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The heavenly court: a study on the Iconopraxis of Daoist temple painting

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THE HEAVENLY COURT

A Study on the Iconopraxis of Daoist Temple Painting

Lennert Gesterkamp

PhD Dissertation

Leiden University

The Heavenly Court: A Study on the Iconopraxis of Daoist Temple Painting

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Abstract

The Heavenly Court
A Study on the Iconopraxis of Daoist Temple Painting

Lennert Gesterkamp

For more than two thousand years, the Chinese have imagined paradise as an imperial court situated in heaven where celestial officials, similar to their terrestrial counterparts, govern and decide over the affairs of the human world. The traditional Chinese name for paintings depicting this Heavenly Court, *chaoyuan tu* 朝元圖 ("paintings of an audience with the origin"), reveals the close link with the core element of Daoist liturgy, the *chao* 朝-audience ritual, which consists of addressing deities with written memorials in a visualised heavenly court audience. The wall paintings found in the main ritual hall of a Daoist temple complex or the hanging scroll-paintings on an open-air altar exactly depict this heavenly court audience, and the paintings are therefore a visual representation of the practice of the *chao*-audience ritual. This focus on viewing images as a representation of practice rather than for example style, symbolic meaning, language, or social relationships, is a methodology I have devised and termed iconopraxis.

This study investigates the iconopraxis of four complete sets of Heavenly Court paintings – the Yongle gong murals, the so-called Toronto murals in the Royal Ontario Museum, the Nan'an murals, and the Beiyue miao murals – all wall paintings dating to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and aims to explain how Daoist ritual and related practices inform the particular layout and representation of these Heavenly Court painting.

After a historical survey outlining the development of Heavenly Court painting from the fifth century to the present and providing an inventory of extant materials and related sources on these images, I demonstrate in the first chapter that Daoist Heavenly Court paintings are an elaboration on a traditional, indigenous theme in Chinese pictorial art, the *chao*-audience theme. Before the emergence of the first Heavenly Court paintings and sculptures in the fifth century, the same format is witnessed in the so-called homage scenes of the Later Han dynasty in the second century AD, in Buddhist donor scenes, and in tomb

procession scenes. I argue that these various scenes are in fact different representations of the same practice of the *chao*-audience ritual. The *chao*-audience theme, primarily because the *chao*-audience ritual also formed the main element of Daoist liturgy, was then adopted in the depiction of Daoist Heavenly Court paintings.

In the second chapter, I demarcate the ritual foundations of Heavenly Court paintings that provided the conceptual framework on which painters based their composition. The conceptual framework consists of a left-right division (i.e. east and west) on the walls of a temple hall; an arrangement in three tiers of an altar mound and the so-called Six Curtains; a division into the Three Realms of Heaven, Earth and Water; a Northwest-Southeast axis; and an arrangement of the Eight Trigrams.

The third chapter deals with practical matters of murals production, explaining how the social organisation and working procedures of the wall painters in early modern China determined the design of a Heavenly Court painting. The use of preparatory drawings in the design of Heavenly Court, of which several examples have survived, demonstrates the close overlap between design and the construction of a ritual area with hanging-scroll paintings, resulting in either a loose, joined, or integrated design which in turn provides potent clues on the quality of the painting workshop and eventually on the price of a Heavenly Court painting.

The fourth and final chapter explains how Heavenly Court paintings are "personalised" to fit the wishes of the patrons, accounting for many of the irregularities and differences among the four versions under discussion. The personalisations of the patrons, chiefly Daoist priests or the religious community as a whole, pertain to the inclusion of irregular deities or portraits or semi-historical figures, or to the conscious adoption of a particular ritual format linking the site to a certain liturgical tradition. Such personalisations have invariably distinct political connotations and reflect the interests of the religious community on a local level or the high-minded ideals and aspirations of the Daoist patrons on a more national level.

Lastly, a conclusion summaries the most important results of the study and provides suggestions for future research. The appendix contains a discussion of the historical background and a detailed iconographical analysis of the four Heavenly Court paintings of this study.

Samenvatting

Het Hemelhof

Een studie naar de iconopraxis van daoïstische tempelschilderingen

Lennert Gesterkamp

Al meer dan tweeduizend jaar stellen de Chinezen het paradijs voor als een keizerlijk hof in de hemel waar hemelse bureaucraten over de mensenwereld regeren, net zoals hun evenknieën op aarde. De traditionele Chinese naam voor de schildervoorstellingen van een Hemelhof, *chaoyuan tu* 朝元圖 ("schilderijen van een audiëntie bij de oorsprong"), tonen het nauwe verband aan van de voorstellingen met het kernelement van de daoïstische liturgie, het *chao* 朝-audiëntie ritueel, dat bestaat uit het aanschrijven van goden door middel van petities tijdens een gevisualiseerde hofaudiëntie in de hemel. De muurschilderingen in de centrale rituele hal van een tempelcomplex of de hangende rolschilderingen op een openlucht altaar beelden precies dit hemelhof uit, en de schilderingen zijn daarom een visuele representatie van de praktijk van een *chao*-audiëntie ritueel. Deze nadruk op het aanschouwen van afbeeldingen als een representatie van een praktijk, anders dan bijvoorbeeld als een representatie van schilderstijl, symbolische betekenissen, taal, of sociale verhoudingen, is een methodologie van mijn hand die ik iconopraxis heb genoemd.

Deze studie is een onderzoek naar de iconopraxis van vier complete sets Hemelhofschilderingen – de Yongle gong muurschilderingen, de zogenaamde Toronto muurschilderingen in het Royal Ontario Museum, de Nan'an muurschilderingen, en de Beiyue miao muurschilderingen – uit de dertiende en de veertiende eeuw, en heeft ten doel te verklaren hoe het daoïstische ritueel en aanverwante praktijken de compositie en representatie van deze Hemelhofschilderingen bepalen.

Na een historisch overzicht dat de ontwikkeling van Hemelhofschilderingen van de vijfde eeuw tot heden aangeeft en een inventaris opmaakt van bestaande materialen en verwante bronnen omtrent deze afbeeldingen, toon ik in het eerste hoofdstuk aan dat daoïstische Hemelhofschilderingen voortborduren op een traditioneel, oorspronkelijk thema in de Chinese beeldkunst, het *chao*-audiëntie thema. Voor de verschijning van de eerste

Hemelhofschilderingen en –sculpturen in de vijfde eeuw was hetzelfde formaat al bekend in de zogenaamde hommagescènes in de tweede eeuw AD van de Late Han dynastie, in de boeddhistische donorscènes, en in processiescènes in graftombes. Ik beweer dat de verscheidene scènes in feite verschillende representaties zijn van dezelfde praktijk van het *chao*-audiëntie ritueel. Met name omdat het *chao*-audiëntie ritueel ook het centrale element in de daoïstische liturgie vormde, werd uiteindelijk het *chao*-audiëntie thema ook in gebruik genomen om daoïstische Hemelhofschilderingen af te beelden.

In het tweede hoofdstuk markeer ik de rituele fundamenten van Hemelhofschilderingen, die een conceptueel raamwerk opleveren waarop de schilders hun compositie baseerden. Het conceptuele raamwerk bestaat uit een verdeling in links en rechts (d.w.z. oost en west) op de muren van een tempelhal; een indeling in de drie lagen van een altaarheuvel en de zogenaamde Zes Gordijnen; een verdeling in the Drie Sferen van Hemel, Aarde, en Water; een noordwest-zuidoost as; en een indeling volgens de Acht Trigrammen.

Het derde hoofdstuk behandelt de praktische kant van de productie van muurschilderingen, en verklaart hoe de sociale organisatie en werkprocedures van muurschilderaars in vroegmodern China het ontwerp van een Hemelhofschildering bepaalden. Het gebruik van voorbereidende tekeningen met betrekking tot het ontwerp van een Hemelhofschildering, waarvan verscheidene voorbeelden bewaard zijn gebleven, tonen de grote samenhang tussen ontwerp en de constructie van een rituele ruimte met hangende rolschilderingen, welke typen in een los, samengevoegd, of geïntegreerd ontwerp kunnen worden ingedeeld. Deze typen ontwerpen kunnen een goede indicatie geven over de kwaliteit van het schildersatelier en uiteindelijk van de prijs van een Hemelhofschildering.

Het vierde en laatste hoofdstuk verklaart hoe Hemelhofschilderingen werden "gepersonaliseerd" om aan de wensen van de opdrachtgevers te voldoen. Deze aanpassingen resulteerden in de vele onregelmatigheden in en verschillen tussen de vier muurschilderingen van het huidige onderzoek. De personalisaties van de opdrachtgever, hoofdzakelijk bestaande uit daoïstische priesters of de religieuze gemeenschap in zijn geheel, hebben betrekking op het invoegen van ongewone goden of portretten van semi-historische figuren, of op het bewust toepassen van een bepaalde rituele compositie, die de locatie van de tempel verbindt met een zekere liturgische traditie. Zulke personalisaties hebben vaak specifieke politieke connotaties, die de belangen weerspiegelen van een religieuze gemeenschap op het lokale niveau of de hoge idealen en aspiraties van daoïstische opdrachtgevers op een meer nationaal niveau.

Een conclusie vat tenslotte the belangrijkste resultaten van het onderzoek samen en geeft enkele suggesties voor toekomstig onderzoek. De appendix bevat een discussie van de

historische achtergrond en een gedetailleerde iconografische analyse van de vier Hemelhofschilderingen van dit onderzoek.

To Yuan, Jan, and Luc

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 13

Introduction 15

Temple painting 16

Daoist art 20

Iconopraxis 23

1 History and Development 29

1.1 Four phases 29

Early Phase, 400-700 30

Transitional Phase, 700-1000 36

Middle Phase, 1000-1400 48

Late Phase, 1400-present 63

1.2 Development of the *chao*-audience theme 71

Homage scene 71

Donor scene 73

Tomb procession scene 81

Heavenly Court paintings 84

2 Ritual Foundations 88

2.1 The *chao*-audience ritual 90

Court ritual and Daoist liturgy 90

Development and sequence 93

Fusion 100

2.2 Paintings in altar setting 103

Layout and development 104

Jiao-*offering lists and memorial lists* 114

Increase of the ritual pantheon 117

Altar and temple space 121

Viewers 122

Ritual function 123
2.3 Cosmology 127
Cosmological division 128
The Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Water 131
The NW-SE axis 133
The Eight Trigrams 134

3 Mural Production 139
3.1 Painting workshop 139
Organisation 140
Painting procedures 145
3.2 Drawings 154
Sketches 156
Designs 159
3.3 Mural design 164
Loose design 165
Joined design 165
Integrated design 169

4 Personalisation 173
4.1 Yongle gong 173
Patronage 173
The number of central deities 176
Incorporation of non-standard deities 179
4.2 Toronto murals 184
Daoist priest as central deity 184
Ritual configuration 187
4.3 Nan'an 191
Basic ritual format 191
De-emphasis of imperial figures 194
4.4 Beiyue miao 198
Irregular elements 199
Archaic model 203

Conclusion 214
Iconopraxis 214
Heavenly Court paintings 215
Painting and ritual 219
Wall paintings and their techniques 221
Patrons and personalisation 225

Appendix 231
1 Iconographic Description 232
1.1 Yongle gong 232
Temple history and layout 232
Scholarship 236
Iconography 239
1.2 Toronto murals 251
Scholarship 251
Iconography 254
1.3 Nan'an 257
Temple history and layout 257
Scholarship 258
Iconography 259
1.4 Beiyue miao 262
Temple history and layout 262
Scholarship 266
Iconography 273
2 Tables 286
2.1 Yongle gong deities 287
2.2 Paintings of Daoist deities in the *Xuanhe huapu* 302
2.3 Mural workshops in Shanxi province, ca. 1100-1400 306

List of Illustrations 309
Bibliography 321
Pictures 360
Curriculum Vitae 424

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Introduction

A Daoist Heavenly Court painting, in Chinese often referred to as a *chaoyuan tu* 朝元圖,[1] is a representation of Daoist paradise and visualised as a court audience of celestial officials governing over the human world of affairs. The theme of the court audience (*chao* 朝) exists since at least the second century AD in Chinese pictorial art and the Daoist Heavenly Court is an elaboration of this theme that probably emerged in the fifth century. Although sculpted versions also exist, the theme figures mainly as paintings decorating a Daoist ritual area, thus found either as wall paintings in the main hall of a Daoist temple complex or as hanging scroll paintings surrounding a Daoist altar. The close connection between the composition, contents and representation of a Heavenly Court painting on the one hand, and the ritual area and Daoist liturgy, which central act also consists of a court audience (also called *chao* 朝) but in a court in heaven, on the other poses us for a range of questions on the relationship and interplay between the two and on the way painters and patrons operated in this creative process and how they influenced its outcome. In order to answer these questions, I will advance a new methodology for viewing and investigating images, a methodology which I call iconopraxis and which sees an image as a representation of an accustomed practice, in our case the practice of the *chao*-audience ritual.

This study will focus on four sets of Heavenly Court paintings from four different temples, but which are, or were, all located in northern China and datable to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries:

1. Yongle Gong (Palace of Eternal Joy) 永樂宮, located in Ruicheng 芮城, southwestern Shanxi 山西 province; dated by inscription to 1325.

[1] *chaoyuan tu* 朝元圖 literally means "painting of an audience with the origin" and is the standard term to designate this type of painting in modern Chinese sources. However, many variations with *chao* or "audience ritual" exist in traditional sources to designate the same type of painting, another common term is for example *chaozhen tu* 朝真圖 or "painting of an audience with truth." In these various terms, the *chao* is the defining element and I have therefore opted for the more general translation of "Heavenly Court" because of this divine imperial court's location in heaven rather than on earth.

2. The so-called Toronto murals, originally from a unknown location in the Pingyang 平陽 area in central Shanxi province but now on display in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto; datable to the first half of the thirteenth century.
3. Nan An 南安 (Southern Hermitage), located in Yaoxian 耀縣, central Shaanxi 陝西 province; datable to the late Yuan dynasty (1260-1368).
4. Beiyue Miao (Northern Peak Temple) 北嶽廟, located in Quyang 曲陽, central Hebei 河北 province; datable to 1270.

For a detailed discussion of the history, scholarship, iconography and layout of these four sets of wall paintings as well as for questions on their date and original location, I refer to Appendix 1. Other known representations of the Heavenly Court, in stone and in hanging scroll paintings and mostly dating from other periods, will serve as supplementary material.

In this introduction I will further elaborate on the state of the field with regard to the study of temple painting and that of Daoist art which both constitute rather new disciplines in Chinese art history, and present a theoretical foundation for my methodology of iconopraxis.

Temple painting

Temple painting, i.e. wall paintings in temples in contrast to those in caves or tombs, is a largely understudied subject in Chinese art history, and its research is still in a very early stage.

Relatively few temple paintings survive and most of them date to the last six hundred years. Although data are lacking on the precise number of temple paintings in China, a general survey conducted on my side would suggest that hardly none survive from the pre-1000 period, about two dozen for the period up to 1400, another hundred or so from 1400 to 1600, and several hundreds after that until 1900.[2] These temple paintings are generally found in North China, such as the provinces Hebei, Shanxi, and Shaanxi, where they have survived mainly for climatological reasons; the timber frame buildings that house the wall paintings survive better in the dry north than in the humid south. This is of course not to say that South China had no tradition in wall painting. Most of these have simple not withstood the test of time.

The present situation is however not representative for the past, because it is certain that before 1900 the number of temple paintings was far greater than at the present moment.

[2] These estimates are based on numbers of temple paintings mentioned in Chai Zejun 柴澤君, *Shanxi siguan bihua* 山西寺觀壁畫. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1997, and Wang Hui 王煇 , "Hebei sheng xianzai siguan bihua de fenbu yu ticai 河北省現在寺觀的分佈 與題材. " *Wenwu chunqiu* 文物春秋 6 (2006), pp. 37-42, and references to temple paintings in other sources or personal investigations in the field.

The small number of extant temple paintings, beside climatological reasons, can almost entirely be attributed to the political vicissitudes of the twentieth century, first the state policy of "destroying temples in order to build schools" (*pomiao banxue* 破廟辦學) from 1900 to 1937, then the Second World War with Japan, and after 1949 the anti-religious policies of the Communist Party and the Cultural Revolution. According to estimates made in recent research, around 1900 China still counted about one million temples; one hundreds years later, only a few thousands temples have left.[3] Although not all temples, a considerable amount of these temples would have had wall paintings. With a drop of almost one hundred percent, this means that Chinese temple culture has almost been completely extinguished in the twentieth century, and with it a Chinese temple painting tradition going back at least two thousand years.[4]

In China, research on temple painting began in the second half of the twentieth century, mostly in tandem with the preservation and renovation projects on temples that were initiated in that period, leading to the publication of numerous articles in Chinese journals and a series of luxurious, large-size picture albums.[5] The Yongle gong is probably the most publicised temple in this respect. Its "discovery" on the northern riverbank of the Yellow River in southern Shanxi province, its relocation and rebuilding brick-for-brick in Ruicheng, the three halls with sumptuous murals - making it the temple with the largest surface of murals in

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[3] Vincent Goossaert, "Le destin de la religion chinoise au 20ème siècle." *Social Compass* 50.4 (2003), pp. 429-440; and idem, *The Taoists of Peking, 1800-1949: A Social History of Urban Clerics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007, pp. 62-66.

[4] The earliest textual references to temple paintings date to the Han dynasty, such as the religious wall paintings at the Palace of Sweet Spring ordered by Emperor Wu of the Han (r. 147-87 BC). See *Shi ji* 史記, by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145–86 BC). Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1994, j. 12, p. 458. See also Jin Weinuo 金維諾, "Qin Han shidai de bihua 秦漢時代的壁畫." *Wenwu* 文物 1 (1980), pp. 15-21; Jin Weinuo 金維諾, "Zhongguo gudai siguan bihua." *Zhongguo meishu quanji* 中國美術全集*, Huihua bian* 繪畫編 *13, Siguan bihua* 寺觀壁畫. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988, pp. 1-40; and Jin Weinuo 金維諾, "Siyuan bihua de kaocha yu yanjiu 寺院壁畫的考察與研究." *Wenwu* 文物 4 (1998), pp. 39-52.

[5] For the large photo-albums, see for example the Shanxi sheng wenwu guanli gongzuo weiyuanhui 山西省文物管理工作委員會 (ed.), *Yongle gong* 永樂宮. Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1964; Beijing shi Fahai si wenwu baoguansuo 北京市法海寺文物保管所 (ed.), *Fahai si bihua* 法海寺壁畫. Beijing: Zhongguo lüyou chubanshe, 1993; Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*; Jin Weinuo 金維諾 (ed.), *Yongle gong bihua quanji* 永樂宮壁畫全集. Tianjin: Tianjin renmin meishu chubanshe, 1997; Jin Weinuo 金維諾 (ed.), *Zhongguo diantang bihua quanji* 中國殿堂壁畫全集, Vol. 3, *Yuandai daoguan* 元代道觀. Taiyuan: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1997; Kang Dianfeng 康殿峰 (ed.), *Pilu si qun hua* 毗盧寺群畫. Shijiazhuang: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 1998. Recently, also many temple paintings have been reproduced in series of less expensive photo-albums or booklets, for example in the series of *Zhongguo siguan bihua dianzang* 中國寺觀壁畫典藏 edited by Jin Weinuo and published in 2000-2001, and in *Lishi siguan bihua yishu* 歷史寺觀壁畫藝術, edited by Pin Feng 品豐 and Su Qing 蘇慶 published in 2000. Numerous small articles have appeared in *Wenwu* 文物 and in provincial journals on cultural relics and archaeology over the last few decades, the most relevant of which will be dealt with later in this study.

China -, is all well documented.[6] The Nan'an and Beiyue miao murals are much less well known, and the Beiyue miao murals still have not been published beside some small, very mediocre photographs. Many temples, mostly from the Ming and Qing dynasties however have remained unstudied and unpublished, and only in recent years these temples begin to attract some scholarly attention, albeit it only in China.

The situation of the study of Chinese temple paintings in the West has a different history. In the first half of the twentieth century, a small selection of the temple paintings was sold to art dealers, or cut from their walls by Japanese soldiers, and eventually ended up in North American museums, where they became the subject of some avid western scholarship.[7] This scholarship was however was mainly focused on their provenance, dating, painters, and iconography. Among these temple paintings, the set of Heavenly Court paintings in the Royal Ontario Museum are among the most published and discussed temple paintings in western scholarship. Despite the publication of the Yongle gong murals, which sparked some interest among western art historians, particularly because they were dated, signed and from the same period and the same Shanxi area as many of the temple paintings in the North American museums, western scholarship has thus far not been able to integrate temple painting in the discourse of Chinese painting history.[8]

The main reason for the seeming lack of interest on the part of the western scholar for Chinese temple paintings is their inaccessibility. Many of the surviving temple paintings are located in remote areas – a feature also contributing to their survival – which have for a long time been closed to foreigners. It is only after the relaxation of the anti-religious policies

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[6] The eighth *Wenwu* issue of 1963 was dedicated in its entirety to the history, architecture, and wall paintings of the Yongle gong. Much additional information can found in the modern local gazetteer of Ruicheng where the Yongle gong was rebuilt, Ruicheng xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 芮城縣誌編纂委員會 (ed.), *Ruicheng xianzhi* 芮城縣志. Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1994.

[7] William C. White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes: A Study of Three Wall-paintings of the Thirteenth Century.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1940; Nancy Steinhardt, "Zhu Haogu Reconsidered: A New Date for the ROM Painting and the Southern Shanxi Buddhist-Daoist Style." *Artibus Asiae* 48 (1987), pp. 5-38; Ka Bo Tsang, "Further Observations on the Yuan Wall Painter Zhu Haogu and the Relationship of the Chunyang Hall Wall Paintings to "The Maitreya Paradise" at the ROM." *Artibus Asiae* 52 (1992), pp. 94-118; Michelle Baldwin, "Monumental Wall Paintings of the Assembly of the Buddha From Shanxi Province: Historiography, Iconography, Three Styles, and a New Chronology." *Artibus Asiae* 54 (1994), pp. 241-267; and Marilyn Gridley, "Images from Shanxi of Tejaprabha's Paradise." *Archives of Asian Art* 51 (1998-1999), pp. 7-15. Anning Jing wrote a PhD dissertation on the Yongle gong Heavenly Court, Anning Jing, "Yongle Palace: The Transformation of the Daoist Pantheon During the Yuan Dynasty (1260-1368)." PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1994.

[8] One of the earliest publication on temple painting in the west was Laurence Sickman, "Wall-Paintings of the Yüan Period in Kuang-sheng-Ssu, Shansi." *Revue des arts asiatiques* 2.2 (1937), pp. 53-67. One of the most recent contributions in the west, on the same temple paintings, is is Anning Jing, *The Water God's Tempel of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual, & Theater*. Leiden: Brill, 2002. For a review of this work, see my critical appraisal in *T'oung Pao* 90.4-5 (2004), pp. 459-467.

under Deng Xiaoping in the 1980's, which was also the period when many temples were renovated and turned into museums, that the temples became accessible to the general public.

Another possible reason for the little enthusiasm generated by Chinese temple painting among western (and Chinese) scholars may be the traditional, biased Chinese view on painting, which they undeliberately incorporated in their writings. This view differentiates between "literati painting" (*wenren hua* 文人畫) and "professional painting" (*gongren hua*). Because temple paintings are done by workshop painters on commission it was automatically classified as "professional painting" and therefore inferior to "literati painting," which was considered individualistic and self-expressive.[9] This distinction came only into being with the rise of a literati-class in the Song dynasty (960-1279), and because our main sources on painting are written by these literati, it is no surprise to find that from the mid-Song onward, hardly any information is found on temple painting or their painters, who thus have been tacitly deleted from the written historical record.

Worthy of note is that in writings on painting up to the mid-Song, temple painting and their painters took pride of place, while the enthusiasm for scroll painting – the favourite medium of the later literati artists – was less well pronounced.[10] From the mid-Song onward, the situation was inversed. Intriguingly, the situation sketched by the written record seems to be reflected in the present situation in the field: on the one hand we have a vast array of tomb paintings and cave paintings, in particular the Mogao 莫高 cave paintings near Dunhuang 敦煌 in Gansu province which form a magnificent painting gallery in the desert sands spanning a period of a thousand years from 400 to 1400,[11] while a limited number of scroll paintings survive from the pre-Song period, and on the other hand we have from the Song onward a large collection of scroll paintings at our disposal while hardly no temple paintings seem to exist for this period. The present situation thus seems to corroborate the findings of the written record, with the result that we can read in many modern survey studies on the history of Chinese painting exactly this history sketched by the literati record.[12] The four Heavenly

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[9] See Susan Bush, *The Chinese Literati on Painting: Su Shih (1037-1101) to Tung Ch'i-ch'ang (1555-1636)*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971.

[10] Before the tenth century, hanging scroll painting were not common and only vertical handscroll paintings were used. In addition, the primary medium for scroll paintings before the tenth century was silk, which was very expensive. Paper became only more common in the Song dynasty.

[11] For the Mogao cave paintings, see Roderick Whitfield, *Dunhuang, Caves of the Singing Sands: Buddhist Art from the Silk Road*. London: Textile & Art Publishers, 1995; and Roderick Whitfield et al., *Cave Temples of Mogao: Art and History of the Silk Road*. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute and J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000.

[12] Compare for example Wai-kam Ho et al., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting: The Collections of the Nelson Gallery-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, and the Cleveland Museum of Art*. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980; Wen C. Fong et al, *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei*. Taipei:

Court paintings that form the topic of this study are not mentioned in either of these surveys, even despite the relative fame of the Yongle gong or the Toronto murals.

A final reason that might also explain the lack of the interest of western scholars for temple painting is art historical methodology. One particularity of temple painting, and especially Heavenly Court paintings, is that they are in fact three-dimensional representations following the architecture of the hall. A temple painting is hard to capture in a two-dimensional frame, be it a standard painting frame or a photograph, not the least because of its size but also because one wall painting is often closely related to other wall paintings in the hall. Chinese temple paintings are basically unified compositions, and their subject-matter should be seen in the context of their location in the hall (i.e. the compass direction), which hall (i.e. the deities belonging to that hall), and importantly, the events taking place in the hall. All this is happening in three-dimensional space that should best be witnessed in situ and with a certain sense of imagination by the viewer or art historian. Traditional methodologies such as period-style or iconography focus on elements of the temple paintings connecting these to elements in other paintings or texts but fail to take into account the 'big picture' of the site. The approach to view a temple painting should include the architecture of the hall in its original setting or situation, and presently art historical researchs lacks the tools to investigate a painting in that way.

A study of Daoist Heavenly Court painting offers a great opportunity to contribute a new chapter to the history of Chinese painting and test new the methodology of iconopraxis as a new art historical tool for research.

Daoist art

Even though Daoism is around for more than two thousand years, Daoist art has emerged as a topic for research and as a discipline in art history only in the last decade. In spite of an occasional article, book, PhD research, or a rare exhibition in Germany or in Taiwan,[13] the beginning of Daoist art as a new field in Chinese art history was marked by the exhibition *Taoism and the Arts of China* held at the Art Institute of Chicago in December 2000 that for

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National Palace Museum, 1996; Yang Xin et al., *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997, and Emmanuelle Lesbre and Liu Jianlong, *La peinture chinoise*. Paris: Éditions Hazan, 2004. This last study is perhaps the most favourable towards temple painting.

[13] An exhibition on religious art from Taiwan was held in the University Museum for Art and Cultural History of Marburg from 12 October to 23 November 1980. See Jorinde Ebert, Barbara M. Kaulbach, and Martin Kraatz, *Religiöse Malerei aus Taiwan*. Marburg: Religionskundliche Sammlung der Philipps-Universität Marburg, 1980. The exhibition in Taiwan on the cultural artifacts of Daoism was held in the National Musuem of History from 22 October to 21 November 1999. See Guoli lishi bowuguan bianji weiyuanhui 國立歷史博物館編輯委員會 (ed.), *Daojiao wenwu* 道教文物. Taipei: Guoli lishi bowuguan, 1999.

the first time attempted to define Daoist art as an independent discipline by making a selection of art objects from various periods, in different media, and with different subject matters. The publications of the exhibition catalogue and its introductory articles was also the first time that a body of scholarly work on this subject was collected.[14] From that moment on, conferences appeared with panels on Daoist art, and Daoist art became a course at western universities. The new interest in Daoist art was did not go unnoticed in China, and in May 2007 at the Academy of Fine Arts in Xi'an, the first conference on Daoist art in China was held. In China too, Daoist art had become a course and research topic. Large exhibitions on Daoist art are scheduled for the near future in Hong Kong and Paris.

The main reason for the belated interest in Daoist art is the inaccessibility of its sources, both in terms of objects and texts. Daoist works of art number much fewer than for example Buddhist art, and are often not immediately recognised as such because Daoist art lacks a distinct and easily-recognisable iconography. Even if Daoist art is identified as such, it is still very hard to relate it to sources and find some concrete information on its historical background, because the official histories only sparsely mention Daoist persons and events, especially after the mid-Song dynasty when they became to reflect the interests of the newly emerged literati class that was responsible for laying down the written historical record. This does not mean Daoist art did not exist, it was simply not written about officially.

The most important source for Daoist history is the Daoist Canon compiled in the Ming dynasty, but the scriptures contained in it are mostly undated and often written in a specific vocabulary difficult to understand to the non-initiated or the modern reader. For example, about eighty percent of the texts in the Daoist Canon consists of ritual texts, providing synopses for ritual proceedings almost without any explanation. In recent decades, the research on Daoist texts has caught up, and has produced an impressive body of secondary literature and reference works;[15] and in the wake of this research, Daoist works of art have also become more accessible by making it possible to relate Daoist art objects to their historical context.

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[14] Stephen Little with Shawn Eichman, *Taoism and the Arts of China.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. See also Stephen Little, "Daoist Art." Livia Kohn (ed.), *Daoism Handbook*. Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 709-746.

[15] The most important reference works are Hu Fuchen 胡孚琛 (ed.), *Zhonghua daojiao da cidian* 中華道教大辭典. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 1995; Livia Kohn (ed.), *Daoism Handbook*. Leiden: Brill, 2000; Kristofer M. Schipper and Franciscus Verellen (eds.), *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Daozang tongkao). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004. An encyclopaedia on Daoism edited by Fabrizio Pregadio is forthcoming.

A moot point in the present discussion of Daoist art is its definition. Trying to define Daoist art we are confronted with numerous questions on which modern scholars have not presented univocal answers. For example, does the label Daoist art only apply to religious objects associated with Daoism, such as images of Daoist deities in Heavenly Court paintings, or does it also apply to objects related to Daoism on a more conceptual level, such as a painting of the "Joy of Fish"[16] alluding to a famous story in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子, which is considered a philosophical text?[17] Does Daoist art also include popular religious art such as images year-prints (*nianhua* 年畫) and images of the gods of Luck, Emolument, and Longevity (*fu lu shou* 福祿壽), or are these forms of popular or folk art? Is a work Daoist when the artist is a Daoist priest (*daoshi* 道士)? If so, should a painting be called Daoist art when the painter is a self-titled "Daoist" (*daoren* 道人), as so many of the literati-painters of the Yuan dynasty used to style themselves? Recent studies on Daoist art are yet to address these problems.

The problem of the definition of Daoist art is not easily resolved, mainly because Daoism itself is very resistant to any form of definition. The *Daode jing* 道德經 (The Way and its Power), the basic work of Daoism, defines itself in the opening chapter as indefinable. In addition, throughout Chinese history, Daoism, its texts and practices, and the people who called themselves Daoists have changed considerably over time. We may add that, very confusing to the modern or western person, the difference with Confucianism, Buddhism or popular culture is not clearly demarcated mainly because there is no strict orthodoxy. We can further wonder if the need for a definition and classification is not perhaps something intrinsic to western science, thus determining how we look at works of art, i.e. with a western eye? In order to look at Daoist art, we would, so to speak, have to develop a Daoist gaze.

Similar to scholars of Indian and Chinese religion arguing that these religions are not defined by orthodoxy (correct believe) but by orthopraxy (correct action),[18] I want argue that

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[16] Painted by Zhou Dongqing 周東卿 (late 13th cent.), reproduced in Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 124.

[17] Both Daoists and the state, as sanctioned by the Daoist Canon, never seem to have differentiated between a philosophical and a religious Daoism. It appears that this division was introduced by Song literati in the classification of their bibliographies. See Yu Shiyi, *Reading the 'Chuang-tzu' in the T'ang Dynasty: The Commentary of Ch'eng Hsüan-ying (fl. 631-652*). New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2000, pp. 17-18. This development shows parallels to the division into literati and professional painters also introduced by literati in the Song dynasty.

[18] See Frits Staal, *Rules without Meaning. Ritual, Mantras and the Human Sciences*. New York: Peter Lang, 1989. Kenneth Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. An eminent Chinese scholar of Daoist ritual also stresses the importance of behaviour or action (*xingwei* 行爲) over symbolic meaning, see Chen Yaoting 陳耀庭, "Lun Daojiao yishi de jiegou: yaosu ji qi zuhe 論道教儀式的結構：要素及其組合." *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究, 1 (1992), pp. 295-296.

Daoist art, if not many other forms of art, is defined by its praxis, or the actions associated with the object in its time, space, and social specific environment, rather than by a certain "meaning" defined by a doctrine in texts.[19] Looking at and studying Daoist art - the development of a Daoist gaze - becomes an art historical method which I therefore call iconopraxis.[20] The present study on Heavenly Court painting will not only venture to investigate a lost tradition in Chinese painting and attempt to reconstruct it in its original environment, but is also aimed at developing and testing a new art historical methodology for looking at and studying art. Daoist Heavenly Court paintings are perfectly suitable for this project precisely because of their association to Daoist ritual and the fact that we have four contemporaneous temple paintings at our disposal for comparison.

Iconopraxis

Iconopraxis holds that an object of art is a representation of a praxis, rather than a representation of period-style, symbolic meaning, text, or social relationships. Investigating the period-style, symbolic meaning (iconology), sign-language as in texts (semiotics), or social relationships between objects and individuals or social institutions (anthropology or sociology of art) are well-established methodologies in (Chinese) art history. The period-style method is premissed upon Hegel's philosophical concept of *Zeitgeist* (spirit of the age) – and both belonging to a period when Romanticism was at its peaks - that each period has some preponderant features permeating the thinking of a certain age, and which thus differentiates itself from other ages. A certain style defines these features for a certain period or phase in art history.[21] The iconological method sees an image as a collection of symbols which meanings

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[19] In this study, the definition of praxis can easily be compared to Heidegger's "event" or "enowning" (*Ereignis*), although I do not claim them to be the same. I am most thankful to Marek Wieczorek for pointing out this correspondence to me. See also Julian Young, *Heidegger's Philosophy of Art*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Most fortuitiously for our research, the theory of "event" (although the relationship with Heidegger's philosophy is not made explicit) has also found its way into the study of Chinese anthropology and religion. Elaborating on Kenneth Dean's anthropological study of local cults, Edward L. Davis for example states in his work on Song religion that "As a description of the formative context, the syncretic field demands that we set our sights on "ritual events" rather than on institutions or texts." See Edward L. Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001, p. 212, and Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the Three Ones: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998.

[20] Iconography or iconology (see below in the main text) professes the same reliance on text in the search for meaning of images. Rather than positing iconography and iconopraxis in a antagonistic relationship, I would prefer to see them as two supplementary methods for investigating art. In the appendix of this study, I use basic iconographic methodology to identify deities although mainly by comparing them to other representations on the same deities, and their numerological qualities and emblematic colours of their robes.

[21] For the study of period-style in Chinese art history, see Wen C. Fong, "Why Chinese Painting is History." *Art Bulletin* 85.2 (2003), pp. 258-280, James Cahill, "Some Thoughts on the History and Post-History of Chinese Painting." *Archives of Asian Art* 55 (2005), pp. 17-33, and its critical reply in Jerome Silbergeld, "The Evolution of a "Revolution": Unsettled Reflections on the Chinese Art-Historical Mission." *Archives of Asian Art* 55 (2005), pp. 39-52.

can be grasped by investigating the references to these symbols in the proper texts.[22] Semiotics is a 'science of signs' which sees an object as a part of a sign-language which meaning can only be understood when it is properly decoded by relating it to other signs in its context. Semiotics can be understood as a linguistic approach to art.[23] In social studies, the object is seen as an agent which "acts" and has therefore aspects normally ascribed to persons or social institutions, for example a cultural biography.[24] Although each method has its own merit, and the above list may even present a too simplified a picture of the art historic field which is ever-changing and much broader than can be summarised in the four general methodologies presented here, the investigation of temple paintings and Daoist art in particular, regarding the aforementioned problems, calls for a different approach.[25]

The approach I propose to take is perfectly illustrated by an anecdote of a Daoist patriarch responding to a question of an artist on how to make Daoist images. The patriarch is Yin Zhiping 尹志平 (1169-1251), a Daoist Quanzhen priest who operates in the same area and period as our temple paintings; the artist, a certain Wang Cai 王才, is further unkown:

> "On the seventeenth night at mid-Autumn, the community of the Qizhen guan 栖真觀 (Perching on Verity Monastery) came together and sat in the open air. A sculpture master, Wang Cai, prostrated himself and requested to ask about the making of Daoist images (*Daoxiang* 道像). The master (Yin Zhiping) said: 'Of the hundreds of images, Daoist images are the most difficult to make. It is not only that they are difficult to sculpt, but to discuss them is difficult as well. For this, you first have to know the

[22] For iconology, see Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939 (1962 reprint); and W.J.T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.

[23] For semiotics, see M. Bal and N. Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History." *Art Bulletin* 73 (1993), pp. 174-208; Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976; and Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976.

[24] For art as social relationships, see among others Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998; and Niklas Luhmann, *Art as a Social System*. Translated by Eva M. Knodt. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

[25] I want to make clear it is not my intention to falsify other art historical methodologies. I neither want to suggest that iconopraxis is an entirely new and independent methodology because many studies venture or have ventured in the same practical arena of art objects. Thus far, this happened to my knowledge without any foundation in a solid methodology, specifically aimed at addressing issues in art for which art historians had to take recourse to methodologies of other disciplines. In addition, as will become clear in the course of this study, iconopraxis is also indebted to the four disciplines and rather than presenting a completely new and independent methodology, it hopes to present a symthesis of former methodologies, pointing to similar basic questions as style, symbolic values, comparisons to linguistic patterns, and social identies, but unifying them through an overarching principle of praxis.

rituals of Daoism and fully understand the art of physiognomy, only then you can begin to talk about Daoist images.

The great Dao is obscure (*xi* 希) and vague (*yi* 夷); you look at it without seeing it, you listen to it without hearing it. The sounds and colours in front of you are unreal. If you do not hear and see, and pay special attention to prevent [your mind] from galloping outside while at the same time visualise (*cun* 存) what is inside, then this is called real. [However,] if you just do not see and hear, you will be a dead thing; and if you do not visualise what is inside while [letting your mind] gallop outside, then you will only be a thing taken control of [by outer things]. [Therefore,] if you want to see the images of Daoism, then you look and listen outside while preserving (*cun* 存) their meaning by means of inner vision (*neiguan* 内觀).[26]

Instead of stressing iconography or studying other models or texts, as one perhaps may expect, the Daoist patriarch advises sculptor Wang to study ritual and physiognomy.[27] He then specifies his advice by stating that what one sees is unreal but what one can see by visualising or preserving (both *cun* 存) inside one's body, called inner vision (*neiguan* 内觀), is real. The proposed method is thus that by ritual practice one is able to see the true images inside one's body, and that these can then be rendered into sculpture. The real images are contained in the ritual practice as opposed to the works of art which should be considered as representations (and therefore unreal) of the images conjured up during the ritual practice.

I have further generalised and abstracted this Daoist viewpoint on art and applied it to devise a methodology called iconopraxis. In studying the iconopraxis of images (not necessarily Daoist images), we have to reverse the process of creation and consider an image as a representation of a praxis. The praxis is then the accustomed practices or actions, one may even say culture or tradition, associated with that image at a certain time and place for a certain group of people in society. The main and primary question of the method of

[26] *Qinghe zhenren beiyou yulu* 清和真人北游語錄 DZ 1310, 2.4a-b. See also Vincent Goossaert, "Liu Yuan, taoïste et sculpteur dans le Pékin mongol." *Sanjiao wenxian* 4 (2005), p. 171. All references to texts in the Daoist Canon (DZ) are based on the numbers provided in Kristofer M. Schipper, *Concordance du Tao-tsang*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1975.

[27] Knowledge of physiognomy, the art of reading the auspicious and inauspicious features in somebody's face, ensures that images of deities are not depicted with inauspicious signs. This topic has been dealt with elsewhere, albeit for ancestral portraits, see Mette Siggstedt, "Forms of Fate: An Investigation of the Relationship Between Formal Portraiture, Especially Ancestral Portraits, and Physiognomy (*Xiangshu*) in China." *International Colloquium on Chinese Art History, 1991; Proceedings: Painting and Calligraphy, Part 2.* Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1992, pp. 715-743; and Livia Kohn, "A Textbook on Physiognomy: The Tradition of the *Shenxiang quanbian*." *Asian Folklore Studies* 45 (1986), pp. 227-254.

iconopraxis is thus posing the question: "what is the central praxis associated with the image?" This question is hardly different from methodologies such as period-style and iconology which ask: "which style is this painting?" or "which symbolic meaning has this object?" only the focus is different. Iconopraxis presents a different way of looking at art.

Heavenly Court paintings give many clues on the central praxis. First of all, the murals depict an imperial court ritual, in which all the court members, i.e. deities, have gathered for an audience with the supreme deities, the Three Purities (*sanqing* 三清). Secondly, the Chinese name for Heavenly Court paintings contains the word *chao* 朝, which means "court audience." Thirdly, the hall in which Heavenly Court paintings are depicted are generally called "Three Purities Hall" (*sanqing dian* 三清殿) which is the most holy hall where the Daoist priests perform their rituals. Lastly, an essential rite in Daoist liturgy is called the *chao* or the "court audience" and entails the presentation of a memorial to the supreme deities. This is a recurring pattern in all Heavenly Court paintings (although the supreme deities may sometimes differ in identity). The central praxis of Daoist Heavenly court painting is therefore the Daoist *chao*-audience ritual.

If determining the central praxis of an image is the first step in the methodology of iconopraxis, the next step is to find similar or related representations of that praxis. With representations I do not only mean other images or objects, but in fact all kinds of representations, including textual representations, oral representations, etc.[28] If we take the Daoist *chao*-audience ritual as the central praxis, iconopraxis allows us to take other images of court ritual, texts describing *chao*-audience ritual, and anthropological field researches on *chao*-audience rituals as other representations of the same praxis. On the basis of these various forms of representations it is then possible by means of comparison to make a tentative reconstruction of the central praxis, the *chao*-audience ritual. This reconstruction is always by approximation and it is never possible to reconstruct the complete praxis. This reconstructed praxis forms the conceptual framework, a framework which all representations have in common (although not necessarily contain all its constituents).

It is important to note that all representations, including the central visual representation that forms the starting point of the investigation, i.e. the Heavenly Court paintings, are equal in status. Regardless whether a representation is an image or a text, from the viewpoint of the praxis, they have equal value. The art historical methodology of iconopraxis thus, rather paradoxically, means the devaluation of the art object, because it is

[28] In this study, I refer to representation with its basic meaning of visual representation, unless otherwise stated.

considered as merely "a representation" and no longer "the art object" and the focus of investigation. It is however necessary to sacrifice the main course to save the dinner, because only by placing the focus on the praxis, which is an abstract reconstruction in time and place primary to the phenomenal world of representations, it is possible, I would argue, to solve the dichotomy between image and text, which haunts western art history since early times (so I would suggest a ten plate Chinese banquet instead of a ten course western dinner).[29] A pleasant side-effect of this perception of representations and their relationship to praxis for the scholar of art is that each representation basically becomes a source of information.

The following step in the methodology of iconopraxis is determining the various sub-praxes. Praxis, or more literally, actions always involve people execute these actions, and I therefore maintain that the sub-praxes correspond to the social groups or classes of peoples responsible for the representations, and as well to sources of information. Although the central praxis of a Heavenly Court painting is the *chao*-audience ritual explaining the form of a painting, many related sub-praxes are involved in the production process from conceptual framework to final painting. The sub-praxes in the production of a Heavenly Court painting are closely related to the people involved in the production. In our case, there are three different social groups involved in the production process, Daoist priests, painters, and patrons (who in our case are often Daoist priests, but sometimes just the "community" commissioning the wall paintings). Each group is involved in the painting and its central praxis, the *chao*-audience ritual, in a different way. The Daoist priests perform a *chao*-audience ritual following the conceptual format – the sources for this praxis is found in ritual manuals describing and explaining the proceedings of Daoist liturgy in a certain area (corresponding to a Daoist lineage or order) and period; the painters work out a design, consciously or unconsciously, on the basis of the conceptual framework according to the limits set by their techniques, tools, and costums – the sources for the praxis of the painters is found in inscriptions left by painters themselves on the walls and by literati writers on painting and art critics mentioning or discussing the technical issues of making a Heavenly Court painting (or related wall painting); and the patrons wish to modify the design in order to have the Heavenly Court painting reflect their wishes and motivations – the sources for this praxis is not found in any textual source by the patrons, simply because no such records are left why a painting was made, but can be inferred from the Heavenly Court paintings

[29] On the problem of irreconcilability of image and text in the tradition of western art history, see Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. It is noteworthy that the Chinese script circumvents this problem because Chinese characters consist of an image component beside an pronounciation element.

themselves by comparing them with similar representations of the Heavenly Court (in painting and text) and determining the irregular elements.

The chapters of this study are arranged in an order reflecting the methodology of iconopraxis. I will first provide a chapter providing a survey of surviving Heavenly Court paintings and references thereof placed against their social-historical background, and describe their origin and development. This is an introductory chapter explaining to the reader the various formats of Heavenly Court paintings and their development throughout Chinese history. The second chapter is called "Ritual Foundations" and attempts to provide the conceptual framework or the ritual elements that Heavenly Court paintings have in common (but not necessarily all of them) on the basis of an investigation of Daoist liturgy and the Daoist ritual area or altar space. The third chapter discusses the practices of the painters for producing a wall painting of a Heavenly Court, exploring the painters' techniques for designing a Heavenly Court painting. The fourth and final chapter is centred on the question of personalisation by the patrons of a Heavenly Court painting, investigating the irregular elements in the four Heavenly Court paintings in order to determine the motivations and reasons behind the commission and the pictorial adjustments. A conclusion provides a summary of the most important results and new insights offered by this study. In the appendix, I provide information and data on the historical background, scholarship, iconography of the deities depicted, and the date of each of the four Heavenly Court paintings. Numbers in the main text connected to deities refer to the drawings of the Yongle gong (1A, 1B, 1C), Toronto (2A and 2B), and the Beiyue miao murals (3A and 3B) included in the appendix. Readers not familiar with the Heavenly Court paintings under discussion are advised to read the appendix first.

1 History and Development

The oldest surviving temple paintings depicting a Daoist Heavenly Court date to the thirteenth century. Representations of a Heavenly Court also exist in stone sculptures, the earliest dating to the mid-eighth century. Textual references however push the earliest date of a Daoist Heavenly Court back to the fifth century. In this very early phase, the Heavenly Court is not an entirely new invention but elaborates on a particular theme, the *chao* 朝 -audience theme, of which representations exist dating back to the second century.

The first section of this chapter presents a chronological survey of representations of the Daoist Heavenly Court in their social-historical context as these survive today in material form such as sculptured statues, scroll paintings, wall paintings, or in references thereof in textual sources. Although depicted in different media they are representations of the same praxis, as expressed in the theme of the Heavenly Court.

The second part of this chapter will give an art historical account of the early development and origins of the representation of the Daoist Heavenly Court. I will argue that a Daoist Heavenly Court painting is a later development of a fixed theme in Chinese art history, a theme I call the audience-theme and which exists in various pictorial formats prior to the emergence of the Daoist Heavenly Court in about the fifth century (or perhaps earlier). The connective principle between a representation of a Daoist Heavenly Court and the other representations of the audience theme is not only pictorial but also practical, or what I call iconopraxis: Daoist Heavenly Court paintings as well as the other images depicting an audience theme are representation of a ritual practice, namely a court audience ritual.

1.1 Four phases

The history and development of representations of the Daoist Heavenly Court can be divided into four general Phases: Early (400-700), Transitional (700-1000), Middle (1000-1400), and Late (1400-present). The transitions between these periods are chosen for convenience and by

approximation and do not correlate exactly to dynastic change or "stylistic" change, in the sense of a period-style. The four phases and their changes are characteristic for the development of the representation of the Heavenly Court, and not for entire Chinese art and history. If so, this still would remain to be attested in the future.

The four phases are defined by the change in overall appearance, contents, and layout of the Heavenly Court representation, and as such I would like to characterise the Early Phase as 'Daoist,' the Middle Phase as 'imperial,' the Late Phase as 'popular,' and the Transitional Phase as a time when 'Daoist' and 'imperial' representations co-existed. These phases are not mutually exclusive but accumulative. Each next phase also contains the representation or elements thereof of the previous phase, e.g. Late Phase Heavenly Court representations feature deities in Daoist, imperial and popular representations.

Early Phase, 400-700

No concrete material survives of representations of the Heavenly Court in the Early Phase. The beginning of the Early Phase in the fifth century is also arbitrary and based on the first references to Daoist images or imagery mentioned in conjunction with a ritual area.

The history of Daoism is much older and officially starts with Laozi 老子, the author of the *Daode jing* 道德經. Laozi is traditionally identified with Lao Dan 老聃 (also called Li Er 李耳) who was a librarian and astrologist at the Western Zhou court and who, according to legend, once received Confucius 孔子 (551-479) seeking instruction on ritual. Laozi remained a central figure of Daoism in the following centuries and was deified as the embodiment of the Dao in the Later Han (25-220), also receiving official worship of the Han emperors. This was also the period when Daoist practitioners organised themselves in an order with a defined set of communal rules, liturgies and a clergy of ordained priests who provided services to a community of Daoist believers. One order was called the Taiping Dao 太平道 (Way of the Great Peace) in Shandong 山東 in east China, but soon disappeared at the end of the second century. Another order was the Tianshi Dao 天師道 (Way of the Heavenly Masters) established in Sichuan 四川 in southwest China, and this order, taking Laozi was their central god and the *Daode jing* as their central scripture, would have lasting influence on Daoism, its religious practices, and its art up to present times since the order is still flourishing today, although undergoing several transformations. After the fall of the Later Han, the members of the Heavenly Master order dissiminated their practices over the rest of China where they mingled and competed with other Daoist practitioners still versed in the rituals and techniques

of the Early Han, manifesting themselves with their own textual traditions such as the Shangqing 尚清 (Highest Purity) and Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) traditions, also in response to the growing presence of Buddhism that had entered China since the first century. These two traditions were basically immortality cults of individual practitioners without a community, a clergy or patriarchs and it would be difficult to describe them as an order. In the fifth century, a Daoist priest called Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406-477) published on the order of the Southern Dynasties Song court (420-477) the first Daoist Canon (*daozang* 道藏) binding the various various traditions together and providing Daoism with a new defined set of rituals and techniques. This canonisation of texts and rituals further allowed that the Daoist clergy was organised in a hierarchy of priests each of whom was ordained in a higher level of texts, registers (*lu* 籙), and talismans (*fu* 符) that served as proof of his or her status. It is from this century onward that we encounter the first concrete references to representations of a Heavenly Court and here our discussion of the Early Phase starts.

The representation of the Heavenly Court in the Early Phase is in fact only known from textual sources providing descriptions or regulations for the decoration and images of the Daoist ritual area (*daochang* 道場). The Daoist ritual area consists of three types: an oratory (lit. "quiet room" *jingshi* 靜室or *jingshe* 靜舍), an open-air altar (*tan* 壇), or a hall in a monastery (*guan* 觀). The first two have much older antecedents in ancient China, while the latter seems to have become fashionable only from the sixth century onward.[1] Despite the diversity in architecture, the types of decoration are very similar. Early Daoist texts do not endorse any imagery in the ritual area or are at least silent about them, but non-canonical sources such as stele inscriptions and historical essays demonstrate that statues, paintings and other ritual paraphernalia were very common, in particular from the sixth century onward.[2]

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[1] On early Daoist monasteries, see Stephan P. Bumbacher, *The Fragments of the* Daoxue zhuan. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2000, pp. 431-493. On the Daoist oratory, see Ishii Masako 石井昌子, "Shinkô ni toku seishitsu ni tsuite 真誥に說く靜室について." *Dôkyô to shûkyô bunka* 道教と宗教文化. Tokyo: Hirakawa, 1987, pp. 136-153, and Yoshikawa Tadao 吉川忠夫. "Seishitsu kô 靜室考." *Tôhô gakuhô* 東方學報 59 (1987), pp. 125-62.

[2] For the oratory decoration, see Lu Xiujing's (406-477) critique in *Lu xiansheng daomen kelüe* 陸先生道們科略 DZ 1127, 4b. For a translation, see Stephen R. Bokenkamp with Peter Nickerson, *Early Daoist Scriptures.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, p. 64. This description can be compared to the decoration of an oratory in Tantric Buddhism of the sixth century in *Longshu wuming lun* 龍樹五明論 T 1420, 967b-c. For the contents and dating of this scripture, see Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, pp 134-135. See *Sui shu* 隨書 compiled by Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580-683). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973, j. 35, pp. 1092 and 1094 for non-canonical references to the use of statues of Heavenly Worthies and immortals by Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (365-448), a reformer of the Heavenly Masters order at the Northern Wei court, and the use of "ritual images" (*faxiang* 法像) in the open-air altar; and Ware, Jamer R., "The *Wei Shu* and the *Sui Shu* on Taoism." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 53.3 (1933), p. 215-250.

For example, the official Laozi temple in Bozhou 亳州 (Henan), the native town of Laozi, was renovated on the imperial order of Sui Emperor Wen 文 (r. 581-604) in 586 and adorned with statues or wall paintings – the text is not clear on this point - representing "a Heavenly Worthy solemn and dignified, and immortals surrounding him majestically and silently."[3] This is arguably our earliest reference to a representation of a Heavenly Court.

The standard imagery of an Early Phase Heavenly Court would have included Heavenly Worthies (*tianzun* 天尊), immortals (*xianren* 仙人) and veritables (*zhenren* 真人),[4] as well as assistant deities such as jade maidens (*yunü* 玉女) and golden boys (*jintong* 金童) – basically the court ladies and attendants in the Heavenly Court – and various kinds of messengers and warriors. Beside these paintings or statues, the Early Phase Heavenly Court abounds with depictions of auspicious motifs and animals most commonly associated with the supernatural realm, such as cloud-vapours (*qi* 氣), mushrooms, phoenixes, dragons, and unicorns, set in a mountainous landscape scenery. Mountains were the place where the mundane world connected to the supernatural spheres and the Daoist Heavenly Court is also understood as being located on a cosmic mountain, either Kunlun 昆侖, the *axis mundi* located in the western regions according to Chinese mythology, or Jade Capital Mountain (*yujingshan* 玉京山), its celestial counterpart. The Daoist ritual area of the Early Phase is therefore a visual representation or recreation of this cosmological mountain. In the ritual area of an open-air altar, the images and decoration motifs were all painted on banners hung from gates made of bamboo poles surrounding the central altar mound. These banners or curtains could range in length from half a meter to over two meters, and the visual drama evoked by such large paintings must have been enormous.[5]

An early seventh century text, the *Fengdao kejie* 奉道科戒, codifying Daoist monastic life in the early Tang and stipulating rules for the building of monasteries and the making of images amongst others, provides similar data for wall paintings. In the case of temple painting

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[3] The Laozi temple in Bozhou already received state support by Emperor Huan (r. 147-168) of the Later Han. *Laoshi bei* 老氏碑, by Xue Daoheng 薛道衡, dated 586. Chen Yuan 陳垣 (comp.), Chen Zhichao 陳智超 and Zeng Qingying 曾慶瑛 (eds.), *Daojia jinshi lüe* 道家金石略. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988: pp. 43-44. See also Liu Yang, "Manifestations of the Dao: A Study in Daoist Art from the Northern Dynasty to the Tang (5th-9th Centuries)." PhD Dissertation, SOAS, University of London, 1997, p. 243.

[4] Veritables and immortals are persons who have achieved the Dao, that is returned to the origin of the Dao.

[5] The types of decorated banners are found in *Chuanshou sandong jingjie falu lüeshuo* 傳授三洞經戒法律略說 DZ 1241, 2: 19b-20a, by Zhang Wanfu 張萬福 (fl. 700-742), a Daoist priest at the Tang court and although active in the Transitional Phase, probably describing a practice also common for the (late) Early Phase. The measurements of the banners are also found in this text and are transcribed in Charles D. Benn, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission: A Taoist Ordination Rite of A.D. 711*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1991, pp. 25-27, 167, note 10.

however, the wall paintings decorate the ritual area inside a monastery hall and are consequently organised differently compared to the open-air altar, even though both types displayed the same visual arena.[6] Because of the rectangular architecture of the hall, in contrast to the circular layout of an altar mound, the wall paintings with the images of the immortals, numinous animals and cloud-vapours were divided to the left and right of the three statues of the Heavenly Worthy, Daojun 道君, and Laojun 老君. In this Daoist text, these three deities are codified for the ritual area for one of the first times, signalling a change in conception of the Heavenly Court. The addition of Daojun and Laojun to the image of the Heavenly Worthy, collectively referred to as the Three Treasures (*sanbao* 三寶) and the precursors of the Three Purities (*sanqing* 三清), is an elaboration of the seventh century, that basically fused the Heavenly Worthy with the images of Laozi, thereby also fusing visually the traditions of Lingbao, Shangqing and the Heavenly Masters, whose main deities they represent. This format of the three main deities flanked by wall paintings on the east and west side of the temple hall would remain the basic structure of Daoist Heavenly Court painting up to the present day.

Early references to such respresentations are however not found in either Daoist scriptures or dynastic histories, even though these histories profess a great state support for Daoism during the Early Phase. Testimonies of this support are recorded in the bibliographical section of the *Sui shu* 隨書 (History of the Sui Dynasty, 581-618) compiled by Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580-683), a Daoist priest himself, stating that the Northern Wei (386-534) emperors save the first two as well as the Northern Zhou (559-581) emperors were all ordained as Daoist priests receiving Daoist registers and talismans (*shou fulu* 受符籙). He further added that during the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577) the finest monasteries were built to house Daoist priests.[7] Daoism undoubtedly had a foremost position in the successive dynasties ruling over northern China from the fourth to the sixth centuries, a status that was probably continued with the establishment of the Tang dynasty (618-907) which chose Laozi as its first ancestor, thereby rallying great support from an, presumably, pro-Daoist populace, but these ties between Daoism and imperial court in the Early Phase have remained very obscure in the remainder of official writings on Chinese history. Even though examples are

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[6] *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* 洞玄靈寶奉道科戒營式 DZ 1125, 2.4a-b. For studies of this text see Florian C. Reiter, *The Aspirations and Standards of Taoist Priests in the Early T'ang Period.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998; Livia Kohn, "The First Handbook of Monastic Daoism: The Date and Compilation of the *Fengdao kejie*." *East Asian History* 13 (1998), pp. 91-118; and idem, *The Daoist Monastic Manual: A Translation of the* Fengdao Kejie. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
[7] *Sui shu* j. 35, p. 1094.

lacking in official writing, we may surmise that under such favourable circumstances Daoist art must have flourished as well, and that numerous representations of the Heavenly Court must have existed. For example, preliminiary research on early Daoist monasticism yielded already over one hundred monasteries for South China alone during the fifth and sixth centuries.[8] The actual number for entire China may be much higher, and Daoist temple painting also more common than reflected in the official sources.

Our suspicion is confirmed by references in stele inscriptions of the seventh century, sources that bespeak the views of contemporary authors rather than those of historiographers writing centuries later: representations of the Heavenly Court, and mostly in the format of sculptural designs (which were also undoubtedly painted) it seems, should have abounded in Daoist monasteries.[9] These inscriptions not only proof that such representations existed, but that they must have been part of an artistic tradition with its own repertoire and models in which painters and sculptors were trained. We may further assume that banner painters and wall painters, as well as the sculptors were working in this same tradition.

Chinese sources on painting history of the Early Phase do not mention Heavenly Court paintings directly, but nevertheless provide us with some tantalising clues. Two important texts are our main sources on early painting history; on is Pei Xiaoyuan's 裴孝源*Zhenguan gongsi hua shi* 貞觀公私畫史 (History of Paintings in Imperial and Private Collections of the Zhenguan Period, foreword dated 639), and the other is the *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (Record of Famous Painters through the Ages, dated 847) by Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (fl. 815-875). The *Zhenguan gongsi huashi* lists forty-seven temple paintings but these are, curiously, all Buddhist. The *Lidai minghua ji* lists no Daoist wall paintings painted before 700 and those listed after 700, with one or two exceptions, are described too tersely to make any statements on their contents (I will return to these further below). The long catalogues on scroll paintings contained in these two works do not reveal any immediate connection with Heavenly Court

[8] Bumbacher, *The Fragments of the* Daoxue zhuan, pp. 467-472.

[9] See for example the abovementioned stele inscription on the Laozi temple in Bozhou dated 586; the *Chijian Niaoshi guan beiji* 敕建鳥石觀碑記, by Chen Zongyu 陳宗裕, 629. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 48-49 which mentions statues and wall paintings as well as an image of the Daoist immortal Xu Xun 許遜 (d. 374); the *Qi Guan tianzun bei* 祁觀天尊碑, by Wang Mu 王母, dated 634. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 50-51 which mentions "a statue of one Heavenly Worthy, veritables, jade boys, heavenly warriors (*tianding*), lions, and earth spirits … all placed opposite of each other to the left and right"; the *Wang xiansheng bei* 王先生碑, by Yu Jingzhi 于敬之, 673. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 58-60 which states that the Taiping guan 太平觀 (Great Peace Monastery) on Maoshan 茅山 had statues of a Heavenly Worthy and veritables and paintings of various auspicious motifs; and the *Yizhou Zhizhen guan zhu Li jun bei* 益州至真觀主黎君碑, by Lu Zhaolin 盧照鄰, 671. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 62-64 which mentions that "the monastery once had more than ten thousand stone statues of Heavenly Worthies and veritables in various sizes."

paintings, providing only titles such as "Painting of Roaming Immortals" (*youxian tu* 游仙圖), "Designs for Various Demons and Deities" (*za guishen yang* 雜鬼神樣),[10] and paintings of Laozi, a Heavenly Worthy, or veritables (*zhenren* 真人) are entirely lacking.

There is however one tantalising reference and contained in both works under the heading of the painter Gu Kaizhi (fl. 345-406), who is recorded to have painted a "Painting of the Water Prefecture" (*shuifu tu* 水府圖).[11] At first sight there is nothing that would connect this title to a Daoist theme, let alone a Heavenly Court painting, were it not that in the modern liturgy of Daoist priests of the Heavenly Master order in Taiwan and in South China a painting with the same title appears in a set of hanging scrolls making up a Heavenly Court.[12] In this set, the painting of the "Water Prefecture" depicts the deities of the Realm of Water because, according to Daoist cosmogony, when the cosmos was created from the Dao, first one original energy (*yuanqi* 元氣) emerged which then divided into three energies that consolidated as the three realms of Heaven, Earth and Water (*tian di shui* 天地水). These three realms are called the Three Heavens (*santian* 三天) in early Daoist scriptures and constitute one of the basic ideas of the Heavenly Master order.[13] The assumption that the "Painting of the Water Prefecture" is indeed a painting of Daoist deities becomes even more appealing when we consider that Gu Kaizhi was a member of the Heavenly Master order and that he therefore should have been very familiar with Heavenly Master cosmology and rituals. Perhaps the "Painting of the Water Prefecture" originally consisted of a set of three paintings, one for each realm, decorating a ritual area.[14] If my assumption is correct, it would mean that the Gu Kaizhi painting is one of the earliest references to the practice of Heavenly Court painting.

There are strong indications that representations of the Daoist Heavenly Court in the Early Phase were closely related to a common visual culture in the sixth and seventh centuries

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[10] *Zhenguan gongsi huashi*. In He Zhiming 和志明 and Pan Yungao 潘運告 (annotators), *Tang Wudai hualun* 唐五代畫論. Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 1997, pp. 13, 19. On the translation of *yang* 楊 as "design," see chapter 3 of this study.

[11] *Zhenguan gongsi hua shi* p. 15; *Lidai minghua ji*, p. 206.

[12] These paintings are discussed in more detail further below in section 1.4.

[13] One Heavenly Master scripture, dating to the fifth century, where this cosmogony of the Three Heavens is explained in fullest form is the *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經 DZ 1205. For an annotated translation of this text, see Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp. 186-229. For a similar cosmogony but in a scripture of the Lingbao tradition, see *Dongxuan lingbao ziran jiutian shengshen zhangjing* 洞玄靈寶自然九天生神章經 DZ 318, which also dates to the fifth century.

[14] The three paintings of the Three Officials (*sanguan* 三官) in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and dating to the Southern Song (1127-1279), depicting the three deities of Heaven, Earth, and Water and their entourages who rule over their respective realms, may be a later example of Gu Kaizhi's type of painting. The Boston paintings of the Three Official are discussed below in section 1.3.

associated with depictions of the supernatural. The representation of the supernatural with the same motifs and elements is also found in contemporaneous tomb decorations, Buddhist wall paintings, and in palace murals from all parts of China. Auspicious animals and motifs abound for example on the ceilings of caves 249 and 285 at Mogao 莫高 near Dunhuang 敦煌and dated to 535-557 and 538-539 respectively,[15] and in the tomb murals of general Cui Fen 崔芬 in Linqu 臨朐 (Shandong) dated 550,[16] clearly attesting to this common visual culture. A description of palace murals in the Southern Qi capital dated 501 almost reads as a description of a Daoist Heavenly Court painting: after a fire had destroyed the palace, it was rebuilt in 501 and "among [the palace halls] was a Jade Longevity Hall which was adorned with curtains (*zhang* 帳) of embroidered damask on all four sides depicting flying immortals; the walls between the windows were painted with deities and immortals and with images of the Seven Sages [of the Bamboo Grove] assisted by beautiful ladies. Gold and silver were chiselled into the form of characters, and numinous animals, divine birds, drifting clouds, and flowering torches were rendered into playful decorations."[17]

The existence of a common visual culture of the supernatural in the Early Phase further suggests that Heavenly Court painting is an elaboration on an existing theme. Since Heavenly Worthies, immortals, and veritables are lacking in these other representations, they should be considered as the key-defining element of Heavenly Court painting in the Early Phase. This assumption is corroborated by surviving sculptured images of Heavenly Worthies and veritables who are represented in the costumes of Daoist priests. Several carved steles erected by local Daoist communities (*yi* 邑) in the Shanxi area from the fifth and sixth centuries portray the Heavenly Worthy either wearing a three-pointed Daoist cap in the shape of the Chinese character for "mountain" (*shan* 山), or a *bangu* 斑鶻 -cap, an official's headgear of the fourth century, which as a means of archaism, became the attire of Daoist priests in the centuries thereafter who were similarly regarded as officials but of a celestial bureaucracy.[18]

Transitional Phase, 700-1000

[15] Wang Yi'e 王宜娥, *Daojiao yu yishu* 道教與藝術. Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1997, pp. 122-124.
[16] Shandong sheng wenwu kaogu yanjiusuo 山东省文物考古研究所 (ed.), "Shandong Linqu Beiqi Cui Fen bihua mu 山东临朐北齐崔芬壁画墓". *Wenwu* 文物 4 (2002), pp. 4-26.
[17] *Nan shi* 南史, compiled by Li Yanshou 李延壽 (618-676). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975, j. 5, p. 153.
[18] The largest collection of Daoist stele carvings is discussed in Liu, "Manifestations of the Dao," pp. 72-156, see also Stanley K. Abe, "Heterological Visions: Northern Wei Daoist Sculpture from Shaanxi Province." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 10 (1996-1997), pp. 69-83, and idem, *Ordinary Images*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002, pp. 270-313.

In the Transitional Phase, an imperial representation gradually supersedes the Daoist representation of the Heavenly Court. The eighth century marks a new era in the attitude of the court toward Daoism, during which Tang Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-756) initiated a whole series of reforms that established Daoism as a *de facto* state religion. As already mentioned, the Tang imperial family was surnamed Li and claimed descendency of Laozi, also surnamed Li 李, but it was not until the High Tang that Emperor Xuanzong initiated on unprecedented scale a state cult of Laozi and concomitantly a personality cult to enhance his status as divine ruler. In 741, Xuanzong ordered the building of temples to Laozi in the two capitals Chang'an and Luoyang as well as in every prefecture in the empire, 331 in total, and in 744 he further ordered that his personal image should be cast in bronze and placed in every Daoist and Buddhist monastery throughout the realm.[19] Emperor Xuanzong further had Daoist scriptures, such as the *Daode jing*, selected as compulsory texts for the state examinations, and he established Daoist schools in which these texts were taught to students. Perhaps the most single important event that instituted Daoism as a state religion was the establishment of the Taiqing gong 太清宮 (Palace of Great Purity) that functioned as and factually replaced the Confucian Taimiao 太廟 (Great Temple), the official site where the emperor sacrificed to his ancestors. The Taiqing gong was installed with images of Laozi, the Tang imperial ancestor and dressed as an emperor with a so-called *mian* 冕-crown, (a mortar-board shaped crown, called *mian* 冕, with pendants of jade beads, called *liu* 旒, hanging from the front and back rims),[20] and other Daoist sages but also of Confucius, Emperor Xuanzong, and some ministers such as Li Linfu 李林甫. Laozi's statue was unearthed from a place nearby the capital Chang'an 長安 (Xi'an), the location of which was disclosed to Xuanzong in a dream by Laozi himself.[21]

The fervent state support of Laozi and Daoism had a great impact on Daoist art and the representation of the Heavenly Court. Daoism became closely associated with the imperial court and it is no surprise to find Daoist deities attaining a more imperial demeanour, even though this transformation seems only to have been limited to court-related art.

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[19] The Daoist reforms under Tang Emperor Xuanzong have been the subject of a detailed study in Charles D. Benn, "Taoism as Ideology in the Reign of Emperor Hsüan-tsung (712-755)." PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1977. For his personality cult and references to images, see also Liu, "Manifestations of the Dao," pp. 283-285.

[20] For a study of the *mian*-crown, see Zhou Cibao 周錫保, *Zhongguo gudai fushi shi* 中國古代服飾史. Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1984, pp. 13-46.

[21] *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, compiled by Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975, p. 589. Liu Yang surmises that a white marble statue of Laozi now in the Beilin Museum in Xi'an is the statue in question. Yang, "Manifestations of the Dao," pp. 264-266.

The history of Daoist Heavenly Court painting in the Tang dynasty is closely related to Wu Daozi 吳道子 (fl. 685-758), China's most celebrated painter, and as far can be judged from the historical record, the painter who may be solely held responsible for the imperial transformation of the Daoist Heavenly Court. In 749, Wu Daozi painted on imperial order a Heavenly Court painting in a Laozi temple on Mt. Beimang 北邙山, north of Luoyang洛陽 (Henan), depicting the first five Tang emperors accompanied by a retinue of officials on audience with Laozi, their first ancestor. Although the murals have been lost, a poem by the Tang poet Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770) gives an evocative description of the scene: "Painters look up to their predecessors,/but Master Wu [Daozi] leaves them far behind./Dense and numerous, [his images] rotate the earth,/subtle and refined, they move the palace's walls./The Five Saints line up in dragon robes,/a thousand officials march in goose file./*Mian*-crowns tower high [above the multitudes],/flags and banners rise up [in the sky]."[22]

Du Fu's poem not only gives an apt description of Wu Daozi's dynamic painting style "rotating the earth" and "moving the walls," it also demonstrates that the Daoist Heavenly Court was now equipped with all the regalia of an imperial court, with emperors wearing "dragon robes" and "*mian*-crowns", officials, and banners and flags. These images we rather know from imperial donor scenes such as those found in the Buddhist cave carvings of Longmen of the sixth century.[23] The so-called Daoist representation of the Early Phase has been transplanted by an imperial representation under the aegis of the Tang court, thereby not only imperialising the divine image, but also deifying the imperial image. In previous ages, portraits of emperors were included in Buddhist, and probably Daoist, painting and sculpture compositions but always as donors and never as deities.

The emergence of an imperial representation, i.e. deities in imperial costumes, of the Daoist Heavenly Court in the High Tang did not immediately supplanted or substituted the former Daoist representations with its many auspicious motifs. In 727, Emperor Xuanzong bestowed upon the Shangqing patriarch Sima Chengzhen 司馬承貞 (647-735), Xuanzong's personal master who had ordained him into the Dao in 724, an event which was also recorded in a painting by Wu Daozi, a monastery on Mt. Wangwu 王屋 (Henan), the Yangtai guan 陽臺觀 (Sunlight Terrace Monastery). In the Heavenly Worthies Hall, Sima Chengzhen thereupon painted himself the walls with images of "immortals, dragons, storks and cloud-

[22] Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), *Du shi xiang zhu* 杜詩詳注, annotated by Qiu Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲 (1638-1717). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979, pp. 91-92. On the date of the temple, see Yuan Yougen 袁有根, "Wu Daozi de bihua chuangzao 吳道子的壁畫創造." *Xin meishu* 新美術 1 (2002), pp. 54-55.
[23] For the Longmen reliefs, see Abe, *Ordinary Images*, pp. 185-257.

vapours," clearly continuing the earlier tradition of Daoist Heavenly Court paintings.[24] The paintings are no longer extant.

Although Early Phase representations were continued, a greater emphasis was being placed on deity figures and the anthropomorphisation of natural forces. A good example of this new tendency are the Heavenly Court sculptures of the Nanzhu guan 南竺觀 (Southern Bamboo Monastery) and dated to 749, a still-existing cliff site with numerous other niches, most of them Buddhist, located in Niujiaozhai 牛角寨in Renshou 仁壽 County (Sichuan). The Nanzhu guan consists of two caves. Cave 40 depicts an audience of 26 figures (See Fig. 1) . It has large statues of the Three Treasures (one of them with a triple-pointed beard and holding a fly-whisk or *zhuwei* 麈尾 identifiable as Laozi), five Daoist priests holding court-tablets placed behind them (probably representing the deities of the five directions, the *wudi* 五帝), two deities with sun and moon discs above their heads, and a series of warriors, officials and court ladies at the sides. To the east side is a seated figure (now beheaded) who is generally identified as Tang Emperor Xuanzong, a sole surviving trace of his personality cult. An adjacent Cave 63 has further images of thirty-five male and female Daoist priests in a similar carving style and showing great variety in facial representation.[25] Importantly, all the main deities, including the alleged Xuanzong image (which is also seated in a Daoist armrest), are portrayed as Daoist priests rather than imperial figures; yet, no signs of auspicious motifs or animals is witnessed, underscoring the tendency of emphasising deity figures rather than supernatural phenomena in the Transitional Phase. The fact that the beheaded image is represented in the costume of a Daoist priest represents Emperor Xuanzong is corroborated by evidence from the Song poet Lu You 陸游 (1125-1200) who wrote in his travelogue, *Ru Shu ji* 入蜀記 (Record of Traveling into Shu) that when he visited a Daoist monastery in

[24] The murals painted by Sima Chengzhen measured five meters (1.6 *zhang*) in height and over twenty-eight meters (95 *chi*) in length, see the *Ci Baiyun xiansheng shushi bing jinshan chibei* 賜白雲先生書詩並禁山敕碑, by Tang Emperor Xuanzong 唐玄宗, dated 733. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 182-183. The part on the murals in the stele inscription is damaged but a short reference to the contents of the Tang murals is found in a Yuan stele, the *Chongxiu Wangwushan Yangtai gong bei* 重修王屋山陽臺宮碑, by Li Junmin 李俊民, 1275. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 1074-1075. That Sima Chengzhen painted the murals himself, can be inferred from Zhang Yanyuan's *Lidai minghua ji* p. 241, translated in Acker, *Some T'ang*, p. 257. For the reference to Wu Daozi's painting of Emperor Xuanzong receiving the Daoist registers, i.e. his ordination as a Daoist priest, see *Lidai minghua ji* p. 237.

[25] Cave 40 measures 4 meters in height, 2.9 meters in width, and 2.1 meters in depth. The adjacent cave measures 2.5 meters in height, 5.4 meters in width, and 1.6 meters in depth. The site has been extensively studied in Hu Wenhe 胡文和, *Zhongguo daojiao shike yishu shi* 中國道教石刻藝術史. Vol. 1. Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004, pp. 169-222; Anning Jing, "Yongle Palace," pp. 172-191; Liu, "Manifestations of the Dao," pp. 285-287, and idem, "Cliff Sculpture: Iconographic Innovations of Tang Daoist Art in Sichuan Province." *Orientations* 28.8 (1997), pp. 90-92. For reproductions see *Zhongguo meishu quanji* 中國美術全集, *Diaosu bian* 雕塑編 *12*, *Sichuan shiku diaosu* 四川石窟雕塑. Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1988, p. 100.

Jiangzhou 江洲 (Jiangxi), he saw a clay image of Laojun accompanied by veritables and attendants, and a gold-plated bronze image of Xuanzong with the cap and dress of a Daoist priest, thus confirming the Xuanzong image in the Nanzhu guan.[26]

The Nanzhu guan sculptures of the Heavenly Court are a visual testimony of the close connection between the court and the Daoist clergy. The statues of Cave 40 were commissioned by a Daoist high priest, as recorded in a stele inscription on the west side of the assembly, an event further materialised by the two rows of donor figures in Daoist dress on the bottom lintel. Since Daoist priests received a land stipend from the state upon ordination, it could explain the wealth of the priest for commissioning such a cave and is further evidence how other monasteries in this period could have commissioned Heavenly Court paintings. The indirect imperial connection could then also explain the presence of the Xuanzong image.

The Transitional Phase also coincides with a long period of great social and economical changes taking place in China, changes that also had their bearing on the representation of the Heavenly Court. From the end of the Tang dynasty to the beginning of the Song dynasty in the tenth century, a period of division commonly referred to as the Five Dynasties (907-960), many new social classes emerged making Chinese society creating more social mobility and more socially complex. Technical innovations and greater economical independence gave rise to artisan and mercantile classes, while bureaucratic careers and master-student relationships ensuing from state examination preparations formed a powerful literati class. A wealthy bourgeois class of local landlords moved to the cities from where they managed their rural estates, especially in the Jiangnan 江南 area (the area of the lower Yangtze 長江 river) where new sorts of rice imported from South-East Asia caused bumper harvests and greatly enhanced the economical development of the area. In the meantime, the central power of the state was undermined by a change from conscription to private armies which in turn drained the treasury, and social and economical power was more and more transferred to the local level. In the religious field, the economic power of Buddhism was in a steep decline after the Huichang persecution of 844-845, that destroyed most of its monasteries and assets and sent its clergy back to lay-life. The Daoist ordination system supervised by the state had also declined, the Daoist priests - as ritual specialists – became more and more dependent on local communities and their wealthy leaders. In addition, many of the newly emerged social classes were organised in guilds and networks, often along strong religious lines, and in this new complex, socially instable constellation people vied with each

[26] Chun-shu Chang and Joan Smythe, *South China in the Twelfth Century: A Translation of Lu Yu's Travel Diaries July 3-December 6, 1170*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1977, p. 99.

other for social legitimation and recognition, a state of affairs under which the representation of the Heavenly Court also achieved a new role.

The new social state of affairs affected the whole nation but the artistic endeavours in the Sichuan area – then called Shu 蜀 Kingdom after the fall of the Tang – are particularly noted. One reason is that a detailed account of Shu painters and their activities from the late Tang and the Five Dynasties have survived in the *Yizhou minghua lu* 益州名畫錄 (Record of Famous Painters from Yizhou, preface dated 1009) by Huang Xiufu 黃休復 (end 10th – early 11th cent.).[27] Another is that the Shu kings saw themselves as the rightful heirs of the Tang legacy and employed Daoism as a state religion in the same vein as the Tang rulers, a feature that may be attributed to a single Daoist priest, Du Guangting 杜廣庭 (844-911), who was first in the service of the Tang court and after that of the Shu.[28] A third reason may be that because of two flights of the Tang court to Chengdu 成都 during the An Lushan 安祿山 rebellion of 755-756 and the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion of 878, it is often suggested that the court painters, or else large collections of paintings and calligraphies in the imperial collection, fled with them and that there was therefore a direct link between the painting traditions of the Tang and the Shu Kingdom, but without extant paintings from both traditions, this assumption remains very difficult to attest.[29] The *Yizhou minghua lu* contains two references to Heavenly Court painting, both of which are exemplary for the changing state of social affairs in this period.

The first is a reference to a Daoist Heavenly Court painting by the painter Zhang Nanben 張南本 (ca. 885). Highly indicative of the social changes that involved more and different classes of peoples in the commissioning of Heavenly Court paintings is the fact that this Heavenly Court painting is found in a Buddhist monastery, the Baoli si 寶歷寺 (Monastery of Cherishing History). The hall with the paintings is called the Water-and-Land Hall (*shuilu yuan* 水陸院), which is named after and intended for a famous type of Buddhist ritual, the Water-and-Land Assembly (*shuilu fahui* 水陸法會), a big offering ritual held in order to save all the creatures living in water or on land. Despite the Buddhist location and the

[27] *Yizhou minghua lu* 益州名畫錄, written by Huang Xiufu 黃休復 (end 10th – early 11th cent.), preface dated 1009. In Yun Gao 雲告(annotator), *Songren huaping* 宋任畫評. Changsha: Hunan renmin meishu chubanshe, 1999, 116-211.

[28] On Du Guangting and his role at the Shu Court, see Franciscus Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933) - Taoïste de cour a la fin de la Chine médiévale*. Paris: Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1989, and idem, "Liturgy and Sovereignty: The Role of Taoist Ritual in the Foundation of the Shu Kingdom (906-925). *Asia Major* 3rd series 2.1 (1989), pp. 59-78, and idem, "Shu as a Hallowed Land: Du Guangting's *Record of Marvels*." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 10 (1998), pp. 213-54.

[29] See Huang Xiufu's comments on this subject in his *Yizhou minghua lu* p. 143.

Buddhist rituals connected to the hall, Huang Xiufu's description of the paintings leaves no doubt that the contents are fully Daoist and completely tally with a Daoist Heavenly Court painting. He writes that Zhang Nanben painted "the images of the heavenly deities and earthly spirits, the Three Officials and Five Emperors (*sanguan wudi* 三官五帝), Father Thunder and Mother Lightning (*leigong dianmu* 雷公電母), the divine immortals of the Sacred Peaks and Marshes (*yuedu* 嶽瀆), and the emperors and kings of ancient times."[30] From another, slightly later text we know that the paintings were a set of hanging scrolls rather than murals, which means that the paintings were not permanent wall paintings but scroll paintings put on display only during the ritual in this specifically designated hall.[31] It must further be noted that this is the earliest known reference to Water-and-Land paintings, albeit only indirectly to the name of a hall, predating the earliest references to this typs of ritual in any Buddhist source.

The social-historical background of these Water-and-Land paintings is enormously complex. The Daoist subject-matter of the paintings suggests a Daoist origin of the paintings (and the ritual). In addition, despite their Buddhist connotation, it is fairly sure that the early Water-and-Land rituals were transmitted in a local oral tradition;[32] that is, not as an "official" Buddhist ritual but within the spheres of lay-Buddhists. In these spheres of lay-religion, there was less emphasis on orthodoxy and practices much more eclectic, as for example is demonstrated for lay-Buddhist-Daoism for the fifth century, and during the Five Dynasties, it were these lay movements that gained more power and influence resulting in the inclusion of

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[30] *Yizhou minghua lu* p. 139.

[31] This is inferred from the comment made by Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛 (last half of the 11th cent.) in his *Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞志. In Mi Tianshui 米田水 (annotator), *Tuhua jianwenzhi*, *Huaji* 圖畫見聞志, 畫繼. Changsha: Hunan meishu renmin chubanshe, 2000, p. 58. The passage in question explains that the paintings in circulation in the Song attributed to Zhang Nanben were in fact copies made of Zhang Nanben's originals and then replaced. cf. Alexander C. Soper, *Kuo Jo-Hsü's Experiences in Painting.* Washington: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951, p. 25. Marsha Weidner and Daniel B. Stevenson both assume that Zhang Nanben painted one hundred-twenty scrolls – a number also witnessed in later references to the number of Water-and-Land paintings – but this is probably inferred from misreading a sentence in the *Yizhou minghua lu* where the number should belong to the next sentence: "in Shu [Kingdom] he [painted] in all the temples altogether over one hundred-twenty paintings 蜀中諸廟一百二十餘幀. " *Yizhou minghua lu* p. 139. See Marsha Weidner (ed.), *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850-1850*. Kansas: Spencer Museum of Art, 1994, p. 282 and Daniel B. Stevenson, "Text, Image, and Transformation in the History of the *Shuilu fahui*, the Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of the Creatures of Water and Land." Marsha Weidner (ed.), *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*. Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press, 2001, p. 38.

[32] The early history of the Buddhist Water-and-Land ritual (*shuilu fahui*) is precarious. It is discussed in Makita Tairyô 牧田諦亮, *Chûgoku bukkyôshi kenkyû* 中國佛教史研究 (Study on the History of Buddhism in China). Tokyo: Taitô, 1984, pp. 213-223, Weidner, *Latter Days of the Law*, pp. 280-282, Michel Strickmann**,** *Mantras et mandarins. Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine.* Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1996, pp. 369-411, and Stevenson, "Text, Image, and Transformation." The study by Petra Klose on the *shuilu* ritual and its paintings is, albeit comprehensive, outdated, believing that the Water-and-Land ritual, or some prototype of it, originated with Emperor Wu of the Liang (502-549) simply following the legend that Buddhist sources state on its origin. Petra Klose, "Der *Shuilu* Ritus and seine Bilder." PhD Dissertation, Heidelberg University, 1992. The general consensus is that the *shuilu* ritual emerged during the tenth century or perhaps a bit earlier.

not only there deities in the Daoist and Buddhist pantheons but apparently also their rituals for which even specific halls were built in the monastery complex. The name of the monastery, "cherishing history," and the inclusion of portraits of "former emperors and kings," which undoubtedly denote the uninterrupted transmission of imperial sovereignty from previous dynasties to the Shu rulers, furthermore suggest that the site also functioned as a quasi-state temple, adding an imperial connotation to the paintings.[33] We may therefore surmise that the Daoist Heavenly Court travelled far beyond its own social and religious boundaries and was adapted by Buddhists, lay people, as well as members of the Shu court.

A second reference in the *Yizhou minghua lu* pertains to a set of Heavenly Court paintings painted by the Daoist priest-painter Zhang Suqing 張素卿 (fl. 845-927) in the Zhangren guan 仗人觀 (Monastery of the Senior) on Mt. Qingcheng 青城山 (Sichuan) employed by the Shu rulers for state legitimating purposes, this time not to purport a genealogy between past rulers and the Shu kings as in the Baoli si painting, but by asserting a claim on imperial sovereignty.[34] Zhang Suqing painted the Five Sacred Peak deities[35] – the deities of the five holy mountains of China, each one ruling over one dominion of the five directions – going on audience with the deity of Mt. Qingcheng, normally an auxiliary mountain to the Five Sacred Peaks but by the Shu rulers, in oblique reference to themselves, designated as the Sacred Peaks' senior. Huang Xiufu gives a short description of the murals: "The first ruler of the Shu kingdom, Wang Jian 王建 (r. 908-918) had the Zhangren Monastery at Mt. Qingcheng repaired and invited Zhang Suqing to paint the Hall of True Lord Zhangren with the images of the deities of the five Sacred Peaks and the four Sacred Streams, the twelve Brook Maidens, mountains and forests, water torrents and trees and bushes, as well as the Officials and Messengers of the Peaks and Streams. Strange and bewildering forms sprang from the tip of his brush, and nobody who went up the hall and saw the images was not struck with fear."[36] This Heavenly Court painting undoubtedly repeats a standard tradition in Daoist wall paintings in the five Sacred Peak temples – and probably the

[33] The imperial connotation is further corroborated by overall contents of the Baoli si murals which in my reckoning suggest that they were painted for the performance of a Golden Register Retreat (*jinlu zhai* 金籙齋), a Daoist ritual held for the benefit of the emperor and the state which also had its basis in the disposition (and depiction) of the deities of the five directions. For example a comparison of the contents of the Baoli si murals with the deities portrayed in the Beiyue miao murals shows a great overlap in focus and function.

[34] On the painter Zhang Suqing and the Zhangren guan murals, see Evelyne Mesnil, "Zhang Suqing et la peinture taoïste a Shu." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9 (1996-1997).

[35] The Five Sacred Peaks are China's holy mountains located in the four directions and in the centre, called Taishan 泰山 (east, Shandong), Hengshan 衡山 (south, Hunan), Huashan 華山 (west, Shaanxi), Hengshan 恆山 (north, Hebei), and Songshan 嵩山 (centre, Henan). For a discussion of these mountains in Chinese art, see Munakata Kiyohiko, *Sacred Mountains in Chinese Art*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

[36] *Yizhou minghua lu* p. 131, Mesnil, "Zhang Suqing," pp. 133-134.

same tradition from which Wu Daozi found inspiration for the Laozi temple murals on Mt. Beimang - which were also the venue of Daoist rituals since they were officially placed under the supervision of the Daoist clergy by an imperial decree of 721.[37] The Zhangren guan murals are however heavily politicised and as representations of an ideal that the Shu kings would be the future rulers of China deeply imbedded in sentiments of local identity, thus making them apt illustrations of the social changes taking place during the late Transitional Phase. Heavenly Court paintings were no longer only representations of supernatural and cosmological realms but also political statements with claims on imperial sovereignty.

The two examples curiously do not give evidence of local deities incorporated in the Daoist Heavenly Court painting, and it seems that the general representation remained fairly consistent over the period. The *Yizhou minghua lu* however gives evidence of a gradual emergence of such local deities in the spheres of Daoist art and liturgy but still separated from the Heavenly Court painting. One example are the so-called Four Saints (*sisheng* 四聖) who became stock-in-trade images, and even the beginning of a whole new type of deities in Heavenly Court painting. The *Yizhou minghua lu* records that Cheng Chengbian 程乘辯 (fl. 935-965) painted one hall of the Dongming guan 洞明觀 (Monastery of Cavern Light) images of "Tianpeng, Black Killer, Dark Warrior, and Fire Bell" (*tianpeng* 天蓬, *heisha* 黑殺, *xuanwu* 玄武, *huoling* 火鈴)[38] We know from their later images that they are represented as frightening warrior deities with multiple arms and heads, weapons, barefooted, wild flowing hair, fangs, and bulging eyes in the case of Tianpeng and Tianyou, and as barefooted generals with long hair and holding a sword in the case of Dark Warrior (from the Song onward renamed True Warrior, *zhenwu* 真武) and Black Killer. Fire Bell is otherwise unknown but later replaced by another terrifying figure called Tianyou 天猷. They are basically the protective gods of exorcists and shamans who are invoked to quell, expel or destroy demons hold responsible for illness, natural disasters, etc. Due to the localisation of economical power and the disintegration of the Daoist ordination system and monastery network at the end of the Tang, Daoist clergy had to compete with many other and new ritual specialists offering the same kind of remedies and catering to the same local communities. Several new Daoist lineages emerged, many of them specialised in exorcist rites, thus taking over existing local deities or promoting new ones cast in traditional Daoist ritual lore. The fact that the Four

[37] *Tang huiyao* 唐會要, compiled by Wang Pu 王溥 (822-882). Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1991, p. 1029. The passage is translated in Édouard Chavannes, "Le jet de dragons." Senart (ed.), *Mémoires concernant l'Asie orientale*. Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1919, p. 200, n. 24.
[38] *Yizhou minghua lu* p. 184.

Saints were painted in a separate hall in the Dongming guan underlines their alien and local background.

The *Yizhou minghua lu* also gives evidence of another new feature gradually emerging in Daoist ritual art and which would soon become, or perhaps already was, a standard asset of Daoist Heavenly Court painting, namely images of stellar deities. The texts makes several references to paintings of stellar deities in the biographies of painters. For example, Zhang Suqing also painted the Five Planets (*wuxing* 五星) and the Old Man Star (*laoren xing* 老人星) and Shi Ke 石恪 (active tenth century) also painted the Five Planets, the Southern and Northern Dippers (*nanbeidou* 南北斗) as well as the Long Life Star (*shouxing* 壽星, the same as the Old Man Star).[39] It is unsure how these stellar deities were introduced into Daoist art and eventually into the Daoist Heavenly Court. Daoism knows stellar deities for long but these do not seem to appear in Heavenly Court paintings before the Transitional Phase. The imperial state cult worships stellar deities on the Altar to Heaven since the Han dynasty, and the utilisation of Daoism as a state religion initiated by Tang Emperor Xuanzong must have led to a fusion of state cult deities into the Daoist cult, meaning that Daoist priests took over or doubled ritual responsibilities normally supervised by Confucian ritual specialists. On the other hand, local cults may also have a hand in their rise since many stellar deities are connected to exorcism.[40]

The Four Saints would eventually be hierarchised under the power of the Northern Pole Star (*beiji* 北極 or *beidi* 北帝), since old the celestial equivalent of the Chinese emperor on earth, and become one powerful exorcistic force reigning over the northern quadrant. The precise origin of stellar deities and their ritual practices need further study. The stellar deities are nevertheless perfect examples of the growing complexity of Chinese society and the coping of Daoist religion in dealing with these complexities.

