The Cult of Mount T'ai in the Ming:
Beliefs, Practices and Historical Developments

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B.A., National Taiwan University, 1990

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Department of Asian Studies)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
September 1994

Department of Asian Studies

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Oct. 7, 1994

Abstract

This thesis explores the cult of Mount T'ai in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) by examining its beliefs, practices and historical developments. The first chapter introduces the religious environment of the Ming by addressing the historical background of the founder of the Ming, Ming T'ai-tsu (r. 1368-1398), and his policy toward popular religions. T'ai-tsu's background influenced his views about religion, and his attitudes were followed, to some extent, by his descendants, later emperors. The last part provides a summary of the environment of ordinary people's religions and their religious practices.

Since the Mount T'ai cult had existed long before the Ming, chapter two summarizes this cult prior to the Ming by discussing its early history and the early history of the role of Mount T'ai in beliefs about afterlife.

Chapter three examines the cult of Mount T'ai in the Ming from three perspectives: as a state cult, a popular cult, and as the most popular cult of the goddess of Mount T'ai during the Ming. This chapter suggests that the development of these cults was closely linked to the ongoing changes in popular culture and the the attitudes of the state toward religions.

Chapter four turns to religious and social activities related to Mount T'ai. In analyzing the incense tax, which was levied on pilgrims and visitors entering Mount T'ai, the pilgrimage trade, and the attitudes of the Ming elites toward popular beliefs about Mount T'ai, I suggest that religious activities were an area where people of all social classes, including the educated level, routinely came into contact.

Chapter five discusses two seventeenth century religious texts about Mount T'ai: Ling-ying T'ai-shan niang-niang pao-chüan (The precious volume of

our efficacious Lady of Mount T'ai) and T'ai-shan tung-yüeh shih-wang pao-chüan (The precious volume of the Ten Kings of the eastern peak Mount T'ai). This chapter explores these two books in terms of their connections to three teachings (Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism), sectarianism, and the attitudes of the religious groups toward the state. The concluding comments characterize the interactions between popular religions, the state, and society. The cult of Mount T'ai developed in a context of socio-religious culture through a process of mutual enrichment.

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Chapter One
Popular Religions and Religious Policy in the Ming

This thesis explores the cult of Mount T'ai in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) by examining its beliefs, practices and historical developments. The first chapter introduces the religious environment of the Ming by addressing the historical background of the founder of the Ming, Ming T'ai-tsu (r. 1368-1398), and his policy toward popular religions. T'ai-tsu's background influenced his views about religion, and his attitudes were followed, to some extent, by his descendants, later emperors. The last part provides a summary of the enviroment of ordinary people's religions and their religious practices.

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Since this study examines Mount T'ai beliefs from all social levels, official historical records weigh as much as popular sources in the research. The main official sources I use are standard histories, encyclopedic histories of institutions, and local gazetteers; the popular sources are "miscellaneous notes" written by literati, and "precious volumes" (pao-chüan 寶卷) circulated in folk religious groups. The most important two official works are T'ai-shan chih 泰山志 (A history of Mount T'ai) and Tai shih 岱史 (A history of Tai). The four-chüan 卷 T'ai-shan chih was edited by Wang Tzu-ch'ing 汪子卿 and published by Hsiang Shou-li 項守禮, a Prefect of Chi-nan prefecture, in 1554.[1] This work contains a great number of the sacrificial texts by the Ming government about Mount T'ai and numerous "accounts about the efficacy of deities of Mount T'ai" (ling-yen chi 靈驗記), which were written by local officials. These materials provide much information about the state cult of Mount T'ai during the Ming. The Tai shih was edited by the governor of Shantung Cha Chih-lung 查志隆 (fl. 1554-1586) in 1586 and presented to Emperor Shen-tsung of the Ming (r. 1573-1619) in 1587. The most valuable materials collected

[1] The edition of T'ai-shan chih that I use is an original print which is now preserved in National Central Library of the Republic of China.

in this work for the purpose of my study are an anthology of verses composed by literati on their travels to Mount T'ai, and the most complete records concerning the incense tax (hsiang-shui 香稅), which was levied on pilgrims and visitors entering Mount T'ai.[2] As for unofficial sources, some Ming-Ch'ing literati discuss their views on the religious activities of Mount T'ai in their "miscellaneous notes."[3] These accounts also provide useful supplementary information for our understanding of the Mount T'ai cult in this period. During the Ming-Ch'ing period, many folk religious groups among the illiterate and semi-literate made use of *pao-chüan* to express their faith. In exploring the attitude of religious groups toward the state, I also use two seventeenth century religious texts concerning popular beliefs about Mount T'ai, which will be examined in Chapter Five. They are the Ling-ying t'ai-shan niang-niang pao-chüan 靈應泰山娘娘寶卷, and T'ai-shan tung-yüeh shih-wang pao-chüan 泰山東嶽十王寶卷.[4]

Why does my study concentrate on the Ming? Firstly, because the scholarship about the Mount T'ai cult of the Ming is very limited. So far, the most

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[2]In guide to this book, Cha says that he wrote the "Hsiang-shui" chapter because it was not completely recorded in previous official materials. See Cha Chih-lung 查志隆 (Ming), Tai shih 岱史 [A history of Mount T'ai, henceforth, TS], "fan-li," 2a, in Tao-tsang 道藏 [The Taoist Canon], vol. 1093, HY 1460.

[3] The incense tax and the attitude of literati toward beliefs about Mount T'ai will be discussed in Chapter Four.

[4]They are not the only pao-chüan about Mount T'ai during the Ming and early Ch'ing period. According to Li Shih-yü's Pao-chüan tsung-lu 寶卷綜錄 [A comprehensive bibliography of "precious volumes"], there are another two related to Mount T'ai. They are T'ien-hsien sheng-mu yüan-liu t'ai-shan pao-chüan天仙聖母源流泰山寶卷 [The T'ai-shan precious volume, on the origin of the Celestial Immortal, Holy Mother], and Tung-yüeh t'ien-ch'i jen-sheng ta-ti pao-chüan 東嶽天齊仁聖大帝寶卷 [The precious volume of the Grand Emperor of Equal to Heaven, Humane and Holy, eastern Peak]. Both were published in the late Ming. Unfortunately, I have not had the opportunity to look at them. See Li Shih-yü 李世瑜, Pao-chüan tsung-lu (Shanghai, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1961), pp. 8, 48.

complete work about Mount T'ai is by Edouard Chavannes, a French scholar of early twentieth century. However, popular beliefs about Mount T'ai in the Ming dynasty are only briefly mentioned in this book. The most flourishing goddess cult, Pi-hsia yüan-chün, is also not elaborately analyzed in this work.[5] Though Susan Naquin published research on the Pi-hsia cult of the Ch'ing period in Peking,[6] she did not trace the Pi-hsia cult back to the Mount T'ai cult during the Ming dynasty very much. The second reason for my focus on the Ming is the greater availability of sources, especially materials about popular beliefs of Mount T'ai. The forty-eight volumes of T'ai-shan ts'ung-shu 泰山叢書 and six T'ai-shan ts'ung-shu hsü-pien 泰山叢書續編, edited by Wang Chieh-fan 王介藩 and his son Wang T'zu-t'ung 王次通 in the early twentieth century, provide me with a comparatively complete collection of sources about Mount T'ai.[7] Some late Ming and early Ch'ing literati's essays about Mount T'ai are well preserved in these two collections. These works supplement T'ai-shan chih and Tai chih, especially when we discuss religious and social activities related to Mount T'ai. More significant for my study is the accessibility of the seventeenth century *pao-chüan* about Mount T'ai. The *pao-chüan* show us another dimension of the Mount T'ai cult. From them we can see how the religious groups set these popular beliefs about Mount T'ai into their religious

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[5]Chapter six of this book generally describes popular beliefs about Mount T'ai from ancient times to the Ch'ing period. Most of the content concerns about the God of Mount T'ai in terms of the belief of afterlife. See Edouard Chavannes, Le T'ai Chan (Paris, 1910), chapter six. Since I do not read French, the work of going through the whole book was completed with the help of one of my colleagues, Stephen Eskildsen.

[6]Susan Naquin, "The Peking Pilgrimage to Miao-feng Shan: Religious Organizations and Sacred Site," in Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China, edited by Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1992), pp. 333-377.

[7]These two works were published in 1989 by Shih-fan University at Chü-fu of Shan-tung. The copies that I looked at are collected in the division of ancient books in the Main Library of Shan-tung University. The librarians there generously gave me the opportunity to go over them (June 4-7, 1993).

hierarchy, and furthermore, how their attempt to connect those deities of Mount T'ai with sectarianism enriched the cult of Mount T'ai. Thus, more accessible sources allow us to examine the Mount T'ai cult from more angles.

Before we proceed to a specific examination of the Mount T'ai cult, it is necessary to discuss briefly the political and religious context of the Ming dynasty. First, we will examine the historical background of the founder of the Ming, which affected his religious policy and his attitudes toward popular religions.

I. Historical background of the founder of the Ming (Emperor T'ai-tsu of the Ming)

Emperor T'ai-tsu (r. 1368-1398), named Chu Yüan-chang 朱元璋, was born into a poor family in Chung-li 鍾離, Hao-chou 濠州 (present day Feng-yang 鳳陽, An-hui province) in 1328.[8] He was the youngest of the four sons in that family. In 1344 there was a serious famine and epidemic in Hao-chou, and that disaster took his parents and his elder brother's lives. Their destitution almost made burial of the dead impossible. It was not until one of the villagers donated a piece of land that Chu Yüan-chang and his brothers buried the deceased.[9] After that, Chu was orphaned and helpless, and decided to become a monk in the Huang-chüeh 皇覺 monastery near Hao-chou. He stayed at the monastery for only fifty days before he was asked by the abbot to go with the other disciples for lack of food. For the next three years (1345-1347), he wandered and begged for food in those areas west of the Huai River, where

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[8]Ming T'ai-tsu shih-lu 明太祖實錄 [The veritable record of Emperor T'ai-tsu of the Ming dynasty], chüan 1 (Taipei, Academic Sinica, 1962), p. 1.
[9]Chang T'ing-yü 張廷玉 and others, eds., Ming shih 明史 [The standard history of the Ming dynasty, henceforth, MS], chüan 1 (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1974), p. 1.

White Lotus Sect and secret activities were popular.[10] During this time, he had many chances for contact with local societies and become familiar with the local people's life. Later, he returned to the monastery and stayed there for the next four years (1348-1352).[11] It was probably during this period that he began to learn how to read and write.[12]

During this time, many uprisings were launched by Han people against the Mongol government in name of racial discrimination and political corruption. Natural disasters, which increasingly happened in certain areas, made these rebellions spread even more quickly. Secret anti-government groups also appeared with this trend. The anti-Yüan movements were closely associated with the Religion of Light (Ming chiao 明教), White Lotus Sect (Pai-lien chiao 白蓮教), and Maitreya belief. Among the revolutionary forces, there were two main powers. One was led by P'eng Ying-yü 彭瑩玉, a mendicant Buddhist in the western Huai area, who believed in the reincarnation of Maitreya Buddha and the reappearance of a Radiant Prince (Ming wang 明王) who would save the people from their miseries.[13] The other force was led by Han 韓 family of Chao-chou 趙州 (presently the Ho-pei province) which provided the hereditary leadership of the White Lotus Sect for many generations. This Sect attracted many followers in rural communities. After Han Shan-t'ung 韓山童 (d. 1351) took over this sect, he had followers who widely advocated that the world would be in a turmoil, and Maitreya Buddha would come and the Radiant Prince

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[10] Ming T'ai-tsu shih-lu, p.3; Li Shou-k'ung 李守孔, "Ming-tai pai-lien chiao k'ao-lüeh 明代白蓮教考略" [A brief examination on White Lotus Sect of the Ming] in Ming-tai tsung-chiao 明代宗教 [Religions of the Ming], edited by Pao Tsun-p'eng 包遵彭 (Taipei, Hsüeh-sheng shu-chü, 1968), p. 22.

[11] Ming T'ai-tsu shih-lu, p. 4.

[12] L. Carrington Goodrich, Chaoying Fang, eds., Dictionary of Ming Biography (1368-1644) (New York and London, Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 382.

[13] Wu Han 吳晗, Chu Yüan-chang chuan 朱元璋傳 [A biography of Chu Yüan-chang] (Hong Kong, San-lien shu-tien, 1965), pp. 14-15.

reappear. Then Han Shan-t'ung organized his followers and got ready to rebel. Yet once these two forces launched their movements, they became virtually indistinguishable because of their common political goal of an anti-Yüan government and their similar religious beliefs. Later, their members intermingled, and covered their heads with red turbans. Their military band was called the Red Army 紅軍, Red Turbans 紅巾軍, or Incense Army 香軍. [14]

The Religion of Light is also called Mo-ni chiao 摩尼教, or Manichaeism, and was established by a Persian Mani (216-277 AD). This belief was spread to China in the T'ang dynasty (618-907). But during the time of the Buddhist persecution by Emperor Wu-tsung of the T'ang in 845, the Religion of Light was also forbidden. From then on, the Religion of Light became an underground religion and spread secretly in societies.[15] The central idea of this religion is that the dual principles of light and darkness are the fundamental elements of the cosmos. These two forces are in constant opposition. Light represents brightness, good and rationality, while darkness equals ignorance, evil and desire. The god of this religion was called the Radiant Prince.[16] The followers of this religion believed that once the Radiant Prince appeared in the world, light eventually would defeat darkness. This concept especially attracted those miserable people who had suffered for a long time under an alien corrupt government, like the Mongolian regime.[17]

During the late Yüan and the Ming period, the Religion of Light was mixed with the Maitreya belief and the White Lotus Sect. In Indian Mahayana Buddhism Maitreya is the Buddha of the future who waits in Tusita heaven for many thousands of years until he is ready to come down to the

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[14]Wu Han, Chu Yüan-chang chuan, p. 15.
[15]Wu Han, Chu Yüan-chang chuan, p. 16.
[16]Wu Han, Chu Yüan-chang chuan, p. 16.
[17]Wu Han, Chu Yüan-chang chuan, pp. 16-17.

world.[18]Scriptures describing Maitreya were translated into Chinese in the third century. During the fourth to sixth century the Maitreya belief was popular among the people. Devotees to Maitreya believed that when Maitreya descended, he would bring peace and prosperity to the world.[19] Besides this orthodox background of Maitreya belief, there were some dissenting popular movements based on similar eschatologies from the sixth century on. These movements' religious advocates sometimes threatened the state.[20] The state's suppression of them resulted in these groups going underground. Thus, Han Shan-t'ung's proclaimation about the descent of Maitreya in his White Lotus movement in 1351 followed this tradition. Furthermore, the Maitreya belief subsequently became central to the White Lotus Sect.[21]

The above outline gives us a basic understanding of the relationship between the late Yüan political movements and folk religions. Since these political movements were spread in Ho-pei province and western and northern Huai regions where Chu was living and wandering, Chu Yüan-chang must have observed them and could have been, to some degree, familiar with the tenets of Manichaeism and the White Lotus Society.[22] It was under these circumstances that in 1352 immediately after the Huang-chüeh monastery was

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[18]Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 81.

[19]Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, pp. 81-82; Li Shou-k'ung, "Ming-tai pai-lien chiao k'ao-lüeh," p. 25.

[20]Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, pp. 82-84.

[21]White Lotus Sect drew many ideas from Pure Land Buddhism. After the late Yüan Maitreya and the concept of the reappearance of the Radiant Prince became dominant in the White Lotus Sect. For detailed information on the White Lotus tradition, see Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, pp. 73-108; Susan Naquin, "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China," in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, edited by David Johnson, Andrew Nathan, and Evelyn Rawski (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985), pp. 255-260

[22]Wu Han, Chu Yüan-chang chuan, p. 15.

burned by the Yüan army, Chu Yüan-chang followed repeated divination to join the Red Turbans and started his political career.[23] He enrolled as a solider under a local leader, Kuo Tzu-hsing 郭子興.

Chu was quick to catch the attention of his leader and earned rapid promotion. In 1355 Kuo Tzu-hsing died. Meanwhile, a chief of the Red Army, Liu Fu-t'ung 劉福通. persuaded Han Lin-erh 韓林兒, son of Han Shan-t'ung, to claim descent from the imperial house of the Sung dynasty.[24] Liu called Han Lin-erh the Young Radiant Prince (Hsiao ming-wang 小明王). Han Lin-erh then became the new leader of the White Lotus Society. In the same year Han Lin-erh appointed Chu Yüan-chang as the commander of Kuo Tzu-hsing's military.[25] By 1366 the Huai valley was under Chu's control.

Chu's military movements were different in style from others of that period. Chu did not allow his soldiers to kill innocent people or plunder.[26] This characteristic gained him some degree of support from the localities through which his army passed. Another of Chu's unique characteristics was that beginning in 1359, he invited many Confucians to serve as his mentors. These people taught Chu Chinese classics and histories, and helped him in various ways among the political rivals of the late Yüan.

Though Chu served under Han Lin-erh, the leader of the White Lotus Sect, he was ambitious and was not willing to remain under Han's leadership.[27] Chu's dissatisfaction was further enhanced by some of his

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[23]Ming T'ai-tsu shih-lu, p. 4.
[24]Han Shan-t'ung was killed by the Yüan army in a rebellion of 1351. See Wu Han, Chu Yüan-chang chuan, p. 43.
[25]Wu Han, "Ming-chiao yü ta-ming ti-kuo 明教與大明帝國," [Manichaeism and the great Ming empire] in Tu-shih tsa-chi 讀史劄記 [Notes taken while studying histories], by Wu Han (Peking, San-lien shu-tien, 1956), p. 264.
[26]Wu Han, Chu Yüan-chang chuan, p. 78.
[27]See Li Shou-k'ung, "Ming-tai pai-lien chiao k'ao-lüeh," p. 26.

Confucian mentors' objection to respecting Han as a leader.[28] As soon as Chu's power and strength were strong enough he disposed of Han: in the twelfth month of 1366, Chu sent one of his officers to drown Han Lin-erh in Kua-pu 瓜步 (presently in Chiang-su province).[29] On January 31, 1367, Chu established his own calendar, initiating the Kingdom of Wu 吳元年. This act was significant for showing Chu's detachment from the White Lotus Sect. In 1368, Chu Yüan-chang founded a new state and proclaimed Ming 明 (bright or enlightened) as the dynastic name.

Though Chu Yüan-chang had Han Lin-erh killed and himself enthroned, he could not deny that his power arose from the White Lotus Society, as many of his followers still practiced this belief. Hence, Chu chose "Ming" as the dynastic name to win these people's devotion. This act was also a means of declaring that the "true" Radiant Prince had appeared, denoting Chu himself, and those rebels claiming they were Radiant Prince were now prohibited.[30] On the other hand, Chu also employed "Ming" as the dynastic name to avoid offending Confucians: the character "Ming 明" was combined with "sun 日" and "moon 月." In Confucian rites, the "Ta-ming 大明" sacrifices were to the sun and moon respectively. These sacrifices were also emphasized by past dynasties.[31]

II. Policy toward popular religions

As discussed above, the historical background of the Ming T'ai-tsu was closely related to sectarian religions. However, after founding the Ming, Chu

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[28]Wu Han, "Ming-chiao yü ta-ming ti-kuo," pp. 265, 266n1.
[29]Wu Han, "Ming-chiao yü ta-ming ti-kuo," p. 266.
[30]Wu Han, "Ming-chiao yü ta-ming ti-kuo," p. 262.
[31]Wu Han, "Ming-chiao yü ta-ming ti-kuo," p. 262.

prohibited Manichaeism and the White Lotus Society.[32] Later, he even incorporated this prohibition into the imperial law. In this code, it says that :

> [As for] all [groups] recklessly calling themselves the White Lotus society of the Buddha Maitreya, the Religion which Honors Light [Manichaeism], or the White Cloud school, and so forth, and all those methods of the left way [heresy] which cause disorder, and those who conceal pictures and images [of deities], offering incense, gathering the people at night to disperse by day, pretending to practice good deeds [but in fact] stirring up and deceiving the people, the leaders [of all such groups and activities] shall be strangled, and their followers given 100 blows [of the bamboo cane] and banished 3, 000 *li.* [33]

This code shows that Chu treated these sectarian activities as heresy, probably because T'ai-tsu knew how threatening to the regime these groups would be. For the stability of his political power, he couldn't allow any other rebellious elements to grow into societies. Yet, even though the laws against sectarian activities were so severe, during the Ming those sectarian sects went underground and launched several movements which finally were placated by

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[32]Wang Shih-chen王世貞 (Ming) , "Li Shan-ch'ang chuan 李善長傳," [A biography of Li Shan-ch'ang] in Ming-ch'ing chi-chi 名卿績紀 [Accounts of famous officials], chüan 3. It is cited by Wu Han, "Ming-chiao yü ta-ming ti-kuo," p. 267.

[33]Ming-lü chi-chieh fu-li 明律集解附例 [The Ming law code, with commentary and appended precedents], chüan 11 (reprinted in 1908), v. 6, 9b. This is translated by Daniel Overmyer. See his work, Folk Buddhist Religion, p. 27.

the Ming state.[34]

The Ming's strict religious policy also reflected on the regulations for commoners' sacrifices. These laws are collected in the Collected Statutes of the Great Ming Dynasty (Ta-ming hui-tien 大明會典). Many of the documents in this collection date from Emperor T'ai-tsu's reign.[35] In chapter 81 of this collection, we are told that commoners are to make offerings to uncared-for ghosts of the village and district, and the spirits of their grandparents and parents; they may also sacrifice to Stove gods, but all other sacrifices are prohibited.[36]

As for local religious practices, local officials were ordered to sacrifice according to the following principles, which were codified in the first two years of Emperor T'ai-tsu period. First, local officials had to make offerings to the spirits to whom sacrifices should be offered, such as famous mountains and rivers, sage emperors, and loyal and brave officials. Second, local officials should sacrifice to those who made great contributions to the state, and those who had shown their loyalty and love among the people; these people's merits could be found in the ritual statutes. Third, for those whose merits were not recorded in the ritual statutes but were well-known among the people, local officials were not to sacrifice to them, but their shrines were not allowed to be destroyed.[37]

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[34]Sun Cheng-jung 孫正容, Chu Yüan-chang hsi-nien yao-lu 朱元璋繫年要錄 [A chronicle of Ming T'ai-tsu] (Hang-chou, Che-chiang jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1983), pp. 241, 320, 371, 380; Wu Han, "Ming-chiao yü ta-ming ti-kuo," pp. 269-270; T'ao Hsi-sheng 陶希聖, "Ming-tai mi-lo pai-lien chiao chi ch'i t'a 'yao-tsei' 明代彌勒白蓮教及其他'妖賊'," [Maitreya belief, White Lotus Sect and other 'evil bandits' of the Ming] in Ming-tai tsung-chiao, pp. 7-16.

[35]Daniel Overmyer, "Attitudes toward Popular Religion in Ritual Texts of the Chinese State: The Collected Statutes of the Great Ming," Cahiers D'Extreme-Asie 5 (1989-1990): 213.

[36]Li Tung-yang 李東陽 (Ming), Ta-ming hui-tien 大明會典 [The collected statutes of the great Ming dynasty], chüan 81 (Taipei, Hua-wen shu-chü, 1964), p. 1265.

[37]Li Tung-yang, Ta-ming hui-tien, p. 1466.

The above laws confirm that the Ming state wanted to control in detail the religious activities of commoners. More importantly, the Ming state wanted to subject local cults to its religious control system. If a local deity was believed to contribute to the state or to the people and could be verified in the ritual statutes, he or she would be sacrificed to not only by commoners, but also periodically by local officials. Even if some deities who had merits were not recorded in the ritual statutes, local officials had the responsibility to keep their cults alive. So the survival of local cults seems to lie in whether they made any contribution to the state and the people. The recognition of such cults was always undertaken by the state. This recognition process, of course, became a method of searching out and controling local religious activities. From this perspective, the local officials' regular visits to these activities implied that the state put commoners' religious practices under close surveillance. However, though the policy toward popular religions was quite strict as we discussed, this system was never fully implemented as the state intended.[38]

III. Summary of the environment of ordinary people's religions and their religious practices

Ordinary people's religious practices were prevalent, and flourished increasingly from the sixteenth century onwards because of booming economic development. The economic upsurge of the sixteenth century brought increased commercialization of agriculture, rapid growth of rural handicraft production, and the spread of rural markets in North China along the Grand Canal, in the Lower Yangtze and the Southeast Coast. This development lessened the gap between urban cities and villages, and thus reshaped the picture of the Ming

[38]Daniel Overmyer, "Attitudes toward Popular Religion in Ritual Texts of the Chinese State," p. 213.

popular culture.[39] Another effect of economic growth worth noting was education. According to Evelyn Rawski's research, the sixteenth century's economic development stimulated the expansion of the school system.[40] The extension of education increased the literacy rate and also enhanced the circulation of written works in Chinese society.[41] Female literacy was also on the rise in the late Ming.[42]

More sophisticated printing technology arose with the increasing demand for written materials. During the late Ming, advances in printing technology included color printing, improved woodcut illustrations, copper movable type, and woodcut facsimiles of earlier editions.[43] As a result, the government and private printers' publishing industry expanded to a high degree.[44] Without doubt, higher literacy, advanced printing technology and the expansion of the publishing industry provided a different environment for the religious practices of ordinary people.

Beginning in the fifteenth century, the folk religious groups made use of another form of publication to express their faith. This was the *pao-chüan* 寶卷 genre of religious literature.[45] By the beginning of the sixteenth century, Lo

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[39]Evelyn Rawski, "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial China," in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, pp. 4-5.

[40]Evelyn Rawski, "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial China," p. 11.

[41]Evelyn Rawski, "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial China," p. 16.

[42]Richard Shek, "Religion and Society in Late Ming: Sectarianism and Popular Thought in Sixteenth-Seventeenth Century China," Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1980, p. 41.

[43]Evelyn Rawski, "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial China," p. 17.

[44]Richard Shek," Religion and Society in Late Ming," p. 42.

