

Duren jing

also known as “Wonderous Scripture of the Upper Chapters of the Numinous Treasure on Limitless Salvation”, “度人經”, “Scripture on Salvation”, “Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing”, “靈寶無量度人上品妙經”

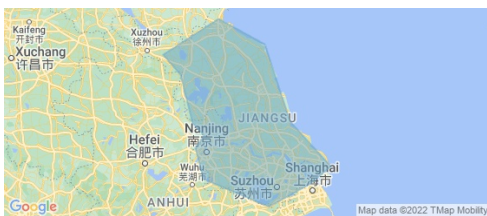
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Entry tags: Yellow and Yangzi Rivers Region, Text, Religious Group, Daoism, Daoist text, Scripture, Canonical texts

Duren jing 度人經, the Scripture on Salvation, is an abbreviation for the longest text in Daoist scriptures: Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing 靈寶無量度人上品妙經, the Wonderous Scripture of the Upper Chapters of the Numinous Treasure on Limitless Salvation. The text consists of sixty-one chapters divided by its function from saving the country to individual affairs. What we see nowadays is an expansion of the original one-chapter version text, Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing 太上洞玄靈寶元始無量度人上品妙經 (P. 2606), collected in Dunhuang Library Cave. This Dunhuang version of Duren king is now considered as the earliest form of Duren jing in 4th-5th century. The title points out that first, the function of this text focus on salvation; second, the text was instructed by the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Commencement (Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊); and third, this text is miraculous and empowered by supernatural forces, thus become a wonderous scripture. The structure throughout the text is identical. Each chapter starts with an introduction of the secret revelation and marvelous efficacy by reciting the text; then, there is the original scripture repeatedly shows up in the middle of every chapter; finally, the third part is the Innumerable Sound of the Secret Language of the Great Brahman [Energies] of the Heavens (Zhutian zhong dafan yinyu wuliang yin 諸天中大梵隱語無量音), a heavenly hidden language incomprehensible unless translated to the profane sound of human beings. The original text appeared first around 400 CE, after that, many Daoist priests commented, explained the secret knowledge revealed in the text. During the reign of Emperor Huizong of the Song (r. 1100-1125), the Daoist master Lin Lingsu 林靈素 of Divine Emphyrean school (Shenxiao 神霄) led the program of enlarging the original one-chapter Duren jing to sixty-one chapters. Research on the Scripture on Salvation was an active project in Daoist Studies because, in the first place, it is the longest text among all the other Daoist scriptures, what contents in it is rich, as the description on Daoist cosmology, pantheon, rituals, etc. Besides, the text reflects strong influence by Buddhist salvation thought, the style of Buddhist sūtra, and the Sanskrit language. It provides a large number of resources for the study of Buddho-Daoist interaction. In the end, the usage of Duren jing in various Lingbao ritual performances would be great materials for examining the social-religious activities of medieval to modern Daoism.



Date Range: 400 CE - 500 CE

Region: Jiangsu Province

Region tags: China, East Asia, Jiangsu Province

The actual history is still unknown to us now.

According to scholarly examination, the credit for receiving and transmitting the Duren jing, as well as some other original Lingbao scriptures (gu Lingbao jing 古靈寶經) goes to the Ge family (geshi 葛氏) staying mainly around Jurong, Jiangsu province.

Status of Readership:

✓ Elite ✓ Religious Specialists ✓ Non-elite (common people, general populace)

Sources and Corpora

Print Sources

Print sources used for understanding this subject:

- Source 1: Hsieh Shu-wei 謝世維. *Tianjie zhi wen: weijin nanbei chao Lingbao jingdian yanjiu* 天界之文：魏晉南北朝靈寶經典研究. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshu guan, 201
- Source 1: Hsieh Shu-wei 謝世維. “Shengdian yu chuanyi: liuchao daojiao jingdian zhong de fanyi” 聖典與傳譯——六朝道教經典中的「翻譯」. *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 中國文哲研究集刊 no. 31 (2007), 285-233.
- Source 1: English translation of the fourth-century one-chapter version: Bokenkamp, Stephen R. “The Wonderous Scripture of the Upper Chapters on Limitless Salvation.” In *Early Daoist Scriptures*, edited by Stephen R. Bokenkamp, 405- 438. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

Online Corpora

Relevant online Primary Textual Corpora (original languages and/or translations)

- Source 1 URL: <https://www.kanripo.org/text/KR5a0001/>
- Source 1 Description: Primary source of the Daoist Canon “Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing” 靈寶無量度人上品妙經 [Wonderous Scripture of the Upper Chapters of the Numinous Treasure on Limitless Salvation] (sixty-one juan)
- Source 2 URL: <https://www.kanripo.org/text/KR5a0087/>
- Source 2 Description: Primary source of the Daoist Canon “Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu” 元始無量度人上品妙經四註 [Four Commentaries on the Wonderous Scripture of the Upper Chapters of the Numinous Treasure on Limitless Salvation] by Chen Jingyuan 陳景元.
- Source 3 URL: <https://www.kanripo.org/text/KR5a0092/>
- Source 3 Description: Primary source of the Daoist Canon “Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing zhujie” 太上洞玄靈寶無量度人上品妙經註解 [Commentary and Explanation on the Scripture on Salvation] by Chen Zhixu 陳致虛.

General Variables

Materiality

Methods of Composition

– Written

↳ Inked

– with Ink

Medium upon which the text is written/incised

– Paper

- ↳ Specify type of paper
 - Specify: Xuan paper

Was the material modified before the writing or incising process?

