

## Liturgy and Sovereignty: The Role of Taoist Ritual in the Foundation of the Shu Kingdom (907–925)

During the late eighth- and ninth-century decline of central T'ang authority, new regional centers of commercial activity and political autonomy emerged throughout China.<sup>1</sup> The predominant influence of T'ang cosmopolitan civilization formerly exerted by Ch'ang-an, the capital and cultural hub of the empire, also fell away with the sack and destruction of that city in the 880s.<sup>2</sup> In the wake of these developments, culminating in a proliferation of regional kingdoms across China in the tenth century, indigenous culture flourished and in turn bolstered local independence.

Traditional historians have treated the brief period known as the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms as an awkward interlude between the great dynasties of the T'ang (618–907) and the Northern Sung (960–1127). None of the ephemeral and local regimes that had been succeeded, if not overcome, by the reunified Sung empire could qualify as incumbents of a divine mandate to rule China.

In a larger scheme of periodization, however, the fact of disunion stands out as a catalyst of the social transformation that marked the transition to the modern era in China during that period. Traditions of local independence, previously depreciated as disruptions of the dynastic cycle, assume a more positive significance in this perspective.

The devolution of sovereignty from a defunct central government to local regimes after the demise of the T'ang dynasty in 907 called for ritual legitimation of competing claims to the succession.

Owing to the genealogical affiliation of the T'ang ruling house with Lao-tzu, the imperial ancestor cult had become largely assimilated with the

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<sup>1</sup> For the political, administrative, and military background to this development see Denis Twitchett, "Varied Patterns of Provincial Autonomy in the T'ang Dynasty," in J. C. Perry and B. L. Smith, eds., *Essays on T'ang Society* (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 90–109, and C. A. Peterson, "Court and Province in Mid- and Late T'ang," in D. Twitchett, ed., *Sui and T'ang China, 589–906, Part 1*, vol. 3 of *The Cambridge History of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1979), pp. 464–560.

<sup>2</sup> See Edward H. Schafer, "The Last Years of Ch'ang-an," *OE* 10 (1963), pp. 133–79.

official cult of Lord Lao (Lao-chün 老君), in other words, Lao-tzu deified, under that dynasty.<sup>3</sup> From the reign of Hsüan-tsung 玄宗 (712-756) onward, "Taoism" was virtually synonymous with "imperial cult." At the local level, the propensity of Taoist liturgy to absorb particular sites, saints, and legends within its universal framework continuously enlarged and diversified the categories of religious, social, and cultural phenomena subsumed under the heading of Taoism.

The Shu region, corresponding approximately to modern Szechwan province, had enjoyed a loyalist reputation during the declining years of the T'ang. Twice in less than a century and a half, the provincial capital Ch'eng-tu had served as refuge for a T'ang monarch in exile. From 881 to 885, during Emperor Hsi-tsung's 僖宗 (r. 873-888) flight from the Huang Ch'ao 黃巢 rebellion (878-885), liturgical services that were performed by the court Taoist Tu Kuang-t'ing 杜光庭 (850-933)<sup>4</sup> associated the emperor with regional sacred sites and confirmed the T'ang's imperiled mandate to rule. These rituals set precedents for the emerging local powers to follow.

Ten years later Taoist liturgy played an active role as mediator between the new leadership, mostly recent arrivals from outside the region, and local cults. Building on the indigenous traditions and followings of these cults, Taoist rituals of enfeoffment and investiture became a significant factor in the foundation of the Shu kingdom.

On November 3, 907, at the end of three days of public mourning to commemorate the deposition of the last T'ang emperor five months earlier, the then Prince of Shu, Wang Chien 王建 (847-918), assumed the title of emperor and proclaimed the realm of Great Shu.<sup>5</sup>

The new ruling house and state bureaucracy, many of whose members were former officials of the T'ang, seemed in fact to regard their authority as a rightful legacy for services rendered to the previous dynasty. While Taoist liturgy lent its sanction to the rising local leadership, the latter extended, through the same Taoist intermediaries, a promise of tutelage and adoption to followers of the region's indigenous cults.

<sup>3</sup> Since the mid-eighth century, the T'ai-ch'ing kung 太清宮 in Ch'ang-an served at once as chief sanctuary dedicated to Lao-chün and as imperial ancestral temple. See Ting Huang 丁煌, "T'ang-tai tao-chiao T'ai-ch'ing kung chih-tu k'ao" 唐代道教太清宮制度考, pt. 2, *Li-shih shüeh-pao* 歷史學報 7 (1980), pp. 200-213.

<sup>4</sup> For details concerning his career, see F. Verellen, *Du Guangting (850-933): Taoïste de cour à la fin de la Chine médiévale*, Mémoires de l'Institut des Etudes Hautes Chinoises 30 (Paris: Collège de France, 1989).

<sup>5</sup> See Ssu-ma Kuang 司馬光, *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 資治通鑑 (Peking: Ku-chin ch'u-pan she, 1956; hereafter cited as *TCTC*) 266, p. 8685. Emperor Ai-ti 哀帝 (r. 904-907) had been deposed on June 1. The Liang, first of the Five Dynasties, was proclaimed four days later. See *ibid.*, pp. 8673-74. On Wang Chien's conquest of Shu, see Verellen, *Du Guangting*, pp. 141-50 and *passim*.

In the following, an attempt is made to supplement the fragmentary historical record of the foundation of the Shu kingdom and its ritual consecration on the basis of contemporary Taoist epigraphy, liturgical memorials, and devotional and hagiographic narratives.

## ENFEOFFMENT

During the exile of 881-885, Taoist liturgy played primarily the role of affirming the continued protection of the shaken ruling house by its declared ancestor Lord Lao. New temples dedicated to Lao-tzu sprang up in many places, commemorating the apparitions and miraculous interventions of the deity.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the court in exile availed itself of such support as could be gained from existing local cults.

### *Hsi-tsung's Enfeoffment of Ning Feng-tzu*

On August 13, 881, not quite six months after the arrival of the court at Ch'eng-tu, Tu Kuang-t'ing was ordered by Emperor Hsi-tsung to celebrate a ritual in the presence of an official of the inner palace, the local prefect, and the county magistrate at the sacred mountain of Ch'ing-ch'eng shan 青城山 (forty-five miles northwest of Ch'eng-tu).<sup>7</sup> The liturgy was an Offering (*chiao* 醮)<sup>8</sup> for the enfeoffment of the mountain's principal deity, the Immortal Ning Feng-tzu 甯封子,<sup>9</sup> with the rank and style of "Perfected Hsi-i 希夷."<sup>10</sup>

Ning Feng-tzu was also known as the Elder (*chang-jen* 丈人) of Ch'ing-ch'eng, and even as Elder of the Five Sacred Peaks of China. The edict ordering the enfeoffment ceremony of 881 shows that Emperor Hsi-tsung intended to bestow the mere rank of "duke" (*kung* 公) on this exalted deity.<sup>11</sup> Elsewhere Tu Kuang-t'ing cites a memorial addressed by Ssu-ma Ch'eng-chen 司馬承禎 (647-735) to Emperor Hsüan-tsung, to the effect that the

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Tu Kuang-t'ing's *Li-tai ch'ung-tao chi* 歷代崇道記 (885), in *Cheng-tung Tao-tsang* 正統道藏 (photolithographic rpt.; Shanghai, 1923-1926; hereafter cited as *TT*) fasc. 329, pp. 15a-20a, and his *Tao-chiao ling-yen chi* 道教靈驗記 (ca. 905), in *TT* 323-26 (hereafter cited as *LYC*) 6, pp. 4a-b, 5b-6a.

