Taiwan Journal of East Asian Studies, vol.2 no.1, June 2005, pp. 89-110

Articles【研究論著】

The Evolution of Daoist Cosmology and the Construction of the Common Sacred Realm

道教宇宙觀的演化及其普世聖域的建構

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Keywords: syncretism, blood sacrifice, Daoism (*daojiao*), Buddhism, common religion, ritual master (*fashi*), exorcism, official title (*fenghao*), sectarian religions

關鍵詞：融合主義、血祭、道教、佛教、民間宗教、法師、驅魔、封號、宗派宗教

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§ 本文曾宣讀於 2004 年 8 月 20-21 日，由臺灣大學東亞文明研究中心主辦之「東亞近世世界觀的形成」國際學術研討會。

Abstract

China's two great institutionalized religions, Daoism and Buddhism, were created in opposition to the popular or common religion of the people and the state, which focused on ancestors and deities that accepted blood sacrifice in return for blessings. During the Song dynasty, a syncretic conception of this common sacred realm emerged, a cosmos that is continuous and all-encompassing, incorporating all sorts of gods, transcendents, buddhas and demons in a ranked administrative hierarchy. In post-Song China, this assured a respected place for the transcendent figures of the organized faiths in a pantheon that was not threatening to the theocratic Chinese state and provided a continuing revenue stream for both through their specializations in Buddhist funeral and mourning services and Daoist rites of cosmic renewal that confirmed local gods in their positions. In this paper I first sketch out the main characteristics of the common religion, then introduce the critiques of this common religion that informed the rise of Daoism and Buddhism. I then consider various sorts of accommodations attempted by the two faiths, such as the incorporation of local deities as the door gods or temple guardians of Buddhist monasteries or the incorporation of local notables into the lower echelons of the Daoist heavens. Turning to the socio-economic and political changes of the Song, I relate these to religious innovation, such as the development of the "ritual master" (*fashi*) class of religious professional and the hybrid Thunder Rites that proved so effective in dispelling the demons that plagued the men of the Song. Finally, I consider the amalgamation of Daoism and common religion in the cults to the gods who would dominate the religious world of late imperial China, like Wenchang, Guandi, and Mazu.

摘要

中國的兩大制度化宗教，佛教和道教，是對抗以血食為核心的中國共同宗教（包括民眾信仰和國家宗教）而興起的宗教體制。宋朝時期，一個有綜合性的共同聖界概念逐漸形成。這種無間斷且全面性的宇宙觀將各種神祇、仙人、佛陀和鬼怪都編入一個管轄幽冥兩界的等級制度。宋代以後的中國神係一方面確保佛道兩種制度化宗教最高神靈之地位，而一方面仍能避免危及中國的神權政治系統。不但如此，這種眾神崇拜聖域的形成，還持續提供了佛道兩教的收入來源，使得佛教以喪葬儀式見長，而道教以認定各地神明神位的齋醮儀式為主。在本文中，我首先介紹早期中國共通信仰的諸點特色，接著說明各種針對此種信仰的批判，以一窺佛道二教崛起的原因。接著，我將考察二教所嘗試的各種融合作法，例如將地方神祇納入作為佛寺的門神或是守護神的作法，或是將地方上崇拜的聖人納入道教仙班的下階。本文也進一步考量宋朝的社會政經變化，並把這些融合和當時的宗教革新串連在一起，像是當時的「法師」發展成為一個宗教專業階級，以及宋朝人相信雜柔各家的「雷法」，具有驅魔的神效等皆是其例。最後，我將探討主宰晚期中國帝國宗教領域的全國性神祇崇拜中（諸如文昌帝君、關帝和媽祖），道教和共同信仰的融合。

Western observers of traditional Chinese religion have often been struck by what they perceive to be the high level of syncretism, the seeming mixture of figures from what to Western eyes seem to be China's great "religions": Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. We are left to marvel at the confused Chinese, who place a Daoist god next to a Buddhist bodhisattva and a Confucian sage. In part, this misperception arises because of the failure to recognize the indigenous religious tradition of China as a religion rather than a simple conglomeration of beliefs and superstitions. China's autochthonous faith centers on god worship and ancestor veneration and has remained a constant core of practice through the millennia. But this Chinese Common Religion did not originally subsume Daoism and Buddhism, two organized religions that once defined themselves by their differences from the Common Religion. How did so many elements of these higher religions make their way into the religion of the common, lay Chinese?

The answer is to be found in a dramatic shift in the Chinese religious world that took place over a long period of time, but seems to have centered on the Song dynasty. From Song times on we can document a view of the other world that is continuous and all-encompassing, incorporating all sorts of gods, transcendents, buddhas, and demons in a ranked administrative hierarchy. Below I sketch out the nature of the traditional Chinese common religion, present the challenges posed to this world view by the organized religions of Buddhism and Daoism, and discuss the identifications, assimilations, borrowings, and reinterpretations that occurred between the faiths and the common religion over the first millennium CE that set the stage for the Song amalgamated, unitary sacred realm.