[45]According to Daniel Overmyer's research, the oldest sectarian pao-chüan dated 1430. See Daniel Overmyer," The Oldest Chinese Sectarian Scripture, The Precious Volume, Expounded by the Buddha, on the Results of [the Teaching of] The Imperial Ultimate [Period] (*Fo Shuo Huang-chi Chieh-kuo*

Ch'ing 羅清 (c. 1442-1527), an important popular religious leader of the Ming, systematized his teachings in the Five Books in Six Volumes (Wu-pu liu-tse 五部六冊) of scripture in the form of *pao-chüan*. Lo's teachings were incorporated Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. Compared with the classical language of the orthodox Buddhist or Taoist scriptures, the language of *pao-chüan* was relatively colloquial, which made it more acceptable and accessible to the less-educated people. [46] Consequently, in the Ming and Ch'ing period, the Five Books in Six Volumes were continuously published. [47]

Lo Ch'ing's teachings were greatly influenced the later development of Chinese popular religions.[48] The key themes of Lo's teachings were an idea about a female creator, which was later developed into the belief in the Eternal Venerable Mother (Wu-sheng lao-mu 無生老母), and a yearning for the Native Land of True Emptiness (Chen-k'ung chia-hsiang 真空家鄉), which is the final refuge of the religious pious. Despite individual variations and different emphases, later *pao-chüan* literature, to some extent, shares these themes.[49] In the late Ming and Ch'ing, great quantities of *pao-chüan* were published and circulated in popular religious groups as well as ordinary people.

In summary, the economic growth of the mid-late Ming increased the literacy rate and the demand for written materials. With the advancement of printing quality, the mushrooming publishing industry met the demand for books, and thereby enhanced the accessibility of reading materials for many

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Pao-chüan, Pub. 1430," Journal of Chinese Religions (Fall 1992) 20: 17-31.

[46]More details about the nature of *pao-chüan* will be explored in Chapter Five.

[47]Ma Hsi-sha 馬西沙 and Han Ping-fang 韓秉方, Chung-kuo min-chien tsung-chiao shih 中國民間宗教史 [A history of Chinese popular religions] (Shanghai, Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1992), p. 177.

[48]See Randall Nadeau, "Popular Sectarianism in the Ming: Lo Ch'ing and His 'Religion of Non-Action'," Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1990, chapter three.

[49]Part of Chapter Five will deal with this issue.

persons. As we have mentioned, the sixteenth century's economic surge also strengthened the tie between cities and villages. This facilitated the increased communication between city and countryside. Consequently, the circulation of knowledge was no longer limited to cities or isolated areas, and was more rapid than before. These changes gave ordinary people more opportunities to gain access to various kinds of knowledge and information, even religions. Though Emperor T'ai-tsu of the Ming codified the prohibitions to the commoners' religious practices, he likely did not forsee that the later popular religions would flourish with these socio-economic changes.

Chapter Two

The Cult of Mount T'ai before the Ming: A brief summary of popular and official beliefs and practices

T'ai shan 泰山 (Mount T'ai), the chief of the five sacred mountains in China, is located in the central part of Shantung province. It is the highest mountain in the Shantung peninsula. In broader terms, especially in its historical and cultural meaning, the designation Mount T'ai refers to the whole mountain range of T'ai, running roughly from the southwest of Chiao-chou Bay, passing through the central part of present-day Shantung, and extending east of the Grand Canal, its highest peak is situated at the north of present T'ai-an 泰安 county. In this thesis, I use this definition of Mount T'ai.[50]

The earliest reference to "Mount T'ai" appears in the Book of Documents

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[50]Cheng Ch'iao 鄭樵 (c. 1102-1160) describes Mount T'ai, "all mountains in Chi-nan 濟南 as Mount T'ai's northern foot; all mountains of Yen chou 兖州 as its southern foot; mountains of Ch'ing 青, ch'i 齊 and sea as its left wing; all mountains in the east of the Yellow River as its right wing." Quoted by Sung Ssu-ho 宋思和 (Ch'ing), in T'ai-shan shu-chi 泰山述記 [A record of Mount T'ai], chüan 1, in T'ai-shan ts'ung-shu 泰山叢書 [Collected works about Mount T'ai], edited by Wang Chieh-fan 王介藩 (Shantung, Ch'ü-fu shih-fan ta-hsüeh, 1989). In his Taoist text, Tu Kuang-t'ing 杜光庭 of the T'ang in Tung-t'ien fu-ti yüeh-tu ming-shan chi 洞天福地嶽瀆名山記 [An account of heavenly mansions, blessed grounds, lofty hills, rivers, and famous mountains] states that the area of Mount T'ai is 2,000 *li* 里 round, covered by Mount T'ai's *ch'i* 氣 (Tao-tsang 道藏 [The Taoist Canon], vol. 331, 3a, HY 599). Tu Fu's 杜甫 (c. 712-770) poem "Gazing at the Great Mount" [Wang yüeh 望岳] depicts "To what shall I compare the sacred mount that stands, a balk of green that hath no end, betwixt Ch'i and Lu" [Tai-tsung fu ju-ho, ch'i-lu ch'ing wei-liao 岱宗夫如何，齊魯青未了]. Ch'i and Lu are ancient principalities in Shantung. This poem's ambiance also indicates the whole mountain range. See A Golden Treasury of Chinese Poetry, translated by John Turner (Hong Kong, Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1976), pp. 132-133.

(Shang shu) as Tai-tsung 岱宗 and Tai 岱.[51] The name of T'ai shan 泰山 was first noted in the Book of Odes.[52] During the Chou, the people of the Lu state saw Mount T'ai as a holy mountain. For the literal meanings of "Tai" and "tsung," Pan Ku 班固 (c. 32-92) of the Later Han explains that "Tai tsung" of the East is a point where all nature comes and goes, and thus is the head of the five peaks.[53] This statement, in fact, was drawn from the theory of Five Phases (wu-hsing 五行, metal, wood, water, fire, and earth), which was popular in late Chou and the Han. Being the eastern-most mountain of the five peaks, and thus associated with the East, where all nature commences, Mount T'ai naturally became the chief of the five peaks.

Though for the reasons given above this thesis focuses on the Ming period, the cult of Mount T'ai in the Ming cannot be understood without some knowledge of its early development. This chapter will give a survey of the historical development of this cult from the beginning to the Ming period (1368-1644). The first part will examine Mount T'ai as an official cult before the Ming. Since popular beliefs about Mount T'ai developed with changing ideas about the afterlife, the second part will summarize the early history of the role of Mount T'ai in beliefs concerning the afterlife.

I. The early history of the Mount T'ai cult

Like many ancient civilized peoples, in primeval times the Chinese

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[51]Ch'ü Wan-li 曲萬里, Shang-shu chi-shih 尚書集釋 [Collected annotations on the Book of Documents, hereafter, SSCS], (Taipei, Lien-ching ch'u-pan she, 1983), pp. 19, 52-53, "Yao-tien 堯典" [the Canon of Yao], and "Yü-kung 禹貢" [the Tribute of Yü]; James Legge, The Chinese Classics, vol. 3:1 (Hong Kong, 1865), p. 36.

[52]James Legge, The Chinese Classics, vol. 4:2 (Hong Kong, 1865), p. 627.

[53]Pan Ku班固 (Later Han), Pai-hu t'ung 白虎通 [A reconstructed record of an imperial conference on the classics at the White Tiger Hall, hereafter, PHT], chüan 3 (1662), 6b.

believed that significant natural objects and phenomena had spirits. In time, the relationship of humanity with the gods and nature took on a more human aspect; that is, it became more relational and reciprocal. Since people believed that there were spirits, or gods, presiding over nature, it would offend these spirits if people did not honor them, or failed to sacrifice in the right way and at the right time.[54] This approach also applied to mountains considered sacred.

In the cosmology of ancient China, five peaks shared with Heaven and Earth the reverence of the State. According to the canons of ancient sacrifices, only the Son of Heaven could translate the principles of cosmic order into edicts and laws on behalf of mankind.[55] He ritually offered submission to the cosmic order on behalf of all.[56] The Son of Heaven worshipped Heaven, Earth, the Five Peaks and the Four Great Rivers,[57] which symbolically represented the whole of nature. What is more important is that only the Son of Heaven was qualified to perform these sacrifices. Those who arrogated themselves the right to do these sacrifices would be reproached for violating the rites.[58] This arrangement

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[54]Wolfram Eberhard, Guilt and Sin in Traditional China (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967), p. 16.

[55]Sun Hsi-tan 孫希旦 (Ch'ing), Li-chi chi-chieh 禮記集解 [Collected commentaries on the Book of Rites, hereafter, LCCC], chüan 4, in Wan-yu wen-k'u hui-yao 萬有文庫薈要 (Taipei, Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1965), vol. 269, p. 10.

[56]Romeyn Taylor, "Official and Popular Religion and the Political Organization of Chinese Society in the Ming," in Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China, edited by K. C. Liu (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990), p. 127.

[57]The Four Great Rivers refer to the Yellow River, the Yangtze River, the Huai River (huai-ho 淮河), and the Chi River (Chi-shui 濟水).

[58] For example, in the period of Spring and Autumn, the chief of the Chi 季 family in Lu state once went to sacrifice on Mount T'ai, which was a royal prerogative. Confucius criticized Chi's act, "Is that not saying that Mount T'ai is not the equal of Ling Fang?" [ts'eng-wei t'ai-shan pu-ju lin-fang hu 曾謂泰山不如林放乎?] Lin Fang 林放 , a native of Lu, once asked Confucius about the basic principles of rites. Confucius' criticism of Chi implied that if even a commoner knew the significance of the rites, how could Mount T'ai accept Chi's sacrifice which was not in accordance with propriety? See Hu Kuang 胡廣 's Lun-yü chi-chu ta-ch'üan 論語集注大全 [Collected commentaries on

of sacrifices reflects the Chinese cosmological "world view." The pivotal goal of sacrifices to the gods of nature was to keep nature and the world in harmony and peace. The ruler then could gain great peace for society, and attain stability for his political power. Mountain worship in this world view was also a way for people to express their gratitude to the mountains for supplying human beings with forest materials for use.[59] One of the primary purposes of sacrifice in Confucianism was to educate people to respond to nature's support.[60] Without worshipping these spirits, nature could bring forth calamities or crises in the human world.

Given these facts, we may posit that the function of these sacrifices was ethicopolitical as well as theological. Mountain worship was part of the sacrifices to nature in ancient times, as a means of thanks or propitiation. For the state, its significance lay in that the ruler legitimized his political power and kept nature and his country in harmony through his unparalleled qualification to make sacrifices to Heaven, Earth, and subordinate nature deities. Through sacrifices to mountains, people were educated to show their appreciation for what they received from mountains.

In China, the five sacred mountains are the Eastern Peak Mount T'ai in present Shantung, the Western Peak Mount Hua 華山 in present Shan-hsi 陝西, the Southern Peak Mount Heng 衡山 in present Hu-nan 湖南, the Northern Peak Mount Heng 恒山 in present Ho-pei 河北, and the Central Peak Mount Sung 嵩山 in present Ho-nan 河南.[61] In the ancient Chinese

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Analects] chüan 3 (Taipei, Chung-kuo tzu-hsüeh ming-chu chi-ch'eng pien-yin chi-chin hui, 1978), pp. 173, 179.

[59]LCCC, chüan 23, vol. 12, p. 42.

[60]Yü Shih-nan 虞世南 (Sui), Pei-t'ang shu-ch'ao 北堂書鈔 [Documents from the Pei-t'ang studio], chüan 88 (Taipei, Wen-hai ch'u-pan she, 1978).

11. Before the Later Han, the locations of the five peaks were not fixed. Except for the eastern peak Mount T'ai and the northern peak Mount Heng, others were changed from time to time with the change of the state's territory. See Chang

system of mountain worship, the five peaks represented many other mountains in China. The earliest historical record of worship of the peaks appears in the "Canon of Yao," which was written not earlier than the early Warring States Period (around the fourth century B.C.),[62] of the Book of Documents. The earliest sacrifices to the peaks were related to the duty of the Son of Heaven to make tours of inspection (hsün-shou 巡狩, 巡守) to the four quarters of the empire once every five years.[63] This regular imperial tour was an opportunity for the ruler to reconfirm his political power and inspect local politics as well as popular customs.

Though the notion of five peaks had formed before the Han, not until the Han was it fully developed. More importantly, the role of the Eastern Peak, Mount T'ai, as the leader of the five peaks was also stabilized during this period. It served as the chief of mountains and the abode of numerous spirits. The development of Mount T'ai as the chief of the five peaks was closely linked with the theory of the Five Phases and the Feng and Shan sacrifices, which the emperor performed with the greatest solemnity at Mount T'ai to Heaven and Earth respectively. Under the strong influence of this theory of the Five Phases, promoted by the Han, people firmly believed that Mount T'ai of the East was the origin of creation. This attribute, consequently, was later associated with the legend of Lord of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan fu-chün 泰山府君), who in popular

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Ch'ung-te 張崇德 (Ch'ing), "Wu-yüeh k'ao 五嶽考" [An examination on the five peaks] in Hsiao-fang-hu chai yü-ti ts'ung-ch'ao pu-pien tsai pu-pien 小方壺齋輿地叢鈔補編再補編 [A supplementary on the supplementary of the collected documents about the territories, from the Hsiao-fang-hu studio], edited by Wang Hsi-ch'i 王錫祺 (Ch'ing), chüan 1 (Taipei, Kuang-wen shu-chü, 1964), vol. 5.

[62]Ch'ü Wan-li 曲萬里, "Yüeh-i chi-ku 岳義稽古," [The origins of the meanings of Yüeh] in Shu-yüng lun-hsüeh chi 書傭論學集 [The collected works from the Shu-yüng studio] (Taipei, Lien-ching ch'u-pan she, 1984), p. 286.

[63]James Legge, The Chinese Classics (Hong Kong, 1865), vol. 3:1, pp. 35-37.

belief before Buddhist influence was also thought of as lord of the underworld who knew the life-span of human beings.[64]

As is discussed above, the state worshipped Mount T'ai from ancient times on. By the Ch'in, feudal lords governing T'ai-an county, where Mount T'ai is situated, had the responsibility to perform sacrifices to Mount T'ai. After the First Emperor of the Ch'in unified China in 221 B.C., the emperor worshipped Mount T'ai in person. In the early Han, the political system partially reverted back to the feudal system, and Mount T'ai during that period was again sacrificed to by local feudal lords. It was not until Emperor Wu of the Han (r. 140-87 B.C.) abolished the feudal system that the sacrifice of Mount T'ai returned to the control of the emperor.[65]

The policy of envoys performing this imperial duty for the emperor (ch'ien-shih tai-chi 遣使代祭) started from the time of Emperor Hsüan of the Han (r. 73-49 B.C.) From then on, the emperor did not have to travel from the capital to Mount T'ai to make the sacrifices. Generally speaking, most of the subsequent dynastic rulers simply followed this policy and most of the time they themselves made a symbolic sacrifice to Mount T'ai in the Capital (yao-chi 遙祭).[66]

The significance of Mount T'ai in Chinese political culture after the Ch'in lay in its serving as the place where the emperor made the Feng and Shan

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[64]The development of the cult of T'ai-shan fu-chün will be discussed later in this chapter.

[65]Actually the feudal system collapsed in the reign of Emperor Ching of the Former Han (r. 156-141 B.C.), but it was officially abolished by Emperor Wu.

[66]MS, chüan 49, pp. 1283-1284; Hsü I-k'uei 徐一夔 (Ming), et al., Ming chi-li 明集禮 [Collection of Rites of the Ming dynasty], in Ssu-k'u ch'üan-shu chen-pen pa-chi 四庫全書珍本八集, chüan 14 (Taipei, 1978?), 1a-2b; Wang Tzu-ch'ing汪子卿 (Ming), T'ai-shan chih 泰山志 [A history of Mount T'ai, hereafter, TSC], chüan 1, microform.

sacrifices (Feng shan 封禪).[67] The emperor performed, with the greatest solemnity, the sacrifices at the top of Mount T'ai to Heaven and at the foot of Mount T'ai, usually at the Hill of Liang-fu (Liang-fu shan 梁父山, 梁甫山) or the Hill of Hao-li (Hao-li 蒿里),[68] to Earth, respectively.[69] According to historical documents, only six emperors made the Feng and Shan sacrifices, the First Emperor of the Ch'in in 219 B.C., Emperor Wu of the Former Han in 110, 104, 102, 93, 89 B.C., Emperor Kuang-wu of the Later Han in 56 A.D., Emperor Kao-tsung of the T'ang in 665, Emperor Hsüan-tsung of the T'ang in 725, and Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung in 1008.

The purposes of the Feng and Shan sacrifices were interrelated. The first goal of the sacrifices was to show that the emperor had received the mandate of

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[67]The origins of the Feng and Shan sacrifices are unclear. For more discussion of this issue, see Howard Wechsler's Offerings of Jade and Silk: Ritual and Symbol in the Legitimation of the T'ang Dynasty (New Heaven, Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 171-172, 271n7.

[68]Ssu Ma-ch'ien 司馬遷 (Former Han), Shih chi 史記 [Records of the grand historian of China], chüan 6, 28 (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1973), pp. 241, 1355; Pan Ku 班固, Han shu 漢書 [The standard history of the Later Han], chüan 6 (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1962), p. 199. A commentor of the T'ang, Yen Shih-ku 顏師古, says that Hao-li [Hao Village] was the Village of the dead [Ssu-jen li 死人里]. See Han shu, chüan 6, p. 199. According to Ying-shih Yü's study, in about the middle of the first century B.C., some people mentioned Hao-li as the abode for the dead. Ying-shih Yü, "'O Soul, Come Back' A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 47.2 (1987): 392.

[69]As to the meanings of terms *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪, there are two possibilities. First, Chang Shou-chieh 張守節 of the T'ang interpreted *feng* as a piling up of earth at Mount T'ai in order to make an altar, on which the emperor worshipped Heaven to give thanks for its gifts, and *shan* as the sweeping away of earth at the foot of Mount T'ai to thank Earth for its gifts. The second interpretation is given by Pan Ku of the Later Han. He explains *feng* as the "golden mortar used to cover silver bindings, or stone mortar to cover golden bindings, and they were sealed [*feng* 封] with a seal." This could refer to the "sealing up" of a stone coffer containing jade tablets [yü-tieh 玉牒] inscribed with an announcement to Heaven. See Chang Shou-chieh's Shih-chi cheng-i 史記正義 [Annotations on the Records of grand historian of China] (T'ang), in SC (p. 1355); Pan Ku, PHT, chüan 3, 1a; Howard Wechsler, Offerings of Jade and Silk, p. 172.

Heaven, which implied the legitimation of the emperor's political power. At the same time, the emperor acknowledged and gave thanks for the blessings of Heaven and Earth. The most important point is, as Pan Ku maintained, that these sacrifices announced to Heaven and Earth that the emperor had unified the state and brought peace to the world.[70]

Even though the Feng and Shan sacrifices were not made very often, their influences were far-reaching. For the purpose of our study, we will only briefly mention two of their points of impact on Chinese culture and religion. The first is that the symbolic meaning of the chief of the five sacred mountains was profoundly established. The holiness of Mount T'ai was confirmed and enhanced through the Feng and Shan sacrifices. Not surprisingly, in the later Taoist idea of the thirty-six paradises (tung t'ien 洞天) Mount T'ai was ranked first.[71]

The second influence can be seen in popular beliefs about Mount T'ai. Emperor Hsüan-tsung of the T'ang (r. 712-755), while making the Feng and Shan sacrifices in 725, unprecedentedly granted the god of Mount T'ai the title "King Equal to Heaven" (T'ien-ch'i wang 天齊王) and built a temple to him.[72] Around the time of Sung Chen-tsung's (r. 998-1022) making these sacrifices in 1008, the "King Equal to Heaven" was promoted to "Emperor Equal to Heaven, Humane and Holy" (T'ien-chi jen-sheng ti 天齊仁聖帝).[73] Later, the emperor bestowed the titles of Empress on the god's wife and Duke on his sons, who

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[70]PHT, chüan 3, 1a. For more detailed, see Edouard Chavannes's Le T'ai Chan (Paris, 1910), chapter three; Howard Wechsler, Offerings of Jade and Silk, chapter 9.
[71]Tu Kuang-t'ing, Tung-t'ien fu-ti yüeh-tu ming-shan chi, 3a, HY 599.
[72] Ma Tuan-lin 馬端臨 (Yüan), Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao 文獻通考 [General history of institutions and critical examination of documents and studies, hereafter, WHTK], chüan 83 (Shanghai, Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1935), p. 758.
[73]WHTK, chüan 83, p. 758.

were figures conceived of by popular beliefs.[74] T'ai-shan niang-niang 泰山娘娘 (Our Lady of Mount T'ai), the most popular deity of Mount T'ai in late imperial China, also at this time received the title "T'ien-hsien yü-nü pi-hsia yüan-chün 天仙玉女碧霞元君" (Heavenly immortal Jade Maiden, the Princess of Multi-colored Clouds) from the emperor. So, beliefs about Mount T'ai clearly developed in two directions--as a state cult and as popular beliefs. The personification of Mount T'ai gave an opportunity for the common people to link this deity with the legend of the Lord of Mount T'ai, who was believed to be the head of the netherworld. The temple in this deity's honor and a visible image in the form of a god sanctioned and supported by the government, certainly encouraged worship by common people and gradually made this cult prevalent in the country. Given these facts, we may conclude that the development of the popular beliefs about Mount T'ai was closely related to the Feng and Shan sacrifices.

II. The early history of the role of Mount T'ai in beliefs about the afterlife

In beliefs concerning Mount T'ai, the common people's concepts were different from the state's. From the Han onward in the eyes of the commoners Mount T'ai was called the Lord of Mount T'ai 泰山府君 (T'ai-shan fu-chün), and became Tung-yüeh ta-ti 東岳大帝，東嶽大帝 (the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak) after the Sung. By the Later Han, the Lord of Mount T'ai was believed to be the head of the netherworld. He was generally considered a kind of mediating human beings and Heaven. People believed that T'ai-shan fu-chün fixs the time of birth and death, and that he kept registers of the living.[75]

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[74] WHTK, chüan 83, 90, pp. 758, 823.
[75] Henri Maspero, Taoism and Chinese Religion, translated by Frank Kierman, Jr. (Amherst, University of Mass. Press, 1981), p. 102.

In order to understand the development of this cult, we have to discuss briefly changing conceptions of the afterlife in the Han before the coming of Buddhism.

The Chinese had formed several conceptions of the afterlife before the arrival of Buddhist ideas of purgatory. From the eighth century B.C. onward, the terms "Huang-ch'üan 黃泉" (Yellow Springs) and "Yu tu 幽都" (Capital of Darkness) appear in certain historical and literary works as the abode of the dead.[76] "The Yellow Springs" was probably somewhere beneath the earth, but its location was unclear. Nevertheless, there was an assumption that after death people still existed in some form. According to a study based on related historical materials and the most recent archaeological reports, in the late Chou and early Han both the common people and the elite believed that each person had two spirits: the *hun* 魂 and the *p'o* 魄.[77] In life the *hun* and *p'o* formed a harmonic union within the human body and at death the two spirits left the body to go their separate ways. Upon death, the *hun* spirit, being a light essence, went up to Heaven, while the *p'o* spirit, being a heavier essence, traveled down to Earth.[78]

During the periods of the Han and the Three Kingdoms, the destinations of *hun* and *p'o* after they left the deceased varied. One theory, which seemed more prevalent, was that once people died, their spirits would go to Mount

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[76]Ying-shih Yü, "'O Soul, Come Back'," p. 382; P'u Mu-chou 蒲慕州, Mu-tsang yü sheng-ssu 墓葬與生死 [Tomb burial and life and death] (Taipei, Lien-ching ch'u-pan she, 1993), p. 207.

[77]Before the dualistic ideas of the *hun* and the *p'o* were well accepted, however, in the early sixth century B.C. the *p'o* had been used to denote the spirits of a human. At that time, the idea of how many spirits a human being had varied. But it was not until the end of the sixth century B.C. that the notion of the *hun* become widespread in China. As to the origin of *hun,* Ying-shih Yü suggests, citing the "T'an-kung 檀弓" chapter of the Li-chi [the Book of Rites] and two songs in Ch'u Tz'u 楚辭 [The Elegies of Ch'u] as supporting evidence, that this notion originated in the south and during the sixth century spread to the north. See Ying-shih Yü, "'O Soul, Come Back'," pp. 370-373.

[78]Ying-shih Yü, "'O Soul, Come Back'," p. 375.

T'ai.[79] Two pieces of supporting evidence can be mentioned. "An Account of the Wu-huan 烏桓傳," the Wu-huan being a tribe in present-day Northeast China, in the Standard History of the Later Han states that "The spirits of the dead [of the Wu-huan] return to Red Mountain (Ch'ih-shan 赤山)...just as the *hun* spirit of the dead of the Chinese returns to Mount T'ai."[80] Kuan Lo 管輅 (c. 208-255) once told his brother that he was afraid of going to Mount T'ai to govern ghosts and not to govern living people.[81]

Nevertheless, it seems that by the third century people believed that the Lord of Mount T'ai administered the netherworld, and the spirits of the dead returned to Mount T'ai.[82] Because of his close links with eternal life/immortality or death, or because he was thought to be the grandson of Heaven, the Lord of Mount T'ai was believed to know the life spans of human beings.[83] This belief began in the Han.[84] There are two possible explanations for this belief. First, according to the Hsiao-ching yüan-shen ch'i 孝經援神契 (Annotations on the Book of Filial Piety to cooperate with the gods)[85] probably from the Later Han,

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[79]One theory, based on funeral texts of the Han, shows that the offices and abodes of the dead were not limited to Mount T'ai and Hao-li but existed in other of the four peaks as well. See Anna Seidel, "Traces of Han Religion," in Taoism and Religious Culture, edited by Akizuki Kan'ei (Tokyo, Hirakawa Shuppan Inc., 1987), p. 47.

[80]Fan Yeh 范曄 (Chin), Hou-han shu 後漢書 [The standard history of the Later Han dynasty], chüan 90 (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1965), p. 2980.

[81]Ch'en Shou 陳壽 (Chin), San-kuo chih 三國志 [The standard history of the Three Kingdoms], chüan 29 (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959), p. 826.

