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Mollier/Buddhism and Taoism Face to Face

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Introduction

The implantation of Buddhism in China, during the first centuries of the common era, was an unparalleled phenomenon in the history of religions. Unlike Christianity, which played a major cultural, social, and political role in the formation of early medieval Europe, Buddhism did not have such a pervasive effect in the Chinese world. Already five or six centuries old when it entered China, the Indian religion encountered there an ancient, highly advanced civilization. China had its own rich intellectual, philosophical, and religious traditions. It had also a strong sense of cultural and political identity, often expressed as a powerful ethnocentrism. Compared with the many other Asian nations in which Buddhism became a dominant vector of social and intellectual organization, the Celestial Empire seemingly had very little to envy with respect to India's great civilization. Erik Zürcher's masterpiece, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* (1959), which deals with the formative phase of this implantation, remains the first reference for anyone who wishes to understand the complex history of medieval Chinese Buddhism.

The remarkable establishment of the Indian religion in its Chinese setting has long been a subject of fascination for scholars of Buddhism and Sinologists, who have explored its various aspects: philosophy and doctrines, textual material, social and institutional organization, art, economy, and so on. Nevertheless, in considering the complex course of its sinicization, its manifold intellectual influences on Chinese culture, and the magnitude of its textual and artistic remains, one cannot be surprised that large areas have remained neglected. One of them, and not the least, is the interaction of Buddhism with the other major Chinese religion, Taoism, the indigenous tradition that, in spite of its long prehistory, began its development only in the second century of the common era. The encounter of these two great religions was particularly fruitful in medieval times, when they contributed to shaping one another in many ways. Their in-

terrelationship only started to be regarded as a subject of fundamental interest in the late 1970s, however, when Zürcher opened the way in the field now usually referred to as "Buddho-Taoism."

Zürcher's interest in this large and tricky domain was, I believe, motivated by an ambitious project that had just started in Paris, namely, the detailed study of the Taoist Canon. This monumental effort was initiated and directed by the doyen of Taoist studies, Kristofer Schipper, who created a team of both senior and junior European Sinologists who would devote themselves to the analysis of the Taoist Canon's 1,500 scriptures. For those of us who joined this enterprise, the task seemed herculean not only in terms of the quantity of texts to examine but also in terms of their difficulty. Most of these Taoist scriptures were completely unknown and untouched, whether by Chinese, Japanese, or Western scholars. By and large undated, anonymous, and written in a hermetic, esoteric style, they had issued from different Taoist schools dating from the beginning of the common era down to the Ming dynasty, when the extant Canon was compiled in the fifteenth century. The topics found in the Taoist Canon (*Daozang* 道藏) were also extremely diverse, including philosophy, meditation techniques, exorcism, medicine, alchemy, hagiography, messianism, and, most importantly, liturgy. The scope of the task, therefore, among its other vicissitudes, explains why it took some thirty years of labor for it to be realized. This tentacular work was finally published in 2004 by the University of Chicago Press.[1] What is immediately pertinent here, however, is that, having already to deal with the difficult work of identifying and classifying such an enormous amount of material, the question of the possible Buddhist influence on some of these medieval Taoist works was not, in the first instance, viewed as a priority. It was shortly after the project had started that Erik Zürcher's visits to Paris somehow changed this state of affairs.

At the time, I was among Kristofer Schipper's students trying to find my way in the obscure new field of medieval Taoism and in this context had the opportunity to meet Zürcher a few times, as well as another great master and pioneer of the Buddho-Taoist field, the late Michel Strickmann.[2] I did not immediately realize, however, to what extent the Buddhist sūtras that Strickmann showed me as matter of comparison with the Taoist scriptures I was working on might prove relevant to my work. I already had too much on my hands just in trying to penetrate the Taoist arcana, and so did not feel any urgency to comprehend the interplay between the two great Chinese religions. My efforts were, for a few years, entirely dedicated to the study of an important

1. Schipper and Verellen (2004).
2. See esp. Strickmann (1982, 1990).

fifth-century Taoist work entitled the *Scripture of the Divine Incantations of the Abyssal Caverns* (*Dongyuan shenzhou jing* 洞淵神咒經), the chef d'oeuvre of medieval Chinese apocalyptical eschatology.[3]

While Buddho-Taoist comparison was already well established in Japanese scholarship, notably in the monumental work of Yoshioka Yoshitoyo 吉岡義豐,[4] in the West it only gradually began to be recognized as a field of some importance following the publication, by Zürcher, of two seminal articles in the early 1980s. One, entitled "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism," illustrated the colonization of the imagination that Buddhism effected on Taoist soteriological and eschatological representations.[5] The second, "Prince Moonlight," dealt with Buddhist messianism and apocalyptism.[6] This last work was particularly interesting to me, for the Buddhist sūtras that Zürcher introduced there sounded like the perfect echo of the contemporaneous Taoist materials I was investigating. Both the Buddhist sūtras preached by the Buddha and the Taoist scriptures revealed by the supreme god Laozi were, with a similar tone of alarm, predicting the end of the world and the spread of billions of demons bringing disease and calamity all over the earth. Both were, in much the same terms, denouncing the moral and religious decadence of humanity, which would be responsible for the impending cosmic collapse. Messianism and more generally eschatology were definitely domains in which medieval Taoism and Buddhism influenced one another profoundly and enduringly, from a theological as well as an ideological point of view.

Following Zürcher's opening of the way in Buddho-Taoist comparison, further studies appeared in the 1990s that showed how the two Chinese religions affected one another in many domains. Stephen Bokenkamp, Kristofer Schipper, and Michel Strickmann, for example, produced key contributions in the field of liturgy and therapeutic exorcism.[7] At about the same time, Livia Kohn and Franciscus Verellen, dealing respectively with Buddhist and Taoist apologetic literature, shed light on some of the processes of assimilation and confrontation between the two traditions.[8]

My first steps in this field started also in the early 1990s, after I entered the research team run by the late Michel Soymié, a team that had been work-

3. Dz 335. (Dz = *Zhengtong daozang* 正統道藏, edited in 1445, reimpression in Shanghai in 1923–1926. Numbered here according to Schipper [1975].) On the *Dongyuan shenzhou jing,* see Mollier (1990).

4. Yoshioka (1959, 1970, 1976). See also Kamata (1986), which presents a selection of Taoist texts influenced by Buddhist scriptures.

5. Zürcher (1980).

6. Zürcher (1982).

7. Bokenkamp (1983, 1990); Schipper (1994); Strickmann (1993).

8. Kohn (1995); Verellen (1992).

ing for three decades on the descriptive catalogue of the Pelliot Collection of Dunhuang Chinese manuscripts kept in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris. Three volumes had already been published covering some 2,000 manuscripts, the first of which was edited by Jacques Gernet and Wu Chi-yu in 1970.[9] The last catalogue, including a further 2,000 documents, was in preparation when I joined the project. It was published in 1995.

