



In Search of the Folk Daoists of North China

Stephen Jones

ASHGATE e-BOOK

IN SEARCH OF THE FOLK DAOISTS OF NORTH CHINA

The living practice of Daoist ritual is still only a small part of Daoist studies. Most of this work focuses on the southeast, with the vast area of north China often assumed to be a *tabula rasa* for local lay liturgical traditions. This book, based on fieldwork, challenges this assumption.

With case studies for parts of Hebei, Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Gansu provinces, Stephen Jones describes ritual sequences within funerals and temple fairs, offering details on occupational hereditary lay Daoists, temple-dwelling priests, and even amateur ritual groups. Stressing performance, Jones observes the changing ritual scene in this poor countryside, both since the 1980s and through all the tribulations of twentieth-century warfare and political campaigns. The whole vocabulary of north Chinese Daoists differs significantly from that of the southeast, which has so far dominated our image.

Largely unstudied by scholars of religion, folk Daoist ritual in north China has been a constant theme of music scholars within China. Stephen Jones places lay Daoists within the wider context of folk religious practices – including those of lay Buddhists, sectarians, and spirit mediums. This book opens up a new field for scholars of religion, ritual, music, and modern Chinese society.

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ASHGATE

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Preface

I may not be the person to write this book, but it doesn't look as if anyone else is going to, and it needs writing.

The study of religious practice in north China is beginning to catch up with that of the south, but work on Daoist ritual remains heavily weighted towards the south. I am inspired by scholars of both southern Daoism and northern religion, but in equal measure by the work of the Chinese music scholars who, since the 1930s, have quietly been doing fieldwork on local ritual traditions in the Chinese countryside.

Thus much of my material comes from Chinese scholars, mainly since the 1980s, and from my own fieldwork with them since 1986. This material is of several types. In two areas, north Shanxi and the central Hebei plain, I and my colleagues have done relatively detailed fieldwork; I can cite both my own experience of rituals, and interviews on the present and former state of ritual practice. In other parts of Shanxi and Shaanxi I have done less thorough work, perhaps just enough to gain a rough handle on local conditions. For the other areas discussed below, I cite publications by local scholars, which are themselves variable in detail. This variation in coverage is reflected here both in the text and in the many tables showing ritual sequences; it may be no bad thing to zoom in at different levels, but even the most detailed treatment below is never adequate. Always, I try my best to scrutinize the material of others, and my own, judiciously.

Since early texts in libraries, or even those in the hand-copied collections of local Daoists, can only tell a small part of the story, my focus is on performance. Thus I am mainly concerned to describe rituals as they have been performed since the 1980s, however impoverished. But of course one also wants to make the most of senior Daoists' memory and recreate as much as possible from before the 1966 Cultural Revolution, before the 1949 Communist 'Liberation', or before the 1937 Japanese invasion. Although ritual is never static, all this reflects traditions maintained since the late imperial period.

Such an approach breaks down several barriers: between temple and folk traditions, ritual and music, sinology and modern ethnography, and pre- and post-Communist eras – the '1949 barrier'. Though I sometimes include sections from my notes that contribute to explaining how ritual specialists have kept practising since the 1930s, I am not concerned here with a more general ethnography of the lives of Daoists in modern times. Rather I seek mainly to outline where they may still be active, and what kinds of rituals they perform. This presentation of fragments of the overall picture can only be a beginning, crying out for more detailed fieldwork and the more learned treatment of Daoist scholars and local historians. But such theorization must be based on fieldwork.

The ‘search’ of my title is partly inspired by a popular genre of Tang-dynasty poetry, wherein the poet embarks on an arduous climb in search of the abstruse wisdom of a mountain recluse – only he isn’t in. Typical Tang titles include ‘On seeking the hermit of West Mountain and not finding him’ 尋西山隱者不遇. Now mountain recluses, with their archetypal long white beards, are definitely not the type of Daoist I am looking for here – ‘pacing the void’ that is rural north China, my search is for ordinary peasants who perform rituals among the people; and the arduousness of the journey is more likely to entail getting stuck in endless traffic jams behind coal-lorries, and enduring banquets with cadres in unsightly modern county-towns apparently bereft of all tradition. So the concept still has a certain resonance; in the immortal words of Alan Bennett’s clergyman, ‘Some of us think life’s a little bit like that, don’t we?’

Stephen Jones
Chiswick, London, autumn 2010

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First, I must thank all the ritual specialists, villagers, and local cadres who have shared their experiences with me since 1986. I have been immensely fortunate in my trusty Chinese companions Xue Yibing and Zhang Zhentao (Music Research Institute, Beijing), with whom I shared all the delights and tribulations of fieldwork. Qiao Jianzhong, Tian Qing (both of the Music Research Institute), and Yuan Jingfang (Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing) have also been valued mentors. Other central and local scholars, mentioned in the text below, have assisted on particular fieldwork trips.

It was John Lagerwey and Ken Dean who first turned me on to modern Daoist ritual practice, and their work remains a great inspiration, along with that of C.K. Wang. Over the years I have also learnt much from discussions with Stephan Feuchtwang, Vincent Goossaert, Adam Yuet Chau, Yang Der-ruey, Tim Barrett, Susan Naquin, and Helen Rees; they rashly encouraged me to put these notes together at last, for better or worse. Vincent in particular has not only read the text meticulously, but suggested many sources (which I hereby acknowledge en masse, rather than noting them fastidiously below). John, Stephan, and Adam also made valuable comments on a draft version. The versatile Morgan Davies kindly helped prepare the maps. At Ashgate, Barbara Pretty has made a patient and painstaking editor of the manuscript.

Funding on a variety of projects in China from 1986 to 2005 came from several sources, including the British Council, the British Academy, the Leverhulme Trust, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation, SOAS, and the AHRC, to all of whom I am most grateful.

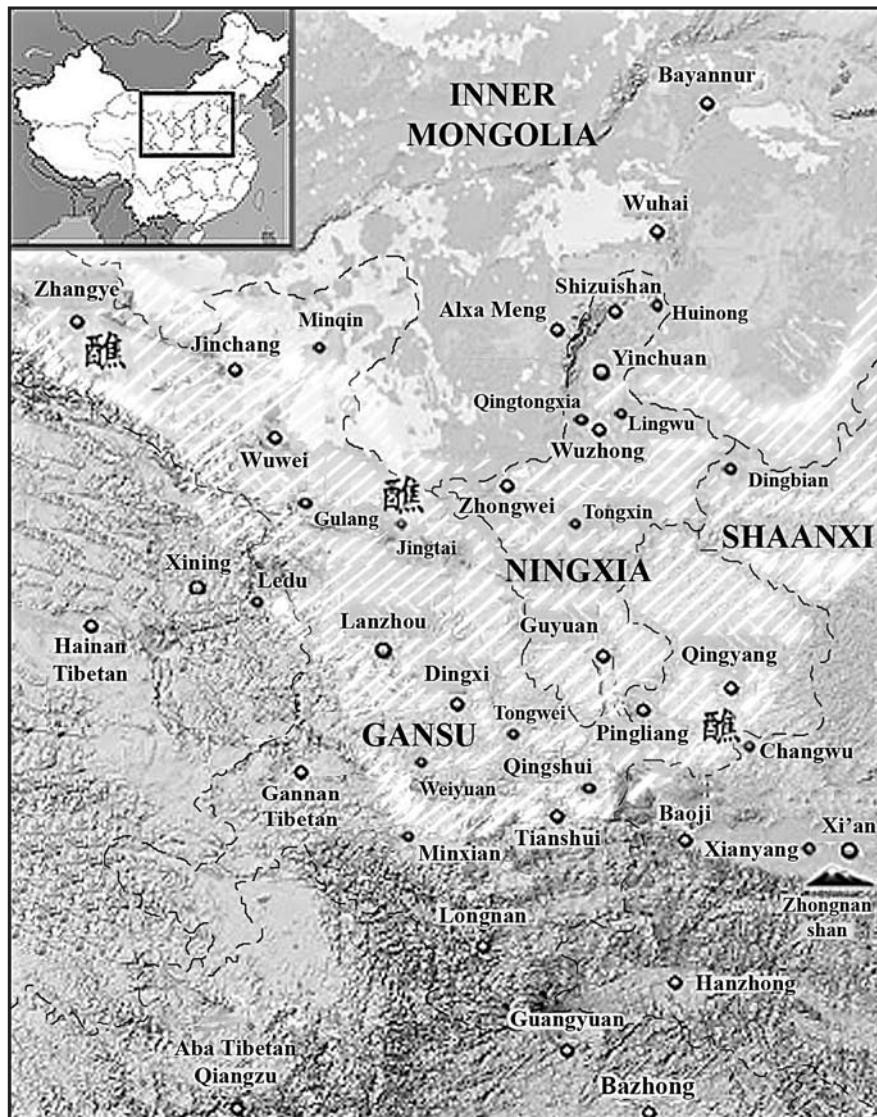
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Terms used in the text

Ages: I cite people's ages in Chinese *sui*, leaving the reader to subtract one from the number. I translate villagers' common 'xx *sui* in 19yy', subtracting a year to yield the form '(b. c19zz)'.

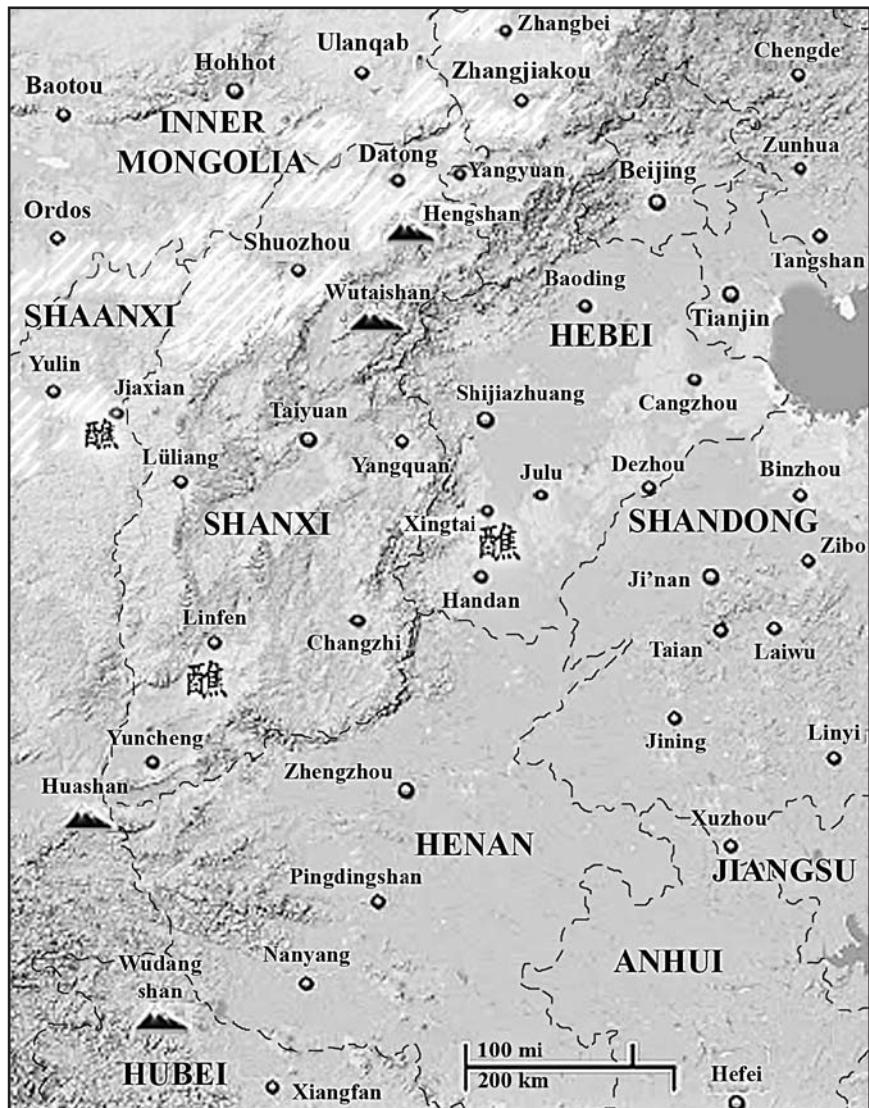
Village names: Following local custom, I use binomes for village names: thus Liangcun, Hanzhuang, but Gaoluo (cun), Baima (cun); where I don't give cun 村 or zhuang 庄, it is cun. I include other final characters for settlements, such as bu 堡, tun屯, and wu 務, in the village name: Mojiabu, Shizitun, Lijiawu. In the text I translate prefixes like Upper (Shang), Lower (Xia), North (Bei), South (Nan), East (Dong), and West (Xi); in the Glossary–Index such names appear under the *pinyin* terms.

Calendar and dates: I use the form '1st moon 15th' etc., using the term 'moon' to render the lunar months still universally used in the Chinese countryside to denote dates in the ritual calendar. The Chinese New Year generally falls around late January–early February.



Map 1 North China

Besides larger cities, the map shows some of the counties for which Daoist activity is described in the book. A single county, shown here by a mere dot for the county-town, is an area comprising several hundred villages, many of which have active groups of ritual specialists. Moreover, many of the counties not shown here are also likely to have groups that practise beneath the radar of scholars. On several online map sites, you can zoom further into villages.



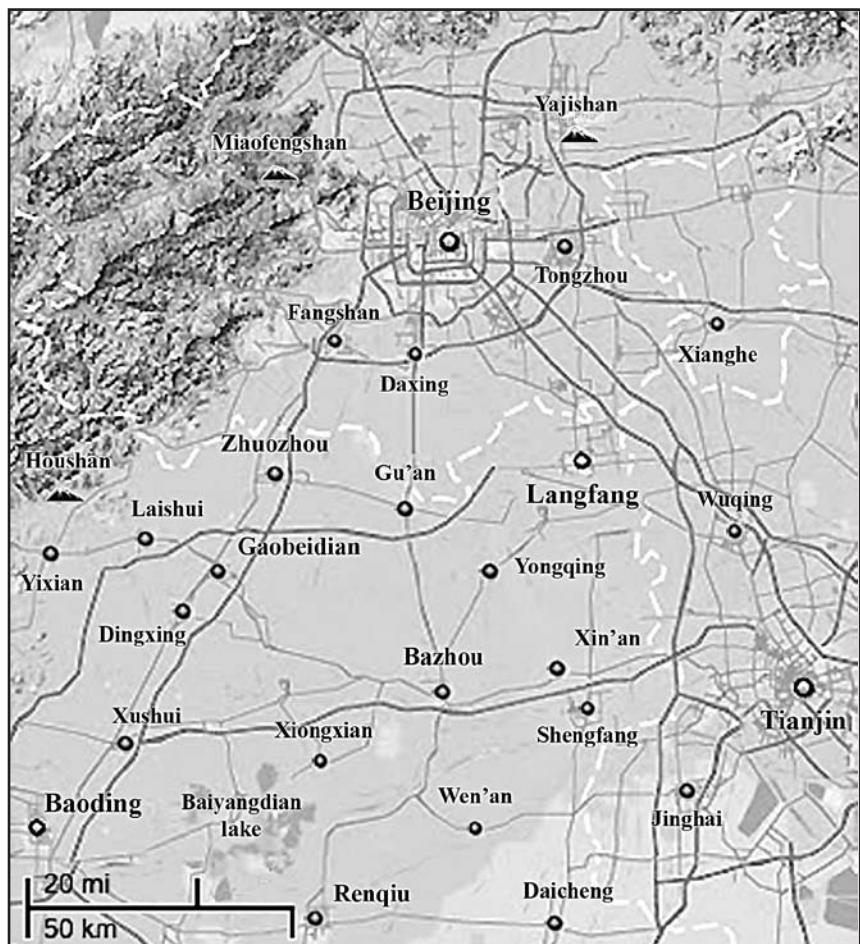
Map 1 North China (*continued*)

The shaded area across the northwest shows the rough extent of the term *yinyang* for Daoists; the character 魁 shows places where the *jiao* Offering ritual has been documented.



Map 2 Shanxi and Hebei

The rectangle shows the central Hebei plain (Map 3).



Map 3 The central Hebei plain

This map shows the main areas discussed in Part Three.

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Chapter 1

A well-kept secret

In this book I go in search of Daoist ritual specialists in north China, outlining their practices since the 1980s, writing on the basis of my own fieldwork since 1986 as well as on reports by Chinese scholars.

Published material on Daoist ritual in modern times is dominated by studies of south China – notably Fujian and Taiwan, as well as Jiangsu, Hunan, Zhejiang, and Sichuan. Musical aspects of Daoist ritual have also been covered – if more for major temples than for lay traditions, and again mainly for south China (Cao 1994–2000). Of course, both ‘north’ and ‘south’ are crude delineations; even the ritual practices of south Fujian are magnificently diverse, as the pioneering articles of Lagerwey, Dean, and their Chinese colleagues have shown. Yet not just southeastern Daoist ritual, but Daoist ritual as a whole, still tends to be represented almost solely in more general publications by the ritual practice of one master Daoist in Tainan.

By contrast, the growing body of work on religious behaviour in north China has mainly revealed more vernacular practices such as ‘hosting’ (Chau 2006), and the activities of temple committees, spirit mediums, and performing arts groups.¹ All this tends to support the old cliché that north China is (or has become) almost a *tabula rasa* for lay Daoist ritual practice. However, I have come to expect to find Daoists wherever I set foot in north China too – an expectation deriving largely from the fieldwork of my Chinese mentors on northern ‘temple music’ (§1.4).

So these notes can only offer a few clues, in the absence of other material. Having been waiting for many years for scholars of religion to write a better book than this to assist my own explorations, in the end it seems I may as well write one myself. Parts One and Two list some sites in Shanxi, with briefer notes on Shaanxi and Gansu, as well as brief forays into Hebei; Part Three refines the picture with notes from a less obviously promising milieu in central Hebei, that turns out to be significant. Bearing in mind that every single county mentioned below includes several hundred villages, this whistle-stop tour over a huge area will only scratch the surface, ‘gazing at flowers from horseback’ (*zouma guanhua* 走馬觀花) – on the hoof, perhaps.

In some areas my fieldnotes come from extended or repeated visits where I was able to witness rituals in their regular folk practice, but in others my account

¹ The work of Overmyer (notably 2009; cf. Johnson 2010 on Shanxi) might seem to overlap substantially with my subject, but such downplaying of the religious liturgy/ritual of temple or lay Daoists and Buddhists (for which, see pp.8–9 below) makes my study an all the more necessary counterpoint.

is based merely on brief interviews, during which we sometimes requested ritual specialists to perform sections of their rituals out of context. Though our notes (and indeed those of Chinese scholars that I cite) are sprinkled with miswritings, and reveal missed opportunities and failures to note points that now cry out for elucidation, I offer them here mainly in the absence of more detailed material. At the same time, trying not to overburden the reader unversed in musical technicalities, I have religiously (if you'll excuse the pun) expurgated the most detailed material in our notes, on the *shengguan* melodic instrumental music that invariably accompanies Daoist ritual in north China (§1.4), its prescribed scales and repertoires for each segment.

And while the area covered here is all too extensive, this is not an exhaustive survey for all of north China. I do not discuss the northeast, or Henan and Shandong. Those latter regions may even combine into a reasonable cultural unit, and are rather different from those discussed here; I have some material on Daoist ritual in the northeast, and Daoists are doubtless common in Henan and Shandong.² I trust the kind of material in this book will also encourage people to look beyond the major urban and mountain sites in those areas – always the tip of the iceberg.

All this is an attempt to broaden our picture of Daoist ritual practice, showing the kinds of rituals that Daoists perform in north China – redressing the balance that has hitherto been heavily weighted towards the southeast (or at least the south), and which to some extent has also meant a bias towards the ‘esoteric’ practices of cosmic visualization (§1.3). However, the work of John Lagerwey, Ye Mingsheng and others has now put traditions like those of Lüshan on the southeastern map as well; such traditions, lacking the esoteric practices just mentioned, perhaps have more in common with those that I shall be describing.

Ritual is about performance, and this study is animated by the need to *witness* rituals, not just to read about them in old books. Textual research has yielded remarkable results, but until someone finds a cave full of videos of the Tang-dynasty Daoist master Du Guangting leading rituals (and until we manage to convert them from BETA), what we can glean from his ritual manuals can only be rather limited. Even my comments below offer a mere taste of how these rituals are performed; perhaps, short of witnessing them or learning to perform them ourselves, we should be trying more to document them through DVD, not just in dry and laborious text. How these rituals are actually performed is important, including kinetic and sonic aspects, and all the behaviour, and texts, that are not included in the manuals. As the saying goes, ‘writing about music is like dancing about architecture’, and (notwithstanding the need for discursive exegesis) how much more so for ritual! Patrice Fava’s 2005 film about a rich Daoist tradition in Hunan shows the way forward.

² The *Anthology* (see §1.4 below) volume for Liaoning is impressive (cf. the detailed submission for the single county of Panjin, Li Runzhong 1986), and the Henan and Shandong vols also offer clues; for Henan see also e.g. Jin Ping 2005.

This ethnographic approach entails an engagement with continuities and disruptions in the modern social, economic, and political history of China. However impoverished the reader may find the rituals described here, I suggest, *faute de mieux*, that you limber up by watching the DVD with Jones 2007, for a flavour of the contexts of funerals and temple fairs in one small part of modern north China.

1.1 Religious practice

Surveying the diverse forms of religious behaviour in China, Adam Chau usefully lists five ‘modalities’: discursive/scriptural, personal/cultivational, liturgical/ritual, immediate/practical, and relational.³ The kinds of groups discussed in this book are subsumed under his type 3, liturgical/ritual. Here I won’t attempt to document all the other manifestations of religious practice – such as temple committees and temple fairs more generally, masters of ceremonies, geomancers, spirit mediums, and amateur sectarian groups. Nor will I focus on the various more secular types of behaviour at ritual events (hosting, cooking, and so on); nor yet on expressive cultural forms such as folk-song, opera, narrative-singing, *yangge*, percussion ensembles, and dance – all, in different degrees depending on the locality, important parts of ritual culture. But all these should be borne in mind, and some will occasionally feature below. Thus the cast of performers within funerals and temple fairs includes:

- ritual specialists (liturgical and paraliturgical)
- other specialists: master of ceremonies, geomancer, shawm band, scribes, cooks, and so on; opera and other performing groups
- ‘mass’/individual activities: behaviour of kin and guests at funerals, and of people attending temple fairs: burning incense, kowtowing, casting lots, and so on.

The household ritual specialists who are my main subject are discussed by Chau in another useful article (2006a). They work either solo (such as geomancers or spirit mediums) or in groups (such as the Daoists discussed below), all supplementing their basic living from the land by performing rituals for their local communities. Of many meanings of the term ‘ritual specialist’, I shall use it here to refer more narrowly to groups performing complex liturgical sequences, often with hereditary manuals and god-paintings; and I use the term ‘liturgy/ritual’ to denote the complex of rituals that these groups perform, mainly within funerals and temple fairs.

³ Chau 2010a; cf. Chau 2006: 75–6; see also Jones 2009: Preface. Useful online bibliographies on Chinese religion are:

<http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~clarlp/bibliography_CPR.html> and
<<http://website.leidenuniv.nl/~haarbjter/chinPRCbibtext.html>>.

By ‘folk ritual’ I mean ritual practice outside the major temples, among the general populace of rural China – whether performed by temple or lay ritual specialists.

I use the term ‘lay’ (Daoists, Buddhists, or ritual specialists) to describe members of ritual groups not attached to any temple: ordinary peasants with families, who also serve as ritual specialists. Most are occupational (or ‘semi-occupational’, in that they also live from agriculture), although Part Three thickens the plot by discussing amateur ritual groups in central Hebei. Such groups also show an overlap with former Daoists from small local temples; and Part Two also suggests that in some areas today, occupational lay Daoists may have received input from former temple-dwelling clerics.⁴

Below I suggest several subdivisions of the liturgical/ritual modality, such as lay Daoists and Buddhists, amateur ritual associations, and sects. Thus my list of ritual specialists might include:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| • temple Daoist priests | in major urban and mountain temples;
in small local temples |
| • temple Buddhist monks | in major urban and mountain temples;
in small local temples |
| • lay Daoist ritual specialists | occupational, household |
| • lay Buddhist ritual specialists | occupational, household |
| • amateur lay ritual specialists | representing whole village or sect
within it |
| • ritual specialists within sects | amateur, voluntary, intra/inter-village. |

At the margins of this complex are:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| • temple committees | organizers |
| • spirit mediums | mostly working individually, but also
leading groups of disciples they have
healed |
| • geomancers | working individually |
| • Christians | (‘underground’ or subscribing to the
‘patriotic church’) |
| • performing arts associations | occasional, largely amateur (stilts,
lion-dancing etc.) |
| • master of ceremonies | for funerals. |

⁴ Despite a wealth of material on the rituals of southeastern Daoists, I have seen little information on their lives. Ironically, the only such detail in Dean 1993 is on a former temple-dwelling Daoist (*ibid.* 42–5); another good account for Hunan (Yan Guangrun 2006) also describes a former temple-dwelling Daoist. Lay Daoists undoubtedly predominate in south China, but more material is needed.

You might think it would be simple enough to find Daoists by searching for temples within any county. That is indeed one way to find them, but few temples have resident Daoists. Moreover, not all temple-dwelling Daoists perform rituals outside their temples. Today the more easily-found temples have often become mere historical sites or glorified tourist attractions; where they are occupied by resident priests, these may be Quanzhen Daoists who perform few public rituals inside or outside their temple (Herrou 2005) – some do, though, like the Baiyunshan Daoists in Shaanbei (§5.1). Nor yet do I refer here to the daily morning and evening rituals of the clerics resident in larger official temples. Such clerics did not need to rely on ritual work among the populace, as their temples were well endowed with land and patronage from wealthy households. By contrast, those Daoists in charge of small temples had to supplement their meagre income with ritual work.

The nexus of topography and economic subsistence also deserves more consideration. Remote mountain sites are ideal for ascetic Daoists seeking to retreat from the world, but inconvenient if they need to make a living performing rituals among the people. More numinous mountain sites may attract enough pilgrims and worshippers to support the clerics, but the clerics of smaller local temples – and lay ritual specialists – tend to live more accessibly to serve their catchment area of local communities.⁵

Indeed, today in general I doubt if my subject includes temple-dwelling Daoists at all. I mainly seek occupational lay ritual specialists who are ordinary peasants. Though temple-dwelling Quanzhen Daoists, with their coiled hair, long beard, and daily Daoist costume, are unlikely today to perform the kinds of public rituals that I seek, below we see that until the 1950s those from the smaller local temples often did, cross-fertilizing with lay traditions, both occupational and amateur.

What constitutes a ‘Daoist temple’ is anyway not so simple: priests dwelling in larger temples called *guan* (‘belvederes’, actually quite rare in modern times) tend not to perform the public rituals that interest me, while the mass of small temples (*si*, *miao*, and so on)⁶ may not be specifically thought of as Daoist, but may invite Daoist ritual specialists from nearby. Locally the distinction between Buddhist and Daoist temples may be rather academic; but for what it’s worth, Buddhist temples were far more common than Daoist ones, as shown in imperial and republican county gazetteers.⁷

This, along with the fact that in most areas until the 1950s, Buddhists performed folk rituals just as much as Daoists, may make the far greater proportion today of Daoist over Buddhist ritual specialists seem rather strange. But it’s not. The Buddhists worked mainly from their temples, and the 20th-century waves of laicization and temple destruction were certainly more of a blow to the Buddhists than to the Daoists. The Buddhists perhaps tended to cater more for élite patrons,

⁵ Cf. Jing Anning 2002: 238. The case of Houshan (§9 below) may be interesting here.

⁶ For a thorough list, see Naquin 2000: 19–23.

⁷ See e.g. Goossaert 2000: 63–70; DuBois 2005: 86–105; Zhao Fuxing 2006: 35–41; §2.3 below. But cf. Zhao Shiyu 2002: 51–8, confirming some of my following points.

and were less able to survive during times of economic recession; state policies of the 1950s came as a double blow for them, as apart from laicizations and temple destruction, their former patrons also vanished. Conversely, the Daoists had long lay and household traditions, alongside any institutional base; they were more adaptable to local religious life, more all-embracing. The difficulty of regulating them has always been their hidden strength.

Rural temples are often not clearly either Daoist or Buddhist, and locals may not distinguish. We have plenty of cases of ‘Daoist’ temples being curated by Buddhists, and vice versa, since imperial times. Since at least the late imperial period, most local rural temples had only a very small staff. Today the sole temple-keeper (commonly called *kanmiaode*) of the typical small northern village temple is rarely a ritual specialist, and he does not even organize the temple fair – that will be done by the temple committee. In one village in Yanggao (§2.1), the temple keeper is an old Buddhist monk; but the lay Daoists of the village are invited for its temple fairs, and the village’s amateur sect also performs its rituals there. Nearby is the only rural temple in the region with a group of resident Buddhist monks; during their 7th-moon temple fair they perform rituals inside the main temple (Jones 2007, ●B5), but a local group of lay Daoists is also hired for more public rituals. For funerals, of course, ideally one would wish to invite both Buddhists and Daoists, and in some places where both are available, people can still do so – not to mention inviting Lamas and nuns, as in imperial Beijing.⁸

Thus my scope of groups performing complex liturgical/ritual sequences notionally subsumes occupational groups of Buddhists. Though Daoists dominate the rural ritual scene, Buddhist ritual specialists may also perform similar rituals; below I mention groups in central Shanxi, south Shaanxi, and central Hebei – and for southeast China, we have some material for the Hokkien and Hakka areas.⁹ The public ritual sequences (and indeed music) of Daoist and Buddhist ritual specialists in any region have much in common, as shown most clearly in Part Three below.

Calendrical observances for the gods are commonly known in north China as *miaohui*, which I render as ‘temple fairs’ (though ‘temple festivals’ is often suitable, and the French *fête* might be better still). They remain very common throughout China – though one is also curious to read ethnographies of some areas apparently long devoid of any temple, and even ritual, activity, for both north and

⁸ For Shanxi, see Jones 2007: 73–4; for combined Buddhist and Daoist funerals, see e.g. Dean 1988: 60–63 (Fujian) and §7.4 and §8 below (Hebei); for old Beijing, see Appendix 1, and Goossaert 2007: 253–4. Cf. Zhao Shiyu 2002: 52–3.

⁹ For Hokkien Buddhists, see Dean 1988; for the Hakka, see vols in Lagerwey series, and for the *xianghua* Buddhist ritual specialists of eastern Guangdong, see e.g. Wang Kui 2006, 2007. See also the two special editions of *Minsu quyi* (162 and 163, 2008–9) on Buddhism and local communities. The works of Dean and Lagerwey et al. on southeast China reveal magnificently subtle local distinctions between Daoists, Buddhists, Buddhist-Daoists, Daoist Buddhists, and so on – and even Buddhist *jiao* rituals.

south China.¹⁰ Temple fairs are of course multi-functional – subsuming (in varying proportions) markets, socializing, cultural display, and religious devotion. The last of these may be manifested more commonly in routine popular behaviour like the offering of incense, pledging of vows, and so on, rather than in the performance of complex liturgical sequences.

This is not the place to outline research on temple fairs, or to debate their different social histories in north and south China,¹¹ but Zhao Shiyu makes interesting comparisons for the Ming and Qing dynasties between the temple fairs of north China and the Jiangnan (south Jiangsu) region. He suggests that temple fairs in the poor countryside of north China were more concerned with markets, in the absence of the developed trade networks of Jiangnan; and that the greater affluence of Jiangnan allowed patrons to sponsor more elaborate ‘cultural’ displays, which moreover were related to lineage and territorial identity to a greater extent than in the north. This was among the factors in the greater elaboration of ritual opera (such as *Mulan* drama) in the south. If southerners sought their gods for local power and identity, northerners sought theirs for survival – though territorial communities such as the parish (*she*) were common in the north too.¹² Yet another factor was the proximity in the north to centres of political power, which Zhao thinks tended to dilute local cultures; while detailed studies show an abundance of the latter, Zhao’s point is good – that the gods of the north are far more standardized, national, than the profusion of local gods in the south. That doesn’t mean, of course, that local rituals are standardized, as we will see below.

Just as relevant are village calendrical rituals that are not necessarily described as temple fairs. In central Hebei (Part Three below), the New Year’s lantern rituals around 1st moon 12th to 16th are the village’s most important annual observance, but villagers don’t call it a ‘temple fair’. Beginning with an Opening the Altar (*kaitan*) ritual (which, by default, may be the common term for the whole sequence), it may take place in a specially erected tent, or even in the ‘brigade’ office (headquarters of the village administration) – where donors’ lists, pantheons, and paintings of the Ten Kings of the Underworld are displayed, ritual specialists recite scriptures, and villagers offer incense. Though associations from nearby villages may come to pay respects, the observances are small in scale, a far cry from the vast displays of many temple fairs in both north and south. Such village-bound observances rarely feature in imperial or modern accounts, but are crucial to a sociologically well-rounded appreciation of Chinese folk religion.

Apart from 1st moon 15th, villages often hold small-scale lantern rituals for 7th moon 15th. In the major urban and mountain temples, the universal ritual of

¹⁰ E.g. Liu Xin 2000 for Shaanxi, and Gao Mobo 1999 for Jiangxi.

¹¹ Zhao Shiyu 2002: 187–256; cf. articles in Guo Yuhua 2000; Wu Fan 2007: 4–14.

¹² Traces of the old parish organization remain in many regions of north China. See Zhao Shiyu 2002: 231–56; also e.g. Holm 1991: 157–8, Cao and Xue 2000: 82–3, Qin and Bujard 2003, Jones 2004: 34, Jones 2007: 74, Chau 2006: 85; Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Handan vol., pp.53ff., Johnson 2010. See also Glossary–Index.

salvation (*shuilu* or *pudu*, including a large-scale *yankou*, *shishi*, or *liandu*), such as for the 7th-moon Zhongyuan festival, is lengthy and important.¹³ But this is rare in the northern countryside; there are many temple fairs in the 7th moon, which often include some kind of Releasing the Lanterns (*fangdeng*) ritual, but they are not called *pudu* or *jiao*, and folk ritual sequences today generally include only a smaller *shishi* ritual.

Anyway, at temple fairs in both north and south China, apart from the important business of individual worship, the cast of performers commonly includes opera troupes, mediums and their disciples, temple committees, bards, ‘performing arts associations’ (called *shehuo* or *huahui* in the north), and so on. Ritual specialists in my narrow sense seem remarkably absent from many major northern temple fairs – such as Miaofengshan and Fanzhuang in Hebei, or in Shaanxi.¹⁴ Nor can we suppose that liturgy was merely a casualty of Communism; the absence of ritual specialists from the observances on Miaofengshan predates Communism, for instance. However, this apparent rarity of complex ritual sequences at northern temple fairs is far from a useful generalization: below we will see how common ritual specialists remain in north China – in some of the areas discussed they are the star attraction.

Moreover, in folk ritual activity, funerals are just as important as temple fairs, perhaps more so. Funerals too may be performed without ritual specialists, except for a master of ceremonies (nowadays commonly called *zongli* or *zongguan*), a geomancer, a shawm band (§1.2), and helpers. This varies regionally: where there are Daoists, as in north Shanxi, they will be invited. And while the focus of many scholars documenting funeral practice is the rituals performed on the day or days preceding the burial, which often require ritual specialists, the customs following the death are much more lengthy and complex than this. Not only do elaborate observances immediately follow the death, but there are prescribed rituals after the burial, and on various anniversaries. Local accounts such as county gazetteers, both imperial and modern, present this broader ‘folklore’ image, often limiting their discussion of liturgy performed by ritual specialists to a single phrase (such as ‘inviting Buddhist monks and Daoist priests to recite the scriptures’ *yan*

¹³ See e.g. Goossaert 2007: 250–51; Min Zhiting 1995: 166–82. Here and below I use the form *yankou*, though people generally use it with the verb, *fang 放* *yankou*.

¹⁴ For Miaofengshan, see below p.118 n.3. For Fanzhuang (in Zhaoxian county), see e.g. Liu Teliang 2000, Gao Bingzhong 2000, Yue Yongyi 2005; for the temple fair’s early *jiao* ancestry, see Liu Teliang 2000: 265, 292; since the restoration, a group of Daoists was invited only once, in 1992 (*ibid.*: 278), Gao Bingzhong 2000: 322; they came from distant Xingtai, then promoting themselves outside their home base – cf. §4.2), and more popular devotion dominates activities. For Dingxian, see Gamble 1954. Liturgy/ritual is mentioned for few of the other Hebei temple fairs in Naquin 2000 or Overmyer and Fan 2006–7; cf. Part Three below. For Shaanxi, see Qin and Bujard 2003, Herrou 2005, Chau 2006, Jones 2009; for elsewhere in north China, see e.g. Dols 1917–18, Gamble 1963.

sengdao songjing); indeed, we should bear this broader picture in mind.¹⁵ But ritual specialists pride themselves on their complex sequences, as we shall see.

Burial remains almost universal outside the main towns, cremation only being enforced in the cities. One exception, in the Beijing suburbs (§7.4), didn't even affect the ritual performance greatly.

Though temple fairs and mortuary rituals are the most common contexts, occasional rituals (again, the southeastern term *xiaofa* is not used) were also frequent until the 1950s, such as for the fulfilling of vows (*huanyuan*), Thanking the Earth (*xietu*), communal emergencies such as for natural disaster (notably drought, for which rain rituals were performed), and exorcisms for domestic crises (see mainly §3.4).

Pestilence rituals feature quite prominently in early Daoist texts, and some older manuals still in circulation include them, but most such rituals appear to have long been rare in practice, at least in north China. In the southeast in modern times, the controlling of infectious diseases and the implementing of the birth-control policy have led to the cessation of the Bureau of Smallpox ritual in Putian, Fujian (Dean 2001: 45). Here there is a clear link between ritual and physical danger, but 'rites of affliction' persist in some parts of southeast China despite the modern decline in danger from plagues or epidemics, being rather a symbol for other social or personal afflictions. Indeed, such pestilence rituals perhaps constitute a sub-category between calendrical and occasional observances. As Katz observes, they may serve as a more general atonement for personal or social ills; any modern decline in performance does not seem to be directly related to advances in pesticides, yet they seem to have survived, as so often, better in southeast China than in the north.¹⁶ So while improvements in healthcare, and then the birth-control policy, have not always rendered such rituals superfluous, they have declined in some areas, like north China.

While Dean (1993), following Schipper and Lagerwey, has argued for the crucial place of the 'Daoist liturgical framework' in south Fujian, more recently he and others have moved away from privileging Daoism as the pivot of local cultures there towards identifying it as one element in a complex whole. But for religion in north China, most studies (at least in Western languages) have highlighted more vernacular, non-liturgical practices, and we still need to establish that Daoist ritual has even a basic presence in the whole; local Daoist ritual traditions were, and are, far more common than studies have so far suggested.

¹⁵ For an outline of pre-Communist funeral practice in north China, based on county gazetteers, see Naquin 1988. For an early instance for Gansu, see Dols 1915–18; for funeral ritual in southwest Shanxi, lacking Daoists, see p.86 n.6 below.

¹⁶ Katz 1994; cf. Katz 1995, and *Minsu quyi* 143 (2004), a special issue on 'Disasters and religion'.

1.2 Daoists of north China

Schipper has described the typical lay Daoist with whom he studied in Taiwan in the 1960s.¹⁷ While observing that ‘at first sight, nothing distinguishes the *tao-shih* [*daoshi*] from the ordinary person’, he goes on to assign these ‘minor notables’ to an exalted literati class, translating *daoshi* as ‘dignitaries of the Tao’. Like so many aspects of southeastern Daoism, if this was a fair depiction of Taiwanese Daoists in the 1960s, it seems to bear little relation to those found in mainland China since the 1980s, and probably long before. So let us broadly characterize the kinds of Daoist ritual performers we find in north China (Illustration 1).

As we saw in §1.1, my scope here is mainly lay Daoists, ordinary peasants working from their households,¹⁸ usually with hereditary household traditions. Several brothers may learn, so that with father, grandfather, and uncles, a single



Illustration 1 Li Qing, exemplary lay Daoist in Yanggao, practising two vital skills: writing the texts required for a ritual, and playing the *sheng* mouth organ.

¹⁷ Schipper 1993: 55–60.

¹⁸ Indeed, there are other occupations in rural China apart from agriculture (builders, miners, mechanics, vendors, factory workers, state employees such as teachers and cadres, and so on), but the vast majority of rural dwellers, and lay Daoists, are peasants. For a good account of social structure in modern Shaanbei, see Chau 2006: 26–43.

family may be sufficient to mount a ritual group. However, a reputable Daoist may take one or more disciples from other lineages, and this has long been the case; it is also common for Daoists from nearby villages to work together.¹⁹ Lay Daoists invariably began studying with their family elders from infancy. Where we found former temple priests, they too had entered (or rather were given to) the clergy in their early teens or earlier, as young as 5 *sui*;²⁰ like lay ritual specialists, the great majority came from a very poor background, and their education was almost entirely based on learning ritual skills. In north China today one rarely hears of traditions of registers (*lu*) confirming ordination, though former temple priests have generational names and knowledge of a generational poem.

Individually, lay Daoists may offer consultations for appropriate timings and sites, using their almanac and *luopan* compass, but their main business is performing public rituals for funerals and temple fairs, in groups of between around seven to twelve. They till their own land, if they have time – the Yanggao Daoists (§2.1) seemed to be busy most of the time doing funerals and temple fairs.

I expect any single county to have at least several groups, but we can't just close our eyes and stick a pin in the map: distribution is patchy. Some areas, like central Shaanbei, seem unusual in their paucity of Daoists. Reasons for this, of course, will be fascinating, made up of imperial and modern histories, ecology, economics, and so on, but way beyond my scope here. Several types of Daoists come to mind:

- temple-dwelling Daoist priests mainly performing morning and evening services, as well as some calendrical and occasional rituals, all within their home temple;
- temple-dwelling Daoist priests further performing rituals outside their home temple;
- occupational lay Daoists, formerly temple-dwelling, performing ritual among folk;
- occupational lay Daoists with hereditary household traditions performing ritual among folk, never having dwelt in a temple.

¹⁹ Pace Chau (2006a: 175–82), this is hardly ‘ritual jamming’. When individual Daoists from different temples, or lay ritual specialists from different households or villages, came together to perform, they did so on the basis of transmission from a common tradition, their practice compatible. Their vocal liturgy, percussion, and paraliturgical melodic ensemble music were virtually identical. It resembles not so much jazzers coming together to improvise, as members of the London Symphony Chorus sometimes being booked to perform the Brahms Requiem with the London Philharmonic Chorus. Anyway, most groups were stable, working together regularly.

²⁰ Cf. Goossaert 2004: 720.

All these may collaborate, or shift over time. We might add:

- amateur associations whose ritual specialists learnt from temple Daoists, performing ritual among folk, as in central Hebei (Part Three); using vocal liturgy, ritual percussion, and paraliturgical *shengguan* music, or in some cases just the latter;
- amateur sects whose ritual specialists perform ritual with vocal liturgy and ritual percussion alone.

Most groups have preserved at least some of their hereditary ritual manuals, though the rituals they now perform do not always require that they use them – the vocal texts (recited, chanted, sung) of many rituals consist of quite short sections that the Daoists know by heart. Instead, more common are little notebooks into which they have copied the texts they need to recite and sing, and the lengthy documents that they will write before they are addressed to the gods by burning.

Many groups had a wealth of ritual paintings such as images of the Ten Kings of the Underworld, but after the destructions of the 20th century not all groups have had new ones painted – though in areas like south Hebei (§4.2), *jiao* rituals still involve displaying a large array. More often today, simple temporary ‘god places’ (*shenweizi*) or ‘tablets’ (*paiwei*) are inscribed on paper or card, merely giving the name of the deity. Daoists also depict *fu* talismans and write the ritual documents required, including the tomb bricks.

Scholars of ritual in southeast China have instructively paid attention to the diverse deities as found in texts and paintings. This is necessary for north China too, but I suspect it will pay fewer dividends there, since though extensive, pantheons are less locally distinctive, offering fewer clues to transmissions and local cults.

For rituals the Daoists now don cheap and simple robes (usually red or black), most remade recently, a paltry substitute for their former elaborately embroidered robes. They also wear black hats, usually with emblems of sun and moon; the chief officiant further dons the ‘five-Buddha hat’ (*wufoguan*; I rarely find the Daoist term ‘five-ancients hat’ *wulaoguan*) for particular parts of some rituals, such as the Pardon (cover photo) and the climax of Hoisting the Pennant in Yanggao (pp.51–2 below). For some ritual segments they wield a wooden ‘court tablet’ (*chaoban*, or *tieyiban*).

Ritual specialists today are rarely temple-based; though lay practitioners have become more common since the 1950s, they have a long imperial history. They serve several local temples, being hired by temple committees to perform for their temple fairs, but they don’t live there or manage the temples, as we saw above. Whereas the minority of large Quanzhen *shifang conglin* temples have a national network, most temple and lay Daoist traditions are intensely local. Unlike those Quanzhen priests, who are expected to gain experience by travelling widely, lay Daoists and local priests are active over a very small area, mainly within a couple of districts in their own county. Never mind Longhushan (notional mecca for Zhengyi Daoists to receive their registers of ordination, in distant Jiangxi), the Daoists

of Yanggao had not even visited Hengshan (§3.1), the ‘northern marchmont’ of Daoism a mere 60 kilometres south.

The terms *daoshi* ‘Daoist’ and *fashi* ‘ritual master’ may be known but are rarely used; the southern terms *shigong* and *duangong* are unknown. The colloquial *laodao* is common around Beijing and nearby. The term *huoju* or *huojudao* 火(伙)居道 (‘fire-dwelling Daoist’ or ‘Daoist dwelling in company’)²¹ is widely recognized, though less often heard; the popular term ‘fake monks’ (*jia heshang*), referring to lay ritual specialists (whether Buddhist or Daoist), is and was also common – from Beijing and Hebei to Shaanxi.²²

I have already suggested a convenient distinction between temple-dwelling clerics and ‘lay’ ‘household’ ritual specialists. Though this distinction is useful, my material shows that it needs refining. For instance, the terms *huojudao* and *jia heshang* are rather ambiguous. Not only do they seem to be used somewhat interchangeably to refer to either Daoists or Buddhists, but they might denote a ritual specialist who spends most of his time serving a particular temple; a temple-trained cleric who has left the temple, married, and continued practising; a lay disciple of a temple-dwelling cleric; or even, most commonly, a lay ritual specialist performing rituals for the local network of funerals and temple fairs, not attached to a particular temple. We need detailed life stories.

At local level, there were (and are) many Zhengyi lay household ritual specialists, but Zhengyi doesn’t only mean ‘lay’: staffed Zhengyi temples were common alongside Quanzhen ones. Nor are Quanzhen temples only major monastic centres in the urban and mountain sites. Below I discuss some intermediate temples with staffs over a dozen or more (Baiyunshan, the Chenghuangmiao in Gu'an, Houshan), but there were many more small temples with a tiny staff. Priests in such intermediate and small temples were by no means ascetic or removed from the populace.

In a long corridor through northwest Hebei, north Shanxi, north Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia, east Qinghai, and (I am told) the neighbouring areas of Inner Mongolia where Han Chinese ritual specialists are hired, the most common term for lay Daoists is *yinyang* (see Map 1). This is an entirely different usage from the solo *yinyang* master in our usual understanding of the term, who offers geomantic and calendrical advice, and officiates at funerary and other rituals, chanting with a hand-bell at the grave and after the return to the house (Jones 2009 •B6, D5), but works individually, and does not perform complex ritual sequences or don a special costume. Conversely, *yinyang* Daoists, while also giving individual geomantic and calendrical advice, do much of their work in groups, performing

²¹ I am not aware of a consensus on the writing of the *huo* character. This seems to be the same issue as in *shehuo* 社火 ‘parish bands’, whose *huo* is thought to have evolved from the ‘community’ *huo* (伙) to the *huo* of *honghuo* 紅火, ‘fiery’: see Zhao Shiyu 2002: 231–2.

²² See Glossary–Index. For Beijing, see Goossaert 2007: 102, 124–5, 266, and ongoing work by Ju Xi.

complex public ritual sequences with singing, chanting, percussion and melodic instrumental music, and so on. Thus as far afield as Ledu county in east Qinghai, Holm's reference to a group of nine *yinyang* officiating over a *daochang* must signify lay Daoists.²³

Unlike in many southern traditions, Daoist families have no public altar at their home, and the term *tan* 壇 altar is rare; the southern *daoguan* 道館 or *daoshitang* 道士堂 are not found, though the suffix *tang* 'hall' is sometimes added after the name of a Daoist to refer to his ritual group. A Daoist often receives clients at his home for individual consultations, but his band (*ban*, as it may be called) does not perform rituals there. Other measure-words used locally for groups of ritual specialists include *peng* ('tent', as in 'three tents of scriptures' *sanpeng jing*) and *tan* 摊 ('stall', see p.96 n.4).

The lay Daoists I have encountered rarely articulate terms for division of labour. The senior Daoist who is most familiar with the liturgy may be known as *gaogong* or other terms (*zhangjiaode*, *jiaozhu*, *tangzhu*, and so on), and some will indeed specialize more in reciting the scriptures, officiating, or playing percussion or melodic instruments; where terms for divisions of labour are used, they usually stem from a Quanzhen, or at least a temple, tradition.²⁴ The chief Daoist may not even take part in all the rituals, deputing a young disciple to sing the hymns and read out memorials. Again unlike in south China, there is no distinction between Daoists and musicians; the Daoists never hire instrumentalists, they do everything themselves. Even in the exceptional case of amateur lay associations on the central Hebei plain (Part Three), which may comprise separate groups of liturgists and melodic instrumentalists, they are all ritual performers within the association.

Lowly shawm-and-percussion bands (*chuigushou*, *guyueban*) are universally hired for funerals and temple fairs in north China – and in much of the south. In the south, shawm-band musicians may be hired as 'helpers' by the Daoists; but in the north, when there are ritual specialists, they constitute an unequal pair with the shawm bands, and are entirely separate. The prestigious ritual specialists communicate with the gods from their central base before the coffin or the altar; the

²³ Holm 1994: 824. Here the 'tiegang-style *daochang*' presumably refers to a version of the *tieguan shishi* (§5.1). In Yanggao (§2.1) there are few *yinyang* who are not Daoists, but there are some known as 'draftsmen' (*huajiang*), who make the paper houses and paper artefacts for funerals, as well as selecting auspicious timings and sitings for houses and graves, but do not act as Daoist priests or perform public rituals (cf. Grootaers 1945: 171; and Wutai, §3.3 below). For rare textual glimpses of the term *yinyang*, see pp.30, 79. Daoists are often called *yinyang*, and sometimes *xiansheng* 'master', but apparently not both in conjunction; so a *yinyang xiansheng* is probably a geomancer (see p.78)! The *yinyang* serving as 'masters of ceremonial' in southeast Shanxi, as described by Johnson (2010: 156–7, 180, 182, 236–7), may further thicken the plot.

²⁴ As in Julu (Yuan 1997a: 24), Baiyunshan (Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 24), and Gansu (JCI Gansu 628); I can't be sure that these terms are not extrapolations by the authors, but I also heard them used by some Buddhist-transmitted groups. As often, some lay Daoists in Taiwan seem to preserve an elaborate terminology: Lü Chuikuan 1994: 32–8.

shawm bands, while also serving necessary ritual functions, are considered inferior, virtual outcasts, and they play outside the gate, exposed to the elements.²⁵

Thus, unlike the lowly shawm bands, Daoists have a certain local prestige, if never on a par with those described by Schipper for Taiwan. Some, like Li Qing in Yanggao (pp.10, 37–9), are admired for their moral virtue, but most are performing a service. Few have much if any concern for the more abstruse aspects of classical Daoism; their literacy is directed almost solely towards practising ritual skills, and in other respects they are indistinguishable from ordinary peasants.

For funerals, the chief Daoist may be consulted early on, but the full Daoist band is only needed for the funeral proper, whereas the shawm band may play for most days between the death and the funeral. The Daoists retire to a temporary ‘scripture hall’ (*jingtang*), which serves as a base for them to prepare the written documents required, to change their costumes, to rest and be fed. It should also be equipped with god paintings (or, more often by the 1990s, temporary written placards) for the gods of the underworld (p.42). In order to allow for a suitably lengthy and imposing procession, the scripture hall is at some considerable distance from the ‘soul hall’ (*lingtang*) housing the coffin. In some places it is a separate altar where certain ritual segments are held (p.102).

1.3 Rituals, *jiao*, and Quanzhen/Zhengyi

So I am concerned with the public ritual sequences that the Daoists perform, for both of their main contexts: funerals (*baishi*) and temple fairs (*miaohui*) (Jones 2007, and DVD) – a modern dual typography of rituals, for the dead and the living respectively, equivalent to the ancient headings of *zhai* ‘fasts’ and *jiao* ‘offerings’. Lagerwey (1987) has given a classic analytical description of *zhai* and *jiao* ritual sequences in modern Taiwan. Dazzling as his exegesis is, both need modifying for north China.

The mortuary *zhai* rituals of Taiwan and south Fujian are often not merely funeral rituals leading up to the burial, but (sometimes concurrent) *gongde* ‘rituals of merit’, requiems to save the souls of family members who had died some time ago. In north China, however, the term *gongde* is little used; and shawm bands may be hired for the 100th day after the death and the first and third anniversaries, but ritual specialists like Daoists are not invited for these post-burial rituals. Northern Daoists do *funerals*, rarely rituals for previous dead – one such ritual in Shaanbei cited below (pp.100–101) seems exceptional. One might think that the impoverished conditions of Maoism would encourage a rash of this type of ritual everywhere since then; indeed, north China may be generally poorer than the southeast, but some opulent funerals are held in the north too. The recent popularity of rituals for previous dead held in south Fujian may derive from

²⁵ Jones 2007: 9–10, and ●A1.

various factors, such as greater lineage consciousness and the influence of their pious and relatively wealthy overseas kin.

Another difference is that in the southeast, *gongde* rituals may also be performed, exorcistically, for premature or unnatural deaths, whereas in the north such funerals are hasty and perfunctory. And the distinction between northern funerals and southern *gongde* rituals is more than one of terminology, as may be seen from comparing the many funeral sequences listed in this book with Table 2.

As to the grand *jiao* ritual of communal offering, in Part Two I sketch several pockets of activity in north China, but my overall impression is that it is far less common than in the south. Katz (1994: 1041) notes for southeast China that ‘people who are not Daoists have a tendency to refer to any ritual performance by a Daoist priest as an offering’. But in many areas of the north, by contrast, neither Daoists nor common folk use the term *jiao* at all; and again it is not just that the term is rarely used – even when a temple fair involves complex Daoist liturgy, core elements of a *jiao* (like the triple audience, *jinbiao*, *fendeng*, and so on) are absent from the ritual sequence.

Nor does the *jiao* seem to have been common in north China before the 1950s; memory is strong, and I am not aware of much textual evidence for north China in late imperial times. Its absence from Zhao Shiyu’s fine historical account of temple fairs – for south as much as north China – need not concern us too much, since his focus is not on ritual. Goossaert gives instances of *jiao* in imperial and republican Beijing, but as he notes, they were performed more often for the court, for rich guilds, or within the prestigious Baiyunguan temple, and were certainly not such a crucial part of the ritual of local territorial communities as in south China.²⁶ But the *jiao* wasn’t a monopoly of the élite temples – lay Daoists do it in Fujian, so why not in north Shanxi? Spreading out across the north Chinese countryside, territorial communities were stronger than in Beijing, and had an active ritual calendar that sometimes involved hiring Daoists – but rarely the *jiao*. I have hardly found references in county gazetteers, and while local literati were generally laconic on Daoist and Buddhist ritual, this is one aspect of popular ritual behaviour that they might have noted, since they would have been the main sponsors.

Thus rather than discussing *zhai* and *jiao*, I focus on the liturgy/ritual of funerals and temple fairs – an adjustment apparently also applicable to south China. Indeed, in their detailed area projects, both Lagerwey and Dean document a far broader picture of religious activity in southeast China. Other liturgical sequences apart from the *jiao* may be performed for temple fairs, as we see below; while many northern temple fairs may have less of a liturgical element than those of Jiangnan or the southeast, they are not, in general, ‘secular’. And Daoist rituals described below generally seem less elaborate than those described for south China, but

²⁶ Goossaert 2007: 260–61, 264; for instances of the *jiao* in old Beijing, see 162, 196, 198, 200, 211, 258, 261, 263.

elaboration in other respects is far from absent in north Chinese religion: pantheons show vast lists of gods.

In a fine essay on the temple fairs of north and south China, only in his final paragraph does Zhao Shiyu ask a question that seems crucial to me: “Are there distinctions in the whole processes of offerings to the gods and specific rituals?”²⁷

Very little I have read about Quanzhen and Zhengyi, the two dominant branches of Daoism, helps me explain the types of Daoist ritual practice in north China – Goossaert’s fine work on the late imperial period lends me confidence to make this statement.

The Quanzhen monastic order has long been the visible public face of official Daoism,²⁸ most recently reflected in state rhetoric and support. But rituals documented for south China mostly belong to lay Zhengyi traditions, and it is the Zhengyi practice of *jiao* rituals, along with the esoteric interior cosmic visualization techniques of *liandu* and *neidan*, that has attracted fine scholarly attention for Taiwan and Shanghai.²⁹ However, fieldwork on lay Daoist ritual traditions throughout China now suggests that we downplay the esoteric techniques, for even southeastern Daoists rarely use them; but more importantly, with or without them, the ritual components of the *jiao* there are very different from those I document in Parts One and Three. Though I have found little evidence of this whole *jiao–liandu* complex in modern north China, it still dominates our image of Daoist ritual. Anyway, *jiao*, *liandu*, and *neidan* are common to both Quanzhen and Zhengyi.

Modern sources commonly explain the notionally greater incidence of lay Daoist ritual specialists in south China by claiming that Quanzhen (supposedly ‘monastic’) has long been more common in the north, Zhengyi (‘lay’) in the south,³⁰ but the picture is surely not so simple. People resort to it partly because so few scholars have found – or looked for – lay Daoists in the north, so by default any work there has mainly been in major Quanzhen temples. In fact one can find many Zhengyi household traditions in north China too, and local temple-dwelling priests in north China of both nominal Quanzhen and Zhengyi branches also performed folk rituals. The distribution of *jiao* in north China doesn’t seem to be explained by any local prevalence of Quanzhen or Zhengyi; even their temple-dwelling or lay status doesn’t help us identify ritual distinctions (§ 10). It does indeed look as if lay Daoist ritual specialists are more common in the south, but below I will show that they are by no means scarce in the north.

²⁷ Zhao Shiyu 2002: 230.

²⁸ Goossaert 2007: 38–9. See also § 1.5 below.

²⁹ Instances for Taiwan include the works of Schipper, Saso, and Lagerwey, and for Shanghai, articles of Chen Yaoting, several vols in the Wang Ch’iu-kuei (1994–) series, and Yang Der-ruey 2003.

³⁰ See e.g. Dean 2000: 659, 661; Chau 2006: 57–8. For the same assumption for ‘Daoist music’, see § 1.5 below.

Local lay ritual traditions, of course, are by no means merely a modern response to modern state secularization; they date back to at least the 6th century CE.³¹ We should also beware the claim of Chinese scholars that it was only economic desperation since the late imperial period that forced temple-dwelling priests to perform rituals outside their temple and transmit their ritual among laymen. Goossaert shows that this claim was part of an anticlerical discourse going back as far as the Ming,³² this traditional disdain for local Zhengyi lay traditions, originating from the more exalted Quanzhen temple-dwelling priests, was perpetuated by discursive scholars and the religious authorities of the modern state. Indeed, for what it's worth, the more popular type of rituals of northern Daoists may even predate the accumulation of more abstract, bureaucratic details of the *jiao-liandu* complex and the whole esoteric *neidan* element.³³ But whatever their histories, I'm not judging them: I merely point out the situation in north China.

Daoists performing ritual among the folk in north China might be either laymen transmitting within their households, or temple-dwelling clerics; and if the latter, they might belong to either Quanzhen or Zhengyi lineages. Indeed, local temple-dwelling priests did not necessarily have much more ritual expertise than lay Daoists; the latter might be just as busy. In south China, the term Zhengyi seems to be used less often than more specific ones like Lüshan, Shenxiao, or Leifa. But in the north most lay Daoists, if they have any kind of denominational name at all, are Zhengyi.

Many (though not all) local temple-dwelling priests in north China did perform rituals outside their temple, among the folk. But below we find both Quanzhen and Zhengyi temples, and whatever the distinctions between them (and their many sub-branches), I can't discern any clear differentiation in their folk ritual practices. In ritual, at least, the distinction has long been somewhat academic; the Quanzhen clergy adopted Zhengyi liturgy, and even non-Quanzhen priests might use Longmen titles.³⁴ Many of the local Quanzhen Daoists listed in modern sources were no longer resident in temples since the 1950s (as in south Hebei, §4.2), even if they still claim to hand down generational names. Quanzhen temple Daoists were not strictly supposed to play melodic instrumental music, but in practice, if they performed rituals outside their temple, then they invariably did (§1.4).

However, if the Quanzhen/Zhengyi distinction seems of limited use, I do discern a clear difference between the diverse ritual programmes of 'north' and 'south' – each of the ritual segments within overall sequences lasting between 20 minutes and over an hour, by the way. The 'classical' *liandu* rituals of the *jiao* (and we can use this as a shorthand for rituals performed for both *jiao* and mortuary rituals), as in Taiwan or Shanghai, revolve around items like *suzhi*, the *sanchao* triple rituals of audience, *fendeng* Dividing the Lanterns, *jinbiao* Presenting the

³¹ See e.g. Goossaert 2007: 28–9.

³² *Ibid.*: 123–5, 328; for a detailed and surely spurious example, see Li Ciyou 1982.

³³ As suggested by Lagerwey 1987: 235.

³⁴ Goossaert 2004: 702–709; Goossaert 2007: 28–39, 269–70. See also §4.2 below.

Memorial, *danghui* Cleansing Filth, and so on. Conversely, the ‘vernacular’ ritual repertoires of the northern Daoists that we meet below revolve around items such as *pao wufang* Chasing Round the Five Quarters, *duqiao* Crossing the Bridges, *yangfan* Hoisting the Pennant, *guandeng* Beholding the Lanterns,³⁵ *yankou*, and so on. One might characterize the more vernacular rituals as semi-dramatic, the southern *jiao-liandu* complex as both bureaucratic and esoteric – although ironically, ‘ritual drama’ as such is far more common in the south. Of course, the esoteric aspects of southern ritual may have been overstated, and the repertoire is anything but drab: within its bureaucratic frame it may subsume many spectacular rituals, including some of the ‘vernacular’ ones I cited for the north, as we can see from Dean’s lists for Fujian.

Still, the more popular type of ritual specialists in north China don’t seem so much to buy into the whole *jiao*-type ritual sequence emulating imperial court audiences. Though burning paper documents is always the main method to communicate with a range of gods, in the more popular sequences of the north it occurs on a far less Kafkaesque scale than in the *jiao*. While the more ‘classical’ rituals of the southeast stress both bureaucratic and material offerings to the gods, in the north the latter are more important, including incense, tea, liquor, dough shapes, and so on. And while the ritual of northern lay Daoists seems ‘dramatic’, they rarely have a tradition of ritual drama as such, as documented for many regions of south China. In §10 I rashly attempt to identify some broad regional features within north China, such as a *yinyang* corridor across the north and a *jiao* corridor to the south. I also suggest that we stop using southeast China as a template: rather than asking why *jiao* and *gongde* are so rare in north China, perhaps we might ask why they are so common in Fujian and Taiwan.

Although we will meet some northern *jiao* sequences below, I will constantly stress the need to avoid seeing Daoist ritual solely through the prism of the southeast. Still, it is worth outlining here the better-known sequences of typical *jiao* and mortuary rituals in Taiwan (Tables 1 and 2), just to remind ourselves of the kinds of rituals by which Daoist ritual has hitherto been characterized, that we meet quite rarely in rural north China. Indeed, there may be underlying structural resemblances in programmes of north and south, and below I shall attempt to pounce on any analogies in particular segments, but my point is that the vocabulary of the southeast does not stand us in good stead for the conditions we are about to find: most items listed in these tables are unknown in large areas of north China. Let’s postpone discussion of these knotty issues for the Conclusion (§10), after we have looked at more of the evidence. Though it is beyond my scope to explain regional variation, in the Conclusion I will also briefly outline some possible factors, such as topography, population density, and the degree of permeation of élite literati culture.

³⁵ Note that this *guandeng* 觀燈 is the common ritual in north China, not the *guandeng* 關燈 (Closing the Lanterns) commonly found further south (or in the manual mentioned on p.133 below).

Table 1 Typical *jiao* sequence in south Taiwan

eve	<i>fanyou zhuohui</i> 梵油涿穢 Burning Oil for Cleansing Filth (cf. <i>danghui</i> 蕡穢) <i>qigu</i> 起鼓 Starting Up the Drum
Day 1	<i>fabiao</i> 發表 Announcement <i>qibai</i> 啟拜 Invocation <i>yangqi</i> 揚旗 Hoisting the Flag (cf. <i>yangfan</i> 揚幡) <i>wugong</i> 午供 Noon Offering <i>fendeng</i> 分燈 Dividing the Lanterns
Day 2	<i>daochang</i> 道場 Land of the Way <i>wugong</i> 午供 Noon Offering <i>fang shuideng</i> 放水燈 Releasing Water Lanterns <i>qishisheng</i> 啟師聖 Invocation of the Masters and Saints <i>jintan</i> 禁壇 Sealing the Altar <i>suzhi</i> 宿啟 Evening Overture
Day 3	<i>chongbai</i> 重拜 Renewed Invitation <i>nianjing</i> 念經 Reciting Scriptures <i>jinbiao</i> 進表 Presenting the Memorial <i>wugong</i> 午供 Noon Offering <i>zhengjiao</i> 正醮 Offering Proper <i>pudu</i> 普度 Universal Deliverance

A more formal rite would also include:

Day 1	<i>zaochao</i> 早朝 Morning Audience
Day 2	<i>wuchao</i> 午朝 Noon Audience
Day 3	<i>wanchao</i> 晚朝 Evening Audience
	<i>Yuhuang jing</i> 玉皇經 recitation of the <i>Yuhuang jing</i>

Based on Lagerwey 1987: 53–9; cf. Dean 2000: 675–6; cf. Schipper 1975: 10–11.

1.4 Fieldwork on ‘religious music’

Western scholars, apart from a few early worthies such as de Groot in the latter half of the 19th century, only began paying serious attention to Chinese folk ritual practice in the 1960s, with Schipper’s ground-breaking study of Daoist ritual in Taiwan. But mainland China already had a tradition of documenting ‘religious music’. Examples include Yang Yinliu’s work with the Wuxi Daoists from 1937, his 1952 study of the Zhihuasi temple in Beijing, and his team in Hunan in 1956; fieldwork on Wutaishan (1947) and Qingchengshan (1955), and a substantial 1956

Table 2 Typical *gongde* mortuary ritual in south Taiwan

Day 1	<i>fabiao</i> 發表 Announcement <i>qibai</i> 故拜 Invocation <i>nianjing</i> 念經 Reciting Scriptures <i>kaitong minglu</i> 開通冥路 Opening a Road in the Darkness <i>baichan</i> 拜懺 Worshipful Reciting of Litanies <i>fang shema</i> 放赦馬 Dispatching the Writ of Pardon <i>dacheng</i> 打城 Attack on Hell <i>fendeng</i> 分燈 Dividing the Lanterns
Day 2	<i>daochang</i> 道場 Land of the Way <i>baichan</i> 拜懺 Worshipful Reciting of Litanies <i>wugong</i> 午供 Noon Offering (<i>wuxian</i> 午獻 Noon Offerings) <i>nianjing</i> 念經 Reciting Scriptures (Exorcism) <i>hefu</i> 合符 Uniting the Talismans <i>muyu</i> 沐浴 Bathing <i>bai sanbao</i> 拜三寶 Worshipping the Three Treasures <i>jiejie</i> 解結 Untying the Knots <i>baichan</i> 拜懺 Worshipful Reciting of Litanies <i>tianku</i> 添庫 Filling the Treasuries <i>guoqiao</i> 過橋 Crossing the Bridges

Based on Lagerwey 1987: 174–94; cf. Dean 2000: 676, ET 449–51. For funerals in Fujian, note Dean 1988.

volume on Suzhou Daoist ritual. Such studies are far from ideal for details of religious practice, but they drew attention to the topic.³⁶

After lean times for both ritual and research from around 1958, work was reinvigorated from 1979 with the vast national project *Anthology of folk music of the Chinese peoples* (*Zhongguo minzu minjian yinyue jicheng*, see Jones 2003). Diverse forms of ritual music in the *Anthology* are unsatisfactorily represented by both the modern Chinese classification system and its ideology; but given the ideological heritage, the inclusion of even partial material on religion is a tribute to the integrity of local and central scholars. Poorly trained and desperately underfunded, their efforts may seem paltry but were often heroic. The project, of course, depended on local scholars with an interest in doing such fieldwork: although only around 10% of the material collected appears in the published volumes, by no means all counties took the trouble to do fieldwork. So again,

³⁶ See Jones 1998: 27–32. Recent annotated bibliographies for ‘religious music’ (Shi Xinmin 2005, Tian Qing 2005) reveal some of the problems I discuss in this section, but remain impressive.

material listed here may be only the tip of the iceberg. Moreover, a huge archive of audio and video recordings languishes unpublished.

The five main categories of the *Anthology* are folk-song, narrative-singing, opera, instrumental music, and dance, every province having volumes for each genre, each of around 1,000 pages.³⁷ ‘Religious music’ (*zongjiao yinyue*) was mooted as a sixth major separate category with its own volumes, but eventually took up an uncomfortable (and potentially misleading) place at the end of the instrumental music volumes. It is understood firstly to refer to institutional religion, meaning mainly that of Buddhist and Daoist temples; hence the gloss ‘temple music’ (*simiao yinyue*). The *Anthology* pays attention to major temples with resident priests where they perform rituals, but doesn’t allow the scarcity of such temples in an area to obstruct its pursuit of Daoist ritual practice; many hereditary traditions of lay ritual specialists are also included.

In north China, in both imperial and modern times, the term *yinyue* (‘music’) refers not to vocal music (including vocal liturgy) or even ritual percussion, and not even to *any* melodic instrumental music; since at least the 17th century it has referred specifically to the paraliturgical *shengguan* instrumentation that accompanies Buddhist and Daoist ritual (see below). As with several world religions, the major ‘orthodox’ Daoist (and indeed Buddhist) temples of the cities and mountains reject melodic instrumental music entirely, their chanting and singing of the scriptures accompanied by ritual percussion (*faqi*) alone.³⁸ Thus, for instance, the Baiyunguan temple in Beijing seems never to have used any melodic instrumental music until they introduced a garish pan-Chinese conservatoire-style ensemble in the 1980s. In practice, however, additional melodic instrumental music was performed by priests in the majority of more popular temples, and indeed in many of the more exalted ones, such as on Wutaishan; and it was widely used by lay ritual specialists. Murals show that monks and priests were accompanying their rituals with melodic instrumental music by at least the Tang dynasty; the specific *shengguan* instrumentation goes back at least to the Ming.³⁹

Merely for convenience, I sometimes use the term ‘standard’ (or ‘orthodox’) to denote the systems of Quanzhen Daoism (and monastic Buddhism) as practised in the major temples of the cities and mountains – embracing both the rejection of folk ritual with melodic instrumental music, and rituals like the *yankou* with its widely-distributed basic format.

The ‘religious music’ sections in the instrumental music volumes of the *Anthology* often include both lay traditions and a sampling of vocal liturgy. Although the great bulk of the volumes consists of musical transcriptions, the

³⁷ The work of Dong Xiaoping and David Arkush (Dong and Arkush 1995, Dong 2003), shows that ritual material may also be gleaned from the local *Anthology* collectors of folk literature and stories.

³⁸ See e.g. Cao et al. 1996: 228.

³⁹ For iconography, good starting points are *Zhongguo yinyue shi tujian* and *Zhongguo yinyue wenwu daxi*.

textual introductions may offer useful clues; the biographical sections too contain items on ritual specialists, and sometimes on temple practice. Both vocal liturgy and other types of ritual and ceremonial activity may also appear in the other volumes. Under folk-song, some volumes adopt a category ‘ritual songs’ (*yishi ge*) that includes some vocal liturgy of lay funerary ritual specialists. The narrative-singing volumes may also be relevant: ‘precious scrolls’ (*baojuan*) appear there,⁴⁰ and several volumes have sections for living traditions of *xianxiao* morality tales and *daqing*.⁴¹ Indeed, they may give clues to various ritual genres not even subsumed under the category of lay Daoists. In the Shaanxi narrative-singing volumes, apart from the splendid section on Changwu Daoist ritual (§5.2 below), several ritual genres are subsumed under sections on *quanshan* morality tales for the central Guanzhong plain and south Shaanxi.⁴²

So we should unpack the term ‘vocal liturgy’. I mean the recitation, chanting, and singing (collectively known as *yun*) of ritual texts for events such as funerals and temple fairs, requiring some specialized kind of training, whether or not they actually need to use their manuals (*jingjuan*, *keyiben*, *baojuan*, and so on). But this also shades into a category of amateur members of sects or pilgrim groups singing short ritual songs (known by terms like *foge*) without manuals. In fact, even such amateur sects may also perform long complex rituals with the aid of ritual manuals, like one I began to get to know in north Shanxi, reciting the classic 24-pin form of ‘precious scrolls’ (Appendix 3). Such groups will only play cameo roles in my account below, but let’s bear them in mind.

Turning to ritual texts, Dean refines our picture in discussing the imperial history of Daoism and popular cults in Fujian.⁴³ He suggests various types of texts: those of cults with close or less pronounced official connections, which may have found their way into the *Daoist Canon* (*Daozang*); those of other major local cults, found only in the manuscript collections of local Daoists, rather than in the *Canon*; and those with only invocatory chants, but without evolved Daoist scriptures – which Dean describes as by far the most numerous. Indeed, the situation in north China also seems to be very much at the latter end of this spectrum; very few ritual manuals I have seen reflect local cults (the ‘precious scrolls’ to Houtu discussed in §9 and Appendix 3 are a somewhat particular case). Most manuals, indeed, are funerary; and many rituals are performed with scant reference to manuals, consisting largely of chanted and sung texts that are memorized. Note that when ritual specialists refer to *jing* scriptures, they often seem to mean not bulky volumes but short hymns (*zan*) in a few verses. However, hymns and vocal liturgy in general are seldom intelligible in performance, with complex melodies

⁴⁰ E.g. JCNSM Ningxia 784–826; for Gansu, see p.113 n.22 below.

⁴¹ E.g. JCNSM Ningxia 827–82; JCNSM Gansu 595–746. In general, Chinese scholars attribute more Daoist links to *daqing* than are evident in modern practice; see also Appendix 3.

⁴² JCNSM Shaanxi 1325–1446; cf. Zhang Xingyun nd.

⁴³ Dean 1998: 30–32. Cf. Wang C.K. 2000.

and ornate melismas, not to mention the percussion and melodic instrumental accompaniment that often renders the voices hard to hear at all – far from the simple melodies and word settings of Christian hymns designed for an inclusive congregation to sing.

We should also qualify ‘ritual percussion’ (*faqi*). It refers firstly to the more austere temple instrumentation using *ling* bell, *qing* bowl, *yinqing* bowl-on-stick, *dangzi* single gong-in-frame, *muyu* woodblock, and so on. But in folk ritual (and local temples), apart from the core instruments *biangu* hand-drum and *xiaocha* small cymbals, a major component is also the complex patterns led by two types of large cymbals (*nao* and *bo*) in alternating hocket, serving as preludes, interludes, and codas, and as processional pieces – all with titles, such as *Hexi bo* or *Tianxia tong*.

Where paraliturgical melodic instrumental music is used to accompany ritual in north China – and in folk ritual it almost always is – it is invariably the majestic system of *shengguan* wind ensemble, which in its current form goes back to around the Ming dynasty.⁴⁴ The classic Beijing temple orchestration (both Daoist and Buddhist) consists of pairs of the four types of melodic instruments (*shengguan-di-luo*): *sheng* free-reed mouth organ, *guan* (*guanr*, *guanzi*) small oboe with double-reed, *di* (*dizi*) flute with membrane, and *yunluo* frame of ten pitched gongs, accompanied by percussion section of drum and small cymbals. *Sheng* and *guanzi* are the core instruments; in folk practice, at least in modern times, the *dizi* may be used rarely, and the *yunluo* a frame of a mere three gongs; small *suona* shawm or a bowed fiddle may even be added.

To put it another way, where we find *shengguan*, it is generally played by ritual specialists. They commonly refer to three necessary skills for performing rituals: *chui-da-nian*, in reverse order of importance, blowing (wind-and-percussion music for *shengguan* ensemble), beating (ritual percussion), and reciting (vocal liturgy, including chanting and singing).⁴⁵

I suppose it is possible to interview Daoists in northern China while having little idea of this instrumental music, but the study of *shengguan* has helped channel our focus towards folk ritual: where there is *shengguan*, there are likely to be ritual specialists. Clerics of Buddhist and Daoist temples often performed it before the 1950s, but in the remaining staffed temples today it is rarely heard. Anyway, it is an important task to place the instrumental music in its whole ritual and social context: the calendrical, life-cycle, and occasional rituals of folk religion.

Shengguan pieces are of several types: single pieces repeated on procession; long suites played ‘seated at the altar’ (*zuotan*); and pieces that accompany hymns

⁴⁴ For *shengguan* music across north China, see e.g. Jones 1998, chs 2, 11, and 12; for Hebei, see also Jones 1999, 2004, and Zhang Zhentao 2002; for Shanxi, see Jones 2007. Note the audio examples with Jones 1998 and 2004, and the video examples with Jones 2007.

⁴⁵ For *chui-da-nian*, apart from innumerable citations in our fieldnotes since 1986, see e.g. Zhang Xiuhua 1982: 169. For a more comprehensive list of Daoist skills in north Shanxi, see p.36 below.

and other vocal liturgy (*duikou* or *genian* 合念),⁴⁶ also sometimes played without vocals. These ‘holy pieces’ (*shenqu*, as Li Qing’s old score entitles them – p.41) are an essential part of ritual in north China; though I characterize them as ‘paraliturgical’, accompanying vocal liturgy or some ritual action, they may even represent the heart of the ritual itself. I don’t know of an equivalent in south China. Sure, some specialize more on the instruments than on the vocal liturgy, but music cannot be separated from ritual. No-one who has heard the majestic *shengguan* ensemble could possibly mistake it for secular music. We may consider *shengguan* to be just as much part of liturgy as ritual texts recited silently or talismans depicted in the air. In view of the importance of esoteric skills in some areas of Chinese ritual, and considering that vocal texts are often hard to understand in performance, scholars of Daoism seem to have a bias towards discursive knowledge: happy with mudras and cosmic steps, they seem to balk at melodic instrumental music.

The melodic outline of the *shengguan* repertoire is notated in traditional *gongche* script, rather like *solfeggio*. The texts (but not the melodies) of the vocal liturgy are notated in separate volumes from the *shengguan* music, but this does not mean they are performed by different people; in parts of central Hebei they may be (Part Three), but occupational Daoists perform both. Traditional notation for the melodies of the vocal liturgy is only to be found when they are accompanied on *shengguan* and thus appear in the instrumental scores.

