Religion as a Binding Force in Urban Society: The 1313–1314 Restoration of the Travelling Palace of the Eastern Marchmount in Changxing Prefecture (Zhejiang)*

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Abstract: Since Tim Brook's *Praying for Power* (1993) we have come to appreciate the ongoing power of Buddhist religious tradition on all social levels, with the late Ming revival of a remarkably strong link between socio-educational elites and Lower Yangzi region Buddhist monasteries as one particularly clear example. Nonetheless, there are also differences or what we might call roads not taken. While elites connected to local monasteries in more ways than one, by the 1600s these monasteries did not organise society in the same way as local temple networks did. We might not expect this in the first place, but epigraphical evidence and colophons to Buddhist sūtras, for instance, demonstrate that in various places in Song-Jin-Yuan China Buddhist traditions were an important social force that far transcended doctrinal boundaries. In this contribution I analyse an inscription from the year 1314 as an example of the role of some Buddhist monasteries in structuring local society, from local officials and local militia to local guilds and traders. Apparently, something did get lost between the late Yuan and late Ming periods, even if the power of Buddhist ritual and devotional practices certainly continued to exert a strong

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appeal, whether connected to monasteries or new religious groups or otherwise.

Keywords: inscriptions, Dongyue 東嶽, White Cloud Tradition (Baiyun zong 白雲宗), guilds, Buddhism, Daoism, Changxing 長興

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Preliminary Remarks

In the twelfth lunar month of the first year of the Huangqing 皇慶 year period (corresponding largely to January 1313), the urban community of Changxing Prefecture 長興州 on the southwest shore of Lake Tai 太湖 in the modern province of Zhejiang financed a massive rebuilding project for the derelict local Dongyue xinggong 東嶽行宮 (Travelling Palace of the Eastern Marchmount). The project was completed in the beginning of the fourth lunar month of the Yanyou 延祐 year period or late May 1314. We know of this immense project thanks to a famous inscription dated to the eleventh day of that month or May 25 in the Western calendar, which was entitled 'Changxing zhou xiujian Dongyue xinggong ji' 長興州修建東嶽行宮記 [Inscription for the Restoration of the Dongyue xinggong in Changxing Prefecture]. The inscription had been composed by a certain Meng Chun 孟淳, *zongguan* 總管 (Commander) of the Huizhou Route 徽州路 (normally rank 3 or b) with the further honorary rank of *zishan daifu* 資善大夫 (Grand Master for Assistance towards Goodness [rank 2a]). It was written out by the most famous calligrapher of that time, Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫, *Jixian shijiang xueshi* 集賢侍講學士 (Academician Lecturer in Attendance of the Academy of Scholarly Worthies) with the further honorary title of *zhongfeng daifu* 中奉大夫 (Grand Master for Palace Attendance [rank 2a]). Zhao wrote both the regular text and the headings in special seal script (*zhuan'e* 篆額).[1] The stone carver remains anonymous. The highest official directly involved in the project itself was *tong*

zhi zhoushi 同知州事 (Vice-Prefect [rank 6a to 7a]) Ma Rong 馬鎔, though formally together with his *zhizhou* 知州 (boss prefect [rank 5a]) Lü Shu 吕澍. Thus, Ma Rong had been quite successful in obtaining very prestigious symbolic support for the project, although this probably also entailed a further expenditure, if not for the *zongguan* of Huizhou Route, then probably for the services of the nationally famous calligrapher Zhao Mengfu who would have been paid in the form of a gift known as *runbi* 潤筆 (Wetting the Brush).[2] Zhao came from the neighbouring prefecture of Huzhou 湖州 (a *fu* 府 level prefecture, which usually encompasses more counties than the *zhou* level prefecture), so there might also have been some kind of local relationship to soften the price or even to make him do it for nothing.[3] Even though he produced hundreds of calligraphed inscriptions during his lifetime, individual citizens would at best have seen only one or just a few of them. Having an exemplar in your local temple would have been a major cultural event, certainly for those with the education and cultural *nous* to appreciate it.

Now, all of this bureaucratic information is quite a mouthful to a Western reader and we usually ignore this kind of detail unless we deal with someone's career. For people at the time, however, the high positions and prestige of the people involved were extremely important. Most scholars who have used this inscription as a historical source or the generations of calligraphers who have been inspired by it have focused on the towering figure of Zhao Mengfu as a calligrapher.[4] In 1523 the county magistrate of Changxing (which had been downgraded in the meantime from the earlier prefecture level) noted in a post-

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1 All references to the inscription are to the version in *Liangzhe jinshizhi*, *juan* 15: 9a–14b. I have made a few crucial emendations on the basis of a detailed photograph of the backside of the extant stone.

2 Saeki, 'Shidaifu to junpitsu', 193–221 and Cahill, *The Painter's Practice*, *passim*. See ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*, 89–90 for a concrete example involving Zhao Mengfu himself.

3 *Wuxing beizhi*, *juan* 24: 10b–11a, 25: 9b–10a contains numerous references to local inscriptions produced by him.

4 See McCausland, *Zhao Mengfu*, passim.

script to the inscription that the original pavilion for the stone tablet was long gone, leaving the tablet standing alone to face the onslaught of changing weather circumstances. He had a new pavilion erected to protect it, but as the state of the extant tablet in a Changxing museum today indicates, this did not prevent further damage over the following centuries. Soon after the fall of the Yuan 元 in 1368, the primary attraction of this stone tablet became its importance as a public calligraphic document for everybody to see and imitate, rather than the paintings of Zhao Mengfu or his calligraphies on paper which were invariably in private collections closed to the public. Eventually, in fact, it came to be praised as a rare example of his surviving calligraphy, despite the recurring damage that was done to the stone itself.[5]

In practical terms, the whole restoration project was organised by monks of the then prominent Lower Yangzi Buddhist religious movement of the Baiyun zong 白雲宗 (White Cloud Tradition) and financed amongst others by a large number of local *hang* 行 (guilds). This information and much more is contained on the back of the stone, a part that is only rarely reproduced in traditional epigraphical collections and therefore often ignored. Luckily it was included in the *Liangzhe jinshi zhi* 兩浙金石志 [Monograph of Bronze and Stone Inscriptions from the Two Zhe] that was compiled under the auspices of Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849) in the early nineteenth century.[6] While some mistakes were made in the transcription (which we can correct with modern photographs), by and large the Qing text is reliable and can be used for further analysis. It is especially for this kind of religious and social information that the inscription has drawn the attention of modern socio-economic historians such as Katō Shigeru 加滕繁 or historians of religious movements such as myself and others.[7] Each scholar has paid attention to the bit of information that they needed, rather than analysing the stone as a

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[5] Ruan, *Liangzhe jinshi zhi*, 15:14a, Ming postscript to the 1313–1314 inscription.

[6] Wei, *Ruan Yuan*, esp. 48 and 202.

[7] Katō, *Shina keizaishi kōshō*, 1, esp. 448–49 (lists the relevant fragment without further discussion); Hua, 'The White Cloud Movement', 124–25, 222.

whole. My aim in this contribution is not to analyse the complete iconography of this Changxing temple, which is a task done best in combination with other early temples for the same deity, but to analyse the way in which an entire urban community as well as some additional donors from the countryside came together to fund what is more less the parallel institution to the medieval cathedral, even if completed in much less time and architecturally a bit less grand. Unlike Buddhist colophons for donations which are traditionally very detailed in this respect, the donors to this project have not made any explicit statements on their motivations. Nonetheless, a precise analysis demonstrates that most donors made very conscious decisions that reflect their ideas about the cult of Dongyue 東嶽 (Eastern Marchmount) as well as their own professions.

The Cult of the Dongyue xinggong

When the stone inscription was produced, however, it was a major exercise in public relations for all those involved, and this is how I will analyse text and object in this study. The simple fact that the initiators got highly ranked figures like Meng Chun and Zhao Mengfu to participate, whether through personal or political connections that are now unclear to us, or by some kind of informal payment, indicates that this restoration effort greatly mattered to the organisers and contributors.

Already by the Northern Song 北宋 period (960–1127), a temple devoted to Mount Tai 泰山 under its more elevated name of Dongyue would have been established in most administrative centres. The one in Changxing had been founded relatively late, in 1138, and the inscription notes that it had fallen into abeyance by the early fourteenth century. The nationwide cult is extremely well documented in epigraphical evidence, Daoist ritual texts, local histories, anecdotal sources, Yuan theatre, and so forth. The large complex of the Dongyue xinggong is one of the few temples still surviving in Beijing, just outside Chaoyang Gate 朝陽門, now a subway station and once the location of one of the gates of the imperial capital. As we learn from the inscription, the now gone Changxing temple was iconographically quite

similar to the Beijing temple and to another one in Taian 泰安 at the foot of Mount Tai, also still surviving.[8] Already before the rise of the cult of Dongyue, the mountain had been a major landmark and the object of royal and then-imperial worship such as the Feng 封 and Shan 禪 sacrifices last carried out by the Song emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (968–1022) in 1008, but also the site of the world of the dead.[9]

By the Song period, people would go on pilgrimage to Mount Tai in Shandong, and after an interruption during the Southern Song 南宋 (1127–1279), the pilgrimage again became highly popular during the Yuan period. Local temples for the cult were usually conceived as an extension of the cult at Mount Tai as reflected in their name *xinggong* 行宮 (Travelling Palace). This should not be taken to mean that the actual temples were also small, since one of the unique characteristics of the cult was its dozens of smaller offices to deal with the various bureaucratic tasks of an underworld deity.[10] Somewhere in the fifteenth century, but only in northern China, the cult was more or less superscribed by the cult for Bixia yuanjun 碧霞元君 (Primal Lady of the Azure Clouds) or Taishan niangniang 泰山娘娘 (Lady of Taishan).[11] In southern China, both in the Lower Yangzi region, and for instance in Quanzhou, the cult of Dongyue was also a centre of local ritual networks. Daoist ritual specialists of the Heavenly Master 天師道 tradition often had their headquarters in a local temple of this cult. One of the exorcistic bureaucracies of the Song period and after had the deity of Dongyue as its supreme authority.[12]

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[8] Goodrich and Ten Broeck, *The Peking Temple of the Eastern Peak*, *passim*; Chavannes, *Le T'ai chan*, 364–69 discusses two inscriptions from the Mount Tai temple dating to 1284 and 1285. They provide a detailed list of offices, often with different names from the Changxing temple, with the additional information of the names of the officials who have been appointed in this bureaucracy.

