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The Tongbai Palace and Its Daoist Communities: A History

Jacopo Scarin

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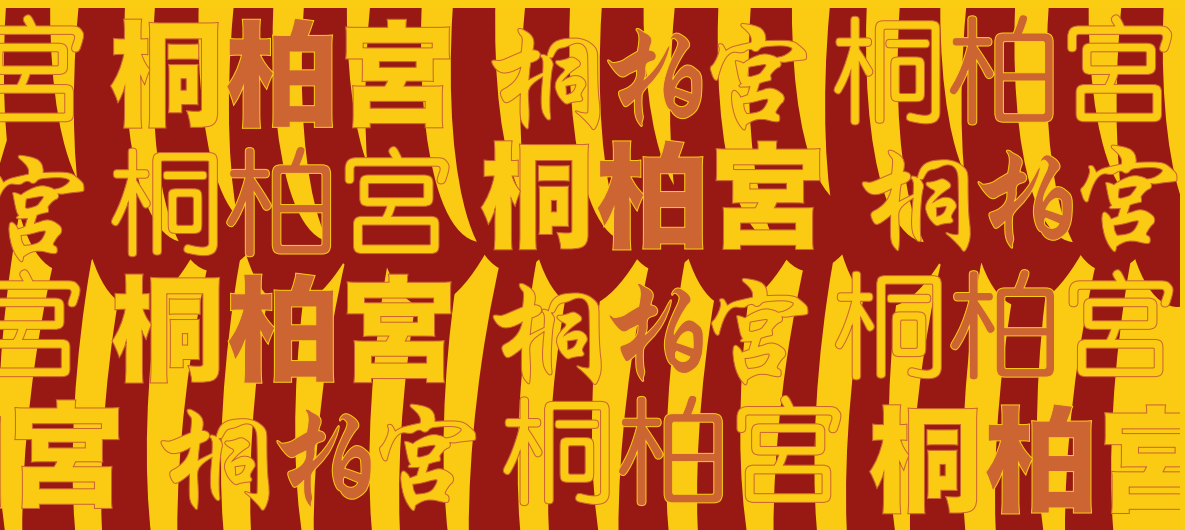

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Sinica venetiana

Serie diretta da
Tiziana Lippiello e Chen Xiaoming

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Jacopo Scarin

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Jacopo Scarin

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The Tongbai Palace and Its Daoist Communities: A History
Jacopo Scarin

Abstract

Daoism is one of the foremost religions of imperial China alongside Confucianism and Buddhism and historically represented an influential system for interpreting the cosmos. Throughout the centuries, Daoism continued to evolve by incorporating elements from other religious traditions and maintained a dialectical relationship with Chinese society as a whole, influencing the worldviews, value systems and practices of all social classes. Daoism's creative power produced tangible relics: scriptures, stelae, works of art, temples and shrines. This book focuses on Tongbai Palace in Tiantai County, built in 711 by emperor Tang Ruizong (r. 684-690, 710-712) for the eminent court Daoist Sima Chengzhen (647-735). This event only raises more questions: why was that place chosen to build the temple? How did the institution fare in the following centuries and what ties did it entertain with Daoist movements during that period? Why did the emperor patronise its restoration in the 18th century and what were the consequences of this event? In attempting to answer such questions, this book also tackles more fundamental issues related to Daoist history, the history of religions and the role of religion in society. The introduction provides the theoretical framework of the book. The second chapter analyses the significance of the Tiantai area before the 8th century. The third follows the development of Tongbai Palace from its construction in 711 to the Ming dynasty and devotes more space to the earliest and best-documented stages in its history. The fourth chapter discusses the complete demise of the temple during the Ming dynasty, exacerbated by the involvement of the local gentry in a case of land encroachment. Finally, the fifth chapter studies the rebirth of Tongbai Palace in the 18th century and its position in the network of temples of the Daoist Longmen lineages in the southeast part of the Qing empire.

Keywords Chinese history. Chinese religion. Quanzhen Daoism. Longmen lineages. Southeast China.

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During my doctoral years in Hong Kong, I had the chance to know, converse and work together with remarkable and talented professors such as Tam Wai Lun, Wu Zhen, Elena Valussi, Edward L. Shaughnessy, Huang Weishang, K.-K. Yeung: I was lucky to have met them at the first stage of my career, and I feel that what merit I might have as a scholar is also due to them. I also desire to thank all my amazing colleagues at the Department of Cultural and Religious Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, especially Prof. Li Jing, Dr Zhu Yiwen, Dr Hu Jiechen, Dr Karine Martin and Dr Bony B. Schachter: it was both exciting and enjoyable to work side by side.

I fondly remember my research time in Tokyo, at Waseda University, where I found a welcoming and stimulating environment. Prof. Mori Yuria's guidance and remarks helped me achieve a better understanding of late imperial Daoism and introduced me to Japanese scholarship. I met many wonderful scholars and persons in Tokyo, and I would like to remember in particular Prof. Norifumi Sakai and Dr Hirose Naoki.

I feel privileged to have spent some months at the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO), Centre of Academia Sinica, where I met and conversed with brilliant scholars such as professors Paul Katz and Chen Hsi-yuan: knowing them has been both an instructive and humbling experience. I must thank them not only for what they taught me, but also for their invaluable suggestions on how to better approach the academic environment. In Taiwan I also met many other scholars, such as professors Chang Chao-jan and Lin Chen-yuan, who left a lasting impression on me and whose knowledge and expertise I admire and take as a model.

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gether with his rigorous methodology, have been a source of inspiration for me. Most of the research was financed by a number of institutions that provided the necessary fundings to bring this project to completion: the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong started this all by awarding me with the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme. During my doctoral years, I also received the support of the Institute of Chinese Studies and the Faculty of Arts of The Chinese University of Hong Kong and of EFEO: these allowed me to continue conducting my research in Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan after the end of the PhD fellowship. More recently, in 2020, I was awarded the Seal of Excellence by the European Commission.
After my doctoral graduation, I found myself in dire straits, but I was fortunate enough to have the chance to teach at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. There, I discovered the pleasure of and passion for sharing knowledge with classes of bright students and I could finally see myself joining the millennia-old long procession of the representatives of the academia envisioned by Abraham Maslow and that Robert Bellah called "the true university", the "sacred community of learning". In Venice I also met extraordinary colleagues, who are passionate, kind and outstanding scholars. I am much indebted to Prof. Francesca Tarocco for her support and advice as much as for our intellectually stimulating discussions: there are no words that I can write that can adequately express my gratitude toward her. I would also like to thank Dr Giovanni Lapis for his meticulous and professional help and Dr Jörg Henning Hüsemann for sharing with me his expertise in very technical matters.
I genuinely thank the two anonymous reviewers who assisted the editors by reading the first draft of this book with care and attention, providing invaluable comments and pointing out some flaws, helping me to improve the final version of the manuscript. I would also like to express sincere gratitude to all the staff of Edizioni Ca' Foscari, who took charge of this project, following the editing and publication of this book with unyielding professionalism. I must thank Dr Sergio Knipe for his meticulous proofreading of the English draft, while I remain the sole responsible for any mistake caused by later amendments.
Finally, not only this book, but my whole research would have been impossible without the support of my parents Carla and Marino, my sister Anita, my family and my friends, who always reminded me what is most important in life, and with whom I shared each other's joys and burdens. Regardless of how far and for how long I travelled – often with great personal enjoyment –, I could always rely on steadfast reference points that told me exactly where to find myself and where I should head to. I dedicate this book to them.

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The Tongbai Palace and Its Daoist Communities: A History

Preface

John Lagerway

Jacopo Scarin is one of the most promising new scholars of late imperial Daoism. Already in his 2017 thesis, a systematic study of the ongoing significance in the Qing dynasty of one of Daoism's most persistently important abbeys, the Tongbaigong in the Tiantai mountains in northern Zhejiang, he showed himself to be an innovative, methodical, and meticulous scholar. While some of his discoveries have been published in article form, with this book we have a full and rich account of the successive strata of the history of the Tongbai Palace.

The story begins with the Han immortal Wangzi Qiao, acquires the Lingbao 'patriarch' Ge Xuan along the way, but does not really enter Daoist history until the year 711, when the Tang emperor Ruizong builds a temple for the Shangqing master Sima Chengzhen. From then on, the Tiantai mountains belonged to the system of Daoist 'blessed lands' (*fudi*) first formalized by Sima, later developed and confirmed by Du Guangting, who himself dwelt for a time on Tiantai. At one point in his career, Sima left Tiantai to move closer to the capital, but some decades later a Daoist lineage claiming Sima as its patriarchal master took up residence in the Tongbai Palace and remained active there to the end of the Tang.

In the Song, the texts kept in the Tongbai Palace became a partial source for the compilation of the Daoist canon under Zhenzong, in the

early 11th century. Over the course of the Song, two important shifts occurred: the temple's history is henceforth more closely linked to private sponsors than to the court and, according to later records, the statues of two Confucian culture heroes, the martyrs Bo Yi and Shu Qi, were brought to the palace. Tiantai Daoists also played an important role in the transformation of Lingbao Daoism from the 13th century on, but the lack of sources makes it difficult to say what exactly that role was and how it interacted with the ever-more central role of Tiantai in Buddhist history in the Song.

Although sources are scarcely more abundant for the Yuan and Ming, Scarin does glean information about a number of Daoists on the mountain. Above all, the patterns set in the Song can be seen to carry on, with Bo Yi and Shu Qi in "their double role as Confucian saints and deities ruling the mountain" and elite private sponsors and local officials replacing the court entirely. That by the end of the Ming the Tongbai Palace was in total disrepair Scarin illustrates with a moving account by the official Pan Lei of his visit to the palace in 1691:

> Today everything is covered in vegetation, except the Sanqing Hall. Raindrops become tears dripping from Tianzun's saddened face. The son of a local official's family is buried next to the temple. People say that the biggest responsibility for the temple's decline is this person's deluded geomantic practices and his avid interest in these propitious lands. There is nothing that this kind of people would not do in order to obtain the land, even openly occupying Buddhist or Daoist temples and burying their own bones under that soil.

This account sets the scene for the fascinating story of the legal battle for the recovery of the Tongbai temple lands from the local Zhang family. Such contests are frequent in the increasingly gentry-dominated local society from the mid-Ming on, but rarely are they so thoroughly documented as in the local official Zhang Yuanliang's *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 清聖祠志. This temple gazetteer about the Qingsheng Shrine dedicated to Bo Yi and Shu Qi contains "a collection of communications and memorials that the author Zhang Lianyuan 張聯元 himself wrote between 1712 and 1722". While Zhang's account records how, in the end, the lands were officially restored to the temple, it "also reinterpreted the temple as a place of worship devoted to the two Confucian sages and Daoist deities Bo Yi and Shu Qi, choosing to give prominence to what had hitherto been regarded as secondary features of Tongbai Palace".

The Yongzheng Emperor, who came to the throne in 1722, had a completely different reason for taking an interest in the Tiantai traditions, namely, Zhang Boduan, the Song Daoist to whom is attributed one of the most important texts of internal alchemy, the *Wuzhen*

pian. In his thesis, relying in part on a Yongzheng stele erected at the time of the imperially sponsored Tongbai restoration and of which he discovered fragments during a field visit to a Tiantai village – complete versions are still extant in the literature – Scarin showed that "Yongzheng was not interested in Zhang Boduan merely as a Daoist, but as master of the integration of Daoism and Chan Buddhism". This provided a plausible explanation for why an emperor so heavily invested in Buddhist patronage, both in the capital and on Tiantai, also took an interest in Tiantai Daoism.

In the 'Introduction' to the present book, Scarin cites a text of Yongzheng, "Instructions [to Exhort] Local Officials to Pay Special Care for the Sustenance of the Self-cultivation Practitioners and Monks", that gives interesting insight into his reasons for investing in harmonious relationships between the Three Teachings: "I think that the principle of each one of the Three Teachings that enlighten the people in the realm comes from the same origin". Unfortunately, he goes on:

> Those who worship the Dao say that the Buddha is not as worthy [of praise] as the Dao [itself], while those who favour the Buddha say that the Way is not as great as the Buddha. Confucians censor both [teachings] as heterodox. They hold selfish motives, dispute to gain victory, and do not yield to each other.

Yongzheng's interest in the Tongbai Palace provides the backdrop for Scarin's meticulously researched study in 'Chapter 4' of the subsequent role of the Tongbai Palace as "a node in the expanding network of Longmen communities of southeast China". Centred on the Jingu Grotto of Hangzhou, this network added yet another stratum to Tongbai history, one which retained its significance "at least up until the first part of the 19th century, when a number of Longmen Daoists associated with Mt. Weiyu visited Tongbai Palace and received training there".

In his 'Introduction', referring to the authors who have inspired him, Scarin reflects succinctly on his ideas of religion. "The process of socialisation and of the production of meaning", he writes, are "the defining feature of human beings", and religion is "*practised* meaning". The ever-changing central figures and actors in the long history of the Tongbai Palace are so many

> different 'strata of meaning', by which I mean layers of religious significance […] The way in which these strata interact, intersect, come to replace one another, and arise and disappear over the course of the temple's history is therefore determined by how people transmitted this knowledge and these stories, by what they did at the temple and in relation to it, by the importance that they at-

tached to each stratum and to the perceived relationship between different strata.

It would be hard to state more precisely the contribution of this case study to our understanding of the logic of Daoist religious history, and of its relationship to changing social and political environments in the course of Chinese history.

Vincennes
17 March 2022

1 Introduction

Summary 1.1 Sources. – 1.2 Structure of the Book.

This book is about the history of a temple, the Tongbai Palace 桐柏宫 of Tiantai County 天台縣. I first realised the importance of this temple for late imperial Daoism when I began to approach the Longmen lineages of the 18th and early 19th century. Even though Longmen today is the most widespread affiliation among monastic Daoists in Mainland China, this was not the case in the first half of the Qing dynasty. I was at first fascinated with the development and growth of this religious community and wanted to understand more about it, especially in relation to its founding and early stages of development. Through my studies I realised that Daoism in southeast China constituted a good starting point to improve my knowledge of Longmen lineages during the Qing dynasty. I set out to make a list of the main Longmen temples in the region and it was then that I first stumbled across the name 'Tongbai Palace'. This place had a few peculiarities that made it quite interesting in its own right: it had been a prominent temple tied with the court during the Tang and Song dynasties, but it had later declined during the Ming dynasty and until the 18th century, when imperial sponsorship restored it and left

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it to Daoist lineages that described themselves as belonging to the Longmen tradition. Moreover, it had received very little attention in the scholarly literature, in spite of being a node in the Longmen temple network during the late 18th century. It also seemed to me that sources after the Taiping Rebellion seldom mentioned this temple: although I was to prove myself wrong with regard to this last point, it made me more determined to understand what Tongbai Palace's role had been in the expansion of Longmen lineages in southeast China.

In writing this book, I wanted at first to focus on the late imperial side of the temple's history, but I realised that I needed to understand its history from the beginning if I wanted to make sense of its recent past. I needed to understand why it was built in the first place, what significance it had through the ages and to what extent the different layers of symbolic capital accumulated over the centuries influenced the way it was portrayed and its significance during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Therefore, I decided to study more in detail also the period that went from the temple's construction in 711 to the Yuan dynasty. I found out that the temple underwent different stages of prosperity and decline, which usually represented important watersheds in its history. These critical periods sometimes corresponded to radical shifts in what symbolic significance and what aspect of its historical past acquired prominence.

Tongbai Palace is a Daoist temple, so this research is part of a long list of works on late imperial Daoism that have been published recently. Academic interest in Daoism, though, is a relatively recent phenomenon. In the past, scholars often neglected this institutional religion, based on the assumption that it was not really a religion at all, that it was practised by the lowest echelons of the population, or that its modern version was but a degeneration of the philosophical Daoism of ancient times. Fortunately, in the last few decades an increasing number of scholars have devoted time and efforts to better understanding Daoism, helping us to achieve a more profound insight into one of the great native religious traditions of China. Scholars have discovered not only that Daoism played a major role in Chinese politics from the 3rd century onwards, but also that it accounted for fundamental religious aspects, such as liturgical frameworks and ways of thinking about divinity, for the people of China.

As a result of this newfound interest in Daoism, the latter has found a place alongside the other religions of the Chinese empire as a valuable subject of study. Confucianism was the religion of the scholarly elite: it undergirded the political system and constituted the ethical and liturgical framework of the government. In the minds of the elite and in late imperial political discourse, it was qualitatively separated from the other two institutionalised religions, Daoism and Buddhism. The latter were often associated in public discourse. This perspective was certainly upheld by Confucians, who wanted

to mark the qualitative difference between Confucianism on the one hand and Daoism and Buddhism on the other. This paradigm can be found in imperial writings as well. In the "Instructions [to Exhort] Local Officials to Pay Special Care for the Sustenance of the Self-cultivation Practitioners and Monks [According to the Doctrine of] the Common Origin of the Three Teachings: Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism" 諭儒佛道三教同源地方大臣當加意護持出家修行之人, for example, the Yongzheng Emperor stated:

> I think that the principle of each one of the Three Teachings that enlighten the people in the realm comes from the same origin: if one practices the Way, he cannot fall into error. Human beings cannot understand the whole clearly, so each of them has a different heart-mind and each heart-mind has a different perspective.[1]
>
> 朕惟三教之覺民於海內也, 理同出於一原, 道並行而不悖。 人惟不能豁然貫通, 於是人各異心, 心各異見。

Implicitly, though, the emperor admitted that in the early 18th century Buddhism and Daoism were often separated from Confucianism when, in the same work, he added:

> Those who worship the Dao say that the Buddha is not as worthy [of praise] as the Dao [itself], while those who favour the Buddha say that the Way is not as great as the Buddha. Confucians censor both [teachings] as heterodox. They hold selfish motives, dispute to gain victory, and do not yield to each other.[2]
>
> 慕道者謂佛不如道之尊, 向佛者謂道不如佛之大, 而儒者又兼闢 二氏, 以為異端。 懷挾私心, 紛爭角勝, 而不相下。

In another text, again authored by the same emperor, this difference becomes even clearer:

> I have received a responsibility from my royal parents so I am not a person who can dedicate himself to spiritual life. If I wish people to lead a peaceful life, I can only follow the path of Confucius. Therefore, ascending to the throne, I did not deal with Chan Buddhism for ten years.[3]

1 *Yongzheng chao hanwen yuzhi huibian* 3:285b. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Chinese texts are my own.

2 *Yongzheng chao hanwen yuzhi huibian* 3:285b.

3 "Yuxuan yulu zongxu" 7a-9a, in *Yuxuan yulu*.

> 朕膺元后父母之任, 並非開堂秉拂之人, 欲期民物之安, 惟循周 孔之轍。所以御極以來, 十年未談禪宗。

Such ways of conceptualizing the relationship between the three teachings (i.e. by positing either various modes of coexistence or the separation and mutual incompatibility of the three traditions) may have trickled down to the popular level, but among the population we also witness another mode of interaction. We find popular movements, especially in late imperial times, that produced a peculiar kind of integration of elements from the three religions, which resulted in their amalgamation at the doctrinal and moral levels, and in the permeability of their divine figures and liturgical features in praxis. Such is the case of the movements that were, improperly, labelled as the White Lotus or Luo teachings 羅教.[4]

In addition to the institutional and officially recognised 'three religions' (*san jiao* 三教), in the last few decades scholars have increasingly focused on popular religious movements. Although it is often referred to as one category, popular religion did not represent a single religion, but was made up of the myriad local and regional cults that were practised by the population at different geographical and social levels, regardless of whether they were officially recognised by the state or not. These cults included both ascriptive societies and voluntary associations that operated though different forms of organisation, from the subvillage to the supra-village level.[5] Finally, another category that I think deserves being mentioned separately is that of the imperial rituals, the liturgies performed by the state (i.e. directly by the emperor or by officials) for the sake of the state and of the general population. Even though they are usually conceptualized as having developed out of the Confucian framework, we know that in certain periods state rituals were also influenced by Daoism, and even, as in the case of the sacrifice to Heaven, performed by Daoists.[6]

Each of these five categories was not necessarily separate from the rest on the level of practice or doctrine: only those who devoted themselves to the study and practice of one of them could consider themselves to be exclusively Confucian, or Buddhist, or Daoist, and even in their case, this does not mean that they never dealt with the other religions. Indeed, as some scholars have noted, we should think of the religious landscape of late imperial China as dominated

4 Cf. Goossaert, "The Heavenly Master", 229-45. On the amalgamation of the different institutional religions at the popular level, see Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements*, 439-45; ter Haar, *The White Lotus*.

5 On ascriptive societies and voluntary associations, see Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State*, 15-16, 118-57.

6 Wang, *The Ming Prince and Daoism*, 34-9; Liu, "Daoist Priests and Imperial Sacrifices", 55-88.

by a pervasive 'Chinese religion', of which the three institutional religions discussed above are only a partial expression.[7] According to this interpretive framework, the different religious denominations rested on a common cosmology and world-view and shared ethics that allowed many authors, including some emperors, to claim that the differences in phenomenal expression concealed a common origin or purpose. Historically speaking, this was the result of a centuries-long process of interaction that in fact never led to complete integration and instead resulted in the various religious domains occupying separate, but intersecting areas in relation to the activities of the state and the life of the population. This meant that they were often experienced as coexisting rather than as mutually exclusive. This does not mean that the coexistence was always pacific: in late imperial times we find strong attacks by Confucians against Buddhism, Daoism, and popular religion, as well Daoist criticisms of Buddhism and vice-versa. What I have just described represents the theoretical foundation for the present study in respect to my conceptualization of Chinese religiosity.

This book can be described as a study in social history concerned with the case of Tongbai Palace. Yet, my aim is not simply to retrace the history of the temple, but to read its history – and especially the period between the 17th century and the first half of the 19th – as a cultural product of the social actors who interacted with this institution. To achieve this aim, I focused on two aspects that I consider fundamental: the cultural and the social spheres. The former pertains to the symbolism and cultural knowledge that came to be associated with the temple and its surrounding territory over the centuries. The latter aspect, instead, concerns the people who frequented the temple and their social networks. These two aspects not only influenced each other, but were mutually dependent. As has been clearly explained by Peter Berger, society and culture are human creations, but once externalised they take on a life of their own that provides them with the semblance of an objective reality apparent to anyone examining them. Throughout this book I will describe how previously sedimented symbolic and cultural strata functioned as a magnet for specific groups of people and how different persons responded in different ways to the different strata related to the temple. The basic assumption of this book, then, is that temples and institutions have no volition or agency in themselves which is separate from that of the human beings who inhabit and frequent them: their history and the stories that people tell about them become seemingly objective elements that people must engage with, assimilate, rethink, and rewrite. In other words, they are facts that must be dealt with by those inter-

7 On this topic, see Goossaert, Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 20-7.

acting with the Tongbai Palace. For this reason, my study focuses on individuals and their mutual interactions, as well as on the relationships between them and their communities, and between them and the cultural and material products that they generated.

In late imperial China, human action was also related to divine action. As the most responsive beings in the world, humans enjoyed a special relationship with Heaven, Earth, and the supernatural. Therefore, late imperial people understood human agency and more specifically human action as fundamental for any divine response, as exemplified by the following excerpt from the *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 清聖祠志 (Gazetteer of the Qingsheng Shrine):

> Although the statues of the [two] wise and virtuous men were protected by the spirits of the mountain, they could not have made it without the merit of the Daoist's determined care [for them].[8]
>
> 雖聖賢遺像由山靈呵護, 道士苦守之功正不可沒。

Gods could operate through human beings and their actions in the world, an aspect that has been highlighted by a series of studies demonstrating that, far from being 'superstitious', these cults were ways of interacting with the cosmic reality envisioned by traditional Chinese culture. As a consequence, the univocal interpretation of rituals and cult activities and religious policies from an exclusively political or economic perspective is problematic to me, because it erases from history a set of important drives and motivations that acted on both the personal and the social level:[9] although 'religion' *also* intersects with the economic, social, and political dimensions, it is a complex phenomenon, that cannot be reduced to any one of them. In other words, I also take as legitimate the claims founded on religious motivation.

Another important concept to which I refer in this book is that of religion. While a single definition of religion remains elusive, I find recent work in the psychology of religion persuasive, in particular the theories of Raymond Paloutzian and Crystal Park.[10] These two scholars state that religion is "a multidimensional variable that is among

8 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "fanli":4a. The statues mentioned here refer to those portraying Bo Yi 伯夷 and Shu Qi 叔齊: more on them in chapter two.

9 For example, we may consider Benn, "Emperor Hsüan-tsung's Taoist Ideology", 127-45 and compare it to Victor Xiong's critique of Benn's interpretation of the cult of Laozi as motivated by political reasons (Xiong, "Ritual Innovations and Taoism", 258-316). Similarly, Jia Jinhua's study of ordained Daoist princesses highlights the panoply of reasons that led them to enter Daoism, including political, religious and personal ones. Jia, *Gender, Power, and Talent*, 18-32.

10 Paloutzian, Park, *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*.

the most complex properties of the human mind" and that "[o]ne way that religion seems to be unique is that it provides people with ultimate meaning in life […], centred on what the individual perceives to be sacred […], especially in a way that is nonveridical such that its truth claims or the person's idiosyncratic meanings derived from them can carry the weight of absolute reality without being bound by the rules of evidence".[11] According to these scholars, religion has to do with the sacred, truth claims, and absolute reality. Crystal Park describes two basic aspects of meaning in relation to religion: global meaning and meaning making. The former is the "general meaning in life", consisting "of three aspects: beliefs, goals, and subjective feelings". Associating religion with these three dimensions implies that religion can be considered as the weft supporting an individual's sense of reality and his or her position within it. Meaning making "in contrast to meaning in life, refers to a *process* of working to restore global life meaning when it has been disrupted or violated, typically by some major unpleasant or terrible life event".[12] This position is remarkably close to that expressed by Jonathan Smith in his 'Map is not Territory': "religion is one mode of constructing worlds of meaning, worlds within which men find themselves and in which they choose to dwell […] Religion is the quest, within the bounds of the human, historical condition, for the power to manipulate and negotiate one's 'situation' so as to have 'space' in which to meaningfully dwell. […] Religion is a distinctive mode of human creativity […] which both discovers limits and creates limits for humane existence. What we study when we study religion is the variety of attempts to map, construct and inhabit such positions of power through the use of myths, rituals and experiences of transformation".[13] Elaborating on Paloutzian, Park, and Smith's theory of religion, I came to tentatively define religion as *practised* meaning.[14] My focus on practice is necessary in order to allow the process whereby the interiority of the individual is poured into the world and becomes 'real' (in the sense discussed above) by means of actions and their products. This allows us to understand and explain how knowledge about a place such as Tongbai Palace became interwoven with the more general

11 Paloutzian, Park, "Integrative Themes", 8.

12 Park, "Religion and Meaning", 297-9.

13 Smith, *Map is not Territory*, 290-1.

14 It is worth noting that at least another scholar of Chinese religion has arrived at a position that resonates with mine. John Lagerwey defined religion as "the practice of structuring values". Lagerwey, "Introduction", 2. While I consider a system of values as a fundamental part of a meaning system, I think that my approach is more encompassing and it helps to account for other aspects that are included within the concept of meaning, such as the feeling of being anchored in a cosmic order that 'makes sense' as well as provides coordinates and direction.

religious fabric of imperial China and how it was able to exert a certain amount of influence on the subsequent generations of people who dealt with the temple.

At the sociological level, I have benefited from Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's paradigm on the sociology of knowledge. What I have found particularly useful is their discussion of the process of socialisation and of the production of meaning as the defining feature of human beings. Robert Bellah's theory of religion has also contributed to the development of my own approach to religion. His paradigm of multiple realities, which he shares with Berger and Luckmann, and that of Being Cognition and Deficiency Cognition, which he borrowed from Abraham Maslow, have been very inspiring for me and have provided a way to tie together the theories of psychology of religion with those of sociology. Thanks to these scholars, I was able to develop a perspective on the history of a place of worship that sees it as resulting from the sedimentation of different 'strata of meaning', by which I mean layers of religious significance. These strata are made up of the stories told about the temple, of the historical events remembered and recorded in a variety of texts, of the knowledge about deities, important locations, useful flora, fauna, and minerals, and everything that constitutes religiously significant information about the temple and its surrounding area. The way in which these strata interact, intersect, come to replace one another, and arise and disappear over the course of the temple's history is therefore determined by how people transmitted this knowledge and these stories, by what they did at the temple and in relation to it, by the importance that they attached to each stratum and to the perceived relationship between different strata.

According to what I have stated above, it is clear that, while being the main focus of this book, Tongbai Palace is not its sole subject. In fact, we could easily change our perspective and see the temple as nestled within the surrounding territory and therefore expand our view to encompass Mt. Tongbai and the Tiantai Mountains as fundamental features of the landscape studied in this book. I discuss these in detail in the first chapter, but I deem it necessary to offer a few preliminary reflections here on the importance of mountains in traditional Chinese religion. Many studies have analysed the symbolism of mountains in China and their function both within Daoism and in other contexts. First of all, we find a long-standing tradition that considers mountains to be a setting for supernatural encounters and the dwelling place of deities and transcendental beings. As I will discuss in the first chapter, mountains were considered liminal places where human beings could witness and interact with supernatural elements. This is true for their surface and even more so for their inner territory, made up of grottoes and tunnels. The *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas; DZ 1031) appears to be one of the earliest

atlases of supernatural landscapes, although the date of its composition is debated.[15] It details a territory marked by supernatural features where strange creatures and deities abound. Ancient Chinese culture gave prominence to some specific mountains, both real and mythological, such as Mt. Kunlun 崑崙山, which tradition described as the dwelling place of Xiwang Mu 西王母 (in the *Shanhai jing*) or of Laozi (in the *Xiang'er* 想爾), the Five Marchmounts 五嶽, distributed in the four directions plus the centre, and functioning as 'regulators' (*zhen* 鎮) of the empire, or specifically Mt. Tai 泰山, where sovereigns performed the critical *feng* and *shan* rituals 封禪.[16]

As noted by Franciscus Verellen, mountains were not important just for their outward appearance, which easily turned them into landmarks in the sacred landscape, but also for what they contained, what he called "the beyond within".[17] Gil Raz similarly noted that the Daoist landscape was not constituted merely by the topography of its external features – although this territory certainly presented many supernatural elements – since its underground territory was often equally, if not even more, important.[18] Mountains held a creative power evident in the clouds surrounding them, which was conceptualized as the outflowing *qi* generated within them. The supernatural features of the landscape, therefore, extend to what is not visible, to the hidden realm below the surface. A set of interconnected tunnels traversing the bowels of mountains were believed to conceal parallel worlds filled with supernatural elements, and even having their own sun and moon and day-night cycles. Starting with the Shangqing revelations of the 4th century, a list of grottoes and of their related mountains began to be systematised, reaching maturity by the end of the Tang dynasty. A number of peaks in Zhejiang, including Mt. Tongbai, were also included in this ranking of sacred grottoes that extended all over the territory of the empire. Starting in medieval times, we find texts containing an increasing number of descriptions of journeys to supernatural places, such as distant lands and underground mountain tunnels. By travelling underground, one could reach fabled lands, come into possession of sacred texts (either revealed or found ones), and encounter supernatural beings. The different parts of a mountain were seen at the same time as a kind of

15 Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann states that most of the *Shanhai jing* was drafted in the 1st century BC. Dorofeeva-Lichtmann, "Text as a Device", 148. Marianne Bujard argues that the first five chapters of the text date from the end of the Warring States period. Bujard, "State and Local Cults", 788.

16 On the Five Marchmounts, which he calls Sacred Peaks, see Robson, *Power of Place*, 25-44.

17 Verellen, "The Beyond Within".

18 Raz, "Daoist Sacred Geography", 1400.

natural laboratory and as an altar, both aspects being necessary to the ascension of the gifted practitioner. Although they were indeed dangerous places, mountains – as argued by Verellen – served a series of beneficial functions for the practitioner: they acted as a place of initiation, made possible by the encounter with supernatural beings or sacred texts, and – most importantly – functioned as a refuge from war, social turmoil, and indeed civilisation itself.[19] Mt. Tongbai too is described by the sources as a safe refuge, a *blessed land*.

Early examples of hagiographies of transcendents, such as the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 (Biographies of Exemplary Transcendents; DZ 302; 2nd century) and the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of Divine Transcendents) bear witness to the close relationship between transcendents and mountains.[20] The Shangqing revelations further developed the links between sacred mountains and successful practitioners. This is also true in the case of Mt. Tongbai, which was related to the figure of Wangzi Qiao during the Tang dynasty, while during the Qing dynasty the temple was linked to a practitioner of inner alchemy of the Song dynasty, Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (987?-1082). In the context of individual practices, mountains were not only places where self-cultivation was possible: they were considered liminal spaces where human beings could enter in contact with supernatural beings, and where they could gather special herbs and mushroom to be eaten or used for medical purposes. Following James Robson, "the numinous nature of Chinese sacred mountains was constituted by elements within the site, such as potent herbs, magical waters, deep caves, strange plants, and noteworthy people",[21] but also sacred scriptures, divine objects and supernatural beings.

Their condition of liminal places, their function as access to a supernatural world, perhaps explains why mountains have been a preferred site for self-cultivation in China since ancient times. This aspect has already been discussed in detail elsewhere, so I will not delve into it more than it is necessary. Descriptions of mountains as favourite places for self-cultivation are found in texts from the first part of the imperial era or even earlier. One early example is found in the *Zhuangzi*, where a *shenren* 神人 pursues self-cultivation on Mt. Guyi.[22] Ge Hong's 葛洪 *Baopuzi neipian* 抱朴子內篇 (The Master

19 Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 267-8.

20 Raz, "Daoist Sacred Geography", 1406. In this book I have decided to translate the term *xian* 仙 as 'transcendent' instead of opting for another viable and frequently used translation, 'immortal'. In this, I follow Bokenkamp's reflections on the term. Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 22-3; Penny, "Immortality and Transcendence", 109-33. For a different approach to the issue, see Jia, *Gender, Power, and Talent*, 209 fn. 3.

21 Robson, *Power of Place*, 22.

22 Campany, "Seekers of Transcendence", 350.

Who Embraces Simplicity; 4th century) is probably the source that most scholars have in mind when discussing early systematic texts on transcendence on mountains. This text contains many passages that explain the preparations needed to access mountains and avoid their dangers as well as practice self-cultivation. It is worth noting that Ge Hong himself was also critical of some practitioners whom he considered to be charlatans for spreading fake stories about their supernatural encounters on mountains. Therefore, even at this early stage the lore surrounding mountains was not univocal and universally accepted, but we find different perspective on the issue.

The importance of mountains for Daoism also derived from their ritual significance. Not much can be said in general about local mountain cults in early imperial times, but we know a great deal about ancient royal cults and early myths that were based on mountains. Perhaps the most famous – and least practised – mountain rituals were the *feng* and *shan* sacrifices, which were performed to communicate to Heaven that the empire had been reunited and pacified under one dynasty.[23] On the other hand, mountains were also the stage for popular cults, as in the case of the transcendents of Mt. Huagai 華蓋山 studied by Robert Hymes.[24]

The very close relationship between mountains and temples, in traditional China and especially in Daoism, is witnessed by the use of symbolic language. All Daoist temples are called mountains or caves. The close relationship between orography and cult places is confirmed by the use of the expressions *shanmen* 山門 (literally: 'gate of the mountain', or 'access to the mountain') and *dongmen* 洞門 ('entrance to the cave' or 'main gate') to indicate the main gate of a temple. Moreover, in biographies about Daoists we often find expressions such as 'he visited famous mountains', which can be understood both as a direct reference to mountains with a particular cultural and religious significance, and as an indirect reference to the temples located on or near these mountains. The close connection between the concept of mountain and that of temple should be understood as being not only metaphorical, but factual. Like mountains, temples were a liminal place, where the boundary between the immanent and the transcendent worlds became permeable. If, as argued by Gil Raz, within the grottoes under the mountains the mundane spatial and temporal limits were abrogated, then – by analogy – the same could be said of temples, from a religious perspective.[25] While mountains in the Chinese tradition are 'places of initiation', temples too often perform the same function. The kind of discipline and aus-

23 Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, 170-94; Bujard, "State and Local Cults".

24 Hymes, *Way and Byway Taoism*.

25 Raz, "Daoist Sacred Geography", 1404.

terity that Verellen attributes to the lifestyle of those who live in the mountains also characterises the life of temple dwellers, as illustrated by the codes of conduct of monastic communities preserved in the *Daoist Canon*.

This confirms the point stressed here that the significance of a (Daoist) temple does not reside in its material form as a set of walls and buildings, nor merely in it being a setting for the activities of Daoists and visitors, but should rather be studied both as a tool for the production of meaning and as the very outcome of such process. This view resonates with the difference between place and history that James Robson made in his study on the Nanyue, which can be found also in traditional Chinese local history, which "evolved along two intertwined axes: the biographies of individuals on one hand, and stories about particular places or localities on the other".[26] I am therefore convinced that it is the human presence that gives shape to a place, that provides it with symbolic layers, and that makes it significant through time and space. For these reasons, in this book I dedicated much space to the study of the activities of persons and Daoist lineages that have been related to Tongbai Palace and Tiantai.

1.1 Sources

In order to conduct the research behind this book, I have used a variety of sources, which I have classified as official, Daoist, and private. Official sources encompass all those texts that were produced by emperors, members of the court, or officials serving in this capacity. These include official histories and related documents, edicts and memorials, inscriptions, and other similar sources. Daoist sources include those texts produced by Daoists qua Daoists, such as temple gazetteers and doctrinal and ritual books dealing with Daoist doctrine, rituals, and institutions. Finally, private sources are not limited to texts produced for private use, but also include ones written by individuals who were not acting as public officials, such as poems, essays, and travelogues. Sometimes these categories overlap: for example, some local gazetteers were not state-sponsored, but were undertakings by individual officials working at a given post or by local literati that were later employed by other officials, sometimes to compile state-sponsored gazetteers.

Among the sources that I quote the most are a series of gazetteers on the Tiantai region, such as the *Tiantai Shan zhi* 天台山志 (Gazetteer of the Tiantai Mountains), the *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 天台山方外志 (Gazetteer on What Lies Beyond the Secular of the Tiantai Moun-

26 Robson, *Power of Place*, 24.

tains), the *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 天台山全志 (Complete Gazetteer of the Tiantai Mountains), and the *Qingsheng Ci zhi*. The last of these works, in particular, constitutes the foundation for the third chapter, focused on the Qingsheng Shrine on Mt. Tongbai. The *Qingsheng Ci zhi* is divided into two parts. The first is a collection of communications and memorials that the author Zhang Lianyuan 張聯元 himself wrote between 1712 and 1722. The declared purpose of this gazetteer was to record the development of the legal case against the Zhang clan of Tiantai (unrelated to Zhang Lianyuan) and to preserve the final ruling that returned the land to the shrine – which belonged to Tongbai Palace – for future reference. The official missives collected in the *Qingsheng Ci zhi* allow us to reconstruct the whole process of land reclamation from the author's point of view. The second part of this gazetteer collects a variety of texts on the shrine, including land registries, records, and poems about it. The anonymous *Tiantai Shan zhi* is found in the *Daozang* and can probably be dated to the year 1367, during the reign of the Yuan emperor Huizong (1333-1370). It represents an important source for our understanding of the history of Tongbai Palace in a period that is under-represented in the sources in our possession.[27] The *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* bears a preface by the author dated to the Wanli *xinchou* 萬曆辛丑 year (1601). The name of the author is Shi Chuandeng 釋傳燈 (1554-1628), who was clearly a Buddhist monk based in Tiantai. He wrote the preface in the Youxi Lecture Hall 幽溪講堂 of the Gaoming (Buddhist) Monastery 高明寺.[28] His Buddhist affiliation certainly explains why his gazetteer is heavily focused on the influence of that religion in Tiantai County; nonetheless, this work remains an important source of data on Tiantai Daoism from the late Ming dynasty. Finally, the *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* was also compiled by Zhang Lianyuan during the Kangxi 康熙 era (1662-1722) and it provides useful insights into the status of the Palace during the early Qing period.

In the fourth chapter I rely heavily on the *Jingai xindeng* 金蓋心燈 (Mind-Lamp of Mount Jingai; 1821, blocks recarved in 1876) by Min Yide 閔一得 (1748/58-1836), a hagiographical account of the transmission of the Longmen doctrine and precepts throughout the centuries. Even though this text has been proven to be partially unreliable from a historiographical perspective, it remains useful for two reasons. First, while its reliability can be contested for the oldest hagiographies in it, the most recent ones are more reliable. Not only was Min Yide a direct witness to many of these accounts, but this

27 This gazetteer states: "From the year 1168 […] until the incident in the present *dingwei* [year], 199 years have passed" 自乾道戊子……至今丁未變故又一百九十九年. *Tiantai Shan zhi* 8b.

28 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 7:17b; *Youxi biezhi*, in particular "xu": 3a-5a.

is also the only source for some of them. In other cases, we have external sources that either partially or fully confirm what is recorded in the *Jingai xindeng*. I have tried to quote these alternative sources whenever possible. The second reason why this text is extremely useful to the scholar of late imperial Daoism is because it casts light on the self-depiction of Min Yide's Longmen lineage and of its history. This lineage is very significant for the development of Tongbai Palace during the 17th and 18th centuries, since it managed the temple starting in the Qianlong 乾隆 era (1735-1796). I have therefore studied the relationship between the two in detail.

1.2 Structure of the Book

This book comprises four chapters that can be divided into two parts. The first includes Chapters 1 and 2, which focus on the pre-Qing history of Tongbai Palace. They do not aim to record each and every mention of Tongbai Palace or Mt. Tongbai in the sources, or to analyse each occurrence. Instead, they provide an overview of what I consider to be the main elements that, over the centuries, contributed to building the cultural and religious image of Tiantai, making it a significant location for Daoist practitioners. Chapter 1 focuses on the earliest mentions of the Tiantai area and on the main early myths associated with the Tiantai Mountains. Here I have striven to provide an overview of some features that contributed to the attractiveness of the area, including its significance for self-cultivation, deities related to mountains, and the presence of virtuous men.

Chapter 2 summarises the history of the temple from its construction under the Tang dynasty to its demise during the Ming. The periods on which the chapter focuses the most are the Tang and Song dynasties, since they are those for which we have most data. They are also the years most investigated by scholars. Unlike in the first chapter, in this one I do not discuss the mythological and symbolic capital accumulated by the region in the period in question, but focus instead on the people and on the religious lineages found in the area. This is justified by the fact that, after the construction of Tongbai Palace in 711, we find information on individuals that lived in the temple and on traditions that were linked to it. This chapter has two purposes. First, by analysing who dwelled at Tongbai Palace we can better understand what its function was and what position it occupied within the broader religious environment. Second, the study of the individuals inhabiting and supporting the temple proves useful to understand its development across the centuries and to contextualize the way in which Tongbai Palace was subsequently conceptualized.

The second part of the book is made up of Chapters 3 and 4, both focusing on the history of the temple during the late Ming and Qing

dynasties. Chapter 3 discusses a case of encroachment on the temple land that affected the Qingsheng Shrine, the aforementioned shrine annexed to Tongbai Palace. Even though this legal case specifically concerned the shrine, the arguments made by the official supporting the temple and its resident Daoist refer more generally to the original endowments of Tongbai Palace. Moreover, from the late Ming dynasty onwards the Qingsheng Shrine appears to have been the only part of the Palace that remained in use, so a study of this topic allows us to fill a gap in the history of the temple, corresponding to the period of disrepair between the end of the Ming dynasty and the end of the Yongzheng era (1722-1735).

Chapter 4 discusses the restoration of Tongbai Palace sponsored by the Yongzheng Emperor along with the Longmen lineage that subsequently established itself in the temple. This chapter ends with the 1850s, which I consider to mark the end of an era through the Taiping Rebellion. Even though Tongbai Palace continued to remain part of the Daoist world and discourse during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the religious landscape of the region was radically changed by the rebellion and therefore, in my opinion, this constitutes a separate stage in the history of this temple that must be studied in its own right. In this final chapter I discuss the temple network created by Longmen Daoists and try to locate the position of Tongbai Palace within it. Because the latter was but one node in this network, my analysis necessarily relies on a broader perspective, encompassing the evolution of regional Daoism in the Jiangnan area, a term that I here take to indicate specifically southern Jiangsu and Zhejiang.[29]

29 For a discussion of the different meanings of the term Jiangnan, see Wu, *Jiangnan Quanzhen Daojiao*, 8-18.

2 A Geographical and Symbolic History of Tiantai

Summary 2.1 The Earliest Sources on Mount Tongbai Up to the Song Dynasty. – 2.2 Mount Tongbai and the Tiantai Mountains: Name and Location. – 2.3 Tiantai in the *Tiantai Shan ji*. – 2.4 Religious Features of Tiantai. – 2.4.1 Wangzi Qiao. – 2.4.2 Ge Xuan. – 2.5 Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao. – 2.6 Bo Yi and Shu Qi. – 2.7 Buddhism in Tiantai. – 2.8 Conclusion.

This chapter is devoted to the study of the earliest accounts regarding the Tiantai mountain range and Mt. Tongbai. My purpose here is not to produce a complete review of such sources, but to discuss the most influential texts dealing with this area. This will provide the reader a good understanding of the historical and symbolic importance of the Tiantai mountains, which were already significant in Daoist traditions before the Tang dynasty and became a major Daoist centre from that dynasty onwards.

2.1 The Earliest Sources on Mount Tongbai Up to the Song Dynasty

The Tiantai Mountains are mentioned in a number of ancient sources. What is probably the earliest instance can be found in the *Shanhai jing* 山海經, a text compiled between the 3rd century BC and the 3rd century AD:

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> In a very remote place there is a mountain called High Mount Tiantai. Seawater reaches its interior.[1]
>
> 大荒之中有山名曰天臺高山。 海水入焉。

The *Shanhai jing* is an atlas of sacred geography, a record of all the gods inhabiting the world. Its entries are grouped into different sectors according to the cardinal directions and to the distance of each place from the centre of the realm: Mt. Tiantai belongs to the lands beyond the outer seas, which were regarded as marking the boundaries of known dry lands. The significance of this excerpt is controversial not merely because the geography of the *Shanhai jing* is filled with religious symbolism that may render a strictly geographical interpretation of the text superfluous, but also because the ancient and composite origin of the text poses some serious problems in terms of the direct correlation between its toponymy and the one used after the 7th century. This is especially true because Mt. Tiantai is included in one of the chapters devoted to the remote lands beyond the four seas surrounding the known world, lands whose features are necessarily hazy and which fall outside the Chinese territory. If this Mount Tiantai is actually located in faraway or even mythical lands, then it cannot be related to the subject of this book. If we understand the *Shanhai jing* as a description of a narrower area encompassed within the borders of contemporary China – as some scholars have done – then it is still not possible to find much correspondence between the two mountains. For these reasons, although the presence of Mt. Tiantai in the *Shanhai jing* would be historiographically very significant, I would rather adopt a more cautious approach and take the possibility of simple homonymy into consideration.

The first historically reliable mention of the Tiantai Mountains in a religious context comes from the tradition of Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-363). This is also the most ancient and verifiable connection between the mountains and a 'Daoist' tradition.[2] In the 'Golden Elixir' 金丹 section of his *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (The Master who Embraces Simplicity), Ge writes:

> According to the scriptures of the transcendents, [Daoists] can meditate and produce the medicine of immortals together at Mt. Hua, Mt. Tai […] the Big and Small Tiantai mountains, Mt. Si-

1 *Shanhai jing* 15:5a. Cf. Gong, "Songdai Zhejiang diqu de dongtian fudi", 49-51; Ren, "Tiantai Shan dongtian fudi", 50-3.

2 I hesitate to use the term 'Daoist' here, since Ge Hong did not envision himself as part of a Daoist tradition in the modern sense of the expression.

> wang, Mt. Gaizhu, Mt. Guacang [...] On all these mountains there are orthodox gods and sometimes earth transcendents.[3]
>
> 按仙經, 可以精思合作仙藥者, 有華山、泰山 [...] 大小天臺山、四望山、蓋竹山、括蒼山 [...], 此皆是正神其山中, 其中或有地仙之人。

The Big and Small Tiantai mountains, along with the Siwang, Gaizhu and Guacang mountains, can all be found in later gazetteers that deal with the Tiantai area, and this confirms the correspondence between the above text and the geographical area we are discussing. Therefore, the significance of the Tiantai area for self-cultivation within the context of southern Chinese theology had already been established by the late 3rd / early 4th century It is probable that this information was not invented by Ge Hong, but that he was relating and systematising older traditions, religious and technical knowledge that was rooted in the ancient past of the region and that, for the most part, is unfathomable to us today.

The prominent position of Tiantai within the sacred geography of the 4th century is substantiated in a quotation from Xu Lingfu's 徐靈符 (ca. 760-841) *Tiantai Shan ji* 天台山記 (Record of Mt. Tiantai; 9th century) and that this text attributes to Gu Kaizhi's 顧愷之 (Gu Changkang 長康; 345-406) *Qimeng ji* 啟蒙記 (First [Lessons] for Beginners). This work, which scholars suppose to be a reading and writing handbook for children,[4] is now lost, although it partially survives in quotations found in later texts, most notably the encyclopaedic work of the 10th century *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽. The citation in the *Tiantai Shan ji* states:

> The Tiantai Mountains are located in the middle of the five counties of Guiji Commandery. It is not far from the human world. The path [first] crosses a waterfall and then the You Brook, reaching Mount Zhe. The You Brook is in Tangxing County. It originates 20 *li* eastward, from Hua Peak, and it flows south-east of Mount Fenghuang. [...] In front of the peak there is a stone bridge. After dozens of steps, one arrives at the Jueming Ravine: in order to cross it, one must not fear for one's life. Those who succeed can see the Tiantai Mountains, lush and beautiful, soaring above the sky. [Here, there] are the Qiong Towers, the immortals' abodes, the Li Spring, transcendents' items and uncommon flora and fauna. Sometimes one

3 Wang, *Baopuzi neipian xiaoshi*, 85. See also 106-7 fnn. 271-2, 288. The text can also be found in the *Daoist Canon*: *Baopuzi neipian* (DZ 1185), 4:19b-20a. The edition by Wang Ming uses '臺' in the context of non-simplified characters, but the character generally used by the people of Tiantai today is '台' (pronounced *tāi*), as demonstrated by the canonical version of the text.

4 On this, cf. Knechtges, Chang, *Ancient and Early Medieval Chinese Literature*, 285-6.

> can see them. [Travellers] sometimes happen to see [this place]. [Even if] they cut trees in order to mark the way and later search for it again, they cannot find again the route.[5]
>
> 天台山在會稽郡五縣界中。 去人境不遠。 路經瀑布次經猶溪, 至于浙山。 猶溪在唐興縣。 東二十里發源。 自花頂, 從鳳凰山東南流。 [...] 岭前有石橋。 遙望不盈尺長。 數十步臨絕溟之澗, 忘其身者然後能度。 度者見天台山。 蔚然 凝秀。 雙嶺於青霄之上。 有瓊樓、玉堂、瑤琳、醴泉、仙物、異種。 偶或有見者, 當時斫樹記之, 再尋, 則不復可得也。

It should be noted that the authenticity of the entirety of this excerpt can be disputed based on a series of facts. First of all, as anticipated, this work is not extant, although we can find some references to the *Qimeng ji* that partially correspond to the quotation above in a series of texts: *Taiping yulan*, *Chicheng zhi* 赤城志 (Gazetteer of [Mt.] Chicheng; 1223) and *Wen xuan* 文選 (Selections of Refined Literature; 520s). Almost half of the excerpt can be found, with minor changes, in the *Taiping yulan*, where its original source is indicated as *Qimeng ji zhu* 啟蒙記注 (Annotations on First [Lessons] for Beginners): it is not possible, though, to the best of my knowledge, to determine what belongs to the main text and what to the commentary, which impedes any decision on the attribution of this text to Gu Kaizhi himself. More importantly, the excerpt in the *Tiantai Shan ji* mentions Tangxing County: according to Xu Lingfu himself and to the *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志 (Gazetteer of Zhejiang [Province]), a work from the Qianlong era (1735-1796), Tangxing is the name that Tiantai County received during the Shangyuan 上元 era (674-676), more than 200 years after Gu Kaizhi passed away.[6] We can conclude that the passage quoted in the *Tiantai Shan ji* has some interpolations and does not come directly from the *Qimeng ji*, although Xu Lingfu considers the whole excerpt as a quotation from that text, as argued also by Usui Shunji 薄井俊二.[7] Most troubling perhaps is the fact that extant references to the *Qimeng ji* fail to report the last period dealing with the supernatural character of the path into the Tiantai Mountains, which does not allow me to determine whether this was actually discussed in Gu Kaizhi's work. If this passage reproduces the content in the *Qimeng ji*, with minor interpolations, then it is valuable proof of the importance of this area within the supernatural geography of the region. Mt. Tiantai therefore constituted an organic system that was near civilisation, yet separate from it, both geographically and ontologically. To reach it, travellers had to follow

5 *Tiantai Shan ji* 1b-2a.

6 *Tiantai Shan ji* 2a; *Zhejiang tongzhi* (QL) 4:18a.

7 Usui, *Tendaisanki no kenkyū*, 300.

a long and dangerous road, at the end of which they could finally witness a marvellous sight. This place, inhabited by supernatural and elusive beings, encompassed both powerful natural forces and supernatural features. Perhaps, the best known early description of the Tiantai Mountains as a sacred landscape is 'You Tiantai Shan fu' 遊天台山賦 (Rhapsody on Roaming Mt. Tiantai) by Sun Chuo 孫綽 (320-371).[8] This work is considered the earliest literary celebration of these mountains, although, as discussed above, their name does appear in earlier texts. Presently, it is one of the few complete works by Sun Chuo in our hands and it has been preserved in the 6th century literary anthology *Wen xuan*. This rhapsody possesses different interpretive levels: on the surface, it describes the ascent of the Tiantai Mountains by the poet, but it can also be read as the portrayal of the persona's mystical experience of union with the absolute. The rhapsody famously begins with the following words:

> The Tiantai Mountains are indeed the divine excellence of [all] mountains and peaks. Traverse the sea and there are the Fangzhang and Penglai [islands], on land the Siming and Tiantai [ranges]. Both are [places where] the mystic sages roamed and transformed [themselves], where numinous transcendents dwelt in caverns. Their high and pinnacled demeanour and their auspicious beauty, is the apex of the jewelled wealth of mountains and seas, achieves the highest ornate finery of men and gods. They are not included among the Five Peaks and have never been recorded in the ancient records: is it not simply because they stand in a dark and hidden place and their road is secluded and remote? Or is it [because they] cast their inverted image in the double deep, or hide [their] summits amid the thousand ranges? Setting out, one travels paths of sprites and monsters and ends by treading regions without men. In the whole world, few can mount or climb [them], and of kings none has offered prayer or sacrifice [there]. Therefore accounts are missing in the ordinary documents, [but] their name figures in unconventional records. Yet, how can the appearance of maps and pictures be unfounded? Except for those leaving the world to revel in the Way, abandoning the grains to eat wild mushrooms, who could lightly rise and dwell there? Except for those distantly dismissing and intuitively probing, those sincerely and trusting communing with the gods, who would dare to recall remote [images] and keep [the mountains] in his mind? The reason I urge on my spirit and transport my thoughts, daily chant-

8 Sun Chuo's dates of birth and death are unclear. Some hypotheses are: ca. 301-ca. 380 (Derk Bodde); 320-377 (Mano Senryū 間野潜龍); ca. 310-397 (Richard Mather) as the latest year of birth and earlier year of death. Mather, "The Mystical Ascent of the T'ient'ai Mountains", 226 fn. 2.

> ing and nightly rising, is that in the interval between a downward and an upward glance, it seems that I ascend them a second time. So I cast off all circling bonds, forever taking refuge in this mountain range. Unable to endure extremes of declaiming and thinking, I resort to literary skill to express my feelings.[9]
>
> 天台山者, 蓋山嶽之神秀者也。 涉海則有方丈、蓬萊, 登陸則有四明、天台。 皆玄聖之所遊化, 靈仙之所窟宅。 夫其峻極之狀, 嘉祥之美, 窮山海之瑰富, 盡人神之壯麗矣。 所以不列於五嶽, 闕載於常典者, 豈不以所立冥奧, 其路幽迴? 或倒景於重溟, 或匿峰於千嶺? 始經魑魅之塗, 卒踐無人之境。 舉世罕能登陟, 王者莫由禋祀。 故事絕於常篇, 名標於奇紀。 然圖像之興, 豈虛也哉! 非夫遺世翫道, 絕粒茹芝者, 烏能輕舉而宅之? 非夫遠寄冥搜, 篤信通神者, 何肯遙想而存之? 余所以馳神運思, 晝詠宵興, 俛仰之間, 若已再升者也。 方解纓絡, 永託茲嶺。不任吟想之至, 聊奮藻以散懷。

In this text, Sun Chuo confirms that the Tiantai Mountains were not encompassed in official cults, but were nonetheless central in exotic and quite mysterious religious activities, probably of local origin.

In addition to these pieces of evidence we find other, slightly later sources that testify to the growing religious significance of the area, such as those related to the Shangqing 上清 revelations. These were received by a certain Xu Mi 許謐 (303-373) from a series of *zhenren* 真人 (perfected), most notably the female Perfected Wei Huacun 魏華存 (*zi*: Shen'an 腎安; *hao*: Nanyue furen 南嶽夫人; 251-334), a deified libationer belonging to the tradition of the Heavenly Masters.[10] Notes on these revelations are collected in the *Zhengao* 真誥 (499), edited by Tao Hongjing. This scripture frequently mentions Mt. Tongbai, often in relation to the Perfected Tongbai 桐柏真人, better known as Wangzi Qiao 王子喬 (sometimes – wrongly – written as Wang Ziqiao) or Wangzi Jin 王子晉, the son of King Ling of Zhou 周靈王 (571-545 BC). This Mt. Tongbai – regardless of whether it coincides with the Tongbai where the present-day Tongbai Palace is located – was considered a powerful place, and an appropriate setting for self-cultivation. Two excerpts from the *Zhengao* allow us to appreciate the significance of this area for those involved in the Shangqing revelations:

9 *Wen xuan* 11:4a-5a. The translation is based on Mather, "The Mystical Ascent of the T'ient'ai Mountains", 234-5 and Sun, "Rhapsody on Roaming the Celestial Terrace Mountains", 243-5.

10 The Heavenly Masters are usually considered the first communal religious movement that can be called 'Daoist'. The history of the Shangqing tradition is actually much more complex than I explained and would require a more extensive discussion than the one I can offer here. More information on the origin and doctrine of the Shangqing revelations, as well as its relation to other traditions, can be found in the relevant entries in Pregadio's *The Encyclopedia of Taoism* and in Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*; *Taoism*; Strickman, "On the Alchemy of T'ao Hung-ching", 123-92.

> [In the] Golden Court there is the land of no-death. It is located in the middle of [Mt.] Tongbai and its circumference is 10 li.[11]
>
> 金庭有不死之鄉。 在桐柏之中, 方圓十里。
>
> The Jinting of Tongbai in [the region of] Yue and the Jinling of Jurong in Wu are blessed places [where one can] cultivate perfection and numinous places [where one can] bring to completion the spirit.[12]
>
> 越桐柏之金庭, 吴句曲之金陵, 養真之福境, 成神之灵墟也。

The same source also places these locations within the broader framework of Shangqing cosmology and theology:

> The Perfected Wang, sovereign of the Youbi [star], has transmitted this to the Marquis Xu [Mi]: the Morning Emperor of Tongbai said that only the two Jin [i.e. Jinting and Jinling] of Wu and Yue are blessed lands.[13]
>
> 右弼王, 王真人啜令密示許侯此, 即桐柏帝晨所說, 言吴越之境, 唯此两金最為福地者也。

Tao Hongjing's commentary adds:

> Because [one] is near the grotto-heaven, [within] the area protected by the sacred perfected [beings], [one] is not touched by the three calamities.[14]
>
> 既近洞天, 神真限衛, 故能令三災不幹。[15]

Therefore, this place had a special quality to it that was conducive towards the attainment of transcendence and protected practitioners from harm.

11 *Zhengao* 14:19a-b.

12 *Zhengao* 11:5b.

13 *Zhengao* 11:5b.

14 *Zhengao* 11:5b.

15 The concept of three calamities is of Buddhist origin. There exist two lists of calamities, the major ones (*da san zai* 大三災) and the minor ones (*xiao san zai* 小三災). The former consist of fire, water and wind, while the latter consist of conflict (*daobing* 刀兵), pestilence (*jiyi* 疾疫) and famine (*jijin* 飢饉 or *ji'e* 飢餓). Verellen, *Imperilled Destinies*, 102 fn. 13; Ding, *Foxue dacidian*, 304-5.

We may conclude that during the 4th century the importance and sacredness of Tiantai was related to a variety of different aspects. First of all, it was conceived as a place governed and inhabited by supernatural beings related to ancient local traditions and to new revelations, the latter being the product of the lively religious environment of southern China after the fall of the Han dynasty. It was also renowned as a place appropriate for self-cultivation and for the achievement of transcendence. Finally, but in close connection with the other two aspects, Tiantai was also important for its physical, botanical, faunal and mineral features. During the following centuries this place continued to acquire new layers of meaning thanks to the institutionalisation of Daoism and to the systematisation of sacred geography by a number of religious specialists.

According to Tao Hongjing, for example, Mt. Tongbai was a 'blessed land' (*fudi* 福地), a term that originally was not completely distinct from the concept of 'grotto-heaven' (*dongtian* 洞天) and that indicates areas with supernatural characteristics useful for practising self-cultivation and preserving one's life: eventually the two words came to define different categories and were systematised and integrated during the Tang dynasty. By the 10th century, many such places had become part of the larger system encompassing hundreds of different sites.[16] However, as clearly shown by the sources quoted above, the idea that some places in the Tiantai region were endowed with special features that marked them as qualitatively superior from a religious perspective is rooted in very ancient local traditions, of which Ge Hong and the Shangqing revelations are but the earliest historically attested expressions.

By the Tang dynasty, the Shangqing tradition had developed into a major state-sponsored Daoist order. It had also established a foothold on Mt. Tongbai by means of the Tongbai Palace, built for its patriarch Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647-735) under imperial auspices. Sima Chengzhen was the most famous court Daoist of the Tang dynasty and allegedly a descendent of the Sima clan that ruled China during the Jin 晉 dynasty (265-420).[17] A text attributed to him and titled *Shangqing shi dichen Tongbai zhenren zhen tuzan* 上清侍帝晨桐柏真人真圖讚 (Veritable Illustrations with Eulogies of the Attendant to the Celestial Emperor of Shangqing and Perfected of [Mt.] Tongbai; *Zhen tuzan*) presents the biography of the perfected Wangzi Qiao 王子喬. This is divided into 11 scenes, each followed by a picture and a eulogy describing the main stages of Wangzi's life, his apotheosis and his appointment as 'Attendant to the Celestial Emperor' (*shi dichen* 侍帝晨) and as administrator of Mt. Tongbai, as well as his involvement in

16 Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 265-90.

17 Refer to the text of the "Tongbai Guan bei" 桐柏觀碑 by Cui Shang 崔尚, found in *Chicheng zhi* 30:5a-7a.

the Shangqing revelations of the Mao Mountains 茅山. The *Zhen tuzan* quotes the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of a Historian) and the *Liexian zhuan*, but it is clearly also inspired by Shangqing texts such as the *Zhengao*. Therefore, it shows that Sima Chengzhen was acquainted with a series of sources dating between the 2nd century BC and the 4th century AD, and that he developed a tradition which had been in existence in some form since the 4th century. His purpose was to extol Wangzi Qiao and to celebrate his own Shangqing order, while at the same time highlighting the importance of Mt. Tongbai and of its Jinting 金庭 (Golden Court).[18] It is not by chance, then, that Mt. Tongbai became one of Sima Chengzhen's early residences.[19] The Shangqing tradition maintained a foothold in the Tiantai area after Sima Chengzhen and at least until the eve of the Song dynasty (see the next chapter).

By the time Xu Lingfu – a 9th-century Daoist and scholar belonging to the Daoist lineage of Sima Chengzhen – wrote his *Tiantai Shan ji*, this area had already become firmly incorporated into a religious landscape that encompassed numerous intersecting layers of meaning.[20] The *Tiantai Shan ji* itself confirms this by referring to numerous sacred spots and to the deities inhabiting these mountains, along with the Buddhist and Daoist institutions scattered throughout the region. This work is possibly the oldest extended text entirely devoted to the Tiantai Mountains and its content constitutes the backbone of all the later accounts on this area that were included in the gazetteers. Xu Lingfu is also known as the author of a commentary on the *Wenzi* 文子, the *Tongxuan zhenjing* 通玄真經 (True Scripture of Communion with Mystery; DZ 746), today found in the *Zhengtong daozang* 正統道藏 (Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong [Era]). The latter also contains the *Nanhua zhenjing yushi zalu* 南華真經餘事雜錄 (Miscellaneous Documents and Additional Notes on the *Zhuangzi*; DZ 738) that compares different editions of the *Zhuangzi*, including one collated by Xu Lingfu himself.[21] The main versions of his *Tiantai Shan ji* extant today are found in the *Tangwen shiyi* 唐文拾遺 (Compendium

18 Verellen, "Shangqing shi dichen Tongbo zhenren zhen tuzan", 1:424-6. This text is not a "collection of eleven short biographies of Shangqing saints connected with Mount Tongbo", as stated in Kohn, *Seven Steps to the Tao*, 21. The development of the cult of the Daoist immortal Wangzi Qiao was quite complex. On this topic see Bujard, "Le culte de Wangzi Qiao", 115-58.

19 Barrett, *Taoism Under the T'ang*, 13.

20 On Xu Lingfu, cf. *Dongxuan lingbao san shi ji* 3a-4b; *Chicheng zhi* 35:12b. On the *Tiantai Shan ji*, cf. Usui Shunji's seminal study of this text, *Tendaisanki no kenkyū*, and Jülch, *Der Orden des Sima Chengzhen*, 45-51. Both contain a full translation of the *Tiantai Shan ji*, the first in Japanese and the latter in German.