The Common Religion before the Song

The sacrificial system of traditional China has its roots in the Shang dynasty and was formalized in the ritual codes of the late Warring States and early Han. It entailed the offering of food, especially meat and grain as well as alcohol, to a variety of supernatural beings. The objects of worship included both

the divinized ancestors of the ruling house and nature spirits associated with prominent natural features like mountains, rivers, and springs. There was also a sort of high god or ultimate ancestor called Di 帝 who could only be approached indirectly. Under the Zhou (1045-221 BCE), Di was replaced by or transformed into Heaven, a less-clearly personified deity and one with no special ties to the defunct Shang royal house. The ritual codes record a set of restrictions on sacrifice that seek to limit the worship of certain deities to a small group of nobles arrayed in a ranked hierarchy that was mirrored in the pantheon of gods.[1] Although these strictures permit no religious activity for commoners and hence can only be a normative rather than a descriptive account of the way religion functioned at the time, it is significant that we already find explicit restrictions based on birth and, later, official position.[2]

A new kind of cult, to dead individuals unrelated to the sacrificer, began to arise no later than the Warring States period. A powerful taboo, supported by Confucius himself, stated that the dead were available for worship only to their direct descendents. Worship beyond these bounds was considered "licentious sacrifice" (*yinsi* 淫祀) and was prohibited as profane. One category that evaded this prohibition was the spirits of those who had died without descendents to maintain the ancestral sacrifices to them. We also see considerable concern for those who had fallen in battle and whose bodies remained unclaimed on the battlefield. The last of the "Nine Songs" of the *Elegies of Chu* (*Chuci* 楚辭) is a memorial to these spirits and, given the pace and scale of warfare during the period, this must have been a constant concern for the populace. All the dead could return for vengeance if they had been wronged (as proclaimed by Mozi 墨子), but these dispossessed and untended dead were particularly likely to seek out the living and demand sustenance.

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[1] On traditional strictures on sacrifice, see Terry F. Kleeman, "Licentious Cults and Bloody Victuals: Sacrifice, reciprocity and Violence in Traditioanl China," in *Asian Major*, 3th series, vol. 7, no. 1 (1994), pp. 185-211.

[2] The positions mentioned in these lists were originally all hereditary, but by the Warring States period, when they were systematized, the highest governmental positions, like those of Grandee (*dafu* 大夫) at court, were being filled by individuals of mean birth.

We also see in the Warring States the first recorded cults to transcendent beings. One of the earliest is Wangzi Qiao 王子喬,[3] reputedly the son of a Zhou king who ascended to Heaven on a crane before his father's eyes. He is mentioned already in Warring States sources like the *Elegies of Chu*. Such figures are typically childless and hence fulfill the stricture of cults being established only to those who need and are able to accept sacrifice. But transcendents have transcended traditional food and dine on mists and ethers, hence they should be offered only tokens of faith like fruit and flowers. Sacrifice in China was a system of exchange wherein mortals provided material sustenance to the dead in return for supernatural blessings (*fu* 福) that would improve one's fortune, career, and health. Transcendents would be difficult to manipulate within this process because they had no needs that could be answered by worshippers and hence no burden of debt toward worshippers that would inspire them to intervene in the mortal world on behalf of one of their clients. Nonetheless, there are records of cults to such figures in specific locations extending over long periods of time that look quite similar to normal god cults. We return to this topic below.

Sectarian and Institutionalized Religions

All of the structures we have discussed so far are organized at the local or familial level, or by governmental representatives in the case of state-sponsored worship, but they are essentially diffuse in that individuals pursuing similar ritual activities at different locations were not linked by an overarching organizational framework or even a self-awareness that they belonged to a religious organization other than the family or local community. The earliest example of a supra-local organized religious movement would seem to be the widespread festivals and mass pilgrimage of 3 BCE, which centered on an ancient goddess

[3] Wangzi Qiao is identified with the Heir Apparent Jin of Zhou King Ling (Ji Yixin 姬泄心, r. 571-545), and he is sometimes called Wangzi (Prince) Jin 太子晉. The Biographies of Arrayed Transcendents says that he was fond of playing the flute and mimicking the cry of phoenixes. He cultivated the Dao on Mount Song for thirty years, then was observed flying off to Heaven on a crane. Max Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien tchouan (Biographies légendaires des Immortels taoïstes de l'antiquité)* (Peking: Université de Paris, 1953), publications du Centre d'études sinologiques de Pékin (repr. Paris: Collège de France, 1987).

called the Queen Mother of the West 西王母.[4] This was quickly followed by the religious rebellion known as the Red Eyebrows. By the second century CE there were numerous religiously-based organizations, each a nascent religion, across the breadth of China. The Yellow Turbans led by Zhang Jue 張角 were such a group. They maintained strict standards of conduct and transgressions required confession and the administration of talisman-suffused water. These religious movements are ancestral to the sectarian or maternist movements that attracted government notice and suppression repeatedly during Late Imperial times and still remain an important aspect of the modern Chinese religious world.[5] Although such movements often establish new connections among religious symbols drawn from different traditions, and hence seem syncretic, they typically place limitations on their follower's ritual behavior that are more exclusivist than is the norm in the common religion.

One of the many nascent religious movements of the second century CE grew into China's indigenous institutionalized religion, Daoism.[6] The Celestial Masters credit their origins to a revelation made to an obscure figure named Zhang Ling 張陵 in 142 CE. Accounts of this revelation may be little more than

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[4] Or perhaps "Grandmother of the West." See Paul Rakita Goldin, "On the Meaning of the Name Xi wangmu, Spirit-Mother of the West," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 122, no. 1 (Jan.-Mar. 2002), pp. 83-85. On the pilgrimage itself see Homer H. Dubs, "An Ancient Chinese Mystery Cult," in *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 35, no. 4 (1942), pp. 221-240. On the figure of the Queen Mother through time, especially as represented in elite poetry, see Suzanne E. Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1993).