Walled up not long after 1000 C.E. in a chamber adjoining one of the famous Thousand Buddha Caves of Dunhuang, some 40,000 manuscripts and documents were discovered by Western explorers at the beginning of the twentieth century, English archeologist Aurel Stein and French Sinologist Paul Pelliot foremost among them. Mysteries still surround the raison d'être of this library cave at the Dunhuang Mogao site, which is known as cave 17. The most recent and plausible explanation is that it was mainly used as a temporary depository for one or more local monastic libraries while they were themselves being restored.[10] However that may be, the hoard of manuscript treasures discovered there date from the fourth century down to the beginning of the eleventh, when the grotto was sealed after the Xixia, or Tangut, invasion. Mostly written in Chinese and Tibetan, they also include documents in Khotanese, Uighur, Sogdian, Sanskrit, Hebrew, and other languages. Although the great majority of the scrolls, booklets, paintings, and other fragments found in cave 17 were of Buddhist origin, there were also manuscripts representing other religious traditions, Taoism, Nestorianism, and Manicheanism among them. In addition, the trove contained literary and philosophical collections, Confucian classics, pedagogical manuals, and encyclopedias, together with treatises on medicine, divination, and mathematics, and various documents such as calendars, local gazetteers, calligraphy exercises, administrative and accounting papers, letters, and so on. The sealing of the cave permitted the perfect conservation of this invaluable library for some nine hundred years. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the Dunhuang collections have been a gold mine for scholars of medieval East and Central Asia, and for historians of religions in particular.

Among the Chinese Buddhist documents, which represent more than 80 percent of the entire collection, one finds a substantial proportion (perhaps 5 to 10 percent) of noncanonical scriptures. These sūtras, conventionally re-

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9. *Catalogue des manuscrits chinois de Touen-houang, Fonds Pelliot de la Bibliothèque nationale,* vol. 1 (1970), ed. Gernet and Wu; and vols. 3 (1983), 4 (1991), and 5 (1995) under the direction of Soymié. (On the absence of volume 2, see the introduction to volume 3. A sixth volume concerning the Chinese fragments found among the Tibetan documents from the Pelliot Collection was edited by Françoise Wang-Toutain [2001].)

10. See Rong (2000).

ferred to as "Buddhist apocrypha," had, in many cases, completely disappeared after having been expunged from the canons. Some were of course edited in much later versions and therefore substantially modified or altered, so that the known redactions were less reliable than the ancient manuscript copies from Dunhuang that had luckily been preserved.[11]

Although the eminent scholar Paul Pelliot drew attention to the exceptional value of these apocryphal sūtras as early as 1911, it was only in the late twentieth century that Western specialists started to examine this long-disregarded facet of Buddhist literature. Michel Strickmann, Robert Buswell, Stephen Teiser, and Robert Sharf in the United States, Herbert Franke in Germany, as well as Antonino Forte and Kuo Liying in France were among those who began working in this area, following the traces of such great Japanese Buddhologists as Yabuki Keiki 矢吹慶輝 in the 1930s and, more recently, Makita Tairyō 牧田諦亮, who is now the doyen of the study of Chinese Buddhist apocrypha.[12] In the past few years, the rise of interest in Chinese Buddhist apocrypha has been given further encouragement thanks to an invaluable find, not in China, but in Japan. An entire medieval library was rediscovered in 1990 in a Buddhist monastery called Nanatsu-dera 七寺, in a suburb of Nagoya. About 5,000 scrolls, among which one finds many unpublished apocrypha, were stored there, for the most part dating to the twelfth century. The Nanatsu-dera collection is esteemed by Japanese scholars, such as Ochiai Toshinori 落合俊典, as the most significant find of ancient texts in East Asia since the discoveries at Dunhuang.[13]

Borrowed from biblical studies, the term "apocryphon" as it is used by contemporary historians of Chinese Buddhism refers to a complex notion relating to both bibliographic and doctrinal categories. For medieval Chinese Buddhist bibliographers, there mainly existed two types of sūtras: the "authentic," or "real" (*zhen* 真) sūtras; and the "false" (*wei* 偽) or "suspect" (*yi* 疑) ones. The first category was generally applied to sūtras that were translated from an Indian or Central Asian language into Chinese, that is, from "original" sources considered to be the transcriptions of the historical Buddha's preaching. Imported to China by adventurous monks and pilgrims, these prestigious and exotic scriptures were highly praised as the "genuine" canonical texts. The second category comprised the "indigenous" sūtras, that is, the "apocrypha" written directly in Chinese.[14]

11. See Makita (1976); Buswell (1990b); Franke (1990); Tokuno (1990); and Kuo (2000).

12. Yabuki (1930–1933); Makita (1976). For some examples of Western scholarship in this domain, see Forte (1976, 1990); Strickmann (1990); Kuo (1994b); Teiser (1994); Sharf (2002). Other pertinent works are cited in the following chapters.

13. See Ochiai (1991).

14. See Yü (2001): 95–102, who prefers the expression "indigenous Chinese scriptures" to "apocrypha."

These were scriptures whose earliest representatives were composed, for the most part, during the fifth and sixth centuries C.E., and then continued to be produced regularly, with a noticeable high peak between the sixth and eighth centuries.[15] Although they also claimed to be the words of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni and often adopted the structure of Indian texts, these "homemade" sūtras were, in many cases, stigmatized and rejected, assigned to the "erroneous" or "suspect" categories by Buddhist cataloguers. In reality, however, the problem of distinguishing between "orthodox" sūtras and "apocrypha" turned out to be much more complicated. The criteria of authentification varied considerably during the long history of Chinese Buddhism, mainly for political reasons. It is well known that the translations of the sūtras as well as the compilation of the canons were generally carried out under imperial sponsorship and control. They were consequently subject to more or less heavy ideological pressures.[16]

A new generation of researchers soon came to recognize, however, that these apocryphal sūtras cast light on little-known, unconventional aspects of sinicized Buddhism, a Buddhism mainly meant to appeal to the faith of the Chinese laity and to respond to their needs. As expressions of the intermingling of Buddhist beliefs and rituals with local cultural and religious specificities, they supply much matter for reflection on the part of historians of Chinese religions in general and Taoist scholars in particular. "They served," as Pelliot said in 1911, "as a kind of intermediary between the two religions."[17] Indeed, for the most part, the Buddhist apocrypha reframed indigenous Chinese rituals and texts.

If the extensive creation of Buddhist apocrypha was motivated to some degree by proselytic necessities, the Taoist superproduction of writings during the same period can undoubtedly be seen as a phenomenon of acculturation. When Mahāyāna Buddhism started to prosper in Chinese society around the fourth and fifth centuries, Taoism was still also in its formative phase. The first Taoist organization, known as the Way of the Heavenly Master (Tianshi dao 天師道), was originally a local, sectarian movement, confined to the western part of Sichuan Province. After a period of diaspora provoked by political pressures, it spread throughout China so that, by the beginning of the fourth century, Taoism had expanded beyond its sectarian confines to acquire the shape and status of a religion per se, whereupon new schools and new scriptures also emerged in South China. The combination of the ancient practices of the Way of the Heavenly Master with the southern esoteric traditions gave birth to one of the main currents of medieval Taoism: that of the

15. Kuo (2000): 684–686.

16. For more on this question, see Makita (1976); Buswell (1990b); Tokuno (1990); and Kuo (2000).

17. Pelliot (1911).

High Purity, or Shangqing 上清. Shangqing writings are divine instructions that were revealed to a visionary medium during the years 364–370. Soon after this first great wave of inspired literature, the scriptures of the Numinous Treasure (Lingbao 靈寶) appeared. The Lingbao movement, strongly influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism, emphasized salvation through communal rituals into which were integrated Indian conceptions of hell, bodhisattvas, karma, retribution, and so forth.[18] During the following two centuries, other minor Taoist sectarian movements also created their own "bibles," like the aforementioned *Scripture of the Divine Incantations*.