The emphasis of Chinese scholars on this melodic instrumental component tends to downplay the liturgical content of ritual, but there are noble exceptions, and many entries in the *Anthology* include vocal liturgy too. Music scholars list rituals within events such as funerals or *jiao*, often in considerable detail. But they mainly get interested just as the scholar of religion tends to lose interest: within each of the segments of a ritual, there are prescribed vocal, percussion, and melodic instrumental pieces, and prescribed places to chant solo, recite the liturgy in chorus with only the percussion, add *shengguan* accompaniment, or perform separate *shengguan* suites. Where we have been less rigorous is in describing the detail of actions within those rituals. It is not even enough to list texts; the texts are efficacious only through their performance, and that depends on the complex local knowledge of reciting, singing, percussion, and melodic instrumental music, not to mention spatial dispositions, setting out of altars, writing of petitions, hanging of paintings, banners, and so on. Still, some scholars like Yuan Jingfang have made detailed inventories.

Even music scholars tend to parrot the old cliché of Quanzhen temples dominating northern activity, Zhengyi dominating the south. In an authoritative history of Daoist music, the section on northern Daoist activity is based on major Quanzhen temples; for lay Zhengyi practice in north China it only gives the briefest

⁴⁶ *Ge* being the common pronunciation of standard *he* in Shanxi where I have heard the term used.

of summaries for three small locales, simply presented as *shengguan* instrumental genres, including the Yanggao Daoists (for whom see §2.1 below).⁴⁷

Still, for north China at least, ‘Daoist music’ has attracted a lot more attention than Daoist ritual practice. I surmise that, despite all the advances in ethnography and study of religion and folklore, ‘music’ and ‘culture’ still remain a rather safer fieldwork topic than naked religion. Googling *Julu daojiao* 巨鹿道教 (*Julu Daoism*), yields a lot of results for *Julu daojiao yinyue* 巨鹿道教音樂 (*Julu Daoist music*), but little else; I’m not sure if this is unfortunate, or if it protects them from unwelcome scrutiny.

While the *Anthology* was about documentation, by the 21st century a new project, the *Feiwuzhi wenhua yichan* (Intangible Cultural Heritage, henceforth ICH), sought to ‘salvage’ ‘endangered’ genres.⁴⁸ In the lists of provincial submissions, I have found only a few such projects for ‘Daoist music’. Though the official website contains some thoughtful general articles about the thorny issues of ‘preservation’, the agenda for individual ‘genres’ considers ‘folklore’ elements largely independently of the local social practice of folk religion. The ICH agenda for a tradition like the once-vibrant ‘Daoist music’ of Changwu in Shaanxi (§5.2 below) looks utterly gloomy, though the website contains some interesting material including a video, and proposes further documentation.

If research by music scholars on Daoist ritual in north China has often been flawed by a narrow focus on its melodic instrumental component, fieldwork by Daoist scholars is even more seriously flawed in that, well, there isn’t any. For all its faults, the *Anthology* may serve partly to identify ritual areas for which detailed studies have not yet been made.

I would be happy to abolish the terms ‘Daoist music’, ‘Buddhist music’, and ‘religious music’. They seem to me to have done more harm than good, isolating music as a no-go zone for scholars of ritual, and commodifying it (usually in its narrow sense of melodic instrumental music) for the secular concert stage. Music is always a vital part of ritual, yet we should no more compartmentalize it than ritual paintings, ritual food, or indeed ritual texts.

1.5 Other sources

It is still hard for outsiders to find lay Daoists, which, I’m sure, is precisely why they survive. I have found very little research published from national or provincial institutes of religion, anthropology, or folklore. Such research as there is on Daoist

⁴⁷ Cao et al. 1996: 227–51; 179–83.

⁴⁸ See <<http://www.ihcchina.cn/main.jsp>> and the fine ongoing review <<http://www.chinaheritagequarterly.org>>. Provincial websites of the Ministry of Culture also contain material for submission. Most promising is the Chinese ritual music centre in the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, headed by Xiao Mei and Tsao Poon-yee: see <<http://www.anthromusic.com>>.

practice today, even once one has put to one side the mass of early historical and philosophical material, tends to focus on the Daoism of the major urban and mountain temples. Official representations, such as the journal *Zhongguo Daojiao* (indirectly a channel for state/Party religious policy), and most websites, largely overlook folk practice; most provincial material is based on the official meetings of regional Daoist associations, offering few clues on local practice. While such associations have proliferated since the 1980s, their members are more often temple-dwelling rather than lay household Daoists, so one cannot necessarily locate the lay Daoists through such official organizations. This lacuna seems like a mutually acceptable deal: the official image promotes ‘civilized’ patriotic modern Daoism in registered places of worship, while the local lay Daoists may be happy enough to slip under the radar of state attention. Nor are the major mountains likely to reveal the kind of Daoists we are looking for here – though all around their peripheries, lay Daoists may perform rituals (cf. §3.1), as around other religious mountains such as Wudangshan further south.

Incidentally, since we now have some fine detailed studies of individual Daoist groups for south China, largely inspired by C.K. Wang and the *Minsu quyi* series, one might wonder why no such studies have been made for the north. Any of the groups mentioned below would make fine subjects, yet the *Minsu quyi* initiative did not evince local scholars with the resources to write them, and anyway set forth more from the premise of ritual drama, less evident in the north.

County gazetteers (*xianzhi*) are an important source for our studies of local culture, but are often disappointing for ritual practice. Neither those compiled in imperial times, the 1930s, or the 1980s, reveal much local knowledge of ritual. For funerals, they tend to copy general Confucian platitudes, stressing ‘folklore’ aspects (albeit rich in content) but downplaying the liturgy of ritual specialists to what looks like a purposeful degree.⁴⁹ For temple fairs, they provide extensive but bare lists, again rarely addressing any liturgical elements. Lists provided during fieldwork with ritual specialists are much more helpful; they will tell you of the local temple fairs to which they or their colleagues are invited to perform liturgy, and detail ritual sequences. Moreover, I am concerned here to show a picture of current practice. The gazetteers would form part of a study of the religious scene before the 1950s, but even here, they would take a back seat to recollections by elderly informants. I use them below only sparingly to amplify my material.⁵⁰

Below I occasionally cite texts in the *Daoist Canon* (*Daozang*, a Ming-dynasty compilation of earlier sources) with similar titles to rituals mentioned by Daoists practising in modern times – if never as thoroughly as Lagerwey’s (1987) masterly

⁴⁹ Cf. Naquin 1988, for pre-1940s funerals; cf. p.9 n.15 above. Sections relevant to ‘folklore’ are collected in the anthology MSZL. Cf. also Johnson 2010: 5–6, 20.

⁵⁰ The gazetteers are not, however, as disappointing as Grootaers et al. 1995, since they meticulously document ‘cultic buildings’ in the 1940s, in an area of north China where lay Daoist ritual was ubiquitous and vibrant (§2.1 below); one would not know from his account that the region was populated at all.

citations tracing the ancestry of modern Taiwanese ritual practices. This is not easy, partly because texts mentioned by Daoists in conversation may bear more formal titles prefaced by terms like *Taishang* 太上 or *Shangqing* 上清. And it is only a start; one would need to compare the texts in detail. For now it is unlikely to provide many answers; it may suggest that the rituals still practised are ‘old’, but *Daoist Canon* texts rarely give clues to their region of currency, and presumably local lay ritual texts were rarely admitted; so the best we can hope is that prestigious texts from the *Canon* entered local folk currency.

There is a similar problem of provenance and usage with the ritual texts in the *Daoist texts outside the Canon* (*Zangwai daoshu*), which, coming mostly from the late imperial era, one might expect to be more relevant to recent practice.⁵¹ But the kinds of ‘dramatic’ vernacular rituals that we find in Parts One and Three below seem to be conspicuously absent from both of these voluminous sources. Ritual manuals, anyway, are only a minor part of the diverse Daoists texts in such compendia; and they can only be brought to life (and indeed properly studied) through performance. It is only with Wang Ch’iu-kuei’s recent series for south China that ritual manuals are at last linked to particular local groups.⁵²

There is potential for seeking material on folk religion in less obvious sources. In Hebei we found some former temple Daoists in old-people’s homes (§7.1). Although most temple clerics probably got married after being expelled from their temples, old-people’s homes would have made an interesting site for interviews with former temple clerics until recently. Prisons and labour camps would also have housed some ritual specialists and sectarians. County police archives and local state religious bodies all over China should have extensive collections of ritual manuals and artefacts confiscated since the 1940s, as well as ‘confessions’ (for the latter, see e.g. my comments in Appendix 1 on the memoirs of Tianjin Daoist Zhang Xiuhua).

In sum, even in this supposedly interlinked age, the best – indeed almost the only – way to find Daoists performing rituals is to settle down in a county and begin enquiring by the roadside (e.g. §2.2).

1.6 Sects

My main focus is household groups of occupational ritual specialists; this is not the place for a detailed discussion of sectarian religion, but since it occasionally features in my material below, a note is needed here.

There is a substantial literature for the late imperial period on northern religious groups subsumed under the umbrella of ‘White Lotus teachings’, often millenarian and seen by the late-imperial state as a threat to its power; there is also much modern material on groups similarly portrayed by the Communist authorities

⁵¹ For the *Canon*, see TC; for *Zangwai daoshu*, see ET 1210–14.

⁵² Wang C.K. 1996–; for an overview, see Wang 2000.

as anti-state.⁵³ These were – and are – usually amateur, voluntary, intra- and inter-village groups, though some were village-wide; they were not necessarily ‘heterodox’ or ‘secret’. What they have in common with the ritual specialists discussed in this book is that their group rituals sometimes – though far from always – include complex liturgical sequences. What distinguishes them is that healing (by means of mantras, incense, possession, and so on) was sometimes a major aspect of their programme; and that they often had a complex organizational network (with ‘altars’ *tan*, headed by leaders called *panzhu*, *dianchuanshi*, and so on) – this also by contrast with the simpler terms of village-wide folk religion (see Part Three). I shall refer to these groups as ‘sects’, while following local Chinese practice in eschewing rigid boundaries.

Below I also occasionally mention ‘cults’, in the commonly-used sense of groups loyal to a particular deity, whether voluntary or ascriptive. Local cults in south Fujian have been splendidly documented, as ever, by Dean and Lagerwey. There are several in north China too, though they are more often to ‘national’ deities than to the many deified local territorial personages one finds in Fujian and Taiwan.⁵⁴ But I shall not take a view here on the knotty issue of when, or whether, a religious group may be termed a ‘sect’ or a cult’. In an area like Yixian, Hebei (§9), village-wide ascriptive ‘ordinary popular religion’ may coexist with voluntary intra- and inter-village ‘sects’, and both may subscribe to the Houtu ‘cult’. All these groups may or may not have ritual specialists performing complex sequences of liturgy/ritual.

One section of the modern local gazetteers which is fascinating is the sections on the suppression of the ‘reactionary sects’ (*fandong huidaomen*). Though anything but objective, they go into the kind of detail that is generally lacking from the sections on temples and folklore; and though not directly related to the kind of household and village-wide religious practices I am seeking here, they give detailed local pictures of the religious scene throughout the years of Maoism that are otherwise very scant.

It is ironic that this official material largely describes groups considered ‘anti-Communist’; we can only guess at the concurrent activities of less flagrant village-wide and household groups not targeted specifically. What we need is a balance in the form of independent, or at least alternative, documentation from ordinary people – Ownby 2001 is a fine guide here. Still, the volumes reveal, in substantial local detail, how sects were not only attacked, but kept resurfacing every time a

⁵³ See e.g. Ma Xisha and Han Jianfang 1992; for their modern history, see Li Shiyu 1948, Munro 1989, and the useful Zhao Jiazhu 2004, compiling material from county gazetteers nationally. See also Overmyer 1976, Naquin 1985, ter Haar 1992, DuBois 2005; note esp. Ownby 2001.

⁵⁴ As noted by Zhao Shiyu (2002: 31, 63–4, 224–30), and Goossaert (2007: 263) for Beijing; cf. Medicine King (Yaowang) cults such as that of Yaoxian, Shaanxi (Qin and Bujard 2003). In §9 I discuss the Houtu cult, and in §2.1 I briefly mention the cult of Huye in north Shanxi.

severe campaign or hardship drove them to desperation and disaffection – including the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

The Yiguandao sect is a compulsory focus of the modern material, though it had only a brief heyday in the 1940s. No-one I met mentioned it much, whether because of its taboo status, or because it really was transient and its importance really has been overstated by the Communist Party. But villagers did mention plenty of other sects, with a much longer history. Of course, the sectarian campaigns were only one aspect of the whole repression of religious practice under Maoism. In all our talks with locals about ritual practice, they rarely specified these campaigns as significant, and indeed in many places even the sects managed to keep active, after a fashion, through the 1950s and early 1960s, not to mention the household Daoists and more village-wide public ritual.

A rare instance of lay Daoists being specifically targeted in the campaigns against ‘reactionary sects’ is the ‘*huojudao*’ listed (erroneously) as a ‘sect’ for suppression in several counties in south Shaanxi.⁵⁵ These same listings also give the term *yinyang* (§1.2 above) – as well as *duangong*, a link with ritual specialists further south. Worrying as it is that local authorities in this area bracketed household Daoists along with amateur sects (grammatically, too, it is misguided), it seems exceptional.

So we should try to distinguish amateur voluntary intra- and inter-village sects; amateur ascriptive village-wide ‘orthodox’ religion; and occupational groups of household Daoists – even if there may be complex relationships between them. Though local police were not necessarily so diligent, local relations doubtless often blunted the radical nature of centrally-decreed campaigns.

Nor have the police always been mollified by an emphasis on cultural virtues. The gazetteer for Tianjin notes ominously:⁵⁶ ‘Since 1988, some leaders and core elements in the Taishangmen and Tiandimen sects in the North and West suburbs, Wuqing, and Jinghai have availed themselves of the reform and open-door policy to practise all kinds of comeback activities. Some don Daoist robes and perform funerary services, promulgating superstition; [...] some avail themselves of cultural bodies unearthing folk arts, masquerading under the cloak of *chuigehui* [“songs-for-winds associations”] and *yinyuehui* [“music associations”]⁵⁷ to play feudal superstitious pieces.’ While this shows the official story and potential vulnerability of these amateur ritual groups, neither our work nor that of DuBois in the 1990s revealed any real sensitivity about their practices in the eyes of local authorities.

Sectarian religion may also be a feature of temple life. Hunyuan and Yaochi sects were active in the Baiyunshan in Jiaxian (§5.1), and sects were, and indeed are, based in Wutaishan temples. They may overlap with the more ascriptive lay village religion, as we see in Part Three; household Daoists might also belong to sects; and the liturgy of sectarian ritual specialists might overlap with that of

⁵⁵ Zhao Jiazhu 2004: 1147–52.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*: 32; for these groups, see §8.7 below.

⁵⁷ For *chuigehui*, see Jones 1998: 195–8; for *yinyuehui*, Part Three below.

temple or lay Daoists and Buddhists. At temple fairs in one north Shanxi village (Appendix Three), lay Daoists and sectarians perform complex separate rituals.

Incidentally, while I have extended my focus from Daoists to Buddhist ritual specialists and further to lay associations, sects, and cults, I am also sure that a project on spirit mediums in north China, so very different from those in the southeast, would further enrich our picture of ritual practice – not merely individuals going into trance during consultations for healing, they may also organize into groups, acting as major sponsors for temple events, and they may even perform vocal liturgy.⁵⁸

1.7 Time-frame

Chinese accounts are often ambiguous about time-frame: they may describe traditions active at the time of collection, or they may be memories from former practitioners – both valuable as long as we are told.⁵⁹ My accounts below too are ambivalent in this sense, relying on either my own material from the 1990s or that of local *Anthology* scholars whose work was largely complete by then; and we all sought to ‘salvage’ as much as possible from people’s living memory.

One can document rituals as one finds them performed – indeed, the only really useful information comes from witnessing the actual performance of ritual. But one naturally also delves into the memories of senior practitioners, discovering rituals that they recall practising (before Liberation, before the Cultural Revolution, and even in the 1980s) which have since fallen out of use, perhaps consulting surviving old ritual manuals containing obsolete items. These are the two prongs of my approach, current practice and living memory, reflecting traditions handed down since the late imperial period.

Though lay ritual specialists have been common since at least the 6th century CE, modern history has accelerated the trend. When temple-dwelling Daoists were forced to laicize in the 1950s, they and their children often became lay ritual specialists, becoming more openly active in the 1980s. The troubled maintenance of ritual traditions under Maoism has rarely been documented; my own efforts (Jones 2004, 2007, 2009) suggest that ritual specialists and their local communities managed to keep practising impoverished versions from pre-Communist times except at moments of extreme political pressure, famine, and poverty; and further illustrations appear below.

Religion continues to thrive: individuals like geomancers and mediums, occupational groups like Daoists and shawm bands, and amateur groups with a strong devotional element (including Catholics). One cannot be sure that Daoists will still be practising today, or how the picture is changing; but given that these

⁵⁸ Apart from my own encounters, see e.g. Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Handan vol., pp.12–17 (for Tanyin village in Shexian county, Hebei).

⁵⁹ Cf. Jones 2003: 318–21.

are often hereditary household traditions, and that the ritual market has remained strong, it is well worth seeking out groups in the areas for which they are listed.

Conversely, while lay Daoist groups continue to be active, I suspect the kind of impoverishment that I found in Yanggao (§2.1) may be typical. Ritual expertise is suffering, with younger members content to don their costumes casually, performing short rituals with hymns and melodic instrumental music – by contrast with the broader knowledge and use of manuals of the senior generation who led the revival of the 1980s. The latter in turn, under the restrictions of Maoism, had a lesser repertoire than their own seniors. In some areas, religious ritual may not be (and may not have been) needed for either funerals or temple fairs; but even where traditions remain, local people may now be satisfied with a token display, often highlighting instrumental music rather than scriptural recitation.

For both elderly ritual specialists and fieldworkers, ‘nostalgia ain’t what it used to be’. Some of the senior leaders of ritual groups whom we met in the 1990s had performed three-day funerals before Liberation, with many rituals that had since fallen out of use; some of them had been temple priests, or had worked with temple priests. By the time you read this, senior ritual specialists will only be able to recall practices on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, themselves often more complex than those performed since.

Still, my feeling about north China is not unlike that of Dean (1988: 6) for Fujian: ‘Extraordinary as it may sound, one could say that everything described in de Groot [documenting rituals there from 1877 to 1890] is still happening in southeast China, but no longer all in any one place.’

PART ONE
Singing from a different
hymn-sheet:
north and central Shanxi

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Chapter 2

North Shanxi

Daoist activity appears strong in many parts of Shanxi, as one might expect from the province's ancient historical links with Daoism.¹ In Part One we make a trip down from north to central Shanxi – this section consists mainly of notes from my own fieldwork,² supplemented by clues derived from Chinese sources.

2.1 Yanggao

In the far north of Shanxi, just below the mountains that divide Han China from Inner Mongolia, the Daoist networks east of Datong city, in the northeastern corner of Yanggao county into Tianzhen just east, are the clearest case I know in north China of lay Zhengyi Daoists from hereditary family traditions, never temple-based.³ I will set the scene for my survey of north China with a relatively detailed account.

Local scholar Chen Kexiu has long been in contact with them, and he and Jing Weigang have published learned treatises – albeit limited largely to their paraliturgical *shengguan* music – based on fieldwork through the 1980s. The Yanggao Daoists became minor celebrities in 1990, giving a concert performance at a festival of religious music in Beijing, supported by local cadres, the Shanxi Music and Dance Institute in Taiyuan, and the Music Research Institute in Beijing.

¹ For Shanxi Daoism, see e.g. JCI Shanxi 1769–74. Wen and Xue 1991 largely relegates ritual specialists from its otherwise interesting accounts of folk customs, such as the section on funerals (21–8), although the photographs (61–72) feature our Yanggao Daoists discussed in §2.1. Shanxi temple iconography is of course a rich field. For some sites of ritual activity, see Appendix 4.

² My work in Yanggao (in 1991, 1992, and from 2001 to 2005) was assisted by Chen Kexiu, Jing Weigang, Xue Yibing, Zhang Zhentao, Wu Fan, and genial local cadres Zhao Fu and Li Jin. Elsewhere in north-central Shanxi (§2.2–3, §3), a trip in August–September 1992 with Xue Yibing was assisted en route by many scholars and cadres, notably Jing Weigang and Wang Bin. I first visited Wutaishan in 1986.

³ See Jones 2007 (for an early attempt, Jones 1992), Wu Fan 2007; for transcriptions, JCI Shanxi 1775–1809 (vocal), 1810–1918 (*shengguan*). For the *shengguan* music, works of local scholars Chen Kexiu and Jing Weigang are cited in the bibliography of Jones 1998. Here I will revise and augment some of my already published material, focusing on the Daoists, but the broader treatments of Jones 2007 and Wu Fan 2007 remain useful perspectives. I am grateful to Chen Kexiu for copying some unpublished notes from his early interviews with several Daoists.

Although provincial scholars coined the name ‘Hengshan Daoist music troupe’ for this concert, and the recent Intangible Cultural Heritage project uses the term, they have never had any contacts with the mountain (cf. §3.1). I visited Yanggao briefly in 1991 and 1992, and made lengthier stays from 2001 to 2005, by which time Wu Fan was doing a fine PhD on music in temple fairs there. But alas, we missed the boat to study the Yanggao Daoists comprehensively; the expertise of the senior generation still practising in the early 1990s is now much diminished – and even that expertise was doubtless reduced since the 1950s.

For Daoism in the Datong region (historically called Pingcheng), Shanxi scholars adduce early historical links with the ‘Northern Heavenly Masters’ tradition of Kou Qianzhi in the Northern Wei period (5th century CE), as well as the resilience of early Daoist traditions under the Liao and Jin dynasties (cf. pp.208–9). Here, though, I will limit the discussion to modern practice. The term *daoshi* is not commonly used; the local terms for lay Daoists here are *yinyang* (see §1.2) and *yingmenshi* 應門事 ‘responding to household rituals’,⁴ just west in Datong county and further afield, the term *erzhai* (here pronounced *erze*) ‘two dwellings’ or ‘secondary dwelling’ is heard.⁵ More prosaically, locals talk of *qingjing* ‘requesting the scriptures’; more prosaically still, the most common term of all in north China for ‘performing ritual’, whether secular or liturgical, is *banshi* ‘doing things’ (hence my title for the DVD with Jones 2007). A group of Daoists may be known as a ‘hall’ (*tang*), and named after its leader, such as ‘Li Qing tang’, but a more common vernacular term is *ban* ‘band’, as in *yinyangban*.

They are Zhengyi Daoists of the Lingbao scriptural tradition, living as ordinary peasants. They earn their livelihood both as a group from performing public rituals, and individually (like *fengshui* or *yinyang* masters elsewhere in China) by doing geomancy and calendrical consultations for auspicious sitings and timings. Thus they cite two common summaries of their skills: ‘first looking, second reciting, third wind-and-percussion’ (*yikan ernian sanchuida*); or ‘wind, percussion, writing, reciting, looking’ (*chuidaxieniankan*) – this latter phrase in reverse order of importance. ‘Looking’ (*kan rizi* or *ze rizi*) refers to choosing auspicious days, a task that senior Daoists perform often; ‘writing’ refers to the many complex documents prepared for funerals and other rituals. Individual ‘looking’ and group ‘responding to household rituals’ occupy about the same time for them monthly, but the latter takes longer, and ‘looking’ is quick and well paid. They also officiate

⁴ Perhaps ‘performing household rituals on demand’, cf. *yingshi* etc. in Beijing (Goossaert 2007: 124, cf. *yingshi*, Appendix 1 below), and *fuying* in the Jiangnan region further south (Chau 2006a: 175–7). Some sources give *yingmenshi* as 應門士 ‘gentlemen responding to households’ (cf. §4.1), but I believe I have only heard it as a verb, written as above.

⁵ This term may refer to their dual officiation over *yin* and *yang* dwellings for the living and the dead; indeed, one might think *yinyang erzhai* was a composite phrase of which the two binomes were alternative abbreviations, though no-one said so. Or perhaps *erzhai* contrasts with *dazhai* ‘greater dwelling’, which refers to temple-dwelling priests (e.g. Yangyuan 1935: 229). Nuns in Beijing were popularly known as *erseng* ‘second-class monks’!

for raising the roofbeam, writing an auspicious diagram of the eight trigrams (*bagua tu*) to be pasted on the beam.

A 2003 name-card of one *yinyang* shows local concepts of their spheres of activity, advertising:

Complete funeral services

Choosing days, selecting graves, seeking ley-lines (*longbu*), settling the burial and establishing the orientation, moving the earth when work begins, mending construction, marriage partners, moving home, choosing auspicious days for celebrations of setting up in business

Wreaths, oil and goods, paper artefacts, everything for the funeral, the complete sequence of funerary services for *yinyang* rituals of deliverance (*chaodu*), repaying kindness, and filial scriptures (*baoen xiaojing*)

Another senior village *yinyang* advertised:⁶

Funerals, delivering the souls of the deceased, burial processions, wreaths and funerary paper artefacts, documents and images, choosing auspicious days for weddings, funerals, and disturbing the earth for house-building.

Personal predilections: the eight nodes and three mysteries, the twenty-eight stellar mansions, and the eight gateways and nine stars (八節三奇, 二十八宿, 八門九星)

On the group outings of the *yinyang* for public rituals, apart from ‘writing’ and ritual actions (including cosmic steps and the depicting of talismans), they perform vocal liturgy (chanting, singing hymns and incantations), ritual percussion, and *shengguan* wind ensemble music. It was this instrumental music, led by the master Daoists Li Qing and Liu Zhong, that became deservedly – if ephemerally – famous in Chinese musical circles around 1990; but since their demise, while *yinyang* bands are still very much active, ritual expertise has continued to decline.

Most prestigious of the Yanggao Daoists was Li Qing (1926–99), based in Upper Liangyuan village in Shizitun district southeast of the county-town. He was the second of three brothers, all of whom took up the Daoist trade; he never went to school, instead gaining a rigorous Daoist schooling from young with his elders. Li Qing’s family genealogy was destroyed in the Cultural Revolution, but he made a new one in the late 1980s. He could name his Daoist forebears back to Li Fu, six generations before him; the family tradition was that Li Fu had learnt

⁶ For Chinese texts, see Wu Fan 2007: 89.

Daoist ritual from nearby Jinjiazhuang village, perhaps in the late 18th century. Ritual business had not suffered during the Japanese occupation, Li Qing said – the Japanese troops even made donations when they came across Thanking the Earth rituals (§3.4) being performed – nor during the following civil war.

During the first stage of land reform Li Qing's father was classified, much to the family's disadvantage, as a 'rich peasant', but he was shot dead accidentally during the civil war in 1947. After Liberation, they still performed funeral rituals, but temple fairs and Thanking the Earth were becoming rare. In 1958 the commune confiscated some of their ritual manuals and instruments, and Li Qing – a gifted *sheng* player, like many Daoists in north China – was chosen for a salaried job in the Yanbei regional 'arts work troupe' (*wengongtuan*) in Datong city. Like many local state work-units throughout China, the troupe was cut back in 1962, and Li returned to his village – anyway, rural households needed all the labourers they could get. Unlike Hebei villagers, Yanggao dwellers didn't really identify the 'three years of hardship', as they were hungry right until the dismantling of the commune system in the 1980s. After that they still managed to do a bit of Daoist ritual on the quiet until the Four Cleanups campaign, though many of their manuals were burnt then. In a barren countryside where everyone was pretty destitute, Li Qing was himself classified as a 'rich peasant' in 1968 – much to the amusement of his fellow villagers, who ribbed him, "Call yourself a rich peasant?!" – perhaps the only way they could ridicule the rigid political system.

The Daoists performed very rarely through the Cultural Revolution, coming out gingerly into the open around 1980, and soon doing good business again. Importantly, despite Li Qing's sensitive trade, he had a wonderful reputation as an honest and virtuous man – when the matchmaker was seeking partners for his sons, she only had to announce that Li Qing was their father and the deal was done. His group was in demand throughout the area; Li Manshan still profits from his father's good repute. Of the young generation, only Li's disciple Wu Mei has claims to such moral authority.

Apart from working with his own family, Li Qing often collaborated with a group of distinguished senior Daoists from Upper Liangyuan, Shuangzhai, and the nearby villages,⁷ including (in addition to Liu Zhong) Li Yuanmao (1919–late 1990s), and Kang Ren (1925–c2002). They could all muster enough fellow Daoists from their own families and disciples to form several groups on demand. And they were in great demand – few days passed when they were not performing a ritual,

⁷ Our fieldwork so far lacks detailed work on the sectarian history of these villages. I cannot tell if there is any connection with the fact that the two main centres for the Daoists, the villages of Liangyuan and Shuangzhai, are both cited as centres for the Yiguandao sect on the eve of Liberation; 200 of the 240 households in Lower Liangyuan are said to have belonged after its introduction to Yanggao county in the 1940s. And the Jiugongdao sect was active just northeast of the county-town, in precisely the villages where we have documented thriving temple ritual (Zhao Jiazhu 2004: 159–62).

particularly in the busy winter season, when there were more funerals (and, until the 1950s, more individuals fulfilling vows by commissioning rituals – see §3.4).

Of his own six children, Li Qing taught his three sons. Two of them have kept it up; the oldest son Li Manshan (b.1946) only started learning in earnest after Li Qing came home from the Datong ‘arts work troupe’ in 1962, as society was loosening up, although the famine was still desperate. Anyway, he now gave up school to go round performing rituals with the band, for an all-too-brief period before the Four Cleanups. He took over as leader of the group when Li Qing died in 1999. The second son Li Yushan still lives in Upper Liangyuan, but works for a separate group. The third son Li Yunshan (b. 1969) loved learning after Daoists were able to practise more openly again around 1979, practising the *guanzi* while he tended sheep. In that early period after the revival they were busy ‘all month’, indeed more in demand than now. Having done well in school (unusually) and landed a job as cadre in the county-town in 1990, he rarely goes out on ritual business; since 2006 he has been employed in the county anti-corruption unit.

Li Qing also taught his grandson Li Bin. Of his many disciples, the most outstanding is Wu Mei (b. 1970), fourth child of a family from the cripplingly poor village of Renjiayao just east, who from 1985 apprenticed himself to Li Qing, staying at his house for three-year apprenticeship. His brilliant *guanzi*-playing is modelled on that of Liu Qing’s colleague Liu Zhong (c1930–93); Liu Zhong’s playing brought tears to the eyes of all who heard him, but Wu Mei is no less inspired. In 2007 he moved with his family to Shizitun village, and in 2009 they moved to the new village of Xinhebu (built as part of a government poverty-alleviation project) south of the county-town. He has been working as a welder in the town, having learnt from his older brother; for this he earns the princely sum of 120 *yuan* a day, as opposed to 40 *yuan* for two days as a Daoist. But in the busy winter and spring seasons he still does 15–20 days a month as a Daoist, 7–8 days in summer.

Two further close relatives are regular performers with Li Manshan’s group. Huang Shuangping (b. 1978), from Upper Liangyuan, learnt from 15 *sui* with Li Qing, his mother’s father. Zhang Shiyu (b. 1968) comes from Houying village, studying from 1987 with Li Qing, his mother’s brother.

But the problem of transmission is now acute. These Daoists don’t want their sons to learn; there are now easier ways to make a better living, and people like pop music anyway. They agree that the Intangible Cultural Heritage project is unable to solve these issues.

In 1992 Li Qing listed ten lay Daoist groups in the area just south and east of Yanggao town (for a map, see Jones 2007: xv), observing that their ritual and music were similar, while the music of two more, in West Yaoquan (or was it Yaozhuang?) and Upper Yinshan (the latter in Tianzhen county to the east), was distinct. Indeed, in Upper Yinshan, the eminent *yinyang* Lü Yuzhang (b. c1912) called himself a Jinzu Longmen *huoju* Daoist. I now realize we neglected all these groups, as we later worked mainly just north and east of the town, where there were several more hereditary Daoist families – in the villages of Mojiabu, Gushan, Chenjiabu,

Xiezhuang, Taipingbu, Wangzhuang, and Zhenmenbu. In Luowenzao township, just east of the county-town, Li Yuan (b. c1929) was the seventh generation of Daoists in his family, his two sons the eighth; there were also three nephews and a disciple in his band. These groups are active around the northeastern corner of the county, on the plain and in the northern foothills not far from the county-town. In the adversities of the 1950s – and apparently earlier – Daoists were among many Yanggao dwellers who migrated north to Inner Mongolia and northeast to the Zhangjiakou region, so there may be a similar ritual tradition there too. But as one goes south towards Hunyuan, there appear to be no Daoists in the whole of the mountainous southern half of Yanggao county.

None of these Daoist groups was ever formally attached to a temple, apart from their informal links of being invited to perform rituals at the local temple fairs. As to cults, there is a network of temples to Huye (Hulaoye, Hushen), extending as far as Xuanhua in northwest Hebei.⁸ Some of the main temple fairs around north Yanggao are shown in Table 3. They last two or three days, the table showing the ‘main day’ (*zhengrizi*). As often, the temples are identified by the name of the village, the formal names of their temples being barely known – the Gushan temple is known as ‘Nunnery’ (Guzimiao) or Granny temple (Nainaimiao). Only the Xujiayuan temple has resident clergy – unusually, they are Buddhist monks, and for their own temple fair they perform several rituals including an impressive *yankou* (Jones 2007, ●B5), though they appear not to perform rituals outside their temple. For all these temple fairs, apart from an opera troupe, at least one group of Daoists and at least one shawm band is invited.

Table 3 Some temple fairs in north Yanggao

Village	Formal name of temple	Main fairs
Xujiayuan 許家園	Qingyunsi 青雲寺	(2nd moon 2nd) (5th moon 8th) 7th moon 3rd
Lower Liangyuan 下梁源	Lingyuansi 靈源寺	7th moon 7th
Zhenmenbu 鎮門堡	Chenghuangmiao 城隍廟	1st moon 15th 7th moon 15th 10th moon 1st
Gushan 孤山	Wulong shengmu miao 五龍生母廟	4th moon 8th 7th moon 3rd
Yunmenshan 雲門山	Xuanyunguan 懸雲觀	5th moon 18th
Rutoushan 乳頭山	Longwangmiao 龍王廟	2nd moon 2nd

⁸ Huye refers to an ancient general called Huta: see Jones 2007: 73–5, 78.

No lay Daoists we met spoke of any formal graduation or ordination process in learning to be a Daoist – some even observed that you’re born a Daoist, so how could you go through an exam?! However, Li Qing told us of a Daoist association (he used the more modern term *Daojiao xiehui*) in Yanggao town in his father’s time. This must refer to the *Daohuisi*, official state organizations that had been established in every county in the Qing dynasty to regulate Daoism.⁹ Indeed, Li Qing was probably right: in Tianjin, for instance, the old *Daohuisi* were replaced by *Daojiaohui* in the republican period.¹⁰

Li Qing also claimed (I think less convincingly) that a Daoist had come from the Beijing Baiyunguan temple to take charge of the association, staying in the Sanhuangmiao temple in the county-town; they held an annual gathering on 3rd moon 15th. Senior Daoist Li Yuan recalled too that before Liberation, candidates for official recognition had to go to the ‘yinyang official’ (*yinyangguan*) in the county-town to ‘recite the fish scriptures’ (*nian yujing*, if our notes are correct: the *muyu* ‘wooden fish’ woodblock was commonly known as *yuzi*);¹¹ the candidate had to recite the scriptures alone while accompanying himself on the three main ritual instruments (cymbals, drum, and *dangzi* gong-in-frame), and only after passing this exam did one get a certificate and go looking for ritual business (*lanshi*) among the people. The *yinyang* official used to be called Yang 楊; he was also responsible for arbitrating in any disputes between Daoists, but the system ended before Liberation.

Li Qing’s son Li Manshan recalled that the family had a seal (*yin*) with the characters *Lingbao dafashi* (‘grand ritual master of Lingbao’), that they stamped onto the document for Burning the Treasures; they stopped using it on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, afraid it was evidence of politically unacceptable private business.¹²

Rituals

Li Qing managed to keep some of his family collection of ritual manuals, including a copy by his uncle Li Peisen of the snappily-titled *Lingbao kaifang shezhao yubao xianxuan youlian poyu fangshe duqiao zhubaiyu ranghuangwen ke* (‘Lingbao ritual manual for Opening the Quarters, Summons, Food Offerings, Roaming Paradise, Smashing the Hells, Dispatching the Pardon, Crossing the Bridges, Precautions against Hailstones, and Averting Plagues of Locusts’), replete with complex sets of *fu* talismans. Li Qing later made his own copy of the first five of these rituals. He also preserved his great-grandfather’s *gongche* score of the *shengguan* melodies, entitled ‘Complete holy pieces’ (*Shenqu quanbu*).

⁹ For the central *Daolusi*, see e.g. Goossaert 2007: 59–62; for Yangyuan just east of Yanggao, see Yangyuan 1935: 229.

¹⁰ Zhang Xiuhua 1982: 172, 187–8; cf. Goossaert 2007: 72–80.

¹¹ See e.g. Chang Renchun 1993: 329, Yuan Jingfang 1997a: 92.

¹² For such seals in Hunan, see Yan Guangrun 2006: 110–12.

By the 1990s, fewer rituals seemed to require much use of manuals; many rituals in common use consisted of relatively short texts that could be memorized. While Li Qing was lovingly documenting his ritual practice, this consisted largely of transcribing into exercise books the short recited texts and sung scriptures in common use; for the *shengguan* melodies, he wrote beautiful copies of the family *gongche* score, but also used modern cipher notation, more detailed than the traditional skeletal *gongche* versions. Anyway, Daoists rarely take their precious old manuals out of the house, so they make more dispensable copies of particular sections for everyday use, including a booklet with all the lengthy texts to be copied during rituals, such as memorials for burning.

The main rituals of the Yanggao Daoists are funerals and temple fairs – below (§3.4) I mention a further set of rituals for crises and vows, rarely performed since the 1950s. Sequences for funerals and temple fairs are shown in Table 4, and a longer more ideal funeral sequence in Table 5. In fact the Daoists alternate throughout with the prescribed pieces of the shawm band, as well as going with them on procession.¹³

The chief Daoist is consulted soon after the death to make geomantic and calendrical calculations, the whole band arriving in time for the rituals on the day preceding the burial. During the funeral proper the chief Daoist performs tasks such as writing the many documents and talismans for burning, as well as the brick for the tomb, finally using his *luopan* compass to align the coffin.¹⁴

The Daoists are given a separate room called ‘scripture hall’ (*jingtang*) to rest and prepare. The scripture halls for the funerals I attended in 1991 and 1992 (Jones 2007, ●A2) were equipped with simple ‘god places’ to Bodhisattva King Kṣitigarbha (Dizangwang pusa), ‘In the Palace of the Eastern Pole’ (*dongji gongzhong*),¹⁵ and the Ten Kings of the Underworld Courts (*mingfu shiwang*); apart from the customary *duilian* mottos at the soul hall, there were also abstruse Daoist slogans pasted on the doors of a gateway on the route from the scripture hall to the soul hall. Since then all such inscriptions seem to have fallen out of use.

First I will describe common rituals that I have attended since 1991, and then add notes on some rarer ones. The *yinyang* pay several visits to the soul hall over the day, called Escorting the Scriptures (*songjing*) or Escorting the Litanies (*songchan*)¹⁶ – the first sequence may also be called Opening Scriptures (*kaijing*). On procession, usually in their black costumes, in single file from their ‘scripture

¹³ Cf. the tables in Jones 2007: 64–5 and 80–81, including the activities of the shawm band, and the text 57–86.

¹⁴ See Wu Fan 2007: 328; for detailed notes on the similar activities of the solo *yinyang* (geomancer, not Daoist) in neighbouring Shaanbei, see Guo Yuhua 1992: 198–217.

¹⁵ This should continue with the title of the presiding god Taiyi jiuku tianzun: Min Zhiting 1991: 181, cf. Min Zhiting 1995: 173.

¹⁶ One might expect *song* to be ‘reciting’ 誦, but ‘escorting’ is almost universal in my experience. *Song* 送 may mean either ‘gifting’ (as here) or ‘escorting away’ (as in *songshen* 送神).

hall' to the altar-table in front of the soul hall where the coffin lies, led by the oldest son or grandson carrying the soul tablet, they perform percussion, intermittently sounding the conch. They do three sets in the morning, four in the afternoon, interspersed with elaborate rituals in a more public arena, for which they wear their red costumes.

On arrival at the soul hall, standing around the altar table under the awning before the coffin, the *yinyang* sing a prescribed sequence of songs (generically called 'hymns of mourning' [*zantan*],¹⁷ although here few are in the standard *zan* hymn structure of 4–4–7–5–4–5 words), some accompanied only by the percussion, some further by the magnificent sound of *shengguan*. They refer to some of these songs by formal titles, such as *Shi miezui*, *Yizhandeng*, *Taishang song*, *Liujz zan*, *Fengxian xiang*, and so on. But many more are named by their opening words, such as *Yuqie jing* (*Shi baoen* Ten Repayments for Kindness), *Wujin beitan*, *Yici zhenling*, and the magnificent *Zhongzhong wuming*, also known as *Qizi zhenyan* 'Seven-character mantra'. The latter four songs are all part of the 'standard' *yankou* rituals of Daoist and Buddhist temples,¹⁸ but are performed separately in several contexts in Yanggao. Below I will speculate further on this apparent dispersal of elements from the orthodox *yankou*. The sequence of *shengguan* pieces without vocal liturgy, in long suites, is also closely prescribed.

Apart from these 'routine' visits, on the day preceding the burial the Daoists also perform more public rituals such as Fetching Water, Summoning Kin, Burning the Treasures, and Transferring Offerings. **Fetching Water** (*qushui*), a most common component of rituals throughout north China (Yuan Li 2001), is part of both funerals and temple fairs. It is performed in the afternoon, between the first and second visits of the *yinyang* to the altar. By 2001 it was becoming optional for funerals, but I saw it at a funeral in 1992 (Jones 2007, ●A6; here and below I describe particular rituals that I witnessed). The oldest son, bearing a tray with the soul tablet, a vase, and ritual food offerings, led the procession, followed by the shawm band and then the *yinyang*, playing alternately on procession to the well. On arrival at the well, as the shawm band stood (as ever) to one side, the *yinyang* performed vocal hymns accompanied by the melodic instruments and ritual percussion while the son filled the vase with water, tying its neck with red cloth. The procession then returned to the soul hall, whereupon the vase was

¹⁷ Like *zan*, this term has a long pedigree in Daoism, but *zantan* seems to be rarely used elsewhere today.

¹⁸ The *Shi baoen* is performed near the end of the Buddhist *yankou*: Ling Haicheng 1986, *yankou* manual p.106a–b. For *Wujin beitan* in the Daoist *yankou*, see Min Zhiting 1991: 177–80, Min Zhiting 1995: 178; and in south Hebei, Yuan Jingfang 1997a: 179–81. *Yici zhenling* is the introduction to the *Kulou zhenyan* in the *zhaoqing* segment of the (Buddhist) *yankou*: Chang Renchun 1993: 324; Ling Haicheng 1986, *yankou* manual 63b (cf. 53a); Yuan Jingfang 1997: 216–17. For *Zhongzhong wuming*, see Min Zhiting 1991: 37, Min Zhiting 1995: 171; among folk versions, see e.g. JCI Gansu 768–73 for its rendition in Zhangye, Gansu (§6.1 below).

Table 4 Funeral and temple fair sequences of Yanggao Daoists, c1990

	Funeral	Temple fair
Day 1		
am	<i>kaijing</i> 開經 Opening the Scriptures <i>songjing</i> 送經 Escorting Scriptures <i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures	√ √ √
noon	(<i>fangshe</i> 放赦 Dispatching the Pardon)	
pm	<i>kaijing</i> Opening the Scriptures <i>qushui</i> 取水 Fetching Water <i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures <i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures <i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures	√ √ √ √ √
eve	<i>zhaocin</i> 招親 Summoning Kin <i>shaoku</i> 燒庫 Burning the Treasures <i>zhuanxian</i> 轉獻 Transferring Offerings <i>shishi</i> 施食 Dispensing Food <i>songgu</i> 送孤 Escorting Away the Lonely Souls <i>guoling</i> 過靈 Crossing the Soul, without Daoists	
		<i>guandeng</i> 觀燈 Beholding the Lanterns
Day 2		
am	<i>taigang</i> 拾杠 Raising the Coffin <i>raoling</i> 繞靈 Circling the Soul [chief celebrant alone attends at the grave] [end]	<i>kaijing</i> Opening the Scriptures <i>yangfan</i> 揚幡 Hoisting the Pennant <i>shanggong</i> 上供 Presenting Offerings
pm		<i>kaijing</i> Opening the Scriptures <i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures <i>panhu</i> 判斛 Judgement and Alms

Note: Items in bold italics denote major public rituals; items in parentheses were less often included.

Table 5 Li Qing's ideal three-day funeral sequence, c1990

Day 1	
am	<i>kaijing</i> 開經 Opening the Scriptures <i>songjing</i> 送經 Escorting Scriptures <i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures
pm	<i>kaijing</i> Opening the Scriptures <i>qushui</i> 取水 Fetching Water <i>kaifang</i> 開方 Opening the Quarters (= <i>pao wufang</i> 跑五方 Chasing Round the Five Quarters) <i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures <i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures <i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures
dusk	<i>zhaοqin</i> 招親 Summoning Kin
eve	<i>songdeng</i> 送燈 Escorting Lanterns <i>baomiao</i> 報廟 Report to the Temple <i>guandeng</i> 觀燈 Beholding the Lanterns
Day 2	
4–7am	<i>qiwyijng</i> 起五更 rising at the fifth watch: recite seven litanies
9am	<i>yangfan</i> 揚幡 Hoisting the Pennant <i>fangshe</i> 放赦 Dispatching the Pardon <i>xianwu</i> 獻午 Noon Offerings
pm	<i>kaijing</i> Opening the Scriptures <i>songchan</i> Escorting Litanies <i>duqiao</i> 渡橋 Crossing the Bridges <i>panhu</i> 判斛 Judgement and Alms
eve	<i>shaoku</i> 燒庫 Burning the Treasures <i>zhuaxian</i> 轉獻 Transferring Offerings * <i>shishi</i> 施食 Dispensing Food * <i>songgu</i> 送孤 Escorting Away the Lonely Souls * <i>guoling</i> 過靈 Crossing the Soul (without Daoists)
Day 3	
	<i>fayin</i> 發引 Burial Procession
am	<i>taigang</i> 拾杠 Raising the Coffin <i>raoling</i> 繞靈 Circling the Soul [chief celebrant alone attends at the grave] [end]

Note: * In his otherwise thorough account, I surmise that Li Qing subsumed these rituals under Transferring Offerings without detailing them.

placed on the main altar table and the *yinyang* led the mourners on a winding route before the coffin. Until the 1950s they used to spray the water around the ritual arena, symbolic of making the ground suitably moist for the deceased, but now the winding route represents it instead. Li Yuan was alone in mentioning a brief *anfang* Settling the House exorcistic ritual (cf. p.138), performed after returning from the well.

For the temple-fair version of Fetching Water, I describe a 2003 ritual (Jones 2007, ●A6). As the procession nears the well, the shawm band stops at the foot of the slope leading to the well, while the *yinyang* climb the slope and then stop too; the pennants from the temple are stuck in the ground. The temple elder, with helpers, goes to the well, where they set the tray down on the ground, light three sticks of incense and place them on the tray, burn the yellow paper petition in front of the tray, break the biscuit and disperse it, kowtow, and then fill the vase with water from the well. Usually they only fill the vase a third full, so as to attract a reasonable amount of rain, not a flood, but since 2000 there has been a serious drought, so today they fill it to the brim – something of a metaphor for modern Chinese history? As the temple elder returns from the well, he sets the tray down before the *yinyang*, who, standing in facing rows, with one chief reciter facing the tray, perform the hymns *Taishang song* and *Wu gongyang*, each with several verses, accompanied by *shengguan*, with the incantation *Jingzhi zhou* (accompanied only by the ritual percussion) in the middle. As the procession returns towards the temple, the shawm band and *yinyang* again play instrumental pieces alternately. On arrival, the vase is placed between the large and small statues of Hulaoye; it will stay there until the next rainfall, when it can be poured away. The shawm band disperses while the *yinyang* stand in double file at the entrance to the temple, performing another sequence of hymns, some with *shengguan* accompaniment, in praise of water and the dragon kings.

For the funerary rituals in the evening, the **Summoning Kin and Burning the Treasures** rituals may be condensed into one sequence. The purpose of Summoning Kin (*zhaoqin*, also known as *zhaoqing*, Invitation) is to invite back the last three generations of ancestors of the deceased, showing them the way by burning paper along the route from the graveyards back to the coffin, inviting them to share a meal and then go off together with the deceased.¹⁹ So the procession first goes in the direction of their graves. Transferring Offerings can only be performed after Inviting Kin. My local mentors explain that Burning the Treasures (*shaoku*, sometimes called Returning the Treasures, *huanku*) means returning the money borrowed by the soul (*linghun*) at birth – the debt must be redeemed, or else the Yama Lords of the Ten Courts (Shidian Yanjun), who preside over the underworld,

¹⁹ The manual copied by Li Qing's uncle (see above) is a rare occurrence of the ritual title *shezhao* in my experience. But in Min Zhiting's prescription (1995: 163–6), it is among the major sections of a funeral, and is one of several sections that include the *zhaoqing*, although the two are not equivalent. Several 'invitations' (*zhaoqing*) to the orphan souls are issued in the course of the *shezhao* and the *yankou*: *ibid.*: 165–6, 171, 179.

won't let the deceased pass. The gold and silver treasures (two tall structures made of paper) shouldn't be too full, or else the deceased's descendants will have no money.²⁰

The procession sets off after dusk (Jones 2007, ●A7). The shawm band (here the local term is *gujiang* rather than the common *chuigushou*) leads the way, followed by the *yinyang* in single file playing percussion simultaneously but not in time with the shawm band, and periodically sounding a conch; then two men bearing the treasures, two men carrying the altar table laden with offerings, and other helpers, the kin coming along in no fixed order. Along the route they sometimes stop to regroup, kin standing behind the altar table while the shawm band and *yinyang* continue to play. When the procession reaches the site just outside the village, the two treasures are set down back to back, the altar table is set down a few metres in front of it, and kin kneel in between the two, male and female kin facing each other in two rows, burning paper spirit-money on little fires in a line between them, while the *yinyang* sing a hymn with ritual percussion. The shawm-band musicians take up their place, standing as ever to one side. A *yinyang*, holding a cloth spirit-banner, then recites the paper Summons, which he then hands to the eldest son to burn while the *yinyang* band performs a brief percussion coda. The (living) kin now move into a circle around the treasures; the treasures are then ignited, and the kin, holding hands, parade in an anti-clockwise circle around it, while the shawm band play. This circular parade is common in the area south of the Baideng bridge, where the 2003 funeral I describe took place; north of the bridge, nearer Yanggao town, the kin commonly kowtow.

After the treasures have been reduced to ashes, all proceed back towards the soul hall, the shawm band playing again, the *yinyang* now playing *shengguan* pieces, while the kin set little lights on the ground at the side of the track at intervals to show the ancestors the way back. From Li Qing's prescription for a three-day funeral above, I wonder if this is a further condensed amalgamation of Escorting the Lanterns, when the *yinyang* lead the kin on a Report to the Temple.²¹ Indeed, Burning the Treasures may also be combined with a Report to the Temple (*baomiao*), as I saw at another funeral in 2003. At a funeral I attended in 1991, the shawm band was ritually 'impeded' (*lan*) on the return journey, surrounded by boisterous village men and cajoled into playing pop pieces on demand.

When they arrive back at the host household, the altar table is set down outside the gate as the shawm band and *yinyang* finish playing. Finally, the *yinyang* sing a

²⁰ For Treasury rituals in Taiwan, cf. Lagerwey 1987: 188–9 and 186, Hou Ching-lang 1975 (esp. 49–54); and in Fujian, Dean 1988: 39–40, 57–8. See also Seidel 1978. Cf. the modest contract implied in the amount of water poured for Fetching Water.

²¹ Of course, lantern rituals are a pervasive theme of Chinese rituals: see p.56 below. Here I refer only to the lighting of lanterns to show the way back to the soul hall; for Shaanbei, though without Daoists, Jones 2009: 178–9, 185–6, and ●B4, D5. But distinguish *fendeng* as part of the *jiao*, Tables 9 and 14 below.

hymn accompanied by ritual percussion, while the kin again kneel in facing rows and burn paper spirit-money.

The lengthy **Transferring Offerings** (*zhuanyan*) ritual (Jones 2007, ❶A8), the climax of the evening rituals, is a ‘feast for the ghosts, the dead ancestors’. The coffin rests directly inside the open main central door of the deceased’s house. Before it is a small altar table; before that, on the floor, is a bowl for burning paper spirit-money. Outside the house, directly in front of the coffin, is a large altar table, laden with offerings, under an awning. The *yinyang* sit or stand around this altar table, and the kin kneel before it.

Transferring Offerings consists of three sections (*ji*), during which offerings are transferred from the large altar table to the smaller altar table directly in front of the coffin. Meanwhile two grand-daughters, kneeling before the coffin, burn paper spirit-money in the bowl on the floor, while the oldest son kneels before the large altar table, and other kin kneel on both sides and kowtow in turns. When the chief *yinyang* calls out instructions to present offerings in turn, the oldest son goes to kneel at the threshold before the coffin, while helpers place bowls of offerings from the large altar table onto a tray, covering them with a cloth; the tray is then placed on his head while the bowls of offerings are moved onto the small altar table directly in front of the coffin. The son then returns to his place kneeling before the large altar table.

During this sequence of offerings, the shawm band and the *yinyang* perform alternately. The shawm band stand (or sit) to one side, while the *yinyang* sit facing each other on both sides of the altar table, wind instruments on the left, percussion on the right. Tonight the *yinyang* do not wear their costumes, claiming that this has never been prescribed for the evening rituals in this area – which I doubt. After the shawm band has played a medley of pieces, the *yinyang* then perform a sequence of hymns with *shengguan* accompaniment, linked by brief percussion interludes, beginning with the magnificent solemn slow hymn *Yici zhenling* (‘Hereby shaking the bell’) and accelerating. The chief *yinyang* officiant then intones a series of commands to ‘Present offerings’ (tea, fruit, liquor, vegetables and so on) and, while the shawm band plays another medley, the eldest son kneels before the coffin, and bowls of offerings (covered with a cloth) are placed on a tray which he supports on his head, as the bowls are moved to the table before the coffin. To mark the end of the first section, the chief *yinyang* shouts ‘Play the Grand Music!’ (*Zou Dayue* 奏大樂) and the shawm band plays the ‘suite’ *Jiangjun ling*, as prescribed, while the mourners kowtow in turn.

For the second section, the whole sequence is repeated; this time the first hymn performed by the *yinyang* is *Shi baoen* (‘Ten repayments for kindness’). The kin continue to kowtow in turn, while the grand-daughters continue to burn paper spirit-money before the coffin as more offerings are transferred onto the altar table at the coffin. The shawm band marks the end of the second section with the ‘suite’ *Shang qiaolou*.

Whereas the first two sequences consisted of five offerings, for the final section eight offerings are made. This time the first hymn of the *yinyang* is *Shi muezui*

(‘Ten absolutions of sin’). For their finale the *yinyang* first play a percussion piece while the kin again kowtow, then an upbeat instrumental suite, accelerating rapidly, including a popular ‘mountain piece’ (*shanqu*) from nearby Inner Mongolia, for which the leading *guanzi* player also plays *mahao* short curved trumpet.

Then in a strangely perfunctory **Dispensing Food** (*shishi*) ritual, the *yinyang* officiant scatters bread for the lonely souls (*guhun*) before the main altar table while reciting a brief text. As his colleagues begin a simple pattern on drum and small cymbals, an equally perfunctory **Escorting Away the Lonely Souls** (*songgu*) ritual follows, the *yinyang* leading the oldest son a little way along the road outside (nominally towards a crossroads in the direction of the earlier Summoning Kin) to burn paper spirit-money, the *yinyang* percussionists following. The whole sequence finishes around midnight. I can’t explain the simplicity of the Bestowing Food ritual here – surely this (or the equivalent *yankou*) should be the climax of the nocturnal rituals? Or have elements from the *yankou* already been incorporated into the whole nocturnal sequence?²²

In another local variation, Transferring Offerings is performed at different times north and south of Baideng bridge. South of the bridge, it is generally performed after the opera ends, from about 10pm to midnight; if there is no opera, then the shawm band plays popular pieces instead – this is called *guoling* Crossing the Soul. North of the bridge, they do Transferring Offerings first, then a lengthy Crossing the Soul deep into the night.

On the morning of the burial, first the coffin is prepared for removal from the house (Jones 2007, ●A9). While one *yinyang* directs the son to kowtow as the coffin is sealed with nails and prepared with heavy ropes, the shawm band plays briefly, standing in the courtyard. The *yinyang* wields a bundle of *gaoliang* stalks and a cleaver as he exorcizes the dwelling, and then smashes a bowl (*dawan* or *zhanwan*) on the floor (marking the end of the son’s duties to feed his parent), the coffin is lifted out of the house and the shawm band (now standing outside the gate) plays again until it is rested in the alley outside. The coffin-bearers then prepare the coffin inside the handsome palanquin, fixing the poles on which it is to be borne. Little yellow paper talismans (*fulu*) are distributed to avert evil; as I video, one is lodged in my ear to protect me too.

As the coffin is raised and the procession starts, the two shawm bands play again, and female kin wail on cue, continuing to do so at intervals throughout the procession to the grave. Firecrackers are set off at the head of the procession; the shawm bands and *yinyang* (the latter now in their red costumes) follow, playing alternately; then helpers bearing soul pennant and paper offerings; then the male kin in single file, linked together by a long hemp rope over their shoulders; then the coffin, and lastly the female kin wailing behind it.

The procession first goes as far as the main village square, where the coffin is put down before a large crowd of villagers. The shawm bands take up a place to one side at some distance, while *yinyang* and kin ‘circle the soul’ (*raoling*), the

²² Cf. central Hebei (§9.9), where the term *yankou* seems to be used loosely.

yinyang playing a free selection of fast pieces including pop. Firecrackers are let off, the large assembled crowd is showered with candies, while the shawm bands play pop. Eventually the male and female kin kneel in two rows facing each other to burn paper spirit-money, and the soul pennant is waved as the son smashes a second bowl (*jiao zhipen*), the female kin wailing on cue.

Thus two bowls are smashed: the first, privately, by the chief *yinyang* as the coffin is taken out of the house, to show the end of food for the deceased; the second (in which incense and paper spirit-money were burnt) by the son in the public square.²³

The procession sets off again towards the grave in the fields outside the village, the shawm bands and *yinyang* accompanying only as far as the edge of the village. While the other members of the *yinyang* band return to their scripture hall, only one senior *yinyang* attends at the grave, performing necessary rituals such as checking the *fengshui* alignment with his *luopan* compass.

Less common rituals

Of the rituals in Li Qing's uncle's manual (p.41), several were no longer known by the 1980s (if not earlier), such as *yubao chenghuang*, *youlian*, *poyu*, and the pestilence rituals *zhubaiyu* and *ranghuangwen* (for the latter type, see p.9 above).

A major element in the choice of the common two-day or the now rare three-day funeral programme, apart from a modern history of political restrictions, is the relative economic means of the host family or community – rituals like Crossing the Bridges are expensive, as we will soon see. The fuller sequence is still sometimes performed when the host family wants to put on a grand show, as in a funeral around 1990 for the mother of a mine-boss in Xinghe county over the border in Inner Mongolia.²⁴ The abbreviation of the funeral from three to two days necessitated a streamlining, a readjustment to include the core elements; but as we now see, much has been lost. On one hand, ritual programmes are not static – apart from synchronic variation (with factors such as means and social status of the host family, age and gender of the deceased, season and weather, geographical layout of the home and the village), we cannot assume a timeless historical constancy before the reductions of the 20th century. But the latter are doubtless a quite extreme case.

For *kaifang Opening the Quarters* (*pao wufang* Chasing Round the Five Quarters),²⁵ a large ritual arena is prepared, with each of the 'five quarters' (*wufang*) represented by five tables stacked up. On each of these is a rectangular *dou* bowl in which are placed *gaoliang* stalks representing the 'holy trees' (*shenshu*) for

²³ Much could be, and probably has been, written about smashing the bowl in Chinese funerals: for just one example from old Beijing, see Chang Renchun 1993: 403–6.

²⁴ Jones 2007: 29.

²⁵ Only briefly mentioned as an option in the 'standard' ritual of Min Zhiting (1995: 170).

the gods: the central, east, south, west, and north quarters are respectively yellow emperor (*huangdi*), blue emperor (*qingdi*), red emperor (*chidi*), white emperor (*baidi*) and black emperor (*heidi*). After a vocal chant, they chase ever faster through the arena (east, south, central, west, north) as they perform acrobatics with ‘flying cymbals’ (*feibo, feinao*, cf. p.86).²⁶ Finally they assemble at the central altar and sing the hymn *Guangming zan*.

Hoisting the Pennant (*yangfan*), now more common at temple fairs than at funerals, is a rather similar ritual.²⁷ I saw it the Lower Liangyuan temple fair in 2003, on the morning of the second (final) day (Jones 2007, ●B6). This time five tall wooden poles (to the five elements) are erected in the centre, southeast, southwest, northwest, and northeast corners of an arena in the large open space before the temple complex. The poles are linked by ropes from which are hung coloured paper squares each bearing a character written by the *yinyang*, making up four rows of inscriptions to the ghosts and ancestors. The tall central pole is called ‘the old pole’ (*laogan*); at its top is a long triangular pennant decorated with the seven stars of the Northern Dipper. Just beneath this is a furled cloth attached to a rope hanging right down to the ground; it is decorated with an image of ‘Our Lady Earthworm’ (Qushan niangniang), with the head of a woman and body of a snake, as in ‘The Tale of the White Snake’ (*Baishe zhuan*).

We saw how Li Qing observed that the tradition of the Daoists in Upper Yinshan (in nearby Tianzhen county) was different from theirs. Indeed, according to the Jinzu Longmen *huoju* Daoist Lü Yuzhang (b. c1912) from Upper Yinshan, the furled cloth should contain *paiwei* inscriptions for all the gods, as well as dates, walnuts, and candies. As to the other four poles, the Yanggao Daoists merely post red paper god-places on the poles, but two of them should bear images of Nüwa niangniang (he regarded the Qushan niangniang on the cloth of the Yanggao Daoists as incorrect), the other two a *chihu*, a type of dragon with claws of a dog.

First the shawm band plays while making a base to one side in the shade beneath the eaves of the temple, then the *yinyang* emerge to parade sedately around the poles, animating the ritual arena with percussion. On a small offerings-table are placed a ‘precious sword’ (*baopian*), a hand-bell, three bowls of food offerings, and yellow paper petitions and incense sticks for burning; the table is moved by helpers as the *yinyang* visit each pole in turn. On arrival at each pole, the *yinyang* sing a sequence of different hymns with *shengguan* accompaniment, interspersed with short interludes led by *nao* and *bo* cymbals. The temple elder offers incense and burns a yellow paper petition at the foot of each pole before the group moves on to the next one. On procession from pole to pole the *yinyang* again

²⁶ One thinks also of the cymbal tricks at Hakka Buddhist funerals in Meizhou far south: see e.g. Wang Kui 2007: 147–8.

²⁷ For a version in ‘standard’ Quanzhen temple ritual, see Min Zhiting 1995: 191–3; this ritual, as part of the *jiao*, is common in southeast China, but seems to be of a different nature in north Shanxi.

take a winding route, playing *shengguan* pieces, the shawm band also playing in the distance.

In the last act, as the table is set down back at the central pole, and Li Qing's favourite young disciple Wu Mei, the chief *yinyang* celebrant today, dons the 'five-Buddha hat' and unsheathes the precious sword, wielding it in his right hand and the bell (its mouth facing upwards) in his left hand. He leads the *yinyang* on a tour around the poles; as they play percussion, Wu Mei hastily uses the sword to depict a talisman in the dust before each of the poles in turn. He then breaks into a run, the *yinyang* trying to keep up as they play percussion, and they race ever faster around the arena. Finally Wu Mei tugs the rope hanging from the furled cloth on top of the central pole, revealing the image of Our Lady Earthworm, and making the small paper envelopes and goodies inside the cloth fall down for excited children to catch. This seemingly naïve denouement denotes cosmic harmony and the prosperity of the community.

I saw the magnificent **Dispatching the Pardon** (*fangshe*) ritual at a funeral in Yanggao in 1991; it was already becoming rare by then, although it is still occasionally required (cf. pp.91, 99).²⁸ The *yinyang* have constructed an open-air altar in a large clearing in the middle of the village near the funerary site, using tables, benches, and planks. On this structure are placed in a row five 'palaces' for Yuhuang, the Three Officers (*sanguan*, for heaven, earth, and water: Tianguan, Diguan, and Shuiguan), and Ziwei – small paper images mounted on stalks of *gaoliang* inserted into large rectangular *dou* bowls filled with grain. Just below the central palace to Yuhuang is an altar table bearing the soul tablet, and below that, a long table around which the *yinyang* will stand. Further behind, facing the five palaces, a long platform has been built on which tables are placed. The ritual is in two main parts: presenting the offerings from the altar table, and announcing and burning the writs of pardon from the platform.

The *yinyang* proceed once more from their scripture hall, playing percussion and conch, first paying a brief visit to the soul hall. They then lead the kin on an elaborate winding procession around the whole ritual arena to purify it. Virtually all the villagers have gathered round. Acting as intermediary for the kin standing or kneeling in a row behind him, the chief celebrant Li Qing, wielding his wooden Daoist placard and sounding a hand-bell and a *qing* bowl on the table, now faces the altars and presents offerings to each of the five deities in turn. The tray of offerings is at first placed on the table of the *yinyang*; after a choral hymn accompanied only by the ritual percussion, its verses punctuated by patterns on *nao* and *bo* cymbals, the tray is handed down to the oldest son of the deceased. Li Qing recites a text and then takes the offerings in turn from the tray, handing them up towards the altars by way of the altar tray in front of the central palace. Each time he does so, the instrumentalists, standing around the main altar table, play a short piece – this is

²⁸ For the Pardon in Fujian and Taiwan, see Lagerwey 1987: 202–15, Dean 1988: 45, 52–3; Dean 1989: 59–61. Cf. ET 403–4. For the Pardon within the 'standard' *yankou*, see Min Zhiting 1995: 175–6.

one of the few occasions when the *dizi* flute is played, replacing the *guanzi* oboe²⁹ – and the *yinyang* sing another hymn.

For the transfer of the second set of offerings, Li Qing climbs up onto the table, wielding placard and bell, and the *yinyang* sing hymns (now accompanied by majestic *shengguan*) as he places the offerings before the central palace. He kneels on the table and makes obeisances with his placard while the cymbals play interludes.

Then, taking all their ritual and musical instruments with them, the *yinyang* ascend the platform behind, standing in a long line before a row of tables to face the altars. After a long percussion prelude, the three central *yinyang* don ‘five-Buddha hats’. Li Qing and Liu Zhong, in the middle, solemnly read out the lengthy pardon slips (*shetiao*) to the deities (cover photo), fold them up, and place them in large envelopes, handing them down to the kin, again accompanied by the ensemble with *dizi*. Li Qing told us there were one hundred pardon slips, but thankfully they are combined into a few documents.

The main *guanzi* player, the splendid Liu Zhong, standing to the left of Li Qing, then leads a protracted clowning sequence (‘fooling around’ *shuashua* or ‘catching the tiger’ *zhuo laohu*), playing two *guanzi* alternately and at once, dismantling his instruments while playing them, playing a whistle in his mouth, pretending to pluck snot from Li Qing’s nose and smear it over the face of the *sheng* player on his left, replacing the latter’s cap with a cymbal, putting on false eyes, and making ribald gestures with his *mahao* small telescopic curved trumpet. Li Qing and the others try to keep a straight face throughout. Finally the *yinyang* descend from the platform, parade around the altars again playing *shengguan*, and Li Qing guides the kin in the ritual burning of the memorials, *dizi* again replacing *guanzi* in the accompanying instrumental music. They then retire to their scripture hall to rest and prepare for the next ritual.

The clowning sequence is also performed for the *panhu* ritual (see below); indeed, there is some dispute whether the Daoists learnt it from the shawm bands or vice versa, but anyway it goes back well before living memory. As in the Pardon ritual of Fujian and Taiwan, I suppose it represents the mockery of all the ghosts and officials from whose clutches the deceased is to escape on the journey to paradise, though the Yanggao Daoists do not articulate such a specific significance; its most obvious function is to provide comic relief.

In Fujian and Taiwan the Pardon precedes the Assault on Hell, and indeed in Li Qing’s grandfather’s day they also performed **Smashing the Hells** (*poyu*), as well as **Roaming in Paradise** (*youlian*), but by the 1980s even master Daoists like Li Qing couldn’t recreate them. We meet Smashing the Hells in several places below;

²⁹ This change of instrumentation is also adopted elsewhere; I heard of it for the *kaiji* ritual in Shaanbei, for example.

in some classic sequences such as those of Shanghai it is part of lantern rituals (*dengyi*, see below).³⁰

Crossing the Bridges (*duqiao*) was also rare in this area by the 1980s.³¹ Below we find other areas with further material, but Li Qing gave a detailed prescription. Two bridges were constructed, each using four or five horse-carts, without the wheels,³² which were turned upside-down and placed in a long line. Wooden planks were placed on top of them to simulate a bridge; white cloth decorated with waves trailed from the sides. A group of at least nine beggars was then hired; their leader must be able to sing the Mantra for Crossing the Bridges (*Guoqiao zhou*). (It is still eminently possible to find beggars – they routinely show up at weddings and funerals to sing a few songs.)³³ The beggar leader dressed up as the ‘big ghost’, wearing a five-feet-tall hat of white paper³⁴ – this has an obvious modern secular reflection in the dunce’s cap of the Cultural Revolution, though both appear to go back to punishments of imperial times. The hat had the characters ‘responsible for great ritual’ (*dang dashi*) on the front, and the name Zhang Guangcai on the back.³⁵ The other eight, the ‘little ghosts’, wore hats three feet tall. In pairs, they stood guard at the ends of the bridges while the big ghost directed them from on top of the bridges.

The *yinyang* now led out the kin, followed by the two shawm bands. First they paraded round the bridges, then the *yinyang* led them to the head of the silver bridge, singing the Opening the Bridge Scripture (*Kaiqiao jing*). The male kin then gave some cash to the big ghost for permission to cross the bridge by singing the mantra, and both male and female kin ‘bribed’ the little ghosts to let them onto the bridge. Throughout the slow journey of the kin across the narrow planks, the beggars could extort more cash from them so they would not impede their progress. The hapless kin also had to shower the onlookers with cigarettes, candies, and coins.

³⁰ In Panjin, Liaoning (see following n.31), Smashing the Hells was subsumed under Chasing Round the Quarters, for male funerals. It is also part of the *yankou*: Min Zhiting 1995: 168–9; Chang Renchun 1993: 298–301.

³¹ There is a rich literature for south China, notably Shanghai vols in the Wang C.K. 1994– series. See also the fine description for Panjin county in Liaoning, Li Runzhong 1986, vol.1: 66–7, 384, part of an exceptional account of all ritual contexts (47–75, 364–402), revealing very similar sequences to those listed here; see also his vol.3: 15–20. By the way, for the *du* of *duqiao*, sources often use the character 度 for the more ‘correct’ 渡.

³² In Changwu (Shaanxi), they don’t take the wheels off: see video under p.102 n.23 below.

³³ Jones 2007, ●A1.

³⁴ Cf. the hat of the ‘dead ghosts’ in Baifu, Wu'an county, Hebei: photo, Zhao Shiyu 2002: 256.

³⁵ All I can find about him is that he features in the *Pipa ji*, on which the Beijing opera *Saomu xiashu* and other operas like *Zhao Wuniang* are based. There must be a local dramatic source, but I haven’t yet found him in any Shanxi dramatic genres. He is a model of righteous behaviour, entrusted with sweeping the tomb of the parents of a distant grand official. Help please.

The little ghosts demanded a further bribe to allow them to emerge from the other end of the bridge. The beggars also ‘impeded’ the two shawm bands on the bridge and demanded that they compete in playing popular pieces for the crowd; the crowd threw clods of earth at the band they considered less accomplished. This section alone could take several hours, and the shawm bands naturally demanded a very high price from the host for this ritual. The whole process was repeated for the golden bridge. Remembering that the shawm bands were themselves right at the bottom of the pile, all this sounds like a system of social support for the less privileged members of an unequal society!³⁶

Escorting Lanterns (*songdeng*) and **Report to the Temple** (*baomiao*, to the Wudaomiao temple) on the first evening were a unit. There was also a Report to the Temple on the second evening in conjunction with Burning the Treasures, and the two may still be combined in the two-day funeral. The shawm band and the *yinyang* led the kin on a tour of the village alleys, setting out lanterns at the sites of all the temples. From a bucket, ladles of gruel were poured into vegetable leaves – the only kind of sustenance the deceased can take while still trapped at the Wudaomiao temple. After burning paper before the temple, the kin wailed, and all returned, shawm band and the *yinyang* playing instrumental pieces at the front of the procession. For the grand 1990 funeral mentioned above, shawm player Hua Yinshan recalled having to play on procession for five hours the first evening, seven hours on the second evening, only resting for a while, fuelled by opium,³⁷ before going into a lengthy Transferring Offerings.

On return to the soul hall, the Report to the Temple was followed by **Beholding the Lanterns** (*guandeng*). Until the 1940s, 365 lanterns were placed at the soul hall for all the days in the year, but later they reduced the number to twelve, for the twelve moons; the kin knelt as the *yinyang* recited the ‘Ten Kings Lantern manual’ (*Shiwang deng ke*, cf. p.197). But it is now performed mainly for temple fairs, as the main ritual event on the evening before the final day – although even this may be omitted, since the opera attracts more of an audience.

At the 2003 Lower Liangyuan temple fair, after supper the younger *yinyang* rehearse the Beholding the Lanterns manual in their scripture hall. They still sometimes perform this ritual for funerals, but the version required tonight is a ‘Wishing Longevity’ (*zhushou*) Beholding the Lanterns, also called Spreading Flowers (*canhua*), for the temple’s patron deity Hulaoye. It is more complex, and they are less familiar with it, so they have to rely more on the manual, with its unfamiliar characters – prompting some last-minute swotting.

The ritual eventually begins at 9.15pm. In the courtyard at the entrance to the main temple a table is set up, around which the *yinyang* will sit. First they pay a ritual visit to the kitchen to collect the eight offerings (*baxian* 八獻, indeed

³⁶ Cf. Jones 2007: 14.

³⁷ Members of shawm bands were rarely able to find opium since the 1950s, but were notorious for consumption before, like temple clerics; see *ibid.*: 12, 19; Jones 2009: 97–8. Lay Daoists seem to have smoked rather less often.

representing the eight immortals *baxian* 八仙) on a tray, performing a hymn to the Stove King – using *dizi* instead of *guanzi* again, as in the Pardon. The main ritual consists of vocal liturgy punctuated by patterns on percussion with cymbals; as the eight dishes are transferred in turn to the temple from the tray held by a temple elder kneeling before the table, the *yinyang* play brief instrumental pieces. When the offerings are complete, twelve candles are lit on the table (again a paltry replacement for the former 365 lanterns), and the lantern manual is recited, hymns now accompanied by fine *shengguan*. By their standards it is not a very spectacular ritual; though this group plays the *shengguan* music well, their recitation is mediocre, apart from their unfamiliarity with the text.

Lantern rituals, of course, are a vast topic. Classic lantern rituals, with clear ancestry in the *Daoist Canon*, are performed in the major national temples; there is a Beholding the Lanterns in the *jiao* (see Part Two).³⁸ Even in north China, there seem to be several different types. We find general lantern festivals, with a full programme of rituals over several days, for 1st moon 15th and 7th moon 15th; and specific funerary segments such as Escorting or Beholding the Lanterns. But the ritual as performed with puppets seems to be distinctive to old Beijing and the countryside just south (§7.4, §9.9). The Beholding the Lanterns in north Shanxi is a ritual segment perhaps related to more élite versions.

Panhу ('Judgement and Alms'?) was also once performed for funerals after Crossing the Bridges, but is now performed more for temple fairs. This ritual seems to be rarely found elsewhere.³⁹ The obscure term *panhu* is locally interpreted to mean sending off or placating the dead spirits; Li Qing equated it with the *shishi* (*yankou*) ritual for feeding ghosts without a master.⁴⁰ But here it now appears to have little liturgical content; while entertainment is often a concomitant factor in Daoist rituals (as we saw in the Pardon ritual above), in this version it seems to take clear precedence over cosmic functions. Our Tianzhen Daoist noted another difference from his tradition and that of Yanggao: in Yanggao the painting to be hung was of the Heavenly Master, whereas in Tianzhen it was of Laojun. But we saw no painting.

At the Lower Liangyuan temple fair in 2003, this final public ritual was performed by the *yinyang* from 5 to 5.30pm.⁴¹ Again the shawm band leads the way, followed by the *yinyang* playing percussion on procession to the square

³⁸ Cf. DC 213, *Huanglu poyu dengyi* (here and below, these are the catalogue numbers of texts in the *Daoist Canon* as listed in TC 1393–1440); TC 969–70. More generally, see TC 962–71, ET 792; <<http://gb.taoism.org.hk/religious-activities-rituals/rituals/pg5-10-6.htm>>; for Taiwan, Lagerwey 1987: 216–57.

³⁹ The only text I can find in the *Daoist Canon* is *Yulu jiyou panhu yi*, DC 506, TC 1000–1001.

⁴⁰ Indeed, the food offerings for the hungry ghosts are called *hushi*, but there is no specific *panhu* segment in the *yankou*, although there are 'judgement documents' (*panshu*: Chang Renchun 1993: 261–3, 303) and 'judgment officers' (*panguan*: Min Zhiting 1995: 176).

⁴¹ Jones 2007, ●B8.

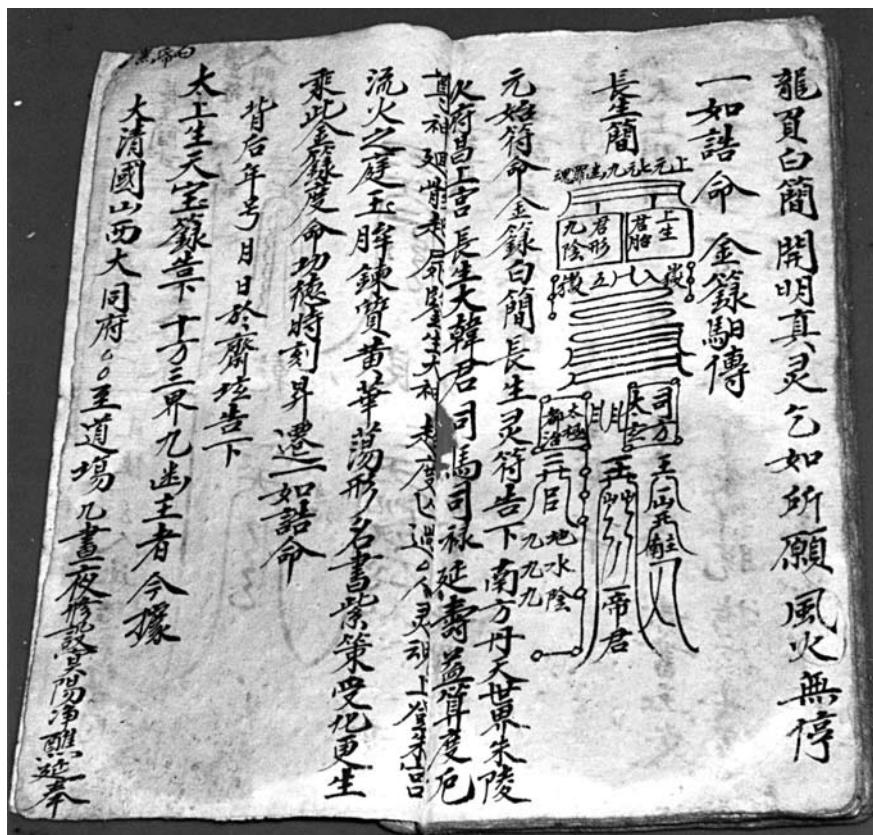


Illustration 2 Page from manual of Li family Daoists, Yanggao, copied by Li Qing's uncle Li Peisen before Liberation. The final listing of 'Shanxi Datong fu' shows its local origins, followed by a rare sighting of the term *jiao*.

outside the temple. A table has been set in front of a single pole decorated with a sheaf of tall *gaoliang* stalks, into which are stuck dough offerings. The *yinyang* stand round the table to finish their percussion prelude, and then take their seats around the table. Villagers crowd around – again mainly young children. On the far side of the pole, facing the pole and the temple, a village elder kneels before a tray with three bowls of offerings and a paper petition, lighting three sticks of incense. First the *yinyang* perform verses of the hymn *Yuqie jing*, accompanied only by ritual percussion. The following brief recitation of the leading *yinyang* is largely drowned out by the opera across the square. Then brilliant young wind-player Wu Mei, on small *guanzi* oboe, leads the *yinyang* in an extrovert *shengguan* suite, switching to large *guanzi* for a fine medley of pop pieces, in authentic Daoist style. He segues into a fine ‘fooling around’ routine (cf. the Pardon above); the audience laps it up, the children spellbound.

