

Popular Sectarianism in the Ming:
Lo Ch'ing and his "Religion of Non-Action"

By

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Abstract

"Popular Sectarianism in the Ming: Lo Ch'ing and his 'Religion of Non-Action'" is a study of Lo Ch'ing (1442-1527), a lay religious reformer of Ming Dynasty China, the scriptures he composed and the *Lo chiao* tradition. Chapter I utilizes historical materials (official records, accounts of observers, and memorials to the throne) and sectarian documents (sectarian hagiographies and Lo's own autobiography) to formulate a biography of Lo Ch'ing. Chapter II analyzes Lo's religious thought, based on translated passages from his scriptures, entitled Wu-pu liu-ts'e (Five Books in Six Volumes), in the context of the history of Chinese religions and the canonical scriptures of Buddhism, Taoism and the Literati (Confucian) tradition. Chapter III traces the history of Lo sects from the Ming Dynasty to the present, from historical documents, sectarian accounts, and interviews with contemporary Lo sectarians conducted in Taiwan. Chapter IV examines Lo's sources and his use of Chinese written and oral traditions, with comparisons to popular religious literature of early modern Europe. Chapter V evaluates Lo Ch'ing's social role as a "cultural mediator" of conceptions and values between elite and popular levels of Chinese society, incorporating recent studies of similar figures in both Chinese and European history. The Appendices include summaries of the one hundred three chapters constituting the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, an annotated catalogue of Lo's sources, and a bibliography of reference works, primary sources, and secondary studies in Chinese, Japanese, and Western languages.

The thesis is presented as a contribution to the fields of Chinese popular religion, sectarianism, and social history. It addresses methodological issues concerning the interaction of elite and popular culture, the study and interpretation of popular religious texts, the analysis of charismatic religious personalities, and the transmission of religious conceptions and values. The principle methodological conclusion of the thesis is that religious figures at a lower and middle level of society can be both creative thinkers and active agents of the transmission of values and conceptions throughout society and history. Much of the translated material in the dissertation is made available to Western-language readers for the first time, and the analysis of the material is based upon secondary studies in Chinese, Japanese, and English. It is hoped that this study will inspire further scholarship on Chinese popular religion as well as Lo Ch'ing and his Religion of Non-Action.

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To my parents

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Popular Sectarianism in the Ming:
Lo Ch'ing and his "Religion of Non-Action"

Preface

臺南市德化堂祖經講習會	南	南	南	一	智	世	衆	教	品	顯	性	羅	龍 華 最 祖 讚		
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	乘	祖	華	海	依	上	出	極	寶	真	人	部		三	
	教	師	會		大	明	泥	樂	普	俗	生	攝		春	
	菩	薩	薩		乘	性	在	教	遍	二	傳	揚		祖	
	摩	摩	摩		船	在	地	化	化	神	三	天		龍	
	阿	阿	阿		度	度	苦	生	喚	圓	立	下		華	
	薩	薩	薩		衆	生	薩	美	無	醒	融	破		薩	
	生				生	大	化	窮	大	九	邪	道		見	

Ode to Dragon-Flower Patriarch Lo
(for a Sūtra-recitation and Preaching Assembly
held at Conversion-by-Virtue Hall, Tainan)

After thirteen years [lit. "springs"] of bitter effort, Patriarch Lo awakened to the Way, perceived his Nature, and enlightened his Mind,¹ raising high the Path of the Dragon-Flower Bodhisattva.²

1. *Wu-tao chien-hsing ming-hsin* (悟道見性明心): three phrases describing Buddhist enlightenment, especially as described in the Ch'an tradition. In a Buddhist context, Tao is translated as "Way" or "Path". The *hsing* (Nature, Sanskrit *prakṛti*) and *hsin* (Mind) refer in Ch'an thought to the original, unchanging "Buddha-nature" possessed by all persons at birth. Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyō-go daijiten* [Comprehensive Dictionary of Buddhist Terms], 321c, 1263d, 1307d. Morohashi Tetsuji, *Daikanwa jiten* [Comprehensive Dictionary of Chinese Characters], 5:773 (13805.322).
2. *Lung-hua p'u-sa* (龍華菩薩): Sūtras of the Buddha Maitreya (彌勒佛) predict that 56 i (億), a number corresponding here to 5.6 billion, plus 70 million years (i.e., 5,670,000,000 years) after the complete extinction, or *pari-nirvāṇa*, of the Buddha Śākyamuni, the Bodhisattva Maitreya (彌勒菩薩) will descend from the Tuṣita Heaven (兜率天) and appear beneath the

He composed five books [of scripture], and transmitted them throughout the empire, destroying heterodoxy, manifesting orthodoxy, and enlightening human life. The Third Assembly³ is established; the Ninth Stage [of the Path]⁴ has been reached; the Teaching of the Two Truths, Real and Provisional,⁵ is perfect and complete!

Dragon-Flower tree (龍華樹, *pumṇāga*) to preach the *Dharma*. At that place, all believers will be gathered together and enlightened, in the course of three preaching assemblies (see note 3). In the final assembly, Maitreya himself will become a Buddha. See especially the *Fo-shuo mi-le hsia-sheng ching* (佛說彌勒下生經) [The Sūtra of Maitreya's Incarnation in the World, as Spoken by the Buddha], *Taishō Tripitaka* vol. 14, no. 453, pp. 421-423; the *Fo-shuo mi-le hsia-sheng ch'eng-fo ching* (佛說彌勒下生成佛經) [The Sūtra of Maitreya's Incarnation in the World and Realization of Buddhahood, as Spoken by the Buddha], T14.454.423-425 and T14.455.426-428; the *Fo-shuo mi-le ta ch'eng-fo ching* (佛說彌勒大成佛經) [The Sūtra of Maitreya's Complete Realization of Buddhahood, as Spoken by the Buddha], T14.456.428-434; and the *Fo-shuo mi-le lai-shih ching* (佛說彌勒來時經) [The Sūtra of Maitreya's Arrival in the World, as Spoken by the Buddha], T14.457.434-435. Nakamura, *Bukkyō-go daijiten*, 1422b. The "Ode" implies that Patriarch Lo is an incarnation of Maitreya Buddha.

3. *San hui* (三會): (See note 2) In the first assembly, 96 *i* (億 -- one *i* is variously calculated as ten thousand, one hundred thousand, one million, ten million, or one hundred million, most commonly the last, corresponding to *wan-wan* [萬萬] in Chinese) persons will be saved; in the second assembly, 94 *i* persons; in the third assembly, 92 *i* persons. See the *Fo-shuo mi-le hsia-sheng ching* (T14.454), p. 425b, lines 1-3.
4. *Chiu-p'in* (九品): Various Pure Land scriptures describe nine stages or grades of incarnation, the highest being rebirth in the Pure Land. In general terms, it is the highest level of spiritual cultivation. Nakamura, *Bukkyō-go daijiten*, 256c; Mochizuki Shinkō, *Bukkyō daijiten* [Comprehensive Dictionary of Buddhism], I:707a-708a.
5. *Chen-su erh-t'i* (真俗二諦, Skt. *paramārtha-samvṛti-satya*): Absolute Truth, from the perspective of enlightenment or *Nirvāṇa*, and relative or provisional truth, from the perspective of *Samsāra*: a term of Buddhist epistemology associated with the *Mādhyamika* and *Hua-yen* Schools. See Chitsang's (吉藏) *San-lun hsüan-i* (三論玄義, T45.1852.1-15) for the classic *Mādhyamika* statement. For a general discussion, cf. Mochizuki, *Bukkyō daijiten*, III: 2072a-2075b.

He made the teaching complete and conversion universal, and called the myriad beings to awaken, to take refuge in the Three Treasures.⁶ Numberless beings he converted by teaching!

On the earth he has established [the Land of] Perfect Bliss,⁷ a beautiful Transformation-world, [like] a lotus emerging from the mud. The *Bodhisattva* of Home-based [Cultivation],⁸ [Lo] in his great wisdom illumines his Nature above and saves the living below.

Together let us take refuge in the Ship of the Great Vehicle [*Mahâyâna*], to save the myriad living beings that they may depart from the sea of suffering [*saṃsāra*].

Glory to the *Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva* ["great being"] of the Dragon-Flower Assembly! Glory to the *Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva* Patriarch-Master Lo! Glory to the *Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva* of the Sect of the Great Vehicle!

This "Ode to Dragon-Flower Patriarch Lo" was printed by the Conversion-by-Virtue Hall (德化堂), Tainan, Taiwan, in 1982, on the occasion of the five-hundredth anniversary of the Patriarch's enlightenment. The anniversary was marked by sermons on Dragon-Flower Assembly teachings and chanting of scriptures, including Lo's own Five Books in Six Volumes (五部六冊). The Dragon-Flower Assembly (龍華會) has active branch halls throughout Taiwan and Fukien, with an elaborate organizational base and a line of

6. *San-pao* (三寶, Skt. *triratna*): Buddha (enlightened one), *Dharma* (the Law or Teaching), and *Saṅgha* (the assembly of monks and nuns).

7. *Chi-le* (極樂): the Pure Land, or Western Paradise. The Pure Land school teaches that rebirth there guarantees ultimate liberation; the Ch'an interpretation of Pure Land soteriology makes the Pure Land, and final enlightenment, immanent within the world and one's own mind. The "Ode" implies that Lo is a founding Ch'an patriarch.

8. *Tsai-chia p'u-sa* (在家菩薩): Lo never renounced household life (出家) to become a monk. His teachings, and the sect founded in his name, represent an alternative to monastic self-cultivation.

transmission stretching uninterrupted to its founder. This and other sects claiming Lo as their first patriarch represent the oldest continuing lay-based, sectarian tradition in the history of Chinese religions.⁹

9. "Lo sects" have been known by a variety of names. The earliest recorded in historical documents was the "Non-Action Sect" or "Sect of Non-Manipulative Religious Cultivation" (無為教), appearing in the sixteenth century (the 14th and 15th years of the Wan-li reign period, 1586 and 1587, of the Veritable Records of the Ming (明實錄) (Nanking: 1940), *chūan* 176, p. 7a; *chūan* 183, p. 2b).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sects claiming Lo Ch'ing as their founding patriarch and employing his texts included the "Mahâyâna Sect" (大乘教), the "Sect of the Way of Lo" (羅道教), the "Sect of Patriarch Lo" (羅祖教), the "Sect of Great Completion" (大成教), the "Sect of the Origin-in-Chaos" (混源教), the "Sect of the Three Vehicles" (三乘教), the "Vegetarian Sect of the Venerable Officers" (老官齋教), the "Dragon-Flower Assembly of the Lo Sect" (羅教龍華會) -- first appearing in government records in the eighteenth year of Ch'ien-lung (1753), the "Long Life Sect" (長生教), the "Sect of Fruit [Offerings]" (果子教), and the "Sect of the Prior Heaven" (先天教).

These are names recorded in the Veritable Records of the Ming (Nanking: 1940) (Wan-li 12年, 12月 [1584]; Wan-li 13年, 正月 [1585]; Wan-li 14年, 7月 [1586]; Wan-li 15年, 2月 [1587]; Wan-li 34年, 12月 [1618]; Wan-li 43年, 6月 [1615]; Wan-li 46年, 9月; T'ien-ch'ü 3年, 3月 [1623]); the Veritable Records of the Ch'ing (清實錄) (Taipei: 1963) (Shun-chih 3年, 6月 [1646]; Ch'ien-lung 40年, 4月 [1775]; Tao-kuang 5年, 5月 [1825]); the Historical Records Published Every Ten Days (史料旬刊) (Peking: 1930-1931) (Yung-cheng 7年, 10月 [1729]; Yung-cheng 7年, 12月 [1729]; Ch'ien-lung 13年, 3月 to 7月 [1748]; Ch'ien-lung 18年, 7月 to 8月 [1753]; Ch'ien-lung 33年, 9月 to 11月 [1768]; Ch'ien-lung 34年, 3月 [1769]); and the Palace Archives (宮中檔) (Taipei: 1976) (Yung-cheng 5年, 9月 to 11月 [1727]; Yung-cheng 7年, 10月 [1729]; Yung-cheng 10年, 5月 [1732]; Ch'ien-lung 34年, 6月 [1769]; Ch'ien-lung 46年, 8月 [1781]). For specific references, see Chapter III below.

The earliest descriptions of Lo sects in English were by Joseph Edkins, Chinese Buddhism (London: 1893), 371-379; and J.J.M. de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China (Amsterdam: 1903), vol. I, 176-241. De Groot observed the Dragon-Flower Assembly in 1887 in Amoy (Hsia-men) and collected recitation texts of the *Lung-hua* and *Hsien-t'ien* Sects (cited specifically below). Many of the rites, membership ranks and titles, texts, and festival observances recorded by de Groot are descriptive of the *Lung-hua* Assembly in Taiwan today.

Lo Ch'ing (羅清, 1442-1527) was a popular religious leader of the Ming Dynasty. He was a man of humble origins, whose Autobiography in the first of his Five Books describes the course of his spiritual search, self-education and religious awakening. The "Ode" calls him the "Bodhisattva of Home-based Religious Cultivation": though familiar with Buddhist scriptures and meditative practices, Lo never took the tonsure to become a monk. He inherited the tradition of the founding of lay associations by monks such as Hui-yüan (慧遠, 334-416), who established the White Lotus Society (白蓮社), and Mao Tzu-yüan (茅子元, 1086-1166), founder of the White Lotus Sect (白蓮教), but dissociated himself completely from the institutions of the Chinese *saṅgha* and state.¹⁰ His teachings, set out in his Five Books of scripture, became the basis of a "Lo Sect" (羅教), or "Sect of Non-Manipulative Religious Cultivation" (無為教)¹¹ that was to attract a wide following in the late Ming and early Ch'ing

10. For Hui-yüan, his "Amitâbha vow" and the "White Lotus Fellowship", see Emil Zürcher, The Buddhist Conquest of China (Leiden: 1959), 219-233; Tsukamoto Zenryû, A History of Early Chinese Buddhism, trans. Leon Hurvitz (Tokyo: 1985), vol. II, ch. 8. On the White Lotus Sect of Mao Tzu-yüan, see Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China (Cambridge, MA: 1976), 90-94, 130-132; and "Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society," Modern China 7 (1981), 169-172.

11. *Wu-wei chiao* (無為教): translated as the "Religion of Non-Action" in the title of this study to elicit the classical Taoist basis and conventional translation of the phrase, *wu-wei* is employed more narrowly by Lo Ch'ing to describe his "method of non-manipulative religious cultivation" (無為法) -- simple faith in the inner capacity for self-illumination developed through congregational worship, vegetarianism, and recitation of scripture -- in contrast to the "manipulative methods of religious cultivation" (有為法) that characterize conventional religiosity. I explore this theme in detail in Chapter II.

Dynasties. Branching into several divisions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Lo sects still survive today in southern China and Taiwan.

Lo advocated home-based worship and ritual, strict vegetarianism, and mutual aid among believers. He was a conscious innovator within the Buddhist tradition, which, by Ming times, survived primarily in its Ch'an and Pure Land forms: his Five Books of scripture provide a window into popular interpretation of Buddhist teachings and practices. Though within the realm of discourse of these doctrines, however, Lo was an outspoken critic of Ch'an and Pure Land, modifying their conceptions and incorporating Taoist, Neo-Confucian, and popular elements in his teachings. His soteriological vision was one establishing the goal of self-realization as a union with a compassionate "Holy Ancestor of the Limitless" (無極聖祖) or "Eternal Mother" (無生老母), calling her children to their "true home". The cult of the Eternal Mother became a defining characteristic of the Lo sects, though Lo's scriptures describe her primarily in metaphorical terms, as a representation of one's "true self" (真身) or "inner light" (靈光). The ultimate goal of the religious seeker, Lo said, is to "return" to his or her "ancestral home" (家鄉) by recovering the "original mind" (本心).

As inspirational as he was to religious sectarians of late imperial China, the explicit focus of Lo's writings is the *salvation of individual believers*, not sectarian organization. Lo was disdainful of unreflective religious followers, including those who attached themselves to Lo Ch'ing himself. His

teachings were aimed to instruct, and his Autobiography was meant to serve as an exemplary model for others to follow, not to enthrone himself as a lofty savior. While it is true that the very form of his scriptures implies collective worship, Lo had no interest in seeing himself deified by his followers, except to the extent that all men and women are already divine and possessed of an eternal spirit -- Lo himself no more than others.

Nevertheless, biographies of Lo appearing in later sectarian scriptures emphasize his supernormal powers and messianic sanctity. Religious hagiographies of Lo, like his "Ode", describe him not merely as a moral and religious model, but as a universal savior.

In Chapter I, on the life of Lo Ch'ing, we will explore several of these hagiographies and their portrayal of the Patriarch; our primary source for Lo's biography, however, will be the autobiographical Awakening to the Way through Bitter Effort (苦功悟道卷), the first of Lo's Five Books. Chapter II describes Lo's religious thought, through a presentation and analysis of his Five Books in Six Volumes. In Chapter III, we will attempt to trace the history and development of Lo sects, beginning with Lo Ch'ing's self-understanding as a "sect patriarch" and culminating in the "vegetarian halls" (齋堂) of contemporary Taiwan and their ritual activities. Chapter IV examines the social and economic context of Lo's life, returning to the form of his writings as an early example of "precious volume" (寶卷) literature; Lo's use of religious and philosophical texts to support his own teachings reveals much

about his educational and social background. Chapter V evaluates Lo's place in Chinese religious and intellectual history, as a mediator of "elite" and "popular" culture. Lo Ch'ing and his sects provide us a window into an area of Chinese history and society long neglected or ignored. They also encourage us to think about the nature of popular sectarian religion, its role in culture, and the extent of its impact and appeal in the Chinese case.

The Wu-pu liu-ts'e

Between 1482 and 1507, Lo Ch'ing composed his Five Books in Six Volumes (五部六冊). There are extant editions of the fourth and fifth books dated 1509.¹² The edition cited in this study was first published in 1652, based on an earlier edition of 1595-1597, and reprinted in 1802, 1842, 1869, and, in a photolithographic reprint, in 1980 by the Taichung Hall of People's Virtue (台中民德堂) of the Dragon-Flower Assembly of Patriarch Lo (羅祖龍華會).^a This text, also entitled Essential Methods for Opening the Mind (開心發要), was annotated by Wang Yüan-ching (王源靜), preface 1596, and edited by a Lo sectarian known by his *Dharma*-name, P'u-shen (普伸), preface 1652.

12. In Sawada Mizuho's possession. See his Zôho hôkan no kenkyû [Studies in *Pao-chüan*, revised edition] (Tokyo: 1975), 310.

a. One copy of the reprint edition is held at the Gest Library, Princeton University.

Lo refers to his works as "scriptures" (經卷) or "precious volumes" (寶卷).¹³ The texts are in alternating prose-verse form, the prose sections presenting the basic religious message in simple, colloquial Chinese. The verses articulate the key points of Lo's teachings, and are likely to have been recited and chanted aloud, in a congregational setting, as they are still today among Lo sectarians in Taiwan and other Chinese communities. The commentary of Wang Yüan-ching is inserted within the body of the text, with laudatory verses by his "Ch'an master" Lan Feng (蘭風), composed between 1550 and 1580. In my view, Lan Feng and Wang Yüan-ching exaggerate Lo's Buddhist tendencies and intellectualize his teachings. For the most part, I have chosen not to rely upon their commentaries. In Chapter III, I discuss their role in the development of the early Lo sects.

The Wu-pu liu-ts'e is divided into five books and one hundred three sections (品). The 1652 edition is in sixteen bound volumes (卷), with a total of 1,792 pages. The five books are entitled:

I. K'u-kung wu-tao chüan (苦功悟道卷), "Awakening to the Way through Bitter Effort," in one volume (冊), *chüan* 1-2.

II. T'an-shih wu-wei chüan (嘆世無為卷), "[The Way of] Non-Action in Lamentation for the World," in one volume, *chüan* 3-4.

III. P'o-hsieh hsien-cheng yao-shih chüan (破邪顯證鑰匙卷), "The Key to the Refutation of Heresy and the Manifestation of the Real," in two volumes, *chüan* 5-8.

13. In Chapter IV, I look at the form and structure of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, its place in the development of "precious volume" literature, and its debt to other textual genres.

IV. Cheng-hsin ch'u-i wu hsiu-cheng tzu-tsai pao-chūan (正信除疑無修證自在寶卷), "The Precious Volume of Self-Determination [físvara], Neither Cultivated nor Confirmed, which Rectifies Belief and Eliminates Doubt," in one volume, *chūan* 9-12.

V. Wei-wei pu-tung T'ai-shan shen-ken chieh-kuo pao-chūan (巍巍不動太山深根結果寶卷), "The Precious Volume of Deep-Rooted Karmic Fruits, Majestic and Unmoved like Mount T'ai," in one volume, *chūan* 13-16.¹⁴

I discuss Book 1, containing Lo Ch'ing's Autobiography, in Chapter I below, and Books 2 to 5 in Chapters II, III, and IV. For a summary of each of the 103 *p'in* making up the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, see Appendix I. The Wu-pu liu-ts'e is a seminal work: it is not only the oldest extant sectarian *pao-chūan*, but also perhaps the most interesting and sophisticated of the genre. It should be viewed as a primary source for the history of Chinese religions and for the intellectual thought and cultic life of men and women at a middle and lower level of society.

The Study of Popular Religious Texts

A word or two should be said about the methodological basis of this study. The ways that scholars dichotomize cultures -- distinguishing between "religion" and "history", "hagiography" and "biography", "popular" and "elite" cultural products and

14. Hereafter, the Five Books will be cited by abbreviated title, *p'in* and page numbers; e.g., "K'u-kung 18:139" for *p'in* 18, page 139 of the K'u-kung wu-tao chūan (*chūan* and volume numbers are not cited). The abbreviated titles for the 1980 edition are as follows:

- I. K'u-kung
- II. T'an-shih
- III. P'o-hsieh
- IV. Cheng-hsin
- V. Chieh-kuo

forms -- shape their approaches to the object of scholarship, the range of its definition, and the materials and resources deemed legitimate for its study. The canons of scholarship have long articulated the principled exclusion of the "historically valueless": "spurious" artifacts, "apocryphal" texts, marginal movements, and powerless men and women. It is only in recent years that the obelisks of conventional historiography have begun to come down.

This is a study of an unusual man and the religious associations that formed in his name. Lo Ch'ing was a commoner from a military family who never attended a school, earned a degree, or impressed an official. He travelled as a seeker, gathered ideas from a scattered assembly of religious conceptions and practices, and described a soteriological vision that is often derivative, self-contradictory, and under-articulated. Monks and officials found his works both repetitive and misguided, and branded them as the sinister "Tao of the left" (左道). His followers either misunderstood or altered many of his teachings, and yet, in the eyes of the state and in the testimony of its representatives, they defined his legacy. Because the institutionalized orthodoxy of the Ch'ing viewed his sects only in political and economic terms, it rejected the religious alternatives they provided. The conventional resources for historical study, therefore, are inadequate for an understanding of the man, his experience, and his impact in his culture.

As much as possible, I attempt here to describe Lo Ch'ing and the Lo sects in their own terms -- relying on sectarian hagiographies to describe his life, and on the terms, illustrations, and allusions of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e to uncover his thought. This means avoiding the temptation to describe Lo and his texts solely in the context of the "general trends" of Chinese religious history, or to equate his mythological, meditative, and soteriological conceptions with the "antecedents" of conventional religion -- some of which he explicitly eschews. It means also looking to non-literary sources for the referents of his models and metaphors -- in oral traditions, popular dramas, and local customs and practices. In this way, the boundaries of Lo's world can be drawn from within, and the terms he used can be defined as he understood them, in light of his education and experience. Inasmuch as Lo is a man of the people at a lower level of society, his life and written record provide a rare glimpse into the concerns and conceptions of otherwise unknown men and women.

Chapter I: The Saint becomes a Savior: The Transformation of Lo Ch'ing from Religious Exemplar to Sect Patriarch

1. Lo Ch'ing in History and Legend

Our best source for a biography of Lo Ch'ing is the Wu-pu liu-ts'e itself. Book 1, the K'u-kung wu-tao ch'uan, contains an autobiography in thirteen sections recounting the course of Lo's religious career. It is an intense, personal work, anticipating a style of confessional writing that was to become characteristic of Neo-Confucian letters of the later Ming. It describes a man of humble origins, who, through a process of self-education and personal religious seeking outside the institutional boundaries of conventional learning and spiritual cultivation, articulated a comprehensive vision of the Self and ultimate salvation, and inspired a sectarian following that has played a significant role in Chinese social history from the Ming Dynasty to the present day.

The Autobiography begins with the premature deaths of Lo Ch'ing's parents when he was still a young child, and traces the steps of his physical and spiritual journey in search of complete and final liberation from the suffering of conditioned existence. Describing his "thirteen years of bitter effort in search of the Way," Lo enumerates the various forms of religious cultivation which he alternately embraced and rejected. One after the other, he recalls his efforts in Taoist reclusion and meditation, Pure Land recitation of the Buddha's name, Ch'an sitting in meditation, scriptural studies, contemplation of the origins of the universe, and intellectual analysis of the doctrine of

Emptiness. As passionately as he attempts to integrate these practices into his own life, however, Lo comes away disappointed. None is able to satisfy his spiritual yearning or resolve the ultimate religious problem of *samsâra*. Each account ends with the same refrain: "Dreading the pain of *samsâra*, I dared not abandon my search, and progressed another step along the path" (懼怕生死之苦不肯放參再參一步).

The autobiographical narrative leads up to a spiritual illumination that comes in a "flash of insight" and launches Lo Ch'ing on his career of teaching and lay leadership. Having rejected all conventional forms of religious piety -- monasticism, meditation, devotionism, moral cultivation, contemplation, and study -- Lo affirms an immediate, intuitive awareness based upon faith and unmediated understanding. He recognizes the inherent Buddha-nature of all beings, and the identity of the Self with the "Creator-Mother" of the universe. One's Nature or Inner Light -- like the Mother -- is eternal and unchanging, by virtue of its Emptiness or lack of limiting characteristics. The religious seeker, Lo asserts, need only acknowledge the Emptiness of all beings and conceptions, and affirm the identity of the Self with the Creator-Mother, and he or she will instantly "return home" or "recover the ancestral home" within the mind. Books 2 to 5 of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e are elaborations on this soteriological theme.

Lo's personal experiences of spiritual frustration and fulfillment shape his religious teachings. In the second and third books of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, he attacks as "inadequate in

the face of death" (臨死也用不著)¹ the methods of religious cultivation which he himself had attempted and rejected as a seeker, and, in the fourth and fifth books, he articulates the religious principles that he had discovered in his enlightenment experience. Thus, all of his writings provide insight into his own life, and explicit self-referential statements appear throughout the Five Books. In Chapter II below, we will explore the content of his religious teachings in detail, with reference to their inspiration in the Autobiography.

Outside of his own writings, there are few resources for a biography of Lo Ch'ing that can meet rigorous standards of historical scholarship. Diaries and travelogues of Buddhist contemporaries, publication records for the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, and brief references to Lo Ch'ing in historical documents of the state confirm the fact of his existence and widespread fame.² These sources make Lo's historicity unassailable. They corroborate sectarian records of the dates of Lo Ch'ing's birth and death; the sites of his ancestral home, military service, and religious enlightenment; his composition of a Scripture in Five Books; and the extent of his influence in north China and along the Grand Canal.

1. *passim*; alternately, "...in the face of danger" (臨危也用不著).

2. Independent sources for Lo's biography, cited below, include the chronological biography of Han-shan Te-ch'ing (1546-1623), a brief essay by Mi-tsang Tao-k'ai (fl. 1595), the Veritable Records of the Ming and Ch'ing, and depositions of practicing Lo sectarians reported by local officials of the early Ch'ing.

Only a few details of Lo Ch'ing's life can be known from historical sources and Lo's own writings. Otherwise, we must depend upon sectarian scriptures to "colorize" the life of the Patriarch. The religious biographies contained in popular scriptures stand within a rich tradition of hagiographical legendizing in the history of Chinese religions.³ Hagiographies develop in the context of specific social groups, and the hagiographical tradition surrounding the Patriarch confirms the existence of a vital, continuous body of religious sectarians dedicated to communal worship and practice inspired by his example and his teachings.

In his own lifetime, Lo Ch'ing gathered a group of disciples and established a "school" of lay-based religious practice north and east of the capital. His sect quickly spread throughout north China, and eventually extended as far south as the Yangtze Delta and Fukien Province. It was known as the "Lo Sect" (羅教) or "Sect of Non-Manipulative Religious Cultivation" (無為教), and branched into a number of independent sectarian traditions within two generations of the Patriarch's death. Out of these sects and their "precious volumes" (寶卷) of religious scripture, a life of Lo Ch'ing emerged that characterizes him as a saint in possession of supernormal powers and insight. In many cases undateable,

3. See, for example, the biographies of monks and nuns in the Buddhist Tripiṭaka (*Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, volumes 49-52), numerous biographies of recluses and immortals in the *Tao-tsang*, and the rich biographical tradition of the standard histories, local gazetteers, and other state-sponsored publications. Many of these Buddhist, Taoist, and "Confucian" hagiographies border on fantasy and myth, and the distinction between history and myth is never clear-cut in Chinese hagiographic literature.

these accounts complete and enliven the sparse historical record. Lo Ch'ing's followers exaggerated his accomplishments and transformed a spiritual leader into a religious savior. Setting their accounts next to those of contemporary Buddhist monks and local officials, we can discover the creative elaborations of religious hagiography.

My primary sources for a religious life of the Patriarch are sectarian publications of late imperial and modern-day Lo assemblies. In the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties, Lo sects produced scriptures inspired in form and content by Lo's own example. Many contain portraits of the Patriarch. The earliest were composed within a hundred years of Lo's death. "The Marvelous *Gāthā* in Ten-Character Verse of Master Lo's Travels [in Search of Enlightenment]" (祖師行腳十字妙頌), written by Lan Feng between 1550 and 1580, comprises the prologue to Wang Yüan-ching's *K'ai-hsin fa-yao*.⁴ Lan's verse biography already portrays Lo Ch'ing as a transformation-body (化身) of the Buddha, come to earth for the salvation of humanity.

Another early edition of the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*, entitled the *Commentary of Layman Wang of Hua-yang County, Chin-ling Prefecture* (金陵華陽居士王海潮會解), edited by Wang Hai-ch'ao (王海潮) (preface 1629), includes imaginative details of Lo's enlightenment and teaching career.⁵ Other sectarian scriptures

4. *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*, *K'u-kung wu-tao chüan* 1:13-15. This passage is translated in full below.

5. Wang Hai-Ch'ao's edition, in Sawada Mizuho's possession, incorporates the fourth and fifth books of the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*. Daniel Overmyer has a microfilm copy of this edition. In the following discussion, I make use of quotations from the text

which elaborate upon Lo Ch'ing's life include the Precious Volume spoken by the Buddha in Lamentation for the World for the Division of Heaven and Earth by the Three Emperors (佛說三皇初分天地嘆世寶卷), preface 1639;⁶ the Precious Volume of Causal Origins [Based on] the Traces of the Three Patriarchs (三祖行腳因由寶卷), preface 1682;⁷ the Precious Volume of Universal Joy (眾喜寶卷), composed in the Tao-kuang reign period of the Ch'ing (1821-1851);⁸ the Precious Volume of Patriarch Lo's Engagement with the World, Repelling the Foreign Army (羅祖出世退番兵寶卷) of the Ch'ing;⁹ the "Biography of Patriarch Lo" (羅祖傳錄) from Green Gang (青幫) materials of the Republican Period;¹⁰ and the "Brief History of Patriarch Lo" (羅祖簡史), contained in a religious handbook in current use by the Dragon Flower Assembly in Taiwan.¹¹

by Yoshioka Yoshitoyo in his "*Raso no shūkyō*" [The Religion of Patriarch Lo], *Taishō daigaku gakuho* 37 (1950): 88-96.

6. For a description of the text, see Sawada Mizuho, *Zōho hōkan no kenkyū* [Studies in Pao-chūan, Revised Edition] (Tokyo: 1975), 302; and Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "*Kindai chūgoku ni okeru hōkan ryū shūkyō no tenkai*" [The Development of Pao-chūan Sects in Modern China], *Shūkyō bunka* 3 (1950): 28.
7. I am indebted to Daniel Overmyer for making a copy of this text available to me.
8. See Sawada Mizuho, *Zōho hōkan no kenkyū*, 148.
9. Quoted by Tsukamoto Zenryū in his "*Rakyō no seiritsu to ryūden ni tsuite*" [On the Founding and Development of the Lo Sect], *Tōhō gakuho* 17 (1949): 27.
10. Ch'en Kuo-ping, ed., *Ch'ing-men k'ao-yūan* [Sources of the Green Gang] (Hong Kong: 1965), 41-45.
11. P'u-k'ung, "*Lo-tsu chien-shih*," *Lung-hua k'o-i* [Ritual Instruction Book of the Dragon-Flower Sect] (Taichung: 1978), 1-12.

These sectarian materials contain many elements of the fantastic, as we shall see. They are hagiographies of a religious visionary and charismatic sectarian leader, complete with details of his supernormal powers, accounts of his ability to bring skeptics to conversion, and significant articulation of his principles and religious practices -- at least as interpreted by his followers. From the point of view of conventional historiography, they are not worthy of our attention. Indeed, few can make a claim to historical authenticity. Nevertheless, I employ these materials to compose Lo's chronological biography. For Lo sectarians, the fantastic powers and accomplishments of the Patriarch are testimony to the force of his soteriological message, and carry a reality more binding and personally transformative than the dry scraps of information provided by unsympathetic observers. They bear an "aura of reality" that "history" alone cannot support, drawing on archetypal elements that define Lo Ch'ing as one in a great tradition of religious saints and visionaries in the history of Chinese religions. Indeed, as confessional documents of the religious community that produced them, they testify to the *religious reality* of mythic allusions and the fruits of spiritual cultivation. From the perspective of the history of religions, the Lo Ch'ing portrayed in sectarian hagiography is more important than the Lo Ch'ing of history for an understanding of religious alternatives in China.¹²

12. For a recent collection of articles on religious hagiography in Asian religions, see Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara,

In this chapter, I examine historical evidence for the existence and influence of Lo Ch'ing, draw upon his Autobiography as my primary source for his life and activities, and then turn to sectarian hagiographies for the narrative details that define him as a religious patriarch. In Chapter II I present Lo's teachings in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e without the use of the interpretive filter of later sectarian interpretations, and in Chapter IV, on Lo's education and textual allusions, I attempt to uncover the actual social, historical, and literary raw materials of his own creative work, based as much as possible on internal evidence within his writings.

Lo as a Historical Personage

The bare bones of Lo Ch'ing's life appear in prologues to the earliest extant edition of the fourth and fifth books of his Five Works in Six Volumes, published in Lo's sixty-seventh year, the fourth year of the Cheng-te reign period of the Ming Dynasty (1509). At the end of the fourth book, the Precious Volume of Self-Determination, Neither Cultivated nor Confirmed, which Rectifies Belief and Eliminates Doubt (正信除疑無修證自在寶卷), we read,

Your master's (師傅) home is in the Lao Mountains (牢山), Chi-mo County (即墨縣), Lai-chou Prefecture (萊州府), Shantung. At Mi-yün Garrison (密雲衛) in the Wu-ling Mountains (霧靈山), I awakened to the Way and enlightened the mind. I have explicated the *Dharma* to save others, and [composed] the [precious] volumes of "Bitter Effort" (苦功卷), "Lamentation for the World" (嘆世卷), the "Refutation of Heresy" (破邪卷), and the "Rectification of

eds., Monks and Magicians: Religious Biographies in Asia (New York: 1988).

Belief and the Elimination of Doubt" (正信除疑卷), which some have named the Scripture in Four Books (四部經卷). I call upon you to escape from the bitter sea of birth and death!¹³

Here we learn not only of Lo's hometown and site of enlightenment, but also that the first four of his five scriptures were composed at some time before the fifth, and enjoyed a degree of notoriety. Indeed, in his fifth book, the Precious Volume of Deep-Rooted Karmic Fruits, Majestic and Unmoved like Mount T'ai (巍巍不動太山深根結果寶卷), Lo refers to disciples and followers, who, we may assume, were drawn to Lo as a result of his earlier writings.¹⁴ The prologue to this scripture reads,

My temporal home is in the Lao Mountains, Ch'eng-yang Village (成陽社), Chu-mao City (豬毛城), Chi-mo County, Lai-chou Prefecture, Shantung. My family has served in the military for many generations,¹⁵ and I stayed for a time in the Chiang-mao Valley (江茅峪) of the Wu-ling Mountains (悟靈山), Ssu-ma Terrace (司馬台), Ku-pei Pass (古北口), Mi-yün Garrison.¹⁶

13. Wu-pu liu-ts'e (1509 edition). Sawada Mizuho, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû, 303. Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Kindai chûgoku ni okeru hôkan ryû shûkyô no tenkai," 33.

14. See Chapter III below for Lo's comments on his early disciples.

15. I am following Wang Hai-ch'ao's commentary in reading 祖輩當軍 for 祖倍當軍. Sawada, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû, 303.

16. *ibid.* The Five Books are as close as we can get to Lo himself, and we can assume that he composed them. But these prologues may very well have been altered by his followers: no where else does Lo refer to himself as a "master" (p. 20 above), and the change in the place of his enlightenment from "Cloud-Spirit" (霧靈) to "Enlightened Soul" (悟靈) Mountain may be the work of a pious redactor. (Cf. Sawada, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû, 304.) There is in fact a 霧靈山 90 km. north-west of Mi-yün County.

Ch'eng-yang is at the foot of the Lao Mountains, thirty km. southeast of Chi-mo, one of eight county seats in Lai-chou Prefecture in the Ming. When he visited Lao-shan in 1585, about sixty years after Lo's death, the Buddhist monk Han-shan Te-ch'ing (憨山德清, 1546-1623) was distressed to find that a "non-Buddhist by the name of Lo Ch'ing, from Ch'eng-yang at the base of the [Lao] Mountains" (外道羅清者乃山下之城陽人) had founded a religion which subsequently "spread throughout the east" (徧行東方) -- to such an extent, it appears, that the people of the area "had never seen a monk" (從來不知僧) and "knew absolutely nothing about the existence of the Three Treasures" (絕不知有三寶). Only after some time in the area, with the patronage of an influential clan, was Te-ch'ing "gradually able to attract them to conversion" (漸漸攝化).¹⁷ From this hostile witness, then, we have the confirmation that Lo Ch'ing was a historical personage of Shantung Province, with a significant religious following there.

Lao-shan in the Ming was known locally as a fabulous and spiritually potent area, shrouded in the daemonic atmosphere of shamanism and the immortality cult. The Ming county gazetteer of 1579 describes mythical figures and strange events associated with Lao-shan, and the rich *hsien*-lore of its peaks and grottoes. Even Chang San-feng (張三丰) was said to have appeared there,

17. Han-shan Te-ch'ing, *Meng-yu chi* [A Collection of Dream Travels], *chūan* 53, "Tzu-hsü nien-p'u Wan-li 13年," in *Han-shan ta-shih nien-p'u shu-chu* (Taipei: 1967), ed. by Fu-cheng (1651), I:52-53. For a complete translation of the passage, see Daniel Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas: The Lo Chiao in Ming Dynasty China," *History of Religions* 17 (1978): 289.

after the unsolved mystery of his disappearance from the world of men.¹⁸ Though these are aspects of religious charisma that Lo explicitly eschews in his writings, the aura of his birthplace would not have been lost on his followers and biographers.

The prologues to the fourth and fifth books of Lo's Wu-pu liu-ts'e also state that the Patriarch came from a military family, and that he served at Mi-yün Garrison, and was enlightened in a mountain valley there. Mi-yün Garrison, about 65 km. northwest of Peking on the Great Wall, was a strategic military station under the direct command of the Military Commissioner (都司)¹⁹ of the capital.²⁰ Elaboration upon Lo's military classification and period of residence in Mi-yün comes from the Lo sects themselves. A verse autobiography in the Precious Volume of Causal Origins [based on] the Traces of the Three Patriarchs (三祖行勝因由寶卷) (1682), a basic scripture for several Lo sects in the Ch'ing, says, "My ancestors from first to last were a family of soldiers" (我祖上上留下軍丁一戶),²¹ suggesting that Lo Ch'ing came from a hereditary military

18. Wan-li Chi-mo hsien chih [Wan-li Period Gazetteer of Chi-mo County] (1579 edition), II: 4b-7a; IX: 6a.

19. Names of titles follow Charles O. Hucker, A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China (Stanford: 1985).

20. Sakai Tadao, "Minmatsu ni okeru hōkan to muikyō" [Pao-chūan and the Non-Action Sect in the Late Ming], in his Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū [Studies in Chinese Shan-shu] (Tokyo 1960): 470.

21. San-tsu hsing-chiao yin-yu pao-chūan (Peking Library edition of 1682), I: 6a.

household.²² In depositions of sectarian "heretics" taken by Yung-te (永德), Governor (巡撫) of Chekiang Province, in 1768, the founders of one branch sect, named Ch'ien (錢) and Weng (翁), were said to have come from Mi-yün "many years" before, and migrated with grain transport workers to Hangchow. There they had established the "Sect of the Great Vehicle" (大乘教), identified by Yung-te as a Lo sect (羅教) and in possession of scriptures whose titles resemble those of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e.²³

22. From the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, every household was required to provide one male for military service. He was registered in a military population register (*chün-chi*, 軍籍) of the Commissioner's Office (*Tu-tu fu*, 都督府). He was bound to military service for life, and his obligation was hereditary for his descendents. For a brief description of the registration of households in the Ming, and the "guard-battalion" (*wei-so*, 衛所) system of frontier and capital defense, see Albert Chan, The Glory and Fall of the Ming Dynasty (Norman, OK: 1982), 40-44; and Edward Dreyer, Early Ming China: A Political History (Stanford: 1982), 76-87.
23. Shih-liao hsün-k'an [Historical Records Published Every Ten Days] (Peking: 1930-31), t'ien 404-407: Ch'ien-lung 33 [1768], 9/10, 9/28. Though Yung-te reports that scores of sect scriptures had been confiscated, it appears from his errors in listing their titles that the memorialist himself had not laid eyes on them. They appear in the memorial as the Cheng-hsin ching (正信經), in six *chüan*, the K'u-kung ching (苦工經, properly 苦功經), the P'o-hsieh ching (破邪經), and the Chin-kang ching (金剛經 or Diamond Sūtra, quoted extensively by Lo and thus undoubtedly a basic scripture of his sects). "On the basis of their titles," he writes, "they do not seem the least bit objectionable (並無不法)" (t'ien 405a). Cf. Tsukamoto Zenryū, "Rakyō no seiritsu to ryūden ni tsuite," 20; Sakai Tadao, "Minmatsu ni okeru hōkan to muikyō," 471; Yeh Wen-hsin, "Jen-shen chih chien: Ch'ien-lun shih-pa shih-chi te Lo-chiao" [Between Men and Gods: A Brief Discussion of the Eighteenth-century Lo Sect], Shih-hsüeh p'ing-lun 2 (1980): 69, 71; Sung Kuang-yü, "Shih-lun 'Wu-sheng-lao-mu' tsung-chiao hsin-yang te i-hsieh t'e-chih" [A Preliminary Discussion of the Religious Cult of the Eternal Venerable Mother], Chung-yang yen-chiu yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k'an 52.3 (1981): 565; David Kelley, "Temples and Tribute Fleets: The Luo Sect and Boatmen's Associations in the Eighteenth Century," Modern China 8 (1982): 373-385 *passim*.

Though this memorial is separated from Lo by nearly two hundred years of history, it is perhaps not unreasonable to assume that Lo had indeed enjoyed some fame as a religious leader while stationed at Mi-yün Garrison. Moreover, Yung-te goes on to relate that one of his sectarian informants

...served as a sailor on a grain-transport boat (糧船), and sailed to T'ung-chou (通州) [a prefecture situated east of Peking at the terminus of the Grand Canal] in the eighteenth year of Ch'ien-lung [1753]. [One day] in a small eatery he chanced upon a man by the name of Lo Ming-chung (羅明中) of Mi-yün County. He was more than seventy years of age. People there said he was a descendant [of the founder] of the Lo sects.²⁴

Other memorials of the mid-eighteenth century refer to Lo Ch'ing's descendants in the Chiang-nan area,²⁵ indicating a direct historical connection between the Lo Ch'ing of Mi-yün Garrison and the Lo sects of Ch'ing Dynasty Chekiang and Nanking.

Was Lo Ch'ing himself a canal boatman? As we shall see in Chapter III, it was among grain-transport workers that Lo sects proliferated in the Ch'ing Dynasty, and the Grand Canal was undoubtedly the route of transmission from Lo's principle area of activity in and around Peking to the boatmen's winter quarters in Hangchow and Soochow.²⁶ The earliest reference I have found to the participation of boatmen in Lo sects is in the Veritable

24. Shih-liao hsün-k'an, t'ien 405a-b: Ch'ien-lung 33 (1768), 9/28.

25. *ibid.*, t'ien 50a-51a: undated.

26. This is the conclusion drawn as well by Sawada Mizuho, Zôho hōkan no kenkyū, 305. Cf. David Kelley, "Sect and Society: The Evolution of the Lo Sect among Grain Tribute Fleet Boatmen, 1700-1850" (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1981). See map iii.

Records of the Ming Dynasty (明實錄) for the third year of T'ien-chi (1623),²⁷ about a hundred years after Lo Ch'ing's death. Indeed, twenty-five years earlier the Buddhist monk Mi-tsang Tao-k'ai (密藏道開) wrote,

In the Cheng-te reign period [1506-1522] in Chi-mo County, Shantung, there was a grain-transport soldier (運糧軍人) by the name of Lo Ching (羅靜). As a youth, he maintained a vegetarian diet (持齋). One day he happened upon a heretical teacher, from whom he received oral formulas of access to the *Dharma* (法門口訣). He practiced quiet-sitting for thirteen years, and suddenly saw a light in the southeast, which he interpreted as meaning that he had become enlightened. He narrated a scripture in five parts, drawing wildly upon canonical language for confirmation [of his teachings], entitled Awakening to the Way through Bitter Effort (苦功悟道), [The Way of] Non-Action in Lamentation for the World (嘆世無為), The Key to the Refutation of Heresy and the Manifestation of the Real (破邪顯證鑰匙), Majestic and Unmoved like Mount T'ai (太山巍巍不動), and one other -- I've forgotten the name. The P'o-hsieh chūan is in two volumes (冊), which is why I say [there are] six volumes.²⁸

This is an interesting statement for a number of reasons. It is the only direct evidence that Lo Ch'ing was a canal boatman, but otherwise corroborates details recorded in Lo's Autobiography (discussed below), including his studies with Buddhist masters, his thirteen years of seeking prior to his

27. Ming Hsi-tsung shih-lu, chūan 32: T'ien-ch'i 3 (1623). Cf. Yü Sung-ch'ing, Ming-Ch'ing pai-lien chiao yen-chiu [Studies of the White Lotus Sect in the Ming and Ch'ing] (Ch'engtu: 1987), 29.

28. Mi-tsang Tao-k'ai, Tsang-i ching shu [Scriptures and Classics Outside the Storehouse of the Tripitaka], "Wu-pu liu-ts'e". Quoted by Sakai Tadao, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû, 476; and Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng-lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan [Sources of the Belief in the Eternal Venerable Mother] (Taipei: 1985), 20. For a complete translation of relevant passages, see Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas," 287-288. Mi-tsang was, with his Ch'an master Chen-k'o, principle editor of the Ming Tripitaka.

sudden enlightenment, and the correct titles of at least four of his Five Books in Six Volumes, which do indeed draw upon canonical scriptures and classics. The errors in Lo's name (recorded as Lo Ching 靜) and direction of illumination (recorded as originating in the southeast by Mi-tsang, but the southwest in Lo's Autobiography), barring errors in transcription, suggest that Mi-tsang knew of Lo Ch'ing by means of oral transmission and exposure to his sects.

Mi-yün Garrison was a long way from the Grand Canal, and soldiers stationed there would have been assigned to border defense, but it is not unimaginable that Lo or his followers among the Mi-yün conscripts would have been re-assigned to the grain-transport corps during a period of shortage or in a peak season for shipping along the Canal.²⁹

We need not engage in speculation to conclude that some historical facts about Lo Ch'ing and his early life can be known from the writings of non-sectarians: that his home was in the Lao Mountains of Shantung, and that he was stationed -- as his ancestors had been before him -- at Mi-yün Garrison as a border guard, and there experienced a religious awakening which led to the composition of his five scriptures and the enrollment of a group of disciples.

29. Sakai believes this would have been unusual, since border troops and grain-transport troops were under distinct political jurisdictions in the Ming, but there were times that additional labor was required for the important work of transport along the Grand Canal, and soldiers were assigned to the task (*Zôho hôkan no kenkyû*, 470-471). See also Hoshi Ayao, *Mindai sô-un no kenkyû* (Tokyo: 1963), edited and translated by Mark Elvin as The Ming Tribute Grain System (Ann Arbor: 1969), *passim*.

That so little can be said of this man on the basis of non-sectarian records demonstrates the paucity of conventional sources that can be drawn upon to formulate an account of his life and work. By "conventional sources" I mean the historical writings of the state and its officials, the "saints' lives" genre of institutional Buddhism, and the essays of scholars and Confucianized Buddhists, all of whom found Lo and his writings inherently unworthy of attention. But, of course, it is the purpose of studies such as this to expand our standards of evidence, and, as a corollary, to question the objectivity of conventional historiography in favor of a more nuanced characterization of Ming Buddhism, and of Chinese religion generally, as it was lived and practiced by ordinary people. About Lo Ch'ing in particular, we can learn so much more when we explore sectarian scripture and hagiography -- no less "objective" as a source for our understanding of Chinese beliefs and practices than the staid condemnations of the upholders of orthodoxy who enjoyed the legitimizing power of state recognition. Let us turn to those sources then, including the autobiographical writings of Lo Ch'ing himself, for a richer portrait of the Patriarch.³⁰

30. My sources for the biography of Lo Ch'ing are from these works (for complete references, see the bibliography and specific citations below):

Lo Ch'ing, K'u-kung wu-tao pao-chūan [The Precious Volume of Awakening to the Way through Bitter Effort] (1509).

Lan Feng, "Tsu-shih hsing-chiao shih-tzu miao-sung" [The Marvelous Gāthā in Ten-Character Verse of Master Lo's Travels (in Search of Enlightenment)] (mid-16th century).

Chin-ling hua-yang chū-shih Wang Hai-ch'ao hui-chieh [The Commentary of Layman Wang Hai-ch'ao of Hua-yang County,

2. The Autobiography of Lo Ch'ing

Lo's autobiography, the K'u-kung wu-tao chūan, recounts his "thirteen years of bitter effort in search of the Way," culminating in his sudden enlightenment. It begins with meditations on the pains of *samsāra* and the impermanence of life, occasioned by Lo Ch'ing's distress over the premature deaths of his parents. Lo's orphan status dominates his thinking, and is a recurring motif of his religious writing.

Dreading the pain of the impermanence of life and death, [I undertook] the first step of my initial investigation. I observed that all the myriad things are impermanent, and that all things which have the signs of existence are empty and insubstantial (凡所有相皆是虛妄). The light cast in a hundred years lasts but one *kṣaṇa*;³¹ wealth, position,

Chin-ling Prefecture (on the Five Books in Six Volumes) (1629).

Fo-shuo san-huang ch'u-fen t'ien-ti t'an-shih pao-chūan [The Precious Volume Spoken by the Buddha in Lamentation for the World for the Division of Heaven and Earth by the Three Emperors] (1639).

P'u Sung-ling, Liao-chai chih-i [A Collection of Strange Stories from the Conversation Hut] (1679).

San-tsu hsing-chiao yin-yu pao-chūan [The Precious Volume of Causal Origins based on the Traces of the Three Patriarchs] (1682).

Chung-hsi pao-chūan [The Precious Volume of Universal Joy] (1840).

Ts'ai Heng-tzu, Ch'ung-ming man-lu [Casual Records of the Cries of Insects] (1877).

Joseph Edkins, Chinese Buddhism (1893).

Lo-tsu ch'u-shih t'ui fan-ping pao-chūan [The Precious Volume of Patriarch Lo's Engagement with the World, Repelling the Foreign Army] (Ch'ing).

Ch'en Kuo-ping, ed., "Lo-tsu ch'uan-lu" [The Biography of Patriarch Lo] (Republican period).

J.J.M. de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China (1903).

P'u-k'ung, "Lo-tsu chien-shih" [The Brief History of Patriarch Lo] (1978).

31. *Ch'a-na* (刹那): the shortest unit of time, a moment, "the time of one thought," "the time of one wink [or glance 瞬]".

honor, and glory are like a dream. Thought itself is no more than an insubstantial, ornate dream. Looking at it closely, I found that there was not one thing [無一物 -- i.e. not one thing existed in a substantial sense]. (K'u-kung 1:17-18).

For Lo Ch'ing, the image which typifies the suffering of *samsāra* is the subterranean hell where the soul must submit to punishment.

The spark of the soul (靈魂) goes to suffer in an unknown place, the Terranean Prefecture of the Officer of Hell,³² where there is no sun, moon, or constellations, and the sky is shrouded and the earth is black. (K'u-kung 1:19).

Having been born, one dies; having died, one is born [again]. [But] one does not attain eternal life (長生). After death, the four elements [of the body]³³ are consumed by fire and turn to ashes and dust. The soul in hell has no place to take refuge. In the *yang*-world, your parents watch over you when you are ill, but in the *yin*-world, there is no one to care for you -- you are a lonely orphan soul. (K'u-kung 2:26).

Alas, I was vexed and troubled in my heart.³⁴ Suddenly the [cycle of] impermanent *samsāra* [i.e., death] came to me (忽然無常生死到來), and I did not know where I would go to

Nakamura Hajime, Bukkyō-go daijiten [Comprehensive Dictionary of Buddhist Terms] (Tokyo: 1975), 827b.

32. Yin-ssu ti-fu (陰司地府): *Ssu* and *fu* are both names of bureaucratic offices in imperial China. A *ssu* is a "court" or "court officer", a *fu* is a "prefecture" (between a province 省 and a county 縣) or "prefectural bureau". Yin-ssu is the "court officer of hell," referring to King Yama (閻羅王), ti-fu the "prefecture of the earth [i.e. the underground]". Morohashi Tetsuji, Daikanwa jiten [Comprehensive Dictionary of Chinese Characters], 11:845 (41691.132), 2:777 (3257), 4:558 (9283, def. 11).
33. *Ssu-ta* (四大): the four constituent elements (*mahābhūta*) of all material things: earth, water, fire, and wind. Nakamura, Bukkyō-go daijiten, 526c.
34. *Fan-nao* (煩惱): a common Buddhist expression for the anxiety, "rage", passion, and confusion arising from mental attachment; freedom from this state of mind is the principle psychological reward of liberation or non-attachment. Nakamura, Bukkyō-go daijiten, 1273c.

suffer. After death, I will be unable to see the light of Heaven and Earth. Dreading the pain of the cycle of *samsâra*, I dared not abandon my search, and progressed another step (懼怕生死輪迴之苦不肯放參再參一步). (*K'u-kung* 3:32).

At this point, Lo begins a period of reclusion and the cultivation of immortality techniques, in hopes of defeating death and phenomenal impermanence: "what people say has no benefit, and I took no pleasure in listening to them" (人說話無益語不喜聽聞). Based on reports of "men of antiquity" (古人), he enters into the mountains and maintains a diet of fir and cypress seeds, seeking "no death and long life" (不死長生). Yet this environment is no more comforting than the world of society: "In seclusion I wept, vexed and unsettled. Among men I was ridiculed, my spirits assaulted" (*K'u-kung* 3:33-34).

One day, a friend calls on him, and Lo is overjoyed to have human company. He is told of a Pure Land master in a distant village. Lo travels with his friend to study with the teacher. The Pure Land monk tells him about Amitâbha, whom he calls the "Eternal Progenitor" (無生父母). "Your soul [lit. "this spark of light"]," he says, "is the infant offspring of the Buddha" (這點光是嬰兒佛嫡兒孫) (*K'u-kung* 3:35).³⁵ Lo devotes eight years

35. This is the first instance of the phrase *wu-sheng fu-mu* in the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*, and, as far as we know, in the history of Chinese religions. *Wu-sheng*, literally "not born", means "eternal" and "immortal", and specifically in a Buddhist context, free of the constraints of *samsâra* (as in *wu-sheng wu-mieh* 無生無滅, "subject to neither birth nor extinction"); Nakamura, *Bukkyô-go daijiten*, 1330b, 1331b; Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 7:442 (19113.517); William Soothill and Lewis Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (1937; Taipei: 1962), 381b-382a. The phrase *wu-sheng fu-mu* cannot be found in texts of the Pure Land tradition, before or after Lo Ch'ing, though Amitâbha is clearly associated with

to Pure Land practice, but he is both uncertain that his recitations are heard and skeptical that the Western Paradise of the Pure Land School is not characterized by the same impermanence and insubstantiality as the phenomenal world. It is, he concludes, "an illusory, non-existent realm" (頑空境界) (*K'u-kung* 5:45). He begs to take leave of the Pure Land master.

That night, Lo overhears the chanting of monks performing funerary rites for an elderly woman of the neighborhood. They are reciting the Ritual Code of the Diamond Sūtra (金剛科儀), a Sung "amplification text" (科儀) of the *Chin-kang ching* used for public recitation and instruction.³⁶ The monks chant, "One must

immortality in the earliest Chinese translations of Pure Land scriptures. See the Amitābha and Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtras (無量壽經) (T12.360-366.265-348), and Raoul Birnbaum's discussion of Amitābha and the early immortality cult, "Seeking Longevity in Chinese Buddhism: Long Life Deities and Their Symbolism," Journal of Chinese Religions 13/14 (1985/1986), 145-147.

- As we shall see below, Lo eventually rejects the identity of the "Eternal Progenitor" with Amitābha in the context of his general criticism of Pure Land religious cultivation, and describes *wu-sheng fu-mu* in favorable terms as the "Holy Ancestor of the Limitless" (無極聖祖), a creator deity at once identified with the self and at the same time projected as an object of reverence and adoration. Lo sectarians founded a cult to a deity called the "Eternal Venerable Mother" (無生老母) within fifty years of Lo's death. Indeed, *wu-sheng fu-mu* is described in feminine terms throughout the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*, and imagery of a holy mother dominates Lo's soteriology. It should be noted that *wu-sheng lao-mu* cults developed independent of the Lo sects in the Ming and Ch'ing.
36. *Chin-kang k'o-i* (HTC 129: 29-44 -- edition of the Tao-kuang reign period of the Ch'ing [1821-1851]). For a discussion of the authorship and basic contents of the *Chin-kang k'o-i*, see Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Shōshaku kongō kagi no seiritsu ni tsuite" [On the Authorship of the *Chin-kang k'o-i*], *Ryūoku shidan* 56-57 (1966), 154-170; Cheng Chih-ming, "Sung-tai Hsiao-shih Chin-kang k'o-i te tsung-chiao ssu-hsiang" [The Religious Thought of the *Chin-kang k'o-i* of the Sung], in his *Chung-kuo she-hui yū tsung-chiao* [Chinese Society and Religion] (Taipei: 1986), 213-224; and Daniel Overmyer, "Values in Ming and Ch'ing *Pao-chūan*," in David Johnson,

accept in faith, then take [faith] and examine oneself!"

(要人信受拈來自檢看) (K'u-kung 5:46).³⁷

"When I heard these words," Lo reports, "my heart was filled with joy. Requesting a copy of the Chin-kang k'o-i, I studied it in its entirety for three years" (*ibid.*).

Important as the Chin-kang k'o-i was to become in Lo's mature thought -- it is cited more often than any other text in his Wu-pu liu-ts'e -- it did not slake his spiritual thirst.

I examined the [Chin-kang] k'o-i for three years, [but] my investigation was not penetrating, and I could not attain awakening. Tears flowed from my eyes. Rice I did not eat, tea I did not drink, anxious and unsettled. Fearing *samsāra* in every breath my stomach [lit. "gall"] trembled and my heart was alarmed. In this life [lit. "revolution (of the wheel of *samsāra*)"], I am unable to escape the bitter sea of *samsāra*. The space of one *kṣaṇa*, once lost, is never to be re-encountered. This life, I have become incarnate [as a man], [but] human form is difficult to attain, and it is [as insignificant as] a seed rolled or needle tossed on Mt. Sumeru. I determined to read no longer, and again to advance a step [in my search]. Sweeping away the step I had progressed, I had no where to take refuge. (K'u-kung 5:51).

Lo Ch'ing then attempts various methods of Buddhist and Taoist meditation and several forms of popular divination (K'u-kung 6:53-66). He concludes that they are "motley methods" (雜法) which are useless in the face of human mortality (K'u-kung 6:62), and abandons them.³⁸

Andrew Nathan, and Evelyn Rawski, eds., Popular Culture in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: 1985), 225-227. See Chapter IV for further discussion of this and other texts of the *k'o-i* genre.

37. The phrase does not appear in the Hsü tsang ching edition of the Chin-kang k'o-i (*ibid.*).

38. We will examine these practices more closely below.

From these practical aids to religious understanding, Lo turns to more metaphysical questions about the origins of the universe and the substance of reality. He asks, what was the nature of existence "...in the beginning, when there was no Heaven and Earth (當出無天無地)?" In these meditations, Lo has his first insight into Emptiness (虛空).³⁹

Before there was a Heaven and Earth, first there was an Unmoved Emptiness: unbounded, unlimited, unmoving, unshaken. It is the *Dharma*-body (法身) of the Buddhas. While *ch'ien* (乾) and *k'un* (坤) [Heaven and Earth] are subject to decay, Emptiness is not... My heart was overjoyed! (*K'u-kung* 7:67-69).

Lo had discovered, personally and experientially, one of the fundamental teachings of the Buddhist tradition. Emptiness was to become a key conception of his emerging religious system.

Yet, in the course of his spiritual progress, Lo is unable to see the relevance of this intellectual discovery to the existential problems of his life. Though Emptiness is all-inclusive, "penetrating the mountains and seas" (穿山透海) and "universally sheltering humankind" (普覆人身) (*K'u-kung* 9:77), how, he asks, does this bear upon one's own existence and well-being?

Having understood that Emptiness is the *Dharma*-body of all the Buddhas, still I did not know [how] to settle the body

39. Lo Ch'ing clearly attaches metaphysical importance to his conception of *hsü-k'ung*, and I translate the phrase as "Emptiness" (Sanskrit, *Śūnya* or *Śūnyatā*, Chinese equivalents 舜若多, 空, 空性), "the immaterial universe behind all phenomena" (Soothill and Hodous, *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 389b), and not its more literal meaning of "empty space" (Skt., *ākāśa*). Cf. Nakamura, *Bukkyō-go daijiten*, 349d.

and establish my destiny⁴⁰ or [how] to become free and autonomous.⁴¹ (*K'u-kung* 8:73).

The problem, Lo concludes, is that a metaphysical conception of Emptiness, as an idea that can be grasped intellectually, is merely another form of mental attachment. Any attempt to conceptualize Emptiness will prove false, perpetuating the problem that it is seen to resolve. It is not an intellectual attachment, but rather an experiential identification with Emptiness that resolves his spiritual search.

I progressed another step [in my search]. Do not be attached to Being; do not be attached to Non-Being (不執有不執無). Simply in being human is the *Dharma*-nature of True Emptiness (當人就是真空法性). (*K'u-kung* 11:47).⁴²

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40. *An-shen li-ming* (安身立命): Morohashi cites the *Ch'uan teng lu* (T51.2076) in his definition: "to settle the body, knowing how to follow one's Heaven-bestowed destiny, the mind without worries and anxieties" (天命の歸するところを知って身を立て、心に憂へ悩む所がないこと). *Daikanwa jiten*, 3:917 (7072.245).
41. *Tsung-heng tzu-tzai* (縱橫自在): Lo Ch'ing frequently uses this phrase to describe the autonomy or self-determination of the enlightened individual. It suggests an expansiveness, ease, composure, and freedom of mind, not the attainment of physical, supernormal powers. To be *tsung-heng* is "to behave as one pleases" (translating Morohashi: 思ふままに振舞ふ: Morohashi cites the *Hou Han shu*, describing the guest who "makes himself at home" (*Daikanwa jiten*, 8:9293 [27819.103, def. 5])). Cf. Chang Ch'i-yün, *Chung-wen ta tz'u tien* [Comprehensive Dictionary of Chinese Characters], 26:130 (28475.92, def. 4). To be *tzu-tzai* in a Buddhist context is "a state in which one is freed from the constraints of mental attachment and anxiety" (心が煩惱の束縛から離れること); "to be unconstrained and unobstructed" (束縛又障礙のないこと) (Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 9:408 [30095.215]). I treat *tsung-heng tzu-tzai* as a single lexical term, and translate it as "free and autonomous," "self-composed," "self-possessed," "self-determining," and so on.
42. We may be presupposing too much to credit Lo Ch'ing with a sophisticated understanding of Buddhist epistemology. Clearly, he was struggling with one of the fundamental conceptions of Buddhism -- in the concept of Emptiness -- and

In a flash of insight, I progressed another step in my investigation. My heart was overjoyed! Do not take refuge in Being; do not take refuge in Non-Being (不歸有不歸無). The Self is True Emptiness (我是真空). The Mother is the Self. The Self is the Mother. In origin they are one in the same... (K'u-kung 11:48).

Rather than in abstract conceptualizations of the nature of existence, the resolution of the religious quest can be found immediately and directly, in the self, identified with Emptiness, the "Mother" of creation.

In the dialectical fashion in which his meditations proceed, even this insight, however, is to be questioned. Was Lo merely replacing his attachment to intellectual formulations of the nature of reality with another form of attachment, to the "True Emptiness" of the Self?

Attached to self, I was not self-composed, and my heart was troubled. Having progressed a step, I had regressed a step, and not achieved self-determination. (K'u-kung 11:49).

As Wang Yüan-ching comments,

Although he understood that the nature of the True Self [is characterized by] Emptiness, still he was attached to the word "I" (我). And, like ice that has not melted completely, with a solid mass still contained within [the surrounding water], there was yet something like a substantial thing (一物) within his mind, vague and misleading. That is why he said that he was "mentally attached" [to the self]. No wonder he was troubled! (K'u-kung 11:50).

the use of paradox in Buddhist *sūtras* and *śāstras* to define it. His association of Emptiness with "Being" and "Non-Being" suggests some exposure to classical Chinese Buddhism. For the background of these issues in early Chinese Buddhism, see Kenneth Chen, "Neo-Taoism and the Prajñā School during the Wei and Chin Dynasties," Chinese Culture 1 (1957), 33-46; and Arthur Link, "The Taoist Antecedents of Tao-an's Prajñā Ontology," History of Religions 9 (1969), 181-215.

Every stage of his progress thus far -- Taoistic reclusion, Pure Land recitation, Ch'an meditation, the study of texts, and the intellectual grasping of True Emptiness and of its identity with the Self -- had left the Patriarch in doubt and confusion.

At last, his final enlightenment comes, quite literally, in a flash of illumination. It appears first in a dream, and then is re-experienced in a waking state:

Day and night, in the midst of my passions and dreams, I cried out in pain. Startled, I nudged the Emptiness (驚動虛空), [and I found it to be] the Venerable True Emptiness (老真空). I evinced great goodwill and compassion. From the Southwest came forth the bright glow of the Way, enveloping and illuminating my body. [But] in my dream the enveloping [light] dispersed, and [the light] having dispersed, my suffering did not cease.