– Corrections

Notes: It was not specified in the text what modify would happen before the writing process.

Was the text modified before the writing or incising process?

– Corrections

Location

Is the text stored in a specific location?

[Note at which point in time, for reference, if known; select all that apply]

– Yes

- ↳ Tomb
 - I don't know

- ↳ Cemetery
 - I don't know

- ↳ Temple
 - Yes

- ↳ Shrine
 - I don't know

- ↳ Altar
 - I don't know

- ↳ Devotional marker
 - I don't know

- ↳ Cenotaph

– I don't know

↳ Church

– No

↳ Mosque

– No

↳ Synagogue

– No

↳ Triumphal Arch

– No

↳ Monument

– No

↳ Mass Gathering Point

– I don't know

↳ Cave(s)

– Yes

Notes: This specifies the manuscripts discovered in the Dunhuang Library Cave.

↳ Hilltops

– I don't know

↳ Other natural sanctuaries

– I don't know

↳ Boundary markers or lines

– No

↳ Domestic contexts

– Yes

↳ Library/archive

– Yes

↳ Specify

– Specify: Private place

Notes: the priests read and recite the text in their quiet chamber (jingshi 靜/靖室) at home or a solitary sacred place.

Is the location where the text stored accompanied by iconography or images?

– Yes

↳ Where is iconography or imagery present?

Select all that apply

– At home

– Only religious public space

Notes: priests who value and recite the Duren jing, are usually have faith in the Three Purity (Sanqing 三清). The Three Purity refers to the three heavens in supreme position in Daoist cosmology. They are the Jade Purity (Yuqing 玉清), High Purity (Shangqing 上清) and Grand Purity (Taiqing 太清). These three heavens are depicted in human appearance therefore, priests might worship the anthropometric statues of these three deities in their temple or altar.

↳ Are there distinct or notable features or attributes in the religious group's iconography or images?

– Yes

↳ Eyes (stylized or not)

– No

↳ Supernatural beings (zoomorphic)

– No

↳ Supernatural beings (geomorphic)

– I don't know

↳ Supernatural beings (anthropomorphic)

– Yes

Notes: The Three Purities (sanqing 三清) are formless qi 炁 in original Daoist belief. For better propaganda and education, the image of these three deities as the human form started to appear in later texts, and statues engraved with gorgeous robes were put in

the temple for worship.

↳ Supernatural beings (abstract symbol)

– Yes

↳ Portrayals of afterlife

– I don't know

↳ Aspects of doctrine (e.g. cross, trinity, Mithraic symbols)

– Yes

Notes: The belief reflected in the Duren jing includes worship on the Five Directions (four directions with the center). There are pairs of forces correspond with the five directions: Five Emperors (wudi 五帝), five talismans (wufu 五符), five colors (wuse 五色), etc. But it was not clear if places stored the text, such as a temple, have images or symbols showing this belief.

↳ Status objects (tools, weapons, mounts, throne, etc.)

– Yes

↳ Humans

– No

↳ Supernatural narratives

– I don't know

↳ Human narratives

– I don't know

↳ Specify

–Specify: None

Is the area where the text is stored accompanied by an-iconic images?

– I don't know

Production & Intended Audience

Production

Is the production of the text funded by the polity?

– Yes

Notes: The version collected in the Ming Canon was an official production under political support. Earlier from the Tang period (618-907), several versions of the Daoist canon were compiled by religious specialists incorporation with the state. Unfortunately, the only collection survived that we have access to today is the Zhengtong Daozang 正統道藏 (1445).

↳ Are the authors/copyists/engravers paid by the polity?

– Yes

↳ Does the polity provide financial support to religious infrastructure involved with textual production?

– Yes

↳ Are the leaders of the polity and the religion the same figure?

– No

↳ Are political officials involved in the support of textual production?

– Yes

↳ Are political officials and religious officials otherwise overlapping institutional networks?

– Yes

↳ Does the polity enforce religious observance according to text or texts?

– I don't know

↳ Is the polity legal code derived from religious text(s) in question?

– I don't know

↳ Is preferential economic treatment (e.g. tax exemption) present in the polity to support the text(s)...

– I don't know

↳ Are religious specialists present/in charge of the production of the text or copies of the text?

– Yes

Notes: Specialists such as the chief compiler of the Ming Canon was the forty-third Celestial Master Daoism Zhang Yuchu 張宇初 (1361-1410). Compilation as enormous as the Daoist Canon

requires the cooperation of numerous people. There might be many other religious specialists who took a crucial part in this project.

↳ Present full-time?
– I don't know

↳ Present part-time?
– I don't know

↳ Are the religious specialists of a specific sex/gender?
– No

↳ Are the religious specialists of a specific ethnicity?
– No

↳ Are the religious specialists of a specific class/caste?
– No

↳ Are the religious specialists dedicated to the place for life?
– I don't know

↳ Are the religious specialists stratified in a hierarchical system?
– Yes

Notes: The main editor Zhang Yuchu 張宇初(1361-1410) was a Celestial Master (tianshi 天師) in Zhengyi school (zhengyi 正一) in Jingxi province.

↳ Is access within the space segregated by this hierarchy?
– I don't know

↳ Are there regulations/provisions for living spaces of religious specialists?
– Yes

↳ Are there regulations/provisions for training spaces of religious specialists?
– Yes

↳ Are there formal institutions for the maintenance of a body of religious specialists?

– Yes

Is the text considered official religious scripture?

– Yes

Notes: Duren jing was a part of the official test for Daoist certification in the Tang dynasty (618-907).