21 The *Daozang* also contains the *Liezi chongxu zhide zhenjing shiwen* 列子沖虛至德真經釋文 (Textual Explanations of the Liezi; DZ 733), which among its sources also includes a text written in the calligraphy of Xu Lingfu. Cf. Robinet, "Nanhua zhenjing yushi zalu", 2:673-4 and Schmidt, "Liezi chongxu zhide zhenjing shiwen", 2:682.

of Tang Prose), the *Guyi congshu* 古逸叢書 (Collectanea of Ancient and Lost [Books]) and the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (New Edition of the Buddhist Canon of the Taishō [Era]; T 2096).[22] I have employed the edition of the *Tiantai Shan ji* stored in the National Diet Library (*Kokuritsu Kokkai Toshokan* 国立国会図書館) in Tokyo, which is considered by Usui Shunji as the original edition on which the *Guyi congshu* text is based.[23] Moreover, I have slightly amended my citations of the *Tiantai Shan ji* following Usui's critical edition. The volume in the National Diet Library bears the characters *Anran shu* 安然書, which might be a reference to the Tendai (Tiantai) Buddhist monk Annen 釋安然 (Anran, 841-889?), although it is not possible to determine whether the text was hand copied by him.[24]

2.2 Mount Tongbai and the Tiantai Mountains: Name and Location

Tongbai (or Tongbo) Palace 桐柏宫 is a Daoist temple located in Tiantai County 天台縣. If we try to reach it today, we will find it to be quite a difficult journey. The city of Tiantai, the administrative centre of the county, does not have an airport, or even a train station. The easiest and cheapest way to reach Tiantai is by bus. Alternatively, one may decide to rent a *mianbaoche* 麵包車 – a small van – or a private car. The nearest airports are those of Hangzhou 杭州 and Ningbo 寧波, respectively located about 150 and 100 km away from Tiantai. Once a visitor has arrived at the bus station, he or she has to rent a taxi; if the visitor is in really good terms with the resident Daoists, the temple will provide a car to drive him or her to the temple. Needless to say, when I first went there, this was not a viable option. In fact, the first time I arrived at the temple it was rather late in the afternoon and I decided to stay at a local hotel. The following morning I was able to reach the temple by taxi in about twenty minutes.

Once one has familiarised oneself with contemporary geography and rationalised toponymy, it is difficult not to ask oneself whether certain places have always had the same names or, conversely, if certain names always corresponded to the same places: I soon learnt

22 Jülch, *Der Orden des Sima Chengzhen*, 45. Thomas Jülch based his study on the *Tangwen shiyi* version, which he considered the most reliable of the three.

23 Usui, *Tendaisanki no kenkyū*, 40.

24 Annen is considered to be the founder of Japanese Tendai esoterism. Buswell Jr., Lopez Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 49. Usui Shunji states that it is not possible to confirm whether Annen had anything to do with the transcription of this specific copy, even though the paper wrapping (19th century) of the *Tiantai Shan ji* edition stored at the National Diet Library states that it is the 'authentic work' 真蹟 of Annen. Usui, *Tendaisanki no kenkyū*, 80-1.

Figure 1 Picture of the new Tongbai Palace, built starting in 2007, and of the reservoir, taken from the back of the temple facing the front. Photo by the Author, 2015

that these are very important questions for a scholar of Chinese history. For example, what is referred to as Tongbai Palace today is commonly called *xingong* 新宫 (the new palace) by resident Daoists **[fig. 1]**. Why so? Because during the second half of the 20th century the temple changed place twice and the present Tongbai Palace was only built at the beginning of the 21st century. The reason for this relocation was the construction of a reservoir in the valley where the most ancient Tongbai Palace had been located.

Historical sources usually state that the Tongbai Palace was built on the Tiantai Mountains during the Tang dynasty (618-907). Although we are used to translating the character *shan* 山 as mountain, in the case of Tiantai and other famous mountains like Wudangshan 武當山 and Maoshan 茅山 it would be more appropriate to understand it as referring to a mountain range, a chain of mountains encompassing many different peaks.[25] The first problem we must face, therefore, is to ascertain where the historical sources situate Tongbai Palace.

The Tiantai Mountains are the namesake both of Tiantai County and of Taizhou Prefecture and attempts to explain the origin of the name of these mountains are found in historical sources. The *Chicheng zhi* of the Song dynasty, quoting the *Tiantai Shan ji*, provides three explanations of the name: according to the first one, it is because the

25 Cf. de Bruyn, *Le Wudang Shan*, 8-9. The fact that the name Tiantai Shan 天台山 refers to a massif rather than a single peak is also discussed in Usui Shunji. Usui, *Tendaisan no kenkyū*, 17.

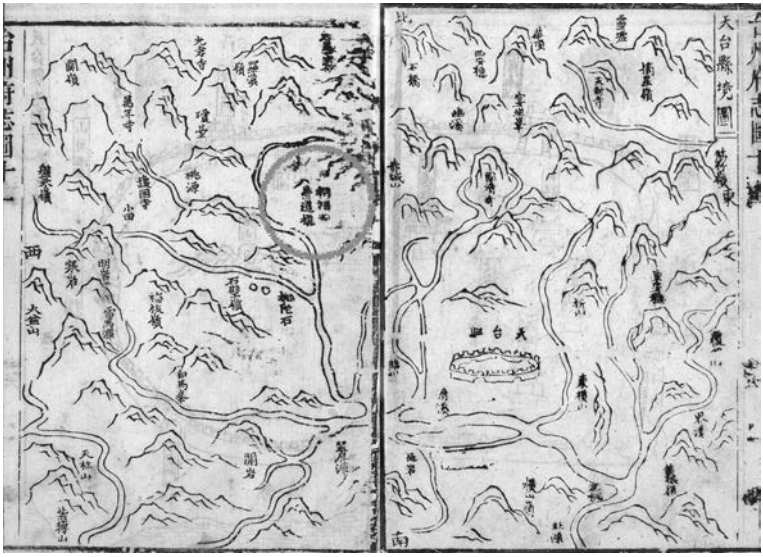

Figure 2 Map of Tiantai County during the Qing dynasty. The red circle marks the position of Mt. Tongbai. *Taizhou Fu zhi* "tu":10b-11a. Harvard College Library Harvard-Yenching Library. https://nrs.lib.harvard.edu/urn-3:fhcl:14302704?n=41

Tiantai summits face the *sanchen* 三辰 (Three Celestial Bodies', i.e. sun, moon and Pole Star), acting as a platform. The second hypothesis explains: "[they] stand between the [constellations of] the Ox and of the Woman, corresponding above to the [constellation of the] Supreme Palace" (*dang niu nü zhi fen, shang ying taisu* 當牛女之分, 上應台宿).[26] The 'Supreme Palace' is also known as the constellation of the *santai xing* 三台星 (Asterism of the Three Platforms', made of the Upper, Central and Lower Platform 上中下三台).[27] To understand this explanation, we must remember that in traditional Chinese cosmography there existed a direct correspondence between asterisms in the sky and earthly geography. This cosmological viewpoint still influenced the content of late imperial gazetteers.[28] The third theory argues: "the Greater and Lesser Tai mountains got their names from the great stone bridge and small stone bridge" (*daxiao tai yi shiqiao daxiao de ming* 大小台以石橋大小得名), two bridges (i.e. platforms) of different sizes.[29]

26 Cf. "Liu Xuan Liu Penzi liezhuan", in *Houhan shu*, 472.

27 For a correspondence of these stars with the contemporary astronomical reference system, see Yi, *Zhongxi duizhao hengxing tubiao*, 26-7. Each 'platform' is in fact made of two stars.

28 Cf. *Chongxiu Fujian Taiwan fu zhi* 37.

29 *Chicheng zhi* 21:1a-b.

Figure 3 Map of Taizhou Prefecture during the Qing dynasty. Tiantai County is in the top left corner. *Taizhou Fu zhi* "tu":1b-2a. Harvard College Library Harvard-Yenching Library. https://nrs.lib.harvard.edu/urn-3:fhcl:14302704?n=32

Chinese toponymy started developing quite early, but the denomination of mountain ranges and peaks could change, even frequently, from one era to another. In this case, Tiantai and Tongbai have sometimes been used according to loose rules of attribution as synonyms, although today Mt. Tongbai refers to a specific mountain located in Tiantai County 天台縣 (Taizhou Prefecture 台州市) **[fig. 2]**, in eastern Zhejiang. The county is presently located about 150 kilometres south-east of Hangzhou and more than 60 kilometres north-northwest of Taizhou **[fig. 3]**.

According to the *Zhengao* by Tao Hongjing (456-536), Mt. Tiantai stands 3 li north of the Tiantai county seat:

> Mt. Tongbai is 18,000 zhang high and its perimeter is 800 li long. It is made up of eight mountains, without interruptions on the four sides.[30]
>
> 桐柏山, 高一萬八千丈, 周迴八百里。 其山八重, 四面如一。

It should be noted that this quotation is copied in later gazetteers where it describes the Tiantai Mountains, but in the *Zhengao* it seems to indicate specifically Mt. Tongbai, or more appropriately, the Tongbai

30 *Zhengao* 14:19a-b, quoted in *Tiantai Shan ji* 1a-b and *Chicheng zhi* 30:5b.

Mountains. The *Tiantai Shan ji* (9th century), quoting the *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (Secret Instructions for the Ascent as a Perfected; DZ 421) by Tao Hongjing, states: "the Greater and Lesser Tai stand in the middle of five counties" (*daxiao Tai chu wuxian zhongyang* 大小台處五縣中央).[31] The *Tiantai Shan ji* specifies that these counties are: Yuyao 餘姚, Linhai 臨海, Chuxing 處興, Gouzhang 句章 and Shan 剡. Various historical sources, from the Tang dynasty onwards, identify specific places as 'gates' to the Tiantai mountain range. Mt. Chicheng 赤城山 in Tiantai County was referred to as the southern gate, Mt. Shicheng 石城山 as the western and the Jinling Abbey 金靈觀 of Shan County 剡縣 as the northern gate, each providing access from a different direction.[32]

My use of both 'Tiantai Mountains' and 'Mt. Tiantai' is not a mistake, but the result of a problem inherent in ancient Chinese toponymy. Today we understand only the three characters *tiantai shan* 天台山 as indicating the Tiantai mountain range, but in the past the word *Tongbai Shan* 桐柏山 was sometimes used as a metonymy, or as a synonym for the entire mountain range. At the same time, *Tongbai Shan* indicated the mountain on which the Tongbai Palace was built, and which belonged to the Tiantai mountain range, but not always. Xu Lingfu stated: "The Tiantai and Tongbai Mountains are connected to each other, therefore there is not much difference [between the two]" (*Tiantai yu Tongbai ershan xiangjie, er xiaoyi ye* 天台與桐柏二山相接, 而小異也).[33] However, there seems to be no doubt on Xu Lingfu's part as on the proper name of the mountain range, because the *Tiantai Shan ji* records:

> The prefecture takes its name from the mountains and it is called Taizhou. [The mountain is in] Tangxing county, that was once called Shifeng, but renamed Tangxing in the second year of the Shangyuan 上元 era of Tang Suzong's 肅粽 reign (761).[34]
>
> 州取山名, 曰台州。縣隸唐興, 即古始豐縣也。肅宗上元二年改為唐興縣。

Tao Hongjing's *Zhengao* also contains references to Mt. Tongbai, which occupies a very significant place in the author's doctrine. This

31 *Dengzhen yinjue*, quoted in *Tiantai Shan ji* 1a. Of the original 24 *juan* of the *Dengzhen yinjue*, only three survive in the *Daozang*. See Robinet, "Dengzhen yinjue", 356-7. The Greater and Lesser Tai are mentioned also in earlier texts: see, for example, the quotation of the *Baopuzi* above.

32 *Tiantai Shan ji* 13a, 18b; *Chicheng zhi* 21:5a.

33 *Tiantai Shan ji* 1b; see also *Chicheng zhi* 21:1b. On Xu Lingfu, see also Cedzich, "Tongxuan zhenjing", 296-7.

34 *Tiantai Shan ji* 2b.

was not missed by the *Chicheng zhi* of the Song dynasty, that reprises some excerpts from this text:

> "The Tongbai Mountains stand on the boundary between the Shan and Linhai counties. They end at the limit of Guiji Prefecture and enter into the Eastern Sea". Therefore, the mountain ridge extends in this manner across the connected boundaries of three regions. All of it should be called Tongbai [Mountains].[35]
>
> 「桐柏山在剡、臨海二縣之境。一頭在會稽東海際, 其一頭入海中。」 然則山之綿亘如此三邑接境。 宜皆指為桐柏也。

In the *Zhengao*, then, the expression *tongbai shan* seems to indicate a mountain range that extended across three counties. The confusion between Tiantai and Tongbai is also evident in a sentence from the *Yudi zhi* 輿地志 (Gazetteer of the Empire) quoted in the *Chicheng zhi*:

> The Tiantai Mountains, also called Tongbai, are the most excellent among mountains.[36]
>
> 天台山, 一名桐柏, 眾嶽之最秀者也。

The same gazetteer also contains a quotation from Cui Shang's 崔尚 (first half of the 8th century) *Tongbai Guan bei* 桐柏觀碑 (Stele of the Tongbai Abbey), which states:

> Tiantai is Tongbai, the former being the substitute name, the latter being its real one. These are two different names [that indicate] the same [mountains].[37]
>
> 天台也, 桐柏也, 代謂之天台真謂之桐柏。 此兩者同體而異名。

If we were to follow these excerpts, then, we should use Tiantai and Tongbai almost as synonyms. Usui Shunji theorises that, during a first phase – I would say at least since the 5th century, when the *Zhengao* was edited – both names were employed to indicate the mountain range and later gradually the name Tiantai became more prominent and eventually remained as its only denomination: the *Tiantai Shan ji* is therefore situated at a point of this process in which the confusion between the two names was still present, which is why its author

35 *Chicheng zhi* 40:9a. I could not find this exact sentence in the *Zhengao*, but it is possible to find a similar one in *Zhengao* 14:19a.

36 *Chicheng zhi* 21:1b.

37 *Chicheng zhi* 30:5a.

determined that there was not much difference between calling the mountains Tiantai and Tongbai.[38]

Finally, it is worth bearing in mind that, according to the *Dengzhen yinjue*, the Tiantai Mountains covered the territory of five counties, suggesting that this was an extended mountain range rather than a single peak, in contrast to the use of 'Tongbai' to indicate a single mountain that is found in other sources. Having discussed the relationship between the terms Tiantai and Tongbai, let us focus on the Tongbai Mountain itself. The *Chicheng zhi* also reports the following description from the *Taiping huanyu ji* 太平寰宇記 (Record of the World of the Taiping [Xingguo Era]; 10th century):

> Today there is still a Tongbai Village 50 li west of Ninghai, which is in Shan County. Tiantai and Linhai counties both have a Tongbai [Mountain], so the Daoist scriptures state that in the Yue [region] there is a Jinting (the Golden Hall) [Grotto-Heaven] and a Tongbai Mountain that are connected to the Tongbai of Siming [mountains].[39]
>
> 在寧海西五十里, 今其地猶有桐柏里, 是剡縣。 天台、寧海皆有桐柏, 然道經云, 越有金庭、桐柏與四明天台相連。

Here Mt. Tongbai is even doubled, further complicating our analysis. Indeed, historically there would appear to have been more than one Tongbai Mountain. The *Chicheng zhi*, quoting the *Zhengao*, confirms what we have seen above:

> In the Yue region there is the Jinting of Tongbai, today [known as] the Jinting Hermitage, which was built by Shen Yue. The records about this abbey state that [Shen] Yue settled down on the Tongbai Peak and built a mansion that [he] called Jinting. Therefore, this is in the Jinting of Shan [County], also called Tongbai [Hermitage].[40]
>
> 「越有桐柏之金庭」, 今剡縣金庭館, 乃沈約造。 本觀記云約定居桐柏嶺, 建館曰金庭, 則是剡之金庭, 亦號桐柏也。

Shen Yue 沈約 (441-513), a famous literatus and official, had the opportunity of visiting the area as the head of a delegation of ten

38 Usui, *Tendaisanki no kenkyū*, 27.

39 *Taiping huanyu ji* 98:12b; *Chicheng zhi* 40:9a. Between the Sui and the Ming dynasties, the length of one li varied between 0,415 and 0,498 Km. Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, 234 fn. d.

40 *Zhengao* 11:5b; *Chicheng zhi* 40:9a.

Daoists on a pilgrimage to the Tiantai Mountains to pray in favour of the Southern Qi 南齊 dynasty. This mission was performed during the reign of Xiao Baojuan 霄寶卷 (r. 498-501) and we have two stele inscriptions by Shen Yue dated 498-501 for two different temples of Tiantai, one of which is the Jinting Hermitage 金庭館 of Mt. Tongbai. In the *Tongbai Shan Jinting Guan bei* 桐柏山金庭館碑 (Stele on the Jinting Hermitage of the Tongbai Mountain), Shen Yue narrates: "The hill to which I have retired is in reality only Mt. Tongbai, the lower capital of the Numinous Sages, the leftover territory of the five counties. [...] The space occupied by Mt. Tongbai is called the Golden Courtyard".[41] It should be noted, though, that scholars are not unanimous in reading the part in prose as representing Shen Yue's point of view; for example, Tan Xiaofei advances the possibility that the prose preceding the part in verses, written in first person, actually portrays the point of view of the head priest of the temple.[42] We also have a poem by Shen Yue, titled 'Roaming to the Hermitage of the Daoist Priest Shen' (*You shen daoshi guan* 遊沈道士館): Tan Xiaofei suggests that this Daoist might be one of those inhabiting the temple and was possibly related to Shen Yue himself.[43]

What I have explained above shows that it is impossible to respect the autochthon toponymy while maintaining a clear denomination of the different geographic features of the area. Therefore, in order to avoid similar ambiguities, in this book I use 'Tiantai Mountains' or 'Tiantai mountain range' when I wish to consider the whole area occupied by these mountains from Ningbo in the east to Hangzhou in the north and Taizhou in the south. 'Tiantai' and 'Tiantai County' refer to a region corresponding to the one administered by the county itself. Finally, 'Mt. Tongbai' refers to the peak and valley where the Tongbai Palace is (was) located. When translating the sources, instead, I have tried to maintain the denomination they use in order to preserve the original nuances.

2.3 Tiantai in the *Tiantai Shan ji*

The *Tiantai Shan ji* provides a thorough description of the area of Tiantai, explaining its main natural and religious features and determining their relative position. It starts by quoting an excerpt

41 Mather, *The Poet Shen Yueh*, 123-5. The translation of the stele is based on Mather, *The Poet Shen Yueh*, 124-5, with slight changes. Contrary to Mather, I think that the *wu xian* 五縣 (five counties, that Mather translates as 'five prefectures') refer to the five administrative territories into which the Tiantai Mountains extended.

42 Tan, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 385 fn. 41.

43 Tan, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 385 fn. 41. For a translation of the poem, refer to Mather, *The Age of Eternal Brilliance*, 1:265.

from the 'You Tiantai shan fu' by the celebrated poet and painter Sun Chuo. These lines set the tone for the rest of the gazetteer:

> Across the sea there are the Fangzhang and Penglai [islands], [here] on land there are the Siming and Tiantai [mountains].[44]
>
> 涉海則有方丈、蓬萊, 登陸則有四明、天台。

The mountains are thus equated with lands inhabited by supernatural beings. The lines are followed by descriptions of Tiantai from a variety of texts, such as Tao Hongjing's *Zhengao* and *Dengzhen yinjue* and Gu Kaizhi's aforementioned *Qimeng ji*.[45] Xu Lingfu himself noticed a few discrepancies between the landscape in his time and historical descriptions of the area, which he actually attributed to the supernatural qualities of the land. One noticeable case is that of the bridge that crosses the You Brook 猶溪 described in the excerpt presented as part of the *Qimeng ji*: Xu Lingfu comments that in his days this watercourse presented no bridges and that, instead, what travellers could see was a bridge 20 li west of Xie Pavilion 歇亭, crossing a river that flowed by Shan County. What is described in the *Qimeng ji*, states the author, is in fact a "supernatural place" (*shenyi zhi suo* 神異之所).[46]

The *Tiantai Shan ji* also provides some general information on the administrative history of the county, its topography and the origin of its name. There is no doubt that the *Tiantai Shan ji* discusses the Tiantai Mountains of Tiantai County (i.e. Tangxing County). Xu Lingfu explains that these mountains border Mt. Siming 四明山 to the north, Jinyun 縉雲 Mountain to the south, the sea to the east and the Shan River 剡川 to the west. The Tiantai Abbey 天台觀 was located 18 li north of the Tangxing county seat, on the southwest side of Mt. Tongbai, under a cliff from which a waterfall issued. The waterfall flowed more than 100 steps southward, then into the Ling Brook 靈溪 and eventually into the great county river, through the Linhai Prefecture 臨海郡.[47]

According to tradition, Tiantai Abbey was built by Sun Quan 孫權 for Ge Xuan 葛玄. Xu Lingfu records that located nearby were an altar to Wang Zhenjun 王真君 (Perfected Lord Wang, i.e. Wangzi Qiao 王子喬) to the north, the Danxia Grotto 丹霞洞 northeast and Cuibing Cliff 翠屏巖 northwest. 150 steps to the east one would first

44 *Tiantai Shan ji* 1a.

45 On Sun Chuo, see Kroll, "Poetry on the Mysterious", 230-44. On Gu Kaizhi, see Wan, "Literary Imagination of the North and the South", 80.

46 *Tiantai Shan ji* 1b.

47 *Tiantai Shan ji* 4b-5a.

find the former abode of the Prefect of Taizhou Liu Bi 劉泌 (d. 820), called Zixiao shanju 紫霄山居 (Zixiao mountain abode), connected to the north with the Zixiao Peak 紫霄峰, while travelling northeast one would reach the Danxia Grotto 丹霞洞, where Ge Xuan practised alchemy.[48] Liu Bi, too, took advantage of the extraordinary properties of this place. According to the *Tiantai Shan ji*, when he received his prefectural position in 819, instead of fulfilling his role at the prefectural seat he took up residence at the foot of the mountain and concocted medicines, after which all his family transcended (*xian* 仙) in the Danxia Grotto.[49]

One li west of Tiantai Abbey 天台觀, one would find Pubu Monastery 瀑布寺 (Monastery of the Waterfall), built during the Yuanjia 元嘉 era of the Liu Song 劉宋 dynasty (424-453) by the monk Fashun 法順.[50] North of this monastery one would find the cliff of the one hundred zhang 百丈巖, under which flowed the Ling Brook that was diverted into the kitchen of the Pubu Temple and then circled around its cloisters (*langyuan* 廊院). South of the monastery there was Mt. Jiufeng 九峰山 (Mountain of the Nine Peaks), located 15 li northwest of the county: the scenery that could be enjoyed from this mountain was reportedly appreciated by the famous Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361) and Zhi Dun 支遁 (314-366).[51]

Ascending the north road from Tiantai Abbey, through ravines and stone steps, after 12 li one would reach the cave gate of Tongbai 桐柏洞門. Next to it there was a small mountain path, about two li long, that ended at Tongbai Abbey, which stood on a modest hill covered in pine trees. In front of the hill there was a plain a few qing long, surrounded

48 *Tiantai Shan ji* 5a. On Liu Bi, cf. *Tiantai Shan ji* 6a-b; Usui, *Tendaisanki no kenkyū*, 343-4; Jülch, *Der Orden des Sima Chengzhen*, 67 fn. 287.

49 *Tiantai Shan ji* 5a-b. Other sources that discuss Liu Bi's life are the *Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝, the *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 and *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書. The *Xin Tang shu* gives a different account of the story: Liu Bi was recommended as a *fangshi* 方士, a master of techniques, and for this reason he was able to supply medicines of transcendence (*xianyao* 仙藥) to emperor Xianzong. These were blamed for the latter's psychic instability, which pushed the court eunuchs to commit regicide in 820. Liu Bi was eventually executed together with another alchemist, the Buddhist Datong 大通, under the order of Xianzong's successor, Muzong 穆宗 (r. 821-824). Usui, *Tendaisanki no kenkyū*, 343. As Usui Shunji has noted, the positive depiction of Liu Bi in the *Tiantai Shan ji*, written only a few years after emperor Xianzong's death, conflicts with the version narrated in the later sources: this might reveal that the bad reputation of Liu Bi had not yet spread or developed.

50 Thomas Jülch is unable to identify any monk called Fashun in the 5th century, but remarks that the founder of the Huayan school 華嚴宗, who lived much later (between the Sui and the Tang dynasty), is known by this name. This temple is mentioned in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Continuation of the Biographies of Eminent Monks) and in the *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (Pearl Forest in the Garden of Dharma), where it is associated with the monk Huida 慧達 of the Sui dynasty. Jülch, *Der Orden des Sima Chengzhen*, 68 fn. 291.

51 *Tiantai Shan ji* 5b-6a; *Chicheng zhi* 21:10a.

by mountains on all four sides. In front of the abbey there were a few qing of cultivated fields and east of it flowed the Qing Brook 清溪: this stream flowed through the fields and to the three wells to the west, until it became a waterfall and finally entered the great country river. Xu Lingfu begins his description of the extraordinary qualities of this place by naming a series of prominent figures associated with it. He describes it as the resting place of deities and perfected beings (*shenzhen zhi suo xiuqi* 神真之所休憩) and as the location revered by the recluses Chao Fu 巢父 and Xu You 許由;[52] it was also the location where Chu Boyu 褚伯玉 (394-479) cultivated the Way and where Xu Ze 徐則 (510-591) built his retreat, called 'Central Peak of the Hidden Perfect' (*yinzhen zhi zhongfeng* 隱真之中峰).[53] One li south of the abbey there was a stone altar, where according to tradition Ge Xuan received a revelation from the three perfected of the Supreme Pole (*Taiji sanzhen* 太極三真).[54] Southwest of the altar there was a stone, on which was engraved the inscription: "Dispatched the revered Xu to bestow the scripture to the revered transcendent at the altar of offering" 使徐公醮壇授仙公經.[55] In front of the altar there was a pond, called the Pond of the Descended Perfected 降真塘, from which a southbound road departed that after one li reached the *dongmen*.

52 Chao Fu and Xu You appear in Wei Shuqing's 衛叔卿 biography in Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 together with Wangzi Qiao (see below), another transcendent linked to the Tiantai Mountains. Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 273.

53 *Tiantai Shan ji* 6a; Usui, *Tendaishan ki no kenkyū*, 349-55; Jülch, *Der Orden des Sima Chengzhen*, 69 fnn. 302-3. According to the *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑒 (DZ 296), Xu Ze retired on Mt. Jinyun 縉雲山 to practice the Way. There, Xu, the Perfected of the Supreme Pole (Taiji Xu Zhenren 太極徐真人) manifested himself to him, saying: "When you will be eighty years old, you should become the emperor's mater and then you will attain the Way". Thereafter, he went to the Tiantai Mountains to live there. When he was eighty-one years old, he was summoned by the emperor Yang 煬帝 of the Sui dynasty. He eventually went to the stone bridge in Tiantai and left no traces. *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*, 29:6b-7b.

54 This event is described in the Lingbao corpus. The *Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhenyi quanjie falun miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶真一勸戒法輪妙經 (Scripture of the Wheel of the Law to Encourage [Good] and Prohibit [Evil Deeds]; DZ 346) records the revelation of the *Falun jing* 法輪經 to Ge Xuan on the Tiantai Mountains by three perfected, the 'masters of transmission' (*dushi* 度師). In fact, another being was present with the role of 'guarantor' (*bao* 保) of the transmission: the Perfected of the Supreme Pole (*Taiji zhenren* 太極真人), Xu Laile 徐來勒. Schipper, "Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhenyi quanjie falun miaojing", 1:227; Bokenkamp, "The Early Lingbao Scriptures", 95-124.

55 According to *Tiantai Shan ji* 9b, the perfected said that his surname was Xu 徐, his *ming* Laile 來勒 and his *zi* Ze 則. Xu Lingfu adds that this person is "unknown" (*wei xiang heren* 未詳何人). Yet, this is clearly the supernatural being who reportedly appeared to Ge Xuan (see previous note). It appears that the figures of Xu Laile and Xu Ze were somehow conflated in this story, although the *Tiantai Shan ji* itself mentions Xu Ze a few pages before: Usui, regarding this passage, comments that 'Venerable Xu' is another name for Xu Ze, but it seems to me that it refers in fact to Xu Laile, since the altar and the stone are linked with the transmission of teachings to Ge Xuan (see also note 74). Usui, *Tendaisanki no kenkyū*, 372. I interpreted *xiangong* 仙公 as a reference to Ge Xuan, also known as Ge Xiangong.

More than one li southwest of the *dongmen* one reached the 'Altar of Perfected Lord Wang' (*Wang Zhenjun tan* 王真君壇), next to a small hall built on imperial orders at the beginning of the Kaiyuan 開元 era (713-741), where a statue of Wangzi Qiao was enshrined. In front of the hall there was the 'Li Spring' (*Li Quan* 醴泉) and a few steps to the south one could find the newly built 'Shangzhen Pavilion' (*Shangzhen ting* 上真亭). The main altar was located 20 steps northwest of the hall and during Xu Lingfu's time this was regularly used to pray for auspicious weather to the benefit of the prefecture or of the county; an octagonal altar stood 20 steps east of the hall. Descending the mountain in a northwest direction, after 300 steps one came upon three wells. One was already closed by the 9th century and a local folktale blamed this on a Buddhist nun who had washed her hands in the well. The other two wells were so deep that a man who once tried to measure their depth used up all his fishing line without reaching the bottom. Some said that the wells were connected to the sea, or that there was a karstic spring flowing into it – probably an echo of the above-mentioned description found in the *Shanhai jing*. Xu Lingfu himself, though, stated that it had been impossible to check any of these claims. Nonetheless, this was another place of worship, linked with the seasonal prayers for auspicious weather and with the ritual of tossing the dragons (*toulong* 投龍), which according to the author was most notably celebrated here in the years 683, 737 and 825. Ascending westward for 2 li to the first peak, one would find the Foku Temple 佛窟院, renamed Daoyuan Abbey 道元觀. In front there is the Cuiping Cliff 翠屏巖, that is connected with Mt. Tongbai. Seven li northwest of Tongbai Abbey, instead, the visitor arrived at the 'jade platforms' (*qiongtai* 瓊臺), two peaks that can still be visited today. Five li northeast of Tongbai Abbey stood the Hualin Mountain Dwelling 華林山居, restored at the beginning of the Changqing 長慶 era (821-824) by the Daoist Chen Guayan 陳寡言. Near Tongbai Abbey lay a series of other mountain dwellings, among which there were those called Fangying 方瀛 and Yuxiao 玉霄.[56]

The Tiantai Mountains featured a large number of other significant places, but the two most important ones were probably Mt. Chicheng and the Guoqing Monastery 國清寺. The former was reportedly located 15 li east of Tiantai Abbey. It is described as 300 zhang high, with a perimeter of seven li, and was considered the southern gateway to the Tiantai Mountains. Xu Lingfu recognised the religious importance of this place, noting that state rituals had been held there since antiquity. The Guoqing Monastery was located one li north of the county. It was built in 598 by Emperor Wen 文 of the Sui 隨

56 *Tiantai Shan ji* 9b-12b. This version of the *Tiantai Shan ji* reports the name Chen Zongyan 陳宗言, but as noted by Usui, the text refers in fact to Chen Guayan, one of Tian Xuying's disciples together with Xu Lingfu.

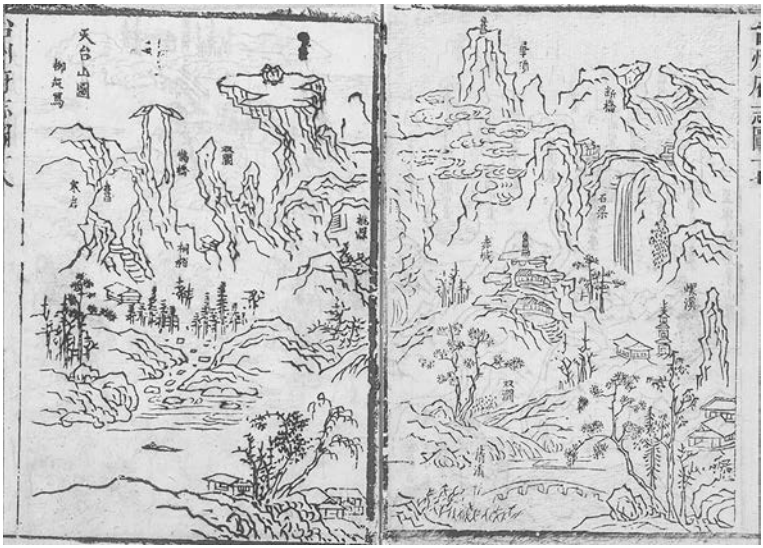

Figure 4 Landscape of the Tiantai Mountains from *Taizhou Fu zhi* 17b-18a. Harvard College Library Harvard-Yenching Library. https://nrs.lib.harvard.edu/urn-3:fhcl:14302704?n=48

dynasty (r. 581-604) for the Buddhist master Zhiyi 智顗. The fame of this temple was such that Xu Lingfu calls it the first among all Buddhist temples in the empire.[57]

One more noteworthy place that received Xu's attention is the area surrounding Huading Peak 華頂峰, which was considered the highest point of the Tiantai Mountains. This place was associated with Sima Chengzhen's self-cultivation, but also with tales of encounters with transcendent beings. The most famous is the tale of how Liu Chen 劉晨 and Ruan Zhao 阮肇 met supernatural maidens while collecting herbs on the nearby Tianmu Peak 天姥峰 **[fig. 4]**.

2.4 Religious Features of Tiantai

The previous presentation of early sources has offered a glimpse of the complex and multi-layered cultural and religious significance of the Tiantai area up until the end of the Tang dynasty. In what follows I will focus on the most significant elements that contributed to augmenting the importance of Tiantai up until the Song dynasty. I have chosen this dynasty as a watershed because it was during

57 *Tiantai Shan ji* 13a-b.

its reign that the symbology and cults associated with Mt. Tongbai began to change. In particular, I will discuss the position of grotto-heavens and blessed lands in Chinese cosmology, the links between some transcendents and famous persons – Liu Chen, Ruan Zhao, Wangzi Qiao and Lord Mao 茅君 – with Chinese culture and the ritual of tossing the dragons.

Mountains in general, but especially those traditionally defined as sacred, were appreciated as solitary places of refuge, remote from civilisation, that could serve as safe havens in times of persecution and turmoil. They also represented a nexus between the ordinary world and qualitatively superior planes of existence, where the trained (or predestined) traveller could find numinous paths for self-cultivation and encounter supernatural beings. Taking into consideration these characteristics, Franciscus Verellen explains that in Daoist culture mountains were envisioned as a 'place of initiation', virtually inaccessible to – or even deadly for – ordinary human beings.[58] Caves were especially significant places in the sacred landscape of China. A cave is an opening to the inside of a mountain and potentially to a realm that obeys different laws from those of ordinary reality: human beings can be turned to stone, can enter from one side of the empire and come out into another on the same day, spend a few days in the cave when outside many decades have passed, or even be trapped within the cave itself.[59]

The Song dynasty *Chicheng zhi* quotes the famous calligrapher and poet Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361):

> Between Tiantai and Linhai there are many golden platforms, immortals' abodes, transcendents, numinous mushrooms and plants.[60]
>
> [王羲之書云]自天台至臨海, 多有金臺、玉室、仙人、芝、草。

This source describes a number of caves, peaks and other places associated with the supernatural. Not all practitioners agreed on the reality and significance of mountain paradises. For example, Ge Hong, who was a committed proponent of alchemical methods for achieving transcendence, was also very critical of those who claimed to have visited supernatural areas in the mountains and to have met there transcendents and other supernatural beings.[61]

58 Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 268-9.

59 Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 269. Cf. especially the quotation of the *Maojun zhuan* 678:4b; *Ziyang zhenren neizhuan* 紫陽真人內傳 (The Esoteric Life of the Perfected of the Purple Yang; DZ 303) dated to the Six Dynasties (399?) and the *Zhengao* itself.

60 *Chicheng zhi* 21:14b.

61 Wang, *Baopuzi neipian xiaoshi*, 345-51. Cf. Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font", 71.

Although it is impossible to determine the exact origin of the idea of grotto-heavens, it certainly underwent a profound development within the context of the Shangqing revelations, between the 4th and the 5th century, when we find numerous references to the concept of 36 grotto-heavens.[62] According to the most mature systematisation, they may be arranged into two groups of ten and 36 grotto-heavens: the first group is that of 'major grotto-heavens' (*da dongtian* 大洞天), the second one that of 'minor grotto-heavens' (*xiao dongtian* 小洞天). Grotto-heavens are often discussed in combination with the 72 'blessed lands' (*fudi*, also 'auspicious' or 'blissful' land, 'paradise').[63] This complete and mature systematisation was proposed for the first time by Sima Chengzhen in his *Tiandi gongfu tu* 天地宮府圖 (Plan of Celestial and Terrestrial Palaces and Residences; DZ 1032, early 8th century?). It seems that the formation of the system of 36 grotto-heavens preceded that of the ten greater grotto-heavens, which first appears in our sources in the 4th and 5th century, whereas the two series are probably mentioned together for the first time in the *Qiyu xiuzhen zhengpin tu* 七域修真證品圖 (Diagram Demonstrating the Hierarchy of Degrees of the Practice of the True [Dao] and of the Seven Regions [of Immortals]; DZ 433), dated later than the 5th century.[64]

Zhejiang is one of the regions with the highest density of these so-called grotto-heavens. The fact that Sima Chengzhen was very familiar with the mountains of Zhejiang Province could account, at least partially, for this. In his *Tiandi gongfu tu* the greater grotto-heavens are defined as *shangtian qian qunxian tongzhi zhi chu* 上天遣群仙統治之所 (places administered by the transcendents dispatched by the superior heaven) and *chu tiandi mingshan zhi jian* 處天地名山之間 (located within the famous mountains of the universe) and the 36 lesser grotto-heavens receive similar definitions.[65] The blessed lands, instead, are said to be administered by the perfected and most of them are places where the Way can be obtained.[66]

Today, Zhejiang contains the following 12 sacred places among those listed in the *Tiandi gongfu tu*:

62 Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 275-6.

63 The meaning of *dongtian* and *fudi* and the relative theories were initially heterogeneous and unsystematic. In general, *dongtian* seems to refer to an underground paradise or 'utopia', while *fudi* indicates a location protected from external harm and where extraordinary beings and plants can be found. Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 271; Miura, "*Dongtian* and *fudi*".

64 Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 278.

65 *Tiandi gongfu tu* 2a, 3b.

66 *Tiandi gongfu tu* 9a.

- the *Dayou Kongming* 大有空明 grotto-heaven on Mt. Weiyu 委羽山, in Huangyan County 黄岩縣, Taizhou 台州 (second greater grotto-heaven);
- the *Shangqing Yuping* 上清玉平 grotto-heaven on Mt. Chicheng, in Tiantai County (sixth greater grotto-heaven);
- the *Chengde Yinxuan* 成德隱玄 grotto-heaven on Mt. Guacang 括蒼山 of Xianju County 仙居縣 (10th greater grotto-heaven);
- *Danshan Chishui Tian* 丹山赤水天 on Mt. Siming 四明山, in Xinchang County 新昌縣 (ninth lesser grotto-heaven);
- *Jixuan Taiyuan Tian* 極玄太元天 on Mt. Guiiji 會稽山, in Shaoxing County 紹興縣 (tenth lesser grotto-heaven);
- *Rongcheng dayu Tian* 容城大玉天 on Mt. Huagai 華蓋山, in Yongjia County 永嘉縣 (18th lesser grotto-heaven);
- *Changyao Baoguang Tian* 長耀寶光天 on Mt. Gaizhu 蓋竹山, in Linhai County 臨海縣 (19th lesser grotto-heaven);
- *Jinting Chongmiao Tian* 金庭崇妙天 on Mt. Jinting 金庭山, in Shan County, Yuezhou 越州 (27th lesser grotto-heaven);[67]
- *Xiandu Qixian Tian* 仙都祈仙天 on Mount Xiandu 仙都山, in Jinyun County 縉雲縣, Chuzhou 處州 (29th lesser grotto-heaven);
- *Qingtian Dahe Tian* 青田大鶴天 on Mount Qingtian 青田山, in Qingtian County 青田縣, Chuzhou (30th lesser grotto-heaven);
- *Tiangai Dixuan Tian* 天蓋滌玄天 on Mount Tianmu 天目山, in Yuhang County 餘杭縣, Hangzhou 杭州 (33rd lesser grotto-heaven);
- *Jinhua Dongyuan Tian* 金華洞元天 on Mt. Jinhua 金華山, in Jinhua County 金華縣, Wuzhou 婺州 (35th lesser grotto-heaven).[68]

The *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* 洞天福地嶽瀆名山記 (Record of the Grotto-Heavens, Auspicious Sites, Holy Mountains and Marshes, as well as of the Famous Mountains; DZ 599) – authored by the court Daoist Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933), "the most comprehensive exponent of this [D]aoist world-view"[69] – represents a later stage in the development of the concept of grotto-heavens. Compared to Sima Chengzhen's list, the one in the *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* presents a few differences in the names of the grotto-heavens, their ranking and the gods linked to each one. Du Guangting, though, maintained the classification of the grotto-heavens into two sets of ten and 36 and of the 72 blessed lands.

67 This agrees with the *Zhengao*, quoted in *Chicheng zhi* 40:8a-9b, that places the grotto in Shan County 剡縣. Further study of the early location of these sacred places is required to clarify whether they changed over time.

68 The list of grotto-heavens and blissful lands can be found in *Yunji qiqian* 27:1a-9a. *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* 3b-11a records a slightly different list by Du Guangting.

69 Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 272.

We can see that grotto-heavens are a characteristic feature of Daoist sacred geography. Their interior is described as marked by features similar to those of the outer world, even to the point of having their own sun and moon. The *Zhengao*, describing the *Jintan huayang* 金壇華陽 grotto-heaven of Jurong 句容 (eighth greater grotto-heaven, according to Sima Chengzhen), states:

> Inside it there are [...] the yin rays shining at night and the illumination of the root of the solar essence, also [called] sun and moon. The yin rays govern the night, the yang essence governs the day; these have a round shape and fly in the middle of the dark space.[70]
>
> 其內有……陰暉夜光, 日精之根照此空內明, 並日月矣。 陰暉主夜, 日精主晝, 形如日月之圓, 飛在玄空之中。

Du Guangting's *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* declares:

> The *Guishan yujing* (Jade Scripture of Tortoise Mountain) states: "Among the great heavens are 36 grotto-heavens (*dongtian*). They separately contain suns, moons and stars, as well as the places of the divine immortals who control blessings and chastisements and keep the registers of life and death".[71]
>
> 『龜山玉經』云: 「大夫之內有洞天三十六, 別有日月星辰, 靈仙宮闕主御罪福典錄死生」。

The fact that the sun and moon were considered features of all grotto-heavens is clearly explained in Tao Hongjing's commentary on these lines. A similar concept is found in the *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 太上靈寶五符序 (The Five Fu, Powerful Treasure of the Most High; DZ 388), a scripture that belongs to the Lingbao corpus. The current text is probably dated to the Eastern Jin dynasty 西晉 (317-420), although scholars argue that it possibly originated within the religious milieus of the 3rd century and that it may be related to the weft texts (*weishu* 緯書) of the Han dynasty. The version included in the *Zhengtong daozang* mentions Ge Hong and its content extends beyond the 'five talismans' (*wufu* 五符) named in the title, constituting an anthology of Taiqing 太清 Daoism.[72] In it, a recluse called Elder Longwei (Longwei zhangren 龍微丈人, Elder of Dragon Prowess) was ordered to explore the 'grotto court' (*dongting* 洞庭) under Mt. Bao 包山 and reached

70 *Zhengao* 6a-b.

71 *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* "xu":1a. Transl. by Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 273.

72 Lagerwey, "Taishang lingbao wufu xu", 232-3.

an underground world with natural light, gold buildings and jade pillars, dragons, phoenixes and all sorts of things different from their counterparts in the mortal world. The passage was studded with innumerable other caves and passageways: in brief, it was an otherworld accessible via specific entrances located in the mortal world, but qualitatively superior to the latter.[73]

It should be noted that grotto-heavens are not independent sites, but are interconnected via an array of underground tunnels.[74] As Stephen Bokenkamp has remarked, the Shangqing revelations too deal with this theme by advancing a particular geography of the network of tunnels centred on Mt. Xi and advancing a characteristic underground geography: "The Grotto-Heaven of [Juqu] 句曲 (Mao Mountains) communicates with the Grove Chamber ([B]ao Shan) in the east, with [Daizong] 岱宗 ([Taishan]) in the north, [Emei] 峨嵋 in the west and [Luofu] 羅浮 in the south. All these are major passageways. Between them are small paths and criss-crossing roads in the thousands and hundreds, but they do not converge in one spot".[75] Anyway, these underground passageways constituted a world within a world, at least as extensive and difficult to travel as the surface world.

The most interesting reflection on the process of systematisation of these sacred places regards their political and cultural significance. We know that Tao Hongjing, Sima Chengzhen and Du Guangting all had close connections with the court, so their efforts to outline an empire-wide sacred geography can be interpreted as attempts to produce a unified spiritual landscape to support and go along with the project of giving the empire political unity.[76] This interpretation is helpful for the present book, because it advances a perspective that highlights the practical consequences of religious discourse: it does not treat this topic as merely fantastic, but allows us to appreciate the profound political, cultural and social implications of religious knowledge.

Mountains were also the stage for the aforementioned ritual of tossing the dragons. According to our knowledge, the ritual of 'tossing' or 'casting the dragons and tablets' (*tou longjian* 投龍簡) was a 5th century evolution of the ritual of sending written documents to the Three Offices (*san guan* 三官), practised by the early Celestial Masters 天師.[77] The *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing*

73 *Taishang Lingbao wufu xu* 1:8b-11b; Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font", 65-9.

74 Miura, "*Dongtian* and *fudi*", 372.

75 *Zhengao* 11:7a. Transl. by Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font", 74-5 fn. 51.

76 Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 278.

77 Huang, *Picturing the True Form*, 234.

太上洞玄靈寶赤書玉訣妙經 (Lingbao Scripture of the Jade Instructions on the Red Writing; DZ 352; *Chishu yujue miaojing*), dated to around the year 400, belongs to the early Lingbao canon and it is the oldest text containing the liturgical procedure for tossing the dragons. The *Yuanshi lingbao gao xuechu zui jian shangfa* 元始靈寶告削除罪簡上法 (Superior Methods of Yuanshi Lingbao for Ordering to Erase Sin) instructs the ritualist to prepare three ginkgo tablets with red writing and wrapped in green threads and to throw them into rivers, to bury them in mountains and at one's residence together with nine gold coins and a gold dragon in order to ask the sovereigns of water, the mountains and the earth to erase one's sins from the divine records.[78] We again find similar rituals in Lu Xiuijng's *Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhongjian wen* 太上洞玄靈寶眾簡文 (The Tablets of the Precious Jewel; DZ 410), where oblations of dragons and tablets serve the purpose of announcing an adepts' new status as an initiate.[79] Another text useful to understand the continuing importance of this ritual is the *Jinlu zhai qitan yi* 金籙齋啟壇儀 (Rites of Commencement of the Retreat of the Golden Register; DZ 483) by Du Guangting, where the casting of dragons and tablets constitutes the last part of the ritual.[80] Here, as in the *Chishu yujue miaojing*, the tablets are addressed to the three offices of water, mountains and earth. Finally, during the Tang dynasty the casting of dragons was performed relatively frequently by emperors as an auspicious ritual in favour of the ruler and of the dynasty.[81]

The Tiantai area itself, as stated above, was chosen as the stage for the tossing of dragons and tablets. According to Xu Lingfu's *Tiantai Shan ji*, the three wells hosted the casting of dragons during imperial offering rituals three times during the Tang dynasty.[82] It is not clearly explained why this place was considered especially suitable for rituals of this kind, nor it is clarified whether the rituals involved all three offices or whether it was done only by tossing the dragon effigy in the water of the three wells.[83] This practice was clearly oriented toward asking for blessings for the empire (*guojia*

78 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* 5a-7a. Cf. Benn, "Tou longjian", 998-9.

79 Schipper, "Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhongjian wen", 1:255. See also the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao shoudu yi* 太上洞玄靈寶授度儀 (DZ 528), also by Lu Xiujing.

80 *Jinlu zhai qitan* 4a, 6a. See also *Jinlu zhai tou jian yi* 金籙齋投簡儀, a 12th c. revision of the ritual by as court Daoist. Cf. Schipper, "Jinlu zhai qitan yi", 1:580.

81 Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 279; Barrett, *Taoism Under the T'ang*, 32-3.

82 *Tiantai Shan ji* 10b.

83 In the context of a similar ritual described in the *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要, only one 'jade letter' was tossed from a cliff, while the others were hung and buried. Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*, 166-7.

tou long bi jiaoji qifu 國家投龍壁醮祭祈福), but the three wells were indeed regarded as a numinous place in a more general way. This may be justified by the fact that profound water wells were seen as related to dragon spirits, which controlled the weather, or by the belief that these wells were connected to the sea and hence in some way associated with underground paradises.

Finally, the Tiantai area was closely connected to the history of the systematisation of the Shangqing revelation. We know that the Xus 許 were a prominent family of Jurong 句容, counting Xu Mi and his son Xu Hui 許翩 (341-ca. 370), the final addressees of the Shangqing revelations that Yang Xi 楊熙 (330-386?) received between the years 364 and 370, among its members. The revelations were bestowed by a number of transcendental beings, including the Mao Brothers, the female immortal and former libationer of the Heavenly Masters Wei Huacun and Wangzi Qiao. After the death of the original recipients, in 404, Xu Mi's grandson Xu Huangmin 許黃民 (361-429) retired to the Shan Mountains 剡山 (presently located northwest of Tiantai County), bringing most of the manuscripts of the revelations with him. Moreover, before 465 a group of owners of partial collections of the Shangqing manuscripts, "the most notable recluses of their time" as Strickmann described them, gathered in that region, undertaking the collation and critical study of the surviving corpus.[84] Therefore, the region occupied by the Tiantai Mountains and its surrounding areas were actually involved in the spread and development of the Shangqing revelations centuries before the construction of Tongbai Palace. Only later, in 492, Tao Hongjing retired to the Mao Mountains to edit a collection of what he considered to be the remaining original documents received by the Xus and to practice the Shangqing teachings. It was at this time that these mountains strengthened their relation to the Shangqing revelations, begun in the 4th century.[85] By the beginning of the 6th century, the Shangqing tradition had established firm control over the Mao Mountains, but there remained a historical bond with the Tiantai area, which was later chosen to host Sima Chengzhen's temple.

84 Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations", 1-36. The Xu family had generations-old connections to the area: Xu Mi's father had acted as district magistrate of Shan County 剡縣令 and one of Xu Mi's sons lived as a hermit there. Among the scholars who gathered in the Shan Mountains, we find Gu Huan 顧歡 and Du Jingchan 杜京產, who reportedly set up a residence or school (*she* 舍) there. An early source mentioning Xu Mi's father is the "Stele of the Altar at the Ancient Belvedere of the Shangqing Perfected, Administrator Xu" 許長史舊館壇碑 (erected in 518), in *Huayang Tao yinju ji* (Literary Works of Tao [Hongjing], the Hermit from Huayang; DZ 1050) 3:1a-5a. On this stele, see also Li, "'Xu changshi jiuguan tanbei' lüekao".

85 Bumbacher, "On Pre-Tang Daoist Monastic Establishments", 145-52; Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations", 38-40.

2.4.1 Wangzi Qiao

In traditional culture, the supernatural features of Tiantai explain the presence of deities and transcendent beings operating there: one of the most famous supernatural beings associated with this area is Wangzi Qiao, whose cult exerted a long-lasting influence on the development of local Daoism. The *Chicheng shishi* 赤城事實 (Facts of [Mt.] Chicheng) reports one version of how Wangzi Qiao supposedly arrived at the Tiantai Mountains:

> The Eminent Jin [Tong]bai hurried inside this area while hunting and smelled the fragrance of many famous flowers and strange herbs, whose scent was uncommon.[86]
>
> 晉柏碩因馳獵深入, 見其中有名花異草, 香氣不凡。

Wangzi Qiao was already recognised as a powerful immortal during the Later Han 後漢 dynasty (25-220). The "Wangzi Qiao bei" 王子喬碑 (Stele of Wangzi Qiao) of the year 165 commemorates Wangzi Qiao's appearance at the Wang family shrine in Meng 蒙 (Henan) during a *la* 臘 festival in 137.[87] In the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳, Wangzi Qiao is described as prince Jin 晉 of the Zhou kingdom, who "liked playing the reed pipe" (*hao chui sheng* 好吹笙) and "imitating the call of the phoenix" (*zuo fenghuang ming* 作鳳凰鳴). He was held to have been a disciple of Fu Qiu 浮丘 on Mt. Song 嵩山 and to have finally ascended on a white crane after residing there more than 30 years.[88]

The cult of Wangzi Qiao was already well-established in the 2nd century, although it seems that by that time his biographical details, including his place of origin and main activities, were already detached from historical facts.[89] Wangzi Qiao is also remembered as one of the transcendents who appeared to Yang Xi in the context of the revelations of the Mao Mountains: even more important for us, the *Zhengao* describes him as the administrator of the Jinting Grotto 金庭洞 of Mount Tongbai; therefore, starting from the Shanqing revelations, Wangzi Qiao was associated with these mountains.[90] During the Tang dynasty, Wangzi Qiao's links with the Tiantai Mountains strengthened. The stele written by Cui Shang is now lost

86 *Chicheng zhi* 21:14b.

87 Bumbacher, "Early Buddhism in China", 220.

88 *Liexian zhuan* 1.14a. Marianne Bujard argues that the *Liexian zhuan* dates from the 1st century AD. Bujard, "Le culte de Wangzi Qiao", 119. Cf. Campany, *Strange Writing*, 193.

89 Campany, *Strange Writing*, 194-5.

90 Cf. *Zhengao* 1:15b, 2:3a.

but its text has been recorded in local gazetteers.[91] It states that the Tongbai Abbey was first established by Wangzi Qiao owing to the peculiar characteristics of the area, which was considered a *fuxiang* 福鄉 (blessed land) and a "*lingjing* [numinous realm] that is propitious for cultivating perfection" 養真之靈境.[92] According to Cui Shang, this was the main reason for Tiantai's eminent position in Daoism.

Wangzi Qiao received the attention of Tang and Song rulers. During the Zhou 周 dynasty, even Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690-705) showed an interest in him. Timothy Barrett argues that this was related to her fascination with techniques for attaining immortality and to Wangzi's connection with Mt. Song 嵩山, where she performed the crucial, but potentially harmful, *feng* 封 sacrifice in the years 688, 700 and 701.[93] But, as we have seen, Wangzi Qiao was already featured in the Shangqing revelations as a transcendental being and he is repeatedly mentioned in the *Zhengao* under his sobriquet Perfected Tongbai (Tongbai Zhenren 桐柏真人). When Sima Chengzhen took residence at the Tongbai Palace, it was surely his position as Shangqing representative that led him to take up this tradition and celebrate the figure of Wangzi Qiao and, at the same time, the importance of Mt. Tongbai within Daoism. Thomas Jülch interprets this fact as Sima Chengzhen's attempt to provide spiritual justification for the temporary transfer of the Shangqing centre of power from the original Mao Mountains to Mt. Tongbai, an event that in fact was caused by political reasons.[94] The Song emperors continued to sponsor the cult of Wangzi Qiao by granting him two titles, Yuanying Zhenjun 元應真君 (True Lord of the Mysterious Response) in 1113 and Shanli Guangji Zhenren 善利廣濟真人 (Perfected of the Charitable Merit and Vast Relief) during the Shaoxing reign (1131-1162).[95]

We can see that the figure of Wangzi Qiao developed over the centuries and acquired new characteristics. Originally he was the elder son of King Ling of the Zhou dynasty who achieved transcendence after 30 years of study under his master Fu Qiu between the cities of Luoyang 洛陽 and Kaifeng 開封, but became a central figure in the Shangqing tradition and the spiritual administrator of Mt. Tongbai. His importance grew even more during the Tang dynasty through the founding of Tongbai Abbey in Tiantai and Sima Chengzhen's celebration of Wangzi's achievements within Shangqing theology.

91 The earliest record is the one contained in the *Chicheng zhi*.

92 *Chicheng zhi* 30:5b.

93 Barrett, *Taoism Under the T'ang*, 43-4. On the *feng* and *shan* rituals, cf. Bujard, "State and Local Cults in Han Religion".

94 Jülch, *Der Orden des Sima Chengzhen*, 2. I will discuss Sima Chengzhen's activities more in detail in the next chapter.

95 Raz, "Wangzi Qiao", 2:1029.

2.4.2 Ge Xuan

According to tradition, another very famous Daoist master who lived on Mt. Tongbai after Wangzi Qiao was Ge Xuan 葛玄 (tr. 164-244), who was Ge Hong's paternal great-uncle: this fact explains his prominent role in Daoism and why the earliest accounts about him were authored by Ge Hong himself. According to the latter's *Baopuzi* and *Shenxian zhuan*, Ge Xuan was a proficient healer and exorcist who performed all sorts of miracles. He was also a scholar, well versed in the Five Classics.[96] A later tradition, tied to the Lingbao revelations of the 5th century and already well developed by the time of the Tang dynasty, states that Ge Xuan meditated on the Tiantai Mountains at the age of 18, when three Perfected bestowed on him all the Lingbao scriptures, the Golden and the Yellow Registers, and the methods for performing the *zhai* rituals.[97] This story is at the origin of the various places associated with Ge Xuan on Mt. Tongbai discussed above (see 1.3).

A few decades after Ge Hong, Ge Xuan became a central figure as the first supposed recipient of the Lingbao revelations, spread by Ge Hong's great-nephew Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫 (*fl.* 402). Within the framework of this new tradition, Ge Xuan was fully deified and received the title Taiji Zuo Xiangong 太極左仙公 (Duke of the Left of the Great Ultimate). The *Falun zuifu* 法輪罪福 (The Wheel of the Law [Expounding] Sins and Blessings; DZ 346, Six Dynasties), a scripture itself belonging to the Lingbao corpus, narrates the appearance of three masters of transmission (*dushi* 度師) to Ge Xuan during his practice on the Tiantai Mountains. Each of the three masters, who were in fact three deities, transmitted one part of the revelation to him. As a proof of the complex religious environment of the Six Dynasties, Stephen Bokenkamp argues that these deities reflect Buddhist influences. The same scripture also presents Xu Laile 徐來勒 as the "guarantor" (*bao* 保) for Ge Xuan's promotion to "great ritual master of the Three Caverns" (*Sandong dafashi* 三洞大法師).[98]

In this way, Ge Xuan became one of the patriarchs of Daoism and he continued to be celebrated in the following centuries as such. For example, the *Zhengtong daozang* contains a biography of Ge Xuan titled *Taiji Ge xiangong zhuan* 太極葛仙公傳 (Biography of Ge, Duke Immortal of the Taiji [Palace]; DZ 450) and attributed to Tan Sixian 譚嗣先, with a preface by the editor Zhu Chuo 朱綽 dated to the year

96 Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 152-9.

97 *Xianyuan bianzhu* 2:13a; Campany, *To Live as Long as Heaven and Earth*, 406.

98 Bokenkamp, "The Early Lingbao Scriptures", 102-3; Schipper, "Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhenyi quanjie falun miaojing", 1:227. Cf. *Taiji Ge xiangong zhuan* 4b, where Tongbai Abbey is described as the place where Ge Xuan received the *Dadong jing* 大洞經 from Xu Laile 徐來勒.

1377. It records two edicts from 1104 and 1246 bestowing on Ge Xuan the titles of Chongying Zhenren 沖應真人 (Perfected of Humble Response) and Chongying Fuyou Zhenjun 沖應浮佑真君 (Perfected of Humble Response and of Manifested Protection).[99] The centrality accorded to Ge Xuan continued to represent a fundamental feature of modern Daoism and we still find him mentioned as one of the patriarchs of Daoism in sources from the early 19th century.[100]

While the historicity of Wangzi Qiao and Ge Xuan – at least as presented by the early sources – is contested and the idea that they practised self-cultivation on Mt. Tongbai seems to be a later development of their hagiographical accounts, in late imperial times they were regarded as important persons who reinforced the significance of the Tiantai area, and their supposed presence there augmented the prestige and sacredness of those mountains. As I will discuss in the fourth chapter, the relation of Mt. Tongbai with Ge Xuan played a part in the restoration of Tongbai Palace at the beginning of the 18th century.

2.5 Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao

The presence, alleged or otherwise, of deities, holy persons and elite masters in the Tiantai Mountains contributed to the gradual accumulation of layers of sacred significance in Tiantai over the centuries and to the consequent elevation of its religious significance and its appeal for the religious elite and the general population. One famous story set in the Han dynasty and mentioned by Xu Lingfu is based on the shared recognition of the extraordinary quality of this region: it is the story of Liu Chen 劉晨 and Ruan Zhao 阮肇. In some way, this can be read as a consequence of the high density of grotto-heavens and blessed lands in Zhejiang Province discussed above, but also as a development of the numerous stories about supernatural beings and self-realised masters who dwelled in the Tiantai Mountains.

The local gazetteers mention the Liu-Ruan Grotto 劉阮洞, located 20 li northwest of the Tiantai county seat. Its name originates from that of the two men Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao who, according to an ancient story, met female deities in the Tiantai Mountains. This story is already found in the *Youming lu* 幽明錄 (Records of the Hidden and Visible Worlds) attributed to Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403-444). In the year 62, Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao of Shan County went to the Tiantai Mountains,

99 Bokenkamp, "Ge Xuan", 445; Schmidt, "Taiji Ge xiangong zhuan", 905.

100 Cf. *Jingai xindeng* "Daopu yuanliu tu":1b, in *Jingai xindeng*, where he is mentioned under his divine title 'Taiji xiangong'.

but could not find their way back. After 13 days they run out of food and faced the threat of starvation. They saw a peach tree in the distance, up the mountain, and they wanted to eat its fruits. To reach it they had to climb up a dangerous path on which no living human being had ever set foot. They ate several peaches, then descended the mountain. They met two women, who knew their names, although Liu and Ruan did not remember having ever met them. The women invited them home and treated them to a feast of succulent food. After the meal, they drank to their heart's content and then a group of women arrived, each holding some peaches and congratulating the grooms (*he ruxu lai* 賀汝婿來). Finally, they led the two men to their room. After ten days, Liu and Ruan expressed the desire to return home, but the women managed to convince them to remain for half a year. Once they were finally able to return to civilisation, they met their seventh-generation descendants and found out that they had gone missing for hundreds of years. Then, in the year 383 the two disappeared again and no one ever knew where they went.[101]

This story contains a number of references to supernatural tropes of ancient China, most notably to the idea of transcendental beings (in

101 *Youming lu* 1-3; *Chicheng zhi* 21:16b; *Taiping guangji* 61:12a-b.

Figure 5 Detail of Zhao Cangyun's painting *Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao Entering* the *Tiantai Mountains* 劉晨阮肇入天台山圖. "Recent Acquisitions, A Selection: 2005-2006" in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, v. 64. https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/39545

this case female transcendents, *nüxian* 女仙) inhabiting inaccessible places, and to mountain paradises filled with extraordinary elements, paradigmatic lands of plenty. This story contains sexual undertones that scholars have attributed to a new trend which arose through the influence of the Shangqing revelations, whose texts often dwell on the 'spirit marriage' between a mortal practitioner and goddesses.[102]

The story of Liu and Ruan continued to influence literary production and the way in which the Tiantai area was conceptualized by literati and common people alike. Just to give two examples, this story inspired Wang Ziyi's 王子一 (late Yuan-early Ming) *zaju* 雜劇 "Liu Chen, Ruan Zhao wuru Taoyuan" 劉晨阮肇誤入桃源 and it is portrayed in a famous painting from the Yuan dynasty by Zhao Cangyun 趙蒼雲, acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York in 2005 **[fig. 5]**.[103]

The aforementioned *Shanhai jing* testifies to a very ancient substratum of Chinese sacred geography, theology and teratology. Visitors' reports about trips to extraordinary lands were clearly well-known during the 4th century, as it is suggested by chapter 20 of Ge Hong's *Baopuzi neipian*, the last of the 'inner chapters',

102 Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font", 75 fn. 52.

103 Maxwell, "Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao Entering the Tiantai Mountains", 13.

those that constitute the kernel of Ge Hong's esoteric teachings. It is titled 'Dispel Confusion' (*quhuo* 祛惑), with reference to the idea of differentiating true masters from fake ones. Ge Hong distinguishes between two possible reasons for not achieving thorough understanding (*juewu* 覺悟): this is either blamed on the master, who is mediocre (*yongshi* 庸師) or on the disciple, who is not diligent in his pursuit (*qinqiu* 勤求) – hence the need to separate 'shallow' people from 'profound' ones. Those who know the essential teachings do not desire material things (*wu yu yu wu ye* 無欲於物也), do not search for worldly honours (*bu xun shiyu ye* 不狥世譽也) and consequently do not show off following the current fashion (*zi biaoxian yu liusu* 自摽顯於流俗). Instead, shallow practitioners brag about themselves, trying to cover up their nonsense with an austere façade just to confuse their pupils. Among those who 'talk big', Ge Hong includes people who "say that they have already climbed the famous mountains and seen the transcendents" 乃云, 已登名山, 見仙人.[104] In conclusion, the author disapproved of these practices, associating them with shallow practitioners, but they actually seem to have been common in that era as well as in later centuries.[105]

In the first part of the aforementioned *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* we find a sort of 'introduction' that narrates the history of the transmission of the five talismans. According to Stephen Bokenkamp, this first section constitutes part of the original core of a scripture that predates both Ge Hong and the Shangqing revelations collected in the *Zhengao*.[106] I am interested here in the incipit of the *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* because it contains the tale of the journey of the Elder Longwei (also known as the recluse of Mt. Bao, *Baoshan yinju* 包山隱居) into the grotto court under Mt. Bao, where he obtained a celestial script that turns out to be the 'Lingbao talismans' (*Lingbao fu* 靈寶符).[107] This story is helpful to trace the roots of the concept of mountain paradises, such as those discussed in Liu Chen and Ruan Zhao's tale. After a long journey of about 7,000 li, the Elder Longwei arrived at a marvellous place that he describes in the following way:

> At the mouth of the converging paths there were golden city walls and jade chambers, 500 li in circumference. Where the passageways joined, the sun and moon shone clearly, illuminating mottled patterns with shifting beams. In the center were canopies, bed-platforms, windows and secret rooms – all inlaid with purple gems and decorated with gold. Cloudy buildings scraped the heav-

104 Wang, *Baopuzi neipian xiaoshi*, 346.

105 Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font", 71-2.