<sup>7</sup> See *LYC* 14, pp. 7b-8b.

<sup>8</sup> See Kristofer Schipper, *Le corps taoïste: Corps physique — corps social* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), pp. 110-11. On the significance of the date, the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month (i.e., the Chung-yüan 中元 festival), see John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), pp. 20-21.

<sup>9</sup> For Ning Feng-tzu, see *Lieh-hsien chuan* 列仙傳, in *TT* 138, ch. A, p. 1b. See also the translation and commentary, esp. n. 9, in Max Kaltenmark, *Le Lie-sien tchouan* (1953; rev. rpt. Paris: Collège de France, 1987), pp. 43-47.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Tao-te ching* 14: "Invisible to the eye, [the Tao] is named i; inaudible to the ear, it is named hi."

<sup>11</sup> *Ch'in-ting Ch'üan T'ang wen* (rpt. Taipei, 1965) 88, pp. 12a-b.

Five Peaks had already at that time been honored as Perfected, and that the Elder of Ch'ing-ch'eng took precedence among them.<sup>12</sup> If Tu Kuang-t'ing was aware of the breach of protocol committed in the promulgation of the edict of 881, his account of the ceremony passed over the matter in silence. Two years later, however, the local Taoist and painter Chang Su-ch'ing 張素卿 memorialized the throne as follows:

"Since the Five Peaks have already been enfeoffed as princes (*wang* 王) and the Elder [of Ch'ing-ch'eng] ranks above the Five Peaks, it would not be appropriate to address him as Duke." That year (883) it was decreed that the investiture of the Five Peaks Elder be changed to Perfected Hsi-i, and Su-ch'ing was bestowed the purple.<sup>13</sup>

Investiture with the purple robe was a secular as well as clerical court distinction in T'ang times.<sup>14</sup>

Complaints with regard to rank on the part of spirits anxious to receive their due from the living constitute a common motif of Buddho-Taoist devotional literature. The present incident, however, was the subject and the consequence of an exchange of court memorials. Regard for the protocol pertaining to the feudal peerage system here rather highlights the literal significance of the act of religious enfeoffment: at a critical juncture of the Huang Ch'ao rebellion, Emperor Hsi-tsung entered into an alliance, as between liege lord and vassal, with the presiding deity among the realm's great mountain gods.

#### *Wang Chien and Chang Hung-tao*

Such instances of imperial patronage lent recognition to and entailed a material boost for the local cult. Undoubtedly they in turn generated popular support for the patron among the adherents of the cult. By way of reciprocity, the enfeoffment of gods implied at the same time a divine investiture of the king.

<sup>12</sup> *Lu-i chi* 錄異記 (completed between 921 and 925), in *TT* 327 (hereafter cited as *LIC*) 1, pp. 2a-3b.

<sup>13</sup> Huang Hsiu-fu 黃休復, *I-chou ming-hua lu* 益州名畫錄 (pref. 1006), in *Chung-kuo mei-shu lun-chu ts'ung-k'an* 中國美術論著叢刊 (Peking: Jen-min mei-shu ch'u-pan she, 1964) A, p. 9 (wrongly punctuated).

<sup>14</sup> See *Hsin T'ang shu* 新唐書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1975) 24, pp. 527, 529. Since the reign of Hsüan-tsung, Taoists were regularly awarded this honor. See *Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei* 册府元龜 (Hong Kong: Chung-hua, 1960) 54, p. 18a. On the principle of reciprocity in Chinese society, of which rites of mutual investiture constitute a particular instance, see Lien-sheng Yang, "The Concept of *Pao* as a Basis for Social Relations in China," in J. K. Fairbank, ed., *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1957), pp. 291-309.

When Wang Chien (r. 907-918) established his rule in Szechwan, he also assumed the prerogative to enfeoff the gods.<sup>15</sup> In the year 912, for example, he ordered Offerings to Mount Hsien-chü 仙居山 (in Shih-fang 什邡 County, thirty miles north of Ch'eng-tu), and enfeoffed its immortal Chang Hung-tao 章 (var. 張) 弘道, in response to a local prophecy pertaining to his progeny's royal ascendancy, as Perfected Chien-sheng 鑿聖真人.<sup>16</sup> An obscure local saint was thereby elevated to a position in the pantheon of the imperial cult. Sacred site, ranking deity, and miracle tale together formed the nucleus for a new hagiography. Each of these elements had been authenticated by means of Taoist rituals.<sup>17</sup> Tu Kuang-t'ing, rapporteur of the prophecy, author of the imperial Supplications, and officiant of the liturgy, seems himself to have participated in the ensuing round of investitures: the following year he received substantial court promotions, including a title of nobility.<sup>18</sup>

#### *The God of Mount Hsüan-tu*

Another year later, in 914, Wang Chien enfeoffed the presiding god of Mount Hsüan-tu 玄都山 in Ching-ku County 景谷縣 (modern Pai-shui 白水), Li-chou 利州 prefecture (modern Kuang-yüan 廣元, in northern Szechwan), in response to the auspicious apparition of a group of immortals, decked out in yellow and purple (the colors of court dress), in front of Yang-mo Cavern 楊 (var. 陽) 謨洞 in a remote precipice of the mountain. Tu Kuang-t'ing reported the contents of the memorial from the prefect of Li-chou, Wang Ch'eng-shang 王承賞,<sup>19</sup> and the court's solemn responses culminating in the enfeoffment ceremony, in his mirabilia collection *Record of Marvels*.<sup>20</sup> Further details are supplied by a circumstantial history of the same events contained in the prayer that Tu composed for a concluding

<sup>15</sup> A sense of continuity was emphasized by further enhancements of the Chang-jen Temple 丈人觀, the sanctuary of Ning Feng-tzu at Mount Ch'ing-ch'eng, under Wang Chien. See *I-chou ming-hua lu* A, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> See *Kuang-ch'eng chi* 廣成集, the surviving fragment of Tu Kuang-t'ing's collected works, in *TT* 337-39 (hereafter cited as *KCC*) 4, pp. 11b-12a. Cf. *LIC*, as cited in *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1961) 463, p. 3815; *Hsin Wu-tai shih* 新五代史 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1974) 63, p. 789.

<sup>17</sup> See *KCC* 13, pp. 11b-12b; 14, pp. 1a-2a; 16, pp. 1a-2b.

<sup>18</sup> See *TCTC* 268, p. 8773. The nominal enfeoffment of Taoist priests had been practiced by emperors since at least the sixth century; see Kao Ch'eng 高承 (fl. 1078-1085), *Shih-wu chi-yüan* 事物紀原, in *Hsi-yin-hsüan ts'ung-shu* 惜陰軒叢書 7, p. 27a.

<sup>19</sup> The name suggests that this was one of Wang Chien's numerous adopted grandsons; see Kurihara Masuo 栗原益男, "Tōmatsu Gōdai no kafushi teki ketsugō ni okeru seimei to nen-rei" 唐末五代の假父子的結合における姓名と年齢, *TYGH* 38 (1956), pp. 437-38.

<sup>20</sup> *LIC* 1, pp. 5b-6a.

