HETRODOX RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND THE STATE IN MING-QING CHINA

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ABSTRACT

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The present paper looks at two texts relating to 'White Lotus' sectarian religious groups in China during the Ming and Qing dynasties and examines how they illuminate the relationship between heterodox cults and the state during this period. Huang Yupian's *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy* demonstrates how the government viewed the heretical teachings presented in sectarian scripture, while the *Chuxi baojuan* is an example of a scripture that expresses orthodox moral values while criticizing the contemporary society and government.

Based on the selected translations provided of the two texts, as well as the research and scholarship of other researchers in the field, it is argued that the key factors behind the conflict between religious groups and the state are still influencing present-day Chinese society, as evidenced by the fate of the Falun Gong group in the People's Republic.

CHRONOLOGY

Year or Period	***Event***
1370	Zhu Yuanzhang prohibits several 'heterodox teachings'
1372	Date of the *Mulian Jiumu Baojuan*
1430	Date of the *Foshuo Huangji jieguo Baojuan*
1509	The works of Luo Qing are first published
1523	*Jiulian Baojuan* first published
1573-1643	Period in which the baojuan in Huang Yupian's collection were written
1774	Wang Lun rebels in western Shandong
1796-1803	White Lotus rebellion in Hunan, Hubei and Jiangxi
1813	Eight Trigrams rebellion in Zhili
1834	Huang Yupian writes the preface to his *Detailed Refutation of Heresy*

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to contribute to scholarship on Chinese sectarian religious groups in the Ming [1368 – 1644] and Qing [1644 – 1911] periods. The focus will be on those sects usually referred to as White Lotus assemblies (*Bailian Hui* 白蓮會). The discussion will be centered around two types of sources; popular religious texts called 'precious volumes' (*baojuan* 寶卷), and official documents and reports dealing with the religious groups themselves. Two texts will be examined in detail, partial translations of which are available in the appendices. The first is *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy* (*Poxie Xiangbian* 破邪詳辯, hereafter *Refutation*), initially composed in 1834 by Huang Yupian 黃育楩, and reprinted with additions several times more in the late Qing. It was written to warn and educate the people about the dangers posed by the religious teachings of White Lotus sectarian groups, doctrine referred to by Huang as 'heretical teachings' (*xiejiao* 邪教). The second text is a baojuan written in the late Imperial period, most likely in the Qing, although the exact date of its authorship is unknown. Its title is "The precious volume concerning Maitreya's appearing out of the West, the Ancient Buddha who is about to be reborn" (*Gufo Danglai Xiasheng Mile Chuxi Baojuan* 古佛當來下生彌勒出西寶卷, hereafter *Chuxi Baojuan*),[1] and it is significant because it contains several chapters heavy in social criticism, as well as describing a millenarian cataclysm due to strike in the

1 This shortened name follows that in Che Xilun, ed., *Baojuan Zongmu* (Index of Precious Volumes) (Taibei: Zhongyanyuan Wenzhesuo Choubeichu, 1998), 27. The translation of the title is that found in Daniel L. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1999), 274. I also follow Overmyer in translating baojuan as 'precious volume'. See ibid., 3.

near future. The connection between these two texts and the history of late-Imperial popular religion has not yet been addressed in detail, and the present paper will attempt to introduce discussions of these two works into the field.

In the decades preceding Huang's work, religious rebellions had erupted across China with disastrous consequences. A concern with these revolts, and with the potential of the breakdown of a society organized along Confucian lines is at the heart of Huang's book. Behind the sectarian violence lay the 'heretical' teachings recorded in baojuan and the dangerous religious activities of heterodox sects. Huang therefore turned to a detailed study of heterodox teachings in order to pursue his goals as a socially-concerned Confucian official: to maintain social order and promote obedience to the state among the people. From our perspective however, we can see that only a small number of religious sects during this time were ever involved in violent activity. Research into the teachings contained within baojuan also indicates that the beliefs of these groups were by no means unorthodox, nor do most baojuan advocate violence. Huang nevertheless advocates criminal punishments for those participating in heterodox religious groups, and a vigorous education campaign to dissuade people from joining them in the first place. Was Huang's concern misplaced, or was he right in identifying sectarian religious groups as a threat to society? Of the groups that did rebel, why did they do so, when so many other groups managed to exist in peace?

This paper seeks to help clarify the relationship between the state and orthodox religious doctrine on one hand, and independent religious groups and teachings on the other. It is concerned with both social and religious history, because in tracing the history of religious rebellion, dissent, and persecution, it will become clear that social and

religious aspects of this topic are deeply connected. This topic also speaks to the larger question of the relationship between the people, religion and the state in China – a topic which, given the recent conflict surrounding the Falungong movement, is still very much relevant in today's post-reform China.[2] It will be suggested that religious rebellions are only the most visible and extreme case of local, popular religious sects seeking alternative models of society, religion and the cosmos. These alternatives were sought partly in response to the specific economic and social pressures of the late Qing, but are also connected to an ancient tradition of religious resistance to political authority.

In Chapter One the general historical background of late-imperial China as it pertains to the topic is explored, as well as some questions of methodology and theory. The scope and aims of this thesis are also defined. Chapter Two begins an examination of baojuan, both in terms of content and context. Chapter Three looks at heterodox religious groups, religious rebellions, and how the government in the Ming and Qing dealt with heterodoxy. In Chapter Four the social criticisms of the *Chuxi Baojuan* are described and connected to some larger trends in baojuan literature. Chapter Five examines in detail the ideas presented in Huang's *Refutation*, and suggests how his views may be representative of those held by the state in general. The arguments and suggestions presented in this paper are summarized in the Conclusion, and selected chapters of the two texts mentioned above are translated in the appendices.

Key terms are given in *pinyin* romanization and Chinese characters in parentheses following the English translation of the term. The characters for proper names are also given for their first instance, but not subsequent ones.

2 See for example David Ownby, "A History for Falun Gong: Popular Religion and the Chinese State Since the Ming Dynasty," *Nova Religio* 6:2 (2003), 223-243.

CHAPTER ONE

Religion and the State in the Ming and Qing Dynasties

While both baojuan and religious heterodoxy have roots which extend as far back as the Tang dynasty [618 – 907] and earlier, in this paper these phenomenon will be discussed as they developed during the Ming and Qing dynasties, also called the late-imperial period. There are several broad aspects of late-imperial Chinese history which are significant to the present discussion. This period saw an increased commercialization of the economy, the diversification of the workforce, the development and expansion of the printing industry, the rise and fall of two political regimes, and numerous rebellions against local and imperial authority. During the Qing dynasty these violent incidents became endemic, and as C. K. Yang has said, "very few political rebellions of any appreciable proportion were totally unconnected with some religious element or organization."[1]

After the establishment of the Ming dynasty, the economy began to expand and prosperity followed the new peace. In the early Ming merchants and markets arose in response to the new economy, which was becoming more commercialized.[2] Inter-regional trade of goods and culture grew, as did the size of urban economic and cultural centres. At the same time, the Ming government attempted to control the population to an unprecedented degree, both in ideological and practical terms. The ideal was of a settled,

1 C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), 219.
2 Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 71-75.

agrarian society which was both productive and frugal, but an expanding population and economy made this an impossible goal.[3] People connected across regions, expanded their horizons and associated with each other in ways the government had little ability to control. This process of "mobility and change" continued after the disruptions of the Ming-Qing transition, as did the resistance of the "old degree-holding elite" to the growing culture of commerce.[4]

Along with the expansion of a commercial economy, literacy became important not only for those with scholarly or political aspirations, but also for those who wanted to participate in trade and use written contracts without being cheated.[5] The rise of cheaply printed editions of vernacular novels indicates spreading literacy, as well as the commercial viability of mass printing for a wide audience.[6] The rise of literacy among the non-elites also threatened to destabilize the static vision of society mentioned above. Some former elites who lost social and political power, whether through an inability to operate in an expanding economy, political intrigue or competition for a restricted number of official positions, were able to express themselves through the written word but had no reason to uphold an orthodox social structure which had failed them. As Johnson notes of this group, which he defines as 'literate-dependant':

> Such a person was not likely to have had a benign view of the prevailing order of things. Slipping from a comfortable position in the world to the edge of the abyss breeds both anxiety and rancor. It seems probable therefore that this group may have produced more than its share of rebels and members of millenarian cults. Their literacy enabled such people to see beyond the village horizon (if they chose), while their experiences would

3 Ibid., 19; 96-97.
4 Susan Naquin and Evelyn S. Rawski, *Chinese Society in the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 63-64.
5 Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, 56-62.
6 Ibid., 62-65. Naquin and Rawski, 59.

have made them resentful of the status quo.[7]

Economic expansion and the development of literate markets for mass-published books therefore opened up new avenues for people disaffected with society to spread their ideas, whether through simple leaflets, posters, or books. The state responded by seizing and destroying texts deemed heterodox or seditious, one example being the Literary Inquisition that began in 1774, accompanying the collection of texts for the compilation of the *Complete Books of the Four Treasuries* (*siku quanshu*).[8] Under the guise of collecting important works to be republished in the new project, the government was also able to reach into private collections and suppress heterodox works. While the private collections of scholars were unlikely to contain baojuan of the type described in this paper, this inquisition began during the Wang Lun 王倫 uprising in Shandong, at a time when there was "... a considerable increase of concern at the central level of Qing government over ideological orthodoxy."[9]

It was in the mid-Ming, during this period of economic change and the development of the printing industry, that the teachings of Luo Qing 羅清 (1443-1527) were published, works which were to have a strong influence on later sectarian authors of baojuan.[10] While the earliest baojuan which can be dated with any confidence were published in the late Yuan [1271 – 1368] and early Ming, the works which came to define the genre as it existed in the late imperial period first appear in the mid-Ming.[11] The

7 David Johnson, "Communication, Class, and Consciousness in Late Imperial China," in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. Johnson et al (Berkeley: Univeristy of California Press, 1985), 66.
8 B. J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 249.
9 Ibid.
10 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 92-93.
11 See Che Xilun, "Zhongguo Zuizaode Baojuan" (The Earliest Chinese Precious Volume) in Che Xilun, *Zhongguo Baojuan Yanjiu Lunji* (Collected Essays on Chinese Precious Volumes) (Taibei: Xuehai Chubanshe, 1997), 57-68.

development of baojuan is discussed in chapter two, but at this point it is sufficient to note that baojuan appeared within a context of expanding literacy and increased availability of printed material.

The religious groups that produced baojuan have often been accused of being violent and rebellious, but violence was no monopoly of revolutionary or anti-government forces.[12] Contrary to the then-fashionable Western image of China as a peaceful, well-ordered society presided over by a rationalist government, state control during the late-imperial period was often prosecuted through the application of violence. While the state reserved for itself the legitimate application of force, the means by which it wielded this power were often on the borders of legitimacy. The Ming government had close connections with "men of force": bandits and thugs, and soldiers who looted the countryside they were assigned to protect.[13] In spite of this, non-governmental forces managed to challenge the hegemony of the state and make rebellion against the emperor and his forces. A study of violent uprisings during the Ming found instances of rebellion throughout the official histories, although most were determined to be a result of economic hardship, rather than a desire for social change or class conflict.[14] Sectarian disturbances formed only a very small number of the total number of rebellions and violent incidents during this period.[15]

During the Qing the number of religious rebellions was much higher however,

12 See Barend ter Haar, "Rethinking 'Violence' in Chinese Culture" in *Meanings of Violence: A Cross Cultural Perspective*, eds. Göran Aijmer and Jon Abbink (Oxford: Berg, 2000): 123-140, especially 136-138.

13 David Robinson, *Bandits, Eunuchs, and the Son of Heaven: Rebellion and the Economy of Violence in Mid-Ming China*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 7-11.

14 James W. Tong, *Disorder Under Heaven: Collective Violence in the Ming Dynasty* (Stanford: Stanford Univeristy Press, 1991), 5-8.

15 Ibid., 57-59.

leading Yang to make the observation noted above. In 1774 a sect led by Wang Lun rebelled in western Shandong, transforming itself from a peaceful religious group into a rebellious army which managed to disperse local military forces and seize an important market town. Eventually it was crushed by Qing forces;[16] nonetheless, over 100,000 people were involved in this uprising. Between 1796 and 1803 a White Lotus sect rebelled in the Han River highlands, holding out against government troops in the difficult terrain of the hills.[17] In 1813 the Eight Trigram rebellion erupted across north China, even attempting to take the Forbidden City in Beijing.[18] The disruption of these revolts was accompanied by state suppression of heterodox groups and scriptures. This issue of rebellion and suppression, of social action and religious ideology, is further explored in chapter three.

While this paper speaks of orthodox (*zheng* 正) and heterodox (*xie* 邪) sects and teachings, these terms are entirely subjective; a religious scripture may refer to itself as orthodox whereas the state, and perhaps even competing sectarian groups see the teaching as heterodox. This idea of a dichotomy of correct and false doctrine pervades the sources, and thus these terms cannot be avoided, but the relationship between baojuan teachings and official doctrine is not as simple as a conflict between competing orthodoxies. This will also be discussed in chapter three.

Traditionally, Chinese religions are divided into the so-called "Three Teachings": Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. Since many practices and teachings transcend this neat three-fold division, a fourth category "Popular Religion" is sometimes

16 Susan Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
17 Naquin and Rawski, 136-137; 166-167.
18 Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976).

added.[19] Religion in the late imperial period was intimately tied up with politics, the economy, and society. The first emperor of the Ming, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, was brought to power with the help of a religious sect, and spent part of his life as a monk. One of his first acts was to limit religious worship and prohibit certain traditions, including the White Lotus tradition, and the worship of Maitreya.[20] Buddhist monasteries in this period, with the exception of a few famous temples, could not rely on the government for support. For a variety of reasons, the gentry stepped in to support local Buddhist institutions, especially in the closing years of the dynasty.[21]

While the Qing court supported Lamaist Buddhism, especially in their relations with Central Asia, the state promoted Confucianism and Buddhism at home. The Kangxi emperor, who was keen to be perceived as a Confucian scholar-ruler, continued the civil service examination system that his predecessor the Shunzhi emperor had revived, and proclaimed Confucian moral values in his "Sacred Edict" of 1670.[22] The orthodox Buddhist canon was reprinted by the state in 1738, and emperors made pilgrimages to important religious sites.[23]

Religion continued to play a central role in the lives of the non-elites as well, and it is the religion of the common people which is discussed both in Huang's *Refutation* and the *Chuxi Baojuan*. As Stephen F. Teiser points out in the work cited above, the term

19 For a discussion of the Three Teachings and the inclusion of Popular Religion, see Stephen F. Teiser, "The Spirits of Chinese Religion," in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3-37.

20 Ter Haar, *White Lotus Teachings*, 124. On the beliefs of Han Shantong and the rewritten history of the early Ming, see ibid., 115-122.

21 Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 325-330.

22 Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 2nd edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999), 60.

