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The Emergence of the Taoist Papacy in the T'ang Dynasty

For some time now, religious potentates outside Europe have been described more or less appropriately as popes, perhaps the best known and most justified claimant to such a title being Pope Shenouda of the Coptic Church of Egypt.¹ In East Asia, too, the use of the word pope has a certain history: the earliest English travelers to Japan in the seventeenth century applied it to the Japanese emperor in order to distinguish the nature of his authority from the more overtly temporal power of the shogunate.² It must of course be admitted that as a title indicative of spiritual authority "pope" is by no means the best choice of terminology to describe the Heavenly Masters 天師 lately resident on Dragon and Tiger Mountain 龍虎山 in Kiangsi but now domiciled in Taiwan. As Henri Maspero pointed out quite trenchantly some time ago, the Heavenly masters do not command spiritual authority so much as magical power.³ The current occupant of the office would seem to be doing his best to conform to modern East Asian ideas of religious leadership in order to offset a decline in popular belief in his magic, but even so Maspero's characterization remains essentially correct.⁴

What the office of the Heavenly Master does share with the Papal See (and indeed with the Japanese emperorship) is none the less important, and might well justify some terminological signposting. The Heavenly Masters claim to represent an unbroken succession traceable to the long-lost ancient world. It is difficult to think of any other institutions still in existence that make this claim. Specifically, the Heavenly Masters assert that they are de-

¹ A. S. Atiya, *A History of Eastern Christianity* (London: Methuen, 1968), pp. 122-23.

² Harold Bolitho, "Japanese Kingship," in Ian Mabbett, ed., *Pattern of Kingship and Authority in Traditional Asia* (Beckenham, Kent, and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 24-43, n. 13, quoting a 1615 reference to "The Pope of Japan."

³ Henri Maspero, trans. Frank Kierman, Jr., *Taoism and Chinese Religion* (Amherst: U. of Massachusetts P., 1981), pp. 397-400, written in 1941. More recent is Holmes Welch, "The Chang T'ien-shih and Taoism in China," *Journal of Oriental Studies*, 1 (1957-8), pp. 188-212.

⁴ The Master's current style may be divined from the highly conventional group photographs of religious gatherings featuring the sixty-fourth generation holder of the office, Chang Yüan-hsien 張源先, in Yang Feng-shih 楊逢時, ed., *Chung-kuo cheng-i'ung Tao-chiao ta-t'ü-tien* 中國正統道教大辭典 (Taipei: I-ch'ün t'u-shu yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1985), a publication sponsored by Chang himself.

scendants of Chang Ling 張陵 (or Chang Tao-ling 張道陵), who was vouchsafed a revelation in 142 AD whereby Lao-tzu (or rather the high divinity of whom Lao-tzu was but an avatar) granted him both the title of Heavenly Master and the authority to deal with demons.⁵ This assertion of descent is, of course, not beyond criticism, and Maspero in particular expressed doubts over the authenticity of the family records of the Heavenly Masters, which for the whole span of history from the Han to the T'ang regularly depict but two generations per century.⁶ A certain degree of falsification of the Chang family genealogy would not of itself necessarily invalidate their claims. Howard Nelson has established that even today this particular type of source, while not resorting to wholesale fabrication, regularly reveals a highly interpretive and selective attitude towards the genealogical facts when checked against other evidence.⁷ In China an unbroken line of descent like that claimed by the Changs would in any case not be unparalleled. As one observer noted long ago, "The family of Confucius is, in my opinion, the most illustrious in the world. After the painful ascent of eight or ten centuries, our barons and princes of Europe are lost in the darkness of the middle ages; but in the vast equality of the empire of China, the posterity of Confucius have maintained, above two thousand two hundred years, their peaceful and perpetual succession."⁸

In recent years the Chang family succession, particularly as depicted in T'ang sources, has attracted the attention of scholars.⁹ In reviewing and extending their discussions, the following remarks do not always endorse the view taken of the history of the Changs in Anna Seidel's earlier work. It is quite clear, however, that her brilliant interpretations of the relationship between Taoism and political power provide the only possible key to understanding how the Chang family of today once rose to national

prominence in late-T'ang times. While in matters of detail it is conceivable that advances may sometimes be made upon her research, it seems certain that for many years to come anyone working in this area will remain indebted to her larger insights, which constitute a rich and rewarding legacy perhaps unparalleled since the death of Maspero himself.

The question of a Taoist succession, however, cannot be dealt with solely on the basis of T'ang court-centered sources since even our earliest evidence for the Heavenly Masters and their religion already make quite clear that it was a Chang-family affair. Despite the many legends that grew around the name of Chang Tao-ling, there seems no doubt that he, his son Chang Heng 衡, and his grandson Chang Lu 魯 were all historical personalities.¹⁰ Admittedly Chang Heng is a somewhat obscure figure, so much so that some confusion as to his identity may be found even in early historical materials.¹¹ This confusion, together with the fact that in the better-established biography of Chang Lu, Heng's wife (Lu's mother) plays a prominent part, suggests that perhaps Chang Heng died prematurely (rather disappointingly for a Taoist) and that for a time Chang Lu, though titular head of the religious movement founded by his grandfather, was too young to exercise personal control.¹² In establishing his position it would have been only natural for him to emphasize the hereditary principle. In any case the profession of magician, just as much as that of artificer or any other occupation demanding the acquisition of technical knowledge, tended to be hereditary, and this in itself would explain the emphasis on hereditary succession within the Taoist priesthood already noted in early documents by Maspero, and subsequently by other scholars.¹³

Whether Chang Lu's position of supreme authority remained hereditary is, however, a separate question. In the medium term, Chang Lu himself was extremely successful, setting up a small theocratic state in western

⁵ This is the date currently accepted by the masters themselves, to judge by p. 7 of the historical table appended to *ibid.*

⁶ Maspero, *Taoism*, p. 398.

⁷ Howard G. H. Nelson, "Ancestor Worship and Burial Practices," in Arthur P. Wolf, ed., *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford U. P., 1974), pp. 251-77.