106 *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 1:7a; Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font", 65 fn. 1.

107 *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 1:1a-11b; Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font", 65-9.

> ens so that I could not distinguish their shape. [...] When the recluse had travelled for a distance of about 1,000 li from the place he started out, it was no longer dark. Natural light shone like the sun. The great passageway was high and dry and dust was raised [as he walked]. To the left and right were subterranean and surface aqueducts. Every thirty li there was a stone well with wonderfully sweet-tasting waters. Drinking from them, he was naturally sated and did not thirst. Sometimes the prints of men and horses were evident, leading into side passages.[108]
>
> 其叢徑之口, 有金城玉屋, 周迴五百里, 於眾道中央, 明月朗煥, 華照逸光, 其中帷帳牀机, 窻牖密房, 錯以紫玉, 飾以黃金, 雲廈凌天, 莫識其狀。…… 隱居行當出一千里, 不復冥晻, 自然光照如白日, 大道高燥揚塵。 左右有陰陽溝。 三十里輒有一石井, 水味甘美, 飲之自飽不飢。 或見人馬之跡, 旁入他道。

This extraordinary place shares certain features with the grotto-heavens discussed above, most notably the presence of a sun and a moon, of buildings, of gems and strange flora. Although the Elder reportedly saw traces of human-like activity, he did not have the chance to interact with any inhabitant of the subterranean realm and only witnessed phoenixes, dragons and *qilin* 麒麟. This text confirms that the Daoist sacred geography that was developed during the Tang dynasty and was systematised by Sima Chengzhen and Du Guangting had a long history, closely tied to an array of previous traditions.

The incipit of the *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* falls within a tradition that describes the world as dotted by portentous localities characterised by elements that transcend everyday reality. This literary strand inspired a famous *zhiguai* by Tao Qian 陶潜 (365-427) set in the end of the 4th century and titled *Taohua yuan ji* 桃花源記. It tells of a fisherman who, having lost his way, found Peach Flower Spring and, next to it, the entrance to a cave. He entered it and after a while found himself in a subterranean land with flora and fauna similar to that in the outside world. He then had the chance to befriend the local villagers, who presented themselves as the descendants of people who had sought shelter there at the end of the Qin 秦 dynasty.[109]

108 *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 1:7b, 8b. Transl. by Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font", 66-7.

109 For a study on the *Taishang Lingbao wufu xu* and the *Taohua yuan ji*, see Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font", 65-77. Peaches features prominently in religious symbolism. For example, one the most ancient Chinese deities known to us, Xi Wangmu 西王母, was said to have a garden of peaches of immortality. By the time of the Six Dynasties there circulated a story about her making a gift of the peaches of immortality to emperor Han Wudi (r. 141-87 BC). Cahill, *Transcendence and Divine Passion*, 54-5, 143-89. One of the earliest, if not the earliest account, of Xi Wangmu can be found in the *Shanhai jing*. Cf. Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary*, 109-10.

This story enjoyed great popularity in the following centuries, especially from the Tang dynasty onwards, and it can be found also in the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Imperial Overview of the Taiping [Xingguo] Era; late 10th century).[110] This and similar works, along with the constantly developing Daoist sacred geography certainly exerted a profound influence on how portentous locations around the empire and in particular in Tiantai were thought of and experienced, as witnessed by the lasting appeal of the *Taohua yuan ji* during the Yuan dynasty.

2.6 Bo Yi and Shu Qi

One final feature of Tiantai County that I should like to mention is its relation with two figures from the Shang 商 dynasty (16th century-11th century), Bo Yi 伯夷 and Shu Qi 叔齊 (sometimes written Boyi and Shuqi), which exerted a profound and long-lasting influence on the portrayal of the Tiantai Mountains as a place promoting personal transcendence and inhabited by supernatural beings. These two personalities are mentioned *en passant* in chapter 20 of the *Baopuzi*, where Ge Hong uses the expression 'to borrow grain at the door of [Bo] Yi and [Shu] Qi' (*jia gu yu Yi Qi zhi men* 假穀於夷齊之門) to refer to those who abstain from consuming cereals.[111] The story of Bo Yi and Shu Qi has been known since antiquity, as testified by their presence in Confucius's (551-479) *Lunyu* 論語 (The Dialogues). According to the *Shiji*, Bo Yi and Shu Qi were the sons of the ruler of the state of Guzhu 孤竹 under the Shang dynasty. The latter wished for his second son, Shu Qi, to succeed him on the throne. Upon their father's death, however, neither brother would take his place: Shu Qi because he did not wish to take precedence over the eldest and rightful heir, Bo Yi, and the latter in order not to contravene to their father's wish. So, they both left their homeland. In the meantime, the Shang dynasty had collapsed at the hands of King Wu 武王, who founded the Zhou 周 dynasty. Bo Yi and Shu Qi then deemed it unworthy to eat the food produced within the land of what they considered a usurping dynasty, governed by a regicide, and so they decided not to eat cereals anymore. Instead, they went to Mt. Shouyang 首陽山 (which Sima Qian locates north of Mt. Hua 華山), where they ate only ferns, until they eventually died of starvation.[112] Bo Yi and Shu Qi's is the first of the biographies (*liezhuan* 列傳) included in the *Shiji* and it allows Sima Qian to ponder

110 Campany, "Tales of Strange Events", 576-91; Zhang, "A Textual History of Liu Yiqing's 'You Ming Lu'", 87-101. I will refer to this source also for a discussion on the authorship of the *Records*.

111 Wang, *Baopuzi neipian xiaoshi*, 345, 352 fn. 12.

112 *Shiji* 61:3a-4a.

over the problem of theodicy: why is it that righteous persons like Bo Yi and Shu Qi died of starvation, while cruel cannibalistic bandits like Bandit Zhi 盜蹠 lived a long and comfortable life?

Their biography in the *Shiji* is proof that by the beginning of the imperial era Bo Yi and Shu Qi were seen as paragons of morality. One prestigious antecedent that contributed to this reading is the *Lunyu*, where the two are mentioned multiple times. A list of the occurrences will offer the reader a better understanding of their cultural significance during the Spring and Autumn 春秋 era (722-403 BC):

> The Master said: "Bo Yi and Shu Qi never harboured old grudges, this is why they rarely incurred ill will".[113]
>
> 子曰: 「伯夷、叔齊不念舊惡, 怨是用希。」
>
> [Zigong] went in and said: "What sort of men were Bo Yi and Shu Qi?" [The Master] replied: "They were virtuous men of old." "Did they have any complaints?" "They sought benevolence and they achieved it. So, why should they have any complaints?" Zigong came out and said: "The Master is not on the side [of the Lord of Wei]".[114]
>
> [子貢]入曰: 「伯夷、叔齊何人也?」曰: 「古之賢人也。」曰: 「怨乎?」曰: 「求仁而得仁, 又何怨? 」出, 曰: 「夫子不為也。」
>
> Duke Jing of Qi had a thousand teams of four horses each, but on his death the common people were unable to find anything for which to praise him, whereas Bo Yi and Shu Qi starved under Mt. Shouyang and to this day the common people still sing their praises.[115]
>
> 齊景公有馬千駟, 死之日, 民無德而稱焉。 伯夷叔齊餓于首陽之下, 民到于今稱之。
>
> Bo Yi, Shu Qi, Yu Zhong, Yi Yi, Zhu Zhang, Liu Xiahui, Shao Lian are men who withdrew from society. The Master commented: "Not to lower their purpose or to allow themselves to be humiliated describes, perhaps, Bo Yi and Shu Qi".[116]
>
> 逸民, 伯夷、叔齊、虞仲、夷逸、朱張、柳下惠、少連。 子曰: 「不降其志, 不辱其身, 伯夷、叔齊與!」

113 Translations based on Confucius, *The Analects*, 43.

114 Translations based on Confucius, *The Analects*, 59.

115 Translations based on Confucius, *The Analects*, 167.

116 Translations based on Confucius, *The Analects*, 187.

According to Confucius, Bo Yi and Shu Qi were virtuous men (*xianren* 賢人) who sought to achieve benevolence (*ren* 仁), whose will never capitulated and who never humiliated themselves with their actions. This made exemplary men who were praised for the moral strength and determination to follow what complied with the system of values upheld by Confucianism. Tao Qian, too, inspired by their biography authored by Sima Qian, mentioned Bo Yi and Shu Qi in a poem dealing with the same questions about morality and justice.[117]

Their superior virtue did not confine them to the Confucian framework: indeed, in due time they were deified within Daoism. The *Chicheng zhi* calls them Vice Directors of the Ninth Heaven (*jiutian puye* 九天僕射), based on a text titled *Zhongzhen ji* 眾真記.[118] This refers to the *Yuanshi shangzhen zhongxian ji* 元始上真眾仙記 (Record of [the Heavenly Prince of] Primordial Beginning, the Superior Perfected and Hosts of Transcendents; DZ 166, *Zhongxian ji*), contained in the *Zhengtong daozang*. The canonical edition also bears the title *Zhenzhong shu* 枕中書 and is attributed to Ge Hong, although the text itself is surely later.[119] The *Zhongxian ji* claims to be a revelation received by Ge Hong and includes cosmogonic and cosmological sections, a divine hierarchy and a list of transcendents with their respective titles and abodes. The scripture lists deities and transcendents coming from a variety of different traditions, some of which became recognised Daoist deities from the Northern and Southern Dynasties on, while others remained within the general Chinese heritage or were quite clearly separated from traditional Daoist theology.

The *Zhongxian ji* describes the highest levels of the divine hierarchy, constituted by three palaces on the mountain above the 'Great Canopy Heaven' (*daluotian* 大羅天). The top palace (*shanggong* 上宮) is governed by Pangu Zhenren Yuanshi Tianwang 盤古真人元始天王 (Perfected Pangu Celestial King of the Original Beginning) and by Taiyuan Shengmu 太元聖母 (Holy Mother of the Supreme Origin); the 'middle palace' (*zhonggong* 中宮) is governed by the *taishang zhenren* 太上真人 (Supreme Perfected) and Jinque Laojun 金闕老君 (Lord of the Golden Portal); the 'lower palace' (*xiagong* 下宮) is administered by the *jiutian zhenhuang* 九天真皇 (Perfect Augusts of the Ninth Heaven) and the *santian zhenwang* 三天真王 (Perfect Sovereigns of the Third

117 Ashmore, *The Transport of Reading*, 210-12.

118 *Chicheng zhi* 30:9a. The title *puye* 僕射 could also be read *pushe* with reference to the ancient custom of letting the best archers manage important matters. For a detailed explanation of the term, see Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 394-5.

119 In fact, the header reads: *Ge Hong zhenzhong shu* 葛洪枕中書, which can be translated as "writs inside Ge Hong's pillow". Verellen, "Yuanshi shangzhen zhongxian".

Heaven).[120] These are followed by a long list of deities, historical and mythical figures, cultural heroes and transcendents, such as Xiwang Mu, Guangcheng Zhangren 廣成丈人 (Elder Guangcheng), Wuchengzi 務成子 and the Five Emperors (*wudi* 五帝).[121] Among them, are the ancient sovereigns Yao 堯, Shun 舜, Yu 禹 and King Tang 唐, founder of the Shang dynasty, and the hermits Xu You and Chao Fu, to whom Emperor Yao offered the throne – and who, as seen above, are said to dwell in the Tiantai Mountains by Xu Lingfu. We also find more recent emperors, such as Gaozu 高祖 (r. 202-195 BC) and Guangwu 光武 (r. 25-57), the founders respectively of the Western and the Eastern Han dynasty. The scripture not only mentions exalted figures from the Confucian tradition, but also introduces Confucius himself as Superior Lord Daji 大極上真公, the administrator of Mt. Jiuyi 九嶷山!

Most interesting for the present study is the presence of a few other figures who have been associated with the Tiantai area:

> Wangzi Qiao is the Official of Jinque, who administers Mt. Tongbai. Chisong[zi] is the Transcendent Kunlin, who administers the Southern Marchmount. Wangzi Deng is the Thearch Xiaoyou, who administers Mt. Wangwu. Bo Yi and Shu Qi from the Reign of Guzhu are Chief Administrators of the Nine Heavens and [they] administer Mt. Tiantai [...] Xu Laile is the Perfected of the Utmost Ultimate, who administers Mt. Kuocang and his small palace is in the Tiantai Mountains.[122]

> 王子喬為金闕侍中, 治桐柏山。 赤松為崑林仙伯, 治南嶽山。 王子登為小有天王, 治王屋山。 孤竹伯夷、叔齊等並為九天撲射, 治天台山……徐來勒爲太極真人, 治括蒼山, 小宮在天台山。

The importance of the *Zhongxian ji* for the present study lies in its mention of Bo Yi and Shu Qi as *jiutian puye* and administrators of the Tiantai Mountains.[123] This piece of information is in stark contrast with what is recorded in their previous biographies, discussed above, where the Tiantai area plays no role at all.

120 *Yuanshi shangzhen zhongxian ji* 4a. We find a classification of transcendents in nine ranks in Du Guangting's *Yongcheng jixian lu* 墉城集仙錄 (Record of the Assembled Immortals of Yongcheng; DZ 783) 1:12b. The *Yongcheng jixian lu* describes Xiwang Mu's entourage as living on Mt. Kunlun and it is influenced by texts close to the tradition of the Shangqing, by Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan* and by the *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要. Reiter, "Yongcheng jixian lu", 431. This same nine-tiered taxonomy is found in the late Qing work *Sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan* 三教源流搜神大全 (Complete Search of the Deities of the Traditions of the Three Teachings) 1:11a.

121 *Yuanshi shangzhen zhongxian ji* 5b-6a.

122 *Yuanshi shangzhen zhongxian ji* 8a-b.

123 *Yuanshi shangzhen zhongxian ji* 8a.

Two considerations are in order here. The presence of figures from different cultural and religious backgrounds might explain why Bo and Shu appear in the *Zhongxian ji*, pointing to a process of assimilation of elements from all sorts of traditions belonging to the broader Chinese culture into a Daoist sacred geography. Moreover, their association with southern locations should be read within the context of southern efforts to produce a systematic cosmology. The locations managed by transcendental beings include many places in Jiangnan, such as the Tiantai, Tongbai and the Siming 四明 mountains, but also more distant ones such as Mt. Qingcheng 青城山 and Emei 峨眉山 in Sichuan and Mt. Luofu 羅浮山 in Guangdong.

The fact that this text was attributed to Ge Hong suggests that it was produced or considered to be related to his milieu or to the context of the southern revelations. Although it is undated, it reflects their influence, and especially that of the Shangqing, as exemplified by the idea that Wangzi Qiao is related to Mt. Tongbai and by the mention of Wei Huacun 魏華存 and the three Mao Brothers (*san Maojun* 三茅君). This sacred geography is so mature that it is difficult to consider it a product of the mid-4th century, so it may be related to a later stage of development of the Shangqing tradition. Finally, the attempt to produce a broad cosmological system that also encompasses Confucian characters reveals the author's tendency to turn Daoism into an overarching system embracing native Chinese culture as a whole.

2.7 Buddhism in Tiantai

Up to this point I have mainly dealt with the significance of the Tiantai area in Daoist and literary accounts, but we should consider the fact that the Tiantai Mountains hosted a great number of Buddhist institutions as well. In fact, in certain periods in Chinese history the Tiantai area was remembered especially for its relation with Buddhism. Gil Raz argued in favour of four basic geographic imaginations in Medieval China: the imperial, the popular, the Buddhist and the Daoist.[124] The previous pages focused mainly on the geographical imaginary of imperial, Daoist and – to a lesser degree – popular origin, but Buddhism was equally present, if not more so, starting from the 4th century.

I will not discuss the Buddhist presence in the Tiantai area in detail, because this would require a separate study. Still, I consider it necessary to at least mention the importance of Buddhism in the construction of the religious significance of this territory. If we concentrate on Buddhist schools, certainly one of the most famous

124 Raz, "Daoist Sacred Geography", 1400-1.

is the Tiantai (Jap.: Tendai),[125] one of the four main Chinese Buddhist schools – together with the Huayan 華嚴, Pure Land (*Jingtu* 淨土) and Chan 禪, which attests to the historical significance of this area for the history of Buddhism.

The local gazetteers record a great number of Buddhist institutions that were built in Tiantai County. The coexistence of Buddhist and Daoist institutions in the same mountains was a common feature of the Chinese religious landscape and mutual influence was inevitable. Already in Sima Chengzhen's writings Buddhist elements are noticeable and one wonders if this is somehow related to his long-term residence in the Tiantai Mountains. We also find traces of the interaction of Buddhism and Daoism in the late imperial history of Tongbai Palace, specifically in relation to the Yongzheng emperor's restoration of the temple in the first half of the 18th century.

According to the *Chicheng zhi*, Qinghua Monastery 清化寺, located 45 li southeast of the county seat, was built in 239 and was still active during the Song dynasty: in 1066 it was renamed 'Xinghua Monastery' 興化寺 and during the Longxing 隆興 era (1163-1164) it took the name of 'Zifu Monastery' 資福寺.[126] If the information in the gazetteer is true, this means that Qinghua is the most ancient Buddhist temple in Tiantai. Unfortunately, without further sources it is impossible to confirm this version. Another temple allegedly established in early times is Yinyue Monastery 隱嶽寺, built in 535 by 'a Buddhist monk from India' (*xiyu fanseng* 西域梵僧). In 522, the Buddhist monk Zhida 智達 built a hut west of the county, where he recited the sutras. Later, this hut became a temple, called 'Xichan Monastery' 栖禪寺. It was restored in 851 and renamed 'Ningguo Monastery' 寧國寺 in 1008.[127] Another Buddhist temple is reportedly tied to Zhida's presence in the territory. It was called 'Pumen Monastery' 普門寺 and was built in 950 by the second patriarch of the Fayan school 法眼宗 on the site where Zhida had reportedly set up a retreat.[128]

According to a much later source, the Ming-dynasty *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi*, during the same period a certain Tianhua Zunzhe 天花尊者 (fl. 522) arrived in Tiantai. In 522 he broke open the rock under a cliff near the village of Pingqiao 平橋鎮 and set up a temple there, which for this reason was called Kaiyan Monastery 開巖寺 (*kaiyan* 開巖 meaning 'opening the cliff').[129] According to the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (Biographies of Eminent Monks; 6th century), in the 4th century the

125 Robson, "Buddhist Sacred Geography", especially 2:1393-4.

126 *Chicheng zhi* 28:28b; Tiantai Xian dang'an ju, *Fozong daoyuan*, 206-8.

127 *Chicheng zhi* 28:31a; Tiantai Xian dang'an ju, *Fozong daoyuan*, 233.

128 Tiantai Xian dang'an ju, *Fozong daoyuan*, 238.

129 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 天台山方外志 4:11b, 5:12a; Tiantai Xian dang'an ju, *Fozong daoyuan*, 240.

Buddhist monk Tanyou 曇猷, originally from Dunhuang 敦煌, went to Mt. Chicheng.[130] The Fangguang Monastery 方廣寺 was built in 1101 near the place where Tanyou had supposedly practised meditation.[131]

Tiantai is indissolubly bound to the Tiantai school, whose historical foundation can be traced back to the activities of the monk Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597). Traditionally, he is regarded as the fourth patriarch of the school, in a line of transmission that begins with the founding patriarch Nāgārjuna, followed by two generations of Chinese successors (Huiwen 慧文 and Huisi 慧思, 515-577) and then by Zhiyi. In fact, this version of the transmission was developed by Zhang'an Guanding 章安灌頂 (561-632) based on the *Fu fazang yinyuan zhuan* 付法藏因緣傳 (History of the Transmission of the Dharma-Storehouse; T 2058).[132] Historical sources do not support this narrative, but Nāgārjuna's role as the founder of the school granted legitimation and prestige to Zhiyi's teachings. Born in Jingzhou 荊州 (Hunan), Zhiyi was ordained a Buddhist monk in 556, after his parents died during the turmoil that would lead to the foundation of the Sui dynasty. In 560 he met master Huisi in Guangzhou 光州 (Henan) and studied with him for about eight years. In 567 Zhiyi was sent to Jinling 金陵 (Nanjing) by his master, where he taught for eight years to a growing number of disciples. He then left for the Tiantai Mountains, where he arrived in 575 and set up twelve monasteries (or 'platforms', *daochang* 道場) in Tiantai, most of which developed into prominent institutions during the following centuries. Later, he received the patronage of the Chen 陳 (557-589) and Sui dynasties. In 585 he accepted the invitation of the Chen ruler, Shubao 叔寶 (583-589), and returned to Nanjing. In later years he had a close relationship with the crown prince of the Sui dynasty, Yang Guang 楊廣 (569-618), on whom he bestowed the bodhisattva precepts.[133]

Zhiyi is recognised as one of the most influential Buddhist masters in Chinese history and he is the founder of what is considered to be the first truly 'Chinese' Buddhist school, called 'Tiantai'. One of Zhiyi's main contributions to Chinese Buddhism was the development of a doctrinal and scriptural system of classification.[134] Zhiyi is also responsible for developing the Chinese Buddhist repentance rites, based on the Tiantai doctrinal framework.[135] I have already mentioned this monk in relation to the *Tiantai Shan ji*, which testifies to his lasting

130 *Gaoseng zhuan* (T 2059) 11:2-3; Tiantai Xian dang'an ju, *Fozong daoyuan*, 118.

131 Tiantai Xian dang'an ju, *Fozong daoyuan*, 158.

132 Xu, "A Study of Early Transmissions", 31-89.

133 *Chicheng zhi* 35:2b; *Sui Tiantai Zhizhe dashi biezhuan* 191-7; Buswell Jr., Lopez Jr, *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 911-12; Sheng, "Faith and Lifestyle of Buddhists", 170-5.

134 Yü, *Chinese Buddhism*, 154-6.

135 Sheng, "Faith and Lifestyle of Buddhists", 170-97.

importance even during the Tang dynasty. We should also note that Zhiyi is remembered for his important contribution to the dynastic ideology legitimating Sui 隋 sovereignty. For this reason, Thomas Jülch argues that setting up a prestigious Shangqing institution such as the Tongbai Abbey (later, Palace) on Mount Tongbai was justified by the politically driven purpose of countering Buddhist legitimation of the Sui dynasty through a Daoist organisation that supported the Tang.[136] I will discuss this theme further in the next chapter.

Zhiyi is behind a great flourishing of Buddhism in Tiantai during the 6th century Tianfeng Monastery 天封寺 developed out of the retreat that Zhiyi had built on Mt. Huading 華頂山 in 575. In 585 the temple received the name of 'Lingxu Platform' 靈墟道場, and during the Qianyou 乾祐 era of the Later Han 後漢 (947-951) it was renamed 'Zhizhe Temple' 智者院; then, in 1008, it became 'Shouchang Monastery' 壽昌. Finally, in the year 1066 it obtained the name of 'Tianfeng Monastery'.[137] Xiuchan 修禪 or Chanlin Monastery 禪林寺 was built for Zhiyi during the Chen 陳 dynasty (557-589), although older gazetteers record that it was originally built in the first year of the Zhongxing 中興 era of the Southern Qi 南齊 (501).[138] Luoxi Monastery 螺溪寺, located 10 li east of the county seat, was built on the spot of one of Zhiyi's abodes in the Tiantai Mountains. In the year 1066 it was renamed 'Qingxin Temple' 清心院.[139] Jiyun Temple 集雲院 was built by Zhiyi 15 li southwest of the county and in 1008 it was renamed 'Chanlin Temple' 禪林院.[140] 20 li northeast of the county seat one would find Jingming Monastery 淨明寺, later renamed 'Gaoming Monastery' 高明寺, which was built during the Tang by expanding the previous Youxi Platform 幽溪道場: this too was recognised as one of the platforms (of enlightenment) related to Zhiyi in the Tiantai Mountains.[141]

Other Buddhist temples that were built between the Tang and Song dynasties were located in places significant for Zhiyi's biography. For example, the Guotai Temple 國泰院 was built in 856; Zhiyi was believed to have authored his *Zhiguan* 止觀 (Cessation and Contemplation)

136 Jülch, *Der Orden des Sima Chengzhen*, 3.

137 *Chicheng zhi* 28:19b. In the *Chicheng zhi* the name of the temple is recorded as 'Wenfeng Monastery' 文封寺.

138 *Chicheng zhi* 28:22b-23b.

139 *Chicheng zhi* 28:27a.

140 *Chicheng zhi* 28:27a.

141 *Chicheng zhi* 28:20b; Tiantai Xian dang'an ju, *Fozong daoyuan*, 65.

there.[142] The temple was renamed 'Xizhu Temple' 西竺院 in 1008.[143] Yunfeng Monastery 雲峰寺 was built in 911 at the location of Zhiyi's sixth platform (*diliu daochang* 第六道場) and renamed 'Taiping Xingguo Monastery' 太平興國寺 during the Taiping Xingguo era (976-984).[144] According to the *Chicheng zhi*, Renshou Monastery 仁壽寺 was built 30 li northeast of the county in 949 in the location of Zhiyi's ninth platform; it was renamed 'Jiuming Monastery' 九明寺 in 1066.[145]

Certainly, the most famous of these temples is the Guoqing Monastery 國清寺, located 10 li north of Tiantai County **[fig. 6]**. The *Chicheng zhi* states that it was built for Zhiyi (whom had died in 597) in the 18th year of Kaihuang 開皇 reign (598) with the name of Tiantai Monastery. Other documents explain better the situation. The idea of building a temple in the Tiantai Mountains had been in the mind of Zhiyi for some time, so much so that some time before his death, Zhiyi stated: "If today we manage to set up the foundations of the monastery, the ruler will build it. This is not something that you, helpless monks, can accomplish. There is another powerful man who will [bring this] to completion. It is a pity that I will not see it finished" 今得寺基, 爲王創造。 非爾小僧所辦, 別有大力勢人, 後當成就。 恨吾不見寺成.[146] In his last wishes, handed to the Prince of Jin 晉王 (the future Emperor Yang 煬帝) in 597, Zhiyi mentioned the construction of the monastery: the prince was eager to comply with Zhiyi's wishes, given the long-standing close relationship between the two.[147] The temple was probably completed in 601, the date in which the monks expressed their gratitude to the prince.[148] In the Daye 大業 era (605-

142 'Zhiguan' might refer to the *Mohe zhiguan*, a fundamental scripture of the Tiantai school, but this contains the lectures that Zhiyi held in 594 at the Yuquan Monastery 玉泉寺 of Jingzhou 荊州 (Hubei) and which were recorded by his disciple Zhang'an Guanding. Therefore, the gazetteer here is referring to the *Xiao zhiguan* 小止觀 (Minor Cessation and Contemplation), also called *Xiuxi zhiguan zuochan fayao* 修習止觀坐禪法要 (Essentials of the Methods of Studying Cessation, Contemplation and Sitting in Dhyāna). Cf. Beal, *A Catena of Buddhist Scriptures from the Chinese*, 250; Buswell Jr., Lopez Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 1013-14.

143 *Chicheng zhi* 28:21a.

144 *Chicheng zhi* 28:19a-19b. *Daochang* translates the Sanskrit term *bodhimanda*, 'platform of enlightenment'. It originally indicates the place under the Bodhi tree where the Buddha was sitting when he achieved the enlightenment. In China, the term was also used to indicate ritual precincts and monasteries. Buswell Jr., Lopez Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 132.

145 *Chicheng zhi* 28:28a.

146 *Tiantai Shan zhong xieqi* 天台山眾謝啟 (Missive of Gratitude from the Buddhists of the Tiantai Mountains; 599), in Ikeda, *Kokusei hyakuroku no kenkyū*, 398.

147 *Wang da yizhi* 王答遺旨 (The Prince's Reply to the Last Wishes; 598), in Ikeda, *Kokusei hyakuroku no kenkyū*, 379-81.

148 *Tiantai zhong xie zao si cheng qi* 天台眾謝造寺成啟 (Letter to Thank for Completion of the Construction of the Monastery by the Tiantai [Monastic] Community; 601),

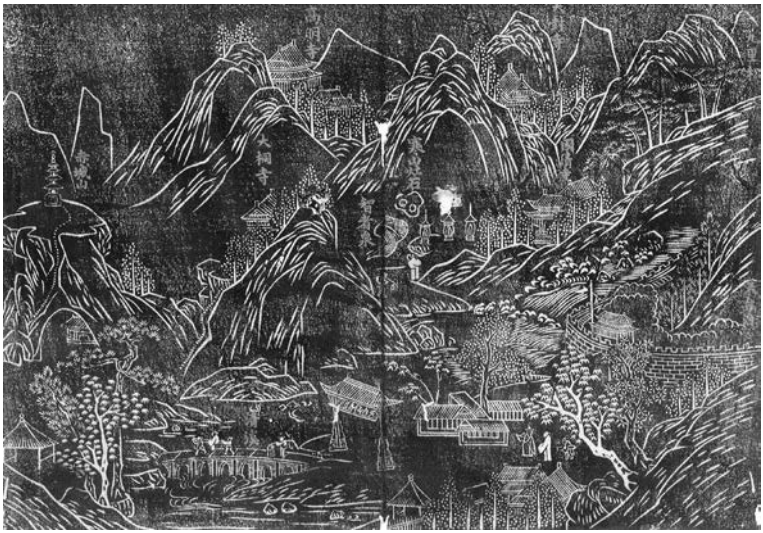

Figure 6 The landscape surrounding the Guoqing Monastery. The temple is shown on the page on the right, at the centre. *Tiantai shan tu bing fu* 天台山圖并賦 1a-b

610), the temple eventually received the name 'Guoqing' by which it is still known today: according to the tradition, it was suggested to Zhiyi in a dream in which the Buddhist master Dingguang 定光 appeared to him and said "If the monastery will be built, the empire will be stable, so it must be called Guoqing Monastery" 寺若成國即清, 必呼為國清寺.[149] This event therefore ties the establishing of the temple to the prosperity of the country and to the legitimation of the ruling dynasty. Later, during the Song dynasty, the monastery was destroyed, the only surviving traces of it being a copy of the *Lianhua jing* 蓮華經 (Lotus Sutra) handwritten by Zhiyi, a one-volume sutra written on palm leaves (*beiduoye* 貝多葉) from India and a sandalwood statue with a tooth, a relic of the Buddha. The temple was rebuilt in the year 1128 and many other times after that, up until the end of the imperial era.[150]

included in the collectanea *Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄 (Hundred Records of Guoqing [Monastery]), of the first year of the Renshou 仁壽 reign (601). *Tiantai zhong xie zao si cheng qi*, in Ikeda, *Kokusei hyakuroku no kenkyū*, 405.

149 *Fozu tongji* 49:185c; *Chicheng zhi* 28:17b. Dingguang was a Buddhist monk who lived during the Liang 梁 dynasty (502-557), originally from Qingzhou 青州 (Shandong). During the Datong era (535-546) he retired to Folong Peak 佛隴峰, where he spent thirty years, mostly unseen. *Chicheng zhi* 35:2a-2b.

150 *Chicheng zhi* 28:17b-19a; *Tiantai Shan ji* 11b. The *Tiantai Shan ji* states that this temple was built by Sui Yangdi 隋煬帝 in the 18th year of the Kaihuang 開皇 era, but Emperor Yang's reign name was Daye 大業 (605-617). Instead, Kaihuang was the era name of the founding emperor of the Sui dynasty, Wenhuang 文皇 (r. 581-604). So, Xu

The Tiantai area also reflects the influence of other Buddhist schools. In the case of Chan Buddhism, the earliest traces can be dated to the 8th century, when Chan master Yize 遺則 (753-?) built Foku Monastery 佛窟寺 on the peak west of the three wells (*sanjing xi feng* 三井西峰) of Mt. Tongbai.[151] Another influential character, a near contemporary of Yize's, with an almost mythical status is the hermit Hanshan 寒山, who supposedly lived between the 7th and the 8th century and who is remembered today as one of the three recluses of Guoqing Monastery, together with Fenggan 豐干 and Shide 拾得.[152] During the Song dynasty, Hanshan's poems became very popular, especially within Chan circles that frequently quoted his poems.[153] Guoqing Monastery, therefore, is the bearer of powerful symbolic capital, being linked not only with the Tiantai school, but also with Chan Buddhism.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have studied the cultural and religious substratum that constitutes the basis of the importance of the Tiantai area throughout the imperial era. Although in different periods all these layers played a role in the development of local Daoism, some features became increasingly significant, while others were forgotten or left out of the narrative about the area. During the Tang dynasty, for example, the importance of the relation of Mt. Tongbai with the Shangqing revelations and with Wangzi Qiao played a prominent role. Later, to this was added the (physical and historical) presence of Sima Chengzhen at Tongbai Abbey/Tongbai Palace. After a few centuries, as I will discuss in chapters 4 and 5, the significance of these layers changed in accordance with elite patrons' focus, which came to be directed first towards Bo Yi and Shu Qi and then towards new Daoist figures who emerged during the Song dynasty, like Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (987?-1082). One aspect that should not be underestimated is the interaction between the three religions (Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism) present in the area: I will have the chance to illustrate the importance of this element in the rest of the book. In the following chapter I will focus on the institutional development of Tongbai Abbey during the Tang and Song periods and I will explain in greater detail which layers became prominent in that period and why, based on a study of the interactions between resident Daoists and the court.

Lingfu might have meant to indicate the year 598, which nonetheless might be wrong for the reasons discussed above.

151 *Chicheng zhi* 28:31b; *Song gaoseng zhuan* 10:8-9; Zhu, *Tiantai shan Fojiao shi*, 41.

152 Rouzer, *On Cold Mountain*, 19-40; Buswell Jr., Lopez Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 344, 803; Zhu, *Tiantai shan Fojiao shi*, 44-8.

153 Rouzer, *The Poetry of Hanshan*, ix.

3 History of Tongbai Palace Before the Qing Dynasty

Summary 3.1 Sima Chengzhen. – 3.2 The Lineage of the Three Masters and Tongbai Palace. – 3.3 Du Guangting. – 3.4 From the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms to the Ming Dynasty. – 3.4.1 The Song Dynasty. – 3.4.2 Yuan and Ming Dynasties. – 3.5 Conclusion.

The focus in this chapter will be on the history of Tongbai Palace during the period between its construction in the Tang dynasty and its decline at the end of the Ming, concentrating primarily on the institutional, social and political aspects of its development and on the relation of these with the symbolic dimension on the one hand and the dimension of meaning on the other.

The building of Tongbai Palace during the Tang dynasty represents a watershed event in the history of the area: before this, Mt. Tongbai and the surrounding area lacked a specific, architecturally determined location that could physically epitomise and represent imperially sponsored Daoism. Tongbai Palace was thus closely related to the court. The start of the history of the temple itself must be traced back to the early 8th century. As is common knowledge among scholars, the Tang dynasty had a special relationship with Daoism, justified both by their pious and sincere devotion and by their interest in exploiting religion for political purposes.

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The most evident link between the Tang dynasty and Daoism was the imperial family's surname, Li 李, which is identical with what has been traditionally handed down as Laozi's own surname. Lord Lao (Laojun 老君, the divinised Laozi) reportedly manifested even before the founding of the dynasty, in 617 and 618, to communicate to Li Yuan 李淵 (Gaozu 高祖, r. 618-626) that he would win over the empire, and in 620 Gaozu bestowed on him the title of Sage Ancestor, Shengzu 聖祖.[1] In 666 Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649-683) visited the temple dedicated to Lord Lao in Bozhou 亳州 (in today's Anhui) and bestowed on him the title of Taishang Xuanyuan Huangdi 太上玄元皇帝 (Supreme Emperor of the Mysterious Origin); among a series of other decisions, he also changed the name of what was traditionally considered to be Laozi's home county, Guyang 谷陽 (sunny side of the valley), into Zhenyuan 真源 (source of truth). Before she became empress, in 689, Wu Zhao 武曌 (Wu Zetian 武則天, r. 690-705) 'demoted' Laozi to the original title of Laojun. In 705, with the restoration of the Tang dynasty, Laojun's title was also restored.[2]

Perhaps one of the most striking events is the Daoist ordination of about 28 royal princesses and many palace ladies during the Tang dynasty, the foremost examples being those of Princess Jinxian 金仙 (689-732) and Princess Yuzhen 玉真 (691-762), who received their full ordination between 706 and 712.[3] In fact, in the *Tiantan Wangwu Shan shengyi ji* 天壇王屋山聖迹記 (Account of the Sacred Vestiges of the Altar of Heaven on Mt. Wangwu, DZ 969), Du Guangting records that Tang Ruizong's daughter, princess Yuzhen, "loved the Way and took the Celestial Master Sima [Chengzhen] as her master" 唐睿宗皇帝女玉真公主好道, 師司馬天師.[4] Recent scholarship has highlighted the rise of Daoist institutions for women during the Tang dynasty. These temples, inhabited by female residents, could attain economic independence, sometimes thanks to state and private donations. In these institutions, women Daoists (*nüguan* 女冠, *nüguan* 女官 or *nüdaoshi* 女道士) were able to set up and develop autonomous communities that sometimes entertained close relationships with the external world, engaging in artistic, political and religious interactions. In fact, the autonomy of their religious life not only

1 Cf. Kohn, Kirkland, "Daoism in the Tang (618-907)", 340-1; Xiong, "Ritual Innovations and Taoism under Tang Xuanzong", 258-316.

2 Xiong, "Ritual Innovations and Taoism under Tang Xuanzong", 282. Wu Zetian 'demoted' Laozi back to his original title of Laojun in 689, which was later restored by Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 684, 705-710) in 705.

3 Jia, *Gender, Power, and Talent*, 18-49; Barrett, *Taoism under the T'ang*, 49-50; Benn, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission*.

4 Chen, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 54.

expressed itself in the economic sphere, but also in the cultural one. It should be recalled that Daoist initiation and ritual practice, especially at the highest levels, required education and literacy. This suggests that women Daoists, at least their highest representatives in terms of social rank, were able to satisfy these requirements.[5]

Emperor Zhongzong's 中宗 second reign (705-710) marked the effective restoration of the Tang dynasty. Already in the year 706, he restored Laozi's title of Taishang Xuanyuan Huangdi and ordered the foundation of a Daoist abbey in each prefecture. His successor, Emperor Ruizong 睿宗 (r. 684-690, 710-712), who also authored a commentary on the *Daode jing*, ordered the construction of several Daoist temples, "which in the main capital led to a more rapid expansion [of Daoism] during his brief reign than in any other period of the dynasty".[6] It was he who built the Tongbai Abbey (Tongbai Palace) for the Daoist Sima Chengzhen in 711.

3.1 Sima Chengzhen

Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (*zi*: Ziwei 子微;[7] *hao*: Master Zhenyi 貞一先生; Master Baiyun 白雲子; 647-735) was one of the most prominent Daoist masters of the Tang dynasty and the most important of the first half of the dynasty. Cui Shang's *Tongbai Guan bei* describes his familial background as follows:

> If not my refined master, who could have made it flourish? [His] *ming* was Chengzhen, his [*hao*] Tiantai Baiyun and he hailed from Wen [County] in Henei. He is a descendant of the younger brother of Emperor Xuan of the Jin [employed] in the Office of the Chamberlain for Ceremonials.[8] His grandfather Sheng was Area Commander in Chief under the Sui [dynasty]. At the beginning of the

5 Jia, *Gender, Power, and Talent*, 12-15. The significance of women's interest in Daoism during the 8th century, possibly promoted also by the princesses' initiation, is highlighted by an official survey of the Kaiyuan era, which found that 550 out of 1,687 total Daoist temples were female convents. Jia, *Gender, Power, and Talent*, 50.

6 Barrett, *Taoism under the T'ang*, 48.

7 Xu Lingfu recorded that Ziwei was Sima's 'given name' *ming* (cf. *Tiantai Shan ji* 6b), but Sun Yueban, based on the *Tang shu* 唐書, argued that Ziwei was his 'courtesy name' *zi* 字. Cf. *Yuding peiwen zhai shuhua pu* 73:15b. *Ming* is the 'given name', *hao* 號 is the 'alternative name', *zi* 字 is the 'courtesy name'. Daoists would have a *faming* 法名 and/or a *daohao* 道號, a 'Daoist name', bestowed upon ordination.

8 Emperor Xuandi refers to Sima Yi 司馬懿 (179-251), posthumously named emperor by his grandson and founder of the Jin dynasty, Sima Yan 司馬炎 (r. 266-290). His brother was Sima Kui 司馬馗. *Tang Wangwu Shan Zhongyan Tai Zhengyi Xiansheng Miao jie* (DZ 970) 1a; Dien, Knapp, *The Cambridge History of China*, 42-7, 80-4. Cf. Chen, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 50-1.

> Tang dynasty, [his] father Renzui was Grand Master for Closing Court and administrator of the Xiang Prefecture.[9]
>
> 微我鍊師, 孰能興之? 鍊師名承禎, 一名子微, 號曰天台白雲, 河內溫人。晉宣帝弟太常道之後。 祖晟仕隋為親侍大都督。 父仁最, 唐興為朝散大夫, 襄州長史。

One fundamental period in Sima Chengzhen's training was the time that he spent on Mt. Song 嵩山, where he studied the Way with Master Pan Shizheng 潘師正 (585-682).[10] Pan Shizheng had already met Emperor Gaozong on that mountain in 676, 679 and 680, when a Daoist monastery there was promoted to the rank of 'palace' (*gong* 宮). The same emperor visited this temple one last time in 683.[11] After his training, Master Sima initially settled on Mt. Tongbai, keeping himself out of the court politics that led to the establishment of the Zhou dynasty in 690 and ended with the demise of Empress Wu Zetian and the reestablishment of the Tang in 705. It is noteworthy that the empress tried to summon both him and his master Pan Shizheng to court.[12] Instead, Sima Chengzhen first accepted Emperor Ruizong's 睿宗 summons to court in 711. In that same year, the emperor decided to build a retreat for him on Mt. Tongbai, called 'Tongbai Abbey', which became the most important Daoist temple of Tiantai County.[13]

Details about the edification of this temple are recorded in Xu Lingfu's 徐靈符 (ca. 760-841) *Tiantai Shan ji*. The building of the Tongbai Abbey is described as being marked by wondrous signs: "at the beginning of the building of the Tianzun Hall, five-coloured clouds [gathered] on top of it three times" 初構天尊堂, 有五雲其上三.[14] Cui Shang's stele provides a more detailed account:

> In the morning, when the construction of the hall to Tianzun started, there were five-coloured clouds floating above it. By the three wells where the dragons are tossed, there were strange clouds that entered the hall and again emerged from it three times.[15]

9 *Chicheng zhi*, 30:6a-b. This information is confirmed in *Tang Wangwu Shan Zhongyan Tai Zhengyi Xiansheng Miao jie* 唐王屋山中巖臺正一先生廟碣 by Wei Sheng 衛升. Cf. Kirkland, "Ssu-Ma Ch'eng-Chen and the Role of Taoism", 118, 127.

10 *Tang Wangwu Shan Zhongyan Tai Zhengyi Xiansheng Miao jie* 1a, 4a; *Maoshan zhi* (DZ 304) 11:1a-3b; Chen, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 54-9. Cf. Kohn, *Seven Steps to the Tao*.

11 Barrett, *Taoism under the T'ang*, 37-8.

12 Barrett, *Taoism under the T'ang*, 43, 47.

13 *Tiantai Shan ji* 6b, 8b; *Chicheng zhi* 30:5a-7a. Cf. Ren, Ma, *Taizhou Daojiao kao*, 190.

14 *Tiantai Shan ji* 9a.

15 *Chicheng zhi* 30:6a.

故初構天尊之堂，晝日有雲五色游靄其上。三井投龍之所，時有異雲氣入堂，復出者三。

Only one year later, in 712, Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-756) ascended the throne and began one of the longest reigns in Chinese history. One of his main concerns upon taking the throne was to affirm dynastic control over other institutions: with this in mind, following 714 he laboured to reduce and eliminate the Buddhist and Daoist clergy's influence over the court. Xuanzong only resumed a more favourable attitude toward Daoists starting from 720, the same year in which the last 'old guard' of powerful court Daoists, Ye Fashan 葉法善 (631-720), passed away. Yet between 729 and 733 the emperor issued a series of decrees that gradually introduced the registration of the Buddhist and Daoist clergy, restrictions on their movement and the obligation for them to revere their parents.[16]

Nonetheless, Emperor Xuanzong is also remembered for his passionate interest in Daoism, which resulted in a series of acts of patronage. Starting with a decree in 732, he implemented a series of policies promoting Daoism. One of the most famous is his order that every household should keep a copy of the *Daode jing* and should worship it. In 737 the emperor placed Daoism under the jurisdiction of the Zongzheng Si 宗正寺 (Court of the Imperial Clan) while keeping Buddhism under that of the Honglu Si 鴻臚寺 (Court for Diplomatic Relations), a move that at once confirmed the fact the imperial family regarded Laozi as its ancestor and consigned Buddhism to the status of a religion of foreign origin.[17] In 742, the emperor promoted Laozi to *shangsheng* 上聖 (superior sage) and granted him priority during sacrificial offerings. He also established Daoist academies (*chongxuan xue* 崇玄學) and elevated the Daoist scriptures to the same rank as the Confucian classics. Then, the following year, the Emperor Xuanyuan's Temple in Chang'an was renamed 'Taiqing Palace' 太清宮 and underwent some architectural modifications and rearrangements of the spaces; similarly, the Temple in Luoyang was renamed 'Taiwei Palace' 太微宮. It is in this period that two new sacrifices were added to the list of state rituals: the Taiqing Palace ritual in Laozi's honour and the worship of the "noble gods of the nine palaces" (*jiugong guishen* 九宮貴神).[18]

16 Barrett, *Taoism under* the *T'ang*, 52-8.

17 The Zonglu Si was responsible for keeping the imperial genealogies, establishing the ranks of the members of the imperial family and monitoring the activities of the imperial relatives. During the Tang dynasty, the Honglu Si was supervised by the Ministry of Rites 禮部 and was in charge of the reception of foreign emissaries and of some imperial rituals. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 264, 530; Twichett, *The Cambridge History of China*, 411.

18 Xiong, "Ritual Innovations and Taoism under Tang Xuanzong", 261-73, 281-3.

In 721, Sima Chengzhen answered the emperor's summon and left the Tiantai Mountains to go to court, helping him to develop measures for the imperial patronage of Daoism.[19] In 724, Emperor Xuanzong set up the Yangtai Abbey 陽臺觀 on Mt. Wangwu 王屋山 for Sima Chengzhen, where the Daoist passed away in 735.[20] According to Xu Lingfu, the construction of this abbey was justified by the emperor's desire to bring Sima Chengzhen nearer to the capital.[21] In fact, Mt. Wangwu is located north of Luoyang, which had been the eastern (second) capital of the Tang dynasty since 657 and was chosen as the de facto capital of the Zhou dynasty as well as by Emperor Xuanzong until the final return of the court to Chang'an in 736.[22] It also seems that the aforementioned Princess Yuzhen visited Sima Chengzhen at Mt. Wangwu less than a year before his death and that the two performed a ritual called *jinlu zhai* 金錄齋 (retreat of the golden register) together.[23]

In the first year of the Tianbao 天寶 reign (742), the Prefect of Linhai, Jia Changyuan 賈長源, together with Sima's disciple Li Hanguang 李含光 (683-769) erected the famous stele composed by Cui Shang; its header was reportedly written by Emperor Xuanzong himself.[24] This early source, whose original is now lost, but whose text is still preserved in local gazetteers such as the *Chicheng zhi*, highlights the mountain's link with Wangzi Qiao. The stele first describes the physical features of Mt. Tongbai, mentioning the Jinting Grotto-Heaven as the palace where Wangzi Qiao resides. This is called "a numinous place for cultivating perfection" (*yangzhen zhi lingjing* 養真之靈境). According to the stele, the location of the most ancient temple indicated the place where Ge Xuan dwelled, and for this reason Daoists continued to visit it.[25]

The close relationship between the Tang emperors and Sima Chengzhen suggests that his Daoist tradition was supported and legitimised by the dynasty. This was possible also thanks to the

19 Notably, this included the recognition of the five marchmounts as seats of Shangqing deities, the composition of ritual music based on Daoist themes for the emperor and the engraving of the *Daode jing* written by Sima Chengzhen in three different calligraphic styles on a stele erected at the capital in 721. Barrett, *Taoism under the T'ang*, 54-5.

20 *Tang Wangwu Shan Zhongyan Tai Zhengyi Xiansheng Miao jie* 2b-3a. Other sources provide 727 as the year of Sima Chengzhen's death. Chen Guofu considers the year 735 as the most probable. Cf. Chen, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 54-5.

21 *Tiantai Shan ji* 16a.

22 Twichett, *The Cambridge History of China*, 257, 400.

23 Chen, *Daozang yuanliu kao*, 54; Benn, *The Cavern-Mystery Transmission*, 11.

24 *Tiantai Shan ji* 9a; *Chicheng zhi* 40:17b. This edition of the *Tiantai Shan ji* states that the stele was set up in the sixth year of the Tianbao reign (747).

25 *Chicheng zhi* 30:5a-7a.

Daoists' intimate bonds with some high deities, which heightened the significance of the Shangqing masters for the emperors. Kirkland noticed that Sima Chengzhen brought with him an institutional authority as Shangqing Grand Master, Pan Shicheng's successor, and a spiritual authority represented by a seal that a phoenix had bestowed on him in a dream. The seal read: "Bestowed by (upon?) the Lord of Eastern Florescence, the Shangqing Perfected One". Sima Chengzhen surely had a close connection with Qingtong 青童 (Azure Lad), the Lord of Eastern Florescence, since before passing away he reportedly said: "Today I have been summoned by Qingtong" 吾今為青童君所召. The *Xu xian zhuan* 續仙傳 (DZ 295; 10th century) reports a similar sentence: "Today I have been summoned by Lord Qingtong of the Eastern Sea, I must go" 今為東海一青童君東華君所召, 必須往.[26]

Among the many texts authored by Sima Chengzhen, at least two of his extant works are geographical descriptions of numinous lands: the *Shangqing tiandi gongfu tu* (in DZ 1032, *Yunji qiqian, juan* 27) and the *Shangqing shi dichen Tongbai zhenren zhen tuzan* 上清侍帝晨桐柏真人真圖讚 (DZ 612).[27] The first text describes 72 sacred sites, the majority of which are located in the Jiangnan area, and has been discussed in the previous chapter. The second text contains the biography of the immortal Wangzi Qiao, composed of 11 vignettes, each followed by a picture and a eulogy. This text cites many sources, including the *Shiji* 史記 and the *Liexian zhuan* and follows the deeds of the immortal, including his revelation of scriptures to Yang Xi, following his appointment as 'governor of Mount [Tongbai]'.[28] The *Shangqing shi dichen Tongbai zhenren zhen tuzan* can be read as an exaltation of the figure of Wangzi Qiao as a patriarch of the Shangqing tradition, but also as Sima Chengzhen's attempt to augment the mountain's prestige. I do not think this second interpretation very likely, though, because, as discussed in the previous chapter, traditional historiography and Chinese culture had both long considered Mt. Tongbai and the Tiantai Mountains to be locations with extraordinary qualities. During pre-Tang era, even Mt. Tongbai became entwined with supernatural occurrences and assumed an aura of sacredness. Wangzi Qiao is

26 *Chicheng zhi* 35:11b; *Xu xian zhuan* 3:3a. Russell Kirkland spoke of a probable identification of Sima Chengzhen with Qingtong, but according to the sources cited above this appears to be not possible. Kirkland, "Ssu-Ma Ch'eng-Chen and the Role of Taoism", 119. On Qingtong, see Kroll, "In the Halls of the Azure Lad", 75-94.

27 See Kohn, *Seven steps to the Tao*, 21; Ren, Ma, *Taizhou Daojiao kao*, 286. Other texts by Sima Chengzhen included in the *Daozang* are *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論 (DZ 1036), *Fuqi jingyi lun* 服氣精義論 (DZ 830) and *Tianyin zi* 天隱子 (DZ 1026).

28 Verellen, "Shangqing shi dichen Tongbo zhenren zhen tuzan". This text is not a "collection of eleven short biographies of Shangqing saints connected with Mount Tongbo" as stated in Kohn, *Seven steps to the Tao*, 21. In fact, the development of the cult of the Daoist immortal Wangzi Qiao was quite complex. On this topic see Bujard, "Le Culte de Wangzi Qiao", 115-58 and cf. the previous chapter.

important for the present study, because by focusing on this immortal the text associates the Mao Mountains, the historical setting of the Shangqing revelations and of Xu Mi's retreat, with Mt. Tongbai, where the retreat built by the emperor for Sima Chengzhen was located.[29] Both mountains were already prominent in Tao Hongjing's *Zhengao*, therefore Sima developed a tradition which was already established in its fundamental elements in the 4th century. A Daoist lineage associated with the Shangqing tradition survived in the Tiantai area after Sima Chengzhen and at least until the twilight of the Song dynasty, as will be clear from the following analysis of later generations of Daoists.

Sima Chengzhen's choice to move from Mt. Song, a major mountain located east of Luoyang, to the distant Tiantai Mountains might be justified by the tense political climate at court. In this sense, we find here one instance of the phenomenon called 'political hermitism' – the conscious political choice to live a retired life, far (although never too far) from the social world and the centres of power.[30] Yet, this element alone would not explain Sima Chengzhen's choice of Mt. Tongbai. In the interest of offering a more informed hypothesis, it is useful to remember the close links between the early Shangqing compilers and Mt. Shan. Moreover, we should recall that the earliest accounts of Wangzi Qiao himself linked him to Mt. Song; he thus represents a direct link between that mountain and Mt. Tongbai. Mt. Song was the place where Wangzi Qiao studied the Dao with his master Fuqiu and Mt. Tongbai was the place that he administered after his deification. The parallels between the lives of Wangi Qiao and Sima Chengzhen lead Thomas Jülch to speculate that Sima Chengzhen might have considered himself to be a sort of second manifestation of Wangi Qiao, or at least that he consciously stressed the parallels between their two biographies in order to justify his move to Mt. Tongbai.[31] I would rather invert the process of causality, arguing that Sima Chengzhen moved to Mt. Tongbai because he was aware of the sacredness of that area and of its link with a major deity of the Shangqing tradition.

If we consider the Shangqing lineage as recorded in the *Maoshan zhi* 茅山志 (Gazetteer of the Mao Mountains; 14th century), we find that Mt. Tongbai ceased being a significant outpost for Sima Chengzhen's tradition since the life of his disciple Li Hanguang, who is remembered as the 14th Shangqing ancestral master. Li began his Daoist career at the Longxing Abbey 龍興觀 near Luoyang and in 729 he met Sima Chengzhen on Mt. Wangwu, five years after Master

29 Barrett, *Taoism under the T'ang*, 13.

30 On political hermitism, cf. Jülch, *Der Orden des Sima Chengzhen*, 6; Mair, "Li Po's Letters in Pursuit of Political Patronage", 123-53.

31 Jülch, *Der Orden des Sima Chengzhen*, 54.

Sima had moved there. During his life, Li Hanguang did not reside on Mt. Tongbai, preferring instead to care for the Yangtai Abbey, and later to move to the Mao Mountains.[32] The successive generations of disciples related to this place seem to have been equally uninterested in the Tongbai Abbey. Yet, historical sources suggest that Sima Chengzhen had many disciples, each one linked with a different line of transmission. The line recorded in the *Dongxuan Lingbao san shi ji* 洞玄靈寶三師記 (*San shi ji*, DZ 444) differs from that of the *Maoshan zhi*, but it is much more important for the present study, since it provides information on the lineage connecting Sima Chengzhen, Xu Lingfu and Du Guangting 杜光庭 (*zi*: Binsheng 賓聖; *hao*: Dongying zi 東瀛子; ca. 850-ca. 933), all renowned Daoists of the Tang dynasty who dwelled at the Tongbai Abbey and who therefore played a central role in the history of the temple itself.

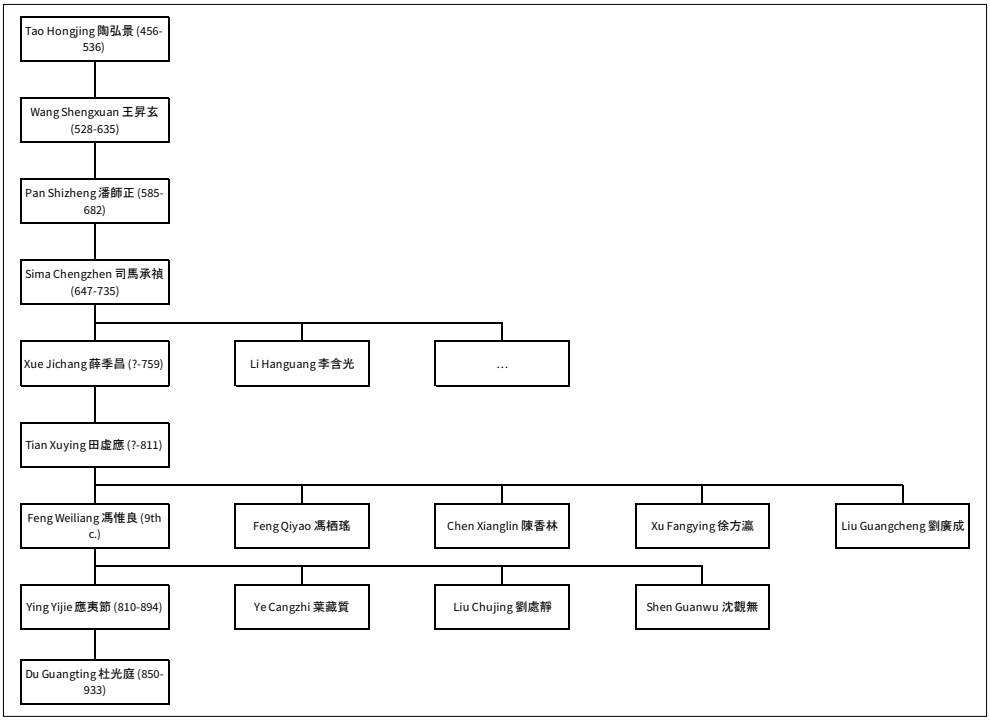
3.2 The Lineage of the Three Masters and Tongbai Palace

The *San shi ji* is a text of unclear authorship, probably composed at the beginning of the 10th century, that focuses on a lineage of Daoists who were active in southeast China during the Tang dynasty.[33] The text is divided into two parts: it opens with a preface, followed by the biographies of three Daoist masters, Tian Xuying, Feng Weiliang and Ying Yijie, (hence the title *san shi*, or 'three masters'). These are the main focus of the text and they were all related to the Southern Marchmount 南嶽 (Mt. Heng 衡山). They represent three successive generations that preceded that of the famous court Daoist of the late Tang, Du Guangting, who was himself related to this lineage. This lineage **[table 1]** starts with Tao Hongjing (first generation) and includes Sima Chengzhen (fourth generation) and Du Guangting (ninth generation) as part of the same tradition. I am mostly interested in the sixth and seventh generations, dateable to the beginning of the ninth century, not too distant in time from Du Guangting's life and presumably from the compilation of the text itself: these correspond to the first and second of the three masters.

32 *Maoshan zhi* 11:3b-5a.

33 See Lagerwey, "Dongxuan lingbao san shi ji". This text was compiled by multiple hands. The author of the preface, dated 920, and purportedly final editor of the text, is Master Guangcheng 廣成先生. For a discussion on the debated authorship of this text, see Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933)*, 17-18.

Table 1 Chart of the lineage of the three masters



Tian Xuying 田虛應 (*zi*: Liangyi 良逸; d. 811) is the first of the three masters, referred to by the title 'Scripture Master, Great Cavern of Shangqing at the Southern Marchmount (i.e. Mount Heng)' 經師南嶽上清大洞. This biography contains some problematic elements, as will be made evident in what follows. According to the *San shi ji*, Tian hailed from the region of the state of Qi 齊國, corresponding to today's Shandong, and starting in the Kaihuang 開皇 era of the Sui dynasty (581-600) he took care of his parents in You County 攸縣. He decided to move, so he travelled until he came to Zigai Peak 紫蓋峰 of the Southern Marchmount (i.e. Mt. Heng), where he dedicated himself to agriculture and waited upon his parents for more than 50 years.[34] He then aspired to cultivate the Way and to pursue self-realisation and travelled to the five peaks (i.e. the five marchmounts). During the Longshuo 龍朔 era (661-663), he met the 'recluse transcendent Lord

34 *Dongxuan lingbao san shi ji* 2b-4a. Cf. Ren, Ma, *Taizhou Daojiao kao*, 287-8. On Mount Heng, cf. Robson, "Mount Heng".

He' (*yinxian Hejun* 隱仙何君), who 'silently transmitted his teachings' (*mochuan qi dao* 默傳其道) to Tian Xuying; the latter then returned to Mt. Heng and built (or rebuilt?) the Jiangzhen Hall 降真堂.[35] Master Tian was initiated into the *Shangqing dadong* 上清大洞 tradition by Xue Jichang 薛季昌 (Master Zhenyi 貞一先生; d. 759), Sima Chengzhen's disciple, on that very mountain.[36] Having inherited the mysterious essential tenets, he was able to penetrate the realm of the Dao (*zuancheng xuanyao, shenzhen daoyu* 纘承玄要, 深臻道域).

Master Tian had four disciples. Three of them, Feng Qiyao 馮栖瑶, Chen Xianglin 陳香林 (aka Chen Guayan 寡言) and Xu Fangying 徐方瀛 (i.e. Xu Lingfu, *hao*: Moxi 默希), travelled east to Mt. Tiantai during the Yuanhe 元和 era (806-820).[37] According to the *Chicheng zhi*, Xu Lingfu hailed from Qiantang 錢塘, lived on Yungai Peak 雲盖峰 and went to Mt. Fangying to practise self-cultivation.[38] Liu Guangcheng 劉廣成, on the other hand, who dwelled at Mt. Heng and received the title of Celestial Master from Emperor Wuzong 武宗 (r. 841-846), is described as the founding patriarch of the school of the 'method of the Three Caverns' 三洞之法.[39] The fact that Tian Xuying's life was reportedly a couple of centuries long is the most problematic aspect of his biography, and indeed suggests that we are actually dealing with a hagiographic account. Despite this, it still contains information that is confirmed by other sources, such as Xu Lingfu's historical existence and his presence at the Tongbai Abbey.

The real inheritor of Tian Xuying's legacy, according to what the *San shi ji* records, was Feng Weiliang 馮惟良 (aka Feng Qiyao 栖瑶; 9th century), also known as the 'Registration Master, Great Cavern of Shangqing at the Tongbai Abbey on Mt. Tiantai, Lord Sanzheng' 籍師天台山桐柏觀上清大洞三徵君. He hailed from Changle 長樂 (Fujian) and practiced the Way on Mt. Heng together with Xu Lingfu and Chen Xianglin.[40] He received 'true instructions' (*zhenjue* 真訣) and the esoteric teachings of the Three Caverns (*Sandong you'ao* 三洞

35 The *Nanyue xiaolu* 南嶽小錄 (DZ 453) by Li Chongzhao 李沖昭 (9th century), the *Nanyue zongsheng ji* 南嶽總勝集 (DZ 606; T. 2097) by Chen Tianfu 陳田夫 (12th century) and the *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* by Zhao Daoyi 趙道一 (fl. 1294-1307) of the Song dynasty all contain information on this temple.

36 *Dongxuan lingbao san shi ji* 3a-b.

37 *Dongxuan lingbao san shi ji*, 3a-b; *Nanyue xiaolu* 13b-14a. Franciscus Verellen argued that Tian Xuying most probably did not go with them to Tiantai. Verellen, *Du Guangting*, 21.

38 *Chicheng zhi* 35:12b.

39 *Dongxuan lingbao san shi ji* 3b.

40 *Dongxuan lingbao san shi ji* 2a-b. See also *Chicheng zhi* 35:12b, where his surname is miswritten as "馬". In the Song source, his *zi* is Yunyi 雲翼. The brief biography contained in the gazetteers fundamentally agrees with the Daoist text and it specifies that Master Feng employed the "arts of the Three Caverns" 三洞法.