Buddhism not only deeply affected traditional Chinese religious life and mentality, but it also operated as a trigger for the native religion. Taoism owes part of the formation of its identity, as a fully structured and organized religion, to its face-to-face encounter with Mahāyāna Buddhism. In response to the sophisticated eschatological and soteriological concepts imported by its foreign rival, Taoist theologians had to formulate and define their own ideas of the afterlife and human destiny, of moral precepts and ethical principles. To vie with itinerant and often zealous Buddhist preachers, skilled thaumaturgists, and miracle workers, Taoism had to organize its own clergy of physician-exorcists. Inspired by the already well-structured Buddhist canonical literature and impressed by the massive profusion of sūtras, whether "original" or "apocryphal," that were being diffused, Masters of the Dao also felt the urge to increase and classify their own literature. Most of the scriptures that came to light during this period were "revelations." In other words, they were considered as cosmic writs that were "translated" into profane language by their divine recipients in order to protect and save faithful Taoist adepts. During the fifth century, the first Taoist "canon" was thus created, and Taoism progressively acquired all the attributes of an institutionalized, nationwide religion.[19]

But other nativistic reactions also set in. In order to silence the omnipresent Buddhist rival, Taoists sought to reinforce the prestige of their own tradition. The polemical confrontations over the legend of the "conversion of the barbarians" (*huahu* 化胡), which lasted for about a thousand years, offer certainly the most famous, ferocious, and sustained examples of the attempts by the two parties to achieve predominance in the Chinese state. The *huahu* debates took shape in a critical historical and political context, at the beginning of the fourth century C.E., with the compilation of the *Sūtra of the Conversion of the Barbarians* (*Huahu jing*). Paul Pelliot was especially proud to have had put his hand on a late manuscript version of this text during his first selection of scrolls inside the li-

18. See Bokenkamp (1983).
19. On the history of the Taoist canons, see Schipper and Verellen (2004).

brary cave of Dunhuang. "This sūtra," he says, "lost since six centuries, is one of the texts that has played the most considerable role in the religious history of the Chinese world."[20] The legend on which this literature is based was probably first created with the sole goal of explaining the rise of the foreign but nonetheless familiar Buddhist religion in China. An early fifth-century Taoist text entitled the *Inner Explanations of the Three Heavens* (*Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經), found in the actual Taoist Canon, conveys a complementary vision. The text explains how the Taoist sage and divinity, Laozi, left China in the ninth century B.C.E. and, riding his blue ox, reached the frontier, where he met Yin Xi 尹喜 (the Guardian of the Pass). Laozi revealed to him the famous *Daode jing* 道德經 (*The Book of the Way and Its Power*). Then, with Yin Xi, he proceeded toward the West, where he converted the king of Kashmir and his people by transmitting holy scriptures he composed for them. Laozi and his companion then continued farther west to the kingdom of India, where the Taoist deity was reborn as the Buddha.[21] In other words, Śākyamuni and Buddhism are originally Taoist.

Soon, however, the legend was exploited by Taoist apologists in reaction against Buddhism. They pretended that Laozi undertook his western journey with the aim of converting the "barbarians" of Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. If he transformed himself into Śākyamuni, it was to impose the strict rules of Buddhism, which could bring to heel the savage and immoral nature of the inhabitants of these regions. The newly composed versions of the *Huahu jing* were determined to prove the antecedence and the supremacy of the autochthonous tradition, while treating Buddhism as a by-product of Taoism. The Buddha's teaching was good only for taming and humanizing miscreant foreigners. During the following centuries, and above all under the Tang, the debates pro- and contra-*huahu* continued to nurse the quarrels between the two great religious traditions. The *Huahu jing* was often reworked and developed, with Buddhist and Taoist apocrypha striving to reduce, as the case may have been, Laozi or Buddha to decals of one another.[22] Taoists did not hesitate to provide their supreme god, Laozi, with all the qualities required of a divine missionary: miracles, inspired pedagogy, and all the other means needed for introducing the True Religion to foreign countries. To lead immoral people to adopt the right way, Laozi adapts his preaching to their inferior "Western" intelligence, and he advocates precepts and rigorism: the newly converted have to observe celibacy, to wear the robe with one naked shoulder, to shave their hair, to abstain from meat, to build monaster-

20. Pelliot (1911).

21. Dz 1205. 1/4a–4b. See Bokenkamp's translation (1997): 211–212.

22. See Zürcher (1959): 288–320; and Kohn (1995). See also Schipper (1994): 65n10, which provides a long bibliography on the subject.

ies, and to celebrate cults in his honor. The xenophobic flavor of such Taoist tales was, as has been noticed elsewhere, reinforced by the social context. The invasions of Northern China by foreign peoples during the Six Dynasties period contributed to the formation of a negative view of the alien religion.

First tolerated by the Buddhists, who regarded them as a means to introduce their doctrine as a sister of Taoism, these tales of Laozi, disguised as Śākyamuni Buddha, rapidly became the object of serious denunciation and rebuttal. The several anti-Taoist treatises produced by Buddhist literati in the context of court debates that took place at different times during the medieval period have been extensively studied by Zürcher and more recently by Livia Kohn.[23] Moreover, imperial officialdom took a jaundiced view of these *huahu* controversies and sometimes intervened in order to halt their escalation. The Tang emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (705–710), for example, found himself obliged to promulgate an edict in 705, just a few months after his enthronement, prohibiting Taoist temples from exhibiting paintings of Laozi's conversion of the barbarians, declaring that anyone who attempted to circulate the *Laozi huahu jing* would be punished.[24]

Besides the canonical apologetic literature issuing from courtly Buddhism, which used mainly doctrinal weapons to dismiss its rival, one finds another type of Buddhist refutation of Taoism: the counter-*huahu* strategy expressed in certain apocryphal sūtras. There, in their turn, the Buddhists claimed that Laozi was nothing but the Buddha's disciple who came to China in order to convert people to Buddhism by preaching an alternative religion—that is, Taoism. One of the earliest examples of this Buddhist counteroffensive is found in an apocryphon rediscovered among the Nanatsu-dera manuscripts in Japan. In this sūtra, dating to the fifth or sixth century and entitled *Qingjing faxing jing* 清淨法行經, or the *Sūtra of the Pure Practice of the Dharma, Preached by the Buddha,*[25] we find Laozi described as a bodhisattva who—together with two other famous "bodhisattvas," Confucius and his cherished disciple Yan Hui 顏回—is sent by the Buddha to China to teach the Dharma. After accomplishing his mission, Laozi leaves for the West, which, in this case, means that he goes back to his Indian homeland.[26]

23. See Zürcher (1959): 288–320; and Kohn (1995).

24. Weinstein (1987): 47–48. The text of the edict entitled "Jin Huahu jing zhi" 禁化胡經敕, cited by Weinstein, is found in the *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 17, Zhonghua shuju ed.: 202–203.