↳ Is there a culture of oral recitation?

– Yes

↳ Is there a story associated with the origins of scripture?

– I don't know

↳ Are the scriptures alterable?

– I don't know

↳ Are there formal institutions (i.e. institutions that are authorized by the religious community or political leaders) for interpreting scriptures?

– I don't know

Notes: The commentaries made by many Daoist masters were spontaneous. There might not be any formal institution arranging interpretation.

↳ Is there a select group of people trained in transmitting the scriptures?

– No

Notes: Daoist groups were loose to some extent, hence there might not have been a well-organized group of people who committed to transmitting the Duren jing. Moreover, Daoist scriptures are secrets and cannot pass to everyone. The transmission is hidden from the public, limited to masters and disciples.

↳ Is there a codified canon of scriptures?

– Yes

↳ Can the canon be altered or added to?

– Yes

Notes: Though the compilation of the Daoist Canon did not accomplish until the Ming Zhengtong period (1435-1449), the collection of Daoist scriptures from various regions in China and different branches of Daoism already began in the Tang dynasty (618-907). Most scripture has only one version survived to nowadays. Due to the lack of comparisons, it is hard to tell if a text was altered. However, the perfection of collection of the Daoist Canon was never stopped. For instance, a hundred years later, under the reign of the Emperor Wanli of the Ming (r.1572-1620), another Daoist Canon was

completed, so-called Sequel to the Daoist Canon of the Wanli Reign Period (Wanli xu daoang 萬曆續道藏, 1607). The Sequel to the Daoist Canon provided a great deal of new material that was missed in the Zhengtong Daoist Canon.

↳ Are additional commentaries part of the canon as it is currently understood?

– Yes

Notes: Several commentaries to the Scripture of Salvation are a part of the Daoist Canon.

Written in distinctly religious/sacred language?

– Yes

Notes: The Scripture on Salvation is a result of a revelation: deities directly transmit to human beings. According to the text, the Most High Lord of the Dao (Taishang daojun 太上道君) received knowledge from the supreme god, Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Commencement (Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊). However, the language of deities is incomprehensible to human language. Therefore, a translator, August Person of Heavenly Perfected (Tianzhen huangren 天真皇人), reversed the secret language, so-called the Hidden Language of Great Brahman (Dafan yinyu 大梵隱語), into what understandable to human beings. The secret language transformed with the origin of the universe contains power and knowledge of the mystery. People who want to learn this knowledge and recognize the language, have to become Perfected (zhenren 真人). The August Person of Heavenly Perfected took the order from the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Commencement to translate the heavenly Brahman Sound (fanyin 梵音) to humanistic Correct Sound (zhengyin 正音). What we see nowadays is the translated text which we are able to read. The language reveals the “hidden names of ten thousand spirits” 萬神之隱名, knowing this could command deities and possess their power. Transmit and learning this language is very secret and serious because it is “not the common phrase in the human world” 非世之上常辭, anyone who abuses this would cause severe punishment. For further study on this topic, see Hsieh Shu-wei's works listed below in the Bibliography.

↳ Archaic ritual language?

– I don't know

↳ Considered endogenous by the group itself?

– I don't know

↳ Considered exogenous by the group itself?

– No

↳ Blended languages/creolizations/specific dialects?

– Yes

Notes: The accent might be different depending on regional dialects.

↳ Possess its own distinct written language?

– Yes

Notes: The written symbol of the Hidden Language of Great Brahma is Cloud Seals (yunzuan 雲篆). It looks like traditional Chinese calligraphy, such as official script (lishu 隸書), Fame script (xingshu 行書) with artistic formulation with religious secrecy.

↳ Is use of this distinct written language confined to religious professionals?

– Yes

↳ If known: which authority (authorities) describe(s) the language as sacred?

[Select all that apply]

– Divinity

↳ Are non-religious institutions involved with the support of teaching religious language(s) for this text?

– No

↳ Are non-religious written languages used by the group's adherents to support religious study of text?

– No

↳ Are oral traditions used to support the religious study of the text?

– I don't know

Intended Audience

What is the estimated number of people considered to be the audience of the text

This should be the total number of people who would serve as the intended audience for the text.

– Field doesn't know

Notes: The broad spreading area, multiple groups circulating the text, and its continuity value from 400 CE to contemporary make it hard to measure the potential audience.

Does the Religious group actively proselytize and recruit new members?

– No

Notes: The Daoist group has strict standards in selecting its people. The word saying as “transmit to a person unworthy” (chuanfei qiren 傳非其人) express the importance of the master finding the right or worthy person. Otherwise, the master would be punished by “casually revealing” (qingxie 輕瀉) the secret of Heaven.

Are there clear reformist movements?

(Reformism, as in not proselytizing to potential new conservative, but "conversion" - or rather, reform - to the "correct interpretation"?)

– Yes

Notes: Duren jing was identified as one text in Original Lingbao Corpus (gu Lingbao jing 古靈寶經). The term of Original Lingbao Corpus first appeared in master Lu Xiuqing's (406-477) Lingbao jingmu 靈寶經目 (Catalogue of Scriptures of Numinous Treasure). It is a compilation of scriptures directly revealed by the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Commencement (Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊). This work largely advanced the development of the Lingbao movements and its advantage in competition with the Shangqing revelation.

Is the text in question employed in ritual practice?

– Yes

Notes: Duren jing illustrates the concept of universal salvation. This idea was employed in many rituals either to save the livings or for the dead.

↳ Is it orally recited?