Finally the children scramble for the dough offerings which are released from the bundle of *gaoliang* stalks – again symbolizing food for the hungry ghosts – before the temple elder lights the paper petitions and places them beneath the bundle, setting fire to it. These petitions are on behalf of the ancestors, orphan souls, ghost kings, and ‘the *taishang* Mianran and orphan souls for whom the *jiao* is initiated’:

- *geshimenzhong sandai zongqin* 各氏門中三代宗親
- *bianfangjienei shilei guhun* 邊方界內十類孤魂
- *sisheng liudao yiye guiwang* 四生六道一切鬼王
- *qijiao taishang Mianran guhun* 啟醮太上面燃孤魂.

Aha! Despite the silence of locals on the *jiao*, in this transient petition, the very final act of the temple fair, here we find a slim clue. Lower Liangyuan villagers call their temple fair ‘doing the sedan’ *dajiao* 打轎, and local Daoists concur with me that it must refer to the Daoist *jiao* 醇 (‘Wise guy, huh?!’). Below (§3.4) I give some elusive references under Thanking the Earth; and the term, alone, appears within the Li family ritual manual (Illustration 2), and even in some funeral placards. But these are the only clues I have found for the *jiao* in this region. It is far from what one expects of a *jiao*, entirely lacking crucial elements like *chaoshi* audience rituals or the *jinbiao*. But let’s put our *jiao*-fixation on hold: the ritual sequences here are quite complex enough to be going on with.

2.2 Elsewhere in north Shanxi

Imperfect as our Yanggao notes are, from here on south my material is even less detailed. Nevertheless, at least it will add to the evidence that Daoist ritual specialists are far from rare in north China.

There are plenty of women throughout the Datong region who belong to amateur sects and groups of mediums. Indeed, since below I will be mentioning the classic 24-chapter ‘White Lotus’ sectarian style of ‘precious scrolls’ (*baojuan*) in Gansu and Hebei (see §6.2, §9, and Appendix 3), it is worth mentioning an amateur (and mixed-gender) sect in the region, whose liturgists perform 24-chapter precious scrolls as part of elaborate rituals, often for vows, in temples and households. Said to have been suppressed in 1950, the sect has remained active; I describe it further in Appendix 3.

Leaving Yanggao, Daoists appear to be rare around Datong city. However in summer 1992, driving through Datong county, just southeast of the city, as we quenched our thirst with a melon by the roadside, we chatted with the old vendor, who not only told us of an old Daoist in his village but gladly took us to see him. With limited time, this is an ideal way of working, avoiding time-consuming banquets with irrelevant cadres; such ‘hit-and-run’ tactics (John Lagerwey’s term!), though, are no use if you want to stay longer and work in detail.

Despite our short time together, it soon became apparent that here was a rather strictly transmitted tradition, with several musical aspects that were ancient and well preserved. It has much in common with that of the Daoists of Yanggao nearby. Our Daoist appeared to be more knowledgeable about the *shengguan* music than the vocal liturgy, but this may have been to do with his recent problems in practising, as well as our own excitement at finding such a fine score. Where there is such a firm *shengguan* tradition, there is likely to be a strong ritual heritage, but in those rather early days of our fieldwork we were still rather too focused on the *shengguan*.

Yang Quan (b. c1923), of Dangliuzhuang village, was the sixth generation of Daoists in his family. Lay Daoists here are known as *erzhai* (pronounced *erze*, cf. p.36)—as opposed to *liutoudao* temple-dwelling Daoists. The youngest of Yang's three sons had taken up the business, becoming the seventh generation; the oldest was the village Party Secretary. The family had been forced to burn their scriptures in the Cultural Revolution. Yang had managed to keep a fine *gongche* score of the melodic instrumental music, undated but apparently at least from the 19th century; it uses an early form of *gongche* notation, and includes a fine classic repertoire of suites. But they had still had problems even recently; the Datong county authorities were apparently quite strict, and their instruments had been confiscated in 1988 by the police. Without a formal introduction, and without cadres present, Yang was relaxed enough, but his reluctance to discuss current ritual practice may have been tactical.

His ancestors had migrated from Hongdong county further south in Shanxi – like, one sometimes thinks, most north China dwellers; of course it was more like a refugee post. He claimed that when they first moved here, they only knew the *Erda jing* scriptures, which alas we didn't pursue. He recalled a tradition that their *shengguan* music, like that of the other Daoist families in the area, had been learned in his grandfather's day from someone called Ding T in Baijiazhuang village; that family was no more. Another Daoist colleague of his, Li Sheng, in Jiebuzhuang, had lately become a shawm-band musician. Yang also recalled that before Liberation, Buddhist monks from the nearby city of Datong came to perform rituals, including *shengguan* music; several people told us that the monks of the Huayansi temple there practised folk rituals (cf. p.74).

Funerals here are called *guo shichang* ‘going through the ritual arena’ (cf. p.74). Again, before Liberation funerals lasted three days, but now they generally only lasted for two, with the main rituals on the day before the burial. Thus several parts of the fuller funeral sequence have been forgotten. For instance, Presenting the Memorials at the God-seats (*shangbiao canzuo*) is not performed in the two-day version. Their morning, afternoon, and evening appearances are called ‘arenas’ (*chang*), divided into ‘sessions’ (*hui*). As in Yanggao, routine visits to the coffin (*kajing*, *songjing*) are punctuated by more public rituals. The evening arena opens with Escorting the Lanterns (*songdeng*), followed by the *yankou*. Crossing the Bridges (*duqiao*) and Roaming in Paradise (*youlian*) rituals should be performed

before Escorting the Lanterns, but they had become rare in this area, if not obsolete, though some ritual manuals survived.

Other parts of north Shanxi, such as Pianguan, Daixian, and Yingxian counties, were said to have *huoju* Daoists, but I have little material. I have an impressive, though totally undocumented, 1979 mimeograph for the *Anthology* of transcriptions of Daoist *shengguan* music from Zuoyun county, which implies a lively ritual tradition.⁴² And for the county of Shuozhou, the *Anthology* gives transcriptions (only) of items of vocal liturgy from the Daoist band of Wang Yuxi in Muzhai village of Shuocheng district near the county-town.⁴³

2.3 Yangyuan

Before venturing further south in Shanxi, let's make the first of several forays into Hebei with a note on Yangyuan county, just on the western border with Shanxi, not far from Yanggao, which appears to belong to a similar tradition. In 1992 our high hopes, aroused by a detailed draft report for the *Anthology*,⁴⁴ were disappointed. While culturally Yangyuan appears to have much in common with northeast Shanxi, the atmosphere seemed very different. Temples had not been restored, ritual still appeared to be a tense issue, and one group of Daoists was so afraid that we had to curtail our session with them. Our notes at least show some basic continuity with ritual practice in north Shanxi.

In Yangyuan (called Xining in imperial times), Buddhist and Daoist ritual specialists were active, both playing *shengguan* music, contrasting as ever with the lowly shawm bands. The county-town is the 'West city' (Xicheng); on the road towards Xuanhua is the 'East city' (Dongcheng).

In the East City we met Yang Zhigao (b. c1923), the fourth generation of lay Daoists in his family. Though by the time we met him he was perhaps mainly taking part in a shawm band, he was still an occasional colleague of lay Daoists from the village of Sanmafang just north of the road east of the East city.⁴⁵ Lay Daoists in this area were called *laodao*, *yinyang*, *erzhai*, or *yingmenshi*, whereas temple-dwelling Daoists had been known as Huangtiandao Way of Yellow

⁴² For what it's worth, 'Zuoyun temple music' (*simiao yinyue*) is listed, with no details, among ICH projects for Datong municipality in 2008: see <<http://www.dtsswxzx.gov.cn/news.asp?id=7682>>.

⁴³ JCI Shanxi 1919–30. Conversely, Johnson (2010: 69–91) documents *sai* ritual operas before 1949 in two villages, one in the far south of Yanggao, the other northeast of Hunyuan town (cf. §3.1), without finding any major role for Daoist or Buddhist ritual specialists.

⁴⁴ Sadly reduced and garbled in the published provincial volume: JCI Hebei 1416, and for lay Buddhist bands, *ibid.*: 1346–7.

⁴⁵ This was one of several villages in the county looted by Allied troops during the Boxer unrest in 1900: Yangyuan 1935: 390–1. Catholicism in Yangyuan appears to go back to the first half of the 18th century: Yangyuan 1935: 231–3.

Heaven. This was a sect, active since the Ming and apparently suppressed soon after Liberation.⁴⁶ It reminds us that sectarian religion is an element to be borne in mind; temples (both large and small) were a breeding ground for sects that had wider lay memberships (cf. §1.6, and §3.3 for Wutai, §5.1 for Baiyunshan). Yangyuan, of course, is very near the area where Li Shiyu did his seminal work on sects (Li Shiyu 1948).

The lay Daoists who revived (briefly?) around 1979 were from a tradition known as *Sanyuan yi*. According to the exceptionally fine 1935 county gazetteer, this term was used for the ritual collaboration of the lone Daoists in three temples in the county-town with ‘household Daoists’ (*zaijia daoren*).⁴⁷ The gazetteer reminds us that Buddhism was much more common than Daoism in Yangyuan (as we find throughout China); there were five or six Buddhists to every Daoist, and Buddhist monks officiated at nine out of ten funerals – generally we have to allow for official preference for institutionalized religion, and ignorance of folk practice, but this account looks like good fieldwork. Tempering the indubitable further decline of religion under Communism, the gazetteer observes that temple income from services was already dwindling by the 1930s, with less demand as fewer élite families could afford large services.

According to Yang Zhigao, the Chenghuangmiao temple in the East city held festivals ‘parading the gods’ (*youshen*) on Qingming, 7th moon 15th, and 10th moon 1st. The priests of the Guandimiao temple in the West city ‘invited the gods’ (*qingshen*) on 5th moon 5th. There was also a pilgrimage to the Longyemiao temple fair on Huanghuashan mountain, which involved Daoists as well as local performing arts associations.⁴⁸

As ever, the long list of temples in the 1935 gazetteer suggests a stark picture of the later destruction,⁴⁹ but we also need to bear in mind that this was no golden age. In the ten years prior to the writing of the gazetteer, while temple fairs were still held, the unrest of the period had made it impossible to employ opera troupes, and market goods were much less varied.⁵⁰ Such accounts are an important balance to our picture of the impoverishment of culture under Maoism. Without denying the horrors of the Cultural Revolution, it was not the first interruption in transmission of tradition, nor indeed was the republican period. Not to mention the troubles of

⁴⁶ See Li Shiyu 1948: 10–31, Ma Xisha and Han Jianfang 1992: 406–88; Shek 1982, Yang C.K. 1961: 215, 235. The sect is not mentioned in the account in the 1935 gazetteer (Yangyuan 1935: 190–91).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*: 229–31.

⁴⁸ I have rarely heard the expression *youshen*, or *youshen saihui*, in north China, although it is a most common expression in the southeast. The *sai* festival, of which ritual opera was often a major element, was common in the north, but dwindled under Communism (for refs, see Jones 2009: 19 and n.36 there); Daoists do not appear to have played a role.

⁴⁹ Yangyuan 1935: 50–56; for temple fairs, see *ibid.*: 260–61; see also *ibid.*: 229–31, 242.

⁵⁰ Cf. Hebei, §9.2 below; Gamble 1963: 112–15.

the 19th century; and if one could go into local detail on the 1640s, for instance, we might also find considerable disruption to local culture.⁵¹

Lay Daoists appear to have been inactive after 1956 when the local government confiscated their instruments (*jiahuo*, a common term for all ritual and musical instruments). Traditional observances had revived since 1979, but the Daoists seem to have been absorbed into shawm bands, largely dispensing with liturgy. Or that was the story they gave us – in great contrast with Yanggao, where both Daoist and shawm bands, separately, have continued to be *de rigueur*.

They recalled the sequence for a three-day funeral before about 1956 (Table 6). Allowing for the circumstances of our brief interviews in Yangyuan, it is basically

Table 6 Former three-day funeral sequence, Yangyuan

Day 1	
	<i>kaijing</i> 開經 Opening the Scriptures
pm	<i>songjing</i> 送經 Escorting Scriptures
	<i>gushui</i> 取水 Fetching Water
	<i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures
	<i>qingwang</i> 請亡 Requesting the Deceased [Ancestors]
	<i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures
eve	<i>zhuanzhou</i> 轉咒 Revolving the Mantras
	<i>gaomiao</i> 告廟 Report to the Temple
	<i>guandeng</i> 觀燈 Beholding the Lanterns
Day 2	
am	<i>kaijing</i> Opening the Scriptures
	<i>songjing</i> Escorting Scriptures
	<i>paohua youlian</i> 跑花游蓮 Running Flowers, Roaming in Paradise
	<i>yingjing</i> 歡經 Welcoming the Scriptures
noon	<i>xianwu</i> 獻午 Noon Offerings
pm	<i>kaijing</i> Opening the Scriptures
	<i>poyu</i> 破獄 Smashing the Hells
	<i>guoqiao</i> 過橋 Crossing the Bridges
eve	<i>shishi</i> 施食 Dispensing Food
	<i>song guhun</i> 送孤魂 Escorting Away the Orphan Souls
	<i>guoling</i> 過靈 Crossing the Soul (without Daoists)
Day 3	
	<i>fayin</i> 發引 Burial Procession
	<i>raoguan</i> 繞棺 Circling the Coffin

⁵¹ Cf. Jones 2004: 347–51, Chau 2006: 5–7, 45–8.

compatible with that of nearby Yanggao. The Yangyuan Daoists also had a solemn repertory of *shengguan* suites, called *foqu* – a not uncommon term among Daoists, which we might render not ‘Buddhist pieces’ but ‘ritual pieces’; as ever, I spare you the details of *shengguan* titles prescribed for each segment of the ritual, but this is also a vital aspect of Daoist ritual skills.

This was the common domestic funeral, the ‘scriptures before the soul’ (*lingqianjing*) at the home of the deceased, also known as ‘hall of peace and purity’ (*qingjingtang*). But Yang Zhigao mentioned another type of funeral, ‘scriptures emerging from the hall’ (*chutang jing*), held in a temple; this sounds more like the *gongde* rituals of southeast China, but this was the only place in north China that I have heard of such a mortuary ritual held in a temple. The gazetteer observes that the temple-style funerals had mainly been held by the local gentry, so that already by the 1930s, in times of economic crisis and social unrest, they had largely been replaced by the domestic type.⁵²

Yang Zhigao also cited rituals such as Thanking the Earth and reciting *ping'an jing* scriptures for illness or domestic crisis (cf. §3.4). He mentioned *Dacheng jing* 大成經 scriptures, and I later realized that we, and perhaps our informants, weren’t always clear about the writing of the *cheng* character. Other Daoists in north Shanxi and Hebei also mentioned *Dacheng* scriptures. The *Dacheng* sect (*Dachengjiao*) goes back to the Ming and later formed many branches, including a ‘western’ branch, common in this area.⁵³

This was a sketchy impression, and I was perhaps more disappointed than you will be that the tradition had been semi-dormant since the 1950s; but at least we have learnt that Yangyuan was part of the same ritual area as north Shanxi.

⁵² The account of the 1935 gazetteer, though not detailed on ritual sequences, is worth consulting: Yangyuan 1935: 236–8 (reprinted in MSZL 169–71, part of a rather good section, 167–90). For funeral variation, note again Naquin 1988.

⁵³ Ma Xisha and Han Jianfang 1992: *passim* (see index); for the Western branch, see *ibid.*: 653–88, 1095–6. *Dacheng* scriptures began with the Luo sect (*ibid.*: 250); see also Overmyer 1976: 113–29; Zhao Jiazhu 2004: 10–11.

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Chapter 3

North-central Shanxi

3.1 Hunyuan

Resuming our trip from Yanggao south through Shanxi, it is curious that Daoists seem to be absent in the southern part of Yanggao, but just further south, the Hengshan mountain is a historically significant Daoist site. Making a base at the county-town of Hunyuan below the mountain, we again met lay Daoists.

Hengshan, the northern peak of the numinous ‘five marchmonts’, though patronized by Qing emperors, was less prestigious and significant than either its Buddhist neighbour Wutaishan (indeed, it was on the emperors’ route to Wutaishan) or other Daoist mountains.¹ The mountain itself, with its pilgrimage route of vistas, temples, and shrines, is quite distinct from the surrounding area, including the town of Hunyuan and the many villages, where lay Daoists are still active. This, indeed, is probably a general principle – as around Wudangshan in Hubei, or Taishan and Laoshan in Shandong.

According to a local account, temples were damaged during a major battle here in 1926 between the warlord armies of Feng Yuxiang and Yan Xishan; in 1933 they were restored by the donations of local gentry. During the occupation, the Japanese took off many precious Daoist scriptures. We were told that the Daoists living in the temples on the mountain had fled in 1937 when the Japanese came; perhaps, rather, they had fled the fighting. The local account claims that there were thirty or forty Daoists (including *huoju* Daoists) in Hunyuan [county? town?] in the republican period, and that only nine elderly Daoists remained (on the mountain) after Liberation.²

Like some other parts of north Shanxi, this is still a strategic military area today. Despite the opening up of nearly every other sacred Daoist site in China, no Daoists had been allowed to return to Hengshan by 1992. This was of concern to the Chinese Daoist Association, and we met some young Daoists from Beijing trying to set up there, but complex political issues still needed to be overcome.

¹ It was located at Hunyuan since ancient times, but following the reign of the Former Han emperor Wudi its site was decreed to be in Quyang county in western Hebei, further east in the same range; although (apart from a brief interlude under the Northern Wei) the site was not officially changed back to the Hengshan in Hunyuan until the Qing dynasty, it retained its minor reputation over the centuries. See Kang Wenyuan 1986: 187–9; Zhang Jianyang 1987: 8–14; ET 481–2; Xiong Yangde and Cheng Zuxiu 1988.

² *Ibid.* 1988, including accounts of two distinguished Daoist priests on Hengshan, Dong Yongli (1883–1957) and Li Yuantong (b. 1888, last seen leaving for Shaanxi in 1957).

By 1998, as Vincent Goossaert tells me, the mountain temples were Quanzhen-managed.

I found no evidence that the Quanzhen priests in the Hengshan mountain temples ever performed folk rituals outside their temples; their vocal liturgy within the temples was accompanied only by the ritual percussion, in accord with the exalted view of élite clerics (both Buddhist and Daoist) that I noted above. But lay Daoists around the foot of the mountain perform rituals (including *shengguan* music) with gusto. In this area they were evidently hired more than Buddhist monks; before Liberation, if a rich family wanted two competing groups of ritual specialists (*duipeng*), Buddhist monks were invited from the counties of Fanshi or Guangling. By the 1990s, Buddhists were occasionally invited for folk funerals, but they didn't play *shengguan* music, so perhaps they mainly recited scriptures rather than performing the more popular public rituals.

Following the imperial county gazetteers, the Hunyuan guidebook lists over twenty temples in the town before Liberation. Many were destroyed in 1954–55 during campaigns to sweep away superstition. The two main Buddhist temples still standing, the Yong'ansi and the Yuanjuesi, are now merely tourist attractions.³ By 1992 there were two officially sanctioned places of worship in the town: the Buddhist Guanyindian nunnery, and the Daoist Sanqingdian.⁴ We were also told that before Liberation, Hunyuan town had several *tang* 'halls', which sounded like amateur religious associations.

But as ever, this is only the tip of the iceberg. In 1992 we visited the *huoju* Daoist Jiao Yong (known as Jiao San, b. c1936) at his home in the county-town. The sixth generation of Daoists in his family, his father Dianru and grandfather Yuxin were both deceased. His younger brother was practising rituals with him; his older brother, also a Daoist, had died in 1986. From here south, I no longer heard the term *yinyang* for lay Daoists (although see p.79 n.28); here they seemed to be called *daoshi*, or *huojudao*. The chief celebrant is called *zhangjiaode* – while we were there, this was an elderly Daoist called Zhang Yu. Another senior Daoist was Cao Jincai (b. c1917), whose son also took part. The ritual group usually consists of around eight men.

There were five or six groups of lay Daoists in Hunyuan town in the republican period, but only two or three survived during the War against Japan. Business was less good after Liberation, and they had to find subsidiary occupations; in the early 1950s there were still two bands, but the other one soon gave up. Along with Buddhist monks and even shawm-band musicians, they were 'struggled' as 'ox demons and snake spirits' during the Cultural Revolution. Jiao Yong's Daoist father had been so terrorized that he tried, unsuccessfully, to stop them when they resumed in 1978. Another Daoist band with a hereditary tradition in the county-town had recently restored activity, led by Li Wancun; the Daciya district just south of the town was also said to have active Daoist groups.

³ Zhang Jianyang 1987: 19–22, 116–20.

⁴ *Ibid.*: 84–6.

There was no contact between the Quanzhen temple Daoists dwelling on the mountain and the lay Daoists all around. By the 1990s, at least, only shawm bands, not lay Daoists, took part in the temple fair on the mountain on 4th moon 8th and at the Sanqingdian on 6th moon 1st, and in the inauguration of new statues on the mountain. The only occasion when the lay Daoists did perform their ritual and *shengguan* music at the Quanzhen temples was for the temple fair of the Sanqingdian on 2nd moon 15th. In 1992, for the first time, they had even been invited to the 6th-moon festival at the Sanqingdian; they had taken part, but refused the temple's offer of money. I heard this selfless claim in several places – though in fact they would always make money from pilgrims, even if they refused a fee from the temple.

Many of the Jiao family's old ritual manuals and scores were lost during the turmoils of the 20th century. In the Cultural Revolution they themselves had burned their manuals, making a pile 'a metre high'. However, they preserve an old funeral manual, undated but perhaps from the late 19th or early 20th century, entitled *Qingxuan jiuku (zhaowang duqiao fadie qushui shishi daochang) keyi tongjuan* 'Ritual manuals in a combined volume of dark mystery for relieving suffering: Summoning the Deceased, Crossing the Bridges, Modelling the Mandates, Fetching Water, Dispensing Food, and Arenas of the Way'.⁵ At our request, they performed two sections from their funeral ritual, both for the evening before the burial, including *shishi* Dispensing Food (Illustrations 3 and 4).



Illustration 3 Hunyuan town Daoists performing ritual segment for us in their family courtyard, 1992. Zhang Yu in centre wearing 'five-Buddha' hat', Cao Jincai second from right, Jiao San second from left.

⁵ Cf. *Qingxuan jiuku baochan*, DC 539, TC 993; *Taishang shuo qingxuan leiling faxing yindi maojing*, DC 1198, TC 1225–6.

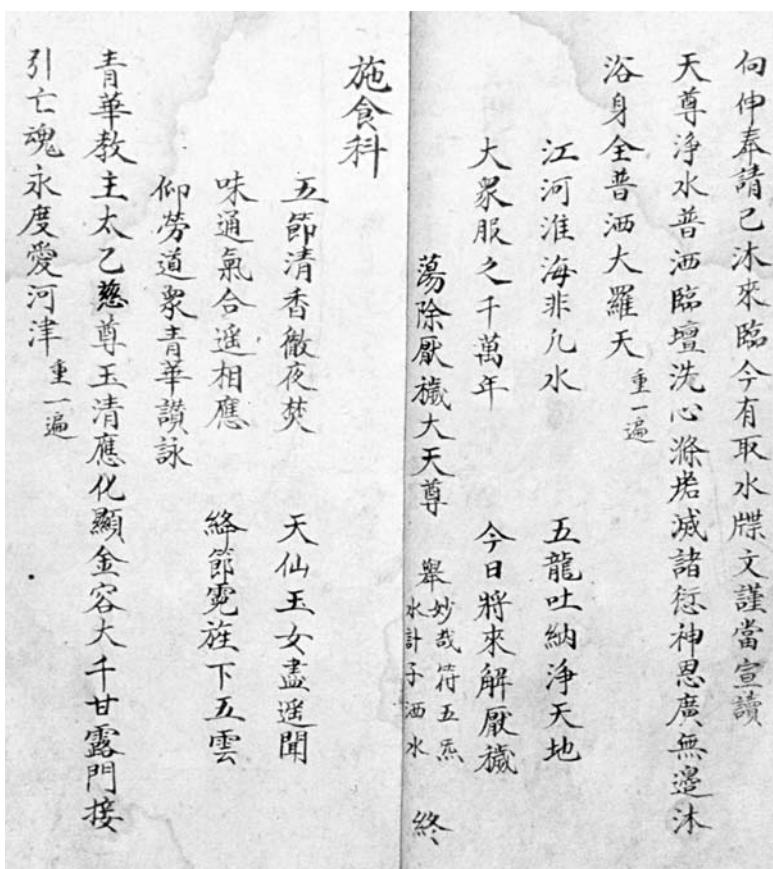


Illustration 4 Page from manual of Hunyuan town Daoists: the end of Fetching Water ritual and start of Dispensing Food ritual.

Their funerary manual concludes with a section called *Zanyong quanji* ‘Complete collection of hymns for singing’.⁶ For their *shengguan* music they use *gongche* notation; their old scores had been burned along with their ritual manuals in the Cultural Revolution, but Jiao Yong had rewritten a score with the help of the senior Daoist Cao Jincai. Unusually among lay Daoists in my experience, they also had a manual for morning and evening services (*zaotan/wantan gongke*); we didn’t query this, but I am inclined to doubt their claim that they performed these at their own home on the 1st and 15th of each moon, though our Daoist in Datong county had also mentioned a similar routine.⁷ They had recently had (typically garish) new costumes

⁶ The term *zanyong* goes back to Zhang Shangying in the 12th century: TC 1039.

⁷ The morning and evening services could be included in funeral ritual and temple fairs in élite temple traditions (as in old Beijing), but this is not known in folk traditions in north

made; they wore Daoist hats, and the chief celebrant donned the ‘five-Buddha hat’ for some rituals. They also spoke of Thanking the Earth (§3.4).

3.2 Xinzhou

Just south on the central Shanxi plain, Xinzhou municipality is a large and actually quite mountainous area. The administrative region of Xinzhou covers the whole of central-northwestern Shanxi; here I merely introduce some aspects of ritual in the immediate vicinity of Xinzhou county itself.

Local scholars have only studied one group of lay Daoists in Xinzhou, from a group of three villages just southwest of the county-town; I imagine there are more.⁸ We paid them two brief visits in 1992. A band consists of seven or eight Daoists – 12 or 13 if a large group is required. They mustered 11 to perform sections of their ritual for us, and the same number did a concert in Beijing in 2008, after being rediscovered by students from the Central Conservatory of Music during fieldwork around Wutaishan in 2002.⁹

The *Anthology* draft mentions four Daoist ritual groups (in the county?) in the late Qing, led by Liu and Zhang lineages.¹⁰ The Liu tradition declined in the republican period, leaving the Zhangs, based in the adjacent Wangyao and Hexitou villages in Lancun district; Daoists from nearby North Zhao village also took part in the restoration after the Cultural Revolution.

Here, unlike in Yanggao and Hunyuan further north, the tradition was handed down by Quanzhen Daoists formerly resident in temples. The restoration of the 1980s was led by seven or eight senior Daoists from former temples – though they seemed to describe themselves as *huojudao* even while they were resident in temples. Some of them had lived in a temple called Yuquanguan; on Liberation it was converted to a school, and the Daoists were laicized. One of these was Zhang Changxian (b. c1923), Daoist *hao* Jiaoxin – the *jiao* component of their names represents the 17th generation, the 17th word in their 100-word generational poem. We also met Zhang Shuangxi (!, b. c1922), the fifth generation of Daoists in his family, from North Zhao village; his father’s Daoist *hao* was Jiaozhong. Sun Mingfu (b. c1921), not from a Daoist family, entered the clergy at the late age of 20 to live in the San’gaisi temple, but it was destroyed upon Liberation; he was a disciple of Zhang Shuangxi’s father. Apart from these three in their early 70s, the others were aged between 22 and 46; several of their fathers and grandfathers were also former temple Daoists.

China. The morning, noon, and evening audiences (*chao*) of the *jiao* are a separate issue.

⁸ Xue Yibing 1992: 52–60; Xinzhou 1992: 163–4; transcriptions (only *shengguan*) in Xinzhou 1992: 167–235 and JCI Shanxi 1931–61, naming seven performers.

⁹ For which see <<http://musicology.cn/reviews/concert/200805/3035.html>>.

¹⁰ Xinzhou 1992: 163–4.

They are also known as *daoshi*, *shifu* ‘masters’, or *erzhai*. Although they were no longer occupying temples, the expression ‘inviting the Daoist belvedere’ was still in use (*qing daoguan* 請道觀; the term *daoguan* 道館 is common in south China, but I haven’t heard it in the north). The chief celebrant responsible for the ritual is called *fashi* ‘ritual master’, similar to the less commonly-used term *gaogong*. He wields a *longtou* dragon-shaped incense holder and a large upturned *ling* bell.

As we saw, in principle, Quanzhen Daoists living in temples have no melodic instrumental traditions, but here, as with other local Quanzhen groups performing folk ritual, there was a long tradition of *shengguan* music. They mentioned another apparently ‘Daoist’ branch called *Qingfodao* 清佛道, whose members, including priests living in the Lüzumiao temple in Xinzhou town, had also been laicized after Liberation. ‘Laicized’ may have been a euphemism: in Wutai county nearby, a *Qingfodao* is listed as one of the ‘reactionary sects’, introduced from other counties, crushed in the campaigns of 1950–51.¹¹ The Xinzhou members of the *Qingfodao* were said to have acquired their instrumental music from our *huoju* Daoists.

There had also been Buddhist monks in the area, all laicized after Liberation, who played *shengguan* music, but it was ‘different’. Before Liberation, Buddhist monks and Daoist priests used to compete at funerals. Funerals were also called *daiqi* ‘attending at the sevens’, and apart from Buddhist sevens (*heshang qi*) and Daoist sevens (*daoguan qi*), there were also ‘*xiucuai* sevens’. Indeed, our Hunyuan Daoists said that it was the educated élite, graduates of the *xiucuai* examination, who had written their scriptures down for them.

The Daoists continued activity through until the Four Cleanups campaign of 1964. They buried their instruments, ritual manuals, *gongche* instrumental melodic scores, and god-images, but during the Cultural Revolution two cartloads of scriptures had been taken away and burnt. By the time the Cultural Revolution was over they were unable to retrieve the buried artefacts, and they now recited the scriptures from memory. Zhang Changxian was praised for his memory of scriptures and music; it was he who led the collective relearning of their ritual.

Though their ritual practice has doubtless been much simplified since the 1930s, they distinguished three types of activity: ‘god rituals’ (*shenshi*, temple fairs), funerals (*zuo fashi* or *wangshi*), and Thanking the Earth (§3.4). Before Liberation, the main temple fairs of the Yuquanguan were held around 1st moon 15th and 4th moon 8th and 14th. On 7th moon 2nd they performed Escorting the Thunder God (*song leishen*), presumably related to rain rituals (§3.4).

They even do one-day funerals, called *zaoqijing*, ‘early-to-rise scriptures’, for which there are five sessions of scriptures (*wutangjing*). The first session consists

¹¹ Wutai 1988: 577; also listed for nearby Fanshi and Shenchi (Zhao Jiazhu 2004: 182–4); for the sect in Shanxi generally, see *ibid.*: 151. For other counties in north-central Shanxi, cf. *Qingfodao* 青佛道 in Pianguan and Hunyuan (*ibid.*: 185); cf. also *Qingfudao* 清福道 in Zuoyun (*ibid.*: 165) and 青福道 in Yingxian (*ibid.*: 167).

of Inviting the Soul (*qingling*), singing the *Dadao dongxuanxu* (erstwhile part of the *yankou*)¹² for the Triple Libations of Tea (*san diancha*). For the second session they perform *shengguan chan* Litanies with *shengguan*; the hymn is *Qinghua jiaozhu*.¹³ For the third session the text is the hymn *Penglai haihui*.¹⁴ For the fourth session the scripture is probably *Shizhong chan*. For the fifth session the scripture is *Xuanshu gongde*. (Our notes are unclear on the last two sessions, but these are the main scriptures.)

A two-day funeral is called *zhouyejing* ‘day-and-night scriptures’. There are two types of scripture-recitation: ‘scriptures before the soul’ (*lingqianjing*), including sung hymns such as *Sangui zan* and *Yuyin zan*; and ‘scriptures before the gods’ (*shenqianjing*), including *Huangdi zan* and the hymns to the Three Primes (*Shangyuan zan*, *Zhongyuan zan*, and *Xiayuan zan*).

A three-day funeral, rare if not obsolete by the 1990s, is called *sanzhoueryejing* ‘scriptures of three days and two nights’. For this they performed ten (rather than the more common five) sessions of scriptures, including *dachi poyu* Making the Arena and Smashing the Hells,¹⁵ *yinjing* Leading the Scriptures, *zhaoqin* Summoning Kin, and *guo jinyinqiao* Crossing the Gold and Silver Bridges. For Making the Arena and Smashing the Hells (or *da huichi* Making the Arena of Ashes), a kind of mandala was drawn with ashes on the ground, made up of concentric squares (whereas that used for Thanking the Earth was octagonal, §3.4), and in the centre an altar was constructed out of tables. On the third day (*fayin* Burial Procession), after the standard Raising the Coffin (*qiguan*) and smashing the bowl (*dapen*), they concluded with the procession as far as the edge of the village, Walking the Way *xingdao*.¹⁶

For us they performed the opening part of a funeral, called *qingling* Inviting the Soul, and its conclusion, called *wanchan* Concluding the Litanies (including *Shizhong chan*). As ever, the rituals are an alternation of vocal liturgy accompanied by ritual percussion, sections for the ritual percussion alone, and melodic instrumental music for *shengguan* ensemble.

Though (as in most local Daoist traditions in north China) their main texts are doubtless the hymns, they also mentioned their main scriptures, *Sanyuan chan*

¹² Min Zhiting 1991: 31 (*Buxu*), Min Zhiting 1995: 163 (for the *shezhao* ritual).

¹³ This also appears near the start of the *shishi* manual of the Daoists in Hunyuan town (p.68 above); and cf. Min Zhiting 1995: 174.

¹⁴ Version of this are again performed by the Daoists of Hunyuan, and (in the *Yujiao dayun* section of the *jiao*) by the Julu Daoists, Yuan Jingfang 1997: 26, 74.

¹⁵ I rarely query my colleague Xue Yibing’s fine notes, as he is always careful to check the correct characters with people as they tell him, but his notes have *poyue* 破月 Smashing the Moon, which we have never met anywhere. Forgive me, all, for any editorial hubris.

¹⁶ Not apparently equivalent to the ancient Daoist *xingdao*, Lagerwey 1987: 90, 106, 110–11. In north China I have only met the term in the title of the common *shengguan* melody *Xingdaozhang*.

Litanies to the Three Primes,¹⁷ *Shiyi yao* Eleven Luminaries,¹⁸ and *Beidou jing* Scriptures to the Northern Dipper;¹⁹ if they have recopied any texts, they didn't show us any.

If *zuo fashi* refers here specifically to funerals, then the term *daochang* Arena of the Way, exceptionally, refers to 'inviting the ancestors' (*qing zuxian*), and was only used for a ritual of revising the lineage chart (*xiu jiapu*); it is also called *fanchang* Arena of [making the ancestors] Return – another term I have not found elsewhere.²⁰ They said that the Daoists of Jingle and Yangqu counties, just west and south of Xinzhou, did *fanchang* rituals, including Chasing Round the Five Quarters (*pao wufang*).

3.3 The Wutai area

Continuing south through Shanxi, the focus of most Chinese and foreign interest in the Wutaishan range is the Buddhism of its great temples in the midst of the 'five terraces' of the mountain proper. As one of the most important sites for Buddhist ritual (and *shengguan* music) in north China, this is indeed a major topic; studied by Chinese music scholars since 1947, it is beyond my scope here.²¹ In official public discourse the practices of the major temples naturally tend to obscure those of folk religion.

Before we look at folk ritual activity in the area, the 1988 Wutai county gazetteer reminds us again that temples were a breeding-ground for the 'reactionary sects' (§1.6).²² It is not that Buddhist monks or Daoist priests were usually, or even often, sectarian; usually the two are clearly distinct, as in Yanggao. The sectarian groups among the amateur ritual associations in central Hebei (Part Three, notably §9), whose liturgy was transmitted from temples, are a separate case. But the sects should interest us, since while not all of them performed complex liturgy, they show a link between temple and lay practice – several of those around Wutai,

¹⁷ Cf. DC 533–5.

¹⁸ For the *Shangqing shiyi dayao dengyi*, see DC 198, TC 963–4, Holm 1994: 819. For another *Shiyi yao* text in the Daoist Canon, see DC 43, TC 956–7. *Dengyi* rituals (p.56 above) are not cited as such by Daoists I have met, and I have found few mentions of *Shiyi yao* among Daoists: the *Zanyong quanji* manual of the Hunyuan Daoists also has a hymn with the incipit *Shiyi dayao*, and in Baiyunshan (Table 12 below) it is part of the Beholding the Lanterns (Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 111, 252).

¹⁹ Northern Dipper scriptures are common; cf. DC 622, TC 1441, ET 224–6, 1053–5.

²⁰ Cf. *fangchang* in Bazhou, Hebei, Table 19.

²¹ See e.g. Ya Xin 1955; Liu Jianchang 1989; Han Jun 2004, and forthcoming work from Beth Szczepanski.

²² Wutai 1988: 576–7, 603; see also 335–8. Such articles can often be supplemented with the chronologies near the front of the gazetteers. One sectarian leader, Zhang San Baotai (1890–1958), is even awarded a biography: Wutai 1988: 643.

such as the Jiugongdao, Huanxiangdao, and Houtiandao, were organized from the base of a Wutaishan temple, and we find this elsewhere, such as at Baiyunshan in Shaanbei (§5.1).

The recent county gazetteers, however partial, are often a useful source on the sects. Major campaigns were held from 1950 to 1951, and continued through into the Cultural Revolution. Of course, campaigns against ‘heterodox teachings’ were nothing new, having been frequent under both imperial and republican governments, but the new campaigns were far more ruthless. Still, the sects went underground as usual, and have revived since the 1980s. However partial such recent accounts may be, it is important to bear in mind this perspective on local religious organizations when we consider the practice of folk ritual (and its music) over the last century; this background still colours local society, and our interviews, today.

Anyway, Wutai county consists of over three hundred villages and townships, and the inhabitants of ‘lower Wutai’ have little contact with ‘upper Wutai’, feeling remote from the grand temples there with their austere monks. Although folk religion is very strong throughout the county (with a truly amazing number of spirit mediums in every village we visited), funerals and temple fairs seem largely to be practised without ritual specialists.²³

In 1992 we made a base at Dongye township southwest of the mountain. In one village nearby we observed one of five days of a fair to inaugurate a new temple. It had been destroyed in 1959. Typically, all that survived was a gnarled ancient date tree, which then became an object of veneration, peasants offering incense and making prayers before it, which were considered efficacious. Recently an association (*hui*) had made collections to rebuild a more modest version of the old temple; there was a new donors’ list opposite it. But the inauguration of temples or new god-statues (‘opening to the light’ *kaiguang*) is less grand here than in southeast China. The god-statues were made by an elderly religious artist (*huajiang*; we also heard the term *daoshujia*). In this region (unusually, in my experience) many households have their own cloth pantheon, also painted by a *huajiang*, who then performs a *kaiguang* animation ritual for it; he also practises geomancy and prepares the paper artefacts (*zhizha*) for funerals. This seems reminiscent of the *huajiang* mentioned in Yanggao (p.14 n.23 above). We visited another such elderly village artist, who called the making a household pantheon ‘painting grandpa’ (*hua yeye*) or ‘putting grandpa’s costume on for him’ (*gei yeye quan yishang*, *yeye* referring here to the martial god Guangong/Guandi). He said that they paint under the direction of spirit mediums, and that it is the mediums who perform the animation ritual, known as *anshen* Settling the Gods.

We attended several impressive funerals in the Dongye area, but the only vestige of ritual specialists seemed to be fine occupational *shengguan* instrumental

²³ For lists of temple fairs in the towns and villages of Wutai county, see Wutai 1987: 110–11; Wutai 1988: 549–51. On the Wutai mediums, Odile Pierquin (Paris/Beijing) has a remarkable archive, largely unpublished.

ensembles whose paraliturgical suite repertory, quite distinct from that of the local shawm bands, was related to that of the monks on the mountain. But we did find some clues to folk ritual practice in the area just north of the mountain. In 1990 a 'Wutaishan Buddhist music ensemble' performed at a festival of religious music in Beijing, mainly featuring *shengguan* music, as was typical for such concert performances. I was able to invite them for a tour of England in 1992 under the aegis of a major world music festival sponsored by BBC Radio 3. The group consisted of former monks, long laicized. Most of them came from Fanshi and Daixian counties on the northern foothills of Wutaishan, and had been pledged to nearby temples between the ages of 7 and 12 *sui*; after being ordained at Wutaishan, they had mainly continued practising in their home temples, such as the Gongzhusi of Gongzhu village in Fanshi, and the Wenshusi (Xisi) in Ekou township, Daixian. Several had also spent time in the Upper Huayansi temple in Datong city further north.

Some of them were still based in Ekou, part of an occupational lay Buddhist group still regularly performing folk ritual at some distance from the major temples in the central district of Taihuai, where the monks rarely seem to perform folk rituals outside their temples. One of these was (Du) Chengde (b. c1936). On a brief visit to Ekou, we found his older brother, Du Guichang (b. c1933), himself a devout and knowledgeable lay Buddhist. For the previous three generations, one male in every generation of the Du family had been pledged to the Wenshusi temple in Ekou – generally one suffering from illness, partly in the hope of curing him, and presumably because they could better afford to lose him. Chengde joined the temple at the age of 7 *sui*. In 1946–47, during the traumatic period of land reform, he and Yunrui (another member of the 'Wutaishan ensemble') spent a year at the Upper Huayansi temple in Datong. This was a major temple, but they, and one older master at the temple, were apparently the only monks there at the time who could play *shengguan* music.

Among several Buddhist temples in the Ekou area, the Wenshusi, a Pure Land temple, used to have over twenty monks, most of whom had been ordained at Wutaishan. After the 1946–47 land reform, there were fewer monks, rituals were simplified, and fewer people could hire them. But the remaining monks maintained ritual activity largely undisturbed right until the Four Cleanups campaign in 1964, and were only forced to return to the laity in 1966, when Chengde was 31. The temple was finally destroyed in 1973. Since the revival after 1979, Du Guichang (like many) observed that patrons were more interested in a lively show (*kan honghuo*), and thus the *shengguan* music was more popular than vocal liturgy. Whereas the *shengguan* ensemble ideally requires six to eight players, the instrumentation was now simpler: if pushed, one *guanzi*, two *sheng*, a drum, and the small cymbals would suffice.

Like Daoists further north in Shanxi, this Buddhist group did business by 'responding to ritual' (*yingshi*). They distinguished three types of activity: calendrical temple fairs, which they call *guo huichang* 'going through the assembly arena' (cf. *guo shichang*, p.59), or *pao simiao* 'chasing round the temples' if

invited to take part in the festival of another temple; funerals (*dafa wangren*); and Thanking the Earth (§3.4). They might also perform for the animation of new god-statues in temples (*kaiguang*); longevity celebrations (*zuoshou*); for illness (*yansheng* ‘extending life’), and for household misfortune, when they performed ‘scriptures for well-being’ (*ping'an jing*) for three days (§3.4).

Du Guichang’s summary of the simple two-day funeral (*erzhou yiye*) performed since the 1980s is shown in Table 7. As ever, the *jingtang* ‘scripture hall’ is placed at some remove from the soul hall. They were well paid for their services: 1992 rates for the group were 500 *yuan*, or 700 if outside a 30 *li* (15 kilometre) limit, plus cigarettes and three metres of white cloth. The *yankou*, performed by both Buddhists and Daoists, a crucial part of northern temple practice, is quite common in folk ritual too. It lasts at least three hours, beginning after dusk or sometimes at midnight. Du observed that since this is the most frightening part of a funeral, when the vengeful ghosts are summoned to be appeased by a feast, many onlookers retreat to the safety of their own homes – forgive me for being so mundane, but I think they may also get a bit tired (the pre-burial vigil being rare in north China). As in north Shanxi, the lowly shawm band plays an important part throughout the funeral, alternating with the ritual specialists.

Before Liberation, funeral rituals lasted three days – including, before the *yankou*, Crossing the Bridges – for which they constructed the bridges out of tables and paper, but didn’t actually cross them. On return from the burial, they again used to perform ‘scriptures for well-being’.

I won’t be mentioning lay Buddhist ritual much again until we reach central Hebei, and (in inverse proportion to the ratio of Buddhist to Daoist temples) it is always a small part of the folk ritual picture compared to Daoism, but it is worth looking out for. Judging from mainly instrumental pieces transcribed in the *Anthology*, Buddhist ritual specialists may also be active not far further west in Wuzhai county, and (elsewhere in Shanxi) in Jingle, Zuoquan, Xiangfen, Hongdong, Fenxi, and Linfen municipality.²⁴

Returning to Daoism, while the *jiao* seems rare in Shanxi, one hears of the occasional *luotian dajiao* Great Offering to the Entire Firmament. Zhang Minggui (in Shaanbei – §5.1 below) told us that it is held in Jiexiu county on 4th moon 28th – though I believe Daoists are invited from outside the area, and recent websites for the temples of Mianshan in the county suggest that the event may now have been substantially taken over by the cultural tourist industry.

²⁴ JCI Shanxi 1550, 1724–68. Among named performers in Wuzhai are former temple monks with the intriguing clerical names of Daoxian 道仙 and Daocun 道存; it is unclear if this material derives from ‘salvage’ fieldwork or a still active tradition. The brief paragraph on Xiangfen, Hongdong, and Fenxi (JCI Shanxi 1550) claims combined *sengdao* Buddho-Daoist groups (for south Shanxi, see also p.86 n.4). We need to assess all this in more detail.

Table 7 Prescription for a Buddhist funeral, Daixian

Day 1		
am–noon	<i>qushui</i> 取水 Fetching Water	Cf. Yanggao, pp.43–6 above
pm	<i>daochang</i> 道場 Arena of the Way	Scripture-reciting (<i>Guanyin jing</i> , <i>Jin'gang jing</i> , and <i>Yaoshi jing</i>) and <i>shengguan</i> music alternate; sometimes <i>shengguan</i> accompanies the singing of the text (<i>genian</i> , cf. p.25 above).
eve	<i>zhao hun</i> 招魂 Summoning the Soul, or <i>zhao wang</i> 招亡 Summoning the Deceased [Ancestors]	Scripture: <i>Mituo jing</i> . The kin wail to summon the ancestors. In the old days, the door was closed and a bowl of water and a towel were placed for the ancestors' souls to purify themselves: this is the <i>muyu</i> 沐浴 Bathing ritual.
	<i>songxing</i> 送行 Escorting the Procession	The Buddhists escort the ancestors outside the village to a crossroads, only reciting the scriptures, without <i>shengguan</i> .
	<i>yankou</i> 焰口	see p.75.
Day 2		
am	<i>daochang</i> 道場 Arena of the Way	The proper scriptures are <i>Guanyin jing</i> and <i>Jin'gang jing</i> , but now they only recite the <i>Dacheng jing</i> .
noon	<i>fayin</i> 發引 Burial Procession	The coffin is taken to the burial ground. Like Daoists elsewhere, the Buddhists stop at the edge of the village.

Notes:

daochang: the term is not heard so often in north China, but when it is used, it is more often as an umbrella term for rituals. In Hunyuan (§2.2), it was one specific item within a funeral, as here; in Julu (§4.2), funerals divide into five *daochang*. Cf. Lagerwey 1987: 179, 106–48.

muyu: this appears in the same place in the *shezhao* ritual in Li Qing's manual in Yanggao (p.46, n.19). As to 'standard' versions of the *yankou*, the Smashing Hells segment of the Daoist *yankou*, after *zhaoqing*, also ends with a *muyu* (see e.g. Chang RENCHUN 1993: 301), but it is not apparently part of the Buddhist version. More usually in north China, *muyu* is an unspecified segment of Crossing the Bridges, but is rarely mentioned. In south China, however, it may be considered a separate ritual; see e.g. Lagerwey 1987: 183–4, ET 753. See also Glossary–Index.

Dacheng jing 大乘經: if Buddhist, it in general means the whole corpus of 'Mahāyāna sutras'. But specific sectarian texts were also so named; cf. pp.63, 143, 157.

3.4 Occasional rituals

To conclude this section on the northern half of Shanxi, I will give brief notes on some other occasional – and now rare – rituals apart from the main repertory of funerals and temple fairs, including Thanking the Earth and rain ceremonies, collating notes from most of the sites above and occasionally dipping into material from other areas.

Thanking the Earth

The basic distinction in Chinese ritual is between ‘red’ and ‘white’ ritual – not just weddings and funerals (the Daoists and Buddhists don’t do weddings, of course), but rituals for the living and the dead, like the Daoist *jiao* and *zhai* distinction. Thanking the Earth (*xietu*) is a little-discussed ritual for the living, still occasionally performed. As we have seen, the term *jiao*, if recognized at all, seems to be little used in Shanxi, but in seeking to respond to my queries, some Shanxi Daoists equated it – I think spuriously – with Thanking the Earth. I haven’t yet witnessed it, but we may not assume that it disappeared after Liberation. Perhaps it is analogous with rituals like the *qingtu* of Taiwan, or similar rituals in Sichuan and Yunnan.²⁵

According to master Daoists Li Qing and Kang Ren in Yanggao, Thanking the Earth should be performed for illness or crisis, and for the pledging and fulfilling of vows – it was for individual households, not for the community. They did it frequently before Liberation, but it had rarely been required since the 1980s, and their accounts were largely prescriptive. The sequence sounds like a combination of elements from both temple fairs and funerals, which are anyway not dissimilar (§2.1). Scriptures include the *Laojun jing*, *Bafang shenzhou*, *Yuhuang jing*, *Yansheng chan*, and *Xietu jing*. On the first day they go on the Fetching Water procession in the afternoon, and perform Beholding the Lanterns (*guandeng*) in the evening. On the second day, after a *xiewu* Noon Thanksgiving ritual, in the afternoon they recite the *Zhenwu chan* and play the *shengguan* suite *Mayulang*. They then ‘depict the earth altar’ (*hua tutan*, or ‘depict the citadel’ *huacheng*), a type of mandala (earth citadel *tucheng*); they recite the Earth Ritual (*tuoke*, or Earth Scripture *tujing*) and pace the steps of Yu (*Yubu*). In the evening, after an Offering to the Stove (*jizao*), they rest before performing Dispensing Food (*shishi*) and a final Escorting Away the Orphan Souls (*songgu*). In 2009 Li Manshan told me that they are still hired to ‘recite the earth scripture’ (*nian tujing*) in the winter – one main occasion when they need to copy talismans from their old manuals.

In Datong county nearby, Yang Quan described Thanking the Earth as a ‘red ritual’ for vows made after ‘moving the earth’ (*dongtu*) or for illness. One requests

²⁵ Lagerwey 1987: 53; reviews by Lagerwey and Holm of vols in the *Minsu quyi congshu* series, in Overmyer 2002: 75, 129. For south Fujian, see e.g. Ruizendaal 2006: 186, 225.

a geomancer (*yinyang xiānshèng*) to choose the auspicious day, usually after the autumn harvest; as we saw above, though there were some individual geomancers in the area, the *yinyang* was more likely to be a Daoist! For the ritual, one invites Daoists (here he said *daoshi* – confused? You will be!) to perform the ritual and recite the Earth Scripture. Conversely, Yang Quan had heard of the *jiao* as a communal celebration held once or twice a year within the first four moons, and for major calendrical occasions such as Wangmu's birthday on 2nd moon 18th–19th. *Jiao* held in the 4th moon depended on people making vows, generally praying to the Dragon Kings (Longwangye) for rain, but this had not been practised since Liberation (see next section). He also equated temple inaugurations (*kaiguang*) with *jiao*. But he only said all this in reply to our queries – the term wasn't in common use.

According to the Xinzhou Daoists too, Thanking the Earth is a 'red ritual' for the living. Sometimes it is held at temples, to guarantee well-being (*baoping'an*, frequently heard); they recalled the temple of Baishisizhuang village holding a very lively three-day Thanking the Earth. Its common use is to Pacify the Dwelling (*anzhai*) after the moving of the earth upon the construction of a new house or a new village, serving an exorcistic function, forestalling or destroying evil influences. The Xinzhou Daoists recalled a major Thanking the Earth for a neighbour early in the 1980s. But the ritual may be more common than we could discern. It is often performed in the 12th moon (*layue*). A geomancer (*yinyang jiang*) is invited to choose an auspicious day; the Daoists recite scriptures and play *shengguan*. Just as for the segment performed during funerals (p.71), a mandala of ashes is delineated on the ground, but this time it is octagonal. It is a diagram of the five elements (*wuxing*), with the character *tu* earth in the centre, *jin* metal to the west, *mu* wood to the east, *shui* water to the north, and *huo* fire to the south. The Xinzhou Daoists said they could no longer depict the *fu* talismans that should also be part of such major rituals.

The lay Buddhists in Ekou also mentioned Thanking the Earth. For the building of a new house, Daoists and Buddhists might be invited; the Buddhists recited the *Wutujing*. The ritual still performed for the building of a new opera stage was also said to be a form of Thanking the Earth. It preceded the 'opera inaugurating the stage' (*dataixi*). The village must give all the actors a new set of (everyday) clothes. After the instrumental overture, the lead player, acting the Tang general Yuchi Gong, killed a red rooster and sprinkled its blood at the four corners of the stage.

In Yangyuan, Hebei, Thanking the Earth was also linked to construction; it was one of four types of 'scriptures' mentioned by Yang Zhigao, apart from those for temples, funerals, and well-being (*ping'an*).²⁶ A brief account in the exceptionally detailed 1935 gazetteer for Zhangbei county (nearby in northwest Hebei) describes it as a vow ritual:²⁷

²⁶ Cf. Yangyuan 1935: 241; MSZL 188.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: 163.

After the Double Yang festival [9th moon 9th], after the autumn harvest, every family pledges vows and Thanks the Earth, only stopping on 12th moon 23rd. They invite *yinyang* (fake Daoists, *jia daoshi*) to construct an altar in their homes and recite scriptures. It lasts two days; one person for ‘small scripture’, five to seven people for ‘large scripture’. Its meaning is to guarantee well-being for all four seasons.

Note, by the way, the authors’ gloss of *yinyang* as ‘fake Daoists’, meaning lay Daoists – for those of you waiting for a textual source for the widespread folk term *yinyang*, here is one at last!²⁸ As we saw, the term *jia heshang* (fake monks) is much more common than *jia daoshi*, irrespective of any notional allegiance.

In Zhangzi county in southeast Shanxi (§4.1), Thanking the Earth was one of the contexts for which the local Daoists performed the Revolving the Ten Offerings ritual. The other contexts also suggest that ‘red rituals’ requiring the service of Daoists may be more common than we realize: the puberty ritual Opening the Locket (*kaisuo*),²⁹ and the fulfilling of vows (*huanyuan*).

However, other texts, such as a brief 1886 account of funeral practice in Baoding in Hebei³⁰ mentioning Thanking the Earth God (*xie tushen*) after burial, seem to refer merely to the mumbled incantations of the solo geomancer at the grave and back at the house of the deceased. In Shaanbei this is known as Settling the Earth [God] (*antu, antushen*).³¹ In Ekou, reciting the ‘scriptures for well-being’ (*ping'an jing*) used to follow the burial, perhaps like the brief Daoist recitation sometimes requested by individuals at temple fairs in Yanggao.³² But the Ekou Buddhists also sometimes performed ‘scriptures for well-being’ for lengthier household exorcisms of one to three days.

Another occasional ritual in Shanxi and Shaanxi is posthumous marriage (*minghun*). Proscribed under Maoism, it revived since the 1980s. Within five years after the death of an unmarried male over the age of 15 *sui*, a suitable dead unmarried female is found of roughly the same age – though it was attracting headlines in 2007 because women (often disabled, or from poorer provinces) were

²⁸ For southeast Shanxi, in two nearly identical refs under funerals in the Qinzhou (1741) and Tunliu (1885) county gazetteers (MSZL 625, 638), fusty Confucian prescriptions concede reluctantly that ‘only the versions of the Buddhists and *yinyang*, with their ancient customs, have not entirely been erased’ (*wei futu-yinyang zhishuo sushang yijiu, wei jin ge* 惟浮屠陰陽之說俗尚已久, 未盡革); since the term *futu* is not colloquial, I cannot be sure how to interpret this, but I surmise that *yinyang* here too indicates Daoists rather than geomancers, the binome *futu-yinyang* being thus equivalent to the more common term *sengdao* 僧道.

²⁹ Cf. Wen and Xue 1991: 11–12; for Yanggao, Wu Fan 2007: 286–7. For Shaanbei, see Jones 2009: 35–8.

³⁰ MSZL 304.

³¹ See Jones 2009: 22, 35, 180, and ●B6.

³² Wu Fan 2007: 175.

being murdered to cater for the market. A set of clothes and coffins are made. In Yanggao, a shawm band usually plays throughout the first day and accompanies the joint burial of the couple on the second day, but only one *yinyang* is hired, to perform the geomantic and calendrical tasks, write talismans and the tomb-brick, and align the grave. Sometimes the ritual is performed on a single evening; while not secret, it is expensive – though there is no need to buy a new house for the couple, other expenses are almost as great as those for a real wedding.³³

Rain ceremonies

We noted in §1.1 how ‘rites of affliction’ have become rare, at least in north China. Rain rituals (*qiyu*, *qiuyu*) are a rather separate case. After severe restrictions under Maoism, they became more common by the 1990s.³⁴ Just as for funerals and temple fairs, the cast of performers depends on local conditions. Rain rituals appear in the *Daoist Canon*, and local scholars in Tianshui (Gansu) have collected several rain scriptures, though sadly we have no notes on how, or if, they are performed.³⁵ Indeed, rain-making, and the Dragon Kings, are just as much Buddhist as Daoist: there are texts in the *Chanmen risong*. However, rain ceremonies in north China in modern times seem rarely to involve Daoist or Buddhist ritual specialists. Catholics in Shanxi also hold ceremonies for rain, like the Catholic village of Wujiazhuang, Xinzhou county, that we visited in 1992.³⁶

Rain processions may be held in the summer during times of exceptional drought. But in many villages today, they are subsumed under more general calendrical temple fairs. As we saw, both funerals and temple fairs may include a Fetching Water (*qushui*) ritual, but at the temple fairs it commonly represents a more generalized prayer for well-being.

In Xinzhou before Liberation, ‘rain-thanksgiving’ (*xieyu*) did require Daoist and Buddhist monks. Rain ceremonies continued there after Liberation, and were still performed in the 1990s, though it is unclear if ritual specialists took part; we were even told of a village that held a rain-procession in 1972, during the Cultural Revolution. Similarly, rain ceremonies persisted in the Wutai area after Liberation, and even took place on the quiet through the Cultural Revolution, continuing since.

The *Anthology* again gives further slim leads to rain ceremonies such as impressive photos of the *qingmiao shuihui* ‘Green Shoots Water Assembly’ procession, apparently for rain, on Lianhuashan mountain in Tongxin county

³³ Jones 2007: 58; Wu Fan 2007: 321–4; Jones 2009: 86. As ever, this northern practice is very different from the ritual as revived in Taiwan, where mediums preside over a ritual for a dead daughter: Chen Chung-min 2001: 170–74.

³⁴ For some refs, see Jones 2009: 23 n.51.

³⁵ Dong and Arkush 1995: 20–22.

³⁶ Cf. Harrison 2010: 214–16.

of Ningxia.³⁷ The term *shuihui* was quite common; though some urban *shuihui* were more or less secular, local militia for protection against fire and robbers, in rural north China they were often associations for rain, as in the pilgrimages just south of Xi'an.³⁸

* * *

So far, the upper half of Shanxi shows a rather homogeneous ritual scene, despite local variations. In the far north, hereditary household groups of lay Daoists were standard, but further towards central Shanxi some Daoists (and Buddhists) still practising had originally been temple-dwelling clerics. Though making their living from funerals and temple fairs, neither type had anything quite resembling a *jiao*. As we venture into south Shanxi and further afield, the plot thickens.

³⁷ JCI Ningxia, impressive photos at front of vol., and transcriptions, 713–46.

³⁸ Naquin 2000: 660–62; Goossaert 2007: 49–50. For the Xi'an groups, see §5 below.

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PART TWO

Temple–lay connections:
south Shanxi and south Hebei,
Shaanxi and Gansu

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Chapter 4

South Shanxi and south Hebei

Not having ventured further south in Shanxi, I now rely mainly on Chinese sources. So far on our trip down from the far north of Shanxi, traces of former *jiao* rituals have been scant, but now at last we find a *jiao* tradition – transmitted by former Quanzhen temple priests.

4.1 South Shanxi

Provincial scholars have made a suspiciously neat ritual distinction between north Shanxi, where lay *huoju* Zhengyi Daoists known as *yingmenshi* are common, and south Shanxi, where Quanzhen Daoist priests dominate, apparently resident in temples and known as *chanmenshi*.¹ While careful fieldwork would soon clarify this, I suspect that (as for south Hebei below) scholars have omitted to explain that the current practitioners were laymen who had learnt from *former* Quanzhen priests. Thus in practice, it is again laymen who now dominate the ritual scene; the *Anthology* scholars describe them as *huoju* Daoists, for what that's worth.²

Counties in southwest Shanxi they listed with active (lay) Quanzhen Daoists are Jiangxian, Xinjiang, Yicheng, and Xiangfen.³ In Yicheng, Li Xianghe (b. 1930) in Upper Shimiao village, Wangzhuang district, was said to be the 14th generation of Daoists in his family. Like many Daoists (such as Li Qing, §2.1), he spent a period from 1958 as an instrumentalist in a local ‘arts work troupe’.

In Jiangxian county, Zheng Xiangtong (b. 1952) from Bolinpo of Zhangcun village, Dajiao township, learnt Daoist ritual in his youth before the Cultural Revolution from his father Zheng Jiaqi, of the Dongyue Taishanmiao temple, who belonged to the Haozu branch of the Huashan lineage – *jia* and *xiang* are the 21st and 22nd characters in its 40-character poem.⁴ Though the temple was destroyed

¹ See JCI Shanxi 1769–74. For *chanmenshi*, cf. *chanjing* etc. in Beijing, Appendix 1 below. For *chanmen* and *fumen* priests in south Jiangsu, see Chau 2006a: 175–7; cf. Jones 1995: 125. Cf. p.36 n.4 above.

² The *Anthology* (JCI Shanxi 1769) claims that the dominant Longmen lineage of Quanzhen Daoism takes its name from Longmen, now Hejin county in southwest Shanxi, but it is usually linked to Longmenshan in Longzhou, western Shaanxi (ET 704).

³ Nearby Ruicheng county is the site of the famous murals of the Yongle gong temple: see e.g. *Zhongguo yinyue wenwu daxi, Shanxi juan*.

⁴ For the poem, beginning *zhi yi wu shang dao* 至一無上道, see JCI Shanxi 1774; Koyanagi 1934: 100. Apart from these two laconic biographies (JCI Shanxi 2047), see also

during the Japanese occupation, the Daoists performed two annual *jiao* on 1st moon 1st–3rd, for the home village, and on 3rd moon 14th–16th, for a *she* parish of ten surrounding villages.⁵ As to funerals in this region, though the *Anthology* summary is superficial and centred on instrumental music, Table 8 shows items listed for a two-day ‘complete ritual’ (*quanshi*).⁶

In the melodic instrumental music played by Daoists in south Shanxi as part of their rituals, the *suona* shawm has often replaced the more classic *shengguan* instrumentation. With typical stress on entertainment aspects, tricks with martial arts (*zashua*) are listed, incorporating percussion ensemble (*wuchang*).

For the Shangdang region of southeast Shanxi, a certain wealth of material on *sai* temple festivals, along with study of *yuehu* outcast shawm-band families, is remarkably lacking in leads to Daoists.⁷ However, there do seem to be lively Daoist ritual traditions here too. Daoist groups are cited for several districts of Zhangzi county in Changzhi municipality (Sun Xiuhua 1990), performing the Revolving the Ten Offerings (*zhuan shigong*) ritual, used for Opening the Locket (*kaisuo*), Redeeming Vows (*huanyuan*), and Thanking the Earth (*xietu*) rituals (for the latter, see §3.4; n.28 there also mentions *yinyang*). Tell me more, someone.

If this distinction by Chinese scholars is at all accurate, between Zhengyi lay Daoists in north Shanxi and (former?) Quanzhen temple Daoists in south Shanxi, then the Quanzhen corridor might extend from south Hebei (§4.2) through south Shanxi, and west into Shaanxi, through Huashan to south Shaanxi. But I don’t believe it is so simple. Zhengyi priests might live in temples too, and local Quanzhen priests often did folk rituals; what was distinctive about north Shanxi was that we found lay hereditary Daoist families there, never occupying temples. But whether they now live in temples or not, what interests me here is Daoists who perform public rituals among the local populace.

the photo of Gao Faseng, *gaogong* of a group in Yicheng county, at the front of JCI Shanxi vol.1. For the Jiangxian Daoists, see also Jing Weigang 2005: 89–91. The *Anthology* also gives transcriptions from Linfen of vocal liturgy and instrumental pieces, the latter led by *suona* (JCI Shanxi 1978–2020). Yang Yongbing 2008, ch.5 gives some further leads to south Shanxi; for Buddhist, Daoist, and perhaps Buddho-Daoist groups, see also p.75 n.24. For more clues to Daoist ritual in south Shanxi, including *baojuan* (cf. Appendix 3 below), see also Dong and Arkush 1995: 28–9. The names of 26 ‘Daoist music masters’ are listed for Shanxi (JCI Shanxi 2051).

⁵ This mention of *jiao* is only found in Jing Weigang 2005: 90, but seems reliable; sadly, no ritual sequences are cited. For the parish, see p.7 and Glossary–Index.

⁶ JCI Shanxi 1773–4; transcriptions (alas, only instrumental), JCI Shanxi 1962–77. Cf. Liu Jianchang et al. 1990: 11–12. For a good description of funeral ritual in Yuncheng, lacking Daoists, see Huang and Wang 1993.

⁷ For the *sai*, see Johnson 1994 and 2010, Huang and Wang 1994; for *yuehu*, Xiang Yang 2001, Qiao Jian et al. 2002. This is the very area where William Hinton documented the land revolution – his later works only showing the revival of Catholicism, not indigenous religious practices, there.

Table 8 Daoist funeral programme, Yicheng–Jiangxian

Day 1	<i>kaijing</i> 開經 Opening the Scriptures <i>qingshen</i> 諸神 Inviting the Gods <i>songshu</i> 送疏 Escorting the Requests	vocal liturgy includes <i>tan xiaojuan</i> 探孝眷
	<i>yuji</i> 預祭 Preparatory Sacrifice	including popular instrumental melodies
	<i>zhaohun</i> 招魂 Summoning the Soul	vocal liturgy uses <i>Zhaowang ke</i> 招亡科 text
	<i>guo jinyinqiao</i> 過金銀橋 Crossing the Gold and Silver Bridges	
	<i>yankou</i>	
Day 2	<i>yingshu</i> 迎疏 Welcoming the Requests	instrumental melodies include <i>Daobing ji</i> 刀兵計
	<i>dagongwu</i> 大供舞 Greater Offering with Dance	including <i>Shi gongyang</i> 十供養, <i>Linlang zhenxiang</i> 琳琅振響, and <i>Huanglu zhaiyan</i> 黃籙齋筵.
	<i>zachangzi</i> 扎場子 Setting up the Arena	with acrobatics and popular melodies
	<i>kaiji</i> 開祭 Opening the Sacrifice	
	<i>gaomiao</i> 告廟 Report to the Temple (<i>youjie</i> 遊街 Parading the Streets)	
	<i>songshu</i> 送疏 Escorting Away the Requests	

Notes:

Daobing ji: cf. p.228 below.

Linlang zhenxiang: cf. Min Zhiting 1991: 11–12, the *Dengqing* 澄清 sung for daily temple rituals; cf. Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 123 (Baiyunshan); Shi Ximin 2005: 271–2 (Laoshan).

Huanglu zhaiyan: part of the ‘standard’ *yankou*, e.g. Min Zhiting 1991: 140–49; cf. south Hebei, Yuan Jingfang 1997a: 190–92.

I have no material yet for large areas of Shanxi, such as the municipalities of Yangquan and Jinzheng (for a list of sites in Shanxi, see Appendix 4). Daoists are said to have taken part in rain prayers in the Liulin area of the Lüliang region in west Shanxi,⁸ which belongs culturally with Shaanbei (§5.1). But before continuing further west, I suspect that the rituals of former Quanzhen temple Daoists in south Hebei make a logical pairing with those of south Shanxi (Map 2).

⁸ Dong and Arkush 1995: 74.

4.2 South Hebei

The Xingtai and Handan regions of south Hebei, not far east of south Shanxi, sound very lively for Daoist ritual. Chinese scholars make much of the Taipingdao heritage from the time of Zhang Jue in the 2nd century CE; though this is far too remote for my tastes, the rituals of this area are clearly quite distinct from the scene further north towards Beijing (Part Three). While the performance of *jiao* was still rather elusive in the sources for south Shanxi, here (and in the other sites to be discussed in the rest of Part Two) it appears in all its glory. Indeed, the Quanzhen stronghold of south Hebei seems to belong to a separate cultural area from that further north and west, relating more to Henan and Shandong.⁹

In the Xingtai region (in counties like Julu, Pingxiang, Guangzong, Renxian, Longyao, Ningjin, Nangong, Nanhe, Xinhe, Shahe, Quzhou, Jize, and Yongnian), scholars claim Daoists were busy performing rituals in the 1990s – an impressive list, if reliable – including over 40 active Daoists in both Julu and Guangzong counties.¹⁰

In Guangzong, 17 Daoists were interviewed between the ages of 62 and 24 in 2007, all with generational names, mostly from *ming* 明 and *zhi* 志 generations; nine came from Zhongqing village. In Julu county too, some of the senior generation still active in the 1990s had Quanzhen generational names. Zhang Zixiu, Daoist name Mingren (20th generation in the Longmen Quanzhen lineage, b. 1916) is described laconically as a Daoist of the Dabeimiao temple in Julu – I surmise that he was trained there before leaving the clergy. But according to a biography, Zhen Shanzeng, Daoist name Zongzhen (23rd generation, b. 1919) was not a temple Daoist. From West Zhenzhuang in Jiazhua district, he learnt the *guanzi* and *sheng* from the age of 16 *sui*, beginning to perform folk rituals two years later. It was only then that he sought a Daoist master, Zhang Qinghai, Daoist name Libo (22nd generation), from Baifo village; that would explain why he received the *zong* name which follows *li* in the poem. Two more Daoists, born in 1967 and 1968 and also surnamed Zhen, bore the *cheng* 誠 name of the 24th generation.¹¹

Thus Quanzhen temple Daoists could bestow generational names on lay disciples; even lay liturgists could use the names freely. Indeed, Quanzhen generational names were not a monopoly of temple priests – nor even of lay liturgists, as we can see from the case of solo ritual bards in Baofeng county,

⁹ Cf. Goossaert 2000: 78 and 2004: 737 for late imperial China. For serious sectarian unrest in south Hebei under Maoism, see Zhao Jiazhu 2004: 53–4, 128–47.

¹⁰ For Julu, see Yuan Jingfang 1997a: *xuyan* p.4, JCI Hebei 1238. For Guangzong, see <<http://musicology.cn/Article/traditional/200806/3197.html>>, or <http://www.anthromusic.com/tianye/info_tianye.jsp?id=411&sj_id=47>. For Xingtai Daoism, see also <<http://www.mipang.com/places/bible.3011.51730.htm>>. The latter sources make it clear that the Daoists practising since the 1950s are laymen, not temple-dwelling.

¹¹ JCI Hebei 1438–9; Yuan Jingfang 1997a: 2.

west Henan.¹² Whereas amateur disciples of temple priests had no call for the generational names on the central Hebei plain (Part Three), in Baofeng the bards were occupational. Like most rural narrative-singers, they performed their stories for the gods,¹³ but they were not Daoist ritual specialists; still, claiming ancient ancestry from a Quanzhen master, they took generational names from the 100-character Longmen Quanzhen poem. Anyway, the Julu Daoists, whatever their former Quanzhen temple connections, must have been working from a household base since at least the 1950s.

In the mid-1990s, a combined group from the Xingtai region made connections with the Baiyunguan temple in Beijing and local religious authorities, resulting in a certain exposure outside their home base, performing ‘concerts’ in Beijing and outside China under the dodgy name of ‘Xingtai municipality Daoist music troupe’ (*Xingtai shi daojiao yinyuetuan*). We found them at a temple fair in Dingxing county (quite far north of their main catchment area) in 1995. The temple had itself been restored with approval from the religious authorities, who now influenced the choice of Daoists to officiate at the temple fair – otherwise a group would not have been invited from so far (around 250 kilometres) away. Indeed, this kind of attempt at legitimization for temple fairs, by inviting non-local officially-sanctioned temple Daoists rather than local groups, may be a minor recent trend.¹⁴ We saw them performing *fawen* Issuing the Documents (with *tagang* cosmic steps, and, for those of us seeking esoteric Daoism, some promising adoptings of the turtle position) and *zhuangong* Revolving the Offerings rituals,¹⁵ but were unable to spend further time with them, our focus anyway being on ritual activity in the immediate vicinity of the central Hebei plain (see Part Three).

We need not wonder that the Xingtai Daoists whom we met in Dingxing had mostly Lingbao manuals in the impressive collection they had brought with them – a collection pooled since the end of the Cultural Revolution by the Daoists scattered through the villages. They told us that *shengguan* (they used the common term *xiaoguan*, see Introduction to Part Three) dominated in the ‘eastern eight counties’ of the region, percussion in the ‘western eight counties’ – apparently meaning that paraliturgical melodic instrumental music is only added to vocal liturgy in the eastern area.

Having found scant clues to the *jiao* on the long trip down south through the Hebei plain, or indeed in Shanxi, it seems remarkable that it suddenly becomes prevalent in the Xingtai and Handan regions. Best documented is the *jiao* ritual of

¹² Dong Xiaoping 2003: 578–611 (for the Longmen Quanzhen poem, see pp.586–8). In Tianjin, children protected by ‘hanging the locket’ were given Zhengyi generational names (Zhang Xiuhua 1982: 185).

¹³ See e.g. Jones 2009: Part Two.

¹⁴ Cf. Jingchuan in Gansu (Zhao Zongfu 2002: 148–9), where Daoists invited for a temple fair were not local, but from the Baiyunguan in Lanzhou and the Baxiangong in Xi’an.

¹⁵ For the latter, see Yuan Jingfang 1997a: 50–57; cf. southeast Shanxi, §4.1.

the Daoists in Julu county, subject of a book by Yuan Jingfang (1997a, inspired by local scholar Pan Jinglu), though frustratingly laconic on social background. While most villages in north China hold their major annual rituals around 1st moon 15th, here it is specifically a *jiao*. Yuan gives detailed sequences (summarized in Table 9) for a three-day *Yuhuang dajiao* in the 1st moon of 1996; as well as for a funeral (*duwang* or *zhaishi*, Table 11), divided into five *daochang* – within this list, she further subdivides each ritual.¹⁶ Extensive series of god paintings were displayed: ‘over 140’ at a 2002 *jiao* in Handan, over 300 at a 2007 *jiao* in Guangzong.

In the Handan region just south of Xingtai, Daoists have also revived. Recent reports (Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Handan vol.) help contextualize Daoist practice within the lively and diverse folk ritual practices of the region (notably the *saixi* ritual drama, as well as several instances of sectarian Wusheng laomu worship, for which see Part Three), and offer some accounts of recent Daoist activity at temple fairs. While more focused on pre-Communist times, these reports imply that liturgical/ritual groups have survived less well than ordinary worship and ‘performing arts associations’ (*huahui*), as we noted for several areas of north China.

A group of five villages in Handan county performed a *Yuhuang shengjiao* in rotation from 2000 to 2003, after the prescribed cycle of 60 years (at least, the 1938–9 *jiao* had been performed after a 60-year interval), increasing its length from two to four days – the *jiao* described took place from the 17th to the 20th of the 2nd moon in 2002.¹⁷ I digest its ritual sequence as described in the field-report in Table 10 – a similar, though not identical, list to that described for Julu. Despite considerable detail on the temple fair, the status of the Daoists is again unclear from the article: ‘a professional Daoist music group’ (p.104) was led by abbot (*daozhang*) Li Zhijin, resident at the Cishanguan in Wu'an municipality (p.105) – was he the only temple-based Daoist? Though a stele from 1941 survives, one supposes that an extensive network of *jiao* in the region since the 1980s enabled this one to be reconstituted, or reinvented, after 60 years.

Another article describes temple fairs in the famous Huangliangmeng village in Handan county, though here they have been reinstated without *jiao* and apparently without ritual specialists; indeed, since 2001 its fame has encouraged the local authorities to nominate the 4th-moon fair as a ‘cultural tourism festival’, which bodes ill for the restoration of the more abstruse elements of ritual practice.¹⁸ The fair on 6th moon 25th was the occasion for an annual *jiao*, performed by ‘temple-based Daoists’. Apart from the standard *Yuhuang jiao*, other types (*wenshen jiao*, *bala jiao*, and *luoma jiao*) were also once performed for emergencies; a *bala jiao* in 1953 is recalled as having

¹⁶ Yuan 1997a: 18–79, 82–105. For Julu ‘Daoist music’, see also JCI Hebei 1237–51.

¹⁷ Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Handan vol., pp.103–15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 151–5.