幽奧) at the altar of Master Tian Xuying, the Jiangzhen Hall. As we have seen, Feng Weiliang together with Xu Lingfu and Chen Xianglin moved to Mt. Tiantai, probably between their master's death in 811 and 820, and they settled down at the Tongbai Abbey. The temple, according to this source, had been repaired for the last time by Xue Jichang, so its buildings were covered by vegetation.[41] The three Daoists decided to restore them, erecting the Shangqing Pavilion 上清閣, the Jiangzhen Hall 降真堂, the Baiyun Pavilion 白雲亭 and the Xiaoxian Temple 翛閑院, in order to recover Master Zhenyi's legacy.[42] Feng Weiliang was reportedly summoned by emperors Xianzong 憲宗 (r. 806-820) and Jingzong 敬宗 (r. 824-826), but refused the invitations and instead isolated himself in the Hualin Valley 華林谷, where he built the Bingyao Retreat 柄瑤隱居. Among his disciples, this source lists Ying Sandong 應三洞 (Ying Yijie 夷節), Ye Cangzhi 葉藏質 (*zi*: Hanxiang 含象), Liu Chujing 劉處靜 (Liu Xiandu 仙都) and Shen Guanwu 沈觀無.[43] The most famous is probably Liu Chujing (whose name is also written Xuanjing 玄靖 or 玄靜), whom the header of the *San shi ji* calls Master Guangcheng. He accepted Wuzong's invitation to court, and in 844 he received the title 'Grand Master of Imperial Entertainments with Silver [Seal] and Blue [Ribbon]' 銀青光祿大夫, so he can by all means be considered a court Daoist.[44]

Ying Yijie (*zi*: Dizhong 適中; 810-894) is the third master, also called Ordination Master, Great Cavern of Shangqing at the Daoyuan Temple of Mount Tiantai, Master Daoyuan Awarded the Purple [Robe] (*dushi tiantaishan daoyuan yuan shangqing dadong daoyuan xiansheng cizi* 度師天台山道元院上清大洞道元先生賜紫).[45] His ancestors hailed

41 The *San shi ji* states: "At that time, many years had passed since Master Zhenyi had restored the Tongbai Abbey" 時桐柏觀自貞一先生繕修之後, 綿歷歲年. 'Master Zhenyi' was an epithet of both Sima Chengzhen and Xue Jichang, but since the text refers to the restoration of the temple and not to its edification, I suggest that it here indicates the latter.

42 Here, again, determining who this master was is problematic. Sima Chengzhen would seem to be the most obvious choice, being the most important Daoist of the Tang dynasty related to the abbey. Consistency, though, requires that the two references to Master Zhenyi should be understood as indicating the same individual.

43 Cf. Hu, *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian*, 105.

44 Cf. Hu, *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian*, 107. Franciscus Verellen noted that the title of "Master Guangcheng" was bestowed at least once per generation on Daoists belonging to the lineage of the three masters. He also argues that it was the same epithet held by Laozi as counsellor of the Yellow Emperor. Cf. Verellen, *Imperilled Destinies*, 297-8; Jia, "Du Guangting and the Hagiographies", 86. On the title *yinqing guanglu dafu*, see Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 581.

45 It should be noted here that each of the three masters is respectively addressed with a different title: *jingshi* 經師 (scripture master), *jishi* 籍師 (transmission master) and *dushi* (ordination master). While these titles are used to indicate different generations within the same lineage, probably in relation to the author of the text, the same words were used during the Tang dynasty to address offices concurrently involved in

from the area south of Runan 汝南 (Henan) and during the Eastern Jin they settled near Mt. Jinhua 金華山 (Zhejiang).[46] At the age of seven he left his parents to study the Way, so he became the disciple of Wu Xuansu 吳玄素 of the Lingrui Abbey 靈瑞觀 of Lanxi County 蘭溪縣 (today part of Jinhua City 金華市). Master Wu bestowed on him a set of texts belonging to the Daoist and the Confucian corpora: the 'true scripture' of Nanhua 南華真經 (i.e. the *Zhuangzi* 莊子), the Chongxu 沖虛 (i.e. the *Liezi* 列子) and Tongling 通靈 (which in fact refers to the *Tongxuan* 通玄, i.e. the *Wenzi* 文子), the *Zhouyi* 周易, the *Xiaojing* 孝經 and Confucius's *Analects*. When he was 15 years old, he went to Tiantai and received the Zhengyi 正一 initiation, which corresponded to the first rank of Daoist ordination, receiving the title of disciple of the Superior and Mysterious Purple Void (*gaoxuan zixu* 高玄紫虛), when he was 17.[47] At the age of 18, he went to Mt. Longhu, where he received the third rank and the position of Great Inspector of Merit (*da dugong* 大都功) from the 18th Heavenly Master.[48] When he was 24 years old, he received the 'true writs of Lingbao' (*Lingbao zhenwen* 靈寶真文) and the ritual methods of the scriptures of the *Dongshen* 洞神 and of the *Dongxuan* 洞玄.[49] Then, we are told, "at 29 he entered the Ascent to Mystery" (*ershijiu jin shengxuan* 二十九進昇玄). This might

ordinations rituals. These titles were already mentioned in the *Wushang biyao* 舞上祕要, where they indicated different liturgical roles. Lin, *Tangdai Daojiao guanli zhidu yanjiu*, 166. For a 19th century use of the three titles to indicate three successive generations of masters, see the interlinear commentary in *Jingai xindeng* 4:21.

46 *Dongxuan lingbao san shi ji* 5b-8b.

47 On the Daoist ranks during the Tang dynasty, cf. Kohn, "Ordination and Priesthood" 19; *The Daoist Monastic Manual*; "Medieval Daoist Ordination"; Schipper, "Taoist Ordination Ranks in the Tunhuang Manuscripts". I have interpreted the expression *gaoxuan zixu* found in the *San shi ji* as a reference to the first level of initiation, Newly Ordained in the Register of the Purple Void (*xinshou taishang daode gaoxuan gaoshang zixu dizi* 新授太上道德高玄高上紫虛弟子). The corresponding ordination ritual is found in *Taishang San Dong chuanshou Daode jing Zixu lu baibiao yi* 太上三洞傳授道德經紫虛籙拜表儀 (Ritual of the Presentation of the Memorials for the Transmission of the Register of the Purple Void and the *Daode jing*; DZ 808), edited by Du Guangting. Cf. Schipper, "Taishang San Dong chuanshou Daode jing Zixu lu baibiao yi ".

48 The *dugong* (inspector of merit) was the highest office in the Celestial Masters' hierarchy during the Tang. *Dugong* were heads of dioceses and could bestow all levels of ordination, except for the highest. Schipper, "Zhengyi fawen chuan dugong banyi". Cf. *Zhengyi fawen chuan dugong banyi* 正一法文傳都功版儀 (DZ 1211), which contains models of ordination documents and memorials. Vincent Goossaert argues that the invention of the new ordination register, the [*sanwu*] *dugong lu* [三五]都功籙, was instrumental for the rise of the ordination monopoly of the Zhangs of Mt. Longhu, as well as of their prestige and influence, from the 9th century on. Goossaert, *Heavenly Masters*, 63-9.

49 It is not clear whether the 'true writs' refer to those employed during the initiation rituals, copied on wooden tablets and tied to gold dragons of the kind mentioned in *Taishang dongxuan Lingbao zhongjian wen* 太上洞玄靈寶眾簡文 (DZ 410), or to the celestial writs that spontaneously appeared at the origin of the cosmos such as those discussed in the *Yuanshi wulao chishu yupian zhenwen tianshu jing* 元始五老赤書玉篇真文天書經 (Scripture on the True Writs of the Five Ancients of the Primordial Beginning,

refer to initiation into the Shengxuan tradition, which was linked with the *Shengxuan neijiao jing* 昇玄内教經, a text now lost, but partially preserved in the *Taishang lingbao shengxuan neijiao jing zhonghe pin shuyi shu* 太上靈寶昇玄内教經中和品述議疏 (DZ 1122) and among the Dunhuang manuscripts.[50] At 32 he received the talismans of the *Shangqing dadong* 上清大洞, the *Huiju bidao* 回車畢道, the *Ziwen sudai* 紫文素帶, the *Jidi shengtian* 藉地騰天.[51] In 843 he was dwelling on the Cuiping Cliff 翠屏巖, west of the Tongbai Abbey.

We are also provided the lineage of the transmission of the *Shangqing dafa* 上清大法, which corresponds to the Shangqing lineage of the Mao Mountains only in its first part: Tao Hongjing > Wang Shengxuan 王昇玄 (528-635) > Pan Tixuan 潘體玄 > Sima Chengzhen > Xue Jichang > Tian Liangyi > Feng Weiliang > Ying Yijie.[52] As has already been observed by John Lagerwey, Xue Jichang and his disciples here present an alternative lineage to the official Shangqing lineage included in the *Maoshan zhi*, although it can be found also in the *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑 (DZ 298).[53] Lagerwey thus hypothesises that the *San shi ji* was written in order to promote this alternative lineage, which led up to Du Guangting, the second most famous court Daoist of the Shangqing lineage of the Tang dynasty.

If we read the *San shi ji* as an attempt to legitimise the specific lineage described therein, we can draw some conclusions on the history of the Tongbai Abbey during the Tang dynasty. The

Red Writings in Celestial Script on Jade Tablets; DZ 22). *Taishang dongxuan Lingbao zhongjian wen* 255; Schmidt, "Yuanshi wulao chishu yupian zhenwen tianshu jing".

50 Cf. Schipper, "General Introduction", 13; "Taishang lingbao shengxuan neijiao jing zhonghe pin shuyi shu"; Lagerwey, "Taishang dongxuan lingbao xuanjie shouhui zhongzui baohu jing".

51 *Huiju bidao* refers to a Shangqing register related to a Daoist's final retreat to a mountain to practice ascension, but since he received the talismans when he was only 32 years old, this seems improbable. There exists also a *Shangqing tianshu yuan huiju bidao zhengfa* 上清天樞院回車畢道正法 (True Shangqing Method of Returning by Chariot and Completing the Way According to the Department of the Celestial Pivot; DZ 549), which in its current recension was probably edited during the Song dynasty and contains exorcistic methods related to the *Tianxian zhengfa* 天仙正法. Andersen, "Shangqing tianshu yuan huiju bidao zhengfa".

52 *Dongxuan lingbao san shi ji* 6a. Wang Shengxuan (*ming*: Yuanzhi 遠智 or 遠知; *zi*: Guangde 廣德) hailed from a family of officials in Shandong. He met emperors of the Sui and of the Tang dynasties. His is responsible for beginning the construction of the Taiping Abbey 太平觀 on the Mao Mountains. In 680 Emperor Gaozong bestowed on him the title Master Shengzhen 昇真先生 and in 684 Empress Wu changed his title to Master Shengxuan 昇玄先生. Xue Jichang also hailed from a family of officials. He reportedly accepted Emperor Xuanzong's summoning to court, where they discussed Daoist doctrine. Hu, *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian*, 92, 98.

53 Lagerwey, "Dongxuan Lingbao sanshi ji"; *Maoshan zhi* 11:2b-5a; *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 40:1a-8b.

three masters Tian, Feng and Ying are undoubtedly portrayed as eminent Shangqing masters. This lineage was originally based on Mt. Heng and traced its tradition to the teachings transmitted by Sima Chengzhen's disciple Xue Jichang. At the beginning of the 9th century, this lineage moved from Mt. Heng to the Tiantai Mountains. Although the reasons for this shift are yet to be determined, they might be related to the competition between the different Shangqing lineages that had been established on the Heng and Mao mountains and other places. In this way, its members were effectively travelling closer to the origins of their own lineage, to one of Sima Chengzhen's residences and to a place of imperial sponsorship. From a symbolic perspective, then, Mt. Tongbai was religiously significant on account of all the strata of meaning it had accumulated during the centuries. It was also politically important, since it was not difficult for the court, the officials, the religious specialists and the commoners to relate the Daoist community living on Mt. Tongbai to its recent history and Ruizong's sponsorship. This is all the truer if we consider that these Daoists stressed their having inherited Sima Chengzhen's tradition.

If we shift our attention toward the three masters' own achievements, the bestowal of imperial honours on Ying Yijie in the form of the 'purple robe' is a very important piece of information. This means that at the end of the 9th century the lineage of the three masters maintained the close relationship with the court that characterised its alleged patriarch, Sima Chengzhen. In this regard, it is important to remember that the Shangqing initiation was but the highest and most prestigious of the series of initiations that these Daoists had received. To unravel the implications of this would draw us very far from the purposes of this book, but fundamentally it means two things: first, that the construction of a Daoist's identity in this period (as well as in later periods, as I will demonstrate in the last chapter) was not based on a unique, univocal tradition; and second, that Mt. Tongbai continued to maintain its prominence for Shangqing Daoism until the 9th century.

In conclusion, at the time the Tang dynasty ended, the Tongbai Abbey was still regarded as part of the network of court Daoist institutions. The intimate ties between the abbey and the court are confirmed by the life of the most prominent court Daoist of this period, Du Guangting. In his youth, Du Guangting was considered an 'eminent literatus' (*juru* 巨儒), but despite his great talent he failed the imperial examinations during Emperor Yizong's 懿宗 reign (r. 859-873).[54] Afterward, Du went to the Tiantai Mountains, where he became a disciple of Ying Yijie, the descendant of the court Daoist Ying Zangzhi (fl. 860-874) and, of course, the last of the three

54 *Chicheng zhi* 35:13b.

masters.[55] During this period, Du had the opportunity to explore the area, study the history of the place and become familiar with the stories related to the mountain: this experience influenced his entire career, and much of the knowledge that he accumulated in this period ended up in his writings.[56]

3.3 Du Guangting

Du Guangting launched his career as a court Daoist at his first audience with Emperor Xizong 僖宗 in 875.[57] His activity at court then continued beyond the fall of the Tang dynasty and into the Former Shu Kingdom 前蜀國 (907-925). Du's biography is therefore of paramount importance for our understanding of Daoist history in general, but also for the present study of Daoism in Tiantai County.

Du was a renowned ritualist who performed Lingbao liturgies multiple times for the courts and who authored ritual and biographical collections.[58] These works had two principal functions: systematising Daoist knowledge and legitimising the ruling family that Du was serving. For example, his *Wang shi shenxian zhuan* 王氏神仙傳 (Biographies of Immortals of the Wang Family) is a clear attempt at legitimising the ruling family of the Former Shu, founded by Wang Jian 王建 (r. 907-918).[59] This agenda was at times carried out through the initiation of the emperor to Daoist hierarchies, followed by the imperial bestowal of prestigious titles on Du Guangting. For example, in 923 the Daoist granted a register to Wang Yan 王衍 (r. 918-925), and received the title of *chuanzhen tianshi* 傳真天師 (Celestial Master who Transmits the Truth).[60] This practice of mutual legitimation between

55 Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933)*, 17-27.

56 For example, Du Guangting included Master Hanshan's 寒山子 biography in his *Xianzhuan shiyi* 仙傳拾遺 (today only available as a quotation in the *Taiping guangji*) and being one of the earliest accounts of Hanshan, it is extremely significant. Rouzer, *On Cold Mountain: A Buddhist Reading of* the *Hanshan Poems*, 42-3. Interestingly, here Hanshan is included in the group of transcendents 仙, as the title of the work suggests. He reportedly went to Mount Cuiping 翠屏山 (which belongs to the Tiantai mountain range) during the Dali 大曆 reign (766-779) to practice the Dao. Mt. Cuiping was a cold place, where the snow did not melt even during summer: therefore, the peak was also called Mt. Han 寒山 (literally 'cold mountain'), hence his sobriquet. He is described as a poetry lover who authored a total of 300 poems, later collected by Xu Lingfu in an anthology in 3 *juan* with a preface by Xu himself.

57 Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933)*, 35.

58 For example, fast of the Yellow Register 黃籙齋 for the Tang court in 880 and the Shu in the 910s, see Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933)*, 40, 166.

59 Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933)*, 153, 178-80. On another collection of biographies by Du Guangting, the *Yongcheng jixian lu*, see Jia, "Du Guangting and the Hagiographies".

60 Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933)*, 178.

the religious and the political authorities was, of course, not unique to Du's relationship with the court. The Daoist ordination of sovereigns had already been carried out most notably by Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (365-448) on Taiwu 太武 (r. 423-452) of the Northern Wei 北魏 and by the Daoists Tao Hongjing, Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406-477), Pan Shizheng (596-684), Sima Chengzhen and Li Hanguang.[61]

Du Guangting's significance for the history of Daoism traces back to a complex interaction of different factors. He had a profound knowledge of Daoist liturgy, which he used both for religious and political aims. He was also a man of letters trained in the Confucian classics and doctrine, and for this reason he could effectively bridge the two traditions and comfortably interact with elite representatives of the most prominent social and religious communities of the 10th century.[62] His ability to relate with other literati and court Buddhist monks, along with his literary and ritual skills, gained him access to the imperial sponsorship that he used to support and promote Daoism.

On the institutional level, Du Guangting linked two geographical extremes of the Tang empire. He was trained in Daoism and practised it in the Jiangnan region, but spent the last years of his life on Mt. Qingcheng 青城山 (Sichuan), at the western frontier of the empire. I cannot thoroughly discuss the magnitude of Du Guangting's influence on Daoism during the Former Shu kingdom, but previous studies have stressed his long-term impact on Daoist development in Sichuan. The magnitude of his influence on the history of Daoism in general can hardly be overestimated, and from the time of the Song dynasty he was considered a fundamental figure of the Lingbao tradition.

So far, I have discussed those Daoists related to Tongbai Palace who belonged to the elite religious specialists operating at court and side by side with the highest levels of society. The construction of the Tongbai Abbey in 711 was the result of imperial sponsorship, aimed at supporting a charismatic representative of the elite clergy with the highest levels of initiation. The presence of elite masters at the Tongbai Abbey certainly continued until the 9th and 10th centuries, up until the time of Du Guangting. The fall of the Tang dynasty also meant that some of these elite Daoists moved westward, following the court. I consider the 10th century as the first watershed in the history of Tongbai Palace, because during this period the centuries-old relationship between it and the court was ultimately broken. Moreover, as I will discuss below, the Tiantai region and Tongbai Palace came to be related with distinct traditions that developed during the Song dynasty, so that by the Yuan the local religious landscape was very different from that at the end of the Tang dynasty.

61 Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933)*, 187.

62 On this point, see also Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933)*, 187.

In these paragraphs I chose to focus only on the most significant lineages that were tied to Tongbai Palace and the court, but this does not mean that the Daoist communities operating in Tiantai County were limited to such Daoist communities. In fact, the gazetteers and the Daoist texts contain some records about several other Daoists, including Daoist nuns, who operated in that area during the Tang dynasty, but information on them is patchy at best and their relationship with the broader Daoist network is often unclear.[63] It would still be useful, for future studies, to focus on these Daoists: more data about them would allow us better to understand pre-modern local Daoism. In any case, they bear less significance for the present study of Tongbai Palace, because after the end of the Tang dynasty, Tongbai Palace developed a whole new series of strata of cultural and religious meanings, supplanting even Sima Chengzhen and his tradition.

3.4 From the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms to the Ming Dynasty

During the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms 五代十國 era (907-960), we witness a diversification of the religious landscape, following the political fragmentation of the empire's territory. During the Later Zhou 後周 (951-960), Emperor Shizong 世宗 (r. 954-959) favoured Daoism and persecuted Buddhism, leading to the destruction – according to some sources – of more than 90% of the Buddhist monasteries in his territory.[64]

Despite the political instability that affected the territory of the defunct Tang dynasty, this period was very important for the history of Tongbai Palace. According to the *Chicheng zhi*, the first major event occurred during the Kaiping 開平 era (907-911) of the Later Liang 後梁 dynasty, when the Tongbai Abbey was promoted to the status of palace (gong 宮).[65] This means that the name by which the temple is still known today, i.e. Tongbai Palace 桐柏宮, was initially bestowed on it only after the Tang dynasty.

In the sequence of different realms that ruled during this period, the Wuyue 吳越 kingdom (907-978) influenced the development of Tongbai Palace the most. This dynasty was founded by Qian Liu 錢鏐

63 For a collection of sources on the various Daoists of Taizhou during the Tang dynasty, see Ren, Ma, *Taizhou Daojiao kao*, 68-95.

64 Qing and Tang, *Daojiao shi*, 148-9.

65 *Chicheng zhi* 30:4b. Tiantai xian dang'an guan, *Chongding Tiantai Shan fangwai zhiyao dianjiaoben*, 162. To count years, the *Chicheng zhi* relies on the era names of what were considered, from the time of the Song dynasty, the 'legitimate' dynasties, ruling over the Central Plains: in this case, the Later Liang. On the determination of the legitimate dynasties during the Song, cf. Mote, *Imperial China*, 8-10.

(852-932) and it extended over a territory corresponding to present day southeast Jiangsu, Zhejiang and northeast Fujian. It was one of the smallest southern kingdoms, but also among the wealthiest. This was partially due to the natural resources in its territory, which favoured certain kinds of high-yield crops (e.g. rice), and to the commercial enterprises of its population, but also to the long period of political stability created by the Qian rulers.[66] The capital, Hangzhou, was one of the major cultural centres of the period together with Chengdu (the capital of the Former Shu) and Nanjing (the capital of the Southern Tang 南唐) and it developed the industry of fine printing. Hangzhou was also a cosmopolitan city that benefited from the rulers' attention to diplomatic relationships with Japan and Korea.[67]

Buddhism was an important diplomatic tool for the Wuyue kingdom, especially in its relations with Japan and the Korean peninsula; it was also a political instrument applicable both on the internal front and in relations with neighbouring kingdoms and dynasties.[68] We should also bear in mind the personal devotion of the rulers of Wuyue. Three examples related to Qian Chu 錢俶 (929-988, r. 947-978), who would become the fifth and last ruler of Wuyue, will clarify the extent of his patronage. In 947, a few months before his ascent to the throne, Qian Chu was appointed governor of Taizhou by the third ruler, Qian Zuo 錢佐 (r. 941-947). This gave him the opportunity to meet Shi Deshao 釋德韶 (891-972) a disciple of the Chan master Fayan Wenyi 法眼文益 (885-958) who lived in the Tiantai Mountains and who reportedly prophesied to Qian Chu that he would become ruler of Wuyue. It so happened that when Qian Chu actually became the new ruler of Wuyue, he bestowed on Deshao the title of Great Chan Master (*da chanshi* 大禪師) and teacher of the state. Deshao also contributed to the restoration and construction of many temples in the Tiantai Mountains and to recovering lost scriptures belonging to the Tiantai school 天台宗 of Buddhism. Moreover, in the preface to the *Zongjing lu* 宗鏡錄 by the Buddhist monk Yongming Yanshou 永明延壽 (904-975), Qian Chu defined Confucianism as his own teacher, Daoism as the teacher of Confucianism and Buddhism as the teacher of Daoism. Finally, he received the bodhisattva precepts, the highest level of initiation, from Shi Daoqian 釋道潛 (?-961), one of Fayan Wenyi's disciples.[69]

66 Worthy, "Diplomacy for Survival", 17-44; Mote, *Imperial China*, 19.

67 Mote, *Imperial China*, 21-2.

68 Worthy, "Diplomacy for Survival", 36. For example, the third ruler of Wuyue, Qian Zuo, asked the Japanese court for sutras in 947, after he was informed that the Tiantai school of Buddhism was popular there and Qia Chu made similar requests to Japan and Koryo. Cf. Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs*, 99-100.

69 Brose, *Patrons and Patriarchs*, 89-100.

At the same time, the rulers of Wuyue also patronised Daoism, with beneficial consequences for its development as well as for Tongbai Palace: the Wuyue rulers published a new edition of the *Daoist Canon*, built or renovated Daoist temples and paid respect to Daoist priests.[70] It was Qian Chu who rebuilt Tongbai Palace for the Daoist Zhu Xiaowai 朱霄外 (fl. 10th century), bestowing on the temple '200 caskets of scriptures written in gold and silver' (*jinyin zi jing erbai han* 金銀字經二百涵) and the effigies of the Three Pure Ones 三清 made of bronze. The scriptures were stored in a library (*zangjing dian* 藏經殿) located northwest of the Shangqing Pavilion 上清閣 of the temple.[71] This effectively turned Tongbai Palace into one of the two repositories of a Daoist canon of the Five Dynasties era: the other, located in the state of the Former Shu, was developed by Du Guangting who, as we have seen in this chapter, was himself originally linked with the Daoist community of Tongbai Palace.[72]

Zhu Xiaowai was well known at the Wuyue capital, Qiantang 錢塘 (Hangzhou), but I have not found biographical information on him outside of gazetteers dated between the Song and the Ming dynasties. According to one biography found in the *Chicheng zhi*, he refused the honours offered to him by Qian Chu and in 951 left the capital to build a retreat in Tiantai, which during the Jiading 嘉定 era (1208-1224) was known as Xixia Palace 栖霞宮.[73] The section of the gazetteer dedicated to Daoist temples indicates that Xixia Palace was located 260 steps northwest of the prefecture and that it was previously called Baiyun Retreat 白雲菴. The name 'Xixia Palace' was bestowed on it in the Dazhong Xiangfu 大中祥符 era (1008-1016).[74] Historical sources mention other temples located within the prefecture that were linked to Zhu Xiaowai's activities. The first one was located 25 li north of Tiantai County, the place where Zhu Xiaowai reportedly established another retreat in 951. In 1066, the temple received the name of Shengshou Temple 聖壽院, by which it is recorded in the *Chicheng zhi*.[75] The temple was located west of the Tongbai Abbey, a detail that helps us understand why Zhu Xiaowai was involved

70 Ren, Ma, *Taizhou Daojiao kao*, 69.

71 "Chongjian Daozang jing ji", in *Tiantai Shan zhi* 13b-14a; *Chicheng zhi* 30:4b-5a; Tiantai xian dang'an guan, *Chongding Tiantai Shan fangwai zhiyao dianjiaoben*, 162. The *Chicheng zhi* states that this happened in the second year of the Guangshun 廣順 era (952). For a short biography on Zhu Xiaowai, cf. *Chicheng zhi* 35:14a-b.

72 Chen, *Wang Qizhen "Shangqing lingbao dafa" yanjiu*, 44.

73 *Chicheng zhi* 35:14a.

74 *Chicheng zhi* 30:2b.

75 *Chicheng zhi* 30:11b.

in the imperial patronage of Tongbai Palace.[76] Zhu Xiaowai is also mentioned in relation to two other projects. According to the *Chicheng zhi*, in 951 he built a Sanqing Hall 三清殿 at the location of the former Yuxiao Palace 玉霄宫, on top of the Yuxiao Peak 玉霄峰, a temple reportedly established in 854 by the Daoist Ye Cangzhi, whom I have mentioned above as one of Feng Weiliang's disciples. The temple was renamed Dongtian Palace 洞天宫 in 1008.[77] Finally, during the Qianyou 乾佑 era of the Later Han dynasty (948-951), the king renovated a temple located 25 li northwest of Tiantai County for Zhu Xiaowai, and had one hundred statues of sandalwood carved for it. It was supposedly located where Ge Xuan set up his retreat in 238 and where he received the revelation from three Perfected of the *Zhenyi quanjie falun miaojing* 真一勸誡法輪妙經: Ge Xuan was said to have subsequently built the Jiangzhen Altar 降真壇 on the same spot.[78] Similarly to many other places discussed in these pages, and to Tongbai Palace itself, this location also developed special significance thanks to the accumulation of subsequent strata of meaning during the centuries. Finally, in 1008 it was renamed Falun Temple 法輪院.[79]

The obvious interest of the Wuyue court toward Daoism in the 950s might be justified for several reasons, but I find it worthy of note that it coincides chronologically with the political and military ascension of the Later Zhou dynasty; this preceded the latter's invasion of the Southern Tang, which started in 955 with the help of Wuyue. As mentioned above, the Later Zhou were very favourable toward Daoism, but much less toward Buddhism, so one wonders whether the patronage of Daoism in Wuyue was motivated also by the wish for improving the diplomatic relations between the two countries or even as a means of competition for religious and ideological prestige.

76 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 5:5b. Tiantai xian dang'an guan, *Chongding Tiantai Shan fangwai zhiyao dianjiaoben*, 170. The latter calls the temple Shengshou Abbey (*Shengshou guan* 聖壽觀) and states that it was located to the west of Tongbai Palace itself.

77 *Chicheng zhi* 30:10a.

78 The *Chicheng zhi* only reports "during the Qianyou era of the Han [dynasty]" 漢乾祐中. This refers to the Qianyou era of the Later Han (948-951). The *Chicheng zhi* seems to consistently rely on the reign names of the 'legitimate' dynasties, so the sentence should refer specifically to the years 948-51. Based on the fact that the numerous acts of regal patronage in favour of Zhu Xiaowai are often dated to 951, my guess would be that the restoration of the temple happened around that same year. The *Zhenyi quanjie falun miaojing* refers to the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhenyi quanjie falun miaojing* and to three other texts found in the *Daozang*. Cf. Schipper, "Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhenyi quanjie falun miaojing".

79 *Chicheng zhi* 30:11a.

3.4.1 The Song Dynasty

The relationship between Daoism and the court continued during the Song 宋 dynasty, benefiting both parties and repeating to a certain extent patterns that had already developed under the Tang. Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997) already relied on Daoism to legitimate his ascension to the throne, using oracles revealed by the divine general Yisheng 翊聖. The Song emperors most supportive toward Daoism were Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 998-1023) and Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1101-1125), who both wrote commentaries on the *Daode jing*. The former ordered the establishment of Tianqing abbeys 天慶觀 in every prefecture in 1009. In 1019 the Song edition of the Daoist canon (*Da Song Tiangong baozang* 大宋天宮寶藏), whose compilation started in 990 during Taizong's reign (but was finally presented to Emperor Zhenzong) and employed the large amount of scriptures stored at Tongbai Palace. Another work that appears to be related with the redaction of the Song canon is Zhang Junfang's 張君房 (961?-1042?) *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (DZ 1026) in 122 *juan*, one of the largest anthologies of Daoist scriptures included in the *Zhengtong daozang*: some scholars argue that also this work contained textual material stored in the library of Tiantai Palace.[80] Although the author dedicated this work to Emperor Zhenzong, internal evidence tells that he must have presented the *Yunji qiqian* to the successor, Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1022-1063), after 1025.[81] Emperor Zhenzong elevated Yuhuang 玉皇, the Jade Emperor, to the top of the celestial hierarchy and built a temple to Zhenwu 真武, the Dark Warrior, in the capital, promoting him as the protector of the dynasty. Huizong is probably the most famous sponsor of Daoism among the Song emperors. In 1105, he decreed the precedence of Daoism over Buddhism. The Zhang Celestial Masters 張天師 of Mt. Longhu 龍虎山, whose significance within Daoism had already started to rise at the end of the Tang dynasty, and who would be the main Daoist institution of the Ming, reinforced their position in the Song dynasty thanks to imperial sponsorship. Huizong bestowed titles on the patriarch of the Celestial Masters, Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (2nd century) and on the 29th and 30th Celestial Masters, and ordered the grandiose construction of the headquarters of the Celestial Masters on Mt. Longhu. In 1113, the emperor sponsored a new Daoist canon, the *Zhenghe wanshou zangjing* 政和萬壽藏經, which was completed around 1119. In 1117, having learned that he was the manifestation of a god of the highest heaven (called Shenxiao 神霄), the emperor created a network of Shenxiao palaces 神霄宮 in the empire, converting Buddhist and Daoist temples for the purpose.

80 Zhu, *Tiantai Shan Daojiao shi*, 104-5.

81 Schipper, "Yunji qiqian"; Boltz, "Yunji qiqian".

This was reportedly justified by the self-imposed mission of saving the empire and getting rid of Buddhism. Later, it was Emperor Lizong 里宗 (r. 1224-1264) who gave authority to the Celestial Masters over the three main mountains of Daoism: Mt. Longhu, Mt. Gezao 葛皂山 and the Mao Mountains. Zhenzong, as well as Renzong, Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1067-1087), Huizong and Qinzong 欽宗 (r. 1126-1127) after him, bestowed titles on Zhenwu or on his temples or on both.[82]

The Tongbai area was still significant at the beginning of the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). Thanks to Xia Song's 夏竦 (985-1051) "Chongjian Daozang jing ji" 重建道藏經記 (Record of the Reconstruction of the Daoist Library), dated to the year 1010, we know that the collection of the scriptures stored at Tongbai Palace was used by the Song emperors as the basis for the new Daoist canon sponsored by the court. In 985, once the Song dynasty had strengthened its control over the empire, Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r. 976-997) ordered that the scriptures stored at Tongbai Palace be brought to Yuhang, so that they might be used to compile a new Daoist canon. The scriptures were subsequently brought back to the library on Mt. Tongbai, but only ten years later the building was showing signs of decline and the Daoists were afraid that the weather might compromise the integrity of the scriptures. So, in 995, the building's rotting components were substituted and it was repainted.[83]

The temple continued to draw imperial support during the 11th century. Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (r. 998-1022) renamed it 'Chongdao Abbey of [Mt.] Tongbai' (*Tongbai Chongdao Guan* 桐柏崇道觀) in 1008.[84] In the same year, a series of other temples were renamed: Dongtian Palace and the Falun Hermitage, which I have already mentioned; what was considered the former dwelling of Xu Lingfu on Mt. Tongbai, was renamed 'Guangming Palace' 光明宮; the 'Buddha's Cave' 佛窟, rebuilt as a Daoist temple in the Huichang era 會昌 (841-846), was renamed 'Zhaoqing Abbey' 昭慶觀. Finally, in 1011 the Tiantai Abbey, located southwest of Tongbai Palace, was renamed Fusheng Abbey 福聖觀.[85] In 1027 Emperor Renzong dispatched

82 Ebrey, "Song Government Policy", 81-93, 99-100; Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, 229; Skar, "Ritual Movements", 419-27; Chao, "Huizong and the Divine Empyrean Palace", 324-58.

83 "Chongjian Daozang jing ji", in *Tiantai Shan zhi* 13a-15b. The *Tiantai Shan zhi* is a compilation of texts on the Tiantai Mountains, found in the *Daozang* and probably dated to the beginning of the Ming dynasty. Cf. Allistone, "Tiantai Shan zhi".

84 *Chicheng zhi* 30:5a; "Chongjian Daozang jing ji", in *Tiantai Shan zhi* 14b.

85 *Chicheng zhi*, 30:9a-10b. According to the tradition, the Fusheng Abbey was built by Ge Xuan in the second year of the Chiwu 赤烏 era (239) and it was previously called Tiantai Abbey. *Chicheng zhi*, 30:8b-9b; Tiantai xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi, *Qing Kangxi Tiantai Xian zhi dianjiaoben*, 273; Tiantai xian dang'an guan, *Chongding Tiantai Shan fangwai zhiyao dianjiaoben*, 162.

a court representative there to perform the ritual tossing of the dragons.[86]

Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1100-1125) was one of the most active supporters of Daoism among all Song rulers. It comes as little surprise, then, that he also sponsored Daoist temples in as prominent an area as Tiantai. In 1116, the Huizong Yuanming Hall 徽宗元命殿 of the Chongdao Abbey was built. The *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* of the Ming dynasty adds that the Yuanming Hall was built "in the style of an (imperial) palace, with green glazed tiles" 一如宮制, 瓦用青色琉璃.[87] I could not confirm this description by comparing it with earlier sources, but if what I have translated reflects the truth, then architecturally Tongbai Palace was honoured with the same markers of prestige as those of an imperial palace. The *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* mentions more buildings constructed on this occasion: two bridges built over the Suo Brook 梭溪 and, on top of them, the Huixian Pavilion 會仙亭, the main gate (*dongmen*) to the south, the abbot's quarters (*fangzhang* 方丈), a refectory (*zhaitang* 齋堂), a gathering hall (*yuntang* 雲堂), the Tudi Hall 土地堂, the Sanzhen Hall 三真殿, the Shangqing Pavilion 上清閣, and the Yushu Pavillion 御書閣.[88] This last building suggests that the temple also hosted examples of imperial calligraphic works. In fact, we already find mention of this in the *Chicheng zhi*, where it is written that handwritten texts of three emperors and Song Gaozong's books of calligraphic practice in the Jin and Tang styles (*Gaozong suo lin Jin Tang tie* 高宗所臨晉唐貼) were stored in the pavilion; but this source, too, does not provide further details. If we are to trust the *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi*, the documents also included 53 scrolls of texts handwritten by the emperors Taizong and Zhenzong. In any case, by the 13th century, these treasures were no longer extant.[89]

In addition to imperial patronage, private sponsors contributed to the survival and to the prestige of Tongbai Palace. The final part of the entry dedicated to Tongbai Palace in the *Chicheng zhi* records that in 1152, Yang He 楊和 and Wang Cunzhong 王存中 restored the Sanqing Hall and that later, three gates were restored by Cao Xun 曹勛 (1098-1174), who then built a retreat north of Tongbai Palace, called Chongqiang Retreat 沖墻庵.[90] A text authored by Cao Xun himself sheds more light on this occurrence. In the *Chongxiu Tongbai ji* 重修桐柏記 (Record of the Restoration of the Tongbai [Abbey]; 1168)

86 *Chicheng zhi*, 30:9a.

87 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:17b.

88 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:17b.

89 *Chicheng zhi* 30:5a; *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:17b.

90 *Chicheng zhi* 30:5a. For a biography of Cao Xun, see *Chicheng zhi* 34:27b.

he described the efforts of a group of patrons who restored the temple. Cao Xun began his record with a geographical description of the territory: "On the right of Mt. Tiantai there is [Mt.] Tongbai. It is about ten li from [Tiantai]" 天台山之右, 曰桐柏。自城距洞門, 約十里時至. Then, after a brief mention of Ge Xianweng 葛仙翁 (Ge Xuan) and Sima Chengzhen, Cao Xun focuses on the extraordinary, even supernatural qualities of the mountain and supports his claim with a quotation from Tao Hongjing's *Zhengao*. After having clarified the reasons for this place's importance, he describes its state of disrepair and informs the reader that since the time of the Five Dynasties the temple has been abandoned and its statues are ruined and rotten. As we have seen, this was far from the truth, and one wonders if Cao Xun did not know the recent history of Tongbai Palace, or if he wilfully ignored it. All this leads to the part where he explains that a group of people supported the restoration of the temple. These persons were the Director-in-chief (*dujian* 都監) Shi Qingduan 石慶端, the Daoist Assistant Dignitaries (*daofuzheng* 道副正) Li Yongnian 厲永年, Shi Baozhang 石葆璋 and, as stated above, Cao himself.[91] The magnitude of the restoration was remarkable: the foundations of the halls and of the walkways were enlarged by more than one zhang each, the ancient stone inscriptions were replicated and painted pictures inspired by the *Duren jing* were painted on the walls. In order to build the Sanguan Hall 三官殿, the refectory was moved and huge rafters were added, so that it could host thousands of people. On each side were built two guest houses for travellers in need of rest. The magnificent main gate was flanked by the statues of the Dragon and the Tiger lords (*longhujun* 龍虎君). Finally, the Daoist Tang Zhizhang 唐知章 financed with his own money (*chu siqian* 出私錢) the edification of the Zangbing Hall 藏并殿 to store the aforementioned Daosit scriptures in gold and silver.[92]

Cao Xun's perspective on the history of the temple tells us a lot about how Tongbai Palace was conceived in this period. The two persons that he mentions are Ge Xuan and Sima Chengzhen. The presence of the second is not surprising, given his importance and prominence during the Tang dynasty. Ge Xuan was related both to the ancient southern practices of self-cultivation, to the proto-Daoist traditions of the region, as well as to the more recent Lingbao revelations and his links with this area were very well established by the 12th century. The fact that Cao Xun quoted the *Zhengao* confirms that during the Northern Song dynasty the 'Shangqing identity' of the temple continued to be a significant part of the history of this temple. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, this image of

91 On Daoist dignitaries, see McGee, "Questioning Convergence", 58-61.

92 "Chongxiu Tongbai ji", in *Tiantai Shan zhi* 15b-18b.

Tongbai Palace differs in some crucial aspects from that of the late Ming and Qing dynasties. Although the record does not mention any direct imperial patronage in relation to this restoration, the fact that two or three of the patrons were Daoist officials, makes it possible that this initiative was in some way backed by the court.

One of the most renowned features of Tongbai Palace in late imperial time was the presence of two statues representing the brothers Bo Yi and Su Qi. The *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* of the Kangxi era states that in the past the Tongbai Abbey used to "enshrine two statues of Bo Yi and Shu Qi, carved out of stone, large in size and very ancient, empty in the inside and polished on the outside. If struck, they would emit a sound" 舊桐柏觀有二大石像, 鐫製, 奇古, 內空, 外潤。叩之鏗然有聲.[93] Apparently, the statues first belonged to Tongbai Palace, although this fact and also the date of their production are difficult to determine. At a certain point in their history, the statues were removed from the temple, and it was only during the Song dynasty that they were returned to Tongbai Palace. The gazetteers record two versions of this story: according to one of them, a certain Wang Lingbao 王靈寶 asked for their restitution to the Tongbai Palace.[94] Scholars already know one Daoist called Wang Lingbao who operated in the Tiantai Mountains between the 12th and the 13th century. He was also called Wang Maoduan 王茂端 and was a renowned physician and practitioner of Shangqing Dadong rituals (*Shangqing dadong fa* 上清大洞法). He had a disciple, his younger brother, called Wang Qizhen 契真, or Xiao Lingbao 小靈寶 (Young Numinous Treasure), who reportedly authored a text called *Lingbao jiaofa milu* 靈寶教法秘錄 (Secret Registers of the Lingbao Teaching Method) in ten *juan*, which was stored at the Tongbai Abbey.[95] We have little information on the activities of the Wang brothers, but thanks to a meticulous analysis of the sources, Chen Wenlong suggests that Wang Maoduan either arrived at Tongbai Palace or became known as a Daoist master during Huizong's reign. It also seems that Wang Maoduan resided at that temple, as testified to by a poem of Zhao Shixiu 趙師秀 (1170-1219).[96]

In the second version of the story, during the Xuanhe 玄和 era (1119-1125) it was Emperor Huizong who summoned a certain Daoist Huang 黃道士, a skilful physician, asking him to cure his mother's illness. The Daoist succeeded in this task, so the emperor wanted to repay him with an official position and material goods (*ci zhi guan yu jinbo* 賜之官與金帛), but Huang refused: instead, he asked the emperor to return the statues of Shu Qi and Bo Yi (*qing er shixiang gui* 請二石

93 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 5:6b.

94 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 5:6b.

95 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 9:15a; *Zhejiang tongzhi* 200:22a.

96 Chen, *Wang Qizhen "Shanqing lingbao dafa" yanjiu*, 51-6.

像歸) to the Tongbai Palace and for this purpose he had the Jiutuan Puye Shrine 九天僕射祠 (Shrine of the Chief Administrators of the Nine Heavens) built.[97] Late imperial sources usually do not provide any information about who this Daoist was and how he knew the emperor, or better how the emperor knew him, but there is a third version of the story, which the 17th century scholar-official Zhang Lianyuan 張聯元 (see ch. 4) considered to be correct. One day, the Empress Dowager Song Xianren 宋顯仁 (1080-1159) was afflicted by an eye ailment. She dreamt that Daoist Huangfu 皇甫 could heal her, and so it happened. Zhang Lianyuan therefore argued that the name of the Daoist was Huangfu,[98] who might be the same Huangfu mentioned in the poems "Fang Huangfu daoshi" 訪皇甫道士 (Paying a Visit to Daoist Huangfu) by Zhao Rusui 趙汝鐩 (1172-1245), "Huangfu zhenren xiang zan" 皇甫真人像贊 (Praise for the Icon of Perfected Huangfu) by Song Gaozong 宋高宗 (r. 1127-1162) and in Cao Xun's "He Huangfu xiansheng ti wei'an" 和皇甫先生題唯庵 (Discussing Wei'an with Master Huangfu).

Later, the county magistrate Zhong Niu 鍾鈕 (fl. 16th century) restored the Jiutian Puye Shrine and renamed it Qingfeng Shrine 清風祠 ('Shrine of the Pure Attitude', also known as 'Qingsheng Shrine', 'Shrine of the Pure Sages').[99] As a side note, this county magistrate is also remembered for completing the renovation of the walls of Tiantai city, adding a southern and a northern gate to the two already opened in 1121 on the west and east sides, plus four gates in the inner circle of walls (*xiaocheng* 小城).[100]

According to these stories, the shrine was built at the end of the Northern Song dynasty, or, at the latest, at the beginning of the Southern Song. It might be of interest that a shrine to Bo Yi and Shu Qi reportedly had also been built in the Fusheng Abbey, located south of Tongbai Palace, in the year 1141.[101] It is possible that the statues were moved to the Fusheng Abbey that year only to be later brought back, maybe even at the time of the restoration of the Sanqing Hall by Wang Cunzhong and Yang He, which occurred in the Shaoxing era, in 1152. It would be very useful to understand whether Wang Cunzhong

97 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 5:6b; Tiantai Xian difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi, *Qing Kangxi Tiantai Xian zhi zhi dianjiaoben*, 163. The text does not specify from where the statues had to be brought back. For the translation of the title of *puye* as 'chief administrators', see "p'ú-yèh", in Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 394-5. Cf. the next chapter.

98 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "fanli":1a.

99 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 5:6b-7a.

100 *Zhejiang tongzhi* 24:14b. This is the only mention of Zhong Niu that I could recover in historical sources.

101 *Chicheng zhi* 30:9a, *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:19a.

and Wang Maoduan were related, but I could not find any data in this regard. I also could not confirm whether the shrine was built under imperial patronage. There are other sources telling the history of the shrine, such as a stele entitled *Tongbai Gong yisi Yi-Qi xiang ji* 桐柏宮移祀夷齊像記 (Record on the transfer of the cult of [Bo] Yi and [Shu] Qi to Tongbai Palace) dated to the year 1571 and originally located outside of the Qingfeng Shrine. Its author was the *jinshi* Zhang Tingchen 張廷臣 from Panyu 番禺, prefect of Taizhou between the years 1568 and 1571. As such, he ordered Fang Weiyi 方惟一, county magistrate of Tiantai since the third year of the Longqing era (1568), to restore the shrine and to install the two statues there. The stele inscription is now lost, but its text is recorded in local gazetteers. According to this source the shrine was built during the Shaoxing era (1131-1162), which contrasts with the second of the stories recorded in earlier sources.[102] Regarding the contribution of the Wang brothers or of Huangfu in the restoration of the shrine, both enjoy a degree of plausibility, if nothing else because all the individuals mentioned in each appear to be historical.

Wang Qizhen, Wang Maoduan's younger brother, appears to have been related to the Tiantai region in more than one way ad in particular via a ritual tradition that was spreading out of Tiantai as early as the 12th century Jin Yunzhong 金允中 was a Daoist active around 1225, who wrote a text titled *Shangqing lingbao dafa* (DZ 1223). In this work he attacks vehemently a group of individuals who alter and appropriate a textual tradition that he considers orthodox and that he represents. We find out that his attacks target especially what he calls the 'rites of Tiantai'.[103] In his preface, Jin states: 'Since the Shaoxing [era] (1131-1162), east of Zhejiang the 49 sections of Tiantai are more revered and the meaning of the anthologies of past generations are not studied [anymore]' 紹興之後, 浙江以東, 多宗天台四十九品, 不究前輩編集之本意.[104] It appears obvious that Jin Yunzhong throws himself against the *Lingbao dafa* produced in Tiantai. Another text titled *Shangqing lingbao dafa* (DZ 1221), authored by Wang Qizhen and possibly later than Jin Yunzhong's, appears to represent the Tiantai school, although it never mentions it. Unfortunately, this text does not provide more information on Wang Qizhen, except that he might have belonged to the lineage of a certain Ning Quanzhen

102 Xinwenfeng chubanshe gongsi bianji bu, *Shike shiliao xinbian* 299. On Fang Weiyi, see Tiantai Xian difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi, *Qing Kangxi Tiantai Xian zhi zhi dianjiaoben*, 104. A certain Fang Weiyi is mentioned in the *Guangxi tongzhi*, which states that he received his *juren* degree in 1556, but I cannot confirm unequivocally that he is the same person. *Guangxi tongzhi* 73:23b. On Zhang Tingchen's position in Taizhou see also *Zhejiang tongzhi*, 119:21b.

103 Lagerwey, "Shangqing lingbao dafa"(b), 1026.

104 *Shangqing lingbao dafa* (DZ 1223) 3a.

寧全真.[105] It seems that during the Song dynasty the void left by the Shangqing lineage in Tiantai was also filled by a ritual tradition that was widespread in the empire and that received a certain amount of credit.

During the Southern Song 南宋 dynasty (1127-1279), new Daoist traditions arose, characterised by specific rituals and a strong vocation for exorcism and healing. We can expect that some of them may have been linked to the Tiantai area or that they nurtured the aspiration of establishing themselves there. Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (*hao*: Haiqiong zi 海瓊子; 1194-1229?), whose lineage was one of the most prominent among these traditions, travelled southeast China extensively. He had a list of mountains occupying a special position in his religious system that included Mt. Wuyi 武夷山 and the Tiantai Mountains.[106] According to Gai Jianmin, Bai Yuchan also trained a disciple in Tiantai, known as Zhang Yunyou 張雲友 of Yuanming Palace 元明宮.[107] Another Daoist of the Song dynasty who was thought to be related to Tongbai Palace during the Qing dynasty was Zhang Boduan. This Daoist is remembered as the author of the influential treaty *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇, which influenced all subsequent discussions on inner alchemy and Daoist self-cultivation. A tradition that developed starting from the early 13th century also describes Zhang Boduan as the first patriarch of the 'Southern Lineage' (*Nanzong* 南宗); this tradition was based in south China and counted among its patriarchs the eminent master Bai Yuchan. The lineage linking the two Daoists is as follows: Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 → Liu Haichan 劉海蟾 (*ming*: Cao 操, Xuanying 玄英; *zi*: Zongcheng 宗成, Zhaoyuan 昭遠; 10th century) → Zhang Boduan (*zi*: Pingshu 平叔; *hao*: Perfected Ziyang 紫陽真人; 987?-1082) → Shi Tai 石泰 (*zi*: Dezhi 得之; *hao*: Xinglin 杏林, Cuixuan zi 翠玄子; ?-1158) → [Xue] Daoguang 薛道光 (*zi*: Taiyuan 太源; *hao*: Zixian 紫賢, Chan Master Piling 毗陵禪師; 1078?-1191) → Chen Nan 陳楠 (*hao*: Cuixu weng 翠虛翁; Master Niwan 泥丸先生; ?-1213) → Bai Yuchan. Even though the historical data on Zhang's life is very limited and his presence at Tongbai Palace probably does not correspond to historical truth, this Daoist became the most important person linked to the palace since the Yongzheng era. There are historical reasons for this that will be discussed in more detail in the fourth chapter.

There are other notable Daoists who operated in Tiantai during the Song dynasty, although it is not always easy to assess their relationship with Tongbai Palace. Among them, the most notable is probably Zhang Wumeng 張無夢 (*zi*: Lingyin 靈隱; *hao*: Hongmeng

105 Lagerwey, "Shangqing lingbao dafa"(a), 1021.

106 Gai, *Daojiao Jindan pai Nanzong kaolun*, 978-986.

107 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 8:15b; Gai, *Daojiao Jindan pai Nanzong kaolun*, 2:984.

zi 鴻蒙子; 952?-1051), who reportedly travelled to Tiantai and lived at the Qiongtai Abbey 瓊臺觀 for more than 10 years, practicing the 'gymnastics of [Master] Chisong' 赤松導引 and the 'technique for reverting the elixir of Anqi [Sheng]' 安期還丹之法.[108] One of his disciples, Chen Jingyuan 陳景元 (*zi*: Taixu 太虛; *hao*: Bixu zi 碧虛子; ?-1094), originated from a family of literati of Nancheng 南城 (Jiangxi). In 1025 he decided to become a Daoist priest and went to the Tiantai Mountains, where he trained with Zhang Wumeng. Eventually, he was called to the capital, where starting from 1072 he lectured Shenzong on the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi* and celebrated a *jiao* ritual that resulted in the emperor bestowing on him the title Zhenjing Dashi 真靖大師 (Great Master of Reality and Tranquillity). Eventually, Chen Jingyuan retired to Mt. Lu 廬山 (Jiangxi) with a stipend.[109] Texts in the *Daoist Canon* are attributed to both masters, testifying to their lasting influence on Chinese Daoism as a whole.

Sources compiled during the Song dynasty provide us with statistical data to better understand how big Tongbai Palace actually was compared to other coeval institutions. The *Chicheng zhi* records 61 Buddhist temples and 10 Daoist temples in Tiantai County.[110] In the first group, the largest were surely the Bao'en Monastery 報恩寺 with 3,998 mu of cultivable fields, 196 mu of land and 6,830 *mu* of mountainous terrain, and the Guoqing Monastery 國清寺 with 3,461 mu, 420 mu and 3,902 mu respectively: at that time there were few institutions comparable to these in extension in the whole prefecture. Among the Buddhist temples there were also very small institutions, like the Weiyan Monastery 委巖寺, that possessed only 7 mu of fields, 10 of land and 40 of mountain land. Tongbai Palace (which at that time was called Chongdao Abbey and included also the Changshou Abbey 昌壽觀) held the largest surface of cultivable land among all the Daoist temples of Tiantai County, with 1,618 mu of fields, no land, and 1,345 mu of mountain land. There was just one other comparable temple in Tiantai, the Fusheng Abbey with respectively 994 mu, 491 mu and 1,695 mu, while the third, Dongtian Palace 洞天宮, was a smaller temple, but still comparatively wealthy, with its 903 mu of fields, 44 mu of land and 1,160 mu of mountain land.[111]

108 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 9:13a-b. On Zhang Wumeng, see also Baldrian-Hussein, "Daoshu"; Andersen, "Huashu"; Robinet, "Daode zhenjing cangshi zuanwei pian".

109 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 9:16a. For biographical notes on Chen Jingyuan, see Skar, "Chen Jingyuan".

110 *Chicheng zhi* 14:22b-29a and 14:38b-39b.

111 *Chicheng zhi* 14:38b.

3.4.2 Yuan and Ming Dynasties

Compared to the previous periods, little is known of Tongbai Palace during the Yuan and the early Ming dynasty. The types of sources that I have so far relied upon, such as local and temple gazetteers and Daoist scriptures, provide very few reliable data on this period. Ming gazetteers mention Wang Zhongli 王中立 (*zi*: Dingmin 定民; *hao*: Zu'an 足庵; fl. 2nd half of the 13th century) from Tiantai and describe him as a Daoist of the 'Tongbai Abbey'. At one point, he was the abbot of Taiyi Palace (太一宮 or 太乙宮) in Hangzhou. He enjoyed the favour of emperors of the Southern Song and of the Yuan dynasties, such as Emperor Lizong (r. 1224-1264) and Emperor Shizu 世祖 (i.e. Kublai Khan, r. 1260-1294), who bestowed on Wang the title of Perfected Renjing Chunsu 仁靖純素真人 (Perfected in Calm Humanity and Pure Simplicity) during the Zhiyuan 至元 reign (1264-1294). Consequently, two buildings located at the sides of Tongbai Palace, called 'Chongse Retreat' 沖嗇庵 and 'Baiyun Abbey' 白雲觀, were respectively renamed 'Renjing Palace' 仁靖宮 and 'Chunsu Palace' 純素宮 in his honour. During the same reign, Wang Zhongli also built the Yangsu Daoist Temple 養素道院 in Tiantai, which by the early 17th century had fallen into disrepair and had been taken over by a powerful local family.[112] It is also reported that at that time, Tongbai Palace still held a copy of Wang Zhongli's recorded sayings (*Zu'an yulu* 足庵語錄).[113]

Another Daoist mentioned in the gazetteers is the ritual master Cao 曹法師. Like the others, he resided at the Tongbai Abbey during the Yuan dynasty, seeking to become a Daoist. After three years of practice, he realised detachment from worldly affairs, so he visited the Perfected Zhang (i.e. the Celestial Master) to study his techniques. After this, Master Cao went to Hangzhou where he successfully prayed for rain. He lived at home, he exorcised demons, healed people and prayed for auspicious weather.[114] Coincidentally, this biography testifies to the importance of Mt. Longhu as a centre for initiation and demonstrates that Tiantai Daoists were embedded in the broader Daoist network of southern China.

The "Xuanru Lü xiansheng daoxing ji" 玄儒呂先生道行記 by Wei Su 危素 (1303-1372) tells the story of Daoist Lü Xuyi 呂虛夷 (*zi*: Yuzhi 與之; ?-1344) from Fenghua 奉化 (today Ningbo). He initially held modest bureaucratic positions in Yin 鄞 and Xiangshan 象山 counties that afforded him a small salary, which he used to care for his mother.

112 *Tiantai Shan zhi* 21b; *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:18b, 21a.

113 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 9:16b-17a. The Chongse Retreat 沖嗇庵 was built in 1152 by the aforementioned Wang Cunzhong. *Chicheng zhi* 30:5a.

114 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 9:17a.

When she passed away, he decided to leave the lay world and retired to Tongbai Palace (in this source called Chongdao Abbey), where he focused on writing. In the Huangqing 皇慶 era (1312-1313) he paid a visit to the Venerable Master Wu 吴尊師 of the Bao'en Abbey 報恩觀 in the Qingyuan Circuit 慶元路. There, Lü learnt "the arts of praying for wind and rain and of controlling ghosts and spirits" (*qi fengyu, yishi guishen zhi fa* 祈風雨, 役使鬼神之法) and, after having successfully prayed for rain in 1341, he retired to Mt. Wu near Hangzhou.[115]

Zhang Yu 張雨 (1277-1348) was another coeval Daoist who practiced in the Tiantai Mountains, although I have not found evidence that could confirm his presence at Tongbai Palace. He is particularly interesting because after he left Tiantai he first took Zhou Dajing 周大經, related to the Shangqing tradition of the Mao Mountains, as his master and then he became a disciple of Wang Shouyan 王寿衍 at Kaiyuan Palace 開元宮 of Hangzhou. Later, he followed Master Wang to the capital and finally retired on the Mao Mountains since Kaiyuan Palace burnt down in 1322. The *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* describes him Zhang Yu as a Daosit who spread the 'methods of Zhengyi' 正一之法.[116]

From these biographies, we can conclude that Tongbai Palace was still an attracting institution for prospective Daoists in the first half of the 14th century, who were probably initiated and trained there. It is not clear, though, if this place was prestigious enough or if its Daoists possessed the required knowledge for advanced training during the Yuan dynasty: the case of Wang Zhongli suggests a connection between the court and Tongbai Palace in the 13th century, and that of Zhang Yu highlights the relations between the Tiantai Mountains and the Mao Mountains, but in the first both Master Cao and Lü Xuyi eventually left Tiantai to reside near a big urban centre such as Hangzhou, as did Zhang Yu in the second.

The Yuan dynasty closed with Tongbai Palace burnt to the ground. This happened in 1367, during the rebellion against the Mongol dynasty: the only thing that survived was the shrine with the sandalwood statues of the Three Purities.[117] This event was not unique: reading local gazetteers, we discover that many other temples in different parts of the region were destroyed around the same period, all probably due to the disorders that afflicted the area.[118] Despite this tragic event, the temple was very soon rebuilt, at some point during the Hongwu 洪武 reign (1368-1398), by the

115 "Xuanru Lü xiansheng daoxing ji", 978.

116 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 8:16a; Hu, *Zhonghua Daojiao dacidian*, 169.

117 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:18a.

118 See the examples of the Ciyun Monastery 慈雲寺, Tiangong Monastery 天宮寺, Dongguang Fu Monastery 東廣福寺, all in disrepair at the beginning of the Ming dynasty,

official Wu Weijing 吳惟敬 and by the Daoist Jin Jingguan 金靜觀.[119] At the beginning of the Ming dynasty the Daoist institutions of Mt. Tongbai were rearranged: the aforementioned Fusheng Abbey was 'merged' with Tongbai Palace (*guochao chu bingru Tongbai* 國朝初併入桐柏).[120]

Between 1368 and 1600, the name of the temple was changed back to Tongbai Palace, although I could not find more information about this event.[121] Tongbai Palace continued to be active throughout the early Ming dynasty: in the year 1411, the Daoist Bao Liaojing 鮑了靜 restored it and changed its overall structure.[122] By the 16th century, at the time the *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* was compiled, the temple was in decline. Its Daoist community was "impoverished and deficient [in means]" (*daozhong pinkui* 道眾貧匱) and the buildings "ever more dilapidated" (*dianyu rijiu tuihuai* 殿宇日就頹壞). Of the more than ten inscribed stelae, only Cui Shang's remained.[123]

Despite its decline, during the 16th century Tongbai Palace was still inhabited by Daoists. Xiao Wenqing 蕭文清 (fl. 1521-1566) tells us of his meeting with a Daoist living at the temple, and we also know that the Qingsheng Shrine of Tongbai Palace was restored by Fang Weiyi.[124] Literati of the Ming dynasty recorded that the temple had already fallen into disrepair between the end of the 16th and the 17th century.[125] Its state of decline lasted during the whole 17th and early 18th centuries, as is confirmed by numerous statements found in the poems and travelogues of various literati. Tao Wangling (*zi*: Shikui 石簣; 1562-1609) was native of Guiji 會稽 (today Shaoxing, Zhejiang) and in the year Wanli *yichou* 己丑 (1589) obtained first place in the metropolitan examination (會元).[126] Tao was one of a group of intellectuals who gathered around Li Zhi 李贄 (1527-1602), the famous literatus, official and lay Buddhist. Despite their Confucian education, these intellectuals were committed

but restored during the reigns of the first Ming emperors. *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:10b-11a.

119 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:18a.

120 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:19b; Tiantai Xian dang'an ju, *Chongding Tiantai Shan fangwai zhiyao dianjiaoben*, 174.

121 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4.18a.

122 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:18a.

123 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:18a.

124 On Fang Weiyi, see note 101, ch. 3.

125 See for example Dai Ao's 戴澳 and Tao Wangling's 陶望齡 here below.

126 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi*, 12:6a; Zhao, *Tongbai chunqiu*, 205-6; Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, 49-53, 71-7; Eichman, *A Late Sixteenth-Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship*.

patrons of Chan Buddhism.[127] Tao Wangling's "Journey on Roads of the Tiantai Mountains" 遊天台山上路程記[128] confirms the temple's state of disrepair:

> [I] walked for about 10 li and finally arrived in the valley. [Then] I saw a river and a plain surrounded by small hills. In the middle there were some buildings: it was the defunct Tongbai Palace. [All that remains of] the temple are just three halls. One enshrines the Three Worthies and the one on the right contains the stone effigies of Bo Yi and Shu Qi that [look] very ancient. At its side has been built a big granary to store the products of the temple land, taken under the management of the [local] officials.[129]
>
> 得平地約行十里。下瞰川原, 有小山環繞。中闢一境, 即桐柏廢宮。宮僅三楹祀三清、右小屋有夷、齊石像, 甚古。旁設大庾庋粟, 即宮田官收之耳飯。

Dai Ao (*zi*: Youfei 有斐; *jinshi* in 1613) was originally from Fenghua 奉化 (today within the prefecture of Ningbo, Zhejiang).[130] In his "Travelling Again on Mount Tiantai" 重遊天台山記 he wrote:

> At the end of the hill ridge there is a flat field. It is so vast that [my] eyes cannot embrace it and it's crossed by Qing Brook, whose waters flow into the nearby waterfall. Tongbai Palace is in disrepair. The platform for worshipping the Big Dipper has been demolished and is now wasteland [...] The temple has two stone statues of Bo Yi and Shu Qi that are very ancient...[131]
>
> 嶺盡平田彌望貫。以清溪瀑布飛流即此溪所瀉。道宮廢甚。禮斗臺爲煙草。[...]宮有伯夷、叔齊石像衣冠, 甚古...

"Journey from Tongbai Palace to Qiongtai" by Yan Yunjue 顏允珏 (fl. 1655) basically confirms the information provided by the previous reports. In the ninth month of the year *yiwei* 乙未 (1655) he, together with "the refined scholar, Master Li 李子士雅" from Qiantang 錢塘 (near today Hangzhou), went to visit Tongbai Palace and other nearby famous places, such as the Two Towers and the Qiongtai (Jade Platform) 瓊台雙闕. Once they arrived on the mountain, Yan recorded:

127 Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute*, 50-2.

128 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 12:6a-9b.

129 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 12:8b.

130 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 13:1a.

131 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 13:1a-b.

> We asked where Tongbai Palace was and were directed toward a Daoist's retreat, which stood on the old foundations of the temple. On one side of the retreat there were the two stone effigies of [Bo] Yi and [Shu] Qi.[132]
>
> 問桐柏宮何在, 指道士茅屋一間, 即其故址。旁有夷齊二大石像。

Other sources provide information on the Palace for the latter part of the Ming dynasty, such as Chen Hanhui's 陳函輝 poem "Writing Verses on the Walls while Travelling with Hong Jiuxia and Wang Suidong to Tongbai Palace" 游桐柏宮和洪久霞王遂東題壁韻. Chen Hanhui (*zi*: Mushu 木叔; *hao*: Xiaohan zi 小寒子; 1590-?) from Linhai, obtained the *jinshi* degree in 1634.[133] He wrote:

> The transcendent officials in this place live in an ancient temple. Its old wood in a wasteland is full of grass. It is easy to find the alchemic furnace and a stone bed.[134]
>
> 仙官此地有遺宮。古木荒煙草一叢。丹竈石牀容易到。

The original text mentions *xian* 仙, 'transcendent(s)', but this term sometimes referred to Daoists as well: could it indicated that Daoists were still living at the temple? Yan Yunjue's text seems to suggest that there was a Daoist retreat on the site of Tongbai Palace.

More details on the situation of the Tongbai Palace were reported by two authors of the early Qing dynasty, Zhang Lianyuan and Pan Lei 潘耒 (1646-1708), recorded that since the Tianqi era (1620-1627) the majority of the temple land had been taken over by the local gentry and that the income from the remaining land was confiscated by the county magistrate to pay the stipend of Tiantai students. The lack of economic means and the pressure of the Tiantai elite weakened the Daoist community even more, to such an extent that by the end of the Kangxi era only one Daoist, called Fan Qingyun 范青雲, remained. At the time of the compilation of the *Tiantai Shan quanzhi*, in 1717, the Jiutian Puye Shrine was also in disrepair, but a memorial requesting its restoration had already been sent to the throne.[135] I will analyse the history and the significance of this shrine in greater detail in the following chapter.

132 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 13:17b-18b.

133 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 16:16b; Zhao, *Tongbai chunqiu*, 206-7.

134 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 16:16b.

135 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 5:7a.