– Yes

↳ Is there any particular affect of the oral recitation of the text?

– Yes

Notes: The text includes a whole list of deities' names, these deities are heavenly officials, earthly officials, and demons converted to follow the lead of Daoist authorities. People who know the names and recite them appropriately can communicate with deities and acquire heavenly power.

↳ Is there any particular affect on the audience of the recitation?

– Yes

↳ Does the affect involve unlocking hidden knowledge?

– I don't know

↳ On the reciter?

– Yes

Notes: The priest who recites the text during the ritual performance could possess the power granted by deities whose names are called in the text. With this power, the priest can suffice the goal of a ritual practice.

↳ Does the affect involve unlocking hidden knowledge?

– I don't know

↳ Is it read?

– Yes

Notes: Duren jing is a basic textbook for Daoist disciples learning ritual performance. Moreover, it uses the idea of universal salvation to educate Daoist groups with benevolence and altruism.

↳ Is there any particular affect on the reader of the text?

– Yes

↳ Does the affect involve unlocking hidden knowledge?

– I don't know

↳ Is there any particular affect on the audience of the recitation?

– Yes

↳ Does the affect involve unlocking hidden knowledge?

– I don't know

↳ Describe the nature of the ritual practice?

– Specify: Large- and/ or small- scale of salvation ritual

↳ Is the text employed in large scale rituals?

– Yes

Notes: One of the popular rituals is Yellow Register Retreat(Huanglu zhai 黃籙齋) popularized since the Southern Song period (1127-1279).

↳ On average, how many participants are present?

– Number of participants: 8

Notes: 8-11. A typical large-scale ritual requires at least eight Daoist ritual masters. Depending on different scales of ritual, sometimes might be more participants.

↳ Is the text employed in small scale rituals?

– Yes

↳ On average, how many participants are present?

– Number of participants: 3

Notes: 1-3. In some cases, only the ritual master solely performs a ritual. More often, the ritual master is accompanied by one or two disciples. If the patrons who sponsor the particular ritual make enough payment, the ritual might also be accompanied by a

group of musicians and a few more assistances.

↳ How often do the rituals take place?

– Specify: Depends

Notes: 1) Fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month: the festival called Zhongyuan (the Middle Prime) in Daoist tradition is the time when the passage between this world and the other world is open, ritual practice can save the ancestors' souls trapped in purgatory subterranean; 2) Birthday or the day of death; 3) Festivals: sometimes, local or national festivals combine with a ritual practice as part of the show; 4) Under special request: if some family members feel disturbed by ancestor's spirits who cannot rest in peace, they would come to find the help of ritual masters and require such ritual.

↳ Are there orthodoxy checks?

– Yes

Notes: On the one hand, both human behavior in daily life and priest's performance in ritual space are monitored by Heaven. On the other hand, in ritual space, the position of jianzhai 監齋 (Keeper of Retreat) record any improper action of ritual masters.

↳ Are there orthopraxy checks?

– Yes

↳ Are there synchronic practices?

– I don't know

↳ Are there intoxicants used during the ritual?

– I don't know

↳ Are there other substances (such as food or drink, for example) that are consumed during rituals?

– Yes

Notes: Usually, on the altar where the divine status worshiped has incense, rice, fresh fruits, flowers, etc.

Is there material significance to the text?

– No

Context and Content of the Text (Beliefs and Practices)

Context

Is the text itself accompanied by art?

– Yes

Notes: The front page of the text (based on the version collected in the Ming Daoist Canon), is an illustration of the Daoist pantheon showing the way the deities look like to guide the meditation and visualization process during the recitation.

↳ Calligraphy?

– Yes

↳ Illustrations?

– Yes

↳ Illuminations?

– I don't know

Are there multiple versions of the text?

– Yes

Notes: 1) Original one-chapter version of Duren jing, found in Dunhuang manuscripts: Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaoqing 太上洞玄靈寶元始無量度人上品妙經, author unknown (ca. 400 CE); 2) Sixty-one chapters version in Ming Canon, based on Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen edited The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang: DZ 1 Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaoqing 靈寶無量度人上品妙經, Lin Lingsu 林靈素 (after 1112) and Shenxiao (Divine Empyrean) Daoists; 3) Commentaries on Duren jing: DZ 87 Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaoqing sizhu 元始無量度人上品妙經四註 [Four Commentaries on the Scripture on Salvation], Chen Jingyuan 陳景元 (1067) DZ 88 Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miangjing zhu 元始無量度人上品妙經註 [Commentary on the Scripture on Salvation], Donghai Qingyuan zhenren 東海青元真人 (fl. 1174-1204) DZ 89 Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miangjing tongyi 元始無量度人上品妙經通義 [Comprehensive Interpretation of the Scripture on Salvation], Zhang Yuchu 張宇初 (1361-1410) DZ 90a Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miangjing neiyi 元始無量度人上品妙經內義 [Esoteric Interpretation of the Scripture on Salvation], Xiao Yingsou 蕭應叟 (1226) DZ 91 Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaoqing zhujie 太上洞玄靈寶無量度人上品妙經註解 [Commentary on the Scripture on Salvation], Chen Zhixu 陳致虛 (1336) DZ 92 Yuanshi wuling duren shangpin miaoqing zhujie 元始無量度人上品妙經註解 [Commentary on the Scripture on Salvation], Xue Jizhao 薛季昭 (1303/1304); 4) Illustrations of talismans and diagrams in the Duren jing: DZ 2 Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaoqing zhiyin 元始無量度人上品妙經直音 [Correct Sounds of the Scripture on Salvation], author unknown DZ 147 Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaoqing futu 靈寶無量度人上品妙經符圖 [Talismans and Charts of the Scripture on Salvation], Emperor Huizong of the Song 宋徽宗 (r.1100-1125) DZ 148 Wuliang duren shangpin miaoqing pangtong tu 無量度人上品妙經旁通圖 [Chart for Analyzing the Scripture on Salvation], Liu Yuandao 劉元道 (1100-1125).