23 Naquin and Rawski, 20.

"popular religion" is used in two distinct ways: one is to denote traditions and practices shared by a large segment of the population regardless of class or background; the other refers to those practices unique to the folk, distinct from the religion of the elite.[24] Whether the teachings of the baojuan should be thought of as part of popular religion, or even popular Buddhism, will be discussed below. Regardless of which label we use, contemporary sources written by the elites make clear distinctions between the orthodox teachings upheld by the state and the heterodox teachings circulating among the folk. It is important to note, however, that the labels of orthodox and heterodox were always applied by those who saw their own beliefs as orthodox. Often this was the secular authority, but as we shall see, the argument over right and wrong belief was not a simple struggle between the state and religious groups. Different religious groups also accused each other of following heretical teachings, all the while portraying themselves as the only source of orthodox teaching.

While heterodox teachings have historically not received the same degree of attention that has been paid to the orthodoxy, recent research has tended to focus on different aspects of popular religion, the beliefs and acitivies of the common people, one of which being heterodox sects. In his preface to *A History of Chinese Popular Religion* (*Zhongguo Minjian Zongjiao Shi* 中國民間宗教史), Ma Xisha 馬西沙 defends the study of popular religion and sects labelled as heterodox:

> 民間宗教與正統宗教雖然存在質的不同，但差異多地表現在政治範疇，而不是宗教本身。前者不爲統治秩序所承認，被污爲邪教，匪類，屢遭取締鎮壓，往往只能在下層潛行默運；後者從整體上屬於統治階層的意識形態，受到尊崇，信仰和保護。就宗教意義而言，民間宗教與正統宗教之間沒有隔著不可逾越的壕溝。[25]

24 Teiser, "The Spirits of Chinese Religion", 21-25.

25 Ma Xisha and Han Bingfang, eds., *Zhongguo Minjian Zongjiao Shi* (A History of Chinese Popular Religion) (Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1992), 3.

> Although the qualities of popular and orthodox religion differ, the place where there are the most differences is in the category of poltics, not in the religions themselves. The former was not what the ruling order recognized [as orthodox religion], and so was smeared [with the label of] heresy, of having to do with bandits, and was repeatedly subjected to supression and repression, often only able to act secretly among the lower strata [of society]; the latter was wholey a part of the ruling stratum's ideology, and received respect, esteem, belief and protection. There is no insurmountable gulf between the religious meanings [taught by] the popular and orthodox religions. (Translation mine)

Ma's thesis is that "heresy is also religion", and that heterodox groups deserve attention because they reflect the consciousness of the common people, rather than giving voice solely to state-sanctioned ideology.[26] With Marxist historiography still influencial in mainland China, Ma's arguments allow the study of 'superstition' for the sake of studying the lower strata of society.

As mentioned above, popular religious groups were closely linked to violent rebellion both in official histories and in the work of modern scholars writing about Chinese religion and society. It has been suggested by several scholars that the sectarian religious groups that used baojuan as their scriptures represented an radical alternative society to the state, and thus were anti-establishment in nature.[27] This revolutionary aspect of popular religion also appeared in the work of C. K. Yang, who noted that

> ... from earliest times, religion has universally performed the unique function of producing a picture of life different from that in concrete existence, and hence the morally uplifting effect of religion in changing the world to conform to the imaginary or ideal pattern as conceived by the founders. Religion has always sought to differ from and not to conform to reality, in contrast to the tradition-conformed and reality-bound Confucian

26 Ibid., 10.

27 Richard Shek "Ethics and Polity: The Heterodoxy of Buddhism, Maitreyanism, and the Early White Lotus" in *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China*, eds. Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Shek (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 101. Daniel L. Overmyer "Alternatives: Popular Religious Sects in Chinese Society", *Modern China*, Vol. 7 No. 2 (April 1981), 186.

> orthodoxy. Either as the discovery or as the product of man's power of imagination, religion contains a seed of revolution except when it is thoroughly diffused or merged into the established moral and political institutions, as the Chinese classical religion was.[28]

The fears of civic-minded magistrates such as Huang Yupian seem therefore to be justified: heterodox religions were indeed rebellious and seditious in nature, a threat to social order and the orthodox teachings.

While not discounting this 'revolutionary' potential of religion to suggest a higher good which trumps secular authority, this paper will argue that the religious ideas of the baojuan and sectarian religious groups were neither 'subversive' nor 'heterodox'. Based on the primary texts and on secondary scholarship, it seems that although there were certainly religious groups seeking alternatives in the late Imperial period, the idea that all of these groups were a threat to the state was a baseless fear. The rebellions associated with religious groups were isolated and infrequent compared to the total number of violent incidents in the Ming and Qing, and compared to the number of sects which existed in peace. Rebellions were often merely a response to persecution, a means for the group to survive when threatened with destruction.

It has been argued that the Chinese state was never that concerned with the specific religious doctrine being preached by religious organizations, but rather the actions and practices of the congregation itself: the state enforced orthopraxy, not orthodoxy.[29] From this argument it would follow that state persecution of religious groups was due only to their propensity for rebellion, not their religious beliefs. If the arguments in

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28 Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 229.

29 James L. Watson, "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of T'ien Hou ('Empress of Heaven') Along the South China Coast, 960-1960" In *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. Johnson et al (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 292-324.

Huang's Refutation are taken into account however, it does appear that at least on some levels, the state was promoting specific orthodox beliefs, and attacking the heterodoxies it perceived in certain religious traditions, specifically those contained in many baojuan. Religious groups were expressing alternative ideologies which were threatening to the religious framework that the state attempted to use to justify its rule and promote social stability.

The genesis of this argument lies in the essay entitled "Religion as Resistance" written by Stephen Feuchtwang, which looks at modern Chinese religion and its role in providing a public space separate to that controlled by the government.[30] Feuchtwang argues that Chinese religious organizations in post-reform times have come to serve as a venue of expressing dissatisfaction with the government, and have continued to suggest higher ideals and values which are able to challenge those put forth by the state. Without using this modern evidence to make statements about Ming and Qing religion, the article nevertheless suggests that Chinese religious congregations can challenge the state without seeking to destroy it. The official sources always portray White Lotus groups as antagonistic to the state, and a threat to public morality and society. Perhaps when the veil of official paranoia is pulled aside, it will become clear that these so-called heterodox cults were quite orthodox in their outlook, were usually accepted by the communities in which they operated, and if anything were closer to many of the original spirit of the very 'orthodox' teachings the state accused them of slandering.

30 Stephen Feuchtwang, "Religion as Resistance," in *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance* eds. Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden (London: Routledge, 2000), 161-177.

CHAPTER TWO

Baojuan in Chinese Religious History

Baojuan, or 'precious volumes' are a unique genre of popular scripture which circulated in China between approximately the 16th to the mid 20th century.[31] Although there appears to be a core tradition which all sectarian baojuan share, they also express varied religious teachings depending on which sect or teacher was responsible for their creation. While we may speak in general about 'baojuan teachings', this refers only to the broad beliefs expressed in different texts, and not to a homogeneous tradition. Since baojuan were produced anonymously, we seldom know anything about the authors behind these texts. Nonetheless, from what we know of local sect leaders, it is unlikely that they were highly placed in society, although they may have come from a family holding hereditary religious power in the locality.[32] Coming from a non-elite source, and written for a folk audience, baojuan allow us a glimpse into the religious and social concerns of a class about which little was recorded.

Systematic research into baojuan was first undertaken in the 1920s and 30s, led by two Chinese scholars, Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 and Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸, who in turn influenced other contemporary scholars of popular literature to include baojuan as an object of study.[33] During this early period, scholars first recognized the value of baojuan,

31 This period of time excludes the 'early models' suggested by Overmyer, and discussed below.
32 On hereditary sectarian families, see Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*, 21-23.
33 Che, *Xinyang*, 285-289.

and tried to place them within the spectrum of popular and religious literary forms known at the time. The 1950s and 60s saw research into the origin and typology of baojuan, joined by Japanese scholars such as Sawada Mizuho 澤田瑞穗, who was to publish several important books on the subject, including the source text for the present translation of *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy*.[34] Daniel Overmyer began his collection and study of baojuan in the early 1980s, and in the post-reform China many collections and reprints of baojuan have appeared, including the *Baojuan Chuji* of 1994, edited by Zhang Xixun et al.

Che Xilun 車錫倫 suggests that baojuan may be divided either according to their content, which may be religious or popular, or by their style, either literary or non-literary.[35] Religious baojuan function as records of religious teachings, and are used most often in ritual. Popular baojuan on the other hand, while incorporating religious themes, are not the product of a certain sect or teacher, and are not associated with a particular religious tradition. The style may be 'literary', by which Che means incorporating narrative, whereas non-literary works state their message without the use of stories. Overmyer also divides baojuan into 'sectarian' and 'narrative' baojuan, roughly equal to Che's 'religious' and 'popular'.[36] Che's system differs from that of Overmyer in that he includes Buddhist texts in the 'religious' category and recognizes that both religious and popular baojuan may use narrative. Overmyer uses the style of alternating prose and poetry and the mythologies of Maitreya and the Eternal Venerable mother to distinguish sectarian baojuan. The categories become potentially confusing because of the differing uses of the words 'popular' and 'narrative' in the research of the two scholars, but there does seem to be a

34 Ibid., 289-292.
35 Che, *Zhongguo Baojuan*, 18.
36 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 4-5.

distinction between baojuan used as scripture and those that merely incorporate religious themes.

The present thesis is concerned primarily with those baojuan expressing the teachings of a religious group, and not with those forms which relate narrative stories in order to convey a moral teaching. What distinguishes these baojuan is that they were venerated as religious texts, whereas other types were treated much like other types of popular literature. While this religious message as it appeared in baojuan of the late imperial period was highly syncretic, drawing images and themes from several religious traditions, early models were more closely linked to Buddhism.

Che Xilun calls baojuan the "direct disciples" of Buddhist *sujiang* 俗講, a type of popular lecture delivered to explain Buddhist teachings to laypeople. These lectures grew out of a need to serve the interests of a laity who had little advanced knowledge of Buddhist teachings, and who were alienated by terms transliterated from the Sanskrit.[37] These lectures appeared to have gained popularity through the Tang, to the point that Tang Xuanzong 唐玄宗 [r. 712 – 755] issued an edict banning them in 731. They persisted, however, forcing Tang Xianzong 唐憲宗 [r. 806 – 820] to issue a less strict policy in 815, limiting the number of *sujiang* performances to three per year for all jurisdictions outside of the capital, Chang'an.[38] From these early times there seems to have been a need to "translate" Buddhism into a form which could be understood by people other than those who had devoted their lives to studying the language and philosophy of the sutras. There was also clearly a concern on the part of the state over the effect of the popularization of

37 Che Xilun, *Xinyang, Jiaohua, Yule: Zhongguo Baojuan Yanjiu Ji Qita* (Faith, Education, Recreation: Studies of Chinese Precious Volumes et cetera) (Taibei: Taiwan Xuesheng Shuju, 2002), 45-46.
38 Ibid., 47.

Buddhist teachings, and an apparently unsuccessful attempt to control their influence.

While Overmyer identifies several possible antecedents for baojuan, including indigenous Buddhist scriptures, transformation-texts and sutra lectures, Chan writings, pure land texts, and Quanzhen Daoist writings, he maintains that none of these directly influenced the authors of baojuan. There are several aspects already present in these texts that later appear in baojuan, although in most cases the means by which these ideas were disseminated over time is as yet unclear. In the early indigenous scriptures for example, there is mention of the end of a cosmic age, with widespread suffering in store for all but the faithful. This apocalyptic vision reappears in baojuan, and is even described using similar terminology, but many of these early texts were only recidscovered in recent times, and would not have been availible to writers of the Ming and Qing.[39] Overmyer maintains though that baojuan did not grow out of any particular genre or tradition, and the close links between baojuan and other traditions are simply the result of "... fresh imagination working on fragments of old material that led to a new creation."[40]

The date of the earliest baojuan is still a contentious issue. Overmyer calls the "Imperial Ultimate" baojuan (*Huangji Baojuan* 皇極寶卷) an 'early model', based on several references in this text to the Eternal Venerable Mother (*wusheng laomu* 無生老母), who comes to prominence in baojuan of the sixteenth century. This deity is important in the teachings of the baojuan and will be discussed in detail below. The date of this text is 1430.[41] Note that Overmyer does not connect this text with later baojuan, calling it a 'model' instead. Che Xilun, rejecting several other baojuan as incorrectly dated, calls the

39 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 11-23.
40 Ibid., 50.
41 Ibid., 51; 59.

baojuan entitled “Mulian Rescues his Mother out of Hell to be Reborn in Heaven” (*Mulian Jiumu Chuli Diyu Shengtian Baojuan* 目連救母出離地獄生天寶卷) the oldest known, dating it to 1372. He argues that for the baojuan to have arose any earlier is unsupported by present evidence, but does not reject the possibility that earlier forms may be found, perhaps in the *tanjing* 談經 arts of the Southern Song [1127 – 1279] period.[42]

Seiwert traces the beginnings of baojuan to Luo Qing 羅清 [1443 – 1527], a sectarian teacher in the mid-Ming whose works were first published in 1503. Whether or not he composed the first baojuan, Luo Qing, also known as Luo Menghong, was certainly the first sectarian author about whom we have firm biographical information.[43] Born in Shandong, and spending most of his life teaching northwest of Beijing, he attracted a large following drawn from all levels of society during his teaching career, and his writings also influenced later religious teachers and authors.[44] A former soldier, Luo's teachings drew on the texts mentioned above and established many foundations for later baojuan, although he was certainly not the only source of inspiration for later teachers.

Significantly, he used the term 'baojuan' to refer to two of his five major works: “The Precious Volume of Self-Determination, Needing Neither Cultivation nor Verification, Which Rectifies Belief and Dispels Doubt” (*Zhengxin Chuyi Wuxiu Zhengzizai Baojuan* 正信除疑無修證自在寶卷) and “The Precious Volume of Deeply Rooted Karmic Fruits, Majestic and Unmoved Like Mount Tai” (*Weiwei Bu Dong*

42 Che, *Zhongguo Baojuan*, 57-65.

43 Seiwert gives his personal name as Menghong, and provides three examples of homonymic characters used to write it: 夢鴻;孟洪;孟鴻. Hubert Seiwert and Ma Xisha, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 217; 228.

44 For a look at some later texts directly influenced by Luo's teachings, see Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 124-135.

Taishan Shen'gen Jieguo Baojuan 巍巍不動泰山深根結果寶卷).[45] He also referred to Amitabha Buddha as the Eternal Venerable Parent (*wusheng fumu* 無生父母)[46] and the Buddhist practitioner as an infant, adopting the practice apparently popular among contemporary Pure Land groups to characterize the connection between religious follower and deity as a parent-child relationship. While Luo himself thought of Buddhas and the Eternal Venerable Parent as representing universal forces rather than signifying actual gods, later teachers adopted this message into a personified deity they called the Eternal Venerable Mother.[47]

It is from Luo's time that baojuan begin to take on a syncretic nature, a trend present in the works of Luo himself, who at best had a "fragmented" knowledge of Buddhism, and who incorporated many popular ideas from the Daoist tradition in his writings.[48] The *Jiulian Baojuan* of 1523, which has few definite connections to Luo's works, nevertheless incorporates aspects from the varied traditions represented in the earlier texts mentioned above. Overmyer calls it "a complete statement of sixteenth-century sectarian mythology and teaching...",[49] and proceeds to argue that later baojuan, influenced by sources such as the *Jiulian Baojuan*, were more than imitations or debased versions of Luo's writings. The major themes in this text become hallmarks of later baojuan, and will be discussed below.