3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused mainly on the social and institutional history of Tongbai Palace from its origins in 711 up to the end of the Ming dynasty, paying particular attention to the first part of its history during the Tang and Song dynasties. I have described how the history of the temple during this period was intimately connected with imperial patronage and elite Daoism. I have also discussed the main traditions that were historically present at the palace. There is no doubt that the Shangqing tradition was in control of the institution for much of the Tang dynasty and a community tracing its line of transmission to Sima Chengzhen continued to be present at Tongbai Palace until at least the end of that dynasty, after which the political fragmentation of the territory promoted a re-configuration of the Daoist communities that were active in the area. In particular, we see a westward relocation of the lineage of court Daoists of the Tiantai Mountains by means of Du Guangting and the rise of a ritualistic community in Tiantai, related to one version of the *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*.

In the following dynasties, Tongbai Palace continued to receive patronage, but it appears to have become less central to the elite Daoist communities related to the court, and this may be the reason why we have less reliable information on the temple during the Yuan and Ming dynasties. Finally, by the last period of the Ming dynasty, the temple was in constant decline, resulting in its demise by the beginning of the Qing dynasty. I will discuss the resurgence of Tongbai Palace during the Qing dynasty in the next two chapters.

4 The Demise and Rebirth of Tongbai Palace

Summary 4.1 Tongbai Palace in Disrepair. – 4.2 The Qingfeng Shrine. – 4.3 Zhang Wenyu of Tiantai. – 4.3.1 The Tiantai Elite. – 4.4 Land Disputes and Tongbai Palace. – 4.5 The Case of the Qingsheng Shrine. – 4.5.1 The Temple Land. – 4.5.2 Analysis and Plan of Action. – 4.5.3 Zhang Lianyuan and Fan Qingyun Restore the Qingsheng Shrine. – 4.6 Conclusion.

I devoted the previous chapter to providing an overview of the development of Tongbai Palace from its construction in 711 to the beginning of the 17th century, when its decline was already evident to contemporary authors. By the beginning of the Qing dynasty, paralleling the decline of the Ming dynasty, that of Tongbai Palace had been going on for at least fifty years. What was left of this temple remained under Daoist management, despite the warfare and the economic problems that hit the region in the final years of the Ming. Nonetheless, their control over the temple and its territory had been dwindling: since the Tianqi 天啓 era (1621-1627), the land had been de facto, although certainly not *de iure*, in the hands of local gentry, who were eager to keep it and to possibly receive official recognition of their control over it. By the early Qing dynasty, Tongbai Palace of Tiantai County had lost much of its prominence within the national religious system. Yet, its memory lingered on due to its past connections to important Daoist lineages and especially to that

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of Sima Chengzhen. The literati were aware of the layered history of Tiantai and appreciated its cultural, historical and religious significance. The surrounding natural environment was another aspect appreciated by Qing literati, who described it in their poems by relying, sometimes just as a *topos*, on the concept of *fudi* 福地. By the Kangxi era, when literati and members of the elite started challenging the occupation of the temple land by local families, this had been under the control of the local gentry for about 100 years.

The Qing dynasty did not take control of the whole empire when its army entered Beijing in 1644. The process of 'pacification' of the empire, especially of its peripheral and south-eastern territories took many years and was only completed at the beginning of the Kangxi reign, while the remnants of the Ming dynasty continued to affirm their right to rule until 1662.[1] If we turn our attention to the South, we see that the city of Nanjing was conquered by the Manchu only in the middle of 1646 and that the subjugation of south-east China – the area which is the focus of this study – was only completed with the conquest of Fuzhou in October 1646.[2] The pacification of the area, though, was a much more complex issue.[3] The Qing could not declare total control of Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Fujian until 1661 – with the demise of the legendary Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (also known as Koxinga; 1625-1662), who had been harassing the Manchu forces since 1651 – and even then, not on all levels of society.[4]

The last decades of the Ming dynasty were characterised by various forms of power struggle. One of the reasons for the end of the dynasty was the competition and mutual diffidence between the military and bureaucratic hierarchies, with officials claiming authority over generals and the army demotivated by the lack of funding and career prospects.[5] Before the final showdown, though, the situation had been exacerbated by another political conflict, this time involving the gentry on the one side and the state on the other. This is a fundamental topic for the present study because it is directly related to the change in social and political significance of the gentry and it provides the interpretative key for understanding how the gentry of Tiantai could exert seemingly unchallenged control over local affairs.

1 Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 1.

2 Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 95-8; Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, 577-90.

3 Cf. Struve, *The Southern Ming*; Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*.

4 Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 154-66, 178-93; Croizier, *Koxinga and Chinese Nationalism*; Hung, *Protest with Chinese Characteristics*, 1-7, 106-10. Consider the role of secret societies in keeping alive a revanchist spirit against the Manchu: Novikov, "La propagande anti-mandchoue de la Triade en Chine"; Ownby, *Brotherhoods and Secret Societies in Early and Mid-Qing China*.

5 Struve, *The Southern Ming*, see especially the introduction.

These events mark the beginning of the second part of this book, which deals with the history of Tongbai Palace in late imperial times and more precisely between the 17th and the early 19th century. In this chapter I will focus on the period of transition between the end of the Ming dynasty and the Yongzheng 雍正 reign (1722-1735) of the Qing. Two of the main sources on which this chapter is based are the *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 天台山全志 (Complete gazetteer of Mt. Tiantai) and the *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 清聖祠志. It is noteworthy that Zhang Lianyuan was the editor of the former and author of the latter: the relationship between Zhang Lianyuan, Tongbai Palace and these texts will become clearer over the course of the present chapter.

At the end of the previous chapter, I established that at the beginning of the 17th century Tongbai Palace lacked resources and lay in a state of disrepair. This situation may have been caused by a number of factors: irresponsible management, the lack of resources and patronage, the direct influence of the local gentry or of the government and so on. According to my research, the two main causes were the lack of imperial support and the local gentry's attempts to occupy temple land. Regarding the former point, the late imperial sources that I could analyse are silent concerning any kind of imperial patronage after the restoration by Bao Liaojing of 1411. In fact, the *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* states that during the Kangxi era the temple was completely in disrepair (*jin ju fei* 今俱廢).[6] A temple had two means of earning the resources that it needed to survive: donations and patronage, or properties and estates. From the time of its construction in 711, Tongbai Palace was designed as a temple located far from the major urban centres: while this made it a lofty, detached environment and thus benefited its reputation as a place for self-cultivation and transcendence, it also meant that lay sponsors were more difficult to attract. While the presence of charismatic personages such as Sima Chengzhen, Du Guangting and other renowned Daoists could obviate the geographical distance from prospective affluent donors, this could not be expected to be the case during periods in which the resident Daoists did not boast a comparable charisma. Moreover, from the start Tongbai Palace was designed as a residence for court Daoists, meaning that it relied on their privileged bonds with the court for its sustenance.

However, Tongbai Palace was not totally at the mercy of generous emperors: Tang Ruizong had already granted it lands intended to support its community in its daily activities and as we have seen in the previous chapter, the temple still possessed a large quantity of land during the Song dynasty. This source of revenue must also have been alluring for the local population, and it attracted especially

6 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 5:2b.

those who had the means to forcefully take hold of it: this became a problem for Tongbai Palace at the end of the Ming dynasty.

4.1 Tongbai Palace in Disrepair

Even though, as discussed at the end of the previous chapter, the temple found itself in critical condition, Tongbai Palace had not been destroyed in its entirety: we find evidence of this in a number of sources from the early Qing period. I will refer here to a record by Pan Lei 潘耒 (*zi*: Cigeng 次耕, *hao*: Jiatang 稼堂; 1646-1708), who visited Tiantai in 1691, just a few decades after Koxinga's defeat.[7] Pan was a native of Wujiang 吳江 (Suzhou) and, after passing the imperial examinations in 1679, he entered the Hanlin Academy as a member of the Imperial Diary Office (*rijiang guan qiju zhu Hanlin Yuan* 日講官起居注翰林院).[8] Pan Lei is also remembered as the author of many travelogues and journals, such as the *You Jinniu Shan ji* 遊金牛山記 (Record on the Excursion on Mt. Jinniu), *You Linlü Shan ji* 遊林慮山記 (Record on the Excursion on Mt. Linlü) and *You xianju zhushan ji* 遊仙居諸山記 (Record on Excursions to the Mountains Abodes of Transcendents).[9] His *You Tiantai Shan ji* 遊天台山記 (Record on the Excursion on Mount Tiantai), includes the following excerpt:

> [Travelling] more than ten li southward, I arrived at Tongbai Palace, which is the Daoist Jinting Grotto-Heaven. The Zixiao and Hualin peaks produce a large quantity of stalactites, *jinjiang*, *qi* flowers, *yao* grass and other famous drugs. The disciples of Ge Xuan and Sima Chengzhen lived here. […] Today everything is covered in vegetation, except the Sanqing Hall. Raindrops become tears dripping from Tianzun's saddened face. The son of a local official's family is buried next to the temple. People say that the biggest responsibility for the temple's decline is this person's deluded geomantic practices and his avid interest in these propitious lands. There is nothing that this kind of people would not do in order to obtain the land, even openly occupying Buddhist or Daoist temples and burying their own bones under that soil. How could these people gain any benefit from actions that they themselves did not realise were a sin? I loathe their greed and pity their folly! This place had more than ten stelae from the Tang and Song dynasties: I

7 On Pan Lei, see *Da Qing yitong zhi* 57:3b; Jiang, *Qingdai renwu shengzu nianbiao*, 828. See also the short biographical annotations in *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 13:4a.

8 *Da Qing yitong zhi* 57:3b; Jiang, *Qingdai renwu shengzu nianbiao*, 828.

9 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 13:4a. These works are collected in *Xiao fanghu zhai yu diye chao* 小方壺齋輿地叢鈔.

> looked for them everywhere, but could not find them. The stone effigies of Bo Yi and Shu Qi solemnly sit one next to the other. How did the two masters from the Guzhu kingdom come here? The statues are very ancient.[10]
>
> 又南十餘里得桐柏宮遺墟, 是道家金庭洞天也。 紫霄華琳諸峰, 聳躍抱石髓、金漿、琪花、瑤草, 諸藥物多產其中。 自葛仙公、司馬子微之徒居之。 ……今皆鞠爲茂草, 惟存三清殿一間, 雨淋天尊面淚下蘇蘇。 有宦家子葬其旁。 人言宮觀之廢, 半由此自人之惑於堪輿, 貪得吉地也。 而可以勢力攘奪, 無所不為。 乃至佛刹仙宮亦公然掩取而埋其骨。 罪之不圖, 福於何有? 吾惡其貪亦憐其愚耳。 此地有唐宋碑十餘, 通徧求之, 不可得。 夷齊二石像儼然並坐孤竹子, 何得在此? 然像甚高古。

The existence of a functioning but dilapidated temple at the end of the 17th century, more precisely in 1691, is confirmed by Zhang Lianyuan's *Qingsheng Ci zhi*.[11] One aspect that attracts our attention is Pan Lei's forceful condemnation of the occupation of the temple land by local people. I could not determine Pan Lei's actual reasons for siding with the Daoists of Tongbai Palace against local takeovers: it may be that he was genuinely disgusted by this kind of behaviour on a moral level, or that he wished to defend Daoism against lay prevarication, or again that he had personal reasons to oppose the occupants, whom he may have known. In any case, he clearly blames them for the decline of the temple.

Pan Lei does not limit himself to describing the condition of the temple and what he regarded as the direct cause of its demise: he also suggests possible reasons why local families may have wanted the land of Tongbai Palace. He mentions a burial, "deluded geomantic practices" (*ren zhi huo yu kanyu* 人之惑於堪輿) and "propitious lands" (*jidi* 吉地). According to Timothy Brook, geomantic features were one of the qualities determining the significance of a landscape based on the local 'subterranean forces', which had to resonate with the architecture built on the surface level.[12] Timothy Brook has focused on how these marks of potency could promote the patronage of a temple, but in our case we distinctly see that geomantic power could also encourage the local elite to take possession of a temple and its land in order to satisfy their own private needs. Desirable characteristics, then, could work both in favour and against the survival and development of a temple.

The entry about the Qingfeng Shrine of Tongbai Palace in the *Tiantai Shan quanzhi*, compiled in the year 1717, states: "At the

10 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 13:8b.

11 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:10a. See below.

12 Brook, *Praying for Power*, 210-11.

moment, the Qingfeng Shrine has again been in ruins for a long time. It has been sent a memorial for its restoration" 今清風祠又已久圮矣。 現在議詳重建.[13] From this excerpt we learn that in a span of about 25 years nothing had changed for the Tongbai Temple: in fact, the situation of its Qingfeng Shrine might have even worsened. Due to its dilapidated status, it is unsurprising that there is little information about the activities of Tongbai Palace as a Daoist monastery during the first two reigns of the Qing dynasty. Contrary to what had happened with the establishment of the Ming dynasty, there is no reference to any imperial patronage of the temple and very little is known about the Daoist community that lived there, if there indeed was one. Instead, thanks to Zhang Lianyuan's commitment, we have plenty of information on one specific portion of Tongbai Palace, the Qingfeng Shrine.

Due to the importance of this shrine in the history of Tongbai Palace during the Qing dynasty, as it was the only part of the temple to reportedly still be inhabited by the local Daoist community despite the overall decline, in the next pages I will follow the fate of this shrine with special reference to the period between the years 1715 and 1722.

4.2 The Qingfeng Shrine

Let us start by examining the history of the Qingfeng Shrine up until the last years of the Kangxi reign (1662-1722). In the previous chapter I discussed the hypotheses behind its construction. Regardless of which version (if any among those known) corresponds most closely to the historical truth, the sources date the origin of the shrine to the 12th century. We also know that a Jiutian Puye Shrine was built in Fusheng Abbey in 1141, before this abbey was absorbed by Tongbai Palace at the beginning of the Ming dynasty.[14] According to the *Tongbai Gong yisi Yi-Qi xiang ji*, the shrine was built in the Shaoxing 紹興 era (1131-1162) by the county magistrate of Tiantai, Fang Weiyi.[15] The shrine was certainly inhabited during the last part of the Ming dynasty, because Xiao Wenqing 蕭文清 (fl. 1521-1566) recorded his meeting with a Daoist living at the temple. It would seem that between the end of the Northern Song and the beginning of the Southern Song dynasty the cult of Bo Yi and Shu Qi became quite popular in Tiantai and influenced the religious development of the area over the following centuries.

13 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 5:7a.

14 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:19a.

15 Xinwenfeng chubanshe gongsi bianji bu, *Shike shiliao xinbian*, 299.

Some years later, the county magistrate Zhong Niu (fl. 16th century) renamed it 'Qingfeng Shrine' 清風祠 (Shrine of the Pure Demeanour) after he restored its exterior.[16] I could not date the restoration precisely, but we know that the same county magistrate also renovated the walls of Tiantai city and added a south and a north gate to the two already built in 1121 on the west and east sides; he also added four more gates to the inner circle of walls (*xiaocheng* 小城).[17]

During the Tianqi and Chongzhen 崇禎 (1628-1644) eras, the whole complex, including the Qingfeng Shrine, was in dire condition. This agrees with the evidence discussed above and with Shi Chuandeng's statement that the temple had been in decline for at least 100 years (i.e. since the beginning of the 16th century).[18] Another testimony, this time by Zhang Lianyuan, states that in the Jiajing 嘉靖 era (1521-1566) the shrine still had plenty of land.[19] If this were true, then it would seem that the temple either lacked funding and was in disrepair, or possessed lands and therefore was able to survive, if not thrive. These two views need not necessarily be regarded as mutually exclusive and we do not need to invoke inaccuracy or hyperbole on either side to make sense of the apparently incompatible statements. It is possible, instead, that during the first half of the 16th century the temple still legally retained its ownership of the land, but in reality did not benefit from it, or that the local Daoist community (if present) was suffering from managerial incompetence, or even that local families had already begun to encroach on the temple land.

There is no doubt that at the beginning of the 17th century the shrine itself lay in a complete state of disrepair. Evidence is given by the fact that there is no mention of any repair work in relation to Tongbai Palace in general or on the shrine. Several visitors bear witness to this condition of neglect, with Zhang Lianyuan providing the most detailed accounts.[20] The main reasons for the decline of Tongbai Palace are two concurring circumstances: the Palace's loss of a significant position in the imperial Daoist system and the interests of the local gentry, who tried to take advantage of an institution that was no longer politically or religiously influential anymore.[21]

In the preface to his *Qingsheng Ci zhi* **[fig. 7]**, Zhang Lianyuan provides a brief overview of the encroachment on the palace land:

16 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 5:6b-7a.

17 *Zhejiang tongzhi* 24:14b. This is the only mention of Zhong Niu that I was able to identify in historical sources. Zhang Lianyuan agrees in dating the change of the name to Qingfeng to the Ming dynasty. *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu 2":1b.

18 *Tiantai Shan fangwai zhi* 4:18a.

19 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 5b.

20 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1b.

21 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu 2":2a.

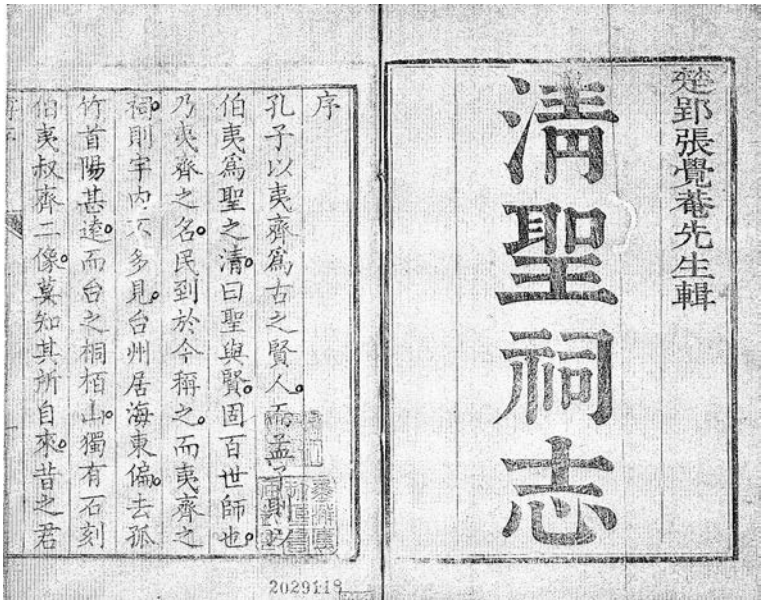
楚郢張覺菴先生輯
清聖祠志
序
孔子以夷齊爲古之賢人。而孟子則以
伯夷爲聖之清。曰聖與賢。固百世師也。
乃夷齊之名。民到於今稱之。而夷齊之
祠。則宇內不多見。台州居海東偏。去孤
竹首陽甚遠。而台之桐栢山。獨有石刻
伯夷叔齊二像。莫知其所自來。昔之君

Figure 7 Frontispiece of the *Qingsheng Ci zhi* by Zhang Lianyuan with the first page of the preface by the official Fu Zeyuan 傅澤淵, dated 1723

I paid homage to [Bo Yi and Shu Qi] under a decadent thatched hut and my feelings were so deep that I could not depart. Afterward, I checked [and found out] that in the past the temple [had] 9 qing and 80 mu of cultivated fields, 1 qing and 90 mu of land and 5 qing and 69 mu of mountain land. During the Ming dynasty, the taxes of the abbey went to the county, the surplus was used for public expenses and the remaining sum was embezzled. 7 qing and 91 mu 9 fen of the abbey's fields and 1 qing, 12 mu and 3 li of land were divided and sold to four parties. Only 1 qing and 4 mu of incense fields remained, returned to the Daoists of the abbey to provide for [their] sustenance. There were still precisely 91 mu of uncultivated fields, 84 mu of wasteland and the four sides of mountain land which were left to the four parties, who paid the land tax, because the Daoists had all left. The abbey was surely still functioning, [but] surprisingly [they] pretended for a long time [that it was not] and did not return [the temple land], or conspired with their clique to delete the [land] registries or to forge fake ones, planning to secretly embezzle it.[22]

22 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu 2":1b-2a.

> 予瞻拜於零落茅簷之下, 慨然不能去。 隨查舊時觀田九頃八十畝, 地一頃九十畝, 山五頃六十九畝。 明季觀租歸縣經收, 以其贏餘充爲公用, 及額外搜括。 將觀田七頃九十一畝九分, 地一頃一十二畝三釐, 分爲四股變賣。 止存香燈田一頃四畝。歸看觀道士供養香火, 尚有荒田九十一畝零, 荒地八十四畝零, 並四面山場, 因道士星散, 令四股人等, 隨帶完糧。 固仍然觀業也。 詎久假不歸, 或將原冊串黨刪除, 或造僞冊, 設機影佔。

The occupation of the temple land turned into a legal case, documented in detail in the *Qingsheng Ci zhi*. This book takes its title from the name given to the shrine during the Qing dynasty and it represents the perspective of Zhang Lianyuan, who supported Tongbai Palace against the local families, but it remains an invaluable document for understanding the history of the temple during the late Ming and early Qing periods. In the following pages I will discuss in detail the circumstances of the embezzlement and Zhang Lianyuan's commitment to returning the land to Tongbai Palace.

First, who were these four parties? Here again, Zhang Lianyuan comes to our help. In a report that he wrote in 1717 he provides the names of the illegal occupants of the land. According to his own account, they were Zhang Ruoying 張若嬰, Zhang Rushao 張汝韶, Zhang Yuanhe 張元和, Tang Yuangong 湯元功, and Chen Wanli 陳萬里.[23] The Zhangs are the most numerous among them, followed by the Tangs and by only one member of the Chen family.

Additionally, as stated by Pan Lei and confirmed by later sources, we know that there was one local family that used the land of Tongbai Palace as its own private burial ground. What Pan Lei does not disclose is the name of the individual buried there or of his family: he was Zhang Ruoying, son of a local official. A secret memorial sent by Li Wei 李衛 (1687-1738) to the Yongzheng emperor accuses Zhang Tianyu 張天郁 of being responsible for the land encroachment:

> In the Tianqi era Wei Zhongxian's associate, Zhang Tianyu, conspired to [take possession of] this place because of [its] geomantic characteristics. He sent his servants, pretending to be Daoists, to mistreat their [Daoist] companions, and so the latter all fled. [Zhang Tianyu] accused [the temple] of having extorted the land, so he returned more than 2000 mu of land to the government, making it public again.[24]

> 天啓間魏忠賢羽黨張天郁謀此地爲風水。先 令家奴充爲道士凌虐侶伴, 悉皆星散。又借搜括之名, 將賜田二千餘畝官賣歸公。

23 *Qingsheng Ci zhi*, 1:9b-10a.

24 *Gongzhong dang Yongzheng chao zouzhe* 19:51b-52a.

If we check the historical sources, we find no Zhang Tianyu from Tiantai among the eunuch Wei Zhongxian's associates. In the light of this, I began to question Li Wei's and Zhang Lianyuan's reports, but my mistrust was misplaced. As my research progressed, I did find a certain Zhang from Maoyuan 茅園 (Tiantai), who corresponded to the person described by the two authors, but his name was in fact Zhang Wenyu 張文郁 (*zi*: Congzhou 從周; *hao*: Taisu 太素; self-bestowed *hao*: Taoyuan sanren 桃源散人; 1578-1655).[25] So, it turned out that Zhang Tianyu is seldom used in the sources and that his actual name was Zhang Wenyu. Who was this official and how is the history of the empire tied to the case of the land occupation in Tiantai? Why was he singled out as the main culprit for this crime? It is necessary to focus on what happened at the end of the Ming dynasty in order to contextualize the later events.

4.3 Zhang Wenyu of Tiantai

I will focus on Zhang Wenyu's life and his role in state politics before attempting to understand why Li Wei especially blamed him for the occupation of the Palace land. Li Wei is described as a member of Wei Zhongxian's 魏忠賢 party. Chinese traditional historiography, following a well-established pattern of placing individuals into neat moral boxes, condemned Wei as a power-greedy despot and cruel oppressor of the morally upright scholarly elite. The latter, instead, represented by the militant Confucian Donglin party 東林黨, are often described as concerned with the salvation of the empire from impending doom and of the last emperors from themselves. The most extreme version of this position blames Wei Zhongxian for "planting the seeds of the [Ming] dynasty's demise".[26] An alternative interpretation of these events describes Wei Zhongxian's rise to power and his conflict with political opponents as the product of the harsh competition between state and gentry for the control of

25 For an autobiographical account of Zhang Wenyu's life, see his *Zhang Taisu shilang zizhu nianpu* 張太素士郎自著年譜. Zhang mentions his hometown in *Zhang Taisu shilang zizhu nianpu*, 17a (24a). The page refers to the copy in the Shanghai Library, the page of the version in the Linhai Museum is provided in brackets (for an online copy of the latter, refer to `http://www.317200.net/thread-135769-1-1.html`).

26 Williams, "The Manchu Conquest of China", 1:358-9; Miao, *Wei Zhongxian zhuanquan yanjiu*, 1. This position was just one of an array of different theses. Regardless of who was blamed, among Qing historiographers "[t]here was wide agreement […] that the fate of the Ming was sealed by what had happened in the Tianqi era. There were differences, however, about who or what bore the main responsibility", Dardess, *Blood and History in China*, 165. It must be noted, though, that many of the sources available today had been written by supporters of the Donglin party, who generally opposed Wei's position at court and the policies that he represented.

political power, generated by two main causes: the economic, cultural and political rise of the local elite and the development of localist tendencies connected to Neo-Confucian philosophical tenets.[27]

The power struggle between the two factions became harsher in 1620, a year marked by the death of the two emperors Wanli 萬曆 (r. 1572-1620) and Taichang 泰昌 (r. 1620) and by the ascent to the throne of the young Tianqi Emperor 天啓 (r. 1620-1627). Most notably, the infamous 'three cases' – three events preceding the death of Taichang that, according to Wei Zhongxian's detractors, were caused by palace conspiracies – became a casus belli justifying open opposition to the palace eunuch.[28] After his ascent to the throne, the young Tianqi Emperor gradually distanced himself from the officials and surrounded himself with court eunuchs, including Wei Zhongxian, who became his closest collaborator.[29] The traditional understanding is that Wei Zhongxian's power reached its peak between 1624 and 1627: by the end of the Tianqi era he had accumulated numerous titles and, more importantly, had become the most powerful man at court.[30] Harry Miller, opposing this interpretation, argued that Wei Zhongxian was a symbolic target of political attacks by the Donglin party and that he was never able to establish a tyranny or to usurp imperial power in any way. In any case, the Tianqi Emperor's death and the Chongzhen Emperor's ascent to the throne also spelled the end of Wei Zhongxian's influence at court: in the year 1627 he committed suicide while travelling south to reach the destination of his exile.[31]

The name Zhang Tianyu is mentioned in the *Dongnan jishi* 東南紀事 (Accounts of the Southeast) by Shao Tingcai 邵廷采 (1648-1711), a history of the Southern Ming dynasty in southeast China during its resistance to the Manchu conquest. This text records that Zhang Wenyu was nominated Minister of Work (*gongbu shangshu* 工部尚書) by the Prince of Lu 魯王, a descendant of the first Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang and the ruler of the Southern Ming between 1645 and 1653.[32]

By searching for Zhang Wenyu I was able to gather many more data. Gazetteers record that he passed his *juren* examination in

27 This interpretative framework has been used by Professor Harry Miller to connect the increasing tensions between the central government and the gentry over the issue of sovereignty. Miller, *State Versus Gentry*, 4-18.

28 Miller, *State Versus Gentry*, 9-30; Dardess, *Blood and History in China*.

29 Miller, *State Versus Gentry*, 32-49.

30 Miao, *Wei Zhongxian zhuanquan yanjiu*, 1, 11.

31 Dardess, *Blood and History in China*, 154.

32 *Dongnan jishi*, 184-98. On the *Dongnan jishi*, see also Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 521 and Matsuda, *Japan and China*, 152.

1618 and received his *jinshi* degree in 1622.[33] The *Qinding ni'an* 欽定逆案 (Case of the Rebels, Compiled by Imperial Order) proved fundamental for my research on Zhang Wenyu's allegiance to Wei Zhongxian because, among other information, it provides a list of names of officials belonging to Wei Zhongxian's clique who were accused of having participated in his attempted coup d'état, a very obscure chapter in the history of the Ming dynasty.[34] The text lists his affiliates in order of involvement and therefore of the gravity of their crime, starting with the two leaders of the rebels (*shouni erren* 首逆二人) Wei Zhongxian and 'Madame Ke' 客氏, the Tianqi Emperor's wet-nurse. Madame Ke is one of the leading figures from the Tianqi era and was accused of having bewitched the sovereign to keep him under her control.[35] The list continues with the names of six 'accomplices of the leaders' (*shouni tongmou liu ren* 首逆同謀六人), with 19 'colluding retinue officials' (*jiaojie jinshi shijiu ren* 交結近侍十九人) and 11 'attached colluding retinue assistants' (*jiaojie jinshi cideng shiyi ren* 交結近侍次等十一人). The fifth section records the names of the 127 'other colluding retinue assistants' (*jiaojie jinshi you cideng* 交結近侍又次等), among whom we find Zhang Wenyu. The last group, that of the 'colluding retinue assistants who received a mitigated sentence' 交結近侍減等 contains 44 names. Thus, it is confirmed that Zhang Wenyu was officially condemned as a supporter of Wei Zhongxian, although the exact charges are not explained. Moreover, I was unable to recover in the sources any evidence about the specific occasion on which he actively supported Wei Zhongxian against the Donglin faction. My hypothesis is that he must have been a high ranking official and that his simple performance of his duties during Wei's regime was enough to have him impeached as a collaborationist.

This is substantiated by a sizeable array of sources confirming that Zhang Wenyu was in fact hired as an official of the Minister of Work during the Tianqi era. In the sixth month of 1625 Zhang Wenyu entered this Ministry as supervisor of the restoration of 'the halls' or 'palaces'.[36] One of the big projects realised by the Tianqi Emperor was in fact the restoration of several buildings in the Forbidden City, the most important of which were the 'Three Palaces' or 'Halls'

33 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 17:13a; *Zhejiang tongzhi* 140:23b; *Lu zhi chunqiu* 8:10a-b; Tiantai Xian difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi, *Qing Kangxi Tiantai Xian zhi zhi*, 174. The latter source indicates Badu 八都 village as his hometown: both are in Tiantai county today, but Maoyuan seems to be the more widely accredited piece information.

34 *Qinding ni'an* 16a.

35 On Madame Ke's alleged influence on the emperor, see Dardess, *Blood and History in China*, 31-7; Lee, Wiles, *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women*, 178-80.

36 *Mingshi* 354:26b; *Zhang Taisu shilang zizhu nianpu* 17a (25b).

三殿: the Hall of Imperial Supremacy 皇極殿, the Hall of Central Supremacy 中極殿 and the Hall of Establishing Supremacy 建極殿,[37] which had been destroyed in a fire on the sixth month of 1597.[38] The restoration work began in the second month of 1625 and ended in the eighth month of the following year, and came to a total cost of almost six million liang.[39] According to the *Mingshi* 明史 (History of the Ming dynasty), Zhang became Wei Zhongxian's collaborator on recommendation of Cui Chengxiu 崔呈秀 (?-1627), who in turn had been a close collaborator of Wei's since 1625 and who is remembered today as one of the 'Five Tigers' 五虎, the main supporters of Wei's 'eunuch party' (*yandang* 閹黨).[40] Cui Chengxiu was an adoptive son of Wei Zhongxian and during the Tianqi reign he filled the two positions of censor-in-chief and Minister of War. As a consequence of his position and prestige, he acquired considerable power and for this reason he was eventually impeached during the Chongzhen reign.[41]

The *Mingshi* suggests that Zhang's links to the eunuch allowed him to gain a series of offices: in 1626 he added that of Subdirector (*shaoqing* 少卿) of the Court of the Imperial Stud (*taipusi* 太僕寺), one of the 'Nine Courts' (*jiu si* 九寺), an institution responsible for managing the meadows for the state horses along with the relevant gear and vehicles.[42] Once the restoration of the halls was completed, Zhang received two other positions, as Right Censor-in-chief 右都御史 and Left Vice Minister of Works (*gongbu zuo shilang* 工部左侍郎).[43] Although the majority of the positions held by Zhang were not at the top of the official ranking, he was nonetheless very close to the group in charge. Interestingly, his task as head of the censorial institution granted him control over an organisation responsible for denouncing the misconduct of government officials.[44] Wei Zhongxian fell into

37 Dardess, *Blood and History in China*, 140-1.

38 *Chunming meng yulu* 6:11b.

39 *Chunming meng yulu* 6:11b; *Huang Ming xuji sanchao fazhuan quanlu* 16:32b-34a; *Zhang Taisu shilang zizhu nianpu* 17b (26b-27b). There is discrepancy among the sources. In his *nianpu*, Zhang Wenyu records that work on the three halls began on the seventh day of the eleventh month of the year 1625. *Zhang Taisu shilang zizhu nianpu* 17a (26a). The Chinese terms *liang* 兩 and *yinliang* 銀兩 are sometimes translated into English as '(silver) tael', whereas *qian* 錢 or *tongqian* 銅錢 are translated as '(copper) mace' or 'coin'. One tael equalled 10 maces. Cf. Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 565, 568.

40 *Mingshi* 354:26b; Dardess, *Blood and History in China*, 129-30.

41 Dardess, *Blood and History in China*, 151-2.

42 *Mingshi* 354:26b; *Zhang Taisu shilang zizhu nianpu* 17b (27b). It should be noted that the Court of Imperial Steed was under control of the Minister of War, which might confirm the close relation between Zhang Wenyu and Cui Chengxiu. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 414, 481.

43 Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 426-7, 546.

44 Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 546.

disgrace at the beginning of the Chongzhen reign (1627-1644), when the opposite faction returned into power, and brought Zhang Wenyu down with him. Zhang was impeached and demoted soon after the change of regime and in 1628 he returned to Tiantai.[45] It is probably in this context that he started writing his *Anthology of Passing by the Small Pavilion* (*Du ziting ji* 度子亭集).[46]

Zhang Wenyu, who hailed from a small county in the southeast part of the empire, was involved in historical events of great magnitude. This incident could have been the end of his official career, but life is always unpredictable. So, we come across Zhang Wenyu again after the fall of the Ming dynasty, actively supporting the Southern Ming regime in east Zhejiang. At that time, all members of the imperial family and of the court who could flee the capital hurried south. There, they tried to organise their forces for the purpose of resisting the Manchu army and hopefully take back the lost territories, and to raise their chances to survive the collapse of the regime. The last Ming emperor, Sizong 思宗 (r. 1627-1644), had committed suicide on the day Li Zicheng 李自成 (1605?-1645), head of the rebels, entered the capital, but news of this tragic event arrived in the South much later. Despite the confusion and the political instability, factionalism was still rampant among former Ming officials. After much debate, a regency was established under the Prince of Lu 魯王, title first held by Zhu Changfang 朱常淓 (r. 1645) and then by Zhu Yihai 朱以海 (r. 1645-1653).[47] The new political entity needed ministers as much as any ordinary dynasty, if it wanted to organise durable institutions and thrive. The qualified personnel was chosen directly by the prince from among the available officials. The government was established in Shaoxing and it counted Wang Siren as Deputy Minister of Rites (*libu shilang* 禮部侍郎).[48] Among his colleagues, we find Zhu Zhaobo 朱兆柏, Li Baichun 李白春 and Zhang Wenyu. Upon establishment of the regency, Zhang was promoted to the rank of Minister of Works (*gongbu shangshu* 工部尚書),[49] no doubt because of his previous experience within the same bureau.

Making sense of Zhang's allegiance to the Southern Ming resistance is a complex task and it critically destabilises the simplistic paradigm of 'good versus bad' officials suggested by supporters of the Donglin faction (in its various incarnations). The reasons why Zhang

45 *Mingshi* 354:26b; *Zhang Taisu shilang zizhu nianpu* 18a (29b).

46 *Zhejiang tongzhi* 251:21b.

47 Regarding the part played by Zhu Yihai in the resistance to the Manchu conquest in Zhejiang, see Struve, *The Southern Ming*, 75-124.

48 *Lu zhi chunqiu* 8:7b-10b. Wang Siren wrote the record "Travelling in the Tiantai Mountains" 游天台山記. *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 12:34a.

49 *Lu zhi chunqiu* 8:10a-b; *Dongnan jishi*, 185.

Wenyu chose to join the resistance against the Manchu are subject to a variety of hypotheses. It is possible that he regretted the selfish ambition that had pushed him to become Wei Zhongxian's accomplice and sought to serve the dynasty one more time; it may be that he felt that his duty as a Confucian man of letters and former official was to remain loyal to that dynasty; he may have just wanted to clean up his reputation, or to take advantage of the situation and to satisfy his ambition; finally, it is possible that he just wanted to fight to protect his life, the lives of his family and his assets in Tiantai.

1.3.1 The Tiantai Elite

Having discussed the main features of Zhang Wenyu's biography and his links with the Ming court, let us return to analyse the families involved in the occupation of the land of the Qingfeng Shrine. Zhang Wenyu belonged to one of the most prominent families of Tiantai, but his was not the only one to occupy the temple land. How did it rank compared to the other families? What do we know about the Tangs and the Chens? There are various ways to assess the relative power of the local gentry. One parameter is the number of graduates that a family produced, namely of individuals who passed the *juren* and especially the *jinshi* 進士 examination, the highest level, whose holders could aim for a prestigious position in the bureaucracy. The results of my study on the successful candidates between 1370 and 1681 are summarised in **tables 2** and **3**.

We see that most of the graduates from Tiantai County at both levels belong to the period encompassed between the Hongwu and the Chenghua 成化 (1465-1487) reigns, with a peak in the latter. The average number of *juren* for the whole period is 3.22 every ten years, while in the Chenghua reign it is 10.4. The average number of *jinshi* in the period between the first examination (1371) and the last (1673) is 1.02 every ten years, while in the Chenghua era it is 4.78. In the period between the Hongzhi 弘治 (1487-1505) and the Kangxi eras, the average is 0.21 *jinshi* every ten years and 0.77 *juren*. Therefore, the clans of Tiantai County were much less able to produce graduates in either category during the last part of the Ming dynasty. In the first part of the Ming dynasty until the end of the Chenghua reign, the most successful clans were the Xia 夏 (3 *jinshi*, 7 *juren*), the Yang 楊 (3, 5) and the Fan 范 (3, 5); the Hu 胡 clan had a high number of *juren* (6), but only one *jinshi*. By comparison, the Zhangs only had 2 *juren* in this period and no *jinshi*. If we consider the Ming dynasty as a whole, it is also worth mentioning the Yang 楊 clan, which counted three *jinshi* graduates between 1388 and 1475: this shows that clans continued to produce individuals capable of passing examinations at the highest levels for an extended period of time.

Tables 2-3 Successful candidates from Tiantai County for the provincial and national examinations between 1370 and 1681. Tiantai xian difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi, *Tiantai Xian zhi*, 169-79

Name	Characters	Origin	Year	Degree
Hong Hua	洪華	Zheqiu 浙嶘	1371	*jinshi*
Zhou Bofu	周伯阜	Rutang 儒堂	1371	*jinshi*
Hu Ruyu	胡汝雨	Shuizhu 水竹	1371	*jinshi*
Yang Kejian	楊克儉	Badu 八都	1388	*jinshi*
Zhu Siping	朱思平	Jiudu Miaoshan 九都妙山	1397	*jinshi*
Lu Mu	魯穆	Taifang 太坊	1406	*jinshi*
Qiu Shen	裘參	Jiudu 九都	1411	*jinshi*
Ye Ying	葉穎	Taifang 太坊	1415	*jinshi*
Chu Sijing	褚思敬	Hefang 何坊	1418	*jinshi*
Du Ning	杜寧	Yongfang 永坊	1427	*jinshi*
Shi Mengkang	石孟康	Taifang 太坊	1430	*jinshi*
Fan Li	范理	Taifang 太坊	1430	*jinshi*
Qi Wang	齊汪	Taifang 太坊	1436	*jinshi*
Tong Shouhong	童守宏	Taifang 太坊	1442	*jinshi*
Xia Xun	夏塤	Yongfang 永坊	1451	*jinshi*
Lu Chongzhi	魯崇志	?	1454	*jinshi*
Xia Cheng	夏澄	Yongfang 永坊	1457	*jinshi*
Pan Zhen	潘禎	Rutang 儒堂	1466	*jinshi*
Fan Yin	范絪	Taifang 太坊	1472	*jinshi*
Yang Ze	楊澤	Taifang 太坊	1472	*jinshi*
Fan Ji	范吉	Taifang 太坊	1475	*jinshi*
Pan Qi	潘祺	Rutang 儒堂	1475	*jinshi*
Yang Fengchun	楊奉春	Badu 八都	1475	*jinshi*
Chu Tan	褚潭	Taifang 太坊	1478	*jinshi*
Pang Pan	龐泮	Ershiwudu 二十五都	1484	*jinshi*
Lu Jun	盧濬	?	1487	*jinshi*
Xia Hou	夏鍭	Yongfang 永坊	1487	*jinshi*
Wang Huan	王環	十七都	1487	*jinshi*
Pan Han	潘漢	Taifang 太坊	1511	*jinshi*
Fan Xun	范洵	Taifang 太坊	1514	*jinshi*
Zhang Wenyu	張文郁	Badu 八都	1622	*jinshi*
Pan Zhang	潘璋	?	1673	*jinshi*

Name	Characters	Origin	Year	Degree
Hu Ruyu	胡汝雨	Shuizhu 水竹	1370	*juren*
Hong Hua	洪華	Zheqiu 浙嶘	1370	*juren*
Zhou Bofu	周伯阜	Rutang 儒堂	1370	*juren*
Yang Shan	楊善	Badu 八都	1370	*juren*
Wu Hao	吳昊	Ershiliudu Dongshan 二十六都東山	1370	*juren*
Hu Zongfu	胡宗輔	Hudou 胡竇	1370	*juren*
Pan Meiyou	潘梅友	Ershibadu 二十八都	1370	*juren*
Zhu Wezhong	朱文中	Jiudu Miaoshan 九都妙山	1370	*juren*
Xia Di	夏迪	Yongfang 永坊	1387	*juren*
Yang Kejian	楊克儉	Badu 八都	1387	*juren*
Zhu Siping	朱思平	Jiudu Miaoshan 九都妙山	1396	*juren*
Zhu Wang	朱望	?	1396	*juren*
Qiu Shen	裘參	Jiudu 九都	1403	*juren*
Lu Mu	魯穆	Taifang 太坊	1405	*juren*
Wang Lu	王錄	Sidu 四都	1408	*juren*
Chu Zinan	褚子南	Hefang 何坊	1411	*juren*
Ye Ying	葉穎	Taifang 太坊	1411	*juren*
Chen Xiang	陳祥	Taifang 太坊	1414	*juren*
Ding Tingjie	丁廷頡	Badu Dingcun 八都丁村	1414	*juren*
Chu Sijing	褚思敬	Hefang 何坊	1417	*juren*
Chen Dan	陳啖	Jiudu 九都	1417	*juren*
Xu Xuping	徐敘平	Badu 八都	1417	*juren*
Dai Zongxian	戴宗賢	Jiexi 界溪	1417	*juren*
Qi Pu	齊普	Taifang 太坊	1420	*juren*
Hu Ju'an	胡居安	Nianjiudu 廿九都	1420	*juren*
Xu Banggui	徐邦貴	Houze 厚澤	1420	*juren*
Du Ning	杜寧	Yongfang 永坊	1423	*juren*
Qi Rangchuan	戚讓川	Taifang 太坊	1423	*juren*
Hu Kezhe	胡克哲	Nianjiudu Shuizhu 廿九都水竹	1426	*juren*
Fan Li	范理	Taifang 太坊	1429	*juren*
Cao Chang	曹昌	?	1429	*juren*
Hu Kezhao	胡克昭	Shuizhu 水竹	1429	*juren*
Shi Mengkang	石孟康	Taifang 太坊	1429	*juren*
Pan Wei	潘偉	Rutang 儒堂	1429	*juren*
Li Zehe	李則賀	Liudu 六都	1429	*juren*
Qi Wang	齊汪	Taifang 太坊	1432	*juren*
Xia Lu	夏魯	Yongfang 永坊	1435	*juren*
Zhang Xuan	張諼	Taifang 太坊	1441	*juren*
Tong Shouhong	童守宏	Taifang 太坊	1441	*juren*
Xu Duanhong	許端宏	Yongfang 永坊	1441	*juren*

Name	Characters	Origin	Year	Degree
Xia Yao	夏曜	Yongfang 永坊	1444	*juren*
Xia Xun	夏塤	Yongfang 永坊	1451	*juren*
Lu Chongzhi	魯崇志	?	1454	*juren*
Xia Cheng	夏澄	Yongfang 永坊	1457	*juren*
Pan Zhen	潘禎	Rutang 儒堂	1466	*juren*
Fan Yin	范絪	Taifang 太坊	1472	*juren*
Yang Ze	楊澤	Taifang 太坊	1472	*juren*
Fan Ji	范吉	Taifang 太坊	1475	*juren*
Pan Qi	潘祺	Rutang 儒堂	1475	*juren*
Yang Fengchun	楊奉春	Badu 八都	1475	*juren*
Chu Tan	褚潭	Taifang 太坊	1478	*juren*
Pang Pan	龐泮	Ershiwudu 二十五都	1484	*juren*
Lu Jun	盧濬	?	1487	*juren*
Xia Hou	夏鍭	Yongfang 永坊	1487	*juren*
Wang Huan	王環	Shiqidu 十七都	1487	*juren*
Pan Han	潘漢	Taifang 太坊	1511	*juren*
Fan Xun	范洵	Taifang 太坊	1514	*juren*
Zhang Wenyu	張文郁	Badu 八都	1622	*juren*
Pan Zhang	潘璋	?	1681	*juren*

During the rest of the Ming dynasty, the only clans with a *jinshi* were the Pan 潘, the Fan 范 and the Zhang. We also count three *juren* among the Chens 陳, two in the Yang and the Pan clans, but only one (Zhang Wenyu) among the Zhangs. What distinguishes the Zhangs from the other clans is that Zhang Wenyu obtained positions in the capital.[50] Before him, Fan Xun 范洵 (*zi*: Yunqing 允卿; *jinshi* 1514) was appointed Assistant Surveillance Commissioner of Huguang (*Huguang anchasi qianshi* 湖廣按察司僉事), but this happened at a much earlier date.[51] It is not possible to argue that the influence of an elite family at the local level was directly proportional to the number and rank of its graduates, but consistent rates of success at examinations indicate that a clan had access to enough wealth and cultural capital to ensure higher educational standards for its offspring. Moreover, we see that it was enough for one member of a family to obtain the *jinshi* degree and gain lofty bureaucratic positions in order to boost the whole family's wealth and local influence.

50 *Zhejiang tongzhi* 131:2b, 19a, 135:16b; Tiantai Xian difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi, *Qing Kangxi Tiantai Xian zhi* 173-8. The *Zhejiang tongzhi* provides two different dates for Fan Li's *jinshi* degree: the fourth year of the Xuande era (1429) and the *gengxu* year (1430). *Zhejiang tongzhi* 161:8a.

51 Tiantai Xian difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi, *Qing Kangxi Tiantai Xian zhi*, 174.

If we compare the results of this study with the surnames of those who occupied the temple land on Mt. Tongbai, we find that only Chen and Zhang are present. Moreover, the Chens were not the most successful at the imperial examinations. Until the Chenghua 成化 era (1464-1487), the clans with the most *juren* had been the Xias, the Hus, the Yangs and the Fans with an average of five to seven graduates, followed by the Zhus 朱, the Pans, the Qis 齊, the Chens and the Xus 徐 with four. In the second period, from the Hongzhi era (1487-1505) to the Kangxi, the Chens and the Pans had the most graduates, three each: the Zhang clan only had one. In the same period, only the Pans had two *jinshi*, followed by the Fans and the Zhangs with one each. There is no trace of a Tang graduate. This seems to suggest that the elite of Tiantai included many families and that the Zhangs and the Chens were not necessarily the most successful at the examinations. It remains to be qualitatively assessed what contribution each of these graduates brought to their families in terms of power, prestige and wealth: the case of Zhang Wenyu shows that one graduate in the right place could be enormously beneficial to his own family. Therefore, it is not only a matter of *how many* graduates a family had, but also of *how successful* a career these graduates had. Having familiarised with the protagonists of the land encroachment case, I will now present it in detail.

4.4 Land Disputes and Tongbai Palace

If we are familiar with late imperial sources, then we know that gentry abuse at the local level was a widespread if not chronic phenomenon, especially during the last part of the Ming dynasty.[52] This was not only lamented at the local level, but also explicitly discussed at court. The potential harmfulness of the gentry's power is clearly described in a letter that Prime Minister Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525-1582) wrote to a regional official at the beginning of the Wanli reign:

> Today, those who secretly seize the land and occupy it with deceit are the rich and powerful, not the common people. I try to apply the law [against] the evildoers, not [against] the good people.[53]

52 I use the term 'gentry' to translate the wide range of concepts indicated in Chinese by the terms *shi* 士, *shidafu* 士大夫, *shen* 紳, *shenshi* 紳士, *shenjin* 紳縉, *jinshen* 縉紳, *xiangguan* 鄉官, *tianzhu* 田主 and others. I follow Harry Miller's definition: "the Ming gentry seem to have based their status on a set of interrelated criteria, of which civil service examination performance, with the attendant possibility of government office, was perhaps primary, but which also included landholding and conventional behavior patterns". Miller, *State Versus Gentry*, 16.

53 Zhang, "Da Yingtian xunfu Song Yangshan lun jun liang zu min ". Cf. Miller, *State Versus Gentry*, 32-40.

今為侵欺隱占者, 權豪也, 非細民也。而吾法之所施者, 奸人也, 非良民也。

I started from this excerpt of a text by Zhang Juzheng because he aptly represents the position of the authoritarian and centralist style of administration of officials who preferred a strong central government to the detriment of the local autonomy of the gentry, whose interests they sometimes actively tried to curtail.[54]

Illegal transactions and unregistered changes in landownership, as well as the unlawful occupation of land, were not unusual during the Ming and Qing dynasties, as demonstrated by a significant number of sources. For example, a report of 1494 recording the abuse of power perpetrated by local elite, states: "[small peasants, poor households and other marginal groups] are able to obtain shelter with the rich and powerful [families of Jiangnan] and then bully the weak on the strength of their connection with their patrons.... *Forcibly seizing small peasants' property, or cheating and raping the wives and women of poor people, they use their influence to oppress people in debt and to set up private jails. They falsely claim ownership of rented land and openly deceive and take [rent from people*]. They go beyond their social position and act improperly" [前項之徒]幸得豪富牧留便要仗勢欺人……強奪小民家業或欺姦貧民妻女威縛欠債人戶私置牢獄妄稱 租田名色公然詐去非禮犯分靡所不為.[55] Shigeta Atsushi considered this group of 'local strongmen' part of the core of the gentry. They could come into conflict with the government because they represented 'personal rule', in opposition to 'state power'.[56]

One consequence of this situation is that the 'common people' mentioned in Zhang Juzheng's document were often forced to seek protection under powerful families, who were able to avoid paying taxes instead of bearing their burden, as the peasants had to. The occupation of land could be carried out in different ways. According to Oyama Masaaki, this is what happened in the 17th century in the Jiangnan region, where many peasants were forced to leave their homes due to pressure from local powerful families and to seek protection under other influential households: as a result, some elite families were able to incorporate the vacant land and to employ their protégés as labourers, thugs and bondservants.[57] These were the

54 Miller, *State Versus Gentry*, 32-3.

55 *Huang Ming tiaofa shilei zuan* 1:31a quoted and translated in Oyama, "Large Landownership in the Jiangnan Delta Region", 131. Italics in the original.

56 Shigeta, "The Origins and Structure of Gentry Rule", 355.

57 Oyama, "Large Landownership in the Jiangnan Delta Region", 130-5. Tanaka Masatoshi explained that 'bondservants' in late imperial China (called *nubi* 奴婢, *nupu* 奴僕, *tongnu* 僮奴, *tongpu* 僮僕) upheld a variety of class interests. He argued that some of them were poor peasants treated as objects, others performed complex tasks and were employed as secretaries and could accumulate a comparatively sizeable wealth.

other side of the gentry's organising, ordering rule: the dichotomy between a morally upright local elite and fierce strongmen was sometimes a simple matter of perspective.

In other cases, the act of submission could be totally voluntary and even justified by the increasing fiscal pressure from the government or by personal aspirations. The symbiotic relationship between the local elite and their lackeys would have harmful consequences for the general population, as exemplified by another record: "Brazen slaves and fierce bondservants relied upon the gentry's power to terrorize others. The common people in the district were not able to live in peace. Small peasants (*xiaomin*) in the town had no choice but to submit to such brazen slaves and bondservants in order to live in cordial harmony with them. Moreover, since these bondservants were protected by the gentry, they could get away with doing evil. As a result, 20 to 30 percent of the people on the land in a county or district posted their names (*guaming*) as bondservants" 至於豪奴 悍僕倚勢横行里黨不能安居, 而市井小民計維投身門下。得與此輩水乳交融, 且可憑爲城狐社鼠。由是一邑一鄉之地, 掛名童僕者什有二三.[58] The gentry's servants indeed benefited from a degree of impunity and power as the local elite's protégés: in order to escape harassment, vexed people often sought to gain comparable protection themselves by accepting to serve the gentry as well. Some scholars deem this phenomenon very influential, with the most extreme view probably being Shigeta Atsushi's, who has argued that gentry rule as a whole was in fact based on this kind of unofficial bond.[59]

4.5 The Case of the Qingsheng Shrine

I have anticipated that the local elite's abuses actually have much to do with the history of Tongbai Palace between the end of the Ming dynasty and the beginning of the Qing. The most significant source for reconstructing this period is the *Qingsheng Ci zhi*, where Zhang Lianyuan provides a thorough account of the land dispute through a series of documents. The oldest one is a report that he wrote in the

Tanaka, "Popular Uprisings", 192-3. The actual status of bondservants during the Ming and Qing dynasties has been much debated.

58 *Xiaoxia xianji zhaichao* 1:6a-b, quoted and translated in Oyama, "Large Landownership in the Jiangnan Delta Region", 135. Italics in the original. The situation does not seem to have improved much during the Qing dynasty. At the end of the 19th century the scholar Zhang Daye wrote in his memoirs: "if the landowner was unkind, then hunger and cold immediately struck the tenant farmers. When they could hardly make a living, they began to resort to all sorts of deception." Zhang, *The World of a Tiny Insect*, 128-9.

59 Shigeta, "The Origins and Structure of Gentry Rule", 361.

twelfth month of 1716. This and the other documents usually start by introducing either the geography or the history, or both, of Tongbai Palace and the Qingsheng (i.e. Qingfeng) Shrine. In this case, the first report explains the route to reach Tongbai Peak and describes its geographical setting. This description is followed by a discussion of the 'ten friends of the transcendents' school' (*xianzong shi you* 仙宗十友) and by the story of how the two statues of Bo Yi and Shu Qi arrived at the temple during the Song dynasty: only at this point does Zhang Lianyuan delve into the history of the Qingsheng Shrine.[60] In this way, he clarifies the links between the latter, the ancient sages and Tongbai Palace itself. This is instrumental for justifying his efforts in support of the small shrine of Mt. Tongbai. I can highlight two major points from which all the other arguments are derived: 1) the land that provided subsistence to the Qingsheng Shrine was originally that of Tongbai Palace and therefore must be inherited by the shrine; 2) the shrine's existence was justified by the fact that it hosted the cult of Bo Yi and Shu Qi. If the shrine was to be somehow detached from these two elements, it would lose both juridical and cultural-religious legitimation.

After this general introduction, the author proceeds to illustrate the decline of Tongbai Palace during the Ming dynasty. Its economic decline was the result of two basic issues: the appropriation of the land tax of the temple by county officials and the division of the remaining land into four plots occupied by local families. Out of the original 9 qing and 80 mu (601,720 m^2) of temple land that according to Zhang Lianyuan were recorded in the old documents, only 1 qing and 4 mu (63,856 m^2) remained the temple's possession as incense fields (*xianghuo* 香火).[61] One of Zhang Lianyuan's most serious accusations, supporting the thesis of a fraudulent appropriation of the land, was that these local families had either tampered with the old land registries or produced fake ones in order to strengthen their claim over the land.[62]

The history of the Palace and of its decline, according to Zhang Lianyuan, runs as follows. At some point during the Ming dynasty, the temple lacked administrators. Due to this, the rent from its

60 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu 2":1a-b.

61 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu 2":1b-2a. Units of measure, although officially established by the government, often varied depending on the historical period and location. Since the land was donated by the emperor, I have relied on the conversion table for the Qing dynasty provided by Wilkinson (1 mu = 614 m^2), although I am aware that it may only represent an approximation. 1 qing = 100 mu. Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 557-8. It should be noted that Barend ter Haar uses the equivalence 1 mu = 666,5 m^2 in ter Haar, "Yongzheng and His Buddhist Abbots", 447.

62 "Maybe deleted [compromising information] from the original registries, or fabricated fake ones" 或將原冊串黨刪除, 或造偽冊. *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu2":2a.

lands was poured into the public coffers and was managed by the county magistrate. To add insult to injury, what money remained was embezzled. It appears that the temple income was used to pay some allowances to the local students. Moreover, much of the temple land was sold to a party of four in 1629, marking the decline of Tongbai Palace and of the shrine from the first half of the 17th century onwards. The temple was apparently unable to recover from this series of events and plunged into a downward spiral that compromised its ability to resist outside pressures. Finally, the area of the Qingsheng Shrine became the burial ground of the Zhang family.

Part of the information summarised above is laid out in more detail in Zhang Lianyuan's earliest report, from 1716:

> I have checked the old legal case of the fortieth year of the Kangxi era (1701), [which reports that] a Daoist from Tongbai Palace called Zhang Taiyuan accused the stipend students of misappropriating state wealth. The county official Yan Jingqian investigated: "in the past it was ordered to interrupt the allowances [for the students], therefore public land was used to pay them. If a city did not have public land, it had to use other resources. [Because] the [payment of the] allowances has already been resumed, [the land] should be returned to the temple". The former county magistrate of Tiantai decided that since Zhang Taiyuan was not a local person and had no definite whereabouts, [he] would not return the embezzled money [to him], but would rely on a local person [to manage things], although this would take a long time to accomplish. In addition, because the stipend students had already received more than half of the allowances for this year, for the time being he would collect the rent [of the land] to pay its land taxes. […] Today, 15 or 16 years later, the temple and lands have yet to be reunited. If the land is not returned to the abbey, when will the time of its recovery come? Zhang Taiyuan is not a local [Daoist], so is there anybody who can supervise [the temple]?[63]
>
> 因查康熙四十年間舊案, 有桐柏宮道人章泰元, 以吞佔國產等事, 具控廩生佔抵廩糧。經前閻府, 行縣敕查, 有「該縣既稱昔年奉文裁扣廩糧, 故將公田抵廩, 設別邑並無公田之處, 又將何項抵給。且廩糧既已奉復, 理應退還本觀」等語。 隨經天邑前令, 以章泰元並非土著之人, 行踪無定, 涉手恐歸中飽, 另枱確實土著, 又非旦晚可得。且廩生已將本年銀米, 輪納過半。暫令收租完糧等情。……今又相隔十五六年矣, 田不歸觀。豈能有興復之日? 章泰元即非土著, 豈無堪以住持之人?

63 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:2a-2b.

The *linsheng* 廩生 (stipend students), or *shengyuan* 生員 (government students), were the most promising students of a Confucian school. They were expected to sit provincial examinations and received a stipend from the government.[64] The issue of allowances is better explained in a later report: "Due to the lack of grain rations for the salaried students [of the county school], the land [was used to] supplement the state allowance" 因廩生餼糧裁缺, 將此田抵給廩膳.[65] The redirection of the temple's income was therefore justified by the fact that the student allowances had been suspended at the end of the Ming dynasty.

Wang Ka argued that the decision to continue to use the temple land to subsidise local students was a political choice in favour of Confucianism over Daoism.[66] I would like to add some considerations over his argument. First, this event could be read also as the imperial state's claim over local wealth: as we have seen, once the emergency situation ended and the allowances were reinstated, all property was expected to be returned to the temple. This is also the reason for Daoist Zhang's complaint. It should further be noted that, given the rather murky circumstances, it is debatable whether the *linsheng* were in fact the most meritorious students, or whether they (or at least some of them) were the members of the most influential families. Based on the relationship between gentry, landowning and the education system discussed above, it is plausible that the *linsheng* belonged to the elite of Tiantai society, regardless of their merit. If so, the charge of misusing temple wealth to fund local students was actually a way of pointing to the abuses perpetrated by the local elite, guided by their wish to increase their economic benefits. Once the properties of a declining Daoist temple on the mountain had been appropriated by the local elite and by the Confucian schools, local officials may also have deemed it easier and less troublesome to keep things as they were without stirring up the notables of Tiantai, instead of subtracting resources from the local school to restore Tongbai Palace: this would have earned the elite's hostility without ensuring comparable support from other groups.

The above-quoted excerpt contains another significant detail, namely that a Daoist called 'Zhang Taiyuan' 章泰元 was living at Tongbai Palace. This also allows me to discuss in more detail the history of the temple during the last decades of the Ming dynasty. Zhang Lianyuan wrote:

> I have found that in the third year of the Ming Chongzhen era (1629), each household bought [part of] the abbey's land: now the-

64 "Shén-shìh", in Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles*, 313, 420-1.

65 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:13a.

66 Wang, "Yongzheng huangdi yu Ziyang zhenren (xia)", 4.

> re are the registries as evidence, each with the name of the land and its location. Each party had more than 197 mu of cultivated fields, divided into three tiers according to their value. [Additionally,] each party had 28 mu and 8 hao of cultivated land, each mu valued at 2 qian. Each party took 22 mu of uncultivated fields, 21 mu of unclaimed land and 1 qing and 42 mu of unclaimed mountains, of which there is no evaluation.[67]
>
> 卑府查明崇禎三年, 各戶承買觀田。 現有印冊存據, 各有土名坐落處所。 熟田每股一百九十七畝有奇, 三則定價。 熟地每股二十八畝八毫, 價銀二錢。 又每股隨帶荒田二十二畝、荒地二十一畝、荒山一頃四十二畝, 俱並無價值。

The parcels would appear to have been more or less equally distributed among the four occupants. The date here is of interest to us, as 1629 is the year after Zhang Wenyu had to return home following Wei Zhongxian's impeachment and death. Therefore, it is possible that the scheme to appropriate the temple land was supported, if not organised, by him. This would hardly be surprising, because in order to embezzle wealth and illegally occupy land, Zhang Wenyu's prestige and political connections would have been instrumental.

According to Zhang Lianyuan, "when the abbey's land was sold, the halls had not yet totally collapsed and there were Daoists who managed [the abbey] and farmed [its] land until the thirtieth year of the Kangxi reign (1691)" 緣召賣觀田時, 殿宇未盡傾廢, 且有道士住持耕種觀田.[68] If this report is correct, then even though the land had been surrendered to some local families, Tongbai Palace was in fact still inhabited by one or more Daoists: although the decline is evident, the final collapse was due to the lack of means caused by acts of abuse and prevarication. As we have seen, about ten years later, in 1701, a Daoist of the Palace, Zhang Taiyuan, denounced the situation in which the temple found itself, but nothing was actually done until Zhang Lianyuan took on the case. We may conclude that between 1629 and 1701 the temple had not been entirely abandoned. It appears, though, that if Zhang Taiyuan lived at the Palace, he was alone, for otherwise the documents would have referred to his companions as possible abbots.

Before continuing with the study of the legal case involving the abbey's land, there is still one question that I wish to tackle: why did Zhang Lianyuan go to such lengths in order to restore the shrine? Wang Ka argues that the Confucian pedigree of Bo Yi and Shu Qi was the main justification behind it, a hypothesis that seems to be supported by a number of passages in the *Qingsheng Ci zhi*. In my

67 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:9b.

68 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:10a.

view, the Confucian significance of the shrine, in Zhang Lianyuan's mind, was not separate from the other strata of meaning: the official was fully aware of the Daoist significance of the place and of Bo Yi and Shu Qi, which was also clear to his contemporaries. For example, in his 1723 preface to the *Qingsheng Ci zhi*, Fu Zeyuan 傅澤淵 wrote: "Moreover the *Shuo fu* records that Bo Yi and Shu Qi of Guzhu are the *jiutian puye* and govern Mt. Tiantai, which is why the shrine was built" 而《說郛》載孤竹伯夷、叔齊, 並爲九天僕射, 治天台山, 故祠之建也.[69] Here we see that their Daoist role is mentioned as justification for the very existence of their cult on Mt. Tongbai. Moreover, it was well known to all the authors who reconstructed the history of the shrine, both in the *Qingsheng Ci zhi* and in the local and regional gazetteers, that the statues of the two Confucian sages/Daoist gods had been brought to the temple not by a scholar in the role of Confucian representative, but by a Daoist, maybe even invested with imperial authority.

In Zhang Lianyuan's discourse justifying the importance of the Qingsheng Shrine we can identify three main layers: the landscape, the Confucian elements and the Daoist ones. The first layer is more evident when he describes the features of the landscape: its peaks, springs, bridges, rivers and rivulets, and the literature they inspired.[70] The Confucian discourse is linked to Bo Yi and Shu Qi, who are described as "masters for hundreds of generations" 百世之師也, as sages (*sheng* 聖) and virtuous persons (*xian* 賢), and to the Confucian literati's responsibility to safeguard the cults associated with Confucian doctrine: "How could they both be abandoned to the wilderness? The blame for protecting this land is also shared by the gentleman" 詎得委諸草莽? 此守土者之咎也, 亦士君子之責也.[71] This responsibility is also evident in how Zhang Lianyuan conceptualized the function of the worship of Bo Yi and Shu Qi: "Today, when ascending the famous mountains to pay homage to the new shrines, [people] linger looking upward [and this] really suffices to make the obstinate upright and to straighten up the coward" 今登名山而拜新祠, 瞻仰徘徊, 真足廉頑立懦.[72] Finally, the Daoist layer appears as clearly as the Confucian one from Zhang Lianyuan's text. In the *fanli* 凡例 section, the Daoist identity of Bo Yi and Shu Qi as *jiutian puye* is mentioned in order to explain the name of the shrine during the Song dynasty; it is again mentioned in the *fanli* that Mt. Tongbai is one of the 72 'blessed lands'.[73] Finally, in his

69 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu 1":2a. The *Shuo fu* is a collection of tales regarding unusual, curious or supernatural events compiled by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1329-1410).