↳ Are multiple versions viewed as proper?

– I don't know

Notes: There did not show much controversy over the authority of the text. Each version of the Duren jing is either a complement based on the original one-chapter version or a commentary

or explanation to the sixty-one chapters version. Nonetheless, the essential content was never modified.

- ↳ Is there debate about which version is proper?
 - I don't know

Is the text part of a collection of texts?

– Yes

Notes: The text was included in the collection of Ming Daoist Canon accomplished during the Zhengtong reign (1436-1449). It was already a part of the Lingbao corpus compiled by master Lu Xiuqing 陸修靜 (406-477) in his Lingbao jingmu 靈寶經目 (Catalogue of Lingbao Scripture).

- ↳ Is there a sense of canonization?
 - Yes

- ↳ How is the authority established?
 - Yes

- ↳ Can the canon be altered or added to?
 - Yes

- ↳ Have major debates shifted the sense of the place of the text with respect to the larger canon?
 - No

- ↳ Is the text part of a series of volumes?
 - Yes

Notes: The text develops from its original one-chapter version to a recent edition with sixty-one chapters.

- ↳ How are the volumes ordered?
 - Specify: From above to below

Notes: From geographically above (heaven) to below (earth). Each chapter in the Duren jing describes a function that is fulfilled through recitation. Proper recitation invokes the heavenly and/or earthly officials recorded in each chapter that would appear and aid to fulfill that function. The order of each chapter, therefore, shows the heavenly officials resides in the heaven, shiqing tian 始青天 [Commencement Azure Heaven] for example, then gradually decrease to earthly officials, finally the officials governing the underground bureau.

If the text is not explicitly scripture, is it part of another important literary tradition?

– I don't know

Content

Is the text - or does the text include - a ritual list, manual, bibliography, index, or vocabulary? (Select all that apply)

– Ritual list

Notes: Ritual list: Some dates specified in the text became later Lingbao rituals, for example, the recitation on the eight nodes days became the Eight Nodes Retreat (bajie zhai 八節齋). Daoist pantheon: Each chapter in the Scripture on Salvation lists titles and names of deities in charge of a type of affairs. Together, it became a cherished material for research on the Daoist pantheon. Sacred language: The text is revealed through translator August Person of Heavenly Perfected (Tianzhen huangren 天真皇人). What we see in the text was converted from the Brahman Sound (fanyin 梵音). For more material in the August Person of Heavenly Perfected (Tianzhen huangren 天真皇人), see DZ 97 Tiashang Lingbao zhutian neiyin ziran yuzi 太上靈寶諸天內音自然玉字 [Self-generating Jade Graphs and Inner Sounds of All the Heaven]; Hsieh Shu-wei, "Daojiao chuanjing shenhua de jianli yu zhuanhua : yi tianzhen huangren wei hexin" 道教傳經神話的建立與轉化：以天真皇人為核心, *Qinghua xuebao 清華學報* no. 2 (2008), 291-326.

Are there lineages or a single lineage established by the text?

– No

Notes: The text was revealed through an established lineage, Ge family native in Jurong, Jiangsu around late 4th century to early 5th century.

Does the text express a formal legal code?

– No

Formulating a specifically religious calendar?

– No

Beliefs

Is a spirit-body distinction present in the text?

– No

Notes: Although there are tons of ideas toward soul-body distinction in Chinese tradition, in the Duren jing, there has been no explicit discussion on this. The ancestors mentioned in the text are, more or less, an independent group detached from the previous body and reside in another realm. It could be seen as a different stage in the journey after death. This detachment shows the objective existence instead of appendages of the former body.

Is belief in an afterlife indicated in the text?

– Yes

Notes: Though it was not clearly defined, the idea reflected in the text belongs to traditional Chinese thought about the afterlife. Becoming one generation of a family ancestor is the destiny of all human beings. The text deals with the suffering and deliverance of ancestors from underworld bureaucracy. Previous deeds affect the living condition in the other world. Since no one made no sin while they alive, each person would have to finish a trial in earthly bureaucracy and make atonement for their crime. A suffering ancestor could be a problem for their living relatives because the Chinese believe that their quality of life depend on their relationship with ancestors. Later generations, therefore, looks for salvation of their suffering ancestor. The Scripture on Salvation provides many deliverance methods. Depending on the merit and practice level accumulated in previous live, the deceased Daoist members would rebirth in human world, practicing the Dao, and achieve transcendence before they die again. This process repeats until the Daoist member escape the fate of physically decay. For non-Daoist members, the disciples and religious specialists recite the corresponding chapters in the Scripture on Salvation, ask assistance from heaven and earth officials, and save the ancestor from where they are suffering so they can escape and transform to a deity, or rebirth in human form in their next live. Then, the released and pleasant ancestor would bring fortune to the living family. The universal nature of the Duren jing, illustrates that some deceased people, when they have no alive family members or no one worship them, they can also be saved when others recite the scripture and would like to make the salvation universal.

↳ Is the spatial location of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group?

– Yes

Notes: Underground world is governed by the hell of Mountain Luofeng (Luofeng shan 羅豐山). Spirits of the deceased go to that bureaucracy for trial and experience an ordeal.