[5] On sectarian movements in traditional China see Daniel L. Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion:Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1976); "The White Cloud Sect in Sung and Yüan China," in *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 1 (1982), pp. 615-642; B. J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Leiden: Brill, 1992). On modern examples of this type of group see David K. Jordan and Daniel Overmyer, *The Flying Pheonix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1986); Philip Clart, "The Phoenix and the Mother: The Interaction of Spirit Writing Cults and Popular Sects in Taiwan," in *Journal of Chinese Religions*, no. 25 (1997), pp. 1-32.

[6] On the early Daoist church see Stephen R. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Terry Kleeman, *Great Perfection: Ethnicity and Religion in a Chinese Millenarian Kingdom* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998); Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾, *Shoki no Dōkyō* 初期の道教 in *Oriental Studies Library*, no. 38 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha. 1991).

legend, but a stele from 173 CE confirms that the group was active by that time and already had an established hierarchy of sacerdotal posts, a set of rituals for ordination (and probably other matters), and a set of scriptures or sacred writings. The Celestial Masters promoted a radical program of reform that banned the practice of blood sacrifice to both gods and ancestors because it was founded on a transactional relationship between mortal and divine that called into question the basic moral character of the deity.[7] The Daoists argued that all the traditional gods of Chinese were in fact blood-thirsty demons, "stale ethers" of the profane Six Heavens, whereas Daoist gods were pure emanations of the Dao who eschewed all sacrifice and occupied a set (usually three) of newly revealed heavens superior to the old six. In this way they drew a clear line around their practice and rejected the common religion.

At about the same time, the Indian religion of Buddhism was making its first substantial inroads into Chinese society. Buddhism had been present on Chinese territory since at least the middle of the first century CE, but had remained largely a faith of expatriates and their associates. The latter half of the second century CE saw imperial worship of the Buddha and the first translations of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese, thereby making the complexities of Buddhist doctrine and worldview available to the educated Chinese for the first time. Over the centuries, the Buddhist faith would grow, spread across the empire and permeate all classes of Chinese society until by the beginning of the sixth century we find a Chinese emperor so enamored of the faith that he repeatedly renounces the throne to become a monk.

Buddhism had two reasons to object to traditional Chinese religious practice. First, the Buddhist analysis of reality asserted that all of the phenomenal world—which in Buddhist terms encompassed the human realm, the world of the gods, and the land of the dead—was fundamentally impermanent, illusory, composite, and hence not real. The basic principles of this worldview (transmi-

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[7] Rolf A. Stein, "Religious Taoism and Popular Religion from the Second to Seventh Centuries," in *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion,* Welch & Seidel eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 53-82. In describing this period stresses objections to such sacrifice because they were extravagant and wasteful, a perspective that traditional scholars often shared, but this ignores the full scope of the Daoist prohibition, which condemned sedate elite sacrifice just as surely as it prohibited the raucous celebrations of possessed spirit mediums.

gration and karma, long kalpic cycles of time, the individuated soul or atman, etc.) did not easily mesh with Chinese assumptions. Moreover, Buddhism offered an extensive and very intriguing pantheon of its own, which did have ontological validity according to the Buddhist view of reality, and which promised to answer many of the same problems and questions that might normally in China be directed toward indigenous spirits. For early Chinese Buddhist converts, accepting the new faith meant turning one's back on the accepted Chinese conceptions of the day about the nature of the world, the purpose of human life, the significance of the family, the value of governmental service, the ranking of social classes, and a variety of other aspects of medieval China. This conflict is somewhat surprising, because Buddhism has come to an accommodation with many indigenous faiths during its expansion and was not lacking in doctrinal and symbolic resources with which to accommodate Chinese elements.

The second objection of Buddhism to Chinese practice may seem more trivial but proved persistent and difficult to resolve. The acceptance of karmic retribution and transmigration led Buddhists to extend the strictures against violence and inflicting pain to all sentient beings. Buddhists in India were expected to reject all meat that they had evidence was killed specifically for themselves and offerings of meat or alcohol (also prohibited in the Buddhist precepts) were not made to Buddhist divinities. In China—though we do not yet fully understand the process—the ban on eating meat killed on one's behalf was extended to a prohibition on the consumption of any sort of meat, including fish and shellfish. Buddhist offerings are referred to in our earliest Chinese accounts as "forbearing cults" (*renci* 忍祠) because they did not involve the taking of life. Ancestral worship and the worship of Chinese deities were both condemned in these terms as evil and the source of bad karma that would lead to an inferior rebirth and, later, to grueling torture in the courts of Hell.

Both these religions thus faced serious obstacles in reaching an accommodation with the Chinese common religion. Initially, both were content to exist as independent, evangelical faiths, dedicated to supplanting and replacing the common religion. The Buddhists did go through an early stage wherein translators and interpreters of the faith turned to indigenous concepts, most drawn from Lao-Zhuang philosophy, to explain conceptually remote terminology, but subse-

quent translators worked diligently to convey Indian terms accurately without this sort of conceptual borrowing.[8] Eventually many of these Indians concepts did make their way into the Chinese consciousness (what Zürcher has dubbed "the Buddhist Conquest of China") and profoundly influenced basic elements of the common religion, but did not in the end alter the fundamental transactional relationship between god and worshipper.