The importance of stellar deities during the Transitional Phase is documented more clearly in a later source, the *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜, the catalogue of the imperial painting collection of Emperor Huizong (r. 1101-1125) during the Xuanhe-period (1119-1125). It lists a total of 218 titles for paintings of Daoist deities and immortals by 37 painters from the sixth to the eleventh centuries, and incorporated in Table 2.2 in Appendix 2. The majority of the deities listed are stellar deities indicating that such paintings were fairly common and may have been used in ritual layouts of the Daoist altar. Some of the exorcist deities such as

[39] *Yizhou minghua lu* pp. 131, 180.
[40] I will come back to this issue in the next chapter on ritual foundations.

Tianpeng and Zhenwu are also mentioned. We should however be careful to draw any further conclusions from the table, because attributions may be incorrect, the catalogue probably reflects the preferences of collectors rather than the veritable situation of Daoist deity paintings for each period, and some deities such as the Five Planets are also common to Buddhism. The catalogue's exact value for the history of Heavenly Court painting is perhaps difficult to determine, but it remains however a valuable document on a thriving painting tradition of early Daoist deities, paintings of which sadly not a single one has survived.

The several tendencies lined out above culminated at the end of the tenth century in a representation of the Daoist Heavenly Court incorporating standard Daoist deities such as veritables, immortals, golden boys and jade maidens, the Three Officials and Five Emperors, but which was expanded with the Four Saints of the local cults and various stellar deities of the state cult or otherwise such as the Five Planets, the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions (28 *xiu* 宿), the Twelve Zodiacal Palaces (12 *gong* 宮), the Northern and Southern Dippers, the Five Sacred Peaks and Four Sacred Marshes (*wuyue sidu* 五嶽四瀆), and some traditional deities such as those of lightning and thunder. It can hardly be assumed that this is a perfect linear development, but we at least have evidence that in the tenth century Heavenly Court paintings existed pertaining to this subject-matter. We have evidence from a Northern Song art critic, Li Zhi 李廌 (1059-1109), who wrote the *Hua pin* 畫品 (Evaluations on Painting), a descriptive catalogue of the private collection of an imperial family member.[41] It contains two descriptions of such unified Heavenly Court paintings.

The first painting is titled "[Emperor of] Purple Tenuity [Heaven] Holding Audience" (*Ziwei chaohui tu* 紫微朝會圖) and was painted by Zhang Tu 張圖 (active in the first half of the tenth century).[42] Li Zhi provides the details: "The Emperor is dressed in a ceremonial robe and clasps a jade tablet in front of his chest while [the deities of] the Five Planets, the two Luminaries (Sun and Moon), the Seven Primes, and the Four Saints attend him on his left and right. The deities of the Twelve Zodiacal Palaces and the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions each take up positions behind them. They descend carried by clouds, their faces grave and respectful, their robes majestic and elaborate. The Daoists say that just as the Great Jade

[41] *Hua pin* 畫品, written by Li Zhi 李廌 (1059-1109). In Yun Gao 雲告(annotator), *Songren huaping* 宋任畫評. Changsha: Hunan renmin meishu chubanshe, 1999, pp. 241-273. pp. 241-273. Translated in Alexander C. Soper, "A Northern Sung Descriptive Catalogue of Paintings. (The Hua P'in of Li Ch'ih)." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 69.1 (1949), pp. 18-33.

[42] According to the *Tuhua jianwen zhi* p. 77, translated in Soper, *Experiences in Painting*, p. 32, Zhang Tu once held a position at the Later Liang 候梁 (907-923) court of the Five Dynasties, which would mean that he lived during the first half of the tenth century.

August Emperor is the Son of Heaven for all the immortals, so the Great Heavenly Emperor of Purple Tenuity is the Son of Heaven for all the stars. If one observes this painting, one readily understands the meaning of the proper relationship between ruler and subject. From the top of the Nine Heavens, he never falters."[43]

The second painting is titled "Jade Emperor Holding Audience" (*Yuhuang chaohui tu* 玉皇朝會圖) and painted by Shi Ke, the aforementioned follower of Zhang Nanben. Li Zhi records that the painting consisted of images of "heavenly immortals and numinous officials, golden boys and jade maidens, the Three Officials, Taiyi 太一 (Great One), the Seven Primes (of the Northern Dipper), the Four Saints, the Planets and Lunar Mansions of all directions, the deities of wind, rain, thunder, and lightning, the Lords of the Sacred Peaks and Marshes, as well as the rulers above and underground, who all gather around the seat of the Emperor. The Great Jade August Heavenly Emperor sits upright facing south while the audience of Veritables lift their heads in wonderful expectation. Anyone seeing [this painting] feels bright and aloof as if present in the Hall of Penetrating Light (*tongming dian* 通明殿)." Li Zhi adds the detail that Shi Ke, always keen on playing distateful jokes, portrayed the Official of Water with a crab hanging from his belt, a gesture not very appreciated by his superiors.[44]

It is not known when these paintings were painted and if they were done after wall paintings. There may be a small possibility that both painters, or perhaps only one of them, decorated the halls of a Daoist state temple built in 977 on Mt. Zhongnan 終南山 (Shaanxi 陝西) on the order of Emperor Taizong 太宗 (976-997) in the Shangqing taiping gong 上清太平宮 (Palace of Great Peace from Highest Purity [Heaven]). It was dedicated to Black Killer, one of the Four Saints and who was the protective deity of the Song, and from this deity's hagiography preserved in the *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven Bamboosslips in the Bookbag of the Clouds), a Northern Song Daoist encyclopedia, we know that the temple complex comprised a hall to the Jade Emperor called Tongming dian and a hall to the North Pole Emperor called Ziwei dian 紫微殿, reminiscent of the two paintings by Zhang Tu and Shi Ke; the text also states that there were wall paintings but gives no details.[45] In addition, Shi Ke is known to have been commissioned to paint murals in other Song state temples such as the Buddhist Xiangguo si 相國寺 (Monastery of the Realm of Xiang) after his native Shu had

[43] *Hua pin*, p. 263; cf. Soper, "Descriptive Catalogue," pp. 27-28.
[44] *Hua pin*, pp. 259-260; cf. Soper, "Descriptive Catalogue," pp. 26-27.
[45] *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 DZ 1032, j. 103, compiled by Zhang Junfang 張君房 (11th cent.).

been conquered by the Song and many of its painters were enlisted by the Song court.[46] The case of Zhang Tu seems less plausible because he would have been over seventy years old in 977. If one or two of the paintings were sketches or miniature copies of wall paintings of the Shangqing taiping gong, and because we know that such sketches were preserved in the palace, it could explain how they ended up in the private collection of an imperial family member.[47]

During the Transitional Phase, the Daoist Heavenly Court was gradually transformed from a single or triple deity assembly accompanied by veritables and immortals set in a blissful landscape setting to an impressive court audience of royal figures. A Daoist, supernatural representation had slowly given way to an imperial representation, and small numbers of deities were expanded with hosts of other deities who were chiefly organised and depicted in groups. This transformation, which should basically be interpreted as an imperialisation of Daoist art, was completed in the tenth century and would become the main characteristic of Daoist Heavenly Court representations in the Middle Phase and even to the present day.

Middle Phase, 1000-1400

The Northern Song court was one of the greatest sponsors of Daoist wall painting and it commissioned a great many Heavenly Court paintings for Daoist state temples erected in the capital Bianliang 汴梁 (Kaifeng 開封 in Henan) and in the provinces. Many written records survive, comprising art critical texts, official history writings and some stele inscriptions, from which the themes and contents of the temple paintings can be reconstructed and in several cases even can be assigned with painters' names. Most of the temple projects have in common that they were instigated as part of a larger project of providing the state with a powerful vehicle for state legitimation.

Daoist temple projects were initiated under Emperor Taizong (r. 976-997), the second emperor of the Northern Song, such as the aforementioned Shangqing taiping gong at Mt. Zhongnan, but state-sponsored temple building took a flight under Song Emperor Zhenzong

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[46] Shi Ke also painted murals in the Buddhist Xiangguo si. *Tuhua jianwen zhi*, p. 121, cf. Soper, *Experiences in Painting*, p. 49. On the Xiangguo si and its murals, see Alexander C. Soper, "Hsiang-Kuo-Ssu. An Imperial Temple of Northern Sung." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 68.1 (1948), pp. 19-45; Duan Yuming 段玉明, *Xianguo si: zai Tang Song diguo de shensheng yu fansu zhijian* 相國寺: 在唐宋帝國的神聖與凡俗之間. Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2004; Emanuelle Lesbre, "Étude topologique et thématique des scènes peintes dans les galeries du Xiangguo si sous les Song du Nord." *Sanjiao wenxian* 4 (2005), pp. 141-163.

[47] On sketches kept in the Song palace, see Xu Bangda 徐邦達, "Cong bihua fuben xiaoyang shuodao liangjuan Song hua – Chaoyuan xianzhang tu 從壁畫副本小樣說到兩卷宋畫: 朝元仙仗圖." *Wenwu* 文物 2 (1956), pp. 56-57.

真宗 (r. 998-1022) who issued a whole series of political and religious measures, very reminiscent of those issued by Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756) of the Tang, with the aim of installing Daoism as a state religion and providing it with a network of monasteries maintained by the state and overseen by state officials. Most of the measures were preceded by a miraculous event initiating the measures. The measures were almost in every case followed by large temple building projects of which temple paintings, and in particular those of the Daoist Heavenly Court, were an integral part. I will highlight here two such events.

In 1008, a yellow silk scroll had descended from the sky, interpreted as a Heavenly Text (*tianshu* 天書) announcing Heaven's approval of Emperor Zhenzong's rule. In order to give the celestial text a suitable place for veneration, Zhenzong ordered the building of an enormous temple complex, possibly one of the largest in entire Chinese history, the Yuqing zhaoying gong 玉清昭應宮 (Palace of Bright Response from Jade Purity [Heaven]).[48] Furthermore, the next year Zhenzong ordered a Tianqing guan 天慶觀 (Monastery of Heaven's Celebration) to be built in every county throughout the empire where on set dates, selected as national holidays, Daoist priests would perform offering rituals.[49] In the Yuqing Zhaoying gong, lavish murals decorated the walls of the temple complex and historical records mention that some three thousand painters were invited from all over the empire for this task; from these three thousand painters eventually one hundred were selected to grace the walls with murals, their numbers underscoring the scale and magnitude of this particular project. The records further mention that Wu Zongyuan 武宗元 (d. 1050) and Wang Zhuo 王拙, both followers of Wu Daozi of the Tang and belonging to the best muralists of their time, were in charge of the left and right groups and responsible for the murals of the east and west walls respectively. The hall had wall paintings depicting a Daoist Heavenly Court, since we know that Wang Zhuo painted a mural with "Five Hundred Numinous Officials and an Assembly of Heavenly Maidens on Audience with the Origin" (*wubai lingguan zhong tiannü chaoyuan* 五百靈官眾天女朝元) on the west wall.[50] From this we can further infer that Wu

[48] On this temple and the Heavenly Text affair, see Suzanne E. Cahill, "Taoism at the Sung Court: The Heavenly Text Affair of 1008." *Bulletin of Sung and Yüan Studies* 16 (1981), pp. 23-44, Wang Shengfeng 汪聖鋒, *Song Zhenzong* 宋真宗. Jilin: Wenshi chubanshe, 1996, pp. 87-115, and Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, pp. 67-68.

[49] *Tianqing guan bei* 天慶觀碑, no author, dated 1015. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 249-250.

[50] See *Songchao minghua ping* 宋朝名畫評, by Liu Daochun 劉道醇 (11th cent.), before 1059. In Yun Gao 雲告 (annotator), *Songren huaping* 宋任畫評. Changsha: Hunan renmin meishu chubanshe, 1999, pp. 15-16, 49, translated in Charles Lachman, *Evaluations of Sung Dynasty Painters of Renown: Liu Tao-ch'un's* Sung-ch'ao ming-hua p'ing. Leiden: Brill, 1989, pp. 25-27, 51.

Zongyuan would have painted the other half of the Heavenly Court on the east wall, but its title is not recorded. The temple was destroyed by fire in 1029.

Most intriguingly, a long handscroll now in the C.C. Wang Collection, New York, attributed to Wu Zongyuan and titled *Chaoyuan xianzhang tu* (Painting of Immortals and Seniors on Audience with the Origin) could be related to the murals of the Yuqing zhaoying gong; it is also our oldest example of a Daoist Heavenly Court painting (See Plate 12).[51] It is a drawing on a long scroll in ink on silk, basically a design.[52] and depicts a procession of two deities assisted by officials and court ladies (i.e. golden boys and jade maidens in Daoist terminology) and guarded in the front and rear by fierce warriors crossing a bridge; the majority of the figures are accompanied by a colophon identifying their titles. Another version, presumably a copy of the first one but without the colophons, on paper and with a few figures less, is kept in the Xu Beihong Museum in Beijing. Since the deities all face left, or the northern direction in a Heavenly Court composition, we can conclude that the sketch depicts a scene intended for an east wall, the same wall Wu Zongyuan did at the Yuqing zhaoying gong, and if the attribution to Wu Zongyuan is correct, the scroll would be a valuable example of what the murals in one of China's largest and most prestigious temples may have looked like.

Worthy of note, a *chaoyuan tu* (Painting of Going on Audience with the Origin) would become the standard name for Heavenly Court painting in China from this period on. This name does not appear in textual sources before the eleventh century.

Another major event that led to the sponsoring of large temple building projects was the apparition in a dream to Emperor Zhenzong in 1012 of the Song imperial family's first ancestor, Holy Ancestor (*shengzu* 聖祖), the title of the Yellow Emperor.[53] Consequently, the emperor ordered the building of two temples, both called Jingling gong 景靈宮 (Palace of the Radiant Divine), one in the capital Bianliang and one in the birthplace of the Yellow Emperor, Shouqiu 壽丘 near Qufu 曲阜 (Shandong), the home of Confucius and his ancestral temple. The temple in Kaifeng was modelled after the Taiqing gong of the Tang dynasty, the Daoist ancestral temple of the Tang imperial family substituting the Confucian ancestral temple

[51] The title of the Wu Zongyuan scroll is found in the entry on Wu Zongyuan in the *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜, no author, dated to 1119-1125. In Yue Ren 嶽仁 (annotator), *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜. Changsha: Hunan meishu chubanshe, 1999, p. 99. The attribution to Wu Zongyuan is made in a colophon by the Yuan scholar and artist Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (1254-1322) who apparently took the title from the *Xuanhe huapu*. The scroll is reproduced in *Zhongguo meishu quanji* 中國美術全集, *Huihua bian* 繪畫編 *3, Songdai huihua* 宋代繪畫. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1987, pp.19-24.

[52] I will deal with the question of designs in detail in chapter three.

[53] On the identification of Holy Ancestor with the Yellow Emperor, see the stele inscription *Taiji guan tizi erzhong* 太極觀題自二種, no author, dated 1015. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 248-249. For the official title of the Holy Ancestor, see the stele inscription *Tianqing guan bei*, Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 249-250.

(*taimiao* 太廟), and would fulfil that same function in the Song.[54] The Yuqing zhaoying gong was expanded with a hall to the Holy Ancestor in the same year, as were the Tianqing guan. The Jingling gong in the capital was profusely decorated with narrative and historical scenes, and although no concrete information is known about any Heavenly Court paintings in the Jingling gong, the fact that Daoist priests supervised the rituals in the hall to the Holy Ancestor suggests that, like a traditional Three Purities hall, the hall had murals depicting a Heavenly Court.[55] After all, the Saint Emperor was considered a Daoist deity. The Tianqing guan also had murals and although concrete evidence on their subject-matter is lacking, a stele inscription indicates that the halls were decorated with statues and paintings of "Heavenly Emperors" (*tiandi* 天帝) who are Daoist deities.[56]

It is important to note that Emperor Zhenzong also had his portrait statues as well as those of his predecessors incorporated in many of these temples and thus started a personality cult in imitation of Tang Emperor Xuanzong.[57] This example was also continued by his successors.

Daoist state temples continued to be built and decorated with murals after the reign of Zhenzong. A stele inscription on one of these later projects, the Zhong Taiyi gong 中太醫宮 (Palace to the Great One of the Centre) built in 1073 under Emperor Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1068-1085), records some important views on Daoist Heavenly Court painting in this period rarely seen elsewhere. The text reads: "The four walls of the halls and corridors were painted with an audience of hundreds of deities, from heaven the Five Emperors, the Sun and Moon, and the Planets and Constellations, from earth the Five Sacred Peaks and Four Sacred Marshes, none of whom was not taking a position according to his rank and title. The differentiation in clothes and attributes of high and low rank, the altar layout, and the rites for making prayers and sacrifices, all took the teachings on [the divination of] the Great One (*taiyi*) 太一 as their basis and were supplemented with the sayings of Daoism." The inscription further specifies that because the (Confucian) rites had declined, the methods of diviners had come into use

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[54] *Shiwu jiyuan* 事物記源, written by Gao Cheng 高乘 (fl. 1078-1085) and revised by Li Guo 李果 (15th cent.). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1989, p. 364.

[55] *Yangzhou Tianqing guan shengzu dian ji* 洋州天慶觀聖祖殿記, by Wei Liaoweng 魏了翁, 1214. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 398-399, and *Yuhai* 玉海, compiled by Wang Yinglin 王應麟 (1223-1296), j. 100. In *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, *Yingyin wenyuan ge* 影印文淵閣 edition, 1983, Vol. 945, p. 651.

[56] *Guangzhou chongxiu Tianqing guan ji* 光週天慶觀記, by Dihua Jialuo 地華伽囉, dated 1080. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 287.

[57] For imperial portraiture during the Song dynasty, with references to the personality cult of Zhenzong, see Patricia Ebrey, "Portrait Sculptures in Imperial Ancestral Rites in Song China." *T'oung Pao* 83 (1997), pp. 42-92.

and "that the images [of the deities] were depicted according to the [sayings of] Daoism, for which were used the differentiations between their ranks and titles, clothes and attributes, and the methods of their altars and rites for making prayers and sacrifices."[58]

The inscription underscores some important elements in the representation of the Daoist Heavenly Court in the Middle Phase. It rightly acknowledges the direct link between the images of Daoist deity images and the layout of the Daoist altar and Daoist liturgy; it further stresses the imperial representation of the deities who are dressed according to their ranks, and indeed, most of the deities stemmed from the state cult and were worshipped on the Altars to Heaven and Earth. Although the grouping of deities is not new, the author's emphasis on a hierarchical structure, the differentiation between high and low, is however a view not borne out in Heavenly Court representations and their descriptions of the Early and Transitional Phases, which chiefly pertain to a cosmological order. This emphasis on hierarchy in Heavenly Court painting should be seen as a result of the merging of the Daoist and state cults, a phenomenon which I termed above the imperialisation of Daoist art and which thus comprises not only the aspect of Daoist deities taking on an imperial appearance but also their organisation in a hierarchical order.[59]

The fervour and support of the Northern Song emperors for Daoism remained largely unchanged. This support reached a climax under Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101-1125) who finished the task set by his forebear Zhenzong and installed Daoism as a state religion, a feat symbolised by the official merging of the highest (Confucian) state cult deity, the Emperor-on-High (*shangdi* 上帝), with the Daoist Jade Emperor (*yudi* 玉帝 or *yuhuang* 玉皇) in 1116.[60] In the same or next year, Huizong was told by Lin Lingsu 林靈素 (1075-1119), a ritual specialist of the Divine Empyrean (*shenxiao* 神霄) thunder rites, that he (Huizong) was a reincarnation of a Daoist deity, the Great Emperor of Long Life (*changsheng dadi* 長生大帝), basically another name for the South Pole Emperor (*nanji* 南極) who is traditionally associated with long life, thus merging the Daoist celestial spheres with the terrestrial spheres even further. In 1118 and 1119, the Buddhists were also subsumed under this Daoist state

[58] *Song Zhong Taiyi gong beiming* 宋中太乙宮碑銘, by Lü Huiqing 呂惠卿, dated 1073. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 282-283.

[59] The hierarchical order and proper positions of deities on the Altar of Heaven was one of the main preoccupation of Confucian ritualists during the Tang and Song periods, see *Song shi* 宋史, compiled by Tuotuo 脫脫 (1315-1355). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977, j. 104, p. 2436.

[60] *Song shi* j. 104, p. 2543. Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962-1025), in his hagiography of the Black Killer of 1016, the *Yisheng baode zhenjun zhuan* 翊聖保德真君傳, already hints at the merging of the Emperor-on-High with the Jade Emperor, but this was never officially recognised. *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032, chapter 103.

model when Buddhist deities and monks were all renamed in Daoist fashion and even ordered to dress as Daoist deities or priests, which made them virtually indistinguishable from Daoists, or at least that was the aim.[61] Although Huizong's goal was undoubtedly the unification of China under one ideology, rather than three conflicting and opposing teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism), his efforts were met with fierce resistance and were not continued. Huizong's support for Daoism was also translated in many temple building projects but not much is known about their mural decorations. He also ordered grand ritual reforms which would have an effect on the representation of the Heavenly Court but this topic will be addressed in chapter two.

In 1127, the Northern Song capital Kaifeng fell to the invading Jurchen and the Song court fled to Hangzhou where it established the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). The Southern Song emperors showed less favour to Daoism, or at least, their favour was not translated in large temple projects as their ancestors had done. Clearly, Daoism had lost its leading role in the state legitimation efforts of the Southern Song emperors (Daoism was of course easy to blame for the fall of the Northern Song). Only the first Southern Song emperor, Gaozong 高宗 (r. 1127-1162), is known to have initiated large temple projects, the building of a Jingling gong in 1143 and a Taiyi gong 1147, the last of which had 195 images comprising amongs others the Three Sovereigns (*sanhuang* 三皇), the Five Emperors, the Eleven Luminaries, and the local True Officials; Gaozong also personally wrote the calligraphy of the title board.[62]

Whereas Daoist temple paintings depicting a Heavenly Court on the state level are very well documented for the Song era, their presence on the local level is almost absent in the historical record, both in official texts and in stele inscriptions. The vast corpus of Song poetry and "pen jottings" (*biji* 筆記) still remain a largely unexplored source of information in this respect.

The lack of textual references is remedied by a sole surviving and, presumably, non-state-sponsored representation of a Heavenly Court carved in stone in Sichuan and dating to the end of the Northern Song dynasty. Cave 4 of the Yuhuang guan 玉皇觀 (Jade Emperor Monastery) at Nanshan 南山near Dazu 大足 is shaped as a temple hall with a two-tiered niche occupying the centre ornamented with the Three Purities and two imperial figures on the top tier and four imperial figures and four donors on the lower tier; donor figures also

[61] On Huizong and Daoism, see Patricia Ebrey, "Taoism and Art at the Court of Song Huizong." Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 94-111.
[62] *Yuhai*, j. 100, *Siku quanshu* Vol. 945, pp. 656-657.

decorate the side posts of the central niche (see Fig. 2). The east flank of the niche has further a carving of an imperial figure escorted by an entourage on a cloud above, and a large coiled dragon below. The east, west, and north (behind the niche) walls of the cave are carved with 365 official and general figures (only 231 have survived due to damages) in six tiers, and twelve small niches with representations of the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions (*shi'er shengxiao* 十二生消) arranged vertically on opposite walls adjacent to the entrance. The six imperial figures, four male and two female, are generally referred to as the Six Sovereigns (*liuyu* 六御) but scholars differ on their identities. The Six Sovereigns may either represent August Heaven (*tianhuang*), North Pole (*beiji*), Jade Emperor (*yuhuang*), Earth Goddess (*houtu*), Holy Ancestor (*shengzu*) and Holy Mother (*shengmu*); or idem, but the last two replaced with King Father of the East (*dongwanggong*) and Queen Mother of the West (*xiwangmu*).[63] Iconographical attributes are lacking for precise identification. The entrance of the hall is marked by two stone pillars carved with coiling dragons.[64]

The Yuhuang guan illustrates two important aspects of Heavenly Court representation during the Middle Phase. First, the addition of six imperial figures presiding together with the Three Purities over the Heavenly Court. At the end of the Northern Song dynasty, the number of imperial figures was even expanded to nine, the Nine Sovereigns (*jiuyu* 九御or *jiuhuang* 九皇), but both combinations were used during the Middle Phase, although there has been a preference for the Six Sovereigns (mainly in North and West China). Such sovereigns are not witnessed in the Early or Transitional Phase Heavenly Court paintings. Some of them have a Daoist history but others are clearly introduced from the state cult. Secondly, the patron of the sculptures was a local landlord and his family from Dazu, also responsible for several other sites – both Daoist and Buddhist – in the Dazu area, and belonging to the new class of wealthy landowners making their fortunes by managing their land and estates from their city residences rather than from homes in the countryside.[65] They too represent a new exponent of the social changes that had been taking place during the ninth and tenth centuries and had solidified during the Northern Song. In the Song period, these kind of families, not only local landowners but also local warlords, had taken charge of Daoist monastery building in the

[63] See Hu, *Daojiao shike*, Vol. 2 pp. 265-267, and Jing, "The Yongle Palace," pp. 245-248.
[64] The cave, measuring 5.08 m. in width, 5.58 m. in depth, and 3.91 m. in height, is discussed in Hu Wenhe 胡文和, *Sichuan daojiao, fojiao shiku yishu* 四川道教佛教石窟藝術. Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1994, pp. 99, 190, 197-198, Hu, *Daojiao shike*, Vol. 2 pp. 88, 99-115, 116, and Jing, "The Yongle Palace," pp. 234-249.
[65] The patrons are identified in an inscription: "He Zhengyan 何正言 (d. 1154) and his wife née Yang 楊 donated the land and excavated the hill to gain merits; Zhang Quan and his wife née Zhao excavated the hill and cave." The family background of the first couple and their other artistic exploits are discussed in Jing, "The Yongle Palace," pp. 236-238.

provinces, taking over the role of the state; the pillars with coiling dragons that are normally a sign of imperial stature in Chinese architecture, could be understood as a representation of local landlords enhancing their status and position with imperial regalia, of which the Daoist Heavenly Court as a whole was of course a most shining example.[66]

The imperial representation of deities under the aegis of the Song court was not only restricted to the Daoist Heavenly Court but also extended to the level of local deities that had emerged during the Transitional Phase. Local deities were granted noble titles such as duke or prince and received state offerings and financial aid thereby incorporating them in a nation-wide network of a sacrificial system that started at the court with the sacrifices at the Altars of Heaven and Earth and went down via the City God temples (*chenghuang miao* 城隍廟) and Earth God shrines (*tudi ci* 土地祠) to the local deities. Local deities were promoted on the basis of their numinous power (*ling* 靈) to response to prayers and perform miracles. These numinous acts were verified and reported to the throne upon which a title was granted. This practice started during the mid Northern Song dynasty and reached a peak under Emperor Huizong but continued unabated in the Southern Song.[67] One consequence of the promotion of a deity, considered as an honour by a local community petitioning for it at court, was that the deity's dress but also his temple would be adjusted to a level befitting his new status, and although Song examples of local deities are hard to come by, the imperial representation became a compulsory asset in the depiction of local deities – sometimes in strange hybrid forms – in the Later Period. The spheres of the Daoist pantheon and the popular pantheon however remained firmly separated in the Middle Phase.

Early images of several important local deities of the Song and Yuan are incorporated in the woodblock prints of the *Xinbian lianxiang soushen guangji* 新編連相搜神廣記 (Newly Edited and Fully Illustrated Complete Recording of the Search for the Gods), edited by Tai Zijin 泰子晉and printed in Fuzhou 福州 in the Yuan dynasty, but only few of them are actually found in Heavenly Court paintings of this period or in textual references thereof (See Fig. 3).[68] One reason may be that that these deities often belong to the new Daoist lineages of exorcists (*fashi* 法師, "master of rites") that emerged during the Song but who did not

[66] Similar coiling dragons on entrance pillars are found in the imperially-sponsored Jinci 晉祠 (Jin Shrine) near Taiyuan (Shanxi). Nancy Steinhardt, "Taoist Architecture." Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 63. For a detailed study of this site's architecture, see Tracy G. Miller, "Water Spirits and Ancestor Spirits: Reading the Architecture of Jinci." *The Art Bulletin* 86.1 (2004), pp. 6-30.

[67] The promotion of local deities is extensively studied in Valerie Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990. See also the review of this work by Richard von Glahn, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53.2 (1993), pp. 616-642 for additional information.

perform the traditional rituals of the Daoist priests (*daoshi* 道士, "scholar of the Dao") and who would therefore not have the authority to decorate a ritual area with Heavenly Court paintings let alone include the images of local deities. We may infer that Heavenly Court paintings – their possession and their employment in a ritual area – was a prerogative of a Daoist priest.

Middle Phase local cult temples became the most standard venue for the performance of Daoist rituals, and its communities as the Daoist clergy's most common clientele. Mobile altars with hanging scroll paintings were necessarily the preferred format above wall paintings, and the three paintings in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts of the Three Officials (*sanguan* 三官) are exceptional instances of this tradition in painting, even though the high quality of the paintings betray an imperial workshop provenance (see Plate 13).[69] They depict the Official of Heaven seated behind a desk in the sky, the Official of Earth riding a horse across a bridge, and the Official of Water seated on a dragon above billowing waves all three with respective entourages of attendants, court ladies, and demon soldiers. Although references to Daoist rituals performed on the local level abound, in particular in the stories of the *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 (Record of Hearsay) noted down by Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202), as are many references to the Buddhist Water-and-Land rituals, not one makes any mention of paintings, but one may assume that these undoubtedly have been part of the ritual setting. It is not sure if the lack of references is due to the minor role played by Daoist paintings in these rituals - that is, the paintings should be understood purely as decoration and not as loci of divine power – or a supposed lack of interest in liturgical art on the part of the literati author. The text in question however clearly demonstrates that "local communities" consisted of members of all layers of society sponsoring the rituals, including officials.[70]

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[68] *Xinbian lianxiang soushen guangji* 新編連相搜神廣記, by Tai Zijin 泰子晉, Yuan dynasty (1260-1368). *Huitu sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan* 繪圖三教源流搜神大全. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990, pp. 445-574; and in *Xinbian lianxiang soushen guangji* 新變連相搜神廣記. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1989.

[69] The paintings of the Three Officials are studied in Shih-Shan Susan Huang, "Summoning the Gods: Paintings of Three Officials of Heaven, Earth and Water and Their Association with Daoist Ritual Performance in the Southern Song Period (1127-1279)." *Artibus Asiae* 61 (2001), pp. 5-52, and idem, "The Triptych of Daoist Deities of Heaven, Earth and Water and the Making of Visual Culture in the Southern Song Period (1127-1279)." PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2002. The paintings have further been published and discussed in Wu, *Tales from the Land of the Dragons*, 1997, pp. 63-65, 149-150, and Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 233-236.

[70] *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志, by Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202). Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe, 1997. The *Yijian zhi* and its wider religious ramifications during the Southern Song is studied in Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, and in Barend J. ter Haar, "Buddhist-Inspired Options: Aspects of Lay Religious Life in the Lower Yangzi from 1100 to 1340." *T'oung Pao* 87 (2001), pp. 92-152. See also Ter Haar's review of Davis' work in *Song-Yuan Studies*, 32 (2003), pp. 155-163 for additional and comparative sources on the *Yijian zhi*.

The above described situation mainly pertains to the Southern Song and South China, but also applies to North China, where after the fall of the Northern Song in 1127 the Jurchen, originally nomadic people but who had already adopted Chinese lifestyles, established the Jin dynasty (1127-1234). Alhough textual references should exist, I have not been able to locate stele inscriptions of this period mentioning Heavenly Court paintings and the existence of a continuous tradition in Daoist, and Buddhist, temple painting can only be inferred from the flourishing of Daoist temple painting in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in north China.

The end of the twelfth century saw the rise of a new Daoist order in North China called Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Truth) which would have a great impact on Daoism in China and which still constitutes, together with the Heavenly Master order, one of the two main Daoist orders to this very day. The Quanzhen order officially begins with Wang Zhe 王嚞(Veritable Chongyang重陽真人, 1112-1170) who had been initiated into the Dao by the Daoist immortal Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓,[71] and who introduced a "modern" Daoism advocating self cultivation through inner alchemy, the unity of the Three Teachings (*sanjiao* 三教) of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, and a (celibate) monastic life as the order's main objectives, in contrast to the "traditional" orders such as the Heavenly Masters that focused on (secret) textual transmission, liturgical prowess, and marital life among the people. The differences may never have been that clear-cut since Quanzhen clerics never profiled themselves as "reformers" or "modernisers"; on the contrary, Quanzhen priests also performed rituals and, as the Heavenly Court paintings of this period show, were eager to manifest themselves as yet another "traditional" order.[72]

The most significant characteristic of the Quanzhen order is the establishment of a nation-wide temple network, and in this respect the order can be regarded as continuing an imperial tradition of the Tang and Song dynasties, and it basically took over the former Song network of Daoist state temples. In fact, the temple network acted almost as a "state" in itself since it was autonomous with an independent patriarchate, yet closely allied to the Yuan court, and a clergy that made a career by moving from temple to temple in the empire almost in the

[71] Lü Dongbin allegedly lived during the Tang but, being an immortal, made countless appearances, often in disguise, among the populace in the following centuries. On Lü Dongbin, see Isabelle Ang, *Le culte de Lü Dongbin des origines jusqu'au début du XIVème siècle: Caractéristiques et transformations d'un Saint Immortel dans la Chine pré-moderne.* Lille: A.N.R.T., 1993, and idem, "Le culte de Lü Dongbin sous les Song du Sud." *Journal Asiatiques* 285.2 (1997), pp. 473-502.

[72] On the Quanzhen order, see Yao Tao-chung, "Ch'üan-chen: A New Taoist Sect in North China during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." PhD Dissertation, University of Arizona, 1980; Vincent Goossaert, "La création du Taoïsme moderne: l'ordre Quanzhen." PhD Dissertation, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, 1997; and Stephen Eskildsen, *The Teachings and Practices of the Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004.

same fashion as state officials took up their administrive posts. The institutionalised aspect of the Quanzhen order also has a direct bearing on the social-religious history of the period. Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (Veritable Changchun 長春真人, 1148-1227), Wang Zhe's youngest disciple and the *de facto* founder of the order, explained once that the chief goal of the order was the conversion (*hua* 化) of people and temples to the Dao.[73] Quanzhen priests travelled in the wake of marauding Mongol armies and brought relief to the people in the devastated areas, performed therapeutic and purgatory rituals, and made repairs to irrigation systems, mills etc. after which local landlords or warlords donated temples to the Quanzhen order in the priests' honour. The Quanzhen priests organised the local communities in congregations (*hui* 會) which were not only dependent on the monastery and its clergy for religious services, such as rituals and the teaching of Quanzhen meditation techniques, but also for more practical matters such as loans in grain, labour, and the renting of equipment.[74]

When such temples were renovated under the supervision of the Quanzhen clergy, often financed by the concerted efforts of the local populace and leaders, the layout of the rebuild monastery would ideally follow the traditional layout as established in the early Tang and continued in the Song: the monastery would have one central hall dedicated to the Three Purities behind which a (lecture) hall was built dedicated to the Seven Veritables (*qizhen* 其真), i.e. Wang Zhe and his six disciples, and/or the Five Patriarchs (*wuzu* 五祖), i.e. Wang Zhe and four spiritual masters.[75] The monastery further had an altar platform in front of the central hall and the usual refectories, dormitories, shrines to guardian deities, and other halls. The temple or shrine to the original local deity was often, but not always, placed to the side in

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[73] *Quanzhen diwudai zongshi Changchun yandao zhujiao zhenren neizhuan* 全真第五代宗師長春演道主教真人内傳, by Li Daoqian 李道謙 (1219-1296), dated 1281. Chen, *Daojia jinshivv lüe*, pp. 634-637. Qiu Chuji had won the privilege of freely distributing ordination certificates (*dudie* 度牒), together with the exemption of taxes and corvée labour for the Quanzhen clergy, after his visit to Chinghis Khan in Samarkand (north Afghanistan) in 1223, and the order kept this privilege, despite protests by officials, until the end of the Yuan dynasty. Goossaert, "L'ordre Quanzhen," pp. 29-30.

[74] The congregations were normally organised around a festival for a local deity or immortal and mainly involved artisans and merchants. Goossaert, "L'ordre Quanzhen," pp. 362-363. The social-economical aspects are less known but can be culled from stele inscriptions, for example from stele inscriptions extant at the Yongle gong. See for example the research on these stele inscription in Paul R. Katz, *Images of the Immortal: The Cult of Lü Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.

[75] The Seven Veritables are Wang Zhe 王嘉 (Veritable Chongyang 重陽真人, 1112-1170), 馬鈺 (Veritable Danyang 丹陽真人, 1123-1183), Tan Chuduan 譚處段 (Veritable Changzhen 長真真人, 1123-1185), Hao Datong 郝大通 (Veritable Taigu 太古真人, 1140-1212), Wang Chuyi 王處一 (Veritable Yuyang 玉陽真人, 1142-1217), Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 (Veritable Changsheng 長生真人, 1147-1203), and Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (Veritable Changchun 長春真人, 1148-1227). The female disciple Sun Bu'er 孫不二 (Hermit Qingjing 清淨散人, 1119-1182), Ma Yu's wife, is a later addition in place of Wang Zhe. The Five Patriarchs are Wang Xuanfu 王玄甫 (also called *Donghua dadi* 東華大帝), Zhongli Quan 鍾離權, Liu Haichan 劉海蟾, Lü Dongbin, and Wang Zhe.

the monastery complex in a more subservient position. An additional Quanzhen element were the many *huandu* 環堵 (lit. "enclosed walls"), cells or little huts with only one window for prolonged meditation retreats, sometimes lasting up to several years.[76]

As a principle, the central hall to the Three Purities would have wall paintings depicting a Heavenly Court. Stele inscription of this period attest to this practise and show furthermore that Heavenly Court paintings were not confined to any specific areas but appeared all over North China and in monasteries of different status and scale.[77] In fact, the four surviving Heavenly Court paintings of this period are not mentioned in any stele inscription, and the same is true for surviving Buddhist murals, indicating that wall painting was much more common than the written record would suggest. At the end of the thirteenth century the Quanzhen order had a network of about 4000 monasteries in North China – for comparison, there were about 12-15,000 Buddhist monasteries in North China and about 42,000 Buddhist monasteries in the whole of China in 1291[78] – giving a rough indication on the number of Heavenly Court paintings during that period. The case of Daoist hanging scroll paintings in the same period is less clear, but since local cult temples were supplanted by Quanzhen monasteries already equipped with paintings, hanging scroll paintings were perhaps in lesser demand in North China than in South China where the Heavenly Master order and other, new orders or lineages of ritual specialists held sway.

Four sets of murals have survived and perfectly illustrate the above described development of the Quanzhen order and its relationship with the (local) community to which it provided its services. Although adhering to basic principles with regard to layout and content and all located in temples managed by Daoist clergy, the four surviving sets clearly demonstrate that there exists a considerable variation in the representation of a Heavenly Court with regard to the number of deities, which deities should be included, and how they

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[76] For the basic layout of Quanzhen monasteries, see Goossaert, "L'ordre Quanzhen," pp. 171-219. For the *huandu*, see Vincent Goossaert, "Entre quatre murs: un ermite taoïste de XIIe siècle et la question de la modernité." *T'oung Pao* 85 (1997), pp. 391-418.

[77] See for example *Chuangjian Yunfeng guan ji* 創建雲峰觀記, by Xu Dezhen 徐德真 and Wei Zhizhong 魏志衷, 1272. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 604; *Chuangjian Qingzhen an ji* 創建清真庵記, by 厲志元, 1272. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 605; *Chuangjian falu tang ji* 創建法籙堂記, by Zhang Daokuan 張道寬, 1288. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 658-659; *Dadu lu Huozhou Longxi guan beiming* 大都路漷州隆禧觀碑銘, by Wang Yun 王惲, 1275. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 697-698; *Zhangde lu Tangyin xian Luloucun chuangxiu Longxing guan beiming* 彰德路湯陰縣鹿樓村修隆興觀碑銘, by Sima Deyi 斯馬德義, 1313. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 738-739; *Chongjian Xiuzhen guan ji* 重建修真觀記, by Ouyang Zhizhen 歐陽志真, 1322. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 759-762; *Taihuashan chuangjian Chaoyuan dong zhi bei* 太華山創建朝元洞之碑, by Jing Daoquan 井道泉, 1325. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 769-770, which is a cave on Huashan with "four hundred statues big and small." *Chongjian Yuquan guan ji* 重建玉泉觀記, no author, 1354. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 810-811.

[78] Goossaert, "L'ordre Quanzhen," p. 320.

should be represented. They further demonstrate that there was a close relationship between the representation of the Heavenly Court and the local community allied to the monastery, often accounting for the differences among the several wall paintings.

The set of Heavenly Court paintings in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada, (hereafter referred to as the Toronto murals) should date from the first half of the thirteenth century and originated from central Shanxi province, the former Pingyang Prefecture 平陽府. The wall paintings depict a procession in two rows on the east and west walls of a large hall and feature a total of sixty-two deity figures (See Plates 4 and 5). The deities comprise the Six Sovereigns (one of them actually a portrait of Qiu Chuji),[79] the Four Saints, the Northern Dipper, the Five Planets, the Five Elders, the Nine Heavens, the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions, and female and male assistants, the so-called jade maidens and golden boys.

The Yongle gong 永樂宮 (Palace of Eternal Joy) was originally located in Yongle 永樂 on the northbank of the Yellow River at the site of Lü Dongbin's shrine, but it was moved to its present location in Ruicheng 芮城 (southwest Shanxi) some ten kilometres to the North because of the building of a dam. The monastery is built according to the traditional layout: a central hall to the Three Purities with a high altar platform in front and two other halls, to Lü Dongbin and Wang Zhe (in fact the Seven Veritables), behind it. Originally there was also a fourth hall to Qiu Chuji closing the row, but this and several other halls on either side of the main axis have disappeared. The shrine to Lü Dongbin is on the west side of the complex. The central hall has wall paintings of a Heavenly Court comprising in total 290 deity figures painted in 1325 who line the walls in four or five rows deep as if attending a court audience (Plates 1-3), and the two rear halls have wall paintings with narrative scenes depicting the lives and wondrous deeds of Lü and Wang, painted in 1358 and 1368 respectively. The Yongle gong murals also comprise some irregular deities who would rather be identified as "popular" in the sense that they belong to local cults. Another peculiar feature is the inclusion of portraits of Quanzhen priests in the Heavenly Court. Some deities still await identification.

The Nan'an 南庵 (Southern Hermitage) located in Yaoxian 耀縣 (central Shaanxi) is a large temple complex distributed over two small hill tops and dedicated to Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682), a famous Daoist priest and physician of the early Tang dynasty. Contrary to the more traditional layout of the Yongle gong temple complex, the Heavenly Court paintings at Nan'an take only a peripheral position in the entire layout of the temple complex and are located in one of the many small halls on the south hill; the central hall to Sun Simiao takes

[79] See chapter four on the identification of the Qiu Chuji portrait.

the most prominent position on the north hill, indicative of the position he takes up in the local cult that surrounded him and still thrives today. The Heavenly Court paintings are of an equally modest size as the hall and comprise a total of eighty-nine deity figures depicted as groups amidst clouds (Plates 6-9). They comprise the Six Sovereigns, the Northern and Southern Dippers, the Five Sacred Peaks and Four Sacred Marshes, the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions, the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors, the Three Officials, the Six Lineage Masters, the Four Spirits, and several unidentified figures. Some parts of the murals are heavily damaged.

The Beiyue miao 北嶽廟 (Northern Peak Temple) is the official temple dedicated to Hengshan 恆山 in the north, one of the Five Sacred Peaks of the state cult worshipped in the state cult. The temple is located in Quyang 曲陽 (Hebei) actually some one hundred kilometres south of Hengshan and presently consists of a main hall with a large altar platform in front, the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility (*Dening zhi dian* 德寧之殿), the foundations of another hall, a pavilion, and three gates, all located on a north-south axis with the main hall to the north end. Despite being a state temple, the site was supervised by Daoist priests since the mid-Tang dynasty, and the central hall where the murals are located was renovated on imperial commission by the Quanzhen clergy in 1270. The murals would date to the same period, but their subject-matter and style would rather date them a few centuries earlier; their composition and selection of deities would easily fit them in with types of Heavenly Court paintings of the Transitional Phase (Plates 10 and 11). They are also known as paintings closest to the style, or even by the hand of the famous Tang painter Wu Daozi (fl. 685-758); but this attribution is only found from the Ming onwards. For reasons of convenience we will consider the murals as a Yuan product painted after earlier models. The Heavenly Court painting comprises a total of eighty-one figures, most of them attendants, warriors, and court ladies. The deity figures are the Five Sacred Peaks, the Two Auxiliary Mountains, the Three Officials, the Thunder Ministry, the Five Planets, and Immortals of the Sacred Peaks (including a donor-figure). When the state sacrifices were moved to another place in 1660 after another mountain was identified as Hengshan, the temple gradually went into decline.

Beside these four temple paintings, two other representations of the Heavenly Court have survived from the Middle Phase but in an incomplete, damaged state. The Longshan 龍山 cave sculptures, located near Taiyuan 太原 (central Shanxi) were carved in 1234, a project managed by the Quanzhen priest Song Defang 宋德方 (Veritable Piyun 披雲真人, 1183-1247) - the same person who in 1242 would "convert" Lü Dongbin's shrine and local

community in Yongle and start the building of the Yongle gong for which he designed the architectural layout – and comprise statues of the Three Purities and the Six Sovereigns in one cave and in another those of many veritables, most of them probably portraits of Quanzhen priests. The site has a total of nine caves with statues but which are presently almost all severely damaged or eroded. Fortunately for us, the complete statues have however "survived" in photographs taken by Japanese scholars in the early twentieth century on the basis of which the original site can be reconstructed.[80]

Another site, the Three Purities Hall of the Wanshou gong (Longevity Palace) in Gaoping (south-eastern Shanxi) has two fragments of a Heavenly Court painting dating to 1307. The north, east, and west walls originally all had murals, but these and the images of the Three Purities were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. The surviving mural parts have images of the Three Officials and two of the Six Sovereigns (a third sovereign is damaged) followed by attendants and two generals.[81] Although incomplete or damaged, the two sites are valuable, early examples of Heavenly Court representations that can help solve questions of dating, style, and content in other murals.

Worthy of note in respect to Heavenly Court paintings of the Middle Phase are the Buddhist Water-and-Land paintings which are closely related in content and iconography and of which two examples have survived. The oldest, the Qinglong si 青龍寺 (Green Dragon Monastery) located in Jishan 稷山 County (southwest Shanxi), depicts a most interesting proto-version of a Water-and-Land painting dated to the late Yuan period (Fig. 4).[82]

It is designed as two Buddha assemblies focused on both east and west walls yet containing a pantheon of Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian deities as in a Water-and-Land assembly (*shuilu fahui*), rather than as all other known Water-and-Land paintings focused on the north similar to Daoist Heavenly Court paintings. Sadly, some parts of the murals are damaged or have been removed by dealers. Another Buddhist monastery with Water-and-Land wall paintings is the Pilu si 毗盧寺 (Vairocana Monastery) near Shijiazhuang 石家莊 (south Hebei). A large pantheon of figures crowds the walls in multiple rows and since one

[80] The Longshan cave sculptures are published, including the Japanese photographs, and studied in both Zhang Mingyuan 張明遠, *Taiyuan Longshan daojiao shiku yishu yanjiu* 太原龍山道教石窟藝術研究. Taiyuan: Shanxi kexue jishu chubanshe, 2002, and Hu, *Daojiao shike*, Vol. 2 pp. 322-408.
[81] Chai Zejun, erroneously, identifies the deities as the Gods of Rain and Thunder, and Taiyi. Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, pp. 78-79, 234.
[82] On the Qinglong si, see Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, pp. 57-66.

group among them is depicted in Mongol dress (Fig. 49), the murals are generally believed to date to the early Ming (late fourteenth century). This issue should await further study.[83]

Heavenly Court representations of the Quanzhen order generally followed the imperial format set in the Northern Song dynasty. In some cases though, portraits of Daoist priests and images of local deities were added. The inclusion of portraits of Daoist priests must have been a particular Quanzhen trait, and seen for example in the Yongle gong and the Toronto murals, and is probably an elaboration of the Quanzhen practice of making images of their patriarchs for commemorative and worship purposes. For example, already in 1182, Ma Yu had an image made for his master Wang Zhe.[84] It is unsure if the incorporation of local deities in the Yongle gong murals is a popular trend in Quanzhen Heavenly Court paintings, because other examples are simply lacking, but the fact the Quanzhen order was not a "traditional" order defined by the transmission of registers as in the Heavenly Master order would certainly give more leeway to the absorption and depiction of local deities in the Daoist Heavenly Court. The inclusion of images of local cult deities would however become a defining characteristic of Late Period Heavenly Court representations.

Late Phase, 1400-present

The beginning of the Late Phase largely coincides with the advent of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). The new Ming government issued a series of measures to curb the powers of the religions; for example, both Buddhist and Daoist rituals were strongly simplified, and the number of ordinations each year as well as the number of establishments and clergy per region were strictly regulated.[85] As a consequence, the Quanzhen temple network virtually ceased to exist in the Ming period, and the order seems to have survived thanks to the Heavenly Masters. The order of the Heavenly Masters had established close ties with the Ming court, and it became the head of the Daoist ecclesia in China; from that moment all the other orders, lineages, schools and their deities were subsumed under the authority of the Heavenly Masters.

Although this process may have started much earlier, probably in the Song, the integration of various orders, lineages and cults under one authority had far reaching

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[83] The murals are reproduced in Kang, *Pilu si qun hua*. For the figures in Mongol dress, see plate 207.

[84] *Wang Chongyang huaxiang shi ke* 王重陽畫像詩刻, by Ma Danyang 馬丹陽 (1123-1183), 1182. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 431.

[85] *Da Ming xuanjiao licheng zhaijiao yi* 大明玄教立成齋醮儀 DZ 467, compiled by Song Zongzhen 宋宗真, prefaces dated 1374; and Duan Yuming 段玉明, *Zhongguo simiao wenhua* 中國寺廟文化. Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 1994, p. 98 quoting the *Ming shi* 明史, *zhiguan zhi* 職官志.

consequences for the representation of the Heavenly Court in the Late Phase. The Late Phase should be characterised as a popularisation of the Heavenly Court, meaning that many so-called popular deities attained positions in the Daoist Heavenly Court. The representation of these popular deities is "popular" insofar they are depicted as scholars, officials, and generals; a commoner is still not found anywhere depicted in the Daoist Heavenly Court. A deity could receive a Daoist canonisation (*daofeng* 道封) and/or a state canonisation (*guofeng*國封). The relation between these two, their influence on the representation of the deities, and the question if members of a local cult differentiated between them still remain interesting topics for research. In the Late Phase however, an imperial title and representation were seemingly considered to be the highest possible ideal for a local cult deity and its community. A model deity who perfectly illustrates this rise from popular deity to imperially canonised Daoist deity is Wenchang, who started as a viper god and after being identified with a star ended as the god of literature, being depicted as a scholar wearing a long robe and a *putou*-hat with the distinct horizontally projecting wings.[86] Regardless of official canonisations, a great variety existed in the representation of popular deities, and judging from the surviving examples, it seems that only a very selected part of all canonised deities were incorporated in Heavenly Court representations.

Beside the introduction of popular deities dressed as scholars and magistrates, the most imposing new change in the representation of the Daoist Heavenly Court was the inclusion of numerous generals, often referred to as marshals (*yuanshuai* 元帥). Since the Daoist priest (*daoshi*) could also perform the rites of the exorcist (*fashi*), many exorcist deities found their way into the Heavenly Court. The Four Saints of the Middle Phase were the first of this kind of deities but their number grew rapidly in the following centuries. One major difference with the Four Saints is however that the generals are almost all historical or quasi-historical figures, such as Marshal Wen 溫, Marshal Deng 鄧, Marshal Yue 嶽, China's revered general, Yue Fei 嶽飛, who was betrayed and killed in the Southern Song, and Marshal Guan 關, the loyal general of the Three Kingdoms period (220-265), Guan Yu 關羽, who arguably became the most famous of them all. Worship of these historical figures had their origin in the local cults of the Tang and Song, and they became the protective deities of exorcists, who in the same fashion as tantric priests identified themselves with these spirits during their rituals. It is therefore important to note that many of these divine marshals, beside

[86] On the history of Wenchang, see Terry Kleeman, *A God's own Tale: The Book of Transformations of Wenchang, the Divine Lord of Zitong*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994.

their representation as a general, portray many elements of a performing exorcist, such as dishevelled hair, barefooted, and carrying all sorts of terrifying weapons associated with exorcising and punishing demons.[87] The weapons are often the most characteristic iconographic motifs defining the identity of each general in Daoist art.

A unique album with drawings for Daoist Heavenly Court paintings in the Junkunc Collection in Miami (recently acquired by the Cleveland Museum of Art), and reprinted in a Chinese pirate edition in 1965, the *Daozi mobao* 道子墨寶 (Ink Treasures of Wu Daozi) datable to the early Ming, is a visual testimony to the integration of traditional Daoist ritual order with that of local cults.[88] The album consists of single sheets of paper with drawings in black-and-white of emperor deities seated on thrones, single local cult deities dressed as scholars and officials assisted by attendants, more traditional deities such as the Emperors of the Five Sacred Peaks, and a long series of thunder generals, many of them in demonic appearances. Many of the deities are identified by colophons but the majority of the local deities still remain to be identified. A second section of sheets depicts a narrative of "Clearing out the Mountains" (*soushan tu* 搜山圖).

The Junkunc Album demonstrates that wall paintings of the Daoist Heavenly Court were still practised in the Late Phase, evidently continuing the tradition set by Wu Daozi in the Tang and passed on in North China during the Song and Yuan. A close variant of the Junkunc Daoist Heavenly Court painting is found in the Dadao guan 大道觀 (Great Dao Monastery) in Dingzhou 定州 (central Hebei), which was rebuilt in 1512.[89]

The two south walls depict thirty-six thunder generals (some severely damaged), eighteen for each side; the east and west walls have the traditional series of imperial and Daoist deity figures such as the Northern Dipper and the Five Sacred Peaks depicted in two rows (Fig. 5); the northern wall has three emperor figures seated on thrones in a palace setting assisted by all kinds of attendants and officials. The three main deities should represent the Three Sovereigns (*sanhuang* 三皇), who are traditionally identified as the first three rulers of

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[87] See also Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, p. 77.

[88] Zhu Zhangchao 朱章超 (ed.), *Daozi mobao* 道子墨寶. Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1963. The first page has a spurious seal of the Xuanhe-period (1119-1125) as well as a spurious signature of Wu Daozi. Caroline Gyss already demonstrated that some of the marshals depicted and named in the album only appeared in the thirteenth century and she further pointed to a blue-and-white porcelain vase in plate 35 which, suggesting a date not earlier than the fifteenth century. Caroline Gyss, "Les Messagers divins et leur iconography." *Arts Asiatiques* 46 (1991), p. 101.

[89] On the date of the hall, see Liu Dunzhen 劉敦楨, *Liu Dunzhen wenji* 劉敦楨文集. Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1982, p. 201. The murals are provisionally dated to the same year of the hall, 1527, but this is pending further investigation. The hall is closed to the public.

the China, Fuxi 伏羲, Shennong 神農, and the Yellow Emperor 黃帝.[90] The Three Purities are absent in this Heavenly Court painting, as in the Junkunc Album, which probably depicts (two of) the Three Sovereigns as well.

The emphasis on imperial deities – rather than Daoist-styled deities such as the Three Purities – presiding over the Heavenly Court and therefore acting as the highest power in the Daoist pantheon is apparently a defining element of Heavenly Court representations of the Late Phase, probably owing to the greater influence of local cults in this period. It is a curious fact that in the Transitional and Middle Phases such imperial representation was attributed to the introduction of the state cult deities in the Daoist Heavenly Court, but that the same imperial representation became a hallmark of popular religion in the Late Phase. There is however no indication that local cults represented their deities as emperors much earlier than the Late Phase.[91]

With regard to hanging scroll versions of the Daoist Heavenly Court, only a small number have survived for the Ming period. They may however be representative of a much larger phenomenon knowing the closer association of Daoism with local cults in the Late Phase. The collection of the Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery) in Beijing has hanging scroll paintings of two of the Three Purities dated to the sixteenth century, but the majority of the paintings in the collection date to the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) (see Fig. 6).[92] A hanging scroll in the Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, depicting an unidentified empress and emperor with two attendants, is another rare example of a Daoist Heavenly Court painting of the Ming.[93] A painting of Marshal Wen in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, dated to around 1400, and one of Marshal Wang 王 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York dated 1542 could be other examples of Heavenly Court paintings but since such paintings were also used as private objects of devotion and probably figured in rites of

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[90] A Heavenly Court representation headed by the Three Sovereigns carved in stone is found in Cave 10 at Shimenshan in Anyue County (Sichuan), dated to the early Southern Song before 1178. See Hu, *Daojiao shike*, Vol. 2 pp. 119, 280-284.

[91] The earliest example of an imperial representation of a local cult deity to my knowledge, is a late Yuan painting of Zhenwu who was canonised as an emperor (*shangdi* 上帝) in 1304. It must be noted that the title granting of 1304 and its imperial representation are used as a criterion for dating the painting. A similar painting, dated to the fifteenth century is owned by the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University. Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 300.

[92] For the Heavenly Worthy of Original Beginning (*yuanshi tianzun* 元始天尊), see Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 228; for the Heavenly Worthy of Numinous Treasure (*lingbao tianzun* 靈寶天尊), see Zhongguo daojiao xiehui 中國道教協會 (ed.), *Daojiao shenxian huaji* 道教神仙畫集. Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1995, p. 5.

[93] Wai-kam Ho et al., *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980, p. 152. In this work the painting is dated to the fourteenth century for its similarity to the Yongle gong murals. I would suggest a Ming date on the basis of the figure proportions, such as the shape of the faces and short torsos.

exorcism – which in both cases were not ritual settings with Heavenly Court paintings – their exact status remains uncertain.[94]

Although no complete sets of hanging scroll paintings of a Heavenly Court have survived from the Ming period, very similar paintings may be observed in sets of Water-and-Land paintings that contain many Daoist deities. The imperially commissioned hanging scroll paintings of the Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Precious Tranquility) near Datong大同, now kept in the Shanxi Provincial Museum are the best known (Fig. 7). They comprise 139 scrolls including three scrolls with inscriptions and can be dated to 1460 on the basis of stylistic features and information obtained from two later colophons. A similar set of thirty-five paintings dated 1454 and also commissioned by the Ming court is found in the Musée Guimet in Paris. Two paintings in the Cleveland Museum of Art have been verified as belonging to the Guimet set,[95] while another painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York probably also belongs to the same set.[96] A second set of seventy-four paintings in Musée Guimet would date to around 1600.[97] Much less known are the twenty-four scrolls in the Xilai si 西來寺 (Monastery of Western Arrivals) in Ledu 樂都 (Qinghai) and which are also believed to date to the Ming.[98] Many of these paintings are still unpublished and largely unresearched.[99]

During the Qing period, the political situation seem to have become less favourable for the Heavenly Master order, but the Quanzhen order was revived under the names of different lineages such as Longmen 龍門. The Quanzhen order spread over the empire and in southern China it set up a dense network of lay congregations organised around medium altars (*tan* 壇).[100] It is however doubtful if the order regained the same economical strength and independence of its heydays in the Yuan period. Without a large temple network firmly locked in the local society and consequently secured with a fixed income, wall paintings of

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[94] Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 264-266.

[95] On these Water-and-Land paintings, see Shanxi sheng bowuguan 山西省博物館 (ed.), *Baoning si Mingdai shuilu hua* 寶寧寺明代水陸畫. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1988, Caroline Gyss, "Démons et merveilles: vision de la nature dans une peinture liturgique du XVe siècle." *Ars Asiatiques* 43 (1988), pp, 106-122, and idem, "Les Messagers divins," Weidner, *Latter Days of the Law*, pp. 280-287, Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, pp 369-373, and Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp, 242-245, 250-251, 258-259, 270-271.

[96] Depicted in Little *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 248.

[97] See Gyss-Vermande 1991 and Little 2000: 260-262, 280-281.

[98] Bai Wanrong 白萬榮, "Qinghai Ledu Xilai si Ming shuilu hua xi 青海樂都西來寺明水陸畫析." *Wenwu* 文物 10 (1993), pp. 57-63.

[99] For other and later examples of Water-and-Land paintings see the PhD dissertation of Petra Klose, Der *Shuilu* Ritus.

[100] Goossaert, Vincent, "The Quanzhen Clergy, 1700-1950." John Lagerwey (ed.), *Religion and Chinese Society*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Chinese University Press & Paris, EFEO, 2004, pp. 699-772.

the Heavenly Court number only very few. The only example to my knowledge is found at the Taifu guan 台符觀 (Great Talisman Monastery) in Fenyang 汾陽 County (central Shanxi) which has murals depicting a Heavenly Court repainted in the Qing period but probably representing a Ming format because of its close similarity in content to the Dadao guan murals in Dingzhou. The central hall of the Taifu guan has statues of the Jade Emperor accompanied by two female and four male attendants; the north wall has images of the Three Sovereigns while the east and west walls depict 365 deities in 134 groups.[101] Local gazetteers of the Qing period mention in fact many Daoist monasteries but nowhere is any mention made of wall painting. The majority of these monasteries were destroyed during the vicissitudes of the twentieth century, making verification difficult. A recent survey of extant Ming and Qing wall paintings in Shanxi province in north China mentions no Daoist Heavenly Court paintings but only wall paintings in local temples dedicated to deities such as the Dragon King (*longwang* 龍王) and Saint Mother (*shengmu* 聖母).[102]

Hanging scroll paintings of the Heavenly Court from the Qing period have survived in greater numbers than from earlier periods, and probably number into the thousands despite the wars, social upheavals, anti-religious measures, and more recently mega state building projects of the twentieth century. Perhaps one part remained in the private possession of Daoist priests or were replaced with modern replica's, while another part ended in the hands of private collectors and museums.

Although greatly varying in style and quality, the paintings have in common that they are mostly painted, or better, traced, with the help of stencils or pounces. This feature is at odds with wall paintings in which all proportions are adjusted by hand, and is neither visible in the few high quality scroll paintings that have survived from the Song to the Ming. But we can surmise that this procedure was the most common type of representation from at least the Song onwards and that it was also related to the artisan and guild practices at a local level, where most Daoist priests, especially the Heavenly Masters, were performing their liturgies.[103] The Qing paintings are therefore a valuable testimony to a once thriving local visual culture. Let me discuss some important collections.

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[101] Data found in Shanxi sheng Fenyang xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 山西省汾陽縣誌編纂委員會 (ed.), *Fenyang xianzhi* 份陽縣誌. Beijing: Haihu chubanshe, 1998, p. 801.
[102] The murals of the Taifu guan are not specified but dated to the Ming. Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, pp. 84-99.
[103] Good examples of such paintings are the Southern Song period hell paintings of the of the workshop of Lu Xinzhong, studied in Lothar Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 163-185.

One of the greatest collections is owned by the Baiyun guan in Beijing. Only a small number of them have been published and none have been studied.[104] The paintings are very valuable because they present a rare view on Daoist scroll paintings of a Heavenly Court as practised in northern China, that were probably used during rituals performed by Quanzhen priests. One of the striking elements is the inclusion of Four Sovereigns, instead of the six or nine of the Middle Phase.

The majority of the extant scroll paintings originate from the south of China, and belong to the liturgies of the Heavenly Masters. Probably best known are the so-called Yao 瑤 ceremonial paintings, which are basically Heavenly Court paintings and should be considered as part of the same tradition.[105] The people of the Yao minority live in the secluded and mountainous region comprising Yunnan province in southern China and northern Laos and Thailand across the Chinese border. Already at an early stage, probably during the Southern Song, they were converted to Daoism which, combined with their own pre-Daoist conceptions on the supernatural, became the central religion of the Yao people up to the present time. The Yao have attracted considerable attention from anthropologists, who during their fieldwork could hardly fail to notice the omnipresence of Daoist paintings and other ritual paraphernalia in the religious life of the Yao people. These scholars have provided important studies and observations on the rituals and production techniques involved with the Heavenly Court paintings, revealing practices that must have existed in earlier periods and in other areas of China as well. The Yao Daoist Heavenly Court comprises only Two Sovereigns, the Jade Emperor and *xingzhu* 星主, probably another name for the North Pole Emperor. The Two Sovereigns are also found in modern Taiwan ritual practice. The Heavenly Court paintings also include images of deities not found anywhere else, such as the Great Sea Banner (Chinese: *da hai fan* 海帆, Yao: *tom hoi fan*) (Fig. 8), and often show interesting narrative scenes related to the rituals they are used for.[106] Some paintings included in the ritual layout are strictly speaking not even Heavenly Court painting but genealogies of deities or family forebears, thus underscoring the important role the Daoist Heavenly Court paintings played for the Yao identity.

The private collection of Kristofer M. Schipper, himself ordained as a Daoist priest in the Heavenly Master order in south Taiwan, includes a complete set of Heavenly Court

[104] Published in Fu, *Daojiao shenxian huaji*.
[105] Jacques Lemoine, *Yao Ceremonial Paintings*. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1982, and Jess G. Pourret, *The Yao. The Mien and Mun Yao in China, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand.* London: Thames & Hudson, 2002.
[106] For pictures of Hai Fan, see Lemoine, *Yao Ceremonial Paintings*, pp. 83-96.

paintings originating from Quanzhou 泉州 (Fujian) dating to the eighteenth century. The paintings have already received some public exposure during exhibitions in Marburg and Cologne in Germany in 1980-1981, and in Chicago in 2000.[107] The set of ritual paintings show two striking elements. First is the inclusion of two Buddhist bodhisattvas, Manjusri (*taiyi jiuku tianzun* 太一救苦天尊) and Samantabhadra (*leisheng puhua tianzun* 雷聲普化天尊) identified by their respective animals, a lion and an elephant, in addition to the Two Sovereigns seen in the Yao paintings and in northern Taiwan paintings mentioned above. They are represented in the guise of Daoist priests.[108] The two bodhisattvas entered the Daoist scene as exorcist deities with putative tantric origins in the Song dynasty, but apparently found their way into the Daoist Heavenly Court paintings at a much later period, completing the integration of some peculiar Buddhist elements otherwise absent in representations of the Heavenly Court. The two Buddhist deities also appear among the Yao ceremonial paintings but as a different set of three, together with Zhuling 朱鈴, used especially in cases of funerary rituals; the Taiwan versions may have a similar origin.[109] A second element is the organisation of the paintings on the east and west walls in four spheres of heaven, earth and water – the three traditional spheres – and the human world (*tiangong* 天宮, *difu* 地府, *shuifu* 水府, *yangjian* 陽間). This organisation is also found among the Yao paintings.

The period after the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 is still a field open for exploration and investigation. The vicissitudes of the twentieth century have left deep marks not only on Daoist art but on the entire cultural heritage of China. With anti-religious rules gradually relaxed and many temples being renovated since the 1980s, the situation is improving and the Daoist clergy and their communities are slowly restoring their former lives and practices. The re-establishing of Daoist rituals and the accompanying artefacts will no doubt lead to new additions, transformations, and modifications of the representation of the Daoist Heavenly Court, but that is a history to be written in the future.

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[107] Some of the paintings of the Schipper Collection are reproduced and studied in Ebert, Kaulbach, and Kraatz, *Religiöse Malerei aus Taiwan*. The paintings were also on display hung in their ritual order during the Daoist art exhibition in Chicago but were not included in the catalogue.

[108] Ebert, Kaulbach, and Kraatz, *Religiöse Malerei aus Taiwan*, pp. 56-57. Another source rather speaks of Kşitigarba and Samantabhadra, see Schipper and Verellen (eds.), *The Taoist Canon*, p. 637. *Taiyi jiuku tianzun* is also a Daoist avatar of Guanyin according to Franciscus Verellen, "'Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism': The Inversion of a Buddhist Apologetic Tradition in Late Tang China." *T'oung Pao* 78 (1992), pp. 234-235.

[109] Three Yao paintings of Manjusri (*taiyi jiuku tianzun*), Samantabhadra (*leisheng puhua tianzun*), and Zhuling are reproduced in Pourret, *The Yao*, p. 237.

1.2 The development of the *chao*-audience theme

In this section, I will venture to demonstrate that the *chao* 朝 -audience theme developed from the Han homage scene through Buddhist donor scenes and tomb processions of the mediaeval period into Heavenly Court paintings. This, I want to emphasise, is not a linear development; it should demonstrate that the *chao*-audience theme was adopted by Chinese artists, with some modifications, for Daoist Heavenly Court representations from an existing, or perhaps "stock-in-trade", repertoire in Chinese pictorial art. This adoption could very well fall together with the emergence of the Heavenly Master order that similarly adopted the *chao*-audience for its liturgy at the end of the Later Han.

Regardless the actual historical situation, my point is that the *chao*-audience theme in its many different applications should be understood as a representation of the same basic practice of court ritual, which itself is a typical "Chinese" format used for addressing a superior in many different kinds of situations. The composition and format of a representation depicting a *chao*-audience follows the same basic principles of court ritual practice, called *chao* 朝 and hence the name of the theme. Confucian classics on court ritual such as the *Zhou li* 周禮 (Rituals of Zhou) and the *Li ji* 禮記 (Notes on Ritual),[110] stipulate that when the ruler is addressed, the members of the audience should be organised in two rows divided to the left (east) and right (west) facing north. The ruler would always be seated in the north and face south. I will argue that this compositional scheme is found in many other representations such as the homage scene, the tomb procession scene, and the donor scene, to name the most important ones. In this section I will therefore first deal with these three types of representations, followed by a discussion of the Heavenly Court as a representation of this theme.

Homage scene

The so-called "homage scene" in Han stone reliefs and carvings is basically a *chao*-audience. I would define a *chao*-audience as consisting of two rows divided to the left and right addressing a ruler facing south who is positioned in the north. Not all homage scenes would readily fulfil these criteria as often only one row is depicted, as for example can be seen in the

[110] *Zhou li* 周禮, pre-Han (206-8 BC), commentary by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200). Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1966, 31.1b, and *Li ji* 禮記, pre-Han, commentary by Zheng Xuan. Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1985, 1.2a-b. On the dates of these works, see Michael Loewe (ed.), *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*. Berkeley: Society for the Study of Early China, 1993, pp. 24-32, 293-297.

more well-known Wu Liang Shrine stone reliefs (Fig. 9). However, that this example should represent a "reduced" or "flattened" format (i.e. without a sense of three-dimensional space) of a homage scene is demonstrated by other Later Han (25-220) carvings. For example, a carving on a tomb stone slab from Qianliangtai 前涼臺 in Zhucheng 諸城 (Shandong) depicts, in a rare perspective style, two rows of figures in various sizes (denoting differences in status and hierarchy) to the left and right in front of a terraced pavilion in which a large frontal figure is seated accompanied to his sides by attendants and some other kneeling figures (Fig. 10).[111] On a stone slab from Beizhuang 北莊in Linyi 臨沂 (Shandong), similarly two rows of figures are depicted kneeling before a large, central figure placed on the left side (Fig. 11).[112] In addition, a related arrangement for a homage scene but which rather looks like a banquet is witnessed in the wall painting in Tomb no. 2 in Dahuting 打虎亭, Mi 密County (Henan) of the end of the Later Han, depicting a large tent on the left in which the host is seated and two long rows positioned to the left and right side of the host on the bottom and top register of the painting. Between these two rows, musicians, acrobats and dancers entertain the audience. There is also a kneeling figure in front of the host, similar to homage-scenes (Fig. 12). Significantly, the banquet-scene is represented on the north wall of the central tomb chamber, the same location where homage-scenes are usually depicted.[113]

Beside the more common two-dimensional representations of homage scenes in a single pictorial plane, one Later Han tomb has a homage scene that follows the three-dimensional architectural layout of the tomb, thereby visually re-recreating a court audience. The murals on the east and west walls of the front chamber of tomb No. 1 at Wangdu 望都 County (Hebei) depict officials and soldiers in three-quarter view and of various sizes raising their court tablets and spears in front of their faces while bowing to the northern direction (the host is located in a separate rear-chamber in the north) (Fig. 13).[114] The official titles are written in characters beside the figures reinforcing the re-creation or continuation of a court administration in the after-life of the tomb host. The architectural division of a homage scene

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[111] The stone slab carving and a drawing are reproduced in Wu Hung, *The Wu Liang Shrine: The Ideology of Early Chinese Pictorial Art*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989, p. 208. See also Xin Lixiang 信立祥, *Handai huaxiang shi zonghe yanjiu* 漢代畫像石綜合研究. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2000, pp. 58, 83-102.
[112] Reproduced in Wu, *The Wu Liang Shrine*, p. 206.
[113] The mural is over six meters in length. Reproduced in Jan Fontein and Wu Tung, *Han and T'ang Murals*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1976, pp. 52-53.
[114] The Wangdu tomb murals are reproduced in Beijing Lishi bowuguan, Hebei sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui 北京歷史博物館, 河北省文物管理委員會(eds.), *Wangdu Han mu bihua* 望都漢墓壁畫. Beijing: Zhongguo gudian yishu chubanshe, 1955. See also Yang Hong 楊泓, "Handai de bihua mu 漢代的壁畫," in his *Han Tang meishu kaogu he fojiao yishu* 漢唐美術考古和
佛教藝術. Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2000, pp. 20-36.

composition over two walls makes the Wangdu murals an excellent example of a proto-Heavenly Court painting.

A similar homage scene divided over two walls which resembles a Heavenly Court painting even closer is found not in China but in Korea. A tomb from the Koguryŏ kingdom dated 408 at Tŏkhung-ri in South P'yong'an Province has a frontally-seated tomb host receiving two rows of standing officials depicted in three-quarter view on the east and west walls. Characters identify again the titles of the figures. According to Nancy Steinhardt, the Korean tomb closely follows models from the former Yan state covering present Liaoning province in Northeast China and the Korean peninsula,[115] demonstrating that the homage scene remained for over two centuries a standard type for tomb decoration in East and Northeast China.

Based on the above, we can draw the conclusion that the depiction of homage scenes in Later Han offering shrines[116] and post-Han tombs were modelled after sacrificial ritual or rituals for commemorating the dead which in turn were conceived and performed in the typical arrangement of a court audience ritual: the *chao*-audience. The fact that a homage scene is sometimes also rendered as a banquet further suggests that banquets in those days were conceived and organised in this format. It is therefore my contention that the *chao*-audience arrangement, as a theme, formed a typical way of arranging space when addressing a superior, being an emperor, ancestor, host or deity.

If we consider the homage scene as a representation of the *chao*-audience theme, it is possible to trace the development of the homage scene into history and witness its adaptation in donor scenes depicted in Buddhist murals and reliefs above ground, and in tomb procession scenes underground.

Donor scene

Donor scenes are generally interpreted as "offering pictures" (*gongyang tu* 供養圖) or "paying homage to the Buddha pictures" (*lifo tu* 禮佛圖) since the donors who commissioned the work are seen worshipping and offering gifts to a Buddha image represented above them.

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[115] Nancy Steinhardt, "Changchuan Tomb No. 1 and Its North Asian Context." *Journal of East Asian Archaeology* 4.1-2 (2003), pp. 270-271.

[116] According to an iconographic study by Jean James, the homage scene had developed from Early Han painted silk banners via reliefs on stone coffins to the Later Han offering shrine. Jean M. James, "The Eastern Han Offering Shrine: A Functional Study." *Archives of Asian Art* 51 (1998-1999), pp. 16-29. Since the practice of the Chinese court audience ritual also predates the Later Han, we may assume that the *chao*-audience theme would also date to before the Later Han, but the examples presented by James do not provide evidence to support this assumption.

In this arrangement, the Buddha image is depicted in large size in frontal view dwarfing the small figures of the humble donors at the bottom of the composition depicted in three-quarter view or sometimes *en face*. This basic composition is maybe not immediately connected to the homage scene – it may for example be inherited from Indian prototypes - but when we investigate these donor scenes in their spatial compositions such as cave paintings and stone reliefs or on the foundation stones of statues, its reliance on the *chao*-audience theme becomes more evident.

The Mogao 莫高 caves near Dunhuang 敦煌 present a unique case where the development of wall paintings on one site can be witnessed spanning almost a thousand years. The development of Buddhist donor scenes at this site can be summarised in the following table, selecting caves from several successive dynasties:

Cave	Date or period	Description
285 (north-wall)	N-Wei 538-539	Two rows of small donor figures, male and female clansmen divided to the left and right, depicted in three-quarter view and meeting below a frontal Buddha image.[117]
428	N-Zhou (557-581)	Three tiers or a single band of small donor figures at the bottom of the walls and central pillar, all monks depicted in three-quarter view and facing the main image of the central pillar.[118]
390	Sui (581-618)	Two tiers of small donor figures, the lower larger than the upper tier, at the bottom of a wall below a frontal Avalokiteshvara preaching scene, all monks depicted in three-quarter view (Fig. 14).[119]
220 (east-wall)	Early Tang (618-704)	Imperial audience of donors in medium size and three-quarter view below the debate scene between Vimalakirti and Manjusri.[120]
107	Late Tang (848-906)	Donor ladies of medium size in three-quarter view around the lower part of two walls.[121]

[117] See Roderick Whitfield, *Dunhuang, Caves of the Singing Sands: Buddhist Art from the Silk Road*. London: Textile & Art Publishers, 1995, p. 42.
[118] Ibid. pp. 49-51.
[119] Ibid. p. 64.
[120] Ibid. p. 71.

98	Five Dynasties (907-960)	King and Queen of Khotan and monks of large size in procession at the bottom of a wall (Fig. 15).[122]
61	Five Dynasties (907-960)	Donor queen and court ladies of large size making two processions divided over the north, east, and south walls.[123]

On the basis of the images and the development of the depiction of donor figures as laid out in the table, we can make four conclusions:

1) In contrast to Buddha images in the murals which all take a frontal pose, donor figures are all depicted in three-quarter view and at the bottom of a wall.

2) Donor figures are usually depicted in facing directions, one left and one right, often on opposite walls, in contrast to Buddha images which are without direction because of their frontal position. Such a contrast between the frontal view of the Buddha images on the one hand and the three-quarter view of the donor figures on the other are normally explained as owing to conventions on differentiating between divinities and mortals. However, these conventions are exactly the criteria for a *chao*-audience theme, and we can presume that the painters adopted a native programme for depicting the donors, while the Buddha images and narrative scenes represented above the donor scenes seem more related to Buddhist (and therefore foreign?) conceptions of imagery, a spatial and artistic division that the painters often reinforced by a line separating the two spheres.

3) Donor figures increased in size over the centuries.

4) Secular rulers gradually supplanted monks as donor figures, their importance also emphasised by their size. This development has no direct bearing on the topic of homage-scene, and probably refers to a change in patronage of the Mogao caves over the centuries, but it is of significance in the respect that the development coincides with the so-called imperialisation of the Heavenly Court during the Transitional Phase, or the merging of the Daoist cult with the state cult that occurred during the Transitional Phase. Apparently, the imperialisation of art was a much wider phenomenon that also implicated Buddhist art and that was due to the self-aggrandisation efforts – literally witnessed in the Mogao cave paintings – of the ruling clans from the Tang period onward, contesting with Buddhist and Daoist deities for space and attention if not devotion. Yet it must be noticed that these secular

[121] Ibid. p. 111.
[122] Ibid. p. 116.
[123] See Roderick Whitfield et al., *Cave Temples of Mogao: Art and History of the Silk Road*. Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute and J. Paul Getty Museum, 2000, p. 89

donors, in contrast to the imperial deities of Daoist temple paintings, are all historical figures and often identified by cartouches and inscriptions and are not deities. The codification of imperial images for Daoist nature deities in Daoist liturgy in the Northern Song would therefore be an appropriate development following the aggrandising images of secular donor figures of the Five Dynasties.

Besides the donor scenes in the Mogao cave paintings, donor figures also appear in many stone reliefs and carvings such as in the Longmen 龍門cave shrines, on the bases of statues, steles and on tower gates (*que* 闕). Each one of these sites adds important information to the development from Han homage scene to Buddhist donor scene and their possible relationship to later Heavenly Court paintings. The Longmen caves near Luoyang abound in donor scenes carved in two opposite rows below a Buddha statue as in many niches in the Guyang 古陽Cave (Fig. 16), or the large carved limestone reliefs from the Binyang 賓陽Cave, now separately on display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City.[124] It was Wang Xun 王遜 in his seminal article of 1963 on the iconography of the Heavenly Court painting of Yongle gong who first drew attention to the stylistic and compositional relationship between the donor scenes in the Binyang Cave carvings of Longmen and Heavenly Court painting.[125] We now know how correct his assumption was, since the two are depictions of the same *chao*-audience theme and representations of the same praxis of addressing a superior.

Because many of the caves were patronised by the Northern Wei imperial family or their close associates in the late fifth century and early sixth century, the Longmen donor scenes are not only exquisitely executed, we also see here for the first time that imperial figures take place among the homage scenes. From the accompanying dedicatory inscriptions in the Guyang cave we further know that the imperial donors and monks recorded in these texts were the same as the figures in the donor scenes.[126] It would be difficult though to

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[124] The Metropolitan Museum relief shows Northern Wei Emperor Xiaowen 孝文 (r. 471-499) and his entourage, and the Nelson Atkins Museum relief shows Empress Zhao 昭 (d. 494) and her female companions. For a reproduction of the first, see Yang, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, p. 54; for a reproduction of the latter, see Robert L. Thorp and Richard E. Vinograd, *Chinese Art & Culture.* New York: Abrahms, 2001, p. 169. The Binyang reliefs have been thoughtfully studied in Amy McNair, "The Relief Sculptures in the Binyang Central Grotto at Longmen and the "Problem"of Pictorial Stones." Wu Hung (ed.), *Between Han and Tang: Visual and Material Culture in a Transformative Period*. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2003, pp. 157-189. For examples of donor scenes at the Guyang Cave at Longmen, see Abe, *Ordinary Images*, pp. 185-257.

[125] Wang Xun 王遜, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian bihua ticai shitan 永樂宮三清殿壁畫題材試探." *Wenwu* 文物 8 (1963), p. 35.

[126] These texts are discussed and translated in Katherine R. Tsiang, "Disjunctures of Time, Text, and Imagery in Reconstructions of the Guyang Cave at Longmen." Wu Hung (ed.), *Between Han and Tang: Religious Art and Archaeology in a Transformative Period*. Beijing: Wenwu Press, 2000, 319-328.

identify these images as portraits. The traditional representation of patrons in these donor scenes as Chinese emperors may deemed even more significant when we take into consideration that the Northern Wei rulers were of Turkish (*tuoba* 拓拔）origin and evidently attached great importance to being represented in a Chinese fashion, or at least wished to be remembered as such by later generations. Indeed, the imperialisation of the donor figures (as well as some of the Buddha figures) coincide with other historical events, such as an imperial decree of 486 ordering all courtiers to wear Han-style dress and the moving of the capital from Pingcheng 平城 (Datong 大同, Shanxi) to Luoyang (Henan) in 493 (Luoyang was the capital of the former Wester Jin empire, 265-316), and such emphasis on Chinese imperial imagery should be understood as clear indications of the imperial aspirations of the Northern Wei rulers, rather than as sinicisation efforts as official dynastic history had always made believe us.[127]

Donor scenes in the Guyang Cave at Longmen furthermore provide technical evidence that the *chao*-audience scene constituted an independent tradition in Chinese art. Several modern scholars have already noted the discrepancy between the "Chinese" carving style of the homage scenes (and some other decorative motifs) on the one hand, and the "Western" style of the much larger Buddha images occupying the niches in the cave on the other.[128] In contrast to the high-relief sculptural forms of the Buddha images, the donor figures - beside their Chinese-style robes - are rendered in a flat Chinese drawing style that finely delineates the drapery folds of their gowns and long sleeves. Such contradicting styles suggest that two different types of workshops operated in the same cave, one specialised in Western, i.e. Gandhara, style Buddha images (Chinese-style Buddha images were executed too at Longmen) with carvers perhaps hailing from that region, and the other specialised in traditional Han style imagery, in particular the homage scenes, and these carvers may have come from the east of China (Shandong area) where such images had a long history.[129] All in all, the *chao*-

[127] Stanley Abe persuasively points out that for the Northern Wei rulers issues of racial differences were subordinated to issues of politics and status. Abe, *Ordinary Images*, pp. 180-185. See also Katherine R. Tsiang, "Changing Patterns of Divinity and Reform in the Late Northern Wei." *The Art Bulletin*, 84.2 (2002), pp. 222-245.

[128] Abe, *Ordinary Images*, pp. 203-204, Jessica Rawson (ed.), *The British Museum Book of Chinese Art*. London: British Museum Press, 1992, p. 154, and Tsiang, "Disjunctures of Time," p. 339. It must be noted that there is quite some controversy on the precise style of the Buddha images at Longmen, discussed in Abe, *Ordinary Images*, pp. 173-180.

[129] Stanley Abe suggests that the artists may have come from "not-too-distant areas of northern Henan and Hebei" however without specifying his choice. Abe, *Ordinary Images*, p. 208.This area is adjacent to Shandong province, thus providing support for my assumption that the donor scenes are elaborations of the Han homage scenes that were popular in East China.

audience scene and its various pictorial adaptations formed a distinct Chinese or indiginous artistic tradition with its own iconography and techniques.[130]

It appears that the donor scene travelled from the Shandong area further west. The motif of the donor scene travelled further south and appeared for example also on a Han tower gate (*que* 闕) in Mianyang 綿陽 (Sichuan), which were carved in a much later period with Buddhist and Daoist deities in niches and flanked with donor scenes depicting royal figures and attendants approaching from the left and right sides (Fig. 17).[131] More to the west, it also appeared in this same format in Mogao Cave 285 dated to AD 538-539 as seen above.

Some representations of donor scenes suggest a more architectonic or spatial division which could be related to ritual practices reminiscent of a *chao*-audience. A votive pagoda dated 466 but of unknown provenance and now in the National Museum of History in Taipei has a square stone base with in front an incense burner flanked by two standing monks and two lions; and on the left and right sides two processions of donor figures moving to the front of the base.[132] Again, the carvings of the Thousand Buddhas on the nine floors of the pagoda and the Many Treasures Buddha flanked by Shakyamuni Buddha at the foot of the pagoda are all exquisitely carved in high relief; the donor scene on the base by contrast is carved in the flattened low-relief style already seen in the Later Han homage scenes from the Shandong area. The particular division in two rows is in this case spatially rendered, suggesting that the composition reflects actual ritual practices, namely a *chao*-audience ritual. For example, the carver could also have depicted the donors making one full circle moving in one direction on the base of the pagoda – the circumambulation ritual (*pradakshina*) – the standard way of worshipping the Buddha inherited from India and particularly used for pagodas and stupas representing the Buddha or containing his relic stored inside the pagoda.[133] The carvers however did not, and followed an established indigineous composition.

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[130] Amy McNair points in her article to the strong sculptural qualities of the relief in the Binyang Cave not seen in similar scenes of the Guyang Cave. See McNair, "The Relief Sculptures in the Binyang Central Grotto at Longmen." Perhaps the Binyang reliefs, which were produced later, were modelled after "Western" examples with regard to their more pronounced sculptural style, and may even have been made, designed, or supervised by sculptors hailing from that region. According to Amy McNair (p. 185 n. 41), thousands of foreigners, mainly merchants, lived in Luoyang during that time. The composition however remained "Chinese".

[131] Sun Hua 孫華, "Sichuan Mianyang Pingyang Fujun que queshen zaoxiang - jiantan Sichuan diqu Nanbeichao Fo Dao kanxiang de jige wenti 四川綿陽平陽府君闕闕身造像 – 簡談四川地區佛道龕像的幾個問題." Wu Hung (ed.), *Between Han and Tang: Religious Art and Archaeology in a Transformative Period*. Beijing: Wenwu Press, 2000, pp. 89-137.

[132] For the 466 votive pagoda, see Abe, *Ordinary Images*, p. 152.

[133] A scene of Buddhist monks circumambulating a stupa is depicted in an eighth century mural at Mogao, Cave 23. See Eugene Y. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005, pp. 274-277, 376-380. It must be admitted that not all western Buddhist representations of circumambulations would depict the worshippers proceeding in one direction only, in Gandhara sculpture there is also one example of worshippers facing each other in opposite directions. See W.

Simply than just seeing two rows of donor figures as being positioned in a single linear file from left to right, they rather should be envisioned in a three-dimensional, spatial relationship opposite each other and approaching a central Buddha image. The practice of worshipping the Buddha in the format of a court audience is most convincingly depicted in a stele carving of the early sixth century from the Wanfo si 萬佛寺 (Ten Thousand Buddhas Monastery), Chengdu (Sichuan). Organised into two registers, the upper register depicts a *chao*-audience scene of two rows of seated monks worshipping a centrally positioned Buddha, pictorially emphasised by the triangular format of the composition which creates a sense of depth and renders the characteristics of a *chao*-audience all the more visable. The lower register depicts narrative scenes culled from the Lotus Sutra set in an undulating landscape (Fig.18).[134] Although the upper register does not necessarily depicts donors, we however see that images of worshipping the Buddha and donor scenes are compositionally related and adopted the same format of the *chao*-audience ritual.

A similar reference to this type of *chao*-audience ritual is witnessed in the donor scenes on odd mixtures of Buddhist-Daoist steles from the late fifth and early sixth century in southern Shanxi province. For example the Feng Shenyu 馮神育 stele from Lintong 臨潼 and dated to 505 has a donor scene of figures not depicted in one linear horizontal file relegated to the bottom of the composition, as we are used to see from other representations, but in two vertical rows which occupy more than half of the lower part of the stele, the upper part occupied by a seated Buddha in front and a Daoist deity (a Heavenly Worthy) as identified by the fly-whisk held in his hand on its reverse side (Fig. 19).[135] In a similar fashion as the 466 votive pagoda, it is possible to view the stele carving as a flattened three-dimensional representation – similar to those pop-up children books where figures cut out in cardboard rise up from the book when opening a page - in which an audience of donor figures divided in a left and right file worship a large Buddha image in front of an incense burner. Visualised in this way, the donor scene resembles closely the three-dimensional architectonic layout of a temple hall with a Heavenly Court painting.

Zwalf, *A Catalogue of Gandhâra Sculpture in the British Museum*. Vol. 2. London: British Museum Press, 1996, pl. 299. Even though the circumambulation format does not rule out or contradict an audience format, yet, seen in the light of the examples presented below, I would argue that the artists adopted a specifically Chinese tradition for representing a donor scene.

[134] The front side of the stele, which dates to 425, has similar carvings on the lower register but the upper register is unfortunately damaged. It may well be possible that the damaged part equally depicted a *chao*-audience theme. For a reproduction of the Wanfo si stele, see Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, pp. 220, 222.

[135] For the Feng Shenyu stele, see Abe, *Ordinary Images*, pp. 274-281.

Another instance where ritual practice seems to be reflected in the pictorial programme of a stele engraving is the Wei Wenlang 魏文朗 stele dated to ca. 424 (but probably later)[136] at Yaowangshan 藥王山 (Shaanxi) (Fig. 20). The *chao*-audience scene, as a prototype, is integrated into this pictorial programme which most interestingly takes the form of a narrative distributed over all four sides of the stele (front, back, and two sides), and depicts the journey of the soul of the deceased from this world to that of the Western Paradise of Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future (unwinding from right side via front and left side to back). The narrative enfolds on two registers of the stele. One is an upper register with Buddha images seated in niches – their hand gestures (*mudras*) aptly evoke the transit from present to future world.[137] The other is a lower register where the soul is depicted travelling in a procession consisting of a horse drawn cart accompanied in front by a camel and an courtly figure on horseback (depicted on the front side) and behind by a (female?) horse rider and two cavalry soldiers (on the right side). The caravan cuts through a donor scene of female attandants below, divided to the left and right (although depicted horizontally) of a small incense burner, and what seems to be a Daoist priest wearing a cap and a bold-headed Buddhist monk also positioned to the left and right of a larger incense burner above.[138] The journey continues over the left side of the stele and ends on the back where a Daoist priest is waiting to receive the soul in a palace hall, as suggested by the tiled floor, presided over by Maitreya Buddha.

