

A Work and its Shapers  
*The Most High Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens* in Early  
Medieval China

by  
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## ABSTRACT

Religions, following Max Müller, have often been seen by scholars in religious studies as uniform collections of beliefs and practices encoded in stable “sacred books” that direct the conduct of religious actors. These texts were the chief focus of academic students of religion through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and this approach remains strong in the 21<sup>st</sup>. However, a growing chorus of dissidents has begun to focus on the lived experience of practitioners and the material objects that structure that experience, and some textual scholars have begun extending this materialist framework to the study of texts. This dissertation is a contribution in that vein from the field of Daoist studies. Now split between two separate texts, the *Most High Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens* began as a 4th-century collection of apocalyptic predictions and apotropaic devices designed to deliver a select group of Chinese literati to the heavens of Highest Clarity. Later editors during the early medieval period (ca. 220-589 CE) took one of two paths: for their own reasons, they altered the *Rectifying Methods* to emphasize either the world’s end or its continuation. Detailed study of these alterations and their contexts shows how individuals and groups used and modified the *Rectifying Methods* in ways that challenge the conventional relationship between religious text and religious actor.

To my mother, my first teacher

“One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for  
ever.” – *Ecclesiastes* 1:4

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DDB	<i>Digital Dictionary of Buddhism</i>
ECR	<i>Early Chinese Religion</i>
EDS	<i>Early Daoist Scriptures</i>
EoT	<i>The Encyclopedia of Taoism</i>
<i>Grand Ricci</i>	<i>Grand dictionnaire Ricci de la langue chinoise</i>
HFL	The Hanfenlou 涵芬樓 edition of the Daozang, printed by the eponymous publishing house between 1923-1926.
Handian	The <i>Hanyu Dacidian</i>
j.	<i>juan</i> (“chapter” or “scroll” – the traditional unit of textual division)
R	Robinet, <i>La révélation du Shangqing</i>
T	<i>Taishō shinshū daizōkyō</i>
TC	<i>The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang</i>
TPGJ	<i>Taiping guangji</i>
WSBY	<i>Wushang biyao</i>
XDL	<i>Xiaodao lun</i>
YJQQ	<i>Yunji qiqian</i>
ZG	<i>Zhen’gao</i>
ZHDZ	<i>Zhonghua daozaang</i>

## Chapter 1: Religious Studies and Textuality

### The Tools at Hand

The centrality of texts in the Daoist religion is beyond dispute. Consider the following example, from the *Most High Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens* (CT 1203 *Taishang santian zhengfa jing* 太上三天正法經). Two gods receive a work of scripture from their superior that allows them to control demon soldiers in the service of the gods of the Six Heavens, whose violent rule has heretofore oppressed a suffering humanity. The superior deity ordains them into a hierarchy and commands them to transmit this work to human beings. With the aid of said work, these humans can become powerful beings known as Perfected. With their new status, these fortunate few can use the methods provided by this text to aid their celestial superiors in sweeping away the violent rule of the Six Heavens:

太上與後聖，九玄上相青童君共序三天正法除六天之文，施用寶訣祝說，投祭法度以付二君，使教後學諸為真人者，以制六天收戮群凶。於是帝君，上相青童君奉受真訣稽首而還。

The Most High allowed the Lord of the Golden Porte and the Azure Lad of the Nine Heavens to together lay out the Correct Methods of the Three Heavens for Expelling the Six Heavens, using precious oral instructions, incantations, and explanations. They sacrificed and he ritually ordained them, in order to transmit [the scripture] to the two lords, commanding them to teach those who come late to the study [of the Way] how to become Perfected in order to control the Six Heavens, gathering up and slaying the mass of demons. Thereupon the Lord of the Golden Porte and the Azure Lad received perfected instructions, performed full prostrations, and left.<sup>1</sup>

In the ritual recounted above, the text is the focal point. Materially, it is the sole object being transmitted. The ritualized behavior of the three gods is structured around its transmission and receipt. The work structures the social relations within the celestial

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1 ZHDZ 1.260b.22-c4

realm and between deities and humans. All of this presents a problem for scholars of Daoism as members of the larger discipline of religious studies. The discipline as a whole has recently been turning away from texts as the chief object of study.

One articulation of this stance is the editorial statement found in the first issue of the journal *Material Religion* (2005-):

The study of religion has largely been pursued as the study of texts—liturgical, theological, poetic, or narrative words and concepts. There is no regretting this practice, since it is clear that many religions in the last three millennia have invested enormous cultural resources in hand and mechanically printed texts, which have acted as authoritative transmissions of received knowledge. But the limits of a textual study of religion have gradually been recognized by many in academe, museum, and elsewhere over the last two or three generations...

In addition to gaps in the textual record where relevant evidence has been misplaced or destroyed (or instances where texts simply did not feature in the religion under study), the editors note that meaning and its interpretation is not confined to the textual sphere, and thus cannot be understood through textual analysis alone:

...[M]aterial things, places, and practices evoke modes of experience that are not equal to the reading of texts. "Meaning" may not be reduced simply to the parsing of words or their conceptual interpretation. Things and practices mean in ways that texts do not. Moreover, words combine with things to create even richer, more embodied forms of experience that must be scrutinized in order to capture the complex sense of religious meaning-making.

The editors give examples of the sorts of material they are interested in:

We understand by "material religion" not only great works of art and temples, but all the things believers do with them. We understand material religion to include pilgrimages, image-guided meditation, the spaces that house shamanistic transport, spirit possessions, divination, or liturgical worship, the objects to which memory and genealogy are keyed, the costumes in which ancestors are invoked, the images that make aesthetic experience a spiritual encounter, the devotional paraphernalia that grandparents and priests give as gifts to the young, the bumper stickers that invoke deities, and the objects that serve as amulets to ward off evil or summon benevolence. All of these objects and their uses constitute examples of lived religion.

Their "meaning" is not contained merely in the object or its imagery, but in how they are used, and reused, forgotten, broken, salvaged, or ensconced in museums.<sup>2</sup>

Some disciplines suggest themselves immediately for the study of these objects:

geography and place (pilgrimages, spaces that house religious activities); drama and performance (the religious activities people engage in within these spaces, as well as the objects the use and costumes they wear); social memory (memory, genealogy, and associated objects); or media studies (bumper stickers). Absent are the typical tools of the textual scholar: philology, text-criticism, and the like. Consider, too, a more recent (and very influential) programmatic statement for the materialist study of religion by Manuel

A. Vásquez:

The sort of materialism I would like to advance approaches religion as the open-ended product of discursive and nondiscursive practices of embodied individuals, that is, individuals who exist in particular times and places. These individuals are embedded in nature and culture, and drawing from and conditioned by their ecological, biological, psychological, and sociocultural resources, they construct multiple identities and practices, some of which come to be designated, often through contestation, as religious at particular junctures. In other words, a materialist approach is interested in the processes behind the naming and articulation of religion as a relatively stable and patterned reality recognized by both insiders and outsiders.<sup>3</sup>

Without analyzing this passage in detail, one can note the fields it makes amenable to the study of religion: among others, these are ecology, biology, sociology, psychology, and cognitive science. The disciplinary broad-mindedness shared by Vásquez and the editors of *Material Religion* is a striking departure from the early days of the field.

Understanding this departure requires a brief foray into those early days.

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2 *Material Religion* 1.1 (March 2005): 6-7.

3 Vásquez, *More Than Belief: A Materialist Theory of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 8. For a discussion of the work as a whole, see the review round table in *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24, no. 4-5 (2012).

The modern discipline of religious studies is often traced to Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900), who was the first to use the term “Science of Religion” (*Religionswissenschaft*) in a series of lectures delivered in 1870. There, he divides his new science into two stages: “[T]he former, which has to deal with the historical forms of religion, is called *Comparative Theology*; the latter, which has to explain the conditions under which religion, in its highest or lowest form, is possible, is called *Theoretic Theology*.”<sup>4</sup> Müller thus divides religious studies into empirical and theoretical modes; the first requires the collection, collation, and classification of data; the second crafts an explanatory theory of religion based on that data. His split would influence the giants of the field, from Mircea Eliade (1907-1986) to J.Z. Smith (1938-2017).<sup>5</sup> The science of religion should begin with the first stage, since it is not until “all the evidence that can possibly be gained from a comparative study of all the religions of the world has been fully collected, classified, and analyzed” that scholars could begin to formulate a theory of religion corresponding to the second step.

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4 Jon R. Stone, ed., *The Essential Max Müller: On Language, Mythology, and Religion* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002): 114. Emphasis in original. The quotation is from the first of Müller’s 1870 “Lectures on the Science of Religion.” Stone uses the 1872 text, justifying his choice on p. xv.

5 Eliade’s debt to Müller is evident in his citational practices: the theory of religion he advances in *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, tr. Willard R. Trask (Orlando: A Harvest Book, 1957) and *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, tr. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton/Bollingen Paperbacks, 2005) are founded on diverse examples. For instance, his theses on sacred space on pp. 12-17 of *The Eternal Return* are enumerated, then explicated with citations. The chaos/cosmos split on pp. 29-32 of *Sacred and Profane* is established through reference to the Vedas; to unspecified “Scandinavian colonists;” and to 2 Corinthians 5:17. Smith’s four-step method of comparison reads like a heavily-modified version of Müller’s original: the scholar first situates a given example in its historical context, then describes its reception history; second, they repeat the same two steps with a different exemplum; third, they redescribe the exempla each in light of the other; and finally, they rectify the academic categories in light of which the exempla have been imagined. See “The ‘End’ of Comparison: Redescription and Rectification,” in *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age*, ed. Kimberley C. Patton and Benjamin C. Ray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 239.



For Müller, the most important source of this evidence is textual. Though he provides a brief paragraph on the value of missionary accounts of “savage” religions, he is chiefly interested in documentary evidence in the form of “sacred books:”

A study of the original documents on which the principal religions of the world profess to be founded... has enabled some of our best living scholars to distinguish in each religion what is really ancient and what is comparatively modern; what was the doctrine of the founders and their immediate disciples, and what were the afterthoughts and, generally, the later corruptions of later ages... [A]s it is essential that we should know the most ancient forms of every language, before we proceed to any comparisons, is indispensable that we should have a clear conception of the most primitive form of every religion before we proceed to determine its own value, and to compare it with other forms of religious faith.<sup>6</sup>

Note the semantic slippage here: the study of original documents at first is only relevant to “the principal religions of the world,” but by the end of the paragraph that method is useful in the study of “every” religion. The examples of “religion” that follow only confirm the centrality of sacred texts to the study of religion: Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism are – for Müller, at least – paradigmatic textual religions (115-116). The methods that allow such study involve “critical scholarship,” broadly conceived (“When was [a book] written? Where, and by whom?... Was the whole book written at once, or does it contain portions of an earlier date?”) but also philology. When studying Zoroastrianism, for instance, “we must chiefly, if not entirely, depend on those portions of the Zend-Avesta which are written in the Gatha dialect, a more primitive dialect than that of the rest of the sacred code of the Zoroastrians,” (ibid.). Of course, the most successful

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6 Stone, *Essential* 114-115. His textual focus sets him apart from other early evolutionists like Tylor and Frazer, and (later) Durkheim, who appealed to what might be called an early form of ethnographic evidence in reconstructing “primitive” religion.

analysis of a religious text was his own – that of the Vedas, again performed via philology and text-criticism.<sup>7</sup>

Norman Girardot sees Müller’s study of the Vedas as emblematic of his entire enterprise:

[Müller’s] judgment concerning the authentic sacredness or profound “religiosity” of the Indian “classics...” relates in many ways to an imbricated set of Evangelical Protestant assumptions about history, religion, and the special authority of scripture (*sola scriptura* – and Müller’s original Pietistic Lutheran roots should be recalled here) and individual moral regeneration. In addition to an obvious anti-Catholic perspective on the general history of religions, priests, and ritual, these mostly unspoken criteria included... an emphasis on reified religious beliefs, doctrines, and moral codes embedded in scriptures and conscience; a stress on a monotheism... unsullied by intermediary spiritual beings; the importance of nonpetitionary prayer and worship; the need for a radical spiritual transformation of human nature and an ongoing moral self-cultivation; and the originary inspiration and authoritative role of individual religious founders, prophets, reformers, and editors.<sup>8</sup>

We have seen some of these notes struck above in Müller’s emphasis on the beliefs of the “founders” of various religions as recorded in their texts; others are evident elsewhere in his work.<sup>9</sup> Key for us here is his emphasis on sacred texts, to be interpreted as carriers of signification that constitute the center of a given religion. Some scholars continue to uncritically adopt Müller’s approach.<sup>10</sup> The vast majority, however, have begun to see

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7 For his introduction to the study of the Vedas, see his “Lecture on the Vedas, or the Sacred Books of the Brahmans” in Stone, *Essential* 43-67.

8 Girardot, “Max Müller’s *Sacred Books* and the Nineteenth-Century Production of the Science of Comparative Religions,” *History of Religions* 41, no. 3 (Feb., 2002): 233.

9 The definition of religion he advanced in 1870 is one he adhered to, with minor modification, throughout his life. Its basic component, evident in the lowest and highest forms of religion, is the human experience of the “Infinite.” Much in the manner of Rudolph Otto, the Infinite is perceived more dimly or more perfectly in varying grades of religion, stretching from “fetish worship” through Roman Catholicism and finally reaching its culmination in Protestant Christianity. For concise statements of these views, see Stone, *Essential* 113, 170-171, 197, 216.

texts as more than containers for meaning that offer skeleton keys to the nature of religion. Rather, they are now one data point among many others that are included in religious activity.

Parallel to the notion of texts as central to religions is the tendency of religious studies scholars to read religions as texts. Tomoko Masuzawa treats this trend as an extension of the hermeneutic approach in anthropology, which arose out of and in reaction to earlier German and English models of culture. Despite their differences, these models shared the conceit that culture was the province of an intellectual elite nurtured on classic literature. Their resulting spiritual and moral cultivation set them apart from the common folk (and indeed, it was at this time that the distinction between “the masses” and “the classes” began to appear). Though it was embodied in the literature studied by this elite, culture was also the expression of a unitary, primordial national spirit – a “whole way of life” or a “natural, organic folk spirit.” But while the English and German models were unabashedly evaluative, the anthropological model strove to be descriptive and pluralistic: there existed many cultures, with none distinctly “better” than the other. But the new anthropological definition of culture inherited two particularly important elements from its forebears. First, culture was conceived of as a unitary whole that was particular to a given group. Second, This unitary whole can be represented (as in literature for the German and English intellectuals); it can be understood. Therefore, it must be interpreted as a text: “[T]o know a culture is to understand its *meaning*... to grasp the ‘essential truth’ of a culture requires a *hermeneutic science*.”<sup>11</sup>

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11 Masuzawa, “Culture” in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 70-78, esp. 74, 77-78. Emphases in original.

Though it was first employed in this definition by Tylor, the “complex whole” version of culture remained influential among professional anthropologists (Masuzawa cites Ruth Benedict, Franz Boas, and Clifford Geertz) down through the mid-twentieth century – with an important modification: what was, for Tylor, “culture” in the singular, became plural.<sup>12</sup> It was then that the hermeneutic approach was borrowed from anthropology by prominent theologians like Paul Tillich and used to describe religions. Inheriting their perspective was Mircea Eliade, who defended hermeneutics as the *only* method proper to the study of religions:

The hierophanies – i.e., the manifestations of the sacred expressed in symbols, myths, supernatural beings, etc. - are grasped as structures, and constitute a prereflective language that requires a special hermeneutics... By means of a competent hermeneutics [developed, he explains earlier, from the work of earlier historians and phenomenologists of religion], history of religions ceases to be a museum of fossils, ruins, and obsolete *mirabilia* and becomes what it should have been from the beginning for any investigator: a series of "messages" waiting to be deciphered and understood.<sup>13</sup>

Eliade had earlier allowed that religious matters were “of concern” to members of other disciplines, and even that drawing upon their techniques could prove useful to the historian of religions; later in the same work (pp. 12-36) he elaborates on the contributions and shortcomings of psychologists, sociologists, and theologians in the study of religion. In the preface, however, as in earlier works, he makes the case that the methods of religious studies – what he calls here his “special hermeneutics” – are distinct

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12 For Tylor, “culture” was unequivocally singular: “[A] search of the surviving residue of Tylor’s career has produced only two rather dubious instances of the plural, neither of them in a published work by Tylor.” See George W. Stocking, Jr., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 302-303. “Culture” had become plural at least by the time of Ruth Benedict. See Benedict, *Patterns of Culture* (New York: Mentor Books, 1959 [1934]), 17ff.

13 Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* (1969; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), preface, n.p. Masuzawa cites a slightly longer portion on 81-82.

from the methods of other disciplines.<sup>14</sup> Masuzawa details the enduring influence of the hermeneuticists on the field of religious studies and beyond:

To be sure, not everyone professionally engaged in religious studies would subscribe to this particular conception of ‘religious hermeneutics.’ More broadly speaking, however, the hermeneutical paradigm has become so insidiously ensconced in the human sciences generally in the course of the twentieth century that it now seems to strike many people as perversely unnatural, if not entirely impossible, to entertain the possibility that “culture” or “religion” could be construed in any way other than as an intricately intrareferential “meaningful whole...” the overwhelming emphasis on *meaning* as the ultimate constitutive substance of a cultural wholeness has had the effect... of bringing the anthropological notion of culture into closer association with the more literary, aesthetic, and moral concepts of culture discussed earlier.<sup>15</sup>

The same, she implies, could be said of religion. In this respect, Geertz and Eliade come in for particular criticism: both were interested in situating the study of religion in the tradition of the interpretive study of culture.

Her criticism of Geertz is particularly ironic because his anthropological approach had seemed to offer an alternative to scholars of religion who had tired of the Eliadean paradigm. Instead of “identify[ing] and catalog[uing] sacred archetypes across different cultures and eras” – that is, instead of constructing Eliade’s series of “messages” – they could rely on Geertz’s famous “thick description” to study various religions in their own context. In the process, religionists adopted his theory of religion as a system of symbols that created and reflected an ethos and worldview. By taking a semiotic approach to religion and culture, however, Geertz perpetuated the focus on unity and hermeneutics that saw religions as separate wholes, with their own essences, that could be read like texts.<sup>16</sup> Vásquez traces Geertzian textualism to a particular current in Durkheimian

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14 See Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, 14-16.

15 Masuzawa, “Culture,” 80-82.

16 Vásquez, *Belief* 222-223; Masuzawa, *ibid.*

thought that privileges ideas over matter, and which influenced his successors in the structuralist and post-structuralist tradition. Lévi-Strauss and Derrida fundamentally differ in their approach to meaning, but both are textualists at heart. Their conceptions of meaning, insofar as they have influenced religionists, have led to the same emphasis on religion-as-text that one sees in Geertz. As an alternative, Vásquez suggests scholars refocus their gaze on ritual and practice – an approach that has been present in the field since Durkheim (and even Tylor) but has been neglected by a collective textualist myopia. While texts are critical data to the study of religion, they should not be the only data – and religions should not be analyzed exclusively in textual terms.<sup>17</sup>

For the materialists above, the problem is not that religions involve texts; it is that scholars see religions *as* their texts, and extend the textual metaphor to non-textual aspects of religious life. Religious bodies, spaces, and practices are either relegated to secondary status or reframed as texts in need of explication. The text has become a “hungry metaphor” that in the end consumes all other modes of analyzing religion.<sup>18</sup> Approaching a given text not only as a container of signifiers but also as a material object opens new windows on the lives of its users. Vásquez sketches the parameters of textual materiality. He first notes that texts, as they have been approached, are at once objectified activity and carriers of meaning. Overemphasis on their completeness and their value as pure vehicles of signification, however, has obscured their materiality:

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17 *Belief* 231-232. Throughout the book, Vásquez develops a materialist theory of religion that focuses on embodiment, praxis, and place. While extraordinarily promising, the details of his theory need not concern us here.

18 The reference is to Thomas Csordas, “Embodiment and Cultural Phenomenology,” in *Perspectives on Embodiment: The Intersections of Nature and Culture*, ed. Gail Weiss and Honi Fern Haber (New York: Routledge, 1999): 146.

Texts are always the result of (and we always meet them through) practices of production and consumption. These practices always point to: (1) the habituses of their authors and competing audiences; (2) the selection of materials (e.g., the types of parchment, binding, and ink used); (3) manipulation (miscopying them, generating apologias or polemics around them, and bowdlerizing or even banning them); and (4) appropriation (since texts are not just interpreted but also memorized, chanted, decorated, paraded down the streets, and even worn...). Texts, thus, should not be opposed or even separated from religious practices or artifacts. Instead, texts are the relatively stable albeit open-ended products of practices of “religious mattering,” text-making and text-consuming practices, including those of the religion scholar.<sup>19</sup>

We will see that most of these aspects of materiality are relevant for the production of the *Rectifying Methods*. There is another important aspect he does not discuss in detail, however: the social situation in which texts are generated, modified, and circulated. Karen King shows an astute awareness of this facet of textual production in *The Secret Revelation to John* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). Her assumptions and the methods she bases on them provide useful tools for the study of the *Rectifying Methods*.

The fundamental data for students of the *Secret Revelation* are four extant manuscripts, all of which differ from one another in major and minor ways. Three versions of the *Secret Gospel* were found in three different codices (II, III, and IV) among a cache of ancient manuscripts discovered near the Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi in 1945. Another, referred to by scholars as BG, was purchased in a Cairo antiquities market and brought to the Egyptian Museum in Berlin. These four different manuscripts suggest people in four different settings thought the text was relevant: an urban school setting; second-century Rome; at various points in Egypt; and outside a Pachomian monastery. The *Secret Gospel* was probably composed in an urban school setting, most likely in

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<sup>19</sup> Vásquez, *Belief* 255-256.

Alexandria, in the first or second century CE; during that same century, some version made its way to Rome, where it was used for purposes of refutation by the orthodox polemicist Irenaeus; meanwhile, different version(s) circulated in Egypt; and finally three of these were collected and buried by Pachomian monks. The differences in form and content among these versions, as well as their differing uses, reveal a great deal about the social life of the text.

The circumstances behind the discovery of the Nag Hammadi codices have been the subject of dispute for decades. King presents a stripped-down version of the conventional account, and that will serve for present purposes:

In 1945, the most important single discovery for the history of early Christianity was made. A peasant digging for fertilizer in the hills near the village of Nag Hammadi in Egypt uncovered a clay jar containing a collection of fourth-century papyrus books. As it turned out, these books contained a wealth of early Christian writings that had been buried by monks from the local Pachomian monastery in order to save them from the censors of the fifth-century Church.<sup>20</sup>

The importance of the Nag Hammadi find is unquestioned, but almost every other detail has been criticized. Who found the texts? Why do the accounts of the principal figures in the discovery vary so widely? What were they doing at time of discovery? Who buried the Nag Hammadi codices, and why?

Such questions have direct bearing on the books' nature and origin. Challenging the regnant Pachomian-centered vision of the Nag Hammadi texts, Nicola Denzey Lewis and Justine Ariel Blount argue persuasively that the fertilizer story is unlikely; instead, the individual or group responsible for the discovery had likely looted the tomb of a private citizen who had commissioned the codices to be used as grave goods (a well-attested practice in ancient and late antique Egypt). Grave robbery is a well-attested

<sup>20</sup> King, *Secret Revelation 2*.



practice in ancient and modern Egypt, and furnished many of the manuscripts on the antiquities market – including, likely, the Berlin Codex version of the *Secret Gospel*. If they were indeed looted from a grave, the Nag Hammadi codices would have functioned as displays of the wealth and social power of the tomb’s occupant.<sup>21</sup> Their status as material objects, then, would have been at least as important as their content.<sup>22</sup>

The existing versions of the *Secret Gospel* suggests second-century Alexandria as a place of composition for several reasons. Its format places it among the esoteric tradition of master-student textual transmission common to an urban school; in this case, Christ transmits his final teaching to his disciple John, and the masters and students who transmitted and received it took their own place in the “school of Christ.” Its author displays extensive familiarity with Jewish literature and hermeneutics, and so they must have composed the text in a setting where such material was available. Alexandria’s community of Greek-speaking Jews provides just such a setting. Indeed, much of the material included with the *Secret Gospel* in the Nag Hammadi codices would have been exactly the sort collected and transmitted in an urban school. The material the *Gospel* quotes and parodies shows the author was familiar not only with Jewish theology and hermeneutic techniques but also distinctively Egyptian theriomorphic deities, Platonic cosmology and astrology, and demonology. Alexandria would have been one of the few

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21 The power of such objects in this regard is illustrated by the story of Arethas of Caesarea, a scholar and politician of the tenth century who paid, on average, 15-20 nomismata per codex – equivalent to half the yearly salary of a civil servant. See *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. Alexander P. Kazhdan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), s.v. “Book Trade,” “Codex,” “Arethas of Caesarea.”

22 See Nicola Denzey Lewis and Justine Ariel Blount, “Rethinking the Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 2 (2014): 400-415. The debate continues: see Hugo Lundhaug and Lance Jennot, *The Monastic Origins of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum, 97 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015). Pp. 1-21 answers some of the criticisms advanced in the article.

places where all of these resources would have been accessible. “The cumulative evidence...” says King, “points to most directly to Alexandria. Indeed if the *Secret Revelation of John* were not written in Alexandria, it would need to have been written in a place just like it.”<sup>23</sup>

The popularity of the *Secret Gospel* is unquestionable; there is, however, no single definitive version. Both of these facts derive from the *Secret Gospel*'s material circumstances. All four surviving manuscripts were translated from Greek into Coptic – three independently – and show evidence of having been copied before. Indeed, each copy we now possess probably had its own complicated history. Some of this history is hinted at by “variations in the construction of the codices, scribal hands, and dialect,” (18). As mentioned above, three of the copies were found in Nag Hammadi codices; the fourth circulated separately. At the linguistic level the copy of the *Secret Revelation* found in codex IV shows distinct features characteristic of a southern dialect of Coptic; the same criteria show that the version found in codex II is a northern text (though the texts themselves are otherwise almost identical).<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, the versions found in codex III and in the Cairo marketplace – in addition to differing significantly from one another – are both shorter than the versions in II and IV. Besides orthographical differences and differences in content, each version of the *Secret Gospel* is also marked by lacunae – portions of the text that have been damaged beyond recognition or completely destroyed between the centuries during the text's production and their discovery. Some can be filled in with reference to other versions of the text or with educated guesses, but other parts of

<sup>23</sup> King, *Secret Revelation* 9-17.

<sup>24</sup> Funk, “Linguistic Aspects” 127.

the text are beyond recovery.<sup>25</sup> Textual lacunae, linguistic and orthographic differences, and the complicated histories of the Nag Hammadi codices, combined with the debates surrounding their nature and origin, present significant obstacles to their study. They also hint at another relevant factor: mobility.

Wolf-Peter Funk summarizes the movement of the Nag Hammadi codices:

Quite evidently, at least a few of our “texts”—in some Coptic version and format—did a great deal of traveling along the Nile valley before they arrived in the Nag Hammadi region. During these travels, they were doubtless part of the luggage of certain persons (who may or may not have been interested in their specific contents). They may have changed carriers from time to time, and they were probably taken out of the bag at a number of places—to be read, modified, copied (thus, in a sense, “published”) so as to multiply into several chains of transmission. That is to say, at such stopovers on the way—possibly involving a more extended stay in some places—they can be assumed to have undergone the same kind of treatment that they were evidently given on their arrival in southern Upper Egypt: as a consequence of the personal or professional contacts between their carriers and other persons, indigenous to the region, they were gradually adapted to their new environment. (This adaptation, it seems, was hardly ever accomplished one hundred per cent.) At some stages during the process, there happened to be editors who thought it fit to unite one or two pieces of the imported goods with other interesting material that derived more directly from their home production. Such miscellaneous volumes may have had quite a history of their own before some of the items happened to be chosen for inclusion into the codices we are proud to have.<sup>26</sup>

Funk’s summary highlights several important aspects of the Nag Hammadi codices’ materiality. As he relates more explicitly elsewhere, they are composite volumes, containing individual manuscripts written in different dialects by different scribes. They are neither doctrinally nor linguistically unified.<sup>27</sup> The individual manuscripts contained in each codex would themselves have had their own histories, bound up in the mutual contact between copyists, editors, caravan hands, and interested locals from different

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25 King, *Secret Revelation* 25.

26 Funk, “Linguistic Aspects” 146, as quoted in King, *Secret Revelation* 17.

27 Funk, “Linguistic Aspects” 125.

regions of Egypt. All of these histories would have played out for each individual manuscript before they were bound up together and (eventually) buried.

In detailing the winding journey of the Nag Hammadi texts, King and Funk display awareness of the four aspects of materiality discussed by Vásquez above. The habituses (though Funk does not use the term) of the authors, editors, teachers, and copyists of the *Secret Gospel* would have been evident in everything from their methods of teaching to the criteria governing the text's selection for use to the act of copying itself. This latter would be implicated in the wider circulation of the manuscripts. Manipulations may reflect simple dialectical differences between scribes, but they may also point to what Vásquez calls "appropriations" of the text: its specific uses in specific settings. In particular, King infers that certain differences in content mark different social fields in which the text operated.

The most important difference in content between the longer version in II/IV and the shorter version in BG/III is the insertion of a hymn to a figure called Pronoia. This hymn, inserted near the end of the text, precipitated a wave of revisions throughout the *Secret Gospel* that allowed the text to speak to contexts different than the original.<sup>28</sup> She notes four effects these changes had on the text as a whole. When compared to the shorter version, the new, longer edition displays:

...[A]n increased interest in rationalizing ritual practice, especially baptism, in terms of the work's mythological framework; a shift in some gender imagery; and an enrichment of intertextual allusions to the *Gospel of John*. In addition to these, we can note the stronger emphasis on healing by the addition of the extended list of demons...<sup>29</sup>

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28 King details the changes on *Secret Revelation* 244-257.

29 King, *Secret Revelation* 257

King associates these new characteristics with new contexts of use:

Altogether these may indicate a closer association of the work with a communal setting where baptism is understood in terms of moral purification and protection from the effects of demons. The ties to the *Gospel of John* indicate a stable or even increasing association with Christians for whom Johannine traditions were highly valued. And finally, the shifts in gender may point toward a monastic setting... where women were present but their leadership was not allowed and their presence was considered a sexual temptation.

For King, then, changes in the *Secret Gospel of John* reflect changes in the settings in which the text was used. An initial, shorter version was likely composed in an urban school setting for individual transmission from master to student. An independent hymn was later integrated into this version, precipitating a massive revision of the text to smoothly incorporate the new material. The thematic evidence in this longer version indicates a change in social context from a private esoteric school to a communal monastic setting.

Without question, the most important method King uses to understand these changes, and therefore what they imply about their new settings, is hermeneutic: she compares the semantic content of two different versions of the same text. And the account she favors has been challenged. Both she and her challengers agree, however, that understanding the text's fuller significance to late antique Egypt is only possible by taking into account its status as a material object. It is not solely a repository of meaning. Orthographic differences between different versions of the *Secret Gospel* reveal the intervention of different scribes as they attempted to refigure the text to suit readers who used different dialects of Coptic. Its monastic audience altered the content to suit their own purposes. The *Secret Gospel*, like other texts in the Nag Hammadi library, shows evidence of having been copied multiple times. The codices themselves collect

manuscripts written on a wide variety of subjects and in a wide variety of dialects, often by different scribes. Taken together, these facets of the history of the *Secret Gospel* make it clear that understanding the nature of any given text requires taking into account its material and social context – and that, by the same token, analyzing the changes a text undergoes over time can provide insight into the social contexts in which those changes took place. We will see that the *Rectifying Methods* offers another illustration of this same principle, but first some terminological clarification is in order.

#### Work, Text, Version, Voice, Author

More than forty years ago, the literary critic Jerome McGann offered a definition of “text” and related concepts that, in modified form, will prove useful in a discussion of the *Rectifying Methods*. For McGann, the text is more than the words on the page; it is inseparable from the context in which it is read.

...[W]e shall have to distinguish the different faces... which [the text] always turns to us. I do not say the different ‘levels’ of the text because that word is freighted with the concept of the text as a container or transmitter of meaning rather than as a meaningful agent in itself. In this sense one might usefully distinguish ‘the text’ (of the poem as a purely linguistic event) from the ‘version’ (or the immediate and integral physical object through which the ‘text’ is being executed), and make yet a further distinction of ‘text’ and ‘version’ from the ‘work’ (the term to stand for some more global constitution of the poem). There is a ‘work’ called *Paradise Lost* that supervenes its many texts and its many versions; to William Blake that work was one thing, whereas to William Empson it was something else; and of course to any one of us the work we call *Paradise Lost* can be, will be, reconstituted yet again.<sup>30</sup>

In my reading of McGann, the word “text” is almost a verb: it is a version read in a particular situation. He gives the example Byron’s critique of the prince regent (and heir apparent to the throne of England), “Lines to a Lady Weeping.” The poem was published

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30 McGann, “Theory of Texts,” review of *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts: The Panizzi Lectures 1985*, by D.F. McKenzie. *London Review of Books*, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 1988.

in two different versions – one in 1812, anonymously, and one in 1814 under Byron’s own name. The 1812 version produced a small uproar; the impact of the 1814 version was much greater, due in no small part to Byron’s fame and political status. It occasioned attacks on Byron in the prominent newspapers *The Morning Post* and *The Courier*, with the latter being particularly outraged that Byron – as a “heredity counsellor of the King” – would dare admonish the heir apparent.<sup>31</sup> The “texts” are thus the readings and responses to the 1812 and 1814 versions; the “versions” are the physical documents read during the textual process; and “Lines” is the work independent of the two versions. The boundaries between McGann’s categories are somewhat porous: for him, a constitutive element of the 1814 text is in fact the 1812 version, the reprinting of which under Byron’s name engendered such rancor. “Lines” as a work incorporates these versions and their associated texts, but also transcends them. Of note, too, is that different versions can constitute a given work even when the content of those versions differs. His example is Marianne Moore’s “Poetry.” This work was revised several times over the course of five decades. The third and “final” version consisted of a mere three lines, stripping away much of the content that had been commented on, analyzed, and enjoyed by Moore’s fans for decades. They were, perhaps understandably, upset: the poet Robert Pinsky notes that “Many readers, including numbers of Moore’s fellow poets, consider this one of the most egregious examples ever of terrible revision.” Like Byron’s “Lines,” the third version of “Poetry” caused such a stir only because it was read in light of previous versions to which

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31 See “Lord Byron,” in *The Courier*, February 1, 1814, and “Lord Byron,” in *The Morning Post*, February 8, 1814. The former is reprinted in Appendix VII, “Attacks upon Lord Byron in the newspapers for February and March, 1814,” in *The Works of Lord Byron: A New, Revised, and Enlarged Edition, With Illustrations*, vol. II, edited by Rowland E. Prothero (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1898), 463-465.

Moore's public had grown attached. But despite these differences, McGann considers the earliest and latest versions of "Poetry" to constitute a single work.<sup>32</sup>

McGann's three examples of "works" and their constituent "versions" share one significant feature. Whatever their differences in context or content, each "version" of *Paradise Lost*, "Lines," and "Poetry" has the same title as every other version. This is not true of every work. If we adopt his definitions of "text," "work," and "version," what are we to do with "works" whose titles differ over time? Such works are legion: a glance at the "Acknowledgments" section of many academic books reveals that certain chapters appeared elsewhere in revised form and/or under different titles, yet these are considered (for legal purposes, at least) to be different versions of the same work, and similar enough that they require the copyright holder's permission for reuse in a different setting. I suggest we adopt this flexible definition of "work." This is in part because of convention. In common scholarly usage (at least, when speaking English), "Genesis," in reference to the book of the Hebrew Bible, can refer to the Greek text of the Septuagint; to the Masoretic Text consulted by the translators responsible for the King James Version; to the King James Version itself; or to any of the text's other innumerable translations. With no further specification, it is impossible to know exactly which version is being referred to – yet when discussing, in general terms, the flood in Genesis 6, or the differing accounts of the creation in Genesis 1 and 2, we can all be reasonably sure we refer to the same

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32 McGann does not seem to share the assessment of Moore's critics, noting simply that the shorter third version's "power" is only present if one reads it with earlier, longer versions of the same work in mind. The background on "Poetry" is from Robert Pinsky, "Marianne Moore's 'Poetry': Why did she keep revising it?" *Slate*, June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, [http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/poem/2009/06/marianne\\_moores\\_poetry.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/poem/2009/06/marianne_moores_poetry.html)



work.<sup>33</sup> A better reason is that titles can be fluid, especially in ancient works. Many come down to us with no name, their “titles” being the additions of later readers. So, for instance, the Revelation of John found at the end of the New Testament: what we now take as the title was originally intended to describe the work’s contents.<sup>34</sup> And yet if we take the various untitled manuscript copies of Revelation, its translations into Greek and Latin, and modern English translations to be utterly separate entities, no scholarly discourse is possible.

The extent of a “work” must be judiciously policed, however. Some titles very similar to that of the modern *Rectifying Methods* appear only in bibliographic catalogues, with no accompanying version. They are often ambiguous in Chinese, with the result that translation requires choosing between a number of different, sometimes mutually-exclusive, options: should *Chu liutian zhi wen santian zhengfa* 除六天之文三天正法 – the earliest title under which the present text appears in a bibliographic catalogue – be translated “Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens, the Writ that Expels the Six Heavens,” or “Correct Law of the Three Heavens that Expels the Qi of the Six Heavens?” The text’s early medieval apocalyptic context and the semantic range of the character *fa* 法 allows for either option. Is some combination of the two preferable? Does this title in fact combine two separate works, so that we are seeing a “Writ for Expelling the Qi of the Six Heavens” and a “Correct Method of the Three Heavens?” I will make a detailed

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33 It is worth noting here that chapter divisions in the Old Testament were only introduced in the twelfth century, and – though English editions have followed them – are themselves one of many different divisions across different languages and times. See “Preface,” in Herbert Marks, ed., *The English Bible: King James Version: The Old Testament: A Norton Critical Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2012), xviii-xix.

34 See David E. Aune, *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 1-2.

(and hopefully persuasive) case for my own interpretation, but that does not change the fact that translation is a scholarly judgment call – as is the inclusion of various titles and versions under the umbrella of the same “work.”

While the contents of a “work” may be ambiguous, the status of “originals” is far more certain, especially in the case of the *Rectifying Methods*: they don’t exist.

Discussing Derrida’s “Archive Fever,” McGann notes:

...[T]he history of original documents includes their subsequent transformations and even their disappearance... Like the concept of origin itself, original documents are fictions we practice in order to manage their losses and our limits... [T]he ruptures that characterize the documentary record are an ever-present function, when the history of the making of the documents is continually rewritten and thence further revealed/obscured.<sup>35</sup>

McGann’s concern in *A New Republic of Letters* (from which the quote is taken) is the transference of information (whether literary, audiovisual, or tactile) from libraries, museums, and other repositories of knowledge to the digital realm. It is thus reasonable to presume McGann intends to claim that the origins of any document (which, given the context, I assume he holds synonymous with his earlier “work”) – even those whose textual history is relatively well-known or easily traceable – is irrecoverable. But the assertion is doubly true for works like the *Rectifying Methods* whose composition, reception, and transmission is largely invisible to us; indeed, one can say the documentary trail of the *Rectifying Methods*, like that of many Daoist works, is more rupture than record. Despite these difficulties, reconstructing the social situation of the work at various points in its history can provide insight into the motives for the changes introduced in the work.

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35 McGann, *A New Republic of Letters: Memory and Scholarship in the Age of Digital Reproduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 5.

The result of centuries of shaping by different audiences is a work that speaks with different voices. By “voice,” I mean a single, relatively unified perspective in a given work – a perspective that may come from an individual author, but may also reflect the coincident desires of an editorial team or a series of editors acting separately over time. A voice in this sense is a heuristic device meant to make study and discussion of a work easier; it is a scholarly invention, not an intrinsic feature of a work. So, for Herbert Marks, the Pentateuch is characterized by two voices: “Priestly” and “Lay:”

The former is defined by an abstract, majestic God, a dynamic conception of holiness, a penchant for numbers and lists, and a reliance on schemes such as travel itineraries and genealogies to structure space and time. The Lay writings, by contrast, feature a conditional covenant, a somber assessment of human character, gaps, ambiguities, narrative suspense, and a sophisticated use of folklike legends centering on a personal God at once familiar and uncanny.<sup>36</sup>

Some features of these two voices are distinguished in the two creation stories of Genesis. Commenting on the Lay version of 2:4-3:24, Marks says:

The first [i.e., the Priestly] account of creation [in 1:1-2:3] was solemn and hieratic, with a transcendent God who created man and woman in his own image and appointed them to rule over an ordered world. The second account is picturesque and evocative, with an immanent God who shapes man out of clay as a potter makes a pot... The author is less concerned to educe a hidden pattern of cosmic order than to account for the reality of human life – contentious, laborious, restless, finite – answering the question “why” with tales that can delight a child or challenge the most sophisticated interpreter.

It is impossible to trace the composition process of the Pentateuch back to individuals; rather, Biblical scholars speak of editorial teams or authors. Marks, for instance, dates the composition of the earliest Priestly strand to the late eighth century BCE based on archaeological and textual evidence (see Marks, “Pentateuch” 3-4). With the Pentateuch, we are fortunate enough to have the coherent final product into which these voices were

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<sup>36</sup> Marks, “The Pentateuch,” in *Bible 3*.

eventually integrated. The *Rectifying Methods* did not follow the same path: what may have been first attested to as a unified version that combined apocalyptic and apotropaic themes was pieced apart, supplemented, and redacted by different groups for different reasons. In the process, the role of “author,” “editor,” and “audience” are blended in ways that deserve closer scrutiny.

Xiaofei Tian provides clear examples of how this process worked in the context of medieval China in *The Record of a Dusty Table: Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture* (Seattle: University of Washington, 2005).<sup>37</sup> The poet of the title (Tao Yuanming 陶淵明, 365?-427) is one of the most significant poets in Chinese history. In our day he has become synonymous with “Chinese culture” or “Chinese poetry.” In popular conception he is

a lofty-minded recluse, intensely loyal to [his government]; a spontaneous, willful, unconventional person who is often portrayed as drinking excessively... a poet who chooses to pursue self-fulfillment through a set of private values rather than through public life, who finds contentment and pleasure in retirement and leisure, who defies material hardship for the sake of adhering to his personal principles, and who writes natural, unaffected, and simple poetry of nature in celebration of such a lifestyle.<sup>38</sup>

He is the very picture of the pastoral gentleman-poet, untrammelled by convention, whose magnificent work is dashed off in unmediated, spontaneous reaction to the natural world; it is the work’s essential brilliance that ensures its enduring appeal and enshrines its author in the Chinese pantheon of literary greats. Tian shows how this image of the poet, so simple and appealing, is belied by Tao’s own work. Her patient study reveals a picture of Tao that was devoid of loyalist sympathies; wary of nature’s dark side; and possessed of a detached irony about the world and about himself. Tao’s image as an earnest loyalist

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37 What follows is drawn from her introduction, pp. 3-22.

38 Tian, *Tao* 12-13.

did not sprout naturally from his poetry; it was the product of centuries of editorial intervention. These editors often lacked Tao's originals, and so had no choice but to mediate between copies that often differed from one another in major and minor ways. One careful editor noted over seven hundred variants in different manuscript versions of Tao's work, ranging from single characters to phrases or even entire lines.<sup>39</sup> The work of an editor was far more than simple copyediting: in choosing between different variants, Tao's later admirers were often shaping the poem at a fundamental level.

One of the pressures on their work was their image of Tao; after all, an important criterion in determining the "correct" reading was what an editor thought the author "would" have said. It is here that Tao's enduring image as a gentleman-farmer played an especially important role in the editorial process. Tian gives the famous example of the *jian/wang* controversy, in which an editor was forced to decide whether *jian* 見 "to see," or *wang* 望 "to gaze upon" was the more probable wording in a given poem's original. *Jian* carries connotations of accident or spontaneity, while *wang* implies deliberation; because Tao was the epitome of the "spontaneous" poet, the choice was clear. Thus Tao's later "editors" were often much more:

To the degree that they were engaged in the production of manuscript copies by copying, editing, altering, and revising, we are no longer talking about the readers' reception of a stable text, but about the readers' dynamic participation in the very process of creating a text that is essentially protean. In such a paradigm, the author is still important, but the author no longer occupies the stable central position as an all-powerful and controlling presence in relation to his or her work.<sup>40</sup>

Tian thus provides McGann's text/version/work distinction with valuable context.

We already have a picture of works as fluid, not static; they are at the mercy of reader-

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39 Tian, *Tao* 14.

40 Tian, *Tao* 8-9.

editor-authors, who – far from conveying the perfect essence of the original’s author – were subject to contingent pressures in making choices about which reading was “correct.” This is the situation in which the *Rectifying Methods* found itself. Different audiences inherited different versions of the work, and altered it in different ways. They quoted portions that only sometimes existed in the version they would have inherited; they excerpted material that was of particular interest to them, leaving by the wayside other material that, for the original audience, would have been central; they glossed over or rewrote portions they found inconvenient for their particular purpose(s). Thus, at various times, a work’s “audience” (the person, persons, or group who received the work) was also its “editor” (as they rearranged or deleted material), as well as its “author” (as they created new material *ex nihilo* that resulted in a different version which suited their own ends).

Reconfiguring McGann, then, I will use “work” to refer to the *Rectifying Methods* as a supervenient entity that transcends different instantiations (including the earliest version to which we have access). “Text,” for me, is not the sociohistorical context of use but rather the arrangement of signifiers on a given medium. “Version” is the material object that incarnates a given work – the combination of text and medium. Thus, one can possess two versions of a given work in which the text is the same. A facsimile of a manuscript edition of Bach’s “Partita in E Major for Solo Violin” and a typeset version of that same material, for instance, possess the same “text” because they contain the same directions for the player. However, if the editor of the typeset version has also added accents, dynamic markings, bowings, and fingerings – material that is absent from the

manuscript version – I would then say that one possessed two different versions of the same work. In the same way, two versions of the *Rectifying Methods* can be said to possess the same text if they contain the same characters in the same arrangement, or if the differences are no simpler than a misprint or variant character (穀 as a mistake for 穀, or 无 as a variant of 無). In deciding which differences are “major” and which are “minor,” I am of course playing the same role as the editors of Tao Yuanming’s work, and a degree of trust and judgment is involved. My motivation is different: instead of reconstructing an ur-text that conveys the author’s essence, I am interested in distinguishing different versions of the *Rectifying Methods* and showing how these versions reflected the circumstances of their use. Reconstructing even a few stages of this process requires an introduction to the body of literature among which the *Rectifying Methods* appeared – but also to notions of writing current among some of its many authors.

#### Writing and the work of creation

McGann’s “work” may be a useful tool for those of us interested in the travails of early medieval Daoist authors, but it would have been utterly foreign to those authors themselves. Connecting with their own assumptions about how writing worked and what the process of authorship actually entailed is crucial to understanding how the *Rectifying Methods* was generated and altered.

From earliest times, writing in China was thought to have arisen from imitation of the natural patterns of birds and beasts by human culture heroes. It also had intrinsic

power, particularly in the political realm, that was utterly independent of its signification.<sup>41</sup> This understanding was inherited by Daoist authors of the early medieval period, for whom human script was nothing more than “the dead tracks of the noisy and polluted world” 鷲穢死迹 – a pale imitation of perfect celestial archetypes that arose before the primal unity divided to form the realms of gods and humans. This celestial writing was of several sorts that together formed a descending hierarchy – a hierarchy that eventually reached a degraded form used by humans in ordinary life. Immediately above the utilitarian script of daily life were the basest dregs of the celestial prototype. Like other forms of celestial writing, these dregs were incomprehensible by all but a select few humans, however. Indeed, what unified the various forms of celestial script was the fact that ordinary people could not understand them.<sup>42</sup>

And therein lay their power: the incomprehensibility of celestial script was evidence of its connection to the heavenly authorities. Such writing held power in the hidden realm of spirits, whose denizens could interpret it and were bound to act on its instructions. This was the motive force behind the utility of talismans in particular, which were written in a lower form of celestial script. While they might appear to possess power independent of their signification, this is only superficially true. Talismans held meaning

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41 For a brief overview of the origin of writing and its political significance in early China, see Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999) 197-202. A more detailed overview of the origins of writing, including its attribution to various culture heroes, can be found in Hsieh Hsu-wei, “Writing From Heaven: Celestial Writing in Six Dynasties Daoism” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2005): 39-108.

42 Ibid.



for, and conveyed orders to, spirits and demons. They connected the hidden realm of the spirits to the visible world of human beings.<sup>43</sup>

The same cosmic origin held for scriptures. As we will see, the *Rectifying Methods* was part of a series of works transmitted by a few different deities to the same person during the same time period. These revelations were often held to predate, or at least be co-eternal with, the cosmos itself. Like writing itself, the works I choose here to call “scripture” (a term I will soon explain) formed out of the same august stuff – *qi* 氣 – as the rest of the cosmos. Following what was by now common knowledge in Daoist circles, beings or objects formed out of *qi* were more powerful and worthier of veneration the closer they came to the cosmic muddle (*hundun* 混沌) that predated the universe as we know it. We learned above that human writing was the last link in a chain of celestial scripts that stretched back to the beginning of the universe. Just as it was farthest from the writing that arose along with the cosmos, so it was the most debased. The same holds true of scripture. (This explains the insistence, commonly encountered in Daoist works, that said works predate other “lesser” scriptures – whether Daoist or no – and are thus worthier of veneration.) The term I choose to render as “scripture” in English is *jing* 經. *Jing* is an old word with a long history that merits only a brief sketch here.<sup>44</sup> First attested

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43 See Stephen Bokenkamp, “Word as Relic in Medieval Daoism,” in *Medieval and Early Modern Devotional Objects in Global Perspective: Translations of the Sacred*, edited by Elizabeth Ann Robertson and Jennifer Jahner (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 21-35. He takes this vision of celestial script from the *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhen’gao* 真誥, HY 1010/CT 1016 1.8a-10, which he summarizes on pp. 24-27. Hsieh provides a translation and fuller discussion on pp. 250-99 of “Writing from Heaven.”

44 Any competent historical dictionary will provide an overview. See, for instance, Handian or Grand Ricci, s.v. “經.” To the surprise of no specialist, Tetsugi Morohashi’s 諸橋轍次 *Dai Kan-Wa Jiten* 大漢和辭典 (Tokyo: Taishukan, 1968) devotes nearly two pages to the character. See 8:9207-08.

in bronze inscriptions of the earliest recorded Chinese dynasty, the character there meant “to govern.” A few centuries later, the term had been appended to the titles a variety of works – everything from poetry to political philosophy and ritual manuals. A *jing* was usually credited to an august sage like Confucius, or to his circle of immediate disciples. The typical English translation in this period is “classic” or “canon,” implying a relatively stable work to which one turned to find the rules and norms (another meaning of *jing*) that governed the world. These were accompanied by *zhuan* 傳 “transmissions, traditions” or *shuo* 說 “explanations.” Such accompaniment was necessary because the canons themselves were abstruse, requiring the elucidation of qualified teachers who understood the intent of their composers. Indeed, it is doubtful if any work of widespread repute was ever transmitted without the oral commentary of a master versed in its tradition, who would have himself learned at the feet of an earlier master.<sup>45</sup>

We find many of the same principles operative with the *Rectifying Methods*, but also important differences. The body of works with which it was transmitted (known as the Shangqing 上清 or “Highest Clarity” revelations), like its forebears, distinguished between the work itself (a *jing*) and the necessary accompaniment. *Jing* here were more than the work of human hands, however. As described above, they formed at the same time and out of the same material as the earliest elements of the cosmos. They were coequal with – and often superior to – the highest gods. Written in celestial script accessible only to these deities, the Shangqing revelations were, at divine direction, passed down through the hierarchy of deities until they reached qualified mortals. Even

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45 See Lewis, *Writing and Authority* 299-302. Michael Nylan’s *The Five ‘Confucian’ Classics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 10-12 provides similar background.

then they were written in script accessible only to a few, and required transcription into characters comprehensible by the rest. Their function was often salvific. Appearing during a chaotic age beset by war, disease, and famine, *jing* promised their bearers relief from the cataclysm and ascent to the heavens. This was frequently accomplished via agency of talismans (*fu* 符). The talismans that accompanied the *jing* – and which ultimately formed their core – were, however, written in the lowest form of celestial script, and conveyed messages to the spirits and demons who were of immediate concern to their bearers. Such talismans were only useful with the appropriate instructions for their use. These were known (*inter alia*) as *fa* 法 “methods,” *jue* 訣 (or *koujue* 口訣) “oral instructions.” In one sense, the *jing* served as a container for the talismans and their necessary adjuncts. I choose the term “scripture” to translate *jing* because of these celestial origins. The important difference between scripture in its common English usage is that it is not (as is attested in the Oxford English Dictionary) mere “sacred writings – at least, not as commonly conceived. *Jing* in their true form are not words on paper; they are the highest psychophysical stuff that exists.

The term *jing*, in our case, does not have the same stable usage one finds with the products of sagely effort discussed above. While *jing* were clearly distinguished from *zhuan* (which, as above, were traditions surrounding the work itself compiled by eminent masters), the accompanying works (*fa*, *jue*, etc.) were often of divine origin as well, delivered by or expounded by the same gods who conveyed the *jing* to mortal hands. Further, *jing* was synonymous with a variety of words that are semantically distinct in common usage: *shu* 書 “book,” *dao* 道 “way” (here akin to “method”), *wen* 文 “writ,”

or *zhang* 章 “strophe,” all clearly distinguished in everyday speech or writing, are synonymous in the titles of Shangqing works. They formed at the same time as the highest heavens, and were transmitted down to humankind at the end of a world-age to save a fortunate few. It is to the specific context of the Shangqing revelations that we now turn.<sup>46</sup>

### The Shangqing revelations

The body of works later known as the Shangqing 上清 (“Highest Clarity”) revelations were transmitted in thirty-four scrolls (*juan* 卷) to the spirit medium Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-86) between 364 and 370. When he received his revelations, Yang was in the service of the Xu 許 family of Jurong 句容 county (near modern Nanjing). His chief patrons were Xu Mi 謚 (303-73), a minor official in the service of a northern lord, and his son Xu Hui 翮 (341-ca. 370). Among Yang’s missives from the other world were the disparate fragments of daily revelations later collected by Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536) in his *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhen’gao* 真誥, CT 1016). This is our major source for information on the history and transmission of the Shangqing revelations, as well as their original social setting. The revelators were a class of more-than-human beings known as “Perfected” (*zhenren* 真人). Some, like Yang Xi’s chief instructor Wei Huacun 魏華存 (251-334), had once been human; others have no discernible human past. The term *zhen* implies that these beings, whether once human or no, had subjected themselves to a regime of self-cultivation that led to the realization of their full potential. The exact regime varies according to the work consulted, but generally includes specific dietary

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<sup>46</sup> The preceding is a selective summary of Robinet 1: 107-122.

practices, meditation and visualization exercises, and the imbibing of alchemical elixirs. Upon ascending to this status, they received a post in the celestial bureaucracy; Wei Huacun, in life a clergywoman of the Celestial Masters (*Tianshi* 天師) sect, in death became known as the Lady of the Southern Marchmount (*Nanyue furen* 南嶽夫人). Her title was honorary, but many Perfected had real responsibilities: supervising subordinate celestial beings, guarding important texts, surveiling the conduct of mortals, and correcting celestial records were common assignments.

Many of the revelations as transmitted to the Xu family have been lost, and what remains does not represent a unified body of work. The *Declarations*, our most important source, contains everything from visions and hymns, to otherworldly geography, to questions put to the Perfected by the Xus, their associates, or by Yang himself. The collator of the text was the 6th-century scholar, alchemist, and calligrapher Tao Hongjing, who built on the work of Xu Mi's grandson, Xu Huangmin 黃民 (361-429) and the noted scholar Gu Huan 顧歡 (420 or 428-483 or 491). Tao assembled this mass of disparate material from the private collections of notable families scattered throughout the southeast. He tried (sometimes in vain) to impose order on the variegated mass, completing his work probably in 499. Though his effort was the most extensive among all the collators, by his own admission he failed to collect all of the extant materials. One source of Tao's troubles was the fact that the Shangqing manuscripts had been dispersed soon after their composition – if indeed they had ever been intended as a unified work. Huangmin began to collect “scriptures, talismans, and secret registers” 經符祕錄 copied by his father and grandfather when he was seventeen, before fleeing Jurong (then beset

by the troubles of the Sun En 孫恩 rebellion) for the safer county of Shan 剡縣 in 404. This indicates that either the works had been widely diffused during that time, or they had remained with the families to which they were addressed. Either possibility indicates that many (if not all) of the parties involved in the early revelations considered possession of individual works more important than preserving the early material as a unified whole. Tao's travail confirms that this conception of the Shangqing revelations still held some two centuries later. His efforts at collection essentially replicate Huangmin's visits to various notable families, but on a larger scale: instead of restricting his visits to the notables of Jurong, he was required to travel throughout the southeast in order to meet with a much wider circle as he followed the manuscripts' winding trail. Tao is not reassembling a coherent body of work that has been scattered by the winds of fate; he is most likely assembling such a body for the first time out of disparate materials that may never have been intended for a unified audience.

#### The Shangqing revelations: material and social history

An ancestor of Xu Mi had led the family south in 185, fleeing deadly intrigue at the court of the Han 漢 dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE). By the time of Mi and Hui, the Xus were related by marriage to a number of other prominent southern families.<sup>47</sup> These families and their associates, along with the Xus themselves, were the primary recipients of the dispatches from the other world. Analyses of dynastic records by Michel Strickmann and Dušana Dušanka Miščević show that the recipients of the Shangqing revelations – both the families to whom they had originally been addressed and those that had inherited

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<sup>47</sup> See ZG20.6ff and commentary.

them after the elder Xus' passing – had once held important posts, but had since lost political power to northern nobility fleeing the destruction of the capital. The social circumstances surrounding the revelations' composition and subsequent popularity thus suggest that one reason for the continued success of Yang Xi's work was the desire of these southern families to recapture in the spiritual realm power that had been denied them on earth. While this thesis dates back to Michel Strickmann's work in the 1970s, I suggest in chapter three that Strickmann is overconfident in attributing the entirety of the revelations to this single cause.

#### The Shangqing revelations and the Rectifying Methods

The *Rectifying Methods*, like the rest of the Shangqing revelations, was originally intended for limited circulation among a select circle of southern aristocrats. These men and their families had been shut out of the halls of power by a recent wave of northern emigres. They took refuge in the new knowledge that Yang Xi imparted to them. The Shangqing revelations included detailed descriptions of the celestial and cthonic realms. Their geography, inhabitants, and bureaucracy; the mechanisms through which their denizens could affect the world of the living; and the postmortem fates of local notables were all revealed. Also revealed was the imminent end of the world, the signs that announced it in the celestial and political realms, methods for escaping it, and techniques that conveyed power over the malicious spirits who flourished in the latter days. The first version of the *Rectifying Methods* to which we have access concentrated specifically on this sort of information, imparting to its readers privileged knowledge of the end times and methods to escape it that set them above their earthly rulers. Access to

this version is impossible, however. The earliest surviving citations, found in encyclopedias and Buddhist polemics, depict a work that had already undergone considerable revision. Nonetheless, these citations, combined with other Shangqing works, can tell us what Yang Xi's version of the *Rectifying Methods* probably looked like. It was, more than likely, a collection of apocalyptic predictions and apotropaic devices, the latter meant to protect the bearer from the malevolent spirits that multiplied at the end of days as well as to guarantee ascent to one of the Shangqing heavens.

The revisions to the *Rectifying Methods* highlight which aspects of the work attracted the attention of later editors. Foremost among these was the political. When the end predicted in the original Shangqing revelations did not arrive as expected, the immediate response of the *Rectifying Methods*' editors was to delay it. They did so by altering the signs in the celestial and political realms that announced its advent. The result was a *Rectifying Methods* that legitimated the rise of Liu Yu 劉裕 (363-422), a general who founded his own dynasty. This version of the work depicted Liu's rise as one of many signals that the world was about to end. This immediacy suggests an author or authors essentially committed to the same trajectory as the original *Rectifying Methods*, but who revised it in light of changing political circumstances. Despite a lack of critical context, there is sufficient evidence to support this hypothesis (though it must remain only that).