Baojuan would not have existed in the form we know without the

45 Ma and Han, 165. English translations of the two titles follow Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 117; 122.
46 See below, pp. 92-94 for Huang Yupian's refutation of this concept.
47 Richard Shek and Tetsuro Noguchi, "Eternal Mother Religion: Its History and Ethics" in *Heterodoxy in late Imperial China*, eds. Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Shek (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 242-245.
48 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes,* 15. On Daoist sources see ibid., 104.
49 Ibid., 176.

development of printing in the Ming. Although block printing was invented sometime in the Tang dynasty and developed during the Song, it is only during the Ming that the publishing and purchasing of printed books occurred on a massive scale. During the early part of the dynasty books were relatively cheap, and probably helped to disseminate the Confucian classics to the relatively poor and humble.[50] While most baojuan were copied by hand, many were printed, although the texts themselves may have existed in manuscript form before being published. Most of the texts that still exist today were printed between the Zhengde 正德 [1506 – 1521] era of the Ming and the Kangxi 康熙 [1662 – 1722] era of the Qing, in a style imitating that of Buddhist scriptures. Some religious groups, supported by members of the royal family or eunuchs, even used the Imperial presses to produce their works.[51]

Printing baojuan was probably an important step in the development of a sect or teaching. Catherine Bell, in her study of an 18th century morality book, notes that practical social and economical concerns were often behind the publishing of a sectarian scripture. Small groups with little access to resources, especially those operating during times of government persecution, had little chance to spread their teachings. More established groups with links to wealthy elites on the other hand, had an easier time in getting their texts printed.[52] The greater visibility that came with having published works circulating led to many groups adopting more socially acceptable messages, giving up

50 Ho Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 212-215.

51 Che, *Zhongguo Baojuan*, 40-41. On Huang's experience with the similarity between baojuan and Buddhist scriptures, see below, p. 86.

52 Catherine Bell, "'A Precious Raft to Save the World': The Interaction of Scriptual Tradition and Printing in a Chinese Morality Book" *Late Imperial China* 17.1 (1996), 183-184.

challenging the “dominant cultural tradition” in favour of upholding it.[53] She argues that the later texts of the 'spirit-writing' genre, where scripture is produced by a medium and transcribed into an intelligible text, may be seen as the result of this process.

This is not to say that printed baojuan were considered orthodox by those outside the sect; most if not all of Huang's confiscated books were printed, “all in the style of a legal document, and quite similar to a real Buddhist scripture.”[54] The transformation from a manuscript into a printed document did not change the fundanmental messages of the baojuan, which is what the state found objectionable. Baojuan were also never printed on the same scale as popular fiction or orthodox works, their 'precious' nature coming not only from the importance of the message contained within the text but also from the scarcity of the books themselves.[55]

53 Ibid., 186.
54 Below, p. 86.
55 Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*, 18-24.

There are some broad similarities among the teachings recorded in baojuan, although with a genre as rich as diverse as this, there are invariably works which do not follow the general description given here. As mentioned above, one trait which links together all baojuan, whether literary- or religious-themed, is an orientation to the laity. Early models for late-Imperial baojuan were already concerned with bringing the message of Buddhism to laypeople, as in the case of *sujiang*. Luo's teachings were directed to soldiers and officials, not to monks and nuns immersed in the traditions of the Buddhist canon. One result of this is that many baojuan tend to be critical of priests, whereas the earlier sutra commentaries and sujiang support the monastic order.[56] Lay life does not appear as secondary or less important then monasticism, but as the natural setting for religious activity.[57] This no doubt enhanced the appeal of sectarian teachings to laypeople.

Baojuan preach a universal message, a description of the world and the cosmos which applies to all types of people, and yet in formulating such a message religious groups dismissed the teachings of competing sects as heterodox. Texts usually open with a description of the creation of the world, often leading into the central mythologies of the Eternal Mother and Maitreya.[58] Most baojuan also included a description of a future apocalypse which would result in the destruction of the world, and thus in their teachings encapsulated the entire history of the universe. Followers of the sectarian teaching were taught that they were part of an elect few who would be spared

56 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 11-12. See appendix A for criticism of monks.

57 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 275-276.

58 See for example Huang Yupian's discussion of the *Gufo Tianzhen Kaozheng Longhua Baojing*, which opens with "From the unbeginning, [there was] neither heaven nor earth, neither sun nor moon, neither people nor animals; from within the true emptiness, transformed forth the honoured one, the Ancient Buddha of the True Heaven Without Limit." Sawada Mizuho, *Kochu Haja Shoben* (Corrected and Annotated *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy*) (Tokyo: Dai'ichi Shobo, 1972), 19. Also see the opening chapter of the *Chuxi Baojuan*. Zhang Xishun, ed. *Baojuan Chuji* ('Precious Volumes', First Collection) Vol. 19, ([Taiyuan?]: Shanxi Renmin Chubanshe, 1994), 301-311.

from the sufferings and disasters of this coming calamity. As Richard Shek observes, while the opportunity of salvation was open to all, only those who joined the sect would be saved.[59] These traditions outside of the state orthodoxy thus experienced little solidarity between sects, and because of this groups were seldom able to cooperate even in the face of government persecution, as will be seen in the next chapter.

The central deities of most baojuan were the Eternal Venerable Mother (or alternatively, the Eternal Venerable Parent), and Maitreya. As mentioned above, from the time of Luo Qing the Eternal Venerable Mother had assumed paramount importance in the mythologies of sectarian teachings. While the roots of this deity extend possibly as far back as the 13th century, Luo's inclusion of the Eternal Mother myth in his writings seems to have been the major inspiration for her incorporation and development by later sectarian writers.[60] However, even he was building upon an earlier tradition, as evidenced by the appearance of mother-goddesses in the *Huangji Baojuan* mentioned above, some of which are referred to as "Venerable Mother".[61] While the creation of the world and the establishment of the original religious doctrine was the work of the Ancient Buddha, the Eternal Mother functions as the spiritual mother of all humankind, a personal deity full of compassion.[62] She is described as residing in a heavenly palace, saddened at the low state to which humanity has fallen. There appear to be some superficial similarities to the Buddhist Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, known in China as Guanyin 觀音: a female figure

59 Richard Shek, "Sectarian Eschatology and Violence" in *Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counterculture* eds. Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrel (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 98-102.
60 Shek and Noguchi, 242-247.
61 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 59.
62 Seiwert and Ma, 246; 276-277. Seiwert notes that in the *Huangji Jieguo baojuan* of 1430 the Ancient Buddha fulfills both the role of world-creator and of compassionate deity, but later the Eternal Mother was portrayed in the latter role.

symbolizing compassion, and available to help human beings achieve salvation. The sources referenced above indicate however, that the Eternal Venerable Mother deity was based upon distinct traditions, and was not simply a popular form of Guanyin. Furthermore, the role played by Guanyin in Buddhist traditions is much more limited than that played by the Eternal Venerable Mother in sectarian writings.

Maitreya (*Mile Fo* 彌勒佛), a figure from the Buddhist tradition, also appears in many baojuan, including the *Chuxi Baojuan* translated in appendix A. He operates as a messenger for the Eternal Mother, bringing the true teachings down to earth where those who hear and believe in them will be saved. In other contexts he takes on a more political role, appearing as a future leader of the world.[63] This political nature of Maitreya is not always present in all the texts; he may simply be delivering religious teachings which do not require political or social change except within the religious community itself, much like Shakyamuni Buddha.[64] By the late-Imperial period, Maitreya was still an important figure in orthodox Buddhism, although since the Song dynasty his image had largely been supplanted by that of the Budai Monk (*Budai Heshang* 布袋和尚), the fat laughing figure which greets visitors at Chinese temples even today.[65]

It is clear however that in baojuan texts Maitreya was often linked to discussions about social and political topics. The Dragon Flower Assemblies (*Longhua Hui* 龍華會) of the *Dragon Flower Sutra* were said to be modeled on religious assemblies

63 Daniel L. Overmyer, “"Messenger, Savior, and Revolutionary: Maitreya in Chinese Popular Religious Literature of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" in *Maitreya, the future Buddha*, eds. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 110-115.

64 Seiwert and Ma, 358.

65 Zhao Chao, "Lüetan Fojiao Zaoxiangzhong Mile Xingxiang de Yanbian (A Brief Discussion of the Evolution of the Form of Maitreya in Buddhist Statues)" in *Budai Heshang Yu Mile Wenhua* (The Budai Monk and Maitreyian Culture) ed. He Jingsong (Beijing: Zongjiao Wenhua Chubanshe, 2003), 48.

presided over by Maitreya; this in turn served as a model or inspiration for religious groups forming their own communities.[66] Maitreya was also said to descend one day to earth to "take control" (*zhangshi* 掌世), a phrase with clear political intentions and one which Huang was to argue against in his *Refutation*.[67] Although some ambitious leaders proclaimed themselves to be reincarnations of Maitreya in order to cement their religious authority, such as Lin Zhao'en 林兆恩 of the Three-in-one teaching (*Sanyi Jiao* 三一教), Maitreya's arrival was usually placed in the future, at a time of worldwide disasters.[68]

A description of the coming apocalypse was an important part of baojuan teachings. This idea of a future era of disaster and suffering was closely related to the Buddhist notion of time being divided into periods of cosmic eons, and also to traditional schemes about the eventual extinction of the Dharma, the Buddhist teachings. The kalpa (*jiepo* 劫波),[69] originally denoting an immensely long period of time, was transformed in sectarian teachings into a historical period, a stage in the revelation of religious teaching to humanity. While the first two stages saw attempts to save humanity that met with little success, the coming third stage would see destruction on a mass scale, sparing only those who believed in the correct (sectarian) religious doctrine.[70] Eschatological teachings had existed in Chinese Buddhist sutras since the medieval period, influenced by indigenous Daoist ideas, and may have provided the source for sectarian teachers in the Ming and

66 Daniel L. Overmyer, "Values in Chinese Sectarian Literature: Ming and Ch'ing Pao-chüan" in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China* eds. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 241; 221.

67 See below, pp. 65-96.

68 Kenneth Dean, *Lord of the Three in One: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China* (Princeton: Princeton Univeristy Press, 1998), 23; 93.

69 See William Edward Soothill and Lewis Hodous, eds., *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms* [book on-line]; availible from http://www.hm.tyg.jp/~acmuller/soothill/cjkindex.html; Internet; accessed 15 January 2005.

70 Shek and Noguchi, 263-264.

Qing.[71] This anxiety about a coming kalpa of massive change was coupled with orthodox teachings about the end of the Dharma, which was to come after a period when the forms of the religion were practiced, but people no longer had true understanding. One of the hallmarks of the downfall of the true teachings was that monks would be corrupt, and sectarian groups used this idea both to support the truth of their own teachings, and to validate lay life over monasticism.[72]

The complement to sectarian eschatological teachings was the assurance that salvation from the immanent suffering was possible, if one was to join the sect and spread its teachings. This idea of sect members forming an elect fostered group cohesiveness, and had a drastic impact on the group's relations with the government and society at large, sometimes with violent consequences.[73] As will be discussed below, this promise of salvation was an important factor in attracting new believers, but it was by no means the only one. What is interesting about this message of salvation is that it is open to all moral persons who have faith in the group's teachings; neither education or wealth are prerequisites for being part of the elect. The appeal of these ideas was thus very broad, and attracted followers from all levels of society.[74]

Apart from addressing these matters of faith, baojuan also discuss more secular issues, directing criticism against unjust or immoral aspects of society. They also supported values and morals quite orthodox in nature, often referring to Confucius or the

71 Seiwert and Ma, 131-132.
72 Ibid., 129-131.
73 Shek, “Sectarian Eschatology and Violence”, 98-99. Also see chapter three for a more detailed discussion of the social aspects of sectarian religious groups.
74 Susan Naquin, “The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China”, in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan and Evelyn S. Rawski. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 257. Naquin's findings, while tentative, indicate if nothing else that sectarian teachings had a wide appeal.

Confucian School (*ru men* 儒門) as the basis of their ethics.[75] Criticisms were directed against monks and nuns for being corrupt and hypocritical, against soldiers and bandits for being inhuman, and against officials for being corrupt and greedy. These critical attacks were expressed in terms of who would suffer during the turn of the kalpa, when the virtuous would be rewarded and the sinful punished.[76] Although anger and resentment against certain types of people is couched in the language of divine retribution, there is an indication in baojuan of conflicts between different groups of people which come out in sectarian teachings. Although each sect more often than not saw both the state and other sects as false, sectarian teachings on the whole uphold similar values: filial piety, loyalty, honesty, and charity. These values in turn are not fundamentally different from those espoused by the state orthodoxy in proclamations such as the Sacred Edict, but the key difference is that sectarian organizations claimed to be actually practicing these values, whereas officials, soldiers and priests were charged with being hypocritical in preaching morality but acting otherwise.

Many scholars have thus identified a fundamental conflict between sectarian organizations and the state, a conflict which they connect to violent incidents led by religious groups against the state in the Ming and Qing periods. Whether we accept this argument or not, religious rebellion has been an important part of the relationship between Chinese sectarian religious groups and the state.

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75 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 275-276. Liu and Shek, introduction to *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China*, 2-3.

76 See chapter four and appendix A for this theme in the *Chuxi Baojuan*. Overmyer briefly addresses the "rich and detailed social criticism" of this book in *Precious Volumes*, 276-277.

CHAPTER THREE

Heterodox Religious Groups and Rebellions

Much of what we know about heterodox religious organizations in the Ming and Qing comes as a result of government investigations into sectarian rebellions. These sources bear a heavy bias: the government had already identified these groups as 'rebels' and enemies, and was therefore hostile to them. Much of this information was gathered during interrogations, where the criminals (for they were already branded as such) may have simply told their interrogator whatever they thought would end the torture.[1] Finally, the groups which were uncovered during rebellions were only a small percentage of the total number of sectarian religious groups operating at the time. If these sects are taken to be representative of the tradition as a whole, it naturally appears subversive, anti-government, and violent in nature. Nonetheless, since the groups seldom recorded much about themselves, these investigation records form a valuable resource at least for understanding those groups which transformed themselves from congregations into armies capable of challenging local government forces. These sources also reveal something of how the state perceived sectarian religious groups as a threat to society, and how they reacted when that threat suddenly became real.