70 Cf. *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu 2":1a-b.

71 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu 2":3a.

72 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "xu 2":3a.

73 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "fanli":4a, 1:1a.

first report, Zhang Lianyuan mentions Sima Chengzhen and the group known in late imperial times as 'the ten friends of the transcendents' school'.[74] This cannot be regarded simply as the appreciation of Sima Chengzhen as a scholar, because the religious undertones of the group are clearly expressed in the name of the group itself and also because it would be problematic to separate the different roles of literatus and Daoist priest embodied by Sima Chengzhen.

To conclude, it appears that the importance of the shrine was based on the juxtaposition of multiple strata of meaning, broadly summarised by the Confucian and the Daoist ones. Which of the two was brought to the surface level and therefore made more visible and accessible, depended on the author, on his agenda and on the occasion. Despite this, one layer did not cancel the other: both subsisted, at everyone's disposal.

1.5.1 The Temple Land

Apart from the problem of revenue loss, during the Kangxi period, Tongbai Palace was facing the problem of land encroachment. According to documents provided by local families, part of the temple land had been divided into four units. Zhang Lianyuan reported:

> In the year Kangxi 40 (1701), the descendants of the Zhang who had bought the temple land were accused of extorting heavy taxes for generations. The previous Provincial Administration Commissioner ordered to carry out a detailed enquiry into this county. It was said that the buyers did not want the lower fields, [so] they only obtained the rent of two mu (1,228 m^2) of lower fields calculated as [if they were] one mu of upper fields. The accusation ran that the Zhang family's ancestor was a high official of the previous dynasty. He vied for the purchase of the land of Tongbai Palace with the Tiantai country gentlemen [surnamed] Chen.[75]
>
> 康熙四十年間, 有承買觀田張姓之裔, 以重稅世累等事籲控。 前布政使司批發該縣審詳, 據稱買戶不肯[=肯]要下田, 只得將下田二畝之租, 筭作上田一畝出賣。 據買戶人等, 控稱張姓之祖係前朝顯宦, 與本邑陳鄉紳爭買桐柏宮田地。

74 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:1b. In addition to Sima Chengzhen, this group included famous literati of the Tang dynasty variously related to each other, such as Bi Gou 畢構 (650-716), Song Zhiwen 宋之問 (ca. 656-712), He Zhizhang 賀知章 (659-744), Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂 (ca. 659-700?), Meng Haoran 孟浩然 (689-740), Wang Wei 王維 (699/701-761), Li Bai 李白 (701-762), Lu Cangyong 陸藏用 (?-ca. 714) and Wang Shi 王適 (fl. 691). Cf. Jiang, *Qinshu daquan* 17:20a.

75 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:3b-4a.

Here the Chen 陳 family is mentioned: we already know that they are one of the three clans that occupied the land of Tongbai Palace. According to this report, the relationship between the different clans may have been one not of collaboration, but of competition over the acquisition of the land. For reasons that are not clear, the Zhangs were nonetheless still largely blamed for the land encroachment. It may be that they controlled most of the temple land, or that they were especially powerful and well-known and that therefore they played a leading role among the Tiantai elite.

The other documents collected by Zhang Lianyuan elaborate on the details of the past and present of Tongbai Palace and of the Qingsheng Shrine. A document dated to the fifth month of 1718 provides a plan of the temple, parts of which were still visible among the ruined foundations:

> In the past, the peak of Mt. Tongbai had a *dongmen* (main gate). From the peak one could reach the abbey via a very wide and flat road and in the middle there was the Hua Bridge. Today the bridge is broken and the road is extremely narrow. According to tradition, there were more than 1,300 buildings on the two sides of the bridge. North of the bridge, there is still a **stele from the Qiandao** 乾道 **era** (1165-1173). Its characters are already unclear and it used to be located outside the foundations of the then main gate. Beyond the stele, within [the territory of the temple] there are the **Lingxing Gate** and the **Longhu Temple**. Behind them, one enters the **second gate** and beyond it there is the **San Qing Hall**. One can still see the base of the side walls. Behind it, one floor higher, is the **Yuqing Hall**. To the west there is the **Lüzu Hall**, and to the east the **Pavilion of the Dipper**. The main mountain of the abbey is called **Mount Yuanwu** and it is to the right of the San Qing Hall: this is the Qingsheng Shrine of Bo Yi and Shu Qi.[76]
>
> 從前桐柏巔, 有洞門一座。 自嶺達觀, 俱康莊大路, 中有花橋。 今橋已中斷, 路盡窄狹。 橋之內外, 相傳舊有屋宇一千三百餘間。 橋之北尚存有乾道年間石碑, 字已模糊, 爲當日大門外基址。 碑以內, 建有櫺星門及龍虎廟。直北而進爲二門, 內爲三清殿, 兩邊尚有牆腳。 殿後高一層, 乃玉清殿。西爲呂祖殿, 東爲斗閣。 觀之主山曰元武山, 其三清殿之右, 即夷、齊清風祠。

In the same document, Zhang Lianyuan provides very interesting pieces of information taken from Ming-dynasty land registers. Here the four parties occupying the temple land and their respective properties are thoroughly described:

76 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:8b. Emphasis added.

Each party has more than 197 mu (120,958 m^2) of cultivated fields, [divided into] three price brackets and 28 mu and 8 hao (~17,192m^2) of cultivated land, each mu being worth 2 coins. Annexed to each party's [property] are 22 mu (13,508 m^2) of unclaimed fields, 21 mu (12,894 m^2) of unclaimed land and 1 qing and 42 mu (87,188 m^2) of unclaimed mountain, all of no [clearly indicated] value. According to these records, the share of Zhang Ruoying's fertile fields is on the east side of Mount Tongbai. It comes with unclaimed land at the foot of the mountain, all on the east side of Mount Tongbai. Tang Yuangong has fertile land on the southeast side of Mt. Tongbai and unclaimed mountain land on the foot of the mountain, all located by the peak at the northern limit of the valley of Mt. Tongbai. Zhang Rushao 張汝韶 has fertile land on the small peak on the northern border of Mt. Tongbai and unclaimed mountain land on the southern side of Mount Tongbai. Chen Wanli 陳萬里 and Zhang Yuanhe 張元和 own fertile land on the mountain in the west valley and unclaimed land, also in the west valley of Mt. Tongbai. I have checked the small northern peak, where the fertile land bought by Zhang Rushao is located. On the peak at the northern edge of the valley, there is the unclaimed mountain of Tang Yuangong. This territory is all within the sacred perimeter, which belongs to the temple. Zhang Rushao's uncultivated mountain land is located on the southern boundary of Mt. Tongbai and it marks the southern territory that was once outside the sacred perimeter. When it was decided to sell the land, the halls had not yet totally collapsed and there was a Daoist who tilled the land. [Moreover,] until the thirtieth year of the Kangxi reign (1691), the Sanqing Hall was still extant. [Therefore,] regardless of [whether] it, the mountain, the land and the foundations of the halls are within the bought land and annexed properties or not, how could the buyers consider the land and mountain area bestowed to the temple to have been sold [when it was] not sold and given [when it was] not given?[77]

熟田每股一百九十七畝有奇, 三則定價。熟地每股二十八畝八毫, 每畝價銀二錢。又每股隨帶荒田二十二畝, 荒地二十一畝, 荒山一頃四十二畝, 俱並無價值。據印冊開載, 張若嬰一股, 熟地坐桐柏山東界。山腳隨帶荒山, 俱坐桐柏山東界。湯元功一股, 熟地坐桐柏山東南界, 山根隨帶荒山, 俱坐桐柏山北嶴界嶺。張汝韶一股熟地坐桐柏山北界小嶺中央。荒山俱坐桐柏山南界。陳萬里、張元和一股熟地俱坐西嶴山, 荒山俱坐桐柏山西嶴界。查北面

77 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:9b-10a. I have not followed David Hu, who translates *shutian* 熟田 as 'cultivated lands', since I had necessarily to translate *tian* as 'fields' in order to distinguish it from *di* 地, which I translated as 'land'. Hu, *Chinese-English Dictionary*, 2:2266. The term *di* appears to indicate land dedicated to dry field cultivation, while *tian* stands for rice paddies. The mountain land (*shan* 山) could indicate cropland on the slopes of the mountain, or it referred to mountain land used for gathering wood.

> 小嶺中央, 方爲張汝韶承買熟地。至北嶴界嶺, 方爲湯元功隨帶荒山。是洞門以內之地, 皆為觀業。即張汝韶一股荒山坐桐柏山南界, 亦指舊時洞門外南一帶。而言緣召賣觀田時, 殿宇未盡傾廢, 且有道士住持耕種觀田, 至康熙三十年, 尚有三清殿一間。其附觀山地祠殿基, 毋論不在編賣之中, 亦并不在隨帶之列。詎承買之人竟將該觀額山額地, 已賣未賣, 已隨帶未隨帶。

A summary of the information is found in table 4.

Table 4 Distribution of land parcels to each of the four parties, divided by type

		qing	mu	fen	li	hao
Cultivated fields	熟田	1	97			
Cultivated land	熟地		28			8
Unclaimed fields	荒田		22			
Unclaimed land	荒地		21			
Unclaimed mountain	荒山	1	42			

The technical terminology of this excerpt reveals that cultivated fields (*shutian* 熟田) and cultivated land (*shudi* 熟地) were worth more than uncultivated land. We also have a thorough estimation of the value of each in the first report by Zhang Lianyuan: high-tier fields were valued at 1 liang and 5 qian per mu, mid-tier fields at 1 liang and low-tier fields at 5 qian, while the land was worth 2 qian.[78] Mountain land could be used to collect wood, but it was valued less than the rest. Yet, in the case of a temple, wood was a fundamental resource, especially when the building was in need of restoration, as such work was very expensive: the possibility of saving part of the funds allotted for the raw material could prove critical for the survival of the institution.

It has been calculated that while the construction of an entire temple required pooling the resources of a whole county, the restoration of one building was possible thanks to the patronage of just one group of elite families. However, this was not a simple endeavour: by the end of the Ming dynasty, 100 liang was considered a generous donation by a wealthy family, but the edification of a bell tower cost about 1,000 liang.[79] Moreover, keeping the temple in good conditions was vital in order for the clergy to attract more patronage from the elite. Given that the average life of a wooden building in late imperial times was around 50 years, consistent restoration work and a continuous inflow of donations could make the difference between the life and the demise of an institution.[80]

78 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:3a.

79 Brook, *Praying for Power*, 162-4.

80 Brook, *Praying for Power*, 162.

If we focus on the Zhangs, we find that they represented the ⅗ of all landlords in the area and that they owned about 5/8 of all parcels. From Zhang Lianyuan's report we now know the full names of those involved in the occupation of the land, although there is one exception. As noted by Wang Ka, the name of Zhang Wenyu was expunged from the *Qingsheng Ci zhi*. Wang interpreted this as a sign of Wenyu's prestige, which still endured at the beginning of the Qing dynasty, as did the power of his family.[81] Even though I have no definitive evidence to prove the contrary, and Zhang Lianyuan may have decided to censor Zhang Wenyu's name to protect himself and the Daoists of Tongbai Palace from retaliation, it appears strange that in the same text he openly names other members of the Zhang clan, along with Tang Yuangong and Chen Wenli. Zhang Lianyuan's accusations were strong and clear enough to cause them serious trouble and the way in which he later dealt with these elite representatives makes me doubt that the absence of Zhang Wenyu's name has anything to do with Zhang Lianyuan's perception of his power or of that of his clan.

1.5.2 Analysis and Plan of Action

The Daoist Zhang Taiyuan's denunciation and the orders from the local authorities did not change the situation of the temple. Zhang Lianyuan observed: "Today, after 15-16 years, the land has yet to be returned" 今又相隔十五六年矣，田不歸觀. He further noted that Tongbai Palace only retained 104 mu of 'incense fields' (*xiangdengtian* 香燈田).[82] Historical evidence made it necessary, therefore, to find a more effective plan for the restoration of the shrine. The first problem that Zhang Lianyuan sought to solve with his first report was allowing the shrine to stand on its own feet, as it were, by making it economically independent again:

> Apart from visiting the county and investigating which Daoist is managing the temple today, starting from the 56th year of the Kangxi reign (1717, i.e. the year after his first report) the land must be returned to the temple. [Moreover], wait until the taxes have been paid in autumn, then use what remains of the revenues to gradually buy supplies. Collect donations to restore the Qingfeng Shrine, where the statues of Bo Yi and Shu Qi will be enshrined, together with [a statue of] Sima Chengzhen.[83]

81 Wang, "Yongzheng huangdi yu Ziyang zhenren (xia)", 1.

82 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:2b, 5a.

83 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:2b.

> 除行縣確查現今何道士住持, 自康熙五十六爲始, 觀內之田應歸本觀。 其錢糧糧米, 俟秋收完納。 除完糧外, 贏餘之租, 逐次購料建, 並行捐募建復清風祠, 專祀夷齊石像, 並以司馬承禎配之。

A second, related problem, also mentioned in the previous excerpt, was the settling of the land dispute. This was more difficult to solve because it entailed stripping local families of land that they regarded as their own and razing their tombs to the ground. The return of the land to the temple was fundamental for its survival as an institution. This was true for all Daoist and Buddhist temples, as they could survive without a stable income from their estates only in few exceptional cases.[84] The power of the gentry increased from the second half of the Ming dynasty onwards thanks to land control and privileges. This made them also the main providers of land to religious institutions, either directly or indirectly (i.e. through the donation of money that allowed monks to acquire land).[85] Another way in which the local elite could support a religious institution was by means of political patronage. Timothy Brook has noted that sometimes the gentry committed themselves to redeeming land that had once belonged to the monastery, but that for various reasons had been lost.[86] In this case, they would use their influence and prestige to push the county magistrate to return the land: this is reminiscent of what Zhang Lianyuan attempted to do in favour of the Qingsheng Shrine, both as a member of the elite and as an official, by relying on his influence. The fact that, as shown below, this proved to be a difficult task means that the opposition from the local families was fierce and backed by a similarly strong influence over the area.

As I have previously discussed, in his first report Zhang Lianyuan already presented a clear inventory of the estates belonging to Tongbai Palace, including their price per mu, which he compiled according to land registers from the Ming dynasty. The complex system of classification of the land (divided per kind – *tian* 田, *di* 地 or *shan* 山 – and according to its use) made it easy for the local elite to try to exchange less valuable parcels for more profitable ones. Towards the end of the first report, Zhang Lianyuan wrote:

84 One example is the Qingyun Temple 慶雲寺 on Mt. Dinghu 鼎湖山 (Zhaoqing, Guangdong). By explicit orders of its first abbot (traditionally regarded as the second one), Liji Daoqiu 離際道丘 (1568-1658), this temple was forbidden to buy land that might ensure regular revenue, so the resident monks were forced to survive on the patronage of rich sponsors. This required exceptionally charismatic leaders, though. Brook, *Praying for Power*, 137-58.

85 Brook, *Praying for Power*, 165-6.

86 Brook, *Praying for Power*, 166.

> An order must be issued to visit this county (Tiantai) and to investigate every uncultivated field, land and mountain parcel [indicated as] without value [as recorded] in the documents in order to understand [the actual situation]: return half of each to the temple. Donate enough state grain to build [the temple] and cultivate [the land]. Then, the cult of these ancient worthy sages will finally last forever.[87]
>
> 應敕行該縣, 將各帖內並無價值之荒田、荒地、荒山履勘明白。各開還本罐一半。輸糧官業, 以便建造, 并種植有資。則古聖賢祀典得以長存。

The 'documents' had been provided by leading local clans for the purpose of proving their rights over the land of Mount Tongbai. Since the beginning of the controversy, the Zhang family tried to play any card in their hands to hinder and possibly stop the restitution of the temple land to the shrine. As we have seen, the clan stressed its relationship with a high-level official of the previous dynasty, obviously referring to Zhang Wenyu, in an attempt to exploit his former influence and prestige.

In a later report, Zhang Lianyuan explained: "What was outside the second gate [of the temple] – all the foundations of the halls, the garden plots and the road – has become reclaimed land. It is not on the list of the [land] bought, therefore it is still the temple's property" (即)舊時二門以外凡殿宇基址、園圃、道路俱墾爲平田, 並不在變賣之列, 亦依然觀業也.[88] The concept of reclaimed land appears to refer to the common practice, first promoted under the Ming dynasty and later by both the Kangxi and the Yongzheng emperors, according to which common people could occupy unclaimed land in order to cultivate it, eventually obtaining the right to own their 'reclaimed land', along with additional allowances. According to Wang Ka, in the first years of the Kangxi reign the process of land reclamation was as simple as settling down on uncultivated land and cultivating it, a circumstance that inspired some officials to suggest policies in favour of the secularisation of all temple land as territory to be reclaimed.[89]

The third issue to be solved was the restoration of the shrine itself, which was not limited to the appropriation of the land for cultivation. In the excerpt from the *You Tiantai Shan ji* discussed at the beginning of this chapter, Pan Lei mentioned "deluded geomantic practices" and "burying [the] bones": these two aspects were certainly connected to late imperial geomantic beliefs and the need to choose the appropriate location to set up a family grave. The *Qingsheng Ci zhi*

87 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:4a.

88 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:18a.

89 Wang, "Yongzheng huangdi yu Ziyang zhenren (xia)", 3-4.

in turn informs us: "the old foundations of the Qingfeng Shrine have been turned into a grave by the Zhang family. On its left and right sides are the remains of the walls of the old shrine" 今清風祠舊基, 已爲張姓造墳。墳之左右, 現有舊祠牆腳.[90] Although the Zhang family graveyard is the one usually mentioned in the sources, it was not the only one. Zhang Lianyuan himself recorded: "Moreover, they built graves on each mountain, not only the one of the Zhang family" 且造墳各山, 亦不止張姓一處.[91] The case of the Zhang grave was simply more problematic because it had been built on the site of the old Qingfeng (Qingsheng) Shrine: anyone wishing to rebuild the shrine on the same location would have to move the grave first. The grave also functioned as a marker for the Zhang family, whose possession of the land was confirmed and reinforced by the presence of their own relatives on the land itself.

In order for Fan Qingyun, the Daoist living among the ruins of Tongbai Palace, to have any claim on the land of Mt. Tongbai, it was important for the shrine to be restored first, as suggested by the insistence with which Zhang Lianyuan demanded the grave be moved and the temple rebuilt on its original location. It was not easy to move the grave and, one would guess, not auspicious either. Therefore, in 1717 Zhang Lianyuan provided an alternative plan for the restoration:

> After intense deliberation, the Qingsheng Shrine will be built on the old foundations of the Sanqing Hall; [...] the second gate will be built where there was the ancient Sanqing Hall; the main gate will be located on the location of the ancient second gate.[92]
>
> 至清聖祠, 已酌定于三清殿舊基建造。……舊時三清殿, 建爲二門。舊時二門, 建爲大門。

This plan suggests that the new shrine had to be built as a resized Tongbai Palace, smaller in scale than the original temple. The reduced size was also justified by the missing land and the lack of funds for a more ambitious project. In order to prevent future problems, Zhang Lianyuan made two more requests. First, he asked his superiors to perpetually exempt the 'incense fields' from taxation – a request which was indeed granted to him.[93] This policy was aimed at avoiding the kind of problems that had led to the decline of Tongbai Palace towards the end of the Ming period. Moreover, monks were generally exempted from corvée and even though the temple land was entirely taxable,

90 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:8b.

91 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:11b.

92 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:10b-11a.

93 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:10b, 13b.

petitions were often submitted to the local magistrate to ask for partial or full exemption. When applied, the favourable fiscal regime had the downside of being open to misuse by the monks, who would sometimes turn the monastery or temple into a tax haven for landowners by resorting to the practice of commendation (*touxian* 投獻).[94]

Second, knowing that without an administrator the shrine would fall into disrepair again, Zhang Lianyuan suggested that "honest Daoists be hired with a grand ceremony in order to manage [the temple], as required by the prefecture" 再另募殷實道士管業, 以昭盛典, 應如該府所請.[95]

1.5.3 Zhang Lianyuan and Fan Qingyun Restore the Qingsheng Shrine

Halfway through the second report, dated to the ninth month of 1717, Zhang Lianyuan introduces a very peculiar figure, destined to play a very important role in the history of Tongbai Palace and of Chinese Daoism as a whole: Fan Qingyun 范青雲. At that time, this person was only known as "the Daoist living in the thatched hut near Tongbai Palace, who has lived alone on top of the mountain, determinedly caring for the stone statues of Bo Yi and Shu Qi" 住桐柏宮茅屋道士范青雲, 以獨住高山之頂苦守夷齊石像.[96] But as I will explain in the next chapter, he received a place of honour in the Longmen lineages of the early 19th century. At the time of the restoration of the shrine, Fan Qingyun was only described as a Daoist recluse who had taken it upon himself to look after the two statues, along with what remained of the shrine. Zhang Lianyuan makes no mention of the Longmen lineage or the Quanzhen tradition in his documents.

The plan for the reconstruction of the shrine and for the restitution of the temple land also called for an improvement of Fan Qingyun's living standards, which were far from enviable at the time. This is something we clearly learn from Zhang Lianyuan's own words: "at first Master Fan had no food, but held firmly [to his vow], [so] he was treated as a slave [by the Zhangs, who were] waiting for him to pass away, [so that they might] swallow up the whole [temple] land" 先因范道士並無籽粒, 隻身苦守。人亦視同隸, 以俟其死徒, 可以盡行鯨吞.[97] What the Zhang clan did not foresee was that officials would take it upon themselves to restore the shrine:

94 Brook, *Praying for Power*, 171.

95 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:13b.

96 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:6b.

97 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:21a.

> Unexpectedly, after [the officials of] this prefecture had worshipped the statues of the virtuous men, they [sent a] request to build the [Qing]sheng Shrine. Then, the Zhang family devised a stratagem to prevent Master Fan from becoming its abbot.[98]
>
> 不料, 本府拜謁聖像之後, 詳建聖祠。張姓遂設機謀不容范道士住持。

The risk of losing the land and of being accused of embezzlement triggered the Zhangs' reaction: this is when things started to go sour for Master Fan – interfering with the local gentry's plans was very dangerous, a lesson that he learnt at his own expense.

A serious incident occurred in the fifth month of the year 1718: Fan Qingyun was accused of cutting down more than 20 trees located on the hill where the tomb of the Zhang family was located and for this reason he suffered a harsh retaliation at their hands. His (older) cousin, Fan Zhenyong 范振雍 (Fan Qingyun was his *tangdi* 堂弟), rapidly came to his rescue. On this occasion, the latter explained to the authorities:

> Fan Qingyun left his family and embraced Daoism. He firmly cared for the statues of the pure sages for 25 years, all alone and living in a thatched hut. Lately, because of the restoration of the temple [i.e the Qingsheng Shrine], the unworthy despot <name missing>, on the 6th day of the present month sent a group of ten ferocious and armed men, each carrying a wooden stick. They injured his head and hurt his abdomen, sliced his hands and broke his feet. After this event, the supervisor of works of the southern yamen ordered to carry him to his house and to use any means possible to save him.[99]
>
> 范青雲出家入道, 苦守清聖石像二十五年, 孑然一身棲止芽蓬。近因重修廟宇, 豪劣□□□于本月初六日, 部帶兇棍數十, 各執木棍。將第碎首破臚, 截手斷足。隨是, 督工南衙命擡進房, 百計救甦等情。

The aggression was clearly an act of retaliation against the ongoing restoration of the shrine: the same report also states that the beams of the new temple had been put in place on the tenth day of the same month, just four days after the beating. This modus operandi was not unprecedented, as Timothy Brook illustrated in his study. The local elite could not directly strike officials such as Zhang Lianyuan, so

98 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:21a-21b.

99 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:16a-16b. If the injuries inflicted on Fan Qingyun were as serious as those described here, he would most probably have died. According to this and later sources, Fan Qingyun survived the attack, so this seems to be an exaggeration, probably aimed at upholding the cause of the Qingsheng Shrine.

they directed their anger toward Fan Qingyun. In their eyes, he was most probably bound to become the administrator of the renewed institution and was responsible for resisting the land occupation.

The aggression against Master Fan Qingyun may appear an overreaction, or an exaggerated description by the author, maybe designed to gain sympathy for Fan Qingyun and support for his cause, but the same source also mentions a very interesting practice observed in imperial times that confirms the seriousness of the beating. The authorities decided to keep a *baogu* 保辜 period, which meant waiting a certain amount of time to see whether the victim of the aggression would die or recover: this was aimed at determining whether the charges against the assailants would be homicide or only assault. The social context of late imperial times was therefore not new to such violence. In fact, a local gazetteer of Wuxi 無錫 (Jiangsu) recorded in 1752: "During the Jiajing period the tyranny of bondservants from the two families Wang and Yu was terrible. Wang had 500 bondservants, while Yu had over 100. They liked elegant clothes and fresh food and maltreated the people in neighbouring villages, always seizing market goods".[100]

With regard to the gathering of wood, which constituted the pretext for the violence, Zhang Lianyuan stated:

> According to the county [government] the forest from which the wood was gathered is located on the mountain behind the new Qingsheng Shrine and stands within the territory that must be returned to it. Therefore, the trees in fact belong to the shrine.[101]
>
> 據該縣詳稱所砍之木在新清聖祠之後山, 應歸祠內之山。則樹實係祠內之樹。

It is not clarified whether the attack was planned by the Zhangs or whether it was carried out on the thugs' initiative, maybe in the hope of pleasing their masters, although the idea that the latter were totally oblivious to their lackeys' violent intentions seems rather implausible. Seeing themselves progressively entangled in a dangerous situation, the Zhangs finally agreed to compensate for the aggression and begged to be pardoned:

> The Zhang family has sent for a doctor in order to heal [Master Fan], [promising that] in the future they will not get to this point and begging for mercy. For the time being [this event] was not thoroughly reported. Moreover, the county [government of Tiantai]

100 *Xi Jin shi xiaolu* (Brief Record of Information from Wuxi and Jinkui) 10:2a, quoted and translated in Shigeta, "The Origins and Structure of Gentry Rule", 368.

101 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:17a.

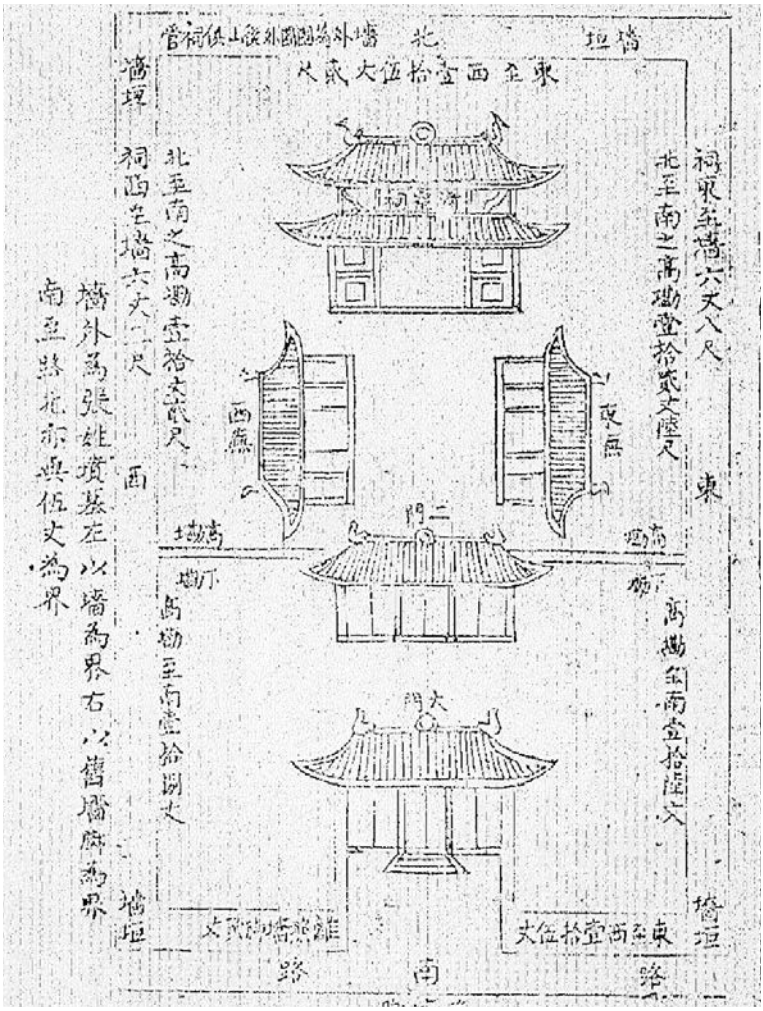

Figure 8 Plan of the Qingsheng Shrine of Mt. Tongbai after its restoration. *Qingsheng Ci zhi* "tu":2a

> requested [them] to pay two taels and <name missing> compensated [Fan Qingyun] with four silver taels for medical treatments.[102]
>
> 現在張姓延醫調治。 將來不致廢疾, 伏乞恩開一面。 暫免通詳, 並據該縣令銀二兩。又□□□償還藥銀四兩等情。

Through the intervention of local officials, Fan Qingyun was healed and compensated, but he had risked his life and been warned that the Zhangs would not relinquish the land so easily. The fact that the Zhangs were not punished for their clear responsibility in the attack could be explained on the basis of their influence on local society and their prestige, but it is well known that illegal actions by the landlords' servants, in addition to being frequent, were sometimes perpetrated without their masters' explicit consent.[103] Whether the Zhangs denied direct responsibility is bound to remain a conjecture, but their link to the aggressors is beyond doubt.

The beating left Fan Qingyun even weaker than before and in need of fellow Daoists' support. This concern is reflected in Zhang Lianyuan's third report:

> Today, although he has been lucky and still breathes after having been violently beaten, he cannot travel far to beg for alms: how could he still work hard to cultivate [the land]? [This is] very pitiful. Moreover, in Tiantai there are very few Daoists, so it is necessary to search again in other places to recruit them. [We] must find someone else he can rely upon. How could he live on the top of a high mountain with an empty stomach?[104]
>
> 今被毒毆之後, 雖倖留殘喘, 既不能遠行募化。豈尚能胼胝耕耘殊可矜憫。又天邑土著道士甚少, 即向別處再行召募。令其其相依倚, 而高山之嶺, 豈能枵腹而居。

The Zhang family continued to attack the Daoist, probably hoping to replace him with one of their own men, or to directly take control of the land. According to the report of the eleventh month of the year 1721, at that time Zhang Lianyuan was still trying to force the local elite families to give back at least part of the land. The situation remained very complex and problems started accumulating. First, 1720 was a year of famine, so the construction stopped. Second, the institution still lacked the 'incense fields' that would allow the consistent performance of rituals and the maintenance of a Daoist community. The Zhang

102 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:17a.

103 On this topic, see Shigeta, "The Origins and Structure of Gentry Rule", 371.

104 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:19a.

张氏后裔数百人祭扫张文郁墓

来源：后司街　　作者：度予亭　　编辑：雪达云

4月2日，阳光明媚，春意盎然，时近清明，上宝相村和下宝相村共同主持拜祭张文郁墓仪式。来自各地的张氏后裔数百人参加祭扫仪式，寄托对先人的追思与怀念，场面既隆重，又壮观。随后，分别拜祭张文郁长子若婴公和次子九夏公。

张文郁(1578—1655)，字从周，号太素，又自号桃源散人，天台城郊茅园(今莪园)人。明天启进士，初授工部主事，督造三殿告成，累陞都察院右都御史，工部左侍朗。县志载："丙戌方兵过台，文郁倾家犒士，多方调度，全活邑民数万……善事难以枚举。制行忠孝训后，从不以私于当道"。著《度予亭集》。

张文郁墓位于"桃源春晓"附近天宫乡宝相村大坟山，山上松柏翠郁，花木扶疏，墓前原有碑坊、石亭、石碑，今存坟坦二道，坟面及罗围，雕有鲤鱼戏水、鹿、鹤、狮、猴、花卉等石刻图案。

墓右侧有张文郁长子明都督府都事张元声墓。

张元声，字汝韶，号九夏，别号幽溪散人，白云逸叟，博览史籍，钦赐举人，授刑曹主事。著有《度予亭草》、《桐柏草》、《兵燹拾余》等书。

1984年7月，天台县人民政府公布为第二批县级重点文物保护单位。

Figures 9-10　Screenshots of the online newspaper article concerning the gathering of the Zhang clan. The website is no longer accessible. http://www.tt1890.com/tupian/3610.htm

family had even pressed what Zhang Lianyuan called false charges against Fan Qingyun, accusing him of having embezzled the land.[105] Zhang Lianyuan expressed the following considerations:

> Unexpectedly, a petition was sent to build the Qingsheng Shrine. After this, they [the local elite families] thought of a scheme to prevent him from becoming the abbot. The case of the theft [of the land by Fan Qingyun] was not filed 20 years ago, but after the construction of the shrine [started], [so] in fact it is an intolerable injustice.[106]
>
> 不料詳請建造清聖祠。遂設謀不容住持。故捏造敕前竊案，不控逐于二十年前反控逐于建祠之後。實屬天理難容等情。

In the end and despite Zhang Lianyuan's efforts, the situation of the shrine did not improve as much as its supporters hoped. In the report of 1721, Zhang Lianyuan addressed many potential issues that were still unresolved: the local elite selling the land to someone else (a frontman/nominee?), loss of the land records, as well as the possibility that the land did not provide enough for the Daoists to make a living, even with the perpetual tax exemption previously obtained. Zhang Lianyuan, then, suggested:

> If the uncultivated mountain land is enough to pay for the sacrifices and the restoration [of the shrine], there is no need to discuss matters any further. If the revenue of the uncultivated mountain land is scarce, [I'll] ask that a plot of land of either the Zhenjue Temple or of the Yangliu Hut to be selected and given to the shrine, in order to perpetually offer sacrifices [to the sages].[107]
>
> 如荒山已足爲俎豆修造之資，毋庸置議外。如荒山花利無多，請將真覺寺田或楊柳庵田擇一處歸祠以永典。

Moreover, there was still the issue of the lack other Daoists at the shrine, who could aid Fan Qingyun in managing the temple. I think that this emphasises a problem inherent in the institution itself. The temple was built as a place of retreat for Sima Chengzhen, therefore it was originally located in an isolated area, maybe not too distant from urban centres, but nonetheless on a mountain located far away from large cities. It was different from the urban temples patronised by the local population, because it originally relied on imperial sponsorship and on its own estates to survive. This means that without proper

105 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:31a-32a.

106 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:31b.

107 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:34a.

political and economic support from the state, it was difficult for such an institution to attract Daoists and to prosper.

Zhang Lianyuan's final report of the twelfth month of 1722 has been quoted in its entirety by Wang Ka,[108] and offers information on the status of the temple at the end of the Kangxi period. According to it, the land had been returned to the shrine, which had been rebuilt not on its original foundations **[fig. 8]**, where the grave of the Zhang family was still standing, but according to Zhang Lianyuan's plan. Despite all his efforts, Zhang Lianyuan was unable to completely bring back the temple to its original status and the Zhangs did not lose on all fronts.

We can see in this Pyrrhic victory the reason for Zhang Lianyuan's decision to publish the *Qingsheng Ci zhi* as an enduring record of all the events. Again, this was not the first time that patrons employed literary works to record the extension and distribution of the temple land. Historically, this was just one of many different means of recording temple property – a more durable one being setting up a stele that could be paid for either by the gentry or by the county magistrate.[109]

Just a few years later, the Yongzheng emperor would take an interest in Mount Tongbai and, with the help of Li Wei, one of his most trustworthy officials, would finally order the destruction of the grave and return part of the land to the temple.

4.6 Conclusion

If we focus on the world constructed by the excerpts mentioned at the end of the previous chapter and in this one, we see that Bo Yi and Shu Qi are often at its centre. There are two reasons for this. First, they had been associated with Tongbai Palace within the context of southern Daoist traditions since medieval times, as I have discussed in the second chapter. Second, the authors of these excerpts were trained Confucian scholars who were likely to support any initiative in favour of the two brothers, paragons of Confucian morality.

It is worth noting that starting with Zhang Lianyuan's third memorial, references to Confucianism in relation to Bo Yi and Shu Qi became more frequent. For example, Zhang Lianyuan wrote: "I have studied the four moral standards, called propriety, justice, integrity and honour, [so I know that those who] insult the sages and the worthy are degenerate [people]. Bo Yi and Shu Qi are called sages and worthy persons and are mentioned many times in the *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi*: if one does not know them, then one does not know Confucius and Mencius" 卑府

108 See Wang, "Yongzheng huangdi yu ziyang (xia)", 4-5.

109 Brook, *Praying for Power*, 174.

查禮、義、廉、恥, 謂之四維。侮聖茷賢, 即爲敗類。夷齊之曰聖曰賢, 迭見于孔孟之書。不知有夷齊, 即不知有孔孟也.[110] This was a severe attack against any official who failed to deal with the problems in Tiantai with the due care and respect and especially against the local elite, guilty of having stolen land from the sages' shrine. At this stage in the history of Tongbai Palace, then, the focus was on Bo Yi and Shu Qi and on their shrine. Cursory references to Sima Chengzhen recall the illustrious Daoist past of the Tongbai Palace, but also remind us that that past was long gone. It was no longer the imperial authorities that cared for the temple, but rather private citizens and local officials, who superimposed their own version of Tongbai Palace on its old history. Nonetheless, we should not read the preoccupation with Bo Yi and Shu Qi only as an endorsement of Confucianism: the two brothers were equally depicted as the *jiutian puye*, members of the supernatural Daoist bureaucratic hierarchies. Final proof of this comes directly from the brushes of officials and literati, who clearly acknowledged this fact. That depiction of Tongbai Palace as an eminent Daoist institution is witnessed in a poem by Zhang Yuansheng 張元聲 (*zi*: Rushao 汝韶; *hao*: Jiuxia 九夏; *biehao*: Youxi sanren 幽溪散人; 17th century), member of the Zhang family of Tiantai, titled "Passing by Tongbai Palace, [I was] Moved" 過桐柏宮有感,[111] where the author refers first of all to Ge Xuan and then to the "gracious Daoist priests" 娟娟羽客. The Zhang family's attachment to the religious landscape of their native land is also evident in Zhang Lihuang's 張利璜 (*zi*: Weifu 渭夫; *hao*: Xiongbu 熊卜; other *hao*: Yongzhuo 用拙)[112] poems "Walking through the Village on Mt. Tongbai on a Cold Day", "Passing below Tongbai Peak" 過桐柏嶺下,[113] "Passing through the Valley of the Abbey" 過觀罍,[114] "Crossing the Cha Peak" 度察嶺,[115] "The Mingyu (Jingling Jade) Ravine" 鳴玉澗,[116] "Passing by the Qingfeng Shrine" 過清風祠 and "Paying Homage to the Statues of [Bo] Yi and [Shu] Qi" 謁夷齊石像.[117] These poems return a somewhat more nuanced picture of the relationship between the Zhang family and Tongbai Palace compared to the one in the *Qingsheng Ci zhi*, telling us of their emotional attachment to the region, including the palace and the shrine.

This literary output in a Qing gazetteer also documents the enduring relevance of the Zhang family in Tiantai County. The

110 *Qingsheng Ci zhi* 1:15b-16a.

111 "Guo Tongbai Gong you gan", in *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 16:16b-17a.

112 *Guochao Tiantai shi cun* 3:17b.

113 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 16:19a-19b.

114 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 17:49a.

115 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 17:50a.

116 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 17:53a.

117 *Tiantai Shan quanzhi* 18:43b-44a.

importance of Zhang Wenyu for local history and familial memory is still evident today. In April 2008 members of the Zhang clan gathered at his grave to perform a ritual and pay homage to their ancestor **[figs 9-10]**.[118] Next to it, today we find the tomb of his son, Zhang Yuansheng, who owned part of the temple land.[119] The old *jinshi* who achieved a high position in the imperial bureaucracy still exerts a strong, lingering influence on his forebears.

118 Du, "Zhang shi houyi shubai ren jisao Zhang Wenyu mu" 張氏後裔數百人祭掃張文郁墓, in *Zhongguo Jigong wang* 中國濟公網. `http://www.tt1890.com/tupian/3610.htm`. According to the *Taizhou Fu zhi* 台州府志 (1722), quoted in the *Zhejiang tongzhi*, Zhang Wenyu's grave was located in Taoyuan 桃源.

119 *Liangzhe youxuan xulu buyi* 1:9b; Tiantai Xian difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui bangongshi, *Qing Kangxi Tiantai Xian zhi*, 185.

5 Tongbai Palace in the Qing Dynasty

Summary 5.1 The Restoration of Tongbai Palace. – 5.1.1 The Yongzheng Emperor and Religion. – 5.1.2 The Emperor, Chan Buddhism and Zhang Boduan. – 5.2 The Longmen Lineage. – 5.2.1 Myth and Historical Facts. – 5.3 Longmen Daoists in 18th-Century Hangzhou and Tiantai. – 5.4 The Longmen Lineage of the Jingu Grotto. – 5.5 Tongbai Palace and Its Longmen Lineages. – 5.5.1 Shen Yibing. – 5.5.2 Fang Yiding. – 5.5.3 Min Yide. – 5.6 Other Daoists Active at Tongbai Palace. – 5.7 The Last Decades. – 5.8 Conclusion.

In the previous chapter I focused on the decline of Tongbai Palace during the late Ming dynasty, followed by the restoration of only one part of the temple, the Qingsheng Shrine, thanks to the dedication of the official Zhang Lianyuan and of its resident Daoist Fan Qingyun. Let us keep Master Fan in mind, because he will be attributed a central position in the history of Daoism by later Daoists. With the restoration of Tongbai Palace, then called Chongdao Abbey, in 1734, the temple finally acquired a new physical form and was granted some land: it took the imperial authorities to achieve two of the three objectives deemed necessary by Zhang Lianyuan. The third aim, though, remained unfulfilled: to attract new Daoists who could take care of the temple together with Fan Qingyun and after him. In the following pages I will discuss the restoration of the temple in the 18th century and the arrival of a new lineage of Daoists who moved into Tongbai Palace right after it.

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5.1 The Restoration of Tongbai Palace

About ten years after the restoration of the Qingsheng Shrine, another, much more powerful individual became interested in the Daoist temples of Mt. Tongbai. The history of the Yongzheng emperor's patronage of Tongbai Palace is the history of a radical recombination of the fundamental constituents of local religious symbolism. After the temple was rebuilt, the importance of some elements was greatly reduced, while new ones were added and enhanced in their significance. A fresh tradition was to flourish in this renewed context.

So far, I have found no proof that Zhang Lianyuan's commitment to defend and support the Qingsheng Shrine is somehow connected with Yongzheng's interest in Tongbai Palace. Given the emperor's efforts and economic investment in favour not only of Tongbai Palace, but also of other Daoist and Buddhist temples in Taizhou Prefecture, I would argue that the reasons behind these two enterprises are quite different, and more deeply related to Yongzheng's religious activities at court. Therefore, to understand the motives of the imperial patronage of Tongbai Palace, we must first concentrate on the emperor's own religious activities in the capital.

5.1.1 The Yongzheng Emperor and Religion

Yongzheng's relationship with religion is a complex topic. On the one hand, it is clear that he was personally involved in all three official teachings: Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. On the other, his religious policies followed the long tradition of Chinese autocratic emperors who employed religion – including the well-known doctrine of the Three Teachings – as a means to 'educate the people' or to increase their own ideological and political control over the Chinese territory.[1] Yet, in the late imperial context it is sometimes difficult to clearly distinguish between an emperor's or a bureaucrat's personal beliefs and his public stance, especially if we rely only on official documents.[2] This does not mean that it is impossible to obtain information about someone's personal ideas and beliefs, only that official documents were not composed for the purpose of sharing them and therefore do not represent a valid source for this kind of study. In the case of the Yongzheng Emperor, as this chapter will

1 Feng, *Yongle zhuan*, 461-3; Wang, "Yongzheng huangdi yu Ziyang zhenren (shang)", 23. Neither author totally rules out the possibility that Yongzheng may have been genuinely interested in Buddhism, at least to some extent.

2 The case of Zhang Lianyuan's aid to the Qingsheng Shrine is one example of this.

show, the paradigm of political expediency results in a reductive and partial assessment of his involvement in religion.

In the following pages I will focus mainly on those policies adopted by the Yongzheng Emperor that had a direct impact on the restoration of Tongbai Palace. These initiatives were often seemingly undertaken to meet the emperor's personal interests and objectives, but also had a direct impact on the empire's religious landscape: for this reason, I have decided to refrain from drawing a clear-cut distinction between instances of 'political opportunity' and ones of 'personal belief', by simply focusing on facts.

Generally speaking, the Yongzheng Emperor was involved in all three religions. He supported Confucianism as the head of the empire, but also appreciated its alleged positive influence on the people of the realm and on the officials. His reign marks the high point in the building of altars and school shrines, such as the Xiannong Altar 先農壇 (added to the list of county altars reserved for official rituals in 1726) and the shrines of the Loyal, Righteous, Filial and Fraternal (Persons) 忠義節孝祠, dedicated to local personages who had distinguished themselves in the moral field, and those of the Chaste and Dutiful (Women) 節孝(婦女)祠 (both financed by the government).[3] His fascination with Buddhism originated in his youth and developed during his reign as a strong personal interest that cannot be explained merely according to the parameter of political expediency. Barend ter Haar also excluded that the emperor's Buddhist practices were "an infatuation late in life caused by the fear of death, apprehensions about the historical judgment of his reign, or regret about past acts" and the sources seem to confirm this idea.[4]

The Yongzheng Emperor's relationship with Daoism is slightly more complicated and is still an object of contention among scholars. He certainly practiced many physiological techniques that were related to Daoism in one way or another, and he showed interest in concocting various kinds of elixirs and in the practice of outer alchemy (*waidan* 外丹), which some scholars identify as the probable cause of his death by poisoning.[5] Apart from these concrete interests, there is little proof of any active attempts on his part to shape Daoist doctrine, although we know that he supported the Daoist institutions

3 See Taylor, "Official Altars, Temples and Shrines", 96-110. *Shizong Xian huangdi shangyu neige* 80:22b-24a. The altars also included those dedicated to Sheji 社稷壇, to natural phenomena (*feng yun lei yu* 風雲雷雨) and to local spirits (*shan chuan chenghuan* 山川城隍, renamed 'Shenqi Altar' 神祇壇 in 1811), as well as the one dedicated to the *li* ghosts 厲鬼. Feng, *Yongle zhuan*, 212-13, 377. On the local presence of state cults, see Feuchtwang, *Grassroots Charisma*, 63-8. On the significance of the two shrines, see Naquin, Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century*, 112-14.

4 Ter Haar, "Yongzheng and His Buddhist Abbots", 437.

5 Li, "Yongzheng yu dandao", 83-9.

of the Heavenly Masters both on Mt. Longhu 龍虎山 and in the capital and that he patronised various Daoist altars and rituals. One court Daoist who played a central role in this period, surely thanks to the emperor's support, was Lou Jinyuan 婁近垣 (*zi*: Sanchen 三臣; *hao*: Langzhai 郎齋 and Shangqing Waishi 上清外史; 1689-1776).

The case study that we are focusing on here appears to have little to do with the emperor's attraction to Daoist practice, though. Rather, it stemmed from his personal interest in Buddhist doctrine and especially in the Chan school: my thesis is that the restoration of Tongbai Palace was justified by the emperor's belief that Zhang Boduan practiced self-cultivation in that place and that, in turn, the relevance of Zhang Boduan in the emperor's religious system was fuelled by the links between the latter and Chan Buddhism. We might say that, more generally, to the emperor Zhang Boduan represented the connection between the imperial patronage of Daoist institutions in Taizhou and the emperor's own involvement in Buddhism.

5.1.2 The Emperor, Chan Buddhism and Zhang Boduan

The Yongzheng Emperor's involvement in religious activities at court increased in the second half of his thirteen-year-long reign and reached its peak in 1733. A crucial event is represented by the establishment, in that year, of the 'Contemporary Dharma Assembly' (*Dangjin fahui* 當今法會), which counted fourteen members of the political and religious elite, including two of the emperor's brothers and two sons, high officials, two Chan masters, two Buddhist abbots and one court Daoist, the charismatic and very influential ritual master Lou Jinyuan. The Assembly produced a text titled *Yuxuan yulu* 御選語錄 (1733), a collection of Buddhist teachings and commentaries by the fourteen participants.[6] The 'Imperial General Preface' (*Yuzhi zongxu* 御制總序) lays out the emperor's approach to the subject matter:

> I have received responsibilities from my royal parents, so I am not a person who can dedicate himself to spiritual life. If I want the people to lead a peaceful life, I can only follow the path of the Duke of Zhou and Confucius. Therefore, since I ascended to the throne, I have not dealt with Chan teachings for ten years. But I think of the wisdom-life of humans and Heaven and the special transmission of the teachings of the Buddha: in order to awaken all living creatures, he left [us] the Supreme Golden Elixir that can be used to get rid of what is rotten and withered. How could one permit het-

6 Scarin, "The Chan Immortal and the Tongbai Palace", 93-9.

> erodoxy to blind one's own orthodox vision, promote muddled and poisonous [words], and extinguish the subtle mind? I really have words that I cannot bear to keep for myself, so I must say them. Recently, during my leisure time, I have tried to taste the mixed waters of the rivers Zi and Mian [i.e., to deal with very intricate analyses]. I have read from ancient recorded sayings and chosen some to promote true orthodoxy. I have picked their superb words, choosing and compiling them with [my] hands.[7]
>
> 朕膺元后父母之任, 並非開堂秉拂之人, 欲期民物之安, 惟循周孔之轍。所 以御極以來, 十年未談禪宗。但念人天慧命, 佛祖別傳。拚雙眉拖地, 以悟 眾生;留無上金丹, 以起枯朽。豈得任彼邪魔, 瞎其正眼, 鼓諸塗毒, 滅盡 妙心? 朕實有不得不言、不忍不言者。近於幾暇, 辨味淄澠, 隨意所如, 閱 從上古錐語錄中, 擇提持向上, 直指真宗者, 並擷其至言, 手為刪輯。

The endeavour was therefore both a personal and a political enterprise and its objective was to define (Buddhist) orthodoxy. This excerpt also highlights the difference, in the emperor's eyes, between adherence to Confucianism, a political imperative, and adherence to Buddhism, a matter of personal preference.

Among the many texts quoted in the *Yuxuan yulu*, there is one that is significant for the present study. To the amazement of the unprepared reader, the anthology contains poems attributed to Zhang Boduan that constitute the 'External Collection' (*waiji* 外集) of his *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇. The imperial preface to this part states:

> The Perfected Ziyang wrote the *Wuzhen pian* to clarify the essentials of the Mysterious Doctrine [i.e., Daoism]. Thereafter he wrote thirty-two eulogies, each one expressing from the mind the subtle instructions of the Superior Vehicle that came from the West [i.e., Buddhism]. He wrote: "These represent the Ultimate Way of non-action and subtle awakening" and titled them 'External Collection'.[8] Having called [them] 'external', did the Perfected regard the Mysterious Doctrine as esoteric and the Ancestral Doctrine [i.e., Buddhism] as exoteric? If so, the Perfected should have focused exclusively on the Mysterious Doctrine; why would he have needed to further discuss the Ancestral Doctrine? Moreover, why would he call the latter the 'Supreme [Vehicle]'? Isn't it because [he] considered [it] as transcending the Three Realms,

7 "Yuxuan yulu zongxu", in *Yuxuan yulu* 7a. Transl. in Scarin, "The Chan Immortal and the Tongbai Palace", 94.

8 This is a reference to *Ziyang zhenren Wuzhen pian zhushu* (DZ 141) "houxu":3a: "the songs and eulogies at the end of the *Wuzhen pian* discuss the methods for seeing the [Buddha] nature. These are called the Way of non-action and subtle awakening" 篇末歌頌談見性之法, 即上之所謂無為妙覺之道.

> where perfection cannot have its place, that he then treated it as external to the *Wuzhen pian*?[9]
>
> 紫陽真人作《悟真篇》, 以明玄門祕要, 復作頌偈等三十二篇, 一一從性地演出西來最上一乘之妙旨。自敘云: 「此無為妙覺之至道也。」標為〈外集〉。夫外之云者, 真人豈以玄門為內, 而以宗門為外哉? 審如是, 真人止應專事玄教, 又何必旁及於宗說? 且又何謂此為最上? 豈非以其超乎三界, 真亦不立, 故為《悟真》之外也歟?

Here we see the emperor's attempt to explain the name of the 'External Collection' by interpreting the *wai* in its title not as the opposite of 'esoteric', something reserved to the inner circle of the initiated, but according to its literal meaning of 'outside', 'external': in this case, external to the core of Zhang Boduan's work, devoted to 'perfection' (*zhen* 真) and external to – therefore transcending – the Three Realms. The emperor's stance is made quite clear in this preface: his appreciation of Zhang Boduan was based on the latter's thorough understanding of the Chan doctrine. This point of view had already been expressed in his "Lun zhu jiafeng Ziyang zhenren daci yuantong chanxian fenghao bing jiang qi suo zhu 'Waiji' bianru Fozang" 諭著加封紫陽真人大慈圓通禪仙封號并將其所著〈外集〉編入佛藏 (Edict on the Bestowal of the Title of Most Benevolent and Boundless Chan Immortal Perfected Ziyang and on the Inclusion of His 'External Collection' in the Buddhist Canon), dateable between 1731 and 1734:

> If the Mysterious Doctrine [i.e. Daoism] were superior to the Chan tradition, then certainly the Perfected [Zhang Boduan] would have dealt with it exclusively. Was it necessary to combine it with the Chan School? If the Perfected thought that the principle of Chan tradition is more wondrous than [that of] the Mysterious Doctrine and wanted to take one side over the other, then he would have simply pilfered others' ideas to supplement his own. Yet, this is not the kind of behaviour tolerated by the benevolent or the upright. If the mysterious teachings [of Daoism] were indeed inferior to those of the Chan tradition, how difficult would it have been for him to abandon Daoism and follow the Chan school? Why would he straddle two separate teachings? As I see it, [Zhang Boduan's] *Wuzhen pian* does not mix in a single word of the Chan school. His 'Exoteric Collection' does not mix in a single word of the Mysterious Doctrine. One can see that the root of the Way has one origin and a single principle. This is what is called "to do things together without contradiction." Some say that the Chan School deals with nature but not with vitality, and that the Mysterious Doctrine cultivates vitality but not

9 *Yuxuan yulu* 8:1a-b. Transl. in Scarin, "The Chan Immortal and the Tongbai Palace", 96.

> nature. These are all disorderly, erroneous arguments that cannot thoroughly penetrate the supreme principle. The *Wuzhen pian* written by Zhang Boduan is not just specifically about the true knowledge of Daoism, therefore the "External Collection" contains the quintessential tenets of the supreme vehicle of the Chan School.[10]
>
> 假使玄門之理果超於釋宗, 則真人止應專事玄門, 又何必旁及於宗門耶? 如謂禪宗之理妙於玄門, 真人若懷人我之見, 竊其說以附合其教, 何難之有? 但非仁人君子之所忍為。盖玄教若果遜於禪宗, 則真人又何難舍道而從釋? 豈肯為此兩岐之學耶? 今觀其所著《悟真篇》, 則不雜宗門一語, 而所著〈外集〉則不雜玄門一語, 可知道本一原, 理無二致。所謂並行而不悖者, 此也。或謂宗門言性不言命, 玄門修命不修性, 是皆於至理未能貫通, 支離謬說耳。紫陽真人所著《悟真篇》, 不特為道教真詮, 即此〈外集〉, 亦釋門中最上一乘宗旨。

The purpose of this edict was to canonise the 'External Collection' by adding it the Buddhist Canon (the *Qianlong dazang jing* 乾隆大藏經 or *Longzang* 龍藏, 'Dragon Canon', patronised by the Yongzheng Emperor himself) and bestowing a new title on Zhang Boduan. It should be noted that today both the *Longzang* and the *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* do not contain neither the *Wuzhen pian* nor any other work attributed to Zhang Boduan as an independent text. Nonetheless, the Yongzheng emperor managed to include the 'External Collection' embedded in the *Yuxuan yulu* to the *Longzang*, only one of the 54 works that he had added to this canon.[11]

The emperor's interest in Zhang Boduan led him to ask for more information about the places linked with the Daoist. In the year 1731 or slightly before then, the emperor had already sent the following request to Li Wei 李衛 (*zi*: Youjie 又玠; 1687-1738), then the governor-general (*zongdu* 總督) of Zhejiang:

> I heard that in Tiantai there is the Grotto-Dominion of the Perfected Ziyang [i.e. Zhang Boduan]. May it be that there are also ritual areas or temples there? Please check carefully. If there are places that we can restore and improve, memorialize this in secret. I also know that there are many Buddhist temples in Tiantai: are there big public monasteries or famous temples [still extant]? Prepare a map of the whole Tiantai area and send it [to me]. Take your time and submit either a paper mountain with buildings made of rice, in the style of an 'Aoshan' [model], or made with the 'bonsai' tech-

10 *Yongzheng chao hanwen yuzhi huibian* 3:464. In the original text, the character *xuan* 玄 is rendered as *yuan* 元. The translation follows Scarin, "The Chan Immortal and the Tongbai Palace", 91-2, with minor amendments.

11 Wu, Chia, *Spreading Buddha's Word in East Asia*, 315.

> nique. There is no need to make a big one, just attend to details. You do not need to rush to prepare [it]. Send it in due time, so that I can enjoy looking at it. Moreover, [I have heard that] Ge Xianweng's altar was also in Tiantai, but I do not know if it is in the same place as the Perfected Ziyang's. I have heard that [Ge] Xianweng's ritual platforms have all been destroyed and that [his] talismans and registers have been incorporated by Mt. Longhu, but I do not know since which dynasty [the ritual platforms] have been in a state of disrepair. If I wanted to restore them to their ancient state, would it be possible [for you] to make inquiries into their relics and lores, and sort them? I have a wish: for you to conduct a meticulous investigation and careful study, and then present [the results] to me. If they are two separate things, the ritual area of the Perfected Ziyang is the most important, because [with this special order] I am undertaking this matter precisely for his relics, as you should know.[12]
>
> 天台山聞得有紫陽真人洞府, 未知可有道場觀宇否? 可詳細留心訪查。若有可應修理振興處, 密議奏聞。向來知天台僧院亦甚多, 可有大叢林有名望寺院否? 可將天台總景繪一圖呈進。再隨便徐徐, 或如鰲山, 用紙山米家作法。或堆一盆景, 不用大, 務小巧為妙。亦不必急速製造, 得時送來, 以備 觀玩。再, 葛仙翁道場亦在天台, 未知與紫陽真人仙踪一事否? 聞得仙翁道 場俱皆消磨, 符錄皆歸龍虎山, 未知從何代廢墜。今若振興復舊, 可能查其遺跡傳聞整理否? 朕有一心願, 可代朕詳細查考議奏。若係兩事, 紫陽真人 道場更為切要。 特諭。朕專為紫陽真人仙跡起見事也, 卿可知之。

The emperor was interested in any signs of the presence of Zhang Boduan and Ge Xuan in Tiantai County. As we have seen, the latter was Ge Hong's paternal granduncle and was associated with alchemical practices and the Lingbao revelations. Zhang Boduan, though, was the one clearly attracting most of the emperor's attention, as he himself states at the end of the text. The juxtaposition of Zhang Boduan and Buddhist temples seems to reflect the close connection that the two had in the emperor's mind.

In his memorial to the emperor, Li Wei summarised the history of Tongbai Palace from the Tang dynasty on, including the case of the land appropriation discussed in the previous chapter. Then, he added:

> Today, the foundations of the main hall of the Qingfeng Shrine are occupied by the grave of his son Zhang Ruoying and only the two

12 *Gongzhong dang Yongzheng chao zouzhe* 19:53a. Transl. in Scarin, "The Chan Immortal and the Tongbai Palace", 71-2. The 'Aoshan model' or 'Mt. Ao model' may refer to the historical tradition of producing an artificial landscape lit by countless lanterns on occasion of the Spring Festival. Cf. Fu, Cao, *An Urban History of China*, 180 and the painting *Shangyuan jie*. It is not clear which talismans and registers of Ge Xuan the emperor refers to.

> statues of the Pure Sages [Bo Yi and Shu Qi] remain. That was the reason behind the fall and ruin of [Ge] Xianweng and the Perfected Ziyang's ritual grounds. Now only the Daoist monk, Fan Qingyun, determinedly remains there. It is unknown where Ge's talismans and registers have gone.[13]
>
> 清風祠正殿之基, 已為其子張 若英佔塟作墳, 惟清聖二石像尚在。此仙翁、真人道場消磨廢墜之所由。至 今只有道士范青雲一人苦守於此。其符籙歸於何處, 則俱不得而知矣。

Li Wei's description does not differ much from Zhang Lianyuan's last reports, although we do not know whether his was based on first-hand evidence or whether he was mainly inspired by the *Qingsheng Ci zhi*. As was the case with the sources discussed above, in this memorial too there is no information about who Fan Qingyun was or how he became a Daoist.

Li Wei executed a thorough survey of all the places linked with Zhang Boduan in Taizhou and recorded the information in his memorial: the Ziyang Mansion 紫陽樓 in Linhai 臨海, deemed to have been Zhang Boduan's house, already converted into the Yuantan (i.e. Xuantan) Temple 元壇廟;[14] the Wuzhen Bridge 悟真橋, located north of the prefecture, and Wuzhen Lane 悟真坊, in the northern part of Linhai, both named after the *Wuzhen pian*; and the Baibu Brook, where according to tradition Zhang Boduan attained transcendence – it was located 60 li northwest of the Linhai county seat and hosted a small shrine with a statue of the Perfected and a poem (probably attributed to him), engraved on a stele. At the end of this list, Li Wei added: "in Tiantai there is only Tongbai Palace, where the Perfected is said to have practised self-cultivation" 其在天台, 惟桐柏宮有真人於此棲真修煉之蹟, 餘無所傳.[15] In fact, there is no historical evidence that Zhang Boduan ever practised self-cultivation at Tongbai Palace, or in Tiantai for that matter, even though this misconception can still be found in contemporary scholarship. This idea was developed in later sources, such as the *Lidai shenxian tongjian* 歷代神仙通鑑 (or *Lidai shenxian yanyi* 歷代神仙演義, 17th century) by Xu Dao 徐道, but in its most elaborate form it does not appear to precede the

13 *Gongzhongdang yongzheng chao zouzhe* 19:51b-52a.

14 Xuantan 玄壇 seems to be a reference to Zhao Gongming 趙公明, also known as Zhengyi Xuantan Zhao Yuanshuai 正一玄壇趙元帥 and as god of wealth (*caishen* 財神). I thank John Lagerwey for pointing this out.

15 *Gongzhongdang yongzheng chao zouzhe* 19:51a. Transl. in Scarin, "The Chan Immortal and the Tongbai Palace", 77.

Yongzheng Emperor's enquiries.[16] Li Wei's memorial ends with the official's suggested plan of action:

> The Emperor has stated that it would be suitable to restore and develop the prosperity of the ancient places listed above. [I suggest] restoring the Ziyang Tower of Taizhou as an abbey as in the past and relocating the Yuantan Temple. The Wuzhen Bridge and Lane should be repaired. It is reported that the sanctuary halfway to Baibu Peak is located on a narrow and steep terrain and that the place, hosting the statue [of Zhang Boduan], is only a tile-covered building with three naves hanging from the mountainside. It cannot be enlarged, therefore a new shrine should be built on a plain area at the foot of the mountain, which will improve the outlook of the area. As regards Tongbai Abbey, encompassing the famous ritual areas of the two transcendents [Zhang Boduan and Ge Xuan], it stands on a place that has many ancient and famous relics; it occupies a large ground and its land records are still extant: we only need to remove the tomb of the local despot, take back the occupied hall, and open up its uncultivated land in compliance with the [aforementioned] records. Once the teachings of the ancestral tradition have been restored, it will be called a grand abbey. I respectfully leave the choice of its scale and style up to his majesty.
>
> […]
>
> His Majesty was already aware that there are many Buddhist temples in Tiantai, but would like to know if there is any renowned, large public monastery. He has ordered an enquiry.
>
> Tiantai was called Grotto-Heaven and Blessed Land. Formerly there were seventy-two Buddhist monasteries in total, but they gradually fell into disrepair. There is no need to speak of the small temples and thatched retreats that are neither Buddhist nor Daoist sites and that literati since the antiquity have seldom described as places to visit. Apart from them, the biggest and most famous Buddhist temples today are two, Wannian and Gaoming: they are intact and the easiest to repair. There are also the Tianzhu, Tianmu, and Tianfeng temples. In addition, there are the Guoqing, Shanxing, Huguo, Daci, Baijing Terrace, and other Buddhist temples, [but] all of them have been in ruins for many years.[17]

> 誠如聖諭，宜為整理振興，以誌千古之盛。所有台州府城之紫陽樓當復舊觀，元壇廟應為移建，悟真橋、坊俱宜興修。其百步嶺半之祠，據稱地勢窄

16 Scarin, "The Chan Immortal and the Tongbai Palace", 81-3. For an example of narrative that includes Zhang Boduan among the Daoists related to Tongbai Palace, see Zhu, *Tiantai Shan Daojiao shi*, 104.

17 *Gongzhongdang yongzheng chao zouzhe* 19:52a-b. Transl. in Scarin, "The Chan Immortal and the Tongbai Palace", 78-9.