As Buddhism spread to the non-Indic cultures of Central and East Asia, it devised a variety of ways to accommodate elements of the indigenous religious within Buddhism. We see this most developed in the Japanese theory of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 or "appended traces of the basic deity," which informed a system that identified specific native Shinto deities as transient manifestations of Buddhas and bodhisattvas.[9] But Chinese gods had fierce defenders and Buddhism never reached a level of acceptance in China that would have permitted the wholesale redefinition of the popular pantheon as mere reflexes of Buddhist figures. Instead, a small number of Chinese deities were introduced into the Buddhist pantheon as door guardians and temple protectors. A prominent example is Guan Yu, the third century general who would eventually become Thearch Guan, the most important god in the popular pantheon; in the ninth century he was adopted as a temple guardian or *qielan* 伽藍 spirit.[10] Typically only relatively obscure local deities were available for cooption in this manner, and they were converted in small numbers, but it did serve to win support on the local level in some specific regions.

The Daoists had an easier path toward incorporating deities of the common religion into the Daoist pantheon. Although the highest gods of Daoism, like the Three Pure (*sanqing* 三清) at the top of their pantheon, were pure emanations of

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[8] On these early translations and the process through which comprehensible and accurate translations were developed see Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (Leiden: Brill, 1959).

[9] For a collection of recent essays on this process, see Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm* (Routledge/Curzon, 2003).

[10] Inoue Ichii 井上以智為, "Kan U shibyō no yurai narabi ni hensen" 關羽祠廟の由來並びに變遷 in *Shirin*, vol. 26, no. 1 (1941), pp. 41-51; vol. 26, no. 2 (1944), pp. 242-283; Harada Masami 原田正巳, "Kan U Shinkō no nisan no yōso ni tsuite" 關羽信仰の二三の要素について in *Tōhō Shūkyō*, vol. 8, no. 9 (1955), pp. 29-40.

the Dao and had never assumed human form, others like the Supreme Lord Lao sometimes took on human form to interact with the mortal realm and some of the lower-level figures had once been human, attaining transcendent or even perfected status through prominent good works. In the earliest surviving Daoist pantheon (the *Zhenling weiye tu* 真靈位業圖) we already find ancient gods and goddesses who have been assimilated into Daoism. The limitation here is that once taken into the Daoist pantheon, these deities could no longer accept blood sacrifice, at least in their Daoist identities.[11] Those figures adopted into Buddhism suffered a similar fate.

This sort of piecemeal incorporation of individual divinities from the popular pantheon provided a limited amount of accommodation to the interests of local societies but ultimately proved unable to win over the allegiance of the masses from the common religion. On the contrary, the common religion was able to incorporate a number of Buddhist and Daoist figures within its bounds, so that it was not uncommon in late imperial times and even today to find popular temples owned and operated by the community and offering traditional blood sacrifice as well as incense and paper money to figures like the Three Officers (*sanguan* 三官) and the Three Pures (*sanqing* 三清), the most traditional of Daoist deities, or to Guanyin 觀音, Jigong 濟公, and Yaoshi Rulai 藥師如來 from the Buddhist world. Thus Buddhist and Daoist figures could easily enter the popular pantheon and be accepted as members of an increasingly diverse and comprehensive sacred realm.

The Daoists, who had once sought to destroy temples to non-Daoist deities as demonic, took a major step toward accommodation of the (in their eyes) profane sacred realm by offering rites of cosmic renewal (*jiao* 醮 or *zhai* 齋) on behalf of specific popular deities. The net effect of this ritual innovation has been to establish Daoist priests as the highest rung of a hierarchy of religious professionals tending to the common pantheon. Today they perform rituals to their deities, at the same time confirming and reestablishing the local god in his position

[11] Even in this respect, Daoism made some early concessions. In the fifth-century *Master's Lu's Abridgement of the Daoist Code* we find allowances made for sacrifice to the ancestors and tutelary deities on certain limited dates during the year. See *Lu Xiansheng Daomenke lüe* (HY 1191), pp. 1a-b.

near the bottom of a shared sacred realm that extended from the Three Pures in the highest Daoist heaven all the way down to the lowliest house guardian or earth god.[12] They thus have come to offer the best, most elaborate, most expensive, and most effective rituals to profane deities whose worship they would have once sought to suppress. How the Daoists came to assume this position, and why representatives of the popular religion sought them out to fulfill this role will be the focus of the rest of this paper.

Song Accommodation

The focus of our inquiry is the Song dynasty. The Song was a period of great change, even against the backdrop of China's eventful history. Among the many political, social, and economic changes of the period, scholars have pointed to the expansion of the mercantile economy, the development of a national market, a growing trend of urbanization and an emerging urban scene, the monetarization of the economy aided by the invention of paper money, the widespread use of printing, the related growth in literacy, the rise of the examination system, and the resulting improved social mobility.