China's earliest political leaders, like in many societies, used religious

1 Interrogators were also more concerned with obtaining the names of other sect members than in individual motivations in following the sect. See Blaine Gaustad, "Prophets and Pretenders: Inter-sect Competition in Qianlong China," *Late Imperial China* Vol. 21, No. 1 (June 2000), 2.

teachings to justify their rule, cement their position as elites, and determine the rules of political and social discourse.[2] When the Han dynasty began supporting Confucianism at the expense of other philosophies, traditional religious ideas were not uprooted by the secular teachings. Even one of the central virtues of Confucian ethics, filial piety, was supported by beliefs about the ability of the dead to become ancestors, and the need for descendants to support them through the performance of sacrifices. There was also a deep respect for a hierarchal society led by the virtuous and able 'gentlemen' (*junzi* 君子), an aspect the state employed to support its own position and prevent challenges to its rule. While officials may have attempted to justify these rites as supporting good behaviour, and dismissed the supernatural aspects as mere superstition, Confucian rites had clearly adopted the ancient forms of Chinese religion, and for most the religious aspects of the rituals surrounding ancestor sacrifice remained strong.[3] By the late-imperial period the government continued to incorporate religious practices into politics and governance, and Chinese society was strongly tied to religion both in its organization and its morals.

Since political and religious power were both centered specifically in the person of the emperor, and more generally in the government, the state retained for itself the authority to define orthodoxy and heterodoxy. This definition changed over time as different historical circumstances affected the acceptance of the state to different ideologies. In his study of Chinese religion, Max Weber identified Confucianism as the sole orthodoxy, and relegated Daoism and Buddhism to the status of heterodoxies. This argument is based on his interpretation of Confucianism as an atheistic, rationalistic philosophy that encourages loyalty and obedience, a suitable device to support an

2 Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 106.
3 Ibid., 48-53.

authoritarian, bureaucratic state. Daoism on the other hand emphasizes the mystical and was never fully accepted by the state.[4] Such a neat distinction fails however to take into account the official support paid to Buddhist, Daoist and folk religious traditions and groups, and the strong support of the state for theistic institutions such as shrines to local gods and deities which had gained national prominence.[5] Clearly the label of orthodoxy was not limited to Confucianism, but could extend to other traditions which were found to be acceptable to the political rulers.

Guandi is one example of how the state was able to influence a popular tradition, although there were limits to how far religious and mythological symbols could be altered. Duara has outlined how the investiture of the historical figure of Guanyu 關羽 with the orthodox values of loyalty and filial piety never completely eclipsed his origin as a martial deity and the popular worship of him as a god of wealth.[6] With these orthodox qualities 'superscribed' over the popular ones and his new identity as a "protector of the empire", Guanyu was acceptable to the orthodoxy as he could serve to encourage loyalty and obidience to state authority at the local level, even though popular worship continued to emphasize older aspects of this potent figure.[7] Thus today he is still considered the god of business, where he represents loyalty to one's partners and peers rather than the government, a role he also plays in the criminal underground. Orthodoxy was thus neither static nor exclusive of other traditions, but at times a compromise was possible with other traditions which resulted in recruiting popular symbols to the orthodox cause.

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4 Max Weber, *The Religion of China: Confucianism and Taoism* (The Free Press, 1951), 181-191.

5 As in the cases of Guandi and Tianhou. On Guandi see Prasenjit Duara, "Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 46, No. 4 (November 1988): 778-795. Official involvment in the promotion of Tianhou is covered in Watson.

6 Duara, *passim*.

7 Ibid., 788; 791.

The limits of orthodox belief also changed over time as new ideas arose and were either accepted and incorporated, or rejected and persecuted. Such was the case with Buddhism, which underwent some drastic changes in order to accommodate itself to Chinese society, and which was persecuted for various reasons including its foreign origins, and the fiscal power of monasteries. Even the 'neo-Confucianism' (*daoxue* 道學) of Zhu Xi was condemned as heterodox when it was first formulated, only to receive official support in the early Qing. The emphasis upon principle (*li* 理) rather than individual moral knowledge as the basis of conduct appealed to the early rulers of the dynasty, as did its rich cosmological and metaphysical content, influenced by Buddhist and Daoist ideas.[8] In a similar way, the White Lotus tradition of the Song dynasty seems to have been an accepted tradition, but from the Yuan it became a blanket label for heterodoxy, referring not to a homogeneous tradition but to unsanctioned religious groups in general; this transformation has been examined in detail by ter Haar.[9] The definition of orthodoxy was thus used by the state for its own ends, usually to promote political and moral stabilization by censoring potentially threatening ideologies.

Just as religion was used to stabilize and control society, it could also be invoked by groups who wished to challenge political power. This could be expressed using the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), as the founders of the Zhou dynasty did,[10] or by means of other religious figures, as in the case of rebels proclaiming themselves to be incarnations of the Maitreya Buddha. Since the authority to rule was ultimately derived from having the support of the gods, dissatisfaction with the political authority could be

8 Spence, 102. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 123-126.
9 Ter Haar, *White Lotus Teachings*, *passim*.
10 This is the idea of Heaven supporting a rebellion against the corrupt rulership, a concept often invoked in traditional Chinese historiography when explaining the downfall of dynasties.

transformed into rebellious action if sanctioned by religious figures.[11] The fall of many dynasties was accompanied by religious groups propelled into violent action; for example the Yellow Turbans of the late Han, and the White Lotus of the late Yuan.

In the Ming and Qing there are several instances of religious rebellion associated with sectarian religious groups, the types of congregations that used baojuan as their scripture. These incidents seem to have begun in the mid 18th century and continued through to the end of the dynasty.[12] These rebellions were seriously damaging both to local societies and to the Qing state, which had to expend money and human resources in quelling the disturbance. Yang cites the rebellion of 1794 as "marking the beginning of the dynasty's decline."[13] In many cases the government produced official reports based on investigations and arrests as these rebellions were put down, and private individuals caught up in sectarian violence made their own records. We are thus able to look at a few rebellions of this period in some detail.

The White Lotus rebellion of 1774 erupted in western Shandong province, led by a local man called Wang Lun 王倫. Wang had studied martial arts from a young age, as well as meditative and healing techniques, and traveled around the local villages and market towns practicing the latter.[14] Along with healing, he also spread the teachings of the White Lotus tradition, and participated in sect activities. The membership of the sect was similar to that of other known White Lotus communities and similar to the peasant societies as a whole, in that it was a mix of people from many occupations and backgrounds, with the one important difference that orthodox elites played no role in the

11 Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 239-243.
12 A selection of several White Lotus rebellions is outlined in Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, 154-157.
13 Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 219.
14 Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, 37-38.

religious assembly under Wang.[15]

In the winter of 1771-1772 two White Lotus sects in northern China were discovered and their members arrested, and this event probably encouraged Wang to strengthen his prophetic rhetoric and move to fill the void left by the disappearance of two prominent sectarian groups. Naquin identifies the growth of White Lotus groups as a precursor to rebellion, pointing out that these groups had few other avenues for expansion as they could not participate in the structures of orthodox society, such as the social networks of the literati or the civil bureaucracy, at least not without giving up their heterodox beliefs and their social standing within the group. Since the region was not experiencing any particular economic hardship during this time, it could not have been an important factor in the decision to rebel.[16]

The level of prophetic rhetoric circulated by Wang's sect increased through the fall of 1773 and the first half of 1774, until word of their planned rebellion reached the authorities. When Wang heard that the magistrate of Shouchang had issued warrants for the arrest of sect members, he mobilized the sect, saying it was better to take action rather than wait to be apprehended.[17] The group took control of several towns along the Grand Canal as they fought northward, gathering followers and supplies along the way until they sieged and occupied the urban centre of Linqing 臨清. The Qing military eventually took back the city using their greater numbers and superior equipment including firearms, Wang Lun having chosen to burn himself alive rather than suffer capture.[18]

Rather than look upon Wang's rebellion as a failures, Naquin suggests that we

15 Ibid., 45.
16 Ibid., 51-56.
17 Ibid., 65-67.
18 Ibid., 137.

should recognize the effects of action on the believers; that people previously unconnected were united in action, their lives transformed by the formation of a new community:

> This type of social mobilization, accompanied by the abandonment of old lives, the pooling of resources, and the forging of dense new relationships, a new life style, and new goals, is characteristic of White Lotus uprisings. Although we cannot see the millennium they envisioned, we can almost look upon these rebel communities as ends in themselves. Everyday White Lotus sectarianism of the sort Wang Lun practiced could not provide this kind of community. But through rebellion, through a violent and total separation from the fabric of society, the White Lotus promise of an enveloping and satisfying sense of fellowship and meaning could be achieved.[19]

According to this interpretation, it would seem that White Lotus sectarian groups could achieve their full potential only through violent rebellion against the state. Rebellion is thus recast as an act to strengthen the community within, rather than one motivated by a desire to attack society at large. While Naquin states that the movement toward rebellion was largely "internally generated", she also identifies competition between sectarian leaders and orthodox culture as a major cause of friction between these groups and the state.[20] In any case, it is difficult to accept that the chief end of sectarian groups was rebellion, as a brief look at two other rebellions will make clear.

The rebellion in the region bordered by Shaanxi, Sichuan and Hubei lasted between 1796 and 1803 and was led by two sect leaders, one of which was identified with Maitreya and the other who was said to be an imperial descendant of the Ming ruling family.[21] One group that took part in the rebellion had been led by Fan Mingde 范明德, a farmer who also practiced healing and whose group recited scriptures and made references to the Dragon Flower assembly, a coming apocalypse, and the attendant mythology of the

19 Ibid., 82-83.
20 Ibid., 153; 159-162.
21 Ibid., 155.

Eternal Mother described above.[22] Following the Wang Lun rebellion the Qing government was especially sensitive to sectarian organizations, and Fan was arrested in 1775 and his religious group scattered. In the wake of this persecution however new leaders arose, and the references to armed rebellion and responding to the kalpa grew in intensity. Two of these leaders were Liu Zhixie 劉之協, a disciple of one of Fan's followers, and Song Zhiqing 宋之清, a sect leader who had supported Liu's teacher during his exile in Gansu, but who split with him in 1792 over the selection of who should be designated as Maitreya's incarnation, and who their choice of the legitimate heir of the Ming.[23]

The rebellion was carried out under slogans that combined religious doctrine with social discontent: the government persecution of religious groups between 1794 and 1795, aiming to apprehend Liu Zhixie, only angered those who never had any connection to White Lotus sects but who were caught up in the investigations. Sectarian groups carried banners that read “The officials have forced the people to rebel” (*guan po min fan* 官迫民反).[24] Sect leaders were also not above paying consideration to purely political questions, such as that regarding a source of legitimacy for their new state, as is shown by their concern over the need to provide an 'heir' to the Ming ruling house. Despite a lack of unity among different sects during the rebellion, there was certainly a vision of a new society past the disasters of the apocalyptic battles.[25]

The 'Eight Trigrams' rebellion of 1813 lasted for three months, involved nearly

22 Kwang-Ching Liu, “Religion and Politics in the White Lotus Rebellion of 1796 in Hubei” in *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China*, eds. Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Shek (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 283.
23 Ibid., 284; 287-288. Liu Zhixie's position as an important leader has recently been put into question; see Gaustad, 3; 14-18.
24 Liu, 293. The translation is that of Kwang-Ching Liu.
25 Ibid., 307.

100,000 people, and resulted in at least 70,000 deaths.[26] The rebels won followers by spreading the message that the turn of the kalpa was at hand, that the state was about to fall, and anyone who did not join their sect would be killed in the coming disorder. Although they succeeded in capturing some small cities such as Hua city in northern Henan, an attack on the Imperial Palace failed, and all the rebels were either arrested or killed merely three months after the start of the uprising.

At the centre of this rebellion was a sect leader named Lin Qing 林清. Before linking up with members of a local religious group, Lin had traveled to many parts of China including the Northeast, worked a number of jobs and acquired many skills, and had flirted with the law and courted poverty on numerous occasions, but he had always relied on his powers of persuasion to extricate himself from trouble. When he returned to his native place on the outskirts of Beijing, 36 years old, broke and a widower, he met up with members of a group called the Ronghua Assembly (*Ronghua Hui* 榮華會), a White Lotus sect active around Beijing led by one Gu Liang 顧亮. Lin Qing brought his persuasive ability and personally connections to the sect, and transformed it. Before Lin, the various White Lotus groups in the region, while aware of each other, did not cooperate or have much communication, but Lin was able to a certain extent to establish connections between these groups and raise support for a rebellion.[27] Zhili province had the highest number of reported mass incidents during the period 1796-1911, perhaps because the proximity to the capital meant that more were reported, but this shows that Lin's uprising was by no means unusual for taking place so close to the poltical centre of

26 Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*, 193-194.
27 Ibid., 72-79; 70.

Beijing.[28]

While Lin was familiar with the teachings of the sect, the depth of his knowledge of the White Lotus tradition is unclear. Gu Liang, the founder of the sect that Lin Qing first joined, taught his students how to cure disease and how to meditate, as well as instructing them to recite the Eight Character Mantra. When the group was uncovered in 1808, the authorities found that no heretical teachings were being spread, and let most practitioners off with light sentences. There is no indication that Gu Liang preached about an imminent apocalypse or rebellion, as these were precisely the types of heretical teachings in which the government would be most interested, and would certainly have drawn their attention. Lin himself was not presented with a scripture book until after plans for rebellion had already begun. He is also recorded as saying that he originally organized his assembly as a means to make money, and only later considered rebellion as a path to greater prestige and wealth.[29]

The rebels suffered from a lack of military experience, and in spite of their local victories could not mount a challenge to the regular banner forces of the Qing military. Lin Qing had used the emotionally powerful language of the Eternal Mother tradition to attract followers, but as Naquin states, in the end he was trapped by his own propaganda, forced to attempt an ambitious raid on the palace in order to live up to the myth that had surrounded his sect's undertaking.[30]

Records of sectarian groups produced in the wake of rebellion tell us much

28 C. K. Yang, "Some Preliminary Statistical Patterns of Mass Actions in Nineteenth-Century China." in *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, eds. Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 182.
29 Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*, 70-71; 23; 187.
30 Ibid., 188-189.

about the character of these groups that was not recorded anywhere else, either in the baojuan or in the records of the religious congregations themselves. Sects were organized along teacher-pupil relationships, chains of association that passed down the religious teachings of the sect, such as healing, martial arts, meditation, and mantras.[31] Anyone could become a member, and one's social class did not aid or hamper one's standing within the group. Women in particular were given more opportunities for participation and in these congregations, and even took positions of military leadership during times of rebellion, a shocking fact in the eyes of orthodox observers.[32] Sect membership in general was not markedly different from that of Chinese society as a whole, but just as Wang Lun's group was not dominated by the orthodox elites, so too did other groups not give privilege to members who had high social positions outside of the group. Sectarian organizations were neither organized along 'peasant class' lines, nor is there evidence that rebellions were seen as struggles against a dominant or hegemonic social class.[33]

The success of sectarian rebellions was seriously hampered by their inability to foster cooperation between local groups, and also by a failure to attract a wider base of support among people outside of their tradition. Wang Lun did not join forces with other sects in the region when he mobilized his group, nor was the female leader of one of the groups who took part in the 1796 uprising able to coordinate with coreligionists in Sichuan.[34] In general, as Blaine Gaustad has written, "while religious sectarians may have generally speaking been adherents to a common faith, and potentially had common cause

31 Ibid., 24-41.
32 Ibid., 41-42; Liu, 295-297; Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, 44.
33 Frederick Wakeman, Jr., "Rebellion and Revolution: The Study of Popular Movements in Chinese History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 36, No. 2 (Feb. 1977), 211-212.
34 Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, 152-153. Liu, 298-299.

in the face of government repression, they lacked a broad-based sense of solidarity."[35] Sectarian groups remained in competition with each other for resources and followers, and only in a few cases were able to overcome long-standing rivalries to cooperate against state pressure.