The pictorial narrative of the Wei Wenlang stele can be interpreted as depicting an entirely visualised journey, but it is my contention that the iconopraxis of the stele engravings suggest that it is also a representation of early fifth-century lay-Buddhist mortuary ritual in which the deceased is transported by means of a carriage and accompanied by relatives and perhaps brought to different temple halls where mortuary services were conducted, in this case, by both the Daoist and Buddhist clergy.[139] The mortuary ritual, as in the Later Han

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[136] The characters for the year-reign are damaged and probably misread, a view presented by a Japanese scholar during the Daoist art conference "Homage to Laozi" held in Xi'an, China, in May 2007.

[137] Cf. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, pp. 45-46.

[138] Opinions differ on the identities of the two deities in the front niche of the stele which may be either two Buddhist deities or one Buddhist and one Daoist deity. Eugene Wang argues for two Buddhist deities. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, pp. 41-44. Liu Yang provides an extended discussion on the *fodao* 佛道 or Buddhist-Daoist issue in fifth and sixth century sculptures and argues that on the basis of its iconography the Wei Wenlang stel should depict a Daoist deity. Liu, *Manifestation of the Dao*, pp. 121-126. The parallel presence of one Daoist priest and one Buddhist monk below the two deities suggests to me that a Daoist and Buddhist deity are intended.

[139] For the use of carriages in early mediaeval mortuary ritual, see Wu Hung, "Where Are They Going? Where Did They Come From? – Hearse and 'Soul-Carriage' in Han Dynasty Tomb Art." *Orientations* 29.6 (1998), pp. 22-31. It should be noted that a procession, sometimes including a carriage, also precedes the presentation of

period, would follow the format of a *chao*-audience ritual. If the pictorial programme was merely a representation of an ideology or of past-time practices with no connection to the world of the viewer, one wonders how contemporary viewers could in any way relate to and understand such pictures. No indications are given that the artists depict themes from Buddhist sutras and would therefore rely on texts for their pictorial programme; by contrast, I would argue that in this intriguing case they rely on ritual practices, ritual practices that also already had been laid down in prototypes of the *chao*-audience scene of which they created an evocative elaboration.[140]

Tomb procession scene

While aboveground donor scenes decorated many Buddhist images, a variant of the Later Han homage scene continued to develop in the same period underground, the tomb procession scene. I would argue on the basis of their compositional characteristics that they are not distinct types but rather another elaboration of its prototype, the *chao*-audience scene. In other words, painters adopted and modified the *chao*-audience scene to give visual expression to the ideas and practices on the after-life of a deceased family member.

The Han homage scenes are continued in tomb procession scenes of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589) but with modifications bespeaking changing concepts on the afterlife and probably changing mortuary practices as well. The tomb host, often accompanied by his wife, is seated in the northern end while receiving homage from his courtiers (or perhaps descendants), but whereas in previous homage scenes horses and carriages were racing around the walls in circles and often depicted in separate registers, the horses and carriages became fixed parts of the homage scene and follow the procession towards the host of the tomb, as for example witnessed in the Daogui 道貴[141] tomb murals of the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577) in Ji'nan 濟南 (Shandong) and in the donor scenes on Buddhist images

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memorial (*jinbiao* 進表) in a Daoist *chao*-audience ritual, a part or ritual element corresponding the dispatching of the officials (*chuguan* 出關), as for example in Du Guangting's commentary on a *chao*-audience ritual, *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* DZ 507, 49.7b where the carriage is described as a "feathered chariot" (*yuche* 羽車) (for the Daoist audience ritual and its terminology, see the next chapter). This would let us surmise that a procession with a carriage would also be a part, or better, a preamble to the Han court ritual of presenting a memorial during a *chao*-audience. The notion of a presentation of a written memorial seems however to be absent in the lay-Buddhist mortuary ritual adaptation of the *chao*-audience ritual. My preliminary assumption would be that it was substituted by offerings (made to images) in Buddhist ritual, but this remains still to be researched.

[140] The *chao*-audience provided a conceptual framework. This does not mean that there is exact iconographical overlapping between representation and contemporaneous ritual practice. Representations tend to evoke anterior styles, yet the underlying structures remain the same or change only very slowly.

[141] Surname lost.

such as the one dedicated by Cao Wangxi 曹望憘 and dated 525 from Linzi 臨淄 (near Ji'nan in Shandong) (Fig. 21), subscribing to the interaction of Buddhist art aboveground and native tomb art underground, and their probable common origin in the *chao*-audience scene.[142] Apparently the ox cart, that replaced the horse carriage of the Han, was always paired with female donors or the hostess of the tomb, and the horse with the male donors or the host of the tomb. Its appearance can also be traced back to tomb murals in the Western Jin (256-316).[143]

The most drastic changes in tomb mural composition occurred during the sixth century. First, the direction of the figures was inverted from a procession into the tomb to a procession leaving the tomb. The Xu Xianxiu 徐顯秀 tomb dated 571 near Taiyuan 太原 (Shanxi) has murals preserved in a remarkably good condition depicting the ox-cart and horse on the left and right of the tomb hostess and host, i.e. leaving rather than approaching them.[144] A similar change in direction, but without the horse and ox-cart, is witnessed in the Cui Fen 崔芬tomb murals dated 551 and located in Linqu 臨朐 (Shandong), the "homeland" of the homage scene. Above the entrance/exit door, an imperial procession is depicted of presumably the host and hostess and their retinue leaving the tomb. The postures of the lead-figures with their arms spread upholding their long sleeves is in perfect key with similar depictions of donor scenes seen in the Mogao cave paintings, the Longmen cave sculptures or the Buddhist stele engravings discussed above (Fig. 22).[145] Secondly, the procession was extended to the passage way which now came to be decorated with files of guards and riders, as seen for example in the Xu Xianxiu tomb murals (Fig. 23) as well as in the Lou Rui 婁叡 tomb murals also located near Taiyuan and dated 570.[146]

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[142] The same format continued into the Sui dynasty. Reproduced and discussed in Zheng Yan 鄭岩, "Qingzhou Beiqi huaxiang shi yu ruhua Suteren meishu: Yu Hong mudeng kaogu xin faxian de qishi 青州北齊畫像石與入華粟特人美術：虞弘墓等考古新發現的啓事." Wu, *Cultural and Artistic Interaction*, pp. 91-93.

[143] Zhao Yonghong 趙永洪, "You daoshi dao mudao: Nanbeichao muzang suojian zhi yizhang biaoxian yu sangzang kongjian de bianhua 由墓室到墓道：南北朝墓葬所見之儀仗表現與喪葬空間的變化." Wu, *Cultural and Artistic Interaction*, pp. 434-440.

[144] On the change in direction, see Jessica Rawson, "Creating Universes: Cultural Exchanges as Seen in Tombs in Northern China Between the Han and Tang Periods." Wu, *Cultural and Artistic Interaction*, p. 131, and for other references Steinhardt, "Changchuan Tomb No. 1," pp. 248-249, and Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, pp. 37-38. For the Xu Xianxiu tomb murals, see Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiu suo 山西省考古研究所, Taiyuan shi bowuguan kaogu yanjiu suo 太原市博物館考古研究所 (eds.), "Taiyuan Beiqi Xu Xianxiu mu fajue jianbao 太原北齊徐顯秀墓發掘簡報." *Wenwu* 文物 10 (2003), pp. 4-40, and Taiyuan shi wenwu kaogu yanjiu suo 太原市文物考古研究所 (ed.), *Beiqi Xu Xianxiu mu* 北齊徐顯秀墓. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 2005.

[145] Shandong sheng, "Cui Fen bihua mu," pp. 4-26.

[146] On excursion paintings, see Xin Lixiang 信立祥, "Handai huaxiang zhong de che ma chuxing tu kao 漢代畫像中的車馬出行圖考." *Dongnan wenhua* 東南文化, 1 (1999), pp. 47-63. For the Lou Rui tomb murals, see Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiu suo 山西省考古研究所, Taiyuan shi wenwu guanli weiyuan hui 太原市文物管理委員會 (eds.) "Taiyuan shi Beiqi Lou Rui mu fajue jianbao 太原市北齊婁睿墓發掘簡報." *Wenwu* 文物 10

The relationship in subject-matter – probably with regard to the horses and guards but not as much to the tomb host - with very similar excursion paintings depicting an emperor making an expedition tour found in early tomb murals have led Chinese researchers to identify these tomb murals also as excursion paintings (*chuxing tu* 出行圖).[147] Although different opinions on the origin and function of this tomb excursion scene exist,[148] I would argue that on the basis of iconopraxis it should represent a changed mortuary practice in which the soul of the deceased was no longer worshipped in a *chao*-audience ritual, but probably was conceived as going on expedition in his dominion protected by his soldiers and riders in the after-life as he did in real life. It is therefore mainly a change in the conception and exertion of sovereignty in this period and region that should have introduced the change in composition.[149] Research on mortuary practices of this period are still in an initial state.[150]

Alternatively, it is also possible that no excursion is intended and that the tomb murals simply depict an inverted procession of officials, guards and riders guiding the host on his way to paradise. This could be correlated to the Chinese (and Daoist) cosmology of life and death, death corresponding to the tenebrous regions located in the north and symbolised by Fengdu, the Chinese Hades, life and immortality corresponding to the south symbolised by the South Pole star which Emperor deity keeps the registers of life. It is however not known if this representation corresponds in any way to mortuary ritual of this period.

Regardless the correct name, origin, and interpretation, the practice of depicting long files of soldiers and riders depicted on the passageway leaving the tomb became a standard and independent theme for Tang imperial tomb paintings, as recognised by many scholars.[151]

Modified into a tomb procession painting, tomb murals of the sixth century had seemingly lost their connection with Heavenly Court paintings. The painting had changed in compositional structure and in function. Yet, it maintained two important aspects: the division

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(1983), pp. 1-23. The Lou Rui tomb murals seem to depict the riders going out on the east wall of the passage way and returning on the west wall. See Wu, "Where are They Going?" p. 31.

[147] Zhao, "You daoshi dao mudao," p. 432.

[148] Zhao Yonghong suggests that the excursion scene was inherited from tomb decoration in South China. Zhao, "You daoshi dao mudao," pp. 448-455.

[149] Such change in emphasis from audience ritual to excursion ritual may for example have been enticed by Buddhist rituals of carrying around statues on festival days, when the display of wealth and power could have led the emperor and local rulers to emphasise a similar display of wealth and power. The expedition tour already existed a long time but in the face of growing Buddhist presence it may have come more to the front. Evidence for such practices is for example found in Liu Shufen, "Art, Ritual, and Society: Buddhist Practice in Rural China during the Northern Dynasties." *Asia Major* 3rd series 8.1 (1997), 19-47.

[150] Cf. Yang Hong 楊泓, "Tan Zhongguo Han Tang zhijian zangsu de yanbian 談中國漢唐之間葬俗的演變" (A Discussion on the Development of Chinese Burial Customs of the Han-Tang Period). *Wenwu* 文物 10 (1999), pp. 60-68.

[151] See e.g. Rawson, "Creating Universes," p. 131, and Zhao, "*You daoshi dao mudao*," p. 430.

over two walls and the display of an imperial court audience with soldiers, officials, court ladies, and attendants extending all the way from the inner tomb chambers to the outer passageway.

Heavenly Court paintings

No Heavenly Court representations survive from the period under discussion here, overlapping with the Early Phase (400-700), making it difficult to trace an exact development. However, I hope I have convincingly argued that the main characteristics of Heavenly Court paintings such as a unified composition divided over two walls depicting two processions facing north and the inclusion of officials and guards was a standard theme in various formats since at least the Later Han dynasty, and that all these various formats rely on or derive from the practice of court ritual, the *chao*-audience. I therefore term this theme a *chao*-audience theme. The shared structural and compositional characteristics of Heavenly Court representations as we know them from much later examples with the *chao*-audience theme, as well as their relationship with the *chao*-audience ritual, should demonstrate that painters worked with themes and modified them accordingly depending on the circumstances and the conceptions of the time and area.

Although a development from Han Homages scenes via donor scenes and tomb procession scenes to Daoist Heavenly Court paintings should be easily envisioned, determining when Heavenly Court representations emerged in this development is not. It seems that they were introduced in two stages.[152] The first stage was when artists adopted the *chao*-audience theme as a vehicle for portraying a Daoist Heavenly Court representation in painting or sculpture, substituting the court officials in the representation with images of Daoist priests holding court tablets, such as in the Nanzhu guan 南竺觀 sculptures representing immortals and veritables (Fig. 1). This type of composition would still follow the spatial division over two walls and would be mostly adopted in the rectangular layout of a Daoist temple hall, even though there may have been only relatively few Daoist temples in the Early Phase. Yet, supernatural elements and a largely cosmological division of ritual space in the altar area seem to have dominated over the characteristics of court ritual, such as a more hierarchical and linear division of space.

[152] The development sketched here remains hypothetical and is based on the information provided in this chapter in conjunction with the data provided by the historical outlines of Heavenly Court painting and Daoist ritual in the previous two chapters.

The second stage occurred during the mid-eighth century and is heavily implicated in the social and political changes of that time. The first exact reference to a Heavenly Court painting as witnessed in later examples is the set of murals by Wu Daozi 吳道子 in the Laozi temple on Mt. Beimang 北邙山 near Luoyang 洛陽. It seems very improbable that Wu Daozi invented the theme, and I would argue that he rather adopted an existing theme which he then modified to the changing needs of the time. The representation of the murals conjured up by the words of Du Fu's 杜甫 poem "The Five Saints line up in dragon robes,/a thousand officials march in goose file./*Mian*-crowns tower high [above the multitudes],/flags and banners rise up [in the sky]" could easily apply to the tomb procession theme of the Cui Fen tomb murals of 551 or the numerous donor scenes at Longmen and Mogao as well. It should however be noted that representations of Daoist deities in the guise of emperors are not known before this event – Tang Emperor Xuanzong was represented as a Daoist priest and not as an emperor, lest we forget - and even the procession type of composition is nowhere accounted for in early descriptions of Heavenly Court paintings in which there seem to have only a very few (main) deities. Although Wu Daozi may not invented the theme of Heavenly Court painting, we can attribute to him the introduction of new aspects of an imperial presentation and a linear (hierarchical) arrangement of the procession in Daoist Heavenly Court painting.

The Laozi temple on Mt. Beimang represents an odd case where Daoism and state politics intertwine. Although a much older site dedicated to the Laozi cult, thw temple on Mt. Beimang was "requisitioned" during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong as an ancestral temple of the Tang imperial family which worshipped Laozi as its first ancestor. Crucially, Wu Daozi depicted the portraits of the first five Tang emperors rather than paint deities in the costumes of Daoist priests.[153] In addition, as an imperial ancestral temple, it is perhaps not entirely surprising for Wu Daozi to adopt a *chao*-audience theme with its strong connotations to worship of ancestors and mortuary ritual.[154] Wu Daozi's murals should therefore be seen in

[153] The five Tang emperors were Gaozu 高祖 (r.618-626), Taizong 太宗 (r. 627-649), Gaozong 高宗 (r. 650-683), Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 684, 705-710), and Ruizong 睿宗 (r. 684, 710-712). An imperial decree of 748 gave them and their consorts the title of Saint (*sheng* 聖). See Yuan, "Wu Daozi," p. 54. Interestingly, the *Xuanhe huapu*, p. 41 lists a painting titled "*Liesheng chaoyuan tu* 列聖朝元圖" under the heading of Wu Daozi. Since the title saint is only applied to ancestors (i.e. living persons) and never to Daoist deities, with the exception of Laozi and the Yellow Emperor who were considered to be the first ancestor of the imperial Tang and Song families, and also because Wu Daozi painted the Five Saints at Mt. Beimang, we could wonder if the painting in the Northern Song imperial collection was, or was thought to represent, a copy or drawing of Wu Daozi's murals at Mt. Beimang. The coincidence is striking and no other paintings of a Heavenly Court are known by Wu Daozi.
[154] Interestingly, Mt. Beimang was already the designated location for imperial tombs since the Northern Wei after the court had moved to Luoyang and many tombs have been unearthed containing wall paintings.

the light of the appropriation of Daoism by the Tang imperial court, and the intended merging of the Daoist cult with the state cult.

One could further wonder if the adoption of an imperial representation of the Daoist Heavenly Court as well as the merging of the state cult and Daoism were perhaps induced by anti-Buddhist sentiments at the Tang court, sentiments shared by Confucians and Daoists alike.[155] The adoption of an imperial representation was aimed at providing the state with an image, both figuratively and literally, strong enough to compete with the omnipresence, wealth and opulence of Buddhist imagery, which was increasingly felt as a threat to the authority and integrity of the state.[156] The performance of Daoist rituals[157] as well as the supervision by Daoist clergy at this site and other Laozi temples in each prefecture then ensured that the imperial image became imbued with divine authority, a necessary weapon in the battle against the Buddhist visual hegemony.

It is uncertain if the imperial image immediately gained divine status, and probably this was a process that was only completed under the Northern Song. It is worth noting that the same scheme of adopting a Daoist deity as the first dynastic ancestor, in this case the Yellow Emperor, and having him worshipped with Daoist rituals, was continued in the Northern Song dynasty.[158] Our oldest painted example of a Heavenly Court painting is the drawing attributed to Wu Zongyuan (d. 1050), similarly depicting a procession of imperial figures assisted in a long file by court ladies and attendants (Plate 12) , very reminiscent of the Cui Fen tomb murals (Fig. 22). One major difference is however that the imperial figures in the procession are no longer emperors but Daoist deities.

Unfortunately, the paintings are in too bad a state to provide any concrete information. See Zhao, *You mushi dao mudao*, p. 434.

[155] For anti-Buddhist sentiments in the Tang era, see Jan de Meyer, *Wu Yun's Way: Life and Works of an Eighth-Century Daoist Master*. Leiden: Brill, 2006, pp. 103-146.

[156] For the wealth of Buddhism in the Tang dynasty, the role of Buddhist imagery in displaying this wealth, and the threat of Buddhist wealth to the Tang court resulting in the Huichang persecution of Buddhism (841-846), see Jacques Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society: An Economic History from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries.* Translated by Franciscus Verellen. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

[157] Daoist rituals not coincidentally also focused on the deities of the five directions. Rituals performed in these temples was the Golden Register Retreat (*jinlu zhai* 金錄齋). A stele inscription commemorating this type of ritual held in 743 in another Laozi temple has survived mentioning the Five Elders (*wulao* 五老), the Daoist deities of the five directions, but not the five Tang emperors. A much later stele inscription recorded in a local gazetteer mentions that the temple had murals depicting the portraits of six Tang emperors and survived up to 1916 when they were destroyed during a fire caused by recklessness while holding a ritual. Alas! See *Qingtang guan jinlu zhai song* 慶唐觀金錄齋頌. By Cui Mingyun 崔明允, 743. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 137-138. A monograph on the history of this site, including this inscription, has been preserved in the Daoist Canon, *Longjiaoshan ji* 龍角山記 DZ 968. For the stele inscription in the local gazetteer, see *Fushan xianzhi* 浮山縣誌, 16.1b-2a. *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* edition, reprint of 1935, Vol. 416. Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1976, pp. 882-883.

[158] *Yuhai* j. 100. *Siku quanshu*, Vol. 945, p. 647.

Having established Heavenly Court painting as a fixed theme in Chinese painting history, we will now look at the ritual foundations that provided a conceptual framework for the painters to work from.

2 Ritual Foundations

This chapter will aim to reconstruct the conceptual framework on which painters based their compositions for Heavenly Court paintings. Heavenly Court paintings are intimately connected to Daoist ritual: the Chinese name of a Heavenly Court painting, *chaoyuan tu* 朝元圖 or *chaozhen tu* 朝真圖 (lit.: paintings of an audience with the origin or truth), is already an immediate reference to the liturgical foundation of the paintings, because they depict a court ritual, called a *chao*朝-audience, which is also the name of central ritual element in Daoist liturgy. The painting term is based on the liturgical term since earliest references to *chaozhen*, *chaoyuan* or other variations with *chao* already appeared from the fifth century onwards while the first known mentionings of *chaoyuan tu* or *chaoyuan tu* date to the early eleventh century.[1] In addition, Heavenly Court paintings are found only on locations where Daoist

[1] The earliest reference to *chaozhen* is found in the third chapter of the *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 DZ 421 compiled by Tao Hongjing (456-536) which quotes passages from an early Heavenly Master text, dating to the second or third centuries. I will deal with this audience ritual below. Many other references to various combinations with *chao* 朝 and denoting a Daoist *chao*-audience ritual are found in the *Zhengao* 真誥 DZ 1016, also compiled by Tao Hongjing and containing material from the fourth century, and in the *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032, compiled in the early eleventh century but containing mostly material from the Tang or pre-Tang period. References to *chao*-audience rituals in the *Zhengao* are for example 14.2a: "*chao tiandihuang* 朝天帝皇" (on audience with the Heavenly Emperor Sovereign), 9.15a: "*chao taisu sanyuan* 朝太素三元" (on audience with the Three Original Ladies of Great Simplicity), and 2.9a "*bei chao wuhuang sanyuan* 北朝五皇三元" (on audience with the Five Sovereigns and Three Original Ladies); references in the *Yunji qiqian* are for example 45:12a: "*chengzhang chaozhen cun wufang qi* 呈章朝真存五方氣" (presenting a memorial, on audience with truth, and visualise the energies of the five direction), and 105:22b: "*Dadong zhenjing yi zhiyu chaoling zhi dao zhaoshen chengzhenren zhi fa ye* 大洞真經以致於朝靈之道招神成真人之法" (The *Dadong zhenjing* is a method to command spirits and become a veritable through the Way of going on audience with the numinous [deities]). References to Daoist *chao*-audience paintings are found in Huang Xiufu's *Yizhou minghua lu* (preface dated 1009), p. 131 recording a "*wuyue chaozhen tu* 五嶽朝真圖" (Painting of the Five Sacred Peaks on Audience with Truth) by Zhang Suqing (fl. 845-927); in Liu Daochun's *Songchao minghua ping* (before 1059), p. 49 recording a mural depicting "*wubai lingguan zhong tiannü chaoyuan* 五百靈官眾天女朝元" (Five Hundred Numinous Officials and an Assembly of Heavenly Maidens on Audience with the Origin) by Wang Zhuo (early 11th cent.); in Li Zhi's (1059-1109) *Hua pin* pp. 239, 259-260 recording a "*Ziwei chaohui tu* 紫微朝會圖" (Emperor of Purple Tenuity Heaven Holding Audience) by Zhang Tu (early 10th cent.) and a "*Yuhuang chaohui tu* 玉皇朝會圖" (Jade Emperor Holding Audience) and painted by Shi Ke (10th cent.); and the *Xuanhe huapu* (1119-1125) pp. 41, 89, 99 recording a "*liesheng chaozhen tu* 列聖朝真圖" (Painting of Exemplary Saints on Audience with Truth) by Wu Daozi, a "*changsheng chaoyuan tu* 長生朝元圖" (Painting of an Audience with the Origin for Longevity) by Wang Qihan 王齊翰 (ca. 961), and "*chaoyuan xianzhang tu* 朝元仙仗圖" (Painting of Immortals and Elders on Audience with the Origin) by Wu Zongyuan (d. 1050). These references to Heavenly Court paintings have been dealt with in the first chapter of this study.

liturgies were performed, either on open-air altars or in the central halls of temple complexes. The interrelationship between painting and liturgy provides us with great possibilities to investigate some important underlying principles for the composition of Heavenly Court paintings

The investigations will focus on four aspects which should provide the parameters for a conceptual framework: *chao*-audience ritual, altar layout, and cosmology. Daoist liturgy and in particular the *chao*-audience provides information on how paintings are addressed and used during a ritual performance. A traditional liturgy consists of first a *zhai* 齋-retreat during which a memorial is presented (called *jinbiao* 進表 in the ritual sequence) to an audience of deities in a Heavenly Court as visualised in the paintings of the ritual area, and is followed by a *jiao* 醮-offering, traditionally explained as a banquet (*yan* 筵), to thank the deities for their benevolence (*xie'en* 寫恩).[2] The altar setting gives detailed information on the location of paintings and images in a ritual area and its development is closely related to the development of Heavenly Court painting. Daoist cosmology is a fundamental issue of both Daoist ritual, altar layout and painting, and provides information on, in particular, the division of pictorial space.

Whereas the previous chapter mostly dealt with art historical sources and materials, this chapter will by contrast take Daoist scriptures, and in particular ritual manuals, as its source for investigation. The four surviving Heavenly Court paintings that form the subject of this study, supplemented with sources discussed in the first chapter, will serve as materials to which the information obtained from the ritual manuals can be compared. Although I will try to be comprehensive and pay attention to all periods, the main focus will be on the Middle Phase, or roughly the Song-Yuan period.

The conceptual framework culled from the ritual manuals, mainly those contained in the Ming Daoist Canon, only represents the view of the Daoist clergy, and probably only that of a selected few, on Heavenly Court paintings and their ritual praxis. No specific attempt is made to qualify this view further with regard to other social groups involved in the production of the paintings. These are discussed in the next chapters. So far as possible, the conceptual framework should represent a normative view of the Daoist clergy on the application and spatial division of Heavenly Court painting. No such normative view is ever pronounced in

[2] The first notable sequence of this kind is observed in Lu Xiujing's *Taishang dongxuan lingbao shoudu yi* 太上洞玄靈寶授度儀 DZ 528; the *xie'en* ritual is mentioned in a note (50b) explaining that its proceedings were recorded in a separate scroll. It seems however that a *jiao*-offering also could be performed independently and also contained a presentation of a memorial (*jinbiao*). From the Song onward, the names of *zhai* and *jiao* became confused and were often used interchangeably.

any Daoist text and therefore remains the product of this study, and is solely intended as a means to clarify the production process of Heavenly Court painting.

2.1 The *chao*-audience ritual

Daoist ritual is extremely broad and complex and may denote a wide variety of practices.[3] The Chinese term for Heavenly Court paintings, *chaoyuan tu* 朝元圖or *chaozhen tu* 朝真圖 (lit.: paintings of an audience with the origin or truth), however assumes that the paintings are a representation of what I designate as a *chao*-audience ritual.

This section will therefore specifically focus on the relationship between paintings and the *chao*-audience ritual, rather than attempting to provide a full account of the entire Daoist ritual history. I will investigate first the relationship between court ritual and Daoist liturgy, both of which ceremonies are called *chao*-audiences; I will then give a short overview of the ritual sequences and development of the *chao*-audience which began as a basic Heavenly Master ritual in the Later Han period and was integrated into Lingbao ritual in the fifth century which from then on became the standard tradition for performing Daoist liturgy; and in the last part of this section I will present a discussion on the unity between Heavenly Court paintings and *chao*-audience describing it as a fusion of cosmic energies.

Court ritual and Daoist liturgy

[3] Studies on Daoist ritual are numerous, most of these focus on ritual traditions in modern Taiwan, see for example Michael R. Saso, *Taoism and the Rite of Cosmic Renewal*. Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1972; Kristofer M. Schipper, *Le Fen-teng: rituel taoïste*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1975; and idem, *The Taoist Body*. Translated by Karen C. Duval. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983 (1994 reprint); Liu Zhiwan 劉枝萬, *Taiwan minjian xinyang lunji* 臺灣民間信仰論集. Taipei: Lianjiang chuban sheyi gongsi, 1983; John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*. New York: Macmillan, 1987;; Li Fengmao 李豐懋, Zhu Ronggui 朱榮貴 (eds.), *Yishi, miaohui yu shequ: daojiao minjian xinyang yu minjian wenhua* 儀式，廟會與社區：道教民間信仰與民間文化. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wen zhe yanjiusuo choubei chu, 1996; Ôfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾 (ed.), *Chûgokujin no shûkyô girei, Dôkyô hen* 中國人の宗教儀禮，道教篇. Tokyo: Fukyosha, 2005. For some recent studies on Daoist ritual in China mainland, see Kenneth Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993; and Chen Yaoting 陳耀庭, *Daojiao liyi* 道教禮儀. Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003. Studies of ancient Daoist liturgy are less well represented, see for example Zhang Zehong 張澤洪, *Daojiao zhaijiao fuzhou yishi* 道教齋醮符咒儀式. Chengdu: Bashu chubanshe, 1999, and for a complete study of an eight century Daoist transmission ritual, see Benn, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission*. The only full and annotated translation of a Daoist ritual texts is still Chavannes, "Le jet de dragons," pp. 55-220. A short survey of Daoist ritual including a comprehensive bibliography is found in Kenneth Dean, "Daoist Ritual Today." In Livia Kohn (ed.), *Daoism Handbook*. Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 659-683.

Daoist liturgy is in its most basic structure a re-enactment of a court audience consisting of a ceremonial presentation of a memorial (*biao* 表) or petition (*zhang* 章) to a superior. The Daoist priest assumes the role of an official reporting his affairs by reading out a written memorial to the deities assembled in the Daoist Heavenly Court, the celestial counterpart of the imperial court on earth. Most importantly, the two court audiences are visualised as taking the same ritual layout, dating back supposedly to the times of the Zhou dynasty and recorded in the Confucian classics of ritual. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, in ancient court ritual of the Zhou dynasty, the members of the audience were organised in two rows to the left (east) and right (west) facing north, while the emperor occupies the north and faces south, exactly the same arrangement found in Heavenly court paintings, as can be witnessed in a diagram of the Yongle gong murals (Fig. 24).[4] The emperor and audience members were all supposed to wear ceremonial robes and crowns, also in accordance with their rank.[5] A copperplate engraving of a court audience a the Qing court of 1830 demonstrates that this ritual format was still in practice at the end of the imperial period (Fig. 25). The close relationship between the ritual practice of this terrestrial imperial court and that of the imperial court in Heaven is aptly illustrated by the frontispiece of a Yuan woodblock print of the *Yushu baojing* 玉樞寶經 (Precious Scripture of the Jade Pivot), dated 1333, but in which the two rows have been transformed a bit to suit better the format of the frontispiece (Fig. 26).

The resemblance between court ritual and Daoist liturgy and the role of the Daoist priest as an official of a celestial bureaucracy would give credence to an interpretation of Heavenly Court paintings that ties in well with general conceptions of Chinese religion in imperial China and the role of Daoism therein. These general conceptions envisioned a supernatural world of palaces in multiple heavens inhabited by emperors and officials who rule over the affairs of the human world in a manner similar to the terrestrial emperor and his officials ruling over the Chinese empire. The celestial bureaucracy had strong judicial powers and kept track of one's good and bad deeds by recording these in registers, thus deciding disease, misfortune, and death of each person. In order to negotiate with the celestial bureaucracy and remedy a person's misfortunes, a Daoist priest could then in his capacity as an official of this celestial bureaucracy send up a memorial to a specific deity in a celestial department (often a constellation or star connected to the person's birthday) requesting the

[4] *Zhou li* 31.1b and *Li ji* 1.2a-b. For a study of memorials in Han bureaucracy, see Enno Giele, *Imperial Decision-Making and Communication in Early China*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006.
[5] *Yi li* 儀禮, second century, commentary by Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200). Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1984, 1.1a-b. Zheng Xuan's commentary provides the details on the dresses, presumably describing Han practices.

problem to be solved. In dealing with the official authorities on earth, a person would go through the similar process of presenting a petition – or rather finding an official presenting a petition on his behalf – in order to see a problem solved. Daoist liturgy with its central act of presenting petitions to a celestial bureaucracy, performed in the same fashion as at court, therefore tallied perfectly with the conceptions of its viewers and patrons, and undoubtedly reinforced the status of the Daoist priest as a representative of the celestial bureaucracy.

The resemblance between Daoist liturgy and court ritual can easily be interpreted as an imperial metaphor or allegory, and Heavenly Court paintings would readily support this view.[6] However, the imperial metaphor of Daoist religion presents only the outer surface, the part that is visible to the public eye. Such a metaphor presumes a direct correlation between an imperial court audience and Daoist Heavenly Court paintings, and although this may be intended to some extent, the relationship is only superficial, because the interpretation of an imperial metaphor could hardly explain the finer details of a Heavenly Court composition except for the division into a left and right audience focused on the north and an imperial iconography of most deities. In order to be able to define a ritual framework for a Heavenly Court composition, it is necessary to investigate the practice of a *chao*-audience a little bit closer.

Daoist liturgy is composed of an external and internal component, which are performed simultaneously during the liturgy.[7] The external component entails the various movements and actions of the priest in the ritual area and consists of all physical and material, and therefore externally visible, liturgical observances. The internal component is the part of the ritual that is played out inside the body of the priest and consists of all mentally visualised, and therefore externally invisible, liturgical observances. In both cases, the *chao*-audience is acted out as a presentation of a memorial, in the external ritual literally entailing the reading out of a memorial in front of the audience of deities represented in the Heavenly Court painting (or sculptures) and finally its burning symbolising its transformation and sending up to heaven; in the internal ritual this presentation is visualised as a spiritual journey to a palace in heaven where the memorial is handed over to the deities of the Heavenly Court.

In Daoist ritual, the internal component prevails over the external component. Although the external ritual requires only a minimum of altar settings and actions, any ritual would fail to accomplish its envisioned result without the proper command of visualisation

[6] On this topic, see Robert Hymes, *Way and Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, and Models of Divinity in Sung and Modern China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002, and Stephan Feuchtwang, *Popular Religion in China. The Imperial Metaphor*. London: Routledge Curzon, 2003.
[7] See also Kenneth Dean, "Daoist Ritual Today."

techniques. This stance also explains why Heavenly Court paintings are regarded, in Daoist texts at least, as tools for visualisation and why they can even be discarded with.[8]

Development and sequence

As far as can be judged from surviving materials, the *chao*-audience ritual originated with the Heavenly Master order of the Late Han and merged in the fifth century with the ancient Lingbao tradition to form the traditional Lingbao *zhai* 齋-retreat as performed to this day.

The earliest Heavenly Master rituals were called a *chaozhen* 朝真 or an "audience with truth." This audience ritual was always conducted inside an oratory where the liturgy consisted of a simple sequence of lighting the incense burner (*falu*), protecting the four directions by the four heraldic animals (of the four directions, *sishen* 四神), dispatching the (bodily) officials (*chuguan* 出官), presenting a memorial (*zouzhang* 奏章), and their reversal, returning the (bodily) officials (*naguan* 納官) and covering the incense burner (*fulu* 復爐).[9] There is no indication that ancient Lingbao ritual included a presentation of a memorial although a kind of Heavenly Court with assembled deities was visualised in the ritual area.[10]

The merging of liturgical procedures also meant a merging of ritual space. The ritual space of the Heavenly Masters was an oratory in which basically a visualised court audience took place while the Lingbao altar was closely associated in layout and conception to the Altar of Heaven, on which principally a sacrificial or offering ritual was held.[11] Heavenly

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[8] I will come back to this issue in the section below on ritual function.

[9] This sequence is culled from ancient Heavenly Master material collected in the *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 DZ 421 by Tao Hongjing (456-536). See Ursula-Angelika Cedzich, "Das Ritual der Himmelsmeister im Spiegel früher Quellen: Übersetzung un Untersuchung des liturgischen Materials im dritten chüan des *Teng-chen yin-chüeh*." PhD Dissertation, Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, 1987, reviewed in Anna Seidel, "Early Daoist Ritual." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 4 (1988), pp. 199-204. This information tallies with the descriptions found in the *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, compiled by Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960, j. 8, p. 264, and in Kou Qianzhi's 寇謙之 (365-448) *Laojun yinsong jie jing* 老君音頌戒經 DZ 785, 10a-13b. A more precise and original description of the early Heavenly Master *chao*-audience is found in two slightly different versions contained in the *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032, 41.12b-14b and 45.7b-11a, both called *chaozhen yi* 朝真儀 or "rituals for going on audience with the truth." The Song ritual manual, *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 DZ 508, chapter 22, contains a later elaboration on the Heavenly Master ritual but for a *jiao*-offering.

[10] *Dongxuan lingbao changye zhi fu jiuyou yugui mingzhen ke* 洞玄靈寶長夜之九幽玉匱明真科 DZ 1411. For the authenticity of this text and its use as a source for later Lingbao *zhai*-retreats, in particular the Golden Register Retreat (*jinlu zhai* 金籙齋) and Yellow Register Retreat (*huanglu zhai* 黃籙齋), see John Lagerwey, *Wu-shang pi-yao. Somme taoïste du VIe siècle.* Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1981, pp. 161-165.

[11] On the relationship between the Daoist altar and the Altar to Heaven, see John Lagerwey, "Taoist Ritual Space and Dynastic Legitimacy." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995), pp. 87-94. See also the next section on altar space below. Interestingly, the description of the ancient Lingbao altar with five gates in *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶赤書玉訣秒經 DZ 352, 2.20a-22a is called a *jiao*-offering altar, suggesting that the ancient Lingbao altar was originally a sacrificial altar (to which deities descend) in contrast to

Court paintings thus depict the audience in heaven and is not an offering to deities who have descended to the altar site.

With the fusion of Heavenly Master and ancient Lingbao liturgy, which already had absorbed some elements of Buddhist ritual, probably during the time of Lu Xiujing (407-477), the *chaozhen* ritual transformed into a long sequence of ritual elements which were placed before (a-d, h) and after (e-g) the formal presentation of the memorial (*jinbiao* 進表). Important elements were, among others, (a) the distribution of lamps (*fendeng* 分燈) for inviting the deities to attend the ritual; (b) the installation of the ritual area defined by the placement of the Five True Writs (*wu zhenwen* 五真文) on five tables fixed (*zhen* 鎮) by five golden dragons appeasing the five directions; (c) several homage rituals such as to the Three Treasures (*sanbao* 三寶, i.e. Dao, scriptures, and master), the ten directions (*li shifang* 禮十方) – a Buddhist element – and the Three Masters (*li sanshi* 禮三師); (d) a ritual dance of Pacing the Void (*buxu* 步虛)[12] always held prior to the presentation of memorial which was also identified with a report of merit (*yangong* 言功) - a term deriving from court ritual. After the presentation of the memorial there was further a (e) tossing of dragons and slips (*tou longjian* 投龍簡) to the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth and Water – a ritual element also adopted from the Heavenly Master order;[13] (f) after dismantling the ritual area (*santan* 散壇), (g) a *jiao* 醮-offering was finally held to thank the gods for their presence and benevolence.[14] In later times, this ritual sequence was further expanded with elements such as (h) the Rites of Deliverance (*liandu* 煉度) for the salvation of the soul from the Song onward, and the expanded *jiao*-offerings as codified by the Northern Song court. Rituals could last one, three,

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the Heavenly Master oratory which is based on a court audience ritual (to which the priest ascends). These two spaces (and in fact contradictory movements) are fused in the traditional Lingbao liturgy since the fifth century.

[12] The translation "pacing the void" was first made by Edward H. Schafer, *Pacing the Void: T'ang Approaches to the Stars*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977.

[13] This rite was moved to the end of the ritual sequence from the Tang onward. It was also an almost independent ritual when performed on behalf of the court on sacred mountains and rivers. See Chavannes, "Le jet de dragons," for a study of this ritual.

[14] Lu Xiujing's *Taishang dongxuan lingbao shoudu yi* DZ 528, an ordination ritual text, perfectly exemplifies the fusion between early Heavenly Master and ancient Lingbao ritual in the fifth century. Curiously, this ritual text contains no homage to the ten directions, a Buddhist element. See further *Wushang biyao* 無上祕要 DZ 1138, a Daoist encyclopedia of the late sixth century that contains many quotations and summaries of Daoist liturgy as codified after the time of Lu Xiujing. The *Wushang biyao* is studied in John Lagerwey, *Wu-shang pi-yao. Somme taoïste du VIe siècle.* Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1981. Research on the earliest forms of Daoist liturgy is only at a preliminary stage and the development sketched here should be seen as a contribution to this research as seen from the development of Heavenly Court painting. See for example, Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism." *T'oung Pao* 66 (1980), pp. 84-147, Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-Bao Scriptures," in Michel Strickmann (ed.), *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honor of R.A. Stein*, Vol. 2. Brussels: Institute Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1985, pp. 434-486, and Lü Pengzhi and Patrick Sigwalt, "Les textes du Lingbao ancien dans l'histoire du taoïsme." *T'oung Pao* 91 (2005), pp. 183-209.

or more days and each day had three audiences (*chao* 朝) during which all kinds of written memorials were presented; the presentation of the memorial during the report of merit on the last day would however remain the most important one after which all memorials together with the True Writs were burned.

The development outlined here is of course a very general picture of Daoist liturgy, but in Lu Xiujing's time already many types of rituals existed, differentiated according to social class (court, commoner, Daoist clergy) and function (salvation of souls, confession of sins, seeking immortality, averting calamity and natural disasters etc.).[15] From the fifth century, these Lingbao rituals – and what I term the "traditional" Lingbao liturgy - were no longer called *chao*-audiences but *zhai*-retreats. In classical times, a *zhai*-retreat originally meant the purification period of fasting and bathing before a blood-sacrifice *(si* 祀 or *ji* 祭) of a victim, which was now replaced by a *jiao*-offering of vegetable substances like tea, flowers, fruit, and incense.[16] The two most important type of rituals were however the Golden Register Retreat (*jinlu zhai* 金籙齋) held for the well-being of the emperor and the state, and the Yellow Register Retreat (*huanglu zhai* 黃籙齋) performed for the salvation of the soul of the deceased. The functions of these retreats were largely expanded in later times, and their names were even confused with *jiao*-offerings which mainly had an exorcist function, resulting later on in a division of rituals for the living (the former Golden Register Retreat, today called a *jiao*-offering) and the dead (the former Yellow Register Retreat, today called a *zhai*-retreat),[17] a division already witnessed in the early fourteenth century ritual manual *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* 靈寶領教濟度金書 (Golden Book of Salvation of the Lingbao Tradition).[18]

Regardless of the type of liturgy or the order of its elements, the *chao*-audience of presenting a memorial remained the most quintessential part of the Daoist liturgy.[19] This part is variously termed *yangong* or *jinbiao* in the description of ritual sequences in ritual manuals.

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[15] For a convenient summary of the various types of Daoist ritual and their differences, see Chen, *Daojiao liyi*, pp. 72-88.

[16] *Jiao*-offerings could also be performed independently, often for exorcist or therapeutic purposes, but a presentation of a petition or memorial – the audience - would still form the central act of the ritual.

[17] The correlation with the former retreats is the situation in South Taiwan (and among the Yao). See Schipper, *Le Fen-teng: rituel taoïste*.

[18] *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.25b and 2.1a-14a makes a division between exorcism (*qirang* 祈禳) for the living, and a Rite of Deliverance (*kaidu* 開度) for the dead. This division is repeated in the Ming ritual manual *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu* 上清靈寶濟度大成金書, compiled in 1432 by Zhou Side 周思德 (1359-1451), chapter 25. In *Zangwai daoshu* 臧外道書 (hereafter abbreviated as ZWDS), Zangwai daoshu bianweihui 臧外道書編委會 (ed.). Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1992, Vol. 17, pp. 71-105.

[19] See the remark on this subject in Kristofer M. Schipper, *Exposé de titres et travaux*. Paris, 1983, pp. 28.

In the ritual sequence where the presentation is mentioned, the ritual manual itself often provides no more information than a short note by the compiler that the presentation is performed in kneeling position in the direction of the Gate of Heaven (*tianmen* 天門), that is the north-western direction in the altar layout, followed by the instruction "to visualise the deities and the presentation [of the memorial] according to ritual" (*cunshen chengjin ru yi* 村神呈進如儀).[20] At this point it is perhaps of interest to note that both the Yongle gong and the Toronto murals have included a pictorial reference to this praxis. Namely, the Yongle gong has a depiction of a Daoist priest (101), one of the Three Masters, bowing in front of the Heavenly Sovereign (*tianhuang* 天皇, IV) – a deity traditionally identified with Heaven (*tian* 天) – aptly depicted on the northwest wall (Fig. 27), while the Toronto murals depict an image of a Daoist priest (B12) on the (northern part of the) west wall on the place where normally the Heavenly Sovereign is located, thus sublimating the two and attributing a divine status of the Daoist priest.

The particular information on the "visualisation of the deities presenting the memorial" is however found in the explanatory sections on visualisations of these ritual manuals, where they are referred to with different names, such as "audience with the origin" (*chaoyuan*), "presenting a memorial" (*jinbiao*), or simply "visualisation" (*cunsi*).[21] Almost all of these references appear in Song ritual manuals on Lingbao liturgy, but the oldest description is found in a repository of early Heavenly Master writings, the *Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章歷 (Petition Almanac of Master Redpine). Since it is also the most complete description I will provide here a translation:

> "*Visualisation*. The Ritual Codes state: after recollecting yourself, prostrate on the ground in front of the table and visualise a scarlet red *qi* rise form your heart to heaven. In a moment, you have traversed one hundred *li* (3 km) on the scarlet red *qi*. The road is winding and rolling and on both sides completely screened off by numerous precious trees. Suddenly you see the Yellow Way; that is the Yellow Way of the sun and moon. When you have travelled the yellow way for about five or six *li* (1500-1800 m), you see in the distance a purple cloud hidden and indistinct. Arriving at the purple

[20] Cf. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi*, dated 1223, DZ 508, 18.7b.

[21] *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* 太上黃籙齋儀 by Du Guangting DZ 507, 49.7b-8a; *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 44.1a-3b; *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 by Wang Qizhen 王契真 DZ 1221, 3.13a-15b, 54.20b-21b, 26b-27a; *Lingbao yujian* 靈寶玉鑒 DZ 547, 13.2a-4a and 21.21b-24a; *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* 靈寶無量度人上經大法 DZ 219, 46.7a-8a; and *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 283.5a-7a, 17a-22a.

cloud, you see the Gate of Heaven. The gate measures three *zhang* and eight feet (5.4 m) [high?] and is guarded on all sides preventing you from entering. The messengers and meritorious officers are allowed to hand over the petition only to General Zhou. A jade boy then takes the petition and memorial to the Portal (*que* 闕) gate below which he is ceremonially received on the west by the ritual master of the Three Heavens of Correct Unity surnamed Zhang and with the name Daoling. After bowing twice, he shows the petition and memorial and state the reasons of your affairs. He bows nine times for the Heavenly Master and proceeds to below the gate of the Phoenix Pavilion. Shortly after you have entered [the gate], an immortal boy will appear in a red robe and wearing a mystery-crown to whom you must hand over the petition. A jade boy will collect the petition and memorial and after entering for a while he will reappear and guide you inside where you see the Superior Supreme (i.e. Laozi).

The Superior Supreme is donned in a cape of nine-coloured cloud mists and wearing a nine-powers crown. He sits in the hall accompanied to his left and right sides by a mysterious veritable and guards. You also see Great Unity (*taiyi* 太一) wearing a red robe and a mystery crown.

The Superior Supreme [receives] the petition and memorial.

The Superior Supreme reads it once and hands it over to Great Unity.

The Superior Supreme notifies the relevant department [in charge of solving the problem mentioned in the petition], and descends from the jade steps of Great Purity [Heaven], writing [on the petition] the character for "approved'" (*yi* 依). You then see an immortal boy receiving the petition and memorial on the staircase to the right and distributing it among the officers and officials of that day making them bow in their hearts twice and bidding farewell.

The Superior Supreme leaves through a door and after bowing twice you bid the Heavenly Master farewell. Together with the true officials who [escorted] the presentation of the petition, you return walking to the place where you presented the immortal (i.e. the oratory). You get up [from the original kneeling position in which the visualisations took place] and make known [the result]."[22]

[22] *Chisongzi zhangli* DZ 615, 2.23b-24b. On this scripture, see also Peter Nickerson, "The Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints." Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp. 230-274, and Franciscus Verellen, "Tianshidao shangzhang keyi: "Chisongzi zhangli" he "Yuanchen zhangjiao licheng li" yanjiu 天師道上章科儀: "赤松子章曆" 和 "元辰章醮立成曆" 研究." Li Zhitian (Lai Chi-tim) 黎志添, *Daojiao yanjiu yu Zhongguo zongjiao wenhua* 道教研究與中國宗教文化. Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 2003, pp. 37-71.

The audience at the Heavenly Court of the early Heavenly Master order is visualised as a spiritual journey of the Daoist priest through the Milky Way which comes to an end below a palace gate, generally referred to as the Golden Portal (*jinque* 金闕), where some formal transactions should take place before the priest can enter. Inside the palace, the Superior Supreme, or Laozi, assisted by Great Unity, finally reads and approves the memorial presented to him, bringing the audience to a completion and after which the priests returns to the oratory – the standard place where Heavenly Master priests conduct their *chao*-audience rituals - taking the same route back. Unfortunately, no detailed information is given on the representation of the interior of this Heavenly Court besides the mentioning of gates, a pavilion and a flight of steps below the throne of the Superior Supreme. The text neither gives detailed information on the iconography of the deities mentioned, only describing the colours and types of crowns and gowns, an idiosyncrasy of both Daoist iconography and Chinese imperial court ritual. The description is too terse to reconstruct a Heavenly Court painting but it is interesting to point out that the specific mentioning of one veritable to both the left and right side of Laozi tallies with surviving stele carvings from Shaanxi province from the late fifth and early sixth century, suggesting that both text and stele are representations of the same ritual praxis.[23] An illustrated ritual manual for visualisations made during the liturgy of the Tang dynasty and presumably of Heavenly Master origins, *Laojun cunsi tu shiba pian* 老君存思圖十八篇 (Lord Lao's Illustrations for Visualisation in Eighteen Sections), gives a depiction of a Daoist priest ascending with his retinue to the Heavenly Court supervised by the Superior Supreme (Fig. 28).

The explanations for a visualised *chao*-audience in Song ritual manuals are an elaboration on the Heavenly Master audience.[24] Most of them follow a basic structure and, taking the explanation in the *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* as a basic source of reference, it can be summarised as follows:[25] 1) beginning in the oratory and transforming the body; 2)

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[23] See for example theYao Boduo 姚伯多 stele dated 496, the Yang Eshao 楊阿紹 stele dated 500, and the Feng Shengyu 馮神育 stele dated 505 in Stanley K. Abe, "Heterological Visions: Northern Wei Daoist Sculpture from Shaanxi Province." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9 (1996-1997), pp. 69-83, figs. 2, 7, 9.

[24] The *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 283.5a-7a, 17a-22a provides the longest and most detailed explanation and is clearly based on the *Chisongzi zhangli* described above, as are some parts of the *Lingbao yujian* DZ 547, 21.21b-24a. Du Guangting's annotation in *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* DZ 507, 49.7b-8a is copied verbatim in Jiang Shuyu's *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 44.1a-3b. The *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1221 by Wang Qizhen has many aspects in common with the *Lingbao yujian* DZ 547. Only the *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* DZ 219 seems to be independent in outlook and uses much Shangqing terminology.

[25] *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 283.17a-22a is divided into three sections, each which more or less describe the same audience. In the summary provided here, I have for convenience sake integrated the three sections into one sequence. In the text, for example, an audience takes first place in front of the Heaven's Gate

visualisations in front of the "curtains" of the Three Masters and the Mysterious Master; 3) fusing the *qi* in the colours green-blue, yellow, and white of the three cinnabar fields (of the lower, middle and upper body) in the middle cinnabar field (Yellow Court, or Red Palace); 4) entering the ritual area through the Royal Gate (*dumen* 都門) in the south on the lower tier, passing the Earth Door (*dihu* 地戶) in the southeast corner on the middle tier and moving to Heaven's Gate (*tianmen* 天門) in the northwest corner;[26] 5) performing the nine steps of Pacing the Void, each step ascending one step of the staircase of the Yuluoxiao Terrace 鬱羅蕭臺 (where the Superior Supreme resides) and each step accompanied by one stanza of the hymn, the tenth stanza for reaching the summit;[27] 6) crossing the Rainbow Bridge; 7) reaching the Three Gates of Heaven guarded by the three generals Zhou 周, Ge 葛, and Tang 唐; 8) entering the Golden Portal; 9) audience with the Heavenly Worthy of Original Beginning seated on a throne of five-coloured lions amidst rays of golden light and assisted on both sides by multitudes of veritables; 10) erasing sins from the purple register (of death) held by the veritable on the left side and adding one's name to the red register of life on the right side; 11) the Heavenly Worthy of Original Beginning signing the memorial with the character for "approved" (*yi* 依); 12) returning through the Three Gates of Heaven, the Rainbow Bridge, to the middle cinnabar field (Red Palace); 13) ending in the oratory.[28]

At first sight, a connection of the *chao*-audience with Heavenly Court painting seems difficult to make; paintings are not mentioned in the description and of the many deities depicted only a handful appears in the explanations. The most important deity in the text is the Heavenly Worthy of Original Beginning, the central deity of the Daoist Three Purities, which in the Lingbao *chao*-audience has replaced the Superior Supreme - in one other text the central deity is even identified as the High Emperor (*shangdi*) of the state cult.[29] Other deity

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on the altar while later almost the same audience is held on the separate Petition Presentation Altar, but this is only a later development. The sections also seem to have been compiled from different sources, i.e. Lingbao, Heavenly Master and Shangqing texts but this would need further study.

[26] For a description of the Daoist altar, see the next section on altar space.

[27] On the hymn of Pacing the Void (*buxu*) and its use in Daoist liturgy as a means to accessing a different space-time continuum, see Kristofer M. Schipper and Wang Hsiu-huei, "Progressive and Regressive Time Cycles in Taoist Ritual." J.T. Fraser (ed.), *The Study of Time*. Vol. V. *Time, Science and Society in China and the West*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986, pp. 185-205, idem, "A Study of *Buxu*: Taoist Liturgical Hymn and Dance." Pen-yeh Tsao and Daniel P.L. Law (eds.), *Studies of Taoist Rituals and Music of Today*. Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1989, pp. 110-120, idem, "Progrès et régression ou l'immortalité sans peine." *Piste* 2 (1990), pp. 61-72. See also, Poul Andersen, "The Practice of *Bugang*." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 5 (1989-1990), pp. 15-53. Many different versions of this important hymn of Pacing the Void exist but to date only one has been translated, Edward H. Schafer, "Wu Yün's 'Cantos on Pacing the Void.'" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 41 (1981), pp. 377-415.

[28] Cf. *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 319.11a.

[29] *Lingbao yujian* DZ 547, 22.21a.

figures mentioned are the Three Generals Zhou Wu 周武, Ge Yong 葛雍, and Tang Hong唐宏, three meritorious generals of the Western Zhou dynasty (ca. 1100-771), who are depicted in the Yongle gong murals on the southern part of the east wall (197-199) (Plate 3).[30]

Yet, while not all deities seem to play a role in the Heavenly Court audience or receive memorials, their inclusion is significant for the performance of the visualised *chao*-audience.

Fusion

The deities represented in Daoist Heavenly Court paintings are the cosmological counterparts of the deities residing inside the priest's body.[31] The whole *chao*-audience is a ritual during which the deities of the outer cosmos are fused with the deities of the inner cosmos. This process is "translated" in the liturgy, in the visual setting of the Heavenly Court painting, and in various ritual attributes as an imperial metaphor of court ritual. However, the sequence of dispatching the (bodily) officials (*chuguan*) and presenting a memorial (*jinbiao*) is basically an allegory itself for a re-creation of the cosmos in its original state (*yuan* or *zhen*). The Chinese name for the Heavenly Court paintings as *chaoyuan tu* or *chaozhen tu* is therefore very aptly chosen.

The *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* 靈寶無量度人上經大法 (Great Method of the Immeasurably High Salvation Scripture of the Lingbao Tradition, ca. 1200) makes the most explicit statements, in distinct Shangqing terminology in which it differs from the other manuals, that the deities visualised inside the body of the priest fuse (*hunhe* 混合) with the deities of the outer cosmos. In a paragraph on *Methods for sending up memorials in a flight* (*feizou zhi fa* 飛奏之法) the text states for example that:

> "The energies of the human body fuse with the energies of all the heavens. From his conception in the womb, man's correct energies are muddled with false energies,

[30] The names of the Three Generals together with iconographic descriptions of crown, gown and attributes are found in *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* DZ 219, 46, 5b-6a. These descriptions do not match their representation in the Yongle gong murals. The Three Generals were also incorporated in the registers of the early Heavenly Masters, see *Jiao sandong zhenwen wufa zhengyi mengwei lu licheng yi* 醮三洞真文五法正一盟威錄立成儀 DZ 1212, 12b-13b, edited by Zhang Wanfu 張萬福 (fl. 700-742). Interestingly, paintings of the Three Generals are still used among Heavenly Master Daoist priests of the Yao minority, see Pourret, *The Yao*, pp. 230-231.

[31] This practice probably stems from Heavenly Master ritual in which the Register of the Covenant of the Allied Powers of Correct Unity (*zhengyi weimeng lu*) in twenty-four parts (which also correspond to twenty-four grades of initiation) constitute all the powers residing in one's body, visualised as in total 1200 officials, that merge with their counterparts in heaven (also numbering 1200). See the "Explanation on the Correct Unity Registers" (*ming zhengyi lu* 明正一錄) preserved in *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032, 45.2a-4a.

therefore the human body has twelve knots (four in each cinnabar field) and thirty-nine death gates (thirteen for each cinnabar field). If one can dissolve the twelve knots and thirty-nine death gates, then man's true energies will rise and communicate with heaven."[32]

The text continues with explaining that all these energies fuse and return as one unified body called "Emperor One" (*diyi* 帝一) who returns to the Yellow Court. This procedure is explained in more detail in a section titled *chaoyuan* in the same text: the deities of the three cinnabar fields of the priest's lower, middle and upper body rise to the Clay Pill (*niwan* 尼丸), the upper cinnabar field in the crown of the head, where they fuse with the Three Purities, and unified as one (i.e. Emperor One) return to the middle cinnabar field, the Yellow Court (*huangting* 黃庭).[33] An illustration of this visualisation of the Emperor One is found in an illustrated version of the *Dadong zhenjing*大洞真經 (True Scripture of the Great Cavern) the central text of the Shangqing tradition and first compiled in the fourth century and appended with illustrations on a later date (Fig. 29). An illustration of the visualisation of the Three Purities is also found in the *Laozi cunsi tu shiba pian* (Fig. 30).

Although steeped in Shangqing lore, this particular manual fills in a lacuna on the inner visualisation of deities left open in our previous discussion on the *chao*-audience: the deities depicted in Heavenly Court paintings are exactly those representing the deities of all the heavens and not those of ones body. This finding could easily relate to other Daoist orders and traditions as well, even though the numbers and names of the deities may differ.

It is even possible to narrow down the relationship between paintings and the *chao*-audience even further. The *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* relates the just mentioned thirty-nine death gates, together with the twenty-four life-diagrams (*shengtu* 生圖, eight for each cinnabar field) of an ancient Lingbao text, to the ritual of dispatching the officials (*chuguan*). The text specifies that these deities are the deities of the five organs and all other body parts. In other words, amalgamating both Shangqing and Lingbao tradition, the ritual of dispatching

[32] *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* DZ 219, 46.9b-10a.
[33] *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* DZ 219, 46.8a. Cf. *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 54.20b-21b where this sequence is performed inside the oratory in preparation of the presentation of the memorial. These visualisation can be compared to the Shangqing meditation technique of the "Audience with the Three Original Ladies" (*chao sanyuanjun* 朝三元君) as described in considerable detail in the *Dongzhen gaoshang yudi dadong ciyi yujian wulao baojing* 洞真高上玉帝大洞雌一玉檢五志寶經 DZ 1313, 27a-31a and the *Shangqing sanyuan yujian sanyuan bujing* 上清三元玉檢三元布經 DZ 354, 40a-47b, and paraphrased in *Zhengao* 真誥 DZ 1016, 9.14b-15a. The method also appears in the *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032, 41.14b-15a and 21b-23b. Another, slightly different explanation of the technique and its main deities, however without any reference to the *chao*-audience, is found in Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 128-129, 132-133.

the officials entails the gathering of all the bodily deities – those of the five viscera being the most prominent – and having them fused with all the deities of the outer cosmos. The visualisations for the ritual of dispatching the officials, as explained in the *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu*, entails a formation of deities that is very similar as the one found in a Heavenly Court composition; namely, the Daoist priest calls forth all the deities of his body (which he fuses with their counterparts in heaven – the deities of the Heavenly Court paintings) and arranges them in a cortege surrounding his body.[34] Transforming them into a single great procession of officials, clerks and soldiers (the bodily deities are mostly minor officials), they accompany the priest on his ascend to Heaven's Gate where the officials will handle the affairs of transmitting the memorial, the part described in the *Chisongzi zhangli* translated above. In the Heavenly Court paintings, a similar procession of deities (unmistakably all high-ranking deities) is witnessed on its way to the Three Purities, sometimes depicted in active motion such as in the Toronto murals (Plates 4 and 5). Again, the proceedings of court ritual – I am inclined to believe that such descriptions of dispatching officials are based on actual court ritual practice – are an allegory or imperial metaphor for meditations on cosmological processes.

The imperial metaphor continues in fact with the images of the Three Purities that in a Heavenly Court composition receive the audience or procession of deities. We have seen above that the Three Purities are fused with the deities of the three cinnabar fields of the Daoist priest's body. This is the last preparatory stage before the priest fuses the Three Purities into one deity. This final stage is however not reflected in the Heavenly Court paintings, but entails a reversal of the creation of the cosmos during which the priest returns from a pluralist to a unified state. The deity of this final stage has several names, such as Emperor One in the Shangqing tradition, the Heavenly Worthy of Original Beginning of the Lingbao tradition, or the Superior Supreme (Laozi) in the Heavenly Master order, but the most important aspect is that this deity is the "original deity" (*yuanshen* 元神) of the Daoist

[34] *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 282.22b-23b. For another example, see Lu Xiujing's *Taishang dongxuan lingbao shoudu yi* DZ 528, 4b-6b, also quoted in Du Guangting's *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* DZ 507, 1.3a-5a. These are probably an elaboration of Heavenly Master visualisation for the *chuguan*-ritual, cf. *Zhengyi chuguan zhangyi* 正一出官章儀 DZ 795, 1-3b.

priest him- or herself.[35] It is even possible to liken this original state to the Dao itself: the priest is the Dao.[36]

The *chao*-audience is therefore played out on two levels: first, a liturgical level on which the Daoist priest is on audience with the deities of a Daoist Heavenly Court presenting his memorial; and second, a visualised level on which the deities of the cosmos, as manifestations of his own bodily deities, become subordinated to his power and are in fact on audience with him, the memorials acting instead as orders rather than requests or prayers.[37] Regardless the paradox of the visible and visualised, both spheres adhere to the same ritual or cosmological structure, and understanding this structure allows us to understand the pictorial structure of Daoist Heavenly Court paintings. We will therefore now first look at Daoist altar space and its structures.

2.2 Paintings in altar setting

The most concrete information on the use of Heavenly Court representations in Daoist liturgy is found in descriptions for the correct layout of a ritual area. Ritual manuals, mostly dating to the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) often give descriptions and diagrams for the correct layout of an open-air altar, usually conceived as a three-tiered mound set with gates made of bamboo poles and cordoned by coloured ribbons, flags, curtains, and from the Transitional Phase also by paintings. Although ritual manuals may differ in content and outlook – differences that can often be explained by different regional or lineage traditions - the liturgical elements and altar layouts they describe are remarkably consistent for each period. This is important, because the consistency in text allows us to connect aspects of the ritual performance to compositional structures in Heavenly Court paintings.

It should be noted however that nowhere in the ritual manuals is any reference made to the standard Chinese term for a Heavenly Court painting, *chaoyuan tu* 朝元圖, let alone wall paintings. Only in very few instances, direct references are made to "images" (*xiang* 像),

[35] *Lingbao yujian* DZ 547, 17.1b writes: "the ruling god is called Cinnabar Original Lord, i.e. your own original spirit (*ziji yuanshen* 自己元神)." See also Wang Qizhen's *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1221, 55.1a where it says: "visualise the deities and transform your body into the Heavenly Worthy of Original Beginning."

[36] The relationship between Dao and the self is the subject of a study by Kristofer M. Schipper, "Dao yu wu 道與吾" (The Dao and I). *Daojia wenhua yanjiu* 15 (1999), pp. 399-403.

[37] As suggested by the textual sources, the liturgical level seems to be more valued in the Lingbao traditions and the Heavenly Master order, while the visualised level is more emphasised in the Shangqing tradition.

which may refer to both paintings and statues, or to "paintings" (*hua* 畫). The term "picture" (*tu* 圖) is not encountered in connection to Heavenly Court paintings in ritual manuals (the term was introduced most probably by painting critics of the Song we must remember). *Tu* can generally denote any type of drawing, including paintings, diagrams, illustrations in texts, and even talismans. The term is mostly encountered in the titles of Daoist scriptures. Context determines the exact meaning of a term, sometimes even without mentioning any painting or image. For example, from the word "hanging" (*xuan* 懸) we can infer that hanging scroll paintings are intended. In the specific case of altar descriptions, paintings – but sometimes also statues or tablets - are indicated by the word "curtain" (*mu* 幕, *zhang* 帳), a tent-like structure which shielded paintings of deities on three sides, at least in the Southern Song (1127-1279) and Yuan (1260-1368) dynasties.[38] Lastly, in some instances paintings are indicated by the term for a "seat" (*zuo* 坐 or *wei* 位) which may either be represented by an image, a tablet (*ban* 版or *pai*牌) or a banner (*fan* 幡). The context then makes clear which type is intended.

Besides a survey of the layout and development of the Daoist ritual area, this section will further discuss some issues related to paintings in altar settings. These issues are: *jiao* 醮 -offering lists and memorial lists which provide the names for the deities incorporated in the ritual area; the increase of the ritual pantheon of deities as reflected in the altar layout and explained in ritual manuals; the relationship of the Daoist altar with the temple space which started out as two separate spaces but which were gradually merged; the viewers of the Heavenly Court paintings or who was allowed in the ritual area and who was therefore allowed to see these paintings; and the question of the ritual function of Heavenly Court paintings.

Layout and development

The layout and development of the Daoist altar (*daotan* 道壇) or ritual area (*daochang* 道場 lit. "area of the Dao") closely follows the development of Heavenly Court paintings and I will employ here the same division in four phases to describe the development. I will only present a historical development for the so-called Lingbao altar, the tiered open-air altar, which forms the mainstay of Daoist liturgy up to the Middle Phase when it was gradually incorporated into the ritual space of temple architecture, and with that in wall paintings of the Heavenly Court.

[38] The word *zhang* 帳 can mean "curtain" or "canopy" and is a metonym for "painting." See the explanation in a Song ritual manual, the *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.23b.

Early Phase (400-700). The earliest descriptions of Daoist open-air altars give no reference to any paintings but instead represent deities in the form of tablets (*pai* 牌). The traditional Lingbao altar in the Early Phase consists of five gates hung with tablets for the deities of the five directions, five tables on which the Five True Writs (*wu zhenwen* 五真文) written on five coloured silk ribbon and fixed (*zhen* 鎮) by five golden dragons, and one additional gate called the "royal gate" (*dumen* 都門), which was hung with a tablet to the deities of the Three Offices (*sanguan* 三官, i.e. the Three Officials) and immortals of the five Sacred Peaks (*wuyue* 五嶽).[39] At the centre of the altar sometimes a pole with nine lamps was placed, while outside the gates also lamps or candles were placed in varying numbers corresponding to the season when the ritual was held. This layout was the standard altar setting up to the times of Lu Xiujing (406-477).[40] During or after his time, two changes had taken place. First, the number of gates was augmented to ten, dedicated to Heavenly Worthies of the Ten Directions (*shifang tianzun* 十方天尊). Second, the altar was erected on a three-tiered mound instead of at ground level.[41] More types of Daoist altars seem to have existed, but the three tiered Lingbao altar in the five directions would remain the basic and most commonly applied layout.[42] A short description of a Lingbao altar has survived in the *Sui shu*: "[The Daoists] make an altar of three tiers, and each tier they set off with silk ribbons in order to create a restricted area. On the sides, they erect gates which all have ritual images (*faxiang* 法像)."[43] By the late sixth century, paintings had become a standard part of the open-air altar. The

[39] Since a circular altar has only four directions, the gate of the centre and the royal gate were placed to the left and righ side of one selected gate, called seasonal gate. Each season is also emblematically related to a direction, e.g. east is spring etc. and if a ritual is held in spring, the centre gate and royal gate are thus placed to the left and right side of the east gate.

[40] This altar layout is found in two ancient Lingbao texts, *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* DZ 352, 2.20a-22a, the *Dongxuan lingbao changye zhi fu jiuyou yugui mingzhen ke* DZ 1411, 26b-26a, both dating to the fourth century, and in Lu Xiujing's transmission ritual *Taishang dongxuan lingbao shoudu yi* DZ 528, 2b-3b. The Lingbao altar is modelled on the archaic altar of Later Han Daoism, recorded in *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 太上靈寶五符序 (Preface to the Five Talismans of the Superior Supreme Lingbao Tradition) DZ 388, 3.3a-5a.

[41] The ten gates are mentioned in Lu Xiujing's *Dongxuan lingbao wugan wen* 洞玄靈寶五感文 DZ 1278, 5b-6a presenting in an appendix to the text twelve types of *zhai*-retreats accompanied by a commentary in which the altar layouts are discussed. However, the first line (1a) of the main text by Lu Xiujing mentions only six *zhai*-retreats and the appendix should therefore be treated with caution and may not be representative of altar layouts of Lu Xiujing's time.

[42] A Daoist encyclopedia of the late sixth century, the *Wushang biyao* DZ 1138, contains descriptions of several other altar layouts.

[43] *Sui shu* j. 35, p. 1092.

description does not specify what types of paintings were used but these most probably depicted supernatural elements and landscape motifs and no deities.[44]

Transitional Phase (700-1000). During the Transitional Phase, the change was mainly in representation rather than in content and layout, and from this period on images of deites appear in the open-air altar other than the central deity (a Heavenly Worthy or Laozi) as codified in ritual manuals. A Southern Song ritual manual, the *Daomen dingzhi* 道門定制 (The Order of Daoism, preface dated 1188) by Lü Yuansu 呂元素 discusses an altar which he claims follows the layout of former masters of the Tang dynasty (Fig. 31). He explains in a note: "When I look down at the diagrams for the altar layout by the two masters Zhang Wanfu (fl. 700-742) and Du Guangting (850-933), I see that they only established an [open-air] altar mound in three tiers for the performance of a liturgy and make no mention of regulations for the placement of images in halls. Therefore, the method of establishing images of the Three Worthies (i.e. Three Purities) on the upper tier and tents (*wo* 幄) to the Three Officials and Five Masters (*wushi* 五師) to the left and right is uniform with the court rituals on the Altar to Heaven (*yuanqiu* 圓丘) and follows the ancient practices."[45] The mentioning of the Five Masters in the text is a bit curious and is probably an error for the Five Emperors.

The accompanying diagram shows a three-tiered altar mound of which the upper tier is round and set with three tables, the central one for the images and scriptures of the Three Purities (not depicted but only mentioned in the colophon on top), the middle tier is octagonal, set with tablets (*pai*) of the eight trigrams, and the lower tier is square, the four corners representing the four gates: Earth Door (*dihu* 地戶) in the southeast corner, Heaven's Gate (*tianmen* 天門) in the northwest corner, Sun Gate (*rimen* 日門) in the northeast corner, and Moon Gate (*yuemen* 月門) in the southwest corner. The colophon mentions that the lower tier also has ten gates to the ten directions (not depicted). The lower tier furthermore has characters for the twelve earthly branches (*dizhi* 地支), three for each side. The altar mound is finally set with a fence made of decorated poles and coloured ribbons and surrounded by lamps in emblematic numbers following the seasons, as indicated by the two colophons to the left and right.

Although unverifiable because of the absence of such diagrams in surviving texts by Zhang Wanfu and Du Guangting, Lü Yuansu's descriptions tallies with our information on

[44] See my discussion on Early Phase Heavenly Court representations in the first chapter of this study.
[45] *Daomen dingzhi* DZ 1224, 8.29a-30b.

Daoist Heavenly Court painting from the Transitional Phase, in particular those painted by Zhang Nanben (ca. 885) in the Water-and-Land hall of the Baoli si in Shu Kingdom (Sichuan) which closely follow the division in three and five deities, as discussed in the first chapter. The Beiyue miao murals, which also depict the Five Sacred Peak deities and the Three Officials, would also fit neatly in this development. A more or less contemporaneous text, the *Xuantan kanwu lun* 玄壇刊誤論 (Discussion on Correcting Mistakes of the Mysterious Altar, dated 943) by Zhang Ruohai 張若海, further suggests a standard practice of employing images of the Three Officials and Five Emperors. It states, although without explicitly referring to paintings, that "in order to hold a *zhai* 齋 -retreat, the most high Three Purities are on the highest level [of a three-tiered altar]; next are all the veritables of the ten extremities; on the lowest tier are the categories of the Three Officials, Five Emperors and the divine immortals and numinous officials"[46] Interestingly, the veritables of the ten extremities – probably a substitution for the Heavenly Worthies of the Ten Directions – may also have been represented by paintings. The *Xuanhe huapu* lists a hanging scroll painting (*xiang* 像) of the Ten Veritables by Zuo Li左禮 (late 9th cent.) and a copy (of the same painting?) by the Shu (Sichuan) painter Huang Quan 黃荃 (903-965).[47]

Middle Phase (1000-1400). The Middle Phase saw a stunning increase in the number of paintings installed on an open-air altar. The altar itself was also expanded with numerous side-altars thus greatly expanding the scope of the ritual area. In order to describe the situation, I will rely on the *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu*靈寶領教濟度金書 (Golden Book of Salvation of the Lingbao Tradition) attributed to Lin Lingzhen 林靈真 (1239-1302), but probably of an early fourteenth century date, which is very explicit on the location and use of images in the altar layout and illustrates its text profusely with diagrams.[48] The *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 (On Performing the Ritual of the Unsurpassed Yellow Register Retreat, dated 1223) compiled by Jiang Shuyu 蔣叔輿 (1162-1223) contains similar diagrams and explanations which I shall use for comparison.[49] I will start with a description of the main three-tiered altar mound and then expand to the outer spaces.

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[46] *Xuantan kanwu lun* DZ 1280, 10a, 12a.
[47] *Xuanhe huapu* 3.69, 16.332. According to Lu You (1125-1200) a painting of the Ten Veritables was painted in the Taiping xingguo gong 太平興國宮 on Mt. Lu 盧山 (Zhejiang) by Wu Daozi. See Chang and Smythe, *Lu Yu's Travel Diaries*, p. 107.
[48] *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466 chapter 1.
[49] *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508 chapter 2.

The three-tiered altar mound follows with some minor additions the same layout as the ancient Lingbao altar. The upper-tier has ten gates with tablets to the deities of the ten directions and is placed with the tablets of the Three Treasures (*sanbao* 三寶, i.e. Dao, scriptures, and master), a five-coloured canopy (*huagai* 華蓋), a Cavern Table (*dongan* 洞案), and ten other tables on which the Five True Writs are installed, although these last tables are not mentioned in this particular manual.[50] Outside the ten gates, an additional thirty-two talisman-banners are installed representing the Thirty-two Heavens. The middle-tier has the standard four gates in the four corners but also additional tablets for the Five Sacred Peaks, the Three Radiances (*sanguang* 三光, i.e. Sun, Moon, and Stars), the Water Department (*shuifu* 水府), and the Scripture Treasure (*jingbao* 經寶).[51] The mid-tier further has a chime stone on the right and a bell on the left. The lower-tier, on ground-level, has one main gate on the south side as well as eight gates to the Eight Trigrams, an inversion of the arrangement on previous altars where the latter were located on the mid-tier while the four gates were located on the lower-tier. All the tablets further receive offerings of incense, flowers, lamps, and candles according to sacrificial ritual (*gongyang rufa* 供養如法). A wide array of lamps is placed in the shape of the constellations of the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions (*ershiba xiu* 二十八宿) surrounding the altar mound, an elaboration on the original seasonal configuration. The altar mound, which has only two actual tiers (the third tier equals the ground floor), would measure one meter in height and nine meters in width, the upper-tier being fifty centimetres high and over five meters wide. Since the poles measured at maximum over three meters, the total height of the altar could reach over four meters.[52]

The altar mound, resembling a mountain, would be the centre of a giant visual spectacle. A magnificent display of paintings is installed inside the temple hall behind the altar mound creating a Heavenly Court audience of Daoist deities; in addition, two rows of paintings concealed in curtains are installed to the left and right sides of the pathway leading up to the altar; while various smaller altars, halls, and curtains were erected to the left and right of the altar. Almost all of these other halls had paintings or statues of deities as well. The *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* provides diagrams for each of these external ritual areas, but I will restrict myself here to those in front of and behind the altar, and only give a short

[50] Cf. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 1.7b.
[51] On the origin of these additional positions, see *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 17.30a-31b.
[52] *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.1a-21b.

description of the other altars. I have compiled the various illustrations in the ritual manual into one diagram (Fig. 32).

The paintings and curtains in front of the altar seem to be an elaboration of the practice described in the *Daomen dingzhi*. In Southern Song times, the number of paintings was increased to six. To the left of the central pathway to the altar, paintings are hung of the Mysterious Master (*xuanshi* 玄師), the Heavenly Master (*tianshi* 天師, i.e. Zhang Daoling), the Supervisor of the Retreat (*jianzhai* 監齋), and to the right side paintings of the Five Emperors (*wudi* 五帝), the Three Officials (*sanguan* 三官), and the Three Masters (*sanshi* 三師). The order of the paintings however differs among other Song ritual manuals. The paintings all receive the standard offerings.[53]

The Song and Yuan altar layout is an expansion of the Tang altar. A diagram and a long explanation detail the location of the paintings hung on the walls of a temple hall: "In ancient times, the two tiers of a *zhai*-retreat altar imitated heaven and resembled earth. After its construction in the open-air was completed, all the veritables of the Three Realms (*sanjie* 三界) assembled on this one altar. Later generations simply constructed it indoors. Therefore it is necessary to distribute them over the three walls in the north, left (east) and right (west). The Jade Emperor is the highest venerable in the myriad heavens and ruler of the Three Realms. How could his hanging image (*xuan xiang* 懸像) be ranked below the Three Purities? Therefore, only the seven images of the Three Purities, North Pole, Heavenly Sovereign, East Pole, and South Pole hang on the north wall. On the left (east) wall only hang [the images of] the Nine Heavens, Six Luminaries (*liuyao* 六燿, probably a mistake for Six Masters, *liushi* 六師),[54] Northern Dipper, Three Provinces (*sansheng* 三省), Three Officials, and the Five Sacred Peaks. On the right (west) wall hang [the images] of the Five Elders (*wulao* 五老), Five Planets, Southern Dipper, Celestial Officers (*tiancao* 天曹), Four Saints, and the Two Departments [of Earth and Water] (*erfu* 二府). All receive offerings of incense, flowers, lamps, and candles according to ritual." This particular layout of paintings is not known in any source or among surviving Heavenly Court painting, which is demonstrative of the

[53] It states rather curiously that the "curtains are hung on two walls to the left and right." What type of walls is not indicated. Ibid. 1. 23a. Cf. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 2.7a-10b which has the paintings of the Mysterious Master, Heavenly Master, and Three Officials on the right and the paintings of the Five Emperors, Three Masters, and Supervisor of the Retreat on the left side.

[54] The Six Luminaries do not exist as an entity. The Nine (or Eleven) Luminaries are the Sun, Moon, Five Planets, Ketu and Rahu (and Yuebo and Ziqi), see for example the Yongle gong murals nos. 90-100. But since the Five Planets are depicted on a painting hanging on the west wall in the diagram, the Six Luminaries cannot be a writing error for the Nine or Eleven Luminaries. A standard entity of six figures are the Six Masters (*liushi*).

selective character of Heavenly Court paintings. The exclusion of an image of the Jade Emperor in the text seems to constitute a peculiar practice not followed in extant Heavenly Court paintings.

A bit further on in the text, a similar diagram appears, but for a *jiao*-offering altar (Fig. 33).[55] The diagram of the *jiao*-offering altar and its explanation demonstrate that the deities are all indicated by tablets and organised in rows to the left and right walls and against the north wall. This is very important because it shows that the offerings to the deities were not made to the paintings but to the tablets. The diagram gives the names for the tablets placed against the north wall: the seats (*zuo*) of the Three Purities are on top, then separated by a few feet of open space to allow passage, is a row of high tablets (*pai*) for the Jade Emperor in the centre, North Pole (here called Purple Tenuity) and South Pole to its left (east), and Heavenly Sovereign, Earth Goddess, and East Pole to its right (west).[56] Then, to the side walls are the left and right rows with positions for the *jiao*-offering. No deity names are given in the diagram or in the explanation. These are found in the following chapters of the manual where long lists are divided in a left row (*zuoban* 左班) and a right row (*youban* 右班) with names to be written on the tablets for the *jiao*-offering. The lists vary greatly in length and number as few as 24 or as many as 3600 deity names, the most common number of positions seems however to have been 360.[57]

The *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* lists nine other external altar sites distributed to the left and right and front of the central altar mound.[58] One is an Oratory (*jingmo tang* 靜默堂 or *jingshi* 靜室) which has images of the Daoist priest's scriptural, lineage and transmission masters (*jingjidu shi* 經籍度師). All ritual procedures start and end in this oratory. Two is a Concentration Pavilion (*jingsi ge* 精思堂) where the priest writes talismans and registers and chants scriptures. It also has a hanging scroll painting of a Lingbao official. Three is a Supervision Curtain (*jianlin mu* 監臨幕) for the judicial spirits of the Eastern Peak, the City God temple of the district and the local temple. The deities are represented by either images or tablets shielded by a curtain positioned to the left and right outside the central southern gate of the central altar. Four is a Generals and Clerks Curtain (*jiangli mu* 將吏幕) for the deities that

[55] *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.25a-26a.
[56] Curiously, the explanation to the diagrams mentions the Seven Sovereigns (*qiyu*) but in fact there are only six. It is not sure if the diagram is incomplete or altered, or if the explanation is incorrect.
[57] The lists are found in *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466 chapters 4-7.
[58] *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.23a-27b.

act as messengers for the priest. They are represented either by images or tablets and the altar is also positioned in front of the central altar.

Five is a Petition Officials Curtain (*zhangguan mu* 章官幕) for the deities that hand over the petition. They are indicated by tablets. Six is a Petition Presentation Altar (*shangzhang tan* 上章壇). It is a small open-air altar in three tiers and one meter in height. It is erected in front of the central altar in the location of the constellation Heavenly Well (*tianjing* 天井). This is where the petition is burnt and sent to heaven, i.e. in the direction of Heaven's Gate in the northwest corner of the central altar.[59] Seven is a Divine Tiger Curtain (*shenhu mu* 神虎幕) for the deities responsible for the assimilation (into the Dao) of the soul of the deceased. The deities are indicated by hanging scroll images and tablets and are shielded by curtains on a position to the right (west) of the central altar. Eight is a Correct Salvation Curtain (*zhengdu mu* 正度幕) for the deities responsible for the purification of the soul of the deceased (*lianhun* 練魂). They are represented by either statues, hanging scroll paintings, or tablets and are located to the left (east) of the central altar. Nine, a Deliverance Curtain (*liandu mu* 練度幕) for the Officials and Clerks, deities which assist in the salvation of the soul of the deceased. They are represented by tablets. Eight other minor curtains are listed and various layouts for lamps. An explanation to a lamp diagram for the Nine Prisons of Hell interestingly notes that no hell paintings are to be used. Hell paintings are almost standard to Heavenly Court painting in the Late Phase. The *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* provides names for the deities represented by statues, paintings, and tablets in four of the external altars, among which the Curtains for Salvation and the Divine Tiger seem to be the most important.[60]

Late Phase (1400-present). Attempting to give a description or thorough analysis of the altar layout during the Late Phase (1400-present) and its relationship to Heavenly Court painting is an almost impossible task, mostly for the lack of comparative sources and the diverse and largely unstudied state of Daoist liturgy in this period (with the exception of the last few

[59] The use of a separate petition altar seems to be later development. Cf. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 49.8a-b where the burning of the petitions takes place on the central altar on the priest's original position (i.e. his birth date in geographical directions) in the direction of Heaven's Gate.
[60] *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 38.1b-5b. Compare also the detailed explanations of the various external altars in Wang Qizhen's *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1221, 55.21a-35a.

decades of the modern period),[61] and I will restrict myself to making some general remarks, leaving the precise development in this period for future scholarship to investigate.

Before listing some cases of interest, it is at this point perhaps worthwhile to note a curious parallel between the development of the Daoist Canon and Daoist Heavenly Court painting. Recent research on the various compilations of the Daoist Canon through history shows a radical break in terms of content and composition with the publishing of the final compilation of 1447 and its supplement of 1607,[62] a break which can also be recognised in Late Phase Heavenly Court paintings. Whereas the previous compilations followed a set order, the so-called Three Caverns (*sandong* 三洞) and Four Supplements (*sifu* 四輔) each one containing the texts of one scriptural tradition as introduced by Lu Xiujing, the Ming Canon only followed this organisation in name but filled in the Caverns and Supplements with texts almost at random. More importantly, many ancient and original scriptures were discarded – a decision partially corrected with publication of the supplement in 1607[63] - while on the other hand a great number of texts of Daoist exorcist lineages and local cults that had emerged since the late Tang were incorporated; in Song and Yuan editions of the Daoist Canon, there presence was not yet recognised even though they played a central role in Daoist liturgy and in the layout of the ritual area. The particular compilation of the Ming Canon is understood as a reconciliation with the contemporaneous status of ritual practice in the field for which the division of the former Canons was outdated.[64] It should also be understood as a wholly new definition of Daoism as a religious entity in Chinese society.

As compilations directed and sanctioned by the state, the various editions of the Daoist Canon through history represent a canonical or orthodox view, an orthodoxy (or rather orthopraxy) that did not change much until the publishing of the Ming Canon in 1447. Daoist Heavenly Court paintings show a similar emphasis on orthopraxy up to the Middle Phase and only from the Late Phase we see this rigid framework in which Heavenly Court paintings are conceived to be breaking down, giving way to a wide variety of different formats which are

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[61] Daoist liturgy of the Ming, Qing and Republican (1912-1948) periods is still unstudied. Several ritual manuals are preserved in the *Zangwai daoshu*. It contains works not included in the Ming Daoist Canon and works published after that. Many ritual texts dating to the Qing and the modern period are still in the hands of Daoist priests. Several of these Qing and modern ritual texts were used in field studies, for example, by Schipper, *The Taoist Body*, Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual*, and Ôfuchi Ninji, *Chûgokujin*. See also the instructive article on such field work by Poul Andersen, "The Transformation of the Body in Taoist Ritual." Jean Marie Law (ed.), *Religious Reflections on the Human Body*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, pp. 186-208. Several late imperial ritual texts, mostly from South China, have been photomechanically reproduced in Wang Qiugui 王秋桂 (ed.), *Zhongguo chuantong keyiben huibian* 中國傳統科儀本彙編. Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1999.
[62] Schipper and Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*.
[63] Apparently, many scriptures at the disposal of the editors were for some unknown reason not included in the 1447 edition of the Daoist Canon. *Ibid*. pp. 32-40.
[64] *Ibid*. p. 34-35.

not easily related to one unified system – similar to the structure of the earlier Daoist Canons - probably owing on the one hand to a greater disparity in ritual observances now firmly established in the religious practices of local cults and regional Daoist lineages, and on the other to a certain formal distancing between the government and the Daoist clergy in the Ming and Qing dynasties.[65]

This development in the Late Phase can be demonstrated with surviving descriptions of altar layouts and Heavenly Court paintings. For example, the *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu* 上清靈寶濟度大成金書 (Complete Golden Book of Salvation of the Lingbao Tradition of Highest Purity Heaven) compiled in 1432 by the Daoist priest Zhou Side 周思德 (1359-1451), active at the Ming court in the capital Nanjing and disciple of the forty-third Heavenly Master Zhang Yuchu 張宇初 (1359-1410) who was the editor-in-chief of the Ming Canon, contains a description of a ritual area very akin to the one in the late Southern Song *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu*, with which it presumably formed one tradition as the title suggests.[66] There are only minor changes, one is the greater profusion of external altar sites, especially lamp altars judging from the numerous diagrams included in the manual, and the other is smaller number of central deities from nine to seven (now comprising the Three Purities, Jade Emperor, North Pole, Heavenly Sovereign, and Earth Goddess) (Fig. 34) yet the manual contains similar long lists with the names for *jiao*-offerings with 3600, 1200, and 360 positions continuing the tradition established in the Northern Song.[67] Interestingly, the central deities listed in the manual are nearly the same as those on hanging scroll paintings dated to the Qing period preserved in the collection of the Baiyun guan in Beijing, suggesting that the Quanzhen order in North China in its turn preserved, at least in part, the ritual tradition of the early Ming.[68]

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[65] At least, no Daoist Canon was published by the Qing court suggesting this formal distancing between court and Daoist clergy. *Ibid.* p. 2. However, recent research also demonstrates that the Qing court and the Daoist clergy were closely allied. See Vincent Goossaert, "Bureaucratic Charisma: The Zhang Heavenly Master Institution and Court Taoists in Late-Qing China." *Asia Major* 3rd series 17.2 (2004), pp. 121-159, and Liu Xun, "General Zhang Buries the Bones: Early Qing Reconstruction and Quanzhen Daoist Collaboration in Mid-Seventeenth Century Nanyang." *Late Imperial China* 27.2 (2006), pp. 67-98. This topic needs further study.

[66] *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu* chapter 25, DZWS 17/71-105.

[67] For the *jiao*-offering lists, see *ibid*. chapters 39-40. The fact that the diagram depicts a *zhai*-retreat altar layout but mentions a left and right group, obviously referring to the positions of the left and right groups of deities in a *jiao*-offering ritual strongly suggests that at this point, i.e. in 1432, no clear distinction was made between a *zhai*-retreat and a *jiao*-offering while this distinction was still made a century earlier.

[68] The paintings of the Baiyun guan Collection comprise eight central deities, including Three Purities, Jade Emperor, Heavenly Sovereign, North Pole, South Pole, and Earth Goddess, thus adding South Pole. The last four form the Four Sovereigns (*siyu* 四御). See Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian hua ji*, pp. 2-11, 14-17 . The architecture of the Baiyun guan is similarly organised as a ritual area presided in the north by a hall dedicated on the top floor to the Three Purities and the ground floor to the Four Sovereigns.

Altar layouts in the late Ming and Qing dynasties by contrast show a bewildering variety and not all of them can be readily explained from their relationship to changes in ritual practice. For example, the Ming Heavenly Court paintings in the Taifu guan (Shanxi), the Dadao guan (Hebei), and the closely related album of sketches in the Junkunc Collection, not only include a vast array of marshals used in exorcist rituals but also have pantheons presided over by the Three Sovereigns without any of the other central deities such as the Jade Emperor present. An emphasis on all kinds of marshals is also witnessed in the Qing paintings preserved in Baiyun guan Collection, such as the Thirty-Six Marshals and the Thirty-Two Marshals[69]. It is however not clear if all paintings in the collection were ever part of a ritual setting with Heavenly Court paintings.

Research in recent decades on ritual practice in Taiwan and southern China demonstrates an even greater variation in altar layouts and in deities incorporated in them. Although some may have been the result of the political upheavals in the twentieth century during which liturgical performances were practically halted and much knowledge was lost, as suggested by a modern altar layout in Qing'an County (Zhejiang) consisting only of Hell paintings.[70] Some overlap is however seen in South China where the Heavenly Master order seems to provide an overarching system in altar layouts. For instance, the Taiwan and Yao Heavenly Court paintings all group various deities together in four single hanging scroll paintings representing the Prefectures of Heaven, Earth, and Water (*tianfu* 天府, *difu* 地府, *shuifu* 水府), and the Human World (*yangjian* 陽間) which are doubled on the left and right walls of a temple hall (in rites for cosmic renewal). It is not known if this arrangement of the Heavenly Master ritual area is transmitted within the order and therefore much older or that the arrangement is a derivation of the Middle Phase Lingbao altar.