↳ Afterlife in specified realm of space beyond this world?

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "above" space?

– No

↳ Afterlife in vaguely defined "below" space?

– Yes

↳ Afterlife in "other" space?

– Yes

↳ Is the temporality of the afterlife specified or described by the religious group?

– No

↳ Is there debate in the interpretation of the language of the afterlife?

– No

Is belief in reincarnation in this world specified in the text?

– Yes

Notes: Daoist practitioners who had not achieved transcendence will reside in the Grand Yin (taiyin 太陰) keep practicing the Dao until they can ascend to heave. The common people who are not Daoist members, will go down to the underground purgatory and undergo a trial before they are reborn. Duren jing helps people save their ancestors from underground purgatory. Through this salvation, ancestors can rebirth in this world as a human, or have a chance to ascend to heaven.

↳ In human form?

– Yes

↳ In animal/plant form?

– No

↳ In form of an inanimate object(s)?

– No

↳ In non-individual form (i.e. some form of corporate rebirth, tribe, lineage, etc.)?

– No

↳ Reincarnation linked to notion of life-transcending causality (e.g. karma)?

– I don't know

Notes: The souls in Chinese belief are different from the concept of samsara: a repeated cycle of birth, suffering, death, and rebirth caused by karma. The deeds of each generation will pass to the next generation, their merit accumulated can transfer between each generation. For example, the ritual performance creates merits. These merits can be transferred to ancestors saving them from underground suffering. Contrarily, merits leftover by ancestors would also bring auspicious to the future generation.

↳ Other form of reincarnation in this world?

– I don't know

↳ In textual exegesis among practitioners are there debates about reincarnation?

– No

Are there special treatments for adherents' corpses dicated in the text?

– No

Does the text indicate if co-sacrifices should be present in burials?

– No

Does the text specify grave goods for burial?

– No

Are formal burials present in the text?

– No

Are there practices that have funerary associations presented in the text?

– I don't know

Are supernatural beings present in the text?

– Yes

↳ A supreme high-god is present

– Yes

Notes: The Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Commencement (Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊) is the supreme high-god in Duren jing and Lingbao tradition.

↳ The supreme high god is anthropomorphic or described in anthropomorphic terms

– No

Notes: The high-god was universal forces, qi 炁, in the idea of the anterior heaven, the god has no form and body

↳ The supreme high god is a sky deity

– No

↳ The supreme high god is chthonic (of the underworld)

– No

↳ The supreme high god is fused with the monarch (king=high god)

– No

↳ The monarch is seen as a manifestation or emanation of the high god

– No

- ↳ The supreme high god is a kin relation to elites
 - No
- ↳ The supreme high god has another type of loyalty-connection to elites
 - No
- ↳ The supreme high god is unquestionably good
 - I don't know
- ↳ Other features of the supreme high god
 - Specify: I don't know
- ↳ The supreme high god has knowledge of this world
 - I don't know
- ↳ Has deliberate causal efficacy in the world
 - I don't know
- ↳ Indirect causal efficacy in the world
 - I don't know
- ↳ Exhibits positive emotion
 - No
- ↳ Exhibits negative emotion
 - No
- ↳ Possesses Hunger?
 - No
- ↳ Can be hurt?
 - I don't know
- ↳ Can be tricked?
 - No

↳ Can be imprisoned?

– I don't know

↳ Is it permissible to worship supernatural being other than the high god?

– Yes

Notes: Daoist pantheon includes millions of transcendents (xian 仙), spirits, Perfected ones (zhenren 真人), heavenly or earthly officials, generals, clerks and soldiers. There has no centralization in worshipping the sole high-god.

↳ The supreme high god possesses/exhibits some other feature

–Specify: I don't know.

↳ The supreme high god communicates with the living

– Yes

↳ In waking, everyday life

– Yes

Notes: One way of revelation is the deities actually show up in front of the destined person. The chosen one can see, feel and communicate with these deities.

↳ In dreams

– Yes

Notes: Sometimes, deities instructed people in their dreams of a secret location where a scripture or an sacred objects is buried.

↳ In trance possession

– No

↳ Through divination practices

– Yes

Notes: Fuji 扶乩, spirit-medium, is a long-lasting religious phenomenon in Chinese society. While most scholars agree that Duren jing and other early Lingbao texts were a result of the revelation, there are still some who argue that it was transmitted through divination practices.

↳ Only through religious specialists

– Yes

Notes: Or it could be someone who converted to Daoism after receiving sacred text(s).

↳ Only through monarch

– No

↳ Other form of communication with living

– Yes

Notes: Meditation, recitation, and visualization. The image of deities on the front page of the text provides the practitioner with a visual sense of deities. Meditating and visualizing those deities provides a method of communication.

↳ Does the text make communication with supreme high-god possible?

– Yes

↳ Can the audience communicate directly to gods through the text?

– I don't know

↳ Can the audience communicate through supernatural intermediaries to the high-god, as a result of the text?

– Yes

Notes: The hidden language provides secret names (yinming 隱名), inner names (neihui 內諱) of deities, and Demon Kings (Mowing 魔王). Reciting those names could summon the deities.

↳ Are there notions of inspiration or inspired knowledge?

– Yes

↳ Are there rituals required to attain inspired knowledge?

– Yes

↳ What concepts of inspiration exist? (e.g. clairvoyance, insights, vision of the divine world, awareness of divine omnipresent agency or omnipotence, sigh or vision beyond the five senses).