Later compositional stages rest on firmer ground. With a few small changes, the same predictions inserted in the second revision could be used to glorify Liu Yu. This was the aim of a third editor, who either altered the *Rectifying Methods* or appealed to a



heretofore unseen version in order to endear himself and the new textual lineage he championed to a later Liu emperor. Similar concerns shaped the final edition of the text to emerge during the Northern and Southern Dynasties. One hundred and fifty years later, a new king had taken control of north China and – thanks in part to the largest army in recent memory – was on the cusp of reunifying the entire realm. Unity required more than military force, however. Since ancient times, rulers had crafted comprehensive worlds in the written realm that mirrored the coherence they sought to impose on the fractured empire. The production of such works was key to their own legitimation. The *Rectifying Methods* was redeployed as part of this ideological project. Its new editors crafted a calendrical system that illustrated their patron’s mastery of time and space and inserted it into their own version of the work.

Meanwhile, the editors of two separate works read some version or versions of the *Rectifying Methods* with entirely different purposes in mind. Malevolent spirits were a matter of everyday concern in early medieval China. They were of special danger to those who sought longevity through the alchemical arts. The potions and pills these individuals consumed required rare plants and minerals found in remote mountain forests. Such places were haunted by spirits of greater or lesser power, and those who traveled there required techniques to guard against these beings. Two such works were useful in this endeavor. The *Scripture of the Forty-four Methods on Yellow Silk* contains an incantation for guarding oneself against the spirits dwelling in remote places that is quoted from some early version of the *Rectifying Methods*. The *Precious Writs and True Formulas on [Prescribed] Lengths of Silk, Determining the Rank of Those who Seek Immortality*

contains amulets extracted from the *Rectifying Methods* that also provide spirit guards. Internal evidence places both works in a structured ordination hierarchy. This is particularly true of the *Precious Writs*; while the *Forty-four Methods* is transmitted from master to disciple, the *Precious Writs* involves itself in a multi-tiered hierarchy, with members of each grade receiving more of the amulets it contains. As in the received *Rectifying Methods*, these amulets promise spirit guards and ascent to the heavens, but the context is different. This difference is particularly evident at two points. The amulets in the received *Rectifying Methods* have varied and complex transmission histories that often involve salvific deities who appear when the end is nigh. The *Precious Writs* strips these amulets of their association with salvific deities; instead, the amulets are said to have originated with the Queen Mother of the West, famous primarily for her transmission of longevity techniques. Gone, too, is the concern with the cycles of time or the end of the world. This is evident not just in what is absent – the portions of the received work (or its variants) concerned with the apocalypse – but what is there. A well-graded hierarchy presumes not the end of the world, but its continuation. We thus see the *Rectifying Methods* appealed to for divergent purposes in the *Forty-four Methods* and the *Precious Writs*. While both share an emphasis on spirit guardians, the first is concerned almost exclusively with spirit guards and apotropaic methods, while the second uses spirit guards to emphasize the differences in rank among Daoist adepts.

Different versions, different voices

Much like the *Secret Gospel of John*, the *Rectifying Methods* took different forms according to the needs of its audiences. While it originated as a collection of apocalyptic

predictions and methods to escape the eschaton targeted at a small group of southern elites shut out of political power, it was quickly repurposed. The result brought out two different voices in the work. The first can broadly be called “apocalyptic.” It continued the eschatological orientation of the original version, inserting new signs of the end times while preserving the original version’s methods for escaping the eschaton, and also integrating it into the new Lingbao textual lineage in ways that will be discussed later. The second voice could be called “continuous.” This voice can be seen in two new versions of the work. The first featured a quotation of the text by a Lingbao-affiliated author who sought to endear his new lineage to an ascendant ruler, while the third required the interpolation of new cosmological material to argue with Buddhist critics of Daoism and provide ideological support for the unification of the realm. At the same time, the *Rectifying Methods* was being excerpted by editors who also emphasized the “continuous” voice. This voice is audible in the *Precious Writs* and the *Forty-four Prescriptions*. Though they have different orientations – one a collection of methods for transmission from master to disciple, the other a graded hierarchy of amulets intended for Daoists of different ranks – what unites them is their assumption of a continuing cosmos inhabited by people who were not under immediate threat of extinction. The guiding thread behind the changes in form and content of the *Rectifying Methods* during the early medieval period (ca. 220-589 CE) is the interests of the people who used it.

The “Rectifying Methods” and the study of religion(s)

In light of the extensive critique launched by materialist scholars of religion against a focus on texts, one might ask: what do texts still have to offer the study of religion? Such

a question misrepresents the materialist position. As articulated by Vásquez, the point is not that texts have nothing to teach us: it is that they must be seen as more than vehicles of meaning. Although they perform that function, it is only one of many. In particular, I point to the third and fourth elements of his definition of “text:” manipulation and appropriation. These suggest two features exhibited by the *Rectifying Methods* during its long life. It has been manipulated – commentated upon, added to, subtracted from, deliberately misread – for specific purposes across the centuries. It (or at least elements of it) are treated as material objects: they are laid out, worn, venerated, transmitted, or buried. As will be explored later, they even function like keys that unlock doors, symbols that confer status, or tokens that secure passage. All of these aspects are foreign to Müller’s vision of “the text” in two ways. First, the *Rectifying Methods* possesses a kind of materiality that cannot be reduced to words on a page; it plays an active role in the lives of those who are interested in it. Second, it does not function as the beating heart of a religion. That place is taken, properly, by human beings. Finally – with the addition of McGann’s notion of the “work” – scholars are looking not for pure originals that can be “corrupted,” but instead unearthing how and why readers changed works over time.

I am reminded of a joke I once heard about the “medical gaze” – the sort of dispassionate attention applied to patients by doctors during the process of diagnosis. The doctor does not treat a patient exhibiting symptoms of a disease; the doctor treats a disease whose primary symptom is the patient. Not very funny, perhaps (especially for the patient), but apt. For too long, the study of religion has treated texts as its object, with religions as lived by people as ancillary. By focusing on the hows and whys of the

*Rectifying Methods'* changes over time, I join a chorus of others who hope to redirect the scholarly gaze.

## Chapter 2: The “Rectifying Methods” and Change Over Time

Tales retold

### The Secret Revelation of John

The *Secret Revelation of John* offers a radical departure from the Christian and Jewish theologies that have come to be accepted as conventional. It draws on the common cultural repertoire of its day and refashions the material to protest a late antique world order it sees as fundamentally unjust. Summarizing the work allows us to highlight how its editors reworked existing material for their own ends. In the *Revelation*, rather than a benevolent creator who enforces a fundamentally just order, the God of the Hebrew Bible is a blind, arrogant tyrant – like the Roman rulers who oppressed the authors of the *Secret Gospel*. While the cosmos is divided into divine model and imperfect execution along the Platonic model, attempting to escape our imperfect circumstances and unite with the divine via conventional Platonic philosophy will only result in venturing further astray. This is because the world in which humans live is not, as the period’s conventional wisdom would have it, fundamentally good; rather, it is the product of deception and malice on the part of flawed gods who pretend to omnipotence.

As the name implies, the *Secret Revelation* is an oral communication from Christ to his disciple John, who was crippled with doubt after being mocked by a Pharisee. Breaking through the veil between the divine and imperfect realms, Christ comforts John and reveals to him the true nature of the universe. Christ explains that the universe originates with a single perfect, utterly transcendent being: God the Father. From God

emanated a multitude of lesser divinities, the first of whom was Pronoia-Barbelo, the Mother. From her came forth the Son, the divine Christ. However, she did not birth Christ; he was “self-generated” (“Autogenes”). Christ brought forth four great Lights, each with three pairs of eternal deities known as Aeons. Each pair had one female and one male component; the very last Aeon to appear was the female of the final triad. Her name is Sophia, which means “wisdom.” Sophia desired to produce an image of herself, but did not seek the permission of her male partner or the Father. She acted out of good will, but – in failing to understand the necessity of male consent and participation – also out of ignorance. The result is an ignorant and malevolent being, a fiery-eyed, lion-faced serpent called Yaldabaoth. This is the God of Genesis, known in the *Secret Revelation* as “the Chief Ruler.” He is born without the power to create; his first act is to steal some of his mother’s creative power in order to fashion seven subsidiary beings and a host of angels and archangels with twisted, animal-like forms. Using the same creative power, he shapes the lower world, modeling it on the divine realm. But since he himself is ignorant and malicious, the world he fashions can only be similarly flawed.

Yaldabaoth then boasts to his minions, telling its creations, “For my part, I am a jealous god. And there is no other god apart from me.” At this point, Sophia becomes aware that her brightness has diminished, and that Yaldabaoth had stolen it. She realizes her error and repents, and Christ attempts to comfort her and to instruct Yaldabaoth and his minions. Christ corrects Yaldabaoth by creating a perfect first human, informing the monster that “The Human exists, and the Child of the Human.” The Human’s image appears as a reflection on the waters of the earth. Yaldabaoth and the world rulers he

created attempt to fashion a being like it. However, because they are flawed, so is their creation: it is only an image, and has no life of its own. Like God in *Genesis 2:7*, they attempt to enliven it by blowing into its mouth, but are unable to. Sophia wishes to retrieve the power her child had stolen from her, and so Christ and the four Lights surreptitiously inform Yaldabaoth that the only way to enliven his creation is to blow that power into it. He does so, removing the power from himself and gifting it to Adam. Realizing their creation is now superior to them thanks to this infusion of power, the world rulers immediately imprison his light in a fleshly body that is subject to the mortal constraints of passion, suffering, and death. These new passions make Adam vulnerable to desire for food, beauty, and pleasure, and so to further control him they imprison him in Eden (where all these are to be had in abundance). But the benevolent gods have implanted in Adam a helper spirit, Epinoia, who teaches him about his true nature. Eve comes about as a botched attempt by the evil rulers to remove this spirit. Instead of removing Epinoia, however, they remove a portion of Sophia's power, placing it in Eve; Epinoia herself removes to the Tree of Knowledge, from whence she instructs Adam and Eve of their true nature. Upon discovering this, Yaldabaoth exiles Adam and Eve from the Garden and curses Eve to be forever subordinate to her partner. He then implants in humans the desire for base sexual reproduction to encourage the creation of more beings for the world rulers to can control. However, the resulting generation were still wiser than their rulers, and so the Chief Ruler plots with his underlings to further cement his control:

He made a plan with his powers. They begot Fate and bound the gods of heaven and angels and demons and human beings with measures and seasons and times in order to keep them all in its fetter – for it was lord over them all.<sup>48</sup>

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48 Quoted in King, *Revelation* 108.



The created world is thus an imperfect model of the divine realm subject to the rule of flawed and malevolent beings who seek to enslave humanity. However, all is not lost.

King summarizes humanity's situation thus:

...[I]n the end all humanity will be saved and brought into the eternal light. After a period of instruction and purification, each soul will ascend up to the Divine Realm, taking its rightful place in the Aeons of the Great Lights.

The narrative of the *Revelation* takes up and reworks several common themes in the Ancient Near East. In what follows, I have chosen to highlight two: the Platonic conception of the universe as reflected in the *Timaeus* and the creation of humankind taken from Genesis.<sup>49</sup>

Plato's cosmology was some of the most influential in the ancient world. Its classic expression is in the dialogue *Timaeus*, wherein a set of friends (including the Timaeus who lends his name to the title) fête Socrates with a "feast of discourse" in celebration of the festival of Athena. According to King, it rests on three fundamental pillars: Being, becoming, and the Ideas. The realm of Being is eternal and unchanging, a stable pattern for the world of becoming. It is the abode of the Demiurge, the creator God who is himself so perfect that he is unknowable by human senses and indescribable by human language. Belonging to this realm are Ideas, the stable and certain basis for all true knowledge. Distinct from, but connected to, the realm of Being is the world of becoming. The mundane world belongs to the realm of becoming. Crafted in imperfect imitation of the world of Being on the basis of the Ideas, the world of becoming can be seen and felt, perceived via the senses and composed of the four material elements.

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<sup>49</sup> The foregoing summary is based chiefly on King, *Revelation* 3-5, with supplements from pp. 89-108 and Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: Ancient Wisdom for the New Age. A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions*, (New York: Doubleday, 1995): 28-39.

Because God is ultimately good, he tried his best to fashion a world that was peaceful, orderly, beautiful, and intelligent. Included in this goodness is hierarchy: the subordination of matter to spirit, the body to the soul, and created to creator. The stars and planets were created as a “moving image of eternity” to mark time and govern human destiny.<sup>50</sup>

Later thinkers found several problems with Plato’s thought. One is the problem of evil. If God is benevolent and just, and everything on earth a copy of some more eternal, better form in the Divine Realm, what explains human suffering and death? What possible model for things so terrible could be found in a fundamentally perfect realm, and why would God inflict them upon us? Plato provides an answer in the *Timaeus* by introducing a third principle, the “receptacle.” Conceived of as female, her form changes according to the Idea whose copy she is creating. Plato uses the metaphor of the family: the receptacle is the Mother; the source of all being the Father; and the objects that are created are the Offspring. Imperfections are inevitably introduced during the process of copying (thus resulting in evil), but the process of mimesis by which God creates the perceived world ensures an essential continuity between the imperfect copy and the perfect original.<sup>51</sup>

Plato also accounts for the creation of humankind. *Timaeus* explains that the Demiurge did not create us himself, but delegated our crafting to his offspring, “the younger gods.” Imitating him, they fashioned around the immortal soul (itself a gift from God) a fleshly frame to be its vehicle, and constructed as well another soul within that

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50 See King, *Revelation* 191-194.

51 King, *Revelation* 196, 198.

same body. This latter soul was mortal, subject to all the passions we associate with that state. To each immortal soul was assigned a star, from whence it descended into the human body. The ultimate task of human beings is to cultivate themselves by conquering the passions via reason so they can return to their original star. The younger gods, in addition to performing the lion's share of the labor in creating humankind, are also tasked with guiding humans along the proper path during this cultivation process. Human institutions can help, however. Because people are fundamentally good, they act unjustly only through ignorance and poor government; education and good government are the appropriate remedies. Wise men, being masters of their own passions already, are best suited to the task of governance.<sup>52</sup>

The *Secret Revelation* as summarized above reads almost like a parody of the *Timaeus*. Rather than a benevolent and perfect deity creating a fundamentally good world, an abomination born of ignorance fashions the human world as a prison. Its violence and suffering are not accidents, but come about as a direct result of the flawed and malevolent nature of its creators. The lower gods are not benevolent guides, but jailers. It follows logically that their agents on earth are similarly malevolent – an implication that I will explore later. For the moment, it suffices to note that Plato is not the only target of the *Revelation's* ire. As any reader familiar with *Genesis* will note, that book too comes in for intense criticism. Rather than the refined and distant deity of the Priestly editors, the God of *Genesis* is a cruel tyrant, ignorant and blind to his own imperfection. It is only with the hidden aid of his betters that he is able to breathe life into Adam. The world order he creates is fundamentally unjust. Even the heavens have

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<sup>52</sup> King, *Revelation* 208-209, 211, 214.

malicious intent, forming part of the vicious cabal that rules over a suffering humankind. Our way out lies not in reasoned contemplation of the nature of the world in the mode of Plato, but in fundamentally breaking with it via the knowledge revealed by Christ. But the ironic turns in the *Secret Revelation* are premised on some of the same fundamental points as its sources. The universe (if not the human world) was created by benevolent deities; hierarchy is not itself unjust; humans possess the capacity to better themselves within this hierarchy. The authors of *John* do not want to destroy order as a whole; only the particular manifestation that confronts them.

In King's reading, the fundamental theme of the *Secret Revelation* is hope. Evil is a product of unjust power relations in the lower world, which are parodies of the truly good order that exists in the Divine Realm. Yaldabaoth and the world rulers are stand-ins for corrupt Roman officials and tyrannical emperors. The work is thus coded resistance to imperial rule:

The critique operates by sharply contrasting the ideal realm of the divine with the mundane world. The portrait of the transcendent Deity represents the utopian commitments of the Secret Revelation of John, while Yaldabaoth and his minions exemplify everything that is wrong. The breach between them marks the nearly unbridgeable gap between the imagination of how things were supposed to be and how they were experienced. Christ repeatedly represents evil as hierarchy overturned, both in the deadly sway of the passions over the soul and in the inverted governance of the cosmos whose rulers work to deceive and entrap humanity. In this mythic economy, the inferior wrongly attempt to rule the superior. They rule not for the good of the governed but to satisfy their own arrogance and lust for dominance. Their repeated resort to deception and violence to maintain their illusory power merely underscores the illegitimacy of their right to rule. This portrayal leads ineluctably into a foundational critique of power relations in the world.<sup>53</sup>

The authors of the *Revelation* were engaged in rhetorical battle against a structure of power wherein rulers styled themselves gods and the political order was sanctioned by its

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53 King, *Revelation* 158.

imitation of a divine model. Plato's particular utopianism may have failed with the demise of the Greek city-states, but his institutional framework remained influential.

Quoting the philosopher Diotogenes, King summarizes the analogy between god and ruler:

Now the king bears the same relation to the state as God to the world; and the state is to the world as the king is to God. For the state, made as it is by a harmonizing together of many different elements, is an imitation of the order and harmony of the world, while the king who has an absolute rulership... has been transformed into a god among men.<sup>54</sup>

In this ideal framework, the rule of the king was, of course, wise and benevolent. Such sentiment often grated with reality. The authors of the *Revelation* critiqued this reality by reworking the most important cultural resources of their day.

### The saint who never was

A final example sounds a cautionary note. The circumstances of a work's change over time often suggest deliberate shaping by actors with their own interests, but the degree of intentionality or unity of purpose we can reasonably posit as lurking behind these changes can be stronger or weaker. Hypothesizing about authorial intent is a tricky business even when we have all the facts of composition; this is even more so when the course of a work's change and the individuals or groups responsible for it are largely invisible to us. A few examples from the case of Salar Masud illustrate this difficulty.

Legend has it that Salar Masud, also known as Ghazi Miyan, was the nephew of Sultan Mahmud (r. 998-1030) of Ghazni (in present-day Afghanistan), who invaded north India no less than seventeen times. I say "legend" because a great body of stories

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<sup>54</sup> King, *Revelation* 160.

has accrued around the character of Salar Masud, despite the fact that he is totally unattested in contemporary chronicles. A composite version of these stories, corresponding to a greater or lesser degree with any individual telling, is told by Shahid Amin in *Conquest and Community: The Afterlife of Warrior Saint Ghazi Miyan* (Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan, 2015). Masud was born to the sultan's sister in 1009 in the town of Ajmer (in present-day Rajasthan, western India). As a young man, he accompanies his father (Sultan Mahmud's chief general) on campaign in northern India before heading to Ghazni. His stay there is brief; friction with the sultan's jealous wazir forces Mahmud to send his beloved nephew on what is supposed to be a brief exile. Masud turns this into an opportunity for conquest: riding a magnificent gray mare and accompanied by an army of adoring followers, he sets out to extend his uncle's realm in northern India. Initially successful, he establishes his headquarters at Satrikh and sends his generals to conquer the surrounding countryside, personally setting up a forward base at Bahraich, the northern frontier.<sup>55</sup> But tragedy strikes: on the day of his wedding, he receives word that the cattle following his army are being driven off by a tyrannous Hindu lord who had slaughtered the Ghazi's cowherds. Enraged, Ghazi Miyan leads his army forth to vengeance. Struck down by an arrow, Masud is carried by his followers to his garden in Bahraich, where he dies beneath his favorite mahua tree. The year was 1034. Though most of his troops rush to martyrdom upon the death of their commander, some few survive to see to Masud is properly buried and to erect a shrine over his tomb.<sup>56</sup>

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55 Both sites are in present-day Uttar Pradesh; see Amin, *Conquest* 153. "Ghazi" is an honorific granted to warriors who die in combat against non-Muslims, and so is sometimes preceded by the definite article.

56 This account is taken primarily from Amin, *Conquest* xv, with supplements from elsewhere in the book. His journey to Ghazni is taken from p. 27; Satrikh and Bahraich from 31; his love of the mahua from 34-35; the mare from 91-92; his followers' fates from 38-39. All information is from the first

Though Ghazi Miyan dies in the early eleventh century, he first enters the historical record over two hundred years later. In 1290, a letter by a Delhi-based poet mentions “the fragrant tomb of... [the martyred commander]’ at Bahraich spreading the perfume of ‘odorous wood’ throughout... present-day eastern Uttar Pradesh,” seeming to hint at Masud’s established presence in local memory. Whether the letter reflects widespread esteem or the predilections of a particular poet, Ghazi Miyan’s subsequent fame is undeniable. His tomb receives visits from two successive sultans (in 1341 and 1372); a ruler of modern Bengal made an armed foray there in 1353, reportedly seeking a cure for vitiligo; he appeared to an ill soldier in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; and in the same century a boisterous crowd of pilgrims on the way to his shrine piqued the interest of the famous emperor Akbar, who accompanied them incognito for a time and made a land grant for the upkeep of Masud’s shrine. The grant was reaffirmed by royal decree in 1765, and two separate accounts of the Ghazi’s fair appeared in the 1810s. British colonial administrators and native ethnographers both evinced interest in Masud and the stories and festivals surrounding him. Finally, his story or his shrine has aroused the ire of – at various times – orthodox Muslims, sectarian Hindus, Christian missionaries, and the colonial government.<sup>57</sup>

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hagiography of Masud, the *Mirat-i-Masudi*, compiled by Abdur Rahman Chisthi (d. 1683) in the 1620s. The sole exception is his wedding, which was probably grafted onto the account in the *Mirat* at a later date: see Amin, *Conquest* 67-69.

57 For the letter and the sultans’ visits to the tomb, see Amin, *Conquest* 10. The date of the second visit, that of Ferozshah, is taken from Anna Suworova, *Muslims Saints of India: The Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries*, (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004): 156. Amin, *Conquest* 10 also discusses the armed foray (and the rapid response by Ferozshah) on the same page. The soldier’s story appears on pp. 10-13; Akbar’s encounter on 13 and Suworova, *Saints* 156; the land grant and its reinforcement on 13-14; and the two ethnographic accounts on the same pages. The *Mirat-i-Masudi* has been translated several times. Two British translations appeared during the Victorian era (see Amin, *Conquest* 256 n. 4 and the bibliography. Amin quotes Abdur Rachman chastising orthodox scholars on 67. Hindu critics appear much later, beginning with a series of pamphlets meant to discourage veneration of the Ghazi among

If we consider the stories surrounding Ghazi Miyan to be a “work” in McGann’s sense, two examples from its long history illustrate the promise and problems of an interest-focused approach. The first chronicle of Masud’s life, the *Mirat-i-Masudi*, was written in the 1620s by the Chishtiya Sufi Abdur Rahman. Leader of the Rudauli (in modern Uttar Pradesh) branch of the Chishti Sufis, Abdur Rahman’s *Mirat* explicitly connects the success of Islam in Upper India to his own order. The famous saint Muinuddin Chishti received a command from the Prophet himself to travel to Ajmer, drive out the local deities and their earthly servitors, and establish Ghazi Miyan’s birthplace as a sacred site for Islam. It was Muinuddin’s holy power and sage advice, provided to two successive Muslim rulers from his base in Ajmer, that allowed the establishment of a stable Islamic state in northern India. At the same time Abdur Rahman was writing, the Naqshbandia Sufi school had great influence at the Mughal court; Amin concurs with another medievalist that the *Mirat-i-Masudi* was part of an effort to counter this influence by linking significant Muslim heroes of the past to the Chishtiya patriarch Muinuddin. Because Salar Masud had already been a figure of local legend for centuries by the time Abdur Rahman wrote, this hypothesis is certainly plausible. The author of the *Mirat* would then have been collecting and transmitting extant material while rearranging it in a way that suited his own interests. The *Mirat* itself supports the hypothesis, at least in part: Abdur Rahman claims to rely on consultation with spiritual advisers, but also on “Hindi histories” and an eyewitness account recorded by one Mulla Mahmud Ghaznavi

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lower-caste women; see 171-173. These pamphlets were published by the revivalist movement Arya Samaj, to be further discussed below. For British colonial management of the Bahraich shrine and missionary comments upon it, see Amin, *Conquest* 138-148.



(an account that is suspiciously absent from contemporary chronicles).<sup>58</sup> A neat case seems to be laid out, then: the legend of the Ghazi, in significant part, consisted of material that was edited or outright fabricated by Abdur Rahman to elevate the Chishti Sufi school.

And yet Amin himself resists relying on this interpretation too heavily:

Even if we could establish the motivation for Abdur Rahman... for writing his *Life of Masud* at the time when he did... an excess of meaning would still remain. [T]he more important issue is the assent of a diverse population to a common construction of a long and conflictual past.<sup>59</sup>

As he notes later on the same page, Ghazi Miyan is not the exclusive property of Chishtiya Muslims, nor of even Muslims at all: he is overwhelmingly popular among both Muslims and Hindus across Uttar Pradesh. His appeal is reflected (no doubt in a process of mutual reinforcement) in both contemporary practice and stories about him – some of which are not accounted for in the *Mirat-i-Masud*. Abdur Rahman, for instance, does not touch upon the Ghazi's marriage. In the late twentieth century, Amin recorded a tradition local to Rudauli that Salar Masud married one Zohra Bibi, a noble girl raised by low-caste Teli. While thirsty, he comes upon Zohra by a well, but – being blind – she is unable to draw water for him. He prays to Allah to restore her eyesight, and the boon is granted. In a reversal of roles, she pursues him for marriage; the Ghazi's mother summons a Brahman (not a Muslim officiant) to set an auspicious date for the wedding, but the Brahman informs her that the wedding will not be successful: it will proceed as far as the anointing of the groom, but no further. Zohra Bibi's connection to the Teli perhaps explains the Ghazi's enduring popularity with the Teli and their own connection

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58 See Amin, *Conquest* 40, 19-22.

59 Amin, *Conquest* 186.

with the Dafali, the caste of Muslim balladeers who sing stories of the Ghazi during his festival season. It is also a point of significant divergence with the *Mirat*, where the high-born Zohra traces her lineage to the Prophet himself and has nothing to do with the Teli.

Popular ballads similarly stress the role of cowherds in the Ghazi's martyrdom, something that receives little attention in Abdur Rahman's telling. Amin notes that the fight against cattle rustlers is a common theme in many Ghazi Miyan ballads, and that such a theme brings these ballads into contact with North Indian folk epics, many of which feature cow-protectors as the central heroes. In ballads of the Ahir cow-herding caste recorded in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ghazi rides to avenge the deaths of Ahir cowherds at the hands of a local Hindu tyrant. In dying for cows and cowherds, Ghazi appears like the hero of the founding epic of the Ahir caste, the *Lorikayan*. The fact that in the *Lorikayan* Turkic Muslims are occasionally the target of noble military campaigns in defense of cattle, and that Muslims are typically depicted as barbarous eaters of beef with no regard for Hindu sensibilities, does nothing to diminish Ahir esteem for the Ghazi.<sup>60</sup>

We thus see hints at the reasons behind the "excess of meaning" that endears Ghazi Miyan not just to Muslims, but Hindus as well. The assimilation of the Ghazi legend to local tales, and the insertion of local peoples into the same legend, ensure an appeal that crosses religious lines. Another reason is perhaps easier to account for. In his capacity as a wonder-worker, he does not distinguish between Hindu and Muslim. Both beseech him for sons, to cure blindness, and to cure leprosy.<sup>61</sup> His interreligious appeal

60 Amin, *Conquest* 67-69, 122-125, 80-90.

61 Amin, *Conquest* 59ff, 138.

has in turn resulted in new twists on the Ghazi legend by Hindu and Muslim partisans eager to disabuse their co-religionists of foolish notions about Salar Masud. The Hindu revivalist movement Arya Samaj published a series of pamphlets in the 1920s that sought to free naïve Ahir and Teli from the sway of this Muslim conqueror, abetted by the machinations of the duplicitous Dafali. They can still be found outside the shrine today. Their propaganda was countered by rhetorical fusillades from Muslim partisans as well as softer counterarguments by the shrine-keepers themselves, who minimize aspects of the Ghazi's life story (such as his penchant for iconoclasm) that would resonate negatively with a Hindu audience.<sup>62</sup> Because of the Ghazi legend's long, complex, and often uncertain history, asserting self-interest on the part of individuals or groups as the sole force behind change over time would be asking a hypothesis to do too much work. Rather, parallels between other local legends, coupled with pragmatic interest on the part of a diverse group of devotees, probably lies at the root of Salar Masud's continuing popularity. Given the many gaps in the *Rectifying Methods*' textual history, and the many anonymous individuals and groups responsible for its shaping, students of the work can draw valuable lessons from Amin's study of Ghazi Miyan.

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<sup>62</sup> Amin, *Conquest* 163-176.

## Partial works, partial memories

The scholars above make a convincing case that the works they study were altered for specific polemical reasons. But academics should not think themselves above one variety of the same criticism. No given version of a work – not even one that attempts to incorporate and thereby replace all others – can claim to represent the work as a whole.

Turning again to McGann:

[The crafting of a critical edition] is a process by which the entire sociohistory of the work – from its originary moments of production through all its subsequent reproductive adventures – is postulated as the ultimate goal of critical self-consciousness. That the goal is in fact an unreachable one is clear. A practical move towards its attainment is essential to the critical enterprise, however. Such a move appears as some particular version of a work... Because [the critical edition] also emphasizes, *in itself*, the constructed and agented character of a text, it has the additional advantage of opening itself to critical reading, and thence of breaking down that spell of self-transparency which hovers over all the texts we read.<sup>63</sup>

In self-consciously attempting to account for all variations among different versions of a work, the author of a critical edition makes explicit their own editorial decisions and thus reveals the contingent nature of both the critical edition and the versions on which it relies. The result highlights certain aspects of the work and obscures others. This is not necessarily a bad thing. Speaking of two different versions of Shakespeare's Sonnets – a variorum edition and a critical edition – McGann notes that, despite their shared ambition to account for every detail of the Sonnets' textual history, "their respective virtues are as much a function of their limits as of their particular strengths, both of which they execute as corresponding sets of presences and absences." Such deliberate shaping – conscious or unconscious – is a feature of any work, and of any attempt to preserve or remember.

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63 McGann, "Theory of Texts." Emphasis in original.

The means by which this partiality is enacted is often physical as much as it is rhetorical. The museum that currently occupies Alcatraz Island is run by the National Parks Service, and focuses on Alcatraz's time as a prison. Alcatraz was also much more, however. From 1969 to 1971, the island was occupied by Native Americans claiming the former prison – recently declared surplus land by the Department of the Interior – under the Sioux Treaty of 1868. This nineteen-month occupation was the single most important driving force behind sweeping changes in the treatment of Native Americans by the federal government. However, the museum chooses to emphasize the site's time as a prison. Visitors to the museum engage with Alcatraz chiefly via touch, sight, and hearing. Visitors can tour the prison grounds, but the sites available to them are selective: they can visit the former Post Exchange and the warden's residence, for instance, but many of the areas that were most important during the Occupation are off limits. One of the dominant experiences is an award-winning guided audio tour of the cellhouse, where a former corrections officer and former prisoners narrate their experiences in Alcatraz in a recording keyed to various locations in the prison. As they listen, visitors enter the cells inhabited by prisoners, walk the same halls patrolled by jailers, and touch the bars, railings, beds, and other objects that formed daily life in the prison. In guiding its listeners, however, the audio tour almost completely neglects the island's time as a site of protest. Instead, it provides visitors with memories that emphasize their separation, as law-abiding citizens, from the criminal inhabitants of Alcatraz during its time as a prison. This simple binary forges a picture of the American government as the champion of justice that locks away dangerous elements for the good of society, while simultaneously

forgetting its more unpleasant history as an oppressor of native peoples. This particular collective memory – whether intended or not – is a product of the senses.<sup>64</sup>

The somatic component in each of the works discussed above should not be overlooked. They may not be “collective memories” as commonly discussed in memory studies (see, e.g., *Places of Public Memory* 1-54 and references), but they are nonetheless rhetorically-inflected accounts of the past that are inseparable from physical practice. Though the *Secret Gospel* relies on the written word to reshape its source material, the versions we have bear traces of their context of use – whether in minor dialectical variants or significant differences in content. Further, the content of a given version sometimes provides suggestions about its contexts of use: the list of demons in the longer versions of the *Revelation* would likely have been used in healing magic, while the school setting in which the *Revelation* was originally composed featured close contact between a master and a group of students, including ritualized activities like prayer, the singing of hymns, and other sorts of close fellowship; it was via these means that a student in an Alexandrian school would have seen themselves as belonging to a tradition.<sup>65</sup> The primary mode through which supplicants of the Ghazi engage with his story (at least, as detailed by Amin) is not silent reading but physical performance: songs are sung, coins are thrown, vast distances traveled, prayers uttered, a tomb entered and

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64 See Cynthia Duquette Smith and Theresa Bergman, “You Were on Indian Land: Alcatraz Island as Recalcitrant Memory Space,” in *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*, ed. Greg Dickson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010): 160-188. 160-166 provide background on the Occupation; 176-182 discuss the audio tour. See also a retrospective interview with five of the original Native participants: “Voices from Alcatraz Island,” *Indian Country Today*, September 2, 2017, <https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/archive/voices-from-alcatraz-island-rhwndtlnwES8WRChgoRsuw/>

65 See King, *Revelation* 11-12 on the Alexandrian school setting; on healing, see 110-114.

exited.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, we saw in the last chapter that the use of amulets in the *Scripture of the Three Heavens* is predicated on a ceremony of conferral that is structured by ritualized movement; certain of the amulets themselves, as we will see later, only acquire their power through journeying, chanting, and burial. Not every version of the *Scripture* will place the same level of importance on movement (this is especially true of its more ideologically-inflected revisions), but where it is present physicality should not be ignored.

#### A Summary of the “Rectifying Methods”

The received version of the *Rectifying Methods* is divided into two parts. The first is a motley collection of amulets, hymns, rituals, predictions, and cosmological speculation called *The Most High Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens* (CT 1203 *Taishang santian zhengfa jing* 太上三天正法經). The second is a collection of amulets called *The Wonderful Registers of the Great Scripture of the Universe* (CT 1395 *Shangqing dadong jiuwei badao dajing miaolu* 上清大洞九微八道大經妙錄). In what follows, *Rectifying Methods* or *Methods* will refer to the composite work, while I will refer to its constituent parts as the *Zhengfa jing* (for CT 1203) and the *Jiuwei badao* (for CT 1395). (When I refer to “the beginning of the *Rectifying Methods*” or “the beginning of the *Methods*,” I am referring to the beginning of the *Zhengfa jing*, which is the found before the *Jiuwei badao* in the canon.)

Like other Daoist works of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, the *Rectifying Methods* attempts to explain the current age of disorder while providing

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<sup>66</sup> See particularly Amin, *Conquest* 124-145.

methods to save the reader from its dangers. The *Zhengfa jing* opens with a history of the cosmos from its earliest beginnings to the tribulations attendant on the fall of the Han 漢, China's first stable dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE). It explains these trials as part of the violent rule of Six Heavens, which employ spirits and demons to cleanse the world of evildoers. While they had legitimate command of worldly affairs for many centuries, their period of control has now expired; the lords of the celestial bureaucracy have transferred legitimate rule to the benevolent Three Heavens. The *Zhengfa jing* promises that the methods it provides – amulets, an incantation, and an internal meditation exercise – will save the reader from malevolent agents of the Six Heavens and allow ascent to the Three. Accordingly, the work provides a transmission ritual for these methods, lists the powers that accrue to the bearer of the amulets, and warns of various prohibitions that accompany these powerful tools. The work closes with a list of goods the recipient of the techniques must provide to his or her master. The *Jiuwei badao* opens with a slightly different list of material requirements, followed by a list of the amulets to be transmitted that largely accords with that found in the *Zhengfa jing*. The text (that is, the arrangement of signifiers on the page of the received work called the *Jiuwei badao*) also includes detailed instructions for copying some of these amulets, as well as list of their powers and transmission histories, before closing with a transmission ritual that almost certainly postdates the text itself.

The structure of the two works is not nearly as smooth as the above summary indicates, however. Internal inconsistencies reveal a compositional process that took place over time. While the dating of any individual layer is problematic, themes and



characters within these layers link each to discrete currents in Daoist thought that presuppose different conceptions of the universe and the beings – normal and supernatural – that populate it.<sup>67</sup> The difficulties begin with the title. Within the work, the phrase “Santian zhengfa” refers to methods associated with the Three Heavens that allow the bearer at once to escape the violence of the Six and to chastise the Six Heavens, rectifying the cosmic order by replacing them with the Three. These usages align it with one notion of the phrase found elsewhere in the Daoist canon, while sharply contrasting it with a different contemporary notion of the phrase. This second sees the “Santian zhengfa” as the “law” or “norms” instituted by the newly-ascendant Three, rather than methods to weather the travails of the Six or to punish them. The crux of the difference is the translation of the character 法 (pronounced *fa*, with the third tone, in modern standard Chinese): depending on the context, *fa* can be translated as either “law” or “method” in the written language of dynastic China. (The two different meanings are evident in modern standard Chinese *fangfa* 方法 “method” and *falü* 法律 “regulation.”) Unfortunately, the context here is ambiguous. Certain terms at the beginning of the *Zhengfa jing* associate it decisively with the “law” approach, but the bulk of the *Zhengfa jing* and the entirety of the *Jiuwei badao* is concerned with “methods” to control spirits and ascend to the heavens. Accordingly, I have chosen to use the term “method” to translate *fa* as it occurs in the title of the work, associating it more closely with the first current of thought in the canon.

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67 While we can associate a given layer with one of these currents – for instance, Lingbao 靈寶 or Celestial Masters 天師 – it is impossible to thereby infer that each section was authored by a different hypothetical individual who subscribed to the cosmological vision associated with that corpus.

The *Rectifying Methods* is littered with such ambiguities. A more detailed summary will not resolve them, but it will better acquaint the reader with the work. The divisions that follow are of my own devising; the pagination that follows refers to the Zhonghua daozaog version. (On the ZHDZ, see “Primary Sources” in the bibliography). I translate the names of deities and places without comment here, providing more detailed introductions where necessary throughout the rest of the dissertation. The summary that follows concerns the *Zhengfa jing* almost exclusively. The *Jiuwei badao* consists almost entirely of amulets, and so I will not review it here; for a discussion see Appendix F. For the names and places that feature in the following, see Appendix G.

Cosmology [1.259a.1-259c.6]

The *Zhengfa jing* begins with a cosmogenesis and the creation of beings that rule the universe. It descends through various grades of deities and supernormal beings before arriving at the creation of the world and the humans who inhabit it. The Azure Lad plays an important role here: the text records him as its compiler under his title “Clear-and-Void King of the Xiaoyou Cavern-Heaven,” (*Qingxu xiaoyoutian wang* 清虛小有天王), and he also provides a commentary under the title “Lord Azure Lad” (*Qingtong jun* 青童君). The relationship between the main text and the commentary is unclear. The latter supplies key details that fundamentally alter the nature of the *Zhengfa jing*, but whether those portions attributed to the Lord Azure Lad were originally conceived of as commentary is an open question: as we shall see later, it seems to integrate material from different versions of the *Zhengfa jing*. This being the case, I will be cautious to differentiate text and commentary in what follows.

The main text relates that the Perfected King of the Nine Heavens (*Jiutian zhenwang* 九天真王) and the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement (*Yuanshi tianwang* 元始天王) formed in the primordial muddle “before the Inaugural Qi” (*shi qi zhi xian* 始炁之先), placing their formation within an altered version of the Celestial Masters’ cosmology.<sup>68</sup> After seven thousand kalpas, the “primal light” (*xuan jing* 玄景) divided into the Nine Qi, which were muddled together like turbid waters. The more refined qi rose and clarified, while the less refined qi sank and spread out as a distinct layer. At this point, the Perfected King and the Heavenly King formed as the Nine Qi coagulated into the Nine Heavens. The Azure Lad explains that these heavenly lords formed out of the clarifying qi during this process.<sup>69</sup> Our text discusses three heavens in detail: Clear Tenuity (*Qingwei* 清微), Yuyu 禹餘, and Grand Crimson (*Dachi* 大赤), names that resonate with Celestial Master cosmology.<sup>70</sup> The Azure Lad’s commentary explains that these heavens are hypostases of the clear qi, which itself had divided into

68 The typical order of the Three Qi, as reflected in the *Commands and Admonitions of the Families of the Great Dao* (*Dadao jia lingjie* 大道家令戒, found on pp. 12a-19b of CT 789 *Zhengyi fawen tianshi jiaojie ke jing* 正一法文天師教戒科經) and CT 1205 *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經 is Mystic (*xuan* 玄), Primal (*yuan* 元), and Inaugural (*shi* 始). See Bokenkamp, *EDS* 159-160, 188-192. The commentary to our text inverts this order. This would place the deities’ formation sometime before the earliest *qi* emerged.

69 The term *xuan jing* does not seem to have special significance in Daoist works, based on its absence from the *Daojiao dacidian* and *Zhonghua daojiao dacidian*. Accordingly, I have translated it in its conventional sense. The identity of the *Zhengfa jing*’s Nine Qi and their corresponding Nine Heavens is unclear to me. In the 5th-century Lingbao work CT 318 *Ziran jiutian shengshen zhangjing* 自然九天生神章經, the Three Qi of the Celestial Masters each divides itself into three qi, thus forming nine qi. See the quotation from in *Daojiao Dacidian*, s.v. “九天.” However, since our work does not follow the typical Celestial Masters cosmology, it seems inappropriate to equate its Nine Qi or Nine Heavens with those of CT 318.

70 See R: 419. These are the highest three of the nine heavens listed in CT 1345 *Dongzhen taishang daojun yuandan shangjing* 洞真太上道君元[=玄]丹經), a later Shangqing work that combines Shangqing and Celestial Masters elements; it is the latter to which these three heavens belong. Because the *Yuandan shangjing* cites the *Suling jing* extensively, it must postdate the Shangqing revelations; see R 2:287.

three different layers: Clear Tenuity emerged as the Inaugural Qi (*Shi qi* 始氣) stilled; Yuyu formed when the Primal Qi (*Yuan qi* 元氣) stilled; and Grand Crimson formed as the Dark Qi (*Xuan qi* 玄氣) stilled.<sup>71</sup>

Several gods emerge in sequence after this process is complete. First is the “Thearch of the Nine Perfected” (*Jiuzhen zhi di* 九真之帝). The Nine Perfected play a critical role in the Shangqing corpus as residents of realms within the human body and corresponding cosmic domains. These realms are the Three Primes (*San yuan* 三元). In the *Zhengfa jing*, however, the Nine Perfected live in the Three Heavens mentioned above: three in Clear Tenuity, three in Yuyu, and three in Grand Crimson. Next to emerge are the Three Prime Dames (*San yuan jun* 三元君), a trio of female deities typically referred to as the Three Prime Dames of Simplicity (*San suyuan jun* 三素元君). The main text of the *Zhengfa jing* records them spontaneously giving birth to three children, who establish mansions and spirit guards in the Shangqing heavens – perhaps equated here with Clear Tenuity, Yuyu, and Grand Crimson, though these are not the typical Three Clarities of the Shangqing textual corpus.

The commentary goes into more detail about these august deities and their progeny. The Prime Dame of White Simplicity (*Baisu yuanjun* 白素元君) gives birth to the Lord White Prime of the Right (*You baiyuan jun* 右白元君); the Prime Dame of Yellow Simplicity (*Huangsu yuanjun* 黃素元君) births the Yellow Old Lord of the Center (*Huang zhongyang jun* 黃老中央君); and the Prime Dame of Purple Simplicity (*Zisu yuanjun* 紫素元君) births the Matchless Lord of the Left (*Zuo wuying jun* 左無英君). For

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71 ZHDZ 1:259a.1-b.5-6.

the moment, it suffices to emphasize that in the *Zhengfa jing* the Three Prime Dames serve to blur the distinction between body and cosmos in a manner that is typical of the Shangqing corpus: in addition to their celestial roles, these goddesses preside over the upper, middle, and lower sections of the adept's body, while their offspring have charge of various organs.<sup>72</sup>

The next deity is not born, but rather enfeoffed. After the Prime Dames come into being, we read that the “Three Ways flourished, and named [as] their lord the Most High Lord of the Great Dao” (*Sandao xingjiang, juhao wei Taishang dadao jun* 三道興隆舉號為太上大道君). The exact identity of these Three Ways is not clear, but the term here probably refers to the sun, moon, and stars. In depicting them all as choosing the Most High Lord of the Great Dao as their leader, the *Zhengfa jing* situates itself above them.<sup>73</sup>

In other Daoist texts of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, the Most High Lord

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72 ZHDZ 1:259.6-14. See Robinet, *Taoist Meditation* 100-103.

73 Another possible referent for the term “Three Ways” consists of three cults found in a Tang work, CT 375 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao tianzun shuo jiku jing* 太上洞玄靈寶天尊說濟苦經: the Great Limitless Way (*Wuji dadao*): the Unexcelled Way of Orthodox Perfection (*Wushang zhengzhen dao* 無上正真道), and the Great Way of the Clear Covenant of Spontaneous Action [of the] Era of Great Peace (*Wuwei taiping qingyue dadao* 無為太平清約大道). John Lagerway infers that these Three Ways are the same as the Three Ways discussed in *Inner Explanations* 1.3a: the Way of Spontaneous Action (*Wuwei dadao* 無為大道), the Way of the Buddha (*Fodao* 佛道), and the Way of the Clear Covenant (*Qingyue dadao* 清約大道). The dissimilarity between the titles of these three ways of the *Inner Explanations* and those in CT 375 makes this seem unlikely to me. Further complicating matters is that the *Inner Explanations* contains what appears to be a different set of Three Ways. It speaks favorably of the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice (*Wudoumi dao* 五斗米道, i.e., the Celestial Masters), contrasting it with two deviant alternatives, the Way of Spontaneous Action of Banners and Flowers (*Wuwei fanhua zhi dao* 無為幡華之道), which it equates with Buddhism, and the Way of Pure Water (*Qingshui zhi dao* 清水之道) (7a). Given the context, identifying the *Wudoumi dao* as the *Wuwei dadao* of 1.3a makes sense, as does equating Buddhism with the Way of Banners and Flowers. Bokenkamp (*EDS* 197, 219 and notes) distinguishes the final items in each list provided by the *Inner Explanations*, but it is possible that either could be the Way of the Clear Contract referred to in CT 375. Whether any of these ways correspond to the Three Ways of the *Zhengfa jing* is unclear. See Daojiao dacidian, s.v. “三道.”

of the Great Dao transmits scriptures, crafts methods, or responds to important requests.<sup>74</sup> In our work, he assumes rulership of the Nine Heavens from the Perfected King of the Nine Heavens and creates the world as we know it: he establishes the Eight Directions and appoints three sets of Eight Emperors to oversee them. (Incidentally, these twenty-four emperors, alongside the Most High Lord himself, consider the adept's petition to enter the domain of the Azure Lad in CT 1315.) In the commentary, the Azure Lad contrasts this process of appointment with the wrong view (presumably included in a competing work) that the Heaven of Commencement had a ruler from the very beginning. He also comments on the qualifications of the Eight Emperors: they received their appointments because they were “heritors of spontaneity” (*ziran zhi yin* 自然之胤); later human beings (“those later joining the study” *hou xue* 後學) merely “modeled themselves” (*fa* 法) on spontaneity, and so could not achieve this position. The main text continues by relating how the Eight Emperors drew on spontaneity to craft precious works in order to aid later students. The specific identity of these works is uncertain, but they were secreted away in the Palace of Jade Clarity. It was at this time that the Yellow Emperor – the mythic prototype of the wise ruler – ascended to the throne. Thus humanity entered the time of the Three Dynasties, and history as we know it began.

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74 He originated the techniques for rectifying the Three Heavens that form the substance of the *Forty-four Prescriptions on Yellow Silk* (an important work discussed below), while in the *Purple Book of the Celestial Emperor of Qingyao* (CT 1315 *Dongzhen Shangqing qingyao zishu jingen zhongjing* 洞真上清青要紫書金根衆經), he helps adepts gain entrance to the abode of the Azure Lad. See Robinet 1:127, CT 1338 17a; *Huangsu* 1a, 21a; CT 1315 2.1b.

The creation of humanity and nonhuman people [1.259b.24-259c.6]

The Azure Lad's commentary plays a critical role in the section of the *Zhengfa jing* concerning the creation of humanity and China's nonhuman neighbors. His conception of these two groups follows the traditional division into humans (*ren* 人) and nonhuman barbarians (usually referred to – though not directly in this work – as *hu* 胡). While the main text credits the Yellow Emperor with the creation of humankind, its description is limited to a scant eight characters: we read only that early people (*min* 民) were “coarse and rough, clothing and capping themselves with the five colors.”<sup>75</sup> There is no explicit *ren/hu* distinction, and the reader is left with the impression that the text is speaking only of human beings.<sup>76</sup> The Lord Azure Lad is more forthcoming, however – both about the origins of humanity and its distinction from nonhuman groups. He explains that the Yellow Emperor molded clay into statues of human beings. He placed some in the Central Plain – that is, what would become China – and in the wastes to the north, south, east, and west. Over a period of three hundred years, these statues took on the five colors and acquired the power of vocal communication. Those in the center could speak, while those on the periphery howled like birds and beasts. The statues of the Central Plain “modeled themselves on Spontaneity” (*fa ziran* 法自然), and because of this they received the *qi* of the Upper Perfected and became human. By contrast, the four sets of statues that populate the wastes surrounding the central plain became the four different tribes of barbarians that are the traditional enemies of the inhabitants of the Central Plain.

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75 蠢以元炁五色衣冠.

76 While the character 民, when taken as “human,” implies a distinction from non-humans, this meaning is only one of several possible interpretations; whether the author meant to stress that distinction here is unclear.

The civilized Chinese have mortal lifespans, but they also have the opportunity to live forever: if they have proper moral character and model themselves on the Perfected, they will be named transcendents; those who do not will “die and return to the earth” (*si guitu* 死歸土).

The importance of Spontaneity (*ziran* 自然) in the creation of both gods and people provides one argument for the continuity of the *Zhengfa jing* and its commentary. The main text traces the inheritance of Spontaneity throughout creation. It predated the earliest and most august gods, who merely “inherited” it or “were endowed” (*bing* 稟) with it. In fact, it is only because they were endowed with Spontaneity that they acquired the title “Lords of the Nine Heavens.”<sup>77</sup> The term *ziran* next appears in the description of the Eight Emperors. In the main text, these beings were enthroned by the Most High Lord of the Great Dao. The Azure Lad’s commentary explains that they acquired their titles for the exact same reason as the Lords of the Nine Heavens.<sup>78</sup> Their connection to Spontaneity is what qualifies them for the post to which they are appointed. Finally, one of the only differences between the humans of the Central Plains and their nonhuman neighbors is that – as the commentary explains – the former “model themselves on Spontaneity” and so receive a special sort of qi: that of the “Upper Perfected” (*Shang zhen* 上真). Because of this endowment, they possess the potential to join the ranks of the “Upper Transcendents” (*Shang xian* 上仙) – that is, to become a sort of being that is

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77 ZHDZ 1.259a.1-g: 九天眞王，元始天王，稟自然之胤，置於九天之號。

78 八帝者，皆受自然之胤，得爲帝號。



greater than human.<sup>79</sup> Realizing this potential requires following the example set by the Upper Perfected; those who do not will die and return to the earth.<sup>80</sup> This special qi that grants them this opportunity is only bestowed upon them because of their connection to Spontaneity. Spontaneity thus links human beings to the gods and the earliest beginnings of the universe, allowing them to transcend the bounds of their own mortality.

The Six Heavens and the coming apocalypse [1.259c.7-260a.8]

Not everyone chooses to avail themselves of this opportunity, and so the gods are forced to take drastic measures. The main text tells of how they dispatch “ghost soldiers” (*gui bin* 鬼兵) to weed these individuals out. Once again, the Azure Lad has more to say. His commentary divides humankind into two groups: those who “do not accord with Spontaneity” (*bu bing ziran* 不稟自然) and those “whose conduct is good” (*shan xing* 善行). These latter “diligently contemplate the prolongation of life [and] do not transgress the [rules of] the Three Offices [of Heaven, Earth, and Water].”<sup>81</sup> In a process consistent with Celestial Master cosmology, they are thus selected as “seed people” (*zhongmin* 種民) who will survive the coming cataclysms and repopulate the world; here, they receive

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79 The most complete study of transcendentals is Campany’s *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009). Pages 39-87 delineate the powers of a transcendent and situate it among the other sorts of supernatural beings that populate the textual canon of early medieval China.

80 若有骨炁係真，便為不死得補上仙。有不純之行，死歸土也。I translate 有骨炁 in the more abstract sense of “having moral character,” contrasting it with “impure conduct” that results in death. One could also translate it literally as “having [the proper] *qi* in one’s bones.” This would add the requirement that one not only behave morally, but also possess the appropriate destiny.

81 善行精勤，思念長生，不犯三官。The Three Offices form an integral part of the cosmology of the early Celestial Masters; according to *Master Redpine’s Almanac of Petitions* (CT 615 *Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章歷), a compilation of Celestial Master petitions that contains early documents, they choose the “seed people” discussed in this paragraph. See EoT, s.v. “Sanguan,” “Chisongzi zhangli.”

undefined “Perfected Scriptures.” The ill conduct of the former, however, incurs the wrath of the heavens and disrupts the natural course of the planets.<sup>82</sup> The main text continues by explaining that – though the violent Six Heavens are currently dominant – time moves in cycles of good fortune and apocalyptic disaster. The former are called “Yang nine,” while the latter are called “hundred-six.”<sup>83</sup> Given the turmoil that led to the formation of the *Zhengfa jing*, the reader is presumably in the midst of a hundred-six, which the text assures them will end in the next *renchen* 壬辰 or *guisi* 癸巳 year (the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> years of the sexagesimal cycle; see Table 2). Given the uncertainty surrounding the exact date of the text’s composition, it is difficult to determine the exact years it refers to here. The Azure Lad’s commentary provides some help, but is opaque in its own ways.

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82 The concept of a correlation between human behavior and the course of the heavens is often credited to Han scholar Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (c. 195-105 BCE), who probably formalized existing ideas. Dong’s work became part of the *habitus* of political thought at both popular and elite levels, and its influence persisted throughout dynastic China. The behavior of the emperor engendered positive or negative responses from Heaven in the form of omens: a peaceful populace, plentiful harvest, and auspicious planetary alignment were signs of Heaven’s approval, while such disasters as famines, fires, and rebellion indicated Heaven’s approbation. For more on Dong’s thought, see Sarah Queen, *From Chronicle to Canon: The Hermeneutics of the Spring and Autumn, according to Tung Chung-shu* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 206-226. Stephan Peter Bumbacher, *Empowered Writing: Exorcistic and Apotropaic Rituals in Medieval China* (St. Petersburg, FL: Three Pines Press, 2012): 33-56 provides a more general introduction to the linkage between heavenly approval conveyed in these terms and political authority.

83 According to Stephen Bokenkamp, this appears to be a very free modification of Liu Xin’s 劉歆 (d. 23 CE) Triple Dispensation Calendar (*Santong li* 三統歷), according to which 106 normal years – a *bailiu* 白六 (“one hundred six”) were followed by nine years of drought called a “Yang nine” (*Yang jiu* 陽九). The phrase “Yangjiu bailiu” became synonymous with the disasters that augured the apocalypse in later, especially Daoist, works – though here it is only the hundred-six that are years of disaster. See Stephen Bokenkamp, “Time After Time: Daoist Apocalyptic History and the Founding of the T’ang Dynasty,” *Asia Major*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Series 7, no. 1 (1994): 63-64. This section of the work (259c.12-14) also includes the phrase 三道虧盈，廻運而生. I am unsure what the “three daos” are here, only that their rise and fall is connected to cosmic cycles; since I deal with these already, I omit this portion of the text in my analysis.

He begins by dividing Yang nines and hundred-sixes into great and small, both of impossible length. A Great Yang Nine and a Great Hundred-Six are each 9,900 years, while their Small variants each last 3,300 years.<sup>84</sup> By the time of the Zhou 周 Dynasty (ca. 1100-256 BCE), the Six Heavens had already been dominant for three Great Yang Nine, but had still failed to fully exterminate evil people. Seeing this, the Sage Lord of the Latter Age asks the Most High Lord of the Great Dao whether the time was ripe to effect the separation of good and evil by different means. The Most High explains that the time had not arrived; rather, they are in the middle of the era of Grand Perfection (*Taizhen* 太真), with six more Great Yang Nine and Hundred-Sixes yet to elapse before government returned to the Three Heavens.<sup>85</sup> The calculated time begins with the rule of the legendary sage-ruler Yao, and ends either at the end of a *dinghai* 丁亥 year (the 27<sup>th</sup> in the sexagesimal cycle), or in a *renchen* year – a slight difference from the main text.<sup>86</sup> Regardless of the exact year of the coming apocalypse, the instruments with which the gods enact it remain the same.

The main text continues by specifying the means by which the Six Heavens will be subdued and the Three Heavens installed. The Perfected King of the Nine Heavens transmits two amulets to the Most High Lord of the Great Dao. Their names are difficult to translate, particularly because they seem totally unconnected to the powers the amulets provide. The first is the Writ of Three Winding Perfected Prescriptions of the Numinous

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84 See R 1: 138ff.

85 I am unsure what period of time this refers to. The term *taizhen* is usually found as an epithet for a deity (e.g., CT 446 *Shangqing zhongjing zhuzhenshengbi* 上清衆經諸真聖祕 4.9a), or as a place (WSBY 56.1a).

86 計期盡承唐之年，金氏御世，丁亥之末，壬辰之歲。

Capital of the Heaven of Grand Tenuity (*Taiwei lingdu wanzhuan sanfangwen* 太微靈都  
 婉轉真三方文, hereafter Lingdu wanzhuan), and the second is the Perfected Registers of  
 the Massed Books (*Zhongshu zhenlu* 衆書真錄, hereafter Zhongshu zhenlu). These are  
 known as the Methods of the Three Heavens for Controlling the Six Heavens (*Zhi liutian  
 santian zhi fa* 制六天三天之法). The Azure Lad's commentary specifies, for the first  
 time, that these are the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens (*Santian zhengfa* 三天  
 正法) and provides a more detailed transmission history. The amulets' ultimate origin is  
 unrevealed; the Azure Lad states only that they predate the Perfected King of the Nine  
 Heavens and the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement, to whom they were  
 bequeathed when the two lords first formed out of the primordial qi. The Perfected King  
 and the Heavenly King anticipated the need to restrain the rule of the Six Heavens, and so  
 the two lords transmitted the Lingdu wanzhuan and the Zhongshu zhenlu to the Most  
 High Lord of the Great Dao when the Six Heavens' dispensation began. As this  
 dispensation progressed, the amulets' line of transmission extended down to human  
 beings: when the Yellow Emperor ascended to the throne, the Most High transmitted  
 them to human beings. Those fortunate enough to receive them all achieved  
 transcendence by the grace of the Lord Emperor (*Dijun* 帝君), the Kingly Lord of the  
 Western Regions (*Xicheng wangjun* 西城王君), and the Azure Lad himself.<sup>87</sup> This is the

87 *Dijun* is the supreme deity of the Dadong zhenjing. He is associated both with attaining transcendence and the records of transcendence themselves. Isabelle Robinet discusses this in Julian F. Pas and Norman Girardot, trans., *Taoist Meditation: The Maoshan Tradition of Great Purity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993): 107-8, 137. See also the "Method of the Nine Perfected" in the *Jiuzhen zhongjing* (ZHDZ 1.222-225), in which the Lord Emperor plays a critical role. The Kingly Lord of the Western Regions is a Perfected being in the *Zhen 'Gao* (14.8b) who dwells in Hengshan 衡山. This has sometimes, but not always, been considered the southern marchmount (*Nanyue* 南嶽), the latter's exact identity has been the subject of debate among scholars Chinese and Western for two millennia. See James Robson, *Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (Nanyue 南嶽) in Medieval China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009): 57-89.

last of the Azure Lad's commentary in the *Zhengfa jing*, but the list of amulets used to control the Six Heavens continues with one more.