When I awoke, I was still left with a troubled feeling. Facing the Southwest, I sat erect and composed. Suddenly, the mind-flower blossomed and the mind-foundation was penetrated, making transparent the evanescent light of the origin (洞明本地風光). Only then was I free and self-possessed; only then was I autonomous and at peace. (K'u-kung 12:53-55).

The agent of Lo's enlightenment is the "Venerable True Emptiness" (老真空). Elsewhere, Lo describes Emptiness as a creator deity called the "Holy Ancestor of the Limitless" (無極聖祖). The "transparent," "evanescent light of the origin" is the perception of the original state of the universe, before any discrete, individual objects came into existence. Moreover, it is that "place" where confusion is dispelled, worries and troubles eliminated, and ignorance dissolved.⁴³

43. On the "Holy Ancestor of the Limitless," see Cheng-hsin 5:32-47 and Chapter III below. On the original, "transparent" universe, see Chieh-kuo 24:107. For a discussion of this passage from Lo's Autobiography, see Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan, 77-81.

Lo concludes his enlightenment account by describing the fruits of his insights.

Having come, then, to this point in my search, at last I had attained ease and self-determination, and thorough penetration of the internal and the external, forming a single continuum. No inside or outside, no east or west, no south or north, no above or below: free and autonomous. In motion and at rest, sitting or lying down, [I felt] open and clear, like a shaft of light!

When death [lit. "danger"] is imminent, the four elements of the body scatter and spread [to other things]. It cannot be described or depicted. Self-determining and autonomous -- mountains, rivers, rocks and cliffs could not obstruct [my progress]. East, west, south, and north, the four intermediate directions, above and below: I looked on them all the same, as one body (一體同觀). After thirteen years of bitter effort, I had attained clarity and insight, I had attained awakening through reflection. (K'u-kung 13:61-62).

The implication of these passages is that Lo has realized a measure of immortality, with ultimate control over his own destiny, transcending the "danger" and mortality of phenomenal existence, his soul free of physical constraints. He has become a "Perfected Man" (真人) (K'u-kung 13:64), identical with the "Great Emptiness" (太虛空): "He is I, and I am He. [I am] one body with Emptiness" (K'u-kung 14:72). He is now the "True Body" (真身), "the root of men and women" (男女根), "the body of the Buddhas" (諸佛身體), and identical to the progenitor of Heaven and Earth, yin and yang, the five grains and five elements -- indeed, all of creation (K'u-kung 15-16:74-87). Lo's enlightenment is one of identity with the universe, the creator, and all beings past and present.

Lo's discoveries in his spiritual search become the basis for his religious teachings in his career as a sect leader. The Autobiography is not only our best source for a life of Lo

Ch'ing, but also for a general outline of his thought. We explore Lo's religious philosophy in more detail in Chapter II, based upon all of his Five Books.

3. Lo Ch'ing in Sectarian Hagiography

For a richer portrait of the Patriarch, we must turn to sectarian accounts of his life. Typical of Chinese hagiographic writing -- other examples are readily available in the Taoist, Buddhist, and Confucian canons, as well as in popular sectarian *pao-chūan* -- these biographies place Lo Ch'ing in a cosmic context, and portray him as a savior and saint endowed with supernormal powers and complete understanding. In regard to their usefulness to historians, these materials evidence the growth of his cult and the charismatic attraction of his persona as a sectarian leader, though they are of little value in establishing the facts of Lo's life.

The earliest biography of Patriarch Lo appears in verse form in the first pages of his Five Books in Six Volumes. It was composed by Lan Feng (蘭風) whose *gāthās* ornament the commentary edition of Wang Yūan-ching (王源靜), preface dated 1596. Lan Feng's verse biography, "The Marvelous *Gāthā* in Ten-Character Verse of Master Lo's Travels [in Search of Enlightenment]," appears below in prose translation.⁴⁴

44. All translations of verse in this dissertation are in prose form. This for two reasons: first, the verse portions of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e have a ritual function -- they are meant to be learned and chanted. The cadence of these chants was derived from popular entertainment, which cannot be reproduced in English translation. Second, what is remarkable about these verses, for my purposes, is not their form, but their narrative and pedagogical content.

The venerable Buddha of antiquity (老古佛) became incarnate (托化), adopting the surname Lo. For the benefit of all living beings, he descended to Shantung to carry out their universal salvation. Thanks to the generous compassion and virtue of his parents, who maintained the precepts during pregnancy, he entered into the world in human form, in the seventh year of the Cheng-te reign period. Appearing at midnight on the first day of the twelfth month [corresponding to January 1, 1443 of the Western calendar], he left his mother's womb and ate no meat or strong vegetables -- a *bodhisattva* in the world of men!

At the age of three, he lost his father; at the age of seven, his mother -- an orphan cast away. How pitiful! Without a father or mother, he was forced to depend on his uncle and aunt. Out of the goodness of their hearts, they raised him to adulthood.

Every day he lived in fear of birth and death. Vexed and grieved, he knew no respite -- thinking of *samsāra* and the bitterness of rebirths among the six levels of reincarnation [as a *deva*, human, beast, hungry ghost, being-in-hell, or *aśura*-demon], his stomach ["gall"] trembled and his heart palpitated with anxiety.

In the sixth year of the Ch'eng-hua reign period [1470; age 28], he set out in search of masters and companions in study. Day and night, he did not sleep, courageous in his pursuit of future merit. Tea he did not drink, rice he did not eat for thirteen years, until, in the eighteenth year of Ch'eng-hua [1482; age 40], he awakened at last to the enlightened mind. On the eighteenth day of the tenth month, the Patriarch completed the ripening of the Way. Precisely at midnight, his mind was opened to enlightenment: an experiential penetration, sparkling and clear!

In the sixth year of Chia-ch'ing [1527], with no heart to remain in this world, he abandoned the mind and body just after the New Year, aged 85... (*K'u-kung* 1:13-15).

Poetic indeed this glorious life of a Buddha incarnate, who overcame the worldly pain of orphanhood and spiritual struggles in his youth to experience a sudden enlightenment after thirteen years of bitter austerity.

"Versifying" the translations would conceal their clarity and appeal to the people who actually read and use the texts.

In texts discovered by J.J.M. de Groot in his investigations of Lo sects in nineteenth-century Fukien,⁴⁵ Lo is portrayed as a divine being who yearns to establish the Third Dragon-Flower Assembly of Maitreya, and bring salvation to all living beings. He petitions the heavenly "Old Grandfather" (老爺), the "Limitless" (無極), to fulfill this cosmic destiny:

The Most High Venerable Patriarch of the Limitless (太上無極老祖) later ascended to the palace again, and spoke to the assembled Buddhas: "Ninety-six million (億) embryonic sons and daughters (懷胎兒女) came into being (開天)⁴⁶ and were dispersed throughout the world. [From that time] until the present, they are crazed with longing for the earth [娑婆 -- Skt. *sahā*], and their true nature is sunken and lost [within the material world]. No one has been enlightened [lit. "converted by a spark"] as to where to return to their ancestral home.

"In the Age of the Prior Heaven (先天) I ordered Dīpamkara Buddha to save two million adepts of immortality (仙家). In the Age of the Middle Heaven (中天) I ordered Śākyamuni Buddha to save two million monks (僧家). There are still ninety-two million left. Now, the Posterior Heaven (後天) reigns over the world. Who will descend to the earth, to call my sons and daughters to return home?"

The assembled Buddhas dared not answer. Only Patriarch Lo, expressing compassion and commiseration, distinguished himself from the rest, and respectfully replied, "I wish to become incarnate in the world, to transform and save⁴⁷ the sons and daughters, that they may return to their ancestral home. What is your holy will?"

45. He observed the *Lung-hua* (龍華) and *Hsien-t'ien* (先天) sects in the 1880's. Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China (Amsterdam: 1903), 176-259.

46. *K'ai-t'ien* (開天): this would appear to be a peculiar use of the phrase. Morohashi, citing the *Chuang-tzu* (see the Harvard-Yenching Index, Supplement 20, Concordance to *Chuang-tzu* [Peking: 1947], 48/19/16), defines *k'ai-t'ien* as "moving in accordance with the basic nature of one's natural endowment" (天賦の本性に従って動くこと). *Daikanwa jiten*, 11:718 [41233.284].

47. Or, "save by conversion". *Hua-tu* (化度): "guide the myriad beings to salvation" (衆生を導き, 救うこと). Nakamura, *Bukkyō-go daijiten*, 292d.

The Old Grandfather joyfully commissioned Patriarch Lo, and he descended to the earth to make a new start [lit. "clear the wasteland"] and reveal the teaching...⁴⁸

Thus, in the fully developed sectarian tradition, Lo's followers describe the Patriarch in cosmic terms, as the divinely-appointed champion and savior of the common people. He is no less than Maitreya incarnate, appointed to his role in a transcendent, pre-existent realm.⁴⁹

The latest biography of Patriarch Lo available to us is the "Brief History of Patriarch Lo, Unsurpassed Ancestral Master" (太上祖師羅祖簡史), an uncritical collection of Lo Ch'ing hagiographies compiled in 1978 by the branch head of Taichung's Hall of People's Virtue (民德堂) of the Dragon-Flower Sect.⁵⁰ The "Brief History" is written in a vernacular form of classical Chinese, and borrows freely from a number of sectarian

48. DeGroot, *ibid.*, 180-181 (note 1): my translation of the Chinese text.

49. On messianic expectations of Maitreya's salvation of humanity in a third, "Dragon Flower" assembly, see the Preface above, pp. 1-2 (notes 2-3), and the articles collected in Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre, eds., Maitreya: The Future Buddha (Cambridge: 1988). On messianic expectations in Chinese popular sectarianism, and the three-stage kalpic time-scheme suggested in de Groot's text, see Daniel Overmyer's article in the Sponberg-Hardacre volume, "Maitreya in Chinese Popular Religion" (pp. 110-134), and his Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China (Cambridge: 1976), 83, 134-161; and Susan Naquin, Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813 (New Haven: 1976), 7-24.

50. P'u-k'ung, "Lo-tsu chien-shih," in Lung-hua k'o-i [Ritual Instruction Book of the Dragon-flower Assembly] (Taichung: 1985): 1-12.

scriptures, without attribution.⁵¹ It is a rich compendium of Lo Ch'ing lore, and the text which shapes the imagination of Lo sectarians in contemporary Taiwan. Though of little value in uncovering the historical details of Lo Ch'ing's life, the "Brief History" is a primary source for sectarian hagiography and religious practice among present-day *Lung-hua* followers. The "Brief History" also places Lo in a cosmic context, with an introductory section on the origins of the universe, based on Neo-Confucian cosmology, and a basic chronology of the history of Buddhism in China.⁵²

However Lo may have understood himself, his followers saw him as a divine savior, indistinguishable from Maitreya and the Eternal Venerable Mother (無生老母), their patron goddess and ultimate savior. For Lo sectarians, Lo's biography is infused with mythic significance.

Birth and Childhood

The "Brief History of Patriarch Lo, Unsurpassed Ancestral Master" begins by recording Lo's parents, native place, and early propensity for religious cultivation:

Patriarch-master Lo, founding patriarch of the Buddhist Dragon-Flower Sect of the unsurpassed *Dharma*-gate of At-home Cultivation, had the surname Lo, the taboo name (諱) Yin (因), the style (字) Ch'ing (清), the *Dharma*-appellation (法號) Wu-k'ung (悟空), and the *Dharma*-name (法名) P'u-jen

51. The earliest is probably the *San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan* [Precious Volume of Causal Origins based on the Traces of the Three Patriarchs] (1682), the principle source for the "Chien-shih" account of Lo's debate with foreign monks, translated below.

52. *ibid.*, 1.

(普仁). He became incarnate (降生) in Chu-wei city (豬尾城), Chi-mo county, Lai-chou prefecture, Shantung province, at midnight of the first day of the twelfth month of the seventh year of the reign of Emperor Ying-tsung of the Ming, 535 years ago, 1443.

His father was Lo Ch'üan (全), styled Teng-lung (登龍), a farmer who took delight in the good and made a practice of charitable giving. When he was three years old, his mother left the world, and when he was seven, his father. He was forced to depend on his uncle Lo K'uei (奎), styled Teng-ssu (登思), and aunt, née She (攝), to raise him to adulthood.

Lo's Heaven-bestowed nature (天性) was acute and intelligent, warm and approachable. He was proficient in reading religious books. At twelve years of age, his Buddha-destiny (佛緣) had matured, and he took refuge in the Three Treasures and applied himself to cultivating the Buddhist Path.⁵³

Here we have the full details of Lo's parentage, including his ages when they passed away,⁵⁴ and the names of the uncle and aunt who raised him to adulthood. Despite their possession of styles (字), suggesting gentry standing, Lo's father and uncle were anonymous folk, absent from the biographical sections of the Chi-mo County gazetteers, extant genealogies, or the official histories of the Ming, our first clue that the hagiography of the "Brief History" cannot make a claim to historical authenticity.

53. *ibid.*, 2.

54. The relative ages of their deaths are the opposite of those given by Lan Feng in his verse biography, which states that his father died when he was three and his mother when he was seven (p. 40 above). In the *Cheng-hsin chüan* of the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e* edited by Wang Hai-ch'ao (preface 1629), the relative order corresponds to Lan Feng's. The *Chung-hsi pao-chüan* [Precious Volume of Universal Joy], composed in the Tao-kuang reign period of the Ch'ing (1821-1851), also agrees with Lan's chronology. Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Kindai chûgoku ni okeru hôkan ryû shûkyô no tenkai," 28; Sawada Mizuho, *Zôho hôkan no kenkyû*, 148. DeGroot's sources have Lo losing his father at seven and his mother at thirteen (*op. cit.*). In any case, Lo's orphan status is recorded in each source.

Military Service

The "Brief History of Patriarch Lo" tells us that Lo Ch'ing was assigned to Mi-yün Garrison at the age of fourteen (1456). His military career lasted from that time until 1470, when he initiated his "thirteen years of bitter effort in search of the Way." During his service, he studied both military (武) and civil (文) arts, and started a family.

By day, he studied the martial arts; by night, he read diligently from religious classics. After a number of years, he took a wife, née Yen (顏), *Dharma-name* (法名) Miao-jung (妙榮), and she gave birth to a son named Fo-cheng (佛正) and a daughter named Fo-kuang (佛光).⁵⁵

As a soldier, Lo demonstrated both heroic bravery and religious resolve. At some point, he was re-assigned to Chiang-mao Valley (江茅峪) in the Wu-ling Mountains (悟靈山).⁵⁶

...There, by chance, he met with a shaman (巫人) rebellion, and, accompanying a unit sent to put down the revolt, he courageously pressed forward with a fearless spirit. When the enemy had been defeated, the Commissioner-in-chief (總督) closely observed that Patriarch Lo's courage far exceeded all others', with no fear of birth and death [sic], and that he could summon the spirits of soldiers in a great battalion and stir up the ability to gain victory in battle.

He called Lo before him and inquired closely of his experiences and background. The Patriarch replied: "I am just an ordinary foot soldier, with no aspirations of fortune or prestige. My mind is set on cultivation, awaiting the fulfillment of my Buddha-destiny, so I have always read Buddhist scriptures and studied Buddhist teachings. But, 'A dragon must live in a thousand [mile] river; he disrupts a small stream such that it cannot flow.'"

55. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 2.

56. Identified as 霧靈山 in the postface of the 1509 edition of the *Cheng-hsin ch'u-i pao-chüan* (see note 13 above), the Wu-ling Mountains are 90 km. northwest of Mi-yün County, in modern-day Hopei Province.

When the Commissioner-in-chief heard his situation, he immediately allowed him to resign his post in order to pursue his studies. Patriarch Lo kow-towed in thanks to the Commissioner's great kindness.

It could be said that when a person has virtuous ambitions, Heaven must bring them to fruition. This saying is not amiss!⁵⁷

Accounts of Lo's heroism and leadership appear far and wide. Green Gang (青幫) materials of the Republican period describe Lo Ch'ing as one of three founding patriarchs, and portray his military exploits in fanciful detail.⁵⁸ Though their Lo Ch'ing was from Kansu province and lived a hundred years later than the Lo Ch'ing of the *Ta-sheng*, *Lung-hua*, and Vegetarian Sects, Green Gang records do provide a link in the chain of Lo hagiographies from the Ming to the present -- to which we will return in Chapter III. Their accounts of Lo's military career do not, however, deserve our attention.

Nor does the remarkable tale recorded by P'u Sung-ling (蒲松齡, 1640-1715) in his *Liao-chai chih-i* (聊齋志異):⁵⁹ Patriarch Lo of Chi-mo county, while serving as a northern border guard, married and had a son. When he was reassigned to a post in Shensi province, he entrusted his wife to a friend by the name

57. *ibid.*

58. "Lo-tsu ch'uan-lu" [Received Accounts of Patriarch Lo], in Ch'en Kuo-ping, ed., *Ch'ing-men k'ao-yüan* [Sources of the Green Gang] (Hong Kong: 1965): 41-45. Cf. Hsieh Jung-chih, "Lo-chiao yü Ch'ing-pang kuan-hsi chih yen-chiu" [Studies of the Relationship between the Lo Sect and the Green Gang], *Shih-yün* 132 (1968): 3-11.

59. P'u Sung-ling, *Liao-chai chih-i* [A Collection of Strange Stories from the Conversation Hut] (Taipei: 1967), IX: 479-480.

of Li. Li and Lo's wife entered into an adulterous affair, and his discovery of their betrayal upon his return three years later drove Lo Ch'ing into seclusion. He died, a Taoist recluse, in the mountains near Shih-hsia camp (石匣營), thirty km. northeast of Mi-yün.⁶⁰

We do not know how P'u Sung-ling, the great collector of tales, came upon this story. It glosses over the course of Lo's religious career, and is thus of little value to us. In any case, later sectarians asserted that it was his wife, Miao-jung, who perpetuated Lo's cult.⁶¹

Thirteen Years of Bitter Effort

Lo Ch'ing's Autobiography describes the course of his religious career. Later sectarian hagiographers mythologize the story of Lo's travels in search of the Way, and provide details -- which we must regard as fictional -- not found in the Autobiography. They name the monks and recluses visited by Lo, and the way-stations of his physical and spiritual journey.

After Patriarch Lo had been discharged, he sought out famous masters of great virtue, beginning with the monk Pao-yüeh (寶月) of the *Lin-chi* school. [Pao-yüeh] taught him to maintain [the precepts], but he could not bring him to an understanding of the great matters of birth and death. [Lo] reconsidered [his situation and decided] to call on other famous masters. [One day] he happened to come across a group of people inviting a temple-monk (寺僧) to chant the Diamond Sūtra (金剛經). When he heard the teachings of this sūtra, Patriarch Lo realized that seeking [the truth] from others is not as good as seeking [the truth] within oneself,

60. For a discussion of this story, see Sawada Mizuho, Zôho hōkan no kenkyū, 305-306; Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Kindai Chûgoku ni okeru hōkan ryū shûkyô no tenkai," 29-30.

61. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 10.

and that "seeking salvation in the Way" is merely a beautiful phrase for seeking salvation within the mind. Consequently, [Lo] exclusively set to the Ritual Instructions of the Diamond Sûtra (金剛科儀).

But again he found that he could not enlighten his mind, see into his nature, or commit himself fully [to the Path]. [Once more] he left his home to pursue his education, and sought out the Ch'an master Wu-cheng (無諍). [Finding] his ethical principles high, he begged him to serve as his teacher. Based upon this master's instructions, he set his mind on studying the Avatamsaka Sûtra (華嚴經).

Abandoning sleep and neglecting to eat, he studied the canonical scriptures for six years. Though industrious in the affairs of this world, however, Patriarch Lo had little to show for his efforts.⁶²

His travels take him finally, according to these sources, to White Cloud Grotto (白雲洞) in the Nine-Flower Mountains (九華山), in present-day Anhwei Province, one of the four sacred mountain ranges of Chinese Buddhism. There he meets a *Lin-chi* monk named Wu-chi Chen-k'ung, "Ch'an Master of Limitless True Emptiness" (無極真空禪師).⁶³ He is given the *Dharma*-name Wu-k'ung (悟空), "Awaken to Emptiness", and dedicates himself to Ch'an meditation. As the "Brief History" relates,

One night, in the midst of *samâdhi*, Patriarch Lo saw a white light shining in the southwest, and, the flower of his mind opening to the light (心花發朗), he perceived clearly the evanescence of the origin and penetrated the true teaching of the original substance of the universe.⁶⁴

Consequently, Lo Ch'ing is requested by Chen-k'ung to become his teacher.

62. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 2.

63. Flourished 1507. Mochizuki Shinkô, Bukkyô daijiten [Comprehensive Dictionary of Buddhism] (Tokyo: 1955-1963), 4811.

64. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 2.

Though the "*Chien-shih*" account of Lo's sudden enlightenment appears to be based upon Lo's Autobiography (*Ku-kung* 12:53-55), it should be pointed out that the "Brief History" exaggerates Lo's Ch'an leanings, as do the commentaries of Wang Yüan-ching and the verses of Lan Feng -- both of whom describe themselves as *Lin-chi* "patriarchs". In fact, Lo was never tonsured and is critical of Ch'an meditation and Buddhist monasticism in his writings. As we have seen in his autobiographical account of his religious quest, the practice of Ch'an meditation is but one of the religious techniques that he attempts and abandons.

According to Lan Feng, Lo's "thirteen years of austerity" were from 1470 to 1482, ages 28 to 40. The number thirteen is mentioned repeatedly by Lo in his *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*; Yoshioka Yoshitoyo comments that thirteen is regarded as sacred in Chinese religious numerology.⁶⁵ The age of Lo's enlightenment is also seen by his commentators to have been significant: Wang Hai-ch'ao reminds his readers of the legends that Confucius became "unmuddled" (不惑) and Mencius "mentally still" (不動心) when they were forty.⁶⁶

Imprisonment in the Capital

There are a number of versions of the story of Lo's imprisonment, imperial audiences, and composition of the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*. Let us examine first the longest, that of the "Brief History of Patriarch Lo." It relates that he composed his

65. Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "*Raso no shûkyô*," 90.

66. *ibid.*

scriptures immediately after his enlightenment, then set to the task of their dissemination.⁶⁷

Patriarch Lo travelled to Peking, stopping en route to call upon a "venerable master" T'ai-ning (太寧).⁶⁸ In Peking, he stayed with a benefactor named T'ang Liao-jan (湯了然) on Chessboard Street (棋盤街). Outside the villa gate, he preached to passers-by on ethics and emptiness. Monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen, the wealthy and honored, and the poor and humble came to hear him, and, the "Brief History" reports, "the multitudes were enlightened, increasing in number by a thousand per day. They acclaimed him the Great Teacher!"⁶⁹ Lo hoped that his scriptures would come to the attention of the emperor, and be endorsed with an imperial tablet.⁷⁰

67. This chronology for the composition of his scriptures is also attested by Wang Hai-ch'ao in his commentary (1629) on the Cheng-hsin chūan (Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Raso no shūkyō," 90). This would date their composition to the 1480's. Most sources, however, recount that Lo recited his scriptures while in prison, and that they were first published in the fourth year of Cheng-te (1509), when Lo Ch'ing was 67 years of age. Indeed, this is the date which appears on the earliest extant editions of the first two books, in Sawada Mizuho's possession. The San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan (1682), p. 27a, says that they were first printed with imperial imprimatur in the thirteenth year of Cheng-te (1518). Cf. Sawada Mizuho, Zōho hōkan no kenkyū 301; Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Kindai chūgoku ni okeru hōkan ryū shūkyō no tenkai," 25; Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsien-yang su-yūan, 21.

68. T'ai-ning is one of the victims of Mi-tsang's condemnation of Lo and his followers: Mi-tsang Tao-k'ai, *op. cit.* (see note 28 above).

69. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 3.

70. Lung-p'ai (龍牌): "dragon placard". Apparently an anachronism, since the term does not appear until the Ch'ing Dynasty (it is absent from the P'ei-wen yün-fu). In the Ch'ing, lung-p'ai praising the emperor were placed in yamens and schools. Morohashi, Daikanwa jiten, 12:1136 (48818.519).

One day, Lo received a visitation from the deva Wei-t'o (韋駄), who instructed him,

Great troubles lie ahead in the coming days. At such times, grasp in your mind homage to the holy name of the Bodhisattva Kuan-shih-yin (觀世音), and I will personally come to aid and protect you. Later, officers and ministers will guard the teaching and greatly turn the wheel of the *Dharma*!⁷¹

As Wei-t'o predicted, Lo was apprehended by Chou Sheng (周昇), one of the circuit inspectors (巡城御史) of the city. He charged Lo with spreading rumors and false teachings, and had him beaten. The blows inflicted on Patriarch Lo were ineffectual, however, thanks to the protection of the deva Wei-t'o.

Lo was then brought before a military warden (兵馬司), who himself had been visited by the deva Wei-t'o in a dream and foretold of the Patriarch.

He observed that the prisoner had been subjected to countless blows, but showed no signs of disformity. His body was whole and complete. There was not the slightest [indication of] harm. His original spirit (元氣) was as good as new. Moreover, he showed no fear, and was utterly self-possessed and unabashed. It was truly unbelievable.⁷²

Inspecting an official transcript of Lo's Scripture in Five Books, the military warden found "nothing but orthodox teachings" in them, and ordered him released to a eunuch by the name of Chang Yung (張永), who had earlier been converted to Lo's teachings.⁷³

71. *ibid.*

72. *ibid.*, 4.

73. Chang Yung is the only player in Lo's biography who appears in the official histories. During the Cheng-te reign period (1506-1522), he formed a party with the traitor Liu Chin

Chang agreed to support Lo's efforts in gaining access to the emperor (Wu-tsung, reigned 1506-1522), and approached the court with his testimony:

"In recent days, the circuit inspector, in a territorial investigation through the five wards of the city, detained a man named Lo Ch'ing, who cultivates virtue. Intending to execute him, he subjected him to punishments without justification. I, your minister, have inspected the Scripture in Five Books, and every sentence is the orthodox transmission; it could even be called a National Treasure (國家之寶典). I request His Majesty to call this man to the palace, to inspect for Himself whether he is genuine or false."⁷⁴

The emperor granted this petition, and ordered Lo Ch'ing to the palace for an imperial audience.

Lo Ch'ing bowed before the golden steps to the throne. The emperor asked, "What does this scripture have to recommend it?"

The Patriarch replied respectfully, "I, this guilty servant, have studied Buddhism and cultivated virtue since childhood. I have investigated the foundations, and been awakened to the truth. Relying on my own determination to establish my destiny, I completed a scripture in five books to benefit widely the myriad living beings, a true transmission which will enable them to avoid suffering and obtain happiness. This scripture, in accordance with the canonical teachings of our Buddha, instructs people who practice Buddhism within their homes. It is a scripture which states that anyone, whether clergy or layman, can enlighten the mind, perceive the nature, return to his ancestral home, and recover the origin.

"I beseech His Majesty to write a Dragon Placard to guard and protect [my scripture] and widely bring salvation to the common people, that they may as soon as possible cultivate

(劉瑾), but later accused him to the court, and was rewarded with a promotion by Emperor Shih-tsung (1522-1567). There is no reference in these sources to Chang's sectarian activities. For the Ming-shih account, cf. Li Ku-min, ed., Ming-shih jen-ming so-yin [Index of Names in the Ming History] (Peking: 1985), 187.

74. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 4.

virtuous behavior and together ascend the Other Shore. Thanks be to the Emperor's unlimited kindness!"

The Emperor said, "Insofar as you have learned the true teachings of the Buddha, why have you not shaved your head to become a monk?"

Patriarch Lo respectfully replied, "Our Buddha, the Light of Compassion (慈光), explained that as long as the four classes of men [monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen] can cultivate themselves well, every one together will return to [the Land of] Perfect Bliss. True cultivation takes place solely within the mind, and the outward form or manner is unimportant. People who study Buddhism within their own homes need not shave their heads, nor will this obstruct [their understanding of] the true teaching as spoken by the Buddha."⁷⁵

Lo's refusal to take the tonsure infuriated the emperor, who ordered a soldier of the Bureau of Punishments (刑部) to fire up an iron furnace, and heat iron shoes and shackles to be placed on the offender. Lo was unafraid, but ministers of the court pled for mercy. They entreated the emperor to send Lo Ch'ing to the Southern Prison (南獄), where he would have the opportunity to repent. "[The Emperor], showing His great mercy, so decreed."

Another version of Lo's imprisonment is recorded in sectarian scriptures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The San-tsu yin-yu pao-chüan (1682) reports that Patriarch Lo, while still an ordinary soldier, was seen to be "enveloped in a purple vapor, manifesting a great light." The Chief Military Commissioner (總都) entreated Lo to aid him in overthrowing a crowd of "108,000 red-haired Mongols":

The Venerable Patriarch of Emptiness (虛空老祖), true to his word, led the troops forward to repel the foreign soldiers. When they saw him, their hearts jumped and stomachs ["galls"] trembled with fear. Seen from afar, this man

75. *ibid.*

radiated a great light, and his body was enveloped in a purple vapor. Was he not an extraordinary man?

The Patriarch, going forward, took up three arrows, and shot them one after the other in a display before them. The foreign soldiers saw three lotus blossoms in the sky falling to the earth. They turned around their troops and horses and returned to their native country, and the court was kept stable and secure.⁷⁶

When the emperor heard of this victory, he was "greatly pleased." But when Lo performed the same lotus-arrow feat at court, some ministers were offended, and Lo was sent to prison. There, according to this text, he composed his Scripture in Five Books, with the assistance of two disciples from the Wu-t'ai Mountains (五台山) who set down the scriptures as Lo recited.⁷⁷

Finally, one other text, a collection of essays called Ch'ung-ming man-lu (蟲鳴漫錄) (1877), by Ts'ai Heng-tzu (采衡子), states that Lo was imprisoned for spreading false teachings, and released when, during a drought, he brought rain by directing an oral formula over the sea.⁷⁸

The "Brief History of Patriarch Lo" tells that while in prison, Lo was visited frequently by the eunuch Chang Yung and

76. San-tsu yin-yu pao-ch'uan, 8a-9b.

77. *ibid.*, 9b-10a, 11b-12b, 13a-16a. The same story is told in the Lo-tsu ch'u-shih t'ui fan-ping pao-ch'uan [Precious Volume of Patriarch Lo's Engagement with the World, Repelling the Foreign Army] (mid-19th century), according to Tsukamoto Zenryū, "Rakyō no seiritsu to ryūden ni tsuite," 27; and J.J.M. de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China, 193-194.

78. Ts'ai Heng-tzu, Ch'ung-ming man-lu [Casual Records of the Cries of Insects], in Pi-chi hsiao-shuo ta-kuan [Great Compendium of Essays and Tales] (Taipei: 1962), IV: 3704a.

two ministers, named Tang (黨) and Ting (定).⁷⁹ Even the circuit inspector, Chou Sheng, had become convinced of the profound insight of Lo's teachings, after witnessing the miraculous protection of the deva Wei-t'o.

One night, during the third watch, [Chou] received a report from a messenger (差役) that the southern prison was on fire, flames filling the sky, in all probability a conflagration! Inspector Chou rushed out, but when he looked toward the southern prison, he saw that there was a five-colored light in the sky, unlike the light of a fire. Thereupon, he sent a messenger to go and see, and before long, the messenger returned with his report: "The fire at the southern prison is not a blazing fire; it's what Master Patriarch Lo has made manifest from his seat." Inspector Chou faced the sky and bowed, and as the assembly of messengers followed his lead, the immense light shone all over the world.

Inspector Chou and his messengers went to report to Master Yung and Minister Tang, that they would know about this miracle. By the fifth watch, that great five-colored light had diminished. Those who had seen it close up all praised the height and depth of the Way of Patriarch Lo, and their faith in the Patriarch was another degree more strong and firm.⁸⁰

When Lo's wife and son visited him in prison, he comforted them:

79. He is Ting, the "duke of state" (國公), and, like Chang Yung, a eunuch. This Ting *Kuo-kung* reappears over a century later, as a patron of the *Hun-yüan* Patriarch (混元祖) in the *Hun-yüan hung-yang lin-fan p'iao-kao ching* (混元紅陽臨凡飄高經) [Scripture of (Patriarch) Piao-kao on the Descent of the Red Yang Era of Chaotic Origins] (early Ch'ing). Huang Yü-pien, in the *P'o-hsieh hsiang-pien* [Detailed Refutation of Heresies], identifies him with a rebellious minister of the Hsi-tsung reign period (1621-1628). Sawada Mizuho, *Kôchû haja shôben* [Annotated Edition of the *P'o-hsieh hsiang-pien*] (Tokyo: 1970), 122; Cheng Chih-ming, *Wu-sheng lao-mu hsinyang su-yüan*, 23; Sawada Mizuho, *Zôho hôkan no kenkyû*, 307. On the participation of eunuchs in the Lo sects, cf. Yeh Wen-hsin, "Jen-shen chih chien," 58.

80. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 5.

One cannot control the fortunes and misfortunes of human life. They are due to the awards and punishments accrued in previous births. My own karmic recompense I am willing to suffer. There is no need for my family to worry and fret.

He ordered them:

Return home and rest easy. Wait for the day when this karmic consequence is exhausted, and naturally there will be good news for you to hear.⁸¹

In prison, Lo preached to the eunuch Chang Yung, Minister Tang, Duke Ting, and Circuit Inspector Chou Sheng about the virtues of simplicity and the vanities of high office. Faith in the teaching and dedication to fundamental virtues are greater than worldly fame and fortune. In the course of history, there have been many kings, generals, and high-ranking ministers who have sacrificed their status in order to keep the precepts, observe vegetarianism, and worship the Buddha.

Patriarch Lo remained in prison for many years, conversing on and explicating the true teaching, and converting prison officials and yamen runners without number. Ranking officials such as Duke Ting, Minister Tang, Circuit Inspector Chou, and the eunuch Sir Chang Yung acclaimed the sublimity of the Patriarch's way of great virtue, bowed to him as their master, and took refuge in the Three Treasures. [All told], it is impossible to estimate the number of believers [brought to] the Buddhist faith [by Lo Ch'ing].⁸²

The Debate with Foreign Monks

The "Brief History" indicates that Lo spent some twenty-five years in prison, from 1482 to 1507. We have no confirmation,⁸³

81. *ibid.*

82. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 6.

83. Nor am I certain of the standard prison term in the Ch'eng-hua, Hung-chih, and Chia-ch'ing reign periods of the Ming.

but this chronology is in keeping with the date (1509) of an imperial placard "reproduced" in the frontispiece of the earliest editions of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, reprinted in the Lung-hua k'o-i. There is no historical evidence that the emperor ever composed a placard in the Patriarch's honor, but sectarian hagiographies portray him as Lo's greatest convert to his sect.

The "Brief History of Patriarch Lo" relates that in the second year of the Cheng-te reign period of Emperor Wu-tsung (1507), a foreign monk by the name of Nai-shan (奈善) had received orders from the king of his country to "raise troops and cavalry to invade China and raise his nation's flag [on Chinese soil]." He proposed to Wu-tsung a debate with a Chinese monk, the winning nation to be declared the superior state, the losing nation the tributary state.⁸⁴

In short order, continues the "Brief History", Nai-shan defeated a *Dharma*-master of Heavenly Repose Monastery (天寧寺) in a debate, employing a spell (法術) that effectively silenced the Chinese monk. Minister Tang came forward with this recommendation to the emperor:

"I, your minister, wish to recommend a prisoner confined to the southern prison named Lo Ch'ing. That man is profoundly well-versed in the sublime truth, and there is nothing he has not examined in fine detail. Though the Buddhist principles [he espouses] are outside the transmission, [purveyors of] heterodox ways nevertheless find it difficult

84. *ibid.* The San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan says that it was seven foreign monks, and that they challenged the emperor with a riddle. "If you cannot penetrate this riddle," they said, "we will take the city of Peking to our country. Our country will be the superior state, yours the submissive state" (19b).

to approach him. Perhaps he can overcome the foreign lackey."⁸⁵

Patriarch Lo complied with the emperor's call for assistance, and requested three articles for the debate: "a nine-ridged cap" (九梁巾), "clothing of chaotic origins" (混元衣), and "an abbot's staff with nine rings" (九環錫杖). "Even if he twists his tongue with ten thousand tricks," he said, "I am confident that I will beat him."

...In the morning, Patriarch Lo donned the clothing of chaotic origins as bestowed by the emperor, put on the nine-ridged cap, and grasped the nine-ringed abbot's staff, and ascended the imperial palace.

The assembled ministers said, "On this day, for [the benefit of] the *Dharma*, we place all of our trust in the Buddha-power of [this] revered master [Lo] to overcome the foreign slave." At that moment, they prayed to the *Buddha-dharma* of our master and to his unbounded kindness and mercy.

The Cheng-te Emperor said, "We see that the clothes of chaotic origins that you are wearing, sir, [fits you so well that] it appears you fashioned them yourself."

Patriarch Lo replied respectfully, "I, your humble minister, have worn them in a previous life."

The Emperor then said, "Our ten thousand miles of rivers and mountains depends entirely upon you, venerable master. With one word, you can make it secure. Today it is incumbent upon us to make the *Buddha-dharma* most revered."⁸⁶

Three platforms were erected. Nai-shan took his place on the left, the Emperor in the center, and Patriarch Lo on the right. Lo Ch'ing intoned, "Homage to Amitâbha Buddha, homage to the holy name of the Bodhisattva Kuan-shih-yin!" and Wei-t'o

85. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 6.

86. *ibid.*, 6-7.

stood guard, not visible to the assembled audience, on his left-hand side. The debate commenced.

The actual content of the debate appears in a number of versions. The "Brief History" account is taken from the San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan (1682).⁸⁷ The briefest is recorded by De Groot (based on his observations of the Dragon-Flower Sect in 1887).⁸⁸ In each account, it is not so much a "debate" which takes place as a catechism for Lo to expound his sectarian views. His responses to the foreign monk's queries suggest the existence of a fully developed sect organization.

In the following translation, "de Groot" indicates Lo's response in de Groot's text, "San-tsu" the extended response from the San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan.⁸⁹

87. San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan, 20a-26b. This text appears to have been a basic scripture of the early Lo sects of the seventeenth century. It records biographies of the first three "patriarchs" and is a primary source for my discussion of early Lo sect history in Chapter III below.

88. My translation of the Chinese text: J.J.M. de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China, 184. The text is not named.

89. The order of passages in the San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan has been re-arranged to conform to de Groot's text.

de Groot: 番僧問言問曰、師就是無爲道人、再有大法、
無有、願開垂示。

The foreign monk began by asking, "If you, master, are indeed the man of Non-Action and the Way, do you also possess the Great *Dharma*? Please instruct us!"

祖答曰、華嚴誨會廣無邊。

The Patriarch replied, "The flower-garden teaching assembly is unbounded in breadth."

我無爲。
天下人。
明達了。
天然自身。
奈善。你真是無爲。祖答曰。
不識真。那宗外覓。

San-tsu (20b): The foreign monk⁹⁰ asked, "Are you really the Man of the Way, Non-Action Lo?"

The Patriarch replied, "The people of the empire do not understand the truth, [but associate with] heterodox schools and non-Buddhist pursuits. My Non-Action enlightens one's true self, Heaven-bestowed."

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90. The "Lo-tsu chien-shih" identifies him as Nai-shan (奈善) (p. 7), as indicated in the text provided; otherwise, the "Chien-shih" account follows the San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan verbatim.

de Groot: 僧問曰、你如何說這樣大話。

The monk asked, "How can you boast so?"

祖曰、普天匝地說真言。

The Patriarch replied, "All of Heaven and Earth speak true words."

希僧曰。你說這等大話。答曰。這卷真經本不難。未分天地原在前。運動往來無間斷。華嚴海會廣無邊。

San-tsu (21a): The foreign monk said, "You boast so!"

[Lo] replied, "This true scripture basically is not difficult. Before Heaven and Earth were divided, it originally existed. Its revolving, moving, going, and coming are uninterrupted. The flower-garland teaching assembly⁹¹ is unbounded in breadth."

91. Compare *Hua-yen hai-hui* (華嚴海會) with *Hua-yen hui-hui* (華嚴誨會) in de Groot's text.

de Groot: 僧問曰、你如何又不供養佛像、

The monk asked, "And why do you not make offerings to Buddha images?"

祖答曰，天地山河爲佛像。

The Patriarch replied, "Heaven, Earth, mountains, and rivers are Buddha images."

San-tsu (21b): Again he asked, "Why do you not make offerings to Buddhas?"

The Patriarch replied, "Tsk! Tsk! A bronze Buddha cannot pass through (度) a furnace. A wooden Buddha cannot pass through fire. A clay Buddha cannot pass through water. If they cannot save (度) themselves, how can they save you? If you want to be saved, you must save yourself. The true Buddha is manifest at all times. It is right in front of you, but you do not know it.

"Every speck of dust⁹² is a Buddha land. Every land is [ruled by] the *Dharma* king.⁹³ Mountains, rivers, and the great earth are Buddha images. Why is it necessary to mold a false carved ornament?"

92. *Ch'en-ch'en ... ch'a-ch'a* (塵塵刹刹): *ch'en-ch'en* means "dust of dust" or "every particle of dust"; *ch'en-ch'a* (normally *ch'a-ch'en*) refers to "lands [Skt. *kṣetra*] as numerous as dust". Soothill and Hodous, Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, 250b.

93. *Fa-chung wang* (法中王): an appellation used frequently by Lo Ch'ing in his *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*. I have been unable to identify this "Dharma king" in any of the standard Buddhological and Sinological dictionaries.

de Groot: 僧問曰、既天地爲佛像、叫那人來燒得許多香。

The monk asked, "If Heaven and Earth are Buddha images, who can come forth with so much incense to burn?"

祖答曰、風雲霧露是香炷。

The Patriarch replied, "Wind, clouds, fog, and dew are the smoke of incense."

又問如何不燒香。祖言。迷人不識。執着草木假香。乃是引過之法。各人自己有五分真香。又問。今在何處。祖答曰。戒香。定香。慧香。和見香。解脫香。此爲五分真香。人人有。住真妙香。不用燒香。不用裝。清淨無爲道。普天遍地是真香。香在乾坤本自然。草木假香不上天。春見秋冬時則現。風雲霧露是真香。

San-tsu (21b-22a): Again he asked, "Why do you not burn incense?"

The Patriarch said, "Confused people do not understand that grasping the false incense, made of grass and wood, is merely an [expedient] means for drawing them [into worship]. Every person has his own five sticks of true incense."

"And where are they now?"

The Patriarch replied, "The incense of the precepts, the incense of *samādhi*, the incense of wisdom, the incense of compatible views, the incense of liberation: these are the five sticks of true incense."

"Everyone has a stick of true, subtle incense. There is no need to burn it, no need to fashion it. Clean and pure: the Way of Non-Action. All of Heaven and Earth is true incense. Incense is contained in ch'ien and k'un, the original Self-so. False incense of grass and wood does not ascend to Heaven. Manifest at every moment in spring, summer, fall, and winter, winds, clouds, and purple mist are the true incense."

de Groot: 僧問曰、你既有這樣好大道場、我又不曾聞師打下鼓。

The monk asked, "If indeed you have such an immense sacred space, why have we never heard you beat the drum?"

祖答曰、雷震乾坤爲法鼓。

The Patriarch replied, "Thunder shaking Heaven and Earth is our *Dharma*-drum."

又問如何不動鼓。祖曰。
正法祖觀不動尊。
無生唱出空王調。
識得真趣不用多。
自然現出無相法。
靜觀太虛爲法鼓。
萬物發生苗結果。
人遇正法得真空。

雷音嘹亮絕人聞。
不解宗通近講論。
明師直指見圓陀。
水流風動法聲和。
風雲雪水關神通。

San-tsu (23a-b): Again he asked, "Why do you not strike musical instruments?"

The Patriarch said, "The True *Dharma*, when set forth, contains the Immovable and the Venerable. The clattering of thunder surpasses human hearing. The Eternal chants the melody of the King of Emptiness.⁹⁴ [If] one does not attain thorough penetration of the teaching, [then] one reverts to calumny and rage.

"In understanding the true scriptures, it is not necessary that they be numerous. When the enlightened master points directly, one sees Amitâbha, naturally revealing the signless *Dharma*. Water flows and wind blows, declaring the Greater Vehicle [*Mahâyâna*]! Thunder shakes the great void as his *Dharma*-drum. Wind, clouds, snow, and rain manifest supernormal powers. The ten thousand things once born, their sprouts mature as fruit. When men meet with the True *Dharma*, they attain True Emptiness."

94. Tentative: 無生唱出空王調. I have been unable to identify this "melody".

de Groot: 僧問曰、既有法鼓、何又不曾點燈。

The monk asked, "If there is indeed a *Dharma*-drum, why then have you never lit a lamp?"

祖答曰、日月爲燈、晝夜燃。

The Patriarch replied, "The sun and moon are the lamps, burning day and night."

San-tsu (23b-24a): Again he asked, "Why do you not light lamps?"

The Patriarch said, "The earth is the lamp stand, water is its oil. The azure Heaven momentarily becomes a round paper lantern. The sun and moon, called the bright flame of a lamp, thoroughly illuminate Jambûdvîpa and the [other] four continents.⁹⁵ One bright lantern concealed within, permeating Heaven and Earth, is bright in its majesty. The inner light shines outward, but men do not recognize this. With every step, and wherever [one] moves, one emits light everywhere."

又問如何不點燈。
地爲燈臺水爲油。
日月喚作燈光。
一盞明燈在內藏。
裡明外光人不識。
青天橫作紙燈籠。
照徹圓浮四部洲。
通天徹地亮堂堂。
舉步擲移普放光。

-
95. *Yen-fu ssu-pu chou* (閻浮四部洲): the *ssu-chou* are "the four inhabited continents of every universe," surrounding Mt. Sumeru. Jambûdvîpa (*yen-fu*) is one; Pûrva-videha, Aparagodânîya, and Uttara-kuru are the others. Soothill and Hodous, Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, 178a.

de Groot: 僧問曰、既有明燈、將何物供養。

The monk asked, "If there are indeed bright lamps, what do you use for offerings?"

祖答曰、四時花果常供養。

The Patriarch replied, "The flowers and fruits of the four seasons offer [themselves] continuously."

又問如何不供花。祖言。走年年四季。一切萌芽。生計開
花結實。佛祖空中。先降甘露。受之為衆生。收在掌中。應
應剎剎。先新後舊。依然發現。豈能容納。
香在爐中燭在臺。
茶在盞中時時現。
瓶在瓶中時時現。
四季常開可供養。
何曾一夕不充腸。

San-tsu (22a-b): Again he asked, "Why do you not make offerings of flowers?"

The Patriarch said, "Year after year there is the revolution of the four seasons. Before the buds and sprouts blossom in flower and swell with fruit, the Buddhas and Patriarchs send down sweet dew from the sky. Receiving it, the various kinds of living thing are harvested and stored in our homes. Every particle of dust in every land first is new, then is mature, developing in accordance with nature. Can [one] possibly take [all of this in]?"

"Incense in the burner, candles on the altar [lit: "platform"]. Flowers in the silver bowl, blossoming four seasons of the year. Tea leaves in the shallow dish, always present there. Fruits in the basin, offered to the Tathāgata!

"Manifest in Emptiness, the fragrance [of incense] collects among the participants. The lustre of pearls and hundred flavors [of food offerings] display the hearts of men. [The flowers of] the four seasons, always in blossom, can serve as offerings [to the Buddhas]. Has there ever been even one night in which they have not been present in abundance [lit. "filled the belly"]?"

de Groot: 僧問曰、既有花果供養、何又不獻茶。

The monk asked, "If there are indeed flowers and fruits for offerings, why then do you not present tea?"

祖答曰、五湖四海爲茶獻。

The Patriarch replied, "The Five Lakes and Four Seas⁹⁶ are tea offerings."

de Groot: 僧問曰、我和你是小小的人行這樣大法事。

The monk asked, "[How can] tiny and insignificant persons such as ourselves perform such great *Dharma*-rites?"

祖曰、法身遍滿三千界。

The Patriarch said, "The *Dharma*-body [of every man] fills the three thousand worlds."

de Groot: 僧問曰、如何又不撞下鐘。

The monk asked, "And why do you not strike bells?"

祖答曰、雷鳴法鼓勝鐘聲。

The Patriarch replied, "The *Dharma*-drum of peals of thunder surpasses the sound of bells."

de Groot: 僧問曰、何不寫文疏奏上。

The monk asked, "Why do you not write petitionary prayers?"

祖答曰、善言就是文疏奏。

The Patriarch replied, "The language of *bodhi* [enlightenment] is our petitionary prayer."

96. *Wu-hu ssu-hai* (五湖四海): different Chinese sources list the Five Lakes variously; the Four Seas refer to the East Sea, the West Sea, the South Sea, and the North Sea surrounding the civilized (Chinese) world. Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 1:478 (257.335), 3.6 (4682.84).

de Groot:

問曰、如何又不揚幡。

The monk asked, "And why do you not raise banners?"

祖答曰、樹梢擺動是揚幡。

The Patriarch replied, "The swaying tree-tops are [our] raised banners."

又問如何不揚幡掛榜。祖言。佛問揚幡掛榜。一切花紅柳綠。亦是家鄉變化。迷人執着。不得還原。天生自然。剎正法。何須假作百千般。花紅柳綠家鄉教。樹梢擺動是揚幡。

San-tsu (22b): Again [Nai-shan] asked, "Why do you not raise banners or hang placards?"

The Patriarch said, "You ask about raising flags and hanging placards. The red of every flower and green of every willow is also a transformation of the ancestral home. Those who have gone astray, [subject to] attachment, are unable to revert to the origin.

"The Self-so borne of Heaven is everywhere present in the True *Dharma*. What need is there to fabricate a hundred thousand means [of wisdom]? The red of flowers and green of willows burst forth in the ancestral home. The swaying tree-tops are [our] raised banners."

de Groot: 俗問曰,如何又不作佛事。

The monk asked, "And why do you not perform Buddhist rites?"

祖答曰,時時刻刻作佛事。

The Patriarch replied, "In every instant Buddhist rites are performed."

又問該何不
作佛事。祖
曰。大道無
異。常作佛
事。人天都
乃法中主。
一年四時
作佛事。
迷人不識
內中藏。

San-tsu (23a): Again he asked, "Why do you not perform Buddhist rites?"

The Patriarch said, "The sages and worthies of the Great Way constantly perform the Buddhist rites.

"Men and devas are *Dharma-kings*. The True Emptiness of their Original Nature is their sacred platform.⁹⁷ Four seasons of the year, they perform the Buddhist rites. Those who have gone astray do not recognize that [every rite performed by the Buddha] is contained within them."

97. *Tao-ch'ang* (道場): the raised seat of enlightenment, or *p'u-t'i tao-ch'ang* (菩提道場, Skt. *Bodhimāṇḍa*); "every *bodhisattva* sits down on such a seat before becoming a Buddha." Soothill and Hodous, Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms, 389a.

de Groot: 俗問曰、如何又不見師立經堂。

The monk asked, "And why have we not seen you, master, erect sūtra-recitation halls?"

祖答曰、無邊虛空是經堂。

The Patriarch replied, "Unbounded Emptiness is [our] sūtra hall."

見
踪。
又問如何沒有經堂。祖曰。你的經堂是假相。我的經堂不
解云。勝家路。無極聖祖印難止。包含法界普放光。
虛空無邊是經堂。

San-tsu (23a): Again he asked, "Why do you not have sūtra-recitation halls?"

The Patriarch said, "Your sūtra-halls are [characterized by] false, phenomenal signs. Our sūtra-halls leave no visible traces.

"The Holy Ancestor of the Limitless is unfathomable in His mystery. He embraces the *Dharma*-realm and emits a universal light. Auspicious clouds, vast and boundless, [cover] the road to the ancestral home. Emptiness Unbounded is [our] sūtra-hall."

那僧曰。如何不念經。答曰。
 先天大道本自然。且古至今性同天。
 無字真經常轉念。普天師地說真言。
 真經從來不離口。迷人不知念多經。
 自然現在無為法。水流風動演摩訶。

San-tsu (21a): The foreign monk said, "Why do you not recite scriptures?"

[Lo] replied, "The Great Way of Prior Heaven is fundamentally the Self-so. From antiquity to the present, the Nature is identical to Heaven. We regularly recite the true scripture without words. All of Heaven and Earth pronounce *mantras*. The true scriptures have never departed from the good. Foolish men in their ignorance recite *sūtras*. The Self-so is manifest in the Way of Non-Action. The flow of water and movement of wind perform [the hymn of] *Mahā!*"

de Groot: 僧問畢。低頭叩謝師曰。善哉。善哉。

The monk concluded his questioning. Bowing low to kow-tow in thanks to the master, he cried, "Marvelous! Marvelous!"

The foreign monks in attendance, reports the San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan, bowed their heads in thanks to the Patriarch for his instruction. "Truly," they confessed, "the subtle meaning of the great Way of Non-Action is inexhaustible" (p. 24a). Patriarch Lo declared his victory:

"Seven foreign monks have come to the imperial court of our [nation]. As confirmed by the great civil and military ministers, [I] instructed the foreign monks and they have returned to their kingdom. Our king has attained great peace throughout the empire. The great Way of Non-Action penetrates Heaven and Earth. Who can thoroughly recognize the faculties of meditation (禪機) [that I have accomplished]? The ancestral home makes manifest the protection of supernormal powers: pure and clear, revealing [the Way of] Non-Action!" (p. 25a).

As close as the San-tsu yin-yu pao-chūan was to the time of Lo Ch'ing (the edition quoted was published one hundred fifty-five years after his death), all of this is too fantastic to be true. Moreover, since Lo Ch'ing would not have been in a position to have "erected recitation halls" or established an active sect while in prison, this "debate" must be a later

interpolation. Still, the legend offers a few insights into Lo-sectarian ritual and Lo's "Way of Non-Action". Heaven and Earth are his ritual space, fruits and flowers are his clerical implements, and natural events possess religious significance. Since all things are sanctified, there is no need for the construction of altars or the investiture of priests; each individual has the capacity for salvation in a direct and spontaneous identity with the universe. These points of doctrine are fully consistent with Lo's writings in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, and with later sectarian belief and practice, as we shall see in Chapters II and III.

The Dragon Placard

For his victory, tells the "Brief History", Patriarch Lo won his freedom, as well as a title from the emperor: "Nation-Defender Dharma-King" (護國法王), and "Twenty-fourth Patriarch of the *Lin-chi* School" (臨濟宗第二十四代的祖師).⁹⁸ Lo requested an imperial placard to guard his teaching. "Then it can be disseminated throughout the empire, and widely save the myriad living beings!"

Thereupon the emperor ordered that they proceed to the records room (文房), [where he took up] the four treasures [brush, paper, ink, and ink-stone], [and wrote these words]: "The Emperor decrees that the great plan (皇圖) shall be eternally secure; the Emperor commands that the Way shall be made enduring and prosperous. May the Buddha be daily more luminous and the *Dharma-wheel* ever turn!"⁹⁹

98. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 9, 2.

99. *ibid.*, 9. The placard is reproduced in the Lung-hua k'o-i, 16; and Wu-pu liu-ts'e, frontispiece to *chüan* 1.

The emperor also granted the Patriarch funds and personnel to cast bronze printing plates for the Scripture in Five Books.

After giving final instructions to his prestigious disciples, the Patriarch took his leave. The officials reluctantly said their good-byes, asking, "Our master, vehicle of the *Dharma*, when will you descend again?"

Lo replied:

"It is not necessary to concern yourselves with my comings and goings. Whether I leave or stay, strive to strengthen your resolve. In the end it is all the same. Diligently carry out Buddhist worship! Though the fruit of the Way is whole and complete, practice charity and reward virtue, and exert utmost effort in saving all beings universally. Do not be slothful. Do not forget to recompense the four benefactors [parents, master, king, almsgiver]. Returning together to the Western Land can be determined completely within your own minds!"¹⁰⁰

The "Brief History" reports that Lo established Dragon-Flower assemblies -- literally, "ritual areas" or "sacred platforms" (道場)¹⁰¹ and "vegetarian halls" (齋堂) -- for communal cultivation of the Way of Non-Action.

"Today, thanks to the Cheng-te Emperor's bestowal of a dragon placard to guard and protect the Scripture in Five Books, the empire now knows that for the sake of my lay-Buddhist *Dharma*-gate, ritual areas have been established for the Buddhist Dragon Flower Sect..."¹⁰²

The biography concludes:

We regard Patriarch Lo as the founding patriarch of the Buddhist Dragon-Flower Sect. Spread throughout the nation, everywhere vegetarian halls have been built. Buddhist believers who have taken refuge in the Three Treasures

100. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 10.

101. See note ⁹⁷ above.

102. "Lo-tsu chien-shih," 10.

increase day by day. By means of the Scripture in Five Books, the *Dharma-wheel* is given a great turn!¹⁰³

Sectarian scriptures agree that Lo Ch'ing died in the sixth year of the Chia-ch'ing reign period, on the twenty-ninth day of the first month (corresponding to March 1, 1527 of the Western calendar), at the age of 85 years.¹⁰⁴ The "Brief History" reports that he was buried beneath Wu-feng pagoda (無峰塔) in Peking, "[a brilliant light] dazzling Heaven and Earth " (晃耀乾坤).¹⁰⁵

103. *ibid.*

104. The commentary to the Cheng-hsin chüan by Wang Hai-ch'ao (1629) says that Lo died "one hundred two years and six emperors before the first year of Ch'ung-chen [1628], and nineteen years after the composition of the Cheng-hsin chüan [1509]," corresponding to 1527. Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "*Kindai chûgoku ni okeru hôkan ryû shûkyô no tenkai*," 27.

105. "*Lo-tsu chien-shih*," 10.

4. The Significance of Lo's Life

Before we dismiss as too fantastical these hagiographical accounts of the Patriarch -- pre-existent deity, heroic soldier, miracle-worker, and favorite of gods and emperors -- we must admit the importance of these images to sectarian believers. In Vegetarian Halls of contemporary Taiwan, Lo Ch'ing is known primarily as a narrative figure, whose life "incarnates" the teachings he sought to communicate through his writings. It is my informal observation that these tales are better known among ordinary believers than the abstract arguments of Lo's Scripture in Five Books, despite its being a primary recitation-text of the Vegetarian Halls.

Still, there is a problem here, insofar as the hagiographies frequently misrepresent history and in some areas misrepresent Lo's own teachings. I have been unable to identify the court officials and eminent citizens who played such an important role as Lo's patrons and disciples.¹⁰⁶ Even those who are recorded in the official histories had no known association with sectarians, or lived in times and places far removed from the Patriarch.

106. The "Brief History" lists a number of others not mentioned above, including Censors, Ministers and Vice Ministers, Grand Secretaries and Chancellors of the Han-lin Academy, Bachelors, and Prefectural and County Officials ("Lo-tsu chien-shih," 11). None appear in the official histories or in standard biographical dictionaries. I suspect that it is nearly impossible to reconstruct the true histories of the actors on Lo Ch'ing's stage. Confusion of events, persons, times and places is characteristic of sectarian historiography. For a discussion of this problem, see Sawada Mizuho, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû, 307; Yeh Wen-hsin, "Jen-shen chih chien," 58; and Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan, 23.

Other events in this life are narrative *trompe l'oeil*, having the appearance of reality based on parallels to actual events, and yet as unlikely as they are vivid in the telling. Foreign monks at court, for example, were indeed common during the reign of the Cheng-te Emperor,¹⁰⁷ but there is no record of a lay sectarian defeating one in debate. Though the emperor's recorded words have an aura of narrative authenticity, and the "Dragon Placard" he commissioned is "reproduced" in realistic detail, no official history recollects these events. Clearly, they cannot be regarded as historically accurate, and are presented here for what they reveal about the hagiographical imagination of sectarian believers.

Another form of misrepresentation in these texts is in the religious teachings they glorify. In some cases, they are faithful to Lo's pedagogical intent, albeit while simplifying his arguments or exaggerating certain features to prominence. In the imperially-sponsored debate we have an effective presentation of Lo's "Way of Non-Action", which may reveal some of the ritual principles and practices of the Lo sects. Overall, however, there is an over-emphasis on Lo as a lay *Buddhist* leader, when in fact he rejects many of the central tenets of Buddhism in his writings. In the case of the "Brief History of Patriarch Lo", this is a reflection of the Buddhist orientation of its contemporary sectarian compilers.

107. See the section on "Gods and Religion" for the Cheng-te reign period, *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* [Illustrations and Texts, Old and New] (Shanghai: 1934), *ch'uan* 64, *ts'e* 494: 58a-b.

If texts have motivations, then we can see a number at work in these hagiographies: the attempt to legitimize the existence of the Lo sects in the eyes of state authorities, to Buddhicize Lo's teachings for contemporary lay believers, and to transform a seeker into a saint with a charisma and supernaturalism worthy of collective worship. The Lo Ch'ing of these works does for lay-based sectarianism what Hui-neng and the legends surrounding him did for Ch'an Buddhism -- providing a model to their followers with the sanction and authority afforded by their own charismatic presence.

Indeed, details of Lo's sectarian biography are reminiscent of two figures in Chinese intellectual history who share many of his convictions: Hui-neng and Wang Yang-ming. As I will argue in Chapters II and IV below, Lo carried Hui-neng's teachings to their logical conclusion and anticipated many of the philosophical convictions of the Yang-ming School. He did so, of course, in an all-inclusive spirit, and became a popular spokesman for the principles of Ch'an and later Neo-Confucian thought. Sectarian portrayals of his life are illustrative of the principles shared by all three.

Lo Ch'ing and Hui-neng, Sixth Patriarch

Based on Philip Yampolsky's translation of the Platform Sûtra and his study of hagiographical traditions surrounding the life of Hui-neng, we can outline a number of parallels between Lo

Ch'ing and the Ch'an Patriarch.¹⁰⁸ Though these legends cannot be regarded as historically factual, they created archetypes of religious authority and charisma that established standards of legitimacy for religious leadership.¹⁰⁹

(1.) Lo and Hui-neng were orphans. In the Platform Sûtra, we read:

My father was originally an official at Fan-yang. He was [later] dismissed from his post and banished as a commoner to Hsin-chou in Ling-nan. While I was still a child, my father died and my old mother and I, a solitary child, moved to Nan-hai. We suffered extreme poverty and here I sold firewood in the market place.¹¹⁰

Lo Ch'ing's father had never served as an official, but he was a farmer and thus, of course, a commoner. Neither Lo Ch'ing nor Hui-neng was born in comfortable circumstances. Both lost their fathers at the age of three, and there is a tradition, though not recorded in the Platform Sûtra, which maintains that Hui-neng, like Lo Ch'ing, lost his mother as well as his father: so states the Ts'ao-ch'i ta-shih pieh-chuan (曹溪大師別傳), composed in 782.¹¹¹

(2.) Much is made in the Ch'an tradition of the fact that Hui-neng was untutored and illiterate:

108. Philip Yampolsky, The Platform Sûtra of the Sixth Patriarch (New York: 1967).

109. The power of the model or archetype cannot be overemphasized in the Chinese case, where sanctity is recognized as the ability to imitate and reconstitute the personal character of sages and saints, and rarely the capacity for innovation.

110. *ibid.*, 126; Chinese text, p. 1 from back.

111. HTC 146:483b, column 1, line 12. Cf. Yampolsky, *ibid.*, 71, 126.

[I was taken] to the south corridor and I made obeisance before the verse [of Shen-hsiu]. Because I was uneducated I asked someone to read it to me. As soon as I had heard it I understood the cardinal meaning.¹¹²

Sectarian biographies of Lo Ch'ing do not say explicitly that their patriarch was illiterate, but the implication is strong that he did not base his religious insights on study or conventional learning. Lo's own autobiography indicates that he was self-taught; he certainly did not benefit from a formal education. Like Hui-neng, Lo rejects the efficacy of language to express the "wordless teaching" of the true *Dharma*.

(3.) The conditions of Hui-neng's first enlightenment anticipate those of Lo Ch'ing directly:

I happened to see [a] man who was reciting the Diamond Sûtra. Upon hearing it my mind became clear and I was awakened.¹¹³

Lo Ch'ing experiences his first enlightenment when he hears an assembly of monks reciting an "amplified" version of the Diamond Sûtra.

(4.) The Fifth Patriarch, who transmitted the robe of the *Dharma* to Hui-neng, warns him that he will be "harmed" if he remains at the monastery. He travels widely, followed by "several hundred men...wishing to try to kill me and to steal my

112. Yampolsky, *ibid.*, 132; Chinese text on p. 4 from back. Biographies of the Ch'an patriarch appearing in the Ts'ao-ch'i ta-shih pieh-chuan and the Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu recount that Hui-neng was able to explain the meaning of *sûtras* though he "[didn't] know written words... 'The mysterious principle of all the Buddhas has nothing to do with words,' [he said]" (*ibid.*, 79). In his lectures on the *Dharma*, this is one of Hui-neng's principle themes.

113. *ibid.*, 127; Chinese text on p. 1 from back.

robe and Dharma." A former general, whom Hui-neng suspects of murderous intent, in fact seeks religious instruction from him.¹¹⁴ Similarly, sectarian accounts of Lo Ch'ing's life describe his travels throughout the country, his persecution at the hands of skeptical officials, and his successful conversion of eunuchs, generals, and officials to his sect.

(5.) At least one account of Hui-neng's life states that he was invited to court by the Emperor Kao-tsung (though he declined, claiming ill health), answered queries put forward by a hostile interlocutor, and was rewarded for his insightful replies with an imperial proclamation of praise.¹¹⁵ This sequence of events parallels exactly the course of Lo Ch'ing's interview at court, debate with a foreign monk or monks, and victory signified by the bestowal of a "Dragon Placard" by the emperor.

It can also be noted that Lo Ch'ing paraphrases the Platform Sûtra at least four times in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e and makes repeated reference to the ideal of the "wordless teaching" so characteristic of the Ch'an School. The tales of Hui-neng I have referred to are hagiographic legends and cannot be regarded as historically factual, as Yampolsky notes at length in his discussion. Still, like the hagiographies of Lo Ch'ing recorded in the "Brief History of Patriarch Lo," they shaped the consciousness of religious followers. Both in the details of his biography and the content of his thought, Lo Ch'ing fulfills the model set forth in the Platform Sûtra of the Sixth Patriarch.

114. *ibid.*, 133-134; Chinese text on p. 5 from back.

115. *ibid.*, 74.

Indeed, the name of the patriarch of the Dragon-Flower Sect discovered by Joseph Edkins in nineteenth-century Chekiang was "Lo Hui-neng".¹¹⁶ Lo Ch'ing is truly the "populist" Ch'an patriarch in the image of his followers.

Lo Ch'ing and the Yang-ming School

Other details of Lo's legendary biography closely parallel the early experience of Wang Yang-ming (王陽明, 1472-1529). For both figures, meditation on the ideal of family shapes their careers and their philosophical insights.

The relationship between personal biography and religious philosophy is clear in Lo's case, and this is a pattern familiar to students of Ming intellectual history in particular. As we have seen, the deaths of Lo's parents in 1446 and 1450 significantly shaped his mendicant career between 1470 and 1482 (ages twenty-eight to forty). Similarly, a profound experience of attachment to family when he was thirty-one years of age (in 1504) determined the course of Wang Yang-ming's career as an official and a committed Confucian moralist, as Tu Wei-ming's study of Wang Yang-ming's youth has shown.¹¹⁷ After flirting with Taoist longevity practices and Buddhist meditation, Wang was "enlightened" to an affirmation of his basic humanity and his natural attachment to family. This led him ultimately to embrace Confucianism -- Mencius' idea of "natural feelings" in particular

116. Joseph Edkins, Chinese Buddhism (London: 1893), 377.

117. Tu Wei-ming, Neo-Confucian Thought in Action: Wang Yang-ming's Youth (1472-1509) (Berkeley: 1976), 55-71.

-- and to criticize Buddhism for contradicting the in-born, positive attachments of a young person to his or her parents. Wang felt that Buddhist monasticism actually intensifies the burden of attachment in the mind by driving a physical wedge between the seeker and his family.¹¹⁸ Wang, unlike Lo, had a physical family to return to, and one could speculate that this in itself re-channelled Wang's creativity in the direction of an all-embracing Confucianism. Lo's separation from his parents was occasioned by the fact of human mortality -- their premature deaths -- and the resolution of this crisis was naturally expressed in religious terms.