– Yes

Notes: secret knowledge of the universe

Previously human spirits are present

– No

Notes: As far as the text presents, the relationship between souls and body is not so clear to conclude. The spirits of ancestors might count as previously human spirits.

Non-human supernatural beings are present

– I don't know

Does the text attest to a pantheon of supernatural beings?

– Yes

↳ Organized by kinship based on a family model?

– No

↳ Organized hierarchically?

– I don't know

Notes: The text describes offices in Heaven, Earth, and under the earth. However, the administrative relation or performance evaluation between each office was not plain in the text.

↳ Power of beings is domain specific?

– No

↳ Other organization of pantheon?

– Specify: I don't know

Are mixed human-divine beings present according to the text?

– No

Is there a supernatural being that is physically present in the/as a result of the text?

– No

Are other categories of beings present?

– Incomprehensible?

Does the text guide divination practices?

– No

Supernatural Monitoring

Is supernatural monitoring present in the text?

– No

Do supernatural beings mete out punishment in the text?

– No

Do supernatural beings bestow rewards in the text?

– No

Notes: It might be more proper to think of the text as a tool. Each chapter presents a different function. Such functions are not limited to releasing sin and averting disasters, exorcising evil beings, extending life-span, protecting the state, and so on. Properly recitation is the approach to ask for help from universal forces and spirits in charge of that kind of affair. Getting these assistances will then realize that function promised in that chapter. However, it does not show any intimate and personal relationship between human beings and supernatural beings related to the direct cause and effect of getting punishment or rewards from the supernatural beings.

Messianism/Eschatology

Are messianic beliefs present in the text?

– No

Notes: Daoism has belief in messianic, for example, the divinized figure Laozi 老子 or Laojun 老君 (Lord Lao) repeatedly transforms his form, appear in this world to convert people to Daoism. People who converted to Daoism become seed people (zhongmin 種民) will survive the “last judgment.” But in the Scripture on Salvation, the emphasis is put on recitation and the outcome of doing so, instead of lecturing about karma and causality.

Is an eschatology present in the text?

– No

Norms & Moral Realism

Are general social norms prescribed by the text?

– No

Is there a conventional vs. moral distinction in the religious text?

– No

Are there centrally important virtues advocated by the text?

– No

Advocacy of Practices

Does the text require celibacy (full sexual abstinence)?

– No

Does the text require constraints on sexual activity (partial sexual abstinence)?

– No

Does the text require castration?

– No

Does the text require fasting?

– Yes

Notes: o Before reciting the text, the practitioner should constrain what food and how much to consume at least three days ago. The smell of the food, especially meat and plants with pungent smells (onion, ginger, garlic, etc.), is quite disrespectful and disturbing for the deities if it appears in sacred places and shrines.

Does the text require forgone food opportunities (taboos on desired foods)?

– No

Does the text require permanent scarring or painful bodily alterations?

– No

Does the text require painful physical positions or transitory painful wounds?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of adults?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of children?

– No

Does the text require self-sacrifice (suicide)?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of property/valuable items?

– No

Does the text require sacrifice of time (e.g. attendance at meetings or services, regular prayer, etc.)?

– Yes

Notes: According to the text, regularly in every first, seventh, and tenth lunar month, a long retreat (changzhai 長齋) should be held in the monastery. If not, on each fifteenth day of the first, seventh, and tenth lunar months, the priests should choose one chapter of the text and recite it. Except that, eight nodal days of a year (bajei ri 八節日, i.e. equinoxes, solstices, first day of each season) and day of one's natal destiny (benming ri 本命日) are also the time better for recitation.

Does the text require physical risk taking?

– No

Does the text require accepting ethical precepts?

– No

Notes: It was not specified in this text. However, both Daoist priests and followers should obey the Ten Precepts (shijie 十戒) once they committed to the Daoist group.

Does the text require marginalization by out-group members?

– No

Does the text require participation in small-scale rituals (private, household)?

– Yes

Notes: Recitation is the most valued ritual practice in the Scripture on Salvation. The priest enters into the quiet chamber (jingshi 靜室) alone to recite the text. Sometimes, it might be a collective behavior between master and disciples, or among several fellow apprentices.



What is the average interval of time between performances?

– I don't know

Notes: Several days or series days of a year are seen as the Day to Practice the Dao (xingdao zhi ri “行道之日”): 1) Fifteenth day in the first, seventh, and tenth lunar month; 2) eight nodal days of a year (bajei ri 八節日, i.e. equinoxes, solstices, first day of each season) 3) day of one's natal destiny (benming ri 本命日) How strict the rules were is not very clear, therefore, hard to estimate the interval of time between each recitation.

Does the text require participation in large-scale rituals?

– I don't know

Notes: The Duren jing has no detailed instruction in ritual performance other than recitation. During the time of textual revelation, neither did Daoist communities have a systematic large-scale ritual. Not until the Song period (960-1276), the Yellow Register Retreat (Huanglu zhai 黃籙齋), a large-scale salvation ritual for the deceased, inherited the idea of universal salvation from the Duren jing and became a public ritual service that participated in socio-economic activities.

Are extra-ritual in-group markers present as indicated in the text?

– No

Does the text employ fictive kinship terminology?

– No

Does the text include elements that are intended to be entertaining?

– No

Does the text specify sacrifices, offerings, and maintenance of a sacred space?

– Yes

↳ Are sacrifices specified by the text?

– No

↳ Are there self-sacrifices specified by the text?

– No

↳ Are there material offerings present?