[9] On the sacrifices, see Cahill, 'The Heavenly Text Affair', 23–44.

[10] Good introduction in Idema, 'The Pilgrimage to Taishan', 23–57.

[11] For the notion of superscription, see Duara, 'Superscribing Symbols', 778–95. For the cult, see Naquin, *Gods of Mount Tai*, passim.

[12] ter Haar, 'Local Society and the Organization of Cults', 1–43; von Glahn, 'Towns and Temples', 191–94.

The newly restored Dongyue xinggong in Changxing was in fact a rather large temple. The inscription on the back side details a large number of side halls and smaller shrines, in addition to the main halls for the deity itself. Among the Buddhist institutions that organised the project were several larger monasteries (*si* 寺) and a score of smaller establishments (*yuan* 院), which could not be tracked down in local gazetteers. No mention is made of the even smaller cloisters (*an* 菴) for which the Baiyun zong was also known at the time, but they may have participated in different formats or through its owners on a personal basis. Usually, a larger monastery (*si*) has several courtyards and annexes, whereas a smaller monastery (*yuan*) has only one large courtyard, and cloisters (*an*) or halls (*tang* 堂) have no courtyard at all. In the Bailian 白莲 (White Lotus) movement of the same period, there is never any mention of monasteries, but only of smaller or larger halls, often explicitly transformed from private homes.[13] In this respect the Baiyun zong was clearly closer to the monastic tradition, including its central monastery in Yuhang, despite the strong position of lay people within it.

We know very little about the actual cult in Changxing itself, but evidence on temples elsewhere indicates that these huge complexes were important centres of all kinds of religious activity, from individual entreaties accompanied by sacrifice to extensive rituals and huge festivals.[14] The main deity celebrated his birthday on the twenty-eighth day of the Third Lunar Month. As a proxy for what things may have looked like in Changxing, I translate here the short description in the *Mengliang lu* 夢粱錄 [Record of a Dream on a Millet Pillow] (1303 or 1334), which purports to describe the festivities in the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou (referred to below as 'capital' or *ducheng* 都城, rather than its Song appellation of '*xingzai*' 行在, or temporary residence).[15]

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13 ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*, 64–113.

14 The Dongyue dian in Tainan on Taiwan is still a major ritual centre of the old city and the site of almost daily rituals (fieldwork by the author, early May 2023).

15 *Mengliang lu*, *juan* 2: 9a–b.

> The twenty-eighth day of the Third Lunar Month is the birthday of the Saintly Emperor of the Eastern Marchmount. This deity controls the life and death of everybody in the All-under-Heaven. In all prefectures and counties there are travelling palaces where they worship his incense fire. In the city of Hangzhou there are five travelling palaces, namely at Wu Hill, Linping, Tang Township, Western Creek, and Dharma Hill, where they worship his incense fire. Only in Tang Township and Linping are the halls and galleries wide and spacious, and his offices all complete. The temple at Wu Hill is located close to a busy road with many people living close to each other. While it is hard to expand, it still surpasses the small hall within a Buddhist temple on Dharma Hill.
> 三月二十八日，乃東嶽天齊仁聖帝聖誕之日．其神掌天下人民之生死，諸郡邑皆有行宮奉香火．杭城有行宮者五，如吳山、臨平、湯鎮、西溪、曇山，奉其香火．惟湯鎮、臨平，殿廡廣闊，司案俱全．吳山廟居輦轂之下，人煙稠密，難以開拓，亦勝曇山梵宮內一小殿耳．

A brief comment is in order on the last of the five travelling palaces. It was located on Tanshan 曇山 (Dharma Hill), using the Chinese transcription of the Sanskrit term, rather than the indigenous term *fa* 法, in a Buddhist temple (*fangong* 梵宮). Thus, the worship of Dongyue that is more commonly associated with Daoist ritual practices or state sacrifice could be included within a largely Buddhist context in Hangzhou without anybody feeling that this was contradictory in doctrinal terms. This is an important point for one of our arguments about the Changxing temple further below as well. The description now continues with the actual festivities.

> In the final period of the last month of spring, capital residents from across society repay [vows] and worship the deity with sincere heart. Some especially offer incense of devotion, others repay [a vow] by wearing cangues like heavy criminals. Alternatively, the guilds and shops offer special fruits and rare flowers, or finely crafted buns and noodles. Some offer Buddhist monks and Daoist priests reciting scriptures, or go to the side halls and galleries to raise dharma sounds out of gratitude for long life. Traffic by boats or carts continues for days on end without interruption.

都城士庶, 自仲春下浣, 答賽心愫, 或專獻信香者, 或答重囚帶枷者, 或諸行鋪戶獻異果名花、精巧面食, 呈獻者或僧道誦經者, 或就殿廡舉法音而上壽者, 舟車道路, 絡繹往來, 無日無之.

Once more, the religious context is not limited to one particular type of devotion, although the wearing of instruments of legal punishment was a special feature almost unique to this particular cult and only imitated by the City God cult. The idea behind it was that a sinner could do penance during this life to avoid karmic punishment now or in a later incarnation. The description uses the term *da* 答 (replying) twice, which I have interpreted as 'repaying a vow'. It was a general practice that one prayed for a deity or his/her assistants to provide health or some other benefit, in return for a future act of devotion in his or her temple. Another term for it in later imperial China would be *huanyuan* 還願 (returning a vow) and it was not associated with a specific religious tradition. Our descriptions mention both Buddhist monks and Daoist priests as those carrying out rituals at request. The term *fayin* 法音 (dharma sounds) can refer narrowly to Buddhist recitation, but I would not put too fine a point on it here. The reference to boats and carts reflects the position of Hangzhou in a network of roads, rivers and canals, but perhaps also the presence of elderly people unable to travel for large distances without some form of support.

> There also beggars who offer colourful drawings and cash-flags (i.e. flags that somehow referred to or imitated cash coins) at the travelling palace on Wu Hill, hanging these up in front of the hall. Their society is particularly active. I have heard that these cash-flags are stored by the Office for Applying Red Powder in the Back Hall.
> 又有丐者於吳山行宮獻彩畫錢幡, 張掛殿前, 其社尤盛. 聞之此幡錢屬後殿充脂粉局收管.

As this last discussion indicates, beggars too had some form of organisation, at least in the capital of Hangzhou. The 1314 inscription from Changxing is in fact one of the major early sources on the rich diversification of guilds (*hang*) that already existed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but it does not mention a beggars'

guild. We will discuss this information further below in much more detail. All in all, there will have been some variation between the festivities in Hangzhou described above and those in Changxing, but we can be sure that in its own Dongyue xinggong the time around the twenty-eighth of the Third Lunar Month would have been as lively here as it was in Hangzhou.

The procession of sinners dressing up as criminals being punished was closely related to the iconography of the cult and remained a common feature throughout the centuries. The so-called offices (mostly referred to as *si* 司, sometimes as *ci* 祠 in the 1314 inscription) covered a variety of aspects of underworld justice, which were evidently based in part on this-worldly justice. If the extant statues in the Beijing temple are anything to go by, the offices in Changxing would also have contained lively statues or at least wall paintings of underworld torture and punishment, as well as different forms of retribution and reincarnation. The small reference to their absence in three of the five temples in Hangzhou also indicates that people at the time thought of these 'offices' as a fixed part of the cult's iconography.

There are many definitions of what 'Buddhism' means, but by now it is well-established that not only was the term itself created in the aftermath of the French Enlightenment (the first mention known to me is from 1792), but that its introduction also accompanied a complete rethinking of this religious culture as text-based rather than a set of regionally very different practices.[16] Chinese texts certainly have a vocabulary to refer to things that we today refer to as 'Buddhist' or 'Daoist', namely *sengdao* 僧道 (Buddhist monks and Daoist priests), *fangong* 梵宮 (Buddhist temple) and *fayin* 法音 (dharma sounds). I do think that our conventional practice of adding the labels 'Buddhist' and 'Daoist' here for the terms *seng* 僧 and *dao* 道 possibly makes the doctrinal aspect stronger than what was felt at the time. It refers more to the ritual performers and the nature of their expertise, than to the beliefs of their followers. Despite the overall connections between the cult of Dongyue and ritual practices that we tend to label as Daoist, the terminology used here certainly

16 ter Haar, 'Een kleine revolutie', 71–105.

does not seem to refer to the kind of mutual exclusionary beliefs and practices that we understand by these labels today. The inscription that I will discuss in much detail below further supports this point.