For both Wang and Lo, separation from family initiated a career, and the ideal of family unity became the basic symbol of human fulfillment.

The motivation for Lo Ch'ing's religious quest was grounded in an emotional crisis. But the personal intimacy of Lo's testimonial goes beyond his meditations on the deaths of his parents. Throughout his Autobiography, there is an emotional angst that drives him to "push on another step...and another step" in his physical and spiritual journey. The motif is a common one in Ming dynasty biographies: religious or philosophical insight rises from the ashes of spiritual anxiety and emotional trauma. For Ming Buddhists and Neo-Confucians of the Yang-ming School, intense seeking borne out of personal

118. Tu's analysis of Wang Yang-ming's celebration of family ties is based on the chronological biography (年譜) by Ch'ien Te-hung, reprinted in Lu Fei-k'uei, ed., Yang-ming ch'üan-shu (Taipei: 1970), 32-36.

crisis grounds one's ultimate commitment to a new-found religious or philosophical understanding.¹¹⁹ So, autobiography was a genre characteristic of the Ming,¹²⁰ and Lo's is our earliest example.

Note, too, that the ideal of the untutored commoner blessed with philosophical insight is a characteristic of the "left-wing" Ming Neo-Confucians. Lo Ch'ing anticipates this model by at least a hundred years.¹²¹

119. In addition to Tu Wei-ming's study cited above, see Judith Berling, The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en (New York: 1980), ch. 4; Cynthia Brokaw, "Yüan Huang and the Ledgers of Merit and Demerit," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 47 (1987): 137-195; Hsü Sung-peng, A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch'ing (State College: 1979), ch. 2; Wu Pei-i, "The Spiritual Autobiography of Te-ch'ing," in William Theodore de Bary, ed., The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism (New York: 1975): 67-92; Johanna F. Handlin, Action in Late Ming Thought: The Reorientation of Lu K'un and Other Scholar Officials (Berkeley: 1983); Rodney Taylor, "Neo-Confucianism, Sagehood and the Religious Dimension," Journal of Chinese Philosophy 2 (1975): 389-415; Taylor, The Cultivation of Sagehood as a Religious Goal in Neo-Confucianism: A Study of Selected Writings of Kao P'an-lung (Missoula: 1978); Willard J. Peterson, Bitter Gourd: Fang I-chih and the Impetus for Intellectual Change (New Haven: 1979); the biographical portions of The Records of Ming Scholars (*Ming-ju hsüeh-an*) by Huang Tsung-hsi, English translation edited by Julia Ching (Honolulu: 1987); and William Theodore de Bary's introductions to de Bary, ed., Self and Society in Ming Thought (New York: 1970), and The Unfolding of Neo-Confucianism (New York: 1975). These are among a number of recent studies which explore the relationship between the personal biographies and mature thought of Ming intellectuals and religious leaders.

120. See Rodney Taylor, "The Centered Self: Religious Autobiography in the Neo-Confucian Tradition," History of Religions 17 (1978), 266-283.

121. We can cite, for example, Wang Pi (1511-1587) and the artisans Chu Shu and Han Chen. Cf. Julia Ching, ed., The Records of Ming Scholars by Huang Tsung-hsi (Honolulu: 1987), 179-183. For further discussion of these parallels, see Richard Shek, "Elite and Popular Reformism in Late Ming," Rekishì no okeru minshû to bunka: Sakai Tadao sensei

Towards a "Psycho-Biography" of the Patriarch

Let us look at Lo Ch'ing's reflections on his orphanhood in greater detail; it receives more emphasis than any other event in his Autobiography, and sheds light on his religious thought as presented in the other four books of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e.

The loss of his parents had a profound effect on Lo Ch'ing. It is, in fact, an *idée fixe* of his religious meditations. The temptation to engage in psycho-biography may be forgiven when we observe to what a degree his orphan status obsessed him, and in light of the dominant metaphors of his religious vision: of "returning home" and identifying the self with the "eternal father and mother" (see Chapter II for further discussion of these goals). Indeed, Lo's very definition of suffering and salvation is expressed as the loss and recovery of family.

The first verse section of Lo's Autobiography is a meditation on his parents' deaths and the significance of this loss for his religious quest:

Alas, human life is brief; my heart was full of trouble and worry. My parents died, and I was left alone, abandoned to orphanhood. In my youth I grew to maturity without a father and mother. With no one to rely upon, I suffered pain and confusion. In my internal delusion, I yearned for my parents to live long in this world. How suddenly they had passed away! How bitter were my tears for my injured feelings! All I wished for was the reunion of father and son, and a long life together. My parents died, and I was left alone, never to see them again.

When a father sees his son, and a son sees his father, they are joyful, and [the father's] love is great. Left alone

koki shukuga kinen ronsô (Tokyo: 1982), 1-21, and Chapter V below.

was I, and I had no where to take refuge.¹²² Thanks to the protection of the gods and Buddhas, I grew to maturity. I maintained a continuous vegetarian diet; fearing *samsâra*, I wished to plan for my future. Thinking of my parents but unable to see them -- how vexing! how troubling! Contemplating the pains of birth, death, and transmigration, I killed my heart with grief! Suddenly I had lost the parents who had given me life. Nor did I know where I would be reborn after my death. (*K'u-kung* 1:21-22).

For Lo Ch'ing, the premature deaths of a loving mother and father are deeply felt manifestations of the impermanence of *samsâra*. The love and security of family, one of the few blessings of life in this world, has been denied to him, and his emotional loss becomes the root of a spiritual anxiety.

Every ox, horse, pig, and sheep, every bird that flies and beast that walks, all have a father and mother which bore them. People who travel afar as strangers, too, will return home one day. And soldiers ten thousand miles [from home] also have an ancestral home where they reside. How is it possible¹²³ that this spark of my soul has no home? (*K'u-kung* 3:31).

Lo's emotional crisis precipitates his religious quest, and the "recovery of family" becomes the primary metaphor of his

122. Wang Yüan-ching comments: "Our Patriarch lost his father at the age of three, his mother at the age of seven. Having lost both of his parents, he was cut off and alone, like grass floating on water, blown by the wind. He had no one to rely upon, and could but entreat strangers to take him back to his ancestral home [suggesting that Lo had been born elsewhere -- perhaps at Mi-yün Garrison]. He threw himself upon the graces of an aunt and uncle, and depended on them through the years.

"How can one who has lost both parents understand the love between a father and a son? Whenever he saw his aunt and uncle, the Patriarch [observed] the blessings and joy of blood relatives. 'My own parents, alas, are dead,' [he thought]. 'I am left alone, with no refuge. I can but pass the days with relatives, with no where else to turn.'" (*K'u-kung* 1:21-22).

123. Reading 豈怎 for 豈爭.

soteriological vision. At the beginning of his thirteen-year career as a mendicant and seeker, he meets a Pure Land monk who urges him to recite the Buddha's name. Significantly, the Buddha who reigns over the Pure Land, Amitâbha, is equated with the "Eternal Father and Mother" (無生父母). In Lo's Autobiography, we read:

The [Pure Land] master instructed me to recite the four-character phrase, [O-mi-t'o] Fo (阿彌陀佛). [He said that] at the moment of my death, [by raising this thought to mind] I would transcend the Triple Sphere [Skt. *Triloka*], where, on [Mount] T'ien-t'ai in that realm, I would see the Eternal Father and Mother. (*K'u-kung* 5:45).

The Pure Land master urges him,

"Every day, recite the name of Amitâbha. Do not abandon this practice! Walking, recite his name! Sitting, recite his name! Ardently press forward on the path of merit! At the moment of death, raise this thought to mind, and you will transcend the Triple Sphere. Arriving at the Buddha's Land of Tranquility and Nurture [*Sukhâvatī*], there will be the reunion of father and son." (*K'u-kung* 3:37).

Lo's efforts, however, merely cause him further suffering:

Alone I recited the four-character name, O-mi-t'o Fo -- but I recited it carelessly.¹²⁴ Moreover, I feared that the Eternal Father and Mother in that Other World above the heavens would not hear my voice. Day and night, I raised my chant. But after a period of eight years, my mind was [still] vexed and I had not attained clarity of perception. (*K'u-kung* 4:40).

Lo's emotional and spiritual separation from his parents, both worldly and eternal, defined and shaped him, and his eventual enlightenment is expressed in terms of family re-

124. *Nien-te man-le*: 念得慢了. The adverbial *man-le* indicates a number of meanings that suggest a lack of conviction: neglectfully, arrogantly, contemptuously, haphazardly, slowly, leisurely, superficially, carelessly, insecurely. Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 4:1159 (11110).

unification. Eventually, Lo comes to the realization that the object of one's quest is within oneself. One's parents are not distant and hidden; they are in fact identical with the self.

The Mother is I. I am the Mother. Basically we are one in the same. (K'u-kung 11:48).

The religious path, therefore, does not take one on a journey to another realm, but rather requires a "return" to one's native place or ancestral home:

Those of wisdom seek the Great Path: they return to their homes (歸家去了). Arriving at their ancestral home (家鄉), they never scatter, and never [again] turn the wheel of *saṃsāra*. Arriving at their ancestral home, their lives are immeasurable in duration. Long will they live. They will not die. Forever united [as a family: 團圓], they are subject to neither birth nor death and their joy is unbounded! (T'an-shih 3:51).

The Mother is thus a root metaphor of Lo's religious system, and "returning home" the ultimate goal of religious cultivation. Lo's spiritual insights are firmly grounded in the biographical details of his life. His experiences of loss and seeking provide him with the central images of his soteriological vision.

Chapter II

Lo Ch'ing's Religious Thought: The Wu-pu liu-ts'e

1. Overview

Books 2 to 5 of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e elaborate upon Lo Ch'ing's experiential understanding of the human condition and the nature of religious salvation. At times derivative and uninspired, at times creative and insightful, Lo employs terminology borrowed from Buddhism, Taoism, and Neo-Confucianism in a creative synthesis shaped by his own interpretation of the Three Teachings. In this sense, Lo is typical of the "three-in-one" thinkers of the Ming, but he incorporates classical religious conceptions in a way that is unique and distinctive. To the extent that later sectarians based their beliefs and rituals on Lo's Five Books, his influence has been far-reaching. More significantly, Lo's writings are representative of popular innovation and sectarian interpretations of classical thought. Here we will examine the teachings of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e in detail; in a later chapter, we will turn to the influence of Lo's social and historical setting on his thought and activities.

The Wu-pu liu-ts'e hints at a developmental tendency, and is loosely arranged thematically. There is considerable overlap and repetition within the Five Books, but generally Book 1 (the K'u-kung wu-tao chūan) is devoted to verse expressions of lay-Buddhist piety and the Autobiography of Lo Ch'ing; Book 2 (the T'an-shih wu-wei chūan) is concerned with an analysis of the

human condition, again expressed for the most part in traditional Buddhist terms; Book 3 (the P'o-hsieh hsien-cheng yao-shih chūan) is a series of attacks on false or "heterodox" forms of religious practice; and Books 4 (the Cheng-hsin ch'u-i wu hsiu-cheng tzu-tsai pao-chūan) and 5 (the Wei-wei pu-tung T'ai-shan shen-ken chieh-kuo pao-chūan) present Lo's mature religious thought, self-consciously innovative vis-à-vis the traditional teachings of Buddhism. Viewed as a whole, Lo's writings articulate a creative, deeply personal interpretation of religious faith and practice made accessible to popular sectarian believers.

Lo Ch'ing directs his teachings to a wide audience, and his goal is clearly that the Wu-pu liu-ts'e may be employed as an aid to universal salvation. All beings, trapped as they are in a cycle of suffering and impermanence, yearn for deliverance from *samsāra*, and Lo's first task is to describe the nature of *samsāra* and the reasons for its perpetuation. This he does in terms familiar to students of Chinese Buddhism: the wheel of *samsāra* is turned by the engine of *karma*, and life in every form is characterized by pain and uncertainty. In colorful illustrations of the anxieties and suffering experienced by officials, emperors, merchants, thieves and brigands, monks, nuns, fathers and sons, gods, animals, and demons, Lo points out that no being is exempt from karmic punishment and personal insecurity. Life is fundamentally painful, and the ultimate religious goal is escape from *samsāra*.

Lo's remarks on the human condition are conventional from the standpoint of popular Buddhism in the Ming. His many

references to *samsâra* and the doctrine of *karma* show how commonly accepted these views were, and broadly illustrate the economic and social life of the time.

We have seen in Lo Ch'ing's Autobiography that these concerns were deeply felt. His religious writings reflect his own spiritual anxieties and the solutions that he himself discovered in the course of his spiritual career. *Samsâra* is not a metaphysical abstraction, but a symbol of personal insecurity and psychological unease. Lo's soteriological message, moreover, is an expression of his own salvation experience.

It is reflection on the cosmological origins of the universe that leads to Lo's ultimate enlightenment, and this is the theme which dominates the Five Books. The solution to the problem of *samsâra*, Lo announces, is personal re-union with the Creator-Mother of the universe. The Mother gives birth to and nourishes all beings and things, and religious salvation consists in "returning", personally and experientially, to one's "ancestral home". In his cosmological speculations, Lo relies on terminology from the Buddhist, Taoist, and Neo-Confucian traditions: the root and source of all things he describes alternately as Emptiness (空) or the Buddha (佛); Non-Being (無) or the Way (道); and the Limitless (無極) or Supreme Ultimate (太極) -- citing a variety of classical sources for confirmation of his teachings. Ultimately, these are all terms denoting the same reality, and it is fruitless to follow one tradition to the exclusion of the same truths revealed in the others. The Three

Teachings, despite their variations in nomenclature and historical transmission, are fundamentally one.

In these pronouncements, Lo anticipates a trend in religious thought that was to be shared by religious leaders such as Lin Chao-en (林兆恩, 1517-1598), Yün-ch'i Chu-hung (雲棲株宏, 1532-1612), Tzu-po Chen-k'o (紫柏真可, 1544-1604), and Han-shan Te-ch'ing (憨山德清, 1546-1623), and speculative philosophers of the Yang-ming School, including Li Chih (李贄, 1527-1602) and Yüan Huang (袁黃, 1533-1606) among others, of the later Ming.¹ This is not to say that Lo Ch'ing was a "founder" of a "school" of "three-in-one" thought; the trend can be traced to Taoist and Buddhist canonical works in the Sung, and was virtually the "state policy" of the first emperor of the Ming.² What is notable is that this orientation should be articulated by a popular religious leader two to three generations before the same views were expressed by sociologically elite, classically educated religious reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Lo's truly unique and creative contribution to this mode of discourse is his belief that the Three Teachings originate in a fundamental, prior source: the Creator-Mother of the cosmos.

1. For a discussion of this tendency in late Ming thought, see Judith A. Berling, The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en (New York: 1980); Cynthia Brokaw, "Yüan Huang (1533-1606) and the Ledgers of Merit and Demerit," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 47 (1987), 137-195; and Chun-fang Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis (New York: 1981).

2. Berling, *ibid.*, 34-61; Sakai Tadao, Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū [Studies of Chinese Shan-shu] (Tokyo: 1960), 227-233.

"Mother" (母), Lo says, is "the word from which all words flow" and the single term uniting all descriptions of the creation. She is the "Ancestor" (祖) and the "root" (根) of all beings and things. Salvation consists in recognizing the Mother and "returning to one's ancestral home". There, believers will be united as a family, sharing in a blissful existence far from the pain of the world of *samsâra*.

Here we have the origin of a cult of the "Eternal Venerable Mother" (無生老母) that was to dominate Ming and Ch'ing sectarianism: the Mother yearns for her lost children in the "red-dust" world of *samsâra*, and sect participation becomes the only avenue to salvation at her side.³ But it is significant that Lo does not make membership in his sect a precondition for reunion with the Mother. Lo's focus, as we shall see below, is not the creation of a sect, but the salvation of individual believers. This becomes evident when we observe the final step of Lo's soteriological argument: the ultimate unity of Self and Mother.

The most profound teaching of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e is that the creative principle of the universe -- whether that be expressed by the term "Emptiness", "Buddha", "Non-Being", "Limitless", or "Mother" -- is indistinguishable from the Nature (性) or Spiritual Light (靈光) within the individual. Salvation, therefore, described as a reunion with the Creator, is nothing more than a process of Self-realization. By recognizing the unity of Self and Mother, the seeker is liberated from the cycle

3. See Chapter III below.

of *samsâra* and attains a psychological state of autonomy and composure that is infinitely joyful and calming. To "return to one's ancestral home" is to recognize and affirm the eternal, free, and unobstructed Self or Mother within.

This is Lo Ch'ing's central message, made explicit only in the last of his Five Books. Though the Mother is the ultimate term for creativity and liberation, its identity with the Self shapes the appropriate religious activity of the believer as *insight* rather than *devotion*. Later sectarians were overly literalistic in their interpretation of Lo's teachings, and founded a devotional Eternal Mother cult in his name. This was surely not the Patriarch's intention, as the Mother is depicted in the Chieh-kuo pao-chūan as the immediate, accessible "True Self" of every individual. Historians may trace the Eternal Mother cult to Lo Ch'ing, but he was not its conscious founder.

The influence of the Ch'an school on Lo's conclusions is unmistakable, and much of the terminology used to describe the Self and its ultimacy is Ch'an-inspired. Lo Ch'ing could be portrayed as a Ch'an popularizer, making Ch'an teachings on the Original Face (本來面目), the "wordless teaching", and sudden enlightenment accessible to a popular lay audience. However, as we shall observe in his critique of "manipulative forms of religious cultivation" (有為法), any outward or active expression of religious practice is rejected by Lo as inhibiting the fundamental insight into one's true Nature. This is the basis for his repudiation of monasticism, deity cults, and a variety of "heterodox" religious affiliations, and extends to a criticism of

the Ch'an School as well. Lo goes to the heart of Ch'an by rejecting sitting-meditation as an avenue to self-understanding.

If anything, true insight is a product of faith, not meditation, devotion, or moral action. The Wu-pu liu-ts'e encourages the religious seeker to have faith in its own teachings, and Lo admits this *Dharma* as the only true and correct path to liberation. Faith, or "right belief" (正信), is fundamental to realizing the enlightened mind. In this sense, the Wu-pu liu-ts'e could become the basis for the development of a sect, and Lo Ch'ing its founder and First Patriarch.

This is substantially the religious message of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e. The texts are not straightforward in their presentation, however, and include much material that is superfluous or even opposed to these teachings, primarily in the form of conventional Buddhist language which dominates the verse portions of the text. Lo clearly saw his *Dharma* as growing out of a tradition that he respected and emulated. As we shall discuss further in Chapter IV, he quotes and paraphrases canonical scriptures and other religious and philosophical works to buttress his religious claims. Yet he was also an innovator and a reformer, and his rejection of monasticism and other "outward forms" of religious practice, as well as his affirmation of faith in the Eternal Mother and a new understanding of the inner Nature, are explicit and self-conscious. Lo was by no means merely a popularizer of an existing body of teachings, but

the founder of a new, lay-based sectarian religion.⁴ In this chapter, I explore the peculiar language of Lo's teachings in detail, with attention to the internal development of his thought, his analysis of the human condition, his understanding of religious salvation, and his distinction between "proper" and "improper" modes of religious cultivation. The aim here is not only to digest and summarize a long and often repetitive corpus of "precious volumes" -- the oldest extant -- but also to uncover the religious thought and social world of a popular sectarian leader.

4. I discuss congregational and ritual aspects of this religion in Chapter III. His role as the inspiration for -- if not the actual founder of -- a sectarian tradition, as much as Lo Ch'ing's religious thought, is the Patriarch's most lasting contribution to the history of Chinese religions. My emphasis throughout the following discussion is on Lo's self-understanding as a creative religious thinker, an innovator and reformer within the religious traditions known to him. Viewed critically, however, it must be admitted that many of his teachings predated Lo Ch'ing. His attacks on Buddhism, for example -- including his repudiation of sitting meditation -- were articulated by Hui-neng centuries before (Philip Yampolsky, The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch [New York: 1967], pp. 82, 115, 117, 136, 140f.). To what extent Lo Ch'ing can be said to have been "indebted" to Hui-neng, however, is difficult to say: anyone reading the Wu-pu liu-ts'e is struck by the sense of Lo's self-perception as a creative thinker and religious prophet.

2. On the "Development" of Lo Ching's Thought

Lo's works are not always internally consistent. There are discrepancies in his pronouncements on a creator diety, the Holy Patriarch of the Limitless (無極聖祖); on charity and moral virtue; and on some of the basic teachings of Buddhism. As can be seen in a quick overview of the 103 p'in that make up the Wu-pu liu-ts'e,⁵ Lo's writing is highly repetitive. Pedagogically, the cumulative effect of this repetition is to fix certain phrases and ideas in the mind of the disciple reciting or hearing the text. Surely this is the function of the verse form which dominates the work. For the purposes of interpretation, however, the repetition of themes makes the task of analysis more difficult, as it veils any clear development of thought. It is not possible to differentiate sharply between books on the basis of inconsistencies in Lo's treatment of his major themes, or to observe a significant phased development of ideas from the first of his Five Books to the last.

5. For summaries of each chapter, see Appendix I.

We can, however, observe developmental tendencies or variations of emphasis in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e:

(1.) *The karma doctrine*: Earlier and later books of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e appear on the whole to differ in their treatment of morality and the doctrine of *karma*. Generally, Lo adopts a straightforward view of *karma* in the first two books, utilizing it to describe the human condition and urge his followers to avoid evil. In the later books, however, the doctrine is treated more as an expedient means (*upāya*), which a "person of superior capacity" recognizes as true only in a conditional sense, and ultimately discards.⁶ It is primarily in books 4 and 5 that Lo employs the relativistic language of *prajñā-pāramitā*, denying the distinction between good and evil and repudiating the efficacy of "good works" for religious cultivation. We cannot help but observe, however, that this more sophisticated view also appears, in isolation, in the earlier books, and that straightforward injunctions to virtue are not absent from books 3, 4, and 5.

(2.) *The Original Face and Ancestral Home*: Though the phrases "Original Face" (本來面目) and "Ancestral Home" (家鄉) appear in the earlier books, they are the predominant themes of books 4 and 5, and are employed far more frequently in Lo's later *pao-chūan*. Moreover, in Lo's Autobiography in book 1, there is a narrative focus on the imagery of "returning home" -- playing on

6. See, for example, the Chieh-kuo pao-chūan, p'in 14, "On Fools who do not Believe in their Own True Body": "*Karma* [applies only to] the realm of vain ornamentation (虛華境界). It is nonsense that takes in and deceives those who have gone astray. Those who have awakened to the Way basically have no *karma*." (Chieh-kuo 14:64-65).

the psychological power of the phrase -- whereas in later books it is described principally in its *metaphorical* sense, as an expression for enlightenment.⁷

(3.) Other Buddhist formulations: Generally, Lo is more thorough in his repudiation of Buddhist conventions and institutions in the later books. Here we find his explicit rejection of monasticism and physical austerity, Ch'an meditation, and the recitation of scripture. Once again, however, we must point out that this critical attitude is not absent from books 1 and 2, and does in fact play its part in Lo's autobiographical narrative. On the other hand, there is a great deal of conventional Buddhist language throughout the Five Books, sometimes in direct opposition to Lo's forceful message of reform, lay-based religious piety, and "three-in-one" synthesis. Analysis of Lo's religious thought relative to the conventional teachings of the tradition is one of the more difficult tasks of interpretation in a study of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e.

(4.) The Holy Ancestor of the Limitless (無極聖祖): This phrase does not appear at all until book 4, where it is defined as a creator deity capable of self-transformation and multiple incarnations. A similar phrase, the Eternal Progenitor

7. This is not to say that the evocative character of the image is lost (as we can see in book 5, the Chieh-kuo pao-chūan, p'in 23, "The Pain of Weeping for Home"), but its religious significance is spelled out by Lo Ch'ing, in a series of explicit definitions or equivalences, only in the later books (book 4, the Cheng-hsin chūan, p'in 8, "On the Monk Long Ago who Mistakenly Identified the One Word of Liberation," and the Chieh-kuo pao-chūan, p'in 4, "Mother, the One Word from which All Things Flow," for example). I discuss this theme in more detail below.

(無生父母), is equated with Amitâbha and portrayed negatively in book 1. Moreover, Lo refers to the "Mother", which he identifies with both the Ancestor and the Self, far more frequently in books 4 and 5. As we shall see in Chapter III, we have here the origins of an Eternal Mother (無生老母) cult that was to dominate sectarian religion from the late sixteenth century on.

Lo's Autobiography in the first book describes the progress of his religious quest through "thirteen years of bitter effort in search of the Way," and is narrated as a dialectical process of alternately embracing and rejecting conventional methods of religious cultivation. In part, the discrepancies of the other four books can be explained in light of general developmental tendencies reflecting religious and psychological growth, with later books corresponding to more mature stages of his thought. We have textual evidence, in a postface to an early edition of the Cheng-hsin ch'u-i pao-chūan, that the fifth book was composed at some time after the other four, and Lo is most explicit in his later pao-chūan on the identity of Self and Mother, the imagery of the "ancestral home", the rejection of moral and social distinctions, and the establishment of a lay-based sectarian community of religious seekers.

However, on the principle themes of the texts, outlined above, the "developmental" theory cannot withstand close scrutiny. Though inconsistencies and variations of emphasis appear in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, we should be careful not to import conceptions of a "narrative process" into the texts. The Wu-pu liu-ts'e is roughly organized topically, and Lo appears to direct

his teachings to distinct audiences according to their needs and expectations. The inconsistencies in the texts can thus be viewed as a means consciously employed by Lo Ch'ing to appeal to the various propensities of his audience, not as evidence of the author's personal intellectual development. His use of conventional Buddhist language, which compromises many of his more radical antinomian statements, may have been an attempt to draw disciples to his sect or to anchor his own teachings in the accepted, "orthodox" foundation of the tradition; it is not the case that Lo abandons this language in the later texts. Overall, we do not find a clear and unambiguous contrast between the earlier and later books in the presentation of major teachings.

To the extent that it is possible, therefore, I view the Five Books as a single work, with an implicit order and coherence. This is simply to accord the written record of a popular religious figure the same assumption of self-consciousness and integrity that we regularly give to the writings of social elites. As a guiding principle of hermeneutics, it is a responsibility of the contemporary scholar to treat popular religious literature presupposing the conscious intentionality of its authors.

3. Lo's Analysis of the Human Condition

The narrative details of Lo Ch'ing's life give his religious quest an urgency and utility not found in the philosophical texts of Buddhist scholasticism. Born into a humble family of farmers, serving as a military conscript, suffering through the premature deaths of his parents, Lo was faced with the contingency and changeability of life as real, existential problems. The classical Buddhist teachings of impermanence (*anitya*) and suffering (*duhkā*) are, for Lo, practical, utilitarian concerns that motivate him to pursue his "thirteen years of bitter effort" and serve as the starting point of his religious philosophy.

Lo maintains the popular Buddhist conception of *samsāra*: the physical body is subject to illness, decay, and death; after death, the soul (靈魂) is judged by Yen-lo wang (閻羅王), King Yama, and punished in a purgatorial hell with physical tortures based metaphorically on sins performed on earth; and after a period of suffering in hell that may last for "innumerable eons", the soul transmigrates, to be reborn among the four types of living being (四生) -- womb-born, egg-born, water-born, or "transformation"-born -- or the six *gati* (六道) -- *deva*, human, beast, *asura*, hungry ghost, or hell-being -- as determined by the karmic law of just consequences.

The starting point of Lo Ch'ing's religious teachings, coming out of his own experience of loss as a child, is the observed fact that human life is short and inherently painful. This, of course, is a corollary of the conventional Buddhist teaching that the basis of *duhkā* suffering, is the transience

of existence -- all evident things are by nature impermanent and cannot be relied upon; they are "empty".⁸

Lo maintains the classical Buddhist doctrine of impermanence:

In the midst of *samsāra*, there is only impermanence (無常), bitterness (苦), emptiness (空), no-self (無我), impurity (不淨), and vain illusion (虛假) -- like foam on the surface of a stream, now appearing, now disappearing. Coming, going, and spinning, it is just like the wheels of a cart. Birth, old age, sickness, death, and all of the eight afflictions of life⁹ follow one after the other. There is never a moment's rest. (*T'an-shih* 3:36).

The body is unclean:

From the nine apertures, there is a continuous flow [of bodily fluids]. That is why the scriptures say that this body is a collection of a myriad afflictions. All of it is impure. (*T'an-shih* 3:38).

Fools do not understand that theirs is a body of blood, pus, and skin, which turns to dust after death. They do not know that after death, they will turn into a corpse, gnashing its teeth [reading 咬 for 噬], unbearably putrid and stinking. (*Cheng-hsin* 2:61).

And life is short:

Alas! Life is a floating world, insecure and short. The heart is full of pain. Fathers and sons are together for only a moment's duration [lit. "one *kṣaṇa*"]. The unity of the sons of one household cannot be preserved for long. The four elements [earth, water, fire, air] of fathers and sons turn to ashes and dust before one's very eyes. [The father]

8. Lo uses different terms for this "emptiness" (虛妄) and the "Emptiness" of liberation (虛空). I will continue to distinguish the two terms with upper- and lower-case letters. Lo's use of different expressions resolves one of the classic paradoxes of *prajñā-pāramitā* literature -- a characteristic of popular religious texts which we will see further illustrated below.

9. *Pa-k'u* (八苦): birth, age, sickness, death, parting with what we love, meeting with what we hate, unattained aims, and all the ills of the five *skandhas*. Soothill and Hodous, *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* (Taipei: 1962), 39.

cannot hold his gaze for long on his sons and daughters. When the great limit¹⁰ arrives, unable to see one another face to face, they grieve to death.

A good home and shelter, [though made with] walls and partitions of stone, cannot last. When the great limit arrives, it is impossible to extend [one's life] or to free oneself [from death]; alas, one grieves to death!

Those of wisdom walk the Great Path, and will return to their ancestral home. Those without wisdom consume a diet of meat, and will never exchange [one] body [for another].¹¹

Foolish men, gazing upon their sons and daughters, take delight in what they see before them. The past and the future are completely absent from their thoughts: they are utter fools. When they are cold, they lay out quilts and brocade, and cover their bodies. They do not consider that after the briefest time they will be carried to the suburban graveyard. A pit will be dug in the earth, three feet by five. Covered with five feet of dirt, they will not see the light of Heaven. Deserting their sons and daughters to suffer the approbrium of men, fathers cannot see their children. The one real spirit (真魂) in the Eight Hells also suffers the calamities of retribution. They think that they will remain forever in the yang world of the living, cultivating family relationships. But in the moment it takes to curl a finger, their lives come to an end, and they arrive at the Bureau of Death. (*T'an-shih* 3:52-53).

In this world, nothing is permanent. Wealth and honor are insecure even when possessed, and cannot endure beyond the grave:

A money-lender takes no rest, counting his profits. He calculates interest without sleeping until dawn. If he loans out money and it is not returned, [his anger] is like the slice of a knife. It's hard to give up on [a loan of] a eleven hundred catties (石); it pierces his heart like fire. Prone to grasping [for profit: reading 著掩 for 著俺], a money-lender exhausts himself with anxiety [lit. "constraint of the mind"]. Every day his family cannot be at peace, for the sake of an ounce (兩) [of silver].

10. *Ta hsien* (大限): death. Morohashi Tetsuji, *Daikanwa jiten*, 3:396 (5831.719).

11. *Fan-shen* (翻身): to change bodies, or attain a higher level of rebirth through transmigration. Nakamura Hajime, *Bukkyō-go daijiten*, 1268a; Oda Tokunō, *Oda Bukkyō daijiten* [Oda's Comprehensive Buddhist Dictionary] (Tokyo: 1965), 1621; Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 9:136 (28814.49).

Lending one ounce, recovering two: his heart is joyful!
But if he makes a loan without interest, it's hard to take!
If he lends out money and [must even] deduct the principle,
it is like the slice of a knife. If he takes out a suit [on
the offender], [he must] also fear him and [the threat of]
cutting short his life.

His own money he is loathe to give up; day after day he is
anxious and angry: anxious to the point that he cannot
sleep straight until dawn. During the day, worries arise;
there is never a moment's rest. When night comes, he is
afraid [a thief] will strike him. His stomach [lit. "gall"]
trembles and his heart is alarmed. The whole family, for
the sake of an ounce [of silver], frets in vain and cannot
sleep. They are unequal to a family which has no money at
all and can sleep until dawn.

Everyone is troubled by a money-lender who cannot lend his
money. He grants [a loan] to one, he does not grant [a
loan] to another, gathering hatred as he goes. If someone
cannot pay him back, he still wants to initiate [more
loans]. If he isn't attacked, he is robbed, or [his house
is] set afire aimed at burning him to death, or the grain of
his fields is chopped down, harming the tender shoots; what
can he do about it? Prone to grasping [for profit], [the
life of] a money-lender is truly difficult to practice...

[Those who] rely on wealth and honor use strength and
intimidation to cheat virtuous men. Moreover, they butcher
living things and harm life: their sinful *karma* is
unbounded. People with money buy pigs and sheep, scrape
their hides and butcher the meat. Their sons lay out the
table for the feast, happy and delighted. They invite their
relatives to share the food. Blowing [flutes] and plucking
[strings], they sing and dance. But what is sweet when
eaten becomes bitter: retribution attends the body. What
is sweet when eaten becomes bitter: karmic retribution
falls upon them [as a result of their actions]. The record
book of the ten Kings of Hell in the Office of Destiny
records the distribution [of good and evil]. (T'an-shih
6:81-87).

For ministers and officials, the material rewards of
government service are like floating clouds:

I admire those of you who are in official positions. In
fact, your lives are difficult. Every day your thoughts are
exhausted managing the households, and you are unable [to
conduct yourselves] as you would like. If you are lazy, you
fear that other official business will not be attended to;
if you are pressing, you fear that [the people] will plan
revenge. Wishing to do good, you fear that your own

household will manage only with difficulty; wishing to do evil, you fear that sinful *karma* will follow close upon you. Unable to do otherwise, you deceive your conscience, and perform evil all the day. You butcher living things and harm life: punishment for your sinful *karma* is close upon you! You build beautiful palaces with flowered beams and ornamental pillars. You wear delicate clothes and ride fine horses; you are heroes full measure. [But] who knows that the record book of the ten Kings of Hell records every item? When your clothes and official emoluments are exhausted, illness will afflict you, and you will be bound up in sinful *karma*.

What son [could be so] filial that he will take your place in death? What son or daughter would replace you in an audience with Lord Yama? You are completely covered with diseases and afflictions; you experience pains that penetrate your body. Lying on your bed, you cannot get up; your cries of pain sound out continuously. When the pain comes upon you, you cannot endure it, like a knife scraping [your skin]. When a fever approaches, there is no place to hide from it; it is like a fire burning your body.

[At death, you have these thoughts]: "I think to myself about riding sleek horses and travelling great distances [lit. "roaming on long streets"]. In the time it takes to curl a finger, death comes to me, a myriad pains afflict my body. No longer can I abide in fine dwellings. How difficult it is to give them up! I must cast aside my sons and daughters, and travel the road [to Hell] alone. Arriving at the Bureau of Death, I am not released. How difficult it is to be freed! Evil spirits and oxhead demons follow me closely. In Hell, I suffer from head [to foot]. Illuminated by the mirror of *karma*, my pain and suffering are boundless. For my heavy sins, I am sent to the Avici Hell.¹² For my lighter sins, I am sent to samsaric transmigration among the four types of rebirth ..." (*T'an-shih* 7:3-8).

Lo's condemnation of the lifestyles of the rich and famous is pronounced in these passages, and this is one of many contexts

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12. *Wu-chien ti-yu* (無間地獄): "last of the eight hot hells, in which punishment, pain, form, birth, death continue without intermission" -- the hell of "uninterrupted", "unintermitted" suffering. Soothill-Hodous, *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 35a, 383a. Stephen Teiser calls it "The Hell of No-Interval"; *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: 1988), 181. Cf. Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 7:431 (19113.133).

in which he exhorts his followers to frugality and vegetarianism, but the underlying message of these remarks is the uncertainty and transiency of worldly accomplishments.

Lo never admits that wealth and status may be rewards for virtue in past lives; his point is that affluence is fleeting and ephemeral. However, the other side of the karmic equation -- that evil behavior is inevitably punished -- receives full play in Lo's Five Books. In his chapter, "Lamentations for Brigands and Thieves," he writes:

I urge you "great heroes" not to wish to steal. Desist from releasing the bow and in loosing the arrow, by which you bring harm to others. If you harm another, it is impossible to attain salvation; the book [of merits and demerits] records each case. Though impossible to determine when, sooner or later you have to run somewhere for your life. Your wife [must] return to her family; your sons have no master. Parting is a bitter sorrow! I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent!

In a moment's inattention, you are captured. Ropes are tightened around you, cords bind you, and iron cudgels strike your body. A metal vest is fastened upon you; your flesh and bones are smashed to pieces. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent!

You abandon your father and mother, and there is no one to care for them. Parting is a bitter sorrow! I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent!

You leave your wife and children, and she must return to her family. Parting is a bitter sorrow! I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent! Abandoning your sons and daughters, they suffer the approbrium of strangers. Parting is a bitter sorrow! I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent!

Locked in prison, you will never be let out. How woeful and bitter! I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent!

Entering your tiny bed, it is difficult to move and stretch, and you are bitten to death by mosquitoes and gnats. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent! You long for your parents but can never see them; all day, you think of them. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent! You long for

your wife and son, and your sons and daughters; all day, you weep. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent!

Never again will you see the pleasant scenes of the marketplace in the city. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent! Never again will you see the azure mountains and green waters. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent! The walls are high; you cannot escape. You suffer all day. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent! Far from your home village, you think of your native place. Your eyes are filled with tears. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent! In prison there is a putrid smell; there is no where to escape it. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent! Under the cold earth, trembling with fear, you suffer all day. I urge you good gentlemen, swiftly repent! (T'an-shih 9:37-39).

Worse still, a life of crime produces a myriad transmigrations in which rebirth as a human is impossible: after all, "To attain human form is as difficult as fishing a needle out of water" (T'an-shih 9:36).

Just as an immoral life leads to karmic retribution in the form of unfavorable rebirths in future lives, an unfavorable situation in this life is the just consequence of evil performed in past lives. In his "Lamentations for the Poor," Lo states that the hunger, cold, and ill-health suffered by the poor are the karmic fruits of their own past, and urges them to repent (T'an-shih 5:68-79).

Lo refers repeatedly to the nature of the punishments evil persons are subjected to in hell, and he "laments" for the souls transmigrated among the "four types of living creature" (四生) and the abuses they are destined to suffer in the perpetual wheel of *samsâra*.

The Chin kang lun¹³ says: 'The Bodhisattva Manjuśrī asked the Buddha: "What are the painful conditions of the four types of living creatures? Please explain them to your disciple."

The World-Honored replied: "The one whose eyes cling to visible forms sinks after death into the pain of [rebirth as] an egg-born creature (卵生), and becomes a hell-dweller in the form of any bird or beast.

"The one whose ear covets sound sinks after death into the pain of [rebirth as] a womb-born creature (胎生), and becomes a hell-dweller in the form of any ox, horse, pig, sheep, or domestic animal with hooves and horns.

"The one whose nose covets odors sinks after death into the punishment of [rebirth as] a water-born creature (濕生), and becomes a hell-dweller in the form of any fish or crustacean in a river or lake.

"The one whose tongue covets tastes sinks after death into [rebirth in] the category of transformation-born creatures (化生), and becomes a hell-dweller in the form of any mosquito, gnat, flea, louse, or worm."

If you do not seek the way of transcendence, it is impossible to escape rebirth as one of the four living creatures among the six gati.' (P'o-hsieh 2:59-62).

Lo remarks how unpleasant it is to be reborn in these forms.

Creatures born from the womb eat water-reeds and wallow in mud; they are plowed, whipped, tied, skinned, and butchered.

Creatures born from eggs eat worms, live in fear of other animals, and die young; they are sliced and boiled for soup.

Water-born creatures are wet and muddy; when they are caught, chopped up, and cooked in oil, they smell good to humans.

Creatures born by "transformation" -- a spontaneous form of gestation in bogs and swamps -- live in filth and lack heads,

13. T25.1510.757-781. This is one of three quotations attributed by Lo Ch'ing to the Vajracchedikā-sūtra-sāstra. I am unable to locate this passage in the Taishō text, though mention is made throughout of the four types of animal rebirth.

tails, and legs; they are born in the morning and die in the evening (P'o-hsieh 2:64-67; T'an-shih 5:74-75).

The perils of *samsāra* are even more heinous if one is reborn as a ghost or demon (P'o-hsieh 2:67-68), and the likelihood of rebirth in one of the four lower *gati*, as a beast (畜生), hell-being (地獄), hungry ghost (餓鬼), or *asura*-demon (脩羅), is far greater than that of rebirth in the higher two, as a *deva* (天人) or human (人倫).

Lo's focus in all of these many passages -- the theme of death, punishment, and transmigration is recalled in virtually every chapter of the Five Books -- is the inevitability of suffering. What concerns him is less the moral problem of *karma* -- encouraging good and discouraging evil -- than the religious problem of *samsāra*. There are no statements to the effect that good behavior will be rewarded with a favorable rebirth (whether in this world or the Pure Land), or that the suffering of existence can have a moral solution. Material blessings are ephemeral and thus illusory, and Lo's religious goal is not a better rebirth, but escape from *samsāra*.

4. Cosmology: The Origins of Existence

We have seen that Lo's analysis of the human condition follows directly from his autobiographical meditations. In his thirteen years of travels in search of the Way, Lo seeks final release from the inevitable pain of existence. Life is tenuous and short, and the immutable laws of *karma* power the wheel of *samsāra*.

He finds at least a preliminary solution to the problem of impermanence and mortality in speculations about the origins of the universe:

In the beginning, when there was no Heaven and no Earth, what sort of scene was this? Suddenly I had an insight into Emptiness (虚空): before there could be a Heaven and Earth, first there was a motionless Emptiness. Unbounded, unlimited, unmoving, unshaken, it was the *Dharma*-body (法身) of the Buddhas.

Ch'ien and *k'un* [Heaven and Earth] are subject to decay, but Emptiness is indestructible. It is the essence of the *Dharma* (法體) of the Buddhas. Dreading the pain of the wheel of *samsâra*, I dared not abandon my investigations, and advanced another step in my search.

Suddenly, [as I progressed] a step in my search, my heart was filled with great joy. I thought about the beginning, when there was no Heaven and Earth: what sort of scene was this? Emptiness was prior, Heaven posterior; True Emptiness is unmoving. Heaven has boundaries, [but] Emptiness has none. [From Emptiness], the Buddhas attained the *Dharma-kâya*.

This True Emptiness: go upwards, and there is no place where it is exhausted. This True Emptiness: go downwards, and it is bottomless, unlimited. This True Emptiness: go east, and there is no border or boundary. This True Emptiness: go west, and there is no end-point or point of exhaustion. This True Emptiness: go in the four directions, and there is no border or boundary. This True Emptiness is the body of the Buddhas; [they are] at one with Emptiness! (*K'u-kung* 7:67-71).

Emptiness, then, is both pre-existent and all-encompassing. It exists prior to Heaven and Earth, and is present everywhere and in all things.

As we saw in Lo's account of his ultimate enlightenment, he describes this eternal Emptiness as a creator deity:

I thought of the beginning: there was no Heaven and Earth, there were no names. Originally there was no genesis, nor was there destruction; no decrease or increase. The Great Emptiness (太虚空) has no name, [but] its supernormal powers are vast. It gives birth to men and women; it can rule *ch'ien* and *k'un* [Heaven and Earth]. It does not move or

shake; it envelopes Heaven and Earth. It transforms itself into spring and fall, and the five grains can grow. It penetrates the mountains and seas, and the spring waters flow continuously. (K'u-kung 14:70-71).

This process of the "self-transformation" of Emptiness is the means by which all things come into existence.

Lo employs terminology with Buddhist, Taoist, and Neo-Confucian associations to describe the origins and metaphysical foundations of the universe. Buddha (佛), Tao (道), and the Limitless (無極) are all depicted as pre-existent creators who give birth to and nourish the cosmos; they are identical to the Great Emptiness.

As it does most of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, Buddhist language informs Lo Ch'ing's religious cosmology. The Buddha controls and maintains (治) all things in the universe: Heaven and Earth; mountains and waters; heavenly bodies; King Yama and the ten hells; the thirty-three Heavens and three thousand worlds; fruits, meats, and vegetables; wild and domesticated animals; men and women; the five organs and the five senses; birth, old age, sickness, and death. All are arranged and determined by the eternal Buddha (T'an-shih 2:21-26).

This litany of creation, as well as the passages quoted above on the creative power of Emptiness, clearly draw on the vocabulary of Buddhism, but Lo also employs a metaphysical understanding of the Tao. The Tao is the "venerable host" (主人公) of creation:

Before [Heaven and Earth] were first divided, first there was the Way (道). The Great Tao fundamentally is the venerable host. Before the Three Teachings, first there was the Tao. The Great Tao fundamentally is the venerable host.

Before the Buddhas, first there was the Tao. The Great Tao fundamentally is the venerable host. Before the scriptures and classics, first there was the Tao. The Great Tao fundamentally is the venerable host. Before monks and laymen, first there was the Tao. The Great Tao fundamentally is the venerable host. (Chieh-kuo 11:28-29).

Though the Wu-pu liu-ts'e quotes sparingly from Taoist works, they are employed as primary sources to bolster Lo's cosmological theories. Purporting to borrow from the Lao-tzu book, Lo describes the creative power of the Tao:

The T'ai-shang Lao-tzu Tao-te ching says: "The Tao is the Principle (理) to which things and affairs should conform. From antiquity to the present, it penetrates Heaven and Earth, as the Original Breath (元氣) circulates the four seasons. Have they ever ceased, even for a moment?"¹⁴

It also says: "Non-Being is the name of the beginning of Heaven and Earth; Being is the name of the mother of the ten thousand things."¹⁵ The Tao was born and developed originally, before Heaven and Earth existed. It was not established after things had come into being."¹⁶

It also says: "The Great Tao is without form (無形): it engendered and nurtured Heaven and Earth. The Great Tao is without feelings (無情): it moves the sun and the moon. The Great Tao is without a name (無名): it reared and nourished the ten thousand things. I do not know its name. Forced to, I call it 'Tao'..."¹⁷

14. Source unknown.

15. Tao-te ching, Chapter I. Lo Ch'ing's own emphasis on Being (有) and Non-Being (無) forces me to choose this translation, as opposed to "The Nameless (無名) is the beginning of Heaven and Earth; the Named (有名) is the mother of the ten thousand things." For translations of the Tao-te ching supporting my translation, see Max Kaltenmark, Lao-tzu and Taoism, trans. Roger Greaves (Stanford: 1969), 33; Chad Hansen, Language and Logic in Ancient China (Ann Arbor: 1983), 65.

16. Source unknown.

17. Elsewhere (Cheng-hsin 12:37), Wang Yüan-ching attributes this quotation to the Ch'ing-ching ching. Indeed, it appears to be from that Sung work: see the T'ai-shang lao-chün shuo-ch'ang ch'ing-ching miao ching, Tao-tsang (Taipei: 1962), case 40/number 341/傷上/chüan 1/page 1a.

(P'o-hsieh 15:65-67).

Elsewhere, Lo refers to the *Tao* as the "Old One" (古者), the "master of Heaven and Earth" who nurtures all things "like a hen incubating its eggs" (P'o-hsieh 15:72-73).

With an admixture of religious terminology from Buddhist, Taoist, and Neo-Confucian sources, Lo's speculations on the creative principle of the universe are founded on his conception of the "Limitless" (無極).

The Great Chilocosm, Heaven and Earth are in the grip of the Limitless. The source of the "Limitless" of our recitations is at one with the True Body (無極源一體真身).

The five lakes and oceans, the great seas and rivers are transformations of the Limitless. The source of the "Limitless" of our recitations is at one with the True Body.

Heaven and Earth and the myriad things [are subject to] the supernormal power of the Limitless. The source of the "Limitless" of our recitations is at one with the True Body.

The revolutions of the sun and moon, and of the Milky Way, [are subject to] the supernormal power of the Limitless. The source of the "Limitless" of our recitations is at one with the True Body.

The three thousand Buddhas in charge of the Teaching [are subject to] the supernormal power of the Limitless. The source of the "Limitless" of our recitations is at one with the True Body.

The production of spring and autumn and harmony of the four seasons is a transformation of the Limitless. The source of the "Limitless" of our recitations is at one with the True Body.

The five grains, and the fields of the four seasons are manifestations of the Limitless. The source of the "Limitless" of our recitations is at one with the True Body.

The grasses, trees, and fruits are manifestations of the Limitless. The source of the "Limitless" of our recitations is at one with the True Body.

Men and women and their stinking sacks of skin are transformations of the Limitless. The source of the

"Limitless" of our recitations is at one with the True Body.
(Cheng-hsin 9:100-101).

It is clear from these statements that the Limitless is the most fundamental cosmological conception of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e.

In p'in 17 of book 5 (Shen-ken chieh-kuo chūan), "Before the Division [of Heaven and Earth], There was First the Egg of the Limitless and Supreme Ultimate," Lo paraphrases a Neo-Confucian classic:

The Explication of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate (太極圖說) serves as confirmation: When Heaven and Earth were not yet in existence, there was chaos (混沌) like a chicken egg, something vast and watery, initiating sprouts, and nebulous and misty, producing shoots...¹⁸ The Primal Breath (源氣) of the Supreme Ultimate envelopes the myriad things and makes them one. The Primal Breath produced the two principles [yin and yang]. The two principles produced the four diagrams [太陽, 少陰, 太陰, 少陽]. The four diagrams produced the eight trigrams... (Chieh-kuo 17:11-16).¹⁹

Lo goes on to state a number of equivalences -- between the Limitless, Principle (理), the Way (道), Virtue (善), and the Supreme Ultimate (太極) -- grounding his mythology of creation in Taoist and Neo-Confucian terminology.

We will return to the question of how Lo Ch'ing understood the classics in a later chapter, but we might observe that his cosmology owes more to the early speculative Neo-Confucian philosophers, as well as to Taoist and Buddhist classics, than to the more mature and cosmologically restrained Chu Hsi. The

18. The passage is interrupted by a verse quotation of the "virtuous [patriarchs] of old" by Lan Feng.

19. This is Lo Ch'ing's wording of Chou Tun-i's creation account. Cf. Wing-tsit Chan, Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton: 1963), 463-464.

phrase *wu-chi* appears first in the *Tao-te ching*: "If you are a model to the empire, then Eternal Power (常德) will not be lacking and you will return to the Limitless (歸于無極)." ²⁰ Shao Yung and Chou Tun-i posit the Limitless and the Supreme Ultimate out of their concern for the origins of the universe, and borrow from the *Lao-tzu* and the *I-ching* to describe the process of creation. For both, the Limitless is that from which and by which all things come into being. It is the pre-existent, cosmic source of the universe.

For Chu Hsi, on the other hand, the Supreme Ultimate (太極) takes precedence not as a pre-existent creative force but as the focal point of the Principle or universal pattern (理) of existing things. To Chou Tun-i's exclamation at the beginning of the *T'ai-chi t'u-shuo*, "Limitless and also Supreme Ultimate!", Chu commented, "It is not the case that beyond the Supreme Ultimate there is additionally the Limitless (非太極之外復有無極也)." *Wu-chi* cannot be separated from *T'ai-chi*, and neither should be viewed as a pre-existent, pro-creative Emptiness somehow independent of things. ²¹ Lo Ch'ing's emphasis is clearly on the cosmological, creative capacity of the

20. *Tao-te ching* (SPPY edition), ch. XXVIII. For another early appearance of the phrase, see the "Questions of King T'ang" (湯問) of the *Lieh-tzu* (列子) (SPPY, *chūan* 5, pp. 1b-2a), trans. Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: 1963), 312.

21. *Chin-ssu lu* 近思錄, I:1. Chu Hsi's favorite interlocutor Lu Hsiang-shan reviled *wu-chi* as too "Taoistic" and urged Chu to abandon it entirely. See Wing-tsit Chan, ed., *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: 1986), "Introduction", 8-9; and *Chu Hsi: New Studies* (Honolulu: 1989), 141.

Limitless, not only sustaining the universe, but bringing it into existence.

Lo's contribution to "three-in-one" thought is to describe Emptiness as the single source of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. As terms designating one and the same reality, they are ultimately indistinguishable: "True Emptiness" (真空) is equated with the Buddha (佛), the "Way" (道) and the "Limitless" (無極).

The Emptiness of the ten directions is not empty. It is the fundamental essence of the Buddhas. The Emptiness of the ten directions is not empty. It is the *Dharma*-body of the Limitless. (Cheng-hsin 9:103).

Emptiness (虛空) is the Limitless (無極). The Limitless is Emptiness. The Great Tao is the Limitless. (Cheng-hsin 11:30-31).²²

And so on.

Those who cultivate the Three Teachings share a common goal:

The bond connecting a [Buddhist] monk, a Taoist practitioner, and a [Confucian] scholar is that all alike enter into the emptiness of thought (心空) and into graduated concentration [*dhyāna*] (第禪),²³ just as water from its springs flows into the vastness of the sea, and as the sun, moon, stars, and planets are together in the same heaven. Fundamentally, the Great Tao is non-dual. For what reason, with one-sided attachment, should one separate the pronouncements [of the Three Teachings]? If one understands thought, one is permitted a discussion of "what" and "who". The Three Teachings are fundamentally one category [of understanding]. (P'o-hsieh 1:43-45).

22. This is part of a quotation attributed by Lo Ch'ing to the Yüan chüeh ching (Mahāvaiṣṇava-purnabuddha-sūtra; T17.842.913-922). I have been unable to locate the reference.

23. *T'ung ju hsin k'ung chi di ch'an* (同入心空及第禪): but see Wang Yüan-ching's interpretation below, which supports a translation, "...all alike enter into emptiness of thought (心空), success [in the examinations] (及第), and meditative concentration (禪[那])."

As Wang Yüan-ching explains:

Though the patriarchs of the Three Teachings never met face to face, their principles (理) were the same despite differences in language... Taoists talk about "emptiness of thought" (心空); Confucians talk about success in the examinations (及第); Buddhists talk about meditative concentration (禪那). Generally speaking, those who talk about success in the examinations are encouraging people to cultivate moral behavior (修身); those who talk about emptiness of thought are encouraging people to become detached from their emotions (忘情); and those who talk about meditative concentration are encouraging people to see into their Natures (見性). If a person's body, mind, feelings, and Nature are together pure and unobstructed -- a single, non-dual sign of existence -- it is like ten thousand streams having a single source: the waters are by nature no different from one another. (P'o-hsieh 1:43-44).

Lo concludes:

Unenlightened people falsely distinguish among the Three Teachings. Those of understanding are together enlightened to the One Mind. (Cheng-hsin 4:9).

Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism, then, are united in a single source and a common destiny. That source is Emptiness.

What is the relationship between this creative Emptiness and humankind? Our greatest failing, Lo asserts, is in ignoring the distinction between the "root" of all things -- Emptiness, Buddha, Non-Being, Tao, Limitless, Supreme Ultimate -- and its "sprouts", and it is in this context that Lo emphasizes the anthropomorphic character of Emptiness, as the Patriarch or Ancestor (祖). The "sprouts" are Heaven and Earth, the sun and moon, the myriad stars and constellations, the five grains, the four seasons, all living things, the Three Teachings, oxen and horses, Heaven and Hell, *sūtras* and classics, savory foods, silk and satin, the eight trigrams, *ch'ien* and *k'un*, yin and yang, men and women, monks and laymen (Chieh-kuo 17:4-8, 30-41). Foolish

people become fixed on these phenomenal things and forget their common origin.

The Gâthâ of Wu-chi, Foundation of the Great Chiliocosm²⁴ says: "Those who do not know who maintains Heaven and Earth have forgotten the mercy of the Ancestor and turned their backs on Him (忘恩背祖). Those who do not know who controls the rivers and seas have forgotten the mercy of the Ancestor and turned their backs on Him. Those who do not know who holds Heaven and Earth in the palm of His hand have forgotten the mercy of the Ancestor and turned their backs on Him. Those who do not know who produced spring and autumn have forgotten the mercy of the Ancestor and turned their backs on Him. Those who do not know who controls the five grains have forgotten the mercy of the Ancestor and turned their backs on Him. Those who do not know who moves the sun and the moon have forgotten the mercy of the Ancestor and turned their backs on Him. Those who do not know who holds the great chiliocosm in the palm of His hand have forgotten the mercy of the Ancestor and turned their backs on Him. Those who do not know who controls the ten thousand things have forgotten the mercy of the Ancestor and turned their backs on Him. (Cheng-hsin 10:10-11).

Anyone who does not know the root has forgotten the mercy of the Ancestor and turned his back on Him. (Chieh-kuo 17:8).

The Limitless produced Heaven and Earth. [He] orders the world and nurtures the myriad living beings. The myriad beings of the earth are His poor children. I urge you to return home your unbelieving hearts. The Limitless originally is your blood-relative [lit. "fused-bone kin"]. The Limitless Elder (無極長者) longs for His children and grandchildren. The myriad beings of the earth are His poor children, but over many *kalpas* they have become lost in confusion and do not recognize their kin. (P'o-hsieh 24:98).

"Returning home" means recognizing the common origin of all things, including oneself, in the First Ancestor: Great Emptiness, Limitless.

Finally, and most importantly, the Wu-pu liu-ts'e asserts that the First Ancestor is nothing other than the Self within

24. Wu-chi chia-chu ta-ch'ien chieh chieh (無極架住大千界偈): an unknown source.

every individual. In the course of Lo Ch'ing's religious quest, the discovery of Emptiness as the creative force of the universe is preliminary to his ultimate enlightenment to the identity of this Emptiness with the Self, which Lo refers to alternately as the Nature (性) or Original Nature (本性), the Original Face (本來面目), the Original Essence (本體), myself (吾身), the True Self (真身), and the Spiritual Light (靈光).

He is I and I am He. I am One Body with Emptiness. (K'u-kung 14:72).

The Original Face (本來面目) of every man is truly the Perfect Body of the Limitless (無極圓身). Inner and outer are continuous with the Great Emptiness. Emptiness is fundamentally the body of the Limitless. The Original Face, [properly] recognized, cannot be calculated [in terms of] east, west, south or north. (T'an-shih 1:4-5).

The Original Face is the Limitless: originally there is but One Breath. (Cheng-hsin 9:103).

The Yüan chüeh ching²⁵ says: "The spiritual light of the ten thousand things was produced by the Limitless. [The Limitless] established Heaven, Earth, and the root of humanity. Emptiness is the Limitless. The Limitless is Emptiness. The Great Way is the Limitless. The Limitless is Emptiness. The Original Nature (本性) is continuous with the Great Emptiness. The Original Nature is precisely the body of the Limitless (本性就是無極身). (Cheng-hsin 11:31).

In its identity with Emptiness, the Self is co-existent with the creation, and thus existentially prior to the origin of differentiated things.

Never was there a time when the ten thousand things did not exist; originally they were a Single Breath (一氣). It is clear that the Original Face (本來面目) is that Single Breath. (Chieh-kuo 12:37).

25. The Mahāvaiṣṇava-pūrṇabuddha-sūtra (T17.842.913-922). Again I am unable to locate the passage in Lo's attributed source. Nor would we expect to find a reference to wu-chi in a central Buddhist text. For a discussion of Lo's use of sources, see Chapter IV below.

Before [Heaven and Earth] were divided, first there was the Nature (未曾初分先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this [lit. "take responsibility for it": 今朝如何不承當]? Before Heaven and Earth, first there was the Nature (未有天地先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before good and evil, first there was the Nature (未有善惡先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before birth and death, first there was the Nature (未有生死先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before hell, first there was the Nature (未有地獄先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before Lord Yama, first there was the Nature (未有閻君先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before cultivation and confirmation, first there was the Nature (未有修證先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before yin and yang, first there was the Nature (未有陰陽先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before the thousand Buddhas, first there was the Nature (未有千佛先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before all the Buddhas, first there was the Nature (未有諸佛先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before the *Bodhisattvas*, first there was the Nature (未有菩薩先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before monks and laymen, first there was the Nature (未有僧俗先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, first there was the Nature (未有禪定先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before the laws and precepts, first there was the Nature (未有戒律先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before the scriptures and classics, first there was the Nature (未有經書先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before the Three Teachings, first there was the Nature (未有三教先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before causes and effects [*karma*], first there was the Nature (未有因果先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before the ancient Buddha, first there was the Nature (未有古佛先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before the present and past, first there was the Nature (未有今古先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before the gods and immortals, first there was the Nature (未有神仙先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before the yang-spirits, first there was the Nature (未有陽神先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? Before impermanent [things], first there was the Nature (未有無常先有性). Why do the people of today not recognize this? (Chieh-kuo 6:29-46).

Think of it: in the beginning, when there were no Three Teachings, first there was the Original Essence (本體). When there were no scriptures and classics, first there was myself (吾身). (P'o-hsieh 23:77).

For Lo Ch'ing, enlightenment consists in recognizing the true nature of this Creator-Self. It is not among the "sprouts" of existence, but is in fact the "root" itself. So, the basic spiritual crisis of humankind -- its separation from the creator -- is resolved internally: "returning home" consists in recovering the Self.

The image which ties Lo's cosmological speculations together is the "Mother" (母). The Mother is root, creator, original Emptiness, Limitless, Supreme Ultimate. Ultimately, she is also the Self, within the inner Nature of every individual.

The names of the Buddhas, of the canonical scriptures, of humans and of the ten thousand things all flow from one word. Recognize that this one word is Mother. The Mother is the Ancestor (祖); the Ancestor is the Mother. Let me explain with a simple analogy: A child's name is also a name transformed from the Original Face. And the names of all the people of the world are also names transformed out of the Original Face. Regardless of the name, the names of the Buddhas, the names of the Three Teachings, the names of the *bodhisattvas*, the names of every word (字), the names of all of the ten thousand things, all are names transformed out of (變起) the Original Face. The Original Face is the Mother; it is the Ancestor (為做母, 為做祖). (Chieh-kuo 4:88-90).

The Mother is the Self. The Self is the Mother. In origin they are one in the same... (K'u-kung 11:48).

In an extended verse passage, Lo sets out forty-four terms for the "Mother", "Original Face", or "Ancestral Home", all equivalent to the Self (Chieh-kuo 4:91-125):

- (安養國) The [Pure] Land of Tranquil Nourishment
- (佛國土) The Land of the Buddha
- (天堂路) The Road to Heaven
- (西方境) The Western [Pure] Realm

(淨土天)	The Pure Land Heaven
(古觀音)	Old Avalokiteśvara
(古彌陀)	Old Amitâbha
(舊家鄉)	The Old Ancestral home
(龍華會)	The Dragon-Flower Assembly
(法中王)	The <i>Dharma</i> -king
(常安國)	The Land of Eternal Peace
(大藏經)	The Buddhist Canon
(金剛經)	The <u>Diamond Sûtra</u>
(無字經)	The <i>Sûtra</i> Without Words
(諸佛祖)	The Patriarch of all Buddhas
(諸佛母)	The Mother of all Buddhas
(藏經母)	The Mother of the Canonical Scriptures
(三教母)	The Mother of the Three Teachings
(諸佛體)	The Body of all Buddhas
(諸佛境)	The Spiritual Realm of the Buddhas
(諸字母)	The Mother of all Words
(無當母)	The Mother of Non-Obstruction
(男女根)	The Root of Men and Women
(天地根)	The Root of Heaven and Earth
(五穀根)	The Root of the Five Grains
(日月根)	The Root of the Sun and Moon
(陰陽根)	The Root of <i>Yin</i> and <i>Yang</i>
(萬物根)	The Root of the Ten Thousand Things
(三界根)	The Root of the Three Realms
(大千根)	The Root of the Great Chilocosm
(世界根)	The Root of the World

(通天眼)	Vision that Penetrates Heaven
(不壞身)	The Incorruptible Body
(安身命)	Settled Personal Destiny
(無價寶)	The Priceless Treasure
(大摩訶)	The Great, <i>Mahā</i>
(摩尼寶)	The Precious Jewel, <i>Mani</i>
(波羅密)	<i>Pāramitā</i>
(真實僧)	The True <i>Saṅgha</i>
(真禪定)	True <i>Dhyāna</i>
(活菩薩)	The Living <i>Bodhisattva</i>
(活神仙)	The Living God and Immortal
(大羅仙)	The Great Saint Lo
(長生路)	The Road to Long Life

Wang Yüan-ching describes these forty-four terms as the "tradition which points directly to the Mind" (直指心宗). To have faith in the identity of these terms with the Self is the "right road" to salvation and self-illumination.

5. Soteriology: The Way of Non-Action

Lo Ch'ing describes the proper means of enlightenment as the "Way of Non-Action" or the "method of non-interference" (無為法). The end result of this correct method (正法) is to awaken the original mind by "returning home" (歸家) and recovering the "ancestral home of true emptiness" (真空家鄉).

The "ancestral home" is a place without pain and worry, exceedingly joyful, free from the cycle of *samsāra* and unbounded in time and space. It is the "land" of self-transformation

(自化) and autonomy (自在), completely contained within and identical to the Self, and also that "place" where all persons are reunited as one.

Those of wisdom walk the Great Path: they return home. Arriving at their ancestral home, they will never disperse, never [again] turn the wheel [of *samsāra*]. Arriving at their ancestral home, their lives are immeasurable in duration; long they live, they do not die. Forever united as a family, *samsāra*-free, their happiness is unbounded. (T'an-shih 3:51).

People say that they do not know where those who have 'returned home' have gone. Now I will explain it in detail, and everyone will understand, and they will all come together. If I use this analogy, everyone will have faith: the rivers of the world return to the sea; they mix together to form one body of water. (Chieh-kuo 12:33-35).

Those who have attained the Way (得道) have gone home; they are mixed in one body (混源一體). (Chieh-kuo 12:45).

In his religious quest, Lo is able to "settle the body and establish [his] destiny" (安身立命) only after he recognizes the identity of the Self with the "Dharma-nature of True Emptiness" (真空法性) (K'u-kung 12:51). His subsequent writings attest to his conviction that his own experience can be universalized:

Over innumerable kalpas, we have in our confusion lost the One Breath that precedes Heaven. Among the four forms of rebirth, we suffer pain and anguish right to the present day. Think of it: we are far from home for tens of thousands of births and deaths. Reflection raises up the pain of birth and death; the stomach ["gall"] trembles and the heart is alarmed. Only in this cycle [of *samsāra*] have I come to understand the One Breath prior to Heaven. Coming from where I have come, going to where I shall go: a leaf falls and returns to the root. (K'u-kung 17:92).