Offering of Thanksgiving (*kao-hsieh chiao* 告謝醮), celebrated by himself on the mountain.<sup>21</sup>

The historical narrative of that document presents the Li-chou apparitions as a sequel to the Chang Hung-tao miracle of 912. The text dates Wang Ch'eng-shang's<sup>22</sup> memorial to September 16, 914. In response to the memorial, the commissioner for Taoist ritual (*wei-i* 威儀) Jen K'o-yen 任可言 was dispatched with a palace official to present a Green Supplication (see below) and an imperial gift of incense, and to perform an Offering of Thanksgiving. After that a further apparition took place on October 22; on November 11 an imperial decree bestowed commemorative names on the sites of the apparitions and the county.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, the god of Mount Hsüan-tu was enfeoffed as Duke of [the Heaven of] Jade Purity (Yü-ch'ing kung 玉清公). Mundane rewards followed suit: the county magistrate was presented with the crimson [robe] and the fish bag (*fei yü-tai* 緋魚袋) (the paraphernalia of court rank). Tu Kuang-t'ing himself lists the full array of his recently acquired titles:

We<sup>24</sup> respectfully dispatch the Grand Counsellor, Conferee of the Golden [Seal] and Purple [Ribbon] (*chin-tzu kuang-tu ta-fu* 金紫光祿大夫) and Imperial Remonstrator of the Left (*tso chien-i ta-fu* 左諫議大夫), Master of Broad Accomplishment (Kuang-ch'eng hsien-sheng 廣成先生) and Duke of Ts'ai Principality (蔡國公), Tu Kuang-t'ing, and others numbering twelve, with offerings of pledges (*hsin* 信), money, incense, and flowers,<sup>25</sup> to celebrate the Golden Register ritual (*chin-lu tao-ch'ang* 金錄道場)<sup>26</sup> at the Temple of the Immortals of Purple Aurora, in accordance with the canons of the mysterious liturgy.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>21</sup> A ceremony to announce the completion of the Temple [of the Immortals] of Purple Aurora (Tzu-hsia [hsien] kuan 紫霞 [仙] 觀) constructed on the site; see *KCC* 12, pp. 6a-7b. The prayer formed part of a liturgical memorial (*tz'u* 詞) of the type discussed below.

<sup>22</sup> Here identified as "commissioner of local militia" (*t'uan-lien shih* 團練使) in Li-chou.

<sup>23</sup> Thus Mount Hsüan-tu, previously known as Mount Tao-ch'ang 道長山, was named after the celestial capital; Yang-mo Cavern became Purple Aurora Cavern (Tzu-hsia tung 紫霞洞), after a celestial realm of immortals; Ching-ku County became County of Precious Immortals, Chin-hsien hsien 金仙縣.

<sup>24</sup> Tu Kuang-t'ing assumes here the voice of the patron of the ritual, who also commissioned the composition of the present memorial.

<sup>25</sup> A virtually identical formula is used today to engage the services of a priest; cf. Kristofer Schipper, "Tokō no shokunō ni kansuru ni san no kōsatsu" 「都功」の職能に関する二、三の考察, in Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, ed., *Dōkyō no sōgō teki kenkyū* 道教の総合的研究 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1977), pp. 265-67.

<sup>26</sup> I.e., the Golden Register Retreat intended for the protection of the emperor and the security of the nation; see *Tao-men ting-chih* 道門定制 (pref. 1188, 1201), compiled by Lü Yüan-su 呂元素, ed. Hu Hsiang-lung 胡湘麓, in *TT* 973-75, ch. 6, p. 1b, citing Tu Kuang-t'ing.

<sup>27</sup> *KCC* 12, p. 7a.

## INVESTITURE

While Wang Chien was in the process of establishing a foothold in Szechwan, contemporary accounts began to attribute a supernatural aura to his and his fellow campaigners' military feats and incipient government. Thus Shan Hsing-chang 山行章 (d. 897), an adjutant in Wang Chien's camp, interpreted his master's prophetic dream vision of "a dark-robed deity (*ch'ing-i* 青衣) with wide-open mouth" ten days before Wang's protracted siege of Ch'eng-tu ended in the desperate city's capitulation on September 30, 891,<sup>28</sup> as follows:

"Ch'ing-i" is a place name in Shu.<sup>29</sup> There is also a god Ch'ing-i whose shrine is within the ramparts [of Ch'eng-tu].<sup>30</sup> At present, the people inside the city walls "exchange their children to eat"<sup>31</sup> and the soldiers "weep while guarding the battlements."<sup>32</sup> I should call it the extreme of destitution. The shrines and ancestral temples are undoubtedly short of offerings. The fact that now the mouth of the god Ch'ing-i is open, means that the territorial deity (*t'u-ti* 土地) seeks offerings from you, sir. He also opens his lips and reveals his teeth as a sign of his sincerity.<sup>33</sup>

The second decisive step in Wang Chien's conquest of Shu was the capture of the prefectural city of P'eng-chou 彭州 (present P'eng-hsien 縣), on the northern edge of the Ch'eng-tu plain. The walled city was finally taken in the summer of 894, after a siege lasting almost two and a half years.<sup>34</sup> A few weeks before the surrender of P'eng-chou,

<sup>28</sup> *TCTC* 258, pp. 8417-18.

<sup>29</sup> The native region of the Ch'iang 羌 people in Ming-shan 名山; see Ku Chieh-kang 顧頡剛, *Lun Pa Shu yü chung-yüan ti kuan-hsi* 論巴蜀與中原的關係, in *Pa Shu shih yen-chiu ts'ung-shu* 巴蜀史研究叢書 (Ch'eng-tu: Ssu-ch'uan jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1981), pp. 42-43. See also Rolf A. Stein, "Remarques sur les mouvements du taoïsme politico-religieux au II<sup>e</sup> siècle ap. J.-C.," *TP* 50 (1963), p. 22.

<sup>30</sup> A Szechwanese god of silkworms, associated with Ts'an Ts'ung 蠶叢; see Lo Pi 羅泌, *Lu-shih* 路史 (1170), in *Wen-yüan ko Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* 文苑閣四庫全書 (photolithographic rpt.; Taipei: Taiwan Kuang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1985-1986; hereafter cited as *SKCS*), vol. 383, ch. 4, p. 5a. The commentary by the author, or his son Lo P'ing 苹, concerning the dark-robed guardian deity of Ts'an Ts'ung's tumulus, reads: "This is today's god Ch'ing-i of Ch'eng-tu."

<sup>31</sup> *Tso-chuan*, Hsüan 15 (Yang Po-chün 楊伯峻, ed., *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan chu* 春秋左傳注 [Peking: Chung-hua, 1981], p. 761): When Sung 宋 was besieged by Ch'u 楚, its desperate inhabitants "exchanged their children to eat [to avoid butchering their own offspring] and broke their bones for kitchen fuel."

<sup>32</sup> *Tso-chuan*, Hsüan 12 (*Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-chuan chu*, p. 718): When the Viscount of Ch'u besieged Cheng 鄭, "the population waited [at the royal ancestral temple]. Those who guarded the battlements wept [at their stations of duty]."

<sup>33</sup> Ho Kuang-yüan 何光遠 (fl. 938), *Chien-chieh lu* 鑑戒錄, in *Hsüeh-chin Pao-yüan* 學津討原 (1805 edn.) 6, p. 6b.

<sup>34</sup> See *TCTC* 259, pp. 8427, 8435.