⁸ Edward Gibbon, *Memoir of My Life and Writings*, in John, Lord Sheffield, ed., *Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon* (London, 1814), vol. 1, p. 4. Quoted on p. 38 of C. S. Ch'ien, "China in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century," *Quarterly Bulletin of Chinese Bibliography* (English edn.) NS 2 (1941), pp. 7-48, 113-52.

⁹ The most extended account devoted to the T'ang is probably that in Ch'ing Hsi-t'ai 卿希泰, ed., *Chung-kuo tao-chiao shih* 中國道教史 (Ch'eng-tu: Ssu-ch'uan jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 1992) 2, pp. 145-51, though this is marred somewhat by an uncritical reliance on *Ch'uan Tang wen* 全唐文.

¹⁰ For one recent summary of what we know of these men, see the entries under their names provided by Isabelle Robinet, in Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1987).

¹¹ He is identified with one Chang Hsiu 張修 in P'ei Sung-chih's 裴松之 commentary to *San-kuo chih* 三國志, though according to T'ang Ch'ang-ju 唐長孺, "Wei-Chin ch'i-chien pei-fang T'ien-shih tao ti ch'uan-po" 魏晉期間北方天師道的傳播, in his *Wei-Chin Nan-pei-ch'ao shih-lun shih-i* 魏晉南北朝史論拾遺 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-ch'ü, 1983), pp. 218-32, esp. p. 222, n. 1, there may have been more than one Chang Hsiu.

¹² See Chang's biog. in Lu Pi 盧弼, ed., *San-kuo chih chi-chieh* 三國志集解 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1982) 8, pp. 266-70, which assembles most of the relevant materials; esp. p. 267.

¹³ Maspero, *Taoism*, p. 288; Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾, *Shoki no Dōkyō* 初期の道教 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1991), p. 373.

China that maintained for well over two decades an independent regime throughout a period of intense civil war. But in 215 he was obliged to surrender all his temporal powers to the famous warlord Ts'ao Ts'ao 曹操; it would be natural to suppose that under the circumstances he and his descendants (he himself seems to have died soon after the surrender) relinquished at the same time all title to spiritual leadership as well, in return for membership in the nobility of the new regime.¹⁴ A claim to the contrary might be made on the basis of a Taoist document, "Ta-tao chia-ling chieh" 大道家令戒, ostensibly representing a settlement arrived at during the third century AD between the new Wei 魏 dynasty and the Chang family whereby the latter became the spiritual guarantors of temporal authority.¹⁵ Anna Seidel was among those who tended to accept its authenticity.¹⁶ Even Yang Lien-sheng 楊聯陞, who at an early stage voiced the doubt that apparent references to the Wei dynasty might actually signal composition under the Toba Wei in the fifth century, seems to have wavered somewhat in his suspicion, especially in view of a suggestion from Hu Shih 胡適 that one rather obscure remark on the question of succession actually accorded rather well with what is known of the fate of Chang Lu's sons.¹⁷ The strongest current proponents of the authenticity of the Taoist document "Ta-tao chia-ling chieh" are those who assign an early date to the *Hsiang erh* commentary on the Lao-tzu, which is mentioned in it; those who see the commentary as the product of a later environment naturally cannot accept the document as authentic.¹⁸

Certainly whoever composed this work was well informed about the history of the early-third century but if it does date to close to that period

¹⁴ T'ang, "Pei-fang T'ien-shih tao," pp. 229-30, points to evidence suggesting that he died in 216.

¹⁵ This document is one of five composing a work known as *Cheng-i fa-wen t'ien-shih chia-chieh k'o-ching* 正一法文天師教誡科經, printed in *Cheng-i'ung tao-tsang* 正通道藏 (hereafter, *TT*), textno. 788 in the enumeration according to Wang Tu-chien 翁獨健, comp., *Tao-tsang tzu-mu yin-te* 道藏子目引得, Harvard-Yenching Sinological Index Series 25 (Peking, 1935; hereafter *HY*).

¹⁶ "The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism," *History of Religions* 9:2-3 (1969-1970), pp. 216-47; esp. 227, n. 34.

¹⁷ This may be seen from a correspondence now published by Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤, *Lao-tzu Hsiang-erh chu chia-cheng* 老子想爾注校證 (Shanghai: Shang-hai ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1991), pp. 162-66.

¹⁸ The most recent proponents of an early date are Jao (ibid.) and Ōfuchi, *Shoki no Dōkyō*, pp. 262-79; Kobayashi Masayoshi 小林正美, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū* 六朝道教研究 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1990), pp. 328-56, considers that the vocabulary of the document links it to the fifth-century southern Taoist circles that form the particular focus of his own research.

there is no possible explanation for its referring to "Chinese" as "the people of Ch'in," a type of phrase well attested in Buddhist translations carried out in the late-fourth and early-fifth centuries when north China was under the control of successive dynasties of that name.¹⁹ While many problems concerning the text "Ta-tao chia-ling chieh" still await solution, the most reasonable date, on the basis of existing scholarship, would be the early-fifth century, when the Toba Wei regime was attempting to integrate into its population Chinese communities formerly under Later Ch'in rule.²⁰

At all events there are no signs in the centuries immediately following Chang Lu's surrender of the appearance in fact (as opposed to wishful thinking) of anything like a system of Caesaropapism. On the contrary, even the earliest modern research on this era revealed many examples of adherents of the religious tradition founded by Chang Tao-ling coming into violent conflict with the secular authorities – not necessarily, one might add, because the religion encouraged subversion (as Buddhist critics of Taoism claimed, without any evidence from the history of Chang Lu or the doctrines of his authentic followers) but more probably because local groups, deprived of central control, were easy prey to ambitious, often heterodox leadership.²¹ Indeed, the massive and dangerous Sun En 孫恩 Rebellion offers a case in point, in which T'ien-shih tao influences combined with southern popular cultic beliefs to provide an ambitious and disaffected northerner with the means to overthrow (in effect) the ruling dynasty.²² It is

¹⁹ This was first pointed out by T'ang, "Pei-fang T'ien-shih tao," pp. 224-28. In the interests of promoting an even later date, Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi kenkyū*, p. 341, attempts to discount T'ang's evidence by pointing to a passage not adduced by him where "Ch'in" points unambiguously to the regime of the First Emperor (c. 221-210 BC), but this does not dispose of the other instances brought forward by T'ang. Apparently, T'ang Yung-fung 唐用彤 also favored a Toba Wei date for this text, according to Jen Chi-yü 任繼愈, ed., *Tao-tsang t'i-yao* 道藏提要 (Peking: Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she, 1991), p. 568.