All this led to various transformations in the religious world of the Song, as well, but in assessing evidence from this period one must use care to sort out which records reflect a changed world and which reflect merely the vastly increased scope of surviving literary production. New genres of literature like notebooks and local gazetteers recorded events and opinions that once escaped recording and printing assured the survival of texts that once would have been

[12] Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, 206ff) has argued in an extended analysis of other people's research that there are other models of the jiao festival that do not involve subordination of the local god to the Daoist, but rather parallel Daoist and village rites going on simultaneously. Unfortunately, most of this is based on his own personal conception of what sort of spatial arrangements might constitute subordination, uninformed by any firsthand experience of the rite or any direct contact with participants. For example, when profane gods are relegated to a separate matshed off to the side of the main axis of the rite, he claims that this is a position of equality, but even a cursory study of ritual paintings will clearly show such a decentralized placement to be a marked inferior position. In each case he describes, the god of the temple is displaced from its place of honor, yet Hymes assumes that the audience has an understanding of the ritual as a meeting of parallel and equal rites that is unattested and at variance with all other scholarship simply because it provides a better fit to his thesis.

lost. Nonetheless, there were numerous innovations in religion at this time that altered the face of the Chinese religious world for all time.

One of the most significant developments was an expansion by the state in the granting of ennoblements to deities and in official names inscribed on commemorative plaques to temples.[13] This was certainly not a new process—it had been in use continuously since the Han if not earlier—but the Song seem to have practiced it more extensively and with more rigor than previous ages. Moreover, the range of deities enfeoffed was probably wider, including figures of Daoist and Buddhist origin and from diverse social backgrounds. Although these titles have been treated as having immense significance in the history of a cult, and they may indeed be significant in expanding elite support for the cult, in most cases these boons merely recognize the existing identity and influence of a cult. Their point is to enlist the aid of these local pockets of supernatural power and popular support, in aid of the dynasty. As such, they may not function as evidence of the central government's domination of the Chinese religious scene, but they do provide evidence of the existence and significance of local cults.[14] Through these grants of governmental recognition we can trace the rise to prominence and geographical spread of many popular cults.

A proliferation of new Daoist sectarian movements also characterized the Song, to the point that Michel Strickmann has written of the Song as a renaissance of Daoism.[15] A prominent force was a revived Celestial Master church,

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[13] On this process of ennoblement by the state, see Valerie Lynn Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[14] A caveat is appropriate here. Hymes has shown that the 1075 enfeoffment of the Two Perfected on Mount Huagai (or Mount Baogai, in Jiangxi province) occurred at the instigation of the central government and that local officials supplied the name of a cult that was well attested in historical documents but does not seem to have been significant (or even extant?) at the time. See Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China*, pp. 101-105.

[15] On Song Daoism and the proliferation of new movements see Michel Strickmann, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching," in *Facets of Taoism: Essays in Chinese Religion*, Welch & Seidel eds. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp.123-192; Judith Magee Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 1987); Lowell Skar, "Ritual Movements, Deity Cults and the Transformation of Taoism in Song and Yuan Times," in Livia Kohn ed., *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 413-463;

now based on Dragon and Tiger Mountain in Jiangxi. Although it is still unclear whether this movement is in fact, as they claim, a direct lineal descendent of the early Celestial Masters, it was widely recognized as such and proceeded to create a continuous history for itself. In Late Imperial times the Celestial Masters of the Zhang family functioned as the designated leaders of Daoism, sometimes sharing this role with the Complete Perfection movement, and served as something like a Daoist pope.[16]

The Shenxiao 神霄 or Divine Empyrean movement of Lin Lingsu 林靈素 (1076-1120) was also of considerable political significance, largely because of the support of Emperor Huizong, last emperor of the Northern Song, who was not only an adherent but had been convinced that he was himself the incarnation of a high deity associated with the movement. Other Song Daoist movements include the Celestial Heart movement centered on Mt. Huagai 華蓋山, the Way of Pure Brightness (Jingmingdao 淨明道) associated with Xu Xun 許遜, the Rites of Youthful Incipience (Tongchu 童初) promoted by Yang Xizhen 楊希真 (1101-1124), etc. The Complete Perfection (Quanzhen 全真) movement was founded in the late 12th century and although its political power developed only with Mongol sponsorship, it was undoubtedly the most successful new Daoist movement of the Song. In doctrine and iconography this movement borrowed from Buddhism and Confucianism, and they adopted a strict monasticism that was clearly inspired by Buddhism, but their rituals were more traditional.

Another important development for the Chinese religious world at this time was the appearance of a class of religious professionals who were not tied to the service of a single deity at a specific place, like a spirit medium, but also were not ordained into one of the institutionalized religions.[17] Such figures, sometime referred to as "ritual masters" (*fashi* 法師), wielded the newest sacred technology, from thunder rites to Tantric spells, to bring relief to a people concerned to

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Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2001).

[16] Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, p. 38.

[17] On the rise of the ritual master, see Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, but note the caveats expressed on the interpretation of certain passages related to this figure in Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China*, p. 287.

the point of obsession with demonic forces and nefast invasions. Ritual masters might be simultaneously ordained Daoist priests or Buddhist monks, but most were in practice highly syncretic, drawing from the domains of orthodox Daoist and Buddhist rites as well as various esoteric movements and traditional Chinese practices related to spirit possession.