Far from home in the sea of suffering for thousands and thousands of births and deaths, today I have arrived home, and I shall never again spin the wheel of *samsāra*. I have arrived home: the Land of Perfect Bliss (極樂國), of long life without aging (長生不老). It is not at all like nine deaths and ten births in the sea of suffering. I have arrived home: the Land of Perfect Bliss, of freedom and autonomy. It is not at all like entering *samsāra* and

meeting [repeatedly] with death and rebirth. I have arrived in the Land of Perfect Bliss, of security and sustenance, where Perfected Men assemble (真人聚會). It is not at all like accompanying the dead as a skeleton in the sea of suffering. I have arrived in the Land of Perfect Bliss, of security and sustenance, where Perfected Men assemble. It is not at all like revolving through the four forms of rebirth in the sea of suffering. (K'u-kung 17:98-99).

As a condition for illuminating the "ancestral home" within, Lo exhorts his followers to undertake a non-aggressive lifestyle, refraining from meat and wine, from harming living things, and from desecrating the Teachings (presumably as interpreted by Lo, though stated throughout in conventional Buddhist terms).

Who is capable of this form of deliverance from *samsāra*? A secondary theme in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e is a distinction between "men of superior capacity" (上等人) or "gentlemen" (君子) and "men of inferior capacity" (下等人), "small men" (小兒人), or "men who have gone astray" (迷人). Superior persons are unshaking in their commitment to the Way of Non-Action, not subject to back-sliding, having fully repented their prior lack of belief and evil ways.

The superior man repents sooner, the small man later. The superior man thinks about the innumerable great *kalpas* in the future of unending suffering through [transmigration among] the four types of living things and the six *gati*. He quickly repents and walks the Path, and [thereby attains] deliverance from the bitter sea of *samsāra*: he is the superior man. The small man does not deign to repent. Once he has lost this human body, troubles ensue for a myriad of *kalpas*. Eternally spinning about in the four types of rebirth, he is unable to exchange [one] body [for another]. (Chieh-kuo 2:59).

Superior men receive [lit. "take responsibility for"] [the *Dharma*] and return home; small men suffer torment in hell. (Chieh-kuo 3:86).

Lo asserts that "persons of superior capacity" come from every social class, from farmers to merchants and monarchs. Nor are they confined to men, monks, and do-gooders: repeatedly Lo eschews any distinction between men and women, clerics and laypersons, or lawful and criminal citizens with regard to their potential for enlightenment. He appears to attribute this potential -- and the distinction between persons of "superior" and "inferior" capacity -- to destiny.

If you do not meet with the marvelous teaching, you will not attain the immeasurable blessing. As far as meeting with this teaching is concerned, if you are destined to do so (有緣) you will meet with it even if you must travel a distance of a thousand li. If you are not (無緣), you will not meet with it even if it is right in front of you. Small men of slight merit (薄福小人), though they may chance upon [the teaching], will not walk the Path. (Chieh-kuo 3:71-73).

The difference between the two types of person described by Lo Ch'ing is expressed as a capacity or potential for salvation, the evidence for which is faith. The "true" faith or belief (正信) Lo praises repeatedly is not devotional; it is a faith in the "marvelous teaching" (妙法) as Lo defines it.

This is the method by which I was enlightened to the Way, after thirteen years [of bitter effort]. One needs a believing heart to transcend birth and death, that one's joy may be boundless. If you have complete faith in the Way to which I awakened, you will be no different from me. (Chieh-kuo 9:85).

Only believing hearts return to their [true] homes. (T'an-shih 4:63).

This means believing, even prior to an experiential awakening, that although one's soul (靈魂) is trapped in *samsāra*, there is a deeper, eternal Self; that although the physical body is subject

to decay and death, there is a "True Body" that is not. The person of faith "dares" to "return home" and to recognize the "ancestral home" within.

Generally, Lo favors the vocabulary of the Ch'an School to describe the personal, experiential realization of the Emptiness of the Self: the positive use of Ch'an terms to identify the Self, such as the Mind (心), the Nature (性), and the Original Face (本來面目); the rejection of mental activity and language, which should be "turned upside down and put on its head" (顛來倒) (Cheng-hsin 21:33); descriptions of a sudden insight that is subject to "neither cultivation nor confirmation" (無修無證).

Despite his prevalent use of Ch'an formulas, however, his books are intended to inspire faith, not to produce a sudden awakening. As we shall examine in Chapter III, the Five Books are teaching manuals intended to be recited aloud in a ritual setting, the effect of which is to educate disciples about their "True Selves". This allows the participant to arrive at the same insights as the Ch'an masters without the distraction of the means they employ (*kôan* studies, meditation, and strict obedience to a teacher), which, as we shall see below, can become false attachments inhibiting one's spiritual advancement.

6. Lo's Critique of "Manipulative Methods" of Religious Cultivation

Lo's supreme didactic effort in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e is to define and distinguish two forms of religious cultivation: the Way of Non-Action, or "non-manipulative" methods of self-cultivation (無為法), and the "active" or "manipulative" methods of conventional religiosity (有為法). The Way of Non-Action, as we have seen, describes the inner realization of the Self's identity with Emptiness, understood by Lo to be the creative power of existence, in a moment of insight, predicated upon commitment and faith. Conventional forms of religious cultivation -- Lo refers to them disdainfully as "sundry" or "motley means" (雜法) -- on the other hand, are ineffective and ultimately frustrating.

Before examining the various means of religious practice rejected by the Patriarch, we might observe that the distinction between proper and improper modes of spirituality is a common theme in the history of Chinese religions. The operative terms are "orthodox" (正) and "heterodox" (邪), and Lo himself does not hesitate to use them. These are relative designations, labels employed to legitimize those who apply them. The Chinese state has always distinguished between religious forms and practices it recognizes and those it does not, and the charge of "heterodoxy" is paramount to treason.²⁶ After all, religions that do not

26. Sects subjected to government persecution in the Ch'ing, including the Lo sects, were regularly described as heterodox. See specific references to the Ch'ing shih-lu [Veritable Records of the Ch'ing] and the Shih-liao hsün-k'an

enjoy state recognition represent not only a political challenge to the imperial establishment but also a cosmic challenge to the court's heavenly mandate, which includes the power to judge between truth and falsity in matters of religion.

Despite how frequently these terms are applied to Chinese religions, however, it is misleading to see them as anything more than value judgments relative to the contexts in which they are applied -- and mistaken to employ them as fixed terms of signification. First, the Chinese state itself never was sufficiently monolithic in regards to religion to define, once and for all, "true" and "false" forms of religious practice. Even within the period of a single reign, it was not uncommon for the state to shift its religious allegiances. Second, the Chinese state did not have a monopoly on the use of the terms "orthodox" and "heterodox". Nor did the Buddhist *sangha*, which showed no hesitation in branding "unorthodox" many of its own schools and sects. In fact, the charge of "heterodoxy" appears quite frequently in religious texts of sectarian religious movements, from Six Dynasties Taoism to contemporary spirit-writing cults, with Lo sects proving no exception. Every Chinese religion has attempted to establish its legitimacy in the eyes of its followers, if not the state, and the distinction between *cheng* and *hsieh* is a common device.

[Historical Records Published every Ten Days] in Chapter III below.

A "proper" study of Chinese "heterodoxy", then, would have to be concerned with the application of a term, not with a certain body of Chinese religious groups.²⁷

This much said, let us return to Lo Ch'ing's characterization of improper means of religious cultivation. His condemnations are valuable not only in fine-tuning his own views, but also in filling out our picture of popular religious practice in late imperial China. Lo is critical of both conventional religion and the new sectarian movements of the Ming.

In the course of his own religious career, Lo Ch'ing attempted and rejected a number of spiritual alternatives available to a seeker of his era. Chapters 3 to 6 of his Autobiography catalogue his efforts. Though sincere in his initial commitment to each method, Lo is ultimately frustrated, and driven to "press on yet another step" in his search. He attempts Taoist reclusion in a mountain retreat, on a diet of cypress nuts and pine cones, only to find himself starved for ordinary food and intercourse with the society of men. He devotes eight years to Pure Land recitation of Amitâbha's name, only to determine that his meditations are misdirected. Three

27. The point of this digression is, of course, to discourage the use of the label of "heterodox teachings" in referring to Lo Ch'ing and the Lo sects. In the past, Chinese and Japanese historians in particular have described sects as *hsieh-chiao* (邪教), with little sensitivity to their religious conceptions and self-understanding. This arises undoubtedly from too much reliance upon official records of the state -- which often viewed the sects as rebellious threats to civil authority -- in formulating a historical representation of the sects. Cf. Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China (Cambridge: 1976), 1-52.

years of scripture studies convince him that spiritual insight can arise only from the "wordless teaching" of immediate, personal experience. In addition, the Autobiography rejects Ch'an concentration and *kôan* studies, Taoist alchemical visualization ('inner alchemy'), and various forms of popular shamanism and precognition. "All of these sundry methods," he concludes, "are useless in the face of death [lit. "danger"]" (這些雜法到臨危都用不著) (*K'u-kung* 6:62).

Each of these disappointments in his own religious career is discussed explicitly in the context of Lo's teachings. From his attacks on conventional forms of religiosity, we can arrive at a more nuanced understanding of Lo's religious thought.

(1.) Pure Land recitation of the Buddha's name. In his Autobiography, Lo Ch'ing repudiates Pure Land recitation because it is ineffective. This reflects the pragmatic, utilitarian concerns of his spiritual career: to discover a method that will carry him immediately and unconditionally from the wheel of *samsâra*. In later books of the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*, however, his approach shows a greater sophistication, outlining why Pure Land practice fails the believer.

The recitation of scripture and the recitation of the Buddha's name are paths of *samsâra*, and attachment to thought constitutes a heterodox teaching. Seeking the Buddha in sound and in form is wrong and misguided; you will never see the *tathâgata* by reciting the Buddha's name. [Though] the Buddha is on the spiritual Mount [Sumeru] (靈山), there is no need to seek him afar. The *tathâgata* is in fact within my own mind, and by illuminating myself I perceive the Buddhas and Patriarchs. Recognizing this in myself, I need not seek far. (*P'o-hsieh* 13:21-22).

Lo points out repeatedly that the Buddha is within the mind (or is, indeed, identical with the mind), and that the Pure Land is no further than one's own "ancestral home" (see, for example, Cheng-hsin 3:95-97).

In his conceptualization of the "ancestral home", Lo is clearly influenced by Pure Land depictions of the Western Paradise. "Returning home", one is free of suffering, delivered from all calamities, and destined to an eternity of autonomy and bliss (Cheng-hsin 14:70-71).²⁸ But the Ch'an interpretation of Pure Land meditation is even more apparent here: the Ch'an School maintains that the Pure Land is within the mind, and visualization and other Pure Land meditative practices are simply means towards the unobstructed and unconditional *samādhi* of complete concentration. This leads to the insight that there is no "Pure Land" except the mind itself. Lo "quotes" approvingly from the Platform Sūtra:

The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch provides verification of [this teaching]: "If people of the East produce *karma* [and] seek to be reborn in the Western Land, where do the people of the Western Land seek to be reborn in the performance of evil? Deluded people yearn for [rebirth in] the East or the West, but for the enlightened person this very place is the Western Land. Everyone possesses the Pure Land of the West. Ultimately there is no need to be steadfast in maintaining [pious practices], [because the Pure Land] is already right before you! Deluded persons do not understand that the Self is the Western Land. Seeking to be reborn there, their efforts are in vain, and they sink deeper into the bitter sea of *saṃsāra*, unable to exchange

28. Pure Land Buddhism describes the Western Paradise in similar terms. See, for example, the Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra (T12.364.326-340), F. Max Muller, ed. and trans., Sacred Books of the East, vol. 49, part 2, The Land of Bliss (Oxford: 1894): 1-85.

their bodies [for others] through innumerable *kalpas*."
(Cheng-hsin 20:24-25).²⁹

Perhaps Lo reflects here the contemporary trend towards the integration of Ch'an and Pure Land meditation, articulated in more explicit terms by the four renowned Ming monks Chu-hung (朱宏, 1535-1615), Chen-k'o (真可, 1544-1604), Te-ch'ing (德清, 1546-1623), and Chih-hsü (智旭, 1599-1655). These monks turned to a creative use of Pure Land meditation practices out of disappointment with Ch'an, which, they felt, had degenerated into a mechanical "dead technique" (死法) of rote memorization, authoritarian interpretation, and self-glorification. Their principle criticism was of the use of *kôans*, the interpretations of which, rather than products of self-reflective contemplation, had become fixed tenets of doctrine. The "correct" interpretations of the *kôans* were now set down in books, to be memorized and recited by Ch'an novitiates who were discouraged from struggling for their own understanding and thus denied, from

29. I have not been able to find this exact wording in the Platform Sûtra, but compare chapter 35 of Yampolsky's translation: "People of the East [China], just by making the mind pure, are without crime; people of the West [the Pure Land of the West], if their minds are not pure, are guilty of a crime. The deluded person wishes to be born in the East or West, [for the enlightened person] any land is just the same. If only the mind has no impurity, the Western Land is not far. If the mind gives rise to impurities, even though you invoke the Buddha and seek to be reborn [in the West], it will be difficult to reach... Since Buddha is made by your own nature, do not look for him outside your body" (Yampolsky, The Platform Sûtra of the Sixth Patriarch [New York: 1967], 157-158; Chinese text on p. 16-17 from the end). On Lo Ch'ing's simplification of the *sûtras* and classics, see Chapter IV below.

the original Ch'an point of view, the opportunity for sudden enlightenment.³⁰

(2.) Ch'an meditation. Ch'an reformers in the Ming sought to preserve the kernal of Ch'an -- meditation in the form of quiet-sitting -- while eliminating the "dead techniques" of institutional Ch'an. One of their strategies was the Pure Land-Ch'an synthesis described above. Lo Ch'ing's rejection of Ch'an goes further, however, to include a repudiation of the "method of *dhyāna* and *samādhi*" (禪定法) itself. Unlike the four great monks of the Ming (all of whom were born after Lo's lifetime), Lo Ch'ing was not a Ch'an reformer engaged in a revitalization of the "spirit" of Ch'an or a reinterpretation of the *kōan* method. He rejects the meditative practices of the Ch'an School as well as the employment of *kōans*, as forms of mental attachment that inhibit the quest for insight.

Sitting in meditation without a clear understanding of the Path is a manipulative method of cultivation (有為之法). At the point of death, having no way out, one sinks down eternally. (*P'o-hsieh* 19:6).

Attachment to religious cultivation, to *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, to sitting-in-quietude, and to the cultivation of virtue means that you will not attain self-determination [*aiśvarya*]: these are routes to *samsāra*, and you will not achieve liberation from suffering. (*Chieh-kuo* 10:2).

30. Chün-fang Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis (New York: 1981), 29-63, 172-177; Leon Hurvitz, "Chu-hung's One Mind of Pure Land and Ch'an Buddhism," in William Theodore de Bary, ed., Self and Society in Ming Thought (New York: 1970), 451-481; Sung-peng Hsü, A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Hanshan Te-ch'ing (State College, PA: 1979), 44-45 & ch. 4; Kuo P'eng, Ming-Ch'ing fo-chiao (Fuchou: 1982), 176-292; Shih Sheng-yen, Ming-mo fo-chiao yen-chiu (Taipei: 1987), 150-167.

One cannot deny the extent to which Lo's religious philosophy was shaped by Ch'an formulations. His understanding of the Nature, the Buddha or Pure Land within the mind, and the experience of enlightenment are all derived from Ch'an; he invokes the Ch'an ideal of the "wordless teaching"; and he cites Ch'an scriptures and sayings as much as any other group of texts. His criticism is of the method, not the meaning: Ch'an's "attachment" to its methods of sitting meditation, which Lo encapsulates in the characters *ch'an-ting* (禪定), is the object of his attack. Ch'an practitioners are encumbered by their own terms of religious practice, their rules of monastic participation, and their focus on the means rather than the ends of their efforts. For Lo Ch'ing, salvation lies in the fruits of meditative insight, not in meditation itself.

(3.) **Karma.** Lo is also critical of other forms of Buddhist doctrine and practice. We have seen his implicit attack on the *karma* doctrine in his analysis of the human condition. *Karma*, he insists, is a religious problem of the perpetuation of suffering, and does not have a moral solution. Tied to the unreal and inauthentic state of *samsāra*, it is ultimately groundless: the doctrine of *karma*, Lo states, is "foolish talk (誑語) ... one part truth and ten parts falsehood (一分實十分虛)" (*Chieh-kuo* 14:66). Thus, while encouraging his followers to do good by maintaining a vegetarian diet and giving aid to other living beings, Lo does not suggest that this in itself will lead to salvation.

(4.) Dāna. Similarly, Lo is critical of good works or material gifts of charity (財法), which are characterized by the phenomenal signs of existence (色相) and are thus incommensurate with the Way of Non-Action.

Manipulative acts of charity (有為布施) [i.e., mundane gifts subject to cause and condition] [have] a merit [leading to rebirth as] a man or god, [but this blessing lasts only] a hundred years, the flash of an eye ["one *ksana*"]. To cultivate merit is like crossing a high mountain; its rewards are like [the images of] flowers before one's eyes. Pile-of-Jewels [Ratnakūṭa], the king of mountains, [has wealth] incalculable, yet it is like an arrow shot into space: when its power is exhausted, it falls to earth. [In the same way], one is due to fall into the Avīci hell. The merit of Non-Action (無為福) [by contrast] is vast and unbounded. Though mountains and rivers are subject to decay, this merit is long-lasting. The merit of Non-Action is superior and inexhaustible. In it, there is unbounded joy. (P'o-hsieh 8:108-109).

(5.) The Buddhist Precepts. Finally, in the context of his general critique of Buddhist monasticism, Lo condemns the effort to maintain the precepts (守戒) or to perform virtuous acts as defined by conventional Buddhist piety (P'o-hsieh 9:129-139). This is partly a reflection of his rejection of good works as a means to salvation, and partly an expression of his lay-based religious program. As we shall see in Chapter III below, Lo repudiates any distinction between monastic and lay self-cultivation. Adherence to the rules of monastic life, in fact, merely distracts the committed seeker from the real object of his religious quest.

(6.) Taoist Inner Alchemy. By the Ming dynasty, "Taoism" was principally an individualized regimen of meditative practices aimed at long life, the confirmation of which could be seen in strong health, psychological calm, and the demonstration of

supernormal powers associated with the "earthly immortals" of Taoist legend. These practices were commonly referred to by the term "inner alchemy" (內丹).³¹ In the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, Lo describes adepts "nourishing the treasures" (養寶) -- "essence" (精), "breath" (氣), and "spirit" (神) -- through meditation upon the "three gates" (三關) of the body (P'o-hsieh 7:68-92). Practitioners fled the world to focus their embryonic spirits in mountain retreats, where they attained immortality and the ability to fly and to transform themselves. Of this, Lo Ch'ing expresses no doubt; he even praises immortals by name, such as Lu Tung-pin, and to this day Lu Tung-pin is associated with the Lo sects of Fukien Province.³² For the most part, however, Lo adopts a proper Buddhist attitude towards immortals: regardless of their accomplishments, they are still trapped in the cycle of *samsāra*. "[Even] in becoming an immortal, it is impossible to avoid the wheel of suffering" (P'o-hsieh 14:56). So, the cultivation of immortality is a false method, with no benefit for ultimate release.

There is one kind of heterodox practitioner (邪人) who talks about "swallowing eye-secretions", "eating pus", and "embryonic breathing".³³ These are useless at the point of

31. For a general description, see Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China, vol. 5, part V, Spagyric Discovery and Invention: Physiological Alchemy (Cambridge: 1983).

32. So Kenneth Dean observed in 1988. Personal communication, April 1989.

33. *Ch'ih-ch'ih ch'ih-nung t'ai-hsi* (喫眇喫膿胎息): psycho-physiological practices described in the Huang-t'ing nei-ching ching (黃庭內景經) and other early Taoist works on longevity cultivation. By consuming one's own saliva and bodily secretions, and breathing internally "without the use of the nose or mouth", the adept avoids contact with external

death. [They also] talk of the "cinnabar field" and the "nirvāṇa palace",³⁴ and say that before the Three Gates there is no protuberance and behind them no cavity,³⁵ and talk about Nature (性) and Destiny (命) and yin (陰) and yang (陽). Fundamentally [one is] a sack of bloody pus and rotting flesh -- talk about it as much as you wish, how can it not be useless at the point of death! (Cheng-hsin 23:57).

Having discovered the futility of a diet of cypress nuts and pine cones during his own search, Lo repudiates the peculiar dietary practices of immortality adepts, who avoid cereals, eat uncooked foods, or consume only liquids (P'o-hsieh 19:8-10).

material agents which pose a threat to the Original Breath (元氣) within the body. Henri Maspero, Taoism and Chinese Religion, trans. Frank Kierman (Amherst: 1981), 459-505; Morohashi, Daikanwa jiten, 8:212 (23308), 9:374 (29938), 9:275 (29369.29).

34. Tan-t'ien ni-wan kung (丹天泥丸宮): the Huang-t'ing nei-ching ching describes three "cinnabar fields" within the body: the "nirvāṇa palace", between the eyebrows; the "red palace" (赤宮), three inches (寸) below the heart; and the "lower cinnabar field", three inches below the navel. Li Shu-huan, Tao-chiao ta tz'u tien [Great Dictionary of Taoism] (Shanghai: 1987), 17, 410; Maspero, Taoism and Chinese Religion, 325-329; Morohashi, Daikanwa jiten, 1:327 (99.227), 6:1066 (17311.21).
35. Tentative: 三關前不胸後不穴. I am unable to make much sense of this phrase. The "Three Gates" (三關) are the Heavenly Gate (天關), in the mouth; the Earthly Gate (地關), the two feet; and the Human Gate (人關), the two hands. Maspero, Taoism and Chinese Religion, 494 n. 109. Hsiung (胸), normally a noun meaning "thorax", and hsüeh (穴), "cave", are made into verbs with the modifier pu (不); I have interpreted this as meaning that "[what is] before the Three Gates does not protrude [like the breastbone; thus, "there is no protuberance"] and [what is] behind the Three Gates does not concave [thus, "there is no cavity"]". I am unable to find more specific references to hsiung and hsüeh relative to the Three Gates. Lo himself does not appear to have benefited from extensive Taoist training, though he did engage in Taoist physiological practices for a period during his years of seeking.

(7.) Contacts with the Spirit World. Lo also decries a number of shamanistic practices popular in his age: spirit-travel, divination, and the cultivation of supernormal powers.

One kind of shaman receives ghosts and spirits into his own body, giving him the power to submerge himself in water and fire; this practice, warns the Patriarch, does not protect the adept from suffering in hell (Cheng-hsin 23:57).

Lo refers to a method of spirit-travel called "sending forth the yang-spirit" (出陽神). As Wang Yüan-ching describes it, this consists in focussing the mind to the point that the adept can "emit the yang from his forehead for thousands of li, returning in the flash of an eye." The yang-spirit can see but it cannot be seen; it gathers information from afar and the adept becomes all-knowing (K'u-kung 6:57-58; P'o-hsieh 14:37-38). Lo warns that the manipulation of the yin and yang breaths exhausts these energies in the body, culminating in death. This leads to suffering in hell and the perpetuation of *samsâra* (P'o-hsieh 14:40-41).

In another context, Lo describes shamanistic practices as a form of prescience or divination:

There is a kind of fool who receives and holds on to spirits, ghosts, and demons. With a depraved spirit (邪氣) he orders [them] to follow and report to him (隨身耳報).³⁶ [In this way] he knows the good and bad fortunes of others. If others have good fortune, [the spirits] let him know by reporting to him. If others have bad fortune, again they let him know by reporting to him. If someone approaches him with an aim to cause trouble or with duplicitous intentions, again they let him know by reporting to him. This method of

36. Probably by whispering in his ear: cf. *erh-yen* (耳言), Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 9:183 (28999.30), and *erh-yü* (耳語), *ibid.* (28999.32).

having depraved spirits (邪神) report to the ear, and let one know [about others] by reporting to him, is called the "method of reporting to the ear" (耳報之法). (Chieh-kuo 24:100).

"Do not put any store in this vile spirit" (休歸邪氣), admonishes the Patriarch. "Take refuge in the correct Way (歸正道)" (Chieh-kuo 24:101).

Lo is equally critical of other forms of divination, making repeated reference to the practice of "fixing the time of death" (定時刻). Wang Yüan-ching explains the ritual in detail:

On the night marking the end of the year in the 1a [twelfth lunar] month, they bow before the light of a lamp in order to understand the cycle of birth and death and determine the time [of death]. In the coming year, there are twelve months, so they bow down (拜) twelve times, and on that *pai* when there is no shadow cast by the lamp, they know in which month they will die. (K'u-kung 6:61).

The procedure is repeated for the thirty days of the month, the twelve two-hour periods of the day, and the eight divisions of the two-hour period.

It is unclear from this description exactly how the ritual was performed, but it has the flavor of a popular divinatory practice carried out by common folk in their homes or local temples. Elsewhere Wang mentions that it was taught by "heterodox teachers of the Sect of the Hanging Drum (懸鼓教)" (P'o-hsieh 14:36), so it may have been associated with one of the sectarian groups of the Ming -- I have been unable to identify it specifically -- which often employed magic and divination in recruiting new members.³⁷

37. Cf. Daniel L. Overmyer, "Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society," Modern China 7 (1981): 153-190.

Lo adopts a fatalistic attitude towards these practices: there is little use in knowing the workings of Destiny over which one has no control. Divination and shamanism certainly have no bearing on the problem of *samsâra*: "As long as you follow this method, you cannot achieve self-determination; as long as you follow this method, you will fall eternally into the suffering of *samsâra*" (*Chieh-kuo* 19:60).

Ritual propitiation of ghosts and spirits is also rejected by Lo Ch'ing. Offerings of paper money, incense, or "bloody sacrifices" serve only to strengthen King Yama and the spirits of the dead. Moreover, this kind of ritual activity is completely unnecessary: ghosts are frightened away by the faithful disciple who "returns home". True belief "transforms Hell into Heaven" and saves the hungry ghosts; worshiping them is a false, "manipulative" method (*P'o-hsieh* 13:28-35).

Brief mention is made of a variety of other contemporary religious practices: self-mortification (*P'o-hsieh* 19:8), the worship of images (*Cheng-hsin* 9:97-98), vows of silence (*Chieh-kuo* 24:124), and doomsday prognostications (*Chieh-kuo* 24:128). All are "manipulative" methods producing attachments and futility.

Lo does not deny the efficacy of these practices within the world. However, whatever they may accomplish lasts only the duration of a flash of lightening, the blink of an eye, or the space of one breath; their benefits disappear at the moment of death "like a snowflake in a furnace". Ultimately, all ritual practices and conceptual formulations other than those of the Way

of Non-Action are stained by the phenomenal marks of existence and directly inhibit salvation. This is no less true of the conventional teachings of Buddhism than it is of the immortality cult, popular devotion, or the beliefs and practices of contemporary sectarian groups (to which we will turn in Chapter III). Even while employing the language of Buddhism, the cosmological speculations of the Confucian classics, and some of the meditative practices of Taoism, Lo criticizes any "active" method that might become an object of intellectual or psychological attachment. Lo Ch'ing's soteriology is direct, simple, and immediate: there is no need for a textual, ritual, or ideological intermediary in the illumination of the "ancestral home" within.

We should pause to appreciate the radical antinomianism of Lo's position, especially in light of the fact that a sect organization formed around him that has survived to the present day, with its own forms of worship and ritual, basic texts, and hierarchies of leaders and followers. Lo pushed Ch'an to its own extreme, extending its attacks on convention, on language, and on thought, and radically affirming its founding principles of direct and intuitive insight. With his conviction that all teachings illuminate the same truth (his variation on the "three-in-one thought" of his age), Lo grasped the opportunity to borrow from the language of all and to discard what would not serve his needs. "Derivative" as he was in many respects -- and we must admit that most of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e reads as a simplified, repetitive paraphrase of conventional Buddhism and

Neo-Confucian cosmology -- Lo was a "creator" and not merely a "transmittor" of religious *Dharma*. This is not syncretism, if by "syncretism" is meant the uncritical superimposing of independent traditions within a "unifying" context. Lo is extremely selective and purposeful in his choice of texts, models, and religious formulations from the history of Chinese religions, and he reserves "orthodoxy" for his own Way of Non-Action alone. His "*Dharma of Wu-wei*" employs a language that would have been familiar to his audience, but places it in a new social and religious context: that of the ordinary layperson. It must have attracted a significant following, for Lo Ch'ing's Five Books became the foundation of a long and vital lay movement in late imperial and modern Chinese history. In Chapter III, we turn to the sectarian interpretation of Lo Ch'ing's message of universal salvation.

Chapter III: Lo's Place in the History of Chinese Religions

1. Lo as "Sect Patriarch"

In Lo Ch'ing is both the medium and the message for a vital tradition of religious sectarianism still active in Chinese communities today. Voluntary, lay-based, congregational religion -- with its distinctive texts, rituals, and internal organization -- provides an alternative form of religious belief and expression to the conventional practices of the Chinese *saṅgha* and state. The Lo sects of the Ming and Ch'ing were prototypes for a broad range of sectarian movements that have made a significant mark upon the social history of recent times.

It is my purpose here to focus upon Lo Ch'ing as a *self-conscious* sect patriarch, and upon his sects as a distinct and coherent tradition. To what extent did Lo Ch'ing see himself as a religious leader and as the founder of an independent sect? What principles of sectarian organization and practice can be derived from Lo's *pao-chūan*? What are "Lo sects", and how should they be distinguished from other Chinese sects with similar forms of expression and organization? What is the nature of contemporary Lo sects (I have done fieldwork in Taiwan, but there are active branches in Fukien, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, and the United States), and how "true" are they to the teachings of the Patriarch? How are Lo sects organized, and what are their principle rituals of initiation, worship, and religious or moral cultivation? Lo's Five Books in Six Volumes, sectarian

pao-chūan, official records of the state, and contemporary sectarian histories can provide answers to these questions.

We have already observed that Lo Ch'ing enjoyed a significant following in his own lifetime. This is evident from a postface to his fourth book, the *Cheng-hsin pao-chūan*, in an edition of 1509, when Lo was sixty-seven years of age, and from the popularity of his teachings both in Mi-yün County and near Lao-shan within fifty years of his death. From these areas in northern China, his sect spread rapidly to the Chiang-nan region, flourishing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Chekiang, Kiangsu, Fukien, Anhwei, and Kiangsi.¹

Sectarian *pao-chūan* as early as 1682 imply that Lo established "vegetarian halls" (齋堂) with images, rituals, and forms of worship derived from his distinctive teachings. As we have seen, the *San-tsu hsing chiao yin-yu pao-chūan* (Precious Volume of Causal Origins based on the Traces of the Three Patriarchs) recounts a debate between Lo Ch'ing and a group of foreign monks in which Patriarch Lo articulates principles of congregational ritual called the "Way of Non-Action" (無為法). Though unacceptable for substantiating the historicity of his leadership, the text is faithful to the method of "non-manipulative" religious cultivation described in his writings.

In the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e* itself, there is a strong implication that Lo was a self-conscious religious leader. He addresses the

1. Memorials originating in all of these provinces appear in the *Shih-liao hsün-k'an* [Historical Records Published Every Ten Days] (Peking: 1930-1931): specific references below.

"people of the assembly" (會中人) in terms that suggest the existence of a fully developed sectarian organization.

I earnestly entreat you, members of the assembly, to protect yourselves from birth and death... [and] to dedicate yourselves to the Way with determination. (K'u-kung 17:93,94).

Lo's soteriological vision describes a "union of the Perfected" in the Mother's home, where those destined as "superior persons" are reunited as a family. This state of bliss is perfectly realizable within the mind, and is open to anyone who will take the teachings of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e seriously and put them into practice. We have already remarked upon the didactic tone of Lo Ch'ing's writings, his emphasis on "right belief" (正信) or the "true Dharma" (真法), his very clear use of his own biography as a moral and religious model, and his confidence in his "precious scriptures" as a medium for salvation.

The scrolls of my five scriptures (五部經卷) [contain] a marvelous teaching (妙法) comprising myriads of myriads of sentences, [but] from [only] two or four sentences [one can] return home (歸家). The scrolls of my five scriptures contain myriads of myriads of sentences [by which one can] return home. It is not difficult to manifest [the Way] and bring [it] to completion. One exerts no effort! One spends no time! The worthy man in just one hearing experiences a great enlightenment within his mind, from which he will never slip. [But] to a foolish man, [though] he may listen for a myriad of myriad of times, yet to him it will be like foreign talk. (Chieh-kuo 1:45-46).

Explicit statements like this, and the very form and tone of his writings, suggest the self-understanding of a master addressing his students.

Even Lo's choice of genre -- repetitive verse interspersed with his own prose explications -- is a variation on the ritual

instruction books or amplifications of sūtras (科儀), morality plays, songs, and didactic fiction popular in his time; all were mediums of religious instruction and moral suasion.

Despite his self-understanding as a religious teacher, however, Lo sometimes doubts the capacities of his students. In a number of revealing passages -- and the only self-referential statements outside the Autobiography -- Lo appears to criticize his followers directly. Commenting on religious disciples in a pointed, reproving tone, Lo attacks students who fail to attach importance to what they have learned (不當重意 -- more accurately, fail to "put store in" the true meaning of the teaching; literally, fail to "apply heavy thought").

There is a class of fools who do not think about transformations into the four classes of beings and six *gati* through innumerable great *kalpas*, and the immeasurable suffering they receive. Nor are they afraid of being transformed after death into the four classes of beings and six *gati*, and the evil paths [as animals, *pretas*, *aśuras*, and hell-beings] from which they cannot attain conversion.

In the presence of their master (祖家), they do not attach importance to the meaning [of what they have learned]. Walking the Path, in what they should have and what they should lack, their investigations are few to the east and insufficient to the west. They do not attain clarity for themselves; nor do they attain enlightenment. [Rather], they chaotically transmit the heterodox *Dharma* (邪法). Pissing at [their teachers] above, their urine defiles their followers below. The illness of doubt is difficult to cure [even with] good medicine.

Another class of fools [ostensibly] maintain [the teachings of] their patriarch in adulthood, [but] they do not put their minds to listening to the *Dharma*; they do not put store in [what they have learned]; they do not fear *saṃsāra*.

By day I did not nap, at night I did not sleep. I suffered fully thirteen years in my search. If you do not walk the Path with a sincere mind (虔心), then later generations will not undertake real reflection upon the *Dharma*.

There is another class of fools who are never together with their patriarch. [Though they] call themselves disciples of the master, they talk nonsense behind his back and chaotically transmit the heterodox *Dharma*, blinding their followers [to the truth]. They shall fall eternally into hell. (Cheng-hsin 22:38-39).

These disciples are either insincere in their commitments or mentally lazy in practice. Their lack of understanding is traced by Lo to their failure to reflect upon the teaching.

Another class of persons follow a teacher for five, ten, twenty, or even thirty years. Though their teacher is before them, they do not put store in the truth [he has taught them] and are lax and negligent of the *Buddha-dharma*. Unafraid of the bitter sea of *samsāra*, they do not attach importance to the meaning [of the *Dharma*]. They do not walk on solid ground. In their minds, they do not attain reflective awakening or clarity. They [merely] scheme to satisfy their appetites for well-cooked meals; unafraid of *samsāra*, they [merely] scheme for fame and profit, and preach the *Dharma* outside [the true transmission]. (Cheng-hsin 25:81).

Referring explicitly to his own disciples, Lo complains that they have misrepresented his *Dharma* to others:

They are precisely my own followers. Though they have attended me for thirty, forty, or even fifty years in all, in explicating the teaching they do not put their minds in the truth [of what I have taught them]. They do not listen mindfully to what they have heard [me say], but preach forced, wild theories behind my back, which gives rise to doubt; in their darkness, they backslide. (Chieh-kuo 1:36).

What is striking in these passages is that Lo Ch'ing regards the apprehension of truth as a reflective, conscious, and experiential activity -- not something that can be learned simply by virtue of one's proximity to a master. The master merely points the way, by means of his own efforts and process of discovery, to the disciple dedicated to self-illumination through direct apprehension and affirmation of the truth.

Without taking away from the strong sense of didactic purpose in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, these comments in the fourth and fifth books should give us pause when considering Lo's self-understanding as a "sect patriarch". There is a tone of disdain or despair towards his followers which may suggest a reluctance on Lo's part to be cast in a position of leadership. At the very least, it does not evidence a sense of mission to be the active founder of a communal sectarian movement. On the contrary, the earliest editions of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e are noticeably lacking in any reference to sect organization or communal ritual. Nowhere does Lo Ch'ing outline a hierarchy of titles, or list rules for communal worship or meditation; his texts contain no religious law code, no prescriptions for temple construction, no procedures for the ritual transmission of texts or esoteric knowledge. Critical as he is of monasticism and of the distinction between clergy and laity, Lo does not propose an alternative social expression for religious cultivation. He certainly does not define a communal consciousness in opposition to that of the state: loyalty to the emperor, ministers, and officials is a constant refrain of the texts, as one of five conventional moral obligations. In fact, the "target" of his injunctions is always the individual, who is asked to assent to certain religious truths and to firm up his commitment to the Way.

Setting aside the question of Lo's *intentionality* as a sect founder, we can still derive a number of organizational principles from Lo's writings. Though explicit references to sectarian institutionalism are absent from the Wu-pu liu-ts'e,

there is a significant internal basis for what a "Lo sect" should look like. We will examine the social make-up and religious activities of the actual sects below; first let us consider how Lo Ch'ing himself may have envisioned them.

(1.) Sectarian participation makes no distinction between monks and lay-persons. First, the religious community suggested in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e is lay-based. In Lo Ch'ing's Autobiography, we learn that Lo spent a period of time -- as much as eleven years -- as a disciple of Buddhist monks (a "Pure Land master") and Buddhist *sūtras* (the Chin-kang ching). This experience was ultimately frustrating, and Lo abandoned both monasticism and the study of texts for a more immediate experience of encounter with the "Buddha-nature" within the mind. On the basis of his experiences, we can assume that Lo was familiar with the monastic life though he was never tonsured as a monk. In one of the "Lamentations" (嘆) that make up the T'an-shih wu-wei chūan ([The Way of] Non-Action in Lamentation for the World), he writes,

I praise one who renounces the family [to become a monk] (出家). There is pain in his heart. Parting from his parents, casting aside his relatives, he departs from his country village. He begs for a bowl of rice from a house to the east, meek and submissive. He begs for a bowl of rice from a house to the west, surrounded by a pack of dogs. Escaping from the dogs of this house, he is met by dogs from that house. Though he has parents and relatives, who knows this? In a home of good persons he is invited to sit among them when he begs for his bowl of rice, but from the homes of the mean-spirited when he asks for a meal he is quickly driven out the gate. Every day he is occupied with the concern for getting his next meal. His belly is empty -- how insufferable! He worries all day long.

Those who stay at home have a family to watch over them when they are ill; but for one who renounces the family, who

comes to inquire about him when he is ill? His eyes ache, his belly aches, his whole body is [wracked with] pain. His head aches, his back aches, a hundred ailments bore into his body. I myself have said that those who renounce the family are free and autonomous, [but] who understands that a foul sack of flesh [i.e. the physical body] cannot attain [such] freedom? This skeleton is characterized by the phenomenal signs of existence, all of which are vain and deceptive. Everything with phenomenal signs is vain and deceptive, and cannot attain autonomy. Who understands that those who renounce the family are filled with suffering? Unable to discover the path to physical transcendence, their labors produce no results. (T'an-shih 8:19-21).

This passage continues with skeptical queries about the benefits of monastic self-cultivation. The only Buddhist clerics who attain insight and composure are those who have "returned home" (T'an-shih 8:22), that is, the spiritual home of the Mother-Self described in Lo's later *pao-chūan*.

Lo's goal of "returning home" has, as we have seen, both a personal and a metaphysical basis. His own sense of loss as a child and his conviction that one's "True Home" is within oneself motivate Lo Ch'ing to pursue religious cultivation within the context of ordinary social life, just as Wang Yang-ming rejected monasticism out of deference to the "natural attachments" of family. Ultimately, Lo maintains, renunciation of the family has no bearing on spiritual attainment, and there is no meaningful distinction between monasticism and engagement with the world.

The [Chin-kang] k'o-i says, "Desist from making the distinction between those who stay at home and those who renounce the household. Do not cling to [the division between] monks and laymen..." (P'o-hsieh 1:29).²

2. Chin-kang ching k'o-i pao-chūan [The Precious Volume Amplification Text of the Diamond Sūtra], HTC 129: 130b下, line 4.

Lo's condemnation of monasticism is an aspect of his general critique of "manipulative methods of religious cultivation" (有為法). In this context, he repudiates any number of monastic practices: sitting-meditation (which is, Lo asserts, only another form of mental attachment), walking-meditation (Lo mentions either circumambulation around an altar or pilgrimage to Buddhist altars and images), maintaining the precepts (which, in other contexts, Lo recommends, but for *all* persons, lay as well as cleric), the chanting of scriptures and incantations to the beat of bells and drums. None of these outward forms enables its practitioners "to discover the path to physical transcendence (出身路)" (T'an-shih 8:26-27).

The assumption that there is no basis for renouncing society, and that monasticism may even obstruct the path to spiritual illumination, informs all of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e. Monks and laymen, nuns and laywomen, Lo asserts again and again, are equally capable of "recovering the ancestral home" and enlightening the mind.

(2.) Sect participation is open to men and women. A second principle of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e with implications for sectarian organization is that there is no religious justification for distinguishing between *men and women*. The quotation from the Chin-kang k'o-i continues, "One need only perfect one's thought, for fundamentally there is no distinction between male and female."³ Lo's verse commentary elaborates:

3. *ibid.*, line 5.

Men and women, women and men: each are perfect and complete. If I make a distinction between myself and you, I do not understand the Great Way. As soon as I make distinctions, there is dualism within the mind, and I fall and sink eternally [into *samsāra*]. (P'o-hsieh 1:31).

All of Lo Ch'ing's injunctions to his followers are addressed to both "good men and believing women" (善男信女), and he never distinguishes between men and women on the basis of karmic destiny or potential for salvation. "Before Heaven and Earth were first divided" (未曾初分天地), he writes, "there was no male or female" (無男女) (Chieh-kuo 8:67 and *passim*); so, men and women are united in the Emptiness that creates and permeates the world. Moreover, the differences between them are washed away in the experience of "family unity" that results from "recovering the ancestral home."

Nothing in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e indicates any form of discrimination against women. On the contrary, women are encouraged to pursue the "Way of Non-Action" as much as men. Spiritually, men and women are indistinguishable, and the physical characteristics of women are described in the most positive terms. Even the creation of the universe is the pro-creation of all existence by the Eternal Mother, and other images of motherhood -- suckling, embracing, nurturing -- are employed to describe salvation itself. The Mother is the "root of men and women" (男女根) (Chieh-kuo 4:107) and superior to the Buddha Amitâbha precisely in her ability to give birth (Cheng-hsin 16:87 -- see discussion below).

It is not unreasonable to suppose that these positive images of femininity would have attracted women to the Lo sects,

especially in light of the egalitarian language of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e.⁴

The best-known of the female sectarian leaders of the Ming, T'ang Sai-erh, was a member of the White Lotus Sect, and predated Lo Ch'ing himself.⁵ Official memorialists of the time frequently characterized White Lotus sects as "chaotically mixing the sexes," and it is a tribute to Lo Ch'ing that he did not include this charge among his criticisms of contemporary sectarians. He found the White Lotus and Maitreya sects objectionable on other grounds (which we will turn to shortly), not because they were inclusive of women.

We have some evidence for the actual participation of women in Lo sects in the Ming and Ch'ing. Lo sect scriptures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reiterate Lo's emphasis on the equality of women and list women among their officers and followers. J.J.M. de Groot describes the participation of women in nineteenth-century Dragon-Flower congregations in Amoy, albeit

4. Generally speaking, Chinese goddesses tend to attract female cult participants, as they are seen to be particularly efficacious in meeting the physical and emotional needs of women. See my "Taiwanese Folk Religion as a System of Meaning" (unpublished ms., 1983); P. Stevan Sangren, "Female Gender in Chinese Religious Symbols: Kuan Yin, Ma Tsu, and the 'Eternal Mother'," Signs 9 (1983): 4-25; Suzanne Cahill, "Performers and Female Taoist Adepts: Hsi Wang Mu as the Patron Deity of Women in Medieval China," Journal of the American Oriental Society 106 (1986): 155 -168.

5. Tai Hsüan-chih, "Pai-lien chiao te pen-chih" [The True Nature of the White Lotus Sect], Shih-ta hsüeh-pao 12 (1967): 119-127; T'ao Hsi-sheng, "Ming-tai mi-le pai-lien chiao chi ch'i-t'a yao-tsei" [Ming Maitreya-White Lotus Sectarrians and Other Rebels], Shih-huo yüeh-k'an 1.9 (1935): 46-52.

in a subsidiary role.⁶ Today the vast majority of Lo sectarians are women, though few are in positions of leadership.⁷

In Chapters IV and V, I will turn to considerations of Lo Ch'ing's role as a "popular" religious leader, but I want to note here the contrast between Lo Ch'ing's attitudes towards women and those of the religious "popularizer" Chu-hung (株宏, 1535-1615). Chu-hung, a highly educated monk born into an elite family, advocated lay-based religious cultivation in a congregational context not unlike the communal religious practices of the Lo sects. But his attitudes towards women were strictly conventional, and he disapproved of lay associations with female members.⁸ Attitudes towards women may be the first litmus test of elite vs. popular perspectives on congregational religion, reflecting the greater role of women in social and religious affairs on the local, village level.

(3.) Sect participation is based upon congregational ritual and the recitation of texts. The religious community outlined in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e is inclusive of clergy and laity, men and women. What can we gather from the texts about the ritual activities of the sect? We would assume, first of all, that they

6. "Women are entitled to be religious leaders, but in reality they rarely act as such." J.J.M. de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China (Amsterdam: 1903), 203.

7. Personal observation: Tainan and Taichung, 1986-1988. Cf. Marjorie Topley, "Chinese Women's Vegetarian Houses in Singapore," Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society 27 (1954): 51-67.

8. Chün-fang Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis (New York: 1981), 76.

were centered around the Wu-pu liu-ts'e itself: its soteriological power is explicitly affirmed by the Patriarch, and its alternating prose-verse form is well-suited for both explication by a teacher and congregational chanting. The Wu-pu liu-ts'e stands within a textual tradition of popular religious works -- indigenous scriptures, "transformation texts" (變文), and sūtra-amplifications (科儀) -- that were composed precisely for these purposes (discussed in more detail in Chapter IV). In actuality, the recitation of scriptures was the principle ritual activity of the Lo sects of the Ming and Ch'ing, and continues to be so today.

One of the earliest scriptures of the established Lo sects is the Precious Volume of Causal Origins based on the Traces of the Three Patriarchs (三祖行腳因由寶卷). In Chapter I I translate a passage from the text which records a debate between Patriarch Lo and a group of "foreign monks" intent on forcing the Chinese state into submission by means of their rhetorical skills. In that debate -- which we have concluded to be entirely mythical -- Lo outlines principles of sectarian organization and ritual in direct contrast to the communal practices of the Buddhist *saṅgha*. He remarks that his sect is not limited by buildings, altars, and images, or bound to the use of physical offerings, incense, *Dharma*-drums, votive lamps, written prayers and banners. Rather, the "Way of Non-Action" employs "wordless scriptures"; its "images" are "mountains, rivers, and the great earth"; its "incense" is the "wind, clouds, and purple mist"; its "drum" is the clapping of thunder; its "lamps" are the sun and

moon; its "banners" are flower blossoms and willow branches; its offerings are "the flowers and fruits of the four seasons" and the waters of "the Five Lakes and Four Seas". All outward forms of religious practice are superfluous beside the cosmic offerings of Nature, the Self-so.⁹

Ignoring the problem of the historicity of this "debate", are the principles outlined here consistent with the teachings of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e? Indeed they are; Lo's thorough repudiation of outward forms of religious behavior, which he terms the "method of activity" or "manipulative forms of religious cultivation" (有為法), is echoed in narrative form in the debate. We have seen that the Wu-pu liu-t'se eschews any number of practices commonly associated with the religious vocation and popular worship in his day: Pure Land recitation and visualization of the Buddha, Ch'an meditation and the use of *kôans*, scriptural studies, Taoist inner alchemy, spirit-travel, divination, propitiation of ghosts, and so on. All of these practices, says Lo, distract the religious seeker from the basic task of spiritual self-discovery. It follows that ritual implements, offerings, images and the temples in which to house them would be repudiated as well, and that halls for *sûtra*-recitation and congregational worship would constitute a form of active institutionalization of Lo's teachings that violate the spirit and intent of his writings. In this instance, the narrative recorded in sectarian *pao-chüan* is faithful to principles articulated by Lo Ch'ing in his own writings.

9. San-tsu hsing-chiao yin-yu pao-chüan (preface 1682): 20a-26b.

Though variations of the debate tale appear throughout Lo sect history -- repeated in materials collected by de Groot in nineteenth-century Fukien and in ritual texts of contemporary Dragon-Flower sectarians in Taiwan -- its principles have not been put into practice consistently. Certain ritual forms came to dominate Lo sects in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for the initiation of new members, promotion within the sect hierarchy, healing, veneration of the Eternal Venerable Mother and the sect patriarchs, the establishment of new vegetarian halls and branch-halls, the celebration of vegetarian feast days, dissemination of scriptures and *pao-chūan*, and burial of the dead.¹⁰ There is no basis for these practices in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e.

Though in actuality the Lo sects did not adopt Lo Ch'ing's antinomian program of egalitarianism and simplicity whole cloth, the spirit of his pronouncements against outward forms of religious expression can still be seen in Lo sect organization. Contemporary vegetarian halls are relatively plain and unadorned; some are simple rooms in the homes of sect members. Monetary offerings are refused, except in the form of a yearly tithe for the basic upkeep of the hall and its manager. The principle activity of the sects is recitation of scripture and lectures by sect leaders, and the occasional rituals that are performed are

10. See the reports of officials on Lo sect activities in the Chiang-nan region in the Veritable Records (實錄) of the Ming and Ch'ing and Historical Memorials Every Ten Days (史料旬刊). Specific citations below.

not lengthy or ostentatious.¹¹ This spirit of simplicity existed at least among some Lo sect branches in the late imperial period as well: the European travellers Edkins and de Groot found that the *Wu-wei* and *Hsien-t'ien* sects eschewed ceremony and "outward show" and emphasized the practice of "non-active" forms of religious cultivation.¹²

11. Personal observation: Taichung and Tainan, Taiwan, 1986-1988.

12. J.J.M. de Groot, *op.cit.*, 176-196; Joseph Edkins, Chinese Buddhism (London: 1893), 371-379.

2. Lo Ch'ing and Contemporary Sectarian Movements

The three principles of sectarian organization discussed above are only suggested in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e; they are not stated outright. The only explicit indication of Lo's attitude towards sectarianism is in his severe, unqualified condemnation of voluntary religious associations of his day: Manichaeism (明教), the White Lotus religion (白蓮教), and associations devoted to the Buddha Maitreya (彌勒教會) -- all, in Lo's terms, "manipulative" and "heterodox" means of religious cultivation (有為法, 邪法). By the Ming Dynasty, these three traditions had largely merged into one, describing a struggle between powers of light and darkness, to be resolved in a third and final *kalpa* when Maitreya/the King of Light (明王) will descend to the earth. One of the White Lotus slogans of the sixteenth century said, "When Maitreya descends, the King of Light will appear (彌勒降生, 明王出世)",¹³ suggesting a high degree of syncretism among the

13. Tai Hsüan-chih, "*Pai-lien chiao te pen-chih*," 119; source not

three groups by Lo Ch'ing's time. White Lotus and Manichaeian groups had established "vegetarian halls" (齋堂) in the Sung for the practice of communal repentance and devotion -- prototypes, no doubt, for the *chai-t'ang* of Ming and Ch'ing Dynasty sects, including the *Lo-tsu chiao* and *Wu-wei chiao*. The White Lotus sect, subject to repeated imperial proscriptions in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was the victim of scores of government actions throughout the Ming Dynasty, and enjoyed wide notoriety.

It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss specific forms of ritual activity performed by these associations.¹⁴ Suffice it to say that Lo Ch'ing's condemnations were based on the same hearsay and caricature that justified their suppression in the eyes of the state.

Lo refers to the White Lotus sect as the *Pai-lien chiao* (白蓮教). As Wang Yüan-ching explains,

"*Pai-lien*" is the name of a false silk. There is a group of heterodox people who use false white silk to write memorials [to the gods]; they burn incense of *agaru* and sandalwood and paper money; at night, they worship stars and the Dipper (星斗) to entreat Heaven. On a placard they have a slogan which reads: "May the Terranean Prefect erase our names [from the Book of Destiny] (仰望地府除名)!" They entice and

specified.

14. For studies in English on Manichaeism, see Samuel N.C. Lieu, Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China: A Historical Survey (Manchester: 1985); on the cult of Maitreya, Daniel Overmyer, "Maitreya in Chinese Popular Religion," in Helen Hardacre and Alan Sponberg, eds., Maitreya: the Future Buddha (Cambridge: 1988): 110-134; and on the White Lotus sect, Richard Y.D. Chu, "An Introductory Study of the White Lotus Sect in Chinese History" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1967) and Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China (Cambridge, MA.: 1976), 73-108.

mislead men and women, promising wealth, honor, merit and repute in the future. That is why it is a heterodox teaching. (P'o-hsieh 6:38).

Lo Ch'ing describes the *Pai-lien chiao* as a heterodox sect which deceives "good men and believing women" by means of rituals and divinatory practices: they worship the sun and moon, and use sanctified water to divine the identities of future messiah-kings (cast by the reflections in the water's surface). These are "manipulative methods"; moreover, they endanger their practitioners with the inevitable suffering of arrest and punishment at the hands of the state (Cheng-hsin 18:11-18). Because of this sect, "...good men and women, you are led by ropes [to the execution ground], crying out in anguish, and after you die, you will descend into hell, never to exchange your body [for another]" (Cheng-hsin 18:18).¹⁵

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15. On the White Lotus Sect in the Ming, see Chan Hok-lam, "The White Lotus-Maitreya Doctrine and Popular Uprisings in Ming and Ch'ing China," Sinologica 10 (1969), 211-233; Chao Weipang, "Secret Religious Societies in North China in the Ming Dynasty," Folklore Studies 7 (1948), 95-115; Richard Yung-teh Chu, "An Introductory Study of the White Lotus Sect in Chinese History" (Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1967; Fuma Susumu, "*Mindai byakuren kyô no ichi kôsatsu*" [A Study of the White Lotus Sect in the Ming], Tôyôshi kenkyû 35 (1976), 1-26; Li Shou-k'ung, "*Ming-tai pai-lien chiao k'ao-lüeh*" [A Brief Study of the White Lotus Sect in the Ming], Wen-shih che-hsüeh pao 4 (1952), 151-177; Noguchi Tetsurô, "*Min-Shin jidai teki byakuren kyô*" [The White Lotus Sect in the Ming and Ch'ing], Rekishi kyôiku 12 (1964), 26-34; Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China, 73-108; Shigematsu Toshiaki, "*Shoki no byakuren kyôkai*" [The Early White Lotus Society], Shih huo 1 (1935), 143-151; Sôda Hiroshi, "*Byakuren kyô no seiritsu to sono tenkai*" [The Founding and Development of the White Lotus Sect], Chûgoku minshû hanran no sekai (Tokyo: 1974), 147-218; Tai Hsüan-chih, "*Pai-lien chiao te pen-chih*" [The True Nature of the White Lotus Sect], Shih-ta hsüeh-pao 12 (1967), 119-127; "*Pai-lien chiao te yüan-liu*" [The Origins of the White Lotus Sect], Ta-lu tsa-chih 54 (1977), 257-262; T'ao

The Maitreya Sect (彌勒教) deceives its followers by composing oral formulas to deliver them from disaster (Cheng-hsin 19:19-20). Wang Yüan-ching explains:

There is a class of foolish, misled, heterodox [practitioners] who have deceived [the people] by establishing the Maitreya Sect. They compose charms and incantations (書符咒術), and mesmerize the people with their magic spells. Those good men and believing women who performed certain ritual observances have established a Maitreya assembly (彌勒院); they enter the Silver City (銀城) to avoid the suffering of the three great and small calamities; [and they believe that] when Maitreya becomes incarnate, they will become Buddhas in the Third Dragon-Flower Assembly (龍華三會)... (Cheng-hsin 19:20).¹⁶

All of this, Lo declares, is heterodox and stained by the marks of phenomenal existence, irrelevant to the task of enlightenment.¹⁷

Hsi-sheng, "Ming-tai mi-le pai-lien chiao chi ch'i-t'a yao-tsei" [Ming Maitreya-White Lotus Sectarials and Other Rebels], Shih-huo yüeh-k'an 1 (1935), 46-52; Yü Sung-ch'ing, Ming-Ch'ing pai-lien chiao yen-chiu [Studies of the White Lotus Sect in the Ming and Ch'ing] (Chengt'u: 1987).

16. I have been unable to identify Lo's reference to the "Silver City" (銀城). The "three great and small calamities" are standard Buddhist descriptions of the apocalyptic disasters of sword, pestilence, and famine, and fire, water, and wind, respectively.
17. There is some irony in Lo's attack on the White Lotus and Maitreya Sects, as sects founded in Lo's name in the Ch'ing Dynasty incorporated elements of both in their teachings, ritual practices, and soteriological expectations, and the state persecuted the Lo sects among others on the basis of their vision of messianic world-transformation. Cf. Chuang Chi-fa, "Ch'ing Shih-tsung chin chiao k'ao" [Prohibitions of Sects during the Shih-tsung Reign Period (1723-1736) of the Ch'ing], Ta-lu tsa-chih 62 (1981), 278-288; "Ch'ing Kao-tsung ch'a-chin Lo chiao te ching-kuo" [The Course of Ch'ing Kao-tsung's Suppression of the Lo Sect], Ta-lu tsa-chih 63 (1981), 135-143; Sôda Hiroshi, "Rakyô no seiritsu to sono tenkai" [The Founding and Development of the Lo Sect], Zoku chûgoku minshû hanran no sekai (Tokyo: 1983), 1-74; Tai Hsüan-chih, "Lao-kuan chai-chiao" [The Vegetarian Sect of the Venerable Officials], Ta-lu tsa-chih 54 (1977), 257-262; Yü

Sectarians of the Dark Drum (玄鼓教),¹⁸ writes Lo,

...designate the sun and moon as their father and mother. Everything having the signs [of phenomenal existence] is vain and false. Forever they fall into the Avīci [Hell of no-interval]. They gaze at the sun and moon, blurring their vision; truly they are [bound for] hell. Those so ensnared are not self-possessed, and cannot attain peace and stability... (Cheng-hsin 19:21).

Lo's point is well summarized in verse form by Lan Feng:

The light of wisdom of my mind is not like the sun. The sun revolves in the heavens; it is sometimes bright and sometimes eclipsed. But the enlightened Nature (覺性) always shines: [for it], there is no night sky. For innumerable *kalpas* perfect and complete, this Light is bright and clear.

The spiritual brightness of my Nature is not like the moon. The moon rises and sets; it is sometimes full and sometimes absent. But the oil-less Lamp as deep as the sea can shine upon Heaven and penetrate Hell. (Cheng-hsin 19:22-23).

Lan's verse evokes the religious basis for Lo's condemnation of popular sects: their emphasis upon ritual, magical techniques, and the objects of religious worship obstructs the disciple's ultimate goal of direct self-illumination.

We should also take note of Lo's choice of words in condemning these sects: they "deceive" the people, promote the "heterodox breath" (邪氣), and subject their followers to arrest and punishment. This wording is echoed in government prohibitions of the sects. Lo clearly places himself on the side of state orthodoxy. For this, he enjoys the grudging praise of

Sung-ch'ing, "*Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai min-chien te tsung-chiao hsin-yang he mi-mi chieh-she*" [Popular Religious Belief and Secret Societies in the Ming and Ch'ing], Ch'ing-shih yen-chiu chi 1 (1980), 113-153.

18. I am unable to identify this sect.

none other than Huang Yü-p'ien, a representative of official condemnations of the sects in the nineteenth century.

In as much as he resolutely criticizes the White Lotus Sect as a heterodox teaching (邪教), [Lo] does have a conscience. But because he attacks the White Lotus sect in order to illustrate that his own teaching is not heterodox, he darkens this conscience... To curse a religion for being heterodox when one's own teaching is the same is a trick of legerdemain! Do not put your faith in the Cheng-hsin ch'u-i chüan!¹⁹

To the extent that Lo Ch'ing regarded himself as a congregational leader, he clearly defined his sectarian aims and organization in opposition to those of the sects known to him in his day. His *pao-chüan* begin and end with laudatory verses to the emperor and the state, and Lo eschews any form of religious organization that threatens state sovereignty. Moreover, the ritual practices of the White Lotus and Maitreya sects are outward, "manipulative" forms of religious cultivation that ultimately obstruct the faithful seeker in his or her pursuit of the right path.

3. "Wu-sheng lao-mu"

Most contemporary scholars of Lo and his sects credit Lo Ch'ing as the founder of the cult of the "Eternal Venerable Mother" (無生老母) or the "Eternal Progenitor" (無生父母).²⁰

19. Huang Yü-p'ien, P'o-hsieh hsiang-pien [A Detailed Refutation of Heresies], *chüan 2*; Sawada Mizuho, ed., Kôchû haja shôben [Annotated Edition of the P'o-hsieh hsiang-pien] (Tokyo: 1970), 54; cited in Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan [Sources of the Belief in the Eternal Venerable Mother] (Taipei: 1985), 180.

20. See especially Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan, 105-144; Chuang Chi-fa, "Ch'ing-tai min-chien

While *wu-sheng lao-mu* mythology is suggested in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, there is no evidence that Lo Ch'ing was the founder of a devotional cult. On the contrary, he rejects devotionalism explicitly. Evidence from the San-tsu yin-yu hsing-chiao pao-chūan shows that the cult of the Eternal Venerable Mother was developed by Lo's followers in the seventeenth century.

Based on *pao-chūan* collected by the Ch'ing scholar-official Huang Yü-p'ien between 1830 and 1841, as well as extant editions of sectarian texts such as the seventeenth-century Dragon-Flower Sūtra (龍華經), we can reconstruct the cosmology and soteriological vision of the cult as it was described by contemporary believers. Moreover, a number of sectarian groups in Taiwan still maintain these beliefs, in cults of the Eternal Venerable Mother and the Golden Mother of the Jasper Pool (瑤池金母). With these materials at our disposal, the narrative

tsung-chiao te pao-chūan chi wu-sheng lao-mu hsing-yang" [Popular Religious *Pao-chūan* and the Belief in the Eternal Venerable Mother in the Ch'ing], Ta-lu tsa-chih 74 (1987), IV:23-32, V:22-32; Sawada Mizuho, "Raso no muikyō" [The Non-Action Sect of Patriarch Lo], in his Zōho hōkan no kenkyū [Studies in *Pao-chūan*, Revised Edition] (Tokyo: 1975), 300-342; Sung Kuang-yü, "Shih-lun 'Wu-sheng lao-mu' tsung-chiao hsing-yang te i-hsieh t'e-chih" [A Preliminary Discussion of a Few Distinctive Characteristics of the Religious Cult of the Eternal Venerable Mother], Chung-yang yen-chiu yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k'an 52 (1981), 559-590; Suzuki Chusei, "Rakyō ni tsuite: shindai Shina shūkyō kessha no ichi rei" [On the Lo Sect: An Example of a Religious Association in Ch'ing China], Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo kiyō 1 (1943), 441-501; Tsukamoto Zenryū, "Rakyō no seiritsu to ryūden ni tsuite" [On the Founding and Development of the Lo Sect], Tōhō gakuho 17 (1949), 11-34; Yeh Wen-hsin, "Jen-shen chih chien: Ch'ien-lun shih-pa shih-chi te Lo chiao" [Between Men and Gods: A Brief Discussion of the Eighteenth-Century Lo Sect], Shih-hsueh p'ing-lun 2 (1980), 45-84; Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Raso no shūkyō" [The Religion of Patriarch Lo], Taishō daigaku gakuho 37 (1950), 88-96.

details of *Wu-sheng lao-mu* mythology have been made familiar to English-reading students of Chinese religion.²¹

Huang Yü-p'ien traces the origins of the Eternal Mother cult to the Wan-li reign period (1573-1620), coinciding with the founding of the sixteen sects whose texts are the subject of his Detailed Refutation of Heresies. By the 1830's, there were scores of *Wu-sheng lao-mu* temples in the counties of Chihli (modern Hopei) where Huang served as a county and prefectural magistrate. He recalls destroying a "Stele of the Temple of the Eternal [Mother]" (無生廟碑), composed in the Ming Dynasty by Tai Ming-shuo (戴明說).²² The stele associates the Eternal Mother cult with a number of "Lo sects" of the late Ming: the Red Yang Sect (紅陽教), the Non-Action Sect (無為教), the Sect of the Recovery of the Origin (還源教), and the Mahâyâna Sect (大乘教).

21. On the Dragon-Flower Sûtra (preface 1654), see Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, 135-138; "Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature: Ming and Ch'ing Pao-chüan," in D. Johnson, A. Nathan, and E. Rawski, eds, Popular Culture in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: 1985), 237-243. On Eternal Mother sects in contemporary Taiwan, see Cheng Chih-ming, T'ai-wan min-chien tsung-chiao lun-chi [Essays on Popular Religion in Taiwan] (Taipei: 1984); Daniel Overmyer, "A Preliminary Study of the Tz'u-hui t'ang," Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Chinese Religions 4 (1977), 19-40; Overmyer and David K. Jordan, The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan (Princeton: 1986). In addition, see Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, index citations for "*Wu-sheng lao-mu*"; Susan Naquin, Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813 (New Haven: 1976), 9-18.

22. Presented scholar (近士) in the Ch'ung-chen period (1628-1644); government service in the Shun-chih period of the Ch'ing (1644-1662).

Since all of these sects claimed Lo Ch'ing as their first patriarch, it is widely assumed that Lo was the cult founder.²³

Close examination of cosmological sections of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e reveals that Lo may indeed have planted the seeds of an Eternal Mother cult. However, the cult as it developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries demonstrates a superficial, literalistic interpretation of Lo's fundamental teachings.

Lo's approach to devotionism and the very concept of deity is ambiguous at best. His initial references to an Eternal Father and Mother or Progenitor (無生父母), in the context of his "thirteen years of effort in search of the Way," are negative. In these autobiographical passages, the Eternal Progenitor is equated with Amitâbha. A Pure Land master urges Lo Ch'ing to recite the Buddha's name, that he might be reunited with the Eternal Mother and Father in Heaven (K'u-kung 5:45); this promise is a beacon of hope for a young man plagued by the premature deaths of his mortal parents as a child. After eight years of effort, however, Lo finds *Wu-sheng lao-mu* too distant to hear his prayers.

I exerted bitter effort day and night. With a great cry, I raised my chant. But after a period of eight years, my mind was [still] vexed and I had not attained clarity of perception. (K'u-kung 4:40).

23. Sawada Mizuho, ed. Kôchû haja shôben, 93. Though Huang Yü-p'ien cites the Wu-pu liu-ts'e and discusses their contents, he does not show great familiarity with Lo Ch'ing and his teachings. This is perhaps due to the fact that by the nineteenth century, Lo sect activity was centered in the Chiang-nan region. Cf. Sawada, *ibid.*, 198.

Lo's eventual enlightenment is expressed as an encounter with a deity he calls the "Venerable True Emptiness" (老真空) (*K'u-kung* 12:53-54). This is Lo's only use of this title, but he goes on to describe "Great Emptiness" (太虛空) in anthropomorphic terms, as a creator deity who rules over all things:

Great Emptiness gives birth to men and women; He can maintain Heaven and Earth [*ch'ien* and *k'un*] (*K'u-kung* 14:70).