[Wang Chien] temporarily returned to Ch'eng-tu. It was the height of summer. The military and civilian officers in his retinue went about on leave. General Tu K'o-hsiu 杜克脩 reached the emplacement of the Divine Kings (*shen-wang* 神王) [sculpture of Ch'ien-yüan Temple 乾元觀]<sup>35</sup> first. Seeing that a crowd had gathered and was gazing at the sculpture, [Tu K'o-hsiu] inquired the reason and was told that the figures of the gods had moved. K'o-hsiu scooped up some water in a bowl which he conveyed into the hand of one of the deities. It did indeed shake and water spilled out. Presently, the Prince of Shu (that is, Wang Chien)<sup>36</sup> arrived on the scene. Again he invoked the gods and made the experiment, saying: "If I shall capture P'eng-chou, let us witness another sign by shaking." After a while, [the statue] shook repeatedly. Less than a month later [Wang Chien] scaled the walls of the prefectural city and annihilated the enemy.<sup>37</sup>

To report such omens was not necessarily to suggest that Wang possessed a mandate to secede from the T'ang. His acquisition of a supernatural aura accorded in fact with the notion that the emperor's divine power extended down to and was shared by his local representatives, including county magistrates. Once Wang Chien had gained control of the Ch'eng-tu plain, he rose formally through the ranks of the official local hierarchy.<sup>38</sup> Thus he derived nominal authority to conduct his campaign in Shu from the imperial commissions conferred on him, willy-nilly, by Hsi-tsung. The inscription discussed below exemplifies this loyalist posture adopted by Wang Chien and his supporters Deputy Governor Chang Lin 張琳 (d. before 908) and the magistrate of Ch'ing-ch'eng County, Mo T'ing-i 莫庭乂, during the conquest of Shu.

### The Chang-jen kuan Inscription

Tu Kuang-t'ing's stele inscription "On the Merit Acquired by the Restoration of the Various Temples at Mount Ch'ing-ch'eng" was composed in 895 for the Chang-jen Temple.<sup>39</sup> It not only extolled Mo T'ing-i's

<sup>35</sup> On the site of Ch'eng-tu's Silk Worm Market; see Chü Ch'ing-yüan 鞠清遠, "T'ang Sung shih-tai Ssu-ch'uan ti ts'an-shih" 唐宋時代四川的蠶市, *Shih-kuo pan-yüeh k'an* 食貨半月刊 3.6 (1936), p. 29.

<sup>36</sup> The author anachronistically uses the title conferred on Wang in 903. See below.

<sup>37</sup> *LYC* 9, pp. 9a-b.

<sup>38</sup> Beginning with his appointment as [acting] military governor of Hsi-ch'uan in 891 (see *TCTC* 258, p. 8420) and culminating in the title Prince of Shu in 903 (ibid. 264, p. 8613).

<sup>39</sup> *Hsiu Ch'ing-ch'eng shan chu-kuan kung-te chi* 修齊城山諸觀功德記 (hereafter cited as *HCCS*), in *Ch'üan T'ang wen* 全唐文 932, pp. 14a-18a. A stele bearing this inscription was erected in the precincts of the Chang-jen Temple in 897, according to Yang Shen 楊慎, *Ch'üan Shu i-wen*

temple benefactions, but also eulogized the magistrate's sage administration of the surrounding county, in the service of Wang Chien.

The text links Mo's successful local government in several ways to his support for the rising regional authorities. The abundant wealth of the county is attributed to waterworks initiated by the Chief Minister and Director-in-Chief of Instruction Master Wang (that is, Wang Chien)<sup>40</sup> and the Deputy Governor Master Chang (that is, Chang Lin),<sup>41</sup> and secured by Mo T'ing-i himself.<sup>42</sup> Chang Lin already enjoyed a reputation as a hydraulic engineer, and is said to have ranked in popular affection with one of the most revered local leaders in preceding centuries.<sup>43</sup> As for Wang Chien, the waterworks undertaken on his initiative could not fail to evoke the very origin of the region's ancient irrigation system under the celebrated rule of the Warring States hero Li Ping 李冰 (ca. 250 B.C.).<sup>44</sup>

The inscription goes on to record that during the P'eng-chou campaign (892-894),

when the Chief Minister's (that is, Wang Chien's) troops lay up against the enemy walls in Chiu-lung 九隴 (that is, P'eng-chou)<sup>45</sup> for more than a year, [Mo T'ing-i] dispatched shipments of supplies wheel-to-wheel and oar-to-oar and superintended the delivery of funds in endless [convoys] along the roads. His operations allowed for no delay; his actions succeeded without fail. His divine government was just like that of Kung-sha Mu 公沙穆 (fl. A.D. 155)!<sup>46</sup>

The following explication of the term *kung-te* 功德, merit-and-virtue, which figures in the title of the inscription, also seems to evoke a Han ideal:

*chih* 全蜀藝文志 (1541) (Chang-shih hsiao shu-lou 張氏小書樓 edn. of 1817) 52A, p. 8a. The latter however wrongly attributes the inscription to the contemporary Taoist and alchemist Cheng Ao 鄭遨 (866-939).

<sup>40</sup> The honorific "director-in-chief of instruction" (*ssu-t'u* 司徒) was among the titles conferred on Wang in 891; see *Hsin Wu-tai shih* 63, p. 785.

<sup>41</sup> For this identification, compare his name and titles in *KCC* 10, p. 3a, and 13, p. 1a.

<sup>42</sup> *HCCS*, pp. 16a-b.

<sup>43</sup> See Wu Jen-ch'en 吳任臣, *Shih-kuo ch'un-ch'iu* 十國春秋 (1678) (Peking: Chung-hua, 1983) 40, p. 597, which compares Chang Lin with Chang-ch'iu Chien-ch'üang 章仇兼瓊, the renowned military governor of Szechwan in the K'ai-yüan period (713-742).

<sup>44</sup> On the local cult of Li Ping, see Huang Chih-kang 黃芝崗, *Chung-kuo ti shui-shen* 中國的水神 (1934; rpt. Taipei: Tung-fang wen-hua shu-chü, 1973), pp. 14-27.

<sup>45</sup> See Hu San-hsing's 胡三省 commentary (1285) in *TCTC* 259, p. 8432.

<sup>46</sup> *HCCS*, pp. 17a. Kung-sha Mu: the self-sacrificing local administrator of the Later Han period whose supernatural insight saved the inhabitants of Hung-nung 弘農 prefecture (Honan) from an inundation. He is said to have been revered as a divine being (*shen-ming* 神明); see *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1963) 82B, p. 2730. Ngo Van Huyet, trans., *Divination, magic et politique dans la Chine ancienne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976), pp. 109-11.

the eclectic world view that had permitted Taoism and Confucianism to combine forces in shaping the ideology of the early imperial state.<sup>47</sup>

Regarding merit-and-virtue, in Taoism "merit" reaches the dead and the living, while "virtue" both shelters and nurtures.<sup>48</sup> In Confucianism "merit" defends against disasters and "virtue" wards off calamities. In practicing the Way, the gentleman [Mo T'ing-i] conforms to the first; in conducting the affairs of government, to the second. Abundant, vast are his merit-and-virtue!<sup>49</sup>

As though to forestall any suspicion of sycophancy, Tu Kuang-t'ing concludes with the following flourish: "Having long known [Mo T'ing-i's] fragrant reputation, and having earlier inspected his reverent restorations, Kuang-t'ing set out the truth of the matter and did not venture to flatter. Recorded by Tu Kuang-t'ing on October 11, 895."