The final amulet fits awkwardly with its two companions. The text calls it the Three Heavens' Numinous Registers [of Yin and Yang] of the Grand Perfected [One] from the Mystic Capital of the Nine Heavens (*Santian jiuwei xuandu taizhen yinyang linglu* 三天九微玄都太真[陰陽]靈錄, hereafter Yinyang linglu).<sup>88</sup> This amulet has a different transmission history than the Lingdu wanzhuan and the Zhongshu zhenlu, and unlike the other two it receives an elaborate description: the text specifies that it is made out of jade and gold and hidden in away in the Numinous Capital, where it is venerated like a scripture by various deities. (The Numinous Capital is the chief city of Grand Tenuity, a constellation near Polaris.)<sup>89</sup> Notably absent is any association of the Yinyang linglu with the Six Heavens: where the other two amulets restrain them so the Three Heavens can be established, the only link to this process that the Yinyang linglu can claim lies in its association with the Three Heavens. It should be grouped together with the other two amulets only by virtue of their mutual proximity. The main text explicitly presents the Lingdu wanzhuan and the Zhongshu zhenlu as methods of the Three Heavens for controlling the Six, then immediately proceeds to describe a third amulet that is both associated with the Three Heavens and lacks a function that is clearly separate from the other two. Given these facts, it is likely that the author of the *Zhengfa jing* – or

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88 I have inserted 陰陽 based on their presence in the amulets' title both later in the *Zhengfa jing* and the *Jiuwei badao*.

89 Its identity varies, however: in WSBY 32.17a it is the capital of Grand Tenuity, just as it is here, but it can also be a palace in the Jade Capital (Yujing 玉京) of the Xuyan 須延 Heaven (the third of the Nine Heavens) according to WSBY 23.3a, or a palace in Shangshang Heaven according to WSBY 21.1a. Grand Tenuity can also be a palace in the Shangqing heavens.

more probably some later editor – numbered the Yinyang linglu with the two preceding amulets as devices to restrain the Six Heavens, but felt a more lavish description of its surroundings was necessary.

Hymns and transmission ceremony [1.260a.8-c.4]

At this point, the voice of the Lord Azure Lad recedes from the *Zhengfa jing*. His silence on the matter of the Yinyang linglu, coupled with the extravagant description of the amulet's heavenly abode and its inhabitants, prefigures what follows. Three times each month, the Azure Lad and the Imperial Lord of the Golden Porte pay a visit to their immediate superiors. With a retinue of a thousand Perfected beings, they ride a cloudy chariot of flowing light the color of dawn to visit the Perfected Father and the Most High. Together with the Most High they proceed to the Jade Hall of the Jade Palace in the Jade Court of the Heaven of Jade Clarity, where – amid a banquet served by ten thousand million myriads of female Perfected and guarded by giant dragonlings – they proceed to chant hymns that summarize the text up to this point. The Most High recounts the history of the cosmos from its formation down to the present end of the Great Kalpa; the Lord of the Golden Porte describes their journey to the Jade Palace and the coming apocalypse: the violent Six Heavens and their disasters will be completely obliterated, legitimate government will be taken up by the Three Heavens, and select human beings will be vouchsafed certain texts – here called the Stanzas of the Grand Perfected (*Taizhen zhang* 太真章) – that will allow them to escape the cataclysms, avoid unpleasant rebirths, and ascend to the Shangqing heavens. When the hymns are concluded, the Most High transmits the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens for Expelling the Six Heavens

(*Santian zhengfa chu liutian zhi wen* 三天正法除六天之文) in a ceremony that is at once elaborate and hastily summarized:

太上與後聖，九玄上相青童君共序三天正法除六天之文，施用寶訣祝說，投祭法度以付二君，使教後學諸為真人者，以制六天收斂群凶。於是帝君，上相青童君奉受真訣稽首而還。

Thereupon the Most High allowed the Lord of the Golden Porte, and the Azure Lad of the Nine Heavens to together lay out the Correct Methods of the Three Heavens for Expelling the Six Heavens, using precious oral instructions, incantations, and explanations. They sacrificed and he ritually ordained them, in order to transmit [the scripture] to the two lords, commanding them to teach students of the latter age how to become Perfected in order to control the Six Heavens, gathering up and slaying the mass of deviances. Thereupon the Lord of the Golden Porte and the Azure Lad received perfected instructions, performed full prostrations, and left.

We first saw this passage in the introduction. Its overall significance is clear: modeling practices expected of human beings who interact with the Methods of the Three Heavens, the Azure Lad and the Lord of the Golden Porte preform the proper sacrifices, and in return they receive the Methods along with the oral instructions (*jue* 訣) required to understand them. The Most High directs the two deities to transmit these tools to human adepts in order to enlist them into the ranks of the Perfected; these human servants will aid the Three Heavens in sweeping away the violent remnants of the Six. The ritual contains the elements of a conventional transmission. The deities are ordained by a superior; they “lay out” (and presumably copy) the Methods of the Three Heavens and accompanying textual paraphernalia; and their superior commands them to continue the line of transmission.

Codes for transmission of Zhongwen linglu and Yinyang linglu [260c.5-261a.14]

If we take the text as continuous – a contentious proposition – then the Most High and the Lord of the Golden Porte received three amulets that comprise the Methods for Expelling

the Six Heavens: the Lingdu wanzhuan, the Zhongshu zhenlu, and the Yinyang linglu. The *Zhengfa jing* continues by outlining the ritual that structures the transmission of these amulets from master to disciple in the human realm. At the beginning of the process, the student faces east. Next, master and disciple face north; the master swears an unspecified oath, then commences the transmission process. When this is finished, the student faces eastward once again, bows, and performs an incantation in which they ascend to the heavens and formally request that the Perfected King of the Nine Heavens, the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement, and the Most High bestow upon them the Methods for Expelling the Six Heavens. The purpose of these amulets, according to the petition, is to allow their bearer to command the evil spirits of the Six Heavens and ascend to personally greet the Lord of the Golden Porte. It is important to note here that the amulets the student receives are not identical to those received by the Lord of the Golden Porte and the Azure Lad: where latter receive the Lingdu wanzhuan, the Zhongshu zhenlu, and the Yinyang linglu, the former receives the Yinyang linglu and the Gathered Writs (*Zhongwen* 眾文). According to the *Jiuwei badao*, the *Zhongwen* – there known as the Most High (*taishang* 太上) *Zhongwen lu* – is actually a group of amulets that itself includes the Yinyang linglu. Because the latter is specifically listed as separate from the *Zhongwen* here, the redactors of the *Zhengfa jing* and the *Jiuwei badao* must be referring to separate lists. Such inconsistencies are a hallmark of the received text.

Instructions for use of the Santian zhengfa and Zhongwen linglu [260c.20-261a14]

Putting them aside for the present, what follows in the *Zhengfa jing* are instructions for the use of certain amulets: the Santian zhengfa and the *Zhongwen lu* (here known as the



*Zhongwen linglu* 眾文靈錄). Again, the presence of an unspecified “Correct Methods of the Three Heavens” sounds a note of uncertainty: because different authors included different amulets in this group, we cannot be sure precisely which are intended here. Whichever they may be, the instructions for their use are as follows. Proper care requires daily veneration with incense and prostrations, culminating in a more complex ritual to be performed every nine years. Here, for the first time, we glimpse the process by which the amulets become efficacious. During the ninth year, on the *taisui* 太歲 day corresponding to the adept’s natal day, they are to write out the amulets in a prescribed fashion and bury them at a prescribed depth in the soil of the appropriate marchmounts.<sup>90</sup> The act of burial is what gives the adept control over the spirits; this is reinforced by an incantation performed at the site that restates that control, as well as asserting that heavenly figures have recorded the adept’s name in records of transcendence controlled by the Azure Lad. After three nine-year periods, the Most High will dispatch spirit-servants to welcome the practitioner to the Palace of Shangqing.

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90 A person’s “natal days” (*benming ri* 本命日) are determined with reference to the sexagesimal cycle by which time was demarcated at the levels of day, month, and year. They occur when both the celestial stem (*gan* 干) and earthly branch (*zhi* 支) of a given day match that on which the person was born. The *taisui* hemerological system divides the calendar according to the five agents. Each agent is correlated with a particular stem and direction: wood with *jia* 甲 and the east; fire with *bing* 丙 and the south; earth with *wu* 戊 and the center; metal with *geng* 庚 and the west, and water with *ren* 壬 and the north. The stems are each combined with the branch *zi* 子 to form five sets of twelve days, during which the deity Taisui 太歲 and his retinue travel in the direction and to the marchmount associated with each element. On *jiazi* days they travel east to the eastern marchmount; *bingzi* days to the southern marchmount; *gengzi* days to the western marchmount, *renzi* days to the northern marchmount, and *wuzi* days to the central marchmount. The ritual associates *benming* days with *taisui* days in a manner that is unclear to me; the end result is that one performs the ritual every nine years, or three times per cycle of twenty-seven years. See ZHDZ 1.261a.1-14: 九年每以本命之日或太歲之日，以白素朱書文一通，詣所屬嶽，封埋之以制五嶽萬精之炁……如此二十七年合三埋之。See *Zhonghua daojiao dacidian*, s.v. “太歲已下神煞出遊日.” Many thanks to Professor Donald Harper for his help on this passage and for pointing me to the relevant dictionary entry.

Instructions for the use of the Zhongshu zhenlu [261a.15-261b.13]

The *Zhengfa jing* next details a burial ritual meant to accompany an amulet it has not yet introduced: the Perfected Writs of the Spirits of the Eight Directions [Gathered from] the Massed Texts (*Zhongshu baling zhenlu* 眾書八靈真籙). This amulet is known by the abbreviated title *Zhongshu zhenlu* later in the *Zhengfa jing* as well as the *Jiuwei badao*, and that is how I will refer to it hereafter. Despite the abrupt introduction, this section's structure and content link it to the ritual performed with the Santian zhengfa and Zhongwen linglu. As before, it must be performed on one's natal day or *Taisui* day every nine years for 27 years. The adept petitions the gods for the power to control spirits and is granted the *Zhongshu baling zhenlu* and spirit guards by the Most High after demonstrating his or her sincerity. However, a few factors distinguish it from the burial ritual that accompanies the previous amulets. First is a sacrifice of material goods that accompanies the petition. On the night of the prescribed day, the adept sets up five long, low tables, one in each of the five directions, and adorns them with incense and candles. Next, he or she lays out patterned silks and "invites" (*qing* 請) the talismans and accompanying text, setting them on (presumably) the central desk along with a plate of fruit and jujubes. Along with the petition, the adept presents these offerings to a group of deities and spirits: the High August of the Nine Tenuities and Eight Ways, the Thearchs of the Nine Heavens, the Yellow Woman of Glorious Mystery, the Officers of the Nine Numens, and the Supervisors of the Emissaries of the Transcendents.<sup>91</sup> After three such

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91 In the *Huangting neijing jing*, the Nine Tenuities are nine palaces located in various parts of the body. According to the commentary of Liangqiu zi 梁丘子 (Bai Lihong 白履忠, fl. 722-29), "The *jing* 精 ([i.e., refined *qi*] there is subtle (*wei* 微); thus they are called 'the Nine Tenuities.'" 精微故曰九微 See YJQQ 11.43b-44a. See also EoT, s.v. "Huangting jing." See also Patrick Carré, *Le Livre de la Cour Jaune: Classique taoïste des IV-Ve siècles* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1999) 58, 141-42. See also Daojiao

sacrifices, the Most High responds by dispatching the Lord of the Golden Porte to bestow a title and spirit guards on the petitioner. A postface details the Most High's exact commands to the Lord: he is to seek out those who diligently practice the above methods – here referred to as “Upper Perfected” – and bestow the Zhongshu zhenlu upon them in order to “assist the ruler in governing according to the rule of the Three Heavens, destroying and expelling the inauspicious and evil.”<sup>92</sup> In order to assume this role, the adept must fulfill three conditions: first, they must receive the earthly portion of the amulet in a transmission ceremony conducted according to certain rules; second, they must demonstrate their sincerity to the gods by the consistent performance of certain rituals. At this point they receive the heavenly half of the tally, and this prepares them for the third step: use of the talisman itself to fulfill the obligations of an Upper Perfected.

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dacidian, s.v. “九微,” though this entry does not take into account the full scope of the reference in the *Huangting neijing jing*. The Eight Ways (*badao* 八道) are the eight directions. I am unclear on the identity of the High August of the Nine Tenuities and Eight Ways (*Jiuwei badao shanghuang* 九微八道上皇); this may be a reference to a deity named in the *Duren jing* (27.7a) as the “August Elder, Venerable Spirit of the Nine Tenuities and Eight Ways” (*Jiuwei badao huanglao zunshen* 九微八道皇老尊神), but if so that sheds no light on his identity; the *Duren jing* gives no further information on the deity. The only other reference I could find to the Nine-Flowered Thearch 九華帝君 is in a Ming work, CT 1220 *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 in a talisman at 16.8a and repeated at 23.17b. The compiler gives no further information on this deity. Thus, this is probably an error for 九帝, mentioned at *Jiuwei badao* 6. If this is correct, then the other deity mentioned would be Huaxuan Huangnu 華玄黃女, otherwise unknown. It could be an epithet for the Mysterious Woman (*xuan nu* 玄女), who bequeathed several different methods to the Yellow Emperor – but this is no more than a guess. See Handian, Daojiao Dacidian, and Grand Ricci, s.v. “玄女.” According to *Taiqing yuce* 255b, the Nine Numens (*Jiu ling* 九靈) are Tiansheng 天生, Wuying, 無英, Xuanzhu 玄珠, Zhenzhong 正中, Zidan 子丹, Huihui 回回, Danyuan 丹元, Taiyuan 太淵, and Lingtong 靈童. These are bodily deities according to CT 64 *Jiutian yingyuan leisheng puhua tianzun yushu baijing jizhu* 九天應元雷聲普化天尊玉樞寶經集註 (which the *Taiqing yuce* is probably quoting), but many are also names of ingredients used in laboratory alchemy. See, e.g., Daojiao dacidian, s.v. “天生,” “玄珠.” Because the *Taiqing yuce* and CT 64 are both much later than the *Santian zhengfa*, here the Nine Numens probably refer to the Nine Heavens, with the *guan* 官 being unspecified officers. See Handian, s.v. “九靈,” TC, s.v. “Jiutian yingyuan leisheng puhua tianzun yushu baijing jizhu.” The Supervisors of the Emissaries of the Transcendents (*Jianzhen shi* 監真使) aid the adept in adding his or her name to the records of transcendence in the *Qisheng xuanji* (see, e.g., 7a-10b in that work).

92 輔正三天，滅除凶惡。

Employing the Zhongshu zhenlu requires the adept to perform a visualization exercise followed by an incantation. The Most High explicitly presents these actions as “accept[ing] the responsibility on behalf of the Three Heavens of aiding the lords of the realm in expelling calamities, causing the brightness of the correct Way to be disseminated, and the Six Heavens to be annihilated.”<sup>93</sup> After preparatory purifications, the adept burns incense and writes out the text and its accompanying talismans. The text mentioned here is not specified, but likely consists of instructions for the talisman’s use. This would place it in the genre of *jue* 訣; these were originally oral instructions delivered from master to student during a transmission ceremony that allowed the latter to properly understand and employ the text being transmitted, and without which it would be useless. (Above, we see the Most High employing *jue* that governed the transmission of the Santian zhengfa chu liutian zhi wen, as well as imparting *jue* required for their use to the Azure Lad and the Lord of the Golden Porte.) Eventually, such instructions formed an independent genre, and the word *jue* features in the titles of several subsidiary works meant to aid in the interpretation of more important texts.<sup>94</sup> In this case, the *jue* may have been this text itself, or the portion of it that explains the use of the Zhongshu zhenlu. Be that as it may, once the writing process is complete, the adept performs the following visualization:

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93 太上告後聖君曰：凡受三天正法，當為三天立效，佐時除凶使正道，演明六天殄滅也。

94 See, for instance, CT 1324 *Dongzhen taishan basu zhenjing dengtan fuzha miaojue* 洞真太上八素真經登壇符札妙訣, which details the construction of an altar for use in a ritual meant to accompany CT 426 *Taishang basu zhenjing* 洞真太上八素真經. 1a details the necessity of the *jue* to the proper use of the Basu zhenjing. Importantly, CT 1324 in this case probably constitutes a later reinterpretation of the work it is supposedly meant to accompany. See TC, s.v. “Dongzhen taishan basu zhenjing dengtan fuzha miaojue,” R 2: 432.

身正在中央，平坐北向，叩左齒三十六通，瞑目內思已身吐炁，炁化爲火，光精流竟，天鬱冥焚，燒四方天下山林草木土地靈司。人民悉令蕩盡。竟天冥然無復。子遺洞達無涯，火炁都消，清炁鬱勃。上則無天，下則無地，率天以下莫不歸宗於虛無金門，玉闕，瓊宮，紫殿，羅列及已身俱在空虛之中清炁之內。

With your own body upright in the center [of the oratory], sit peacefully and face north, clack your left teeth thirty-six times, close your eyes, and envision your body emitting qi. The qi transforms into fiery light and flows brilliantly throughout all the dark quiet of the heavens, burning up all the plant life, all the local gods, all the Numinous Directors.<sup>95</sup> As for the people, they will all be eliminated completely. Up to the darkness of Heaven, there will be no remainder. Penetrating without margin or boundary, the fiery qi will all disappear, and pure qi will flourish. Above, there is no heaven; below, there is no earth. From heaven on down, nothing will not return to its ancestor in nothingness [passing through] the Golden Gate, Jade Porte, and Jade Palace, spreading out in the Purple Hall, together with “my” body, in the midst of vacuous emptiness, in pure qi.<sup>96</sup>

The adept thus visualizes fire from his or her body progressively destroying the entire universe and returning it to a state of primordial purity. The incantation that follows

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95 I am uncertain what function the Numinous Directors perform here. They appears as a spirit that can command numinous beasts in interlinear commentary to *Dengzhen Yinjue* 2.10b; as a spirit one can offend in the *Siji mingke* 1.16; as a spirit of the Water Bureau 水府 (TPGJ 232.6b-7a; as a spirit that can save one from destruction at 15.4 of Du Guangting’s CT 616 *Guangcheng ji* 廣成集, and again as a spirit of the water bureau in CT 489 *Jinlu jietan yi* 金錄解壇儀 (ZHDZ 43.31).

96 The Golden Gate, Jade Porte, Jade Palace, and Purple Hall are all locations in the heavens according to works contemporaneous to portions of the *Zhengfa jing* as well as others that predate and postdate it – though some are also locations in the human body. A citation in WSBY 4.5a lists a Golden Gate Palace as the abode of the White Emperor; the color white being associated with the West since ancient times, this would place the Golden Gate in the western regions of the heavens. See Handian, s.v. “白帝.” The Golden Gate is also associated with the West in *Duren jing* 35.7b, which places it above the “Western Pass” (*Xi guan* 西關), and is located in the Northwest according to the much later CT 5 *Taishang wuji zongzhen Wenchang dadong xianjing* 太上無極總真文昌大洞仙經 According to WSBY 1.4a-b, the moon is located above the Golden Gate during the fourth of the twenty-four solar terms. 1.1b has the sun absorbing refined souls of the dead in the Golden Gate during *Lichun* 立春, the first of the twenty-four solar terms. The Jade Porte is located in the constellation Grand Tenuity (*Taiwei* 太微), according to CT 5 *Maoshan zhi* 茅山志 (14<sup>th</sup> century) 10.2a as well as 3.24 of the much earlier CT 421 *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (ca. 492-514). The Jade Palace is found in Grand Tenuity according to CT 1334 *Dongzhen taishang shenhu yinwen* 洞真太上神虎陰文 (ca. 317-420) 1a. Grand Tenuity is located in the South, bridging Virgo and Leo. See Edward Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T’ang Approaches to the Stars* (Warren, CT: Floating World Editions, 2005), 52. The phrase “Purple Hall” may be a reference to the “Purple Hall of Golden Splendor (*Jinhui zidian* 金輝紫殿), the residence of the Lord of the Golden Porte according to WSBY 14.9a.

summarizes the destruction, then reconstitutes the universe according to the plan of the Three Heavens:

天陽地激，三五及靈  
流光極崖，竟天鬱冥  
自下無外，悉還無形  
六天群祆，靡有不平  
太一促運，真道當行  
九天有命，收攝賈生  
周天徧地，莫有所停  
聖皇顯蓋，控駕紫庭  
推校十方，列奏玉清

By Heavenly Yang, Earth is stimulated.

The Three-and-Five exert their numinous power.<sup>97</sup>

Flowing light [reaches] the border, [moving] throughout all the flourishing darkness of the heavens.

Below me is the all-embracing [nothingness]; everything has returned to formlessness.

Of the massed deviances of the Six Heavens, none are not pacified.

The Grand Monad pushes forward the revolution [of the heavens], and the true Way is put into practice.<sup>98</sup>

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97 The phrase “Three-and-Five” has many possible referents. Given the context, the cosmology of CT 999 *Zhouyi cantong qi* 周易參同契 fits best here. According to one interpretation of that work, the “Three-and-Five” refers to the Five Elements, which merge in order to generate the myriad phenomena. See *Zhonghua dao jiao dacidian*, s.v. “三五;” EoT, s.v. “Zhouyi cantong qi.” A reference to the “Three-and-Five” together with yin and yang in a cosmological context can be found in *Zhouyi cantong qi* 2.28b-29a.

98 On the Grand Monad, see Appendix C, j. 65.

The Nine Heavens have the mandate; they control the living beings of the world<sup>99</sup>

Throughout all the heavens and all the earth, nothing stops them.

The Sage-August displays his chariot cover, steering [his carriage] to the Purple Court.<sup>100</sup>

Reflecting and examining [everything in] the Ten Directions, he enumerates [them] in a memorial to the [emperor dwelling in] Jade Clarity.<sup>101</sup>

Acting as an agent of the Three Heavens, the adept visualizes their body emanating fiery qi that destroys the universe. When the Grand Monad passes control from the Six Heavens to the Three, the world is reconstituted according to the plan of the Three Heavens. The Sage-August then goes on a tour of inspection, returning to the Purple Court and preparing a memorial to the emperor dwelling in Jade Clarity – himself too important to enter the mortal realm – that informs him of the goings-on in the reformed world.

Worthy of note is that incantation – known in the *Zhengfa jing* as the Incantation of the Nine Heavens – is discussed in much the same way as the *Zhongshu zhenlu*, which is not an incantation but an amulet. We learn that the Most High bestowed it upon the

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99 Read 界 for 賈. Given the reference to the Nine Heavens at the beginning of the *Zhengfa jing*, the incantation as it appears here probably intends to stress the Three Heavens' dominance over their lesser counterparts; because the Three are masters of the Nine, when the Nine Heavens have the mandate, it is the Three that direct them.

100 The Sage-August (*Sheng huang* 聖皇) is an epithet for the earthly emperor. His identity here is unclear, but given his position below that of the emperor of Jade Clarity, he cannot play a role of similar importance here. The term probably refers either to the Lord of the Golden Porte or one of the many subsidiary emperors already discussed in the *Zhengfa jing*. Given that he returns to the Purple Court – a palace in the Big Dipper – this may be the Emperor of the North. Elsewhere, the Purple Court is associated with the East; see the *Dance Song of White Ramie* (*Baizhu wuge shi* 白紵舞歌詩), in *Song Shu* 22.24b-26a.

101 The “Emperor dwelling in Jade Clarity” is the Celestial Worthy of Original Commencement (*Yuanshi tianzun* 元始天尊) according to Tao Hongjing's *Zhenling weiye tu*. This itself is evidence of later modification of that work, as the Celestial Worthy is the primary deity of the Lingbao pantheon. See EoT, s.v. “Zhenling weiye tu.”

Sage Lord of the Golden Porte for the purpose of commanding the Six Heavens and the spirits under their control; that its earthly bearers are responsible for assisting in this process; and that they will be numbered among the Perfected and transcendents as reward for their diligence. The postface to the burial ritual for the *Zhongshu zhenlu* gives the same transmission history and purpose for the amulets, as well as the same responsibilities and rewards to their human wielders.

Citations from the *Siji minkge* [262a.1 – 262b.9]

After the Incantation of the Nine Heavens, the *Zhengfa jing* abruptly transitions to a concern with ritual purity applied to an unspecified set of amulets called the “Santian zhengfa” and the “True Writs (*Zhenwen* 真文).” Purity is maintained by upholding five prohibitions related to the amulets. The text leaves little hint as to what the original author of this section might have originally placed in this group, but the separation between the True Writs and the Santian zhengfa is evident: each prohibition begins with either “All those who receive the Santian zhengfa,” or “All those who receive the Santian zhengfa and wear the True Writs.”<sup>102</sup> There are many possible referents for the term “True Writs;” within the *Zhengfa jing* and the *Jiuwei badao* alone, there are three amulets whose names contain the phrase, and this fails to consider another incredibly popular text of the period that circulated separately.<sup>103</sup> Whatever the exact identity of the True Writs, they are subject to the same prohibitions that apply to the Santian zhengfa.

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102 凡受三天正法; 凡受三天正法佩帶真文

103 I refer here to the *Perfected Script in Five Tablets* (*Wupian zhenwen* 五篇真文), preserved in the Daoist canon as CT 22 *Yuanshi Wulao hishu yupian zhenwen tianshu jing* 元始五老赤書玉篇真文天書經). See TC, s.v. “Yuanshi wulao chishu yupian zhenwen tianshu jing,” “Taishang donxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing.”



The *Zhengfa jing* details both these prohibitions and the penalties that accrue to those who fail. The text claims the penalties and prohibitions are extracted from the *Bright Statutes of the Four Poles* (*Siji mingke* 四極明科), which has come down to us as CT 184 *Taizhen Yudi siji mingke jing* 太真玉帝四極明科經, *The Bright Statutes of the Four Poles of the Jade Emperor of Grand Perfection*. CT 184 does indeed contain these five prohibitions, but they differ in important ways from their equivalents in the *Zhengfa jing* (differences whose discussion must be put off for the moment). The first of the five concerns cleanliness: those who wear the Santian zhengfa must keep their bodies and clothes clean. The second prohibition requires the wearer to avoid the impurities surrounding death and funerals, refraining even from paying their condolences during the funeral itself.<sup>104</sup> The third prohibition concerns dress: when asleep or when performing a certain internal meditation exercise, one must take care not to reveal the head or body. The fourth concerns association: fraternizing with unspecified “experts in Yin ways” (*Yin jia* 陰家) and “persons whose outward *qi* is not the same” (外氣不同之人) will be penalized by otherworldly authorities. The final prohibition is a general injunction not to transgress unspecified precepts – presumably those enumerated above, as well as others in a book of statutes (some version of the *Siji mingke*?) the editor of the *Zhengfa jing* expected adepts to have at hand. The penalties for transgressing each prohibition are similar. At the least, the practitioner will have lose their rank among the Perfected; other ill effects include desertion by spirit guards, attack by malevolent entities, reduction in lifespan, and judicial torture by infernal officials. This emphasis on pain and punishment

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<sup>104</sup> Customs surrounding death and burial in early medieval China were elaborate. See, e.g., Wendy Swartz *et al.*, eds., *Early Medieval China: A Sourcebook* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 70-71, 119-120

is counterbalanced in the next section by promises of the benefits that will accrue to those who keep the prohibitions.

Amulets and their transmission [262b.10 – 263a.2]

What follows in the *Zhengfa jing* is a list of spirit guards (and occasionally powers) that accompany various amulets. The general format of each entry follows the first:

得佩蓬萊高上真書者，給玉童十二人侍衛佩者身。

I will give those who receive and wear the Exalted Perfected Book of Penglai<sup>105</sup> twelve jade lads to guard them.

The list comprises eleven amulets in total. Two – the *Zhongshu zhenlu* and the *Lingdu wanzhuan* – we have seen before. However, the others have not been introduced, and one amulet that receives extensive discussion in earlier portions of the text – the *Yinyang linglu* – is missing. Compounding the confusion, the majority of these amulets also appear in the *Jiuwei badao*, but some do not; meanwhile, other amulets listed in the *Jiuwei badao* do not appear here. I discuss each amulet in detail in Appendix F. For now I note that one amulet in particular receives special attention. This is the *Zhongshu zhenlu*, known here as the *Zhenshu zhonglu*. 265c.5-11 reads:

太上告後聖君曰：諸有骨分，名書東華錄字，上清得佩真書衆籙，即給玉童玉女侍衛已身，記功明善，糾禁漏泄。佩者不得妄傳，傳非其人，不依年限。輕泄寶文，身被風刀之考，沒命鬼官殃及七玄祖父運蒙山之石塞，九源之河深，慎奉行。

The Most High told the Lord of the Golden Porte: All those who have lot [lodged] in their bones, whose names are inscribed in the [Records of] Eastern Florescence, recorded in the lists of Shangqing, who wear the *Zhenshu zhonglu*, are given jade lads and jade maidens to guard them and record their merits and shine a light on their good deeds, and who watch over them and prohibit them from divulging [the talisman improperly]. Those who wear the talisman must not heedlessly transmit them. If it is transmitted to an inappropriate person, [the bearer] will not live out

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105 Penglai is a legendary mountain and abode of transcendents in the Eastern Sea.

their allotted years. If one rashly divulges the precious writ, their body will suffer the trial of wind and swords. When they die, they [will become] ghost-officials and disaster will extend to seven generations of their descendants, and their progenitors will be assigned to move the rocks of Mt. Meng and stop up the rivers of the Nine Springs.<sup>106</sup> Diligently practice this!

Breaking from the common formula, the entry on the Zhenshu zhonglu records not only that the bearer of the amulet receives spirit guards, but notes the prerequisites for its transmission; reminds the reader that spiritual attendants monitor the adept's behavior in addition to guarding them (something that is only implied in the other entries); and provides injunctions against improper transmission. Much of this information would have been common knowledge for a contemporary reader, and in any case is stated elsewhere in the *Zhengfa jing*: we know from the Most High's speech to the Azure Lad (in 251b.14-21) that those who receive the Zhongshu zhenlu must have the proper fate lodged in their bones, and the earlier citation of the *Siji mingke* (252b.5-9) reminds the reader that spirit guards report on the conduct of those they protect. Finally, the *Zhengfa jing* closes in the next section with rules for its proper transmission and warnings of the punishments that befall those who fail to follow them. This format is typical – indeed, the *Jiuwei badao* is structured in this way – and so there should be no need to introduce an injunction that focuses only on one amulet so close to a postface that encompasses the entire text and every amulet therein. As we have seen, such strange stylistic choices permeate the *Zhengfa jing*, and so – odd as they may be – it should be no surprise to find more of them.

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106 A similar admonition against reckless transmission occurs in YJQQ 4.18b: 若不依科而傳，罪延七祖，父母充責鬼官，運蒙山之石，填積夜之河，萬劫還生非人之道，已身被風刀之考。 “If you do not follow the regulations and yet transmit [the text], the fault will extend to seven generations of your ancestors. Your father and mother will fill the duty of the ghost-officials, moving the rocks of Mt. Meng to block the rivers of night; after ten thousand kalpas they will return to life in a path of nonhumans.” The Nine Springs are the waters of the netherworld.

## The Daoist Canon and the history of the “Rectifying Methods”

There is little scholarship on the *Rectifying Methods*. What there is mostly focuses on the work’s origin and evolution, with the “final version” assumed to be that found in the Daoist Canon. Begun during the reign of the Yongle 永樂 Emperor (r. 1403-24) and finally published in 1445, the Daoist canon of the Ming 明 Dynasty (1368-1644) is the main source for all Daoist studies scholarship.<sup>107</sup> The assumption that the version included there marks the definitive end of the text’s use and development cuts off a few interesting avenues of inquiry. First, by adopting the standpoint of the editors of the Daoist Canon, scholars silently accept the political circumstances surrounding its compilation. While this hermeneutic simplifies study, it comes at a great cost. Canons, it need not be said, do not occur naturally. They are the end points (and often not even that) of a great degree of struggle. Official recognition (whether by a local community, a larger ecclesiastical body, or an imperial government) is a highly sought-after commodity, and so different actors (whether factions or individuals) have a great deal at stake in getting their own particular versions or interpretations of works accepted as “authoritative.” We have already seen an example of the fallout from this process: a prominent theory concerning the origin of the Nag Hammadi codices holds that they were buried to escape censure at the hands of representatives of newly-forming orthodoxy, who had decided such books were not fit for inclusion in the emerging New Testament canon.<sup>108</sup> Similarly,

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<sup>107</sup> It is also the heart of modern editions of the Canon. These supplement, expand and improve upon it while introducing additional errors. For an introduction to editions of the Daoist Canon, see EoT, s.v. “Daozang and subsidiary compilations.”

<sup>108</sup> To take only one example of canon formation, the canonization of the “orthodox” New Testament has been the focus of much debate in Biblical studies. The first list that corresponds to today’s most widely-accepted 27 books appears in 367 CE. See Bart Ehrman, *After the New Testament: A Reader in Early Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). This was the Festal Letter of Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria. It was only one of many ancient lists, and was ignored or disputed

the arrangement of the modern Daoist canon is a relic of the imperial politics surrounding the compilation of a predecessor to the Ming canon first printed in 1190. The work that claims pride of place there is at once a paean to the then-reigning emperor and a tool to ward off a northern invasion.<sup>109</sup> Twelfth century Chinese politics or fourth century debates among sectarian Christians may have lost all relevance in current times, but such contingencies have left their marks on the materials we study. Our materials may present themselves as pure and homogeneous, but that does not mean scholars have to take them at their word.

A second problem with taking the Ming canon's version of the *Rectifying Methods* as the final word on the matter is that this is simply not the case. Although my analysis stops at the end of the early medieval period (that is, ca. 589 CE), a few examples contemporary and subsequent to the Daoist canon's compilation in 1445 suffice to show that non-canonical versions of the text remained of interest. A quotation from one such version is found in the *Secret Essentials of the Most High* (*Wushang biyao* 無上祕要), a sixth-century compendium of Daoist literature. If the Ming version of the *Most High Scripture* had been universally considered definitive, one would expect subsequent quotations of the version found in the *Secret Essentials* to be marked as spurious because they contain material not found in the Ming text. This is not the case, however. Two Ming

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by some Christian communities. The exact composition of the New Testament is disputed among different Christian denominations today. For a concise explanation of the New Testament's formation and its relationship to the Hebrew Bible, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 1-7. A more recent discussion is Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). See also the review in *Reading Religion* at <http://readingreligion.org/books/biblical-canon-lists-early-christianity>.

109 See Michel Strickmann, "The Longest Taoist Scripture," in *History of Religions* 17, no. 3/4 (1978): 350-351.

works, the *Book of Ancient Subtleties* and the *Record of Mount Tianzhong* (comp. 1550) cite the *Secret Essentials* version of the *Rectifying Methods* without any indication they doubted its authenticity. The version in the Ming canon thus emerges as one among many. Despite its official status, contemporary and subsequent authors felt free to ignore it. The studies consulted below should be read with this caveat in mind.

### Previous scholarship on the “Rectifying Methods”

Detailed discussions of the work are rare, though numerous notes exist scattered throughout other scholarship.<sup>110</sup> I was unable to find any reference to the *Rectifying Methods* in the first major study of the Daoist Canon, Chen Guofu’s 陈国符 mammoth *Origins and Evolution of the Daoist Canon* (*Daozang yuanliu kao* 道藏源流考).<sup>111</sup>

Below, I will restrict myself to works that discuss the *Rectifying Methods* at length. What follows contains a welter of intertextual references. Because matters of detailed dating are primarily of interest to specialists, I will introduce the works that follow without comment, employing standard sinological conventions. More detailed introductions to important texts referenced here will appear in following chapters and the appendices.

Nonspecialists should feel free to consult my summary at the end. Note that my Japanese

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110 See, for instance, Wang Zongyu, “Daojiao zhi ‘liutian’ zhi shuo” [The theory of the “Six Heavens” in Daoism], *Daojiao wenhua yanjiu* 16 (1996): 33 n. 2. Wang’s article is concerned overall with the theory of the Six Heavens. While the *Rectifying Methods* deals with this concept at length, Wang refers to the work itself only in passing. Similarly, Ren Jiyu, ed., *Daozang tiyao* [A Summary of the Daoist Canon] (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1991) aims to provide short summaries of every work in the Ming canon. Its entry on the *Rectifying Methods* (on p. 949) only devotes a few sentences to the work’s textual history.

111 Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963.

is limited to reading proficiency with heavy reference to a dictionary. This makes extended engagement with Japanese scholarship difficult.

Ozaki Masaharu

The first detailed study of the *Rectifying Methods* is an article by Ozaki Masaharu 尾崎正治 published in 1973. Ozaki compares the received *Zhengfa jing* with citations found in six different sources: *Laughing at the Dao* (*Xiaodao lun* 笑道論, preserved in T 3102 *Guang Hongming ji* 廣弘明集); the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* (CT 1139 *Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊); the *True Appearances of the Categories* [Pertaining to] *the Dao of the Highest Purity* (CT 1132 *Shangqing dao leishi xiang* 上清道類事相); the *Seven Lots from the Bookbag of the Clouds* (CT 1032 *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤); the *Taiping Yulan*, and the *Veritable Facts Concerning the True Lord Investigator of the Taiping Xingguo Temple on Mount Lu* (CT 1286 *Lushan Taiping xingguo gong Caifang zhenjun shishi* 廬山太平興國宮採訪真君事實), as well as citations of other works within the canonical *Zhengfa jing*. The most important of these is the *Bright Statutes of the Four Poles* (*Siji mingke* 四極明科), which has come down to us as *The Bright Statues of the Four Poles of the Jade Emperor of Grand Perfection* (CT 184 *Taizhen Yudi siji mingke jing* 太真玉帝四極明科經). Dividing the present *Zhengfa jing* into two parts, the author concludes that the germ of the text is the first half of the present *Taishang santian zhengfa jing* (running to page 5 of the Hanfenlou 涵芬樓 edition). This, she claims, is cited in the *Shangqing dadong zhenjing mu* 上清大洞真經目 under the title

*Shangqing chu liutian wen santian zhengfa* 上清除六天文三天正法.<sup>112</sup> The very end of the received text, which Ozaki calls the *Liutian wen santian shangzhen zhengfa* 六天文三天上真正法, was a supplement added between the Liu-Song 劉宋 (420-479) and the Southern Qi 南齊 (479-502). Further additions were made through the Sui 隋 (581-618) and the Tang 唐 (618-907).<sup>113</sup>

Ozaki's conclusion is sound in its outline but implausible in its details. As noted by Robinet (see below), the analysis is incomplete. The author considers only the present *Zhengfa jing* (CT 1203), but not the collection of amulets that probably formed an integral part of the original work (CT 1395, discussed in Appendix F; I refer to it in this chapter as the *Jiuwei badao*). As will be shown below, other students of the *Rectifying Methods* are unified in asserting that CT 1203 and CT 1395 originally constituted a single work. Further, I find persuasive Robinet's argument for the later dating of what, for Ozaki, forms the germ of the original text. Finally, I am persuaded by Robinet's conclusions on the general course of development of Shangqing texts (on both, see below).

Isabelle Robinet

Isabelle Robinet made a brief but thorough study of the *Rectifying Methods* as part of her effort to reconstruct the original Shangqing corpus as revealed to Yang Xi.<sup>114</sup> She presents

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112 The *Dadong zhenjing mu* is preserved in CT 1125 *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* 洞玄靈寶三洞奉道科戒營始. See TC, s.v. "Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi."

113 Ozaki Masaharu, "Taijō santen seihō kyō seiritsu kō," *Tōhō shūkyō* 43 (1974): 13-29

114 Robinet, *La révélation du Shangqing dans l'histoire du Taoïsme*. 2 vols. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984. See 2: 87-91 on the *Rectifying Methods*. She summarizes her findings in TC, s.v. "Taishang santian zhengfa jing" and "Shangqing dadong jiuwei badao dajing miaolu." See TC 1: 587-588, 602, especially for her dating of CT 1203 and CT 1395.



the following information on the work: its title and a summary that situates it in the context of contemporary Daoism; mentions throughout the Daoist canon of the work under various titles; citations of the work (again, under various titles) within and without the canon; comments on the authenticity of different parts of the work; a more detailed summary of the work that provides some justification for her conclusions regarding the dates of the different parts; and some concluding remarks. Based on this data, she concludes that the present *Rectifying Methods* (comprising both CT 1203 and CT 1395; cf. Ozaki, above) is a skilled imitation of earlier Shangqing works that postdates slightly the original revelations. She dates CT 1395 to the late fourth or early fifth century, and CT 1203 to the seventh century (at the earliest); she thus adopts roughly the same periodization as Ozaki after a much more detailed investigation. She is hesitant, however, to include the work among the original Shangqing revelations despite its inclusion in the list of *Zhen'gao* 5.2.

For Robinet, some of the most concrete evidence for the *Rectifying Methods*' later date include three features of the present work. The first is the quotation from the *Sijimingke*, which postdates the original revelations. The second feature concerns two figures in the work: a higher deity called the Most High Lord of the Dao (*Taishang Daojun* 太上道君; that is, the deified Laozi), and a pupil called the Lord of the Golden Porte. In several discrete segments of the work, the Most High Lord imparts specific knowledge to the Lord of the Golden Porte. This is a common trope throughout the Shangqing corpus, but Robinet takes it as unique to works that postdate the original revelations. Finally, the present version of the *Rectifying Methods* makes reference to three particular qi: "Mystic"

(*xuan* 玄), “Primal,” (*yuan* 元) and “Inaugural” (*she* 始), each corresponding to a different stage in the progressive unfolding of the cosmos. These three *qi* are ubiquitous in texts belonging to the earlier Way of the Celestial Masters (*Tianshi dao* 天師道), but do not appear in members of the original Shangqing revelations. Another of Robinet’s criteria is formal: the chopiness and brevity of the current *Rectifying Methods* do not seem to indicate a complete work. Further, many of the citations of a *Rectifying Methods* found elsewhere in the Daoist canon (and without) conform to the style and tone of the received *Methods*, but are not included there. This suggests, for her, that at some point they were extracted from the text.

However, she notes that several features of the *Rectifying Methods* do in fact argue for its inclusion among early (if not the earliest) Shangqing texts. One is the agreement between citations in the WSBY and the received version of the *Jiuwei badao*. Another is the verses on page 4a-b (of the Hanfenlou edition), which fits the style of other Shangqing poems. She thus posits two major versions of the *Most High Scripture*. The first, preserved in citations from the YJQQ, WSBY, and SDZN, is most likely a significant portion of the work as revealed to Yang Xi. What we have in the received *Jiuwei badao* and *Zhengfa jing* are the remains of this work, mixed with a good deal of material inserted later by authors sympathetic to the Celestial Masters. The original work was probably a collection of apocalyptic predictions along with charms and talismans that helped one avoid the unpleasant fates met by so many during the chaos of the Northern and Southern Dynasties periods.

Robinet is well-respected as one of the twentieth century's finest scholars of Daoism, and her work here shows why. Close examination of the material she has collected, supplemented by the use of searchable databases, confirms her suspicions. The *Rectifying Methods* in its original form was probably a collection of talismans, charms, and apocalyptic predictions that was later pieced out for various purposes. What the databases tell us cements the relationship between the *Rectifying Methods* (as preserved in the *Zhengfa jing* and *Jiuwei badao*) and the early Shangqing corpus. The amulets in the *Jiuwei badao* and the *Zhengfa jing* link the *Most High Scripture* very closely with two other members of the original Shangqing corpus. While she notes where these amulets occur in specific quotations of the *Rectifying Methods*, searching for these amulets outside the confines of any title similar to that of the *Zhengfa jing* confirms this link (see Appendix F). Further, one of the few citations of the *Zhengfa jing* she missed fits strongly with the original Shangqing corpus in exactly the ways she adduces. Finally, I am less reticent than she to include some version of the *Most High Scripture* to the early Shangqing revelations based on a similar title in *Zhen 'gao* 5.2.

Kobayashi Masayoshi

The first lengthy study of the *Rectifying Methods* appears in Kobayashi Masayoshi's 小林正美 *Research into the History of Six Dynasties Daoism*.<sup>115</sup> He is concerned chiefly with the “original form” of the work, which he includes among the original Shangqing revelations based on its inclusion in *Zhen 'gao* 5.2. His reasoning relies on a detailed

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115 *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū* 六朝道教史研究, Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1990. It later appeared in Chinese as *Liuchao dao jiao shi yanjiu* 六朝道教史研究, trans. Li Qing 李庆 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe 人民, 2001). The paragraphs that follow refer to pp. 412-418 of Li's translation.

parsing of the different names of the work as they occur in different sources: the *Zhen'gao*, the *Dadong zhenjing mu*, the WSBY, the SDZN, the YJQQ, the XDL, and the *Preface to the Lingbao Scriptures* (*Lingbao jingmu xu* 靈寶經目序, preserved in YJQQ 4.4a-6a). He confidently dates the work to between 364 and 371 (the period of the Shangqing revelations) based on the presence of a 《除六天之文三天正法》 at ZG 5.2. However, the evidence within that passage strongly suggests that Yang Xi did not himself compose the scripture; rather, he took up and modified a work that already existed. This is so for two reasons. First, the relevant section of ZG 5.2 marks the 《除六天之文三天正法》 as “within the world” 在世, indicating that it was already in existence. Second, that section concludes by noting that the work is a *jing*. This likely indicates that the work had acquired a large body of supplementary material (*koujue*, *fa*, etc.) by the time Yang inherited it.

Kobayashi runs into more trouble when he equates the 《除六天之文三天正法》 of ZG 5.2 with a certain 《上清太上三天正法除六天文錄》 preserved in the *Dadong zhenjing mu* (412-413). As Robinet notes, the *Zhenjing mu* also contains works that are posterior to the Shangqing revelations, indicating that work was revised over time. This means it should be used with caution when judging the authenticity of a Shangqing work that claims to be early. He also omits the fact that no work by a similar name is mentioned in any of the ancient bibliographies of Shangqing texts except the *Basu jing* (see Appendix B). While this does not necessarily mean some form of the *Rectifying Methods* was not early (as I will show below), it still deserves consideration.

Kobayashi also assumes that several works listed under different titles in the WSBY are in fact the same work. In many circumstances, this is a perfectly acceptable inference: different works are referred to by the same author by different titles (sometimes within the same work). But the WSBY must be used with care in this regard. As Stephen Bokenkamp has shown, it was altered by its editors (and perhaps subsequently), and so the quotations it contains do not necessarily reflect the versions the authors held in their hands.<sup>116</sup> This does not diminish its value as a resource – only its reliability as a window onto the specific versions of the works it quotes that were available to its editors.

Kobayashi next claims that a passage from the 《上清三天正法經》 quoted in YJQQ 2.4 is the same as a passage from SDZN 9, which quotes a text by the same title. This is substantially true, though there are several minor differences between the text of the two entries (e.g., character variants, changes in word order, insertions and deletions). However, another passage in the YJQQ suggests the editors of the two compilations were not consulting the same version. YJQQ 21.1a quotes a 《三天正法經》, but the passage resembles neither the citation from YJQQ 2 nor SDZN 9. The latter two concern the cycles of time; YJQQ 21.1a concerns the formation of the gods. It reads like much shorter version of the beginning of the received *Zhengfa jing* – one that mixes the main text with the Azure Lad's commentary and excises his explanation of how the Three Heavens formed. These differences, combined with the many minor variations between YJQQ 2 and SDZN 9, raise the possibility that the YJQQ's editors were consulting a different

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116 Bokenkamp, "Research Note: Buddhism in the Writings of Tao Hongjing," *Daoism: Religion, History, and Society* 6 (2014): 267.

version of the text. But that is a question for another time. Of more pressing import is Kobayashi's claim, made in the same paragraph, that WSBY 6 and SDZN 9 are the same. This is simply untrue; I discuss the differences extensively below.

Kobayashi next claims that the text of YJQQ 21 and the opening of the received *Zhengfa jing* “are basically the same (基本是同樣文字). This, again, is untrue. He compounds the problem by asserting that 《三天正法經》 is simply an abbreviated form of 《上清三天正法經》, and because of this, the present *Zhengfa jing* must have contained material from the 《上清三天正法經》. He adduces as proof the fact that YJQQ 22b, 《釋除六天玉文三天正法》 and the received *Zhengfa jing* are the same. This, too, is incorrect. One assumes, then, that by his reasoning the editors of the YJQQ, WSBY, and SDZN were consulting the same version – and that he believes he has shown there is significant similarity between this version and the received *Zhengfa jing*. Some of these conclusions hold, but many are suspect.

The portion of *Research* devoted to the *Rectifying Methods* continues in this vein. Kobayashi's extensive acquaintance with the Daoist canon allows him to marshal a wide variety of sources to support his claims. Unfortunately, he sometimes reads these sources in too little detail. Moreover, he shows a willingness to assume that two works with a similar title must be the same or share similar contents. While this is true in many circumstances, the principle must be applied with caution; appealing to it too frequently can result in significant details going unnoticed.

Ōfuchi Ninji

Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾 devotes a few short pages of his *Religious Taoism and its Scriptures* to the *Zhengfa jing*.<sup>117</sup> Based on its presence in *Zhen'gao* 5.2 and its numerous citations in early Daoist texts (especially the WSBY), he feels strongly that it formed part of the early Shangqing corpus. Based on citations of a 《三天正法經》 in the WSBY and other texts, there must have been a different, lost edition. It is extremely doubtful that these two editions – the lost edition and the present *Zhengfa jing* – were the same work; rather, the citations in the Daozang edition of the WSBY and other works seem to belong to a commentary meant to accompany the older edition of the *Zhengfa jing*. The received *Zhengfa jing* came together after the time of Wang Lingqi, probably during the century before the compilation of the five-juan edition of the *Siji mingke*. The version of the *Zhengfa jing* in which the citation of the *Siji mingke* appears probably came to be during or after the compilation of the five-juan edition of the *Siji mingke*, being added to the work by people who venerated the *Zhengfa jing*.

Ōfuchi's work leaves several questions unanswered. First, what is the relationship between the *Zhengfa jing* and the *Jiuwei badao*? Though he discusses some amulets that feature in both texts (see p. 423), he does not devote any attention to the *Jiuwei badao* itself. Given the extensive intertextual links between the two, it is surely the case that the two works shared a common or at least related course of development. The information he marshals strongly suggests an early date for the *Zhengfa jing* itself – what, then, of the *Jiuwei badao*?

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117 道教とその經典. Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1997. Pp. 419-425 concern the *Rectifying Methods*.

Wang Haoyue

The most recent work on the *Rectifying Methods* has been done by Wang Haoyue 王皓月.<sup>118</sup> He comes to the conclusion, again based on *Zhen'gao* 5.2, that some work called the 《除六天之文三天正法》 formed part of the original Shangqing revelations. For Wang, this did not constitute a *jing* proper; it was only over time it became different versions of the 《三天正法經》 referred to so many times throughout the canon. The original 《除六天之文三天正法》 was in fact written by Xu Mi, who controlled Yang Xi; this is the 《上清三天正法》 of YJQQ 4.2, which records a Xu son receiving the work from Yang Xi.<sup>119</sup> By the time it became a *jing*, it had become collection of apocalyptic predictions and apotropaic amulets; the amulets were relatively stable, but the content of the predictions varied over time according to the needs of the work's authors. The changes eventually resulted in three different versions of the *Rectifying Methods* (71-72, 74).

The first and earliest is the 《洞真三天正法經》 referred to in WSBY. This can be reconstructed via quotations in WSBY 6, 22, 31, 32, 43, and 65 as well as a later fragment called the 《三天正法除六天玉文》 (hereafter *Jade Writ*), which is similar in content to WSBY. This version is marked as earliest by its use of the phrase “The Dao said...” (*Dao yue* 道曰), because the earliest form of the text had the Azure Lad recording the Most High Lord of the Dao teaching the Lord of the Golden Porte – that is, Wang equates “The Dao said...” with the present *Zhengfa jing*'s “The Most High Lord of the

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118 See “*Santian zhengfa jing* de chengshu he yanbian,” *Shijie zongjiao wenhua* (August 2013): 71-77.

119 Wang considers the 《曲素鳳文》 a separate text.



Dao told the Lord of the Golden Porte...” The first half of the 《洞真三天正法經》 concerned the revolutions of the kalpas, with the second half comprising the talismans recorded in the *Jiuwei badao*. This version is closest to the 《除六天之文三天正法》 revealed to Yang Xi.

The second version is the 《上清三天正法經》. This was a revised version of the *Rectifying Methods* rewritten by Celestial Master Daoists some time before Lu Xiuqing composed the *Preface to the Lingbao Scriptures*, and it is preserved in citations in SDZN 9 and one section in YJQQ 2. In this version, to the “turnings of the kalpas” portion of the original text was added predictions that augured the rise of Liu Yu. These predictions were rewritten versions of predictions that appeared in the original, which concerned the advent of the Lord of the Golden Porte; instead, they became about Liu Yu, who (the work now foretold) would pacify the disorders plaguing the realm. This forms part of a set with the *Inner Explanations of the Three Heavens* (on which, see Bokenkamp’s entry in *EDS*). The two works partook of a common eschatology whereby the Six Heavens replaced the Three, and along with the appearance of the Lingbao scriptures, they were supposed to confirm that Liu Yu had the mandate as part of this process. This version was chopped up after the Liu-Song fell, with the *Dajing miaolu* becoming a separate, self-contained work.

The third version is the received *Rectifying Methods*. The editors of this text removed portions of the first version where the Dao spoke, instead claiming the Azure Lad compiled the text, with a separate deity known as the Upper Minister, Lord Azure Lad (*Shangxiang qingtong jun* 上相青童君) writing a preface. This version integrates

content from *Siji mingke* and gives instructions on how to use the Correct Methods of the Three Heavens. It de-emphasizes the content on the turning of the kalpas and removes content on Liu Yu. Because this final version of the work contains info on how to use the talismans found in the in *Dajing miaolu* as well as information on why these amulets are efficacious, it was reinterpreted as oral instructions (*jue*) meant to accompany that text.

With the exception of Robinet, Wang provides the most detailed analysis of the *Rectifying Methods*. He engages both the *Zhengfa jing* and the *Jiuwei badao*, as well as tracing allusions to individual amulets elsewhere in the Daoist canon. Further, he goes beyond Robinet in places: where Robinet merely notes that extant citations of a *Santian zhengfa jing* do not match the received version, Wang explores these differences and their implications for the evolution of the work. By de-centering the received version, his approach allows for more insight into changes in the work over time; paradoxically, this helps us better understand the *Rectifying Methods* as we have it today. However, a lack of attention to detail, combined with some faulty assumptions and insufficiently supported inferences, makes some of his methods suspect. His attribution of the earliest version of the *Most High Scripture* to Xu Mi is unwarranted. While there is no question that – given the power differential between them – Yang’s revelations would have been tailored somewhat to Xu’s needs, existing evidence shows that the relationship between the two was much more complex than Wang realizes. Stephen Bokenkamp, in *Ancestors and Anxiety*, details a give-and-take between Yang’s spiritual informants and the Xu clan that fits ill with Wang’s absolute domination of Yang by Xu Mi.<sup>120</sup> Wang’s picture of the initial stages of the *Rectifying Methods*’ evolution is also questionable. While he astutely uses

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<sup>120</sup> See Bokenkamp, *Ancestors* 135-136.

ZG 5 to date an early form of the *Rectifying Methods*, he overlooks an important part of it. The list of works contained in ZG 5.2 (which provides the earliest evidence of the *Most High Scripture*) concludes by noting that every text in the list has already become a *jing*; thus, it cannot be the case that the work revealed to Yang Xi was merely a method (*fa*) that only later became a *jing*.

There are also problems with the formal changes in his postulated *Rectifying Methods*. While he is no doubt correct that it contained both apocalyptic predictions and apotropaic amulets, and that the predictions changed over time, it is not the case that the amulets remained stable. He notes that some of the amulets in the *Jiuwei badao* also appear elsewhere in quotations from the *Most High Scripture* that also include amulets absent from the present version. He attributes these quotations to a lost version of the work that had little influence; however, he fails to note that the powers therein often differ from those the amulets possess in the received *Jiuwei badao*. Further, even the received *Zhengfa jing* and *Jiuwei badao* are inconsistent in the powers they attribute to the amulets: the *Zhengfa jing* has them almost exclusively providing spirit guards, while the *Jiuwei badao* also lists other powers as well as different numbers of spirit guards. Finally, the same amulets often appear in works that do not cite the *Rectifying Methods*, where they have different powers and different transmission histories. Clearly the amulets possessed a life of their own before they were incorporated into the *Rectifying Methods*, and were afterwards excerpted from different versions that work by authors who had their own interests.

Finally, each of his postulated versions of the *Rectifying Methods* has various problems. He assumes his first version (the 《洞真三天正法經》) is closest to the work cited in ZG 5.2 because it contains the phrase “The Dao said...” which he maintains is a different form of the formula “The Most High Lord of the Dao instructed the Lord of the Golden Porte.” There are two issues here. First, he cites no evidence to support the link between the two. Second, Robinet has claimed, after extensive study, that the formula he invokes is in fact never used in early Shangqing works. While she may of course be incorrect, work of her caliber deserves engagement. He claims his second version was a form of the *Rectifying Methods* revised by Celestial Master Daoists and taken up by Lu Xiujing, but cites no evidence to indicate the version cited by Lu Xiujing was anything but Lu’s own creation. It is much simpler to assume (as Stephen Bokenkamp has already postulated) that Lu is simply selectively quoting the version of the *Most High Scripture* recorded in the SDZN, or even that Lu is consulting a different version entirely. While Wang’s hypothesis is of course possible, in the absence of evidence Occam’s Razor suggests otherwise.

That being said, his overall conclusions are sound. The version Lu presented to the throne in 437 was probably a revision of the earlier work; it almost certainly was meant to harmonize with the *Inner Explanations*; and astute later editors would have certainly removed the references to Liu Yu. Further, the *Dajing miaolu* and the *Zhengfa jing* were eventually split up; there is no reason to suppose it could not have happened in the way Wang claims. His third version is plausible, but only in part. If the present *Zhengfa jing* was intended as oral instructions for the *Dajing miaolu*, why do the two

provide different powers for the amulets? Why does the *Zhengfa jing* provide explicit instructions only for a few of the amulets mentioned in the *Dajing miaolu*? And why do so many amulets in the *Dajing miaolu* receive no mention in the *Zhengfa jing*? Clearly if the *Zhengfa jing* is meant to aid the practitioner in the use of the *Dajing miaolu*, the two works have undergone modification.

I will advance my own vision for the development of the *Rectifying Methods* in the following chapters. Briefly: Some work with a title similar to that of the *Rectifying Methods* existed at the time of Yang Xi and had already acquired a body of supplementary material large enough that it was called a *jing*. We know this because Tao Hongjing possessed an autograph version of *Zhen'gao* 5 that attests to both facts. But that is all we can know about the work: anything beyond the barest contours is beyond our knowledge. We can, however, reconstruct the Shangqing version of the *Rectifying Methods* that, like Wang's reconstruction, provides a useful starting point for later reworkings. Based on extant quotations in the XDL, WSBY, and SDZN, and our general knowledge of Shangqing eschatology, I hypothesize that the 《除六天之文三天正法》 as transmitted to Yang Xi was a collection of apocalyptic predictions, hymns, and apotropaic amulets and chants. The work's purpose was to foretell the end times and help adepts escape the eschaton by requiring spirits to inscribe their name in certain celestial records. This version was reworked several times. The first revision kept the talismans and methods but sharpened the urgency of the original's apocalyptic predictions by inserting direct references to Liu Yu. This is similar to Lu Xiuqing's version, and forms part of what we find in today's SDZN. It was also the version available to Wang Xuanhe (the editor of

the SDZN) and the editors of the WSBY. The WSBY's editors inserted an elaborate method of marking cosmic time (reflected in WSBY 6) to support their patron's attempt to provide an ideological foundation for a reunited China. Those same concerns dictated they remove references to Liu Yu, whose time had long passed. However, the version that referred to Liu Yu still existed. Wang Xuanhe synthesized both versions of the work when he compiled the SDZN.