[82]Ying-shih Yü, "'O Soul, Come Back'," pp. 388-389.

[83]Chang Hua 張華 (Chin), Po-wu chih 博物志 [A record of ample readings]. See Fan Ling 范寧, ed., Po-wu chih chiao cheng 博物志校證 [A reconstructed edition of a "record of ample readings"] (Peking, chung-hua shu-chü, 1983), p. 12.

[84] Ying Shao 應劭 (Later Han), Feng-su t'ung-i 風俗通義 [The general meaning of customs]. See Wang Li-ch'i 王利器, ed., Feng-su t'ung-i chiao-chu 風俗通義校注 [A reconstructed edition of the "general meaning of customs"], chüan 2 (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1981), p. 64.

[85]In the preface of Jūshū Isho Shūsei 緯書集成, Yasui Kōzan 安居香山 says that Hsiao-ching yüan-shen ch'i is a kind of material related to the

Mount T'ai, the grandson of Heaven, was in charge of the spirits of human beings. As Heaven was omnipotent, and omniscient, the grandson was probably believed to possess, to some degree, this capability. Secondly, because Mount T'ai was located in the East, where all creatures rise, it was thought to know the lifespan of human beings.[86] Probably for the above two reasons Chao I 趙翼 of the Ch'ing suggested that the Eastern Peak, Mount T'ai, was considered to hold the record of life and death.

By the Han, people believed that there was a bureaucracy under the command of the Lord of Mount T'ai to assist him in administering the netherworld. Most of the candidates for the positions of the Lord and other assistants were human beings who had behaved well while they were alive.[87] The Sou-shen chi 搜神記 (Investigations into the divine) records some information about this bureaucracy. A story in this work discusses a native of Ch'u 楚 of the Warring States period named Chiang Chi 蔣濟. One day his wife dreamed that their deceased son appeared to her and made a request. He told his mother that he had been appointed as an assistant official of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan wu-po 泰山伍伯). For his promotion, he asked his mother to make a request of Sun O 孫阿, who at that time was alive but was about to die and be appointed as the District Magistrate of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan ling 泰山令). His mother did this for him. Later, he appeared in his mother's dream and told her

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divination combined with mystical Confucian belief (Ch'en-wei hsüeh 讖緯學), which was prevalent during the Later Han. Thus, it is probably a work of the Later Han. See Jūshū Isho Shūsei, edited by Yasui Kozan 安居香山 and Nakamura Shohachi 中村璋八, chüan 5 (Tokyo, Meitoku Shuppansha 明德出版社, 1971), p. 29. A fragment of this source has been preserved in Chang Hua's Po-wu chih. See Fan Ling, ed., Po-wu chih chiao-cheng, p. 12; PHT, chüan 2.

[86]Chao I 趙翼 (Ch'ing), Kai yü ts'ung kao 陔餘叢考 [Accumulated layers of investigations], chüan 35 (Taipei, Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1960).

[87]Chao I, Kai yü ts'ung kao, chüan 35.

that he had already been promoted to the position of Office Manager (Lu-shih 錄事).[88] It is obvious that the bureaucratic system of the netherworld was formulated after the developed political system of the state, and contemporary models of government.

As for the development of indigenous beliefs about the afterlife, two points can be made. First, within the changing indigenous notions of the afterlife, the idea that goodness would be rewarded, and evil punished did not clearly exist. In the minds of the Chinese, Mount T'ai was an abstract divinity who, receiving a mandate from Heaven, was in charge of all nature. This belief was especially emphasized by the state. Official worship of Mount T'ai never concerned matters of the dead.

From the very beginning of the arrival of Buddhism, the conception of Buddhist hell did not totally replace Chinese indigenous ideas of the afterlife, as is indicated by some early translators of Buddhist sutras. From some translated Buddhist sutras dated around the third century, we note that the translators simply used "Mount T'ai" to denote "Hell."[89] The Fo-shuo fen-pieh shan-o suo-ch'i ching 佛說分別善惡所起經 (The sutra of Buddha's preaching how to distinguish between the origins of the good and those of the wicked), translated by An Shih-kao 安世高 (the second century A.D.), says that people who love to

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[88]Kan Pao 干寶 (Ch'in), Sou-shen chi 搜神記 [Investigations into the divine], chüan 16 (Taipei, Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1962), p. 117. The title of "Lu shih" refers to an official managing affairs in the office. See Charles Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, p. 323.

[89]"Hell" is not an exact translation for "Ti-yü". Literally speaking, "ti-yü" means "earth prison." Anne Goodrich argues that "sentences to this prison are not for eternity as in our western conception of Hell.... Purgatory is the western term which most nearly agrees with the idea of ti-yü, for purgatory is a place where one pays for one's sins and then goes on. The suffering is not for eternity." See Anne Goodrich, Chinese Hell: The Peking Temple of Eighteen Hells and Chinese Conceptions of Hell (Tokyo, St. Augustin, Monumenta Serica, 1981), p. 67.

kill without compassion would be sent to Mount T'ai after death.[90] Another Buddhist text, the Liu-tu chi ching 六度集經 (The collected sutra of six forms of salvation), translated in the period of Three Kingdoms, also states that Mount T'ai was a horrible place where one accepted cruel punishments for sins.[91]

With the gradual spread of Buddhism in China, the indigenous conception of the afterlife was fundamentally changed. The conception of a hell as a place for the souls of the wicked was alien to early Chinese ideas about the afterlife. It was brought into China with Buddhism and reconciled with old Chinese notions.[92] Therefore, in the T'ang, both the Lord of Mount T'ai and Yama (Yen-lo 閻羅), the Lord of death and hell in Buddhism,[93] existed in the bureaucratic system of the netherworld. The ranks of Yama and the Lord of Mount T'ai were changed from time to time and from place to place.[94] Thus, we may say that approximately from the third century to the seventh century both the belief of Mount T'ai and the Buddhist ideas of hell persisted in the minds of Chinese. Chinese people seemed to have gradually accepted Buddhist ideas concerning purgatory without totally abandoning indigenous beliefs. Rather, the two notions were reconciled.

During the time of the late T'ang and Five Dynasties, the conception of the afterlife went through another change. As Ying-shih Yü writes, "the pre-Buddhist belief of the underworld was eventually replaced by the belief of 'Ten

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[90] J. Takakusu and W. Watanabe, eds., Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō (Tokyo, The Taishō Issai-kyō Kankō Kai, 1922-1933), T. 729; 17: 516, 518.

[91] J. Takakusu and W. Watanabe, eds., Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, T. 152; 7: 39-40.

[92] Anne Goodrich, Chinese Hells, p. 68.

[93] William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, eds., A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., 1937), p. 216.

[94] Hsiao Teng-fu 蕭登福, Tun-huang su-wen-hsüeh lun-ts'ung 敦煌俗文學論叢 [Collected articles about vernacular literature found in Tun-huang] (Taipei, Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan, 1988), pp. 197-198.

Hells' each governed by a 'king'(yama-rāja)."[95] According to Stephen Teiser's most recent research, which is mainly based on the Tun-huang manuscripts,[96] "we may with reasonable certainty date the existence of the Ten Kings as early as 654-664... But the first dated copy of the Scripture on the Ten Kings (Shih-wang ching 十王經) was produced in 908."[97] Therefore, by the Sung the conception of the afterlife was gradually transformed into the system of "Ten Hells."

In this system, the Lord of Mount T'ai, called the King of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan wang 泰山王), is assigned the position of the seventh king of the ten, in charge of decreeing retribution for each sinner.[98] Yama became the fifth King (Yen-lo wang 閻羅王). In this hierarchy, each king is equal, so the rank of the King of the Yama is not higher than that of King of Mount T'ai. Below these kings, there are seventy-two, or seventy-five courts (ssu 司), each having a judge presiding over them. From that time onward, the conception of the afterlife basically remained the same in China.

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[95]Ying-shih Yü, "'O Soul, Come Back'," p. 395.

[96]In the end of the nineteenth century, more than forty thousand scrolls [chüan 卷] of manuscripts, dated before the Sung, were found at the Cave of Mo-kao [Mo-kao k'u 莫高窟] in Tun-huang of the northwest China. Many of them are about Chinese religion and popular culture. This discovery provided the studies of this field much valuable information.

[97]The ideas of the Ten Hells were mixed not only with Buddhism but also Taoism and Confucianism. Stephen F. Teiser, "The Ten Kings of Hell and Popular Belief," presented in the International Conference on Popular Beliefs and Chinese Culture, Center for Chinese Studies, Taipei, April 25-28, 1993.

[98]Anne Goodrich, Chinese Hells, pp. 72-73.

Chapter Three

The Cult of Mount T'ai in the Ming

This chapter explores beliefs about Mount T'ai in the Ming, as an official cult, the God of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan chih shen 泰山之神), and as a popular cult, the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak (Tung-yüeh ta-ti 東嶽大帝, 東岳大帝). In its second part, it discusses the most popular female deity of Mount T'ai during the Ming, the Princess of Multi-colored Clouds (Pi-hsia yüan-chün 碧霞元君). This study will demonstrate that during the Ming the ideas of the state about the cult of Mount T'ai changed in reflection of the attitude of Emperor T'ai-tsu of the Ming toward popular religions. Through examining the origins and duties of these two popular deities, we will see how closely the development of popular religions was related to the state.

I. Worship of Mount Tai as a state belief: the cult of the God of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan chih shen 泰山之神)

During the Ming period, the worship of Mount T'ai basically followed the pattern of the previous dynasties--sending envoys on behalf of the emperor to make the sacrifices. The most drastic change was made in 1370 when the founder of the Ming, Emperor T'ai-tsu (r. 1368-1398), abolished the title of "'Emperor' of Mount T'ai," which had been granted by Emperor of Chen-tsung of the Sung in 1013.[99] The new official title of Mount T'ai--"the God of the Eastern Peak Mount T'ai"--from that time onward, was not changed by the Ming and Ch'ing governments. In the following imperial decree, T'ai-tsu explained why he decided to do this:

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[99] MS, chüan 49, p. 1284.

After the Yüan dynasty lost control [of China], groups of powerful men arose like the bubbling of a caldron. [Because] the land of the state was divided, the name and influence [of each ruler] on the people were different. (聲教不同) I rose from the level of commoners. With the intention of bringing peace to the people, I trained military officers and soldiers to pacify both the Chinese and barbarians, and unified all so that proper order could be perpetuated (大統以正永). But the way of governing must be based on the rites. By examining various canons of sacrifices, I realized that the titles of the five peaks, five hills, four seas, and four great rivers were begun due to the T'ang venerating and embellishing these titles (崇名美號). More titles were added by following dynasties. In my own opinion, I do not agree with them. Peaks, hills, seas, and great rivers are lofty mountains and vast waters, which have existed from the dawn of the world. Their brilliant and efficacious *ch'i* came together and became spirits, which must have received the mandate from the Lord on High. [Their] darkness and subtlety are unfathomable, how can the state add any titles to them? For defiling rites and being uncanonical, there is nothing more so than this....So that in this way these titles can properly reflect the relationship between human beings and spirits, according to the rites, one should employ a proper balance. With the idea of worshipping spirits according to the rites, I have arranged the titles of each spirit. [The spirits] of the five peaks are called the God of the Eastern Peak Mount T'ai, the God of the Southern Peak Mount Heng, the God of the Central Peak Mount Sung, the God of the Western Peak Mount Hua, and the God of the

> Northern Peak Mount Heng....Of the famous shrines in the world, those which do not contribute to people, and are not in accordance with canons of sacrifices are unofficial sacrifices. Officials must not sacrifice to them [in a trivial manner] in play. In the realm of brightness there are rites and music, and in the realm of darkness there are ghosts and deities. The principle is the same, and their roles should be correct.[100]

The emperor had this decree announced in the whole country, and had it inscribed and erected at each temple of the gods the above decree listed.[101]

This decree shows, to some degree, Ming T'ai-tsu's ideas about the God of Mount T'ai. Ming T'ai-tsu argued that the titles of "Emperor" given to the deities were all produced because of emperors' intention of "venerating titles (chung ming 崇名)." In the case of Mount T'ai worship, the Son of Heaven's granting the title of "emperor" to the deity of Mount T'ai implied that the Son of Heaven's power was beyond that of the spirits in the Dark Realm, where the God of Mount T'ai belonged. T'ai-tsu pointed out that the deity of Mount T'ai, just like the Son of Heaven, held a mandate from Heaven. Thus, the emperor and the God of Mount T'ai were the two high dignitaries with almost equal ranks. Both had been designated by Heaven. The Son of Heaven was expected to establish a sage government to assure harmony and virtue among his people, while the God of Mount T'ai had the responsibility of maintaining good order in the natural and extra-human world by his regulative influence.[102] In the human world, rites

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[100] Ming chi-li, chüan 14, 7b-9a.
[101] Ming chi-li, chüan 14, 9a.
[102] Edouard Chavannes, Le T'ai Chan, Chapter one, pp. 3-43. Laurence Thompson has translated part of Chapter one of this book into English. See Laurence Thompson's The Chinese Way in Religion (California, Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc., 1973), p. 180.

and music set the world in order, while in Dark Realm spirits maintained harmony. Theoretically speaking, even though the emperor and the God of Mount T'ai could cooperate for the welfare of people, that did not mean that the emperor could interfere in the independent jurisdiction of the God of Mount T'ai. But how could a relationship be maintained with those spirits in the realm of darkness? Formal links should be established at each level between the visible and invisible realms by means of prescribed regular and occasional rites.[103] In other words, dealing with deities ought to be based on the rites. These rites keep human beings and the spirits focused on their duties. For this reason, T'ai-tsu considered that the action by which the emperors conferred any titles on deities was simply violating this principle and against the rites.

The above quotation demonstrates Ming T'ai-tsu's view of the world. However, it would be naive for us to try to explain T'ai-tsu's intended sacrificial reforms with this single official decree. In my view T'ai-tsu's reforms can be analyzed from the perspective of the political environment of the early Ming. In building a new ruling system, T'ai-tsu realized that the task of governing a state might not be as easy as that of leading the military. What was most important was obtaining legitimation of his political power. In this regard, he first had to win the support and trust of the elite, most of whom were Confucians. Indeed, after conquering the Che-tung 浙東 base area in 1360, he recruited many Confucian advisers to help him achieve the goal of shaping an ideal regime.[104] To provide a general theoretical framework for the Ming ruling system, after he founded the Ming he and his advisers and high officials made "rites" highly

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[103]Romeyn Taylor, "Ming T'ai-tsu and the Gods of the Walls and Moats," Ming Studies (Spring, 1977), 3:37.

[104]John Dardess, Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983), p. 194.

concrete through the continual promulgation of codes of law and the constant issuing of regulations pertaining to etiquette and ceremonial standards.[105]As Edward Dreyer points out, Ming T'ai-tsu's ruling ideal was to show his people, especially Confucians, that his empire was a reincarnation of a proper Confucian empire.[106] This does not mean that Confucians played an important role in this new empire. In fact T'ai-tsu just valued Confucians for their administrative expertise, not for their function as ideal Confucian officials.[107] Nevertheless, through these codified laws and decrees the emperor, with the aim of gaining political legitimation from the Confucian elites, outwardly showed his appreciation of Confucianism and his aspirations to follow its spirit. The concept of rites is the pivotal idea of Confucianism, and the proper performance of sacrifices was the most important affair of the state as well as of society. Therefore, in 1370, just two years after founding of the Ming, T'ai-tsu's sacrificial reform in the name of returning to the principles of rites could be seen as an act to show his attachment to Confucianism in order to obtain support from the elite.

The second motivation of Ming T'ai-tsu could be from the threat of the title of "Emperor." T'ai-tsu was born of a common family. After numerous tough fights with rivals, eventually he ascended the throne. Two pieces of evidence indicate his suspicion and anxiety about other powerful competitors. First, in the first year of Hung-wu period (1368), T'ai-tsu abolished the title of "Celestial Master" (T'ien

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[105]John Dardess, Confucianism and Autocracy, p. 199. During the first three years of the reign of T'ai-tsu, he sacrificed to Confucius at the National University, asked Confucian officials to edit "Admonishments of Women" [nü-chieh 女誡] and books of rites, and ordered Confucians to teach the Classics and Histories to martial officials. Liu Chi 劉基 (c. 1311-1375) and Sung Lien 宋濂 (c. 1310-1381), two well-known Confucian scholars of that period, were invited by T'ai-tsu to help him govern the new empire. See MS, chüan 2, 128, pp. 19-25, 3777-3782, 3784-3788.

[106]Edward Dreyer, Early Ming China: A Political History, 1355-1435 (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1982), p. 69.

[107]Edward Dreyer, Early Ming China, p. 68.

shih 天師) possessed by the forty-second leader of the Cheng-i school of Taoism,[108] and gave him a new title, "Perfect Man" (Chen-jen 真人). T'ai-tsu explained that Heaven is the most honorable; how then could Heaven have teacher? It was, T'ai-tsu argued, indecent to use this as a title.[109] According to Anna Seidel's research, "Celestial Master" was the title of a politico-religious leader during the times when there was no able emperor.[110] Therefore, this title could be a threat for T'ai-tsu. The second example of T'ai-tsu's anxiety is the fact that he abolished the priministership in 1380 and said that his descendants, future emperors, should not restore this position. Any official who dared to plea for reestablishing this post would be sentenced to death, together with all his family members.[111] Thus, in my opinion, T'ai-tsu might not have tolerated any other "Emperor" or "Celestial Master" competing with him for power, even a deity, because he considered himself the only ruler in the country.

In the early Ming, many complicated sacrifices were reformed by the state in the name of returning to the original spirit of Confucianism.[112] The simplification of deities' numerous and elaborate titles was part of this policy. What is

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[108]Cheng-i 正一 and Ch'üan-chen 全真 were the two largest Taoist schools after the Yüan. Bascially the development of Cheng-i school followed the tradition of the Way of Celestial Master (T'ien-shih tao天師道), which was established by Chang Tao-ling 張道陵 of the Later Han. According to Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien 雲笈七籤 [The seven bamboo slips of the cloudy satchel], an important Taoist document, of the Northern Sung, the Lord of Lao (T'ai-shang lao-chün 太上老君) bestowed on Chang Tao-ling the title of "Celestial Master." His descendants inherit this title. See Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien, Chang Chün-fang 張君房 (Northern Sung), in Ssu-pu ts'ung-k'an ch'u-pien so-pen 四部叢刊初編縮本, chüan 28 (Taipei, Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1960?), vol. 32, 1a.

[109]MS, chüan 299, p. 7654; Sun Cheng-jung, Chu Yüan-chang hsi-nien yao-lu, p. 163.

[110]Anna Seidel, "The Image of the Perfect Ruler in Early Taoist Messianism: Lao Tzu and Li Hung," History of Religions 9 (1969-1970): 234.

[111]See Huang-ming tsu-hsün 皇明祖訓 [The teachings from Emperor T'ai-tsu of the Ming] (Ming), chüan 1 (microform, in special collection of Asian Library of University of British Columbia), 4a-4b.

[112] MS, chüan 49, p. 1284.

interesting, however, is that if we examine the state's sacrificial texts presented to the deity of Mount T'ai, we will find that the state's demands of the deity were significantly increased. The following analysis is mainly focused on the thirty-three sacrificial texts collected in the T'ai-shan chih (A history of Mount T'ai), written in the late Ming (1554) by Wang Tzu-ch'ing 汪子卿, to Mount T'ai. By examining these texts, I will attempt to show some characteristics of Ming beliefs about Mount T'ai.

Roughly speaking, there are two tendencies in these thirty-three texts. One is closely related to military affairs, a concern that only appeared in the early Ming. The second is mainly concerned with civil affairs. From the reign of Hsüan-te 宣德 (r. 1426-1435) on, the purposes of state worship of Mount T'ai were entirely for civil matters such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, famines, and plagues of locusts.

The first , military tendency, is explicitly shown in the following text. In 1395, T'ai-tsu decided to send troops to suppress rebellions in the Southwest. Before the troops were dispatched, the emperor sent officials to offer sacrifice to the God of Mount T'ai, asking him to pass on a message to Heaven. Here is the sacrificial text:

> In the past when the Yüan destiny was about to end, heroes rose all together. When people were suffering from the calamities of war, I also hastened forward with those powerful men, assembling soldiers to protect the people. Since the Lord of Heaven helped me in silence, and [the gods of] the mountains and rivers obtained the Order of Heaven [to help me], in the places in which their efficacious powers were shown, we attained victory....Military affairs are always serious. Since [this action is to be] carried out, [I]

> do not dare not to announce [it to you]. The reasons why I announce it are as follows: A hundred thousand soldiers have left and are away from their wives, children, and parents, and on the way some of them may suffer from hunger, toil and harmful miasmas. This is the difficulty of using troops. When troops enter an area, good people [of that area] are harmed. In the places where a large army has passed, [even] thistles and thorns will not grow, and people are frightened and suspicious, and harm comes to all. These are [the reasons] that I make this announcement. I only want a method for [dealing with] the plague, and am [trying to] transform the harmful mist into clear and cool air in order to exterminate the leaders of the rebels, so that good persons will be content in their occupations, and officers and soldiers return quickly, and each of them will be reunited with their families and support their parents. This is what I pray for. However, I do not dare to recklessly announce [this] to the Lord of Heaven. May you, God, examine it and pass on it [to the Lord of Heaven]. [This is] sincerely announced.[113]

In 1396, T'ai-tsu sent envoys to worship Mount T'ai before troops were sent to put down another uprising in the Southwest.[114] In 1406 and 1407, Ming Ch'eng-tsu (r. 1403-1422) also dispatched officials to worship the God of Mount T'ai in connection with a military campaign in Vietnam.[115]

These four texts were announced in the same pattern for the same purpose. The God of Mount T'ai was asked to transmit the emperor's prayers to Heaven

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[113]TSC, chüan 1.
[114]TSC, chüan 1.
[115]TSC, chüan 1.

in order to lead the military to victory.[116] In my view, these sacrifices were probably related to T'ai-tsu and Ch'eng-tsu's personal patronage of religious Taoism. During the early period of Ming T'ai-tsu's reign, he ordered officials to erect the "Genuine Pictures of the Five Peaks" (Wu-yüeh chen-hsing t'u 五嶽真形圖) at the temple of Mount T'ai, together with "the imperial decree abolishing the title of the Eastern Peak" (Yü-chih tung-yüeh ch'u feng-hao wen 御制東嶽除封號文).[117] The development of the idea of the "Genuine Pictures of the Five Peaks" closely related to the early Taoist practices.

By the fourth century at the latest, the Taoist idea of obtaining immortality by means of elixir was popular. Ko Hung 葛洪 (c. 283-363), the person to epitomize the thought of this Taoist school, said that San-huang wen 三皇文 (An account of the three ancient emperors) and Wu-yüeh chen-hsing t'u were the most two significant Taoist books for practitioners because they could be used to summon divinities to dispel the evil while they were practicing.[118] In religious Taoism, mountains were always the best place to cultivate the Way, but the dangers in mountains could harm Taoists and impede their cultivation.

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[116]From the sixth century to the T'ang (618-907), before going to war, the Son of Heaven had to worship Heaven and Earth, also making sacrifices to the gods of mountains and rivers for obtaining help, so that the troops could pass in safety. However, we should note that these rites were only practiced by rulers who led their troops in person, and the sacrifices were offered to the mountains through which the army passed, not specifically to Mount T'ai. In this sense, these sacrifices discussed above seem not to have a close link with this tradition. See Tu Yu 杜佑 (T'ang), T'ung Tien 通典 [Encyclopedic history of institutions], chüan 76 (Shanghai, Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1935), p. 411; Cheng Ch'iao 鄭樵 (Southern Sung), T'ung chih 通志 [Comprehensive history of institutions], chüan 14 (Shanghai, Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1935), p. 592.

[117]Sung Ssu-ho, T'ai-shan shu-chi, chüan 6, p. 348. This account does not show which was erected first.

[118]Ko Hung 葛洪 (Chin), Pao-p'u tzu nei-p'ien 抱朴子內篇 [The inner chapter of the Master embracing simplicity], chüan 19. See Pao-p'u tzu nei-p'ien chiao-shih 抱朴子內篇校釋 [A reconstructed edition of the inner chapter of "the Master embracing simplicity"], edited by a modern scholar Wang Ming 王明 (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1985), p. 366.

Many Taoists of that period believed that if they wanted to cultivate the Way (hsiu-tao 修道) in mountains without any attacks or interference from evil things or fierce animals, they had to wear "the Genuine Pictures of the Five Peaks."[119] These pictures became a type of talisman worn by many Taoist practitioners. Thus, in art of sincerely wearing the "Genuine Pictures of the Five Peaks" while in the mountains was required for any Taoist.[120] These pictures were later collected into the Ling-pao 靈寶 scriptures[121] and were kept in the Taoist Canon.[122]

Emperor T'ai-tsu and Emperor Ch'eng-tsu could have been influenced by this Taoist concept. Southwest China is famous for its dangerous and difficult mountain paths and fatal miasmas in mountains and jungles. As such, the first step to victory was to conquer the difficulty of passing safely through the mountains. Since Mount T'ai was perceived for long time as the head of the five peaks as well as of all mountains of China, the emperors probably believed that worshipping the chief of mountains--the God of Mount T'ai--might secure from Heaven the safe passage of troops elsewhere.

After the reign of Ch'eng-tsu (r. 1403-1422), most of the state's worship of Mount T'ai was for civil matters. The twenty-seven sacrificial texts, roughly dated from 1435 to 1537, collected in the History of Mount T'ai by Wang Tzu-ching,

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[119]Wang Ming, ed., Pao-p'u tzu nei-p'ien chiao-shih, chüan 17, p. 299.

[120]The Genuine Pictures of the Five Peaks were not only used in mountains, but could also be used at home. It was believed that if one worshipped the pictures sincerely at home, one would obtain the protection of the gods. See Pao-p'u tzu nei-p'ien chiao-shih, edited by Wang Ming, pp. 336-337.