²⁰ This period in Taoist history is briefly summarized by Richard B. Mather, "K'ou Ch'ien-chih and the Taoist Theocracy at the Northern Wei Court, 425-451," in Holmes Welch and Anna Seidel, eds., *Facets of Taoism* (New Haven and London: Yale U. P., 1979), pp. 103-22, esp. p. 106.

²¹ The pioneering study of Ch'en Yin-k'o 陳寅恪 on these rebellions, originally published in 1933, "T'ien-shih tao yü pin-hai ti-yü chih kuan-hsi" 天師道與濱海地域之關係, is reprinted in his *Chin-ming-kuan ts'ung-kao ch'u-pien* 金明館叢稿初編 (Shanghai: Shang-hai ku-chi, 1980), pp. 1-40. Ch'en's criteria for determining T'ien-shih-tao input into rebellions look in retrospect somewhat impressionistic, but the case of the Sun En rebellion at least is clear cut.

²² The most recent scholarship on this rebellion is that of Miyakawa Hisayuki 宮川尚志, now gathered in his *Chūgoku shūkyōshi kenkyū* 中國宗教史研究 (Kyoto: Dōhōsha, 1983) 1, pp. 193-270.

possible that in both north and south China in the early-fifth century ruling groups drew from this phenomenon the lesson that Taoism should be under more centralized control, and it may even be that "Ta-tao chia-ling chieh" is a product of this thinking. It is also likely that persons claiming descent from Chang Lu were around at this time because (as we see, below) they certainly existed at the end of the fifth century. But any moves to coopt these Changs in a centralizing role in the service of either the Toba Wei in the north or the new Liu-Sung dynasty in the south seems to have been resisted. As is well known, K'ou Ch'ien-chih 寇謙之, who emerged as the leader of Northern Wei Taoism, claimed the authority of a new revelation to introduce reforms on his own initiative, independent of the Chang tradition.²³ Yet more explicitly, the notion that the Chang family remained worthy of exercising religious leadership in the south is rejected in *San-t'ien nei-chieh ching* 三天內解經, the scripture that heralded the southern reformation of Taoism.²⁴ Even had one of the contemporary powers decided to elevate descendants of the Chang family within their own empire to some special status, it is difficult to see how their writ would have run in the territory of the rival dynasty. In both cases the court seems to have preferred a fresh start with new leaders capable of promoting an imperially acceptable Taoism free of any obligations towards the past.

Yet in the south at any rate reform seems to have led to a certain degree of recognition for the Changs, not as the leaders of the Taoist community, but as members of it accorded a degree of respect second only to those who exerted the real leadership on the government's behalf. Such an order of precedence appears quite clearly in the text of an inscription of the Liang period preserved in later sources: male and female members of the Chang family in what are termed the ninth and tenth generations are listed ahead of ordinary abbots and abbesses; interestingly enough, two of them are further described as residents of Ch'eng-tu 成都, possibly hinting that the only surviving branch of the family were descendants of Changs who had remained in the west without ever becoming part of Ts'ao Ts'ao's court.²⁵ On the other hand, another inscription drawn on in a variety of

later sources records that a twelfth-generation descendant was awarded an abbacy in present-day Kiangsu by emperor Wu-li of the Liang 梁武帝 in the first or second decade of the sixth century.²⁶

Most revealing of all, what seems to have been a thirteenth-generation descendant appends his name to a Taoist text still preserved in the canon and describes himself as an adjutant on the staff of the prince of Wu-ling 武陵王.²⁷ This record has the ring of authenticity, in that the prince appears in historical sources as a traitor and, worse still, as a loser, who when the Liang dynasty was torn apart by a military uprising, preferred to set up his own separatist regime in Szechwan in 552 rather than aid his monarch, only to be eliminated from the power struggle himself in 553.²⁸ No later writer would particularly have wished to associate his name with that of the prince, and if the Chang family were indeed caught up in his defeat, the long gap in our sources following this event looks distinctly ominous.

Although a multitude of sources from the mid- to late-tenth centuries attest the connection between the Heavenly Masters and Dragon and Tiger Mountain,²⁹ a connection which was to endure for a millenium, even verifying their residence there during the late-T'ang dynasty is a much more difficult matter than one might assume. An entry by John Lagerwey in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* notes that the Taoist writer Ssu-ma Ch'eng-chen 司馬承禎 (647-735) speaks of an individual named Chang residing on Dragon and Tiger Mountain.³⁰ But if one pursues this reference to its earliest surviving source, it emerges that it was more a case of "presiding" 主 rather than "residing" 住: Ssu-ma's text is simply listing the presiding immortal of the mountain, one Chang Chü-chün 張巨君, as part of a catalog of holy places and their supernatural patrons. In fact Chang Chü-

explained at 20, p. 17a; the date of the inscription is at 20, p. 1a.

²⁶ Ch'en, *Tao-tsang yüan-liu k'ao*, p. 499, gives a biography of this man as reconstructed from a lost Taoist work, cited fully in *Shang-ch'ing tao lei-shih hsiang* 上清道類事相 (TT edn.) 1, p. 12b (HY no. 1124), for which see also Florian C. Reiter, *Kategorien und Realien im Shang-Ch'ing Taoismus* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992), p. 32. Ch'ing, *Chung-kuo Tao-chiao shih*, p. 147, nn. 3, 4, shows how the inscription was preserved in its full form in a local history.

²⁷ *Shou-lu tz'u-ti fa-hsin i* 受籙次法信儀 (TT edn.; HY no. 1234), p. 19b.

²⁸ See the prince's biog., *Liang shu* 梁書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1973) 55, pp. 825-28.