#### Works and their authors

The *Rectifying Methods* shares something very important with the *Secret Revelation to John* and the story of Ghazi Miyan. Each of the three works has been altered over time by different readers to suit their own purposes. The authors of first version of the *Secret Revelation* – the one, as discussed in the last chapter, that circulated in the Alexandrian school setting – drew on prestigious existing material (Platonic philosophy and *Genesis*) but reworked it for their own ends. The Platonic cosmos, the God of the Hebrew Bible, and the Roman rulers who called themselves representatives of the gods were recast as twisted parodies in protest of the unjust world in which the *Secret Gospel's* authors found themselves. The same process is evident in the very first account of Ghazi Miyan's life. In composing the *Mirat-i-Masudi*, Abdur Rahman would have been drawing upon material that had been in circulation for at least four centuries before his time. He inserted a famous member of his own Sufi order into the tale in order to boost the authority of his order at a time when it was losing ground to the rival Naqsbandiya. Finally, previous scholarship on the *Rectifying Methods* depicts a work that changed over time in the hands of various authors and editors. It began its life in the late fourth century as a collection of

apocalyptic predictions, apotropaic amulets, chants, and talismans. Later readers saw many potential uses in the work. They chose to emphasize certain elements, downplay others, and excise, misread, or add material at their discretion. This process was carried out over several centuries and resulted in a collection of fragments that relate to each other in confusing and even contradictory ways. What I show in the following chapters is the very oddness of these fragments, rather than representing an insurmountable barrier to inquiry, can help us understand more about the social circumstances under which they emerged. We may never be able to reconstruct an “original” *Rectifying Methods* with certainty. What we have left can teach us, however, about who used the remains we have left, and why.

### Chapter 3: The “Rectifying Methods” and the Shangqing Revelations

In order to understand what the *Rectifying Methods* has to tell us about how religious works are taken up and altered, we need to know something of the context in which that alteration took place. This requires attention to the material and social conditions that circumscribe the authors of any given work, as well as awareness of the fact that the work they generate is in part a response to these conditions. But the process of composition cannot be reduced to historical factors alone. The work (or works) themselves have a great deal to tell us. In this case, we are dealing with an author – Yang Xi – who generated a number of works that share a certain regularity in their assumptions about (*inter alia*) the nature of the cosmos, the composition of human beings, our potential fates after death, and practices we might undertake during our time on earth to ensure that said fate is as pleasant as possible.

This regularity, and Yang Xi’s responsibility for it, should not be overstated. The complicated redactional history of the works revealed to Yang Xi involved additions, deletions, “corrections,” forgeries, members of uncertain provenance, and the outright loss of material by many different individuals over the centuries. Indeed, it is only appropriate to speak of the Shangqing corpus as a body of work, rather than a collection of disparate material that with similar assumptions but different occasions of composition, once Tao Hongjing gathers the material together for what is in fact the first time. The many lacunae in his final product, as well as his own editorial interventions, sound cautionary notes to those of us interested in analyzing it.



Even when one approaches Yang's creative output with appropriate prudence, it stretches credulity to think that the regularities therein are all later fabrications or the result of random chance. There is no doubt that the author wrote with coherent assumptions in mind. For scholars interested in reconstructing any of the many missing members of the Shangqing corpus, knowledge of these assumptions – of the regularity that infuses Yang's corpus – provides an appropriate starting point when considered in connection with the considerations of time, place, and audience. That is to say, of its context.

The sociohistorical fabric

The first stable Chinese dynasty officially ended in 220 CE, but it had lost all *de facto* power decades before. The territory that formerly belonged to the Han 漢 (202 BCE-220 CE) house became divided between the states of Wei 魏, Shu 蜀, and Wu 吳. These were the celebrated “Three Kingdoms,” each of which sought to reunify China and recapture the lost glory of the Han. The dominant Wei were overthrown by their generals in the Sima 司馬 clan in 265, who established the Jin 晉. Jin history is conventionally divided into two periods: Western and Eastern. The initial period of Jin rule is known as the Western Jin 西晉 (265-316). It was dealt a serious blow in 311 when the Jin capital, the ancient city of Luoyang 洛陽, was sacked by the confederation of northern nomadic tribes known as the Xiongnu 匈奴. The court fled east to the other traditional capital of the Central Plain: the city of Chang'an 長安 (modern Xi'an 西安). But in 317, Chang'an, too, fell. The court and many of the most powerful gentry families were driven

south along with their slaves and retainers, where they established a new capital at the most significant city in the region: Jiankang 健康 (modern Nanjing 南京). Thus began the Eastern Jin 東晉 (317-420). From then on, China became divided into a series of petty kingdoms centered around the river valleys of the Yellow and Yangzi Rivers. Local kings (including the Simas) had to defend themselves against their competitors in the same valley; meanwhile, invasion by their neighbors to the north or south was a constant threat. This was particularly true for the non-Chinese northern dynasties, who were attacked every now and again by southern generals seeking the glory that would accrue to anyone who managed to successfully reconquer the old capitals of Chang'an and Luoyang.<sup>121</sup>

The flight of the northern families produced a fundamental restructuring of power relations in the south. Southern elite families had grown wealthy under the Wu and, with the disintegration of Han power, had long been accustomed to governing their own affairs. Their economic base had remained largely unharmed by the upheavals of the Three Kingdoms period, and they maintained armies large enough to deal with the occasional peasant rebellion or would-be warlord. Earning their allegiance (or at least mitigating the military threat they posed) was among the most urgent concerns of Sima

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121 An excellent and accessible English-language overview of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period is Mark Edward Lewis, *China Between Empires* (Cambridge, MA and London: the Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009). He provides an account of the Three Kingdoms period on pp. 28-37. The *Cambridge History of China* volumes on the Northern and Southern Dynasties period are still unpublished, but another excellent English-language introduction is Albert Dien's introduction in Dien, ed., *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990): 1-29. While Dien has argued against "earlier views of the [Northern and Southern Dynasties] as a period characterized by powerful aristocratic clans..." (28), Lewis demonstrates that significant opposition to such a view still exists. Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A New Manual, Revised and Enlarged*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (digital) (Harvard University Asia Center, 2018) pp. 728-735 includes an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources; many of these are mentioned in the main text of this dissertation, while others appear in the bibliography.

Rui 睿 (r. 317-322) and his cohort when they re-established the Jin court in Jiankang. He was initially unsuccessful in this effort, and after one month at the new capital he had yet to establish relations with the local notables. Grasping the urgency of the situation, one of his retainers persuaded Rui to personally visit local headmen and court their approval. Even after this effort proved successful, some southern families continued to agitate for independence. The two strongest were the Zhou 周, who had a long history of military conquests in the area, and the Shen 沈, who were of similar power. The Zhou in particular proved a thorn in the side of the Eastern Jin, leading several revolts in the early years of the dynasty's presence in Jiankang; it was only by pitting the Zhou and Shen families against each other that the emperor's strategists were able to ensure relative safety.<sup>122</sup>

The Xu family was notably absent from the great clans who jockeyed for power during the period. Though they were of long standing (having migrated southward in 185 CE), and of former note (a Xu had held the prestigious post of Grand Chancellor-in-chief ([*da*]chengxiang [大]丞相) under the Wu), by the Eastern Jin the family had faded into obscurity.<sup>123</sup> The Shangqing revelations – the *Rectifying Methods* among them – were produced on the Xus' behalf and circulated among families at more or less the same

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122 Wang Zhongluo 王仲榮, *Wei jin nanbeichao shi* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2003), 296-309, provides a fascinating account of the stormy relations between northern émigré families and the established southern gentry in the early part of the dynasty. This includes the military adventures of Zhou Pei which preceded the arrival of Sima Rui. Unfortunately, Wang's account of social relations between northern and southern gentry ends before the time of Yang and the Xus; he shifts instead to Huan Wen's 桓溫 three invasions of the North.

123 ZG 20.4b-5b chronicles the Xus move to Pingyu 平輿 county (now located in modern Henan, then in Runan Commandery 汝南郡) and Jurong 句容 county (near modern Nanjing), with which they are more commonly associated. Dušana Dušanka Mišćević, "Oligarchy or Social Mobility? A Study of the Great Clans in Early Medieval China," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1992), 81, 619-20 provides an account of the Pingyu Xus. Tan Qixiang, ed., *Zhongguo lishi ditu ji* [The historical atlas of China] (Beijing: Zhongguo ditu chubanshe, 1996), 3:7-8 provides the location of Pingyu; for Jurong, see 3:26-27.

socioeconomic level. This included ancestors of Tao Hongjing as well as the Ge 葛 family, all related to the Xus by marriage. While portions were directed to families of higher status, the majority of the individuals involved in the transmission and preservation of the Xus' manuscript legacy hailed from lesser-known clans. The research of Michel Strickmann and Stephen Bokenkamp has shed light on the middling status of these families. Both scholars have translated *juan* 19 and 20 of the *Zhen'gao*. Called "Account of the Perfected Scriptures from Beginning to End" (*Zhenjing shimo* 真經始末), Tao Hongjing's postface to the *Zhen'gao* follows the revelation and diffusion of Yang Xi's manuscripts from their beginning "in the second year (364) of the Xingning 興寧 reign period (363-365) of Emperor Ai 哀 of Jin" (r. 362-365) down to his own day.

Tao notes the official positions and genealogies of several principals in the process. Some, like Yang and the Xus, are lower-level functionaries from southern families in the service of high lords of northern descent. Many are unknown outside Tao's postface; others are the sons of renowned chess masters, relatives of noted hermits, and the like – an altogether undistinguished lot. But humble though their ancestry might be, they themselves would find a more august destiny. Strickmann comes to the following conclusion:

...[C]areful collation of the biographies of these men and their relations in the dynastic histories reveals they were all members of the old-established clans of the Southeast... It was they who became the élite of the movement that had been inaugurated by the revealed message to members of their own class, and thereby they came to occupy a prestigious spiritual status under secular rulers and officials of Daoist faith and northern origin, as their conspicuous inclusion in standard history amply demonstrates. What they had lost on the plane of mundane administration, then, was fully offset by their monopoly of other-worldly channels. In them, the "Southern scholars" (*nanshi* 南士) had eloquent spokesmen for their cause, and an

expanding Daoist society gained its most gifted intermediaries with the sources of worldly power and prestige.<sup>124</sup>

According to this thesis, the earliest fragments of the *Rectifying Methods* are part of the effort by the southern gentry class to assert control in the spiritual realm that had been denied them in the material realm. With their political autonomy usurped by northern interlopers, they fashioned for themselves places in a new cosmic hierarchy as consolation. Whether Yang Xi was himself a member of that class is irrelevant; as a client he would have written to his audience, and that audience – at least, according to Strickmann – was looking for heavenly fulfillment of their earthly desire for power.

Yang Xi's eschatology and his map of the otherworldly bureaucracy provide the most convincing evidence for this point. One sign of the end times (in a work I will discuss more fully below) was the ascension of a certain king; who precisely Yang was referring to is difficult to tell based on existing evidence, but the role of the king in Yang's prophecy is clear: his rise to power presages the eschaton. The king's role here places Yang's prophecy in the tradition of imperial legitimation, which is two-sided. Ever since the Han, the rise of a king who would put an end to an age of disorder and preside over a peaceful realm had been foretold via the interpretation of celestial portents and the discovery of auspicious signs (often physical objects) on Earth. Once this mode of prophecy was established, it was appealed to in this way by successive rulers, including the founding emperors of the Sui 隋 (581-618) and Tang 唐 (618-907). This latter, Li Yuan 李淵 (566-635), took full advantage of his surname in order to identify with Li Hong 李弘, also known as the Lord of the Golden Porte 金闕帝君. This is none other

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<sup>124</sup> Strickmann, "Mao-Shan" 35.

than messianic avatar of the deified Laozi (also surnamed Li according to legend) who would usher in an age of Great Peace 太平. The same rhetoric was often adopted by the leaders of various popular rebellions, who took the surname Li for the same reason. Li-led messianic rebellions began during the Han, crescendoed in the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, and sporadically reoccurred until 1112, when the final Lord Li was captured and executed.<sup>125</sup>

Because he does not advocate rebellion – merely situating the king’s rise among the signs of the end times – Yang does not belong to this millenarian tradition. Nonetheless, the thrust of his work is apocalyptic. Coupled with the coming end of the world is the assurance that certain people will survive it through various means. One might, for instance, practice various meditation methods found throughout the Shangqing corpus. Upon completing the prescribed regimen, the practitioner would ascend to more-than-human status and attain a post in the celestial bureaucracy, which Yang sketched out with care. The question of audience arises here: who in the realm of the living (or dead) was meant to receive these posts? We know that Yang himself was destined for one, as were his patrons. But considering only the immediate circle of the initial revelations does not do the works justice. We know from Tao’s postface that Yang’s methods were transmitted and practiced by members of wealthy southern families for generations after the death of their principal recipients. We also know that these southern families had been effectively shut out of the halls of power by northern émigrés. It is thus no stretch to infer

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<sup>125</sup> See *Encyclopedia of Taoism*, s.v. “Li Hong.” The classic study is Anna Seidel, “The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism: Lao-Tzu and Li Hung,” *History of Religions* 9.2-3 (1969-1970): 216-247.

that the detailed structure of the other world present in Yang Xi's texts, coupled with the imminent end of this one, would appeal to such a class.

The problem for Strickmann's hypothesis is that Yang's revelations cannot be reduced to eschatology and bureaucracy alone. He reads the Shangqing corpus as a sort of "protest literature." Such literature is written by an oppressed minority in response to a real or perceived crisis. Strickmann's explanation of the Shangqing revelations' origin fits this definition well (though of course "oppression" can only be a relative term in the case of families possessed of wealth, land, slaves, and abundant cultural capital). This interpretation of apocalyptic literature silently follows Karl Marx's theory of religion, expressed trenchantly in his "Introduction to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right:"

Man is *the world of man*, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion, an *inverted world-consciousness*, because they are an *inverted world*... *Religious* distress is at the same time the expression of *real* distress and also the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people."<sup>126</sup>

John Raines points out that this theory grew out of Marx's own experiences with religion in Germany and England, and acknowledges the many instances (from the cotton fields of the Old South to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s to the liberation theologies of South America) where religion has worked not to reinforce existing power structures, but to disrupt them.<sup>127</sup> He also situates Marx in dialogue with Hegelian idealism, which

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<sup>126</sup> From John Raines, ed., *Marx on Religion* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 171.

Emphasis in original. Marx is often misunderstood here as claiming religion is an anesthetic forced upon people by their rulers in order to keep them docile; in fact, Marx is claiming that people produce religion in order to soothe themselves amidst unsatisfactory material conditions. Raines notes this.

<sup>127</sup> Raines, *Marx* 5-6, 8-10. Raines's understanding of religion as expressed here and in surrounding pages would certainly benefit from complexification, but his essential point, in my opinion, stands.

(at least in relation to German Protestant Christianity) sprung from the same soil. Cognate to Raines's remarks on religion and power outside this realm, then, we can add that Marx (through no fault of his own) is ill-equipped to deal with the complexities of the Shangqing revelations. The revelations themselves attest to this fact. They were about far more than earthly power; they were also meant to address earthly problems.

This comes across clearly in the case of Tao Kedou 陶科斗 (?-sometime between 363 and 365), wife of Xu Mi. Shortly after her death, Xu and other members of his family began suffering from illness and nightmares. They turned to Yang Xi for an explanation. His spiritual informants revealed that Tao herself was implicated in his patrons' troubles. An ancestor of the Xus had, in 317 or 318, unjustly killed two men. After their deaths, the victims had lodged a complaint with the magistrates of the underworld, who decided it was appropriate to punish Tao – a member by marriage of the Xu family – with imprisonment in her tomb, where she was “perpetually thirsty but unable to drink; hungry, but unable to eat.” To escape her plight, Tao's ghost looked for someone in the Xu family to take her place. Yang's celestial informants explained that the problem could be solved via offerings to the appropriate chthonic authorities. Though the record of events as preserved in the *Zhen'gao* is incomplete, all parties involved apparently reached a satisfactory settlement: the ill family members recovered, and Tao Kedou was released from her tomb.<sup>128</sup>

Without adducing this episode as evidence supporting one theory of religion or another, it suffices to note that the Xu family drama is not protest literature, and therefore

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128 This account is taken from Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, 130-138, and Peter Knickerson, “The Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints,” in Bokenkamp, *EDS* 236-237. The quotation is from Bokenkamp, *Ancestors* 131.



contravenes Strickmann's hypothesis. Just because this hypothesis does not suffice to explain the Shangqing revelations in their entirety – work that Strickmann himself would probably not presume it capable of – does not mean it can shed no light on the probable social context of the initial revelations, and thus of the *Rectifying Methods*. It presents exactly the kind of specialized knowledge that would allow its recipients an edge over the northern interlopers who had usurped political power.

The Shangqing eschaton and methods to escape it

### An Early Example

The Shangqing revelations were transmitted by Yang Xi to his patrons in the Xu family between 364 and 370. They included a concrete vision of the end of the world and a plethora of methods to escape it. For Yang, the eschaton will be marked by political chaos and natural disasters that claim the lives of the wicked while sparing practitioners of Shangqing techniques. These disasters are followed by the descent to earth of the Lord of the Golden Porte, who inaugurates the Age of Great Peace (*Taiping* 太平). The classic account of the Shangqing eschaton occurs in the *Purple Texts*:

夫唯二氣離合，理物有期，三道虧盈，出處因運期之至也，因而適之運有來矣，就而撫之。唐承之年積數有四十六丁亥之間，前後在中，中間鳥獸之世，國祚啓竭，東西稱霸，以扶弱主，主有縱橫九一之名，逮號光迹昌元。其後甲申之歲已前已後，種善人，除殘民，疫水交其上，兵火繞其下，惡惡並滅，凶凶皆沒，好道陸隱，善人登山，流濁奔蕩，御之鯨淵，都分別也。到壬辰之年，三月六日，聖君來下光臨於兆民矣……

Now, the two *qi* both separate and join. According to the principles, all things have their appointed times. The three paths have times of growth and of depletion. Emergence and withdrawal are in complete accord with the fated cycles. When he thus approaches, the end of the cycle draws near. It was during the years of [the sage-king Yao] that the Sage Lord last came to set the cycle in motion. According to the calculations the end should fall within the space of forty-six *dinghai* years.

Sooner or later, within this space of time, it will be an age of birds and beasts, when the kingdom's blessings begin to evaporate. To the east and west there will be those who declare themselves hegemon to support a weak ruler. That ruler will have the given name, vertical and horizontal, "nine" and "one." He will be bestowed the style name "Light Traces, Flourishing Prime." Later, both before and after the *jiashen* year of his rule, the good will be planted as seed people and the remaining mortals will be eradicated. Pestilence and flood will wash over them; weapons and fire will circle below them. All the evil will be eradicated at once; all the violent will be destroyed. Those who delight in the Dao will hide away in the land; the good people will ascend mountains. The flowing filth will be shaken off, driven into the vast abyss. In this way all the mortals will be divided, the good from the evil. Coming to the sixth day of the third month in the *renchen* year, the Sage Lord will descend and appear to mortals in all his glory...

The eschatology described above is characteristic of the entire Shangqing corpus, and is in fact the most detailed exposition therein. As Bokenkamp notes (*EDS* 345), Yang Xi likely had a specific ruler in mind with this description, to whom he was referring in coded language (i.e., by dividing his name into vertical and horizontal strokes). This passage is also the *locus classicus* for a very popular timeframe for the apocalypse: it will begin sometime around a *jiashen* year (the 21<sup>st</sup> year of the sexigesimal cycle), and end in the next *renchen* year (the 29<sup>th</sup> year).<sup>129</sup> In a note that was sometimes dropped from later works, the *Purple Texts* claim the whole drama will take place during the sixty-year period between the 45<sup>th</sup> and 46<sup>th</sup> *dinghai* years after the rule of the sage-king Yao.

The end has no end

The foremost scholar of Shangqing Daoism is Isabelle Robinet. Her work is marked by such meticulous attention to detail and such comprehensive knowledge of her sources that it remains the starting point for research on the subject despite appearing thirty years before the first searchable databases. It is thus fitting to draw extensively on her

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<sup>129</sup> See EoT, s.v. "Apocalyptic eschatology," for the popularity of this timeframe.

scholarship for an overview of the eschatological assumptions that underpinned the Shangqing corpus.<sup>130</sup>

One of the most important is that “eschatology” is a misnomer. The finality of the eschaton (from the Greek word for “last”) has no place in traditional Chinese cosmology. This latter is reckoned cyclically, according to the *ganzhi* 干支 “stem and branch” cycle: ten heavenly “stems” (the *gan*) match with twelve earthly “branches” (the *zhi*). The stems and branches follow their own individual cycles, intersecting to form sixty possible combinations. These combinations are used to record hours, days, months, and years.<sup>131</sup> The “eschaton” as described above in the *Purple Texts* is not the end of history nor the end of all things; it is the end of a cycle. The text of the received version makes this explicit: “When [the Lord of the Golden Porte] thus approaches, the end of a cycle draws near.”<sup>132</sup>

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130 The notion of the eschaton and the methods to escape it that follow here are extracted from Robinet 1: 138-146. She provides a much fuller account of the methods in various works; I concentrate on those relevant to the *Rectifying Methods*.

131 See Handian, s.v. “時辰,” “干支.” The traditional Chinese hour consisted of two modern hours, with each day containing twelve. The twelve stems were used to record them. See also Adam Smith, “The Chinese Sexagenary Cycle and the Ritual Origins of the Calendar,” in *Calendars and Years II: Astronomy and Time in the Ancient and Medieval World*, edited by John M. Steele (Oxford: OxbowBooks, 2010): 1-37.

132 Found on CT 442 3b, as translated in Bokenkamp, *EDS* 345.

Table 1

## The Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches

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	Stems	Branches
1	甲 <i>jia</i>	子 <i>zi</i>
2	乙 <i>yi</i>	丑 <i>chou</i>
3	丙 <i>bing</i>	寅 <i>yin</i>
4	丁 <i>ding</i>	卯 <i>mao</i>
5	戊 <i>wu</i>	辰 <i>chen</i>
6	己 <i>ji</i>	巳 <i>si</i>
7	庚 <i>geng</i>	午 <i>wu</i>
8	辛 <i>xin</i>	未 <i>wei</i>
9	壬 <i>ren</i>	申 <i>shen</i>
10	癸 <i>gui</i>	酉 <i>you</i>
11		戌 <i>xu</i>
12		亥 <i>hai</i>

Both stems and branches proceed in linear order: *jiazi* 甲子 is followed by *yichou* 乙丑, *bingyin* 丙寅 by *dingmao* 丁卯, etc. Once the ten stems are exhausted, the cycle of stems returns to its beginning, while the cycle of branches continues until its own end: *jiaxu* 甲戌 is followed by *yihai* 乙亥. Then, the branch cycle resets while the stem cycle continues: *bingzi* 丙子 is followed by *dingchou* 丁丑, *wuyin* 戊寅 by *jimao* 己卯, etc. The full cycle ends at *guihai* 癸亥.

## The Three Heavens and the Six Heavens

The violence of the northern and southern dynasties took a heavy toll on elite families. For the *Rectifying Methods*, as for several works of the early northern and southern dynasties period, this violence signaled the end of a cycle. Like days, seasons, and even dynasties, the universe moved through natural periods of growth and decay. The growth was marked by peace and stability; the decay saw extreme violence, societal breakdown, and the disruption of the natural order. Many Daoist works of the period saw the end of the current cycle as the passage of legitimate government from six evil heavens to three benevolent ones, and implicitly implicitly or explicitly contrasted the Six and the Three in their promises of salvation.

To understand this contrast, we must trace the Six Heavens back to the Han. In an influential article, Wang Zongyu 王宗昱 finds the beginning of the theory of the Six Heavens in an attempt by a group of scholars led by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200) to systematically interpret earlier ritual works on imperial sacrifice. They claim to see the Six Heavens in Zhou 周 (ca. 1100-256 BCE) works concerning state ritual – specifically, sacrifice to Heaven and the five visible planets. Under the influence of the apocryphal Weft Texts (*Wei shu* 緯書) – prognostication works that claim to explain the Five Classics (*Wu jing* 五經) – Zheng then associated Six Heavens with the Han imperial sacrifice to The Grand Monad (*Taiyi* 太一) and the emperors of the Five Directions. Thus, initially the term *tian*, far from meaning “heaven,” meant “heavenly spirit.” For Zheng and his associates, it referred to the spirits propitiated in state sacrifices of meat and grain. In

return for these gifts, the spirits ensured the welfare of the state and the common people.<sup>133</sup>

Beginning in the late Han, this interpretation was turned on its head. Early medieval Daoist works like the *Inner Explanations* agreed with Zheng Xuan and his compatriots that the Six Heavens involved ritual sacrifice of meat and grain to heavenly spirits, but they differed from their predecessors in two important respects. First, for the *Inner Explanations* and works like it (e.g., the even earlier *Nüqing guilü*), the term “Six Heavens” referred not just to the earlier six deities of the state cult, but all deities that had received official sanction by the central government – often the spirits of dead generals or men of renown. The *Inner Explanations* holds that Laozi, here depicted as a god, had repeatedly incarnated throughout history in the role of royal advisor. In this capacity, he did not at first push for the total abrogation of the state cult; rather, he attempted to correct sacrificial customs that had strayed from the true Way. The Six Heavens, though they had erred, were capable of redemption. However, he eventually concluded that this effort was futile. In 142 C.E., Laozi descended to Zhang Daoling and abolished the rule of the Six Heavens, whose “stale qi” (*gu qi* 故氣) had run its course. He replaced them with the newly-revealed Three Heavens. The spirits of these heavens did not subsist on meat because they were emanations of the pure qi of the heavens; thus, blood sacrifice – previously thought to engender the blessings of both the great spirits of the state cult and the deceased heroes of local veneration – would be ineffective when used to propitiate these newly-revealed gods. The *Nüqing guilü* takes a harsher stance. It belongs to a genre

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133 Wang Zongyu, “Daojiao de ‘Liu tian’ zhi shuo,” [The theory of the “Six Heavens” in Daoism], *Daojiao yanjiu* 16 (1996): 23-27. Bokenkamp presents a similar argument on *EDS* 200-201 n. 21.

of texts that aim to protect their bearers from maleficent spirits by listing these spirits' true names. While most such manuals confine themselves to miscellaneous demons of greater or lesser stature, the *Nüqing* focuses specifically on the spirits of the state cult, stretching back to Zhou times. Unlike in the *Inner Explanations*, the objects of state sacrifice are depicted here as unequivocally evil. The state cult is decisively rejected.<sup>134</sup>

While Wang focuses on the Daoist rejection of official state religion, other scholars broaden the scope of their analysis. Rolf Stein and Ursula-Angelika Cedzich note the interaction between early Daoism, popular religion, and the state cult. Local cults included not only those spirits integrated into the official pantheon, but a variety of deities thought to provide benefits like healing, prognostication, and general good fortune. Daoist authors echoed government officials in their condemnation of these cults, but each group did so for different reasons. Where the officers of the central government were concerned with regulating sacrifice along class lines, Daoist works also integrated meat-eating local gods into the new cosmological scheme of the *Inner Explanations* under the rubric of the “Six Heavens” and their “stale qi.” The new gods of the Three Heavens were unambiguously separated from local gods, whether state-sanctioned or no; these latter were “mere remnants,” in Cedzich’s words, “of the old, rotten, and demonic order of the Six Heavens.” As Terry Kleeman notes, however, these local gods could be of use to the celestial and terrestrial agents of the Three Heavens – a fact that lends the

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134 Wang Zongyu, “Liu tian” 23-36. Stephen Bokenkamp traces the account of the Five Thearchs and their subordination to Taiyi even further back in time to the reign of Han Wudi 漢武帝 (r. 140-87 BCE). See Bokenkamp, “Sources” 452. The passage he cites is from the 1970 Minglun chubanshe 明倫出版社 reprint of *Gu shi bian* 古史辨, ed. Lü Simian 呂思勉 and Tong Shuye 童書業. The edition accessible to me is different, but substantiates his claim. See Gu Jiegang and Yang Xiangkui, “Sanhuang kao,” in *Gu shi bian*, comp. Gu Jiegang (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981) 7.2: 93-94.

Six Heavens a certain ambiguity in Daoist texts of the early medieval period. Even in works like the *Nüqing* that reject the deities of the Six Heavens in no uncertain terms, the demons, departed generals, and spirit-soldiers under the Heavens' command could still be turned to the good if such beings submitted to the proper order – that is, the authority of the Daoist pantheon and its human priests. When powerful local gods acknowledged the authority of superior beings, they could be profitably employed as overseers of lesser demonic entities. However, their ubiquity – and the attendant misfortune they cause in our world – is reflective of a more serious problem confronting humanity.<sup>135</sup>

In many of the texts above, the rule of the Six Heavens is connected to a steady degradation of customs in the human realm which is responsible for the state of disorder that prevailed after the fall of the Han. This is made explicit in a fifth-century work, *Master Lu's Abridgement of the Daoist Code* (CT 1127 *Lu Xiansheng Daomen ke lüe* 陸先生道門科, hereafter *Daomen ke lüe*):

The Most High Lord Lao observed that in late antiquity there had been a descent into violence, so that purity was defiled and simplicity lost; the universe had lost direction and men and ghosts mixed in confusion; the stale [qi] of the Six Heavens claimed exalted office and assembled the hundred sprites as well as the ghosts of those who has suffered severe injuries, the dead generals of defeated armies, armies

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135 Rolf A. Stein, "Religious Taoism and Popular Religion," in Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel, ed., *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979): 56-58, 63-64, 67, 77-78; Ursula-Angelica Cedzich, "The Organon of the Twelve Hundred Officials and its Gods," *Daoism: Religion, History and Society* 1 (2009): 49- 50. Here I treat only a small portion of Cedzich's impressive article. In addition to asking critical questions about the nature of textual research on, e.g., 32ff, she also points out how the boundaries between Daoist and non-Daoist gods were necessarily more complex than works like the *Inner Explanations* and the *Nüqing* would have the reader believe, as well as efforts by to incorporate undomesticated local deities into their spiritual hierarchy. Terry Kleeman, "Exorcising the Six Heavens: The Role of Traditional State Deities in the Demon Statutes of Lady Blue," in Florian C. Reiter, ed., *Exorcism in Daoism: A Berlin Symposium*, Asien-und Afrika-Studien der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin 36, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 93-97. Here I follow the basic structure of his argument, which discusses Wang, Stein, and Czedich. For a more detailed discussion of the nature of traditional sacrifice, including its organization along class lines and Daoist critiques of it, see Kleeman's "Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals: Sacrifice, Reciprocity, and Violence in Traditional China," *Asia Major*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series, 7.1 (1994): 185-211.



that had rebelled and dead soldiers; the men claimed to be generals and the women called themselves ladies; leading ghostly soldiers the moved as armies and rested in camps, roaming freely about heaven and earth wantonly dispensing their might and blessings, attacking the temples of others, seeking the sacrifices offered to them...<sup>136</sup>

These spirits spread disease and death, part of the natural world's responds to human immorality. In the words of Christine Mollier:

The final deluge will be preceded by horrible calamities: wars, barbarian invasions, crimes, social, political and familial dissolution, meteorological disorders, trials, imprisonments and official punishments, oppression of the people, conflagrations, floods, bad harvests, famines, curses, and above all an extraordinary propagation of diseases. All these troubles are produced by gigantic armies of demons (*gui* 鬼 and *mowang* 魔王), souls of the dead, and are a consequence of humankind's defilement and evil.

However, some will escape this age of disorder. These are the “seed people” (*zhong min* 種民), those few Daoists who, because of their good conduct, will live to see the coming age of Great Peace. The concept of seed people arose with the early Celestial Masters movement, which practiced a sexual rite thought to conceive a perfect human being. The explicit nature of these rites resulted in heavy censure by Buddhists and later Daoists. It is perhaps in response to this pressure that we see the *Zhen'gao* advocate a sublimated version wherein the entire process takes place as a visualization exercise involving a human agent and a spirit-maiden. Contemporaneous to this usage was the equation of *zhongmin* with terms like *liangmin* 良民 or *zhenmin* 真民 that simply connoted people of virtue. Per Bokenkamp, “The metaphor is agricultural. The ‘seed people’ were the elect of Daoist eschatology, those selected to survive the coming end time to form the germ of a new populace at the beginning of a fresh age, once all the evil

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<sup>136</sup> Translation taken from Kleeman, “Exorcising” 92.

had been ‘rooted out.’” However, they could not survive the paroxysms of a dying world through virtue alone. They required the recognition of higher celestial authorities.<sup>137</sup>

The appropriate authority here is the Most High Lord Lao, who once again descends to save a suffering world from its own depravity. While traces of a divinized Lord Lao can be seen during the Han, he soon acquired an eschatological aspect as Li Hong 李弘, known also as “The Imperial Lord of the Golden Porte,” (*Jinque dijun* 金闕帝君) a quasi-messianic figure who appears extensively in the religious milieu of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. The terrors of the final age were often explicitly tied to the political realm: the *Inner Explanations*, for instance, depicts the Liu-Song 劉宋 (420-497) dynasty as heritors of the mandate of the Han who would inaugurate a peaceful age of religious and political unity. The Lord of the Golden Porte appears in a similar capacity: he will descend in a *renchen* 壬辰 year (the 29<sup>th</sup> of the sexagesimal cycle), eight years after the end of the world, to proclaim the commencement of the age of Great Peace (*Taiping* 太平), populated solely by the elect. It was the duty of these individuals to prepare the realm for his arrival.<sup>138</sup>

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137 One exposition of the “seed people” theory occurs in the *Commands and Admonitions of the Families of the Great Dao* (*Dadao jia lingjie* 大道家令戒), part of CT 789 *Zhengyi fawen tianshi jiaojie ke jing* 正一法文天師教戒科經. Bokenkamp introduces and translates the *Commandments* on *EDS* pp. 149-185, discussing the seed people on pp. 155-157. Mollier’s words are from *EoT*, s.v. “Dongyuan shenzhou jing.” See also *EoT*, s.v. “Seed People.” For an alternative interpretation of the Celestial Masters’ sexual rites see Gil Raz, “The Way of the Yellow and Red: Re-examining the Sexual Initiation Rite of Celestial Master Daoism,” *Nan Nü* 10 (2008): 86-120.

138 Bokenkamp, *EDS* 186-188, 221-224; *EoT*, s.v. “Housheng daojun lieji,” “Li Hong.” The literature on the eschatology of the Six Dynasties period, its historical background, and on Li Hong in particular, is extensive. I refer the reader to the relevant entries in *EoT*, which are referenced in the articles cited earlier in this note.

## The celestial lists

The Lord of the Golden Porte is one of several celestial judges who appear at the end of a cycle to separate the saved from the unsaved. Because of the cyclical nature of time, they do not do so in the manner of Christ redeeming the chosen from damnation at the end of time. Instead, they are rectifying certain lists. These lists contain the names of those who will be saved from the destruction at the end of a cycle. This is merely another iteration (albeit a rather unusual one) of a rather routine bureaucratic process. Just as one was registered on the imperial census as a member of a certain household, so the pertinent facts of one's life (and previous lives, where applicable) were registered with the appropriate otherworldly authorities. These facts, as well as one's behavior during this life, determined one's membership in the lists of those who would survive the end of a kalpa cycle. Emending these lists (or checking them for errors) was a common assignment for celestial officials.<sup>139</sup> One early version of the *Rectifying Methods*, for instance, records a similar task being performed in ages past:

白簡青錄，得道人名記。皇民譜錄，數極唐堯。是為小劫一交。其中損益，有二十四萬人應為得者。自承唐之後，數四十六丁亥，前後中間甲申之年，乃小劫之會，人名應定。

The names of those who will attain the Dao are recorded in green records on white slips. The numbers of the Genealogy of the People of the Three Sovereigns [that is, the relevant records referred to above] extended through the time of [the legendary sage-king] Yao. This was the turning of one small kalpa. During this time 2,400,000 were subtracted from the count of those who should attain [the Dao]. In the *jiashen* year sometime before or after the forty-sixth *dinghai* year after Yao, there will be a conjunction of small kalpas, and the records must be fixed again.<sup>140</sup>

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139 See, for instance, WSBY 22.15b, where the Grand Imperial Elder 太帝丈人 gathers with other deities to correct the records of transcendence.

140 See SDZN 9.3b-4b.

A pressing question for Shangqing adepts was how one's name was added to or removed from these lists. Different works provide different techniques for inscribing one's name on the appropriate lists, refer to the lists by different names, and warn of different acts that will cause the gods to strike one's name from them. Addition could require meditation exercises wherein one envisages themselves writing their own name, while others require the adept to recite incantations that demand the gods do it for them.<sup>141</sup> Alternatively, the task could require the chanting of hymns or the wearing of talismans. These are a few of several methods that the adept could appeal to; because different versions of the *Rectifying Methods* contain them and they are in any case common features of Shangqing works (whether or not they work to inscribe the adept's name in celestial lists), I will treat some in detail below. Readers curious about other methods should consult volume one of Robinet. These lists often have exotic names, like the "Green Text on White Slips of the Grand Culmen" (*Taiji baijian qingwen* 太極白簡青文) or the "Jade Register of the Golden Book of the Shangqing Heaven (*Shangqing jinshu yulu* 上清金書玉錄). Their names are relatively consistent throughout the Shangqing corpus.<sup>142</sup> As we shall see later, these same names appear in one early version of the *Rectifying Methods*.

#### Meditation exercises

The *Purple Texts* also provide methods for assuring one's membership in the elect:

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141 For examples former, see CT 1364 *Shangqing dongzhen zhihui guanshen dajie wen* 上清洞真智慧觀身大戒文 and CT 1379 *Shangqing yudi qisheng xuanji huitian jiuxiao jing* 上清玉帝七聖玄紀迴天九霄經. Overviews can be found in the relevant entries in TC, and a more detailed introduction to CT 1379 in Robinet 2: 225-228. For the latter, see, for instance, R 2: 163ff, particularly 166.

142 Robinet discusses the chief works that contain these lists on R 2: 225-228 and R 2: 101-110.

若能精洞房於上元，修九真以彌勤，步隱書於七靈，窮八素之用誠，既得涉乎三災而不傷，又必觀更始於太平，又得賜書仙官神真長生也。

If you have been able to make essential the Cavern Chamber in your Upper Prime, have cultivated the [Method of the] Nine Perfected to widely exert their control, have paced according to the secret writings on the seven holy stars, and have assiduously completed the Eight Simplicities, then you will be able to pass through the three plagues without injury. You will also certainly be born again in the age of Great Peace and will receive documents as a Transcendent officer or as a Perfected spirit endowed with long life.<sup>143</sup>

The methods found above, like the *Purple Texts*' eschatology, are also common throughout the Shangqing corpus.<sup>144</sup> While reference is also made here to dance called "walking along the guideline" (*bugang* 步剛) recorded in the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子, the techniques offered by the *Purple Texts* to escape the apocalypse by and large consist of internal meditation exercises.<sup>145</sup> This is immediately apparent from the allusions to parts of the human body. The Upper Prime here refers to the upper Cinnabar Field, one of the three divisions of the human body that corresponds to the brain; the Cavern Chamber is a location in the Upper Prime that is sometimes situated two inches behind the brow ridge. The Method of the Nine Perfected refers to a series of visualization exercises detailed in CT 1376 and CT 1377 during which the individual envisages various deities combining in their own person and transforming into a single spirit that revitalizes their inner organs. Finally, the Eight Simplicities refers to another series of visualization exercises detailed

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143 This is a partial translation of *Housheng daojun lieji* 3a-4b modified slightly from Stephen Bokenkamp, *EDS* 345-347.

144 EoT, "Shangqing" reviews characteristic features of the Shangqing textual lineage, including cosmology, eschatology, and methods of salvation. Consult also R: 1 107-47. On Shangqing apocalypticism, see EoT, s.v. "Jinque dijun," "housheng," "Li Hong," as well as Kobayashi, *Liuchao daojiao shi* 419-426.

145 The dance ultimately descends from the ancient shamanic dance known as the "paces of Yu" Yubu 禹步. See EoT, s.v. "Bugang."

in CT 426 *Basu zhenjing* 八素真經 (*Scripture of the Eight Pure Ladies*) and CT 1323 *Basu zhenjing fushi riyue huanghua jue* 八素真經服食日月皇華訣 (*Authentic Scripture of the Eight Pure Ladies and Instructions on the Absorption of the August Essences of the Sun and Moon*). These scriptures teach the adept techniques to absorb the essences of the sun and moon via talismans and meditation exercises, and to visualize the divinities of the planets in order to request that their name be erased from the records of death and inscribed on the records of life. Much like the *Purple Texts*, though the methods of the Nine Perfected and Eight Simplicities have been pieced apart and scattered throughout the Daoist canon, they nonetheless form a central and indisputable portion of the original Shangqing revelations.<sup>146</sup> The received *Rectifying Methods* contains a meditation exercise that – though it does not mention the lists – is perfectly coherent with the Shangqing corpus: the adept visualizes his or her body emitting fiery qi that destroys the entire universe (see chapter two’s summary of the work).

### Protective spells

Bodily ascent to the heavens is only possible if one survives life’s myriad dangers.

Demons and the disasters they caused were a constant worry. The proliferation of these nefarious spirits during the tumult of the end times would have lent the problem even more urgency. Shangqing works themselves thus often include a variety of techniques designed to ward off the demons. One of the most popular was the chanting of protective spells. These spells sometimes featured in subsidiary compilations meant to prepare the

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146 See Daojiao dacidian, s.v. “三元,” EoT, s.v. “Sanyuan,” “Dantian;” Grand Ricci, s.v. “洞房;” Handian, s.v. “洞房;” EoT, s.v. “Jiuzhen zhongjing” and Robinet, “Introduction,” “Basu jing,” R 2: 67-83, R 2: 51-57.

way for the practicing of more exalted methods.<sup>147</sup> But these methods would obviously have interested anyone concerned with demonic threats, and were sometimes excerpted from their original works. This is the case for one chant taken from an early version of the *Rectifying Methods*. See Appendix C.

## Talismans

The word “talisman” or “amulet” translates the graph *fu* 符. In the earliest written record it means “a document written at royal command,” but by a long process of extension came to refer, in a Daoist context, to graphs that – when written on silk and worn by a worthy person – conferred special powers. Daoist amulets have their roots in techniques of imperial legitimation. After the conquest of Shang 商 (ca. 1600-1046 BCE) by Zhou, the right to rule was tied to the perceived virtue of the ruler and confirmed by the interpretation of celestial and natural phenomena. Han rulers added more concrete tokens to the repertoire of legitimation techniques in the form of physical objects like cauldrons or stones. These were often inscribed with messages foretelling or confirming the rule of a particular emperor, and could be conveniently “found” by his supporters. With the rise of the weft texts in the late Western Han (202 BCE-8 CE), these tokens extended to written works themselves. Some foretold or confirmed the ascent of a particular ruler, but their content was secondary; merely possessing them proved one’s legitimacy in the same manner as the earlier non-textual objects.<sup>148</sup> However, the interpretation of omens was not

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147 See, for instance CT 1355 *Shangqing taishang Yuqing yinshu miemo shenhui gaoxuan zhenjing* 上清太上玉清隱書滅魔神慧高玄真經, which casts its chants as a preparatory exercise for the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經. See the relevant TC entry. For an example of such a chant in this work, see ZHDZ 1.707b-708a.

148 Not all rulers appealed to these signs consistently; see Lagerwey, *Le Wushang* 9. Zhou Wudi rejects the necessity of talismans to buttress his authority, claiming to rule by virtue alone.

abandoned: celestial phenomena and terrestrial prodigies were used to confirm (or challenge) the mandate of a given ruler, functioning as signs of Heaven's approval or disapproval of his conduct. Amulets would later serve this same function. Rather than an innovation, however, this was an extension of their original use.<sup>149</sup>

*Fu*, properly translated “tally” in this context, were among the signs of diverse kinds that were used by messengers to confirm the proper origin of the information they conveyed. The relationship between emperor and general provides an example. Before departing on a military campaign, a general would be given one half of a *fu*-tally (usually a physical object like a cylinder or a carving of an animal) while the other half would remain in the emperor's keeping. Orders from the emperor or messages from the general would be accompanied by the corresponding portion of the tally, which functioned as a sign of their authenticity. The stellar omens and auspicious prodigies that confirmed a ruler's legitimacy played the same role: they were the heavenly half of a tally offered in response to the emperor's earthly conduct. In the realm of popular religion, amulets functioned along similar principles: they signified the imprimatur of higher celestial authorities (who kept the other half of the talisman), and so informed spirits and demons that the bearer could command them with legitimate authority. In the Daoist realm, they were bestowed in response to the behavior or destiny of the adept: those of sufficient virtue (or whose fate permitted it) encountered a master (whether divine or mortal) and

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149 The classic work connecting Daoist amulets and works to signifiers of imperial authority is Anna Seidel, “Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments: Daoist Roots in the Apocrypha,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*, vol. 2, ed. Michel Strickmann, pp. 291-371. On Zhou political authority, see Baumbacher, *Empowered Writing* 33-53; David Pankenier, “The Cosmo-Political Background of Heaven's Mandate,” *Early China* 20 (1995): 123ff. See also his book-length study, *Astrology and Cosmology in Early China: Conforming Earth to Heaven* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013).



received either the earthly half of a *fu*, or the instructions and rituals necessary to generate their own. Like earthly *fu*-tallies, heavenly ones could be forged, stolen, or transmitted improperly. The gods were not easily fooled, however; they ignored the false tallies and penalized those who improperly transmitted them. The receipt and transmission of *fu* thus confirmed the authority of the master and disciple involved and situated them both within a heavenly hierarchy. Those who obtained the amulets or accompanying instructions outside the proper channels were ignored by the gods, and those who transmitted them improperly were subject to harsh punishment.<sup>150</sup>

Placing the *Rectifying Methods*' amulets in the proper context reveals that they implicate the bearer in a complex web of significations. First, he or she received the talismans and accompanying instructions because of innate virtue or moral conduct, and they were transmitted from a master (whether mortal or deity) via a prescribed ritual. Second, they do not possess intrinsic power. The abilities conferred by the *Most High Scripture*'s amulets depend on the assent of the deities who assess the adept's virtue. The amulets signify their bearer's status as a lower but legitimate member of the heavenly hierarchy. While the powers they confer depend on the virtue of the bearer, virtue alone is not enough: it requires the recognition of higher authorities, who bestow tokens in response. The key factor is thus neither virtue nor mere possession, but rather what

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150 On *fu* and other sorts of talismans, see Baumbacher, *Empowered Writing* 13-31. On *fu* in popular religion, see *ibid.*, pp. 58-62. On specifically Daoist *fu* and their antecedents (as well as the role of morality), see pp. 58-62. Threats of punishment for improperly revealing a scripture – known as “leaking” (*xie* 泄 or *lou* 漏) it – are common throughout Daoist works. The *Zhengfa jing* details them in 262c.12-263a.2. For other examples, see, e.g., CT 320 *Dongxuan lingbao danshui feishu xiaojie miaojing* 洞玄靈寶丹水飛術運度小劫妙經 9b, CT 1336 *Dongzhen taishang jinpian hufu zhenwen jing* 洞真太上金篇虎符真文經 2b. Like earthly punishments, these punishments often applied not only to the individual actor but also members of his or her family.

legitimate possession signifies: the imprimatur of the celestial authorities. The amulets of the *Rectifying Methods* are the sign of this imprimatur.

Talismans deserve discussion at length because they probably formed the core of the *Rectifying Methods* as revealed to Yang Xi, just as they form the core of the received version. They are the chief means by which the bearer performs the work for which they have been deputized by the lords of the Three Heavens; that is, they rectify the present chaotic world in preparation for the peaceful era to come.

#### The Shangqing version

Certain fragments of the *Rectifying Methods* can be conclusively linked to the Shangqing corpus via intertextual citation, presence in ancient bibliographies, and overlapping content. I will explore these links more fully in the following chapters. Despite disagreements among early sources about the work's antiquity, on balance they argue that certain early fragments can help us reconstruct a hypothetical "proto-version." The information found in these fragments, when compared to the general tenor of the Shangqing corpus as a whole, indicates that the *Rectifying Methods* as taken up and modified by Yang Xi predicted the end times and promoted certain specific methods of surviving the apocalypse. While the exact work revealed to Yang Xi is not available to us, existing information permits a tentative reconstruction.

Chapter 4: Prophecy and the Pen: The *Rectifying Methods* and the Rise of the Liu-Song

The *Rectifying Methods* may have been taken up by Yang Xi, but they did not remain his property alone. Very soon after the Shangqing revelations ceased, the work was altered by other authors who put it to new uses. Just as Yang's revelations spoke to his own historical context, these new authors reshaped the *Rectifying Methods* according to their own times. A figure that loomed large in this new shaping was Liu Yu 劉裕 (r. 402-422). Founder of the Liu-Song 劉宋 (420-479) and erstwhile general in service of the Eastern Jin 東晉 (317-420), Liu made a name for himself by putting down several rebellions against the throne before deciding to seize it himself. Various Daoist authors decided that his bid to rule China was significant enough to provoke heavenly attention, detailing the signs and wonders that coincided with it. Some decided to support him, presenting him with texts that both augured his rise and – in a tradition stretching back to the Eastern Han “Weft Texts” (*chen wei* 讖緯) – functioned as tokens which served to legitimate it.<sup>151</sup> Others – including the anonymous editors of a new version of the *Rectifying Methods* – maintained the apocalyptic certainty of the Shangqing works but felt compelled to acknowledge the Liu clan's power.

The sociohistorical fabric

The decline of the Eastern Jin was marked by famine, royal incompetence, and internecine conflict. The dynasty finally fell to one of its own generals, the warlord Liu Yu 劉裕 (363-422). Through cunning and treachery, Liu had managed to assume control

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<sup>151</sup> Much has been written on the use of texts as talismans that legitimate political authority. See Baumbacher, *Empowered Writing* 50-56 for a recent example.

of the dominant military power, the elite Northern Palace Army (*beifu bing* 北府兵). Conceived of by the brilliant general Huan Wen 桓溫 (312-373) and realized in 377 by the statesman Xie An 謝安 (320-385), the Northern Palace Army functioned as a bulwark against northern aggression and a means to retake the Central Plain. The new army proved its worth six years later at the Battle of Feishui 淝水 (383), where it defeated a much larger invading force under the command of the lord of the Former Qin 前秦 (351-395) and recovered a broad swathe of modern Shandong, Henan, and Shaanxi that had been lost to the northerners.

However, the Jin court was soon weakened by factional infighting, and their newly-reclaimed territory was carved up by the northern states of Southern Yan 南燕 (398-410) and Latter Qin 後秦 (387-414). Meanwhile, the Jin emperor Sima Yao 司馬曜 (Emperor Xiaowu 孝武, r. 372-396) squandered his kingdom's wealth in pursuit of personal pleasure, and appointed his second son, the severely intellectually-disabled Sima Dezong 司馬德宗 (r. 396-418) heir apparent. With Yao's death, Dezong was crowned Emperor An of Jin 晉安帝. True power, however, lay in the hands of his father's brother, the prime minister Sima Daozi 司馬道子 (364-402). But Daozi's power would not last.

After a devastating famine and a series of agrarian revolts, Huan Wen's son Xuan 桓玄 (369-404), lord of the powerful province of Jingzhou 荊州, took matters into his own hands and rebelled. He bribed the commander of the Northern Palace Army, and their joint forces captured the capital in 403. Xuan executed Sima Daozi and his son, forced Emperor An to abdicate, and established his own dynasty of Chu 楚. The new emperor immediately moved to solidify his power. His chief threat in that regard was the

very reason he had captured the capital: the Northern Palace Army. By then, it had become a semi-independent military power that had proven difficult for the throne to control. (Indeed, it had rebelled against Sima Daozi in 397, allying itself with two local warlords.) Exiling its commander and murdering its generals, he sought to bring the army under control by promoting lower-ranking officers who would be loyal to the throne. One of these men was Liu Yu, who immediately began plotting Xuan's ruin.<sup>152</sup>

Liu was the son of an impoverished noble family who had fled their ancestral home in the north. Conscripted into military service, he was made an officer of a general of the Northern Palace Army. Liu's relatively low rank meant he emerged from Huan Xuan's purge unscathed (a fate not shared by his commander). Immediately after the purge of 403, he began plotting against Xuan with other officers of similar rank across the kingdom. On February 28<sup>th</sup>, 404, simultaneous rebellions led by these officers rocked the nascent Chu dynasty. Liu and his officers slaughtered their overlords (all Huan family members), joined their armies, and marched on the capital. Huan Xuan was forced to flee to his base in Jingzhou with Emperor An in tow. Raising an army in great haste, he met a general of the Northern Route Army in battle. Returning to his base in defeat, Xuan was killed shortly thereafter. Sporadic resistance by Huan clansmen was crushed within a year, and Sima Dezong was reinstated. Liu spent the next several years establishing his fame by recapturing lost territory and vanquishing threats to Jin power. In 409, he destroyed the kingdom of Southern Yan; in 410, he crushed a peasant army led by the warlord Lu Xun 盧循 (?-411). Though the empire appeared stable, it was closer than ever to collapse.

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<sup>152</sup> The preceding is a summary of Wang, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 333-336, 340-341.

The generals of the Northern Palace Army had seen the writing on the wall, and began jockeying for power. Liu proved the most capable. First one, then another of his former comrades fell before him, and by 413 Liu had solidified power in his own hands. His remaining rivals (including a member of the imperial clan) fled north to Latter Qin. Meanwhile, he was still nominally in Emperor An's service, and enlarged Jin's territory by conquering neighboring states. After the fall of Southern Yan, he sacked Chengdu and annexed its holdings (Yizhou 益州, in modern Sichuan) in 412. Taking advantage of Latter Qin's troubles with nomadic tribes along its northern border, Liu launched a campaign against the rival state in 416. He promptly conquered Luoyang, and the court fled to the ancient capital of Chang'an. This, too, fell before Liu, and the last Latter Qin emperor was dragged off to Jiankang and executed in 417. Having reconquered the heartland, Liu Yu was emperor in all but name. He returned to Jiankang, and in 420 accepted the abdication of the final ruler of the Eastern Jin. Thus was the Liu-Song born.<sup>153</sup>

#### The Liu-Song and political prophecy

Liu's new dynasty would be short-lived, ending a mere sixty years after it had been founded. But no one knew that at the time. When Liu died unexpectedly in 422, power passed to his son Liu Yifu 劉義符 (406-424). Yifu was quickly assassinated, along with his older brother, by high-ranking officials who sought to rule the Liu-Song from behind the throne. His successor Liu Yilong 劉義隆 proved cunning and capable, however. He had the officials responsible executed and successfully stabilized the new empire,

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<sup>153</sup> The preceding summarizes Wang, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 341-348, 353-359.

reigning for thirty years as Emperor Wen of the Liu-Song 宋文帝 (r. 424-445). After a brief interregnum, his successor Liu Jun 劉駿 (430-453) presided over another period of relative stability.<sup>154</sup> This stability, coupled with Liu Yu's military success in the central plain, made it seem almost inevitable that the Lius would eventually reunify China. Their success did not go unnoticed by contemporary Daoist authors, who rushed to declare their support for the ascendant dynasty.

The first prophetic text to predict the Liu family's rise was probably the *Scripture of the Divine Spells of the Cavernous Abyss* (CT 335 *Dongyuan shenzhou jing* 洞淵神咒經), composed sometime in the early fourth century. In coded language, it declares the fall of the Jin and the rise of the Lius as their legitimate successor, holding that Liu Yu's ascent signals the advent of an age of peace and prosperity under which the true teaching of the Dao will flourish.<sup>155</sup> A contemporaneous work borrows the same coded language to make the same point: the Jin will fall, and the Lius will succeed them.<sup>156</sup> A Celestial Masters work from the same period, the *Scripture of the Inner Explanations of the Three Heavens* (CT 1205 *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經), connects the Liu family with the Dao itself and notes a series of auspicious signs that legitimate their rise.<sup>157</sup>

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154 See Wang, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 359-360.

155 See Seidel, "Image of the Perfect Ruler" 237-240. Christine Mollier reviews the internal textual evidence and argues conclusively for a date before or shortly after the ascent of Liu Yu in *Une Apocalypse Taoïste*, 56-60. See also EoT, s.v. "Dongyuan shenzhou jing."

156 I refer here to the *Scripture of the Numinous Treasure on the Causes and Conditions of Past Lives, of the Cavern of Mystery* (CT 322 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao benxing yinyuan jing* 太上洞玄靈寶本行因緣經). See Mollier, *ibid.*

157 See Bokenkamp, *EDS* 186-188, 221-222.

The second version of the *Rectifying Methods* appeared in this context. However, that version is not directly accessible to us. It is preserved in a much later compendium, the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* (CT 1139 *Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊).<sup>158</sup> The *Pearl Satchel* is the work of one Wang Xuanhe 王懸河 (fl. 664-684). We know frustratingly little of Wang. He was the calligrapher for two inscriptions of imperial texts, one in 664 and another in 684. This suggests he may have served the Tang emperor Li Zhi 李治 (Tang Gaozang 唐高宗, r. 650-84) in some capacity, and perhaps could have compiled the work at imperial command. An imperial audience is suggested by some section titles, such as “Laozi as the teacher of emperors” (老子為帝師品; see 9.8b), as well as the work’s general concern with the place of Daoism in history and society. But the circumstances of composition are especially difficult to reconstruct because the received version of the *Pearl Satchel* is not Wang’s original. The version he composed contained thirty juan; the one that has come down to us contains only ten. We do not know how, why, or by whom the work was rearranged. Some sections have been moved; some are missing entirely. But the general ideological thrust is clear. The *Pearl Satchel* is hortatory literature. Wang did not aim to present a complete survey of Daoist works; rather, he collected extracts containing theory and practice that he favored, as well as the biographies of exemplary Daoists who completed these practices and the benefits they achieved. The Daoism of the *Pearl Satchel* is not Daoism “as it was” in Wang’s day; it is Daoism as he wanted it to be.

So much is clear from the received work – though given its extensive modification, one must use it with care when attempting to distinguish between Wang’s

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<sup>158</sup> What follows is based on TC, s.v. “Sandong zhunang,” and EoT, s.v. “Sandong zhunang.”



editorial motives and those of his later redactors. But the *Pearl Satchel*'s use of the *Rectifying Methods* gives us no reason to challenge the assumptions outlined above. Its only direct citation of that work concerns cosmological theory. The citation takes up almost four pages (9.1a-4b) of a five-page section called "The turning of the *kalpas*" 劫運品. A kalpa (rendered in Chinese as *jie* 劫) is a standard Indian unit denoting an unimaginably vast expanse of time that was imported into China along with the spread of Buddhism.<sup>159</sup> A simple conception of the kalpa divides it into two sorts: the small kalpa (*xiao jie* 小劫) and great kalpa (*da jie* 大劫). The *Pearl Satchel*'s citation of the *Rectifying Methods* begins by presenting one method of computing cosmic time, continues by discussing the signs disasters attendant upon a conjunction of small kalpas, and concludes by discussing the signs attendant upon the conjunction of great kalpas. The work continues with much more detailed omens of the coming end, chiefly in the form of the movements of deities and other actions in the hidden realm that would be invisible to the mortal eye. I discuss these in more detail below. For the moment, I want to focus on the material that links the first post-Shangqing recension of the *Rectifying Methods* with contemporaneous literature that predicted the rise of the Liu family.

This material consists of another detailed prediction:

當有赤星見於東方，白彗干於月門，祆子續黨於蟲口，亂群墳尸於越川，人啖其種，萬里絕煙。強臣稱霸，弱主蒙塵，其後當有五靈曷瑞，義合本根。龍精之後，續族之君，平滅四虜，應符者隆，龍虎之世，三六乃清。民無橫命，柞無危患。自承之後四十六丁亥，是三劫之周。又從數五十五丁亥至壬辰，癸巳是也。則是大劫之周。天翻地覆，金玉化消，人淪山沒，六合冥一。

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<sup>159</sup> See DDB, s.v. "劫." The version of the *Rectifying Methods* consulted by the editors of the *Pearl Satchel* differs from the classical Buddhist conception of a kalpa. While it follows the typical division into small 小 and great 大 kalpas, its subdivisions of those two periods of time are unique. Usually, a great kalpa is fulfilled after the passage of eight small kalpas, or a total of 1,347,000,000 years.