[121]The Ling-pao scriptures were first systematically arranged by Lu Hsiu-ching 陸修靜 in 471. There were still many scriptures collected into the Ling-pao scriptures by later generations. Lots of these scriptures, especially those about liturgy and talismans, were used by different schools of Taoism in later periods. See Chung-kuo tao-chiao shih 中國道教史 [A history of Chinese Taoism], edited by Jen Chi-yü 任繼愈 (Shanghai, Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1990), p. 371

[122]Jen Chi-yü, ed., Chung-kuo tao-chiao shih, p. 126.

were all presented for solving civil problems, such as floods, droughts, earthquakes, the overflow of rivers, difficulties of water transport, plagues of locust and famines. The disaster areas discussed are not necessarily limited to the Shantung region. The following two examples are typical of these sacrificial texts. In 1452, because of floods along the south Shantung and north Huai River, the emperor sent officials to worship the God of Mount T'ai:

> At present, the river has overflowed from the south of Chi-ning subprefecture to the north of Huai River. People's houses and farmland have all been destroyed and flooded, and [our efforts to] rescue people from death are not sufficient everywhere; I genuinely feel sorrow in my heart. A ruler uses good government to benefit people and, gods send forth springs to moisten things. Both are decreed by Heaven. Today, springs cause the Huai and Ssu Rivers to overflow. The calamities extend to both the public and the private realms. Who should be responsible for this? Certainly it resulted from my lack of virtue, but how can you God alone escape [from the responsibility]? You must cause springs to come up properly, and then people can obtain benefit from them, and not be troubled. Then they may get their own work, looking up or down without disgrace and shame. I specially await your response (專候感通) in order to assuage my concerns. [This is] sincerely announced.[123]

In 1485, an imperial envoy went to offer sacrifice to the God of Mount T'ai because of several earthquakes in the country. The sacrificial text states the

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[123]TSC, chüan 1.

following:

> Since the beginning of the world you gods have commanded the land of the East, stirring up clouds to make rain, which greatly nourishes all creatures. Your efficacy and intelligence are obvious, and people are dependent on them. Hence in the sacrificial canons of successive dynasties, worship of you has only been augmented. But some time between the second and the third month of this year, there were several earthquakes. It is thought that human affairs are not in good order, and the God of river is insecure and unpeaceful.[124] When the memorial sent from the official guarding [that area] arrived, I felt worry and fear, and prepared incense and offerings and ordered officials to sacrifice [to you].[125]

From these two texts, we note that the state's prayers to the God of Mount T'ai for civil matters were based on two assumptions. The first was that since Mount T'ai was located in the East, where all nature begins, it had long been believed that the God of Mount T'ai must have the power to control nature. The second was that because Mount T'ai was thought to be capable of making clouds to bring rain to benefit the world,[126] people believed that the God of Mount T'ai was responsible for floods or droughts.

In ancient times, when encountering floods or droughts, the state would

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[124]Here the god of river symbolically represents earth.
[125]TSC, chüan 1.
[126]Ying Shao 應劭 (Later Han), Feng-su t'ung-i 風俗通義 [A general meaning of customs], chüan 10. See Feng-su t'ung-i chiao-chu 風俗通義校注 [A reconstructed edition of a "general meaning of customs"], edited by Wang Li-ch'i 王利器 (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1981), p. 44.

sacrifice to Heaven, Earth, the deities of Rain and Wind, and the deities of famous mountains and rivers. These sacrifices were continuously practiced by successive dynasties.[127] The worship of Mount T'ai should have been just one of the sacrificial objects of the state. However, during the Ming, the God of Mount T'ai was specifically said to have responsibility for floods and droughts, and increasingly his duties were extended to cover almost all disharmonies of nature--earthquakes, famines, and plagues of locust.[128] Several "accounts of the deity's efficacy" (ling-yen chi 靈驗記) written by local officials, and steles erected by the state to show his miracles,[129] imply that the God of Mount T'ai did not let the state and the people down and received appreciation from them. It was because of this reciprocal relationship that the Ming state maintained the worship of this deity.

Before the Ming, most official worship of Mount T'ai was not for specific requests. Most of the time, the officials prayed to the God of Mount T'ai for wind and rain in proper quantities and at proper times (feng-t'iao yü-shun 風調雨順) in order to keep the state prosperous and the people at peace (kuo-t'ai min-an 國泰民安).[130] By examining the sacrificial texts of the Ming, we can conclude that these traditional duties of the God of Mount T'ai later were greatly amplified and made more detailed. With this change, the personification of this deity gradually intensified. The deity was expected to perform miracles to fulfill the state's wishes. If he did not respond with efficacy, he could hardly escape from being accused of dereliction of duty. In this sense, we may conclude that the Ming attitude toward the deity of Mount T'ai was different from those of the

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[127]WHTK, chüan 77, pp. 705-712; Hsü-t'ung tien 續通典 [A continuation of the Encyclopedic History of Institutions] (Ch'ing), chüan 48 (Shanghai, Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1935), p. 1413.
[128]TSC, chüan 1.
[129]TSC, chüan 1.
[130]TSC, chüan 1.

past. This deity as an object of state worship in the Ming was changed into a type of deity whose functions were not much different from those of other popular gods.

II. Worship of Mount T'ai as a popular belief: the cult of Tung-yüeh ta-ti 東嶽大帝, 東岳大帝 (The Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak)[131]

As is discussed in Chapter Two, in the eyes of the common people, Tung-yüeh ta-ti, originally the Lord of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan fu-chün 泰山府君), eventually took over the affairs of the netherworld. In the Ming, the most popular temples of this cult were in Peking and the home of this cult, Mount T'ai, both under the strong patronage of the state.

It is believed that a Tung-yüeh temple was erected in Peking some time between 1312 to 1320, because the emperor did not like to make a long trip to worship at Mount T'ai.[132] During the Ming period it became a Taoist temple with Taoists residing there.[133] Emperor Ying-tsung of the Ming (r. 1436-1449) had it

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[131]When the title Tung-yüeh ta-ti first appeared in the Chinese society remains uncertain. But we know that Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung bestowed the honorific title of "emperor" on the deity of Mount T'ai in early eleventh century. Before then, people usually called him the Lord of Mount T'ai instead of the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak. Thus, I suggest that the title of Tung-yüeh ta-ti might not have been used by the people before the Sung. As we have discussed earlier, from the T'ang on the state changed the title of the deity of Mount T'ai from time to time. In the Ming, Emperor T'ai-tsu even abolished the title of Emperor of Mount T'ai. The common people of late imperial China still, however, liked to call this deity Tung-yüeh ta-ti. For this reason, I have decided to use this title in discussing the popular cult of this deity.

[132]Liu T'ung 劉侗, and Yü I-cheng 于奕正 (Ming), Ti-ching ching-wu lüeh 帝京景物略 [A sketch of the prospects of Capital Peking], chüan 2 (reprinted in Peking, Ku-chi ch'u-pan-she, 1980), p. 64; Anne Goodrich, The Peking Temple of the Eastern Peak, p. 16.

[133]It is hard to answer when the God of Mount T'ai started to be identified as Taoist. Even though Valerie Hansen says, in her study of popular religions of the Southern Sung, that "characterizing the cult of the God of the Eastern Peak is especially difficult", she still classifies him, probably with the identification of later times, into the category of Taoism. Hansen's speculation could be correct. According to her case study in Hu-chou prefecture, most temples of the Eastern

renovated and extended, and also had icons of the seventy-two judges of the underworld set up in the two corridors of this temple. Here is an interesting point to note. As we discussed earlier, the state cult of Mount T'ai began in ancient times. According to all official records concerning this belief that I can find, the duties of God of Mount T'ai as a state cult never covered or overlapped with those of God of Mount T'ai in popular belief, which were always connected with the affairs of underworld. In the beginning the state intended the Peking temple of the Eastern Peak to play the role of a branch of its home temple in Mount T'ai, but later this function was mixed with the popular ideas about the deity.[134] The turning point, in my view, was the fact that Emperor Ying-tsung had the depictions of purgatory set in this official temple.[135] Since then its primary role as a place for state cult gradually disappeared, and in late imperial China it became only one of numerous temples in this deity's honor.

Each first and fifteenth day of lunar month many persons, especially women, went to make offerings to this deity. On his birthday, the twenty-eighth day of the third month, a bustling temple fair always attracted lots of people. The God would be led out of the temple by devotees to parade in Peking city. This parade was the highlight of his birthday celebration. Along the roads this deity traveled a huge number of persons waited to enjoy the festival.[136]

The temple of Tai (Tai miao 岱廟) on Mount T'ai was a significant place

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Peak there were built in the reigns of Emperor Chen-tsung (r. 998-1022) and Hui-tsung of the Sung (r. 1101-1125). As we know, these two emperors favored Taoism very much. Thus, the popular cult of God of Mount T'ai could have been incorporated into the Taoist pantheon during this period. See Valerie Hansen, Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276 (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 181, 183-200.

[134]According to Anna Goodrich's book, The Peking Temple of the Eastern Peak, in the Republican period the duties of this deity mainly concerned matters of underworld.

[135]Liu T'ung and Yü I-cheng, Ti-ching ching-wu lüeh, chüan 2, p. 64.

[136]Liu T'ung and Yü I-cheng, Ti-ching ching-wu lüeh, chüan 2, p. 64.

where the state held sacrificial ceremonies to worship Mount T'ai.[137] The present temple was first built in the Sung and renovated in the Ming-Ch'ing period.[138] Probably for the reason of its significance to the state, the temples of Tung-yüeh on Mount T'ai and in Peking were built according to the highest standard of imperial temples. Thus, the structure of the temple is quite similar to the imperial palace in Peking.[139] Because Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung bestowed on the God of Mount T'ai the title of "Emperor," the temple where the "emperor" of Mount T'ai resided then was built to be palace-like. During the period of the Ming, even though Emperor T'ai-tsu of the Ming abolished the title of "Emperor" of the God of Mount of T'ai, the temple of Mount T'ai was still preserved and maintained regularly by the state.[140] This practice continued during the Ch'ing. The Ch'ing continued to send sacrificial officials to pray for civil matters to the God of Mount T'ai. Thus, the maintenance of the Tung-yüeh temple was always emphasized.

The cult of Tung-yüeh was a two-faceted belief, one facet as an official cult, the other a popular cult. On the one hand, the popularity of this cult was supported by regular imperial sacrifices. On the other hand, it gained from the worship of the common people. However, even though the deity of Mount T'ai was worshipped from ancient times, and survived the influence of Buddhism, during the Ming-Ch'ing period his ascendancy was successfully challenged by Chinese indigenous religion in the form of a female deity, Pi-hsia yüan-chün.

137TS, chüan 9, 1a.
138TS, chüan 9, 3a; Daimiao, p. 117.
139TS, chüan 9, 2b; Hsiao Hsieh-chung 蕭協中 (Ming), T'ai-shan hsiao-shih 泰山小史 [A short history of Mount T'ai], see Hsin-k'o t'ai-shan hsiao-shih 新刻泰山小史 [A short history of Mount T'ai newly engraved, henceforth, TSHS], edited by Chao Hsin-ju趙新儒 (reprinted in Taipei, 1987, originally published in Shantung, 1932), p. 136; Daimiao, pp. 5-6.
140TS, chüan 9, 7a, 8a, 9b, 10b.

III. The Cult of Pi-hsia Yüan-chün 碧霞元君 (The Princess of Multi-colored Clouds)

The cult of Pi-hsia yüan-chün started to spread from the early eleventh century after Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung (r. 998-1022) conferred on this female divinity the title of "T'ien-hsien yü-nü pi-hsia yüan-chün 天仙玉女碧霞元君" (Heavenly Immortal Jade Maiden, the Princess of Multi-colored Clouds) and built a Taoist temple, the Chao-chen kuan 昭真觀, for her at the summit of Mount T'ai. Not surprisingly, many Chinese liked to call her T'ai-shan niang-niang 泰山娘娘 (Our Lady of Mount T'ai).[141]

From the mid-Ming onward, the cult of this goddess became increasingly popular in North China. In the minds of people of North China in general and of Shantung Peninsula and the region of Peking in particular, the popularity of Pi-hsia yüan-chün was greater than that of any other divinity. This phenomenon is shown in a Ch'ing literatus' account of Mount T'ai. He said, "Making a pilgrimage to Mount T'ai, those pious people from far away always went to sacrifice Pi-hsia yüan-chün first, and then to other divinities."[142] In and around

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[141]Pi-hsia yüan-chün was not the exclusive title of T'ai-shan niang-niang. According to Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng 古今圖書集成 [A complete collection of books and illustrations from antiquity to the present, vol. 491], Emperor Ssu-tsung of the Ming (r. 1628-1644) conferred the title of "Pi-hsia yüan-chün" on Ma-tsu 媽祖 [Queen of Heaven]. Henri Maspero treats Ma-tsu, who holds the same title as T'ai-shan niang-niang, as her incarnation in Fukien. However, even though some of Ma-tsu's functions are similar to those of Pi-hsia yüan-chün, I do not think this allows us to conclude that Ma-tsu was Pi-hsia yüan-chün. See Henri Maspero, Taoism and Chinese Religion, p. 164.

[142]Nieh Hsü 聶敘 (Ch'ing), T'ai-shan tao-li chi 泰山道里記 [A record of the geography of Mount T'ai] (Taipei, Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan she, 1968), pp. 80-81. According to the modern scholar Lo Hsiang-lin 羅香林, this phenomenon still could be seen during the Republican period. See Lo Hsiang-lin's "Pi-hsia yüan-chün碧霞元君" in Min-su-hsüeh lun-ts'ung 民俗學論叢 [Collected works of folklore], edited by Lo Hsiang-lin (Taipei, Chuan-chi wen-hsüeh, 1968, originally written in 1929), vol. 19, p. 5.

Peking, according to Susan Naquin's study, there were two dozen temples to Pi-hsia yüan-chün during late Ming.[143] On the birthday of Pi-hsia, the eighteenth day of the fourth month of the lunar calendar, a great number of people, especially women, enjoyed participating in this celebration. Because of the attraction of this flourishing cult, it gradually became part of the lives of people in these areas.[144]

With her growing popularity, her roles, responsibilities and powers increased. Later she became the protectress of the state and the people, especially women and children. Two female assistants always accompanied her--Tzu-sun niang-niang 子孫娘娘 (Lady of Children), and Yen-kuang niang-niang 眼光娘娘 (Lady of Eyesight). In addition, there were six secondary female divinities who were specialists in matters related to childbirth and the care of infants and children. The Princess, her two constant assistants, and her six followers, made up a group, which was usually called Chiu niang-niang 九娘娘 (the Nine Ladies), for whom there are many temples called Niang-niang miao 娘娘廟 (the Temple of the Niang-niang).[145]

Though the cult of Pi-hsia began in the eleventh century, it was not until the Ming that its popularity reached its peak, surpassing even that of the cult of Tung-yüeh. A stele inscription written by an official named Wang Hsi-chüeh 王錫爵 (c. 1534-1610) shows this popularity:

> Since the palace of Pi-hsia was erected, those who made a pilgrimage to the Eastern Peak have all been people

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[143]Susan Naquin, "The Peking Pilgrimage to Miao-feng Shan: Religious Organizations and Sacred Site," in Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China, p. 337.
[144]Liu T'ung & Yü I-cheng, T'i-ching ching-wu lüeh, chüan 3, p. 133.
[145]Susan Naquin, "The Peking Pilgrimage to Miao-feng Shan: Religious Organizations and Sacred Site," p. 335; Henri Maspero, Taoism and Chinese Religion, p. 165.

[worshipping] Pi-hsia. Those from near by [could be from] several hundred *li* [away], and those from a distant place [could be from] several thousand *li* [away]. Each year there are several hundred thousand people making offerings at the summit of the Peak. The gold and cash that people offer is several hundred thousand pieces. The incense fire of Pi-hsia has been regarded more as prosperous than those of [the cults] of other Peaks.[146]

As her efficacious powers grew, the duties of Pi-hsia yüan-chün were extended. A stele of the temple of Tung-yüeh Pi-hsia, erected by the government in late Ming, shows that people offering sacrifices to Pi-hsia yüan-chün believed that Yüan-chün could bring benefit to the worshipper, and fulfill their prayers--the poor for wealth, the ill for health, peasants for the harvest, businessmen for financial benefit, the newly-born for longevity, and people without descendants for heirs.[147]

In the Ming, this female deity not only attracted the popular people but was also strongly supported by the state. Emperor Hung-chih (r. 1488-1505) once sent an eunuch to make a sacrifice to Pi-hsia yüan-chün.[148] In the eleventh year of Chia-ching 嘉靖 (r. 1522-1566), the Empress Dowager, without an heir, sent officials to pray to Pi-hsia yüan-chün.[149] Because of this patronage and partly because the title of Pi-hsia yüan-chün was conferred by the state, and because Pi-hsia yüan-chün was overwhelmingly supported by

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[146]Wang Hsi-chüeh 王錫爵 (Ming), "Tung-yüeh pi-hsia kung pei 東岳碧霞宮碑," [A stele inscription from the Pi-hsia temple of the Eastern Peak] in T'ai-shan ts'ung-shu 泰山叢書 [Collected works about Mount T'ai], edited by Wang Chieh-fan 王介藩 (Shantung, Ch'ü-fu shih-fan ta-hsüeh, 1989), vol. 11. There is no information about whether this stele is still extant.
[147]Wang Hsi-chüeh, "Tung-yüeh pi-hsia kung pei."
[148]TSC, chüan 2.
[149]TSC, chüan 2.

the people,[150] Pi-hsia, unlike some other deities who rose from the bottom of society, seemed not to have gone through the tough process of official recognition.[151] For example, the temple of Pi-hsia yüan-chün on Mount T'ai was always built and maintained by the state. In the Chia-ching period the emperor commanded that a temple for Pi-hsia be rebuilt.[152] It was an impressive temple. The new temple was reconstructed with solid and expensive materials: the roof was made of iron, and the roof beams were made of copper.[153] This firm and magnificent temple built by the state demonstrated that the state attached great importance to this cult, and thereby reconfirmed the status of the Pi-hsia cult.

During the Ming, many myths about the origin of Pi-hsia circulated. By examining these legends, we will see how the attributes of this deity changed, reflecting the expectations of commoners about her. Of the many legends concerning Pi-hsia yüan-chün, three theories of her background were most common. These are: first, the theory that she was the daughter of the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak, second, that she was one of the seven women whom Yellow Emperor sent to welcome Hsi k'un-lun chen-jen 西崑崙真人 (the Perfect man of West K'un-lun), and third, that she was originally a commoner.

1. The theory that she was the daughter of the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak

In the minds of many people in North China, Pi-hsia yüan-chün was

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150Further detailed discussion about the influence of the Pi-hsia cult's popularity on local society and the response of local officials and elites will be explored in Chapter Four.

151As for the process of official recognition of popular deities, see Valerie Hansen, Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276, chapter four.

152TSC, chüan 2.

153Wang Hsi-chüeh, "Tung-yüeh pi-hsia kung pei."

originally the daughter of the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak; she was named Yü-nü 玉女 (Jade Maiden), who was the Lady Jade Maiden at the Peace Summit (T'ai-ping ting 太平頂) of the Eastern Peak and lived on Mount T'ai with her father.[154] While Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung was making the Feng and Sang sacrifices at Mount T'ai in 1008, the Jade Maiden was given the title of "Pi-hsia yüan-chün" by the emperor. Here is Ma Tuan-lin's 馬端臨 (c. 1254-1323) account:

> The Jade Maiden pool at Mount T'ai was located at the Peace Summit. Beside the pool, there was a stone statue. The source of the water was always blocked and so the water was muddy. [During the time of Sung Chen-tsung's making] the Feng and Shan sacrifices at Mount T'ai, no sooner did the advance troops set up camp than the water was gushing out. When the emperor ascended Mount T'ai, the water flowed more fully. Its clearness and coldness were apparent, and it tasted very sweet. The Commissioner for Ceremonies (經度制置使), Wang Ch'in-jo, requested [permission from the Emperor] to deepen this pool. Since the statue had been seriously damaged, the emperor ordered a Capital Security Officer (皇城使) Liu Cheng-kuei to replace it with jade. After it was completed, the emperor and his close advisors came to observe it. The emperor sent an official to grind a stone to be a niche [for this image] and put it in the original place. [The emperor] ordered Ch'ing-jo to offer a sacrifice, and

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154 Hsin-k'o ch'u-hsiang tseng-pu sou-shen chi 新刻出像增補搜神記 [A newly engraved, with illustrations, supplementary on "Investigations into the divine"] (Ming), in Hsü tao-tsang 續道藏 [The continuation of the Taoist Canon], vol. 1105, HY 50840, 18b-19a.

himself made a record of this.[155]

At that time, the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak, his wife, his five sons and one daughter were given prestigious titles. This statement indicates that belief in the Jade Maiden, the daughter of the God of Mount T'ai, may have existed before Emperor Chen-tsung's granting her an official title.

2. The theory that she was one of the seven women whom the Yellow Emperor sent to welcome Perfect man of West K'un-lun (Hsi k'un-lun chen-jen 西崑崙真人)[156]

Pi-hsia yüan-chün was one of these seven women. She practiced the Way and obtained enlightenment at Mount T'ai. Kao Hui 高晦, a late Ming official, in his textual research on the background of the Jade Maiden, argues:

> ... Not until then did I read Li O's (李諤) Yao-ch'ih chi (瑤池記) [the Record of Turquoise Pond], which said that the Yellow Emperor had the temple of the Eastern Peak (岱嶽觀) built. He once ordered seven maidens in cloudy hats and feather dresses to cultivate the incense fires of Mount T'ai to welcome the Perfect man of West K'un-lun. Examining this, I realized that Jade Maiden must be one of these seven women who cultivated [the Way] and became an immortal. For this reason, later generations worshipped her at Mount T'ai. In the period of the Sung and the Yüan, people built a niche for the statue of her or built the temple for her, and [her power] was more subtle. It is especially since our

155WHTK, chüan 90, p. 823.
156Who the perfect man of West K'un-lun was is unclear.

dynasty [Ming] rebuilt the temple, that her efficacy has become more manifest.[157]

Most of the accounts which support this theory simply cited Li O's 李諤 (d. 598?) statement as evidence.[158] In other words, they rely on the same source.

In religious Taoism, the "Turquoise Pond" is always associated with the Queen Mother of the West (Hsi wang mu 西王母), who was the highest female deity in the pantheon of the religious Taoism during the T'ang. This goddess dwelled on the Mount K'un-lun (K'un-lun shan 崑崙山), which was her paradise, a place where heaven and earth connect. The Turquoise Pond was a pool where the divine and human beings can meet. It was believed that there were a number of "jade maidens," who carried the Queen Mother's messages, served the peaches of immortality, and entertained guests with performances.[159] Legends of the Queen Mother of the West can be easily seen in literary works of the T'ang.[160] Li O was a person of late sixth century, so his description could be related to the legends about the Queen Mother of the West. The notion of "seven maidens" sent by Yellow Emperor might be drawn from the mythology of "jade maidens," the assistants of the Queen Mother. Not surprisingly Kao Hui affirmed that the Heavenly Immortal "Jade Maiden", the

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157Kao Hui 高誨 (Ming), "Yü-nü k'ao-lüeh玉女考略," [A brief examination of the Jade Maiden], in TS, chüan 9, 26a-27b.

158There are several accounts which rely on this theory. They are: Hsieh Chao-chih's 謝肇淛 (Ming) Teng tai-chi 登岱記 [An account of climbing to Mount T'ai]; Wang Ssu-jen's 王思任 (Ch'ing) T'ai-shan chi 泰山記 [An account of Mount T'ai]; Wen Hsiang-feng's 文翔鳳 (Ming) Teng t'ai-shan chi 登泰山記 [An account of climbing to Mount T'ai]. These are quoted by Lo Hsiang-lin 羅香林 in his article, "Pi-hsia Yüan-chün," pp. 7-8.

159Suzanne Cahill, Transcendence & Divine Passion: The Queen Mother of the West in Medieval China (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1993), chapter two and three.

160See Suzanne Cahill's book, Transcendence & Divine Passion. Her research is mainly based on the literature of the T'ang.

Princess of Multi-colored Clouds was one of the seven maidens.

In addition, as Kao Hui mentions in the above quotation, Pi-hsia yüan-chün's association with the Yellow Emperor and with the Perfect man were related to the notion of immortality in Taoism. During the Han, there was a story that Yellow Emperor did not really die but flew to Heaven from Mount T'ai.[161] In other words, the Yellow Emperor became an immortal. In Taoism, the term "perfect man" refers to those who cultivate the Way, obtain enlightenment and finally ascend to Heaven to be an immortal. This is the larger context of Kao Hui's suggestion that Pi-hsia also became an immortal.

3. The theory that she was a common woman

This legend says that Pi-hsia yüan-chün was a commoner's daughter, was taught by certain divinities, and finally became an immortal through practicing the Way. Wang Chih-kang 王之剛, an official of the Lung-ch'ing 隆慶 (r. 1567-1572) period, wrote a biography of the Jade Maiden. He cites the Yü-nü chuan 玉女傳 (the Scroll of Jade Maiden), the author and the date of which are unknown:

> In the time of Emperor Ming of the Later Han, in the Feng-fu county of the prefecture of Sun-ning in the land of the Western Ox (西牛國), the good man Shih Shou-tao's (石守道) wife, whose family name was Chin (金), delivered a daughter, whose name was Yü-yeh (玉葉), at the *tzu* hour[162] of the eighteenth day of the fourth month of the seventh year of Chung-yüan reign.[163] [Yü-yeh] was

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161 Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Shih-chi, chüan 12, p. 473.

61 *Tzu* hour (tzu-shih 子時) is equivalent to the two hours from eleven p.m to one a.m.