#### *Personal Destiny Rituals*

According to the Chang-jen kuan inscription, Taoist rituals performed in the newly restored temples of Mount Ch'ing-ch'eng were unfailingly efficacious and enabled sincere worshipers "to commune with divine beings and bring down blessings upon the nation."<sup>50</sup>

A variety of sources indicates that governors, prefects, magistrates, and members of the imperial family all patronized Taoist rituals on their own behalf and for one another. In one account, Tu Kuang-t'ing emphasizes the virtual impossibility for the Taoist clergy to resist such patronage in high official quarters: the prefecture of Ch'ung-chou 邛州 (modern Ch'ung-lai 嶺, fifty miles southwest of Ch'eng-tu) has organized a Taoist Retreat (*chai* 齋) that is expected to draw crowds even from surrounding prefectures. At the last moment, a Taoist adept discovers a Buddhist plot to hire a band of

"rustics" to pose as Taoist representatives from different parts of the province in a sham religious debate. This embarrassment can only be averted by divine intervention, for the Taoist officiants are powerless to cancel a ritual ordered by a prefect and approved by a military governor.<sup>51</sup>

Taoist rituals sponsored by the political authorities were typically consecrated to the Personal Destiny (*pen-ming* 本命)<sup>52</sup> of a public figure, with the expectation of benefits accruing to those in his charge as well. Patrons of Taoist rituals of state would supplicate, like the emperor himself, for timely rain, successful harvests, and the peace and prosperity of the nation.

Liturgical memorials dating from the founding years of the Shu kingdom yield further insight into the nature of the relationship between the secular hierarchy and the Taoist priest already suggested by the Chang-jen Temple inscription.

A class of documents of particular interest is the so-called Green Supplications (*ch'ing-tz'u* 青詞), memorials originally inscribed in vermilion ink on green bamboo.<sup>53</sup> In T'ang and Sung times, green rattan paper (*t'eng-chih* 藤紙) was used.<sup>54</sup> *Ch'ing-tz'u* were sent off by sacrificial burning as part of every Taoist service. They contained, in particular, the ritual's Intention (*i* 意), a prayer that set out the occasion, patronage, and cost of the ceremony, as well as, among other things, the type and length of the ritual, its degree of solemnity, and the number of co-celebrating priests. For rituals sponsored by the emperor, and on other important occasions, a Supplication composed by an academican was officially issued from the palace. Copies of Green Supplications appear to have been retained for the record, perhaps of the

<sup>51</sup> LYC 8, pp. 8a–9a.

<sup>52</sup> Determined by the constellation at the time of the individual's birth. The object of the ritual was to propitiate the associated star cum spirit (*pen-ming hsing* 星 / *shen* 神), including the ritual payment of Personal Destiny Money (*pen-ming ch'ien* 錢); see Ching-lang Hou, *Monnaies d'offrandes et la notion de trésorerie dans la religion chinoise* (Paris: Collège de France, 1975), pp. 107–16. The following story illustrates the belief underlying the ritual: Lu Wei 盧蔚 is prophesied a premature death unless he makes an Offering for his Personal Destiny. At first he lends no credence to the admonition. At the age of twenty-five, however, he falls critically ill. He is summoned to the underworld in a dream and there encounters the *pen-ming shen*. Lu repents and is released. See version of LYC in *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* 雲笈七籤, in TT 677–702, ch. 120, pp. 14a–15a. Prayers for rituals commissioned by Lu Wei, and corresponding to those demanded in the devotional tale, survive in KCC 4, pp. 16b–18a.

<sup>53</sup> See *Tao-men ting-chih* 6, pp. 8a–b, and Chin Yün-chung 金允中 (fl. 1225), *Shang-ch'ing ling-pao ta-fa* 上清靈寶大法, in TT 963–72, ch. 24, pp. 5b–14b.

<sup>54</sup> See Li Chao 李肇, *Han-lin chih* 翰林志 (819) (*Han-yüan ch'ün-shu* 翰苑叢書 edn.; rpt. in *Chih-pu-tsu chai ts'ung-shu*) A, p. 4a. On rattan paper, see P'an Chi-hsing 潘吉星, *Chung-kuo tsao-chih chi-shu shih-kao* 中國造紙技術史稿 (Peking: Wen-wu, 1979), p. 59, and Tsien Tsuen-hsuin, *Paper and Printing*, vol. 5, t in J. Needham, ed., *Science and Civilization in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1985), pp. 54–56.

<sup>47</sup> See Anna K. Seidel, "Imperial Treasures and Taoist Sacraments: Taoist Roots in the Apocrypha," in M. Strickmann, ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein* (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1983) 2, pp. 291–371.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. the phrase in the abdication decree by Kao-tsu 高祖 (r. 618–626), the founder of the T'ang, concerning his son T'ai-tung 太宗 (r. 626–649): "His merit reaches the sky, his virtue embraces the universe." Howard J. Wechsler, trans., *Offerings of Jade and Silk* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1985), p. 102.

<sup>49</sup> HCCS, p. 17b. The term denotes both religious merit acquired by virtuous deeds (Sanskrit *punya*) and the beneficial power and moral excellence of a prince. The title of the inscription might also have been suggested by the office of the Buddhist commissioner of good works, *hsiu kung-te shih* 修功德使, which had in recent centuries been filled by lay patrons. See Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1987), pp. 85–86.

<sup>50</sup> HCCS, p. 16a.

sponsor. Samples and models of the genre found their way into both liturgical manuals and the collected writings of T'ang and Sung literati.<sup>65</sup>

The Green Supplications composed by Tu Kuang-t'ing on behalf of the local leaders in question reveal the politicoreligious purpose behind the stately rhetoric of the stele inscription.

Most of the surviving Supplications were commissioned either by Wang Chien himself or by the patron of a ritual celebrated on his behalf. Thirteen of the extant documents were, on the other hand, commissioned by Mo T'ing-i, some to be dispatched in rituals on the magistrate's own Personal Destiny Day (*pen-ming jih* 本命日),<sup>66</sup> others in Offerings to the astral deities responsible for his destiny and life span,<sup>67</sup> for example the Southern Dipper (*nan-tou* 南斗),<sup>68</sup> the Nine Luminaries (*chiu-yao* 九曜),<sup>69</sup> the Celestial Palace (*t'ien-fu* 天符),<sup>60</sup> or the Entire Firmament (*chou-t'ien* 周天).<sup>61</sup>

An additional three rituals sponsored by Mo T'ing-i on behalf of the Personal Destiny of Deputy Commissioner Chang [Lin] are attested by extant Intentions. The Supplications composed by Tu Kuang-t'ing for these occasions extol Chang Lin's selfless and loyal exploits before the powers of fate.<sup>62</sup>

Personal Destiny rituals that were applied to the political, military, and administrative leadership served a purpose similar to that of the great communal rites for the protection and prosperity of the state. Liturgical programs for these rituals, including numerous manuals dating from the end of the T'ang, are in fact extant.<sup>63</sup> A ritual that associated the Personal Destiny of the heir designate and the future security and welfare of the state, was celebrated repeatedly in Shu, notably under the patronage of the

eunuch T'ang I 唐嗣 (d. 918), and of the emperor himself for his son and eventual successor Wang Yen 王衍 (898-925).<sup>64</sup>