At this time, the Red Star<sup>160</sup> will appear in the east, the White Sweeper<sup>161</sup> will transgress the Lunar Gate. Demons will link together at the mouth of the insects,<sup>162</sup> chaotic mobs will pile their corpses in mounds at the rivers of Yue; people will eat their own posterity; after myriad *li*, the smoke of cooking fires will be cut off. Strong feudal lords will become hegemony; weak kings will flee the capital. After this there will be bright signs of the five numens; righteousness will accord with its root. The descendant of the Dragon-seed, the lord who continues the clan, will destroy the four rebels.<sup>163</sup> Talismanic responses will descend.<sup>164</sup> In the generation of the Dragon-tiger, the three-and-six will clarify. The people will have no [urge to] rebel; the throne will have no danger. In the forty-sixth *dinghai* year after Yao – this will be a complete cycle of three kalpas. Moreover, counting from the fifty-fifth *dinghai* year to the *jisi* [month?] of the [following] *renchen* year: this will be the completion of one great kalpa. Heaven and earth will be overthrown; jade and gold will transform and disappear. The people will sink into oblivion, and the mountains will be drowned. Everything in the Six Directions will become one in the darkness.<sup>165</sup>

Many of the figures and portents in this passage remain obscure, but enough remains clear to make an educated guess at its meaning: the end times are at hand. The passage begins by invoking specific celestial phenomena that – unlike the movements in the hidden realm detailed in 9.1b-2a – would have been visible to human beings. It continues by obliquely referring to contemporary events. The “descendant of the Dragon-seed”

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160 A star located in the first of the twenty-eight lunar mansions. See Handian, s.v. “赤星,” *Grand Ricci*, s.v. “角宿.”

161 The White Sweeper appears in the second *juan* of the *Jin shu* chapter on astronomy in a quote that nearly matches Zhang Shoujie’s 張守節 (?-?) *Correct Meanings of the Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji zhengyi* 史記正義) 27.20a. The latter was presented to the throne in the twenty-fourth year (736-737) of the Kaiyuan 開元 reign period (712-742). The interlinear commentary at 27.20 holds that the “essence” 精 of Venus “scatters” 散 into nine stars, one of them being the White Sweeper.

162 I am uncertain what this refers to. It appears to be the only appearance of the two characters 蟲口 as a binome in the canon, other than a citation of this passage at SDZN 9.3b-9.4a. The compound refers to a medicinal plant elsewhere in the Chinese literary corpus.

163 The “lord who continues the clan” is probably Liu Yu 劉裕 (363-422). This would make the “four rebels” four military commanders he defeated. Three of these are probably Sun En 孫恩 (?-402), his younger sister’s husband Lu Xun 盧循 (?-411) and Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369-404); I am uncertain of the fourth.

164 The implication here is that the actions of the “descendant of the Dragon-seed” will form the earthly half of a tally, and the heavenly half – in the form of the signs and wonders depicted above – will manifest.

165 SDZN 9.4aff.

probably refers to Liu Yu. The clan he continues is the house of Liu, founders of the Han 漢 dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE) whose surname had long been associated with dragons. While Liu himself claimed descent from the Han Lius, the facts of the matter are uncertain. That uncertainty was not shared by the author of this version of the *Rectifying Methods*, however. Like the authors of the *Inner Explanations* and the *Divine Spells*, they confidently augur a coming age of peace and prosperity presided over by the most powerful and successful warlord in recent memory.

Another version of the *Rectifying Methods* that existed around the same time makes the same confident prediction. We find it in the work of Lu Xiuqing 陸修靜 (406-477). A few important things happened around the time of his birth. First, a body of works called the Lingbao 靈寶 (or “Numinous Treasure”) revelations appeared sometime around 400. These works were a direct response to the popularity of the Shangqing revelations. They prominently feature the Ge 葛 family, relatives (and rivals) of the Taos who lived at the same place and time. The new revelations feature more exalted postmortem fates for members of the Ge clan, and in fact claim to supersede the authority of the Shangqing revelations entirely thanks to their own descent from a higher heaven.<sup>166</sup> Though Lu was initiated into the Shangqing lineage, he would later become a stout partisan of the Lingbao corpus. Second, of course, was the ascent of Liu Yu in 402. Though this happened before Lu’s time, the Liu clan would rise to the height of its power during the age of his maturity. As an élite in the favor of the royal family, Lu would certainly have been writing in response to their concerns.

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<sup>166</sup> See Bokenkamp, “Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honor of Rolf A. Stein* (Brussels: Institute Belges des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1983) 2:442-443.

This context animates his version of the *Rectifying Methods*:

按經言：承唐之後四十六丁亥，其間先後庚子之年，妖子續黨於禹口，亂群填尸於越川，強臣稱霸，弱主西播，龍精之後，續祚之君，罷除偽主，退翦逆民，衆道勢訖，此經當行。推數考實，莫不信然。期運既至大法方隆。

The scripture states: “Forty-six *dinghai* years after [the sage-king Yao], sooner or later within that period of time, in the *gengzi* year [400], the short-lived ones will continue to form gangs at Yu’s mouth; the rebellious hordes will fill with their corpses the streams of Yue. A strong minister will declare himself hegemon; a weak lord will spread out towards the west. The descendant of dragon seed [is] the lord who will continue the Mandate.” This lord is to eradicate the false ruler and cut down and drive off the rebellious people. At this, the strength of the myriad ways will come to an end, and these scriptures will be put into practice. Figuring by the fated numbers and considering what actually happened, all [these predictions] have proven trustworthy. Since the foretold cycle has arrived, the Grand Law [of Lingbao] has risen to prominence.<sup>167</sup>

The similarities to the earlier extract from the *Pearl Satchel* is obvious. So, too, are the differences. Like the *Divine Spells* and the *Inner Explanations*, Lu here predicts a peaceful world order administered by the Liu clan, whose rise is augured by the appearance in the year 400 of the Lingbao scriptures that legitimate their rule. This contrasts sharply with their role in the *Pearl Satchel*’s version. There, while they indeed preside over a peaceful world, their unification of the realm is merely one of several signs of the end times. The Lius have no power against the disasters that are to come.

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<sup>167</sup> The translation is from Bokenkamp, “Lu Xiujing, Buddhism” 192.

Table 2

Sequence of Events in the Apocalyptic Predictions of the *Purple Texts*, the *Pearl Satchel*, and Lu Xiujing's *Preface*

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*Purple Texts*

Yao rules → 46 dinghai years elapse → Apocalyptic disasters and political decay befall before and after the jiashen year; a weak ruler is referred to in coded language; a remnant is saved → the Lord of the Golden Porte inaugurates an era of Great Peace in a renchen year

*The Pearl Satchel*

Yao rules → 46 dinghai years elapse → celestial records are rectified → apocalyptic disasters and political decay befall before and after the jiashen year; a remnant is saved → a strong ruler (Liu Yu) is referred to in coded language; he inaugurates an age of peace → the universe is destroyed in a renchen year

*Lu's Preface*

Yao rules → 46 dinghai years elapse → apocalyptic disasters and political decay befall in a gengzi year (400); a weak king is referred to in coded language; this weak king is supplanted by a strong ruler (Liu Yu). Auspicious omens descend; a peaceful era ensues.

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This arrangement is not meant to suggest that the *Pearl Satchel's* version preceded Lu's. The relationship between the two is unclear, though it is evident that each drew on some version or versions of the *Rectifying Methods* that modified the *Purple Texts*.

The Shangqing version: a step forward

It is uncertain whether Lu is citing a different version of the *Rectifying Methods* or (as has been claimed) revising the version found in the *Pearl Satchel*.<sup>168</sup> Whatever the case, both versions cited above share a common ancestor in the apocalyptic predictions of the *Purple Texts*. Disaster strikes around the forty-sixth dinghai year after Yao; events in the political realm presage a peace. This basic timeline was reimagined twice in the Liu-Song. Both new versions augur the rise of the Lius, with coded references to a weak king being replaced by more obvious references to Liu Yu, who takes the realm from the king in question and ushers in a peaceful era. The key difference between the world of the *Pearl Satchel* and that of Lu's *Preface* hinges on the fate of this new world. For Lu, it continues under the Liu family's benevolent aegis. For the anonymous editor of the version found in the *Pearl Satchel*, their rule is but one sign of the coming end.

It is at precisely this point that the *Pearl Satchel's* version of the *Rectifying Methods* probably recalls its predecessor among Yang Xi's revelations. Much like the *Purple Texts*, the *Pearl Satchel's Rectifying Methods* promises that even as mountains founder and the world burns, not all will be lost:

惟高上三天，白簡青籙，乃得晏鴻翻而騰翔，飛景霄而盼目耳。

Only those [whose names are inscribed] in green records on white slips in the exalted Three Heavens will in ease and comfort take flight on great wings, fly on the phosphors to the empyrean, paying a visit to and fixing their regard upon [the Three Heavens].<sup>169</sup>

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168 Bokenkamp, "Lu Xiujing, Buddhism" 317 and n.41.

169 SDZN 9.4a-b. For a discussion of the term 盼目, see the appendix.

One learns the identity of the “green records on white slips” at the beginning of the *Pearl Satchel*’s citation of the *Rectifying Methods*:

白簡青籙，得道人名記。皇民譜錄，數極唐堯。是為小劫一交。其中損益，有二十四萬人應為得者。自承唐之後，數四十六丁亥，前後中間甲申之年，乃小劫之會，人名應定。

The names of those who will attain the Dao are recorded in green records on white slips. The numbers of the Genealogy of the People of the Three Sovereigns extended through the time of Yao. This was the turning of one small kalpa. During this time 2,400,000 were subtracted from the count of those who should attain [the Dao]. In the *jiashen* year sometime before or after the forty-sixth dinghai year after Yao, there will be a conjunction of small kalpas, and the records must be fixed again.

The passage from the *Pearl Satchel* quoted earlier that explicitly predicts Liu Yu’s rise functions like a commentary on this passage, detailing the specific signs that occur near the forty-sixth dinghai year after Yao. Those meant to survive the cataclysm have their names recorded on the heavenly lists – here called the “Genealogy of the People of the Three Sovereigns.” While this portion of the *Pearl Satchel* has clearly undergone editing by a Lingbao-affiliated author, I will suggest nonetheless that this is a collective name for all of the records included in the version of the *Rectifying Methods* received by Yang Xi. The presence of one’s name on these records guaranteed salvation from the disasters predicted by the work itself.

Chapter 5: A Lord of Space and Time: The *Secret Essentials* and the Quest for Power  
The final iteration of the *Rectifying Methods* to appear during the early medieval period was a product of sectarian debate and imperial ambition. The pressure of these twin forces moved the editors of a government-sponsored encyclopedia to fashion a new version. The result was the *Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens of the Cavern of Perfection* (*Dongzhen santian zhengfa jing* 洞真三天正法經). It combined inherited and created material to meet the needs of a new political age.

The sociohistorical fabric

The bloody politics of the sixth century informed the creation of the *Dongzhen zhengfa jing*. Its place was the Northern Zhou 北周 (557-581), a kingdom formed from the ruins of the Western Wei 西魏 (535-556), itself a rump state of the Northern Wei 北魏 (386-534). Northern Zhou's foundations were laid by the general Yuwen Tai 宇文泰 (507-56), who poisoned the final emperor of the Northern Wei and inaugurated the Western Wei, with himself as the power behind the throne. As Tai lay dying of illness in 556, he faced a crisis of succession; with his own sons too young to assume power, he appointed Yuwen Hu 護 (515-572), the son of his eldest brother, as successor. Hu in turn crowned Tai's legitimate son Yuwen Jue 覺 (542-557) as the first emperor of the Northern Zhou. Jue was not Tai's oldest son, however; that honor belonged to Yuwen Yu 毓 (534-560), son of a concubine. This became relevant for the Northern Zhou when Jue came of age, at which point Hu poisoned him and installed Yu as emperor. Hu repeated the process in 560, this time appointing Tai's fourth son, Yuwen Yong 邕 (543-78), who would later be



known by the posthumous name Emperor Wu of Zhou 周武帝. It was Emperor Wu who finally outwitted Yuwen Hu, assassinating him during a meeting with the Empress Dowager in 572. Thus, at age 30, Zhou Wudi became the first son of Yuwen Tai to hold power in his own right.<sup>170</sup>

With his chief political rival dead, Emperor Wu began sweeping reforms to the structure of Northern Zhou social life. At the kingdom's inception, the economic and military power of Northern Zhou rested on the twin pillars of the equal-field (*juntian* 均田) system of land allotment, first developed during the Northern Wei, and the *fubing* 府兵 armies (an innovation of Yuwen Tai). Under the equal-field system, land was allotted to peasants according to their projected manpower. During the Northern Wei, for instance, this meant every male above twenty-five *sui* was given forty *mu* 畝 of arable land, with each woman being granted half that; in the Northern Zhou, each married couple was given one hundred and forty *mu*, divided into plots devoted to mulberry trees and various sorts of crops, and required to meet certain agricultural quotas. The *fubing* system divided the military into armies of various sizes. The base unit was the *yitong* 儀同, comprised of one thousand men; these were further grouped into bureaus called *kaifu* 開府, with two *kaifu* under the command of a general (*da jiangjun* 大將軍) and two generals under a Grand General, Pillar of the State (*zhuguo dajiangjun* 柱國大將軍). With a total of six Grand Generals, the early Northern Zhou had at its command 48,000 troops. Aside from its organization of the military, the *fubing* system also registered

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<sup>170</sup> This summary of events is taken from Wang Zhongluo, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 565-569. Wang details Zhou Wudi's extensive economic and military reforms on pp. 569-580. Lewis provides an overview of the collapse of the Wei, the formation of the Northern Zhou, and the rise of the Sui on *Empires* 73-85.

military households separately from the peasantry and exempted them from taxes and corvée. Zhou Wudi abolished this practice, combining the military and equal-field registries – a reform that vastly broadened the pool of potential recruits.<sup>171</sup>

One significant check on this reform was the vast number of Buddhist monasteries within Northern Zhou territory. According to one estimate, they numbered around ten thousand, housing around one tenth of the total population – some one million people. Jaques Gernêt, relying on Buddhist sources, raises the number of monasteries to over forty thousand and counts three million monastics in total. Because monastics were exempt from taxes, corvée labor, and military service, this represented a significant drain on the Northern Zhou coffers, as well as its agricultural output and military strength. These costs extended to the construction, maintenance, and ornamentation of monasteries, which often required significant expenditures of manpower and materials. One Northern Wei monastery in Luoyang, for instance, was over 200 meters tall and contained numerous furniture and decorations of gold and rare stone; the construction of another cost well over six hundred thousand in cash. While such displays of extravagance were rare, the sheer number of monasteries and monastics meant that aggregate costs were high.<sup>172</sup> Emperor Wu’s response was to institute the first persecution of Buddhism in Chinese history. He demolished thousands of temples, seizing their land and wealth to

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171 Wang, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 574-575, 579. On the *juntian* system, see Hanyu dacidian, s.v. “均田.” It has been the subject of much scholarly attention. See, for instance, Han Guopan 韓國磐, *Beichao Sui Tang de juntian zhidu* [The equal field system of the Northern Dynasties, Sui, and Tang], Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1984.

172 Wang, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 583, estimates the total number of monastics at one million, or around one-tenth of the total population; Jacques Gernet’s estimates come from *Les aspects économiques du Bouddhisme dans la société Chinoise du V<sup>e</sup> au X<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1956), 4. See also pp. 15-16.

fund his armies. He also laïcized vast numbers of monastics: two million in 574 alone. The result was a vast expansion in the land and labor available to the state, and a corresponding explosion in the size of the army: at its height, Emperor Wu commanded some 240,000 troops. He used this vast military force to conquer the neighboring state of Northern Qi at the end of 576, reunifying North China. His dominance of the region assured, he turned his attention to stabilizing the empire and asserting his own authority. The *Dongzhen zhengfa jing* played a minor role in this process as part of a much larger work.<sup>173</sup>

The first comment on this work to be found in the historical record is a remark by the Buddhist monk Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667):

周武平齊……自續道書號《無上祕要》。

After Emperor Wu of Zhou pacified Qi... he compiled a Daoist book called the *Secret Essentials of the Most High*.<sup>174</sup>

At first glance, this seems to be an unproblematic statement. John Lagerwey notes, however, that it is likely incorrect: the WSBY's compilation had probably commenced in 574 at the Belvedere for Penetrating to the Way (*Tongdao guan* 通道觀). Assuming Lagerwey's dating is sound, why would Daoxuan provide an incorrect date? The answer rests on a fundamental principle of Chinese historiography: within certain constraints, facts are subordinate to narrative. In the compilation of biographies, for instance, certain facts of a subject's life were routinely manipulated so that he or she conformed to the

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173 For the size of Wudi's army, see Wang, *Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 580; for his "persecution" of Buddhism, see 584. Gernet, *Les aspects* 7 n 4, records him siezing 40,000 monasteries and distributing them to feudal lords.

174 The note appears in his *Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳), T 50.436c10-14.

models set by famous worthies of previous ages. Interpolations and deletions were standard practice in this effort. Well-known incidents from tradition were frequently inserted at key points in the biography in order to convey the biographer's judgment on the subject or to illustrate the subject's character. Such manipulations would have been immediately evident to the intended audience, who would have understood them in these terms and not as blatant distortions of the historical record; indeed, "fictional" incidents that stretched the bounds of credulity would have been immediately noticed by that audience and, on occasion, were condemned by the biographer recruited by the deceased's friends and family.<sup>175</sup> Further, any biography – especially those included in the Standard Histories – was the final product of a long editorial process that required hard decisions about which episodes from the subject's life ought to be omitted and which included. Twitchett details the criteria a biographer would have applied in making such choices:

The historian sought to establish the subject's basic characterization by categorizing his biography in terms of one of the normalized roles [in imperial society]... To maintain consistency, the historian often had recourse to the device of recording events that did not fit into this general picture in some other section of the history, often in the annals or in somebody else's biography, so as to leave the picture of the individual intact and at the same time preserve his own professional integrity as a recorder of the true facts... Biographies, then, in spite of their having each derived from.. separate... [sources], were to be judged as a corpus of exemplary lives from a given period.<sup>176</sup>

Knowledge of these historiographic conventions allows us to detect the ideological charge behind Daoxuan's comment. His "mistake" was justified by the ideological requirements of history writing. Even if he were not mistaken, the same ideological

<sup>175</sup> On the role of "fictional" incidents in Chinese biography, see Denis Twitchett, "Problems of Chinese Biography," in Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett, eds., *Confucian Personalities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962): 28-30.

<sup>176</sup> Twitchett, "Problems" 32-33.

charge applies: by connecting the WSBY's compilation to the conquest of Qi, the historian implicates it in the process of unification.

This notion is supported by the general role of encyclopedias in a given emperor's ideological project. As detailed earlier, encyclopedias were more than simple repositories of facts. They were explicitly ideological efforts aimed at cementing a ruler's rhetorical authority. This is no less true of Daoist encyclopedias like the *Wushang biyao* than it is of "secular" works like the *Taiping yulan*. All partook of a common heritage that stretched back to the Warring States. In the words of Mark Edward Lewis:

In the late Warring States period, developments within the textual traditions and the political realm coincided to produce new forms of writing intended to encompass the world in writing... These works were part of a general trend proclaiming completeness or totality as the highest form of textual authority. This dream of writing the world in a single text prefigured, in turn, the enterprise of uniting the world in a single state. The close links in imperial China of political authority with textual mastery or patronage emerged out of this confusion of the intellectual and political realms in a shared ideal of a single, comprehensive authority. I call the texts reflecting this development "encyclopedic," not in the modern sense of a reference work consulted for basic information on all matters of concern, but in its original sense of "cycle of learning," grand schemes that led the reader through an ordered, often hierarchical sequence including all essential knowledge...[A]ll [of these works] sought to create a sense of completeness through appeals to schemata of recurrent patterns, ultimate origins, numerical categories implying totality... or related models.<sup>177</sup>

As it happens, many of these same principles animated the compilation of the *Wushang biyao*. As Lagerwey notes:

The cosmological speculations of the Daoists... would not displease an emperor whose political ambitions fittingly demanded a religion that embraced all, from the highest heavens to the deepest hells... [T]he encyclopedia responds perfectly to this ideological exigency. Beginning with the Great Dao that precedes the division of the unitary *qi*, the *Wushang biyao* follows an itinerary that passes through all the distinctions of the heavens, the hells, divinities, writings, techniques, and prescriptions to arrive at a conclusion in spontaneity and the return to silence.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 287.

<sup>178</sup> Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 29.

Lagerwey is commenting here on the organization of the *Wushang*, which begins with the parturition of primordial chaos into the heavens and continues by describing the heavens; the cycles of time; the bureaucracies of the unseen world; the gods' appearances, regalia, and attendants; the various sorts of Daoist writings (including scriptures, talismans, petitions, and hymns) and their proper transmission; methods for preserving the body and extending life; and finally the completion of the Way and the return to silence.<sup>179</sup> We see here a direct connection to the encyclopedic works of an earlier epoch, which – like those that would follow in the Tang and the Song – formed an ideological instrument for the unification of empire.

The ideological function of the WSBY in Zhou Wudi's reunification of China is further confirmed by the administrative work he undertook during its process of compilation. As Lagerwey notes:

According to the annals of the *Book of Zhou*, [Emperor Wu] spent the last eighteen months of his life reorganizing the administration of his enlarged empire and preparing the unification of all of China... [T]he end of the reign of Emperor Wu was as much devoted to the political unification of China as... the beginning was to the ideological unification of his empire. It is for this reason that it seems probable to us that this phrase in the *Continued Lives* has only an indicative value.

The compilation of the *Wushang biyao* was part of a long and ambitious plan. It is of a piece with his early administrative work to stabilize and expand the Northern Zhou, his military conquests, and the later reorganization of his empire. All were driven by the same aim: to unify and rule all of China. Central to this effort was the ideological foundation provided by a detailed and coherent written world.

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179 See EoT, "Wushang biyao," and Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 220-221.

## A Buddhist critique and a Daoist response

The coherent world of the *Secret Essentials* arose in response to a variety of editorial pressures. The two most important were the ideological needs of the nascent Zhou state and the critiques of Buddhist monks and functionaries who were competing to meet these needs with Confucian and Daoist counterparts. The conflict gave rise to a series of court debates held by Emperor Wu, from which the Daoists emerged victorious.<sup>180</sup> The victors did not ignore the critiques of their opponents, however. As a compilation of extracts from various Daoist works, the *Secret Essentials* depended for its own coherence on the coherence of its constituent works. It was this exact point that attracted the ire of Buddhist polemicists. Notable among these was the mathematician and astronomer Zhen Luan 甄鸞 (fl. 535-81). While not a monk himself, Zhen's sympathy for Buddhism was sufficient to prompt the compilation (at imperial command) of a treatise measuring the relative merits of Buddhism and Daoism. The result was *Laughing at the Dao* (*Xiaodao lun* 笑道論), presented to the throne of Emperor Wu in 570. Displeased with Zhen's effort, the emperor ordered the work burned. A summary survives in the later *Expanded Collection Spreading the Light of Buddhism* (*Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, 7<sup>th</sup> c.). Zhen presents extracts from a variety of Daoist works organized into thirty-six chapters. These chapters cover a variety of topics; cosmogony, cosmology, and demonology constitute just a few. In each case, Zhen cites Daoist works on his chosen topic to form what he considers a coherent position, before offering a response headed by the phrase "I laugh at

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<sup>180</sup> The debates are discussed extensively in Livia Kohn, *Laughing at the Tao: Debates Among Buddhist and Taoists in Medieval China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3-46. Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 21ff discusses their background as it relates to the *Secret Essentials*.

this and say...” 臣笑曰……. His response draws on other Daoist works that contradict the position he establishes in the first section of the chapter.

It is Zhen’s work that preserves the first post-revelation recension of the *Rectifying Methods*. He cites the work four times, in each case on matters of cosmogony, cosmology, and the creation of humankind. (For a discussion and translation of these citations, see Appendix E.) Each citation is designed to contradict some other account of these matters as portrayed in a different Daoist work. This ideological thrust should remind us that Zhen was at least as interested in providing a damning picture of Daoism as he was in faithfully presenting his source material. However, it is inappropriate to dismiss his version of the *Rectifying Methods* as a distortion of whatever version he had at hand (despite the fact that this might indeed be the case). Like all other authors of the *Rectifying Methods*’ various incarnations, he worked under specific historical constraints with a particular purpose in mind. The different version preserved in the *Secret Essentials* shows that its editors took Zhen’s product seriously.<sup>181</sup>

Their regard for Zhen’s critique is particularly evident in their first citation of the *Rectifying Methods*. The sixth juan of the *Secret Essentials* demonstrates the latter in particular. It forms a unit with juan seven, which concerns the foundations of moral action. Both are implicit in the creation of the state, because good government proceeds from the moral excellence of the ruler and the harmony of the state with the cosmos.<sup>182</sup>

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181 Appendix C provides a full translation of each quotation or mention of the *Rectifying Methods* found in the *Secret Essentials*, as well as a brief discussion of how the translated material fits into the editors’ larger project. What follows here excerpts that material.

182 This harmony was sometimes literal. Sound and tuning were matters of concern not just in what we today consider “musical” contexts, but in the synchronization of human conduct and the cosmic order. This concern is reflected in a treatise on tuning included in the *History of the Latter Han (Houhan shu 後漢書)* as well as forays into musicology by the courtiers of Wang Mang’s 王莽 (45 BCE-23 CE) Xin 新 Dynasty (9-25 CE). See Noa Hegesh, “In Tune with the Cosmos: Tuning Theory, Cosmology,



Obviously, such harmony was only possible when the ruler possessed intimate knowledge of the cosmos' inner workings. The editors of the *Secret Essentials* appeal to the *Rectifying Methods* on exactly this point.

The version of the *Rectifying Methods* they consult contains two different methods of computing cosmic time. Each is subdivided into earthly and heavenly components. Both methods begin with the smallest unit of time and build to small and great kalpas, with disasters accompanying the change of each; the conjunction of great kalpas is accompanied by the worst disasters of all.<sup>183</sup> While the two methods share common terminology, each also contains unique periodizations; further, the terminus of each calendrical method is different, with different disasters accompanying it.

The heavenly component of the first method (ZHDZ 28.110a.14-b.22) emphasizes the motion of heavenly qi. It first introduces the Celestial Pass, which is pushed forward by the stars of the Dipper and cycles through each of the Nine Heavens. Each heaven has four doors, with each door being associated with a period (literally “watch” *hou* 候). In one day and one night, the Dipper pushes the Celestial Pass through one door, thus completing one period; when the Pass has moved through each period in each of the Nine Heavens, one revolution (*lun* 輪) is completed; one revolution thus constitutes 36 complete cycles of day and night. Three hundred and sixty revolutions constitutes one circuit (*zhou* 周) of the Nine Heavens. At this point, the qi of the Six Heavens returns to

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and Concepts of Sound in Early China” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2018).

183 A kalpa (rendered in Chinese as *jie* 劫), is a standard Indian unit denoting an unimaginably vast expanse of time. It was imported into China along with the spread of Buddhism. See DDB, s.v. “劫.” The version of the *Rectifying Methods* consulted by the editors of the *Secret Essentials* differs from the classical Buddhist conception of a kalpa. I present these alternative periodizations below. See also chapter x, p. x, n. x.

the upper Three Heavens, which rectify the qi and send it back down. 3600 circuits completes one small kalpa. This is a period of great change: in the heavens, the Nine Qi are transformed and rectified, and celestial emperors shift places in the otherworldly bureaucracy. On earth, evil spirits are annihilated along with the vast majority of humankind. With only good people remaining, earthly government is tranquil and all is harmonious.

The terrible events that accompany the conjunction of great kalpas are a marked contrast. Great kalpas, like their smaller counterparts, are measured in circuits: where 3600 complete one small kalpa, a great kalpa requires 9900. At this time, the qi of the celestial bodies moves with unusual vigor. In response, the demons and devils that inhabit the human realm multiply and become similarly agitated, causing illness and harm at will. The story stops here; no era of peace is promised, nor are any humans destined for salvation. Moving on to the earthly component, we find it similarly bleak.

Where the focal point of the heavenly component was on the qi of the Nine Heavens, the earthly component centers around the proper circulation of yin qi and yang qi. Earthly timekeeping revolves around the terrestrial counterpart to the Celestial Pass: the Floodgates of the Earth (*diji* 地機). These are located in the southeast, under the Nine Springs. Every day, the *ji* 機 lines of the earth (introduced later) push earthly waters eastward, and so qi – presumably yin qi, associated with waters and darkness – gathers at the Floodgates after each cycle of day and night. From there it circulates upwards to the Heavenly Source. This latter is presumably a locale of intense yang qi (correlated with light and heat); the infusion of yin qi would then serve to balance it. For 33 days and

nights – constituting one revolution (*lun* 輪) – this cycle maintains itself. After one complete revolution, however, yin qi and yang qi fall out of balance. The northeastern Heavenly Source extends, and the southwest – the location of Fengdu and likewise a gathering point for yin qi – contracts. The yin qi destined for the Heavenly Source flows downward, and the Nine Rivers overflow. Yin qi surges over the earth. 330 such revolutions constitute one measure (*du* 度), at which point apocalyptic figures associated with yin convene or ascend to the Three Heavens. 330 measures are one “yin blockage” (*yin fou* 隱否). In response to the buildup of yin qi, the moon (a focal point of yin qi) is eclipsed, and so floods cover the earth. 9300 measures constitute the end of one great kalpa, at which point the Nine Springs surge forth, “mountains and seas merge in the darkness, and all in the Six Directions is laid bare. This is the end of one yin cycle, the stimulation of the qi of the earth.” Yin qi – the qi of the earth, in contrast to the yang qi of the heavens – is thus in severe excess. At a later point in the text, we learn what happens when yang is in excess and yin deficient, but first chapter six of the *Secret Essentials* introduces the divisions of the sky and the earth, while reintroducing terms we have already seen.

What immediately follows is the second method of computing time, centered around *gang* 綱 (“net”) and *ji* 機 (“cable”) lines. Gang lines divide the sky into twelve portions, while ji lines (which first appear above) divide the earth by the same number. As before, a circuit occurs after 360 revolutions of the Celestial Pass, while a measure occurs after 330 revolutions of the Floodgates of the Earth. At this point, two new terms are introduced: “yang swelling” (*yang bo* 陽勃) and “yin corrosion” (*yin shi* 陰蝕). The

former occurs after 3600 complete circuits (i.e., one small kalpa according to the first method); the latter occurs after 330 measures (i.e., one yin corrosion according to the first method). A small kalpa ends when a yin corrosion and a yang flourishing both occur at the same time. At this point, the qi of heaven and earth reverse their usual order: heavenly qi becomes yin, while earthly qi becomes yang. As in the first method, “the myriad emperors change their stations,” but new changes are also introduced. Along with the reversal of the qi of heaven and earth, the cosmic order is upended: the sun and moon quit their revolutions, the Nine Springs run dry, and a variety of apocalyptic deities appear. However, we learn that the seed people survive – though we are not told how. A complete reversal of the cosmic order might seem bad enough, but the end of a great kalpa promises yet more horrors. A great kalpa ends at the conjunction of 9900 complete heavenly circuits (a “yang corrosion”) and 9300 earthly measures (a “yin flourishing”). At this point the entire universe is destroyed and then reverts to primal unity: “Heaven is upended and earth is flipped; the seas surge and rivers burst their dikes; humankind disappears and mountains drown; gold and jade transform and disappear; and all in the six directions muddles into one.”

It is understandably tempting to read this passage eschatologically, but doing so ignores its context. J. six and seven are not concerned with the end of the world; they are concerned, as Lagerwey notes, with the order of the universe and the foundation for proper moral action within it – that is, the rhetorical foundation of Emperor Zhou’s state. Their concerns become even more apparent when one browses the chapter contents themselves. Immediately after the cosmological speculations discussed above, one finds

discussion of mythical sovereigns (6.5a-7b; these individuals may or may not have been taken as real by the readers of the time); an introduction to the lands outside the central plain (6.7b-10a); a discussion of virtuous rule (6.10a-b); and advice on governance (6.11aff).<sup>184</sup> The context clearly places speculation on the end of the universe within the realm of what we might call political science. The point is not the universe's end, but its continuation. Emperor Wu's ability to measure that continuation demonstrates the potential of his government to accord with the natural rhythms of the continuing cosmos.

The *Secret Essentials*' other citations or mentions of the *Rectifying Methods* further emphasize the emperor's intimate knowledge of the cosmos. The compilation moves from a general account of the cosmos and its cycles to its celestial inhabitants and the individual works they send down to human beings; the prescriptions contained in these works and their regimes of practice; the minutiae of daily life these regimes require; and the beneficial effects for the adept who practices the regimes faithfully – namely, union with the great Dao.<sup>185</sup> We find the *Rectifying Methods* inserted at appropriate points in this structure. So, j. 22, which concerns the organization of the celestial bureaucracy and the abodes of its various deities, places the work in a specific celestial palace. J. 30-32, on the provenance, character, and function of celestial writings – including, significantly, their power as political tools for the transformation of imperial subjects – discusses the amulets in the *Rectifying Methods* and the powers they bestow upon the bearer. J. 43, on ritual dress and the recitation of scriptures, details the proper procedures

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184 See Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 50-51. Where he has 論德品, both HFL and ZHDZ eds. have 論意品. The contents, however, still concern morality and just governance. See ZHDZ 28.23a-b.

185 Lagerwey discusses this structure extensively in *Wu-shang*, pp. 38-48.

for chanting a hymn that formed part of the *Methods*.<sup>186</sup> The overall picture is of a work that was reshaped by new authors in response to political exigency and sectarian critique.

The Shangqing version: a step forward

The amulets discussed in j. 30-32 are worthy of extended discussion because they provide the closest link between the *Rectifying Methods* and the Shangqing corpus. A previous chapter discussed how the Shangqing adept could hope to escape the end times with recourse to a variety of methods. One of these required his or her name to be inscribed on the appropriate celestial lists – a task that could be accomplished (*inter alia*) via meditation exercises, incantations, or the wearing of talismans. A version of the *Rectifying Methods* preserved in the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns* gave a collective name for the lists: The “Genealogy of the People of the Three Sovereigns.” The *Secret Essentials* goes into more detail about the lists themselves and their relationship to the amulets found in the *Rectifying Methods*.

The locus of this detail is a long quotation from a work devoted to celestial lists. The *Scripture of the Return to the Nine Heavens, Mystical Records of the Seven Saints of the Jade Emperor of Utmost Purity* (CT 1379 *Shangqing yudi qisheng xuanji huitian jiuxiao jing* 上清玉帝七聖玄紀迴天九霄經) details these lists and relevant information about them.<sup>187</sup> In a section called “The Lodged Lot of Those who Encounter Scripture” (*Yujing sufen pin* 遇經宿分品), the *Secret Essentials* quotes the *Mystical Records* extensively (though in a different form than we find it today). What follows in the

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<sup>186</sup> These are just a few of the *Secret Essentials*’ citations or mentions; see Appendix E.

<sup>187</sup> For more on this work, see Appendix E.

“Lodged Lot” is a long series of citations from other scriptures about the same material. Among these is a quote from the *Rectifying Methods* that links its own amulets to the heavenly lists in the *Mystical Records*. While the latter work concerns itself with practices that help the adept inscribe his or her name in these records, the quote from the *Rectifying Methods* holds that receipt of a given amulet acts as proof that the recipient’s name is already inscribed in the associated celestial record. These proofs are enumerated in a list of entries that are identical in format: “All whose names are inscribed in [record X] will attain sight of [amulet Y]” 凡名參……者得見…… The *Secret Essentials* thus reassures the adept that – should they possess the relevant amulet – their names are already inscribed on the celestial lists. They are safe from disaster.

This quotation from the *Mystical Records* is important because it provides a tight link between the *Secret Essentials*’ version of the *Rectifying Methods* and the Shangqing corpus as a whole. Although the received *Records* has been pieced apart and edited, portions of it – including the section on celestial lists – are verifiably ancient. These lists provide a solid link to another early Shangqing work. This is *The Annals of Lord Lao of the Latter Age* (CT 442 後生道君列記) *The Annals* is a member of the original Shangqing corpus that is devoted to the Lord of the Golden Porte. It opens with his biography and describes his efforts to save humankind as well as the heavens to which certain elect will ascend, should their names be inscribed on the appropriate celestial records.<sup>188</sup>

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188 See TC, s.v. “Shangqing yudi qisheng xuanji huitian jiuxiao jing,” and R 2:225-228. For more on these works, see Appendix E and the notes.

### Conclusion: Afterlives

The previous chapters summarized the probable form and content of Yang Xi's version of the *Rectifying Methods*. Our two chief sources for the material were the sixth-century compendium called the *Secret Essentials of the Most High* and the seventh-century hortatory encyclopedia called the *Pearl Satchel of the Three Caverns*. Both projects were conducted by editors with their own agendas who were responding to their own conditions, and these exigencies left their mark on the *Rectifying Methods*. They dictated what material from earlier versions was selected for inclusion, what was omitted, and – in one particular case – what was invented. While the versions of the *Rectifying Methods* preserved in the two works were demonstrably reshaped to fit the needs of their times, they still provide clues to the content of the version revealed to Yang Xi. This was probably a work that was consistent in tenor with the rest of his revelations. It would have combined apocalyptic prophecy with methods to escape the end times that relied on the chanting of hymns, the wearing of amulets, and exercises to inscribe the adept's name on celestial lists. Later authors' revisions of Yang Xi's material led to versions of the work that had fundamentally different ideas about the end of the world. It is to these ideas that we now turn.

### Versions and voices

This dissertation began in part by introducing the concept of literary “voices.” These are different, relatively unified perspectives that can be discerned within a single work. My example was the “Priestly” and “Lay” voices usually discerned in the Pentateuch. The first was concerned with the principles of creation and featured an abstract, distant God;



the second accounted for some of the fundamental problems of daily human life, with a God who walks in the garden in the cool of the day. The *Rectifying Methods* displays a similar duality. This is only true if one sees it as a “work” in McGann’s sense – an abstract entity that supervenes its constituent versions. Taking this view, one can discern two different voices. One continued the eschatological bent of its immediate predecessor, while the other – which quickly became dominant – featured a world in no danger of an imminent end. The first voice I will call “apocalyptic;” the second, “continuous.”

### The final days

The Shangqing corpus is characterized most of all by its eschatological vision. This might seem counterintuitive, given that so few expositions of the end times survive. (The *Rectifying Methods*, as it exists in the *Pearl Satchel* and the *Secret Essentials*, is actually one of the longest.) But the intense concern held by Yang Xi and his associates with the eschaton is reflected more than anything else in the detailed methods to escape it preserved in the works revealed to him. The exact date of the end as it features in those revelations is uncertain; the *Purple Texts* provides only a loose sketch of the events surrounding them, featuring a failing political order and a weak king supported by warlords. The version of the *Rectifying Methods* preserved in the *Pearl Satchel* is remarkable for its elucidation of this sketch. The focus turns to the “descendant of the Dragon-seed” who restores the realm. However, the peaceful world he presides over is short-lived; soon enough, all is destroyed as it reverts to the state of primal unity that precedes the beginning of a new kalpa. The end as depicted in the *Purple Texts* receives new urgency as the signs that surround it, originally nebulous, become much clearer: the

king is clearly identifiable, as are stellar and terrestrial omens that would have been visible to the naked eye. Anyone could see that the end was nigh.

The world continues

Around the same time, strikingly similar language was being used by the Lingbao prelate Lu Xiujing to emphasize the world's continuity. Whether he was modifying the *Pearl Satchel's* version or referring to one of his own, Lu used some version of the *Rectifying Methods* to make the case to the Liu-Song kings that the Lingbao canon was an auspicious sign that both augured and legitimated their rise. The Lius would pacify a disordered realm and inaugurate a peaceful age. In the *Purple Texts*, as in the *Pearl Satchel's* version of the *Rectifying Methods*, political disorder (whether pacified or not) was only a prelude to the end of the kalpa and the concomitant reversion of all into nothing. Lu's version omits this part of the story – one that was probably integral to the Shangqing version – and instead presents the disorders as a backdrop for the Liu family's rise to power.

The longest addition to the *Rectifying Methods* arose in a very similar context. 150 years after Lu Xiujing presented his version to the throne of Liu Yu, the editors of the *Secret Essentials of the Most High* found themselves working for the benefit of a different king with equally grand ambitions. Fresh from the conquest of the north, Emperor Zhou of Wu signaled his intention to unify all of China with the creation of a comprehensive mirror of the universe in the realm of writing. Untroubled by Daoism's apparent contradictions, Emperor Wu found in the religion a vehicle for his own ideological legitimation. At imperial command, his team of editors compiled a work that reflected in

the rhetorical realm the unity the emperor sought to bring to the material world. The result was none other than the *Secret Essentials*. Its compilers were also sensitive to recent challenges by Buddhists and their sympathizers at court, and their extensive interpolations to the *Rectifying Methods* reflected these dual goals. Elaborate methods of marking cosmic time served both to illustrate their patron's mastery over the cosmos and reply to Buddhist charges of incoherence. While the continuous voice thus proved popular at the imperial level across the centuries, Daoist authors with no apparent concern for imperial politics also found it useful during the same period.

#### Further uses of the “Rectifying Methods”

It was this continuous voice that dominated further use of our work. Authors felt free to extract specific techniques to suit their own needs, while leaving the apocalyptic content – one of the most significant components of the Shangqing revelations as a whole – behind. One of the earliest examples of this is the *Precious Writs*.<sup>189</sup> This is a collection of Shangqing and Lingbao amulets probably dating from the Northern and Southern Dynasties period that includes several entries found in the *Secret Essentials* version of the *Rectifying Methods*, all unattributed. Some of the Shangqing amulets featured here belong to the original revelations, while others are later. In contrast to the sometimes-complicated transmission histories found in the *Secret Essentials* (see the section of Appendix C on j. 30-32) every amulet here is subsumed under the heading “Transmitted by the Queen Mother of the West” 西城金母王夫人受. This is an important difference.

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189 The full title is *Precious Writs and True Formulas on [Prescribed] Lengths of Silk, Determining the Rank of Those who Seek Immortality* (CT 128 *Taishang qiuxian dinglu chisu zhenjue yuwen* 太上求仙定錄尺素真訣玉文).

The Shangqing deities associated with transmitting methods to mortals are the Lord of the Golden Porte and the Azure Lad. They both appear in the transmission history of the *Secret Essentials*, and both typically transmit their methods to a select few mortals just before the apocalypse. The Queen Mother of the West, by contrast, has no historical apocalyptic association. The notable absence of deities associated with the apocalypse is the first hint that the author of the *Precious Writs* was less preoccupied with the end times than the author of the Shangqing version of the *Rectifying Methods*. Further evidence follows immediately. The *Precious Writs* opens with a template for an ordination ritual that accompanies the transmission of the text. The template begins in the typical format: “On the first day of such-and-such month of such-and-such year...” 某年月朔日甲子 before noting that the adept must have already been ordained at lower level in order to receive the *Precious Writs*. The generic template and concern with ordination hierarchy presuppose a transmission ceremony to be repeated many times under many circumstances, as well as a set of ordination practices that are widely-established. Both of these premises are out of place in a world that is about to end.<sup>190</sup>

The *Rectifying Methods* are put to similar use in a contemporaneous text, the *Forty-four Prescriptions on Yellow Silk*.<sup>191</sup> This quotes a chant given in the Shangqing version, the purpose of which is to repel demons. The *Forty-four Prescriptions* seeks to

190 I take the opposition between apocalyptic orientation and an emphasis on organization from New Testament criticism of the letters of Paul. Many scholars dispute the authenticity of the so-called “Pastoral Epistles” – 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus – based on their concern with church hierarchy; concern for the long-term longevity of the church as an organized body clashes with the emphasis on the imminent end of the world established in the genuine Pauline letters. For an introduction to this view, see Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 357-362. On CT 128, see TC, s.v. “Taishang qiuxian dinglu chisu zhenjue yuwen,” R 2: 427. The summarized passages are on CT 128 1a.

191 The work number is CT 1380. The full title is *Shangqing taishang huangsu sishisi fang jing* 上清太上黄素四四方经. See R 2: 229-232.

integrate into the original Shangqing revelations a few methods that postdate it slightly. It presents itself as “statutes on yellow silk” 黄素之科, and contains extensive rules for its own transmission as well as the transmission of other works. This emphasis on transmission is not unusual for members of the original Shangqing corpus; many contain such rules, as well as penalties for breaking them. What is unusual is the degree of ritualization. Transmission requires the involvement of several officiants who are listed by title, and it is these titles that betray the late date of the text. They only arose after both the Shangqing and Lingbao revelations, and mark the beginning of a shift towards an ecclesiastical hierarchy that would reach its fullest form centuries later. For the same reason as the *Precious Writs*, the *Forty-four Prescriptions* endorses a worldview that relies on the continuation of the cosmos in much the same form as it already existed.

Both the apocalyptic and continuous voices of the *Rectifying Methods* testify to the generative potential early medieval editors found in the work. It attracted the interest of different audiences, who modified it with different goals in mind. One question that immediately suggests itself is: what made the *Rectifying Methods* so special to so many different people in so many different contexts? Is there some unique spark within the work itself, hidden like a lamp under a bushel? Or was it simply random chance that caused it to catch the eye of so many across the centuries? Finding a way out of this dilemma is beyond the scope of the present work. For now, I want only to note that none of the changes in the work across the early medieval period were wholesale innovations. The earliest version contained within it all the elements that later editors would find so appealing. The cosmological speculation added by the editors of the *Secret Essentials*

found precedent in the story of origin and destruction that probably formed part of the work first revealed to Yang Xi. The amulets excerpted by the editors of the *Precious Writs* and the incantation quoted by the author of the *Forty-four* also probably sprung from that same common source. This might suggest to some that the *Rectifying Methods*' generative potential is intrinsic to the work itself – that it contained some unique essence that possessed transhistorical appeal. This assumption falls flat, however, when one notes that every use to which the *Rectifying Methods* was put depended on a particular historical situation. Certain people with certain interests somehow came into contact with a version or versions of the same work and adapted it to their own purposes. The version(s) of the *Rectifying Methods* they produced were therefore a co-production of the existing resources provided by the work itself and the interests of the editors who appealed to it.

#### The “Rectifying Methods” as material object

The focus of the *Rectifying Methods*' editors quickly shifted away from the next world to this one. At the same time, their editorial practices varied. Some authors were content to preserve the essential integrity of the text, merely inserting or deleting portions as necessary. Others took a more radical approach. In their eyes, it was not necessary to keep the *Rectifying Methods* whole in order for the work to be of use. Both of these tendencies are already on display during the Northern and Southern Dynasties with the *Precious Writs* and the *Forty-Four Prescriptions*, which extract amulets and/or incantations from the *Rectifying Methods* and place them in separate collections to be transmitted during ordination rituals. Compared to the earlier versions of the *Rectifying*

*Methods*, these works show an attenuated concern with the end of the world. The *Precious Writs*, for instance, lacks any apocalyptic deities, and contains a template for an ordination ritual that presupposes different grades of ordination. This suggests a developed ritual structure that requires continuity over time – a concern far removed from the editors behind the *Rectifying Methods* transcribed by Yang Xi. The continuous voice in the *Rectifying Methods* only became more pronounced as time moved on.

Continuing a trend that began with the *Precious Writs* and the *Forty-four Prescriptions*, the *Rectifying Methods* or the amulets it contains began to be transmitted during ordination rituals. One example of this is the *Protocol of the Ritual Pledges*, a mid-Tang work that enumerates the physical goods to be offered as pledges of sincerity upon attaining a higher rank in the organizational framework of Tang Daoism.<sup>192</sup> Other works invoke the *Rectifying Methods* or its talismans for healing or personal protection.<sup>193</sup> One factor that unites these disparate catalogues is that they presuppose not the end of the world but its continuation. The amulets originally found in the *Rectifying Methods* no longer feature in the esoteric knowledge of a small group; rather, they exist in a communal context. Paradoxically, they sometimes confer powers, like ascent to the heavens, that are typically meant to rescue the adept from the end of the world. But the settings in which the amulets were used and transmitted suggest that these powers were not expected to be exercised on the spot. (This is in contrast to other powers, like healing or the summoning of spirit guards, that would have been of more immediate import.)

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192 The full title is CT 1244 *Shoulu cidi faxin yi* 受籙次第法信義. See TC 461-462.

193 See CT 1347 *Dongzhen taishang shangqing neijing* 洞真太上上清內經 and CT 463 *Yaoxiu keyi jielü chao* 要修科儀戒律鈔.

While the editors of these later texts see no need to strip the amulets of salvific powers connected to the end of days, their immediate concerns lie elsewhere.

Another unifying factor in each of these applications – ritual, apotropaic, or healing – is the role played by the *Rectifying Methods*. In each case what matters is not only its text – the meaning it contains – but its physical presence as an object. The legitimate possession of the *Rectifying Methods* or its amulets is what certifies a Daoist's admission to a higher grade in the ritual hierarchy. Legitimate possession, not semantic content, is what ensures its proper function as a demon-queller or curative – that is, as a controller of spirits. Scholarly students of the *Rectifying Methods* must therefore leave behind the Müllerian vision of religious texts (what I have called “works”) as containers of meaning that provide access to a religion's core beliefs. That is simply not how the *Rectifying Methods* functions.

Different works, different needs, different times

If the compilers of the Ming Daoist canon had been successful in their attempt to fix the *Rectifying Methods*, one would expect references to other versions to drop off as the received version became hegemonic. But this is not the case: a variant remained popular centuries afterwards. The *Book of Ancient Subtleties* (*Guweishu* 古微書) was compiled by Sun Jue 孫穀 (fl. 1607-1608) in an attempt to reconstruct lost apocryphal texts based on existing quotations. When the study of apocryphal texts exploded during the Qing, the *Book of Ancient Subtleties* became the foundational text of the new field. Sun quotes the *Rectifying Methods* extensively in sections on cosmology, and the material cited is none other than the elaborate methods of marking cosmic time inserted by the editors of



WSBY 6 – and excluded, for whatever reason, from the received version.<sup>194</sup> Sun never indicates he doubts the legitimacy of the version he has at hand; indeed, he never mentions the canonical version in his sections on cosmology. Why Sun chose to cite the *Rectifying Methods* here is less important than the fact that he chose to cite a non-canonical version.<sup>195</sup> This shows that while one version may have received official sanction, at least one influential author felt free to ignore it. Canonizers are not always successful.

The introduction situated the *Rectifying Methods* alongside other works that found different shapes under the hands of different editors. Like the *Rectifying Methods*, distinct versions of the *Secret Revelation to John* and the story of Ghazi Miyan were produced to suit the purposes of different editors. Contingent circumstances spurred these authors to find cultural resources in each work that appealed to their individual purposes. If this is the manner in which works are reproduced and altered, to designate any version “final” can only be a motivated move. In the case of a canon (officially-sponsored or otherwise), the motivations of the participants are more or less clear. Clear, too, are the scholarly motives that underlie the compilation of a critical edition. One major difference

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194 See *Guweishu* 33.9a-10a, 35.57a-58a. Chen is commenting on a story of the decline of civilization after Yu tamed the flood, apparently taken from TPYL 2.7a, 36.5a. The citation from the *Rectifying Methods* he inserts here is not included in the source material, so I assume it is his own addition. On the *Guweishu*, see Yang Quan 杨权, “Chenwei yanjiu shulüe” [A summary of research on the Weft Texts], *Zhongguo shi yanjiu dongtai* 6 (2000): 12-13. Sun attained his *jinshi* 進士 degree – the highest degree granted by the imperial examination system – in the 35<sup>th</sup> year of the Wanli Emperor’s 萬曆 reign, corresponding to the period between January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1607 and February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1608 in the Western calendar. I assume 穀 is a misprint for 穀 for a few reasons. First, the *Book of Ancient Subtleties* is elsewhere attributed to a 孫穀. See *An Examination of the Charts of the Book of Changes* 易緯稽覽圖 3b. In addition, the entry for Sun Jue is preceded by the one for his father, Sun Yuhou 孫羽侯 (*jinshi* 1589/90). On the dates for Chen and his father, see the *Huarong xianzhi* [Annals of Huarong County] 1882/1883, repr. Huarong jiaoyuju, 1930/31: 178-179.

195 It is of course possible that Sun lacked access to the canonical version, but I assume an elite literatus moving in imperial circles would have had both access to and familiarity with the canon.

between the two is that the latter makes explicit the principles of its own construction, leaving open the possibility of different configurations – the addition, deletion, or reinterpretation of material. The former seeks to hide the circumstances that gave rise to itself, presenting the resulting configuration of material as the only natural one. In a related rhetorical move, canonizers seek to set a seal on the creative process that leads to new versions. By adopting the view point of the canonizer, scholars of the *Rectifying Methods* adopt these two goals as their own and shut a window upon the lives of people who used and altered the work they study.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

This bibliography lists the works consulted during the writing of this dissertation. In addition, it aims to introduce the reader to some of the important works in Daoist and Chinese studies in English, Chinese, Japanese, and French. My Japanese being limited, the inclusion of a Japanese work should by no means indicate I have read it in exhaustive detail.

### PRIMARY SOURCES

For works in the Taishō canon I have consulted the online edition published by the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association (*Zhonghua dianzi Fodian xiehui* 中華電子佛典協會) and available at CBETA.org. Works in the *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書 are cited in the same way as HFL (see below), and follow the editions available at ctext.org and <https://www.kanripo.org>. Works in the Daoist Canon are cited according to their number in Volume 3 of TC. For passages marked ZDHZ, I have consulted:

Zhang Jiyu 張繼禹 comp. *Zhonghua daozaog* 中華道藏. 49 vols. Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe 夏出版社, 2004).

When this abbreviation is absent, or when I have included the abbreviation HFL, I have followed the Hanfenlou edition of 1923-26. Works therefrom are cited by *juan* 卷 (“scroll”) and page number, followed by “a” for recto, and “b” for verso – e.g. “46.7b” indicates the recto side of page seven of *juan* 46.

### WORKS IN THE DAOIST CANON

CT 1 靈寶無量度人上品妙經 *Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing*

CT 5 太上無極總真文昌大洞仙經 *Taishang wuji zongzhen Wenchang dadong xianjing*

CT 6 上清大洞真經 *Shangqing dadong zhenjing*

CT 7 大洞玉經 *Dadong yujing*

CT 22 元始五老赤書玉篇真文天書經 *Yuanshi Wulao hishu yupian zhenwen tianshu jing*

- CT 55 高上太霄琅書瓊文帝章經 *Gaoshang taishang taixiao langshu qiongwen dizhang jing*
- CT 56 太上玉珮金璫太極金書上經 *Taishang yupei jindang taiji jinshu shangjing*
- CT 64 九天應元雷聲普化天尊玉樞寶經集註 *Jiutian yingyuan leisheng puhua tianzun yushu baijing jizhu*
- CT 87 元始無量度人上品妙經四注 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu*
- CT 89 元始無量度人上品妙經通義 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing tongyi*
- CT 91 元始無量度人上品妙經註解 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing zhujie*
- CT 103 太上無極總真文昌大洞仙經註 *Taishang wuji zongzhen Wenchang dadong xianjing zhu*
- CT 128 太上求仙定錄尺素真訣玉文 *Taishang qiuxian dinglu chisu zhenjue yuwen*
- CT 133 太上洞房內經注 *Taishang dongfang neijing zhu*
- CT 166 元始上真衆仙記 *Yuanshi shangzhen zhongxian ji*
- CT 167 洞玄靈寶真靈位業圖 *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu*
- CT 184 太真玉帝四極明科經 *Taizhen yudi siji mingke jing*
- CT 292 漢武帝內傳 *Han Wudi neizhuan*
- CT 294 列仙傳 *Liexian zhuan*
- CT 303 紫陽真人內傳 *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan*
- CT 318 自然九天生神章經 *Ziran jiutian shengshen zhangjing*
- CT 320 洞玄靈寶丹水飛術運度小劫妙經 *Dongxuan lingbao danshui feishu xiaojie miaojing*
- CT 322 太上靈寶天地運度自然妙經 *Taishang lingbao tiandi yundu ziran miaojing*
- CT 352 太上洞玄靈寶赤書玉訣妙經 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue*
- CT 354 上清三元玉檢三元布經 *Shangqing sanyuan yujian sanyuan bujing*

- CT 361 太上洞玄靈寶八威召龍妙經 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao bawei zhaolong maojing*
- CT 369 太上洞玄靈寶滅度五鍊生尸妙經 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao miedu wulian shengshi miaojing*
- CT 375 太上洞玄靈寶天尊說濟苦經 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao tianzun shuo jiku jing*
- CT 388 太上靈寶五符序 *Taishang lingbao wufu xu*
- CT 405 上清紫精君黃初紫靈道君洞房上經 *Shangqing zijing jun huangchu ziling daojun dongfang shangjing.*
- CT 421 登真隱訣 *Dengzhen yinjue*
- CT 426 洞真太上八素真經 *Dongzhen taishang basu zhenjing*
- CT 427 上清修行經訣 *Shangqing xiuxing jingjue*
- CT 442 上清後生道君列記 *Shangqing housheng daojun lieji*
- CT 446 上清衆經諸真聖祕 *Shangqing zhongjing zhuzhenshengbi*
- CT 456 太上洞玄靈寶三元品戒功德輕重經 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao sanyuan pinjie gongde qingzhong jing*
- CT 463 要修科儀戒律鈔 *Yaoxiu keyi jielü chao*
- CT 489 金籙解壇儀 *Jinlu jietan yi*
- CT 507 太上黃籙齋儀 *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi*
- CT 547 靈寶玉鑑 *Lingbao yujian*
- CT 605 四明洞天丹山圖詠集 *Siming dongtian danshan tu yong ji*
- CT 615 赤松子章歷 *Chisongzi zhangli*
- CT 616 廣成集 *Guangcheng ji*
- CT 736 南華真經章句音義 *Nanhua zhenjing zhangju yinyi*

- CT 742 南華真經註疏 *Nanhua zhenjing zhushu*
- CT 783 壟城集仙錄 *Yongcheng jixian lu*
- CT 789 正一法文天師教戒科經 *Zhengyi fawen tianshi jiaojie ke jing.*
- CT 790 女青鬼律 *Nüqing guilu*
- CT 880 太清金液神丹經 *Taiqing jinye shendan jing*
- CT 1016 真誥 *Zhen'gao*
- CT 1032 雲笈七籤 *Yunji qiqian*
- CT 1114 太上洞玄靈寶本行宿緣經 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao benxing suyuan jing*
- CT 1125 洞玄靈寶三洞奉道科戒營始 *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi*
- CT 1127 陸先生道門科略 *Lu Xiansheng Daomen ke lue*
- CT 1128 道門經法相承次序 *Daomen jingfa xiangcheng cixu*
- CT 1138 無上祕要 *Wushang biyao*
- CT 1139 三洞珠囊 *Sandong zhunang*
- CT 1168 太上老君中經 *Taishang Laojun zhongjing*
- CT 1205 太上三天正法經 *Taishang santian zhengfa jing*
- CT 1205 三天內解經 *Santian neijie jing*
- CT 1219 高上神霄玉清真王紫書大法 *Gaoshang shenxiao yuqing zhenwang zishu dafa*
- CT 1220 道法會元 *Daofa huiyuan*
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- CT 1244 受錄次第法信義 *Shoulu cidi faxin yi*
- CT 1269 上清修身要事經 *Shangqing xiushen yaoshi jing*

- CT 1313 洞真高上玉帝大洞雌一玉檢吾老寶經 *Dongzhen gaoshang yudi dadong ciyi yujian wulao baojing*
- CT 1315 洞真上清青要紫書金根衆經 *Dongzhen Shangqing qingyao zishu jingen zhongjing*
- CT 1314 洞真太上素靈洞元大有妙經 *Dongzhen taishang suling dongyuan dayou miaojing*
- CT 1317 洞真上清開天三圖七星移度經 *Dongzhen shangqing kaitian santiantu qixing yidu jing*
- CT 1323 八素真經服食日月皇華訣 *Basu zhenjing fushi riyue huanghua jue*
- CT 1324 洞真太上八素真經登壇符札妙訣 *Dongzhen taishan basu zhenjing dengtan fuzha miaojue*
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- CT 1347 洞真太上上清內經 *Dongzhen taishang shangqing neijing*

- CT 1352 洞真太上太霄琅書 *Dongzhen taishang taixiao langshu*
- CT 1355 上清高上滅魔洞景金元玉清隱書經 *Shangqing gaoshang miemo dongjing jinyuan yuqing yinshu jing*
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- CT 1360 上清九天上帝祝百神內名經 *Shangqing jiutian shangdi zhu baishen neiming jing*
- CT 1364 上清洞真智慧觀身大戒文 *Shangqing dongzhen zhihui guanshen dajie wen*
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- CT 1380 上清太上黃素四四方經 *Shangqing taishang huangshu sishisi fang jing*
- CT 1382 上清九丹上化胎精中記經 *Shangqing judan shanghua taiqing zhongji jing*
- CT 1389 上清高聖太上大道君洞真金元八景 *Shangqing gaosheng Taishang Dadao jun dongzhen jinyuan bajing*
- CT 1393 上清元始變化寶真上經九靈太妙龜山玄籙 *Shangqing yuanshi bianhua baozhen shangjing jiuling taimiao guishan xuanlu*
- CT 1395 上清大洞九微八道大經妙籙 *Shangqing dadong jiuwei badao dajing miaolu*



CT 1411 洞玄靈寶長夜之府九幽玉匱明真科 *Dongxuan lingbao changye zhi fu jiuyou yukui mingzhen ke*

#### WORKS IN THE BUDDHIST CANON

T 50 虛高僧傳 *Xu gaoseng zhuan*

T 603 陰持入經 *Yinchi ru jing*

T 2110 辯正論 *Bianzheng lun*

T 2013 廣弘明集 *Guang hongming ji*

#### WORKS IN THE SIKU QUANSHU

古微書 *Guweishu*

禮記集說 *Liji jishuo*

呂氏春秋 *Lüshi qunqiu*

史記正義 *Shiji zhengyi*

太平御覽 *Taiping yulan*

易緯稽覽圖 *Yiwei jilan tu*

揚子雲集 *Yangzi yunji*

文選 *Wen xuan*

周禮注疏 *Zhouli zhushu*

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APPENDIX A

MENTIONS OF THE WORK OR ASSOCIATED CONCEPTS



Differences in cosmology and amulets throughout the canon reveal something of the textual company kept by the *Rectifying Methods* and its various versions, as well as their continued relevance over the centuries. There is more to be learned, however: citations, transmission requirements, and titles that diverge from the received text indicate that variant editions preserved in encyclopedias were cited and consulted well into the Qing 清 (1636-1912). I have attempted to collect mentions of the *Rectifying Methods* or some of its chief themes below.