²⁹ E.g., the encyclopedia *Tai-p'ing yü-lan* 太平御覽 (Taipei: Kuo-t'ai wen-hua shih-yeh yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1980; rpt. of SPTK, *san-pien*, edn.) 48, p. 6a, and the geography *Tai-p'ing huan-yü chi* 太平寰宇記 (rpt. Taipei: Wen-hai ch'u-pan-she, 1963) 107, p. 3b, both completed by 983.

³⁰ *Encyclopedia of Religion* 14, p. 313, "The Taoist Community."

²³ See Mather, "Taoist Theocracy," p. 107.

²⁴ This passage was first noticed by Ch'en Kuo-fu 陳國符, *Tao-tsang yüan-liu k'ao* 道藏源流考 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1963), pp. 319-20, who cites ch. 1, pp. 6a-7a, of the text. The role of *San-t'ien nei-chieh ching* (HY no. 1196) in ushering in a reformed Taoism is treated in Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi*, pp. 482-510.

²⁵ *Mao-shan chih* 茅山志, HY no. 304 (TT edn.) 15, pp. 5a-b, the nature of which list is

chün appears simultaneously as patron of another mountain in Hunan as well,³¹ and was included in the lower ranks of the pantheon well-before the T'ang. He has no known connection with the Heavenly Masters.³² But Ssu-ma's list cannot be taken as evidence that the Heavenly Masters had not yet occupied the mountain, since the writer belonged to a rival Taoist tradition that may easily have passed over such information in silence. At least it shows that the locality was now deemed more than normally numinous.

Maspero himself felt that the biographies of the Heavenly Masters attained a greater degree of verisimilitude from the time of the fifteenth master, Chang Kao 高, in the mid-eighth century. More recently, however, Russell Kirkland, while not apparently doubting the existence of the fifteenth master, has observed that Chang failed to make any impact whatsoever on contemporary sources.³³ But the matter is perhaps a shade more complicated than that, since according to official records the reigning emperor, Hsüan-tsung, granted a posthumous title in 747 (or 748) to Chang Tao-ling (and also one to Ssu-ma Ch'eng-chen's spiritual ancestor), which might possibly be construed as the result of lobbying from the line of the Dragon and Tiger Mountain Changs.³⁴ More obvious instigators of this move, however, would have been the relatives of Chang T'an-hsüan 探玄 (d. 742), a prominent Taoist in the emperor's service who claimed descent in some unspecified fashion from Chang Tao-ling, but who during his lifetime neither seems to have had any connection with Kiangsi nor to have claimed any standing in the Taoist community on the grounds of his genealogy.³⁵ Besides the official records, two eulogies on Chang Tao-ling by Hsüan-tsung and one by his successor may also be found, and there is even a vague reference in one of them to the undiminished influence of Chang's authority.³⁶ But these pieces are not certain to be of T'ang date. Moreover,

³¹ *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* 雲笈七籤 (T'edn.; HY no. 1026) 27, p. 131; cf. 27, p. 152.

³² Cf. p. 245 of the parallel text comparing two versions of the early-Taoist pantheon, provided in Ishii Masako 石井昌子, *Dōkyōgaku no kenkyū* 道教學の研究 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1980): Chang is in the fourth rank of the pantheon.

³³ Russell Kirkland, "Chang Kao: Noteworthy T'ang Taoist?," *T'ang Studies* 2 (1984), pp. 31-35.

³⁴ *T'ung-tien* 通典 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1988) 53, p. 1479; *T'ang hui-yao* 唐會要 (Shanghai: Shang-hai ku-chi, 1991) 50, p. 1031. These well-known works were compiled from official records.

³⁵ This Chang's career is recorded in a funerary inscription well attested in epigraphical works; included in Ch'en Yüan 陳垣, *Tao-chiao chin-shih lüeh* 道教金石略 (Peking: Wen-wu ch'u-pan-shu, 1988), pp. 136-37.

³⁶ Included in *Ch'üan T'ang wen* (Palace edn., 1814) 41, pp. 13b-14a; 45, pp. 18a-b.

since they first surface in material associated with the Dragon and Tiger Mountain, they are in all likelihood later products of propagandistic activity by the Changs themselves.³⁷

It might be added that among the surviving works of the poet Ch'ang Chien 常建, who lived in the mid-eighth century and who is best known for his poem on "Broken-hill Monastery," is one about a visit to the "Thatched Hall of Heavenly Master Chang."³⁸ We know next to nothing of Ch'ang Ch'ien's life - he may, like many T'ang poets, have rambled rather extensively - but there is nothing to show that this structure was on Dragon and Tiger Mountain.³⁹ In fact, Li Tao-yüan 鄴道元 (466-527), the commentator on the *Water Classic*, mentions a hall connected with Chang Tao-ling in Szechwan.⁴⁰ A number of T'ang poems in post-T'ang collections are said to have been inspired by the Masters on Dragon and Tiger Mountain, but the only one to name both the place and its Taoist occupants appears for the first time in the eighteenth century and seems in the judgment of experts to be a later fabrication put under the name of an early-eighth-century figure who hailed from the vicinity of the mountain.⁴¹

Yet if we turn from poetry to T'ang stories, we find indications that the cult of the Heavenly Master was spreading during the latter half of the dynasty so as to link it with a number of locations not previously associated with the Changs. The result was that from the mid-eighth century onward, sites associated with Chang Tao-ling were to be found well beyond his historic base in Szechwan.⁴² One example bears a firm epigraphic date of

³⁷ See the Yüan gazetteer, *Lung-hu shan chih* 龍虎山志, p. 51, as reprinted in Tu Chieh-hsiang 杜潔祥, ed., *Tao-chiao wen-hsien* 道教文獻 (Taipei: Tan-ch'ing 'u-shu, 1983), vol. 1, for an allusion to the piece by Hsüan-tsung, and also Lou Chin-yüan 裴近垣, comp., *Lung-hu shan chih* 龍虎山志 (1740 edn.) 10, pp. 1a-b, as rpt. Tu, *Tao-chiao wen-hsien*, vol. 4.

³⁸ See *Ch'üan T'ang shih* 全唐詩 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1960) 144, p. 1459.