Lo's ultimate realization, as we have seen, is that "He is I; I am He. I am one body with Emptiness" (*K'u-kung* 14:72).

In other passages of Lo's Autobiography, this creative Emptiness is given feminine attributes, as a mother who gives birth to all things. Lo's separation from the mother is bridged by his complete identity with her (he uses the more personal character 娘 rather than the character 母, which dominates the later texts): "Mother is I; I am mother. In origin we are one in the same. The inner is Empty; the outer is Empty. I am True Emptiness" (*K'u-kung* 12:48).

The next detailed description of a creator deity does not come until book 4 of the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*. Here the god is referred to as the "Holy Ancestor of the Limitless" (無極聖祖). *Wu-chi sheng-tsu* sends fools who drink wine and eat meat and do not "return home" to the Avfci Hell, never to attain deliverance (*Cheng-hsin* preface:23-25). Yet, the god has "great compassion" (大慈大悲), saving the people through self-transformation and multiple incarnations as benevolent kings, saintly princes, and morally exemplary sons and daughters (*Cheng-hsin* 5:32-47; 6:47-62; see Chapter IV below). This creator deity is also

titled the "Great Way of Prior Heaven" (先天大道) (Cheng-hsin 12:32-47) and the "Supreme Ultimate" (太極) (Chieh-kuo 17:1-51 *passim*) -- both anthropomorphized as "creators" and "rulers".

The only other passage to mention the Eternal Progenitor (無生父母) outside of the Autobiography is an odd diatribe at the beginning of p'in 16 of the Cheng-hsin pao-chūan, "Originally There was no Infant to See the Mother":

Fools say that the Original Nature (本性) is an infant. They say that Amitâbha Buddha is the Eternal Progenitor. Amitâbha's childhood name (小名號) is the "King Mindful of the Absence of Strife" (無諍念王). His father is the Cakravartin King (轉輪王). Now, Amitâbha is a man, not a woman. How could he have given birth to you? If Amitâbha was born of the Original Nature, of whom was the Original Nature born? Within the Great Tao, there has never been a case where the grandfather gave birth to the father, the father to the son, and the son to the grandson. (Cheng-hsin 16:87).

The Pure Land master, it appears, was ultimately mistaken in identifying the Eternal Progenitor with Amitâbha. We can infer that *Wu-sheng fu-mu* is in fact a matriarchal deity who has created the Nature of all beings: only a mother is capable of giving birth.

Lo is more explicit in his many references to the Mother (母) in book 5, the Shen-ken chieh-kuo pao-chūan. The Mother is the creator of all: "the Buddhas, the canonical scriptures, humanity and the ten thousand things." The Mother is the Ancestor (祖), existing prior to and co-existing with phenomenal reality (Chieh-kuo 4:87-90). This is not a deity removed from its creation, but is identified with all things. Lo's ultimate teaching, as we have seen, is the identity of Mother and Self; those who do not recognize this are "cut adrift from their

ancestral home" (流浪家鄉) far from their "native place" (Chieh-kuo 13:92-93). These "inferior persons" refuse to acknowledge the True Emptiness of the Self, and reject the Ancestor/Mother. "They are all people who have forgotten [Her] mercy and turned their backs on the Ancestor." They "lack faith in [the efficacy of] returning home" (P'o-hsieh 24:96-97). These passages resonate with the cosmogonic myth of the seventeenth and eighteenth century sects, which describes the Eternal Mother yearning tearfully for her children trapped in the "red-dust world" of *samsāra*.²⁴

The general thrust of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e is to place less emphasis upon the deity than upon its identity with the Self: the Original Face (本來面目) itself is the Mother of all things. There is little in the way of devotionism in the text -- certainly no ritual prescriptions, prayers, or mythological narratives that would imply the existence of a devotional cult. Overall, Lo Ch'ing relegates worship, incense-burning, the erection of images, and other forms of cult practice to the refuse heap of "manipulative" (有為) religious cultivation. His "doctrine of Non-Action" is one aimed to produce insight and understanding, not reliance on "other-power" (他力), as the Pure Land Buddhists describe their meditation upon Amitābha.

Indeed, Lo Ch'ing himself seems to vacillate between a literalistic interpretation of the Mother in her procreative activities and a conception of "returning home to Mother" as a

24. Susan Naquin, Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813, 9-18; Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, 135-144.

metaphor for an inner process of Self-realization. Lo's wording is inconsistent on this central image of his work, just as his conception of Emptiness alternates between the roles of creator deity, on the one hand, and metaphysical abstraction, on the other. But even in his most concrete references to these deities as creator -- giving birth to Heaven and Earth, controlling the heavens and the seasons, nurturing humankind -- Lo does not prescribe worship of Emptiness or the Mother as an external object of devotion. The enlightened individual recognizes the identity of Mother and Self.

From the evidence of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, then, Lo is not a conscious founder of a *devotional cult* to the Eternal Mother. Still, the goddess does appear in Lo's texts: she is the Venerable True Emptiness, the Holy Ancestor of the Limitless, the Eternal Progenitor, the Mother who gives birth to all things. It is easy to imagine how Lo Ch'ing's followers -- "unreflective" as he said they were -- may have begun a devotional cult to this "Venerable Mother beyond birth and death" in the name of their patriarch.

4. Early Lo Sectarrians

The diaries of travelling monks like Han-shan Te-ch'ing, Mi-tsang Tao-k'ai, and Yün-chi Chu-hung indicate that Lo's teachings enjoyed a wide appeal very soon after his death.²⁵ By the end of the Ming Dynasty, his followers ranged from farmers in Shantung to soldiers in Chihli and boatmen along the Grand Canal.

The infant Lo sects did not escape the attention of the Ming court. A memorial of 1584 by Wang Lin (王遴) warns that the "White Lotus, Lo Tao, and other groups confuse the people and waste their money; for all of them we must increase our punishments" (白蓮羅道等會惑眾靡財悉重加懲治).²⁶ In 1615, Emperor Shen-tsung agreed to proscriptions against the Lo-tsu chiao (羅祖教), the Ta-ch'eng wu-wei chiao (大成無為教), and six other sects, which "...avoid using its name but in fact carry out the [heterodox] teachings of the White Lotus Sect" (諱白蓮之名實演白蓮之教).²⁷ In 1618, a Vice Minister ^{of the Ministry of Rites} (禮部侍郎) named Shen Ch'üeh (沈 維) discovered 966 block-prints of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e in Nanking, and recommended that they be burned and

25. See Chapter I above and Daniel Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas: The Lo Chiao in Ming Dynasty China," History of Religions 17 (1978): 287-289.

26. Ming shih lu [Veritable Records of the Ming]: Wan-li 12/12 (1584) and 13/1 (1585); cf. Sakai Tadao, "Minmatsu ni okeru hôkan to muikyô" [Pao-chüan and the Non-Action Sect of the Late Ming], Chûgoku zensho no kenkyû [Studies in Chinese Shan-shu] (Tokyo: 1960), 478.

27. Ming shih lu: Wan-li 43/6 (1615); cf. Sakai Tadao, *ibid.*, 478-479; Daniel Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas," 284-285.

prohibited.²⁸ The first official record of the involvement of boatmen in sectarian activities appears in a memorial of 1623, concerning the *Hun-yüan chiao* (混元教),²⁹ though they came under government censorship only in the Ch'ing.³⁰ Briefer mention of Lo Ch'ing and his sects is made in numerous memorials between 1585 and the end of the Ming Dynasty. These records, in addition to the writings of Han-shan Te-ch'ing (1585), Mi-tsang Tao-k'ai (1597), and Yün-chi Chu-hung (1614), indicate broad exposure among common folk to Lo and his texts throughout the four eastern provinces of Honan, Shantung, Nanking, and Chekiang within a hundred years of Lo's death.³¹

But Lo sectarians were not confined to the "common people"; indeed, if they had not included merchants, scholars, monks, priests, eunuchs, and generals, his *pao-chüan* may never have been printed and circulated.

The earliest annotated edition of the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e* is the *K'ai-hsin fa-yao* (開心法要) of Wang Yüan-ching, preface 1596 -- the edition that serves as the basis for this study. In his commentary, Wang incorporates verses of Lan Feng, probably

28. *Nan-kung shu-tu* (南宮署牘) [Official Archives of the Southern Capital], *chüan* 4; I have not seen the original source -- cf. Sakai Tadao, *ibid.*, 479; Daniel Overmyer, *ibid.*, 291.

29. *Ming shih lu*: T'ien-chi 3/3 (1623); cf. Yü Sung-ch'ing, *Ming-Ch'ing pai-lien chiao yen-chiu*, 29. I am not certain that this was a Lo sect.

30. David Kelley, "Temples and Tribute Fleets: The Luo Sect and Boatmen's Associations in the Eighteenth Century." *Modern China* 8 (1982), 361-391.

31. Cf. Overmyer, *ibid.*, 289-291; Sakai, *ibid.*, 478; Sôda Hiroshi, "Rakyô no seiritsu to sono tenkai," 54-64.

composed between 1550 and 1580 (Mi-tsang had read Lan Feng's works by 1581). Wang Yüan-ching and Lan Feng were Soochow intellectuals, Lan retiring in later years to the Heavenly Pool Peak (天池峰) at Lu-shan (廬山) to write memoirs and verse. Wang Yüan-ching's commentary on the Wu-pu liu-ts'e shows wide familiarity with Confucian classics and Buddhist scriptures; Lan Feng's verses are written in good classical Chinese, showing a much greater facility with the language than that evidenced in the verse portions of Lo Ch'ing's text. Clearly they were representatives of the cultural elite of the Chiang-nan region in the late Ming.

Wang Yüan-ching and Lan Feng call themselves "*Lin-chi* patriarchs," and their interpretations of Lo's teachings are notably Ch'an-influenced. Yet there is too much contrary evidence to accept their titles at face value. It is unlikely that they were monks at all, much less "Ch'an patriarchs", because Buddhist clergy did not continue to use their given names after taking the tonsure, and did not have *Dharma*-names like Lan Feng's "the Venerable" (老人) and Wang Yüan-ching's "Taoist of the Pine Retreat" (松庵道人), though Wang's "alternate titles" (別號) "Mental Fasting" (心齋) and "Unattached" (無住) are more Buddhistic. Significantly, neither Wang, Lan, nor Lo Ch'ing himself appear in Buddhist historical records of the Ming and Ch'ing, and renowned monks of the late Ming Ch'an School, such as Mi-tsang Tao-k'ai, attacked Lan Feng for his "wild and misguided" religious leanings, while others, such as Chu-hung, repudiated Lo

Ch'ing and the *Wu-wei chiao*.³² The *Wu-pu liu-ts'e* itself rejects Ch'an meditation, monasticism, and Buddhist devotionism, and incorporates non-Buddhist religious language. While both Wang and Lan may have had the benefit of Buddhist training, they certainly had abandoned the *saṅgha* when they wrote their commentaries on the *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*.³³ We can assume that they were classically trained Buddhist intellectuals, with the ability and leisure time to write and, perhaps, the economic wherewithal to have their texts printed and disseminated, trading in on the popularity and religious authority of the Ch'an School to legitimize their sect patriarch and his teachings.

The edition of the text cited in this study is that of P'u-shen (普伸), preface 1652, incorporating the annotations of Wang Yüan-ching and the verses of Lan Feng. P'u-shen was born around 1570 in Hsin-an County (新安縣), Anhwei. He came from a renowned merchant family, and this is our first recorded evidence of a long association between the Hsin-an merchants and the Lo

32. Wang Yüan-ching, Lan Feng, and Lo Ch'ing do not appear in the nine Ch'an biographical works (composed between 1642 and 1794) consulted by Shih Sheng-yen in his history of sixteenth and seventeenth century monks; *Ming-mo fo-chiao yen-chiu* [Studies of Late Ming Buddhism], trans. (from Japanese into Chinese) by Kuan Shih-ch'ien (Taipei: 1987), 1-45. For English translations of Tao-k'ai's attacks on Lan Feng and Chu-hung's criticism of Lo Ch'ing, see Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas," 287-289.

33. For further discussion, see Chang Man-t'ao, "Kuan-yü Chen-k'ung chiao, Lo chiao yü Fo chiao te wen-t'i [Topics Concerning the True Emptiness Sect, the Lo Sect, and Buddhism], *Ta-lu tsa-chih* 35 (1967): 305-309.

sects.³⁴ P'u-shen's title (with the prefix 普) is characteristic of Lo sects of the Ch'ing; it suggests that some form of sectarian organization was already in existence by the end of the Ming. P'u-shen also calls himself the "Taoist of the Ten Thousand Sources" (萬源道人), and a disciple of the "Orthodox Sect of the Limitless" (無極正派). He refers to Lo Ch'ing as the "Venerable Patriarch Enlightened to Emptiness" (悟空老祖), and the incarnation (托生) of the "Holy Ancestor of the Limitless" (無極聖祖). After Lo's death, P'u-shen reports, *Wu-chi sheng-tsu* again became incarnate as the second patriarch, Ying Chi-nan (應繼南 -- sic., undoubtedly a mishearing of Yin Chi-nan 殷繼南, the name which appears in the earliest sectarian histories) (*K'u-kung* Preface:8). All of this points to the existence of a fully developed sect by the mid-seventeenth century, with a teaching consciously traced to a founding patriarch, and rituals for naming disciples and for the transmission of leadership. As evidenced in the social background of the editors of our texts, the sect enjoyed the support of patrons who were economically and educationally privileged.

The 1652 edition of the *K'ai-hsin fa-yao* includes laudatory verses by literati from T'ai-chou Prefecture (台州府), Chekiang, and Sung-chiang Prefecture (松江府), Kiangsu, named Chu Yüan-chieh (朱源潔) and Wang Yüan-huai (王源淮) (*K'u-kung* 18:136-137). It would appear that by the end of the Ming, Lo Ch'ing enjoyed a

34. Sakai Tadao, "*Kaishin hōyō to muikyō*" [*K'ai-shin fa-yao* and the Non-Action Sect], *Yuki kyōju shōju kinen bukkyō shisō-shironshu* (Tokyo: 1964): 561-562.

wide following among both wealthy merchants and classically-trained literati of the Chiang-nan region.

We have further evidence that Lo sectarians were not confined to peasants and laborers in an early edition of the *K'u-kung wu-tao ching* (苦功悟道經), preface 1518 (reprinted in 1698).³⁵ The preface to this edition contains laudatory encomiums (讚) to "Lo the Venerable" (羅翁) by six individuals: a Secretary (中書) of the Han-lin Academy in Lu-ch'eng (鹿城), Chihli, named Wang Ping-chung (王秉忠); a monk, Shan-shih Wen-nai (善逝文奈), in the position of "assistant to the monk-intendant" of the capital (僧錄司左); a Taoist priest (道士), Ch'en Shou-yang (陳守陽), titled "The Infant who Embraces the One" (抱一子), of the Abbey of Spiritual Receptivity (靈應觀) in the Wu-tang Mountains (武當山), Hupei; a eunuch named Shan Yü (單玉) of the imperial household (尚衣監); a military officer, Li Ching-tsu (李敬祖), of the Guard of the Left (騰驤左衛左所); and a scholar at the rank of prefectural candidate (府學生員), Ho Chung-jen (何仲仁). Clearly, Lo and his teachings enjoyed the patronage of individuals from every social class and occupation.

The catholicity of Lo Ch'ing's appeal blurs the distinction between "elite" and "popular" culture, and challenges those modern scholars who define the sects as a religious and social alternative for the "common people", providing avenues of religious and political expression normally "closed off" to the "disenfranchised," "marginal" classes, and distinguished from the

35. Lenin State Library, Moscow. I am grateful to Daniel Overmyer for making a copy of the preface available to me.

"secret societies" (祕密會社) of Chiang-nan merchants and social elites by virtue of their "popular" base. These assumptions have been shaped by historical sources which portray sectarians as "foolish and uneducated" commoners (愚民). But the evidence from the earliest followers of Lo Ch'ing and the first editions of his Wu-pu liu-ts'e does not bear them out. It also makes the historical fantasy of the "Brief History of Patriarch Lo" (羅祖簡史 -- cited in Chapter I), with its distinguished disciples of the Patriarch, including a circuit inspector (巡城御史), military warden (兵馬司), eunuch, and duke of state (國公), a bit less far-fetched. Fantastic though it may be, in our study of the sociology of the sects, we should perhaps give more credence to the testimony of the sects themselves.

Based on this principle, our best source for the early Lo sects from the perspective of sectarian historiography is the San-tsu hsing-chieh yin-yu pao-chüan (三祖行腳因由寶卷), The Precious Volume of Causal Origins based on the Traces of the Three Patriarchs, dated 1682, a sectarian "precious volume" of prose biography and religious verse. The work is in three *chüan*, the first of thirty folio pages on the founding patriarch Lo Ch'ing, the second of fifty-four pages on the second patriarch Yin Chi-nan (殷繼南), and the third of thirty-eight pages on the third patriarch Yao Wen-yü (姚文宇).³⁶ I have quoted from *chüan* 1 in Chapter I above.

36. Again I am indebted to Daniel Overmyer for making a copy of portions of this *pao-chüan* available to me.

According to the Traces of the Three Patriarchs, the second patriarch, Yin Chi-nan, was born on the twenty-eighth day of the second lunar month, in the nineteenth year of the Chia-ch'ing reign period (corresponding to April 4, 1540 of the Western calendar), thirteen years after the death of Lo Ch'ing.³⁷ His home was in the Tiger-head Mountains (虎頭山), Chin-yün County (縉雲縣), Ch'u-chou Prefecture (處州府), Chekiang. Like Patriarch Lo, Chi-nan lost his parents at a young age (his mother at three and his father at seven), and, like Lo, was raised by an uncle and aunt. When he was eleven years of age, his aunt passed away, and he was sent to Golden Sands Monastery (金沙寺) to take the tonsure. He was instructed by a monk named "Original Emptiness" (本空), who preached on the Buddha within every man. Despite upholding the precepts, however, Yin remained unenlightened. He was so vexed by the austerities of monastic life and the hopeless misery of the Buddhist doctrine of *samsāra* that he even contemplated taking his own life (p. 5b).

Abandoning the monastery, Yin took up with a silversmith in Yung-k'ang (永康), a county of Chin-hua Prefecture (金華府), Chekiang. While observing the incorruptibility of gold in a fiery furnace, he attained a "gradual awakening" (p. 6a), and devoted himself to upholding the five precepts as a lay-Buddhist practitioner. He experienced a "sudden enlightenment" when he heard a teacher named Lu Pen-shih (盧本師) recite a verse on Non-Action and Emptiness. He took the name P'u-neng (普能) and

37. Clearly, Yin was not Lo's hand-picked successor, and this is another bit of evidence that Lo was not the conscious founder of a religious sect.

recognized himself as the "manifestation" of the "Perfected Man of Non-Action" (無為真人) (p. 9a-b). We can assume from these titles that Yin had joined a Lo sect; indeed, he became known as "Patriarch Lo returned to earth" (羅祖轉世) and an expert on the Wu-pu liu-ts'e (p. 12a).

Yin Chi-nan's teachings echo those of the first patriarch, emphasizing the identity of the Self with the Buddha, a common truth uniting the Three Teachings, the role of destiny in one's exposure to the "Way of Non-Action", the importance of self-illumination through one's own efforts, the pointlessness of monasticism, and the necessity for vegetarianism and maintaining the five precepts. What is most remarkable about Yin's teachings is his full narrative development of the mythology of *Wu-sheng lao-mu*, crying for her children (p. 23a), and a three-stage cosmological time scheme consisting of the *kalpas* of the Yellow Willow (黃楊劫), the Red Dust (紅塵劫), and the White Yang (白陽劫) (pp. 29a-30b).

Taking disciples in the thousands, Yin drew the attention of the state, and was executed on the fourth day of the eighth month of the tenth year of the Wan-li reign period (August 21, 1582), at the age of forty-two.

When the Patriarch had returned to the West, darkness reigned over Heaven and Earth for seven days. The sun and moon had no light. Whether sage or simpleton, whoever heard of the holy master's death by execution was moved to tears of sorrow. (p. 46a).

The text lists twenty-eight of Yin's disciples, all having *Dharma*-names with the *p'u*-prefix. They are from Feng-yang (風陽), Nan-chih (南直), T'ai-chou (台州), Yung-k'ang (永康),

Wu-i (武義), Sung-yang (松陽), Ch'u-chou (處州), Hsüan-p'ing (宣平), Chin-yün (縉雲), P'ing-yang (平陽), Ch'ing-t'ien (青田), Jui-ch'ang (瑞昌), Chin-hua (金華), Ching-ning (景寧), and Wen-chou (溫州) counties in Chekiang and Kiangsi (p. 40b-41a).

The third patriarch, Yao Wen-yü, whose biography appears in the final *chüan* of the Traces of the Three Patriarchs, was from Ch'ing-yüan County (慶元縣), also in Ch'u-chou Prefecture (處州府), Chekiang. He was born on the nineteenth day of the third month of the sixth year of Wan-li (April 25, 1578). He could not speak for the first five years of his life; only when Patriarch Yin had died (in 1582) could Wen-yü open his mouth.

Like Yin Chi-nan, Yao lost his parents at a young age, precipitating a spiritual search that ended with self-discovery in simple labor. Passing his youth as a lonely orphan herder of geese, he was christened with the *Dharma*-name P'u-shan (普善) by a "man of the Tao" and advised to open a food stall at the side of the road. For the "sages and simpletons" who passed by on the road, he

...could assuage their hunger and thirst, and incidentally save [their souls]... The patriarch, in accord with this advice, bought three bushels of glutinous rice and did as he was told. During the day he worked at his stand, at night he practiced meditation, and after seven days and seven nights he experienced a sudden great awakening within his mind. (p. 2a-b).

In the forty-first year of Wan-li (1613), at the age of thirty-six, Yao entered the mountains, where he accepted disciples numbering 3,784, whom he instructed until his death in 1646. But Yao's career as a sect leader was not without strife:

the text is replete with tales of "heterodox teachers" and renegade congregations (including one which migrated to Korea), debates concerning the issue of celibacy among sect leaders, and divisions of the sect into branches and sub-branches. Within a century of Lo Ch'ing's death, it would appear, the Lo sects experienced fragmentation and internal dissension. It is not surprising that independent sectarian movements in the Ch'ing traced their origins to the first three patriarchs while differing in sect organization and doctrine and in their claims of sectarian transmission after the third patriarch.³⁸

38. See, for example, the confession of a Lo sectarian recorded in Shih-liao hsün-k'an [Historical Records Published Every Ten Days] (Peking: 1930-1931), t'ien 861-862: Ch'ien-lung 18 (1753), 7/19; cf. Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsün-yang su-yüan, 23-25; Sung Kuang-yü, "Shih-lun wu-sheng lao-mu tsung-chiao hsün-yang te i-hsieh t'e-chih," 562-564.

5. Lo Sects in the Ch'ing

The splintering of Lo sects and sub-sects described in the Traces of the Three Patriarchs is consistent with the remarkable diversity of sects claiming descent from Lo Ch'ing in the Ch'ing Dynasty, and makes the designation of a single, continuous Lo-sectarian tradition difficult. We have seen that the cult of Wu-sheng lao-mu, for example, was initially inspired by Lo Ch'ing and more fully developed in the second *chüan* of the Traces of the Three Patriarchs. Yet a number of sects in the Ch'ing based themselves on the Wu-sheng lao-mu cosmogonic myth without acknowledging Lo Ch'ing as their "founding patriarch". Moreover, most sects declaring descent from Lo Ch'ing do not evidence familiarity with his teachings. While the sects placed great store in "orthodox" lines of transmission, their fidelity to the teachings of Lo Ch'ing is often tangential at best.

Given my own focus upon the "founder" of the sects and his Wu-pu liu-ts'e, I have chosen to identify as "Lo sects" those which acknowledged Lo as their "first patriarch" and were in possession of his *pao-chüan*. These include principally the "Lo Sect" (羅教), the "Non-Action Sect" (無為教), the "Mahâyâna Sect" (大乘教), the "Sect of the Great Completion" (大成教), the "Sect of the Three Vehicles" (三乘教), the "Vegetarian Sect of the Venerable Officials" (老官齋教), the "Sect of Long Life" (長生教), the "Sect of the Prior Heaven" (先天教), and the "Dragon-Flower Assembly of Patriarch Lo" (羅祖龍華會).

The history of Lo sects in the Ch'ing, particularly in relationship to the fledgling canal boatmen's associations of the

eighteenth century, is the subject of a number of Japanese and Chinese studies.³⁹ This research has been based upon historical documents of the state, such as the Historical Materials Published Every Ten Days (史料旬刊), the Palace Archives (宮中檔), the Monthly Records of the Ministry of Defense (軍機處月摺包), and the Veritable Records of the Ch'ing (清實錄).⁴⁰ Independent research on these materials has also been conducted by several American scholars, and the reaction of the state to the sects, as well as the basic doctrines, rituals, and sociological background of Lo sectarians, have been ably described.⁴¹ I have read the primary source materials for what they can tell us about sectarian religion and ritual, and confine myself here to a brief summary and catalogue of these sources. My work on the history of the sects in Taiwan, in addition to fieldwork observation of contemporary sect activities, has involved original research on materials unfamiliar to English readers, and receives more detailed treatment below.

In the first years of the Ch'ing, the Shun-chih Emperor (reigned 1644-1662) proscribed the White Lotus and other sects, which, "...by means of incense-burning and ritual confession,

39. Refer to the bibliography for studies by Chang Man-t'ao, Chuang Chi-fa, Noguchi Tetsurô, Sakai Tadao, Sawada Mizuho, Sôda Hiroshi, Sung Kuang-yü, Suzuki Chusei, Tai Hsüan-chih, Tsukamoto Zenryû, Wang Erh-min, Yeh Wen-hsin, and Yoshioka Yoshitoyo.

40. Shih-liao hsün-k'an (Peking: 1930-31; Taipei: 1963).
Kung-chung-tang (Taipei: 1976)
Chün-chi ch'u yüeh che-pao (Taipei: 1965)
Ch'ing shih lu (Tokyo: 1937; Taipei: 1963).

41. Refer to the bibliography for studies by David Kelley, Susan Naquin, and Daniel Overmyer.

mislead and confuse the minds of the people"

(以燒香禮懺騙惑人心). These sects included the *Ta-ch'eng chiao* (大成教) and *Wu-wei chiao* (無為教).⁴² Nevertheless, the sects became widespread, especially among grain transport workers along the Grand Canal. For these boatmen, the sects functioned as guarantors of personal and religious security, offering religious instruction, ritual performances, vegetarian meals, dormitory housing in winter, care for the elderly and burial of the dead. Their temples were called "public halls" (堂) and "places of refuge" (庵), and grew in number and geographical density as the branches and sub-sects proliferated. Inspections conducted by the Governor (巡撫) of Chekiang, Li Wei (李衛), in 1726-1727 revealed the existence of dozens of temple-complexes in the outskirts of Hangchow. Admitting the need served by the halls for "wandering and unattached" laborers, while at the same time alarmed by the powerful religious appeal of the sect, Li advised destroying the Lo scriptures and icons and converting the halls into boatmen's "associations" (公所). His suggestion was approved by the Yung-cheng Emperor.⁴³

42. *Ch'ing shih lu* 26:18, Shun-chih 3 (1646). The text is reproduced in Tsukamoto Zenryû, "*Rakyô no seiritsu to ryûden ni tsuite*," 13; and Tai Hsüan-chih, "*Lao-kuan chai-chiao*," 261; cf. Chuang Chi-fa, "*Ch'ing-tai min-chien tsung-chiao hsin-yang te she-hui kung-neng*" [Social Functions of Popular Religious Beliefs in the Ch'ing], *Kuo-li chung-yang t'u-shu-kuan kuan-k'an* 18.2 (1985): 133.

43. *Kung-chung-tang*, Yung-cheng 5 (1727), 11/8. Cf. Yeh Wen-hsin, "*Jen-shen chih chien: Ch'ien-lun shih-pa shih-chi te Lo-chiao*," 69, 70; Yü Sung-ch'ing, "*Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai min-chien te tsung-chiao hsin-yang he mi-mi chieh-she*," 123; Chuang Chi-fa, "*Ch'ing Kao-tsung ch'a-chin Lo-chiao te ching-kuo*," 139; David Kelley, "Temples and Tribute Fleets:

Lo sects were not confined to boatmen, nor to Chekiang. In 1729, inspections by the Governor Liu Shih-ming (劉世明) and the Governor-general (總督) Shih I-chih (史貽直) of Fukien Province uncovered active halls in Fukien and neighboring counties in Chekiang and Kiangsi. A Lo sect follower named Chang Wei-ying (張維英) testified:

We are [farmers] who live in the countryside. Our sect was founded by Lo Ch'eng (羅成), an ancestor of Lo Ming-chung (羅明忠), in the Cheng-te period [1506-1522]. He called it the Non-Action Sect. We recite a book called the Scripture of Enlightenment through Mental Hardship (苦心悟道經), and we eat vegetarian food and hold candlelight services.⁴⁴

Further evidence of Lo sect participation among non-boatmen is in a memorial of the same year by Hsieh Min (謝旻), Governor of Kiangsi. He writes:

...Among the people under investigation, those who live in the towns are craftsmen and those who live in the countryside are farmers. Their activities are confined to moral cultivation through vegetarianism. [The *Lo chiao*] is also called the *Ta ch'eng chiao* (大成教) or the *San sheng chiao* (三乘教).⁴⁵

A flurry of memorials concerning a Fukien-based "uprising" of the Sect of the Venerable Officials (老官齋教) appears in

The Luo Sect and Boatmen's Associations in the Eighteenth Century," 369.

44. Kung-chung-tang, Yung-cheng 7 (1729), 10/13. Cf. Chuang Chi-fa, "Ch'ing Kao-tsung ch'a-chin Lo-chiao te ching-kuo," 135, 137; Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan, 16.
45. Shih-liao hsün-k'an, t'ien 49: Yung-cheng 7 (1729), 12/6. Cf. Suzuki Chusei, "Rakyô ni tsuite," Tôyô bunka kenkyûjo kiyô 1 [1943]: 446-447; Tsukamoto Zenryû, "Rakyô no seiritsu to ryûden ni tsuite," 19; Chuang Chi-fa, "Ch'ing Shih-tsung chin chiao k'ao," 281; Sung Kuang-yü, "Shih-lun 'Wu-sheng lao-mu' tsung-chiao hsin-yang te i-hsieh t'e-chih," 565; David Kelley, "Temples and Tribute Fleets," 363.

1748. The basic text of this group was the Traces of the Three Patriarchs, and it claimed the Third Patriarch Yao Wen-yü as its branch founder. Yao's grandson, Wen-mo (姚文謨), of Lin-ch'uan County (臨川縣), Fu-chou Prefecture (撫州府), Kiangsi, was said to have changed the name from the *Lo chiao* to the *Lao-kuan chai-chiao* after the government inspections of 1729.⁴⁶ All members of the sect were titled "Venerable Officials" (老官).⁴⁷ Some twenty memorials collected in the Historical Memorials Published Every Ten Days report an uprising of over three hundred persons in Chien-an (建安) and Ou-ning (甌寧) Counties, Fukien. Sect followers called the Three Patriarchs "Maitreyas in Heaven" (天上彌勒) and "Holy Ancestors of the Limitless" (無極聖祖), and believed in Maitreya's imminent descent into the world. With banners and cloth head-wraps reading "Great Way of Non-Action" (無為大道), "*Wu-chi sheng-tsu*," and "Acting on the Behalf of Heaven" (代天行事), they called for sharing resources with the poor. Though equipped with "shotguns, pistols, daggers, large and small banners, talismans of yellow paper, and cloth head-wraps," their supplies were primitive, and their knives "broken and dull"; the rebels seemed to have "...come together temporarily and haphazardly," suggesting that they were not sect members of long standing. All the leaders, however, had *Dharma*-names with the *P'u*-prefix: the "chief commander" was a woman

46. Chün-chi ch'u yüeh che-pao 2772/25/3733: Ch'ien-lung 13 (1748), 11/24. Cf. Chuang Chi-fa, "*Ch'ing Kao-tsung ch'a-chin Lo-chiao te ching-kuo*," 136.

47. Chün-chi ch'u yüeh che-pao 2772/15/2042: Ch'ien-lung 13 (1748), 2/27. Cf. Chuang Chi-fa, *ibid.*

named P'u-shao (普少), and seven "generals" named P'u- were arrested or killed with her.⁴⁸

Several memorialists of the 1748 rebellion comment on the difficulty of investigating the sect because of Fukien's mountainous terrain, but they surveyed fourteen counties and a total of seventy-five vegetarian halls (齋堂); each had persons living within the hall, numbering from two or three to more than ten. The group under scrutiny was described in a sectarian's confession of 1753 as the central of three branches -- corresponding to the pattern of branch filiations described in *chüan* 3 of the Traces of the Three Patriarchs -- and he listed each of the branch heads by name, beginning with Yao Wen-yü (P'u-shan) and ending in the ninth "generation" with the current patriarch, P'u-tung (普棟), over seventy years of age at the time.⁴⁹ This confessor named boatmen and soldiers among the sect followers.

Despite Li Wei's efforts to change the nature of the halls and sect activities in 1727, the Lo sects continued to flourish

48. Shih-liao hsün-k'an, t'ien 963-972; ti 27-37, 61-70: Ch'ien-lung 13 (1748), 3/3 to 7/6. Cf. Suzuki Chusei, "Rakyô ni tsuite," 444, 446, 475, 484; Tsukamoto Zenryu, "Rakyô no seiritsu to ryûden ni tsuite," 17-18; Tai Hsüan-chih, "Lao-kuan chai-chiao," 257; Daniel Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion, 121-123; Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas," 292; Overmyer, "Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society," Modern China 7.2 (1981): 163; Yeh Wen-hsin, "Jen-shen chih chien," 78-79, 82-83; Chuang Chi-fa, "Ch'ing Kao-tsung ch'a-chin Lo-chiao te ching-kuo," 138; Yü Sung-ch'ing, Ming-Ch'ing pai-lien chiao yen-chiu, 31.

49. Shih-liao hsün-k'an, t'ien 861-863: Ch'ien-lung 18 (1753), 7/19 and 8/6. Cf. Suzuki Chusei, "Rakyô ni tsuite," 464-465, 481-482; Daniel Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas," 292; Sung Kuang-yü, "Shih-lun Wu-sheng lao-mu tsung-chiao hsin-yang te i'hsieh t'e-chih," 565.

as religious assemblies for canal boatmen in Hangchow and Soochow.⁵⁰ Memorials of 1768-1769 by the Governor of Kiangsu, P'eng Pao (彭寶), the Governor of Chekiang, Yung-te (永德), and a local official, Ts'ui Ying-chieh (崔應楮), report scores of "vegetarian halls" (齋堂) and "sanctuaries" (庵) engaged in religious indoctrination and the billeting of grain transport workers.⁵¹ Again, one reason why the associations continued to function as Lo sects, despite Emperor Shih-tsung's prohibition, was because of the many rivers and valleys of Chekiang and Kiangsu, making it "exceptionally easy," according to P'eng Pao, "to harbor villains and criminals," and, presumably, to carry on with religious activities considered threatening to the state's monopoly on ideological control.⁵²

At this time, the complexity of the sect seems to have become even more pronounced. The halls were named "Ch'ien" (錢),

50. For a detailed discussion of Lo sectarian appeal among canal boatmen, as revealed in memorials of 1726 and 1768, see David Kelley, "Temples and Tribute Fleets: The Luo Sect and Boatmen's Associations in the Eighteenth Century," and his "Sect and Society: The Evolution of the Luo Sect among Grain Tribute Fleet Boatmen, 1700-1850" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1981).

51. *Shih-liao hsün-k'an*, t'ien 404-410, 449-451, 525-531: Ch'ien-lung 33 (1768), 9/10 to 11/30. Cf. Suzuki Chusei, "Rakyô ni tsuite," 446, 465, 475; Tsukamoto Zenryû, "Rakyô no seiritsu," 20; Daniel Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas," 292; Yeh Wen-hsin, "Jen-shen chih chien," 64-65, 67-68, 69, 71; Yü Sung-ch'ing, "Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai min-chien te tsung-chiao hsin-yang he mi-mi chieh-she," 123; Sung Kuang-yü, "Shih-lun Wu-sheng lao-mu tsung-chiao hsin-yang te i-hsieh t'e-chih," 565-566; David Kelley, "Temples and Tribute Fleets," 371-378, 381-385; Cheng Chih-ming, *Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan*, 17; Chuang Chi-fa, "Ch'ing Kao-tsung," 139; Chuang, "Ch'ing-tai min-chien tsung-chiao hsin-yang te she-hui kung-neng," 133, 143.

52. *Shih-liao hsün-k'an*, t'ien 450: Ch'ien-lung 33 (1768), 9/16.

"Weng" (翁), and "P'an" (潘) sanctuaries (庵), depending on their affiliation with the sub-sect patriarchs so named. Ch'ien and Weng were said to have been from Mi-yün County in Chihli, where Lo Ch'ing had served as a border guard and experienced his religious awakening, and P'an was from Sung-chiang County (松江縣), Kiangsu. All had migrated to Hangchow with the boatmen. The sanctuaries had common lands for agriculture and sericulture, burial grounds called "Non-Ephemeral [Shadowless] Mounts" (無影山), and dormitory accommodations for the homeless and elderly; some had common rooms for "vegetarian assemblies", and sūtra-recitation halls with altars and Buddha-images. Division within the sects may be suggested by the diversity of sectarian scriptures discovered in the halls, including the Wu-pu liu-ts'e but a number of other *pao-chūan* besides. The images included Kuan-yin, Maitreya, and Wei-t'o, and offerings of fruit were believed to cure illness and prolong life: the same sects were also called "Fruit" (果子) and "Long-life" (長生) Sects.⁵³

One cannot help but feel a strong sense of historical remove from the First Patriarch, who showed so much disdain for devotion to Maitreya, cultic ritual, and "sectarianism" in general. His texts are listed, but he and his principles of "Non-Action" seem virtually forgotten. Even his name is misreported: the memorialists are told that the founder's name was Lo Meng-hung (羅孟洪).⁵⁴ It is also clear that the sanctuaries imposed no requirements for sect membership or participation: only a third

53. *ibid.*

54. *ibid.*, t'ien 525-527: Ch'ien-lung 33 (1768), 10/1.

of those arrested were sect members, and many were illiterate and did not engage in scriptural studies or recitation.⁵⁵ The religious activities of the halls may have become merely a subsidiary function (though the nature of our sources shows a bias towards reporting the social and political roles of the sects, as opposed to their more religious character). In any case, Governor Yung-te's suggestion to convert the halls into boatmen's associations, as Li Wei had done, was rebuked by the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, and the temples, images, and texts were all destroyed.⁵⁶

The sects continued nevertheless; the Veritable Records for 1825 describes thousands of boatmen organized in sects called *P'an-an* (潘安, not 潘庵), *Lao-an* (老安), and *Hsin-an* (新安). Their leaders were called "Venerable Officials" (老官). The Veritable Records does not give details of any religious activities of these associations beyond the presentation of offerings to "the god, Patriarch Lo".⁵⁷

Some form of religious practice continued independent of the boatmen's associations. Diarists -- two European and one Chinese -- in the latter half of the nineteenth century report observing Lo sects engaged in *sūtra*-recitation, communal worship, and

55. *ibid.*, t'ien 404-407: Ch'ien-lung 33 (1768), 9/10 and 9/28.

56. Ch'ing shih lu, Ch'ien-lung 33 (1768). Cf. David Kelley, "Temples and Tribute Fleets," 377-381.

57. Ch'ing shih lu, Tao-kuang 5 (1825). Cf. Tsukamoto Zenryū, "Rakyō no seiritsu," 20; Daniel Overmyer, "Boatmen and Buddhas," 296.

ritual transmission of leadership,⁵⁸ linking the early Lo sects to those of Chinese communities in the twentieth century.

6. Lo Sects in Taiwan

Taiwan gazetteers composed during the Japanese Occupation (1895-1945) and the Republican Period (1950-present) distinguish "Vegetarian Sects" (齋教) from Buddhist monasteries (寺) and "Taoist" temples (廟) (popular cults) in their sections on "popular customs" and "religions".⁵⁹

The *chai-chiao* consist of three independent sects: the Dragon-Flower Sect (龍華派), the Sect of the Gold Pennant (金幢教), and the Sect of the Prior Heaven (先天教). Today, only the *Lung-hua p'ai* continues to function as an active Lo sect (celebrating Lo Ch'ing and his Wu-pu liu-ts'e): the *Chin-ch'uang chiao* no longer has an independent sect organization, and the *Hsien-t'ien chiao* is no longer a Lo sect.⁶⁰

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58. Joseph Edkins, Chinese Buddhism, 371-379; J.J.M. De Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China, 176-241; Ts'ai Heng-tzu, Ch'ung-ming man-lu [Casual Records of the Cries of Insects], in Pi-chi hsiao-shuo ta-kuan [Great Compendium of Essays and Tales] (Taipei: 1962), IV: 3701a.
59. Kataoka Iwao, ed., Taiwan fûzoku shi [A Gazetteer of Customs in Taiwan] (Taipei: 1941-45, 1981); Marui Keijirô, Taiwan shûkyô chôsa hôkokusho [Report on the Survey of Religion in Taiwan] (Taipei: 1919); Suzuki Seiichirô, Taiwan kyûkan shûzoku shinkô [Old Customs and Popular Beliefs of Taiwan] (Taipei: 1934, 1978); Li Ju-ho, ed., T'ai-wan sheng t'ung-chih [Gazetteer of Taiwan Province] (Taipei: 1954, 1971), "Jen-min chih, tsung-chiao p'ien" [The Populace: Religion] *chüan* 3, section 6 ("Chai-chiao" [Vegetarian Sects]).
60. In Taiwan, the *Hsien-t'ien chiao* acknowledges the Ch'an patriarch Hui-neng as its founder and does not disseminate the Wu-pu liu-ts'e. The sect was established by Huang Te-hui (黃德輝) (1624-1690) of Jao-chou Prefecture (饒州府), Kiangsi, and still recites the scripture he composed, the

The earliest vegetarian hall (齋堂) in Taiwan was established in a private home in 1765 in Hai-t'ou Village (海頭社), Anping. The first *Lung-hua* sect "patriarch" arrived from Fukien in 1804. The oldest active hall is the Hall of Conversion by Virtue (德化堂) on Fu-ch'ien Road in Tainan, constructed in 1837.

It happens that the arrival of Lo sectarians in Taiwan coincided with disputes regarding the transmission of leadership and the establishment of several sub-sects on the mainland. According to *Lung-hua* sect history, the sect had been based in Fukien since 1645, when P'u-ch'ien (普錢) became the sixth patriarch. The central hall of the sect was the Hall of the One Truth (壹是堂) at Port Kuanyin (觀音埔), established by P'u-yüeh (普月) or P'u-le (普樂), who became the tenth and eleventh patriarchs in 1696 and 1724, respectively. In 1796, the incapacitation of the thirteenth patriarch P'u-ts'ung (普聰) led

Huang-chi chin-tan pao-chüan (黃極金丹寶卷). From Fukien, the sect was transmitted to Taiwan during the Hsien-feng reign period (1851-1862), beginning in Taipei and spreading southward. Today, official registries list twenty *Hsien-t'ien* temples in nine cities and counties: Taipei (3), Hsinchu (5), Taoyuan (2), Taichung (2), Changhua (1), Tainan (3), Kaohsiung (2), Pingtung (1), and Penghu (1). Largely moribund, the sect bears little resemblance to the sophisticated and somewhat aristocratic *Hsien-t'ien* sect observed by de Groot in Fukien or the *Wu-wei chiao* discovered by Edkins in Kiangsu and Chekiang in the 1850's. In the 1920's in Fukien, Chang T'ien-jan (張天然) broke away from the *Hsien-t'ien chiao* and established the "Way of the Prior Heaven" (先天道) or the "Way of One Thread" (一貫道). The *I Kuan Tao* is a syncretic sect with a wide following in contemporary Taiwan; it continues to recognize Lo Ch'ing as a "patriarch", but does not utilize his texts or preach his philosophy. Cf. Li Ju-ho, ed., T'ai-wan sheng t'ung-chih (op.cit.); Su Ming-tung, *T'ien-tao te pien-cheng yü chen-li* [An Apology and Justification for the Way of Heaven (Sect)] (Tainan: 1983): 232-263.

P'u-yu (普有) to establish a new central hall in Hsien-yu County (仙遊縣). He called it the *Han-yang Hall* (漢陽堂). This move was opposed by a majority of the *Lung-hua* followers, leading to the division of the sect into two branches, the *I-shih t'ang p'ai* (壹是堂派) and the *Han-yang t'ang p'ai* (漢陽堂派). These branches of the *Lung-hua* sect have maintained independent lines of transmission since the thirteenth patriarch.

Today, the *I-shih t'ang p'ai* is predominant in central and northern Taiwan, with sixty-nine halls registered in Taichung, Changhua, Nantou, Hsinchu, Taoyuan, and Miaoli. The *Han-yang t'ang p'ai* is centered in the south, with thirteen halls registered in Chia-i, Peimen, Hsinfeng, Touliu, Huwei, Tungshih, and Kaohsiung.

A further split of the *I-shih t'ang* branch was occasioned by the establishment of the Hall of the Recovery of Faith (復信堂) in Fuchow in 1800. In contemporary Taiwan, certain vegetarian halls are associated with the *Fu-hsin t'ang p'ai*, but no independent line of succession is recorded. Twelve halls are registered in central Taiwan.

A schematic sketch-history of *Lung-hua* sect succession can be charted as follows:⁶¹

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61. Cheng Chih-ming, "*T'ai-wan chai-chiao te yūan-yūan yū liu-pien*," [Origins and Evolution of the Vegetarian Sect in Taiwan], in his *T'ai-wan min-chien tsung-chiao lun-chi*, 39-42; Li Ju-he, *T'ai-wan sheng t'ung-chih* (op.cit.); T'ing Chia, "*T'ai-wan te chai-chiao yu-lai*" [Origins of Taiwan's Vegetarian Sects], Chang Man-t'ao, ed., *Chung-kuo fo-chiao shih lun-chi* (Taipei: 1979): 364-367. I focus on the *Lung-hua* sect because it is still active; however, a number of other Ch'ing Dynasty sects traced their lines of succession to Patriarch Lo.

1

Wu-k'ung: Lo Ch'ing (d. 1527)

2

P'u-neng: Yin Chi-nan (1540-1582)

3

P'u-shan: Yao Wen-yü (1578-1634)

└→ "five schools and seven branches"

4

P'u-hsiao: T'ang K'o-chün (1634)

5

P'u-pu: Yang Shih-ch'un (1643)

6

P'u-ch'ien: Chang xxx-xxx (1645)

7

P'u-te: Huang Ta-chieh (1654)

8

P'u-fang: Ch'ih xxx-xxx (1669)

9

P'u-t'ung: Chang xxx-xxx (1684)

10

P'u-yüeh: Ch'en xxx-xxx (1696)

11

P'u-le: Chang Chia-i (1724)

12

P'u-ying: Chang Lang (1779)

13

P'u-ts'ung: Ch'en xxx-xxx (1788)

Han-yang t'ang p'ai

I-shih t'ang p'ai

14

P'u-yu (1796)

14

P'u-yao: Lu Ping (1800)

└→ Fu-hsin t'ang p'ai

15

P'u-t'ao (1837)

15

P'u-tao

16

P'u-chūeh

16

P'u-piao

17

P'u-chi (1856)

17

P'u-ch'ou

18

P'u-lung (1858)

18

P'u-hsi

19

P'u-chang (1862)

19

P'u-hsien

20

P'u-chih (1865)

20

P'u-tou
- 197 -

21

P'u-feng (1867)

22

P'u-jan (1888)

21

P'u-hsi

28

P'u-mei (1914)

?

P'u-hsü (after 1950)

?

P'u-ching (1948)

The history of the Lo sects on Taiwan during the Japanese occupation is unclear, but the nature of sect activities and self-definition seems to have undergone significant change during the period. In line with its policy of strict ideological and institutional control, the Japanese Command registered all religious bodies in Taiwan, and limited their autonomy. The *Lung-hua*, *Chin-ch'uang*, and *Hsien-t'ien* sects were designated as "lay Buddhist assemblies" and registered with the "Patriotic Buddhist Association" (愛國佛教會). Non-Buddhist texts, including Lo's *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*, were confiscated and destroyed, and the Vegetarian Halls themselves were placed under the authority of tonsured monks and nuns. Sectarians were not permitted to meet at night, to meet for other than strictly "religious" purposes (i.e., the recitation of *sūtras*), or to compose texts, banners, or slogans having a nationalistic or political tenor. The sectarians seem to have complied, and they

met with no further curtailment of activities: the number of registered halls remained constant throughout the period.⁶²

Lo scriptures were reintroduced into Taiwan in the early 1950's, but most vegetarian halls retain their lay Buddhist character. Many have nightly or weekly *sūtra*-recitation meetings, vegetarian feasts on annual observances for Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, and occasional lectures on Buddhist doctrine and ethics. None of these activities show the influence of Lo Ch'ing and his *pao-chūan*. In terms of their public religious function, the halls differ very little from Buddhist monasteries in their traditional lay-outreach activities. The difference is that the hall leaders are not tonsured or celibate, and all members participate in the planning and organization of public assemblies. Two or three of the main halls in Taichung and Tainan do sponsor annual weekend retreats, during which the Wu-pu liu-ts'e and other *pao-chūan* are recited, and lectures are presented on Lo Ch'ing's life and teachings. These assemblies are open to members only, and the participants represent a small fraction of the number of pious men and women who regularly visit the halls to chant Buddhist *sūtras* in a congregational setting. There are hundreds of halls and branch halls, some existing in private homes, which provide the space for common, non-sectarian religious practice -- connected to Lo Ch'ing only by history and

62. Kataoka Iwai, ed., *Taiwan fūzoku shi*, 44-48; Marui Keijirō, *Taiwan shūkyō chōsa hōkokusho*, 79-82; Suzuki Seiichirō, *Taiwan kyūkan shūzoku shinkō*, 29-40; Cheng Chih-ming, "T'ai-wan chai-chiao te yüan-yüan chi liu-pien," 46-47; Sung Kuang-yü, "Shih-lun wu-sheng lao-mu tsung-chiao hsin-yang," 564; personal interview with Yen Shih-te (顏施德), Taichung Min-te t'ang (June 1988).

their institutional base. A small number of halls, again principally in Tainan and Taichung, have dormitories for elderly sectarians having no other means of support and a desire to pursue intensive religious cultivation without cutting off their ties to the world. Residents, non-resident members, and non-members all define themselves less as "sectarians" than as "lay Buddhists"; the Vegetarian Halls represent an active congregational alternative for Chinese Buddhists in Taiwan.

7. Ritual and Sect Organization

The "sanctuary" (庵) or "hall" (堂) of a Lo sect may describe a single room in a private home or a large complex of many chambers and detached buildings. Halls of the Mahâyâna Sect (大乘教), built in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for use as dormitories for canal boatmen, had as many as twenty-three rooms, including living quarters and a central hall for communal gatherings.⁶³

Nineteenth-century *chai-t'ang* still in use in Taiwan are striking because they resemble more the traditional homes of merchants and land-owners than religious structures such as monasteries and temples; their preservation is valuable for historians of Taiwanese architecture as much as for historians of Chinese religions.⁶⁴ They are relatively unadorned, many with a

63. *Shih-liao hsün-k'an*, t'ien 526: Ch'ien-lung 33 (1768), 10/1.

64. See, for example, Lin Heng-tao, "T'ai-chung min-te chai-t'ang" [The Vegetarian Hall of People's Virtue, Taichung], *T'ai-wan wen hsien* 33.6 (1982): 59-60; "T'ai-nan shih te chai-t'ang" [The Vegetarian Hall of Tainan], *T'ai-wan wen-hsien* 19 (1968): 54-61; "Chai-t'ang yü T'ai-wan" [The

plain facade and a surrounding wall, and a slanted (not curving) gabled tile roof without ornamentation. The central gate alone mimics the main gate of a temple, with the name of the hall embossed in large gold characters on a placard hanging above the door. The main hall contains images encased in a central altar of Lo Ch'ing, Kuanyin, Sâkyamuni, and other Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, much like the main hall of any popular temple. In the *chai-t'ang*, however, this hall is used less frequently than a much larger side hall furnished with stools for congregational assemblies. This room serves the regular activities of the hall: *sûtra*-recitation and vegetarian banquets. Some of the halls have living quarters for sect members: in one hall I visited, there were two rows of individual, dormitory-style cloisters at the right-rear and left-rear of the hall, housing a dozen or more men and women; in another, there was a modest detached home for the branch head and his spouse.⁶⁵

The primary religious activity of the halls is the recitation of *sûtras*, and the confiscation of hundreds of texts and printing blocks by Ch'ing authorities in the eighteenth century suggests that this has always been the predominant form of religious piety encouraged by the sects. We have already

Vegetarian Sect and Taiwan], *T'ai-wan yeh-t'an* (Taipei: 1980): 107-109, plates 93-100.

65. I have visited a handful of *chai-t'ang* in Taichung and Tainan: the Hall of Vigilant Vegetarianism (慎齋堂) and the Hall of the People's Virtue (民德堂) in Taichung; the Hall of Conversion by Virtue (德化堂), the Hall of Vigilance in Virtue (慎德堂), and the Hall of Reverence for Virtue (崇德堂) in Tainan; and the Hall of Conversion to Goodness (化善堂) in Anping.

remarked on the form of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e as especially conducive to recitation. The 1652 edition of the K'ai-hsin fa-yao includes instructions for upholding the text, guidelines on how to read and recite the scripture and how to distinguish between text and commentary, and exhortations to moral and religious purity (K'u-kung preface:11-13). It also sets out procedures for communal worship:

Arrange the altar. Entering the sacred area, sit in meditation. Chant the Heart Sûtra from beginning to end.

[Commentary: By "arranging the altar" is meant establishing a sacred space, with an altar for the text. By "sitting in meditation" is meant sitting quietly, with a solemn and correct demeanor appropriate to this sacred place, the mind at peace. Do not talk about profane matters or engage in idle conversation and pleasantries. The mind should not be unfocussed, roaming to consider affairs unrelated to the matter at hand...]

Raise incense and chant [these words of praise]:

Incense in the burner is suddenly ignited!
The Dharma-realm is steeped in fragrance!
The Buddhas assemble, gathering from afar to hear!
Everywhere auspicious clouds come together!
Sincerely we set out offerings in abundance!
The Buddhas manifest the golden body!

All thrice chant these words: Praise to Sâkyamuni Buddha, the original teacher!

...I take refuge in all Dharmas (法), throughout the ten directions. The wheel of the Dharma turns continuously, and saves all living beings! I take refuge in all Buddhas (佛), throughout the ten directions. The wheel of the Dharma turns continuously, and saves all living beings! I take refuge in all monastic communities (僧), throughout the ten directions. The wheel of the Dharma turns continuously, and saves all living beings! (K'u-kung Preface:18-22).

Contemporary sectarians recite scriptures and encomiums collected in a "ritual instruction booklet" or "sûtra amplification text" of the Lung-hua Sect, the Lung-hua k'o-i

(龍華科儀). This sectarian "book of common prayer" includes *gāthās*, chants, oral formulas, scriptural selections, and didactic verses to be recited in a designated order and cadence. Among those held up to praise are Lo Ch'ing and Lo sect patriarchs, various Buddhas and *bodhisattvas*, and the "Most High Holy Ancestor of the Limitless" (太上無極聖祖). Other texts recited by sectarians today include the *Chin-kang k'o-i* (金剛科儀) and the *San-shih hsing-chiao yin-yu pao-chūan* (三世行腳因由寶卷).

In addition to regular *sūtra*-recitation assemblies, the halls sponsor special gatherings on particular days of the year. In the eighteenth century, sectarians of the Great Completion (大成教) met three times each year (上元, 中元, 下元) to "gather together for public confession, recitation of scriptures, vegetarian feasting, and exhortation to virtue"

(做會拜懺念誦吃長齋勸人為善).⁶⁶ The Mahâyâna Sect held assemblies for Kuanyin, Maitreya, and Wei-t'o on the first day of the first lunar month, the third day of the third month, the sixth day of the sixth month, the ninth day of the ninth month, and the seventeenth day of the eleventh month, at which times tithes of rice and coin were collected for the purchase of incense, offerings, and food.⁶⁷ De Groot records thirteen annual

66. *Kung-chung-tang*: Yung-cheng 10 (1732), 5/1. Cf. Chuang Chi-fa, "*She-hui kung-neng*," 134.

67. *Shih-liao hsun-k'an*, t'ien 529: Ch'ien-lung 34 (1769), 3/19. Cf. Yeh Wen-shin, "*Jen-shen chih chien*," 65; Chuang Chi-fa, "*Ssu-hai chih nei chieh hsiung-ti: Li-tai te mi-mi she-hui*" [All in the Four Seas are Brothers: Secret Societies throughout History], *Chung-kuo wen-hua hsin-p'ien: she-hui p'ien* (Taipei: 1982): 294.

festivals, including one (on the fifth day of the first month) commemorating Patriarch Lo.⁶⁸ Today, the *Lung-hua p'ai* observes a day for opening the hall on the fifth day of the first month, the birthday of the Jade Emperor on the ninth day of the first month, the birthday of the Emperor of Heaven on the fifteenth day of the first month (上元), the birthday of Kuanyin on the nineteenth day of the second month, the birthday of Sâkyamuni on the eighth day of the fourth month, the death-day anniversary of Kuanyin on the nineteenth day of the sixth month, the birthday of the Emperor of Earth on the fifteenth day of the seventh month (中元), the birthday of Ti-tsang (Ksitigarbha) on the thirtieth day of the seventh month, the enlightenment anniversary of Kuanyin on the nineteenth day of the ninth month, the birthday of the Emperor of Water on the fifteenth day of the tenth month (下元), and the birthday of Patriarch Lo on the first day of the twelfth month.⁶⁹

Sect membership is open to all. The sects are organized hierarchically, with ritual procedures for initiation and advancement. Sect income is based on a system of tithes, corresponding to the member-contributor's position in the sect. The Mahâyâna Sect levied an initiatory tithe of one or two taels

68. Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China, 220.

69. *Lung-hua k'o-i* (Taichung: 1985): 227-237. The central position occupied by Kuanyin is a prominent feature of contemporary sects, and was noted as well by Ch'ing memorialists investigating the *Ta-sheng* and *Lao-kuan chai chiao*. Cf. Suzuki Chusei, "*Rakyô ni tsuite*," 474; J.J.M. de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China, 228-229.

of silver to "take a teacher" (投師).⁷⁰ The Wu-wei chiao based its initiation upon the financial contribution of the novice, providing him or her with a 28-character *gāthā* entitled the Scripture of the First Vehicle (一乘經) for six *fen* (分) of silver, the Scripture of the Second Vehicle (二乘經) in 108 characters for one *ch'ien* (錢), two *fen*, and the Scripture of the Third Vehicle (三乘經) for three *ch'ien*, three *fen*, three *li* (釐).⁷¹ Similarly, a memorial of 1753 describes the Lo chiao affording three levels of membership: "Hīnayāna" (小乘), with the transmission of a 28-character *gāthā* for three *fen*, three *li*; "Mahāyāna" (大乘), with a 108-character *gāthā* for one *ch'ien*, two *fen*; and the "Higher Vehicle" (上乘), with instruction in the "wordless teaching" of the "*gāthā* of no characters" for one tael (兩), six *ch'ien*, seven *fen*.⁷² Ostensibly, the tithes were for the "purchase of incense," but the sects also purchased land and provided for mutual aid among members in times of need.

The ritual of initiation includes the presentation of *mantras*, the Three Refuges, and the Five Precepts, with an emphasis on the vow of vegetarianism.⁷³ Modern-day *Lung-hua* sectarians may practice partial vegetarianism (partaking of a daily, weekly, or annual vegetarian meal).

70. Shih-liao hsün-k'an, t'ien 525: Ch'ien-lung 33 (1768), 10/1.

71. Kung-chung-tang, Yung-cheng 7 (1729), 10/13.

72. Shih-liao hsün-k'an, t'ien 861: Ch'ien-lung 18 (1753), 7/19.

73. Suzuki Chusei, "Rakyô ni tsuite", 468-472; J.J.M. de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China, 204-220.

The system of nine levels (九品) of sect membership employed today by the *Lung-hua p'ai* has remained constant at least since the nineteenth century (it is identical to that described by de Groot), and is probably based on a similar system adopted by the *Lao-kuan chai chiao*.⁷⁴ The ritual entitlements of each level are as follows:

- 1st p'in: *Hsiao-sheng* (小乘): given the 28-character mantra
- 2nd p'in: *Ta-sheng* (大乘): given the *Ta-sheng ching*
- 3rd p'in: *San-sheng* (三乘): given a P'u-prefix name
- 4th p'in: *Hsiao-yin* (小引): a recruiter of *Hsiao-sheng*
- 5th p'in: *Ta-yin* (大引): a recruiter of *Ta-sheng*
- 6th p'in: *Shu-chi* (書記): a recorder
- 7th p'in: *Ch'ing-hsü* (清虛): an instructor in the *Dharma*
- 8th p'in: *Ch'uan-teng* (傳燈): a branch head
- 9th p'in: *Tsung-ch'ih* (總敕): reigning patriarch

The 8th-p'in *Ch'uan-teng* carries the title "*T'ai-k'ung*" (太空), and the 9th-p'in *Tsung-ch'ih* the title "*K'ung-k'ung*" (空空).

At annual assemblies, members contribute tithes, and rituals of initiation and advancement are performed. These meetings, and the right to contribute to the upkeep of the halls, are open to members only. My principle informant in Taiwan, named Yen Shih-te (顏施德), title P'u-k'ung (普空), is the editor of the "Brief History of Patriarch Lo," cited in Chapter I, and the fourth branch head (*Chuan-teng*) of the *Min-te t'ang* in Taichung.

74. Ts'ai Heng-tzu, *Ch'ung-ming man-lu*, chüan 1, 3701a; cf. Tai Hsüan-chih, "*Lao-kuan chai chiao*," 258-259.

Reigning patriarchs (*Tsung-ch'ih*) choose their own successors; lines of transmission are typically based on family and village networks.⁷⁵

As de Groot himself observed, these hierarchical distinctions are not emphasized within the sects, except at the annual meetings for indoctrination, initiation, and promotion. In that sect membership and advancement are open to all, regardless of social background, age, or sex, the opportunity for full participation within this hierarchy is in fact one of the sects' characteristically egalitarian features.⁷⁶

Involvement in healing and "long-life" rituals was characteristic of several Lo sects. Good health could be secured by the recitation of oral formulas, such as "*Chen-k'ung chia-hsiang, wu-sheng lao-mu*" (真空家鄉, 無生老母), and the healing skills of sect leaders may have drawn newcomers to the sects.⁷⁷

75. Wang Erh-min, "*Mi-mi tsung-chiao yü mi-mi hui-she chih sheng-t'ai huan-ching chi she-hui kung-neng*" [The Ecological Environment and Social Function of Secret Religions and Secret Societies], *Chung-yang yen-chiu yüan chin-tai-shih yen-chiu so chi-k'an* 10 (1981): 54-55; Yü Sung-ch'ing, "*Ming-Ch'ing shih-tai min-chien te tsung-chiao hsin-yang he mi-mi chieh-she*," 135; cf. Susan Naquin, "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China," in Johnson, Nathan, Rawsky, *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, 255-291; "Two Descent Groups in North China: The Wangs of Yung-p'ing Prefecture, 1500-1800," in Patricia Ebrey and James Watson, eds., *Kinship Organization in Late Imperial China, 1000-1940* (Berkeley: 1986): 210-244.

76. Cf. Daniel Overmyer, "Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society," 153-190.

77. *ibid.*; Chuang Chi-fa, "*Ch'ing-tai min-chien tsung-chiao hsin-yang te she-hui kung-neng*," 135-143.

As they did for boatmen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,⁷⁸ the Lo sects still provide for the burial of the dead. Sectarians benefit from recitation of scriptures by fellow members, rather than the more common practice of services conducted by Buddhist priests. Vegetarian halls in Taiwan have cemetery plots in addition to other land owned and managed by the sect. For the older halls, these land-holdings can be extensive.

P'u-k'ung describes the fruits of the recitation of scripture and communal ritual activities conducted by the Dragon-Flower Assembly:

We do these things to make the teachings of the Great Vehicle our central aim, to spread the *Buddha-dharma* and lead others to return to the right path, to take refuge in the Three Treasures, and to give the *Dharma-wheel* a great turn. Then, one awakening can leap over a thousand *kalpas* of suffering, the majesty and magnificence of the Great Way [can be illuminated by] one spark of Truth, and the *pao-chüan* of Patriarch Lo can be forever transmitted, like a continuous string of lights.⁷⁹

78. See, for example, Shih-liao hsün-k'an, t'ien 406: Ch'ien-lung 33 (1768), 9/10; t'ien 528: Ch'ien-lung 34 (1769), 3/19; Kung-chung-tang: Yung-cheng 5 (1727), 11/8; de Groot, Sectarianism and Religious Persecution in China, 231-241.

79. Lung-hua k'o-i, 12.

8. Conclusion

The history of the Lo sects from the death of Lo Ch'ing in 1527 to the present day is far more complex than is presented here. Many details of sectarian transmission, beliefs, and ritual activities will never be known, for sectarian records are scarce and the Lo sects captured the attention of memorialists and diarists only when they were perceived as a threat to institutionalized forms of religious and political orthodoxy. Whole branches of sectarian affiliation shall remain lost to history, while other details of sect activities await further research in *pao-chüan* of the Ch'ing and Republican periods.

What can be observed is that Lo Ch'ing clearly made a great impact upon the social history of late imperial and modern China, either through his texts or through the mythologized biographies associated with his name. Close examination of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e reveals that many of his basic teachings -- the rejection of ritual, the interiority and self-determination of salvation, the idea of faith unmediated by words and texts -- were lost on his followers, and that his invocation of an "Eternal Venerable Mother" was never intended to become the object of a devotional cult. In significant ways, however, implicit ideals and assumptions supporting the Five Books have had an enduring legacy: lay-based congregational religion, equally inclusive of men and women, advocating mutual aid and the shared experience of religious salvation, became definitive of popular and sectarian Buddhism in late traditional China. However they may have been understood, the example and teachings of Patriarch Lo helped to

shape the popular consciousness and social organization of recent times.

Chapter IV: Lo's Educational and Social Background:

Popular Uses and Interpretations of the Scriptures and Classics

The life and teachings of Lo Ch'ing tell a story -- not only about a charismatic religious patriarch and his idiosyncratic understanding of Buddhist Emptiness and the "Eternal Mother" within, but also about the history of ideas, the mechanisms of innovation, and the interplay of cultural integration and segmentation. In this chapter, we turn from the "facts" of Lo Ch'ing's biography and religious thought to an analysis of their meaning, that is, their meaning to us as modern historians of religion attempting to discern the vague shapes of the social groups, ideas, rites, and mythologies constituting popular religion and culture in sixteenth-century China. Do Lo Ch'ing and his Five Books in Six Volumes articulate a "popular vision" of religious reality? Are they representative of a particular social class and its beliefs and values? Where was this man coming from: to what individuals, texts, and cultural forms (genres, scripts, narrative traditions, personal models, ethical values) was he indebted? What did his culture mean to him: how did he view the Three Teachings and interpret their scriptures and classics? More than the specific details of Lo Ch'ing's life and teachings, the answers to these questions are what make the Patriarch important and interesting to us as sinologists and scholars of religion.