To complete our list of spiritual "players" in the Song, we must mention the popular sectarian movements of the age. The Song was once thought to be the source of an esoteric White Lotus tradition of sectarian Buddhism that continued through much of Late Imperial China. Barend ter Haar (1992) shows that terminological confusion lies at the root of this understanding, but it is undeniable that the Song Buddhist movements were inspired by these early examples. These movements were often millenarian in character, looking forward to a series of natural and human disasters that would herald the advent or return of some divine figure who would set things right. Chikusa (1982) demonstrates that some of these sectarians were in fact Manichaeans but most were inspired by the esoteric doctrines of better established faiths like Buddhism and Daoism. To the degree that we can reconstruct their teachings, and on the basis of later parallels, we can assume that they were highly syncretic and tried to create a religion that would appeal to those faced with the plethora of religious choices available in the Song. We can also assume that most, despite this varied background of their teachings, were relatively exclusivist in encouraging their followers to eschew other religious practices and texts, focusing exclusively on their own. Thomas DuBois (2001) affirms that such sectarian groups can displace both the common religion and the institutionalized religions, becoming the sole significant faith in traditional communities. In this regard, we should also mention the possible persistence of traditionally organized Daoist communities, wherein all members above the age of seven held some form of ordination and elements of the common religion were severely limited if not banned.

In the midst of sweeping economic, political, social, and technological change, people of the Song were keenly interested in religious issues. This was a period of great religious innovation, but these rapid transformations did encounter a backlash. Neo-Confucianism, which was formulated during the Song and became a dominant force in Southern Song and later China, was in this context a

radical, fundamentalist force seeking to return to the religious conceptions and practices of ancient, pre-imperial China.[18] We must use great care in interpreting the statements made by representatives of this movement, who are disproportionately represented in standard historical sources.

A good example is the late Southern Song administrator Huang Zhen 黃震 (1213-1280), who during the 1270s governed the Fuzhou 撫州 prefecture in modern Jiangxi that Robert Hymes has studied so exhaustively. Huang came into a prefecture with a variety of religious forces at work, prominent among them the cult to the Two Perfected Wang and Guo 王郭二真人 and their teacher Earl Floatinghill 浮丘伯. These figures have Daoist-sounding names, and were the center of the Celestial Heart movement of Daoism, which rose to prominence at the end of the Northern Song. However, they were also the object of a popular cult at Flowered Canopy Mountain (Huagaishan 華蓋山) that seems to have originated around the end of the 11th century. As deities of the common religion, the Perfected and their teacher (since 1099 often identified as the Three Perfected) were especially known for control of rain and thunder (rather than Daoist concerns for longevity and posthumous salvation). When severe drought plagued Fuzhou, Huang Zhen had to decide whom to approach to resolve the problem. He did a survey of the religious establishments within his territory and found none that met his standards of orthodoxy.

Huang Zhen was a strict neo-Confucian, a follower of Zhu Xi 朱熹, who tried to live the life of the Ritual texts in the much more complex world of the Song. By his standards, the only really acceptable cults were those to Heaven and Earth and to prominent natural features like mountains and streams.[19] When

[18] In fact, the past to which they hoped to return does not correspond to any historical reality we can reconstruct today. It was, rather, an idealized world in which everyone followed the normative rules of the *Liji* and *Yili*, with each ruler and official making punctual and exact sacrifices to a clearly circumscribed list of state-sanctioned deities and the common people basically tending only to their ancestors.

[19] Huang does make occasional reference to an abstract higher power as "the creator of things" but more commonly to August Heaven (*huangtian* 皇天) or the Thearch on High (*shangdi* 上帝). Both are references to the August Heaven Thearch on High (*huangtian shangdi* 皇天上帝) that is invoked in the ritual texts as the supreme deity and was worshipped by the Han until 118 BCE. See Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China*, pp. 139-140.

invocations of the Thearch on High, pleading with him to command the dragons to make rain, proved ineffective, Huang had to choose among the less orthodox but more efficacious local cults.

There is in the classical canon a provision that allows the worship of historical personages who have made significant contributions to the public good. On this basis he was willing to offer cult to the Four Transcendents (*sixian* 四仙), a group of four historical figures who lived during the Han and Tang dynasties.[20] Two had in fact been local officials in the area and the other two were recorded in standard historical works. The immortal gods of Flowered Canopy, who were wholly unrecorded in secular literature, were snubbed in both their popular and Daoist guises, though their cult was certainly more flourishing and had a reputation for special efficacy in matters related to rain.[21] Moreover, in making offering to the Four Transcendents, Huang expresses the conviction that they are wrongly identified and are in fact merely nature spirits. Hence they are a wholly appropriate object of sacrifice for a local official, who sees himself as the counterpart of a classical feudal lord: "…in my humble opinion, [the Four Transcendents] represent nothing other than the spiritually efficacious marvels of the gods of the mountains and rivers."[22] There is very little in the Song religious world that meets the standard of orthodoxy propounded by men like Huang, but we can assume that they were quite few in number. Otherwise they would not have attracted so much attention as isolated cases and would instead have had a more substantial impact on the Song religious world.

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[20] The Four Transcendents are Luan Ba 欒巴 and Mei Fu 梅福 of the Han and Ye Fashan 葉法善 and Deng Sihuan 鄧思璠 of the Tang. See Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China*, pp. 134-143.

[21] In this interpretation I differ from Hymes, who sees in Huang Zhen's actions a reaction against a grand trend toward elite involvement in local issues in opposition to the central government. Huang's actions can all be explained by his admitted allegiance to Zhu Xi's doctrines and we can be confident he would have eschewed worship of the wholly unsubstantiated (in his terms) cult to the Huagai gods whatever his relations with the local elite. This is clearly preferable to resort to a vague "spirit of the age" that is nowhere confirmed in original documents and seems to be demarcated by the beginning and ending dates of the Zhao family's rule of China.