25. See Ochiai (1991): 26–29; Ishibashi Nariyasu, Naomi Gentestu, and Ochiai Toshinori, "The *Qingjing faxing jing*," in Makita and Ochiai (1996), vol. 2: 5–28. A French translation and analysis of the Sūtra realized collectively under the direction of Kuo Liying is forthcoming.

26. See Ochiai (1991): 26–29; and Kohn (1995): 16–17.

A New Approach to Buddho-Taoist Interaction

Far from these ideological polemics, the investigation that I propose in this volume adds a new dimension to the study of Buddho-Taoist relationships and turns on their concrete and practical aspects. For during mid- and late medieval times (from the end of the Six Dynasties through the Tang and Five Dynasties periods), religious life was far more confrontational than the considerable interpenetration of the two religions might at first have us suppose. An amazing competition was taking place between the two communities, a fight for hegemony in the domains of scripture and ritual.

In the past few years I have drawn attention to scriptures of various genres that occur in both Taoist and Buddhist guises. My exploration of these scriptural doppelgängers started when I was working for the French Dunhuang manuscript research team, mentioned above, and has been motivated by my formation as a historian of medieval Taoism, my direct contact with the medieval manuscripts, and my collaboration with Buddhologist colleagues.

Within the vast field of interaction between the two great Chinese traditions, some of the examples of apocryphal sūtras and Taoist "revealed" scriptures that I present in this book offer a previously unknown face of this complex process of interplay. What we find in these examples is not mere hybridization or passive borrowing, but a unique type of scriptural production, whereby the two traditions mirrored one another. One and the same body of material is set in both Buddhist and Taoist frames. Not only are some Buddhist sūtras strongly impregnated with Taoist elements, but indeed we find that they have precise Taoist counterparts. In such instances the sūtra follows, of course, the usual device used by authors of apocrypha, whereby it is said to have been preached by the Buddha to such and such a bodhisattva, while the Taoist parallel is held to have been revealed by Lord Lao (Laozi). The ascription of divine authorship to these texts provides them with the "appellation contrôlée," effectively guaranteeing, in the eyes of their practitioners, their authenticity and authority. Sealed with Śākyamuni or Laozi's hallowed name, such a sūtra could aspire to canonization.

The two most remarkable instances among the Buddho-Taoist doubles analyzed in this volume are the *Sūtra of the Three Kitchens* (*Sanchu jing* 三廚經) and the *Sūtra to Increase the Account* (*Yisuan jing* 益算經). Classified as "suspect" and as "human fabrications" by Buddhist catalogues since the mid-Tang period, these two sūtras prove to have been directly copied—in fact, calqued—on the basis of contemporaneous Taoist writings. It would be no exaggeration in these cases to speak of flagrant piracy.

The first of these two apocrypha, the *Sūtra of the Three Kitchens,* is the most

fully documented case. It was already denounced as a Buddhist plagiarism in the tenth century by the renowned court Taoist Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933). Du accused a fraudulent Buddhist monk of stealing the well-established Taoist text entitled the *Scripture of the Five Kitchens,* changing its title to the *Sūtra of the Three Kitchens, Preached by the Buddha,* and adding a few Buddhist elements in order to create a credible sūtra. In spite of last-minute divine intervention, not all of the copies made by the arrogant monk could be destroyed, and several were said to have been diffused throughout the entire country. This is how, explained Du Guangting, the Buddhist forgery remained in circulation. In essence, Du Guangting's account was on target, for we indeed have today both a Buddhist *Sūtra of the Three Kitchens* and a Taoist *Scripture of the Five Kitchens*. The first, whose full title is *Sūtra of the Three Kitchens, Preached by the Buddha* (*Foshuo sanchu jing* 佛說三廚經), is an apocryphon dating from the end of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth century that was discovered in a dozen recensions at Dunhuang. It is also found in two manuscript copies of the eleventh and thirteenth centuries in the famous headquarters of the Shingon sect on Mount Kōya 高野山 in Japan. The Taoist version, the *Scripture of the Five Kitchens, Revealed by Laozi* (*Laozi shuo wuchu jing* 老子說五廚經), which was edited in the Ming Taoist Canon with a Tang-period commentary by the Taoist Master Yin Yin 尹愔, seems also to date from the same period but was certainly derived from an older tradition. Both versions concern a method of meditation based on the recitation of a Taoist poem involving incantations of the Five Agents, which aims at salvation through complete abstinence from food. An examination of the two versions, as will be seen in chapter 1, lends support to Du Guangting's allegation that the Buddhist sūtra was indeed forged on the basis of a Taoist scripture.

A similar case is that of the talismans "to increase the account," dealt with in chapter 3 and found in the *Sūtra of the Divine Talismans of the Seven Thousand Buddhas to Increase the Account, Preached by the Buddha* (*Foshuo qiqian fo shenfu yisuan jing* 佛說七千佛神符益算經), of which several versions were also discovered among the Dunhuang manuscripts. The work has been labelled as a Buddhist apocryphon since the end of the seventh century, but in fact the *Sūtra to Increase the Account* should be more appropriately qualified as a Buddhist replica of a Taoist scripture. The latter, once more, may be found in the Taoist Canon. It bears the title *Marvelous Scripture for Prolonging Life and for Increasing the Account, Revealed by the Most High Lord Lao* (*Taishang Laojun shuo changsheng yisuan miaojing* 太上老君說長生益算妙經). The two texts, Buddhist and Taoist, are almost perfectly identical. Both versions are centered around the same incantations and the same two sets of talismans—one set of five prophylactic, astrological talismans and a second set of ten talismans for

the exorcism of demons. The aim of these ritual implements is to guarantee full protection to the faithful so that they can achieve the optimal term of longevity, a span of 120 years.

How in reality were these scriptural "doubles" rendered possible? Were they strictly local occurrences involving only neighboring religious communities, or do they reflect widely ramified developments, due to the broad diffusion of manuscripts? Except for the *Sūtra of the Three Kitchens,* which is plausibly held to be a Taoist work pirated on the personal initiative of a Buddhist imposter, the circumstances informing these scriptural exchanges remain obscure. Through the juxtaposition and detailed comparison of the two sets of documents, we may come to understand somewhat better just how such sharing was effected and thus make evident the procedures utilized by the "forgers" to fabricate their duplicates. The "cut-and-paste" method seems to have proved its utility in more than one case of transformation of a Taoist text into a Buddhist sūtra, or vice versa. In general, the business was achieved just by a simple change of the narrative frame together with obvious terminological substitutions. As we shall see in chapter 3, the procedure was quite well described by Du Guangting, who deplores on several occasions its brazen use by his Buddhist rivals.