After setting these issues within the broader context of cross-cultural and historical scholarship, we will look more critically at Lo Ch'ing's position in mid-Ming society, the

nature of his education and exposure to the Three Teachings, the particular texts he read and how he read them, and the incorporation of popular oral traditions in his thought and teachings. In Chapter V, I will argue that Lo was a "cultural mediator" between elites and commoners, the powerful and powerless, literati and non-readers, and that he derived from this role the prestige and power of a charismatic leader. Lo has much to teach us about popular religion, cultural integration, and the sociology of religious leadership and transmission.

1. Culture and the "Elite-Popular Distinction"

A cross-cultural perspective has been useful to me in formulating this approach and gaining an appreciation for the scholarly significance of Lo Ch'ing and his works. In particular, recent scholarship on European popular culture critically examines the nature of popular religion and conventional models for its study. Historians such as Peter Brown, Natalie Davis, Roger Chartier, Carlo Ginzburg, and Peter Burke challenge the "two-tiered" model of culture, which distinguishes "elite" and "popular" culture and denigrates the "vulgar, superstitious" beliefs and practices of the common people as "distortions" and "pale reflections" of the cultural products of the elite.¹ The "two-tiered" conception of culture

1. See especially Peter Brown, The Cult of the Saints (Chicago: 1981), and Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity (Berkeley: 1982); Steven L. Kaplan, ed., Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century (New York: 1984); Natalie Z. Davis, Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford: 1975); Carlo Ginzburg, The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller, trans.

describes a qualitative distinction between social elites and their cultural products (texts, arts, institutions, rituals) and the diffused traditions of the common people.² Though the theory admits interaction between the two, the "Little Tradition" is generally portrayed as a "passive receptacle" for elite conceptions, "absorbing" elite ideas into a culture that is in itself uniform, unchanging, derivative, and anonymous. Since the elite-popular distinction is itself a creation of the elite, it is not surprising that popular culture is usually described as "a diminution, a misconception or a contamination" of the Great Traditions.³

European scholarship of the past ten to fifteen years has begun to describe the complexity and creativity of popular culture. There are, as Peter Burke points out, "many popular cultures or many varieties of popular culture," distinguished by history, geography, occupation, ethnicity, religion, and sex.⁴ Each is distinctive, and each provides a context for creativity and innovation, in many cases quite separate from the culture of the literati and the politically powerful.

John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: 1980); and Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (New York: 1978).

2. Robert Redfield, Peasant Society and Culture (Chicago: 1956). On the historical development of this view, see Burke, Popular Culture, 1-22.
3. Brown, The Cult of the Saints, 19. Natalie Davis, "Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion," in The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion, ed. Charles Trinkaus and Heiko O. Oberman (Leiden: 1974), 309.
4. Burke, Popular Culture, 23-58.

Even in the case of popular integration of elite forms and ideas, historians have found that the process of cultural assimilation is by no means passive and uncritical. As Natalie Davis writes about the dissemination of printed materials and the growth of literacy in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century France, "it is especially important to realize that people do not necessarily agree with the values and ideas in the books they read." The common people "...were not passive recipients...of a new type of communication. Rather they were active users and interpreters of the printed books they heard and read, and even helped to give these books form..."⁵ The "use" and "interpretation" of written materials is an active, creative process. So, a model of cultural transmission that describes "sinking" from top to bottom fails to account for the creativity of those on the receiving end. As Peter Burke remarks,

The sinking theory is too crude, too mechanical, suggesting as it does that images, stories or ideas are passively accepted by popular painters, singers, and their spectators and audiences. In fact they are modified or transformed, in a process which looks from above like misunderstanding or distortion, from below like adaptation to specific needs. The minds of ordinary people are not like blank paper, but stocked with ideas and images...

which they bring to bear on the cultural products of social elites.⁶

Roger Chartier draws some general principles from these observations:

5. Davis, "Printing and the People," in Society and Culture in Early Modern France, 191, 225.

6. Burke, Popular Culture, 60.

Cultural consumption, whether popular or not, is at the same time a form of production, which creates ways of using that cannot be limited to the intentions of those who produce... How the message is received depends on the intellectual and cultural habits of those on the receiving end.⁷

Popular religion borrows elements from the "Great Tradition" and "adapts, trespasses, and subverts." The historian, therefore, should undertake "the search for the differentiated ways in which common material is used. What distinguishes cultural worlds is different kinds of use and different strategies of appropriation."⁸

The implication of these arguments is that ultimately no particular cultural object, whether it be a text, narrative, conception, moral value, ritual, or institution, can be identified as exclusively "elite" or "popular". Cultural products are not the "possessions" of classes; they are rather part of the cultural world of society as a whole. Peter Brown has made this point convincingly in his studies of the cult of the saints in medieval Europe. Death and its attendant rites were, he says, "the common preoccupation of all, the few and the 'vulgar' alike... indifferent to the labels usually placed upon forms of religious behavior [such as] 'pagan' or 'Christian', 'popular' or 'superstitious'... The customs surrounding the care of the dead were experienced by those who practiced them to be no

7. Chartier, "Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France," in Understanding Popular Culture, ed. Steven L. Kaplan (New York: 1984), 234-235.

8. *ibid.*, 233, 235-236.

more than part and parcel of being human."⁹ Brown demonstrates that the cult of the saints was not a product of popular "superstition", as it has been portrayed by modern European church historians, but was intimately tied to the power and prestige of the priestly class. The association of the cult of the saints with the "vulgar masses" and "popular superstition" is an invention of later historians; it was, in fact, a shared institution.

If anything, rituals, texts, and other cultural products are subject to different *uses* and *interpretations* by distinct social groups; and it is the act of interpretation -- not the object itself -- that can be described as elite or popular. Steven L. Kaplan asks rhetorically,

Is it sufficient to define "popular" in terms of the artifacts in which the quality is supposed to inhere -- in a given body of texts, values, modes of behavior? ... Might it not be more illuminating to shift our emphasis away from the objects themselves, and their dissemination, to the diverse ways in which, by accident and design, they are perceived, used, and transformed?¹⁰

Indeed, the same text or ritual act may be understood very differently by a learned priest and a semi-literate miller, and their conscious use and manipulation of the cultural object will differ accordingly. It is not the cultural products themselves that are elite or popular, "but rather," in Roger Chartier's words, "the specific ways in which such cultural sets are appropriated."

9. Brown, The Cult of the Saints, 22, 24.

10. Kaplan, "Preface," to Understanding Popular Culture, 1.

What is needed is a historical approach not unlike that of sociologists when they try to identify cultural types not from a group of objects supposedly characteristic of a particular group but rather from the relation each group has with shared objects, knowledge, or practices.¹¹

When it comes to books, this means analyzing how they were read and what uses they were put to: what they meant to different people, their "patterns of consumption."¹²

The new historical prolegomenon demands critical and detailed descriptions of popular culture, and analysis of the various uses and interpretations given to shared cultural objects at different levels of political power, economic advantage, and educational literacy.

The history of popular culture has reached a point where we must think anew about the premises on which the field is founded... We seek more nuance than may have been the case before.¹³

11. Chartier, "Culture as Appropriation," 233, 234.

12. The phrase is David Hall's: "Introduction" to Stephen L. Kaplan, ed., Understanding Popular Culture, 13.

13. David Hall, "Introduction," 5.

2. Structures of Autonomy and Education in Mid-Ming China

In recent years, historians of Chinese religion and culture have begun to put some of these principles to work. Though this may not have occurred in response to the European historians cited above, there has gradually emerged a remarkable affinity of approaches and concerns. At the most basic level, this is evident simply in the valuation of popular culture as a legitimate area of scholarly specialization -- as demonstrated in the inspiring work of Daniel Overmyer and Susan Naquin on late imperial and modern religious sects.¹⁴ Popular culture, so long ignored by Chinese and Western historians alike, is now the subject of some of the best scholarship on Chinese religion and social history in Asian as well as European languages. Chinese popular culture is a vast territory begging to be explored, and we are just now devising the tools of discovery and excavation best suited for the task.

The collection of articles appearing in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China is a model for the subjects and the approaches that could fruitfully occupy our attention for a long time to come.¹⁵ In the Popular Culture volume, we see

14. Overmyer, Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China (Cambridge: 1976), "Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society," Modern China 7 (1981), 153-190, and, with David Jordan, The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan (Princeton: 1986); Naquin, Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813 (New Haven: 1976), and Shantung Rebellion: The Wang Lun Uprising of 1774 (New Haven: 1981).

15. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan, and Evelyn S. Rawski, eds., Popular Culture in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: 1985).

illustrated applications of the new historiographical models I have outlined above: Evelyn Rawski, Overmyer, Naquin, and James Hayes uncover the riches of popular society through its texts, rites, and forms of social organization and group identity;¹⁶ the idea that "interpretations and uses" of shared cultural objects reveal differences between elite and popular values is explored by Robert Hegel, Tanaka Issei, Barbara Ward, and James Watson;¹⁷ and the abandonment of a "two-tiered" model for a "multi-tiered" model of social and cultural identity is proposed by David Johnson and offers a nuanced description of Chinese social groups and their cultural expressions.¹⁸

In his analysis of beliefs, values, and their expression, Johnson attempts to show that there is a relationship between an individual's "consciousness" and the position he occupies in society, or a social-cultural grid of "dominance and communication" (political autonomy and educational literacy). This relationship, Johnson argues, is observable and generalizable.

16. *ibid.*, "Problems and Prospects," 399-417; "Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature: Ming and Ch'ing Pao-ch'uan," 219-254; "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China," 255-291; "Specialists and Written Materials in the Village World," 75-111.

17. *ibid.*, "Distinguishing Levels of Audiences for Ming-Ch'ing Vernacular Literature," 112-142; "The Social and Historical Context of Ming-Ch'ing Local Drama," 143-160; "Regional Operas and Their Audiences: Evidence from Hong Kong," 161-187; "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ('Empress of Heaven')," 292-324.

18. *ibid.*, "Communication, Class, and Consciousness in Late Imperial China," 34-72.

Whether he was one of the creative few or the imitative many, when he put his thoughts or feelings into words he could not help but draw heavily, both consciously and unconsciously, on what he had earlier heard and read. This is why it is possible, in theory at least, to reconstruct the influences on a person's thought, or, more accurately, the sources of a particular text. Each individual was constantly engaged in fashioning out of what he had heard and read a more or less coherent view of the world. This weaving together by each person of the almost infinite variety of verbal material he had encountered in his life was in itself a process of cultural integration, perhaps the most fundamental one. Although each of these personal syntheses was, by definition, unique, those produced by individuals located in a particular segment of the systems of communication naturally shared many features of both form and content. Here we see the direct, necessary connection between communication and consciousness.¹⁹

"Communication" refers to modes of verbal and behavioral expression -- texts, performances, rituals, conversations -- and the capacity (gained from education) both to comprehend and to create them: reading and writing, hearing and articulating, receiving and transmitting. The "segments of the systems of communication" described in Johnson's social-cultural model distinguish three types of individual: those "classically educated" (including gentry-officials, scholars, examination candidates, and, I would add, ordained Buddhist monks of the scholastic monasteries), those "literate in varying degrees but not classically educated" (upper-class women, "farmer-scholars", wealthy merchants, and craftsmen of specialized trades), and the illiterate (most women and the great majority of the rural population).

Superimposed on this scheme of classification, Johnson describes a second axis of "structures of dominance" or political

19. *ibid.*, 45.

autonomy: "legally privileged", "self-sufficient", and "dependent", the middle group here including examination candidates, "rich" peasants, shop owners, skilled craftsmen, and religious professionals. In combination, the hierarchies of literacy ("communication") and political autonomy ("dominance") form a matrix of nine identifiable social-cultural groups.²⁰ Johnson's fundamental point is that an individual's attitudes and values are necessarily shaped by his social background and educational experience.

Let us attempt to place Lo Ch'ing on Johnson's social-cultural grid. It is possible to evaluate Lo's position in Johnson's hierarchy of "communication" because we have the books he composed and know what books he read; I will turn to an analysis of his education in what follows. To pinpoint his *social* position is more difficult, since we are forced to rely on biographical details with varying degrees of historical reliability. What we do know is that Lo was born into a registered household of soldiers, that he was sent several hundred miles from his native place to serve as a border guard and, in all likelihood, a conscript transport worker, and that he escaped his military/corvée duties while still in his twenties and enjoyed the leisure and material means to sustain him as a religious teacher for the rest of his life. He moved, in Johnson's terms, from a situation of "dependency" to one of relative "self-sufficiency", the middle level of political

20. He describes characteristics of each in detail: *ibid.*, 55-67.

autonomy. Hagiographies of the Patriarch recount that this transition was made possible by his military heroism and the special dispensation of a commanding officer, but it is perhaps more likely that Lo gained release from his duties by desertion or bribery, and took refuge in a Buddhist monastery for a substantial portion of his "thirteen years of bitter effort" -- a not untypical strategy in fifteenth-century China, if accounts of the Ming "decline of the *saṅgha*" are to be believed.²¹ Later in his career, it is possible that Lo was able to maintain his political and economic self-sufficiency within a sectarian organization that supported him, though we have no direct evidence that this was the case.

Lo's social background gave him the ability to empathize with persons at every level of society. We have seen that he directed his teachings to peasants, thieves, monks, merchants, scholars, and emperors -- a catholicity of appeal that can be attributed to his wide travels, his own experiences as a soldier, and his voracious reading. Nevertheless, his humble origins and the perspectives they provided distinguish Lo from the great religious reformers and popularizers among his contemporaries, such as Chu-hung (株宏, 1532-1612) and Lin Chao-en (林兆恩, 1517-1598), both of whom enjoyed the advantages of a privileged

21. Kenneth K.S. Ch'en, Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey (Princeton: 1964), 390-394, 447-449; Chün-fang Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Chu-hung and the Late Ming Synthesis (New York: 1981), 138-170. On the social conditions and rate of desertion among transport workers, see Shina Yoshinobu, Commerce and Society in Sung China, trans. Mark Elvin (Ann Arbor: 1970), 15-26; Hōshi Ayao, The Ming Tribute Grain System, trans. Mark Elvin (Ann Arbor: 1969), 50-54.

birth and a classical education. Regardless of their appeal,²² these men were socially advantaged, classically educated elites shaped by the values and assumptions of their class. If the object of our investigations is popular religion in the Ming, Lo Ch'ing -- not Lin Chao-en -- is our man.

Regarding Lo Ch'ing's educational background, and his position in Johnson's "structures of communication," we must adopt a more critical approach to Lo's religious thought and expression, and the cultural influences that shaped them. Johnson places him in the same category as Lin Chao-en, as a "classically educated" religious leader. But Lo Ch'ing did not write with the facility and sophistication of a Lin Chao-en, did not enjoy the advantages of a formal education, and read the classical texts of the Three Teachings in a way that betrays his commoner background.²³ In fact, placing Lo Ch'ing on Johnson's grid presents us with some difficulties, as his exposure to classical Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist works made him much more than "functionally literate" while the particular way in which he manipulated and interpreted his sources set him apart from "classically educated" Confucian scholars and Buddhist

22. "Three-in-One" cults inspired by Lin Chao-en sprang up in the Fukien countryside and became a truly popular movement in late imperial and modern China, as Kenneth Dean's work has shown. For studies of Chu-hung and Lin Chao-en, see Chün-fang Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism in China; and Judith Berling, The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en (New York: 1980); and "Religion and Popular Culture: the Management of Moral Capital in The Romance of the Three Teachings," Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, 196.

23. Johnson admits parenthetically that "it is just as likely that [Lo] should be placed in the literate/self-sufficient group" (op.cit., 60).

clerics, some of whose values he rejected explicitly. Returning to the general points made at the beginning of this chapter, it is not the texts that he learned from that defined Lo Ch'ing as a representative of Chinese "popular" culture, but how he understood and used them. Self-motivated and self-taught, Lo became a "cultural mediator" of great versatility and creative inspiration.

Let us turn now to a more detailed evaluation of Lo Ch'ing's "classical education" and its incorporation in his life and work.

3. Lo's Interpretation of the Three Teachings

In Chapter II, we examined Lo Ch'ing's extensive incorporation of vocabulary from Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism in explicating his religious philosophy. Let us look at his debt to the scriptures and classics of the Three Teachings more critically. While reflecting trends in Ming society and religious thought, Lo manipulated the Three Teachings and their texts to conform to his own religious *Dharma*.

What was the state of the "three traditions" in the fifteenth century?

The emphasis in Ming Buddhism was less on doctrinal studies and monastic discipline than it was on proselytization and community service. In 1382, the first emperor of the Ming (T'ai-tsu, r. 1368-1399) established a new system of classification for Buddhist monasteries, devoted exclusively to "meditation" (禪), "scriptural studies" (講), or "instruction" (教). Monks were to wear robes of regulated colors to represent

their affiliations.²⁴ The third category was newly created, and became most favored and most numerous. It involved outreach to the lay community, in the form of public preaching, *sûtra*-recitation, and the performance of rituals for the benefit of the dead.²⁵

The monks relied on textual and ritual guidebooks to conduct their preaching and ritual services. These were "*sûtra*-amplification texts" (科儀) and "penance texts" (懺法), some of which became familiar to Lo Ch'ing during his period of textual studies. It was when overhearing a public funeral recitation of an "amplification text" of the *Diamond Sûtra* (金剛經) that Lo Ch'ing experienced his first enlightenment and began three years of intensive study of the *Chin-kang k'o-i* (金剛科儀).²⁶

K'o-i and *ch'an-fa* first appear in the Sung. They may be descended from "prompt books" (話本) and "transformation texts" (變文) of the T'ang, which were narrative tales, often illustrated, of *bodhisattvas*, model Buddhist practitioners, and the workings of *karma*, but the later texts seem to have relied more upon direct quotation and vernacular summaries of scripture. An illustration of how such texts were employed in proselytization can be found in several passages from the late

24. *Ku-chin t'u-shu chi-ch'eng* [A Complete Record of Illustrations and Texts, Old and New] (Shanghai: 1934), *ts'e* 494, *chüan* 64, p. 56a (15th year of Hung-wu).

25. Chün-fang Yü, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*, 144-152; Sung-peng Hsü, *A Buddhist Leader in Ming China: The Life and Thought of Han-shan Te-ch'ing* (State College, PA.: 1979), 42-52.

26. See Chapter I above, pp. 32-33.

Ming novel Chin P'ing Mei (金瓶梅), in which a Buddhist nun uses a sampling of "scripture books" (經卷), *pao-chüan* (寶卷), and *k'o-i chüan* (科儀卷) to preach to illiterate women.²⁷

As we shall see below, Lo was acquainted with a number of *k'o-i* and *ch'an-fa* texts, and was undoubtedly aware of their function as tools for the popular dissemination of Buddhist teachings. He was inspired to compose his own *pao-chüan* with similar uses in mind, though in a new and distinctive style, incorporating vernacular structures in his prose, vernacular summary of scripture, and patterned, repetitive verse, clearly intended for group recitation. Both in content and in form, the Wu-pu liu-ts'e marks an important development in the history of *pao-chüan* literature.²⁸

27. These references include the Chin-kang k'o-i, though I am unable to correlate her text with the extant Chin-kang k'o-i: Chin P'ing Mei Tz'u-hua (Tokyo: 1963), vol. 3, 288-290. Cf. Sawada Mizuho, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû [Studies in *Pao-chüan*, Revised Edition] (Tokyo: 1975), 327.

28. *Pao-chüan* are religious works composed for lay audiences of a lower or middle level of society, in simple, direct, illustrative language. They are written in a vernacular-classical style, and incorporate prose and verse: generally, the prose sections serve as introductory prologues to the principle religious teachings composed in verse form. The regular, patterned structure and repetitive quality of these verses suggest that *pao-chüan* are not so much didactic texts to be read and studied as they are ritual texts to be chanted or recited in religious assemblies. Indeed, they are employed precisely in this way in contemporary sectarian settings.

The first scholar to identify *pao-chüan* as a discrete genre was Cheng Chen-to, who traced their origins to narrative *pien-wen* of the T'ang and textual popularizations of Buddhist teachings composed in the Sung: Chung-kuo su wen-hsüeh shih [A History of Chinese Popular Literature] (1938; Taipei reprint 1965), 306-346. Li Shih-yü distinguished *pao-chüan* from *pien-wen* on the basis of their sectarian teachings, and formulated a set of identifying characteristics for the genre, as well as a classification

scheme for their chronological development, and composed a catalogue of extant texts: "Pao-chüan hsin-yen" [New Studies of Pao-chüan], Wen-hsüeh i-ch'an tseng-k'an 4 (1957), 165-181; Pao-chüan tsung lu [A Comprehensive Bibliography of Pao-chüan] (Peking: 1961). Sawada Mizuho's exhaustive studies of pao-chüan further delineated their identifying features and their ties to pien-wen, ch'an-fa, and k'o-i, with more narrowly defined categories for their classification: "Hôkan to bukkyô setsuwa" [Pao-chüan and Buddhist Narratives], Bukkyô shigaku 11 [1964], 177-194; Zôho hôkan no kenkyû [Studies in Pao-chüan, Revised Edition] (Tokyo: 1975). A number of other Chinese and Japanese scholars have furthered our understanding of this genre with detailed studies of particular k'o-i and pao-chüan texts: Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Shôshaku kongô kagi no seiritsu ni tsuite" [On the Authorship of the Chin-kang k'o-i], Ryûkoku shidan 56-57 (1966), 154-170; Sawada Mizuho, "Ryûkakyô no kenkyû" [Studies of the Dragon Flower Sûtra], in his Kôchû Haja shôben (Tokyo: 1970), 300-342; Cheng Chih-ming, "Sung-tai Hsiao-shih Chin-kang k'o-i te tsung-chiao ssu-hsiang" [The Religious Thought of the Chin-kang k'o-i of the Sung], in his Chung-kuo she-hui yü tsung-chiao [Taipei: 1986], 213-224).

This scholarship has been clearly and concisely summarized by Daniel Overmyer, and one can do no better than to refer to his publications on the subject: Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China (Cambridge, MA: 1976), 176-186; "Values in Sectarian Literature: Ming and Ch'ing Pao-chüan," in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, 219-254. Overmyer's classification of pao-chüan divides the texts into five types, "distinguished by content and/or date of production":

1. popularized Buddhist tales and explications of scripture, composed by monks in the Sung, Yüan, and Ming Dynasties before 1500;
2. the works of Lo Ch'ing, "who used this form to expound his own doctrines"; the Wu-pu liu-ts'e quotes extensively from Buddhist sûtras and from pao-chüan of the first type above;
3. sectarian pao-chüan of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, describing particular sect teachings in a pseudo-scriptural style;
4. "literary" pao-chüan having little or no sectarian content and composed as "moral exhortation books" (shan-shu) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries;
5. spirit-writing texts presenting sectarian teachings as revealed instructions of gods and mythic figures, published by sectarian groups since the mid-nineteenth century. ("Values in Sectarian Literature," 220-221).

Why do Lo Ch'ing's Five Books constitute a category all their own, a sub-genre of pao-chüan literature? While much indebted to earlier pao-chüan, as revealed in his many

In his Autobiography, Lo recalls hearing the chanting of monks in a public funeral service and describes his studies with a "Pure Land master", and he was obviously familiar with the practice of meditation and the rigorous requirements of monastic "renunciation of the household". It is significant that his only positive impression comes from the public outreach of the monks: his rejection of Pure Land and Ch'an religious practices and of the "false distinction" between clergy and laity is clear and explicit in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e.²⁹ Lo's critique does not include the standard characterization of the Ming *saṅgha* as morally corrupt and undisciplined: moral turpitude in the monasteries was a basic concern of later reformers like the monk Chu-hung (株宏, 1535-1615) and a common theme of late imperial fiction and popular lore, but Lo's repudiation of monastic self-cultivation

quotations from those works, Lo was not an ordained monk, and his Five Books are not popularized versions of canonical scriptures. They describe alternative values and religious conceptions, which became the basis for the sects founded in his name. Yet, Lo's texts are also distinguishable from later sectarian *pao-chüan* both in content and in tone: later *pao-chüan* do not cite other scriptures or *pao-chüan*, and assume a pre-existing mythological and institutional framework.

In addition to Overmyer's work, I am indebted to a number of recent studies on *pao-chüan* and the Wu-pu liu-ts'e in particular, including Tseng Tzu-liang, Pao-chüan chih yen-chiu [Studies of Pao-chüan] (Taipei: 1975); Sakai Tadao, "Minmatsu ni okeru hōkan to muikyō" [Pao-chüan and the Non-Action Sect in the Late Ming], in his Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū (Tokyo: 1960), 437-485; and Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan [Sources of the Belief in the Eternal Venerable Mother] (Taipei: 1985).

29. See Chapter III above, pp. 150-152.

is based on general principles, not the so-called "decline of Buddhism" in the Ming.³⁰

Doctrinally, Ming Buddhism carried on a process of standardizing Ch'an formulas and articulating the "dual cultivation" of Ch'an and Pure Land practices. The compilation of "recorded sayings" (語錄) and hagiographies of Ch'an patriarchs, popular in the Sung, continued to dominate Buddhist literary output, and the study of Sung yü-lu and "lives of eminent monks" (高僧傳) was the focus of novitiate training. In Lo Ch'ing's time, the Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu (景德傳燈錄), Pi-yen lu (碧巖錄), Wu-men kuan (無門關), and other collections of biographies and master-disciple encounters stood alongside "Ch'an scriptures" such as the Avatamsaka Sûtra (華嚴經), the Lankâvatâra Sûtra (楞伽經), the Sûrangama Sûtra (楞嚴經), and the Platform Sûtra (六祖壇經) as primary texts of monastic learning.³¹ Lo Ch'ing was exposed to all of these works during his period of study in the Wu-ling Mountains.

We have already remarked on the extensive Ch'an influence in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, despite Lo's rejection of Ch'an meditation

30. On the "decline of the *saṅgha*" and the reform efforts of Chu-hung, see Kenneth Ch'en, Buddhism in China, 434-449, 443f.; Chün-fang Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism in China, 138-222; Kuo P'eng, Ming-Ch'ing fo-chiao [Buddhism in the Ming and Ch'ing] (Fuchou: 1982), 176-190.

31. Shih Sheng-yen, Ming-mo fo-chiao yen-chiu [Studies of Late Ming Buddhism] (Taipei: 1987), 1-82. Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu (1004): T51.2076.196-467. Pi-yen lu (1125): T48.2003.139-225. Wu-men kuan (1228): T48.2005. 292-299. Hua-yen ching: T10.279.1-445. Leng chia ching: T16.670.480-514. Leng-yen ching: T19.945.105-155. Liu-tsu t'an-ching: T48.2008.345-362.

and the monastic life.³² This is especially significant in his implicit debt to the doctrine of "the dual practice of Ch'an and Pure Land" (禪淨雙修). The identity of Ch'an and Pure Land cultivation was widely accepted in the Ming, and most fully articulated by the "four great monks" Chu-hung (株宏, 1535-1615), Chen-k'o (真可, 1544-1604), Te-ch'ing (德清, 1546-1623), and Chih-hsü (智旭, 1599-1655).³³ Though he does not incorporate the "Pure Land *kōan*" or meditation on the Pure Land within the mind, Lo makes frequent statements to the effect that the Pure Land is identical to the Original Mind or Buddha-nature within. These are representative formulations from just one of his Five Books:

The Original Nature is the land of the Buddha Amitâbha, the fragrance of *prajñâ*, uncorrupted for innumerable *kalpas*. (P'o-hsieh Preface:24).

Everyone possesses the Pure Land of the West. (P'o-hsieh 1:34).

Recognize that you yourself are the Western Land. (P'o-hsieh 5:14).

Your own Light is the Western Land; it cannot be spoken of. Your own Light is the true Pure Land; it never comes and goes [i.e., it is unchanging]. Your own Light is not [subject to] cultivation or confirmation; nor is it either good or evil. Your own Light is the real Buddha-realm; it cannot be further arranged. Your own Light is your real ancestral home; beyond this there is nothing to be said. Your own Light is the *Dharma*-king; never again will you meet with the three calamities [of the end of the world: conflagration, flood, and strong winds]. Your own Light is the ancient original home; there is no where else to reside.

32. Chapter II, pp. 127, 134-135.

33. On "dual cultivation" in the Ming, see Chün-fang Yü, The Renewal of Buddhism in China, 47-53; Leon Hurvitz, "Chu-hung's One Mind of Pure Land and Ch'an Buddhism," in William DeBary, ed., Self and Society in Ming Thought (New York: 1970), 451-481; Shih Sheng-yen, Ming-mo fo-chiao yen-chiu, 164-186.

Your own Light casts off the sack of flesh [the physical body] and emits a great glow. (P'o-hsieh 17:102-103).

Beyond this, it is difficult to evaluate Lo's understanding of the tenets of Buddhism. A glossary of Buddhist vocabulary from the Wu-pu liu-ts'e would include...

"extinction" (寂滅),

"Nirvâna" (涅槃),

"thusness" (真如),

the "Dharma-nature" (法性) and "Buddha-nature" (佛性),

"marks of reality" (實相),

the "uncreated and unextinguished" (不生不滅).

In many instances, however, Lo appears to use these terms with no sense of their classical meanings, in fact with no sense of any particular meaning at all. They are seemingly employed simply for their evocative power and appeal.

By far the most important Buddhist term in Lo Ch'ing's religious system is Emptiness (空), and we have already remarked on Lo's use of Emptiness as one expression for the creative principle of the universe, the "primordial nothingness" that is the ultimate source of all things.³⁴ In classical Buddhist thought, by contrast, Emptiness is not an ontological category, but an expression of the "emptiness of self-being" or co-dependence of forms. It is relationality and mutual interaction, and finds its classic expression in the identity of *Saṃsāra* and

34. Chapter II, pp. 109-123.

Nirvāṇa.³⁵ Lo Ch'ing does not describe Emptiness in these terms. Though he repeatedly quotes the statement "Emptiness is form; form is Emptiness" (空即是色, 色即是空), it is in the context of his teaching that Emptiness, as creator, is imminent in all existent things. Throughout the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, Emptiness is viewed more as a creative power -- perhaps even a mythical being -- than as a principle of impermanence or dependent co-origination.³⁶

References to Taoist texts and practices are less frequent and less pronounced in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e. Sung and Ming Taoists were intent on the cultivation of long life and physical transcendence through the practice of "inner alchemy" (內丹), as evidenced by the compilation of alchemical-meditative texts by members of the School of Complete Perfection (全真教).³⁷ The

35. Frederick J. Streng, Emptiness: A Study in Religious Meaning (New York: 1967), 69-81, 155-169.

36. The closest parallel to Lo's understanding of "Emptiness" in the history of Chinese religions is perhaps the conception of "Non-Being" (無) and its powers of creation of the School of "Dark Learning" (玄學) in the third and fourth centuries, C.E., especially as articulated by Wang Pi (王弼) in his commentaries on the *Lao-tzu* and *I-ching*. See Arthur Wright, "Wang Pi: His Place in the History of Chinese Philosophy," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 10 (1947), 75-88. The "Dark Learning" philosophers exerted significant influence upon Buddhist scholars of the day. See Arthur Link, "The Taoist Antecedents of Tao-an's Prajñā Ontology," History of Religions 9 (1969-1970), 181-215. We cannot, however, describe "Dark Learning" cosmology as a direct influence on Lo Ch'ing's thought: he quotes none of the *hsüan-hsüeh* scholars or any of the Buddhist texts that show their influence.

37. Joseph Needham, Science and Civilization in China, Vol. V: Chemistry and Chemical Technology, Part III: Spagyric Discovery and Invention: Historical Survey, from Cinnabar Elixirs to Synthetic Insulin (Cambridge: 1976), 208-219; Part V: Physiological Alchemy (Cambridge: 1983), 229-257. For a

Japanese scholar Sawada Mizuho speculates that the Lao-shan branch (勞山派) of the *Ch'üan-chen chiao* may have been the source of Lo Ch'ing's understanding of Taoism and exposure to some of its basic texts and practices.³⁸ Lo certainly associates Taoism with inner alchemy, and rejects its physiological practices as a form of "manipulative" religious cultivation, as we have seen. By contrast, he regards the classical texts of Taoist philosophy with approval, and describes the Tao as a cosmic force that creates and maintains the universe.³⁹

The dominant system of thought in the fifteenth century, from the point of view of social and political advancement, was the School of Principle (理學), or Neo-Confucianism, standardized by Chu Hsi (朱熹, 1130-1200). The Supreme Ultimate (太極) and the Limitless (無極) were fundamental terms of this school, central to the cosmological speculations of Chou Tun-i (周敦頤, 1017-1073) and Shao Yung (邵雍, 1011-1077) and at least nominally so to Chu Hsi.⁴⁰ For Chu Hsi, *T'ai-chi* and *Wu-chi* represent the highest expression of the Principle (理) underlying all existent realities. They are, in the words of one of his followers, "the

summary of trends in Ming Taoism, see Liu Ts'un-yan, "Taoist Self-Cultivation in Ming Thought," in William T. de Bary, ed., Self and Society in Ming Thought (New York: 1970), 291-330.

38. Sawada, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû, 328.

39. See Chapter II above, pp. 111-113.

40. A.C. Graham, "Chou Tun-i and the Beginnings of Neo-Confucianism," in his Two Chinese Philosophers: Ch'eng Ming-tao and Ch'eng Yi-ch'üan (London: 1958), 152-175; Chu Hsi and Lu Tsu-ch'ien, Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology, trans. Wing-tsit Chan (New York: 1967), 5-6.

undifferentiated and maximum *li*... the sum total of the *li* of heaven, earth, and the ten thousand things, [which] cannot be separated from them or be spoken of apart from them."⁴¹ *T'ai-chi* and *Wu-chi* are associated with creation and existence, but not in the sense of "creation out of nothingness" -- Chu Hsi explicitly repudiates any association between *Wu-chi* and the *wu* or *k'ung* of Buddhism.⁴²

Wu-chi is the most important single term in Lo Ch'ing's *Wu-pu liu-ts'e*. The Limitless creates and maintains the universe, and is equivalent in this role to the Eternal Mother. Tao and Emptiness are merely alternate words for the Limitless. *Wu-chi* is the origin of all things, and is personified as the "Holy Ancestor of the Limitless" (無極聖祖), who, by means of innumerable self-transformations, brings all things into existence and all beings to salvation.

Why does *Wu-chi* occupy such a central position in Lo Ch'ing's religious system? It was the most powerful symbol he knew, and evocative in popular thought of creativity and the fullness of being. For anyone with even the most basic primary education, the cosmological terms of Taoism and Sung Neo-Confucianism were associated with the origins of the universe and the principles of its perpetuation: cosmology is the opening subject-matter of Ming and Ch'ing children's instruction books

41. Ch'en Ch'un, Neo-Confucian Terms Explained, trans. Wing-tsit Chan (New York: 1986), sec. 18.

42. *ibid.*, sec. 26; cf. Charles Wei-hsün Fu, "Chu Hsi on Buddhism," in W.T. Chan, ed., Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism (Honolulu: 1986), 380-386.

such as the Thousand-Character Classic (千字文) and the Forest of Gems for Elementary Education (幼學瓊林), and would have been known to virtually everyone.⁴³

In Lo Ch'ing's time, the civil service examination, based strictly on Chu Hsi's commentaries on the Four Books, was the standard for promotion to official status, and a system of "universal education", ideally if not in reality, insured the selection of the best minds in the empire for government service. At the local level, there were quotas for examination candidates from every region, and representatives of educational success in the persons of district and prefectural magistrates (鄉知, 府知).⁴⁴

Though preparatory schooling for the examination was not as wide-spread as it was to become in the Ch'ing, Lo knew something about the examination system and the life of the scholar. There

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43. Sung Kuang-yü describes the Ch'ien-tzu wen and the Yu-hsüeh ch'ung-lin as "instructional materials for elementary education in the Ming and Ch'ing." "Shih-lun 'Wu-sheng lao-mu' tsung-chiao hsin-yang te i-hsieh t'e-chih" [A Preliminary Discussion of a Few Distinctive Characteristics of the Religious Cult of the Eternal Venerable Mother], Chung-yang yen-chiu yüan li-shih yü-yen yen-chiu-so chi-k'an 52.3 (1981), 578. This was, of course, a later edition of the Ch'ien-tzu wen than that first composed by Chou Hsing-ssu (周興嗣) in the sixth century for the edification of Emperor Wu of the Liang (r. 502-550). The text is in verse form, comprising 250 four-character couplets. Later editions, identical in form but varying significantly in content, were compiled in the Yüan, Ming, and Ch'ing Dynasties. Morohashi, Daikanwa jiten, 2:522-524 (2697.190).
44. Ichisada Miyazaki, China's Examination Hell: The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China, trans. Conrad Schirokauer (New York: 1976); Evelyn Rawski, Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China (Ann Arbor: 1979), and "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial China," in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China (see note 16), 3-33.

is no question, he admits, that examination success depends on a "deep familiarity" with written words and the cosmological principles described by Sung Neo-Confucianism:

How can an official, who composes questions at the examination hall, be an official if he does not apprehend the Supreme Ultimate? The Supreme Ultimate transforms itself (變化) into the written words of books. If you do not comprehend the written word, how can you be an official? [One who] reads books for many years can understand written words, and, deciphering their meaning, he can enter the examination hall. Under the authority of the Supreme Ultimate you resort to the written word. If you do not comprehend the written word, how can you be an official? (Chieh-kuo 17:46).

But it is this dependence on "written words" and their literal meaning, Lo argues, that obstructs the scholar from realizing the Path and "returning home".

The Chin-kang i-lun (金剛儀論) says:⁴⁵ "Some are attached to the literal meaning of the text. Most of them lose human form, and often form heretical views. To be attached to the literal meaning of the text is to turn one's back on the light and leap into darkness, to fly like a moth into a fire. Talking idly about the "mysterious" and "subtle", they "sketch cakes to satisfy their hunger".⁴⁶ To ascend the mountain, you must climb to the top! To plumb the seas, you must dive to the bottom!" (P'o-hsieh 2:91-92).

[Wang Yüan-ching explains:] Words are merely the "function" of the Way, and the Way is the "substance" of the words. The scriptures are nothing more than a raft of salvation. The virtuous [patriarchs] of antiquity⁴⁷ say, "You must use

45. I have not been able to locate this quotation in either the Chin-kang k'o-i (HTC 129:129-144) or the Chin-kang lun (T25.1510.757-781).

46. Hua-ping ch'ung-chi (畫餅充機): Lo has perhaps taken this expression from the Ch'uan teng lu (傳燈錄) (T51.2076.196-467), though I do not find it indexed in the Taishō Tripitaka Index, Volume 29; see Morohashi, Daikanwa jiten, 7:1117 (21859.203).

47. For the "virtuous [patriarchs] of antiquity" (古德), see Nakamura, Bukkyō-go daijiten, 345c: "patriarchs of old, past worthies, eminent patriarchs of old" (昔の祖師, 往時の有徳者,

a raft to cross a stream. Once you have crossed the stream to the other side, there is no more need for the raft."
(P'o-hsieh 2:91).

An educated monk (僧), a student in a community school (學堂), or a metropolitan scholar (都秀才) are "unable to bring the Path to completion" (不能成道) because of their "deep familiarity with the written word" (深識字). One who understands only the literal meaning of a text cannot comprehend its "subtle significance" (妙義). Thus, the great masters Bodhidharma (菩提達摩), Śākyamuni Buddha (釋迦佛), Hui-neng (六祖慧能), and Chang Shan-ho (張善和) "became revered though they were completely illiterate" (一字無亦得成尊) (Chieh-kuo 14:70-71).⁴⁸ Lo Ch'ing well understood the connection between literacy and political advancement, but saw it as an obstruction to religious insight.

昔の高僧), citing the Shōbō genzō (正法眼藏) (T82.2582, p. 29b). Wang frequently cites Buddhist scripture by quoting the "ku-te".

48. In Ch'an tradition, Bodhidharma is the twenty-eighth Indian and first Chinese Buddhist patriarch; he arrived in China in 521 or 527 AD and is reputed to have sat in meditation, "wall-gazing", for nine years; references to this tale appear in a number of Ch'an historical-biographical works, and in two passages of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e. Lo's reference to Śākyamuni's "illiteracy" may be an allusion to the legend of the "flower sermon", in which the Buddha held a flower aloft without speaking to attract a true disciple. Hui-neng's illiteracy and commoner background are archetypal themes in his Ch'an biographies. I am not certain of the identity of Chang Shan-ho: Lo refers to him twice in the Cheng-hsin ch'u-i pao-chūan and twice in the Shen-ken chieh-kuo pao-chūan, recounting the tale of Chang's salvation by a Pure Land master after butchering an ox. Wang Yüan-ching (Cheng-hsin 3:87-89) notes that Chang Shan-ho lived in the T'ang Dynasty. I have been unable to locate references to him in the standard Sinological and Buddhological dictionaries (see the reference works listed in the bibliography following the appendices), or to substantiate his dates or narrative in the Buddhist Canon.

The fact that in spite of his obvious debt to the Ch'an "attack on language", Lo himself was so well read, and turned so often to scriptural quotations to support his ideas, may highlight a tension in his own life between his commoner background and his religious education. Denigrating language and at the same time beholden to it, Lo struggled to uncover the "true meaning" of the written word. His ambivalence towards books may explain why Lo was remarkably free in his use and interpretation of classical texts. Let us turn now to a catalogue of the books that he cites in his writings and an analysis of how he manipulated and interpreted them for his own creative purposes.

4. Lo Ch'ing's Sources

Lo Ch'ing quotes extensively from other works in his Wu-pu liu-ts'e. In most instances, he provides the names of his sources, but misattribution, alteration of the original, and paraphrase are the norm for his scriptural citations, as we will discuss below. Disregarding this problem for the moment, we discover in the Five Books a total of 275 attributed quotations from 59 works, with 16 quotations from 9 works in the K'u-kung wu-tao chüan, 16 quotations from 13 works in the T'an-shih wu-wei chüan, 122 quotations from 33 works in the P'o-hsieh hsien-cheng chüan, 73 quotations from 23 works in the Cheng-hsin ch'u-i pao-chüan, and 48 quotations from 30 works in the Shen-ken chieh-kuo pao-chüan. Lo Ch'ing's pao-chüan are unique in this genre for their reliance upon direct quotation from the scriptures and classics, and provide evidence of the popular use and wide circulation of a significant number of religious works, some no longer extant.

If we classify these sources by genre, we find four general types: canonical scriptures (經) and commentaries (論) (16 works); Buddhist collections (經集) and recorded sayings (語錄) (16); k'o-i, pao-chüan, and other ritual or preaching aids (19); and Taoist and Confucian works, including popular educational materials (8).⁴⁹ In Appendix II, I provide complete

49. Sawada Mizuho and Sakai Tadao have both done studies of Lo Ch'ing's sources, with somewhat different classifications and lists of texts. Sawada lists 54 titles, and Sakai 88. For the significant number of k'o-i and pao-chüan no longer in existence, Sawada combines titles to refer to what he believes to have been distinct works, whereas I choose to

bibliographical details for these titles, and an index of their appearances in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e. A brief catalogue follows, indicating the number of citations for each work:

A. Canonical Scriptures and Commentaries (98 quotations).

<u>Chih-tu lun</u>	知度論	(1)
<u>Chin-kang ching</u>	金剛經	(27)
<u>Chin-kang lun</u>	金剛論	(3)
<u>Fa-hua ching</u>	法華經	(4)
<u>Fo yin-kuo ching</u>	佛因果經	(1)
<u>Hsiao nieh-p'an ching</u>	小涅槃經	(4)
<u>Hsin ching</u>	心經	(13)
<u>Hua-hsien ching</u>	華嚴經	(1)
<u>Hua-yen ching</u>	華嚴經	(2)
<u>Leng-yen ching</u>	楞嚴經	(2)

list such titles separately; Sakai lists every title cited in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, even when they clearly refer to the same work (in the case, for example, of extant canonical titles given various short-hand titles by Lo Ch'ing). Sawada's five categories, with number of titles for each, are:

1. canonical scriptures (9)
2. scriptural commentaries, *k'o-i*, *ch'an-fa*, and collections (10)
3. *pao-chūan* (20)
4. Buddhist biographies and recorded sayings (11)
5. Taoist classics and collections (4)

Sakai provides six classifications:

1. canonical scriptures and commentaries (25)
2. *k'o-i* and *ch'an-fa* (7)
3. *pao-chūan* (24)
4. Buddhist biographies and recorded sayings (18)
5. Buddhist collections (4)
6. Taoist and Confucian works (10)

Sawada Mizuho, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû [Studies in *Pao-chūan*, Revised Edition] (Tokyo: 1975), 325; Sakai Tadao, Chûgoku zensho no kenkyû [Studies of Chinese *Shan-shu*] (Tokyo: 1960), 440-441.

Nieh-p'an ching 涅槃經 (20)
Pao-en ching 報恩經 (6)
P'i-yü ching 譬喻經 (1)
Shou-sheng ching 壽生經 (1)
Ta chang fu lun 大丈夫論 (1)
Yüan-chüeh ching 圓覺經 (11)

Lo quotes from many of the major classical works of the Buddhist tradition, most frequently the Diamond Sûtra (Chin-kang ching), Heart Sûtra (Hsin ching), and Nirvâna Sûtra (Nieh-p'an ching).

B. Buddhist Collections and Recorded Sayings

(65 quotations).

Ching-t'u chih-kuei chi 淨土指歸集 (1)
Ch'uan-teng lu 傳燈錄 (4)
Chung-feng ho-shang kuang-lu 中峰和尚廣錄 (1)
Fa-yüan chu-lin 法苑珠林 (1)
Liu-tsu t'an-ching 六祖壇經 (4)
Lung-shu ching-t'u wen 龍舒淨土文 (1)
P'ang chü-shih yü-lu 龐居士語錄 (11)
Shen-seng chuan 神僧傳 (1)
Shih-chia fo yen-shen wen 釋迦佛厭身文 (1)
Ta-mo hsieh mo lun 達摩血詠論 (1)
Ta-tsang i-lan chi 大藏一覽集 (28)
Tsung-ching lu 宗鏡錄 (1)
Wu-teng hui-yüan 五燈會元 (1)
Yü-chih sung 御製頌 (1)

These works, many composed in the Sung, were of central importance to Ming Buddhism. They are predominantly Ch'an-inspired, and Lo quotes from them to bolster his arguments for the immanence of the Buddha-nature and the Pure Land within the Original Mind, and against "reliance on the literal meaning of the written word" and the cultivation of conventional practices.⁵⁰ Many of these quotations are taken from the Ta-tsang i-lan chi, an "encyclopedia" of Buddhist sayings and scriptural selections composed in the Southern Sung (thirteenth century).⁵¹

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50. An example of one such quotation is from a "recorded saying" of the Ch'an master Yao-shan (藥山) in conversation with monk (śrāmana) Kao (高沙彌):

Yao-shan asked Kao *sha-mi*, "Where are you going?"

"To Chiang-ling Prefecture [modern Hupei] to receive the precepts."

Yao-shan said, "For what purpose are you taking the precepts?"

"Why, to escape from [the cycle of endless] births and deaths!"

Shan said, "For one who does not take the precepts, there is no cycle of births and deaths to be avoided!"

Thereupon Kao *sha-mi* was enlightened to his original mind, and, of course, he did not take the precepts. (P'o-hsieh 18:124 -- unattributed).

51. The Ta-tsang i-lan chi is not contained in the Taishō Tripitaka (大正新修大藏經), the Kyōto Tripitaka (訃字藏), the Tōkyō Tripitaka (弘教書院引), or the Supplement to the Canon (續藏經); cf. the Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Index no. 11, Combined Indices to the Authors and Titles of Books and Chapters in Four Collections of Buddhist Literature (佛藏字目引得), 3 volumes (Taipei: 1966). The Mochizuki dictionary attributes the work to Ch'en Shih (陳實) of the Ming (Bukkyō daijiten, VII:363), but Sakai Tadao argues from his examination of the text that the Ch'en Shih who edited the work lived in the Southern Sung; cf. Sakai, Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū, 451, 482 n.18. I have not

C. Ritual and Preaching Texts (95 quotations).

- Chao-yang chūan 昭陽卷 (1)
Cheng-tsung chūan 正宗卷 (1)
Chin-kang k'o-i 金剛科儀 (61)
Ching-t'u chūan 淨土卷 (1)
Fa-hua chūan 法華卷 (1)
Hsiang-shan pao-chūan 香山寶卷 (2)
Hsin-ching chūan 心經卷 (3)
Hsin-hsieh shao-chih pao-chūan 信邪燒紙寶卷 (1)
Keng-tzu chūan 耿子卷 (1)
Mu-lien chūan 目蓮卷 (2)
Ta-mi t'o chūan 大彌陀卷 (5)
Ti-tsang k'o-i 地藏科儀 (2)
Tsung-yen yü-lu pao-chūan 宗眼語錄寶卷 (2)
Tz'u-pei shui-ch'an 慈悲水懺 (2)
Wu-hsiang chūan 無相卷 (1)
Wu-lou chūan 無漏卷 (1)
Yin-hsing chūan 因行卷 (1)
Yüan-chüeh chūan 圓覺卷 (3)
Yüan-t'ung chūan 圓通卷 (4)

Among the quotations from these works, only those from the Chin-kang k'o-i can be identified with certainty, pending further

been able to locate the work; it is not listed in the Union Catalogue of library holdings in North America. The edition cited by Sakai is held at the Japanese Government Archives (內閣文庫). See Appendix II for chapter citations by Lo Ch'ing.

research.⁵² The Chin-kang k'o-i, composed in the mid-thirteenth century, is Lo's principle source. It is in three parts: a prefatory section with laudatory verses and ritual instructions (14 sections); a commentary on the Diamond Sûtra, with quotations from the scripture and verse summaries of principle teachings (34 sections); and a commentary on the Heart Sûtra (6 sections). In addition to doctrinal discussion, it contains "real-life" accounts of enlightenment experiences based on earlier Buddhist narratives and oral tales. The Chin-kang k'o-i made a very deep impression on Lo Ch'ing: it is cited more often (61 times) than any other text, and contains many of the basic themes of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e: the falsehood of distinctions (especially between monastic and lay cultivation), the ease of liberation, the common origin of the Three Teachings, the "dual cultivation" of Ch'an and Pure Land, the repudiation of language, an emphasis on "non-manipulative" methods of self-cultivation, and attention to practical aims of the religious life (to avoid calamity, uproot heterodoxy, cure illness, and relieve suffering).⁵³

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52. Daniel Overmyer has collected texts with similar titles to some of those listed here, none dated before Lo Ch'ing's Wu-pu liu-ts'e (personal communication, November 1989). These may be later editions of the same works, but I have not yet been able to examine them for correspondence to Lo's citations.
53. HTC 129: 129-144 (Ch'ing edition). On the Chin-kang k'o-i, its textual history and principle themes, see Sawada Mizuho, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû, 101-102; Daniel Overmyer, "Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature: Ming and Ch'ing Pao-chüan," in Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, 225-227; Cheng Chih-ming, Chung-kuo she-hui yü tsung-chiao [Chinese Society and Religion] (Taipei: 1986), 213-224; and Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, "Shôshaku kongô kagi no seiritsu ni tsuite," 154-170.

Just as the Chin-kang k'o-i is an "amplification" of the canonical Diamond Sūtra, we can assume that several of the other texts listed in this category are "instruction texts" of major scriptures, including the Fa-hua chūan, Hsin-ching chūan, Ta-mi-t'o chūan, and Yüan-chüeh chūan; Lo's quotations from the corresponding ching may have come from these sources, though this cannot be confirmed with certainty as the specific pao-chūan and k'o-i cited by Lo are no longer extant.

The Hsiang-shan pao-chūan is a narrative of the transformation of the Bodhisattva Kuan-yin (觀音, Avalokiteśvara) into the virtuous princess Miao-shan (妙善). It dates to the twelfth century, and is the earliest known text with a "pao-chūan" title. This work, as well as the Mu-lien chūan cited by Lo Ch'ing, may be descended from narrative "transformation texts" (pien-wen) of the T'ang, and is undoubtedly the source for Lo's three references to the Miao-shan legend in addition to his direct quotations from the text. (I explore Lo's use of Buddhist narratives and popular tales below.)⁵⁴

54. On the Hsiang-shan pao-chūan, reprinted in Yoshioka Yoshitoyo, Dōkyō kenkyū [Taoist Studies], vol. 4 (Tokyo: 1971), 115-195, see Daniel Overmyer, "Pao-chūan: Types and Transformations" (unpublished ms.: 1978), 7-14; and "Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature," 223-225; and Glen Dudbridge, The Legend of Miao-shan (London: 1978), 10-50. Cf. Sawada Mizuho, Zōho hōkan no kenkyū, 25, 126-127, 326; Sakai Tadao, Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū, 439; Kuo Yüeh-hsiang, "Fo-ch'ü hsü-lu" [An Annotated Bibliography of Buddhist Canticles], in Yü Ta-fu, ed., Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh yen-chiu (Taipei: 1976), 2:775. On the Mu-lien chūan, see Sawada Mizuho, "Hōkan to bukkyō setsuwa, 179-184; Zōho hōkan no kenkyū, 29, 123-125, 326; Sakai Tadao, Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū, 441; Cheng Chen-to, Chung-kuo su wen-hsüeh shih, 318-327; and further citations below.

D. Taoist and Confucian Works (15 quotations).

Chung yung 中庸 (1)

Lao-chün hsing-t'an chi 老君行壇記 (1)

Ming-hsin pao-chien 明心寶鑑 (1)

Sheng yü 聖諭 (1)

Shih-lin kuang-chi 事林廣記 (2)

Ta hsüeh 大學 (1)

T'ai-chi-t'u shuo 太極圖說 (1)

T'ai-shang Lao-tzu tao-te ching 太上老子道德經 (7)

Half of these quotations are attributed to the T'ai-shang Lao-tzu tao-te ching, but it is likely that these seven passages are taken from a Taoist collection which includes the Tao-te ching as well as other works of interest to Yüan and Ming Taoists, such as the Ch'ing-ching ching (清靜經) and the Wu-chen p'ien (悟真篇).⁵⁵

The Shih-lin kuang-chi was a popular educational work of the Yüan, and may be the true source of Lo's paraphrase quotations from the Four Books (Chung yung, Ta hsüeh, and an unattributed quotation from Lun yü) and the T'ai-chi-t'u shuo. Sakai Tadao includes the Shih-lin kuang-chi among "popular encyclopedias" in

55. At least one of Lo's quotations from the Tao-te ching is attributed by Wang Yüan-ching to the Ch'ing-ching ching (Cheng-hsin 12:37): it is the T'ai-shang lao-chün shuo-ch'ang ch'ing-ching miao ching (太上老君說常清靜妙經); Tao tsang (Taipei: 1962), case 40, number 341, 傷上, chüan 1, pp. 1a-3a. I quote Lo's misattributed citation from this work in Chapter II, pp. 112-113. The Wu-chen p'ien, in 8 chüan, is attributed to Chang Po-tuan (張伯端) of the 11th century; Tao tsang, case 8, numbers 65-66, 呂上, 呂下. Cf. Sawada, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû, 326.

wide circulation in the Sung, Yüan, and Ming Dynasties.⁵⁶ A preface to the work says, "It is not only those of well-known and well-to-do families who may gain knowledge from this book, but also common people living in the towns and villages."⁵⁷ Sakai contends that Lo's use of such materials was characteristic of a popular level of literacy in the Ming. Sawada Mizuho writes that "...[Lo's] quotations from the T'ai-chi t'u shuo are taken from reference books (類書) such as the Shih-lin kuang-chi. In this respect, Lo Ch'ing demonstrates his illiteracy or, perhaps, an attitude of indifference."⁵⁸

The Ming-hsin pao-chien was a similar compilation of quotations from classical texts, including the Lun-yü, Meng-tzu, Lao-tzu, Chuang-tzu, and Neo-Confucian works of the Sung. Sakai describes it as a "moral exhortation text of the Ming" used for popular education.⁵⁹

56. He has examined a Japanese edition, dated 1699, of a Shih-lin kuang-chi compiled in the Yüan (kept at the Naikaku bunko); cf. his "Confucianism and Popular Educational Works," in William T. de Bary, ed., Self and Society in Ming Thought, 333-334, 365o; Chûgoku zensho no kenkyû, 451; and "Mindai no nichiyô ruisho to shomin kyûiku" [Daily Use Encyclopedias and Popular Education in the Ming], in Hayashi Tomoharu, ed., Kinsei chûgoku kyôikushi kenkyû (Tokyo: 1958).

57. Sakai, "Popular Educational Works," 334.

58. Sakai, Chûgoku zensho no kenkyû, 451; Sawada, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû, 326. The Shih-lin kuang-chi is not available in North America, and does not appear, save for brief selections not quoted by Lo Ch'ing, in extant collectanea (叢書).

59. Sakai, Chûgoku zensho no kenkyû, 451, 483 n.20. I have found no listings of the Ming-hsin pao-chien in the Union Catalogue or the Chung-kuo ts'ung-shu tsung-lu [Comprehensive Bibliography of Chinese Collectanea] (Shanghai: 1962).

The Lao-chün hsing-t'an chi appears to be an apocryphal "Taoist" text recounting conversations between Confucius' disciple Tzu-lu and a wise hermit, inspired by two passages from the Lun-yü.⁶⁰

I discuss Lo Ch'ing's utilization of this category of texts in more detail below.

5. How Lo Read: The Manipulation of Texts

It seems that Lo Ch'ing was remarkably well read, and ranged widely in the nature of the texts he was willing to cite. This would suggest significant influence of China's "higher culture" -- the few persons who could read and write -- on Lo Ch'ing's religious thought. But Lo was by no means a "passive receptacle", using Natalie Davis' term, of the cultural products of Chinese tradition; for Lo, texts were tools, to be altered, manipulated, and reshaped both to inspire his thinking and to conform to his own conceptions. In Lo Ch'ing's approach to texts we have an illustration of the popular interpretation of shared cultural forms. It is not what he read that alerts us to his popular perspective, but how he read.

Cheng Chih-ming has done a detailed study of Lo Ch'ing's use of his textual sources.⁶¹ Lo did not hesitate to alter the

60. SPPY edition (commentary by Chu Hsi): 18:6, 18:7. The Lao-chün hsing-t'an chi does not appear in the Tao tsang, the Union Catalogue or the Chung-kuo ts'ung-shu tsung-lu.

61. Lo's methods included summary paraphrase (often with the use of vernacular rephrasing), omission of individual characters and phrases, substitution of words, and re-ordering of phrases. In his eleven quotations from the Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang (P'ang chū-shih yü-lu), for example, three

original text to illustrate his themes, and most of the quoted passages -- as Lo reformulates them -- revolve around the basic teachings outlined in Chapter II above: Emptiness, "non-manipulative" cultivation, faith and moral virtue. His alterations of the original texts do not fundamentally change their meanings so much as they highlight and simplify Lo's own principle themes.

In his manipulation of his sources, Lo is by no means unique. Loose borrowing from written texts, often without attribution, is characteristic of Chinese letters. It would not have been considered either vulgar or heterodox to substitute paraphrase, reformulation, or selective copying for attributed quotation. What can help us locate Lo Ch'ing intellectually and sociologically is the particular way in which he manipulates his sources, and how he brings them to bear on his own conceptions.

The majority of Lo's quotations are from Buddhist works. Two examples will suffice to show how he employs them:

In one of eleven quotations from the P'ang chū-shih yü-lu (龐居士語錄), Lo adds twenty characters to the original verse (indicated in bold type below):

Layman P'ang said, "If you fast (齋), you must carry out the fast of absolute reality (實相齋). If you practice the

(P'o-hsieh 4:131, P'o-hsieh 5:20, Cheng-hsin 24:69) are unaltered, two (K'u-kung 18:114, Cheng-hsin 22:50-51) omit phrases from ten to thirty characters in length, three (P'o-hsieh 9:129-130, Cheng-hsin 10:2-4, Cheng-hsin 9:104) add phrases from ten to twenty characters in length, two (P'o-hsieh 20:17-22, Cheng-hsin 24:73) "cut and paste" or change the order of the original phrasing, and one (Cheng-hsin 23:64) cannot be found in the original. Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan [Sources of the Belief in the Eternal Venerable Mother] (Taipei: 1985), 235-253.

precepts (戒), you must practice the precepts of absolute reality (實相戒). One who maintains [vegetarian] fasting and the [moral] precepts [simply at the level of] the phenomenal form (相) will, in the end, return to [a condition of] decay [i.e., rebirth in a lower form of existence]. This decay is an aspect of impermanence; how can one [in such a position] avoid the three realms of existence [desire, form, and formlessness]? The true precepts (真戒) are the Original Nature (本性); the Original Nature is the true precepts. The true precepts fundamentally are not cultivated [無修 -- i.e., they are spontaneous, natural, "original"]. The non-cultivated are the true precepts." (P'o-hsieh 9:129-130).⁶²

Here, Lo is clarifying his general argument that "manipulative methods of self-cultivation" (有為法), which must be "cultivated" (修) and "confirmed" (證), serve only to perpetuate *samsāra*, and are inferior to "non-manipulative means" (無為法) of maintaining the "true precepts". One who maintains the true precepts of non-action is beyond good and evil, subject neither to arising nor to destruction, and lives long and uncorrupted (P'o-hsieh 9:138).

In many instances, Lo reformulates quotations from scripture in such a way as to broaden their appeal by simplifying their message. An example is one of twenty quotations from the Ta-pa-nieh-p'an ching (大般涅槃經). The original reads as follows:

Virtuous men among the myriad living beings, only *devas* and men can set their minds on attaining *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi* [unexcelled complete enlightenment]; can cultivate the Path of good *karma* resulting from the practice of the ten commandments [refraining from killing, taking what is not freely given, adultery, lying, cursing, prevarication, speaking with levity, covetousness, despair, and heterodox views]; can attain the fruits of *śrota-āpanna* [the first stage of the arhat], the fruits of the *anāgāmin* [the arhat of the third, "non-returning", stage], the fruits of the arhat [the fourth and highest stage], and the Way of the *pratyeka-buddha* [the enlightened arhat]; and [can thereby]

62. P'ang chū-shih yū-lu, chūan 下 (HTC 120.38b上, lines 14-15).

attain *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. For this reason, we call the Buddha the teacher of *devas* and men.⁶³

Lo's "quotation" differs significantly:

Chüan 16 of the *Nieh-p'an ching* says: "Observe those myriad living beings who cultivate the good *karma* resulting from the practice of the ten commandments. At the end of their lives, they are accordingly reborn in the heavens above among the *devas* or as human beings, [but this is a case of] passing from darkness into darkness [i.e., remaining trapped within the cycle of *samsāra*]. [And] there are others among the myriad living beings who pass from light into darkness [i.e., having been exposed to the *Dharma*, neglect to cultivate the Path]." (*P'o-hsieh* 4:123).

The true extent of Lo's quotation from chüan 16 of the *Ta-pan nieh-p'an ching* amounts to no more than four characters, describing those who "cultivate the good *karma* resulting from the practice of the ten commandments" (修十善業). Significantly, whereas this activity is recommended by the *Nieh-p'an ching* as one step on the path to the attainment of enlightenment, for Lo Ch'ing it is nothing more than a form of self-cultivation which perpetuates *samsāra*.

Turning to examples of Lo's use of texts from the fourth category, Taoist and Confucian works, we can observe more active manipulation of texts for Lo's own purposes.

We have seen that Lo was well aware of the honor and prestige that accrues from examination success, and political advancement in the Ming depended on mastery of the *Four Books* (the *Lun-yü*, *Mencius*, *Chung yung*, and *Ta hsüeh*) and Chu Hsi's commentaries on them. Lo's "quotation" from the *Ta hsüeh* appears to be based upon the third commentary chapter (attributed by Chu

63. *Ta-pan nieh-p'an ching*, chüan 16 (T12.375.712b, lines 12-16).

Hsi to Confucius' disciple Tseng-tzu) on "abiding in the highest good". The original reads:

The Book of Odes says, "The imperial domain of a thousand li is where the people stay" [Ode 303]. The Book of Odes also says, "The twittering yellow bird rests on a thickly wooded mount" [Ode 230]. Confucius said, "When the bird rests, it knows where to rest. Should a human being be unequal to a bird?" The Book of Odes says, "How profound was King Wen! How he maintained his brilliant virtue without interruption and regarded with reverence that which he abided" [Ode 235]. As a ruler, he abided in humanity. As a minister, he abided in reverence. As a son, he abided in filial piety. As a father, he abided in deep love. And in dealing with the people of the country, he abided in faithfulness.⁶⁴

Lo Ch'ing's version differs significantly from the original. His purpose is to employ man's "inferiority to birds" to highlight our proper relationship to the Limitless (無極):

The Ta hsüeh has this statement: "Could it be that even men are inferior to birds?" The Limitless rules Heaven and Earth and the ten thousand things, but there is no one who understands that its benevolence should be requited. (Chieh-kuo 17:22, emphasis mine).

This substantially altered passage -- in fact incorporating a poem from the Shih-ching more directly than the surrounding text of the Ta hsüeh -- is employed as confirmation of Lo's point that the man of faith does not "turn his back" on the Limitless, but "requites His benevolence" with dedication and moral virtue.

Lo's quotation from the Chung yung goes even farther afield; I am unable to find the corresponding passage in the original,⁶⁵

64. Ta-hsüeh, in Shen Chih-fang, Ssu-shu tu-pen [A Reader's Guide to the Four Books] (Taipei: 1966), 4-5. The translation is by Wing-tsit Chan, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton: 1963), 88.

65. Chung-yung, in Ssu-shu tu-pen, 17-51.

but Wang Yüan-ching discovers echoes in four other texts. Lo quotes as follows:

The Chung yung has this statement: "Observe the relationship between father and son among tigers and wolves: they practice the virtue of moral reciprocity [報恩 -- i.e., the son repays his father's love with obedience and respect]. The rulers and ministers among bees and ants practice the virtue of moral reciprocity. Even jackals and sea lions possess this principle, and practice the virtue of moral reciprocity. The waterfowl and the turtle-dove, even birds of the air and beasts of the land, can in similar fashion practice the virtue of moral reciprocity." (Chieh-kuo 17:22).

Again, Lo's point is that men should repay the benevolence of the Limitless with faith and upright behavior, just as animals requite the benevolence of their parents. But this passage does not come from the Chung yung. The first sentence, on "tigers and wolves", can be traced to the Chuang-tzu:

The Prime Minister (大宰) of the state of Shang, [Sung] Tang, asked Chuang-tzu about benevolence (仁). Chuang-tzu said, "Tigers and wolves are benevolent." "Why?" the minister asked. Chuang-tzu replied, "As long as father and son are intimate, what is this if not benevolence?"⁶⁶

The second statement, on "bees and ants", Wang Yüan-ching attributes to a passage in the T'an-tzu hua-shu (談子化書):⁶⁷

66. Chuang-tzu, chapter 14. Ch'en Ku-ying, ed., Chuang-tzu chin-chu chin-i [A Modern Annotation and Explication of the Chuang-tzu Book] (Taipei: 1987), 399. Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement no. 20, A Concordance to Chuang-tzu (Peking: 1947), 333: 36/14/5. Compare Wang Yüan-ching's version of the quote: 'Prime Minister [Sung] Tang asked Chuang-tzu about benevolence (仁). Chuang-tzu said, "Tigers and wolves are benevolent." "Why?" the minister asked. Chuang-tzu replied, "Though tigers and wolves may be malicious, even they do not eat their own sons."' (Chieh-kuo 17:23).

67. I am unable to identify this work. It does not appear in the standard Buddhist and Taoist dictionaries and concordances, or in the Chung-kuo ts'ung-shu tsung-lu. There is a

Even bees and ants do not act counter to righteousness (義). How much the more should this be true of men in the world! (Chieh-kuo 17:24).