Table 9 Rituals in *jiao*, Julu

eve	<i>qingshen kajing</i> 請神開經 Inviting the Gods and Opening the Scriptures	
Day 1		
am	<i>jinfeng qushui</i> 禁風取水 Sealing the Wind and Fetching Water	
	<i>qing tudi chenghuang</i> 請土地城隍 Inviting the Earth God and City God	
pm	<i>fawen</i> 發文 Issuing the Documents	includes <i>tagang</i> 踏罡 cosmic steps
	<i>yangfan, qishi</i> 揚幡啓師 Hoisting the Pennant and Invoking the Masters	
	<i>qing wulao</i> 請五老 Inviting the Five Ancients	includes <i>jiufeng gang</i> 九鳳罡 steps
eve	<i>fendeng</i> 分燈 Dividing the Lanterns	
	<i>yingluan</i> 迎鑾 Welcoming the Phoenix [Palanquin]	
	<i>dali shifang</i> 大立十方 Setting Up the Ten Quarters on a Grand Scale	
Day 2		
am	<i>qing taiyang</i> 請太陽 Inviting the Great Yang	
	<i>qing tianshi</i> 請天師 Inviting the Heavenly Master	includes <i>zhuangong</i> 轉供 (<i>shi gongyang</i> 十供養)
pm	<i>qing tianshi</i> 請天師 Inviting the Heavenly Master	
eve	<i>qing tianshi</i> 請天師 Inviting the Heavenly Master	includes <i>beidou</i> Northern Dipper rituals
Day 3		
am	<i>zhushou</i> 祝壽 Wishing Longevity	
	<i>baibiao</i> 拜表 Worshipfully Presenting the Memorial	includes <i>tagang</i> 踏罡 steps
pm	<i>fangshe</i> 放赦 Dispatching the Pardon	includes <i>song wulao</i> 送五老 (<i>pao wufang</i> 跑五方) and <i>zhuan dagong</i> 轉大供
eve	<i>yujiao dayun</i> 御醮大韻 Greater Chant of the Imperial <i>Jiao</i>	
	<i>shishi ke</i> 施食科 Dispensing Food ritual	includes further <i>qing wulao</i> , and <i>shishang</i> 十傷
	<i>da songshen</i> 大送神 Great Escorting Away the Gods	

Notes: For the *wulao*, see ET 1060–62. The *shishang* ('victims of the ten kinds of bad death') are part of the 'standard' *yankou*: see e.g. Min Zhiting 1991: 192; Chang Renchun 1993: 300. For *jinfeng*, cf. *jintan* in southeast China; for *fendeng*, cf. Schipper 1975.

Table 10 Rituals in *jiao*, Handan

Day 1		
am	<i>qingshen</i> 請神 Inviting the Gods	includes <i>pai shenzhou</i> 排神軸 (unfurling 140 god paintings) and <i>kai tianmen</i> 開天門 Opening the Heavenly Gate, reciting the <i>Kaitian jing</i> 開天經
pm	<i>qingsong Zhang tianshi</i> 請送張天師 Inviting and Escorting Away Heavenly Master Zhang	
eve	<i>chuitan</i> 吹壇 Wind Music for the Altar	
Day 2		
am	<i>zhufeng qushui</i> 祝風取水 Commanding the Wind and Fetching Water	
pm	<i>qingsong tianshi</i> 請送天師 Inviting and Escorting Away the Heavenly Master	
eve	<i>gui huangjing</i> 跪皇經 Kneeling for the <i>Yuhuang jing</i>	recite the <i>Yuhuang jing</i> 玉皇經
Day 3		
am	<i>qing tianshi</i> 請天師 Inviting the Heavenly Master	
pm	<i>song tianshi</i> 送天師 Escorting Away the Heavenly Master	
eve	<i>bai beidou</i> 拜北斗 Worshipful Reciting of the Northern Dipper [Scripture]	recite the <i>Beidou jing</i> 北斗經
Day 4		
am	recite the <i>Shiwang jing</i> 十王經 Ten Kings Scripture	
pm	<i>songshen</i> 送神 Escorting Away the Gods <i>kaitan</i> 開壇 Opening the Altar	(to the wider public)
	<i>po Fengducheng</i> 破酆都城 Smashing Fengdu Citadel, and	
	<i>guo naiheqiao</i> 過奈河橋 Crossing the Bridge of No Return	
dusk	<i>ji guhun</i> 祭孤魂 Sacrifice to the Orphan Souls	recite the <i>Sanyang</i> <i>shishe jiuku jing</i> 三陽施 舍救苦經

Notes:

Sanyang shishe jiuku jing: *shishe* 施舍 ('dispensing alms') is a type of *shishi* (*yankou*), not a mistake for *shishi* 施食; Chang Renchun (1993: 318) lists the term 舍施 for Beijing. For the *sanyang shishi*, cf. §5.1 below.

po Fengdu: part of the 'standard' *yankou*, cf. Min Zhiting 1995: 177–8.

zhufeng: cf. *jinfeng* in Table 9.

Table 11 Funeral sequence, Julu

Day 1	
pm	daochang 1:
	<i>anshen</i> 安神 Settling the Gods
	<i>songshu</i> 送疏 Escorting the Requests
	daochang 2:
	<i>shishi zuo</i> 施食座 Dispensing Food
	<i>nianjing</i> 念經 Reciting Scriptures
	<i>shangzuo</i> 上座 Ascending to the Seat
	<i>sanzhuixiang</i> 三炷香 Three Sticks of Incense
	<i>qing wulao</i> 請五老 Inviting the Five Ancients
	<i>wu gongyang</i> 五供養 Five Offerings
	<i>huanglu zhai</i> 黃錄齋 Fast of the Yellow Register
	<i>donggongzhu</i> 東宮主 Lord of the Eastern Palace
	<i>juhun</i> 聚魂 Assembling the Souls
	<i>yiwen</i> 意文 The Documents
	<i>yingluan</i> 迎鑾 Welcoming the Phoenix [Palanquin]
	<i>zhaoqing</i> 召請 Summons
	<i>shishang ji</i> 十傷祭 Sacrifice for the Victims of the Ten Kinds of Bad Death
	<i>san xiancha</i> 三獻茶 Triple Offerings of Tea
	<i>songlu</i> 送路 Escorting to the Road
	<i>muyu</i> 沐浴 Bathing
	<i>songlu</i> 送路 Escorting to the Road
Day 2	
am	daochang 3:
	<i>qingling kaijing</i> 請靈開經 Inviting the Soul and Opening the Scriptures
	<i>kaitan</i> 開壇 Opening the Altar
	<i>qingling</i> 請靈 Inviting the Soul
	<i>kaijing</i> 開經 Opening Scriptures
	<i>songling</i> 送靈 Escorting Away the Soul
	return to <i>danfang</i> (see p.137 n.12)
	<i>laotan</i> 落壇 Dismantling (?) the Altar
	daochang 4:
	<i>songshu</i> 送疏 Escorting the Requests
	Escorting the Requests 5–11
	daochang 5:
noon	<i>duqiao</i> 渡橋 Crossing the Bridges
	<i>jichu</i> 祭廚 Sacrifice to the Kitchen
	<i>qing sandai</i> 請三代 Inviting the Three Generations
	<i>muyu</i> 沐浴 Bathing
	<i>guojinqiao</i> 渡金橋 Crossing the Golden Bridge
	<i>guoyinqiao</i> 渡銀橋 Crossing the Silver Bridge
	return to soul hall
	<i>san xiancha</i> 三獻茶 Triple Offerings of Tea
	<i>songshen</i> 送神 Escorting Away the Gods
	(burial)

been efficacious.¹⁹ What is different here from places like Shanxi (or at least north Shanxi) is that here we are discussing not just routine Daoist ritual sequences at temple fairs, but the grand *jiao* complex.

From south Hebei it is but a short hop south to Henan and east to Shandong, both beyond my scope here. Northwards, connecting this region with the central Hebei plain (Part Three below), the Dingxian–Shijiazhuang region is also lively for folk ritual. The Fanzhuang temple fair in Zhaoxian county has been much studied (p.8 n.14); the material doesn't specify ritual sequences, and so appears to lack Daoists or vocal liturgists, though amateur sects presumably perform hymns and so on. I have nothing on Daoists in this region – I recall draft reports from west of Shijiazhuang, but they escape me. More ritual specialists might be revealed in the Shijiazhuang region if we had material on funerals, making a connection between the plain to the north and the Xingtai–Handan region, hotbed of *jiao*, to the south.

¹⁹ For another annual *jiao* in another village in Handan county, also defunct since 1953, see *ibid.*: 123, 131–2. In 1953 two groups of Buddhist monks performed as well as a group of Daoists. Zhao Shiyu (2002: 89–90, 92–8) observes that Bala temples were common in north China, but, like pestilence rituals, they barely feature in our material.

Chapter 5

Shaanxi

Heading back west again after our excursion into south Hebei, the distribution of Daoist ritual in Shaanxi appears uneven.¹

In the central Shaanxi area of Guanzhong, Daoist temples of great antiquity are famed; there is plenty of folk religious activity too, but I have little material on any Daoist involvement in it. Around Xi'an, major temples like the Baxiangong, Louguantai, and so on, are mainly Quanzhen, and are not apparently active doing folk ritual; they may be able to perform *jiao*,² but it is unclear how much demand there is. Nor can I assess how much of Min Zhiting's manuals on Quanzhen practice (apparently describing the Baiyunguan in Beijing) derives from his main background in Huashan and the Baxiangong. For a large city like Xi'an, a study such as that of Naquin (2000) for Beijing might be more in order.

Research on Daoist- and Buddhist-transmitted amateur folk ritual associations around Xi'an has focused almost entirely on the instrumental music of the so-called Xi'an *guyue* (another variant of the *shengguan* style), represented before the 1960s by many amateur groups. The research is also a classic case of the obsession with the Tang dynasty that has deflected scholars from the need for basic modern ethnography. Thus we know little of the ritual practices of temples like the former Chenghuangmiao in Xi'an, whose master Daoist An Laixu (1895–1977) was renowned as instrumentalist rather than as a liturgist; nor of the many Buddhist temples that also performed folk ritual in the area.³ The major rain pilgrimages to the 'southern Wutai' mountains and elsewhere in the Zhongnanshan range in the 6th moon are still a magnet for amateur ritual groups, but apart from some *shengguan* and percussion ensemble music, they appear to sing only a few short ritual songs. Such amateur groups around Xi'an do not perform funerals, and lack extensive liturgical sequences, so they are probably somewhat outside our remit here.

One assumes there should be lay ritual groups around the Huashan mountains (as around the northern Hengshan, or Wudangshan), but I have no material. In the Yaowang Medicine King cult of Yaoshan in – you guessed it – Yaoxian county (Qin and Bujard 2003), solo itinerant Quanzhen temple Daoists arrive from

¹ See JCI Shaanxi 1675–81; cf. the earlier draft, Liu Jie 1988.

² E.g. Baxiangong Daoists performing for a *jiao* in Gansu, Zhao Zongfu 2002: 148. For the Baxiangong, I have not seen Zhang and Chen 1993; Shi Xinmin 2005: 52–4 has a brief summary of its vocal liturgy.

³ Jones 1998: 227–45 and refs. While mainly limited to the instrumental ensemble, many of these articles mention Daoist and Buddhist transmissions. I visited some of these groups in 1986, 1987, and 2001. For other leads to Guanzhong, see p.23 above.

elsewhere in Shaanxi to tell fortunes and so on, but do not appear to perform rituals as such; nor do the amateur pilgrim parish groups, or the many performing arts groups.

For south Shaanxi (perhaps belonging more to the Sichuan cultural area), the temple-dwelling Quanzhen Daoists in the Hanzhong region studied by Herrou (2005) seem not to perform folk rituals outside their temples. However, in this same region, *Anthology* collectors have again unearthed folk ritual traditions of Daoists in Xixiang county, and of former temple Buddhists around Yangxian and Chenggu.⁴ From here it is not far east to the major Daoist mountains of Wudangshan in north Hubei, for which both temple ritual and lay practice around the foot of the mountain have been documented;⁵ Sichuan, heart of fine Daoist ritual traditions, also beckons just south.

5.1 Shaanbei

The region of Shaanbei, the north of Shaanxi, with its barren loess hills and deserts, seems to continue this paucity of folk Daoist ritual, as in the Lüliang region of west Shanxi just east across the Yellow River, which belongs culturally with Shaanbei.

Though élite imperial culture had a more tenuous fingerhold in this poor and sparsely populated hill region than on the Guanzhong plain around Xi'an quite far south, here too until the 1950s Buddhist monks and Daoist priests occupied temples both in the major towns and in the countryside, and performed calendrical and funerary rituals for the more affluent in Yulin city and in some towns and villages. But since then funerals, in both town and country, have largely been performed without liturgy, using only a master of ceremonies, a geomancer, and a shawm band; nor are ritual specialists often invited for the abundant calendar of temple fairs.⁶

I can cite two rare pockets for Daoist ritual in Shaanbei, from the eastern and western margins of the Yulin region. In Jiaxian county in the east of the region, bordering the Yellow River that divides Shaanxi from Shanxi, the Baiyunguan (known as Baiyunshan) temple complex is now an isolated outpost of institutional Daoism in the region, with its Longmen Quanzhen tradition whose priests have

⁴ JCI Shaanxi 1676–7, 1680–81; Liu Jie 1988. For ‘*huojudao*’ in south Shaanxi, see p.30 above. For the ICH project on Buddhist ‘scripture stalls’ (*jingtan*) in Yangxian, see <http://www.srwh.gov.cn/feiwuzhi/hanzhong/11/200711/t20071122_37033.htm>. Wang Xiaoping (Nanjing yishu xueyuan) is also writing a thesis on the Yangxian Buddhists.

⁵ Of many publications, see e.g. Cao and Pu 1993. Here too the lay Daoists include a paraliturgical *shengguan* repertory.

⁶ Chau 2006 is a fine ethnography of popular religion in Shaanbei, confirming the paucity of Daoists; see also Jones 2009; cf. Zhang Zhentao 2002a: 73–4 and refs below.

long performed both *jiao* and mortuary rituals among the local people.⁷ Founded in the 17th century from the Baiyunguan in Beijing – though links with Huashan and Shanxi may have been just as significant in its early history – it is a *zisunmiao* ‘hereditary’ temple.⁸

From their biographies,⁹ we find that the priests listed for the 20th century were all local, indeed from the county itself – unlike the priests of many large metropolitan Quanzhen temples, who come from many areas, notably south China. Their numbers since the 1940s have stayed at around a dozen. Coming from poor families – inevitably, since Jiaxian is the poorest county in a chronically poor region – most of them entered the clergy ‘from infancy’, or in specific cases between the ages of 7 and 14 *sui*. The current abbot Zhang Minggui (b. 1931) was exceptional, coming from a scholarly family; since he was ill, his parents pledged him to the temple when he was 5 *sui* old, but they bought him back after a couple of years, only taking him back to the temple when his illness recurred at the age of 11. He was already a fine vocal liturgist by the age of 18, and went on to steer the temple through the choppy waters of Maoism while serving as a schoolteacher. He is one of the most exceptionally enlightened Daoists I have had the honour of meeting, a fine informant not only on Daoism but on all aspects of local culture, and indeed life.¹⁰

The temple Daoists were first given permission to marry in the republican period (one Daoist there told us it was in 1924), apparently creating competition (presumably including ritual competition) between the married priests and those unable to find wives.¹¹ During this period there was also Byzantine intrigue among the priestly adherents of the Hunyuan and Yaochidao sects (the rituals of the latter not including vocal liturgy). This continued through the 1950s, just as they were being targeted in campaigns, with the sectarian Daoists plotting against the more orthodox clerics, although some activity is still said to continue today.¹² The temple complex (and the sects) managed to keep active through the 1950s until 1963,

⁷ See the monograph Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999; our 2001 notes are partially copied in Zhang Zhentao 2002a: 144–69. On the temple’s history, note also Fan Guangchun 2008; the unpublished Fan Guangchun 2007 contains further details on modern history and ritual practice. For the 100-character generational poem, and a list of Daoists from 6th to 22nd generations down to the 1990s, see Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 16–20.

⁸ Despite the claims of the monograph (*ibid.*: 26), their *shengguan* music cannot have been acquired from the Baiyunguan in Beijing, since the latter never had any; it is possible that it came from contact with Buddhist monks, as local scholar Shen Feixue suggested to us.

⁹ *Ibid.*: 30–42.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*: 40–43, Zhang Zhentao 2002a: 153–8.

¹¹ Although I find dubious the authors’ claim (Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 27) that this competition stimulated a wider absorption of ‘folk melodies’. For more on the permission to marry, see Fan Guangchun 2007: 6–7.

¹² Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 28; Zhang Zhentao 2002a: 154–7. Zhao Jiazhu 2004 contains many refs to both sects. Those to the Yaochidao are mainly for counties in Shaanxi

more open worship resuming gingerly around 1979. Since then there has been a political tug-of-war between the Daoists and the county authorities for control of the temple and its substantial funds; the temple income is a major factor in the economy of this poor county.

The main temple fair on the mountain is held over the week leading up to 4th moon 8th, with smaller fairs on 3rd moon 3rd and 9th moon 9th. Here too there is an active *jiao* tradition. The ritual is held four times in the spring: in three specific villages in the 1st and 2nd moons, apparently not a recent tradition; in the temple itself during the 4th-moon temple fair; and eight times earlier in the winter, sponsored by a group of many villages in a parish (*she*) clubbing together, rotating the host village over many years.¹³ The latter system consists of a group of 48 villages to the south of the temple, and 12 villages to the north (the *fangshe* Pardon ritual, on which see below, is performed only for the latter); to the west, the smaller *jiao* is a *niuwang jiao* for the Ox King. Apart from the temple Daoists, there are other less costly lay Daoist groups performing similar rituals in the nearby countryside. The programme for a four-day *jiao* is summarized in Table 12.¹⁴

For the temple fairs on Baiyunshan, there is a group of eight (five in the 1950s, now in practice more than eight) regional associations (*hui*), which serve mainly to organize the large groups of pilgrims, and appear to include few groups of ritual specialists.¹⁵ Apart from the temple fairs, the Daoists' income comes mainly from performing funerals outside the temple. Zhang Minggui recalled how he often lost his voice performing seven- or eight-day rituals in the 1950s.

Abbot Zhang identified two distinctive aspects to Baiyunshan ritual practice: their vocal liturgy in general, distinct from the standard *shifangyun* style of Quanzhen liturgy; and their use of the *sanyang shishi* version of the *yankou* ritual, rather than the more common *tieguan shishi* used in the parent temple in Beijing.¹⁶ No-one seems to have pursued this, but I surmise that the *sanyang shishi* is a version incorporating the three *yang* kalpas, often part of White Lotus worship,

and Gansu; see also the general introduction, *ibid.*: 14. Indeed, I have not found it in areas of Hebei and Shanxi that I have visited.

¹³ For the parish, see p.7 and Glossary–Index.

¹⁴ See Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 102–19 (with detailed descriptions under each ritual); cf. Holm 1994: 814–20, citing a local article from 1989, and differing somewhat in detail. I have followed Yuan, Li, and Shen's three-day format, although it further includes a preparatory ritual on the evening before the first day, and after their 'last day' there is a *songshen* ritual. See also Zhang Zhentao 2002a: 150. Several Chinese websites for Shaanbei (e.g. <http://ziyuan.wh5000.com/JiaXian/MinsuHD/102321643.html>, and under <http://www.sbcctyyw.com>) show photos and videos of *jiao* rituals around Jiaxian.

¹⁵ For these groups, see refs in Jones 2009: 85 n.20.

¹⁶ See Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 26, 28, 117–19, and for texts, vocal items transcribed on pp.155–228. For the 'standard' Quanzhen liturgy, see Min Zhiting 1991; for the Beijing *tieguan shishi*, see Goossaert 2007: 341–4; and for a version in the *Guangcheng yizhi*, see ZWDS vol.14, pp.589–636.

Table 12 Rituals in the *jiao* of the Baiyunshan Daoists

eve	<i>xuntan</i> 熏壇 Fumigating the Altar
Day 1	
am	<i>qijing</i> 啟經 Arousing the Scriptures
	<i>danghui</i> 滯穢 Cleansing Filth
	<i>guafan</i> 掛幡 Hanging the Pennant
	including <i>zhuan wufang</i> 轉五方 Revolving the Five Quarters
	<i>yingluan jiejia</i> 迎鑾接駕 Welcoming the Phoenix Palanquin
pm	<i>yemiao xingxiang</i> 謁廟行香 Paying a Visit to Temples to Present Incense
eve	<i>nianjing, baideng</i> 念經擺燈 Reciting Scriptures and Displaying Lanterns
	<i>fang xiao shishi</i> 放小施食 Lesser Dispensing Food
Day 2	
am	<i>shangbiao</i> 上表 Presenting the Memorial
	<i>bai huangchan</i> 拜皇懺 Worshipfully Reciting the <i>Yuhuang Litany</i>
	<i>yemiao</i> 謁廟 Paying a Visit to Temples
pm	<i>shanggong</i> 上供 Presenting Offerings
	<i>songjing</i> 詠經 Intoning Scriptures
eve	<i>guandeng</i> 觀燈 Beholding the Lanterns (<i>chaodou</i> 朝斗 Audience with the Dipper), including <i>Beidou jing</i> 北斗經, <i>Shiyi yao jing</i> 十一耀經, <i>Zhenwu jing</i> 鎮武經 scriptures
Day 3	
am	<i>songjing</i> 詠經 Intoning Scriptures
noon, pm	<i>fangshe</i> 放赦 Dispatching the Pardon
eve	<i>zhuanjiuqu</i> 轉九曲 Revolving the Nine Bends
	<i>da shishi</i> 大施食 Greater Dispensing Food
final am	<i>songshen</i> 送神 Escorting Away the Gods

Note: *xuntan*: I have rarely encountered this preliminary part of the *jiao* in northern folk ritual traditions, but a fragment appears in the *gongche* score handed down by the Houshan Daoists to Wei Guoliang (§9.2).

perhaps even related to the Hunyuan sectarian connection at the temple. To thicken the plot, it may also be performed in Gansu (§6.2 below); and as we saw, the *jiao* of the Handan region of south Hebei seems to feature a *Sanyang shishe jiuku jing*.¹⁷ Perhaps a scholar of Daoism will be able to explain what these *yankou* variants might imply for the 17th-century transmission from Beijing to the Baiyunshan.

The *fangshe* Pardon ritual may be quite rare in north China, though we met it as part of the *jiao* in south Hebei (§4.2), and I described a 1991 funerary version

¹⁷ In Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Handan vol., p.111. The term *sanyang* actually appears towards the end of the *tieguan* ritual in the *Guangcheng yizhi* (ZWDS vol.14, p.634).

in north Shanxi (§2.1). The Baiyunshan version, with large god puppets descending on a rope down from the hillside to the bank of the Yellow River,¹⁸ seems to be unique, though it may remind one of the *guandeng* Beholding the Lanterns funerary ritual around Beijing (pp. 140, 197–8) on a far grander scale. The Revolving the Nine Bends (*zhuan jiuqu*), another part of the *jiao*, is or was also common in folk ritual, here and elsewhere in north China.¹⁹ Alas, I have no data on their mortuary rituals.

Leaving the mountain, we also heard of several groups of lay ritual specialists operating in Jiaxian county, commonly known as ‘fake monks’ (*jia heshang*), such as those based around Wuzhen township and Jinmingsi (‘Jinming temple’) village nearby. In Wuzhen we found a group of five or six ritual specialists in their 30s and 40s. Two were the sons of a laicized Buddhist monk from the town’s Dongyuemiao temple (*sic*), which was the head of a ritual network of 48 villages. They thought of themselves as Buddhists, and said there were no Daoists in the township; they had recopied their scripture *Cibei daochang chanfa qianfo* in 1983, and wore Buddhist robes to perform rituals. For funerals, on the day before the burial they perform Smashing the Hells (*poyu*) in the afternoon, and Chasing Round the Five Quarters (*pao wufang*), Crossing the Bridges (*guoqiao*), Circling the Soul (*raoling*), Beholding the Lanterns (*guandeng*), and *yankou* in the evening – a very similar list to those of the north Shanxi Daoists. Several laicized monks formed the core of other local ritual groups in the area, also using *shengguan* music. In 1995, locals had responded to an alarming number of deaths of young people in the township by commissioning *ping'an jiao* rituals, which they claimed had solved the problem.²⁰

The heartland of Shaanbei (Yulin, Suide, Mizhi, Zizhou, Hengshan) seems to have a remarkable lack of either temple-based or lay Daoists; they are absent from the hugely popular Black Dragon Temple (Chau 2006), for instance. But there are said to be many lay Daoist bands again in the west of Shaanbei towards Ningxia and Gansu; music scholars have paid brief visits to one of over twenty *yinyang* bands active in Dingbian county alone.²¹ The Ansi temple in Anbian township there, where the 2006 CHIME conference participants were received, belongs to the ‘sixth association’, one of the regional pilgrim associations attending the Baiyunshan temple fairs.²² Tian Yaonong cites an interesting three-day ritual in a village in Dingbian, a grave relocation ordered by an orphan for his foster-mother who had died in the Cultural Revolution – a case that would be called *gongde* in southeast China (cf. §1.3). The leader (*jiaozhu* or *tangzhu*) of the group of nine lay Daoists was Gao Guangshi. The ritual sequence is shown in outline in Table 13.

¹⁸ Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 112–13; Zhang Zhentao 2002a: 149–50.

¹⁹ Holm 1994; Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 113–16.

²⁰ Zhang Zhentao 2002a: 150, 160–61.

²¹ Tian 2005: 115–20, 145 n.18; and notes from the ‘western route’ in the CHIME 2006 fieldwork, under <<http://www.anthromusic.com>>,

²² Cf. Jones 2009: 85. This is the only clue we have that these regional associations included occupational ritual groups.

Table 13 Grave relocation ritual in Dingbian, 2002

Day 1	
	<i>qijian</i> 起建 Raising the Edifice
	<i>qingling</i> 請靈 Inviting the Soul
	<i>qijing</i> 起經 Raising the Scriptures
	<i>lingyang</i> 領羊 Accepting the Sheep [Sacrifice]
	<i>fangshi</i> 放食 Releasing Food (?)
Day 2	
	<i>yingbang</i> 迎榜 Receiving the Placard
	<i>yangfan</i> 揚幡 Hoisting the Pennant
	<i>zhangbang</i> 張榜 Displaying the Placard
	<i>shangfan</i> 上飯 Serving Food
	<i>jingbiao</i> 敬表 Revering the Memorial
	<i>shifang zhuan'an</i> 十方轉案 Ten Directions Revolving round the Tables
	<i>weicheng</i> 圍城 Surrounding the Citadel
	<i>poyu</i> 破獄 Smashing the Hells
	<i>guoqiao</i> 過橋 Crossing the Bridges
	<i>shuxi</i> 梳洗 Combing and Washing
Day 3	
	<i>chulung</i> 出靈 Taking out the Soul
	<i>anzang</i> 安葬 Settling the Burial

Notes:

shuxi: cf. *shuzhuang* under *dutianqiao*, Table 14 below.

shifang zhuan'an: cf. *shiwang* 十王 *zhuan'an*, e.g. the manual in *Guangcheng yizhi*, ZWDS vol.13, pp.261–74.

5.2 Changwu

The *Anthology* contains an unusually useful account of lay Daoist ritual in Changwu county, in west-central Shaanxi on the border with eastern Gansu; indeed, this tradition may have much in common with those of Gansu (§6). I shall cite it at some length here, while aware that it may be more prescriptive than descriptive – at least it seems to be a local prescription rather than a copy of national sources, as one sometimes finds in Chinese accounts. The textual material (apparently by Hui Xinsheng and Zhang Xingyun) is brief but full of detail, and is illuminated by well-annotated transcriptions of vocal liturgy.²³

²³ Not in the instrumental vols, but in JCNSM Shaanxi 1559–1684 (text 1559–65, transcriptions 1566–1683, biographies 1684). Zhang Xingyun et al. nd is a revised edition in book form, with additional notes on the vocal passages, as well as further sections on other lay genres of vocal liturgy in Xianyang and Xingping. For the relevant ICH proposal,

They are *huoju* household Daoists of the Heavenly Masters (Tianshi) Zhengyi tradition, working in groups of seven or eight. The material comes from the Wen lineage, notably Wen Jixiang (1903–98) and Wen Donglai (b. c1930), from Fangzhuang village of Penggong district. They claimed a family tradition dating back to the late 18th century; their ancestors had twice gone through the selection process for Daoist rank (*daoguan zhixian* 道官職銜) in the Qianlong and Daoguang eras, and had later ‘founded a ritual group in their lineage in imitation of the Daoist method’. Another Daoist interviewed by *Anthology* collectors, Wang Zhixi (1903–89), was a disciple of Wen Donglai’s father Wen Huanzhang (1905–34), but only took part in Wen Donglai’s group from the 1950s. By 2007, when local cultural authorities promoted the ‘genre’ as part of the Intangible Cultural Heritage project for Shaanxi, they claimed that only one group was still working; as ever, this claim may serve to justify the urgency of the project, and indeed may derive from a lack of recent fieldwork.

They distinguished ‘pure *jiao*’ (*qingjiao*, or ‘*jiao* for well-being’ *ping'an jiao*) and mortuary *jianwang jiao* (or *mingyang daochang*); the latter might even include a *zhushou* longevity ritual. In addition to recently copied texts, they were using some old manuals from the late Qing and republican eras, including *Taishang lingbao baojing* volumes (for *yingjia* Welcoming the Palanquin, *jingtang-danghui* Purifying the Altar and Cleansing Filth, and *fendeng* Dividing the Lanterns rituals), and the litanies *Shiwang jieyuan bazui baohan* and *Yuhuang cifu baohan*.

A (*song*)*jingtang* is set up (cf. p.15) – apparently like the *jingtang* we found in north Shanxi (p.42), a room well away from the soul tent in which the Daoists prepare and rest. In north Shanxi the ritual aspects of this room have become much simplified since the 1980s, but here it is elaborately decorated with ritual hangings and is a site of ritual activity. It consists of front and rear altars (*qiantan, houtan*). At the front altar are hung images of Yuhuang, Guanyin, and Dizang; at the rear altar, the santian jiaozhu (Yuqing yuanshi tianzun, Shangqing lingbao tianzun, and Taiqing daode tianzun).

In the courtyard of the mortuary site, or in a suitably large space outside, heavenly and *yin* altars (*tiantan, yintan*) are set up. The heavenly altar is either a star altar (*xingtan*, or civil altar *wentan*) for *qingjiao* rituals, or a thunder altar (*leitan*, or martial altar *wutan*) for mortuary rituals (for which the star altar may also be constructed). The *yin* altar is a platform for Dispensing Food (*shishi tai*) or dharma platform (*fatai*).

Their *jiao* are further classified by length: *chenggui jiao* lasting four days and three nights, *qiluo jiao* lasting three days and two nights, and *zhanling jiao* lasting one and a half days. Though presumably only the latter has been common in recent decades, the account admirably lists the full version (Table 14).

including an enticing video, see <http://www.snwh.gov.cn/feiwuzhi/xianyang/4/200711/t20071119_36387.htm>. JCI Shaanxi also mentions nearby Binxian and Xunyi counties as having ritual traditions; Gansu (§6) is just west too.

Table 14 Mortuary *jiao*, Changwu county

Day 1		
pm	<i>qingshen</i> 請神 Inviting the Gods	procession outside
	<i>anshen</i> 安神 Settling the Gods	at front and rear altars of <i>jingtang</i>
	<i>zhaohun</i> 招魂 Summoning the Soul	at Shanshenmiao or Tudimiao temples, or at crossroads
eve	<i>baidou</i> 拜斗 Worshipful Reciting of the Northern Dipper Scripture	recite <i>Beidou jing</i> 北斗經
Day 2		
	<i>yingshui</i> 迎水 Welcoming Water	recite <i>Sanguan jing</i> 三官經 at front altar
	<i>yangfan</i> 揚幡 Hoisting the Pennant	procession to well; sing <i>Shieryuan</i> 十二愿
	<i>yinggong</i> 迎供 Welcoming Offerings	The Twelve Vows
	<i>ying xianfan</i> 迎獻飯 Welcoming the Offering Food	including <i>Xiaojing</i> 孝經 and <i>Ershisi xiao</i> 二十四孝
	<i>wei tiantan</i> 圍天壇 Surrounding the Heavenly Altar	recite <i>Jingtian jing</i> 淨壇經, celebrant wields <i>qixing baojian</i> 七星寶劍 sword and sprinkles water from well.
	(<i>kaitian danghui</i> 開天蕩穢 Opening the Heavens and Cleansing Filth)	<i>guoguan</i> 過關 Crossing the Passes is often performed here, celebrant dotting children with red while singing <i>Shibaoguan</i> 十保關. tour of temples
	<i>yemiao</i> 謁廟 Paying a Visit to the Temples	The <i>naihe</i> bridge (<i>yinqiao</i> , silver bridge) is made of carts. Celebrant leads kin across bridge, reciting <i>Shidian jing</i> 十殿經. The heavenly bridge (<i>jinqiao</i> , golden bridge) is adorned with blue cloth. <i>muyu</i> 沐浴, <i>zhaojing</i> 照鏡, <i>shuzhuang</i> 梳妝; celebrant sprinkles grain and water to sides of bridge thrice. before coffin, singing <i>Xiaojing</i> 孝經 and <i>Dianjiu ge</i> 奠酒歌.
	<i>guo naiheqiao</i> 過奈河橋 Crossing the Bridge of No Return	kin kneeling beneath golden bridge, celebrant recites and burns <i>biao</i> 表. Triple inviting of <i>sanqing</i> paintings at rear altar, officiant (<i>zhishi</i> 執事) climbs bridge, celebrant sings <i>Sanjiao zan</i> 三教讚, another recites <i>sanjiao</i> text.
	<i>dutianqiao</i> 渡天橋 Crossing the Heavenly Bridge	
	<i>san dianjiu</i> 三奠酒 Triple Libations of Wine	
	<i>jiejia</i> 接駕 Receiving the Palanquin	

continued

Table 14 Mortuary *jiao*, Changwu county (*continued*)**Day 2**

(cont.)

chaofan 朝幡

Audience of the Pennant

jianwang 荐亡

Visit to the Deceased

fendeng 分燈

Dividing the Lanterns

(pao liandeng) 跑蓮燈Chasing Round the Lotus
Lanterns)

visits to the coffin (?) interspersed in these sequences.

illuminating the gates of the hells with precious lanterns of the sanqing heavenly realms. Emerging from the rear altar, one Daoist dressed as *fawang* 法王, two as *daotong* 道童, and two to four others, perform *paowufang* 跑五方, *jianziguang* 剪子桄, and *daobazi* 倒八字 spatial dispositions, and display the lanterns at the altar in three sequences. Then they lead the kin in a fast tour around the heavenly altar, and make a hectic crossing of the *naihe* bridge – this time for their own benefit, not that of the deceased. With caps and shoes going astray and people falling off, this also provides comic relief.

Day 3*guabang* 挂榜

Hanging the Placard

the two announcements of the deceased's details are posted on a wall, the celebrant recites *Shi baoen* 十報恩, and reads out the placard (*bangwen* 榜文).

jin wuchao 進午朝

Presenting the Noon

Audience

At an altar table placed before the *jingtang*, kin present offerings as Daoists sing, and two Daoists dance with rare percussion instruments *yugu* 魚鼓 and *jianban* 簡板.

celebrant places *die* and *biao* 牣表 memorials on a tray on the head of the oldest son, and leads him to kneel before the *fan* pennant outside the gateway, where the memorials are burnt.

placard is taken down from the wall, placed on a tray, ready to be burnt in the evening.

baibiao 拜表Worshipfully Presenting the
Memorials

On a table outside the heavenly altar are placed the holy water and a thunder rule (*leichi* 雷尺). The celebrant wields the precious sword on a tour of the four quarters of the altar, escorting all the gods in turn, chopping off a talisman with his sword each time, finally taking the god placard from the central *dou* bowl and burning them all. He shakes the poles to indicate the closing of the altar, and they

pm

jiebang 揭榜

Tearing Down the Placard

po tiantan 破天壇Smashing the Heavenly Altar
(*daotan* 倒壇)

Overturning the Altar,

cishen 辞神

Farewell to the Gods)

		go to outside the <i>jingtang</i> . After singing the <i>Songshen jing</i> 送神經, the pennant, poles, and god placards are burnt.
eve	<i>shishi</i> 施食 Dispensing Food	performed at the <i>yin</i> altar. First they escort the Ten Kings back to the hells, upturning their pennants and reciting the <i>Jianwang jing</i> 荐亡經. Ascending the platform, three celebrants sing the <i>Shisa ge</i> 十洒歌, sprinkling food and water for the hungry ghosts. Then they sing the <i>Daobing zan</i> 刀兵讚, <i>Xiaojing</i> , <i>Shi baoen</i> , <i>Shidian ge</i> , and <i>Jianwang jing</i> .
	<i>san xianli</i> 三獻禮 Triple Offerings of Rites	triple offerings at the coffin: <i>chuxian</i> 初獻, <i>yaxian</i> 亞獻, <i>zhongxian</i> 終獻, accompanied by <i>shengguan</i> and shawm band, with <i>Xiaojing</i> and <i>Jianwang jing</i> sung after each offering.
Day 4		
am	<i>cizao</i> 辞灶 Farewell to the Stove	recite the <i>Zaojing</i> 灶經.
	<i>songbin fayin</i> 送殯發引 Burial Procession	Daoists, unusually, go to the grave, and sing <i>Fengtu ge</i> 封土歌.

Note: *guoguan*: for child-protection rituals including *baosuo* Hanging the Locket, cf. Jones 2009, Part Two.

Though, unusually, the *Anthology* material concentrates on the vocal liturgy, melodic instrumental music is also played: *guan* and *di* are mentioned, so one supposes it was also a *shengguan* tradition. Throughout Shaanxi, apart from their vocal liturgy and ritual percussion, most ritual groups have added a small *suona* shawm to the classic *shengguan* ensemble.

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Chapter 6

Gansu

Although I have no first-hand experience in Gansu, I must include it in this survey, partly because I gather that the scarcity of Daoists in Shaanbei was exceptional, and that going further west they again became common.¹ Along with the article on Changwu Daoist ritual cited in §5.2 above, the *Anthology* section on ‘Daoist music’ in Gansu (by Hao Yi and Zheng Liming) is outstanding, putting all the other provincial essays to shame; I hereby recommend it.² Of all the sites listed in this book, this makes one want to jump on the next plane. Work for the volume began in 1988, and was completed around 1995. While the article is also quite rich in historical citations, I shall cite it here for its clues to current practice. If reliable, the material from Zhangye and Jingtai counties, like that from nearby Changwu, reveals a much more ‘exalted’ ritual repertory than most of those we found further east, belonging to the *jiao-liandu* complex (§1.3).

Again, we meet the term *yinyang* for Daoists; the term *xiansheng* (master) is also used, as well as *fashi* (ritual master). Though official statistics are often dubious,³ the authors list 1,054 Daoist temples in Gansu for 1943; for the period 1949–52, 306 major temples, 5,690 Quanzhen priests and nuns, and over 1,000 Zhengyi priests. At the time of writing (early 1990s), they estimated 96 active Daoist temples (*daoguan* 道觀, apparently meaning only those with resident priests), 160 male and 71 female ‘Daoist professionals’ (again, apparently meaning temple-dwelling priests and nuns), besides ‘over a thousand’ active lay Zhengyi ritual specialists.⁴ Zhangye county alone had at least 23 lay groups by the late 1980s.

Quanzhen Daoists in Gansu are dominated by the Longmen branch, and had reached the 34th generation at the time of writing. Other minor Quanzhen branches in Gansu are Yushan 耘山, Yushan 遇山, Namo, Huashan, and Qingjing. Zhengyi Daoists in Gansu are mainly of the Tianshi Heavenly Master branch, with its 40-character generational poem (as well as some of the Qingwei branch, with its 48 characters). They claim origins from a Song-dynasty Hui-Muslim Daoist (*sic*)

¹ For stimulating perspectives on other aspects of folk religion (though not Daoists) in Gansu, cf. Jing Jun 1996. Much earlier, the fascinating Dols 1915–18 and 1917–18 also stress customary practices at the expense of liturgy/ritual.

² The documentary material on Gansu Daoism is found in JCI Gansu 623–52, 995–1000, 1110–11, and 1117–19; pp.653–993 consist of transcriptions, including substantial sequences of vocal liturgy.

³ Cf. Dean’s comments (1993: 4, 41) on statistics for Fujian temples.

⁴ JCI Gansu 626.

patriarch Sa Shoujian, who founded the Iron Masters (Tieshi) or Xihe lineage;⁵ thus in Gansu and elsewhere the Sa Shoujian tradition is Zhengyi – notwithstanding the adoption by the Baiyunguan in Beijing (a Quanzhen stronghold) of the ‘Iron Bottle’ (*tieguan*) version of the *yankou* attributed to him. Another major transmitter of the Heavenly Master tradition in Gansu was the Ming-dynasty Ancestor Kang (Kangzu).⁶

The *Anthology* work in Gansu focuses on activity in two centres some 400 kilometres apart: Zhangye municipality (formerly the major trading post of Ganzhou) in the Hexi corridor, and Jingtai county north of Lanzhou. The accounts appear to describe temples with resident Daoists active for ritual, the Daodeguan in Zhangye and the Shoulushan in Jingtai, both Zhengyi temples; but on closer reading it transpires that the practitioners are again laymen, operating from household traditions dispersed throughout the countryside. This is a common ellipsis of which we should beware: using the name of a famous temple to represent, and perhaps legitimize, predominantly lay activity. ‘Since 1985 the Daoist music bands of the Daodeguan (*sic*) in Zhangye have developed into 23, spread over all the districts of the municipality.’⁷

6.1 Zhangye

The *Anthology* article on the Daoists of Zhangye names the leaders, all aged over 60, of thirteen of the groups as ‘relatively influential’, as well as three fine Daoists in their 40s.⁸ These groups were all said to belong to a homogeneous style. The article singles out the hereditary tradition of Wang Maoxue (b. 1937), based in Liangjiadun district; the volume also includes his biography.⁹ He studied Daoist ritual with his father Wang Xingcai (Daoist name Gaocai?)¹⁰ from the age of 11, but after joining the army in 1953, he returned home to be a schoolteacher. (In passing, I note that this was among a few common occupations for former Daoists under Maoism, also including brigade accountants, or *sheng* players in state regional

⁵ JCI Gansu 626–9; for Sa Shoujian, cf. ET 825–6, and for the Baiyunguan link, Goossaert 2007: 341–3.

⁶ JCI Gansu 995–6, citing the *Ganzhou fuzhi* 甘州府誌.

⁷ *Ibid.*: 997.

⁸ *Ibid.*: 995–7. By the way, since famine has long been a constant risk in many parts of north China like Gansu, and since the famines following the 1958 Great Leap Forward are among the crises in modern ritual transmissions (see e.g. Jones 2004: 130–35), I note that Zhangye was among many counties where political extremism exacerbated conditions severely: Becker 1996: 158–61.

⁹ JCI Gansu 1118.

¹⁰ Gao isn’t in the Tianshi Zhengyi poem (*ibid.*: 626); the article later says he was of the *bi* generation, the 16th. Again, we need more information.

arts work troupes. As we saw, Zhang Minggui, ineffable abbot of Baiyunguan in Shaanbei, served as a respected schoolteacher.)

After retiring in 1980, Wang Maoxue resumed the family Daoist tradition. In general, there is a far more nuanced story to tell about furtive Daoist activity under Maoism, but that is the outline. He was recruited to the newly-formed Zhangye Daoist Association – though as we saw, in general, one cannot necessarily locate lay Daoists through such official organizations. Two sons and two nephews were part of his band, forming the fifth generation in his family, with the *da* 达 name, 18th generation in the Heavenly Masters Zhengyi transmission.

The other Zhangye Daoist whose biography appears in the volume is the Iron Masters Zhengyi Daoist Sun Chengzu (b. 1921), Daoist name Bishou, 16th generation), formerly of the Chenghuangmiao, since the 1980s abbot of the Daodeguan and another figurehead of the Zhangye Daoist Association.¹¹

The Zhangye Daoists perform for temple fairs and funerals (locally called *shenzhai* and *wangzhai*); some of the rituals listed are shown in Tables 15 and 16. Over 20 manuals were in use, in over 50 volumes (*juan*).

Table 15 Some segments of temple-fair sequence, Zhangye

<i>zaochao</i> 早朝 Morning Audience
<i>wuchao</i> 午朝 Noon Audience
<i>xuchao</i> 绪朝 Supplementary (?) Audience
<i>shang dabiao</i> 上大表 Presenting the Great Memorial
<i>fadie</i> 發牒 Issuing the Mandate
<i>lidou</i> 礼斗 Paying Homage to the Dipper
<i>zhuanchan</i> 轉懺 Revolving the Litanies

Table 16 Some segments of funeral sequence, Zhangye

<i>xingxiang quhuo</i> 行香取火 Ambulating Incense and Fetching Fire
<i>shenwen fadie</i> 申文發牒 Deploying the Documents and Issuing the Mandate
<i>poyu</i> 破獄 Smashing the Hells
<i>baoen duqiao</i> 报恩渡橋 Repaying Kindness and Crossing the Bridges
<i>nianchan</i> 念懺 Reciting the Litanies

6.2 Jingtai

For Jingtai county, the name of the Shoulushan temple also seems to be serving merely as a banner under which to group the lay Daoists of the county.¹²

¹¹ *Ibid.*: 1117–18.

¹² *Ibid.*: 997–1000, 1110–11.

The temple, whose clerics are described as belonging to the Iron Masters branch of the Tianshi Heavenly Master Zhengyi tradition, was destroyed in 1968.

The *Anthology* also gives a biography of Cao Jixiang (b. 1925),¹³ based in Sitan district. It shows a temple to lay transmission; his father Cao Yisan was a teacher at *sishu* private school, who often took part in *daochang* ritual activities and served as master of ceremonies. He then ‘studied the Daoist scriptures’, and learnt the *suona* shawm with a Daoist music master from the Shoulushan temple, soon becoming a respected liturgist and musician. His son Cao Jixiang bore the Daoist name Kesheng, 17th generation in the lineage. After successive campaigns, by the 1990s he still preserved ‘over fifty’ volumes of Daoist manuals. He only transmitted the tradition within his own family. Here under the general heading of *daochang* rituals they distinguish *youjiao* mortuary rituals and *qingjiao* rituals for the community.

The most elaborate mortuary rituals recalled were obsolete by the time the fieldwork was done: the nine-day *jiuyou* ritual and the seven-day *zhuanlun daochang*, requiring the building of a ‘yinyang citadel’ (*yinyang cheng*) maze. Of the less elaborate greater, medium, and small *sanyuan* rituals, only the latter, held over three days, survived. Rituals within this complex (known as ‘audience rituals’ *chaoshi*) are shown in Table 17 (the article merely lists the extra rituals for the medium and greater versions, not inserting them into the sequence, and I don’t quite care to try). Ritual texts used as part of these *chaoshi* rituals are listed: *shenfa yangfan ke*, *shixian baoen ke*, *wangyang* (presumably a miswriting of *sanyang*, cf. §5.1) *shishi ke*, and *muyu duqiao ke* (for *muyu*, cf. p.76).

Interspersed with these rituals they also recite three volumes of *jing* scriptures and ten volumes of *chan* litanies. The scriptures include the *Shiwang jing* (?), *Wenchang dadongjing*,¹⁴ *Sanguanjing*, *Gaoshang Yuhuang zhenjing*, and *Wangshu* (presumably a miswriting of *Yushu*) *baojing*;¹⁵ the litanies include the *Shiwang bazui baochan*, *Sanguan chan*, and *Yuhuang manyuan chan* – the latter perhaps *Gaoshang Yuhuang manyuan baochan*.¹⁶

Even if this is an idealized prescription, it suggests what I suspect may be a common impoverishment in modern times, highlighting a distinction between grand public rituals on the one hand, and the recitation of lengthy scriptures and litanies on the other. The latter type, like we seem to find here, has perhaps become rare, depending on the preservation of (and familiarity with) long complex manuals – which were perhaps deployed only for relatively grandiose funerals, quite rare even before Communism. In their place, ‘routine’ visits to the coffin throughout the day consist of singing a few verses of a hymn. Although many locals note that

¹³ *Ibid.*: 1118–19.

¹⁴ Cf. Rees 2000, for Yunnan.

¹⁵ Cf. DC 195, 196, TC 1092–3; ET 317–18. The Jade Pivot is associated with *qingwei* thunder rites; cf. Lagerwey 1987: 56.

¹⁶ DC 194, TC 1099–1100, a 14th-century *qingwei* text.

Table 17 Mortuary rituals, Jingtai

a) lesser sanyuan

- kajing* 開經 Opening the Scriptures
kaichan 開懺 Opening the Litanies
yangfan 揚幡 Hoisting the Pennant
shixian baoen 十獻報恩 Ten Offerings and Repaying Kindness
shishi 施食 Dispensing Food
zhaowang 召亡 Summoning the Deceased [Ancestors]
yemiao 謁廟 Paying a Visit to the Temples
muyu 沐浴 Bathing
songwang 送亡 Escorting Away the Deceased [Ancestors]
duqiao 渡橋

b) medium sanyuan mortuary ritual added

- kaifang* 開方 Opening the Quarters
poyu 破獄 Smashing the Hells

c) greater sanyuan further added

- yingshen* 迎神 Welcoming the Gods
jiejia 接駕 Receiving the Palanquin
randeng 燃燈 Lighting the Lanterns
jingtan 净壇 Purifying the Altar
shangbiao 上表 Presenting the Memorial
ban'gao 頒告/誥 Promulgating the Invocation
bingzhu 炳燭 Grasping the Candle
chaocan 朝參 Audience Visit

ostentation has replaced ritual content (cf. §10), in some areas these routine visits are surviving better than more spectacular public rituals.

The *qingjiao* rituals, mostly for calendrical temple fairs, are listed in Table 18, also subject to re-ordering. Under this rubric the account also mentions rituals for natural disaster, including pestilence; since these seem to have become obsolete in most of north China (pp.9, 50), one wonders if this is again documented more from memory than from current practice. I can't explain the absence of Fetching Water – apparently a basic ritual in northwest China – from these lists (cf. Glossary–Index).

The transcriptions of Daoist ritual in Jingtai¹⁷ open with a lengthy passage of the mortuary *Shiwang baojuan jing* to the Ten Kings, including chanted and sung texts, percussion and *suona* accompaniment, but omitting some of the recited passages. The text is from the first volume of the *Lingbao youjiao shiwang bingzhu xuanke*. Also included are excerpts from *chanke* litanies, and the

¹⁷ JCI Gansu 884–972.

Table 18 *Qingjiao* rituals, Jingtai

<i>fazou</i>	發奏 Issuing the Announcement
<i>faxi</i>	發檄 Issuing the Letters [of Invitation?]
<i>baibiao</i>	拜表 Worshipfully Presenting the Memorial
<i>gongxian</i>	供獻 Presenting Offerings
<i>yingsheng</i>	迎聖 Welcoming the Sages
<i>kaiguang</i>	開光 Opening to the Light
<i>Yuhuang chaoke</i>	玉皇朝科 audience ritual for Yuhuang
<i>sanqing chaoke</i>	三清朝科 audience ritual for the sanqing
<i>jiejia chaoke</i>	接駕朝科 audience ritual for Receiving the Palanquin

rituals *shixian baoen* Ten Offerings and Repaying Kindness, *shishi* Dispensing Food, *muyu-duqiao* Bathing and Crossing the Bridges, *zhaowang* and *songwang* Summoning and Escorting Away the Deceased Ancestors, *yemiao* Paying a Visit to the Temples, *kaifang* Opening the Quarters, *poyu* Smashing the Hells, *chaocan* Audience Visit, and *randeng* Lighting the Lanterns, as well as two sections of the *qingjiao* (*ershisi zan* and *shisong*).

Here I have cited only the articles on Zhangye and Jingtai counties; I am less confident about the further citations in the general introduction to Gansu Daoism,¹⁸ but readers will want to assess the rich data there for themselves. Vocal and/or instrumental excerpts from Gansu Daoists are also transcribed from Qingshui (in Tianshui municipality),¹⁹ Lingtai (near Changwu in Shaanxi, §5.2), Weiyuan, Wuwei, Minqin, and Gulang counties, and Jiayuguan municipality.

I note in passing that Lanzhou also has a Baiyunguan temple, dating from 1836 – a fourth to my knowledge in China, apart from those of Beijing, Shanghai, and Jiaxian. Though no material for its ritual practice is provided, in 2000 they performed a *jiao* for the Wangmu temple fair in Jingchuan county in east Gansu (near Changwu, §5.2) – which as I observed in §4.2, suggests a desire for legitimization on the part of the temple committee, not necessarily an absence of local ritual specialists.²⁰

In Gansu, as in south Shanxi (but apparently not in Shaanxi in between?!), two *suona* shawms are the main accompanying melodic instruments – the *suona* is thought to have replaced the *shengguan* instrumentation in this area in modern times.

Folk Buddhist ritual in Gansu, as generally in north China, appears very minor compared to Daoism.²¹ But the Daoists' use of a 'Ten Kings precious scroll'

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 628–9.

¹⁹ For their recent ICH application, see <<http://www.tianshui.com.cn/news/zjts/2008070309422058597.htm>>. For rain scriptures from Tianshui, see p.80 above.

²⁰ Zhao Zongfu 2002: 148.

²¹ JCI Gansu 1001–3. Apart from the Baotasi temple in Lintao (with both Han and Tibetan monks) and the Xilaisi temple in Zhangye (see also biography of Liu Xuchan,

(*Shiwang baojuan*) reminds me that Gansu appears to have several relatively active traditions of these ‘precious scrolls’.²² The material frustratingly omits to explain what kinds of ritual specialists perform them, but I suspect their main use is by amateur sects. The *Ten Kings scroll* seems to be the most commonly recited precious scroll in north China, due to its use in funerals; others, performed mainly for calendrical rituals, are used less often (cf. §9 and Appendix 3). But unlike versions of this and other scrolls that we found on the central Hebei plain, the Gansu version does not seem to be in the classic White Lotus form of 24-*pin* chapters with their ten-word form (see Appendix 3).

For Ningxia province, again, the only material I have is the *Anthology*. Though its textual documentation of ‘religious music’ is nugatory, the many transcriptions of ‘Daoist music’ (from Qingtongxia municipality and the counties of Lingwu, Huinong, Yinchuan, Guyuan, Tongxin, and Zhongning), including both vocal liturgy and instrumental melodies, suggest lively ritual traditions.²³ In addition, a separate section gives transcriptions, including vocal liturgy, of ‘water assemblies’ (*shuihui*) – perhaps amateur pilgrim associations – for the Lianhuashan (cf. pp.80–81) and Xiangshan temple fairs, as well as Pingluo and Yinchuan.²⁴ Not having seen the *Anthology* volume for Qinghai province, I have little information, apart from clues to activity in Ledu county on the eastern border with Gansu.²⁵

* * *

Having ventured way out to the northwest frontier of Han Chinese culture, let us now return east to the area just south of Beijing, where I have more detailed material on a ritual scene that seems quite different – and initially less promising – from any of those we have found so far.

b. 1915, who became a monk at age 12, endured labour reform in Xinjiang from 1958 to 1980, and went on to serve as abbot of the temple, holding leading official posts: JCI Gansu 1117), the author Hao Yi mentions lay Buddhists in Tongwei in central Gansu (transmitted from the Wuquanshan in Lanzhou) and Gulang in west Gansu. Further transcriptions come from Gangu and Taian.

²² JCNSM Gansu 747–802, 867; Chiao 1994; Mair 1988: 8–13; Pu Wenqi 2005: 12–13; note also Duan Ping 1992. Performances have been documented in Minxian in central Gansu, and Wuwei, Zhangye, Jiuquan, and Jiayuguan in west Gansu.

²³ JCI Ningxia 749–1092, 1099–1100; note also JCNSM Ningxia 827–82. For ‘Buddhist music’, transcriptions (from Pingluo, Zhongning, Zhongwei, and Yinchuan) are largely of vocal items such as hymns, apparently from routine temple ritual. I have not seen Zhang Zongqi 2006, a history of Daoism in Ningxia.

²⁴ JCI Ningxia 713–46.

²⁵ Apart from Holm’s citation of *yinyang* in Ledu (p.14), see Ma Jingjie 2007.

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PART THREE

Just can't get the staff: the central Hebei plain

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Introduction to Part Three

So far, the ritual performers we found have been groups of occupational lay Daoists, whether they came from long hereditary lay traditions or were former temple-dwelling priests – or a combination of the two. I now discuss the largely amateur ritual associations on the central Hebei plain just south of Beijing. This is a different ritual scene, requiring another somewhat lengthy introduction.

While some of the accounts by Chinese scholars that I cited in Part Two were impressive, for this region I can again rely more on my own fieldwork, and put the Daoists in a broader social and religious context – with modern history, Buddhists, sects, and mediums all making cameo appearances again. Whereas my accounts so far have often subsumed whole counties, now they sometimes concern individual villages.

My focus here is the part of the Hebei plain south of Beijing nearly as far as Baoding (Map 3). My scope also includes Beijing and Tianjin municipalities; whereas since 1949 little ritual has been performed in the cities except within the major temples, Beijing and Tianjin municipalities are largely rural, part of the same cultural traditions that we find on the Hebei plain. Ritual practice varied considerably before 1949 in Beijing, with distinct élite and popular traditions (Appendix 1). If detailed material were available, we would doubtless find that village ritual has more in common with the practices of popular ritual specialists in Beijing and Tianjin before 1949 than with those of the rituals in the major temples there. Fieldwork on the Hebei plain incidentally allows us to witness how some of the rituals of imperial Beijing and Tianjin would have been performed, since in urban areas such rituals have become rare.

The Hebei plain was a breeding-ground for ‘White Lotus’ sectarian groups (§1.6), as is still evident in the practices and manuals of its ritual associations today. It is also a hotbed for underground Catholics, still active after decades of repression.¹ As throughout China, spirit mediums practising healing are active too.

Ritual transmissions from Beijing and Tianjin seem mainly to have spread southwards. This may be partly explained by topography: not far north and west of Beijing, the terrain becomes mountainous, population more sparse, and patrons and literate culture perhaps rarer. In Part One we found a ritual corridor going west through northwest Hebei to north Shanxi. Daoists are said to be active to the north of Tianjin, and I have some clues to east Hebei – again around major former centres of imperial power, such as lay Buddhist ritual groups around Chengde and Pingquan, as well as Zunhua near the Eastern tombs of the Qing emperors.²

¹ See e.g. Jones 2004: 37–45, 56–64, 298–304, and index.

² Scant clues in Jones 1998: 207; note Chengde nd. I visited Chengde in 1987 with Yuan Jingfang.

But otherwise there is a curious lack of information on ritual transmissions to the north of Beijing. No-one seems to claim any Daoist ritual activity around Miaofengshan. Just northeast of Beijing, Yajishan (like Miaofengshan) was sacred to the deity Bixia yuanjun, and was also patronized by the Qing emperors; but again, we seem to have no reports of liturgy/ritual there, nor at other popular destinations for Beijing pilgrims before 1949 like Gaoliangqiao and Majuqiao.³ Of course, popular religion cannot be assessed merely from such major events: less publicly, ritual specialists were needed for funerals and calendrical rituals largely within the home village. Still, clues to such rituals come largely from the area south, not north, of Beijing.

Trying to define a southern boundary for this type of ritual organization and its attendant performance style, we found this largely amateur tradition of village ritual groups with vocal liturgy and *shengguan*, derived from former temple priests or monks, south of Beijing down almost as far as Baoding, in counties as far south as Renqiu, westwards to Yixian, and east to Tianjin and Jinghai. Further south in Hebei (before we reach the Xingtai–Handan regions, where occupational Daoists thrive, as we saw in §4.2), religious behaviour still seems to involve many sects, lively temple fairs, mediums, and so on, but religious groups seem to have less connection with liturgy/ritual. Outside this area – north of Beijing, in the Shijiazhuang region and further south, and further west into Shanxi – occupational Daoists, sects, shawm bands, and amateur ‘entertainment associations’ may be active, but we have not heard of amateur village-wide ritual associations. Still, much further fieldwork is needed.

Reading some accounts of Hebei temple fairs (e.g. p.8 n.14), one might suppose that there was no ‘Daoist liturgical framework’ there at all. But the picture is more complex. The framework is evident mainly in the practice of amateur lay ritual specialists at funerals and temple fairs, even if not performed by people calling themselves Daoists. Thus only a few counties in this area still have occupational groups of Daoists or Buddhists; they appear to be invited to major temple fairs only rarely, and most temple fairs are small, limited to the home village, with the New Year rituals their main annual observance – indeed, temple fairs in China do not necessarily require ritual specialists in my narrow sense. But Daoist and Buddhist folk ritual has survived in this area mainly among amateur ritual associations. Thus, ironically, the apparent absence of Daoists in central Hebei is partly to do with scholars’ stress on temple fairs; ritual specialists (whether

³ Naquin 1992: 337, 339–42, 349, 353–4; Naquin 2000: 517–47; Gu Jiegang 1988: 38–9; Zhao Shiyu 2002: 352–78; Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Xianghe vol., pp.208–16. Gu Jiegang’s list of 99 associations making the Miaofengshan pilgrimage in 1925 (Gu Jiegang 1988: 41–52) only contains one *yinyuehui* (*ibid.*: 50), which he, like most educated urbanites, would have assumed to be an entertainment group; his list mainly consists of *huahui* and ‘incense associations’ (*xianghui*), mostly voluntary pilgrim groups from Beijing. On the Hebei plain, by contrast, the Houshan temple fair has many more ritual associations alongside the *huahui*, though see §9 below.

amateur or occupational) and complex sequences are often more evident in the practice of funerals, on which we have more material.

These groups have been discussed by our team from the Music Research Institute in Beijing, following a fieldwork project mainly from 1993 to 1997, but I now focus on the Daoist (and Buddhist) elements in their transmission. The ritual specialists of these groups perform just the kind of liturgy/ritual that I am seeking here. It is delightful to revisit our notes from over a hundred villages in the area, however provisional their leads.⁴

Ritual associations on the Hebei plain

Most villages on the Hebei plain have, or had, a ritual association, whose nominal membership – distinct from voluntary intra- or inter-village sectarian groups – was ascriptive, potentially involving the whole village. They are represented by a core group of amateur ritual specialists, who perform for funerals (never for weddings) and calendrical rituals for the gods, mostly serving the home village. Villages with such an association were thought to be protected by the gods. They learnt their ritual (including their vocal and instrumental music) from Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, or from other village associations, at various stages from the Ming dynasty right until the 1950s.

The associations are led by one or more *huitou* ‘association heads’, known as *xiangtou* or *xiangshou* ‘incense heads’ until the 1950s;⁵ leadership and organizational duties are also performed by a small group of senior men called *guanshi* ‘organizers’. In imperial times, and even under Maoism, there was a close connection between the ‘association heads’ and the village leadership, with religious and secular power overlapping. But whereas temple committees elsewhere in China are generally organizers rather than ritual specialists, here the core membership also consists of a group of ritual performers (usually around 5 to 10 liturgists and 10 to 30 instrumentalists). Beyond this, the whole village population might be considered to belong to the association by a token donation of tea or cigarettes at the New Year’s rituals. Until the 1950s the associations owned a minimal amount of land. Any male can train to perform the vocal liturgy or instrumental music, with membership not based on lineage, but hereditary transmission is common. They are ordinary peasants, mostly poor, although senior members have a certain prestige.

These associations often have, or had, large collections of ritual paintings such as pantheons and images of individual deities, displayed for rituals. Most common are paintings of the Ten Kings (*shiwang xiang*) presiding over the Ten Palaces

⁴ For the project, see Note on sources, pp.128–9 below.

⁵ Note that this is the common meaning of *xiangtou* in this area – unlike in Cangzhou to the southeast (DuBois 2005: 65–85), or around Beijing in the 1940s (Li Wei-tsu 1948, a classic source), where it denotes spirit mediums. Cf. §9.5 below.

(shidian) of the Underworld – a rather close equivalent of European mediaeval depictions of the punishments of hell, and no less graphic.⁶ Colourful and stimulating, they make a splash of colour in otherwise drab villages, especially before the advent of TV and horror films. Related images are of Dizang Bodhisattva and the King of Ghosts (Guwang). Some other main deities of the associations include the Bodhisattva Guanyin and Caishen god of wealth. By the way, the martial god Guandi, so prominent in the wartime material analysed by Duara, now barely features at all (though see Appendixes 2 and 3).

Pennants and cloth veils also adorn the ritual building. From the late 1980s, as ritual performing traditions atrophied and commercial instincts strengthened, such paintings and hangings, and indeed the scriptures, the soul of the village, were often being sold off to collectors. After all the confiscations and destructions of ritual artefacts over the previous decades, this is very sad, whatever the gains for Chinese black marketeers and foreign collectors. For the New Year rituals, cloth hangings known as *beiwen*, listing donors to the association, are also displayed at the ritual building – as well as more temporary paper lists.⁷

Other important artefacts of such groups include ritual manuals (*keyiben*, *yikeben*) containing the texts of the vocal liturgy, mainly for funerals. Also important are musical scores of *gongche* solfeggio, containing the melodic outline of the paraliturgical *shengguan* instrumental music. More *gongche* scores survive than ritual manuals, but both were invariably handed down from temples.⁸

For funerals, the ritual specialists of many village associations could stage a quite elaborate series of rituals for the salvation of the soul, that one associates with occupational ritual specialists – such as Crossing the Bridges (*dugiao*), Smashing the Hells (*poyu*), and *yankou*. Indeed, some groups dress in Buddhist or Daoist robes to perform the vocal liturgy. They both recite from manuals and sing shorter hymns from memory. But in many associations the list of rituals has been abbreviated since the 1950s, as an indirect result of political pressures; the complex *shengguan* instrumental music has remained an intrinsic feature of these rituals even when vocal liturgy has fallen out of use.

Apart from their main duties within the home village, the association ritual specialists sometimes accept invitations to perform funerals in neighbouring villages, over a small radius of around 15 kilometres. At such times they are more like a group of voluntary amateur ritual specialists, but usually, when performing in their home village, they serve an ascriptive membership.

They are also responsible for leading the calendrical rituals of their home village – not, in this area, a very dense annual list, even before Communism. As elsewhere in north China, village temples went into a long decline from the beginning of the 20th century, intensifying under Maoism; temples staffed by

⁶ See e.g. Goodrich 1964; Teiser 1994; Ma Shutian 1990: 532–5. Cf. the better-known *shuilu* paintings, *ibid.*: 539–40.

⁷ Note Zhang Zhentao 2002: 115–80.

⁸ On *gongche* scores, see *ibid.*: 367–407.

resident priests have long been rare except in some larger cities. Though both the music and ritual of the associations were associated with priests, in this area there have been no full-time priests since the 1950s, and even occupational lay Daoists are rare: thus the amateur practitioners of the ritual associations are now the main public intermediaries with the divine world.

In this area, although county gazetteers give quite a rich list of temple fairs, fewer temples have been rebuilt since the 1980s' reforms than in many parts of north and south China. There are still a few major temple fairs, like those of Houshan and Maozhou, which attract visitors from a wide area, and thus involve significant accommodation with the local state; most, however, are local and small-scale, with little economic interest, and the festivals that are held are quite small and observed largely by the home village. Though most associations once served a village temple, in many villages the only functioning public religious site by the 1960s was the building of the ritual association, called 'official building' (*guanfangzi*),⁹ adorned with god paintings almost solely for the New Year rituals, or a specially erected tent (*peng*, commonly 'lantern tent' *dengpeng*); the rituals may even be held in the brigade office, decorated as a temple.

The main calendrical event is the New Year lantern rituals around 1st moon 15th. Generally the altar is opened (*kaitan*) around the 12th, and the gods escorted away around the 17th.¹⁰ Some calendrical observances do not revolve around a temple, like Releasing the River Lanterns (*fang hedeng*), observed in the 7th moon by many associations around the area of the Baiyangdian lake. Village associations sometimes visit each other's temple fairs, but such networks are not extensive or formal.

We can identify broad cult areas, like the Medicine King (Yaowang) cult around Maozhou in the south of our area, but associations identifying themselves as serving a particular deity were quite rare. Until the 1950s, many village associations in the Yixian–Laishui–Dingxing–Xushui area made pilgrimages to the Houshan mountain temple complex in the 3rd moon for the cult of the female deity Houtu (§9), and many still observe the festival in their home village; some had Houtu paintings, and some recited the *Houtu precious scroll*, but even these groups didn't formally identify themselves as Houtu associations. So the main activity is performing for funerals, and since they mainly serve within the village as a social duty, even this does not demand much of their time.

One might seek to characterize these groups as resembling a village temple committee that includes ritual specialists who also perform funerals; but they are not quite a temple committee, nor quite a sect, nor simply a group of ritual specialists. Nor can they be simply bracketed along with the 'entertainment associations' that perform for calendrical rituals: although the latter too may perform on behalf of the whole village, they are not considered to be offering scriptures to the gods. These amateur ritual associations are also distinct from

⁹ Note the splendid chapter in *ibid.*: 181–204. Elsewhere (e.g. Jones 2004) I have called it 'public building'.

¹⁰ For Gaoluo, see *ibid.*: 270–306.

occupational household groups of ritual specialists like lay Daoists. Conversely, the sectarian groups described by DuBois (2005), in the southeast of our area, are very much part of the same phenomenon – ritual specialists performing as a duty, often representing the whole village.

Duara's fourfold categorization of associations, though mainly concerning a mere six villages widely scattered just outside the periphery of this area, offers a rough outline. As I have hinted, most of the groups we have been studying seem best to fit Duara's type 3, village-wide ascriptive associations – though note again that while all villagers may nominally belong to the association, a core group of ritual specialists represents them in communicating with the gods.¹¹

The most common local term for these groups is *yinyuehui*, denoting both the core group of ritual performers and the entire village membership. This term, going back several centuries, often stands for more formal titles like Great Tea-tent Association (*da chapenghui*) or sectarian names like Hunyuan or Hongyang Association. The core group of ritual performers comprises a *shengguan* instrumental ensemble and sometimes a group of vocal liturgists accompanying themselves on ritual percussion, the latter group known as 'civil altar' (*wentan*; *wutan* or *wuchang* may refer either to the *shengguan* ensemble or to the percussion section). In the western part of the region (§9) some groups consisting only of vocal liturgists were called *foshihui* 'ritual association'. For calendrical rituals other village-wide names were also used, such as Tea Tent Association or Great Tent Association (*chapenghui*, *dapenghui*). The term Lantern Association (*denghui*) refers mainly to the New Year's Lantern Festival rituals around 1st moon 15th.

Like ritual specialists throughout north China (§1.4), most ritual associations in this area have, or should have, three main musical components, *chui-da-nian*: wind music, percussion music, and vocal liturgy, in reverse order of importance. The 'civil altar' performing the vocal liturgy consists of between five and ten performers, accompanying their chanting and singing of the ritual manuals by patterns on ritual percussion instruments including woodblock, a pair of small bells or a small upturned bowl-shaped bell on a stick, a bowl, gong-in-frame, large barrel drum, and small cymbals. The ritual specialists also punctuate their liturgy with majestic and solemn music in more complex percussion patterns led by several pairs of two types of large and heavy cymbals (*bo* and *nao*) in dialogue.

The *yinyuehui* are named after their solemn paraliturgical *shengguan* music, which as we saw, belongs to ritual specialists in north China, including temple priests and lay Daoists; it is as much a part of ritual observance as is vocal liturgy. It would be quite wrong to consider these groups as 'musical', with our baggage of secular modern meanings. Throughout north China, villagers use the term *yinyue* to refer not to *any* music, but specifically to the *shengguan* instrumental ensemble

¹¹ Duara 1988: 118–32; cf. Liu Tieliang 2000: 269–80, for temple fairs. For diverse types of village association before Communism, note Duara 1988: 118–57; Gamble 1963: 32–40. See also my comments, Jones 2004: n.14, 384–5.

music performed as a ritual duty for funerals and gods' days.¹² Hence common traditional terms like *yinyue yankou* (*yankou* with *shengguan*) and *yinyue foshihui* (ritual association with *shengguan* and vocal liturgy). While the *yinyuehui* often subsumes vocal liturgists, the vocal liturgy itself is not properly called *yinyue*.

Nor are other genres of music worthy of the name *yinyue*: neither folk-song nor opera, nor the music of shawm bands. Ironically, of course, the term *yinyuehui* is the modern name for 'concert' – itself a modern concept, one barely known to Hebei peasants. The term is clearly not a modern, or even ancient, invention to give the group a cloak of secular respectability – though it might incidentally serve that purpose. Thus these are not just 'musicians', and the associations are no more 'music societies' than Daoists reciting the scriptures are a book club.

One might at first subsume these groups under the 'performing arts associations' (*huahui*) that commonly perform for temple fairs and gods' birthdays throughout these villages; they too have a core group of performers, may be widely supported, and perform for calendrical rituals. Villages without *yinyuehui* may enliven temple fairs with whatever performing association they happen to have. But though some of these groups (for *yangge* dancing, for example) may also have a certain ritual content, it is the *yinyuehui* that perform the core rituals representing the village's identity, communicating with the gods, and locally this basic difference is widely perceived. Still, with some groups now performing their *shengguan* music more than their vocal liturgy, some recent scholars have tended to bracket them with the 'entertainment associations', stressing the melodic instrumental music and the more 'customary' aspects of their performance contexts. In some parts of the area this may be valid, but they are ritual groups performing for funerals and temple fairs, who learnt from monks or priests, and even the *shengguan* melodies are 'holy pieces' (*shenqu*), 'scriptures' (*jing*).

As we saw in §1.4, the classic Beijing temple orchestration consists of pairs of the four types of melodic instruments (*sheng-guan-di-luo*); although in their numbers village ritual groups tend to be much larger than the occupational household groups we met above, often consisting of over twenty musicians, in their instrumentation they are more 'classical' than those we found in Shanxi and further west, with the *yunluo* here always a frame of ten gongs, and without small *suona* shawm or bowed fiddle.

Whereas in the smaller occupational groups the Daoists learn the complete repertoire including both vocal liturgy and *shengguan*, in these larger amateur groups there is a clear division of labour between the small group of liturgists and the often large group of *shengguan* instrumentalists. Some associations that originally had only vocal liturgy decided they needed *shengguan* music too.

¹² The term is traditionally used thus in Beijing temple Buddhism, and is part of the title of the celebrated 1694 *gongche* score of the Zhihuasi temple. The extensive *shengguan* repertoire transmitted by Buddhist monk Miaoyin in villages of Xiongxian county in the late 18th century, still preserved in several village scores (p.157 below), was an important part of ritual performance there.

Some that used to have both vocal liturgy and *shengguan* music now have only one of these elements – we may assume that most *yinyuehui* performed vocal liturgy before 1937, for instance. However, by the mid-1990s, several associations that had survived barely since the 1950s by performing only their instrumental music for rituals were keen to relearn their vocal liturgy. The musically outstanding Gaoqiao village association (§8.5) started playing their *shengguan* music for rituals again in 1979, but only resumed scripture recitation in 1992.

Some counties now have little vocal liturgy – like Xiongxian, with its fine *shengguan* groups and early *gongche* scores. Some counties didn't have many groups at all, such as Gu'an and Zhuozhou. Our notes often document the minutiae of the *shengguan* instrumental music. This is partly because we were interested in it; it may suggest that most peasants tended to learn this rather than the vocal liturgy, but ideally they sought to learn both, and in many cases they did, even if the latter has declined more since the 1950s.

Apart from the solemn and conservative ritual *shengguan* instrumental music (also known as *beiyue* ‘northern music’, or *xiaoguan* ‘small *guanzi*’), since early in the 20th century some village associations converted to a style called ‘southern music’ (*nanyue*, or *daguan* ‘large *guanzi*’), led by a larger *guanzi* oboe and also using a small shawm and a bowed fiddle, playing more popular pieces related to folk-song and opera. This style was also transmitted by monks and priests before Liberation, like the monk Haibo around Laishui, and the priest Yang Yuanheng (1894–1959) from the Lüzutang temple in Anping county,¹³ and most groups remained amateur, serving the same types of rituals as the *yinyuehui* from which they evolved.

On pennants, donors’ lists, and the title page of *gongche* scores, both before and after the revolution, the term *yinyuehui* is usually prefixed by the name of the village. Clear evidence comes from associations that have early scriptures and manuals with the name *yinyuehui* on their title page, like the 1929 *yankou* manuals of North Wudaokou (§8.6). More formal terms are *yinyue shanhui* (charitable, referring to ritual duty), since they exist to ‘practise good’ (*xingshan*); and *yinyue shenghui* (‘holy’ or ‘illustrious’ 聖/盛). Of course, other types of association could also call themselves *shanhui* or *shenghui*, as the Miaofengshan material shows (see p.118 n.3).

The ritual specialists commonly show their awareness of transmission from former temples, referring to their traditions as either ‘Buddhist monk scriptures’ (*heshangjing*), or ‘Daoist priest scriptures’ (*laodaojing*); ‘Daoist transmitted’ (*daochuan, daomen*) or ‘Buddhist transmitted’ (*sengchuan, sengmen*). The ritual specialists are also sometimes known as *laodao*, generally a colloquial term in the area for local temple Daoists, as in old Beijing,¹⁴ but here also meaning precisely these people – ordinary lay villagers who have learnt to perform the vocal liturgy

¹³ For Haibo, see Jones 2004: 71, cf. p.189 below; for Yang, later professor of *guanzi* at the Central Conservatoire in Beijing, see Jones 1998: 197.

¹⁴ Goossaert 2007: 83, cf. Appendix 1 below.

and/or the *shengguan* music. Unlike occupational lay Daoists who have long hereditary traditions and manuals handed down in the family, in this area ritual knowledge is not the monopoly of a particular family, it is not a livelihood (quite the opposite – it detracts from livelihood), and they have little if any formal ‘Daoist’ training apart from learning how to perform the rituals.

The village associations invariably acquired their ritual (whether vocal liturgy, *shengguan*, or both – as well as ritual manuals, *gongche* scores, paintings, and so on) from temples, or sometimes from other associations that had done so. These transmissions occurred at various stages since the Ming dynasty, with a naturally greater proportion relating to transmissions since the late imperial period. Our notes are full of such accounts, and the material below only cites a few cases.

While the leader of a ritual association may be called ‘incense head’, the term ‘incense association’ (*xianghui*) is rarely heard here. Other common terms include ‘association outing’ (*chuhui*), referring to both calendrical worship and funerals. Whether or not vocal liturgy is performed, terms like ‘taking out the scriptures’ (*chujing*), ‘delivering the scriptures’ (*songjing*), or ‘inviting the scriptures’ (*qingjing*) are often used. The associations perform ‘seated at the altar’ (*zuotan*). Several terms refer to funeral practice, such as ‘sending off’ (*fasong*), and ‘helping out’ (*laomang*), a dialectal expression for the social duty to perform funerals for a bereaved family without any material reward – this is perhaps the most frequently heard term of all.

All these individual village associations have only loose personal and customary ties of cooperation, based on earlier transmission and geography.¹⁵ Villagers are aware of other associations in their area; they can tell you which nearby villages have a *yinyuehui*, a *nanyuehui*, or a *foshihui*, and which are ‘Buddhist’ or ‘Daoist’ scriptures, or have ‘only’ a martial-arts group or a lion-dancing association. But such local knowledge does not, at least not any longer, amount to an active network of support, far from the *fenxiang* ‘division of incense’ networks of the southeast.

The *yinyuehui* were the most prestigious of local performing associations, often within the ritual catchment area of a ‘great temple’ (*dasi*) that defined a ‘parish’ (*she*); we often heard the expression ‘where there is a great temple, there is a *yinyuehui*’. Though we find traces of the parish in many parts of north China (p.7 n.12), the term ‘great temple’ was used most commonly in this part of central Hebei.¹⁶

This whole region south of Beijing was a base for ‘White Lotus’ religion, hence the reciting of ‘precious scrolls’ (*baojuan*) in some areas (§9, and Appendix 3). State attempts to suppress ‘heterodox’ popular religion have a long history. The Ming and Qing codes actually prohibited ‘associations’ (*hui*); ‘the Qing code prohibited the formation of associations generally, and specifically banned religious activities involving processions of god images accompanied by music

¹⁵ Cf. DuBois 2005: 160.