CT 426 *Shangqing taishang basu zhenjing* 上清太上八素真經 (Eastern Jin, 317-420)

The “True Scripture of the Eight Purities” was one of the original Shangqing revelations. The earliest version of this work was broken and scattered throughout the Canon. (See R 2: 51-57 for details.) CT 426 is one of the longest portions, and 4b-5a begins with a hierarchial ranking of Shangqing texts into Ways (*dao* 道) of the Upper (*shang* 上) Middle (*zhong* 中), and Lower (*xia* 下) Perfected. The *Zhengfa jing* is among the Middle Ways; other texts of the Middle Way include two we have encountered previously: the *Sanyuan sanbu jing* and the *Sanhuang neiwen*. The end of this section lists the benefits that accrue to those who practice techniques of the Middle Way”

右中真之道，總而行之，則爲上清中道真人，給玉童玉女各一千人，位爲上清左右卿相之師。行則紫毛之節，從萬神千真，前吹鳳鳴，後奏天鈞，玄龍啓道，五帝驂軒，飛行太空，遨戲丹霄。

The above are Ways of the Middle Transcendents. All those who practice them will become Transcendents of Upper Clarity of the Middle Way, and be given one thousand Jade Lads and Jade Maidens [as guards], and be appointed masters of the grand ministers of Upper Clarity. If they practice them, they will [be given?] a staff [adorned] with purple hair (?). They will be served by ten thousand spirits and a thousand transcendents; before them phoenixes will blow and cry; behind them will play celestial music. Black dragons will open the ways before them; the Five

Emperors will drive their chariot, and [they will] fly to the grand void, sauntering and taking their ease in the red empyrean.

*Precious Writs*

The phrase “Santian zhengfa” appears twice in the *Chisu zhenjue*: at 20a and 23a-b. 20a includes it in a list of amulets that all appear in the *Jiuwei badao* and/or the *Zhengfa jing*; 23a-b places it at the end of a list of deities inscribed on an amulet to be worn during a breathing exercise.

CT 1 *Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing* 靈寶無量度人上品妙經

“Wondrous Superior Book of Immeasurable Salvation from the [Canon of] the Marvelous Jewel.” The central scripture of the Lingbao corpus, the original *Duren jing* is indisputably among its original works. It is probably this unquestionable antiquity and importance that inspired later additions and revisions. While the first *juan* dates from before the fifth century, the following sixty were added after 1112. *Juan* 54.8b mentions “spirits of the Correct Law of the Three Heavens” (*Santian zhi shen* 三天之神).

The next four works contain the same information about the *Zhengfa jing*. I will introduce each text and conclude with the information itself.

CT 1345 *Dongzhen taishang daojun yuandan shangjing* 洞真太上道君元丹上經

“Superior Scripture of the Mysterious Cinnabar.” TC provides no date for this text. The editors of the *Zhonghua daoze* date it to the Eastern Jin, and while their dating can be

suspect this particular extract gives no reason to doubt it. The relevant portion of the text is 24b-25b, which is equivalent to a portion of CT 1314 (discussed below) called the “Sworn Codes of the Nine Perfected” (*Jiuzhen mingke* 九真明科).

CT 1314 *Dongzhen taishang suling dongyuan dayou miaojing* 洞真太上素靈洞元大有妙經  
“The Wondrous Scripture that Penetrates Mystery of the [Room of] Unadorned Spirituality [in the Palace of] Vast Possession, of the Dongzhen Canon.” CT 1314 is a pastiche of different Shangqing texts and is probably not later than the early fifth century. The relevant passage (51b-52a) forms a portion of the *Jiuzhen mingke*.

CT 1409 *Taishang jiuzhen mingke* 太上九真明科

“Sworn Code of the Nine Perfected.” This text is included in its entirety at the end of CT 1314. WSBY cites it under that title, which implies that the present CT 1409 may have originally formed part of the received CT 1314 but was detached from it at a later date. The text often refers to itself as the “Upper Chapters of the Mystic Capital” (*Xuandu shangpin* 玄都上品), an abbreviation for “Upper Chapters of the Sworn Code of the Nine Perfected of the Mystic Capital (*Xuandu jiuzhen mingke shangpin* 玄都九真明科上品). Chapter Five (beginning on 5b of the received text) groups together several works in a single celestial palace and gives the schedule of their transmission as well as the rites required to do so, while the next chapter (6a-b) records their material transmission requirements.

玄都上品第五篇曰：傳《消魔智慧》《玉清隱書》《寶洞飛霄絕玄金章》《紫鳳赤書八景晨圖》《金真玉光》《靈書紫文》《金璫玉佩》《金根上經》《三

天正法》皆太上大道君，元始天王，金闕帝君之寶章，祕在玉清之宮，金房紫戶之內。衛靈文玉童玉女各三千人。元始之初，皆千劫一傳。自三天立正之後，七百年內聽得三傳。百年中有其人，聽一傳。給玉童玉女依四極明科。授者對齋九十日或三十日或九日而傳，不依科而傳，罪延七玄之祖，長充鬼役，無有解脫。己身被風刀之考，死充下鬼，萬不得仙。

The fifth section of the *Upper Chapters of the Mystic Capital* says: “The “Hidden Book of Demon-Destroying Wisdom,” “The Hidden of the Palace of Jade Clarity,” the “Golden Stanzas of the Precious Cavern Flying Empyrean Ultimate Mystery,” the “Red Book of the Purple Phoenix and Dawn-Chart of the Eight Phosphors,” the “Numinous Text in Purple Characters of Golden Perfection and Jade Light,” the “Scripture of the Golden Pendant and Jade Belt-Pendant,” the “Upper Scripture of the Golden Root,” the “Correct Method of the Three Heavens” – all are treasured by the Most High Lord of the Dao, the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement, and the Lord of the Golden Porte. They are hidden away in the Purple House of the Golden Chamber of the Palace of Jade Clarity. Guarding the numinous text are jade lads and jade maidens, each numbering three thousand. Since the very beginning, they have been transmitted once every ten thousand kalpas. Since the Three Heavens rectified [the cosmos], in seven hundred years they have been transmitted three times. If there is an appropriate person, then in one hundred years they can be transmitted once. [Their recipient] will receive jade lads and jade maidens [as guardians], as prescribed by the *Siji mingke*. Those who transmit [授=受] them must engage in a purificatory fast for ninety days or thirty days or nine days, then transmit it. If one transmits it but does not abide by the statutes, the guilt will extend to one’s ancestors in the seven darknesses; they will for long be charged with labor as ghosts, with none to save them. One’s own body will undergo the trial of wind and swords, and in death one will become a lower ghost, absolutely not attaining transcendence.

玄都上品第六篇曰：五傳……三天正法清繒三十尺青布四十三尺金環五雙以爲密誓上金十兩通神之信。

The sixth section of the *Upper Chapters of the Mystic Capital* says: Transmitting... the *Santian zhengfa* [requires] thirty chi of azure-black silk, forty-three chi of azure-black cloth, and five pairs of golden hoops as an Oath of Secrecy. It requires ten *liang* of gold as an Oath for Penetrating to the Spirits.<sup>196</sup>

In addition to the *Zhengfa jing*, all but one of the texts in this list bear titles similar to texts that either form part of the original SQ revelations or that were integrated therein slightly afterwards. See R 2: 179-186 (#1); 237-246 (#2, #4); 45-49 (#5); 101-110 (#6); 213-218 (#7); 119-125 (#8).

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196 Cf. the required offering given in the text itself at ZHDZ 262c.12-263a, which says “Thirty chi of red-and-indigo silk is the offering for possession. Thirty chi of indigo cloth is the [offering] of the oath of secrecy. Five pairs of golden hoops is the [offering] of the Grand Oath to Heaven.”

CT 184 *Taizhen yudi siji mingke jing* 太上四極明科經

“Sworn Code of the Four Poles.” The relationship between this work and the *Zhengfa jing* is complex. Contrary to Robinet in TC, s.v. *Taishang siji mingke jing*, the citations of the *Siji mingke* that appear in the *Zhengfa jing* do not correspond exactly to the same passages in CT 184. Comparing *Siji mingke* 5.6b-7a to ZHDZ 262a.1-6 shows this. CT 184 reads:

太玄都四極明科曰：凡受四極明科，三天正法，佩帶真文，恒當沐浴盥洗為急每，令屐履衣服盛潔不使污穢。真靈遠離，凶邪所乘。有犯此禁，五犯退削陟真之爵，十犯左官所考，死入地獄，萬劫還生不人之道。《玄都中宮女青律文》受者明慎奉行。

The *Siji mingke* says: All those who receive the *Siji mingke* and the *Santian zhengfa*, who wear belted at their waist the True Writs – they must always regard it as significant to bathe and wash their hands and face, and each time [they wear the talismans?] cause shoes and clothing to be exceedingly clean and not to become impure. [Otherwise] the Perfected and numens will stay far away from you, and misfortune and deviances will seize the opportunity. If you offend against these prescriptions five times, your ranking among the Perfected will be revoked. After ten offenses, the Official of the Left will subject you to judicial torture. Upon death, you will enter the earth-prisons. After ten thousand kalpas, you will be reborn in one of the paths of non-humans [according to] the Statutes and Writs of Lady Blue of the Middle Palace of the Mystic Capital. Those who receive this text must be cautious about this and behave reverently [toward the text].

Cf. ZHDZ 262a.1-6:

太上告後聖君曰：凡受三天正法，佩帶真文，恒當沐浴盥洗為急每，令屐履衣服盛潔，不使污穢。真靈遠離，凶邪所乘，便有毀敗。學者宜明慎之。有犯此禁，太極領仙退削子陟真之爵。

The Most High told the Housheng jun: All those who receive the *Santian zhengfa* and wear the True Writs must always regard it as significant to bathe and wash their hands and face, and each time [they wear the talismans] cause shoes and clothing to be exceedingly clean and not to become impure. [Otherwise] the Perfected and numens will stay far away from you, and misfortune and deviances will seize the opportunity, and there will be ruin. Those who study [the Way] should understand and be diligent about this. If you offend against these prescriptions, the [Perfected of the] Grand Bourne will order the transcendents to revoke your ranking among the Perfected.

The first four precepts given by the *Zhengfa jing* differ in the same way from their equivalent passages in CT 184.<sup>197</sup> The *Zhengfa jing* versions threaten the practitioner with the revocation of a celestial post and cite the *Siji mingke*, while the precepts in that work threaten imprisonment in the hells and an unfortunate rebirth, citing a different text as their authority.<sup>198</sup>

Three rhetorical features shared by the precepts in the *Zhengfa jing* suggest the work's editors modified an existing version of CT 184 to suit their purposes. The first hint at a later date for at least part of this process is that each precept in the *Zhengfa jing* opens with the phrase "The Most High told the Lord of the Golden Porte..." As detailed by R 2: 89, this format is never utilized by the undisputed members of the original Shangqing revelations. Indeed, it recalls Lingbao texts, wherein the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Commencement (*Yuanshi tianzun* 元始天尊) plays the role of teacher in the same manner as the Buddha in Buddhist scriptures. Second, the references to the *Statutes and Writs of Lady Blue* found in CT 184 are deleted. The motive for this move is difficult to ascertain from a limited textual sample, but the picture becomes clearer when one takes the third alteration into account. The *Zhengfa jing* warns the disobedient that they will be stripped of their ranking among the Perfected, where CT 184 combines the more

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197 The fifth is a general exhortation to behave correctly, linking improper behavior to demonic attack as in the first precept. Given the prevalence of demonic etiology throughout the early medieval period, this precept in and of itself provides no clues as to the *Zhengfa jing*'s textual association. Its most notable feature for our purposes is that it does not appear in the received *Siji mingke*.

198 The *Statutes and Writs* is probably not the famous *Nüqing guilü*, an eschatological and apotropaic work from the fourth century that provides the names of demons as well as methods of averting their malign influence. EoT, s.v. "Nüqing guilü." Cf. TC, s.v. "Taizhen yudi siji mingke jing," "Nüqing guilü," EoT, s.v. "Nüqing guilü." The summaries of the *Nüqing guilü* in these two works paint a very different picture from the quotation of the *Statutes and Writs* given here. Interestingly, the phrase I gloss here as "unfortunate rebirth" (*bu ren zhi dao* 不人之道) is confined almost entirely to CT 184, with other occurrences (e.g., YJQQ 40.10a-b, SDZN 6.5a) citing the underlying *Statutes and Writs*.

traditional postmortem consignment to the earth-prisons with rebirth among “the paths of nonhumans” (*buren zhi dao* 不人之道). This locution is confined almost entirely to CT 184, with other occurrences (e.g., YJQQ 40.10a-b, SDZN 6.5a) citing the underlying *Statues and Writs*. Despite this isolation, the phrase itself immediately recalls the Buddhist notion of unfortunate rebirth more commonly conveyed by the phrase “Three Paths” (*san tu* 三途) – rebirth in a hell realm, as an animal, or as a hungry ghost.

The punishment threatened by the received *Zhengfa jing* implies a celestial bureaucracy divided into various ranks (*jue* 爵) similar to the degrees of earthly officialdom. The terms used to describe a mortal’s rise and fall in this hierarchy are exactly those used to describe movement through the earthly bureaucracy: we can ascend (*zhi* 陟) to certain ranks, but also be stripped of them (*tui* 退). This constellation of terms relates the *Zhengfa jing* more closely to the Shangqing corpus. One sort of question frequently put to Yang Xi by members of the Xu and Ge families included the postmortem fate of deceased family members, expressed in terms of celestial ranks such as Lord Transcendent of the Left (*zuo xiangong* 左仙公).<sup>199</sup> It also harmonizes the *Siji mingke* more closely with the received *Zhengfa jing*, portions of which promise ascent to transcendence.

*Wushang biyao*. On the *Wushang*, see chapter five.

While *Zhengfa jing* extracts from the *Wushang* feature extensively above, there is more that text can tell us. ZHDZ 28.102a.13-b.6 connects the *Zhengfa jing* with several other

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199 Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety*

texts with which we have already seen it keeping company. A quote from one “Golden Book of the Jade Belt-Pendant and Golden Pendant of the Grand Bourne” (*Yupei jindang taiji jinshu* 玉珮金璫太極金書, a text modified by Yang Xi that predated the Shangqing revelations, lists it along with the *Jingen zhongjing* and three books we haven’t yet seen: the *Purple Book of the Green Essentials* (*Qingyao zishu* 青要紫書), the *Shijing jinguang zangjing luxing shenjing* 石精金光藏景錄形神經, and the *Jinzen yuguang taishang yinshu* 金真玉光太上隱書. The first book forms part of the Shangqing revelations; the second predates them, though it exists only in citations; and the third is an early apocryphon.<sup>200</sup>

T 2110 *Bianzheng lun* 辨正論

“Disputations on What is Correct.” An early seventh-century apologia by the monk Falin 法琳 (572-640), the *Disputations* testifies to Falin’s extensive knowledge of Daoist literature through its copious citation. Along with various pre-Tang works like the *Waiguo fangpin* and the *Duren jing*, he cites a *Santian zhengfa jing* in 8.547b to prove that earlier Daoist works lacked Vajra-spirits (*jingang zhi shen* 金剛之神), a variety of guardian deity depicted in large statues at the entrance of Buddhist monasteries. Another is the *yakṣa*, and it these spirits with which Falin is concerned here. Yakṣa are typically malevolent spirits, but in this context they have been converted to Buddhism and act as the Buddha’s guards. In this capacity they are known as *miji lishi* 密迹力士 in Chinese. Falin has this to say about the earlier Daoist works he consulted:

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200 On the *Yupei jindang*, *Shijing*, and *Jinzen yuguang* see R 2: 213-218, 137-140, 45-49.



具序太玄之都，玉光之州，金真之郡，天寶之縣，元明之鄉，定志之里。金闕，玉京，及清靈宮，極真宮，紫陽宮等，並是道家尊神所坐之處。但有騏驎鳳凰，白雀朱鸛，鷓鴣靈鵠，赤鳥青雀等……亦無金剛之神，密迹力士之像。

All [of these texts] are arrayed in the Capital of Grand Mystery, in the Province of Jade Light, in the Prefecture of Golden Perfection, in the County of Heavenly Treasure, in the Village of Primordial Brightness, in the borough of Fixed Intention. The Jade Capital and the Golden Porte, the Palace of Clear Numinosity, the Palace of Ultimate Perfection, the Palace of Purple Yang, etc., are all the abodes of venerated spirits in Daoism. They only have *qilin*, phoenixes, white swallows, crimson ospreys, rocs, numinous swans, red birds, azure phoenixes, etc... but they do not have vajra-spirits or statues of *yakṣa*.

Daoists of his day, by contrast, had noted the popularity of these spirits in Buddhist texts and had added them to their own texts, calling them *tiangang* 天岡. The location of the *Zhengfa jing* given here does not match any of the various locations for the work or its components given in the received *Zhengfa jing/Jiuwei badao*, nor do Daoist heavens of the early medieval period typically follow the administrative divisions of the human realm so closely. This suggests either that Falin was consulting some work that has not come down to us, or that he was taking liberties with his source material in the service of his larger rhetorical goal.<sup>201</sup>

*Sandong zhunang*. On this text, see chapter four. 8.31b claims one *Santian zhengfa jing* mentions a Most August Master (*Shanghuang xiansheng* 上皇先生) and equates it with Laozi's manifestation as counselor to the Zhou. This is not in the received version. The SDZN also quotes the *Siji mingke*, claiming the *Santian zhengfa* is "hidden in above the

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201 On Falin and the *Bianzheng lun*, see Thomas Jülch, "In Defense of the Saṃgha: The Buddhist Apologetic Mission of the Early Tang Monk Falin," in *The Middle Kingdom and the Dharma Wheel: Aspects of the Relationship between the Buddhist Saṃgha and the State in Chinese History*, ed. Thomas Jülch (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 33ff. For the locations, cf. ZHDZ 259b.22-24, 259c.22-26, 259c.26-260a.22 and 260b.22-260c.4.

Nine Heavens, in the Heaven of Jade Clarity, in the Golden Chamber, in the Purple Room.” This does not match any of the locations in the received *Zhengfa jing*, though it does match *Siji mingke* 3.9a.<sup>202</sup>

CT 1132 *Shangqing dao leishi xiang*

“The True Appearances of the Categories [Pertaining] to the Way of Shangqing.”

Compiled by the same author as the SDZN, this is an aide-mémoire to the personages that feature in various early medieval Shangqing works. It lists their names and residences. It includes the same quotation from the *Siji mingke* as in the SDZN.

CT 1129 *Daojiao yishu* 道教義樞

“The Pivotal Meaning of Daoist Doctrine.” The *Pivotal Meaning* is a small encyclopedia devoted to Daoists terms and concepts, composed by Meng Anpai 孟安排 (fl. 699). 2.4a-b claims a *Writ of the Song of the Pure Phoenix, Correct Method of the Three Heavens of the Heaven of Highest Clarity* 上清三天正法曲素鳳文 in thirty-one *juan* was received by Xu Hui. The same entry appears in YJQQ 4.3a; 5.3b specifies that Xu became a “Master of Registers” (*lu shi* 籙師) upon receiving it, and 6.4a has Xu Mi receiving the work as well. The title itself appears nowhere else in the Canon. 2.11b echoes the *Inner Explanations*, claiming that Lord Lao descended to Zhang Daoling and bestowed upon him the “Correct Law of the Three Heavens.”

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202 祕於九天之上，玉清金房紫戶之內。

CT 463 *Yaoxiu keiyi jielü chao*

16.8b concerns practices for the well-being of a Disciple of the Three Phosphors who is ill. One of the registers in the possession of such a master is the “Register of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens.”

CT 1212 *Jiao sandong zhenwen wufa zhengyi mengwei lu licheng yi* 醮三洞真文五法正一盟威錄立成儀

“Complete Ritual for Offering to the Gods of the Registers of the Three Caverns, the Five Methods, and the One and Orthodox Covenant.” A Tang work that lists the titles of the registers, with their deities, that are propitiated in the ritual. A 三天正法三元大君 appears twice – at 9a and 19a – but it is unclear which amulet in particular the deity is associated with. Few of the amulets given in the work (on 8b) correspond to those in the *Zhengfa jing/Jiuwei badao*.

CT 433 *Qiyu xiuzhen zhengpin tu* 七域修真正證品圖

“Diagram Demonstrating the Hierarchy of Degrees of the Practice of the True [Way] and of the Seven Regions [of the Immortals]. This Tang work contains a list of Shangqing methods taken from the *Zhen'gao* and establishes a hierarchy of the spiritual degrees of their practitioners. 3a contains a disordered copy of *Zhen'gao* 5.2a that includes the familiar *Chu liutian zhi wen santian zhengfa*.

CT 1239 *Zhengyi xiuzhen lue yi* 正一修真略儀

“Concise Treatise for the One and Orthodox Cultivation of the True [Way].” This Tang work collects doctrine and protocols related to 24 registers belonging to the Three Caverns. It divides these registers into three groups. First and lowest are those belonging to the Way of the Celestial Master; second are those of the Sanhuang and Lingbao traditions; final and highest are the registers of Shangqing. A “Register of the Correct Methods of the Three Heavens” (*Santian zhengfa lu* 三天正法錄) appears among the Shangqing registers, along with some other registers mentioned in the *Jiuwei badao* and *Zhengfa jing*, either directly or by alternate names that feature elsewhere (e.g., the True Book of the Middle Prime).

CT 617 *Taishang xuanci zhuhua zhang* 太上宣慈助化章

“Most High Memorials That Proclaim Mercy and Are Helpful in Working Wonders.” This work, compiled by Du Guangting 杜光庭(850-933) collects 23 petitions that aim either to ameliorate or prevent certain illnesses or misfortunes. As in the below work, the phrase *Santian zhengfa* occurs in one such petition.

CT 461 *Shangqing gusui lingwen guilü* 上清骨髓靈文鬼律

“Demon Code of the Spinal Numinous Writ of the Shangqing Tradition.” This is the penal code applied in the exorcistic ritual of the Correct Method of the Heart of Heaven (*tianxin zhengfa* 天心正法), an influential exorcistic and therapeutic tradition that arose during the Song. The date of the text itself is uncertain; while the Correct Method

appeared as early as the ninth century, its textual corpus was not formed until the twelfth. *Juan 3* is devoted to priestly titles and formulas for ritual documents. The phrase *Santian zhengfa* appears twice in this *juan*, in each case forming part of a petition.<sup>203</sup>

*Song tongzhi*, “*Yiwen lue*” 宋通志, 藝文略

“Bibliographic Summary” chapter of the “General Annals of the Song.” Compiled under the direction of Zheng Qiao 鄭樵 (1104-1160), the “General Annals” is an encyclopedia. Its contents range from the typical entries in the Standard Histories (imperial annals, biographies of empresses, genealogical tables) to the more unusual (phonetics and philology, zoology, topography). The Bibliographic Summary, as the name implies, collects the titles of various works into various rubrics. The “School of the Way” (*Dao jia* 道家) contains a *Taishang santian zhengfa jing* in one *juan*.<sup>204</sup>

*Yunji qiqian*.

“Cloudy Bookbag in Seven Satchels.” The incantation that features in WSBY j. 65 (on which, see below) appears here under the same title as in the *Sishisi fang* and the *Wushang biyao*. It is this version I translate in that chapter. The *Yunji* is a Daoist encyclopedia presented to Song Renzong 宋仁宗 (r. 1023-1064). Scholars differ on its

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203 See EoT, s.v. “Tianxin zhengfa.”

204 In dividing works into various *jia*, Zheng Qiao was probably modeling his work on the *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shi ji* 史記), compiled by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-86?) and presented to the throne in 100 CE. Sima Qian’s categorization was uncritically accepted by Western Sinologists as an objective assessment of the works under his purview, but the problems with this assumption are now well-known. Briefly, Sima Qian’s categorization explicitly favored works he placed in “School of the Way” (*Dao jia* 道家), and in any event his classificatory scheme simplifies a complex process of oral transmission and later systematization. On the second point, see Wilkinson, *Chinese History* s.v. “Daoism.”

focus. Kristofer Schipper, following John Lagerwey, divides the work into 37 sections; nearly half, he says, are devoted to longevity techniques under the rubric of “tending life” (*yang sheng* 養生). He notes that the heavy emphasis on *yang sheng* was more likely to be of interest to an emperor like Renzong, who was not a devoted patron of Daoism. The cost of such a slant is the comparatively scanty sections on talismans and the total lack of liturgical material. By contrast, Judith Boltz divides the work into sixteen sections. 4.3a lists a *Tanshang santian zhengfa qusu fengwen* 清三天正法曲素鳳文 in 31 *juan*. This title appears nowhere else in the Canon, apart from the DLSX entry noted above. 4.19b-20b quotes the fifth and sixth chapters of the *Xuandu shangpin* as they appears above in the *Jiuzhen mingke*, with minor variations in the number of days required for a fast. Note that in both cases the material and purificatory requirements differ from those given in *Siji mingke* 3.9a-b and in the received work at ZHDZ 262c.12-264.a.11. 5.3 records that Yang Xi bestowed the text upon him, at which point he became a Master of Registers (as detailed above). 6.4 specifies that Xu Mi received the text as well. While this exact title does not appear anywhere else in the Canon, a similar one appears at 6.7b. The sixth *juan* of YJQQ is devoted to explicating the contents of the Three Caverns, and is appropriately titled “Texts and Teachings of the Three Caverns” (*Sandong jingjiao bu* 三洞經教部). This *juan* contains a subsection by the name of “Official Ranks of the Three Caverns” (*Sandong ge* 三洞格), which includes a work called *Santian zhengfa feng zhen zhi wen*, *jiuzhen shengxuan zhi wen* 三天正法鳳真之文九真昇玄之文. An appended note echoes the *Basu zhenjing*, explaining that the works listed are “the methods of the Middle

Transcendents. If one practices all of them, one will ascend to the Heaven of Highest Clarity as a Transcendent of the Middle Circuit,” (ZHDZ 29.65a).

6.17b-19a (= ZHDZ 29.68c.32-69b.3) does not mention the *Santian zhengfa* by name, but records a composition process that is very similar for a different text, the *Rites Newly-Appeared* (*Xinchu zhi yi* 新出之儀). According to one *Jade Weft* (*Yuwei* 玉緯), the *Xinchu* originated thusly:

昔元始天王，以開皇元年七月七日丙午中時，使玉童傳皇上先生白簡青籙之文，自然得乎此法虛無先生傳於唐堯。又後聖帝君命小有天王撰集宣行。青童云：自爾之後，得此文者乃七千人，皆飛龍玄昇或淪化潛引不可具記。得道者藏文五嶽，精思積感，先得此文。此文極妙，得之隨緣文來或出河洛或戒經方依因結果也

In the days of old, the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement, in the first year of the Kaihuang reign period, in the seventh month, on the seventh day (a *bingwu* day), in the middle double-hour, ordered the Jade Lad to transmit to the August High Master writs of azure registers on white slips. [The Master] spontaneously attained this method. Master Void transmitted this to Yao. Moreover, the Lord of the Golden Porte ordered the Azure Lad to compile and promulgate them. The Azure Lad said, “From this point on, those who receive the text will number seven thousand. In all cases those who mysteriously ascend to [to the heavens on] flying dragons, or undergo a great change and retire from the world, will be uncountable. Those who attain the Way will hide this text in the Five Marchmounts. [Others] who would refine their thought and pile up their sentiments [i.e., consistently and sincerely seek the Way] must first attain these texts. These texts are wondrous to the limit; those who attain them will be able to do anything they wish. As for the coming of the texts – sometimes they emerge [like] the *River Chart* and *Book of Luo*; sometimes they [arise] from keeping the precepts of the scriptures. The result is according to one’s causes and conditions.

Some of the particulars here recall events in the received work and the cosmological extract from WSBY 6, though it overlaps perfectly with neither. The date and time of the register, some of the parties involved, and the color of the records match WSBY 6, while the composition process echoes the received work. The titles “Jade Weft” and “Rites Newly-Appeared” do not match any received texts. However, a passage very similar to the above citation appears at *Daojiao yishu* 2.10b-11a.

*Juan 40* of the *Yunji* sheds some light on the *Statutes and Writs of Lady Blue of the Middle Palace of the Mystic Capital* (see above). The *juan* is an explanation of precepts that connects morality to disease, naming various good acts as “medicines” and continuing by listing several different sets of precepts. One of these bears the title *Statutes and Precepts (jie 戒) of Lady Blue of the Middle Palace of the Mystic Capital*, and contains two precepts that match exactly the first two of *Siji mingke* 5.6b-7a. Finally, 49.8a quotes a passage attributed to a *Santian zhengfa* that conforms exactly to an existing sentence in the *Yuwen*.

CT 296 *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑

“Comprehensive Mirror of Immortals who Embodied the Dao through the Ages.” This text was probably composed shortly after the fall of the Song by Zhao Daoyi 趙道一, about whom little is known. Here, he collects existing biographies of eminent Daoists and arranges them according to his own groupings, with the overall aim of providing a Daoist counterpart to the *Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government (Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑑)* and the Buddhist *Comprehensive Mirror for Those of the Sakya Clan (Shishi tongjian 釋氏通鑑)* – collections of eminent lives meant for the study and emulation of princes (in the former case) and Buddhists (in the latter). *Juan 25* includes a biography of Xu Hui that claims he received the *Santian zhengfa qusu fengwen* (see above, in the entry on the *Yunji qiqian*) from Yang Xi.



CT 1353 *Shangqing daobao jing* 上清道寶經

“Shanqing Book of the Treasures of the Dao.” An encyclopedia of Daoism that probably dates to the Song, the *Daobao jing* draws mostly on Shangqing works for information on topics ranging from scriptures and practice to the pantheon. 1.6b adopts the rubric of the *Basu zhenjing*, including the *Zhengfa jing* among the “Middle Ways.”

CT 304 *Maoshan zhi* 茅山志

The ninth *juan* of this work includes a bibliography and a list of 32 Shangqing registers. The bibliography lists a *Shangqing santian zhengfa jing* twice (9.2a, 9.5a) while the registers include a *Shangqing santian zhengfa lu*. The list also includes several registers that appear in the *Jiuwei badao*, e.g. the Most High Perfected Book of Penglai.

CT 1483 *Tianhuang zhidao taiqing yuce* 天皇至道太清玉冊

“Most Pure and Precious Books on the Supreme Dao of August Heaven.” This encyclopedia was completed in 1483 by Zhu Quan 朱權 (1378-1448), seventeenth son of Ming Taizu 明太祖 (Zhu Zhangyuan 朱璋元, r. 1368-1398). Pp. 208ff are a calendar that lists the deities that descend on each day of the month. Zhu sometimes includes a parenthetical note about that day: for instance, he calls the eighth day of the fourth month “the opening of summer” (*qixia zhi ri* 啟夏之日; the more typical name is *lixia* 立夏, a date falling between the fifth and the seventh day of the fifth month of the solar calendar). The first day of the fifth month, according to Zhu, was the day on which the

Most High Lord Lao bestowed the *Santian zhengfa* upon Zhang Daoling. This is the month and day recorded in the *Inner Explanations* (see Bokenkamp, *EDS* 215).

CT 1430 *Daozang quejing mulu* 道藏闕經目錄

“Catalogue of Missing Books in the Daoist Canon.” Compiled by the editors of the Ming Daoist Canon, this is a list of titles included in previous Daoist canons that were no longer extant by the time the Ming editors began their work. A *Taishang santian zhengfa jing jue* 訣 appears in a section called “Rites” (yi 儀).

CT 1219 *Gaoshang shenxiao yuqing zhenwang zishu dafa* 高上神霄玉清真王紫書大法

“Great Magic from the Purple Book of the True King of the Highest Divine Emyrean Jade Purity.” A work of unknown date in the tradition of Five Thunder Magic (*Wu lei fa* 五雷法). This was a method of summoning rain current in the early tenth century. On Shenxiao (“Divine Emyrean”) Daoism, see TC, pp. 1081-1083. Despite internal references that suggest it was compiled during the reign of Song Huizong 宋徽宗 (Zhao Ji 趙佶, r. 1100-1125), more compelling evidence near the end of the text gives the impression it was a later document. The *Zishu dafa* is an exorcism manual; juan 10 collects various incantations, with one “Hidden Incantation for Dispelling [the Qi of] the Six Heavens at 10.23b-24a.

*Guang bowu zhi* 廣博物志

“Expansion of a Treatise on Curiosities.” Compiled by Dong Sizhang 董斯張 (1586-1628) in 1607. In contrast to more typical encyclopedias (*leishu* 類書), the *Guang bowu zhi* includes what we would call “natural history.” Topics include food and drink (juan 41), botany (juan 42-43), and fauna (44-50). Juan 28 concerns art and literature, and cites Daoist works, Buddhist works, and the Standard Histories. 28.31b includes a garbled quote of Zhen’gao 5.2a, which mentions the *Chu liutian zhi wen santian zhengfa*.<sup>205</sup>

*Daozang mulu xiangzhu* 道藏目錄詳

“Annotated Table of Contents to the Daoist Canon.” The received version was presented to the throne in Qianlong 46 (1781-82), but was originally compiled by the Ming Daoist priest Bai Yunji 白雲霽 (fl. 1626), who presented it to the throne in the *bingyin* year (1626-27) of the Tianqi 天啟 reign period (1621-1628) of Ming Xizong 熹宗 (Zhu Jiaoyou 朱校由, 1605-27). 4.38a of this text claims a *Zhengfa jing* in one *juan* was bestowed upon Zhang Daoling by the Most High Lord Lao.

*Daming Daozangjing mulu* 大明道藏經目錄

“Table of Contents to the Scriptures in the Daoist Canon of the Great Ming.” A *Santian zhengfa* in one *juan* is listed under the “Orthodox Unity” (*Zhengyi* 正一) section, thus placing it among Celestial Masters works. This is a marked departure from earlier

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<sup>205</sup> On Ming *leishu* in general, and the *Guang bowu zhi* in particular, see Harriet T. Zurndorfer, “Fifteen hundred years of the Chinese encyclopedia,” in *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, ed. Jason König and Greg Woolf (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 518-19.

material – e.g., CT 1239 (Tang) or CT 461 (Song) – which include the works or methods by its name in the Shangqing tradition.

*Yuding pianzi leibian* 御定駢字類編

“Imperially-commissioned [Lexicon of] Binomes [Containing] Categorized Excerpts [from Classic Works].” This is a dictionary-like compendium containing over 1600 entries in 240 juan compiled under the auspices of Gao Yu 高輿 (?-1717) on the order of the Kangxi 康熙 Emperor (1662-1722). The title is a pun; the word *pian* (“paired,” “parallel”) refers to binomes as a word class in the phrase *pianzi*, but also to a style of writing called *pianwen* 駢文 that began in the Han and flourished during the Northern and Southern Dynasties. Sometimes translated “parallel prose,” *pianwen* is characterized by emphasis on syntactic and lexical parallelism as well as tonal alternation. After the Tang, the dominant form of this style involved alternating phrases of four and six characters, thus earning it the name “four-six prose” (*siliu wen* 四六文). The purpose of the *Pianzi leibian* was to aid literati as they wrote in this style.

The *Pianzi leibian* is notable for our purposes in that it three citations of the YJQQ that concern the Zhengfa jing. Juan 98 contains a series of binomes beginning with 五. Under 五雙 we find an excerpt that contains the transmission requirements for the *Zhengfa jing* (part of 98.11a-b = part of YJQQ 4.20b); in 102.11a-b, we find the quote from YJQQ 4.19b that sites the Santian zhengfa and several other Shangqing works in the Heaven of Highest Clarity; and at 123.50a under 上學 we find the citation of the *Zhengfa jing* that appears in YJQQ 40. In each case, the YJQQ is credited by name. This

fact becomes significant when one considers the many divergences between the version of the *Zhengfa jing* preserved in the YJQQ and the received text.

APPENDIX B

THE “RECTIFYING METHODS” IN THE ANCIENT LISTS

The following contain bibliographies of Shangqing works. This appendix is based on the list in R 2: 15. I have noted where the *Rectifying Methods* appears and the name under which it appears.

CT 426 *Basu zhenjing*

4b-5a: 三天正法鳳真之文

CT 442 *Housheng daojun lieji* 後聖道君列記: does not appear

*Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 紫陽真人內傳 (part of YJQQ 106.8a-15b): does not appear

CT 303 *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 紫陽真人內傳 46:192a-193c, 195a-c: does not appear

CT 1331 *Dongzhen shangqing shenzhou qizhuan qibian wu tianjing* 洞真上清神州七轉

七變舞天經 (ZHDZ 1:368)

2b: 三天正法威制六天

27b: 威制六天三天正法消魔上經

*Jiuzhen mingke* 九真明科 (Part of CT 1314 洞真太上素靈洞元大有妙經)

1:124a-b.

The biography of Lord Pei at YJQQ 105 (YJQQ 105, ZHDZ 29:816-817): does not appear

The *Dadong zhenjing mu* 大洞真經目 Dame Wei's biography (P 2337)

上清除六天文三天正法 in one juan.

APPENDIX C

THE WSBY EDITION OF THE *RECTIFYING METHODS*



The editors of the *Secret Essentials* refer to their edition of the *Rectifying Methods* almost exclusively as the *Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens of the Cavern of Perfection* (*Dongzhen santian zhengfa jing* 洞真三天正法經). They cite or mention the work eight times: in j. 6, 22, 30, 31, 32, 43, 47, 65, and 95. In what follows, I translate each citation and explain how it fits into the *Secret Essentials*' larger ideological project.<sup>206</sup>

## Juan 6

The editors first invoke their version of the *Rectifying Methods* at a particularly crucial moment in their own work. Legitimate rulership required personal moral perfection and knowledge of the workings of the cosmos. WSBY 6 demonstrates the latter in particular. It forms a unit with chapter 7, which concerns the foundations of moral action. Both are implicit in the creation of the state, because good government proceeds from the moral excellence of the ruler and the harmony of the state with the cosmos.<sup>207</sup> The editors make their reasoning explicit in their summary of the latter portion of j. 6, in which they quote the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhou li* 周禮): “It is the king who establishes the state.”<sup>208</sup> I will say

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206 This section is heavily indebted to Lagerwey, *Wu-shang*. On j. 6, see pp. 38-42, 50-51, and 81-82; on j. 30-32, pp. 42-43, 58-59, 100ff; on j. 44, pp. 45-47, 62, 143ff; on 44, pp. 35-47, 63, 147ff; on 65, pp. 47, 64-66, 170-174, esp. 172-173; on 66, pp. 47, 65, 174ff (note that this is actually a silent citation of an incantation associated elsewhere with the *Rectifying Methods*; thus, I do not discuss it here); on 95, pp. 47-48, 68-70, 203ff.

207 This harmony was sometimes literal. Sound and tuning were matters of concern not just in what we today consider “musical” contexts, but in the synchronization of human conduct and the cosmic order. This concern is reflected in a treatise on tuning included in the *History of the Latter Han* (*Houhan shu* 後漢書) as well as the musicological predilections of one of Wang Mang's 王莽 (45 BCE-23 CE) courtiers. See Noa Hegesh, “In Tune with the Cosmos: Tuning Theory, Cosmology, and Concepts of Sound in Early China” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2008).

208 惟王建國。 See Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 51.

more on the organization of WSBY 6 and its contents below. A partial translation of WSBY 6 follows. It corresponds to ZHDZ 28.110a.14-c17.<sup>209</sup>

道曰：天關在天西北之角，與斗星相御。北斗七星則天關之綱柄，玉宸之華蓋，梵行九天十二辰之氣，斗綱運關，則九天並轉。天有四候之門，九天合三十六候，一晝一夜則斗綱運關，經一候之門，晝夜三十六日，則經三十六候都竟。三十六候竟，則是九天一轉。三百六十輪為九天一周。

The Dao says, “The Celestial Pass<sup>210</sup> is in Heaven’s northwest corner. It is driven forward with the stars of the [Northern] Dipper. The seven stars of the Dipper are thus the headrope and handle of the Celestial Pass, [which is] the beflowered canopy of the Jade Mansions [of Heaven]. [The stars of the Dipper] move the qi of Nine Heavens through the [cycles] of time.<sup>211</sup> The net of the dipper turns the Pass, and so the Nine Heavens revolve. Each heaven has four doors that correspond each to a period [of time]; therefore, in total the Nine Heavens have thirty-six periods. In one day and one night, the net of the dipper turns the Celestial Pass through the doors of one period; in a collection of thirty-six days and nights, it thus passes through thirty-six periods. With thirty-six periods complete, one revolution of all the Nine Heavens is complete. Three hundred and sixty [such] revolutions equals one complete circuit of the Nine Heavens.

九天一周，則六天之氣皆還上上三天，三天改運，促會以催其度。三千六百周，則為小劫交。

In one complete circuit of the Nine Heavens, the qi of the Six Heavens returns to the upper Three Heavens. The Three Heavens rectify the revolution [of the Six], urging them to gather [in the Three Heavens] to hasten onward in their appointed degree. The conjunction of small kalpas occurs after three thousand and six hundred complete circuits.

小劫交，則九氣改正，萬帝易位，民亡鬼滅，善存清治，六合寧一，九千九百周為大劫終。

At the conjunction of small kalpas, the Nine Qi are transformed and rectified. The myriad [celestial] thearchs change their places; the people are obliterated, the ghosts are destroyed. The good remain and purify the rule [of the kingdom], and [all in] the

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209 The following translation was aided immensely by Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 38-43, 81-82; Bokenkamp, “Time After Time: Taoist Apocalyptic History and the Founding of the T’ang Dynasty,” *Asia Major*, 3rd series, 7.1 (1994): 68-72; *ibid.*, “Lu Xiuqing, Daoism, and the First Buddhist Canon,” in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200-600*, edited by Scott Pearce, Audrey Spiro, and Patricia Ebrey (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001): 192-193, 317-318 notes 41-42.

210 The star Polaris.

211 The phrase *shi'er chen* 十二辰 means literally, “the watches of the night,” or “the twelve earthly branches used to measure time.”

Six Directions becomes tranquil and unified.<sup>212</sup> After nine thousand nine hundred complete circuits, one great kalpa is completed.

大劫終，則九天數盡，六天運窮。六天欲窮，則氣激於三五，羣妖凶橫，因時而行，放毒威民。此皆運窮數極，乘機而鼓，以致於此。

When one great kalpa is completed, the days of the Nine Heavens reach their end, and the movement<sup>213</sup> of the Six Heavens weakens. When the Six Heavens near their end, then qi is stimulated in the three-and-five<sup>214</sup> and the massed anomalies become bold and fierce. Moving about in response to the times, they freely spread illness and cause harm among the people. At the end of the turnings [of a great kalpa], these beings are nearly infinite, and they seize upon [the unfortunate times] to drum themselves up [to do great harm].

地機在東南之分，九泉之下，則九河之口吐噏之。靈機上通天源之淘注，旁吞九洞之淵奧。十二時，紀推四會之水東迴，一晝一夜則氣盈，氣盈並湊九河之機，晝夜三十三日機轉。西北迴，東北張，西南噏，張則溢，噏則虧，周於四會。天源下流，九泉涌波，是為一輪。三百三十輪為一度，一度則水母促會於龍王，河侯受對於三天。三千三百度謂之陰否，陰否則蝕陰，蝕[陰]<sup>215</sup>水涌，水涌河決，山淪地沒，九千三百度為大劫之終，陰運之極。當此之時，九泉涌於洪波，水母鼓行，山海冥一，六合坦然。此陰運之充，地氣之激也。

The Floodgates of the Earth are in the southeast, under the Nine Springs, and the mouths of the nine rivers spit forth and suck in there. The numinous Floodgates – above, they penetrate to the Heavenly Source,<sup>216</sup> to dredge and irrigate it; to the side, they swallows the deeps of the Nine Caverns. In one day, the *ji* lines of the earth push the waters of the Four Directions eastward. Because of this, during the passage of one day and one night, qi overflows; qi overflows and it all gathers at the Floodgates of the Nine Rivers.<sup>217</sup> Thirty-three days and nights is one complete rotation of the pivot. The northwest turns, the northeast extends, and the southwest

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212 The SDZN version of this portion reads 冥一 “muddle into one.”

213 Reading 運 for 欲. While phonetic confusion on the part of the scribe was unlikely – the two characters sounded little alike in early medieval literary Chinese – correcting the passage in this way allows it to follow the same rhetorical pattern established earlier in the work: anadiplosis of a phrase, whereby the same phrase ends one sentence and begins the next. This is evident in the previous line: 九千九百周為大劫終。大劫終，則九天數盡… See Sylva Rhetoricae, s.v. “anadiplosis.”

214 The sun, moon, stars, and five naked-eye planets; see *Grand Ricci*, s.v. “三五.”

215 I insert 蝕 to preserve the anadiplosis referred to above.

216 I have been unable to find an explanation of this term.

217 In translating *ji* 機 as floodgate, I follow Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 81. Because *ji* lines are not introduced until the next paragraph, the only way for the translation to make sense is if that paragraph had preceded this one in the original edition of the *Wushang*.

contracts. [The northeast] extends and so spills over; [the southwest] contracts and so is deficient. [Yin qi] circulates throughout the Four Directions. The Heavenly Source flows downward, and the Nine Springs surge and rush. This is one revolution. 330 revolutions is one measure. After one measure, then the Water Mother hurries to meet with with the Dragon King, and the River Lord receives the summons of the Three Heavens. Three thousand three hundred measures are called one yin blockage.<sup>218</sup> After one yin blockage, there is an eclipse of the moon. The moon is eclipsed, and the waters [of the Nine Springs] surge forth. The waters surge fourth, and so the rivers are cut off, the mountains sink and the earth drowns. Nine thousand three hundred measures are the end of one great kalpa, the limit of the hidden turning. At this time, the Nine Springs surge into great waves, the Water Mother drums herself up and moves about, mountains and seas merge in the darkness, and [all in] the six directions is laid bare. This is the fulfillment of a yin cycle, the stimulation of the qi of the earth.

天圓十二綱，地方十二紀。天綱運關，三百六十輪為一周。地紀推機，三百三十輪為一度。天運三千六百周為陽勃。地轉三千三百度為陰蝕。天氣極於太陰。地氣窮於太陽。故陽激則勃。陰否則蝕。陰陽勃蝕，天地氣反。天地氣反，乃謂之小劫。小劫交，則萬帝易位。九氣改度，日月縮運。陸地通於九泉，水母決於五河。大鳥屯於龍門，五帝受會於玄都。當此之時，凶穢滅種，善民存焉。

The round space of Heaven [is divided by] twelve *gang* lines; the square space of Earth [is divided by] twelve *ji* lines.<sup>219</sup> When Heaven's *gang* [lines] turn [it] around the [Celestial] Pass three hundred and sixty times, it is one complete circuit. When the terrestrial *ji* lines push the Floodgates of the Earth three hundred and thirty times, it is one measure. When the heavens turn for three thousand and six hundred complete circuits, it is a "swelling of yang." When the earth revolves for three thousand three hundred measures, it is a "yin corrosion." Heavenly qi reaches its limit in the Grand Yin; earthly qi exhausts itself in the Grand Yang. Yang is stimulated and flourishes; yin is negated and corrodes. The corrosion of yin and the flourishing of yang is the reversal of the qi of heaven and earth. The reversal of the qi of heaven and earth is the conjunction of small kalpas. During the conjunction of small kalpas, the myriad emperors change their stations, and the nine qi run counter to their norm. The sun and moon quit their revolutions. Dry land surges forth from the nine springs, and the Water Mother bursts from the five rivers. The Great Bird is visible in the Dragon Gate;<sup>220</sup> the Five Emperors gather at the Mystic Capital. At this

218 See Kroll, s.v. "否."

219 See Kroll, s.v. 綱. The term also suggests the headrope of a fishing net, and its meaning was extended to "main lines" or "guiding principle" (of a policy, an argument, etc.). The author of the WSBY version of the *Zhengfa jing* conceptualizes heaven as a circular net divided into sections by twelve of these *gang* lines, while the earth is a square net divided by twelve *ji* lines. The character *ji* suggests subsidiary lines to the *gang* headrope (though its extended sense carries the same meaning as *gang*). The *gang* lines of Heaven push it in revolutions around the Heavenly Pass, while the *ji* lines of Earth push it in revolutions around the Earthly Pivot.

220 Perhaps the region of Luoyang, in the old territory of Zhou.

time, disasters accumulate and annihilate all beings. The good seed people will survive.

天運九千九百周爲陽蝕。地轉九千三百度爲陰勃。天蝕則氣窮於太陽。地勃則氣謀於太陰。故陽否則蝕，陰激則勃，陰陽蝕勃則天地改易，謂之大劫交。大劫交，天翻地覆，海涌河決，人淪山沒，金玉化消，六合冥一。

When the heavens revolve for nine thousand nine hundred complete circuits, it is a “Yang corrosion.” When the earth turns for nine thousand three hundred measures, it is a “Yin swelling.” Heaven is corroded and its qi is exhausted in the Grand Yang; earth flourishes and its qi gathers at the Grand Yin. Thus yang is negated and corrodes, while yin is stimulated and flourishes. Yin flourishes and yang corrodes, and heaven and earth change and shift – this is called a conjunction of great kalpas. At the conjunction of great kalpas, heaven is upended and earth is flipped; the seas surge and the rivers burst their dikes; humankind disappears and mountains drown; gold and jade transform and disappear, and [all in] the six directions muddles into one.

右出《洞真三天正法經》

The preceding comes from the Correct Method of the Three Heavens of the Cavern that Penetrates Perfection.

For a summary of these passages, see chapter four.

## Juan 22

Though juan 22 contains only a mention – not a citation – of the *Rectifying Methods*, it is nonetheless worth considering. Juan 22 belongs to a section of the text (j. 8-23) that describes the organization of the celestial bureaucracy, illustrating that Emperor Zhou’s knowledge comprehends even the minutiae of the heavens’ inner workings.<sup>221</sup> At WSBY 22.1b, the editors place a “Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens” (*Santian zhengfa* 三天正法) in one of the highest celestial palaces, the Purple Chamber of the Universe (*Liuhe zifang* 六合紫房; the phrase *liuhe* literally means “the Six Directions,” here standing for everything within them). Whether the *Secret Essentials* is referring to the

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<sup>221</sup> See Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 42-43.

work as a whole or to methods contained therein is unclear. The very mention of the Rectifying Methods in the context of heavenly organization accords it great importance; the editors of the *Secret Essentials* would have had a multitude of works available to them, and choosing this particular work or part of a work to include here indicates they held it in great esteem. Their placement of the Rectifying Methods in one of the highest palaces reinforces this impression.

Juan 30-32

The next citations of the *Rectifying Methods* occur during a long discussion of the provenance, character, and function of celestial writings. J. 30 gives the provenance and names of books and talismans; j. 31, their powers and the duration for which they will remain in the world, as well as the fated preconditions one must possess in order to receive them; and j. 32, the procedures for their transmission. The import of these writings is not in doctrine, but in part in their power as political tools. The editors make this point later on when they discuss the proper transmission of Daoist works: “The norms of the scriptures transform the world.”<sup>222</sup> J. 30 mentions, but does not cite, the *Rectifying Methods*. From it, we learn that the *Rectifying Methods* came to be together with the Celestial King of Primordial Commencement, and that he thereafter bestowed it upon the Most High Lord of the Great Dao (i.e., the deified Laozi). The implication here is that the work formed together with the highest gods out of the primordial qi of the universe, thus granting it almost unexcelled status among works. Following a general

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<sup>222</sup> 經法化世. See Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 60. My translation differs from his.

principle of Daoist hierarchy, its exalted status would have come with exalted powers: the nearer to the cosmic unity a deity or work, the greater its power.

J. 31 explicitly cites the *Rectifying Methods*. It links the work to a number of other works that form part of the core of the Shangqing canon. The nexus of these relationships is CT 1379 *Shangqing yudi qisheng xuanji huitian jiuxiao jing* 上清玉帝七聖玄紀迴天九霄經 “Scripture of the Return to the Nine Heavens, Mystical Records of the Seven Saints of the Jade Emperor of Utmost Purity.” This Eastern Jin text is a reworked member of the original Shangqing revelations that is quoted extensively in the WSBY. It provides a list of records – the *ji* 紀 of the title – on which one’s name must be inscribed in order to ascend to the heavens, a method of visual meditation for writing one’s name in said records, hymns to the seven patrons of the scripture, and a list of Seven Wounds (*qi shang* 七傷). These are faults in behavior that harm the Marks of Immortality – that is, the physical characteristics borne by a human destined to become a transcendent. Per Robinet, “[t]he names of the paradises [to which one can ascend], the characteristics of the records, and the Marks of Immortality correspond exactly to the terms found in CT 442 (*The Annals of Lord Lao of the Latter Age*).” CT 442 is a member of the original Shangqing corpus that is devoted to the Lord of the Golden Porte; it opens with his biography and describes his efforts to save humankind as well as the heavens to which certain elect will ascend, should their names be inscribed on the appropriate celestial records.<sup>223</sup>

Establishing an early date for the *Qisheng xuanji* and linking it to the Shangqing corpus is important because it helps date the amulets in the received *Rectifying Methods*,

<sup>223</sup> See CT, s.v. “Shangqing yudi qisheng xuanji huitian jiuxiao jing,” and R 2: 225-228.

many of which are associated with the celestial records at the center of the *Qisheng*. However, this association does not exist in the received version of the *Qisheng xuanji*. Instead it is found in a chapter of WSBY 31 called “The Lodged Lot of Those who Encounter Scripture” (*Yujing sufen pin* 遇經宿分品). This chapter opens with a condensed version of the introduction to the received *Qisheng* (which it cites by name) before providing quotations related to that text found in elsewhere in the Daoist canon. On ZHDZ 28.107c-108a, it quotes an extract from the *Rectifying Methods* (absent from the received version) that links the amulets to various celestial records in *Qisheng* (and thereby CT 442). While the received *Qisheng* is concerned with practices that help the adept inscribe his or her name in these records, in the *Rectifying Methods* extract, receipt of a given amulet acts as proof that the recipient’s name is *already* inscribed in the associated celestial record from the *Qisheng*. These proofs are enumerated in a list of entries identical in format: “All whose names are inscribed in [record x] will attain sight of [amulet Y]” 凡名參……者得見…… All of the amulets in WSBY 31 are found in the received *Jiuwei badao*, and all but one of the records listed are found in the received *Qisheng xuanji*. What follows is a partial translation of WSBY 31. The text is available at ZHDZ 28.107c-1-108a. My own notes appear in brackets.

凡名參上清金書玉籙者，得見太上衆文籙。

All those whose names are in the Jade Registers of the Golden Books of Upper Clarity will gain sight of the Register of the Massed Writs of the Most High. [The Jade Registers are the second record in the *Qisheng*. The Massed Writs is the name of the first group of amulets in the received *Jiuwei badao*. It is treated as a single amulet in WSBY 31 and 32, as well as at *Precious Writs* 20a.]

凡名參太極白簡青文者，得見除六天文三天正法。



All those whose names are in the Indigo Writs on White Slips of the Grand Culmen will gain sight of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens for Expelling [the Qi of] the Six Heavens. [The Indigo Writs is the third record in the *Qisheng*. The Rectifying Methods is the second amulet in the *Jiuwei badao*.]

凡名參方諸玄素紫名者，得見太微靈都婉轉[三方]真文。

All those whose names are in the Obscure Plain Purple Names of Fangzhu will attain sight of the Turning Writ [of Three Prescriptions] of the Perfected of the Numinous Capital of Grand Tenuity. [The Plain Purple Names is the fourth record in the *Qisheng*. The Turning Writ is the fifth amulet in the received *Jiuwei badao*.]

凡名參金闕玉名者，得見九老仙都玄流紫極元君真書。

All those whose names are in the Jade Names of the Golden Porte will gain sight of the Perfected Book of the Dame of the Mysterious Flows of the Purple Culmen at the Transcendent Capital of the Nine Elders. [The Jade Names is the first record in the *Qisheng*. The Perfected Book of the Dame of the Mysterious Flows is the sixth amulet in the received *Jiuwei badao*.]

凡名參太清玉籍絳名者，得見清和宮天帝君真書。

All those whose names are in the Red Names of the Jade Records of the [Heaven of] Grand Clarity will gain sight of the Perfected Book of the Heavenly Thearch-Lord of the Palace of Clear Harmony. [The Red Names is the fifth record in the *Qisheng*. The Perfected Book of the Heavenly Thearch-Lord is the seventh amulet in the *Jiuwei badao*.]

凡名參太素瓊簡金字者，得見紫微玄宮玉帝飛天真書。

All those whose names are in Golden Characters on Green Slips of Primordial Substance will gain sight of the Flying Heaven Perfected Books of the Jade Emperor in the Mysterious Palace of Purple Tenuity. [The Golden Characters is the sixth record in the *Qisheng*. The Flying Apsaras Perfected Books are the ninth amulet in the *Jiuwei badao*.]

凡名參玄都丹臺白玉金字者，得見玄洲仙伯開天萬仙真書。

All those whose names are in the Golden Characters on White Jade in the Red Platform of the Mystic Capital will gain sight of the The Perfected Book of the Myriad Transcendents that Opens Heaven, of the Transcendent Count of the Mysterious Continent. [The Golden Characters is the ninth record in the *Qisheng*. The Perfected Book of the Myriad Transcendents is the tenth amulet in the *Jiuwei badao*.]

凡名參南極丹文紫籙者，得見崑崙壙臺飛天真文

All those whose names are in the Unadorned Register in Cinnabar Script of the Southern Culmen will attain sight of the Flying Apsaras Perfected Writ of the City Wall of Kunlun. [The Unadorned Register is the seventh record in the *Qisheng*. The Flying Apsaras Perfected Writ is the twelfth amulet in the *Jiuwei badao*.]

凡名參玄宮青金赤書者，得見蓬萊高上真書。

All those whose names are in the Crimson Books of Blue-Green Gold of the Palace of Mystery will gain sight of the Exalted Perfected Books of Penglai. [The Crimson Books do not appear in the received *Qisheng*. The Exalted Perfected Books is the fourteenth amulet in the *Jiuwei badao*.]

凡名參三元宮琳札青書者，得見天帝丈人黃上真書。

All those whose names are in the Azure-black Memorials of the Palace of the Three Primes will gain sight of the Perfected Books of the Celestial Thearch Elder of the Yellow August. [The Azure-black Memorials are the tenth record in the *Qisheng*. The Perfected Books of the Celestial Thearch Elder is the sixteenth amulet in the *Jiuwei badao*.]