There is a further aspect to our modern discussions that needs a brief comment here, which is the religious provenance of these elaborate beliefs in underworld punishment and its enactment in the form of an elaborate iconography of hell in the cult of Dongyue and the custom of wearing cangues as an act of ritual attrition for some moral offense. None of these originate in what we usually label as Daoism, nor do they directly originate in bureaucratic cults (and certainly not in that mystical creature called Confucianism). Indeed, these beliefs were unknown in China until they were introduced by Buddhist missionaries. They are one of the biggest Buddhist contributions to Chinese culture, but rarely recognised as part of 'Buddhism' by modern scholarship.[17] In a way this is really curious, given that we have no compunction in recognising the central importance of similar beliefs in Christian traditions over many centuries.

The Organisation

As they write in the main inscription itself, Prefect Lü Shu and Vice-Prefect Ma Rong wanted to have the temple restored but lacked the financial resources. They therefore publicly announced their intentions and donated their own salaries as a first contribution. Hereupon 'the monk Zhengming of the former Baiyun zong' (前白雲宗僧正明) received the instruction of the 'monk [Ru]xiang[18] Former Manager of the Shi Teachings' (前釋教提控僧亨) and the 'Venerable Monks and Managers of the various monasteries' (諸

[17] But not entirely forgotten, for instance Teiser, *The Ghost Festival* and *idem*, *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*.

[18] This name can be read in different ways. The reading *heng* means 'prosperous', which seems less fitting. In the reading *xiang*, it is a variant of 享, meaning 'to sacrifice, to offer, to worship', which seems more appropriate here. On the character that indicates his initiation generation see further below.

山尊宿綱紀)[19] to take care of the restoration project. These statements alone make this inscription worthy of further analysis. It is well known that the Baiyun zong ran into trouble with the central authorities from time to time. This was most likely caused by the successful use of the Baiyun cloisters by local landowners to evade the land tax by registering their land to such a cloister (*an* 庵 or 菴) with themselves as its head (*anzhu* 庵主).[20] In itself this kind of tension was hardly remarkable. The Lower Yangzi region was extremely productive agriculturally and commercially, making local taxation a major source of income for all imperial dynasties from the second half of the Tang onwards. In each period, landowners would use new means to evade taxation as much as possible. Precisely how the initial connection between the Changxing restoration project and the Baiyun zong was established remains unclear, although local lay believers such as the temple keeper himself (more on whom below) could have functioned as intermediaries.

Especially remarkable are the two phrases containing the term 'former' (*qian* 前), which show a clear awareness that the movement

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19 In the Qing transcript, the two characters before this phrase are given as Kuaiji 會稽, which is an alternative name for the modern area of Shaoxing. The modern photograph of the original inscription clearly shows *huiji* 會暨. There is a parallel phrase to this inscription in a 1290 colophon, also by the Baiyun zong, which writes 'huiji zhushan chanjiao shide' (會集諸山禪教師德) or 'gathered the teachers and virtuous ones from the Chan teachings of the various monasteries'. Zhao Mengfu allowed himself the variant 暨 for 集, perhaps because it was calligraphically more interesting. The 1290 colophon describes the management structure behind the Baiyun zong reprint (with some additions) of the Buddhist canon. It was placed at the end of *juan* 40 of the *Da fangguangfo huayan jing* 大方廣佛華嚴經 [Skt. Avataṃsaka-sūtra, Flower Garland Sūtra], *T* no. 293, 10: 0849a18–0851c12. This is not the complete *Huayan jing*, but an expanded version of the road of Sudhana towards becoming a Bodhisattva and thus of central information to the Baiyun zong as a lay movement in which adherents took the so-called Bodhisattva vow.

20 Overmyer, 'The White Cloud Sect', 615–42; and Hua, 'The White Cloud Movement', passim.

had been recently prohibited, but also confirm that it had continued to function aboveground nonetheless. This dubious legal status formed no hindrance in asking the movement for its formal involvement in this project, and could even be acknowledged in the public inscription for all to see. The Great Capital (*dadu* 大都, modern Beijing) was far away and could clearly be ignored on a local level. Secondly, the inscription connects the project explicitly to the movement as a whole, which would have been quite well known at the time for its late Southern Song to early Yuan Buddhist canon compilation project, centred on the Nanshan Puningsi 南山普寧寺 (Puning Monastery of the Southern Mountain) in Yuhang, close to Hangzhou. Thanks to a Yuan colophon from 1290 that lists the complete printing office of the movement's Buddhist canon printing project, we know that Mingzheng himself came from a local hall in the prefecture of Hangzhou, whereas a monk called Ruxiang 如亨(=享) actually came from the nearby prefecture of Jiaxing. Both Ru and Ming were common characters to mark the generation of someone's ordination as a monk in the movement.[21] Since the colophon dates back to 1290, the fact that both monks were still around in 1313–1314 and could be contacted from Changxing again says something about the capability of the tradition to survive over time. We know from the canon publication project that the movement was able to mobilise people all across the regional core of the Lower Yangzi region.[22]

Important from the present-day perspective in which the label Buddhism is so easily applied, with its Chinese translation as Fojiao 佛教, is the then-current label Shijiao 釋教 (Shi Teachings) or the Shijiamouni jiao 釋迦牟尼教 (Teachings of Śakyamuni), with Shi as a shortened version for the name of the historical Buddha. During the Yuan this was the official label for what we would now call Buddhist institutions that were supervised by the state, and not for the teachings as a single doctrinal tradition.[23] Ruxiang had been a functionary

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21 *Da fangguangfo huayan jing*, *T* no. 293, 10: 0850c12, c19.

22 This generalisation is based on my unpublished analysis of the colophons in the White Cloud Tradition reprint, better known as the Puning canon.

23 During the Yuan, the term regularly recurs in the titles of monks serving

in the state structure for overseeing Buddhist monastic institutions as a whole, giving him the rank of *tikong* 提控 (Manager) in the Shijiao, but at the same time he was also a manager in the Baiyun zong and had been one of the donation gatherers for the canon compilation project. Here both hierarchies clearly coincided, indicating how not only was the Baiyun zong completely legal (most of the time), but also integrated into the control system over Buddhist monastic hierarchies. As already noted, its conflict with the central state revolved around taxation and not over any doctrinal issues.

In addition to the Baiyun zong monk Zhengming, there was also an entirely local organisation committee. It consisted of a number of local clerks and ordinary citizens without known background (only one is mentioned elsewhere in the inscription, Shi Yuanheng 施元亨 of the *Guohang* 果行 [Guild of Fruitsellers]).[24] They were labelled *ganyuan* 幹緣 (Performers of Causal Conditions) and funded a number of offices as a group, namely the *Tiangong chanmu si* 田公蠶母司 (Office for the Lord of the Soil and the Mother of Silkworks, —after all we are in the heartland of Chinese silk production at the time); the *Guijian si* 貴賤司 (Office of High and Low Status); and the *Ebusi* 惡部司 (Office of the Ministry of Evil Deeds). We do not know why they supported these specific offices, but maybe they had not been supported by other groups and therefore became the responsibility of the organising committee. In addition, the Prefect Lü Shu and the Vice Prefect Ma Rong are mentioned as *quanyuan* 勸緣 (Exhorters to Causal Conditions). Here, the term 'causal conditions' (*yuan* 緣) refers to the idea that by donating someone would gather merit and thereby positively influence the chain of causal connections that determines one's fate in life and eventual rebirth. Further below I shall argue that many smaller and larger buildings

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in the state bureaucracy for overseeing Buddhist monks. It can be used to refer to something you can 'not adhere to' or 'not worship' (*bufeng Shijiao* 不奉釋教), see *Dayuan shengzheng guochao dianzhang* 大元聖政國朝典章 (*Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 edition), 48, *xingbu* 刑部, *juan* 10: 3a.

[24] See also note 18. Here the meaning 'prosperous' and thus the pronunciation *heng* seems quite plausible.

with the overall temple complex are meaningfully combined with donors, which suggests that considerable thinking and networking went into the gathering of donations. Some of the donors came from farther away as well, again suggesting a certain amount of local lobbying. Having both members of local guilds, clerks and officials in the committee would have made such combining and lobbying easier.

Erecting a Stone Stele with Inscription

The nature of the Dongyue cult and the size of the Changxing temple would have guaranteed a considerable audience, which is of course also reflected in the large number of signatories to the restoration project as recorded on the back of the 1314 inscription. Nowadays the stele looks rather sad, hidden behind glass in the Changxing Museum 長興博物館 and heavily damaged (Figure 1). With the cooperation of the museum director and my doctoral student Wei Yin, I was able to obtain two detailed pictures which show the damage that the stone has suffered over time, but also some important details that are not evident in the copy preserved in the *Liangzhe jinshi zhi* 兩浙金石志 [Monograph of Bronze and Stone Inscriptions from the Two Zhe-regions], including the highly unusual detail of two headings in seal script on the back (Figure 2).[25] In the Qing epigraphical collection, the spatial arrangement of the donations as lists is much less clear, indicated merely by blank spaces and not in the page make up. The quality of the writing on both the front and the back of the stele indicates that it was intended as a three-dimensional display to be admired by walking around it.