¹⁶ See Jones 2004: 33–5; cf. the term *damiao* in Fujian.

and percussion'.¹⁷ But success in suppression has been checkered, in both imperial and modern times.

Laymen in the villages have long acquired a certain ritual expertise, and could substitute for priests. Naquin cites an 18th-century member of a Hongyang sect:

Whenever there was a funeral for a poor person who did not have the resources to invite a monk or a priest, they asked [us] to chant sutras and escort [the coffin to the grave].

Describing the late imperial and republican periods, Naquin notes:¹⁸

If [Buddhist or Daoist, Naquin glosses] professionals were not available nearby, people turned to *huoju* Daoists, lay Buddhists, or sectarians. The poor might be unable to hire any clergy at all. Musicians who specialized in funerals could be brought in cheaply to supplement or even substitute for some of the clerics.

I would refine that a bit: by this period, there was already a long tradition of lay ritual specialists in the countryside, and local tradition would naturally suggest inviting them. And it wasn't quite a question of 'bringing them in cheaply': they were already there, they didn't have to be brought in. As we saw, whether local temples were Buddhist or Daoist, if they were occupied at all, it was by a very small staff, rarely adequate to field a team able to perform a complex ritual. The main duties of temple priests, apart from any notional 'self-cultivation', would have been survival: tilling the fields, temple upkeep, supervising offerings of incense, hanging lockets to protect children, and so on. Performing folk ritual outside the temple could be a welcome source of extra income, so they might collaborate with priests from other temples nearby to make up a band (*dabanr*; cf. pp.10–11 above). In many cases, they sought local villagers whom they could teach and constitute a viable ritual group.¹⁹ While we have plenty of instances of transmissions in the 20th century, there was a long tradition of temple priests performing ritual services outside their temple, recruiting laymen to supplement their numbers, as well as lay groups performing rituals without temple priests.²⁰

If rather mundane imperatives drove the temple priests (most have whom had been given to their temple in infancy), the villagers too might welcome this chance to learn ritual, partly to save money on inviting priests themselves. But also, since they were perhaps more devout than the priests, with their own set of ritual they could bring divine protection ('well-being' *ping'an*) to their home village; and once they had set up their own association, they adhered to a tradition

¹⁷ Naquin 1992: 351–2; cf. Esherick 1987: 41–2.

¹⁸ For these two citations, see Naquin 1988: 51–2 (cf. Naquin 1985: 267); Naquin 1988: 60.

¹⁹ See also DuBois 2005: 101–2.

²⁰ Cf. Goossaert 2007: 123–5.

of performing rituals as a moral duty, without a fee. Indeed, association members we met were invariably devoted to their ritual tradition, even if they had little doctrinal understanding; they were true amateurs.

Thus here we find amateur village-wide traditions performing mainly for the home village – by contrast with the occupational ‘household idiom’ (Chau 2006a) of *huoju* Daoist families, performing for patrons throughout their locality, that we found elsewhere. If the amateur associations acquired many of the rituals of temple priests, one major difference between them and occupational groups is that they are not at all busy, performing funerals and temple fairs only within the home village and a small radius.²¹ Unlike in north Shanxi (§2.1), where lay Daoists and shawm bands are the two complementary bands to invite for funerals and temple fairs, the shawm bands are of minor importance on the Hebei plain, and occupational Daoists too are scarce. The calendar of temple fairs is less dense than in north Shanxi, and ritual less complex.

Within this large area, I will suggest some local variations. Indeed, though our survey could never be adequate, it reminds us again of the need for detailed fieldwork. The areas introduced briefly in Parts One and Two were often equally large – under Xingtai, for instance, I glibly bracketed around sixteen counties, a similar area to that discussed below.

Below I will discuss three areas on the Hebei plain, a mere smattering of our material on over a hundred villages. These areas have distinct ritual characters. Just southeast of Beijing (§7), the largely occupational groups have strong ritual traditions acquired from temple clerics only in the 1950s. Around Bazhou (§8), traditions are amateur, often with clear links to Daoist priests. Around Yixian (§9), the associations are again amateur, and early; the cult of Houtu is a major factor in ritual activity, and the area is distinguished partly by the additional occurrence of groups reciting vocal liturgy with percussion alone, including ‘precious scrolls’ derived from White Lotus sects.

But the three main temple transmissions that I highlight in these areas were only part of ritual elements there, chosen because I happen to have rather detailed material. Our notes also show that ritual transmission to lay associations might derive from a variety of sources. My point is not so much to show transmission from a particular Daoist temple, but to show that the network of lay ritual specialists who had acquired their practices from Daoist priests and Buddhist monks stretched back into imperial times. The ritual specialists of those ‘old associations’ (*laohui*, a term sometimes denoting a group with more than one hundred years of history), that had a thriving early ritual tradition and no recent input from temples, are rather like *huoju* Daoists, except that they are amateur and represent a village-wide constituency; indeed, they are often known as *laodao*. Though their connections with priests or monks are sometimes lost in time, they perform liturgy for both funerals and temple fairs.

²¹ Cf. DuBois 2005: 183–4.

Occupational groups like the *huoju* Daoists that we met above appear to be weathering the new capitalist ethos quite well. So too do the more devotional amateur groups like sects and Catholics, with their frequent and inclusive rituals. But while many of the amateur associations also staged an impressive revival through the 1980s, I cannot predict that they will still be so active now, as migration, modern popular culture, and mercenary values take root.²²

On the theme of mobility (including ritual mobility), until younger villagers began boarding packed rickety buses to the towns in search of work in the 1980s, the world of peasants, even in this area near Beijing, was highly circumscribed. Peasants, and ritual specialists, travelled mostly by foot, within a radius of around 20 kilometres. One expects transport problems in Shanxi or Shaanxi, but it is worth noting that even here, on the plain not far south of Beijing and Tianjin, transport was still far from ideal in the 1990s. Even in the dry northern climate, once we left the main roads, our jeep was often unable to reach villages connected only by narrow rutted tracks.

Note on sources

Our team consisted mainly of Zhang Zhentao, Xue Yibing, Qiao Jianzhong, and me. Attempting a survey of an area comprising over a dozen counties, we collected data on over a hundred villages (not all of whose associations were currently active), so our visits were often quite brief, and since we could not always coincide with a ritual (in this area they are anyway quite sporadic), we sometimes had to fall back on requesting them to perform their ritual for us. (Contrast Yanggao, where no more than a couple of days ever seem to pass without the Daoists and shawm bands going out to do rituals!)

Our main notes (mostly by Xue Yibing and Zhang Zhentao) are from 1993 to 1996 (as well as some by Wang Shenshen, Han Mei, and Du Yaxiong, to whom I am also grateful), but come also from our many fieldwork trips from 1986 through 2003. Undigested notes from fifty of the villages were printed in *Zhongguo yinyue nianjian* 1994–96. We also took photos, copies of ritual manuals and *gongche* scores, and made audio and video recordings. Note the fine Zhang Zhentao 2002; after our preliminary survey (Jones and Xue 1991), I overviewed the associations in Jones 1999, but eventually focused on a historical ethnography of one village, Gaoluo (Jones 2004).

The Japanese material from 1940 to 1942 cited by Duara, from a handful of villages just around the margin of this area, is not ideal for our purposes (see p.122 above). Cf. also Gamble 1954 and 1963 for Dingxian just south, no more helpful for the kind of ritual practice we find here. For ‘religious music’ in Hebei, see JCI Hebei 35–9, 1237–1409; though the editors gave us useful early leads, the published result is most misleading for the central Hebei plain. Under ‘Daoist music’, apart from the counties discussed above and below, JCI Hebei also includes instrumental transcriptions from Boxiang, Gaocheng,

²² For reflections on the precarious state of non-devotional amateur ritual groups, see Jones 2010.

and Shexian, as well as Chengde and Pingquan in northeast Hebei. For Daoism in Hebei, articles like Kang Wenyuan 1986 are typically concerned more with early temple history than with modern ritual practice; for the Baoding region, cf. Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Baoding vol., pp.613–83.

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Chapter 7

Daxing: the Liangshanpo transmission

In the municipality of Beijing, just southeast of the city, the ritual associations in the suburban counties of Daxing and Tongxian were still quite active for liturgy in the 1990s – far more so than the Hebei counties of Gu'an, Fangshan, and Zhuozhou just west. They are distinguished by their proximity to Beijing, their continuing ritual traditions, their clear links to Daoist priests (and Buddhist monks), and the fact that many groups acquired their ritual only in the 1950s, as laicized clerics sought to transmit their knowledge to villagers. Thus although they are not ‘old associations’ (unlike most of those we found just further south on the plain), and have no early history, they clearly reflect temple traditions of ritual, relating to Beijing and Tianjin as well as to local networks. Again by contrast with most of the associations elsewhere on the Hebei plain, many of these groups don costumes for rituals, and accept fees.¹

7.1 The Liangshanpo Daoists

Several village ritual associations in this area learnt only in the early 1950s from the Quanzhen Daoist priests (known as *laodao*) of the Liangshanpo Daoist temple, properly called Pantaogong Liangshanpo, in Zhangziying district of Daxing county.² It was also known as Wangmu niangniangmiao; its main temple fair, the *sanyuesan pantaohui*, was for Wangmu’s birthday from 3rd moon 1st to 3rd, and they used to take a sedan (*jia*) of the Niangnang deity on procession due south to Shanggezhuang for the 4th-moon temple fair there (p.148 below).

In 1993 we met two surviving former Daoists from the temple, Gao Liwang (b. c1923) and Zhang Liwang (known by his secular name of Zhang Fugui, b. c1928). The *li* component of their given names indicated the 22nd generation, as in the 100-character Longmen Quanzhen poem (beginning *da dao tong xuan jing* 大道通玄靜) that Zhang recited for us.³ We found Gao Liwang in the local old-people’s home, which he had entered in 1987.

¹ This section is based on several visits to the area in 1993 and 1995, with help from Xue Yibing, as well as Du Yaxiong and Han Mei.

² Zhangziying had indeed been colonized from Zhangzi in southeast Shanxi.

³ As in Gansu (JCI Gansu 626). Versions transcribed from local Daoists over China have many variants – I have stuck with our 志, but changed our careless 李 to 理. Zhang’s version seems to get off to a shaky start, the more common version beginning *dao de tong xuan jing* 道德通玄靜; but I suppose only a few of these characters were ever used in

The Liangshampo temple belonged to the Qiuzu Longmen lineage of the Quanzhen order; Zhang said it was a ‘subsidiary cloister’ (*fenyuan*) of the Baiyunguan in Beijing. Since Lingbao liturgy was subsumed under Quanzhen practice, Gao claimed that they were ‘Lingbao Quanzhen branch’, reciting Lingbao scriptures and Quanzhen scriptures, and Zhang Fugui also said they recited *Lingbao jing* and *Lingbao shishi yankou*. It was quite a large and affluent temple, with three *qing* of land (*liangtian*), whose grain they sold to pay for upkeep. They hung out the Ten Kings paintings when they went to perform funerals.

Gao Liwang, whose old home was in Zhangziying, became a Daoist priest at Liangshampo in 1939, learning to play the *sheng* with Li Zihui (then 52). That very year the temple was partly burned down by the Japanese. Zhang Fugui, Gao’s former fellow-priest at Liangshampo, entered the temple when 16 *sui* (c1943), also taking the Daoist name Liwang.

In that period, Gao recalled, there were seven priests in residence, who recited the scriptures and played *shengguan* for folk rituals: himself, his master Li Zihui (then abbot [*dangjiade*, a very common term for boss of any ritual or indeed secular group], known as ‘Third Ox’ Sanniu), Ma Zhikang, Zhang Fugui, his master Kang Zhixi, Cheng Zhishan, and Liu Lixiu. Zhang Fugui recalled two more priests from the elder generation, Jia Zhiqing (‘Black Dog’ Heigou), and Liu Zhijiang. Just after Liberation, apart from Gao Liwang and Liu Lixiu, Lijiawu villagers recalled two further active temple Daoists: Xu Lixin and Zhang Licai. We met still others in the Upper Zhangziying association in 1995 (see below).

In 1943 Gao Liwang left to join the Eighth Route Army against the Japanese, going on to fight the Nationalists in the civil war. After Liberation in 1949 he returned to the Liangshampo temple ‘to till the fields’ – though most of the temple land was confiscated for Lijiawu village – and to resume folk ritual. In 1950 he and fellow Daoist Liu Lixiu (c1910–1980, mainly a *guanzi* player) taught vocal liturgy and *shengguan* music to Lijiawu villagers (§7.2), going on to do funerals with the new Lijiawu association. Meanwhile Zhang Fugui, unable to stay on in the temple, served at the Yuhuangmiao in Tianjin city from 1949 to 1950 (he also recalled the Lütutang and Chenghuangmiao there as having *huoju* Daoists). But when he wasn’t allowed to stay there either, he returned to his old home at East Beitaizhuang in Zhuzhuang district, becoming a peasant, folk vet, and book-keeper; by the 1990s he had opened a general store.

The way that Liangshampo priests taught Lijiawu villagers its vocal liturgy and *shengguan* in 1950 may sound typical of temple-lay transmissions, but actually, until not long before then, Liangshampo seems to have behaved more like an ‘orthodox’ Quanzhen temple, without any melodic instrumental music of its own (cf. p.22). While the accounts of Gao and Zhang about how the temple first acquired *shengguan* defy my most diligent efforts at reconciliation, the following

practice in a group of local Daoists. Cf. Koyanagi 1934: 97; Dong Xiaoping 2003: 586, and p.69 above. To thicken the plot, Gao said he belonged to the 13th generation of ‘Lingbao Quanzhen’ Daoists.

account at least shows that the temple had only added that component a generation or so earlier.

Zhang recalled that Liangshapo was most closely linked to the Li'ersi temple in Zhangjiawan district of nearby Tongzhou,⁴ with whose priests they also used to make up a band together for folk ritual. The Li'ersi was to the eight immortals. Unlike the priests of Liangshapo, the priests there played *shengguan*. One day, the Liangshapo priests of the generation senior to Zhang, no longer willing to pay the Li'ersi Daoists so heavily, decided to learn *shengguan* themselves, inviting the locally celebrated Ma family from Southgate of Wuqing county-town. To pay for tuition they sold off 80 *mu* of land and some trees, and three Daoists started to learn: Li Zhihui, Jia Zhiqing, and Liu Zhijiang. Alas, we didn't clarify whether the Ma family were *huoju* Daoists or a lay group, but it seems an amazing reversal of the commonly-heard story: usually it is villagers who decide to save money by themselves learning ritual and *shengguan* from priests, but here we find the Daoists learning *shengguan* from villagers! Zhang also mentioned that if the Liangshapo Daoists needed to make up numbers, they could link up with the nearby Daoist bands in Aigezhuang or North Jianta – or even, if people were more choosy or affluent, with the Yuhuangmiao temple in Tianjin.

The Liangshapo temple was further damaged in 1954 when the county authorities needed wood to make the new county hall; in 1958 the temple was destroyed, and Gao Liwang again returned to lay life in Zhangziying, still performing folk ritual for some years.

Zhang Fugui showed us the copy of a *yankou* manual (titled *Quanzhen qingjing shishi ke*)⁵ that he had brought back from his sojourn at the Yuhuangmiao in Tianjin in 1950; he also had a manual called *Guandeng gongde jingshu*. In 1979 he had copied the main features of his ritual practice into a small exercise book, including *gongche* scores of the *shengguan* music, mnemonics for the ritual percussion (*faqi*, several for specific rituals like Chasing Round the Five Quarters and Crossing the Bridges), and a section with ritual texts (*zaniān bu*, *Lingbao ke*). Zhang Fugui still liked to read the scriptures on his own at home, and memorized them as he rode along on his bicycle; he also played his *guanzi* (an exquisite old instrument) on his own at home for fun. He took part in the ritual association of his home village of East Beitaizhuang, which had fourteen members able to ‘take out the scriptures’; the Lijiawu association sometimes invited some of them to help make up numbers.

7.2 Village transmissions

In 1993 visits to **Lijiawu** village, known as Lifu, we talked with the association leaders, notably Zhang Fengxiang (b. c1929), who was not only chief liturgist in

⁴ Mentioned in Li Wei-tsui 1948: 52, and also recalled by villagers in nearby Shicun.

⁵ Unlikely to be linked to the *Qingjing* lineage of Quanzhen, for which see ET 799–800; Koyanagi 1934: 101–2.

the village association, and a *sheng* player, but was also village chief (a common pattern in the Hebei associations). The association then had 17 members, including 12 instrumentalists.

As we saw above, the Lijiawu villagers had learnt in 1950 from the Liangshanpo Daoist priests Liu Lixiu and Gao Liwang, with whom they continued to do funerals for some years. They inherited the temple's ritual manuals, costumes, instruments, and *shengguan* score, but most were confiscated before the Cultural Revolution; two sets of ritual manuals were burned during the Cultural Revolution. By 1993 they had both new Daoist robes and some surviving old ones. The latter (some said they came from the Liangshanpo Daoists, but Zhang Fugui said they were bought from Tianjin soon after Liberation) were much more ornate, embroidered with the Eight Immortals; they had water sleeves (*shuixiu*), like female opera costumes.

For the funerary Visiting the Soul (*jianling*) ritual they dress up and perform the *Songjing gongde* hymn; the ritual leader (*zhengnian*) clasps two *tieyiban* placards, one inscribed *Penglai xianjing* 蓬萊仙境, the other *Liangyuan guizhen* 良苑歸貞. For the *guandeng* Beholding the Lanterns ritual, they sing the *Jinran shendeng*, with *shengguan* accompaniment (*duikou*). Their Visiting the Soul, Chasing Round the Quarters, Beholding the Lanterns, Crossing the Bridges, and *yankou* rituals all include *duikou* pieces.

In **Upper Zhangziying** village, Gao Rongshui (b. c1940) told us that the association there had been founded in his grandfather's time, by learning with the Liangshanpo Daoists. He himself had learnt the ritual since the age of 17 with Gao Ruixiang; they had been quite busy performing until the Cultural Revolution. Gao Rongshui had been association head (here called *liaoshi*)⁶ since 1988. Two months before we met them in 1995 they had begun training a new group (*yipeng*) of young men to learn both vocal liturgy and *shengguan*. Though they, like the other groups in this area, are handsomely paid for performing rituals, their training reflected old moral values: they were taught not to engage in gambling or whoring.

The ritual elders in the group were former Liangshanpo Daoists. Zheng Wencai (b. c1916, Daoist name Lijing) studied *shengguan* in the temple with Li Zihui, scriptures (*jing*) from Zhao Mingzhi, and vocal liturgy (*yun*) from Xu Yuanbin; his master (*shiye*) was Feng Mingshan.⁷ His younger brother Zheng Wenzxue (b. c1919) began performing Daoist ritual aged 11, learning with his father Zheng Jinbang; from their names, it is not apparent if Wenzxue and his father were temple Daoists, and I'm afraid we didn't clarify this, but the tradition is evidently the same. The father and two sons had a great local reputation for their ritual.

Guxian village in Langfang (§7.5 below) also claims transmission from the Liangshanpo temple. We didn't manage to visit another recommended ritual association with 'Daoist scriptures' (*laodaojing*) at Longmenzhuang in Fengheyng district.

⁶ Cf. old Beijing: Chang Renchun 1993: 292.

⁷ In the generational poem, the sequence is *yuan-ming-zhi*.

7.3 Buddhist-transmitted groups

In this region there were just as many Buddhist-transmitted lay groups. Still in Zhangziying district, the **North Xinzhuan** village ritual association⁸ (again called *yinyuehui*) learnt only from 1951; as we saw, folk ritual here before Liberation seems to have been mainly performed by clerics in the local temples.

On the eve of Liberation, the village Guandimiao temple had five Buddhist monks: Daguang, his master, and three of Daguang's disciples, who performed folk ritual, including *shengguan* music. The temple images were destroyed in 1950, and the priests had to leave the temple; most returned to their old families, but Daguang (c1887–1966), had no family to go to, so he remained in the temple. It was he who was to teach the villagers, and he was revered by all who knew him. His students knew that his surname was Cui 崔; he came from a village in Gu'an county, becoming a priest when 12 at the Zaolinsi temple, perhaps in suburban Beijing. He told villagers he had learnt ritual percussion at a temple in Huangxindian, and *shengguan* at a temple in Aoxiaoying, and also spent time in a temple in Xianghe county before settling in the Guandimiao in North Xinzhuan.

Like many monks, Daguang used to smoke opium; it was often part of their reward for performing funerals. After 1949 he had to stop smoking. During land reform, he was allotted land, but he couldn't cultivate it, and since several youngsters in the village liked the *shengguan* music, he agreed to let them cultivate his land in exchange for teaching them. He took three sets of disciples, in 1951, 1954, and 1956, who still formed the core of the association by the 1990s.

Under the commune system, unable to gain work-points while out doing folk funerals and thus absent from production, the new ritual specialists were awarded a full day's work-points in exchange for 1 *yuan* each.⁹ They still treasure a rare photograph of the pupils with Daguang (Illustration 5), all in fine Buddhist robes and with instruments, taken on the eighth anniversary of the association – at the extraordinary time of 1959, with famine imminent after the frantic mobilizations of the Great Leap Forward.¹⁰

But in 1963 their instruments, costumes, and paintings (all from the temple) were confiscated by the Four Cleanups work-team to form part of an exhibition to show the evils of superstition, and they had to stop activity. Daguang, criticized and then neglected, died in August 1966, soon after the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. After the association restored in 1978, one of their first acts was to claim back their artefacts from the Daxing Hall of Culture, but since four costumes and some other effects had been handed over to higher authorities, the Daxing county government eventually gave them 1,000 *yuan* in compensation.

⁸ For this association, the book Du Yaxiong 2004, in English, gives a very different perspective from that of our team. His version of their funeral sequence (*ibid.*: 119–33) needs careful handling.

⁹ Cf. Jones 2007: 20–26; in fact the brigade did well out of such arrangements.

¹⁰ See Jones 1999: 47.



Illustration 5 The North Xinzhuan ritual association with their master Daguang, 1959.

Like the Daoist ritual associations in Daxing, the fact that they learnt only in the 1950s from a cleric explains how it is that they take money for funerals, unlike the amateur tradition of most old village ritual associations just south. The association has some fine musicians, and they are very keen; the *huitou* (a post here again called *liaoshi*, as in Zhangziying, §7.2) is Shi Huashen (b. c1926), a respected ritual specialist. They were still playing instruments inherited from Daguang, such as the *guanzi* oboe that Lian Kui (b. c1933) was playing, and a superb *yunluo* frame of pitched gongs. They also still have a set of paintings called ‘the seventy-two courts’ (*qishiersi*), resembling the more common Ten Kings.¹¹ Though they still perform some vocal liturgy for funerals, they regret having forgotten some of the ritual pieces that Daguang taught them, like those for Raising the Coffin *qiguan* and *jieshi* 借時 (?).

In Upper Zhangziying district, **Baimiao** village also used to have a Buddhist-transmitted association. We spent some time in 1993 with two further Buddhist-transmitted associations in the area, those of Lesser Heifa and Shicun villages; I will introduce the latter here.

In Majuqiao district of Tongxian county, the association of **Shicun** (Shijiacun) also had a modern Buddhist transmission (*sengmen*). The *huitou* when we visited in 1993 was the fine *guanzi* player Li Lianrong (b. c1929). They learnt in 1949 from the village Guanyinsi temple, founded in the Ming dynasty. A subsidiary

¹¹ Best known in the Dongyuemiao in Beijing (where there are 76), Chen Bali 2002: 85–139.

temple of the Guangjisi in Xisi quarter of Beijing (another ‘orthodox’ temple without *shengguan*), it was thought to have acquired *shengguan* music in the Qing dynasty. Its abbot (*sangzhang*) Wuran went to the Guangjisi in 1917 to be abbot there; his master there was Benyong. The village temple was destroyed and the monks driven away soon after Liberation, but in 1949 Wuran’s disciple Changji, the only priest then remaining in the temple, taught *shengguan* to 15 or 16 of the Shicun villagers. He played *sheng*; they learned *guanzi* from the monk Shenglin from Aoxiaoying village nearby. Their *gongche* melodic score was copied from the Guanyinsi. Again, the Shicun villagers learnt the *shengguan* more than the vocal liturgy. They held a further recruitment in 1962; having stopped around 1964 with the Four Cleanups campaign, they recruited again only in 1990. Apart from funerals, and the New Year’s rituals around 1st moon 15th (here called Spreading Lantern Flowers, *sa denghua*), they also observed 2nd moon 19th, 4th moon 8th, and the Medicine King (Yaowang) festival on 4th moon 28th.

Though I have tried throughout this book to expurgate too much detail on the *shengguan* music, this may be a suitable place to remind the reader that not only is it a ritual tradition derived from, and distinctive to, Buddhist and Daoist temples, with complex prescribed sequences of ancient melodies and scales, but that it is a most exquisite solemn aspect of northern ritual performance.

7.4 A Buddhist and Daoist funeral

A funeral like that I attended at Upper Zhangziying village on 13th March 1995 brought all the old Daoists from Liangshapo out of the woodwork. It was a lavish funeral for a 70-year old man who had died on the 11th, with three ritual associations taking part: the Buddhist North Xinzhuan band, and the Daoist Lijiawu and Upper Zhangziying groups. However, the main rituals took place only on the one day before the cremation next morning. Unlike the earth burial that remains universal for rural funerals, in this Beijing suburb cremation is enforced, but the traditional rituals are still observed before the coffin is taken off to the crematorium.

The three groups were each given their own house to prepare, change costumes, be fed, and rest between visits to the soul hall.¹² On the long procession in both directions between this base and the soul hall, they played magnificent *shengguan* in prescribed sequences with percussion interludes, led by a grandson carrying the soul tablet (*lingpai*) (and on later visits a god tablet *paiwei*) on a tray. The processions of the three groups to the soul hall (*lingtang*) were usually separate, the North Xinzhuan Buddhists always beginning the sequence, reflecting the

¹² Du Yaxiong (2004: 119) calls this *danfang* 單房; I didn’t hear the term used, but if they did use it, then perhaps it should be 丹房, as in Julu, south Hebei, where Yuan Jingfang (1997: 84) describes it as the site where the Daoists perform the scriptures; cf. the *jingtang* (pp.15, 42, 102).

traditionally greater prestige (though not actual popularity) of Buddhist monks (as in the expression ‘first Buddhist monks, then Daoist priests’ *xianseng houdao*).

- 11.20am–12pm: Settling the Stove (*anjian, anzao*) and first Visiting the Soul (*jianling*). On arrival from their procession, each of the three groups first visits the kitchen to pay homage to the kitchen god, playing *shengguan* and a hymn with *shengguan* accompaniment, while a grandson stands before the kitchen with a soul tablet. Then for their first Visiting the Soul ritual, they play a short percussion interlude as they move over to stand before the soul hall and its altar table, the chief celebrant (wielding a hand-bell or a placard) facing the coffin, as they sing a solemn hymn to accompaniment of ritual percussion, followed by another hymn with *shengguan*. Meanwhile the grandson continues kneeling as the soul tablet is placed on the altar table. As they leave, the female kin (who have been kneeling to the side of the coffin throughout, burning spirit money) begin to wail. In quick succession, as each association begins the long parade back to its base, still playing *shengguan*, the next one arrives. After lunch,
- 1.30–2.45pm: the second Visiting the Soul, with the three bands in succession again. The leader of the Zhangziying Daoists sings the Song of the Skeletons (*Kulou ge* or *Tan kulou*) – an important ritual song in imperial Beijing, still sung by many ritual associations on the Hebei plain (Appendix 2).
- 3.30–4.15pm: the third Visiting the Soul. (The number of visits is not fixed, depending on the behaviour of the funeral family and the whole atmosphere, how many people have come, and so on.)

For optional Crossing the Bridges and Chasing Round the Quarters/Chasing Round the Hells rituals at this juncture, not performed today, see §9.9 below.

- After the last visit to the soul is a brief *tan wangling* (*jingzhai*) ritual, the North Xinzhuang group (led as ever by a grandson of the deceased) entering the house where the deceased breathed their last, to play a brief *shengguan* piece by way of exorcism.
- 4.30–6pm *songsan*, a public procession through the village. The kin assemble, and all three ritual groups. Leading the procession are helpers carrying the three items to be escorted away: the soul tablet (representing the deceased), the paper horse and cart (the deceased’s transport to heaven), and paper lanterns (to illuminate the way for the deceased). A paper streamer brought from the soul hall is first animated by a group of women (perhaps mediums) with water, a comb, and a mirror. Next come the three ritual groups, led by a grandson bearing a soul tablet (Illustration 6). More kin and villagers bring up the rear. The three ritual groups follow the paper artefacts, playing upbeat *shengguan* all the way, stopping sometimes to perform extrovert clowning and tricks with the instruments (the Daoists

now stealing the show). At the edge of the village they stop, still playing *shengguan*, while the kin continue just outside the village to burn the paper artefacts. At a funeral nearby a few days earlier, they also burnt the funerary sticks, decorated at their base with white paper, with which the kin symbolically swept the route; they wailed as they kneeled.



Illustration 6 Funeral procession, Zhangziying 1995. Grandson bearing soul placard, North Xinzhuan Buddhists, Daoists behind.

- 6.20–6.40pm: Sealing the Soul (*fengling*). As the kin kneel on either side of the coffin, at the bidding of the master of ceremonies, they go in same-sex pairs to kneel before the coffin, kowtow, and use chopsticks to place morsels of food from the altar table into a jar (the ritual is thus also known as *jianguan*); this jar is to be buried with the coffin. The master of ceremonies meanwhile pours some tea before the altar (hence the alternative title *diancha* Libations of Tea for this ritual, though with no liturgical/ritual content). This ritual is accompanied not by the ritual specialists but by a shawm band (*chuigushou*) playing short popular pieces, seated before the coffin – surely a relaxation of the traditional rule whereby only the ritual specialists can take their place directly before the coffin/altar, whereas the shawm band always stand to one side (cf. the DVD with Jones 2007). The shawm band did not take part in the previous *songsan* procession.

At the funeral a few days earlier, after a brief Thanking the Stove [god] (*liaozao* or *xiezao*) procession, the Buddhist association accompanied the kin to the crossroads just outside the other end of the village to burn the paper *baofu*

envelopes stuffed with ritual money, the association again stopping at the edge of the village to play *shengguan*.

In the evening, two popular video films are shown on a projector in the street. After supper (the associations eating after the guests),

- 10pm–1am: Beholding the Lanterns (*guandeng*). This ritual is a rather rare survival from that of old Beijing (cf. p.197). It is held in the large tent where the guests had eaten, in the courtyard near the soul hall. First three Buddhist liturgists (now in their black robes) sing vocal liturgy before the coffin. The rest of the group then plays percussion as they proceed over to the tent, where the three liturgists make offerings and sing a solemn hymn at an altar they have set up there, the chief celebrant wielding both hand-bell and dragon-headed incense holder. Meanwhile the other ritual groups have taken seats on either side of a long line of tables; the Daoists are now in plain clothes.

Over the table a rope pulley stretches, in two parallel lines, from which are suspended two cloth puppets (*dengrenr*), about 1.5 feet tall, one male and one female, perching on lotus flowers, each holding a little tray. First the three Buddhists face the tables to sing more vocal liturgy, interspersed with more ritual percussion, and the puppets begin to make their sedate journey along the rope, accompanied by all three groups. As a helper gently manipulates the pulley, at either end of the table a grandson of the deceased awaits; while one lights a ball of cotton wool, soaked in oil, from a candle and places it carefully on the little tray held by one puppet, the other grandson removes the ball from the other puppet as it reaches the other end. The puppets twirl round and begin their magical journey back along the rope, passing each other in different directions, swaying daintily back and forth as they deliver the lanterns to the deceased.

The three ritual groups take turns to play *shengguan*, with percussion interludes, in long accelerating sequences from solemn to extrovert. The Lijiawu group launches into more clowning, a young Daoist playing *guanzi* with cigarettes in his nostrils, ears, and corners of his mouth (a staple of more secular wind bands in Hebei and elsewhere in north China), to cheers from the spectators. But the puppets' journey is ever stately. Later, the Buddhists accompany the puppets with more vocal liturgy, now seated at the table.

It was only later that I read Chang Renchun's typically detailed account of Beholding the Lanterns in old Beijing (cf. p.197). Though this village ritual is nocturnal, a lot simpler, and a lot less liturgical, I suppose it might also remind us somewhat of the *fangshe* puppets of the Baiyunshan Daoists in Shaanbei (§5.1).

- We couldn't attend the *chubin* 'burial' procession next day, but I had attended one a few days earlier at another funeral nearby with the North Xinzhuan association. Villagers came out to watch, with kin leading the

way, the grandson leading the association behind, the coffin in a truck (not getting great fuel economy) bringing up the rear. Villagers could now ‘impede the association’ (*lanhui*, cf. p.47), demanding popular pieces (folk-song, pop music) – this and the *songsan* procession are the only times they can depart from the solemn ritual style. The coffin was then taken off to the crematorium, the kin following in trucks, while the association returned to their home village.

Despite the spectacular participation of three ritual groups, this was a somewhat ritual-lite funeral, quite typical of funerals on the plain south of Beijing. Although I would argue against discounting the wealth of paraliturgical *shengguan* music, most of their more elaborate rituals, such as Chasing Round the Quarters, Crossing the Bridges, and *yankou*, were absent, and even the Beholding the Lanterns was notable more for the magic of the puppets than for its liturgy. The main events were the repeated *jianling* (cf. *kaijing/songjing* in north Shanxi), in which vocal liturgy was mostly represented by single hymns at each visit. This may be an impoverished scene, but to witness such rituals in performance, even today, must be a major part of our understanding of the ritual heritage from the Daoist priests and Buddhist monks of imperial times.

In sum, until the 1950s, even if the Liangshapo Daoists were temple-dwelling Quanzhen priests, they were busy doing folk ritual. Unlike most counties on the plain just south, this area didn’t have many lay ritual associations before 1949, and most of those that we found in the 1990s had learnt from monks or priests since 1949. So this also suggests in a bit more detail the kind of paths that might have led to the rituals of former Quanzhen temple Daoists being spread among lay ritual specialists, as we found in Part Two.

7.5 Langfang

Though not part of the Liangshapo transmission, it makes sense to subsume groups in Langfang here. Just southeast of Daxing, Langfang municipality (formerly a county called Dong'an, then Anci) is another lively area for ritual; although most groups were now mainly playing *shengguan*, they had learnt from priests.

Unlike the particular case we found in Daxing, most groups from here south and west on the plain maintained the amateur tradition of ‘practising good’ by performing rituals as a social duty without reward – although Zhougezhuang villagers pointed out that if people were going to pay, groups with vocal liturgists were in more demand,¹³ as we found above in Daxing. Such amateur groups were active mainly in the home village and a very small radius.

In Jiuzhou district, the **South Hancun** association was founded in 1945 by the Buddhist monk Gao Longxi (c1899–1963). Originally from a village in Tangxian

¹³ Li Xin 1996: 138.

quite far southwest, he was ordained in the Guangjisi temple in Beijing, coming to the Nanhai Guanyinmiao temple (also called Fengyuanmiao) in the south of their village in 1945. Eighteen village men then studied the ritual and *shengguan* with him, nicknamed ‘the eighteen arhats’ (*shiba luohan*). Gao even provided all the instruments. Though he transmitted the more popular *nanyue* style (with large *guanzi*, and adding *haidi* small shawm), he enjoined them that the ritual was a serious business, not for fun. By 1993 this group was still cohesive, because all but three of the original eighteen students survived, and many of their sons had learnt too; there were now over twenty performers. Here the *guanshi* ritual organizer was called *pupai*, a term we didn’t often hear (only in Junlu and Zhangzhuang, both discussed below) but that was common in old Beijing.¹⁴ They used to perform rituals in the village for 1st moon 15th and 7th moon 15th, but had not done so since Gao Longxi died in 1963. They still did funerals, including Chasing Round the Quarters, Crossing the Bridges, *chanling* 禪(懺?)靈, and so on, wearing Buddhist costumes, different for liturgists and instrumentalists. But our team found no ritual manuals or scores.

In the same district, the **South Changdao** association was Daoist-transmitted (*laodaojing*), wearing recently-made Daoist costumes; they played the more classical *beiyue* style of *shengguan* that is more common in this area. Though the village had a Yuhuangmiao temple, later turned into a school, they provided no specific details of transmission. There were four generations among the 18 members in 1993, though the only surviving member of the ‘first generation’ was 83 and no longer active. They had an undated score, handed down since at least 1941, with some ritual texts interspersed in the *gongche* notation.

The **Junlu** association was the first to attract the attention of music scholars, even before the 1986 discovery of Qujiaying. The village is famous for its role in the Boxer uprisings of 1900,¹⁵ and the association appeared in Zhang Zi'en's 1984 film *Shenbian* ('Holy Whip'). They were originally taught by the Buddhist monk Tanjiaozi, from the village Sanguanmiao temple. In 1937, Li Shangqin (b. c1912), head of the association when we visited, was among seven of the villagers who went to stay at the Sanjiaosi temple in Shenyang, Liaoning, quite far northeast;¹⁶ they were invited by the abbot (*dangjia*) there, Nengqu (Jiesan, secular name Yan Zhiyuan), who came from Yangliuqing near their home village. Li Shangqin and Han Cunzhi (also b. c1912) remained at the Shenyang temple for the whole eight years of the Japanese occupation. Though they took part in *yankou* rituals, they

¹⁴ Chang Renchun 1993: 309, with various written forms.

¹⁵ See the simplistic Han Jule et al. 1984, and the apt retort Feng Ling 1985. A later article, Xiao Xinghua and Cao Guojin 1992, is more detailed; see also the following article in the same vol. by Yang Zhenwang.

¹⁶ For leads to Shenyang temple ritual, see Igarashi 1986, Ling Qizhen 1958; for temple and folk ritual in Shenyang and Liaoning generally, see JCI Liaoning 1115–350, 1353–67, 1373–7.

appear to have only played the paraliturgical *shengguan* music. They were both still active in the village association when we visited in 1991.

In the village, although they used to wear robes, we heard of no extant tradition of vocal liturgy, and their rituals were now basic. Apart from funerals (here called *paowaichan*), they hold the *sandengke* lantern procession (cf. *sa denghua*, p.137) for the New Year's rituals on the evening of 1st moon 15th. Lotus-leaf lanterns are put out at all the dark places and wells, for dead souls, to 'guarantee well-being' (*baoping'an*, most universal purpose of all kinds of ritual in China). We attended this ritual in 1991. The association played *shengguan* on procession through the lanes, led by the respected community ritual leader, called *pubei xiansheng* (cf. *pupai*, South Hancun above).

Still in Langfang, a group of *laodaohui* (*laodaojing*) in four villages claimed transmission from a common source.¹⁷ Early in the 20th century, **Zhougezhuang** villager Ma Zhichun (known as Ma laoye) served as a priest at the Baiyunguan in Beijing, bringing back many ritual manuals when he came back to the village in 1947 after the debacle of the murder of Abbot An.¹⁸ For the remaining dozen years of his life he taught his home association, as well as those of **Wangma** and **Dongbiaofa** villages. The **Guxian** association was part of this tradition, though according to Li Xin, they also claimed to have learnt from the Liangshapo temple.

The Zhougezhuang association claimed to have learnt, before living memory, from the Lianhua'an temple in Yuanping county in the south suburbs of Beijing. Lan Wang (b. c.1919) learnt *shengguan* in the village from the age of 16. In the 1940s, Ma Liqing, his master there, had taken him to the Chenghuangmiao in Tianjin, where he worked as a *huojudao* for five or six years, returning home after Liberation. Lan Wang was illiterate, and (like the Junlu villagers above) had presumably taken part only as instrumentalist, not vocal liturgist (though cf. Yuanmenkou, §8.7); but like several illiterate villagers we met, he could read the *gongche* solfeggio characters! Otherwise we met rather few villagers who had served in urban temples.

The former scriptures mentioned in Zhougezhuang, including *Dacheng jing*, *Dafa jing*, and *Sancheng*, would appear to be of sectarian origin (cf. pp.63, 76), but we had no chance to enquire further, and none of these groups appear to have restored their liturgical practice since the 1980s. Thus they now only performed *shengguan* for funerals and a limited range of calendrical events, reduced (like Junlu) to the *fang dengke* around 1st moon 15th and Releasing the Lotus Lanterns (*fang hedeng*) on 7th moon 15th.¹⁹

Unusually, the four village groups also met on 4th moon 5th to commemorate their common ritual ancestor (*xianshi*) Ma Zhichun. The Zhougezhuang and Guxian groups used to wear Daoist robes, but had cavalierly adopted Buddhist

¹⁷ Apart from our 1991 notes from Zhougezhuang, I have consulted Li Xin 1996.

¹⁸ See e.g. Goossaert 2007: 177–81.

¹⁹ Several associations around the Baiyangdian lake just south still perform 'releasing river lanterns' (*fang hedeng*) rituals in the 7th moon; see e.g. Zhang Zhentao 2002: 347–53.

ones since the 1980s; both villages, like most of those we met, had an amateur tradition, but were now beginning to accept modest fees.²⁰ Even if few groups still performed vocal liturgy, in 1991 we were told that there were active *yinyuehui* in 15 of the 30 villages in the district.

From Langfang, just east in Wuqing county (Tianjin municipality), the **Huanghuadian** village association was taught around 1928–29 by the Buddhist monk Puji from the nearby Jinhuasi temple. He had been ordained in Beijing. Members also recalled studying with the monks Xinkui and Yuanliu from the Jinhuasi.²¹ We also heard of other Buddhist-transmitted groups in Wuqing, like that of Jianchang village in Gaocun commune. Just further north of Wuqing, I have found no clues to liturgical/ritual groups in Xianghe, although the fine wind bands there play a repertoire derived from the temples.²² Jinghai county (also in Tianjin municipality, §8.7 below) is not far southeast.

²⁰ Cf. DuBois 2005: 178–9.

²¹ Xue and Wu 1987: 86–7.

²² The Xianghe vol. of Overmyer and Fan 2006–7 largely concerns folklore and *huahui*. The 1936 Xianghe county gazetteer, though, has a rare mention of specific funeral rituals, including *yankou*, Smashing the Hells, Beholding the Lanterns, and Crossing the Bridges (cf. §9.9 below): MSZL 285.

Chapter 8

Bazhou and Jinghai

Like the associations in Daxing above, the groups I shall now discuss had also acquired their ritual from temple clerics (or from other associations that had done so), but most such transmissions had taken place much earlier. We have relatively detailed notes for the Zhangzhuang association in Bazhou, the elongated county south of Langfang, Yongqing, and Gu'an.

First, since the Daoist traditions in Bazhou that I will discuss derive from a temple in Gu'an county, I may note that ritual practice in Gu'an since the 1950s (indeed, the county itself) appears much impoverished compared to nearby counties.¹ By the 1990s, Gu'an could apparently only boast (and they did) the Qujiaying village association still practising, and they only performed *shengguan*, not vocal liturgy, with official networking replacing traditional contexts.²

Bazhou municipality (formerly Baxian county) just south, however, has remained lively for amateur ritual associations, particularly the area around Xin'an town east of the county-town, near Yongqing county. Elderly people in Xin'an recalled monks and priests from several of the town temples performing folk rituals, as well as household *huoju* Daoists. Ritual associations on the Hebei plain are mainly village-based; few towns have or had such groups, but by the 1980s several Buddhist-transmitted groups had resumed activity in Xin'an, though they had only preserved *shengguan* without liturgy.³

¹ Local scholar Zhao Fuxing (2006: 35–56) offers dour material on temples (as he says, the list he cites of 159 temples from the 1942 county gazetteer is by no means complete) and village groups in Gu'an before Liberation, but little on actual ritual practice, either before or after Liberation, and so hardly touches on my material here.

² Note the pioneering article Xue and Wu 1987; cf. Zhao Fuxing 1987; for a fine update (including discussion of the building of a ‘concert hall’ there), see Zhang Zhentao 2009, much preferable to Zhao Fuxing’s article in his 2006 vol. (187–212). Zhao Fuxing (1987) also mentions a former *yinyuehui* in Greater Yangwu, and his 2006 article (57–68) on a ‘hailstone association’ (*bingbaohui*) in Dayidian village (just in Gaobeidian [Xincheng] county – where we also found slim pickings, by the way) is surely in the same tradition.

³ For largely secularized *yinyuehui* in Shengfang, the other main town in Bazhou, see Li Xin 2005.

8.1 *Sheng* tuners

Indeed, Xin'an town was one of our first ports of call in 1989. We were led there by a slender, nay magical, clue in Yang Yinliu's fine 1953 monograph on the *shengguan* music of the Zhihuasi temple in Beijing, where he noted an itinerant *sheng* tuner called Qi Youzhi who used to do the rounds of the Beijing temples to tune and repair their *sheng* for them. Yang Yinliu's monograph even provided an address for Qi Youzhi in Xin'an, so in 1989 we set forth, and lo and behold, we found him!⁴ He gave us a valuable glimpse into the world of urban temple and village ritual music before and after Liberation. Indeed, *sheng* tuners (*dianshengde*), often itinerant, make a wonderful source in seeking ritual associations, apart from their profound technical knowledge of the ancient system of scales and pitch; we met several wise *sheng* tuners on the Hebei plain. (Occupational Daoists we met elsewhere tuned their own *sheng*.)

Qi Youzhi was the third generation of *sheng* tuners in his family. His grandfather Qi Baoshan had worked for the imperial palace in Beijing, and his father Qi Lanpu built a reputation tuning *sheng* for temple musicians there. Qi Lanpu's older brother and oldest son also took up the business, working in Tianjin as well. Qi Youzhi (b. c1920), the second son, began to help his older brother with the *sheng* business from 1931. They used to make the rounds of all the Buddhist and Daoist temples (including some nunneries) in Beijing and Tianjin, also touring the villages. Though their activities were highly restricted during the Japanese occupation, the family resumed its work from the mid-1940s, now based back in Xin'an. Twice a year Qi Youzhi used to go on a two- or three-month trip on foot to Beijing with his uncle, staying in villages on the way and tuning *sheng* wherever there was work. After Liberation, they could no longer find work in Beijing, since priests were being returned to lay life and temples were now largely inactive; but significantly there was still plenty of work repairing *sheng* for village ritual associations until the Four Cleanups in 1964. By 1980 Qi Youzhi was 60, and less active.

8.2 The Chenghuangmiao in Gu'an

We learnt much from Li Duqi (b. c1920), a former Daoist priest at the Chenghuangmiao temple in Gu'an county-town.⁵ His old home was in the Northgate quarter of Gu'an town; at the age of 10 he entered the Chenghuangmiao, where there were over 20 priests. It had records going back several centuries, and

⁴ We visited him again in 1993. Cf. also Bazhou 1990, vol.2: 245–6.

⁵ The temple is listed in Zhao Fuxing 2006: 36, with underwhelming epigraphs commemorating its refurbishment in 1480 cited on p.54, and in 1569 on pp.47–8; see also pp.49–51. Curiously, it is not listed as among the three temples in the town holding temple fairs in the late Qing (p.55).

(unlike Liangshapo above), belonged to the Heavenly Masters (Tianshi) Zhengyi branch – not that the Zhengyi/Quanzhen distinction makes much difference for my purposes. They used the 40-character Zhengyi generational poem; Li Duqi was 22nd generation, hence the *du* component of his name, 22nd character in the poem (beginning *yi de shou zhen yuan* 義德守真元).⁶

In the temple the young Li Duqi studied with his master (*shiye*), the chief ritual officiant (*qingzhu*),⁷ for four years, but he found the discipline tough, and went off to spend half a year at the Baiyangdian lake further south on the plain. On returning home he was sent back to the temple again, and spent a further six years studying there (cf. Zhang Xiuhua's story, Appendix 1). His master was Liu Shuhan (d. 1962; with disciple-like devotion, Li recalled that he died on the 21st of the 6th moon, and was buried on the 23rd), who could play all the melodic instruments; he had taught a dozen Daoists at the Chenghuangmiao, of whom only a couple still survived by the 1990s. Li Duqi had two 'younger-brother' fellow-Daoists, Li Dutian and Li Duheng; they didn't learn well, finding the temple rules too many and too complicated, so they went off to join the Liberation Army (*hmm...*).

In his teens Li sometimes went to stay at the Baiyunguan in Beijing, where they were received by the cloister supervisor (*jianyuan*), but the Daoists 'from the 24 counties' [in the Beijing vicinity?] didn't need to register (*guadan*); indeed, Daoist priests could also register at Buddhist temples. They often went for seven or eight days around 9th moon 18th. "Irrespective of what branch you belonged to, when you arrived at the Baiyunguan, even the abbot had to become a Longmen Daoist!" When 14 or 15, Li had even helped rent out rooms at an inn in Beijing.

Already a fine liturgist and drum player, Li Duqi only learnt *sheng* and *guan* from the age of 18. His master wanted him to take over as *qingzhu*.⁸ To learn the vocal liturgy, the young priests would imitate the *qingzhu*, striking their thighs, one hand for the drum, the other for the bell; while reciting the *gongche* mnemonics of the *shengguan* music they would clap out the beats as they followed the master. They were themselves beaten if they went wrong (former priests and monks we met invariably recalled this, indeed some attributed it to their ability to recall the repertoire after long periods of inactivity), though Li got off lightly. His master wouldn't let him write things down, making him memorize everything – thankfully for Gaoqiao village later. This was not so much for Li's sake as to preserve secrecy of transmission – the *qingzhu* was even afraid the ritual would

⁶ Xue Yibing 1993.2: 27; Koyanagi 1934: 107. As we have already seen, there were different poems for each of the many branches of both Quanzhen and Zhengyi; cf. the 40-character Qingwei Lingbao poem cited by Zhang Xiuhua 1982: 166 (Appendix 1 below).

⁷ A temple term that I heard only here, denoting the liturgist responsible for sounding the bronze bowl. Li explained that the *qingzhu* was the number two in the temple after the cloister supervisor, who was responsible for finances, food, and visitors, while the abbot (*sangzhang*) wasn't responsible for any practical business, only for 'large matters'.

⁸ Cf. the complex division of duties in major metropolitan Quanzhen temples, Min Zhiting 1995: 12–22.

be transmitted to the Japanese. Li recalled a fellow-priest during the Japanese occupation going to talk with the local radio station, who offered them 100,000 *yuan* to record for them. When he came back and discussed it with Li's master, he declared, 'Not even if they gave us a million!'

8.3 Other temples practising folk ritual

Apart from the Guandimiao of Zhangzhuang, Li Duqi mentioned other 'subsidiary temples' (*femiao*) of the Chenghuangmiao in Gu'an – such as the 'small temples' of the villages of South Taoli and Lihewu, and four temples in Gongcun district, including the Baiyian, Laoyemiao, and a 'great temple' (*dasi*); the latter was originally staffed by a Buddhist monk, but after he died, a Daoist priest came.⁹ They all had land (*xianghuodi*). The Daoists from all the subsidiary temples returned to the Chenghuangmiao on 1st moon 15th and 2nd moon 19th to 'do the assembly' (*banhui*). The temple fair for the sanxiao shengmu goddesses on 3rd moon 28th was also a major event. The Daoists had all studied for four or five years at the Chenghuangmiao, learning both scriptures and *shengguan*, whereafter they were farmed out to small subsidiary temples.

Li Duqi also recalled several local Buddhist temples whose priests could play *shengguan* music. The Wenshenmiao in the Southgate quarter of Gu'an had two Buddhist monks, a master and disciple whose *shengguan* music was similar to that of the Daoist Chenghuangmiao. There were six or seven Buddhist monks in the temple at Lesser Shafa south of Gu'an town. In Niutuo district, Yanggezhuang and Shanggezhuang villages had 'Longmen' [Quanzhen] Daoist temples with priests whose ritual and *shengguan* Li described as 'the same' as those of the Chenghuangmiao. The abbot (*dangjiade*) of the Shanggezhuang temple (a Yaowangmiao to the Medicine King, according to a local source)¹⁰ had studied at the Chenghuangmiao in Gu'an; the priests, in turn, had taught the '*laodaohui*' of Shanggezhuang village (cf. p.131 above). Villagers recalled seeing groups of Daoist priests and Buddhist nuns competing at funerals (*duipeng*) in Wen'an county-town. Once, the Chenghuangmiao Daoists had taken part in a grand funeral in Dacheng county where there were four competing ritual groups ('four tents of scriptures' *sipengjing*).

But as you can see, if the few isolated local Daoists (or indeed Buddhists) in the small subsidiary temples were to do ritual business in the area with a full quorum for both vocal liturgy and *shengguan*, then they were either going to have

⁹ Zhao Fuxing 2006: 40 lists three temples for Gongcun.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*: 69–78, an article that (even on p.74, describing the six priests there until the 1950s) sadly fails to mention ritual practice or the village association. See also *ibid.*: 38, 49, 55. He does observe, however (*ibid.*: 69), that it was an exceptionally thriving temple, being restored in 1935 and 1942, at a period when temples in the whole area were in decline.

to combine with their fellows in other temples, or teach a group of local laymen. And this was nothing new to the 20th century.

8.4 Zhangzhuang

The village of Zhangzhuang in Bazhou is a short journey 3 *li* west of Xin'an town. Its Daoist-transmitted ritual association (*laodaojing*) makes an interesting comparison with the equally fine Buddhist-transmitted association of Gaoqiao nearby (§8.5).

As we saw, the Guandimiao of Zhangzhuang was a subsidiary temple of the Chenghuangmiao in Gu'an, which sent a Daoist to take charge of it. Before the 1940s this was Guo Weicheng, Daoist name Shuyuan (*shu* was indeed the generation senior to Li Duqi's *du* generation) or Sanduo. It was he who taught ritual and *shengguan* to the Zhangzhuang villagers. The village association also had a master called Liu Guoyue, who died early in the 1940s – he taught the associations of Beizhou and Caojiawu in Yongqing (see below) too. The Daoists never took fees for teaching villagers, and (unlike the later transmissions in Daxing, §7 above) the village association doesn't seem to have charged for its rituals either.

Li Duqi was sent to the Guandimiao in Zhangzhuang late in 1947, to take over (*jiemiao*) from the dying priest there. Li found the village with its own already active ritual association. After Liberation, he returned to the laity in 1951 or 1952, and the temple became derelict, but he stayed on at Zhangzhuang to be a peasant. During the desperate hardships from 1959 he returned to his old home in Gu'an, but he couldn't survive on the land there either, and came back to Zhangzhuang in 1962 – the villagers there were good to him. But the association had to disband that year – so until 1990 people could only hire shawm bands for funerals, and during the Cultural Revolution they couldn't even do that.

One of the association's old scores of the *shengguan* music was burnt in the Cultural Revolution, but another was hidden by a committed member, the *guanzi* player Zhang Shuchun (c1910–1994). Li Duqi was not attacked too much in the Cultural Revolution; 'clerics (*chujiaren*) don't make enemies of people', and villagers couldn't face giving him too hard a time. But he must have kept on the move, as he returned to Zhangzhuang in 1989. By then, villager Zhang Fengtao (b. c1944) was keen to restore the association, aware of all the other ritual associations in the area that had been restoring since the early 1980s. Though not a former member, his uncle had been a ritual specialist; he and his older brother were doing well from the economic reforms, the village itself was now quite prosperous, and the villagers were keen. One day Li Duqi was drinking with Zhang Fengtao when they discussed the idea of restoring the association. Li Duqi wasn't worried about having been attacked in the Cultural Revolution, but he still wasn't convinced that this stuff (*wanyir*) was much use any more. (Their position was still somewhat sensitive by 1993, and though active in the nearby countryside,

they were wary of attracting too much official attention by performing funerals in the town.) Anyway, what could they do, now that their scriptures were all lost?

Still, the association restarted in 1990, restoring ‘in a single week’. Eight village men took responsibility for the restoration of the association, clubbing together to buy new instruments and Daoist costumes and hats. Although there was a fine core of at least eight members in their late fifties who had entered the association (*ruhui*) as youngsters in 1945, and Zhang Shuchun also had a fine memory, Li Duqi was asked to teach the *shengguan* to the younger recruits. As we saw, Zhang Shuchun had managed to preserve one of their old *gongche* scores, and very fine it is too, a compendium of melodies plainly derived from the classic tradition of the Beijing temples.

But they were keen to relearn their vocal liturgy too, so Li now had to recite as much as possible from memory, getting people to write down the texts as he chanted and sang them, phrase by phrase, over several years. It took him a whole year to recall the *yankou*, and he pieced ‘The Song of the Skeletons’ (Appendix 1) gradually too. As everywhere, there were characters to which they could only approximate, not knowing the correct way to write them, only the sounds.

By 1993 the *yinyuehui* had 27 members, with several youngsters aged from 17 to 28. The building where the association met and stored its artefacts¹¹ was on the old site of the Guandimiao; in the grounds was a stone stele said to record the temple’s history since the 12th century. The building was exceptionally clean. Its inner room had an altar with recent paintings of the sanqing deities, an offerings table, and a veil. They met every evening to rehearse the scriptures and the *shengguan*; the younger members were keen to learn, studying the Daoist texts recalled by Li Duqi. On a blackboard were written the *gongche* solfeggio symbols of the *shengguan* melodies they were currently relearning. They prided themselves on being the only real Daoist ritual association in the area, with their master still guiding them. Though there were only 27 ritual performers, the amateur association represented the whole village, as usual in central Hebei: here they said about 80% of the villagers were ‘in the association’ (*zaihui*), expressed by token donations of tea or cigarettes at the New Year’s rituals. When we visited them again in 1995, they were keen that we should video their Chasing Round the Quarters and Crossing the Bridges rituals, but we never managed to do so.

Like many villages in the region, they now only observed two main calendrical rituals:

- 1st moon 15th, Releasing the Lanterns (*fangdeng*): one must first sing and play *Jinran shendeng* (cf. p.134 above), then the following processional pieces are flexible.
- 7th moon 15th: one should do Releasing the River Lanterns (*fang hedeng*), but as there is no water here, they just hang paper lanterns. They also perform *yankou*, as for funerals (see below), with minor textual differences. This is

¹¹ Cf. again Zhang Zhentao 2002: 181–204.

also an occasion for an association feast, including meat; these feasts are at the members' expense.¹²

They also referred to other calendrical rituals formerly observed:

- 2nd moon 15th: set up a tent for Laojun and Pusa, and hold a vegetarian feast (*chizhai*).
- 2nd moon 19th: set up a tent for the birthday of Nanhai dashi (Guanyin), repertoire including *Dengzan/Jinran shendeng* and *shengguan* pieces.
- 9th moon 15th: set up a tent for Laoye (Guandi), repertoire including *Shenzan*, hymns with *shengguan* accompaniment, and a few *shengguan* suites.

Like most of the *huoju* Daoists we met, Li Duqi never mentioned *jiao*; nor had he heard of *fenxiang* division of incense, despite the network of subsidiary temples (*senyuan, xiayuan*).

The Chenghuangmiao priests used to recite morning and evening altar scriptures (*zaowan tanjing*), but they were not recited outside the temples. Now their main texts, restored from memory by Li Duqi, were the *Dapan mengzhen*, for the *yankou*,¹³ and the *Jiuku jing* – the latter, as he explained, mainly for the 'sea assembly' (*haihui*, 'sea' denoting universality), helping eliminate calamity for the dead (cf. *Penglai haihui*, p.71).

As to funerals, Li Duqi recalled that richer families used to store the corpse for half a year, burying it only after the autumn; sometimes it was kept for over three years. After the chief Daoist received the announcement (*tiaozi*), he sent it round all the subsidiary temples, summoning his fellow priests to take part – another reminder that there might not be enough Daoists in a single temple to stage a proper ritual.

Conversely, for less wealthy families, Li commented significantly, 'Villages which had a *yinyuehui* didn't need to spend money on inviting Daoists.' He also considered that a *yinyuehui* funeral was more or less the same nowadays as he could recall it; it was only a two-day event. He gave us a fine prescriptive account (Table 19) for a funeral as performed by a village *yinyuehui*.¹⁴ To remind you, *duikou* refers to vocal singing accompanied by *shengguan*.

¹² These feasts were a common aspect of the practice of the Hebei associations: *ibid.*: 169–72.

¹³ My only clue to this at present is a funerary *mengzhen* ritual in Fujian, Dean 1988: 42, 61, and manuals, *ibid.*: 45, 52.

¹⁴ Xue Yibing 1993.2: 30–33.

Table 19 Li Duqi's prescription for a funeral

Day 1		
noon	<i>baizao</i> 拜灶 Homage to the Stove	Before going to the soul hall, pay homage to the kitchen god, singing <i>Jianzhai</i> 兼齋 (?) <i>duikou</i> . Recite a four-phrase <i>jizi</i> 倭子 in unison, sing another <i>duikou</i> piece.
	<i>anling</i> 安靈 Settling the Soul	Sung text <i>duikou</i> , then recite a few lines of scripture, <i>Shiwang gong</i> 十王功; then percussion <i>Changsanpai</i> 長三牌, then percussion four-phrase <i>jizi</i> . Also called <i>ruguan</i> 入棺 Encoffining.
	<i>canling</i> 參靈 Visiting the Soul	Can be done once or as many times as the patron requests. Sing the unaccompanied <i>Tan wangling</i> 嘆(探?)亡靈 in unison.
	<i>zhaowang</i> 招亡 Summoning the Deceased [Ancestors]	A relative bears a god tablet (<i>paiwei</i>) to the earth god Tudi, the association proceeds behind, playing small pieces. They go to the entrance of the village, towards the ancestral graves. The chief celebrant (<i>qingzhu</i>) of the association stands in the centre and takes the feast tablet (<i>zhaiban</i> 齋板), inscribed with <i>Yifeng chaozhou</i> <i>jiuchongtian</i> 壹封朝奏九重天 (opening line of a Han Yu poem), the association standing on both sides before him. First perform a <i>duikou</i> piece, recite a few phrases of <i>jizi</i> , and recite <i>Qing xianling</i> 請先靈 text. Then return to the soul hall, putting the offerings on the altar table.
	<i>qushui</i> 取水 Fetching Water	The kin take a god tablet (or painting) to the dragon king (Longwang), proceeding to the village well with the association playing behind, <i>Shendeng zan</i> and reciting a section (<i>zhe 折</i>) of scripture, sing <i>duikou</i> hymns <i>Longwang zan</i> and <i>Qushui zan</i> . Put water in a wine flask with red cloth tied at top with rope with red end. Take it back to the resting-place of the association (<i>xiachu</i> 下處, like <i>jingtang</i>), until it is needed in the <i>yankou</i> .
	<i>paofang</i> 跑方 Chasing Round the Quarters (or another <i>canling</i> instead)	Five tables with the tablets (<i>paiwei</i>) of the wufang (wulao) tianzun 五方(五老)天尊. Seated before the coffin, the association recites scriptures and plays <i>shengguan</i> . A kin member takes the soul tablet; the <i>biaobai</i> 表白 (one of the liturgists) takes the 'pennant to lead the soul' (<i>yinhunfan</i> 引魂幡), and leads the kin to the 'arena of the quarters' (<i>fangchang</i> 方場). First they pay homage to the Central quarter, then EWSN; while the <i>biaobai</i> leads the kin west, the <i>shengguan</i> group goes east, and so on. The <i>shengguan</i> group plays the <i>duikou</i> pieces <i>Shendeng zan</i> or <i>Cuizhulian</i> 翠竹簾 throughout, while the texts change.
eve	<i>guandeng</i> 觀燈 Beholding the Lanterns	No longer performed; see §9.9
	<i>fang yankou</i> 放焰口	A dharma platform (<i>fatai</i>) is built, a table on top of four other tables, the association sitting in front of the platform. First the chief liturgists recite the <i>Tudi jing</i> 土地經, and sing <i>Liuju zan</i> 六句讚 <i>duikou</i> , then a <i>shengguan</i> suite (<i>daqu</i> 大曲). On the platform the chief liturgists offer incense and recite the <i>Shiwang jing</i> scripture – not the same as the <i>Shiwang juan</i> , which is what the Laofomen sect recited! <i>Shengguan</i> accompanies the three verses of <i>Cuizhulian</i> . Grains and water are scattered for the hungry ghosts. They used to hang out the Ten Kings paintings, but since they have been lost, they just hang that of the King of Ghosts. Same as for 7th moon 15th, except minor differences in text.

Table 19 Li Duqi's prescription for a funeral (*continued*)

Day 2	
<i>canling</i> 參靈	Scripture and <i>shengguan</i> same as Day 1, but different pieces, different texts.
<i>canling</i> 參靈	ditto
<i>diancha</i> 奠茶 Libations of Tea	Offering three cups of pure tea to the deceased. For the first, tutti sing <i>Yizhu fanhun xiang</i> 一柱返魂香, led by the <i>qingzhu</i> , alternating with <i>shengguan</i> and percussion. While the offerings of tea are made, play three different pieces, like <i>Jinran shendeng</i> , <i>Cuizhulian</i> , and <i>Liuju zan</i> .
<i>songlu</i> 送路 Escorting to the Road	On a long and slow procession, the family goes to burn paper outside the village. The association plays lively 'small pieces' (<i>xiaoqu</i> 小曲) on a Ritual Tour of the Streets (<i>zhuanjie</i> 轉街), following the paper offerings: cart, horse, gold and silver casket, and so on. After the paper offerings have been burned, they play the percussion piece <i>Changsanpai</i> . They continue to play small pieces on the way back, escorting the family back to the soul hall. In some places this ritual is done on Day 1 – it differs by district.
<i>duqiao</i> 渡橋 Crossing the Bridges	The <i>qingzhu</i> leads the way as a male kin takes the 'banner to lead the soul' and crosses the bridge of no return (<i>naiheqiao</i>), made out of tables or carts. On tables at either end of the bridge are images of Niutou and Mamian 牛頭馬面. On both sides of the bridge the association plays <i>Jintong yinlu</i> 金童引路; the <i>qingzhu</i> recites a few phrases of scripture as the percussion plays, and the kin and <i>qingzhu</i> ascend the bridge. The latter recites another four-phrase <i>jizi</i> and the <i>shengguan</i> group plays another suite, very slow. After descending the bridge, return to the soul hall. All this takes around 2 hours – if necessary you can abbreviate the <i>shengguan</i> , but not the scriptures.
<i>songqian</i> 送前 Escorting Afore	Recite scripture, burn paper memorials (<i>biao</i>), play <i>Liuju zan</i> .
<i>chubin</i> 出殯 Burial Procession	Raising the coffin (<i>qiguan</i> 起棺), percussion only; more percussion after the coffin has been placed in the palanquin (<i>zhao</i> 罩) and is lifted. On procession, the association leads, playing small pieces with percussion interludes. Escort the coffin to the entrance of the village, association standing to the side as the coffin passes, playing a lively percussion piece.

Notes:

diancha: including brief allusions to the 'three dreams'; for a 'standard' version, see Min Zhiting 1991: 282–5. Cf. the western area, §9.8 below, where the dreams are treated more expansively.

Yizhu fanhun xiang: cf. Min Zhiting 1991: 188–91, Min Zhiting 1995: 159, 166, 179; and for south Hebei, Yuan Jingfang 1997a: 203–5.

For *zhaowang*, *qushui*, and *paofang*, cf. §2.1 above; for *duqiao*, see Glossary–Index.

8.5 Gaoqiao

Nearby, in Zhongkou district just south of Bazhou town, is the fine Buddhist-transmitted association of Gaoqiao village. In 1993 and 1995 visits we talked mainly with Shang Xuezhi (b. c1949) and the *huitou* Hao Shan (b. c1938), as well as the leading vocal liturgist (*zhengnian*) Hao Guanghua (b. c1933).

This was a large village (with 784 households and a population of over 4,000 in 1993) but, like Zhangzhuang, it was quite prosperous. The association members were doing well from their *sheng* workshop, which supplied instruments to ritual associations and shawm bands over a wide area of Hebei, as well as to Beijing instrument shops. The workshop was mainly run by Shang Xuezhi and his three brothers with four of their sons, all of whom played *shengguan* in the association. Again, they were able to run off a long list of active ritual associations all over the area. Indeed, the Shang family *sheng* workshop went back at least four generations.¹⁵

The ritual association was quite a small group, and (unusually) they only reckoned around sixty households as ‘in the association’, but they had a good range of ages, and were traditional and enterprising, as well as musically outstanding. Shang Lishan (b. c1963) was among the finest *guanzi* players we have heard in Hebei,¹⁶ playing with his eyes firmly closed, like all *guanzi* and *sheng* players trained in the strict ritual tradition.

Again, they can recall four generations, but tradition was that the association was much older. The account (as often) is a little blurred, but their elders had said that the villagers had learned ritual and *shengguan* from a priest called Guangda in the village Jinlongsi temple; there were four or five monks there who could play *shengguan*. The temple, a subsidiary temple (*fenniao*) of the Longxingsi (known as Dawangmiao) in Zhengding county (just north of Shijiazhuang, quite distant), had acquired its ritual from there in the Kangxi era (1662–1722) (or was it then that the villagers had acquired it from the Jinlongsi?!). The cover of the association’s *yankou* manual bears the legend:

[1922] 3rd moon, reprinted by abbot Yiding of the Longxingsi in Zhengding fu of Zhili.

Yiding turns out to have been an important local figurehead in the Boxer movement of 1900,¹⁷ reminding us that the Boxers were active throughout the whole region discussed in Part Three. The manual was printed at the Yongshengzhai printing shop in the Qianmenwai quarter of Beijing; indeed, though Gaoqiao had a clear

¹⁵ Cf. Bazhou 1990, vol.2: 246–8.

¹⁶ They can be heard on track 14 of the CD with Jones 2004. For amazing Daoist *guanzi* players in Yanggao, by the 1990s Wu Mei had assumed the mantle of Liu Zhong (§2.1 above).

¹⁷ See Yihetuan 1980, vol.1: 404–5.

link with the Longxingsi temple, this edition seems to have been widely distributed, even being reproduced for the 1986 Beijing *yankou* recordings (Ling Haicheng 1986, see Appendix 1). The association also has a fine *gongche* score in the most exalted temple tradition.

The Jinlongsi was destroyed, along with the other temples in the village, in Communist anti-superstition campaigns of 1945–46, but the association remained active. After the crises from 1958, in 1962–63 they were still performing Chasing Round the Quarters and Crossing the Bridges rituals, but they had to stop in 1964. They restarted (with *shengguan*) as early as 1979, but had only just resumed reciting the scriptures in 1992. They performed as a social duty within the village, and took a modest, flexible reward for funerals elsewhere – though they were reluctant to perform much outside the village, as they were busy with the *sheng* workshop.

Interestingly, they spoke of two types of funerals: *banfoshi* including vocal liturgy in costume, or *zuopeng* ('seated in the tent') with only *shengguan* and in plain clothes. Vocal liturgists and instrumentalists are known respectively as 'civil and martial monks' (*wenseng*, *wuseng*, like the more common *wenchang/wentan* and *wuchang/wutan*; as in Laishui below, 'civil to the east, martial to the west', *wendong wuxi*), and wear different costumes. For Raising the Soul (*tiling*), they don a separate set of costumes. All their costumes were newly made. With a group of seven liturgists they performed sections of the *yankou* for us – rather well, if they had restored it only recently. Again, their calendrical contexts are now limited to Releasing the Lanterns rituals on 1st moon 15th and 7th moon 15th.

In this area, two ritual groups still often perform at the same funeral (*duipeng* 'facing tents'). The Gaoqiao group has *duipeng* with the North Wudaokou association (see below), and they often *duipeng* with the Zhangzhuang Daoists – 'first Buddhists then Daoists' (*xianseng houdao*), as in Daxing above.

8.6 Other nearby groups

In west Baxian in 1989 we visited members of the former **North Yanjiawu** association. Though they had been inactive since the Japanese invasion, they preserved a beautiful *gongche* score, undated but clearly ancient; the preface to another score, copied recently by Fan Guangyin (b. c1915), states that a Buddhist monk from the Qianfosi temple just north of the village had taught the villagers after they nursed him back to health.

The Zhangzhuang and Gaoqiao villagers gave us leads to several other nearby village associations (including some of those in Jinghai county to the east, §8.7 below). **Majiabu** village in Bazhou (Dongduan district, just west of the road leading south to Shengfang) had an 'old association'. In 1995 we chatted with villagers at the house of the *huitou* Han Shutian (b. c1925) there, including his son, then village Party Secretary. They could recall at least five generations, and considered themselves the earliest association in the region. Li Duqi had told us this group belonged to the Laofomen sect, though the subject wasn't broached

on our brief visit with them. Their old collection of ritual manuals had been lost, but from some of the titles they recalled (we wrote *Sitang yuanjun* 四堂圓君, *Tanbi* 嘆比, and *Yinyangshi* 陰陽世, but they couldn't suggest the right characters any more than we could), I suspect Li Duqi may have been right. The Laofomen connection was quite common just further west and south.¹⁸

After ceasing activity in 1956, they were presumably resuming by 1981 when they recopied their old *gongche* score, but had recently sought tuition from Zhangzhuang, since they had a family relation with Zhang Shuchun there. Li Duqi said they had learnt the *laodaojing* from them, for two years, 'After a fashion – actually, it takes at least five years to learn this set of ritual.' Like Zhangzhuang, they had Daoist costumes.

Just north, **Yongqing** county, south of Langfang and east of Gu'an, also had several groups. We visited the Daoist-transmitted **Greater Liangcun** village association (Caojiawu district) in 1995. The *huitou* Wang Honghua (b. c1930) learnt from the age of 16 or 17. This group could recall least four generations, but their tradition was that they had learnt their ritual from the Daoist priest Meng Shouzhong of the village Sanguanmiao temple in the Tianqi era – Wang thought it was in the Qing, but it was 1621–27, in the Ming; they also claimed to have '200 years of history', so make of that what you will. They too had only restored in 1990, copying a *gongche* score borrowed from another former Daoist in an old people's home in nearby Gu'an – they had a relative working there who made the connection. The score concludes with five ritual texts, but they still had not restored their liturgy. Their old costumes were burnt after the Four Cleanups, but they had bought new costumes and hats. Again, apart from doing funerals, their only calendrical rituals were 1st moon 15th and 7th moon 15th.

Still in Yongqing, in **North Wudaokou** village, by the Yongding canal, we found an active Buddhist-transmitted *yinyue shanhui*. Two senior members claimed that the association had already been active for several generations before they learnt in 1947. But their elder Xing Xianming (c1913–91) had also claimed that the village learnt more recently from the village of Xinli further east; they in turn had learnt it from the monk Guo Zeng, who had come to Xinli in 1928 to look after the village Guandimiao, and now taught the Xinli villagers in exchange for a supply of opium.

Anyway, the Wudaokou association had managed to preserve three ritual manuals from this period (Illustration 7):

- *Yugie yankou*, dated 1929, 1st moon 15th;
- *Zanianben*, same date, with the name North Wudaokou village;
- *Yugie yankou*, dated 1930, 9th moon 9th, with the name North Wudaokou *yinyue shanhui*.

¹⁸ Cf. Jones 2010: 164–6. The Laofomen seems largely absent from county listings in Zhao Jiazhu 2004, but features in a long list for Xiongxian, *ibid.*: 114–15.



Illustration 7 Yankou manuals, Wudaokou ritual association, 1929–30.

As in Zhougezhuang (§7.5), they spoke of reciting the *Dacheng jing*. Large paintings of the Ten Kings were burnt in the Cultural Revolution. They had a *gongche* score; an older one was buried with Gao Fulin (elder brother of *huitou* Gao Fuming) on his own request – another distressingly common theme, as if political destruction wasn't bad enough; musicians often had their precious old *guanzi* oboe buried with them too. As in Gaoqiao, they distinguished liturgical and paraliturgical funerals: 'When we dress up it's "monk scriptures" (*heshangjing*), when we don't it's a *yinyuehui*.' They had grey inner costumes with red outer robes. They also had an instrument workshop.

Many of the associations in the eastern part of **Xiongxin**, the next county south, had regularly recopied beautiful old *gongche* scores. Extant scores from Lihezhuang and Hanzhuang, copied in 1915 and 1920 (4th and 9th years of the republican period) after previous copies in 1874 (Tongzhi 13), state that the *shengguan* music was transmitted in 1787 (Qianlong 52nd year) by the Chan monk Wang pusa Guanghui, called Miaoyin 'Wondrous Tones' – a good name for a musical monk. Nearby North Dayang and Gegezhuang also had exquisitely copied old scores with elegant and literary preliminary texts.¹⁹ These were among the most perfect documents we found recording the strict tradition of *shengguan* suites transmitted ultimately from the Beijing temples. But by the 1990s these associations were also distinguished by their lack of vocal liturgy. Similarly, several associations in **Wen'an** county had learnt their *shengguan* from Buddhist monks, but we found no liturgy.

¹⁹ See Zhang Zhentao 2002: 391–3, 34–6.

On a 1994 trip to **Dacheng** county just further southeast, our team found active ritual associations called *laodaohui* at **South Xifu** (in Fucao district in the west of the county) and **Hancun** (Hanzhuang). Both went back several generations; though they no longer performed for calendrical rituals, they had once made the pilgrimage to the Yaowangmiao temple at Maozhou. Their vocal liturgy (*wenchang*) formerly included Chasing Round the Quarters, Fetching Water, Ambulating Incense (*xingxiang*), Crossing the Bridges, and Making the Platform (*dazuo*, apparently *yankou*) rituals. They still performed funerals as a social duty, wearing Daoist costumes, but both groups had lost their vocal liturgy, and no longer had their old ritual paintings and manuals. They mentioned several nearby villages that used to have ritual associations.

8.7 Jinghai and the eastern area

Bazhou villagers gave us leads to groups in Jinghai county just east and south, in Tianjin municipality. Here there were many Daoist-transmitted associations, like Baiyangshu village in Fujumiao commune. Note that Tianjin municipality (like Beijing) is largely rural, outside the city itself, along the eastern border of the areas discussed above. It is an extremely fruitful area for fieldwork, where we have sadly not had enough time to study. I have already mentioned some groups in Wuqing county. Apart from the sectarian connection (see below), Tianjin is notable for its large ritual percussion ensembles called ‘dharma drumming associations’ (*faguhui*), again Buddhist-transmitted; many of them also include a subsidiary *shengguan* repertoire, although their liturgical/ritual element is slight.²⁰

Here it is worth introducing two ritual groups in Jinghai, those of Lesser Huangzhuang and Yuanmenkou, both richly deserving more fieldwork than our team could manage in 1994 and 1995. The small village of **Lesser Huangzhuang** (1994 population around 800) in Ziya district, west Jinghai, was quite poor, but was locally renowned both for its ritual association and its *sheng* workshop. In 1994 our team talked with the venerable Li Baoyan (b. c1915). His son (b. c1928, sic! – early marriages were still common) was the association *huitou*, and his grandson was head of the *sheng* workshop.

The association, called *yinyuehui* or *laodaohui*, had at least three or four generations before Li Baoyan. According to an old ritual painting now lost, it was transmitted from Beijing. Among a largely illiterate population in Hebei, though several senior association members had received an old-style Confucian education in private school (*sishu*), Li Baoyan was of exceptional erudition. He had attended private school from the age of 12 to 15, and, already a father, he began learning the village ritual from the age of 17, beginning with the *guanzi*, and going on to learn everything, including the vocal liturgy. After joining the CCP in 1949, he served successively as village chief, district chief, commune chief, and village

²⁰ Guo Zhongping 1991; JCD Tianjin 47–91.

Party Secretary. Meanwhile he was also leading the ritual association – active until the Cultural Revolution, with an interruption during the late 1950s. Such a combination of political and ritual authority in village leaders was very common all over the Hebei plain.²¹ In 1968, while assistant chief of the village revolutionary committee, Li restarted the *sheng* workshop. They revived the association again in the early 1980s, recruiting groups of youths in 1984 and 1992, with the support of the village committee, as usual; by 1994 had over twenty members with a good range of ages.