³⁹ See the biographical study of Ch'ang by Fu Hsüan-tsung 傅璇琮, *T'ang-tai shih-jen ts'ung-k'ao* 唐代詩人叢考 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1980), pp. 78-87, which underlines just how little we know of this poet and his travels.

⁴⁰ *Shui-ching chu* 水經注 (Shanghai: Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1958) 27, p. 350.

⁴¹ See Lou, *Lung-hu shan chih* 13, p. 1a-2a, a piece purportedly by Wu Wu-ling 吳武陵. While this work was originally included (via another source) in Wang Chung-min 王鍾民, Sun Wang 孫望, and T'ung Yang-nien 童養年, comps., *Ch'üan T'ang shih wai-pien* 全唐詩外編 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1982), p. 465, the latest version of this compilation, Ch'en Shang-chün 陳尚君, comp., *Ch'üan T'ang shih pu-pien* 補編 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1992), does not include it.

⁴² Within the Szechwan area, sites connected with Chang seem to have multiplied, to judge by the local gazetteer of Ling-chou 陵州 quoted in Li Fang 李昉, ed., *Tai-p'ing huang-chi* 太平廣記 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1960) 399, p. 3206. Unfortunately, however, there seems

738 and links Chang Tao-ling to Kiangsu.⁴³ The more well-known connection with Kiangsi seems to have taken some time to become the dominant one, since even during late-T'ang it is possible to find stories associating appearances of the Heavenly Master with north China.⁴⁴ If, indeed, the mid-T'ang saw the multiplication of claims to genealogical or geographical connections with Chang Tao-ling, one might surmise that this could have been because the dynasty witnessed the spread of his cult beyond narrowly Taoist circles, to which it has been seen as confined in the seventh century,⁴⁵ and its growth in the late T'ang and Five Dynasties, leading towards full popular acceptance in the Sung and later.⁴⁶ Equally, however, such a trend towards acceptance could be explained as the result of increased promotional activity from the Chang family. Either way, we are probably dealing with the increased prominence of locality in religious consciousness that has been remarked by Bernard Faure.⁴⁷

In fact, when all our materials are subjected to thorough critical examination, the earliest firmly attributable sources that mention the Heavenly Masters of Dragon and Tiger Mountain derive from the great Taoist writer Tu Kuang-t'ing 杜光庭 (850-933), concerning whom a detailed study now exists by Franciscus Verellen. Two particularly revealing passages may be found in a text by Tu that Verellen suggests was written some time after 905.⁴⁸ The first shows that the Heavenly Masters were already in the business of issuing the documents known as registers; indeed

to be no way of pinning down the date of this source, since such gazetteers were constantly reedited in manuscript, as in later, woodblock editions.

⁴³ *Chiang-su chin-shih chih* 江蘇金石志 4, p. 17, in *Shih-k'o shih-liao hsin-pien* 石刻史料新編 (Taipei: Hsin-wen feng, 1977), vol. 13; cf. Ch'en, *Tao-chiao chin-shih lueh*, p. 123.

⁴⁴ *Tai-p'ing kuang chi* 45, pp. 282-23, citing *Yüan-hua chi*, 原化記, a work apparently of late-T'ang date.

⁴⁵ Thus Nathan Sivin, "On the Word 'Taoist' as a Source of Perplexity," *History of Religions* 17.3-4 (1978), pp. 303-32, esp. 312, n.18.

⁴⁶ Note that the first reference to Thunder Magic deriving from Chang Tao-ling appears to date to the 10th c.: see Sun K'o-k'uan 孫克寬, *Sung-Yüan Tao-chiao chih fa-chan* 宋元道教之發展 (Taichung: Ssu-li Tung-hai ta-hsieh ch'u-pan, 1965), p. 47, quoting Lu Yu's 陸游 *Nan Tang shu* 南唐書. See also below, concerning Tu Kuang-t'ing as a source for Chang Tao-ling's tenth-century iconography. The cult's popularity is attested by the widespread use of Chang's name on mass-produced talismans beginning in Sung times; see Huang Shih 黃石, *Yuan-wu li-su shih* 端午禮俗史 (Hong Kong: Tai-hsing shu-chü, 1963), pp. 165-68; Kwok Man-ho, *The Chinese Almanac 1990* (London: Bantam Books, 1989), p. 17; Hung Mai 洪邁, *I-chien chih* 夷堅志 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1981), 4, p. 570.

⁴⁷ Notably in chap. 5 of his *Chan Insights and Oversight: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 1993), pp. 155-74.

⁴⁸ Franciscus Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933): Taoiste de cour à la fin de la Chine médiévale* (Paris: Collège de France, 1989), pp. 206-7.

they had been manufactured on paper since the time of the thirteenth master. Tu's story concerns a rich merchant issued with such a document by the nineteenth master in 868. The second concerns the sword of Chang Tao-ling, bequeathed by him to one successor in each generation of his descendants, whose fitness for the task would be revealed by the presence of several strands of vermilion hair upon his head. Tu comments that the present wielder of the sword was in the twenty-first generation since Chang Tao-ling; he also mentions masters in the sixteenth and eighteenth generations.⁴⁹ Elsewhere in the text he gives copious information concerning the cult of Chang Tao-ling's image.⁵⁰

That Tu should term his own contemporary the twenty-first descendant of the first Heavenly Master fits neatly with what is apparently a reference in two somewhat later tenth-century inscriptional sources for the nineteenth generation master circa 870 and for the twenty-second, Chang Ping-i 乘一, around the middle of the tenth century.⁵¹ By contrast, the much later Chang family records studied by Maspero assign this Chang Ping-i to the twenty-first generation.⁵² But since Tu was not only one of the most prominent religious spokesmen of his day but also one of its most creative storytellers, it would be reassuring to find independent evidence verifying the existence of Heavenly Masters at Dragon and Tiger Mountain before his own times. This is, surprisingly enough, rather hard to come by.

A very valuable text in the Taoist canon, bearing a date interpreted as equivalent to 920 AD, includes a biography of Tu Kuang-t'ing's teacher Ying I-chieh 應夷節, who is said to have gone to visit the eighteenth

⁴⁹ *Tao-chiao ling-yen chi* 道教靈驗記 (HY no. 590; TT edn.) 11, pp. 5a-b; 13, pp. 9a-b, respectively.