The analogy to "jackals and sea-lions" in Lo's passage is echoed in the "Yüeh-ling" (月令) chapter of the Li chi (禮記): the sea-lion worships the fish he eats, and the jackal shows reverence to his prey;⁶⁸ in this, men are inferior even to beasts of the air and land. And his reference to "the water-fowl and the turtle-dove" is associated by Wang Yüan-ching with a poem in the Shih ching (詩經), in which the water-fowl and the turtle-dove symbolize sexual propriety;⁶⁹ men are inferior even to beasts of the air and land in their moral relations (Chieh-kuo 17:24-26).

A final example of Lo's appeal to Confucian texts and personalities to bolster his own teachings is his quotation from the Lao-chün hsing-t'an chi.⁷⁰ Tzu-lu, Confucius' favorite disciple, illustrates the ideal of inner illumination in the context of Lo's discussion of the "inner light" within every individual:

譚子化書, dated 11th century (Tao-tsang, case 82, number 724, 別上, and Hsü tao-tsang, case 127, number 1107, 冠上), and even a section within it on bees and ants (chüan 4, number 5), but not as quoted by Wang Yüan-ching. So I am uncertain about both Lo's citation and Wang's attribution.

68. Li Chi [Book of Rites] (SPPY edition) 6:2, 6:84. Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Index no. 27, Index to Li Chi (Taipei: 1966), 517, 454.

69. Shih Ching [Book of Odes], Ode 1. Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement no. 9, A Concordance to Shih Ching (Peking: 1934), 228, 190: 1/1/1 (Ode 1, printed on p. 1).

70. See note 60.

The "Lan-chi p'an-jo chapter" of the Lao-chün hsing-t'an chi recounts: "Tzu-lu bowed and said, 'Is it not true that there is no one who is not a sage?' The old man replied, 'A sage is one who is naturally enlightened from birth, is not dependent on cultivation or strict maintenance [of his principles], and has no fear at the point of death. He always says what is true. And that is why he is called a sage.'" (P'o-hsieh 22:45-47).⁷¹

From these three examples, we can see how free Lo Ch'ing is in his use of scriptural and classical authority. In the first instance, he takes off from an existing passage in the original, in the second he creates his own text from a collection of existing sources, and in the third he cites what is apparently a Taoist text "quoting" Confucian authorities to trade in on the prestige of Confucius' disciple, emphasizing the value of self-illumination and spiritual self-reliance.

Lo Ch'ing was active in his manipulation of sources. Of course, this is not to say that Lo was engaged in a conscious distortion of the "actual intent" of the quoted passages; undoubtedly, he saw in them a confirmation of the truth, and his own thinking was in part shaped by what he read. But reading is an interpretive process, and it follows that persons of distinct social backgrounds and ideological inclinations will interpret

71. This is Lo Ch'ing's only reference to the Lao-chün hsing-t'an chi, which, as noted, is not contained within the Taoist Canon and cannot otherwise be identified. His own reference to the work indicates that Lo may have found the passage in the Ta-tsang i-lan chi (also unavailable: see note 51); elsewhere he quotes from the "P'an-jo" chapter of that work (P'o-hsieh 22:54; Chieh-kuo 1:26). If so, he has misworded his reference, which should read "The Lao-chün hsing-t'an chi of the P'an-jo chapter of the [Ta-tsang i] lan chi" (覽集般若品老君行壇記). On the other hand, his other quotations from the Ta-tsang i-lan chi are, as its title indicates, exclusively Buddhistic. In any case, the reference cannot be identified pending further research.

the same text quite differently. That relationship between the reader and the text -- or, for that matter, between ritual participant and ceremony, audience and performance, or devotee and object of devotion -- is what distinguishes the meanings and values assigned to cultural objects by "popular" and "elite" social agents. Lo Ch'ing read in a way that demonstrated his commoner background, placing more value in the confirmation of the "truth" than in the sanctity of the text or the tradition it represented. No member of the social-cultural elite -- Johnson's "classically educated, legally privileged" few -- would have interpreted the scriptures and classics in the same way, or found the same messages Lo found encoded within them.

The same inventive approach to the written word is demonstrated by the miller Menocchio of sixteenth-century Italy, the subject of Carlo Ginzburg's brilliant study, The Cheese and the Worms.⁷² Menocchio had created a complex and remarkably consistent vision of the cosmos, with his own theories of creation and salvation, and found his fantastic conceptions confirmed by the persons he met and the books he collected, including a vernacular translation of the Bible, Boccaccio's Decameron, several theological treatises and prayer books, and even, perhaps, an Italian translation of the Koran. Ginzburg illustrates how "...Menocchio's manner of reading was obviously one-sided and arbitrary -- almost as if he was searching for confirmation of ideas and convictions that were already firmly

72. Note 1 above.

entrenched."⁷³ The key is not in the books he owned -- they were part of the shared culture of sixteenth-century Italy -- but how he read them:

Any attempt to consider these books as "sources" in the mechanical sense of the term collapses before the aggressive originality of Menocchio's reading..., a screen that he unconsciously placed between himself and the printed page... And this screen, this key to his reading, continually leads us back to a culture that is very different from the one expressed on the printed page -- one based on an oral tradition.⁷⁴

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to challenge Ginzburg's conclusions about the integrity of oral tradition,⁷⁵ but his general point is as true of sixteenth-century China as it was of contemporary Europe: the model of cultural transmission should not be one of a "sinking from top to bottom", or uncritical "acculturation of the masses", but rather of an active dialogue

73. The Cheese and the Worms, 36.

74. *ibid.*, 33.

75. I feel that in his zeal to "animate" his simple commoner as a cultural agent, Ginzburg gives too much weight to "oral tradition" as a distinct culture in opposition to the culture of the elite, and, as a result, denigrates the role of texts in the evolution of Menocchio's own thinking. On the other hand, it should be noted that Menocchio did not draw on nearly as many texts as did Lo Ch'ing (Ginzberg has catalogued eleven books that shaped his thinking; *ibid.*, 29-30), and that our evidence for Menocchio's thought is based on records of spoken interrogations, not written compositions by Menocchio. This compromises the comparison somewhat, but similarities between Menocchio and Lo Ch'ing are still striking, coming as they did from commoner backgrounds, and shaping a creative religious vision from the resources of written culture and oral tradition. In contrast to Ginzberg's analysis, I shall argue below that Lo Ch'ing is not so much a spokesman for "oral tradition" as he is a bridge or mediator between oral tradition and the literati, consciously integrating what he read with what he heard (in the context of everyday life) in a form that he could transmit to audiences at every level of society.

between the reader and the text. In the case of Lo Ch'ing and Menocchio, a popular perspective determines the meaning and significance of the written word.

If we look at the actual process of Lo Ch'ing's composition of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, we can reconstruct his employment of his sources. Some of the books cited in the Five Books he must have had in his possession -- if not while composing his *pao-chüan*, at least at some time during his career as a religious seeker: the quotations are either unaltered, or involve the careful substitution of particular words and phrases. In other instances, it is conceivable that Lo had heard someone preaching from a text, which he then paraphrases or cites in passing in his own composition; many of the statements attributed to *k'o-i*, *pao-chüan*, and recorded sayings are not direct quotations, but allude in short-hand to references Lo may have assumed would be familiar to his audience. Finally, Lo appeals throughout the text to Buddhist narratives and popular oral tales without citing texts or retelling the stories; these passing references indicate the existence of a widely shared oral tradition with immediate associations in the minds of his listeners and readers. They are evidence of Lo's own social background and of his effort to attract a popular audience to his religious teachings. Let us look at a few of these references and how Lo makes use of them.

6. Lo's Appeal to Oral Tradition

Throughout the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, Lo refers to characters from history and fiction that would have been recognizable to anyone in his culture, especially at the village level. They were the stock heroes and saints of the itinerant actors, missionizing monks, and story-tellers in the market square, well-known to Lo's contemporaries in the countryside.

Most are taken from popular Buddhist narratives, such as the heroes of the Journey to the West (西遊記), who "travelled over ten thousand li to gather scriptures, crossing a thousand mountains and ten thousand rivers solely for the benefit of the myriad living beings" (P'o-hsieh 2:71). They are, of course, Hsüan-tsang (玄奘) -- alternately named by Lo Ch'ing the "old T'ang monk" (老唐僧) and "master of the Tripiṭaka" (三藏師) -- and his companions Sun Hsing-che (孫行者), Monk Sha (沙和尚), and Chu Pa-chieh (豬八戒).⁷⁶ Though the great Ming novel based on this legend had yet to be composed,⁷⁷ the Hsi yü chi enjoyed a long oral tradition, and also appears in the The Precious Scroll which Explicates True Emptiness (銷釋真空寶卷), The Verse Narrative of San-tsang of the T'ang Gathering Scriptures (大唐三藏取經詩話), The Record of Master San-tsang of the T'ang Gathering Scriptures (大唐三藏法師取經記), The Romance of San-

76. Cited 7 times in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e: T'an-shih 1:14-15, T'an-shih 3:43-44, T'an-shih 10:46, T'an-shih 10:54-55, P'o-hsieh Pref:17, P'o-hsieh 2:71, Cheng-hsin 16:89-90.

77. Wu Ch'eng-en, Hsi-yü chi (Peking: 1954). First printed in 1592.

tsang (三藏演義) and other written sources pre-dating the Wu-pu liu-ts'e.⁷⁸

Lo also refers to the virtuous Miao-shan (妙善), heroine of the Hsiang-shan pao-chüan, who disobeys her father's command that she marry and conceive an heir in order to follow the *Dharma*,⁷⁹ and the Lady Ch'ih (郗氏), mother of Liang Wu-ti (梁武帝, r. 502-550), punished with rebirth as a snake for defaming the Buddha and his teachings.⁸⁰

Lady Ch'ih, the Queen Mother of Emperor Wu, descended to the class of snakes! (P'o-hsieh 2:74).

[Wang Yüan-ching, citing chapter 37 of the Liang-huang ch'an-fa (梁皇懺法),⁸¹ tells her story]: Because Lady Ch'ih defamed the true *Dharma* of the monk Chih-kung, her mind gave rise to countless evil thoughts. After her death, [her son] the emperor mourned constantly. During the day he was disoriented and unhappy; at night he was disquieted and unable to sleep. One day he suddenly heard within the palace the sound of rustling. Looking about, all he could see was a python coiled around the eaves in the rooftop. With fiery eyes and a toothy mouth, it looked down at the emperor. He was greatly frightened. There was no place to hide. He said to the snake: "It is expressly forbidden that snakes of your kind should live within the palace! Surely this is an evil omen!" The snake said in a language comprehensible to men, "I am the former Lady Ch'ih. Grateful am I for the emperor's generous care in former times! Because I broke the vow of vegetarianism and defamed the *Buddha-dharma*, and did not believe in the Three Treasures [*Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha*], so I have fallen to this

78. Glen Dudbridge, The Hsi-yu chi: A Study of Antecedents to the Sixteenth-Century Chinese Novel (Cambridge: 1970), 90-100; Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan, 198-199. The Chin-kang k'o-i also makes use of this story.

79. T'an-shih 7:13, P'o-hsieh 2:89, Chieh-kuo 1:42. For scholarship on the Hsiang-shan pao-chüan, see note 54.

80. T'an-shih 2:29, P'o-hsieh 2:74, P'o-hsieh 2:79.

81. The text is no longer extant, but it is cited, with the tale of Liang Wu-ti and Lady Ch'ih, in the Shih-shih chi-ku lüeh (釋氏稽古略), compiled by Chüeh-an (覺岸) in the Ming (T49.2037.794c-795a).

state." Truly this is an illustration: if you wish not to bring on the karmic punishment of the Avīci Hell, do not defame the True Dharma Wheel of the Tathāgata. (P'o-hsieh 2:74-75).

There are numerous references to those who have abandoned careers dedicated to the destruction of living things, such as the fisherman Chin T'ai-kung (金太公) and the butchers Chang Chung-k'uei (張鍾馗), Chang Shan-ho (張善和), Kuang O (廣額), and Shen Liang (神亮).⁸²

Chin T'ai-kung killed fish for an entire lifetime. In one day he repented within his heart, and returned home to be reborn in the Pure Land.

[Wang Yüan-ching recounts]: Chin T'ai-kung was a fisherman on the Ch'ien-t'ang River in the state of Yüeh [an ancient state of present-day Fukien and Chekiang]. His surname was Chin and his given name was Shih (奭). His whole life he netted fish for a living, [but] in former lives he had good karma [making possible his salvation]. One day, selling his fish in the market, he came upon a holy monk [engaged in the work of] salvation by conversion (化度). The monk asked, "How many fish do you have in your basket?" "These fish are very small. I don't know how many there are." "How many liang (兩, ounces) can you sell [in a day]?" "Not more than several ounces, but I can get some rice for them." "How many loads of rice will you sell?" "Not more than several sheng (升, pints)." The monk said, "Having sold [your rice], once you have taken home [your earnings], how many years can you live?" "One day's [sales] sustain me for one day." The holy monk sighed. "A whole basket of these tiny fish can provide only one day's provisions. Feeding a family for hundreds and thousands of meals makes for a lifetime of sin. When will the three lowest states of existence [as animal, preta, and hell-being] come to an end for you? How soon will you forget all about the Four Stages of the cultivation of wisdom?" T'ai-kung listened, and his stomach trembled and his heart was disturbed. In a moment he took up his evil nets and set them on fire, and broke off his family attachments [for a life of reclusion]..." (Cheng-hsin 3:91).

82. Cheng-hsin 3:87-93, Cheng-hsin 3:98-101, Chieh-kuo 14:71, Chieh-kuo 21:79. Their complete stories are told in Wang Yüan-ching's commentary.

Lo refers also to the tales of the frog who leapt from his pond to listen to monks reciting scripture, and was rewarded with rebirth as an arhat, and the pheasant who followed the monk Kumâra (鳩摩羅) and was reborn as a virtuous girl.⁸³

Long ago, the Reverend Kumâra explicated the *Dharma*. A pheasant, hearing the voice of the *Dharma*, thereupon was reborn in human form. Having been reborn as a human, with a single thought within the mind, she brought the Path of the Buddha to completion. How much the more are those born today, in their disbelief of the Buddha, doomed to an eternal fall! (*Cheng-hsin* 3:106-107).

[Wang Yüan-ching relates]: Long ago, during the time of King Wen-hsüan [文宣, r. 550-589], on the roof of the emperor's quarters, the Reverend Kumâra⁸⁴ gathered a group of more than twenty disciples to preach on the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. Just as soon as he announced the topic of the lesson, a female pheasant perched next to the assembly to hear the *Dharma*. When the monks went to eat, the pheasant went out [with them] to peck its food. Day and night, it accompanied the group for the lectures. When three *chūan* had been completed, it broke off contact and did not come [again]. Everyone said this was a strange thing. The Reverend replied, "For this pheasant to be reborn in its next life as a person will not be strange!" In the fourth year of Wu-p'ing (573), the Reverend had led his disciples to the city of Yüeh-chou [in modern Chekiang Province]. Suddenly he said, "That pheasant of last year should have been reborn in this place!" They went to a house and made a loud cry, "Pheasant!" A young girl walked out of the house. She recognized the Reverend like an old friend, and made obeisance to him. The Reverend asked, "Why is this girl

83. *Cheng-hsin* 3:106, 109. Wang Yüan-ching attributes the story of the frog to the *I-hsiang ching* (異相經) and the story of the pheasant to *chūan* 3 of the *Shen-seng chuan* (神僧卷). The *I-hsiang ching* does not appear in the standard Buddhist bibliographical dictionaries and concordances. I have been unable to locate the tale of Kumâra and the pheasant in *chūan* 3 of the *Shen-seng chuan* (T50.2064.948-1015).

84. I have been unable to identify the Reverend Kumâra. Canonical sutras describe Kumâra as one of twenty *devas* who protect the world, portrayed iconographically as a divine figure riding on the back of a peacock (孔雀). The monks Kumarâjīva (鳩摩羅耆婆), Kumârayū (鳩摩羅炎), and Kumârabuddhi (鳩摩羅駄提) did not live during the time of King Wen-hsüan, and none is associated with the tale of the pheasant-girl. Mochizuki, *Bukkyō daijiten*, 715b-717c.

named Pheasant?" Her parents answered, "Seeing her when she was first born, her hair looked like the feathers of a pheasant, but with the form of a girl, so we called her Pheasant." The Reverend laughed heartily and explained the prior cause [her *karma*]. Hearing this, the girl wept ruefully, yearning to renounce the household life. Her parents joyfully approved... (Cheng-hsin 3:107-108).

Lo Ch'ing reserves his highest praise for the emperors, kings, and ministers who have "cast aside their rivers and mountains" to "return home" as lay practitioners. They are model characters for the officers and office-candidates among his audience, for they place their religious salvation above considerations of wealth and power in this world. In this context, Lo cites the kings and Buddha-kings *Aśoka* (阿育王), *Cakravartī* (轉輪王), and *Prabhūtaratna* (多寶王);⁸⁵ the Chinese emperors Liang Wu-ti (梁武帝, r. 502-550), T'ang Su-tsung (唐肅宗, r. 756-763), and the legendary Miao-chuang (妙莊王);⁸⁶ and the ministers Chang Tzu-fang (張子房) of the Han and Pai Chū-i (白居易) of the T'ang.⁸⁷ All "personally sought to return

85. *Aśoka* was the renowned Indian king of the 3rd century B.C. who united the nation and protected Buddhism (Mochizuki, *Bukkyō daijiten*, 4b); *Cakravartī* and *Prabhūtaratna* were mythical kings having characteristics of divine Buddhas (Mochizuki, 3826a, 3489c; on *Cakravartī*, see Emil Zürcher, "'Prince Moonlight': Messianism and Eschatology in Early Medieval Chinese Buddhism," T'oung Pao 68 [1982], 1-75).

86. Liang Wu-ti was a "pious emperor" who favored Buddhism over Taoist and Literati competitors (Emil Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* [The Hague: 1959], 317-318); T'ang Su-tsung was a devout leader who ordered monks to pray for victory over the rebels of An Lu-shan (Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T'ang* [Cambridge: 1987], 57-58); Miao-chuang was the legendary king brought to conversion by his daughter Miao-shan in the *Hsiang-shan pao-chūan* (note 54 above).

87. Chang Tzu-fang (Chang Liang 張良) was a "great minister" (大宰) of the state of Han (漢) who supported Liu Pang in defeating the Ch'in and the forces of Hsiang Yü. He refused

home, and did not seek the status of manipulative, phenomenal forms (不求有為色相之位)."⁸⁸

Other historical figures illustrate the suffering and uncertainty of existence, such as Wu Tzu-hsü (伍子胥) of the kingdom of Ch'u, well-known to Lo's contemporaries for his central role in village plays composed in the Yüan and Ming Dynasties.⁸⁹

Kao-tzu's offer of a fiefdom and accepted a role as marquis ex officio (留侯). In later years, he retired into the mountains to study immortality techniques of the Huang-lao School under master Ch'ih Sung-tzu (赤松子). Shih chi, chüan 55 (SPPY, Shih 53.1, part 5, pp. 1-11); Ch'ien han shu, chüan 40 (SPPY, Shih 53.2, part 4, pp. 1-9). His tale was the subject of the Yüan dramas Chang Tzu-fang ch'i chih kuei shan (張子房棄職歸山) [Chang Tzu-fang Resigns his Post and Retires to the Mountains] (anonymous, listed in the Yung-le ta-tien 永樂大典, chüan 20750), and Han Chang Liang tz'u ch'ao kuei shan (漢張良辭朝歸山) [Chang Liang of the Han Abandons the Court and Retires to the Mountains], composed by Wang Chung-wen 王仲文. Fu Hsi-hua, Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu [A Complete Bibliography of Yüan Dramas] (Peking: 1957), 15; Chuang I-fu, Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao [A Research Collection of Extant Traditional Dramas] (Shanghai: 1982), 239. On the Yüan dramas and their influence on Lo Ch'ing, cf. Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan, 202. Pai Chü-i was a minister of the Yüan-ho (806-821) and Hui-ch'ang (841-847) reign periods of the T'ang, better known in history as a libertine poet of moonlight and inebriation. He died in 846. Chiu t'ang shu, chüan 166 (SPPY, Shih 53.16, part 9, pp. 8a-19a); Hsin T'ang shu, chüan 119 (SPPY, 53.17, part 7, pp. 4b-7b).

88. T'an-shih 7:12-13, P'o-hsieh 1:34-38, P'o-hsieh 2:84-90, P'o-hsieh 11:163, Cheng-hsin 18:11-16, Chieh-kuo 1:39-40, Chieh-kuo 20:69, Chieh-kuo 21:75-77.

89. On the early sources for the tale of Wu Tzu-hsü (Tso chuan, Kuo yü, Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu, Shih chi, and Wu Yüeh ch'un-ch'iu), see David Johnson, "Epic and History in Early China; The Matter of Wu Tzu-hsü," Journal of Asian Studies 40 (1981), 255-271. On the Tun-huang manuscript of the Wu Tzu-hsü pien-wen (伍子胥變文), contained in Wang Ch'ung-min, Tun-huang pien-wen chi (Peking: 1957), 1-31, trans. by Victor Mair, Tun-huang Popular Narratives (Cambridge: 1983), 123-165, see David Johnson, "The Wu Tzu-hsü Pien-wen and Its Sources," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 40 (1980),

Wu Tzu-hsü tuned pipes and begged for food (品簫乞化) at Tan-yang. (Cheng-hsin 1:36).

[Wang Yüan-ching recounts]: In the Chou Dynasty, there were eighteen states. Mu-kung of Ch'in held absolute power, and held a meeting to gather treasure. Because King P'ing of Ch'u had no treasure, he was fortunate to have Tzu-hsü, who was complete in both civil and military [skills], to accompany him to the assembly as his protector. Tzu-hsü's title (號) was Ming-fu (明甫). When Mu-kung heard [that he was coming], he was at his wits' end. Sometime later, King P'ing neglected the responsibilities of government. He dismissed his son, divorced his wife, and no longer employed worthy ministers. Thus affected, Tzu-hsü travelled from state to state, finally arriving in Chiang-nan. When he reached Tan-yang [丹陽, in present-day Anhwei], his luck changed for the worse and the time was inopportune. His food and clothing were insufficient. He could only tune pipes and beg for food. Our Patriarch [Lo] is using this tale in his scripture to demonstrate that people of today should not be lacking in compassion... (Cheng-hsin 1:36-37).

The longest passage in the Wu-pu liu-ts'e in which Lo appeals to oral tradition takes up two p'in of the Cheng-hsin ch'u-i pao-chüan.⁹⁰ Here he describes the model characters of Buddhist legend and Chinese history as "transformations" of the Holy Ancestor of the Limitless (無極聖祖), encouraging sentient beings to "return home" and demonstrate their faith in the Ancestor. These include the narratives of an Indian monarch's conversion to vegetarianism by the Deer King, the enlightenment of Śākyamuni Buddha, Mu-lien's journey to hell, and the righteous

93-156, 465-505. I have found no reference to Wu's "pipe-tuning" in any of these accounts.

It is more likely that Lo Ch'ing's reference (and Wang Yüan-ching's commentary) is based on the Yüan drama Wu Yüan ch'ui hsiao [Wu Yüan (Tzu-hsü) Tunes his Pipes] (伍員吹簫), composed by Li Shou-ch'ing (李壽卿), contained in Tsang Chin-shu, Yüan ch'ü hsüan [Selected Yüan Dramas] (Peking: 1958), II:647-667. The plot of the play is close to Wang Yüan-ching's narrative.

90. Cheng-hsin 5:38 - 6:61, translated in full, with Wang Yüan-ching's commentary, in Appendix III.

acts of a number of virtuous women and filial sons: Pao-lien (寶蓮), Meng Chiang (孟姜), Kao Ch'ai (高釵), Chiao Hua (蕉花), Lady Wang (王氏), the "Good and Virtuous Lady" (賢德聖女), Meng-tsung (孟宗), Kuo Chü (郭巨), Yüan Hsiao (袁小), and Wang Hsiang (王祥) -- all "transformations of *Wu-chi sheng-tsu* ... encouraging people of the present on the basis of examples from the past."

Sources for these references may have been early *pao-chüan* and *k'o-i*, primers (啓蒙) for women and children, village dramas, and tales of filial piety.⁹¹ The story of Mu-lien, for example, was known to village-dwellers through the "transformation texts" (變文) of Buddhist preachers and the popularizations of local drama.⁹² The tale of Fan Chi-liang's wife, Meng Chiang, has its genesis in *Mencius* (孟子) and the *Book of Rites* (禮記), but would have been known to Lo Ch'ing's contemporaries through performances of plays like "Lady Meng Chiang Delivering Winter Clothes."⁹³ The story of the "Holy Woman of Goodness and

91. Cheng Chih-ming, *Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan*, 200-201.

92. On the story of Mu-lien, see the *Mu-lien pien-wen* (目連變文), in Wang Ch'ung-min, *Tun-huang pien-wen chi*, 714-755, trans. by Victor Mair, *Tun-huang Popular Narratives*, 87-121. Cf. Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: 1988), 87-91. Mu-lien was the subject as well of the Yüan drama, *Hsing hsiao tao Mu-lien chiu-mu* (行孝道目連救母) [Realizing the Way of Filial Piety, Mu-lien Saves his Mother], not extant. Cf. Fu Hsi-hua, *Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu*, 351; Wang P'ei-lun, *Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien* [Dictionary of Dramas], 123; Chuang I-fu, *Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao*, 111-112.

93. The story of "the good wife of Fan Chi-liang" appears in the *Li chi* (SPPY edition, *Ching* 53, *chüan* 3, pp. 14a-14b) and *Meng-tzu* (SPPY, *Ching* 20, *chüan* 12, p. 7b). Meng Chiang is the subject of a transformation text discovered at Tun-huang, *Meng Chiang-nü pien-wen* (孟姜女變文) [The Transformation Text

Virtue," about a woman who shames her husband to make amends with a younger brother, was the subject of several tales (傳奇) and popular dramas.⁹⁴ Other tales alluded to by Lo Ch'ing appear not only in Yüan and Ming dramas, but also in the Twenty-four Tales of Filial Piety (二十四孝), a genre of popular literature assuming only the most elementary education, well-known to ordinary folk of late imperial China. These include Meng-tsung,⁹⁵ Kuo Chü,⁹⁶ Wang Hsiang,⁹⁷ and perhaps Yüan Hsiao.⁹⁸

of Lady Meng Chiang], in Wang Ch'ung-min, Tun-huang pien-wen chi, 32-35, and of several Yüan and Ming dramas, including Meng Chiang-nü sung han-i (孟姜女送寒衣), by Cheng T'ing-yü (鄭廷玉) of the Yüan, not extant. Cf. Fu Hsi-hua, Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu, 107; Wang P'ei-lun, Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien, 222, 327; Chuang I-fu, Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao, 40, 120, 210, 581.

94. The basic story related by Wang Yüan-ching in his commentary was common to a number of dramas and short stories composed in the Yüan and Ming Dynasties. The earliest available is Yang shih-nü sha-kou ch'üan-fu tsa-chü (楊氏女殺狗勸夫雜劇) [Lady Yang Kills a Dog to Encourage her Husband], by Hsiao Te-hsiang (蕭德祥) of the Yüan, contained in Tsang Chin-shu, Yüan-ch'ü hsüan, I:98-117. The tale appears in several ch'uan ch'i (傳奇) of the Yüan and Ming, including Sha-kou chi (殺狗記), P'i-p'a chi (琵琶記), and Ching-ch'ai chi (荊釵記), references for which may be found in Chung-kuo ts'ung-shu tsung-lu, II:1691, 1692. Cf. Yang Chia-lo, Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh pai-k'o ch'üan-shu [Encyclopedia of Chinese Literature] (Taipei: 1967), II:183; Fu Hsi-hua, Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu, 298; Chuang I-fu, Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-ka'o, 9-10; Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan, 201; Sakai Tadao, Chügoku zensho no kenkyü, 441.

95. Meng Kung-wu (孟恭武) of Wu (222-259) was renowned for his filial piety; San kuo chih, chüan 48 (SPPY edition, Shih 53.4, part 4, chüan 3), Chin shu, chüan 94 (SPPY, Shih 53.5, part 5, p. 10b). The tale appears in the Hsiao-tzu chüan (孝子傳), contained in Wang Ch'ung-min, Tun-huang pien-wen chi, 903, and the Erh-shih-ssu hsiao (二十四孝); I have examined a Ming copy of a Yüan edition of the Erh-shih-ssu hsiao shih (二十四孝詩), by Kuo Chü-ching (郭居敬) (preface 1300), which includes the story of Meng-tsung (story #3, no pagination), and the story "K'u-chu sheng-sun" (哭竹生筍) [Tears Raise the Bamboo Sprouts], contained in a Ch'ing

Lo employs these tales without explicit details, but his audience would have found in them immediately recognizable,

children's instruction book entitled Yen-wen tui-chao hui-t'u erh-shih-ssu hsiao (言文對照繪圖二十四孝) [Illustrated Twenty-four Tales of Filial Piety] (n.p., n.d.), 47-48. Lo Ch'ing may have seen a performance of Meng-tsung k'u-chu (孟宗哭竹) [Meng-tsung Weeps for Bamboo], by Ch'ü Kung-chih (屈恭之), or Ch'ü Tzu-ching (屈子敬), of the Yüan, not extant; cf. Wang P'ei-lun, Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien, 222; Fu Hsi-hua, Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu, 263; Yang Chia-lo, Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh pai-k'o ch'üan-shu, II:1168; Chuang I-fu, Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao, 345.

96. The earliest version of this story may be contained in the Sou shen chi (搜神記), by Kan Pao (干寶) of the Eastern Chin (317-419 A.D.): Wang Yün-wu, ed., Ts'ung-shu ch'eng-chi (叢書成集), volumes 2692-2694 (volume 2, chüan 11, p. 75). The tale also appears in the Hsiao-tzu chüan (Wang Ch'ung-min, Tun-huang pien-wen chi, 905-906) and the Erh-shih-ssu hsiao (Kuo Chü-ching, story #15; Yen-wen tui-chao hui-t'u erh-shih-ssu hsiao, "Wei-mu mai-erh" 為母埋兒 [Burying his Children for his Mother], 27-28). The story is the basis of a Yüan drama (author unknown) entitled Hsing hsiao-tao Kuo Chü mai erh (行孝道郭巨埋兒), not extant; Wang P'ei-lun, Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien, 145; Fu Hsi-hua, Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu, 299; Chuang I-fu, Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao, 565; Cheng Chi-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsün-yang su-yüan, 200.
97. Wang Hsiang, styled Hsiu-cheng (休徵), was a "filial son" of the Chin; Chin shu, chüan 33 (SPPY edition, Shih 53.5, part 5, pp. 1a-2b). Among "tales of filial piety," see Hsiao-tzu chüan (Wang Ch'ung-min, Tun-huang pien-wen chi, 907); Kuo Chü-ching, Erh-shih-ssu hsiao shih, story #6; Yen-wen tui-chao hui-t'u erh-shih-ssu hsiao, "Wo-ping ch'iu-li" (臥冰求鯉), 25-26. This narrative is the basis of a Yüan drama by Wang Chung-wen entitled Kan T'ien-ti Wang Hsiang wo ping (感天地王祥臥冰) [Moving Heaven and Earth, Wang Hsiang Lies on the Ice], not extant; cf. Wang P'ei-lun, Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien, 50; Fu Hsi-hua, Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu, 16; Chuang I-fu, Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao, 238; Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsün-yang su-yüan, 200.
98. Wang Yüan-ching attributes the tale to the Erh-shih-ssu hsiao, but I have not found it in Kuo Chü-ching's Erh-shih-ssu hsiao shih or other collections of this genre. The story is the basis for a Yüan or Ming drama entitled Yüan Chüeh t'o pa (袁覺拖芭) [Yüan Chüeh Drags a Bamboo Litter], anonymous, not extant; Wang P'ei-lun, Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien, 323; Fu Hsi-hua, Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu, 357; Chuang I-fu, Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao, 601.

powerful and persuasive models of faith and virtue. For these characters would have been well known to the people of the villages and market towns, depicted again and again in popular plays and operas, the songs and verses of the village tale-spinners, the missionary narratives of the "teaching monks", and the cautionary stories of mothers and wives. In his references to China's oral traditions, Lo Ch'ing directs his message of self-realization, and of faith in the "Holy Ancestor of the Limitless", to the illiterate soldiers, peasants and village-dwellers who made up his social world.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have been examining some of the "influences" on Lo Ch'ing's thought, including the scriptures and classics of the Three Teachings and the popular narratives of oral tradition. But we have also been forced to challenge the conventional view of exactly how texts and traditions influence an author and his conceptions. From his reconstructive quotations of Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian works to his references to mythologized figures from Chinese history and legend, Lo Ch'ing was an active interpreter of culture, not a passive recipient of pre-existing forms.

I have argued that it is not the "cultural objects" of Lo's intellectual world that identify him as a "popular" religious thinker, but rather the way he uses and interprets them. Lo's travels and broad education exposed him to a tremendous range of images and alternatives, from the practices of Ch'an and Pure

Land Buddhism, Taoist inner alchemy, and White Lotus sectarianism, to the texts of scholastic Buddhism, classical Taoism and Confucianism, and the village tales and Buddhist narratives of oral tradition. The range is so wide that it cannot "fix" Lo Ch'ing's position in Chinese culture and society. When we examine his attitudes towards and distinctive method of employing these shared cultural products, however, we can begin to articulate the distinguishing characteristics of a popular religious perspective.

What aspects of Lo Ch'ing's interpretation of culture set him apart from that of a "classically educated, legally privileged" Confucian official or Buddhist monk? There are several characteristics of Lo's religious thought, use of traditions and texts, and style of expression which identify him as a popular thinker, and a representative figure in the history of Chinese popular religions:

(1) His manipulation of textual sources: Though Lo's heavy reliance on classical texts to bolster his teachings evidences a basic appreciation for the power and prestige of written traditions, he shows no hesitation in altering and even creating his citations for his own pedagogical purposes. His use of texts is reminiscent of the improvisational techniques of story-tellers and preachers, and Lo approaches written materials in a manner that may have been inspired by the methods of these semi-literate culture-bearers, adjusting his sources to suit his message and his audience. At once indebted to the legitimizing power of the scriptures and classics and at the same time remarkably free in

his utilization of those materials, Lo was able to manipulate tradition in the service of creative innovation.⁹⁹

(2) The re-interpretation of metaphors and abstractions in concrete terms: We have observed that Lo repeatedly assigns personal and physical attributes to the metaphysical abstractions of the Three Teachings: Emptiness, the *Tao*, and the Limitless. Emptiness "rules Heaven and Earth"; the *Tao* is the "Creator and Director of the ten thousand things"; *Wu-chi* is capable of "transformation" into *bodhisattvas* and virtuous men and women, as the "Holy Ancestor" and "Eternal Mother". While it is true that Lo ultimately identifies these conceptions with the spiritual self within the individual, his language is predominantly concrete and imagistic. It is not surprising that his followers -- within two generations of his death -- interpreted him literally, founding cults to the Eternal Venerable Mother (無生老母) and to Lo as sect patriarch.¹⁰⁰

99. I have tried to illustrate that Lo's use of the scriptures and classics betrays his commoner background and informal, self-motivated education. This is not to say that cultural elites have not themselves been very free in their employment of textual allusion; Chinese literati have never hesitated to paraphrase and alter texts, often to a significant degree and frequently without attribution. What is distinctive about Lo is not *that* he manipulates his sources, but *how*. He trades on the cultural power of the scriptures and classics while at the same time challenging their teachings and undermining their authority. It is his particular interpretation of shared cultural objects that serves as the basis for the social-locational analysis I have employed.

100. Among the defining characteristics of the popular interpretation of texts, Roger Chartier includes the following: "...the division of the text into autonomous units that stand meaningfully by themselves ... [the combination] of fragments which would have been considered unrelated from a more learned point of view ... the literal

(3) Relativizing the literati and scholastic traditions:

What sets Lo apart is not the fact that he is a "syncretist" -- syncretism is nothing more than the subsuming of "provisional" theories under a "real" or "primary" expression of the truth, and is common to every tradition (both elite and popular) in the history of Chinese religions -- but that he subsumes the Three Traditions themselves, as well as their founders and basic texts, under his own "highest principles" in an inclusive system. Though much of his religious language is adopted from Buddhism and his cosmological terms from Sung Neo-Confucianism, his criticism of the Three Teachings is direct and explicit. Lo was willing to trade on the authority of their traditions and texts, and clearly was inspired by their language and example, but his particular cultural synthesis was created in his own terms, self-consciously removed from the ethical and ideological orthodoxies of temple and school. Lo Ch'ing assigned new meanings to traditional conceptions, and saw in his own religious discoveries an absolute standard of moral cultivation and a comprehensive vision of the unity and purpose of historical events.

interpretation of metaphors..." Chartier, "*La culture populaire en question*," *H. Histoire* 8 (1981), 92. As Peter Burke writes, "Taking over the forms of official culture did not necessarily involve taking over the meanings usually associated with them." Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 123. On the relationship between "meaning" and "interpretation" in the Chinese context, see Evelyn S. Rawski, "Problems and Prospects," *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, 401-402.

(4) Debt to traditional forms: Innovative as he was, Lo could only express his thought in a way that was both familiar to himself and acceptable to his audience. His appeal to oral traditions betrays commonly held values of heroism and righteous behavior. The style of his writing suggests the influence of popular genres; it is likely that in composing the Wu-pu liu-ts'e Lo adopted the form of the *k'o-i* and *pao-chüan* in use in his time, with their distinctive style of verse and prose-verse alternation, simple language, and standard patterns of organization. Though Lo's *pao-chüan* mark a new stage in the history of the genre, they can be identified with a tradition of religious literature composed for popular consumption, and the Wu-pu liu-ts'e may indeed be the first *pao-chüan* actually written by a semi-literate, self-educated layman with a commoner background. His debt to popular expression identifies Lo with ordinary folk, and his creativity is bounded by the requirements of familiarity and acceptability. In this sense, Lo's popular audience represents a silent partner in the composition of the Five Books.¹⁰¹

What holds true of all of these characteristics is that they deal with the *use and interpretation* of culture. They distinguish a popular interpretation of texts and traditions, and they could equally be applied, in other contexts, to a popular

101. Again quoting Peter Burke, writing of seventeenth-century actors, "The traditional performer was no mere mouthpiece for tradition, but he was not free to invent whatever he liked ... He produced his own variations, but within a traditional framework." Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, 115.

ritual-interpretation of a ceremony or a popular performance-interpretation of a play. Lo Ch'ing was very much an "active reader" of the books, theories and practices of his culture, and the nature of his reading demonstrates his popular origins.

Having examined now Lo's education and social background, and how these interacted with his religious thought, I turn in Chapter V to an evaluation of Lo's role as a "cultural mediator" between elites and commoners, the literate and the illiterate.

Chapter V: Lo Ch'ing as Cultural Mediator: Segmentation, Continuity, and the History of Ideas

Over the course of his religious career, Lo Ch'ing became a bridge for values and conceptions. A candidate neither for ordination nor for government service, he travelled in search of learning, and absorbed the written styles and intellectual trends of his culture. Born as a commoner, he rose to the status of a self-sufficient religious leader. From this social and cultural mobility, he derived his inclusive system of thought and his widespread appeal.

Again let us evaluate Lo Ch'ing's role in the history of Chinese religions from a cross-cultural and a cross-disciplinary perspective.

We have seen that Lo Ch'ing occupied a middle position in Ming society and culture, half-way between the classically educated few and the illiterate many, and between the politically autonomous gentry class and the dependent peasantry. David Johnson has identified this position as representative of a "literate/self-sufficient" group at an intermediate level on each of two axes, which he defines in terms of "communication" (education) and "dominance" (political status).¹ Individuals in this group functioned as cultural mediators between the highest and lowest levels of education and political privilege.

They lived close to the illiterate peasants and town workers, often earned their livings in similar ways, and

1. David Johnson, "Communication, Class, and Consciousness in Late Imperial China," in Johnson, Andrew Nathan, and Evelyn Rawski, eds., Popular Culture in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: 1985), 34-72.

probably enjoyed similar entertainments. Yet they could read, and hence were able to have direct access to at least part of the realm of the written word.

Their particular position in society enabled them "...to bridge the gap between the learned and the illiterate..."²

As educational opportunities increased and greater numbers of inexpensive books came into print, the population of at least semi-literate readers grew dramatically.³ Johnson speculates that members of this group constituted the reading public for works addressed to a popular market: "cheap editions of the classics with simple commentaries, almanacs, shorter (and therefore less expensive) *pao-chüan* and *shan-shu*, ballad broadsheets and pamphlets such as the 'wooden-fish books' of Kwangtung, ... and 'chapbooks' [cheaply printed popular novels]."

Clearly such books were intended for people very similar to those in the literate/self-sufficient group... These novels, and all the other inexpensive texts aimed at non-elite reading audiences, have hardly been studied, since they were despised by the Chinese scholars ... [whose] contempt has been passed on from generation to generation. Moreover, these books are difficult to find, for the book collectors who were interested in such 'trash' were rare indeed. But in the aggregate, such works must have been far and away the most widely circulated literature in late imperial China. It was the only kind of text that many people ever read. The cumulative impact of these writings

2. *ibid.*, 64. For another description of the creativity and bridging function of this "middle ambivalent social stratum" in Ming and Ch'ing China, see Paul S. Ropp, Dissent in Early Modern China: *Ju-lin wai-shih* and Ch'ing Social Criticism (Ann Arbor: 1981), 31-32.

3. Evelyn S. Rawski, Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China (Ann Arbor: 1979); "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial China," Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, 11-28; Robert F. Hegel, The Novel in Seventeenth-Century China (New York: 1981), 10-22; Wu Kuang-ch'ing, "Ming Printing and Printers," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 7 (1942-43), 229-232.

on Chinese culture was very great, for not only did they give order and direction to the ideas and beliefs of the moderately educated people who read them, but they probably influenced significantly a great variety of oral material ... that circulated among the illiterate everywhere in China. These texts, standing as they did on the boundary between the written and the oral, played a crucial role in the complex process by which elements of elite literary culture were translated into terms that the illiterate could comprehend.⁴

Johnson could have been describing the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, which, as we have seen, bridges the divide between written and oral expression, and is thus a vehicle for conceptions made accessible to every level of society and culture.

We can observe the mediating role of similar texts in medieval Europe, in the ballads, broadsides, chapbooks, and *livres d'heures* peddled by itinerant artists, artisans, performers, healers, teachers and preachers.⁵ Not all of these texts were produced by the persons who used them -- in both China and Europe, many, if not the vast majority, of the "popular" novels, plays, almanacs, and liturgical books were composed by missionizing elites "writing down" to a popular audience -- but in Lo Ch'ing, at least, we seem to have an author truly standing

4. "Communication, Class, and Consciousness," 65. Cf. Ropp, Dissent, 48-55.

5. Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (New York: 1978), 92-112; Natalie Davis, "Printing and the People," in her Society and Culture in Early Modern France (Stanford: 1975), 189-226. On the *livres d'heures*, which included texts of church services and selections from scripture, and were "printed in enormous quantities" in the sixteenth century -- parallel in form and function to the *pao-ch'uan* and *k'o-i* of the same era in China -- see Roger Chartier, "Culture as Appropriation: Popular Cultural Uses in Early Modern France," in Steven L. Kaplan, ed., Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century (New York: 1984), 240.

in the center and employing the style of writing most familiar to him.

This brings us to the question of audience, and the distinction between the "intended audience" -- or "public" of a work -- and the "actual audience" -- those who actually read it.⁶ Directing one's writings to particular audiences is a characteristic of Ming and Ch'ing letters, inspired in later generations by the "urge for social reform" of Wang Yang-ming's disciples. Didactic writing by the scholar-elite for the benefit of a "popular" audience is one example of this trend: scholar-officials, based on their experiences as local magistrates, took to writing schoolbooks for children, poetry for women, and moral advice for the common people.⁷ Handbooks for moral self-improvement (善書), which we associate today with China's "popular culture", began with elite audiences and only later in their evolution came to address their injunctions to more narrowly defined groups, from scholars and officials to merchants, artisans, and farmers.⁸ Ming and Ch'ing fiction,

6. I am following the usage of literary "publics" applied by Natalie Davis ("Printing and the People," 192-193), which seems to be the more conventional one, and not as defined by David Johnson ("Communication, Class, and Consciousness," 41).

7. Joanna F. Handlin, Action in Late Ming Thought: The Reorientation of Lu K'un and Other Scholar-Officials (Berkeley: 1983); Willard Peterson, Bitter Gourd: Fang I-Chih and the Impetus for Intellectual Change (New Haven: 1979).

8. Tadao Sakai, "Confucianism and Popular Educational Works," in William T. de Bary, ed., Self and Society in Ming Thought (New York: 1970), 331-366; Cynthia Brokaw, "Determining One's Own Fate: The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century China" (Ph.D. thesis: Harvard University, 1980). Brokaw maintains that, in the Ming and Ch'ing, *shan-shu* were composed by elite authors for the education of

taking as its subject matter the experience of every livelihood (monk, emperor, and courtesan, to name a few), directed itself to a variety of social groups, most notably a growing number of literate commoners; recent scholarship has begun to explore not only the social background of the authors, but that of their readers as well.⁹ Finally, *pao-chüan* of the Ch'ing and Republican periods were aimed at farmers, laborers, and other "local" folk, with a message of hope and promise suited to their condition.¹⁰ For all of these genres, the investigation of "audience" -- both intended and real -- may prove as revealing sociologically as the study of the political and economic background of their compilers.

Viewed in this context, Lo Ch'ing is noticeably catholic in his intended appeal, alternately directing his teachings to

literate commoners: "Thus, education may have been 'democratized' to the extent that efforts are made to extend it to all levels of the population, but the primary purpose of this extension, at least through the [*shan-shu*], is the inculcation of values appropriate to the maintenance of a social hierarchy supporting the existing elite" (364-365).

9. Paul S. Ropp, Dissent in Early Modern China, 48-55; Robert E. Hegel, "Distinguishing Levels of Audiences for Ming-Ch'ing Vernacular Literature," Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, 112-142; Judith A. Berling, "Religion and Popular Culture: The Management of Moral Capital in The Romance of the Three Teachings," Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, 188-218; Evelyn S. Rawski, Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China, 109-124.
10. Daniel Overmyer, "Attitudes Toward the Ruler and State in Chinese Popular Religious Literature: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century *Pao-chüan*," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 44 (1984), 347-379; and "Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature: Ming and Ch'ing *Pao-chüan*," Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, 219-254; Richard H.C. Shek, "Religion and Society in Late Ming: Sectarianism and Popular Thought in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century China" (Ph.D. thesis: University of California, Berkeley, 1980).

particular kinds of individual. He enjoins emperors and kings to abandon their riches for those of the Way, urges wealthy merchants and ministers to forswear meat and drink, warns scholars of the dangers of bookish learning, reproves bandits and brigands, misers and moneylenders, and addresses monks and nuns, laymen and laywomen each in turn. Lo is so conscious of his audience that he may even be said to employ a sophisticated kind of *upâya*, altering his message according to the background and proclivities of his listeners.

Clearly, Lo is aware of his audience -- but he does not limit his outreach to a particular type of audience, class, or social group. The social background of an author does not define his public, and we should be careful how we define "popular literature"; Lo Ch'ing is a "popular" religious figure, and his writings an early example of "popular" sectarian scripture, but this should not lead us to assume that he limits his focus to popular society. Lo stretches his imagination to include every possible listener.

There is some evidence that Lo was successful -- that his actual "audience" did conform to his "public". We have seen that eunuchs, ministers, scholars, and priests were among the patrons of his works, and hagiographies of the patriarch describe disciples from the gentry class and military elite. Whatever the case in the early years after Lo's death, however, the Lo sects appear to have consisted of groups at a middle and lower level of status and education by the eighteenth century. Elite critics such as Huang Yü-p'ien and Chu-hung found the Wu-pu liu-ts'e to

be simplistic, repetitive, and unorthodox,¹¹ and the Lo sects, as we have seen, were regularly subjected to government censure from the late sixteenth century onward.

We have been treating the Wu-pu liu-ts'e as a medium for written communication among Lo Ch'ing's audience, but it was equally a medium for oral communication and for the "transcription" of oral traditions into written form and the "translation" of written materials into oral form. Lo's use of Buddhist narratives and popular stories, discussed in Chapter IV above, is an example of the written transcription of oral traditions, and the very form of his writing -- in seven- and ten-character verse -- may have been derived from popular rhymes and songs.¹² In the other direction, Lo's pao-chüan had obvious ritual uses, and were typically chanted and memorized by Lo sectarians, many of whom we can assume were illiterate. Important as the Wu-pu liu-ts'e and other pao-chüan were to become, the sects were equally dependent upon oral transmission for the dissemination of their teachings.¹³

11. Huang remarks that pao-chüan authors "compose several hundred verses... to say what could be expressed fully in just a few." Sawada Mizuho, Kôchû haja shôben, 67, quoted in Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsün-yang su-yüan (Taipei: 1985), 32, 38; Sawada Mizuho, Zôho hôkan no kenkyû (Tokyo: 1975), 67.

12. Literary critics trace the verse cadence of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e to popular opera and folk songs, such as the "Shansi opera" (梆子腔戲) and drum-accompanied songs (鼓兒詞) of the north China plain. Tseng Tzu-liang, Pao-chüan chih yen-chiu (Taipei: 1975), 46; Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsün-yang su-yüan (Taipei: 1985), 38-39.

13. Susan Naquin, "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China," Popular Culture in Late Imperial

Standing as he did in an intermediate position of political autonomy and literacy, Lo was able to address an audience that included peasants and soldiers, artisans and merchants, ministers and kings. Moreover, his message of religious salvation was expressed in terms familiar to a wide range of social groups, with an underlying assumption of values and conceptions acceptable at every level -- the values of traditional Confucianism and Buddhism (filial piety, loyalty, non-injury, compassion) interpreted in the context of a new social and religious vision. In this sense, Lo Ch'ing was not only a "creator", but also a "transmitter" of common cultural values, mediating between elite and popular society. Neither defined nor limited by a conventional social identity, he did not represent a particular social perspective, and could articulate values for his society as a whole, transcending the narrow interests of specific groups. Peter Brown describes a similar function performed by the "holy man" of early medieval Europe; he was "a mediator in village life" precisely because he occupied a liminal position, "[standing] outside the ties of family, and of economic interest."¹⁴

Though sixteenth-century China witnessed an expanding economy permitting the accumulation of wealth and influence

China, 271-273; "Connections Between Rebellions: Sect Family Networks in Qing China," Modern China 8 (1982), 345.

14. Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," in his Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity (Berkeley: 1982), 135.

outside the gentry class,¹⁵ still, in the context of mid-Ming society, with its established religious alternatives and regular routes to political advancement, Lo Ch'ing defied categorization. His remarkable facility with the written language would have enhanced his prestige among both elites and commoners, while his employment of popular forms of written as well as oral expression would have made his message accessible to a wide audience. Neither official nor monk, yet conversant with both; a man "of the people", yet empowered by literacy; politically and economically undistinguished, yet unconcerned about the successes of this world -- Lo was in a particularly good position to serve as a bridge for cultural transmission. Add to this his message of universal enlightenment and the spiritual equality of all men and women, and Lo Ch'ing represents a living embodiment of a radical social and religious ideal, accessible to all.

A man in Lo's position would not only have been a mediator of culture but a mediator of power as well -- that is, the religious power of prophetic leadership. He is Weber's "charismatic prophet", socially undefined and independent, and therefore in a position to articulate a new system of morality

15. Denis Twitchett, "A Critique of Some Recent Studies of Modern Chinese Social and Economic History," Transactions of the Conference of Orientalists in Japan 10 (1965), 28-41; Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "The Evolution of Local Control in Late Imperial China," in Wakeman and C.A. Grant, eds., Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China (Berkeley: 1975), 1-25; Hilary J. Beattie, Land and Lineage in China: A Study of T'ung-ch'eng County, Anhwei, in the Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties (Cambridge: 1979).

and value.¹⁶ Contemporary social anthropologists such as Victor Turner and Mary Douglas describe the sacred power of individuals who are not easily "class-ified" or categorized: they stand in a "liminal" position, "betwixt and between" clearly defined social groups, and are thus viewed as especially potent mediators of religious authority.¹⁷ The establishment of numerous sects in Lo's name, each with cults dedicated to Lo Ch'ing as their "founding patriarch", attests to his magnetism and charisma. This "sacred power" arose as much from his intermediate and socially undefinable position as it did from his teachings. After all, Lo's message of "non-manipulative" mind-cultivation was not radically new; but his peculiar position in his society, as well as the form in which he expressed himself, gave this message an extraordinary medium of transmission.

This is an alternative to the familiar "social deprivation" theory of sectarian leadership, which describes sect founders and officials as members of a "frustrated secondary elite" who have achieved a middle level of education and social advancement but are unable, for a variety of reasons, to bring themselves higher recognition in the traditional order.¹⁸ There is no evidence to

16. Max Weber, The Sociology of Religion, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff (Boston: 1963), 46-59.

17. Victor Turner, The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure (Ithaca: 1969), 94-130; Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors (Ithaca: 1974), 231-271; Mary Douglas, Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo (New York: 1966), 94-113.

18. Norman Cohn, The Pursuit of the Millenium (New York: 1961), 251-271. Cf. Sylvia Thrupp, ed., Millenial Dreams in Action (The Hague: 1962). For a statement of this view in the Chinese context, see Yuji Muramatsu, "Some Themes in Chinese

suggest that Lo Ch'ing experienced this kind of frustration or sense of inferiority prior to his religious awakening, or that he had ever pursued the traditional paths to success. On the contrary, it appears in his writings that Lo took considerable pride in being institutionally unattached, and was expressing a positive alternative to conventional forms of social and religious self-realization, not "sour grapes" for his failings.

Lo Ch'ing and his Wu-pu liu-ts'e occupy an intermediate, "liminal" position between social groups and between elite and popular forms of written expression. As a consequence, they appeal to a wide audience and function as transmitters of a broad range of cultural values and conceptions. As it turns out, Lo's works became the central recitation texts of a long and continuing tradition of Chinese sectarian religion, and thus played an important role in the translation of written materials into oral traditions. This is not to say that Lo facilitated the "sinking" of values and conceptions from the creative- literate- elite to the passive-illiterate-folk,¹⁹ because Lo himself was an

Rebel Ideologies," in Arthur Wright, ed., The Confucian Persuasion (Stanford: 1960), 255-256. On "social deprivation" as a basic motivating factor for general participation in sects and millenarian rebellions, see Susan Naquin, Millenarian Rebellion in China, 38-39; "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China," 257.

19. In Chapter IV, I challenge this "popular-elite distinction" both for defining the contrasts too sharply and for failing to recognize the role of intermediate levels of educational background and political autonomy in the process of cultural integration. I question as well the model of cultural integration (transmission of values and conceptions) which describes a "sinking" from high to low, because it ignores the interpretative process of alteration and manipulation exerted at the "receiving end" of culture. This is well

active interpreter of written traditions from a popular perspective -- but he did succeed in making the vocabulary of the scriptures and classics part of the working language of the people, and, as a result, in promoting the cultural integration of late imperial society.

A similar function seems to have been performed by Wang Yang-ming and his "left-wing" followers. We have already compared the biographies of Lo Ch'ing and Wang Yang-ming, especially in regard to their experiences of spiritual suffering and attachment to family, but the continuity of their philosophical convictions is even more readily apparent. Near-contemporaries (Lo was thirty years senior to Wang, and the two died but one year apart, in 1527 and 1528, respectively), they expressed their visions of ideal humanity in almost identical terms, and both became conduits for the cultural integration of elite and popular society.

In a superlative study of the intellectual thought of Lo Ch'ing and the Yang-ming School, Richard Shek has identified the "self" and "interiority" as a common focus at every level of late Ming society.²⁰ He associates this "remarkable similarity"

illustrated in Lo Ch'ing's active manipulation of written materials and of the values and conceptions they express.

20. Richard Shek, "Elite and Popular Reformism in Late Ming: The Traditions of Wang Yang-ming and Lo Ch'ing," Rekishi no okeru minshu to bunka: Sakai Tadao sensei koki shukuga kinen ronshu (Tokyo: 1982), 1-21. Since this article is not available in most North American libraries, I quote his argument extensively in the following discussion.

between popular and elite conceptions with profound social and economic changes occurring in late imperial Chinese society.

In his discussion of Lo Ch'ing and the Wu-pu liu-ts'e, Shek highlights the central importance of the "Ultimate of non-being" (無極, the Limitless) as the cosmological source of all things, identical to the "self-existent and complete" (現成) spiritual self within every individual. The character of *wu-chi*, and of the self, is beyond all distinctions, especially the distinction between good and evil.

Lo Ch'ing's portrayal of *wu-chi* goes beyond its function as progenitor of all things. It also depicts the nature of *wu-chi* as one that transcends all phenomenal distinctions. In Lo's own words, *wu-chi* is "not attached to being or non-being, buddhas or sentient lives, sages or commoners, clergy or laity, men or women, whence or whither, good or evil, cultivation or verification, vegetarianism or abstinence."²¹ In the final analysis, therefore, "there is no good or evil, and there is no form. Without augmentation and diminution, everything is self-existent and complete. The path to enlightenment requires no cultivation or verification, there is no origination and no cessation, neither is there contamination or purity."²² The breakdown of all conventional discriminations is seen to be a necessary precondition for ultimate release from worldly burdens and perpetual sufferings.²³

This "breakdown of all conventional discriminations" is the basis for Lo's rejection of intellectualism and scholasticism and for his view that simple, direct introspection is the route to spiritual realization. A proper understanding of oneself, gained through introspection, leads to a state of "liberation from

21. Shek does not provide publication data for his edition of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e. This quotation may be from K'u-kung 18:134.

22. Cf. P'o-hsieh 7:76.

23. Richard Shek, "Elite and Popular Reformism," 7.

anxiety and fear" and the attainment of "ease" (自在, autonomy) and "carefreeness" (縱橫, freedom) in the self.²⁴ Thus, Lo Ch'ing is a popular proponent of a "school" of mind-cultivation independent of orthodox Buddhism, including Ch'an.

Shek comments on the popularity of Lo's teachings among "learned laymen and even orthodox monks" as well as "the unsophisticated and the illiterate", and accounts for this wide appeal on the basis of intellectual change and economic trends in late Ming society.

Perhaps Lo's popularity can be attributed to the timeliness of his teaching. It was in harmony with the spirit of late Ming society, which gave free rein to individualistic impulses and iconoclastic attitudes. It should be recalled that the ascendancy of Lo Ch'ing's teaching coincided with the growing popularity of Wang Yang-ming's ideas. Upon closer examination, the two schools, one representing popular reformism in religion and the other symbolic of elite reformism in philosophy, did share much in common in their outlook.²⁵

In his discussion of Wang Yang-ming, Shek points out the similarities between Lo's *wu-chi* and Wang's idea of "original consciousness" (良知). *Liang-chih* is the "vacuous ... substance of the mind present in everything" and "the generative and transforming force of the universe."²⁶ Like Lo's *wu-chi*, *liang-chih* is identified with the "original face" (本來面目), which "transcends the distinction of good and evil" (無善無惡).²⁷ Shek describes the applications of liang-chih and the idea of "non-

24. Shek, 8-10.

25. Shek, 12.

26. *ibid.*

27. Shek, 13.

distinction in morality" among Yang-ming's "left-wing" followers Wang Chi (王畿), Wang Ken (王艮), Yen Chün (顏鈞), Ho Hsin-yin (何心隱), and Li Chih (李贄).²⁸

The "uncannily similar positions" of Lo Ch'ing and Wang Yang-ming, and the "amazing resemblance" revealed in their philosophical terminology, evidence "a 'shared grammar' among the elites and the commoners in Ming":²⁹ "both advocated a return to and a renewed awareness of the primordial substance which gives rise to human existence"; both placed that "ultimate reality" within the mind; both inferred from their "ethical-religious" cosmology a "sense of self-worth and individual dignity"; and each shared an "insistence on the irrelevance of ordinary moral standards in the realm of ultimate reality."³⁰

Shek accounts for these similarities on the basis of common "intellectual trends" in the late Ming, which he associates -- without significant comment -- with social and economic change. His article opens this way:

Late Ming China was a society rife with tensions. These tensions, together with an attendant crisis-consciousness, were created by unprecedented social-economic conditions such as phenomenal population growth, commercialization, monetization, urbanization, introduction of new crops from America, an increasingly inequitable land-tenure system, growing landlord-tenant antagonism and master-bondservant struggles, consolidation of autocratic rule, democratization of education, rising literacy, rapid ballooning of the ranks of lower gentry, urban riots, and unrestrained hedonism. Confronted by such an array of dramatic changes, sensitive members from every stratum of late Ming society felt compelled to retreat inward. Only in

28. Shek, 13-15.

29. Shek, *sic*, 16.

30. Shek, 16-17.

the inner depths of the self, they reasoned, could one find a sanctuary to escape from and to face the turbulent world on the outside. This preoccupation with the self and interiority was symptomatic of the late Ming period.³¹

His article concludes with these statements:

It is clear that both schools [i.e., the Yang-ming School and the Lo sects] were quintessential products of the Ming preoccupation with the mind. As idealistic movements both were in tune with the spirit of the age. The emphasis on intuition, the affirmation of individual worth, the insistence on moral relativism, the assertion of freedom and autonomy, and the optimistic appraisal of the basic human ability to solve problems without assistance -- these were all issues characteristic of the Ming period. The two schools founded by Lo Ch'ing and Wang Yang-ming addressed these issues with essentially the same language and arrived at strikingly similar conclusions.³²

On the statement that the themes of self-realization and "interiority" preoccupied Ming intellectuals, we cannot comment critically. A look at the Ming-ju hsüeh-an (明儒學案), a survey of important thinkers in the Ming composed by the Ch'ing intellectual historian Huang Tsung-hsi,³³ would indicate that they did, but Wang Yang-ming's influence was so pervasive -- among both his followers and his detractors -- that we would be surprised if they did not. To describe the concerns of the

31. Shek, 1. Shek does not annotate any of his characterizations of late Ming society, and some at least would have to be challenged. See, for example, William T. Rowe, "Approaches to Modern Chinese Social History," in Olivier Zunz, ed., Reliving the Past: The Worlds of Social History (Chapel Hill: 1985), 236-296. For a general confirmation of his view that social and economic change gave rise to spiritual "anxiety" among Ming intellectuals, see Evelyn S. Rawski, "Economic and Social Foundations of Late Imperial Culture," Popular Culture in Late Imperial China, 3-11.

32. Shek, 18.

33. Julia Ching, ed. and principle translator, The Records of Ming Scholars by Huang Tsung-hsi (Honolulu: 1987).

Yang-ming School as "characteristic of the age" would appear to be self-evident, since it was the Yang-ming School that defined the age.

Nor can we fault Shek's characterizations of Lo Ch'ing and Wang Yang-ming. It may not be the case that "non-distinction in morality" was a key theme in Lo Ch'ing's religious thought, but it does appear in the context of his general condemnation of phenomenal distinctions (between men and women, monks and laymen in particular) and "manipulative" methods of religious cultivation. And we cannot challenge the association made by Shek between intellectual trends and social and economic changes, except to say that a more nuanced and detailed argument must be provided to demonstrate the *causal* connection between them -- an argument that can be made with greater precision as we learn more about late imperial society and culture. Moreover, if this connection can be articulated more clearly, it should not surprise us, for the social life and intellectual conceptions of a people are both aspects of a common culture.

The response that should be made to Shek's competent and clear exposition of "elite" and "popular" ideas is that their similarities need not be as "startling" or "remarkable" as he makes them. To use these terms to describe their commonalities implies that elite and popular *should* be distinct, and that cultural continuity is not the norm. We have attempted to demonstrate that this was not the case -- that the elite-popular distinction is ill-founded, and that Lo Ch'ing was himself a vehicle for the transmission of values and conceptions between

gentry and commoners and between the literate and the illiterate. Cultural integration should not be surprising, and semi-literate and illiterate commoners are as much the agents of cultural integration as are intellectuals and scholastic monks.

The point we are making here is echoed by Carlo Ginzberg in the concluding paragraphs of his study of the sixteenth-century Italian miller Menocchio, a simple man whose theological conceptions and moral values were not unlike those of reform-minded clerics of the same period:

We have seen cropping up repeatedly, from beneath a very profound difference in language, surprising similarities between basic currents in the peasant culture we have endeavored to reconstruct and those in the most progressive circles of sixteenth-century culture. To explain these similarities simply on the basis of movement from high to low involves clinging to the unacceptable notion that ideas originate exclusively among the dominant classes. On the other hand, rejection of this simplistic explanation implies a much more complicated hypothesis about relationships in this period between the culture of the dominant classes and the culture of the subordinate classes... It forcefully poses a problem the significance of which is only now beginning to be recognized: that of the popular roots of a considerable part of high European culture, both medieval and postmedieval.³⁴

Ginzberg's comments raise some important questions about the object of our study. To what extent might Lo Ch'ing and other popular thinkers have been the origin of the "intellectual trends" that characterize late Ming society? What was their contribution to the evolution of Chinese intellectual history?

34. Carlo Ginzberg, The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: 1980), 125-126. We should point out that Richard Shek does not attribute the commonality of themes in Lo Ch'ing and Wang Yang-ming to the "sinking" of values and conceptions from high to low.

What role did they play not only in the dissemination of values and conceptions, but also in their creation? More fundamentally, how should we characterize the values and conceptions of a culture? If, as we have argued, culture is one, how should we describe the differences between elite and popular *interpretations* of culture? What approaches should we take to understand "popular religion" as opposed to the "great traditions", or should our approaches be the same, denying any fundamental *cultural* difference between the two?

In this thesis, I have attempted to evaluate Lo Ch'ing from a variety of points of view and academic approaches. These have included an analysis of the religious personality, both in terms of its psychological development and its hagiographic representations; the study of texts, and a straightforward description of the ideas and values they express; the history and ethnology of groups, and their principles of organization, social functions, and forms of ritual expression; and the evaluation of "cultural objects" -- language, morality, ritual -- and how their written and oral expression is grounded in experience, both social and educational. One implication of the rejection of an elite-popular distinction that describes isolated "cultures" is that we should not apply different scholarly approaches to the cultural products of high and low society. This means avoiding the temptation to employ exclusively social-anthropological methods in the study of popular religion or exclusively critical-hermeneutic methods in the study of textual traditions. We have attempted here to view a popular religious leader from

the perspective of both social and intellectual history, and we advocate more studies of social elites and their texts from the perspective not only of intellectual history, but also the history and anthropology of social groups.

Lo Ch'ing has been a fascinating and fruitful subject of study. He left us an autobiography that, in its intensity and drama, was the first of its kind. He expressed religious conceptions that were at once profoundly introspective and at the same time rich in tangible metaphor and imagery. He was credited with founding a cult that gained a tremendous following in late imperial China and can still be observed and studied today. He quoted from books whose titles can be found only in his works, and, in his manipulation of extant scriptures and classics, demonstrated the creative imagination of popular textual interpretation. As a vehicle for commonly held values and conceptions, he was a medium for cultural integration in an increasingly mobile and complex society.

There is much good work still to be done on Lo Ch'ing and his sects. What is the relationship between later *pao-chūan* and the Wu-pu liu-ts'e? What other texts were read and recited by Lo sectarians, and what is their relationship to the Patriarch's teachings? How widespread were the Lo sects; how did they define themselves in relation to other sectarian groups, such as the White Lotus society; and what were the filiations of their many divisions into sub-sects and branches? What is the status of contemporary Lo sects on the mainland of China, and what are their principle texts, rituals, devotional cults, and forms of

religious cultivation? What other "Lo Ch'ing's" are waiting to be discovered, as agents of cultural creativity and innovation, composing and distributing written records of their thoughts and activities? What role did these persons play in shaping the social, religious, and intellectual history of China?