163 There is no Chung-yüan reign in Chinese history.

> good-looking and intelligent. At the age of three, she understood the basic principles of human relations. At the age of seven, she heard the teachings and later once made obeisance to Hsi wang-mu (the Queen Mother of the West). When she was fourteen, suddenly she was influenced by the teachings of the Queen Mother of the West, and desired to enter the mountain. Under the guidance of senior immortal Ts'ao, she entered Yellow Flower Cave (黃花洞) at Mount T'ien-k'ung (天空山) to practice [the Way]. Mount T'ien-k'ung was probably Mount T'ai, and the Cave was the place of the stone house. Three years later, the elixir of life was completed [by her]. Her essence rose and was manifested, and then she lived on Mount T'ai. There is, therefore, the Jade Maiden Goddess at Mount T'ai. And there is a pond named Jade Maiden at the summit, and a stone statue of Jade Maiden beside the pond.[164]

From this quotation, we may suggest that this theory may have been fabricated after the eleventh century. First, the name of the county Feng-fu, in history, first appeared in the reign of Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung (r. 998-1022). Secondly, Shih Shou-tao 石守道 (c. 1005-1045),[165] who was father of Pi-hsia yüan-chün in this theory, was an important thinker around period of Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung. He, a native of Feng-fu county 奉符縣, once gave lectures in the area of Mount T'ai.[166] From these two hints, it is sufficient to say that this version of the origin of Pi-hsia yüan-chün could have not have

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164 TS, chüan 9, 32b-34a.

165 "Shou-tao" is the style name of Shih Chieh 石介.

166 Shih Chieh 石介 (Sung), Tsu-lai-shih hsien-sheng wen-chi 徂徠石先生文集 [The collected works of Shih Chieh] (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1984), p. 1.

appeared before the eleventh century. Besides, the Land of the Western Ox (Hsi-niü kuo 西牛國) could refer to Apara-godānīya (Hsi-niü ho chou 西牛賀洲), one of the four inhabited continents of every universe (ssu-chou 四洲, Catur-dvīpa) in Buddhism,[167] which shows that story was drawn from both Chinese and Buddhist sources. A similar account can be seen in Niang-niang pao-chüan 娘娘寶卷 (the precious Volume of Our Lady), which was circulated in the sixteenth century. In the opening scripture (K'ai ching chi 開經偈), we are told that Pi-hsia yüan-chün was the daughter of the Chin family in the land of the Western Ox. She started to maintain a vegetarian diet at the age of three, and was enlightened at the age of seven. The emperor heard about her wisdom and called her into the palace. However, she did not want to stay in the palace, but rather went to Mount T'ai to practice sincerely for thirty-two years. Finally she gained enlightenment and mighty spiritual powers. The Jade Emperor heard of her painstaking efforts and decided to promote her to the position of Heavenly Immortal Jade Maiden of Mount T'ai, Pi-hsia yüan-chün.[168]

From the perspective of the changing legends about Pi-hsia yüan-chün, we can examine the development of the popular ideas about this female divinity. If we assume that the background and experience of divinities were built on legends created by human beings, and that legends varied from time to time and from place to place, then as the period and place changed, so did the legends and their interpretations. For this reason, it becomes less significant where Pi-hsia yüan-chün came from. Rather, how the legends were formed in

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[167]Ting Fu-pao 丁福保, Fo-hsüeh ta-tz'u-tien 佛學大辭典 [Encyclopedia of Buddhism] (Taipei, Hsin-wen-feng shu-chü, 1961), p. 774; A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, edited by William E. Soothill and Lewis Hodous (London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1937), p. 178.

[168]Ling-ying t'ai-shan niang-niang pao-chüan 靈應泰山娘娘寶卷 [The precious volume of our efficacious Lady of Mount T'ai], the opening scripture (personal collection).

different periods is more important. Thus, when examining the legends of divinities, we should consider the specific chronological historical context in which each legend was formed.

Chronologically speaking, among these three theories the theory that identifies Yüan-chün as the daughter of the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak appeared earliest. Stories about the daughter of Mount T'ai have existed since the third and fourth centuries.[169] After Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung honored her and built a Taoist temple for her, the daughter of Mount T'ai started to merge with the title of Pi-hsia yüan-chün. From that time, she became a Taoist female divinity. What interests me most is why the emperor built a temple for her when she had not yet attained significant status, and why the temple was Taoist instead of Buddhist. To get a better understanding of these questions, we should go back to the historical context of this incident. In 1007, three years after the Sung fought a war with the Khitans and signed the famous the Shan-yüan treaty with them,[170] Wang Ch'in-jo 王欽若, administrator of the Bureau of Military Affairs (Chih shu-mi yüan-shih 知樞密院事) and also a practicing Taoist, suggested to Emperor Chen-tsung that he perform the Feng and Shan sacrifices as a sign of his power. He made a further suggestion:

> "In order to make Feng and Shan sacrifices, there should be auspicious signs given by heaven." He also said, "Heaven-sent

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[169]Kan Pao 干寶 (Chin), Sou-shen chi 搜神記 [Investigations into the divine], chüan 4 (Taipei, Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1962), p. 27.

[170]The Sung signed the Shan-yüan treaty with the Khitans in 1004. This treaty, in contrast to others in the past signed by Chinese empire with foreign countries, was agreed to by the Sung empire in fear of the increasingly strong military power of the Khitans. In this treaty, the Sung promised to pay annually 100,000 taels of silver, and 200,000 rolls of silk to the Khitans. See Li T'ao 李燾 (Sung), Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien 續資治通鑑長編 [Long draft of a continuation of the "Comprehensive mirror for aid in government," henceforth, HTTCCP], chüan 58, (Taipei, Shih-chieh shu-chü, 1960), p. 16.

auspices definitely can be fabricated by human beings. Does your majesty think that there are really such things as the Ho-t'u (河圖) and the Lo shu (洛書)[171]? They were made by sages simply in order to educate people about the way of the gods." [172]

The emperor thought about this for a long time and then consented to his suggestion.

As we have noted above about the Feng and Shan sacrifices, one of the purposes of these sacrifices was to enhance the emperor's prestige and increase his political power. Emperor Ch'en-tsung's making Feng and Shan sacrifices would show the Chinese and the Khitans that Sung China was still the center of the world. Since auspicious signs were needed to appear before the Feng and Shan sacrifices could be performed, the two high officials who favored Taoism the most, Wang Ch'in-jo and Ting Wei 丁謂, publicly encouraged and secretly ordered a large number of people to proclaim their discovery of auspicious signs given by heaven. At the same time, they also sanctioned applications for building temples to popular deities.[173] Given these historical circumstances, it becomes comprehensible that Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung and Wang Ch'in-jo considered the revival of the Jade Maiden pool as an auspicious sign and built a Taoist temple to her. Also in this light, Pi-hsia

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[171]The *Ho-tu* and *Lo-shu* were legendary sources, which contained the origins of the I-ching 易經 [the Book of Change] and "Hung-fan洪範." Later, Taoists claimed that these two sources were originally classics of Taoism. See Tsung-chiao tz'u-tien 宗教詞典 [A dictionary of religions], edited by Jen Chi-yü 任繼愈 (reprinted in Taipei, Po-yüan t'u-shu kung-ssu, 1992), pp. 523-524.

[172]WHTK, chüan 84, pp. 769-770; Pi Yüan畢沅 (Ch'ing) et al., Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien 續資治通鑑 [A continuation of the comprehensive mirror for aid in government, henceforth, HTTC], chüan 27, (Peking, Chung-hua shu-chü, 1957), p. 606.

[173]SS, chüan 8, 283, pp. 135-136, 9561, 9563, 9571; HTTC, chüan 27, pp. 608-609, 614; HTTCCP, chüan 68, pp. 4, 10-11.

yüan-chün could be seen as a product of the connection of a legend--the daughter of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan nü 泰山女)--with this specific historical context. After this point, the cult of Pi-hsia yüan-chün gradually spread and prospered.

As noted above, the story of Pi-hsia as the daughter of Mount T'ai circulated for several centuries. Despite this, the theory of Pi-hsia as a common woman appeared and became popular during the Ming dynasty, and was employed in the Niang-niang pao-chüan. I think that we can explain this phenomenon in two ways. After Neo-Confucianism increasingly became dominant in late imperial China, it placed many social and ethical constraints on Chinese women. The hold of this social and ethical code became increasingly strong in Ming and Ch'ing periods. The social life of women, especially those in the countryside, was not colorful. Going to temples for praying for blessings was one of the few social activities available to women outside the home. In the temples, women focused on female deities. Because most of the functions of female divinities were related to the matters of women and children, goddesses became good objects for women to pray to. Perhaps because they were of the same sex, women felt female divinities would understand their problems best; female deities were an outlet for their secrets, worries, or troubles. Moreover, if this efficacious goddess was once a common girl like any other, her approachability would even more easily win her the hearts of women. They thus had a common bond. This belief that a divinity was once a commoner was, in fact, common in the popular religions of late Ming and Ch'ing. For several reasons, then the example of Pi-hsia yüan-chün, a common person who become divine (fan-jen ch'eng-sheng 凡人成聖), encouraged belief in this cult.[174]

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[174] Niang-niang pao-chüan, chapter 7.

IV. Conclusion

In the Ming, Tung-yüeh ta-ti and Pi-hsia yüan-chün were the two most popular divinities on Mount T'ai. Each spring and winter countless pilgrims come from all directions. In order to reflect this popularity, the Ming government erected a stele at the Palace of Pi-hsia yüan-chün. It stated that the temple of Tung-yüeh and that of Pi-hsia should together accept offerings forever.[175] For this reason, these two deities are certainly representative cases for an understanding of popular beliefs about Mount T'ai in the Ming.

Our examination of the origins of these two deities shows that the developments of the cults were closely linked with the changes of popular culture and the attitudes of the state. As such the origin of Tung-yüeh ta-ti changed along with the changing conceptions of afterlife. By the Later Han, at the latest, the cult of the Lord of Mount T'ai had formed in the popular culture, acting as the ruler of the underworld, and holding the records of life and death. Despite having been challenged by the powerful Buddhist ideas of hell, this cult did not disappear from Chinese society but became even more popular after the T'ang.

The various origin stories about Pi-hsia yüan-chün also clearly reflect the creativity of popular ideas. People's association of her with the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak, the Yellow Emperor, or the Queen Mother of the West, is evidence of attempts to place her in the large and complex hierarchy of Chinese popular divinities. More importantly, they tried to determine the nature of this deity. Since popular ideas about deities are still changing, the attributes of deities are not fixed. Hence, we may conclude that the origin of the deity varied in reflection of changes in the common people's ideas.

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[175] TSHS, pp. 136-37.

The attitude of the state toward popular beliefs also played a critical role. In general, imperial patronage manifested itself in the bestowal of titles on divinities or building and repairing temples, which gave official recognition to the deities. For the deities, official recognition thereby confirmed their efficacious powers. Given this imperial support, they performed more miracles in the eyes of the people. Because of their increasing efficacy, they gained more reputation from the people. This, in turn, drew the state's attention. If lucky the deities could receive more titles; thus the process continued.

The titles--"King of Equal to Heaven" or "Equal to Heaven, Humane and Holy Emperor"--of Tung-yüeh ta-ti indicated the veneration of the state. It was under these circumstances that Tung-yüeh ta-ti survived the challenge of Buddhism, and even gained popularity in Chinese society after Buddhism came into China. Since the cult of Pi-hsia yüan-chün appeared when Emperor Chen-tsung was making Feng and Shan sacrifices, its development became increasingly based on the state's constant support. Because of this, these two deities faced much less difficulty in receiving official recognition than many other popular divinities that first appeared among the people.

As C. K. Yang holds, the permeation of religion in Chinese society may be seen in the wide range of functions served by the temples.[176] This case study of popular beliefs about Mount T'ai perfectly shows this characteristic. The regular religious fairs, mass religious observances, and collective celebrations, undoubtedly provided a chance for individuals to get out of their family-centered and routine activities. At the same time, these religious activities could also stimulate a local economy, as popular beliefs about Mount T'ai stimulated the economy of T'ai-an county. I will address this social-economic significance in

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[176]C. K. Yang, Religion in Chinese Society (reprinted in Prospect Heights, Illinois, Waveland Press, Inc., 1991), p. 7.

the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Religious and Social Activities Related to Mount T'ai

In this chapter, I will discuss the policy of an incense tax on pilgrims to Mount T'ai. The Ming state implemented this revenue policy from roughly the early sixteenth century to the early eighteenth century. First, I will explore the situation in which this policy started. Then, I will examine its implementation by the state, the responses of the pilgrims, and the dynamics that justified this policy for about two hundred years. By analyzing these issues, we will see how the state participated in popular religious activities and how pilgrims contributed to state and provincial finances in the Ming. The second part of this chapter will briefly explore the impact of the pilgrimages on trade and local economy. Finally, I will inquire into how elites of the Ming perceived popular beliefs about Mount T'ai.

I. The Incense Tax (Hsiang-shui 香稅)

According to the introductory statement of the History of Mount T'ai (Tai shih 岱史) by Cha Chih-lung 查志隆 of the Ming, the incense tax was only in effect in Mount T'ai and Mount T'ai-ho 太和山 (Wu-tang shan 武當山).[177] The Ming government of the early sixteenth century set up an organization as part of the provincial government of Shantung that governed and inspected the

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[177] TS, chüan 13, 1a. There is not much information concerning the incense tax in Mount T'ai-ho. An account in Ming shih 明史 [History of the Ming dynasty, MS] records that in the period of Emperor Lung-ch'ing (r. 1567-1572) Liu Ch'ien-hsüeh 劉乾學, a high official, once suggested to the emperor, "The incense tax in Mount T'ai-ho should be [implemented] following the rules for Mount T'ai: it should be presided over by the officials, but not by eunuchs 太和山香稅宜如泰山例,有司董之,毋屬內臣." This statement shows that by 1572 the incense tax had started in Mount T'ai-ho. See MS, chüan 214, p. 5663.

revenue policy to tax incense and issue permits to pilgrims who visited Mount T'ai. Without paying this tax, the pilgrims could not obtain permits to climb the mountain.

The money levied was temporarily stored in the subprefecture of T'ai-an (T'ai-an chou 泰安州) to, which Mount T'ai belonged. Usually in the summer and winter of each year, the money, together with offerings (shih-she wu 施捨物)[178] from the pilgrims, was delivered to the provincial capital, Chi-nan.[179] The task of collecting incense tax must have been relatively enormous and impressive. During the Ming the incense tax on Mount T'ai was so famous that when Japanese pirates invaded the coast areas of southern Shantung, they rode to T'ai-an to "take a look" at the administration of the incense tax.[180]

The exact date on which the incense tax started to be collected still remains uncertain. The earliest historical source that we can find concerning the incense tax of the Ming is in the Veritable Record of Emperor Wu-tsung (r. 1506-1521). It dates to the eleventh year of Cheng Te 正德 (1516):

> The Shrine of Pi-hsia yüan-chün exists on the Eastern Peak, Mount T'ai. The eunuch Li Chien 黎鑑, who guards Mount T'ai, requested [of the emperor the right] to collect *incense money* [hsiang-ch'ien 香錢, italic's mine] to periodically repair and rearrange [the Shrine of Pi-hsia yüan-chün]. [The emperor] consented.[181]

178Here "offerings" means something offered in worship or devotion, as to a deity.

179TS, chüan 13, 1b-3a.

180Huang Ch'ün-yao 黃淳耀 (Ming), Shan-tso pi-t'an山左筆談 [Notes about the leftside of the mountain], in Pai-pu ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng百部叢書集成 (Taipei, I-wen yin-shu kuan, 1967), vol. 260, 1a. This information does not specifically point out whether the pirates stole this money or not.

181Ming Wu-tsung shih-lu 明武宗實錄 [The Veritable Record of Emperor Wu-

Other official accounts indicate that the state did not start to collect the money donated by pilgrims to the Shrine of Pi-hsia yüan-chün at Mount T'ai until Li Chien's request.[182] However, the above quotation only means that the government began to collect the "incense money"[183] during the early sixteenth century: it does not establish an exact date for the implementation of the "incense tax". So far, the sources that we can find show that in the fourth year of Chia-ching (1525), this revenue system, which included incense tax and sacrificial offerings (shih-she wu), was well established.[184] Hence, we may suggest that the incense tax could have been started sometime between 1516 and 1525. After the incense tax on the pilgrims to Mount T'ai had existed for two centuries, Emperor Yüng-cheng of the Ch'ing (r. 1723-1735) abolished it in 1735. The emperor decreed that from then on pilgrims could donate to temples as they could, and officials were not allowed to interfere. As for offerings, this emperor ordered that only the Taoists and Buddhist monks on Mount T'ai (pen-shan tao-jen 本山道人) [185] could collect the offerings to repair the temples on Mount T'ai and the routes to the mountain, and that bureaucrats would not be permitted to collect these receipts.[186]

To manage the affairs of the incense tax and offerings, the Ming central government appointed a General Inspector (Tsung-hsün kuan 總巡官) to live

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tsung], chüan 139 (Taipei, Academic Sinica, 1964), pp. 2733-2734.

[182]MS, chüan 81, p. 1977; T'an Ch'ien談遷 (Ming), Kuo chüeh 國榷 [A deliberation concerning Ming history], chüan 50 (Peking, Ku-chi ch'u-pan she, 1958), p. 3108.

[183]The "incense money" here means the money donated to deities by pilgrims.

[184]TS, chüan 13, 4a.

[185]"Tao-jen" means religious practitioners. Here it refers to Taoists and Buddhist monks and nuns.

[186]Shan-tung t'ung-shih 山東通志 [A general history of Shantung province] (Ch'ing), chüan 1 (photoreprinted in Peking, Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1915), p. 51.

at the Prefecture of Chi-nan of Shantung and take over this task. In the beginning, there were six assistant officials (Fen-li kuan 分理官) assigned to the General Inspector to carry out this policy in Mount T'ai. Two of the six assistant officials were stationed at the starting point of Mount T'ai pilgrimage, the "Pavilion Where One Greets from Afar" (Yao ts'an t'ing 遙參亭), to collect the incense tax and issue permits to pilgrims. Another was placed at the "Dark Martial Gate" (Hsüan-wu men 玄武門) to collect incense tax from pilgrims coming from the northern hill. The rest were assigned to examine pilgrims' permits at the Red Gate (Hung men 紅門), the South Heavenly Gate (Nan-t'ien men 南天門), and the Palace of Pi-hsia yüan-chün at the summit, respectively.[187] In the fifth year of Lung-ch'ing (1571), the state abolished three of the six assistant official posts.[188] Those that remained were at the Pavilion Where One Greets from Afar, at the Dark Martial Gate, and at the Palace of Pi-hsia yüan-chün.[189]

Given that several hundred thousand pilgrims visited Mount T'ai each year, the three assistant officials must not have been capable of handling this number efficiently. As a result, the government asked inns around Mount T'ai to collect incense tax from their guests before they ascended Mount T'ai. During the pilgrimage seasons, every morning, managers of inns sealed up the incense tax collected from their clients, wrapped it up in a cloth, and signed on the top.[190] After accompanying the manager of the inn to obtain the permits from the official at the Pavilion Where One Greets from Afar, the pilgrims could start

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187TS, chüan 13, 2a-b.
188So far I have not found any information about the reasons why these three posts were abolished.
189TS, chüan 13, 2a.
190Chang Tai 張岱 (Ming), T'ao-an meng-i 陶庵夢憶 [Dream memories from the T'ao studio], in Pai-pu ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng 百部叢書集成 (Taipei, I-wen yin-shu-kuan, 1965); TS, chüan 13, 3b.

their trip. The officials temporarily stored the collected incense tax in the treasury of the Pavilion and delivered the money to the provincial government in summer and winter.[191] Before delivery, the officials in charge would ask the managers of inns to claim the packages with their signatures on them and open them up in front of them. The officials then checked packages. Some managers who cheated while they collected the tax money from the pilgrims tried to escape investigation or committed suicide. If they were found guilty, they would be sent into prison. This happened frequently because of the huge amount of money involved.[192]

Incense tax revenue from Mount T'ai in general, and Pi-hsia yüan-chün in particular, increasingly played an important role in the financial resources of the Shantung provincial government. This was because of the sheer value of the revenue:

> That which was donated by the pilgrims--the gold, silver, jewelry, jades and head ornaments, together with the golden or silver figures of children, copper cash, banners, gowns, gauze, and false cash (假幣)[193]-- was all put to the Palace of Pi-hsia. Each summer and winter, a subordinate official of the Prefecture (府佐) was specially appointed to meet with the General Inspector of Incense Tax (總巡香稅委官) and to ascend the summit and open the gate [of the palace] to collect and examine what had been donated. Those things that are [mentioned] above were

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[191] TS, chüan 13, 3b.
[192] TS, chüan 13, 3b.
[193] "Chia 假" here is used as "chia 假," which means false. The false cash could be sort of spirit money that was used in offerings to deities. See Herbert A. Giles, A Chinese-English Dictionary (New York, Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1964), p. 520.

examined and appraised item by item. The officials took the gold, silver, jewelry, jades and head ornaments, together with golden or silver figures of children, copper cash and the amount of the incense tax to the Provincial Administration Commission (布政司) and stored them there in order to be handed over for expenditure. As for the banners, gowns, gauze, false cash and other items, they were delivered to Chi-nan Prefecture and stored there. [They] were sent to the Three Provincial Offices (三司堂),[194] and were changed into the salaries of Staff Supervisor (首領), Fiscal Commissioner (運司),[195] and each Assistant Magistrate and official of the Prefecture of Chi-nan.[196]

Usually a certain tax quota was required to be submitted to the Ministry of Revenue. The Standard History of the Ming records that the average amount of the annual central revenue of the incense tax on Mount T'ai was more than twenty thousand taels.[197] This quota probably was set according to the average revenue from the incense tax during the first several years of implementation,

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[194]The Three Provincial Offices refer to the Provincial Administration Commissions (Ch'eng hsüan pu-cheng shih ssu 承宣布政使司), the Provincial Surveillance Commissions (T'i hsing an-ch'a shih ssu 提刑按察使司) and the Regional Military Commissions (Tu chih-hui shih ssu 都指揮使司). See Charles Hucker's A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, p. 402.

[195]According to Charles Hucker's book, the official title "Yün-ssu 運司 " refers to the Fiscal Commissioner in the Sung and the Salt Distribution Commissioner in the Ch'ing. There is no reference to the Ming in this entry. Here I think that "yün-ssu" could refer to the official who was in charge of the finance of the Prefecture of Chi-nan. Therefore, I have translated it as Fiscal Commissioner. See Charles Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China, p. 599.

[196]TS, chüan 13: 3b.

[197]During the Ming period, the annual revenue collected from the transit duties on all shipping on the Grand Canal, which was a crucial transportation line at that time, was about two hundred and twenty thousand taels. Compared with this, the revenue from incense tax on Mount T'ai was considerable. See MS, chüan 82, p. 2006.

which coincided with a period of peace. At the end of the Ming dynasty, incessant warfare, uprisings and famines naturally caused the cults in Mount T'ai to flourish less than during times of peace. But the quota was not reduced according to the change of circumstances. Under pressure to obtain amount, some officials in charge of the incense tax might force the managers of inns to prepay certain amount of tax money to meet the required quota to the central government. If these managers failed to do so, the officials could easily charge them with "corruption." Some of them were even beaten to death , or committed suicide before punishment.[198]

Except for the required amount of cash for the central government, usually the provincial government allocated the annual collected incense tax and offerings for the repair of Chi-nan city, repair of the temples on Mount T'ai, costs of the administration of the tax, miscellaneous expenses of the provincial government, and salaries of the Commandery Princes (chün wang 郡王) of Te 德, Lu 魯, Heng 衡.[199] Of these allocations, only fees for temple repair were

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[198]Wang Yün 王瀅 (Ming), T'ai-shan yu-chi lüeh 泰山遊記略 [A sketch from accounts of travel to Mount T'ai], in T'ai-shan ts'ung-shu hsü-pien 泰山叢書續編 [A continuation of collected works about Mount T'ai], edited by Wang Tz'u-t'ung 王次通 (Shantung, Ch'ü-fu shih-fan ta-hsüeh, 1989), vol. III, p. 63.

[199]TS, chüan 13, 5a. Though the Commandery Princes of the Ming, unlike those in the Han and the Chin 晉 , were neither given lands, nor governed people, they received salaries which were always paid by local governments. As to where Te, Lu and Heng were, the "account of Geography " [Ti-li chih 地理志] in the Standard History of the Ming and the Comprehensive Gazetteer of the Ming Dynasty [Ta-ming i-t'ung chih 大明一統志] do not specifically indicate. I found , however, that the Gazetteer of the subprefecture of T'ai-an [T'ai-an fu-chou chih 泰安府州志] says that each year the subprefecture of T'ai-an had to pay certain amount for salaries for the Commandery Princes of Te and Lu. Also, the "Biographies of Princes" [Chu-wang chuan 諸王傳] in MS records that a Prince of Heng [Heng-wang 衡王] was assigned to the subprefecture of Ch'ing [Ch'ing-chou 青州], which is in the West of Chi-nan. Thus, I suggest that the Commandery Princes of Te, Lu, and Heng could all be within the Shantung Province. See MS, chüan 119, 120, pp. 3641, 3659; T'ai-an fu-chou chih, edited by Jen Hung-lieh 任弘烈 (Ming), chüan 2 (Taipei,

fixed. According to the revised regulations for the implementation of incense tax in 1580, each pilgrim had to pay eight fen 分. Out of this amount, five li 釐 (6%) was always reserved for repair of the temples on Mount T'ai.[200]

In response to the size of the donations, the officials went to great lengths to safeguard these donated valuables, as described by a Ming literatus Chang Tai 張岱 (c. 1597-1684):

> There are several hundreds of pilgrims a day from the four directions. The money collected [from pilgrims] fills baskets. The iron fence is opened, and [the money] is poured and emptied on the floor of the hall of Buddhas. This is the case of Pilgrims presenting [the deities] with money. There are statues of three Yüan-chün; the one on the left is responsible for the bestowing of male heirs. Those whose wishes have been granted repay the favor with silver figures of boys. The size depends on the economic circumstances of the family. This is the case of the presenting of silver figures of boys. The statue on the right heals ailments of the eyes. Those who have appealed to the goddess and thus regained their eyesight repay the favor with eyes made of silver. This is the case of the presenting of silver eyes. A gigantic gold coin is hung in front of these statues. Aiming at it, pilgrims throw small ingots of silver or coins over the fence. People say that they will receive blessings if they hit the mark. Then this is the case of the offering of silver money. People making offerings to the

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Cheng-wen ch'u-pan she, 1968), p. 57; Ta-ming i-t'ung chih, chüan 22, 23 (Taipei, T'ung-i ch'u-pan yin-shua kung-ssu, 1965).