This *laodaohui* is ‘Buddhist-transmitted Daoist teachings’ (*sengchuan daojiao*), and worships Confucius, Laozi, and Buddha. Their many former paintings included a Heaven and Earth (*Tiandi*) pantheon (*tiandi xiang*), with Guangong and Erlang in the upper row; Mile (Maitreya) Buddha of the future, the four great Tianwang Heavenly Kings, and Dharma Protector Hufa in the middle row; and the Ten Kings, Dizang, Tudi, and Ghost King Bodhisattva (*Guiwang pusa*) in the lower row. Now the paintings had been lost, they wrote inscriptions for each god on pieces of card, as usual.

They now had two main ritual manuals. The ‘Complete Dizang precious lanterns’ (*Dizang baodeng quanbu*) was used for the Beholding the Lanterns ritual; it was an old copy made by a villager before 1937 as the old one became too decrepit. Li Baoyan made four further copies in the 1980s, so each of the five liturgists had his own from which to recite. They were also using a manual called *Zazhi zanben quanbu*, beautifully copied from memory by Li Baoyan in 1984. Table 20 lists its contents;²² though the items are listed as hymns (*zan*), it is more like a ritual manual, with recited and sung sections of various structures for the many segments of a ritual (Illustration 8). They had even recorded their complete vocal liturgy on cassette for the next generation, as well as their *shengguan* music, which is of a mixed *nanyue* style – unusually, here there were no items of vocal liturgy accompanied by the melodic instruments. Again, Li had copied a new *gongche* score on the restoration around 1984. They also used to have a thick *yankou* volume, which they could recite ‘along with the Buddhist monks’.

Funerals now lasted one or two days (before the day of the burial procession), the longer version including Beholding the Lanterns. Again, their ritual calendar was sparse, with only the Releasing God Lanterns (*fang shendeng*) on 1st moon 15th and Releasing Ghost Lanterns (*fang guideng*) on 7th moon 15th. Formerly they also ‘paid homage at the temples to make offerings’ (*baimiao shanggong*) on 3rd moon 3rd and 10th moon 15th.

They had been making *sheng* since before the Japanese occupation; in the 1950s the business was collectivized, but since the 1980s it had split into eight household industries. As ever, Li Baoyan gave us a list of Buddhist- and Daoist-transmitted associations nearby.

²¹ Cf. my detailed account for Gaoluo village, Jones 2004.

²² For a similar type of list, cf. Dong and Arkush 1995: 25–6.

Table 20 *Zazhi zanben quanbu* ritual manual, Lesser Huangzhuang

<i>Tudi zan</i> 土地讚	note in manual: funeral
<i>Tudi zan</i> 土地讚	note in manual: ‘joyous’ [viz. for rituals for the living]
<i>Songlu zan</i> 送路讚	
<i>Menshen zan</i> 門神讚	
<i>Sanguan zan</i> 三官讚	
<i>Laoye zan</i> 老爺讚	
<i>Songsui zan</i> 送歲讚	note in manual: for <i>fangdeng</i> Releasing Lanterns
<i>Songsui zan</i> 送歲讚	note in manual: for <i>chubin</i> burial procession
<i>Antan zan</i> 安壇讚	
<i>Jizao zan</i> 祭灶讚	
<i>Qingling zan</i> 請靈讚	
<i>Yangzhi jingshui</i> 楊枝淨水	
<i>Caoxi shui</i> 潦溪水	
<i>Laojun zan</i> 老君讚	
<i>Wangsheng zhou</i> 網(往)生咒	
<i>San diancha</i> 三點(奠)茶	
<i>Zhaoling zan</i> 照靈讚	
<i>Zhaqing tiaozi</i> 召請條子	a long segment, with <i>Yixin fengqing/zhaqing</i> 一心奉請, <i>Yixin zhaqing</i> 一心召請 texts with <i>Jishou guiyi</i> 稽首皈依 texts followed in same sequence by
<i>Anling zan</i> 安靈讚	
<i>Da sanbao</i> 大三寶	
<i>Qingling zan</i> 請靈讚	
<i>Kulou zan</i> 骷髏讚	
<i>Wenjing</i> 聞經	
<i>Songling zan</i> 送靈讚	
<i>Duqiao zan</i> 渡橋讚	long
<i>Heqiao zan</i> 賀橋讚	
<i>Qushui zan</i> 取水讚	note at end of text: before the soul, recite <i>Yangzhi jingshui</i> 楊枝淨水, <i>Namo saduona zhou</i> 南無薩哆喃咒
<i>Xinjing</i> 心經	
<i>Shenbiao</i> 伸表	
<i>Chenghuang zan</i> 城隍讚	note in brackets at end: segue <i>Jixiang zhou</i> 吉祥咒
<i>Fenxiang zan</i> 焚香讚	



Illustration 8 Page from manual, Lesser Huangzhuang; from Crossing Bridges texts, followed by Fetching Water.

Nearby in East Tantou district, we found an active ritual association at **Yuanmenkou** village, belonging to the Tiandimen sect²³ – properly, they said, Tiandi ruyimen. They described it as a ‘charitable sect’ (*shanmen*) for those in need, for ‘religious ritual’ (*foshi*), existing to ‘serve the people’, no matter how poor – contrast the police view, p.30 above.

There are clues to sectarian groups elsewhere in Hebei (§9). Though in principle, sects are voluntary, intra-village, in most Tiandimen villages the sect is virtually ascriptive, the association representing the whole village. So for our purposes, it is identical in most respects to the amateur associations we have found so far, with vocal liturgy and paraliturgical *shenguan*.

Differences were that unlike most transmissions from Daoist priests or Buddhist monks, this association had been transmitted from sectarians, and not from the north but from Shandong further south; and the old generation had also practised healing and reciting incantations (*zhouyu*).²⁴ As Li Baoyan told us, in both its ritual manuals and the vocal style of its liturgy Yuanmenkou was quite different from Lesser Huangzhuang. DuBois shows that this network extended north all the way up to Tianjin. Non-sectarian ascriptive village associations also

²³ Note DuBois 2005, covering the Tiandimen and Taishangmen sects in Cangzhou and north up to Tianjin, continuing the work of Li Shiyu and Pu Wenqi. For the Tiandimen, see esp. *ibid.*: 161–85. Cf. §1.6; see also Zhao Jiazhu 2004: 45. For a good local list of Tianjin sects, see *ibid.*: 41–2; and for the sects in Hebei, see the provincial survey in *ibid.*: 47–54.

²⁴ In fact we also found several associations in Xiongxian and elsewhere that were transmitted by Laofomen sectarians, not to mention the Hunyuan groups around Laishui (§9 below), though these groups no longer proclaimed any sectarian connection.

often had networks based on transmission from a common master, but the inter-village networks of the sectarian groups were more developed; they had taught several other villages nearby, and further north in Wuqing county and the southern suburbs of Tianjin. The Tiandimen sect from East Changtun nearby had come in 1993 to exchange knowledge and goodwill.

They could recall three generations before Li Junming (b. c1936), the *huitou* when we visited in 1994 and 1995. His generation had only learnt one third of the ritual manuals (*yikeben*) when their old masters starved to death in the famine of 1960. Having hidden their manuals, scores, and instruments through the Cultural Revolution, they restored in 1980 after over 20 years of inactivity, with the support

Table 21 Funeral programme of Tiandimen sect, Yuanmenkou

	small hymn, recited, not sung percussion large accompanied ‘hymn’ <i>Mituofo zan</i> 彌陀佛讚 <i>Putuo</i> 普陀, sung
breakfast	small accompanied hymn <i>Lingtai sibao</i> 靈台思寶 large accompanied ‘hymn’, <i>Tan hongchen</i> 嘆紅塵 large ‘hymn’ <i>Rulai fabao chuan</i> 如來法寶船, to the melody <i>Meihuayin</i> 梅花引, in the house of the deceased small hymn <i>Wangling gaoqi</i> 灵高祈 note: the latter two hymns are mainly used for <i>chaodu</i> 超度 and <i>jingwozi</i> 淨屋子 Cleansing the Room
<i>diancha</i> 奠茶 Libations of Tea	three offerings each of wine, tea, incense, to the melody <i>Sanfan</i> 三番 recitation (<i>shuowen</i>) <i>Yizhu zhenxiang</i> 一柱真香 accompanied song to the melody <i>Jinzi jing</i> 金字經 percussion recitation percussion
lunch	<p><i>songlu</i> 送路 Escorting to the Road go to the soul tent, sing the small hymn <i>Wangling gaoqi</i></p> <p>large hymn <i>Kulou</i>, sung and played (see Appendix 2) recitation</p> <p><i>zhuangjie</i> 轉街 Ritual Tour of the Streets small hymn <i>Mingtu luyuan</i> 冥途路遠</p> <p><i>duqiao</i> 度橋 Crossing the Bridges (see pp.196–7) <i>shaoqiao</i> 燒橋 Burning the Bridges small hymn</p> <p><i>qingling</i> 請靈 Inviting the Soul small hymn <i>Wangling gaoqi</i> recitation (7 × 4)</p>

Note: Where ‘hymn’ is in quotes, the text is not in the standard 4–4–7–5–4–5 hymn structure.

of the three village brigades. In 1995 they had over 20 ritual performers, with several good youngsters. But Li Junming was distressed that they still couldn't afford to organize New Year's ritual festivities, so their main activity, again, was performing for funerals.

They have preserved dilapidated old ritual manuals, one dated 1890 (Guangxu 16th year), and old and new copies of their detailed transmission history called *Ruyi chuantong suyuan*,²⁵ as well as an old *gongche* score and remnants of two more old decrepit scores, one recently copied into an exercise book. Their two ritual paintings had been painted six or seven years earlier: Wanglingguan, hung before they ascend the bridge in the Crossing the Bridges ritual, and Dizangwang, at the other end. As we found quite often with rural liturgists, Li Junming was illiterate, but could sing the manual, keeping his place in it with unerring accuracy. As in Lesser Huangzhuang, they distinguished lesser and greater *zan* hymns, but here the former were only accompanied by ritual percussion, while the latter were accompanied on the melodic instruments too. Their funeral sequence is summarized in Table 21. This is also a much simplified sequence; here, unusually, the dead are now cremated, and these rituals, strangely, take place on the day after that, concluding about 4–5pm.

They no longer wear robes for ritual. They said there were also Taishangmen and Laojunmen sects in the area, differing mainly in details of ritual texts. This sectarian angle leads us nicely to Cangzhou county in Cangzhou municipality, which though quite far south, is worth mentioning since DuBois (2005) has written a useful book on sects there (cf. p.161 n.23 above); the inquisitor Huang Yupian (1982) also listed many scriptures he confiscated there in the 1830s.

²⁵ For this important long text, see *Zhongguo yinyue nianjian* 1995: 208–11. Copies of their manuals and scores are kept in the Music Research Institute, Beijing. Curiously, the sect in Cangzhou seems to have no written scriptures (DuBois 2005: 165–6).

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Chapter 9

The western area: Houshan and the Houtu cult

Local cults (p.29) have been conspicuously absent from my account so far. So I will play myself out with a rousing chorus of Houtu worship, returning further northwest to the area of Yixian county, southwest of Beijing – one of rather few areas for which I have detailed material on such cults. Even if this sometimes diverts us from the path of liturgy/ritual, it will serve usefully to remind us of the wider religious context.¹

There are many old amateur ritual associations in the area of Yixian, Laishui, and Dingxing counties, as always transmitted from Daoist priests or Buddhist monks (both in imperial and modern eras). But here I focus on the tradition related to the cult of Houtu, the temple-dwelling Daoists on the Houshan mountain in Yixian before the 1950s, and the plethora of amateur ritual groups in the vicinity. Further distinctive features of this area are amateur groups called *foshihui* ‘ritual associations’, reciting vocal liturgy with ritual percussion only, without *shengguan*; along with the complex recitation of *baojuan* ‘precious scrolls’ in the classic format of 24-pin chapters (Appendix 3) – among many clues suggesting ancestry in the sects huddling under the convenient umbrella of ‘White Lotus’.

In the period just preceding Liberation, intra-village sects with inter-village networks thrived, until they were crushed in campaigns over a long period from the 1940s to the 1960s. The most common ones were Dafojiao, Laofomen, and Yiguandao, none of which adopted the same style of ritual performance as those we meet here – indeed, some of them had no liturgical ritual at all. Ritual activity in most villages was performed by the ritual specialists of public village-wide associations.

¹ Of other cults in central Hebei, note also the Yaowang Medicine King cult around the major temple of Maozhou in Renqiu county, and there are many traces of Wusheng laomu worship (e.g. Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Baoding vol., pp.293–307, 365; Handan vol., pp.155–60; cf. Fanzhuang, p.8 n.14 above). I have found few clues to Bixia yuanjun worship in the whole area, so prominent around Beijing in Naquin’s imperial sources (e.g. 2000: 157, 160, 245, 246, 523) – unless she shades into the worship of nainai and sanxiao sisters, noted below. The Qingxushan temple fair in Tangxian county (mainly to Ge Hong and the sanxiao sisters) begins on 3rd moon 15th, lasting ten days (Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Baoding vol., pp.308–47). One might also compare the major Catholic pilgrimage in East Lücun village in Qingyuan county just south of our area, for which see Jones 2004: 302 and much material from Amnesty International.

For example, many groups on the Hebei plain belong to Hunyuan and Hongyang sectarian traditions.² Though groups using the term Hunyuan may be a ‘broad church’, and it is also a branch of mainstream temple Daoism,³ these lay traditions are clearly sectarian, like the ‘precious scrolls’ we are about to encounter. The ritual association in North Qiaotou is of Hunyuan ancestry, but they don’t seem to know about the patriarch Piaogao or observe 5th moon 16th. As with other village-wide groups, their ritual specialists perform mainly for funerals and calendrical rituals, on behalf of the whole village. Of course, such groups may have lost their sectarian ideology – not necessarily since the 1940s, but perhaps over a longer period as imperial persecutions took effect.

Houshan is at the easternmost foothills of the Taihangshan range. The area where we found related ritual groups was on the plain just south and east of Houshan (for a partial map, see Jones 2004: 25); though our material for this area is relatively detailed, it was only quite a small part of eastern Yixian and southern Laishui, and there is still ample room for further exploration in those counties. Not far west of Yixian county-town are the Western tombs of the Qing emperors from Yongzheng onwards – reminding us of traces of élite imperial culture at local level.

9.1 Houtu

Around Yixian, Laishui, Dingxing, and Xushui counties, the worship of the goddess Houtu is a little-known cult of great antiquity, still thriving today.⁴ Its centre is the Houshan mountain (literary name Hongyaishan) just north of Yixian county-town, with its cult to Sovereign Earth Empress (Houtu huangdi), popularly known as Houtu niangniang (Our Lady) or Houtu nainai (Grandma); on formal inscriptions she is called Chifeng chengtian xiaofa Houtu huangdi. The enduring popularity of the worship of Houtu today, like that of other fertility goddesses, may be related in good measure to the state birth-control policy since the early 1980s.

Houtu appears in many ancient texts, but since the Song dynasty she has been the fourth of the Four Sovereigns (*siyu*) of Daoism, who rank below the Three Pure

² See e.g. Ma and Han 1992: 489–548, 1258–1311.

³ See e.g. Koyanagi 1934: 94.

⁴ See the chapter in Zhang Zhentao 2002 (278–327); Cao and Xue 2000, Xue 2000, and refs in Jones 2004, including excerpts from the *Houtu scroll* on the CD. All these are largely based on our joint fieldwork in the area in 1989 and since 1993; our work around Yixian was much assisted by local cultural cadres Wang Zhanlong and Gong Li. I have also used the local sources Houtu 1988 and Gong Li 1990. However, the latter’s long recent article (2007) should be treated with caution; while perhaps useful for ancient (indeed prehistoric) legends and details of former temple buildings and statues, it barely engages with modern practice, and its accounts of former calendrical occasions are highly embroidered.

Ones (sanqing).⁵ Yuhuang (most senior of the Four Sovereigns) rules over heaven, while his younger sister Houtu rules over earth. As one of the Four Sovereigns, her image may be seen in many Daoist temples, but she generally has a much less important role than Yuhuang, and features little in standard Daoist temple ritual. Incidentally, she is associated with the Earth God (Tudi), and throughout China the incantations of geomancers at the grave are actually to Houtu.

The Houtu legend widely known in the Houshan area, as told in the Houtu precious scrolls, revolves around her rescue of the young Liu Xiu from the would-be usurper Wang Mang in the Han dynasty; after succeeding to the throne as Guangwu emperor, he is said to have bestowed on her the official title Chengtian xiaofa Houtu huangdi, a title found in ritual manuals, paintings, and inscriptions throughout the area.

Commonly Houtu is the leader of nine goddesses called shengmu, nainai, or niangniang. In the Beijing area, nine goddesses are often associated with authority over childbirth, but I have only found Houtu as their leader in the Yixian–Dingxing area.⁶ This may indeed be a local variant of the Bixia yuanjun cult, for which I have few clues on the Hebei plain (cf. n.3 to Introduction to Part Three above). The goddess Cangu, sometimes attendant on Houtu, is important in Xushui county, and is linked with the sanxiao sisters. In Xiefangying village (Xushui) there was a Cangu temple, and a Bixiagong temple with statues to the sanxiao. But we rarely heard of any direct link between Houtu and Bixia yuanjun; in Zhaogezhuang (Laishui) the temple had sanxiao sisters and Houtu murals together, and there are said to have been statues to the sisters in the Huanxitai temple on Houshan.⁷ Precious scrolls in the area also list many niangniang deities.

Wusheng laomu, the begetting deity for ‘White Lotus’ sects, features commonly in local ritual imagery. When we first visited the summit of Houshan in 1993, a small Wusheng laomu shrine had recently been (re-)built next to the main temple to Houtu. South Shanbei, in eastern Yixian, used to have a ‘great temple’ called Baoansi, the last of whose five ‘layers’ was to nainai (Houtu); beyond the temple was another one to Wusheng laomu. But people understand that our Houtu, though also known as laomu, is only a younger generation from Wusheng laomu. In Gaozhuang (Xushui – §9.7 below), the Laomu citang temple, inaugurated in 1994, had statues of Wusheng laomu in the centre, flanked by four niangniang: Wangmu and Songzi to the right, Cangu and Houtu to the left. Otherwise ‘White Lotus’ vocabulary is widely evident in local ritual imagery such as ‘returning

⁵ Ma Shutian 1990: 37–9; a good summary of early sources is Cao and Xue 2000: 81–6.

⁶ For the pantheon (with Houtu as the central among nine niangniang in the 7th of 10 rows) and other god paintings (where her separate painting is placed nearly central) in Liujing, see *ibid.*: 84–5.

⁷ Gong Li 1990: 66. Of course, sanxiao worship is a whole other story: see e.g. the report on the Qingxushan temple fair in Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Baoding vol., pp.308–47.

home' (*huanxiang*), the dragon-flower assembly (*longhuahui*) and the three *yang* (*sanyang*) kalpas.

9.2 The Houshan Daoists

Travelling north from Yixian county-town, one leaves the main road at Lijiafen to go west, passing through Liujing on the way to Matou at the foot of the Houshan mountain. All these villages have their own ritual associations (§9.3 below). Ascending from Matou, it is a pleasant climb of around three hours to reach the temples around the summit.

Locals began repairing some of the many small shrines on the summit and in Matou soon after the end of the Cultural Revolution. Of the many Daoist and Buddhist temples all around the foothills to the south and east, some were quite large, but most were already in ruins before the 1930s. The two main temples occupied by the Houshan Daoist priests were formally named Shouyangyuan or Shouyangguan. Though there was accommodation for the Daoists on the summit, they mostly lived in two temples in the villages at the foot of the mountain: an upper cloister in Liujing, and a lower cloister in Matou.⁸

The Houshan Daoists belonged to the Longmen Quanzhen lineage. Ritual specialist Wei Guoliang (b. c1914, though he was exceptionally vague about his age), our most knowledgeable local source, life-long resident of Matou and a former disciple and colleague of the Houshan Daoists, told us that they were ordained at the Baiyunguan in Beijing, which oversaw it⁹ – although he and others also said the Houshan Daoists were subordinate to the Laoyemiao temple in Yixian county-town (see below).¹⁰

Since we have so little material on local Daoist priests in the north Chinese countryside for this crucial period, and it was they who transmitted their ritual to the nearby amateur associations, it is worth giving some details (see also Table 22).¹¹

The local pamphlet also cites fragmentary and undatable steles on the mountain, one naming two abbots (*zhuchi*) of the Shouyangyuan temple from the 12th and 13th generations, and another listing three more from the 8th to 10th generations – the 1930s generation being the 18th.¹² At Liujing, villagers said there were over ten Daoist priests in the temple before Liberation. Despite their fine *gongche* score,

⁸ In addition to our interviews, cf. Houtu 1988: 22; Gong Li 2007: 241.

⁹ The local pamphlet (Houtu 1988: 40), written with the clear agenda of gaining official authorization for the site, cites an unidentified stele stating that the Baiyunguan Daoists used to come annually on 3rd moon 15th to ordain and preach; without Wei's comment, I would doubt this strongly.

¹⁰ Cf. Gong Li 2007: 240–41.

¹¹ This material was pieced together from many visits around Matou in 1993, 1995, and 1996.

¹² Houtu 1988: 36–7, 40–41.

Table 22 Houshan Daoist priests before the 1950s

Surname	Name	Dates	<i>Shengguan</i> competence
Cui 崔	‘master’ (<i>shifu</i> 師傅)		
Lu 廬/路	Hekuan 合寬	d. 1940s	
Liang 梁	Jiaozhong 教忠	c1899–1980	<i>sheng</i> and all
Lu 廬/路	Jiaorong 教榮	d. 1940s	all
Liu 劉	Jiaohai 教海	executed 1945	
Nan 南 (Cui 崔?)	Jiaofang 教方 (?)	executed 1940s	
Zhou 周	Jiaoshun 教順		
Chen 陳	Jiaolai 教來		
Zhang 張	Yongqing 永慶		<i>guanzi</i>
Jiang 美	Yongfu 永福		all
Yu 于	Yonglin 永林		
Liu 劉	Yonggao 永遨	b. c1929	
?	Yongtai 永台		
?	Yonghui 永徽		
?	Mimao 米冒/茂 (?)	d. 1957	

by the 1940s few of them could play the *shengguan* music, so they often made up a band with Daoists from the Laoyemiao temple in Yixian town, and also had recourse to Matou villagers to make up their numbers.

Wei Guoliang began studying with the Houshan Daoists when he was 17, around 1930. Earlier, he and several of his friends in the village had studied with the village schoolteacher for three years, their families all paying for tuition. But he recalls learning many more characters by learning the ritual scriptures. Along with a dozen or so village boys, he studied with the Houshan Daoists Liang Jiaozhong (himself a Matou villager) and his master Lu Jiaorong – note that more boys studied with the Daoists than went to school, not least because it was free. ‘We worked in the fields all day, then learnt in the temple in the evening. They gave us tea, but not food. You had to kowtow to your master; they expected respect, not material goods. They had one *qing* of land, they weren’t short of cash. We graduated (*chuke*) after three years. The wind music is harder than the percussion, so you learn the wind music first.’ Wei was the first in his family to learn. After a while only he and a few friends stayed the course; the others were thrown out because they weren’t good enough at it.

Matou village already had its own ritual association, also taught by the Houshan Daoists; this group was then a *fosihui*, performing only the vocal liturgy, not *shengguan* music. Like many of the clergy we found above, the Houshan Daoists got the Matou villagers to learn as there weren’t enough ritual performers among

the temple priests to meet the demand for folk ritual. The new recruits then took part in rituals with the Daoists, and also with their own village association.

While Wei was learning at the temple in the early 1930s, the abbot (*dangjia*) was called Master Cui. Wei's master **Liang Jiaozhong** (c1899–1980), a Matou villager, knew the *Houtu scroll* well, and played all the melodic instruments, specializing in the *sheng*. Liang found it impossible to stay on in the temple around the time of land reform, so he settled back in Matou and got married. Liang kept a copy of the *Houtu scroll*, but by the time Matou villagers tried to copy it around 1981, it was so decrepit that they were only able to recopy the first volume.

Liang Jiaozhong had himself learnt the *shengguan* music from the Houshan Daoist **Lu Jiaorong**. Lu had become a priest at the Xianggongmiao temple¹³ in Yixian town, but 'did something wrong' and was driven off by the gentry families of Yixian, ending up in the Houshan temple. He too could play all the melodic instruments, and made a copy of the temple's old *shengguan* score. Lu Jiaorong eventually left the clergy, also marrying and settling in Matou; he died before Liberation, leaving the score to a relative, who handed it on to Wei Guoliang. This was only one of the scores of the Houshan Daoists. Other Daoists from the *jiao* generation were **Zhou Jiaoshun**, who died on the mountain, and **Chen Jiaolai**.

Liang Jiaozhong's ritual master on Houshan was **Lu Hekuan**; son of a rich family in Matou, he died before Liberation, and only performed the vocal liturgy. As Wei Guoliang reminded us, the Longmen Quanzhen generational poem for the 16th to 20th generations went *he jiao yong yuan ming* 合教永圓明, so Lu Hekuan was 16th generation, Liang Jiaozhong 17th, and the Yong generation 18th; Wei himself, though not a priest, was known as Yongliang (cf. p.88 above).

Villagers recalled **Zhang Yongqing**, who came from Pingshan county quite far south in Hebei, and played the *guanzi*. He and **Jiang Yongfu** (who played all the *shengguan* instruments) often performed rituals with Wei Guoliang and the Matou association. Yongqing, along with the young **Yu Yonglin**, left the clergy and got married sometime after the Japanese invasion. Villagers also mentioned three Daoists from Henan province: **Liu Yongao** (b. c1929, a young Daoist who came to Houshan at the age of 12), **Yongtai**, and **Yonghui**. (Unlike the grand *shifang conglin* temples of Beijing and Shanghai, which trained priests from a wide area, most priests from the smaller temples whose origin I could ascertain were local,¹⁴ so it seems unusual for them to come from so far away.) Liang Jiaozhong's nephew (and a 1991 notice I saw posted on the mountain in 1993) also recalled a priest called Mimao (don't ask me where the *mi* came from), who died in 1957.

As Wei Guoliang reminded us, banditry was rife in the Yixian area before the Japanese invaded.¹⁵ The bandits kidnapped people for ransom: apart from

¹³ A unique name in my experience of north China; I don't dare surmise on any connection with distant south Fujian, where Xianggong is the popular name for the marionette god Tiandu yuanshuai (Ruizendaal 2006).

¹⁴ Cf. old Beijing, Goossaert 2007: 87–8, and above e.g. §5.1.

¹⁵ Cf. Jones 2004: 64–5.

seizing people with money, they extorted cash from the Daoists, driving some of them away. When the Japanese invaded, the bandits were enrolled against them, and some of the temples were damaged in the fighting. In Liujing and several other villages, people pointed out that the Japanese, themselves Buddhists, didn't interfere with the activities of the *foshihui*. Still, some Daoists fled the fighting, and fewer returned to Houshan after the Japanese had been defeated.

In 1945 Yongqing carried the soul pennant at the funeral of another Houshan Daoist, **Liu Jiaohai**, not an instrumentalist. This funeral must have been a tense affair. Jiaohai had been executed by the 8th Route Army; he was a cousin of the Nationalist county magistrate Zhao Yukun, whom they executed the following year. Another Houshan Daoist, **Nan Jiaofang**, was also executed by the Communists: he 'kept talking obstinately'.

The civil war and the increasing power of the Communists exacerbated priests' anxieties about remaining in the clergy. According to the pamphlet, there were still some Daoists on the mountain after Liberation, but that they soon 'left'. To be sure, the pre-Liberation period was also disruptive: the bandits and the Japanese had already done a lot of the Communist regime's work for them. In 1956 the county government sent a Buddhist monk up the mountain to look after the temples; he died in the Cultural Revolution. Liujing villagers also recalled a Tibeto-Mongol Lama looking after the temple in the 1950s; he starved to death during the famine around 1960, and was buried on the mountain.

But despite the disappearance of priests, their ritual practice was perpetuated – now performed only by amateur village associations, bolstered in Matou by former priests like Liang Jiaozhong who had returned to ostensibly lay life.

9.3 The local ritual network

Until the 1940s the main temples related to Houshan were around Matou, the village at the foot of the mountain, and Liujing, the next settlement just south on the way towards the county-town. Both had old amateur ritual associations which restored early in the 1980s as the Houtu cult revived.

The fortunes of the Houtu cult centred on Houshan are closely linked to those of the nearest village **Matou**. Its *foshihui*, also known as *yinyuehui* (the usage seemed flexible, whether or not they used vocal liturgy alone or added *shengguan* too), though now much reduced, has long been closely linked with the temple Daoists.

As we saw, Matou villager Wei Guoliang (b. c1914) was a senior ritual specialist, heir to the tradition of the Houshan Daoists. Having spent some of the Cultural Revolution looking after the mountain, he did so again after the production brigades disbanded early in the 1980s. He read several scriptures in this period, learning ones that he had not previously mastered. In the late 1980s, a friend suggested to Wei that he go to the Baiyunguan temple in Beijing to take Daoist examinations there, so that he could become an accredited resident priest at the Houshan temples. Wei passed the exams, and was given Daoist robes, but

after returning to Matou he decided not to pursue it – he didn’t have the heart to get involved in all the necessary fawning to the local authorities.

By the 1990s Wei was leading a tranquil life tending sheep from his house in the foothills above the village. It was always edifying and fun to see him. Proud of his Daoist skills, he felt alienated by the corruption lately surrounding the Houshan cult. He patiently fielded our incessant questions, while exclaiming with his infectious chortle, ‘You can’t collect the scriptures all in one go!’ (*qujing buneng ququan* 取經不能取全). Only after many visits did he became anxious that I might be trying to ‘steal’ his ritual in order to perform funerals in England; I tried to reassure him that the Houshan liturgy might not go down so well there, even if I could master it and train up a group.

By the 1990s, Wei’s son (b. c1941) and the son of his Daoist ‘brother’ (*shixiong*) Liang Xiyou were taking part in the village ritual association. Though Wei Guoliang himself often took part too, he was disparaging of the association’s abilities.

Wei had only managed to keep the old *gongche* score of the Daoists – a valuable source, of which we made a copy. He had copied from memory many of the funerary texts they now recited, including *yankou* and *guandeng* volumes. He recalled that the village scriptures used to include *Houtu scroll* and *Ten Kings scroll*. Now they were all gone – the Houshan Daoists’ copy of the *Houtu scroll* had been taken off by Liang Shuming, he said.

Liang Shuming was another character in Matou. Keeper of a small (and unauthorized) shrine in the village, he was not a ritual specialist, but in the 1980s he began going round villages in the area and buying up their old precious scrolls, often at great expense. Any money he spent had been a shrewd investment, since he was now charging villagers in the area to let them copy the scrolls – he was doing good business since people were keen to revive their ritual traditions. He had at least two copies of the *Houtu scroll* when we stayed with him in 1995. His whole family was busy making and selling clay fertility dolls, figurines made of *gaoliang*, and paper for curing illness. As an independent operator, he had a troubled relationship with the village brigade and the local police.

Liujing is properly a township (*zhen*), capital of the district, and nominally divided into four villages. It is an important stage on the route to Houshan. Older villagers recalled at least ten temples there until the 1950s. Though no-one recalled any ‘upper cloister’ of the Houshan temple there, the three Buddhist monks who staffed the ‘great temple’ Tongquansi were also responsible for a small Houtu ‘travelling palace’ (*xinggong*) next to it. There were many Buddhist as well as Daoist temples all around Houshan. Unlike the Daoist-transmitted Matou association, that of Liujing (again, they used the names *foshihui* and *yinyuehui* interchangeably) claims to be ‘Buddhist-transmitted’ – Wei Guoliang noted that their *yankou* and other rituals were different from that of Matou. The association represents all four villages that comprise Liujing; each of the four *guanshi* leaders comes from one of the villages. Their scriptures used to include precious scrolls to Houtu, the Ten Kings (for funerals), Guanyin, and Foye. Their *huitou* since the 1980s, Zhang Dejin (b. c1936), was a generous and knowledgeable man. Though

quite deaf, he was a fine ritual specialist, having studied with the respected Zhang Guohua, who was also one of Wei Guoliang's circle of ritual performers.

Liujing also had its own version of the *Houtu scroll* and performed it until the Cultural Revolution. Their liturgists restored in the 1980s, recopying ritual manuals from the memory of the senior Gao Changlin. In 1995 Zhang Dejin was hoping to relearn the *Houtu scroll*, having copied part of it from Liang Shuming, but he had made no progress by 1996.

On 1st moon 8th until the 1950s, the association used to lead the inauguration (*kaiyin*) of Houtu, making a tour of the village temples. But the centrepiece of the Liujing New Year's rituals is an unusually fine lantern maze (known as *dengzhen* or *dengchang*) on 1st moon 15th, reminiscent of the Revolving the Nine Bends in Shaanbei (§5.1). A high central pole (*fandeng* or *tiandeng*) stands in the midst of a maze of small lanterns on poles linked by ropes, through which the association leads a procession. We attended this ritual in 1989, and they were still doing it in 1999. In a nearby 'lantern tent' are hung the pantheon and other god paintings. For their observances for the 3rd moon and other dates, see below.

A cluster of villages nearby had *foshihui* groups of vocal liturgists reciting precious scrolls and other manuals. At the junction of the road leading to Liujing and on towards Matou and the mountain, **Lijiafen** had an active *foshihui* of ten liturgists aged between 73 and 45, whom we visited in 1996. They did not use *shengguan*. Mainly performing for funerals, for which they still recited the *Ten Kings scroll*, they had preserved a range of funeral manuals, as well as the *Demon-queller scroll* (known as *Fumo juan* or *Laoye juan*) and *Houtu scroll* (see pp.245, 248). They also had some of their old paintings, and had recently had more made. They also used to observe the Houtu festival in the village, reciting the *Houtu scroll*. They still recited it in the early 1950s, perhaps even after 1955. They later lost it, and it was not necessarily the same as the new incomplete copy they had recently made from Li Yongshu in Baoquan. Four young men had begun learning in 1963, when there was a strong core of senior performers. Until then they also used to do occasional exorcisms (*jingzhai, anzhai*), reciting the *Longhu jing*,¹⁶ for large exorcisms they also performed Beholding the Lanterns and *yankou*.

Another important ritual centre nearby was **Baoquan** just east of Houshan, where there were several Daoist and Buddhist temples until the 1930s. The Yuquanguan temple was large and ancient, but was abandoned by the 1920s.¹⁷ Still, ritual traditions remained strong in the area. In West Baoquan, the fine vocal liturgist Li Yongshu (b. c1926) was a great authority on the recitation of funeral liturgy and precious scrolls.

His teens were eventful. He attended private school (*sishu*) until the Japanese invasion, and began learning the scriptures in 1939 in the village's Daoist-transmitted *foshihui*, studying with Zhang Tai, a priest in one of the village

¹⁶ Rarely mentioned in north China, and not part of ordinary popular village-wide ritual. See e.g. a Hongyang version, Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.6, pp.131–55.

¹⁷ Cf. Gong Li 2007: 241–3.

temples. The senior generation then had about eight liturgists, and they knew of at least three generations before them. Li recalled five other performers from his own generation. Next year, as a leading figure in the Communist Youth League, he helped demolish the village temples, but he kept studying the scriptures with his Daoist master Zhang Tai (who lived to the age of 90), and by the time he joined the Communist Party in 1942, aged 17 *sui*, he had mastered their complex melodic patterns; he had even found time to get married the year before. He intermittently held leading village posts under Maoism, only being suspended once for three months for his ritual activities. Whereas other *foshihui* in the area are amateur, Li was the only performer we met who plainly made a living from his vocal liturgy, both under Maoism and since the reforms. Among his scriptures was a *Foshi zanben*.

Both **South Baima** and nearby **Kuangshan** had Nainaimiao temples to Houtu, and had ritual associations; both performed the *Houtu scroll* in the village. Before the Cultural Revolution, both villages had *foshihui*, reciting a complete set of precious scrolls, but only the Baima group had restored, and only with *shengguan*; they now climbed the mountain on 7th moon 15th.

Laoping nearby (just across the county border in Laishui) consists of four villages. Elders recalled ‘three Buddhist temples and one Daoist belvedere’ (*sansiyiguan*), but a shrine to Houtu in the south village was only one of several small shrines. The east and south villages still had active *foshihui* in 1996. The east village group went back long before living memory, and used to have both liturgists and *shengguan*. As well as a copy of the *Houtu scroll* (which they claimed to recite on Houshan, if only in part), they also recited the funerary *Demon-queller scroll* and *Ten Kings scroll*, as well as items like ‘The Twenty-four Pious Ones’, Greater and Lesser versions of ‘The Song of the Skeletons’ (Appendix 2 below), and mantras like *Guiku zhenyan* and *Sanjing zhenyan*, but they had all been lost, as had a full set of ritual paintings. They used to accompany villagers to Houshan to pledge vows and burn petitions in the 3rd moon, and also sang hymns there on 7th moon 15th. On these visits to Houshan the group was known as Spring Incense Association (*chunxianghui*) – ‘burning spring and autumn incense’ were common terms for the Houshan visit in the 3rd and 7th moons.

In another typical tale of tenuous transmission, after Liberation, ‘the authorities didn’t interfere, but life was no good’, so the *foshihui* and *yinyuehui* were struggling. Du Jinhe (b. c1934) went off to the army in 1956, and when he came home in 1961 became commander of the village militia. Creatively, he used their drill time to train new recruits for both liturgy and *shengguan*. Of course, all too soon they had to stop again in the Four Cleanups, but as in many villages, this brief period of activity in the early 1960s laid the foundation for senior members upon the revival in the 1980s.¹⁸ They had now restored enough of their old ritual to perform funerals.

Still in Laoping, the south village also had an active ‘Daoist-transmitted’ *foshihui* without *shengguan*. The leading liturgist was known as *zhangjiaode*, a

¹⁸ Cf. Gaoluo, Jones 2004: 135–45.

term we also heard in Shanxi (p.66). They too once had precious scrolls to Houtu, the Ten Kings, and Demon-queller, and had recopied them recently; they also recited *Dizang dajing* (for funerals) and *Tangsanjing* (?). They said the *Houtu scroll* was to be recited for 1st moon 15th, as in Gaoluo, though they no longer did so, and also for exorcisms (*anzhai*), which they still sometimes did. They too had many god paintings. But their recitation was of a lesser quality than some other associations.

In **Yixian county-town**, according to Wei Guoliang, the major Daoist temple for folk ritual was the Laoyemiao (Guandimiao); Wei said it oversaw the Houshan temple. He recalled that the abbot was called ‘Old Fang’ 老方; he really understood ritual, played all the melodic and percussion instruments, and was a good organizer. Old Fang stayed in the temple until he died in the Cultural Revolution. His disciple Zongyuan, who also lived in the temple, only performed the vocal liturgy; he died before the Cultural Revolution. They used to make up a band together (*dabanr*) with Wei Guoliang and the other Matou ritual specialists; they were ‘like one family’.

We found some rare historical clues to the local Daoist network in the grounds of a temple in the south of Yixian county-town, the Longxingguan, a Heavenly Masters (Tianshi) Zhengyi temple founded in the Tang dynasty. Derelict since the 1920s, all that remained of it by the 1990s were some important steles, including one from 1351 (Zhizheng 10th year) giving a genealogy of 30 generations of Heavenly Masters in the area including on Hongyai (Houshan), and another stele from 1443 (Zhengtong 8th year) listing many local Daoist temples.¹⁹ The 1351 stele adduces the Celestial Heart (Tianxin) Zhengyi lineage.²⁰ Thus the Daoist network around Houshan long predated Quanzhen lineages.

Just southeast of Yixian town, there was a popular ‘great temple’ to Houtu at **East Yubu** 東茹堡 (local pronunciation; *bu* is common, but *yu* was new on me) in Qiaotou district. The Mawuzhuang association (see p.187) used to pay a visit there, as well as to Houshan in the 3rd moon; Yubu had its own ritual association. Still further east, though we heard of no ritual specialists in Laishui county-town before 1949, many temples in the Laishui countryside had a small staff of resident priests. The Houtumiao temple in **Situ** village in Laishui was a ‘lower cloister’ of the Houshan temple; when Daoist priests from the Situ temple died, they were buried on the mountain. Wei Guoliang told us that the Houshan Daoist Chen Jiaolai served as abbot (*dangjiade*) there. Villagers in nearby North Ruhe recalled that their predecessors in the association performed for the Situ temple fair on

¹⁹ Both painstakingly copied by Zhang Zhenqiao and reproduced in his 2002: 289–93. A better-known stele in the grounds bears a rare copy of the *Daodejing* from 738 CE, with annotations by the Xuanzong emperor. For the Houshan temples, few of the steles lying around the mountain were legible by the 1990s; the local pamphlet (Houtu 1988: 40) mentions a stele for the repair of the Shouyangyuan dated 1503 (Hongzhi 16th year).

²⁰ For which see ET 989–93.

2nd moon 2nd;²¹ but by the 1940s the temple was disused and Situ's own ritual association had ceased activity.

Of course, temples to Houtu were only in a tiny minority of those in the area; and while few temples were able to muster a band to perform folk rituals, there were many old amateur ritual associations in the villages which did so, and which worshipped Houtu. Some villages had a Houtu temple, a Houtu painting, or a Houtu scroll, but didn't make the Houshan pilgrimage. East Wenquan (in Laishui) had a Houtu painting and a Nainaimiao temple, but no *Houtu scroll*, and they didn't make the pilgrimage. Village associations that performed the scroll are discussed below. By now, we are outside the area directly transmitted from the Houshan Daoists; village groups had acquired their ritual skills from a variety of local temples.

9.4 Houshan before and after Liberation

Most villages making the Houshan pilgrimage before 1937 were represented by performing associations. Among a hundred or so recalled by elderly villagers, we listed at least forty ritual associations (*yinyuehui*, *foshihui*). Liujing villagers recalled eight to ten *yinyuehui* usually coming for 3rd moon 15th. While only the prestigious ritual groups were allowed to pay homage at the temples on the mountain itself, many villages were also represented by other associations (*huahui*) that performed at the foot of the mountain. The associations were busy making ritual greetings to each other (*baihui*).

In the 3rd moon, apart from going to Houshan, village associations took their Houtu palanqins on tour all around their parishes on a territorial tour called **Receiving the Palanquin** (*jiejia*). Last observed in 1958, it has not been restored. Our notes suggest that every parish (*she*), a group of several villages around a central 'great temple', had its own set of 'eight great associations' (*badahui*) to accompany the palanquin. Every village along the route set up tea tents and hung out paintings of Houtu to receive them. Among these groups were those for bamboo poles (*fanhui*, *zhongfanhui*, *zhufanhui*), great drums (*daguhui*), lion dancing (*shizihui*), and *yangge*. Only 'old associations' (*laohui*) counted; groups like *chahui* (pitchforks), *gaoqiaohui* (stilts), and *xiaochehui* (small cart) might attend, but didn't count among the eight. Several opera troupes also performed on stages around the foot of the mountain. In Liujing almost every family had to host an association (not necessarily a *yinyuehui*); the Liujing *yinyuehui* made formal exchanges with other *yinyuehui* mainly after the 15th when they were less busy.²²

²¹ A day said to be sacred to Houtu in Beijing in 1931, according to Goodrich (1991: 168), but otherwise unknown to me, apart from the (formerly) common 'dragon raising its head' (*longtaitou*) festival.

²² Our copious notes from many villages are less than consistent on the precise details of either the *jiejia* or *badahui*, but Gong Li (2007: 274–7) only blurs the picture with myth.

No-one mentioned any major liturgy/ritual being held either on the mountain or below, though Wei Guoliang said that the Daoists used to perform the *yankou* (*shishike*) on 7th moon 15th.

As we saw, despite the disappearance of the Houshan priests, the ritual practice of the Daoists was perpetuated after Liberation, and the Houshan pilgrimage, too, continued right until the eve of the Cultural Revolution, though large-scale mobilizations with ritual groups were impossible. Despite the political climate, belief in Houtu remained unshakable. Several villagers in the area know, and believe, the story that Houtu rescued a brigade of the Chinese army during the Korean War. A Laishui couple told us that during the Vietnam war, a brigade was in trouble when an old lady, an incarnation of Houtu, appeared before them, giving them each a *mantou* steamed bun, after which they were never again hungry, and the danger disappeared.

Several villagers recalled that small groups of pilgrims continued to visit the mountain throughout the hardships of the Great Leap Forward, the famine, and even the Cultural Revolution. One elderly Matou villager recalled, amazingly, that there were more people climbing the mountain in 1958 than in 1995, praying for sons or to be cured of illness. He didn't recall anyone dying in the famine of 1960, but many were swollen with hunger. They managed to plant vegetables on the mountain despite the state policies down below, and pilgrims still used to offer grain to Houtu, filling the temple on the mountain.

But Houshan was not immune from vandalism. On 20th July 1966, Red Guards from the First and Second Secondary Schools in Yixian town climbed the mountain to pull down the statues. Gong Li tells the story of a statue of Houtu.²³ Having smashed up the main temple, the revolutionaries wanted to knock down the statue of Houtu, but a dozen strong men were unable to topple it with ropes all day. At first this was attributed to the miraculous power of the goddess, but later it was discovered that the builders had ingeniously used a sturdy old cypress tree as its foundation. All over China, modern folktales are common of religious artefacts miraculously resisting the destruction of the Red Guards, or of terrible consequences befalling those who attack the gods,²⁴ but this one has a nicely rationalistic denouement. I hate to spoil the story further, but they came back next day and used dynamite, destroying the buildings too.

During the 3rd-moon temple fair, Red Guards and troops blocked off the main track up the mountain to stop people going to offer incense, but pilgrims still climbed by minor paths. Most pilgrims brought grain for Houtu, and when they were stopped, they left it in the riverbed, which had dried up in 1963, reckoning that it would count as an offering to Houtu. During the Cultural Revolution the Matou authorities sent Wei Guoliang to look after the mountain and its forests.

Cf. the *jiejia* of Qingxushan, also with *badahui* (Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Baoding vol., pp.344–7).

²³ Gong Li 1990: 134.

²⁴ See e.g. Chau 2006: 69–72.

9.5 Recent observances on Houshan

Worshippers began coming to Houshan more openly after the end of the Cultural Revolution. The Matou and Liujing associations started making the climb again in 1981. Apart from the 3rd moon, other major days are the 15th of the 1st, 7th, and 10th moons, as well as 7th moon 1st; on the 1st and 15th of every moon, mediums attend with their disciples whom they have healed, and pilgrims pledge and fulfil vows. The mediums, with their disciples, also climb the mountain on 12th moon 29th, staying there till 1st moon 3rd; on 1st moon 3rd and 8th, local ritual associations make the climb, or used to. The Liujing association also climbs the mountain on 10th moon 15th.

Most villages in the region hold quite small-scale calendrical rituals – elsewhere I have given a fairly ‘thick’ description of the New Year’s rituals in Gaoluo nearby.²⁵ A huge temple fair like that of Houshan is of a very different order; over 100,000 people were said to have attended the 3rd-moon fair in 1993, though numbers fell somewhat thereafter. It is worth describing the Houshan temple fair, just to illustrate the paucity of liturgy/ritual in north China temple fairs, by contrast with the southeast. The main festival takes place around the 3rd moon 15th; pilgrims begin to arrive from the 1st, but the busiest time is from the 13th to the 18th – Houtu’s main day is actually the 18th.

The 3rd moon is a busy time for agriculture, when one might suppose that villagers should hardly be able to afford to spend time on pilgrimage. Indeed, this may be one reason why fewer associations attend today, and why old people and women are most often to be seen there. It also shows the strength of religious devotion in the old society, that so many associations could abandon the fields for over two weeks in April in the hope of divine blessing. Indeed, it is also around Easter time, when many of the Catholic villages in the area are busy with their own rituals and pilgrimages – and the police busy in trying to restrict them. Since the 1980s, many pilgrim groups once again attend Houshan, but, in keeping with the loss of community spirit that has accompanied economic privatization, they are smaller, rarely large groups representing the whole village and led by an association; thus association leaders lament that it is no longer possible to mobilize a suitably large-scale visit.

In place of the major rituals for Receiving the Palanquin described above, Liujing village now only holds a small private ceremony for Houtu on the evening of 3rd moon 1st, which we witnessed in 1995. The four *guanshi* association leaders met at the house of Zhang Dejin. He had written petitions, which they placed in large yellow envelopes. They then hung out the beautiful pantheon, burnt incense, kowtowed in turn, and burnt the petitions. The petitions read:

²⁵ Jones 2004: 270–306.

Liujing village, north of Yizhou city in Baodingfu, Zhili
 faithful disciples, the combined *guanshi* of the four Liujing villages
 all bow before thee
 and respectfully request
 the god tablet (*paiwei*) of Chengtian xiaofa Houtu huangdi
 the combined *guanshi* of the whole village having specially prepared
 lanterns, currency,
 offerings of pure tea and fruit
 as we kneel and kowtow
 [date in old calendar equivalent to] 1995, 3rd moon 1st day

The Liujing association didn't, and doesn't, climb Houshan on 3rd moon 15th because all the other associations went, so there was no room. Perhaps a more important reason is because other associations and pilgrims needed to 'rest their feet' (*xiejiao*) and so they were busy renting out rooms and looking after them.

In 1995 we spent the period from the 11th to the 15th of the 3rd moon on Houshan.²⁶ Once we turn left off the main road north and set off towards Liujing, the whole route is bustling and chaotic. Buses and minibuses jam the roads, and stalls line the roadsides. Liujing is already jampacked. An acrobatic troupe is performing, with its brass band, in a marquee in the square. The PA system broadcasts pop songs relentlessly. Zhang Dejin has set up a tea tent with the Houtu painting, but this is a rare reminder of formal religion. Continuing towards Houshan, a vast car-park has been created in Matou in the disused riverbed. People wear red ribbons with Houtu inscriptions hoping to be cured or blessed. Everywhere tea, food, incense, ribbons, clay dolls (for fertility), human or animal images made of *gaoliang* stalks and paper (for curing illness), cloth, ritual paper, and so on, are on sale; there is even a stall selling books and pamphlets about local myths and customs, run by our friend Gong Li (cf. p.166 n.4 above). Beggars, mostly disabled, line the whole route, and are very persistent, even intimidating bus drivers by lying in the road until they pay up; people climbing the first stage up the mountain run a gauntlet of beggars clinging imploringly to their legs.

The avarice and corruption of Matou and county officials are widely resented. Matou villagers sell admission tickets at the entrance to the mountain for 3 *yuan*, which is quite a lot for a poor peasant. Despite the crush, all agree that this year there are more stalls but fewer visitors. The consensus is that the Matou villagers are driving people away by demanding too much money, both for admission to the mountain and for the inflated prices of goods on sale during the fair. Some rival temples nearby are attracting some pilgrims too (see §9.6).

²⁶ Cf. Zhang Zhentao 2002: 288–309.

Mediums (known in this area as *mingren* or *xiangxiang*)²⁷ are the protagonists of worship on Houshan. Most of the regular mediums seem to have a deal with the Matou village committee. There was a big fuss on the 7th or 8th, when 103 mediums arrived en masse and refused to pay the admission price, pointing out, reasonably, that they were attracting donations to the temple. When the people on the gate were adamant, the mediums all went off in a mediumistic huff, and in front of Liang Shuming's little shrine at the foot of the mountain, they ostentatiously burnt the new costumes that had been destined for the Houtu images on the summit, making a huge bonfire, singing ritual songs as they did so.

Profits from the entrance fees are divided between the Yixian Tourist Board and Religious Affairs Bureau, the Matou village brigade, and the temple caretakers.²⁸ The temples on the mountain are being repaired by Matou villagers, supervised by the brigade. They complain there is not enough money to repair temples as well as before, but Wei Guoliang is scathing about the venial unscrupulous types in Matou. 'Now they climb the mountain not to revere the gods, but to fish for profit. They have a deal to look after the temples in exchange for some of the takings. There's quite enough money in donations to repair the temples, but it's all syphoned off by types like that.'

The Matou people are not entirely inflexible (or rational). During the 1995 fair a man tried to get in for free by claiming he was one of the Eight Immortals. Rather than exclaiming, 'Oh yeah, and I'm Chairman Mao! On yer bike matey!', they gave him a fair hearing, and he offered to reveal important events in the life of the Matou Party Secretary (himself son of the former Houshan Daoist Liang Jiaozhong!) by inspecting his footprint. When he did this most accurately, they not only let him onto the mountain for free, but treated him to a banquet at the brigade's expense on his return.

Apart from setting up stalls with drinks and snacks, many Matou villagers sell red cloth ribbons to bring good luck; some tie the ribbon around an afflicted part of their body. Wei Guoliang's son and his wife had made 3,000 of them in 1994, with an image of Houtu and an auspicious inscription. They hawked them up and down the mountain, and sold out almost at once, quickly getting another batch made.

While we are at the central temple, sixteen members of the Mawuzhuang association arrive, playing a fine *shengguan* suite in a side hall. Five *yinyuehui* made brief visits to the mountain in 1995; in 1996 we only heard of three. Apart from their own internal problems of mobilization, their dealings with the Matou mafia were uncomfortable, and they felt discouraged.

Other calendrical observances on Houshan are smaller in scale. The Matou and East Laoping associations climb the mountain on 7th moon 15th. On 7th moon 1st, the Liujing association is one of several which pay a visit to the mountain

²⁷ Cf. Jones 2004: 284–5. For the term *xiangtou*, cf. n.5 in Introduction to Part Three above.

²⁸ There is a fine literature on the modern involvement of the state in local temple fairs; see e.g. articles in Guo Yuhua 2000.

temples. They make the climb on 6th moon 30th, taking provisions, staying in the dilapidated former quarters of the Daoists on the mountain, and returning on the afternoon of 7th moon 2nd. In 1993 we joined them on the summit early in the morning of the 1st.

The main temple and its courtyard are occupied by female mediums and their disciples. We meet many mediums that day. A renowned 70-sui-old local medium known as Kang *dajie* has brought over 30 of her disciples, who come from quite a wide area: they, or their parents, have all been cured by her – or rather, as she points out, by Grandma (nainai, that is Houtu). As they kneel piously in the courtyard before the temple, Grandma, embodied by medium Kang, who is seated inside to the right of the Houtu statue (which is laden with clay doll effigies), sobs a series of songs, complaining that her temple is a wreck, so they must repair it and make new statues. As she tells us later, ‘It’s not me singing, it’s Grandma talking.’

Meanwhile the Liujing group has taken up position around the *shannen* gateway that leads from the steps up into the courtyard, and squatting informally, they begin to play their fine percussion suite. While they are playing, seven members of the Matou ritual association (without Wei Guoliang, and with only percussion, not *shengguan*, to accompany their hymns) arrive to pay homage to Houtu. They sing a fast hymn outside in front of the temple, and then go inside to make offerings. The mediums burn yellow costumes for Houtu in the incense burner before the temple. The Matou liturgists then sing another more solemn hymn inside the temple before the Houtu statue, with medium Kang now seated in silent anguished contemplation to its right. The Liujing association then plays a lengthy classic *shengguan* suite. Later the Matou liturgists play a percussion suite inside the temple, squatting to the left of the Houtu statue while a constant stream of pilgrims offer incense, and then they sing another hymn before the statue while the mediums and their disciples kneel. They then squat to the left, joining with the Liujing musicians to play a popular medley of pieces in a folk-song style, while the mediums burn petitions, wooden doll effigies, and large bundles of incense before the statue. Moving outside to the gateway, the musicians continue in this style.

Later, back in Matou, when I showed Wei Guoliang my video, he was, erm, somewhat critical of his fellow villagers’ choice of repertoire, coming out with a choice string of expletives surely not to be found in the *Daoist Canon*. They should first have sung the *Sanguiyi* from the *Houtu scroll*; and instead of singing *Foci guangda*, they sang *Da sanbao*, and only the first of three verses, at that – they don’t know the rest, he said contemptuously. The *shengguan* medley, needless to say, was totally wrong, both in style and repertoire. We might adduce this as just one of innumerable instances of the decline of ritual expertise and the ‘old rules’ (*lao guiju*) in modern times.

Back on the mountain, the mediums’ disciples have paid for the preparation of a large paper boat, with a god image inside. Around midday, putting the finishing touches in the Daoists’ former dwelling, the mediums animate the god image by smearing its eyes and body with egg yolk on a needle and five-colour thread. Medium Kang leads her disciples to the nearby temple of the Great Yang

(Taiyangdian) to Burn the Boat (*shaochuan*) – later Wei Guoliang points out that you shouldn't burn the boat on 7th moon 1st, only on the 15th!²⁹ The boat is for 'all the gods'; the Great Yang God (Taiyangfo, god of the sun) is 'the first great Buddha', and indispensable, since the sun illuminates all. Medium Kang had requested the Liujing *yinyuehui* to play for this ritual, and given them a sack of flour; when the Matou association plays too, she gives both groups four cartons of cigarettes. They play *shengguan* and percussion interludes on procession as the boat is carried to the open space before the temple; while the boat is burnt, the liturgists sing a hymn, the disciples kneeling (Illustration 9).



Illustration 9 Mediums (led by medium Kang, front centre) and their disciples pray before they burn boat, accompanied by members of the Matou ritual association (top left), Houshan, 7th moon 1993.

* * *

Despite the far greater proportion of ritual associations (as opposed to mere pilgrim groups with more secular *huahui*) formerly attending Houshan than at many Hebei temple fairs (like those of Miao Fengshan, Fanzhuang, or Qingxushan), the liturgical/ritual dimension on Houshan was probably hardly more complex

²⁹ Propitiatory boat-burning rituals to avert pestilence are common elsewhere in China (Katz 1995; photo, Dean 1988: 10), and Goossaert (2007: 259) cites it for imperial Beijing, but this is the only occurrence I have found in north China.

before the 1930s than in the 1990s. These notes may suggest that an unholy alliance between county authorities, Matou villagers, and spirit mediums left little room for the ritual associations or large-scale liturgy. Ironically, the more that local authorities sought to legitimize a temple as a recognized ‘site for religious activities’, the less likely they were to cede part of their power to Daoist priests; the necessary accommodation with local government often seems to engender only the less ‘classical’, more ‘superstitious’ practices of popular religion. This may be a common pattern explaining the apparent scarcity of formal liturgy/ritual at many northern temple fairs today.³⁰ Such temple fairs are dominated by pilgrim groups whose only trace of liturgy will be to sing a few hymns before the main god statues; even the ritual groups that used to make the Houshan pilgrimage did little more than that.

Notionally, the temple committee could invite one or two groups of Daoists to perform a *jiao*, as in south Hebei; or a suitably complex sequence of rituals, as for the smaller-scale temple fairs in north Shanxi, where occupational Daoists and shawm bands are always hired, as for funerals. Or in the absence of occupational Daoists, they could invite a local amateur ritual association to perform a sequence of rituals, as they do for calendrical rituals in their home village. But for such large-scale temple fairs they don’t; there is no central ritual focus. Mediums take part, and local village groups of pilgrims, but the latter don’t bring any complex liturgy of their own.

Mediums on Houshan and elsewhere doubtless have a long history too, presumably long predating any Daoist activity on the mountain, and their activities are eminently worthy of study. Formal liturgy and mediums coexist happily in southeast China. Mediums in north China work largely independently of any liturgists; on Houshan the only improvised contact came when the mediums requested the *yinyuehui* to play a *shengguan* piece for their own rituals. It is not that mediums come to replace liturgists: they are (and were) widely active, irrespective of whether there are ritual specialists available in an area. They work the temple fairs in north Shanxi, independently of the household Daoists there; and in Shaanbei, where liturgists are largely absent.

9.6 Other Houtu temples

Just south of Yixian and Laishui, Dingxing county also belongs to the sphere of the Houtu cult. Many of their ritual associations used to go to Houshan, and some still do. As we saw, while several villages in Yixian, Laishui, and Dingxing had temples to Houtu before the 1950s, they were only a tiny minority of temples in the area. But the Houtu temples in Dingxing are independent of Houshan, and more Houtu temples have been built or rebuilt there since around 1990 than in

³⁰ Cf. also Chau 2006, for a Shaanbei temple.

the other counties. Perhaps as the most distant county from Houshan within the immediate environs of the Houtu cult, alternative sites are more in demand there.

The main Houtu temple in Dingxing with an early history is the Houtu huangdi miao in West Xin'gao village (Zucundian district). Restored in 1993, it has competed with Houshan for pilgrims since at least the 18th century. The old temple and opera stage were destroyed in 1958, but two steles survive. One is dated 1790 (Qianlong 55th year), and gives further dates for recent temple repairs. The other stele commemorates the rebuilding of the temple a few decades later; it also claims Xin'gao itself as Houtu's old home – not Upper Fangcun in Xingtang county, as most other traditions have it. The restoration of the temple had been approved at provincial level, and as we saw (p.89), they had established links with the Baiyunguan temple in Beijing.

We visited several other smaller Houtu temples in Yixian and Dingxing, as well as one in Zhuozhou further east. At least one temple had been built recently for a celebrated elderly local medium whose healing was inspired by Houtu. But since these temples had no apparent connection with local liturgical/ritual groups, I shall resist telling their interesting stories here.³¹ (For another one, see Zhoujiazhuang, p.189 below.)

There are several Houtu temples in Xushui county, and some village groups there made the Houshan pilgrimage. Others went to Langyashan to their west, back in Yixian, which they called Xiding, the 'Western Summit'³² for 1st moon 18th. Cangu is the main deity at the Langyashan temples, but Houtu and Wusheng laomu are also popular there.

That seems to be the main catchment area of Houshan, but the Houtu cult may be more widespread than my evidence so far suggests.³³

³¹ See Zhang Zhentao 2002: 309–13. Following the founding of the Hebei Daoist association, the Baiyunguan had also supported the Houtu temple in Zhuozhou, a very recent and out-of-the-way building, as well as another temple in Zhuozhou (Overmyer and Fan 2006–7, Baoding vol., 446–58). How they were choosing such sites is another interesting theme beyond my scope here.

³² Not, of course, the same as the Western Summit for Beijing residents (Naquin 2000: 518–20).

³³ What of Houtu's supposed birthplace, Upper Fangcun village in Xingtang county further south in Hebei? Though not necessarily linked to Houtu, 3rd moon 15th is the date for many temple fairs, such as Cangyanshan in Luancheng county southeast of Shijiazhuang (Duara 1988: 122). Further afield I yet have few leads. The Houtu cult may be quite common in Shanxi. Johnson (2010: 31; cf. Huang and Wang 1994: 16) mentions the Houtu temple fair in Renzhuang, Quwo county, south of Linfen, held on 3rd moon 18th. Among several Houtu temples further southwest is one in Miaoqian village, Wanrong county (cf. DBK opera 396–7), as well as one right on the riverbank dividing Shanxi from Shaanxi. Other modern sources tend to list Houtu temples as mere historical relics, offering no clues on ritual practice, but presumably where there is a temple, there is some kind of cult; e.g. Jiexiu county has a major Houtu temple, built in 1318 (cf. Ma Shutian 1990: 333–5). For Shaanxi,

9.7 Other ritual groups

If Houshan may sound like a rather typical Hebei temple fair with sparse liturgical content, the main liturgical activities in the area were smaller-scale practices within the villages, both calendrical and funerary. Having already noted the groups in the immediate vicinity of Houshan (§9.3), we can fill out our picture by listing some more associations a little further afield, while keeping the Houshan connection in mind. They were all ‘old associations’, transmitted ‘long ago’ either from temple priests or monks, or else from other nearby village associations that had done so. Some had long since stopped making the pilgrimage to Houshan, but observed the Houtu festival on 3rd moon 15th within their own village.

Most lively of these in the 1990s was perhaps **Shenshizhuang** southwest of Yixian county-town, a large village with three separate *yinyuehui*, serving the south, west, and east sections of the village, all setting up altars to Houtu. The current older generation had never made a formal pilgrimage to Houshan, but the previous generation had done so. They used to have many scriptures, including a *Houtu scroll*, but by 1999 they had only restored their *shengguan* music. We observed the Shenshizhuang ceremonies for 3rd moon 15th in 1996. The three associations had all set up altars to Houtu, with veils donated by villagers fulfilling vows; though only two of them had Houtu paintings, they all have inscriptions to Chifeng chengtian xiaofa Houtu huangdi. The *shengguan* ensemble played to the side of the altar, while worshippers (mainly middle-aged and old women) offered incense, pledging and fulfilling vows at the burner in the courtyard in front of the altar, to the sound of the big gong.

Nearby, the **East Baijian** association also performed vocal liturgy for funerals and recited precious scrolls. We first met them on Houshan in 1995. The association had taken part in a rain ceremony for the village in 1994, rather than paying the county authorities’ exorbitant irrigation tax; villagers recalled more furtive rain ceremonies in 1962 and 1964, without the association.

Just east of Houshan, the **North Qiaotou** association, a group of Hunyuan sectarian ancestry, was active until the Cultural Revolution, and restored keenly in 1992, led by senior liturgist Yang Chun'an (b. c1921). They used to make the visit to Houshan in the 3rd moon for the palanquin rituals (see above). On 3rd moon 16th the association of nearby Shanbei village came to Qiaotou and they went together to Putou in Laishui, where there was a big temple to Houtu’s sisters. The Shanbei and Qiaotou associations carried the palanquin together, and the Qiaotou ritual specialists used to recite the *Houtu scroll* at the Foyedian temple in Shanbei. Until the early 1960s the Qiaotou association also climbed Houshan on the 15th of the 7th and 10th moons. Liang Shuming was now letting them copy his *Houtu scroll*, but it is not the same as their old one. They also used to perform the *Guanyin (Baiyi) scroll* and *Demon-queller scroll* (Appendix 3).

a Laishui villager told me he had heard of a version of the *Houtu scroll* from Huashan; Shaanxi acquaintances tell me that there are Houtu temples in Hanzhong.

They also used to have paintings of Houtu, Dizang, the Ten Kings, the four great Jin'gang, the eight immortals, as well as coloured lanterns and two large tent cloths. On our first visit in 1995 they had just had a new Houtu painting made, as usual entitled Chifeng chengtian xiaofa Houtu huangdi; they were now performing rituals for the 15th of the 1st, 3rd, and 10th moons, and were keen to go as an association to Houshan again – though, like other associations, they were disturbed by the Matou villagers' insistence on the full admission charge.

Their funeral liturgy was quite elaborate, with a *yankou* manual, and a manual including many hymns and other texts, titled *Kaitan*, *Xinjing*, *Erfo*[zhou] and *Puanzhou* – standard ritual texts in the area. They also preserve a *Foshuo taishang hunyuan dengke* volume from 1906 (Guangxu 32nd year) (Illustration 10), bearing the name of the village Guandimiao temple. The association used to do exorcisms (*jingzhai*), and Yang was still sometimes invited to do a simple ritual on his own, singing a hymn and the long mantra *Puanzhou*. Their ritual activities had not been affected by the presence of an army barracks in the district.



Illustration 10 Page from *Foshuo taishang hunyuan dengke* manual, North Qiaotou, 1906. This is from the 16 *xiandeng* Offering Lanterns segments; the last two lines (on the left) invoke Piaogao, ancestor of the Hunyuan sect.

Still in Qiaotou district, the **Mawuzhuang** association had learnt from a Buddhist monk in the temple at Qiliting nearby. They had a group of a dozen senior members when 70 (!) teenage boys began learning in 1946; they managed to learn *shengguan* (an exceptionally well-preserved classical repertoire), and were about to start learning the scriptures, but were prevented by the outbreak of warfare. They still made the Houshan pilgrimage in the 1990s.

Moving further southeast into **Laishui** county, we visited the **Kongcun** association in 1993. They were originally a *foshihui* with vocal liturgists only, adding *shengguan* later. They used to recite the *Houtu scroll* for 3rd moon 15th, but when they went to Houshan, they were represented only by the *shengguan* musicians. The association had tried to make the Houshan pilgrimage during the Japanese occupation, but failed. They went soon after they began restoring the temples there in the 1980s, but had not been as an association recently; indeed, the group was now barely active. Villagers recalled the New Year's rituals, when they hung out paintings of Dizang, Rulaifo, the three worthies (sanzun), the 18 arhats, the 28 stellar mansions (*ershiba su*), the two generals Heng and Ha, and the Ten Kings. They had even commissioned new Ten Kings paintings during the Japanese occupation. They used to perform Beholding the Lanterns and *yankou* for 7th moon 15th.

The association of **Zhaogezhuang** (Wangcun district) was ‘Buddhist-transmitted’, with both liturgists and *shengguan*; for funerals they used to shave their heads and wear Buddhist robes, and had many god paintings. They had vocal liturgists, but didn't recite precious scrolls, though they tried to have a copy of the *Houtu scroll* made during the Japanese occupation. For the New Year's rituals they performed *yankou* on the 15th and Beholding the Lanterns on the 16th, as well as the long central mantra *Puanzhou*. They made the trip to Houshan every two or three years until the early 1960s – though there were no admission charges in those days, it was expensive for a village to organize such a major ritual expedition. Among the former village temples was a Nainaimiao, with statues to the sanxiao sisters and murals of the story of Houtu. They did Crossing the Bridges, Chasing Round the Quarters, Beholding the Lanterns, and *yankou* rituals for funerals until the 1960s, and were still performing some liturgy when we met them in 1993, but now only did a simple version of the *yankou*.

The **East Mingyi** association was Daoist-transmitted, from the same tradition of the association at nearby Situ (p.175 above); they used to make the Houshan pilgrimage together. They once had a full set of precious scrolls, and Ren Wenquan (b. c1916) had a collection of scriptures recently copied. Some of these came from **Jijiagou** nearby, whose association was no longer active, but which was part of a network of four nearby villages whose *foshihui* had recited the scriptures since the 18th century. Like many others in the area, Ji Lianqin was another committed liturgist who had joined the Party in 1948 and served as long-term Party Secretary while reciting the scriptures.

In the southeast corner of Laishui, the adjacent North and South villages of **Gaoluo** are the subject of my detailed historical ethnography (Jones 2004). North

and South villages each had two ritual associations, representing an area based on a temple. Commonly known as *yinyuehui* or *nanyuehui*, they are also called ‘lantern association’ (*denghui*). The *yinyuehui* of the South village is also known as ‘southern lantern association’; their 1930 donors’ list and 1983 instrumental score are inscribed thus. The two Guanyintang ritual associations, in the northeast of the south village and the southeast of the north village, are called ‘eastern lantern association’. All the associations had a stock of ritual paintings such as a pantheon, the Ten Kings, and the Four Officers of Merit (*sizhi gongcao*), as well as (another common feature in these villages) a series of *diaogua* paintings to hang along the village lanes during rituals.³⁴

In addition to their funeral liturgy, the village ritual associations also preserve fine ‘precious scrolls’ (Appendix 3). The Guanyintang associations of both South and North Gaoluo have several printed scrolls inscribed with early-18th-century dates and bearing the name of the village. By the 1980s all four groups were still performing *shengguan* for rituals, but only the south association of the south village, main subject of my book, preserved its vocal liturgy in performance. They had a fine group of senior liturgists under Maoism, mostly leading village cadres, and there was an important transmission in the early 1960s, when a group of teenagers studied with their elders. Though they were only able to study the liturgy for three winters before the Four Cleanups, and their master Cai Fuxiang and some of his colleagues died before the full restoration, the senior Cai Yongchun and Li Wenbin at least were able to guide them throughout the 1980s. By 1995 the present group had been free to practise again for at least fifteen years.

The funeral manuals of the four associations of North and South Gaoluo are virtually identical; I discuss some aspects in which they vary in §9.9. The combined *yinyuehui* of north and south villages had gone to Houshan since about the 1920s, but had stopped going in the 1940s. The south village *yinyuehui* recited the *Houtu scroll* in the village for 1st moon 15th and 3rd moon 15th.

In Dingxing county just south, **Yishangying** village had only acquired its ritual a couple of generations earlier, first from neighbouring Yishangzhuang and then from North Qiaotou (see above), whose Guandimiao temple had a relationship with their own. When the Dafojiao sect was crushed in 1952 campaigns, 80% of households in the village belonged to it, but this had no effect on the public rituals of the village association, known as Great Tent Association (*dapenghui*).³⁵ They used to recite the *Houtu scroll*, as well as the *Ten Kings scroll*. The association was renowned on Houshan for its fine *shengguan* playing; small ensembles like this were invariably more accomplished. Though they were too busy during the Great Leap, they had enough energy to go to Houshan even during the famine of

³⁴ For the checkered history of the paintings, see Jones 2004: 277–82; for the *diaogua*, see *ibid.*: 52–3.

³⁵ Cf. my notes from Xiongxian, Jones 2010: 164–6. For Dafojiao in Tianjin, see Zhao Jiazhu 2004: 38–9, and for Dingxing *ibid.*, 112–13; derived from the Jiugongdao, which features much more commonly in accounts.

1960, and continued until 1964. Since restoring in the 1980s, they observed the 3rd-moon Houtu festival for five days in the brigade office of their own village, decked out as a temple. But they no longer recited vocal liturgy.

The association of **Zangguanying** was Daoist-transmitted. When we visited in 1995, ritual specialist Han Yongzhen (b. c1909) claimed that a Daoist from the Baiyunguan had come to look after their village temple. They had lost their paintings of the Ten Kings, Yaowang, and Laozu, and most of their ritual manuals (including a *Houtu scroll*), but had managed to preserve a funerary manual that they used for Chasing Round the Quarters, Crossing the Bridges, and *yankou* rituals. They used to go to Houshan occasionally, but always paid an annual visit to the nearer Houtu temple at Zhoujiazhuang, and had started going there again for 3rd moon 15th since it was rebuilt in 1991. They converted to the ‘southern’ style of *shengguan* by about 1940.

Han Yongzhen gave us a lead to his former colleague **Zhang Mingxiang** (b. c1912), a renowned former Daoist priest in Dingxing county-town. One of many brothers, he had been given to the Donglinsi temple in the town when 7 *sui*. In his early 20s he had spent three winters at the Baiyunguan in Beijing; he also served for a time in charge of the Chenghuangmiao in Dingxing town. For what we may call a parish priest, he had an unusually keen grasp of Daoist philosophy. He was not only a vocal liturgist but a fine instrumentalist, having learnt the large *guanzi* of the ‘southern’ style from the age of 18. The Donglinsi, like most temples in the area, had always played the solemn ‘northern’ style with small *guanzi*; but around the 1920s they had changed to the new fashionable southern style to attract more funeral business. Indeed, Zhang recalled ‘facing platforms’ (*duitai*, cf. *duipeng*) at funerals with the renowned Buddhist monk Haibo, who transmitted the style in several Laishui villages (cf. p.124 above).

Zhang Mingxiang told us how the notorious Wang Fenggang, commander of the Nationalist army in the area, had sacked the Donglinsi temple in the late 1920s. In nearby Zhoujiazhuang village, we learnt that Wang Fenggang had also partly destroyed the Houtu temple, but by 1930, with his armies suffering repeated defeats, he returned to rebuild it. The temple was totally destroyed in 1947, presumably by the Communists; it was formally re-opened again in 1993.

Around the time of land reform, Zhang was ‘mobilized’ to leave the clergy by a cadre from the county Political department – ‘How could I refuse?’ Keeping an eye on the way the political winds were blowing, he kept his long hair in a Daoist topknot for three years, but eventually he saw ‘it was really out of step with the times’ and cut his hair. ‘How could I be willing to leave the clergy? I was just afraid – I had no choice.’ The death of his master around this time removed only one of his deep bonds to the Daoist life.³⁶ Still, like many former priests, with their education, he became a respected cadre under Maoism, though after 1970 he had a job as a cleaner. All the while he continued to do folk ritual; having learnt

³⁶ Cf. the politically correct memoir of Zhang Xiuhua 1982: 204, and Appendix 1 below.

the *guanzi* when 18, he kept on playing till he was 80. He now had a comfortable house in Dingxing town, and was happy to see his grandchildren running around.

These were just a few of the ritual specialists we visited in Yixian, Laishui, and Dingxing. Further south, **Xushui** county is a remarkably vibrant county for ritual groups and temples, both of which have outlived the county's national fame during the revolutionary thrust towards full communization in 1958. Though this area belongs to a somewhat different style from that of the Yixian–Laishui temple transmissions, it is worth giving a flavour of its ritual groups here. There is another famous *sheng*-tuning family in Qingmiaoying village, where we again got many leads – the village's own ritual association had recited the scriptures in 1963 to try and avert a flood, but had not restored since the Cultural Revolution.

Most Xushui associations had formerly made the Houshan pilgrimage, though Langyashan, home of the deity Cangu, also competed. Many groups had refurbished large collections of god paintings, and Chasing Round the Quarters, Crossing the Bridges, Beholding the Lanterns, and *yankou* rituals (§9.9) were again common. Hunyuan sectarian connections were again evident. I will illustrate with a mere two groups.

Gaozhuang (Gaojiazhuang) is a well-off village in Dasigezhuang district,³⁷ just southeast of the county town. The association is Buddhist-transmitted, claiming descent from a monk 500 years ago, as well as more recent input from monks. (I don't dismiss such claims. We have visited so many villages where they clearly say that they only began practising in the 1950s, or only four generations ago, or where they just say they don't know how long ago the association was founded; and many villages have firm artefacts to support their claims, like paintings, ritual manuals, or *gongche* scores. Peasants didn't wilfully fabricate their histories – at least until recently when the Intangible Cultural Heritage project began giving them an incentive to do so.)

Their vocal liturgists ('front altar' *qiantan*) and *shengguan* ensemble ('rear altar' *houtan*) combine for some accompanied hymns. There is also a more recent tradition here of healing illness. On the route to Houshan the association stopped off at Xiefangying west of Xushui county-town, where there were tea tents and food for the many passing associations. Xiefangying had its own association, with a scriptural tradition including *Hongyang haihui*, *Longhua jing*, *Chaoyang jing*, and *Jin'gang jing* – a more sectarian list than most that we found.

Since this area was at the centre of the revolutionary fervour of the 1958 Great Leap Forward, permit me another brief reminder of the tenacity of village ritual. Gaozhuang was a model village. Chairman Mao made visits to the district (hastily, but only temporarily, renamed '4th August brigade') in August 1958. Quite a lot of people starved to death here in 1960, but the Gaozhuang association restarted in 1961. In the Four Cleanups in 1965 the district secretary brought a work team here himself, but they didn't interfere with the association. The *shengguan* ensemble, at

³⁷ As I noted in Jones 2004: 33–4, this is a nice exception to the principle whereby villages with a 'great temple' are named *cun* whereas those without are called *zhuang*!

least, was able to create a favorable impression by playing ‘old pieces’ for relatives of the army. In the Cultural Revolution, a chest full of scriptures was taken off and burnt, but the villagers, and their cadres, aware that the association existed to ‘practise good’, continued to support the association, and there were no attacks on it; the *houtan* instrumentalists kept active throughout for small-scale village observances.

They restored more openly in the 1980s with vocal liturgy too, though with only ‘one tenth’ of their former scriptures – they could no longer recite the *Dizang jing* or *Huayan jing*. They used to hang out paintings of the Ten Kings, Rulaifo, Cangu, Wenshu, and Puxian. This sounds orthodox enough, but by 1994 they had built a stylish and grand Laomu citang temple³⁸ to Wusheng laomu (cf. p.167), with large donations (most of 50 or 100 *yuan*, some of 1,000 or more) from individuals, as well as funds from incense money, fortune-telling, and healing.