The top half of the backside has the heading 'Chong xiujian Dongyue xinggong shizhu timing' 重修建東嶽行宮施主題名 [Names of the Donors to the Restoration of the Dongyue xinggong], in large seal script characters, which is followed by a neatly organised listing of each hall or shrine followed by the names of the donors for that

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25 The *Liangzhe jinshizhi* postscript informs us of the size and the use of seal script, but the visual formatting of the stone is lost.

FIG. 1 The stele today. Courtesy of Changxing Museum.

FIG. 2 The back of the stele today. Courtesy of Changxing Museum.

FIG. 3 A stone stele in the Temple for the Eastern Marchmount in Beijing (as of May 2007). Photo by the author.

specific building written in smaller regular characters. The bottom half of the backside has the heading 'Dongyue xinggong changzhu tiantu' 東嶽行宮常住田土 [Permanent Landholdings of the Dongyue xinggong], again in large seal script characters.

The original inscription would have been placed on a large pedestal, shaped like a turtle or another mythical animal. On top would have been a further capping stone (Figure 3). Rather than with its back to a wall, as happens to most inscriptions in a modern museum, it would have stood in an open courtyard. Standing in front, people would have admired the handwriting of Zhao Mengfu, if they were sufficiently literate, or be told by others how beautiful it was. Similarly, they could have walked around to check the entry which recorded their own contribution (or that of their relatives or acquaintances). When there was a legal conflict about who owned a certain piece of land that provided income for the temple, the list of contributions would have carried weight in solving the conflict. Of course, this also meant that after a while those who had encroached on the land of the temple—a common occurrence—had an interest in destroying or at least toppling the inscription!

A stone stele exerted its strongest appeal close to the time of its creation, when it was first erected, and in the few years following, as long as people remembered its significance. However, over time the stories connected to the stone would be forgotten. Even if the carved text had originally been filled with ink, it would be washed out after a while. As the modern picture shows, an inscription was not an easy thing to read. In the long run, therefore, the stele was first and foremost a monument that impressed by its size and the presence of writing, but not so much as a message despite the wealth of text on it.

At least by the late-fourteenth century, however, the connection with the Baiyun zong probably had not yet disappeared. We know this from the fact that in the 'twenty-seventh year of the Hongwu period (1394) Li Daojian 李道堅 from Pingliao *li* 平遼里 (a local tax unit) restored the palace' (明洪武二十七年平遼里人李道堅修葺宮), referring specifically to our Dongyue xinggong. Li Daojian is not explicitly marked as an adherent, so we cannot be absolutely sure, but the affiliation character *dao* 道 is common among adherents of the

Baiyun zong during the Southern Song and Yuan.[26] Since the movement was forbidden by Ming law, its overall name could no longer be mentioned in this context.[27] There is no evidence of the Ming reasons for prohibiting the movement, but a comparison between Yuan jurisprudence and this law indicates that the Ming article against religious practices such as the Baiyun zong was mainly a continuation of existing practices, rather than a new statement on religious culture. Thus, we can presume that it was still the connection with tax evasion practices by Lower Yangzi landowners that was the basis for prohibiting the movement. Li Daojian may have been one of them, as he was apparently rich enough to pay for a certain degree of restoration almost a century after the temple had been rebuilt.

The temple in Changxing was located at the foot of Wufeng (Five Peak) Hill 五峯山, only one Chinese mile westward of the county capital. In a way this is somewhat peculiar, since the eastern side would have been the more natural location of the Dongyue xinggong, but probably the hill and its symbolic correspondence to Mount Tai itself had been a more decisive consideration for choosing the location. On the hilltop behind the temple was a Xixinting 洗心亭 (Pavilion for Washing Your Heart), from where you could see the spectacle of Lake Tai.[28] Although the sources do not make this explicit, this name referred to a famous phrase from the *Xici* 繫辭 [Connected Sayings], one of the attachments of the canonical version of the *Yijing* 易經 [Book of Changes], stating that 'the saint cleanses his heart using this' (聖人以此洗心) thanks to his understanding of the divination methods of this book. Later readers would also interpret this phrase in a more moralistic way.[29] It can hardly be a coincidence that this pavilion was built so close to one of the main public expres-

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26 *Changxing xianzhi* (1805), *juan* 13: 45b. Ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*, 36, 39.

27 On this, see ter Haar, 'Whose Norm, Whose Heresy', 67–93 and *idem*, 'Rumours and Prophecies', 382–418.

28 *Huzhou fuzhi* (1570s), *juan* 4: 42b.

29 Good discussion in Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*, 31–36 and passim. *Zhouyi zhengyi*, *xici*, *shang*, 338.

sions of enforcing morality in religious terms.

On the same hill was also at least one Buddhist monastery, but as far as we can tell the latter was not involved in the 1313–1314 restoration project of its mighty neighbour.[30] In addition there was a Cishan xinggong 祠山行宮 (Travelling Palace of Shrine Mountain), which had been founded in 1176. At the time this was one of the most widespread and popular cults of Southern China, with its centre in Guangde Military Prefecture to the immediate west of Changxing.[31] In the side halls of the Dongyue xinggong a number of other popular cults of the Southern Song and Yuan periods were also worshipped. This included a version of Lord Guan, in the version associated with the Heavenly Master tradition and named True Lord of the Chongning year period. In this version, he played an important role in early exorcistic rituals of Daoist priests in southern China.[32] With its variety of religious institutions, Wufeng Hill must have been an impressive sight and a frequent port of call for the urban community living nearby whenever they were in need of some form of religious support or ritual services. When the stone stele had been first erected in 1314, no doubt many of the donors would have come with their families and friends to admire their own munificence.

The Donors and their Motivations

The different kinds of donors can be meaningfully divided into several groups. But before we do so, I would like to show how donors seem to have made very conscious choices in which halls or side offices they wanted to support. We can no longer know their financial considerations, but in many cases the connection between the professional activities of the donors and the nature of the hall or office that they supported is so clear that we can safely assume that someone, most likely the donors themselves or otherwise the organ-

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30 *Huzhou fuzhi* (1570s), *juan* 4: 41b–42b.

31 Hansen, *Changing Gods in Medieval China*, 148–59.

32 ter Haar, *Guan Yu*, *passim*.

ising committee, consciously decided what would be a meaningful contribution for them. In the following table I have summarised those connections where I am fairly certain, but that does not mean that other donors did not also have specific reasons for supporting one or the other hall or office. I follow the sequence of the original inscription.

When we group different types of donors together, we can see roughly three sets of people. One is of course the Baiyun zong itself which financed some of the biggest halls in the whole complex. Most of the monasteries cannot be traced elsewhere, but at least

TABLE 1 Close affiliations between the activities of donors and the building they funded

Formal Name	Donor(s)	Comments
Chongning zhenjun dian 崇寧眞君殿 (Hall of the Perfected Lord of the Chongning period)	*Benzhou budao si* 本州捕盜司 (Office for Catching Bandits of this Prefecture)	Lord Guan or Guan Yu was known for his military activities, surely a fitting connection for soldiers in charge of bandit control.
Jiansheng si 監生司 (Office for Overseeing Life)	*Shousheng Chen Afan deng* 收生陳阿范等 (Midwives Chen Afan [or: Chen A, Fan?] and others	The term translated here as Midwife literally means 'Receiving Life'.
Zisun si 子孫司 (Office for Progeny)	*Wushu hang* 五熟行 (Guild of the Fifth Stage of Ripening)	This region is the heart of Lower Yangzi silk production. Ideally, silkworms are ripe (*shu* 熟) for cocooning in their fifth stage of growth.[33] The millions of silkworm pupae crawling around on their bamboo trays easily symbolise numerous progeny.

[33] For some background, see Kuhn, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 5: IX, 302–7.

Subao si 速報司 (Office for Speedy Retribution)	*Yuzhu hang* 玉麈[34] 行 (Guild of the Jade Flywhisk)	The flywhisk with a plume and a big handle is an important ritual object of Buddhist priests, who provided rituals to avoid bad incarnations ('retribution').
Wenyi si 瘟疫司 (Office for epidemics and plagues)	*Yihu* 醫戶 (Medical households)	The treatment of epidemics became a separate field in the Song dynasty.[35]
Shuifu si 水府司 (Office of the Ministry of Water)	*Gaoshi hang* 篙師行 (Boatsmen Guild)	After all, the temple was located close to Lake Tai, so water transport would have been important. This office was probably devoted to the post-mortem management of those who had drowned.
Shanbu si 善部司 (Office of the Ministry for Good Deeds)	*Chongzhen guan changsheng ku* 冲眞觀長生庫 (Long Life Treasury of the Belvedere Soaring towards Realisation of Truth [?])	A treasury that could provide loans, funded from donations to the monastery. Originally this practice stems from a Buddhist monastic context.[36]
Juelu si 爵祿司 (Office for Ranks and Emoluments)	*Mujiang, jujiang* 木匠 , 鋸匠 (Wood carpenter[s] and sawyer[s])	Possibly customers with prestigious titles or higher social status would be more interested in better furniture.
Yuanwang si 寃枉司 (Office for Wronged Cases/ Lawsuits	*Benzhou shuzhuang chengfa si* 本州書狀承發司 (Prefectural Office for Receiving and Dispatching Letters and Forms)	Since this prefectural office was likely to make mistakes of legal procedure, supporting the office for redress in wronged lawsuits surely made (somewhat perverse) sense.