These cases of rebellion also reveal something of how the state dealt with sectarian religious groups. The Wang Lun uprising, although poorly organized, was able to achieve a few early victories because Qing military forces were spread thinly, and did not have a strong presence in such a strategically-unimportant area as Northwestern Shandong.[36] When sufficient forces were gathered, however, the government was able to defeat the rebels easily, with the help of local elites who were able to organize villagers and prevent them from aiding the sectarians. The 1796 rebellion never seriously threatened the stability of the Qing regime, but in the mountainous areas sectarian forces were able to hold out against government armies for some time.

In their investigation of the rebellions, the Qing government often criticized sectarians for usurping the traditional social hierarchy dictated by Confucian teachings. Much of the fear on the part of authorities was not necessarily due to the potential military strength of religious rebellions, but rather in their ability to undermine the foundations of political and social control. We have already seen how the internal organizational structure of many religious sects disregarded the orthodox hierarchies of age and gender, for example when women were accorded positions of power. These practices challenged the hierarchical system and the elite which depended upon it to justify their position in society.

These rebellions have later been interpreted variously as anti-Manchu or as

35 Gaustad, 5-6.
36 Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion*, 149-150.

examples of early class struggles between the peasants and government authorities. In either interpretation the role of religion has been downplayed, while sectarian groups have been seen to represent greater interests among Chinese society, based either upon a common race (Han) or class (peasant). Considering the new data that has emerged in recent years as a result of the detailed study of government records and based upon a greater understanding of the activies of these groups, these interpretations can not stand without some substantial qualification.

The anti-Manchu stance of sectarian groups is based upon their attacks on Manchu authorities, and their fabrication and use of purported Ming descendants to serve as emperors of the new dynasty. As we have seen however, the rebels showed no more leniancy to Han than to Manchu officials, made no attempts to rally support by portraying the Manchu as an alien people, and did not use race to undermine the authority of the Manchu rulers.[37] Imperial authority was corrupt because of the immorality and the evil deeds of officials, not their background or origins. We may recall as well that the Ming dyansty was no friend to sectarian organizations, and that Zhu Yuanzhang banned certain groups by name.

Just as membership in the sect was open to people from all classes, Manchus were not barred from participating. Race, like gender or background, was no barrier to religious knowledge or karmic merit. The eschatological stories recorded in the baojuan do not villify the Manchus, neither do they uphold the Han as a 'holy' or 'chosen' people. While there is an idea of a religious elect, this refers to members of the sect and not an entire race or society of people.[38]

37 On the inclusion of Manchus as sect members, see Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion*, 38.
38 Shek, "Sectarian Eschatology and Violence", 98-102.

From what we know about the makeup of sectarian membership, it was not limited to the peasant class; in fact a large segment of peasants were never attracted by sectarian ideas. Nor were people from other classes seen as antagonistic, although officials and the military were among those criticized for hypocracy and immorality in the *Chuxi Baojuan*.[39] The ideal society of the post-apocalypse was thought to be one of universal wealth and freedom from suffering, but followers were also attracted by the promise of official positions in the new era. Rather than a stuggle between different economically-determined classes for political supremacy, we see instead the promise of being members of a small elite who correctly responded to the kalpa and survive to be the leaders of the new society.

Religious rebellions were unique in that they combined practical military action with an eschatological ideology. This ideology in turn was banned by the state because of its link to violent and anti-social activity. The reliance on rebellions to study these sects has led to the conclusions mentioned above: sects reached their fullest potential through rebellion even though their struggle was ultimately hopeless; religious sects were anti-Manchu or tried to initiate struggle on behalf of the peasant class; sects were naturally subversive and undermined orthodox society even during times of peaceful existence. The religious scriptures of the sects themselves however indicate that their beliefs and concerns, even when expressed as predictions about the universal disasters, were those shared by the orthodox community. The following two chapters look at the conflict between heterodox groups and the state from two viewpoints, illustrating the fundamental

39 Overmyer remarks on the lack of class consciousness in baojuan. Daniel L. Overmyer, "Attitudes Toward The Ruler and State in Chinese Popular Religious Literature: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Pao-chuan" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Dec., 1984), 349.

misunderstandings which have contributed to the consequences described above.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Social Criticism of the *Chuxi baojuan*

Since the state charged heterodox groups with being antisocial and dangerous to the community, it is worthwhile to study the social values of texts such as the *Chuxi baojuan*. While this baojuan is unique in the detail of its social criticisms, the values expressed within are echoed in many other sectarian traditions.

The *Chuxi Baojuan*, a text of the Yuandun Teaching (*yuandun jiao* 圓頓教), was probably written in the late 19th century.[1] Although this is quite a bit later than the events discussed above, the text is an example of a theme that appears in many baojuan from different time periods: social criticism within the context of apocalyptic predictions and descriptions. When compared with similar criticisms found in other baojuan, the *Chuxi* text can shed light on how sectarian groups distinguished their morality and their practices from those of the world at large.

A scripture in eighteen chapters (*pin* 品), four copies of the baojuan are recorded in the Che Xilun's *Index of Precious Volumes*, three of which were printed in the Qing. One of these was produced in 1870 and another in the Guangxu era [1875-1908]. Only one copy has a reference to an earlier date of composition: the version held in the National Diet Library of Japan (日本國會圖書館) records 1614 as the initial date of

1 Che, *Baojuan Zongmu*, 27.

publication by one Zhao Yuanzhai 趙源齋.[2] Overmyer rejects the possibility that this is a 17th century book because of a reference to the end of the Qing dynasty, so either the information regarding the early publication date was fabricated, or this reference was added sometime after 1644.[3] It is possible that the text was rewritten and reworked over time, but if so then no evidence of this has survived.

The style of this baojuan is a common one: sections alternate between prose and poetry but remained focused on a single theme. There is no verse and commentary of the type found in the Buddhist canonical scriptures, instead the text repeats simliar messages across sections of poetry and prose rather than introducing a topic and expanding on it through commentary. In a few places single lines stand out from the rest, and contain terse instructions, perhaps for the ritual surrounding the recitation of this scripture. Certainly these lines, such as "Deposit the new god", do not fit within the surrounding text and may not have been chanted at all.[4]

Each of the four chapters in the selected translation attack a certain type of person for being immoral and evil, and urge them to transform themselves, learn the true teachings as taught by the sect, and do good. While the text contains descriptions of the end times, the indictments are focused on evil deeds done in the present world. In doing so the *Chuxi* text distinguishes the sect from the corrupt world-at-large, establishes a basis for the moral superiority of the sect and the degeneracy of society.

The first group to be addressed are monks and priests, which is not surprising considering the lay outlook we have already identified for many baojuan. Sectarian authors

2 Ibid.
3 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 276.
4 See below, p. 79.

were by and large laypeople themselves and formed religious organizations separate from those of officially ordained monks and priests. The criticisms target the laziness of the priests and their hypocrisy for not even following their own precepts. These charges of living in luxury while contributing nothing to society, eating food yet not helping to produce it, echo those leveled against Buddhists by Confucian scholars since the early days of Buddhism's introduction to China. The mention of priests "neglecting the kindness of their parents" is especially close to these traditional arguments, and reminds us of the importance of family obligations in the ethical systems of sectarian groups. Note that the basic Buddhist ethical precepts are not criticized here, and in fact monks are urged to "practice vegetarianism and uphold the precepts".[5]

The first verse section in this chapter describes the three stages of the decline of Buddhist teaching that, when combined with the idea of the kalpa, were central to the sectarian eschatological mythology. In the present time of the “End Dharma” (*mo fa* 末法) monks and priests are discredited, but “white-robed” laymen can take their place as religious leaders and reserve the true teachings through the difficult times. The ordained community is not dismissed out of hand however, for “good and evil monks and priests will be separated”.[6] Even priests can be virtuous if they observe the precepts and stop their hypocritical actions.

The next chapter attacks corrupt officials who use their power and prestige to take advantage of others. Instead of considering only profit and gain, they are urged to follow "Confucianism, the orthodox Way of the sage master Confucius."[7] The official was

5 See below, p. 70.
6 Below, p. 72.
7 Below, p. 73.

supposed to be the ideal Confucian, an educated and cultivated man who would promote good conduct by his own example, but they are attacked in the baojuan for being hypocritical in practice. As in the case of monks and priests, the text criticizes a social group for not following the very ethical systems which they themselves advocate. And yet officials are also told to "recite the name of the Buddha and chant the scriptures"[8] as a method of improving their conduct and prolonging their life. There is no conflict in this text between the Confucian and Buddhist ethical demands; the only distinction is between those who do good and those who do evil. Confucianism, as the foundation of the orthodoxy and the state, is not rejected by this 'heterodox' text.

At the same time, there is not a bias against those with power or money, it is only that they often abuse their position. Rather than describing a class conflict between the peasants and the officials, "[t]hose with wealth and those without a cent are the same."[9] Officials are even told to perform practices that are no different from those of the common people. This is an example of the universality of the prophetic message found in many baojuan, open to all regardless of social station.

Chapter seven describes "the wealthy and powerful people of the world",[10] category similar to the previous one, but here the type of people being described are not part of the civil bureaucracy but rather members of merchant and scholarly elite families. These people are criticized for abusing their servants, cheating the good people when doing business, and taking land, forests, and women by force. These are people who have "forgotten their home"[11]; undoubtedly the true home of emptiness spoken of in the

8 Ibid.
9 Below, p. 75.
10 Below, p. 77.
11 Ibid.

sectarian slogan. The *Chuxi baojuan* decries their selfishness, and threatens them with "eight sufferings" which are to come, sparing only those whose names are posted on the "heavenly board".[12]

While selfishness and greed are seen as immoral in orthodox Buddhism, and whereas traditionally they were to be avoided for the deleterious karmic effects on oneself, the moral criticisms of the *Chuxi baojuan* have a decidedly social focus. Most of the sins committed by the powerful and wealthy are antisocial, harming the community and only benefiting a small number of families. Economic concerns loom largely as well, as cheating in trade and the seizure of property are mentioned several times. Good deeds on the other hand, such as participating in a vegetarian diet and respecting one's elders, serve to integrate a community.

The last chapter that deals with social criticism begins with an attack on soldiers and the military. Here the military is described as a purely destructive force, killing and raping without regard for the consequences of their actions. In the next section however the discussion moves on to men who leave their families to become monks in an assembly. It may seem strange to speak of soldiers and monks in the same breath, but both occupations were at times avenues for desperate men who were unable to survive on their own. Both soldiers and monks are forced to leave their families, and it is this threat to the social structure that is being criticized here. Even "brave and strong soldiers" may later find "no path to walk" and be forced into a monastery.[13] Here they are priests only in name, using words such as the Way and the Dharma but actually behaving with the hypocrisy described in the fifth chapter of the baojuan.

12 Below, p. 79.
13 Below, p. 82.

These inditements stand in stark contrast to the image of sectarian groups as being militant; the idea of raising arms to respond to the kalpa is found nowhere in this chapter, and military force is cast in a negative light. The disruptions of armed struggle are lamented for their disruption of peaceful family life, and the sufferings of the coming apocalypse are mentioned only to urge violent people to change their ways. The divine origins of humankind are expressed through the use of August Children (*Huangtai* 皇胎) to describe the people of the world.[14] Although their condition is poor because of their unwillingness to follow the true teachings, their origins are the Buddhist holy places mentioned in the sutras: Shuanglin 雙林 where Buddha achieved enlightenment, and Lingshan 靈山 where the Lotus Sutra was preached.

There is little in the *Chuxi baojuan* that would be objectionable to the orthodoxy: devotion to family and the community is stressed, as well as honesty and loyalty to others. Daniel Overmyer, in his *Precious Volumes*, mentions two important characteristics of the *Chuxi Baojuan*: its detailed descriptions of the "end of the age" and its social criticisms discussed above.[15] Notably absent however are any criticisms of the government itself rather than corrupt or immoral elements within it: any overt revolutionary or violent language is avoided in favour of threatening evil people with retribution in the apocalypse to come. In spite of the sectarian language and symbols employed, the values expressed in this baojuan are quite orthodox in nature; few would disagree that the types of people described above were harmful to society and probably deserved to be punished. The *Chuxi Baojuan* is not an atypical text in this respect, and the theme of urging evil people to turn to doing good is especially prevalent in baojuan as a

14 Below, p. 84.
15 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 276-277.

whole.

These criticisms however were interpreted in a very different light by agents of the government, who detected political aims in the eschatological mythology of baojuan and feared rebellion. Heterodox teachings thus became a target of the orthodox state, which carried out its persecution through the destruction of texts, the punishment of practitioners and, in one important case, the refutation of religious teachings.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Orthodox Arguments of Huang Yupian's *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy*

The second text that will be discussed in detail is *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy* by Huang Yupian. This work may be able to reveal in some detail how the government, or at least one of its representatives at the lowest level of official administration, saw orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and the threat posed by heretical teachings.[1] Thus far the *Refutation* has already proved valuable because it quotes from many texts which have since been lost.[2] The first two chapters, which I have not translated here, cite individual texts by title, summarize their teachings, and proceed to refute them. That Huang would pay any attention to the teachings themselves is something new; previous anti-heretical writings would censure any group associated with "White Lotus teachings", or believing in certain deities such as the Maitreya Buddha and the Eternal Mother. As Huang mentions in his preface, upon being posted to Julu, he had both a collection of heterodox texts assembled by his predecessor, and texts which were gathered during his tenure as magistrate. By attacking the heterodox teachings, Huang provides a guide to local elites who must distinguish heretical texts from orthodox scriptures. The type of book collected by Huang was, after all, "quite similar to a real Buddhist scripture."[3]

1 For a translation of this text, see appendix B.
2 Che Xilun provides a catalogue of lost and extant baojuan mentioned in *Refutation*. Che Xilun, *Zhongguo Baojuan Yanjiu Lunji* (Collected Essays on Chinese Precious Volumes) (Taibei: Xuehai Chubanshe, 1997), 115-130.
3 Below, p. 86.

Huang's *Refutation* is thus a definition of orthodoxy which is not dependent on labels, but rather goes to the heart of doctrinal differences between orthodoxy and heterodoxy.

Scholarship on heterodox sects in Chinese religious history is easily misled by an uncritical acceptance of the official terminology for sects and teachings, an important example of which is the “White Lotus Society”. As mentioned in chapter three, Barend ter Haar dismissed the myth that the term “White Lotus” could be meaningfully applied to a unified religious group in the Ming and Qing. Ter Haar demonstrated that this term was used by the state as a blanket label for heretical groups and not as an autonym by the practitioners themselves. This was because the groups, while influenced to some extent by the historical White Lotus organizations, had few direct connections to them, and also because White Lotus groups were forbidden by name in the law codes of the Ming and Qing. While this term is still useful to describe heterodox sects of this period in general, recognizing the bias inherent in the official terminology forces us to look at each tradition as an independent teaching. The problem therefore, is to determine why certain groups were labelled as heterodox, while others were tolerated by the state. The *Refutation* offers a new perspective on this problem: a government official, and thus a member of the religious authority, defines 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' based on the ideas and teachings themselves, rather than simply relying upon labels such as 'White Lotus'.