The most radical change in altar layout is witnessed in the Heavenly Court paintings of the Yao. In an altar layout used for rituals of salvations of the dead,[71] the Yao Daoist priests arrange the hanging scroll paintings in a very unorthodox L-shape in the corner of a room. An ancestral shrine, also hung on the sides with smaller paintings, occupies the corner of the L-shape. I have already noted the introduction of many narrative elements in the paintings as well as several local Yao deities, but the most astonishing new element is a long horizontal scroll painting called "Bridge of the Dao" that depicts the crossing over, represented as a long procession, of the soul from this world to the Daoist heavens; in earlier

[69] Ibid. pp. 24-27.
[70] Wang, *Zhongguo chuantong keyiben huibian*, p. 153.
[71] Different altar-layouts for rituals for the dead are not known anywhere else. Pourret, *The Yao*, pp. 214-243.

ritual manuals, this bridge is an actual physical structure in the ritual area but in this case it has been incorporated in the representation of the Heavenly Court in a pictorial format. Because of the fact that this painting is hung above the other paintings, usually beginning above the ancestral shrine in the corner and ending at the short side of the L-shape to the right, the entire layout is suddenly imbued with narrative significance, portraying the soul leaving the ancestral shrine and crossing the bridge to heaven. This narrative structure is absent in other representations of the Heavenly Court. Furthermore, the Yao altar setting, probably merging with an originally Yao type of altar, totally departs from the traditional Lingbao altar which always follows a division in a left and right side and the four directions, a basic principle of a court audience (*chao*).

Jiao-*offering lists and memorial lists*

There is a strong correlation in names between the *jiao*-offering lists and memorials on the one hand and the paintings of the *zhai*-retreat altar on the other. *Jiao*-offering lists, as explained above, provide the titles and hierarchical order of the deities that had been invited to attend the audience in the Daoist Heavenly Court. Numbers vary depending on the type of offering and the social status of the person or community for whom the offering is ordered. The different listings already existed but were codified, in the early Northern Song. The Song Chancellor Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962-1025), who most probably initiated these ritual codifications, devised a Great Offering for Universal Heaven (*putian dajiao* 普天大醮) with 3600 "positions" (*wei*) or tablets, a Great Offering for Entire Heaven (*zhoutian dajiao* 周天大醮) with 2400 positions, and a Great Offering for Matrix Heaven (*luotian dajiao* 羅天大醮) with 1200 positions. Several categories with smaller numbers of positions up to 81 follow.[72] These three main *jiao*-offerings are linked to the three main *zhai*-retreats, the Golden Register Retreat (*jinlu zhai* 金籙齋) held for the benefit of the emperor and the state, the Jade Register Retreat (*yulu zhai* 玉籙齋) for the ministers and officials, and the Yellow Register Retreat (*huanglu zhai* 黃籙齋) for the common people.[73] This last retreat was also used for smaller offerings, the one with 360 positions being the most standard. The ritual functions of the Yellow Register Retreat were also greatly expanded from the Song onwards encompassing all

[72] See Wang Qinruo's *Yisheng baode zhenjun zhuan* contained in *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032, chapter 103. The relevant passage is studied in Chavannes, "Le jet de dragons," pp. 215-220.
[73] *Lingbao yujian* DZ 547, 1.19b-21a.

kinds of exorcist functions against natural disasters etc. as well beside its main purpose of salvation of the dead.[74]

The *jiao*-offering lists as comprised in Song ritual manuals are handy tools for identifying deities in Heavenly Court paintings but they do not form the basis for such paintings as thus far has been suggested.[75] Nor are they ritually related. The *jiao*-offering lists records all the names and titles of the deities that are thanked with a banquet for their attendance and help, and are represented in the ritual area by spirit-tablets made from wood or paper installed in the ritual area of the *jiao*-offering altar. They constitute a different ritual area from the Heavenly Court paintings which rather belong to the *zhai*-retreat altar and whose number is not fixed. However, the *jiao*-offering lists can give great insights in the organisation of the ritual pantheon depicted in Heavenly Court paintings, because they group deities together in clear numbers and list the titles and ranks of these deities. The images of the deities reflect these same categorical aspects and always depict deities in their fixed numbers as a group, for example six deities for the Southern Dipper (*nandou* 南斗), and depicts deities – mostly – in the ceremonial costume corresponding to their rank, such as the imperial *mian*-crown, only worn by emperors, for example the Great Emperor of the North Pole (*beiji dadi* 北極大帝). The correspondence in costume and rank seems to hold well for all the major and well-known deities, but appears to be less well enforced for lesser deities.

The same correspondence with title and number is however found in memorial lists. These lists of model-memorials directed to a certain deity or group of deities also contain the specific ranks and numbers of deities addressed. Contrary to the *jiao*-offering lists, which are complete inventories of all the deities invited for the ritual, the memorial lists contain only a selection of important deities who were probably most frequently addressed in the Heavenly Court audience. The memorial lists are found in separate chapters in ritual manuals, where they are organised in the same hierarchical structure.[76] The names of the types of memorials (*zou* 奏or *biao* 表, *shen* 申, *die* 牒) follow this hierarchical structure, a feature adapted from court practice but which only seems to have started in the Song dynasty. The *biao*-memorial was used for example to address the central deities, i.e. the Three Purities and the six or eight sovereigns as depicted in the Toronto, Nan'an, and Yongle gong murals. The *shen*-memorial

[74] *Ibid.* 1.20a where it says that the Yellow Register Retreat is for everyone, from emperor to commoner, and helps to remedy all kinds of problems, regardless if these are astromical, climatological, or salvational, by restoring them to their natural order.
[75] See my discussion on the Yongle gong murals in Appendix 1.
[76] Cf. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, chapters 5-8 and *Daomen dingzhi* DZ 1224, chapter 2.

was directed at stellar and terrestrial deities, while the *die*-memorial was used to address local earth deities such as the City God and the Earth God.

The memorial lists are however ritually related to Heavenly Court images. Comparison between these lists and the deities depicted in Heavenly Court paintings or mentioned in descriptions thereof indicate a great overlap between the two, suggesting that there is a direct correlation between an image of a deity and a memorial. In other words, deities frequently memorialised needed to be visually represented in Heavenly Court paintings.

The difference in type of ritual is reflected in the difference of ritual area and therefore representation. During the *zhai*-retreat, the priest directed his memorials to the images, during the *jiao*-offering he made offerings to the tablets.

Increase of the ritual pantheon

One of the most obvious changes in the layout of the Daoist altar is the great increase in the number of deities incorporated in various representations in the ritual area. The development of the Daoist altar starts off as a relatively simple affair, which gradually grew in the Middle Phase into a huge visual spectacle involving numerous different altar sites, almost all placed with statues, paintings, and tablets indicating the presence of deities. Where do these deities come from and why should they be represented on the Daoist altar?

The increase in the number of deities is best seen in the *jiao*-offering lists, long registers recording the names and titles of all the deities thanked for their attendance to the ritual. It is these lists that form the source for the number of tablets – or paper slips - that are placed on the side walls in a temple hall during the *jiao*-offering. The increase was not unnoticed even among Song ritual specialists, and Jin Yunzhong 金允中 (fl. 1225), the author of the ritual manual *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (Great Lingbao Method of the Highest Purity Heaven), explains the increase as owing to the proliferation in writings addressed to deities (during a *zhai*-retreat) which consequently also had to be accorded a position (i.e. tablet) during the *jiao*-offering.[77] In other words, an increase in the number of memorials and other written communiqués led to an increase in the number of offering positions, which means that the ritual pantheon was expanded with more and different

[77] *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 39, 4a. The same text is found in a ritual manual by the same title, *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1221, 59.22a but compiled by Wang Qizhen (12th cent.). A similar explanation is given in *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 319:18b.

numinous powers that had previously been absent. A similar reasoning is expressed by Jiang Shuyu in his *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi*.[78]

Jin Yunzhong's explanation – although not explicitly mentioned - tallies with the general view that newly-emerged lineages and local cults had a major impact on Daoist liturgy from the end of the Transitional Phase onward. Whereas in previous times Laozi or the Three Purities were sufficient to remedy all kinds of illnesses and misfortunes, great and small, the new lineages brought in their own deities - which often already had a Daoist background or were identified with a certain deity of Daoist legend and lore – for more specific ritual tasks and were often attributed with special numinous powers (*ling* 靈) differentiating them from each other.

Most conspicuous in this respect are deities introduced from the so-called Rites of Deliverance (*liandu* 練度), an exorcist rite that originated with the many new Daoist lineages of the tenth and eleventh centuries, as demonstrated by Edward L. Davis, and that constituted from the Southern Song onward the main part of the rituals for the salvation of the dead, the traditional Golden Register Retreat (*huanglu zhai*). The Rite of Deliverance entailed the liberation of a soul from its hell prison and its subsequent purification and salvation in Daoist Heaven through inner alchemical meditations and the personal transformation of the Daoist priest into a specific deity.[79] Major deities of this rite comprised for example the Four Saints, (*sisheng* 四聖) Tianpeng 天蓬, Tianyou 天猷, True Warrior (*zhenwu* 真武) and Black Killer (*heisha* 黑殺) who play essential roles in exorcist rites, the Heavenly Worthy of Great Unity, Saviour in Distress (*taiyi jiuku tianzun* 太乙救苦天尊), the King Father of the East (*dongwanggong* 東王公) and Queen Mother of the West (*xiwangmu* 西王母), these last two already being connected to death and salvation since ancient times, as evidenced by depictions of these two deities in Han tomb murals.[80] Their presence, and their images, were therefore already much longer in the eye of the general public and their adaptation in Daoist ritual procedures is a clear sign of the influence of such popular practices in the Daoist liturgy of the Middle Phase. Great Unity, King Father of the East, and Queen Mother of the West

[78] *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 38.20a-b.

[79] For a study of these rituals in the Song and their relationship with the ritual specialists (*fashi*) of the tenth century, many of them influenced by exorcist Tantric ritual, see Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, pp. 115-152. See also Judith M. Boltz, "Opening the Gates of Purgatory: A Twelfth-Century Taoist Meditation Technique for the Salvation of Lost Souls." Michel Strickmann (ed.), *Tantric and Taoist Studies*, Vol. 2. Brussels: Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1983, pp. 487-511; and idem, "Singing to the Spirits of the Dead: A Daoist Ritual of Salvation." Bell Yung, Evelyn S. Rawsky, and Rubie S. Watson (eds.), *Harmony and Counterpoint: Ritual Music in Chinese Context*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996, pp. 177-225.

[80] Cf. Wu, *The Wu Liang Shrine*, pp. 126-141, and Li Song 李凇, *Lun Handai yishu zhong de Xiwangmu tuxiang* 論漢代藝術中的西王母圖像. Changsha: Hunan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000.

also figure prominently in the first and second days of a three-day Yellow Register Retreat when they were addressed with memorials according to Jin Yunzhong's *Shangqing lingbao dafa*.[81]

Not all new deities of the Middle Phase ritual pantheon can be traced back to the incorporation of the Rites of Deliverance. One new group of "deities" consists of Daoist masters and patriarchs. Their images are incorporated in numerous places of the ritual area: in the Oratory, as part of the Six Curtains, and in the Heavenly Court paintings on the *zhai*-retreat altar. Interestingly, the *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* specifies that the Oratory should have images of Lu Xiujing, Zhang Wanfu and Du Guangting, the three main liturgical codifiers before the Song dynasty.[82] The emphasis on visual representations of Daoist patriarch and lineage masters could be explained as owing to the social and religious transformations of the Song dynasty that warranted priests of lineages to identify themselves more visibly in order to differentiate themselves from other Daoist lineages and local cults. In addition, incorporating images of Daoist priests in the visual arena of the altar space of course also grants a divine legitimation and authority to the performing priest as a direct spiritual inheritor of the ritual legacy passed on through his or her Daoist masters depicted in the paintings.

Another group consists of deities introduced from the state cult and from the Altar to Heaven in particular. The incorporation of state cult deities pertains foremost to the major deities, such as the Jade Emperor/Emperor-on-High, Heavenly Sovereign, Earth Goddess, and North Pole, who do not appear in any early description of a Lingbao altar before the Middle Phase. Descriptions of the Altar of Heaven in the dynastic histories of the Han and the Jin demonstrate that these deities have a much longer history outside the Daoist Lingbao liturgy,[83] and on this basis I would argue that their introduction in Heavenly Court painting is the result of the merging of the state cult and Daoism which began in the Tang dynasty under Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756) and reached its completion under Song Emperor Huizong (r. 1101-1125). The origin of certain deities and images in the state cult is also hinted at in Lü Yuansu's description of the Tang Daoist altar mentioned above, claiming that it followed the ancient practices of the Altar of Heaven. Although it is not verifyable if the ancient Altar of Heaven had images, the most important deities were those of the Three Sovereigns and the

[81] *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 16.12b-13b.
[82] *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 38.20b. Cf. *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 319.13a.
[83] See the description of the Altar of Heaven in the *Houhan shu* 後漢書. Compiled by Fan Ye 范曄 (398-445). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965, j. 7, pp. 3159-3160, translated in John Lagerwey, "Taoist Ritual Space and Dynastic Legitimacy." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 8 (1995), pp. 90-91, and the description of the Altar of Heaven in *Jin shu* 晉書, compiled by Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578-648). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974, j. 19, pp. 584-585.

Five Emperors. In Lü Yuansu's Tang altar, these have been substituted by images of the Three Officials and Five Masters/Emperors.

A final new group consists of lesser stellar and terrestrial deities but whose provenance is a much more complicated affair. Deities such as the Northern and Southern Dippers, the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions, the Five Planets, the Five Sacred Peaks etc. already appeared on the Altar of Heaven in the state cult of the Han and Jin dynasties. Yet, they also appear in independent *jiao*-offering rituals from at least the sixth century, and judging from surving sources in the Daoist Canon, it seems that these *jiao*-offerings to all kinds of stellar and terrestrial deities was the specific affair of the Heavenly Masters[84] (the Heavenly Court paintings under discussion all bespeak the ritual practices, in particular the *zhai*-retreat, of the Lingbao tradition which formed the mainstream in Daoist liturgy). The end of the Transitional Phase saw a great increase in the number and types of *jiao*-offerings rituals,[85] all performed independently of the *zhai*-retreat – the majority of them being apotropaic or exorcist rituals[86] - and their origin and introduction may be attributed to the Heavenly Masters. The Chinese liturgists of the Song period even seem to have seen it in this way because Daoist priests would change to a type of robe worn by the Heavenly Masters when a *zhai*-retreat had finished and they began a *jiao*-offering. The sharp increase in these *jiao*-offerings rituals, in which Heavenly Master priests also used petitions, would thus explain the increase of the ritual pantheon of deities in the late Transitional and Middle Phases. The fact that the same stellar and terrestrial deities also belonged to the state cult, may only

[84] See the sixth century Heavenly Master ritual recorded in *Yuanchen zhangjiao licheng li* 元辰章醮立成曆 DZ 1288, and discussed in Verellen, "Tianshidao shangzhang keyi." See also the ritual manual edited by Zhang Wanfu 張萬福(fl. 700-742) *Jiao sandong zhenwen wufa zhengyi mengweilu licheng yi* DZ 1212. Many of these stellar deities were later incorporated in Du Guangting's *jiao*-offering list, *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* 太上黃籙齋儀 DZ 498, chapter 50.

[85] The *Daomen dingzhi* DZ 1124, 6.1a-6a of the early twelfth century states that Du Guangting (850-933) had seventeen types of *zhai*-retreats and fifty types of *jiao*-offerings, also stating that the majority of the *jiao*-offerings were used for exorcism. The *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 15.2b speaks of forty-two types of *jiao*-offerings and the *Shangqing lingbao dafa* of twenty-seven *zhai*-retreats and forty-two *jiao*-offerings in Du's ritual system. The ritual manual *Daomen kefan daquan ji* 道門科範大全集 DZ 1225 which is attributed to him but probably edited much later in the fiftheenth century, contains many outlines for these various new *jiao*-offerings.

[86] This connection between exorcist or atropaic rituals and *jiao*-offerings is already witnessed in the *Sui shu* j. 35, pp. 1092-1093. After the description of the three-tiered *zhai*-retreat altar, a description follows of what is seemingly one ritual sequence; first an exorcist or apotropaic ritual centred on the presentation of petitions followed in the night with a *jiao*-offering to "the Heavenly Sovereign, Taiyi, Five Planets, and the exemplary Zodiacal Mansions." These are also addressed with petitions. Because of the emphasis on petitions and the differentiation with the first *zhai*-retreat, which belongs to the Lingbao tradition, we may assume that the exorcist ritual and the *jiao*-offering are part of Heavenly Master liturgy during the Sui period. De stellar deities mentioned in the *jiao*-offering are the same as those of the Altar of Heaven of the state cult. They also appear as such, with Taiyi replaced by North Pole (but who have the same axial function), in Du Guangting's *jiao*-offering list *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* DZ 507 50.2a-b.

have facilitated the merging of state cult and Daoism by the Tang and Song courts, creating one unified pantheon of deities, now placed under the divine rule of the Three Purities.

Altar and temple space

Many correlations exist between the models of Daoist ritual areas presented above and the architecture of Daoist temples with Heavenly Court paintings. It is possible on the basis of these correlations to reconstruct the ritual areas of these temples.

The altar layout presented in the *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* would perfectly fit the architectural layouts of the Yongle gong and Beiyue miao. These two temples have large central halls decorated with wall paintings and a high platform projecting from the front of the halls that could function as a foundation for an altar. Importantly, both central halls have a façade consisting of huge folding doors which when opened create one unified space connecting the interior of the hall where the wall paintings are located with the altar on the platform in front. Interestingly, this layout is in accordance with the prescriptions of the early Tang manual for Daoist monasticism, the *Fengdao kejie*, which also places an altar "constructed of wood in three, five or up to twelve tiers on top of a platform of rammed earth, layered brick or piled stones" in front of the central hall dedicated to the Three Purities.[87] One can further imagine that the tablets for the *jiao*-offering are all arranged against the north wall and in two neat rows against the east and west wall below, presumably placed on the ground or on tables below the paintings; the six curtains and other ritual areas would then be distributed in front and to the sides of the platform, while the Oratory and perhaps the Concentration Pavilion could consist of existing rooms or buildings on the monastery terrain.

Paradoxically, the composition of the Yongle gong murals suggest that the arrangement of tablets on the altar mound and the layout of the six curtains in front of the altar have been integrated into the organisation of the wall paintings. Figure 35 shows the integration of these deities in the Yongle gong murals in a diagram. The central altar niche occupying the back of the hall in which the three statues of the Three Purities are located is decorated on the two outer side walls with paintings of the Ten Veritables or Immortals (9-13, 19-23, Plates 1 and 2) and the Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors (24-55, Fig. 36) on the rear. The Ten Veritables are probably substitutions for the Heavenly Worthies of the Ten Directions or perhaps have a double function, similar to the description of an altar layout by

[87] *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* DZ 1125, 1.18a. See also Livia Kohn, *The Daoist Monastic Manual. A Translation of the* Fengdao Kejie. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 95 where *shi'er* ("twelve") is erroneously translated as "twenty."

Zhang Ruohai mentioned above. The two numerological rings of ten and thirty-two deities are also found for the upper-tier of the Lingbao altar, albeit represented by tablets. In addition, the deities of the six curtains are represented on the side walls of the temple hall: on the northeast wall Mysterious Master (57), the Heavenly Master (Zhang Daoling, 58), and the Supervisor of the Retreat (59), while on the northwest wall the Three Masters (101-103) are located. The Three Officials (132-134, Fig. 37) are represented a further down the northwest wall, and the Five Sacred Peaks (164-168, Plate 3) are located a bit off-side in the centre of the east wall.

A similar observation where curtains are incorporated in the murals can be made with regard to the murals at the Nan'an and the Beiyue miao. The Nan'an murals have the Three Officials and Five Sacred Peak deities on the upper-register of the east wall and on the exact position on the opposite wall we find the Six Masters, this time placed together (Plates 6 and 7). The Beiyue miao murals has on its side walls images of Five Sacred Peak deities and the Three Officials reminiscent of the location of such curtains in front of the central altar mound as described by Lü Yuansu and Zhang Ruohai, thereby reflecting an earlier composition and development. Any such correlations are curiously absent in the Toronto murals.

The integration of the altar mound and curtains in the wall paintings suggests that the entire ritual space, including the altar mound, was integrated into the space of the temple hall. It is unclear if this also meant that the ritual was therefore performed inside the hall rather than outside on the platform or that the painters only used the model of the altar to organise their composition of the Heavenly Court.

Viewers

A paramount question with regard to the paintings in the Daoist ritual area is the nature of the audience. For whom are the paintings intended?

The simple answer should be for the Daoist priest and his acolytes who performed the ritual. In the end, Daoist ritual, although intended for communal or even universal benefit, is the private affair of the priest. Ritual texts preserved in the Daoist Canon reiterate from the earliest beginnings that no spectators are allowed, mainly for reasons of purity.[88] The ritual area could only be entered after fasting and cleansing for a set period prior to the ritual (the proper *zhai*-retreat).

[88] See for example *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* DZ 352, 1. 29b, and *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 16.18b. See also the explanation by Ge Hong (283-243) in his *Baopuzi* 抱朴子. In Wang Ming 王明, *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 抱朴子内片校釋. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985, j. 4, pp. 84-85.

It is generally assumed in Daoist texts that the presence of ordinary people or their slander would prevent the deities from descending to the altar site thus causing the ritual and its meritorious outcome to fail. Only representatives of the community or the family of the deceased who ordered the ritual (*zhaizhu* 齋主) were allowed in the ritual area and only after prior fasting. In the same context, the curtains used in the external altar settings are probably used for shielding the deities from public view.[89] On the other hand, it seems that such regulations were not always rigidly enforced. Wall paintings are permanently on display; poems of Heavenly Court paintings (e.g. the one by Du Fu on the Laozi temple murals) demonstrate that temples were accessible for everyone; and painters learned from copying old masters demonstrating that they also could view the paintings. It therefore seems that Heavenly Court paintings, although primarily intended for the Daoist priest, were accessible to anyone but only outside the period of a liturgical performance. One important reason for this view is that the deities are only present during the ritual while in all other times they are not.[90]

Ritual function

Functions of religious images are a thorny issue not easily solved, notably because images can have many functions. Functions depend on the sources used to investigate these functions, the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the viewers watching, using and interpreting images, the intentions of donors or persons who commissioned the images, and the usages and practices involved in the production and display of images. Research on Daoist imagery is only in a preliminary stage and although it would be easy to find evidence for the various functions of Daoist imagery in general, similar to those of Buddhist images as for example already investigated by Erik Zürcher, T. Griffith Foulk, and Robert H. Sharf,[91] I will restrict my discussion here to the view on the function of Heavenly Court paintings in their ritual context, namely the context found in Daoist scriptures.

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[89] See also Davis, *Society and the Supernatural*, p. 193 where he explains how curtains or screens are erected around a medium representing the deceased after which relatives are admitted one at a time, preventing people from "coming and going."

[90] In Daoist liturgy, the consecration of the ritual area (not the consecration of the images, which is nowhere mentioned) begins with the Nocturnal Announcement (*suqi* 宿啓) or, in later times, with the Inaugeration of the Altar (*qitan* 啓壇) and ends with the Dismantling of the Altar (*santan* 散壇) followed by a *jiao*-offering.

[91] Erik Zürcher, "Buddhist Art in Medieval China: The Ecclesiastical View." K.R. van Kooij & H. van der Veere (eds.), *Function and Meaning in Buddhist Art*. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995, pp. 1-20, T. Griffith Foulk and Robert H. Sharf, "On the Ritual Use of Ch'an Portraiture in Medieval China." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, 7 (19931994), pp. 149-219, and T. Griffith Foulk, "Religious Functions of Buddhist Art in China." Marsha Weidner (ed.). *Cultural Intersections in Later Chinese Buddhism*. Honolulu: Universtity of Hawai'i Press, 2001, pp. 13-29

The general view in Daoist texts on images is that they serve as tools for visualisation (*cunsi* 存思 or *cunshen* 存神) – a Daoist type of meditation conjuring up a mental representation of a deity's form and colours as a manifestation of one's bodily energies (*qi* 氣). Importantly, no Daoist scripture supports the assumption, as proposed in many modern studies on religious images, that they served as objects for offerings. Such a view is for example presented by Paul Katz with regard to the Yongle gong murals.[92] Zhang Wanfu (fl. 700-742), the Tang Daoist court priest and liturgical codifier, has already made this clear in a manual for a *jiao*-offering stating that "the divine Dao is without form and only with the utmost sincerity one gets response. The true numinous powers have no image and can only be addressed by the proper method [of visualisation]. Practitioners of the Dao should therefore place the altar with seats to be able to receive an answer on their prayers for blessings."[93] The division between two diagrams in the *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu*, one for a *zhai*-retreat with paintings and one for a *jiao*-offering with tablets, also corroborates this view, with the *zhai*-retreat constituting the part of Daoist liturgy where memorials are presented to the deities assembled in an audience at the Daoist Heavenly Court.[94]

The fact that ancient Daoist texts refute offerings to images of course does not mean that the practice did not existed – as Zhang Wanfu's fierce criticism seems to imply, and modern observation of Daoist ritual, e.g. among the Yao or on Taiwan (where I presume Katz found inspiration for his theory), readily suggests that paintings serve as the object for offerings. This was however not the standard way, and although even an occasional ritual manuals may state that "images should be re-installed and positions laid out" for a *jiao*-offering,[95] the general idea ventured in Daoist texts seems to have been that in order to communicate with deities and invoke their presence, one does not make offerings but instead should visualise them.

The early seventh century text *Fengdao kejie* in a section on "making images" explains the instrumental role of Daoist images as follows: "The Great Image (i.e. the Dao) is without form and the highest Veritables are incorporal. In their profundity, they are empty and still. Because sight and hearing are insufficient to see their bodies changing in response to the transformations, now visible and then hiding, anyone who wishes to visualise (or preserve,

[92] For details of Paul Katz view, see my discussion on scholarship on the Yongle gong in Appendix 1.1.
[93] *Jiao sandong zhenwen wufa zhengyi mengweilu licheng yi* DZ 1212, 2a.
[94] The curious fact that the same text states that *gongyang*-offerings should be made to each tablet and painting in the ritual area should probably understood as acts independent of the proper ritual proceedings; at least, *gongyang* is not a ritual element (such as *chuguan*, *jinbiao*, *tou longjian* etc.) in traditional Lingbao liturgy. The use of the term *gongyang* further suggest a Buddhist origin. This topic needs further study.
[95] *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1221, 59.21b by Wang Qizhen.

cun 存) the Veritables, should first learn to recognise the appearances of these saints. Therefore, it is necessary to draw images (*motu* 摸圖) representing those Veritables' appearances using cinnabar-red and azure blue and gold and jade, decorate them with lead-white powder and engage with them mentally."[96]

Because of the possibility to invoke a deities presence through visualisation, paintings are, paradoxically, not absolutely prerequisite for the performance of a ritual. Jin Yunzong in his *Shangqing lingbao dafa* explains for example that "[if you wish to hold an audience with the origin] in a monastery, then install the seats of the highest Veritables of the Three Realms and those of the high emperors of all the heavens. In the case of an ordinary dwelling, place the Three Treasures (i.e. Dao, scriptures, and masters) in the centre and only visualisation (*cunsi*) of the Veritables in files on the [left and right] sides going on audience and gazing up to the [Golden] Portal will do."[97] Although only "seats" (*wei*) are mentioned, it is evident from elsewhere in the manual that paintings are intended.[98] The differentiation between sacred and profane space seems to imply that common spectators are not allowed to see the deity images.

It is possible to further specify the instrumental role of paintings in Daoist liturgy. Although texts in the Daoist Canon are generally silent on the use of images in ritual practices, a rare and early reference to such practices is made in the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (Scritpure of Great Peace), a compilation of texts of mixed dates but in general reflecting the thought and practices of the devotees of the Taiping order of the Later Han. On several places in the work, mention is made of images of deities of the five viscera painted on silk banners which are hung in the five directions of an oratory. The five paintings each measured one foot and each depicted five deities and Veritables flanked by ten boy or girl attendants, depending on the adept's gender. The deities were identified by the emblematic colours of their specific direction and corresponding viscera; the attendants wore clothes in the colours of the corresponding season. The visualisation procedures were described as follows: after the paintings had been installed, the adept would first concentrate (*si* 思) on them and then, lying down, approach the images in his mind, visualising the deities entering his or her viscera.[99]

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[96] *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* DZ 1125, 2.1a. Cf. Kohn, *The Daoist Monastic Manual*, p. 97.

[97] *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 5.5a-b. The Golden Portal (*jinque* 金闕) is the entrance to the Heavenly Court, visualised as an imperial palace.

[98] *Ibid*. 16.6b.

[99] *Taiping jing*, annotated by Wang Ming 王明, *Taiping jing hejiao* 太平經合校. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997, pp. 14, 21-22, 292, 459-460. Sickness in the Taiping order also had a distinctive moral connotation. Immoral behaviour of the adept caused the bodily deities to leave in disgust thus resulting in illness. The visualisation

Sickness was believed to be caused by the deities leaving the organs and summoning them back would restore health. A strikingly similar practice of deploying five silk banners (called *lingfan* 靈幡 or "numinous flags") in the five directions of an oratory is also found in a fourth century Daoist scripture of the Shangqing tradition.[100]

Curiously, nowhere in the description is it stated that the deities actually dwell in the images, they rather serve as media that should facilitate the deities' return to the adept's body. Nor does the text make any mention of prolonged focusing on the image; rather, the image, after having been seen, is conjured up mentally while lying down. This "indirect gaze" also conforms to the general practice in Daoist liturgy of visualising deities with eyes "half-closed" (*linmu* 臨目).[101]

The emphasis on an instrumental function of images in Daoist liturgy and the absence of any reference to any numinous power (*ling* 靈) or to the presence of the deities in images is striking. Worship of images, in particular in Buddhist ritual, presumes a divine presence in images, and although Daoist ritual manuals make mention of *gongyang*-offerings to both paintings and tablets invoking the deities' presence, they generally do not attribute any numinous status to images. The absence of any reference to or even rituals for attracting the presence of deities in images may be linked to the Daoist denial of offerings to images. The presence of a deity in an image, one would assume, is the whole reason for presenting offerings to an image. Why else would one present food and gifts to an image? In popular and Buddhist religious practice, images, divine presence (*ling*) and offerings are dissolubly connected. In Daoist religious practice, these relationships are severed and images are rather understood as being interconnected with visualisation techniques and presentations of memorials.

Visualisation practices are at the core of Daoist ritual and images of deities were from the very beginning a supplementary tool facilitating the practices. The instrumental function of images is witnessed for example in texts such as the official registers (*lu* 籙) of the early

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exercises were therefore accompanied by rites of confession. See Isabelle Robinet, *Taoist Meditation: The Mao-shan Tradition of Great Purity*. Translated by Julian F. Pas and Norman J. Girardot. New York: State University of New York, 1979 (1993 reprint), p. 64 and Tsuchiya Masaaki, "Confession of Sins and Awareness of Self." Livia Kohn & Harold D. Roth (eds.), *Daoist Identity: Cosmology, Lineage, and Ritual*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002, pp. 39-57.

[100] *Shangqing gaoshang yuchen fengtai qu su shangqing* 上清高上玉晨鳳臺曲素上經 DZ 1372, 7b, 12b-13a. Although the images depicted in the scripture are actually talismans in calligraphic script the accompanying text describes the deities, the Five Emperors (*wudi*), in human form, and the Shangqing text may be a later elaboration of the Taiping practice. The Ming edition of the text also has an illustration of a standing emperor in frontal view and flanked by ten young court ladies enshrouded by clouds. The number of ten attendants also appears in the *Taiping jing*.

[101] Cf. *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 5.6b.

Heavenly Master order,[102] the *Laozi zhongjing* 老子中經 (Middle Scripture of Laozi) of the Late Han (images now lost),[103] the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經 (True Scripture of the Great Cavern),[104] the *Laojun cunsi tu shiba pian* 老君存思圖十八篇 (Lord Lao's Illustrations for Visualisation in Eighteen Sections), an illustrated ritual manual of the early Tang and presumably for Heavenly Master ritual (Figs, 28, 30),[105] and a similar *Lingbao xingdao chaoli sishen tu* 行道朝禮思神圖 (Illustrations for Visualising Deities during the Performance of an Audience Ritual) for Lingbao ritual of the Song period (lost after the Yuan).[106] The deities of these visualisation texts are mostly bodily deities while those of Heavenly Court paintings are stellar and nature deities suggest at least that the texts did not serve as models for paintings. Visualisation texts however place the same emphasis on grouping, type of crown, and colour of robe as is found in the Heavenly Court paintings, implying some underlying principles common to both paintings, illustrations, and visualisation techniques, even though the identities and the representations of the deities may differ entirely.

Having introduced the organisation, development, and conceptions of the Daoist altar, and the role Heavenly Court paintings play in this ritual setting, I will now venture to explain some cosmological principles that underly the altar layout and the compositional structure of a Heavenly Court painting.

2.3 Cosmology

Daoist cosmology provides fundamental principles for the composition of Heavenly Court painting and the particular arrangement of deities in pictorial space. Not all principles are witnessed in each and every Heavenly Court representation and they may differ over time and

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[102] Anna Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments – Taoist Roots in the Apocryphia." In Michel Strickmann (ed.), *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honor of Rolf Stein*. Vol. 2. Brussels: Institute Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1985, p. 329.

[103] The *Laozi zhongjing* is preserved in *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032, 18-19 and as *Taishang laojun zhongjing* 太上老君中經 DZ 1168. The text is studied in Kristofer M. Schipper, "The Inner World of the *Lao-tzu chung-ching*." Chun-chieh Huang and E. Zürcher (eds.), *Time and Space in Chinese Culture*. Leiden: Brill, 1995, pp. 114-131.

[104] *Shangqing dadong zhenjing* 上清大洞真經 DZ 6. For the authenticity and contents of this text, see Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, pp. 97-119.

[105] The *Laojun cunsi tu shiba pian* has survived in two versions, one complete but without illustrations in *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032, 43.3a-22b, and the other, titled *Taishang laojun da cunsi tu zhujue* 太上老君大存思圖注訣 DZ 875, as a separate scripture with illustrations and small notes but missing the first eight paragraphs.

[106] *Daozang quejing mulu* 道藏闕經目錄 DZ 1430, 1.11b. This text is referred to and quoted in Song ritual manuals, *Wushang huanglu dazhi licheng yi* DZ 508, 32.6b-7b and *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 282.18a-b.

according to region. Yet, it is possible to signal some general principles that clarify compositional themes within surviving Heavenly Court representations.

Daoist cosmology is closely related to Daoist liturgy. Daoist liturgy on the surface is a re-enactment of imperial court ritual or the court audience (*chao*), and its internal visualisations are a re-creation of the cosmos and, most importantly, a reversal to an original state of the Dao, a process which in Daoist liturgy is also designated by the term audience (*chao*). Some principles at work in Daoist liturgy are also valid for Daoist cosmology and we will see that the cosmological structures of Heavenly Court painting are strongly interrelated with issues of altar layout and liturgical performance. I will therefore mainly rely on ritual texts as a source for investigating Daoist cosmological principles, rather than having recourse to ideological scriptures preserved in the Daoist Canon, which are not only largely under-represented in Daoist writings but which also often bespeak the intellectual, if not political, interests of a selected few and hardly have any bearing on ritual practice in a given period or area.[107]

In this section I will discuss several issues of Daoist cosmology - cosmological division, the three realms of Heaven, Earth and Water, the northwest-southeast axis, and the eight trigrams – and put them into relationship with extant examples of Heavenly Court paintings.

Cosmological division

In Daoist cosmology, everything in this world originated from the Dao which first formed a primal energy (*yuanqi* 元氣), further dividing into three energies which created the Three Heavens manifested in the outer cosmos as the Three Realms (*sanjie* 三界) of Heaven, Earth and Water, also called the Three Primes (*sanyuan* 三元) or the Three Departments (*sanfu* 三府), and in the inner cosmos as the three cinnabar fields (*dantian* 丹田) of the human body, located in the crown of the head, in the chest, and in the abdomen. After this initial stage, the universe divided in various other levels, the most fundamental being the five directions, manifested as the Five Planets, the Five Sacred Peaks, and the five organs in the human

[107] Daoist textsthat aim to provide a unifying ideology for Daoism, often compilations of older texts and always adjusted to the social and political needs of the time, are for example the *Wushang biyao* DZ 1138 of the sixth century and studied in Lagerwey, *Wu-shang pi-yao*, the *Daojiao yishu* 到教義樞 DZ 1129 by Meng Anpai 孟安排 (late 7th cent.) and studied in Wang Zongyu 王宗昱, "Daojiao yishu" *yanjiu* 《道教義樞》 研究. Shanghai: Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 2001, and the *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032 of the Northern Song dynasty, studied in Kristofer M. Schipper, *Index du* Yunji qiqian. 2 Vols. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1981-1982, pp. I-XXIX. The *Daodejing* and the *Zhuangzi* could also be classified as ideological works because of their role in later intellectual discourse, even though the works themselves refrain from making any ideological statements.

body.[108] In short, the creation of the world is envisioned as a process from unity to plurality, both in terms of time and space. The *chao*-audience, known to all Daoist traditions and the mainstay of Daoist liturgy, is a liturgical device to reverse this process and gain access to an absolute continuum – in Daoist cosmology often referred to as the Great Matrix Heaven (*daluotian* 大羅天) - in which space and time are folded back into one.

The cosmology is reflected in the Daoist altar settings as well as in Heavenly Court paintings. Spatial divisions inherent to the cosmology are often rendered visually in the altar layout or in the pictorial space of a painting composition. The altar layout in its most basic form can be found in the Early Phase and is a representation of the cosmos divided vertically in an altar mound with three tiers and further ordered in a horizontal plane in the five directions by the placement of five gates and five tables, among other things. The Beiyue miao murals are also the most immediate pictorial representation of this Daoist cosmology similarly dividing the images of the Five Sacred Peak deities in their approximate directions in the lower register of the two side walls, and those of the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water in the upper register (Drawings 3A and 3B). The sculptural representation of a Heavenly Court at Nanzhu guan with its statues of the Three Treasures (the precursors of the Three Purities) accompanied by the deities of the five directions positioned behind them could also count as a fine example of this division even though it lacks the spatial orientation of a temple painting (Fig. 1).

In the Middle Phase, the increase of the pantheon of deities, the introduction of ritual elements (and deities) from the state cult, local cults, and newly emerged Daoist lineages, the compelling presence of an impressive body of material, both written and visual, of Buddhist cosmology, all these aspects warranted a conceptual refurbishment of Daoist cosmology, resulting in additional layers of heavens structured in complex, and often contradictory, spatial relationships. The chapter on cosmology in the imperially commissioned Daoist encyclopedia, the *Yunji qiqian*, is a good example of an attempt to provide Daoist cosmology with a rationalistic ideology.[109] The possible influence of such intellectual efforts are difficult to gauge, but in ritual practice the most fundamental change to the concept of Daoist cosmology is the introduction of the thirty-six heavens divided in first the Great Matrix Heaven on top, followed by the Three Heavens or the Three Purities, all in a vertical plane,

[108] *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 40.1a-5a and 23b-25a contains essays on the Daoist cosmology of three and five and their various manifestations.
[109] *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032 chapter 21.

and then concluded by the thirty-two heavens distributed in a horizontal plane thereby substituting for and superimposing themselves on the former five directions.[110]

This "refurbished" cosmology of the Middle Phase is witnessed in the placement of thirty-two tablets on the central altar mound described in the *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* described above, and for example pictorially represented by the images of the Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors (24-55) on the rear wall of the altar-shrine in the Yongle gong murals. The Ming Daoist Canon has also preserved an illustrated text, the *Sancai dingwei tu* 三才定位圖 (Illustrations of the Fixed Positions of the Three Powers), by the Song statesman and ritual codifier Zhang Shangying 張商應 (1043-1121) for the proper visualisation of the Three Purities and the thirty-two heavens. Annotations in small script to the right of the images give explanations on the specific colours of their robes and the types of crowns (Figs. 38 and 39).[111] The images of the Three Purities are compositionally reminiscent to a wall painting of the Three Purities painted in about 1368 on the rear wall of the central altar-shrine of the Chongyang Hall at Yongle gong, such as the double haloes behind the deity, the armrest and the throne and the positioning of two rows of attendants in front (Fig. 40).[112] The Three Purities of the *Sancai dingwei tu* however lack the traditional attributes (the illustrations seem to simply repeat one woodblock print adding only minor variations, probably for economic reasons) and have moustaches. The version in the Canon is probably a Ming reproduction of a Song original, but more research is needed on this topic. The thirty-two heavens are represented as palaces arranged in a circle on a horizontal plane around the Jade Emperor (or Emperor-on-High) seated in a palace and flanked by attendants. The deities of the thirty-two

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[110] The thirty-two heavens are subdivided in four and twenty-eight heavens, the last part called the Three Realms of desire, form and the formless (*sanjie* 三界) after Buddhism but which by contrast consists of in total thirty-two heavens. The Daoist thirty-two heavens have however a different interpretation and are understood as being horizontally oriented in the five directions. The five directions correspond to the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansion (*xiu*), seven for each direction, and four for the centre, the so-called four Brahma heavens (*fantian* 梵天) where the elected people of the Dao (*zhongmin* 種民) are reborn. These stars and heavens of the five directions are collectively called the Five Dippers (*wudou* 五斗). This seems to be a Song invention, or perhaps Tang. In other versions the thirty-two heavens are divided in four directions of each eight heavens. Regardless the precise ideology – which probably does not exist – the Daoist thirty-two heavens derive from an important ancient Lingbao scripture, the *Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing* 靈寶無量度人上品妙經 DZ 1, chapter one, in which they are superseded by one superior heaven, Great Matrix Heaven. Song cosmology is arguably an elaboration on the ancient Lingbao structure interspersing the heavens of the Three Purities, that had become fully codified by that time, between the Great Matrix Heaven and thirty-two heavens. Both the ancient Lingbao and the Song cosmologies seem to have been directed at demonstrating that the thirty-two heavens of the Buddhist cosmos all originate in – and are therefore inferior to – the Dao.

[111] *Sancai dingwei tu* DZ 155. The text also contains (6b) an illustration of Saint Ancestor for which the introductory text seems to be missing, indicating that the text is incomplete. The illustrations of the following text, the *Shangqing dongzhen jiugong zifang tu* 上清洞真九宮紫房圖 DZ 156, are probably misplaced and should be included in the *Sancai dingwei tu*.

[112] Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 168.

heavens, depicted in groups of four, leave their palaces and approach the Jade Emperor borne on clouds. Zhang Shangying thus provided an illustration for visualising the Daoist cosmos.

Heavenly Court paintings are however not the symbolic representation of the cosmos: they only represent one half of the Daoist cosmos, the outer cosmos. Only when they are matched with their bodily counterparts can the cosmos be considered complete. This may also be reason why normal humans, narrative elements, or other affairs related to the mundane, ordinary world are, principally, absent in Heavenly Court painting, as if the viewer is attending a court audience held in the imperial palace where only the nobility, courtiers, officials, generals, Daoist priests, and attendants were allowed to attend, a place completely sealed off from the world of ordinary people. Presumably, the universe created from the Dao and contained in the outer cosmos of the stars, mountains, and rivers and the inner cosmos of the inner body (of the priest) is that of nature in a pure and perfect state, untainted by the world of man.

The Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Water

Daoist deities organised in Daoist ritual belong to one of the Three Realms of Heaven, Earth and Water. This division is most clearly witnessed in the lists of names for *jiao*-offerings preserved in Song ritual manuals.[113] These *jiao*-offering lists start off with an enumeration of the titles of the Three Purities and four, six, or eight imperial deities, the exact number depending on regional differences and specific time periods, then followed by all the deities associated with Heaven, such as all the stellar deities, and then the deities associated with Water such as the deities of the Five Sacred Peaks and Four Sacred Marshes, and finally all the deities associated with Earth, comprising hell deities as well as the Earth God (*tudi* 土地) and the City God (*chenghuang* 城隍). It should be noted that the realms of Earth and Water seem to be inversed as one normally would order them, but the reason for this inversion will become clear further below. In some *jiao*-offering lists, the realms of Water and Earth are also headed by two imperial deities, the Mulberry Emperor (*fusang dadi* 扶桑大帝) governing

[113] The *jiao*-offering lists in *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, chapter 39, and *Daomen dingzhi* DZ 1224, chapter 3, provide the best examples of this division into three realms. The first contours of this type of division are demarcated in Du Guangting's list in *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* DZ 507, chapter 50, but lack any division among the central deities. The same division of the Three Realms is found in *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 5.1a-2b, where it is used to make a division of the celestial offices of the Three Realms where the deities reside, thirty-nine for the Upper Realm, twenty-seven for the Middle Realm, and twelve for the Lower Realm. Interestingly, the section is followed by a discussion on the private *chao*-audience ritual in an oratory.

over the realm of Water, and the Fengdu Emperor (*fengdu dadi* 豐都) ruling over the Chinese Hades.[114]

The cosmological division of the Three Realms is also reflected in Heavenly Court painting. This division is witnessed in its most basic form in the Beiyue miao murals which has the Official of Heaven depicted on the upper register of the west wall, and those of Water and Earth on the east wall.

A much more complex but still similar arrangement is found in the Yongle gong murals (Fig. 41). The Three Purities and other imperial deities, collectively called the Sovereigns (*yu* 御 or *huang* 皇) are depicted in distinctively large images on the foreground of the Heavenly Court composition – I generally refer to these large images as "central deities" in this study – while deities of smaller size and rank (with some exceptions such as the deities of the Sacred Peaks which had been promoted to emperors and were depicted as such) take position in rows behind them – termed "subordinate deities." Mapping out the realms of Heaven, Water, and Earth on the Yongle gong murals, a linear progression from the highest realm to the lowest emerges: the realm of Heaven corresponds to the deities depicted on the west wall, the two north walls, and the northern section of the east wall.

The realm of Water corresponds to the deities on the mid section of the west wall (Plate 3), that is the deities positioned between King Father of the East (V) and Queen Mother of the West (VI) and some behind her and presided in front by the imperial image of the Mulberry Emperor (160). The Mulberry turns his head, as if looking back to the deities of his realm and demarcating the border between the realm of Heaven and that of Water. The subordinate deities of the realm of Water are those of the Five Sacred Peaks (164-168) and the Four Sacred Marshes (169-172), and the three water deities Zhao Yu 趙昱 (177), Li Bing 李冰 and Erlang 二郎 (188, 189) (Fig. 54).[115]

The realm of Earth corresponds to the southern section of the east wall (Plate 3), that is all the deities following after the Queen Mother of the West and headed by the Fengdu Emperor (178). The subordinate deities of this realm are the Ten Kings of Hell (179-180, 182-186, 189-191), the City God (181) and his general (192), the Meritorious Officers Guarding Time (193-196), the Generals of the Three Primes (197-199), and the Earth God (201). Not all deities in this group are identified (200, 202, 203).

[114] See *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 39.15a, *Daomen dingzhi* DZ 1224, 3.39a, 41b.
[115] On the identification of these deities, see Appendix 1.1.

The division of the Three Realms is less obvious in the Nan'an murals but still present. Deities belonging to the realm of Heaven are depicted on the northern parts of the east and west walls as well as on the mid-section of the west wall, similar to the Yongle gong murals, while deities of the Five Sacred Peaks and four Marshes – which I consider here as representative of the Realms of Earth and Water – are depicted following the standard analogy on the southern part of the east wall (Plates 6 and 7). Curiously, the Toronto murals only seem to depict (subordinate) deities from the realm of Heaven.

The NW-SE axis

The particular distribution of the Three Realms in two-dimensional space follows the cosmological division of the Daoist altar layout with Heaven's Gate positioned in the northwest (NW) and Earth's Door in the southeast (SE) (Fig. 31). Instead of a division of space orientated from south to north as in traditional Chinese architecture, Heavenly Court paintings follow a cosmological division around a NW-SE axis. The *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* explains the particular location of these two gates as follows: "Because *yang* reaches its extremity in the southeast, it will give birth to *yin*. That is the reason why Earth's Door is in the southeast. Because *yin* reaches its extremity in the northwest, it will give birth to *yang*. That is the reason why Heaven's Gate is in the northwest. The methods for practising [the Dao] and going on audience with the truth (*chaozhen*) all proceed from *yin* to *yang* (*qu yin jiu yang* 去陰就陽)."[116] A similar passage explaining the locations of the Gate of Heaven and Earth's Door on the basis of the cyclical development of yin and yang is found in the *Taiping jing* 太平經 of the Han dynasty.[117] According to the Chinese scholar Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, the *Taiping jing* paraphrases the so-called "weft-texts" (*weishu* 緯書) of that period, and correlates to other contemporaneous texts.[118] The NW-SE axis seen in the Daoist altar layout and in the composition of the Heavenly Court paintings therefore continues practices already prevalent in the Han period.

It is my contention that the particular arrangement of the Three Realms in the horizontal plane is based on this NW-SE axis, locating the deities of the realm of Heaven (or Heaven's Gate, or the Heavenly Sovereign) in the northwest and the deities of the realm of

[116] *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* DZ 219, 46.5b.
[117] Wang, *Taiping jing hejiao*, p. 227.
[118] *Rao Zongyi* 饒宗頤, "*Taiping jing* yu *Shuowen jiezi* 《太平經》與《說文解字》." Rao Zongyi 饒宗儀, *Rao Zongyi shixue lunzhu xuan* 饒宗頤史學論著選. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993, pp. 262-263.

Earth (or Earth's Door, or the Earth Goddess) in the southeast. A diagram illustrates the NW-SE axis for the Yongle gong murals (Fig. 42). This would also explain why the realm of Water is interspersed between the realms of Heaven and Earth in Heavenly Court paintings, thus inversing the assumed standard order of first Earth and then Water.

Most Heavenly Court paintings comprise this NW-SE axis in their composition. The Toronto murals, albeit indistinct in the portrayal of the deities of the Three Realms, places the Heavenly Sovereign (B12, the Daoist priest) and the Earth Goddess (A13), identified by the trigram for earth (*kun* 坤, three broken lines) in her headdress in opposite directions on the east and west walls, constituting this cosmological axis (Plates 4 and 5). The same is true for the Beiyue miao murals where the Official of Heaven is located in the north-western direction and the Official of Earth in the south-eastern direction in the upper register of the east and west walls (Drawings 3A and 3B). Interestingly, their cosmological directions are matched by the images of the Five Sacred Peak deities in the lower register. The Northern Peak Emperor (black, heaven) is located in the northwest and the Central Peak Emperor (yellow, earth) is located in the southeast. The painters could have opted for placing the Southern Peak Emperor on that place, which would have been in line with the traditional sequence of the five phases (east-south-centre-west-north), but they apparently chose to follow a cosmological division.[119]

The Yongle gong murals demonstrate that the location of deities seemingly associated with a certain cosmological direction is not fixed. They indeed portray the Heavenly Sovereign (IV) (Fig. 27) on the northwest wall but contrary to what one would expect, there is no trace of Earth Goddess on the southern part of the east wall. Instead, we find the Queen Mother of the West (VI) on this spot (of the Earth's Door) (Plate 3) while the Earth Goddess (VIII) is found on the opposite position on the west wall (Fig. 72). Why is that? Apparently, there are yet other cosmological divisions at work. In parenthesis, the location of Queen Mother of the West as a main representative of the Earth's Door or the realm of Earth is not out of place since first of all the subordinate deities behind her all belong to the realm of Earth and we should further remember that she, together with her husband King Father of the East, play an important role in the Rite of Deliverance during which the soul of a deceased person was liberated from the earth prisons.

The Eight Trigrams

[119] The deities of the five directions are addressed in the sequence east-south-centre-west-north following the "generative cycle" of the five phases. See *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* DZ 352, 8a-16a.

Another type of cosmological division found in the pictorial arrangement of Heavenly Court painting – and in the layout of the ritual area as well - is the circular distribution of the eight trigrams (*bagua* 八卦) from the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes) in the so-called King Wen arrangement. The King Wen arrangement is also referred to as the *Luoshu* 洛書arrangement since legend has it that the patterns (*shu* 書) were written on the shell of a turtle that surfaced from the Luo River and transmitted them to King Wen the founder of the Zhou dynasty (ca. 1050-221). The patterns that make up the *Luoshu* arrangement are understood since antiquity as a magic square divided into nine fields with the numbers from one to nine rendered as imaginary constellations (i.e. dots marking the stars which were then connected by lines). The *Luoshu* arrangement has been correlated with the eight trigrams (omitting the centre, 5) since at least the Han dynasty. This arrangement in nine fields is also at the basis of the Bright Hall (*mingtang* 明堂),[120] a royal temple or sacred palace with nine rooms of which the design is attributed to King Wen.[121]

The Yongle gong murals follow the King Wen arrangement of the trigrams, an arrangement in which the eight trigrams are mapped onto the eight directions, as illustrated in the diagram (Fig. 43). The particular order of the trigrams explains the inversion of Queen Mother of the West with that of the Earth Goddess on the opposite wall: the Queen Mother of the West has an emblem with the trigram for wood (two broken lines and one complete line, *zhen* 震, also denoting east) depicted on her chest, akin to its position in the east in the King Wen arrangement (Plate 3); the trigram for earth (three broken lines, *kun* 坤) should be located in the southwest according to the King Wen arrangement, the approximate position of the Earth Goddess (VIII) on the southern part of the east wall, an identification further reinforced by the emblem with the *kun*-trigram in her crown (Fig. 72). Although without a trigram, the Heavenly Sovereign – representing the trigram for heaven (three complete lines, *qian* 乾) – is found on its appropriate place in the northwest as in the King Wen arrangement. The remaining five trigrams are not identified, but it should be noted that the sidewalls of the Yongle gong murals have altogether eight central deities, corresponding in number to the eight trigrams. The identification of three "trigram" deities strongly suggests that the

[120] Because in Daoism the character for "bright" (*ming* 明) is sometimes read as *meng* 盟 meaning "alliance" such as in *mingzhen ke* 明真科 "ritual for an alliance with truth," I wonder if we should not read *mingtang* in a similar way, thus meaning "Hall of Alliance," i.e. a hall where the Zhou kings established an alliance with (the deities of) heaven, which would make more sense with regard to its layout and fuction than simply translating it as Bright Hall.

[121] Marcel Granet, *La pensée chinoise*. Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 1968 (1988 reprint), pp. 145-157.

remaining five central deities should also be understood as pictorial manifestations of the eight trigrams.

Interestingly, the King Wen arrangement of the eight trigrams contains a similar NW-SE axis, from north-west-west to south-east-east to be more precise. The four trigrams in the upper half are traditionally understood as belonging to yang and the four trigrams in the bottom half as belonging to yin.[122] This phasing between *yin* and *yang* perfectly fits the explanation given in the *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* on the positions of Heaven's Gate and Earth's Door translated above.

The correlation with King Wen arrangement of trigrams is highly significant also because of its relationship to Daoist ritual practice and inner alchemy (*neidan* 内丹). The King Wen arrangement is considered to be an abstract representation of the cosmos after it was created, called "posterior heaven" (*houtian* 後天). The cosmology of the Daoist Three Realms of Heaven, Earth, and Water precisely represents the universe after its creation and the division of energies from the Dao. The Three Realms and the trigrams in the King Wen arrangement therefore represent, ontologically speaking, the same cosmos, namely that of posterior heaven. Daoist liturgy and in particular the *chao*-audience and its preparatory visualisations are focused on reversing this state of posterior heaven, fusing its deities from the plurality to unity, thereby returning to the Dao. This original state of the cosmos, called "anterior heaven" (*xiantian* 先天), is represented by another circular arrangement of the eight trigrams, the so-called Fuxi 伏羲 arrangement of the eight trigrams. The Fuxi arrangement has the trigram for earth in the north and the trigram for heaven in the south, and should be understood as the complement of the King Wen arrangement (Fig. 44).

The use of trigrams and their two complementary arrangements was a central part of inner alchemy, a Daoist type of meditation which focused on the transformation of ones body from a state of posterior heaven to anterior heaven not through a liturgical performance but through rigid meditation techniques phrased and envisioned in an abstract *Yijing* terminology mixed with (outer) alchemical terminology of processing elixirs from mineral substances. Much of these meditation practices - not their terminology - go back to arcane Shangqing lore.[123] The meditations of inner alchemy also have interesting parallels in Daoist liturgy. The nine alchemical transformations correspond to nine phases (*xing* 行, lit. "steps"), and they

[122] *Ibid*. pp. 157-163.
[123] For a study of Daoist inner alchemy in general, see Isabelle Robinet, *Introduction à l'alchimie intérieure taoïste: De l'unité et de la multiplicité. Avec une traduction commentée des Versets de l'éveil à la Vérité.* Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1995.

could well be likened to the nine steps of Pacing the Void (*buxu* 步虛) and its hymns performed before the presentation of a memorial in Daoist liturgy: both the inner alchemical and the liturgical practice are a prelude to the final climax or the return to the state of "anterior heaven" or the Great Matrix Heaven. [124]

Not surprisingly, the *chaoyuan* or *chaozhen* also formed the final stage in this alchemical transformation process, even though *neidan*-texts seem to be less explicit on how this *chao*-audience should be visualised in comparison to Song ritual manuals.[125] One *neidan*-diagram visualises it as the deities dressed as Daoist priests rising up from the five organs, and the commentary to the diagram further explains that they "become a deity and enter the Heavenly Court" (*chengshen ru tiangong* 成神入天宮).[126] This Heavenly Court is however left undepicted (Fig. 45). Discussions in the *neidan*-text *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 (Six Books on Cultivating Truth, 13th cent.) on *chaoyuan* and "inner vision" (*neiguan* 内觀), visualisations made during inner alchemical meditations, rephrase the liturgical *chao*-audience in alchemical terms while retaining some elements; for example, the Three Passages (*sanguan* 三關, located on the spinal column) substitute the Three Gates and are similarly surrounded by guards and soldiers. There is however no reference to a presentation of a memorial.[127]

From the Song dynasty onward, inner alchemy was particular popular among scholars and many of its practices and texts seem to have been widely available.[128] The deities related to inner alchemical practices – that is, the deities transmitting the secrets of inner alchemy and not the bodily deities – are not found in the traditional ritual pantheon of gods of Daoism, but rather belong to local cults that worship immortals such as Lü Dongbin and Zhongli Quan, who often in disguise roamed the country instructing and initiating people into the Dao. Inner alchemy also occupied a foremost position in the religious life of the members and lay members of the Quanzhen order, an order established by the same social group of scholars and which took Lü Dongbin as its spiritual patriarch. The Yongle gong was one of the main

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[124] The *Lingbao yujian* 1.9a-10a further explains that the nine steps correlate to the nine stars of the Big Dipper, seven visible and two invisible. Diagrams for Pacing the Void or Walking the Dipper (or the Mainstay, *gang*) on different days are found in the first part of chapter 21 which is then followed by instructions for visualising the presentation of the memorial in the last part.

[125] See the *Michuan Zhengyang zhenren lingbao bifa* 秘傳正陽真人靈寶祕法 DZ 1191, studied in Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, *Procédés secrets du joyéous magique: traité d'alchimie taoïste du XIe siècle.* Paris: Les deux océans, 1984, esp. pp. 41, 167.

[126] *Xiuzhen taiji hunyuan zhixuan tu* 修真太極混元指玄圖 DZ 150, 7a-b.

[127] *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 DZ 263, 10b-22b.

[128] See Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, "Alchemy and Self-Cultivation in Literary Circles of the Northern Song Dynasty – Su Shi and his Techniques of Survival." *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9 (1996-1997), pp. 15-53.

centres of the Quanzhen order and was built next to the shrine to Lü Dongbin's alleged grave. Having these inner alchemical processes in mind, it may therefore not be entirely coincidental to find Heavenly Court paintings which are based on cosmology of the eight trigrams at this site. At least, the allusions to inner alchemy contained in the wall paintings should not have been difficult to grasp for an audience of Quanzhen followers.

Thus far, only the Yongle gong is known to have Heavenly Court paintings following this type of arrangement based on the eight trigrams. As I will demonstrate in chapter 4, the Yongle gong murals follow a ritual format introduced during the reign of Song Emperor Huizong (r. 1101-1125), and it is therefore plausible that the murals accompanying these rituals would also have appeared for the first time around this time.

Many other views however exist on what ideas Heavenly Court paintings should advocate. In this chapter we have discussed the orthodox (or orthopractical) view of the Daoist clergy as culled from Daoist ritual texts, thus providing a conceptual, ritual framework on which painters would base their composition. The next chapter will deal with the views and practical ideas of the painters on how to organise and apply a wall-painting composition.

3 Mural Production

Daoist liturgy provides a conceptual framework or a set of guiding principles along which painters would, theoretically speaking, fill in a representation of a Heavenly Court. Besides a conceptual framework, there were other principles that governed the decisions of painters designing a Heavenly Court painting. These principles are of an artistic nature and are moreover largely dictated by the practices of Chinese painting culture.

I will limit my discussion here to issues of the production of Heavenly Court wall paintings with special reference to the processes and materials involved that would determine or direct the choices made by painters for representing a Heavenly Court in a certain way, in particular with regard to the four surviving paintings that form the core of this study.

This chapter will discuss three topics: the organisation of a workshop and the production process from beginning to end; the use of drawings by painters in the process of executing a Heavenly Court painting; and finally an investigation in the design of a wall painting of a Heavenly Court on the basis of surviving examples. The three topics should provide a phasing from general to concrete and an approximate historical chronology from beginning to end. Since no first-hand information is available written by the painters themselves – such as painters' manuals similar to the manuals that existed for carpenters in the Ming period, the *Lu Ban jing* 魯班經 (Classic of Lu Ban)[1] - or detailed accounts left by scholars on the production process of a wall painting, the discussion presented here is a reconstruction, as in the previous chapter on Daoist liturgy, based on information culled from a wide variety of sources and largely based on the material left by the painters themselves: their wall paintings, scroll paintings and drawings.

3.1 Painting workshop

[1] For this work, see Klaas Ruitenbeek, *Carpentry and Building in Late Imperial China: A Study of the Fifteenth-century Carpenter's Manual* Lu Ban jing. Leiden: Brill, 1993.

Painters of a Heavenly Court work in a set organisation and follow set procedures. No complete written account survives describing the organisation or working procedures of a painting workshop in pre-modern China. Yet, based on inscriptions left by painting workshops on temple murals and references in textual sources it is possible to reconstruct the organisation and procedures of a workshop in general lines. I will discuss first some important aspects of the workshop organisation and then provide a chronological survey of the mural production process from beginning to end.

Organisation

The decoration of a temple with wall paintings in imperial China was the concerted effort of a team of painters. Hardly ever do textual sources credit one painter with the production of all the murals in one temple – the Heavenly Court painting by Zhang Suqing 張素卿 (fl. 845-927) in the Zhangren guan 丈人觀on Mt. Qingcheng 青城山 is such an exceptional case – but even then we could justifiably assume that this one painter could impossibly be involved in the whole production process from preparing the walls with plaster, grinding and mixing (mineral) pigments, and painting the walls, to applying the various decorative techniques such as gold-inlay. Painters of temple paintings – both wall paintings and scroll paintings – would organise themselves in a team which I will call here a workshop. I would like to differentiate this workshop organisation from another type of organisation of painters, the Painting Academy, which represents a much larger social institution and which has been dealt with elsewhere.[2]

Song textual sources combined with the mural inscriptions left by painters on murals provide invaluable information on the organisation and operation of a painting workshop. I have collected these data in a table (see table Appendix 2.3). An analysis of these data, will provide seven characteristics for mural workshop organisation in the Song-Yuan period.

One, a first general survey of the numbers of workshop members in the Shanxi area shows an increase after 1300, indicating an increase in social status and commercial identity of workshop painters. This increase is exemplified by the Zhu Haogu 朱好古workshop. Only Zhu Haogu and his disciple Zhang Boyuan 張伯淵 are mentioned in a mural inscription as having painted the murals of the Xinghua si興化寺in 1320 while his workshop consisting of eight members decorated the walls of the Chunyang hall of the Yongle gong sixty years later

[2] See Scarlet Jang, "Issues of Public Service in the Themes of Chinese Court painting." PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1989; and Sarah Fraser, *Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618-960.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004, pp. 15-47.

in 1358. Zhu Haogu would have been dead by this time.[3] The first reference seems incomplete, leaving out the names of assisting painters, because both projects are of comparable size.[4] An exception on the general development is the Wuyue miao 五嶽廟 (Temple to the Five Sacred Peaks) in Fenyang 汾陽County, painted in 1326 by only two painters. A possible explanation for the small size of the workshop of the Wuyue miao is the local character of the temple as well as the fact that the murals are relatively small (only 40.91 m2) which had only taken three months in summer to finish, as the inscription relates.[5]

Undoubtedly, the increase would not reflect an actual increase in the number of workshop members but rather a difference in attitude towards recording the names of wall painters. It appears that in the period before 1300 only the names of the masters were recorded while the disciples and assisting painters remained anonymous – also a characteristic of textual references. After 1300, the assisting painters were suddenly deemed worthy enough to be recorded in mural inscriptions as members of a workshop. This not only suggests a change in social status where individuals were granted a place in (local) history, but also a difference in conception of the organisation of a painting workshop: after 1300, the painting workshop displayed itself as a socially and economically independent entity. Although the history of guilds with relationship to painting still has to be researched, a possible overlap can be witnessed in the formalisation of guilds that in the late Yuan or early Ming organised themselves in guild halls, thus similarly manifesting themselves as independent social and economical entities.[6]

Two, all Song and Yuan sources (with some minor exceptions) divide the workshop or painting workforce in a left group and a right group.[7] The left group takes responsibility for the murals of the east wall, and the right group paints the west wall. Since the leading painter of the workshop always participates in the left or east group, we can further deduce that the east wall is the more prestigious wall, in conformity with the traditional Chinese notion that

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[3] According to the Chinese scholar Meng Sihui, Zhu Haogu painted the Xinghua murals not in 1298 but in 1320. Meng Sihui 孟嗣徽, "Xinghua si yu Yuandai Jinnan siguan bihua qun de jige wenti 興化寺與元代晉南寺觀壁畫群的幾個問題." *Gugong xuekan*, forthcoming.

[4] Zhu Haogu and Zhang Boyuan painted a very similar subject matter in the Xinghua si in 1298 as his workshop in the Chunyang hall in 1358: both have hagiographic scenes on the side walls and in the case of the Xinghua si, Zhu Haogu also painted the Seven Buddhas on the north wall. Considering the size of the Seven Buddhas mural on the north wall, the hall must have been similar in size to the Chunyang hall, if not bigger. On the contrary, the inscriptions for the two temples list only two names for the Xinghua si murals but eight names for the Chunyang hall murals. We may therefore assume that the Xinghua si inscription omits the names of assisting painters and artisans. For the reconstruction of the Xinghua si murals, see Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, p. 67.

[5] Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, p. 75.

[6] Quan Hansheng 全漢昇, *Zhongguo hanghui zhidu shi* 中國行會制度史. Taipei: Shihuo chubanshe, 1978, p. 92.

[7] See also Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, p. 76.

east presides over west, male over female, and *wen* 文 (culture) over *wu* 武 (martial). Most interestingly, one would feel hard-pressed to find any significant stylistic differences between the east and west walls of for example the Yongle gong or Mingying wang dian 明應王殿 murals. One surmises that such uniformity can only be the result of a drawing or design made in advance of the mural, presumably by the master painter, which all the painters then followed, each painter executing a part in his designated area. The division between a left and right group of course recalls the *chao*-audience and the practice of court ritual.

Three, mural inscriptions only reveal a master-disciple relationship but provide no information on functions, a hierarchical order, or a division of tasks among the painters of a workshop. The painters in the Song mural inscriptions were called *huajiang* 畫匠 or "painting artisans" designating their low status. From the Yuan period onward, this title is substituted by a more honourable one, *daizhao* 待詔or Painter-in-Attendance, further reinforcing our idea of an increase in social status and commercial identity. Painter-in-Attendance was in Song times the highest title for a painter enrolled at the Imperial Painting Academy, but this position became obsolete in Yuan times and simply denoted the title of a self-acclaimed professional painter without any authorization by the imperial court or enrolment in a painting academy.[8] Other, lower-ranking titles of the Song Imperial Painting Academy such as Painter-Apprentice (*yixue* 藝學), Painter-in-Waiting (*zhihou* 祗候), or Painter-Student (*xuesheng* 學生), are absent in mural inscriptions.[9]

Disciple-painters in workshops are indicated by the term *menren* 門人, but often they also carry the title of *daizhao*. From this we can infer that *menren* is a hierarchical title and *daizhao* not; *daizhao* is rather a honorary title. Interestingly, the use of the term *menren* has a strong religious connotation and formally designates a person who has been ordained through the transmission of texts or by receiving a set of precepts (*jie* 戒). Similar circumstances may have applied to painting workshops as well, in which design albums, such as the Junkunc Album (see below 3.2), could perhaps have functioned as tools for transmission and initiation, but this remains a hypothesis for the time being. The term *menren* nevertheless denotes a

[8] For the history of the title *daizhao*, see Ka Bo Tsang, "Further Observations on the Yuan Wall Painter Zhu Haogu and the Relationship of the Chunyang Hall Wall Paintings to "The Maitreya Paradise" at the ROM." *Artibus Asiae* 52 (1992), pp. 97-98 n. 19.

[9] For the Song Imperial Painting Academy and the titles of its painters, see Wai-kam Ho, "Aspects of Chinese Painting from 1100-1350." Wai-kam Ho [et al.], Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting. Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980, pp. xxv-xxx.

master-disciple relationship that forms the organisational basis of the workshop, without much further hierarchical differentiation.[10]

The titles listed in mural inscription do not give clues on a specific division of tasks. Since mural production involved many stages from plastering walls, mixing pigments, painting designs, writing colophons, and applying decorative motifs with gold-leaf, it appears that all workshop members, perhaps with the exception of the master painter, were involved in several tasks. An anecdote of the Northern Song painter Zhang Fang mentions that he left without applying the colours, thus indicating that painters both made the design of and coloured their painters, and that this was not necessarily the task of specifically trained artisans in a workshop.[11]

My observation stands in stark contrast with how modern studies thus far have regarded wall painting, especially with regard to the application of colours.[12] Perhaps under the influence of later literati painting that emphasised ink-play rather than colour-play, an uneven amount of attention is paid to the brushwork of painters in many art-critical works, which we should not forget were written by literati themselves. Although these texts suggest a division of tasks between painter and artisan, it however remains uncertain if this should be considered a standard practice in mural production in general.

Five, mural inscriptions point to an increasing organisation of painting workshops based on family or lineage ties. The inscriptions show that in several cases one or more sons or relatives were involved in the painting workshop, suggesting that by the late Yuan period guilds increasingly became family businesses, a shift which also ties in with growing market competition and the promotion of a lineage or certain tradition. At least, keeping a trade and its specific techniques in the family ensured the family with a certain guarantee of income over several generations. The reliance on family relatives is for example seen in the Ma Junxiang workshop in which four sons of Ma Junxiang (Ma 'Seven' 馬七, Ma 'Eleven' 馬十一, Ma 'Twelve' 馬十二, and Ma 'Thirteen' 馬十三) work, as well as a father and son Wang

[10] The Ma Junxiang workshop for example lists Ma Junxiang and his son Ma Qi first after which follow the Disciples (*menren*) among whom figure a few Painters-in-Attendance (*daizhao*), the same title as Ma and his son. The Zhu Haogu workshop in the Chunyang Hall of the Yongle gong seem to differentiate more clearly between each one Painter-in-Attendance followed by one or more Disciples, rather than one master painter followed by all Disciples. See Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, pp. 49, 53.
[11] The anecdote is recorded in *Songchao minghua ping* p. 29 and is translated in full below.
[12] Sarah Fraser seems to particularly divide between tasks of wall and banner painters, and between monks and painters. Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, pp. 15-42, 131-158.

(Wang Xiuxian 王秀先and Wang 'Two' 王二),[13] and in the Jia Congzheng workshop of the Wuyue miao which was made up of two fathers and their sons.

Six, mural inscriptions provide in several instances the native places of the painters revealing that painting workshops were largely a local affair. This is most clearly witnessed in the painting workshop, or rather two workshops, of the Mingying wang dian murals. The temple was dedicated to a local water deity enfeoffed as Prince of Bright Response who controlled the spring on the site of which the temple was built. From this spring originated two man-made canals, one heading north and one south irrigating the irrespective areas and sustaining the local communities in their livelihood. The west group painters were closely affiliated, as were the donors, with the area irrigated by the south canal, and the east group of painters hailed from the area of the north canal.[14] The Ma Junxiang workshop painters came from Luoyang, the Wuyue miao painters came from Fenzhou, and the Guangsheng shangsi 廣勝上寺 (Upper Monastery of Broad Victory) painters both hailed from Hongtong County.[15] The inscriptions thus show that the workshops obtained and trained their painters from the local workforce, and that in most cases the workshops operated in their local area.

An interesting exception to the rule is the Zhu Haogu workshop which had painters from Ruicheng芮城 (Li Hongyi 李弘宜), which lies close to Yongle (the village where the Yongle gong was originally was located) but far from the Pingyang area where the Zhu Haogu workshop was based, and from Longmen龍門 (Wang Shiyan 王士彥) which lies even farther away near Luoyang.[16] One would feel inclined to think that they were not standard members of the workshop but were hired especially for the project at the Yongle gong. This would suggest that workshops operated on different levels (local, provincial, national) and that higher level workshops would be able to contract more distant but better painters.

Seven, since the inscriptions mention the native places of the painters, which are often located at quite some distance from the mural projects they were working on, we can infer that painters lived and worked for certain periods at the project site. If the small murals of the Wuyue miao in Fenyang, presently covering a surface of 40.91 m2, took three months to

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[13] Wang Chang'an 王暢安 et al., "Yongle gong bihua tiji luwen 永樂宮壁畫題記錄文." *Wenwu* 8 (1963), p. 66. Sons 'Twelve' and 'Thirteen' are omitted in the transcription given in Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, p. 49.

[14] Native places of the painters of the west group are the same as for some of the donors of the west mural. The native places for the east group are lacking, but we can infer that they should be from the area of the north canal. Anning Jing, *The Water God's Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual, & Theater*. Leiden: Brill, 2002, pp. 43, 46. Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, p. 72.

[15] Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, p. 76; Wang, "*Yongle gong bihua tiji luwen*, pp. 66, 72-73. The native places of the Zhu Haogu workshop painters are identified in Tsang, "Further Observations," pp. 96-97.

[16] The native places of the Zhu Haogu workshop painters are identified in Tsang, "Further Observations," pp. 96-97.

complete for three painters, much larger murals such as those of the Three Purities Hall at the Yongle gong, measuring 429.56 m2 or more then ten times as much, and keeping in mind that many more painters were involved, would probably take more than half a year to finish.[17] During all this time, the painters would be resident at the site and, arguably, receive food and lodging. In the case of the Yongle gong murals at their original location in Yongle in southern Shanxi, the Ma Junxiang workshop came from Luoyang in northern Henan province, and the Zhu Haogu workshop hailed from present Linfen in central Shanxi province, both located several hundreds of kilometres from Yongle and intersected by the Yellow River or by a gruelling mountain range. The painting workshop would therefore mostly resemble a travelling company, which would reside at different places for different lengths of time.

Painting procedures

After a painting workshop was hired for a project, the production process consisted of many steps before the murals were completed. I will here present a general chronology of mural production procedures with special reference to the imperially sponsored Yuqing zhaoying gong murals of the early Northern Song which are fairly well documented and provide ample opportunity to discover some general trends in working procedures. I have supplemented these findings with evidence from other temple paintings from the Song-Yuan period, thus establishing the general working procedures for painting a mural in this period. After the chronology, I will shortly discuss each procedure. In the next section of this chapter I will examine in detail the various types of drawings.

The chronology of working procedures for a Heavenly Court painting, notably the murals in the Yuqing zhaoying gong, would have been as follows.

1. Appoint a project manager.
2. Assign a painting supervisor.
3. Draft and select painters or a painting workshop.
4. Divide painters into an east and a west group and assign their respective leaders.
5. Prepare designs (*xiaoyang*小樣).[18]
6. Make sketches (*fenben* 粉本).
7. Prepare the wall surface with white plaster.

[17] Ka Bo Tsang calculates on the basis of the time a team of painters spent on copying the Chunyang hall that the original murals would have taken a " period of 100 days or more" to complete. Tsang, "Further Observations," p. 113. The murals of the Chunyang Hall presently cover a surface of 212.62 m2. Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, p. 50.
[18] In the next section below I will explain my choice for translating *xiaoyang* as "design" and *fenben* as "sketch."

8. Apply charcoal designs (*xiuhua* 朽畫) to the walls.
9. Provide underdrawing in light black ink.
10. Apply colours.
11. Provide overdrawing in dark black ink.
12. Apply decorative techniques such as gold dust, gold relief, and papier-mâché.
13. Perform a consecration ritual by Daoist priests on an auspicious day.
14. Make a small-scale copy (*fuben xiaoyang* 副本小樣) of the murals for renovation purposes.

The entire project of a temple painting begins with appointing a project manager. The project manager would be responsible for the entire project of building and decorating a temple, not just the wall paintings alone. The patrons of a temple, who may be an emperor, a religious order or leader, a local patron, or a local community, do not take charge of the temple project themselves but assign a project manager. Probably the most notorious project manager in Chinese history is Ding Wei 丁威 who was in charge of the construction and decoration of the Yuqing zhaoying gong from 1008 to 1013 where he is said to have made the labourers work around the clock and had them start anew if only the slightest mistake was found.[19] We further know for example that the Quanzhen patriarch Zhang Zhijing 張志敬 (Veritable Chengming 誠明真人, 1220-1270) was placed in charge of the renovation of the various temples to the Sacred Peaks and Marshes by the Mongol Khan, after which he selected Daoist priests to manage the several projects. The specific project manager of the Beiyue miao murals is however not known.

The next step in the process was assigning a painting supervisor. Most commonly, the painting supervisor would be the master-painter of a painting workshop and was responsible for the overall designs of the murals. We may assume that the patrons, project manager, and painting supervisor would negotiate on the theme of the murals, e.g. Heavenly Court painting or narrative scenes, the selection of the deities or scenes to be depicted in the murals, their number, the decoration types, and of course the price of the murals. If the wall painting was however to be executed in a large-scale state-sponsored temple with many different halls, the painting supervisor would more likely be a famous painter, such as Gao Wenjin 高文進 in the case of the Yuqing zhaoying gong. The *Songchao minghua ping* states for example that "at

[19] Suzanne Cahill, "Taoism at the Sung Court: The Heavenly Text Affair of 1008." *Bulletin of Sung and Yüan Studies* 16 (1981), pp. 32.

the beginning of the Dazhong xiangfu reign-period, he (Gao Wenjin) supervised the workforce who were laying out (*jidu* 計度) the murals of the Yuqing zhaoying gong."[20] Although no mention is made of any designs made by Gao Wenjin, we may assume that as a general supervisor he should have decided on the subject matter for each mural and perhaps even made some designs for them.

If the painting supervisor was a master-painter of a workshop, he would bring his own team of painters. Otherwise, the assistant-painters were drafted and then assigned to their particular tasks and mural sections. In large-scale projects, the painters could hail from anywhere in China, but we may assume that for more modest temples, a local workshop was drafted, e.g. the Zhu Haogu workshop. The Mingying wang dian inscriptions do not mention a specific workshop but rather record the names of painters from two districts allied to the two canals originating in the spring next to the temple, suggesting that individual painters were drafted for this particular project.

It should be mentioned that no any textual evidence has surfaced to date that would substantiate a common assumption that designs were painted in order to obtain a patron's approval.[21] This practice seems however very plausible, and we may therefore presume that the painting supervisor or master-painter would provide this design.

As already mentioned above, the painters of a workshop would be divided into a left group responsible for the east wall and a right group responsible for the west wall. This needs no further explanation. Textual records on the painting of the Yuqing zhaoying gong further suggests that each group was headed by a group-leader At the Yuqing zhaoing gong, Wu Zongyuan 武宗元 and Wang Zhuo 王拙were heading the left and right groups respectively. Because the *Songchao minghua ping* mentions that Wang Zhuo painted a mural with "Five Hundred Numinous Officials and an Assembly of Heavenly Maidens on Audience with the Origin" on the west wall,[22] which is one single theme for an entire hall and Wu Zongyuan thus painted the other half on the east wall, we may further infer that the group leaders would be responsible for the design of their respective walls. Probably due to the large scale of the project, the role of Gao Wenjin in this case may have been limited to only selecting the

[20] *Songchao minghua ping* p. 35. Translation adapted from Lachman, *Evualuations*, p. 41. The sentence could also be read differently, meaning that Gao Wenjin supervised and planned (*jidu* 計度) the murals, but I have followed Lachman's translation.

[21] Fraser, *Performing the visual*, p. 117. This interpretation recalls the use of designs in the studio of Rubens (1577-1640) in seventeenth-century Netherlands, where such designs were first made (by Rubens) to obtain a patron's approval, then used to make several sketches of different figures and motifs of the design (sometimes by Rubens' assistants), and finally transferred to a full-scale painting. Cf. Julius S. Held, *The Oil-Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens: A Critical Catalogue*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980.

[22] *Songchao minghua ping*, p. 49, and Lachman, *Evaluations*, p. 51.

themes and subject-matter for each mural while the actual design of the murals was left to the group leaders.

Even though the group leader made the designs, the actual painting of the mural – the transferring of the design to the mural – was the task of painters of the team, workshop or group. I will now translate an anecdote from the *Songchao minghua ping* on the painter Zhang Fang 張昉, because it contains several important elements to which we will return in the next procedures:

> "During the Dazhong xiangfu reign-period (1008-1017), when the construction of the Yuqing zhaoying gong was completed, Fang was summoned to paint the images of "Heavenly Maidens Playing Music" in the Three Purities Hall. Fang did not avail himself of charcoal designs (*xiuhua*) [on the walls] but wielded his brush with force rapidly completing the images which were all over three meters high.
>
> His fellow painters [who were also working on the murals in the Yuqing zhaoying gong] all turned their heads in amazement, but in the end they stealthily complaint with the supervisor that Fang was too careless and intentionally wanted to show off his speed. Fearing that anybody would try to imitate this unusual behaviour, [the supervisor] visited him and lectured him on his duties. Fang then left without adding colours to his painting, an action the critics much regretted."[23]

This anecdote demonstrates Zhang Fang painted only a fragment of a Heavenly Court painting, namely the "Heavenly Maidens Playing Music." Because the name of the hall is mentioned, Three Purities Hall, we know that the murals in this hall should depict a Heavenly Court painting. In fact, the so-called Wu Zongyuan scroll also contains a group of female attendants playing music instruments (Plate 12). From this anecdote we can conclude that Zhang Fang was an assistant-painter under either Wu Zongyuan or Wang Zhuo. It may therefore have been Wu Zongyuan, Wang Zhuo or perhaps Gao Wenjin who was the supervisor admonishing Zhang Fang for his reckless behaviour.

The same anecdote also provides important information on the use of designs and sketches in the working process. The fact that Zhang Fang did not first laid out his painting on the wall with a charcoal design, but applied the underdrawing directly to the wall presupposes that assistant-painters of a workshop or group worked (in fact had to work because the text

[23] *Songchao minghua ping* p. 29. Translation adapted from Lachman, *Evaluations*, pp. 36-37.

says "summoned") from a fixed design. As I will demonstrate in the next section on drawings below, this design was on scale and represents literally a "small-scale model" (*xiaoyang* 小樣). The painting supervisor, group leader or master-painter would provide the design and assistant-painters would be assigned to transfer a section of the design to the wall. As the anecdote demonstrates, the usual way was first by applying a charcoal design in free-hand on the wall, after which the assistant-painter would then draw the image in light ink.

However, a preparatory stage before the application of the charcoal design and underdrawing in light ink would have been the making of sketches (*fenben* 粉本). These sketches depict certain fragments, sections, or motifs of the design which the assistant-painters worked out before they started on the wall. Although no such sketches have survived for Song and Yuan temple paintings, a great many have survived at Dunhuang from the eighth and ninth centuries, where they were found sealed in a cave in 1900. One major characteristic of these sketches is that not one of them depicts a complete design for a mural; rather, they all depict fragments.[24] We may therefore infer that assistant-painters first made sketches of sections of the design, to which they were assigned, before they would start painting on the walls.

Before any painting on the wall could be done, the surface of unfired brick walls should first be prepared and plastered white. The lower part of the mural consisted of fired bricks and was not plastered. The plaster usually consisted of several layers of clay mixed with coarse or fine sand strengthened with wheat stalks, hemp fibres, and chopped straw. The quality of the plaster (the number of layers, thickness, its constituents etc.) not only determined the durability of the murals, but is also a good indication of the price of the murals. For example, the plaster of the Heavenly Court paintings in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong consists of three different layers of clay, in total measuring 2-3 centimetres, and additionally has on top of the second layer a grid of iron or bamboo pegs with tied hemp strings to enhance bonding.[25] The small scale Nan'an murals are much thinner, 1-2 centimeters, and have consequently withstood the test of time less successfully.

After the preparation of the wall, the several stages of applying charcoal designs, underdrawing in light black ink, colouring, and overdrawing in dark black ink were executed, constituting the actual painting process. This entire process is explicitly mentioned by the

[24] These sketches formed the basis of the study in Fraser, *Performing the Visual*. My interpretation is also influenced by Rubens' studio practices as described in Held, *Oil-Sketches*. The Dunhuang sketches would corroborate this view.

[25] The most complete western language publication to date on the Chinese techniques of preparing wall paintings is Tsang, "Further Observations," pp. 110-114.

Yuan painter and art-critic, Rao Ziran 饒自然 (ca. 1340) in his *Huizong shi'er ji* 繪宗十二忌 (The Twelve Faults in the Painting Tradition), including the charcoal design on the wall. Although mainly intended for painting landscapes on scrolls or on walls, the proceedings outlined here by Rao Ziran equally apply to figure paintings. Rao Ziran writes:

> "If the painting silk exceeds that of several scrolls [in length], or if the wall exceeds several tens of meters [in width], it is necessary to use a bamboo pole to which one affixes charcoal (*tanxiu* 炭朽) to distribute the mountains and valleys, trees and stones, and towers and pavilions. Big or small, high or low, each has its proper position. Then, step away from it several tens of paces and observe it carefully. If you see that it is acceptable, then use light ink to lay down the approximate composition. This is called the 'small beginning of the brush.' After that, wield your brush and sprinkle ink to your heart's content; anything is suitable."[26]

Rao Ziran's exegesis on painting composition contains exactly the three stages of our painting process: 1) a charcoal design, 2) underdrawing, and 3) overdrawing. The absence of a direct reference to colouring is probably due to the fact that landscape painting by the Yuan had become strongly associated with literati-painting (*wenren hua* 文人畫), preferring brushwork in ink alone. In figure painting, the colouring would take place after the underdrawing. Overdrawing would eventually define the outlines of each figure and motif. Murals in which the colouring transgresses the outlines can often be taken as a sign of an inferior workshop. Murals in which this does not occur of course of superior quality. Furthermore, as the Zhang Fang anecdote above attests, the assistant-painters would normally apply the colours to the paintings themselves. Chinese colour pigments used in wall painting are mineral pigments and have to be ground and mixed with a cohesive before use. Each mineral pigments was imported from a specific region in China or even abroad, and each one therefore differed in quality and price. It should further be noted that overdrawing was not always applied, as xseen for example in several Tang Tomb murals,[27] but overdrawing remains the most common form, and all extant Yuan temple paintings have overdrawing.

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[26] *Huizong shi'er ji*, Siku quanshu Vol. 816, p. 566. Translation adapted, with modifications, from Bush & Shih, *Early Chinese Texts on Painting*, p. 266.

[27] No overdrawing was applied in the tombs of Li Xian 李賢 (Crown Prince Zhang Huai 章懷) and Li Chongrun 李重潤 (Prince Yide 懿德) of the Tang located in Shaanxi province. Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, p. 270, n. 73. See also ibid. p. 276, n. 17. Underdrawing is revealed on places where the murals are damaged or where colours have flaked off.

Depending on the wealth of the patrons, the murals could be further embellished with applied gold leaf, gold dust, and papier-mâché. Inlays of gold relief are mostly applied to crowns and jewelleries of imperial figures and to the armouries and weapons of warriors. Although the gold relief in many murals is nowadays scraped off, in their original state the murals must have radiated with light, and together with the colourful gowns and sashes, the murals could equal a real imperial audience or procession. Gold dust is used on robes, faces, and bodies and adds to the overall brilliance of the spectacle. In the case of the Beiyue miao murals, gold dust was applied to two dragons and a demon figure (the so-called Quyang Demon) which are depicted on the higher and darker reaches of the wall painting, thus ensuring a better visual presence for viewers on the ground. Papier-mâché is less common but can for example be seen in the Heavenly Court painting of the Yongle gong, where it is used to add relief to a 'treasure' at the foot of the King Father of the East (III) on the east wall. These decorative techniques are very important instruments in Chinese wall painting to add lustre to the visual drama depicted on the wall. Because of their high costs, the extent of their application can be understood as markers of the quality and price of the murals, and by extension that of the workshop. In this respect, the Yongle gong murals are without comparison. The decorative techniques in Chinese temple painting still remain largely unstudied.

Although not the domain of the painting workshop but certainly of importance for marking its completion, the completion of a temple painting would be celebrated with a consecration ritual to be held on an auspicious day. The construction and decoration of a temple complex was in traditional China on every important stage accompanied by rituals: before the beginning of construction, with the installation of a title board marking the completion of a hall, after the completion of the murals, and probably during other occasions as well. Painters, like carpenters of the Ming, may be involved in small rituals during the process.[28] Official histories or art-critical texts never make mention of such rituals, but references to such celebrations are found among the writings of Daoist priests and Buddhist monks. For example, Du Guangting wrote a long prayer (*ci* 詞) - basically a memorial - for a *jiao*-offering celebrating the completion of the Heavenly Court murals painted by Zhang Suqing (fl. 845-927) in the Zhangren guan.[29]

[28] The *Lu Ban jing*, the carpenter's manual of the Ming, abounds with instructions for all kinds of smaller rituals. See Ruitenbeek, *Carpentry and Building*.
[29] *Guangcheng ji* 廣成集 DZ 616, 6.13a-14a. Translated in Mesnil, "Zhang Suqing," pp. 143-144.

Importantly, we should note that the consecration ritual is not the so-called ritual of "opening the light" (*kaiguang* 開光) but a *jiao*-offering. The Ritual of Opening the Light entails the dotting of the eyes of a deity image with a brush from which moment on the image is inhabited by a "numinous power" (*ling*靈). Although this ritual is very popular in modern religious practices of both Buddhism and Daoism, it seems only to have been introduced in Daoism very late.[30]

Jiao-offerings consecrating the murals were held on auspicious days, and mural inscriptions left by the workshop painters are rather uniform in this regard. Murals of both halls of the Yongle gong, and those of the Mingying wang dian were all completed on the first day of the lunar month, i.e. new moon; only those of the Wuyue miao were completed on the fifteenth day of the lunar month, i.e. at the full moon.[31] Both days are considered auspicious and accord with ancient Chinese practices of ancestor worship. Sometimes, other dates occur such as in the case of the Qinglong si 青龍寺 murals which were completed on the nineteenth day of lunar month X (lost).[32] These other dates may be connected to specific festival days of the temple deity, such as his or her birthday, but this information is in this case difficult to retrieve. Birthdays of deities and other religious holidays are also considered auspicious days. In sum, the completion of a Daoist mural is a feat celebrated by the painters, the local community and its gods with a *jiao*-offering, which in practice meant a lavish banquet in which everybody participated.

One final stage in the process of mural production would be making a small-scale copy (*fuben xiaoyang* 副本小樣) of the murals for renovation purposes. The copy was stored in the temple or in the imperial library if it concerned a state-sponsored temple project. In a seminal article published in 1956, the Chinese scholar Xu Bangda 徐邦達 was first to draw attention to two textual references of this practice in Guo Ruoxu's (ca. 1080) *Tuhua jianwen zhi*.[33] In the entry on the painter Gao Yi 高益, who was responsible for the murals in the state-sponsored Xiangguo si 相國寺 (Monastery of the Realm of Xiang), Guo Ruoxu remarks that:

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[30] For modern Daoist consecration rituals, see Chen, *Daojiao liyi*, pp. 48-49. For mediaeval Buddhist consecration rituals in Japan, see Bernard Faure, *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism*. Translated by Phyllis Brooks. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, pp. 246-263.

[31] The inscription of the Three Purities Hall murals of the Yongle gong read *liu yue ri* 六月日, "the day of the sixth month" which I assume to refer to the first day of the month. See Wang, "Yongle gong," p. 68.

[32] Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, p. 61.

[33] Xu, "Cong bihua fuben xiaoyang."