By obtaining divine protection for community leaders, Personal Destiny rituals in fact conferred a form of investiture. An example of this is the Personal Destiny ritual celebrated at the Ko-kuei Diocese 葛嶺治 (near P'eng-chou) by Tu Kuang-t'ing on behalf of Wang Chien in the year of Wang's accession to power (907).<sup>65</sup>

The year coincided with Wang's Original Destiny (*yuan-ming* 元命), a full sexagenary cycle after his birth (847). The ecclesiastical division of the Szechwan region into twenty-four domains or "dioceses" (*chih* 治), dating from the institution of the Celestial Master state in the second century of our era, correlated in a system of multiple correspondences the principal sacred site of each diocese with astronomical, calendrical, and other categories. The sexagenary characters designating Ko-kuei Diocese (*ting-mao* 丁卯) corresponded, inter alia, to those of the years 847 and 907.<sup>66</sup> In celebrating at Ko-kuei Diocese the coincidence of Wang's Original Destiny year with the foundation of the new kingdom, the ritual affirmed a cosmological sanction for his rule in Shu, at the same time alluding to a sacred antecedent of regional independence. This particular celebration was not a fanciful innovation, but formed part of the traditional liturgy of the imperial cult.<sup>67</sup>

Following is a passage from the Supplication written by Tu Kuang-t'ing for an Offering to the Entire Firmament sponsored by Mo T'ing-i on behalf of Wang Chien. On the basis of its historical references, this text can be dated to the decade 894-904:

Your servant [Mo T'ing-i] humbly considers that to assist the sage [emperor] and render meritorious service is to no avail unless you are worthy (*hsien* 賢); and that to offer support in danger and come to the rescue from peril is to no advantage unless you are virtuous (*te* 德).

<sup>65</sup> See *KCC* 5, pp. 5b-6a, and 2, pp. 2a-b, respectively. The latter ceremony ended on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, i.e., the Chung-yüan festival, as well as the prince's birthday (see *LIC* 5, p. 6a), of a year between 913 and 918. The liturgy probably resembled the Retreat and Offering for the Birthday of the Heir Designate (*P'ai-tzu Chiang-tan* 太子降誕), a ritual lasting seven days and nights, which is found in the Ming edn. of Tu Kuang-t'ing's *T'ai-shang Huang-lu Chai-i* 太上黃籙齋儀 (pref. dated 880 to 901), in *TT* 270-77, ch. 10-12. The author is grateful to Kristofer Schipper for evidence concerning the spurious attribution of this version.

<sup>66</sup> See *KCC* 9, pp. 11a-12a.

<sup>67</sup> See *Tung-t'ien fu-li yüeh-tu ming-shan chi* 洞天福地嶽竇名山記 (901), in *TT* 331, pp. 11b-12a. On the correlative system involved in this ritual, see also Edouard Chavannes, "Le jet des dragons," *Mémoires concernant l'Asie Orientale* 3 (1919), p. 212, n. 145.

<sup>68</sup> See, e.g., Edouard Chavannes, *Le T'ai chan* (Paris: Musée Guimet, 1910), pp. 234-35.

<sup>65</sup> See, e.g., Tu Kuang-t'ing's *KCC* 4-17, and Ou-yang Hsiu's 歐陽修 (1007-1072) *Ou-yang Wen-chung kung chi* 歐陽文忠公集 (SPJK edn.) 82-88, passim. On the latter, see also Ronald C. Egan, *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu (1007-1072)* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1984), p. 65, and James T. C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh Century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1967), p. 155.

<sup>66</sup> Recurring days of reckoning of one's good and evil deeds. See *Chai-chieh lu* 齋戒錄 (7th c.), in *TT* 207, p. 9a; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 3a, 11a.

<sup>67</sup> See Ching-lang Hou, "The Chinese Belief in Baleful Stars," in H. Welch and A. Seidel, eds., *Facets of Taoism* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1979), pp. 208, 228.

<sup>68</sup> In Sagittarius. See *KCC* 9, pp. 12a-13a.

<sup>69</sup> I.e., the five planets, the sun and the moon, and two imaginary "dark planets." See *KCC* 10, pp. 10a-b.

<sup>60</sup> Of the Nine Palaces, *chiu-kung t'ien-fu* 九宮天符. See *KCC* 13, pp. 2a-b.

<sup>61</sup> See *KCC* 6, pp. 11a-12a; 10, pp. 9a-10a.

<sup>62</sup> See *KCC* 6, pp. 8b-9b; 10, pp. 3a-4a; 13, pp. 1a-2a, respectively.

<sup>63</sup> Many of these were saved by Tu Kuang-t'ing from the upheavals of his period. See Verellen, *Du Guangting*, esp. the chaps. "Sauvetage du canon" and "Répertoire: 3. Editions et éditions."

Through his sense of duty (*i* 義), Military Governor Wang [Chien]<sup>68</sup> communicates with the divine; his loyalty safeguards the realm. Thanks to his brilliant display of military strategy, the former reign [of Emperor Hsi-tsung] (873–888) was restored to legitimacy.<sup>69</sup> Owing to the rousing inspiration of his benevolent government, the present sage [Emperor Chao-tsung 昭宗 (r. 888–904)] administers peace. For his abundant merit, he was awarded this great regional command (*chen* 鎮) [in 891].<sup>70</sup>

In the interim, the imperial palaces had been recovered and the evil ravages [of the Huang Ch'ao rebellion] extirpated [in 885]. Then the expedition to the land of Ch'in 秦 (that is, Feng-hsiang 鳳翔, in western Shensi) took place, and the punitive campaign to the streams of Pao 褒 (that is, Hsing-yüan 興元, modern Han-chung 漢中, in south-western Shensi) [in 886].<sup>71</sup> [Finally Wang Chien] swept out Yung-Shu 庸蜀 [in 891] and thoroughly pacified T'ien-P'eng 天彭 [in 894].<sup>72</sup>

Outside [Wang Chien] calms his borders, below he quells insurrection. Despite himself, he has therefore still not been able to discard his arms. Now when it comes to displaying the power of the Son of Heaven, and to wielding the general's battle-ax, all depends on expediency and only opportunity matters. Yet, having committed the sin of bloodshed (*hsin-chiu* 鬻咎), through deliberate killings and fortuitous injuries, [Wang Chien] is anxious lest his faults have been recorded in the celestial bureau or terrestrial archives. Fearful, moreover, of inspection (*lin* 臨)<sup>73</sup> by the heavenly luminaries, and that his life might be in danger, or that his allotted years may be diminished, or that his

domain (*fen-yeh* 分野)<sup>74</sup> be balefully affected, he urgently and fully repents and makes this confession in the hope of remission.<sup>75</sup>

The Offering, then, was performed on behalf of the ascending ruler's destiny, in propitiation of the souls of those killed in Wang Chien's war of conquest. The liturgical theme is once again illustrated in a literary narrative by the same author concerning a magistrate who, after having put down a military mutiny in his county, is haunted by a local deity invoked by the families of the soldiers whom he had sent to their execution.<sup>76</sup>

The ethic of the present ritual stands, despite the Confucian virtues also attributed to the founding king, in the tradition of Buddhist rituals of expiation for sufferings inflicted in war. The prototype of the royal remorse for the karmic and ethical cost of conquest expressed in Wang Chien's Taoist prayer is the rock inscription of the Indian Maurya emperor Asoka (273?–237? B.C.), in which the first Buddhist ruler repented the killings, woundings, and deportations incurred in the annexation of the state of Kalinga.<sup>77</sup>

The liturgy appears to be inspired by the Buddhist requiem services held on battlefields throughout the empire in the early days of the T'ang for the lives taken in the founding of that dynasty:<sup>78</sup> if the ritual disposal of the victims of war is an intrinsically serious social and religious concern, their desecration would indeed carry political risks as well,<sup>79</sup> a fortiori when the legitimacy and moral vigor of a new state are at stake.