'Refutation of heresies' is a translation of *po xie* 破邪, the term used by Huang throughout his book, which literally means 'breaking up heresies'. Although the book is, on one level, concerned with arguing against the teachings Huang sees as being heretical, it also outlines a strategy for uprooting heretical teachings and suppressing heterodox sects. This is significant because the antagonistic relationship between the state and heterodox

sects has had a great impact on the history of popular religion and society in China.

There is little biographical information available on Huang Yupian, and the details we do know about his life give little indication as to why he would take such an interest in heterodox sects.[4] It may be the coincidence of being posted to an area where many baojuan were circulating, and the recent rebellious activity in the region that prompted him to write his refutations. Huang's own preface to his book indicates at least that he wanted to been seen as a person with deep concern for the welfare of the people, and one who was clear about the proper function of officials and the gentry in society.

In the preface, several key themes to Huang's work are outlined: injury to the people; making clear distinctions between heresy and truth; the use and limitations of punishments; and the importance of schools and education. Huang's explanation for the motivation to compose his work is his awareness of the threat posed by heretical teachings, an awareness which was brought on by his posting to counties where heterodox sects had already been active. He describes an early attempt to counter these teachings, while he was still magistrate of Qinghe county, publishing "a notice strictly forbidding any evil teachings" and sending copies to nearby areas. In itself, this concern for the people, an important trait for the paternalistic Confucian magistrate, is not a surprising angle for Huang to emphasize.

A simple reminder of the forbidden nature of evil teachings however, was evidently not sufficient action for Huang; he found more evidence of sectarian influence upon being transferred to Julu county, also in central Zhili. By his own account, this is when he realized a flaw in his anti-heretical efforts: his understanding of heretical sects

4 See Sawada, 18-20, for a biographical outline of Huang.

was based only on 'case logs', and he knew nothing about the heretical teachings themselves. He therefore studied the texts which he and the last magistrate of Julu county, Wu Guomou 吳國謀, had confiscated, and selections from these texts, along with Huang's analysis and refutations, make up the bulk of the work he would later compile. The responsibility for enforcing the orthodox ran from magistrates like Huang up to the office of the Emperor himself, which established the basis for proper belief in the *Sacred Edict* of 1670.

The *Sacred Edict* had been reprinted for popular distribution, accompained by explanations and examples, almost since the time of its composition, with specific instructions on reading and explaining the text to an illiterate public.[5] Though Huang's text is similar to those works, it is specifically concerned with heterodox teachings, the subject of the seventh of the sixteen maxims, "Extirpate strange principles, in order to exalt the correct doctrine."[6] With each refutation, Huang demonstrates to us his understanding of what the 'correct doctrine' is, and what alternative ideologies were circulating in sectarian literature of the time. As David Johnson has observed, the ideas of a single author can tell us much about the social group to which they belong, and in this case, Huang's arguments tell us how the class of officials who enforced the ideological orthodoxy saw their own position, and that of heterodox sects.[7]

Huang does not however, advocate that punishments be ignored and that instruction about the orthodox belief is sufficient to turn people from sectarian religion:

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5 See Victor Mair, "Language and Ideology in the Written Popularizations of the *Sacred Edict*," in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, eds. David Johnson, Andrew J. Nathan and Evelyn S. Rawski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 325-359.

6 Ibid, 326.

7 See Johnson, "Communication, Class, and Consciousness", 34-72.

> This instruction of good people is precisely the means to strictly prohibit heretical teachings. As for criminal cases involving evil teachings, we can only punish to the full extent of the law, as an admonishment to future [criminals]. However, I'm not so pedantic as to suggest the use of persuasion and instruction, [setting up] fine distinctions and instructing the people in this way, and [yet] not to punish to the full extent of the law. Nevertheless, to punish evil teachings to the full extent of the law, and to offer clear distinctions, urge and instruct the good people, this is the benefit that *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy* offers to the people; it is no small thing.[8]

Huang repeatedly uses the phrase "punish to the extent of the law," often with the implication that laws and punishments are not enough to stop people from believing in and supporting sectarian religion. This is another indication that an orthopraxy enforced by law was not seen as sufficient to maintain society: an orthodoxy must be appealed to as support for the more physical punishments facing those disobedient to the state.

The vehicles for this orthodoxy are state-supported schools and the local gentry. Huang advocates the use of both to disseminate his work, and to propagate ideas such as the Sacred Edict. The influence of orthodoxy is, after all, limited to those who can hear and understand the teachings, and in Huang's time the largely illiterate farmers could not be reached by pamphlets or texts.[9] Huang therefore called on the gentry to read aloud his text, and to discuss the ideas presented within, so that even the "foolish people of the countryside" may receive instruction in proper belief. All of these concerns, which also appear often later in the text, center around the enforcement of an orthodoxy which, if we accept the hypothesis that cultural integration was achieved through orthopraxy, we should not expect to find.

The bulk of my translation is taken from the third chapter of the *Refutation*,

8 Below, pp. 88-89.

9 Sectarian groups reached the illiterate through the ritual of reciting baojuan and by propagating spoken mantras. See for example Naquin, "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism", 260-274.

where Huang turns to refuting concepts and teachings which appear in several heterodox scriptures, rather than confining his arguments to a single text. The first section deals with the Mantra of Eight Characters: “True Home of Emptiness, Father and Mother without Birth.”[10] This phrase describes an important image found in many sectarian writings; the true home or heaven of humankind, where the Eternal Mother or Eternal Progenitor awaits the return of believers. The mantra has also been interpreted as symbolizing the radical message of religious beliefs: a doctrine of salvation coupled with the notion that a great cataclysm would one day destroy the earth, sparing only the true believers.[11] This particular mantra is not found in the Buddhist Tripitaka, although parts of the phrase are similar to certain ideas contained within the scriptures, as discussed below.

Surprisingly, Huang displays at least a basic knowledge of orthodox Buddhism in his refutation, tracing the phrase 'true emptiness' back to its roots in Buddhist scripture. The elite had fostered a close relationship with Buddhist monasteries, partly in search of personal salvation and learning, but also to ensure that monastic activies were kept within an acceptable framework.[12] By the late Qing, even a Confucian magistrate such as Huang could support Buddhism as orthodox, in spite of its foreign origin for which it had been critizied as heterodox in earlier times. Rather than dismissing the idea of emptiness for example, so central to Buddhist thought, he contrasts the perverted use of the concept in heretical scripture to its original meaning in the orthodox tradition. The emptiness of sectarian teachings is that of moral decay, not purity and silence. In many cases Huang characterizes heterodox teachings as being a mistaken or debased form of orthodox

10 *Zhenkong jiaxiang wusheng fumu* 真空家鄉無生父母.
11 Naquin, "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism", 276.
12 Brook, *Praying for Power*, 29-34.

Buddhist teachings. This is interesting because as Overmyer argues, the scriptures should not be seen as expressions of Buddhism, but of popular religion, drawing influences from popular beliefs and not solely Buddhist teachings.[13] Huang clearly sees heterodox teachings as a mistaken or debased form of orthodoxy and overlooks the influence of alternative religious ideas; his understanding of religion is dichotomous, divided into right and wrong, true and false.

Huang moves on to discuss he two parts of this eight-character mantra separately. He identifies a key part of the "true home" teaching – that only the elect, the members of the sect, are "sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents," while everyone else is excluded. It seems natural that Huang would criticize this part of the teaching, because it runs counter to the traditional social and religious importance placed on the family. What Huang does not mention, however, is that to the degree that sectarian teachings were exclusive of non-practitioners, they were inclusive of sect members. Although there is little information on what type of person a member of a heterodox sect was likely to be, evidence from arrest records during times of rebellion seems to indicate that they were people who were not being included by the orthodox structure of family and kin.[14]

One distinction between orthodox and heterodox religious groups is that while membership and participation in the former was obligatory, practicing in a heterodox group was voluntary. One cannot join a more powerful lineage,[15] nor change their ancestors, but religious groups were open to all. For people without strong family ties to

13 Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 15.
14 Naquin, "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism", 257.
15 While women may seem to be the exception to this rule, joining their husband's family upon marriage, they seldom had any control over who they married, and thus were also obliged to participate in the religious ritual of their family.

exist in a society which was organized based on familial relationships, membership in a sect which preached that all members, regardless of background or lineage, were all the sons and daughters of a deity, would have seemed very attractive. Huang does not allow the possibility that some people may not be well served by the Confucian family-based orthodoxy. Instead, the 'sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents' are destined for misfortune, punishment, and finally, execution at the hands of the state.

'Father and Mother Without Birth' is the second part of the mantra,[16] and here again Huang contrasts sectarian teachings with those of orthodox Buddhism. The phrase "without birth, without death"[17] appears in many Buddhist scriptures, referring to the idea that anything which is born, must die, and so only that which is never born will never be extinguished. Huang displays his familiarity with this basic teaching of Buddhism, and concludes that only using half the phrase, 'without birth', is to render it meaningless. As for 'mother and father', it is natural that Huang finds this to be unclear; there are no similar deities in scriptural Buddhism, although one form of Guanyin has been credited with the ability to bestow children on a childless woman. This is example both of the syncretic nature of baojuan teachings, and the significant departure from the Buddhist orthodoxy of the time; although Buddhist monks and nuns were said to have 'left the family', they were required to continue to pay obidence to their parents, and families with fewer than three sons were not allowed to have a son join the priesthood. Orthodox Buddhism was not allowed to challenge the Confucian family, but these teachings presented an alternative: the idea of "father and mother without birth", a religious family that transcended ties of

16 Alternatively, 'Unbegotten Progenitor', according to Naquin's translation.
17 *Wusheng wumie* 無生無滅.

blood and kinship.

The idea that these teachings have been formulated for the purpose of seducing or tricking people is introduced in this section. Huang seems to believe that the leaders of heterodox sects do not themselves believe what they preach, but are purposefully misleading people for their own benefit. He also describes the mixing of the sexes and the licentiousness which was supposed to be a key element of heretical rituals. These two stereotypes often appear in the *Refutations*, and will be further discussed below.

Huang then brings up several different schema to illustrate the importance of 'birth' in classical Chinese thought. The Book of Changes, Fu Xi's trigrams, and the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches are all brought forward to refute the sectarian teaching of 'without birth'. This is one clear example of Huang paying especial attention to the teachings apart from their social implications. He certainly is not unconcerned with the social and personal harm done by sectarian teachings, but he also wants to argue against the teachings themselves. Not with the aim of dismissing them, but to show the superiority of orthodox beliefs and the inconsistencies within heterodox teachings.

Of course philosophical discussions may only appeal to those with education, so Huang provides the readers of his work with a ready explanation for those who may not be able to comprehend the above:

> To speak of it in terms of one with a shallow approach, it can be compared to farmland: if there is birth then there will be a joyful, bountiful harvest, without birth one will suffer famine and drought. To compare it to a family, if there is birth then there will be sons and grandsons, without birth then one will become the last of one's line. To compare it to a person, if there is

birth then one can speak and act, without birth one is [just] a dead body.[18]

As described in the preface, the *Refutation* is meant to be read *by* local elites, but read *to* the largely illiterate villagers. In many places in the text, Huang is speaking on two levels, both to the educated readers of his book, and to the farmers who will eventually hear it read aloud. It is significant, though, that Huang speaks at all to the educated reader; after all, would not educated people naturally avoid such heresies, and not need to be convinced of their falsities? The *Refutation* indicates that perhaps not all local elites would have been as firm as Huang in his rejection of heretical teachings. Not only does he tell them how to distinguish heterodox teachings from orthodox, he also teaches them why they are necessarily wrong.

Another topic which is discussed later in this chapter is not a sectarian teaching, but a characteristic of their religious groups: the indiscriminate mingling of men and women. This was a standard indictment of heterodox groups, and of religious activities in general, because the festivals, pilgrimages and ceremonies associated with Buddhism and other religions disrupted the ideal situation of sex segregation. More specifically it was an opportunity for a woman to leave the home and mingle with people outside her own family. While numerous prohibitions existed against men and women mingling in religious activities, these rules were basically unenforceable, and even orthodox or state-approved religious ceremonies saw a breakdown of gender segregation.[19] The stereotype of religious activities being a place where illicit behavour could take place persisted however, and was a common charge leveled against heterodox sects.

18 Below, p. 93.
19 Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 203.

Most of this section, however, describes how women seeking medical aid may be lured into a religious group. One of the claims of sectarian groups was that they could heal illness and protect against future harm, through the use of charms or mantras. The appeal of these technical skills was important for attracting followers, especially among those who did not have the means to hire a professional.[20] Note how women specifically are mentioned here as being susceptible to the promises of sectarian healing, and how the fatal moment comes after the woman leaves the house and the control of her family:

> The woman is ignorant, and thereupon goes personally to make offerings, and enters herself into the list of members. No matter if the sickness improves or not, this person is already not under her own control. A while after entering the sect, honesty and shame all disappear. Furthermore, she also entices other women [to join the sect], but her vile manner already cannot bear helpful advice [from others].[21]

This idea of family control is also repeated in the subsequent paragraph. Note also that Huang is not saying that illness can only be cured by empirical means, for "[w]hether a sickness improves or not is dependent on fate, and nothing else."[22]

Huang later addresses one of the key claims of sectarian teachings, a claim which could be and was interpreted as being political, and thus rebellious, in nature. Although the historical Buddha famously gave up his destiny to be a political leader, instead opting to search for religious enlightenment, subsequent teachings have often envisioned either the Buddha as a universal King, or conversely, saw the political leader as an incarnation of a Buddha or Bodhisattva. The phrase cited by Huang is *zhang shi* 掌世, to take hold of or control of the world, but it can also refer to a 'world controller'.

To refute the idea of the Buddha as a political leader, Huang first identifies

20 Overmyer, "Alternatives", 167-9.
21 Below, p. 94.
22 Below, p. 95.

Buddhism as a foreign teaching.

But rather than dismiss it for this reason as Chinese critics have done since ancient times, he says that the teachings of Buddhism have never been used for political ends. This is not entirely false, for although many Emperors and governments in Chinese history have supported Buddhist teachings and used Buddhist ideas to support their political power, there never developed in China a theocracy of the type seen elsewhere in the Buddhist world. Huang also seems ignorant of a universal quality to this teaching, where 'the world' may indicate the entire universe, and not just China. It is likely that he was concerned mainly with the immediate, practical implications of such a message, a teaching which may undermine political authority in his own country. Indeed the teaching could be interpreted to have a strong revolutionary implication, Maitreya being the Buddha yet-to-come.