What Du fails to say, however, and for good reason, is that the Taoists employed the same subterfuge in order to appropriate certain Buddhist works. This was explicitly denounced by the *saṃgha,* which proclaimed loud and clear the superiority and integrity of Buddhism, while denigrating Taoism as a producer of heretical (*xie* 邪) texts and "false sūtras" (*weijing* 偽經). The first great Buddhist apologetic treatise, *Laughing at the Dao* (*Xiaodao lun* 笑道論), which was presented before the throne of the Northern Wei in 570 C.E. by Zhen Luan 甄鸞, does not mince words about this matter. In a section whose title is fully explicit, "Plagiarizing Buddhist Sūtras for Taoist Scriptures" (Gaifo wei dao 改佛為道), Zhen Luan denounces the counterfeits of the *Lotus Sūtra* forged by the Taoists and literally accuses them of stealing (*qie* 竊).[27] The monk Daoan 道安 raises the same charges in his *On the Two Teachings* (*Erjiao lun* 二教論) of 570, in a passage entitled "On Genuine and False Scriptures" (Mingdian zhenwei 明典真偽).[28] Taoist plagiarists would continue to arouse the indignation of the Buddhist authors of major polemical works, who tirelessly taxed the rival religion as fraudulent and incoherent. At the beginning of the sixth century, Falin 法琳, in a chapter of his celebrated *In Defense of What Is Right* (*Bianzheng lun* 辨正論) with the evocative title "Calling Out

27. Section 29, T. 2103, vol. 52: 150–151; refer to Kohn (1995): 130–132. The theme is taken up in section 8 of the great anti-Taoist polemic of the sixth century.

28. Section 10, T. 2103, vol. 52: 141.

Taoist Lies" (Chu dao weiniu 出道偽謬), manifests particular exasperation with regard to the borrowings from and misconceptions of Buddhism found in the Taoist Lingbao scriptures.[29]

In effect, the Taoists were not content just to react theoretically to the virulent attacks launched by their opponents. To calm criticism and to protect themselves, they took tangible steps as well. As Stephen Bokenkamp has shown, the writings contained in the Lingbao canon, indebted as they were to the Mahāyāna in terms of literary style, terminology, and liturgical outlook, were subjected, at the beginning of the Tang, to a veritable expurgation of the more obvious of the Buddhist elements they contained.[30] Nevertheless, parallel with this campaign for the "purification" of ancient canonical materials, we find a renovation of this same Lingbao tradition under the Sui and at the beginning of the Tang. More than ever, the many "Taoist sūtras" being produced are directly inspired by Buddhist works—indeed, literally copied from them. This phenomenon, however, was by no means unilateral, for the Buddhists, during the same period, also threw themselves into the fabrication of sūtras, the famous apocrypha that were presented as the genuine words of the Buddha. No more scrupulous than their rivals, the Buddhists showed no hesitation about trolling through Taoist collections and falsifying the writings they found there. For better or for worse, both parties thus attempted to conceal the origins of their pickings, in the interest of appropriating and integrating them on behalf of their respective literary patrimonies. The procedure was in any case identical: one changes, in a general manner, the introductory scene and, as required, attributes the text to the authorship of the Buddha or Laozi. The technical vocabulary that betrays the religious pedigree is erased and replaced by the terminology one judges appropriate. The titles of the works in question, however, are retained throughout the process, with only substitutions, as necessary, for the names of the Buddha or Laojun, for the designations of these scriptures are in effect labels of prestige, without which they would cease to be marketable.

Many of these texts are therefore readily identifiable in their double guises. We may cite, for example, the very popular *Sūtra on the Profound Kindness of Parents* (*Fumu enzhong jing* 父母恩重經), a seventh-century apocryphon of which numerous copies were found at Dunhuang, and which was also an object of pictorial representation. The sūtra lays claim to themes already treated five centuries earlier in a Buddhist work bearing an almost identical title and attributed to An Shigao 安世高 (ca. 148–170):[31] the pains and privations that parents endure

29. T. 2110, vol. 52: 8/542–544; dating to 626 C.E.
30. Bokenkamp (1983): 467–468, who quotes Ōfuchi (1978): 52.
31. See Makita (1976): 50–60; and Kamata (1986): 154.

to bring up their children, the hardships of the mother during her pregnancy and then while nursing her offspring, the promotion of filiality, and the central importance of repaying parental care.[32] Soon after its creation, the seventh-century Buddhist apocryphon was taken over by the Taoists, who, by means of a few additions and minor alterations, made it into the *Scripture on Repaying the Profound Kindness of Parents, Revealed by Lord Lao* (*Taishang Laojun shuo bao fumu enzhong jing* 太上老君說報父母恩重經).[33]

Two other examples also merit consideration in this series of Buddho-Taoist doubles. The *Sūtra for Pacifying Houses* (*Anzhai jing* 安宅經)[34] and the *Sūtra of Incantations of the Eight* Yang (*Bayang shenzhou jing* 八陽神咒經)[35] were both classed as "suspect," or apocryphal, by Fajing 法經 in his Buddhist catalogue of 594 C.E., the *Zhongjing mulu* 眾經目錄,[36] and both rediscovered at Dunhuang. They were "adapted" by Taoism, presumably during the Tang dynasty, and thus we find two Lingbao scriptures "revealed by Laojun," whose contents and titles are close to these Buddhist sūtras, edited in the Taoist Canon. Like their Buddhist counterparts, they were used for rituals intended to resolve the topomantic problems of dwellings, caused notably by the disturbance of earthly divinities.[37]

Also deserving of mention are the numerous commonalities linking the *Marvelous Scripture for Extending Longevity, Revealed by the Most High Heavenly Venerable of the Numinous Treasure* (*Taishang lingbao tianzun shuo yanshou miaojing* 太上靈寶天尊說延壽妙經, Dz 382), with the *Sūtra to Extend Destiny, Preached by the Buddha* (*Foshuo yan shouming jing* 佛說延壽命經), a Buddhist apocryphon mentioned in the bibliographical catalogues of the early seventh century and preserved too at Dunhuang.[38] The Taoist text was revealed in the course of a di-

32. See Cole (1998).

33. Dz 662. See Akizuki (1996). The *Daozang* also contains an abridged version of this sūtra entitled *Taishang zhenyi bao fumu enzhong jing* 太上真一報父母恩重經 (Dz 65).

34. *Foshuo anzhai shenzhou jing* 佛說安宅神咒經, T. 1394, vol. 21: 911–912. See, for example, Dunhuang manuscript P. 3915. Makita (1976): 346–347.

35. *Foshuo bayang shenzhou jing* 佛說八陽神咒經, T. 2897, vol. 85: 1422–1425. See P. 3915. A different version of the *Bayang shenzhou jing* (T. 428, vol. 14: 73–74) is allegedly Dharmarakṣa's translation (end of the third or beginning of the fourth century).