右出洞真三天正法經

The foregoing is extracted from the *Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens, of the Cavern of Perfection*.

Given the context in which they appear, the import of the amulets and records listed above rests not just in their ability to confer certain powers on the bearer, but also in the intimate knowledge of the cosmos they demonstrate. The list of amulets in WSBY 31 accords imperfectly with a list given in WSBY 32, What follows is a partial translation of WSBY 32. It appears at ZHDZ 28.112c-113a.

上清清微天始青正法六天文，元始傳九天父母，萬始先生。三天真書，一名金陽洞靈文，三天玉童所出，傳皇上先生。太上衆文籙，太上傳金闕帝君。三元玄臺告六天符，傳太上玄老。三天正法，傳鬱絕真王。三天九微玄都太真陰陽靈籙上元章，太帝丈人受之於太虛无上真君。太微靈都宛轉真炁三方文，九天真王以授太上丈人。九老仙都玄流紫極真元君[真書]，受之於三天玉童。驅虎豹符，九炁丈人受之玄私陰陵上帝。清和宮天帝君皇熙真書，太上元君以授黃軒。紫微玄宮玉飛天真書，太清元始天王以授西王母。玄洲仙伯開天萬仙真書，東海小童以授得道人。崑崙壙臺靈飛天真[書]，太上大夫以授衆仙得道者。蓬萊高上真書，玄成清天上皇以傳寧封。

右出洞真三天正法經

The Writ [for Expelling] the Six Heavens, Rectifying Method of the Heaven of Clear Tenuity, [one of] the Heavens of Highest Clarity, was transmitted by the [Celestial King] of Primordial Commencement to the Master of Myriad Commencements,

Father-and-Mother of the Nine Heavens.<sup>224</sup> The Perfected Book of the Three Heavens, also called “Writ of Golden Yang of Dongling,<sup>225</sup> is that which the Jade Slips of the Three Heavens came out of, and was transmitted to Master Huangshang. The Register of the Massed Texts of the Most High was transmitted by the Most High to the Lord of the Golden Porte. The Talismans for Accusing the Six Heavens of the Mysterious Platforms of the Three Primes were transmitted to the Most High Mysterious Elder.<sup>226</sup> The Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens were transmitted to the Perfected King of Luxuriant Extinction.<sup>227</sup> The Numinous Registers of Yin and Yang of the Grand Perfected [One] of the Mystic Capital of the Nine Heavens – the Venerable Grand Thearch received it from the Unexcelled Perfected Lord of the Grand Void.<sup>228</sup> The Writ of Three Winding Prescriptions of Perfected Qi of the Numinous Capital of the Heaven of Grand Tenuity – The Perfected King of the Nine Heavens conferred it upon the Most High Elder.<sup>229</sup> The Perfected Prime Lord of the

224 The Father and Mother of the Three Heavens appears throughout the Shangqing corpus, particularly in early works. See, e.g., CT 1331 *Dongzhen shangqing shenzhou qizhuan qibian wutian jing* 洞真上清神州七轉七變舞天經 3b, 6a, 23a, 25b; *Sanyuan bujing* 26b. The earliest mention of the Master of Myriad Commencements occurs in an authentic Shangqing revelation, CT 55 *Gaoshang taixiao langshu qiongwen dizhang jing* 高上太霄琅書瓊文帝章經 8b. On this work, see R 2: 233-35. He also appears in works that postdate slightly the original Shangqing revelations: CT 1393 *Shangqing yuanshi bianhua baozhen shangjing jiuling taimiao guishan xuanlu* 上清元始變化寶真上經九靈太妙龜山玄籙 28b-29a (though in an older stratum of the version), and CT 1378 *Shangqing jinzhen yuguang bajing feijing* 上清金真玉光八景飛經 24b. On these works, see R 2: 219-223, 45-49. He also appears at *Sanyuan bu jing* 24b. This is either an original revelation or a slight reworking. See R 2: 132-33.

225 Dongling is one of the Cavern-Heavens. See Handian and Grand Ricci, s.v. 洞靈. Master Huangshang is relatively rare. He appears at CT 1358 *Shangqing gaoshang jinyuan yuzhang yuqing yinshu* 上清高上金元羽章玉清隱書經 23b in the line of transmission for an amulet. This work slightly postdates the original Shangqing revelations. See R 2: 242-44. He appears in several citations in the WSBY.

226 The Mysterious Elder is also rare. This is his earliest appearance in the canon. Of note is that he also appears in *The Petition Almanac of Master Redpine* (CT 615 *Chisong zi zhangli* 赤松子章曆), an important collection of Celestial Master petitions dating to the Tang. On this, see EoT, s.v. *Chisong zi zhangli* and citations, especially Franciscus Verellen, “The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi’s Petition Almanac,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie* 14: 291-343.

227 The Perfected King of Luxuriant Extinction appears only here and in this amulet’s entry in the *Jiuwei badao*.

228 The Venerable Grand Thearch is discussed in more detail elsewhere in the WSBY. In *juan* 23, “Graded Palaces and Bureaus of the Three Realms” (*Sanjie gong fu pin* 三界宮府品), he gathers with other officials at the Azure-Black Palace of the Jade Daïs (*Qinghua yujie gong* 青華玉陛宮) east of the Mystic Capital, under the auspices of the Grand Sage of Primordial Commencement of the Eastern Heaven of Lingbao (*Yuanshi lingbao dongtian dasheng* 元始靈寶東天大聖) to correct the records of the merits and faults of people who study the Way of Transcendents. While he first appears in a member of the original Shangqing corpus (CT 1372 *Shangqing gaoshang yuchen fengtai qusu shangjing* 上清高上玉晨鳳臺曲素上經) and the earlier *Lingbao wufu xu*, he proved immensely popular throughout later ages.

229 The Most High Elder was probably part of the original Shangqing pantheon. His earliest mention is in CT 1372 上清高上玉晨鳳臺曲素上經 12a, 14b. Though Robinet declines to state for certain that the *Qusu shangjing* is a member of the original revelations (see R 2: 187-190), its appearance in many

Purple Culmen, Ninth Elder of the Mysterious Flows of the Transcendent Capital received it from the Jade Lad of the Three Heavens.<sup>230</sup> The Elder of the Nine Qi received the Talisman for Expelling Tigers and Wolves from the Upper Thearch of Mysterious Harmony of the Hidden Tumulus.<sup>231</sup> The Most High Prime Lord bestowed the Perfected Book of August Splendor of the Lord Heavenly Thearch of the Palace of Clear Harmony on the Yellow Emperor.<sup>232</sup> The Celestial King of Primordial Commencement of the Heaven of Grand Clarity bestowed the Perfected Book of the Jade [Emperor] in the Mysterious Palace of Purple Tenuity [that Allows the Bearer] to Fly to the Heavens on the Queen Mother of the West. As for the Perfected Book of the Myriad Transcendents that Opens Heaven, of the Transcendent Count of the Mysterious Continent – the Little Lad of the Eastern Sea bestowed it upon those who had attained the Dao. As for the Grand Perfected Book for Flying to Heaven of the Platform of the Fortified Wall of Kunlun Range – the Grand Officer to the Most High bestowed it upon those many transcendents who had attained the Dao.<sup>233</sup> The High August of Mysterious Attainment of the Heaven of Clarity transmitted the Book of the Most High Perfected of Penglai to Ningfeng.<sup>234</sup>

The foregoing comes from the *Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens, of the Cavern of Perfection*.

WSBY 31 and 32 contain many citations of a *Dongzhen zhengfa jing* that link it to early Shangqing works via apotropaic amulets. They provide strong evidence that warding off demons and ascent to the heavens were two primary focuses of one early version of the

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early lists suggests great antiquity – though it has probably undergone revision.

230 There appears to be some confusion about this title in the WSBY version about this name, as it appears in WSBY 31 not as a deity but as an amulet.

231 The Elder of Nine Qi predates the Shangqing canon. He appears first in *juan* 1 of CT 880 *Taiqing jinye shendan jing* 太清金液神丹經, which Chen Guofu dates conclusively to the Eastern Han (25-220 CE). TC, s.v. “*Taiqing jinye shendan jing*” and Chen Guofu, *Daozang yuanliu xukao* (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1983): 289-292, esp. p. 291. The Upper Thearch of Mysterious Harmony of the Hidden Tumulus (read 和 for 私) is rare, appearing only in the WSBY and at *Zhenling weiye tu* 10b.

232 The Most High Prime Lord predates the Shangqing revelations, appearing first in the Later Han *Taishang laojun zhongjing* (CT 1168 太上老君中經, 1.1b) as a hypostasis of the Most High Lord of the Dao with nine heads on one body.

233 The Grand Officer of the Most High is rare, appearing only twice elsewhere: at *Zhenling weiye tu* 6a and *Chuanshou sandong jingjie* 21b.

234 The High August of Mysterious Attainment is also rare, appearing only once elsewhere in the WSBY (84.6a) and in the *Siji mingke* (3.6a). Ningfeng is a well-known transcendent with a biography in CT 294 *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳, comp. Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-6 BCE).

work. However, other passages in the same sections show that the version of the *Rectifying Methods* consulted by the editors of the WSBY had already undergone significant alteration. The deities and locales in WSBY 32 place the *Dongzhen zhengfa jing* slightly later than the original Shangqing revelations. Though they are camouflaged by allusions to much older works – Ningfeng and the Elder of the Nine Qi, for instance, predate the Shangqing corpus by far – the Chamber of the Three Purities and Master Huangshang are only to be found in apocrypha attached to early texts in the Shangqing corpus. Given the temporal proximity between the Shangqing and Lingbao revelations – the latter appeared around 400, less than thirty years after Yang Xi’s revelations ceased – it is very likely the composition of the *Dongzhen zhengfa jing* overlapped with the composition of the early Lingbao revelations. The editors of the WSBY thus appealed to contemporary religious developments as they crafted their encyclopedia for the emperor.

Another section of WSBY 32 indicates that the *Dongzhen zhengfa jing* included not just amulets, but hymns. The case in point is the Hymn-Writ of the Three Heavens (*Santian songwen* 三天頌文). The *Secret Essentials* does not record the hymn itself; merely its title and powers, spread out over two juan. Juan 32 concerns its history:

三天頌文，三天元始祕於三素之房九曲瓊室。千年一傳。青童君曰：自唐之後，得此文乃七千人。皆得馭飛龍而玄昇，晏鴻翻而騰翔。或託形輪化，潛引而飛空也。如此，不可具記。依三天格制，七百年一出。

右出《洞真三天正法經》

The [Heavenly King of] Primordial Commencement<sup>235</sup> hid the Hymn-Writ of the Three Heavens in the Bejeweled Sidechamber of the Nine Springbends, in the

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235 The work reads “The Primordial Commencement of the Three Heavens.” Because “Primordial Commencement” is a common abbreviation of the title “Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement,” and the phrase *santian yuanshi* appears only once in the Chinese literary corpus outside this citation, I take the phrase “Three Heavens” to be an accidental interpolation.

Chamber of the Three Purities.<sup>236</sup> He transmits it once in a thousand years. The Lord Azure Lad says: Since King Yao this writ has been transmitted to seven thousand people. All rode flying dragons and mysteriously ascended, took their ease on grand wings and flew away. Some entrusted their form to the transformations of the wheel; some retired into hiding and flew into emptiness.<sup>237</sup> Those that were like this – they cannot all be recorded. According to the rules and policies of the Three Heavens, it emerges once every seven hundred years.

The foregoing comes from the *Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens, of the Cavern of Perfection*.

As discussed above, the rhetorical function of this portion of the WSBY is to demonstrate knowledge of the tools used to bring harmony to the people and master the cosmos.

Juan 43

Juan 43, on ritual dress and the recitation of scriptures, concerns the detailed conduct of Daoists in the oratory. As one summary says, “In opening and reciting [the scriptures] according to the rules, [the adept] enters into communication with the spirits and attracts good fortune.”<sup>238</sup> Much like j. 30-32, j. 43 demonstrates the editors’ knowledge of how to communicate with the unseen realm – knowledge which their compilation extends to Emperor Wu. It is here we learn specifically what sort of good fortune the Hymn-Writ attracts:

三天頌文，凡受此文誦之於別室。千徧，通神，萬徧，通真。通神，則與神交，言逆知吉凶。通真，則與元始觀顏，入水不沉，入火不然，經災履厄，騰景三清。

As for the Hymn-Writ of the Three Heavens, those who receive this writ should recite it in the sideroom. After a thousand times, they will enter into communication

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236 The Bejeweled Sidechamber of the Nine Springbends appears nowhere else in the Chinese literary corpus. The Chamber of the Three Purities appears at *Huangsu sishisi fang* 9a as the residence of Jade Lads and Jade Maidens 玉童玉女.

237 Despite its Buddhist resonance, the term *lunhua* 輪化 appears chiefly in Daoist works during the early medieval period.

238 開讀合儀，通靈致福。See Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 62.

with spirits; after ten thousand times they will enter into communication with the Perfected. When they enter into communication with spirits, they will converse with spirits, speak predictions, and foresee the auspicious and inauspicious. When they enter into communication with the Perfected, they will look upon the face of the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement. They will enter water without drowning; they will enter fire and not burn up. They will make it through disasters and traverse adversity. They will ride phosphors to the Three Clarities.

#### Juan 47

J. 47 raises once again the matter of textual transmission, this time in the context of the purificatory fasts (*zhai* 齋) that precede the legitimate transfer of a work from master to student. Concerning the *Rectifying Methods*, it has this to say:

《洞真除六天之文三天正法經》男受投書，不祭。女受當祭。不投書皆齋；七日或三日。

As for the *Rectifying Methods*, when a man receives copy of the work, he need not perform the sacrifice. When a woman receives a copy of the work, then she must perform the sacrifice. Even those not receiving the text should perform a purificatory fast of seven days or three days in length.

Here, the editors of the WSBY are extending the proper ordering of the universe down to the transmission of the works that are created out of the same qi that formed its deities and human inhabitants. Recall that according to these same editors, the *Rectifying Methods* formed together with one of the highest gods; its proper receipt and transmission are thus of utmost importance.

#### Juan 65

J. 65 marks a transition from matters heavenly (the forces of karmic retribution; the characteristics of immortals) to the specifics of Daoist religious life. It is followed in j. 66 by rules governing the minutiae of behavior in the oratory (preparatory bathing; lighting lamps; burning incense). J. 65 advocates a life of reclusion. It cites the *Rectifying*

*Methods* in a section called “On living in the mountains” 山居品. As the citation makes clear, such an abode is not without its dangers. The editors draw on the *Rectifying Methods* for a protective chant. Here we see some of the most concrete instructions for Daoist practice. Several chapters of such advice precede a return outward to more abstract matters – what Lagerwey calls “the return to silence.”<sup>239</sup> As above, demonstrating their ability to prescribe even the minutiae of daily life emphasizes the comprehensive nature of the editors’ project.

凡修六天之文三天正法，遊行五嶽履涉川澤，當行三天正一之祝，威凶滅試召靈致仙之法。登山之初，當先於山外叩齒九通，閉目思五色之雲勃勃四會，掩冠一山及我身在雲炁之中。良久見五嶽仙官及山形林木草澤禽獸，萬物悉來朝己仰祝曰

上帝出遊日吉時良

玉華覆蓋太一扶將

左翼白元右輔無英

八帝九真陵逢履昌

道我送我與我同光

履行五嶽群仙奉迎

出入河海萬道開張

役御六丁旋攝五行

三天有命蕩除萬凶

割落掃穢流金滅殃

正法清通嚴如威霜

華精奕奕龍輿昂昂

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239 See Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 64-66, 29. 170ff.



流青翠羽飛錦羅裳

所向所之靡不吉昌

萬真來朝齊昇玉京

畢引炁三十六咽。右出《洞真三天正法經》

All those who cultivate the *Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens, the Writ [for Expelling the Qi of] the Six Heavens* – when they travel to the Five Marchmounts, when their shoes touch the rivers and marshes, they practice the Incantation of the Orthodox One of the Three Heavens, a method to overawe disasters and destroy adversaries, to summon numens and call transcendents. Before you enter the mountain range, clack your teeth nine times, shut your eyes and imagine a five-colored cloud flourishing and gathering from all sides, covering the entire mountain and “my” body within the cloudy qi. After a while, see the transcendent officials and all the mountain’s features – trees of the forest, grasses, marshes, birds and beasts, and all the myriad phenomena altogether coming to pay court to myself. Welcome them with an incantation, saying:

The High Thearch goes forth to travel, the day being auspicious and the time fine.

Jade flowers cover and canopy him; the Grand Monad supports and leads him by the hand.

On his left, he is escorted by the White Prime; on his right, he is assisted by the Matchless Hero.

The Eight Emperors and Nine Perfected rise up to meet me and we tread in glory.

They lead me and escort me, joining in radiance with me.

[I] walk on the five marchmounts, and flocks of transcendents worshipfully welcome me.

Coming and going within the rivers and seas, the ten thousand ways open and extend before me.

Making servants of and commanding the six *ding* deities, I gather and command the Five Phases at my will.

The Three Heavens have commanded; they annihilate the myriad disasters.

Cutting and chopping, they sweep away impurities; flowing gold  
annihilates calamities.

The orthodox method clarifies and penetrates, severe as a hard frost.

Flowery essence is splendid; dragon carts are brave.

Flowing green and azure wings, they fly with brocaded skirts.

I go where I want, with naught but good fortune.

The myriad perfected come to pay court to me, together ascending to the  
Jade Capital.

When finished, suck in qi thirty-six times.

The preceding comes from the *Rectifying Scripture of the Three Heavens  
of the Cavern of Perfection*

### Appearances in other texts

Understanding the names and terms found within the Incantation of the Orthodox One as well as its appearances elsewhere in the Daoist Canon sheds some light on the antiquity of the chant as well as the sources on which the editors of the WSBY drew. The Incantation of the Orthodox One appears in its full form in the following works.

CT 427 *Shangqing xiuxing jingjue* 上清修行經訣, hereafter *Formulary*

“Formulary for Shangqing Practices.” The *Formulary* is a collection of methods revealed to Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-86), a spirit medium in the service of the Xu 許 family of Jurong 句容 county (near modern Nanjing). The *Formulary* consists of a patchwork of citations from other works. The presence of one Lingbao work and several Shangqing works that postdate the *Zhen’gao* revelations indicate that the received version of the *Xiuxing* must have undergone revision. Each method is preceded by a title and a gloss indicating its

source. The Incantation occurs on pp. 26a-b as the first of several incantations to be chanted when entering mountains or marshes. The editor of the *Xiuxing jingjue* attributes it to the *Xiaomo jing* 消魔經, an abbreviated title for several different texts.<sup>240</sup>

CT 1269 *Shangqing xiushen yaoshi jing* 上清修身要事經, hereafter *Essentials of Practice*.

“The Essentials of the Practice of Perfection” *The Essentials of Practice* is almost identical to the *Formulary*. In the text, the Incantation is called the “Yuqing shaomo daoshi youxing shanze zhufa” 玉清消魔道士遊行山澤祝法, which I tentatively translate as the “Incantation-method from the Heaven of Jade Clarity [for] destroying demons [to be used by] Daoist priests entering traveling in the mountains and marshes.”<sup>241</sup>

### *Names and terms*

High Thearch (*Shangdi* 上帝)

Shangdi is well known as lord of the realm of deceased ancestors and a focus of royal veneration during the Shang 商 dynasty (?- c. 1046 BCE). Though he was replaced in this capacity by Tian 天 with the rise of the Zhou, worship of Shangdi continued under Qin 秦 (255-207 BCE) and Han (206 BCE-219 CE), and in fact he is nearly omnipresent in the

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240 TC, s.v. “Shangqing xiuxing jingjue.” The works referred to as the the *Xiaomo jing* include, e.g., the portion of CT 1358 *Shangqing gaoshang jinyuan yuzhang yuqing yinshu jing* 上清高上金元羽章玉清隱書經, hereafter *Jinyuan yuzhang*) called *Yuqing shaomo dawang jinxuan baishen neizhou yinwen* 玉清消魔大王金玄百神內咒隱文 (ZHDZ 1.733), which does not contain the “Zhengyi zhou.” For an introduction to the *Jinyuan yuzhang*, see TC, s.v. “Shangqing gaoshang jinyuan yuzhang yuqing yinshu jing.” For a list of works that appear under the name *Xiaomo jing*, see R 2:179.

241TC, s.v. “Shangqing xiushen yaoshi jing.”

Chinese literary canon: from the official histories to poetry to local gazetteers, his presence is felt throughout the entirety of dynastic Chinese history.<sup>242</sup>

The Grand Monad (*Taiyi* 太一)

Like Shangdi, *Taiyi* was an important figure long before the Northern and Southern Dynasties. One of his early appearances, in the *Guodian* manuscripts, has him responsible for “generating water” (*shengshui* 生水). This preceded a varied career in which he appeared as a meditative state of “pure oneness” in the late Warring States; the primordial breath (*yuan qi* 元氣) in the *Weft Texts*; the source of the ritual in the *Annals of Master Lü* (*Lushi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, 249 BCE); the root of music used in charismatic transformation in the early Han *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記); and as the focus of a Han state cult in the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BCE. While official veneration declined in the early Common Era, *Taiyi* remained important outside official circles, and indeed rose to prominence again in the Yellow Turbans movement, as well as featuring in the mortuary rituals of the Celestial Masters in the early Northern and Southern Dynasties period. Works of this time place special emphasis on his role as administrator of human destinies who exists both in the star Kochab and as the overlord of the spirits of the human body. He is taken

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242 See Robert Eno, “Shang State Religion and the Pantheon of the Oracle Texts,” in John Lagerwey and Marc Kalinowsky, ed., *ECR Part One: Shang Through Han* 1:41-102 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), for an explanation of the Shang significance of Shangdi and its relationship to other supernormal beings. Mariane Bujard, “State and Local Cults in Han Religion,” in *ECR 2*, ed. John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi, 783, 794. Here are a few mentions of Shangdi in the Chinese literary canon, drawn almost at random from Kanripo’s database: he appears in a controversy over rites during the reign of Mingdi 明帝 (Liu Yu 劉彧, r. 464-472) of the Liu-Song 劉宋 (420-478) in *Song shu* 宋書 16.23a-b; in a poem by Emperor Wu 武 (Sima Yan 司馬炎, r. 265-289) of the Jin 晉 (265-419), preserved in *Wen xuan* 20.22a-25a; and an entry in the *Shandong tongzhi* 山東通志 concerning local sacrifices to Shangdi. The entry is dated to the fourth year (bridging 1726 and 1727 in the Western calendar) of the Yongzheng 雍正 Emperor (Aisin-Gioro Yinzhen 愛新覺羅胤禛, r. 1723-1735) of the Qing 清 (1644-1911).

up by the Shangqing corpus as an important bodily deity. The received *Rectifying Methods* makes him responsible for the turning of the kalpas in an internal meditation exercise that has the adept consume the entire universe in a conflagration of fiery qi emanating from their own body.<sup>243</sup>

White Prime (*Baiyuan* 白元)

The identity of this spirit varies according to the work consulted. The *Huangting neijing jing* (on which, see below) claims it is a spirit of the lungs, which the *Taidan yinshu* (discussed more fully below) confirms. However, it appears as a spirit of the brain in the *Hymn to the Gods of the Cave-Chamber* (CT 133 *Taishang dongfang neijing zhu* 太上洞房內經注, hereafter *Dongfang neijing zhu*), which was integrated into the Shangqing corpus at an early date. Baiyuan plays an important role in the Shangqing corpus, and so appears elsewhere as well. In addition to the *Taidan yinshu*, he can be found in the *Shangqing taishang jiuzhen zhongjing jiangsheng shendan jue* (discussed earlier), as well as texts like the *Zhen'gao* and the *Esoteric Biography of Ziyang the Perfected* (CT 303 *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 紫陽真人內傳) that form the core of the Shangqing corpus. The deity's antiquity is further attested by a citation in the *Wushang biyao*. Finally,

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243 EoT, s.v. "Taiyi." For a detailed overview of Taiyi that takes into account excavated texts, tomb paraphernalia, and Dunhuang manuscripts in addition to received material, see Li Ling, "An Archaeological Study of Taiyi (Grand One) Worship," trans. Donald Harper, *Early Medieval China* 2 (1995-96): 1-39. Isabelle Robinet, in Julian F. Pas and Norman Girardot, trans., *Taoist Meditation: The Maoshan Tradition of Great Purity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 134-138 provides an overview of Taiyi's diverse manifestations in the human body. See also R 1:129. For the *Santian zhengfa jing* citation, see ZHDZ 1:261b.22-261c.11.

Baiyuan links the Incantation to the received *Rectifying Methods*, where he appears early on in the commentary of the Azure Lad.<sup>244</sup>

The Matchless Hero (*Wuying* 無英)

Baiyuan and Wuying often compose two parts of a trio that also includes The Yellow Old Lord of the Center (*Zhongyang Huanglao jun* 中央黃老君); this is how they appear in the *Santian zhengfa jing*. Along with Taiyi and Baiyuan, Wuying is an important bodily deity in the Shangqing corpus.<sup>245</sup>

The Eight Emperors *Badi* 八帝

These might be the Demon Kings of the Eight Directions (*Badi damowang* 八帝大魔王) mentioned in the *Jinyuan yuzhang*, a text that was integrated into the Shangqing corpus at an early date. (For more on these beings, see below.) The Demon Kings appear in this text as villains to be driven away by spirits marshalled by the adept. Thus, their association here with the benevolent Nine Perfected would be strange. However, there are

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244 See the *Grand Ricci*, s.v. “Bai yuan”; the *Huangting neijing jing* in YJQQ 11.25b; EoT, s.v. “Taidan yinshu,” but cf. R 1:129, which lists Baiyuan as a spirit of the brain. See also *Dongfang neijing zhu* 3b-4b; TC, s.v. “Taishang dongfang neijing zhu”; *Zhen’gao* 9.14b, 13.11a, where Baiyuan appears as a spirit of the brain; he also appears as a spirit of the brain in *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 8b-9a; WSBY 3.12a; *Santian zhengfa* 1b.

245 He is sometimes known as *Yuanying* 元英; see, e.g., *Suling jing* (full title: CT 1314 *Dongzhen taishang suling dongyuan dayou miaojing* 洞真太上素靈洞元大有妙經) 18a and CT 1339 *Dongzhen bajing yulu chentu yinfu* 洞真八景玉籙晨圖隱符 6a. In both cases he is associated with Baiyuan, and so is probably a confusion of 元 with 无, an alternate form of 無. The *Bajing yulu* was incorporated into the Shangqing corpus at an early date after the Shangqing revelations; see TC, s.v. “Dongzhen bajing yulu chentu yinfu.” For the association of Baiyuan, Wuying and Zhongyang Huanglao jun in the Shangqing corpus, see R 1:129; *Ciyi jing* 5b-6a, 25a-b; *Dongfang neijing zhu* 1b, 4b, 9a; *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 8b-9a, where Zhongyang Huanglao jun is the “great spirit that cannot be named,” thanks to his association with Taiwei; *Denzhen yinjue* 1.3a. *Dadong zhenjing* 2.10b-11a pairs Wuying with Baiyuan, as does *Taidan yinshu* 20a and *Huangting neijing jing* 1.10b, where Wuying goes by an alternate name (Gongzi 公子); *Santian zhengfa jing* 1b.

references to benevolent Eight Emperors scattered throughout the Shangqing corpus. *The Jade Rule of the Three Original Ones and the Promulgated Scripture of the Three Female Original Ones* (CT 354 *Shangqing sanyuan yujian sanyuan bujing* 上清三元玉檢三元布經) was integrated into the main body of Shangqing texts some fifty years after the Shangqing revelations; in an incantation it contains, the Eight Emperors command transcendents to dispatch a “flying chariot” (*feibing* 飛輶) that carries the adept to the Grand Void (*taixu* 太虛). In *The Nine Crimson Speckled Talismans of the Five Emperors’ Inner Contemplation* (CT 1329 *Taishang jiuchi banfu wudi neizhen jing* 太上九赤班符五帝內真經), a member of the original Shangqing corpus, they appear in an incantation to the Lord of Mount Tai (*Taishan jun* 泰山君). More significantly, they appear in a text associated with the Nine Perfected, the *Mount Turtle Register of the Nine Spirits Pertaining to the Superior Scripture of Transformation of Primordial Beginning* (CT 1393 *Shangqing yuanshi bianhua baozhen shangjing jiuling taimiao guishan xuanlu* 上清元始變化寶真上經九靈太妙龜山玄籙, hereafter *Guishan xuanlu*); thus, these Eight Emperors are probably the same referred to in the incantation. In the received *Rectifying Methods* (259b.19-21), they appear as emperors of the Eight Directions, with one set of eight dwelling in each of the upper three heavens.<sup>246</sup>

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246 Zhonghua dao jiao da cidian, s.v. “八帝大魔王.” For the names and descriptions of the Eight Demon Kings, see the *Jinyuan yuzhang* at ZHDZ 1.733ff. *Sanyuan bujing* 37a/ZHDZ 1.356; on the work, see TC, s.v. “Shangqing sanyuan yujian sanyuan bujing.” *Jiuchi banfu* 9b/ZHDZ 1.444-445. On the work, see TC, s.v. “Taishang jiuchi banfu wudi neizhen jing.” The *Guishan xuanlu* is perhaps the most complete list of the seventy-four Shangqing gods. See TC, s.v. “Shangqing yuanshi bianhua baozhen shangjing jiuling taimiao guishan xuanlu.”

Nine Perfected (*Jiu zhen* 九真)

The Nine Perfected play a critical role in the Shangqing corpus, and are named and described in the *Taidan yinshu* as residents of the Three Primes (*Sanyuan* 三元), here referring to the upper, middle, and lower sections of the body. Each of the Three Primes is itself divided into upper, middle, and lower levels, and one Perfected is assigned to each level. It is in this capacity that they help the adept transform their body in the *Jiuzhen zhongjing*. However, the Three Primes also have cosmological significance as hypostases of the three primordial *qi* that generate the universe, and accordingly the Nine Perfected play an essential role in governing the cosmos. In the *Rectifying Methods* as it has come down to us, they appear as residents of the Three Primes, conceived of in that version as mutations of the *qi* of the Nine Heavens. The Nine Perfected reside in the Three Heavens of Clear Tenuity (*Qingwei* 清微), Yuyu 禹餘, and Grand Crimson (*Dachi* 大赤).<sup>247</sup>

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247 See ZHDZ 1.520a-521a for their names and significance on both the human and cosmological levels. EoT, s.v. “Sanyuan;” *Zhonghua daojiao dacidian*, s.v. “三元;” *Daojiao dacidian*, s.v. “Sanyuan.” They appear in *Santian zhengfa jing*, ZHDZ 1.259b. The Three Heavens appear in many Shangqing works. Yuyu appears here as an abbreviation for Xuanwei ziran shangxu yuyu tian 玄微自然上虛禹餘天, the sixth of the thirty-six heavens according to CT 1373 *Shangqing waiguo fangpin qingtong neiwen* 上清外國放品青童內文. The characters 禹餘 (pronounced hjuXyo in Middle Chinese) were probably chosen for their phonetic value as imitations of Sanskrit, since the Yuyu tian appears in the *Waiguo fangpin* next to pseudo-Sanskrit heavens like the *Yudan wuliang tian* 鬱單無量天 or the *Bujiaole tian* 不驕樂天. “Yudan” (MC: ‘juttan) was the typical transcription of the Sanskrit *Uttarakuru*, a utopian northern continent (not heaven) of the Buddhist pantheon, and 不驕樂 renders Sanskrit *Nirmānarati*, the fifth Buddhist heaven. Accordingly, I leave it untranslated, in contrast to Livia Kohn, EoT, s.v. “Sanqing.” Elaborate Chinese names meant to resemble Sanskrit words were common in other heavens. See ZHDZ 1.287ff; Zürcher, “Buddhist Conquest,” in Silk, *Buddhism in China* 144-145n.



### Six *ding* deities (*Liu ding* 六丁)

These deities are associated with the six combinations of the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches that include the stem *ding*. They act variously as guardians of the adept's body and as sources of information on future events. They appear both in Ge Hong's *Baopuzi* and the *Upper Scripture of Purple Texts Inscribed by the Spirits* (*Lingshu ziwen* 靈書紫文), a text revealed to Yang Xi.<sup>248</sup>

### Five Phases (*Wu xing* 五行)

Important in realms as diverse as bodily health, imperial politics, and military strategy, the first systematic account of the Five Phases appears in the *Annals of Master Lü*. This work was assembled in 239 BCE out of quotations from diverse sources, some of which are no longer extant. In Warring States and Han thought, political dynasties were each linked to one of the Five Phases. The rise and fall of particular dynasties was thus conceived of as a natural process on the same order as the weather, the seasons, and the motion of the planets. However, given the close association between the Five Phases and six *ding* deities in this portion of the incantation, the author of the text probably meant to stress the divinatory aspect of *wu xing*, which had been well-known since Han times. The Five Phases are not directly mentioned in the *Rectifying Methods*, though their influence can be seen in the orderly progression of one dispensation of the heavens to another.<sup>249</sup>

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248 For the *ding* deities in Ge Hong, see Company, *Heaven and Earth* 72-75. The *Lingshu ziwen* is scattered throughout the modern Daozang. See Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *EDS* 275-372 for an introduction to and translation of the work. Robinet, in *EoT*, s.v. "Lingshu ziwen," also provides an introduction.

249 For the *wu xing* in politics and strategy, see Michael Loewe, "The authority of the emperors of Ch'in and Han," in *Divination, mythology, and monarchy in Han China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 85-111; "Water, earth and fire," in *Divination* 55-60, as well as 125-127, 244. *EoT*, s.v.

### Three Heavens (*Santian* 三天)

The Three Heavens have a storied lineage in Chinese cosmology. While they first appear in the *Wufu xu*, the first systematic exposition of the Three Heavens system occurs in the *Inner Explanations*. As reviewed above, this text portrays Zhang Daoling, the putative founder of the Way of the Celestial Masters, as establishing the Three Heavens on behalf of the deified Laozi and thus abrogating the rule of the Six Heavens, whose dispensation – though legitimate – had run its course in same manner as political dynasties. The received *Rectifying Methods* shares key assumptions of the *Inner Explanations*: the Three Heavens (there identified as Shangqing, Yuyu, and Dachi), like the Six Heavens they succeed, are at once cosmological locales, stages in the parturition of the universe, and forces with a legitimate claim to worldly governance. The Nine Heavens (*jiu tian* 九天) also deserve mention, as they are sometimes depicted as the heritors of the mandate from the Six. I am unsure of the relationship between the Nine and the Three.<sup>250</sup>

### Jade Capital (*Yu jing* 玉京)

The Jade Capital was well-known as an abode of transcendents by the time of the Shangqing version of the *Rectifying Methods*. *The Register of the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement, the Superior Perfected, and the Hosts of Transcendents* (CT

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“Wu xing” focuses on the Five Phases’ use in medical works and its place in correlative cosmology. A brief discussion on *wu xing* divination in the context of other forms (such as stalks and turtle plastrons) occurs in Loewe, *Divination* 169-170. In the *Santian zhengfa jing*, the decline of the Six Heavens and the rise of the Three is described in the work and the Azure Lad’s commentary on ZHDZ 1.259c.

250 For a brief introduction to the Three Heavens that cites Bokenkamp, see EoT, s.v. “Santian and liutian.” The Three Heavens are named in *Santian zhengfa jing*, ZHDZ 1.259b.

166 *Yuanshi shangzhen zhongxian ji* 元始上真衆仙記), a Northern and Southern

Dynasties work spuriously attributed to Ge Hong, describes it thusly:

元始天王在天中心之上，名曰玉京山，山中宮殿並金玉飾之。

The Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement dwells above the center of the Heavens. [His dwelling place] is called the Mountain of the Jade Capital. On the mountain, there are palace compounds and royal dwellings, all ornamented with gold and jade.

The “Account of [the teachings] of Buddha and Laozi” (*Shi Lao zhi* 釋老志) in the sixth-century *Book of Wei* (*Wei shu* 魏書) describes it as the dwelling place of the “Numinous King,” located above the Palace of Purple Tenuity:

道家之原出於老子，其自言也。先天地生以資萬類。上處玉京為神王之宗，下在紫微為飛仙之主。

The School of the Way originates in the words of Laozi himself, who created it before the formation of Heaven and Earth in order to save the myriad sorts of beings. Above is the Jade Capital, where dwells the ancestor of the Numinous King. Below is the Lord of the Flying Transcendents, who dwells in the [Palace] of Purple Tenuity.

The Jade Capital does not feature in the received *Rectifying Methods*, though the Palace of Purple Tenuity appears in the name of an amulet that features in the text.<sup>251</sup>

Juan 95

By the time the reader reaches j, 95, they have passed once again from detailed prescriptions for daily life back to more abstract matters. The WSBY mentions the *Rectifying Methods* in a section devoted to exalting a different work, the *Seven Recitations of the Divine Realm with Seven Transformations for Dancing in Heaven*

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251 *Zhongxian ji* 2b. For an introduction to the work, see TC, s.v. “Yuanshi shangzhen zhongxian ji.” *Zhonghua daojiao dacidian*, s.v. “玉京”; *Daojiao dacidian*, s.v. “Yujing”; *Handian*, s.v. “玉京.” *Wei shu* 114.31a; cf. Xu Jialu, ed., *Wei shu*, *Ershi si shi quanyi* (Shanghai: Hanyu dacidian chubanshe, 2004): 2463. For the amulet in question, see *Santian zhengfa*, ZHDZ 1.262b.18-19.

(preserved today in CT 1331 *Dongzhen Shangqing shenzhou qizhuan qibian wutian jing* 洞真上清神州七轉七變舞天經; whether this is the same version as that consulted by the editors of the WSBY is unclear). The juan teaches the adept how to ascend personally to the Purple Empyrean. It opens with the biography of the Lord of the Purple Empyrean 紫晨君, a Shangqing deity of long standing who figures prominently in the above-mentioned *Guishan xuanlu*. Before ascending to the Purple Empyrean and assuming his title, he travels to the ends of the universe and receives a series of works from exalted deities. He then rises to the Jade Capital and receives the *Rectifying Methods* as well as new garb and tokens of his new rank. It is only then – after using the *Rectifying Methods* to pacify the Six Heavens – that he ascends to the Purple Empyrean and performs the methods of the *Seven Recitations*.<sup>252</sup> The *Rectifying Methods* finds an important place in the story, but only as a preparatory exercise (albeit the final and therefore most significant) for the methods of the *Seven Recitations*.

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<sup>252</sup> See Lagerwey, *Wu-shang* 203-204, ZHDZ 28.281c-283a, esp. 282b.8-11. According to the excerpt from the *Seven Recitations*, the methods in several other works rely on it for their efficacy.

## APPENDIX D

### THE “RECTIFYING METHODS” IN THE SDZN

The SDZN preserves what is probably the earliest revision of the *Rectifying Methods*, but also presents a work that had undergone considerable revision by Wang Xuanhe's time. It cites or mentions the *Rectifying Methods* three times.

## Juan 6

Wang first mentions the *Rectifying Methods* in a section of j. 6 concerned with rules and precepts. The section is called “Prohibited Acts When Establishing Merit” 立功禁忌品, and situates the *Rectifying Methods* among various other “methods of Shangqing” 上清之法 (in which it includes, e.g., exercises from the *Sishisi fang*). The authority he cites is the *Regulations of Nüqing of the Middle Palace of the Grand Mystic Capital*.<sup>253</sup> With only a slight difference, this is the title of the fifth juan of the received *Siji mingke*. The text, too, nearly matches – but again, with slight differences. The relevant citation runs as follows. See SDZN 6.4b-5a/ZHDZ 28.438b-c. My punctuation differs slightly from the ZHDZ ed.

又云：凡上學之士受三天正法，四明之科，佩帶真文，出入三光及冥卧息不得露頭，不著巾帽及脫衣露形。毀慢身神，恥辱真文，令真靈遠逝，空尸獨在。三犯不得入仙也，五犯死入地獄，萬劫還生不人之道也。

[The *Regulations*] also state: As for all those who receive the *Rectifying Methods* and the *Bright Statutes of the Four [Poles]*: When wearing the True Writs or coming and going with the Three Luminaries or resting in their bed in the dark night, they must not reveal their heads [due to] not wearing a headcovering, nor remove their clothing and reveal their form. [Doing so will] slander and offend their bodily spirits and disgrace the True Writs, causing the noble numens to go far away; only their empty corpse will remain. After three offenses, they will not attain entry into transcendence. After five offenses, upon death they will enter the earth prisons, being reborn after myriad kalpas on the path of nonhumans.<sup>254</sup>

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253 《太玄都中宮女青律》

254 The True Writs probably refers to what we know today as *The Perfected Script in Five Tablets Written in Red Celestial Writing of the [Celestial Worthy of] Original Commencement and the Five Ancient Lords* (CT 22 *Yuanshi wulao chishu wu pian zhenwen tianshu jing* 元始五老赤書玉 [五] 篇真文天書

又云：凡上學之士受三天正法，四極明科，不得妄入淹穢哭泣悲淚，吊問死喪，五犯伐功，斷事不得入仙也，十犯死入地獄，萬劫還生不人之道也。

The *Regulations* also state: As for all those who receive the *Rectifying Methods* and the *Bright Statutes of the Four [Poles]*: They must not heedlessly enter into the impurities [surrounding] death and mourning, nor present their condolences at funerals. After five offenses, they will destroy their accumulated merit. Their case will be decided [by celestial authorities], and they will not attain entry into transcendence. After ten offenses, upon death they will enter into the earth prisons, and after myriad kalpas return to life on the path of nonhumans.

## Juan 8

The eighth juan of SDZN is a selection of quotes from various works on a variety of subjects, including the dress of the gods and the auspicious signs required of (or possessed by) those destined to view certain works. Among these is a quotation from a certain *Most High Scripture of the Eight Effulgences* (*Taishang bajing jing* 太上八景經, possibly the received CT 1378 *Shangqing jinzhen yuguang bajing feijing* 金真玉光八景飛經). The *Eight Effulgences*, according to the SDZN, places the *Rectifying Methods* “above the Nine Heavens, in the Heaven of Jade Clarity, in the Golden Chamber, in the Purple Grotto.”<sup>255</sup>

## Juan 9

The only direct citation of the *Rectifying Methods* is a long one, occupying nearly four juan (9.1a-4b). It begins by repeating the WSBY’s second method of computing cosmic time. This method begins by dividing the earth into gang and ji lines, continues by discussing the signs disasters attendant upon a conjunction of small kalpas, and concludes

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經, the first work in the Lingbao corpus. Per Daojiao dacidian, “coming and going with the Three Luminaries” probably refers to an embryonic breathing exercise.

255 九天之上，玉清金房，紫戶之內。

by discussing the signs attendant upon the conjunction of great kalpas. Its portents are worth repeating:

At the conjunction of great kalpas, heaven is upended and earth is flipped; the seas surge and the rivers burst their dikes; humankind disappears and mountains drown; gold and jade transform and disappear, and [all in] the six directions muddles into one.

SDZN j. 9 continues with material not seen in the WSBY:

白尸飄於無涯，孤爽悲於洪波，大鳥掃穢於靈嶽，水母受事於九河，五龍吐氣於北元，天馬玄轡以徒魔，赤鎖伏精於辰門，歲星滅王於金羅，日月昏翳於三豪之館，五氣停暈於九嶺之巔，龍王鼓華於東井之上，河侯受對於九海之下，聖君顯駕於明霞之館，五帝科簡於善惡。當此之時，萬惡絕種，鬼魔滅跡，八荒四極，萬不遺一，至於天地之會，自非高上三天所不能禳，自無青籙白簡所不能脫也。

The *Shangqing santian zhengfa jing* says: The White Corpse<sup>256</sup> floats on the boundless; the lonely souls<sup>257</sup> grieve on great waves. The Great Bird sweeps away impurities at the Numinous Marchmount; the Water-Mother receives her charge at the Nine Rivers.<sup>258</sup> The Five Dragons spit forth qi at the Northern Prime; the

256 The earliest reference I have been able to find to the White Corpse is in CT 1315 *Dongzhen shangqing qingyao zishu jingen zhongjing* 洞真上清青要紫書金根衆經, a work partially revealed to Yang Xi that may in fact predate the Shangqing revelations. It contains visualization and meditation practices, but also methods for escaping the apocalypse and for dealing with the pollution caused by sight of a corpse. See the relevant entry in TC. It is the latter to which the word belongs, appearing in an incantation to speed the corpse on its journey to rebirth. Here, *bai shi* refers to the corpse itself – see 1.21b. While this incantation would persist (e.g., in YJQQ 47.7a and *Xiuxing jingjue* 8b), another conception of the *bai shi* would arise that related it to the “Three Worms” (*San chong* 三蟲) or “Three Corpses” (*San shi* 三尸) – malevolent spirits thought to dwell in the human body and cause disease in a variety of ways. See EoT, s.v. “Sanshi and jiuchong.” YJQQ 82.19a numbers the White Corpse among five corpses that keep the company of the Three Worms and should be expelled from the body via an incantation that sends them down to the Yellow Springs. Note that this enumeration of the Three Worms and Five Corpses differs from that given in the EoT article.

257 The phrase I translate “lonely souls” includes the character *shuang* 爽, used since at least the time of Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232) to refer to human will in *jing shuang* 精爽 “essence and soul.” The compound that appears here, *gua shuang* 孤 also appears in other Daoist works when they discuss the components of the person: CT 369 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao miedu wulian shengshi miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶滅度五鍊生尸妙經 19a contrasts it with “rotten bones” (*xiu hai* 朽骸), while CT 103 *Yuqing wuji zongzhen Wenchang dadong xianjing zhu* 玉清無極總真文昌大洞仙經註 3.8a claims Ge Hong spoke of it as something to be “venerated and refined” (*ji lian* 祭煉). Here the term probably refers to the ghosts of the unfed dead that lodge in the fetus and help constitute new persons. See Bokenkamp, “Tao Hongjing and Buddhism” 264-265.

258 The Great Bird and the Water Mother are omens of the impending apocalypse. See Robinet, *Taoism* 160-161; Grand Ricci, s.v. “大鳥;” Handian, s.v. “水母;” *Grand Ricci*, s.v. “水母.” The Numinous Marchmount” probably refers to Mount Tai, in modern Shandong. See Handian, s.v. “靈嶽.” The “Nine



Heavenly Horse [grasps] the mysterious reins in order to imprison demons;<sup>259</sup> The Red Lock causes demons to bow their heads in defeat at the Starry Gates; the Spirit of the Year Star destroys [demon]-kings at the Golden Net.<sup>260</sup> The sun and moon are occluded and dimmed in the offices of the Three Eminences; the Five Qi halt their halos above the peaks of the Nine Ranges;<sup>261</sup> The Dragon King moves about, shining, at the Eastern Well; the River Liege receives a summons under the Nine Seas;<sup>262</sup> The Sage-Lord manifests his chariot in the Office of the Bright Dawn-rose Clouds; the Five Emperors weigh the good and evil [deeds of humans] and decide [their fates].<sup>263</sup> At this time, the myriad evil [beings] will cut off the seed people, and the devils and demons will obliterate their traces. In the eight wastes and four poles, not one in ten thousand will be left, even coming to the conjunction of heaven and earth. If [you] are not [of] the Most High Three Heavens then you cannot avert it; if your name is not carved in green registers on slips of white jade, you will not be able to escape it.<sup>264</sup>

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Rivers” refers to the Milky Way. See Handian, s.v. “九河.”

259 The “Five Dragons” are probably the spirits of the Five Agents. See *Grand Ricci* and Handian, s.v., “五龍.” The Northern Prime could refer to one of the bureaus in Fengdu charged with processing the deceased. It is so named in CT 456, 18a. This is little more than a guess, however, as the referent is uncertain: for instance, Northern Prime is the taboo name of one of the lads dwelling in the stars of the Northern Dipper in CT 446 *Shangqing zhongjing zhu zhensheng bi* 上清眾經諸真聖祕, a compendium of Shangqing saints and gods dating from the second half of the Tang. See CT 446 1.17a and the relevant entry in TC.

260 I am unsure what the “Red Lock” refers to; this appears to be its only occurrence in the Canon. “Starry Gates” is a term used in laboratory alchemy; see, e.g., YJQQ 68.23a-b. I am unsure what it is doing here. The “Spirit of the Year Star” dwells in Jupiter. According to *Guishan xuanlu* 114a, Golden Net County is a place in the Heaven of Jade Clarity. The phrase “Golden Net” also features in hymns to the kings of the Shangqing heavens in CT 55 *Gaoshang taishang taixiao langshu qiongwen dizhang jing* 高上太霄琅書瓊文帝章經 15b-16b, and in a pseudo-Sanskrit placename in *Waiguo fangpin* 1.9a.

261 I am unsure what *san hao* 三豪 means, though it clearly refers to astronomical phenomena here. There is no other occurrence in the Daoist Canon, and it seems to be a rare term in the works of this period. The Five Qi probably refers to the qi of the Five Agents. I am uncertain what the Nine Ranges refers to. It appears in several Daoist works of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period, but the works never go into detail about it. See, e.g., CT 1338 *Yuqing yinshu jing* 15b, where it appears in an incantation to revert from old age to youth and save one’s ancestors from a shadowy afterworld; CT 55 *Gaoshang taixiao langshu qiongwen dizhang jing* 高上太霄琅書瓊文帝章經 13b, where it appears in a hymn to the highest Shangqing heaven. The *Famous Mountains of the Subcelestial Realm* (*Tianxia mingshan ji* 天下名山記) has an entry for a Nine Ranges in Yunnan province (7.58b-59a), but this is almost certainly different from the one mentioned here.

262 The Dragon King is a powerful aquatic spirit associated with the Water Office in *Duren jing* 51.1a. The Eastern Well is the twenty-second of the twenty-eight lunar lodges. The River Liege is an aquatic spirit. The Nine Seas is perhaps a collective term for all the oceans; it appears in *Duren jing* 51.1a in the phrase *bafang jiuhai* 八方九海, where *bafang* is the “Eight Directions.”

263 The Sage-Lord is the Lord of the Golden Porte. The Five Emperors are the Emperors of the Five Directions.

The passage continues with what, in WSBY 6, is the first method of computing cosmic time (“The Gates of Heaven are in Heaven’s northwest corner...), then proceeding with what – in WSBY 6 – is the first method of computing time (“The Floodgates of the Earth...).<sup>265</sup> As detailed in the notes, the figures and signs that feature in the above passage are firmly rooted in Shangqing eschatology. The last line is particularly interesting in light of the celestial records introduced in the WSBY: one’s name must “be of the Most High Three Heavens” in order to survive the eschaton, and – according to this passage, at least – that status requires one to have their name inscribed in the appropriate lists. The “Three Heavens” that feature here are the same common to Six Dynasties cosmology, which opposed three “correct” heavens to six “deviant” heavens. According to this cosmology, the deviant heavens have ruled since ancient times, but their rule has now come to an end; the Three have assumed legitimate governorship of the universe. While one cannot be certain, equating the “green registers on slips of white jade” with the records listed in WSBY 31 is not at all beyond the pale if one assumes (as I do) that the editors of the *Sandong zhunang* and WSBY were consulting the same edition of the *Zhengfa jing*.

A collective name for these records is suggested by another passage from the *Sandong zhunang*:

又云：赤精開皇元年七月七日丙午中時，登琳琅之都，月之上館，受符於元始天王。開金陽玉匱，玄和玉女口命出皇民錄譜。自開皇已前，三象明曜以來，至于開皇，經累億之劫，天地成敗非可稱載。九天丈人於開皇時，算定天元，校推劫運。

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264 SDZN 9.1b-2a. I have been unable to find another occurrence of this prophecy – or anything like it – in the Daoist canon or elsewhere in the Chinese literary corpus.

265 SDZN 9.2a-3b1.

[The *Shangqing santian zhengfa jing*] also says, “In the reign period of Kaihuang,<sup>266</sup> in the seventh month, on the seventh day (a *bingwu* day), in the middle watch, in the capital of Fine Jade, Red Essence<sup>267</sup> bestowed a talisman upon the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement. He opened the Jade Casket of Golden Yang<sup>268</sup> at the command of the Jade Lady of Mysterious Harmony and withdrew the Genealogy of the People of the Three Sovereigns.<sup>269</sup> Before Kaihuang, the Three Images<sup>270</sup> shone forth; [from this time] until Kaihuang, one hundred million kalpas elapsed, and the successes and failures of heaven and earth cannot be measured. In the Kaihuang reign period, the Elder of the Nine Heavens<sup>271</sup> numbered and fixed the heavenly cycles, pushed forward the turning of the kalpas according to the proper order.

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266 The third of the three kalpas that inaugurated the universe. According to WSBY 24.1a-b, the texts of the Three Caverns issued forth during these kalpas. *Dadong* 大洞 (more typically *dongzhen* 洞真), corresponding to Shangqing texts, were revealed during the *Longhan* 龍漢 kalpa; *Dongxuan* 洞玄, corresponding to the Lingbao corpus, were revealed during the *Chiming* 赤明 era, and the books in the *Dongshen* 洞神 (= *Sanhuang* 三黃 texts) cavern appeared in the *Kaihuang* 開皇 era. If the *Rectifying Methods* follows this arrangement – by no means certain – then the Genealogy of the People of the Three Sovereigns would be associated with the Sanhuang corpus.

267 This is a spirit of the south that appears throughout the Chinese literary corpus. In Zhen Xuan’s 鄭玄’s commentary to the *Canon of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) as preserved in the Song *Collected Explanations of the Canon of Rites* (*Liji jishuo* 禮記集說) 41.18a, Chijing appears as vassal of the Flame Emperor (Yandi 炎帝, but cf. Zheng Xuan, *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏 18.36a). He was taken up by Daoist authors: in WSBY 32.9a. Chijing appears below the Queen Mother of the West in the line of transmission for an amulet, and in *Santian neijie jing* 1.3a he appears as an incarnation of Laozi who advised the legendary emperor Zhuanyu 顓頊. Chijing appears low in a hierarchy of deities presented in the sixth-century CT 361 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao bawei zhaolong maojing* 太上洞玄靈寶八威召龍妙經 1.7b-8b.

268 A Jade Casket (*yu kui* 玉匱) was a box used by the emperor for storing jade slips that certified his receipt of the Mandate of Heaven. See Handian, s.v. “玉匱,” “玉冊.” Here, it contains the Registers of the August People, on which is recorded the names of those who will escape the disasters that presage the end of the world.

269 The Jade Woman of Mysterious Harmony appears frequently in the Lingbao corpus or in works that have undergone editing by authors writing in that tradition. To cite one example, in CT 361 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao bawei zhaolong maojing* 太上洞玄靈寶八威召龍妙經 1.7b-8b she is one of the officials dispatched by a group of deities headed by the Most High Elder and the Most High Lord Lao. They are sent to transmit a writ for quelling spirits to twenty-four perfected. The Three Augusts are legendary rulers of antiquity. Their identities vary according to the list, but are usually given as Fu Xi 伏羲, Shen Nong 神農, and Huangdi 皇帝 or Fu Xi 伏羲, Nu Wa 女媧, and Shen Nong 神農. See *Grand Ricci*, s.v. “三皇.”

270 This phrase has many meanings. According the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 5.10b, it is the name of a song composed by the Duke of Zhou. Here, however, it probably refers to the *xuan* 玄, *yuan* 元, and *shi* 始 qi. See CT 1128 *Daomen jingfa xiangcheng cixu* 道門經法相承次序 (ca. 680) 3.4b: 三象: 玄氣, 青; 元氣, 白; 始氣, 黃

271 The Elder of the Nine Heavens appears throughout the Shangqing corpus, where he transmits texts to mortals. See R: 1, p. 127

白簡青錄，得道人名記。皇民譜錄，數極唐堯。是為小劫一交。其中損益，有二十四萬人應為得者。自承唐之後，數四十六丁亥，前後中間甲申之年，乃小劫之會，人名應定。在此之際，陽九百六。二氣離合，吉凶交會。得過者特為免哉。然甲申之後，其中壬辰之初，數有九周至。庚子之年，吉凶候見，其道審明。

The names of those who will attain the Dao are recorded in green records on white slips. The numbers of the Genealogy of the People of the Three Sovereigns extended through the time of Yao. This was the turning of one small kalpa. During this time 2,400,000 were subtracted from the count of those who should attain [the Dao]. In the *jiashen* year sometime before or after the forty-sixth *dinghai* year after Yao, there will be a conjunction of small kalpas, and the records must be fixed again. At this juncture will be a yang [nine and] a hundred-six. The two qi will separate and reunite; good and evil will mix and mingle. Those who will pass through will be specially selected to avoid [destruction]. After a *jiashen* year, at the beginning of the *renchen* year in this period, a period of nine circuits will reach its limit. In a *gengzi* year, good and evil omens will appear, and their ways will be made clear.<sup>272</sup>

9.3b-4b provides background on the celestial records referred to above. The text calls these records the Genealogy of the People of the Three Sovereigns. A key feature of these records is their mutability: at the end of each small kalpa, celestial beings remove the names of the unworthy and add the names of the worthy. Their first recension occurs after the rule of the legendary sage-king Yao, when 2,400,000 names are subtracted. The next small kalpa will end during a *jiashen* year after the forty-sixth *dinghai* year after Yao's rule, and the records will again require rectification. The cyclical nature of the Chinese calendar makes it very difficult to determine the correct *dinghai* year with certainty.<sup>273</sup>

What follows elaborates on the above. It provides the most concrete signs yet that the time is nigh:

當有赤星見於東方，白彗干於月門，祆子續黨於蟲口，亂群墳尸於越川，人啖其種，萬里絕煙。強臣稱霸，弱主蒙塵，其後當有五靈曷瑞，義合本根。龍精之後，續族之君，平滅四虜，應符者隆，龍虎之世，三六乃清。民無橫命，柞無危患。自承之後四十六丁亥，是三劫之周。又從數五十五丁亥至壬辰，癸巳

<sup>272</sup> SDZN 9.3b1-4a. Read 現 for 見.

<sup>273</sup> On this, see Bokenkamp, "Time After Time" 68-72.

是也。則是大劫之周。天翻地覆，金玉化消，人淪山沒，六合冥一。天地之改運，非真所如何，惟高上三天，白簡青籙，乃得晏鴻翻而騰翔，飛景霄而盼目耳。此玄和玉女口命，金陽玉匱，論天地之成敗，吉凶之是非也。

At this time, the Red Star<sup>274</sup> will appear in the east, the White Sweeper<sup>275</sup> will transgress the Lunar Gate. Demons will link together at the mouth of the insects,<sup>276</sup> chaotic mobs will pile their corpses in mounds at the rivers of Yue; people will eat their own posterity; after myriad li, the smoke of cooking fires will be cut off. Strong feudal lords will become hegemony; weak kings will flee the capital. After this there will be bright signs of the five numens; righteousness will accord with its root. The descendant of the Dragon-seed, the lord who continues the clan, will destroy the four rebels.<sup>277</sup> Talismanic responses will descend.<sup>278</sup> In the generation of the Dragon-tiger, the three-and-six will clarify. The people will have no [urge to] rebel; the throne will have no danger. In the forty-sixth *dinghai* year after Yao – this will be a complete cycle of three kalpas. Moreover, counting from the fifty-fifth *dinghai* year to the *jisi* [month?] of the [following] *renchen* year: this will be the completion of one great kalpa. Heaven and earth will be overthrown; jade and gold will transform and disappear. The people will sink into oblivion, and the mountains will be drowned. Everything in the Six Directions will become one in the darkness. If you are not one of the Perfected, then what is to be done? Only those [whose names are inscribed] in green records on white slips in the exalted Three Heavens will in ease and comfort take flight on great wings, fly on the phosphors to the empyrean, paying a visit to and fixing their regard upon [the Three Heavens]. This is [what] the oral command of the Jade Maiden [brought forth from] the Jade Casket of Golden Yang; it discusses the success and failure of the universe, the correctness and incorrectness of fortune and misfortune.<sup>279</sup>

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274 A star located in the first of the twenty-eight lunar mansions. See Handian, s.v. "赤星," *Grand Ricci*, s.v. "角宿."