[200]TS, chüan 13, 3a, 3b, 5a. One fen 分 is hundredth of one tael 兩. One li 釐 is tenth of one fen.

> Buddha give fine satin (法錦), silk, gold, pearls, and precious gems. There are people wearing leg warmers, pearl-strewn shoes, and embroidered handkerchiefs, and they present satin, silk, pearl-strewn shoes and handkerchiefs. Consequently, gifts pile up several feet high at the palace. A military camp has been established at the foot of the mountain. Each night soldiers stay there to keep guard. Each season [of a year] an official is assigned to sweep out the hall [to collect the gifts]. Even allowing for [the losses] resulting from mice and sparrows (鼠雀之餘),[201] the annual proceeds amount to several tens of thousands of cash. The entire Shantung province, from Grand Coordinator (巡撫) to clerks of subprefecture, share them.[202]

Chang Tai's account was based on his personal observation. According to Pei-yi Wu's study of Chang's travel accounts, his trip to Mount T'ai was probably made sometime between 1627 to1629,[203] in the period when western Shantung suffered plagues of locusts, earthquakes, and excessive rains.[204] If Wu is correct, the passage quoted above demonstrates the popularity of Pi-hsia cult. The large amounts of silver figures, gold, and pearls demonstrate the powerful "efficacy" of Pi-hsia and her assistants in the minds of the people. Natural disasters seemed not to have drastically discouraged the religious enthusiasm of Pi-hsia's devotees.

201Here鼠雀之餘 means what remained after petty thieving.
202Chang Tai, "Tai Chih 岱志," [A record of Mount T'ai], in Lang-huan wen-chi [Collected works from the Lang-huan studio], by Chang Tai (Shanghai, Shang-hai tsa-chih kung-ssu, 1935), pp. 40-41.
203Pei-yi Wu, "An Ambivalent Pilgrim to T'ai Shan," in Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China, pp. 73.
204Shan-tung t'ung-chih, chüan 10, p. 841.

Given this tremendous tax revenue and uncountable offerings from pilgrims, the authorities might not have escaped from the temptation to skim off the profits for themselves. This misappropriation of the incense tax and offerings may have occurred for some time. In a possible response to such corruption, during the fourth year of Chia-ching (1525), Yao K'uei 姚奎, the General Inspector in charge of transporting the collected incense tax and offerings from Mount T'ai to the Magistrate of Chi-nan, led his assistants to swear in front of the divinity of Mount T'ai that they would be honest in performing their official duties. Here is his oath:

> ...Now those who make offerings certainly do so to receive happiness and benefit [from the deity], but the principle is also clear that people who encroach upon them will definitely suffer calamities. How manifest the law of the land is! People who besmirch goods (黷貨) and are insatiably greedy will be executed without pardon, and the disasters [given by gods] that fall upon them will be severe (禍亦參 [慘] 矣). Looking at an overturned cart ahead (前車之覆),[205] most are not aware of this warning. It is easy to drive [people] with profit, and their minds are easily aroused. In the tenth month of the fourth year of Chia-ching [1525], [I,] K'uei, received the appointment of General Inspector (總督),[206] which I received because it was not filled (承乏),[207] and am

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205"前車之覆" means that one learns a lesson from a failure.

206Here "tsung-tu 總督" refers to the General Inspector of Incense Tax [Hsiang-shui tsung-hsün kuan 香稅總巡官].

207Literally "承乏" means that someone accepts a job which is not filled. Here is used as a humble expression when someone is appointed to a new official post. It implies that this post should be assigned to other more capable candidates. In our case, Yao K'uei humbly expressed that he was designated as the General Inspector because this job was pending since other capable candidates were unable to take it.

deeply concerned that the human mind is unfathomable and [human] will is difficult to verify. We should follow one another to smear the blood of the sacrifice on our mouths and swear in front of the intelligent gods (明神) that we must coordinate our minds, exhaust our strength, and scrupulously and respectfully do our duties, only seeking that this job can be well done. If one [of us] dares to take one cash for himself, to gain a piece of coin, he will be discarded in the fields. For one who supports his children with jades and silks [offered by pilgrims], the gods will examine him, quickly kill him, and gradually destroy his descendants to greatly manifest the impressive spirit [of the divine] and serve forever as a clear warning."[208]

Apparently this swearing of oaths and threatening punishment to some extent reached their goal. The amount of the revenue collected by Yao k'uei in the winter of that year and the following spring was one-third more than before.[209]

The state's levying a tax on the pilgrims may seem somewhat unreasonable. Perhaps the pious pilgrims considered this policy as a part of the pilgrimage to Mount T'ai, even though they realized that their offerings would go to the state. One possible explanation for the tax policy is that the cult of Pi-hsia yüan-chün was so prevalent and the donations so large that the Ming government naturally sought to benefit from it. It could be argued that the incense tax was only one of the numerous taxes levied by the Ming bureaucracy to exploit the people. We should note that if the government had not first given reasons for the revenue policy, and in the second place had not

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[208]TSC, chüan 2.
[209]TSC, chüan 2.

received important support from religious groups, the pilgrims might neither have paid this tax happily nor donated very much. What were the reasons given?

The government proclaimed that the revenue was collected not only to help the country but also to assist Taoists and Buddhist monks of temples by providing them with places to live by building or repairing temples. I know of one piece of evidence for this. During the period of the Chia-ching Emperor (r. 1522-1566), the temple of the Eastern Peak was damaged by fire and was rebuilt three years later with money from this tax revenue.[210] Another source indicates that this revenue was used to relieve the people in stricken areas of Shantung, or to aid the victims of natural calamities.[211]

Since the support of Pi-hsia cult devotees was imperative to the success of the revenue policy, a theological justification was needed to legitimize donations. In the Precious Volume of Our Efficacious Lady of Mount T'ai (Ling-ying t'ai-shan niang-niang pao-chüan 靈應泰山娘娘寶卷), we find many explicit statements that seem to justify this policy:

> ... [Niang niang's] eyes of wisdom observe the pious people from a distance. Ten thousand pious people presenting incense have offered unaccountable money and food. I [Niang niang] think that it is useless for the goddess to collect money, and [I] give it to the imperial family [the state] to spend.[212].....

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[210] TS, chüan 9, 9a.

[211] TSC, chüan 2. This statement was given by a man of Chia-ching period who probably was a low-ranking official in Shantung. It is a general description, without specifying dates, about how the government spent this revenue.

[212] Ling-ying T'ai-shan niang-niang pao-chüan 靈應泰山娘娘寶卷 [The precious volume of our efficacious Lady of Mount T'ai, hereafter, NNPC] (Ming), chapter 2 (personal collection).

> You people who have good fortune donate more treasures when you go on a pilgrimage. If you give one coin (wen 文), you will receive ten thousand back and obtain a promotion. People who do not give alms will not be rich. By the same principle, those who give alms will not be poor. It is the same for both the poor and the rich. In collecting money and food, our Sacred Lady will not spend one coin. In practicing the way of filial duty for heaven, she will hand it over to the court to protect the state. [So] the people will be at peace, and the wind and rain harmonious. All people under heaven will be secure and happy, and they will recite the name of the Buddha and read the scriptures. Our Sacred Lady also wants to put forth her strength for the state, so that the common people of the whole world will also do so. Respecting the monarch is better than reciting the Buddha's name, and better than respecting your parents. The monarch is the Buddha who protects the state. He is equal to the Buddha. ... By accumulating money and food, and offering them to the court, donors will cultivate vast blessings and accumulate secret merits.[213]

Because the ruler was owed respect, and, more important, because he was, according to the above text, the Buddha who protected the state, giving alms would have been treated as an action that supported the state. Also, the donors would obtain blessings and accumulate merits. Thus to give money to the state here becomes a religious act.

Thus an attempt was made to provide a religious justification for the revenue tax. I think that this religious endorsement could be the main reason

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[213] NNPC, chapter 6.

that this tax lasted for nearly two centuries. In religious activities, decrees presented by divinities can be more convincing for devotees than those proclaimed by state authority. While the latter have the force of law to control people externally, the former have the spiritual power to control people internally. However, the question still remains why this popular cult supported the state in this way. In considering the issue of support for the ruler and the state in *pao-chüan* literature, Daniel Overmyer suggests, "the affirmative political tone of many *pao-chüan* is an attempt at self-protection, because the sects had long been declared illegal and were liable to prosecution at any time." [214] Indeed, some religious groups would keep themselves in the position of supporting the state and avoid promoting any radical anti-government ideas in their teachings to prevent from the state becoming uncomfortable with them.[215] However, Overmyer reminds us that the basic reason for a positive attitude toward the ruling class is the integrated social perspective of many *pao-chüan*.[216] Since the imperial ruling system was the only system that the multitude knew, it was not surprising to see that the popular religious groups

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[214]Daniel Overmyer, "Attitudes toward Ruler and State in Chinese Popular Religious Literature: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century *Pao-chüan* ." Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 44 (1984): 351.

37Some *pao-chüan* which contained radical implications could be interpreted by ambitious leaders of some religious sects to justify their motives for launching anti-state movements. (The issue of the motivations of the popular movements that were related to folk sectarianism has caused big debates in recent decades.) Because of the possibility of anti-government movements, the state kept a watchful eye on folk sectarianism, and Confucian officials, who never or hardly ever tried to understand these sects, usually unsympathetically called them "evil sects" (hsieh-chiao 邪教), and called sectarians involved in this kind of movement "sectarian bandits" (chiao-fei 教匪). For details, see Richard Shek, "Religion and Society in Late Ming"; Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion; Daniel Little, Understanding Peasant China: Case Studies in the Philosophy of Social Science (New Heaven and London, Yale University Press, 1989).

[216]Daniel Overmyer, "Attitudes toward Ruler and State in Chinese Popular Religious Literature," p. 351.

looked up to the rulers. Though the positive attitude in Niang-niang pao-chüan could be the product of both above ideas, I think that for financial support to the state these texts encouraged pilgrims of Pi-hsia yüan-chün to pay the incense tax and donate to the temple.

II. Pilgrimages and the local economy

In the case of pilgrimages to Mount T'ai, little research has been done about the detailed connections between pilgrimages and the local economy or about the social and historical factors that led to them. This is partly because the scarcity of related materials does not afford us enough evidence to portray a complete picture of this topic. However it does not mean that this issue is not worth studying. With limited sources, in this section I will attempt to sketch the local economy of T'ai-an which was mainly based on pilgrimages.

The T'ai-an subprefecture, where Mount T'ai lies, is famous for its myriad temples. This characteristic of the city also indicates that its economic infrastructure relied upon affairs pertaining to the "divinities" of Mount T'ai. In this aspect, Cha Chih-lung remarks that the huge numbers of pilgrims not only helped the finances of government with the incense tax but also stimulated the economic growth of T'ai-an.[217]

Numbers of businesses, such as inns, restaurants, and the number of performances, such as story-telling, drama, and acrobatic demonstrations mushroomed in response to the pilgrimages. Especially in the pilgrimage season, which was usually in the spring, cockfights, wrestling matches, and storytelling sessions attracted thousands of people a day to the vicinity of the Temple of Mount T'ai.[218] Of course, these activities inevitably drew the attention

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[217]TS, chüan 13, 1a.
[218]Chang Tai, "Tai chih," p. 37.

of many vendors. These vendors might bring unique merchandise to pique the curiosity of the locals and pilgrims, or sell general goods to local women.[219] Therefore, these were not only religious activities but also popular social activities. Through these activities, rural women temporarily escaped their ordinary lives to have fun with other people. These social opportunities periodically gave energy and leisure time to the colorless lives of many local rural people.

These commercial activities provided services and entertainment for pilgrims and visitors, and also supplied employment for the people of the area. The enterprises were had a strong connection with inns. Chang Tai gave a detailed description:

> As for the inns in T'ai-an subprefecture, nobody dares to treat them as [ordinary] inns. On my pilgrimage to Mount T'ai, when I had not [yet] reached an inn, around a *li* 里 [from the inn] I saw twenty-three stables for donkeys and horses. A little closer [to the inn], there were more than twenty houses for actors. Closer still, there were buildings with tightly closed doors and secluded apartments, where dwelt courtesans with bewitching charms. I thought that those were activities of a whole subprefecture, and did not know that they pertained to only one inn [that could handle them all]....In all, for this one inn there were more than twenty theatrical troupes, countless numbers of singers, more than twenty kitchens, and about one hundred to two hundred waiters and bellboys. After [the inn guests] came down from the summit they could eat meat, drink wine, and frolic with prostitutes as they pleased. All this could take

[219]Chang Tai, "Tai chih," p. 37.

place in one day.[220]

We should note that the above commercial activities were not temporary businesses. Mount T'ai had long been as a sacred site. It served as an important junction for all types of travelers as well as a pilgrimage center. Furthermore, during the Ming it was also home of the most flourishing cult in North China, that of Pi-hsia yüan-chün. Religious and cultural activities in and around Mount T'ai were not just carried out on certain days. Instead, they took place the whole year round. In function they were quite different from ordinary temple fairs, which were local communal activities held for only several days a year.[221] As discussed above, beyond offering lodging and recreational arrangements, the inns were also responsible for collecting the incense tax from guests who planned to climb Mount T'ai. Consequently the inns had to operate daily to serve visitors to Mount T'ai, as did the businesses surrounding the inns. These commercial enterprises naturally provided local people with opportunities for full-time employment. Without doubt the pilgrimage and tour trade was part of the basic economic structure of T'ai-an. During the height of the pilgrimage season the abundance of entertainment available at Mount T'ai created a carnival atmosphere for the T'ai-an region and also regularly gave a stimulus to the local economy.

III. The attitudes of the Ming elite toward the popular beliefs about Mount T'ai

My earlier analysis gave us a picture of the Ming commoners' religious enthusiasm for the popular cults of Mount T'ai, especially those concerning Pi-

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[220]Chang Tai, T'ao-an meng-i, chüan 4, p. 13. With major change, the translation is based on Pei-yi Wu's. See Pei-yi Wu, "An Ambivalent Pilgrim to T'ai-shan," p. 75.
[221]C. K. Yang, Religion in Chinese Society, p. 82.

hsia yüan-chün. We can now turn to see how the Ming elite responded to these socio-religious phenomena. My definition of "elite" covers the range from high-ranking literati to local low-ranking officials, even extending to people who were educated but not assigned to any official post.

Theoretically it is impossible for us to discuss the elite of Ming China as a whole. However, a considerable data base may enable us to recreate, to some extent, their viewpoints about this issue. As I mentioned in my discussion of sources in Chapter One, one of the characteristics of Cha Chih-lung's Tai shih (History of Mount T'ai) is its collection of travel accounts and poems by Ming elite. *Chüan* 卷 (chapter) sixteen and seventeen of that work record about two hundred and eighty different authors' poems, dated roughly from the early Ming to the thirteenth year of the Wan-li reign (1585).[222] *Chüan* 18 preserves twenty-one Ming essays and accounts. But how reliable is this collection? In the "guide to the use of his work" (fan-li 凡例), Cha says that he copied down these materials, without any deletions, from old accounts, steles, and various works.[223] Since Tai shih was completed in 1586, I have gathered the work of five members of the elite produced from 1586 to end of the Ming (1644) to supply the data base of this analysis.[224]

Of these almost three hundred accounts,[225] there are only fifty that

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[222]In the preface of *chüan* 17, he says that the materials in that chüan date from 1555 to "now," which should refer to the time before 1586, since Cha finished his work of that year.

[223]TS, "fan-li," 2b.

[224] My own search for these additional sources was not systematic as that of Cha Chi-lung. Three of the five works are from T'ai-shan ku-chin yu-chi hsüan-chu 泰山古今遊記選注 [Selected commentaries on accounts of travel to Mount T'ai], edited by Chou Ch'ien周謙, and Lü Chi-hsiang 呂繼祥 (T'ai-an, Shan-tung jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1987). The others are Hsiao Chieh-chung's Hsin-k'o t'ai-shan hsiao-shih, which I cited in Chapter two, and Chang Tai's "Tai chih." I have also used some other supporting and related materials while analyzing these sources.

[225]The collected poems are only used to discover the attitudes of the authors

mention popular beliefs about Mount T'ai. Forty-three out of these fifty records show, directly or indirectly, the authors' attitudes toward popular beliefs. Of the remaining seven, most of them do not make any personal judgments. I have considered them according to the three following subcategories: the payment of one's respects to any popular deity, the belief in legends about popular deities, and the affirmation of the efficacious divine power of any popular deity. If any one falls into one of these subcategories, it belongs to the category of positive attitude. Among the forty-three, forty fall into this "positive" category.[226]

Of the forty that fit the positive category, eight authors did not have official titles, but two of them held Principal Graduate and Provincial Graduate degrees. The official ranks of the remaining of the thirty-two are spread evenly, ranging from rank 2 (Minister, Censor) to rank 8 (local clerk). More than half rank higher than 5.[227] This statistic shows that the gap between the elite and commoners in popular beliefs about Mount T'ai was not obvious.

The people in this category expressed their respect for the popular deities, especially to Pi-hsia yüan-chün. Some of them even attempted to extol Pi-hsia yüan-chün, in the form of an eulogy,[228] or tried to find the Stone House (shih-wu 石屋), which people said was the place where Pi-hsia practiced

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about the popular beliefs of Mount T'ai. An author could produce more than one poem. My rule here is that no matter how many poems a person wrote I count them as one item.

[226]See TS, chüan 16, 1a, 4b, 5a, 5b, 12b, 17b, 20a, 37a-b, 39a-b. 41a, 43a, 51b, 52b; chüan 17, 3a-b, 4a-b, 6a-b, 7b-9a, 31b, 32b-33b, 34b-35a, 35a-b, 37b-38a, 38a-b, 40a, 59b, 60b, 61a, 61b; chüan 18, 8a-12b, 13a-15a, 16a, 18b-20a, 28b-35a, 35a-46a, 46a-53b, 53b-61b, 61b-68b, 69a-76a, 83b-87b. Also see T'ai-shan ku-chin yu-chi hsüan-chu, pp. 51, 114-116.

[227]During the Ming the rank for Prefect was 4. The rank for any Director of a section or a bureau in a ministry, or comparable status was 5. See Charles Hucker's A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China (reprinted in Taipei, Southern Materials Center, Inc., 1988).

[228]TS, chüan 17, 32b-33b.

cultivation before her enlightenment.[229] A certain number of the late Ming elite affirmed the financial and economic contribution of popular deities to the state and local societies, because they considered that both deities and worshippers showed patriotism.[230] This assertion indirectly illustrates Pi-hsia's divine power, which attracted numerous pilgrims. As we analyzed earlier, the annual revenue from incense tax and sacrificial offerings was substantial. These attitudes fit the third subcategory of the positive views.

All levels of the government, from the state down to the clerks of the Shantung provincial governments, contained the beneficiaries of income. For example, when central government officials or other local officials came to visit Mount T'ai, the local government would use the money from sacrificial donations to treat them.[231] Since the Pi-hsia cult was the most flourishing at Mount T'ai during the Ming, the money and donations collected from Temple of Pi-hsia were always more than those of other cults. Therefore, officials who enjoyed entertainment by the local government would appreciate that "this is all the gift of Yüan-chün 皆元君所賜."[232]

Among the records I have found, there are several passages demonstrating negative attitudes or even disgust toward the popular beliefs about Mount T'ai. However, compared with the category of the positive attitudes, the proportion is low. Only five accounts fall into this group. Their criticisms can be classified into two types. First, from the Confucian point of view, these intellectuals considered that the significance of the belief of Mount T'ai should lie in its symbolic political function for the state. Namely, they felt that the state should sacrifice at Mount T'ai mainly for the harmony of all beings. For these

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229TS, chüan 18, 18a-20a.
230TS, chüan 16, 5a; chüan 17, 35a.
231Wang Yün, T'ai-shan yu-chi-lüeh, p. 63a.
232Wang Yün, T'ai-shan yu-chi-lüeh, p. 63a.

writers, the rituals and legends about the deities found in popular beliefs were only fictitious histories.[233] In other words, some Confucians did not think the popular beliefs surrounding the worship of Mount T'ai conformed to the proper or original meaning of making sacrifices to Mount T'ai. An account written by a high official in the middle of the Hung-chih reign (1488-1505) clearly expresses this attitude:

> The glory of lofty Emperor T'ai-tsu resides in the world (光宅天下). [The emperor] worshipped spirits with [the proper] rites. Therefore [he] restored the titles of the Gods, and proclaimed that there is a rule for dealing with sacrifices to defiling spirits. [The emperor] abolished the malpractices of the past, and set an example for posterity. Therefore from that time onward, the people have been in harmony, and produce abundant, and there have been no disasters. Up to the present [all] that has flourished even more is an expression of appreciation for the reverent bestowal [of the emperor] (景 貺之答). So, is the reason why the people of the world, holding incense and offering silk, rush to the mountain to admire the appearance of the temple in fact is because they all respectfully sympathize with the ideas of [Emperor] T'ai-tsu, and his way of profound respect.? [No] [They come] just to seek life with blessings, and death without punishments, so that they do not go to the so-called seventy-five courts (七十五司), and fall down to the hells of filing, burning, pounding and grinding. Alas! [They are] deceived! Blessings to good people and disasters to bad

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[233] TSC, chüan 1.

people (福善禍淫)[234] are the way of Heaven. Can the gods really [decide] death and life? People just serve Heaven to carry out its calamities and blessings. How can [they] gain by asking and escape by praying? Today's people from far and near are crazy and confused, and do not know [how to] stop. Is this not the responsibility of [the officials 有土??][235] I sincerely order the clerks in charge of these affairs to pursue the origin [of the rites],[236] like Lin Fang (林放), pupil of Confucius.[237]

Hsieh Chao-chih 謝肇淛 of the late Ming once criticized the pilgrims of Mount T'ai in a more severe tone. He did not believe pilgrims who did not ordinarily cultivate the good could serve the deities sincerely and carefully. He reprimanded such pilgrims, saying that their keeping the precepts and reciting the name of Buddha were only to deceive the divine, and this was not in accord with the basic principles of the rites.[238] Moreover, Hsieh argued that it was unacceptable that a female deity Pi-hsia yüan-chün should become even more popular than Tung-yüeh, who had long been the focus of official belief. Hsieh

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234"Yao 淫" is a misrepresentation of "yin 淫" which here refers to the bad persons. See Chung-wen ta-tz'u tien 中文大辭典 [The Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Chinese Language], edited by Chung-wen ta-tz'u tien pien-tsuan wei-yüan hui 中文大辭典編纂委員會], vol. 19 (Taipei, Chung-kuo wen-hua yen-chiu suo, 1968), p. 486.

235I have never seen this character "土," and it can not be found in dictionaries. Daniel Overmyer said to me that in some *pao-chüan* equals to 土, meaning earth. But, I still have difficulty with figuring out the meaning of the term "yu t'u." From the last sentence of this quotation, I suggest that 有土" could refer to the officials who were in charge of the pilgrimages of Mount T'ai.

236The origin of the rites means the original intentions of the rites.

237TSC, chüan 2.

238Hsieh Chao-chih 謝肇淛 (Ming), Wu tsa tsu 五雜俎 [Five miscellaneous notes], in Pi-chi hsiao-shuo ta-kuan pa-pien 筆記小說大觀八編 (Taipei, Hsin-hsing shu-chü, 1975), pp. 3421-22.

states:

> ...Thus , in antiquity those who sacrificed to Mount T'ai worshipped the peak itself. However, today those who worshipped at Mount T'ai do so for [Pi-hsia] yüan-chün. The Peak was not capable of keeping his own dignity, but had allowed himself be called by the surname of a female. [Pi-hsia yüan-chün] occupies a position superior to him (偃然據其上).[239] That people, rushing from the four directions, have reversed the precedence of [Pi-hsia yüan-chün and Tung-yüeh ta-ti] is even worse.[240]

In a similar intolerant manner, Shih T'ien-chu 石天柱, a high official of the late Ming, said to the emperor, "In religious rites only the god of the Eastern Peak [can be found], and not the so-called deity, Pi-hsia yüan-chün. Improper worship [to Pi-hsia] is not in accord with propriety; how can [Pi-hsia] be more highly venerated?"[241]

These criticisms show the distinction between the state cult and the popular cult. The cult of the Eastern Peak was the focus of state attention. Any state religious activity was carried out in accordance to Confucian rites. Under the "protection" of Confucian principles, the state could not be charged with impropriety. As we have examined the nature of the Ming state's sacrifices and the populance's on Mount T'ai in Chapter Three, we have seen no difference existed between the state's praying for civil matters and the people's praying for individual welfare. At most, one can argue that the state concerned itself with

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239Here "偃然據其上" implies that the Pi-hsia's power had overcome Tung-yüeh and obtained a higher position than Tung-yüeh.
240Hsieh Chao-chih, Wu tsa tsu, pp. 3419-20.
241Ming Wu-tsung shih-lu, chüan 139, p. 2734.

the matters of the multitude, while the people with their individual needs and purposes. However, both tried to demand that the deity solve specific human problems. It was the same for both sides, the state or the commoners. Deities who did not respond immediately and fairly to demands scarcely escaped from being cursed.[242] From this point of view, the issue seems nothing to do with "rite" or "improper rite," but with the attitudes of some of the elite toward popular beliefs.

The second type of criticism was economic. Chang Tai (c. 1597-1648) once said, in a satirical tone, that when he saw the great amount of the incense tax on pilgrims to Mount T'ai, he finally understood how great Mount T'ai was.[243] The two most detestable elements in Mount T'ai, he says, were beggars and pilgrims. Beggars begged for profit in Mount T'ai, while pilgrims sought for reputation in Mount T'ai. These two kinds of people, Chang argues, were a disgrace to peaceful and quiet Mount T'ai.[244]

We have noted that each year enthusiastic pilgrimage created a prosperous economy in the area of Mount T'ai. During the pilgrimage seasons, many businessmen profited, Buddhist monks or Taoist priests gained financial support, and even beggars were able to survive.[245] Undoubtedly, it was the economic factor that attracted many non-pilgrims to Mount T'ai. In the eyes of Chang Tai, the holiness of Mount T'ai was ruined by the innumerable pilgrims and beggars.