[22] Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China*, p. 142.

Huang Zhen's intolerant attitude toward the religion around him sets him apart, but he resembles other men of the Song in one respect: he is bewildered and suspicious about the welter of gods that confront him and wants a single standard that makes sense of it all. I believe this was also the motivation behind those who sought a merged common pantheon that would bring together nature gods, divinized dead humans, transcendents, and the transcendent figures of Daoism and Buddhism. Below I consider in more detail exactly what was entailed in creating and maintaining this common pantheon.

A Comprehensive Pantheon

Although there are post-Song pictorial representation of the merged pantheon none date from the Song. We do, however, find documents that represent this new worldview. Works on morality are good examples, like the *Tract of the Most High on Actions and their Responses* (*Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇), the *Transcendent Lord of Grand Tenuity's Chart of Merits and Demerits* (*Taiwei xiangong gongguoge* 太微仙公功過格), or perhaps the *Text on the Hidden Administration* (*Yinzhiwen* 陰騭文) associated with Wenchang.[23] These texts promote a moral code that is highly syncretic, drawing values from the classics as well as Buddhist and Daoist scripture and addressing issues of concern to a wide range of Chinese society, from officials to peasants.

Another significant genre consists of hagiographies of deities who possess identities in both Daoism and the common religion. Examples of this type of text are the *Book of Transformations of Wenchang* (also known as the *Book of Transformations of the Divine Lord of Zitong* 梓潼帝君化書) and the *Register of Holy Revelations by the Thearch on High of the Mysterious Heavens* (*Xuantian shangdi qishenglu* 玄天上帝啟聖錄). Here we see figures who hold celestial office yet take on human form and involve themselves directly in the administration of this world in order to promote moral transformation.

[23] On these texts and the rise of the genre of morality books see Cynthia Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991). The *Text on the Hidden Administration* is sometimes dated as early as the Song, but is no later than the end of the Yuan.

What do such texts tell us about deities of the common religion who cross over into the Daoist pantheon? What about the process by which the came to have Daoist or Buddhist identities? To answer these questions, we need to consider again the nature of deity in pre-Song China.

Chinese gods were seldom simple, single-dimensional creatures with one specialized ability, a single name, and one sacred spot. Gods that survived long enough to appear in written sources had outlasted the competition in their native places, and garnered enough good will from important people to have a stable source of financial and human support. Moreover, since the god's identity (appearance, life history, attributes, specializations) tends to appeal to a specific segment of the popular, the more successful deities developed a multifaceted identity so as to appeal to multiple segments of the home community.

For example, a common cult is to a military figure who died in battle or in some other anomalous way. His military prowess during life and his valiant death assure him a good measure of *ling* or supernatural power that can be turned to answering a variety of requests. We can assume that prominent among his supplicants will be soldiers, local martial arts groups charged less formally with defending the village and its interests, merchants who want a strong enforcer of oaths, and villagers worried about external attack by evil forces. The cult is, however, unlikely to draw long-term literati adherents unless the god can be identified as a "real" historical figure whose worship is sanctioned in the *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記). In the Zitong cult, the god began as a snake, by the Tang had been identified as a soldier who died defending his home, and in the Song appeared as an official who had served both the secular and divine administrations under a variety of names.

For most cults, it was important to secure elite support in order grow beyond local boundaries. The elite were far from all skeptical, secular humanists, and many had a deep and abiding interest in the supernatural and the uncanny; certainly many feared the effects of malefic demonic influences that caused disease and misfortune. If they felt threatened, they might turn for protection to any god that had a reputation for efficacy. But in the long term they must have gravitated naturally to deities with a reputation for addressing the interests of the literati. They would surely feel more comfortable with a deity who dressed like the

educated elite and was occupied with the production, digestion, and transmission of documents like any good official. Cults that could present their god as a celestial official sharing the values and concerns of the literati fare better in these circumstances.

Why the Song?

The ebb and flow of deity cults as they spring into existence, survive or suffer repression, expand their clientele, and expand into neighboring regions—did not begin in the Song. The classical texts would have us believe that village religious life in Warring States China, at least, was very simple, but recently excavated texts reveal a world of startling diversity, filled with a wide variety of gods and demons that had to be solicited in different ritualized ways. Marianne Bujard (1997, 2000) shows clear evidence of enfeofment of local cults in the Han, and even some that have expanded beyond their original place to influence an entire region. Even the association of popular cults with institutionalized religion was not new. Schipper (1985) reveals that the Xu Xun cult already had gained a place for their founder in Daoism. What was new about the Song?

One reason we find so many new religious developments in the Song is that, thanks to the spread of printing and the expansion of literacy, we have for the Song much more information, and qualitatively different information from a wider variety of sources in new genres, recording more places and more types of people. This wider net inevitably draws in more information on the pervasive influence of religious conceptions and practices on the society.

Still, I have to concede that there seems to be more such activity in the Song, and this can certainly be related to the socio-economic developments the increased rate of travel, improved communications, etc. One important variable is the development of the examination system and the new demands that put on many literati to participate in a nationwide examination culture. Liao (2001) points out that literati interest in these cults was in part a response to the increased pressure from the exams, but grew out of real pious devotion to the dei-

ties and was contingent upon the development of new deities specializing in such matters.