34 Transcribed incorrectly as *chen* 塵 (dust) in the *Liangzhe jinshizhi* version.

35 Goldschmidt, *The Evolution of Chinese Medicine*, 69–102.

36 Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 171–74. On the same institution in a later period, see Hino, 'Sōdai chōshōko no hatten ni tsuite', 213–46.

Jicai si 積財司 (Office for Accumulating Wealth)	*Caifeng hang* 裁縫行 (Tailor's Guild; or Guild for Stitching and Sewing)	The Chinese words for wealth and stitching are homonyms, but this guild would also have had better off people as its customers.[37]
Fangshseng si 放生司 (Office for Setting Free Life)	*Jinlin hang* 錦鱗行 (Guild of Brocade Scaled Creatures [i.e., fish])	Fish are one of the most important forms of life that are set free in Buddhist establishments.
Zhaiseng si 齊 [~ 齋] 僧司 (Office of Fasting Monks)	*Tangbing hang* 糖餅行 (Guild for Sugar-pastry Makers)	During Buddhist fasting rituals, figures out of sugar would be displayed on the altar.
Esi si 惡死司 (Office for Those who Died Badly)	*Benzhou jinzi* 本州禁子 (The prefectural prison guards)	Prison guards might well be worried that people who died as a result of torture or legal mistakes could come back to haunt them
Zhufu si 注福司 (Office which Brings Good Fortune)	*Caibo hang* 綵帛行 (Guild of Coloured Brocade)	Silk is a luxury product and would often be embroidered with auspicious motives, hopefully bringing good fortune.
Caozhi si 曹職司 (Office for Bureaucratic Staff)	*Caohang* 曹行 (The Guild of Office Staff)	The only place with bureaucratic staff would have been the local yamen.
Gongde si 功德司 (Office of Buddhist Merit)	*Guohang* 果行 (Guild of Fruitsellers)	The term for 'fruit' (*guo*) also refers to the fruit of meritorious behaviour, which probably inspired this particular connection. In addition, fruit is a typical Buddhist vegetarian sacrifice to replace the common meat sacrifice.
Zhangming si 掌命司 (Office for Overseeing Life)	*Chu hang* 厨行 (Kitchen Guild)	Given that Chinese cuisine is centred on meat and fish, in other words on living creatures or incarnated beings, a connection is quite likely here

37 Handlin Smith, 'Liberating Animals', *passim*.

Lüsheng si 掠剩司 (Office of Stolen Remains)	*Fanshi hang* 飯食行 (Foodstuff Guild)	A guild in charge of food (most likely food stalls) would be deeply concerned with leftovers, although this underworld office was really in charge of that bit of one's earnings to which one was not entitled according to one's prescribed fate.

three halls are also mentioned in the 1290 sūtra colophon which lists the entire Baiyun network that contributed to the movement's reprinting of the Buddhist canon.[38] These are the Zhiqing Hall 致慶院, the Qingyuan Hall 慶遠院, and the Miaode Hall 妙德院, all of which are located just south of Changxing in the prefecture of Huzhou. As of 1290, their abbots all carried the generation character Ru 如, the same as the aforementioned Ruxiang. Probably the other halls mentioned in the 1314 inscription are likewise from the Changxing and Huzhou regions, rather than further away, but without explicit evidence we cannot be certain. The total number of Buddhist institutions involved is quite remarkable, with three larger monasteries with several courtyards (*si* 寺) and twenty monasteries with only one courtyard (*yuan* 院). Behind each monastic institution would have been a group of regular donors who visited a temple for ritual purposes and/or some form of personal devotion, signifying a much wider 'Buddhist' inspired involvement than the mere mention of a monastery might suggest.

The Baiyun zong specifically funded the main hall with the statue of the Emperor of Dongyue himself as well as its incense burner pavilion, the central hall for offering sacrifice and the hall for the unidentified Saintly Mother (Shengmu dian 聖母殿), in addition to three gates (or the Third Gate), and finally the Dragon Tower and the Phoenix Pavilion (Longlou fengge 龍樓鳳閣, they are mentioned as one unit). These were of course highly capital-intensive projects, which the monasteries could have funded from their permanent endowment and/or

[38] *Da fangguangfo huayan jing*, *T* no. 293, 10: 0850b29, 0850c23 (but as *yuan* instead of *si*), 0850b20, 0850b21.

incidental smaller donations by their network of local followers and customers. The Zhengdian 正殿 (Main Hall) would have been at least three bays (*jian* 間; units formed by minimally four pillars, with the middle bay often bigger in size) and have the archetypical roof construction that we know so well from surviving palaces, monastic halls and temples from the Song onwards.[39] The Zhongdian 中殿 (Middle Hall) probably had the same number of bays and basic architecture, but would have been smaller in size. A *dian* 殿 (side hall) most likely consisted of only one bay. Together they provided the basic structure of the temple (*miao* 廟, here conceptualised as a *xinggong*).

Contributing to these crucial buildings guaranteed that the project would succeed, and brought in considerable merit as well, both on a personal level and for the religious tradition as a whole. As I already noted above, the Baiyun zong was under considerable pressure from the central state for its recurrent tax evasion, making it even more important to strengthen its local roots by making this extremely visible contribution to local religious and social life. They did not fund any of the smaller offices (*si* 司), which probably were more like shrines, in other words roofed structures for the lesser deities without room for human worshippers to go inside. That three Buddhist monks, of which two most likely resided in the Puning patriarchal monastery in Hangzhou, also donated land to the Dongyue xinggong (see below) further underscores the close connections between land ownership and this particular tradition.

Some of the other associations also seem to have had a 'Buddhist' background. We do not know the further affiliation of the *Futian she* 福田社 (Society [or Societies] of the Fields of Merit) that funded two of the underworld offices, except that at the time this was typically a Buddhist inspired association for charitable activities.[40] Moreover, three of the five people behind this Society used *fu* 福 (merit) as a personal name, surely not a coincidence, but motivated by a deeper religious concern.[41] Finally there is mention of a *Luohan hui* 羅漢

[39] Steinhardt, *Chinese Architecture*, passim.

[40] See for instance, ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*, 25–28.

[41] The names are Xing Fu 邢福, Shao Fu 邵福, and Shen Fu 沈福. This type

會 (Arhat Gathering), but it is unclear what kind of activities they engaged in, except that it seems likely that it was Buddhist in nature. Some kind of contribution was also made by the *daomin* 道民 (person of the way) Zhang Shijing 張師淨, who was the abbot of a cloister and seems to have worshipped at and cared for the temple (焚修管廟). He probably also was an adherent of the Baiyun zong, who typically referred to themselves as *daomin* like other activist lay-Buddhists, and used religious affiliation characters (in this case the character *jing* or pure, which might refer to the belief in the Pure Land [*jingtu* 淨土] of Amitābha).[42]

Several sites in the Dongyue xinggong are somewhat obscure and may need further research. One of them is called the Chaobai ci 朝拜祠 (Shrine for Paying Court and Worshipping) by the *Tangzu she* 堂祖社 (Society for the Ancestor of the Hall). I would tentatively suggest a connection with the Baiyun zong, which was very much constructed as a lineage and continued to worship its founder as an ancestor.[43] This part of the temple is funded by a man identified as Sun *tidu* 孫提督 (intendant Sun) and three persons with a very different name structure, always some numbers and then *xiu* at the end. As I will argue further below, they were most likely women. It is one of only two buildings co-funded by people with that particular name structure, all other parts having been funded by people with more or less conventional names. Conversely, this type of name appears almost as a standard format among the donors of landed property, where we conversely find almost no regular names. I discuss the issue of these names in my section on donations of landed property further below.

Of old, the Dongyue xinggong was deeply connected to the local and imperial state as well as Daoist exorcistic ritual practices. It was usually inhabited by Daoist priests.[44] The role of the state is abun-

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of name appears once more, among the supporters of the Capital City God 都城隍 by the *Xiangzhuo hang*, as Yao Fu 姚福.

42 ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*, 36–37, 39–41, 64–113.

43 See note 19.

44 Goossaert, *Heavenly Masters*, 73, 101–02, 153, 211, 239, 240, 242, 256, 260.

dantly confirmed by this inscription, but the same text only lists one evident Daoist institution, namely the *Changsheng ku* 長生庫 (Long Life Treasury) of a prominent local Daoist monastery, Chongzhen guan 冲眞觀 (Belvedere Soaring towards Realisation of Truth [?]), which funded the *Shanbu si* 善部司 (Office of the Ministry for Good Deeds). Whereas the Dongyue xinggong was located just outside on the west of the city, this monastery was located just outside on the east, in fact exactly where one would have expected the Dongyue xinggong as well.[45] We do not know the precise visitor numbers of any religious site, but I already pointed out that Wufeng Hill would certainly have been a popular destination for city people. Supporting an office here by the *Changsheng ku*, which depended on regular donations to keep up its public lending function, made good sense in terms of visibility.[46]

A number of underworld offices were supported by guilds which specialised in articles for religious worship. The *Xiangzhuo hang* 香燭行 (Incense and Candle Guild) supported the *Du chenghuang si* 都城隍司 (Capital City God Office), while the *Jiaozhuo dazhi yinma hang* 澆燭打帋印馬行 (Guilds for Dipping Candles, Making Paper and Printing Paper Ritual Objects [lit. paper horses]) supported the *Tudi si* 土地司 (Lord of the Earth Office). Although I have not included these two societies in the above table analysing the motivations of donors to support a shrine or hall, it will not be a coincidence that two guilds closely involved with religious practices supported the two main bureaucratic offices immediately below the level of Dongyue and commonly mentioned in Daoist ritual.[47] The precise nature of the *Dusheng hang* 度生行 (Guild for Transferring the Living) is unclear, but because a number of other guilds were devoted to producing ritual objects, I would suggest that this particular guild was of ritual specialists engaged in burial rites, which served to transfer (*du* 度, 渡) people to the world of the dead. They

45 *Huzhou fuzhi* (1570s), 4: 42.