275 The White Sweeper appears in the second *juan* of the *Jin shu* chapter on astronomy in a quote that nearly matches Zhang Shoujie's 張守節 (?-?) *Correct Meanings of the Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji zhengyi* 史記正義) 27.20a. The latter was presented to the throne in the twenty-fourth year (736-737) of the Kaiyuan 開元 reign period (712-742). The interlinear commentary at 27.20 holds that the "essence" 精 of Venus "scatters" 散 into nine stars, one of them being the White Sweeper.

276 I am uncertain what this refers to. It appears to be the only appearance of the two characters 蟲口 as a binome in the canon, other than a citation of this passage at SDZN 9.3b-9.4a. The compound refers to a medicinal plant elsewhere in the Chinese literary corpus.

277 The "lord who continues the clan" is probably Liu Yu 劉裕 (363-422). This would make the "four rebels" four military commanders he defeated. Three of these are probably Sun En 孫恩 (?-402), his younger sister's husband Lu Xun 盧循 (?-411) and Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369-404); I am uncertain of the fourth.

278 The implication here is that the actions of the "descendant of the Dragon-seed" will form the earthly half of a tally, and the heavenly half – in the form of the signs and wonders depicted above – will manifest.

279 SDZN 9.4a-b. The term 盼目 is a strange one, and my translation is conjectural. In Daoist works, it frequently functions as a verb that takes an exalted place as its direct object. For instance, the "Song of

Many of the figures and portents in this passage remain obscure, but enough remains clear to make an educated guess at its meaning: the end times are at hand. The passage begins by invoking specific celestial phenomena that – unlike the movements in the hidden realm detailed in 9.1b-2a – would have been visible to human beings. It continues by obliquely referring to contemporary events. The political turmoil inaugurated by the fall of the Han would not end until the Tang, but in the interim many kings appealed to Daoist and Buddhist apocalyptic texts in order to justify much grander imperial ambitions. The two most notable are probably Yang Jian 楊堅 (541-604), founder of the Sui 隋 (581-618), and Li Yuan, founder of the Tang.<sup>280</sup> But they were not the first to do so.

The “descendant of the Dragon-seed” probably refers to Liu Yu 劉裕 (r. 402-422). He was the founder of the fifth-century Liu-Song dynasty, and was supposedly descended from Liu Bang, founder of the Han. The similarities between the structure of this prophecy and that found in the *Purple Texts* are clear: both foretell the rise of a ruler in the forty-sixth *dinghai* year after Yao; both tell of disasters befalling people “before and after a *jiashen* year,” and of the salvation of the good. Finally, the prediction in the SDZN once again emphasizes the importance of having one’s name inscribed on the

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the High Transcendent Who Pays a Visit, Roaming, to [the Cavern-Heaven] Dongling” (高仙盼遊洞靈之曲, YJQQ 96.9a-b) contains the line “The Beflowered Palace of the Red Dawn – how can one pay a visit to it and fix their regard upon it?” 絳晨華臺何盼目; in a poem bestowed upon Yang Xi by a Perfected informant, we find the line “The Eight Terraces – one can visit them and fix the gaze upon them.” 八臺可盼目

280 Their appeals to eschatology are discussed extensively in Bokenkamp, “Time After Time” 72-87. The classic study of apocalypticism as related to political events is Anna Seidel, “The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Daoist Messianism,” *History of Religions* 2.3 (1969-70): 216-247. She discusses the Northern and Southern Dynasties on pp. 230ff. Another is Erich Zürcher, “‘Prince Moonlight’: Messianism and Eschatology in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” *T’oung Pao* 68 (1982): 1-75. It is reprinted in Silk, ed., *Buddhism in China* 187-257.

appropriate celestial records. These are known here as the “Genealogy of the People of the Three Sovereigns.” Assuming the editors of the SDZN and WSBY were consulting the same edition of the *Zhengfa jing*, the “Genealogy” would then be a collective name for the list of records found in WSBY 31, and viewing the amulets listed there would assure the adept that his or her salvation was guaranteed.

APPENDIX E

THE “RECTIFYING METHODS” IN THE XDL



The earliest quotation of the *Rectifying Methods* available to us survives in the *Xiaodao lun*, a polemic against Daoism written by the mathematician and astronomer Zhen Luan 甄鸞 (fl. 535-81) and presented to the throne in 570. As with each version of the *Methods*, the XDL was produced in a particular context for a particular purpose; modern readers thus must remain alert to the possibility that, in addition to more run-of-the-mill “modifications” like slips of the pen or faulty memory, Zhen Luan may have been abridging or even intentionally misquoting his source material. While Emperor Wu (r. 560-78) ordered the original *Xiaodao lun* burned, an abbreviated version can be found in pp. 143c-152c of T 2103 *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (*Expanded Collection Spreading the Light of Buddhism*, 7<sup>th</sup> c.). The extant *Xiaodao lun* contains thirty-six sections devoted to diverse topics: cosmogony, cosmology, and demonology constitute just a few. The sundry and detailed quotations in even this abbreviated version attest to the author’s intimate knowledge of the Daoist works of his day. Zhen consults the *Zhengfa jing* four times on matters of cosmogony, cosmology, and the creation of humankind. His citations always appear as one of several incommensurable accounts drawn from various Daoist texts. His overall aim is to illustrate how Daoism fails to provide a coherent account of the beginnings of the universe and its inhabitants. Below I have translated Zhen’s citations of the *Rectifying Methods*. In the XDL, the citations themselves are preceded by citations of different Daoist texts with which Zhen contrasts the *Methods* in order to illustrate Daoism’s fundamental incoherence. I have also summarized these passages below.<sup>281</sup>

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281 Consult Kohn, *Laughing* 55, 56 n. 14; 62 and n. 3, 63 and n. 7; 66 and n. 1; 140 and nn. 5-8. My translations of the *Rectifying Methods* citations, and sometimes the XDL itself, differ from hers.

The first citation of the *Rectifying Methods* (under the name *Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens in Original Chaos*) appears in the first section of the XDL, called “The highest lord of the Dao created heaven and earth” 太上道君造立天地. Here, Zhen contrasts the creation account in the *Rectifying Methods* with other accounts in different Daoist texts. In one, Laozi creates the universe by transforming his body into its various elements: his right eye becomes the moon, his left the sun, etc. See Kohn 53-57, a translation of T 2103.52.144b13-144c15.

《三天正法混沌經》云：混沌之始。清氣為天濁氣為地。便有七曜萬像之形其來久矣。<sup>282</sup>

The *Santian zhengfa hundun jing* says: The clear qi became heaven, and the turbid qi became earth. Then there were the seven luminaries<sup>283</sup> and the forms of the myriad phenomena. Their origins are old!

The second citation of the *Rectifying Methods* can be found in chapter 3, “The Three Primes turned into heavenly people” 三元為天人者. This chapter presents differing accounts of the origin of the Three Primes, the highest divisions of the heavens. It also complains that, because the highest deities formed out of pure qi, they were in no position to order human beings to attain the same state via personal cultivation (as other Daoist texts advocated). See Kohn 62-66, a translation of T 2103.52.145a.18-145b.23.

《三天正法經》云：天光未朗，蔚積未澄。七千餘劫玄景始分。九氣存焉。一氣相去九萬九千九百九十里。青氣高澄，濁混下降。而九天真王，元始天王生於九氣之中。氣結而形焉。便有九真之帝。皆九天清氣凝成九宇之位。三元夫人從氣而生，在洞房宮，玉童玉女各三千而侍。以天為父，以氣為母。生於三元之君。<sup>284</sup>

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282 T 2103.52.144c1-3.

283 The sun and moon plus the five naked-eye planets: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. See Handian, s.v., “七曜.”

284 T 2103.52.145a27-145b5.

The *Santian zhengfa jing* says: The lights of the sky had not yet begun to shine. The deep accumulation of qi had not yet clarified. After over seven thousand kalpas, the Mysterious Phosphors<sup>285</sup> began to divide, and the Nine Qi came into being. Each Qi was separated by ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety *li*. The clear qi rose and clarified; the turbulent qi descended. Then, the Perfected King of the Nine Heavens and the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement were born in the midst of the Nine Qi, which knotted together and produced their forms. Then the Emperors of the Nine Perfected were created. They all [formed] when the clear qi of the Nine Heavens coagulated and were established the thrones of the Nine Dwellings.<sup>286</sup> The Lady of the Three Primes was born of Qi and abides in the Palace of the Cavern-Chamber. She is served by three thousand jade lads and jade maidens. Heaven is her father, and qi is her mother. She gave birth to the Three Prime Dames.<sup>287</sup>

The next citation of the *Rectifying Methods* occurs in chapter four, “Humanity was created from earth” 結土為人. It contrasts the creation of humanity as given in the *Rectifying Methods* with other versions in different Daoist texts. One, for instance, adheres to the Buddhist notion of karmic causality, holding that rebirth as a “barbarian” is the result of evil deeds committed in a previous life. This obviously contrasts with the creation account given below. See Kohn 66-68, a translation of T 2103.52.145b24-145c11.

《三天正法經》云：九氣既分。九真天王乃至三元夫人，三元之君，太上道君於是而形。逮至皇帝始立生民，結土為像於曠野。三年能言。各在一方。故有僮秦夷羌。五情合德，五法自然。承上真之氣而得為人也。<sup>288</sup>

285 Elsewhere in the Shangqing corpus, the division of the Mysterious Phosphors is one of the initial steps in the parturition of the universe. See *Jingen zhongjing* 2.1a, which describes this process (and the birth of the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement) in strikingly similar terms.

286 This translation is indebted to Kohn, *Laughing* 63-64.

287 I am unsure who the Dame of the Three Primes is here. The received version is clear that this is another title of the Three Ladies of Prime Simplicity, but Zheng’s quotation appears to take them as two different deities or groups of deities. It is possible that either the author of his version was mistaken, or that Zheng intentionally misquoted his text.

288 T 2103.52.145b24-45b28.

The *Santian zhengfa jing* says: After this, the Nine Qi divided. The Heavenly King of the Nine Perfected<sup>289</sup> and the Dame of the Three Primes, the Three Prime Dames of Grand Simplicity, and the Most High Lord of the Dao thereupon took form. When the Yellow Emperor ascended to the throne, he created the people. He formed earth into images [of humans], [placing them] in the wild wastes. After three years, they could speak. Each was in one direction. This is why there are the crude Northerners,<sup>290</sup> the Qin barbarians,<sup>291</sup> Di barbarians,<sup>292</sup> and the Qiang barbarians.<sup>293</sup> People of the Five Sentiments<sup>294</sup> were of one purpose. They modeled themselves on Spontaneity, receiving the qi of the Upper Perfected and becoming human.

Zhen's final citation of the *Rectifying Methods* is found in chapter 32, "Five million layers of heaven" 五億重天者. It draws from different Daoist works to show that Daoism provides no single coherent account of the heavens. It takes the five million layers of the title from one work, combining it with the nine heavens of the *Rectifying Methods* in order to show that such a vision of the heavens is mathematically ridiculous, resulting in an earth 10,000 miles thick covered by a heaven of five million layers of two feet each. See Kohn 139-141, a translation of T 2103.52.151b24-151c11.

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289 I am unsure who this is, but he is relatively rare in the Chinese literary corpus. He appears in Falin's *Bianzheng lun* at 8.545a-b among other deities, heavens, and practices; *in toto* they are meant to show the contradictory nature of Daoist doctrine. In two 14th-century commentaries to the *Duren jing*, CT 91 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing zhujie* 元始无量度人上品妙經註解 2.21a-b and CT 89 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing tongyi* 元始無量度人上品妙經通義 2.18a he appears as the lord of one of the eight heavens of the east. Here, however, a simpler explanation suggest itself: in writing the name "Perfected King of the Nine Heavens" (*Jiutian zhenwang* 九天真王), a copyist has transposed the characters for "Heaven" (*tian* 天) and "Perfected" (*zhen* 真), resulting in the present name.

290 *Cang* 儻 was a disparaging name used by southerners to refer to Northerners – both those who dwelled in the North and those who moved south of the Yangzi.

291 Inhabitants of modern Shaanxi, enfeoffed by King Xiao of Zhou and relocated to modern Gansu.

292 Inhabitants of the northwest.

293 An ethnic group that was spread over what is now Gansu, Qinghai, and Sichuan.

294 The Five Sentiments are joy, anger, sadness, love, and hate. They constitute the emotional vocabulary of human beings – here in implicit contrast with the five "barbarian" groups.

《三天正法經》云：天光未明。七千餘劫，玄景始分。九氣存焉。九真天王，元始天王稟自然之胤，置九天之號。上中下真，真為一元。元有三天。上元宮即太上大道君所治。<sup>295</sup>

The *Santian zhengfa jing* says: The lights of heaven were not yet bright. After more than seven thousand kalpas, the Mysterious Phosphor began to divide, and the Nine Qi were. The Heavenly King of the Nine Perfections and the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement were heritors of Spontaneity and established the names of the Nine Heavens. As for the Upper, Middle, and Lower Perfected – each [grade of] Perfected created one Prime. Each Prime had three heavens. The Most High Lord Lao governed the Palace of the Upper Prime.

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295 T 2103.52.151b29-c3.

APPENDIX F

AMULETS IN THE RECEIVED "RECTIFYING METHODS"

The amulets attributed to the *Rectifying Methods* vary according to the work consulted. Even the present version (comprising both the *Zhengfa jing* and the *Jiuwei badao*) disagrees with itself on which amulets should be included; their names; their transmission histories; and their powers. Noting the contradictions between both this version and its historical antecedents illustrates that the Shangqing version of the *Rectifying Methods* did not remain stable over time, and in fact began changing very early in its history. The overall picture is of a work that was seen from earliest times not as an unalterable absolute unit, but as a toolkit that could be modified at the discretion of various authors and editors. Despite various alterations, additions, and subtractions, one function of the work remained consistent over time: it is primarily a repository of apotropaic devices meant to protect the adept from various ills and ensure ascent to the heavens.

Texts consulted

CT 1138 *Wushang biyao* 無上祕要

“Secret Essentials of the Most High.” *Juan* 32 is called The Gathered Sages [who] Transmit Scriptures (*Zhongsheng zhuanjing pin* 眾聖傳經品), and is a collection of extracts from various texts detailing the transmission histories of texts and text-like objects. A quotation from the *Dongzhen santian zhengfa jing* 洞真三天正法經 includes the transmission history of many of the amulets included in the *Jiuwei badao*, as well as some that are not. See ZHDZ 42.328b-329a. WSBY 31 and 43 contain quotes related to amulets from a *Zhengfa jing* that do not match the received text.

CT 1379 *Shangqing yudi qisheng xuanji huitian jiuxiao jing* 上清玉帝七聖玄紀迴天九  
霄經

“Scripture of the Return to the Nine Heavens, Mystical Records of the Seven Saints of the Jade Emperor of Utmost Purity.” This Eastern Jin text is a reworked member of the original Shangqing revelations that is quoted extensively in the WSBY. It provides a list of records – the *ji* 紀 of the title – on which one’s name must be inscribed in order to ascend to the heavens, a method of visual meditation for writing one’s name in said records, hymns to the seven patrons of the scripture, and a list of Seven Wounds (*qi shang* 七傷). These are faults in behavior that harm the Marks of Immortality – the physical characteristics borne by a human destined to become a transcendent. Per Robinet, “[t]he names of the paradises [to which one can ascend], the characteristics of the records, and the Marks of Immortality correspond exactly to the terms found in CT 442, *The Annals of Lord Lao of the Latter Age*.” CT 442 is a member of the original Shangqing corpus that is devoted to the Lord of the Golden Porte; it opens with his biography and describes his efforts to save humankind as well as the heavens to which certain elect will ascend, should their names be inscribed on the appropriate celestial records.<sup>296</sup>

Establishing an early date for the *Qisheng xuanji* and linking it to the Shangqing corpus is important because it helps date the amulets in the *Zhengfa jing* and the *Jiuwei badao*, many of which are associated with the celestial records at the center of the *Qisheng*. However, this association does not exist in the received version of the *Qisheng xuanji*. Instead it is found in a chapter of WSBY 31 called “The Lodged Lot of Those

<sup>296</sup> See CT, s.v. “Shangqing yudi qisheng xuanji huitian jiuxiao jing,” and R 2:225-228.



who Encounter Scripture” (*Yujing sufen pin* 遇經宿分品). This chapter opens with a condensed version of the introduction to the received *Qisheng* (which it cites by name) before providing quotations related to that text found in elsewhere in the Daoist canon. On ZHDZ 28.107c-108a, it quotes a *Santian zhengfa jing* extract (absent from the received text) that links the amulets to various celestial records in that text. While the *Qisheng* is concerned with practices that help the adept inscribe his or her name in these records, in this *Santian zhengfa jing* extract, receipt of a given amulet acts as proof that the recipient’s name is *already* inscribed in the associated celestial record from the *Qisheng*. These proofs are enumerated in a list of entries identical in format: “All whose names are inscribed in [record x] will attain sight of [amulet Y]” 凡名參...者得見... In the entry for each amulet, I will list the associated record in the WSBY quotation where such an association exists.

CT 128 *Taishang qiuxian dinglu chisu zhenjue yuwen* 太上求仙定錄尺素真訣玉文  
“Precious Writs and True Formulas on [Prescribed] Lengths of Silk, Determining the Rank of Those who Seek Immortality.” For this text, see the conclusion.

CT 354 *Shangqing sanyuan yujian sanyuan bujing* 上清三元玉檢三元布經  
“Jade Rule of the Three Original Ones [and the] Promulgated Scripture of the Three [Female] Original Ones.” Composed some fifty years after the Shangqing revelations, the *Sanyuan bujing* is actually two texts. The “Promulgated Scripture of the Three [Female] Original Ones” (*Sanyuan bujing*) is a set of visualization practices for discerning the true

forms of deities that appear during meditation and for meditating on the Three Pure Dames; both practices link the *Sanyuan bujing* to other texts composed soon after the original revelations. The “Jade Rule of the Three Original Ones” (*Sanyuan yujian*) forms part of one of the oldest Shangqing rituals to appear after the gods descended to Yang Xi. It contains three sets of talismans: the “Grand Register of the Upper Prime for Regulating Heaven” (*Shangyuan jiantian dalu* 上元檢天大籙), the “Jade Writ of the Lower Prime for Regulating Earth” (*Xiayuan jiandi yuwen* 下元檢地玉文), and the “True Book of the Middle Prime for Regulating Transcendents” (*Zhongyuan jianxian zhenshu* 中元檢仙真書). One of these – the True Book of the Middle Prime – also features in the *Zhengfa jing* and/or the *Jiuwei badao*.<sup>297</sup>

#### The amulets

The *Jiuwei badao* divides its amulets into two groups: the Register of the Massed Writs of the Most High (*Taishang zhongwen lu* 太上衆文籙, ZHDZ 260c.5-265a) and the Amulets of the Nine Tenuities and Eight Ways (*Jiuwei badao fulu* 九微八道符籙, 265a-266a.4). Each have general transmission requirements, but some amulets have their own individual transmission requirements as well. The *Jiuwei badao* opens with a set of transmission requirements that forms part of a passage almost identical to the postface of the *Zhengfa jing* – with the important exception of the transmission requirements themselves. The *Zhengfa jing* requires four sets of offerings for the transmission of what it calls the “Rectifying methods of the Shangqing heavens for expelling the [qi of] the Six Heavens” (*Shangqing chu liutian zhi wen santian zhengfa* 上清除六天之文三天正法).

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<sup>297</sup> R 2: 131-135; TC, s.v. “Shangqing sanyuan yujian sanyuan bujing.”

Because the passage that details these offerings immediately follows a list of amulets and their spirit guards, I take the “Rectifying methods” to refer here to those amulets, which include members of both the Massed Writs and the Amulets of the Nine Tenuities. The first accompanies the “pledge offering” (*yao xin* 要信): thirty *chi* 尺 of silk of red and indigo.<sup>298</sup> Next is the offering of “the oath of secrecy” (*mi shi* 密誓): thirty *chi* of indigo cloth. Five pairs of golden hoops are required for the offering paired with the “Grand Oath to Heaven” (*zhi tian dayan* 指天大誓). Finally, during the transmission ceremony itself, the disciple offers their master ten *liang* 兩 of good-quality gold.<sup>299</sup> The transmission requirements listed in the *Jiuwei badao* for the Massed Writs are much less strict; they comprise merely the ten *liang* of fine gold offered to the master during the transmission ceremony itself.<sup>300</sup>

The transmission history of the amulets also varies according to the text consulted. The *Jiuwei badao* holds that the Sage-Lord of the Eastern Tomb (*Dongling shengjun* 東陵聖君) ordered the Azure Lad to compile the Methods of the Three Heavens for Expelling the Qi of the Six Heavens and directed the transcendent and perfected to store them away, transmitting them to human beings only three times in seven hundred

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298 The length of one *chi* varied over time. In the Han, it was 0.231 meters; thus, assuming the author intended the Han measurement system (an unlikely proposition), 30 *chi* would equal almost 7 meters of silk.

299 In Han times, one *liang* was equivalent to 24 *zhu* 銖, with one *zhu* being the weight of 100 grains of millet.

300 See ZHDZ 262c.12-264a.11 The *Jiuwei badao* calls this the “pledge for penetrating to the spirits” (*tongshen zhi xin* 通神之信) – that is, a pledge offering to draw the spirits’ attention to the transmission ceremony – but the *Zhengfa jing* does not give it a specific name.

years.<sup>301</sup> The context seems to indicate here that the “Methods of the Three Heavens” refers only to the Massed Writs, since the *Jiuwei* gives separate transmission requirements – but no separate transmission history – for the Amulets of the Nine Tenuities. The *Zhengfa jing*’s transmission history is much more complicated, but consistent with the discussion of the Santian zhengfa (by its various names) throughout that work: the Lord of the Golden Porte received them from the Most High, and the Azure Lad compiled them (presumably on the orders of the Most High). Unless otherwise noted, these separate transmission histories apply to the amulets below. What follows is not a complete list of amulets in the *Jiuwei badao*; it includes only those that appear frequently throughout works of the early medieval period.

1) Register of the Massed Writs of the Most High (*Taishang zhongwen lu* 太上衆文錄)<sup>302</sup>  
 The quotation from a “Scripture of the Rectifying Methods of the Three Heavens” (*Santian zhengfa jing* 三天正法經) in WSBY 31 appears to treat the Massed Writs as a single amulet, giving its associated celestial record as the Jade Register of the Golden Book of the Shangqing Heaven (*Shangqing jinshu yulu* 上清金書玉錄); this record appears at *Housheng Daojun lieji* 9b. WSBY 32 appears to treat it as a single amulet as

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301 The identity of Dongling shengjun is uncertain. This is the only occurrence of the name in the Chinese literary corpus. The logical inference, then, is that 東陵 is a scribal error – but for what, I do not know. Two commentaries to the *Zhuangzi* equate Dongling with Mount Tai 泰山; see CT 736 *Nanhua zhenjing zhangju yinyi* 南華真經章句音義 (11<sup>th</sup> c.) 5.3b, CT 742 *Nanhua zhenjing zhushu* 南華真經註疏 10.18a (Cheng Xuanying’s 成玄英 (fl 650) subcommentary to the *Zhuangzi*). CT 783 *Yongcheng jixian lu* 壻城集仙錄, a collection of hagiographies of the attendants of the Queen Mother of the West, includes a Dongling shengmu 母 at 6.128a. All works cited in this note are in the Zhengtong daoze edition.

302 While the Massed Writs appears in the *Jiuwei badao* as a category of amulets, *Precious Writs* 20a includes it (reading 文 for 元) in a list composed mostly of individual amulets. I regard it as a list for present purposes.

well, which the Most High transmitted to the Lord of the Golden Porte. It appears as a single amulet at *Precious Writs* 20a.

1.2) The True Writs of the Shangqing Heavens for Expelling [the Qi of] the Six Heavens (*Shangqing chu liutian zhenwen* 上清除六天真文) (264b.7-9)

According to the *Jiuwei badao*, it is “[one of] the Correct Methods of the Three Heavens, to be transmitted to outstanding perfected kings.”<sup>303</sup> Those who do not wear it “will not be welcomed into the Shangqing heavens by the Lord of the Golden Porte when the Era of Great Peace Arrives.” Its talisman is missing. It does not appear in the *Zhengfa jing*, but appears in *Precious Writs* 20a.<sup>304</sup> Its associated celestial record is the Green Text on White Slips of the Grand Culmen (*Taiji baijian qingwen* 太極白簡青文), which appears as *baijian qinglu* 籙 at *Housheng Daojun lieji* 9a.<sup>305</sup> It appears at *Precious Writs* 20a as 上清除六天真文.

1.4) Stanzas of the Upper Prime, Grand Perfected Register of Yin and Yang of the Mystic Capital [of the] Three Heavens and Nine Tenuities (*Santian jiuwei xuandu taizhen yinyang linglu shangyuan zhang* 三天九微玄都太真陰陽靈籙上元章) (259c.26-260a.8, 264c.3-7)

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303 This translation is strengthened by the fact that WSBY 32 gives the same transmission instructions for the Correct Methods of the Three Heavens.

304 上清除六天真文: 不佩此籙者, 太平期至不得奉迎聖君於上清宮也。三天正法, 傳鬱絕真王。

305 See ZHDZ 28: 395c.22-23: 三天正法云: 三元玄臺, 六天符在其位 (reading 內 for 位). See also 400a.1-2: 上清三天正法云: 烏日之室, 元始三天正法除六天之文封其內也; see *Maoshan zhi* 9.6b-8a.

The Stanzas of the Upper Prime is the first amulet in the *Jiuwei badao* to receive its own transmission history, which features two deities that have heretofore not been introduced. The Grand Imperial Elder (*Taidi zhangren* 太帝丈人) bestowed it upon the Unexcelled Perfected Lord of the Grand Void (*Taixu wushang zhenjun* 太虛無上真君).<sup>306</sup> While this transmission history agrees with that given in WSBY 32, it differs markedly from both the general *Jiuwei badao* transmission history as well as that given in *Zhengfa jing* 259c.26-260a.8. The latter is much more complex: the Perfected King of the Nine Heavens bestowed it upon the Most High and the Jade August of the Three Heavens, who then bestowed it on the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement. The latter then bequeathed it to the Queen Mother of the West, who in turn transmitted it to the Most High Elder [who] Numinously Flies to Grand Perfection (*Lingfei taizhen taishang zhangren* 靈飛太真太上丈人); finally, this last deity transmits the amulet to qualified human beings.<sup>307</sup> Neither the *Zhengfa jing* nor the *Jiuwei badao* list any of the amulet's powers, though the *Zhengfa jing* notes its location and the fact that it is venerated by a series of august beings.<sup>308</sup> It appears at *Precious Writs* 20a and receives an extensive treatment on page 20a of the *Sanyuan sanbu jing*. There, it features as an alternate name for the True Book of the Middle Prime for Regulating Transcendents and boasts an impressive array of powers and spirit guards. Its talisman is missing in the *Jiuwei badao*,

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306 The Unexcelled Perfected Lord is otherwise-unattested in the Daoist canon, but the Grand Imperial Elder appears in WSBY 22.15b, where he and a series of other officials gather in a palace east of the Mystic Capital to correct the records of transcendence.

307 The Most High Elder of Grand Perfection is one of the officials who corrects transcendent records at WSBY 22.15b.

308 This portion of the *Zhengfa jing* is quoted in TPYL 3.6a, 676.4a-b, and again at 679.1a.

though it appears in the *Sanyuan bujing*. The ritual associated with it there is very different, however.

1.5) The Turning Writ of Three Prescriptions of the Perfected of the Numinous Capital of Grand Tenuity (*Taiwei lingdu wanzhuan sanfang wen* 太微靈都婉轉真人三方文) (262b.13-15, 264c.3-7)

Grand Tenuity is a constellation near Polaris and the residence of the Grand Monad, with the Numinous Capital as its chief city.<sup>309</sup> The *Jiuwei badao* gives the Lingdu wanzhuan an extensive list of powers and spirit guards. Its bearers will be protected by three hundred *zhifu* 直符, six thousand jade maidens, and eight “people of the Six Heavens” (*liutian baren* 六天八人).<sup>310</sup> Their lifespans will extend to ten billion years and they will ascend to the Perfected Palace of the Numinous Capital of Grand Tenuity – provided they keep their intention fixed on cultivating their conduct and revering the amulet.<sup>311</sup> The *Zhengfa jing* gives it lesser powers, but counts it among the Methods of the Three Heavens for Controlling the Six Heavens; thus, it shares the same transmission history as the Massed Writs. The process of transmission is much simpler in the *Jiuwei badao*, with the Perfected King of the Nine Heavens bestowing it upon the Most High Elder; WSBY 32 gives the same transmission history. Its name varies somewhat across works: though it

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309 Its identity varies, however: in WSBY 32.17a it is the capital of Grand Tenuity, just as it is here, but it can also be a palace in the Jade Capital (Yujing 玉京) of the Xuyan 須延 Heaven (the third of the Nine Heavens) according to WSBY 23.3a, or a palace in Shangshang Heaven according to WSBY 21.1a. Grand Tenuity can also be a palace in the Shangqing heavens.

310 *Zhifu* was an office in the Han. It is also listed among several relatively minor popular spirits in the *Treatise of a Recluse* (*Qianfu lun* 潜夫论) of Wang Fu 王符 (ca. 85-162 or 90-165). See Handian, s.v. “直符;” *Grand Ricci*, s.v. “潜夫论.”

311 弟子誓志修奉

keeps this name in SDZN 6.5, it appears in WSBY 31.10a as the *Taiwei lingdu wanzhuan zhenwen* 太微靈都宛轉真文, and WSBY 32.10a as *Taiwei lingdu wanzhuan zhenqi sanfang wen* 太微靈都宛轉真炁三方文. Its associated celestial record in WSBY 31 is the Purple Names on Black Silk of Fangzhu (*Fangzhu xuansu ziming* 方諸玄素紫名), which appears at *Housheng Daojun lieji* 10a.

#### 1.6) Talisman for Repelling Tigers and Wolves (*Qu hubao fu* 驅虎豹符) (264c)

The *Jiuwei badao* lists two transmission histories for this amulet, giving the impression that it was originally two amulets that have been combined into one. It promises the bearer relief from disaster, poisons, and various deaths. In addition, “the qi of [their] person will rise” (*renqi shangsheng* 人氣上昇) and evil spirits will submit before the spirit-guardians of this talisman. The *Qu hubao fu* first claims it was received from the Perfected Prime Lord of the Purple Culmen, Ninth Elder of the Mysterious Flows of the Transcendent Capital (*Jiulao xiandu xuanliu ziji zhen yuanjun* 九老仙都玄流紫極真元君). Such an august title is found nowhere else in the Daoist canon or outside of it, but the Perfected Prime Lord of the Purple Culmen features in the line of transmission for an *Upper Scripture of the Seven Recitations of the Divine Realm* (*Shenzhou qizhuan shangjing* 神州七轉上經), part of *Seven Recitations of the Divine Realm with Seven Transformations for Dancing in Heaven* (CT 1331 *Dongzhen shangqing shenzhou qizhuan qibian wutian jing* 洞真上清神州七轉七變舞天經), an early Shanqing text that postdates the original revelations. In the first line of transmission (corroborated by WSBY 32), the recipient of the *Qu hubao fu* is the Lord Jade Lad of the Three Heavens



(*Santian yutong jun* 三天玉童君), who appears nowhere else in the Daoist canon. The second transmission history is less obscure. It begins with the Upper Thearch of Yin and Yang of Primal Unity (*Xuanhe yinyang shangdi* 玄和陰陵上帝). This is a deity of middling rank in the highest Shangqing heaven in *Zhenling weiye tu* 10b, and the lord of the Middle Heaven of the Grand Culmen in WSBY 85.16a. He bestows the amulet upon the Elder of the Nine Qi (*Jiuqi zhangren* 九氣丈人), who ranks below him in the *Weiye tu*. The amulet appears to be known by a different title in WSBY 31, the Perfected Book of the Dame of the Mysterious Flows of the Purple Culmen [who Dwells at] the Transcendent Capital of the Nine Elders. ([*Jiu*]lao xiandu xuanliu ziji yuanjun zhenshu 老仙都玄流紫極元君真書). Its associated record is the Jade Names of the Golden Porte (*Jinque yuming* 金闕玉名), which appears at *Housheng Daojun lieji* 9b.

1.7) The Perfected Book of August Splendor of the Lord Heavenly Thearch of the Palace of Clear Harmony (*Qinghe gong tian dijun huangxi zhenshu* 清和宮天帝君皇熙真書) (262b.15-16, 265a)

The Perfected Book promises its bearer the ability to “cause to pay court to them the myriad spirits, to make servants of the hundred animals, and to ascend to the heavens in the bright day.” We learn in addition that “their years will extend without end.”<sup>312</sup>

Heading its line of transmission is the Most High Prime Lord (*Taishang yuanjun* 太上元君), a deity that has not been introduced in either the *Zhengfa jing* or the *Jiuwei badao*. The Prime Lord also features in textual transmission elsewhere in the Canon: *Huangsu*

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312 佩此上真文朝萬神役百禽白日昇天延年無終黃上君授之於赤松子... 白日上昇

*sishisi fang* 11a has him dwelling in the Transcendent Capital, from whence he approves the transmission of a method to dispel evil spirits; WSBY 98.2a places him in the same capital and has him transmitting a “Precious Writ of the Three Augusts” (*Sanhuang baowen* 三皇寶文). Here, he transmits the Perfected Book to the Yellow Emperor, who bequeaths it to a series of famous transcendents. WSBY 31 knows the amulet as The Perfected Book of the Lord Heavenly Thearch of the Palace of Clear Harmony (*Qinghe gong tiandi jun zhenshu* 清和宮天帝君真書), and its associated celestial record is the Red Names of the Jade Records of the Heaven of Grand Clarity (*Taiqing yuji jiangming* 太清玉籍絳名), which appears at *Housheng Daojun lieji* 10a. Its transmission history in WSBY 32 is the same as that given in the *Jiuwei badao*, as is the name by which it is known.

Thus concludes the list of amulets in the *Taishang zhongwen lu*. Not all of them are written in characters comprehensible by humans, however: two are in imitation seal-script, written echoes of celestial writing.

2) The Amulets and Registers of the Nine Tenuities and Eight Ways (*Jiuwei badao fulu* 九微八道符錄)

2.1) Perfected Book of the Jade [Emperor] in the Mysterious Palace of Purple Tenuity [that Allows the Bearer] to Fly to the Heavens (*Ziwei xuangong yufei tianzhen shu* 紫微玄宮玉飛天真書) (262b.18-19, 265a)

According to the *Jiuwei badao*, the bearer of this amulet will be promoted to “transcendent ancestor” (*xian zong* 仙宗) after thirty thousand years. The “Perfected of the Thousand Hills” (*Qianqiu zhenren* 千丘真人) – a figure otherwise unattested in the Chinese literary corpus – will pay court to them, and twenty thousand “Perfected of the hundred rivers” (*Bai du zhenren* 百瀆真人) will guard them. The more modest *Zhengfa jing* promises twenty-four jade lads and jade maidens as spirit guards. It knows the Perfected Book by a nearly identical name (the *Ziwei xuangong yuwen feitian zhenshu* 紫微玄宮玉文飛天真書), and provides no special transmission requirements nor transmission history. By contrast, the *Jiuwei badao* relates that the Celestial King of Primordial of Commencement bestowed it upon the Queen Mother of the West; here, the Celestial King is known as the “Celestial King of Primordial Commencement who Dwells in Grand Clarity.” This title is previously unknown to either the *Zhengfa jing* or the *Jiuwei badao*, but WSBY 32 gives the same name and transmission history. This amulet exhorts its recipients to perform a sacrifice when the text is transmitted to them: they must swear an oral oath to the central of the Five Emperors and offer white and indigo silks. The Perfected Book closes by enjoining the recipient to transmit the amulet

for myriad generations. Its associated celestial record is the Golden Characters on Slips of Precious Jade of Grand Simplicity (*Taisu qiongjian jinzi* 太素瓊簡金字), which appears at *Housheng Daojun lieji* 10a (which replaces *zi* with *ming* 名 “name.”)

2.2) The Perfected Book of the Myriad Transcendents that Opens Heaven, of the Transcendent Count of the Mysterious Continent (*Xuanzhou xianbo kaitian wanxian zhenshu* 玄洲仙伯開天萬仙真書) (262b.22-262c.1, 265b)

According to the *Jiuwei badao*, this amulet grants its bearer the power to dispel various evil spirits, cause good spirits to pay court to them, avoid disease and illness, and ascend to the Transcendent Capital. Both the *Jiuwei badao* and WSBY 32 claim it was transmitted from the Azure Lad to qualified mortals, while the *Jiuwei* informs its reader that the *Wanxian zhenshu* goes by the alternate names “Amulet of the Way of the Transcendents” (*Xianrendao lu* 仙人道錄) and the Covenant-Writ of Grand Mystery for Ascending to Transcendence (*Taixuan dengxian mengwen* 太玄登仙盟文). Its associated celestial record in WSBY 31 is Golden Names on White Jade of the Cinnabar Terrace of the Mystic Capital (*Xuandu dantai baiyu jinzi* 玄都丹臺白玉金字), which appears at *Housheng Daojun lieji* 10b.<sup>313</sup>

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313 The Mystic Capital is located in the first Shangqing heaven (Yudan wuliang 鬱單无量) in *Taixiao langshu* 1.12b-1.13b and in the Heaven of Jade Clarity according to Chen Xuanying’s commentary to the *Duren jing* (Duren jing sizhu 3.12a-b).

2.3) The Grand Perfected Book for Flying to Heaven of the Platform of the Fortified Wall of Kunlun Range (*Kunlun yongtai feitian taizhen shu* 昆仑墉臺飛天太真[書]) (262c.1-2, 265b)<sup>314</sup>

The *Zhengfa jing* promises the bearer of this amulet a modest twelve jade maidens as spirit guards, and names it *Guangsheng taizhen wuyue binfu* 廣生太真五嶽兵符, the Amulet of [Spirit-] Soldiers of the Five Marchmounts and the Grand Perfected of Broad Life. The *Jiuwei badao* is more effusive, promising that “those who wear it will traverse the Five Marchmounts. Mountain spirits will pay court to them, revering and guarding them. The many sprites will bow down and flee... the Goldstone will open for those who wear it.”<sup>315</sup> Its alternate names are *Guangsheng taizhen* (廣生太真), the Upper Amulet of the Five Marchmounts 五嶽上符, and the Amulet of the Numinous Tiger 神虎符. The first is actually the name of a deity featured in WSBY 24.7a-b; thus, this amulet must somehow be associated with it. The second appears unattested outside this particular entry, but the third is well-known as a talisman with a wide range of powers that belongs at the core of the Shangqing corpus.<sup>316</sup> It appears at *Precious Writs* 20a as *Shenhu xuandong* 玄洞. The Most High Elder (*Taishang daifu* 太上大夫) transmitted it to qualified mortals according to both WSBY 32 and the *Jiuwei badao*.<sup>317</sup> The amulet’s

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314 Worth noting is that the phrase I translate as an attributive (“...for flying to heaven”) is used as a noun to translate Sanskrit *apsara* in Buddhist inscriptions.

315 The Goldstone is a category of alchemical ingredients with a peculiar property: they are invisible to ordinary people, showing themselves only to those who are properly equipped. In performing this function, the *Taizhen shu* recalls the Five Talismans of Lingbao, amulets that both protected their bearer during dangerous forays into the mountains and revealed alchemical ingredients that spurred the journeys. See Daojiao dacidian, s.v. “金石.”

316 See R:2 179-186, 249, 251-252.

317 This figure appears at *Zhenling weiye tu* 6a.

associated celestial record is the Purple Register in Red Script of the Southern Culmen (*Nanji danwen zilu* 南極丹文紫籙), which appears at *Housheng Daojun lieji* 10a. It is known in WSBY 31 as the Perfected Writ for Flying to Heaven of the Fortified City Wall of Kunlun (*Kunlun yongtai feitian zhenwen* 崑崙墉臺飛天真文).

2.4) The Most High Perfected Book of Penglai (*Penglai gaoshang zhenshu* 蓬萊高上真書) (262b.20- 21, 265b)

The *Jiuwei badao* promises that those who wear it “will traverse the rivers and the four seas; the many dragons will guard and serve them; the water sprites will tremble and submit to them,” and that they will “ride the clouds and ascend to the heavens.” Whether the Most High Perfected Book is indeed a single amulet, or two that have combined into one, is unclear. The *Jiuwei* gives two alternate names and two separate transmission histories. The first alternate name is the Most Mysterious Tablet of Penglai (*Penglai taixuan zhi zha* 蓬萊太玄之札), while the second is the Perfected Book of the Nine Flows (*Jiuliu zhenshu* 九流真書). According to the first transmission history (confirmed by WSBY 32), the High August of Mysterious Overawing Power of the Clear Heaven (*Xuanwei qingtian shanghuang* 玄威清天上黃) transmitted it to the legendary Master Ningfeng 甯封; the second has the Elder of the Northern Hill (*Beiling zhangren* 北陵丈人) transmitting it to the transcendents Ma Huang 馬皇 and Wen Quan 文泉. The *Zhengfa jing* holds that the amulet grants its bearer a spirit guard of twelve jade lads. The Most High Perfected Book appears at WSBY 31.321b and 32.329a. Its associated celestial record at WSBY 31 is the Red Book on Green-Gold [Slips] of the Mysterious

Palace (*Xuangong qingjin [jian] chi* 玄宮青金[簡]赤書), which appears at *Housheng daojun lieji* 10b. It appears at *Precious Writs* 20a.

2.5) The August High Book of the Elder Heavenly Thearch (*Tiandi zhangren huangshang zhenshu* 天帝丈人皇上真書) (262b.21-22, 265c)

The *Zhengfa jing* assigns its bearer “one hundred jade maidens and the knowledge of the auspicious and inauspicious,” while the *Jiuwei badao* promises one hundred jade maidens as spirit guards, as well as the assistance of twenty-four thousand jade maidens in divining the future via dreams. It appears in WSBY 31.321b, where its associated celestial record is the Purple Register in Cinnabar Script of the Southern Culmen (*Nanji danwen zilu* 南極丹文紫籙), which appears at *Housheng Daojun lieji* 10a.

Thus ends the Amulets of the Nine Tenuities and Eight Ways. Like the Massed Writs, some of them appear only in celestial transcription, unreadable by mortals. These three can be found on 265a-c. Finally, there is one amulet that appears in the *Zhengfa jing* but not the *Jiuwei badao*: the Perfected Book of the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement (*Yuanshi tianwang zhenshu* 元始天王真書, 262c.2-4). This amulet grants a spirit guard of twelve jade lads and twelve jade maidens as well as “the power to go between the realms of existence and nonexistence.” It appears nowhere else in the Chinese literary corpus.

In addition to discussing amulets featured in the *Zhengfa jing/Jiuwei badao* textual complex, the same portions of the texts discussed above (see “Texts consulted”) often contain information about amulets that feature in neither work. Analyzing these amulets may provide useful information about the works to which the *Zhengfa jing* and *Jiuwei badao* are linked. In format, the below entries are similar to those above. However, they do not record every appearance of each amulet in the Canon; because this portion of the appendix concentrates on links between the *Jiuwei badao/Santian zhengfa* and other parts of the Daoist Canon, I focus chiefly on appearances in the works I have already discussed. In addition, I discuss amulets that appear in quotations of the *Rectifying Methods* that do not match the received text. I thus hope to gain some insight into the wider circles in which the received *Rectifying Methods* must have circulated before assuming its present form.

WSBY 32

3.2) The Perfected Book of the Three Heavens (*Santian zhenshu* 三天真書)

Also known as the Penetrating (read 通 for 洞) Numinous Writ of Golden Yang (*Jinyang dongling wen* 金陽洞靈文). This amulet appears in *Sanyuan bu jing* 1.1a.

3.3) The Amulet of the Mysterious Terrace of the Three Primes for Lodging an

Accusation Against the Six Heavens (*Sanyuan xuantai gao liu tian fu* 三元玄臺告六天符).



This amulet's transmission history is cut off before it begins in WSBY 32. It appears under this name in *Dao leishi xiang* j. 3. The Mysterious Terrace of the Three Primes appears as pleasant location connected to an internal meditation exercise in *Guishan xuanlu* 2.9a-10b, but plays a far more important role elsewhere. It is among the many palaces and bureaus enumerated in WSBY 22; there, one can glimpse the Hidden Writ of the Upper Tenuities of the Three Heavens and Nine Numens (*Santian jiuling shangwei yinwen* 三天九靈上微隱文) once every eight thousand kalpas. This latter is none other than the Yinyang linglu according to the *Sanbu jing*, and has all the powers associated with it; the *Sanbu jing*, like WSBY 22, locates it in the Mysterious Terrace of the Three Primes.<sup>318</sup>

#### WSBY 33

##### 3.4) The Hymn-Writ of the Three Heavens (*Santian songwen* 三天頌文)

Appearing at WSBY 33.13a, the Hymn-Writ should be recited. It has the power to refine the form; to give them powers of prognostication; and to protect them from the myriad disasters that befall humankind during the end of a kalpa cycle. As the title indicates, it is not an amulet but a hymn; it must be included here, however, as WSBY 33 indicates it is a direct quote of the *Rectifying Methods*.

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<sup>318</sup> In that work, the same location is connected to the Jade Writ of the Lower Prime for Regulating Earth. WSBY 22 quotes two different works: the *Dongxuan jing* 洞玄經 and the *Zhenji jing* 真迹經. I am uncertain which works in the received canon. (if any) these names refer to.

## Conclusion

The textual footprint of the amulets above reveal a *Rectifying Methods* of considerable antiquity that has undergone considerable revision through the centuries. Citations in the original Shangqing revelations (e.g., the *Sanbu jing* and a version of the *Qisheng xuanji* preserved in the WSBY) attest to the early date of some version of the work, and circumstantial evidence confirming this is provided by the *Rectifying Methods*' consistent association with other early members of that corpus. The work itself, however, did not remain unaltered. Daoist authors of the early medieval period saw it not as an unalterable whole but as a toolkit containing apotropaic devices. These devices could be freely excerpted from their original setting, sometimes with little regard for their original names, transmission histories, or specific powers. The function remained the same, however: assuring the good fortune of the bearer, whether by warding off demons or permitting ascent to Shangqing heavens.

A different compilation of slightly more certain date – the *Precious Writs* – provides some insight into the possible logic of its editor and demonstrates the different uses to which the amulets were put in the early medieval period. The editor of this text extracted amulets from the Shangqing and Lingbao corpuses, but – in the case of the Shangqing amulets, at least – stripped them of any association with apocalyptic Shangqing deities. Further, the author placed them in a ritual setting that suggested repeated transmission. Both factors combine with the verifiably later date to suggest that the early Shangqing texts' anxiety concerning the imminent apocalypse had abated by the time of CT 128's compilation.

## APPENDIX G

### DEITIES AND PLACES IN THE “RECTIFYING METHODS”

Perfected King of the Xiaoyou Cavern-Heaven (*Xiaoyou zhenwang* 小有真王)

This is another name for the Azure Lad (*Qingtong jun* 青童君), one of the chief deities of the Shangqing textual corpus and an important intermediary between the gods and human beings. He is also called “Supreme Minister, Lord Azure Lad” (*Shangxiang Qingtong jun* 上相青童君), or “Lord Azure Lad of Fangzhu” (*Fangzhu Qingtong jun* 方諸青童君). Fangzhu is one of the island paradises located in the Eastern Sea (*Donghai* 東海). As Supreme Minister, his position is just below that of Lord Li 李君, the savior of humanity who plays a critical role in the Daoist eschatology of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. According to *The Inner Biography of Emperor Wu of the Han* (CT 292 *Han Wudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳, ca. 6<sup>th</sup> c.), he is a disciple of the Perfected King of the Nine Heavens (*Jiutian zhenwang* 九天真王), who rules the second of the Nine Primordial Shangqing Heavens. The Azure Lad also manages the affairs of earthbound transcendents (*dixian* 地仙), and functions as the Great Director of Destinies (*Da Siming* 大司命), overseeing the other Directors of Destinies in the Five Marchmounts (*Wu yue* 五嶽) and the Grotto-Heavens (*Dongtian* 洞天). Accordingly, the *Precious Scripture on the Female One and the Five Elders* (CT 1313 *Ciyi jing*, full title: *Dongzhen gaoshang yudi dadong ciyi yujian wulao baojing* 洞真高上玉帝大洞雌一玉檢吾老寶經) describes Xiaoyou as the foremost of all the cavern-heavens. He composes the *Santian zhengfa jing*, as well as playing a major role in its transmission and internal cosmology. He is also able to bestow transcendent status on human seekers.<sup>319</sup>

319 TC, s.v. “Santian zhengfa jing;” R 1:127, EoT, s.v. “Qingtong,” *Han Wudi neizhuan* 20b; *Ciyi jing* 20a. Methods in the *Ciyi jing* are widely cited in other Shangqing works, and the *Ciyi* itself is a long and complex collection of various methods. Robinet dates it to after the seventh century. See R 2:261-283. It is one of the 三奇 *sanqi*, “Three Wondrous [Texts],” along with the *Dadong zhenjing* and the *Suling jing*. While dating after Yang Xi’s revelations, these works assimilate to the Shangqing corpus practices

Nine Perfected (*Jiu zhen* 九真)

The Nine Perfected play a critical role in the Shangqing corpus, and are named and described in the *Taidan yinshu* as residents of the Three Primes (*Sanyuan* 三元), here referring to the upper, middle, and lower sections of the body. Each of the Three Primes is itself divided into upper, middle, and lower levels, and one Perfected is assigned to each level. It is in this capacity that they help the adept transform their body in the *Jiuzhen zhongjing*. However, the Three Primes also have cosmological significance as hypostases of the three primordial *qi* that generate the universe, and accordingly the Nine Perfected play an essential role in governing the cosmos. In the *Zhengfa jing*, they appear as residents of the Three Primes, conceived of in that work as mutations of the *qi* of the Nine Heavens. The Nine Perfected reside in the Three Heavens of Clear Tenuity (*Qingwei* 清微), Yuyu 禹餘, and Grand Crimson (*Dachi* 大赤).<sup>320</sup>

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that predated them. On the *sanqi*, see R 1:76-80.

320 See ZHDZ 1.520a-521a for their names and significance on both the human and cosmological levels. EoT, s.v. “Sanyuan;” *Zhonghua dao jiao dacidian*, s.v. “三元;” *Dao jiao dacidian*, s.v. “Sanyuan.” They appear in *Santian zhengfa jing*, ZHDZ 1.259b. The Three Heavens appear in many Shangqing works. Yuyu appears here as an abbreviation for Xuanwei ziran shangxu yuyu tian 玄微自然上虛禹餘天, the sixth of the thirty-six heavens according to CT 1373 *Shangqing waiguo fangpin qingtong neiwen* 上清外國放品青童內文. The characters 禹餘 (pronounced hjuXyo in Middle Chinese) were probably chosen for their phonetic value as imitations of Sanskrit, since the Yuyu tian appears in the *Waiguo fangpin* next to pseudo-Sanskrit heavens like the *Yudan wuliang tian* 鬱單無量天 or the *Bujiaole tian* 不驕樂天. “Yudan” (MC: ‘juttan) was the typical transcription of the Sanskrit *Uttarakuru*, a utopian northern continent (not heaven) of the Buddhist pantheon, and 不驕樂 renders Sanskrit *Nirmānarati*, the fifth Buddhist heaven. Accordingly, I leave it untranslated, in contrast to Livia Kohn, EoT, s.v. “Sanqing.” Elaborate Chinese names meant to resemble Sanskrit words were common in other heavens. See ZHDZ 1.287ff; Zürcher, “Buddhist Conquest,” in Silk, *Buddhism in China* 144-145n.

White Prime (*Baiyuan* 白元)

The identity of this spirit varies according to the work consulted. The *Huangting neijing jing* (on which, see below) claims it is a spirit of the lungs, which the *Taidan yinshu* (discussed more fully below) confirms. However, it appears as a spirit of the brain in the *Hymn to the Gods of the Cave-Chamber* (CT 133 *Taishang dongfang neijing zhu* 太上洞房內經注, hereafter *Dongfang neijing zhu*), which was integrated into the Shangqing corpus at an early date. Baiyuan plays an important role in the Shangqing corpus, and so appears in several works. In addition to the *Taidan yinshu*, he can be found in the *Shangqing taishang jiuzhen zhongjing jiangsheng shendan jue* (discussed in the previous chapter), as well as works like the *Zhen 'gao* and the *Esoteric Biography of Ziyang the Perfected* (CT 303 *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 紫陽真人內傳) that form the core of the Shangqing corpus. The deity's antiquity is further attested by a citation in the *Wushang biyao*. Finally, Baiyuan links the “Zhengyi zhou” to the *Santian zhengfa jing*, where it appears early on in the commentary of the Azure Lad.<sup>321</sup>

The Matchless Hero (*Wuying* 無英)

Baiyuan and Wuying often compose two parts of a trio that also includes The Yellow Old Lord of the Center (*Zhongyang Huanglao jun* 中央黃老君); this is how they appear in

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321 See the *Grand Ricci*, s.v. “Bai yuan”; the *Huangting neijing jing* in YJQQ 11.25b; EoT, s.v. “Taidan yinshu,” but cf. R 1:129, which lists Baiyuan as a spirit of the brain. See also *Dongfang neijing zhu* 3b-4b; TC, s.v. “Taishang dongfang neijing zhu”; *Zhen 'gao* 9.14b, 13.11a, where Baiyuan appears as a spirit of the brain; he also appears as a spirit of the brain in *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 8b-9a; WSBY 3.12a; *Santian zhengfa* 1b.

the *Santian zhengfa jing*. Along with Taiyi and Baiyuan, Wuying is an important bodily deity in the Shangqing corpus.<sup>322</sup>

#### The Eight Emperors *Badi* 八帝

These might be the Demon Kings of the Eight Directions (*Badi damowang* 八帝大魔王) mentioned in the *Jinyuan yuzhang*, a work that was integrated into the Shangqing corpus at an early date. (For more on these beings, see below.) The Demon Kings appear in this work as villains to be driven away by spirits marshalled by the adept. Thus, their association here with the benevolent Nine Perfected would be strange. However, there are references to benevolent Eight Emperors scattered throughout the Shangqing corpus. *The Jade Rule of the Three Original Ones and the Promulgated Scripture of the Three Female Original Ones* (CT 354 *Shangqing sanyuan yujian sanyuan bujing* 上清三元玉檢三元布經) was integrated into the main body of Shangqing works some fifty years after the Shangqing revelations; in an incantation it contains, the Eight Emperors command transcendents to dispatch a “flying chariot” (*feibing* 飛輶) that carries the adept to the Grand Void (*taixu* 太虛). In *The Nine Crimson Speckled Talismans of the Five Emperors’ Inner Contemplation* (CT 1329 *Taishang jiuchi banfu wudi neizhen jing* 太上九赤班符五帝內真經), a member of the original Shangqing corpus, they appear in an incantation to

<sup>322</sup> For *Yuanying*, see, e.g., *Suling jing* (full title: CT 1314 *Dongzhen taishang suling dongyuan dayou miaojing* 洞真太上素靈洞元大有妙經) 18a and CT 1339 *Dongzhen bajing yulu chentu yinfu* 洞真八景玉籙晨圖隱符 6a. In both cases it is associated with Baiyuan, and so constitutes 元/无 confusion. The *Bajing yulu* was incorporated into the Shangqing corpus at an early date after the Shangqing revelations; see TC, s.v. “Dongzhen bajing yulu chentu yinfu.” For the association of Baiyuan, Wuying and Zhongyang Huanglao jun in the Shangqing corpus, see R 1:129; *Ciyi jing* 5b-6a, 25a-b; *Dongfang neijing zhu* 1b, 4b, 9a; *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 8b-9a, where Zhongyang Huanglao jun is the “great spirit that cannot be named,” thanks to his association with Taiwei; *Denzhen yinjue* 1.3a. *Dadong zhenjing* 2.10b-11a pairs Wuying with Baiyuan, as does *Taidan yinshu* 20a and *Huangting neijing jing* 1.10b, where Wuying goes by an alternate name (Gongzi 公子); *Santian zhengfa jing* 1b.

the Lord of Mount Tai (*Taishan jun* 泰山君). More significantly, they appear in a work associated with the Nine Perfected, the *Mount Turtle Register of the Nine Spirits Pertaining to Pertaining to the Superior Scripture of Transformation of Primordial Beginning* (CT 1393 *Shangqing yuanshi bianhua baozhen shangjing jiuling taimiao guishan xuanlu* 上清元始變化寶真上經九靈太妙龜山玄籙, hereafter *Guishan xuanlu*); thus, these Eight Emperors are probably the same referred to in “Zhengyi zhou.” In the *Santian zhengfa jing* 259b.19-21, they appear as emperors of the Eight Directions, with one set of eight dwelling in each of the upper three heavens.<sup>323</sup>

“The Lord Emperor” (*Dijun* 帝君)

The Lord Emperor is the supreme deity of the *Dadong zhenjing*, and is associated both with attaining transcendence and the records of transcendence. He plays an important role in the meditation exercises that comprise early Shangqing works like the *Taidan yinshu* and the *Jiuzhen zhongjing*. In the *Jiuzhen zhongjing* he grants transcendent status alongside the Azure Lad. In contrast to his preeminence elsewhere, he appears subordinate to other figures in the *Santian zhengfa jing*.<sup>324</sup>

323 Zhonghua daoqiao dacidian, s.v. “八帝大魔王.” For the names and descriptions of the Eight Demon Kings, see the *Jinyuan yuzhang* at ZHDZ 1.733ff. *Sanyuan bujing* 37a/ZHDZ 1.356; on the work, see TC, s.v. “Shangqing sanyuan yujian sanyuan bujing.” *Jiuchi banfu* 9b/ZHDZ 1.444-445. On the work, see TC, s.v. “Taishang jiuchi banfu wudi neizhen jing.” The *Guishan xuanlu* is perhaps the most complete list of the seventy-four Shangqing gods. See TC, s.v. “Shangqing yuanshi bianhua baozhen shangjing jiuling taimiao guishan xuanlu.”

324 See Isabelle Robinet, trans. Julian F. Pas and Norman Girardot, *Taoist Meditation: The Maoshan Tradition of Great Purity* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993) 107-8, 137, as well as the “Method of the Nine Perfected” in the *Jiuzhen zhongjing* (ZHDZ 1.222-225). The *Jiuzhen zhongjing* was integrated into the Shangqing corpus at a very early date, and is closely related to two other works: CT 1377 *Shangqing taishang jiuzhen zhongjing jiangsheng shendan jue* 上清太上九真中經絳生神丹訣 and CT 405 *Shangqing zijing jun huangchu ziling daojun dongfang shangjing* 上清紫精君黃初紫靈道君洞房上經. See R 2:67-83, EoT, s.v. “Shangting taishang dijun jiuzhen zhongjing,” s.v. “Shangqing taishang jiuzhen zhongjing jiangsheng shendan jue,” s.v. “Shangqing zijing jun huangchu ziling daojun



The Nine Heavens (*Jiutian* 九天)

The Nine Primal Heavens of Shangqing appear in several different works. They appear in the *Santian zhengfa jing* as hypostases of the primordial Nine Qi that took form after the same Nine Qi had formed the Heavenly King of Primordial Commencement and the Perfected King of the Nine Heavens.<sup>325</sup>

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dongfang shangjing.” For a detailed introduction to the *Jiuzhen zhongjing*, see Robinet, “Introduction au Kieou-tchen tchong-king,” *Society for the Study of Chinese Religions Bulletin* 7 (Fall 1979): 24-43. EoT, s.v. “Taidan yinshu.” The Nine Perfected are named in another scripture that features Taiwei – see ZHDZ 1.520a-c, part of CT 56 *Taishang yupei jindang taiji jinshu shangjing* 太上玉珮金璫太極金書上經 (hereafter *Yupei jindang*, ZHDZ 1.518-529). Dijun appears in *Santian zhengfa jing*, ZHDZ 259c.22-26.

325 See R 1:131 for a general introduction to the heavens, including works that provide a complete list. Their relationship to Buddhist heavens of similar name is the focus of Erik Zürcher’s “Buddhist Conquest of Early Taoism,” in Jonathan A. Silk, ed., *Buddhism in China: The Collected Papers of Erich Zürcher* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 144-155n. The Nine Heavens first appear in *Santian zhengfa jing*, ZHDZ 1.259a.10-11.