Just as with the term 'White Lotus', Maitreya is used very generally to signify heretical sects, whether or not the figure appears in the sectarian scriptures of a given group. Nor was Maitreya always associated with heterodoxy; Maitreya was an important figure in early Chinese Buddhism, as evidenced by cave sculptures and Buddha images, but as was mentioned in chapter two, as early as the Song Dynasty [960-1279] Maitreya was being represented as the 'Cloth Sack' or 'Budai' monk,[23] an image now common in Chinese Buddhist temples.[24] It may be because of the sectarian teachings held on to Maitreya's older identity as a future Buddha that he became so closely linked with sectarian groups. Huang goes so far as to say that "[t]hose who worship and believe in

23 Sometimes refered to in English as the 'Laughing Buddha'.
24 Zhao, 48.

Maitreya are only heretical sects."[25] As a symbol though, Maitreya meant different things to different groups, and did not always appear as a future leader.[26]

After addressing the social implications of the teaching, Huang goes on to reference three classical texts to further refute the teaching. The three quotations all speak of how a political leader is supported or endorsed by heaven. He quotes the *Shijing* to say that the actions of heaven cannot be perceived by people, suggesting that portents and omens regarding a world-controller should not be given credence. It was thought that heaven's displeasure with the ruling political authority would be manifested through disasters and strange occurrences, while the support of heaven would bring blessings, such as colours in the sky or pleasant scents, phenomenon which could be used as precursors to revolution. Huang uses the *Shujing* to establish the Emperor as the one true ruler of the multitudes of people, and quotes Mencius to establish the importance of precendent, tradition, and the orthodoxy of the Confucian teachings.[27]

With his last classical reference, Huang places the title of 'world-controller' firmly on the shoulders of Confucius, thus cementing both his position as a Confucian scholar and the legitimacy of the government which ruled according to his principles. He has turned a forward-looking and potentially revolutionary teaching into another justification for the status quo. This is another indication that Huang is not only concerned with the social behaviour of sects, but also in the ideological underpinnings of the state, of which he is a local representative. He is both attacking heretical teachings, and reaffirming the Confucian orthodoxy preached by the state. His talk of signs and omens, and speaking

25 Below, p. 95.
26 Many religious leaders proclaimed themselves to be the incarnation of Maitreya, such as Lin Zhao'en in the Three-in-one teaching (*sanyijiao*). See Dean, 23n25; 93.
27 Below, p. 96.

indirectly about the mandate of heaven, is a reminder that even the 'secular' Confucianism had religious beliefs and supported these beliefs as an orthodoxy at the expense of competing teachings.

In the section entitled “Heretical Scriptures and Theatre Performance”, Huang describes what type of people the authors of these types of scriptures were. Observing a similarity between the form of the text and theatre lyrics, he concludes that the authors first learned how to write and perform theatre, and later used these forms for their heretical writings. Theatre and religion have a close relationship, and nearly all religions make use of performance in the form of ritual. Religious festivals in traditional China were often accompanied by plays, performed ostensibly for the entertainment of the gods, but people were also allowed to take part. Many plays had strong religious themes, and even if the characters and plots were not part of the orthodox teachings, the religious knowledge of the average illiterate person was often based largely on the information they had learned from performance.[28] In his survey of temple paintings in Hong Kong and Taiwan, Wolfram Eberhard found that more than half of all images were from novels or plays.[29]

Huang is also attempting to account for the fact that a literate person would compose the heretical scriptures, and places the blame on certain “heretics of the late Ming”. That someone who had learned to read from the Confucian classics would yet use their skills to spread teachings contrary to the moral orthodoxy expressed in those texts, is threatening to the literate elite of which Huang is a part. Naquin not only notes that

28 See David Johnson, “Actions Speak Louder than Words: The Cultural Significance of Chinese Ritual Opera,” in David Johnson ,ed., *Ritual Opera, Operatic Ritual* (Berkeley: Chinese Popular Culture Project, 1989), 1-45.

29 Wolfram Eberhard, “Topics and Moral Values in Chinese Temple Decorations,” in *Moral and Social Values of the Chinese: Collected Essays*, ed. Wolfram Eberhard (Taipei: Ch'eng wen Publishing, 1971), 15-25.

sectarian families and leaders were a threat to the elite of orthodox society, but that within a sample breakdown of sect members, none were holders of a civil degree.[30] This suggests that for the literate baojuan authors and the sect leaders, literacy was a tool of the orthodox elite that they could use for their own ends. Although Huang's image of the baojuan authors was rather limited, his concern over literacy indicates that he was aware that rival teachings were using texts in the same way as the state. While he dismisses baojuan as false teachings, his attack on the composition and style of the text make clear his underlying anxiety.

Although we know little about the authors of sectarian literature, it is likely that they would have fallen into Johnson's 'literate/dependant' social group mentioned in chapter one; they had literacy, but were not part of the orthodox literate society, and thus had none of the power of the educated elite.[31] The authors of popular plays would also be part of this group, so it is not surprising that many lyrical forms found in popular theatre are used in sectarian scriptures.

Schooling and education form an important part of Huang's strategy for suppressing heretical doctrine. The Guangze Academy, mentioned in the gazetteer of 1886, was established by Huang, and rebuilt by subsequent magistrates.[32] He even mentions converting prosperous temples into schools, ones which were prosperous and had "invited monks and priests from other areas to stay". As potential conduits for the spread of heterodox teachings, traveling priests would be especially disruptive to Huang's control of the beliefs of the people. Indeed, the function of these schools seems to be the

30 Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China*, 268; 38-39.
31 See above, 5-6.
32 *Julu Xianzhi* [JLXZ] (Gazetter of Julu County) [1886], Reprint (Taibei: Chengwen Chubanshe, [1976]), 246.

indoctrination of the people, with Huang's *Refutation* and the *Sacred Edict* as the doctrine.

The *Refutation* places the heresies of various religious groups side by side with the established orthodox teachings promoted by the state. While Huang's work had a limited effect on the sectarian religions he attacked,[33] his arguments and analysis reveal a Confucian scholar deeply concerned with heterodox religious groups, not only because of the activities of the groups themselves, but also because of the doctrine they spread through their scriptures. While there was a great deal of tolerance when it came to religious belief in traditional China, it is clear that certain doctrines, such as those expressed in sectarian scriptures, could not be tolerated.

It is difficult to maintain the image of Confucian officials as essentially atheist humanists, respecting the coercive power of the spirits, but keeping actual faith and belief at a distance. We can imagine an official observing or even participating in a local religious festival, having no belief in the deities, perhaps only supporting the ritual for its ability to maintain community cohesion. The *Refutation* reminds us that officials were not necessarily skeptics when it came to questions of religion or belief. With the sectarian teachings of baojuan, Huang is confronted with a competing ideology, one which establishes an independent historiography, an ideal social system, a family model based on faith rather than bloodline, and a millenarian vision that places retribution for sin and evil in the near future. In all of these aspects, the state relied on an established orthodoxy which was based not solely on social and political expediency, but also on tradition and received learning.

33 The Julu county gazetteer of 1882 collects source materials from the county in the 12th *juan*. Significantly, neither Huang nor his *Refutation* are mentioned. JLXZ, vol. 3.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented the argument that the teachings expressed in sectarian scriptures were on the whole quite orthodox in their orientation. Family life was affirmed, people were urged to treat others fairly and to do no harm to their community, and those who performed evil acts were threatened with suffering in a future cataclysm. When baojuan did criticize and attack, as in the case of the *Chuxi Baojuan*, it was corruption and evil that were targeted, not necessarily the civil government or particular social classes. Religious sects claimed to possess the sole truth regarding the right way to live and the path to salvation, but did not exclude anyone from joining the sect; all one needed to do was change one's behaviour and believe in the teachings of the sect to escape disaster in the future 'turning of the kalpa'.

Huang Yupian's *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy* shows us how these teachings were interpreted by the state: as dangerous and false ideas that misled the people, caused them harm, and fomented political rebellion. Huang's purpose in refuting the 'heretical teachings' he found in baojuan was to make clear their falsity on one hand and reinforce orthodox Confucian teachings on the other. His arguments demonstrate the confrontational stance the state took when dealing with these ideas, as well as the importance of orthodox teachings as an antidote to competing ideologies. The state was engaged in both a security struggle to contain and suppress these sects, as well as a continuing effort to win the hearts and minds of the people away from heterodoxies.

Why then, if the basic ethics of heterodox sects and the orthodox establishment were not so different, was there such an antagonistic relationship between the two, one which at times erupted into violence? One reason was the intolerance of the state for any independent religious authority, such as was presented by sectarian groups which produced baojuan as their scriptures. The fear of religious groups turning into rebellious armies prompted the government to break up sectarian congregations and punish the leaders, several instances of which were mentioned in chapter three. These actions however only made the surviving members of the group fear for their survival, and in the cases of the Wang Lun (1774) and White Lotus (1796-1803) rebellions, it preceded the organization of larger, more militant congregations. Perhaps these groups would have never taken up arms had they not feared for their continued survival. The execution of sect leaders and the destruction of sacred texts must have made it seem as if the nadir of the sect's teaching was at hand, and the apocalypse and ultimate triumph of the religion was imminent.

Elements of this relationship between a religious group and the state can also be found today. A recent example of this confrontation can be found in the Falun Gong. When Li Hongzhi organized this group in 1992 his aims were to spread his own teachings regarding the traditional breath practice called *qigong* 氣功, and to denounce other teachings as false, a practice common to sectarian teachers in the Ming-Qing period.[1] Li himself saw his teachings as part of the sectarian tradition, but the government seems not to have been suspicious of the organization until public demonstrations precipitated the banning of the organization as a "dangerous cult", language that should be familiar to us

1 Ownby, "A History for Falun Gong", 235.

from Huang's writings. The conflict between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, as well as government suppression provoking intensified resistance on the part of sect members, has strong parallels with the sectarian groups discussed above.

In some respects at least, sectarian traditions continue to affect Chinese society even in post-reform China. The conflicts between independent groups and the state have only resulted in sufferings comparable to those prophesied in sectarian scriptures, at least for those practitioners unlucky enough to be caught by the authorities, or for innocent civilians caught up in the ruthless campaigns of suppression. The history of sectarian religious groups in China has thus far been one of distrust and confrontation. Religion in China today is limited to five orthodox religions, all of which are ultimately subject to direct state control. It is as yet unclear whether the current government will be able to constructively deal with the challenges posed by the continued popularity of sectarian organizations.

APPENDIX A: Selected Translation of the *Chuxi Baojuan*

古佛當來下生彌勒出西寶卷
Gufo Danglai Xiasheng Mile Chuxi Baojuan

[The precious volume concerning Maitreya's appearing out of the West, the Ancient Buddha who is about to be reborn]

Chapter Five: Monks and Priests Receive the Kalpa

The ancient Buddha Maitreya opened up the Book of Heaven and took a clear look at all the famous mountains, caves, and residences of the monks and priests under heaven. Living in [places with] carved rafters, painted beams, platforms of cinnabar, and lacquer seats, wearing clothes of fine silk, mouths chewing yet not planting sorghum to eat, recieving free grain, at ease and at leasure, [enjoying] the highest good fortune. All of them neglecting the grace [bestowed upon them by] their parents, not repaying the four sources of gratefulness,[1] some fornicating with blood relations, others illicitly cavorting with good women and having private intercourse with nuns. They kill the living and harm life, on countless occasions drinking wine, eating meat, breaking the precepts and transgressing the law. They also engage in trade, or steal and rob. Or as healers they also bring court and sue, raising lawsuits, taking advantage of their position to bully people. None at all do good, countless do evil.

1 Gratefulness for one's parents, society, nation, and the three treasures of Buddhism: the Buddha, the teaching, and the community of believers. Chen Yixiao, ed., *Foxue Changjian Cihui*. (Commonly Found Vocabulary of Buddhism) [book on-line]; availible from http://cbs.ntu.edu.tw; Internet; accessed March 1st 2005.

This type of monk or priest will therefore, during the transformative cataclysm, return to hell, never to rise again. If you have a heart to return to good, return to lay life, practice vegetarianism and uphold the precepts, be filial and obidient to your parents, respect and honour your elders, promote the return to the True Way of the August Ultimate,[2] and study the method of prolonging life.

In the years of the true dharma Buddha saved the monks
In the years of the false dharma the transmission was chaotic
Now during the end dharma no monks are saved
The white-robed [laymen] say that the dharma saves all beings

The Ancient Buddha transmitted
In the years of true dharma
And delivered[3] monks from misery

Shakyamuni Buddha
Received it from Dipamkara
Showed the way to practice

The Muni ancestor[4]
In the garden of veneration
Expounded the law and developed the teaching

Five Thousand
Forty Eight
Tripitaka of scripture texts

From the unbeginning
To the middle kalpa
The Buddha-dharma lived in the world

The assembly of monks
Passed on the teaching
Transmitted it chaotically

Took the great earth
Confused the monks

2 *Huangji zhengdao* 皇極正道. Huang refers to the Emperor, thus "August".
3 *Pudu* 普度
4 *Mouni Zu* 牟尼祖. Muni was the clan name of Shakyamuni, the "sage of the Muni clan", transliterated into Chinese by "mouni".

Seduced people into hell

In the underworld[5]
Forty li
No light can be seen

This is simply
The prison hell of monks
Who knows this?

Because of the above
The End Kalpa has arrived
And no monks are saved

See the monks and priests
Shoulder to shoulder with nuns
Doing evil and sin

Drinking wine and eating meat
Secretly lascivious
Killing life and harming the living

Abusing their title for profit
Doing a business in trade
As doctors they scorch indiscriminately[6]

None of them considering
Acting with a body at peace
Upholding vegetarianism and practicing Buddhism

I urge monks and priests
Turn your heart around
Return to laity and refrain from killing

Practice vegetarian offerings
To the ancestor of long life
Honour and respect your parents

Monks and priests, quickly and urgently refrain from meat. Quietly use a place to establish a settled mind, and day and night practice the way of Chan enlightenment.[7]

5 *Fengducheng* 酆都城

6 *Luanjiu* 亂灸. This refers to the improper use of moxibustion, a treatment involving the burning of material close to the patient's skin.

7 *Chanwudao* 禪悟道. Perhaps a reference to the Chan school, but it may also refer to Chan's older

Thoughtfully chant the Buddha name and recite scripture. If you desire long life, make a vow to "work to unite and return together to the Western Forest."[8]

> The Jade Buddha's imperial degree is carried out
> Good and evil monks and priests will be separated
> Now I watch from within the void
> The cut[9] of time not carving my body

Halt your steed and listen[10]

The great turner of the Dharma wheel, the ancient Buddha kindly and sorrowfully speaks subtle words.[11] [All in] the assembly bring their hands together, and listen closely. It is ordered that monks and priests observe vegetarianism and obey the precepts. On the 26th the Buddha[12] will enter the *Yuandun*[13] and illuminate Shuanglin.[14] Quickly discern that in an earlier journey, the Jade Buddha brought you back home, and you reached the root of your destiny.

The great assembly listened to these words and cast aside the toil of the mundane world. They took control of their fate and set aside the myriad things. Quietly sitting, practicing Buddhism, at all times making obedience to the world-honoured one, at every moment enlightened to [the secret of] long life. On the 12th the light[15] will reveal bitter mouths biting and chewing. Buddha points out the return home, but among the travellers on the great road there are distinctions.