36. T. 2146, vol. 55: 136, 138.

37. Dz 634: *Scripture of the Eight Yang for Pacifying Houses, Revealed by the Most High Lord Lao* (*Taishang Laojun shuo anzhai bayang jing* 太上老君說安宅八陽經), and Dz 635: *Scripture of the Eight Yang for Amending, Revealed by the Most High Lord Lao* (*Taishang Laojun shuo buxie bayang jing* 太上老君說補謝八陽經). Hans-Hermann Schmidt, in Schipper and Verellen (2004), vol. 1: 563, mentions the proximity of these texts with a Buddhist work attributed to Yijing 義淨 (635–713), but he did not notice their relationship with the earlier apocrypha, mentioned above.

38. See Makita (1976): 80–83.

vine assembly beneath the tree of the "jewel forest" (Linglin shu 靈林樹),[39] while the Buddhist sūtra presents itself as the teaching of the Buddha delivered under twin Pāla trees (Poluo shuangshu 婆羅雙樹). The adepts of the Taoist work to obtain grace and an extension of life guaranteed by the "Heavenly Venerable of the Numinous Treasure Prolongation-of-Destiny" (Lingbao yanshou tianzun 靈寶延壽天尊), while the devotees of the Buddhist sūtra find that they are granted the same advantages by the bodhisattva Prolongation of Destiny (Yanshou pusa 延壽菩薩).[40] To be sure, many more examples of Buddho-Taoist doppelgängers could be added to the list, and some of them would merit the benefits of comparative treatment analogous to that which I have undertaken in the several cases analyzed in the following chapters.

The mid-Tang period (seventh–eighth centuries) seems to have been the golden age for this scriptural mix-and-match game that was played out between Buddhism and Taoism. Significantly, most of the apocrypha mentioned thus far were redacted during this period, as were the *Fumu enzhong jing* and the *Anzhai jing,* which inspired Taoist works, and as were also the *Sūtra of the Three Kitchens* and the *Sūtra to Increase the Account,* Buddhist plagiarisms of contemporary Taoist scriptures. The fickle policies of the Tang with respect to the two religious traditions certainly exacerbated their mutual desire to take advantage of imperial favor and may have incited the protagonists to engage in this literary duel and intensify their scriptural production. The Tang emperors appear to have opted for an unstable compromise between the maintenance of Buddhism, which was powerfully implanted and prospered at all levels of society, and the obligatory patronage extended to the "autochthonous" Taoist tradition in virtue of the legendary ancestral affiliation of the ruling house with Laozi. In the course of the numerous doctrinal debates orchestrated by the court between the representatives of the two religions, each side was eager to win imperial sponsorship and recognition. However, the bidding competition over scriptures in which Taoists and Buddhists were engaged cannot be reduced to an epiphenomenal outcome of this ongoing match. The aura of sacrality surrounding writing in Chinese culture was no doubt a weighty factor promoting their literary production, and to win by sheer numbers seems also to have been part of the strategy. The first true Taoist Canon edited at the order of the emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (712–756) was monumental. It contained more than 3,400 scrolls (*juan* 卷), including not only the ancient canonical texts but also new, contemporary scriptures, among which were some virulent anti-Buddhist works. As a matter of comparison, the Taoist catalogues of

39. This forest is said to be located on Mount Golden Light (Jinguang shan 金光山) in the Southern Pole Heaven (Nanji tian 南極天).

40. On this apocryphon, see chapter 3, p. 105.

the preceding Sui dynasty (581–618) listed around 1,200 works in circulation.[41] Even more impressive, the Buddhist catalogue of Zhisheng 智昇 (668–740), the *Record of Śākyamuni's Teaching, Compiled during the Kaiyuan Era* (*Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄), which was presented to the throne in 730 and served as a standard for the Tang Tripiṭaka as well as for later canons, listed no less than 5,048 *juan* of Buddhist works, among which we find some 400 "spurious," apocryphal sūtras.[42] No doubt this disposition of both religions to incorporate in their respective canons and bibliographies a maximum of works was prompted by a need to assert their proprietary prerogatives, to demonstrate the quantitative respectability of their libraries to the imperial authorities, and to ensure textual diffusion.

The Dunhuang collections and the monastic libraries of Japan are, in this regard, excellent indicators. Thus the number of copies of a given sūtra found in cave 17 sometimes reflects the extent of its distribution. Notably, most of the texts that enjoyed a double existence, Buddhist and Taoist, figure among the apocryphal sūtras of which more or less significant numbers of copies were retrieved at Dunhuang. Above and beyond this quantitative evaluation, the importation of these sūtras to Japan and their preservation in monastic collections such as that of Nanatsu-dera underscore the fame with which they were imbued in their land of origin, for this was surely a criterion to justify their export.

To some extent, the Dunhuang manuscripts indicate also how certain of these sūtras were transmitted. It is not rare to find booklets in which several are copied in series, presumably for cultic reasons. The term "chain sūtra" (*lianxie jing,* Jap. *rensha kyō* 連寫經) has been employed by Makita Tairyō to designate this sort of aggregate manuscript production.[43] It is of interest to note that several of the apocrypha that are thus "enchained" in the Dunhuang manuscripts show also some editorial contiguity in their Taoist versions. We find, for example, the apocryphal *Anzhai jing* and the *Bayang shenzhou jing,* successively calligraphed, together with other Buddhist sūtras, in a tenth-century *pothi* booklet of fifty numbered leaves discovered at Dunhuang (P. 3915), while the Taoist versions of these sūtras figure contiguously (fascicle 341) in the Ming *Daozang* as well. We may notice, too, that the *Sūtra for the Conjuration of Bewitchments* and the talismans of the *Sūtra to Increase the Account,* which will be examined in chapters 2 and 3, respectively, were copied "in chain" in a Dunhuang manuscript (S. 4524), while their Taoist counterparts, the *Scripture for Increasing the Account* and the *Scripture for Unbinding Curses,* were edited in the same fascicle 343 as part of the Dongshen 洞神 division of the Ming Taoist Canon.

41. See Chen Guofu (1963): 105–114. On the compilation of the Tang Taoist Canon, see also Barrett (1996): 60–61; Reiter (1998); and Schipper and Verellen (2004), vol. 1: 24–25.

42. See Tokuno (1990): 52–58.

43. See Makita (1976): 39; and Kuo (2000): 694–695.

One may of course argue that the juxtaposition of these texts, both in their Buddhist and in their Taoist environments, may not be so surprising, considering that they are dealing with the same topics. However, it is equally plausible that such bibliographical arrangements had liturgical justifications. Although sometimes dating to different periods, these scriptures might well have been transmitted together during the Tang dynasty as parts of ritual units by the Buddhist *saṃgha,* on one hand, and by contemporaneous Taoist communities on the other.[44] If, on the Buddhist side, many of the apocryphal sūtras that we are examining seem to have been transmitted in a Tantric context, for the Taoist texts they mostly belong to two main currents of the medieval period: the Zhengyi (Heavenly Master) and Lingbao organizations.