Hsiao Hsieh-chung 蕭協中 of the late Ming observed the zealous donations of pilgrims and the state's constant patronage of the divinity of Mount T'ai in a more compassionate perspective. In the entry entitled "Golden Palace"

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[242]See Chapter Three, p. 42.
[243]Chang Tai, "Tai chih," p. 37.
[244]Chang Tai, "Tai chih," p. 38.
[245]TS, chüan 13, 1a.

(Chin-tien 金殿) of his book, A Short History of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan hsiao-shih 泰山小史), he describes the Palace of Pi-hsia yüan-chün, "when the temple was towering into the clouds, it shined in the bright sunlight. However, it was the time of a malign corona round the sun, and bones of the dead in irrigation canals and ditches." Hsiao demonstrated the ironic phenomenon that the golden image of the deity and the corpses existed simultaneously. He was confused by this occurrence and wondered why people worshipped Pi-hsia yüan-chün, but still had to suffer from those disasters. Hence Hsiao suggested that people not consider Pi-hsia yüan-chün as efficacious.[246]

The above negative criticisms represent only a minority of the Ming elite's views about popular beliefs concerning Mount T'ai. Most of these accounts shared a positive attitude. Thus, we can see that there was no strong contrast between elite and commoners. The religious and social activities accompanying popular beliefs about Mount T'ai were not limited to a certain level of society. Hence my conclusion does not suggest an approach in which "popular religion" refers to the superstitious supernaturalism of the lower classes, as opposed to the more rational religion of the elite. That local officials or elites affirmed the significance of popular deities in Mount T'ai implies that they at least believed the social functions of these deities. What is more important, the financial contribution of the incense tax could not be ignored. The pilgrimages brought economic energy to the local society. These facts must have been noticed by local officials and elites who lived in the same area. In fact, they all directly or indirectly participated in those religious, social and economic activities. They may not have sacrificed to those popular deities as the commoners did. But at least they showed their respect to Pi-hsia in their understanding of the worshippers' religious needs. For the masses, praying to

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[246]TSHS, p. 72.

divinities, accumulating merits and virtues, and burning incense were ways to search for peace of mind, solutions for imminent problems, and blessings for future lives. Hence, the religious activities were part of lives of people.

One other interesting phenomenon is worth mentioning. When members of the elites faced flourishing popular cults, some felt unhappy about the decline of Confucianism in Mount T'ai. Cha Chih-lung, the author of Tai chih, was an example of this. He suggested in 1586 that there should be a temple in honor of Confucius at the top of Mount T'ai.[247] Cha argues that many of Confucius' life experiences were associated with Mount T'ai, but almost no relics of Confucius or even his pupils existed on the mountain. He says with sorrow that half of the bronze statue of Confucius, which was the only trace of Confucius there, was seriously damaged.[248] Cha says that even though he needs not comment on the magnificence of Taoist and Buddhist temples, that fact that there was no temple for the spirits of Confucius and his pupils at Mount T'ai made people sad.[249] Cha found three empty rooms in the temple of the Jade Emperor (Yü-ti kuan 玉帝觀). He hoped that those rooms could be renovated as a place where Confucius and his pupils could be worshipped regularly.[250]

Hsieh Chao-chih of the late Ming was an another example. After visiting the temple of Pi-hsia, then full of enthusiastic pilgrims, Hsieh discovered the destroyed temple of Confucius and the Pavilion where Confucius looked at the Gate of Wu city (Kung-tz'u wang wu-meng t'ing 孔子望吳門亭),[251] which had

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[247]TS, chüan 10, 3b-5b. This source does not indicate to whom this suggestion was made to or whether it was consented to.
[248]TS, chüan 10, 4a-4b.
[249]TS, chüan 10, 4b.
[250]TS, chüan 10, 4b-5a.
[251]The name of this gate refers to the visit which Confucius made to Mount T'ai. Mencius (c. 372 B.C.- 289 B.C.) records that on the summit Confucius felt the smallness of the world and also had a keen vision which enabled him to locate a white horse tied to the gate of the city Wu, in present-day Su-chou 蘇州 of

both been near the temple of Pi-hsia. The subprefect of T'ai-an, Ch'in Mao-yüeh 秦懋約 accompanying told him that because they were not in accordance with the rites the subprefect had them destroyed. This account does not record why the subprefect said the temple and the pavilion were not proper there. Hsieh then asked the subprefect to repair the Pavilion and leave the ruined temple alone.[252] Both examples indicate the unimportant role of Confucianism in Mount T'ai during the Ming dynasty and the powerlessness of the elite to enhance the popularity of Confucianism.

As we stated earlier, the state also supported the Pi-hsia cult, so that local officials were responsible for overseeing Pi-hsia and other popular cults. On the other hand, local officials discerned the significance of these popular beliefs in a local social and financial context. For both reasons, they might pay respect to these deities or even perform ceremonies at their temple. Their participation in popular cults was a way of showing their community-mindedness, which was a kind of "informal" official recognition. This "informal" official recognition sometimes gave pilgrims encouragement which was more direct than the state granting official titles for deities or building temples for them. Consequently, the popular cults could have seen the participation of the elite as constituting approval, and for this reason they would be willing to show their appreciation by supporting the state and keeping a good relationship with the state and local government to maintain social harmony. Hence, the popular cults could retain their popularity, and the local government could govern the

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Chiang-su province. See Nieh Hsü, T'ai-shan tao-li chi, p. 85; Dwight Baker, T'ai Shan: An Account of the Sacred Eastern Peak of China (reprinted in Taipei, Ch'eng-wen ch'u-pan she, 1971, originally published in Shanghai, Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1925), p. 31.

[252]Hsieh Chao-chih, "Teng tai-chi 登岱記," [An account of climbing Mount T'ai] in T'ai-shan ku-chin yu-chi hsüan-chu, p. 116. The present-day temple of Confucius was rebuilt by the Ch'ing government in the same place in 1676. See Nieh Hsü, T'ai-shan tao-li chi, p. 85.

society peacefully. In this sense, the crucial issue here is not whether the Ming elite "believed" in these popular beliefs, but to what extent they "recognized" them and participated in them. Religious activities thus became an area where the educated and the illiterate routinely came into contact.

Chapter Five

Popular Religious Literature Concerning Mount T'ai

This chapter aims to introduce two seventeenth century *pao-chüan* ("precious volume"), Ling-ying T'ai-shan niang-niang pao-chüan 靈應泰山娘娘寶卷 (The precious volume of our efficacious Lady of Mount T'ai) and T'ai-shan tung-yüeh shih-wang pao-chüan 泰山東嶽十王寶卷 (The precious volume of the Ten Kings of the eastern peak Mount T'ai),[253] which relate to popular Mount T'ai belief. After briefly introducing the format of these two texts, I will first discuss them in the perspective of their connections with the three teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism) and sectarianism. Then I will explore the attitude of the religious groups toward the state shown in these two books.

The Niang-niang pao-chüan might have been produced and circulated by and among lay pious people practicing the niang-niang goddess belief, but its link with certain specific groups is not explicit.[254] In the case of the second pao-chüan, T'ai-shan tung-yüeh shih-wang pao-chüan, though people in some localities chanted it in funerals,[255] this text clearly shows a connection with the West Mahayana Sect (Hsi-ta-sheng chiao 西大乘教), which appeared in the

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253 T'ai-shan tung-yüeh shih-wang pao-chüan 泰山東嶽十王寶卷 (the seventeenth century) [hereafter, SWPC], 2 chüan (personal collection).

254 According to Daniel Overmyer's *pao-chüan* research, many sixteenth and seventeenth century pao-chüan were produced by popular religious sects, but precise organizational connections are unclear. See Daniel Overmyer, "Attitudes Toward the Ruler and State in Chinese Popular Religious Literature," p. 351.

255 Hsieh Chung-yüeh 謝忠岳, personal communication (T'ien-chin, June 8, 1993). Hsieh at present is the chairman of the ancient books division of the T'ien-chin Library of the People's Republic of China. He has worked with Li Shih-yü 李世瑜, an expert in Chinese popular religions, for many years, and published several articles regarding *pao-chüan*.

area of Peking after sixteenth century and existed in the early Ch'ing.[256] Though I will mention the historical background of this sect while we examine the Shih-wang pao-chüan, this study does not give a complete historical account of this sect. In addition, since I have not had many opportunities to read other *pao-chüan* of the same period, in this chapter I have no intention of generalizing from these two texts about late Ming and early Ch'ing sectarian religious groups.

Recent scholarship agrees that the characteristic early modern form of Chinese sectarian groups appeared in the fourteenth century, each group possessing its own type of religious teaching, ritual, and organization.[257] These popular religious groups usually produced their own scriptures for the purposes of instruction, ritual practice, and sect consolidation. The earliest extant texts, which date from the fifteenth and sixteenth century, relate to sectarian groups which are Buddhist in origin and orientation, together with some elements of Confucianism and Taoism.[258] Over time, during the Ming-Ch'ing period the styles of these books changed.[259] Even though their style may be different, however, at least in the late Ming and early Ch'ing these kinds of books use "*pao-chüan*" as their titles.[260]

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[256]A late Ming and early Ch'ing item of scripture, Ku-fo t'ien-chen k'ao-cheng lung-hua pao-ching 古佛天真考證龍華寶經 [The precious Dragon-flower scripture examined and corrected by the Heavenly Immortal Old Buddha], records that the West Mahayana Sect existed in the late Ming and its founder was called Bodhisattva Lü. This is cited by Cheng Chih-ming's 鄭志明 Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan 無生老母信仰溯源 [The origins of the belief of the Venerable Eternal Mother] (Taipei, Wen-shih-che ch'u-pan she, 1985), p. 5.

[257]Daniel Overmyer, "Attitudes Toward the Ruler and State in Chinese Popular Religious Literature," p. 347.

[258]Daniel Overmyer, "Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature: Ming and Ch'ing *Pao-chüan*," in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, p. 219.

[259]Daniel Overmyer, "Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature," pp. 219-254.

[260]Li Shih-yü, Pao-chüan tsung lu, p. 1; Daniel Overmyer, "Attitudes Toward the Ruler and State in Chinese Popular Religious Literature," p. 348; "Values in

All *pao-chüan* were written for people of various social levels. From fifteenth century onward, *pao-chüan* were written in a combination of simple classical Chinese and the vernacular. Later *pao-chüan* were increasingly associated with local deities, heroic stories, and some characteristics of opera. The accessibility of these books therefore increased, and the audience was amplified. As Daniel Overmyer indicates, "these books were recited in small group settings, from a sectarian worship service, to a room in the woman's quarters, to the corner of a busy market."[261]

The Niang-niang pao-chüan consists of twenty-four chapters (p'in 品), in two volumes. There is no exact publishing date on my copy. In terms of format and style, Daniel Overmyer suggests that the Niang-niang pao-chüan was written in the seventeenth century.[262] The Shih-wang pao-chüan was also compiled in two volumes with twenty-four chapters. In the end of the second volume of my copy, it is clearly recorded that this book was published on an auspicious date in the tenth month of the thirtieth year of the K'ang-hsi reign (1691). These two books are both written in alternating sections of prose and verse, and in vernacular language. These characteristics naturally enabled people to recite the books much more easily, and so to enhance devotees' comprehension of the teachings.

After the images of our Lady of Mount T'ai and her six assistants on the first page of the Niang-niang pao-chüan, and a picture with a beautiful female goddess circled by the Ten Kings of the purgatory on that of the Shih-wang pao-chüan, the two books have the same opening invocation. It starts with the following words:

Chinese Sectarian Literature," p. 219.

[261]Daniel Overmyer, "Values in Ming and Ch'ing *Pao-chüan*," p. 228.

[262]Daniel Overmyer, "Attitudes Toward the Ruler and State in Chinese Popular Religious Literature," p. 362.

May the imperial realm be forever secure

May the emperor's Way long prosper

May the sun of the Buddha increase its brilliance

May the wheel of the dharma always turn[263]

Then comes the line "ten thousand years to the emperor, ten thousand times ten thousand years." Another page has an invocation of blessings with the words "Yü-chih 御製" (produced by imperial authorization). This invocation requests that the world may be in harmony, the country at peace, and all beings attain the fruit of Buddhahood. This style of opening, as Daniel Overmyer says, is repeated verbatim in many sectarian *pao-chüan* of the late Ming and Ch'ing period.[264]

Usually in the opening chapter (k'ai-ching chi 開經偈) of *pao-chüan* literature during the Ming-Ch'ing period, the historical backgrounds of the deities or heroes who are worshipped in this belief would be given briefly.[265] What is more important is that the basic nature and powers of the deity and the advantages of reciting this pao-chüan are also explicitly demonstrated in this part. This is the case in the Niang-niang pao-chüan, it says,

Our Lady of the summit [of Mount T'ai] contributes much benefit to [the world], guarding Mount T'ai and

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[263]Translated by Daniel Overmyer. See Daniel Overmyer, "The Oldest Chinese Sectarian Scripture, The Precious Volume, Expounded by the Buddha, on the Results of [The Teaching of] The Imperial Ultimate [Period] (*Fo Shuo Huang-chi Chieh-kuo Pao-chüan*, Pub. 1430," Journal of Chinese Religions (Fall 1992) 20: 19.

[264]Daniel Overmyer, "The Oldest Chinese Sectarian Scripture," p. 19

[265]Daniel Overmyer, "Values in Ming and Ch'ing *Pao-chüan*," and "Attitudes Toward the Ruler and State in Chinese Popular Religious Literature."

> protecting the enlightened ruler, keeping wind and rain in harmony and people secure and happy, and making the entire country of the holy dynasty have 100,000,000 springs.[266] The divine powers of Our Lady at the summit are many: rewarding the good and punishing the bad, handing over the good to the Buddhas, and sending the bad to the Ten Kings of the purgatory. The nature of Our Lady originally is not partial, and she does not seek jewelry and money. No matter whether [the pilgrims] are poor or rich, Our Lady looks them all equally. The religious name of Our Lady of Mount T'ai is Heavenly Immortal. She guards Mount T'ai, protecting the country and the people, making the state prosperous and the people at peace, maintaining wind and rain in harmony. Great wise people appear in the state. Our Lady supports them, and people under Heaven act naturally [as they should].[267]

This passage shows that Our Lady of Mount T'ai takes over the inspection of human beings' deeds when they are alive. Upon their death, good people will be sent to Heaven, and wicked people will be led to see the Ten Kings of purgatory to be investigated. The nature of this deity assumes that all human beings, without any distinction of social class, are under her control. On the other hand, the goddess' blessings also reach each being without exclusiveness. The ultimate concern of this female deity is to assist the ruler and

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[266]"100,000,000 springs" means 100,000,000 years.
[267]NNPC, the opening chapter.

keep the country prosperous forever.

The deities in the Shih-wang pao-chüan and those in the Niang-niang pao-chüan give a picture of popular beliefs about Mount T'ai. They exist in these two books without any conflicts of duty or hierarchical position. The opening chapter of the Shih-wang pao-chüan states the following:

> The Ten Kings pao-chüan gives [people] many advantages. [The ten kings] rule over the world during the daytime and the underworld at night. They examine carefully men and women in the world, and their rewards and punishments are exactly correct. People who recite the Ten King pao-chüan should be sincere, settle their thoughts, wash their hands, and burn incense to pay homage to all Buddhas, and should invite past, present, and future Arhats and holy monks from everywhere. The three lights of the constellations, sun and moon, Our Lady at Summit, the Queen Mother [of the West], the Heavenly Consort, Our Lady of Eyesight, the Goddess of Determining Birth, the Goddess of Child-bearing, the Goddess Who Gives Easy Parturition, the Goddess of Scarlet-fever, the Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak, Equal to Heaven, Humane and Holy, and the Ten Kings of the Purgatory come together to the assembly.

As we discussed in the historical development of the conception of the purgatory in Chapter Two, in the Ming-Ch'ing period most Chinese common

people believed that the Ten Kings ruled the underworld. In this system, the God of Mount T'ai is the seventh King, called the King of Mount T'ai (T'ai-shan wang 泰山王). However, the above quotation illustrates that the deity of Mount T'ai was not one of the ten kings, and this god was still called "The Grand Emperor of the Eastern Peak, Heavenly Equal, Humane and Holy," a title bestowed by Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung (r. 998-1022) and frequently used by commoners in late imperial China. This issue is clarified in this book's chapter twenty-two, which discusses how a report of each human being's behavior is conveyed to the underworld. We are told that the Stove Gods of each family make reports to local Earth Gods, Earth Gods hand this on to City Gods (Ch'eng-huang 城隍), City Gods to the God of Mount T'ai, the God of Mount T'ai to the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha of the underworld (Ti-tsang wang 地藏王), and that Ksitigarbha distributes these records to the Ten Kings to deal with. The deity of Mount T'ai in this bureaucratic system seems to act as the highest deity in the human world in charge of the records of human beings' deeds. The Goddess of Mount T'ai is also in charge of the good and evil of mankind, she reserves the right to send bad people directly to the Ten Kings of the purgatory, and not via the God of Mount T'ai.[268]

The Ten Kings conception of purgatory after the T'ang was amplified in these two texts, though the main concept is not changed.[269] The change should be discussed by examining the following two facts. First, the Goddess of Mount T'ai cult became the most flourishing cult of the popular Mount T'ai beliefs during the Ming-Ch'ing period.[270] Second, the role of the City God was emphasized by the Ming state. The City Gods were believed to administer the

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[268]SWPC, chapter thirteen.
[269]For the Ten Kings concept of the purgatory, see Chapter Two, pp. 30-31.
[270]Please refer to Chapter Three, pp. 48-51.

records of human deeds and the wandering ghosts of local areas.[271] In the early Ming, the gods of city assumed aspects of official form "natural spirits" and popular form "deceased humans." [272] Emperor T'ai-tsu of the Ming, on the one hand, sacrificed to the city gods with other major deities of nature. On the other hand, he cast them in their popular role as spiritual magistrates; local officials were required to swear an oath of office in front of the city gods before they took office.[273] During Emperor Chia-ching reign (r. 1522-1566), the emperor did not make offerings to the city gods with other deities of nature any longer, but ordered officials to sacrifice to them in the gods' birthday. In other words, the character of the city gods was recognized as spiritual magistrates only, rather than territorial spirits. Since then, the nature of the city gods as natural spirits was diminishing, and both the state and commoners believed that the city gods were in charge of affairs of underworld in localities.[274] Thus, it is not surprising that in these two seventeenth pao-chüan the Goddess of Mount T'ai and City Gods are incorporated into the political and administrative system of the underworld.

I. Correlations with the three teachings and sectarianism

Confucian ethical values are extolled in the two books. In the Niang-niang pao-chüan, Our Lady of Mount T'ai urges people of the world to display filial piety and show respect to their parents, since the loving kindness of

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[271]Li Tung-yang 李東陽 (Ming), Ta-ming hui-tien大明會典 [The collected statutes of the great Ming dynasty], chüan 94 (Taipei, Hua-wen shu-chü, 1964), pp. 1474-1475.
[272]Romeyn Taylor, "Official and Popular Religion and the Political Organization of Chinese Society in the Ming," p. 150.
[273]Romeyn Taylor, "Official and Popular Religion and the Political Organization of Chinese Society in the Ming," pp. 149-150.
[274]Romeyn Taylor, "Official and Popular Religion and the Political Organization of Chinese Society in the Ming," p. 152.

parents is as heavy as Mount T'ai, and as deep as oceans. We are even told that the benefit of being filial to parents is much better than that of maintaining a vegetarian diet or reciting the name of Buddha.[275]

In the Shih-wang pao-chüan, showing filial piety to the mother is given greater emphasis. This is illustrated by women's suffering in the purgatory because of their sins committed in giving birth. All women have to endure the suffering and dangers of pregnancy and childbirth. What is more, they cannot avoid committing crimes with a flow of blood:

> ...The sins of women are as heavy as mountains, and as deep as big seas. Is there any filial son willing to bear [these sins] for his mother? Mothers are pregnant for ten months in constant fear. After ten months, they feel deep anxiety about [the baby] when they are about to give birth. After the baby is delivered, the mother looks at it with a heart of full joy. Because they love cleanliness, mothers use too much water. Because of this, they commit sins and calamities. None know these [the extent of] crimes committed in the world. When women go to the netherworld, and down to the Nai River (Nai-ho 奈河), they bear [the punishment] themselves. Crushed by bronze snakes and bitten by iron dogs, women are vexed. They can not go up, nor can they go down; they feel terrified. Wise women should maintain a perpetual vegetarian diet and will return to the light

[275] NNPC, chapter four.

and reflect [to themselves] (hui-kuang fan-chao迴光返照).[276]This will prevent you from suffering in the Nai River.[277]

Though the ethical values supported here are in accord with Confucianism, the implicit theme, women's sins, may reflect some of the ideas of folk Buddhism about women after the T'ang dynasty. A scripture called Nü-jen hsüeh-p'en ching 女人血盆經 [The scripture of women's blood pot], talking about the punishment of women due to childbirth, was attached to many scriptures and was recited by many lay Buddhists during the T'ang dynasty and after. This text is still widely circulated in modern times.[278] Through the various scriptures and other ways, the ideas about women's sins must have long been spread in the minds of Chinese people over the centuries. There is a nineteenth century pao-chüan, the Liu-hsiang pao-chüan 劉香寶卷(The precious volume about Liu Hsiang), which deals with this issue to some extent.[279]

Except for some aspects of format and Buddhist terminology, these two books are not expressions of orthodox Buddhism. The style of "Eulogy with lifting the incense" (Chü-hsiang tsan 舉香讚), inviting the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to all descend, and the "verses for opening scripture" (k'ai-ching

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276"Hui-kuang fan-chao" means that people get momentary recovery of consciousness just before death.

277SWPC, chapter one.

278I have had no opportunity to read this text. The information here is cited from the brief summary of this text in the Encyclopedia of Buddhism, edited by Ting Fu-pao, p. 1041. I read a similiar text, Hsüeh-p'en pao-ch'an 血盆寶懺, which was published in 1910. The main theme of this text is also filial piety. Different from Nü-jen hsüeh-p'en ching, this text tells us that no matter whether they are women or men, people who were not filial to their parents or parents-in-law, killing living beings, blaspheming against Heaven and Earth, and contaminating water would definitely go down to the Blood Lake (Hsüeh-hu 血湖). See Hsüeh-p'en pao-ch'an, chapter 2 (personal collection).

279For more detailed discussion of the Liu-hsiang pao-chüan, see Daniel Overmyer, "Values in Ming and Ch'ing *Pao-chüan*," pp. 243-253.

chi 開經偈) are commonly used in Buddhist sutras. Some Bodhisattvas, such as Kuan-yin (the Goddess of Mercy) and Ti-tsang wang (Ksitigarbha), are mentioned in these two books, but they are not discussed in detail.

Generally speaking, there are relatively few references to Taoist terms. The main messages of these two books are closely associated with some important beliefs of Ming-Ch'ing sectarianism. The most significant idea is belief in the Eternal Venerable Mother (Wu-sheng lao-mu 無生老母).

In the Ming-Ch'ing sectarian beliefs, the Eternal Venerable Mother is said to have given birth to *yin* and *yang* , and to two children, male and female. The Eternal Mother called the boy Fu-hsi 伏羲 and the girl Nü-wa 女媧. Fu-hsi and Nü-wa were the ancestors of the human world. They married and gave birth to nine billion sixty million (960, 000, 000) of children. The Eternal Mother sent those children to the Eastern Land to live in the world, but they are all lost in the red dust world. The Eternal Mother felt deeply sorry and sent envoys to summon those lost children to meet in the Dragon-Flower Assembly (Lung-hua hui 龍華會) and thus to be saved by ascending to Heaven. They then could sit together on the golden lotus and did not have to reenter the endless cycle of birth and death.[280]

The myth of the Eternal Venerable Mother came to dominate sixteenth century *pao-chüan*.[281] Many modern scholars of Ming-Ch'ing sectarian sects consider Lo Ch'ing 羅清 (1442-1527), [282] an important sectarian leader of the

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[280]Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, pp. 135-137.

[281]Daniel Overmyer, "The Oldest Chinese Sectarian Scripture," pp. 27-28.

[282]Lo Ch'ing was a popular religious leader of the Ming dynasty. His teachings, contained in his Five Books in Six Volumes [Wu-pu liu-tse 五部六冊] of scripture, became the foundation of the "Lo Sect" [Lo chiao] or "Non-action Sect" [Wu-wei chiao]. The Lo Sect attracted many followers in the late Ming and early Ch'ing. Several divisions of the Lo Sect still exist in Taiwan, Southern China and Singapore. See Randall Nadeau, "Popular Sectarianism in the Ming: Lo Ch'ing and his 'Religion of Non-Action'," Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1990, pp. 5-6.

Ming, to be the founder of the Eternal Mother creation myth.[283] However the fully developed later myth the Eternal Mother does not appear in Lo's scriptures.[284] Goddesses with similar functions do, however, exist in Lo Ch'ing's teachings. They are Venerable True Emptiness (Lao chen k'ung 老真空), the Holy Ancestor of the Limitless (Wu-chi sheng-tsu 無極聖祖), the Eternal Progenitor (Wu-sheng fu-mu 無生父母), the Mother Who Gives Birth to All Things.[285] These figures do suggest that we give some credit for the creation myth to Lo Ch'ing, but it is not correct to hold that Lo Ch'ing established this mythology. At the most, we can say that Lo Ch'ing helped to refine and centralize the goddess myth. Overmyer's recent research on the Oldest Chinese sectarian Pao-chüan, Expounded by the Buddha, on the Results of [The Teaching of] the Imperial Ultimate [Period] (Fo shuo huang-chi chieh-kuo pao-chüan佛說皇極結果寶卷), which is dated 1430, much earlier than Lo Ch'ing's first published texts in 1509, shows that the term "Lao Mu 老母" (Venerable Mother) already appears in this *pao-chüan* several times, even though the pivotal significance of the Eternal Venerable Mother in some sixteenth century and later *pao-chüan* is not yet developed in this book. From this point , we can surmise that Lo Ch'ing might have abstracted this concept from an earlier tradition.[286]

The Niang-niang pao-chüan and Shih-wang pao-chüan were both written in the seventeenth century. By this time, the concept of the Eternal Venerable Mother had already been well developed by sectarian groups over the centuries. In the Niang-niang pao-chüan, Our Lady of Mount T'ai

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[283]This argument is cited from Randall Nadeau's study. Nadeau lists many scholars from this group. They are Cheng Chih-ming, Sawada Mizuho, Sung Kuang-yü, Suzuki Chusei, Tsukamoto Zenryu, Yeh Wen-hsin, Yoshioka Yoshitoyo. For more details, see Randall Nadeau, "Popular Sectarianism in the Ming," pp. 165-166, n20.