46 Gernet, *Buddhism in Chinese Society*, 171–74.

47 As a combined database search in the Daoist canon quickly reveals. The number of hits is too large to include in this footnote.

specifically supported the Liwang ci 李王祠 (Shrine for King Li) for reasons that are unclear, but being involved in a temple devoted to one's fate in the underworld would have made eminent sense for such specialists. Supporting these particular places in the temple served as good advertising for the shopkeepers as well. Judging from modern layouts of religious locations, their actual shops would have been on the route leading to the temple, somewhere at the foot of Wufeng Hill.[48]

I would hesitate to associate the above shops in religious articles with a particular doctrinal approach, but the following guilds, or its shops, were probably more closely related to specifically Buddhist ritual. Again, I would assume that they were located somewhere on the road towards the temple. The *Tangbing hang* 糖餅行 (Guild for Sugar-pastry Makers) funded the *Zhaiseng si* 齊 (~齋) 僧司 (Office of Fasting Monks), surely because during Buddhist rituals fruit, flowers, and finely crafted figures out of sugar would be displayed on the altar. In the same way the *Guohang* 果行 (Guild of Fruitsellers) would also have made much money from selling sacrificial fruit to any visitors and especially so during Buddhist merit-making rituals, such as funerals for specific people and Water and Land Rituals for the anonymous dead which both served to create merit (*gongde* 功德) for the deceased. It is thus hardly a coincidence that they contributed to the *Gongde si* 功德司 (Office of Buddhist Merit).

Most of the donations from the side of the bureaucracy were similarly meaningful, except for those of the prefect and vice-prefect. Prefect Lü Shu paid for the road through the temple complex (*yongdao* 甬道), mostly made out of stone and thus quite expensive. The Vice-Prefect Ma Rong paid for ritual furniture, such as the altar for placing sacrifices (*xiantai* 獻臺), a Moon-shaped Platform 月臺 (purpose unclear), Stele Pavilion 碑亭 (most likely for the 1314 stele), and one or more flagpoles 幡竿. The two officials seem to have filled

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[48] Especially famous examples which I have visited (and many among the readers of this contribution as well) would be the monasteries on West Lake in Hangzhou or the Yonghe Palace 雍和宮 (the Lama Temple) in Beijing. It is also true for most temples and monasteries in Taiwan.

in remaining items that could not be missed but would not create much visibility. Their various underlings in the local bureaucracy on the other hand generally contributed in very meaningful ways, with the side hall or underworld office which they financed clearly related to the nature of their jobs. One group were the local clerks who did the crucial back-office work. Thus, the prefectural *benzhou sili tieshu* 本州司吏貼書 (Copyists of the Prefectural Officials) contributed to the side hall of the Loyal and Pacifying King, or the Tang prefect Zhang Xun 張巡 (709–757) who had defended his seat against the An Lushan 安禄山 rebel armies, paying with his death, and who was the subject of a widespread cult at the time. It is not hard to see here their admiration for a brave local official. The *Caoxing* 曹行 (Guild of Office Staff) funded their direct parallel, the *Caozhi si* 曹職司 (Office for Bureaucratic Staff) of the underworld bureaucracy. The *Benzhou shuzhuang chengfa si* 本州書狀承發司 (Prefectural Office for Receiving and Dispatching Letters and Forms) funded the *Yuanwang si* 寃枉司 (Office for Wronged Cases/Lawsuits), typically an office where there was a high likelihood of bureaucratic mix-ups and even corruption. All of these clerks would have been literate, even though they had not been successful in the examination system.

Other types of crucial local staff who were less literate (or not at all), but were active on the ground, were the local 'police', or the *Benzhou budaosi* 本州捕盜司 (Office for Catching Bandits of this Prefecture) which funded the side hall of the Chongning Zhenjun dian 崇寧眞君殿 (Hall of the Perfected Lord of the Chongning period). This deity was the Daoist version of the increasingly popular deity Guan Yu 關羽 (d. 219) of the Song, Jin, and Yuan period, known for his martial exploits and used by Daoist priests for catching and destroying demons or the otherworldly parallel to bandits.[49] The prefectural prison guards (*benzhou jinzi* 本州禁子) funded the *Esi si* 惡死司 (Office for Those who Died Badly), surely because they were worried that people who died as a result of torture or corporeal punishment could come back to haunt them. Finally, the yamen runners (ushers) (*benzhou zhihou* 本州祗候) funded the side hall of the Zhaolie wang

[49] See ter Haar, *Guan Yu*, passim.

dian 昭烈王殿 (Shining and Illustrious King). Here the deity still needs identification, but it would be surprising if some kind of association between him and the yamen runners would not exist.

The full participation of local officials and their staff, down to the prison guards and local police, together with their highly meaningful choices which side halls or offices to support, indicates that they were fully aware of the parallel nature of this underworld bureaucracy to their own this-worldly one.[50] Moreover, the local bureaucracy funded the more expensive parts of the temple, from side halls (*dian*) to the access road and crucial ritual locations. Even if the strong involvement of the local Prefect and Vice-Prefect would have created a certain social pressure on their underlings, the fact remains that they contributed very substantially in financial terms and meaningfully in their selection of which part of the temple to support.

A final important group were the local guilds, or more likely named people from or even representing guilds. As in most other instances, the entries are made up of the name of the guild (*hang*) followed by a few personal names. What we do not know is how the names relate to the guilds, whether they were their leading officers or just members. In several cases as many as six of seven names are mentioned, which suggests that all local shops in the guild were represented. The clear connection between the main profession of a guild and the nature of the side hall or office that it supported adds a crucial dimension to the presence of guilds in this text that has been overlooked until now. Previous researchers were hard put by the absence of organisational information in this inscription (or indeed in other early references to guilds [*hang*]). From the meaningful connection between a guild and the side hall supported by it, we can surely

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[50] Susan Naquin (personal communication, August 2022) has suggested to me that there is one conspicuous absence, which is those clerks in charge of collecting taxes. Given the reputation of the Baiyun zong supporters as tax dodgers, this is an interesting absence and equally meaningful as the active participation of others. On the other hand, this did not block the top local officials from participating and they would have been the primary persons responsible for tax collection.

deduce that the shopkeepers or craftsmen involved had communicated with each other on their contribution and came to a conscious collective decision for socio-religious action. Since they worked, and probably lived, next to each other, oral communication would have sufficed and there was no need to formalise their cooperation further in written form, such as guild rules.

TABLE 2 The guilds (*hang* 行) involved in the project

1	*Wushu hang* 五熟行 (Guilds of the Fifth Stage of Ripening)	Silkworm farmers
2	*Xiangzhuo hang* 香燭行 (Incense and Candle Guild)	Makers of ritual objects
3	*Yinhang* 銀行 (Silver Guild)	Craftsmen of silver objects and/or those in charge of weighing silver as a means of payment, instead of bronze coins or paper money.
4	*Yuzhu hang* 玉麈行 (Guild of the Jade Flywhisk)	Daoist ritual specialists
5	*Dusheng hang* 度生行 (Guild for Transferring the Living)	Ritual specialists
6	*Jiaozhuo dazhi yinma hang* 澆燭打帋印馬行 (Guild for Dipping Candles, Making Paper and Printing Paper Ritual Objects; lit. 'paper horses')	Makers of ritual objects
7	*Gaoshi hang* 篙師行 (Boatsmen Guild)	Boatsmen on Lake Tai nearby
8	*Jingfa hang* 淨髮行 (Clean Hair Guild)	Hairdressers and barbers
9	*Caifeng hang* 裁縫行 (Guild for Stitching and Sewing)	Tailors
10	*Jinlin hang* 錦鱗行 (Guild of Brocade Scaled Creatures)	Fish mongers

11	*Bilü hang* 碧綠行 (Guild of the Dark-green)	The precise meaning is unclear, but from the colour I would suggest that these were jade workers.[51]
12	*Tangbing hang* 糖餅行 (Guild for Sugar-pastry Makers)	Makers of ritual objects
13	*Caohang* 曹行 (Guild of Office Staff)	Yamen staff
14	*Wuse hang* 五色行 (Guild of the Five Colours)	Unclear, perhaps dyers
15	*Zhengguan hang* 正冠行 (Guild of Proper Headgear)	Hatmakers
16	*Shuangxian hang* 雙線行 (Guild of the Double Stitch)	Shoe and boot maker[52]
17	*Guohang* 果行 (Fruit Guild)	Fruitsellers
18	*Caibo hang* 綵帛行 (Guild of Coloured Brocade)	High end tailors
19	*Chu hang* 厨行 (Kitchen Guild)	Local cooks (?)
20	*Fanshi hang* 飯食行 (Foodstuff Guild)	Local food stalls (?)