⁵⁰ *Tao-chiao ling-yen chi* 8.

⁵¹ The former source is a record by Hsü K'ai 徐鍇 (920-974), the latter one by his contemporary Ch'en Ch'iao 陳喬; they are cited by Ch'ing, *Chung-kuo Tao-chiao shih*, p. 149, from *Ch'üan T'ang wen* 888, pp. 10a-b; and 876, pp. 10a (respectively). Both pieces derive ultimately from epigraphic sources: that by Hsü is mentioned in *Mao-shan chih* 24, p. 19b; for that by Ch'en, see following n.

⁵² *Han T'ien-shih shih-chia* 漢天師世家 (HY no. 1451; TT edn.) 2, p. 16b. Note that both Chang Ping-i's biography in the form found in this Ming source and Ch'en Ch'iao's inscription, flatly contradicting each other, are found together in the Yüan-era *Lung-hu shan chih*, pp. 53-54, 244, as rpt. in Tu, *Tao-chiao wen-hsiem*. Note also with Ch'ing, *Chung-kuo Tao-chiao shih*, p. 149, that the contacts with the T'ang ruling house claimed in the later Chang-family records cannot be confirmed from these two tenth-century inscriptions, which would make Ch'en's references to Southern T'ang support for the Changs the earliest reliable material on state support for their claims.

master on Dragon and Tiger Mountain in 828.⁵³ This text is attributed by mistake in the canon to an associate of Ying who in fact died before him, whereas the content makes it quite clear that it was written by a disciple of Ying who survived him, even though the pseudonym "Master Kuang-ch'eng" 廣成先生 used in the text by its author to refer to himself was also used by this associate. "Master Kuang-ch'eng" was in fact a pseudonym used also by Tu Kuang-t'ing, who was a disciple of Ying and did indeed outlive him, and some have therefore put forward Tu himself as the probable author of the biography.⁵⁴ Verellen disputes this, since the author appears to have been aware of events in parts of China that presumably were beyond the knowledge of Tu, who was isolated in Szechwan from the late-ninth century onwards.⁵⁵ I have, from a much shallower acquaintance with Tu's writings, found nothing to falsify this suggestion, but would myself feel that it rests ultimately upon an *argumentum ex silentio*, and that attribution of the text to Tu, while by no means free from problems, cannot be entirely ruled out.

Similar considerations apply to a text preserved in the early-Sung compilation *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* that associates Chang Tao-ling with Dragon and Tiger Mountain.⁵⁶ It is attributed to a work entitled *Biographies of Lady Immortals* (*Nü-hsien chuan* 女仙傳), not a title associated anywhere with Tu – nor for that matter with anyone else, since apart from the extracts in *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* there is no trace of its existence anywhere known to me in Chinese literature. Rather remarkably, however, its contents (including the passage in question) overlap almost entirely with the surviving portions of a compilation by Tu on the same theme entitled *The Yung-ch'eng Record*.⁵⁷ Comparison of the two works (or rather their existing fragments) is complicated by the fact that both (if they are indeed separate works, and not the same work by Tu under separate names) draw upon earlier sources, mostly old,

⁵³ *Tung-hsüan ling-pao san-shih chi* 洞玄靈寶三師記 (HY no. 444; TT edn.), p. 6a.

⁵⁴ See Verellen, *Du Guangting*, p. 18, n. 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 17–19. He also argues that the conception of the Taoist teaching lineage contained in this text does not accord with Tu's remarks elsewhere: one might object that Tu's work under official patronage put him under constraints that he may not have felt in this more personal text.

⁵⁶ *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 60, pp. 371–72.

⁵⁷ *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 59 and 60 contain, as far as I know, all surviving passages of the *Biographies of Lady Immortals*; for Tu's text see Verellen, *Du Guangting*, pp. 180, 208; he dates it to after 913. The parallel passage in question may be found in *Yung-ch'eng chi-hsien lu* 壩城集仙錄 (HY no. 782; TT edn.) 6, pp. 4a–5b.

but including one written in about 860.⁵⁸

It is, of course, conceivable that some unknown author between 860 and the early-tenth century drew up an independent anthology, which was then incorporated by Tu into his own work. But the passage concerning the Heavenly Master contains a locution that suggests otherwise. The character used in Chinese for the units of local administration set up by Chang Tao-ling and taken over by Chang Lu, *chih* 治 (conventionally translated as "parish" in English), became taboo under the T'ang because it was used for the personal name of the third T'ang emperor. Usually one finds the synonym *li* 理 in its place. But in both the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* and Tu versions one finds the substitute character *hua* 化, a circumlocution attested elsewhere in Tu's work as his way of dealing with the problem.⁵⁹ The hypothesis of independent authorship of the *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* passage is not destroyed by this evidence: others apart from Tu may have used this circumlocution, though so far I have found no such examples. But the attribution to Tu of the whole of the *Biographies of Lady Immortals* (perhaps representing an early version of *The Yung-ch'eng Record*) remains a distinct possibility.

Fortunately, however, researchers are not dependent on texts transmitted obscurely through many hands for our knowledge of the ninth century. We also possess manuscripts contemporary or close to contemporary with the events they describe, thanks to the discoveries at Tun-huang at the turn of our present century. Amongst them is Pelliot no. 3866, apparently a product of the tenth century, to judge by its physical appearance, which contains the poems of one Li Hsiang 李翔, who has not been positively identified. Such evidence as there is points to a date in the range of 860–874 for the poems; they are definitely not earlier than the ninth century.⁶⁰ Among them is a poem "presented to the Heavenly Master Chang of Dragon and Tiger Mountain."⁶¹ True, there is no indication in the

⁵⁸ See Chou Long-ch'ieh 周楞伽, ed., *P'ei Hsing ch'uan-ch'i* 裴鉞傳奇 (Shanghai: Shanghai ku-chi, 1980), p. 38; and for the date of the text edited, p. 4 of his introduction.