[284]Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, p. 115.

[285]Randall Nadeau, "Popular Sectarianism in the MIng," p. 172.

[286]Daniel Overmyer, "The Chinese Oldest Sectarian Scripture," pp. 27-28.

encourages pilgrims to cultivate themselves, mentally and physically, by means of certain steps. Once they complete these steps, they will return to meet the Eternal Venerable Mother and gain longevity:

> The pilgrims who are capable of practicing [the art of] closing tightly the Six Doors,[287] replacing impurity with the [*ch'i*] of Pure Realm, to adjust the *yin* and *yang* [of their bodies], walk step by step and make progress with diligence. They care for the inner part [of their bodies] as well as the outer,[288] and each of them saves his or her spiritual light. The mind should be correct, intention should be concentrated. [They] enlightened their minds and see their natures, transcending the ordinary world, entering the sacred, and never returning home [to this world]. After opening your mind, you can speak of the Dharma like flowing water. Without thinking of anything else, you harmonize the yang *ch'i* by means of a series of twelve bamboo tubes.[289] Opening the front and the rear [of your mind], it penetrates heaven and earth. Circulating above and below, a golden ray of light appears. The light transforms into the Buddha. The

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[287]The Six Doors could refer to the six senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, touth, and cognition.
[288]I.e., mentally and physically.
[289]This refers to an ancient belief. It was said to be possible to communicate with the divine by means of these tubes, in connection with the twenty-eight zodiacal constellations and certain calendaric accords. See A Chinese English Dictionary, edited by Herbert Giles, p. 940.

> Buddha transforms and brings forth the ten thousand creatures. After you let go of the hand (sa-shou 撒手) [290] at the age of one hundred, you head to the West. [When you] arrive in the West and meet the the Eternal Venerable Mother, you will never be reborn or die, and never return home. At this stage, you have been transformed from an ordinary person into a sacred one. Infants who meet their mother sit in the [Land of] Peace and Nourishment (Amitābha's paradise). These then are religious practitioners who obtain correct enlightenment. [They] will go to Heaven and sit on the Lotus and gain eternal life.[291]

Here we can see that salvation is achieved by means of a process of self-realization. After the union of Self and the Eternal Venerable Mother, the seeker is free from samsara and enjoys perpetual peace and joy in paradise. Now they return to their own home. This process of liberation is especially emphasized by Lo Ch'ing. Lo in his texts states that people have to see their own nature or spiritual Light before they can reunite with the creator.[292] Without doubt, the above passage follows this tradition.

Though theoretically speaking those who practiced rites sincerely would obtain the salvation, the Niang-niang pao-chüan strongly encourages people to publish the book itself to attain more merit and to be liberated sooner.

290"Sa-shou " means to die.
291NNPC, chapter nine.
292Randall Nadeau, "Popular Sectarianism in the Ming," p. 92.

> The merit of engraving [this pao-chüan] is much more weighty than mountains. Let the old, the young, men and women recite [this] true scripture that has been left behind (revealed). It everywhere transforms wise and good people so that they transcend the ordinary world and enter the sacred world. They realize the fruits [of their piety], gaze upon the primal origin, and open the Lotus Flower Cave. [Through this merit], they return home, recognize the patriarchs, find peace and security for themselves and establish their destiny... They realize the fruits [of their piety], gaze upon the primal origin, and attain bodhihood. [This book] everywhere exhorts wise and good people to withdraw from the ordinary mind; each person should produce the correct intention and true Samadhi.[293] The Way is right in front of our eyes, but ignorant people are incapable of learning it. Those who are people of origin[294] will go directly to attend the Assembly of the Dragon-Flower.[295]

Sectarian influence can also be seen in the Shih-wang pao-chüan, as can be seen in the following verses:

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[293]Samadhi refers to mental concentration reached through meditation.
[294]"People of origin" here means people who have not gotten lost in the red dust world and still hold the original nature given by the creator.
[295]NNPC, chapter twelve. The Dragon-Flower Assembly refers to a gathering of people who would be saved by Maitreya, the future Buddha. See Ting Fu-pao, Encyclopedia of Buddhism, p. 2722.

Be extremely carefree, be extremely carefree. A ray of spiritual light penetrates into the nine layers of clouds. [Your] joy penetrates heaven and earth.

Pass through the nine layers of clouds, pass through the nine layers of clouds. My Buddha mouth is happy [?], and I obtain a title in the Assembly of Mount Ling.[296]

Be extremely cool and refreshing, be extremely cool and refreshing. [The Buddha] radiates the light from the hair between his eyebrows to everywhere, and transforms the eighteen Hells to paradise.

Swing my arms at Yang-ch'ang [?] (yang-ch'ang 揚常),[297] swing my arms at Yang-ch'ang [?]. My Buddha mouth is happy [?], and [I] am returning to my ancestral home happily.

Return to my ancestral home, return to my ancestral home. As an awakened little child, I see my own mother with joy.

Brightly lit, face toward the West, head toward the West. My Buddha mouth is happy [?]. I swing my arms at Yang-ch'ang [?] until I get in [the Land of]

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[296]Mount Ling is the place where the Buddha is said to have preached the Lotus Sutra. In sectarian mythology, it refers to paradise. See Daniel Overmyer, "The Oldest Chinese Sectarian Scripture," p. 18n3.

[297]I could not figure out what "yang-ch'ang" means here. In some sixteenth century *pao-chüan* Yang-ch'ang 佯常 appears to be a mythological place name. Its literary meaning is "false constancy," which has a Buddhist flavor. Perhaps 揚常 in my text is a corruption of the older term. However, this term as a place name does not fit my passage very well. Personal communication with Professor Daniel Overmyer (September 9, 1994).

Peace and Nourishment (Amitābha's paradise)[298]

II. Attitudes of religious groups toward the state

In these two books, the attitudes of religious groups toward the state and the ruler are positive. Though this is not the main message in either of the two *pao-chüan*, ideas of support for ruler and state do appear in some of their passages. This support in the Niang-niang pao-chüan is shown in two ways: first, Our Lady of Mount T'ai protects the state and the emperor, and second, she supports the state with the incense money and food offered by pious pilgrims as is discussed above in Chapter Four. In the first chapter of the Niang-niang pao-chüan, we are told how this goddess obtained her enlightenment and finally obtained her efficacious divine power. Her divine title was granted by the Jade Emperor, and she was assigned to protect the people and the state. In chapter two of this book, her intention for this commission is specified in greater detail.

> The eyes of wisdom of Our Lady observe from afar that the Military District of T'ien-chin is facing the mouth of the Sea,[299] the same body of water as that [used by] the Wo barbarians (倭蠻). If foreign countries invade China, I [Our Lady] will manifest my efficacious power to descend [here] and have a palace built, guard the mouth of the sea, and make the state prosperous and the people at peace.[300]

298SWPC, chapter twenty.
299This refers to the Po Sea.
300NNPC, chapter two.

"The Wo barbarians" here refers to the Japanese and Chinese pirates who harassed the coastal provinces during the Ming dynasty. The harassment became more serious and alarming after the early sixteenth century. The problem of the Wo pirates was never solved down to the end of the Ming.[301] The above passage thus reflects the situation of the Ming state defenses. Furthermore, T'ien-chin harbor acted as the most important seaport for Peking in the Ming-Ch'ing period. Building a temple and standing on guard there implies that Our Lady wished to protect the capital and the ruler.

Another passage tells us that pilgrims are urged to be sincerely loyal to Our Lady of Mount T'ai. Sincere practicing of rites will, the goddess promises, be rewarded by rebirth in China and the chance to serve the ruler.[302] This message affirms that China is the best place for human beings to live and the present political system is still what they are familiar with and are willing to maintain. These passages above show the positive attitude of this book to the state.

The second aspect is demonstrated in the financial support of the cult for the state. We have given some passages from the Niang-niang pao-chüan exemplifying this attitude when we discussed the incense tax in Chapter Four. Here I would like to cite another passage which indicates that pilgrims to Mount T'ai who donated money and food to serve the ruler would eventually ascend to Paradise, Mount Ling:

> Wise and good people in the world worship Our Lady, going to Mount T'ai to use incense to bring her down [to the altars], and donating money and food to

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[301] MS, chüan 322, pp. 8347-8358.
[302] NNPC, chapter seven.

> serve the ruler. All beings will complete what is appropriate for them. [Our Lady] radiates her power from between her eyebrows, and brings the myriad [people] to Mount Ling.[303]

In terms of support for the state, the divine power of the Mount T'ai goddess as described in the Niang-niang pao-chüan is subtly similar to that of the Matriarch Lü in the Shih-wang pao-chüan. As we mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the Shih-wang pao-chüan was closely linked with the West Mahayana Sect,[304] founded by a nun called Lü Tsu 呂祖 (Matriarch Lü) or Lu P'u-sa 呂菩薩 (Bodhisattva Lü). She was said to be a protector of the state and the goddess, attempting to lead pious people to salvation. In chapter four of this book, a group of pious people is found carefree in a golden city. They stand on the lotus, and recite the name of Buddha. A monk, the narrator of this chapter, asks them why they can enjoy this pleasant life. One of the elders of that group replies with the following words:

> We lived at the same place when we were alive, making merit together, observing ten thousand good deeds, and relying on [these merits] to protect the state. The temple of Pao-ming is very powerful. Pious people accumulate a little at a time [so that] finally one gets much. Twice a year we contributed money and food [to the state]. Trusting the report the Matriarch made with her great powers, and thanking to Heaven and Earth, our merit now is complete, and

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303NNPC, chapter seven.
304See p. 92.

we will go to the Lotus Pool Assembly directly.[305]

Why was Matriarch Lü believed to hold this power? To answer this question, we must explore the origin of the Matriarch Lü. The fifth chapter of the text clearly demonstrates the background of the Matriarch Lü. In this chapter we are told that the founder Lü was originally transformed from the Goddess of Mercy and put forward her divine power to save Emperor of Ying-tsung of the Ming (r. 1436-1449; 1457-1464) at the mountain passes northwest of Peking,[306] in 1449 when the emperor led the army in person to fight with the Wa-la, a Mongolian tribe. After Emperor Ying-tsung came back to the capital, he conferred on her the title of "Imperial Aunt, Emperor's Younger Sister" (Huang-ku, Yü-mei 皇姑御妹). From that time on, the Matriarch Lü stayed in the Temple of Huang-ku (Huang-ku si, Pao-ming si 皇姑寺, 保明寺), which was located in the western suburbs of Peking. Generally speaking, this temple was supported by the Ming sate. In fact, many court women and eunuchs favored the Pao-ming temple very much. With the imperial interest and involvement, this temple could improve the buildings and continued to attract nuns and lay devotees.[307]

The legends about Matriarch Lü were not only described in the teachings of the sect, but also recorded by some literati of the late Ming. Of the legendary stories about Lü, the most historical and dramatic is one that states she stopped Emperor Ying-tsung of the Ming leading the army to counterattack the invasion

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[305]SWPC, chapter four.

[306]Here the text does not explictly indicate at which pass the Matriarch Lü appeared. Based on several sectarian sources, Shi-yü Li and Susan Naquin suggest that probably the pass referred to Chü-yung pass 居庸關. See Thomas Shiyu Li and Susan Naquin, "The Baoming Temple: Religion and the Throne in the Ming and Qing China," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 48.1 (1988): 133n5.

[307]Thomas Shiyu Li and Susan Naquin," The Baoming Temple," pp. 132-145.

of the Wa-la tribe in 1449. A Ming historian, T'an Ch'ien 談遷, records this story in one of his miscellaneous notes published in 1644:

> When the emperor passed the Tzu-ching Pass in 1449, a nun of Shan-hsi province named Lü welcomed the arrival of the emperor and said to the emperor that this trip would not be profitable. The emperor was furious and had her beaten. The nun then was transformed while sitting (tso-hua erh-ch'ü 坐化而去).[308] Offerings were made to her image in the Pao-ming Monastery of Shun-t'ien. On her was bestowed the title of Imperial Younger sister [by the emperor], and so people called this temple "the Temple of the Imperial Aunt."[309]

Another record written by a Ming literatus is even more detailed. He states the following:

> Turing east from P'ing-p'o and looking toward the capital city, there are some tens of *li* of sand. On the way there is a village called Huang Village. The Temple of Pao-ming, where nuns burn incense and practice, is located there.The temple was built

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308Presumbly this means she was beaten to death.

309T'an Ch'ien 談遷 (Ming), Tsao-lin tsa-tsu 棗林雜俎 [Miscellaneous notes from the Tsao-lin studio], chüan 1 (Shanghai, Ta-ta t'u-shu kung-ying she, 1935), p. 21. This text shows that Lü appeared in the Tzu-ching Pass. However, Thomas Shiyu Li and Susan Naquin's article refutes this statement because official documents indicate that Emperor Ying-tsung's trip never went through this pass. See their work, "The Baoming Temple," p. 133n5.

because of the Lady Lü. Lü was a native of Shan-hsi province, and once wandered here. Some time in the period of the Cheng-t'ung reign (1436-1449), the emperor [Emperor Ying-tsung] rode out to resist [the invasion of] the barbarians. The Lady stopped the emperor and tried to dissuade him from going on, but the emperor did not follow [her suggestion]. It was not until he was captured by the barbarians that the emperor always indistinctly saw the Lady protecting him secretly, and every time she spoke to him. Later, when the emperor was restored [to his throne], he thought of this, and so he conferred on her the title of Imperial Younger Sister, and built a temple to her, giving her an honorary tablet. This is the reason why this temple is also called the Temple of the Imperial Aunt.[310]

The historical event which the above two quotations mention is the T'u-mu pao 土木堡 event of 1449. At that time, a Mongolian tribe, the Oirat (Wa-la 瓦剌), invaded China with a very strong army. The military capacity of the Ming at the northern frontier was relatively weak, and the Ming army was soon defeated by the Wa-la army.[311] Wang Chen 王振, an eunuch holding strong

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310Ch'ang I-k'uei 蔣一葵 (Ming), Ch'ang-an k'o-hua 長安客話 [A record written during the visit to Ch'ang-an] (Peking, Ku-chi ch'u-pan she, 1980), p. 60. "Ch'ang-an" in the title of this book refers to Peking instead of Ch'ang-an city. Since Ch'ang-an was used as the capital for a long time, Chiang simply employed it with the symbolic meaning of capital.

311Ku Ying-t'ai 谷應泰 (Ch'ing), Ming-shih chi-shih pen-mo 明史紀事本末 [The major events of the Ming dynasty], chüan 32 (Shanghai, Shang-wu yin-shu kuan, 1938), p. 14.

political power at court at that time, exhorted the emperor to lead the military in person to resist the Wa-la in order to restore the Ming army's morale. Most high officials tried to stop this plan, but in vain.[312] When the imperial army came to T'u-mu pao, in the northwest of Shun-t'ien Prefecture, the Wa-la army successfully attacked the Ming army and captured the emperor.[313] For this reason, the Peking court supported Prince Ch'eng (Ch'eng wang 郕王) as the new emperor, Emperor Ching (r. 1450-1456), and called Emperor Ying-tsung "Overlord" (T'ai-shang huang 太上皇). The Wa-la released Emperor Ying-tsung one year later (1450). In 1456, several officials upheld Emperor Ying-tsung's right to restore his political power, and they succeeded. Emperor Ying-tsung then changed the reign name Ching-t'ai 景泰 into a new name, T'ien-shun 天順 (r. 1457-1464).[314] The bestowal of title on the Matriarch Lü and the establishment of the temple as believed to have been carried out during the period of T'ien-shun.[315] A recent archaeological study also confirms that the Pao-ming temple existed by the sixth year of the T'ien-shun reign (1462).[316]

As Huang Yü-p'ien 黃育楩 has commented in the P'o-hsieh hsiang-pien 破邪詳辯 (A detailed refutation of heresies), these dramatic legends about the Matriarch Lü can not be proven by comparison with official historical

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312MS, chüan 328, p. 8500.
313MS, chüan 328, p. 8500.
314MS, chüan 12, p. 153; Ku Ying-t'ai, Ming-shih chi-shih pen-mo, chüan 35, p. 52.
315Chiang I-k'uei, Ch'ang-an k'o-hua, p. 60; Liu T'ung,and Yü I-cheng (Ming), T'i-ching ching wu-lüeh, chüan 5, p. 90.
316In the temple of Ta-chung of Peking [Ta-chugn si, 大鍾寺], Li Shih-yü, a modern scholar, found an old bell, which was identified as a bell of the temple of Pao-ming. According to the inscription on this bell, it was made in the sixth year of T'ian-shun reign. This means that the temple must have been built by this date. This inscription is cited by Ma Hsi-sha 馬西沙 and Han Ping-fang 韓秉方 in Chung-kuo min-chien tsung-chiao shih 中國民間宗教史 [A history of Chinese popular religions] (Shanghai, Shang-hai jen-min ch'u-pan she, 1992), p. 660.

records.[317] In other words, I cannot find any official material recording that the Matriarch Lü was believed to have appeared to the military expedition of Emperor Ying-tsung.[318] However, the late Ming literati accounts which we have discussed above indicated that the legends about Lü must have circulated in and around the Peking area. Among the religious groups, the association of the legend of Matriarch Lü with historical events gave the followers of this belief and other people an impression that this sect was not anti-state, and in fact that the founder had once tried to save the emperor's life.

On the other hand, the Matriarch Lü was believed to be the reincarnation of the Goddess of Mercy (Kuan-yin 觀音), famous for her kindness and efficacy and worshipped all over the country. In the Shih-wang pao-chüan, Lü was indirectly equated with the Eternal Venerable Mother.[319] The association with these two goddesses implies that the Matriarch Lü possesses these two goddesses' compassion and love of all beings. These attributes seems to have led people to believe that the Matriarch Lü must hold this divine power in order to save the state and the people. Thus, the legends became more real to the religious groups.

Though these two books contain some Confucian ethical values, and Buddhist ideas, and are explicitly associated with the main stream of sectarian mythology of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the main message of these two *pao-chüan* is religious loyalty. The Shih-wang pao-chüan keeps

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317Sawada Mizuho, ed., Kōchu haha shōben 校注破邪詳辯 ["A detailed refutation of heresies," with corrections and commentaries] (Tokyo, Dōkyō kanko kai 道教刊行社, 1972), p. 102.

318This is confirmed by Thomas Shiyu Li and Susan Naquin. See their article, "The Baoming Temple," p. 133.

319In another scripture of the West Mahayana Sect, the P'u-tu hsin-sheng chiu-k'u pao-chüan 普度新聲救苦寶卷 [The precious volume, a new voice of universal salvation, saving the distressed], the Matriarch Lü clearly appears as the reincarnation of the Eternal Venerable Mother. Cited by Ma Hsi-sha and Han Ping-fang, in Chung-kuo min-chien tsung-chiao shih, p. 670.

emphasizing the miserable situation of purgatory, using this image to encourage people to believe that if they worshipped the Ten Kings and recited the *pao-chüan* they would obtain limitless benefits, and if they refused to make offerings to the kings or listen to the *pao-chüan* they would definitely to to sent to the purgatory. If one believed in the Ten Kings and sincerely recited the *pao-chüan*, one was given a promise that upon death one would go to paradise directly. The main theme of religious loyalty to the Mount T'ai goddess is even more strongly emphasized in the Niang-niang pao-chüan. The goddess asks the patrol, Officials of Wang-Ling 王靈官 , to test the sincerity of pilgrims. Those pious persons would be given more strength and their bodies would be light and wonderful when they were climbing the mountain. The hearts of the wicked persons would be found insincere, and at the least the goddess would add to their sins and bring forth disasters upon them, while at the worst they might be flogged to death. This female deity even publicly notified people not to do anything illicit, nor prevent other people from presenting incense. If they did, the goddess would have them fall down a mountain torrent, and never return home. This warning was followed by a powerful statement: If a divinity was impartial, ten thousand people would worship reverently, and if a divinity was not efficacious, people would not sacrifice to him or her. Indeed, as Overmyer argues, seventeenth century *pao-chüan* emphasize religious and political loyalty, while the nineteenth and twentieth century ones underline ethical values. The two seventeenth century *pao-chüan* we have studied here certainly show these typical characteristics.

III. Some implications of this study

We have examined the cult of Mount T'ai from different perspectives. In sum, the worship of Mount T'ai was part of the sacrifices to nature in ancient

times, as a means of thanks or propitiation. For the state its significance lay in the legitimatization of the ruler's political power and keeping nature and his country in harmony. The notion of five peaks was fully developed in the Han. The role of the Eastern Peak, Mount T'ai, as the leader of the five peaks was also stablized during this period. The development of Mount T'ai as the chief of the five peaks was closely linked with the theory of the Five Phases and the Feng and Shan sacrifices, which the emperor performed with the greatest solemnity at Mount T'ai to Heaven and Earth respectively. Under the strong influence of this theory of the Five Phases, by the Han, people firmly believed that Mount T'ai of the East was the origin of creation. This attribute, consequently, was later associated with the legend of Lord of Mount T'ai, who in popular belief before Buddhist influence was also thought of as lord of the underworld who knew the life span of human beings. After Buddhism came, the concept of the purgatory was gradually changed. After the T'ang, the conception of the afterlife was transformed into the system of "Ten Kings." The god of Mount T'ai became the seventh king in this system. This concept might be slightly different with the change of time, but the main idea still exists now. Thought the god of Mount T'ai lost his leadership in the underworld, the temples in his honor were still everywhere in the country after the Sung.

The state also played an important role in the development of the Mount T'ai cult. Through the Feng and Shan sacrifices, the holiness of Mount T'ai was confirmed and enhanced. While Emperor Hsüan-tsung of the T'ang making the Feng and Shan sacrifices in 725, he unprecedentedly bestowed on the god of Mount T'ai the title "King Equal to Heaven" and built a temple to him. Emperor Chen-tsung of the Sung promoted the god of Mount T'ai to the "Emperor Equal to Heaven, Humane and Holy," and granted the title "T'ien-hsien yü-nü pi-hsia yüan-chün" to the goddess of Mount T'ai around the time of his making the

sacrifices in 1008. The actions of personification, granting a human title and building temples to god or goddess, implied that the nature of the deities was transforming into the more popular types. With the different attitudes of the Ming emperors toward the god of Mount T'ai, during the Ming the functions of this deity were greatly amplified and even more detailed. This deity was asked to perform miracles to fulfill the state's wishes. If he responded very well, he may receive greater reputation or more beautiful temples from the state. On the contrary, if he did not, he hardly escaped from being cursed. This characteristic shows this deity was not much different from other popular deities. As a result, those changes provided the official god of Mount T'ai with an opportunity to blend with popular ideas about this deity. In the mid-fifteenth century Emperor Ying-tsung of the Ming had icons of the seventy-two judges of the purgatory set up in the Temple of Tung-yüeh at Peking, where the Ming emperors worshipped the god of Mount T'ai. This official temple attracted more commoners to worship this deity, and finally became a popular temple like others of its type.

The cult of Pi-hsia yüan-chün enriched popular beliefs about Mount T'ai. This female deity's reputation reached the summit at the time of the Ming. Her duties were to protect women and children, and later were extended to protect the whole state and people with her growing efficacy. Each year a great number of pilgrims went to Mount T'ai to make offerings to this efficacious deity. The pilgrimage stimulated the economy and cultural life for people in the Mount T'ai area. Not only did society benefit from the Pi-hsia cult, but also the government. The state started to levy the incense tax on the visitors to Mount T'ai and collect offerings from the temple of Pi-hsia in the early sixteenth century. This huge amount became regular income for the government. Almost every local official profited from this income. In turn, the government supported this cult and tried to keep it flourishing. On the other hand, local officials realized that their support

was a kind of official recognition for pilgrims and the society, and this would help them govern the society peacefully. It was through the interaction between the state, society and popular religions that Pi-hsia yüan-chün became one of the most popular deities in Ming China.

As we discussed in Chapter One, the Ming state's policy toward popular religions was quite strict. However, this case study shows that the implementation of this policy did not function as it was supposed to. This was the result of many complicated reasons. My study shows that the changes in the economy and popular religions could not be ignored. The economic growth of the mid-late Ming shortened the distance of communication between city and countryside as well as between people, and it also indirectly increased the literacy rate. In the development of popular religions, this new economic and social environment made the circulation of religious ideas much faster and easier. Moreover, the advancement of printing technology and the higher literacy rate gave popular religious groups a better chance to promote their beliefs in written works, such as *pao-chüan*, in which the groups expressed their religious concepts, exhorted their devotees to be pious to the cult, and showed their attitudes toward the state. This caused some popular deities to flourish even more. With this change, local government and society had to respond and adjust themselves to local popular religions. The study on the cult of Mount T'ai in Ming China clearly demonstrates this process. The cult of Mount T'ai of Ming China developed and flourished in this mutually enriched context.

Abbreviations

HTTC Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien 續資治通鑑

HTTCCP Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien 續資治通鑑長編

LCCC Li-chi chi-chieh 禮記集解

MS Ming shih 明史

NNPC Ling-ying t'ai-shan niang-niang pao-chüan 靈應泰山娘娘寶卷

PHT Pai-hu t'ung 白虎通

SS Sung shih 宋史

TS Tai shih 岱史

TSHS Hsin-k'o t'ai-shan hsiao-shih 新刻泰山小史

TSC T'ai-shan chih 泰山志

WHTK Wen-hsien t'ung-k'ao 文獻通考

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