A number of donations were made by private persons for whom no profession or background is given beyond their rough local address. Some locations can be traced in later gazetteers and indicate that such donors did not necessarily come from the city itself, but from some distance away. Several men from the Third *du* of Baiwu *xiang* 白烏鄉三都 together funded a bigger side hall. They came from

51 The Qing transcript writes *yuan* 緣, which made no sense to me. The original is so damaged at this point that it is difficult to be sure, but I have emended to the very similar character for green (*lü* 綠), which seems to make more sense.

52 Wu, *Mengliang lu*, *juan* 13: 3a explains the name of this guild, which also existed in Hangzhou. Only a few other names in this source overlap with those in our description, suggesting local autonomy in selecting a name.

roughly twenty-five Chinese miles from the county capital. The *du* is a sub-bureaucratic unit, i.e. without an official appointed from the imperial centre and largely left to its own devices administratively. Someone else came from the Sixth *du* of Jiarui *xiang* 嘉瑞鄉六都, fifty Chinese miles away, and paid for the Offices (purpose unclear, perhaps for the temple keeper?). A man from the Tenth *du* of Pingliao *xiang* 平遼鄉十都, seventy Chinese miles away, paid for the Huaguang Pavillion 華光樓 (perhaps the Wuxian 五顯 [Five Luminaries] deity associated with Huizhou, but other identifications are also possible).[53] None of these were small building projects like the bureaucratic offices of the cult would have been, leading us to assume that these were not petty farmers, but larger landowners with sufficient capital behind them to fund an entire office that otherwise took a guild to pay. It also indicates the potential impact of the cult across the county as a whole.[54] The list of land donations further confirms the appeal of the Dongyue xinggong across the prefecture, assuming that the donors had at least some connection to the plots that they donated to the temple.

The Land Donations

Like any serious religious institution in traditional China since the Song dynasty, the Dongyue xinggong was provided with a sizeable land donation for its regular upkeep. A full analysis of the land donations to this temple cannot be attempted here, since the requisite comparison with other contemporary land donations as well as various more technical agricultural questions would spring the confines of this contribution.[55] We can however make a number of general

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[53] Combining information on distances from the *Huzhou fuzhi* (1475), *juan* 4: 16b–17b and the *Changxing xianzhi* (1874, 1892 expanded), *juan* 1 *xia*: 6a–b (for a historical change of name).

[54] I was unable to locate some of these references which included the inconclusive term *jie* 界.

[55] A recent Western study of Buddhist monastic landed property is Walsh,

remarks which hopefully bear on the nature of the socio-religious community that supported the 1313–1314 restoration of this temple.

The first thing to note is that the donors of land do not appear in the list of donors who gave directly to the restoration project. Some family names do recur throughout, but their personal names do not allow further speculations about possible kinship since they do not contain shared lineage generation characters. Here we face a second peculiarity of the donor names, which is their structure in the form of numbers and what seems to be an honorific. Moreover, these numbered names almost never occur in the list of direct donors to the project. As a result, we cannot meaningfully compare these two different kinds of lists, even though the common family names do suggest a kind of kinship relationship. Nonetheless, a closer analysis reveals some other interesting aspects.

The nineteenth century comments attached to this inscription already noted the curious phenomenon of names consisting of a family name, one or more numbers, and the word *xiu* 秀. We can add to this this appearance of similar names ending with the word *gong* 公 as well. The term *xiu* also appears in ordinary names without the numerical, where it appears to be just another name (still common in male Japanese names, read as *hide*) and remains within the standard number of one or two characters for a personal name.[56] A further peculiarity is the structure of the number, which often includes the words *bai* 百 or *qian* 千. I have listed the various cases in Table 3 below. Evidently, the terms *bai* and *qian* cannot refer to the number of children within a nuclear family and even within the larger lineage or clan this seems highly unlikely. The nineteenth century comments notice that the term *xiu* was used in the Yuan period as a honorific

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Sacred Economies, *passim*. Di, 'Yuandai jiangsi sitian de zudian guanxi', 22–31 compares some of the available data on landed property of religious institutions in this period, including the Dongyue xinggong.

[56] Some other names do contain the character xiu but are most likely male: they are Zhou Erxiu 周二秀 of the *Yuzhu hang* 玉塵行 (Guild of the Jade Fly-whisk); Yin Rixiu 因日秀 supporting one of the gates 櫺星門 as a private person; and Qian Dexiu 錢德秀 of the *Caibo hang* 綵帛行 (Coloured Brocade Guild).

for women, which is confirmed for instance by the late Yuan collection of actresses' biographies, the *Qinglou ji* 青樓集 [Collection of the Green Pavilion] Pavilion] by Xia Tingzhi 夏庭芝 in which *xiu* is added to the names of female performers.[57] This is further confirmed by the appearance of two names with the suffix *gong* (to wit Jiang Baiyi *gong* 蔣百一公 and Yin Baijiu *gong* 因百九公), which is the male equivalent. If this hypothesis is correct, it would mean that women were quite common among the donors of land and sometimes also donated directly to the temple itself. The only professional female group among the direct donors to the temple were the midwives who clearly supported the one 'office' in the temple that was directly meaningful to them, namely the *Jiansheng si* 監生司 (Office for Overseeing Life). Otherwise, we find three female names among the donors from the *Tangzu she* 堂祖社 (Society for the Ancestor of the Hall) which funded the Chaobai ci 朝拜祠 (Shrine for Paying Court and Worshipping). I already suggested that this may have been a lay Buddhist organisation connected to the lineage of the Baiyun zong, but its precise nature is uncertain. Otherwise, the women who were involved donated exclusively in the form of land.

The numerical names in this inscription are curious, but I would propose the following hypothesis. First of all, the elements *bai* 百 and *qian* 千 do not refer to a ranking, but should be treated as auspicious terms. Women who owned land were not necessarily fully literate, but it seems plausible that they could read numbers such as *bai* and *qian*. This understanding is supported by the name Yin Shousan *xiu* 因壽三秀, in which we find a number preceded by the auspicious term *shou* 壽, meaning 'long life'. One instance does not fit this pattern, which is Zhou (*ji*) Yixiu 周季一秀. The character *ji* 季 usually refers to younger brothers, although it can also mean 'season'. Since this person is ranked 'one, first', the explanation 'younger' seems unlikely, but without further evidence I cannot solve this conundrum. Otherwise, the numbers that remain after we 'subtract' the auspicious terms *bai*, *qian*, and *shou* make sense in terms of female fertility, assuming one potential birth every two years between the

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57 Xia, *Qinglou ji*, passim.

ages of eighteen and forty-five, or roughly fourteen births. The highest number among our actual donors is twelve. Many children would have died prematurely, so it is not surprising that someone with a high ranking (i.e. a younger child from the group) would end up in control of the land. Giving numerical names may have been because, after their youth, women would usually be known in terms of the family name of their husbands, and only be named independently as owners of property or land. They did not really need personal names from a kinship perspective, since they rarely acted as independent legal or social persons.

TABLE 3 The Gendered Names of the Land Donors

Contribution	Names carrying the element *xiu*	Suggested gender
Tangzu she 堂祖社 (Society for the Ancestor of the Hall) funding the Chaobai ci 朝拜祠 (Shrine for Paying Court and Worshipping)	Yin Shousan *xiu* 因壽三秀 Ni Qianshier *xiu* 倪千十二秀 Yin Bailiu *xiu* 因百六秀	F F F
Land	Cheng Er *xiu* 程二秀	F
Land	Yin Qianshier *xiu* 因千十二秀	F
Land (two donations)	Zhang Qianshiyi *xiu* 張千十一秀	F
Land	Zhou (*ji*) Yixiu 周季一秀	F
Land	Cheng Er *xiu* 程二秀	F
Land	Jiang Baiyi *gong* 蔣百一公	M
Land	Yin Baijiu *gong* 因百九公	M

The honorifics *xiu* and *gong* are reserved for the donors of land and are absent among the names of those who apparently rented the land and actually carried out the agricultural work. Since the actual farmers

would have been lower in status, at least in terms of the circuit of gifts that this inscription is dealing with, this is not too surprising. Equally interesting is the fact that the donors, and one assumes also owners of the land, might be female but that their farmers were invariably male. But women and some men were not the only donors.[58]

As I have already noted at the outset of this contribution, the cult of the Dongyue xinggong is usually connected to Daoist ritual traditions, even though the detailed beliefs in an underworld are certainly Buddhist in origin (and Buddhist ritual specialists are the most common practitioners of funerary ritual). Moreover, the cult of Mount Tai has strong connections to ancient state ritual practice. Among the land donors, we have further evidence, however, that this cult certainly also appealed to Buddhist monks on an individual level. As many as four separate donations of land were made by three monks. Most likely they were Buddhist in terms of initiation, since at this point in time in the south the term *heshang* 和尚 would still refer primarily to Buddhist monks. In the 1290 colophon from the Puning Buddhist canon, two of these donors can be identified with great likelihood, both from the Baiyun zong patriarchal monastery in Hangzhou.[59] One possibility is that they donated their own land, even though it was formally registered to the Hangzhou monastery. After all, the Baiyun zong was notoriously connected to land evading practices from the perspective of the imperial state.