Liao points out that the majority of gods that gained a reputation for efficacy in predicting the results (or the content) of the examination were drawn from the pantheon of the common religion rather than those of Buddhism or Daoism. Even so, examination gods were numerous and they often disappeared from the scene as quickly as they arose.[24] Moreover, the reason for turning to popular deities was no doubt that the questions asked were improper, hence the resort to gods who might be thought more susceptible to the suasion of rich offerings,[25] but this was a two-edged sword. The exams were, after all, directly tied to the emperor and thought to be a closely guarded secret in Heaven as on earth. There was a question as to how low-level deities might have access to this information.

Further, this was the age of the expansion of morality and it was widely assumed that worldly success was conditioned on proper moral conduct. Success on the examinations, then, should be available only to those whose conduct was exemplary. For these reasons, the most successful examination gods, those who might survive even when a change in political geography meant they were no longer well-situated to host candidates for the examinations, were those that transcended their popular origins and developed more complex identities that could be seen as reinforcing rather than subverting moral standards. The examination system was thus a powerful stimulus to the development of more sophisticated popular deities with clear moral vision and ties to institutionalized religion.

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[24] Liao cites the example of the cult to the Two Ministers (*erxianggong*) in Kaifeng, which was a major center of examination-related piety in the Northern Song but played no role in the Southern Song.

[25] Robert P. Weller ("Bandits, Beggars, and Ghosts: The Failure of State Control over Religious Interpretation in Taiwan," in Morton Klass & Maxine Weisgrau eds., *Across the Boundaries of Belief: Contemporary Issues in the Anthropology of Religion*, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999, pp. 271-290) has shown how specific deities might attract greater attention precisely because of the non-orthodox status.

The system of government titles and temple plaques that grew so rapidly during the Song was another factor pushing gods of the common religion toward more exalted identities linked to the institutionalized religions. Gods hoping to receive such an honor had to fit criteria, set forth in the classics, for those who had made significant contributions to the community. This resulted in the creation of new or transformed identities for local gods that fit the model promoted by the governing elite of gods as promoters of morality and protectors of the political weal. This led to an expansion of the number of sophisticated, complex deities focused on literati concerns, and these gods were prime candidates for assimilation by Buddhism and Daoism.[26]

One other factor deserves consideration. Hymes has shown that in the Huagai cult much of the innovation in both the common and Daoist sides of the cult occur in the 12th century, at the beginning of the Southern Song. The reign of Emperor Huizong 宋徽宗, which ended the Northern Song, was a period of great religious innovation. Huizong was a devoted Daoist, patron of many Daoist movements, and promoter of Daoist deities above those of the populace, the state, or Buddhism. He banned several major popular cults and ordered many popular temples closed which forced local cults to find refuge in Buddhist and Daoist establishments. He then closed all Buddhist temples and remaining shrines and ordered everyone, gods and religious professionals, to convert to Daoism.[27]

Although this edict did not remain in force for long, its influence was profound. Many popular cults had survived only under the protection of a Daoist priest or Buddhist monk, and this relationship did not disappear immediately once the prohibition on popular cults was lifted. Moreover, I would like to suggest that many pious believers took Huizong's edicts seriously. He claimed that popular gods were profane because they accepted blood sacrifice, and ordered then all renamed Perfected Lords and approached only through the austere, sac-

[26] Consider, for example, the cult to Xu Xun that developed into the Pure and Bright Way of Loyalty and Filiality (Jingming zhongxiao dao 淨明忠孝道). The espousal of cardinal virtues like loyalty and filial piety shows the common interests of such movements and the states in promoting a morality that is demanded by both the state and Daoist establishments.

[27] Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, p. 37 and 61.

rifice-free rituals of Daoism. We hear of gods who protested this innovation and demanded a return to their meaty diet so that their spiritual efficacy (*ling* 靈) might be restored, but the influence on believers must have been profound. Even after the popular temples were re-established, many must have viewed them with suspicion and sought for a higher identity for local gods more in tune with the ethical standards of the Daoists. Such followers would welcome texts that reveal a more exalted Daoist (or Buddhist) identity to their local god.

Conclusion

The mature Chinese religious world that emerged during the Song remains the norm in Chinese communities both in China and around the world. The common religion survives and thrives, adapting to new circumstances and producing new gods or reinventing old ones to meet new challenges. Daoists maintain their distinct pantheon and perform rituals on the local level that incorporate the local god into the Daoist universe, at the same time symbolically subordinating him or her to the universal sway of the Dao. Gods have multiple identities to appeal to various constituencies but the most prominent often have a Daoist or Buddhist reflex that, though low in the hierarchy, gives them a foothold in the realm of the institutionalized religions and facilitates interaction with professional priests who oversee large-scale ritual to the god.

This situation is the result of changes centering on the Song, and especially the 12th century, when a number of gods from the common pantheon asserted Daoist identities through revelations and other textual sources. These changes were facilitated by the rapid economic development and societal transformations during the Song. They are also the product of a rising concern with moral conduct, an expanding program of government ennoblements that encouraged redefinition of local cults in moralistic terms, the profusion of new sacred technologies such as spirit writing that expanded communication between commoners and the gods, the rise of the examination culture and its focus on supernatural aid as key to success, and the religious reforms of Emperor Huizong, which had a lasting effect on the Chinese religious world.