⁵⁹ See Tu's work *Tung-t'ien fu-ti yüeh-tu ming-shan chi* 洞天福地嶽瀆名山記 (HY no. 599; TT edn.), pp. 11a–15a; note also the reference to Dragon and Tiger Mountain as home of the Heavenly Master, p. 9b.

⁶⁰ This is the conclusion of the first scholar to publish the poems, Wu Ch'i-yü 吳其昱, "Li Hsiang chi ch'i She-tao shih" 李翔及其涉道詩, *Dōkyō kenkyū* 道教研究 1 (1965), pp. 271–91.

⁶¹ The poem is now reprinted on p. 54 of Ch'en, *Ch'üan T'ang shih pu-pien*, from "Pu Ch'üan T'ang shih shih-i" 補全唐詩拾遺 of Wang Chung-min 王重民. Wu, "Li Hsiang,"

title or poem itself that this mountain was the one in Kiangsi, so we might be tempted to follow Liu Tsun-yan [Liu Ts'un-jen] 柳存仁 in believing (on the basis of the material transmitted by Tu Kuang-t'ing) that at this date the base of the Heavenly Master was still, despite its name, in Szechwan.⁶² But nearly all the geographical references in the poems are confined to the lower Yangtze region; the one mention of Szechwan to be found in them does not imply any personal acquaintance with the area.⁶³ We must, I think, accept this poem as incontrovertible late-ninth-century evidence for the presence of a Taoist pope on the mountain that was to be his family home for the next millenium.

Any date earlier than this is still highly suspect. Note, for example, that Tu Kuang-t'ing gives no indications of date, even vague ones, for any generation he mentions earlier than the eighth century. When these are eventually provided, in materials themselves datable to the twelfth century,⁶⁴ they conflict directly with such references to the sixth century as given above: the tenth-generation master is assigned to the Sui dynasty, rather than to about 500 AD; the twelfth master to the mid-seventh century, not the early sixth. Yet even this cannot be taken as proof that the masters of Dragon and Tiger Mountain had no connection with the earlier Chang family. A thinning out of the generations is something that would have been encouraged both by a desire to grant a decently long life to the more prominent members of the family and by a desire to keep the

pp. 275-76, ventured the opinion that a reference to the "Six Palaces" in the antepenultimate line signified recognition of this Heavenly Master by the T'ang, but the reference is actually to the magical temptation of the Buddha; see Arthur Waley, *Ballads and Stories from Tun-huang* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), p. 213.

⁶² Liu Ts'un-jen, "T'i Mien Te-k'an ts'ang Han T'ien-shih shih-hsi (san ch'uan) 提免得龜藏漢天師世系贊卷, part 3, *Ming-pao yüeh-k'an* 明報月刊 22.1 (1987), pp. 125-28. This article concerns a document apparently of seventeenth-century date, and goes into some of the same questions covered here. Given Verellen's doubts concerning Tu's knowledge of the world beyond Szechwan, Liu's suggestion, in the absence of Li Hsiang's poem, would have much to commend it.

⁶³ Wu, "Li Hsiang," p. 280.

⁶⁴ Ozaki Masaharu, "The Taoist Priesthood: From Tsai-chia to Ch'u-chia," in George A. DeVos and Takao Sofue, eds., *Religion and the Family in East Asia* (Berkeley: U. of California P., 1986), pp. 96-109, esp. 104, cites these biographical materials from an otherwise unknown *T'ien-shih nei-chuan* 天師內傳 preserved in the preface of a source dated to 1154 AD, *San-tung ch'ün-hsien lu* 三洞群仙錄 (HY no. 1238). He apparently takes these materials to be much earlier, since he gives a *terminus post quem* of the mid-8th c., but this seems impossibly sanguine. Even *San-tung hsiu-tao i* 三洞修道儀 (HY no. 1227), from the preface of which he cites the assertion that each one of the ancestors of the Changs of Lung-hu shan was known, dates not to the mid-10th c., as he implies, but to 1004; see Jen, *Tao-tsang t'i-yao*, pp. 978-79, based evidently on a study of the circumstances detailed in this preface itself.

transmission from antiquity as direct as possible. We have noted that juggling with the generations happened even with a relatively late figure like Chang Ping-i; there would obviously have been far greater scope for foreshortening the record (assuming there was one) over more remote centuries.

This, of course, is speculation; but before the rise of modern genetic science all matters concerning ancestry were themselves speculative. While more materials may exist that could refine the above picture of the emergence of the "Popes of Taoism," it seems hardly likely that the claims of the Chang family will ever be capable of subjection to rigorous scrutiny. The materials already discussed do, however, give us ample opportunity to submit the early history of the Changs to the type of inquiry used by Anna Seidel. In a series of publications leading up to the outstanding synthesis "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments," she outlined the close connections between Taoist symbolism and imperial power.⁶⁵ If we look at the early history of the Changs from the point of view of their relations to political power, three clear phases may be distinguished. The first lasts from the surrender of Chang Lu to the mid-eighth century. Whatever the precise nature of the arrangements made between the Changs and China's rulers at the start of this period, in practice our meager sources always tell the same story: descent from Chang Tao-ling conferred on Taoists both dignity and a measure of attention from the state. But no automatic hereditary right to primacy seems to have been inherent in the Chang family: the description even of the career of Chang T'an-hsüan in the mid-T'ang shows that he rose in the state hierarchy of Taoist offices in a progression implying merit rather than hereditary right. Above all, the concept of a single line of supreme hierarchs, passing on from generation to generation, is entirely absent from these early references.

The third phase of Chang relations to political power is equally distinctive, though I am not sure of the precise date when this phase started. The inscription concerning Chang Ping-i, mentioned above, to judge from the personalities mentioned in it, appears to date to about 950, but I have not tried to pin it down more narrowly. At any rate this Chang, now one of a series of masters stretching back to Chang Tao-ling, is linked very firmly

⁶⁵ In vol. 2 of Michel Strickmann, ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies: In Honour of R. A. Stein*, *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 21 (Brussels: Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1983), pp. 291-371.

with the Southern T'ang dynasty. The conquerors of the Southern T'ang, the Sung, seem to have been happy to recognize his successors, thus establishing the relationship that lasted until the overthrow of the imperial system.⁶⁶ This presents the second phase in the emergence of the Changs, from roughly 750 (at the earliest) to roughly 950, as a murky period for which we have no reliable information at all until after 850.