峻, 供石像處僅瓦屋三小間, 懸於山腰, 不能開拓, 應於山下平曠之所, 擇地起建, 庶肅觀瞻。 至桐柏觀即為兩仙道場, 勝蹟之所會萃, 其地基址廣闊, 現有鱗冊可據, 止須闢治草萊, 清理從前豪強佔塟殿基墳田, 重整宗 風, 可稱大觀, 其規制大小欵式若何之處, 恭請聖明欽定。

……

又前奉硃諭: 向來知天台僧院亦甚多, 可有大叢林有名望寺院否? 欽此。遵查天台向稱洞天福地, 從前寺院共有七十二處, 迨後日漸頹廢。今除茅庵小寺向非仙佛道場, 并古來文人墨士偶爾留題駐足者, 無庸議及外, 其古刹之最大而著名者, 則有萬年、高明二寺, 尚屬完整易葺, 天柱、天姥、天封三寺次之。若國清、善興、護國、大慈、拜經臺等寺, 皆年久圮損。

Ultimately, the Yongzheng Emperor decided to undertake the restoration of a number of different sites, both within and outside Tiantai County. Tongbai Palace was restored in the year 1734, as testified by a stele whose text is fully recorded in the *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志 of the year Qianlong 1 (1736). The stele, called "Chongdao Guan bei" 崇道觀碑 (Stele of the Chongdao Abbey), still survives, although today it is in pieces that are kept in a village not too far from Tongbai Palace. I was able to see portions of the stele **[figs 11-15]** and to compare the extant text with the full copy in the gazetteer, confirming the identification.

The stele itself is dated to the third month of 1734 and I am going to translate most of it below, because of its importance as a testament to the restoration of Tongbai Palace, then renamed Chongdao Abbey:

Inner nature and vitality are not separate paths, [just as] transcendents and buddhas do not [follow] separate ways. Seeking long life, but not understanding 'having no birth', sticking to the [notion of] having a body and not knowing 'having no form' and the 'body of the law [dharma]' is like shooting an arrow into the sky: it falls back after depleting its momentum. It is not the supreme subtle Way for achieving perfection. The patriarch of Daoism (i.e. Laozi) stated: "[he] treats [his person] as extraneous to himself and it is preserved".[18] Is it not the Buddha's teaching being without a self and yet having a self? [The patriarch] also said: "When one observes emptiness [and sees that it is also] emptiness, then emptiness has not what [is called] emptiness. When emptiness is no more, the absence of non-being is also non-being. When the absence of non-being is no more, [one reaches] profound suchness and everlasting stillness".[19] So, is this profound suchness and everlasting stillness

18 Transl. in Lau, *Tao Te Ching*, 11.

19 Livia Kohn instead translates: "Use emptiness to observe emptiness,/And see there is not emptiness./ When even emptiness is no more,/There is no more nonbeing either./Without even the existence of nonbeing,/there is only serenity,/Profound and everlasting". Kohn, *The Taoist Experience*, 25-7.

11

12

13

14

Figures 11-15 Fragments of the "Chongdao Guan bei" found in the countryside of Tiantai County. Note the elaborate header in picture 15 and the engraved base in picture 13. Some characters are still visible on the surface. According to local villagers, the stele was cut into pieces and used as building material during the Cultural Revolution

15

not [what is called] the subtle essence of permanence, happiness, self and purity? Those who search for these things outside are foolish: how can they understand [even] a fraction [of it]!

The *Wuzhen pian* written by the Most Benevolent and Boundless Chan Immortal Perfected Ziyang, Zhang Pingshu, explains the essence of the Golden Elixir, which is described in his preface to the text as the technique to nurture life. The Yellow Emperor and Laozi followed what they desired, gradually directing themselves to non-action and subtle awakening. The extreme subtleness and the profundity of the instructions of the Supreme Vehicle of the Bodhidharma and of the Sixth Patriarch (Huineng 慧能 (638-713), mentioned by Zhang Boduan in the postface to his *Wuzhen pian*), are difficult to understand thoroughly, therefore [Ziyang] edited the 'External Collection' and wrote it in the form of poems to discuss self-awakening. He awaits those with a good innate nature, so that these words may enlighten them. Oh! Those like the Perfected can [really] be considered to unite both [the teachings of] the buddas and of the transcendents! Ziyang was born in Taizhou and in the prefectural city there is the Ziyang Mansion, which is his former residence. Sixty li from the prefectural seat one finds the Baibu Brook, which according to the tradition is where the immortal Ziyang transcended. He also cultivated the Way at the Chongdao Abbey of Tongbai, but after many years, nobody goes there to pray. I sent public funds and dispatched officials by special order to entirely restore all [these places].[20]

20 The integral text of the stele can be found in *Zhejiang tongzhi* "juanshou 3":24b-26a and, bearing minor differences, in *Shizong xian huangdi yuzhi wenji* 世宗憲皇帝御製文集 17:13b-15a with the title "Text of the Stele of the Ziyang Daoist Temple" 紫陽道院碑文, partially transl. in Scarin, "The Chan Immortal and the Tongbai Palace", 87.

性命無二途, 仙佛無二道。求長生而不知無生, 執有身而不知無相, 法身, 如以箭射空, 力盡還墮, 非無上至真之妙道也。道祖云 「外其身而身存。」豈非世尊無我而有我之旨乎? 又云「觀空亦空, 空無所空。所空既無, 無無亦無。無無既無, 湛然常寂。」夫此湛然常 寂, 豈非常、樂、我、淨之妙諦乎? 彼夫滯殼迷封, 癡狂外走者, 烏能 測知萬一哉!

大慈圓通禪仙紫陽真人張平叔著『悟真篇』, 發明金丹之要。自序以為是乃修生之術。黃老順其所欲, 漸次導之至於無為妙覺。達磨、六祖最上一承之旨, 則至妙至微, 卒難了徹, 故編為『外集』, 形諸歌頌。俟根性猛利之士, 因言自悟。於戲!若真人者可謂佛仙一貫者矣。紫陽生於台州, 城中有紫陽樓乃其故居。去郡城六十里有百步溪, 傳為 紫陽化處。又嘗焚修於桐柏崇道觀, 歲久香火岑寂。特命發帑遣官載加 整葺。

The first characters of the stele powerfully present the emperor's stance: "Inner nature and vitality are not separate paths, [just as] transcendents and buddhas do not [follow] separate ways": here the emperor is promoting his idea of the substantial, if not formal, religious unity of the two teachings. This project is carried out *in practice* in the following lines: first, by quoting both the *Daode jing* and the *Qingjing jing*, two very representative Daoist texts, and relating their content to Buddhist doctrine; then, by referring to Zhang Boduan with the title *Dazi yuantong chanxian Ziyang zhenren Zhang Pingshu* 大慈圓通禪仙紫陽真人張平叔 (Most Benevolent and Boundless Chan Transcendent Perfected Ziyang, Zhang Pingshu), which defines him as a "Chan Transcendent", uniting Daoism and Buddhism in himself. The stele clearly explains what the purpose of the restoration of Tongbai Palace is within the imperial religious system: this temple was chosen as a place for self-cultivation by Zhang Boduan, who is celebrated not merely as a Daoist master of the highest sort, but as an embodiment of the highest Buddhist *and* Daoist achievements. It seems, though, that Buddhism remains prominent throughout the stele: it is Daoism that is legitimised through Buddhism and not vice-versa.

Around 1734, then, there were three temples restored by the Yongzheng Emperor and linked to Zhang Boduan: the Ziyang Abbey 紫陽觀 of Linhai, the Ziyang Daoist Temple 紫陽道院 near the Baibu Brook, and Tongbai Palace. The following year, the Ziyang Daoist Abbey even received an inscription with the four characters *wanfa yuantong* 萬法圓通.[21] To confirm his interest in Buddhism and the extent to which it was related to the restoration of Tongbai Palace, in 1733 the Yongzheng Emperor ordered the restoration of Guoqing Monastery 國清寺, also located on Mt. Tongbai. The following year the monastery was completed and the emperor presented it with a plaque inscribed with the four characters *huayan jingyu* 華嚴淨域.[22]

21 *Zhejiang tongzhi* 231:33a, 232:12a.

22 *Zhejiang tongzhi* 232:2a.

The *Jingai xindeng* 金蓋心燈, an anthology of Daoist biographies from the early 19th century, suggests that the emperor granted land to the temple:

> Shizong [r. 1722-1735] with a special decree ordered the construction of Chongdao Abbey and granted it 600 mu of fields, so that the ancient statues of the Pure Sage Masters of Guzhu might shine again, and the ancient relics of the Chan Immortal [Zhang] Ziyang might be known far and wide. Mt. Tongbai thus became famous everywhere. This event took place in the twelfth year of the Yongzheng reign (1734), [then] the master [i.e., Fan Qingyun] retired after gaining merit and surviving great perils.[23]
>
> 世宗憲皇帝特旨下頒, 敕建崇道觀, 賜田六百畝, 使清聖孤竹子之古像重輝, 禪仙紫陽氏之遺蹤顯著, 桐柏一山遂為天下望。事在雍正十二年, 此師出於萬死一生之餘而功成身退者。

Granted that 600 mu were few compared to the almost 10 qing calculated by Zhang Lianyuan as the temple's original endowment, they probably must be added to the terrain already returned to the Shrine. Therefore, thanks to imperial intervention, Tongbai Palace was restored and a portion of its land was returned to it. It also became part of a series of temples that the emperor patronised because they were ideally related to Zhang Boduan's activities as a practitioner of self-cultivation, within the context of his own interest in Chan Buddhism. What these documents do not discuss is whether imperial patronage could also achieve the last of Zhang Lianyuan's objectives: finding a group of Daoists willing to move to the temple and to help Fan Qingyun.

5.2 The Longmen Lineage

5.2.1 Myth and Historical Facts

The history of the Longmen lineage and especially its origins are still under scholarly scrutiny. According to the traditional narrative, most famously described in Min Yide's 閔一得 (1748/1758-1836) *Jingai xindeng* (1821, reprinted in 1876; JGXD), the lineage was founded when Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (*zi*: Tongmi 通密; hao: Changchun 長春; 1148-1227) transmitted his teachings to the disciple Zhao Daojian 趙道堅 (1163-1221) and bestowed a Daoist name on him.[24] As we know, Qiu

23 *Jingai xindeng* 3:46a-b.

24 Esposito, *Facets of Qing Daoism*, 67-70.

Chuji was a key figure in 13th-century Daoism. He was the disciple of Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (*ming*: Zhongfu 中孚; *zi*: Yunqing 允卿 and Zhiming 智明; 1113-1170), a man from Xianyang 咸陽 (Shaanxi), the founder of the Quanzhen order under the Jin 金 dynasty (1115-1234). The accounts of Wang Chongyang's life mix historical reality and myth, two aspects that are not always easy to separate. According to Pierre Marsone's critical study, Wang Chongyang probably undertook a military career before giving it up and experiencing a prolonged period of hardship, when he was hit by what we might call an existential crisis that brought him sixteen years of desperation. He became an alcoholic and progressively distanced himself from his family, until – in 1159 – he experienced a spiritual conversion. Hagiographies explain this event by referring to his encounter with two immortals, identified by later traditions as Lü Dongbin and Zhongli Quan 鍾離權, near Hu County 鄠縣 (Shaanxi). Some texts even mention a second and third encounter with transcendental beings, but these too are considered dubious by Marsone. Wang Chongyang was in contact with local Daoist and Buddhist masters, from which he received various teaching. In 1161 he left his family and went to the nearby village of Nanshi 南時村, where a very famous episode occurred. He dug a hole in the ground, which he called "the tomb of the living dead" (*huosiren mu* 活死人墓), and practised self-cultivation there for three years. Finally, after various other experiences, he decided to move to Shandong, where he became a successful proselytiser and over time established an influential religious movement, which sparked the Quanzhen order.[25] We can define Wang Chongyang's religious movement as lay, meditative and syncretic. It was a lay movement, in the sense that previous formal initiation into Daoism was not required.[26] By meditative I mean that one of the most important goals for Wang Chongyang and his early community was the successful practicing of self-cultivation, a feature that was also maintained over the following centuries as a distinctive trait of Quanzhen Daoists.[27] Syncretism refers to Wang Chongyang's commitment to the doctrine of the Three Teachings, which upheld the radical unity of the principles of Confucianism,

25 On the early Quanzhen order, see Marsone, "Accounts of the Foundation of the Quanzhen", 97-101; Eskildsen, *The Teachings and Practices*, 4-10. For a study of the historical context of the birth of Quanzhen, cf. Goossaert, "La création du Taoïsme moderne", 17-36.

26 Eskildsen, *The Teachings and Practices*, 39-56; Goossaert, "La création du Taoïsme moderne", 171-219.

27 Eskildsen, *The Teachings and Practices*, 21-38; Goossaert, "La création du Taoïsme moderne", 171-258.

Buddhism and Daoism.[28] Qiu Chuji was but one of Wang's seven disciples, traditionally known as the 'Seven Perfected' (*qizhen* 七真), each with his or her own following: Ma Yu 馬鈺 (*zi*: Xuanbao 玄寶; *hao*: Danyang 丹陽; 1123-1184); Tan Chuduan 處端 (*zi*: Tongzheng 通正; *hao*: Changzhen 長真; 1123-1185); Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 (*zi*: Tongmiao 通妙; *hao*: Changsheng 長生; 1147-1203); Qiu Changchun; Wang Chuyi 王處一 (*zi*: Yuyang 玉陽; *hao*: Sanyang 傘陽; 1142-1217); Hao Datong 郝大通 (*zi*: Taigu 太古; *hao*: Guangning 廣寧; 1140-1213); and Sun Bu'er 孫不二 (*hao*: Qingjing 清靜; 1119-1183).[29] At first, it appears that it was Ma Danyang – the first to become a disciple, together with his wife Sun Bu'er – who took over Wang's legacy. Over time, though, another of Wang's disciples, Qiu Chuji, was to become the most successful: he not only accepted the followers of the other six Perfected as his own disciples, bestowing new Daoist names on them, but he even managed to earn the benevolence of Chinggis Khan – elected great khan of all Mongols in 1206 – towards the Quanzhen order. In 1220 Qiu Chuji began his journey to Central Asia, which would bring him and a number of his disciples to the court of the Mongol leader in Samarkand.[30] After Qiu Chuji and his disciples returned to Beijing in 1224 (the former capital of the Jin dynasty, conquered by the Mongols in 1215), he took charge of Tianchang Abbey 天常觀, later renamed Changchun Palace 長春宮 in his honour. When Qiu Chuji passed away, his body was buried next to this temple and his disciple Yin Zhiping 尹志平 (1169-1251) built a temple called Baiyun Abbey 白雲觀 in this location.[31]According to the JGXD, Zhao Daojian's teachings were transmitted to his disciple Zhang Dechun 張德純 (fl. 1312-1367) and so on until the fourth generation **[table 5]**. This line of transmission is regarded as having safeguarded the true teachings of Qiu Chuji and is therefore called the 'Longmen orthodox transmission' (*Longmen zhengzong liuchuan* 龍門正宗流傳) in the JGXD.

If we focus on the initial character of the Longmen names of these masters, we see that they correspond to the sequence of characters

28 *Chongyang quanzhen ji* (DZ 1153) 1:16b-17a. Transl. in Eskildsen, *The Teachings and Practices*, 21.

29 For a brief overview of these disciples and of the formation of the concept of 'Seven Perfected', cf. Marsone, "Accounts of the Foundation of the Quanzhen", 102-10. The only woman among the seven was Sun Bu'er, Ma Yu's wife.

30 Cf. *Changchun zhenren xiyouji* (DZ 1429). Tradition credits this journey with having ensured the high status that the Quanzhen order enjoyed during the Mongol conquest of northern China and even the safety of the population of this territory. In 1223 Chinggis Khan even issued an edict that placed all religions in northern China under the control of the Quanzhen order. It should be noted that another major Daoist tradition, that of the Heavenly Masters of Mt. Longhu, received the support of the Yuan dynasty in 1276, after the conquest of southern China and the demise of the Southern Song dynasty. Goossaert, "La création du Taoïsme moderne", 29, 79-80.

31 Esposito, *Facets of Qing Daoism*, 63-4.

of what is known today as the 'Longmen lineage poem' (*Longmen pai shi* 龍門派詩). The first ten characters of the poem are: 道德通玄靜, 真常守太清。一陽來復本, 合教永圓明. This poem is therefore used to mark each Daoist's position in the series of successive generations of Longmen masters: in other words, a Longmen master determines the Longmen name of his disciples by using the character of the poem after the one used in his or her own name. Starting from the fifth generation, the Longmen orthodox lineage supposedly split into two branches, one for the 'masters of precepts' (*lüshi* 律師) and one for the 'masters of doctrine' (*zongshi* 宗師), because the content of the transmission became divided (through a distinction between doctrine, on the one hand, and initiation by means of the precepts, on the other). The two lineages reunited thanks to a Daoist of the Jingu Grotto 金鼓洞 of Hangzhou, Zhou Mingyang 周明陽:[32] in the early 19th century this made the author of the JGXD, Min Yide, the last legitimate representative of the unified orthodox lineage.

There are some problems with what I have termed the traditional narrative. First, as discussed by Monica Esposito, Zhao Daojian passed away in 1221 in Saram, on his journey to Samarkand, and was buried there.[33] This means that he did not complete the journey with his master Qiu Chuji and that he could not have received the Longmen transmission, let alone have founded a lineage to spread this transmission through his disciples.

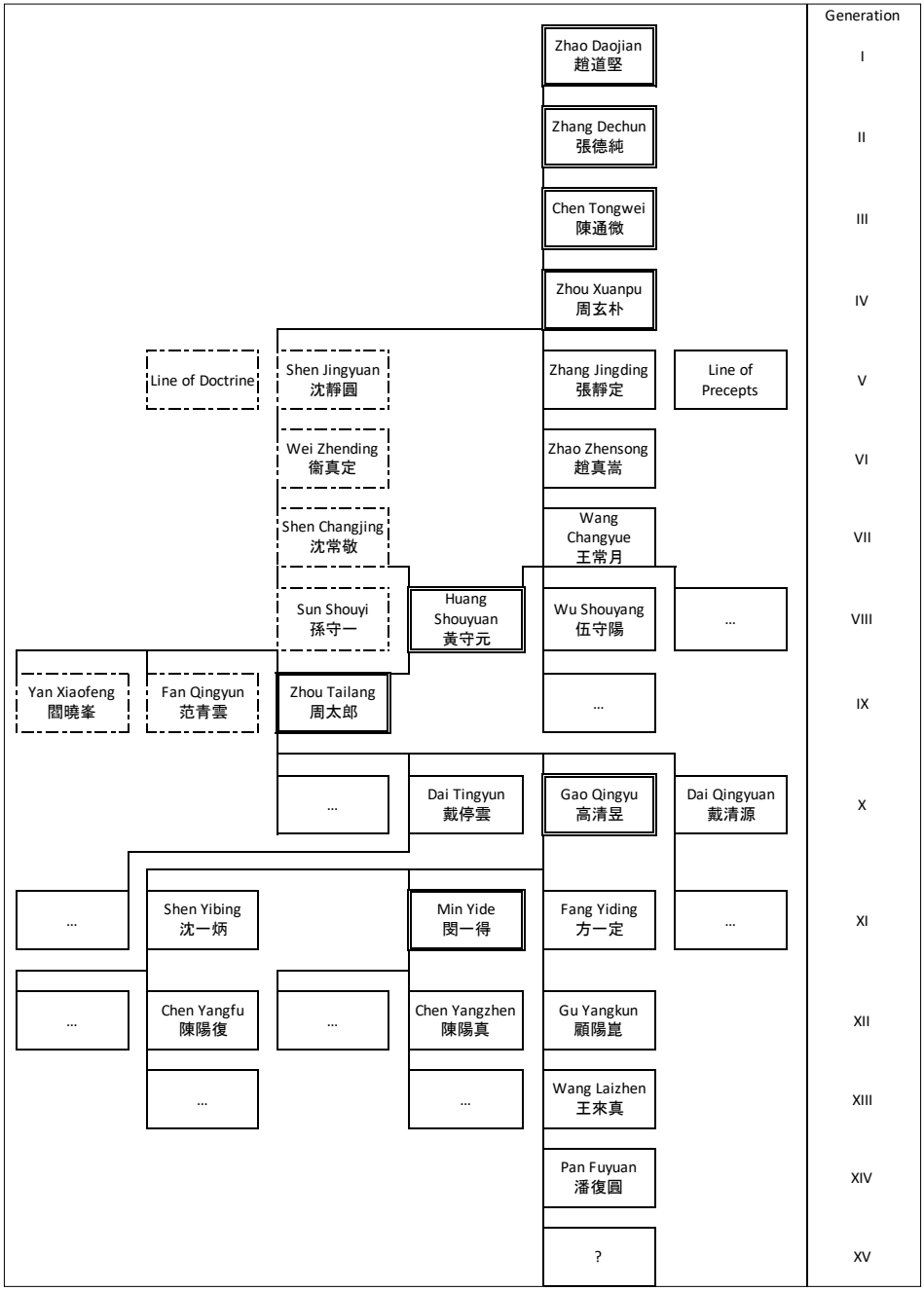
Second, sources ranging from the 16th to the 19th century do not mention the separation of the Longmen lineage into two branches respectively focusing on doctrine and on precepts. We can refer to the *Jingu Dong zhi* 金鼓洞志 and to the *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 委羽洞天邱祖宗譜 (Qiu [Changchun]'s Lineage of the Weiyu Grotto-Heaven; *Weiyu zongpu*), just to name two. Moreover, the use of the Longmen lineage poem must be carefully studied. Before the 18th century this poem was certainly already used by a number of traditions, such as a Quanzhen lineage linked with Daoist Yan 閻道人 at the Qianyuan Abbey of the Mao Mountains in the 16th century, or that of Wu Shouyang 吳守陽.[34] Yet, originally the lineage and the poem were not called 'Longmen', but simply referred to as Qiu Chuji's lineage without mentioning Longmen. Wu Shouyang's case is interesting because we only have four occurrences of the expression 'Longmen' in his writings, two of which could be later

32 According to the JGXD, during a supposed meeting between Zhou and Wang Changyue, the latter said to him: "In Jiangnan the [lineages of] doctrine and precepts will be unified in you" 江南宗律於汝一貫. JGXD 3:12b.

33 *Changchun zhenren xiyouji* 1:22b; *Zhongnan Shan zuting xianzhen neizhuan* (DZ 604) 2:10b-12b; Esposito, *Facets of Qing Daoism*, 70.

34 On Daoist Yan's lineage, cf. Wang, "Mingdai Jiangnan shishen jingying yu Maoshan Quanzhen dao de xingqi", 26-71.

Table 5 The succession of Min Yide's Longmen orthodox transmission according to the JGXD, generations 1 to 14



additions, since they are found in the commentary on his *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu* 天仙正理直論增註 and in Shen Zhaoding's 申兆 1764 preface to the same text. The last instances of the term are found in the postscript (*houba* 後跋) to the *Dandao jiu pian* 丹道九篇, which was not written by Wu Shouyang himself, although it reportedly quotes his words.[35] In signing the texts, Wu Shouyang does not use the term Longmen, but rather describes himself as a disciple of Perfected Qiu [Chuji's] tradition (*Qiu zhenren menxia* 邱真人門下 or similar expressions).[36] I should also note that even in the texts attributed to the 17th-century Daoist reformer Wang Changyue 王常月 (?-1680) the term Longmen does not occur.

Third, the three tiers of precepts supposedly used in Longmen initiation ceremonies from Qiu Chuji's time onwards were in fact the product of late Ming-early Qing systematisation efforts by Wang Changyue 王常月. As discussed by Mori Yuria, the process of redefinition of the precepts and of their transmission was carried out by Wang Changyue in mid-17th-century Nanjing. He argued that Wang Changyue's efforts were aimed not so much at reviving the transmission of Qiu Changchun's precepts, as at reorganising the whole system of precepts and Quanzhen ordination.[37] Moreover, the precepts that constitute the three tiers of Wang's ordination were not originally devised by Qiu Chuji himself, nor were they characteristic of Longmen, but appear to be a collection of different sets of precepts from earlier traditions linked to the Celestial Masters.[38]

Fourth, and more generally, the concept of a Longmen lineage as described in the JGXD needs to be heavily revised in the light of the latest scholarship. The Longmen communities of the late 17th-18th centuries were not the product of a single and direct line of transmission, but resulted from multiple initiations given to the same disciples by multiple masters and from the dissemination of the same teachings to different disciples. The complex and composite nature of Daoist (Longmen) transmission in this context is evident from the discrepancy found in the JGXD between the linear, ordered transmission of Longmen teachings in the earlier generations and the multi-layered, interconnected transmission that occurred in Min Yide's generation and adjacent ones. This will become evident in the pages below. Therefore, scholars should abandon the idea of a unitary

35 "Wu zhenren shishi ji shoushou yuanliu lüe" 3a; *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu* "zixu":11a, 1:85a-85b; "Dandao jiu pian", in *Jindan yaojue* 1:37a-37b. Cf. Esposito, *Facets of Qing Daoism*, 101-2, van Enckevort, "Quanzhen and Longmen Identities in the Works of Wu Shouyang", 152-4.

36 Cf. *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu* "zixu":11a.

37 Mori, "Tracing Back Wang Changyue's Precepts".

38 Esposito, *Creative Daoism*, 91-129; *Facets of Qing Daoism*, 244-8.

Longmen lineage transmitting an ideal, unchanging Quanzhen tradition, and embrace instead the idea of Longmen as the product of specific historical circumstances and the source of a wide array of different traditions. In other words, "Quanzhen Daoism, especially the so-called Longmen lineage, has undergone a multicentered and multifaceted historical development with both strong continuities and institutional innovations and regional variations".[39]

In the following section I will reconstruct the historical Longmen community linked with Tongbai Palace after its restoration.

5.3 Longmen Daoists in 18th-century Hangzhou and Tiantai

In 1734 the Yongzheng Emperor restored three temples somehow connected with Zhang Boduan: the Ziyang Abbey, the Ziyang Daoist Temple and Tongbai Palace, and sponsored the restoration of the Guoqing Monastery. Just a few years before, Fan Qingyun was reportedly still administering the Qingsheng Shrine. The JGXD states that he was a member of the Longmen orthodox lineage and for this reason it contains a biography of him, according to which Fan Qingyun (*ming*: Taiqing 太清; *zi*: Yuanzhen 元真; *hao*: Qingyun zi 青雲子; 1604/1660?-1748) was born in Jiangxia 江夏 (Hubei) in 1604. He was a Longmen master of doctrine of the ninth generation, 'Sun Yuyang's only disciple, the only one carrying on [his] doctrine' 玉陽孫祖弟子, 獨承宗教者也.[40] From his youth, he was erudite and had a strong sense of justice. In 1643 he left his life as a scholar and became a Daoist (literally: 'took off his blue shirt and changed it into a feathery dress', *tuo qingshan, yi yuyi* 脫青衫, 易羽衣) and went to the Mao Mountains, where Shen Taihe 沈太和 transmitted the 110 Mysterious Eulogies (*xuanjie* 玄偈) to him and appointed Sun Yuyang 孫玉陽 as his master.[41] Ten years later, Fan Qingyun returned to Master Shen, but the latter had already passed away, so it was Sun Yuyang who ordained Fan Qingyun and gave him his Daoist name. After recording a series of petitions (*zhang* 章) on a piece of brocade, he left. When Fan Qingyun arrived in Tiantai the snow was clearing, so he climbed Qiongtai Peak, alone. There, he met Master Sun again, who approached him wearing a straw hat. Fan followed his master for another twelve years, then went back to Mt. Tongbai. The JGXD also records that Fan Qingyun travelled across southeast China during the Kangxi and Yongzheng reigns (1661-1735). In 1667 he reportedly

39 Liu, Goossaert, "Introduction", 7.

40 The biography of Fan Qingyun can be found in JGXD 3:45a-47b.

41 Shen Taihe is remembered as the master of doctrine of the 7th generation. More on Sun Yuyang below.

met Wang Changyue, who gave him the *Bojian* 缽鑑 in five fascicles (*juan* 卷), a history of the transmission of the Quanzhen tradition written by the 9th Longmen patriarch Wang Changyue himself.

Bao Tingbo 鮑廷博, one of the commentators of the JGXD, lists the *Bojian xu* 缽鑑續 (Continuation to the *Bojian*) by Fan Qingyun among the sources of the biographies in that text.[42] The *Bojian xu* is reportedly a continuation of the *Bojian*, which Fan Qingyun expanded from its five scrolls to nine. Monica Esposito suggested that both the *Bojian* and the *Bojian xu* may have been fictitious texts, since no trace of either has survived outside of the quotations in the JGXD.[43] Regardless, the fact that Fan Qingyun was regarded as the author of a key text on the historiography of the orthodox lineage places him in a prominent, almost fundamental position.

According to the JGXD, he must have travelled to Mt. Jingai, because in the first month of the following year, Fan Qingyun and Tong Rongyang 童融陽 (another Longmen Daoist) left that mountain and returned to Tiantai. There, Master Fan unearthed the two statues of Bo Yi and Shu Qi that he took care of alone until the restoration of Tongbai Palace. The JGXD depicts Fan Qingyun as a leading Daoist in the history of the Longmen orthodox lineage: quoting a sentence reportedly uttered by Shen Yibing 沈一炳 (1708-1786), Fan Qingyun "alone embodied the doctrinal tradition of four generations of masters, Shen [Jingyuan], Wei [Zhending], Shen [Changjing] and Sun [Shouyi]" 范宗師以一身獨承沈、衞、沈、孫四代之宗派. These four masters constitute the line of doctrine according to Min Yide's systematised Longmen orthodox lineage **[table 5]**. The fact that it is impossible to determine the historical accuracy of the biographies of Shen Jingyuan, Wei Zhending, Shen Changjing and Sun Shouyi in the JGXD does not help clarifying Fan Qingyun's biography. What I can state is that these four Daoists were also regarded, respectively, as the 7th-, 8th-, 9th- and 10th-generation patriarchs of Zhou Mingyang's lineage at the Jingu Grotto: unfortunately, even the *Jingu Dong zhi* does not contain any information on these masters except their names.[44] Therefore, the part of Fan Qingun's biography presented above cannot be confirmed on the basis of other sources – what *can* be is the final part.

After the restoration of Chongdao Abbey, Fan Qingyun left the management of the temple up to Gao Dongli 高東籬, Shen Yibing's and Min Yide's master, while he retired to the Jingu Cave 金鼓洞

42 JGXD "wenxian lu":1a-2b. The other sources include the *Bojian* 缽鑑 by Wang Changyue, the *Daopu yuanliu tu* 道譜源流圖 by Lü Yunyin 呂雲隱 (fl. 1710), the *Yangshi yilin* 揚氏逸林 by Yang Shen'an 揚慎菴 and the *Dongyuan yulu* 東原語錄 by Lü Quanyang 呂全陽. Apparently, only the *Daopu yuanliu tu* is still extant.

43 Esposito, *Facets of Qing Daoism*, 59, 248.

44 Cf. *Jingu Dong zhi* 4:1b-2a.

of Hangzhou. This handover must have seemed strange to Min Yide, because Gao Dongli and Fan Qingyun lacked a direct master-disciple relationship, which is probably the reason why he added the following sentence: "although my master Gao [Dongli] did not receive the doctrinal tradition of Fan [Qingyun], he clearly carried it on" 是則我高子之學, 雖非范授其宗派之流傳, 顯有繼述矣.[45] According to the interlinear commentary, Fan Qingyun was buried on the southern side of Helin 鶴林 Temple (i.e. Jingu Grotto in Hangzhou), next to Baoben Hall 報本堂. I think that the reference to Fan Qingyun's line of doctrine serves to avoid confusion about the fact that Gao Dongli inherited the unified Longmen orthodox tradition from his master Zhou Mingyang, whereas Fan Qingyun was only considered a "master of doctrine" (*zongshi*) in this system.

There are a few problems with this biography, the most evident being Fan Qingyun's year of birth. It is highly improbable that he was born in 1604, if he was still active in the Yongzheng era. Moreover, his cousin Fan Zhenyong employed the word *tangdi* to narrate Fan Qingyun's story, which indicates a cousin from a younger generation: if master Fan was really 113 years old at that time, Fan Zhenyong could have been even older! Ironically, it almost seems as though the JGXD itself suggests what may have been Fan Qingyun's real age. According to this text, Shen Yibing once recalled: "his complexion was that of a forty- or fifty-year-old person. If one asked him, he would say that he was 43 years old" 狀如四五十許。人問之則概以四十三對.[46] Therefore, at the beginning of the 18th century master Fan was said to be 96 years old, but to look about 40. If instead the latter was his real age, it means that by 1717 he would have been around 57 years old and, consequently, that he may have arrived at the Qingsheng Shrine when he was more or less 32. In this way, when he passed away in 1748, he would have been 88 years old, which was still a respectable age, but far from the 144 years of age recorded in the JGXD! It may therefore be argued that it is not so much his date of death, as his date of birth that should be revised in order to account for the biological and historical discrepancies that surface in the JGXD: a more appropriate birthdate should be set around 1660.

The second aspect worth analysing is Fan Qingyun's encounter with Wang Changyue. We do not find any evidence external to the JGXD about this event, which could be regarded as historiographically questionable. We should not read it literally, though, as in the case of his direct relationship with the great master Shen Taihe (d. 1653) and probably even with Sun Yuyang, although the latter's dates of birth and death are not stated.

45 JGXD 3:47a.

46 JGXD 3:45b-46a.

We should also consider the fact that the messages exchanged between the emperor and Li Wei do not discuss Fan Qingyun's affiliation with any state-sponsored Daoist temple or lineage: if things had been as they are described in the JGXD, why was Fan Qingyun presented as a lonely Daoist? Why is there no reference to other Longmen institutions in sources other than the JGXD? This circumstance begs the question of why so much information is missing from the sources, information that could have been fundamental to attract Daoists who might have helped Fan Qingyun manage the temple, as Zhang Lianyuan hoped.

Finally, according to the JGXD, Fan Qingyun was very close to the Daoist institution of Hangzhou called Jingu Grotto. He was trained by patriarchs of that lineage who were also tied to the Qianyuan Abbey of the Mao Mountains. Towards the end of his life he retired to the Helin Abbey of the Jingu Grotto, where he was eventually buried.[47] While there is no evidence outside the JGXD that can confirm any of the above points, the frequent references to the Jingu Grotto can be explained on the basis of Min Yide's Daoist lineage. As revealed above, his master was called Gao Dongli, and before becoming the abbot of Tongbai Palace, he had been trained precisely at the Jingu Grotto. It was he who took over the responsibility of managing Tongbai Palace after Fan Qingyun and he was also Min Yide's first Daoist master: the connections of the Tongbai Palace both to the Jingu Grotto and to Min Yide's Longmen orthodox lineage are therefore very clear. This is the reason why it is now necessary to study the Daoists of Hangzhou in more detail.

5.4 The Longmen Lineage of the Jingu Grotto

The Jingu Grotto is located on Qixia Peak 棲霞嶺 in Hangzhou. It is also known by the names of Jingu 金固 and Jinguo 金果 Grotto.[48] This temple housed two relics of Lü Dongbin: a picture of the transcendent and the four characters *feilai yehe* 飛來野鶴 ("wild cranes flew over"), which appeared on the outer walls of the temple in 1781.[49] In the 17th century Zhou Mingyang (*ming*: Tailang 太朗; *zi*: Yuanzhen 元真; *hao*: Mingyang zi 明陽子; 1627-1710) settled down at the location of this temple and built what later became the Helin Daoist Temple 鶴林道院. The *Jingu Dong zhi*, edited by Zhu Wenzao 朱文藻 (*zi*: Yingchun 映淳; *hao*: Langzhai 郎齋; 1735-1806?) at the beginning of the 19th c., records the story of how the Jingu Grotto became one of the earliest

47 JGXD 3:46a, 47a.

48 *Jingu Dong zhi* 2:1b-2a.

49 *Jingu Dong zhi* 1:1a-16a.

Longmen institutions in Zhejiang. In 1664 Zhou Mingyang, born in Chenze 震澤 (Jiangsu), received the precepts from Wang Changyue at Zongyang Palace 宗陽宮 in Hangzhou.[50] This piece of information may well be historically accurate: we know that other influential Daoists received the precepts from Wang Changyue in Hangzhou in the same period.[51] The compilation of the *Jingu Dong zhi* precedes that of the JGXD and contains a list of the main Daoists of the Longmen lineage of the Helin Temple **[table 6]**.

The first four generations are missing, an interesting circumstance that conflicts with what is recorded in the JGXD. Zhou Mingyang was a disciple of Sun Yuyang, about whom little is known apart from the scant information provided in the JGXD and in turn, the latter was a disciple of Shen Taihe 沈太和. Regarding Shen Taihe (*ming*: Changjing 常敬; *zi*: Yizhai 一齋; *hao*: Taihezi 太和子; 1523-1653), the JGXD recounts as follows: he was born in Tongxiang 桐鄉 (present-day Jiaxing 嘉興) and received a Confucian education. When he was 40 years old, he went to Mt. Jingai, then moved to Wulin and finally to the Yuangai Grotto-Heaven 元蓋洞天 to study longevity techniques, but he was not satisfied with what he learnt.[52] While travelling to famous mountains, Master Shen finally met Wei Pingyang 衛平陽, who became his master and bestowed the Purport of the Supreme Doctrine 太上宗旨 on him.[53] After this, Shen Taihe went to the Mao Mountains and as master of doctrine of the 7th generation he transmitted his teachings to two disciples, Sun Yuyang (Taihe) and Huang Chiyang. He passed away on Mount Mao in Shunzhi 10 (1653), at the age of 131.

The JGXD states that Sun was the Longmen master of doctrine of the 8th generation. He was born in Guian 歸安 (Huzhou) and was considered very smart from his youth. At the age of 19, while travelling in Jinling, he met Shen Taihe. They both retired to the

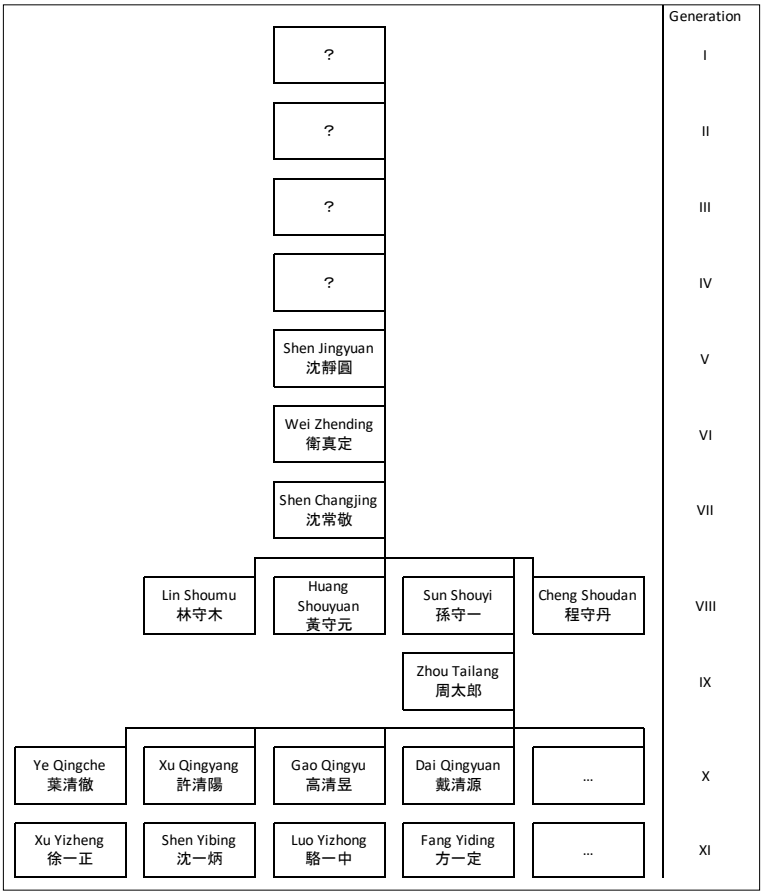
50 *Jingu Dong zhi* 7:2b-3a.

51 So far, I have found concrete evidence about Lü Shoupu 呂守璞 (*zi*: Duanxu 端虛; *hao*: Yunyin 雲隱; original *ming*: Xie 謝; ?-1710). Cf. *Xushuguan zhi* 滸墅關志 (1827) 17: "dao" 3a; JGXD 6:28a-29b; *Xi Jin shi wai* 1:40a-b; *Wuxi Jinkui Xian zhi* 29:33b. There is another Daoist who received the precepts from Wang Changyue and who was active in Suzhou at the end of the 17th century: he is called Huang Gun 黃袞 (fl. 1682-1692) and may also have been initiated at the Zongyang Palace of Hangzhou in 1664. Cf. *Xushuguan zhi* 9:15a-16a, 17: "dao" 2a; *Suzhou Fu zhi* (DG) 45:1b-2a; *Suzhou Fu zhi* (GX) 41:21a, 135:26b-27a.

52 JGXD 1:18a-19a. The Yuangai Grotto-Heaven is presumably the Dadi Xuangai 大滌玄蓋, the 31st Lesser Grotto-Heaven on Mt. Tianzhu 天柱山 (Lin'an County). For a list of these Grotto-Heavens, see Verellen, "The Beyond Within", 290.

53 For Wei Pingyang's biography, see JGXD 1:13a-14b. Wei Pingyang was a Master of Longmen Doctrine of the 6th generation. According to Min Yide, he met master Zhao Fuyang (a 6th-generation master of Vinaya, also known as 'the unusual person of Tiantai' 天台異人) in the Tiantai mountains.

Table 6 Chart of the Longmen lineage of the Helin Temple of the Jingu Grotto according to *Jingu Dong zhi* 7:1a-14b. Note that no distinction between a lineage of precepts and one of doctrine is made in this source



Mao Mountains, where Sun received 36 esoteric documents. Master Shen named him master of doctrine and bestowed the name Shouyi on him. In 1656 Sun Yuyang went back to Mt. Jingai to practice self-cultivation, and met Tao Jing'an 陶靖庵 there.[54] Afterwards, he again travelled to the famous mountains and finally went to stay at the Qianyuan Abbey 乾元觀 of the Mao Mountains. In the year *jiachen* 甲辰 of the Kangxi era (1664) Sun sent his disciple Zhou Tailiang (i.e. Zhou Mingyang) to the Dade Abbey 大德觀 of Hangzhou, to become Huang Chiyang's disciple. The interlinear commentary interestingly

54 Two biographies of Tao Jing'an can be found in JGXD 2:9a-19b, 20a-22a.

notes that the *Bojian xu* by Fan Qingyun listed both Yan Xiaofeng 閻曉峯 (representing the Maoshan ritual tradition) and Zhou Mingyang as disciples of Sun Yuyang's who carried on the doctrinal lineage, but not Fan Qingyun.[55]

The information contained in the JGXD regarding these two Daoists, like that about Fan Qingyun, is problematic. Richard Wang studied the Daoist communities of the Qianyuan Abbey and was unable to find a single reference to either Sun or Shen in sources prior to the JGXD. Instead, he found plenty of data on the Quanzhen-inspired Daoist lineage of a certain Daoist Yan 閻道人 (*ming*: Xiyan 希言; *hao*: Xiyan 希言; *faming*: Fuqing/Fuchu 復清/復初; 1509-1588) established at the Qianyuan Abbey,[56] whose presence is also recorded in Da Changuang's 笪蟾光 (1623-1692) *Maoshan quanzhi* 茅山全志. Daoist Yan and his disciples, most notably Daoist Jiang 江道人 (*ming*: Benshi 本實; *hao*: Wengu 文谷; 1545-1606) and Daoist Li 李道人 (birth *ming*: Mengxian 夢仙; *ming*: Yiliao 一了, Hekun 合坤; *hao*: Chedu 徹度; 1510?-1619) were all assigned characteristics typical of ascetic and monastic communities; they were clearly inspired by the early Quanzhen movement and declared themselves to be part of it. One wonders whether the extreme practices characterising Yan's lineage, and involving early Quanzhen themes such as being buried alive, were an instance of the 'back to the origins' approach to religion of the latter half of the Ming that seems to have also inspired the rebirth of Chan Buddhism.

Different sources contain detailed information on Master Yan's lineage. One reason for its popularity may have been the strong social influence that its Daoists had in the surrounding area and especially in Nanjing, not least through their links with the local elite. In addition, Li Chidu probably met Matteo Ricci (who called him 'Liciettò') during the latter's third stay in Nanjing at the end of the 17th century, in the context of urban elite gatherings.[57] This reinforces the argument that Daoists from Qianyuan Abbey and the urban elite were in close contact during the 16th century Patriarch Yan's lineage reached even higher levels of society, establishing contacts with the court. In 1614 the emperor organised a Golden Register Retreat 金籙齋 for his mother and ordered the Daoists of the Abbey to perform the ritual.[58] In the same year he funded the Daoists and sent a copy of the Daoist Canon, brought by the Quanzhen Daoist Zhou Xuanzhen 周玄真, to the abbot of the Jiuxiao Wanfu Palace 九霄萬福宮 of the

55 JGXD 2:44b-45a.

56 Wang, "Mingdai Jiangnan shishen jingying yu Maoshan Quanzhen dao de xingqi", 26-70.

57 Song, "Two Daoists", 1-11.

58 *Maoshan quanzhi* 2:27b; Yang, Pan, *Maoshan daojiao zhi*, 395.

Mao Mountains.[59] These events point to extensive imperial patronage of this area during the Wanli era, which also benefited Qianyuan Abbey, but no information on any Longmen lineage, Shen Taihe or Sun Yuyang is to be found.

In conclusion, the ties between Fan Qingyun and both the Mao Mountains and the Jingu Grotto are not supported by any evidence uncovered so far that precedes the restoration of Tongbai Palace. Moreover, while the *Jingu Dong zhi* confirms that Shen Taihe and Sun Yuyang were patriarchs of the lineage of the Jingu Grotto, this source does not associate them with Qianyuan Abbey or other institutions of the Mao Mountains: this relationship is not disproved either, but the silence in the sources makes any claim very problematic. It is not possible, for the time being, to determine the origin of Zhou Tailang's lineage. What we know is that in 1664 he received the precepts from Wang Changyue and settled by the Jingu Grotto. The *Jingu Dong zhi* itself states that the Helin Temple was built only about one hundred years before, more or less at the beginning of the 18th century, and that therefore the lineage did not count many generations.[60] Finally, if Zhou Mingyang received the precepts from Wang Changyue, according to what I have stated above, the Longmen identity of his lineage must have originated with him. Consequently, the relationship between the Helin Temple/Jingu Grotto and Tongbai Palace must have been established rather late, possibly only when Gao Dongli was elected abbot of the Palace. The sources tell us that it was the local population (no doubt the local notables) that invited him to take over the administration of the temple. By that time, he had been residing at the Jingu Grotto for many years and had established close relationships with the other Daoists there.

5.5 Tongbai Palace and Its Longmen Lineages

The JGXD states that Gao Dongli (*ming*: Qingyu 清昱, *zi*: Dongli 東籬, Dongli 東离; 1616-1768) became the 'chief instructor' (*jiangxi* 講席) of Chongdao Abbey/Tongbai Palace after its restoration.[61] His ancestral home was in Ninghai Prefecture 寧海州 (Shandong), but his ancestors had left it during the Ming Wanli era (1572-1620). In the Kangxi era he followed his father, a *jinshi* graduate, to Taiwan.[62] Gao Dongli reportedly entered Daoism in 1692, when he was 75. He went to

59 *Maoshan quanzhi* 2:26a-27a; Yang, Pan, *Maoshan daojiao zhi*, 395.

60 *Jingu Dong zhi* 7:1a.

61 According to *Longmen zhengzong jueyun benzhi daotong xinchuan*, he was born in the first year of the Tianqi reign, i.e. in 1620.

62 JGXD 4:11a-13b. Cf. *Longmen zhengzong jueyun benzhi daotong xinchuan* 33a.

Zhejiang and brought with him his nephew Gao Lin 高麟 to visit the Jingu Grotto. Thereafter, Zhou Mingyang became his master and transmitted some texts to him, such as the *Nanhua* [*jing*] 南華, *Daode* [*jing*] 道德, the *Cantong* [*qi*] 參同, the *Wuzhen* [*pian*] and *Huayan* 華嚴 (i.e. the *Dafangguang Fo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經, also known as the *Avatamsaka sutra*), the *Daxue* 大學, *Zhongyong* 中庸 and *Xinjing* 心經. Zhou told Gao Dongli: "All of them are means by which sages can become perfected" 皆此證聖成真之寶筏也, thus confirming the persistent support of the doctrine of the Three Teachings among Quanzhen-inspired traditions.[63] He was later invited to become the abbot of Tongbai Palace (at that time called Chongdao Abbey) soon after its restoration and went there with his disciple Shen Yibing. He reportedly died on Mt. Tongbai at the age of 151 and was buried there.[64] We know of three disciples who dwelled with their master Gao Dongli at Tongbai Palace: Shen Yibing (*zi*: Zhenyang 真揚; *hao*: Guyin 谷音 and Qingyun zi 輕雲子; 1708-1786), Min Yide 閔一得 (*ming*: Tiaofu 苕雱; *zi*: Buzhi 補之 and Xiaogen 小艮; *hao*: Lanyun 懶雲; 1748/1758-1836) and Fang Yiding 方一定 (*zi*: Rongyang 鎔陽; fl. second half of the 18th century). The lives of the first two are better known than that of the third, because historical sources contain multiple biographies about them and they seem to have left a stronger influence on the traditions that produced the sources known today. For example, the texts written or edited by Min Yide for his anthology *Gushu yinlou cangshu* 古書隱樓藏書 contain numerous additional details about his own activities and those of Shen Yibing. The relationship that binds these two Daoists is more complicated than that between disciples of the same master: after Gao Dongli's death, Min Yide completed his training with Shen Yibing. Therefore, even though Min Yide is described in all sources – and described himself – as Gao Dongli's disciple, he also considered Shen Yibing to be his master, although both went down in history as Longmen masters of the 11th generation.

There are four biographies of Shen Yibing in the JGXD, all roughly agreeing on the fundamental data. One was authored by Min Yide himself, the others by three different literati: Wang Yixian 王以銜 (1761-1823), Zhou Yangben 周陽本 (1715-1813) and Yao Wentian 姚文田 (1758-1827). Of these authors, the first two were themselves Longmen Daoists of the 12th generation, whose biographies are also included in the JGXD.[65] The biography by Yao Wentian can also be found in

63 JGXD 4:11b. *Baofa* 寶筏 is a Buddhist term meaning 'precious raft' and indicating the Dharma teachings which lead practitioners to Nirvana, just as a raft is used to cross a river from shore to shore. *Nanhua* refers to the *Nanhua jing* 南華經, also known as the *Zhuangzi*.

64 JGXD 3:47a.2-3, 4:13a.3.

65 For the biography by Min Yide, see JGXD 4:31a-32b. For Yao Wentian's, Wang Yixian's and Zhou Yangmu's, see JGXD 4:37b-44b.

the *Jingu Dong zhi*, together with a shorter one by the abbot of the Jingu Grotto, Zhang Fuchun 張復純 (fl. 1805-1807) and one by Hong Wangyuan 鴻王源, who described himself as a disciple of Shen Yibing from Yanjing 燕京 (Beijing); neither of these biographies are included in the JGXD.[66] These texts mix biographical data and myth, so I will proceed with their comparative study in order to highlight their common and historically most reliable elements.

5.5.1 Shen Yibing

Shen Yibing, like Min Yide, hailed from the Huzhou area. He was born into a prominent family of Wuxing 吳興, but both his parents passed away when he was seven. Yao Wentian proposes a first mythical, but highly significant, element: reportedly, at the age of six Shen Yibing met the Daoist Li Niwan 李泥丸 on Mt. Jingai for the first time and after having received three secret poems from him, he decided to transcend the mortal world.[67] At seventeen (1725), Shen Yibing went to the Jingu Grotto, where he became Gao Dongli's disciple. The latter bestowed the Daoist name 'Yibing' on him and, according to Zhang Fuchun, gave him a series of texts: the *Datong jing* 大通經, the *Aozhi* 奧旨,[68] the *Cantong qi*, and the *Zhongyong*. Two of these, namely the *Cantong qi* and the *Zhongyong*, were also bestowed on Gao Dongli by his master Zhou Mingyang. A third one, the *Aozhi*, may be related to a third scripture bestowed on Gao, the *Dafangguang Fo huayan jing*. We can see, therefore, that the doctrinal foundations of these Daoists encompassed texts from all three officially sanctioned religions. Despite his close relationship with Gao Dongli, it was Dai Qingyuan 戴清源 (courtesy name Rongyang zi 融陽子; *hao*: Chuyang zi 初陽子; 1692-1735) who bestowed on him the three levels of precepts, effectively initiating him into the Longmen lineage. I would explain this event by pointing out that the initiation may have taken place in 1727 or in the following years, when Dai Qingyuan was the abbot of the Helin Temple.[69]

66 *Jingu Dong zhi* 4:6b-8a, 8:7b-8a.

67 Li Niwan is a mythical Daoist who was reportedly active in the 11th century, and who according to the JGXD was also Wu Shouyang's 伍守陽 (trad. 1552-1641) master. On Li Niwan, cf. JGXD 8:48a-49b; Esposito, *Facets of Qing Daoism*, 106-7, 111-25. For Wu Shouyang's biography, cf. JGXD 2:1a-2b.

68 This likely to be either the *Aozhi* by Wang Zihua 汪子華 (714-789), also quoted in Wang Jie's 王玠 (14th century) *Ruyao jing zhujie* 入藥鏡註解, or the *Xiu Huayan aozhi wangjin huanyuan guan* 修華嚴奧旨妄盡還源觀 by the monk Fazang 法藏 (643-712). Cf. Wang, *Commentary on the Mirror for Compounding the Medicine*, 39.

69 For a list of the abbots of the temple, cf. *Jingu Dong zhi* 4:32b-34a and Wu, *Jiangnan Quanzhen Daojiao*, 306.

In 1736 Gao Dongli accepted the abbotship of Tongbai Palace and Shen Yibing followed him. Later, he left Tiantai for Mt. Gaochi 高池山, near Shanghai, where he befriended the Daoist Bei Changji 貝常吉. He then moved to the Zhenxi Retreat 鎮溪菴 (also called Zhengqi 正氣 Retreat in some sources), located in the western outskirts of Wuxi 無錫, where he "faced the wall" in meditation for three years.[70] The Zhenxi Retreat was built as a Daoist institution in the Ming Zhengde 正德 era (1505-1521) and enlarged in the Chongzhen 崇禎 era (1627-1644). It is noteworthy that the *Wuxi Jinkui Xian zhi* 無錫金匱縣志 (1882) records that during the Jiaqing 嘉慶 era (1796-1820), i.e. at least ten years after Shen Yibing's death, the Retreat temporarily became the dwelling place of Buddhist monks.[71] Thereafter, Master Shen travelled to the Songjiang 松江 area, where he reportedly met Li Niwan again and followed a ritual master (*fashi* 法師), from whom he received the 'secret doctrine of the great method' (or 'the great methods of Tantrism', *dafa mizong* 大法密宗). Gao Dongli passed away in 1768, so Shen Yibing became the teacher of a still young Min Yide.

Although the biographies do not explain in detail the role that Li Niwan played in Shen Yibing's education, it is undeniable that his teachings constituted the core of Shen Yibing's tradition as it was transmitted to Min Yide. Out of the 23 texts that constitute what Monica Esposito defined as 'the core' of Min Yide's Daoist anthology, five are attributed to or transmitted by Li Niwan; of these, four were reportedly recorded by Shen Yibing.[72] In 1786 Shen Yibing transmitted part of the *Tianxian xinchuan* 天仙心傳 (Transmission of the Heart of the Celestial Transcendent) to Min Yide at the Xuangai Grotto-Heaven 玄蓋洞天 of Mt. Dadi 大滌山, in Yuhang 餘杭.[73] This grotto is located near Dongxiao Palace 洞霄宮, one of the main Daoist temples of the Song dynasty, which has maintained its importance ever since:[74] this can be considered the third major Daoist centre in Shen Yibing's network after the Helin Temple and Tongbai Palace.

Shen himself died in 1786, and was buried on the Jinzhu Terrace 金筑坪 of Dongxiao Palace. His image was enshrined in the Lanyun

70 Zhenxi is the name reported in the biography by Yao Wentian and in *Wuxi xian zhi* 無錫縣志 19:12b.

71 *Wuxi Jinkui Xian zhi* 13:16b.

72 Esposito, *Facets of Qing Daoism*, 164, 191-211. The four texts are: *Tianxian dao jieji xuzhi* 天仙道戒忌須知, *Tianxian daocheng baoze* 天仙道程寶則, *Niwan Li zushi nüzong shuangxiu baofa* 泥丸李祖師女宗雙修寶筏 and *Suoyan xu* 瑣言續, all dealing with self-cultivation. There are other texts transmitted by Shen Yibing, but apparently unrelated to Li Niwan, the *Xiwang Mu nüxiu zhengtu shize* 西王母女修正途十則 and part of the *Tianxian xinchuan* 天仙心傳.

73 *Tianxian xinchuan* "xu":2a. The Xuangai Grotto-Heaven was listed by Sima Chengzhen as the 34th minor grotto-heaven and by Du Guangting as the 31st.

74 Cf. *Dongxiao tu zhi; Da Qing yitong zhi* 洞霄宮志.

Nest 懶雲窩 of the Jingu Grotto, at the Yunchao Temple 雲巢廟 of Mt. Jingai, at the Kaihua Temple 開化院 of Guian, at Wenchang Palace 文昌宮 of Xushuguan and on the Juhua Slope 菊花坡 of Weiyang 維揚 (Yangzhou 揚州).[75] According to the commentary on the JGXD, these were all places visited by Shen Yibing when he was still alive.

Although he was certainly a charismatic Daoist who was worshipped in a vast area after his death, we know that Shen Yibing was already a prominent Daoist before arriving at Tongbai Palace. Evidence of this is found in the *Jingu Dong zhi*, which contains hints of the competition between Shen Yibing and Luo Yizhong 駱一中 (*zi*: Shengzhe 聖哲; 18th century), who would eventually become abbot of the Jingu Grotto and who himself received the teachings of both Gao Dongli and Dai Qingyuan (師事清源戴真人, 面壁苦修。 上接周祖之傳, 下衍戴師、高師之派).[76] Both Shen Yibing and Luo Yizhong are described as well-endowed and equally skilled Daoists.[77]According to what I have explained so far, the Longmen lineage that Gao Dongli established at Tongbai Palace originated from the Helin Temple, or the Jingu Grotto, of Hangzhou. This institution, founded by Zhou Mingyang, was originally the continuation of an undetermined lineage and an offshoot of the Longmen communities established by Wang Changyue in the second half of the 17th century Shen Yibing endeavoured to expand his Daoist network by establishing contacts with numerous institutions in an area that went from Wuxi and possibly Weiyang in the north to Tiantai in the south, and from Yuhang in the west to Suzhou and Shanghai in the east.

This network was established by Shen Yibing also by befriending several highly respected personalities in Jiangnan, such as Ji Huang 稽璜, the Gu 顧 clan of Wuxi, the Zhang 張 clan of Wulin 武林 and the Yang 楊 clan of Songjiang 松江.[78] One Daoist friend of his was the aforementioned Bei Changji (*ming*: Benheng 本恆; 1688-1758), whose first Daoist affiliation originated from the Daoist communities of Mt. Wudang, where he became the disciple of Yuan Zhengyu 袁正遇 at the age of seventeen. He was later drawn to Wang Changyue's reformed Quanzhen tradition and went to Qianyuan Abbey on the Mao Mountains 'asking Wang Changyue' to receive the precepts: because Master Wang had passed away in 1680, this should not be interpreted literally as Bei Changji's direct request to Wang himself, but to his disciples.[79] In itself, this detail demonstrates just

75 JGXD 4:36a-b.

76 *Jingu Dong zhi* 7:6a.

77 *Jingu Dong zhi* 7:6b.

78 *Jingu Dong zhi* 4:8a; JGXD 4:25a.

79 *Pinluo an yiji* 頻羅菴遺集 9:21b.

how popular and esteemed Wang Changyue's Quanzhen resurgence was among Daoists at the beginning of the Qing dynasty. The JGXD also confirms that Bei Changji was affiliated with two lineages: the Quanzhen of Mt. Hua 華山派 and the Longmen (i.e. Wang Changyue's reformed Quanzhen tradition).[80]

In 1719 Bei Changji built a retreat on Mt. Gaochi and over time became a respected practitioner: this might explain why Shen Yibing went there.[81] His charisma resulted in his appointment as abbot of the Dongxiao Palace of Yuhang in 1745.[82] There, Bei Changji repeatedly distinguished himself by helping the population fight diseases and improved the prestige of the temple by promoting the publication of the *Da Qing yitong zhi* 洞霄宮志.

Shen Yibing's connections with Bei Changji resulted in him becoming a central figure for Daoism in Yuhang, another node in his network. Indeed, he was even chosen as a master by one of Bei Changji's foremost disciples, Li Renning 李仁凝 (*hao*: Yuefeng 月峯; Langu 蘭谷; fl. middle of the 18th century), also known as Li Fang 李芳 or Miaozhong Dingming Zhenren 妙衷定命真人 (Perfected of the Subtle Heart of the Fixed Destiny). It was at the Lanyun Nest of the Jingu Grotto, where he resided later in life, that Li Renning studied as a disciple of Shen Yibing.[83] Like Bei Changji, he was therefore initiated into two lineages: that of Mt. Hua and the Longmen one.[84] Moreover, as though to stress the close bond between them, Li is also remembered as the Daoist who established Shen Yibing's shrine (*feng kan* 封龕) at Dongxiao Palace.

We see that the relations between Daoist communities were much more fluid than they are usually described in the emic systematisations of the late empire: each master had many disciples who could carry on his tradition; at the same time, each disciple could have more than one master and be initiated into more than one tradition. When applied to our study of Tongbai Palace, this allows us to argue that the temple, because it hosted a prominent Longmen lineage of Zhejiang, was part of the coeval network of 'Longmen' temples of southeast China, but only if we amend the traditional concept of Longmen orthodoxy

80 Yin, *Qingdai Quanzhen dao lishi xintan*, 180; Wu, *Jiangnan Quanzhen Daojiao*, 320-1. JGXD 3:22a-b states that Bei Changji was initiated into the Longmen lineage by his master Fan Chuyang 樊初陽.

81 *Pinluo an yiji* 9:21b. We are told that another Daoist, Shen Yueguang 沈月光 (Daoist name: Heyi 和一) of the Tongyuan Abbey 通元觀 of Mt. Jichou 計籌山, went looking for Bei Changji. Yin, *Qingdai Quanzhen dao lishi xintan*, 180.

82 *Zhejiang tongzhi* 227:15b; *Hangzhou Fu zhi* 38:14b-17a. On Dongxiao Palace, cf. *Yuhang Xian zhi* 3:40a-b.

83 *Jingu Dong zhi* 8:8b.

84 JGXD 4:32a; *Jingu Dong zhi* 8:8b-9a, 12b-13a; Wu, *Jiangnan Quanzhen Daojiao*, 323.

as a linear and univocal transmission. Moreover, by focusing on the figure of Shen Yibing, we have uncovered a broad Daoist network that encompassed multiple temples in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. If we extend our perspective to Shen Yibing's disciples, we find that two of them are especially significant: Zhou Yangben 周陽本 (*zi*: Yonglin 用霖; *hao*: Tixia 梯霞; 1715-1813) and Chen Qiaoyun 陳樵雲 (*ming*: Yangfu 陽復; *yuanming*: Qufei 去非; *zi*: Yiting 翼庭; 1730-1785) from Guian. The former set up a lineage branch at the Banchi Retreat 半持菴 of Mt. Tong 銅山 (Yuhang, in present-day Deqing County 德清縣).[85] The latter also operated in Yuhang, but established his lineage at Sanyuan Palace 三元宮 and had four prominent disciples mentioned in the JGXD: Ruan Laizong 阮來宗, Yang Laiyi 楊來逸, Qian Laiyu 錢來玉 and Bao Laijin 鮑來金.[86]

5.5.2 Fang Yiding

The second of Gao Dongli's disciples is Fang Yiding, the only one of the three not from Huzhou, since he reportedly hailed from Ninghai 甯海.[87] The *Jingu Dong zhi* inserts him in the Longmen lineage of the Jingu Grotto, but it is difficult to determine whether this was an affiliation determined a posteriori due to the fact that he was Gao Dongli's disciple, or if Fang Yiding actually trained or dwelled at the Jingu Grotto.[88] Unlike Shen and Min, his area of action would appear to have been to the east and to the south of Tiantai, since according to the JGXD he had many disciples in Wenzhou, Taizhou and Ningbo. He was Gao Dongli's successor as "chief instructor" of Tongbai Palace, which may also imply that he became its abbot.[89] Among the temples that he visited, those mentioned are the ones of Baibu 百步, Jinlei 金罍, Zilang 紫琅, Weiyu 委羽 and Gaizhu 蓋竹, where he appears to have been a successful proselytiser.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Baibu Brook 百步溪 of Linhai County was tied to Zhang Boduan's transcendence to immortality and the temple built in that location in honour of

85 The biography of Zhou Yangben can be found in JGXD 5:9a-10b.

86 JGXD "Longmen zhengzong liuchuan zhipai tu" 龍門正宗流傳支派圖 (Chart of the Transmission of the Longmen Orthodox Lineage): 3b. The JGXD contains an entry on the four of them together, JGXD 5:38a-39b. The biography of Chen Yangfu can be found in JGXD 5:5a-8b.

87 Fang Yiding's biography can be found in JGXD 4:30a–b.

88 *Jingu Dong zhi* 7:6b.