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[58] We do find a similar structure of an auspicious term with a number in their names. Two people carry the term wan (ten thousand), namely Ding Wansan 丁萬三 and Yang Wansilang 楊萬四郎. One person carries the term *zheng* (straight, correct), namely Xu Zhengyi 徐正一. Two persons who are probably male also carry the term qian, namely Sun Qianyi 孫千一 and Pan Qianwu 潘千五.

[59] They were Great Teacher Hao 皓大師 (most likely Minghao 明皓 who is listed first among the venerable monks of the Puning monastery in the 1290 colophon and who must have been even more venerable in 1314, see *Da fangguangfo huayan jing*, 0850b04). In addition, they are Monk Zhi 智和尚 (in the 1290 colophon too many monks carry the name *zhi* for a positive identification); and Monk Zu 祖和尚 (very likely named Mingzu 明祖 and also from the Puning monastery, see the 1290 colophon in *Da fangguangfo huayan jing*, 0850b05).

All in all, women are much more conspicuous among the donors of land than men. In itself it is not surprising that women could have controlling ownership of land, since during the Song and Yuan the position of women in this respect was still better (or less bad) than under later dynasties, although deterioration had already set in.[60] We do not know whether they also had surviving sons or daughters, but even if they did donating this bit of land apparently could not be halted by male relatives (or the latter simply agreed, of course). What we do not know is whether they donated to the Dongyue xinggong as a socio-religious institution more generally, or as a project of the Baiyun zong specifically. If the latter is the case, some aspect of female religiosity might be involved, for instance as followers of the Buddhist monks who also donated land. Since the only person with a clearly religious name linked to activist Buddhism such as the Baiyun zong was the *daomin* Zhang Shijing, and women do not carry any religious names here, I do not think that the lay people involved were motivated by a specific Baiyun affiliation. Even the Buddhist monasteries involved may have been motivated more by general socio-religious concerns of supporting a major religious institution than specific doctrinal affiliations.

Final Observations

As was suggested by Timothy Brook at the conference in his honour where I first presented this investigation, there are certain similarities as well as differences between the medieval cathedral projects of Western Europe and the 1313–1314 restoration project of the Dongyue xinggong in Changxing Prefecture. The most important similarity is also the core argument of my discussion, namely the all-inclusive nature of these projects, at least within urban society. While the buildings looked very different, and cathedral projects were probably much costlier and therefore took many decades or even centuries to complete, both a cathedral in Western Europe and a temple on this

[60] See the discussion by Birge, *Women, Property, and Confucian Reaction*.

scale in imperial Chinese required an all-out effort by local urban society. At the same time, such a project also brought different layers of society together at least for a certain period of time. And finally, although hard to prove specifically for the Changxing temple, such buildings must have been a source of considerable local pride. This case study also underscores Richard von Glahn's argument about the close connection between the commercialising urban society of the Southern Song and Yuan periods and the cult of Dongyue.[61]

At almost no point in the material do we find a sense of separate doctrinal traditions, such as we are wont to use in our scholarship today, i.e. Buddhism, Confucianism or Daoism. There is only one similar term, namely 'teachings of Shakyamuni' (Teachings of Shi or Shijiao 釋教), but it refers to the monastic institutions as they are supervised by a state bureaucracy manned by Buddhist monks, in this case a monk of the Baiyun zong that is also behind the rebuilding project. It is not intended as an overarching label and the Baiyun zong is in fact often put away as heterodox, rather than mainstream Buddhist, mainly because of Yuan and then Ming prohibitions. More importantly than terminology is the fact that people from all social as well as religious backgrounds, and also very different social statuses from the local prefect to midwives, cooperated publicly in a single socio-religious institution.

Equally interesting is the fact that the inscription itself explicitly and publicly recognises that the Baiyun zong which organised the whole project was no longer officially in existence. As we know, this was because of a prohibition related to tax dodging accusations (probably true in themselves, but hardly unique to this movement or this period of time) and not for doctrinal reasons. The Baiyun zong was one of the most prominent religious movements of the Southern Song and Yuan periods in the Lower Yangzi region. It continued to function above the board despite the prohibition.[62] A minor point within the context of this analysis, but still striking, is the total invisi-

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[61] von Glahn, 'Towns and Temples', *passim*.

[62] Much the same was true for the Southern Song and Yuan Bailian movement as well. See discussion in ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*, 64–113.

bility of Mongol rule in these activities. The whole project proceeded much as it might have under the preceding Song dynasty, which is in fact also when the Baiyun zong had started its activities. It may have been officially forbidden as of 1313–1314, but this apparently did not affect its local functioning.

To sum up, the Baiyun zong led a restoration project that we today would not identify as Buddhist, for a temple that is usually associated with Daoist ritual practices and/or 'folk' beliefs in underworld reward and punishment. Nonetheless, in terms of the moral values represented by the Dongyue xinggong, they were completely in line with 'Buddhist' ideas about incarnation, karmic reward and punishment, and the existence of an underworld apparatus to take care of this process. These ideas had been internalised so much in Chinese culture over the preceding centuries, that very few people would have associated them anymore with their Buddhist origins. The only indication that some educated elites might have had some ideological qualms is the presence of the Xixinting on top of Wufeng Hill, high above the Dongyue xinggong. Whilst this is not made explicit in our sources, this name uses a reference to the classical *Yijing* to indicate the importance of moral behaviour. By the late Ming this kind of usage of the *Yijing* to make ethical points would become even more common. Therefore, this pavilion was an early attempt to ground more firmly into pre-Buddhist texts a culture of values and practices that had actually been deeply influenced by Buddhist inspired religious culture. It was part of the reinvention of tradition that we seem much more prominently in the late Ming, of removing the very evident 'Buddhist' and 'Daoist' impact on social life from sight and replacing it by quasi-Classicist (Ru 儒) sources.

Because the Dongyue xinggong represented conventional religious values and practices, even though many of them were Buddhist inspired, it could be supported by all social groups within Changxing society. Conversely, everyone from local officials and their bureaucratic apparatus, local guilds, Buddhist inspired religious associations, a Daoist monastery, local landowners, men as well as women of some means, to a series of smaller and larger monasteries associated with the Baiyun zong cooperated in the project. In terms of their actions, all of these people felt no problem in contributing to

a local institution despite their possible individual social or religious differences. The fact that so many donors or donating groups very consciously picked parts of the Dongyue xinggong that they wanted to fund also indicates that they had a certain amount of agency. They were not just hapless donors who were then redistributed over the temple complex by the organising committee. It also suggests that they will have been aware of other aspects of the overall project, such as the important and very visible role of the Baiyun zong, whether it had been prohibited or not, and despite its religious affiliation. Taking part in this ecumenical restoration project was a conscious choice.

One could dismiss these cooperative efforts as forms of syncretism, but that presumes that these traditions were closed-off and discrete in the first place, which is not necessarily true, certainly not in the Song period and after, and probably not before either. Buddhist monks as well as Buddhist lay people, especially from activist groups of the *daomin*, the Bailian (or White Lotus) movement and the Baiyun zong, are known for their organisational activities for the benefit of society as a whole. These included the building of bridges and roads, the provision of tea, and others.[63] They did so because these movements were a well-integrated part of local society, but they were also strongly aware of the moral benefits that charity brought to their future incarnations.

By erecting a stone inscription, their participation in this project was also more than public, rather than hidden in a neighbourhood temple only visited by local believers in the immediate surroundings. As noted at the outset, the Dongyue xinggong was located at a major landmark just outside the city, Wufeng Hill, and the inscription itself was undoubtedly extremely prestigious at the time of its creation and erection. Written by a high-level official in calligraphy by the best-known calligrapher of that time, and placed in the biggest and most important local temple of the city, the stone and the statements that it made must have drawn considerable local attention.

In the later imperial and modern period, it has long been common

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[63] ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings*, 16–113ff.

to find Buddhist or Daoist monks and priests as temple keepers, but it is much more difficult to find examples of the participation of Buddhist and Daoist institutions within local religious culture. I do not think that absence of information is also absence of phenomena. The work of Timothy Brook, followed more recently by important studies by Jiang Wu and Jennifer Eichmann to mention a few Western colleagues, has demonstrated the ongoing significance of 'Buddhist' institutions among the highest elites as well as the production of sophisticated religious thinking connected with Buddhist inspired figures.[64] There can be no doubt that as a larger religious force, the Buddhist saṅgha continued to be substantial in size and influence long into the twentieth century.[65] Lay religious groups that were partly or wholly suffused with 'Buddhist' inspired beliefs and practices, often combined with 'Daoist' ones as well, continued to arise and then flourish, despite repeated repression.[66]

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Abbreviations

T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*. See Secondary Sources, Takakusu and Watanabe, eds.

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[64] Brook, *Praying for Power*; Jiang, *Enlightenment in Dispute*; Eichman, *A Late Sixteenth-century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship*.

[65] ter Haar, 'State and Samgha', 379–408 for an argument about the size of the Saṅgha. Scott, *Building the Buddhist Revival* about the revival of Buddhist monastic institutions after the mid-nineteenth century rebellions.

[66] ter Haar, 'Giving Believers Back Their Voice', 16–54.

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