What is remarkable about phase two is that despite the assertions of later sources there is absolutely nothing to show that the masters, as their consciousness of a succession stretching back to the Han took shape, had any relationship whatsoever with the T'ang dynasty. Or is that so remarkable? One of the most distinctive features of that dynasty was its ideological exploitation of the notion of its direct descent from Lao-tzu.⁶⁷ While Anna Seidel's early research on the image of the Perfect Ruler pointed to some examples of dual rulership, of a synarchy between temporal and spiritual power,⁶⁸ the T'ang emperors embodied both types of authority and had no need of coadjutors. Initiations staged for them by ordinary Taoists were for outward display only; the rulers themselves seem to have been quite convinced (in some notorious instances, at least) that they were in any case *chen-jen* 真人, Taoist "Realized Men," themselves.⁶⁹ This notion of a line of divine descent, perhaps symptomatic *inter alia* of a general seventh-century need to reconnect with the lost world of antiquity, has certainly been seen as having spawned imitations elsewhere in the world of T'ang religion,⁷⁰ so it should come as no surprise to find the idea of

a lineal succession of masters coming into being in T'ang times. In the case of the Changs, however, it would not be enough to see them as simply emulating the succession of the Lis of the T'ang ruling house.

For again, one of the most striking interpretations hinted at in Anna Seidel's study of Taoist sacraments is that early Taoism was in some sense (and no doubt my restatement of the idea is a travesty of her carefully nuanced research) a continuation in religious celebration of the lost empire of the Han. This may in fact have kept the Chang line obscured from the T'ang court: the Changs could only lay claim to a Han mandate from Lao-tzu while the Lis claimed the authority of Lao-tzu himself. Surely the very notion of a Chang line could only come into being in the countryside of Kiangsi once it had been perceived that the Li line had failed. Thus while the T'ang descended into complete powerlessness and ultimately to extinction, the Changs could offer a religious substitute for political power, issuing their documents to a populace who hoped that their spiritual writ would run where the temporal writ of the T'ang no longer had any effect. It would not be strange if the religion born out of the death agonies of the Han actually found renewal in the final years of the first worthy successor to that dynasty, the T'ang. If so, then the Taoist leader in Taiwan today struggling with an alien modernity represents the last pale reflection in China of that great Taoist age of imperial glory that reached its height under Hsüan-tsung more than twelve centuries ago.

Such a supposed relationship between the T'ang decline and the rise of the Changs might seem rather suspect in the light of the readiness of later rulers to patronize the Changs without feeling that their legitimacy was in any way compromised. But in fact such patronage made sound sense, even under the Sung, whose pretensions to divine descent seem to have been heavily influenced by the T'ang model.⁷¹ A reading of T'ang sources on Taoism suggests that the status of the *chi-chiu* 祭酒, the lowest level of Taoist priesthood associated in particular with the Heavenly Master tradition, posed administrative problems for the dynasty – as indeed for its predecessors – in that they could not simply be equated with celibate Buddhist clergy and controlled in exactly the same way.⁷² It was in the long run expedient for any government to have such persons licensed (one

⁶⁶ Ch'ing, *Chung-kuo tao-chiao shih*, pp. 646–48, gives details of official recognition of the Chang family during the transitional period from Southern T'ang to Northern Sung.

⁶⁷ Among the many publications in European and East Asian languages to comment at length upon this phenomenon, the most ready summary is probably that of Charles Benn, "Religious Aspects of Emperor Hsüan-tsung's Taoist Ideology," in David W. Chappell, ed., *Buddhist and Taoist Practice in Medieval Chinese Society*, Buddhist and Taoist Studies 2 (Honolulu: U. of Hawaii P., 1987), pp. 127–45.

⁶⁸ Seidel, "The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism," p. 234. Recently Alan Chan, using some of her insights in the analysis of new materials, has traced this pattern in the Ma-wang-tui 馬王堆 literature: see pp. 103–7 of his *Two Visions of the Way: A Study of the Wang Pi and Ho-shang Kung Commentaries on the Lao-Tzu* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY, 1991).

⁶⁹ Benn, "Religious Aspects," pp. 139–40, discusses this point.

⁷⁰ Notably J. Jorgensen, "The 'Imperial' Lineage of Ch'an Buddhism: The Role of Confucian Ritual and Ancestor Worship in Ch'an's Search for Legitimation in the Mid-T'ang Dynasty," *Papers on Far Eastern History* 35 (1987), pp. 89–133. My own view on the formation of spiritual lineages may be found in "Kill the Patriarchs," in T. Skorupski, ed., *The Buddhist Forum* (London: SOAS, 1990) 1, pp. 87–97, esp. 93, n. 33.

⁷¹ See Sun, *Sung-Yüan Tao-chiao chih fa-chan*, pp. 82–86.

⁷² This problem is discussed in my review of Charles Benn's *The Cavern Mystery Transmission*, in *BSOAS* 47.2 (1994), pp. 414–15.

might even say "franchised") by a hierarch who claimed the authority of the founder of the whole movement, and whose prestige was bound up with government recognition.

But a full consideration of the functions of the Chang family as they developed in later times lies well beyond the range of this study. As stated above, the main purpose of the preceding remarks has been to suggest that Anna Seidel's remarkable insights into the nature of Taoism, derived in large part from a study of the Han and Six Dynasties, may also prove useful in analyzing later periods such as the T'ang. The questions considered here have been deliberately restricted in scope. Doubtless others will prove better capable of deploying a political understanding of Taoism in the investigation of broader problems in China's religious history. Few, one fears, will bring to the task the dedication and critical spirit of the scholar whose achievements are celebrated in this volume.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- HY* Wang, comp., *Tao-tsang tzu-mu yin-te* 道藏子目引得, Harvard-Yenching Sinological Index Series 25
- TT* *Cheng-t'ung Tao-tsang* 正統道藏