Allow me to end this study with my own brief "Ode to Patriarch Lo":

"Glory to the *Boddhisattva-Mahâsattva* of the Dragon-Flower Assembly! Glory to the *Boddhisattva-Mahâsattva* Patriarch-Master Lo! Glory to the *Bodhisattva-Mahâsattva* of the Sect of the Great Vehicle!" You have been the voice for the voiceless thoughts and visions of your age, a spokesman for the majesty and integrity of the human spirit -- and a source of inspiration at a scholar's desk, half a millenium and ten thousand li from the "native place" of your soul.

Appendix I

The Wu-pu liu-ts'e

The general structure and basic content of the Wu-pu liu-ts'e can be charted briefly as follows. Page numbers are from the 16-*chüan* edition published by the *Min-te t'ang*, Taichung, in 1980. All references are by book, *p'in*, and page number; *chüan* numbers are not indicated.

I. K'u-kung wu-tao chüan, in 18 sections (品 or 參).

Following prefaces by Wang Yüan-ching and P'u-shen, "General Instructions" for approaching and reading the text, a block print of Patriarch Lo ("Nation-Defender *Dharma-King*," "Founding Patriarch of the Limitless on High"), ritual instructions for recitation of the scriptures, a preface by Lo Ch'ing, and the verse biography by Lan Feng (quoted in Chapter I above), the Autobiography begins:

1. Sighs for the Impermanence of the World (嘆世無常品), pp. 16-23: life is characterized by impermanence, as witnessed by Lo Ch'ing in the premature deaths of his parents;
2. Longing for Home (思慕家鄉品), pp. 23-30: after death, the soul (靈魂) is subject to transmigration, and Lo is anxious about his fate;
3. Seeking a Teacher to Inquire of the Way (尋師訪道品), pp. 30-39: after attempting to avoid death through the practice of immortality techniques, and finding himself rewarded only with loneliness and desperation, Lo is taken to a Pure Land master;
4. Seeing through the Vain and Empty (看破頑空品), pp. 39-44: Lo is discouraged by the futility of Pure Land recitation of Amitâbha's name, here identified with the "Eternal Father and Mother";
5. Pulling up Grasses in Search of Traces (撥草尋蹤品), pp. 44-53: after eight years of Pure Land practice, Lo overhears monks chanting the Ritual Instructions for the Diamond Sûtra (金剛科儀), and devotes three years of study to the text;
6. Penetrating the Marks and Uprooting the Emotions (破相拈情品), pp. 53-66: Lo attempts and rejects Ch'an meditation, Taoist rejuvenation practices, and popular divination;
7. Reaching to the Root in Search of the Origin (達本尋源品), pp. 66-72: Lo is penultimately enlightened to the Unmoved Emptiness that exists prior to all creation;

8. No Place to Rest (無處安身品), pp. 72-75: though Emptiness is the ultimate reality, Lo questions how this relates to his own destiny and sense of well-being;

9. Entering the Mountains and Penetrating the Seas (穿山透海品), pp. 76-79: Lo experiences a personal encounter with Emptiness, which penetrates his own body as well as all of creation;

10. Explaining "No-Mind" (說破無心品), pp. 41-46 [the second *chüan* of Book I begins with p. 41]: Lo discovers that attachment of any kind, even to Emptiness, is an obstacle to enlightenment;

11. Non-attachment to "Being" and "Non-Being" (不執有無品), pp. 46-50: the realization of the Emptiness of one's own Nature (性) should not result in attachment either to the mind or to metaphysical conceptions of "Being" and "Non-Being";

12. The Single Light that Shines Alone (孤光獨耀品), pp. 50-60: Lo's ultimate enlightenment experience comes in the form of a brilliant light shining upon his body;

13. Thorough Penetration of the Inner and Outer (裡外透徹品), pp. 60-67: Lo celebrates his awakening and the unobstructed freedom he has attained;

14. Prior to *Bhīṣma-garjita-ghosa-ṣvara-rāja* (威音王以前品), pp. 67-73: the Great Emptiness cannot be measured or named, and is One Body with the self;

15. The Way is not Subject to Cultivation or Confirmation (道無修證品), pp. 73-81: "cultivation" and "confirmation" entail seeking outside oneself, but the example of Lo's own life shows that the True Body of the Self is the proper vehicle of enlightenment;

16. The One Body of Chaotic Origins (混元一體品), pp. 81-87: Lo describes the origins of Heaven and Earth, when all things were identical to the one Nature and the one Home;

17. Joyfully Offering Thanks (樂道酬恩品), pp. 87-103: many have forgotten the original home of True Emptiness, but everyone is capable of returning to the one breath and one body of the Land of Bliss; this *p'in* closes with a declaration of gratitude to the emperor and his ministers;

18. Proclaiming the True Vehicle (唱演真乘品), pp. 103-139: Lo describes the Spiritual Light (靈光) within the Self, and closes this book with quotations from canonical *sūtras* on the Buddha-nature.

II. T'an-shih wu-wei chüan, in 12 p'in.

1. (no title), pp. 1-20: following an introductory prose encomium to the Subtle Teaching of the Unlimited (無極妙法), Lo exhorts his readers to guard the Law; he refers repeatedly to the example of Hsüan-tsang and his aides in their "journey to the West";

2. Dispelling Confusion to Manifest the Real (破迷顯證品), pp. 20-32: confused persons are not aware that their own True Bodies are the *Dharma-kāya* of the Buddhas, which reign over all things; instead they defame the True *Dharma* and are punished in hell;

3. The Baptismal Confessional of Kindness and Mercy (慈悲水懺品), pp. 32-54: a conventional explanation of the workings of *karma* and the sufferings of *samsāra*, with illustrations from popular tales; Lo urges his followers to swear off meat and strong drink;

4. The Subtle Meaning of the One-Sentence *Gāthā* (一句妙義品), pp. 54-68: recalling his own spiritual journey, Lo appeals to Ch'an works to support his "wordless teaching" that the mind and the Buddha are indistinguishable;

5. Lamentations for the Poor (祖嘆貧窮品), pp. 68-79: rebirth in a humble station, or as a domestic animal or wild beast, is the karmic fruit of evil; Lo's emphasis is the pain of *samsāra* and the inevitability of cyclic transmigration, suggesting that everyone is destined to lifetimes in animal and impoverished forms;

6. Lamentations for the Rich (祖嘆受富品), pp. 79-94: lending and borrowing money is fraught with uncertainty and insatiable craving; the rich are full of fear and anxiety, and their wealth amounts to nothing in the face of mortality;

7. Lamentations for Ministers and Officials (祖嘆宰官品), pp. 1-14: even fame and high office do not exempt one from the inevitable pain of *samsāra*; Lo cites numerous instances of kings and ministers who gave up all they had to follow the Way;

8. Lamentations for those who Renounce Household Life (祖嘆出家品), pp. 14-34: the renunciation of ordinary social ties produces loneliness, material anxiety, and want, but by no means insures the mental renunciation prerequisite for enlightenment; the ritual and meditative practices of monks and nuns are ultimately fruitless "methods of active manipulation" (有為法);

9. Lamentations for Brigands and Thieves (祖嘆賊盜品), pp. 34-44: harming another for personal gain leads inevitably to imprisonment and execution in this life, and centuries of karmic punishment in hell;

10. Dispelling Confusion to Manifest the Real (破迷顯證品), pp. 44-72: Lo exhorts his readers to desist from defaming the Law and grasping empty words and false images, and to rely on the mind that is "originally empty", despite its conscious activities;

11. Penetrating the Scriptures and Gāthās (破諸經偈品), pp. 72-93: Pure Land recitation of Amitābha's name, recitation of scriptures and gāthās, and Ch'an meditation are empty forms, as all intentional acts are characterized by vain emptiness; originally, there is only the one True Body of Emptiness;

12. In Gratitude for [the Buddha's] Repudiation of the Physical Body (厭身酬法品), pp. 94-112: quotations from canonical scriptures on the pains and impurities of the body.

III. P'o-hsieh hsien-cheng yao-shih chūan, in 24 p'in.

This book begins with a Table of Contents, a preface by Wang Yüan-ching and prefatory verse by Lan Feng, plus quotations from *sūtras* and *pao-chūan*.

1. Repudiating the Distinction between Lay and Clerical Disciples (破不論在家出家品), pp. 25-58: distinctions between monks and laymen, nuns and laywomen, and men and women create dualisms within the mind and overlook the shared potential of all persons to recognize the "Pure Land" within; Lo quotes extensively from canonical scriptures, the *Chin-kang k'o-i*, and popular Buddhist tales to support his teaching that the Way is undifferentiated;

2. Repudiating the Pain of Transmigration (破四生受苦品), pp. 58-99: rebirth among the four types of living beings, with the suffering characteristic of each, is the fruit of one's own actions and attitudes, but, recognizing this, the "person of superior capacity" seeks release through the wordless teaching of self-understanding;

3. Penetrating the Final Recourse of Enlightenment (破悟道末後一著品), pp. 99-115: recalling his own thirteen years of religious seeking, Lo urges others to recognize their identity with True Emptiness, and thereby with all persons and things;

4. Repudiating the Expedient Means of the Scriptures and Cultivation aimed at Becoming the *Deva* of *Devas* in Indra's Heaven (破覽集方便修三十三天諸天品), pp. 115-143: all outward forms of cultivation, lay or monastic, ritual or moral, merely perpetuate *samsāra*; enlightenment consists in recognition of the Original Face (本來面目) and the True Western Land and Primordial Home within the Self;

5. Repudiating the Supernormal Powers of the Three Treasures (破三寶神通品), pp. 1-37: making one's own Nature awakened, correct, and pure reveals the interiority of the Buddha, *Dharma*, and *Saṅgha*; all outward means of religious cultivation are forms of attachment, even though they may give rise to the attainment of supernormal powers such as flight, great strength, and long life;
6. Repudiating Meditation, Piety, the White Lotus, and the Fruits of Contemplation (破禪定威儀白蓮無想天品), pp. 37-68: "turning one's back" on purposive methods of religious cultivation, monastic or sectarian, is the Great Path of No-Birth (無生大道);
7. Repudiating the Ten Forms of Immortality Cultivation (破十樣仙品), pp. 68-92: though praising the religious practices of the legendary Lu Tung-pin, Lo rejects all forms of Taoist cultivation, whether "external" or "internal", the benefits of which are merely physical and still bound by the karmic laws of *samsāra*;
8. Repudiating the Efficacy of Charitable Acts and External Forms of Religious Cultivation, as Portrayed in Scripture, for the Realization of Enlightenment (破覽集金剛儀論布施咸悟菩提重辯重豈識覺性品), pp. 92-129: charitable gifts (財施), like all material things, are short-lived and subject to decay; only the "gift of the *Dharma*" (法施) has no karmic outflow and contributes to the salvation of others;
9. Repudiating the Efficacy of Maintaining the Precepts (破受戒品), pp. 129-139: the True Precepts (真戒) are within the Original Nature, and are not subject to outward cultivation;
10. Repudiating the Mimicry of Cultivation and Confirmation (破無修證傀儡品), pp. 139-157: visible forms of religious cultivation without a corresponding transformation of the mind are like the haphazard impulses of puppets;
11. Repudiating the *Gāthās* (破偈品), pp. 157-167: the "Four-Sentence," "Two-Sentence," and "One-Sentence" teachings of scripture are inferior to the "wordless teaching" of the True *Dharma*;
12. Penetrating the [Non-Dualist Principles] of the Heart Sūtra (破大顛無垢無佛無人無修證人法雙忘品), pp. 4-18: ultimately, even the most basic concepts of Buddhism are empty and prone to false differentiation;
13. Repudiating the Recitation of Scriptures and of the Buddha's Name, Faith in Heterodox Teachings, and the Practice of Paper Offerings to the Dead (破念經念佛信邪燒紙品), pp. 18-36: the true believer is capable of saving ghosts and demons by transforming hell into heaven; they should not be worshipped or revered;

14. Repudiating the Manipulative Methods of Shamanism and Divination (破出陽有為法定時刻迴品), pp. 36-63: spirit-travel and precognition are false, external means of spiritual cultivation which mislead religious seekers and perpetuate *samsāra*;

15. Penetrating the *Tao-te ch'ing-ching ching* (破道德清靜經品), pp. 63-76: the *Tao-te ching* supports the identity of the One, the Way, and the wordless teaching;

16. Repudiating Transmigration (破六道四生品), pp. 76-97: the various forms of rebirth through innumerable existences are listed and categorized according to the conventional Buddhist classification system;

17. In Praise of the Subtle Teaching (破稱讚妙法品), pp. 97-110: the "Subtle Teaching" describes the inner light of the Self;

18. Penetrating the Teachings of Scripture on *Samsāra* and Repentance (破涅槃經十住菩薩墮地獄覽集持戒懺會殺生不學大乘法無吐唾地品), pp. 110-143: scriptural quotations on *samsāra* and the futility of outward forms of moral and religious cultivation;

19. Repudiating the Cultivation of the Sundry Methods which Lead to Rebirth in Hell (破行雜法墮地獄品), pp. 1-14: criticisms of various religious practices, including self-mortification, austerity diets, and bloody sacrifices;

20. Repudiating the Recitation of Scripture (破念經品), pp. 14-31: the ability to read does not contribute to religious understanding, and may in fact inhibit it;

21. Penetrating the Unsurpassed, Profound, Subtle Truth (破無上甚根妙理品), pp. 31-38: on the meaning of Non-Being (無);

22. Penetrating the Commentary on the Arteries and Veins of Bodhidharma (破達摩血詠論品), pp. 39-65: illustrations of the inner light from various Ch'an and Taoist works;

23. Penetrating the Great Tao, Originally Empty of All Things (破大道無一物好心二字品), pp. 65-82: the realization that in origin there are no differentiable things leads to non-attachment;

24. Penetrating the Universe in Constant Revolution (破乾坤連環無盡品), pp. 82-119: the Original Face is identified with the universe: changeless, all-penetrating, self-existent.

IV. Cheng-hsin ch'u-i chüan, in 25 p'in.

This book commences with forty-two pages of prefaces, scriptural quotations, and introductory verses distinguishing between "superior" and "inferior" persons in relation to the creator, the Holy Ancestor of the Limitless (無極聖祖).

1. Evil-Doers Suffer through Innumerable Kalpas (諸惡趣受苦熬大劫無量品), pp. 42-58: evil-doers deny themselves the opportunity for salvation for many lives;
2. Lamentations for the Impermanence of Human Life (嘆人生不長遠品), pp. 58-83: foolish persons are unaware of *samsāra* and the suffering and impermanence it entails; wise persons devote themselves to attaining the Way, inspired by their fear of the pain of death and transmigration;
3. Rebirth in the Pure Land (往生淨土品), pp. 83-111: conventional Pure Land teachings, with an emphasis on moral cultivation, illustrated with popular Buddhist tales of karmic reward and punishment;
4. That All Beings May Attain the Correct Teaching and Return Home (尚眾類得正法歸家品), pp. 1-25: regardless of class or kind, all beings are capable of salvation: it is simply a matter of accepting the Teaching and True Belief;
5. The Limitless Transforms Itself to Save the Myriad Beings (無極化現度眾生品), pp. 25-47: the Holy Ancestor of the Limitless transforms herself into many forms to lead others to salvation, as illustrated by popular tales and historical legends;
6. [The Holy Ancestor of the Limitless] Transforms Himself into Worthy Persons to Exhort All Living Beings (化賢人勸眾生品), pp. 47-62: references to characters from Buddhist tales, popular drama, and stories of the "Twenty-Four Filial Children" (二十四孝), who exhorted their parents to seek the Right Path;
7. On Drinking Alcohol, Backsliding, and Taking Life (飲酒退道殺生品), pp. 62-73: those who drink wine and eat meat are destined to various forms of suffering in hell;
8. On the One Long Ago Who Mistakenly Identified the One Word of Liberation (蓋古人錯答一字品), pp. 73-89: the true "one word of liberation" is the Original Face, the Native Place;
9. The Futility of Attachments to Phenomena and Religious Cultivation (執相修行落頑空品), pp. 89-105: all outward forms of religious cultivation imply attachments which obstruct the path of liberation;

10. Emptiness, the Structure of the Chiliocosm (虛空架住大千界品), pp. 1-18: on the Emptiness of all forms and the origin of all things in pre-existent Non-Being;
11. Ransoming the Body and Declaring the Vow to Save Others (捨身發願度人品), pp. 18-32: sundry verses on True Belief and Limitless Emptiness;
12. The Original Nature is the Great Way of Prior Heaven (先天大道本性就是品), pp. 32-47: quotations from Buddhist and Taoist scriptures, *pao-chüan*, and *k'o-i* on the Tao within;
13. On Charity (布施品), pp. 47-63: quotations from scriptures and commentaries on the futility of material giving;
14. The Western Land of Great Joy Cannot Compare to the Human World (快樂西方人間難比品), pp. 64-81: true rebirth in the Pure Land is not outward, but inward;
15. On Gratitude (報恩品), pp. 81-87: self-mortification and denial are improper means of repaying the mercy of the Buddhas;
16. Originally There was no Infant to See the Mother (本無嬰兒見娘品), pp. 87-102: Lo explicitly rejects the identification of the Eternal Progenitor (無生父母) with Amitâbha, and dismisses all names and forms as empty of own-being;
17. The Nature is Prior to All Existent Things (本無一物性在前品), pp. 1-11: the Original Face is a non-material, eternal light within, existing prior to all names and forms;
18. On the Heterodox Method of Worshipping the Sun and Moon (拜日月邪法品), pp. 11-18: Lo places himself clearly on the side of the state in its efforts to stamp out the White Lotus Sect; references are made here to White Lotus ritual activities;
19. On the Heterodox Pneuma of the Maitreya Sect (彌勒教邪氣品), pp. 18-23: ritual activities and the cultivation of supernormal powers by members of the Maitreya Sect are described and repudiated;
20. Everyone Possesses the Pure Land of the West; Only Fools in Their Ignorance Seek to Travel There (西方淨土人人有迷人不知往西求品), pp. 23-29: those who have been enlightened to the Way know that the mind is the Western Land;
21. The Mental Emptiness of Non-Attachment to "Being" and "Non-Being" (不執有無心空品), pp. 29-37: Lo rejects mental attachment to particular words and formulations;

22. On the Failure to Undertake Reconsideration (不當重意品), pp. 37-53: Lo attacks students and disciples who follow their masters blindly and uncritically, or who circumvent their masters' teachings behind their backs; oblique references are made to Lo's own disciples;

23. The Affliction of Doubt [Arising from] the Cultivation of Sundry Methods (行雜法疑病品), pp. 53-67: Lo repeats his attacks on Buddhist, Taoist, and popular methods of religious cultivation;

24. On the Restful Mind (安心品), pp. 67-79: Lo appears to criticize prophets of doom who deceive the common people with false predictions of world cataclysm and catastrophe;

25. Completing the Purification of the Enlightened Mind (明心了潔品), pp. 80-90: Lo repeats his attacks on blind obedience to outward forms of religious cultivation, which "melt and disappear" in the "red-hot furnace" of the Original Face.

This book closes with declarations of gratitude and obedience to the emperor, the ministers and officials of the state, and the common people who guard and protect the law.

V. Shen-ken chieh-kuo chūan, in 24 p'in.

The first sixteen pages of this book include a table of contents, a prose preface by Wang Yūan-ching, a verse preface by Lan Feng, and declarations of gratitude and obedience to Heaven and Earth, the sun and moon, the emperor and the state, protectors of the *Dharma*, masters and teachers, and parents.

1. The Unspeakable Suffering of Kalpic Duration for Those who Backslide in Cultivation of the Way (劫量退道苦不可說品), pp. 16-57: Lo once again attacks those among his own followers who either do not reflect critically upon his teachings or regress in their resolve;

2. The Superior Man Repents Sooner, the Small Man Repents Later (君子人悔前小兒人悔後品), pp. 57-70: Lo distinguishes between two grades of persons, based upon their "repentance" for the karmic suffering of *samsāra*;

3. Those who do not Meet with this Marvelous Teaching will not Attain the Immeasurable Blessing (這妙法不著無量大福遇不著品), pp. 70-86: "meeting with the marvelous teaching" is attributed to destiny: persons of superior capacity are so blessed, while those of inferior capacity will not seek the Way even if they are exposed to it;

4. Mother, the One Word from which All Things Flow (一字流出萬物的母品), pp. 86-127: forty-four equivalent

expressions for the Mother, Original Face, or Native Place, which are identical in significance;

5. Some Things are Subject to Decay, Others are Not (那個有壞那個不壞品), pp. 2-25: whereas all the conventional forms and conceptions of Buddhism are impermanent, the Original Face, upon its "return home", is not;

6. First There was the Original Face, Then Heaven and Earth (先有本來面目後有天地品), pp. 25-46: the Original Face, or inner light of one's own Nature, existed prior to the world and to the conventional forms and conceptions of Buddhism;

7. On Failing to Recognize One's Own True Body, and Recognizing Instead One's Sack of Blood and Pus (自家真身不認一包膿血肯認品), pp. 46-66: ordinary people do not have faith that they have a True Body which existed prior to the division of Heaven and Earth, and admit only the existence of the physical body that is subject to putrefaction and disintegration;

8. Before the Division of Heaven and Earth, There was the Self-Existent (未曾初分天地先是現成品), pp. 66-79: repeating the theme of the pre-existent reality of the Original Self, Lo again repudiates outward forms of religious cultivation;

9. The Ten Thousand Things are Subject to Decay, But You Yourself have One Thing that is Not (萬物都有壞自有一個不壞品), pp. 79-88: the "one thing" is the inner light; the non-manipulative cultivation of this light is the substance of the Way, to which Lo himself awakened after thirteen years of seeking;

10. As Soon as There is Attachment, There is No Self-Determination (但有執著牽連不自在品), pp. 1-16: Lo repeats his condemnation of twenty forms of outward religious cultivation, all of which imply mental attachment and constraint;

11. Distinguishing between the Great Path and Metaphors (那是大道那是譬法品), pp. 16-32: the Original Path existed prior to the forms and conceptions of Buddhism;

12. Explaining in Detail Where Those Who Have Returned Home Have Gone (歸家人不知在何處細說便知品), pp. 32-55: those who have "returned home" are one body with Emptiness;

13. One's Own True Body Does Not Suffer Illness or Pain (自家人身無諸病苦品), pp. 55-63: further distinctions between the physical, elemental body and the non-material, golden, true body, which is self-existent and eternal;

14. On Fools Who Do Not Believe in Their Own True Body (自家人身愚癡不信品), pp. 63-72: repeating earlier themes, Lo repudiates the *karma* doctrine and rejects the literal meaning of religious language;

15. One Who Cannot Walk on Solid Ground Admits It is a Great Affliction (踏不著實地自說大病品), pp. 72-77: whereas fools cannot understand why they suffer, the wise overcome the causal succession of *karma*;
16. Cultivation that is Majestic, Unmoved and Deep-Rooted (行的巍巍不動深根品), pp. 77-82: true cultivation is Empty, internal, unobstructed;
17. Before the Division of Heaven and Earth, There was First the Limitless Egg of the Supreme Ultimate (未曾初分無極太極難子在先品), pp. 2-51: Lo describes the origins of the universe, quoting extensively from Sung Neo-Confucian classics and Taoist collectanea;
18. Fools Dare Not Recognize the Self-Existent (迷人不敢承當現成的品), pp. 52-56: repetition of earlier themes;
19. The Cultivation of Supernormal Powers Obstructs the Way (習神通障道品), pp. 56-67: again Lo repudiates popular divination practices and magical techniques;
20. On Ignorance of the Unbounded Blessings of the Native Place that Leads to Backsliding (不知家鄉無邊好事退道品), pp. 67-72: again Lo criticizes those who are exposed to the Way and do not recognize its blessings;
21. Though without Material Blessing, Emperors, Kings, and Prime Ministers Have Returned Home (既無好事帝王宰相歸家品), pp. 72-81: citing popular tales and historical legends, Lo praises kings and officials who have "returned home" as lay Buddhist practitioners;
22. Fools Say They Have Not Arrived in the Land of the Ancients, But They Themselves are the Pure Land (迷人說未到古人田地自家就是品), pp. 81-90: the Great Way is within the self;
23. The Pain of Weeping for Home (流浪家鄉受苦品), pp. 90-98: those caught up in *samsāra*, the "tearful world", weep for their true home;
24. On the Reports of Shamans on Auspicious and Ill Affairs (受持神鬼耳報知人好來知人歹來品), pp. 98-136: in a detailed recapitulation of earlier themes, Lo repudiates shamanistic divination, apocalyptic prophecy, and the cultivation of supernormal powers, and differentiates between correct and heterodox religious texts.

Appendix II

Lo's Sources

Chao yang chüan 昭陽卷 A "sūtra-amplification text" (科儀) or
"precious volume" (寶卷).
Shen-ken 24:122

Cheng tsung chüan 正宗卷 K'o-i/pao-chüan.
Shen-ken 24:122

Chih tu lun 智度論 .in 100 chüan
(T25.1509.57 756)
P'o-hsieh 8:93

Chin kang ching 金剛經
(T8.235.748-752).

<u>K'u-kung</u> 18:126	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:126
<u>K'u-kung</u> 18:129	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:128
<u>K'u-kung</u> 18:130	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 10:146
<u>K'u-kung</u> 18:134	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 23:72
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 1:25	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 23:80
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 1:49	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 8:84
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 1:54	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 9:95
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 4:119	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 13:55
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 4:125	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 16:89
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 4:135	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 18:11f.
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:100	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 23:58
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:104	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 17:29
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:106	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 24:123
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:115	

Chin kang k'o i 金剛科儀 (Ritual Instructions of the Diamond Sūtra), composed by Tsung-ching 宗鏡 of Nan-ch'ang 南昌 in the Southern Sung (1127-1279) (HTC 129:129-144, edition prefaced 1835).

<u>K'u-kung</u> 18:119	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 0:28
<u>K'u-kung</u> 18:132	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 4:2
<u>T'an-shih</u> 2:31	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 5:34
<u>T'an-shih</u> 4:59	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 7:63
<u>T'an-shih</u> 10:72	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 8:78
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 0:22	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 8:82
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 1:29	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 9:94
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 1:53	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 10:14
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 1:54	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 12:38
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 2:95	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 12:40
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 4:120	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 13:57
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 4:130	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 13:62
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 4:139	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 14:66
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 6:47	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 14:72
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:103	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 16:90
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:109	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 20:26

<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:122	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 21:31
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:123	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 21:36
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 10:148	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 25:82
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 11:163	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 1:23
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 12:8	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 1:49
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 14:39	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 1:53
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 16:91	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 6:26
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 20:16	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 7:51
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 20:23	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 14:68
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 21:32	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 19:60f.
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 24:86	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 19:63
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 24:89	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 22:84
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 24:101	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 23:92
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 24:110	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 24:102
	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 24:122

Chin kang lun 金剛論, in 3 chüan
(T25.1510.757-781)
P'o-hsieh 2:59
P'o-hsieh 2:91
P'o-hsieh 23:81

Ching t'u chih kuei chi 淨土指歸集 (A Collection of Essays
Pointing to the Pure Land), compiled by Ta-yu 大佑, preface
1394, in 2 chüan (HTC 108:57-99).
P'o-hsieh 10:151

Ching t'u chüan 淨土卷 K'o-i/pao-chüan.
Chieh-kuo 24:122

Ch'uan teng lu 傳燈錄 (Ching-te ch'uan-teng lu 景德傳燈錄 The
Ching-te Record of the Transmission of the Lamp), compiled
by Tao-yüan 道原 in the Sung, in 30 chüan
(T51.2076.196-467).
K'u-kung 18:113
P'o-hsieh 7:71
P'o-hsieh 10:141
P'o-hsieh 10:144

Chung feng ho shang kuang lu 中峰何尚廣錄 (The Comprehensive
Records of Monk Chung-feng), in 30 chüan. Yüan.
T'an-shih 6:83

Chung yung 中庸 (The Doctrine of the Mean), attributed to Tzu-
ssu in Chu Hsi's commentary. Shen Chih-fang 沈知方, Ssu shu
tu pen 四書讀本 (A Reader's Guide to the Four Books),
17-51. Taipei: 1966.
Chieh-kuo 17:22

Fa hua ching 法華經 , in 7 chüan
(T9.262.1-63).

P'o-hsieh 5:22

P'o-hsieh 24:93

P'o-hsieh 24:102

Chieh-kuo 19:57

Fa hua chüan 法華卷 K'o-i/pao-chüan.

Chieh-kuo 24:122

Fa yüan chu lin 法苑珠林 (Garden of the Dharma, Forest of Pearls), composed by Tao-shih Hsüan-yün 道世玄暉 in 100 chüan (T53.2122.269-1030).

P'o-hsieh 8:99

Fo yin kuo ching 佛因果經 (The Sûtra of Cause and Effect, as Spoken by the Buddha), in 4 chüan (T3.189.620-655).

P'o-hsieh 7:79

Hsiang shan pao chüan 香山寶卷 (The Precious Volume of Fragrant Mountain), attributed to P'u-ming 普明, preface 1103 (reprinted in Yoshioka Yoshitoyo 吉岡義豊, Dôkyô kenkyû 道教研究, vol. 4 [Tokyo: 1971], 115-195).

Cheng-hsin 12:43

Chieh-kuo 24:122

Hsiao nieh p'an ching 小涅槃經 , in 3 chüan
(T1.7.191-207).

T'an-shih 12:94

P'o-hsieh 4:133

Cheng-hsin 23:58

Chieh-kuo 19:59

Hsin ching 心經
(T8.251.848-849).

P'o-hsieh 12:5

P'o-hsieh 12:8

P'o-hsieh 12:10

P'o-hsieh 12:12

P'o-hsieh 16:91

P'o-hsieh 23:73

Cheng-hsin 0:28

Cheng-hsin 0:28

Cheng-hsin 9:91

Cheng-hsin 16:90

Chieh-kuo 24:106

Chieh-kuo 24:106

Chieh-kuo 24:123

Hsin ching chüan 心經卷 K'o-i/pao-chüan.

K'u-kung 18:124

P'o-hsieh 4:131

Chieh-kuo 24:122

Hsin hsieh shao chih pao chūan 信邪燒紙寶卷 K'o-i/pao-chūan.
P'o-hsieh 13:28

Hua hsien ching 華鮮經 Unidentified.
P'o-hsieh 16:94

Hua yen ching 華嚴經 , in 80 chūan
(T10.279.1-445).
T'an-shih 1:7
Cheng-hsin 10:5

Keng tzu chūan 耿子卷 K'o-i/pao-chūan.
Chieh-kuo 24:122

Lao chūn hsing t'an chi 老君行壇記 Taoist collection.
P'o-hsieh 22:45

Leng yen ching 楞嚴經 , in 10 chūan
(T19.945.105-155).
P'o-hsieh 5:27
P'o-hsieh 7:82

Liu tsu t'an ching 六祖壇經 (The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch), compiled by Tsung-pao 宗寶 (Yüan edition) (T48.2008.345-362).
K'u-kung 6:58
P'o-hsieh 6:49
P'o-hsieh 20:25
Cheng-hsin 20:24

Lung shu ching t'u wen 龍舒淨土文 (Pure Land Texts of Lung-shu), compiled by Wang Jih-hsiu 王日休 (preface 1161), in 12 chūan (T47.1970.251-289).
Cheng-hsin 3:85

Ming hsin pao chien 明心寶鑑 (The Precious Mirror of the Enlightened Mind), extant edition compiled by Wang Heng 王衡 (late Ming), in 2 chūan.
T'an-shih 4:61

Mu lien chūan 目蓮卷 K'o-i/pao-chūan.
Cheng-hsin 2:70
Chieh-kuo 24:122

Nieh p'an ching 涅槃經 , in 36 chūan
(T12.375.605-852).
K'u-kung 18:111 P'o-hsieh 18:139
K'u-kung 18:114 P'o-hsieh 19:2
K'u-kung 18:119 P'o-hsieh 24:107
T'an-shih 12:108 P'o-hsieh 24:109
P'o-hsieh 4:117 Cheng-hsin 0:26
P'o-hsieh 4:123 Cheng-hsin 12:34
P'o-hsieh 6:42 Cheng-hsin 13:48
P'o-hsieh 17:106 Cheng-hsin 13:51

P'o-hsieh 18:113
P'o-hsieh 18:116

Cheng-hsin 22:49
Chieh-kuo 24:102

P'ang chu shih yü lu 龐居士語錄 (The Recorded Sayings of Layman P'ang), compiled by Yü Hsiang 于頌, in 3 chüan (HTC 120:28-41).

✓ K'u-kung 18:114
P'o-hsieh 4:131
P'o-hsieh 5:20
P'o-hsieh 9:129
P'o-hsieh 20:17
Cheng-hsin 9:104
Cheng-hsin 10:2
Cheng-hsin 22:50
Cheng-hsin 23:64
Cheng-hsin 24:69
Cheng-hsin 24:73

Pao en ching 報恩經 (The Sûtra of Recompense), in 7 chüan (T3.156.124-167).

P'o-hsieh 6:44
P'o-hsieh 10:153
P'o-hsieh 10:155
Cheng-hsin 11:20
Cheng-hsin 11:30
Cheng-hsin 19:18

P'i yü ching 譬喻經 (The Sûtra of Analogy) (T4.217.801).
T'an-shih 3:50

Shen seng chan 神僧傳 (Traditions of Holy Monks), in 9 chüan (T50.2064.948-1015).
Cheng-hsin 3:107

Sheng yü 聖諭 (Sacred Edicts), Ming (reprinted in Ch'ing Hui-tien shih-li 清會典實例, chüan 397).
Cheng-hsin 0:10

Shih chia fo yen shen wen 釋迦佛厭身文 (Records of Śākyamuni's Repudiation of the Physical Body).
T'an-shih 12:103

Shih lin kuang chi 事林廣記 (The Broad Record of Many Texts). Popular encyclopedia of the Yüan.
Chieh-kuo 17:9
Chieh-kuo 17:27

Shou sheng ching 壽生經 (The Sûtra of Long Life) (HTC 87:299-300).
Chieh-kuo 24:123

Ta chang fu lun 大丈夫論 ; in 2 chüan (T30.1577.256-268).
P'o-hsieh 8:98

Ta hsüeh 大學 (The Great Learning), attributed to Tseng-tzu in Chu Hsi's commentary. Shen Chih-fang 沈知方, Ssu shu tu pen 四書讀本 (A Reader's Guide to the Four Books), 1-16. Taipei: 1966.
Chieh-kuo 17:22,26

Ta mi t'o chüan 大彌陀卷 K'o-i/pao-chüan.

T'an-shih 11:72
Cheng-hsin 0:29
Cheng-hsin 2:70
Cheng-hsin 12:44
Chieh-kuo 24:122

Ta mo hsieh mo lun 達摩血詠論 (Commentary on the Veins and Arteries of Bodhidharma) (HTC 110.405-408).
P'o-hsieh 22:40

Ta tsang i lan chi 大藏一覽集 (Selections from the Great Collection of Buddhist Scripture), compiled by Ch'en Shih 陳實 (Southern Sung), in 10 chüan. Chapters quoted by Lo Ch'ing: Liu-t'ung p'in 流通品, Lin-chung p'in 臨終品, Chu-t'ien p'in 諸天品, San-kuei p'in 三歸品, Chiu-ching p'in 究竟品, Pu-shih p'in 布施品, Ch'ih-chieh p'in 持戒品, Ch'an-hui p'in 懺悔品, Ssu-chung p'in 四眾品, P'an-jo p'in 般若品, Ch'eng-huai p'in 成壞品, Fa-shen p'in 法身品, Shih-shan p'in 十善品, Chieh-liang p'in 劫量品.

<u>K'u-kung</u> 18:103	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 18:125
<u>K'u-kung</u> 18:125	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 18:139
<u>T'an-shih</u> 3:50	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 22:54
<u>T'an-shih</u> 12:109	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 24:82
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 0:19	<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 24:110
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 4:120	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 0:26
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 4:121	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 1:44
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 5:4	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 8:79
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 5:32	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 15:84
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 6:39	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 17:2
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 7:78	<u>Cheng-hsin</u> 21:34
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:98	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 1:18
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 8:100	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 1:26
<u>P'o-hsieh</u> 18:119	<u>Chieh-kuo</u> 24:122

T'ai chi t'u shuo 太極圖說 (Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate), by Chou Tun-i 周敦頤 (1017-1073). SPY edition.
Chieh-kuo 17:11

T'ai shang Lao tzu Tao te ching 太上老子德經 (The Classic of the Way and its Power of Master Lao-tzu on High), quotations likely taken from the Ch'ing ching ching 清靜經 (Yüan) (Tao tsang 40/341/1).
P'o-hsieh 15:65
P'o-hsieh 15:66
P'o-hsieh 15:67
P'o-hsieh 15:69

- P'o-hsieh 15:70
Cheng-hsin 12:36
Cheng-hsin 12:36
- Ti tsang k'o i 地藏科儀 K'o-i.
P'o-hsieh 13:26
Chieh-kuo 24:122
- Tsung ching lu 宗鏡錄 (The Record of Tsung-ching), compiled by Yen-shou 延壽, in 100 *chüan* (T48.2016. 415-957).
P'o-hsieh 5:6
- Tsung yen yü lu pao chüan 宗眼語錄寶卷 (The Precious Volume of the Recorded Sayings of Tsung-yen). Lo's citations likely taken from the Ta tsang i lan chi.
P'o-hsieh 6:67
Cheng-hsin 23:60
- Tz'u pei shui ch'an 慈悲水懺 (The Penance Text of Commiseration), in 3 *chüan* (T45.1910.967-978).
P'o-hsieh 2:7
Cheng-hsin 15:81
- Wu hsiang chüan 無相卷 K'o-i/pao-chüan.
Chieh-kuo 24:122
- Wu lou chüan 無漏卷 K'o-i/pao-chüan.
Chieh-kuo 24:122
- Wu teng hui yüan 五燈會元 (Examinations of the Five Patriarchs), compiled by P'u-chi 普濟 (Sung), in 20 *chüan* (HTC 138:1-416).
P'o-hsieh 24:112
- Yin hsing chüan 因行卷 K'o-i/pao-chüan.
Chieh-kuo 24:122
- Yü chih sung 御製頌 (Poems, Writings, and Gâthâs).
T'an-shih 6:83
- Yu t'an yü lu 優曇語錄 (The Recorded Sayings of Yu-t'an P'u-tu), preface 1305, in 10 *chüan* (also titled Lu shan lien tsung pao chien 廬山蓮宗寶鑑) (T47.1973. 302-354).
T'an-shih 11:80
P'o-hsieh 4:132
P'o-hsieh 5:8
Cheng-hsin 14:65
Cheng-hsin 20:28
Chieh-kuo 24:120
Chieh-kuo 24:123
- Yüan chüeh ching 圓覺經 (T17.842.913-922).
K'u-kung 18:118

T'an-shih 4:56
P'o-hsieh 1:27
P'o-hsieh 1:46
P'o-hsieh 1:47
P'o-hsieh 1:48
P'o-hsieh 24:84
Cheng-hsin 10:13
Cheng-hsin 11:31
Cheng-hsin 12:39
Chieh-kuo 24:123

Yüan chüeh chüan 圓覺卷 *K'o-i/pao-chüan.*

Cheng-hsin 14:67
Cheng-hsin 23:60
Chieh-kuo 24:120

Yüan t'ung chüan 圓通卷 *K'o-i/pao-chüan.*

P'o-hsieh 1:56
P'o-hsieh 13:22
Cheng-hsin 14:70
Chieh-kuo 24:120

Yung chia ch'an shih cheng tao kao 永嘉禪師證道歌 (The Gâthâ
Recording Ch'an Master Yung-chia's Realization of the Path)
(T48.2014.395-397).
P'o-hsieh 18:137

Appendix III

Popular Narratives from the Cheng-hsin ch'u-i pao-chūan (5:38 - 6:61)¹

P'in 5: The Transformations of Wu-chi for the Salvation of the Myriad Sentient Beings

...*Wu-chi sheng-tsu* transformed himself, and became manifest as King Chao-yang (昭陽), lamenting [the greed and attachments of] the human heart.

Chao-yang chu was the king of the state of *Candana-sārī* (旃檀舍利國).² Chao-yang was his alternate title (別號). One day, in the midst of meditation, he perceived the suffering of *samsāra*. Because he longed for liberation, he discarded his opulent possessions [literally, "brocade and embroidery"] and vast territory [literally, "rivers and mountains"] like so many sheaths of grass, abandoned his position [ruling over] a nation of a thousand chariots like so much mud and dirt, and gave up his wives and sons as if they were servants and slaves. He regarded his own body as a flower in the sky blazing with fire. Subsequently he became indebted to the *dhyāna* master T'an-hsi (潭溪), who directly indicated the vision of one's true nature with an enlightened mind, the method of world-renunciation. He went directly to the T'an-hsi Mountains where he wandered alone far and wide. Only then did he understand the Great Teaching: there is no self and no other; the mind of all beings is originally indistinguishable from [the mind of] the Buddhas... (P'o-hsieh 2:86).³

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and became manifest as Pao-lien (寶蓮), encouraging the myriad living beings [to follow the Path].

Pao-lien was the principle consort of King Chao-yang. Together they went to T'an-hsi to practice moral cultivation and investigate the Path. Here, the Patriarch [Lo] is using [tales of the past] to encourage female *bodhisattvas* of the present age. Though she may not renounce the family [to become a nun], still she should have a faithful heart, [by which] she may be liberated

1. The basic text is highlighted and indented; commentary by Wang Yüan-ching.
2. Literally, "relics of sandalwood". I am unable to identify Chao-yang or the state of *Chan-t'an she-li*. Cf. Mochizuki, *Bukkyō daijiten*, 2185c.
3. Wang's account is more detailed in this passage than in the commentary to the Cheng-hsin ch'u-i chūan.

in sudden release from the distress and anxiety of ignorance and from the resentful mind of greed and attachment... (*Cheng-hsin* 5:39).⁴

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and became manifest as the Deer King (鹿王), lamenting [the greed and attachments of] the human heart.

Our first teacher [Patriarch Lo] has said that *Wu-chi sheng-tsu* is the unmoved, true mind of the Buddha. The world-incarnation of the Deer King was the transformation-body of the Buddha, who, in his sixth incarnation as the *tathâgata*, practiced moral cultivation and converted by his encouragement the King the state of Chin-po (金波國).⁵ In the Forest of the Seven Treasures (七寶林), among a whole herd [of deer], he served as Deer King.

One day, the king of *Chin-po* ordered his mounted men to accompany him on an expedition hunting deer. The Deer King went directly before the king, and, speaking with the voice of a human, he said, "I bow before your highness to announce that I, beast, am first among deer. All the deer have scattered in fear into the wilds in four directions. If you will be sympathetic and compassionate, I will send one deer to you each day, presented to you for your consumption!"

The king approved this request, and returned [to the palace]. The next day, the Deer King presented one deer as promised, delivering it right to the *Chin-po* palace. For as many as seven days in a row, he did not go back on his promise. The king sighed to himself, saying, "Even beasts have human nature! I am the king of a nation; in order to satisfy my mouth and stomach, I have brought harm to the spirits of living things. I am ignorant of shame!" He ordered that every time his Entertainment Ministers [光祿司] arranged a savory banquet [for him], he would not eat meat. (*Cheng-hsin* 5:40-41).⁶

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and became manifest as the Golden Calf (金牛), encouraging the myriad living beings [to follow the Path].

Our first teacher [Patriarch Lo] has said that *Wu-chi sheng-tsu* is the true mind of profound awakening of the Buddha. Prince

4. I am unable to identify Pao-lien from the standard Sinological and Buddhological dictionaries. Cf. Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 3:1124 (7376.324).

5. Unknown. "*Chin-po*" means moonlight. Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 11:477 (40152.914).

6. I am unable to identify the Deer King from the standard Sinological and Buddhological dictionaries. Cf. Morohashi, *Daikanwa jiten*, 12:908 (47586.153).

Chin-niu was the seventh *Dharma-kāya* of our Buddha, become incarnate in the state of *Chin-po*. When he [entered and] filled the womb of the third concubine [of the king], the king's wife and second concubine gave rise to venomous thoughts. When the third concubine had given birth to the prince, he was sent deep into the mountains, to be eaten by tigers and wolves. The next day, they sent someone to find him, but he saw only a wild bird with a flower in its beak hovering over his body, and a wild deer feeding him from its breast. When the second concubine learned of this, she again sent someone to bring him back.

The king's wife [attempted to] strangle the Prince to death with a rope, but he came to no harm whatsoever. Again, she went to a high tower and threw him from the top, but his countenance was unaffected. Again, she took him into the grasses behind the palace, where a wild ox swallowed him whole.

At that time, the king returned from his attack on the barbarians. His wife and the second concubine informed him about the third concubine, implicating her in the great sin [of the son's disappearance]. The king banished the third concubine to the cold palace [where concubines who were out of favor were lodged]. The wild ox gave birth to a calf, with golden horns and silver hoofs, its entire body covered with gold fur. The king was as attached to it as a jewel, and crowned it with a gold placard, titling it "Prince Chin-niu".

One day the calf wandered into the cold palace, and son and mother saw one another. Knowing of this, the second concubine again gave rise to thoughts of venom and injury. She feigned an illness and purchased a doctor's prescription, which called for mixing a medicine made from the heart of a golden cow. She reported this to the king, who approved her request, and sent for a butcher to lead the golden ox to slaughter, and to pluck out its heart to mix the medicine. The Golden Calf knelt down on all-fours, and made a mournful sound. Awestruck, the butcher could not bear [to kill him], and substituted the heart of a dog, leading the ox far, far away.

They came across the Golden Emperor T'ai-pai [太白金皇, the evening star], who gave them a magical cinnabar pill. They implanted it in the calf's belly. When the golden calf had consumed it, his hide began to burn and itch. He leapt into the water of *samādhi*, and, after washing himself completely, his horns, haunches, and hooves suddenly fell away, and his face was transformed to reveal all of the ten marks [of a king]. Indeed, he resembled an emperor in appearance.

[At that time], within the kingdom of the Golden Wheel (金輪國), the third princess threw an embroidered ball to settle on a prince, and, because of the fortuitous encounters of fate, the ball struck Prince Chin-niu right on the head. Within the kingdom of the Golden Wheel, he was regarded as most honored. Pining for his father, he ordered his civil and military officers

on the left and right and various officials of the state to return to his country, to meet personally with his father, the king. They told him everything [about his son's adventures]. When he heard their tale, the king was enraged in his heart, and pronounced punishment on his wife and second concubine. Prince Chin-niu discouraged him repeatedly. The king cast aside his feelings of love [for them], and king, son, and third concubine together entered the mountains to cultivate the Path... (*Cheng-hsin* 5:41-44).⁷

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and became manifest as Mu-lien (目連, Maudgalyāyana), lamenting [the greed and attachments of] the human heart.

The Revered Mu-lien had the surname Fu (傅) and the given name Lo-pu (羅卜). His father died young, and his old mother kept within the home [as a faithful widow]. Mu-lien spoke respectfully to his mother: "Father left us 3,000 strings of cash. I will take 1,000 and give it to you, venerable mother, for your support; 1,000 for you to use for regular vegetarian alms to the monks and for charity; and 1,000 for myself to start a business in trade." When old Mother Ch'ing-t'i saw her son go to a distant place to practice trade, she stopped burning incense and reciting the Buddha's name; nor did she give food to monks or practice charity. Her immoral heart was set on the practice of the Ten Evil Things.⁸ When Mu-lien heard of this, he stopped his trade, tidied up and returned home.

When it became known to her that Mu-lien was returning home, his mother again carried out all of her wide-ranging good works as of old. His mother asked, "You weren't gone for even a year. Why did you return so soon?" Mu-lien said, "I heard that you were producing evil *karma* to a great extent, mother, so I returned home." Ch'ing-t'i was moved by her son's words to make a vow: "If I break the vegetarian diet or violate the precepts, before seven days may I die and fall into hell." Her son said to her, "As there is no good reason to do so, do not make such a vow. When one makes a great vow, one has to take [this responsibility] upon oneself." Sure enough, after seven days, Ch'ing-t'i [passed away]. [When King Yama] endorsed the report of the Three Officers [of hell], she was chased down and led into the murky realm. Accordingly, Mu-lien cast aside the household life and took refuge in the Buddha as a monk, relying on the compassionate

7. I have been unable to trace the origins of this tale.

8. *Shih-o* (十惡): taking life, stealing, illicit behavior, prevarication, exaggeration, cursing, duplicity, greed, anger, ignorance. Nakamura, *Bukkyō-go daijiten*, 651b.

strength of Buddha. Grasping his monk's staff, he entered hell to save his mother... (*Cheng-hsin* 5:44-45).⁹

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and became manifest as Ch'ing-t'i (青提), encouraging the myriad living beings [to follow the Path].

This refers back to the previous story.

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and investigated the Path at Snow Mountain (雪山), leading the myriad beings [to enlightenment].

[The Patriarch] is raising [the example of] the *Tathāgata* Sâkyamuni, who first descended into the palace of a king. As soon as he reached the age of nineteen years, his father the king gave an imperial order that the assembled ministers accompany the prince on a pleasure-trip from the four gates of the palace. From the four gates, the prince witnessed individuals [passing through the stages] of birth, old age, sickness, and death, suffering the various pains and troubles.

The prince returned to the palace, and he was fretful and unhappy. In his heart, he thought constantly of leaving the home to attach himself to the Way. That night, [his thoughts of renunciation] moved the four deva-kings to lift the feet of his mount and fly into the sky, departing [the palace] by leaping over the city wall.

Arriving after his journey at Snow Mountain, he practiced austerities for six years. One night, gazing at the bright stars, he was suddenly enlightened to the Way. Returning to his native country for [another] six years, he first converted his own family, and then turned to benefiting others [in the same way]. Our Buddha, because he observed the myriad beings of the world physically ensnared by lust and desire, hindered and obstructed by [their attachment to] fame and profit, and shrouded by ignorance, found it difficult to bring them to conversion. So he travelled [back] to a place of repose at Snow Mountain to investigate the Path... (*Cheng-hsin* 5:46-47).

9. On the story of Mu-lien, see the *Mu-lien pien-wen* (目連變文), in Wang Ch'ung-min, *Tun-huang pien-wen chi*, 714-755, trans. by Victor Mair, *Tun-huang Popular Narratives*, 87-121. Cf. Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China* (Princeton: 1988), 87-91. Mu-lien was the subject as well of the Yüan drama, *Hsing hsiao tao Mu-lien chiu-mu* (行孝道目連救母), not extant. Cf. Fu Hsi-hua, *Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu*, 351; Wang P'ei-lun, *Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien*, 123; Chuang I-fu, *Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao*, 111-112.

P'in 6: Wu-chi Incarnate in Virtuous Persons,
Encouraging the Myriad Sentient Beings

...*Wu-chi sheng-tsu* transformed himself into the virtuous woman Meng Chiang (孟姜), weeping by the Great Wall, ten thousand *li* [from home], and converting the myriad living beings by her encouragement.

The virtuous woman Meng Chiang's family lived in Pai-t'a County, Hu-chou Prefecture [present-day Chekiang]. Her grandfather was named Hsu, and she was an only child. From childhood she practiced filial piety, so she was called a "virtuous girl". Heaven bestowed her with a cultivated talent (秀才) named Fan Ch'i-liang (范寂杞) to be her husband. Three days after they were wed, a neighbor named Hsu Lu-ch'u brought upon him the punishment of being banished to build the Great Wall, as of old [?]. He labored into the dead of winter. Within Chiang's heart was contained matrimonial fidelity: she traversed the ten thousand-mile road to deliver winter clothes to her husband. When [she] asked a merchant about Master Fan, he replied, "Fan has been entombed within the wall." Chiang coiled herself around the wall and wept bitterly. Spontaneously it toppled over, revealing the corpse-skeletons and white bones [of the dead]. Dripping blood [from her fingers], she found her husband and took him home for a proper burial... (*Cheng-hsin* 6:50).¹⁰

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself into the virtuous woman Kao Ch'ai (高釵), plumbing the great sea in search of her father, and converting the myriad living beings by her encouragement.

In the Ch'in Dynasty, there was a virtuous woman Kao Ch'ai. Her father, Kao Wen-Chien (高文簡), was a transportation minister of the Ch'in emperor. He was sent by imperial order east of the sea in search of a magic fungus. [His boat] met with wind, and [the crew] was lost; he could not return to his native place. [At that moment], her mother unaccountably began to weep. Kao Ch'ai asked respectfully, "My mother, why are you crying?" Her mother said, "I have heard it said that your father has drowned in the great sea; he is unable to return home for burial."

10. The story of "the good wife of Fan Chi-liang" appears in the *Li chi* (SPPY edition, *Ching* 53, *chüan* 3, pp. 14a-14b) and *Meng-tzu* (SPPY, *Ching* 20, *chüan* 12, p. 7b). Meng Chiang is the subject of a transformation text discovered at Tun-huang, *Meng Chiang-nü pien-wen* (孟姜女變文), in Wang Ch'ung-min, *Tun-huang pien-wen chi*, 32-35, and of several Yüan and Ming dramas, including *Meng Chiang-nü sung han-i* (孟姜女送寒衣), by Cheng T'ing-yü (鄭廷玉) of the Yüan, not extant. Cf. Fu Hsi-hua, *Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu*, 107; Wang P'ei-lun, *Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien*, 222, 327; Chuang I-fu, *Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao*, 40, 120, 210, 581.

When Kao Ch'ai heard this, she made a solemn vow to sweep the seas in search of her father. Her filial heart moved the Heavens, who ordered the Evening Star T'ai-po personally to bestow a jar of priceless treasures. For three days she searched the great sea exhaustively. The Dragon-gods and Dragon-generals assisted in her search for her father's corpse and bones. She bit her fingers till they bled, searching for her father's remains. At last, in accord with her vow, she brought his skeleton home for burial, to show her gratitude for her parents' love... (*Cheng-hsin* 6:51-52).¹¹

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself into the virtuous woman Chiao Hua (蕉花), tearfully gathering grain in the middle of winter, and converting the myriad living beings by her encouragement.

Ten li from the city wall, outside Chiao-yuan, Chung-shan Prefecture, Yueh-chou, was born a girl named Chiao Hua-nu. Seeing that her grandmother was ill, she did not leave her side night or day, neglecting to eat or sleep. Distressed and ill at ease, she waited upon her grandma, asking, "In your heart, what would you most like to eat?" Grandma answered, "I only smell the aroma of millet sprout soup." The good daughter listened intently, and for some time she said nothing. She told her grandmother, "In the forty-nine days after the Winter Solstice, the time is not right. There are very few millet sprouts." Thus informed, her grandmother closed her mouth and did not say a word.

[Chiao Hua], afraid of disobeying her grandmother's wishes, could only implore the Heavens in silent prayer to protect the millet seedlings. She wept for three days and three nights. Her filial heart moved the gods. [Though within] the forty-nine days after the Winter Solstice -- the earth covered with ice and snow -- suddenly bundles and bundles of millet ears burst forth from the ground. The good daughter plucked them as if she were gathering priceless pearls. She went home and prepared the soup for her grandma to eat, and when she had eaten her illness was cured. Before long, no one had not failed to be impressed by this wondrous event. Our Patriarch [Lo] is using the past to encourage us in the present. Daughters-in-law should follow her example, and revere their grandparents as much as they revere the Three Treasures... (*Cheng-hsin* 6:52-53).¹²

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself into the virtuous woman Lady Wang (王氏賢女), escaping the suffering [of hell] upon her death, and converting the myriad living beings by her encouragement.

11. I am unable to identify the sources of this tale.

12. I am unable to identify Chiao Hua from the standard Sinological and Buddhological dictionaries.

After birth, the virtuous girl of the Wang family received the Chin-kang p'an-jo chen-ching [Vajracchedikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra]. Upon her death, King Yama inquired in judgment about the course of her life, and sent her back to the yang world for seven days. She commanded her husband and sons and daughters not to break the vegetarian fast or violate the precepts or to kill or harm any living thing. "If you do not act in accord with my vow, you will without a doubt fall into the three lowest destinies [hell-being, preta, animal]." Such a woman among womankind is truly an extraordinary person!... (Cheng-hsin 6:53-54).¹³

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself into the Holy Woman of Goodness and Virtue (賢德聖女), who had the family dog beaten to death in order to convert the myriad living beings by her encouragement.

In olden days, Sun Jung (孫榮) and his younger brother Sun Hua (孫華) did not get along with one another. Jung's wife saw that her husband was generous towards his friends, but mean-spirited towards his brother. So this virtuous girl came up with a plan. She had the house dog beaten to death, and pretended that it was she herself who had been killed. Her husband was called home. Now, among all those old friends, not one proved faithful enough to come and share in Jung's grief. But when his own brother Sun Hua heard about it, his face lost its color immediately, and he travelled as quickly as he could for many nights. He took the burden of the death upon himself without fear, and was willing to accept Jung's guilt in his place. Jung's wife said to her husband, "You have 'wine-and-meat brothers' without number. Why in this time of trouble do you have not even one [true friend]?" And in this way, Sun Jung was converted, and husband and uncle, older brother and younger brother, became amicable and once again [established] a common stove, renewing their family ties... (Cheng-hsin 6:54-55).¹⁴

13. I have been unable to identify the sources of this tale.

14. The basic story related here was common to a number of dramas and short stories composed in the Yüan and Ming Dynasties. The earliest available is Yang shih-nü sha-kou ch'üan-fu tsa-chü (楊氏女殺狗勸夫雜劇), by Hsiao Te-hsiang (蕭德祥) of the Yüan, contained in Tsang Chin-shu, Yüan-ch'ü hsüan, I:98-117. The tale appears in several ch'uan ch'i (傳奇) of the Yüan and Ming, including Sha-kou chi (殺狗記), P'i-p'a chi (琵琶記), and Ching-ch'ai chi (荊釵記), references for which may be found in Chung-kuo ts'ung-shu tsung-lu, II:1691, 1692. Cf. Yang Chia-lo, Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh pai-k'o ch'üan-shu (Taipei: 1967), II:183; Fu Hsi-hua, Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu, 298; Chuang I-fu, Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-ka'o, 9-10; Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsün-yang su-yüan, 201; Sakai Tadao, Chügoku zensho no kenkyü (Tokyo: 1960), 441.

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and wove the bamboo to tie up the date-tree branch. *Wu-chi sheng-tsu* transformed himself, and sawed off the branch to let it drop into his neighbor's garden.

Once upon a time, there lived a man named Chang (張公), a bamboo-weaver. His righteousness was such that he was generally at peace with his neighbors. The walls of his residence were adjacent to the Li family home. Li (李公) had a date tree with a branch overhanging the wall, which dropped dates into the Chang family garden. When Chang's children got one, they would eat it. Chang said, "For the sake of a few snacks, we are creating a great offense," and promptly wove some bamboo to tie up the date-tree branch. [For his part], Li sawed off the branch to let it drop into his neighbor's garden. The fragrant reputation of the righteous conviviality of these two gentlemen was broadcast near and far. Our Patriarch [Lo] has borrowed from the past to encourage us in the present: harmony among neighbors is the action of the Tao... (*Cheng-hsin* 6:56).¹⁵

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and became manifest as Meng-tsung (孟宗), encouraging the myriad living beings [to follow the Path].

In olden days, there lived [a man named] Meng-tsung. His mother became ill. In the forty-nine days after the Winter Solstice, in the dead of winter, she yearned for fresh bamboo-sprout soup. Meng-tsung wept bitterly, day and night without interruption. He could not disobey his parents. His filial heart moved the gods, and from the ice and frost of the hard earth bamboo sprouts emerged. Thanking the gods through sacrifice, he picked them and returned home. He prepared the soup for his mother, and she recovered from her illness. The Patriarch uses the past to instruct us in the present. Would that men and women of this world each follow his example, and practice such filial devotion to their parents!... (*Cheng-hsin* 6:57).¹⁶

15. I am unable to identify the origins of this tale.

16. Meng Kung-wu (孟恭武) of Wu (222-259) was renowned for his filial piety; *San kuo chih*, chüan 48 (SPPY edition, *Shih* 53.4, part 4, chüan 3), *Chin shu*, chüan 94 (SPPY, *Shih* 53.5, part 5, p. 10b). The tale appears in the *Hsiao-tzu chüan* (孝子傳), contained in Wang Ch'ung-min, *Tun-huang pien-wen chi*, 903, and the *Erh-shih-ssu hsiao* (二十四孝); I have examined a Ming copy of a Yüan edition of the *Erh-shih-ssu hsiao shih* (二十四孝詩), by Kuo Chü-ching (郭居敬) (preface 1300), which includes the story of Meng-tsung (story #3, no pagination), and the story "K'u-chu sheng-sun" (哭竹生筍), contained in a Ch'ing children's instruction book entitled *Yen-wen tui-chao hui-t'u erh-shih-ssu hsiao* (言文對照繪圖二十四孝) (n.p., n.d.), 47-48. Lo Ch'ing may have seen a performance of *Meng-tsung k'u-chu* (孟宗哭竹), by

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and became manifest as Kuo Chū (郭巨), encouraging the myriad living beings [to follow the Path].

In the *Erh-shih-ssu hsiao* there is the tale of a man named Kuo Chu. He treated his mother with utmost filiality, to the point that his own family was poor and their food and drink insufficient. His mother gave her portions to her son to divide up and feed his family. But because he favored his mother over his children, he told his wife that he had best dig a hole and bury his children alive, in order to provide his mother with enough to eat. One day he carried his children to the rear garden, and dug a hole to bury them. [His filial piety] moved the Heavens, who presented him with a vein of yellow gold. Thus, mother and children were reunited as a family, and his household was prosperous and enriched... (*Cheng-hsin* 6:57-58).¹⁷

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and became manifest as Yüan Hsiao (袁小), encouraging the myriad living beings [to follow the Path].

...Yüan Hsiao's grandfather, because of old age and ill health, found it difficult to walk, and Yüan Ta [Yüan Hsiao's father] devised a bramble basket to carry his father into the mountains, to feed him to the lions and tigers there. When Yüan Hsiao returned home, he did not see his grandpa. He asked his father, "Where has grandpa gone?" His father said, "He was a burden on the family, old and useless, so I took him deep into the mountains and fed him to tigers." When Yüan Hsiao heard this, he wept bitterly. He went into the mountains to search for his grandpa. When he found his grandpa's body, he took his head into his arms and wept. He did not have the strength to carry his

Ch'ü Kung-chih (屈恭之), or Ch'ü Tzu-ching (屈子敬), of the Yüan, not extant; cf. Wang P'ei-lun, *Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien*, 222; Fu Hsi-hua, *Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu*, 263; Yang Chia-lo, *Chung-kuo wen-hsüeh pai-k'o ch'üan-shu*, II:1168; Chuang I-fu, *Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao*, 345.

17. The earliest version of this story may be contained in the *Sou shen chi* (搜神記), by Kan Pao (干寶) of the Eastern Chin (317-419 A.D.): Wang Yün-wu, ed., *Ts'ung-shu ch'eng-chi* (叢書成集), volumes 2692-2694 (volume 2, *chüan* 11, p. 75). The tale also appears in the *Hsiao-tzu chüan* (Wang Ch'ung-min, *Tun-huang pien-wen chi*, 905-906) and the *Erh-shih-ssu hsiao* (Kuo Chü-ching, story #15; *Yen-wen tui-chao hui-t'u erh-shih-ssu hsiao*, "Wei-mu mai-erh" 為母埋兒, 27-28). The story is the basis of a Yüan drama (author unknown) entitled *Hsing hsiao-tao Kuo Chü mai erh* (行孝道郭巨埋兒), not extant; Wang P'ei-lun, *Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien*, 145; Fu Hsi-hua, *Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu*, 299; Chuang I-fu, *Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao*, 565; Cheng Chi-ming, *Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan*, 200.

grandfather home, and at first could only drag home the bramble basket. His father said, "Why did you bring home the basket?" His son replied, "When one's father is old, one has lost something that cannot be recovered." Hearing this, his father had to return to the mountains and carry his father home on his back, and [from that time forward] cared for him with diligence. *Wu-chi* became thus manifest to instruct unfilial persons in the present each to repent and turn towards the good... (*Cheng-hsin* 6:58-59).¹⁸

Wu-chi sheng-tsu transformed himself, and became manifest as Wang Hsiang (王祥), encouraging the myriad living beings [to follow the Path].

In the *Erh-shih-ssu hsiao*, there is one Wang Hsiang. His step-mother, from the Chu (朱) family, loved only her son by her first marriage, Wang Lan (王覽). Within her arose a villainous thought: to bring harm to the son produced by her second husband, Wang Hsiang. Feigning illness, she called Wang Hsiang: "I would like to eat fresh fish soup. Go and fetch some [fish] for me." Younger brother Lan could not bear in his heart [to see Hsiang suffer] and went to the river in his place. But Hsiang repeatedly forbade him; out of love for his brother, he said, "In the season of forty-nine days after the Winter Solstice, the river is frozen solid to the bottom. Your body is young. How can you go into the river? If you dive into the ice, you will harm yourself. Better that I should sacrifice my life." Hsiang thereupon, with no fear of the pain of the cold, stripped off his clothes and lay naked upon the ice to fetch the fish. His filial heart moved the Heavens, and quickly they assigned the Dragon Gods of the Ministry of Waters to send a catch of fish to Wang Hsiang. Hsiang was overjoyed, and sacrificed in thanks to the heavenly dieties. He took the fish home and prepared soup for his mother. She ate it and became well. Recite:

The light of *Wu-chi* is akin to [the light of] the Buddhas.
Wang Hsiang's filial devotion to his mother moved the
Heavens.

If you are not filial, you are not a gentleman.

If you disappoint your parents, you will be condemned to
bitter suffering.

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18. Wang Yüan-ching attributes this tale to the *Erh-shih-ssu hsiao*, but I have not found it in Kuo Chü-ching's *Erh-shih-ssu hsiao shih* or other collections of this genre. The story is the basis for a Yüan or Ming drama entitled *Yüan Chüeh t'o pa* (袁覺拖芭), anonymous, not extant; Wang P'ei-lun, *Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien*, 323; Fu Hsi-hua, *Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu*, 357; Chuang I-fu, *Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao*, 601.

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19. Wang Hsiang, styled Hsiu-cheng (休徵), was a "filial son" of the Chin; Chin shu, chüan 33 (SPPY edition, Shih 53.5, part 5, pp. 1a-2b). Among "tales of filial piety," see Hsiao-tzu chüan (Wang Ch'ung-min, Tun-huang pien-wen chi, 907); Kuo Chü-ching, Erh-shih-ssu hsiao shih, story #6; Yen-wen tui-chao hui-t'u erh-shih-ssu hsiao, "Wo-ping ch'iu-li" (臥冰求鯉), 25-26. This narrative is the basis of a Yüan drama by Wang Chung-wen entitled Kan T'ien-ti Wang Hsiang wo ping (感天地王祥臥冰), not extant; cf. Wang P'ei-lun, Hsi-ch'ü tz'u-tien, 50; Fu Hsi-hua, Yüan-tai tsa-chü ch'üan-mu, 16; Chuang I-fu, Ku-tien hsi-ch'ü ts'un-mu hui-k'ao, 238; Cheng Chih-ming, Wu-sheng lao-mu hsin-yang su-yüan, 200.

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Abbreviations:

HTC Hsü tsang ching
T Taishō shinshū daizōkyō
SPPY Ssu pu pei yao

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