> "Later he received an imperial order to paint a Transformation Table of King Asoka in the surrounding corridors of the Xiangguo si, as well as Tejaprabha Buddha and the Nine Luminaries. A small-scale painting (*xiaoben* 小本) of the composition is preserved in the Imperial Storehouse (*neifu* 内府). Eventually, the two temple corridor [paintings] fell into dilapidation, and famous hands of later generations where ordered to [restore the paintings] for which they copied in freehand (*linfang* 臨仿) from the small-scale painting."[34]

In an entry in the same work on the Xiangguo si we further find information on the name of the painter responsible for the restorations:

> "Its four corridor walls were all restored, after which famous hands of the present period such as Li Yuanji 李元濟 were called together to copy in freehand anew from the small-scale copy (*fuben xiaoyang* 副本小樣) stored in the Imperial Storehouse. But each of them put new ideas in their application of [the small-scale copy]."[35]

In the last reference, the term *fuben* clearly denotes a copy, and it must have been this term that led Xu Bangda to hypothesise that after the completion of a mural, a small-scale copy was made especially for renovation purposes. We must note that the first reference omits this term, leaving open the possibility that a design (a "small-scale model" or *xiaoyang*) was used made before the painting of the mural.

Xu Bangda further linked this term to two other examples, one being an alleged small-scale representation of the Yongle gong mural and stored inside the temple until the Japanese occupation when it was lost, and the other the Wu Zongyuan scroll, suggesting that both were used for renovation purposes. Because the Yongle gong specimen is lost, it is difficult to verify if it was a design or a copy, even though we can rightly assume that it was used for

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[34] *Tuhua jianwen zhi* pp. 115-116. Translation adapted from Soper, *Kuo Jo-Hsü*, p. 48.

[35] *Tuhua jianwen zhi* p. 242. Translation adapted from Soper, *Kuo Jo-Hsü*, p. 98. Strangely, Liu Daochun's *Songchao minghua ping* has a different story of the matter, involving amongst other Gao Wenjin in the restoration: "With the passage of time, the murals that Gao Yi had painted for the Xiangguo si had become dilapidated. The emperor missed their delicate brushwork, and thus decided to have them restored. He summoned Gao Wenjin and asked, "When it comes to the reds and blues, who is the equal of Yi?" Wenjin replied, "Although I cannot equal him, if I would be permitted to copy the brushstrokes by means of a wax stencil (*lazhi* 蠟紙), when transferred to another wall they would not differ in the slightest from Yi's originals." Accordingly, together with Li Yongji 李用及 and Li Xiangkun 李象坤,[35] he copied the old works and transferred them to a new wall, capturing both the character and life-force of Yi's works." *Songchao minghua ping* pp. 34-35. Translation adapted from Lachman, *Evaluations*, p. 41.

renovation purposes. The Wu Zongyuan is a less sure case, because the unfinished state of the scroll, as indicated by the undefined ink washes used to depict hairs, the missing parts of the balustrade in the background, and some carelessly rendered lotus leaves, already pointed out by Xu Bangda.[36] Such characteristics rather point to a design made in advance of a mural, and Sarah Fraser linked them to the unfinished state of preparatory sketches found at Dunhuang, for which reason she identifies the Wu Zongyuan scroll as a *fenben*.[37] However, these objections however still would not deny the possibility that the Wu Zongyuan scroll was used for renovation purposes. It was probably also kept in the imperial library. It has a seal of the Xuanhe-period. If authentic it would mean that it was in the collection of Emperor Huizong, and the *Xuanhe huapu*, recording Huizong's collection, indeed lists a Heavenly Court painting by Wu Zongyuan.[38]

Actually, an example of a small-scale copy has survived from the Ming dynasty. The Chongshan si 崇善寺 (Monastery of Venerating Benevolence) murals in Taiyuan (Shanxi), now destroyed, were painted in small-scale on album leaves, each leaf representing a scene from Buddha Shakyamuni's life as depicted in the murals.[39] Curiously, the album, dating to 1483, was commissioned a hundred years after the murals were completed, apparently during a renovation to the temple. It is not known if it substituted another album, but since it was kept at the temple, and for example not in a painting workshop, we can assume that the album was commissioned specifically for renovation purposes. Interestingly, the paintings were done on silk and, importantly, in colour, as one might expect of copies used for renovation purposes. The format of an album is also uncommon, but is probably facilitated by the fact that the paintings depict narrative scenes of equal size.

3.2 Drawings

In order to understand how a Heavenly Court painting is built up and structurally organised by wall painters, it is necessary to examine more closely some important pictorial tools the painter used in the preparation of a mural. An essential part of the painting process is the preparation of various kinds of drawings that serve as models on which painters would base

[36] Ibid. p. 57.
[37] Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, p. 117.
[38] *Xuanhe huapu* p. 99.
[39] For the album, see Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, pp. 99-100, 235.

the final wall painting. The drawings are representations of this praxis of transferring images from a model to a wall painting and, consequently, various types of drawings each represent an intermediary stage between a model and a final painting. An investigation of the types of drawings will explain how sketches were involved in the production process of a Heavenly Court painting.

In my discussion I will rely on the classification on drawings introduced by Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574). Vasari divided drawings into three types: *schizzo*, *disegno*, and *cartone*, or sketches (small-scale, unfinished and fragmentary drawings after a model), designs (relatively finished compositions often on approximate scale after a model), and cartoons (full-scale outline drawings on full-scale pricked with holes which leave a trace of the outline on a painting surface when brushed with pigment powder).[40] Vasari's classification is particularly useful for our purpose because, amongst other reasons, the three types are classified according to praxis. The three types of drawings are each a respresentation of a different praxis concerning drawing. I will use these three different terms in this study because, in western language and art history, they already have defined meanings. Because no such classification of Chinese drawings exists, I will therefore use the western classification as a starting-point to investigate the Chinese drawings and their terms.

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the same classification can, by an large, be applied to extant Chinese drawings, and the type "sketch" should, I argue, correlate to the Chinese term *fenben* 粉本, and the type "design" should correlate to the term *xiaoyang* 小樣. This identification of *xiaoyang* does not interfere with the idea proposed by Xu Bangda that it should denote a small-scale model of a mural after its completion, as I already noted previously.[41] The identification of the type "cartoon" with a specific Chinese term is less evident.[42] Modern scholarship in China and the West have always explained *fenben* as originally designating a cartoon (in these studies often translated as a "pounce" or a "stencil"), primarily because a literal translation of the term *fenben*, "powder version," would suggest that it refers to the powder brushed in the holes of the cartoon, and secondly because

[40] Michael Hirst, *Michelangelo and His Drawings*. Yale: Yale University Press, 1988. See also the review of this work by Carmen Bambach Cappel in *The Art Bulletin* 72.3 (1990), pp. 493-498, and the exchange of letters between Hirst and Bambach published under the title "A Note on the Word *Modello*" in *The Art Bulletin* 74.1 (1992), pp. 172-173. In a later period, other terms were introduced. *Modelli* referred to designs and *bozetti* referred to sketches. See Held, *Oil-Sketches*, p. 5. For clarity and convenience, I prefer to use direct translations of Vasari's terms.

[41] The term *fuben* 副本 or "copy" in the *Tuhua jianwen zhi* reference quoted above seems to be deliberately added in order to emphasise the fact that this "small-scale model" (*xiaoyang* 小樣) is a copy made after the completion of the mural and not before. Theoretically speaking, the term *fuben xiaoyang* could also mean a copy of a small-scale model.

[42] The modern Chinese term for a cartoon is *cikong* 刺孔.

examples of such cartoons were found among the scriptures and paintings that survived at Dunhuang from the ninth and tenth centuries.[43] Yet, not one textual reference to *fenben* in traditional sources on Chinese painting would indicate that a cartoon is intended or that in any way powder was used in their application. Because the use of cartoons has still to be attested in Heavenly Court paintings – in the Mogao cave paintings the cartoon was mostly used to create repetitive images such as those of the Thousand Buddhas on difficult to reach places, in particular ceilings – we will postpone this topic for future research.

In this chapter, I will investigate the two main types of drawing used in the production of Heavenly Court painting, sketches and designs. Information on the praxis of drawing can be obtained from three different but complementary sources: textual references, extant examples of sketches and designs, and wall paintings that reveal the use of such pictorial tools. The period under discussion is from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries. From these three different sources it will be possible to discern some recurring patterns in the practical application of drawings as a preparatory stage to composing and visually organise a Heavenly Court painting.

Sketches

Sketches are drawings of fragmentary sections of a composition and are used as studies for transferring an image of a model to a painting. The traditional Chinese term for such sketches is *fenben* 粉本, and the cache of scriptures and paintings retrieved from Mogao Cave 17 at 1900 include many examples, if not all, of this type of drawing. Except from a few designs for mandalas and banners, all drawings related to the Dunhuang wall paintings are sketches of fragmentary aspects, some of them also found in the wall paintings. Sarah Fraser has made an elaborate study of the extant sixty-five scrolls with these drawings, but since my classification, methodology, and aims are different from hers, the results presented here should be seen as a contribution to the research on Chinese drawings and their relationship to wall painting.[44]

An analysis of the Dunhuang sketches reveals that sketches transmitted three types of compositional elements: details, single figures, and groups of figures. Dunhuang sketch P.

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[43] For examples of the Dunhuang cartoons in the British Museum collection, see RoderickWhitfield, *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum*. Vol. 2. Tokyo: Kodansha International and the Trustees of the British Museum, 1983, pls. 78-80. For the identification of *fenben* as a "pounce" (i.e. cartoon), Bush & Shih, *Early Chinese Texts*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 256, James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice: How Painters Lived and Worked in Traditional China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 91, Fraser, *Performing the Visua*, pp. 102-108, and Sha Wutian 沙武田 and Liang Hong 梁紅, "Dunhuang qianfo bian huagao cikong yanjiu: jiantan Dunhuang qianfo hua ji ti zhizu jifa yanbian 敦煌千佛便畫稿刺孔研究：兼談敦煌千佛畫及其製作技法演變." *Dunhuang xue jikan* 敦煌學輯刊 2 (2005), pp. 57-71.

[44] Fraser, *Performing the Visual*.

2002 V°, sections four and five, consists of the compositional elements details and single figures. Noteworthy, when a single figure is drawn, the face is often left blank; faces and crowns on the other hand are studied in separate sketches.[45] An example of a group design in the Dunhuang sketches is the preparatory sketch with Raudrāksha seated on a throne from which heretics are tumbling down, blown away by a fierce wind.[46] This particular compositional element appears in fifteen cave paintings in the Dunhuang area depicting the theme of the Magic Competition, all datable to ca. 862-980. The story of the Magic Competition deals with a duel in supernatural powers between Śāriputra and Raudrāksha, representing the Buddhists and non-Buddhists, or heretics, respectively. The heretics are of course beaten and forced to undergo tonsure, i.e. to become Buddhists. The popularity of the story in late ninth and tenth-century Dunhuang cave paintings has strong ethnic undertones, and is often explained as a victory of the "Han-Chinese" (i.e. the minorities posing as such) over the foreign Tibetans who had occupied the area in the ninth century.[47]

The same structural division in compositional elements can be noticed in existing wall paintings, scroll paintings, and even relief sculptures, because sketches were not limited to painting alone but were applicable to all kinds of pictorial media. In the following examples, the existence of sketches can be inferred precisely by the similarities of the compositional elements. It is the praxis of transmitting compositions, as a copy or as a model itself, that allows us to presuppose the existence of many types of sketches circulating over long distances and periods. This praxis has of course its roots in copying (*mo* 摹) which importance was already stressed in one of the earliest writings on Chinese painting by Gu Kaizhi顧愷之 (fl. 345-406).[48]

One, details. Smaller compositional elements such as hand-held attributes and types of headdresses are obvious items to be transmitted through sketches. One example is the horizontally held court tablet in Heavenly Court paintings. It appears both in the Toronto murals (Fig. 46), and in the Yongle gong murals (Fig. 47) on the south part of the west wall. In both cases a Daoist deity seems to inspect the surface of his horizontally held court tablet, but the two figures are in fact depicted in slightly different poses, ruling out the possibility

[45] Reproduced in Sarah Fraser, "The Manuals and Drawings of Artists, Calligraphers, and Other Specialists from Dunhuang." Jean-Pierre Drège (ed.), *Images de Dunhuang: Dessins et peintures sur papier des fonds Pelliot et Stein.* Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1999, pp. 66-68.
[46] Ibid. p. 60.
[47] Fraser, *Performing the Visual*, pp. 71-86, 169-174,
[48] Translated in Acker, *Some T'ang*, Vol. 2, pp. 68-69. Although *mo* 摹technically means "tracing" (in later texts), the context points to the more general meaning of copying.

that the entire figure constituted a compositional element transmitted through sketches; only the court tablet apparently formed such a compositional element.

With regard to types of headdresses transmitted through sketches, the difference between the crowns of the deities in the Toronto and Yongle gong murals is very marginal, suggesting that the painters of two different workshops took their models from the same set of preparatory sketches. The closer affinity with official dress codes of these two Heavenly Court paintings further suggests that both painting workshops worked with preparatory sketches transmitted from the cosmopolitan area. By contrast, the *tongtian*-crowns of the Southern Dipper deities depicted on the east wall of the Nan'an murals (Plate 9) differ greatly from other such examples and are less in conformity with standard representations of imperial dress code, strongly suggesting the possibility that the Nan'an painters worked in a very local tradition. They probably also relied on a limited set of preparatory sketches because the crowns are nearly identical and without any variation. In this case, we can surmise that the preparatory sketch the painters used was not a tool for transferring a design from model to painting, but a model itself.

Two, single figures. Probably one of the most recognisable and enduring compositions in Chinese figure painting is the emperor spreading his arms. It appears in several scenes of the Mogao cave paintings and in the Longmen stone reliefs, and in scroll paintings of for example the "Thirteen Emperors" attributed to Yan Liben (d. 673) and the Wu Zongyuan scroll.[49] It means that this particular design was used by painters from all over China over a period of at least five hundred years.

Three, groups of figures. A final example of a certain composition transmitted over time and place and even occurring in different religious contexts and in different iconographies is found in the Yongle gong and Pilu si 毗盧寺 murals, the first representing a Daoist Heavenly Court and the second a Buddhist Water-and-Land painting. The Yongle gong lies about five hundred kilometres southwest of the Pilu si. A composition of five figures appears in both layouts. In the Yongle gong murals (Fig. 48), they appear on the south part of the east wall (192-195, 197) and in the Pilu si murals (Fig. 49) on a similar location on the southeast wall, perhaps suggesting that this particular design was used to close off a

[49] See Mogao Caves 220 and 61 dating to the Tang and Five Dynasties. Whitfield, *Dunhuang, Caves of the Singing Sands*, Vol. 2, p. 71. The Binyang Cave reliefs, dating to the Northern Wei, are on display in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City. The Yan Liben scroll is in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, published in Wu Tung, *Tales from the Land of Dragons: 1,000 Years of Chinese Painting*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1997, pp. 127-130. For the emperor in the Wu Zongyuan scroll, see *Zhongguo meishu quanji, huihua bian 3, Songdai huihua*, p. 22.

procession or an audience scene on the east side.[50] The soldier holding his sword and depicted *en face* is particularly instrumental to achieve this effect. This type of soldier holding his sword and depicted *en face* is, interestingly, also witnessed in the Beiyue miao murals, but on the west wall where he closes off the audience on the north side (Drawing 3B). The remaining four figures however represent different iconographies, those of the Yongle gong representing warriors and generals, apparently of two different iconographic units, while the Pilu si murals represent them as one unit of five figures in Mongol dress and identify them as such in the accompanying cartouche. Even though their iconographic representations differ, the figures in both murals have the same postures and position and clearly are part of one fundamental composition. It seems implausible that the Pilu si painters copied the design from the Yongle gong; the size of the figures also differs. Rather, we can surmise that the painters used a design on a sketch circulating among different workshops.

A much larger survey of images would no doubt yield many more examples, but for our purpose here, I hope to have made clear that sketches served to transmit compositional elements and that wall paintings, and in particular Heavenly Court paintings, rely on a combination of these three basic compositional elements.[51] In the transfer of the design from sketch to wall painting, the painters could alter the eventual representation of each element in almost infinite ways, depending on the wishes of the patrons and the requirements placed on the design by the architectural layout of the hall.

The next step in the process of composing a Heavenly Court painting was a combination of all the compositional, fragmentary elements in a design which represented a "small-scale model" (*xiaoyang*) of the entire mural.

Designs

Not many designs (*xiaoyang* 小樣) of wall paintings have come down to us. For example, no complete designs are known of the Mogao cave paintings. Of other examples, their exact status has yet to be determined. I will here discuss two examples of designs which are directly related to Heavenly Court painting. The first is the Wu Zongyuan scroll in the C.C. Wang Collection and the other is the so-called Junkunc Album with designs, now in the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art. Both examples will give us important information on the working process of composing and transmitting designs to a wall painting.

[50] For reproductions, see Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 28; and Kang, *Pilu si qun hua*, p. 265.
[51] On modularity of compositional elements in Chinese art, see Ledderose, *Ten Thousand Things*.

The Wu Zongyuan scroll is a design for an east wall of a Heavenly Court painting, depicting a procession of deities drawn in black ink on silk. I will argue that the Wu Zongyuan scroll should be a design of, or intended for, an actual wall painting. The way to prove this assumption, I propose, is by comparing the measurements of the scroll to existing wall paintings. After all, if the Wu Zongyuan scroll represents a design of a real wall painting in a temple hall, the scale of the scroll should match the measurements of a wall painting.

I will first discuss the structure of a temple hall. Temple walls exist in different sizes and measurements, but all adhere to architectural principles that would limit the number of columns and bays (*jian* 間, i.e. the distance between two columns) for constructing a temple hall. According to the early Tang text *Fengdao kejie* 奉道科戒, the largest possible number of bays across the front of a Daoist monastery hall is thirteen.[52] Since Chinese temple halls are traditionally wider than they are deep, a smaller number of bays would be found on the east and west walls of the hall. If we take a fairly standard architectural layout of a temple hall containing wall paintings, such as for example that found in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong, which seems to closely follow building standards as described in the *Fengdao kejie*, it is possible to calculate the measurements of a Heavenly Court painting according to the size of a temple hall, i.e. its numbers of bays.

I will now calculate the measurements of Yongle gong murals per number of bays. The Three Purities Hall is seven bays wide and four bays deep. The front has a façade with folding wooden doors spanning five bays, and the rear wall has a back door of one bay. If we take the east mural as an example - matching the Wu Zongyuan scroll which also depicts an east wall judging from the direction of the procession - the mural starts on the east end part of front wall (2.37 m, one bay), continues on the east wall (14.32 m, four bays), and ends on a large segment of the east part of the rear wall (11.23 m, three bays), measuring in total 27.92 meters in length and 4.38 meters in height and running over a wall of in total eight bays.[53] Even though bays are hardly ever constant in width, we can state that in general one bay would correspond to about 3.5 meters of wall and mural.

Let us now consider the measurements of the Wu Zongyuan scroll and transpose these to a wall of an imaginary temple hall. The Wu Zongyuan scroll measures in total 777.5 cm in length and 58 cm in height, but this includes the colophons and the mounting.[54] The size of the original scroll with images is shorter, and measures 580 cm in length and 44.3 cm in

[52] *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* DZ 1125, 1.14a
[53] For the measurement of the Three Purities Hall, see Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, pp. 44-45.
[54] These measurements are found in Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, p. 240.

height, and we shall use these measurements for our calculations.[55] If we wish to transpose the Wu Zongyuan scroll to a wall similar that of the Yongle gong, we have to magnify it by 10, which would give a fictive mural measuring 58 meters in length and 4.43 meters in height.

Would it be possible to construct to a temple hall which could fit such a long mural? Yes, this is certainly possible, and to be more precise, it would fit a hall of thirteen bays wide in front, the largest possible hall according to the reckoning of the *Fengdao kejie*. If we consider that the Yongle gong murals measure 3.5 meters per bay, we can calculate that the fictive Wu Zongyuan mural would run across 16.5 bays, or sixteen or seventeen bays in reality. If we further would take the division of doors and walls of the Yongle gong as an example and transpose this same division to the fictive hall, it is possible to construct a hall of thirteen bays wide and eight or nine bays deep, which has a mural running over sixteen or seventeen bays. Very similar to the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong, the imaginary thirteen-bay hall would have folding wooden doors spanning nine bays in front, and a back door in the rear wall of one bay. This leaves sixteen or seventeen bays for the wall with the mural: two bays on the east end part of the front, eight or nine bays to the east, and six bays on the rear wall. It would be my guess that the east wall would have nine bays with shorter distance between the columns in order to give firmer support to the roof of such an enormous hall.

Ergo, the Wu Zongyuan scroll is a reduced-size version of or for a real mural. From the fact that the scroll would fit a thirteen-bay hall, we can further assume that the scroll depicts a mural composition for an imperially sponsored Daoist temple in the capital, of which numerous were built in the Northern Song. It is further of interest to note that the design is painted on scale 1:10, which is exactly the same scale used for drawing up plans for architectural layouts in traditional Chinese architecture. For instance, the Song building manual *Yingzao fashi* 營造法式 (Building Standards), compiled by Li Jie 李誡 (ca. 1065-1110 or 1035-1108) and completed around 1100, stipulates that before building a roof first a cross section has to be drawn on a flat pane of a wall in which *zhang* 丈 (3 m) are substituted for *chi* 尺 (30 cm), *chi* for *fen* 分 (3 cm) etc.[56] This evidence from Chinese architecture not only corroborates our hypothesis that the Wu Zongyuan scroll is indeed a design for an actual

[55] Measurements given in *Zhongguo meishu quanji,huihua bian 3, Songdai huihua*, p. 8.
[56] *Yingzao fashi*, completed 1100, first edition 1103, second edition 1145. Compiled by Li Jie. Shanghai: Commemercial Press, block print of 1925, j. 5, p. 112. Passage translated in Ruitenbeek, *Carpentry and Building*, pp. 71-72.

mural but further suggests that such designs followed standard guidelines for scaling or modelling also common in architecture.

Importantly, the scale of the design wholy depends on the measurements of the handscroll and not on the drawings. This observation reveals some important details on the procedures involved in transferring the design of the wall paintings to the miniaturised format of the scroll. First, the murals were measured. Second, the measurements were divided by ten which provided the measurements of the handscroll needed. Third, the height and width of the design could then be measured (presumably by means of a grid) and also divided by ten. Fourth, these measurements could then easily be measured out or compared with the design on the handscroll, in which for example inches (*fen*) stand for feet (*chi*).

If my assumptions are correct, it would mean that the measurements of a presumed design are the main clue to its identification, rather than the characteristics of the images represented on it. If the measurements can in any way be related to an imaginary but architecturally feasible temple wall, the painting stands a very reasonable chance to be identified as a design. It is of course imaginable that also other methods existed for preparing a design other than dividing through ten, but it remains a topic for future research to investigate if the measurements of other candidate-designs can be linked to possible temple walls. This goes beyond the scope of this study which wants first to investigate the practices involved in making a mural and how drawings are incorporated in this process. I believe the Wu Zongyuan scroll represents a very standard type of design used in wall painting projects in temples of the Northern Song court.[57]

The Wu Zongyuan scroll is not the only type of design, and variation exists, obviously geared to meet different practical ends. The designs contained in the so-called Junkunc Album, and also known under the name of its pirated edition, the *Daozi mobao* 道子墨寶 (Wu Daozi's Ink Treasures), can instruct us on several other important practical features of the design. Collected together, the designs are not only "small-scale models" of envisioned murals but, I would argue, represent also 'master-models' defining the repertoire and style of a workshop.

I define four characteristics of the praxis involving this design album as can be inferred from the designs themselves. These characteristics also set it apart from sketches. First, it represents a near-complete collection of deity figures that in their totality or in various combinations could constitute a Heavenly Court painting. In other words, it can be defined as

[57] The fact that the Xu Beihong version of the Wu Zongyuan scroll is shorter (and on paper rather than on silk) also poses some interesting difficulties on the iconopraxis of that version.

an album rather than as a collection of independent sketches. In fact, the album consists of two parts. The first part of twenty-six sheets consists of deity figures for a Heavenly Court painting, beginning with two of the presumably originally three images of the Three Sovereigns (*sanhuang* 三皇) and followed by hosts of other deities, mostly represented as one particular group per album sheet. Only the numerous marshals (*yuanshuai* 元帥) or exorcist deities are depicted over several album sheets. The second part of ten sheets consists of narrative scenes belonging to the theme of Clearing out the Mountains (*soushan tu* 搜山圖) of the Water Deity, generally identified as Erlang 二郎, arresting with his goblin forces all kinds of wild animals living in the mountains, forests, and seas. The album therefore represents the repertoire on offer in a certain workshop.

Second, each album sheet, with the exception of the exorcist marshals, represents a finished product. They lack the incompleteness of sketches or studies and each sheet maintains a regular style and proportion of figures, which seems to suggest that the sketches were not intended as private tools or studies for constructing a painting, but rather as objects to be shown to others, be they painters or customers of the workshop.

Third, each sheet with a group of figures overlaps with the format and subject matter of a single hanging scroll, and the sketch album would therefore contain the master copies or models for both wall painting and hanging scroll paintings that could in equal capacity represent a Heavenly Court composition. The Junkunc Album itself provides no clues that it was only intended for wall paintings.

Fourth, most deity figures in the first part have characters written above them identifying their names, a feature absent for example in the Dunhuang sketches. Knowing the correct names with the correct representation is in fact unnecessary for preparatory sketches, from which I would argue that the Junkunc sketches served another purpose than just sketches. Rather, they demonstrate that the sketches are finished and fixed products that served as reference material – the master copy - for the painters of a workshop, and perhaps also as an album that could be shown to prospective costumers from which they could acquaint themselves with the house-style of the workshop and make a choice of the products on offer and calculate prices. An album with master copies could further easily be transmitted from master to disciple, which thus established a painting-lineage based on the repertoire of a famous local master.

The Junkunc Album neatly fits a commercialised working environment, in which designs of earlier times had evolved in an independent product for studying, transmitting, and

dealing in paintings. The Junkunc Album dates to the Ming – it contains a depiction of a Ming blue-and-white vase and several divine marshals depicted in the album are not known in sources before the Yuan – and although evidence is lacking that such desing albums were in use before the Ming, the increased economic competition between workshops and the closer organisation of guilds from the Yuan-Ming period, as discussed in the section above on workshop organisation, would suggest that the use of design albums started in the Yuan period.

Having analysed the pictorial tools of wall painters by dividing a Heavenly Court painting in its compositional elements and linking these to the various practices involved in making sketches and designs – sketches representing the intermediate stage between model and final product and designs often the models themselves – it is now possible to apply this knowledge to the four Heavenly Court paintings of this study and investigate how the painters and designers conceived and built up their compositions.

3.3 Mural design

In this section I wish to discuss how painters conceived a design for a Heavenly Court painting and what models and pictorial devices they applied.

In the above, I have argued that painters worked out a mural design on the basis of compositional elements. I devised three basic compositional elements (detail, figure, group) constituting a preparatory drawing which are combined in order to achieve one complete design, and argued that the group composition formed the largest module in the mural design. Since we know that Heavenly Court paintings exist in two versions, one in wall paintings and the other in hanging scroll paintings, I further want to argue that the format of the hanging scroll painting functions similar to a group compositional element in drawings, and thereby forms the structural basis on which painters would design a Heavenly Court painting. In other words, in its most simple and basic format, a design of a Heavenly Court paintings is constructed by combining or 'shifting around' hanging scroll paintings. I will attest this in this section.

Importantly, the group composition or the hanging scroll format also overlaps with the iconographic unit of one or more deities in a Heavenly Court painting. Since a Heavenly Court paintings consists of a selection of deities represented as a fixed unit, painters would

arguably adapt their designing process to this modular structure of fixed iconographic units. It is further significant to note in this respect that painters and their workshops were versed in both wall paintings and scroll paintings. This is amply demonstrated by the biographies of wall painters and the collections of hanging scroll paintings listed for example in the *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (see Appendix 2.2). The designs of the sketches prepared in the Junkunc Album could also equally be applied to either wall or scroll paintings.

The issue at stake in this chapter is however not to ascertain that mural designs of a Heavenly Court have a modular character, but to understand how painters would combine these elements in a visually attractive design. To use a simple metaphor, understanding that Chinese cuisine is a combination of a series of fixed ingredients and spices does not yet mean that one understands how the Chinese chef cooks a tasty dish.

With regard to the combination of elements in a mural design, it is possible to discern three different types: loose, joined, and integrated. Considering that the most basic format for a Heavenly Court design would, hypothetically speaking, consist of group compositions on independent hanging scrolls or preparatory sketches which are then transferred to a wall painting, the three types do not represent fixed formats but rather a gradual phasing from a loose to a fully integrated audience of figures. In order to understand how the structural elements are integrated – the secrets of the chef so to speak - we will pay much attention to the compositional devices employed by the painters to integrate independent groups into one pictorial space. Needless to say, the degree of integration is also a strong indication of the quality of the painters, not meaning of course that one painting is more valuable or of greater interest than the other. The two are mutually dependent.

On the basis of surviving examples of Heavenly Court wall paintings and designs, I will discuss now the three types of mural designs and the compositional devices used by the painters to connect the various elements. Sculptural or incomplete representations of a Heavenly Court are left out of the discussion. For the particular location of deities in a mural, painters relied on a conceptual framework based on liturgical practices. This framework has been discussed in the previous chapter.

Loose design

In a loose design, the groups of figures are unconnected and structured, almost literally it seems, by moving sketches or hanging scroll paintings around the wall.

An example of a loose design is the Heavenly Court painting at the Nan'an in Yaoxian (Shaanxi) (Plates 6 and 7). Each group of deities is depicted individually and is pictorially

unconnected, except for the clouds which seem to be the only pictorial device the painters used to "cement" the independent groups together. Although the Nan'an murals represent a very basic design, the painters were able to turn the loose design to their advantage by creating a three-dimensional effect: because only the upper bodies of the figures in the top register are depicted, it is as if the figures are approaching from a distance in the clouds. When the two rows of figures would be stacked up on each other such as in the Dadao guan murals in Dingzhou (Hebei) (Fig. 5), another example of a loose design, this sense of space would be lost.

Joined design

In a joined design, the structural elements are not depicted independently but are seemingly linked in one continuous row. Yet, the format of a group sketch or hanging scroll painting that served as its model remains directly recognisable and structurally distinct in the design.

The Toronto murals are a fine example of a joined design (Plates 4 and 5). The audience of deities forms two continuous processions moving in a northerly direction. However, the individual groups of deities, although not separated by clouds, are still arranged in distinct clusters of figures. In fact, the procession could be cut into four segments, each represented fictively by one hanging scroll: first one painting of two divine marshals, then a group of subordinate deities, followed by a group of central deities assisted by attending deities, and concluded again by one or two paintings of a group of subordinate deities. Each painting also corresponds to one iconographic unit. Quite interestingly, the groups are pictorially and structurally separated by the banners and fans on poles in front and behind the central deities, serving as pictorial lines of demarcation. The long white ribbons running from the top of the *mian*-crowns of the central deities (A12 and B13) to their feet, almost spanning the entire height of the mural, further act as a visual axis around which the two processions revolves the east and west walls mirror each other in this respect. These vertical lines remain important pictorial devices for structuring a mural composition in other Heavenly Court paintings as we will see.

The painters of the Toronto murals employed an interesting compositional device to connect two separate groups of figures. On both walls, one subordinate deity (A6, B5) seemingly takes the role of a Daoist priest and turns around to bow before the altar table carried by two young maidens in front of the three central deities. The reversed pose in contrast to their fellow subordinate deities and the action of bowing towards the central deities links the two groups in a very literal way.

The Toronto murals also seem to employ another compositional scheme beside that of hanging scroll paintings. The placing of the three central deities in the middle of the procession, or slightly before the middle in keeping with the architectural layout of the hall that presumably had a central altar niche occupying the rear part of the hall and blocking the north end of the mural from view, is conspicuous. The painters could as well have opted for arranging the six central deities over the entire wall such as in the Yongle gong murals, but they did not. Although this arrangement was perhaps dictated by the modular use of hanging scrolls, another formula seems to be in play in this case. This particular visual arrangement creates a triangular effect caused by the large central deities depicted in the centre flanked by groups of smaller sized subordinate deities, and is witnessed not in other depictions of procession scenes such the Wu Zongyuan scroll (Plate 12) or the Cui Fen tomb murals (Fig. 22). Rather, it is very reminiscent of Buddhist Paradise scenes. Buddhist Paradise scenes of the Yuan period[58] always depict one central body flanked by two large bodhisattvas and various groups of subordinate deities on further distances. The composition of the Buddha Assembly or Paradise scene is also constructed in the form of a triangle, in which two compositions of a Paradise scene mirror each other on opposite walls of a temple hall. Perhaps the painters of the Toronto murals were better versed in depicting Buddha Assemblies and adopted this format, although still using the structure of joined hanging scroll paintings, and assimilated it with the classic procession scene?

The Heavenly Court painting in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong is also illustrative of a joined design but with strong elements of an integrated design (Plate 3, Drawings 1A-C). The main structure of the design is dictated by the large images of the central deities distributed in even spaces over the walls and mirroring each other on the east and west walls.[59] This kind of distribution of central figures is already found in the imperial donor scenes of the fifth and sixth centuries. The images of the central deities (I-VIII) in the Yongle gong murals occupy the entire height of a wall, and like the Toronto murals, are visually demarcated by the vertical lines of the banners and fans to their left and right as well as by those of their thrones. The only two central deities without thrones (I and II) depicted on the two outside walls of the central altar niche are visually reinforced by axially located white ribbons running from the top of their *mian*-crowns in a long line to the bottom of the mural.

[58] Compare for example the murals of the Guangsheng si and Xinghua si, now on display in various North American museums.

[59] Perhaps such central images are pictorial substitutes for statues since the paintings of the eight central deities belong ritually speaking to the three statues of the Three Purities in the central altar niche. Compare for example this layout with the layout of the sculptural representation of a Heavenly Court of the in Cave 4 on Nanshan (Sichuan) where all the central deities are placed in the central altar pillar-niche rather than on the side walls.

These two emperors are not flanked or demarcated by banners or fans. While the white ribbon of the South Pole Emperor (I) runs from top to bottom in a straight line, that of the Emperor of Eastern Efflorescence (II) spreads to the side but is complemented by the double white ribbons running down from his belt, thus varying on a compositional device that must have been a quite common technique not only to draw attention to a figure (the white colour is very effective in this respect) but also turning this figure in a visual axis around which the other figures revolve evoking a sense of height and majesty. The repeated vertical lines define the compositional structure of these joined designs, demarcating the segmented spaces of the group of figures.

The groups of subordinate deities in the Heavenly Court painting of the Yongle gong are however fully integrated inside their segmented spaces and thus demonstrate an example of a combination of a basically joined design with an integrated design. Packed in four or five rows on top of and behind each other, each iconographic unit is assimilated in the larger group, and it is hardly possible to see any hanging scroll formats in the arrangement and combination of these individual groups. The members of each group are positioned in constantly varying ways, and it is mainly iconographic distinctions in crown and gown, colour, or attributes that sets one group apart from the other. In this massive audience of figures crowding all four temple walls from back to front, the problem faced by the painters is not how to link separate groups but how to differentiate them. Although to the modern eye these differences may be minimal, mostly because of our lack of iconographic reference material, the painters have succeeded in their task most remarkably.

Interestingly, the Yongle gong murals contain the same compositional device of employing a subordinate deity bowing in front of a central deity (101, 206) as in the Toronto murals to create a link between a group of subordinate deities and a central deity. However, in the case of the Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting, the subordinate deities have no obvious divine identity and clearly re-enact the roles of the Daoist priest paying homage to the Heavenly Sovereign (IV) and Jade Emperor (VII) respectively. The bowing figures are only found on the west side instead of on both sides as in the Toronto murals, which seems more in key with ritual practice. During the ritual, the Heavenly Sovereign on the northwest wall symbolises the Gate of Heaven in the traditional altar layout and the priest would actually bow in that direction. The figure depicted (101) is also dressed as a priest. The Jade Emperor is considered the head of the divine pantheon from the Song dynasty onward, ruling in heaven as the Chinese emperor rules his bureaucracy on earth, and would be worshipped as such in

Daoist liturgy.[60] The bowing figure (206) is however an official and not a priest, perhaps because of this bureaucratic connection.

Integrated design

In an integrated design, the groups of figures are assimilated in one composition spanning the entire width of the wall, and apart from their iconographic markers the deities are no longer directly recognisable as a distinct group.

The Wu Zongyuan scroll is a design for of a Heavenly Court painting with an integrated design, certainly an aspect bespeaking the high quality of its original designer. It lacks the groups of subordinate deities found in so many other wall paintings, but the presence of warriors, a music ensemble and groups of court ladies and male attendants would similarly suggest a structure in groups, and the Zhang Fang anecdote mentioned above who was responsible for a music ensemble in the Yuqing zhaoying gong would corroborate such a view. The integrated character of the Wu Zongyuan scroll is reflected in several elements. In contrast to the Toronto murals which equally depict a moving procession, the two main central deities (a third one, identified in the C.C. Wang Collection scroll as the Mulberry Emperor, *fusang dadi* 扶桑大帝, is much smaller), in the Wu Zongyuan scroll are not vertically delineated or pictorially separated from their accompanying figures. All the figures in the procession take ever-changing positions and poses, directions that are further reinforced by the changing directions of swords, fans, banners, canopies, the tree branches in the background, and the emphatic billowing sashes and sleeves. The overall forward tilting position of many of the figures and attributes, together with the dancing movement of the drapery folds result in a progressive forward movement of the design, which further contributes to the cohesion and assimilation of the figures in the general design. This motion in one direction acts as a unifying principle for the entire composition.

The Beiyue miao murals represent another example of an integrated design (Drawings 3A and 3B). Despite the fact that the groups of figures are separated by clouds, as in a loose design, and distributed in small uneven clusters over the surface of the walls, the painters were able to interconnect the figures of the separate groups through the applications of a great variety of compositional devices. Allow me to attempt to indicate the major compositional devices.

[60] The status of the Jade Emperor was elevated in the eleventh century during the ritual reforms introduced by the Song statesman Yang Jie changing an important ritual closing formula. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 16.3b-5a.

One, vertical lines. Vertically held spears and halberds not only demarcate the boundaries of the assembly depicted on the lower register – the rear guards on the west wall are, by way of variation, found in the donor group in the top register - they also link the bottom and top register by pointing to focal deities placed below or above them. In addition, the spears and halberds of the front guards demarcate the axial line of the composition which is divided into a landscape in the first half and an audience scene in the second half.

Two, diagonal lines. Diagonal lines further connect the upper and lower registers. Sometimes these diagonal lines are represented literally such as the flag of the demon above the Official of Earth on the top-right east wall, or the branch of the lady descending from the donor group on the west wall, but in other cases they are represented by movement. Diagonal lines are for example represented pictorially in the streams rushing down through the mountain cracks, or the dragon on the east wall descending through the clouds. The direction suggested by the movement of the Official of Earth group visually enhanced by the streaming flag above him and his trailing sashes, or the Official of Heaven group which diagonal movement is reflected in the direction of the spear of the final guard, also represent figurative diagonal lines in the mural design.

Three, eye contact. Eye contact is another major compositional device used by the painters creating various diagonal lines linking figures and groups of figures. A central position in these scheme of eye contact is taken by the so-called Quyang Demon, depicted on the top centre of the west wall; with one hand held over his eyes he looks down sideways. A bearded immortal in the donor group responds to his gaze. The three figures descending from the donor group are met by the eyes of the deity of the Sacred Peak of the South who just turns his head. On the opposite wall, it is the Official of Water who looks down and who finds his gaze answered by a banner guard below him. The Official of Earth seems to have eye contact with a figure interspersed in the clouds in the centre of the composition. Almost all other figures also seem to fixate on some other person – rather than just simply standing in obedience and watching north in three-quarter view as in standard Heavenly Court paintings - and although unanswered, these figures create new lines or reinforce existing diagonal lines.

Four, wind. The strong wind blowing from the north in the mural design, and evinced by the floating robes, sashes, flags, beards, and banners, is the source of all movement and direction in the mural design, and therefore its connective principle.

Rather then relying on one compositional device, the painters adopted them as parts of one unified programme. If all the directional lines are followed, the whole composition seems to be in a spiralling motion. This spiral starts at the north end of the wall, moves across the

upper register of the mural, and reaching the south end of the mural it is countered and directed downward to the lower register, where it then continues to the centre again being sent up, moving further in an infinite circling motion. If imagined in the three-dimensional space of the temple hall, the murals become one whirlwind of motion that gravitates to the centre of the hall, the exact location where the Daoist priest performs his ritual and fuses the cosmic powers of the outer universe and his inner body, which is exactly imagined as a whirlwind.[61]

The Beiyue miao murals also reveal another important aspect of mural design not readily encountered in the previous paintings, namely architectural layout. Undoubtedly prompted by the huge size of the temple walls, the painters of the Beiyue miao murals succeeded quite effectively in adapting their design to the architectural limitations of the hall. The hall is very high, the light is obscure, and the view is partly blocked by the walls of the huge central altar niche spanning almost the entire width of the rear part of the hall. The mural design was adapted to this layout. The division in a north and south part of the mural, as demarcated by the axial centre lines of the spears and halberds of the front guards, is matched by the division of architectural space of the temple hall: the south part with the audience of deities parallels the ritual area, and the landscape scenery of the north part parallels the central altar niche occupying the rear part of the hall. These north parts are evidently darker and blocked from clear view; although painters could have designed an audience of figures crossing the entire width of the wall, they instead adapted their design and made it fit to the best possible extent to the architectural layout of the hall.

In addition, the painters used specific colouring techniques to remedy the problems of the dark corners. Although the generally darker landscape occupies the obscure rear end of the wall, the painters depicted the flowing water stream in bright white colours, visually suggesting the breaking out of a vital life source from the dark regions of nature. Furthermore, the height of the murals (over seven meters) causes the upper areas, especially towards the north part, to be difficult to see with the naked eye. In order to attract the attention of the viewer to these high areas, the painters sprayed the bodies of the two dragons and that of the Quyang Demon with gold dust, thus making them twinkle like stars in a nightly sky. The whirling draperies of the Quyang Demon are painted in white, further allowing the figure to break out from the gloomy reaches of the hall.

[61] This exercise remains entirely imaginative since viewing the murals in this way is impossible. The hall is too wide and the murals are partly blocked from view for a person standing in the centre of the hall to see the entire mural design. Perhaps a priest could when he first memorised and then visualised these murals, but I doubt if this ever happened this way, or if it was even intended as such. Rather, I surmise that the murals were designed with such visualisations in mind, suggesting that the visualisations were the source of the paintings instead of the paintings the source of the visualisations in Daoist liturgy.

The whole design of the mural breathes the air of an extremely talented painter, or group of painters, who in addition should have had an intimate knowledge of Daoist ritual. On the basic structure of a, principally, ritual design containing the Five Sacred Peak deities in the lower register and the Three Officials accompanied by two groups of subordinate deities in the upper register, the painter was able to integrate a sub-structure of continuous movement and varying directional lines, resulting in the highly accomplished feat that all the figures in the design are connected and participate in one visual spectacle taking place before the viewer's eyes. Despite these eminent features in design, the Beiyue miao murals show a very basic colouring and a sober application of decoration techniques – for instance, blue pigments are the most expensive and these are almost entirely absent in the murals, with the exception of the dark blue of the Northern Peak deity's robe – which rather suggests that even though an excellent workshop was selected, the painters had only mediocre means at their disposal.[62]

This chapter has mainly discussed practical issues of how Heavenly Court paintings are designed, the working procedures of painters and their artistic choices and restrictions. Although the painter's practice can explain many issues surrounding the design and composition of a Heavenly Court painting, the selection of its subject matter, i.e. the choice of the deities and their representation, lay in the hands of the patrons commissioning the painting. How Heavenly Court paintings were personalised according to the wishes of the patrons is discussed in the following chapter.

[62] A possible explanation for this contradiction may be be that the painters depicted an older design – as suggested by the ritual layout – relying on designs that were preserved at the temple or at court. In addition, the absence or sober application of expensive blue pigments indicate that the murals were painted in a period that such pigments were not easily available, mainly because blue pigments were imported from Afghanistan. The reconstruction of the Beiyue miao in 1270 in northern China falls into such a period of great Mongol warfare and social and economic distress.

4 Personalisation

Personalisations pertain to the irregular elements in a Heavenly Court painting. Painters could add minor modifications to the representation of a Heavenly Court by including or excluding certain deities, changing their iconographies, or arranging deities in a slightly different order, thus bespeaking the preferences of the patrons. A comparison of these irregular elements combined with other information such as the background of the patrons, the status of the temple, the quality of the workshop etc. should reveal the motivations behind the personalisation of a particular Heavenly Court painting.

I will now discuss the irregular elements and the possible motivations of the patrons for introducing these elements for each of the four Heavenly Court paintings separately.

4.1 Yongle gong

In order to determine the personalisation of the Yongle gong murals, I will first attempt to identify the patrons of the murals, after which I will discuss some pictorial elements in the murals revealing their particular motivations for designing the Heavenly Court paintings in this specific way.

Patronage

No inscriptions are known to provide clues to the identies and social background of the patrons of the Heavenly Court painting in the Yongle gong. We can however know almost for certain that the murals were funded by the Quanzhen patriarchate directly, perhaps even with the support of the Mongol court. A first indication is found in an inscription left on the narrative murals in the Chunyang hall, listing forty-nine names who are all Quanzhen priests. with the exception of two officials and the local village elders. In addition, the donations of the non-Quanzhen figures are relatively modest.[1] This suggests that the mural decoration of

[1] One official donated five pounds of azurite blue, one official donated five *ding* 定 worth of paper money, and the village elders (*sanlao* 三老) donated five bushels of rice. The Quanzhen priests donated ten, twenty, or fifty *ding* of paper money. Wang, "*Yongle gong*," p. 73.

the Chunyang Hall of the Yongle gong, and probably of the other halls as well, was mainly a Quanzhen affair.

We have strong indications that the entire project, both building and mural decoration, of the Yongle gong was funded by the Quanzhen patriarchate. The shrine to Lü Dongbin was 'converted' to the Quanzhen order by Song Defang 宋德方 (Veritable Piyun 披雲真人, 1183-1247) who also made the design for the architectural layout. After patriarch Li Zhichang 李志常 (Veritable Zhenchang 真常真人, 1193-1256) visited the site in 1252 during his tour to the Sacred Peaks and Marshes on behalf of the new Mongol Khan Möngke, and found out that the building of the Yongle gong had only made slow progress because of the lack of funding, he announced that from that moment on the Quanzhen patriarchate would take responsibility for the costs of the building.[2]

Interestingly, the Quanzhen patriarch could be so generous because he had just been awarded five thousand taels of silver by the Treasury (*neifu* 内府) to compensate for his travel expenses.[3] The Yongle gong was therefore indirectly funded by the Mongol court, which was undoubtedly aware of this 'redirection' of imperial funds to other projects. The Quanzhen patriarchate was also officially associated with the Mongol court, since its patriarchs were automatically members of the Academy of Assembled Worthies (*jixian yuan* 集賢院) of the imperial court. The network of monasteries that the patriarchs directed was however autonomous and independent of the imperial bureaucracy.[4] The long delay between the completion of the three main halls in 1262 and the painting of the Three Purities Hall murals in 1325 parallels the fall from grace of the Quanzhen patriarchate at the Mongol court after 1281 and its reinstitution again in 1310 by the granting of titles to its deities and former patriarchs.[5] Moreover, the painting of the Three Purities Hall murals in 1325 coincides

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[2] *Chonghe zhenren Pan gong shendao zhi bei* 沖和真人潘公神道碑, by Tudan Gonglü 徒單公履, dated 1260. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 555.

[3] *Xuanmen zhangjiao dazongshi Zhenchang zhenren daoxing* 玄門掌教大宗師真常真人道行碑銘, by Wang E 王鄂, dated 1261. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 579.

[4] Goossaert, *La création*, pp. 87, 336.

[5] The fall from grace was initiated by Buddhist-Daoist debates at the Mongol court instigated by the Buddhists and eventually decided by the destruction of the Daoist Canon that had been printed only a few decades before that by Song Defang. For the historical background of this debate, see J. Thiel, "Der Streit der Buddhisten und Taoisten zur Mongolen-zeit." *Monumenta Serica*, 20 (1961), 1-81. In 1285, registrars of Daoist monasteries were placed under the direct supervision of the Academy of Assembled Worthies, thus bringing the temple network – and its income which was tax exempted - within the sphere of influence of the imperial bureaucracy. See Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 606. Another event may also have influenced the temporary downfall of the Quanzhen order. The Mongol prince Zhenjin 真金 had close ties with patriarch Qi Zhicheng 祁志誠 (Veritable Dongming 洞明真人, 1218-1293), the Mongol prince was however disgraced and died in 1285. This event probably also implicated (by accident or deliberatedly) patriarch Qi and through him the

exactly with the official granting of imperial protection by the Mongol Court to the Yongle gong, a protection that also may have been accompanied by financial support.[6] Finally, the completion of the murals may also be linked to the appointment of a new Quanzhen patriarch in 1324, Sun Lüdao孫履道 (fl. 1312-1327),[7] only one year before the completion of the murals, which as we have estimated took about one year to finish. These parallels between the history of the Yongle gong on the one hand, and the support or suppression of the Quanzhen patriarchate on the other suggest that the Yongle gong was mainly built under the aegis of the Quanzhen patriarchs but only with the support of the Mongol court.

The Yongle gong was also a prestigious project that obviously warranted the involvement and direction of the Quanzhen patriarchate. It was the location of the shrine to Lü Dongbin, the spiritual patriarch of the Quanzhen order who initiated its founder, Wang Chongyang, into the Dao; it was also the location where the printing blocks of the Yuan period Daoist Canon were stored;[8] it was furthermore the location of the shrines to Song Defang and to Pan Dechong 潘德冲 (Veritable Chonghe 冲和真人, 1190-1256), both two important Quanzhen priests, the latter even residing at Yongle gong until his death. Evidently, such prestige was mainly envisioned in the eyes of the Quanzhen patriarchate rather than among the local community worshipping Lü Dongbin at the Yongle site.

In sum, all leads point to the involvement of the Quanzhen patriarchate in the patronage of the Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting. The implication of this finding is that we can infer that the patriarch of that time, Sun Lüdao, would have been in charge of the whole project and responsible for the design and personalisations of the Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting.

Quanzhen order and its financial position. The Quanzhen order regained its former imperial status and support with the promotion of its deities and former patriarchs in 1310, recorded in the stele inscription *Tianzhao jiafeng zuzhen zhi bei* 天詔加封祖真之碑, by Li Bangning 李邦寧, dated 1317. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 731-733.

[6] In 1325 the Yongle gong received imperial protection, the same year when the murals of the Three Purities Hall were finished, and in 1337 the holdings of the Yongle gong were reverted to be under the control of the patriarchate and its registrars instead of that of the Bureau of Daoist Affairs. See *Chunyang wanshou gong shengzhi bei* 春陽萬壽宮聖旨碑, no author, dated 1327. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 781-782, and *Chunyang wanshou gong zhafu bei* 春陽萬壽宮札付碑, no author, dated 1336. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 791-795. For a translation of these last two stele inscriptions, see Paul R. Katz, *Images of the Immortal: The Cult of Lü Dongbin at the Palace of Eternal Joy*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999, pp. 113-115.

[7] Goossaert, *La création*, p. 101.

[8] *Dachao chongjian da Chunyang wanshou gong zhi bei* 大朝重建大純陽萬壽宮之碑, by Wang E 王鄂, dated 1262. Ruicheng xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 芮城縣誌編纂委員會 (ed.), *Ruicheng xianzhi* 芮城縣志. Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1994, pp. 795-796. Interestingly, the stele inscription says that "the woodblocks for the scriptures of the Daoist Canon printed by the Piyun (i.e. Song Defang), were delivered with an imperial carriage of the court and stored in this temple."

The number of central deities

The number of central deities is closely related to a specific ritual layout, and through this to ritual reforms of certain periods, regions, and lineages. The choice for a specific ritual programme thus reveals the preferences of the patrons.

It is usually stated that the Yongle gong Heavenly Court has eleven central deities: the three statues of the Three Purities in the central altar niche, the paintings of the South Pole (I) and the East Pole (II) on the side walls of the altar niche, the North Pole (III) and Heavenly Sovereign (IV) on the two north walls, the King Father of the East (V) and Queen Mother of the West (VII) on the east wall, and the Jade Emperor (VII) and Earth Goddess (VIII) on the west wall. In fact, there are thirteen central deities because the list should also include the Mulberry Emperor (160) and the Fengdu Emperor (178). The first eleven deities reign over the Realm of Heaven, and the Mulberry Emperor and Fengdu Emperor rule over the Realms of Water and Earth respectively. The last two are depicted slightly in slightly smaller size but still placed in the front row of the audience in the murals.

The Yongle gong ritual programme of the eleven or thirteen central deities is at odds with information we have from other Heavenly Court paintings in North China of the same period. In fact, all other examples have a ritual programme with nine central deities: the Three Purities and the so-called Four Emperors and Two Empresses (*sidi erhou* 四帝二后), collectively referred to as the Nine Sovereigns (*jiuyu* 九御 or *jiuhuang* 九皇). The programme of Nine Sovereigns, and not Eleven Sovereigns, was the standard number of central deities used during the Jin dynasty by Heavenly Master priests in the capital Yanjing (Beijing),[9] as well as the standard number used in Quanzhen wall painting, as confirmed by the Toronto and Nan'an murals. It is also found in Cave 2 at Longshan near Taiyuan which was designed by Song Defang in 1234 and closely followed standard practices (Plate 14).[10] A stele inscription of 1250 states that: "When palaces and monasteries are renovated, one first has to build the main hall to the Three Purities, after which it is furnished with [images of] the Four Emperors and Two Empresses; next follow all the Veritables of the Three Realms, each of them waiting

[9] This Heavenly Master priest was Sun Mingdao 孫明道 (fl. 1183-1190) taking charge of the Tianchang guan 天長觀 (Monastery of Heaven Everlasting), which was the official Daoist temple for the Jin court and also later for the Yuan court but renamed Changchun guan 長春觀 (Monastery of Everlasting Spring) and taken over by the Quanzhen order. *Shifang da Tianchang guan putian dajiao ruiying ji* 十方大天長觀普天大醮瑞應記, by Zhu Lan 朱瀾, dated 1198. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 1042-1044; on Sun Mingdao as a Heavenly Master, see Yao Tao-chung, "Ch'üan-chen: A New Taoist Sect in North China during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries." PhD Dissertation, University of Arizona, 1980, pp. 122-123. The later shrine to Qiu Chuji to this temple is the present Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery) in Beijing.

[10] Reproduced in Hu, *Daojiao shike*, Vol. 2, pp. 336-339.

in attendance according to his or her rank, and all of them attending the court audience in full numbers.[11] The inclusion of Eleven Sovereigns in the Yongle gong murals is an exception to standard practices of that period and area, and it should therefore be explained as a deliberate choice of its patrons.

The arrangement of Eleven or Thirteen Sovereigns is however not a Quanzhen invention but a continuation of late Northern Song ritual practice. The Chinese scholar Wang Xun 王遜in his article of 1963 on the iconography and identities of the Yongle gong deities already pointed out a connection with the *jiao*-offering list in the *Shangqing lingbao dafa* by Jin Yinzhong (fl. 1225), who claimed it should represent the official ritual programme as promulgated by Song Emperor Huizong (r. 1101-1125) in the Xuanhe reign-period (1119-1125).[12] The Nine Sovereigns were introduced somewhere in the early Northern Song, probably during the ritual reforms of Chancellor Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962-1025), and were expanded to Thirteen Sovereigns under Emperor Huizong on the instigation of the Song statesman Zhang Shangying 張商應 (1043-1121), who mentioned this number in his preface to the refurbished Golden Register Retreat.[13] The number thirteen had its roots in the Shangqing tradition, to which Zhang Shangying was allied,[14] and is also referred to chapter 50 of the *Dadong jing* where it is, as in the Shangqing tradition, connected to the thirteen gates (of the body) of death and life.[15]

A claim on continuing a Daoist sacred empire established by Emperor Huizong should underly the choice for following a composition of his Northern Song ritual programme. The reign of Song Emperor Huizong is characterised by his attempt to create a Daoist sacred empire, an empire in which Daoism was envisioned as the leading state cult. By reinstituting the ritual format of Huizong's reign, the Quanzhen order envisioned to recreate his Daoist empire, but of course now under the guidance of the Quanzhen order. In fact, images of Huizong are incorporated on two places in the Yongle gong murals, once as the Great

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[11] *Tiantan shifang da Ziwei gong yizhi ji Jiewa dian ji* 天壇十方大紫微宮懿旨及結瓦殿記, by Li Zhiquan 李志全, dated 1250. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 480-482.

[12] *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 40.1a. Wang, "Yongle gong," p. 22.

[13] The number of "thirteen venerable emperors" (*zundi yishisan wei* 尊帝一十三位) appears in Zhang Shangying's preface, which has now survived as a postface to the final section on tossing the jade slips of the Golden Register Retreat, *Jinlu zhai toujian yi* 金籙齋投簡儀 DZ 498, 10a.

[14] Zhang wrote a highly ideological stele inscription on the Three Purities for the main temple on Maoshan, the home of the Shangqing tradition, demonstrating his close relationship with the tradition. *Jiangning fu Maoshan Chongxi guan beiming* 江寧府茅山崇禧觀碑銘, by Zhang Shangying 張商應, dated 1096. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 300-301.

[15] Du Guangting makes the connection between thirteen and the *Dadong jing*, the main scripture of the Shangqing tradition. See Wang Chunwu 王純五, *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji quanyi* 洞天福地嶽瀆名山記及全譯. Guizhou: Renmin chubanshe, 1999, pp. 1-5.

Emperor of Long Life (*changsheng dadi* 長生大帝, I) (Plate 2), of whom Huizong was said to be a reincarnation, and once in a scene of the "Assembly of the Thousand Daoists" (Fig. 50) in the Chunyang Hall murals.[16] Tellingly, in this last representation, it is the immortal Lü Dongbin, and not Huizong's favourite court Daoist priest Lin Lingsu 林靈素 (1075-1119) as history tells us, who gave a demonstration of his miraculous powers in front of Huizong and the assembly of priests, thus not only rewriting history, but also creating a direct link between the Quanzhen order – the guardians of Lü Dongbin spiritual heritage – and Emperor Huizong and his Daoist empire.[17]

The grand claim on continuing Huizong's Daoist empire is also exemplified by the composition of the Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting. The Yongle gong Heavenly Court are the only known murals which contain all possible cosmic arrangements (Three Realms, NW-SE axis, Eight Trigrams, Thirteen Sovereigns) and incorporates most faithfully the layout of a Daoist open-air altar (three-tiered altar mound with images of the Ten Masters and Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors as well as the Gate of Heaven of Earth Door), and apparently its designer(s) made great effort to create the most complete and most comprehensive Heavenly Court possible. The comprehensiveness of the composition suits well the claim on the establishment of a Daoist empire by the Quanzhen order and by Emperor Huizong, and I am convinced that the Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting closely follows the layout as introduced during the ritual reforms under Emperor Huizong.

The specific choice for an arrangement with Thirteen Sovereigns also reveals some interesting clues on the identity of the designer of the Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting. Because the arrangement of the Thirteen Sovereigns was not common in North China prior to the completion of the Yongle gong murals, we may suspect that it was introduced from South China and that the designer was familiar with ritual traditions from this area. Probably because the Northern Song court fell in 1127 soon after the ritual reforms of Huizong, the reforms were not known in North China. However, with the fled of the Song court to Hangzhou, the ritual traditions were continued in the Southern Song, as confirmed (with some

[16] The Emperor of Long Life who became assimilated with the South Pole Emperor and depicted, with his divine brother Great Emperor of Green Efflorescence (*qinghua dadi* 青華大帝, who was assimilated with the East Pole Emperor), on the side walls of the central altar-shrine (I and II). In fact, this identification with a Daoist deity meant the deification of Huizong. See Michel Strickmann, "The Longest Taoist Scripture." *History of Religions*, 17.3-4 (1978), pp. 331-353, and Patricia Ebrey, "Taoism and Art at the Court of Song Huizong." Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 95-109. For the mural scene of the "Assembly of a Thousand Daoist Priests," see Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 160.

[17] On the support of Quanzhen for Huizong and his rituals, see Eskildsen, *Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters*, pp. 192-193. For a different interpretation of the scene of the "Assembly of a Thousand Daoist Priests" and the link between Huizong and the Quanzhen order, see Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, p. 167.

variations) in the ritual manuals of this period.[18] After the unification of China in 1279 by the Mongols, the ritual traditions of Huizong were introduced gradually in the north. It was Sun Lüdao 孫履道 (fl. 1312-1327) who was acquinted with the patriarchs of the Heavenly Master order and the Mystery Learning (*xuanjiao* 玄教) of South China and, according to stele inscriptions, even performed grand rituals with them.[19] Since Sun Lüdao was only appointed as patriarch of the Quanzhen order one year before the completion of the Yongle gong murals in 1325, this background would strongly suggest that he was responsible for introducing the Huizong's ritual arrangement of Thirteen Sovereigns in North China, and that he was personally involved in the design for the Yongle gong murals.

Incorporation of non-standard deities

Of course, the Quanzhen order would not simply follow Song models but adjust them and insert changes to reflect the interests of the order. This is best seen in the depiction of individual or groups of deities who deviate from the standard Heavenly Court painting as advocated by ritual manuals, that is the images are not accounted for in ritual manuals.

A first type of images that the Quanzhen patrons altered in the Song ritual programme of Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting were the portraits of Daoist priests. In Yuan murals, the images of the Daoist priests can be recognised by their typical crowns – mostly a lotus crown but other types also exist – and of course their court-like robes but which have embroideries of (Daoist) auspicious signs such as cloud-swirls (*yunqi* 雲氣), numinous mushrooms (*lingzhi* 靈芝), mountains, isles of the blessed, cranes, or the eight trigrams, as well as lack the white "square-heart necktie" (*fangxin quling* 方心曲領) which is worn by emperors and court officials (Fig. 51).[20] Portraits of Daoist priests were part of the Six Curtains and therefore a standard part of the ritual configuration. These are also found in the

[18] Memorial lists in Southern Song ritual manuals contain the complete titles of the Sovereigns, including the Queen Mother of the West and the King Father of the East, as given by Huizong, indicating that the ritual reforms were also introduced in Southern China (the Queen Mother of the West and King Father of the East were not part of the Sovereigns before Huizong) *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 6.19b-20a, and *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 2.3b-5a. Curiously, the Queen Mother of the West and King Father of the East are not incorporated in the *jiao*-offering lists, suggesting that these were altered or modified in a later period.

[19] Zhang Sicheng 張嗣誠 (d. 1344) was the 39th Heavenly Master, and Wu Quanjie 吳全節 (1269-1346), the patriarch of the Mystery Learning, an intellectual offshoot of the Heavenly Master order that only existed in the Yuan dynasty. The relationship between Sun, Zhang, and Wu is mentioned in two stele inscriptions, *Huanglu pudu dazhai gongde bei* 黃籙普度大齋功德碑, by Yu Ji 虞集 (1272-1348), dated 1325. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 922; and *Hetu xiantan zhi bei* 河圖仙壇之碑, by Yu Ji 虞集 (1272-1348), dated between 1338 and 1346. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 963-966.

[20] *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖會, compiled by Wang Qi 王圻 (*jinshi* 1565). Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988, p. 1520.

Yongle gong murals as discussed in chapter 2. The Yongle gong murals include however also some portraits of Daoist priest on unusual places. One of these places is the outer walls of the central altar-shrine which normally would have images of the Heavenly Worthies of the Ten Directions or, according to the *Xuantan kanwu lun*, portraits of the Veritables of the Ten Extremities, but in the Yongle gong murals these ten figures seem to have been replaced by ten patriarchs of the Quanzhen order (Plates 1 and 2). Anning Jing has for example convincingly identified Chen Tuan 陳摶 (871-989) who holds a lotus flower (19) and Liu Haichan 劉海蟾 (10th cent.) holding an elixir pill between his fingers (20).[21] The remaining eight figures are not as easy to identify but should represent similar immortals and masters of the Quanzhen tradition.

Another curious feature on the two shrine walls is the addition of two figures, one official (6) and one Daoist priest (7) on the east side, and three officials on the west side (16-19) who are all placed in front of the central deities. This additional group of five figures to the Ten Masters is unusual, and it is my guess that they should represent donors. Donor figures are for example also depicted on the posts of the central altar niche in the sculpted Heavenly Court of the Yuhuang guan in Sichuan and probably designates a honorably place for donors in such compositions. Because one of the donor figures (7) is dressed as a Daoist priest and moreover depicted frontally, as in a portrait, I would argue that this figure should represent Sun Lüdao, the Quanzhen patriarch who I consider as the main architect of the Yongle gong murals. The four remaining figures are rendered as officials, and probably represent the other donors of the murals.

Interestingly, and already pointed out by Anning Jing, a full-length portrait of the same Daoist priest is found in mid-centre of the east wall on the front row (161, Fig. 52).[22] He wears a red Daoist robe and a lotus crown capped by a black gauze hat; in his folded hands he diagonally holds a fly-whisk. Because of its resemblance to the shrine wall portrait (7), this figure should also represent Sun Lüdao, the Quanzhen patriarch.

In fact, the image is part of a group of three which are not accounted for in any ritual manual and neither have been identified by Wang Xun. Two other figures are positioned to his upper left. The first is a Daoist priest figure (162) who similarly has a black gauze hat capping his lotus crown. This time however, this gauze hat is shaped differently representing

[21] Jing, "Yongle Palace," pp. 307-317.
[22] Anning Jing identifies the two portraits (7, 161) as those of Qiu Chuji. Jing advanced this idea on a symposium on Daoist studies held in Boston, June 2003. In my discussion of the Toronto murals below I will make clear that the image of Qiu Chuji has a different iconography and that the Yongle gong Daoist priest should therefore represent somebody else, and in my opinion Sun Lüdao.

a scholar's hat, the so-called Dongpo-hat styled after the Song scholar Su Shi 蘇軾 (style: Dongpo 東坡, 1036-1101) who apparently made it famous. His identity is not known. The other figure is an old man with an extremely large forehead who can be identified as the Star of Longevity (*shouxing* 壽星, 163). The scepter with the mushroom-head – the mushroom is a sign of longevity – in his hands, and the elixir pill of longevity in the left hand of one of the deities of Four Sacred Marshes to his left (169) further corroborate this identification.

A trio of three deities including the Star of Longevity are traditionally identified as the Three Stars (*sanxing* 三星), better known under their popular names as the Gods of Happiness, Emolument, and Longevity (*fu* 福, *lu* 祿, *shou* 壽) (Fig. 53). The two Daoist priests should in this case represent the Gods of Happiness and Emolument. This is rather confusing because the standard representation of these two deities are a scholar and an official.[23] However, the Water-and-Land paintings of the Gongzhu si 公主寺 (Princess Monastery) in Fanzhi of ca. 1503 depict the two gods as Daoist priests,[24] and I surmise that the scholar-official type is a later development. The Yongle gong version would then represent an intermediate stage, when the iconography of the Three Stars was not yet codified, between the single image of the Star of Longevity, of whom images are already known before the Song according to the *Xuanhe huapu*,[25] and the more popular version of the Three Stars of Happiness, Emolument, and Longevity beginning from the Ming period.[26]

Because the Three Stars are not standard deities in ritual manuals of the Song and Yuan period, their inclusion should be interpreted as another personalisation from the side of the designer of the Yongle gong murals. I would further argue that Sun Lüdao, as the main architect of the murals, made use of the undefined status of two of the Three Stars, and included his own image and that of a fellow priest on a prominent place in the mural.

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[23] Mary Fong argues that the Gods of Happiness and Emolument are originally the attributes sent by the God of Longevity who has a much longer history, and that they were only later anthropomorphised. Mary H. Fong, "The Iconography of the Popular Gods of Happiness, Emolument, and Longevity (Fu Lu Shou)." *Artibus Asiae* 44 (1983), pp. 185-186.

[24] See Pin Feng 品豐 and Su Qing 蘇慶 (eds.), *Lidai siguan bihua yishu: Xinjiang Jiyi miao bihua, Fanzhi Gongzhu si bihua* 歷代寺觀壁畫藝術: 新絳稷益廟,繁峙公主寺壁畫. Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2001, pl. 2.14.

[25] Emperor Huizong's collection had paintings of the Star of Longevity by Huang Quan 黃筌 (903-965). Dong Yuan 董元 (d. 962), and Sun Zhiwei 孫知微 (early 11th cent.) painted images of the "Immortal of Long Life" which I take as another name for the Star of Longevity. *Xuanhe huapu*, pp. 85, 229, 332.

[26] I feel strongly inclined to link the origin of the image of the Star of Longevity to the image of Laozi who is flanked by two Daoist priests (*zhenren*) in early stele sculptures. The inclusion of the images of two Daoist priests in paintings of the Star of Longevity would therefore not be too strange. However, scholars have linked the origin of the Star of Longevity not to Laozi but to Confucius, probably because of his large forehead. See Fong, "The Iconography of the Popular Gods."

Beside the Three Stars, the Heavenly Court painting includes a small number of other non-standard deities. Some of them can be identified,[27] such as the white robed scholar with the Dongpo-hat, Zhao Yu 趙昱 (177), and two assisting officials, who should represent Li Bing 李冰and his son Erlang 二郎 (187, 188) (Fig. 54). All three are known as water gods and placed between the Water and Earth Departments on the east wall. Other non-standard deities include the Three Mao Brothers, Mao Ying 茅盈, Mao Gu 茅固, and Mao Zhong 茅衷 (234, 236, 237), who are placed behind the Jade Emperor (VII) on the west wall (Fig. 55). All three are dressed as Daoist priests or immortals with simple crowns and plain robes. Other figures are more difficult to identify, often depicted as individuals among groups of deities crowding the walls. One example is the young man (136) holding a wheel in his hands and the only deity (not an attendant) without a halo on the northwest wall (Fig. 56), and another example is the scholar holding a feather-fan and wearing a crown capped with a gauze (220) depicted on the west wall (Fig. 57) .

These deity figures have in common that they do not appear in any Song *jiao*-offering list or memorial list and as such were not recognised by most Daoist institutions of the Northern and Southern Song as deities pure enough to be able to enter the ranks of the Heavenly Court. Theoretically speaking, the local Earth God (*tudi* 土地, 201) occupies the lowest rank in memorial lists and *jiao*-offering lists, and deified historical figures and other deities of local cults, who rank below the Earth God, would normally fall outside the Daoist ritual pantheon.[28] This would strickly speaking mean that they were not incorporated in Heavenly Court painting. The inclusion of figures such as Zhao Yu and the Three Mao Brothers, despite their being venerated as Daoist priests and immortals (which I assume is exactly the way that made them immortal, because most of these figures started out as semi-historical figures worshipped in local cults), is an irregular elemented introduced by the Yongle gong patrons.

The specific location of these figures are revealing on their status. All these figures are individuals or form small groups tucked away between standard groups of deities, and they are placed in background positions in the upper row. In addition, they are often depicted as scholars, a class of deities which erstwhile was not represented in the Daoist ritual pantheon.

[27] For these identifications I refer the reader to the appendix.

[28] The pantheon of the Song state cult organised its deities in a similar way. If we look at the organisation of the chapters on deities in the *Song huiyao* 宋會要, all the local deities are placed after (i.e. below) the City God and Earth God, who again come after the deities of the Altar of Heaven etc. See the ordering of the deities in the *Song huiyao jigao* 宋會要輯稿, compiled by Xu Song 徐松 (1781-1848). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957, chapters 20-21.

They are evidently additions or "new-comers" to the traditional layout of a Heavenly Court audience and as such important examples of personalisations by the patrons of the Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting. The inclusion of these local cult deities reveals a marked interest on the part of the Quanzhen order for local cults by granting their deities – even though most of them seem to be Daoist priests[29] or immortals and therefore already partly accepted among the ranks of the Heavenly Court – a place among the Daoist ritual pantheon and address them with memorials during Daoist *chao*-audience rituals. It is interesting to note that many Quanzhen patriarchs and members of the clergy had a scholarly background – rather than being ordained as priests in the traditional sense – suggesting that the incorporation of scholar-type deities reflected a new change in the social composition of the Daoist community.

Although the patrons of the Yongle gong murals closely followed a composition established under Huizong in the Northern Song Dynasty, they were able to modify its content, and add to the former intentions of Huizong. If the Yongle gong Heavenly Court entailed a claim on continuing Huizong's Daoist empire, the Quanzhen patrons had now expanded this claim to include local cults as well, even though they were only margely represented and mostly after a transformation into Daoist priests and immortals or scholars.

The Yongle gong Heavenly Court therefore reflects a social reality in the Yuan period. On the toplevel, the Quanzhen patriarchate was closely allied to the imperial court, but on the bottomlevel, the Quanzhen clergy also closely interacted with the local people, organising them in local communities and religious organisations (*hui* 會). The temples of the local gods were "converted" (*du* 度) to the Quanzhen order, which took care of their renovation but also expanded them with a hall to the Three Purities and a hall to the Seven Veritables of the Quanzhen order. It is in this sense that the Quanzhen order not only renovated former Song state temples,[30] thus presenting themselves as the protectors of the Song and Jin imperial heritage and the successors of the Daoist empire established in the Northern Song dynasty, but also incorporated in its network of monasteries many local cult temples, such as the shrine to Lü Dongbin in Yongle, and thus granting it existence and permanence.

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[29] Perhaps Daoist master would be a better term, because some of these figures do not wear Daoist robes and lotus crowns, but are, like Zhao Yu, dressed as scholars or scholar-officials.

[30] See for example the stele inscriptions *Chongxiu Zhongnanshan Shangqing taiping gong ji* 重修中南山上清太平宮記, by Li Ding 李鼎, dated 1254. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 518-521; *Chongxiu Zhong Taiyi gong bei* 重修中太一宮碑, by Yao Sui 姚燧, dated between 1325 and 1328. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 723-724; and *Xinzhou Tianqing guan chongjian gongde ji* 忻州天慶觀重建功德記, by Yuan Haowen 元好問, dated 1250. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 1087-1088.

The personalisations of the Heavenly Court painting at the Yongle gong therefore tend to be all-inclusive and should be considered exemplary of the ambitions and aspirations of the Quanzhen patriarchate, in particular Sun Lüdao, to re-create a Daoist sacred empire built on the foundations laid by Emperor Huizong.

4.2 Toronto murals

The original location of the set of Heavenly Court paintings in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, has still to be determined but the design and contents of the murals reveal important clues on the particular personalisation of this Heavenly Court painting, and thereby on the motivations of the patrons. I will discuss two elements, one is the Daoist priest image and the other is the particular ritual configuration of deities in the Toronto murals.

Daoist priest as central deity

The most conspicuous element in the Toronto Heavenly Court is the image of the Daoist priest (B12) taking the position of a central deity (Fig. 58). This image has been identified as an image of Laozi by William White, and again by Anning Jing who simply follows White's identification. The main reason for refuting this identification, apart from the fact that both authors do not provide any evidence for their identification, is that Laozi is always portrayed with a (three-pointed) beard and a moustache, and often carries a fly-whisk or fan in his hand. These identification marks are all lacking in this figure. The fact that this figure is beardless, while all other (male) members in the Toronto murals, and in particular the central deity figures, do have beards, make this figure stand out from the rest, an aspect reinforced by his frontal depiction. His robe with embroidered mushroom-clouds and his Daoist crown would identify him as a Daoist priest rather than as an imperially dressed central deity, which is another conspicuous element uncommon to other Heavenly Court paintings. The frontal depiction could be explained as being copied from an existing portrait of a Daoist priest.

Who is this Daoist priest? Considering that the wall paintings should date to the thirteenth or fourteenth century, and that they were produced in an area where the Quanzhen order had many temples, we may guess that the Daoist priest portrayed should most probably represent a famous Quanzhen patriarch. Images of Daoist priests were standard to the Daoist ritual area, but the Quanzhen order pushed the use of portraits of former masters to a new

level, well beyond the confines of the ritual area of the Heavenly Court. The first step was made by Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (Veritable Changchun 長春真人, 1148-1227) in 1188 when he ordered the making of three sculptural images of Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 (Veritable Chunyang 春陽真人), Wang Zhe 王嘉 (Veritable Chongyang 重陽真人, 1112-1170), and Ma Yu 馬鈺 (Veritable Danyang 丹陽真人, 1123-1183) for a personal retreat (*xiu an* 修庵) north of the capital Dadu 大都 (Beijing).[31] Probably sometime after the death of Qiu Chuji, this number was then expanded to seven, the Seven Veritables, whose images were installed in a separate hall behind the central hall dedicated to the Three Purities. This became standard practice for most Quanzhen monasteries in North-China.

Because images of the Seven Veritables were widespread, perhaps our Daoist priest may be found among them. Portraits of the Seven Veritables and other Quanzhen patriarchs are preserved in a Quanzhen text, the *Jinlian zhengzong ji xianyuan xiangzhuan* 金蓮正宗記仙源像傳 accompanied by names, titles, and biographies. It was written in 1310 when the titles of the Five Ancestors (*wuzu* 五祖) and Seven Veritables were augmented by imperial decree. Among the Seven Veritables, two figures attract our immediate attention because they are beardless. One is a depiction of the only female veritable, Sun Bu'er 孫不二 (1119-1182), which therefore does not qualify, and the other is Qiu Chuji (Fig. 59).[32] As the main architect of the Quanzhen order, Qiu Chuji would of course make a good chance to be depicted in a wall painting. Let us explore this possibility further.

There are two other pictorial sources that can support our findings. The first source is the *Xuanfeng qinghui tu* 玄風慶會圖, an illustrated biography of Qiu Chuji published in 1305. In the illustrations of this biography, Qiu Chuji appears also without moustache and beard (Fig. 60).[33] Another source are the Longshan cave sculptures near Taiyuan (Shanxi) of 1234. Although the statues are now almost all decapitated, photographs of the complete statues have

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[31] *Quanzhen diwudai zongshi Changchun yandao zhujiao zhenren neizhuan* 全真第五代宗師長春演道主教真人內傳, by Li Daoqian 李道謙 (1219-1296), dated 1281. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 634. Because Daoist liturgy has a ritual of worshipping the Three Masters (*li sanshi* 禮三師) since very early times and which probably originated with the Heavenly Master order, it is probable that Qiu Chuji modelled his practice on the standard ritual. Daoist oratories seem to have been equipped with images of the Three Masters but I have found no evidence dating before the Southern Song. See *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 319.11a, 13a.

[32] *Jinlian zhengzong ji xianyuan xiangzhuan* 金蓮正宗記仙源像傳 DZ 174, 32a, 41b.

[33] The *Xuanfeng qinghui tu* was printed in 1305 and survives in a 1925 re-edition from Shanghai, Hanfen lou, kept at the Academia Sinica in Taiwan. There is also another version in Japan which has more and older prefaces, among wich one by Zhao Mengfu. See Wang Zongyu 王宗昱, "Zaoqi Quanzhen shiliao 早期全真史料." *China Taoism* 5 (2002), on www.chinataoism.org. For a study of the Taiwan version, see Paul R. Katz, "Writing History, Creating Identity: A Case Study of the *Xuanfeng qinghui tu*." *Journal of Chinese Religions* 29 (2002), pp. 161-178.

survived, made by Japanese archaeologists in the 1920's and recently re-published and studied by two Chinese scholars.[34] Although the caves have no inscriptions identifying the images, two of the eight caves have distinct images of a Daoist priest without moustache and beard, an image we can arguably relate to Qiu Chuji. Cave 7 has a set of seven images portraying the Seven Veritables. On the north wall (Fig. 61) are three seated statues with Wang Zhe in the centre, recognisable by his long triangular beard such as in his portrait in the *Jinlian zhengzong ji xianyuan xiangzhuan* (Fig. 59), and on his left (west side) a beardless figure who should represent Qiu Chuji. The third figure on his right should probably represent Ma Yu.[35]

In Cave 3 of Longshan (Fig. 62), a figure without beard and moustache is portrayed reclining on his left side. A figure depicted in this position immediately reminds of the familiar scene of Shakyamuni Buddha in parinirvana, the Buddha on his deathbed. The parinirvana Buddha is almost always portrayed lying on his right side in the opposite direction, and the designer of the caves, Song Defang, apparently wanted to differentiate the Quanzhen order from its Buddhist practice, on which it was obviously inspired. The parinirvana scene also has some direct bearing on Qiu Chuji since he was Song Defang's master and had only recently passed away in 1227, a few years before the completion of the caves. The reclining image thus portrays Qiu Chuji in a Daoist version of parinirvana and is a respectful homage of Song Defang to the memory of his deceased master.

As a note of interest, Stephen Eskildsen, a scholar of Quanzhen history, also noticed the conspicuous beardless face of Qiu Chuji in the *Jinlian zhengzong ji xianyuan xiangzhuan* and suspects his beardlessness could be explained by a rather painful story that Qiu Chuji castrated himself (*jingshen* 精身, lit. "purifying one's body" but generally used to describe castrated eunuchs) in order to subdue his lustful passions, and almost died from it.[36]

On the basis of the foregoing, we can with confidence identify the beardless Daoist priest image in the Toronto murals as a portrait of Qiu Chuji. Portraying an image of the great Quanzhen patriarch Qiu Chuji after his death on the position of the Heavenly Sovereign,

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[34] Zhang Mingyuan 張明遠, *Taiyuan Longshan daojiao shiku yishu yanjiu* 太原龍山道教石窟藝術研究. Taiyuan: Shanxi kexue jishu chubanshe, 2002; Hu, *Daojiao shike*. Vol. 2, pp. 321-408. The identifications of the deities given in these studies, despite their comprehensiveness, are almost all incorrect.

[35] The remaining four figures on the east and west wall are less easily identified. Two statues were already decapitated, one has a beard, and the last one on the south end of the west wall is a female figure, thus representing Sun Bu'er. This would mean that Sun replaced a Veritable other than Wang Zhe in this cave, thus making an alternative composition of the Seven Veritables not seen or read elsewhere.

[36] The only source of this information is the analects of Qiu Chuji's disciple Yin Zhiping 尹志平, collected in the *Zhenxian zhizhi yulu* 真仙直指語錄 DZ 1256, 2.4b-5a. Eskildsen, *Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters*, pp. 53, 219, n. 36. I suspect the cause for his castration is found on p. 55, translating a parallel story told by Yin Zhiping but which omits the castration.

which actually identifies Qiu Chuji with the central deity has a distinct commemorative value for the patrons of the murals, thus revealing their motivation for this extraordinary type of personalisation.

Ritual configuration

A second conspicuous element in the Toronto murals is the particular ritual configuration and choice of deities, which is at odds with other known Heavenly Court representations in either painting or text. There are four irregular elements in the Toronto murals: 1) The deities of the Nine Heavens (*jiutian* 九天, B3-11) (Fig. 86) in front of the Heavenly Sovereign on the west wall who, although accounted for in memorial and *jiao*-offering lists, are not very common in known Heavenly Court paintings or references thereoff, and their inclusion is therefore peculiar. 2) The inclusion of the King Father of the East (B13) and Queen Mother of the West (B14) who act as substitutes for the Holy Ancestor (*shengzu* 聖祖) and Holy Ancestress (*shengmu* 聖母) in the original arrangement of the Nine Sovereigns in the early Northern Song dynasty. 3) The absence of any Curtains to the Daoist masters, Five Emperors and Three Officials. These are all included in the Yongle gong murals and in the Nan'an murals. 4) The inclusion of only (subordinate) deities belonging to the Realm of Heaven, and the absence of any deities from the Realms of Water and Earth of the original Three Realms (*sanjie* 三界).

I would argue that the motivation for the choices of these particular deities should be sought in the liturgical framework of the Toronto Heavenly Court, and that the murals are personalised to specifically accommodate the Rite of Deliverance (*liandu* 煉度). During the Rite of Deliverance, the soul of the deceased is transformed through several cycles of inner alchemical processes refining (*lian*) the soul's energies and transporting or crossing it over (*du*) to Daoist heaven where it is installed or reborn as an immortal. If we look for example at the contents of the memorials to the Nine Heavens and those King Father of the East and Queen Mother of the West, we find that they play essential roles in the Rites of Deliverance, which had become an integrated part of the Yellow Register Retreat.[37] The deities of the Curtains obviously do not play a role in the Rite of Deliverance, only in the Yellow Register Retreat at large, and the singling out of deities belonging to the Realm of Heaven could be explained by the fact that stellar deities play a more central role during the Rite of Deliverance than those of the Realms of Water and Earth.

[37] *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 6.17b-20b.

This refinement of cosmological energies (*qi* 氣) in the Rite of Deliverance is essential to understanding the particular choice and arrangement of the deities in the Toronto murals. Images of deities are anthropomorphic representations of the cosmological energies and their order in the murals reveals a cosmological process. In chapter 2, I have demonstrated that the Daoist *chao*-audience ritual is basically a return from the differentiated to the unified state of the Dao rendered in a format of ritual actions, and that Heavenly Court paintings are a representation of this ritual praxis.

The Toronto murals display a similar regressive process of unification but geared to the Rite of Deliverance. For example, a memorial to the Nine Heavens read: "[Daoist priest X will] harmonise yin and yang, return to life the *hun* 魂- and *po* 魄-souls,[38] and unite the nine energies of the form (i.e. human body)" and "by means of the Rite of Deliverance (*liandu*) [the Daoist priest] will make the divine energies of the Nine Heavens descend and make the rotten bones of the Nine Earths rise in order to bind together the *hun*-souls of the deceased,"[39] and a memorial to the Queen Mother of the West and King Father of the East reads: "by means of the Rite of Deliverance, [the Daoist priest] will make the ancestral energies of the two principles (i.e. yin and yang or the moon and sun) descend and make the rotten bones of the Nine Earths rise, especially to have them bound together during this [ritual] meeting."[40] The memorials to the other deities similarly mention the unification of energies, except for the Four Saints (A1-2, B1-2) who have an exorcist role.[41] The prominence of the Nine Heavens and the Queen Mother of the West and King Father of the East in the Rite of Deliverance as well as their preference in the Toronto murals above other deities thus suggest that the patrons of the Toronto murals specifically sought to stress the relationship to the Rite of Deliverance.

Therefore, I would argue that it is possible to view the entire arrangement of deities in the Toronto murals as a regressive process, in this case a singular refinement of cosmological energies proceding along the two walls of the (former) temple hall. As in a standard cosmological arrangement with a NW-SE axis, the process of refinement should start in the southeast corner (Earth, represented by the Earth Goddess, A13) on the east wall and end in the northwest corner (Heaven, represented by the Heavenly Sovereign, B12, in this case the portrait of Qiu Chuji) on the west wall. Following this line of development, it is possible to attribute several different stages in this inversed cosmogony (Plates 4 and 5). The end of the

[38] According to Chinese tradition, man has seven ethereal *hun*-souls that rise to heaven and three earthly *po*-souls that descend to earth after death.
[39] *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 6.17b-18a.
[40] Ibid. 6.20a.
[41] These are the four exorcist marshals Tianpeng, Tianyou, True Warrior, and Black Killer. Ibid. 7.13a-14a.

process in the Toronto murals are the Five Elders (A26-30), representing the energies of the five bodily organs (liver, heart, spleen, lungs, kidneys) as well as the generation of mankind. If we reverse the process, we first pass the Five Planets (A22-26), who are the astronomical equivalents of the Five Elders; then Earth Goddess (A13) and the Jade Emperor (A12) who represent the energies of earth and heaven (the Jade Emperor is also the celestial equivalent of the Chinese emperor on earth); after that come the North Pole (A11), the centre of heaven, and the seven stars of the Northern Dipper (A4-10), who form the staircase to the Gate of Heaven and Jade Capital Mountain as explained in the hymn of Pacing the Void (*buxu* 步虛).

The cosmological journey continues on the south part of the west wall, where the cosmos is further condensed and abstracted first through the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions (B22-33), then the Sun and Moon represented by King Father of the East (B13) and Queen Mother of the West (B14) to finally arrive at the Gate of Heaven, the Heavenly Sovereign or Qiu's portrait (B12). After entering the Gate of Heaven and leaving the visible cosmos behind, the energies are further refined and condensed through the nine energies of the Nine Heavens (B3-11) and ultimately the Three Purities (represented as three statues in a central altar niche against the north wall).[42] The Four Saints (A1-2, B1-2) are left out of this scheme, mainly because, as mentioned, they have an exorcist function.[43]

The specific location of the portrait of Qiu Chuji in this cosmological process is even more conspicuous. The entire process of refinement and the reborn of the soul of the deceased would culminate in the image of Qiu Chuji, the patriarch-father of the Quanzhen order. Moreover, this culmination is also stressed in the actual performance of the Daoist priest, because the memorials read to the audience of deities in the Heavenly Court would eventually be presented in a kneeling position in a northwestern direction, the position of the Heaven's Gate and in the Toronto murals occupied by the image of Qiu Chuji. So, each time a ritual is performed, the Daoist priest would in fact kneel in the direction of the image and pay him homage. The patrons of the Toronto murals have sublimely integrated the aspect of commemoration into the ritual performance and by doing so, they have made Qiu Chuji virtually the access to the Dao for the Quanzhen order.

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[42] The cosmological energies of the heavens also have parallels to various parts of the body, the Nine Heavens finally corresponding to the Nine Palaces located in the crown of the head of the old Shangqing tradition. Many elements of the Shangqing tradition were incorporated in the inner alchemical practices of the Song dynasty on which many of the techniques of the Rite of Deliverance but also Quanzhen meditational practices were based. Both macro- and micro cosmos represent essentially the same energies which are united during Daoist ritual.

[43] The particular location of the Four Saints at the north end of the murals is because they are subordinated to the North Pole Emperor ruling over the northern quadrant were all the thunder marshals and other exorcist deities are dwelling.

The identification of Qiu Chuji's portrait in the Toronto murals, its commemorative aspect, as well as the emphasis on the Rite of Deliverance in the mural composition all point to one possible candidate who comissioned the murals: Song Defang 宋德方 (1183-1247). First of all, Song Defang was Qiu Chuji's disciple and had already demonstrated his love for his master with the sculpture of the reclining image of Qiu Chuji in parinirvana at Longshan made in 1234, some ten odd years after Qiu Chuji's death in 1222.

In addition, stele inscriptions mentions that Song Defang was initiated in the so-called Thunder Rites of the Shenxiao 神霄 lineage, made famous by Lin Lingsu at the court of Emperor Huizong.[44] The Rite of Deliverance is strongly related to the Thunder Rites, in particular with regard to the inner alchemical refinement of bodily energies that are used for exorcist purposes, both originating in the exorcist cults of the ritual masters (*fashi* 法師) of the tenth century. In addition, Shenxiao is the name for the highest of the Nine Heavens depicted in the Toronto murals. Although the Toronto murals do not seem to be designed with exorcist rites specifically in mind, the familiarity with such rites and their emphasis on the refinement of energies is borne out in the Toronto murals.

It should further be mentioned that Song Defang was active in the region where the Toronto murals should originate, the Pingyang area or central Shanxi province. A biography of Song Defang records that he 'converted' (*du* 度, i.e. handed over to Song Defang and then often renovated) over forty temples from Beijing to Ruicheng (i.e. the Yongle gong), thus spanning almost all central and southern Shanxi province.[45] It is well possible that the original temple of the Toronto murals was among these forty temples. Lastly, it should not be forgotten that Song Defang was a great manager of all kinds of artistic projects. He designed the Longshan cave sculptures, he managed the printing of the the Yuan Daoist Canon in Pingyang, and he made the blueprints for the architectural layout of the Yongle gong. His affinity with art, his reverence for his master Qiu Chuji, his prowess in Thunder Rites, and his prolific temple building in the Shanxi area would make Song Defang the perfect candidate for having been the patron and designer of the Toronto murals.

As an afterthought, the identifcation of Song Defang as the patron of the Toronto murals gives us the opportunity to hypothesise about the date of the murals and the identity of their painters. Song Defang being active in the Shanxi area from the 1230's and having died

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[44] *Chongxiu Tiantan beiming* 重修天壇碑銘, by Li Zhiquan 李志全 (1191-1261), dated 1249. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 505-507; *Gu Puji dashi Liu gong daoxing beiming* 古普濟大師劉公道行碑銘, by Wang Yun 王惲 (1227-1304), dated between 1270 and 1304. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 691-692.

[45] *Zhongnanshan zuting xianzhen neizhuan* 終南山祖庭仙真内傳 DZ 955, 3.23a.

in 1247, the murals should date to this period, and probably around 1240. It would further be possible to deduce that a painting master of Zhu Haogu (active ca. 1325) two or three generations older than him painted the Toronto murals. Zhu Haogu painted the Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting, but the Toronto murals have several pictorial and compositional aspects that would link the Toronto murals to the Yongle gong, but on the other hand also contain aspects that would disqualify them as being from the same hand.[46] A workshop where the models (*fenben* and *xiaoyang*) for the murals were transmitted from master to student could perfectly explain both the commonalities and differences between the Toronto and Yongle gong murals.