In 1996 we visited the association in **Langwuzhuang**, northwest of the county-town. Here they claimed a history of 600 years! The association had only just revived in 1995, having new costumes made. Again they distinguished liturgists (*foshihui*) and *shengguan* musicians (*yinyuehui*), though so far they had only restored the latter. They used to have scriptures and paintings for the *shuilu* Water and Land rituals (a rare mention), and a *Ten Kings scroll*. For New Year’s rituals (as ever, from 1st moon 13th to 16th) the lantern tent was called Laojuntang, divided into Former, Middle, and Rear Altars, each with its own tent. In the Former Altar tent, they hung the Jieyinfo painting; in the Middle Altar tent, the Ten Kings; in the Rear Altar tent, Laojun. The *yinyuehui* played in the Middle Altar tent, the *foshihui* recited in the Rear Altar tent. On the 15th and 16th they used to perform Crossing the Bridges and Beholding the Lanterns (§9.9), the liturgists and instrumentalists performing together. They mentioned several more Houtu temples in the area.

9.8 Funeral practice

For all the former Daoists of Houshan and nearby, and the many ritual associations in the area, yet the liturgical/ritual dimension on the mountain, as in many temple fairs in north China, is (and apparently was) very much subsidiary to mediums and ‘ordinary popular worship’; there is nothing remotely comparable to a *jiao* here. Nor are the smaller village calendrical observances, led by their associations, of much greater ritual complexity.

The recitation of ‘precious scrolls’, notably the scroll to Houtu, is a distinctive feature of this western area on the Hebei plain. It was an aspect of the vocal liturgy of the Houshan temple Daoists. But for some centuries these scrolls have been recited mainly by amateur village ritual associations in the area, mostly village-wide groups with White Lotus ancestry. Since we have only found them performed in the immediate environs of Houshan, and they may seem to be at something of

³⁸ A rare and atypical use of the term *citang* in north China; cf. Jones 2004: 395 n.210.

Table 23 Funeral prescription, Yixian–Laishui region

Day 1

- After the death, the kin Report to the Temple (*baomiao*) and make preliminary triple Libations of Tea (*diancha*). The family representative goes to kowtow to the funeral manager (*zongli*) and (often the same person) the leader of the *yinyuehui* (*xiangtou, huitou*), formally inviting the association (*qinghui* 請會); the *huitou* then contacts the association members, while the family invites cooks (*qingchu* 請廚), gets food for the feasts, and makes preparations.

Day 2

mid-afternoon:

- The association attends the funeral site and prepares. The liturgists prepare the soul tablet and god places, and an altar is set up before the soul hall. For **Hanging out the Paintings** (*guaxiang* 掛像 or *xuanxiang* 懸像: Dizang, King of Ghosts, the pantheon, and when still extant, the Ten Kings) in the room where the death occurred, an incense burner and offerings are placed on the altar table, and incense offered. **Inviting the Gods** (*qingshen*) inside the house, **Settling the Dwelling** (*anzhai*, or Cleansing the Dwelling *jingzhai*): **Opening the Altar** (*kaitan*), including Cymbals to Open the Altar (*Kaitan bo 開壇鉸, Kaitan hexi 開壇合息*), Hymn for Opening the Altar (*Kaitan zan*) with *shengguan*, concluding with the percussion piece *Changsanpai*, then *shengguan*.

[He Qing: Formerly one had to make a scripture tent (*jingpeng*) where the paintings were hung; nowadays one hangs them in the room where the death occurred. The liturgists sit on the *kang* brick-bed; the *shengguan* ensemble sits around an altar table before the Dizang painting.]

[Wei Guoliang: this is to invite the Myriad Gods to Arouse the Soul (*wanshen qiling* 萬神起靈); the liturgists sing the *Tangchan* 唐懺 (Tang litanies) in the slow *zuyun*, *Taishan yun* and *laozu yun* styles (cf. Appendix 3). After the gods have been invited down, play the *Fendiezi* 粉蝶子 percussion suite, followed by the *shengguan* melodies *Ku changcheng* and *Liuhangyan*.]

- **Settling the Stove** (*anzao*) at the temporary kitchen in the courtyard, with a hymn, percussion, and *shengguan*. [Then the percussion suite and a long *shengguan* suite may be played seated in the courtyard.]

after supper:

- **Report to the Temple** (*baomiao*), this time with the association. [He Qing: one should go to the Wudaomiao, but the funeral of his mother in 1964 was the last time they observed the ritual properly in Gaoluo.]

[Zhang Dejin: first sing the accompanied hymn *Lingqian zan* for Inviting the Soul (*qingling*) at the soul hall.] [Ren Wenquan: use the *Yuzhi* 御旨 manual, including several *zhou* mantras.]

Procession to the site of the former Wudaomiao temple, with percussion and *shengguan*; on arrival, while the family offers incense and burns paper, the liturgists sing hymns [Zhang Dejin: ‘The road back home’ (*Guijialu 歸家路) and ‘Hymn Before the Temple’ (*Miaoqian zan 廟前讚*)], while waving the pennant to lead the soul (*yinhunfan 引魂幡*)], interspersed with percussion [Zhang Dejin: *Tianxia tong 天下同*] and ‘miscellaneous pieces’ for *shengguan*. On the procession back, the incense head lights lamps for*

Illuminating the Road (*zhaolu 照路) back to the soul hall, to more percussion and *shengguan*. [Lijiafen: sing the *Menshen zan* 門神讚 hymn at the gateway on the return. Then enter the room, sing the *Tiandi sanjie zhufo* 天地三界諸佛 hymns before the god-paintings, and then sing further hymns before the coffin. Back in the room, sing another hymn, with repeats interspersed with percussion. Then rest.]*

evening

- **Entering the Altar** (*rutan* 入壇), also called **Sitting at the Altar** (*zuotan* 坐壇), or **Visiting/Seeing the Soul** (*jianling* 蓋/見靈); the general term *jiesan* 接三 may refer specifically to this section. This is the main part of the whole ritual sequence, before the soul hall, for Summoning the Soul (*zhaohun* 招魂) back from the temple to its body in the coffin, and includes the triple **Libations of Tea** (*diancha*), for which the liturgy may alternate with a *chuidaban* shawm band. First the liturgists sing the Hymn Before the Soul *Lingqian zan*, then for the triple Libations of Tea, further vocal liturgy, punctuated by *shengguan* and percussion interludes, while the kin kowtow before the coffin and paper money is burnt. Apart from the liturgy in the main manual, vocal items may be included such as Song of the Skeletons, ‘The twenty-four pious ones’, and the long mantra *Puanzhou* (Appendix 2). [He Qing: for the *jianling*, the liturgists sit to the east, instrumentalists to the west (*wendong wuxi* 文東武西).]

[South Gaoluo: each of the Three Libations of Tea consists of a four-phrase recited text (*yaozi* 么子) followed by a sung text. The main texts for male deaths are the Greater or Lesser *sanbao* 大小三寶, according to age (each song beginning *Jishou guiyi* 稽首皈依); for female deaths they are Greater or Lesser Four Dreams (*Da simeng*, *Xiao simeng* 大小四夢 (each text beginning *Shoupeng qingcha* 手捧清茶 or *Yidian meng* 一奠夢). Vocal melodies for these texts include *Langtaosha* and *Jinzi jing*.] [Zhang Dejin: at the end, the liturgists sing accompanied hymns for the Household God (*Jiazhai shen* 家宅神), Stove God (*Zaowang* 電王), and King of Ghosts.] [Wei Guoliang: parts of the *Ten Kings scroll* were also performed formerly. One recites the *Dizang jing*, singing a different hymn for each of the god places, and alternating with a free choice of miscellaneous *shengguan* melodies; one may sing the Song of the Skeletons.] [Yang Chun'an: the Libations of Tea are sung to the melody *Guajinsuo* (with *shengguan*); other songs include the *Da sanbao*, *Langtaosha*, and Song of the Skeletons.] [Ren Wenquan: use the *Yuzhi* manual again. After a six-phrase hymn and the percussion *Kaitan bo*, one may sing ‘The twenty-four pious ones’ and the *Beidengji* 惡燈記; then optional *Erfozhou* 二佛咒 mantra, a section of the *Ten Kings scroll*, *Jinzi jing*, *Puanzhou*.]

[Lijiafen: one sings nine sections of *Longwang* 龍王 (?), including items such as Song of the Skeletons, ‘The twenty-four pious ones’, *Guajinsuo*, *Langtaosha*, *Cuihuanghua* (the latter to Guanyin), and the *Baxian zan* 八仙讚. One may also recite a chapter or more of the *Ten Kings scroll* or *Demon-queller scroll*.]

- **[Crossing the Bridges, Beholding the Lanterns, *yankou*: see §9.9.]**

towards midnight:

- **Escorting Away the Gods** (*songshe*), or **Farewell to the Soul** (*ciling* 辭靈). The kin kowtow to the soul tablet before going out on procession for **Escorting to the Road** (*songlu* 送路) and **Burning the Cart** (*shaoche* 燒車) at a major crossroads. A long *baiwen* text is recited, a hymn for Burning the Cart is sung [Ren Wenquan: to the melody *Langtaosha*] with *shengguan*, and the paper horse and cart are burnt. [Wei Guoliang: finally recite scripture, sing *Xifang hao* 西方號, and play a free choice of *shengguan*.]

Day 3, morning:

- **Escorting the Soul** (*songling* 送靈), **Visiting the Soul** (*canling* 參靈), or **Offering to the Soul** (*jiling* 祭靈). [Wei Guoliang: the *gaogong* recites the incantation *Songling zhou* 送靈咒, solo, under his breath, dragging out the last line. Then the group sings *Daode zhenxiang* 道德真香, *Jingjiang diyi juan* 經江第一卷 (again, the incipit of a sung text), and *Cibei chan* 慈悲懺, followed by *shengguan*.]
- **Burial Procession** (*yayin*, *chubin*): the association (alternating percussion and *shengguan*) and mourners go only as far as the entrance to the village, leaving the close kin to escort the coffin to the grave, burning all the other paper artefacts.

Note: ** *Fendiezi*, a lengthy and complex piece in seven sections, speciality of ritual groups in this area, is analysed in Jones 2004: 378–81, and heard on the CD.

a tangent to the main liturgical practice of the Daoists, I discuss them separately in Appendix 3.

Rather, let us conclude this overview of the western area by returning to funerary practice, that other element in the old *zhai-jiao* duo; this was the staple repertoire of the Daoists and the amateur ritual associations that learnt from them. We can compare the programme with those of Daxing and Bazhou above, before spreading the net wider.

I have compiled a composite prescription (Table 23, pp.192–3) from accounts given by senior ritual specialists in a small area of Yixian and Laishui, adding their individual comments where suitable.³⁹ Note that ritual specialists give a different, and more detailed, account than is available from the manuals alone, and these must further be corroborated by observing practice – having attended many funerals in this area, I can better assess their accounts.⁴⁰

Wei Guoliang, who had studied with the Daoists on Houshan, described for us a simplified funeral since the 1980s. Before the Cultural Revolution or earlier, he said, the Matou association might also perform Crossing the Bridges and *yankou* (*shishike*), and during the *rutan* ritual they also used to perform a section of the *Ten Kings scroll*. They used to have a ‘Miscellaneous recitations volume’ (*Zanian ben*) with everything in it, including texts for exorcisms (*anzhai*) and funerals.

Zhang Dejin described a funeral of one day and one night, simplified since Liberation. For a three day-and-night funeral they did Crossing the Bridges, Beholding the Lanterns, and *yankou*; for two days and nights, they did Crossing the Bridges (but he had never performed it); for ‘one day and night’ the main ritual is the triple Libations of Tea. The ‘public’ part of the ritual in which the association takes part, though set out as three days, really occupies one afternoon and evening, with the burial the next morning. Unlike in north Shanxi, where the coffin is inside the main entrance of the house with an awning outside shielding the altar table, in central Hebei (space permitting) the coffin is placed in an awning in the south of the courtyard, facing the house. Whereas Fetching Water (*qushui*) is a basic ritual for funerals and temple fairs in Shanxi and further west, here in central Hebei it was less commonly mentioned.

9.9 Some major rituals becoming rare

Even this relatively simple ritual sequence is far more complex than most accounts of funeral practice in the area, which largely omit liturgical performance. But it is still an impoverished version of their former sequence, and I now return to rituals

³⁹ Mainly Wei Guoliang (b. c1914, Matou), Zhang Dejin (b. c1936, Liujing), He Qing (1933–95) and others in South Gaoluo (see Jones 2004), Ren Wenquan (b. c1916, East Mingyi), Yang Chun'an (b. c1921, North Qiaotou), and the elderly ritual specialists of Lijiafen.

⁴⁰ For a funeral in Gaoluo, see Jones 2004: 209–13, and for details on funerary change there, see the index entry on funerals.

like Crossing the Bridges (*duqiao*), Beholding the Lanterns (*guandeng*), and *yankou*. Though these major dramatic rituals have been rare in most parts of the plain since the 1950s, it is worth giving some details. As we saw, these rituals may have been transmitted more intact in Bazhou (§8), but they appear in many old village manuals still in circulation, and several liturgists we knew were keen to revive them in the 1990s. Here I shall also spread my net to other parts of the plain.

Following Crossing the Bridges, Beholding the Lanterns is the ‘lantern ritual’ (*dengke*) in the evening, followed by the *yankou* (hence the binome ‘*guandeng yankou*’). In old Beijing, *yankou* was often performed without *guandeng*, but if you did *guandeng*, then *yankou* always followed it – unlike the 1995 Daxing funeral described in §7.4.

In North Xinzhuan (§7.4), between the various *jianling* Visiting the soul rituals they might also insert Crossing the Bridges, and then either Chasing Round the Quarters (*paofang*) or Smashing the Hells (*poyu*). This was the only place where we heard ‘*paofang bu poyu, poyu bu paofang*’ 跑方不破獄, 破獄不跑方, indicating that *paofang* is performed for the funeral of a male, *poyu* for that of a female.⁴¹ Was this unique to this small area, or was it a general rule that all our interviews elsewhere somehow failed to elicit? I have rather few instances of alternative rituals for male or female deaths in north China. As we saw, there are textual (not ritual) alternatives in Gaoluo funerals.⁴²

In fact, though we met Smashing the Hells in Shanxi and elsewhere in Parts One and Two, we rarely heard of it in central Hebei. In old Beijing it was subsumed within the *yankou* – indeed, it was this part of the *yankou* that included the Lament of the Skeletons (Appendix 2).⁴³ In East Mingyi, Ren Wenquan had heard of former Crossing the Bridges and ‘Chasing Round the Hells’ (*paoyu*), but he had never seen them, so they were perhaps obsolete there quite some time before modern campaigns. In Gaoqiao they still did Chasing Round the Quarters and Crossing the Bridges in the brief restoration of 1962 to 1963, but had to stop in 1964; as we saw above, the nearby Zhangzhuang group has recreated them convincingly with the aid of former Daoist Li Duqi.

In South Gaoluo, He Qing said that before Liberation, on the second evening the association used to do Beholding the Lanterns and *yankou*; according to the full sequence, these rituals should be performed on the first evening, then on the second day Crossing the Bridges, Ten Offerings (*shixian*), Five Quarters (*wufang*), and Farewell to the Soul (*ciling*). After Liberation they stopped performing Crossing the Bridges, Beholding the Lanterns, and *yankou*, but He Qing had never heard of his elders performing Chasing Round the Quarters or Smashing the Hells.

⁴¹ Cf. Du Yaxiong 2004: 123–4.

⁴² In Panjin, Liaoning (Li Runzhong 1986, vol.1: 52, 66), the male–female alternatives were *paofang* or *duqiao*! In southeast China, *poyu*, like the *xuehu* Blood Lake ritual, is prescribed for female deaths; e.g. Hakka ritual, *po Fengdu* or *po diyu* (Lagerwey 2001: 456); in another county, *po diyu* was used for women who died in childbirth (*ibid.*: 484).

⁴³ Chang Renchun 1993: 298–301.

Still, Smashing the Hells is part of the old funeral manual of the Guanyintang association in South Gaoluo. The main surviving funeral manual of the *yinyuehui* dates from 1903, just after the Boxer massacre of the village Catholics; right from its opening hymn for the Longhua assembly, it is clearly of sectarian origin, with Buddhist elements dominant. The manual of the Guanyintang association (undated, but seemingly of a similar vintage) is otherwise identical, but after a more lengthy version of *kaifang* Opening the Quarters, goes on to include texts for two rituals absent from the *yinyuehui* manual: *poyu* Smashing the Hells and a lengthy *zhaoqing* Invitation. The Guanyintang association text has 49 pages, the *yinyuehui* text 29 (with one page considered as verso and recto); title pages do not survive for either.

Many villages stopped performing such elaborate rituals after Liberation, as practice became simplified. Though the political climate was obviously a major factor, villagers generally portrayed it more as an economic casualty – the disappearance of the old more affluent élite class had removed the only patrons with the means to commission such complex rituals. Returning to Ren Wenquan's story of former Crossing the Bridges and 'Chasing Round the Hells', there were manuals for them, now 'lost'; maybe they were lost, or surrendered more readily, after they fell out of use. Zhang Dejin said they had never performed Crossing the Bridges because it required substantial funds for all the white cloth for the bridges, and alms for the beggars dressing up as *yakṣa* devils (cf. pp.54–5). And now that there are rich households again, it remains dubious that there will be a demand for such rituals, as ostentation is more important than the observance of the 'old rules'.

Crossing the Bridges

Though we saw accounts of Crossing the Bridges above (notably pp.84–5, 153), and several of the Hebei groups we met above were again performing it, it is largely obsolete in this western area of the plain today. But several manuals preserve texts, and the ritual can still be reconstructed.

In South Gaoluo, the previous generation of liturgists in the Guanyintang association had performed Crossing the Bridges and Beholding the Lanterns for the last time around 1946. He Qing's account of Crossing the Bridges was similar to that of Li Duqi above. They made a high table-altar (*gaotai*) and crossed the gold and silver bridges (*du jinyinqiao*). The leader of the beggars (*poxiang*, *jiaohuazi*) organized them to dress up as *yakṣa* devils for crossing the bridges – you had to feed them and pay them too! By 1995 the ritual specialists of the South Gaoluo *yinyuehui* were keen to recall the Crossing the Bridges, which appears in their manual.

Outside our western area, members of the Tiandimen association in Yuanmenkou (§8.7 above) still practise Crossing the Bridges, and gave us a detailed account as we all pored over the manual. It is led by one liturgist, who wields the pennant (*fan*) and leads a grandson of the deceased across the bridges

(in some places the latter yields the pennant); he sings all the *hezi*, unaccompanied sung verses in four seven-character lines,⁴⁴ and chants the *shuowen* texts solo, shaking a hand-bell. The ritual begins with a long *Jishou guiyi Dizangwang* text, sung and accompanied by *shengguan*. After a sung *hezi* (its four lines punctuated by percussion), the celebrant chants the long text *Pu jinqiao zhe* 赴金橋者. More percussion accompanies the ascent onto the Golden Bridge, and four verses for the Golden Bridge are recited and sung by all the liturgists, accompanied by *shengguan* and punctuated by percussion – as in the Gaoluo manual, the first verse is *Tan wangling*,⁴⁵ still a common item separately from this ritual. After more percussion and another *hezi*, the long chanted text *Pu yinqiao zhe* 赴銀橋者 leads into four verses for the Silver Bridge. More percussion accompanies the descent from the bridge as the *Xiadiqiao* 下的橋 text is chanted. Here a *hezi* should be sung by the kin descending the bridge, but it has long been obsolete. After the concluding choral ‘small hymn’ *Mianran fozi zan*, accompanied by percussion alone, the pennant is snapped into pieces and burnt, before the bridges too are burnt.

Beholding the Lanterns

Distinct from the ritual of the same name within some of the *jiao* we found in Part Two, on the Hebei plain (and in old Beijing) Beholding the Lanterns (*guandeng*) is performed as part of funerals. In Hebei it is also distinct from the more general village-wide lantern rituals around the 15th of the 1st and 7th moons. As we have seen, it should come in between Crossing the Bridges and *yankou*. Whereas both Buddhists and Daoists perform the *yankou*, in this area at least Beholding the Lanterns is Buddhist rather than Daoist. In old Beijing, it was also called Lighting the Lanterns (*randeng*) or Transmitting the Lanterns (*chuandeng*), using the ‘Precious Lanterns for Dizang and the Ten Kings’ (*Dizang Shiwang baodeng*) manual. It was already rare in Beijing before Liberation, only being performed for wealthy households. Some groups without a separate Beholding the Lanterns manual incorporated this ceremony into the *wufang jiejie* section of the *yankou* – disparagingly called ‘blind lanterns’ (*xiadeng*); in the suburbs, where they recited the manual faster, it was called Chasing Round the Lanterns (*paodeng*)!⁴⁶

The main components for the Lantern ritual in old Beijing were:

- Homage to the Seat (*baizuo*): vocal liturgy to the gods Randengfo, Omituofo, Wuliangshoufo, Guanyin, Dashizhi pusa in turn, and longevity for the host;
- Scripture-reading: *Mituo jing*, *Wangsheng zhou*;
- Lighting the Lanterns (*randeng*) to Dizang and the Ten Kings.

⁴⁴ Cf. Guo Zhongping 1991: 34–6.

⁴⁵ Cf. south Hebei, Yuan Jingfang 1997a: 207–8.

⁴⁶ Chang Renchun 1993: 328–33, a typically fine account.

Meanwhile the lanterns were transmitted and the Ten Offerings (*shi gongyang*) were performed. Though the ritual has been rare since the 1950s, ritual associations in Daxing have revived it and still perform it occasionally; we found it at a funeral in Daxing in 1995 (§7.4), although it was much simpler than that described for old Beijing.

Elsewhere on the Hebei plain, the Lijiafen liturgists said this ritual was the hardest to recite; they recall using little copper Buddha statuettes, one hand pointing to Heaven, one to Earth. The Lesser Huangzhuang association (§8.7) had a fine newly copied ‘Precious Lanterns for Dizang and the Ten Kings’ manual, which alas we didn’t find a chance to request them to perform for us. At New Year in Langwuzhuang (p.191) on 1st moon 15th and 16th they used to perform Crossing the Bridges and Beholding the Lanterns, the vocal liturgists and *shengguan* instrumentalists performing together. For Beholding the Lanterns they set up a structure on tables at the Rear Altar. Just as we saw in Daxing (§7.4), they put ‘over eighty’⁴⁷ little lanterns, made from cotton-wool soaked in oil, in bowls, while the association played *shengguan*. They last performed it during the Japanese occupation; just as they were doing it, Japanese troops surrounded the village and ordered people to stay still.

The yankou

In the absence of a more relevant ‘standard’ text, we can consult the Buddhist *yankou* manual used in Beijing, and excerpts from the Beijing Daoist *yankou*. In ‘standard’ liturgy, the *yankou* is a long and complex ritual for the evening before the burial.⁴⁸ It is commonly mentioned in north Chinese villages, but I have witnessed very few performances, and only a few groups now have manuals, so it might appear to be largely obsolete. Rural liturgists perform some of the Sanskrit mantras of the *yankou*, though the *mudra* Tantric hand symbols are rare.

However, many ritual texts from the ‘standard’ *yankou* manual still constitute individual ritual items in village funeral liturgy. We saw how the *Shi baoen* Ten Repayments for Kindness (*Yugie jing*) of the Yanggao Daoists also appears near the end of the ‘standard’ Buddhist *yankou*. There are several close similarities between texts in the latter manual and those performed in central Hebei, but they may not be strictly identical in function. For instance, while the *yankou* does not involve any bridge-crossing, it does include Invitation sequences, a brief Smashing the Hells text, and even the Song of the Skeletons. In the evening liturgy around South Gaoluo, the Greater *sanbao* section is almost identical with that of the ‘standard’

⁴⁷ In Daxing, according to Du Yaxiong (2004: 128–9), the number of lanterns is the same as the age of the deceased; in the more lavish conditions of old Beijing, according to Chang Renchun (1993: 330, 331), it was 108 plus the age of the deceased.

⁴⁸ For the ‘standard’ Beijing *yankou*, see *ibid.*: 316–28 (Buddhist), 294–304 (Daoist); for the Buddhist version, Ling Haicheng 1986, Yuan Jingfang 1997; for the Daoist version, Min Zhiting 1991, 1995.

yankou; in the *zhaoqing* Invitation section of the Guanyintang association manual, the triple *Zhixin xinli* section is one of several *zhaoqing* sequences in the ‘standard’ *yankou* manual; the village version has extra sections interspersed.⁴⁹ In central Hebei I have only found the *wufang jiejie*, a preliminary segment of the ‘standard’ *yankou*, performed in Gaoqiao and Zhaogezhuang.

As I suggested for Yanggao, we may have a chicken-and-egg scenario here: have items from the ‘standard’ *yankou* been split up, or is the ‘complete’ *yankou* an amalgamation of rituals that are otherwise considered separately? Segments from the full *yankou* appear to have been absorbed into rituals like the Invitation and Smashing the Hells, or even just parts of routine visits to the coffin. But if elements of the ‘standard’ *yankou* are now often free-floating in folk practice, that doesn’t necessarily help us trace origins: more study would be necessary before we could conclude which came first.

9.10 Conclusion

In Part Three I have been extending our boundaries of ‘Daoist ritual’ (or, you may say, lowering the tone even further), not only considering the former Daoist priests (or Buddhist monks) and the ritual associations that learnt from them, but also trying to place them within the whole diversity of performing groups and mediums. Even in this region of Hebei, the ritual practices of the Daoists and the associations themselves show considerable diversity. Funeral ritual is more complex than that of temple fairs. Short hymns and paraliturgical *shengguan* may have become more common than lengthy recitations, but some detailed funeral manuals are still used. Apart from routine observances, we found a liturgical framework based until recently on rituals such as Crossing the Bridges, Beholding the Lanterns, *yankou*, and so on.

Of the three areas discussed above, those just south of Beijing had mostly learnt from priests or monks around Liberation, and were occupational. Elsewhere they were mostly amateur, and had learnt their ritual from priests or monks much earlier; around Yixian we further found some strong traditions of vocal liturgy including precious scrolls.

As if my 2004 book hasn’t already done so, I trust all this conclusively shows that these *yinyuehui* are anything but secular ‘music clubs’. To be sure, there are associations on the Hebei plain whose vocal liturgy has disappeared, and others where liturgy/ritual shades into folk custom; and enthusiasm for the *shengguan* music (indeed for the vocal liturgy too) was a significant element in the perpetuation of these amateur traditions. But these are *ritual* associations derived from temple priests, performing calendrical and funerary rituals.

All this activity may seem impressive, but the long decline since the 1930s was only temporarily arrested by the revival of the 1980s, since when the associations

⁴⁹ Respectively Ling 1986, *yankou* manual 21a–22b, and 19b–21a (cf. 54a–63a).

have perhaps been threatened more by the new capitalism than they had been by warfare and political repression. Still, my point is to show that even in such a seemingly barren area for Daoist ritual, it was deeply rooted in local culture. One might suppose that these rituals performed by amateur villagers hardly represent Daoist ritual – yet they were transmitted from local priests, whose own ritual practice cannot have been much more complex.

Thus much of the material here is of a different order from that in Parts One and Two, showing that we need to cast our net wider for ritual specialists, and also suggesting the kinds of paths that led to the absorption of temple ritual into folk practice, in both imperial and modern times. Though I gave some examples of modern forced laicizations leading to this absorption, the temple–lay transmission has a history going back at least to the Ming dynasty. It is also worth discussing central Hebei because, by contrast with Shanxi or south Hebei, it may seem at first sight to be one of those areas bereft of Daoists.

In this area we found plenty of former temple Daoists, but few occupational groups; moreover, no-one seems to have suggested any lay household *huoju* traditions in this area, even in the imperial period. Some practitioners we met were former temple Daoists who had become leading members of their amateur ritual association after being laicized around 1950; but many more groups had learnt from temple Daoist priests long before that. Perhaps all the long-established amateur associations (and also sects) made it hard for occupational groups of household Daoists to do business – though it doesn't explain why the amateur groups thrived here and not elsewhere.

This transmission from temples to amateur lay groups may seem like a logical kind of thing to happen, but appears to be a particular feature of this plain just south of Beijing. One can think of analogies elsewhere (Dongjing associations in Yunnan, groups around Xi'an or Fuzhou), but the norm was that laymen did not learn complex temple liturgy; elsewhere in north China, despite the common incidence of so-called ‘fake monks’, liturgy generally remained in the hands of temple priests or occupational *huoju* Daoists.

To clarify: south of Beijing there was an extensive network of temple Daoists who performed folk ritual until the 1950s, and since then some of these Daoists, and their rituals, were absorbed into pre-existing local amateur village-wide ritual associations. But the folk borrowing of temple ritual was much older than that: amateur village ritual specialists already had plenty of ritual knowledge, and many amateur village-wide associations were already performing similar rituals to those of the temple priests through the late imperial period; thus the laicizations of the 1950s merely acted as a reinvigoration of their expertise (albeit just as ritual activity was becoming circumscribed). Moreover, while a few groups reviving since the 1980s were occupational (but not household-based), the great majority maintained the local tradition of performing as an amateur social duty on behalf of their home village – and this, along with the difficulty of learning the vocal liturgy and instrumental music, made it hard for them to maintain themselves in a now mercenary society. In north Shanxi, by contrast, lay household occupational

traditions of folk Zhengyi Daoists were active – and there, there were no amateur village-wide associations, only a few voluntary intra- and inter-village sects.

So it looks as if local tradition remained crucial, despite upheavals. Where there were household occupational traditions, as in north Shanxi, they continued; where there were amateur village-wide traditions, as on the Hebei plain, they too continued. Despite having been paid for their ritual services in their former temple life, the tradition into which former temple Daoists were absorbed was one of amateur village-wide groups. The few cases in Hebei where ritual groups charged for their ritual services since the 1980s were ones where they had learned ritual from former temple priests in the 1950s from scratch, not previously having had an amateur village-wide tradition.

One lesson from discussing the more recent transmissions is that it shows an instance of how the link between temples and lay villagers worked; while the mid-20th century was a particular period, transmissions in imperial times may have worked in similar ways. One major difference, of course, is that in imperial times (notwithstanding the far smaller base of temples and monks in north China than in the Jiangnan region), temples staffed by priests populated the landscape alongside villages with their amateur lay specialists (cf. §1.1).

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CONCLUSION

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Chapter 10

It's Daoism, but not as we know it

By a winding route, we have almost returned to north Shanxi where this survey began. (Another way of looking at it would be that we have roughly followed the route of the Communist armies through the northwest base-areas and Hebei, ending with a final push towards Beijing, discussed in Appendix 1.) What can we learn from considering the whole vast area of north China discussed in this book?

Religious activity has evidently remained strong in north China. Whereas research on religion in Taiwan and Fujian has focused substantially on Daoist ritual, most work on the north so far has tended instead to highlight ‘routine’ religious behaviour like attendance at temple fairs, casting divination sticks, consulting geomancers and mediums, and so on. Indeed, in this book I have necessarily touched on other aspects of religious practice such as amateur performing associations, sects, mediums. In the social life of many local communities in north China, the ‘Daoist liturgical framework’, magnificent and complex as it is, may not seem to be the defining element; it is part of the fabric, but one element among many. Indeed, since the 1980s much work on the variety of ritual and customary practice in southeast China suggests that we make a similar qualification there, despite scholars’ initial fascination with the more ‘classical’ and esoteric *jiao-liandu* complex. However, I have shown how in north China too, lay Daoists performing rituals for funerals and temple fairs have remained widespread and important in their local communities. Indeed, in areas like north Shanxi, the rituals of the Daoists are fundamental to the structuring of the event, almost defining it; they are the major public events, without which funerals and temple fairs would be paltry, ‘losing face’ for the host.

10.1 Joining Up the Dots, Chasing the Red Herring

Under the ludic rubric of these fictive ritual titles, I will now do what I can to survey the overall scene outlined above. While religious activity is widespread in north China, and I have added substantially to our list of Daoists (and other liturgical performers) there, I should be careful not to overstate the presence of either general religious activity or Daoist liturgy. Lay Daoists are very common in some areas, like north Shanxi, south Hebei, and pockets of Gansu; in some of the areas discussed above (Xinzhou, Hunyuan), the performers we found were thin on the ground; in the large region of Shaanbei, groups practise almost only at the eastern and western margins; on the central Hebei plain, occupational Daoist families were left no room by all the amateur ritual associations, but even they

were quite patchily distributed; and some areas seem to have no ritual groups at all. But the north Chinese ritual iceberg whose tip I have outlined was much larger only a few decades ago, even if both current and previous icebergs are smaller than those of the southeast.

So while I have added some varied vignettes to our picture, they remain quite sporadic points on the map. Although the two main areas where we can clearly identify lay household occupational traditions are north Shanxi and Changwu, I still tend to surmise that this is the norm, in north just as in south China. By contrast with our last port of call, central Hebei (where amateur village associations learnt ritual from temple priests), in north Shanxi we heard of no temple priests ever having performed folk ritual, and liturgy/ritual had long been a monopoly of the kind of lay occupational household specialists with whom we are familiar in southeast China. But I have also shown areas where the connections between temple priests and lay occupational ritual specialists were close. And there were plenty of temple priests (both Quanzhen and Zhengyi) throughout north China, but in most local temples their numbers were so small that in order to perform folk rituals they had to collaborate with priests from other temples, or train laymen. All these three types of ritual specialists – lay householders, former temple priests with lay connections, and amateur groups – may turn out to be common in south China too, if we can gain more detailed social history on the lives of ritual specialists in the modern period. But in the north at least, neither Quanzhen/Zhengyi nor temple/lay statuses seem very significant issues for ritual practice.

Goossaert, discussing late imperial China, has worthily attempted to trace a rough clerical geography for Buddhism and Daoism, Quanzhen and Zhengyi, and so on. He suggests regional patterns as well as finer gradations within a single province, and within a single county.¹ For south Fujian and Taiwan, scholars have been able to trace the diffusion of local ritual networks in modern times, identifying Lüshan or Longhushan, redhead or blackhead transmissions, on the basis of registers and ritual features. Dean shows for Fujian how we might begin to comprehend ways in which early regional Daoist histories are etched into local modern practice.² I can't yet see how we might undertake such a task for north China; these local traditions seem largely independent, self-contained. We always find different permutations of the diverse religious ingredients. In central Hebei, was the long tradition of amateur lay ritual specialists there the result of the absence of occupational household Daoists, or was it the other way round: did the latter absence engender the former? The area was a centre of sectarian religion – but that could thrive alongside occupational household Daoists, as in north Shanxi.

Of course, the varied local conditions we find throughout China today are obscure heritages from imperial times, complex amalgams of factors such as topography (plains or mountains, and so on), ecology, population density,

¹ Goossaert 2000; NB 63–70 and his conclusions, 78–9. Cf. Goossaert 2004: 716–18, 734–41.

² Dean 1993: 21–45.

economy, poverty, proximity to major power centres and degree of penetration of élite literate culture, lineage customs, and historical migration. The Hebei plain was densely populated and near Beijing, while Shaanbei and Gansu were very sparsely populated and literati culture had a more tenuous grasp; Shanxi Daoists may also be mainly based in the plains. All these elements are further complicated by local histories in imperial, republican, Maoist, and reform eras. From where we stand now, the vexed histories of modern times seem most germane – local politics and personalities, Japanese occupation, radical Communist leadership versus local protectionism, and so on – but imperial historians can doubtless contribute too. It is hard as yet to explain these variations, and we need a far more detailed body of work before anyone attempts to do so, but I look forward to such studies.

Still, I attempt to detect some patterns of distribution in Tables 24 and 25, on the basis of ritual sequences rather than of any explicit transmissions. The 'yinyang corridor' of Part One, denoting occupational lay household Daoists, may extend east-west all along the northern half of north China (Map 1, where the shaded zone shows my projection based on areas where the term has been documented). The ritual repertoires of the north Shanxi *yinyang* have much in common with those of central Hebei (though the term *yinyang* isn't used there, and the practitioners are not occupational), and are of a more 'popular-dramatic' type than the *jiao*-based rituals of south Hebei, Changwu and Gansu; these latter areas appear to have had more historical links with temple priests (though central Hebei did too).

The distribution of *jiao* (Part Two) seems harder to explain. Apart from the sites in Gansu (and Changwu), the other *jiao* pockets are mostly dotted across the southern half of north China; and perhaps we may regard the Baiyunshan in Shaanbei as an isolated outpost. If we had more data for southeast Shanxi, we might be able to establish firmer links between southwest Shanxi and south Hebei,

Table 24 Regional features of Daoist ritual in north China

Table 25 Quanzhen/Zhengyi distribution, temple-based or lay, and *jiao***Quanzhen**

Area	Temple-based	Lay	Temple to lay	<i>Jiao</i>
Baiyunshan	✓		?	✓
South Shanxi			✓	✓
South Hebei			✓	✓
Liangshanpo	✓		✓	
Houshan	✓		✓	

Zhengyi

Area	Temple-based	Lay	Temple to lay	<i>Jiao</i>
North Shanxi		✓		
Hunyuan		✓		
Changwu		✓	✓	✓
Gansu	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gu'an	✓		✓	

perhaps constituting the north of a separate ritual area extending to parts of Henan and Shandong. Gansu and parts of Shaanxi may have commonalities with Sichuan, as in Goossaert's 'western band' (p.206 n.1). But none of these features seem to map onto the distribution of Quanzhen and Zhengyi.

Though I note a few exceptions, what might this paucity of *jiao* (or at least *liandu*–*neidan* practices) in the heartland of the north mean? One might simply posit an impoverishment in modern times, but I doubt it: the rituals themselves are different, and this difference goes back well before Communism. Of the places where the *jiao* is performed, some belong to Quanzhen traditions (south Hebei, Baiyunshan), some to Zhengyi (Changwu, Gansu).

Early history is way beyond my remit in this book; I am content to reveal Daoist ritual traditions going back as far as the late imperial period. But perhaps Chen Kexiu has provided an arcane clue to earlier history in his doggedly musical analysis of the Daoist *shengguan* repertoire in Yanggao.³ He pointed out that the standard pitch e¹, still used by the Daoists there today, seemed to preserve the standard *huangzhong* pitch of the Tang dynasty court, whereas from just further south in Shanxi, around Wutaishan, the pitch is d¹, a tone lower – the standard pitch of the Song dynasty. He surmised that this was a remnant of the post-Tang political division of north China, when the north of Shanxi was controlled by the foreign Liao and Jin dynasties, the south of Shanxi by the Han-Chinese Song

³ Chen Kexiu 1999; for his main arguments, see pp.161–2, 177–80.

dynasty; and that the Tang pitch had been preserved in the northern area. Though even musically Chen's proposition begs many questions, is it possible that we have a similar circumstance in ritual practice too? It seems intriguing that the clearest case we have found of lay household Zhengyi Daoists is from the area around Datong, the capital of the Liao dynasty.

My so-called *yinyang* corridor extends across the northern half of north China, though it does not quite map onto the terrain of the Liao or Jin dynasties. Further south, where we find more *jiao*, the Han Chinese state was mostly in control. The rise of the Quanzhen sect is said to have been a response to the decline of Daoism in the occupied northern area, becoming influential around the time of the Yuan unification. Although Quanzhen and Zhengyi later coexisted, even merged, and the *jiao* is common to both, is it possible that the northern areas have preserved a more ancient and popular ritual style resistant to the dissemination of the Quanzhen elaborations of the *jiao*? Some kind of *zhai* and *jiao* rituals were performed from very early in the common era. Where do the rituals we find today derive from? In north Shanxi, Changwu, or Gansu, if we can be quite confident that *huoju* household Daoist traditions go back at least to the mid-Qing, might we surmise that they go back a lot further, even to before the Song? Did areas under Han Chinese control accept the *jiao* complex more readily, while further north they clung to earlier rituals? Such weighty historical issues are beyond me here, but I hope I have provided some fodder.

Of course, this is only a tiny sampling, but what it does show is that there is no clear pattern! If local priests were Quanzhen, then they lived in temples, but mostly did folk rituals too; there were also Zhengyi temples, whose priests invariably did folk rituals. The performance of *jiao* doesn't seem to align with either Quanzhen/ Zhengyi or temple/lay. The Changwu and Gansu Daoists were Zhengyi, the Julu Daoists were Quanzhen; from both branches, some did *jiao*, others didn't. Can one find other differences in their rituals that align with these features?

It would also be good to assess the regional importance of liturgy/ritual at funerals and temple fairs. For instance, the Hebei plain requires ritual more for funerals than for temple fairs; in north Shanxi, rituals are performed for both, and they are rather similar; some areas (like Shaanbei, and Wutai county) now rarely use liturgy at all for either. I have less information on south Hebei; I would expect that where they do *jiao* they also do *zhai*. Perhaps the most common manuals still used today are funerary (often containing the term *yikeben* or *keyi* in their title); surviving manuals for *jiao* are less common, and less used.

Apart from my proposed dichotomy between the *jiao*-type rituals and the more popular ones, another task for the future is to analyze all the implications of commonality and variation *within* these two types of ritual structure. So one might wish to analyse the commonalities within the *jiao* corridor, and then compare them with the better-known southeastern form; and also to analyse the commonalities within the more popular-dramatic rituals of my '*yinyang* corridor', still more distinctive. One discerns equivalence between rituals like the *san xianli* of Changwu and the *zhuanyuan* of Yanggao, for instance. Assuming, indeed, that

the reports are correct, why in some areas is the silver bridge climbed first, in others the golden bridge first? Why do the Julu Daoists only do Crossing the Bridges just before the burial? Why is the placard only posted on the third day in Changwu? Is it normal to escort the gods away before the *yankou*, as in Daixian and Changwu? Is the elaboration of the dream sequence in the Libations of Tea in Gaoluo a distinctive sectarian feature? Is the use of puppets in Beholding the Lanterns unique to Beijing and the area just south? We should begin by comparing these northern sequences with each other, not just with those of Fujian or with ‘classical’ accounts from ancient texts in the *Daoist Canon*. But my preliminary aim for this book is far more modest: first we need to be aware that there are rituals to analyse.

As to the sonic aspect of ritual, most groups in the countryside (including rural towns) included *shengguan* instrumental music; further west (Gansu), it has become less necessary, but grand public rituals are still important. Only the tiny minority of grand élite temples eschew melodic instrumental music (p.22), but it is not always part of local transmissions, or it may decline; conversely, in parts of Hebei it is the main survivor of ritual practice, vocal liturgy declining instead.

On a more social tack, given that Daoist (and Buddhist) temples were everywhere until the 1950s, why was it only in the area just south of Beijing that we found them transmitting ritual to local *amateur* groups? Why did Daoist and Buddhist ritual in most areas remain the preserve of occupational groups? My material from central Hebei gives a rather clear picture of how ritual was transmitted from temple-dwelling priests to laymen, and may offer a rough blueprint for the kind of transmissions taking place in areas like Gansu or south Hebei, where temple priests performed folk rituals occupationally and then performed them occupationally as laymen, bolstered by other laymen who had not been temple-based. But what I can’t explain is why the pattern of *amateur* associations supplementing or supplanting the rituals of the priests seems largely limited to central Hebei. Amateur religious groups based on the local community are widespread (pilgrim groups attending Baiyunshan in Shaanbei, the Yaoxian groups, sects in north Shanxi, and so on), but few have a liturgical/ritual dimension of any complexity.

Now that I have added a little to our picture of local rural temple priests, and now that we have blueprints for old Beijing and Tianjin,⁴ what we need is real life stories focused in time, not mere prescriptions. The best such ethnography we have (Herrou 2005, for south Shaanxi) documents a temple whose priests perform plenty of services for the local community, but appear not to perform group rituals outside their temple. How much land did local temple priests own, and did they till it themselves or rent it out to villagers? Did such income suffice to support them? Given that dependence on opium was often a factor in priests selling off temple artefacts and buildings, how many of them smoked opium, and where did they get it? Within their home temple, did they perform morning and evening services, and

⁴ Goossaert 2007, Zhang Xiuhua 1982, Fu Dongkui nd 1 and nd2, all cited in Appendix 1 below.

rituals on the 1st and 15th of every moon? Did people come to the temple to have their fortunes told, and for locket rituals protecting children? Outside their temple, did they work with priests from other temples to perform folk rituals, and did they further work with laymen? What proportion of their time was spent performing such rituals, and what proportion of their income did it represent? Did priests staffing small local temples learn how to perform a *jiao*? Surely the expertise was available. Anyway, it wasn't a temple monopoly – lay Daoists do it in Fujian, so why not in north Shanxi? Like chicken and egg, if there was a local folk tradition demanding it, surely they would have to perform it. How did all this change over time, and vary by region? With what kind of local and broader issues (economic progress, migration, weakening of community spirit, pop culture, and so on) have they been interacting since the 1980s' reforms?

It is not so simple as either temple-dwelling or lay. My material only begins to hint at the complexity of local social relations. The simplest case seems to be that of occupational lay hereditary Daoist households like the *yinyang* of north Shanxi. Elsewhere, one begins to deduce that many 'Daoists' did occupy a temple at some stage, perhaps keeping a family in the nearby village. Most temples were small and decrepit, with a staff of one or two – though some I have cited had staffs of a dozen to twenty. In some cases, lay ritual specialists clearly learnt their skills from temple priests.

For instance, the terms *huojudao* ('fire-dwelling Daoist') and *jia heshang* ('fake monk') (p.13) are not used rigorously. They might denote a ritual specialist who spent most of his time serving a particular temple; a temple-trained cleric who has left the temple, married, and continued practising folk rituals; or even a lay disciple of a temple-dwelling cleric. Though my material offers glimpses of the exchanges between temple and lay, more detailed life stories based on long-term fieldwork might show how boys were given to a local temple in infancy, learning ritual skills, performing folk rituals by their teens, returning home occasionally or regularly, perhaps marrying and keeping a family, leaving the temple or spending less time there, still taking part in folk rituals, perhaps returning to look after the temple in later years. Their own sons might acquire ritual skills within the household, might take part in ritual bands both within the household and with temple priests, and might themselves spend some years in temples. Adoption was common, and boys might become ritual 'sons'. Both in temples and lay ritual households, if personnel did not suffice to keep transmission and practice within the immediate family, then the extended family came into action.

10.2 Daoist ritual in 'north' and 'south' China

Some differences between Daoist ritual practice and vocabulary in 'north' and 'south' China are summarized in Table 26. Of course, by 'south China' we tend to mean southern Fujian and Taiwan (with an honourable mention for Shanghai), where outstanding work has been done. One could make comparisons between

Table 26 Ritual activity and vocabulary of Daoists in ‘north’ and ‘south’ China

South	North
one solo Daoist common as director of rituals	group of 5–12 standard
Daoist may employ ‘musicians’	Daoists <i>are</i> the musicians
<i>jiao</i> Offering ritual	mainly in southern area (see Map 1, and Table 21)
<i>liandu</i> Transmutation ritual	rare
<i>gongde</i> merit rituals	rare (mainly funerals, not commemoration)
<i>pudu</i> universal salvation	term not used, though calendrical exorcistic community rituals are held
<i>neidan</i> within rituals: visualization, etc.	no
‘bureaucratic’ ritual base includes <i>sugi</i> , <i>chaoshi</i> audience rituals, <i>danghui</i> , <i>fendeng</i> , <i>jintan</i> , <i>jinbiao</i>	‘dramatic’ ritual base includes <i>qushui</i> , <i>yangfan</i> , <i>paofang</i> , <i>duqiao</i> , <i>guandeng</i> , <i>yankou</i>
cults to local deities	some, but rarely based on ancient territorial personages
<i>fenxiang</i> division of incense	term not used, but parish (<i>she</i>) common
ordination and branches: certificates, connections with Longhushan, Lüshan, Wudangshan, Gezaoshan, Maoshan, Huashan, etc.	none of these, though former temple priests have generational names
redheads, blackheads	no
mediums mainly at service of community cult, not healers	mediums mainly healers, then directing a group of people they have cured to worship the deity; not connected with Daoists
Daoist directs medium	no
medium self-mortifies	no
mediums may appear at <i>gongde</i> merit rituals	Daoists have no connection with mediums, certainly not at funerals
<i>xiaofa</i> ‘minor rites’	term not used; exorcisms (<i>anzhai</i> , <i>jingzhai</i>), rain rituals, etc. sometimes performed
Mulian story common	rare; at least, rarely elaborated into ritual drama

ritual practice within 'the south', as Lagerwey and Dean have done splendidly for different regions branching out from south and west Fujian – let alone vast areas like Hunan, Zhejiang, and Sichuan. But even to make this comparison between 'north' and 'south' is to skew the picture, privileging southeastern practice; I would reinforce Dean's hint that we shouldn't take the Daoisms of south Fujian and Taiwan as some kind of standard.⁵ Indeed, some of the comparisons in Table 26 may not stand up to close local scrutiny, but they at least reveal disparities between actual local practices and received wisdom about Daoist ritual. In particular, local traditions like Lüshan Daoism in the southeast appear to equate more closely with many features by which I characterize 'northern' ritual practice.

As we saw, whereas scholars of Daoism have quickly moved from privileging it as the pivot of local cultures towards identifying it as one element in a complex whole, for north China we still need to establish that it has even a basic presence in that whole. Thus while the 'classical' *jiao*-type rituals are far from dominant in the southeast, even a fine summary of Daoist ritual like that of Dean 2000 is virtually unrecognizable to me from my work in north China; indeed, generally the entries in both the *Daoism Handbook* (Kohn 2000) and the *Encyclopedia of Taoism* (ET) look more than ever like works on southeastern Daoism. It is rather as if our knowledge of Christianity in the whole of Europe were based almost entirely on Sicily and Puglia, with the odd footnote on the Vatican and Westminster Abbey. We may *like* what we find in those places, perhaps considering it more exalted, mystical, and ancient – but that is another issue.

The *jiao-liandu* complex (§1.3) was a basic element of ritual of the Baiyunguan temple in Beijing (Min Zhiting 1995), and survives in pockets of the northern countryside (see above, and Map 1), but these '*jiao* pockets' seem thin on the ground. In large areas of the countryside, we find no *jiao*, no *liandu*, no *chaoshi* audience rituals; cosmic visualizing and the grinding of teeth are very rare. The terms *daochang* and *gongde* are not entirely unknown, just rarely used. Scholars like Lagerwey impressively list southern lineage traditions, but I have hardly heard such vocabulary in north China. There, no-one will tell you of Lüshan or Longhushan transmissions, blackheads or redheads, *gongde* or *xiaofa*, *fenxiang* networks; no-one (as far as we know) ascends sword-ladders or crosses burning coals. It is not that my survey somehow targets a more folk layer of Daoism: as the fieldwork in Taiwan and south Fujian shows, Daoist ritual there was not just an élite temple tradition, but was deeply rooted in local folk households. Someone with the erudition of a Lagerwey or Dean may be able to unearth equivalences in the north to all the subtle esoteric mysteries described for Taiwan, but even if so, we shouldn't describe north in terms of south.

In north China, what we find instead are varied regional programmes performed by several different types of Daoists. But I think we can characterize them generally as dramatic; while southern *jiao* are indeed highly dramatic, they revolve around a bureaucratic–esoteric core. Having surveyed the amateur folk ritual scene south

⁵ Dean 2000: 662.

of Beijing, itself derived from the more popular rituals of the temples, we find a ritual sequence (Chasing Round the Quarters, Crossing the Bridges, Beholding the Lanterns, and so on, as well as *yankou*) that overlaps substantially with the rituals of the lay Daoists further west, and has little or nothing in common with the grandiose bureaucratic–esoteric sequences of the *jiao*. So might the scarcity of the bureaucratic rituals in the north suggest that northern practice predates the medieval elaboration?

Having found *jiao* in only a few areas, will we find more? Whether we do or not, I think I have shown that it is not necessarily a central part of Daoist ritual in north China. Why is the distribution of *jiao*, and indeed the distribution of Daoists, so patchy? Is it to do with location of temples in imperial times? That, I feel, can only be one element. Large urban temples were not necessarily the main base of folk ritual, and rural Daoists didn't necessarily have any links with them. In north Shanxi again, we found lay Daoists near Hengshan, but the lay Daoists around Yanggao had no obvious connection with any major temple, either in the county-town or in the countryside.

Rather than asking why *jiao* and *liandu* seem so rare in the north, we might try asking why they seem so common in the south. Or are they? I gather that even in the southeast, there may have been an undue stress on the *jiao* within Daoist ritual practice, let alone popular religious behaviour. Of course, early Daoist texts (like those in the *Daoist Canon* – from the Song dynasty onwards), as well as living southeastern practice, encourage scholars' emphasis on *jiao*. But in large swathes of north China, the *jiao* is unknown, and this is not just a recent erasing. Maybe my view is biased, not having done much work in the *jiao* pockets; indeed, fieldworkers who have unearthed Daoist practice in north China, including myself, have not been Daoist scholars. The scarcity of complex liturgy at northern temple fairs is not so recent; mediums, pilgrim groups, and entertainment associations have long dominated. Rituals in southeast China found in the *Daoist Canon* had a long ancestry there since the 12th century. What was it about the socio-economic history, and perhaps the religious imagination, of the southeast that stimulated such elaborations? And can we surmise that northern practice has retained an earlier, less baroque ritual system?

We should beware idealizing the past, but though rituals survive, those using short memorized hymns and chants look to be replacing the reciting of lengthy scriptures. Daoist ritual has long been a fine spectacle, but ostentation is gaining ground at the expense of formal complexity. For funerals, I noted that in recent decades the more spectacular public rituals (Crossing the Bridges, the Pardon, and so on) have declined, leaving mainly the more routine visits to the coffin (like *songjing* in Yanggao, *jianling* in Daxing), not unlike the routine scripture recitations in pre-Communist Beijing (Appendix 1 below). Given the growing ostentation of funeral practice since the 1980s, this seems ironic; but perhaps the vehicle for ostentation has shifted from liturgical complexity to more mundane manifestations.

In sum, the crucial lesson is that there are plenty of Daoist ritual specialists in north China – besides temple-based priests, lay household groups were common, and since at least the 1950s they have predominated. The priests of small local temples before the 1950s also deserve more attention; they were as likely to be in Zhengyi as in Quanzhen temples, but both might perform rituals for their local communities, often grouping together, and even recruiting laymen. Apart from all these occupational groups, amateur ritual specialists within village ritual associations or sects might also perform related liturgy/ritual.

Detailed fieldwork is needed to explain the diverse local terms for such ritual specialists and the services they provide (see, for instance, my remarks above on *yinyang* and *xiangtou*), and put them within the context of more general religious activities. Material on the living practice of Daoist ritual has expanded greatly, but still mainly concerns south China, and our concepts remain largely based on a limited area of the southeast – which, as the vignettes in this book confirm, should no longer be taken as some kind of standard.

Not subscribing to the ‘rescuing imperial culture before it is too late’ school of thought, I *really* don’t want to say this, but this work is becoming very urgent. Indeed, ethnographers and ethnomusicologists have been repeating this mantra ever since the beginnings of their disciplines in the 19th century. In China, it seemed as if traditions were threatened after the collapse of empire, the Japanese invasion, the Communist victory, and the Cultural Revolution – but it turns out that any of these times would have been wonderful occasions to document local ritual groups. The 1980s were a great time to do so, when traditions were being restored with alacrity – before the loss of community engendered by the economic reforms, mass media, popular culture, and urban migration.

In Yanggao, by contrast with the prestigious senior generation like Li Qing active until the late 1990s, many younger Daoists no longer even study the skills of advising on sites and timings, now learning only a basic ritual programme, or even the *shengguan* music alone. Whom will locals consult when the skills of the old Daoists are no more, and when there remains only an impoverished public display? By the time that intrepid well-trained scholars get round to doing detailed fieldwork in north China, the decline may have continued. But if Daoist ritual and Chinese culture managed to survive so many upheavals through the 20th century against all the odds, maybe there is cause for optimism.

For now, I am content just to give some fuzzy snapshots of north Chinese Daoists, and to note some of their vocabulary, even if I can’t always make sense of it. The Glossary–Index, apart from putting names to hitherto unknown ritual specialists and villages, reveals some of the riches of this ritual vocabulary. Unable to provide answers, I am seeking to open up a forum for discussion. You may scoff at this Daoist scene – that the temples were small and vernacular, household traditions were uninformed, *shengguan* instrumental music was in better repair than vocal liturgy, their ritual practice was debased, they had little if any esoteric expertise (such as visualization, gnashing of teeth), and so on. But these are instances of points along the spectrum of what Daoist ritual practice involves in

China, which surely tallies with our broader modern interest in all manifestations of popular religion. So scholars of élite esoteric Daoist ritual may gnash their teeth more than northern Daoists! I can only hope that scholars with more of a basis in Daoist studies will undertake detailed fieldwork on such local traditions, however belatedly. For all the insights to be gained from historical sinological library work, if you want to know about local life in China, there is nothing like talking with a Chinese peasant.

APPENDICES

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Appendix 1

Ritual practice in Beijing and Tianjin cities

I consign the cities of Beijing and Tianjin to an Appendix, partly because the situation there was and is exceptional, quite unlike the poor countryside that is my main subject. I also consider them separately because, although ritual practices there since Liberation and the reform period have persisted, the scene has been far more radically impoverished than in the countryside; thus the following notes refer largely to the period on the eve of Liberation.¹

The cities, of course, were full of ritual activity before the 1950s. While the major temples with resident priests still practise daily and occasional rituals inside their temples with a clientele of devotees,² folk ritual practice in the city has become rare, even since the 1980s' reforms, although some (now lay) occupational groups have continued to perform funerals in the suburbs. The abrupt decline of ritual in the cities contrasts with the countryside, where it continued (however tenuously) until the mid-1960s, and revived strongly in the 1980s. Interestingly, Shanghai, though obviously also transformed over the modern period, has retained much more of what we may call 'folk' Daoist ritual practice,³ and any study of ritual life in the Jiangnan area would have to include the activities of the major urban temples there.

The extreme variations in wealth in the capital city gave rise to a varied ritual market. Lengthier rituals were held mainly for the more affluent, but most bereaved families (apart from the severely poor) would endeavour to invite Buddhist monks to perform a *yankou* – a shorter (skeleton?!) version was available in the *Mengshan*

¹ Goossaert (2007: 239–73, 333–44) covers this topic well, within his fine ethnography of all aspects of the life of Daoists in Beijing before the 1950s; Naquin 2000 is a broader study of religious life in late imperial Beijing. Chang Renchun 1993 is a remarkably comprehensive ethnography of all aspects of weddings and funerals in old Beijing; for funerals, see pp.183–433 (for ritual specialists, 290–348); see also Chang Renchun 1997. For Daoist ritual, see also the works of Fu Dongkui and Min Zhiting. Yuan Jingfang 1997 (following the pioneering Yang Yinliu 1953) covers the vocal and instrumental music of Buddhist ritual thoroughly, if drily. I will merely add a few comments from the angle of ritual practice, incorporating my talks since 1989 with former clerics; Ju Xi (Beijing Shifan daxue) is now doing further fine work. Tianjin sources are cited below.

² See e.g. Fisher 2006.

³ See e.g. vols in the two series edited by Cao Benye and Wang Ch'iu-kuei, and Yang Der-ruey 2003.

shishi yi.⁴ Buddhists – as always, most numerous (§1.1 above) – were the first choice; Daoists might be hired too, but apparently not on their own; nuns and Tibeto-Mongolian lamas were also hired for more opulent funerals.

Unlike the ritual programmes of other groups in this book, largely limited to the day or days preceding the burial, more lavish Beijing funerals often took place over a much longer period, punctuating the ‘seven sevens’ (*qiqi*). However, these Beijing rituals, both Buddhist and Daoist, revolved around the recitation of scriptures and litanies during the daytime, and the nocturnal *yankou*. While for more affluent families, Beholding the Lanterns might be added before *yankou* (§9.9), the Beijing material is laconic about other dramatic public rituals.

In his definitive manual on ‘standard’ Quanzhen practice, Min Zhiting gives detailed descriptions of a series of rituals belonging to the type that is more or less familiar from the *jiao* of temple practice. In his list of ‘large-scale rituals of more than three days’, of which the latter rituals are part, he also mentions Fetching Water (*qushui*), and his list for funerals includes the latter as well as Crossing the Bridges and Smashing the Hells; but he doesn’t detail them.⁵ Similarly for Tianjin, though Fetching Water, Chasing Round the Five Quarters, and Crossing the Bridges are mentioned (see below), details are elusive, and such complex ritual sequences seem to have been exceptional. The only major public displays for funerals mentioned by Chang Renchun were the processions for *songsan*, *songsheng–songku* Escorting the Sages and Escorting the Treasures, and the burial.⁶ The more opulent the funeral, the more different types of ritual specialists were hired for more days, but their performances just added more recitations of scriptures and litanies.

Thus by comparison with the folk ritual programmes we have observed just south (e.g. §9.8, §9.9), Beijing funerals were not at all dramatic; the emphasis was on scripture recitation. We saw a hint in §9.9 that the full *yankou* was not so common in rural funerals, so perhaps this even suggests that the more dramatic rituals there were already elaborate enough to obviate the need for it; or, conversely, that the élite *yankou* subsumed some of those functions, like the Invitation or Smashing the Hells.

Also, whereas a village funeral involves most of the village, perhaps the spatial limitations of urban living made it harder to chase around a large arena; although there were local communities within the city, they did not resemble the village. In Beijing and Tianjin there were grand processions that displayed funeral pomp, but such displays were of a very different kind from that of rural Daoists parading through the village and performing in a large public arena near the soul hall.

Buddhist monks were most numerous, and indispensable. The temples we are concerned with here are not the major ‘orthodox’ temples like the Buddhist Guangjisi or the Daoist Baiyunguan, but all the minor *zisunyuan* temples that

⁴ Chang Renchun 1993: 305–6; cf. Picard 2004: 390.

⁵ Min Zhiting 1995: 157–98; list on p.157.

⁶ Chang Renchun 1993: 263–70, 400–423. For the treasury ritual, see pp.46–8 above.

performed rituals (mainly funerals) outside their temples, and indeed lay ritual specialists. Ritual groups were usually of seven, nine, eleven or thirteen. Some groups only performed vocal liturgy, but others also added *shengguan* music, known as *yinyue* since at least the 17th century (Table 27).

Table 27 Terms for ritual styles and ritual specialists in old Beijing and Tianjin

vocal liturgy: <i>chanjing</i> 禪經 <i>chan foshi</i> 禪佛事 aka <i>qingnian</i> 清念, <i>channian</i> 禪念, <i>guanjing</i> 官經, <i>jingchan</i> 經懺	adding <i>shengguan</i>: <i>yinyue jing</i> 音樂經 <i>yinyue foshi</i> 音樂佛事
<i>yankou</i> 焰口:	
<i>chan yankou</i> 禪焰口	<i>yinyue yankou</i> 音樂焰口
	<i>beiyue</i> 北樂 (<i>xiaoguan</i> 小管, or <i>jing yinyue</i> 京音樂)
<i>wai foshi</i> 外佛事 ‘outer ritual’	
<i>kouzi</i> (<i>jingchan kouzi</i> 經懺口子) ‘outlets’:	
<i>lizi</i> 里子 ‘locals’: monks from <i>zisunyuan</i> temples	<i>nanyue</i> 南樂 (<i>daguan</i> 大管, or <i>qie yinyue</i> 怯音樂)
<i>zidi heshang</i> 弟子和尚 apprentice monks	
<i>youseng</i> 游僧 itinerant monks	
<i>jushi</i> 居士 lay devotees	
<i>jushi</i> 居士 groups of lay devotees	
<i>kua laodao</i> 倚老道 ‘bumpkin Daoists’	
<i>jia heshang</i> 假和尚 ‘fake monks’	
<i>zaimentoude</i> 在門頭的 lay sectarians	
<i>fanjing</i> 番經 lama scriptures	
<i>erseng</i> 二僧, <i>youseng</i> 幼僧 nuns (<i>nigu</i> 尼姑)	

The two styles of *shengguan* music we found on the Hebei plain seem to have derived from Beijing temples. The more classical ‘capital music’ (*jing yinyue*) was called *xiaoguan* after the small *guanzi* oboe that leads, or ‘northern music’ (*beiyue*). ‘Rustic music’ (*qie yinyue*) was called *daguan*, led by large oboe, or ‘southern music’ (*nanyue*). The terms ‘northern’ and ‘southern’ music seem to refer to the imperial boundaries of north and south cities;⁷ on the Hebei plain the ‘southern’ style is thought to have become popular only since the early 20th century. As Goossaert observes, the ritual performances of non-monastic priests were subject to criticism ever since the Ming, and were far from a new phenomenon in the 20th century. The use of *shengguan* instrumental music in ritual also had a long history

⁷ For which see Naquin 2000: 5.

in north China; in Beijing, the *shengguan* represented by the Zhihuasi temple was already a well-defined tradition by the time that its melodies were enshrined in a *gongche* score in 1694.

Vocal liturgists were known as *chanseng* ‘ritual monks’, monks specializing in *shengguan* as *yiseng* ‘musical monks’. Music scholars visited an impressive number of both in the 1950s and again from the 1980s, and in the 1990s senior former monks, with some lay instrumentalists, were still sporadically doing rituals at the Guanghuasi temple and funerals in the suburbs (Illustration 11). Several audio recordings have been issued since the 1980s of both the vocal liturgy and *shengguan*, including a six-cassette *yinyue yankou*, representing the increasingly rare northern version.⁸

The ‘capital music’ has long been associated with the Zhihuasi temple, but was played by monks in temples throughout the north and east of the city. Yang Yinliu and Yuan Jingfang give substantial lists of former ritual monks from a network of at least seventeen temples. Only 5 of the 19 monks assembled in 1953 came from the Zhihuasi.⁹ Though monks from different temples often combined,



Illustration 11 A *yankou* ritual during funeral in Beijing suburbs 1993, by which time long-laicized Buddhist monks from small temples in northeast Beijing were performing again for folk rituals.

⁸ Cf. Jones 1998: 204–6. Apart from several recordings of ‘Zhihuasi music’, note Zhihuasi 1991. The *yankou* cassettes (Ling Haicheng 1986) include a *yankou* manual, reprinted from the 1922 version of the Longxingsi in Zhengding (§8.5 above).

⁹ Yang Yinliu 1953.1: 3. Yuan Jingfang 1997: 7–8 adds to the list, making 13 known monks from the Zhihuasi in this period; cf. Zhihuasi 1991, booklet 4–6.

temples did not necessarily have to do so; even a rather obscure temple like the Guangji'an (at Chaoyangmenwai dongdaqiao) had a full quorum. In 1993 three former monks survived from the Guangji'an: Mingsheng (b. 1907), Benxing (b. 1923), and Huiming (b. 1929). Benxing had entered the clergy at the age of 12 *sui*. He recalled his colleagues at the Guangji'an (Table 28).¹⁰ The specialities listed are only that: most monks were versatile at vocal liturgy and percussion. Other temples in this network included the Chengshousi, Guandimiao, Jiuding niangniangmiao, and Dizang'an. Groups of Buddhist nuns, known as 'second-class monks' (*erseng*), also performed for funerals; those from the Xianyingsi nunnery even added *shengguan*.

Table 28 Ritual monks of the Guangji'an temple, Beijing, before the 1950s

Guangjun 廣俊	vocal liturgy, drum, <i>dizi</i> , <i>yunluo</i>	master of * below
Yusheng 裕聲*	<i>guanzi</i>	?–1954
Fasheng 法聲*	<i>guanzi</i>	?–1970
Shansheng 善聲*	<i>dizi</i>	?–1945
Quansheng 全聲*	vocal liturgy, <i>guanzi</i>	?–1959
Liansheng 連聲*	<i>yunluo</i> , drum	?–1986
Xiangsheng 祥聲*	<i>sheng</i> , <i>yunluo</i>	?–1937
Desheng 德聲*	vocal liturgy, <i>guanzi</i>	1898–?
Mingsheng 明聲*	<i>guanzi</i> , <i>yunluo</i>	b. 1907
Benwang 本旺	<i>sheng</i>	?–1970
Benli 本利	<i>guanzi</i>	1927–?
Benxing 本興	<i>dizi</i> , <i>yunluo</i>	b. 1923
Huiming 慧明	<i>guanzi</i>	b. 1929

For funerals, apart from the *chanjing* and *yinyuejing* traditions, both performed by temple-dwelling monks, there was a more popular layer of 'outer ritual' (*waifoshi*). This term seems to have been used in different ways. We see below that in Tianjin, *waifoshi* referred to the more popular ritual items such as Chasing Round the Five Quarters and Crossing the Bridges. But for Beijing, Chang Renchun applies it to the singing of rather popular vocal songs, both by monks in the minor temples and by lay practitioners from 'outlets' (*kouzi*: 'scripture outlets' *jingchan kouzi*).¹¹ These 'outlets' were sometimes temples, but were often like market stalls run by an agent, with a placard advertising 'religious services provided' (*zhuanying foshi*, more literally 'specializing in responding to religious ritual'), such as the Zhiyuantang and Deshantang stalls in the market at Beixinqiao – an area where many of the small temples with *shengguan* were concentrated.

¹⁰ Cf. Yuan Jingfang 1997: 8–9.

¹¹ Chang Renchun 1993: 333–6.

The backgrounds of the pool of practitioners at the call of these outlets were, as Chang Renchun says, ‘extremely complex’. Some were priests from the minor *zisunyuan* temples; some were ‘apprentice priests’ (*zidi heshang*); some were ‘itinerant monks’ (*youseng*) living among the people. None of these three types were ordained; they were also known as *lizi* (‘locals’?). Some lay devotees (*jushi*) also took part in this informal market.¹² This sounds very like the Daoist scene in republican Suzhou that inspired Chau’s term ‘ritual jamming’.¹³ It is strange that we seem to have few references to this phenomenon, as it was presumably a feature of larger cities. I am sure Chang’s brief description provides a clue to the ambiguous status of some of the ritual performers who were coming out of the woodwork from the 1980s, but it is getting a bit late to glean much further information.

At least one lay group was still active in the 1990s, the Zhang Guangquan *yueshe* in Haidian, northwest Beijing (a rural suburb not so long ago), quite separate from the temple style of the Zhihuasi network in the northeast city. Zhang Guangquan (1903–after 1992) came from a hereditary lay tradition, playing the more popular style of *shengguan* with large *guanzi*, and combining with liturgists from a variety of backgrounds. Zhang taught his sons in the 1950s, and the group was active until 1964. The sons, erstwhile army recruits, have maintained the family tradition as instrumentalists. By the 1990s, in the absence of more expert practitioners, they sometimes joined with liturgists from among former monks to perform rituals for the Guanghuasi temple, headquarters of the Beijing Buddhist association, as well as doing occasional funerals in the suburbs and even more occasional concert performances. In the new quest for imperial antiques and foreign fame, the Central Conservatoire had already jumped on the Zhihuasi bandwagon, and the Haidian group also gained a certain profile as the ‘Beijing Buddhist music ensemble’, though by now a ragbag of already diverse styles little informed by ritual priorities.¹⁴

Beijing Daoist temples

Daoists were far fewer in Beijing. The main Daoist temples performing funerals were the Dongyuemiao and Huoshenmiao, both Zhengyi temples; and they worked with priests from other temples too.¹⁵

¹² The latter also sometimes formed separate groups to perform funeral liturgy; mostly amateur, some went on to take fees, and might have as much ritual expertise as temple monks: see Chang Renchun 1993: 304–6.

¹³ Chau 2006a: 175–9. On p.11 (n.19) above, I questioned the term for the routine collaboration between local rural groups, but perhaps the conditions of major cities enabled such a market. Note the term *yingshi* again, cf. pp.36, 74, 85.

¹⁴ This paragraph is based on my Beijing fieldwork from 1986 through the 1990s, as well as their published recordings. But note again ongoing work from Ju Xi.

¹⁵ For a map and statistics, see Goossaert 2007: xiv–xv, 14. Among sources on the Dongyuemiao, note Goodrich 1964; Zhao Shiyu 2002: 379–412.

Fu Dongkui (1911–2000?) was pledged to the Dongyuemiao at the age of 7 *sui*, but despite his family's poverty, first attended private school (*sishu*) before entering the temple at the age of 9 *sui*. The rule, according to Fu, was that children could not formally enter the clergy before the age of 13 *sui*, but most of the monks (and priests) that we met above had also entered before. The *dong* element in his name was the 22nd character in the temple's 28-character generational poem.¹⁶ Though the temple was second only to the Baiyunguan in prestige and worship, Fu was one of only twelve Daoists in the temple. He began taking part in rituals outside the temple when 15 *sui*. He married in 1942. The temple was no longer active after Liberation, but Fu only cut his hair and removed his robes during the *sanfan wufan* campaigns of 1952 (cf. p.189).

The Dongyuemiao often combined with a few other junior temples to perform funerals; the Huoshenmiao (at Di'anmen) had six or seven Daoists, others fewer, like the Niangniangmiao (at Xizhimen) or the Yaowangmiao (at Dongzhimen). Despite the constant attendance of people offering incense at the Dongyuemiao, Fu recalls that they were busy performing rituals outside the temple for at least 15 days a month, or 20 days including *yankou*. There were 20 hereditary servants on rotating duties at the temple, who could presumably look after it while the Daoists were out.

Fu Dongkui does not mention ritual activity such as *jiao* at the temple's major annual fairs, though he discusses the *baibiao* Worshipfully Presenting the Memorial and other routine rituals within the temple.¹⁷ In his rather detailed account of liturgical practice he stresses how much had been lost within his generation; but he does not itemize lengthy ritual sequences, and the repertoire looks quite austere. Though they often worked with the Huoshenmiao, the Dongyuemiao Daoists held back from teaching them some of their vocal repertoire.

Fu only mentions Daoist *shengguan* vaguely as a long-lost tradition.¹⁸ There is slight evidence that Daoists of the Dongyuemiao and Huoshenmiao included melodic instrumental music. Yuan Jingfang lists two *sheng* players from the Huoshenmiao.¹⁹ In 1993 I met, all too briefly, Guan Songshan (b. c1918), a former Daoist priest from the Dongyuemiao; he was still playing a lovely silver-plated small *guanzi* he had inherited from his master. So I don't know quite what to make of Fu's silence on the subject – were those instrumentalists perhaps part of a separate pool more loosely attached to the temples, like the *lizi* we noted above? Fu does at least mention the percussion suite known as *Fendiezi*, still played by many amateur ritual groups on the plain just south (Table 23 above).

¹⁶ Beginning *Gui zong liu shou quan zhen dao* 貴宗留守全真道, it is not among the many Zhengyi poems listed in Koyanagi 1934: 105–9.

¹⁷ Fu Dongkui nd1: 8, 10–13, 14–19; brief mention of *jiao* on p.15.

¹⁸ Fu Dongkui, nd1: 7; cf. Chang Renchun 1993: 291–2.

¹⁹ Yuan Jingfang 1997: 11.

Fu mentions a distant excursion to Handan in south Hebei (§4.2) to Fetch Water in the event of drought.²⁰ This brief reference may suggest some connection between the rather complex *jiao* traditions of the Handan Daoists and the Beijing temples.²¹

The Baiyunguan is, and was, altogether exceptional. Though it still performs impressive rituals, its main duties consist in reflecting state/Party religious policy. Its vocal liturgy has been subject to constant remoulding. By the 1950s it had lost its distinctive local melodic style in favour of the more standard *shifangyun* style of Quanzhen liturgy, with influence from the Jiangnan region and perhaps from Shaanxi. The publications of the distinguished abbot Min Zhiting are splendid prescriptions, but as a source on the Baiyunguan, they need further scrutiny – he studied and practised mainly in Shaanxi.

I have seen no evidence that the Baiyunguan ever used melodic instrumental music. This made even more incongruous their addition around 1990 of a conservatory-style ensemble modelled on the silk-and-bamboo of the Jiangnan region, as part of official efforts at rapprochement with Taiwan and Hong Kong. Such ‘Daoist orchestras’ were becoming part of the official modern pan-Chinese image in Shanghai and Hong Kong, part of what Yang Der-ruey (2003) characterizes as a shift from ritual skills to discursive knowledge, although it represented only the official tip of the iceberg. Along with the commodification of ‘Buddhist music’, this was another nail in the coffin of Beijing ritual.

The schedule within the temple was busy. Koyanagi, resident there in the early 1930s, mentions no funeral activity outside the temple, but they did perform outside the temple for the most élite patrons. Zhang Xiuhua’s account of the notorious 1946 immolation of the clerics An Shilin and Bai Quanyi claims that they were murdered the night they came back from performing a *yankou*; his version, sadly not attested elsewhere, is that after turning themselves in, thirteen of the Daoists responsible for the murder were allowed to go back to complete the service, and were arrested at gunpoint afterwards.²²

A final, exceptional, element in Beijing funerals was Tibeto-Mongol lamas, who performed ‘lama scriptures’ (*fanjing*), mainly for the Qing nobility. Of lamaseries able to perform for funerals, apart from the Yonghegong, which performed almost only for the imperial kin, Chang Renchun lists the Huangsi at Andingmenwai, the Heisi at Deshengmenwai, and, within the city walls, the Longfusi, Huguosi, and Baitasi.²³ They also acquired *shengguan*, perhaps only in the 20th century, to attract custom. Qi Youzhi and former temple priests said the latter three temples

²⁰ As described for the late imperial and republican periods by Pomeranz 1991.

²¹ Fu Dongkui nd1: 12; for a nearer rain procession, see Fu Dongkui nd2: 70–71.

²² Zhang Xiuhua 1982: 199–200. 26 items of the vocal liturgy of An and Bai were notated in 1944–5 (Shi Xinmin 2005: 35).

²³ Chang Renchun 1993: 287.

used *shengguan* in a somewhat different style, and they seem to have played in the ‘rustic’ ‘southern’ style, adding small shawms to the ensemble.²⁴

Tianjin

I have not done fieldwork in Tianjin city, but we have a useful autobiographical article on Daoist ritual practice there, as well as an account of Buddhist practice before and after Liberation.²⁵ These articles link up with my remarks on central Hebei.

For Daoist ritual, we have a detailed account by a leading Daoist, Zhang Xiuhua (1892–after 1965). Written as his last testament in the tense times of 1965, it proclaims his delusion in working as a Daoist for over thirty years until 1949, but though it often reads uncomfortably as a confession and inducement to betrayal, it contains interesting material on ritual practice.

Zhang Xiuhua was the third generation in his family of Daoists at the Tianhougong, commonly known as Niangnianggong, outside the east gate of Tianjin – the ‘west temple’ (*ximiao*), as there was another Tianhougong further east of the city (and a total of 16 in the vicinity). Like most Daoists in Tianjin, they belonged to a Qingwei Lingbao branch;²⁶ this seems to have been the largest Daoist temple in Tianjin.

Zhang’s father was an opium smoker, relying on extra income from performing rituals outside the temple – although this again feeds into the official myth (p.18). Zhang Xiuhua still managed to attend *sishu* private school from the age of 6 *sui*, but his father died in 1901. By 1904 his mother cajoled him into joining the temple. There were two ‘classes’ (*ban*), with apprentice Daoists from different temples. His master, He Yourong, was responsible for teaching them all the necessary ritual skills: learning the scriptures, singing the vocal liturgy, playing percussion and melodic instrumental music. But in practice He’s son He Chengyue did most of the teaching, and he did not play the melodic instrumental music, so Zhang ‘didn’t learn any real skills’; when they went out to perform rituals, they took the first class, leaving the second class behind to look after the temple. Eventually Zhang was taken along, but he was still not making progress on the *guanzi* oboe, vital to the ritual, and he resented the monopoly of the ritual leader, leaving them with no reward for taking part. So after two years he left the temple.

He found work working for a telegraph office and then for a railway company further south, himself picking up an opium habit. Returning to Tianjin in 1911, he was persuaded to return to the temple the following year, aged 20 *sui*. This

²⁴ Several lamaseries in north China incorporated Han-Chinese *shengguan*, as in Wutaishan, Hohhot, Labrang, and Kumbum; see Jones 1998: 31.