Although certain of these Buddho-Taoist textual exchanges involved veritable scriptural "cloning" and obvious forgery, others may be classed among more nuanced types of remodelling, more or less distant adaptation, or response. The Taoist anti-sorcery sūtra, taken up in chapter 2, seems to belong here. This *Scripture for Unbinding Curses, Revealed by the Most High Lord Lao* (*Taishang Laojun shuo jieshi zhouzu jing* 太上老君說解釋咒詛經), said to have been transmitted by Laozi to the Pass guardian Yin Xi in the kingdom of Khotan in Central Asia, offers a radical solution to the problem of witchcraft, deemed a major symptom of preapocalyptic times as well as a perversion derived from the West, that is, from the people of Southern and Central Asia. As in other "conversion of the barbarians" (*huahu* 化胡) accounts, when he delivers this sūtra, Laozi is on his way to India to propagate the True Doctrine. In this case, however, his apparently pragmatic concern to provide a shield against curses is in fact a pretext for a higher missionary program: to save the western populations from the eschatological torments of the end of the kalpa (*mofa* 末法) by converting them to Taoism. The text might well be a Tang response to the earlier Buddhist *Sūtra for the Conjuration of Bewitchments, Preached by the Buddha* (*Foshuo zhoumei jing* 佛說咒媚經), an apocryphon dating from the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth

44. Although there are no indications in the Dunhuang manuscripts that would allow us to determine clearly in which Buddhist milieu the transmission of the *Sūtra to Increase the Account* and the talismans of the *Sūtra for the Conjuration of Bewitchments* occurred, their Taoist counterparts, the *Scripture for Increasing the Account* and the *Scripture for Unbinding Curses,* belong to the Zhengyi (Heavenly Master) tradition, as we will see, and might have been part of a ritual corpus bestowed to its clergy during the Tang. Likewise, the Lingbao pedigree of the Taoist *Anzhai jing* and the *Bayang jing* seems clearly attested, but their Buddhist counterparts' context is more difficult to determine. The tenth-century Dunhuang *pothi* booklet (P. 3915) in which they are copied together with four other sūtras—among which are the famous twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra,* entitled the "Universal Gateway of Guanshiyin," and two *dhāraṇī*-sūtras—would suggest a Tantric background. For this manuscript in particular, see the details in Soymié (1991), vol. 4: 403–404.

century. Several versions of the text were found among the Dunhuang manuscripts, and an eighth-century manuscript of the sūtra has also been preserved in the Nanatsu-dera monastic library. Like most of the Chinese Buddhist apocrypha, the *Sūtra for the Conjuration of Bewitchments* is allegedly taught by the Buddha Śākyamuni in the kingdom of Śrāvastī and aims to secure salvation for the faithful. In particular, the sūtra's priority is to free and protect them from the sufferings caused by witchcraft.

Besides their common calling in the battle against sorcery, internal evidence demonstrates the ritual and scriptural proximity of the two texts. Through the counteroffensive against sorcerers that they propose, they supply much unique data on medieval witchcraft, considered as a tangible, critical, and enduring problem for Chinese society in general, whether in relation to politics, social cohesion, or public health. The antidote to curses that the texts provide consists of a set of *dhāraṇī*s and invocations of deities that enables their practitioners to kill sorcerers and to protect and liberate their victims. This strategy conforms to the medieval Buddhist or Taoist exorcist's fundamental means to battle witchcraft, by making use of the same weapons as the sorcerers themselves: murderous formulae, incantations, talismans, and effigies. In the final part of chapter 2, several examples are provided that further demonstrate the ambivalence of such practices within Buddhist esoteric orthopraxis.

Another noteworthy example of the Buddhist appropriation of a Taoist ritual is the talismanic tradition of the Great Dipper examined in chapter 4. In this case, however, the process of adaptation went through different phases in the course of the Middle Ages and reached its culmination much later, during the Yuan dynasty, with the fabrication of a very influential work: the *Sūtra on Prolonging Life through Worship of the Seven Stars of the Northern Dipper, Preached by the Buddha* (*Foshuo beidou qixing yanming jing* 佛說北斗七星延命經). This Buddhist apocryphon, which is better-known under its abridged title as the *Great Dipper Sūtra* (*Beidou jing* 北斗經), has intrigued researchers for a century, including not only specialists of Chinese religion but also historians of Central Asia. The destiny of this modest work is indeed quite unusual, for besides the Chinese version, it exists in Tibetan, Mongolian, and Uighur recensions, as well as in a late Korean edition. If the Chinese version, which presents itself as an Indian sūtra transmitted under the Tang, was recognized to be a "suspect" work, it was nevertheless not until 1990, with the publication of an article devoted to it by Herbert Franke, that the true nature of the *Great Dipper Sūtra* was revealed. The work, according to Franke, is in effect a "pseudo-sūtra," a Buddhist apocryphon dating to the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century that was redacted in China following a Taoist model composed some two

or three centuries earlier, and it had a decisive role in the consolidation of Yuan imperial ideology.[45] Nonetheless, the "dossier" on the *Great Dipper Sūtra,* far from being closed, has continued to arouse the interest of new generations of Sinologists and specialists of Inner Asia who have explored other facets of its historical and international development. We shall see that the cult of the Great Dipper promoted in this Yuan-dynasty apocryphon can be assuredly traced back to a much earlier time. During the Tang period, it was current in both Taoism and esoteric Buddhism. It is attested, moreover, in Dunhuang materials of the ninth and tenth centuries. Antecedents of this cult can even be detected in Taoist sources dating to the Six Dynasties.

While the majority of the examples presented demonstrate how certain Taoist traditions came to be favored by Buddhism in medieval times, the last chapter of the book explores the opposite phenomenon: the creation of a "new" deity inspired by a Buddhist model long after it had been introduced into China. One of the most prestigious deities of the Taoist pantheon, the Heavenly Venerable Savior from Suffering (Jiuku tianzun 救苦天尊), was modeled on the figure of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin 觀音), drawing on his personality, function, titles, and image. Not just inspired by the charismatic persona of Guanyin, the Taoists went so far as to compose, at some point during the Tang dynasty, a kind of literary transposition of the celebrated twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sūtra,* the "Universal Gateway of Guanshiyin" (Guanshiyin pumen pin 觀世音普門品), in order to promote their deity to the great bodhisattva's level. As we shall see, the icon of this "Taoist Avalokiteśvara" played a central role in his cult and in the rites this involved.

The quest, for both religions, was not only motivated so as to achieve scriptural hegemony. Buddhism and Taoism were also aspiring to strengthen their respective liturgical and evangelical monopolies. To integrate one another's favored rituals was undoubtedly viewed as the best means to consolidate the status of their clerical organizations and to attract or keep faithful followers by providing them with the most fashionable religious trends, even if this meant borrowing conspicuously from the opposing camp's heritage.