4.3 Nan'an

The Nan'an murals date probably to the late Yuan dynasty and no concrete information is known concerning their patrons, but on the basis of stele inscriptions of 1256 and 1295 we know that the Daoist priests overseeing the site belonged to the Quanzhen order because their names include the Quanzhen generation characters *de* 德, *zhi* 志 and *dao* 道.[47] The patrons emphasised two major points in the design and representation of the Nan'an Heavenly Court painting which reveal their personalised wishes. One point is the basic ritual format in the Heavenly Court composition. Another point is the de-emphasis of imperial figures in the Nan'an murals. Let me discuss these two points in more detail.

Basic ritual format

The ritual format of the Nan'an murals contains only the basic elements and seems to rely very directly on the layout of an open-air altar with hanging scroll paintings, albeit without a three-tiered mound. Not only does the mural design point into this direction (i.e. a loose

[46] Common pictorial elements are for example the deity on the southend of the west wall peering over his court tablet, the coral and flower treasures (I owe this observation to Meng Sihui), and the method of dividing the composition and groups of figures by means of horizontal lines demarcated by ribbons on *mian*-crowns and banners. Differences pertain to the shape and colour of the clouds. The Toronto clouds are coloured green, yellow, and white while those of the Yongle gong are sandbrown (it is possible however that these were specifically painted by the Ma Junxiang workshop as indicated in the inscription; I also owe this observation to Meng Sihui), the ceremonial court dress of the Yongle gong figures is more detailed, varied and correct, and the Toronto figures are overall a bit more stockey.

[47] See *Wutaishan Sun zhenren fushou lun ba* 五臺山孫真人福壽論跋, no author, dated 1256. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 1090; *Yaozhou Wutaishan Sun zhenren* □□ *kai xueju ji* 耀州五臺山孫真人□□ 開穴居記, by Qiu Duanqing 丘端卿, dated 1295. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 1126.

design as mentioned in the previous chapter), the fact that the murals comprise the standard groups of deities normally depicted on hanging scrolls hung un screens or in tents in front of the central altar mound – the Five Sacred Peaks (and Four Sacred Marshes) on the top centre of the east wall and the Six Daoist Lineage Masters and Three Officials on the opposite wall – readily suggests that the murals were largely based on the Daoist open-air altar to which the patrons added some other groups. These other groups are in this case the Northern and Southern Dippers, the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors, the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions, the Four Spirits and others whose images are now unfortunately too damaged to be identified.

This selection of groups of deities seems very standard and do not betray any particular form of personalisation. There are however two groups that reveal a preference for a certain type or aspect of Daoist liturgy. The first is the inclusion of the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors, and the second is the Four Spirits.

The inclusion of the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors is a bit of an oddity because representations of this group of deities is neither known from any other Heavenly Court painting, nor from Water-and-Land paintings. Furthermore, they are not mentioned in any *jiao*-offering or memorial list. Regardless these omissions, their presence in this Heavenly Court painting can be directly related to ritual praxis. Jiang Shuyu's *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* depicts an open-air altar mound of which the bottom-tier has twenty-four gates representing the twenty-four energy-nodes of the tropical year (twenty-four nodes of 15 days in a year of 360 days).[48] This basic division is for example also found in the body (eight for each of the three cinnaber fields) and has strong Lingbao connotations (but probably elaborating on ancient Heavenly Master practices).

To my knowledge, the *Scripture of Salvation* (*duren jing* 度人經) is the only Daoist ritual text which mentions the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors. It is the central text of the Lingbao tradition, the core of which dates to the fifth century and which is perhaps the most central text of Daoist liturgy, in particular for mortuary ritual, even though it can be applied to meet apotrapaic and exorcistic ends as well. The mortuary ritual is basically a rite of salvation in which the soul of the deceased is transferred (*du* 度) from the northern heavens of death to the southern heavens of eternal life.[49] The prominent places of the Northern Dipper and Southern Dipper deities on the northern parts of the west and east walls would further fit this scheme presented by the *Salvation Scripture*.

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[48] *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 2.3a. The commentary makes no mention of the twenty-four energy-nodes. This inference is made in Schipper and Wang, "Progressive and Regressive," pp. 189-190.
[49] *Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing* DZ 1, 20.8a-22b.

The inclusion of the Four Spirits is another conspicuous element in the Nan'an murals. In the Yongle gong murals, they appear in front and at the end of the east and west audiences, acting as protective deities of the four parameters. It is also in this capacity that they are depicted in the Nan'an murals but contrary to the Yongle gong murals they are depicted in the centre and in front of the audiences. It should further be noticed that the Four Spirits lack their standard attributes of the emblematic animals (green dragon, white tiger, red bird, and turtle-snake) and are, rather, more akin in representation to the Buddhist Four Devas (*tianwang* 天王).

The prominent positioning of the Four Spirits in the Nan'an murals can also be linked to the *Scripture of Salvation*, or to be more precise with the praxis of incantating the scripture during a ritual performance. The *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* contains a chapter providing the ritual procedings for reciting Lingbao scriptures. It states that when the precentor (*dujiang* 都講) incantates (*song* 誦) the *Scripture of Salvation*, the Daoist priest will silently sing in his heart (*chang jingnian* 唱靜念) the scripture. On this inner ritual of the priest, Jiang Shuyu comments that it should be accompanied by visualisations (*si* 思) of "a green dragon to his left, a white tiger to his right, a red bird in front, and a turtle-snake behind him amidst a *qi*-cloud in the three colours green, yellow, and white. The sun, moon, and five planets shine on the immortal-officials attending to the scripture and placed in files to the left and right of the altar." He adds that this visualisation technique should in fact be used for reciting all types of Lingbao scriptures.[50] The animals of the four directions are represented in their human form as generals in the Nan'an murals without their attributes. The prominent placement of the Four Spirits in the Nan'an murals thus suggests that the recitation of scriptures, and in particular the *Scripture of Salvation*, was placed in high regard by the patrons of the murals.

Sometimes an omission of a deity or group of deities is as telling of the preferences of the patrons as their inclusion. For example, the Four Saints (Tianpeng etc.) are conspicuously absent in the Nan'an murals, even though these deities appear in every ritual manual from the Song onward and figure in many wall paintings, Heavenly Court paintings and Water-and-Land paintings alike. As deities specifically geared for rites of exorcism, such as the Thunder Rites and Rite of Deliverance, we may presume that these rites were not much favoured by the Nan'an Daoist priests in the Yuan dynasty. The representation of the seven deities of the Northern Dipper (top-right west wall, Plate 7) as Daoist priests dressed as local cult exorcists

[50] *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 21.2b-3b.

with long dishevelled hair and holding swords demonstrates that the Nan'an priests were not ignorant of exorcist rites, as well as that the exorcist rites were performed within the confines of the traditional Lingbao liturgy without relying on the exorcist deities.

The ritual format envisioned in the Nan'an murals pertains to a basic Lingbao liturgy which is focused in particular on the *Scripture of Salvation*. The format fulfilled the needs of the patrons and their community who were more concerned with general problems of the salvation of the souls of the deceased and the eradication of demons and disaster, comfortably addressed by one scripture applicable to all needs, rather than making strong political or ideological claims such as the Yongle gong murals seem to advocate. The patrons personalised the Nan'an murals alright, but their emphasis was evidently not on demonstrating ritual prowess but on the representation of the deities themselves.

Because this traditional layout is unconcerned with any imperial or ideological motivations, as well as the inclusion of the Four Emperors and Two Empresses, which was a characteristic of Northern Song ritual formats as I argued above persisted into the thirteenth centure in North China, would suggest that the painters of the Nan'an murals relied on an older model, perhaps from the early Northern Song, which they then personalised to wishes of the patrons. The more isolated location of the site, Yaowangshan, and the local origins of the painting workshop, which perhaps had kept the designs for the murals or which worked from designs kept at the temple itself, could then explain how the Northern Song model was preserved at the site. A Song stele inscription of 1081 mentions that the temple had wall paintings in 1059, which thus may have acted as a model for the Yuan paintings.[51]

De-emphasis of imperial figures

In the Yongle gong murals, non-standard deities were added to the Heavenly Court, but in the Nan'an murals the standard representation of deities themselves is changed. These changes pertain to the rendering of deities and the concern for detail, their positioning in the composition, and the social identity of the deities. In general, the personalisation of the deity figures suggests less emphasis on the imperial nature of the Daoist Heavenly Court in favour of a more mundane and more accessible rendering.

The de-emphasis of imperial figures is most directly witnessed in de the depiction of the Four Emperors and Two Emperors. They are depicted with an almost indifferent plainness. The colours are basic without any concern for iconographical correctness, for example a dark

[51] *Sun zhenren ci ji* 孫真人祠記, by Wang Huan 王瓛, dated 1081. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 288-291.

blue robe for the North Pole Emperor which would denote his association to the north. In addition, the emperors and empresses are depicted without any attributes, such as the usual *kun*-trigram for the Earth Goddess.

The emphasis on mundane concerns over imperial prowess is also evidenced in the particular location of the groups in the mural design and in their particular representation. The most important deities, the Four Emperors and Two Empresses, are positioned to the far northern ends of the east and west wall. The "central" deities of the Nan'an murals are dislocated from the centre (Plates 6 and 7). Although complying to rules of hierarchy and crediting them with a position near the prestigious north, the real visual centre of the Nan'an Heavenly Court is the mid-section of the east and west walls. This type of design can for example be compared to the triangular shaped Buddhist paradise scenes in the Mogao murals and in surviving Yuan and Ming temple paintings, or the Heavenly Court painting of the Toronto murals of which I argued that they adopted the same triangular format. This is the location where in the centre of the hall the Daoist priest would perform his or her ritual, and also the place where the walls are highest. In contrast to the architecture of other Daoist temple halls which have straight rectangular side walls, the hall with the Heavenly Court paintings at the Nan'an has triangular shaped side walls. It is thus at this focal centre that we find the most conspicuously personalised elements of the Heavenly Court painting.

This visual emphasis is further borne out most subtly in the display of the crowns and gowns of the deities in question. As remarked earlier, the crowns of many of the standard deities such as the Four Emperors and Two Empresses and the Southern Dipper (Plate 9) or the Five Sacred Peaks – all imperial figures by they way – although elaborated and with eye for detail are depicted in a very generic manner: each crown is almost a copy of the next one. However, when we come to the crowns and gowns of the deities of the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors and the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions, the painters put much effort in making alterations and distinctions among the figures, suggesting that they were not only visually more important but that they were also depicted with regard to the status of the patrons.

The de-emphasis of imperial figures is also seen in the depiction of the subordinate deities. Several groups, who normally have an imperial representation as officials, are now rendered with various different identities. I have already mentioned the six deities of the Northern Dipper on the top west wall who are not dressed in their standard outfits as imperial officials but rather as Daoist priests in the guise of exorcists with long, dishevelled black hair and holding swords.

Furthermore, where we would expect to find a solemn assembly of twelve imperial officials traditionally representing the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions, as in the Toronto murals (B22-33), we encounter in the Nan'an murals a motley crew of two officials, a Daoist priest, a soldier, a scholar, and a woman for the six zodiacal deities represented on the bottom centre of the west wall (the remaining six deities on the opposite wall are destroyed) (Plate 8).

A similar case can be made for the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors – a group reminiscent to the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions of the Yongle gong (76-89, 118-131) represented as imperial officials – who consist here primarily of Daoist priests and officials and one female figure (Plate 7). The female figure is a particular strong example of personalisation because she carries a conspicuous red sack. In this sack, the shape of a lute can be recognised, and a female deity with a lute is normally identified as Venus, one of the deities of the Five Planets. However, the other deities of the Five Planets have not been incorporated. The painters thus exchanged only one Heavenly Emperor for the image of Venus for which, I presume, they had a single painting that served as a model and not the entire group of the Five Planets. The reason for inserting the image of Venus should be sought, I would argue, in the identity of Venus as a female, because as a stellar deity it is not related to the twenty-four energy nodes as far as I have been able to determine.

Indeed, female deities play in general a more prominent role in the Nan'an murals than in other murals. Other known Heavenly Court paintings are almost all-male cosmic universes, and women only play a very marginal role in these paintings, most often as female attendants and court ladies serving the other (male) deities. The only exceptions are deities such as Venus and Mercury of the Five Planets – whose representations are imported from the western regions – and the two female central deities Queen Mother of the West and Earth Goddess. Except for the Nan'an mural, I am not aware of any Heavenly Court painting in which women are portrayed as other deities than the four just mentioned. In the Nan'an Heavenly Court, by contrast, women deities are present in a greater number and they occupy equal positions among the (male) members in deity groups. Large female figures also figure prominently, although most of them badly damaged, on the south end of the two walls near the entrance. The more prominent presence of female deities in the Nan'an murals – although still relatively modest compared to the presence of male deities - also point to a more worldly outlook of the patrons, rather than one focused on the imperial court and national politics. Because the liturgical services associated with the murals catered to a local community, we can also expect that the inclusion of more female deities reflected the interest and social composition of the local community.

Another type of figure that appears more prominently than in other Heavenly Court paintings is the Daoist priest. As has become clear from the above descriptions of groups of deities, many imperial officials have been replaced or share the stage with Daoist priests. The patrons, who we may assume were Quanzhen patrons because the site fell under Quanzhen supervision from the thirteenth century, obviously took the liberty to insert images of their own social group into the murals and in addition to the images of Daoist priests such as the six lineage masters depicted on the top west wall. We may even suspect that portraits of the patrons themselves are among the images of the Daoist priests, but this is impossible to verify.

The various personalisations of the ritual format and the deity figures in the Nan'an murals make sense if we take into account the ritual and social praxis of the site. The hall with the Heavenly Court paintings only occupies a minor role in the entire layout of the temple complex. The temple complex is located on two hilltops divided by a deep gully, and the hall with the murals is located in one of two rows of halls on the south hill, called Nan'an (Southern Hermitage). The main hall dedicated to Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682) and adjacent buildings lie sprawled over the northern hill, called Beidong 北洞 (Northern Cave). The location of the hall with the Heavenly Court paintings is peculiar, because they are not depicted in the central hall of the site but in a subordinate hall. In the traditional layout of a temple hall, the central hall with the Heavenly Court paintings would be located in the south with the other, smaller halls located behind it to the north. From the layout of the temple complex we can infer that the local cult of Sun Simiao at this site was more important than the rituals of the Daoist clergy.

The importance of the local cult of the site is also seen in the Nan'an murals. Although the Nan'an Heavenly Court still follows the standard layout, the personalisations of its deity figures subtly downplay the importance of the imperial model and elevate the status of various kinds of figures – Daoist priests, scholars, women, and warriors – to that of deities and on an equal footing as the celestial officials, in a same fashion as Sun Simiao – a Daoist priest, physician, and scholar – is moved centre stage in the architectural layout. The personalisation of the ritual format also makes more sense when this Daoist liturgy is seen as subordinated to the local cult. The Lingbao liturgy envisioned in the Nan'an murals is basic in nature and geared for the salvation of souls and the averting of disaster by the incantation of Lingbao scriptures, in particular the *Scripture of Salvation*, beside of course the presentation of memorials; and in this basic format it lacks the political or ideological aspirations implied for example by the Yongle gong and Toronto murals, being in accordance to its modest

position in the architectural layout of the temple complex, and rather reflects the social needs and build-up of the local community.

4.4 Beiyue miao

The personalisations of the Beiyue miao murals are closely related to the question of their date. Because the Beiyue miao have a long history and the murals were painted, re-painted, and renovated on several occasions in this history, we may expect that the personalisations to some extent reflect their development. It seems however impossible that the murals would date before 1270 when the Beiyue miao was renovated. Before that date, the temple was destroyed twice. In 946, it was burnt to the ground by the Khitan armies, a fact confirmed by the finding of a layer of charcoal at about one meter depth in the foundation of the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility (*dening zhi dian* 德寧之殿), the central hall where the murals are located, with another layer of floortiles covering the charcoal layer.[52] In addition, the close similarity between the architecture of the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility of the Beiyue miao and the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong, in particular the high, elevated foundation of the hall and the large terrace in front, would suggest that the hall was also destroyed during the wars between the Jurchen and Mongol armies in the thirteenth century, and then completely rebuilt in 1270.[53]

That the murals inside the hall should date to the Yuan period is demonstrated by Zhang Lifang. He first demonstrated that the decorative paintings on the architecture of the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility are similar to those of the Yongle gong, thus dating them to 1270 when the hall was renovated. Secondly, because the painted dragon on the ceiling of the hall is identical in form, colour, and number of claws to the dragon depicted in the mural on the east wall, he concluded that the murals should also date to 1270.[54]

I would further like to add that the murals use also the same set of colour pigments as those found in the murals of the Mingying wang dian of 1324 in Hongtong County (Shanxi). Especially the use of the same brown and orange colours is striking, which are not often seen

[52] Xue Zengfu 薛增福 and Wang Limin 王麗敏 (eds.), *Quyang Beiyue miao* 曲陽北嶽廟. Baoding: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 2000, pp. 92, 120-123. For the charcoal layer, see Nie Jinlu 聶金鹿, "Quyang Beiyue miao Dening zhi dian jiegou tedian chuyi 曲陽北嶽廟德寧之殿芻議." *Wenwu chunqiu* 文物春秋 4 (1995), p. 48.
[53] Nancy Steinhardt, "The Temple to the Northern Peak in Quyang." *Artibus Asiae* 58 (1998), pp. 69-90.
[54] Zhang Lifang, "Beiyue miao Dening zhi dian caihui fenxi 北嶽廟德寧之殿彩繪分析." *Wenwu chunqiu* 文物春秋 5 (2004), pp. 8-13.

in other murals of either the Yuan or Ming. The two temple paintings have further several pictorial elements or motifs in common, such as a dragon, the small strongmen carrying treasure-trays emitting rays of coloured light, and a Thunder Ministry. The bright red pigment used in wall painting from the Ming onward is also absent. Lastly, the proportions of the Beiyue miao figures would also correspond better to other Yuan period temple paintings when the figures were more proportionally "correct." Song figures tend to be have slender bodies and larger heads, while Ming figures have very small shoulders and seem to stretched vertically.

The Beiyue miao murals deviate in many aspects from the standard programme of other Yuan period Heavenly Court paintings. The irregular elements in the Beiyue miao murals are very numerous, and almost all of them would suggest that the painters followed an archaic model, both in terms of ritual configuration and in style. This situation makes it difficult for us to discern whether the personalisations resulting in these irregular elements were deliberate or simply followed an older model, and which patron in which period was responsible for which element in the composition during the long history of the murals. This section will therefore first make a small inventory of the irregular elements and then attempt to explain how they relate to an archaic model in order to determine the personalisations of the former patrons and those of the 1270 patrons.

Irregular elements

The Beiyue miao murals differ from other Heavenly Court paintings from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in almost every aspect. It is helpful to make a small inventory of these irregular elements in order to discern which of these elements pertain to personalisations and which may be rather explained by older models or later repairs, or perhaps a specific ritual configuration only used for Sacred Peak temples. I will deal with the reasons for their presence in the murals in the next section.

1. *Ritual configuration.* The Beiyue miao murals contain a different set of central deities than other Heavenly Court paintings. The Beiyue miao murals are focused on the Five Sacred Peak deities in the lower register, and the Three Officials and a group of immortals in the upper register (Drawings 3A and 3B). The central niche has statues of the Northern Peak deity, the God of Hall and the Dragon King. From the Middle Phase (1000-1400) onwards, all other known Heavenly Court paintings or textual representations thereoff in ritual manuals and texts on painting focus on the Nine or

Eleven (or Thirteen) Sovereigns and generally have a niche with statues of the Three Purities.

2. *Wu Daozi-style*. The Beiyue miao murals are painted in a dynamic style associated with Wu Daozi (fl. 685-758), epitomised by the dictum "Wu Daozi's sashes billow in the wind, and Cao Zhongda's 曹仲達 robes rise from the water." (*Wu dai dang feng, Cao yi chu shui* 吳帶當風, 曹衣出水) in Guo Ruoxu's *Tuhua jianwen zhi* (last half of the 11th cent.).[55] In other Heavenly Court paintings, the dynamic elements – often limited to warrior and demon figures – are combined with more static elements which are mostly used to depict the majestic images of the central deities. In the Beiyue miao murals, each and every pictorial aspect is subject to this dynamic force, the source of which seems to be the strong wind blowing through the composition from the north. In fact, Guo Ruoxu mentions that Gao Wenjin and Wu Zongyuan (d. 1050) both combined the dynamic and static styles of Wu Daozi and Cao Zhongda,[56] which also suggests that compositions designed in this manner would have begun around this time.
3. *More attending figures than deities*. The Beiyue miao murals depict all kind of attending figures with no specific identies, and who vastly outnumber the deities in the composition. In other Heavenly Court paintings, attending figures only play a marginal role and number only very few, their places being substituted by subordinate deities who gradually had filled the ranks of the Heavenly Court audience over time.
4. *No detailed decorative patterns*. The Beiyue miao murals are characterised by a simple yet very effective brushwork without much emphasis on decorative patterns. This is at odds with Yuan, and in particular Ming paintings of deities, which became increasingly detailed in their decorative patterns depicted in crowns, jewelry, borders on robes and sleeves, and armouries. The Beiyue miao murals rather put emphasis on the brushwork and the rhythm of lines they evoke in the draperies, flags, and robes and sleeves. Although the brushwork is powerful, it is never calligraphic, a form of temple painting which had become very common, probably under the influence of literati-painting and calligraphy, in Ming temple painting.
5. *No haloes.* None of the deities in the Beiyue miao murals are depicted with a halo, one of the most standard elements in other Heavenly Court paintings and in Buddhist temple paintings alike.

[55] *Tuhua jianwen zhi* p. 37.
[56] *Tuhua jianwen zhi* p. 105.

6. *Different "square-heart necktie."* The Eastern Peak deity on the east wall does not wear the standard "square-heart neckties" (*fangxin quling* 方心曲領) in Yuan and Ming temple paintings, a decorative white ribbon with a small square pendant hanging on the deity's chest, but a necktie in which the square pendant is replaced by a rectangular hill-shaped line (Fig. 63). This type of necktie cannot be termed a "square-heart" as it existed in the Yuan and Ming periods.
7. *No imperial* mian-*crowns*. The Sacred Peak deities wear ribbed *tongtian* 通天-crowns instead of the flat-top *mian*-crowns with strings of jade beads hanging from its rims, which would be the appropriate type of crown corresponding to their status of emperor since their promotion in 1011, and which also remained their standard type of crown in any other known Yuan, Ming and Qing representation.[57]
8. *Dark, bearded faces showing emotional expression.* The Five Sacred Peak deities and the majority of attending figures are depicted with dark brown-red faces and large beards (Plates 10 and 11, Figs. 63, 64). In addition, the Five Sacred Peak deities have life-like faces showing various emotional expressions (compassion, fear, startlement and anger). Such characteristics are usually associated with "foreigners" or "barbarians" (from the viewpoint of the Chinese). This is at odds with the depictions of central deities in any other known temple painting who, as a principle, are the embodiment of serenity and lofty other-worldliness, and which is a feature which also correspond more closely to the rules of Chinese physiognomy. Such characteristics were also already laid down by Guo Ruoxu in his *Tuhua jianwen zhi*.[58] It should be noted however that, curiously enough, the Central Sacred Peak deity forms an exception on the abovegiven description, and only his image displays a standard depiction of a serene and emotionless Chinese deity. He neither has a long beard but only the typical long sideburns and a thin beard and moustache as in other Heavenly Court paintings.
9. *No Daoist priests.* Another strange feature of the Beiyue miao murals is the total absence of depictions of Daoist priests in their ceremonial robes, so often witnessed in Heavenly Court paintings. Paintings depicting the various patriarchs and masters of

[57] *Song shi* j. 102, pp. 2486-2487. Song Emperor Zhenzong ordered that the costumes of the Sacred Peak deities were accordingly changed. It should be noted that the Toronto murals depict a group of five deities in costumes in the five emblematic colours with *tongtian*-crowns on the south part of the east wall. I have identified these deities as the Five Elders precisely because of their lack of *mian*-crowns and the fact that the Five Elders are a more appropriate choice in a ritual configuration geared for a Rite of Deliverance or Thunder Ritual.
[58] *Tuhua jianwen zhi* pp. 20-21.

the Daoist master seem only to have been introduced in the ritual area in the Southern Song dynasty.[59] By contrast, the Beiyue miao murals include two immortals, depicted in the top-left corner on the west wall. One has a long beard and unkempt hair, and carries a large sack over his shoulder while the other is smaller in size and carries a small round flask in his left hand and a short branch in his right. They also have quite distinct faces, and one surmises that their images should represent portraits of some famous immortals but I have not been able to identify them (Figs. 65, 66).

10. *No Four Sacred Marshes deities.* In a mural with the Five Sacred Peak deities, one would also expect to find included the deities of the Four Sacred Marshes who are their traditional companions. In the Yongle gong murals and in Ming Water-and-Land paintings the Five Sacred Peak deities are accompanied by those of the Four Sacred Marshes. In the Beiyue miao murals, there is no such pair of four deities. On the east wall, two smaller-sized officials are depicted but their exptected counterparts are lacking on the opposite wall. Intriguingly, in 732 Mt. Lu 盧山 and Mt. Qingcheng 青城山 were appointed auxiliary mountains to the Five Sacred Peaks, and I would therefore tentatively suggest that the two officials represent the deities of these two mountains.[60]
11. *General as central deity and donor.* One of the most conspicuous irregular elements in the Beiyue miao murals is the inclusion of a militairy figure in the group of immortals in the top-left corner on the west wall. The general should moreover represent a donor because he is bowing with hands clasped in devotion before his chest. In addition, he takes the role as central deity of that group of figures because, like the other central deities in the upper register, he is assisted by two banner-bearers standing behind him signalling his exalted status. He should represent the patron commissioning the renovation of the hall and its murals

It is possible to relate all these irregular elements to an archaic model, meaning that they were not the invention of the painters of the 1270 renovations but of the painters of a previous set of murals copied by the painters of 1270. I will now attempt to date this archaic model and explain the personalisations of the patrons.

[59] Before the Song dynasty, there existed the visualisations of the Three Masters (*li sanshi* 禮三師), but to my knowledge no paintings included in the ritual area.
[60] *Jiutian shizhe miao bei bing xu* 九天使者廟碑並序, by Li Pin 李玭, dated 732. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 114-116.

Archaic model

Even though the Beiyue miao was rebuilt in 1270, many irregular elements in its murals suggest a date in the Transitional Phase (700-1000). Their presence in the murals can be explained by postulating the use of a design or *xiaoyang* 小樣 by which means an archaic model was transferred to a later period. The *xiaoyang* was probably preserved at the site. It should be remembered that the Yongle gong had also preserved a *xiaoyang* of its murals at the temple site until the Second World War on which basis restorations to the paintings were conducted over the centuries.

If we postulate an archaic model transmitted through a *xiaoyang*, many irregular elements mentioned above can be explained. Because of their interrelationship, it will moreover be possible to find a date for this archaic model.

Let me first discuss the specific ritual configuration of the Five Sacred Peak deities. According to Jin Yunzhong (fl. 1225) in his *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, the particular Daoist liturgy performed to the Sacred Peaks or on other mountains is the Golden Register Retreat (*jinlu zhai* 金籙齋).[61] Because the Golden Register Retreat is performed for the personal well-being of the emperor, often on his invitation, and for peace and harmony in the empire, it is the appropriate ritual for the Sacred Peaks which are also part of the state cult and which are believed to be able to control natural disasters in their respective dominions.[62] From the early eleventh century onwards however, the Golden Register Retreat was expanded with a *jiao*-offering to the maximum number of 3600 deities, including an expansion to nine central deities, the Nine Sovereigns.[63] These were further expanded to Eleven (or Thirteen) Sovereigns at the end of the Northern Song, and the ritual pantheon of 3600 deities would remain the standard number for a Golden Register Retreat until the end of the imperial period.[64] Obviously, the grandeur of this ritual stands in stark contrast with the handful of deities and the simplicity of the Beiyue miao murals.

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[61] *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 41.3b-4a.

[62] The performance of Golden Register Retreats at the Sacred Peaks is confirmed by the stele inscriptions collected and annotated by Édouard Chavannes. Chavannes, "Le jet des dragons," pp. 68-128.

[63] See Wang Qinruo's *Yisheng baode zhenjun zhuan* in *Yunji qiqian* DZ 1032, chapter 103. In this text, no mention is made of a Golden Register Retreat, but a *jiao*-offering called a *putian dajiao* 普天大醮 with 3600 seats. The *Lingbao yujian* DZ 547, 1.19a-21a makes however clear that this *jiao*-offering belongs to a Golden Register Retreat. Jing Anning has demonstrated that the Nine Sovereigns were introduced under Emperor Zhenzong by Wang Qinruo. See also *Taishang chujia chuandu yi* 太上出家傳度儀 DZ 989, 1a. Jing, "The Yongle Palace," p. 246.

[64] Only a small section of the reformed Golden Register Retreat of the end of the Northern Song is preserved, on tossing the jade slips, see *Jinlu zhai toujian yi* 金籙齋投簡儀 DZ 498, 10a. The ritual text also contains references to a *putian dajiao* with 3600 seats (7a-8b). For the ritual pantheon and central deities of a later Golden Register Retreat; see *Jinlu dazhai shejiao yi* 金籙大齋設醮儀 DZ 490, 2a, 3a. The Seven Sovereigns, a

The composition focused on five central deities, as demonstrated in previous chapters, is rather the ritual configuration corresponding more closely to Heavenly Court paintings of the Transitional Phase (700-1000), such as those painted in the Zhangren guan on Mt. Qingcheng and in the Baoli si in Chengdu, and those witnessed in the altar layouts of the *Daomen dingzhi* (depicting a Tang altar) and the *Xuantan kanwu lun*. Moreover, from the Song period onward, Sacred Peak temples are known to have been decorated with murals depicting the Sacred Peak deity on an excursion tour leaving an returning to his temple (*chuxing tu* 出行圖).[65] No references to the composition with Five Sacred Peaks are known after the tenth century. Because there are no indications that a different type of Golden Register Retreat with only five central deities was specifically performed on the Sacred Peaks,[66] we should assume that the painters of the Beiyue miao murals followed an archaic model from the Transitional Phase. The inclusion the two auxiliary mountain deities in the composition would not be too odd when the ritual configuration had not changed much during that phase. For this period, paintings of Daoist priests were not known either, as far as can be discerned.

The abundance of attending figures is very common in Heavenly Court paintings before the Middle Phase and it is witnessed in the Wu Zongyuan scroll, in Du Fu's description of Wu Daozi's murals on Mt. Beimang, "The Five Saints line up in dragon robes, a thousand officials march in goose file" in which the "thousand officials" stand for attending figures; and even in early representations of the *chao*-audience theme such as donor-scenes depicting a royal figure assisted by a retinue of attendants. Haloes are neither found in these early depictions, and the *tongtian*-crown is a more appropriate type of crown for the title of King that the Sacred Peak deities bore since 746, corresponding to the period of the Transitional Phase.

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combination seen mostly in the Ming, are the Three Purities, Jade Emperor, Heavenly Sovereign, North Pole, Earth Goddess, East Pole, and South Pole. The texts also contains a reference to the thirtieth Heavenly Master Zhang Jixian 張繼先 (1092-1127) (Veritable Xujing 虛靖真君), who was particularly popular in the Ming dynasty, and I suspect the text should date to this period. For an earlier dating, see Schipper & Verellen, *Historical Companion*, pp. 998-1000.

[65] Wu Zongyuan and Wang Jianji painted such an excursion tour in the Tianfeng guan 天封觀 (Monastery of Heavenly Enfeoffment) on the Central Sacred Peak Songshan 嵩山 (Henan). See *Songchao minghua ping*, pp. 16, 32. The Tiankuang dian 天貺殿 (Heavenly Gift Hall) on Taishan 太山 (Shandong), the Sacred Peak of the East, has similar murals of an excursion tour painted in the Ming dynasty. Zhang Mingchuan 張明川 discussed the dating of these murals in a lecture on a symposium on Daoist art held in Xi'an in May 2007. The excursion tour is also a standard theme in murals in local temples dedicated to the Five Sacred Peaks.

[66] Jin Yunzhong mentions that the rite of tossing dragons performed on the Sacred Peaks was different from the standard rite of tossing dragons in the Golden Register Retreat. *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 41.3b-4a.

The Beiyue miao murals also resemble the Wu Zongyuan scroll (Plate 12) most closely in their emphasis on rhytmic brushlines of the robes rather than in intricate decorative patterns and calligraphic brushwork that came into fashion in later periods. The robes in both paintings are rather plain and have no embroidered borders. The jewelry and necklaces decorating the costumes are also rather modest and simple in design. The court ladies in the Wu Zongyuan scroll wear for example necklaces of one string with one simple medallion (Fig. 67). This type of medallion is also worn by the female attendants in the Beiyue miao murals (e.g. left of the Official of Heaven on the west wall, Fig. 68). In Yuan temple paintings, such as in the Yongle gong, or in Ming temple paintings, the necklaces of the female attendants have become opulent showcases of jewelry-ornaments shaped in intricate patterns and studded with gems (Fig. 69). Moreover, in the Wu Zongyuan scroll, simple robes are contrasted with ornate headdresses, a characteristic of Song figure paintings, and also seen in sculptures of that period.[67] The headdresses depicted in the Beiyue miao murals are a little more restrained but still demonstrate a large variation and an eye for detail not seen so much in the robes. The hats are in Five Dynasties or early Song style.[68] It should be noted that the necktie does not figure in the Wu Zongyuan scroll, but this sole painting does not mean that the necktie was invented in the late Song or Yuan.[69] Rather, it suggests that the necktie depicted in the Beiyue miao murals represents an intermediate stage in the development of the necktie. Lastly, All these aspects also suggest a date of around 1000 when the Wu Zongyuan scroll was made.

The Wu Daozi style was also very popular in this period, as confirmed by the supreme status given to Wu Daozi in Zhang Yanyuan's *Lidai minghua ji*, and the *Songchao minghua ping*, and the *Tuhua jianwen zhi*. The early Song painters would still had seen original murals and paintings by Wu Daozi, while in later periods his status attained more legendary or mythical proportions when his works were already lost. The only known painting of the Yuan

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[67] Angela Falco Howard, *Summit of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art of Dazu, China*. Trumbull: Weatherhill, 2001, p. 155.

[68] One curious aspect of the headdresses is the absence of the *putou* 幞頭- hat with its characteristic projecting flaps or wings, so common in Yuan and Ming temple paintings. The *putou*-hat began as a headcloth with flaps wrapped around the hairbun. From the late Tang or Five Dynasties, the cloth was stiffened with lacquer and from the Song the flaps were stiffened as well with wires which made them stand out on the sides. See Sun Ji 孫機, "Putou de chansheng he yanbian 幞頭的產生和演變." *Zhongguo lishi bowuguan guankan* 中國歷史博物館館刊 9 (1985), pp. 60-68.

[69] A painting attributed to Wu Daozi, but probably a Song copy, the "Birth of Sakyamuni" (*Shijia jiangsheng* 釋迦降生) in Tokyo, depicts a king with a necktie. In early Tang depictions, such as the emperor depicted in Mogao cave 220 or in the scroll of "Thirteen Emperors" attributed to Yan Liben in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the necktie is absent. See Whitfield, *Cave Temples of Mogao*, p. 79; Wu, *Tales from the Land of Dragons*, pp. 45-46, 127-130.

that portrays a similar overall dynanism is a handscroll, the "Nine Songs" (*jiuge* 九歌), by Zhang Wo 張渥 (fl. 1335-1365). This painting is however a copy after the same painting by Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049-1106) who, not surprisingly, is famous for painting figures in a *baimiao* 白描 style inspired on Wu Daozi's dynamic style.[70]

If we should attempt to pin down a date for this archaic model on which the 1270 murals were based, the renovations on the imperial order of Song Emperor Taizong (r. 976-997) completed in 991 would be the most plausible candidate.[71] Although during the Five Dynasties and Song dynasty renovations also took place in 917, 1050, and 1106,[72] there are two main reasons for supporting a date of 991. The first is the abovementioned archaeological research at the site that discovered a layer of charcoal and floortiles at about one meter depth in the hall's foundation, caused by the Khitan army burning the temple down in 946. The 946 destruction would thus rule out a date of 917 for the archaic model. It can further be demonstrated that the present foundation of the hall should have been erected in 1270 because the foundation is similar to that of the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong completed in 1262[73] and because no other foundation-layers were found in between, this rules out the possibility that in 1050 or in 1106 the hall was rebuilt. Therefore, if the temple hall was built and decorated with murals in 991, the present murals are based on an archaic model dating to this period.

The other reason is a stele inscription commemorating the completion of the 991 renovation, written by the famous Song statesman Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954-1001).[74] The stele inscription mentions the destruction of the temple by the Khitan, called Xiongnu - an old Chinese term for "barbarians" in general - in the text, and the subsequent repairs to the temple including a reference to wall painting:

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[70] Reproduced and discussed in Ho, *Eight Dynasties of Chinese Painting*, pp. 119-122.

[71] *Chongxiu Beiyue Antian wang miao bei* 重修北嶽安天王廟碑, by Wang Yucheng 王禹偁 (954-1001), dated 991. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 231-233; *Beiyue miao ji* 北嶽廟集, no author. Reprint of Wanli (1573-1620) edition in *Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan* 北京圖書館古籍珍本叢刊, Vol. 118, pp. 747-830. Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1998, pp. 801-804, 8.32b-38a; *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi* 重修曲陽縣志, Zhou Siyi 周斯億 et al. (eds.). Quyang: Xiao xuetang 小學堂, 1904, 12.1b-8b.

[72] See the stele inscriptions, *Wang Chuzhi chongxiu Beiyue miao bei* 王處直重修北嶽廟碑, by Liu Duan 劉端, dated 917. *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 11.23a- 29a; *Chongxiu Beiyue miao bei* 重修北嶽廟碑, by Han Qi 韓琦, dated 1050. *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 12.55b-67a; *Chongxiu Beiyue miao ji* 重修北嶽廟記, by Han Rong 韓容, dated 1106 (only the title is preserved). *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 12.120a-b.

[73] *Dachao chongjian da Chunyang wanshou gong zhi bei* 大朝重建大純陽萬壽宮之碑, by Wang E 王鄂, dated 1262. Ruicheng xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 芮城縣誌編纂委員會 (ed.), *Ruicheng xianzhi* 芮城縣志. Xi'an: Sanqin chubanshe, 1994, p. 795.

[74] See note 71.

"Before this, the Xiongnu had breached the frontiers and came to this temple to divine on their fortunes and misfortunes. When [the divinations] did not comply to their intentions to turn the Chinese empire into turmoil, they subsequently set fire [to the temple] and torched the plains. . .

[Song Emperor Taizong (r. 976-997)] immediately ordered the responsible offices to give [the temple] a new, greater appearance, and when the emperor and the officials had broke tallies on the Bird Terrace, the work force was ready; and when the nobility and commoners had selected workers at the Yellow Gate, the duties were fixed. Timber of the *pian*楩, *nan* 柟, *qi* 杞, and *zi* 梓 trees was assembled in great masses; wires, ink, axes, and saws were collected in great numbers. With the different kinds of materials prepared in abundance and the hundred walls all constructed, they thus restored the halls and chambers applying colourful designs of majestic images; and they thus erected palisades and corridors adorning them with paintings of exemplary men. The gates and towers had wings, staircases were high and low. The bracket sets and roof beams were decorated with clouds, illuminating each other with colours of the mist and the morning sun; the jade title-board and ceiling carvings concealed for each other the rays of the sun and moon. Flags and banners, and dresses and robes were beautifully outlined; and *fu* 簠 and *gui* 簋 vessels and *dou* 豆 and *bian* 籩 beakers were neatly arranged. When all possible means were exhausted, the imperial merit was renewed."[75]

The passage unfortunately gives no precise description of the murals except for the reference that "flags and banners, and dresses and robes were beautifully outlined," a reference which in fact could equally apply to any other wall painting. There is also no specific reference to wall paintings in the main hall; we only know that "majestic images" – "images" (*xiang* 像) in Chinese often refer to statues – were applied (lit. "installed," *she* 設) in the halls and chambers.

Another passage in the stele inscription contains however some allusions which in my opinion are directly related to the present wall paintings:

"Modelling ourselves on Heaven and venerating the Dao, that is an emperor greatest luck: Heaven's blessings will be abundant and the populace will cherish humaneness.

[75] *Chongxiu Beiyue Antian wang miao bei*. *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 12.6a-b. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 232.

> Yu's help is without borders, and Yao's civilisation [efforts] are beyond reckoning. [The kings of the] northern and southern states jointly enter the arrangement (or painting) of a royal assembly (*wanghui zhi tu* 王會之圖), and the *Jin* 僸, *Mai* 佅, *Dou* 兜, and *Li* 離 tribes [of the north, east, south, and western regions] tremblingly assemble according to the tunes of court music [assuming their positions according to fixed hierarchical divisions]. Literary prowess (*wen* 文) beautifies the images of the planets and stars, martial virtue (*wu* 武) displays the authority of thunder and lightning. . ."[76]

What is striking about this passage is the mentioning of the "barbarian" tribes of the four directions tremblingly gathering in a royal assembly following the hierarchical positions. One peculiar element of the Beiyue miao murals are the bearded, dark faces of particularly four Sacred Peak deities, those of the east, south, west, and north, but excluding the Sacred Peak deity of the centre. These four deities also express emotions, although not all four of them are trembling with fear. Because of theis correspondence, I would argue that the four Sacred Peak deities should represent the tribes of the four directions, thus explaining their irregular representation with dark faces, beards, and emotions. The Central Sacred Peak deity on the east wall, who is rendered as a more standard Chinese deity and showing no particular emotion, would of course represent China, which in traditional Chinese thought occupies the centre of the universe.

Some other elements in the last passage above show also some intriguing parallels to the Beiyue miao murals. It mentions Yao and Yu, two of the three legendary first rulers of China, as well as the planets, stars, and thunder and lightning which are conceptually divided to the left and right according to *wen* (left, east) and *wu* (right, west). Postulating Shun, the third sage ruler omitted in the text, we find Yao, Shun, and Yu depicted together with the Five Planets and the deities of the Thunder Ministry depicted in the upper register of the murals (but with *wen* and *wu* inverted).

Against the historical background of the Beiyue miao evinced in Wang Yucheng's inscription, the murals obtain a political interpretation. Wang Yucheng utilises the renovation of the Beiyue miao to underscore the cultural, if not ethnic supremacy of the Chinese people over its foreign neighbours in a time when they had just defeated the Khitan and established

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[76] *Chongxiu Beiyue Antian wang miao bei*. *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 12.4b. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 232. The original stele inscription is in running script and the transcriptions in both sources differ in some cases. The first source is however the more precise one.

the Song dynasty. Singling out the Sacred Peak of the North and his temple and murals for advocating this supremacy is particularly appropriate because, as the stele inscription mentions, the Khitan had also sollicited the support of the Northern Peak deity through divination but who refused and choose for the Chinese instead. The Khitan occupied the steppes of northern China and obtaining the support of the Northern Peak deity would be interpreted as obtaining control over the northern dominion of the Chinese empire, i.e. control over the Khitan. The Beiyue miao thus played an important symbolic role in the battle for territorial hegemony, and investing a stele inscription, and the murals as well in my opinion, with such a political message is a celebration of Chinese supremacy in the northern dominion. This supremacy is also reflected in the composition of the murals, in which the sage rulers Yao, Shun, and Yu, as the icons of Chinese civilisation and cultural supremacy, as well as the Planets and Thunder Ministry, who control natural disasters, are depicted in the upper register above the four Sacred Peaks symbolising the foreign tribes of the four directions in the lower register.

It should be noted that such a political interpretation of supremacy is also implied by Huang Xiufu's *Yizhou minghua lu* on the Zhangren guan dedicated to the deity of Mt. Qingcheng. The text first records that the king of Shu, one of the many kingdoms that emerged after the fall of the Tang and vied with eachother for hegemony, appointed the deity of Mt. Qingcheng – who was made auxiliary deity to the Five Sacred Peaks in 732 – as the supreme mountain deity ruling over the Five Sacred Peaks. When he further describes a Heavenly Court painting in which the Five Sacred Peak deities go on audience with the Mt. Qingcheng deity, the parallels to the political aspirations of the Shu King, of whom the Mt. Qingcheng deity becomes a visual metaphor, become very obvious.[77] In a ritual prayer (*ci* 詞) written for the inauguration of the murals, Du Guangting uses a similar wording as Wang Yucheng to describe the images of the Zhangren guan pointing out the supremacy of the Shu kings over the other kings, and thus implying that the Shu kings were the rightful heirs to the title of emperor after the fall of the Tang.[78]

It should further be noted that a political interpretation is not in conflict with the Daoist liturgical foundation of the murals; both can exist next to eachother. It seems that the painters sought for a middle-way in the depiction of the Five Sacred Peak deities between "foreign-ness" and Daoist liturgy, portraying on the one hand them with dark, bearded faces showing much emotion but on the other still depicting them as dignified Daoist mountain

[77] *Yizhou minghua lu* p. 131.
[78] *Guangcheng ji* DZ 616: 6.13a-14a; translated in Mesnil, "Zhang Suqing," pp. 143-144.

deities. In addition, obtaining control over the five dominions is also the main goal of the liturgical practice of the Golden Register Retreat. Its essential element is the placement of the so-called Five True Writs (*wu zhenwen* 五真文) which are fixed (*zhen* 鎮) with a golden dragon on five tables placed in the five directions in the ritual area.[79] The images of the Five Sacred Peak deities are the pictorial representations of these five cosmic energies. The golden dragons are eventually sacrificed to the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water, also depicted in the murals, together with jade tablets inscribed with prayers by tossing them in a cave on a mountain (Heaven), in a river (Water), and by burying them in the ground (Earth).[80] The placement of the Five True Writs – similar to the paintings of the deities of the five organs in late Han Taiping ritual (see chapter 2.2 on ritual function) – attracts the presence of the deities of the five directions in the ritual area, by which means the original cosmic order is restored, blessings are bestowed on the emperor, and natural calamities are resolved. The Daoist ritual of the Golden Register Retreat thus achieves a similar goal of supremacy but on a cosmic level.

If we can identify the archaic model as the original murals painted in 991, we can now also identify the general-figure in the top-left corner of the west wall (Plate 11, Figs. 65, 66). This figure should represent Song Emperor Taizong (r. 976-997). He commissioned the renovation of the temples and he would be the first one to express his gratitude towards the Northern Peak deity for his help (who is represented with a statue in the central altar niche in the hall) and wish to demonstrate the Chinese supremacy over the Khitan and the remaining border tribes. His representation as a general may seem odd when compared with the better-known ancestral portraits of the Song emperors in casual scholar robes and wearing *putou* 幞頭-hats with long projecting wings, but it makes sense when seen in the light of historical situation of that period.

Song Taizong was leading militairy expeditions during most of the time of his reign, and depicting him in a militairy outfit would be a reflection of his actual situation, especially when we take into account that his worst enemies were the Khitan of the Liao dynasty, who reigned over the north and whom the Northern Peak deity should bring under control. After the establishment of the Song dynasty in 960 some regions of the former Tang empire were still in the hand of independent rulers, and when Taizong succeeded his brother Song Emperor

[79] For the central place of the True Writs in the Golden Register Retreat, see Du Guangting's (850-933) *Jinlu zhai qitan yi* 金籙齋啓壇儀 DZ 483, 4a. They are found in the fourth century *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* 太傷洞玄靈保赤樹玉訣妙經 DZ 352 of the original Lingbao corpus. For the True Writs and this text, see Benn, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission*, pp. 49-55.
[80] Chavannes, "Le jet des dragons," pp. pp. 68-128, 184-189, 207 n. 78.

Taizu (r. 960-976) on the throne, he first defeated the Wu-Yue Kingdom in outheast China in 978 and one year later the Northern Han in Shanxi. Taizong then immediately continued his siege with an attack on Beijing, the Southern Capital of the Khitan who still occupied sixteen routes in northern Hebei, but his repeated attacks in the following years remained unsuccessful.[81] For the remainder of his reign, and in fact of the entire Northern Song dynasty, the mountain range running from northern Hebei to northern Shanxi, Taihangshan 太行山, in which the Sacred Peak of the North Hengshan 恆山 was located, became the frontier between the Liao and Song dynasties with the Beiyue miao still located within Song territory, and a symbolic stronghold against the threat from the north.

Frederick W. Mote's description of Taizong's behaviour and personality during these militairy expeditions would give us even more reason to assume that the militairy figure in the Beiyue miao murals should represent Taizong. According to Mote, Taizong was a far less accomplished militairy strategist than his elder brother – the defeats suffered to the Khitan are written on his conto by Chinese historiographers – and he appeared to have been particularly keen on displaying himself as a martial leader, "a conquering hero" in the words of Mote, who "donned an armor and carried a sword when venturing to the front lines" but which left his generals clearly unimpressed.[82] If Taizong was so focused on displaying his own martial prowess, we may not be surprised at all to find him being portrayed in the Beiyue miao murals as a devout but fierce militairy commander in shining armour.

The identification of Emperor Taizong as the patron of the murals opens interesting possibilities to identify the painter of the Beiyue miao murals in 991. Because the 991 murals were an imperial commission, we may assume that a famous painter of the tenth century was responsible for their production. The high quality and ingenious design of the murals would further support such an assumption. Considering that the paintings are an overt display of the Wu Daozi-style, the painter in question should have been particularly known for this style. Several painters of the tenth century would meet this requirement, such as Wang Guan 王罐, Wang Ai 王靄, or Wu Zongyuan 武宗元,[83] but they lived either too early or too late. The most probable painter for the 991 Beiyue miao murals would in my opinion have been Gao Wenjin, who was a personal favourite of Emperor Taizong and was involved in many wall painting projects during his reign; he was moreover versed in both Buddhist and Daoist

[81] Herbert Franke and Denis Twitchett (eds.), *The Cambridge History of China, Vol. 6: Alien Regimes and Border States, 907-1368*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 84-87; Frederick W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, pp. 104-114.
[82] Mote, *Imperial China*, p. 106.
[83] On these painters, see *Songchao minghua ping* pp. 6-9, 15-16.

images and also supervised the wall painters of the Yuqing zhaoying gong. The *Tuhua jianwen zhi* however mentions that he absorbed both the static and dynamic styles of Cao Zhongda and Wu Daozi – similar to Wu Zongyuan – indicating that he combined both styles,[84] and a woodblock illustration of a Buddhist assembly, which is purportedly made after a painting by Gao Wenjin, shows nothing of the dynanism witnessed in the Beiyue miao murals.[85] The attribution to Gao Wenjin remains therefore hypothetical. It seems more realistic to assume that the Beiyue miao murals were the concerted effort of a team of painters in which different painters were assigned to different tasks, elements, or sections of the wall painting, as was common with state temple painting projects, such as the Yuqing zhaoying gong, in that period. Gao Wenjin may have provided the design (*xiaoyang*), and other painters enlisted for the project were then assigned to transfer sections of it to the wall, such as the landscape, the clouds, or the faces which are particularly detailed and life-like.[86]

Having discussed the irregular elements and personalisations of the archaic model, it is now possible to turn to the patrons of the renovations in 1270 and the question why they would like to adopt an archaic model.

The patron of the 1270 mural was officially Khubilai Khan who funded the restoration to the temples of the Sacred Peaks and Marshes, and probably ordered them, but the actual patron of the entire project was the Quanzhen patriarch Zhang Zhijing 張志敬 (Veritable Chengming 誠明真人, 1220-1270). A stele inscription with his biography relates how he he initiated the project: "The Palace Treasury issued paper money worth a hundred thousand strings of cash to the Patriarch who consequently hired artisans to start the renovation [on the temples]. He selected among the Daoist adepts those of a fair mind and with good organisation skills to calculate the number of artisans and workers needed."[87] He delegated the renovation to able priests with experience in temple restorations, and an inscription on the wall of the Beiyue miao discovered during the renovation of the temple in the 1980's revealed the Daoist name of the temple's registrar (*tidian* 提點), □*jing tongzhen dashi* □靜通真大師提點, but whom I have not been able to identify.[88] Although the Quanzhen order was deeply involved in the renovation of the Beiyue miao renovations, their involvement is not borne out

[84] *Tuhua jianwen zhi* p. 126. See also *Songchao minghua ping* pp. 34-35.
[85] See Gregory Henderson and Leon Hurvitz, "The Buddha of Seiryoji: Finds and New Theory." *Artibus Asiae* 19 (1956), p. 5-55.
[86] The faces may for example have been done by a specialist in portraiture, such as Yuan Ai 元靄 who also worked for Emperor Taizong and painted once his portrait. See *Songchao minghua ping* pp. 43-44.
[87] *Xuanmen sifa zhangjiao zongshi Chengming zhenren daoxing beiming bing xu* 玄門嗣法掌教宗師誠明真人道行碑銘並序, by Wang Pan 王磐, dated 1273. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 600-601.
[88] The characters are difficult to read. Zhang, "Beiyue miao," p. 9.

in the murals. Rather, the 1270 patrons seem to have opted for transferring an archaic model to the renovated hall without any significant change in its subject-matter or style.

Although no stele inscription survives that could possibly motivate the particular choice for copying an archaic model, I would argue that the personalisations of the 1270 patrons pertain to the same motivations as the 991 patron, Emperor Taizong. The 1270 patrons were no doubt familiar with Wang Yucheng's stele inscription of 991 and its political message of Chinese cultural supremacy over the Khitan. The situation for the Chinese in 1270 was comparable to that of 991; this time however the Mongol forces had conquered all of northern China and the Chinese were placed in a subordinate position rather than that of victor as during the time of Emperor Taizong. By copying the archaic model, the Quanzhen clergy could express a covert wish for restoring the Chinese cultural supremacy, and eventually victory, over the invading Mongols. We have seen with the Yongle gong murals that the Quanzhen clergy expressed a similar kind of covert message by adopting a ritual configuration introduced during the reign of Song Emperor Huizong by wich means the Quanzhen could claim to restore and continue Huizong's sacred Daoist empire. Restoring the glory of the Song and Chinese supremacy was apparently an important *leitmotiv* in Heavenly Court paintings in the more intellectual circles of the Quanzhen order. Contrary to the Yongle gong murals however, the Beiyue miao murals do not show any signs that the Quanzhen clergy modified the archaic model to better suit them their wishes or the situation of their time; the Song archaic model already did that quite effectively.

The personalisation of the Beiyue miao murals thus consisted, I would argue, of consciously copying an archaic model in order to express a wish for restoring Chinese cultural supremacy. The archaic model was painted in 991 on the order of Emperor Taizong and possibly designed by the Song court painter Gao Wenjin. It should have been this design (*xiaoyang*) that was preserved at the temple and on which basis the painters in 1270 re-painted the composition. The painters of the 1270 are not known, but because of the similarity in pigment use with the Mingying wang dian murals, I surmise that the painters belonged to a painting workshop hailing from central Shanxi province.[89]

[89] It is possible that a certain painter Liu Borong 劉伯榮 from Puzhou 蒲州 (i.e. Pingyang in Shanxi) was a member of this workshop. See my discussion in Appendix 1.4.

Conclusion

Like any other study, a conclusion should answer the questions set out at in the introduction and reward the reader for his or her patience with a succinct summary of the gains and new insights that the study aims to deliver. However, also like any other study, the answers in their turn raise so many new questions that the achieved gains and insights become seemingly rather small when compared with the immense field of unexplored material and sources that are conjured up by the new questions. In the end, one can only worry if it will ever be possible for one researcher to say something conclusive on a topic; and to immediately eleviate the worry, the researcher can only accept his or her own limitations, in the hope that fellow researchers, now or in the future, will deem the new questions raised by the study worthy enough for future investigation.

In order to quench the reader's thirst for conclusions as well as to wet his or her appetite for the perspectives this study offers for future research, I will now discuss some topics that I believe summarise the conclusions in a succinct way and are representive for the gains and new insights that this study offers, and in the meantime I will try to point out the roads that venture into the still unexplored territories of Chinese art.

Iconopraxis

This study is above all an experiment for trying out a new art historical methodology I have devised, iconopraxis. Although growing out of dissatisfaction with existing methodologies, it should be mostly seen as a new tool in the toolbox of the art historian, or of any viewer of art objects if so desired. Iconopraxis does not refute other methodologies, but in dealing with non-western art objects, when source materials are not always as numerous or documented as in the west, or when such methologies are hindered by as a strong emphasis on symbolism and meaning or by the presupposition of an unbridgeable gap between text and image because of the nature of western languages, they have their limitations which iconopraxis hopes to solve by focusing on the actions associated with the art object and by viewing texts, symbols etc. as representations of this same praxis.

Iconopraxis is borne out of this study of Daoist Heavenly Court paintings, and contains a certain measure of elements borrowed from Chinese and in particular Daoist philosophy. It is however possible to relate these Chinese elements to interesting counterparts or parallel theories in modern western thought – one can think of Husserl's theories on phenomenology, Heidegger's focus on "Das Gestel," or Peirre Bourdieu's work on theories of practice – and, although not the same, they open possibilities for establishing a more globally equal view on art.

In its most general sense, iconopraxis aimes to explain why art objects are depicted in a certain way, but rather than viewing them as representations of period-style, symbolic meaning, sign-language, or social relationships, iconopraxis sees them as a representation of a certain accustomed practice which a certain group of people in a certain place and time have in common. The methodology then proceeds in a few steps that are aimed at recreating the process of art production. The process starts with determining the central praxis, in our case the *chao* 朝-audience ritual, which provides a conceptual framework on wich painters base their design. On the basis of the central praxis, it is possible to reconstruct the sub-praxes such as the historical development, the painting techniques, and the personalisations by the patrons.

Of course, the methodology of iconopraxis should be tested critically in the future and on a wide variety of art objects of different periods and regions. I deliberatedly avoided to make the methodology too complicated or to equip it with a distinct apparatus of terms, with the aim of future applications by others. I also tried to avoid to make this a theoretical study because I believe a theory can only prove its worth in its application, not by an abstract, logically coherent construct that can stand on itself as a theory but lacks the blood and tissue (i.e. the art objects themselves) to make it viable. Iconopraxis is at best conceived as an "open-source technology," and free-available who want to make good use of it and has the potential to improve it; at worst, it is simply forgotten or derided as a study on the functionalism of art which it is of course not. A study on the function of Heavenly Court paintings would for example interpret them as tools for visualisations but a study on the praxis would relate them to the *chao*-audience ritual of presenting a memorial as I demonstrated above.

Heavenly Court paintings

Even though the oldest extant temple paintings depicting a Heavenly Court date only to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Yongle gong, Toronto, Nan'an, and Beiyue miao murals of this study, but their development can be traced back to at least the Later Han

dynasty. Heavenly Court paintings are an elaboration on a early Chinese pictorial theme, the *chao*-audience theme, that can also be witnessed in representations of so-called homage scenes, banquet scenes, donor scenes, and tomb procession scenes of the early mediaeval period. These are all representations of the praxis of the traditional Chinese court ritual which is called a *chao*-audience as well. Daoist liturgy is modelled after this court ritual and its bureaucratic proceedings of presenting a memorial, and it is therefore no surprise to find Heavenly Court paintings following this format of the *chao*-audience theme. Curiously, it seems that nobody has ever noticed that this theme existed in Chinese art. A similar study as this one but focused for example on representations of the so-called excursion scenes in temple paintings but also in scroll paintings and their related practices would yield similar results, not to speak of some thematic programmes in Buddhist art.

Our first record of a Heavenly Court painting dates to the sixth century, but ritual areas decorated with images were already used in the fifth century. It still needs to be researched if Heavenly Court paintings was indeed new to Daoism, for example because of the unification of various Daoist lineages around that time and the emerging of a state-sponsored Daoism or as the result of a reaction to Buddhism which emphasised the production and worship of images, or if such images and wall paintings have always been produced, for example as religious temple paintings at the court or in local cults, but of which the evidence of their existence has been lost after so many centuries.

Regardless the haziness of the precise origins of Daoist Heavenly Court paintings, many of the elements of the earlier period are still preserved in the four sets of Heavenly Court paintings of this study, and they form perhaps the best surviving examples of a great tradition in temple painting. This tradition flourished during the Tang, Song, and Yuan dynasties, mostly because of the state support for Daoism, but still not much is known about Heavenly Court paintings in the Ming and Qing periods. Because of the mass destruction of Chinese temples in the last century, no reliable figures can be given for the later period. Many sets of hanging scroll paintings depicting a Heavenly Court have survived from the Qing and these can perhaps give a better view on the development in the late imperial period. For reasons of scope, these have not been dealt with in this study; moreover, many paintings still need to be inventorised and are in the collections of museums, in hands of private collectors, or in the hands of Daoist priests. It is my hope that with this study, it will be easier to identify these paintings and appreciate them for their value.

One aspect of the history and development of Daoist Heavenly Court paintings not dealt in this study with in any great measure is the relationship with Buddhist temple paintings,

in particular the so-called Paradise scenes. Some parallels have been pointed out such as the relationship between early Buddhist donor scenes (*gongyang tu* 供養圖) or worshipping the Buddha scenes (*lifo tu* 禮佛圖) and Heavenly Court paintings, or the similarity with Water-and-Land paintings (*shuilu hua* 水陸畫), but still many aspects await research. This research should no doubt include the relationship with Buddhist liturgical practices. The relationship between the wall paintings in the Mogao caves in the far west of China and the temple painting tradition in the Chinese heartland further present great opportunities for future research, not only to investigate the continuing tradition of certain themes, styles, motifs, and and compositional formates in both Buddhist cave paintings and temple paintings, which thus far has received only some scant scholarly attention, but also for the history of temple painting as a whole.

As far as can be judged from this study, it seems that Heavenly Court paintings remained largely immune to influences of Buddhist paintings and its deities, and it is my contention that this immunity was largely intentional. Heavenly Court painting were "annexed" by the state during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756) in the mid-Tang dynasty as vehicles for promoting the divine authority of the imperial court. It is from this period onwards, that "Daoist" deities in imperial costumes wearing *mian* 冕-crowns and *tongtian* 通天-crowns appear for the first time in Heavenly Court paintings which were previously only seen in portraits, Buddhist donor scenes, or tomb processions. Most of these new deities originally belonged to the state cult, and both the Daoist cult and the state cult were gradually merged during this period, also on an institutional basis in the organisation of the state such as a state sponsored temple network, holidays, an imperial personality cult, and state rituals for Daoist deities and Daoist rituals for imperial ancestors. It was exactly during this period that Buddhism reached its zenith of wealth and power, which was lavishly displayed in large monastic estates, exquisite sculptures, and temple paintings demonstrating to everyone to see in every corner of the empire that Buddhism constituted the veritable representation of divine authority on earth, thus attracting even more followers and income which in turn increasingly undermined the authority and economic solvency of the state. An alliance between the state and Daoism, in conjunction with new laws and persecutions such as that of the Huichang period (844-845), were aimed at curtailing the wealth and power of Buddhism and bringing it under the supervision of the state. The Heavenly Court paintings of that period are the visual testimonies of the alliance between the imperial court and the Daoist clergy, and I would surmise this was an alliance against Buddhism.

Because the Heavenly Court paintings before this period are characterised by supernatural elements and images of deities represented mainly in the costumes of Daoist priests, I have termed this period the Early Phase (400-700), and the period when the imperial court allied with Daoism in the ideological battle against Buddhism the Transitional Phase (700-1000), because the former type of representation was still produced next to the new format with imperial deities, and because the merging of Daoism and state was not yet complete.

The merging between Daoism and state, as well as the assimilation of Buddhism with Chinese society, were completed during the Middle Phase (1000-1400). The various measures taken by the Tang court were continued by the imperial court of the Northern Song, and they reached their apex with the establishment of a Daoist sacred empire by Song Emperor Huizong (r. 1101-1125) when the state pantheon of deities was subsumed under the Daoist pantheon of deities. The Daoist sacred empire provided the Song imperial court with divine legitimation but was also aimed at the unification of the empire under one ideology, of course much to the dissent of the Confucians and the Buddhists. Daoist Heavenly Court paintings during this period also reached their height in scope, imperial support, the number of deities included in the paintings, and in lavishness.

The Daoist sacred empire of the Northern Song was shortlived and northern China was engulfed first by Jurchen forces in 1127, and later in the early thirteenth century by the Mongol forces. Heavenly Court painting continued during that period in North China, and it regained much of its former glory when the Daoist Quanzhen order rebuilt the Song Daoist temple network and decorated them with wall paintings in the tradition of the Song. The four sets of Heavenly Court paintings of the present study, the Yongle gong murals, the Toronto murals, the Nan'an murals and the Beiyue miao murals, all belong to this period and were painted under the patronage of the Quanzhen order. The more prestigious temple paintings, such as those of the Yongle gong and the Beiyue miao murals, clearly make a claim on continuing (by the Quanzhen order) of the Daoist sacred empire of the Song or on restoring the Song cultural supremacy over the invading forces.

The Quanzhen Heavenly Court paintings however introduced a new element, although only seen in the Yongle gong murals, which was the incorporation of popular deities. These popular deities were represented as scholar-officials and Daoist priests and they belonged to local cults with which the Quanzhen order cooperated, or which the order "converted" (*du* 度) to use their own terminology, together with their temples and incorporated them and their local communities in the Quanzhen monastic network.

The incorporation of and cooperation with local cults of the Quanzhen order would form a prelude for the next period, the Middle Phase (1400-present), when Daoism would form alliances with these local cults and accept their deities, although still very limited, in the ritual pantheon of the Heavenly Court. Liturgy changed accordingly, becoming more diverse, and while the Quanzhen Heavenly Court paintings still continued the classical formats of the Tang and Song, it seems that with the advent of the Ming dynasty the sense of a "classical tradition" had given way to a greater variety of in particular popular traditions, both in painting and liturgy. It seems further that the state, and I mean the governmental administration and its officials and not necessarily the imperial court and the imperial family, was much less supportive of Daoism (perhaps accounting for the lack of an overarching and state-sanctioned classical tradition) with the result that Heavenly Court painting had become more of a local affair with subsequent standards and variations. Most curiously, the historical development of the Daoist Canon, especially from the Song to the Ming, seems to portray a similar rupture with the classical tradition favouring a more local and popularised account of Daoist texts. This period awaits further study.

Painting and ritual

Daoist liturgy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is fairly well documented and further supplemented by modern anthropological research on ritual performances by present-day Daoist priest uncovering traces of the classical ritual tradition. Yet, the role of Heavenly Court paintings, or art objects in general, in these rituals has hardly received any attention. What is most conspicuous about the relationship between Heavenly Court painting and Daoist liturgy is that they virtually show a parallel development. This can be explained by two facts, first that Heavenly Court paintings represent the most essential act of the Daoist liturgy, namely the *chao*-audience of presenting a memorial in a Heavenly Court (none of the many other ritual acts of Daoist liturgy can be related to the murals), and secondly because Heavenly Court paintings only figure in the layout of a Daoist ritual area, open-air altar or temple hall, where the *chao*-audience is performed.

The *chao*-audience provides the ritual foundation and conceptual framework on which painters would base their composition. It is also an ancient pictorial theme in Chinese art but in Daoist Heavenly Court paintings, the theme was expanded with a set of principles for organising visual space which was more directly related to Daoist liturgy. The conceptual framework pertains to five principles which are all closely related to the spatial arrangement of an open-air altar:

1) A division into left and right. Heavenly Court paintings are invariably divided over the left (east) and right (west) wall depicting assemblies of deities focused on the north.

2) A three-tiered altar mound (*daotan* 道壇) and Six Curtains (*liumu* 六幕). The three tiers of a Daoist altar mound are incorporated in the composition of the murals on the central altar niche. The Six Curtains are normally six sets of paintings of Daoist patriarchs, the Three Officials, and the Five Sacred Peaks shielded by curtains placed in front of the altar mound and these sets are also incorporated in the mural composition on the side walls.

3) Three Realms (*sanjie* 三界) of Heaven, Earth, and Water. The Three Realms are the three main governmental departments in the Heavenly Court (originally called the Three Offices, *sanguan* 三官), and the deities on the sidewalls are accordingly divided into three departments, Heaven in the northwest corner, Earth in the southeast corner, and Water in the northeast corner. On a more cosmological level, the Three Realms represent a division of the universe into Heaven, Earth, and Water, and in the human body into the three so-called cinnabar fields (*dantian* 丹田) located in the head, chest, and abdomen. The macro-cosmos of the universe and the micro-cosmos of the body are both hypostases of three energies (*qi* 氣) that emerged from the one original energy (*yuanqi* 元氣) of the Dao after the creation of the cosmos.

4) A northwest-southeast axis. This NW-SE axis connects the Gate of Heaven (*tianmen* 天門) in the northeast corner and the Earth Door (*dihu* 地戶) in the southeast corner in the open-air altar layout. The two gates are represented by central deities such as the Heavenly Sovereign (*tianhuang* 天皇) and Earth Goddess (*houtu* 后土) or by their respective realms of subordinate deities. During the *chao*-audience, the Daoist priest will present his memorial to the Heavenly Court by kneeling in the northwestern direction of the Gate of Heaven, and make a visualised journey to deliver the memorial to the audience of deities assembled in the Heavenly Court. On a cosmological level, the two gates mark the points where yin turns into yang (NW) and yang into yin (SE).

5) Eight Trigrams (*bagua* 八卦). The eight trigrams are abstract representations of the possible transformations of the cosmos, and exist in two circular arrangements of eight trigrams. The King Wen arrangement denotes a representation of the cosmos after its creation or posterior heaven (*houtian* 後天). The Fuxi arrangement is a schematic representation of the cosmos before its creation or anterior heaven (*xiantian* 先天). Heavenly Court paintings organise the eight central deities (of the Eleven Sovereigns) in the King Wen arrangement of

posterior heaven, matching for example the Heavenly Sovereign (and the Gate of Heaven) with the *qian* 乾-trigram of three complete lines symbolising heaven in the northwest corner of the arrangement. The posterior-heaven arrangement is used on the lower tier of the altar mound in the open-air altar layout. Significantly, this arrangement also has a NW-SE axis, dividing the circle of eight trigrams in a yin half (above) and a yang half (below).

The Daoist *chao*-audience is the means to return from the differentiated state of the cosmos after its creation to its original and harmonious state of the Dao before its creation. The Heavenly Court paintings depict the cosmos in its differentiated state after its creation, and are therefore not a symbolic representation of the Dao or something. Because the *chao*-audience exists on both an external level of the visual liturgical performance and the universal deities of the Heavenly Court and an internal level of the visualised cosmos of the Daoist priest's body, we can say that the deity images are at the same time representations of the cosmic energies in their various states of differentiation. It must be noted that in the classical tradition, nowhere is any suggestion made that the images are the deities; as a matter of fact, the images are not strictly necessary or compulsory for executing the Daoist liturgy. The main reason for this curious stance is that the deities are visualised and the paintings act as tools to assist in these visualisations but can also be left out.

The five principles constitute the conceptual framework for a Heavenly Court composition, but painters may not have incorporated all of them in each Heavenly Court paintings. Variations exist. The fact that the Yongle gong murals include all five principles is indicative of the status and importance attached by the Quanzhen patrons to the site.

Wall painters and their techniques

The working methods and social organisation of professional artists in imperial China is a largely neglected subject. On the one hand this neglect can be ascribed to the absence of written sources documenting these artists, and on the other it can be explained by an emphasis on the so-called literati-artists in Chinese art history. On the basis of this study, we can present some preliminary information on the working methods and organisation of wall painters when designing a Heavenly Court painting in the hope to remedy this problem.

Wall painters worked in teams and although texts on painting and inscription suggest that in early times (that is before the Yuan period) workshops consisted of only one master-painter and that in a temple painting project many of such master-painters were working together on one mural, we may expect that they were assisted by various disciple-painters. This phenomenon demonstrates that wall-painters as well as their assistants had a different

social status, and probably organisation, than later workshop painters which were generally all listed in a mural inscription and who often named the workshop after a master-painter who may not be alive anymore or present during the project. The greater social status and fame of the later wall painters suggested by the more detailed inscriptions stands in stark contrast to their absence in the official historical record and in texts on painting of that period. Importantly, the painters of a workshop were generally divided in two groups, one responsible for the east wall and one responsible for the west wall, thus similar to the *chao*-audience. It is however most surprising that there is no detectable difference between the paintings on the east and west walls, suggesting that the painters worked from one design (arguably the responsibility of the master-painter) and that each of them was assigned a particular section or element in the mural.

The titles of the painters known from their inscription do not reveal a strict hierarchy but do emphasise master-disciple relationships. It may also be possible that the constitution of a workshop also changed according to each project and that painters and their disciples were enlisted on a free-lance basis. They could also hail from many different parts of a province, sometimes lying more than two hundred kilometres apart. The master-disciple structure and the existence of an album of designs dating to the Ming dynasty, the so-called Junkunc Album (recently acquired by the Cleveland Museum of Art), all suggest that the painting workshops belonged to a guild organisation that emerged in the Song dynasty. There are also interesting links with Daoist master-disciple relationships in which ordination took place through the transmission of texts, similar to the transmission of the design album in a painting workshop. These aspects should be seen in the light of the changing economic situation starting from the Song dynasty, predominantly on the local level, and its relationship with art production constitutes in fact a whole new field of study. As far as our study is concerned, there are interesting parallels here between the rise of painting workshops organised in guilds and the gradual popularisation of Daoist Heavenly Court paintings after the Yuan dynasty.

If a temple painting needs to be painted, it is possible to reconstruct the working procedures of mural production in a chronological order: 1) A project manager is appointed who handles the financial affairs, hires the painters and other workers, and keeps watch on the time-schedule. 2) A painting supervisor is assigned, determining the contents of the paintings and may also provide designs. 3) The painters or workshop are selected and enlisted. 4) The painters are divided into an east group and a west group, each with their respective leaders. 5) The head-painters prepare designs (*xiaoyang* 小樣) in small-scale of which 6) the painters

work out pictorial elements in sketches (*fenben* 粉本). 7) After the wall has been prepared with layers of plaster and smoothened, 8) the painters draws a charcoal design (*xiuhua* 朽畫) on the wall in full-scale providing the general outlines, 9) on which basis an underdrawing is applied in light black ink. 10) Colours are applied, followed by 11) an overdrawing in dark black ink. 12) As final touches, parts of the images can be decorated with gold dust, gold relief, and papier-mâché to add lustre to the composition. 13) A consecration ritual performed by Daoist priests inaugurates the temple painting. The ritual performed is generally a *jiao*-offering and not a rite of "opening the eyes" (*kaiguang* 開光) which seems of Buddhist origin and is introduced in Daoism only fairly late. Of course, the procedures could vary a bit depending on the scale of the project and the number of painters involved.

Central to the working procedures of the wall painting workshop are the use of drawings in the various stages of the process. Although some research has been done on drawings retrieved from the Mogao cave temples and dating to the ninth and tenth centuries, the present findings do not concur with the previous research. One of the main problems is the terminology, that is, by which terms did art critics (and painters we presume) designate which type of drawings. If we use the classification of drawing adopted in western art history, we can discern three types: 1) sketch (*schizzo*), 2) design (*disegno*), and 3) cartoon (*cartone*), which designate 1) drawings of fragmentary elements of the composition in small-scale, 2) drawings of fairly complete compositions in small-scale, and 3) drawings in full-scale. In texts on painting from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, the western terms can be correlated to the following Chinese terms: 1) sketch – *fenben* 粉本 ("powder-piece"), 2) design – *xiaoyang* 小樣 ("small-scale model"). The cartoon is nowhere mentioned in Chinese texts even though modern art historians equate it with the term *fenben* because in the application of a cartoon red powder is used. This is not substantiated and should await further research.

In modern studies in China and in the West, the term *fenben* has become the general term to designate all kinds of preparatory drawings, and *xiaoyang*, especially among Chinese scholars, to designate drawings made after a mural is painted, thus differentiating the two terms according to the time when the drawing is made, before or after the mural is painted. I have found no evidence for this assumption and rather define the two terms according to their state of depicting a complete composition or not. It must be noted that it seems that Chinese authors were not clear on the exact difference themselves, especially in later period, adding to the confusion.

Having classified the types of drawings more properly, it is now possible to identify some extant drawings and relate these to the praxis of Heavenly Court paintings. It seems that the great majority of the Mogao drawings are sketches of fragmentary compositions. On the basis of these sketches, we can infer that three different types of compositional elements were transferred from model (the master-design) to the wall: details, single figures, and groups of figures. The design in fact constitutes the last stage in which all the three compositional elements are combined into one complete composition. A surviving example of a design, the so-called Wu Zongyuan scroll in the C.C. Wang Collection in New York and generally believed to represent a composition for a wall painting of the early eleventh century, can be correlated to the architecture of the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong, proving that the Wu Zongyuan scroll should have been a design for a thirteen-bay hall and that wall painting designs were made in a scale of 1:10, following similar procedures in architecture of that time for which also small-scale models were made.

The breaking down in compositional elements of the drawings is essential because there is a direct relationship with Heavenly Court paintings, in particular with liturgical praxis. Heavenly Court paintings primarily consist of images of deities pieced together in one composition. Some of these deities stand alone but many of them only come in groups, for example the deities of the Five Planets are represented by a fixed group of five deities. In an open-air altar layout, images of these single or group deities would consist of hanging scroll paintings which, as a format, correspond to the format of the various compositional elements of sketches. Therefore, in order to understand the designing process of a Heavenly Court painting, we should view a Heavenly Court painting as consisting of various compositional elements that are joined together in one composition, similar to hanging scroll paintings are joined together to represent a Heavenly Court painting in an open-air altar layout.

Based on the various degrees of integrating the compositional elements, three different types of designs can be discerned with regard to Heavenly Court paintings: a loose design, a joined design, and an integrated design. In a loose design, such as the Nan'an murals, the compositional elements (i.e. the single or groups of deities) are disconnected; in a joined design, the compositional elements are connected but still preserve a format based on hanging scroll paintings pieced together, such as in the Toronto murals. In an integrated design, all the elements are connected without any reference to the format of sketches or hanging scroll paintings. The Beiyue miao murals are a great example of an integrated design. The Yongle gong murals have a design with both joined and integrated elements. The painters availed themselves of various pictorial techniques to connect, or in some cases to deliberately

disconnect, the compositional elements. These techniques varied from the use clouds to eyecontact, to the use of banners, spears and long decorative ribbons running from the top of the imperial *mian*-crowns down to the ground. The result was a play of vertical and diagonal lines that either connected or differentiated the compositional elements in the painting. The measure of integration and number of techniques used is of course indicative of the quality of the design, and in this comparison the Beiyue miao murals would certainly take pride of place.

Patrons and personalisation

A Heavenly Court painting is not only a representation of a ritual praxis defining the painter's conceptual framework or of the technical process of designing a viable and interesting composition, but also of the particular choices and motivations by the patrons of the murals that decide the final composition. The motivations and aspirations of the patrons are revealed by the irregular elements in the Heavenly Court composition. This irregular element is what I term a personalisation introduced by the patrons.

A detailed study of the four Heavenly Court paintings under discussion reveals that the irregular elements mainly pertain to two types of personalisation. One is the inclusion of certain deity figures not common to the standard ritual pantheon as described in ritual manuals of that time or usually not depicted in other Heavenly Court paintings. The other is the introduction of a particular ritual configuration, a distribution of deities which is not seen in other contemporaneous Heavenly Court paintings or cannot be directly related to configurations promoted by ritual manuals. The personalisations are therefore small changes applied to the standard or normative representation of the Heavenly Court. This normative representation is no doubt an ideal and may have never existed, because each patron would costumise a composition and adapt it also to the local situation of the temple.

Personalisations of deity figures can be further divided into two groups: portraits of historical figures, and images of generic figures. Portraits of historical figures are included in various Heavenly Court paintings. The image of Quanzhen patriarch Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (Veritable Changchun 長春真人, 1148-1227) is included on the position of the Heavenly Sovereign, and probably representing this deity, in the Toronto murals, thus virtually making him the Gate of Heaven and the main focus of the *chao*-audience and the presentation of the memorial. The portrait of Quanzhen patriarch Sun Lüdao 孫履道 (fl. 1312-1327) is incorporated twice in the Yongle gong murals. Once on the outside of the central shrine wall on a location where in other representations the patrons or donors of the murals are depicted,

and also once on the east wall rendered as the deity of Luck or Emolument of the Three Stars. The deity of Longevity is the third member of this group. A portrait of Song Emperor Taizong (r. 976-997) is found depicted, I would argue, in the Beiyue miao murals as part of the archaic model copied by the Yuan painters. The Yongle gong murals also contain several (idealised) portraits of heroes of local cults who were incorporated in the ritual pantheon of the Quanzhen order, such as Zhao Yu 趙昱, Li Bing 李冰, Erlang 二郎, the Three Mao 茅 brothers, and probably some more others who I have not been able to identify. Of a different nature is the portrait of Zhang Daoling 張道陵, the first patriarch of the Heavenly Master order in the Han dynasty, which is part of the Six Curtains, depicting the Daoist patriarchs and masters receiving special worship during the rituals.

The inclusion of the portraits of these (semi-) historical figures in the Heavenly Court of course elevates them to the status of deities and members of the Heavenly Court where they are elegible for receiving memorials and wielding power in the human world. As mentioned above, a Heavenly Court painting is an abstract representation of energies after the creation of the cosmos, and the deities are therefore considered to be pure manifestations of original energy (*yuanqi* 元氣) from which the cosmos was created. Humans are not part of this world (although Daoist priests, as officials of the celestial bureaucracy, have access because they have transformed themselves), and the cultural heroes of the local cults have theoretically speaking no place in the Heavenly Court. Their inclusion is therefore a strong indication of the motivations of the patrons and, we may assume, of the (local) communities that venerated these persons. Patrons could immortalise themselves or their patriarchs and the communities could win prestige and divine authority.

The personalisation of generic figures seems to have happened less often but can be explained in a similar way. In some cases, the patrons would change the standard representations of deities with less common ones, and the Nan'an murals are particularly demonstrative of this feature. It for example depicts the deities of the Northern Dipper, who are normally depicted as seven officials, as seven exorcists with long hair holding swords. The same temple also replaces six deities of the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions, usually depicted as officials, by the very diverse group of two officials, a Daoist priest, a warrior, a scholar, and a woman (the other six deities are damaged). The images can hardly represent portraits of historical figures, but as generic icons they should have had great value to the local community. The Nan'an is a temple dedicated to a Daoist local deity Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682), a famous physician and Daoist priest of the Tang dynasty, whose cult dominates

the site. As representations of persons of a more mundane society – the abundance of females in the Nan'an murals are particularly noteworthy – rather than as officials of a remote imperial court (either in heaven or on earth), the popular figures attain the same divine status as the more standard officials and Daoist priests. This vision also reflects better the ambition of the local cult community rather than the aspirations of the Daoist patriarchate or the imperial court alone.

Personalisations of the ritual configuration pertain to irregular elements in the selection of certain deities or in the choice for an entirely different configuration. The patrons have a great repertoire of deities to chose from, i.e. the ritual pantheon at large, so their choices for particular deities must have been motivated by some reason, either because they were trained in a certain ritual tradition that favoured certain deities, or because the temple site or community encouraged them to make these choices. The personalisations of the ritual configuration therefore reveal the points of emphasis in the Daoist liturgy performed at the site in question and, more indirectly, provide important information on the liturgical background of the patrons, such as their lineage and ritual tradition, and the social needs of the community these liturgies were designed to cater to.

For example, the Nan'an murals show a most basic configuration for a Heavenly Court painting, but the particular choice of some deities such as those of the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors, the inclusion of the Four Spirits (four generals representing the dragon, tiger, red bird, and turtle-snake guarding the four directions) rather than the usual Four Saints (Tianpeng, Tianyou, True Warrior, and Black Killer) would suggest that the murals were designed especially for a liturgy centred on the recitation of the *Salvation Scripture* (*Duren jing* 度人經) in which these deities played important roles during the accompanying visualisations. The *Salvation Scripture* was one of the most popular scriptures of Daoism and was used for rituals of the salvation of the dead which had the soul of the deceased transferred from the realm of death in the north to that the Daoist heavens of eternal life in the south. The prominent positions of the deities of the Northern Dipper (in exorcist dress we remember, probably because many deities invoked by exorcists hailed from the realms of death in the north) and the Southern Dipper at the north ends of the west and east walls would also fit this *Salvation Scripture* scheme. Because the Nan'an was mainly a local cult site dedicated to Sun Simiao, this popular scripture, which could also be used for exorcist means (again involving the deities of the Northern Dipper), would also be very appropriate to cater to the more mundane needs of this local community being less concerned with ideological or political endeavours of the Quanzhen patriarchate or imperial court.

The personalisation of the ritual configuration of the Toronto murals is somewhat similar to the Nan'an murals, and seems to be particularly geared to a so-called Rite of Deliverance (*liandu* 鍊度, litt. "salvation by means of refinement") which is also a ritual for the salvation of the dead but which does not work with visualisation of deities and recitation such as in the case of the *Salvation Scripture* but by means inner alchemy (*neidan* 内丹) and the refinement of the priest's bodily energies. The memorials contained in ritual manuals indicate that the majority of deities selected for the Toronto murals were addressed with these memorials for their role in the Rite of Deliverance. The preference of the patrons for the Rite of Deliverance thus explains the inclusion of the deities of the Nine Heavens, who are not seen in other Heavenly Court compositions but do appear in the lists of memorials addressed to the celestial bureaucracy, as well as the replacement of the Saint Ancestor and the Saint Mother, two central deities of the so-called Four Emperors and Two Empresses introduced by the Northern Song court, by the King Father of the East and Queen Mother of the West who play particularly important roles in the Rite of Deliverance. The succession of deities in the Toronto murals, if seen running from south to north on the east wall and then on the west wall thus form the southeast corner proceeding to the northwest corner, also shows an ever more etherical refinement of cosmic energies, moving from more common stellar deities on the east wall to the Gate of Heaven personified, most significantly, by the portrait of the Quanzhen patriarch Qiu Chuji, and then to the Nine Heavens finally to coalesce with the Three Purities (represented as statues in the hall) and return to the Dao.

The personalisation of the ritual configurations of the Yongle gong and Beiyue miao murals are played out on a more ideological and political level. The Yongle gong murals adopt a configuration focused on eleven central deities (or actually thirteen to be more precise), called the Eleven Sovereigns, which does nowhere appear in other Heavenly Court paintings commissioned by the Quanzhen order. The Quanzhen order rather used a configuration of the Four Emperors and Two Empresses, together with the Three Purities called the Nine Sovereigns, as demonstrated by many stele inscriptions. The configuration with Eleven Sovereigns was installed during Song Emperor Huizong's reign as part of creating a Daoist empire in which this Daoist Heavenly Court constituted the most complete ritual pantheon, incorporating all Daoist lineages and their deities (as well as those of the state cult) and even a deity, the South Pole Emperor, of whom Huizong believed himself to be a reincarnation. The choice for this Song configuration is motivated, I would argue, by the Quanzhen order's ambition to restore the Daoist sacred empire installed by Emperor Huizong.

The inclusion of several Daoist local cult deities, mentioned above, is however a further personalisation of the original Song configuration, demonstrating that the Quanzhen order also included the local cults in this Daoist sacred empire, clearly adjusting themselves to the needs of the time and foreshadowing the changes to come in the Ming and Qing periods.

The ritual configuration of the Beiyue miao murals follows an archaic model of the Transitional Phase (700-1000) focused rather on the deities of the five directions (the Five Sacred Peak deities), even though the murals were certainly painted in 1270. The Beiyue miao is dedicated to the deity of the Northern Sacred Peak ruling over the northern dominion. Many other irregular elements, such as painting style, crowns of deities, dark, bearded faces for central deities etc. not seen in Yuan period temple paintings, would indicate that the murals are painted after an archaic model. An investigation of these irregular elements and stele inscriptions demonstrates that the original murals, i.e. the archaic model, were painted on the commission of Song Emperor Taizong in 991. His portrait as a militairy commander is incorporated in the murals. This archaic model was personalised, as the stele inscriptions accompanying the renovations of 991 demonstrate, in order to show the Chinese cultural supremacy over the foreign Khitan tribes threatening the Song empire from the north. The Quanzhen order that renovated the Beiyue miao in 1270, I argue, choose to copy the Song archaic model precisely because the political situation, with China invaded by the Mongols also from the north, was largely similar to that of Taizong's but now with the Mongols occupying northern China.

The personalisation of a Heavenly Court paintings can reveal valuable information on the background of the patrons and sometimes even on the date of the murals when this is insecure. The dating of the archaic model in the Beiyue miao murals is a good example. Another example are the Toronto murals, which are undated but because of their incorporation of the Qiu Chuji portrait and their provenance from the Pingyang area in central Shanxi province as well as their ritual configuration focused on the Rite of Deliverance, it is possible to link the murals to the Quanzhen priest Song Defang 宋德方 (Veritable Piyun 披雲真人, 1183-1247). Song Defang was Qiu Chuji's disciple and is known to have been active in the Shanxi area during the last half of his life where he "converted" many temples and ordered several artistic projects such as the Longshan cave sculptures of 1234, which also comprise an image of Qiu Chuji shortly after the patriarch's death, the printing of the Daoist Canon, and the designing of the architecture of the Yongle gong. He was also initiated in the Thunder rites of the Shenxiao lineage to which the Rite of Deliverance is closely related.

Song Defang would therefore be an excellent candidate for having commissioned the Toronto murals, and I would therefore date the Toronto murals between 1234 and 1247.

It is my thesis that the personalisations of a Heavenly Court painting are a direct reflection of the social identity of the patrons, or more precisely, of the social identity of the group of people promoting the diffusion of the images. Rather than seeing some individual images of portraits of historical figures, the results of this study suggest that the Heavenly Court paintings as a whole are representations of the people promoting the paintings. If a Heavenly Court painting is promoted by people on an imperial level, we are prone to encounter more imperial figures in the Heavenly Court representation than when it is promoted by a local community, which would thus explain the personalisation of the deity as more mundane and popular figures such as in the case of the Nan'an murals. Inversedly, this would mean that images of deities take on the identity of the people promoting this deity, a sort of social portrait. This social portraiture is also witnessed, in a very general sense, in the development of Heavenly Court painting proceeding in four phases. In the Early Phase (400-700) the deities were represented as Daoist priests and the main promotors of the religion and the images were the Daoist priests themselves. In the Transitional Phase (700-1000) imperial deities were introduced in conjunction with the support for Daoism of the imperial court. This imperial support reached its peak in the Middle Phase (1000-1400) when the imperial representation of the deities became standard. With the merging of Daoism with local cult in the Late Phase (1400-present), deities in more popular representations were added such as scholars and generals (even though the common man remains absent in the Daoist Heavenly Court). The Heavenly Court paintings become representations of the alliances of the social groups promoting the paintings, thus suggesting a correspondence of identity between the viewer and the deity image, but this would take us into a whole new field of study which we will leave now for the future.

APPENDIX

PhD Dissertation

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1 Iconographic Description

1.1 Yongle gong

Temple history and layout

The Yongle gong 永樂宮 (Palace of Eternal Joy) was originally located in the small township of Yongle 永樂 on the northern riverbanks of the Yellow River in southern Shanxi province. In 1952, when the Chinese government planned the construction of the Sanmenxia Dam in the Yellow River, archaeologists coincidentally discovered this temple adorned with unique Daoist wall paintings, and in 1959 they initiated a rescue operation before the rising waters of the dammed river would swallow the precinct. They moved the temple brick by brick and tile by tile to a site north of Ruicheng 芮城, some twenty kilometres of its original location where it was rebuilt, most aptly, at the heart of the ancient Wei 魏 capital, Ruibo 芮伯, of the Western Zhou period. The entire project of relocating and renovating the temple and its murals was finished in 1964.[90]

Building of the temple started in 1240 on the site of a shrine to Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 (Veritable Chunyang, *Chunyang zhenren* 春陽真人), a famous Daoist immortal who had become the first patriarch of the Quanzhen order, initiating its founder Wang Zhe 王嘉 (Veritable Chongyang, *Chonyang zhenren* 重陽真人, 1112-1170) into the Dao. In its present location, the Yongle gong has the following structures on an axis from south to north, the traditional layout of a Daoist monastery since the Tang, in succession from south to north we find Dragon and Tiger Gate (*Longhu men* 龍虎門), a long path leading up to a high platform projecting from the front of the central hall dedicated to the Three Purities, Three Purities Halls (*Sanqing dian* 三清殿) measuring seven by four bays, a slightly smaller hall dedicated to Lü Dongbin, Chunyang Hall (*Chunyang dian* 春陽殿) measuring five by three bays, and

[90] The history of the Yongle gong is best surveyed in Ruicheng, *Ruicheng xianzhi*. See also the special issue of *Wenwu* 8 (1963) dedicated to Yongle gong; Su Bai 宿白, "Yongle gong chuangjian shiliao biannian 永樂宮創建史料編年." Wenwu 4-5 (1962), 80-87; Jing, "Yongle Palace;" and Katz, *Images of the Immortal*.

finally the smallest hall dedicated to Wang Zhe, Chongyang Hall (Chongyang dian 重陽殿) measuring five by four (narrower) bays. A shrine to Lü Dongbin is located to the west and several other small small shrines to Daoist popular deities such as the God of Wealth (*Caishen* 財神) and the True Warrior (*Zhenwu* 真武) are found to the east of the central complex (Fig. 70).