## THE SACRED REALM

Tu Kuang-t'ing received considerable religious and political honors under the Shu, including an appointment to the senior post of Vice-President of the Board of Finance (*hu-pu shih-lang* 戶部侍郎) in 916. In the eighth

<sup>68</sup> Emended for "Wang mou" 某, i.e., "Wang so-and-so." The word *mou*, used in liturgical texts to indicate variable elements, frequently replaces personal names in the present corpus of documents which was transmitted primarily as a collection of models of the genre.

<sup>69</sup> This is a reference to the restoration of 885.

<sup>70</sup> See n. 38 above. Cf. also the notion of merit and virtue in the Chang-jen kuan inscription discussed above.

<sup>71</sup> Allusions to the second exile of Emperor Hsi-tsung after the ill-fated return to Ch'ang-an in 885: on January 31, 886, the court fled from the approaching army of Li K'o-yung 李克用 (856–908) to Feng-hsiang (see *TCTC* 256, p. 8328). During the dangerous flight onward to Hsing-yüan, in the third month of 886, Wang Chien distinguished himself by his personal service to the emperor (see *Hsin Wu-tai shih* 63, p. 784).

<sup>72</sup> Yung-Shu: region corresponding to modern Szechwan and the western part of modern Hupeh, i.e., "Shu." T'ien-P'eng: mountains in modern P'eng County. The reference seems to be to Wang Chien's conquest of the respective administrative seats, Ch'eng-tu and P'eng-chou, the decisive steps in the consolidation of his control of the Shu region.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. the imperial almanac *Ch'in-tung hsieh-chi pien-fang shu* 欽定協紀辨方書 (presented in 1741; in *SKCS*, vol. 811), ch. 6, pp. 6a–7a, "inspection days" (*lin jih* 臨日).

<sup>74</sup> *Fen-yeh*: a "lot" on earth, subject to the influence of a corresponding section of the sky.

<sup>75</sup> *KCC* 6, p. 10a. Cf. the *SKCS* edn. (vol. 1084) 6, p. 8a. The latter breaks off after the place corresponding to the words "military governor" in the second paragraph of the above translation, and erroneously continues with the text corresponding to ch. 6, p. 8a, ll. 5ff., in the *TT* edn.

<sup>76</sup> See *LIC* 4, pp. 7b–9a.

<sup>77</sup> See the Thirteenth Inscription, trans. Jules Bloch, *Les inscriptions d'Asoka*, Collection Emile Senart (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1950), pp. 125–32.

<sup>78</sup> See Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, p. 13. A later, Tibetan example is attested ca. 800 A.D. in a text from Tun-huang. See Bloch, *Les inscriptions*, p. 30, n. 1.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. the warning addressed by the seer Tiresias to the tyrant Creon in Sophocles' *Antigone*, ll. 1080 ff.: "And all the cities that you fought in war / whose sons had burial from wild beasts, or dogs, / or birds that brought the stench of your great wrong / back to each hearth, they move against you now." E. Wyckoff, trans., *Sophocles I*, in D. Grene and R. Lattimore, eds., *The Complete Greek Tragedies* (Chicago: U. of Chicago P., 1954), p. 195.



month of 923, his spiritual and temporal careers reached their summit simultaneously with the Wang family's royal pretensions. At that time, Tu conferred a Taoist ordination on Wang Yen (r. 918-925), the second emperor of Shu, and for his part received the title Celestial Master Transmitting Perfection (*ch'uan-chen t'ien-shih* 傳真天師).<sup>80</sup> Tu's last acts as court Taoist before the collapse of the Former Shu kingdom in 925 were concerned with the institution of an official cult of Taoist saints and immortals purportedly belonging to the ruling family's Wang lineage.

Another characteristic function performed by Tu Kuang-t'ing at the court of Shu was to compile and interpret a record of the kingdom's "sacred geography." In the tradition of Chinese correlative cosmology, the domain of the Son of Heaven was perceived to be demarcated by holy places. These included natural features, such as mountains and rivers, endowed with numinous qualities, as well as their transformations by culture heroes. The legends and cults associated with these sacred sites were systematized and celebrated by the court Taoist.<sup>81</sup> Local traditions of diverse cultural and religious provenance and their followings could thereby be drawn into the orbit of the, relatively speaking, central imperial cult.

#### *A Capital Fit for Emperors*

The following prophecy concerning Wang Chien's royal ascendancy in Shu was disseminated by Tu Kuang-t'ing in his *Record of Marvels*. Tu's intermediary, Huang Ch'i 黃齊, an adjutant of the guards and a Taoist devotee who also patronized rituals for which Tu Kuang-t'ing composed the Supplications,<sup>82</sup> presumably related the revelation directly to the author:

The mountains and rivers of Shu constitute a land of great blessings. It has long been fit to serve emperors and princes as capital. Many are the sages and worthies of preceding generations who for the sake of posterity established control over its hills and waters and breached its impasses with arteries of communications. I know every corner of this region.

<sup>80</sup> For an outline of the tradition of this ritual of reciprocal investiture, see Anna Seidel, "Le Fils du ciel et le Maître céleste: Note à propos des 'registres' taoïques," *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan* 24 (1979), pp. 119-27.

<sup>81</sup> For an example of this hagiographic procedure, see F. Verellen, "Luo Gongyuan: Légende et culte d'un saint taoïste," *JA* 275 (1987), pp. 283-332.

<sup>82</sup> See *KCC* 4, pp. 12b-13b.

Now if you removed "insect" (*ch'ung* 蟲) from the character "Shu" 蜀 and wrote "metal" (*chin* 金) [in its place],<sup>83</sup> that would correspond appropriately to "metal virtue" (*chin-te* 金德).<sup>84</sup> [Wang Chien and his descendants] will rule in perpetuity as kings over this western region, and all the world shall bow to them. You should announce this for me.<sup>85</sup>

The circumstances of the revelation are set out in some detail: Huang Ch'i first encountered the prophet in the Ch'ao-t'ien Range 朝天嶺, the formidable mountain barrier between Shu and the north, traversed only by narrow defiles. On that occasion an apparition with the looks of a Taoist immortal<sup>86</sup> announced to Huang that he would one day rescue him from grave danger. Later, when Huang's boat capsized and sank in the Yangtze gorges, the equally forbidding gateway between Shu and the east, he was indeed saved by the old man. Eventually, after meeting again at Shih-fang (see above) and traveling together a magically foreshortened distance through a mysterious forest, Huang was kept overnight at the immortal's abode at Hou-ch'eng 後城.<sup>87</sup> There he was entrusted with the prophecy. Upon his return, he did communicate the message to others, but "lacked the means to report it up or make it widely known." A few months later he died.<sup>88</sup>

The immortal's earlier apparitions along the periphery and natural frontier of Shu, his familiarity with the region's topography and early myths, and, not least, his choice of the site of the revelation, all established his credentials as a tutelary saint of Shu. The affirmation of the new kingdom's "metal virtue" not only claimed divine sanction for Wang Chien's local regime, but even suggested that it was the only legitimate successor to the T'ang dynasty. It is not surprising that the passage containing the im-

<sup>83</sup> For a recent precedent of "character interpretation" as evidence of political legitimacy, cf. Howard S. Levy, *Biography of Huang Ch'ao*, Chinese Dynastic Histories Translations 5 (Berkeley: U. of California, Institute of East Asiatic Studies, 1955), pp. 27-30.