The sūtras and scriptures presented in this volume are all concerned with ritual procedures intended for the well-being of their practitioners. Their different fields of action embody fundamental preoccupations of medieval Chinese society: long life and immortality, salvation in this world and in the next,

45. See Franke (1990).

as well as prophylaxis against demons and diseases. Exorcism, meditation, and self-perfection figure prominently among the means deployed. Hence the historian of medieval Chinese religions will not be surprised to find that, in all of the cases studied in the following chapters, rituals in effect could easily be absorbed, without any substantial modification, into different scriptural environments. The rituals in question relied on the current liturgical technologies: talismans, incantations and, in some circumstances, effigies and icons.

Of all these implements, the most specifically Chinese were undoubtedly talismans (*fu* 符). Written on paper or fabric, or else engraved on wood or other materials, talismans have, from antiquity down to the present day, always been favored as the indispensable tools of parareligious practitioners as well as of ordained clerics who fabricate, consecrate, and administer them for the protection or curing of the faithful.[46] Privileged by the Taoists who produced them in plenty, the *fu* equally entered into the panoply of medieval Buddhists, above all among the Tantric masters, who adopted them for innumerable therapeutic and exorcistic ends.[47]

Composed of diagrams and characters in an archaic style to accentuate the metaphysical value regularly attributed to Chinese writing, talismans function as iconic writings incorporating the inherent forces of the entities they signify or represent. Submitted to the proper ritual methods, they are invested with coercive virtues acting upon the invisible world and permitting one to tap directly into it. According to need, they are the favorite weapon of exorcists in combat against deadly emanations, or, on the contrary, they serve as therapeutic cures that enhance the deficient vital energies of a patient, thereby effecting his or her recovery and protection. We will see that the talismans "to increase the account," as given in the *Yisuan jing,* and the talismans of the Northern Dipper found in the *Beidou jing* are perfectly suited to these prophylactic and apotropaic missions. In both of these cases, the iconic potency of the talisman is associated with the mantric power of the word.

Incantatory formulae (*zhou* 咒, *dhāraṇī*s and mantras) may complete and reinforce the thaumaturgical efficacy of the written sign or else act through an agency of their own. It is of course well known that incantations, *dhāraṇī*s, and mantras were extensively used in the framework of medieval exorcistic and therapeutic rituals. With the rise of Tantric Buddhism in the pre-Tang and Tang period this "*dhāraṇī* mania" reached its climax.[48] Indic and Chinese cultures share the idea that the compelling strength of the word permits,

46. See Mollier, "Talismans" (2003): 406–408.

47. On the problem surrounding the use of the term "Tantrism" in the context of medieval Chinese religion, see Strickmann (1996); Orzech (1998); and Sharf (2002).

48. See Strickmann (1996): 64–78.

through appropriate ritual protocols, direct communication with spirits and deities. Like ideographs, sounds are imbued with innate vitality. Words pronounced by the officiant disclose "breaths" or "pneumas" (*qi* 氣), which have the decisive potential to materialize and mobilize occult entities. Made tangible by the practitioner's voice, spirits are, according to the needs at hand, summoned for assistance or, on the contrary, banished.

Though all of the traditions studied here take stock in oral formulae, two of these traditions particularly emphasize their use. In chapter 1, I show how a particular incantational poem constitutes the basis of the Method of the Heavenly Kitchens in both its Taoist and Buddhist forms. The recitation of this poem of the Five Kitchens, addressed to the five directions, is the key to this meditation technique, which aims to achieve salvation through a total abstinence from nutrition. And in the aforementioned anti-sorcery sūtras, the weapons brandished by Buddhist and Taoist ecclesiastics alike in their fight against spells are also mainly *dhāraṇī*s.

Following analogous principles, the appropriation and manipulation of personal names allow similar actions to be performed upon a deity or a human being. In chapter 2, we shall see how the *Sūtra for the Conjuration of Bewitchments* denounces, among other things, the use by sorcerers of patronymics in order to curse and injure their victims. Nevertheless, the religious clerics who authored this sūtra adopted precisely the same strategy, advocating the pronunciation of the witches' names to wound, subjugate, and even kill them through dismemberment. The power of words finds here its most violent and radical expression. It is noteworthy that the same murderous formulae are advocated in the texts of both religions.

When used for inducing protection, the recitation of names can also be instantaneously effective. This principle is well illustrated by the private ritual advanced in the Heavenly Venerable Savior from Suffering's hagiography, which is discussed in chapter 5. It consists in calling the deity's name in order to obtain his immediate and unfailing assistance in the face of impending danger. As will be seen, this accessible and easy rite has a Buddhist origin that can be traced back to the *Lotus Sūtra*'s advocacy of the invocation of Guanyin's name to save persons from peril.

Another type of ritual paraphernalia is connected with the anthropomorphic representations that were actively used in medieval liturgies: effigies. Puppets, as will be seen in the second chapter, were among the favorite implements of Chinese sorcerers, who manipulated them to bewitch their victims. Analogous ephemeral icons were also fabricated by practitioners of esoteric Buddhism, who ritually mistreated and destroyed them in the course of exorcising their pa-

tients, as well as to injure persona non grata. By contrast, the liturgical function of icons is considered in chapter 5 with regard to the anthropomorphic image of the Jiuku tianzun. Like that of his homologue Guanyin, his representation was used in the context of both mortuary rituals and domestic worship.

Significantly, in all of these cases similar ritual methods, whether oral or written, form the core elements of specific traditions that were incorporated into either Buddhist or Taoist contexts. While the narrative garb of a scripture had necessarily to be modified so as to conform to the tone and style of its new religious frame, the ritual modules of the adopted tradition were in every instance kept precisely intact. *Dhāraṇī*s, incantations, and talismans, despite the repackaging procedure to which they were thus subjected, were maintained in their pristine, unaltered forms and, accompanied by identical prescriptions, fulfilled the same salutary purposes for both Buddhists and Taoists within their respective fields of action. Their transmission and modus operandi had to be rigorously observed and did not tolerate the slightest misstep, the smallest departure from the rules. Like the incantatory formulae, which depended upon the fidelity and legitimacy of their recitation to set in motion the intrinsic potency of sound, the divine virtues of the talismanic graphs became operational only if their rules of fabrication and utilization were punctiliously observed. This was the warrant for their efficacy and the condition sine qua non for maintaining their credibility. They had thus the capacity to transcend time and space, as well as to attract adherents among the different religious orders, and so eventually to find a place among the paraphernalia of "lay" technicians of divination and healing. We will see that the Dunhuang materials provide in this respect invaluable information, for some of the Buddho-Taoist traditions studied here were indeed removed from their original religious background to become part of the official "magico-scientific" patrimony of Dunhuang.[49]

The examples collected throughout this book illustrate just part of the history of ongoing exchange and active competition among Buddhists and Taoists in China. Whereas the great Taoist debt to Buddhism has been recognized now for a long time, some of the Buddhist sūtras here examined show clearly that the influence operated in the other direction as well, and that Buddhists on some occasions drank from the Taoist well. It is in this context of concrete exchange that the perennial question "Is it Buddhist or Taoist?" which often appears to be vacuous, becomes pertinent once again.

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49. This is the domain commonly referred to as *shushu* 數術 (Number and Techniques); see Kalinowski (2003).