On its original site, the complex consisted however of many more buildings. A fourth hall dedicated to Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (Veritable Changchun 長春真人, 1148-1227), closed the sequence of halls but it was torn down by Japanese soldiers during Second World War to serve as firewood to burn their war casualties. The complex comprised further structures like dormitories, refectories, gardens, and granaries. In the centuries after the Yuan period, several new shrines were added to the complex, comprising a City God Hall, a Three Officials Hall, a Shrine of Repaying Merit, and an Upper-Storey Pavilion to the Jade Emperor.[91] None of these have survived. On the old site, a new shrine to Lü Dongbin has been erected under the direction of Quanzhen monks.[92]

The Yongle gong was designed by the Quanzhen priest Song Defang 宋德方 (Veritable Piyun 披雲真人, 1183-1247) who also had initiated the building of the temple. He was a Daoist with artistic aspirations and great managing skills, known for example to have conducted the carving of several caves with Daoist sculptures at Longshan 龍山 near Taiyuan 太原 in 1234 as well as the printing of the Daoist Canon in Pingyang 平陽 in 1236.[93] Pan Dechong 潘德冲 (Veritable Chonghe 冲和真人, 1190-1256) was ordered by the Quanzhen patriarchate to take charge of the project in 1245.[94] Both Quanzhen priests were eventually

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[91] Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, pp. 107, 108, 127.

[92] The Yongle gong is officially a museum but on Lü Dongbin's birthday, the 14th day of the 4th lunar month, Quanzhen priests from Huashan near Xi'an occasionally perform rituals, as I was informed during my visit in April 2001.

[93] *Xuandu zhidao Piyun zhenren Song Tianshi citang beiming bing yin* 玄都至道披雲真人宋天師祠堂碑銘並引, by Li Ding 李鼎, dated 1262. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 546-549; *Zhongnanshan zuting xianzhen neizhuan* DZ 955, 3.22-23. On the Longshan sculptures, see Zhang, "Taiyuan Longshan Daojiao shiku yishu yanjiu," Hu, *Zhongguo Daojiao shike yishu shi*, Vol. 2, pp. 322-401, and Little, "Daoist Art," p. 730.

[94] See the stele inscription *Dachao chongjian da Chunyang wanshou gong zhi bei* 大朝重建大純陽萬壽宮之碑, by Wang E 王鄂, dated 1262. Ruicheng, *Ruicheng xianzhi*, pp. 795-796, and its translation in Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, pp. 102-103; and *Zhongnanshan zuting xianzhen neizhuan* DZ 955, 3.11b.

buried in tombs on the site.[95] The printing blocks of the Daoist Canon were also stored at the site.[96]

The entire complex is presently adorned with wall paintings covering a total of 880 m2. Wall paintings depicting a Heavenly Court audience of life-size Daoist deities decorate the Three Purities Hall. An inscription left on the murals indicates that a painting workshop from Luoyang 洛陽 headed by Ma Junxiang 馬君祥 completed the murals in 1325. Ma Junxiang had also painted murals in the famous Baimai si 白馬寺 (White Horse Monastery) in Luoyang in 1299, China's first Buddhist establishment where sutras were copied from Sanskrit into Chinese.[97] As the Chinese scholar Meng Sihui 孟嗣徽 recently demonstrated, a close reading of the inscriptions would reveal that the Ma Junxiang workshop only applied the clouds and other decorative paintings on some sections of the murals. Next, she convincingly argues that a comparison with the Xinghua si 興化寺 (Monastery of Flourishing Transformation) murals from Jishan 稷山 painted by Zhu Haogu 朱好古 proves that the Heavenly Court paintings of the Yongle gong were painted by one and the same painter (and his workshop), Zhu Haogu. She further argues that the Xinghua si murals should have been painted in 1320, and not in 1298 as is generally believed, and the Yongle gong murals between 1320 and 1325.[98]

Zhu Haogu hailed from Xiangling 襄陵 (present Xiangfen 襄汾) in Pingyang 平陽 Prefecture (central Shanxi), and is one of the very few wall painters of the Yuan dynasty whose name has been preserved in (local) official history. Zhu Haogu's murals at the Xinghua si were sold at the beginning of the twentieth century and eventually ended up in two museums, one mural depicting a Maitreya Paradise in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto,

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[95] On the coffins, which are now on display at the Yongle gong, see Li Fengshan 李風山, "Shanxi Ruicheng Yongle gong jiuzhi Song Defang Pan Dechong he 'Lüzu' mu fajue jianbao 山西芮城永樂宮舊址宋德方潘德冲和〈呂祖〉墓發掘簡報." *Kaogu* 考古 8 (1960), pp. 22-25, and Xu Pingfang 徐蘋芳, "Guanyu Song Defang he Pan Dechong mu de jige wenti 關於宋德方和潘德冲的幾個問題." *Kaogu* 考古 8 (1960), pp. 42-45.

[96] See the abovementioned stele inscription of 1262 by Wang E in Ruicheng, *Ruicheng xianzhi*, pp. 795-796,

[97] Jin Weinuo, "Siyuan bihua de kaocha yu yanjiu," p. 45; Xu Jinxing 徐金星, "Guanyu Luoyang Baima si de jige wenti 關於洛陽白馬寺的幾個問題." *Zhongyuan wenwu* 中原文物 4 (1996), p. 92.

[98] Meng Sihui 孟嗣徽, "Xinghua si yu Yuandai Jinnan siguan bihua qun de jige wenti 興化寺與元代晉南寺觀壁畫群的幾個問題." *Gugong xuekan*, forthcoming. She also gave a lecture on the topic of the relationship between the Xinghua si and Yongle gong murals at the Daoist art symposium held in Xi'an in May 2007, which will be published in the proceedings of the symposium.

Ontario, Canada, and one mural of an Assembly of Seven Buddhas in the Palace Museum in Beijing. The temple was destroyed.[99]

Despite some small parts having been repainted in 1562 (Plate 3),[100] and the retouching after the relocating of the murals from Yongle to Ruicheng for which they were cut from the walls in pieces of one square meter and then reassembled, the Yongle gong murals are in a fairly good condition.[101]

The Dragon and Tiger Gate also has murals depicting several warriors and other figures but these are mostly eroded. Since no inscription is left, the murals are generally believed to date to 1325 as well, but the coarse style of the figures – short, bulbuous bodies and crudely rendered hands - and use of different hues rather links them to the repainted figures in the central hall and therefore a late sixteenth century date seems more plausible (Fig. 71).

The two other halls have by contrast narrative paintings of a very similar composition and style depicting in two tiers scenes of the lives of Lü Dongbin and Wang Chongyang respectively, set in a landscape scenery with buildings and figures, each scene accompanied by a cartouche explaining the contents of the scene.[102] Inscriptions left on the walls by the painters state that the Chunyang Hall murals were completed in 1358 by members of the Zhu Haogu workshop headed by Zhang Zunli 張尊禮 and Li Hongyi 李弘宜. The murals painted at the Xinghua si reportedly also included a hall with narrative scenes on the life Buddha, and may therefore have been reminiscent of the Chunyang Hall narrative murals.[103] The Chongyang Hall has no inscription mentioning the painters names, but a stele in one scene has

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[99] *Shanxi tongzhi* 山西通志, compiled by Wang Xian 王軒 (Qing dynasty), edited by Gao Ke 高可 and Liu Ying 劉英. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990, j. 158, p. 10969. See also White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*; Steinhardt, "Zhu Haogu Reconsidered;" and Tsang, "Further Observations on the Yuan Painter Zhu Haogu."

[100] Wang Chang'an, "Yongle gong bihua tiji mulu," p. 66.

[101] After the relocation, the Yongle gong murals were reconstructed in Ruicheng not on the temple wall but on a wooden board allowing for ventilation between the wall and the murals. The joints between the mural pieces as well as some large cracks have all been repaired and retouched.

[102] The textual source for the cartouches and murals in the Chunyang Hall is a Daoist scripture called the *Chunyang dijun shenhua miaotong ji* 春陽帝君神化秒通記 DZ 305. The relationship between the mural scenes and cartouches is discussed in detail in Katz, *Images of the Immortal*. The textual source for the Chongyang Hall murals may have been an illustrated scripture in 55 episodes, of which the preface has survived, *Chongyang Wang zhenren minhua tu xu* 重陽王真人憫化圖序, by Ren Shilin, ca. 1260. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 717-718. Most interestingly, the preface states that patriarch Li Zhenchang made it (the paintings?), and his future successor Zhang Mingcheng did the calligraphy. See also Goossaert, "L'ordre Quanzhen," p. 459. If the Hall to Qiu Chuji also had been decorated, the *Xuanfeng qinghui tu* preserved in a Yuan blockprint version may have been a probable source.

[103] See Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, p. 67.

a date corresponding to 1368, the year when the murals were probably finished.[104] The whole project of building the Yongle gong thus took more than a century to complete.

Scholarship

The Yongle gong murals have received a great deal of attention resulting, particularly, in the publication of many large photo albums, but discussion of the style and content of the murals has thus far remained limited.[105] I will restrict my discussion here to scholarly publications on the Heavenly Court paintings of the Three Purities Hall. Discussions have mainly revolved around two issues: the source for identifying deities - text or images – and the ritual connection.[106]

Text or image. In an article published in the Chinese journal *Wenwu* 文物 (Cultural Relics) in 1963, an issue wholly dedicated to the history, architecture, and murals of the Yongle gong, the Chinese scholar Wang Xun presented a complete list with identifications for almost all the deities (although he counted only 286 while there are actually 290 depicted in the murals).[107] He took a *jiao* 醮-offering list from one ritual manual, the *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法, as his basis, reflecting according to him the Northern Song Daoist pantheon during the Xuanhe reign-period (1119-1125).[108] His main argument for the choice of this particular texts seem to have been that it counted Eleven Sovereigns heading the list, the same number of central deities depicted in the Three Purities Hall murals. A great deal of the remaining deities is also identified on the basis of the offering list, chiefly on the correspondence by number and sometimes corroborated by other Daoist scriptures or an

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[104] See Wang Chang'an. "Yongle gong bihua tiji mulu," p. 43.

[105] The murals are reproduced in Shanxi sheng, *Yongle gong*; Jin, *Yongle gong bihua quanji*; and Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*.

[106] Another issue in which the Yongle gong murals play a certain role but not the Heavenly Court paintings as such is the assumption of a regional style among the many Yuan period temple paintings in China and in North American museums. According to Nancy Steinhardt there is one southern Shanxi style, she terms "Ma-Zhu style" after the two only known mural painters from this area Ma Junxiang and Zhu Haogu, but Michelle Baldwin claims there are three different styles which are also chronologically ordered from early and high quality to late and poor quality. She judges the Yongle gong murals as mediocre, apparently because they were painted in the early fourteenth century. Steinhardt, "Zhu Haogu Reconsidered," and Baldwin, "Monumental Wall Paintings." Both authors attempt to create a "scholarly" discourse for "professional" painting, forging regional and period styles while it is not certain if these did exist. Mural workshop consist of many painters, operate on different scales, and murals would be repainted and retouched continuously over time, making issues like authorship or period styles very difficult without knowing or defining which were the main constituents of such a style or how mural production, patronage, and design went about in the Yuan period. These issues still remain to be investigated.

[107] As Anning Jing correctly points out, Wang Xun omits four figures of the west half of the north wall in his drawing. Jing, "Yongle Palace," p. 287.

[108] Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian," pp. 23-24 and *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, chapter 39.

occasional painting The article also includes drawings in black-and-white of the Heavenly Court painting depicting 286 figures.

It must be noted that Wang Xun 王遜 may not have had the access to visual sources in 1963 that we have today, and his attempt in providing a complete identification for so many deities is a great accomplishment. His identifications have however never been questioned by Chinese scholars in later decades, and the identifications are quoted verbatim in all large photo albums on the Yongle gong and other major Chinese publications such as Chai Zejun's 柴澤君 *Shanxi siguan bihua* 山西寺觀壁畫 (Temple Painting in Shanxi province) of 1997. Sadly, Wang Xun nowhere explains his methodology or why this offering list should bear any relationship to the Yongle gong murals.

In 1994, the America-based scholar Anning Jing was first to challenge the identifications made by Wang Xun in his PhD dissertation "Yongle Palace: The Transformation of the Daoist Pantheon During the Yuan Dynasty (1260-1368)." Pointing out that the number of 360 deities in the offering list do not match the 290 figures in the murals, he argues that the "starting point should not be a scripture, but a direct observation of the iconographical features in the murals"[109] and that "images do not always follow textual traditions because artists can not work without models."[110] He therefore sees the Yongle gong murals as representing a stage in the development of the Daoist iconography and the Daoist pantheon, basing his identifications of the Yongle gong deities on previous representations of the Heavenly Court.

Anning Jing proposes new identifications for six of the Eleven Sovereigns and some other deities but unfortunately does not discuss all figures. Furthermore, Jing's methodology of viewing the Yongle gong Heavenly Court as a final stage in a long development of earlier representations – although mainly focusing on main deities such as the Three Purities, the deities of the Five Directions or Five Sacred Peaks, and the Nine or Eleven Sovereigns – restricts him to pictorial sources before the Yuan and not taking into account many later materials such as hanging scroll paintings, other wall paintings, and woodblock prints which depict the same Daoist deities as in the Yongle gong murals; the omission of the related but Buddhist Water-and-Land paintings (*shuilu hua* 水陸畫) is particularly regrettable.

In addition, Jing sees the Yongle gong Heavenly Court as representing a Quanzhen Daoist pantheon. But it should be noticed that all four Heavenly Court paintings under discussion here - Yongle gong, the Toronto murals, Nan'an, and Beiyue miao – were temples

[109] Jing, "Yongle Palace," p. 289.
[110] Ibid. p. 14.

under Quanzhen management and all four depict four different pantheons. Lastly, the methodology of paralleling the development of Heavenly Court painting to the development of the Daoist pantheon assumes that there existed one fixed Daoist pantheon for each period or dynasty, which is not confirmed by either existing Heavenly Court paintings or Daoist texts. Apparently, the Yongle gong murals do not depict a typical or standard Quanzhen pantheon, nor do they represent a typical Daoist pantheon of the Yuan dynasty.

Ritual connection. In an article of 1993 and in a study published on the cult of Lü Dongbin at Yongle gong in 1999, Paul Katz found confirmation of Wang Xun's identifications by exploring the ritual connection of the paintings. He first argues that the murals depicted in the Dragon and Tiger Gate formed a unity with those of the Three Purities Hall together depicting 360 deities, the gate representing the outer altar (*waitan* 外壇) and the hall representing the inner altar (*neitan* 内壇) of a Daoist ritual area (*daochang* 道場); and he further suggests that the deities received offerings of a priest "circulating throughout the Gate of the Limitless Ultimate and the Hall of the Three Pure Ones according to the stages defined in their liturgical manuals. The objects of these rituals were none other than the deities featured on the walls of the two buildings as well as the nearly four hundred spirit-tablets mentioned above [in a stele inscription of 1624]."[111] Paul Katz also questions Anning Jing's identification of Lü Dongbin as one of the emperor figures depicted in the murals arguing that Jing's identification does not match other known images of Lü Dongbin in which he is always represented as a scholar-immortal and never as an emperor.[112]

Katz points out the importance of both the ritual connection and iconographical comparison with contemporaneous sources. Yet, in insisting on the portrayal of 360 figures in the Yongle gong murals, Katz assumes that Heavenly Court paintings must exactly match the number of deities presented in an offering list. This assumption should then also be applicable to other Heavenly Court paintings or textual references thereof, but numbers all vary – as the other Heavenly Court paintings in this study underscore – and the offering list is therefore not a direct source for the paintings (although it can provide possible names for deities in the paintings). In addition, the Yongle gong murals portray several attendants and court ladies that have no match in an offering-list; thus even if the Yongle gong murals had 360 figures,

[111] Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, p. 148. Actually, the inscription speaks of "over" (*yu* 餘) 400 spirit-tablets. *Yongle gong chongxiu zhushen paiwei ji* 永樂宮重修諸神牌位記, by Meng Guan 孟绾, dated 1624. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 1304.

[112] Paul R. Katz, "The Religious Function of Temple Murals in Imperial China – The Case of the Yung-le Kung." *Journal of Chinese Religions*, 21 (1993), pp. 45-68, and Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, pp. 142-149.

they still would not match the names of an offering-list exactly. Clearly, the number of deities depicted in a Heavenly Court painting is variable.

Katz is the first scholar who attempts to explain the ritual use of Heavenly Court paintings, an aspect missed in the work of Wang Xun. Indeed, Katz quotes a ritual text explaining how a Daoist priest circulates around the ritual area burning incense and making offerings, but nowhere in this text it is stated that offerings are made to the images. Rather, a *jiao*-offering is made to spirit-tablets (*shenwei* 神位, *pai* 牌, or *ban* 版) inscribed with the deity names (as recorded in the *jiao*-offering list) and arranged in two rows against the temple walls.[113] In fact, the practice of offerings to spirit-tablets is confirmed by a stele inscription of 1636 preserved at the Yongle gong stating that "more than 500 spirit-tablets were repaired"[114] not only proving the existence of spirit-tablets independently of the murals – used for the *jiao*-offering – but also suggesting that there were many more tablets, presumably 3600 since this is the largest number of tablets or "seats" (*wei* 位) for a *jiao*-offering, normally only held for the benefit of the emperor and the state. Offering-list for smaller numbers – 2400, 1200, 360, 240, 120, 80 etc. – also exist, further suggesting that the same Heavenly Court painting could function in many different types of rituals.[115] My suggestions for the identities of the Daoist deities represented in the Yongle gong murals, also taking into consideration the views of the abovementioned scholars, will be given below.

Iconography

The Yongle gong Heavenly Court painting represents one of the most comprehensive and varied Daoist iconographies. Providing a description of and identifying 290 figures presents major problems of organisation and presentation. I have chosen to describe the murals from wall to wall, rather than from group to group as Wang Xun has for example done, thereby placing more emphasis on the figures' position in the layout and their interrelationship, which are often important aspects as well in determining their identities. I also hope this method will

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[113] See the diagram for a *jiao*-offering layout in *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.25b. It may be that Paul Katz is drawing inferences for his thesis on the basis of personal eye-witness accounts of contemporary Daoist ritual in Taiwan or China where ritual procedures may have changed over time and indeed offerings are made to the paintings of the deities. I am also unaware if contemporary Daoist ritual still uses spirit-tablets for *jiao*-offerings, which perhaps could explain such a change in practice.

[114] *Chongxiu Pan gong citang ji* 重修潘公祠堂記, by Li Conglong 李從龍, dated 1636. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 1308. Another inscription, the same as mentioned by Paul Katz on the 360 images, states that more than 400 tablets were repaired. *Yongle gong chongxiu zhu paiwei ji* 永樂宮重修諸牌位記, author unknown, dated 1624. Su Bai 宿白, "Yongle gong diaocha riji 永樂宮調查日記." *Wenwu* 文物 8 (1963), p. 56.

[115] How these Heavenly Court paintings "functioned" in Daoist ritual, and how the differences between them should be explained, is one of the central questions of this study, and will not be discussed here.

help to give a better sense of looking at murals which are not compartmentalised even though the reproduction may sometimes suggest this. I will start with the main deities and gradually proceed from wall to wall, from north to south and from easy to more difficult to recognise images. A chart with all the deity names suggested by Wang Xun, Anning Jing, and myself, together with references to attributes and important visual sources such as related Water-and-Land paintings is found in Appendix 2.1 for overview. All numbers in the discussion and the chart refer to the drawings published in Wang Xun's article, which I have rearranged in a logical order (shrine walls, east walls, west walls) in Drawings 1A, 1B, and 1C to imitate the layout of the original murals and to facilitate looking up deity figures. I discuss the deities by wall and not by number as did Wang Xun.

Together with the statues of the Three Purities in the altar-shrine (now replaced by modern replicas), the eight main emperor deities on the shrine and sidewalls make up the Eleven Sovereigns, taking up position all around the viewer.[116] These imperial figures, numbered in roman numerals, match in number the eleven deities mentioned in the ritual manual *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, but Wang Xun mixed up some of the deities' locations. Anning Jing corrects the identifications by pointing out the right attributes. Empress VIII should be Earth Goddess (*houtu* 后土) as identified by the *kun* 坤-trigram of three broken lines symbolising earth in her headdress and the two bronze child-brooches across her chest symbolising fertility (Fig. 72); and her male companion, emperor VII, should therefore be the Jade Emperor (*yuhuang* 玉皇), although he has no known attributes (Fig. 73). The two imperial figures on the opposite wall are correctly identified by Anning Jin as King Father of the East (*dongwanggong* 東王公, V)) and Queen Mother of the West (*xiwangmu* 西王母, VI) respectively (Plate 3). King Father of the East has a green dragon symbolising the east at his feet and turning it head in his direction; Queen Mother of the West has standard attributes of a peacock, hare, and peaches since Han times; the peacock is found in front of her, and the hare and peaches make up the background decoration of her seat. A *zhen* 振-trigram formed of two broken lines above and one complete line below symbolising wood and the east further strengthens the bond with her male companion King Father of the East. Wang and Jing agree on the identifications of emperor III as representing the North Pole Emperor (*beiji* 北極) (Fig. 74) and emperor IV as the Heavenly Sovereign (*tianhuang* 天皇) on the two north walls. Both are dressed in dark blue gown symbolising their northern origin, which could create some

[116] In chapter 4.1 I will demonstrate that there are actually thirteen sovereigns but for convenience sake, I will refer to the Eleven Sovereigns.

confusion, but since the North Pole Emperor and the seven stars of the Big Dipper (*beidou* 北斗, 60-66) form a unity, found on the eastern north wall, emperor III should be the North Pole Emperor.[117]

The identification of emperors I and II (Plates 1 and 2) on the exterior walls of the altar-shrine presents however some difficulties. Wang Xun identified them as the South Pole Emperor (*nanji* 南極) on the east wall and the East Pole Emperor (*dongji* 東極) on the west, on the basis of the offering list, but Anning Jing contends that they rather should represent Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 and Zhongli Quan鍾離權, the two main patriarchs of the Quanzhen order, for Zhongli had initiated Lü into the Dao according to legend and this scene is depicted in a mural scene on the rear of the shrine wall in the Chongyang Hall.[118] His main argument is first that both were promoted to emperor by imperial decree in 1310 accounting for the imperial representation rather than as immortals as in the Chunyang Hall mural; and second that the deities are standing rather than sitting on a throne like the other emperors; and third, that the accompanying figures for the most part can be identified as their disciples or lineage masters, e.g. figure 9 should be Wang Zhe, and the person behind him (10) holding a fan should be Ma Yu 馬鈺 (Veritable Danyang 丹陽真人, 1123-1183), his most important disciple. Anning Jing further says a portrait in profile of Qiu Chuji he witnessed in the collection of the Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery) in Beijing and according to him of a Yuan date, closely resembles the portrait in frontal view of figure 7 on top of the east shrine wall, therefore identifying him as Qiu Chuji.[119] I identify this figure as Sun Lüdao孫履道 (fl. 1312-1327), the acting Quanzhen patriarch when the murals were painted.[120] Also, on the west shrine wall, figures 19 and 20 hold a lotus flower and an elixir pill, which Anning Jing takes as attributes for Chen Tuan陳摶 (871-989) and Liu Haichan 劉海蟾 (10th cent.) who are associated with these objects in their biographies (Plate 1). The identities of the other figures are inferred. Wang Xun had identified ten of these figures as the Ten Masters of Mysterious Origin (*xuanyuan shizi* 玄元十子).[121] Paul Katz already professed doubt on

[117] Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian," pp. 23-24; Jing, "Yongle Palace," pp. 289-305.
[118] Reproduced in Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 111.
[119] Anning Jing does not reproduce this painting. A painting of Qiu Chuji in three-quarter view of probably late Ming or early Qing date judging from its style and use of pigments from the Baiyun guan Collection is published in Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian huaji*, p. 105 which does not match the mural figure.
[120] For this identification, I refer the reader to chapter 4.1.
[121] Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian," pp. 23-25; Jing, "Yongle Palace," 306-317.

Anning Jing's identifications of the two emperors and subordinate figures, arguing that Jing had presented not enough textual and iconographical evidence to support his claims.[122]

With regard to the two emperors, iconographical evidence from Water-and-Land Paintings as well as internal evidence from the Yongle gong paintings suggests however that Wang Xun's view is the correct one. First of all, there is a painting of the South Pole Emperor at the Pilu si 毗盧寺 (Vairocana Monastery) in Shijiazhuang, southern Hebei province, and dating to the early Ming, which is identified by a cartouche as such and which depicts the deity in almost a similar pose, holding diagonally a handheld incense burner, and dressed in a red gown, the symbolic colour of the south (Fig. 75). The pose, incense burner and red gown are identical in emperor I, and since the Pilu si figure is identified in a cartouche, the Three Purities Hall emperor should also represent the South Pole Emperor (Plate 2). Emperor II on the opposite side can be identified as the East Pole Emperor by the conspicuous green cloud hovering above his head, green symbolising the east (Plate 1).[123]

As for the subordinate figures accompanying the two emperors, these show very distinct representations in crown and gown and positions on the wall. Following each emperor, are five Daoist priests (9-13, 19-23), recognisable by their colourful ceremonial robes embroidered with auspicious signs and their lotus crowns. All these ten priests have haloes and thus should form one group. By contrast, the figures placed in front of the two emperors are not Daoist priests but are dressed as officials (6, 16-18) except for the Sun Lüdao portrait (7) who is dressed in a peculiar costume representing a Quanzhen master, a feature I will come back to shortly. These five figures, two on the east flank and three on the west flank, also have haloes and should also form one group. Their dresses however differentiates them from the other figures which therefore must present two different groups. The five figures in the front group most probably represent donors, similar to the Nanshan Heavenly Court sculptures in Sichuan where donor-images were also depicted on the posts of the altar-shrine, but their identities remain unclear. With regard to the ten Daoist priests, these may indeed represent ten famous immortals, probably those venerated by the Quanzhen order, although their precise identities remain unclear.

I want to draw attention here to a similarity between the altar-shrine of the Three Purities Hall and the altar mound of "traditional" Daoist ritual, i.e. the ritual layout on a tiered

[122] Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, p. 149.
[123] Strangely, Anning Jing, "Yongle Palace," p. 311 claims that the green cloud is a later addition replacing an original canopy similar to that of emperor. Personal investigation at the site however revealed no traces of repainting in this section. One could further wonder why painters would go through the effort of removing a canopy and paint a seemingly insignificant green cloud.

altar in the open air. The traditional ritual area consists of a tiered altar mound surrounded circles of poles with gates and banners, and it would have statues (or tablets) of the Three Purities in the centre, a ring of ten gates on the first mound for the Heavenly Worthies of the Ten Direction (*shifang tianzun* 十方天尊) with their tablets, which was standard format; in some versions the third ring on the lowest mound would further have banners with the names of the Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors (*sanshi'er tiandi* 三十二天帝).[124] A similar layout is witnessed in the murals of the altar-shrine in the Three Purities Hall: the centre of the shrine was occupied by statues of the Three Purities, images of the Ten Heavenly Worthies occupy the side walls (now represented as Daoist priests), and the images of the Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors on the rear of the shrine. The hierarchy would then logically go further down via the north walls to the east and west walls ending on the south walls. The paintings of the ten Daoist priests would therefore essentially depict the Ten Heavenly Worthies but painted with the faces or attributes of famous Daoist priests and immortals.

From the exterior and rear of the shrine walls, the Heavenly Court audience continues on the north walls, where first two generals, Red Bird (*zhuque* 朱雀, 56) and Xuanwu (玄武, 282) guard the front (and possibly also the northern entrance door against any baleful influence from entering) followed each by three Daoist priests (57-59, 101-103) on the forefront. One of the priests (58) is evidently the first Heavenly Master, Zhang Daoling 張道陵, identified by his bristle hair and protruding eyes, the same features witnessed in his other images, for example as one in the Baiyun guan Collection (Fig. 76).[125]

An explanation for the six Daoist priests on both sections of the north wall may be that they belong to a series of deities whose paintings were traditionally hung on the corridor leading up to the altar,[126] comprising: Xuanshi 玄師 (Mystery Master) who is traditionally identified as Laozi; Tianshi 天師 (Heavenly Master), or Zhang Daoling, who is indeed represented here; Sanshi 三師or Jingjidushi 經籍度師 (Scriptural, Heritage, and Conversion

[124] The middle mound would have banners to the deities of the nine heavens in this version, but these are not represented in the Three Purities Hall murals, see *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.20b-21b.

[125] The images of Zhang Daoling all date after that of the Yongle gong but the characteristics of the wing-shaped hair and bristle beard have remained the same. See the Ming woodblock print in *Huitu sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan* 繪圖三教源流搜神大全. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990, pp. 319-320; the painting in the Baiyuan guan collection, Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian huaji*, p. 99; and the painting in the collection of Kristofer Schipper, reproduced in Ebert, Kaulbach, and Kraatz, *Religiöse Malerei aus Taiwan*, p. 40.

[126] Three paintings, literally *mu* 幕 "curtains," were hung to the left and three to the right of the corridor: Xuanshi 玄師, Tianshi 天師, and Jianshi 監師 to the east, and Wudi 五帝, Sanguan 三官, Sanshi 三師 to the west. See *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.23b; *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 2.9-10; *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 16, 9-10. Images of the Daoist patriarchs (Xuanshi, Tianshi, Jianshi, Sanshi) were also placed in the oratory of the priest. This practice seems to have started with the Tianshidao.

Masters), the founding master, lineage master, and personal master of each Daoist priest; a Jianshi 監師 (Supervision Master) overseeing the ritual proceedings and altar layout; the Wudi 五帝 (Five Emperors of the five directions or the Sacred Peaks); and the Sanguan 三官 (Three Officials) of Heaven, Earth and Water. Because the last two are also represented in the murals (132-134, 164-167, Fig. 37), and the other six figures could therefore all correspond to the six images of the Daoist priests, although one would expect to find a Laozi image among them which is not the case. Perhaps the meaning of the Mystery Master had been lost and all six masters were collapsed into one group; in the Southern Hermitage murals discussed below they also appear in a group of six and in company of the Three Officials and Five Emperors, following standard ritual procedures for the layout of the altar. Wang Xun considered them as six Transmission Masters (*chuanjing fashi* 傳經法師) but could count only five and with different identities.[127]

The eastern north wall has further images of the Big Dipper consisting of the seven stars of the Big Dipper (*beidou* 北斗, 60-61) all dressed in black, the colour of the north, and its two "invisible" stars, Fu 輔 and Bi 弼 (67-68); above them the Three Terraces (*santai* 三台, 69-71); andsurrounding the North Pole Emperor, fourteen images of the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions (*ershiba xiu* 二十八宿, 76-81) each with a specific emblem of their corresponding animal in their headdress, except for seven figures who have heads in the shapes of their particular animal (76-78, 81-82, 87-88).[128] The fourteen others are found on the western north wall. The Eleven Luminaries (*shiyi yao* 十一曜) closes this part of the audience on the north wall, comprising the male Sun (*ri* 日, 90) and female Moon (*yue* 月, 91) identified by a red and white disc in their headdresses, the symbols of the Sun and Moon since early Han times; behind them we find the Five Planets (*wuxing* 五星, 92-96) in their respective Central Asian iconographies, and accompanied by the two Indian stellar deities in tantric style Ketu (*jidu* 計都, 100) and Rahu (*luohou* 羅睺, 99), and two Chinese stellar deities Ziqi 紫氣 (97) in the representation of a Daoist priest, *ziqi* referring to the auspicious purple cloud vapours the Guard of the Pass, Yin Xi 尹喜, saw when Laozi was approaching, and Yuebo 月孛 (98) in official dress (Fig. 77).

The opposite western north wall has many similar stellar deities, also identified as groups by their similarity of dress, emblems or crowns, such as the six stars of the Southern

[127] Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian," p. 25.
[128] Ibid. p. 27; Jing, "Yongle Palace," p. 294.

Dipper (*nandou* 南斗, 104-109), the Three Walls (*sanyuan* 三垣, 110-111, 281 not in drawing) denoting the celestials spheres surrounding the Pole Star called Ziwei 紫微 (Purple Tenuity), Taiwei 太微 (Great Tenuity), and Tianshi 天市 (Heavenly Market); fourteen of the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions taking place behind the Heavenly Sovereign (118-131), and in front right of the Heavenly Sovereign the Three Officials (*sanguan* 三官) of Heaven (*tianguan* 天官, 132), Earth (*diguan* 地官, 133), and Water (*shuiguan* 水官, 134) wearing blue, yellow and red dresses respectively (although these colours vary in other examples) and, as Wang Xun has pointed out, each with a particular emotional expression - happy, stern, and angry[129] – but which is not known for any other painting of the Three Officials (Fig. 37). Strangely, the Official of Water is dressed as a general wearing a suit of armour rather than as an official as his title would suggest.

The western north wall has several unidentifiable figures. Two deities in front (279-290) are dressed in official outfit but inferior in rank than the Southern Dipper deities although all have haloes suggesting, together with their position in front, an important status. A painting in the Baiyun guan Collection mentions two possible candidates: messenger deities appointed to the Heavenly Sovereign and North Pole Emperor called Qing Yang 擎羊 and Tuo Luo 陀羅, but in the painting these are female and not male.[130] Another unidentified deity is an isolated figure represented as a young man holding in both hands a bronze wheel and presumably dressed as a Daoist priest. A similar figure holding a wheel is found in the Baiyun guan Collection but where he is part of the Thirty-six Thunder Generals (*sanshiliu leigong* 三十六雷公).[131] Four obscure figures in the top row of obscure representation (priests?) remain unidentified.[132]

The audiences on the east and west walls are both headed by furious images of the Four Saints: Tianpeng 天蓬 with six arms and three heads (204) assisted by the Black Killer (*heisha* 黑殺, 205) on the west (Fig. 78); and Tian You 天猶 (141) with four arms and two heads assisted by Martial Warrior (*zhenwu* 真武, 142) on the east (Fig. 79).[133] Old Four Eyes (Simu laoweng 四目老翁, 143) stands directly behind them and figures with them in exorcist

[129] Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian," pp. 27-28.
[130] Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian huaji*, p. 67.
[131] Ibid. p. 78.
[132] Possible candidates in the offering list could be the Four Heavenly Officers (*tiancao* 天曹) or the Four Inner Heaven Lords (*tianzongjun* 天中君), see *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1123, 39. 13a; or perhaps the Four Chancellors (*sixiang* 四相) recorded in a memorial list who are interestingly followed directly in the list by the Four Saints, like in the mural, see *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 7.12.
[133] Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian," p. 28 has these two couples inversed.

texts.[134] He is followed by deities of the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions (*shi'er shengxiao* 十二生肖), corresponding to the Twelve Earthly Branches (*dizhi* 地支) and assisting Tianyou, each with an emblem in his crown with a corresponding animal (144-155).

If we first go further down the east wall, we see in the front row to the left and right side of the Queen Mother of the West two standing imperial figures. These must be the Mulberry Emperor (*fusang dadi* 扶桑大帝, 160), reigning over the Water Department (*shuifu* 水府), and the Fengdu Emperor (*fengdu dadi* 豐都大帝, 178), ruler of the Chinese Hades called Earth Department (*difu* 地府), and more easily identified by the ten officials standing behind him, the Ten Kings of Hell (*shidi yanjun* 十地閻君, 179-180, 182-186, 190-191) forming one group on the basis of their unity in crown and gown (Plate 3).[135] The Mulberry Emperor is further identified by deities associated with his Water Department, found behind him in the top row, the Emperors to the Five Sacred Peaks (*wuyue* 五嶽, 164-168), wearing *mian* 冕-crowns according to their ranks bestowed on them during the Song in 1011,[136] and robes in the colour of their corresponding directions, and next to them the deities of the Four Sacred Marshes (*sidu* 四瀆, 169-172).

In between the Mulberry Emperor and the Five Sacred Peaks three peculiar-looking figures take up a rather prominent position in the audience, not indentified by Wang Xun and also not listed in any offering or memorial list. In front we see a Daoist priest (161) but with a gauze hat capping his lotus crown, and Anning Jing has pointed out the similarity with the alleged portrait of Qiu Chuji (in my opinon Sun Lüdao) on the shrine wall (Fig. 52).[137] He holds a sceptre and stands in the first rank in full size at the bottom of the mural. Behind him there is another Daoist priest-like figure (162) and finally an old man holding a gnarled wooden staff and a grotesque, large forehead (163). This last figure should be identified as the God of Longevity (*shoulao* 壽老, *shouxing* 壽星, *nanji laoren* 南極老人, *laoren xing* 老人星). He is only known from much later paintings and, importantly, as a popular folk deity, not

[134] Four-Eyed Old Man is a thunder general surnamed Tao 陶. See *Shangqing Tianpeng fumo dafa* 上清天蓬伏魔大法 collected in the *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 DZ 1220, 156.4b.
[135] Only two individual emperors are recorded in the offering list as well as in the memorial list, and in combination with their particular associated deities, it is possible to identify them as Mulberry Emperor on the left and Fengdu Emperor on the right. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 7.24a, 26a; *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 39, 15a.
[136] *Song shi* j. 102, pp. 2486-2487.
[137] Lecture held in Boston, June 2003.

as a member of the Daoist pantheon incorporated in memorial and offering lists.[138] He is particularly known as a member of a triad called the Three Stars (*sanxing* 三星) or the Gods of Fortune, Emolument, and Longevity (*fu lu shou*, 福祿壽), whose statues still can be found in many Chinese restaurants. A late fifteenth-century painting in the Palace Museum in Beijing depicts the God of Longevity with a large head, and a painting dated 1454 in Musée Guimet in Paris has all three deities depicted as Daoist priests.[139] The two figures in front dressed as Quanzhen masters would then represent the two other members of the triad, turning the portrait of Sun Lüdao in an image of the God of Fortune (*fu* 福). The representation would also be the oldest known representation of the Three Stars thus far.[140]

Three other unidentified figures are found on the top row behind the Queen Mother of the West, one (177) dressed in a casual white robe and a black Dongpo-hat named after the Song artist-statesman Su Shi 蘇軾 (style Dongpo 東坡, 1036-1101).[141] He has a young face and has his hands folded inside his sleeves, rather than holding a tablet, and his whole demeanour is again much different from the rest of the regular audience (Fig. 54). Offering and memorial lists do not give any clues, but his costume suggests a more popular identity and in the Water-and-Land paintings of the Pilu si at Shijiazhuang, a figure wears the same hat and casual robe, albeit yellow, and is identified as Qingyuan miaodao zhenjun 清元秒道真君 (True Lord of Pure Origin and Subtle Dao), a title bestowed by Song Emperor Zhenzong on a Sui dynasty statesman and Daoist priest, called Zhao Yu 趙昱 (Fig. 80).[142] The same image is found in a Yuan period woodblock print with illustrations and biographies on divinities and immortals of the Three Religions (*sanjiao* 三教) Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, called the *Xinbian lianxiang soushen guangji* 新編連相搜神廣記 (Fig. 3).[143] It remains difficult to assess who his two companions are, but Zhao Yu was also known as the Water God Erlang 二郎, and was in fact named after Li Bing 李冰 and his son, both known as Erlang. Li Bing was a Han magistrate in Sichuan who made the region prosper by building an irrigation system at Guankou 關口 and who was therefore deified as a water god together with

[138] However, the Daoist painter-priest Zhang Suqing 張素卿 (fl. 845-927) painted once an image of the "Old Man Star" (*laoren xing* 老人星), according to *Yizhou minghua lu*, p. 131.
[139] Reproduced and discussed in Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 268-271, 273 n. 1.
[140] The Nezu Museum in Tokyo also has a painting of the Three Stars attributed to the Yuan but this identification is unconfirmed. Ibid. pp. 268-271.
[141] See *Sancai tuhui*, p. 1503.
[142] Kang, *Pilu si qun hua*, p. 53.
[143] *Xinbian lianxiang soushen guangji*, pp. 537-538.

his son.[144] I would therefore argue that the three figures should represent water deities. They are appropriately located between the Water and Earth Departments in the mural composition.

The closing section of the audience on the east wall is only partly clear. Wang Xun correctly identified three figures in armour and holding a sword as the Three Original Generals (*sanyuan jiangjun* 三元將軍), Tang Hong 唐宏, Ge Yong 葛永, and Zhou Wu 周武 (197-199), three Zhou period generals who now guard the Three Gates (*sanmen* 三門) before entering the Heavenly Court and mentioned in the offering list.[145] The other figures are more problematic. The four warrior figures (Fig. 48) holding short axes on the foreground can be identified as the Four Meritorious Officers Guarding Time (*sizhi gongcao* 四值功曹, 193-196) guarding the year, month, day, and hour, by comparison to identical paintings in the Baoning si 寶寧寺 (Monastery of Precious Tranquility) in northern Shanxi, Pilu si, and Baiyun guan Collection.[146]

A single bearded figure wearing a conspicuous *putou*-hat with long horizontal wings projecting outwards and a white robe (during the repairs of 1562 painted partly red!) takes a prominent position on the foreground (181). Wang Xun identified him as the God of Literature, Wenchang 文昌, the God of Literature (but also an exorcist stellar deity), but this seems improbable. Namely, this same figure also appears in the Pilu si paintings and the Baiyun guan Collection, named Chenghuang 城隍 or City God, the equivalent in the celestial bureaucracy of the distric magistrate and therefore dressed with *putou*幞頭-hat and scholar's dress (Figs. 6, 81). In addition, in the Pilu si painting he is accompanied by a general, as in the wall paintings (192), of unknown identity, and an old man with white hair, the Earth God (Tudi 土地), the god of the local village who is often dressed in plain robe and casual hat. An old man slightly bending forward and wearing a casual cap is found in the top row (201) but in company of three officials which seems to suggest they form a group. Interestingly, Wang Xun has relegated the City God and Earth God to a place outside the temple following scriptural annotations and did not include them in the wall paintings, which led Paul Katz to the conclusion that their images decorate the Dragon and Tiger Gate forming this outer altar

[144] Hu, *Zhonghua daojiao da cidian*, p. 1496.
[145] Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian," p. 29.
[146] Shanxi sheng bowuguan, *Baoning si Mingdai shuilu hua*, p. 82; Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian huaji*, p. 92; and Kang, *Pilu si qun hua*, p. 73.

(*waitan*),[147] but it now seems more likely that they took up their positions in the very last section in the audience similar to their position in the offering and memorial lists.[148]

The west wall has many figures left unidentified by Wang Xun or Anning Jing and in fact they remain very difficult to identify because of their garbled representation – their crowns and gowns vary greatly and it is therefore not always clear who belongs to which group; and when a possible group is formed their number does not correspond to any numbers found in offering or memorial lists. Many of the following identifications are therefore tentative and need further study.

The majority of figures behind Tianpeng and Black Killer are unidentified by Wang Xun. Dividing them into groups, we have a group of two (219-220), a group of five (221-225), and a group of six (213-218). The group of two form the two most conspicuous figures, a six-eyed old man and another old man behind him, both wearing a scholar costume with a casual hat and the last one holding a feathered fan rather identifying him as a Daoist priest (Fig. 57). Wang tentatively identifies the first as Cang Jie 倉頡 (219), the mythological inventor of the Chinese script and behind him Confucius (220). The six-eyed old man should of course parallel the four-eyed old man on the opposite wall behind Tianyou and therefore relate both figures to thunder magic, but I have found no evidence to support this assumption. Cang Jie is included as an attending deity in a set of sketches of the Thirty-Six Thunder Generals in the Junkunc Collection, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, thus confirming his association to thunder magic.[149]

The figures in the group of five all have different caps (221-225), the one in front (221) a Daoist crown, the one behind him a so-called Zhuge 諸葛-hat which is rolled up like a Chinese bun (224), and named after the famous Three Kingdoms general Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮 (181-234) and the others variations on the ribbed *tongtian* 通天-crown.[150] Most probably, they should be paired with the five other official figures (230-235) also wearing quite distinct crowns on the left side of the Jade Emperor's throne. They could perhaps represent the Ten Heavenly Stems (*shi tiangan* 十天干) because we find the Twelve Earthly Branches (*shi'er dizhi* 十二地支, 144-155), or the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions on the opposite wall.The group of six officials may represent the Six Jia (*liujia* 六甲) but these are normally represented as

[147] Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian," pp. 33-34; Katz, *Images of the Immortal*, p. 148.
[148] In a memorial list, the Four Time Meritorious Officials are the very last deities after the City God and Earth God like in the murals, see *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 8.15.
[149] Zhu, *Daozi mobao*, pl. 11.
[150] See *Sancai tuhui*, p. 1503.

generals and often together with the female Six Ding (*lauding* 六丁) as in the Pilu si murals.[151]

The remainder of the audience on the west wall is better identified. Three Daoist priest on the top row behind Earth Goddess, unidentified by Wang, should represent the Three Mao Brothers (234, 236-237), patriarchs of the Shangqing tradition (Fig. 55). A ritual painting of the Three Mao Brothers is included in the Baiyun guan Collection and in the illustrations of the *Sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan* of the Yuan, always depicted as three Daoist immortals or priests.[152] To the left and right of the Earth Goddess are ten officials, identified by Wang as the Ten Taiyi deities (*shi taiyi* 十太一, 238-247), which makes perfect sense if we go further down the wall where we find deities of the Eight Trigrams (*bagua* 八卦, 260-267) who are the assistants of Taiyi (Fig. 47). The other deities are also related because they belong to the so-called Thunder Ministry (*leibu* 雷部). Nine figures in armour suits (250-258), but strangely four with haloes and five without, and one figure, even more strangely, dressed as an official (259), should represent the Divine Kings of the Ten Directions Flying to Heaven (*shifang feitian shenwang* 十方非天神王) who are exorcist deities of the North Pole Emperor and part of the Thunder Ministry.[153] The final five figures in the bottom corner of the west audience consist of the traditional gods of the Thunder Ministry: Thunder Father (*leigong* 雷公, 268) with his ring of drums, his consort Lightning Mother (*dianmu* 電母, 269) but this time without her mirror, and Rain Master (*yushi* 雨師, 270) normally depicted with a bowl (Fig. 82).[154] The two officials in front of them (248-249) have peculiar feathers on their caps and remain unidentified but may represent Uncle Wind (*fengbo* 風伯) and Cloud Master (*yunshi* 雲師) who together with the three previous deities are known as the Five Thunders (*wulei* 五雷).

The sequence of the two audiences on the east and west walls is closed by the Green Dragon Lord (*qinglong jun* 慶龍君, 271) on the eastern south wall (Fig. 83), and the White Tiger Lord (*baihu jun* 白虎君, 275) on the western south wall, both represented as fierce generals in armour suits and wielding a sword or halberd and accompanied by their corresponding animals. Three Meritorious Officers (*tiancao* 天曹, 272-274) with *putou*-hats

[151] Kang, *Pilu si qun hua*, p. 36.
[152] *Xinbian lianxiang soushen guangji*, pp. 511-515; Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian huaji*, p. 97.
[153] In offering and memorial lists, they are also in sequence with other thunder deities where they directly followed by deities of the Earth and Water Departments. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 7.22b-23b; *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 39.14.
[154] The deities of the Thunder Ministry will be discussed below in the section on the Beiyue miao murals.

assist the Green Dragon lord, a part damaged and repainted in the Ming; and similarly three Strongmen (*lishi* 力士, 276-278) holding long axes assist the White Tiger Lord.

Not discussed thus far are the numerous attendants that assist the eight imperial figures. The male attendants are also dressed as various officials or as warrior figures but generically called Golden Boys (*jintong* 金童) and the female are represented as court ladies, called Jade Maidens (*yunü* 玉女). They hold banners, carry trays with precious gifts, or simply hold tablets. So we find six figures assisting the North Pole Emperor (I:1-5,8); only two court ladies for the East Pole Emperor (II:14-15); again six for the Heavenly Sovereign (IV:112-117) and Jade Emperor (V:207-212); and four figures for the remaining emperors (III:72-75, V:156-159, IV:173-176, VII:226-229). It is interesting to note that also among the attendants a hierarchy is expressed through their dress and headgear. For example, only the male attendants of the Heavenly Sovereign and the Jade Emperor wear a square transparent net over a seven-ribbed crown, called "marten-cicada crowns" (*diaochan guan* 貂蟬冠), which in the terrestrial bureaucracy is only worn by a Chancellor; the crowns of the attendants to the Heavenly Sovereign have indeed seven ribs, while those of the Jade Emperor have five ribs. All the other attendants have crowns of a lesser rank (a lower number of ribs means a lesser rank; this is of course also true for the deity-officials with ribbed crowns).[155]

Perhaps two attendants (Plate 2) could be singled out because they both carry scriptures under their arms, one a square book (8) and the other a heavy scroll (3). Their position next to the South Pole Emperor (I) who also receives a text from a Daoist priest (9) together with the emphasis in Daoist ritual on presenting a written memorial, the two attendants may have a special position in the murals, for example as two deities mentioned in the offering list: one Immortal Official presenting the memorial below the Three Heavens Gate, the entrance to the Heavenly Court, and the other an Immortal Official who carries it into the Heavenly Court.[156] In fact, in several sections of the murals, Daoist priest are engaged in an activity – rather than simply attending a court audience – such as the Daoist priest (9) handing over (or receiving?) a scroll to the North Pole Emperor, one priest (101) bowing and holding his tablet horizontally in reverence to the Heavenly Sovereign, and also on the east side, one official (206) – not a Daoist priest – bowing with a hand-held incense burner to the Jade Emperor. This last figure does not belong to any group and also remains to be investigated, but one would suspect a donor. Because the Jade Emperor is the celestial

[155] *Sancai tuhui*, p. 1514.
[156] The first is called *santianmen xia shang zhangcibiao xianguan* 三天門下上章詞表次仙官, and the other *santianmen xia yinjin xianguan* 三天門下引進仙官. *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 39.14b-15a.

equivalent of the emperor on earth, although this emperor was a Mongol Khan, this way he paid his respect to the Jade Emperor in order to ensure eternal blessings as in the traditional homage scenes found in offering shrines of the Han period.

1.2 Toronto murals

Scholarship

A pair of Daoist murals depicting a Heavenly Court in the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada, (hereafter referred to as the Toronto murals) are of unknown origin and unknown date, and most scholarship has dealt with these two issues. Iconography or the correct identifications of the deities is also discussed, but I will incorporate these views in my discussion on iconography in the next section.

Origin and date. The Royal Ontario Museum acquired the paintings in 1937 from the Japanese art dealers, Yamanaka & Co., who claimed the murals had been cut from the walls of a Buddhist temple called Longmen si 龍門寺 (Dragon Gate Monastery) located in Quwo 曲沃 County east of Houmashi 侯馬市in the Pingyang area (Southwest Shanxi). In 1938, the keeper of the Far Eastern Department of the museum from 1934 to 1948, William White, hired two students from Hongtong county to investigate the area but could find no traces or any references to a monastery with this name in local gazetteers.[157] An inscription of a date on the west wall is as dubious. It states that the murals were repaired in the second year of the *zhiping*-reign period of the Northern Song dynasty, equivalent to the year AD 1065. This date the art dealers must have added to increase its value. William White concluded that the paintings must have originated from a Daoist temple in the Pingyang area and should date to the late thirteenth century by comparison to the very reminiscent style of the Xinghua si murals also in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum.[158]

In 1994, Anning Jing proposed a new, radical theory on the Toronto murals, suggesting that they are "a Buddhist distortion of the early Quanzhen pantheon to humiliate the Quanzhen Daoists as well as their gods" mainly based on the argument that the murals would include a frontal image of Laozi in standing position, rather than in seated position as

[157] Considering that the murals were removed from China at most a decade before 1937, it is regrettable to find that the two students were asked simply to investigate local gazetteers rather than being sent a photograph or drawing of the murals which probably would have yielded much better results.
[158] White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, p. 47; Jing, "Yongle Palace," p. 251.

one of the Three Purities, a humiliating posture according to Jing which can only be explained by presupposing that the murals were painted in a Buddhist monastery; an intention he sees evidenced by the Buddhist-Daoist debates held at the Mongol court in 1255 and 1258, the Buddhists seeking redemption for loss of temples to the fast-growing Quanzhen order. Jing thus implies that the murals were painted in the latter half of the thirteenth century. He finally explains that the murals should however depict an early thirteenth-century prototype of the Quanzhen pantheon because painters would rely on fixed models, or schemata in Gombrich's terms, and were therefore unable to paint the Daoist pantheon "in a far more humble manner than that shown in the Toronto murals" as the Buddhist undoubtedly would have liked to see.[159]

Jing's identification of a supposed Laozi painting is strangely taken over from William White without providing any supporting evidence. Laozi is normally portrayed as an old man with a white (three-pointed) beard and holding a flywhisk or fan. Instead, the image portrayed in the murals is that of a young, beardless man dressed as Daoist priest wearing a ceremonial robe with cloud-motives and a jade-studded lotus-crown. This is certainly not a Laozi image. In addition, no evidence is given that a standing position is humiliating: the Wu Zongyuan scroll deities are standing, the Nan'an murals discussed below have standing deities, and the Beiyue miao murals also have standing deities, not to speak of the many Water-and-Land paintings which all have standing deities. It is therefore highly improbable that the paintings originated from a Buddhist monastery or that they were painted with the intend of humiliating Daoism.

In a Chinese publication of 2002, Anning Jing further elaborated upon his theory and identified a Longmen si in Pingshun 平順 County as the original site of the Toronto murals.[160] The east and west walls are however about a half a meter shorter than the murals, which would rule out the possibility that this Longmen si is the original site. In addition, Jing does not mention the height of the walls which should of course also match the height of the murals.[161]

In 1997, the Chinese scholar Jin Weinuo suggests in a footnote that the murals originated from a Daoist temple, the Wansheng guan 萬聖觀 (Monastery of Myriad Sages)

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[159] Jing, "Yongle Palace," pp. 255-257, 281-283.

[160] Jing Anning 景安寧, *Yuandai bihua – Shenxian fuhui tu* 元代壁畫 – 神仙赴會圖. Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2002.

[161] The Longmen si central hall is 10.4 m. wide and 9.9 m. deep. Murals are usually depicted on the east and west walls (the front wall and often the back wall have doors) , so the murals could have measured at most 9.9 m., yet the Toronto murals are 10.22 m. long and 3.1 m. high (east) and 10.61 m. long and 3.17 m. high (west) respectively. Ibid. pp. 5, 11; and Jing, "Yongle Palace," p. 251.

located in Qicun 齊村, west of Xiangling 襄陵 in Pingyang Prefecture, and built at the beginning of the Zhiyuan reign period (1264-1294).[162] He provides no sources or evidence for this identification.

The original temple site still needs to be determined. Comparing the measurements of the murals to halls of still standing Daoist monasteries in the Pingyang area, and preferably the area near Quwo County, could yield a possible location, if the original temple has not been destroyed yet. In chapter 4.2 of this study I will propose a new date for the Toronto murals, mainly on the basis of the identification of the Daoist priest on the west wall. I date the murals to 1234-1247. This date remains tentative until more evidence can be found on the origin of the Toronto murals.

Iconography

In comparison to the Yongle gong murals, the deities in the Toronto murals present a much easier task - the audience only consists of sixty-three figures and the figures are more easily recognised as groups. The two Toronto murals form one pair, consisting of an east and a west wall, and both depict a procession of deities, not in a static audience as in the Yongle gong murals where the main deities are seated on thrones and the minor deities are standing behind them, but moving in a file from south to north where originally the central altar-shrine with the statues of the Three Purities would have been located. The central deities, three for each mural, imposingly take up positions in the centre of the murals, subordinate figures of court ladies hold banners and fans or tend to an altar table in front, while Daoist deities precede and follow in groups. Numbers in my discussion refer to the drawing of the murals published by William White (2A - east; 2B - west). Both William White and Anning Jing discussed the iconography of the Toronto murals extensively, Jing suggesting many new identifications. I will include their views in my discussion.

The murals have six main deities, consisting of three emperors and one Daoist priest – the figure identified as Laozi by White and Jing – and two empresses. Writing in 1940 and yet unacquainted with the Yongle gong murals, William White's main tool for identification was a painting of three Daoist imperial deities in a Japanese collection which has a cartouche identifying them as the Heavenly Sovereign, Earth Emperor (*dihuang* 地皇, identified by White as the Yellow Emperor), and Earth Goddess; White applies these titles to the three

[162] Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 27, n. 15. Jin Weinuo gives no source and since no temple of that temple exists today Jin must rely on a textual source. There is no Wansheng guan recorded in the stele inscriptions collected in Chen Yuan's *Daojia jinshi lüe*.

imperial figures of the east wall, asserted further by the *kun*-trigram in the phoenix-crown of the Earth Goddess (A11-13) (Fig. 84). Jing agrees only as far as the Earth Goddess is concerned. He correctly argues that her male companion must be the Jade Emperor (A12) and the emperor in front of him rather as the North Pole Emperor (A11) because he is traditionally associated with the Northern Dipper, the seven deities are depicted in front of him dressed as officials in black gowns (A4-10) (Plate 4).[163] The east wall central deities present no great difficulties.

Matters become complicated when we turn to the west wall central deities (Plate 5). William White identified them as Laozi, the Jade Emperor and Heavenly Goddess (*tianhou* 天后) (B11-13), supporting his choices with historical data of the deities but no iconographical evidences.[164] Anning Jing points to a child-brooch (in fact there are two) on the empress's chest symbolising motherhood and therefore identifies her and her companion as the Holy Ancestress (*shengmu* 聖母, B13) and the Holy Ancestor (*shengzu* 聖祖, B12), the two Song imperial family ancestors who also had been incorporated in the Daoist pantheon during the Song.[165] White's identification of the alleged Laozi image is further left unmentioned.

Beside the Laozi image which should represent a Daoist priest, the other two imperial figures also could be identified differently. In the Yongle gong murals we recognised the phoenix and the dragon as the standard attributes of Queen Mother of the West (B13) and King Father of the East (B12), and the same motifs, albeit in a different format, are represented in the Toronto murals: the empress is accompanied by an attendant holding a large wing-shaped fan made of feathers, symbolising the phoenix bird, and the emperor is similarly accompanied by an attendant but holding a square lantern on a long pole, the lantern is decorated with a green dragon. The fan and lantern are very conspicuous and are for example not represented in the Yongle gong murals where the two respective deities are shaded with fans decorated with the so-called isles of bliss, mythological isles in the far ocean where immortals roam. In addition, the Earth Goddess in the Yongle gong murals also wears a child-brooch symbolising fertility. If we check the Earth Goddess in the Toronto murals we discover she is wearing two phoenix-brooches across her chest. All iconographic markers point to the identities of the Earth Goddess and the Queen Mother of the West, yet wearing

[163] White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, pp. 77-79; Jing, "Yongle Palace,", pp. 258, 261.
[164] White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, pp 97-99. Tianhou is the title of Mazu 媽祖, a popular goddess in coastal regions of southeast China and bears no relationship to the Yuan Heavenly Court paintings. On this goddess, see James Watson, "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ("Empress of Heaven") along the South China Coast, 960-1960." David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski (eds.), *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1985, pp. 292-324.
[165] Jing, "Yongle Palace," p. 259.

the wrong set of brooches. Or should we regard this as again another deliberate ploy of the painters exchanging or inversing standard attributes, such as the *zhen* (wood/east)-trigram on the chest of the Queen Mother of the West as an attribute of the King Father of the East?

The Daoist priest takes the position of the Heavenly Sovereign and would therefore represent him. The identity of the Daoist priest is discussed in full in chapter 4.2 and will not be discussed here. The Daoist priest can be identified as the Quanzhen patriarch Qiu Chuji.

The subordinate figures present fewer difficulties. On both sides, the Four Saints lead the procession, Tianpeng (A2) and True Warrior (A1) on the east, and Tianyou (B2) and Black Killer (B1) on the west wall, as identified by the number of their arms and heads and their respective attributes.[166] The deities of the Northern Dipper (A4-10) follow on the east wall, one of them kneeling in front of an altar placed with a fantastic coral in the shape of a mountain. Six female attendants (A15-20), two of them still young girls in plainer dress and headgear lifting the altar table accompany the three main deities. Two groups of five deities close the procession. The first group are the Five Planets (A21-25) in their standard Central Asian appearance, which needs no further explanation (Fig. 85). The second group of five is more problematic. The Emperors to the Five Sacred Peaks would be an obvious suggestion, were it not that are not depicted as emperors; three of them wear officials' crown and gown but two others have slightly different and simpler crowns. Obviously, their status is not as elevated as that of the Emperors to the Five Sacred Peaks. Offering and memorial lists offer two possible solutions: they represent the Five Dippers (*wudou* 五斗) which are placed together with the Five Planets in the same category, as seen in the murals;[167] or they could represent the Five Elders (*wulao* 五老) of the five directions who precede the deities to the Nine Heavens (*jiutian shangdi* 九天上帝) in another offering list.[168] These Emperors of the Nine Heavens are located at the beginning of the west wall (B3-10). The last option is however preferred since a hanging scroll painting of the Five Elders also appears in the Baoning si collection of Water-and-Land paintings and in the Baiyun guan Collection, suggesting that this group of deities belonged to a tradition, or rather praxis of ritual paintings, while the Five Dippers did not, as far as we know.[169]

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[166] White identified only the True Warrior by his attribute the turtle-snake (A3), White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, p. 169. Anning Jing gave the correct identifications for the Four Saints. Jing, "Yongle Palace," p. 264.
[167] The Five Dippers is a division in five groups of the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* DZ 508, 7.6-7.
[168] *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 36.5.
[169] Shanxi sheng bowuguan, *Baoning si Mingdai shuilu hua*, p. 59. In the Baoning si paintings they are however represented as emperors with *mian*-crowns but where there title is also Five Emperors of the Five Directions (*wufang wudi* 五方五帝). In the Baiyun guan Collection the Five Elders are represented on five separate scrolls

The procession on the west wall comprises besides the three main deities and the two warriors, a group of nine figures in front of the procession, representing the deities of the Nine Heavens (B3-11) (Fig. 86), and twelve figures in the rear easily identified by animal symbols in small discs on their crowns as the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions (B22-33), both also identified as such by White. Anning Jing prefers to divide the nine deities in two groups, representing the Southern Dipper (B4-7, 10-11) and the Three Terraces (B3, 8-9). Although not placed together as a group, the deities of the Three Terraces all carry a jade sword and have a darker complexion while the six others of the group do not, leading Jing to conclude that they are two separate groups of deities.[170] It seems however that the carrying of jade swords is not sufficient evidence to identify two separate groups, because for example neither all of the Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors depicted on the central altar-shrine in the Yongle gong murals carry swords even though they constitute one single group.[171] The same is true for the colour of the faces, which can vary in one group. In favour of the Nine Heavens deities, I would further like to add that nine paintings of the Nine Heavens deities attributed to Lu Huang 陸晃 (10th cent.) are listed in the *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (Painting Collection of the Xuanhe Period, 1119-1125), demonstrating that such paintings existed.[172]

1.3 Nan'an

Temple history and layout

The Nan'an 南庵 or Southern Hermitage is the name of a temple complex located on a small mountain, Wutaishan 五臺山 or Yaowangshan 藥王山 (lit. Medicine King Hill), east of Yaoxian 耀縣 in southern Shaanxi 陝西 province. It is dedicated to the Tang physician and Daoist scholar Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682), a native of Yaoxian. He first lived as a recluse in the mountains south of the Tang capital Chang'an 長安 (modern Xi'an 西安),

as five old Daoist priests. Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian huaji*, pp. 20-23. The offering list in *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 36.11b-12a also lists a group of Emperors to the Five Directions. William White identified the five figures as the deities to the Five Phases (wood, fire, earth, metal, water) which are basically the same as the deities of the five directions but do not appear under this title in any related painting or memorial or offering list. White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, p. 188.

[170] Jing, *Shenxian fuhui tu*, pp. 22-23.

[171] Jin, *Yongle gong bihua quanji*, pp. 14-17, especially p. 14.

[172] *Xuanhe huapu*, p. 80. The title of "Nine Heavens" appear in two of the deity names given in the catalogue. and because each painting depicted a Veritable Lord (*zhenjun* 真君), it further demonstrates that the Nine Heavens deities were not emperors. The names however do not match those given in the *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 39.

Zhongnanshan 終南山, but his knowledge of medicines and longevity techniques soon attracted the attention of the court and the three first emperors of the Tang all invited him to the capital. In 675, over ninety years old, Sun Simiao retired to his native place where he spent the last years of his life at Wutaishan.[173] Wutaishan is best known for its many fifth and sixth century stele sculptures with early carvings of Buddhist and Daoist deities, many bespeaking the involvement of local communities in their production.[174] In the following centuries after Sun's death, a local cult emerged on this famous Chinese physician which flourishes up to this day.[175]

The temple complex and the location of the Heavenly Court paintings do not follow the standard layout of a Daoist monastery with a Three Purities hall in front and the other halls placed behind it. Rather, the temple complex consists of a jumble of structures sprawled over two hilltops separated by a 200 meter-wide gully. The northern hilltop, now called Beidong 北洞 (Northern Cave), is the site of the main temple to Sun Simiao to be reached over a steep staircase climbing the hill. The southern hilltop, Nan'an (Southern Hermitage), is a flat area where two rows of halls and buildings are placed perpendicular to a north-south axis that runs from the gate at the southern hill, across the gully, and ending at the central hall to Sun Simiao on the northern hill. The hall with the Heavenly Court paintings is located in a small hall only three bays wide in one row of buildings on the southern hill. The hall is normally closed to public, and pending funding, the murals are scheduled for renovation in 2007. Only the east and west walls have murals, which suffered significant damage over time, especially at the bottom side and near the southern end where latticed windows and wooden entrance doors seal the front. Only a very short layer of fired bricks separates the murals from the moist of the earth, which must have been one of the main reasons for the present state.[176]

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[173] A history of the temple and Sun Simiao is found in Yaoxian zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 耀縣志編纂委員會 (ed.), *Yaoxian zhi* 耀縣志. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui, 1997, pp. 443-464. According to a Song stele inscription the temple had wall paintings in 1059. *Sun zhenren ci ji* 孫真人祠記, by Wang Huan 王瓛, dated 1081. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 288-291. Another stele inscription indicates that he temple was under Quanzhen hierarchy since the names of the Daoist sponsors include the characters *dao* and *zhi*, which signify lineage systems within the Quanzhen order. *Yaozhou Wutaishan Sun zhenren* □□ *kai xueju ji* 耀州五臺山孫真人□□開穴居記, by Qiu Duanqing 丘端卿, dated 1295. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 1126.

[174] On the stele carvings and Buddhist and Daoist communities of the fifth and sixth centuries at Yaowangshan, see Abe, *Ordinary Images*, pp. 281-312.

[175] A big festival that will last for fifteen days, including Daoist rituals, will start at Sun Simiao's birthday, the second day of the second lunar month.

[176] Upon inspection of the damaged parts, the plaster foundation of the murals appeared only 1.5-2 cm thick.

Due to its small size, the hall has no altar-shrine for statues, but traces of three haloes indicate that in former times statues of the Three Purities should have lined the rear wall.[177]

In the Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties, the temple complex was named Jingming guan 靜明觀 (Monastery of Tranquil Brightness); the names Beidong and Nan'an seem to have been introduced much later.

Scholarship

The Nan'an murals received only a minimum of scholarly attention. Four pictures of the murals have thus far been published in the volume on temple painting of the series on Chinese art, *Zhongguo meishu quanji* 中國美術全集 (Complete Collection of Chinese Art), edited by Jin Weinuo 金維諾. The pictures are accompanied by textual explanations and identifications of the deities (discussed below).[178]

A small issue of the murals concerns their date. Jin Weinuo dates the murals to late Yuan period on the basis of Yuan type bracket sets found in the roof structure.[179] In a short article, Xu Jianrong argues that the murals should date to the late Ming. Two stele inscriptions dated to 1664 and 1665 and preserved at the site mention the construction of a hall with images of the Four Emperors and Two Emperors between 1655 and 1664, but since the name and location of this hall is not mentioned and the hall with the Heavenly Court paintings has Yuan type bracket sets, the inscriptions must refer to a different hall.[180] In addition, the Yuan date of the hall is confirmed by an inscription on a roof-beam of the second year of the Zhiyuan-reign period, corresponding to 1336.[181]

Caution is needed before immediately dating the murals to this year, because the inscription of 1336 on the roof-beam only proves that the roof structure dates to the late Yuan period or was renovated in this period, the walls or the murals may be either older or younger. A comparison with the Wanshou gong 萬壽宮 (Everlasting Life Palace) murals in Gaoping 高平 and the Wuyue miao 五嶽廟 (Five Sacred Peaks Temple) murals in Fenyang 汾陽, both

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[177] During my visit to the site in May 2001, I was told that the hall once had a statue of the Medicine King, Sun Simiao, and that it was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, but the three haloes contradict this story. Statues of the Three Purities would match the wall paintings which has images of the Four Emperors and Two Empresses, together making the Nine Sovereigns. Perhaps a Sun Simiao statue was placed in the hall when the original Three Purities had already been destroyed.

[178] *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, pp. 57-59, 128-129; and Jin repeats the same identifications in his "Siyuan bihua de kaocha yu yanjiu," pp. 45-46.

[179] *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, p. 57.

[180] Xu Jianrong 徐建融, "Yaoxin Yaowang shan 'Sidi erhou' niandai de kaoding 耀縣藥王山《四帝二后》年代的考訂." *Wenwu* 文物 2 (1984), p. 93.

[181] This information was given me during my visit in May 2001.

in Shanxi and both dating to the late Yuan, in particular with regard to the use of sand-coloured mushroom clouds and the proportions of the figures, makes a late Yuan date however acceptable.[182]

Iconography

The layout and iconography of the Nan'an murals is simple and clear. The east and west wall mirror each other in group composition, a feature which helps us to solve some problems of identification in cases when figures are damaged or lost. There are a total of eighty-nine figures for both walls. Each wall can be divided in an upper and lower section. Let us start our investigation at the west wall which is best preserved. I will adopt the photographs in *Zhongguo meishu quanji* for reference, supplemented with my own observations if figures are not captured in the photographs.

The lower section of the west wall (Plate 7) is occupied by three of the Four Emperors and Two Empresses, two emperors in front followed by one empress and two attendants holding a fan and a gift. They are represented as very generic imperial figures, and hardly any attempt is made to differentiate them in the shape of their gowns or crowns other than the colours. Contrary to Jin Weinuo's identifications, no clues to their individual identities are given.[183] The next group in the lower section is a group of six figures, who by contrast all vary in headdress and in gender, a feature not found in the previous murals. Two are represented as officials, in the middle is a Daoist priest, and in the row behind them we see a warrior, a scholar with a Dongpo-hat and a woman, who curiously is not represented as a sumptuous court lady but with a rather plain headdress and robe. Three animals, a monkey on the woman's arm, a bird in a disc above the priest's head, and a small sheep to the side of the woman (not visible in the photograph), indicate that this group represents six of the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions (*zi* 觜, *wei* 胃, and *gui* 鬼). The other half of the group is represented on the opposite wall, now the location of a big gaping hole.[184]

In front of the Six Zodiacal Mansions (Plate 8), a large warrior figure with floating sashes brandishes a sword, while a demon-warrior with wild flowing hair, is found at the south end of the wall. Since they "only" have one pair of arms, they cannot represent the Four

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[182] The Wanshou gong and Wuyue miao murals are discussed and reproduced in Liu Yongsheng 劉永生 and Shang Xingliu 商形流, "Fenyang Beijianyuan Wuyue miao diaocha jianbao 汾陽北榆苑五嶽廟調查簡報." *Wenwu* 文物 12 (1991), pp. 1-15; Chai, *Shanxi siguan bihua*, pp. 74-79

[183] *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bia, 13, Siguan bihua*, pp. 57-58; Jin, "Siyuan bihua de kaocha yu yanjiu," pp. 45-46.

[184] Jin Weinuo strangely takes these deities as twenty-four of the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions. *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, pp. 57-58; Jin, "Siyuan bihua de kaocha yu yanjiu," pp. 45-46.

Saints. But because they are mirrored on the east wall and the figure on the south end, holding a tablet, is accompanied by a green dragon, we know that they should represent the Four Spirits (*sishen* 四神) of the four directions, Green Dragon in the east represented in the south-east, White Tiger in the south-west and in front of them Red Bird and Dark Warrior on either east or west wall; no indication is given. These figures are not mentioned by Jin Weinuo.

A miscellaneous group of six figures close the lower section in the south, among them a woman (Jade Maiden?) carrying a bowl, two soldiers, two Daoist priests and an official. Their identities are unclear. The two warriors might represent the Four Meritorious Officers Guarding Time if for example two other two warriors would be included on the opposite wall. On the same south end on the east wall is a group of four figures, including again a woman but the others are too damaged to allow clear identification.

The top section of the mural is occupied by a group of seven figures in front (Plate 7); they are dressed in long black robes, have long sleek black hair and dangerously lift glittering swords – these are the seven deities of the Northern Dipper. Separated by a puff of brown clouds, twelve figures dressed as Daoist priests and officials follow the Northern Dipper deities. Since a similar group of twelve is found in the corresponding section on the east wall, they should represent the Twenty-Four Energies as Jin Weinuo proposes, but these deities are not recorded in any memorial or offering list. Yet, a ritual text for recitation, the *Salvation Scripture* (*Duren jing* 度人經) names them the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors (*ershisi tiandi* 二十四天帝) which seems more likely even though the title of emperor would not match their crowns.[185] It must be noted that one figure on the west wall carries a large red sack in the shape of a Chinese lute, the kind we normally see Venus holding as part of the Five Planets. The figure holding the lute is a female but her standard companions cannot be found. In addition, the Five Planets are part of the Eleven Luminaries and this group consists of twelve figures.

Further along the wall in the top section we see a group of six figures and one of three. The six figures above all wear Daoist lotus crowns and must represent the Six Lineage Masters overseeing the ritual, similarly forming one group as in the Heavenly Gong murals rather than individuals depicted on separate paintings as in the traditional Lingbao altar. The six deities all have generic faces with moustache and small beard; there is for example no

[185] *Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing* DZ 1, 20.8a-22b. Their names probably refer to the same numerological entity, but the twenty-four energies however reside in the body, eight for each level, while the other refers to stellar deities which is here the case; the two groups of figures are placed together with other stellar deities in the mural.

Zhang Daoling to be recognised among them.[186] The three figures below them are the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water, two of them with ornate *tongtian*-crowns and one wearing another type of elaborated crown.

The lower section of the east wall (Plate 6) begins again with three of the Four Emperors and Two Empresses, who are almost exact copies of their companions on the opposite wall, only the colour scheme of their robes and haloes varies. As discussed, they are followed in the lower section by six of the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions (now lost), two partly damaged warriors, and four figures who are heavily damaged. The upper section first presents six figures in royal costumes, one of them having two pairs of eyes, a variation on the Four-eyed Old Man, a companion to Tianpeng but who is not included here. Since the Northern Dipper occupies the front of the opposite wall, this group is identified as the Southern Dipper which has six stellar deities (Plate 9). The next group consists of twelve of the Twenty-Four Heavenly Emperors and they are followed by a group of five figures with *mian*-crowns and below them a group of four with officials' crowns. In this combination and representation, they represent the Emperors of the Five Sacred Peaks and the Deities of the Four Sacred Marshes.

1.4 Beiyue miao

Temple history and layout

The Beiyue miao 北嶽廟 (Northern Peak Temple) is located in Quyang 曲陽, central Hebei province, and the temple and its murals are closely related to Hengshan 恆山, the Sacred Peak of the North, which lies some one hundred kilometres to the north. During its long history, the temple had started as a shrine on top of the mountain, established by Emperor Wu of the Han (r. 140-87) in 98 BC, but for matters of convenience gradually moved to several places at the foot of the mountain and to the vicinity of Quyang to finally reach its present location during the Northern Wei period between 500 and 512. The odd distance of the temple from the mountain is traditionally explained by a legend according to which a flying stone (*feishi* 飛石) from Hengshan had landed on this very spot; when sage-ruler Shun 舜 wanted to make

[186] Jin Weinuo rather identifies them as the Spirits of the Mountains and Rivers (*shanchuan zhushen* 山川諸神) but this is incorrect. *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, pp. 57-58; Jin, "Siyuan bihua de kaocha yu yanjiu," pp. 45-46.

sacrifices to the mountain, he was prevented by bad weather, and thereupon decided to perform the sacrifices at the place of the flying stone instead.[187]

Quyang remained the site for official sacrifices and Daoist rituals for many centuries to follow; being renovated and expanded numerous times on state orders, it had grown to a temple complex covering 170,000 m2 (260.48 *mu* 畝) in 1547.[188] But when the Ming court in 1586 designated another mountain in Hunyuan, northern Shanxi province, as the new Hengshan and when state sacrifices followed in 1660, the temple gradually diminished in scale and was left to the care of the local people of Quyang for the remaining centuries of the imperial period, the county magistrate selling trees standing on the temple grounds to finance renovations in the Qing.

The present temple consists of a main hall, a octagonal pavilion, and two gates all lying on a north-south axis with the main hall located at the north end; four stele pavilions are located to the sides of the central path, together with newly built galleries housing a fine selection of the one hundred-and-sixty-odd steles collected on the temple grounds. In front of the main hall there formerly stood a hall dedicated to the flying stone (*feishi dian* 飛石殿), erected in the early Tang, which burnt down in 1909 so that presently only the foundation platform is left. Other structures, such as a hall to True Warrior (*zhenwu* 真武), Daoist registry offices, and refectories have all been destroyed.

The main hall, called the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility (*dening zhi dian* 德寧之殿) is the oldest structure of the complex and is dated to the Yuan; the other structures are of Ming and Qing dates. The hall is of monumental proportions, seven bays wide and four bays deep, and counts today as the largest surviving timber-frame structure of the Yuan period and with its seven-*puzuo* 鋪作 bracket system it is also our closest example of the imperial building style of the Mongol capital Dadu 大都 (present Beijing).[189] The double-eaved hipped roof is characteristic of the Yuan architectural style with its slender, sloping curves. The eaves are supported by a row of colums creating a gallery going all around. The gallery is fenced by a

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[187] The information on history of the Beiyue miao presented here is compiled from the stele inscriptions collected in *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, j. 11-13; Li and Zhou, "Quyang Beiyue miao bihua;" Steinhardt, "The Temple to the Northern Peak in Quyang;" Han Aiying 韓愛營 (ed.), *Quyang xianzhi* 曲陽縣志. Beijing: Xinhua chubanshe, 1998, pp. 400-403; Xue and Wang, *Quyang Beiyue miao*; and Lü Xingjuan 呂興娟, "Beiyue miao jianli Feishi dian de niandai ji yuanyin chukao 北嶽廟建立飛石殿的年代及原因初考." *Wenwu chunqiu* 文物春秋 5 (2005), pp. 35-40.

[188] Zhang Lifang 張立方, "Wuyue jisi yu Quyang Beiyue miao 五嶽祭祀與曲陽北嶽廟." *Wenwu chunqiu* 文物春秋 4 (1993), pp. 58-62.

[189] The highest number of bracket sets was eight and these were only used in imperial palatial buildings. Steinhardt, "The Temple to the Northern Peak in Quyang," p. 72.

marble balustrade the posts of which are capped with a lion each in a different pose. The hall has folding doors with latticed windows all across the front and relief carvings of narrative scenes depicting military events and auspicious animals intersected by palmette scrolls on the lower sides.[190] The hall is built on a two-meter-high platform that projects from the front of the hall, accessed by two staircases to the sides and one in front, and similarly fenced by a marble balustrade. Interestingly, the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility has many architectural elements in common with the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong and indeed both were built in the same period and under auspices of the Quanzhen order; the Beiyue miao hall however represents a higher grade in architectural scale, decoration, and financial support.

We have precise data on the renovation and patronage of the hall. The Hall of Virtuous Tranquility was renovated from 1268 to 1270. When the Archaeological Institute of Hebei province renovated the Beiyue miao in the 1980's, lifting the entire roof off the hall, and disassembling and re-assembling all its pieces, they discovered several dated inscriptions. Two inscriptions found on a tiebeam and on the upper part of the brick altar-shrine wall give the date of *zhiyuan* 5 corresponding to 1268.[191] The title-board of the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility (*dening zhi dian* 德寧之殿) has a colophon stating that "[After the completion of the] specially decreed renovations, Li Ting 李庭, Registrar of the Tax Transport and Salt Monopoly Commission of Zhending Route (*Zhending lu zhuanyun shisi jingli* 真定路轉運使司經歷) requested Veritable Chengming to write the calligraphy," and further that "This title-board was installed on the first day of the first lunar month of the seventh year of the Zhiyuan-reign period (1270) of the Great [Yuan] Dynasty."[192] The installation of the title-board marked the completion of the hall in 1270.

Veritable Chengming or Zhang Zhijing 張志敬 (1220-1270), mentioned in the colophon of the title-board, is the Quanzhen patriarch of that time who was entrusted with the task of renovating the temples of the Sacred Peaks and Sacred Marshes. A stele inscription recording his biography provides further detailed information on the background and patronage of the renovation of the Beiyue miao in the thirteenth century. It reads in part:

> "The temples of the [Five] Sacred Peaks and [Four] Sacred Marshes were greatly damaged or completely destroyed by fire and warfare during the Jin dynasty (1115-

[190] According to local people, these relief carvings date to the Tang dynasty.
[191] Nie Jinlu 聶金鹿 and Lin Xiuzhen 林秀珍, "Quyang Beiyue miao Dening zhi dian bihua weixiu jishu 曲陽北嶽廟德寧之殿壁畫維修技術." *Gujian yuanlin jishu* 古建園林技術 2 (1989), p. 28.
[192] *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 13.41b-42a. Li Ting is otherwise unknown.

1234). The Palace Treasury issued paper money worth a hundred thousand strings of cash to the Patriarch who consequently hired artisans to start the renovation [on the temples]. He selected among the Daoist adepts those of a fair mind and with good organisation skills to calculate the number of artisans and workers needed. He paid everyone a salary to make sure each of them felt responsible for his job. Some cut tiles or ground stones, and started building; others mended the cracks and holes, and began repairs. When the winter turned into summer for the second time, five temples were completed comprising four Sacred Peak temples and one Sacred Marsh temple."[193]

The biography demonstrates that the renovation of the Beiyue miao was part of a larger project initiated and financed by the Mongol court but executed by the Quanzhen order on account of their experience and skill in managing temple renovations. In addition, we should also remember that the Sacred Peak temples were supervised by the Daoist clergy, and renovations to the temples fell under their jurisdiction, not under that of the court, as this passage underlines. Although no dates are mentioned, the renovation should have taken place between 1265 and 1270, dates mentioned before and after this passage in the biography, thus confirming the findings at the site. The fact that not all the Sacred Peak and River temples were renovated is not because of lack of funds but presumably because one Sacred Peak temple, that of the Southern Peak, and three of the four Sacred Marshes Temples to the Yangtze 長江, Qi 齊, and Huai 淮, were all located in south China, territory still occupied by the Southern Song court.

Since the Beiyue miao murals are slightly different from other Heavenly Court paintings, let me shortly introduce the general layout of the murals before dealing with the scholarship on the Beiyue miao murals. At present, only the east and west wall of the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility have wall paintings in similar monumental proportions as the architecture of the hall, measuring 6.44 m. in height and 15.55 m. in width and covering a surface of 200 m2. The murals stand on a one meter high wall of fired bricks, elevating them to even greater heights. Most regrettably however, the other walls are covered with a thick layer of red plaster. Only on the rear of the shrine wall, measuring 7.70 m. in height and 25.55 m. in width, some images are visible beneath the plaster. Perhaps all walls had murals but they await cleaning. The only damages to the walls are found in the interior of the altar-shrine

[193] *Xuanmen sifa zhangjiao zongshi Chengming zhenren daoxing beiming bing xu* 玄門嗣法掌教宗師誠明真人道行碑銘並序, by Wang Pan 王磐, dated 1273. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 600-601; and *Ganshui xianyuan lu* 甘水仙源錄 DZ 973, 5.2a-b.

where between the statues – modern replicas of the Northern Peak deity, the God of Hail and Dragon King – two large sections measuring three by six meters have been cut from the shrine wall, reportedly depicting huge landscape paintings.[194] If we include the covered parts, the murals of the hall would measure a total of 526.48 m2.[195]

The murals depict the deities of the Five Sacred Peaks attending an audience of the Heavenly Court set in a cloudy and misty landscape setting. The Sacred Peak deities, two on the east wall and three on the west wall, are assisted by a large retinue of court ladies holding plates with precious objects, soldiers standing on guard or holding banners, officials, and little, muscled goblins carrying trays with jewels on their heads. The upper part of the murals is occupied by four groups of figures, each group headed by one larger central deity holding a court tablet and indicated by attendants shading him with fans in deference to his elevated status; strangely, these upper register central deities are all dressed as imperial officials except for the one on the top-left corner on the west wall who is dressed in a militairy costume and bowing with hands clasped in front of his chest, rather suggesting that this figure is not a deity but a donor. Two immortals and several attendants accompany him. The northern end of the murals – exactly starting where the side walls of the central altar-shrine block the view of the murals – are painted with landscape sceneries of mountain streams breaking their way in dashing turns through rocks and boulders set with trees and bushes. The east wall has further an image of a 6.4-meter-long dragon descending from the clouds, his body coiling in similar dashing turns, located between the mountain and the figure section.

Scholarship

Scholarship on the Beiyue miao has thus far mainly focused on its architecture, probably owing to the fact that its murals have not been published anywhere except for a few fragments.[196] I will restrict my discussion here to the scholarship on the murals, which are all

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[194] Information obtained from town elders during my visit to the Beiyue miao in March 2001. The village elders further noted that the original statues were much larger, the statue of the Northern Peak deity measuring eight meters against six now; they were destroyed during the Land Reforms. There were also many more smaller statues of attending deities. The statues of the God of Hail and the Dragon King were inversed. They also noted that the landscape sections were cut from the wall by Japanese soldiers during the Second World War, a fact also mentioned in the modern local gazetteer, which further mentions that the landscape paintings were reportedly painted in the Song. Han, *Quyang xianzhi*, p. 402.

[195] The measurements are found in Nie and Lin, "Quyang Beiyue miao," p. 28. Other studies provide measurements of seven by seventeen or eight by eighteen for the two walls, but since these are less precise I have followed Nie and Lin.

[196] For studies on the architecture of the Beiyue miao, see Liu Dunzhen 劉敦楨, *Liu Dunzhen wenji* 劉文楨文集, Vol. 2. Beijing: Zhongguo jianzhu gongye chubanshe, 1984, pp. 202-204; Zhang, "Wuyue jisi yu Quyang Beiyue miao;" Nie, "Quyang Beiyue miao;" and Steinhardt, "The Temple to the Northern Peak in Quyang." This

very brief and all in Chinese. The murals are practically unknown outside China. I wish to discuss five central issues emerging in this scholarship and which need to be re-addressed: condition, the theme of the murals, the attribution of the murals to Wu Daozi, date and the identification of the deities.

Condition. Authors of a short article on the repair techniques used for the Beiyue miao murals during the renovations in the 1980's write that the murals were "severely damaged" (*yanzhong pohuai* 嚴重破壞);[197] and this harsh judgement on the murals has apparently deterred other scholars from visiting and investigating the murals.[198] Yet upon inspection, the murals appear in a very reasonable condition. In addition, their statement is contradicted by an earlier investigation by the famous scholar of Chinese architecture, Liu Dunzhen (1897-1968), who visited the temple prior to the Cultural Revolution and discovered that it was used as an army headquarters and, much to his dismay, glued with posters and drilled with uncountable nails, from which we can infer that the murals were still in a relatively good state.[199] Furthermore, the article does not mention major repairs or large-scale repaintings but mainly techniques of fortifying and strengthening the walls, and it mentions the filling of the uncountable holes. The sustained damage to the Beiyue miao murals is however not comparable to the condition of other temple paintings which have large cracks, pieces cut out, or which have simply fallen or flaked off, such as in the Nan'an murals. In my opinion, the judgement that the murals are "severely damaged" is overstated.[200]

Then what is the condition of the murals (after the renovations)? My findings from field observation are that the murals on the east and west walls are complete without missing parts or minor damages and that the brushwork and black outlining of the figures is still crisp and clear (or have these been repainted too?). Of less importance is the fact that the colours have faded, especially the blues and reds, and that the applied gold-leaf decorations on crowns and armour have eroded or have been scratched off. The fillings of the holes are still visible and in the upper registers and north end of the murals much of the pigment seems to have eroded too, probably due to rain leaking through the roof on the upper parts of the walls. In

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last source has one picture of two guards in the murals. A temple guide for sale at the Beiyue miao contains more pictures of the murals but reproduced in small format and of poor quality, Xue and Wang, *Quyang Beiyue miao*.

[197] Nie and Lin, "Quyang Beiyue miao," p. 28. Full-scale copies have been made of paintings during the renovations in the 1980's by students of the Beijing Academy of Fine Arts under the supervision of Wang Dingli 王定理, who also made the drawing of the murals in black-and-white.

[198] See for example the references to the Beiyue miao murals in Jing, *The Water God's Temple*, p. 233 n. 1.

[199] Liu, *Liu Dunzhen wenji*, p. 204.

[200] The town elders also assured me that the state of the murals had not changed over time. During the renovations only the roof was lifted from the walls, and bad pieces in the roof structure were replaced.

addition, the murals are presently covered under a thick layer of grey dust, which may help to preserve them, but which does not improve their presentation.

Theme. In all Chinese studies, the theme of the murals is interpreted not as a Heavenly Court painting, but as depicting a "Picture of Clouds Moving and Rain Falling" (*yunxing yushi tu* 雲行雨施圖) on the east wall and as a "Picture of Ten-thousand Countries All in Peace" (*wanguo xian ning tu* 萬國咸寧) on the west wall. These identifications are found in all Chinese writings without exception and reiterated on Chinese websites.[201] The rain theme is probably invoked by a painting of a long dragon on the east wall and the inclusion of the deities of the Thunder Ministry. The blissful peace on the west wall is however more difficult to gauge. The names further suggest a sequence from east to west with the peace following a blessed rainfall, yet the composition does not support such an assumption. The murals give no clue for these names nor do the authors disclose the source of this identification. The same names are however found in the 1904 local gazetteer of Quyang, the *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi* 重修曲陽縣志 (Revised County Gazetteer of Quyang) of 1904, suggesting that they simply copied the names from the gazetteer, or from each other.[202] In addition, one assumes that these titles - and not the murals themselves - led Jin Weinuo to suggest that the Beiyue miao murals are representations of "folk art" (*minjian wenyi* 民間文藝) depicting "widely popular folk legends or historical saga" in the same genre as the Nan'an murals.[203] This qualification then is picked up by a large album series on Chinese art, the *Zhongguo meishu shi* (A History of Chinese Art) which volume on Yuan art places the Beiyue miao murals in a chapter on folk art - unfortunately without pictures - together with the murals of the Mingying wang dian 明應王殿 (Hall of the Prince of Bright Response) rather than with the preceding chapter on the Yongle gong.[204]

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[201] Jin Weinuo 金維諾, "Zhongguo gudai siguan bihua," pp. 35-36; Li and Zhou, "Quyang Beiyue miao bihua," p. 78; Nie and Lin, "Quyang Beiyue miao," p. 28; Huang Miaozi 黃苗子, *Wu Daozi shiji* 吳道子事輯. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991, p. 65; Jin, "Siyuan bihua de kaocha yu yanjiu," p. 47; Xue and Wang, *Quyang Beiyue miao*, p. 36-39.

[202] *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 3.14a. A sequence between prayer and rainfall on west and east walls is for example found in the Murals of the Mingying wang dian 明應王殿 in Hongtong 洪洞 County and the Jiyi miao 稷益廟 in Xinjiang 新絳 district, Shanxi, which are both temples dedicated to local cult deities. The murals have also small narrative scenes in addition to ritual assemblies, totally unlike the Beiyue miao murals. For these murals, see Sickman,"Wall-Paintings of the Yüan Period in Kuang-sheng-Ssu, Shansi;" 1937, *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, pp. 36-40, 67-68, 84-91, 150-157; and Jing, *The Water God's Temple*.