<sup>84</sup> According to the "mutual begetting" theory of the Five Phases (*wu-hsing* 五行相生), metal would naturally succeed earth, the virtue of the T'ang. On the origin of dynastic virtue in early Five Phases theory, see Michael Loewe, "Imperial Sovereignty: Dong Zhongshu's Contribution and His Predecessors," in S. R. Schram, ed., *Foundations and Limits of State Power in China* (Hong Kong: Chinese U. of Hong Kong P., 1987), pp. 38-40.

<sup>85</sup> *LIC* 2, p. 6b.

<sup>86</sup> Viz., an old man with snow-white hair and whiskers, a baby complexion, and "flesh like jade."

<sup>87</sup> One of the twenty-four dioceses, and site of an earlier revelation by the deified Celestial Master himself, situated sixty-five *li* northwest of the county seat of Shih-fang. See *Tung-t'ien fu-ti yueh-tu ming-shan chi*, p. 14a.

<sup>88</sup> *LIC* 2, pp. 6a-b.

mortal's words disappeared when the story of Huang Ch'i was incorporated, along with many other, complete, excerpts from the *Lu-i chi*, into the early Sung anthology *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 太平廣記.<sup>89</sup>

### *Taoist Liturgy and Imperial Cult*

The presentation of written memorials in Taoist ritual has its roots in ancient Chinese rites of local investiture and enfeoffment. Kristofer Schipper compared, specifically, the Taoist "sacrifice of writs" to the ancient *feng* 封 ritual<sup>90</sup> "for announcing the merit of the ruling dynasty to the Heavens." Taoist rituals involving local cults and other associational structures, he remarked, served the same aim: investiture, if not of emperors, then of local leaders to whom Taoist liturgy provided a religious consecration of political power.<sup>91</sup>

Our historical evidence bears out this proposition with regard to the Taoist role in the foundation of the Shu kingdom. Enfeoffment ceremonies, involving local deities in a relationship of feudal vassalage, with the implication of allegiance owed to the king by the votaries of the cult, constituted one area of Taoist ritual participation in the founding process of the kingdom; in addition, the surviving liturgical memorials themselves accord with evidence from temple epigraphy and devotional literature to suggest a pervasive practice of conferring investiture on local and central leaders of all ranks, members of the imperial family, and the emperor himself, by means of Taoist rituals. Once consecrated, the realm and the ruling family of Shu remained the object of Taoist hagiographical speculation and liturgical services.

Whereas the central purpose of Confucian state ceremonial under the T'ang was to demonstrate the continuity of the idealized institutions of

<sup>89</sup> Completed in 978. After particularly tenacious resistance, Szechwan had only been incorporated into the Sung empire in 965. For the truncated narrative, see *T'ai-p'ing kuang-chi* 86, pp. 559-60. Further on, the editors incongruously retained the phrase "Upon his return, he did tell it to others," but omitted the remark concerning his difficulty in reporting the message up.

<sup>90</sup> On the *feng* and *shan* 禪 sacrifices see Chavannes, *Le T'ai chan*. For celebrations of the ritual under the T'ang, see also Wechsler, *Offerings of Jade and Silk*, pp. 176-89. Though concerned with legitimation, *feng* and *shan* sacrifices were held after the successful installation of a dynasty and, in theory, only in the event that universal acknowledgment of the ruler's legitimacy and merit had been established.

<sup>91</sup> See his "Taoist Ritual and Local Cults of the T'ang Dynasty," in Strickmann, ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein* 3, pp. 833-34. See also the same author's discussion of the current practice in Taiwan, "The Written Memorial in Taoist Ceremonies," in A. P. Wolf, ed., *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford: Stanford U.P., 1974), pp. 309-24.

classical antiquity,<sup>92</sup> Taoist, and at times Buddhist, imperial ritual was concerned with the component of government that would always remain susceptible to change: the dynasty.

The distinction between bureaucracy and palace is essential for an assessment of the position of Taoism within the medieval Chinese state. Taoist officials, such as the commissioners for Taoist ritual (*wei-i*), were palace appointees with no institutional basis in either the Taoist ordination hierarchy or the state bureaucracy. Like eunuchs, these religious counselors exercised their influence outside established institutional channels. Their official status was low, regardless of the esteem in which they were held by emperors. Official historiography, a product of the state bureaucracy, scarcely mentions and generally disapproves of them. Court Taoists pronounced, by means of ritual and prognostication, on the heavenly mandate of the ruling house; in view of their liturgical involvement with local associations and interest groups, they also held a key for an emperor obliged, unlike his bureaucratic minister, to campaign for grass-roots and regional support. By the same token, a local leader with imperial aspirations could inspire popular confidence and derive legitimacy through the vehicle of Taoist liturgy. The history of insurrections involving Taoist charismatic and messianic figures seems to bear out recurrent official allegations to the effect that Taoism induced not only extravagant acts of devotion, but also subversion.

Medieval local history and informal literature provide many indications of conflict between Taoists, often working in conjunction with Confucian local officials, and such indigenous cults as they deemed heterodox or "excessive" (*yin-ssu* 淫祀).<sup>93</sup> Taoists resisted sharing their power of local mobilization. Local cults that could not be readily absorbed were persecuted.

The present study suggests, on the other hand, that Taoists were also capable of fostering a sense of cultural cohesion and dignity in rural communities. They provided disparate local bodies with a liturgical framework that was universal and representative of China's high literary culture.<sup>94</sup> This

<sup>92</sup> See David McMullen, "Bureaucrats and Cosmology: The Ritual Code of T'ang China," in D. Cannadine and S. Price, eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1987), pp. 181-236.

<sup>93</sup> See examples in Miyakawa Hisayuki, "Local Cults around Mount Lu at the Time of Sun En's Rebellion," in Welch and Seidel, eds., *Facets of Taoism*, pp. 83-101, and Jean Lévi, "Les fonctionnaires et le divin: Luites de pouvoir entre divinités et administrateurs dans les contes des Six dynasties et des Tang," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 2 (1986), pp. 81-110.

<sup>94</sup> See Kristofer Schipper, "Vernacular and Classical Ritual in Taoism," *JAS* 45 (1985), p. 47.

ability helped in the founding phase of Wang Chien's regime in Shu, which not only affirmed its faith in Confucian statesmanship and Buddhist ethics, but was especially keen to demonstrate its inclusive patronage of the region's local cults.

*LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS*

- HCCS* *Hsiu Ch'ing-ch'eng shan chu-kuan kung-te chi* 修青城山諸觀功德記  
*KCC* *Kuang-ch'eng chi* 廣成集  
*LIC* *Lu-i chi* 錄異記  
*LYC* *Tao-chiao ling-yen chi* 道教靈驗記  
*SKCS* *Wen-yüan ko Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu* 文苑閣四庫全書  
*TCTC* *Tzu-chih t'ung-chien* 資治通鑑  
*TT* *Cheng-t'ung Tao-tsang* 正統道藏