– Yes

Notes: The most important object is incense and incense burner. Daoist priests in Southern China were customary to use incense during meditation and practice of the Dao. The incense burner with the shape of a mountain could help the priest imagine entering that misty mountain while the smoke from burning the incense shrouds the room. The illustrations in Daoist scriptures always depict deities surrounded by glorious lights descending from heaven into the smoke and communicating with the priest. Other objects present are not excluded from fresh flowers and fruits.

↳ Are they mandatory?

– Yes

↳ Are they composed of valuable objects?

– I don't know

↳ Are they composed of daily-life objects?

– Yes

↳ Are material offerings interred at this place (in caches)?

– I don't know

↳ Are there particular smells associated with material offerings?

– Yes

↳ Are there particular visual stimuli (colors, symbols) associated with the offerings? (I.e. 'must be bright' 'must include red')

– No

↳ Other?

–Specify: I don't know

↳ Is attendance to worship/sacrifice mandatory?

– I don't know

↳ Is the maintenance of the place regulated by the text?

– Yes

Notes: Daoist priests need a quiet chamber (jingshi 靜室) to calm the mind and body and recite the text. A quiet chamber is a sacred place where the priest communicates with the deities. It means that both the priest him-/herself and the room have to be purified. The Duren jing made it clear that before reciting the text, the priest would enter the chamber after washing the body, change to clean clothes, abstain from food and desires, and so forth.

↳ Is it required?

– Yes

Notes: A filthy place and an impure body desecrate deities and could cause oneself punishment.

↳ Is there cleansing (for the maintenance)?

– Yes

↳ Are there periodic repairs/reconstructions?

– I don't know

↳ Is the maintenance performed by permanent staff?

– I don't know

Notes: Assumedly, a quiet chamber is excluded from anyone other than the chief priest and senior disciples. Therefore, the room can keep sacred, purified, and solitude.

↳ Other?

–Specify: I don't know

Institutions & Production Environment of Text

Society & Institutions

Society of religious group that produced the text is best characterized as:

– A Segmentary Lineage

Notes: The Ge family was one of the famous Daoist lineages native in Jiangsu. Members of this family contributed to transmitting the Lingbao texts. Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫 (fl. 402), based on inside evidence (records in the Daoist text), was the compiler of many Lingbao scriptures, including the Scripture on Salvation.

Are there specific elements of society that have controlled the reproduction of the text?

– An empire

Notes: A well-organized and documented reproduction was in the Ming dynasty during the reign of the Ming Empire of Ying (1435-1449). Nowadays, it is known as the Zhengtong Daozang 正統道藏 (Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Reign Period, 1445).

Are there specific elements of society involved with the destruction of the text?

– Other

Welfare

Does the text specify institutionalized famine relief?

– Yes

Notes: Chapter forty-six, Pray for Exorcise the Flood and Famine (Qirang shuihan pin 祈禳水旱品), explains that the cause of flood and famine is the imbalance of the qi: the excessive of yang 陽 pneuma produces famine; the overflow of yin 陰 pneuma causes a flood. A bureau in Heaven governing the order of nature has to follow a system and send down the disaster accordingly. Besides, the virtue of a king is also related to the yin and yang pneuma of the universe. Therefore, reciting the Scripture on Salvation could call the officials in the concerned bureau, balance the yin and yang, water and fire, and release the flood and famine.

Does the text specify institutionalized poverty relief?

– No

Notes: In the text, there has no sign of actions taken in relieving poverty directly. However, the third chapter, for example, the Tiandi bawei anzhen guozuo pin 天地八維安鎮國祚品 [The Chapter of the (Spirits of) Heaven, Earth and the Eight Direction on Securing and Guarding the Longevity of Dynasty] presents a promise for people to have a rich life and live in peace, which considered as one of the benefits of reciting the text.

Does the text specify institutionalized care for elderly & infirm?

– No

Other forms of welfare?

– No

Education

Are there formal educational institutions available for teaching the text?

– No

Are there formal educational institutions specified according to the text?

– No

Does the text make provisions for non-religious education?

– No

Does the text restrict education to religious professionals?

– No

Notes: It could be someone who is favored by deities therefore be chosen to receive the text. The reason of a special chosen of such person could be his/her benevolence, virtues, or accumulated merit from previous lives.

Does the text restrict education among religious professionals?

– No

Is education gendered according to the text?

– No

Is education gendered with respect to this text and larger textual tradition?

– No

Does the text specify teaching relationships or ratios? (i.e.: 1:20; 1:1)

– No

Notes: o It does not show in the text, but assumedly the ratio would not be too big. Usually the master has only a few disciples. Take the receiver of the Duren jing, master Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫 (fl.402) as an example, the only two active disciples of him to whom we have better acquaintance were Ren Yanqing 任延慶 and Xu Lingqi 徐靈期.

Are there specific relationships to teachers that are advocated by the text?

– No

Are there worldly rewards/benefits to education according to the text specified by the text itself?

– No

Bureaucracy

Is bureaucracy regulated by this text?

– No

Public Works

Does the text detail interaction with public works?

– No

Taxation

Does the text specify forms of taxation?

– No

Warfare

Does the text mention warfare?

– No

Notes: Chapter six, Taiyi shenbian wufu huguo rangbing pin 太一神變五福護國禳兵品 [Chapter on Securing the State and Exorcise War through the Divine Transformation of Grand Unity for Bestow Five-Blessing], briefly mentions that people in the state would leave warfare, diseases, persecutions, etc. among many other benefits through reciting the text and calling the deities by their names.

Food Production

Does the text mentioned food production/disbursement?

– No

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