[203] *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, pp. 35-36; Jin, "Siyuan bihua de kaocha yu yanjiu," p. 47.

[204] Wang Chaowen 王朝聞 (ed.), *Zhongguo meishu shi*. Ji'nan: Jilu shushe, Mingtian chubanshe, 2000, pp. 99-118.

Another name found in many publications, but strangely often in combination with the previous two titles, is "Heavenly Court Painting" (*tiangong tu* 天宮圖). This title is also mentioned in the Quyang gazetteer.[205] The publications however fail to explain why the Beiyue miao murals should represent a Heavenly Palace, since no buildings or palaces are depicted.

The misidentification of the murals' theme is due not only to an apparent reliance of mainland China scholars on scriptural authority but also thus far to a misconception of the murals' iconography and iconopraxis, which would clearly link them to a tradition of Daoist Heavenly Court painting. Moreover, their contents bear a close resemblance to the description of the murals by the Daoist priest-painter Zhang Suqing 張素卿 (fl. 845-927) found in the *Yizhou minghua lu* 益州名畫錄 (Record of famous painters from Yizhou, completed in 1009) where they are titled *chaozhen tu* 朝真圖 (Painting of an Audience with Truth), thus underscoring the audience-theme of the murals.[206]

Wu Daozi. The Quyang local gazetteer is also the source for the attribution of the wall paintings to the legendary Tang painter Wu Daozi (fl. 685-758), which however is not followed by most scholarly publications but is still widely publicised on the web and other popular articles.[207] The attribution to Wu Daozi is epitomised by a stele engraving of the so-called "Quyang Demon" (*Quyang gui* 曲陽鬼), also called "Uncle Demon" (*guibo* 鬼伯), or "Flying Spirit" (*feishen* 飛神), found in two versions on the temple grounds, one carved in the Wanli-reign period of the Ming (1573-1620) (Fig. 87) and the other, by an inferior hand, in the Qing. The stele engraving is a smaller replica of the figure found on the centre top west wall inside the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility. The image of the Quyang Demon is a whirlwind of motion; his muscles vibrate with tension, his long mane waves in the wind like flames, and draperies coil around his body and dance in the wind like restless snakes; the demon gazes down one hand raised above his dilated eyes, mouth gaping, and his spear ready for use balancing on his shoulder. Even in the copy of the carver, the brush lines are fluid and forceful, contributing to the furious power radiating from the demon. The rubbing of this carving had also become known in the West already in the mid-twentieth century and was

[205] *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 3.14a.
[206] *Yizhou minghua lu*, p. 131; Mesnil, "Zhang Suqing."
[207] *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 3.14a.

considered as one of the main images exemplary of his style.[208] Unfortunately, the rubbing never led to an investigation into the original murals.

Regardless of the truth of the attribution to Wu Daozi, the timing of the attribution in the Wanli-period at the late Ming is highly suspect. The promotion of temple paintings painted by the famous Wu Daozi through the distribution of stele rubbings should be seen in relationship to other promotional activities of the Beiyue miao patrons in this period. For example, in the Wanli-period a temple gazetteer was printed – interestingly, recording the communications between the Ming emperors and the Northern Peak deity acting as an oracle and stele inscriptions – and in 1536, a stele was carved depicting a map of the temple.[209] These promotional activities, I would argue, were clearly intended to strengthen the bond between the temple and the Ming court after it had designated a mountain in Hunyuan as the new Northern Peak in 1586, which would have left the Beiyue miao patrons in fearful anticipation of a pending relocation of the state sacrifices to the Northern Peak deity also to Hunyuan. A relocation of the state sacrifices to Hunyuan would undoubtedly have resulted in a severe loss of state revenues if not a fall in status from a state-supported site frequented by officials and guarded by the military to that of a small, insignificant provincial town. A vehement promotion of Wu Daozi as the painter of the Beiyue miao murals seems therefore to have been made convenient in the circumstances. In 1660, the state sacrifices were indeed moved to Hunyuan which remained the official site for state worship of the Sacred Peak of the North until the end of the imperial period.

Another name should be mentioned in connection with the Beiyue miao murals. A gazetteer of Quyang of 1680 mentions a certain Liu Borong 劉伯榮 from Puzhou 蒲州 (i.e. Pingyang 平陽) of the Tang period who would have painted the eastern gate of the temple complex, the Zhaofu men 昭福門, with an image of a demon-warrior with ferociously looking eyes, holding in his left hand a quiver with arrows and in his right a long snake.[210] A Dingzhou 定州 gazetteer of further mentions that Liu Borong's paintings were different from

[208] Oswald Sirén, *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles*. Vol. 3. London: Lund Humphries, 1956, pl 88; Yang, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, p. 73; and James Cahill, *An Index of Early Chinese Painters and Paintings*. Berkeley: Berkeley University Press, 1980 (2003 reprint), p. 21. On this stele engraving, see also Huang, *Wu Daozi shiji*, pp. 63-66.

[209] The temple gazetteer is republished in the *Beiyue miao ji* 北嶽廟集, no author. Reprint of Wanli (1573-1620) edition in *Beijing tushuguan guji zhenben congkan* 北京圖書館古籍珍本叢刊, Vol. 118, pp. 747-830. Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1998. The stele carving is published in Steinhardt, "The Temple to the Northern Peak in Quyang," p. 78.

[210] *Quyang xian xinzhi* 曲陽縣新志, compiled by Liu Shijun 劉師峻 in 1672. Printed in China, 1680, 3.14b.

those in the main hall.[211] The gate and its murals are now destroyed. It is not known where the gazetteers obtained their information, nor is a precise date given. Dong Tao 董濤, the compiler and commentator of the stele inscriptions in the Quyang gazetteer of 1904, argues that the inscription must date to shortly after 753 because it is listed in an older collection of stele inscriptions after an entry dated to this year.[212] Two Chinese scholars discussing the murals, Li Changrui 李長瑞 and Zhou Yuezi 周月姿 mention that it is said that Liu Borong was Wu Daozi's student from 724, which would then imply that if Liu Borong painted the gate, Wu Daozi would have painted the main hall, but I have found no information confirming their relationship.[213]

I found however information on a painter named Liu Borong, not from the Tang but from the Yuan dynasty, who was active around 1269 and, importantly, was also involved in Daoist art projects. Namely, an illustrated edition of *Xuanfeng qinghui tu* 玄風慶會圖 (Illustrations to the Celebrated Meetings of the Mysterious Wind) of 1346 has survived in Japan with illustrations copied by a certain Xu Zongru 徐宗儒 after originals made by Liu Borong. The text has a preface dated 1274 and a decree dated 1269, suggesting that the original illustrations by Liu Borong were made before this period for an earlier edition.[214] This means that Liu Borong of the Yuan period was active exactly in the period the Beiyue miao was repaired. This can hardly be considered a coincidence. It could for example be possible that the Yuan period Liu Borong was a member of a painting workshop hailing from the Shanxi area and that Liu Borong was responsible for the gate murals while others painted the main hall. The great similarity in the colour palette of the Beiyue miao murals and that of the Mingying wang dian murals in Hongtong County, in particular the use of orange and brown, which are only seen in the Mingying wang dian murals. I have also some doubts on the veracity of the attribution to the Tang. As far as I have been able to determine (see chapter 3.2), painters, and especially workshop painters, started only to inscribe their names and origins on murals from the Yuan period onwards.

Date. The Beiyue miao murals are not dated by any inscriptions, and although the popular view is that they are painted in the Tang by Wu Daozi, the fact that the temple was

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[211] *Dingzhou xianzhi* 定州縣志, compiled by Bao Lin 寶琳. *Zhongguo fangzhi congshu* 中國方志叢書, Vol. 225. Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1849, 5.24.
[212] *Chongxiu Quyang xianzhi*, 11.72b.
[213] Li and Zhou, "Quyang Beiyue miao bihua," p. 77. This alleged relationship between Liu Borong and Wu Daozi is also popular on the internet.
[214] Wang, "Zaoqi Quanzhen shiliao." On the *Xuanfeng qinghui tu*, see Katz, "Writing History, Creating Identity."

completely burnt by the Khitan in 946, and that the present Hall of Virtuous Tranquility was completed in 1270, led most scholars to argue that the murals should date to 1270.

In their article of 1985, Li Changrui and Zhou Yuezi argued that the murals were painted in 1270 modelled after a Song prototype. Some sections of the murals, such as the landscape and the dragon on the east wall would have been repainted in the Ming and Qing dynasties.[215] The authors do not explain why it should have been based on a Song prototype or why the landscape or dragons should have been painted in the Ming or Qing.

In her master-thesis of 2003, Zhao Wei 趙偉 argued for a Ming date of 1536-1547 on the basis of stele inscriptions mentioning renovations in that period, and on the basis of a stylistic comparison mainly pertaining to stylistic changes in crowns and dresses, and to the langscape and the dragon on the east wall.[216] Her findings are often supported with not sufficient evidence – a problem one easily encounters when applying methods from period-style The Ming stele inscriptions would most likely refer to the huge painting of the Northern Peak deity on the rear-wall of the central shrine seated in a litter and accompanied by an as huge court lady. These figures are stylistically unrelated to the murals on the side walls, and are definitely of a later period. Parts of the landscape sections may also have been repainted. Lastly, we may add that the Ming renovations were ordered by a certain Liu Shaozong 劉紹宗, who was an Assistant-Prefect (*tongpan* 通判) of Zhending Prefecture 真定府, and his rank seems not high enough to have been able to fund such a large project of renovating the temple and the complete repainting of the murals.[217] I would further suspect that these renovations were part of the promotional activities that set in exactly during that period, and arguing on the part of the Beiyue miao patrons that the murals were painted by Wu Daozi while they had just been completely repainted seems implausible. The renovations to the Beiyue miao of 1536-1537 would therefore be restricted to retouching parts of the murals and not entail the repainting of the entire hall.

An article by Zhang Lifang 張立方 published in 2004 deals with the date of decorative paintings and patterns in the Hall of Virtuous Tranquility, such as the decorative motifs on the ceiling, roof beams, and bracket sets. According to Zhang, the murals should date to the late thirteenth century. His main argument is that the dragon on the east wall – which most scholar view as a Ming (re-)painting, apparently only because it has five claws – is identical to the

[215] Li and Zhou, "Quyang Beiyue miao bihua," p. 77-78.
[216] Zhao Wei 趙偉, "Hebei Quyang Beiyue miao bihua chutan 河北曲陽北嶽廟初探." MA thesis, Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing, 2003.
[217] *Beiyue miao ji*, 9.20a-22b.

dragon in shape, colour, and claws to the dragon painted in the ceiling. On the basis of a comparison of all the decorative patterns and pigment use on the roofstructure with those of in particular the Yongle gong, Zhang concludes that the decorations, including the dragon, are original (not repainted) and should date to the Yuan, i.e. 1270.[218]

A date of 1270 for the Beiyue miao murals seems fairly conclusive. In my discussion of the personalisations of these murals in chapter 4.4, I will try to elaborate on the issue of the dating further, arguing that the Beiyue miao murals are painted after an archaic model originally painted in 991.

Identifications. A four page article by Li Changrui and Zhou Yuezi of 1985 is thus far the only study on the identities of the deities in the Beiyue miao murals. These identifications are followed in the temple guide and by Zhao Wei.[219] They correctly identify the five Sacred Peak deities by the colours of their robes as well as the deities of the Thunder Ministry (*leibu*) in the top-left group on the east wall on the basis of their attributes, but other identifications are very doubtful or simply omitted. For example, the central deity of the Thunder Ministry group would be Taiyi 太一; three figures of the top-right group on the east wall would represent the Three Officials (Sanguan) although only one is represented as an imperial official and the other two as dog-faced attendants; and two officials behind the Central Peak deity on the east wall, would represent two of the four Sacred Marshes (Sidu) but the other two are left unidentified.[220]

Their identifications are mainly based on correspondence in number and textual sources and do not resemble images found for example at the Yongle gong. One major asset of the article is however the inclusion of black and white drawings of the wall paintings made by Mr. Wang Dingli 王定理 during the renovations in the 1980's, which are thus far the only complete, albeit colourless, reproductions of the murals.[221]

Iconography

The iconography of the murals presents some difficulties, as is already attested by the identifications proposed by Li and Zhou. The murals count a total of eighty-one figures, forty-one on the west wall and forty on the east wall, but only a dozen or so are readily identifiable as deities, i.e. figures dressed in imperial dress or carrying recognisable attributes, contrary to

[218] Zhang, "Beiyue miao Dening zhi dian caihui fenxi," pp. 9, 13.
[219] Xue and Wang, *Quyang Beiyue miao*, pp. 36-41.
[220] Li and Zhou, "Quyang Beiyue miao bihua," pp. 78-80.
[221] The copies would measure about two meters in length according to Mr. Wang Dingli. The present whereabouts of the copies are unknown.

the preponderant number of court ladies, banner bearers, guards, goblins, demon soldiers, and immortals who possibly have no identities or identities which are difficult to gauge after so many centuries. Since so many identities present difficulties, I will give slightly longer discussions on each group of deities. I will further use the drawings by Wang Dingli published in the article of Li and Zhou as the main tool of reference (Drawings 3A and 3B). No numbers appear in the drawings but I will treat the deities as groups in upper and lower registers which are easily recognised in the drawings. I will start my discussion with the main deities on the lower register and proceed to the lesser deities on the upper register, moving from east to west and from north to south.

The Five Sacred Peak deities are easily identified. The east wall has the Eastern Peak deity and the Central Peak deity dressed in a green and a yellow robe respectively over their white inner garments and green tunics. The opposite wall has the images of the Southern Peak deity in a red robe, the Western Peak deity in a white robe, and the Northern Peak deity in a blue-black robe from south to north respectively.

They form the focal figures of two large assemblies in the lower register of the east and west walls. The east wall assembly is guarded by soldiers carrying halberds and wearing armour decorated with gold leaf conspicuously located at the south end, and two demon soldiers with spears at the north end of the assembly. The assembly further consists of two banner bearers in plain dress, two muscled goblins carrying trays on their head loaded with jewels and gems radiating with colourful and waving light – a conspicuous figure seen also for example in the Mingying wang Hall temple paintings at Hongtong county and in the Baoning si Water-and-Land paintings, but which are all depicted in a much more elaborate way[222] – three court ladies behind the Eastern Peak deity also carrying trays with gifts and a branch, and two figures who look like Daoist priests with small lotus crowns and two officials holding court tablets behind the Central Peak deity. A small green dragon coils at the feet of the Eastern Peak deity as its emblematic animal. Its counterpart, the white tiger should be located on the opposite wall.

The Five Sacred Peak deities have some peculiar elements in their representation that are worth mentioning. In contrast to the austere, majestic or serene expressions of other Daoist deities such as the Three Purities, the Nine Sovereigns and even many Buddhist deities, the Beiyue miao Sacred Peak deities present some kind of an anomaly within the depiction of

[222] See for example Jin Weinuo 金維諾, (ed.), *Zhongguo siguan bihua dianzang: Shanxi Hongtong Guangsheng si shuishen miao bihua* 中國寺觀壁畫典藏：山西洪洞廣勝寺水神廟壁畫. Shijiazhuang: Hebei meishu chubanshe, 2001. pp. 4, 6, 9; and Shanxi sheng bowuguan, *Baoning si Mingdai shuilu hua*, p. 104.

deities in Chinese history, first of all because they do not comply to the standard Chinese ideas on aesthetics, the faces are painted in a dark red-brown colour and have large beards (except for the Central Peak deity), features normally associated with foreigners; and secondly they all express emotion: the Eastern Peak deity's face shows compassion (Fig. 63), acquiescently holding his tablet in an relaxed oblique position, the Central Sacred Peak deity shows contentment, the Southern Sacred Peak (Plate 11) deity looks back in fear, the Western Sacred Peak deity, his eyes protruding, dashes backwards as if startled holding firmly his tablet in front of him, and the Northern Sacred Peak deity looks down with a severe, angry look (Plate 10). It is also extraordinary to see how the postures and the body language of the deities completely correspond to the emotions they express. It would be enticing to correlate the five emotions to the five phases, but they do not match (e.g. east should correspond to anger).

Another peculiar feature is the absence of the *mian*-crowns with which the Five Sacred Peak deities are depicted in other known representations, be it Heavenly Court paintings or Water-and-Land paintings. The absence of the *mian*-crowns is conspicuous for an alleged Yuan period state temple because the Sacred Peak deities were promoted from prince (*wang*) to emperor (*di* 帝) in 1011 by Song Emperor Zhenzong accompanied by the specific instructions that their representation should accordingly be changed.[223] The Sacred Peak deities had already been promoted to King (*wang* 王) in 746, and in 1291, Khubilai Khan extended their imperial titles even further.[224] The first Emperor of the Ming, Hongwu 洪武 (r. 1368-1399), feeling that mountain deities could not surpass him, stripped them of their titles and demoted them simply to "spirit" (*shen* 神). In contrast to the Song decree, the Ming decree seems never to have been heeded in painting, because all Ming representations of the Five Sacred Peaks, including the imperially commissioned Baoning si paintings, still depict them wearing imperial *mian*-crowns.[225] The absence of *mian*-crowns in the representation of the Beiyue miao Sacred Peak deities is therefore highly significant and suggests that the paintings are based on models from before 1011.

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[223] Song Emperor Zhenzong "ordered the officials of the Hanlin Academy and Ministery of Rites to lay down in detail the regulations for ceremonies and crown and gowns (*mianfu* 冕服) as well as the rites for embellishing their divine images." After which he had sent to the temples various ritual items including a robe and a *mian*-crown. *Song shi* j. 102, pp. 2486-2487.

[224] The Yuan decree is preserved in the stele inscription *Jiafeng Beiyue shengzhi bei* 加封北嶽聖旨碑, no author, dated 1291. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, p. 670.

[225] Shanxi sheng bowuguan, *Baoning si Mingdai shuilu hua*, pp. 100-102.

In addition, it may be possible that the designer of the murals relied on or paraphrased the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* 五嶽真形圖 (Pictures of the True Forms of the Five Sacred Peaks), a late Han text and the *locus classicus* for the Daoist cult of the Sacred Peaks, for the representation of the crowns. The Daoist text gives a description of the Five Sacred Peak deities dressed in robes of the colours corresponding to their particular direction but also pays special attention to the types of crowns they are wearing.[226] A similar variation in crowns is seen in the representation of the five Beiyue miao deities while one would not expect such a variation for deities all with the same title and who in other known cases wear the same crowns.

The assembly on the west wall consists of a similar group of mixed figures as on the east wall, but they are not exactly mirrored in position. For example, we find two soldiers carrying halberds at the north end of the assembly but no guards at the south end. Furthermore, many of the attending figures are of quite a different nature; we see a goblin carrying a jewel tray on his head and two court ladies holding presents, but also a military figure carrying a jewel tray, a dog-faced official holding a court tablet, and an attendant holding a large vase with a branch behind the Western Peak deity; while three figures, one young attendant holding a branch, an imperial figure and, presumably, a Daoist priest seemingly descending from the upper left group above the Southern Peak deity. There is no white tiger among the assembly, but the small goblin can be seen standing behind the Western Peak deity (the emblematic colour of the west is white) wearing a chest armour in the shape of a tiger head – the white tiger.

The two officials on the east wall following after the Central Peak deity are uncommon. The standard number of deities is always four, such as the Four Sacred Marshes, also seen in the Yongle gong murals or the Water and Land paintings, or the four auxiliary mountains - Mt. Lu 廬山 in Zhejiang, Mt. Qingcheng 青城山 in Sichuan, Mt. Qian 潛山 in Anhui, and Mt. Huo 霍山 also in Zhejiang - according to the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*.[227] The opposite wall lacks two similar official-figures, and Li and Zhou neither attempted to identify all four of the Sacred River deities. There is one possible solution but it pushes us back to the

[226] The names of the crowns for each Sacred Peak deity are: east - *cangbi qicheng* 蒼碧七稱 (seven victories of the green jade)–crown; south - *jiudan rijing* 九丹日精 (sun essence of the nine times refined red cinnabar)–crown; centre- *huangyu taiyi* 黃玉太已 (great unity of the yellow jade)–crown; west - *taichu jiuliu* 太初九流 (great beginning of the nine streams) –crown; north - *taiming zhenling* 太冥真靈 (true numinous power of the great darkness) – crown. *Dongxuan lingbao wuyue guben zhenxing tu* 洞玄靈寶五嶽古本真行圖 DZ 441, 2a-3a.

[227] *Dongxuan lingbao wuyue guben zhenxing tu* DZ 441.

Tang dynasty. Following a decree of 731, Mt. Lu and Mt. Qingcheng were officially incorporated as auxiliary mountains in the state cult of the Five Sacred Peaks, and they are the most likely candidates to represent the two officials on the east wall.[228] Knowing that the Four Sacred Marshes are standard companions to the Five Sacred Peaks in all Yuan and Ming representations, in known Song paintings as well as in the Zhangren guan murals mentioned above, the inclusion of two rather than four companion deities in the Beiyue miao murals, in particular in a temple dedicated to a Sacred Peak, is highly peculiar.[229]

The iconography of the four groups in the upper register of the murals presents more difficulties: the central deities do not have clear attributes, they are in each case accompanied by a group of attending deities who are not seen in other Heavenly Court paintings, and one group, on the top-left of the west wall, has a central deity depicted not as an official but as a general. The general's central status is indicated by the two banner-attendants positioned behind him.

The top-left group on the east wall has the most distinct iconographical attributes, and Li and Zhou already identified them as the members of the Thunder Ministry: readily recognisable is Thunder Father as the pig-faced figure encircled by a halo of drums, to his left we see his spouse, Mother Lightning holding a mirror, and in front of them we see Rain Master dressed as a Confucian scholar holding a rain device in one hand and showering rain with the other, and Uncle Wind bending forwards (Fig. 88). An official in imperial dress figure is appended to the right of the Thunder Ministry (Fig. 89), and assisted by two attendants holding a fan and a branch; in front of him on a distance in the green-yellow-and-white clouds two court ladies carry trays with gifts. The group has further three smaller figures of unclear identity. There is also no clear identity for the central deity. Let us first deal with the other groups.

The top-right group of deities on the east wall consists of an official in imperial robe and holding a court tablet assisted by two dog-faced attendants also holding court tablets in front of him (Fig. 90). A demon soldier and a young attendant carrying a tray with gifts follow the official, a young soldier holding a halberd to his right, and the most compelling figure of

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[228] The source is a stele inscription on Mt. Lu, the *Jiutian shizhe miao bei bing xu* 九天使者廟碑並序, by Li Pin 李玭, dated 732. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 114-116. Both temples were decorated with murals probably depicting images of mainly immortals and warriors, but the text is not entirely clear on this point.

[229] The Yongle gong, Nan'an, Pilu si, and Baoning si paintings all depict the Four Sacred Marshes together with the Five Sacred Peaks. The descriptions of the *Yuhuang chaohui tu* 玉皇朝會圖 by Shi Ke 石恪 of the late tenth century and the Central Taiyi temple of the late eleventh century similarly treat the deities of the Sacred Peaks and Marshes as a pair. *Hua pin*, pp. 259-60. *Song Zhong taiyi gong beiming* 宋中太乙宮碑銘, by Lü Huiqing 呂惠卿, dated 1073. Chen, *Daojia jinshi lüe*, pp. 282-283.

the group behind him, a demon soldier treading the clouds and waving a long flag that trails in the wind along the top edge of the mural signalling the official's approach. None of the figures in the group show any distinct marks or iconographical attributes from which we could gauge their identities.

Amidst the clouds on the east wall, we further see three figures, somewhere between the upper register groups and the bottom assembly, and two of them resemble children, one holding what looks like an elephant tusk; the third figure rather looks like an immortal and holds a bowl. Their identities are unknown.

The top-right group of deities on the west wall are perhaps more easily identified (Drawing 3B), albeit depicting far from standard representations. The central deity of the group is an imperial figure astride a small-headed dragon; his hands are folded inside the sleeves of his green robe. A small attendant guides the dragon, and another attendant shields him with a fan, while two female attendants await him in front with banners and a goblin with a treasure-tray on his head stands by his side. I will return to the central deity below.

Following closely behind the dragon deity is a group of seven figures in very varied representations: first there is a chubby, bearded man holding a scroll under his arm, followed by a tall, old man wearing a lotus crown and holding a sceptre, an angry demon, a man carrying a long object in a sack over his right shoulder (usually used to transport a lute), a young man carrying a plate accompanied by an attendant, and lastly a banner-bearer who closes the row. Their varied representation suggests individual identities. Five of these seven figures should represent the Five Planets, but oddly, only the attributes they carry match the standard iconography of the Five Planets deities, the figures themselves do not. If we take the Five Planets in the Baoning si paintings as an example, we see an old Buddhist pilgrim with a sceptre – Saturn, also depicted in the Beiyue miao murals but rather as a Daoist priest – and a warrior-demon with wild hair – Mars, also in the Beiyue miao murals – but then the similarity ends, because the figures of Mercury and Venus are female figures, the first carrying a long thin sack and the latter a scroll and writing brush. The Beiyue miao figures carry the same attributes but are rather depicted as male figures. Finally, the young man holding the tray should represent Jupiter, the bearded official in the Baoning si paintings.[230]

How should we explain this inconsistency in representation? All known representations of the Five Planets of the Yuan and Ming, such as those in the Yongle gong (Fig. 77) and in the Toronto murals (Fig. 85) all follow the standard format of their

[230] Shanxi sheng bowuguan, *Baoning si Mingdai shuilu hua*, p. 61.

representation with only very minor variations;[231] as does a Dunhuang silk painting of Tejaprabha Buddha dated to 897.[232] A long handscroll in the collection of the Osaka Municipal Museum, depicting the Five Planets and the Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions in anthropomorphic form, also follows, albeit with some small differences, the standard iconography of the Five Planets. This handscroll is traditionally attributed to Zhang Sengyou 張僧繇 (late 5th – early 6th cent.), but should probably date to the Tang dynasty. The scroll clearly shows the Central Asian origin of the deities' representations.[233] Then, if the iconography of the Five Planets was codified and well known from at least the late Tang dynasty, and assuming that the introduction of such images in China would be followed by a certain transitional phase when different forms of figures co-exist before the iconography of a particular deity was established, I feel inclined to think that this particular representation should stem from a period when their iconography had not yet been standardised or so well known. Yet, a Tang date of the Five Planets is in contradiction with the alleged Yuan date of the hall's architecture.

At least, the inclusion of the Five Planets makes good sense in the overall composition. Five Sacred Peak deities rule over the five directions on earth, and the Five Planets rule over the five directions in the sky. In addition, their position on the west wall mirrored by the Thunder Ministry group on the east wall, which also governs from the skies. The design bespeaks a well balanced composition both in concept and content.

The so-called Quyang Demon clears the road in front of the top-right group. He is independently positioned at the top centre of the east wall. His compelling location and motion – kicking and sweeping, angrily looking down as if on the look out for any sinners he can swoop up - is further underscored by the golden hue of his body. This technique of sprinkling a figure or decorative part with gold dust (*lifen* 瀝粉) was also applied to the bodies of the two big dragons on the east and west walls. Since the upper registers and north ends of the walls receive much less light, the gold dust causes the Quyang Demon and two dragons to gloom and twinkle in the dark, another appealing and cunning feature in the well-thought out composition of the Beiyue miao murals.

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[231] White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, p. 187; Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 26.

[232] The Dunhuang representations of the Five Planets are discussed in Michel Soymié, "Peintures et dessins de Dunhuang, notes d'iconographie." Jean-Pierre Drège (ed.), *Images de Dunhuang: Dessins et peintures sur papier des fonds Pelliot et Stein*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1999, pp. 36-43. For an eleventh century representation (attributed), see Mikhail Piotrovsky (ed.), *Lost Empire of the Silk Road: Buddhist Art from Khara Khoto (X-XIIIth century)*. Milan: Electa, 1993, pp. 228-231.

[233] The Osaka handscroll has seals of Emperor Huizong (r. 1100-1125) and is recorded in the *Xuanhe huapu*, but although attributed to Zhang Sengyou, the general opinion is that it should date to the Tang dynasty. See Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 132-137.

The top-left group on the west wall, as mentioned earlier, has no central official deity but a general. Since he is deeply bowing and clasping his hands in devotion, it is my assumption that he should represent rather a donor figure than a deity. His importance in the group is accentuated by two banner-bearers placed behind him. The method of signalling the central importance of a figure in a composition by shielding him with banners, fans or flags is not only used for the other three official deities in the upper register, but also found in secular paintings and donor-scenes on Buddhist images to indicate a central, often imperial figure rather than a militairy figure, suggesting that this figure represents an emperor in militairy outfit.[234] A young attendant to the general's left holds a tray with gifts, further corroborating the idea we are dealing here with a central figure.

The other members of the so-called "donor"-group consist of figures with very individualised representations. Two bearded men – one with a lotus crown and holding a flask in one hand and a short branch in the other, and the other with a knapsack – resemble immortals. Interesting to note, they lack the ceremonial dress to qualify as a Daoist priest, a figure conspicuously absent in the murals when compared to the other Heavenly Court paintings in this study. They are guarded by two men with halberds; a small demon is looking over the shoulder of the immortals. On the far left we see a dog-faced soldier, and behind the two banner-bearers a young female, a long green sash trailing in the wind and holding a wheel or round box with a wheel-motif in front of her chest. A figure with a similar attribute is seen in the Yongle gong murals but depicted as a young man (136) instead of a female. Perhaps this figure is another case of gender-switching or an uncodified iconography, because the two should represent the same deity or immortal, or perhaps a historical figure but whose identity escapes us for the moment.

Let us now turn to the three central deities. The three official deities, I propose, should be regarded as one group and represent the Three Officials (*sanguan* 三官). There are two reasons for identifying the deities as the Three Officials, one is iconographical, the other iconopractical.

A set of three Southern Song paintings of the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts shows some close similarities to the Beiyue miao murals (Plate 13).[235] The Boston paintings depict the officials in their particular realms, the Official of Heaven seated behind a table floating on a cloud in the sky, the Official of Earth

[234] In chapter 4.4, I will discuss and identify this militairy figure as Song Emperor Taizong (r. 976-997).
[235] The Boston paintings are reproduced for example in Wu, *Tales from the Land of the Dragons*, pp. 63-65, and Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 233-235. The paintings are subject of a detailed research in Huang, "Summoning the Gods," and idem, "The Triptych of Daoist Deities of Heaven, Earth and Water."

riding on a horse crossing a bridge in a rocky landscape, and the Official of Water astride a dragon above billowing waves. Each Official is accompanied by a retinue of soldiers, court ladies, attendants, and demon-warriors.

The painting of the Official of Water comprises several elements also witnessed in the murals. First element, both the Boston paintings and the Beiyue miao murals have a Thunder Ministry. However, they are appended to different officials. In the Boston paintings, the Thunder Ministry is part of the retinue of the Official of Water, while in the Beiyue miao murals he is attached to the Official of Heaven. In a black-and-white drawing attributed to He Cheng 何澄 (early Yuan) in the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, we similarly see the Official of Water astride a dragon and accompanied by Thunder Father drawn in a cart hitting his drums (Fig. 91).[236] The representation of the Three Officials in the Beiyue miao murals appears to be another case where the iconography of a deity has not been codified yet. The Five Planets do not appear in the Boston paintings, and both the Five Planets and Thunder Ministry seem to be independent entities similar to the Three Officials, even though an attempt is made by the painters to link them compositionally as deities with their retinues.

Second element, the Quyang Demon is also present in the Boston paintings but in a composite manner. In the bottom left corner of the Official of Water painting we see a demon wielding a spear depicted in almost the same kicking and sweeping position as the Quyang Demon; the top-right soldier constitutes the other compositional part of the Quyang Demon, for he is similarly carrying his spear over his left shoulder and holds the other hand above his eyes, but this time gazing upward instead of down. Although the demon and soldiers in the Boston painting are neatly executed and also present a fine display of dynamic frenzy, the painter of the Quyang Demon at Beiyue miao seems to have condensed all this frenzy and vigour into the body of one figure.

Third element, we further see two attendants carrying book scrolls under their arms following the Official of Water, similar to the figure in the Beiyue miao murals. However, the painting of the Official of Earth has a similar scroll-bearer and I surmise that these motifs are rather related to the judicial function of the Officials recording humans' misdeeds. The Beiyue miao scroll attendant is part of a distinct group of the Five Planets.

The other two paintings are iconographically much less related, but enable some interesting stylistic comparisons. For instance, several faces of soldiers and banner-bearers in

[236] Thomas Lawton, *Chinese Figure Painting*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1973, pp. 156-159. On the date of this painting, see Marsha Weidner, "Ho Ch'eng and Early Yüan Dynasty Painting in Northern China." *Archives of Asian Art* 39 (1986), pp. 6-22. I owe my thanks to Susan Huang for pointing out this painting to me.

the Boston paintings have a characteristic "French Musketeer" moustache and beard, which is for example also spotted on the two banner-bearers in the donor-immortal group on the west wall. Perhaps this would suggest a Song style for portraying faces but this assumption is contradicted by other stylistic elements in the paintings. For example, the *putou*-hat with the long horizontal flaps is worn by the scroll-bearers in the Boston paintings is not seen anywhere in the Beiyue miao murals. Interestingly, it only came into fashion in the Song dynasty. Other stylistic incongruities with the Boston paintings are the shapes of banners, precious objects, clouds, headdresses, especially those of the female attendants, and wardrobe. The Beiyue miao murals present an overall greater variation in the types and forms of faces, postures of figures, and attributes, but in each the representation is more basic and plainer, and similar to the Quyang Demon and his composite counterparts, the Beiyue miao images seem to represent proto-types rather than variations of a type or model which seems to be case with later Song, Yuan, and Ming paintings.

The Boston paintings and the Beiyue miao murals of the Three Officials have in common that they are divided into three, instead of being grouped together. Other Heavenly Court paintings and Water-and-Land Paintings of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties all depict them together on one scroll or as a single group on a wall. With regard to hanging scroll paintings – the case is less clear for wall paintings for lack of evidence or comparative material – the division into three seems to have been the standard format up to the Song dynasty. Seven out of eight references in the *Xuanhe huapu* are to paintings of the Three Officials consisting of a set of three.[237] The earliest reference to paintings of the Three Officials in the catalogue is attributed to Zhou Fang 周昉 (fl. 730-800), although such attribution should treated with caution. If it was common practice to depict the Three Officials on individual scrolls in Song and pre-Song times, as far as can be judged from the *Xuanhe huapu* without other material to compare, it may be a strong indication that this practice was also applied in wall painting.

Beside an iconographical basis for identifying the three central deities as the Three Officials, there is also an iconopractical one related to Daoist liturgical practice.

First of all, the images of the Three Officials are related to the rite of "tossing dragons and slips" (*tou longjian* 投龍簡) to the Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water and has been

[237] The *Xuanhe Painting Catalogue* records paintings of the Three Officials by Fan Qiong 範瓊, Zhang Suqing 張素卿, Sun Wei 孫位, Zhu You 朱繇, Du Nigui 杜齯龜, Cao Zhongyuan 曹仲元, Sun Zhiwei 孫知微, and Zhou Fang 周昉 Only Zhang Suqing depicted the Three Officials on one scroll, the other painters depicted them separately on three scrolls. *Xuanhe huapu*, pp. 52, 55, 61, 71, 76, 78, 85, 126.

the subject of a meticulous study by Édouard Chavannes published in 1919. The jade slips were inscribed with a prayer directed to each of the Officials and read aloud during the rite, after which the slips were "sent" to the appropriate deity by means of a golden dragon - the envoy of the message - and tossed into a Sacred Peak mountain cave (Heaven), buried into the ground often at the altar site (Earth), or thrown in a river or lake (Water).[238] Judged by the stele inscriptions collected by Chavannes on the performance of the rite, primarily on Taishan 太山, the Eastern Peak, the rite seems to have been particularly popular in the Tang dynasty, but performances continued at least until the Yuan dynasty.[239]

Secondly, the identities and the positions of the Three Officials of Heaven, Earth and, Water become clear when we take the ritual configuration into account that lies at the foundation of the composition.[240] The standard ritual performed on Sacred Peaks according to Daoist liturgy, which has many different types of rituals for different occasions, is the so-called Golden Register Retreat (*jinlu zhai* 金籙齋), the standard ritual held for the benefit of the emperor and the state (worship of the Five Sacred Peaks was part of the state cult).[241] Its most essential part consists of the installation of five True Writs (*zhenwen* 真文), which empowers the Daoist priest with control over the forces of the five directions. In other Daoist rituals, such as the Yellow Register Retreat (*huanglu zhai* 黃籙齋) held for the salvation of the dead, the installation of the True Writs is part of an introductory rite performed on the first day (of a three day liturgy) used for the consecration of the ritual area, in fact by inviting the deities to the site and attend the audience ritual, called Nocturnal Annunciation (*suqi* 宿啓). In the Golden Register Retreat, this consecration rite not only applies to the ritual area but is in fact extended to include the consecration of the entire empire, in which the Five Sacred Peaks become representations of cosmic powers that, when brought back in harmony, will bring peace and prosperity to the empire, analogous to the human body with its five organs (heart, liver, spleen, kidneys, and lungs) or the universe with its Five Planets.[242]

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[238] Chavannes "Le jet des dragons," pp. 184-189, 207 n. 78.
[239] Chavannes, "Le jet des dragons," pp. 68-128 contains thirty-six references dating from 661 to 1316 to the rite of "tossing of dragons." Interestingly, the performance of the rite in the Tang was almost always concluded with the presenting of statues, paintings or relief sculptures of Daoist deities. See further Liu, "Transformations of the Dao," pp. 256-258 who has also collected examples of archaeological finds of bronze and silver "golden dragons" and jade slips.
[240] These ritual foundations of Heavenly Court paintings are discussed in full in chapter 2.
[241] *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 41. 3b-4a. The performance of Golden Register Retreats at Sacred Peaks is confirmed by the stele inscriptions collected and annotated by Édouard Chavannes. Chavannes 1919: 68-128.
[242] The correspondences between the Five Planets, Five Sacred Peaks, and five organs is explained in *Shangqing lingbao dafa* DZ 1223, 40.1a-5a.

The basic text for the installation of the True Writs is a fourth-century scripture, the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶赤書玉訣秒經, often abbreviated as *Yujue* 玉訣 or *Jade Formulae*, which contains a description for an altar layout which, most intriguingly, would perfectly match with the layout of the Beiyue miao murals.[243] Namely, the Daoist altar or ritual area would consist of five tables in the centre on which the True Writs were fixed (*zhen* 鎮) with a golden dragon, and six gates on the outside, five for the deities of the five directions and one for a group of deities called the "Assembled Veritables" (*zhongzhen* 眾真) which consists of immortals of the Sacred Peaks and Marshes and the numinous officials of the Three Offices (*sanguan* 三官) who are none other than the Three Officials. The deities of the directions are found in the lower register of the Beiyue miao murals, and the "Assembled Veritables" are found in the upper register in the four groups of the immortals and the Three Officials. There is no counterpart in this ritual text for the images of Five Planets and the Thunder Ministry but as deities belonging to the five directions in the heavenly sphere (the Five Planets) and deities responsible for making rain (Thunder Ministry), they seem to be obvious choices for inclusion in a register of deities invoked for attending a Heavenly Court audience (the Golden Register Retreat) which principle aim was to bring health and longevity to an emperor (the jurisdiction of the Three Officials), and to bring an end to natural disasters and other calamities (the jurisdiction of the Five Sacred Peak deities, the Five Planets, and the Thunder Ministry).

But which official in the mural represents which deity? Although it would be enticing to identify the official seated on the dragon as the Official of Water, a further analysis of the ritual foundations of the Beiyue miao murals, in particular in comparison with other Heavenly Court paintings would demonstrate (see chapter 2) that the northwest corner in a temple hall corresponds to Heaven, the southeast corner to Earth, and the northeast corner to Water. This division correlates exactly to the arrangement of the three groups in the Beiyue miao murals; the donor-group occupies the "vacant" southwest corner. If the Three Officials occupy their respective corners – the Official of Heaven on the top-right east wall (NW), the Official of Earth on the top-right west wall (SE), and the Official of Water on the top-left east wall (NE) – the composition of the Beiyue miao murals suddenly makes perfect sense, even harmonising the upper and lower registers. The Official of Heaven is depicted above the Northern Peak

[243] *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* DZ 352, 2.20a-22a. This scripture is one of the "revealed" texts of the original Lingbao corpus of the fourth century. For the essential position of this scripture for the Golden Register Retreat, see Du Guangting's (850-933) *Jinlu zhai qitan yi* DZ 483, 4a. For the True Writs and the Jade Formulae, see Benn, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission*, pp. 49-54.

deity, whose emblematic colour is blue-black, the emblematic colour of heaven. The Official of Earth is depicted above the Central Peak deity, whose emblematic colour is yellow, the emblematic colour of earth. Furthermore, the Five Planets as deities of heaven accompany the Official of Heaven, while the Thunder Ministry responsible for rain accompanies the Official of Water.

2 Tables

2.1 Yongle gong deities.

Table 2.1 compares the identifications for the deities depicted in the Heavenly Court paintings of the Three Purities Hall, Yongle gong, as made by Wang Xun 王遜, Anning Jing 景安寧, and by me.[621] The numbers for the deities refer to the numbers in Wang's drawings. Arrows (^) mean the same as the previous one. A deity name placed in brackets means that this deity should be part of the group but that his or her name cannot be linked to a specific figure in that group. The column of "related paintings" are references to other paintings or woodblock prints that depict the same deity or group of deities, often including a cartouche identifying the deity. These references are not exhaustive but intend to corroborate my identifications of the Yongle gong deities presented here. The numbers behind these references refer to the pages in works reproducing these images:

PLS – Water-and-Land paintings in the Pilu si 毗盧寺.[622]

BNS – Water-and-Land Paintings in the Baoning si 寶寧寺.[623]

BYG – Paintings in the Baiyuan guan 白雲觀 Collection.[624]

SSJ – Woodblock prints in the illustrated *Soushen ji* 搜神記.[625]

The deities listed in this table are discussed in Appendix 1.1.

[621] Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian;" Jing, "Yongle Palace."
[622] Kang, *Pilu si qun hua*.
[623] Shanxi sheng bowuguan, *Baoning si Mingdai shuilu hua.*
[624] Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian huaji*.
[625] *Xinbian lianxiang soushen guangji*, by Tai Zijin.

No.	Wang	Jing	Gesterkamp	Social Type	Attributes	Related Paintings
I	South Pole Emperor 南極大帝	Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓	South Pole Emperor 南極大帝	Emperor		PLS 50, BYG 17
II	East Pole Emperor 東極大帝	Zhongli Quan 鍾離權	East Pole Emperor 東極大帝	^		BYG 35
III	North Pole Emperor 北極大帝	North Pole Emperor 北極大帝	North Pole Emperor 北極大帝	^		BNS 56, PLS 76, BYG 16
IV	Heavenly Sovereign 天皇大帝	Heavenly Sovereign 天皇大帝	Heavenly Sovereign 天皇大帝	^		BYG 15
V	Jade Emperor 玉皇上帝	King Father of the East 東王公	King Father of the East 東王公	^		
VI	Earth Goddess 后土	Queen Mother of the West 西王母	Queen Mother of the West 西王母	Empress	Peach, hare, phoenix, *zhen* 震-trigram	
VII	King Father of the East 東王公	Jade Emperor 玉皇上帝	Jade Emperor 玉皇上帝	Emperor		PLS 41, SSJ 15
VIII	Queen Mother of the West 西王母	Earth Goddess 后土	Earth Goddess 后土	Empress	*Kun* 坤- trigram	BYG 17, SSJ 24
1	Jade Maiden 玉女		Jade Maiden 玉女	Court lady		
2	^		^	^		
3			Golden Boy 金童	Official	Scroll	
4			Golden Boy 金童	Official		
5			Jade Maiden 玉女	Court lady		
6		(Tan Chuduan 譚處段)	Donor?	Official		
7		Qiu Chuji 丘處機	Sun Lüdao 孫履道	Master		
8		(Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄)	Golden Boy 金童?	Official	Book	
9	Ten Mysterious Masters 玄元十子	Wang Zhe 王嘉	Heavenly Worthies of the Ten Directions 十方天尊 (Ten Masters	Priest	Scroll	BYG 29

			十子)			
10	^	Ma Yu 馬鈺	^	^	Fan	
11	^	(Wang Chuyi 王處一)	^	^		
12	^	(Hao Datong 郝大通)	^	^	Sceptre	
13	^		^	^		
14	Jade Maiden 玉女		Jade Maiden 玉女	Court lady		
15	^		^	^		
16		(Xue Daoguang 薛道光)	Donor?	Official		
17		(Chen Nan 陳楠)	^	^		
18		(Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾)	^	^		
19	Ten Mysterious Masters 玄元十子	Chen Tuan 陳摶	Heavenly Worthies of the Ten Directions 十方天尊(Chen Tuan 陳摶)	Priest	Lotus flower	
20	^	Liu Haichan 劉海蟾	^ (Liu Haichan 劉海蟾)	^	Elixir pill	
21	^	(Dong Shouzhi 董守志)	^	^	Fly whisk	
22	^	(Zhang Boduan 張伯端)	^	^	Sceptre	
23	^	(Shi Tai 石泰)	^	^	Tablet	
24	Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors 三十二天帝君		Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors 三十二天帝君	Emperor		BYG 25-26
25	^		^	^		^
26	^		^	^		^
27	^		^	^		^
28	^		^	^		^
29	^		^	^		^
30	^		^	^		^

31	^		^	^		^
32	^		^	^		^
33	^		^	^		^
34	^		^	^		^
35	^		^	^		^
36	^		^	^		^
37	^		^	^		^
38	^		^	^		^
39	^		^	^		^
40	^		^	^		^
41	^		^	^		^
42	^		^	^		^
43	^		^	^		^
44	^		^	^		^
45	^		^	^		^
46	^		^	^		^
47	^		^	^		^
48	^		^	^		^
49	^		^	^		^
50	^		^	^		^
51	^		^	^		^
52	^		^	^		^
53	^		^	^		^
54	^		^	^		^
55	^		^	^		^

56	Sage of the Heavenly Mainstay 天罡大聖?		Dark Warrior 玄武	General		
57	Transmission Masters 傳經法師		Mystery Master 玄中法師	Priest		BYG 99
58	^		Heavenly Master 天師/ Zhang Daoling 張道陵	^	Bristle beard and “wing”-hair	^
59	^		Supervision Master 監師	^		^
60	Northern Dipper 北斗		Northern Dipper 北斗	Official	Black robe	BNS 74, PLS 56, BYG 55
61	^		^	^	^	^
62	^		^	^	^	^
63	^		^	^	^	^
64	^		^	^	^	^
65	^		^	^	^	^
66	^		^	^	^	^
67	Fu-star 輔		Fu-star 輔	Official		^
68	Bi-star 弼		Bi-star 弼	^		^
69	Three Terraces 三台		Three Terraces 三台	Official		BYG 53
70	^		^	^		^
71	^		^	^		^
72	Immortal Officer 仙曹		Golden Boy 金童	Official		
73	^		^	^		
74			Jade Maiden 玉女	Court lady		
75			^	^		
76	Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions 二		Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions	Official	Snake	BNS 69-73, PLS

	十八宿 Yi 翼 [Crater, Hydra (22)]		二十八宿 Yi 翼 [Crater, Hydra (22)]			59-67, BYG 61-63
77	^ Zhen 軫 [Corvus (4)]		^ Zhen 軫 [Corvus (4)]	^	Worm	^
78	^ Lou 婁 [Aries (3)]		^ Lou 婁 [Aries (3)]	^	Dog	^
79	^ Fang 房 [Scorpio (4)]		^ Fang 房 [Scorpio (4)]	^	Rabbit	^
80	^ Xin 心 [Scorpio (3)]		^ Xin 心 [Scorpio (3)]	^	Fox	^
81	^ Wei 尾 [Scorpio (6)]		^ Wei 尾 [Scorpio (6)]	^	Tiger	^
82	^ Ji 箕 [Sagittarius (4)]		^ Ji 箕 [Sagittarius (4)]	^	Leopard	^
83	^ Bi 壁[Pegasus (1), Andromeda (1)]		^ Bi 壁[Pegasus (1), Andromeda (1)]	^	Wild boar	^
84	^ Kui 奎 [Pisces (16)]		^ Kui 奎 [Pisces (16)]	^	Wolf	^
85	^ Wei 胃 [Musca Boralis (3)]		^ Wei 胃 [Musca Boralis (3)]	^	Pheasant	^
86	^ Mao 昴 [Pleiades (8)]		^ Mao 昴 [Pleiades (8)]	^	Rooster	^
87	^ Zi 觜 [Orion (3)]		^ Zi 觜 [Orion (3)]	^	Monkey	^
88	^ Shen 參[Orion (7)]		^ Shen 參[Orion (7)]	^	Ape	^
89	^ Jing 井 [Gemini (8)]		^ Jing 井 [Gemini (8)]	^	*An* 犴-beast	^
90	Sun		Eleven Luminaries 十一曜, Sun 日	Prince	Red sun disc	BNS 61
91	Moon		^ Moon 月	Princess	White moon disc	
92	Jupiter		^ Five Planets 五星, Jupiter 木星		Fruit plate	BNS 61
93	Saturn		^ ^ Saturn 土星	Old man	Seal, ox	^
94	Mercury		^ ^ Mercury 水星	Lady	Brush, tablet	^
95	Venus		^ ^ Venus 金星	Lady	Pipa	^

96	Mars		^ ^ Mars 火星	Warrior	Weapons, donkey	^
97	Ziqi		^ Ziqi 紫氣	Priest		BNS 63
98	Yuebo		^ Yuebo 月孛	Warrior	Snake, black face	^
99	Rahu		^ Rahu 羅睺	Warrior	Sword	^
100	Ketu		^ Ketu 計都	Warrior		^
101	Transmission Masters 傳經法師		Three Masters 三師	Priest		
102	^		^	^		
103	^		^	^		
104	Southern Dipper 南斗		Southern Dipper 南斗	Official		PLS 57, BYG 57
105	^		^	^		^
106	^		^	^		^
107	^		^	^		^
108	^		^	^		^
109	^		^	^		^
110			Three Walls 三垣 (Purple Tenuity 紫微)	Official		
111			^ (Great Tenuity 太微)	^		
112	Immortal Officer 仙曹		Golden Boy 金童	Official		
113	^		^	^		
114			Jade Maiden 玉女	Court lady		
115			^	^		
116			Attendant	Attendant		
117			^	^		

118	Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions 二十八宿, Dou 斗 [Sagittarius (6)]		Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions 二十八宿, Dou 斗 [Sagittarius (6)]	Official	Crab	BNS 69-73, PLS 59-67, BYG 61-63
119	^ Niu 牛 [Aries (3), Sagittarius (3)]		^ Niu 牛 [Aries (3), Sagittarius (3)]	^	Ox	^
120	^ Nü 女 [Aquarius (4)]		^ Nü 女 [Aquarius (4)]	^	Bat	^
121	^ Xu 虚 [Aquarius (1) Equuleus (1)]		^ Xu 虚 [Aquarius (1) Equuleus (1)]	^	Rat	^
122	^ Wei 危 [Aquarius (1), Pegasus (2)]		^ Wei 危 [Aquarius (1), Pegasus (2)]	^	Swallow	^
123	^ Shi 室 [Pegasus (2)]		^ Shi 室 [Pegasus (2)]	^	Pig	^
124	^ Bi 畢 [Hyades (6), Taurus (2)]		^ Bi 畢 [Hyades (6), Taurus (2)]	^	Bird	^
125	^ Gui 鬼 [Cancer (4)]		^ Gui 鬼 [Cancer (4)]	^	Ram	^
126	^ Jiao 角 [Virgo (4)]		^ Jiao 角 [Virgo (4)]	^	Flood dragon	^
127	^ Kang 亢 [Virgo (4)]		^ Kang 亢 [Virgo (4)]	^	Dragon	^
128	^ Di 氐 [Libra (4)]		^ Di 氐 [Libra (4)]	^	Racoon dog	^
129	^ Liu 柳 [Hydra (8)]		^ Liu 柳 [Hydra (8)]	^	River deer	^
130	^ Xing 星 [Hydra (7)]		^ Xing 星 [Hydra (7)]	^	Horse	^
131	^ Zhang 張 [Hydra (5)]		^ Zhang 張 [Hydra (5)]	^	Deer	^
132	Three Officials 三官(Official of Heaven 天官)		Three Officials 三官(Official of Heaven 天官)	Official	Happy face, blue robe	BNS 77, PLS 40, BYG 19, SSJ 35
133	^ (Official of Earth 地官)		^ (Official of Earth 地官)	^	Stern face, yellow robe	^
134	^ (Official of Water 水官)		^ (Official of Water 水官)	^	Angry face, red	^

					robe	
135				Official		
136			Thunder Marshall?	Boy	Wheel	BYG 78
137				Priest		
138				Master		
139				Priest		
140				Master		
141	Tianpeng 天蓬	Tianyou 天猶	Tianyou 天猶	Tantric warrior	Four arms, two heads	BNS 78, PLS 87
142	Black Killer 黑殺	True Warrior 真武	True Warrior 真武	Warrior	Turtle-snake, sword	BNS 78, PLS 38
143	Old Four Eyes 四目老翁		Old Four Eyes 四目老翁	Scholar	Four eyes, Dongpo-hat	
144	Attendants Tianpeng 天蓬 (Earthly Branches 地支)		Twelve Zodiacal Mansions 十二生肖, Twelve Earthly Branches 十二地支, You 酉	Official	Rooster	
145	^		^ Zi 子	^	Rat	BNS 66-67, PLS 30
146	^		^ (Niu 牛)	^	Ox	^
147	^		^ (Yin 寅)	^	Tiger	^
148	^		^ (Mao 卯)	^	Rabbit	^
149	^		^ (Chen 辰)	^	Dragon	^
150	^		^ (Wu 午)	^	Horse	^
151	^		^ (Wei 未)	^	Ram	^
152	^		^ Si 巳	^	Snake	^
153	^		^ (Shen 申)	^	Monkey	^

154	^		^ (Xu 戌)	^	Dog	^
155	^		^ (Hai 亥)	^	Pig	^
156	Immortal Officer 仙曹		Golden Boy 金童	Official		
157	^		^	^		
158			Jade Maiden 玉女	Court lady		
159			^	^		
160	Mulberry Emperor 扶桑大帝		Mulberry Emperor 扶桑大帝	Emperor		PLS 74
161	Water Department 水府?		Three Stars 三星 (God of Fortune 福), Sun Lüdao 孫履道	Master		
162	^		^ (God of Emolument 祿)	Master		
163	^		^ God of Longevity 壽星	Immortal	Large forehead	
164	Five Sacred Peaks 五嶽		Five Sacred Peaks 五嶽, Western Peak 西嶽	Emperor	White robe	BNS 102, PLS 14, SSJ 41
165	^		^ Southern Peak 南嶽	^	Red robe	BNS 101, PLS 15, SSJ 41
166	^		^ (Northern Peak 北嶽)	^	Black (face)	BNS 102, PLS 15, SSJ 43
167	^		^ (Eastern Peak 東嶽)	^	Green-blue robe	BNS 100, PLS 14, SSJ 37
168	^		^ Central Peak 中嶽	^	Yellow robe	BNS 101, PLS 14, SSJ 43
169	Four Sacred Marshes 四瀆		Four Sacred Marshes 四瀆, Huai River 淮?	Official	(Red robe)	BNS 109, SSJ 47

170	^		^ Yellow River 黄河	^	Yellow dres	^
171	^		^ Yangtzu 長江	^	Black robe	^
172	^		^ Qi River 齊?	^	(White robe)	^
173			Golden Boy 金童	Official		
174			^	^		
175	Jade Maiden 玉女		Jade Maiden 玉女	Court lady		
176	^		^	^		
177	Inner Official 内官		Zhao Yu 趙昱	Scholar	Dongpo-hat	PLS 53, SSJ 93
178	Fengdu Emperor 豐都大帝		Fengdu Emperor 豐都大帝	Emperor		
179	Mao Ying 茅盈		Ten Kings of Hell 十地閻君	Official		
180	Saint Ancestor Zhao Xuanlang 聖祖趙玄郎		^	^		
181	Wenchang 文昌		City God 城隍		*Putou*-hat	PLS 45, BYG 125
182	Fengdu deities 豐都諸神		Ten Kings of Hell 十地閻君	Official		
183	^		^	^		
184	^		^	^		
185	^		^	^		
186	^		^	^		
187	^		Li Bing 李冰?	Master		
188	^		Erlang 二郎?	^		PLS 53
189	^		Ten Kings of Hell 十地閻君	Official		
190	^		^	^		
191	^		^	^		

192	Feitian shenwang?		City God general?	General	Armour	PLS 45
193	Tianding lishi		Meritorious Officer Guarding Time 四值功曹, (Year 年)	Warrior	Axe	BNS 82, PLS 73, BYG 92
194	^		^ (Month 月)	^	^	^
195	^		^ (Day 日)	^	^	^
196	^		^ (Hour 時)	^	^	^
197	Generals of the Three Primes 三元將軍 (Tang Hong 唐宏)		Generals of the Three Primes 三元將軍 (Tang Hong 唐宏)	General	Armour, sword	
198	^ (Ge Yong 葛永)		^ (Ge Yong 葛永)	General	^	
199	^ (Zhou Wu 周武)		^ (Zhou Wu 周武)	General	^	
200	Strongmen Destroying Evil 破邪力士?		?	Official		
201	Immortal Duke of the Great Ultimate 太極仙侯		Earth God 土地	Old man	White hair	PLS 45, BYG 127
202	Spirit of the Bright Star 明星大神		?	^		
203	Jiuyi xianhou? Immortal Duke of Nine Doubts 九疑仙侯		?	^		
204	Tianyou 天猶	Tianpeng 天蓬	Tianpeng 天蓬	Tantric warrior	Six arms, three heads	BNS 78, PLS 88
205	True Warrior 真武	Black Killer 黑刹	Black Killer 黑刹	Warrior	Sword	BNS 78, PLS 87
206	Immortal Official for Introductions 引進仙官		?	Official/ Priest		
207	Immortal Officer 仙曹		Golden Boy 金童	Official		
208	^		^	^		

209	Jade Maiden 玉女		Jade Maiden 玉女	Court lady		
210	^		^	^		
211	Immortal Officer 仙曹		Golden Boy 金童	Warrior?		
212	^		^	^		
213			Six Jia 六甲	Official		PLS 36
214			^	Priest?		
215			^	Official		
216			^	^		
217			^	^		
218			^	^		
219	Cang Jie 倉頡		(Old Six Eyes?)	Old man	Six eyes	
220	Confucius 孔子?		?	Master	Feather fan	
221			Ten Heavenly Stems 十天干 (Jia 甲)	Priest?		
222			^ (Yi 乙)	Official		
223			^ (Bing 丙)	Official		
224			^ (Wu 戊)	Priest?	Zhuge-hat	
225			^ (Ji 己)	Official		
226	Jade Maiden 玉女		Jade Maiden 玉女	Court lady		
227	^		^	^		
228	^		^	^		
229	^		^	^		
230			Ten Heavenly Stems 十天干	Official		
231			^ (Geng 庚)	^		

232			^ (Xin 辛)	^		
233			^ (Ren 壬)	^		
234			Three Mao Brothers 三茅 (Mao Ying 茅盈)	Priest		BYG 97, SSJ 67
235			Ten Heavenly Stems 十天干 (Gui 癸)	Official		
236			Three Mao Brothers 三茅 (Mao Gu 茅固)	Priest		BYG 97, SSJ 67
237			^ (Mao Zhong 茅衷)	^		^
238	Taiyi		Taiyi 太一	Official		
239	^		^	^		
240	^		^	^		
241	^		^	^		
242	^		^	^		
243	^		^	^		
244	^		^	^		
245	^		^	^		
246	^		^	^		
247	^		^	^		
248	Taiyi attendant		Uncle Wind 馮伯?	Official	Feather in hat	
249	^		Cloud Master 雲師?	^	^	
250	Thunder Ministry Generals 雷部元帥		Thunder Ministry Generals 雷部元帥	General		
251	^		^	^		
252	^		^	^		

253	^		^	^		
254	^		^	^		
255	^		^	^		
256	^		^	^		
257	^		^	^		
258	^		^	^		
259	^		?	Official		
260	Eight Trigrams 八卦, Qian 乾		Eight Trigrams 八卦, Qian 乾	Official	Trigram	
261	^ Kan 坎		^ Kan 坎	^	^	
262	^ Gen 艮		^ Gen 艮	^	^	
263	^ Zhen 震		^ Zhen 震	^	^	
264	^ Xun 巽		^ Xun 巽	^	^	
265	^ Li 離		^ Li 離	^	^	
266	^ Kun 坤		^ Kun 坤	^	^	
267	^ Dui 兌		^ Dui 兌	^	^	
268	Thunder Father 雷公		Thunder Father 雷公	Man	Ring of drums	BNS 114, PLS 82
269	Lightning Mother 電母		Lightning Mother 電母	Lady		^
270	Rain Master 雨師		Rain Master 雨師	Confucian master?	Confucian hat?	^
271	Green Dragon Lord 慶龍君		Green Dragon Lord 慶龍君	General	Green dragon, sword	PLS 90
272	Meritorious Officer 功曹		Meritorious Officer 功曹	Official	*Putou*-hat	
273	^		^	^	^	
274	^		^	^	^	

275	White Tiger Lord 百戶君		White Tiger Lord 百戶君	General	White tiger, halberd	PLS 90
276	Messenger 使者		Messenger 使者	Warrior	Axe	
277	^		^	^	^	
278	^		^	^	^	
279	(omitted)		Qing Yang 擎羊?	Official		BYG 67
280	^		Tuo Luo 陀羅?	^		^
281	^		Three Walls 三垣 (Heavenly Market 天市)	Official		
282	^		Red Bird 朱雀	General		

2.2 Paintings of Daoist deities in the *Xuanhe huapu*

Painter	Painting	Number
Liang dynasty		
Zhang Sengyou 張僧繇 (6th cent.)	Nine Luminaries 九曜	1
Tang dynasty		
Yan Lide 閻立德 (d.656)	Seven Luminaries 七曜	2
Yan Liben 閻立本 (d. 673)	Three Purities 三清 Heavenly Worthy of Original Beginning 原始天尊 Dao-lord of Yuchen 玉晨道君 Heavenly Worthy of Prolonging Life 延壽天尊 Heavenly Worthy of Original Vein 木紋天尊 Emperor of the North 北帝 Twelve Veritable Lords 十二真君 Five Planets 五星 Venus 太白 Great Emperor of the North Pole in Ziwei Heaven 紫微北極大帝 Supreme Virtuous Emperor of Chaotic Origin 混元上德皇帝	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 1 1 1
He Changshou 何長壽	Stars and Planets 晨星 True Officials of the Five Sacred Peaks 五嶽真官	1 1
Wu Daozi 吳道子 (ca. 689-758)	Heavenly Worthy [of Original Beginning] 天尊 Heavenly Worthy of Original Vein 木紋天尊 Sun 太陽帝君 Stars and Planets 晨星 Venus 太白 Mars 火星 Rahu 羅睺 Ketu 計都 Five Planets 五星 Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions 二十八宿 Six Jia 六甲	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 5 1 1
Zhai Yan 翟琰	Heavenly Worthy [of Original Beginning] 天尊 Laozi 太上	1 1
Yang Tingguang 楊庭光	Five Planets 五星 Stellar Officials 星官	1 1
Wang Wei 王維 (699-759)	Laozi 太上	2
Zhang Zao 張璪	Laozi 太上	1
Zhang Xuan 張萱 (8th cent.)	Lady Wei [Huacun] 衛夫人 Birth Star 元辰	1 1
Zhou Fang 周昉 (late 8th-early 9th)	Three Officials 天地水三官 Stellar Officials 星官 Six Ding and Six Jia 六丁六甲 Great Emperor of the North Pole 北極大帝	6 1 4 1
Five Dynasties		
Fan Qiong 範瓊	Three Officials 天地水三官 Southern Dipper 南斗	3 1
Sun Wei 孫位	Three Officials 天地水三官	3
Zhang Suqing 張素卿 (fl. 845-927)	Celestial Officials 天官 Three Officials 三官 Nine Luminaries 九曜 Longevity Star 壽星 Veritable Rongcheng 容成真人	1 1 1 1

	Veritable Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒真人 Veritable Yan Junping 嚴君平真人 Veritable Li A 李啊真人 Veritable Ma Ziran 馬自然真人 Veritabel Ge Xuan 葛玄真人 Veritable Chang Shouxian 長壽仙真人 Veritable Huang Chuping 黃初平真人 Veritable Yao Ziming 竇子明真人 Veritable Zuo Si 左慈真人	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Chen Ruoyu 陳若愚	Imperial Lord of Eastern Florescence 東華帝君	1
Zhu You 朱繇	Heavenly Worthy of Original Beginning 元始天尊 Three Officials 天地水三官 Venus 金星 Jupiter 木星 Mercury 水星 Mars 火星 Saturn 土星 Tianpeng 天蓬 Northern and Southern Dipper 南北斗星真	1 3 1 ? 2 3 1 2 1
Li Sheng 李昇	Six Jia 六甲	6
Du Nigui 杜齯龜	Three Officials 天地水三官	3
Cao Zhongyuan 曹仲元	Nine Luminaries 九曜 Three Officials 三官	1 3
Lu Huang 陸晃	Jade Emperor 玉皇大帝 Laozi 太上 Celestial Officials 天官 Stellar Officials 星官 Veritable Lord of Long Life and Preserving Fate 長生保命真君 Veritable Lord of the Nine Heavens Determining Fate 九天定命真君 Veritable Lord of the Heavenly Office of Calculations 天曹益算真君 Veritable Lord of the Heavenly Office of Controlling Emolument 天曹掌祿真君 Veritable Lord of the Heavenly Office Resolving Disaster 天曹解厄真君 Veritable Lord of Nine Heavens Controlling Fate 九天司命真君 Veritable Lord of the Nine Heavens Crossing Disaster 九天度厄真君 Veritable Lord of the Heavenly Office of Bestowing Blessings 天曹賜福真君 Veritable Lord of the Heavenly Office of Controlling Calculations 天曹掌算真君	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Wang Qihan 王齊翰 (ca. 961)	Sun 太陽 Moon 太陰 Venus 金星 Mercury 水星 Saturn 土星 Rahu 羅睺 Ketu 計都 Northern Dipper 北斗星君 Birth Star 元辰 Southern Dipper (copy) 寫南斗星	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 6
Dong Yuan 董元 (d. 962)	Veritable of Long Life 長生真人 Veritable Sun (copy) 寫孫真人	1 1
Huang Quan 黃筌 (903-965)	Three Purities 三清	3 1

	Stellar Officials 星官 Longevity Star 壽星 Old Man of the South Pole 南極老人 Ten Veritables (copy) 寫十真人 True Officials 真官	3 1 1 1
Zhou Wenju 周文矩 (917-975)	Tianpeng 天蓬 Northern Dipper 北斗 Heavenly Worthy of Long Life and Preserving Fate 長生保命天尊	1 1 1
Guo Zhongnu 郭忠怒 (d. 977)	Nine Luminaries 九曜	1
Shi Ke 石恪	Laozi 太上 Saturn 鎮星	1 1
Northern Song dynasty		
Sun Mengqing 孫夢卿	Laozi 太上 Ge Hong 葛仙翁	1 1
Sun Zhiwei	Marshall Tianpeng 天蓬 Three Officials 天地水三官 Nine Luminaries 九曜 Saturn 填星 Libra 亢星 Mars 火星 Eleven Luminaries 十一曜 Jupiter 歲星 Five Planets 五星 Stellar Officials 星官 Immortal of Long Life 長壽仙	2 6 3 1 1 1 1 1 1 2 1
Gu Deqian 顧德謙	Laozi 太上 Laozi, Zhuangzi, Wenzi, Liezi 四子太上	1 1
Wu Dongqing 武洞清	Sun 太陽 Moon 太陰 Jupiter 金星 Mercury 木星 Mars 火星 Saturn 土星 Rahu 羅睺 Ketu 計都 Water Immortals 水仙 Golden Boy Carrying Incense 侍香金童 Jade Maiden Spreading Flowers 散花玉女	2 2 1 2 1 2 1 1 1 1 1
Han Qiu 韓虯	Moon (copy) 寫太陰 Mercury 水星 Stellar Officials 星官 Jinyang Veritable, Director of Fate of Eastern Florescence 東華司命晉陽真人	1 1 1 1
Wu Zongyuan 武宗元 (d. 1050)	Heavenly Worthy [of Original Beginning] 天尊 Emperor of the North 北帝 True Warrior 真武 Mars 火星 Saturn 土星	1 1 1 1 1
Li Derou 李得柔	Eldest Immortal Lord Mao 大茅仙君 Second Immortal Lord Mao 二茅仙君 Third Immortal Lord Mao 三茅仙君 Veritable Zhongli Quan 鍾離權真人 Veritable Zhuangzi 南華真人	1 1 1 1 1

	Veritable Wei Shanjun 韋善俊真人 Immortal Tao 陶仙君 Immortal Feng 封仙君 Immortal Kou 寇仙君 Immortal Zhang 張仙君 Immortal Tan 譚仙君 Veritable Sun Simiao 孫思邈真人 Veritable Wang Ziqiao 王子喬真人 Veritable Zhu Taozhui 朱桃椎真人 Veritable Fu Qiugong 浮丘公真人 Veritable Liu Gen 劉根真人 Heavenly Master [Zhang Daoling] 天師 Veritable Liezi 沖虛至德真人 Veritable Wu Daozi (copy) 謝吳道玄真人	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
Hao Deng 郝澄	North Pole (copy) 寫北極	1
Liu Yongnian 劉永年 (b. 1020)	Jupiter (copy) 謝木星	1
Wu Yuanyu 吳元瑜	Eleven Luminaries 十一曜 Heavenly Worthy [of Original Beginning] 天尊 True Warrior 真武 Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions 二十八宿	1 1 1 14
Li Gonglin 李公麟 (1049-1106)	Five Planets and Twenty-Eight Lunar Mansions 五星二十八宿	1

2.3 Mural workshops in Shanxi province, ca. 1100-1400.

	Temple	Location	Hall	Year	Wall	Painters
1	Kaihua si 開化寺	Gaoping 高平	Mahariva Hall 大雄寶殿	1096	West	Guo Fa 郭發
2	Yanshan si 嚴山寺	Fanzhi 繁峙	Vimalakīrti Hall 文殊殿	1167	West	Wang Kui 王逵 Wang Zun 王揮 Song Qiong 宋瓊 (Song) Fuxi 福喜 (Song) Runxi 潤喜
3	Xinghua si 興化寺	Jishan 稷山	Centre Hall 中院殿	1320? (後大殿)	?	Zhu Haogu 朱好古 Zhang Boyuan 張伯淵
4	Guangsheng xiasi 廣勝下寺	Hongtong 洪洞	Mingying wang dian 明應王殿	1324	East	Wang Yanda 王彥達 Wang Xiao 王小 Hu Tianxiang 胡天祥 Ma Wenyuan 馬文遠 □□□ Yuan Yancai 元彥才 Yuan Xiao 元小 Mr. Xi 席
					West	Zhao Guoxiang 趙国祥 Shang Junxi 商君錫 Jing Yanzheng 景彥政

5	Yongle gong 永樂宮	Ruicheng 芮城 (Yongle 永樂)	Three Purities Hall 三清殿	1325	Altar-shrine (clouds)	Ma Seven 馬七
					East and West (clouds and decorative patterns)	Ma Junxiang 馬君祥 Ma Seven 馬七 Wang Xiuxian 王秀先 Wang Two 王二 Mr. Zhao 趙 Ma Eleven 馬十一 Ma Twelve 馬十二 Ma Thirteen 馬十三 Mr. Fan 範 Mr. Wei 魏 Mr. Fang 方 Mr. Zhao 趙
			Chunyang Hall 純陽殿	1358	East	Zhang Zunli 張尊禮 Tian Dexin 田德新 Cao Demin 曹德敏
					West	Li Hongyi 李弘宜 Wang Shiyan 王士彥 Wang Chun 王椿 Zhang Xiushi 張秀實
6	Wuyue miao 五嶽廟	Fenyang 汾陽	Five Sacred Peaks Hall 五嶽殿	1326	East	Tian Run 田潤 Liang Zi'an 梁子安

					West	Wang Zhongshi 王仲實 Song Junde 宋君德
			Water Immortal Hall 水仙殿	Yuan	North	Guo Congli 郭從禮 Ren Nianzong 任廿宗
					East	Jia Congzheng 賈從政 (Jia) Chaoyan 朝延 Yuan Kedao 原可道 (Yuan) Ting'an 庭安 (Yuan) Tingyu 庭玉 (Yuan) Tingjun 庭鈞 (Yuan) Tingxiu 庭秀
					West	Wang Jizong 王繼宗
7	Qinglong si 青龍寺	Jishan 稷山	Rear Hall 後殿	Late Yuan	East	Liu Dingxin 劉鼎新
					West	Guo Siqi 郭思齊
8	Guangsheng shangsi 廣勝上寺	Hongtong 洪洞	Vairocana Hall 毗盧殿	Late Yuan or early Ming	East	Yang Huai 楊懷
					West	Zheng Dengkui 鄭登魁

List of Illustrations

PLATES

Plate 1. East Pole Emperor and five of the Ten Daoist Masters on the east shrine wall in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 20.

Plate 2. South Pole Emperor and five of the Ten Daoist Masters on the east shrine wall in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 18.

Plate 3. East wall mural in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, pp. 29-31.

Plate 4. East wall of the Toronto murals. Shih, *Chinese Temple Paintings in the Royal Ontario Museum*, p. 5.

Plate 5. West wall of the Toronto murals. Shih, *Chinese Temple Paintings in the Royal Ontario Museum*, p. 9.

Plate 6. East wall of the Nan'an murals. *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, p. 128

Plate 7. West wall of the Nan'an murals. *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, p. 129.

Plate 8. Six of the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions on the west wall of the Nan'an murals. *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, p. 129.

Plate 9. Deities of the Southern Dipper on the east wall of the Nan'an murals. *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, p. 128.

Plate 10. Deites of the Sacred Peaks of the South, West, and North, on the west wall in the Beiyue miao murals. Photograph Lennert Gesterkamp.

Plate 11. Deity of the Sacred Peak of the South (below) and donor group (above) on the southern part of the west wall in the Beiyue miao murals. Photograph Lennert Gesterkamp.

Plate 12. Design on silk attributed to Wu Zongyuan (d. 1050) in the C.C. Wang Collection, New York. Collated from *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 3, Songdai huihua*, pp.19-24.

Plate 13. Hanging scroll paintings of the Three Officials of Heaven (centre), Earth (right), and Water (left) in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, dating to the twelfth century. Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 233-235.

Plate 14. Sculptural representation of a Heavenly Court in Cave 2 at Longshan near Taiyuan, designed by Song Defang (1183-1247) and dated to 1234 (now damaged). Photographs made by Japanese archaeologists in the early twentieth century and reproduced in Hu, *Daojiao shike*, Vol. 2, pp. 336, 338, 339.

DRAWINGS

Drawing 1A. Drawing of the murals on the shrine walls in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong. After Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian."

Drawing 1B. Drawing of the murals on the east wall (NE, E, SE) in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong. After Wang, "Yongle gong Sangqing dian."

Drawing 1C. Drawing of the murals on the west wall (NW, W, SW) in the Three Purities Halls of the Yongle gong. After Wang, "Yongle gong Sanqing dian."

Drawing 2A. Drawing of the east wall of the Toronto murals. From White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, p. 162.

Drawing 2B. Drawing of the west wall of the Toronto murals. From White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, p. 200.

Drawing 3A. Drawing of the east wall of the Beiyue miao murals, made by Wang Dingli. Li and Zhou, "Quyang Beiyue miao bihua,"p. 78.

Drawing 3B. Drawing of the west wall of the Beiyue miao murals, made by Wang Dingli. Li and Zhou, "Quyang Beiyue miao bihua," p. 80.

FIGURES

Figure 1. Sculptural representation of a Daoist Heavenly Court in Cave 40 at the Nanzhu guan in Renshou County, Sichuan, dated 749. *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Diaosu bian 12, Sichuan shiku diaosu*, p.100.

Figure 2. Sculptural representation of a Daoist Heavenly Court in Cave 4 of the Yuhuang guan in Nanshan, near Dazu, Sichuan, dating to the late Northern Song dynasty. Hu, *Daojiao shike*, Vol. 2, p. 99.

Figure 3. Woodblock illustration of the Daoist local god Zhao Yu in the *Xinbian lianxiang soushen guangji* of the Yuan dynasty. Wang and Li, *Soushen guangji*, p. 93.

Figure 4. Assembly of Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian deities in a Water-and-Land painting on the east wall of the Qinglong si in Jishan. Jin, *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 13, Siguan bihua*, p. 123.

Figure 5. The Five Sacred Peak deities on the east wall of the Dadao guan in Dingzhou, Ming dynasty. Photograph by Lennert Gesterkamp

Figure 6. Hanging scroll painting of the City God in the Baiyun guan Collection, Qing dynasty. Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian huaji*, p. 125.

Figure 7. Hanging Scroll Painting of the Thunder Ministery in collection of Water-and-Land paintings in the Baoning si near Datong. Shanxi sheng bowuguan, *Baoning si Mingdai shuilu hua*, p. 114.

Figure 8. Hanging scroll painting of the Great Sea Banner (Tom Hoi Fan) with below an ordination scene of a Daoist priest. Collection of Yao ceremonial paintings in the Leiden Museum of Ethnology, no. 2106022.

Figure 9. Homage scene on the rear wall of the east chamber at the Wu Liang Shrine, second century. Wu, *The Wu Liang Shrine*, p. 196.

Figure 10. Drawing of a homage scene on a stone slab from Qianlangtai, second century. Wu, *The Wu Liang Shrine*, p. 208.

Figure 11. Homage scene on a stone slab from Beizhuang, second century. Wu, *The Wu Liang Shrine*, p. 206.

Figure 12. Banquet scene in Tomb no. 2 in Dahuting, second century. Fontein and Wu, *Han and T'ang Murals*, pp. 52-53.

Figure 13. Homage scene on the east wall (above) and the west wall (below) in the front chamber of Tomb no. 1 at Wangdu, second century. Beijing lishi bowuguan, *Wangdu Han mu bihua*, pls. 3 and 4.

Figure 14. Donor scene below a preaching scene with Avalokiteshvara in Cave 390 at Mogao near Dunhuang, Sui Dynasty (581-618). Whitfield, *Dunhuang: Caves of the Singing Sands*, p. 64.

Figure 15. King and Queen of Kothan and monks on the south part of the east wall in Cave 98 at Mogao near Dunhuang, Five Dynasties 907-960. Whitfield, *Dunhuang: Caves of the Singing Sands*, p. 199**.**

Figure 16. Donor scene below a Buddha image commissioned by Fasheng with male donors on the right (above) and female donors on the left (below), 504. *Zhongguo meishu quanji*, *Diaosu bian 11, Longmen shiku diaoke*, p. 20.

Figure 17. Donor scene of royal figures on a Han tower gate in Mianyang, Sichuan, sixth century. Sun, "Sichuan Mianyang Pingyang Fujun que queshen zaoxiang," p. 109.

Figure 18. Stele carving of the Wanfo si, sixth century, depicting in the lower tier narrative scenes from the Lotus Sutra and in the upper tier a scene of worshipping the Buddha following the format of a traditional Chinese court audience ritual. Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, p. 222.

Figure 19. Rubbing of the Feng Shenyu stele from Lintong and dated 505, with in front (left) a Buddha figure and on its reverse (right) a Heavenly Worthy. Abe, *Ordinary Images*, pp. 275, 277.

Figure 20. Drawing of the Wei Wenlang stele from Yaowangshan dated 424 with Maitreya in front (far left) and a Heavenly Worthy and a Buddha figure on its reverse (right). Wang, *Shaping the Lotus Sutra*, pp. 42-43.

Figure 21. Tomb procession scene with horse and ox-cart dedicated by Cao Wangxi in 525. Zheng, "Qingzhou Beiqi huaxiang shi yu ruhua Suteren meishu," p. 92.

Figure 22. Procession scene in the Cui Fen tomb in Linqu, dated 551. Shandong sheng, "Cui Fen bihua mu," p. 16.

Figure 23. Drawing of the west section of the Xu Xianxiu tomb murals, dated 571. Shanxi sheng kaogu yanjiu suo, "Taiyuan Beiqi Xu Xianxiu mu faxian jianbao," p. 6.

Figure 24. Diagram of the division of the Heavenly Court audience into a left (east) and right (west) group focused on the north.

Figure 25. Copperplate engraving of an imperial audience held at the Qing court in 1830. British Museum Collection. Rawson, *The British Museum Book of Chinese Art*, p. 195.

Figure 26. Frontispiece of the *Yushu baojing*, dated 1333. British Library Collection. Little, *Taoism and the Arts of China*, pp. 238-239.

Figure 27. Daoist priest (one of the Three Masters) bowing in front of the Heavenly Sovereign on the northwest wall in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 24.

Figure 28. Visualisation of a Daoist priest ascending to the Heavenly Court. *Laojun cunsi tu shiba pian* DZ 875.

Figure 29. Illustration of a Daoist priest visualising Emperor One. *Dadong zhenjing* DZ 6.13b.

Figure 30. Visualisation of the Three Purities. *Laojun cunsi tu shiba pian* DZ 875.

Figure 31. Diagram of a Tang open-air altar in three tiers and cordoned with poles and ribbons. *Daomen dingzhi* DZ 1224, 8.30a-b.

Figure 32. Compilation diagram of a three-tiered altar mound in the centre, the Six Curtains in front (south) and behind a *zhai*-retreat altar with hanging scroll paintings depicting a Heavenly Court. The names and positions of the deities are indicated by Chinese characters. Early fourteenth century. *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.1a-21b.

Figure 33. Diagram of a *jiao*-offering altar, early fourteenth century. *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* DZ 466, 1.25a-26a.

Figure 34. Diagram of a *zhai*-retreat altar, 1432. *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu* ZWDS 17/79.

Figure 35. Diagram of the integration of the three tiers (inner 内, middle 中, outer 外) with the Ten Veritables on the side walls and the Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors on the rear wall, and the integration of the Six Curtains in the sidewall murals, depicting A) the Mystery

Master, the Heavenly Master, and the Supervisor of the Retreat; B) the Three Masters; C) the Three Officials; and D) the Emperors of the Five Sacred Peaks.

Figure 36. Three of the Thirty-Two Heavenly Emperors on the rear of the central altar shrine in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 23.

Figure 37. The Three Officials of Heaven, Earth, and Water on the northwest wall in the Three Purities Hall of the Yongle gong. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 53.

Figure 38. Illustration for the visualisation of the Heavenly Worthy of Original Beginning, ca. 1100. *Sancai dingwei tu* DZ 155, 2a-3b.

Figure 39. Illustration for the Visualisation of the Thirty-Two Heavens, ca. 1100. *Sancai dingwei tu* DZ 155, 10a-11a.

Figure 40. Wall painting of the Three Purities on the rear of the central altar shrine in the Chongyang Hall, dated 1368. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 168.

Figure 41. Diagram of the division of the Three Realms of Heaven (天), Earth (地), and Water (水) in the Yongle gong murals.

Figure 42. Diagram of the NW-SE axis between the Gate of Heaven (天門) and the Earth Door (地戶) in the Yongle gong murals.

Figure 43. Diagram of the Eight Trigrams in the King Wen arrangement and the NW-SE axis in the Yongle gong murals.

Figure 44. Diagrams of, left, the King Wen arrangement of the Eight Trigrams showing the state of the cosmos after its creation or "posterior heaven" (後天), and right the Fuxi arrangement of the Eight Trigrams showing the state of the cosmos before its creation or "anterior heaven" (先天).

Figure 45. Illustration of a visualisation for a *chaoyuan* in inner alchemy with explanation showing the refinement of the energies of the five viscera imagined as officials who then rise to the Heavenly Court in the crown of the head for a court audience, 12th-13th cent. *Xiuzhen taiji hunyuan zhixuan tu* DZ 150, 7a-b.

Figure 46. The deities of the Twelve Zodiacal Mansions on the south end of the west wall of the Toronto murals. White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, p. 223.

Figure 47. South end section of the west wall in the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 36.

Figure 48. The Four Meritorious Officers Guarding Time on the south end of the east wall in the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 28.

Figure 49. South end section of the east wall of the Pilu si murals. Kang, *Pilu si qun hua*, p. 265.

Figure 50. Huizong's Assembly of One Thousand Daoists in the murals of the Chunyang Hall at Yongle gong, 1358. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 114.

Figure 51. Illustration of the "square-heart necktie" (left) in a Ming encyclopaedia, ca. 1565. *Sancai tuhui* p. 1520.

Figure 52. Portrait of Quanzhen patriarch Sun Lüdao (fl. 1312-1327), holding a fly-whisk, incorporated in the Yongle gong murals on the east. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 30.

Figure 53. The Three Stars or the Gods of Longevity (left) and two Daoist priests as the Gods of Fortune and Emolument on the east wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yongle gong bihua quanji*, p. 82.

Figure 54. The water deities Zhao Yu dressed in a white robe, Li Bing and Erlang on the east wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yongle gong bihua quanji*, p. 76.

Figure 55. The Three Mao Brothers on the west wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yongle gong bihua quanji*, p. 112.

Figure 56. Unknown exorcist deity on the west wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yongle gong bihua quanji*, p. 58.

Figure 57. Unknown figure with a feather fan on the west wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yongle gong bihua quanji*, p. 121.

Figure 58. Portrait of the Quanzhen patriarch Qiu Chuji (1148-1227) on the position of the Heavenly Sovereign on the west wall of the Toronto murals. White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, p. 213.

Figure 59. Portraits of the Quanzhen patriarchs Wang Zhe and Qiu Chuji, 1310. *Jinlian zhengzong ji xianyuan xiangzhuan* DZ 174, 18a, 32a.

Figure 60. A woodblock print of Qiu Chuji's illustrated biography depicting Qiu inspecting a temple building site, 1305. *Xuanfeng qinghui tu*, Shanghai Hanfeng lou re-edition of 1925, p. 299.

Figure 61. Images of Qiu Chuji, Wang Zhe, and probably Ma Yu (from left to right) on the north wall in Cave 7 at Longshan, 1234. Photograph made in the early twentieth century, images now damaged. Hu, *Daojiao shike*, Vol. 2, p. 253.

Figure 62. Image of Qiu Chuji in parinirvana, Cave 3 at Longshan, 1234. Photograph made in the early twentieth century. Hu, *Daojiao shike*, Vol. 2, p. 341.

Figure 63. The deity of the Sacred Peak of the East on the east wall in the Beiyue miao murals. Xue and Wang, *Quyang Beiyue miao*, p. 13.

Figure 64. The deity of the Sacred Peak of the West on the west wall of the Beiyue miao murals. Photograph Lennert Gesterkamp.

Figure 65. Donor group with images of Song Emperor Taizong (r. 976-997) in military costume, two immortals, and attendants in the top-left corner on the west wall of the Beiyue miao murals, 1270. Xue and Wang, *Quyang Beiyue miao*, p. 17.

Figure 66. Modern copy of the donor group in the top-left corner on the west wall of the Beiyue miao murals.

Figure 67. Banner lady in the Wu Zongyuan scroll, early Northern Song dynasty. *Zhongguo meishu quanji, Huihua bian 3, Songdai huihua*, p. 21.

Figure 68. Two banner ladies in the top-right corner on the west wall of the Beiyue miao murals. Xue, *Quyang Beiyue miao*, p. 18.

Figure 69. Female attendant carrying a tray with coral in the form of ox-heads on the west wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 88.

Figure 70. Map of the layout of the Yongle gong temple complex at its original site.

Figure 71. Guardian deity on the east wall of the Dragon and Tiger Gate, late sixteenth century. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 17.

Figure 72. Earth Goddess on the west wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 35.

Figure 73. Jade Emperor on the west wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 31.

Figure 74. The North Pole Emperor on the northeast wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 27.

Figure 75. The South Pole Emperor on the east wall in the Pilu si. Kang, *Pilu si qun hua*, p. 50.

Figure 76. Hanging scroll painting of Zhang Daoling with the bristle hair and beard and three other Daoist masters in the Baiyun guan Collection, Qing dynasty. Zhongguo daojiao xiehui, *Daojiao shenxian ji*, p. 99.

Figure 77. The Eleven Luminaries consisting of the deities of the Sun and Moon, the Five Planets and Ketu, Rahu, Ziqi, and Yuebo on the northeast wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 88.

Figure 78. Tianpeng and True Warrior on the west wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 73.

Figure 79. Tianyou and Black Killer on the east wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 55.

Figure 80. The Daoist immortal and water deity Zhao Yu in the Pilu si murals, Ming dynasty. Kang, *Pilu si qun hua*, p. 66.

Figure 81. The Earth God (left), City God (right) and a warrior general in the Pilu si murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 57.

Figure 82. The Thunder Ministry with Thunder Father, holding a ring with drums, Lightning Mother, Rain Master to the left, and Uncle Wind and Cloud Master in front on the south end of the west wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 104.

Figure 83. Dragon Lord on the southeast wall of the Yongle gong murals. Jin, *Yuandai daoguan*, p. 11.

Figure 84. Earth Goddess on the east wall of the Toronto murals. White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, p. 183.

Figure 85. The deities of the Five Planets on the east wall of the Toronto murals. Shih, *Chinese Temple Paintings in the Royal Ontario Museum*, p. 5.

Figure 86. The deities of the Nine Heavens. Shih, *Chinese Temple Paintings in the Royal Ontario Museum*, p. 9.

Figure 87. Rubbing of a stele engraving of the Quyang Demon depicted on the top-centre on the west wall of the Beiyue miao murals. Yang, *Three Thousand Years of Chinese Painting*, p. 73.

Figure 88. Left part of the Thunder Ministry in the top-left corner of the east wall in the Beiyue miao murals. Xue and Wang, *Quyang Beiyue miao*, p. 13.

Figure 89. Right part of the Thunder Ministry in the top-left corner of the east wall in the Beiyue miao murals. Xue and Wang, *Quyang Beiyue miao*, p. 14.

Figure 90. The Official of Earth in the top-right corner on the east wall of the Beiyue miao murals. Xue and Wang, *Quyang Beiyue miao*, p. 15.

Figure 91. Section of a drawing of the Water Deity and his retinue of demon-warriors attributed to He Cheng, early Yuan dynasty. Lawton, *Chinese Figure Painting*, p. 157.

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[Illustrations, pp. 360-423, are placed under embargo, apologies for the inconvenience]

Curriculum Vitae

Lennert Gesterkamp (born 1 November 1971, Oosterhout, NB) got his high-school diploma Gymnasium-B from the Dominicus College in Nijmegen (1990), and after one year of studying Physics and Philosophy at the Radboud University of Nijmegen (1990-1991) and another year of militairy service (1991-1992), he completed a study in Sinology at Leiden University (1992-1998). Subsequently, he followed the Advanced Master's Programme of the CNWS Research School at Leiden University (1998-1999), and completed with distinction a MA-study in Chinese Art and Archaeology at SOAS, University of London (1999-2000). Having returned to Leiden University, he did a PhD research on Daoist wall painting in Chinese temples of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (2000-2008) financed by the Hulsewé-Wazniewski Foundation. Presently, he is a visiting fellow at the Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan, with a grant of the National Science Council of Taiwan doing research on Daoist landscape paintings of the tenth to the fourteenth centuries (2007-2008).

Lennert Gesterkamp (geb. 1 november 1971 te Oosterhout, NB) heeft het gymnasium-B op het Dominicus College te Nijmegen doorlopen (1990) waarna hij eerst na een jaar Natuurkunde en Filosofie aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen (1990-1991) en een jaar militaire dienst (1991-1992) een studie Talen en Culturen van China (Sinologie) aan de Universiteit Leiden heeft afgerond (1992-1998). Daarna heeft hij een jaar het Advanced Master's Programme van de Onderzoeksschool CNWS van de Universiteit Leiden (1998-1999) gevolgd en daarop een cum laude MA-studie Chinese Kunst en Archeologie aan SOAS, University of London (1999-2000) afgemaakt, om vervolgens terug aan de Universiteit Leiden een promotieonderzoek te doen naar daoïstische muurschilderingen in Chinese tempels van de dertiende en veertiende eeuw (2000-2008) gefinancierd door de Hulsewé-Wazniewski Stichting. Op dit moment is hij gastwetenschapper met een beurs van de National Science Council van Taiwan aan de Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan, die onderzoek doet naar daoïstische landsschapsschilderkunst van de tiende tot de veertiende eeuw (2007-2008).