89 The JGXD describes Gao Dongli as chief instructor of the Palace as well, but we know from the *Jingu Dong zhi* that he was in fact its administrator: one wonders whether there were so few Daoists living at the temple that they had to perform different roles or if, due to a peculiar custom, *jiangxi* was used at Tongbai Palace to indicate the abbotship.

this event, Ziyang Abbey 紫陽觀, received the Yongzheng Emperor's patronage at the same time as Tongbai Palace. It is possible, although difficult to demonstrate, that Fang Yiding's activities at the Baibu Brook were related to Ziyang Abbey.[90] Another area mentioned among those frequented by Fang Yiding is Mt. Weiyu, where it was located the Dayou Palace 大有宮, which became a major Longmen center in Taizhou during the late 19th century. The close relationship between Fang Yiding and southern Zhejiang is confirmed by the *Jingu Dong zhi*, where the Daoist is said to have practiced the Way for more than thirty years at the Gaizhu Grotto-Heaven 蓋竹洞天 and to have been buried at the Xianyan Cave 仙岩洞 after death, both places located in Linhai.

Not much is known about Fang Yiding's activities and his disciples, yet they may all be considered part of the Longmen community, or lineage, of Tongbai Palace. According to the JGXD, his lineage was as follows: Fang Yiding (11th generation) → Gu Yangkun 顧陽崑 (12th generation) → Wang Laizhen 王來真 (13th generation) → Pan Fuyuan 潘復圓 (14th generation).[91] Gu Yangkun (*zi*: Cangzhou 滄州; *hao*: Cangzhou 蒼州; end of the 18th century) hailed from Gusu 姑蘇 (Suzhou) and resided at Tongbai Palace for some years.[92] At some point, he "got weary of responding [to requests (for ritual services?)]" 疲於酬應 and "interrupted the contacts with the lay world" 退隱於俗. A few decades later, he passed away. His disciple Wang Laizhen (*zi*: Mengsheng 孟生; *hao*: Yiyang 嶧陽; ?-1782) also hailed from Gusu. He was first trained by Shen Yibing and then became Gu Yangkun's disciple.[93] He eventually settled down near the Zhuangjia Bridge 裝嫁橋 and his grave was located on Mt. Daoshi 道士山 in Gusu. The only disciple of his that is mentioned in the JGXD is Pan Fuyuan (*hao*: Xuefeng 雪峰; ?–1798), also from Gusu. He was not related to Tongbai Palace and befriended Min Yide, became the disciple of a certain Qian Yang'ao 錢陽璈 and received the precepts from Shen Yibing in Wuxi and the *Chu qi shen cangshu* 出其身藏書 (Collection of Books to Leave One's Body) from Wang Laizhen.[94] He passed away in Gusu. Whereas his area of activity was mostly located south of Tongbai Palace, Fan

90 On Ziyang Abbey, cf. *Zhejiang tongzhi* 232:12a; *Gongzhong dang Yongzheng chao zouzhe* 19:51a-53a.

91 JGXD "Longmen zhengzong liuchuan zhipai tu": 3a. Cf. JGXD 4:30a-30b, 5:4a-4b, 5:36a-37a; *Longmen zhengzong jueyun benzhi daotong xinchuan* 21b-22a.

92 Gu Yangkun's biography can be found in JGXD 5:4a-b.

93 Wang Laizhen's biography can be found in JGXD 5:36a-37a.

94 Pan Fuyuan's biography can be found in JGXD 5:40a-41b. The interlinear commentary states that Master Qian established the lineage of the Dengyun Abbey 登雲觀 of Mount Tianzhen 天真山 (Hangzhou). JGXD 5:40a. I could not locate the *Chu qi shen cangshu*.

Yiding's three generations of disciples would appear to have mostly operated in the area of Lake Tai 太湖 and that after Fang Yiding they were mostly related with Suzhou.

5.5.3 Min Yide

Min Yide's life is too complex and his enterprises too numerous to be discussed here in detail. I will limit myself to addressing a few fundamental aspects that are significant for our study of the history of Tongbai Palace.

The JGXD contains three biographies of Min Yide, written by Yan Duanshu 晏端書 (fl. 19th century), Yang Weikun 楊維崑 (fl. 19th century) and Shen Bingcheng 沈秉成 (1823-1895), while the *Shengshe Zhen zhi* 晟舍鎮志 (Gazetteer of Shengshe Village) has one.[95] His year of birth is debated, either 1748 or 1758. Min Yide's place of origin is indicated as Wuxing 吳興 or Guian 歸安, but in fact we can more precisely pinpoint his hometown as Shengshe Village 晟舍鎮 (Huzhou). Min Yide hailed from a prominent local family. His father was a *juren* 舉人, and numerous members of his clan were graduates and held bureaucratic positions. He was initiated into the Longmen tradition at Tongbai Palace by Master Gao Dongli. His father brought him to this temple because he suffered from ailments that made it difficult for him to walk – they may have been caused by a fall into a well when he was nine years old. According to the JGXD, Master Gao cured him by teaching him gymnastics (*daoyin* 導引).[96]After a few years of practice, despite the fact that he had failed to earn even the *juren* degree, Min Yide complied with his father's desires and embarked on a bureaucratic career as Departmental Vice Magistrate (*zhou sima* 州司馬) in Yunnan. This allowed him to familiarise himself with Daoist traditions at the fringes of the empire: his link with a tradition based on Mt. Jizu and called *Xizhu xinzong* 西竺心宗 (Heart Lineage of India) lasted his whole life and traces of this connection can be found in his Daoist anthology *Gu shuyinlou cangshu*. After his father's death, though, Min Yide returned to Jiangnan, where he dedicated his life to Daoism. He possibly first studied under Shen Yibing and then set up his own Daoist community on Mt. Jingai, where he built the Yunchao Temple 雲巢廟.

Min Yide was in close contact with many members of the elite. We know that he had exchanges with Jiang Yuanting 蔣元庭 (1756-1819), which allowed him to influence the earliest editions of the *Daozang*

95 JGXD "Min zhuan fu":1a-5a; *Shengshe Zhen zhi* 49b-50a. Cf. Esposito, *Creative Daoism*, 160-5.

96 JGXD "Min zhuan fu":1a.

jiyao 道藏輯要.[97] Min Yide also found a circle of lay supporters among his friends and relatives. In 1834 he was at the Zanhua Palace 贊化宮 of Yaotan 瑤潭 (Suzhou), where he received the part of the *Tianxian xinchuan* titled "Warning Oneself" 自警篇.[98] This temple had been built by Chen Lanyun 陳蘭雲 (Daoist *hao*: Yanglai 陽來; fl. early 19th century), who was married to a member of the prominent Yuan 袁 clan of Changshan 長山 (Hangzhou) and was a cousin of the famous poet and official Chen Wenshu 陳文述 (1774-1845), as well as the leader of a community of more than 20 disciples at the Baoyuan Altar 保元壇 (Altar for Preserving the Origin) of Zanhua Palace. The necessary funds for building this altar had been granted to Chen Lanyun by a local prefect in Changshan after her successful healing of the man's daughter from a ghost possession.[99] In addition to enshrining Lü Dongbin, this temple also worshipped Qiu Changchun, Bai Yuchan and Shen Yibing.[100] Min Yide was acquainted with Chen Wenshu himself and taught him some esoteric methods of the Heart Lineage of India via his disciple Chen Lanyun. Min Yide also directly bestowed on him instructions on *neidan* 內丹 (inner alchemy). The two had known each other since 1818, when Min Yide healed Chen Wenshu by reciting the *Dadong yuzhang jing* 大洞玉章經. It was during Min Yide's stay at Zanhua Palace that Chen Wenshu successfully insisted on him becoming his disciple. Because Chen was a married man with three concubines, Min Yide transmitted to him a sexual method of cultivation.[101] After their death, some Daoists of the Tongbai lineage and their disciples reportedly acted as spiritual counsellors of Daoist practitioners belonging to these circles of local elite: for instance, Liu Xun describes how Shen Yibing and his disciple Chen Qiaoyun descended to the Zhuhe Altar 駐鶴壇 ("Crane-Perching Altar") to instruct Chen Wenshu and his wife.[102] Recent studies have highlighted the fact that Chen Wenshu patronised several spirit-writing altars in Hangzhou, Suzhou and Yangzhou 揚州.[103]

The events discussed above demonstrate that interest in Daoist cults and practices was common among the elite, including its male representatives, who have been traditionally depicted as

97 Esposito, *Creative Daoism*, 201-17.

98 *Tianxian xinchuan* 7b; Liu, "An Intoning Immortal at the West Lake", 93.

99 Liu, "An Intoning Immortal at the West Lake", 92-3. Chen Lanyun is also the first known woman to have been formally ordained as a Longmen nun.

100 *Tianxian xinchuan* 7b.

101 Liu, "An Intoning Immortal at the West Lake", 96.

102 Liu, "An Intoning Immortal at the West Lake", 97-8; "Of Poems, Gods, and Spirit-Writing Altars", 47-8.

103 Liu, "Of Poems, Gods, and Spirit-Writing Altars", 35; "An Intoning Immortal at the West Lake".

(exclusively) Confucian. One interesting aspect that I do not have the opportunity to discuss in detail here, but which nonetheless deserves to be mentioned, is the prominent role of female practitioners in the development and spread of Daoism among the elite during the Qing dynasty. Another noteworthy example related to Min Yide is that of Wang Duan 汪端 (1739-1839), poetess and wife of Chen Peizhi 陳裴之 (1794-1826), a son of Chen Wenshu. Wang Duan was a representative of the Hangzhou elite, since she counted awardees of the *jinshi* degree and officials among her ancestors. Wang Duan was one of the members of Chen Wenshu's following of female artists and authors, and had a close relationship with him, fostered by their shared literary and religious interests.[104] Although initially, influenced by her Confucian upbringing, she strongly opposed Daoism and Buddhism, later she became a devotee of Gao Qi 高啟 (1336-1374), a scholar and official of the Ming court who had been impeached and sentenced to death, and whom she had enshrined at the Baoyuan Altar later in life. Wang Duan became involved in a variety of religious and cultural activities, including spirit-writing. After the death of her husband in 1826, Wang Duan started reciting the *Dadong yuzhang jing* on his behalf on a daily basis, a practice that had been suggested by Min Yide. In this period, Chen Lanyun was very close to Wang Duan and helped her overcome her pain, and it was she who convinced Wang Duan to become a lay Quanzhen practitioner and an active participant in the spirit-writing sessions at Chen Lanyun's Baoyuan Altar.[105] Wang Duan was also initiated into the Longmen lineage, thanks to her master Chen Lanyun and became acquainted with Min Yide, in whose honour she wrote an elegy after his death.[106] It appears evident, then, that leaving Tongbai Palace in order to live in the main urban centres of Jiangnan (such as Huzhou and Suzhou) proved an effective strategy for Min Yide, who was then able to earn the support of the most prominent social groups in the area. This kind of strategy, whether it was applied consciously or not, was very useful to ensure that a Daoist institution would thrive, especially when imperial sponsorship was lacking, but unfortunately it was less viable in Tiantai.

Min Yide's links to the Jiangnan elite, though, were not exclusively a product of his social skills. The Min clan itself was a prominent and influential one in the Huzhou area, counting many *juren* and *jinshi* and several state officials. The Min clan had close ties with other prominent lineages of Jiangnan: for example, its members established marriage relations with the aforementioned Yuans of Changshan.[107]

104 Liu, "Of Poems, Gods, and Spirit-Writing Altars", 25-9.

105 Liu, "Of Poems, Gods, and Spirit-Writing Altars", 37-44, 47, 53-4.

106 Liu, "Of Poems, Gods, and Spirit-Writing Altars", 55.

107 Liu, "An Intoning Immortal at the West Lake", 93.

This power was used by Min Yide to support his Daoist initiatives. One of the most notable members of the clan during the Qing dynasty was Min Eyuan 閔鶚元, who obtained his *jinshi* degree in the period 1744-1745. Later, he was an examiner in Shanxi in 1756 and Sichuan in 1759, before taking up a series of offices in Shandong, Anhui, Hubei, Guangdong and Jiangning between 1762 and 1771. He was promoted to governor (*xunfu* 巡撫) of Anhui first (1776) and then of Jiangsu in 1780. He promoted the construction of the guildhall (*huiguan* 會館) of Suzhou before retiring in 1791.[108] He is also know for the restoration of the Taiwei Temple of Precepts 太微律院 in 1788, an institution previously inhabited by a Daoist called Huang Gun 黃衮 (*zi*: Shanbu 山補; *daohao*: Xutang 虛堂; fl. 1682-1692), who had received the precepts from Wang Changyue.[109] This temple was later restored by a Daoist called Huang Fucheng 黃復成, who must have been a Longmen master.[110] Min Eyuan's family is also tied to the Daoist institutions of Mt. Jingai, since one of his sons, Min Sijian 閔思堅 (*juren* in 1789), at a certain point retired to the Yunchao Temple.

Future studies on the significance of the Min clan and of its tight social network for the development of Longmen Daoism in Jiangnan will have to explain the broader significance of these data in more detail.

5.6 Other Daoists Active at Tongbai Palace

The JGXD contains the biographies of other Daoists associated with Tongbai Palace. Chen Chungu 陳春谷 (*ming* at birth: Yangzhen 陽真; *zi*: Taipu 太樸; *ming*: Pusheng 樸生; other *hao*: Qiyun zi 棲雲子; 1763-1806, 12th generation) was born into a wealthy family of Taizhou Prefecture.[111] When Chen was young, his father and brother urged him to get married, but he refused: he packed his belongings and went to Tiantai County, where he paid homage to Master Sun Laiming 孫來明 (13th generation), who at that time was dwelling at Tongbai Palace. At the age of 17 he met Master Fang Yiding at the Weiyu Grotto-Heaven 委羽洞天 (Huangyan County, Zhejiang) and became his disciple. The JGXD does not state whether he had received a Daoist name from these two masters and had been formally initiated into their lineages, which is possible: as a disciple of Fang Yiding, he would have been a Longmen Daoist of the 12th generation and would have received a Daoist name starting with the character *yang* 陽;

108 *Shengshe Zhen zhi* 5:42a-b.

109 See note 49, ch. 5.

110 *Xushuguan zhi* 10:15b-16a.

111 Chen Chungu's biography can be found in JGXD 5:16a-18a.

otherwise, he would have been a Daoist of the 14th generation and his name would have started with the character *fu* 復.

Chen donated his possessions, possibly to Tongbai Palace, and went back to his family in Taizhou. His father and brother tried to question him, but he fled again and on the way to Huangyan County he met Master Li Pengtou. He then travelled to "famous mountains and caves", studying with different masters. He went back home again, but this time his parents were not angry and instead welcomed him. He returned to Tiantai and Weiyu many times and finally Chen Chungu asked Min Yide to become a member of his lineage on Mt. Jingai, so he left the Tiantai Mountains and went there in 1802, at the age of 39. He received the initiation of the three altars from Min Yide in front of the statue of Shen Yibing. The JGXD records that when Min Yide's disciples saw him, they perceived Zhou Mingyang's marks in him and knew that he had studied with Fang Yiding, Li Pengtou and many others. He was buried on Mt. Handan 菡萏山 (of Mt. Jingai) in 1808.

Who was Sun Laiming (fl. 1754-1785; 13th generation), mentioned in Chen's biography? Information about him is lacking. The *Daotong yuanliu* (Origin and Development of Orthodox Daoism) describes him as a disciple of Chen Qiaoyun, whom we have already mentioned as a prominent disciple of Shen Yibing.[112] At the age of 16 he studied the Way with Xu Longyan 徐隆岩, from whom he received the *Ziguang fandou* 紫光梵斗. In 1754 he went to the Yunchao Temple on Mt. Jingai, where he received the initiation of the three platforms from Shen Yibing in 1775. Sun Laiming was called upon to pray for auspicious weather, suggesting that he practised arts typical of southern traditions, very close to those used by Shen Yibing. He was buried in the Jinzhu Terrace. Very few other lineages used the character 'lai' in their lineage poem, (the *Yushan pai* 遇山派, the *He xiangu yunxia pai* 何仙姑雲霞派 and the *Sanfeng pai* 三丰派) and this would support the theory that Sun Laiming was indeed part of the Longmen lineage.[113] His initiation by Shen Yibing agrees with this narrative: whether he previously belonged to other Daoist traditions, we do not know.

The presence of such a Daoist, belonging to a lineage without detectable direct links to Fang Yiding, ordained by Shen Yibing and

112 *Daotong yuanliu* 2:16a. See also Yin, *Qingdai Quanzhen dao lishi xintan*, 246. For a biography of Chen Qiaoyun, see *Daotong yuanliu* 2:13a. I would like to thank Prof. Lai Chi-Tim for sharing with me his copy of the *Daotong yuanliu*.

113 *Baiyun Guan zhi* 3:1a-16b. I could not find any other lineage poem containing the character 'lai' apart from the Longmen one in the *Jueyun xuanyun xiaoxuan puzhi* 2:1a-2a. The *Tiantai pai zidi* 天台派字遞 (Transmission Characters of the Tiantai Lineage) in vol. 2 of the *Jueyun xuanyun xiaoxuan puzhi* does not contain 'lai' and we do not have any other information about it. We should bear in mind that these are rather late texts compared to the period under scrutiny in this study and that they may in any case represent a later systematisation.

possibly dwelling for a period at Tongbai Palace, means that towards the end of the 18th century the temple still constituted a central node in the Longmen network in southeast China. It is important to stress that both Shen Yibing and Fang Yiding were disciples of Gao Dongli, meaning that Sun Laiming shared with the aforementioned Gu Cangzhou and other Daoists the legacy of the lineage established at Tongbai Palace. This case also highlights the effectiveness of Shen Yibing's efforts to spread his tradition in southern China, confirming that he was a powerful force behind the development of the Longmen lineage even before Min Yide.

The biographies of Chen Chungu and Sun Laiming prove that the situation was much less defined than many scholars have assumed: Daoists belonging to different lineages travelled to and from Tongbai Palace, studying the Way under different masters, some of whom belonged to the Longmen community established on Mt. Tongbai. This mobility was instrumental for the establishment, strengthening and expansion of the Longmen network in south-eastern China, but such a result was not necessarily the cause of the disciples' relocations: social, economic and political factors surely influenced the development of these shifts between lineages and institutions, and determined their relative power and influence. We should also consider the fact that the precocious exit of Gu Cangzhou from the scene may have left Tongbai Palace without proper management, allowing or even requiring the presence of other Daoists at the temple. Finally, it is interesting to note that Sun Laiming belonged to the Longmen generation immediately after that of Gu Cangzhou, and we are left to wonder whether the two were somehow related by a master-disciple bond.

Chen Chungu's shift to Min Yide's lineage may be interpreted as a matter of personal preference, as a reflection of the greater prestige of the institution of Mt. Jingai or as a sign of problems involving Tongbai Palace at the end of the 18th century. It is recorded that Chen Chungu became Fang Yiding's disciple at the Weiyu Grotto in 1780 and later of Sun Laiming at Tongbai Palace, ultimately passing into Min Yide's lineage on Mount Jingai. Therefore, from his biography it can be inferred that Tongbai Palace was still active at the beginning of the 19th century, when Chen Chungu left it for Mt. Jingai. This suggests a development very similar to what happened at the birth of the Quanzhen tradition. In his doctoral dissertation, Vincent Goossaert observed that Qiu Changchun was able to spread his own Quanzhen lineage by re-initiating many of the Quanzhen disciples from the other lineages and by bestowing on them a new ordination name that clearly marked them as his own disciples.[114] It is my understanding

114 Goossaert, "La création du Taoïsme moderne", 75-7.

that this may be what also happened in cases such as that of Chen Chungu and of other disciples of Min Yide.

According to Ren Linhao and Ma Shuming, after Gao Dongli's death no one was left at Tongbai Palace to carry on the lineage, but as we have seen and as I will keep showing below, this is not entirely true: Daoists associated with the legacy of Gao Dongli, Shen Yibing and Fang Yiding still dwelled in the temple between the late 18th century and the Taiping Rebellion.[115] It is possible that as a religious centre Tongbai Palace gradually lost much of its influence and importance, but it certainly remained an active temple throughout the first part of the 19th century. In fact, the early 19th century was an era in which patronage from – and contact with – the local urban population was a much more significant factor for Daoism than imperial patronage, a period in which lay communities were emerging and imperial support for Daoism was declining. Therefore, it is understandable that an institution such as Tongbai Palace, located in a relatively poor region, on a mountain and far from significant urban centres was difficult to maintain and slowly losing its prominence. As we have seen, both Shen Yibing and Min Yide preferred to entertain relations with major regional urban centres, such as Suzhou, Huzhou and Yuhang. Moreover, the relationship between the temple and the court during the Qing dynasty was very different from that during the Tang dynasty, resulting only in a sporadic act of patronage.

In the following decades, Tongbai Palace gradually became detached from the Longmen lineages of Huzhou and Hangzhou: it is seldom mentioned in Daoist sources and usually only in relation to the Daoists already discussed in the JGXD. Local factors are not enough to explain the reasons for the disappearance of the Palace from Daoist documents after the end of the 18th century. This may have been caused by the new social and political environment, as explained, but also by tragic events like the Taiping Rebellion, which marked a watershed in late imperial Chinese history and offered an opportunity to redefine the religious geography of southeast China. This is why, in the last part of this chapter, I will end my study in the 1850s: the 19th century was a period of great instability for Chinese society and politics, marred by foreign invasions, attempted reforms and rebellions. The Taiping Rebellion, with its legacy of destruction – especially against traditional religious institutions – is a watershed in modern Chinese history and from a religious-historical perspective what happened after it may be regarded as a very different story, whose study requires a profound understanding of the events that occurred both during and right after the rebellion.

115 Ren, Ma, *Taizhou Daojiao kao*, 359.

5.7 The Last Decades

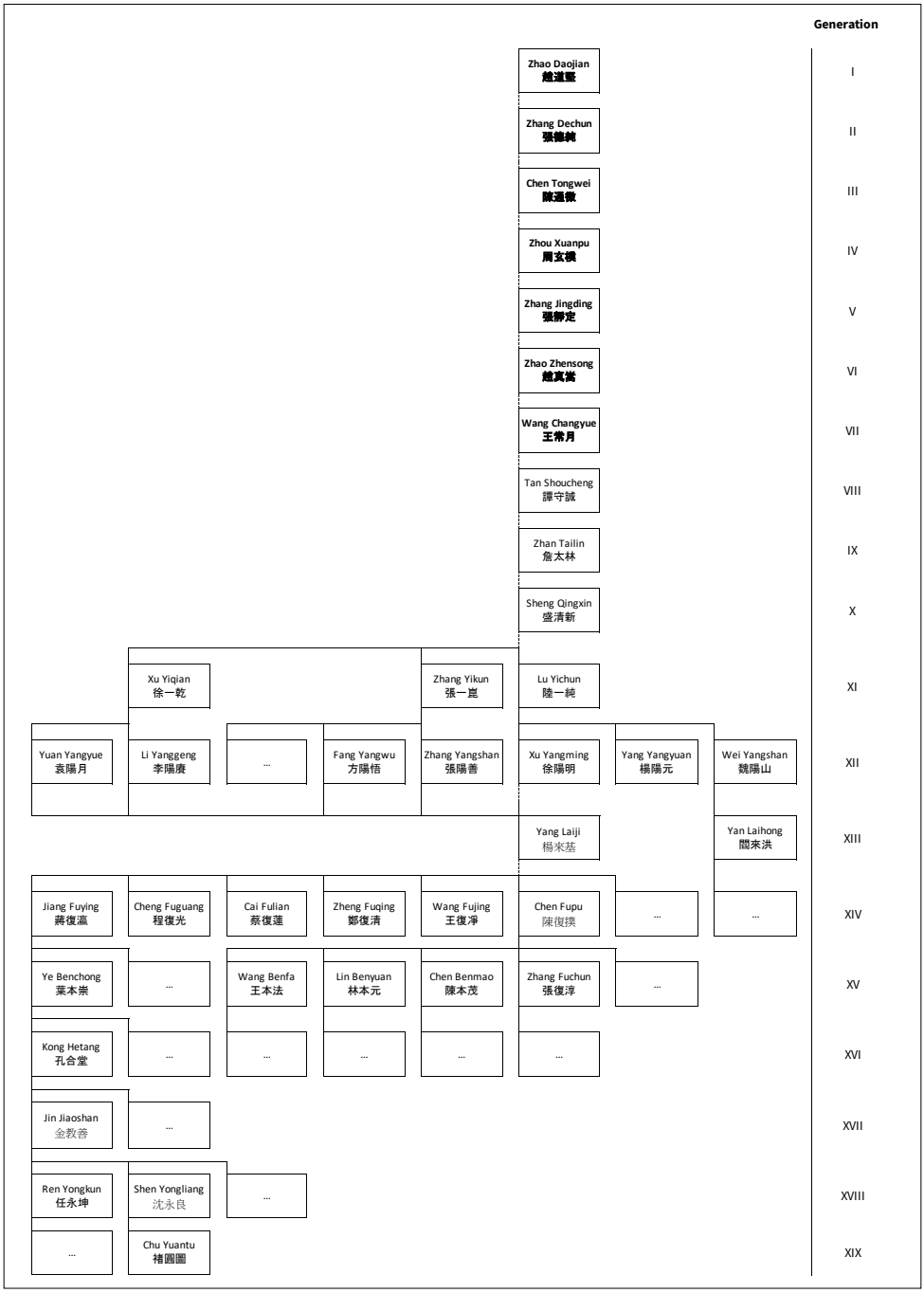
Compared to previous periods, we possess much less information on the final decades of the history of Tongbai Palace before 1851. The little we know can be inferred from the lives of Daoists belonging to another lineage, that of the Dayou Palace 大有宮 of Huangyan County. According to the tradition of the *Weiyu zongpu*, this temple was rebuilt by Yang Laiji 楊來基 (*zi*: Guoning 國甯; fl. 1796-1815) in 1815.[116] The Jingai and the Weiyu Longmen lineages, as recorded respectively in the JGXD and the *Weiyu zongpu*, share their patriarchs until the 7th generation, i.e. until Wang Changyue. The Longmen lineage of Dayou Palace was then founded by Yang Laiji, who is remembered as the first patriarch of this tradition **[table 7]**. What's more, this lineage does not present the separation between a line of doctrine and one of precepts, of the sort laid out in the JGXD, which serve as a further proof that this claim is historically unsound.

I am especially interested in the lineage of Mt. Weiyu because it includes the Daoists Yang Laiji, Shen Yongliang and Chen Fupu (Chungu), who are associated with Tongbai Palace. Yang Laiji hailed from Huanglin 黄林. In the *Weiyu Shan xuzhi* 委羽山續志 (Continuation of the Gazetteer of Mt. Weiyu, 1864) he is presented as a powerful exorcist and healer. In one case, he liberated the population of the western foothills of Mt. Fang 方山 in Huangyan from haunting by weeping ghosts: Master Yang was able to exorcise the spirits with his Daoist techniques (*daoshu* 道術) and to restore tranquillity. During the Qianlong era he dwelled on Mt. Weiyu, which became his place of self-refinement for the following decades. The gazetteer also specifies that he used blessed water to treat people's ailments.[117] In the *Weiyu zongpu*, Yang Laiji plays a fundamental role in the history of Dayou Palace: before restoring the temple, he had been its abbot since 1796; more generally, he was able to establish a Daoist network in the area of Wenzhou 溫州 and Taizhou 台州, through the transmission of his teachings to 14 disciples. Yang Laiji's role as a major depositary of the Longmen tradition lies at the basis of two elements in the *Weiyu zongpu*: the narrative of how the Weiyu lineage was built and the prestige of Dayou Palace.

116 See Chen Yingning's 陳攖寧 (1880-1969) "Chongxiu Weiyu Shan Dayou Gong zongpu xu" 重修委羽山大有宮宗譜序 in *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 1:"xu":2a-b; Ren, Ma, *Taizhou Daojiao kao*, 360-3; Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate*. The *Weiyu zongpu* (1991) is an updated version of a work that was first published in 1909, revised in the 1940s and rediscovered by the Daoist Association of Wenzhou 溫州市道教協會 in 1989. Cf. Katz, "The Development of Jiangnan Daoist Networks", 194.

117 *Weiyu Shan xuzhi* 1:6a-b; "Weiyu Shan lidai chengxian biao jilüe" 委羽山歷代成仙表紀略 in *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 1:"Lidai chongxian biao jilüe":4b; "Shixi tu" 世系圖 in *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 2:"shixi tu":3a. Cf. *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 1:"lidai chengxian biao jilüe":4b.

Table 7 The Longmen lineage of Dayou Palace, according to the *Weiyu zongpu*. Generations 1 to 19



The *Weiyu zongpu* proposes a version of the orthodox lineage of Dayou Palace **[table 7]**. The fact that Yang's name was Laiji indicates that he was a Longmen master of the 13th generation. This membership is confirmed by the name of his disciple in the *Weiyu Shan xuzhi*, Chen Fupu, *fu* 復 being the 14th character in the Longmen lineage poem, about whom I will say more below. The question remains of how Yang Laiji was initiated into the Longmen lineage. One hypothesis, which I cannot demonstrate with the data currently in my possession, is that his initiation was somehow related to Fang Yiding's activities in the area south of Tiantai, as discussed above. According to the *Weiyu zongpu*, after Yang Laiji, the lineage was divided into twelve branches that spread across southern Zhejiang and that, between the middle of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, extended northward, reaching Tongbai Palace.

This lineage chart graphically illustrates the importance of Yang Laiji for the establishment of the legitimacy of the lineage. Not only was he the representative of the tradition that was established by Qiu Chuji and that was transmitted down to Wang Changyue's disciple, Tan Shoucheng, but he was also the inheritor of the tradition of all the lineages established by Master Tan's fourth-generation disciples Lu Yichun 陸一純, Zhang Yikun 張一崑 (who was also associated with the Jingu Grotto) and Xu Yiqian 徐一乾, except four: those transmitted by two disciples of Lu Yichun, Wei Yangshan 魏陽山 and Yang Yangyuan 楊陽元 and those of two disciples of Zhang Yikun, Gu Yangshu 顧陽數 and Wu Yangren 吳陽仁.[118] It is interesting to note that the second of Lu Yichun's disciples, Yang Yangyuan (1686-1772), is in fact described as Yang Laiji's father and hailed from Huanglin (Huangyan) like his son.[119] We are not given much information here, and the lineage chart only states that he received Lu Yichun's teachings. Nothing is said about Gu Yangshu and Wu Yangren's lineages, whether they survived or faded away: the *Weiyu zongpu* only deals with the lineages of Yang Laiji and Yan Laihong 閻來洪, a disciple of Wei Yangshan. Therefore, in this version of the history of the lineage, all the other surviving branches were connected to Master Yang.[120] We can recognise some similarities between this process of reunification of the lineages and the one described in the JGXD and centred on Zhou Mingyang.

The *Weiyu zongpu* also contains two biographies of a certain Chen Fupu 陳復樸 (*ming*: Fupu 復樸; *hao*: Chungu 春谷; *suming*: Zhihua

118 *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 2:"shixi tu":1b-2b. Lu Yichun was disciple of Sheng Qingxin. Xu Yangming was Lu's disciple. The 'orthodox' line represented by Yang Laiji was not the only one that developed starting from the two Daoists: in total the *Weiyu zongpu* lists two other disciples of Sheng Qingxin (for a total of three belonging to the 11th generation), and seven more disciples belonging to the 12th generation.

119 *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 2:"shixi tu":2a.

120 *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 2:"shixi tu":1b-3a.

志華; 1755-before 1850), in addition to a shorter one copied from the *Weiyu Shan xuzhi*, which is also the oldest one. He is especially interesting because he shares the same name as one of Fang Yiding's disciples, the aforementioned Chen Chungu. His biography in the *Weiyu Shan xuzhi* is just a brief sketch of the Daoist's life, describing his divinatory skills and placing him in the lineage of Mt. Weiyu. He is described as hailing from the Taiping Cliff 太平巖 and as Wang Laiji's disciple, as well as a gifted practitioner who could foresee the future. He reportedly visited the most important temples of the empire and was so widely esteemed that at his death the inhabitants of Huangyan built a statue of him, so they could worship it.[121]

One possibility is that the two Daoists are the same person, but if this was the case, each source omitted any information that referred to the other, competing, lineage. Yet, the two sources present profound differences that cannot be explained away in such fashion: the only true common element between the Chen Chungu of the *Weiyu Shan xuzhi* and that of the JGXD remains their name. The other two, much later biographies found in the *Weiyu zongpu* more explicitly tend to conflate the two Daoists into one person. Is it possible that two Daoists with the same name dwelled at the Dayou Palace around the same period? As improbable as this hypothesis may seem, the fact remains that their biographies are almost incompatible, as demonstrated by the awkward attempts to conflate them in the *Weiyu zongpu*. Yin Zhihua supporting the thesis that the two Daoists by the name of Chen Chungu were different persons, noted that they belonged to two different generations of the Longmen lineage, which is clear from their respective Daoist name. I have decided not to rely on this argument for a simple reason: I think that this is the least controversial point, unless we are to assume that at that time there existed only one 'orthodox' Longmen lineage – a notion which I have already argued to be a historiographical misrepresentation. This said, I still agree with Yin Zhihua's conclusion because the details of the biographies do not match.[122]

The life of another Daoist suggests that Tongbai Palace was still a significant temple in the decades before the Taiping Rebellion and that it was connected to Mt. Weiyu by a shared Longmen network. Shen Yongliang 沈永良 (lay *ming*: Qishan 岐山; *zi*: Fengzhi 鳳芝; *hao*: Zuidian 醉顛; ?-1865), one of the major Daoists presented in the *Minguo Taizhou Fu zhi* 民國台州府志 (Gazetteer of Taizhou Prefecture of the Republican Era) of 1936, also has a biography devoted to him

121 *Weiyu Shan xuzhi* 1:6b-7a; *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 1:"lidai chengxian biao jilüe":4b.

122 Yin, *Qingdai Quanzhen dao lishi xintan*, 245-7.

in the earlier *Weiyu Shan xuzhi*.[123] The latter source records that he was an eccentric local personage born into a poor family and active during the Daoguang era (1821-1850) and that his ancestors came from Shaoxing 紹興, but later moved to Huangdao Road 黄道街, in Huangyan. At a certain point in his life, he left home and went to the Siming 四明 mountain range (a northern extension of the Tiantai mountain range), where he became a soldier. After he left the army, he went on to study the Way on Mt. Weiyu with his master Jin Jiaoshan 金教善. Later he dwelt at Tongbai Palace for some years. He left again to travel to the Southern Marchmount (Mount Heng in Hunan), where he met a Daoist who declared to be more than 200 years old and to be able to travel for hundreds of li per day. This mysterious figure transmitted alchemical teachings to Shen Yongliang. The latter then went back to Huangyan 'with a gourd and a book'. He would drink spirits without stopping until he got drunk, behaving eccentrically: for this reason, local people called him Shen Motou 沈魔頭 ('Shen Demon-head' or 'Shen the Mad'). One day he went into the waters of the Hongjia-chang 洪家場 River (Taizhou Prefecture), stood still and died.[124] The *Weiyu zongpu* provides much more material on Shen Yongliang, including more detailed biographies written by eminent practitioners and a chart of his lineage: for example, the biography written by Chen Yingning 陳攖寧 (1881-1969) provides the year of Shen's passing and seems to "domesticate" this figure, stating among other things that in reality he 'feigned madness' (*yang kuang* 佯狂).[125] Who was Shen Yongliang? Yin Zhihua considers his fame as a "living divine immortal" 活神仙 fundamental for the rapid success of the Daoist tradition of Mt. Weiyu.[126] His biographies, from the earliest version in the *Weiyu Shan xuzhi* down to the Republican-era *Taizhou Fu zhi*, describe him as a link between Tongbai Palace and Mount Weiyu. The character *yong* 永 in his name indicates that he was a Longmen Daoist of the 18th generation. The lineage presented in the *Weiyu zongpu* indicates the following transmission: Kong Hetang 孔合堂 → Jin Jiaoshan 金教善 → Shen Yongliang → Chu Yuantu 褚圓圖 **[table 7]**. We are not told whether he had other Longmen masters in addition to Jin Jiaoshan, but it is possible. The *Weiyu zongpu* adds that after having studied under his master Kong Hetang, a Daoist of the Dayou Palace, Jin Jiaoshan went to Tongbai Palace to practice self-

123 The biographies of Shen Yongliang can be found in *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 1: "lidai chengxian biao jilüe": 4b, 1: "Shen zuidian shilüe': 1a-b, "Weiyu Shan Chen-Shen er zhenren zhuan': 1b-3a; *Minguo Taizhou Fu zhi* 139:19a; *Weiyu Shan xuzhi* 1:7a-7b.

124 *Minguo Taizhou Fu zhi* 139:19a; *Weiyu Shan xuzhi* 1:7a-7b.

125 *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 1:"Shen zuidian shilüe":1a-b.

126 Yin, *Qingdai Quanzhen dao lishi xintan*, 348.

cultivation.[127] It would be impossible to present a full-fledged picture of what was happening at Tongbai Palace at that time: all that we know for sure is that there were different Daoists dwelling at the Palace with ties to multiple Daoist temples in Zhejiang and Jiangsu.

My focus on one of Shen Yongliang's disciples will provide the reader with some additional pieces of information on the history of Tongbai Palace in the years before the Taiping Rebellion. Chu Yuantu 褚圓圖 (*zi*: Menglian 夢煉; ?-1874), is the last and latest 'transcendent' explicitly associated with Tiantai to receive an extensive biography in the first scroll of the *Weiyu zongpu*.[128] His biography is obviously not included in the *Weiyu Shan xuzhi*, but the *Weiyu zongpu* has plenty of information about him. The *Ji Chu Yuantu daoshi shi* 記褚圓圖道士事 (Record of the Deeds of the Daoist Chu Yuantu), by Chu Chuangao 褚傳誥 of Tiantai, records that he was originally from Taifang 太坊, in Tiantai County.[129] The local people were surprised to see him wandering with straw shoes and a straw hat regardless of the season and thought that he was a divine transcendent, so they also called him Transcendent Chu 褚仙. He left his family and went to the Xianyan Grotto 仙岩洞 (Sanmen County 三門縣, Taizhou), where he took Shen Yongliang as his master to study the Way for 20 years.[130] One wonders whether Chu heard of Shen Yongliang when the latter was dwelling at Tongbai Palace: surely, there were similarities between his eccentric behaviour and Shen Yongliang's. When Chu Yuantu drank alcohol, he would get drunk, and when this happened, he would insult random passers-by, even if they gave him money. During winter he did not feel cold and in hot weather he would not sweat. Chu Yuantu finally went to the Qiongtai Peaks, near Mt. Tongbai, where he stayed for over a month. The biography also contains a supernatural element. Once, an acquaintance of his met him in Xinchang 新昌 County (Shaoxing) and Chu Yuantu asked the man to return a pair of red shoes given to him by the abbot of Mt. Yuhuang 玉皇山, Jiang Yonglin 蔣永林.[131]

127 *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu*, 2:41a.

128 *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 1:"lidai chengxian zhuan":1a-b. There are other biographies of Chen Chungu in 1:"lidai chengxian biaoji lüe":5a, 2:"shixi tu":38a.

129 *Weiyu Dongtian Qiuzu Longmen zongpu* 1:"lidai chengxian zhuan":1a-b. Yin Zhihua, Ren Linhao and Ma Shuming all state that Taifang is in Tiantai. Chu Chuangao also hailed from that county and the two may have been kin. Chu Chuangao is also known for his preface to the *Tiantai Xian zhigao* 天台縣志稿, dated to the year *yimao* (1915). *Minguo Tiantai Xian zhigao* "Tiantai Xian zhigao xu":1a-3a. Cf. Yin, *Qingdai Quanzhen dao lishi xintan*, 348.

130 This is what is recorded in the *Weiyu zongpu* (*sui taoru Xianyan Dong, bai Weiyu Shan Shen Motou wei shi* 遂逃入仙岩洞, 拜委羽山沈魔頭為師), which is also Yin Zhihua's source, but the latter states that this happened on Mt. Weiyu. Cf. Yin, *Qingdai Quanzhen dao lishi xintan*, 348.

131 The *Minguo zhigao* records a different name: Zhang Yonglin 張永林, which I consider an error. *Minguo Tiantai Xian zhigao* 5:"fangwai zhuan, xian":12a.

When the latter saw the shoes, he explained that Chu Yuantu had in fact passed away more than one month before and that he had been buried wearing that very pair. Chu Yuantu is the only Daoist of the Qing dynasty to receive a separate entry in the *Minguo Tiantai Xian zhigao* 民國天台縣志稿 (Draft of the Gazetteer of Tiantai County of the Republican Period; *Minguo zhigao*).[132] Even though the entry is only titled "Daoist Chu" 褚道士, we know that it refers to Chu Yuantu because it closely resembles the biography in the *Weiyu zongpu*. The *Minguo zhigao* was also edited by Chu Chuangao, the author of Chu Yuantu's biography in the *Weiyu zongpu*, which along with the shared surname explains the presence of the Daoist in the gazetteer.

These biographies do not state the year in which Shen Yongliang moved to Tongbai Palace, nor when Chu Yuantu encountered him at the Xianyan Grotto or why Shen Yongliang went to Sanmen County – all very important pieces of information for our study of the history of the temple. His decision to move out of Tongbai Palace, if not due to personal motivations, may have had to do either with the same reasons that drove Chen Yangming away from the Palace, which would suggest the temple's decline, or with regional events, such as the Taiping Rebellion. Be that as it may, Chu Yuantu's biography describes the Daoist life of a person from Tiantai who was already practising Daoism in his hometown in a way reminiscent of the behavioural pattern of 'feigned madness' proper of the Daoists linked to Mt. Weiyu.

Chu Yuantu's biography mentions another important Daoist, Jiang Yonglin, whose life connects Tongbai Palace to the development of Daoism in Hangzhou at the end of the Qing dynasty. The biography of Jiang Yonglin 蔣永林 (Daoist *hao*: Xuanjing zi 玄晶子; *hao*: Siwei 四為; other *hao*: Changqingzi 長青子; 1826-after 1896) from Dongyang County 東陽縣 (Zhejiang) is further proof that Tongbai Palace was still active in the first half of the 19th century.[133] Just like other Daoists, he did not wish to get married, so he fled to Mt. Putuo 普陀山. Later, he was initiated into Daoism at Tongbai Palace, where he became the disciple of Dong Jiaoli 董教禮 (17th Longmen generation). According to Zhuo Binsen's 卓炳森 *Yuhuang Shan Miao zhi* 玉皇山廟志 (Gazetteer of the Temples of Mt. Yuhuang; published in 1881), in 1864 Jiang Yonglin left Tiantai and went to Mt. Yuhuang 玉皇山, where he built a retreat to worship the Jade Emperor 玉皇. Later, he became acquainted with the local elite, who helped him restore Fuxing Abbey 福星觀. Once they finished building it, Daoists and Buddhists alike went to the Abbey to find peace, and so it was "fashioned into a public monastery" 叢林之風. Master Jiang was invited to the Dongxiao

132 *Minguo Tiantai Xian zhigao* 5:"fangwai zhuan, xian":11a-12a.

133 *Yuhuang Shan Miao zhi* 25:1257-8; Yin, *Qingdai Quanzhen dao lishi xintan*, 344-5, fn. 390.

Palace 洞霄宮 of Yuhang, to Yousheng Abbey 優聖觀 in Hangzhou, to Yuande Abbey 淵德觀 in Zhenhai 鎮海, to Xuanmiao Abbey 玄妙觀 in Jiaxing and to the Dongyue Temple 東嶽廟 in Sixiang 四鄉.[134] In 1875 he received the abbotship of the Dongxiao Palace 洞霄宮 in Yuhang. Jiang Yonglin was very active and performed ordinations on Mt. Yuhuang in 1882, 1883 (in which his disciple Zhu Yuanheng 朱圓亨 also participated), 1885 and 1896: to appreciate the magnitude of these initiatives, we should consider the fact that during the last ceremony alone he ordained 336 Daoists.[135] Paul Katz highlighted the important contribution that the institution of Mt. Yuhuang provided to Daoist ordinations in the late 19th century. I could add that many of the most prominent local Daoists of Zhejiang and southern Jiangsu were associated with Tongbai Palace in one way or another, which demonstrates that this temple continued to provide a fundamental contribution to the formation of new lineages operating in the area.[136] The *Yuhuang Shan Miao zhi* suggests that Jiang Yonglin's disciples were mainly active in Zhejiang, but none of them appears to have been associated with Tongbai Palace.[137] While the JGXD describes a southward expansion of the Longmen lineages originating from the Jingu Grotto, the *Weiyu zongpu* narrates a later northward extension of the lineage of Mt. Weiyu, passing through Tongbai Palace.

My analysis of the available sources has not yet uncovered references to any restoration of Tongbai Palace during the late 18th or early 19th century. This does not necessarily mean that the temple was never repaired during the 19th century, but it still represents a problem for the present study. Because a wooden structure in imperial China needed to be repaired at least once every 25-50 years and the Yongzheng Emperor restored the Palace in 1735, we would expect it to have been repaired at least once before 1785 and again before 1835. Instead, the latest unequivocal reference to a restoration of Tongbai Palace before the second half of the 19th century is that mentioned in Fang Yiding's biography. No epigraphy survives today at the temple to attest this and the sources that I have consulted are silent regarding any further intervention in the first half of the 19th century: not even the *Minguo zhigao*, of the beginning of the 20th century, provides updated information on the status of the temple in the section dedicated to the Daoist and Buddhist institutions in the county.[138]

134 *Yuhuang Shan Miao zhi* 25:1257-8.

135 Pan, "Yandansan to Dōkyō", 9; Yin, *Qingdai Quanzhen dao lishi xintan*, 345-6.

136 Katz, "The Development of Jiangnan Daoist Networks", 203.

137 *Yuhuang Shan Miao zhi*, 25:1258-62.

138 *Minguo Tiantai Xian zhigao* 3:"siguan":13b-14b.

By relying on the information provided by the tradition of Mt. Weiyu, we can identify a line of transmission that developed at Tongbai Palace, that of Jin Jiaoshan → Shen Yongliang → Chu Yuantu. Even though Shen Yongliang is described as a prominent Daoist of Dayou Palace in the *Weiyu zongpu* and even in the earlier *Weiyu Shan xuzhi*, his area of activity would appear to have extended far beyond Huangyan County. This is confirmed by the fact that Shen Yongliang received his teachings from Jin Jiaoshan at Tongbai Palace and that Chu Yuantu, born in Tiantai, was trained by Shen Yongliang and later moved to Mt. Yuhuang. This mountain became a prominent Daoist institution through the efforts of Jiang Yonglin: it attracted at least another Daoist associated with the Tongbai Palace community, Chu Yuanyun, and the temple became a major Daoist ordination platform in Hangzhou during the last decades of the Qing dynasty, reportedly appealing to Daoists and Buddhists alike.

5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the restoration of the temple by the Yongzheng Emperor's order and I analysed the main links between the Longmen lineages of Jiangnan and Tongbai Palace, the contribution of the temple to the development of these Daoist communities in southeast China and the last stages in the life of the temple before the Taiping Rebellion. One aspect that is worth highlighting is the very close relationship between the Daoists of Tongbai Palace and those of Suzhou. As we have seen, all three of Gao Dongli's disciples were active there or were somehow related to that area. At the same time, the Longmen community of Tongbai Palace was also involved in the expansion of Longmen in the southern part of Zhejiang Province. The links between the Daoists of the Tongbai and the northern area of Jiangnan, including Suzhou, Huzhou and Hangzhou, appear to have weakened during the 19th century, whereas those with the southern region remained strong. Whether this can be explained by the lack of sources about the former or as a historical development caused by Fang Yiding's and other Daoists' activities in the south, is a question still open to further research. What is clear is that the older symbolic strata tied with the temple were gradually supplanted by the Longmen tradition. In sources from the late 18th and early 19th century we still find references to Bo Yi and Shu Qi in relation to Tongbai Palace, but these are rare and do not appear to be of primary importance for Min Yide or Shen Yibing. At the same time, Sima Chengzhen is seldom mentioned, nor is Wangzi Qiao. Instead, what significance Tongbai Palace retained appears to have been due to the presence of the Longmen Daoists and to imperial patronage more than to ancient lineages or specific cultural practices.

6 Conclusion

When I started approaching the study of this topic, I decided to develop my theoretical framework – built on paradigms drawn from the fields of psychology of religion and sociology of religion – by enclosing within it the two dimensions that I could analyse through the sources: the history of the social groups that inhabited Tongbai Palace and the history of the symbolism, personages, cults and beliefs linked to it. The former aspect was instrumental in providing historical evidence about the temple's occupants, their possible aims and the way in which Tongbai Palace became part of the broader social, political and economic history of the empire. The latter aspect is what I have summarised through the expression 'strata of meaning'. These include the religious and cultural products of those communities that dealt with Tongbai Palace in one way or another. I hope to have adequately shown that these products did not exist in a vacuum, but were influenced by previous knowledge and existing artefacts (such as stelae, buildings, books, etc.) and in turn resulted in the creation of new lore, new artefacts and buildings, in a word: in text. They acted like sedimentary rock layers, accumulating as strata in Tongbai Palace and in the surrounding territory, as new layers gradually covered more ancient ones. The latter, however, sometimes resurfaced and regained prominence. The historical forces that brought older strata back to life – or that created new ones – took various shapes. One way in which they did so was through the reinterpreting

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and recovering of past traditions that had become obsolete, as specific historical circumstances allowed such traditions to regain significance. One example is provided by the disciples of Sima Chengzhen's lineage, who tried to restore the temple by recovering its glorious past under their patriarch.

Other times, we have found one layer being superimposed upon another, as in the case of Yongzheng's patronage of the temple. As we have seen, the emperor did not want to restore Tongbai Palace as such, but specifically sought to highlight Zhang Boduan's alleged relationship with the temple. Similarly, under the Longmen control of the temple, its most ancient past was seldom employed as a means to build up the prestige of the temple itself or of its community. One example that might correspond to both the resurfacing model and the superimposition one is represented by Zhang Lianyuan's struggle to return Tongbai Palace land to the Qingsheng Shrine. Although it is undeniable that the official supported the shrine's claims by referring to specific elements in the temple's past (the statues of Bo Yi and Shu Qi and, to a lesser extent, Sima Chengzhen), he also reinterpreted the temple as a place of worship devoted to the two Confucian sages and Daoist deities Bo Yi and Shu Qi, choosing to give prominence to what had hitherto been regarded as secondary features of Tongbai Palace.

This book has adopted a largely chronological approach to the study of Tongbai Palace. I started from the oldest pieces of evidence about Tiantai, stored in philosophical-religious, geographical, historiographical and fictional texts, highlighting the fundamental knowledge that shaped how people saw Tongbai Palace in later times. This knowledge was taken for granted, in a way: it was a kind of mark left on the temple and the surrounding area, available for all attentive viewers to see. As I have argued in the first chapter, such knowledge about the Tiantai region served to gradually improve its religious importance and to build that religious substratum that led to the later increase in Mt. Tongbai's importance. The characteristics of the Tiantai Mountains and their local religious significance tied in with their gradual rise in importance in the regional religious landscape and with the progressive accumulation of new religious institutions and features, leading to the mountains' inclusion in Daoist sacred geography, systematised by Sima Chengzhen and Du Guangting and to the concurrent development of mythical lore and fictional narrative about the place. It is easy to see, then, why Tiantai was such an important area for the Shangqing revelations and for the following religious traditions interested in that area, in a continuous accumulation and reworking of adjacent religious layers from the 4th century at least to the 10th.

After studying the earliest evidence related to Tiantai, I decided to focus on the Tang dynasty. This was justified by the importance that this period had in the history of Tongbai Palace. Although some

sources mention a previous temple that existed before the construction of 'Tongbai Abbey', very little is known about it and in fact most of the information we have is related to the activities carried out there by Ge Xuan, himself a semi-mythical figure. Therefore, for all intents and purposes it was the Tongbai Abbey built in 711 that can be taken to mark the historical beginning of this institution. All the various successive incarnations of the temple (Tongbai Abbey, Chongdao Abbey, Tongbai Palace) maintained a sort of identification with the temple built by Emperor Ruizong: this kind of awareness is what allows us today to speak of Tongbai Palace as a thousand-year-old temple, although it went through successive periods of decline, restoration and even experienced displacement. The first construction of the temple during the Tang dynasty was an act of imperial sponsorship, and Sima Chengzhen himself, for whom the temple was built, was the most renowned court Daoist of his time. My study has highlighted how the strata of meaning built up during the previous eras – and more specifically those related to the Shangqing revelations – remained highly influential during Sima Chengzhen's stay at Tongbai Palace. They determined the position of the temple in Daoist geography and history more broadly and provided the temple and the surrounding area with potency and identity. Sima Chengzhen himself recognised these links in his *Shangqing shi dichen tongbai Zhenren zhen tuzan*, which recounted Wangzi Qiao's apotheosis on Mt. Tongbai.

It appears that after Sima Chengzhen left Tongbai Palace to move closer to the capital, the temple may have been abandoned. A few decades later, though, a lineage that recognised Sima Chengzhen as its patriarch regained possession of Tongbai Palace. This Daoist lineage was very adamant in asserting its link with its patriarch also by establishing itself at Tongbai Palace, which represented a sort of ancestral hall. This lineage remained active in the temple until the end of the Tang dynasty, when the upheaval of the political system resulted in the collapse of Daoist traditions historically linked to the court. The obstinate retention of a foothold in the temple shows to what extent the recent past was significant to this community. Tongbai Palace's relationship with Sima Chengzhen's Shangqing tradition endured until the time of Du Guangting, himself a resident of the temple. As demonstrated in the second chapter, only momentous events such as the fall of the Tang dynasty could sever such bonds.

The dislocation of the Shangqing lineage from the seat of power did not mean that Tongbai Palace became completely cut off from court Daoism. During the Song dynasty the temple continued to be an important place of worship linked to the court, but it began to separate itself from earlier traditions. One significant aspect is the use of the texts stored in Tongbai Palace for the compilation of a Daoist canon in the 11th century. This demonstrates how the continuous accumulation of strata of meaning in the temple resulted in the production of artefacts,

in this case a rich library, that further augmented the institution's prestige. In 1008 the temple's name was changed to Chongdao Abbey. It is in this period that interventions by private sponsors in the history of Tongbai Palace start to be recorded by the sources. This is also the period in which the statues of Bo Yi and Shu Qi were reportedly brought to the temple: as we have seen, their importance for the history of Tongbai Palace grew during the early Qing dynasty.

After the end of the Song dynasty, information on the temple becomes less clear. We know that the temple somehow continued to operate, possibly with ups and downs. It was certainly restored at the beginning of the Ming dynasty after having been destroyed during the dynastic change, which suggests that it was active at the end of the previous dynasty. By the end of the Ming dynasty, the separation between the court and Tongbai Palace was complete and the temple lay in ruins. In this period, the only notable stratum of meaning connected to the temple, according to various testimonies by literati and officials, was the one related to the presence of Bo Yi and Shu Qi and to their double role as Confucian saints and Daoist deities ruling the mountain. This story conveniently fell at the crossroads between Daoism and Confucianism, an ambiguity skilfully exploited by literati who often took the ruins of Tongbai Palace as a Confucian rather than Daoist landmark. I have interpreted the sages' two identities as being not mutually exclusive, but mutually reinforcing, as the example of the *Qingsheng Ci zhi* demonstrates.

With the Qing dynasty, a new period in the history of Tongbai Palace began. Between the end of the Ming dynasty and the Kangxi era the land of the temple was occupied by the local elite, and its institutions faced severe decline. Zhang Lianyuan's gazetteer detailing his efforts in support of the legal case for the restitution of the temple land to the Qingsheng Shrine, part of Tongbai Palace, is an extraordinary document. The focus of this text is not Tongbai Palace as a whole, but a small part of it, the Qingsheng Shrine. The latter's attractiveness – we learn from the gazetteer – chiefly lies in the fact that it is dedicated to the two figures of Bo Yi and Shu Qi. According to some sources, the shrine was built during the Southern Song dynasty by the county magistrate of Tiantai. Therefore, the presence of Bo Yi and Shu Qi at Tongbai Palace was a later development compared to its initial Shangqing character. Regarding the latter, Zhang Lianyuan also expressed the desire to enshrine Sima Chengzhen together with Bo Yi and Shu Qi: this suggests that the origins of the temple still affected its development in the 17th century. In a way, Zhang Lianyuan's depiction of Tongbai Palace does not differ much from that of earlier periods: during the Song dynasty the temple continued to be a famous site associated with Ge Xuan and Sima Chengzhen. It should be noted, though, that Sima Chengzhen was not the main subject of interest for Zhang Lianyuan, but only an addition to the main deities of the shrine. This tells us that, despite the

continuing importance of the Daoist patriarch, the significance of his lineage at the Palace had already declined.

The first half of the 18th century saw a critical event in the history of Tongbai Palace, namely its imperially sponsored restoration during the Yongzheng era. The secret exchanges between the emperor and his official Li Wei inform us that the former was not at all interested in Sima Chengzhen, in Wangzi Qiao, or in the past of the temple linked to the Shangqing lineage of the Tang dynasty. Instead, he focused his attention on two other Daoists: Ge Xuan and Zhang Boduan. As we have seen, the former had already been associated with the general area of Tongbai Palace many centuries before and the presence of his altar for self-cultivation was a well-known fact among the local population, so much so that we find it mentioned in local gazetteers. The most striking aspect of the Yongzheng Emperor's patronage of Tongbai Palace is precisely his idea that Zhang Boduan was in some way related to the temple. No historical evidence confirms this belief, yet it is precisely what justified the imperially sponsored restoration of the temple. As we know, Zhang Boduan was a practitioner of inner alchemy (*neidan*), a method of self-cultivation developed under the late Tand and Song dynasties, and is most famous as the author of the *Wuzhen pian*, a treatise on self-cultivation. Thus, thanks to his enormous economic resources, as well as political and religious authority, the emperor was able to superimpose a totally new stratum of meaning upon Tongbai Palace, turning it into the setting for Zhang Boduan's practice of self-cultivation. From this time on, the emphasis on Sima Chengzhen's and the Shangqing Daoists' dwelling at the temple was superseded by a new narrative centred on Song-dynasty practitioners and Buddho-Daoist dialogue exemplified by the figure of Zhang Boduan and his 'External Collection'. I could even argue that, with his patronage, the Yongzheng Emperor reflected the de facto coexistence of Buddhist and Daoist institutions in the Tiantai Mountains and that he was able to express it by uniting the two religions in the person of Zhang Boduan.

Finally, this last act of imperial patronage benefited the expanding Longmen lineages of southeast China, in ways that are not yet entirely clear. Right after the imperially sponsored restoration of Tongbai Palace, a new lineage established itself at the temple, a lineage formed by Longmen Daoists from the Jingu Grotto of Hangzhou. This Longmen community apparently thrived at the temple for at least fifty to seventy years, during which time the abbot Gao Dongli and his three main disciples, Shen Yibing, Min Yide and Fang Yiding, spread the Longmen doctrine across an area that extended as far north as Lake Tai and as far south as Linhai and Huangyan, and which also included the important centres of Huzhou, Hangzhou and Yuhang. In this period, then, Tongbai Palace became a node in the expanding network of Longmen communities of southeast China. It preserved its significance at least up until the first part of the 19th century,

when a number of Longmen Daoists associated with Mt. Weiyu visited Tongbai Palace and received training there. During the Qing dynasty, therefore, the religious significance of the temple took a new turn. Instead of being remembered as a site connected to the Shangqing lineage, Sima Chengzhen, Du Guangting and Wangzi Qiao, it most commonly came to be described as a Longmen temple associated with relatively recent figures and with Zhang Boduan. In this we can see a clear superimposition of a new depiction derived from the Qing-dynasty events upon whatever other representation of the temple may have existed before. In general, the documents from this period often seem to have forgotten or at least to disregard some of the more ancient strata of meaning while adding new ones instead.

In order to understand what traces this process of superimposition may have left on the temple today, we must refer to the new Tongbai Palace, built on the shore of an artificial water basin on Mt. Tongbai at the beginning of the 21st century. This is a large complex that in addition to the main halls includes a parking lot, a series of pavilions and platforms, a canteen, a dormitory, a hall dedicated to Taiyi Jiuku Tianzun 太乙救苦天尊, an altar for the worship of the Dipper (*chaodou tan* 朝斗壇), a hall for Caishen 財神殿, various meditation halls and the buildings of the Daoist College (*daoxue yuan* 道學院) **[fig. 16]**. Additionally, we also find a Wenchang Hall 文昌殿 and a Yuelao Shrine 月老祠.

The Lingguan Hall 靈官殿 marks the entrance to the temple, and within it is enshrined the most renowned guardian deity of all Daoist temples, Wang Lingguan 王靈官 (Numinous Officer Wang).[1] This hall is flanked by the bell and drum towers. Within the walled area, we find the three core halls of the complex. The first and main hall is called Ziyang Hall 紫陽殿 and is dedicated to Zhang Boduan. The second and third halls are dedicated to the Jade Emperor (Yuhuang Dijun 玉皇帝君) and to the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing 三清), the highest deities in the contemporary Daoist pantheon **[fig. 17]**. This layout stresses the importance of Zhang Boduan over any other Daoist who was ever linked to Tongbai Palace: in this way, the Daoists who designed the temple have given a clear indication of what defines their tradition. The prominence of Zhang Boduan for the contemporary Tongbai Palace is remarked by the epithet of the temple, 'ancestral hall of the Southern Lineage' (*Nanzong zuting* 南宗祖庭), which is a direct reference to Zhang Boduan's Southern School of *neidan*, which is traditionally opposed to the Quanzhen (Northern) one.

This does not mean that the Daoists at Tongbai Palace are not aware of the complex history of the temple. Despite the very telling plan of the main halls, we can still find some minor references to other traditions in the buildings: for example, at the back of the Lingguan

1 Katz, "Wang Lingguang"; Meulenbeld, *Demonic Warfare*, 162-5.

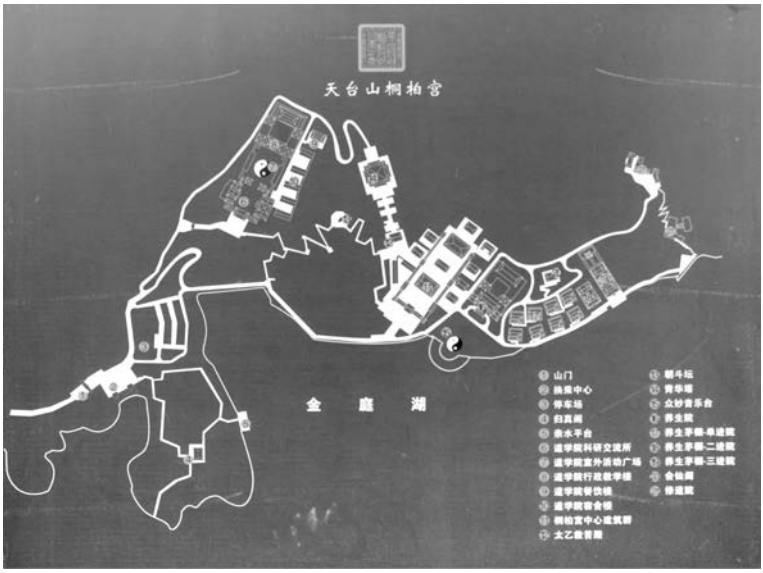

Figure 16 Map of the new Tongbai Palace. Photo by the Author, 2014

Hall a statue of Wangzi Qiao has been enshrined, reminding us of the more ancient religious traditions of the area. The discourse on the temple goes in both directions, marking its special position for the Southern School, while also retaining traces of its complex history. The proceedings of a conference held at the temple in 2012, with the telling title of "Shoujie Tiantai shan Zhongguo Daojiao Nanzong wenhua zhou" 首屆天台山中國道教南宗文化周 (The First Cultural Week [Dedicated to] the Southern School of Chinese Daoism on the Tiantai mountains) contains much information about the self-appraisal of the Daoist community dwelling at the temple. The summary of the temple's history states that in 239 Ge Xuan built a retreat for self-cultivation there. Then, it lists the most important Daoists who were reportedly active in Tongbai Palace: Tao Hongjing, Sima Chengzhen, Xu Lingfu, Ye Cangzhi, Du Guangting, Zhang Boduan and Fan Qingyun.[2] This list clearly demonstrates that all the strata of meaning accumulated during the thousand-year history of the temple are still known and recognised as a fundamental part of the identity of Tongbai Palace. Yet, the immediate image that the Daoists at Tongbai Palace wish to promote does not depend on its past as the seat of the Shangqing lineage, or as a place of worship associated with Wangzi Qiao; rather,

2 Shoujie Tiantai shan Zhongguo Daojiao Nanzong wenhua zhou choubei weiyuanhui, *Shoujie Tiantai Shan Zhongguo Daojiao Nanzong zuting wenhua zhou*, 20.

Figure 17 Ziyang Hall in the new Tongbai Palace.
Photo by the Author, 2013

it fully embraces the later depiction of Tongbai Palace as a seat of southern inner alchemical teachings and as a Quanzhen institution.

Today, Tongbai Palace is no longer an imperially sponsored institution, so it is free to create its own identity. The fact that the Daoists have decided to lend prominence to relatively recent lore and to the latest traditions established in the area indicates that the events which took place during the Qing dynasty and in particular from the Yongzheng reign onwards left a profound mark on the temple, that has continued to shape the way in which it is portrayed today.

This study has some limitations. First, I should note that it mainly deals with the Daoist history of the Tiantai area, leaving unexplored some potentially fruitful research paths. It is true that my focus of research has been Tongbai Palace, but future studies might want to reconstruct a more complete religious history of Tiantai by including the study of the Buddhist and even the Confucian institutions of that place. More work should also be done on the period that goes from the Song dynasty to the early Ming: there might exist primary sources that could cast light on a relatively unknown period in the history of the temple. I regret the most not having been able to collect more data on the clans of Tiantai, especially on the Zhangs. I am reasonably confident that family genealogies (*jiapu* 家譜) and other documents exist and that they would help us clarify even more the events of the early Qing period and perhaps even provide information on many other aspects of the relation between the local elite and Tongbai Palace. My wish is that, despite these limitations, this book has proven a useful addition to the latest series of studies on late imperial Daoism.

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JGXD: *Jingai xindeng* 金蓋心燈.

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