²⁵ Zhang Xiuhua 1982, Li Ciyou 1982.

²⁶ The 40-character generational poem he cites, beginning *yi yuan yi dao zhi* 一元以道至 (Zhang 1982: 166), is again not among the many Qingwei Lingbao and Zhengyi poems cited by Koyanagi (1934: 105–9), though it has some lines in common with that for a ‘Zhengyi’ branch (*ibid.*: 107–8).

time he applied himself; kicking his opium habit, he began learning the *guanzi* again with his ‘older brother’ Daoist Cui Xiujie. Though they soon fell out, Zhang now set up his own class of seven or eight apprentices, inviting a *guanzi* player from the Laomugong temple in East Nigu, who played the same style as the Tianhougong Daoists. After two years they had mastered the repertoire, and were able to compete with the main Tianhougong group on ritual business. Zhang claimed credit for overturning the old system by dividing the fees. With his teenage experience working in the secular world, Zhang was now becoming an influential leader, responsible for the liaisons of the *Daojiaohui* (cf. p.41 above) with local gentry and business circles, and in 1919 he became abbot (*zhuchi*) of the temple.

Though Zhang calls their rituals ‘scriptures, litanies, and audience rituals’ (*jingchan chaoshi*), and he mentions the Daoists (and Buddhists) taking part in rituals held for emergencies such as floods, nowhere does he cite the performance of any *jiao*. Again, he distinguishes *yinyue jing* and *chanjing*, with or without melodic instrumental music; the Tianhougong was in great demand for its *yinyue jing*. A group of 13 was common, though 11 or 15 priests might take part. This ritual market was largely, but not entirely, for the city élite.

I mention Zhang’s emphasis on the *guanzi*, by contrast with Fu Dongkui in Beijing, to remind us how the *shengguan* music might be considered intrinsic to the success of a ritual group: Daoist priests would learn this along with the vocal liturgy, and it was not separate from the ‘main’ ritual repertoire. He lists other Zhengyi temples with *shengguan*: the Chenghuangmiao and Yuhuangge (Yuhuangmiao), as well as the Damo'an Buddhist temple. Of *chanjing* temples, he mentions the Fushougong and Shuiyue'an, and the Buddhist Dabeiyuan (for the Buddhist temples, see below).

Though ritual was their main income, Zhang also gives nice details of other methods of ‘conning people’ within the routine business of the temple, including incense money, lantern oil, fulfilling vows, casting divination sticks, choosing baby dolls for fertility, hanging lockets to protect children, and activities connected with devotion to the five animals (*wudajia*) and the Wang San nainai cult.

Zhang mentions the increase in demand leading to a need to make up numbers with Daoists from outside Tianjin, known as ‘bumpkin Daoists’ (*kua laodao*). In Part Three we noted several village ritual specialists from just south having spent time in Tianjin temples; apart from the Yuhuangmiao and Chenghuangmiao, they also mentioned the Lütutang. The Tianhougong is presumably the ‘Niangniangmiao’ in Tianjin mentioned by North Wudaokou villagers; they recalled that *Daobing ji* 刀兵計 (the last character a common corruption of 倭, *gāthā*) was a kind of test-piece in the Niangniangmiao if a group was to be recognized as a folk ritual *yinyuehui*.²⁷

²⁷ Indeed, *Daobing ji* seems distinctive to this small area in the east of the plain; apart from Wudaokou, we only found versions from the Liangshanpo temple, Lijiawu, Junlu, Zhougezhuang, and Zhangzhuang. But it seems to be mainly played as an instrumental version; the nearest vocal text I know is from the Taiqinggong in Shenyang (Qiao Yongjun

Zhang Xiuhua promptly realized that his Daoist life was untenable when Tianjin was ‘liberated’ in 1949, though he still wore his Daoist costume and kept his hair in a topknot until 1951 – contrast the less politically-correct account of Zhang Mingxiang (p.189). He makes no mention of any ritual activity through the 1950s, and as a figurehead of Tianjin Daoism he was doubtless under extreme pressure; he sat on several official religious committees through the 1950s, rubberstamping the submission of religion to the Party. But one fears that his 1965 confession may not have made the end of his life any more peaceful.

For Buddhist ritual, the purpose of a 1982 article by Li Ciyou is not to confess, but to show the debasement of temple ritual by non-monastic performers since 1900; as we saw in §1.3, this is a dubious anticlerical thesis generally, and although temple economies were doubtless increasingly straitened after 1900, I find it unlikely that it was only then that the mass of small temples in Tianjin began to perform ‘scriptural rituals’ (*jingchan foshi*) outside their temples. But at least Li Ciyou’s article provides us with some ritual vocabulary.

These rituals came to include not only the orthodox ‘scriptures and litanies’ (*jingchan*) including the *yankou*, but also ‘outer ritual’ items such as *xuanfan* Suspending the Pennant, *qushui* Fetching Water, *yufo* Bathing the Buddha (*xifo*, both perhaps misrememberings of *muyu* 沐浴), Crossing the Bridges, Chasing Round the Quarters, Smashing the Hells, and Beholding the Lanterns – precisely the kind of items that had long formed the core of folk rituals throughout north China. As in Beijing, and as with Daoism, he notes further distinctions between vocal liturgy (*chan foshi*, *chanjing*) and liturgy with *shengguan* (*yinyue foshi*, *yinyue jing*), and between ‘northern’ and ‘southern’ rituals.

Li Ciyou lists major temples that once rarely performed rituals outside but did so more often by the republican period, such as the Dabeiyuan, Haiguangsi, and Hebei dasi. In Xin'an town in Bazhou (pp.145–6) we heard of the Haiguangsi: monks from Xin'an temples were often invited to take part in rituals there, and many of them went to reside there after they were laicized. Qi Youzhi said it didn’t have *shengguan*. By the 1920s the Dabeiyuan was investing in opulent costumes to attract more ritual customers.

If we cling to neat distinctions, both the scriptural and ‘outer’ rituals were performed by temple monks, but a further distinction arose in the participation in the outer rituals of ‘fake monks’ (cf. p.13). These lay performers came from both Tianjin city and the outlying counties. Whereas a traditional group consisted of between 7 and a maximum of 15 monks, Li claims that with the ritual inflation of the 1920s, groups of seventeen to as many as 53 might be hired. Thus he dates the addition of all the ‘outer rituals’, and the need for ‘fake monks’ recruited from lay sectarians (*zaimentoude*) only to this late period. Li notes the increasing prominence of these laymen as ritual performers.

1990: 130–31). A version is also sung and played as part of the *yankou* in Baiyunshan (§5.1): Yuan, Li, and Shen 1999: 205–8.

Though Li Ciyou lumps the ‘fake monks’ and the *zaimentoude* together, they were not necessarily identical. The former might be ordinary laymen, whereas the *zaimentoude* were sectarians. The whole municipality of Tianjin was a hotbed for sectarian activities, including Hunyuan, Taishangmen, and Tiandimen groups, but there were plenty of laymen taking part in ritual activities who were not sectarians (§8.7 above). Li notes a 1920 conflict between temple monks and sectarians, resulting in the latter being forbidden to dress as monks within the city but being authorized to perform in the countryside.

After this period of extravagance, Li notes a decline from 1942 and a brief revival after the 1945 defeat of Japan. Itinerant *sheng*-tuner Qi Youzhi recalled that the Buddhist and Daoist clerics at the ‘Buddhist temple’ (Fosi) and Chenghuangmiao at the Tianjin North Great Gate had a lot of *sheng* to tune. Nuns (called ‘infant monks’, *youseng*!) also played *shengguan*; the Qi family used to tune *sheng* for the Taishanmiao nunnery and the one in Xiaomalu (‘Small road’). We met several villagers on the plain to the south who had spent time doing rituals in Tianjin temples before Liberation.

After Liberation, right until the early 1960s, people continued furtively to invite ritual specialists for funerals. But as we saw, Qi Youzhi could no longer do business in Beijing or Tianjin cities after Liberation. Li Ciyou may be right that the decline of temples and the taint of ‘feudal superstition’ left any remaining ritual performance at funerals mainly in the hands of laymen, collaborating with any former monks.

Apart from all the groups we mentioned in the Tianjin countryside, some former monks from Tianjin city temples were part of a group formed in the late 1980s under the name of the ‘Tianjin Buddhist Music Ensemble’. They were based in the village of Xinzhuang in the southern suburbs, but they seemed to be less active doing folk ritual than other groups we found later.²⁸ The two senior figures were both former monks, coming originally from Dezhou in north Shandong. Li Lanting (Buddhist name Jilin, b. 1916) was given to a temple there when only 4 *sui*, moving to the Damo'an temple in Tianjin at the age of 20. Li Jinwen (Nengwen, b. 1923) was given to a temple in Dezhou when 7 *sui*, and joined Li Lanting at the Damo'an in Tianjin when he was 18. Both left the clergy upon Liberation. Other members of the group were lay ritual specialists in Xinzhuang, and had all taken part in folk ritual from young. Apart from the Damo'an, several other Buddhist temples in Tianjin are listed as performing folk rituals.²⁹

* * *

Apart from the daily rituals within the major temples attended by laypeople, the folk ritual scene in Beijing and Tianjin cities was effectively stifled upon Liberation, despite valiant efforts to keep Buddhist ritual music on life support for

²⁸ Zhang Shenglu 1989, 1989a; Jones 1994, and my talks with them in 1989 and 1993.

²⁹ Zhang Shenglu 1989a: 66.

cultural purposes. Though there was some limited folk activity until 1964, even since the 1980s it remained scant. Daoist ritual was monopolized by the official image presented by the Baiyunguan, thoroughly reinvented. By contrast with the lively scene in Shanghai, these were largely defunct traditions.

But even before the upheavals of the 20th century, ritual in Beijing and Tianjin, with its emphasis on scriptures and litanies, looks rather different both from the folk scene we have surveyed in north China, and from ritual programmes further south, such as *jiao* and mortuary sequences. But we have seen how monks and priests, as well as lay ritual specialists, from the countryside just south might take part in rituals in Beijing and Tianjin; and they apparently learnt their rituals not from the larger élite temples there, but from the many smaller folk temples.

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Appendix 2

Some ritual songs in central Hebei

The two sombre catalogue arias ‘The Lament of the Skeletons’ and ‘The Twenty-four Pious Ones’ were among the most moving parts of folk funerals in pre-Communist Beijing, and ritual associations in central Hebei were still singing them in the 1990s. In Beijing and Tianjin they belonged mainly to the ‘outer rituals’ (Appendix 1), although the Skeleton song features in ‘standard’ ritual manuals of both Buddhism and Daoism. The two arias are optional for the evening before the burial. They are similar: slow, highly melismatic, with sobbing cadences on *la* and *so*. The Liujing liturgist Zhang Dejin said that the two were alternatives.

‘The Lament of the Skeletons’ *Tan kulou* is sometimes described as a song (*Kulou ge*). In some manuals it is called an incantation (*Kulou zhenyan*) – temple manuals contain a final Sanskrit section, but this is rarely sung. In some manuals, like that of Lesser Huangzhuang, it is even called a hymn. In typical folk variation, *kulou* 骸體 is sometimes written with the characters 哭樓 ‘weeping for the mansion’.

This song has a *locus classicus* (if we can assume that – cf. §9.9) in the *yankou* rituals of the major Buddhist and Daoist temples.¹ In the Buddhist version it follows the *zhaoqing* Invitation; in the Daoist version it is part of the *poyu* Smashing the Hells segment. We have two transcriptions from the distinguished abbot Min Zhiting at the Baiyunguan in Beijing, ‘Golden’ and ‘Silver’; the latter is a close variant in text to that of the Buddhist *yankou*. They are in three verses each of 28–31 words, beginning *zuori huangjiao qu wanyou* 昨日荒郊去玩游, interspersed with a melismatic ‘*kulou*’ refrain. Most versions add a long coda on the impermanence and suffering of human life. Further afield, Daoist versions from Wudangshan and Shenyang are similar in text and melody.² For south China, Boltz has noted its use in the Lingbao liturgy of Daoists from Zhangzhou in south

¹ For the Buddhist version, see Chang Renchun 1993: 326–7, Ling Haicheng 1986, *yankou* manual 63a–64b and tape 5A; Yuan Jingfang 1997: 218–23. For the Daoist version, see Min Zhiting 1991: 195–205 (Golden), 206–218 (Silver); Chang Renchun 1993: 298–301. See also Picard 2004, Goossaert 2007: 252.

² For *Tan kulou* on Wudangshan, see Shi Xinmin 1987: 131–4, and a *huoju* version, 205–6. For Shenyang, see Qiao Yongjun 1990: 25–34 *Tan Kulou (dayun)*, 101–10 *Xiao kulou (zouma yun)*. For a Wutaishan version, see JCI Shanxi 1610–12; for a Buddhist temple version from Pingluo in Ningxia, JCI Ningxia 821–9.

Fujian, transmitted to Taiwan, where (apart from the names *Kulou ge* and *Tan kulou*) it is also known as *Xinglu tan* ‘Wayfarer’s lament’.³

The Skeleton song is common in central Hebei, but it is not sung in all villages there. Folk texts are variants of those in the ‘standard’ *yankou* manuals. Chang Renchun mentions a popular variant called *Tan qixing*, much in demand after the *zhaoqing* Invitation segment of the *yankou* in folk Buddhist funerals in old Beijing.⁴ It elaborated the theme with seven verses for the seven days, beginning *Yitian laidao guimenguan* 一天來到鬼門關. Not found in temple manuals, it was transmitted orally – it is said to have been incorporated by the Buddhist monk Zhengqing in the Jiaqing era of the Ming (1522–66). Chang lists two Buddhist monks in Beijing famed for their renditions before 1949: Jueshang of the Shifosi temple in Bicai alley in west Beijing, and Baoan of the Zhihuasi temple, both able to move their audiences to tears.

This seven-day version was also still current in Hebei villages in the 1990s. In Baoquan, near Houshan, I recorded Li Yongshu singing it. He called this version ‘Greater skeleton’, whereas the three-day version (as in the ‘standard’ manuals) now more commonly used was ‘Lesser skeleton’. Wei Guoliang, who studied with the Daoists on Houshan, sang a version of ‘Lesser skeleton’; both Greater and Lesser versions were for the *diancha* Libations of Tea ritual. Wei’s sung version is almost identical in text with the manuals of nearby Beihou and more distant Lesser Huangzhuang. The score of the Houshan Daoists contains a *gongche* version, showing that it might be accompanied by *shengguan*,⁵ though I think this was unusual. The song is included in the funeral manuals of Lesser Huangzhuang and the Tiandimen sectarians in Yuanmenkou; the latter sing it for the *songlu* Escorting to the Road ritual. Further west in north Shanxi, a seven-day version (*Tan qiri*) was also in Li Qing’s repertoire, but I have not heard the Yanggao Daoists sing it.⁶

‘The Twenty-four Pious Ones’ (*Ershisi xiao*) is a related ritual song. Although filial piety (*xiao*) is a basic Confucian virtue in rural China, to be displayed by the funeral family, only in the Laishui–Yixian area did we hear ‘The Twenty-four Pious Ones’. A sung catalogue, it was popular in folk funerals (*waifoshi*) of old Beijing (where it was sung before the coffin before the *jiesan* ritual) and also in Tianjin.⁷ We have collected several sung versions, and texts.

³ Boltz 1996: 191, 209–10, 213, 223. Cf. also Hong Kong Daoism, Cao 1989: 192–3, and southern sources cited in Picard 2004.

⁴ Chang Renchun 1993: 326–7. Cf. *Tan qiqi*, part of ‘outer ritual’ in Tianjin, Li Ciyou 1982: 152.

⁵ Cf. alternative versions in Taiwan with or without accompaniment of melodic instruments, Picard 2004: 382.

⁶ There was even a ten-day version, in the manual of the Hunyuan sect cited in Appendix 3 n.4 below: Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.6: 206.

⁷ Chang Renchun 1993: 334, Li Ciyou 1982: 152. For a version sung in distant Yunnan, see Rees 2000: 51, 108.

In East Mingyi, ‘The Twenty-four Pious Ones’ could be sung for the Sitting at the Altar (*zuotan*) ritual. In Yishangying they said it was for the Report to the Temple (*baomiao*), accompanied by *ling* hand-bell, and, as a *duikou* piece with *shengguan* accompaniment, for the *tangji* Hall Offering.

Incidentally, along with the *Dizang scroll* in South Gaoluo (Appendix 3 below), the pious monk Mulian, so common in ritual dramas of south China,⁸ is included in this song, but rarely features prominently in the north, even in local opera.

A very different ritual song is *Puanzhou* ‘The Incantation of Puan’. A long and complex Sanskrit mantra, it appears in ‘standard’ Buddhist ritual, and is performed in most villages in central Hebei as the most efficacious exorcistic ritual song, for 1st moon 15th and funerals. It is generally accompanied by *shengguan*, and a *shengguan* version may be performed for funerals.⁹

⁸ For the central importance of Mulian drama in south China, see e.g. Johnson 1989, Overmyer 2002: 23–48; see also Johnson 1995.

⁹ Jones 2004, index refs. and track 19 of the CD; Picard 1990 – it also entered instrumental repertoires in élite genres such as the *xiansuo shisantao*, and solo versions for *qin* and *pipa*.

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Appendix 3

Precious scrolls of central Hebei

Though quite extensive, study of *baojuan* ‘precious scrolls’, and of the religious groups to which they belong, has been largely limited to historical work on library texts, long detached from their performers. Indeed, ‘armchair sinology’ was the only option during the years of Maoism, as in many fields. Even by the early 1980s, it seemed that ‘unfortunately there are very few materials available for a discussion of sectarian ritual’.¹ Soon after, there was a growing awareness of the persistence of ritual practice in mainland China, but lapses still occurred: ‘We know a certain amount about how *baojuan* were performed, although there are all too few good first-hand descriptions.’² Scholarship on the precious scrolls, as on sects and indeed Houtu, has tended to be more historical and sinological than contemporary and ethnographic; the few descriptions of performances have largely been limited to scant accounts in historical sources.

It is now clear that the past tense is not adequate for many religious practices in China – as we saw, scholars of Daoism like Schipper, Lagerwey, and Dean blazed a trail here. Sinology without fieldwork will only tell a partial story. Even if one wants to know about performance in the imperial period, no laconic historical text can be as valuable as witnessing performance today. That is not at all to say that context and performance practice have not changed.

This Appendix should be read in the wider context of ritual practice discussed in Part Three, notably §9. Among the diverse types of ritual manuals performed in the Houshan area (Yixian, Laishui, and Dingxing counties) are lengthy volumes called *baojuan*, ‘precious scrolls’.³ This term has been used loosely as a general term for sectarian scriptures, and among the texts confiscated by anti-sectarian inquisitors in the Qing dynasty there were various types of ritual manuals.⁴ The term *baojuan* is also applied generally to popular religious literature of various types. Care is needed to distinguish different types of scrolls, performed in different regions by different types of groups.

¹ Overmyer 1985: 186.

² Johnson 1995: 58. The italics for the past tense ‘*were*’ are mine.

³ Overmyer (1999: 3) wisely uses the term ‘precious volumes’, since they are not in fact scrolls, but here I stick with the conventional English rendition.

⁴ Recent *baojuan* compilations also contain a few other such manuals, such as a *Hunyuan baodeng tigu shishi keyi*, of unstated provenance (like most texts in such compilations), Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.6: 201–26.

North Chinese villagers often refer to their ritual texts generally as *jingjuan*, ‘scriptures’. They don’t have many *jing* in the sense of sutras; the term is used, but often to refer to short sung texts. Most of their written volumes are *keyi* ritual manuals. But in this western area of the Hebei plain, they also have *baojuan*, of one particular type: texts specifically titled thus, with 24 chapters (*pin* or *fen*) whose main story is dominated by ten-word form, performed by ritual groups and derived from ‘White Lotus’ sects.⁵ Lengthy moral texts printed on rolls of paper and pleated concertina-like into books, often with a wooden cover, they are vernacular scriptures in colloquial language, devotional epics relating popular morality tales about the gods. But, as I shall explain, they are not ‘books’ but librettos for ritual performance.

Apart from their sectarian ideology, in 1957 Li Shiyu identified six formal characteristics of the scrolls:⁶

- 24 chapters (usually called *pin*, sometimes *fen*)
- opening hymn (*Juxiang zan*) and *gāthā* (*Kaijingji*); closing hymn, including rituals for burning incense
- *baiwen* prose sections
- verse of 4 or 8 lines, seven words per line
- ten-word form, essential
- labelled melodies (*qupai*) at the end of each chapter.

It is this ‘classic’ early form of the scrolls that we find in the Hebei villages. In the 19th century, more popular and simple forms also called *baojuan* became common in south China. As Zheng Zhenduo and Li Shiyu observed, ‘precious scrolls’ collected there, particularly in the Jiangsu–Zhejiang region, are quite distinct from the northern sectarian scrolls: usually short, they are often more secular, related to opera and folk-song.⁷ Johnson (1995) mainly discusses these more recent southern forms, using pre-modern sources to discuss their performance. Such shorter more recent texts also had a period of currency in parts of north China,⁸ but I never heard of them during fieldwork; when villagers in central Hebei had or mentioned *baojuan*, they meant the 24-chapter sectarian scrolls, and this is how I shall use the term here.⁹

⁵ Cf. Johnson’s remarks on taxonomy, 1995: 56–8.

⁶ Li Shiyu 1957: 169–70, also cited by Overmyer 1985: 182.

⁷ See Johnson 1995; cf. DBK opera 521–2.

⁸ E.g. the ‘precious scrolls’ from Shanxi listed by Dong and Arkush (1995: 27–9) and those from Jiexiu county in a 1946 list (Che Xilun 1999: 289–90), none of which are in the classic 24-*pin* tradition.

⁹ In some early descriptions of performances, the term *xuanjuan* ‘proclaiming scrolls’ is used. Indeed, it appears in the scrolls themselves, but I have not heard it used colloquially in north China as a kind of label for the genre. Conversely, it is the main term in Jiangsu – where such performances, by the way, are more often solo. See e.g. Johnson 1995: 66–7.

As Chinese and Western scholars have observed, the precious scrolls are a type of story-telling, descended from forms of popular religious preaching in the Tang dynasty. According to Li Shiyu, however, the precise term *baojuan*, and its common structure, seems to date only from the late Ming, at precisely the time when ‘secret’ sects, for whom the worship of the creator goddess Wusheng laomu was central, were spreading through north China. Official sources are biased against ‘heterodox’ sects, so we might see the precious scrolls as ‘sectarian’ rather than ‘secret’; moreover, in modern times they are performed mainly by ritual associations representing the whole village. References to White Lotus beliefs (including the deity Wusheng laomu, the three yang kalpas, and the Dragon Flower assembly) are common in the manuals of these villages, but not dominant – and we mustn’t assume rebellious intent. Most of the scrolls we have seen appear to have belonged to Hongyang, Hunyuan and related sects. Thus they are not quite ‘popular literature’; although ritual story-telling is a major yet little-known aspect of story-telling in China, the scrolls need to be considered quite separately from the stories narrated by solo bards for rituals of well-being throughout north China, for instance.¹⁰ With the scrolls, ritual takes priority over entertainment, as I will discuss below.

Scholarship on the scrolls perhaps began in the 1830s with the unlikely character of Huang Yupian. A zealous local official campaigning against the ‘heterodox’ sects that transmitted the scrolls around Cangzhou and Julu in south Hebei, Huang was nonetheless close enough to rural practice to give some clues about performance. He noted the relation of ten-word form in the scrolls and in local opera,¹¹ and was fond of criticizing the scrolls not only on the grounds of their dubious historical and religious basis, but also for the vulgarity of their language.

In the republican period, in the new positive climate towards folk literature, Zheng Zhenduo and Lu Xun did valuable work in giving a more appreciative assessment of the literary merits of the scrolls, but I know of no studies of them as performance texts. Remarkably, by the 1950s, when political conditions discouraged the study of folk religion, a few Chinese scholars were aware that the scrolls were living performance manuals, and with considerable bravery transcribed some pieces.¹² Li Shiyu, the senior expert on the sects and their scriptures, also recognized the various formal features of their performance. But from the late 1950s both the practice and its research were highly suspect; it only became possible to perform and research the precious scrolls more openly by the 1980s. But the brief articles on *baojuan* in Chinese musical dictionaries of the 1980s still discuss them mainly as a historical subject,¹³ and they play a minor role in the *Anthology*.

¹⁰ For Shaanbei, see Jones 2009, Part Two, and DVD.

¹¹ Huang Yupian 1982: 59.

¹² Note e.g. Liang Wenda 1953; in Jiangsu, Yi Tang also did fine work.

¹³ *Zhongguo yinyue cidian* 19; on *xuanjuan*, DBK opera 521–2.

Central Hebei

Distribution in north China, as ever, is patchy. Even on the Hebei plain, we have only found the classic 24-chapter precious scrolls in this western area around Houshan. When Huang Yupian was confiscating them in the 1830s, most of the same scrolls (except for the regionally unique *Houtu scroll*) were current in south Hebei and probably throughout the plain and still further afield, but since then they seem to have died out elsewhere on the area of the plain we studied. There should be some further south around Dingxian, where Hunyuan sects are still active, but I have no material. Further afield, we found a sect with a thriving ritual tradition performing classic 24-chapter scrolls in north Shanxi (§2.2, and below); and there are studies for parts of Gansu (§6). Elsewhere, I have little material.

Precious scrolls were and are recited by amateur ritual associations (or their sectarian forebears) rather than by temple priests; their former rendition by the Houshan Daoists seems exceptional. As we saw, the associations also commonly have other types of ritual manuals. But the vocal styles for the scrolls, especially that of the dominant ten-word form, are quite distinct from the rest of the vocal liturgy discussed in this volume. Piety is still evident: all the liturgists we met would only unwrap the scrolls from their blue cloth after washing their hands and lighting incense before an altar. During rituals, the Hebei scrolls are performed by the *wentan* (or *foshihui*) ensemble of between five and ten vocal liturgists alone, accompanying themselves on ritual percussion of *bangzi* or *muyu* woodblock, *qing* bowl, *pengling* bell, *dangzi* gong-in-frame, small cymbals, and drum; interludes are performed on the larger ritual percussion section with *nao* and *bo* large cymbals.

It is exciting to find such living traditions; their vocal performance may be one element that has changed rather little over the centuries. A minor revival was under way in the 1990s, as was evident from the considerable amount of recopying going on between village ritual associations. But we must bear in mind that most surviving scrolls that were not confiscated or destroyed during imperial and modern persecutions are now in the hands of groups that have metamorphosed since the 1940s into more ‘orthodox’ village-wide associations. Though such groups were probably common in imperial times, in some cases they may be of a rather different nature from their imperial forebears.

Performance contexts

Several fine scholars, having noted that the scrolls were meant for ritual performance, go on to focus on their history and early religious affiliations. Naquin and Overmyer mainly discuss the classic form of ‘White Lotus’ scrolls, from a largely text-based historical approach. Necessary as such work is, to me the most significant aspect of our Hebei fieldwork is that living traditions can illuminate the primacy of performance. I have been fortunate to find village ritual groups

performing precious scrolls. They are not just musty tomes to read in libraries: they have always been a living ritual performance art.

Some precious scrolls are performed during calendrical rituals, notably the New Year's observances; some are (or were) performed at funerals; and though I have no evidence for this area, a north Shanxi sect still performs its scrolls as part of vow-fulfilling rituals (see below).

Note, however, that these lengthy scrolls are not recited in full, and probably have not been for a long time. If it takes around twenty minutes to recite one of the twenty-four chapters, it might in theory be possible to perform the whole scroll in around eight hours – but this never happened, and was unthinkable.¹⁴ The reciting of even a couple of chapters is punctuated by lengthy percussion and sometimes melodic instrumental interludes; other ritual business may have to be performed, and singers and audience will need breaks. The Lijiafen liturgists said it would take four or five days to recite the *Houtu scroll* in full, but they didn't mean that anyone had ever done so. The only hint of former complete renditions was over the New Year period. One senior liturgist in Zangguanying claimed that they used to perform the *Houtu scroll* day and night from 12th moon 30th to 1st moon 16th; in South Gaoluo too, the accomplished former generation of liturgists was said to have recited the *Houtu scroll* 'the whole of the 1st moon' – again, presumably meaning until the closing of the altar on the 16th.

However rose-tinted these claims may be, I have heard of no complete performances of any of the scrolls in recent decades. The Hunyuan association in North Qiaotou was among several that used to recite the *Houtu scroll* for 1st moon 14th to 16th, choosing particular chapters at each session. Within their lifetime most senior liturgists had sung no more than a few chapters at a time; Li Yongshu said that even before the 1950s they rarely recited more than two or three chapters of the scrolls, five or six at the most. When people described a venerated former liturgist as 'knowing how to recite the whole *Houtu scroll*', they didn't mean at one sitting, or even during one ritual; they meant that he was familiar with the whole text and all its melodies, and could choose to perform any of the chapters for various rituals over the year. There is an obvious analogy with opera or narrative-singing: though the 'complete' story is in circulation, episodes generally suffice in performance.

The *Houtu scroll* should also be performed for Houtu's birthday on 3rd moon 15th. None of the few ritual associations still making the 3rd-moon pilgrimage to Houshan were performing it on the mountain by the 1990s. Not all village groups that made the Houshan pilgrimage had a version of the *Houtu scroll* – and *vice versa*. The Houshan Daoists had a version of the *Houtu scroll*, but did not perform it during the 3rd-moon festival. Wei Guoliang, who trained with the Houshan Daoists, said that the Daoists only recited it when things were quiet and they had

¹⁴ The private performances described in the 16th-century novel *Jinpingmei* (Johnson 1995: 61–2) lasted deep into the night, but if these scrolls were in the 24-chapter format (which I doubt), I don't believe that this would have sufficed to perform them complete.

nothing to do, as things were too busy at the temple around 3rd moon 15th. He said that the Matou ritual association used to perform it on 7th moon 15th, being far too busy on 3rd moon 15th. Some of the village pilgrim associations were said to perform it on the mountain for the 3rd-moon festival, but again they can only have performed it in part.

But some village associations which observe the Houtu festival in their own village around 3th moon 15th may still perform it then; we were told that the Shenshizhuang associations used to do so. Lijiafen, very near Houshan, used to observe 3rd moon 15th for Houtu in their own village, reciting the *Houtu scroll*; they had not recited it since the mid-1950s, and I doubt if they recited it in full even then. Kongcun and South Gaoluo also used to perform it in their respective villages on 3rd moon 15th, but since at least the 1980s Gaoluo has performed it, in part, only on 1st moon 15th.

As to the scrolls prescribed for funerals, it is still more evident that only excerpts could be performed. In Lijiafen (where the *Demon-queller scroll* was for male deaths, the *Ten Kings scroll* for female deaths, as in several villages), the liturgists said that an individual chapter, only, might be inserted into the Libations of Tea ritual; after Liberation, as funerals became simplified, they just recited the first chapter. By the 1990s they were rarely reciting them at all for funerals.

Ritual practice has of course been simplified in modern times; while ritual performance is still valued in village society, obligations to the gods may now be fulfilled by a shorter ritual performed with diminishing strictness, partially a result of a gradual secularization of society. But such ritual impoverishment is not the main reason why only selected chapters of the scrolls are performed.

So evidence for complete performance in modern times is rather scant, and I can't quite imagine a scenario before the unrest of the 20th century whereby the scrolls were performed complete. So were they really ritual manuals, then? In this area I certainly don't believe they were ever read like a book, for individuals to read silently from cover to cover; I can't be sure this didn't happen in some more literate urban sectarian circles, but it seems an impossible scenario in the villages I have visited. That is not to suggest that the scrolls were not valued for their overall storyline; again, the analogy with opera or narrative-singing is instructive.

Several scholars have shown more gradations of literacy in late imperial China than I will in the following account,¹⁵ but I think this is the basic outline. In most of the north China countryside, literacy was very low indeed until the 1960s – making it hard to recruit cadres able to read out official documents from the county.¹⁶ No women were literate, and few households were able to send their sons to a private school. Anyway, there was very little to read – apart from the village's ritual artefacts. This was still so in the 1990s; though since the 1950s, political

¹⁵ As explored in Johnson, Nathan, and Rawski 1985; see also Schimmelpenninck 1997: 115–24, describing the rather more literate culture of south Jiangsu in the context of folk-song.

¹⁶ E.g. Gaoluo, Jones 2004: 100, 101, 165.

slogans painted on the walls of the village lanes offered a public veneer of literacy, very few households I visited had any books.

So how did village ritual specialists learn to read ritual manuals? They were not recruited from the village élite; some that we met had attended private school for a couple of years, but most were poor peasants.¹⁷ Young boys who were given to temples learnt to read with the ritual manuals as their exclusive texts. The elderly former monk Benxing, whom I used to visit in Beijing in the 1990s, knew his way around the lengthy *yankou* volume, and while I was taking notes, whenever I queried how to write any character (however common, not necessarily one limited to ritual), if he couldn't think of it, his only recourse was to think through the *yankou* and look it up there! So I imagine a rather similar learning process in the villages, with teenage boys learning to read the manuals by imitating their elders as they recited them, until the characters sunk in.¹⁸

But the scrolls were not used as silent reading matter. They were (and are) kept wrapped up in their blue cloth in the association trunk until they needed to be taken out for a ritual performance. So if a lengthy tome like the *Ten Kings scroll* was neither read silently for edification nor performed complete, what was the point of such a magnificent verbal elaboration of the courts of the underworld? Perhaps we also have to incorporate a symbolic function into our view of such scrolls: they might also function as silent protective artefacts.

Such material also suggests a slight adjustment of our terminology describing ritual groups. Naquin (1985) makes a useful distinction between 'meditational' and 'scripture-recitation' sects in the 18th century. Here we are dealing with the latter, but the term may mislead. Reciting the scrolls was not a *raison d'être*, like some kind of book club or Sunday school, it was a means to an end: sects met to perform rituals – calendrical and vow-fulfilling rituals, funerals and exorcisms – for which they used ritual manuals, including the scrolls. And the 'central role of sutra recitation' did not necessarily mean that the sects 'attracted relatively literate followers'.¹⁹

The Hebei scrolls

Within this area where precious scrolls are common, Gaoluo was a treasure trove.²⁰ Below I discuss versions of the important *Houtu scroll* from Gaoluo and other

¹⁷ The *xiangtou* ritual leaders were generally from a more affluent background, but they played no part as liturgical performers.

¹⁸ In north England I once met an illiterate traveller, whose friends had only managed to teach him to recognize headlines from the tabloid *The Sun* – whose recurring themes, ironically, were either 'Gypsies and spongers go home' (what Chinese would call 'negative teaching material') or rather arcane puns.

¹⁹ Naquin 1985: 260.

²⁰ Jones 2004: 31–5, with photos of manuals, and index refs.

villages. The two Guanyintang associations in north and south villages preserve other important 18th-century scrolls, to the deities Guanyin (Baiyi), Dizang, and Zaowang. The *Ten Kings Scroll* was also performed for funerals until the Cultural Revolution. In all, these scrolls deal with the major preoccupations of Chinese villagers: birth (to Houtu and Baiyi), and death (to Dizang and the Ten Kings). The Gaoluo ritual specialists say they were much more familiar with the *Ten Kings scroll*, since it was used for funerals, but it was lost in the Cultural Revolution.

Houtu scrolls

We listed at least seventeen villages in the area that recited versions of the *Houtu scroll* within living memory. We have seen at least part of several different versions.²¹

Li Shiyu kindly directed me towards the only *Houtu scroll* known in collections – also the only known printed edition. The second volume (chapters 13–24) survives of a version believed to date from the Ming dynasty. Its full title is *Chengtian xiaofa Houtu huangdi daoyuan dusheng baojuan*. Remarkably, it comes from Yixian. At the end, four names are listed of ‘charitable gentlemen of Yanshan printing scriptures to convert the masses’ (*Yanshan huazhong kanjing shanshi 燕山化眾刊經善士*); the final page lists two men with ‘the merit for printing and paintings in Hanjiazhuang in Yizhou’ (*Yizhou Hanjiazhuang kanxiang gongde 易州韓家庄刊像功德*).²² Although the closing material gives no dates, Li Shiyu told me he believed this version to date to the late Ming. While concerned more with esoteric sectarian teachings than with narrative, in chapter 16 it features the story of Houtu granting a son to a high official and his wife from Luoyang in Henan, which we also meet in other versions. This ‘Ming’ edition is not known to have remained in circulation in modern times, and the *Houtu scrolls* current around Houshan today (all hand-copied) are in a more popular style, though their origins may be almost as early.

Several versions originating from the Houshan Daoists were still circulating in the 1990s, including one held by Liang Shuming, and new copies held by Liang Shuming and Li Yongshu. Wei Guoliang said that Liang Shuming had taken off the old Matou village copy of the *Houtu scroll*, apparently belonging to the Houshan Daoists. Wei well remembers the story of the *Houtu scroll*, but not having access to a copy, he no longer performs it.

Liang Shuming, indeed, had at least two copies. On the table before his new shrine in Matou in 1993 we saw a recent copy of a *Lingyan cibei Houtu niangniang yuanliu baojuan*. The nephew of the former Houshan Daoist Liang Jiaozhong had a fragmentary copy with this title, which he said was copied from his uncle’s

²¹ For the *Houtu scroll*, see also Xue 2000, Cao and Xue 2000.

²² Listed in Li Shiyu 1957, no.68; Li Shiyu 1961, no.045; and Che Xilun 1999, no.1132, it is reproduced in Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.4: 177–243. It may have come from the collection of Fu Xihua, but I don’t know where he got it.

version; but it seems unrelated to other versions we have seen. Liang Shuming also had a copy of an old manuscript of a *Chengtian xiaofa Houtu huangling dizhi baojuan*. Opening with a series of ‘holy incantations’ (*shenzhou*), in 4, 8, or 12 lines of four words,²³ this version appears to be of great interest, but I was only able to look at it briefly, and he didn’t tell us its origin.

In nearby Liujing, another main centre of Houtu worship, the ritual association also performed the *Houtu scroll* until the Cultural Revolution. In 1995 the ritual specialist Zhang Dejin was hoping to relearn it, having copied part of it from Liang Shuming, but he had made no progress by 1996. Ritual specialist Li Yongshu in West Baoquan claimed to have rescued some scriptures from Houshan after Liberation, including the *Houtu scroll*, but they were burnt in the Cultural Revolution. After the end of the Cultural Revolution he had recopied from memory the first section of the scroll, which, like the fragmentary Houshan copies, was called *Lingyan cibei Houtu niangniang yuanliu baojuan*. In nearby Lijafen, Zhang Yong (b. c1935) borrowed it to make a copy for their *foshihui*, dated 1994 12th moon 1st. Around this time the *foshihui* of South Laoping also made a copy. These associations are all in contact with each other.

Most of the copies in other nearby villages seem to have been lost at the outset of the Cultural Revolution. In Dingxing, Zangguanying had a version; the older generation we met couldn’t recite it, but their seniors could. The old copy was gnawed away by mice, but now they had recopied some of it. Zang Maorong (c1925–1994) had claimed to know it all from memory. Han Yongzhen (b. c1909) used to know it well, but was seriously out of practice. He recalls that their copy was printed, with two dragons on the front cover. An important detail is that they used to recite it day and night from 12th moon 30th right through until 1st moon 16th; this tells us both that it was used at New Year and suggests the kind of time-span needed to perform it complete.

Still in Dingxing, the Yishangying association had a copy made from the Hunyuan association of North Qiaotou in Yixian. In Laishui just east, East Mingyi and Situ made the Houshan pilgrimage before Liberation, but didn’t perform the scripture – not then, anyway. The leader of the Zhao gezhuang association remembered they were going to copy the *Houtu scroll* in 1937, but shelved the plan during the chaos following the 7th July incident. For 3rd moon 15th the Kongcun *foshihui* recited the *Houtu scroll*. East Laoping preserved their copy until the Four Cleanups in 1965. South Laoping also lost their copy, but had a new copy made in the early 1990s; they still read the *Houtu scroll* in part for exorcisms (*anzhai*), but mainly for the New Year’s rituals on 1st moon 15th in the lantern tent.

²³ These *shenzhou* may be an early feature; cf. the opening of the *Gupo tianzhen kaozheng longhua baojing*, Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.3: 423–6.

The *Houtu scroll of South Gaoluo*

The *Houtu scroll* that we know best, and which seems most beautiful to us, is that of South Gaoluo.²⁴ This hand-copied version is called *Houtu niangniang cibei lingying yuanliu baojuan* ‘Precious scroll on the origins of the merciful efficacy of Our Lady Houtu’. Though the copies that we know of in the area are not ancient, the texts may be early; the latest date mentioned in the Gaoluo version seems to be the Chenghua reign period (1465–87) in chapter 12. Like other versions of the scroll common in this area, it describes the young Houtu’s early attainment of divinity, her rescue of Liu Xiu, the young prince of the Han dynasty whose throne has been usurped, and Houtu’s later ennobling when he is restored to the throne; in the second volume Houtu grants a talented son to a childless high official and his wife, who are not local but from Luoyang in Henan – a story also briefly featured in the ‘Ming’ edition.

This latter story resembles Overmyer’s fourth type of precious scroll, wherein a childless high official and his wife are miraculously granted a child, who then goes on to be successful and filial. Overmyer adduces many late versions of this theme that ‘do not appear to be sectarian in origin or content’, but there are early sectarian examples too, like the *Baiyi scroll* from the Ming dynasty (see below).²⁵ We might even see the *Houtu scroll* as a local variant of the *Baiyi scroll*.

This is a beautiful folk tale, distinctive to the region, belonging to the local people, intelligible and entertaining, quite unlike the more arcane Daoist and Buddhist ritual texts. In literary style it is highly vernacular, simple, oral. Indeed, we may see it as a fixed version of folk legend circulating in the region; that is, the stories collected together in the scroll are but one variant of the Houtu legend in folk memory.²⁶ Nonetheless, such scrolls are performed only in ritual contexts.

Ma Xiantu (1902–85), a schoolteacher from Hubenyi village just east of Gaoluo, started copying it in the 6th moon of 1942, and completed it on the 1st day of New Year 1943, adding the punctuation in vermilion as he formally handed it over to South Gaoluo in time for the New Year’s rituals. He states that his reason for copying it was fear of the superstition campaign and the Japanese occupation. Ma Xiantu had originally borrowed it from South Gaoluo to make a copy for his own village ‘to supplement the deficiency of my village Hongyang holy association’. His brother-in-law Shan Hongfu, a South Gaoluo man, saw him copying it and bought paper from Beijing to make another copy for South Gaoluo.

In 1995 we went to Hubenyi to visit Ma Xiantu’s widow and their only daughter Ma Shujuan. Ma Xiantu’s son-in-law, a physical-education teacher in the village, said that the former village association had ‘Daoist scriptures’ (*laodaojing*); it was a Hunyuan association, that recited the scriptures for funerals. Before Ma copied

²⁴ See Jones 2004, index; photos, 89–92.

²⁵ Overmyer 1985: 243; Overmyer 1999: 405 n.10.

²⁶ Cf. Gong Li 1990.

the *Houtu scroll*, the Hubenyi association, like Gaoluo, had scrolls to the Ten Kings, Guanyin, and Dizang.

Before the Japanese invasion, the Gaoluo ritual associations used to go to Houshan for the 3rd moon pilgrimage. Later they observed the Houtu festival in the village: the late lamented ritual leader He Qing recalled that the Japanese troops had once entered the village on 3rd moon 15th, kowtowing in the ritual tent. Did the Gaoluo ritual specialists once perform the *Houtu scroll* at Houshan, or in the village, or both? And did they always perform it at New Year?

Although the copy itself is not old, it is exquisite; indeed, villagers say the older version (from earlier in the republican period) used by Ma Xiantu to make the copies, and which was destroyed in 1966, was less beautiful. The surviving copy is in two volumes, with wood-cut cover, hand-copied with punctuation in red, 235 pages in all, with illustrations in colour between the 24 chapters and at beginning and end – an unusual feature.

In South Gaoluo the *Houtu scroll* survived by a whisker: the six teenagers only studied it for one winter in 1962–63 before the campaigns broke out presaging the Cultural Revolution, and Cai Ran was barely able to rescue it. By the 1990s the performers of the *Houtu scroll* in South Gaoluo were part of a lively ritual association, and were only middle-aged, so there was hope for the continuity of performance of the scroll. They treasure their beautiful copy of the scroll, and they were still performing it in part on the evening of 1st moon 15th. However, all were aware that their vocal skills were undistinguished. Whereas in the 1950s people used to listen with rapt attention as soon as Cai Fuxiang and Li Baoyu (again, ‘old revolutionaries’, as we found so often) started to sing the scroll, by the 1990s New Year worshippers drifted away as the next generation of ritual specialists fudged their way through the opening chapter. This was not just because their performance was mediocre; under the influence of urban pop culture, the whole climate was by now much less receptive to such renditions. The ritual specialists say they were much more familiar with the *Ten Kings scroll*, since it is used for funerals, but alas it has been lost.

Other precious scrolls

Apart from the *Houtu scroll*, most important of the precious scrolls in the area is the *Ten Kings scroll*, performed in part for funerals and found in several villages. The Guanyintang association of South Gaoluo has two important scrolls, the *Dizang scroll* and the *Baiyi scroll*, alas no longer performed. Liang Shuming, the folk collector in Matou (p.172), also acquired several. All these are among the many scrolls confiscated and ridiculed by Huang Yupian in the 1830s in Cangzhou just further southeast; most were associated with the Hunyuan and related sects. Logically, scrolls bearing the name of a deity were also performed on the birthday of that deity.

The Ten Kings scroll

The *Taishan Dongyue shiwang baojuan*, ‘Precious Scroll of the Ten Kings of the Eastern Peak Taishan’²⁷ used commonly to be performed for funerals in these villages, and sometimes still is. Wei Guoliang described it as ‘rescuing from suffering’ (*jiuku*), performed for funerals and for the New Year rituals around 1st moon 15th. Only a couple of groups we met were aware that it was properly prescribed for female deaths; the *Demon-queller scroll* (see below) for male deaths seems to have long been rare. Li Yongshu said the *Ten Kings scroll* should also be performed for rain ceremonies. Most associations have, or had, ritual paintings complementing the deities of these scrolls, but Ten Kings paintings are especially common (cf. Introduction to Part Three) – more often used of course, independently of performances of the scrolls.

As a funerary scripture, performances of the *Ten Kings scroll* should have been more common than the rare calendrical renditions of the *Houtu scroll*. Versions cited in modern published catalogues are in the classic 24-chapter format, and perhaps once linked to the West Dachengjiao sect (p.63 above). In Jijiagou, Ji Lianqin had a fine old printed version, which the ritual specialists of East Mingyi were copying in 1993. Wei Guoliang had also recopied the version of the Houshan Daoists from memory.

The Demon-queller scroll

Full title *Huguo youmin fumo baojuan*, ‘Precious scroll of the Demon-queller for protecting the nation and aiding the people’,²⁸ known as *Fumo scroll*, this is a scroll to the martial god Guandi, commonly known as Laoye, hence its alternative colloquial title *Laoye scroll*. In 1995 the Lijiafen liturgists preserved the first volume of an old undated printed edition, perhaps from the 19th century, and they were still performing parts of it; nearby South Laoping had copied it, and it was also mentioned by Baima, North Qiaotou, and other nearby villages. As we saw, this scroll was once prescribed for male deaths, whereas the *Ten Kings scroll*, more commonly performed in modern times, was for female deaths. In South Baima they also said the *Demon-queller scroll* was used for exorcisms (*jingzhai*). Huang Yupian cites passages from six of its twenty-four chapters, ridiculing its

²⁷ Li Shiyu 1957: 169, no.64; Li Shiyu 1961, no.358, 405; Huang Yupian 1982: 69–70; Overmyer 1999: 351–5.

²⁸ Li Shiyu 1961, no.134; Che Xilun 1999, no.0639, listing 12 editions in collections; cf. no.0640; Che alone attributes it to Wukong in the Ming, though I find no supporting evidence. A Ming version is reproduced in Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.4: 485–583. The Music Research Institute in Beijing also has a fine old copy, apparently acquired in the 1950s; its source is unclear. For a discussion of this scroll, see Overmyer 1999: 348–51. Li Shiyu (DBK religion 158) attributes both this and the *Ten Kings scroll* to the Hongyang sect.

vulgar language.²⁹ It may have been associated with the West Dachengjiao and Huangtiandao sects,³⁰ and was reprinted commonly. As we saw above, the martial god Guandi was a popular deity through the late imperial period, and in times of warfare such as the pre-Liberation period; though conditions under Maoism were often far from peaceful, the radical extension of state power may have produced a shift that has marginalized Guandi.

The Dizang scroll

Full title *Dizang wang pusa zhizhang youming baojuan*, ‘Precious scroll of Prince Dizang Bodhisattva who oversees the underworld’. This printed text, belonging to the Guanyintang association in South Gaoluo, bears a late-17th-century date, but no place.³¹ This is almost the only ritual text we found that includes (as its first two chapters) the story of the filial monk Mulian (cf. ‘The Twenty-four Pious Ones’, Appendix 2 and n.8 therein). Again presumably performed for funerals, the *Dizang scroll* seems to have been used less often than the *Ten Kings scroll* or *Demon-queller scroll*.

The Baiyi scroll

Full title *Xiaoshi Baiyi Guanyin pusa song ying'er xiasheng baojuan* ‘Precious scroll of White-clothed Guanyin Bodhisattva to bestow childbirth’, it is known as *Baiyi scroll*.³² Originally said to date from the Ming, the edition we copied, belonging to the Guanyintang association of North Gaoluo, is dated 1745 (Qianlong reign 10th year) and bears the village name and that of the ‘incense head’ (association leader) Yan Ziming. Although the association members say they also used to have a *Houtu scroll*, this one has the same aim of ensuring childbirth, and shares common themes with the *Houtu scroll*, like the granting of children to an ageing childless pious official and his wife, and the rebuilding of a temple to the deity. It was formerly recited for Guanyin’s birthday on 2nd moon 19th. Several nearby villages used to perform this scroll. According to Li Shiyu, it belonged to the Yuandunjiao sect;³³ the term Linji Yuandunmen is found in the closing section.

²⁹ Huang Yupian 1982: 30–32.

³⁰ Ma and Han 1992: 406–7, 611. Cf. §2.3 above.

³¹ The end of vol.2 gives the printing date of 1679 (Kangxi yiwei year); the end of vol.1 has a handwritten date of Kangxi 49th year (1710), perhaps a convenient spare page to note the acquisition of the scroll. This very edition (with the same handwritten date at the end of vol.1) is reproduced in Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.10: 501–95. See also Huang Yupian 1982: 70–71; Li Shiyu 1961, no.063, Che Xilun 1999, no. 0288/0285.

³² Huang Yupian 1982: 74; Li Shiyu 1961, no.461; Che Xilun 1999, no.0929; Overmyer 1999: 405 n.10. A Ming edition is reproduced in Zhang Xishun 1994, vol.12 (which I haven’t seen), and Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.4: 245–344.

³³ Li Shiyu 1957: 167; see Ma and Han 1992: 859–907.

The Huangtiandao, a sect from which the Yuandunjiao evolved, also features in chapter 13.

The Zaowang scroll

The Guanyintang association of North Gaoluo also has a *Fuguo zhenzhai lingying zaowang baojuan*,³⁴ to the stove god, dated 1720 (Kangxi reign 59th year), again bearing the name of the village, and that of the sponsor He Chengmei. But no-one recalled its use in ritual performance.

The Tudi scroll

Full title *Xiantian yuanshi tudi baojuan* ‘Precious scroll to the Earth god, prior to heaven and prime original’.³⁵ In 1995 we found a printed copy from 1799 (Jiaqing 4th year) in the hands of a female medium from Shenshizhuang visiting Houshan. But no-one we met in Hebei mentioned it or its performance. Writing in the early 1950s, Zheng Zhenduo admired its humorous style, giving extensive citations from chapters 5 to 11.³⁶

Some other texts

We saw several other precious scrolls in the possession of Matou villager Liang Shuming. They are of uncertain origin, but must come from nearby villages – indicating the character of local religious tradition, but not necessarily current practice. These included an old printed edition of the *Taiyang kaitian liji yihua zhufu guiyi baojuan*, a scroll apparently derived from the Huangtiandao sect³⁷ – note the Taiyang temple on Houshan; and another early scroll, the *Xiaoshi guijia baoen baojuan*.³⁸

We also found several sectarians in the area. In 1993 an old sectarian in a Laishui village showed us several texts and manuals, which may illustrate the difficulty

³⁴ Li Shiyu 1961, no.098; reproduced in Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.12: 511–612. Cf. Huang Yupian 1982: 116. It is not mentioned in Chard’s interesting chapter on the stove god in Johnson 1995.

³⁵ Li Shiyu 1961, no.490; Che Xilun 1999, no.0886.

³⁶ Zheng Zhenduo 1954 *xia*: 334–44.

³⁷ Li Shiyu 1961, no.397, from the Ming. Cf. Ma and Han 1992: 408, 409, 438–43, 453, 476. For the sect, see §2.3 above. The *Taiyang kaitian liji yihua zhushen baojuan* (Che Xilun 1999, no.0324, reproduced in Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.2: 501–634), or *Taiyang chushen kaitian liji yihua zhufu guiyi baojuan*, has 36 chapters.

³⁸ Li Shiyu 1961, no.460; Che Xilun 1999, no.0931; Overmyer 1999: 320–21, all describing printed editions from 1581 and 1640. Cf. Huang Yupian 1982: 29–30, Ma and Han 1992: 1263.

of separating the kind of public village-wide religion discussed in Part Three (including their precious scrolls) and less inclusive, ‘secret’ sectarian activity. The village had an active *yinyuehui*, but he was part of a (former?) sect called *haofohui* (‘Buddha lovers association’, cf. *foshihui*) that worshipped independently of it. Some of his manuals might belong to public village ritual traditions, like a woodblock edition of *Yankou shishi* (title page reading *Chanmen foshi, haofohui* of X village in third district of Laishui county), and *Chanmen fozan* (dated 33rd year of the republic, 1944), including *gongke* and funeral rituals.

But others were plainly in a ‘secret’ sectarian tradition. These included *Sanqi baiyanghui kaozheng Longhua jing* ‘Dragon-flower scripture of the White Yang assembly of the three kalpas’,³⁹ hand-copied into an exercise book, dated 53rd year of the republic (1964, *sic!*); and two sectarian texts (not ritual manuals), *Xingmi yaoyan* ‘Important words for awakening from delusion’,⁴⁰ and *Liu Bowen sou tianshu*,⁴¹ dated *nongli* 67 (*sic*) 10th moon 28th. The cover of the latter bears the title *Yuantong pan* 元通盤, apparently the name of a wider sectarian branch. The *Longhua jing* bears the name *Yuantong tang* 元通堂; the final page, stamped with a seal, states that the text was ‘copied across’ to the village in the 9th moon of the 54th year of the republic (1965), not just ignoring the modern calendar but denying the existence of the Communist regime. The year seems remarkable anyway, although political unrest did tend to stimulate sectarian resurgence, and sectarians I met in Shanxi were also busy transmitting in the Cultural Revolution. There may be more such ‘secret’ texts still in use in the area, but they are not part of the liturgical mainstream today.

The scrolls in performance

Though the *Houtu scroll* cannot have been performed complete in the area for many decades, its vocal music is full of variety and appeal. As we saw above, Li Shiyu pointed out six basic structural features of the precious scrolls. Apart from recited sections, they have three main melodic components: hymns, ten-word form, and labelled melodies. Hymns (*zan*) in the same lyric structure (4–4–7–5–4–5 words, common to hymns throughout China), with diverse texts, are sung to one basic slow melody, finishing with an unwritten refrain ‘All Hail to the Buddha’. The main musical element, distinctive to the scrolls, is the catchy ten-word form of 3–3–4 words per line, for which they sing a complex structure alternating solo

³⁹ Though clearly related to sectarian Dragon-flower scriptures, this is a short volume, not like the major early 24-chapter precious scroll *Gufo tianzhen kaozheng longhua baojing* reproduced in Pu Wenqi 2005, vol.3: 423–66; see also Huang Yupian 1982: 7–18, Overmyer 1985: 237–43, 1999: 248–71, Ma and Han 1992: 865–82.

⁴⁰ Reprinted in Wang Jianchuan 2006, vol.12: 619–50.

⁴¹ Liu Bowen was a revered Ming official, in whose name prophecies, often sectarian, were composed; cf. Ma and Han 1992: 1014–17.

and choral phrases and adding unwritten melismatic invocations of ‘All hail to Amitābha Buddha’ at the end of every group of two, three, or four lines.⁴² Between chapters, a more popular repertoire of ‘labelled melodies’ (*qupai*) with several stanzas is sung to various texts.⁴³

In the 1830s, the inquisitor Huang Yupian knew enough about music to make acute, if typically derogatory, comments on the various forms used in the scrolls.⁴⁴ He noted the use of labelled melodies, similar to that of local *Kunqu* troupes, and the resemblance of ten-word form to that sung by *bangzi* opera troupes. He found the recited sections (*baiwen*) ‘unspeakably lowly and vulgar’, like those of opera and narrative-singing (*gurci*). He goes on, his righteous indignation clouding his judgement still further:

If we investigate the melodies (*qiangdiao*) and characters of the heterodox scriptures, we can deduce that their fabricators were evil people (*yaoren*) of the late Ming, who first learnt to perform opera and then practised the heterodox teachings. Fabricating heterodox scriptures with the techniques of performing opera, and even poisoning later generations, despite strict attempts at suppression, the contamination has been profound, and it has been impossible to avoid extreme perils, this is deeply revolting. All one can hope is that the heterodox scriptures can make us mindful of the heterodox brigands, so that we all can be aware that they can absolutely not be trusted.

Like police chiefs since 1949, he was no cultural historian.

As we saw, the scrolls are sung by a vocal ensemble – the *foshihui* or the ritual specialists (‘civil altar’, *wentan*) of the *yinyuehui*, generally between five and ten men, accompanying themselves on ritual percussion including *muyu* woodblock and *ling* bell. In some villages, solo and choral singing alternate in the ten-word form, in others one singer leads; the *qupai* labelled melodies are sung in chorus throughout; recited passages are performed solo. The performance is punctuated by percussion ensemble and, optionally, by *shengguan* melodic instrumental music. Moreover, the text does not include the invocations to the Buddha that punctuate the ten-word sections in every chapter. There is a lot more to performance than meets the eye.

Note that while the texts are written, the melodies to which they are sung are entirely unwritten, like those of all vocal liturgy and narrative-singing; only *shengguan* instrumental melodies are notated. The contours of ‘labelled melodies’

⁴² The three-line interval may be distinctive to Gaoluo; most other groups sing the refrain after every four lines.

⁴³ These three styles in the *Houtu scroll* of South Gaoluo are to be heard on the CD with Jones 2004: track 1 (and ex.1, p.373); track 23 (and pl. 8.6); track 24 (and ex. 6, p.382).

⁴⁴ Huang Yupian 1982: 59.

are commonly notated in the scores of opera and instrumental music, but not in ritual manuals.

As in most Chinese liturgy, the precious scrolls open with sections inviting the gods and explaining the purpose of the ritual: the hymn and *gāthā* (common to most Chinese liturgy), and the first ten-word ‘Buddha’ section, before the story proper begins. This invocatory material for the opening of the altar is common to many rituals. After this introductory material, each chapter runs as follows:

- a long prose section (*baiwen*), at the start of each chapter, *parlando*.
- verse, a seven-word quatrain, recited
- ten-word section, long, sung
- short sung prose section, known as Buddha coda (*fowei*)
- untitled *gāthā* quatrain (generally five-word), recited
- labelled melody (*qupai*, known as *qur* or *paizi*) in several verses (in the South Gaoluo *Houtu scroll* this precedes the quatrain)

This is the sequence that I deduce to be logical, each chapter ending with a labelled melody. In the *Houtu scrolls* from the ‘Ming dynasty’ and South Gaoluo, the chapter headings appears thus, before the long prose section. But in most other scrolls we have seen, confusingly, the chapter heading is given only before the labelled melody; some performers also say that the labelled melody comes first, then the long recited section, then the ten-word section. In the South Gaoluo copy, the sequence is prose –ten-word – melody – *gāthā*; the following illustration is like an advertisement for the following chapter.

By the way, it is no use guessing length of any performance from the number of words in a text.⁴⁵ If recited, a section of, say, 28 words will occupy roughly the same time as it would to read aloud; but if sung, it may last several minutes, with copious melisma, and with percussion interludes between each line – not to mention that the effect (and efficacy) of reciting a text is totally different from that of singing it with accompaniment of percussion and melodic instruments. In the scrolls, there are some recited sections, but the great majority is sung – and singing any text is very different. Handel’s setting of the bland text ‘Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon king’ is not melismatic, but that first section not only takes a lot longer to perform than to recite, but creates an unimaginably majestic effect; and a classical ‘alleluia’ can occupy a whole movement, taking several minutes.

⁴⁵ Pace Johnson 1995: 77.

The ten-word form

Of the three main melodic forms used in the precious scrolls, both hymns and labelled melodies are also used in funerals, but the ten-word form is distinctive to the scrolls. While the written text on the page is a simple sequence of lines of 3–3–4 words, the overall structure of these long sections in performance is complex: it is somewhat reminiscent of Sanskrit mantras like the common ritual incantation *Puanzhou* (Appendix 2).

Note also that the written text of the precious scrolls does not include one of the most substantial parts of the performance, the long melismatic refrains invoking the Buddha. Indeed, the singing of unwritten invocations is rather common in ritual manuals generally, such as hymns and the *Tan wangling* section of Crossing the Bridges. Again, we cannot simply take the text as it stands, but must work from the primacy of performance.

Even from a superficial survey of ritual singing in the area, it is clear that there is a certain variation of performance practice within a generally homogeneous style, just as with the melodic instrumental music. What is constant among groups we have visited is the singing of long complex melodies for the first two lines, both ending in long melismatic invocations to Amitābha Buddha. Upper and lower melodic contours (*shangyun* 上韵, *xiayun* 下韵, or ‘upper and lower Buddhas’ *shangfo* 上佛, *xiaofo* 下佛, or *gaofo* 高佛, *difo* 低佛) are distinguished. The upper *yun* is a ten-word line of 3–3–4 followed by the unwritten refrain *Omituovo*; the lower *yun* is a ten-word line followed by the unwritten refrain *Namo Omituovo*. After these first two lines, each group of four lines ends with another invocation. These refrains are unwritten, and so melismatic that each refrain may last up to a minute; thus over a typical ten-word passage of around thirty lines, there will be at least eight such refrains.

After the ten-word form, the scrolls continue with a short sung section called (by the singers, not marked thus in the text) ‘Buddha coda’ (*fowei*), also ending with the Buddha refrain.

In an apparently unusual variation, according to the Gaoluo and East Mingyi ritual specialists, three, not four, lines make up a unit called ‘one Buddha’ (*yifenso* 一分佛). The structure of the opening ten-word section is further complicated by the fact that the text is in couplets, each called ‘a stick of incense’, beginning *yizhuxiang* 一柱香, *erzhuxiang* 二柱香, and so on. Moreover, the liturgists have an imaginative deployment of solo and chorus to match this.

Only Li Yongshu and the Lijiafen ritual specialists were very aware of an important aspect of ten-word form, that there are ‘four great vocal styles’ (*sibu dayun* 四部大韵): old and young (*lao/shao* 老/少) *Taishan yun* and old and young *huanxiang yun*. *Taishan* may refer to funerals; *huanxiang* ‘return to the district’ seems to allude to White Lotus imagery. Some liturgists also mentioned a *laozu yun* 老祖韵.

Ji Lianqin claimed that the melodies for the ten-word sections of each chapter may be different, and Li Yongshu said the choice of *yun* within a scroll is free, the

leader choosing for each chapter. However, competence with these different styles is minimal today in villages we have visited, and few liturgists discussed these different *yun*; nor are they specified in the scrolls themselves, unlike the named labelled melodies. In Lijafen they said that you can choose any [appropriate] *yun* for any scroll, but in practice they were only still singing the young *huanxiang yun* – the others ‘didn’t sound good’, so they fell out of use.

This melodic impoverishment may seem like a purely aesthetic choice. One might surmise that social control incidentally circumscribed people’s tastes, but what remains is no more accessible than the styles that became obsolete. More precisely, fewer styles were doubtless needed, as rituals became simplified and manuals performed only in much abbreviated versions.

Still, the distinguished leader of a sect in north Shanxi (see below) was also able to explain similar details about the various melodic styles within ten-word form. The above discussion is anything but exhaustive, even for the narrow area covered. What it does illustrate is the basic style of performance, and the importance of going beyond simple, silent texts to the complex way in which they are still performed.

Ten-word structures, though rare in vocal liturgy, are common in many more secular Chinese vocal genres. As we saw above, Huang Yupian pointed out that the 3–3–4 structure of the ten-word form is related to *bangzi* opera, and it is indeed used in genres in Hebei, Shanxi, and Shaanxi. It is also common in *daqing* – one of about seven major sub-divisions of narrative-singing outlined by modern Chinese scholars, subsuming several dozen genres throughout China; more specifically it is a form of vocal ritual music common in Shanxi and Shaanxi, often considered today as a form of ‘lesser opera’ (*xiaoxi*). Though its Daoist origins are rarely apparent, there is much ritual music here awaiting rediscovery, also including many classical labelled melodies.⁴⁶ Several ten-word songs, mostly *yizhuxiang* (‘one stick of incense’) texts, have been transcribed from ritual genres in Shanxi and Shaanxi.⁴⁷ The ten-word form is also common in northern shadow-puppetry, which often retains its ritual origins more than human opera, though much impoverished in recent decades.⁴⁸

Labelled melodies

Labelled melodies (*qupai*) are commonly used in instrumental music, and also in vocal liturgy (not only in precious scrolls), but the repertoires of labelled melodies

⁴⁶ For Shanxi, see *Shanxi xiqu zhi* 119–20, 316–26; on its history, a more detailed article, also by Wu Yimin, is in Shanxi 1984: 148–95. For Shaanxi, see e.g. Liang Wenda 1953; Holm 1991: 184–5.

⁴⁷ E.g. from the *daqing* repertoire of a young blind singer in Shaanbei (Liang Wenda 1953: 63–8), *daqing* in north Shanxi (*Shanxi xiqu zhi* 317), and *quanshan* songs in Xianyang, Shaanxi (Zhang Xingyun nd: 229–32).

⁴⁸ For Gansu, see the film CHIME 2008.

used in vocal and instrumental ritual genres do not overlap much. The repertoire of vocal labelled melodies used in funeral liturgy seems to be very small: the most common ones are *Langtaosha*, *Guajinsuo*, and *Jinzi jing*. The repertoire of titles used in the precious scrolls is greater, but still quite limited. These melodies are in a fixed number of words per line.

As we saw above, each chapter of the precious scrolls ends with a labelled melody. Some of these melodies are in several verses; two or four verses are common, but there may be over ten. Some also are used in different chapters of the same scroll, set to different texts. It is unusual for more than one melody to be specified in the same chapter, performed consecutively, but there are instances in the *Baiyi scroll* and *Dizang scroll*. Although my sample is small, it seems that even fewer melodies have been used since the 18th century – as is clear from comparing the melodic titles in the *Dizang scroll* with those in other extant scrolls, for instance.⁴⁹

Of the thirty-nine melodies in the scrolls we collected, fifteen occur in three or more scrolls. Apart from the melodic intricacies of ten-word form, to know these melodies is another basic task for a ritual specialist wishing to perform the scrolls. As Wei Guoliang told us with his manic chortle, ‘If you don’t understand that, you can’t open your mouth!’ But now the scrolls are performed in such fragments that most of these melodies are virtually obsolete.

In fact these titles are all ‘classic’ labelled melodies with a long history, of which notated versions survive in scores of the élite such as the imperially-commissioned *Jiugong dacheng nanbeici gongpu* of 1746. Thus these ritual songs sung by common villagers today are clearly connected with the ‘art music’ of the imperial literati: as with instrumental music, the musical worlds of urban literati and village commoner were closely linked. If notated versions survive only as far back as the 18th century, texts of identical structure survive from much earlier, often from the Song or even Tang dynasties.⁵⁰ Precious scrolls throughout north China use this same limited stock of labelled melodies; though melodically they are unlikely to be identical, future analysis may show similarities.

Scrolls in performance: Shanxi

As I have stressed, the precious scrolls are not ‘books’ but ritual manuals, albeit quite unlike other ritual manuals. While it was remarkable enough to discover living traditions in Hebei, a brief summary of a ritual I attended of a sect in north Shanxi over a couple of freezing days in December 2003 will give an even better instance of the great complexity of the performance of the scrolls.

This is an area where occupational household Daoists thrive, but precious scrolls play no part in their rituals; village-wide amateur ritual associations like

⁴⁹ For ritual *qupai* in Hebei in the Qing, see also Naquin 1985: 272–3.

⁵⁰ Jones 1998: 130–38.

those we found in Hebei are absent, but instead there are intra- and inter-village networks of voluntary sectarians, performing 24-chapter scrolls that are unique to the sect and not featured in any catalogue or library. I won't specify names here, since the sect was among those earmarked for suppression in the 1950s – although they were now keen to gain official recognition, and enjoyed a good local reputation, thanks partly to the recognized moral integrity of their leader.

This ritual has been commissioned in fulfillment of a vow, by a woman who finally managed to have a child; not herself a member of the sect, she prepares and helps present the offerings but attends the ritual only sporadically. Over thirty people, both men and women, take part, of whom a dozen or so come from the village in whose temple the ritual is being held. Unlike the village-wide observances in Hebei, this is a private ritual; the temple is only open to ordinary worshippers for temple fairs, and is not open to them now. Unlike ordinary worshippers, the sectarians are expected to observe the five precepts (*wujie*). For rituals they dress in yellow robes. Unlike the setting for the scrolls in central Hebei, where during the ritual performance there is a large 'audience' milling around offering incense, smoking, chatting, and admiring the ritual paintings, here all the sectarians take part devoutly in the recitation. Again by contrast with the rare and perfunctory renditions by the liturgists of the Hebei ritual associations, these sectarians perform the scrolls with great gusto, and evidently perform them frequently. There is only one copy of the scrolls on display, and though some members have brief texts copied into notebooks, their learning of the scrolls is mostly oral.⁵¹

The temple has been prepared laboriously; outside the entrance to the main hall is a placard listing all the officiants, at the main altar is a long line of yellow god places and large yellow paper envelopes, with a rich array of food offerings on the altar table, and at a separate altar to the left inside the hall are paper places for the sect's patriarchs.

After an opening invocation in the courtyard inside, lined up in two rows, the sectarians enter the temple, kowtow in sequence, and take their places standing around the altar table before the main god statues; one of the sectarians kneels before the table holding aloft a tray full of offerings, as they are transferred onto the table, all in devout silence. Another invocation is chanted, and a series of incense sticks are presented. A female sectarian, holding one stick of incense, kneels before the gods, her chants and recitations punctuated by a group refrain, before they sing a long slow hymn in rousing chorus (Illustration 12). Alternating with more chanting (this time led by the male leader of the sect from his place standing to the side of the altar table) punctuated by refrains, they sing a series of further hymns and *gāthās*. While there is a core of senior sectarians who lead the singing, the great majority of the group is familiar with the texts and melodies, singing with gusto, in an increasingly intense atmosphere. As yet there is no percussion accompaniment.

⁵¹ Cf. Naquin 1985: 272.



Illustration 12 Sectarian ritual in temple, north Shanxi 2003; ‘precious scroll’ on altar table.

All this, taking over half an hour, and entirely unwritten, is a necessary preliminary to the unwrapping of their first precious scroll from its cloth. As in Hebei, they do not perform the scroll complete; after the opening invocations in the scroll they skip to the 15th and then the 18th, 19th, and 20th chapters. As always, each line of the ten-word form ends with an unwritten but lengthy invocation to Amitābha Buddha. Only towards the end of the morning session do the core performers begin to accompany the singing with woodblocks, drum, and bells, as petitions to the gods are burnt.

In the afternoon, they first perform chapters 16, 1, 2 and 3 of the scroll, with a final *Shi baoen* Ten Repayments for Kindness. After a break, in the late afternoon, they perform a brief *qingtu* Inviting the Earth ritual, with more offerings laden onto the main altar table, and then *shangshou* Presenting Longevity and *guandeng* Beholding the Lanterns rituals. On procession around the courtyard, seven candles (for the *beidou* Northern Dipper) are lit in a tray and paraded around a *bagua* eight trigrams figuration. On returning inside the temple, the leader continues to sing as members in turn perform simple ritual hand gestures and kowtow as yellow petitions are burnt.

Next morning they perform an elaborate *shangxiang* Presenting Incense ritual. First they chant while standing in two facing rows in the courtyard, with an altar in the middle. Then after kneeling and kowtowing to the courtyard altar, half of the group enter the temple, singing and chanting further opening invocations, while

the others remain kneeling in the courtyard. The patron helps present a further set of offerings, and the leader then recites the first half of the lengthy roster of patriarchs and gods, kneeling before the altar. Four, and then eight, sectarians present incense parading around the altar in the courtyard, chanting as they do so. Inside the temple, another leader then kneels before the altar to continue reciting the roster of patriarchs and gods, punctuated by more choral singing.

The sect's second precious scroll, covered in yellow cloth, has been placed on the altar table in the courtyard. The eight sectarians parade around it again and then sing a solemn hymn kneeling around it. As the hymn continues, they bring the altar table into the temple, kowtowing before it as they do so, and placing it before the main altar table. With a female sectarian again kneeling devoutly before the scroll, further lengthy singing and chanting are performed as incense is offered to all the main god places. It is only now, after nearly two hours, that the grand unwrapping of the scroll takes place; the opening pages, with their beautiful images of the gods, are actually opened out and displayed. Soon after we had to take our leave. In the evening they were to perform their own version of the *yankou*.

Conclusion

Johnson has summarized some evidence for the historical performance of precious scrolls; though he mainly addresses their more recent southern form, his historical examples are interesting.⁵² Among several 'private' performances, he cites one from Huashan in 1946, where a young woman, apparently leader of a group of pilgrims, performed short texts of the shorter more recent popular type more common in the south. Johnson also cites several private ritual performances by nuns, described in the late-16th-century novel *Jinpingmei*, for birthdays in an affluent urban household, in intimate domestic settings, with an audience of women. Though somewhat diverse, most of these again seem to refer to shorter texts, whether doctrinal or popular, rather than the 24-chapter scrolls that were soon to become popular among sectarian groups.

In central Hebei in modern times, performances of the scrolls are very different in most respects. The only temple-dwelling performers that I heard of were the Houshan Daoists. The scrolls belong to village ritual associations, and are performed by men only, the ritual specialists of the association; and they perform them only in ritual contexts, never for pure entertainment – they are not considered 'entertainers' at all, however captivating their renditions may be for the audience. Nor are there any 'private' or 'intimate' settings now; whether in the village or for pilgrimage, the ritual contexts are funerals and gods' days. The former sects didn't necessarily perform them 'privately', since they were by no means necessarily 'secret' and their membership constituted most of the population of the village.

⁵² Johnson 1995: 59–74.

The only ‘private’ setting in Hebei was the occasional use of some scrolls for household exorcisms – again, far from entertainment.

On the other hand, in the far fewer cases where intra-/inter-village sects still perform the scrolls, their performances may indeed be ‘private’. Johnson, relying on Naquin’s historical account of White Lotus sects, notes that this is a very different context from the ‘domestic’ settings described in *Jipingmei*, and even suggests that in the sectarian context, there was no distinction between performers and audience.⁵³ This may apply to the more or less private context of a vow-fulfilling ritual held by a small sectarian group like that I described above for north Shanxi, where all the members took part in the performance – and unlike the small core group of male ritual specialists of the associations in Hebei, the Shanxi sect did indeed have a large membership of both men and women, who were all eligible to chant the scrolls. Whereas the Shanxi sectarians enter the sect voluntarily, with a regional network, the Hebei liturgists perform on behalf of an ascriptive village-wide membership. But witnessing the performances in Hebei, the distinction between performers and audience is clear – with vocal liturgists, instrumentalists, supporters of the association, and ordinary villagers. And irrespective of numbers of people attending, in both village-wide groups and inter-/intra-village sects the scrolls were only performed as part of imposing rituals.

On the central Hebei plain, most ritual associations do not follow the sectarian pattern: they hold no meetings on the 1st and 15th of each moon, they observe no precepts, do not engage in meditation or healing, and so on. In some cases this may have changed; maybe over a period since the 19th century they evolved from devout sectarian groups meeting frequently to village-wide associations performing their rituals only occasionally. But such village-wide associations were always a major element in the picture. They represented village orthodoxy; while under Maoism even that had been vulnerable, it is a mainstream that tends to be neglected in studies based on historical literary sources.⁵⁴ My point is that although I describe a current scene, and there may be less diversity now, the current Hebei groups must represent the most common situation in this region in imperial times – amateur groups performing on behalf of their poor villages.

By the 1990s the sectarian scriptures in Hebei were not necessarily in the hands of the sects. Some have been transmitted to the *yinyuehui* which often served the sects; others are kept by former sectarian members, or by family members. Some knowledge survives of how to perform them, both in ritual associations and among individuals such as mediums or loners. While the scrolls were only performed complete very rarely even before Liberation, sections are still performed today, and elderly singers further recall some labelled melodies that are no longer performed. One insight from fieldwork is to show that the scrolls are not just general historical texts, but belong to specific groups of worshippers at specific times.

⁵³ Johnson 1995: 67–8.

⁵⁴ Cf. Naquin 1985: 288–91; DuBois 2005: 184–5.

All this is only a very cursory impression of the ritual performance of the precious scrolls in parts of rural north China. While historical sinological work and textual study remain necessary, it is high time we added the element of ritual performance. Thus I am not merely adding to our catalogues of texts – I am showing how they are still used. Even if the scrolls are not performed complete, the bare texts give a paltry impression of performance. Not only are the important and lengthy invocations to Amitābha not written in the scrolls, and there may also be interludes for the large cymbals or *shengguan* ensemble; but also, the rituals of which the scrolls are part may be very elaborate.

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Appendix 4

Some sites for living folk ritual activity in Shanxi

As an example of the fieldwork potential here, this list for a single province shows only those counties where Chinese scholars have identified active ritual groups since the 1980s – and I may have missed some. Each county may have several, even many, active groups. Moreover, many counties not shown here may have groups that have not come to the attention of scholars; thus the absence of a county from this list is more likely to suggest a lack of fieldwork than a lack of ritual activity.

Region	County	Daoist (D)/Buddhist (B)
Datong	Datong	D
	Yanggao	D
	Tianzhen	D
	Hunyuan	D
	Zuoyun	D
Shuozhou	Shuozhou	D
	Yingxian	D
Xinzhou	Xinzhou	D
	Pianguan	D
	Wuzhai	B
	Jingle	D, B
	Daixian	D, B
	Fanshi	B
	Wutai	B
Taiyuan	Yangqu	D
Jinzhong	Zuoquan	B
	Jiexiu	D
Lüliang	Liulin	D
Linfen	Linfen	D, B
	Xiangfen	D, B
	Fenxi	D, B
	Hongdong	D, B
	Yicheng	D
Yuncheng	Jiangxian	D
	Xinjiang	D
Changzhi	Zhangzi	D

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Glossary–Index

Alphabetization is by letter, not by word; thus e.g. *Longhua jing* precedes *Longhu jing*, and Fanzhuang precedes *faqi*. Titles of rituals and melodies are cited in the forms given by local informants, not always ‘standard’. To reflect the weight of tradition, I use full-form characters – although simplified characters are now common for many names, including ritual terms. Villages in the text with the prefixes North (Bei), South (Nan), East (Dong), West (Xi), Upper (Shang), Lower (Xia), Greater (Da), and Lesser (Xiao) appear under these *pinyin* terms.

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