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meaning of *dhyana*, meditative absorbtion.

8 *Xilin* 西林. Perhaps a reference to the Pure Land, which was thought to be in the west.

9 A play on *ke* 刻, which means both 'to carve' and a unit of time.

10 *Zhuma ting* 駐馬聽. The first of several notes which are neither part of the prose or verse sections.

11 *Yan yin* 演音, literally, 'to perform sounds'.

12 The date is vague, and could refer to the 26th of any month.

13 *Yuandun* 圓頓 is the name of the sect associated with this text, and originally referred to teachings within the Tiantai and Huayan schools. Here it refers to a state of complete enlightenment where the entire universe is perceived as one, thus achieving a complete (*yuan*) view of the cosmos in an instant (*dun*). See Ma and Han, 859-860.

14 *Shuanglin* refers to the place of the Buddha's enlightenment. Soothill and Houdous.

15 Again, the month is not given.

Chapter Six: Corrupt Officials[16]

Maitreya, the Ancient Buddha, looked and saw that the class of people called officials undertook matters unclearly. Corruptly they take advantage of their name for profit, without a bit of kindness in their heart. With all types of corrupt judgements they frame innocent people. Those with money take corruption as honesty, those without money who are truely honest are taken advantage of themselves. Unfilial to their parents, disloyal to their king, disrespectful of the sun and moon, they don't sacrifice[17] to heaven and earth. They forget and distance themselves from the four sources of gratefulness, drink wine and eat meat, and do limitless evil.

Therefore, when they are taken and transformed, they will forever fall into hell. If, however, they are willing to refrain from killing and release living [things], begin to obey Confucianism, the orthodox Way of the sage master Confucius, all will be good people, quietly practicing, protecting and nuturing their essence, spirit, energy and blood.

Practice and study the subtle dharma of long life, recite the name of the Buddha and chant the scriptures. Enter together into the *Yuandun*. Authentically confess your sins and past transgressions, turn to a kind heart, and learn to be a good person.

Alas. The sages and worthies of the ages urge people to be good. To make an effort on the master's behalf to transform brings merit without measure. If this is not enough, listen to this gatha:[18]

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16 *Buqing* 不清. Literally, not clear. Perhaps a pun on the Qing dynasty, which only makes sense if Overmyer is correct in dating it to the Qing. See Overmyer, *Precious Volumes*, 276.

17 *fu bao tiandi* 弗報天地. Literally, 'to not report to heaven and earth'.

18 *Jie* 偈: a rhythmical verse often found in orthodox scriptures. Soothill and Hodous.

But the good worthies of the various schools themselves
All cultivated their karma[19] and achieved deep virtue

The august king will meet with the officials
Cultivate long life, essence, energy and spirit

In former times on Lingshan[20] all was one family
And now we've lost Shuanglin

Five hundred years ago we practiced the Way together
Once you cast off the mundane world you lose all future karma

In life only taking advantage of your name for profit
After death, it's hard to avoid bitterness

Those who are officials covet money and make corrupt judgements
Only plotting for wealth harms the heart of goodness

Now you are lost and can not turn back
Later you'll have regrets but no escape

Single-mindedly coveting money and handling the family fortunes
All types of corrupt judgements harming good people

Lord Yama[21] doesn't care if you're a duke, lord or minister
How would Wuchang[22] fear you, an emperor's decendant?

Careless as an official, you'll return to the underworld
Lord Yama will be angry, and not show favour

He'll instruct Oxhead and Horseface[23]
And your soul will forever fall into Abi city[24]

Eighty one thousand sufferings, you will experience them all
All five venerable ones will toss your soul to pieces

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19 *qian genzhong* 前根種. 'Former root seeds'; the karmic consequences from earlier actions.

20 *Lingshan* 靈山. The 'Spirit Vulture Peak' where the Buddha preached the Lotus Sutra. Soothill and Hodous.

21 *Yanwang* 閻王. The lord of the Buddhist underworld. Ibid.

22 *Wuchang* 無常. The name of a demon said to drag people's souls into the underworld, its name literally means 'impermance'. Ibid.

23 *Niutou* and *Mamian* 牛頭馬面. Two servants of Lord Yama.

24 *Abicheng* 阿鼻城. The 'City of Avici', referring to the Avici hell, the deepest level of the Buddhist 'hot hells'. Soothill and Hodous.

I urge you to give rest to coveting money and treasures
Avoid the bonds of hell and disgracing your family

Return your heart to vegetarianism, return to Confucianism
Start to walk the August Ultimate, repent the root of sin

Practice the dharma of the true way to long life
Abstain from killing, release the living, and enter the complete rest

Work on behalf of the master, urge people to be good
Transform for the sake of heaven and attend the Cloud City[25]

Urge all people in official quarters now to quickly practice that which is convenient and easy for people [to do], such as reciting sutras. Those with wealth and those without a cent are the same, make careful offerings and clearly give rest to abusing your name for profit, and harming the good people. Practice vegetarianism and walk the good path. Those who are officials must be clear and correct, so when Lord Yama sees you he will at once send you back to the Cloud City.

For a thousand years iron trees bloom and change
As soon as you lose your human body you return to difficulty

Give rest to greed and wrongful judgements
Avoid the hatred of hell and a family dispersed

Blackened Luopao[26]

Bring up the year of the future kalpa
Iron hearted people should wrinkle their brow

Hunger, cold, disturbance, and rebellion are truly harmful and sad
People of the world will hardly avoid being hungry and cold

Military horsemen and soldiers in rebellion
Fathers leave, sons part
Husbands escape, wifes scatter

25 *Yuncheng* 雲城.
26 *Zao luopao* 皂羅袍. Meaning unclear. It may be a prompt for the performer to wear a black robe at this point in the recitation.

With family cast into the marsh[27]
The ancient jade Buddha
Brings you back home

I urge all officials to accumulate virtue
Eat vegetarian regularly and thoughtfully use your position

Han Xin[28] and Peng Yue[29] were heroes
The tyrant cut his own throat in the Wu river[30]

Zi Ya[31] looked from on high
Zhang Liang[32] gave up knowledge
Both men have buried names

Avoid reaching the end of merit
The ancient jade Buddha
Brings you to the Sacred seat

27 *Paojia dangcong* 抛家蕩叢. Reading 業 in the original as 叢.
28 Han Xin 韓信 was a famous general of the Western Han under Liu Bang 劉邦, who is said to have been wrongfully sentenced to death. As he was fond of flying kites, people flew kites to remember him.
29 Peng Yue 彭越, another one of Liu Bang's generals, was also put to death.
30 Refers to the suicide of Xiangyu 項羽 on the shores of the Wu river.
31 Zi Ya 子牙. Possibly referring to a Duke of Qi 齊 during the Warring States period who was brought down in an intrigue.
32 Zhang Liang 張良, a descendant of the royal house of Han, attempted to assassinate the Qin emperor, but failed and turned to Daoism late in his life.

Chapter Seven: The Wealthy and Powerful Rely on Power

Maitreya, the Ancient Buddha, looked and saw the idle, wealthy and powerful people of the world relying on their power, cheating the poor, trading unfairly, bullying the good people. Using a small measure to sell, using a large measure to buy, the abacus weighs their profits. Always digging for silver money, not knowing the bitterness of poverty. Without any kindness in their heart, they don't believe in the true path of heaven.

Turning their steps toward hell, these evil families[33] don't care for their servants; their curses are not kind. Day and night, thinking and pondering on the abacus, seizing by force fields and land, mountains and forests. All without thoughts of doing good, but with hearts of evil deeds. Taking women by force, slandering good people, unwilling to eat vegetarian, nurturing only killing, and harming the living souls.

This type of evil person will be taken and returned to hell, never to rise up. If they wish to change their ways, plant good roots, eat vegetarian, and start to obey the teachings of the Confucian school. I urge transformation on the great multitude; study and practice long life.

> The ancient Buddha looked and saw wealthy and powerful heroes
> In previous lives their roots of beneficence were planted deeply
>
> Because of greed, licentiousness, and wine, their energy has been broken[34]
> And forgotten their home up 'till now
>
> The ancient Buddha looked
> At wealthy and powerful families
> [Who were] as in a dream and not waking

33 *Men* 門. Also may refer to religious sects or schools.
34 Taking 事 as 事故.

Today start to make
The sixty eight vows
To universally save the multitude of living [beings]

The Buddha decrees
The Jade Emperor listens
And follows what the Buddha has judged

The gods of the five mountains[35]
The general of assembled heaven
Don't want to travel late

So look at those
Wealthy and powerful people
Acting fiercly and doing evil

Cheating the good people
Harming the poor people
Unwilling to have a kind heart

Taking people's wives
And seizing
Fields, land, goods and crops

Buying with a big measure
Selling with a small measure
Their scale is not fair

Not thinking at all
About offerings to Buddha and Ancestors
Not offering to the blue above[36]

Turn from doing sin
Acting fierce and evil
Killing and harming living souls

Later on
The future kalpa arrives
Where could you [go to] avoid it?

Three disasters will arise

35Refers to Taishan in Shandong, Hengshan in Hunan, Huashan in Shaanxi, Hengshan in Shanxi and Songshan in Henan.
36 i.e. The sky.

Eight sufferings will come[37]
Where will you hide yourself?

I urge you all
Good men and women
Uphold vegetarianism and receive the precepts

Travel the right path
Enter the complete rest
And establish the gate of Dharma

On the heavenly board
Are posted the names
Of Matireya's children

In the halls of hell
Those who have sins[38]
All are cleaned away

The jade Buddha's decree is sent out, tremble with great fear. The sinners of the multitude, their hearts are not just, lusting only after money, wine, and sex, lost in the mundane world. When three thousand years are finished, the future kalpa will approach you. Quickly and urgently change your ways soon, uphold vegetarianism and store up a good heart. [Then] the eight sufferings will stay away, and the three disasters won't approach.

Raise and urge the wealthy and powerful people
Uphold vegetarianism and learn a good heart

Quickly and urgently follow the right path
Don't wait for the three disaters to approach

Deposit the new god[39]

---

37 *Sanzai* and *ba'nan* 三災八難. The 'three disasters' (flood, fire, and wind) and 'eight impediments' (including evil-doing, pleasure-seeking, physcial handicaps, and self-overconfidence). Ling Yuan et al., eds., *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian (Ying-Han Shuangyu)* (Dictionary of Modern Chinese (English-Chinese Edition)) (Beijing: Waiyu Jiaoxue Yu Yanjiu Chubanshe, 2002), 1655.

38 Or, 'There are sinners'.

39 *Ji shengshen* 寄生神. Another line which seems to be a prompt to the reader.

The great Maha
Is the basic root
Before the Paramita[40] eye

See mothers and kin who don't recognize each other
Struggling over fame and stealing profit, showing off their power and ability

Travelling the east and passing through the west have misled you
The great limit has arrived
But alas, the confused people don't know

Ancient Amitabha
In Shuanglin
Light and darkness like flying arrows

Twelve months are finished and a year ends
On the twenty sixth the myriad dharmas are set to open up

One season, eight moments, don't relax
When merit is finished
Together you will arrive at the Dudou palace[41]

40 *Boluo yan* 波羅眼. *Boluo* refers to *paramita*, the 'perfections' or meditative states.
41 *Dudou gong* 都斗宮. A palace in the one of the constellations of Chinese astronomy.

Chapter Eleven: Military Riders March Out

The ancient Buddha Maitreya looked and saw military riders march out who, in the midst of their journey, rely on their name and military might to loot by force, plunder and rob. Raping in broad daylight, calling to and deceiving women, stealing wealth and robbing goods. Thereupon they kill good people, act fiercly and do evil, trap and harm kind people, not thinking of the bitter practice of past existences.

There are those unthinking ones who, when wife, son and daughter are in trouble, cast aside their loved ones and neglect their sons, go far away and shave their head, becoming monks and gathering into assemblies. Wolf-hearted cowards![42] Whoring and raping women, drinking wine and eating meat, starting families with nuns, sacrificing meat before the scriptures and repenting. They overturn the purpose of this life, keeping a family and living for pleasure. Relying on this to live, this is to be without a steadfast heart. Your mouth saying[43] "the Way", "the Dharma", "the high and lofty ancestors", none of this has merit. In fact they only add to your transgressions. Their sins are difficult to measure, therefore these two types of people will, at the time of the change, be returned to hell, and not rise into life [again].

If you are willing to return your heart toward good, then eat vegetarian, recite the Buddha name and practice [methods of] long life. Don't do any evil deeds, uphold the good of the community, and quickly head toward the orthodox path. Make yourself into a

42 *Langxin gougan* 狼心狗肝. Literally, 'wolf-hearted and dog-livered', the liver representing one's inner heart.

43 *kou shuo* 口說. That is, words just spoken by the mouth, and not corresponding to inwardly-held concepts.

good person, read good volumes, build up a good heart, speak good words, repent your former transgressions, and regret your past mistakes. Once you have repented, your former sins will be swept away with none remaining.

> For men and women to marry is the Way of the Confucian teaching
> To cut off human morality is neither loyal nor filial
>
> Urge soldiers to uphold vegetarianism and act with humaneness and justice
> Monks and priests of meat and wine will suffer torment
>
> The ancient Buddha saw
> Those brave soliders
> Relying on their power and acting fiercely
>
> The kind and good people
> Fearing the strength of the soldiers
> Flee to the east and west
>
> Casting aside father and mother
> Leaving behind son and daughter
> All saving their own skins
>
> Those soldiers
> Siezing and robbing by force
> Wealth, goods, gold and silver
>
> Soldiers, brave and strong
> Kill the good people
> And rape the women
>
> Until, later on
> With no path to walk
> [Men] shave their heads and become monks
>
> The hearts of wolves arise
> They grow livers of dogs
> And start families with nuns
>
> Drinking wine and eating meat
> Bowing to scriptures and repenting
> They rely on this to live
>
> Using the Buddhas and ancestors

And the path of practice
They overturn the purpose of this life

With mouths saying “The Way”,
“High and lofty ancestors”
Forever falling and sinking down

This type of person
Their sins are heavy
They will suffer in hell

Doing evil oneself
Adds to the severity of one's transgressions
It's diffucult to rise above them

Urge these two types
Turn their heart around
Uphold vegetarianism and accept the precepts

When the future kalpa arrives
People will be fierce and evil
Again will blades and soldiers arise

The year's harvest will be barren
The world in turmoil
Little of the five grains will be collected

Quickly, return your heart
To the Confucian teachings
The Dharma school of the sage Confucius[44]

Repent your former transgressions
Regret your past mistakes
Urge people to become good

Diligently recite the Buddha name
Help your parents
Leap out of the mundane world

The ancient Buddha Maitreya looked and saw the soldiers of the world doing evil, the severity of which was pitiful. The multitudes who bore these difficulties recived

44 *Kongsheng Famen* 孔聖法門. *Fa* usually refers to the Buddhist dharma, the teachings.

limitless sufferings; it is only because you do not believe in the orthodox true way that when we reach the year of the last kalpa you will be laughed at. Soldiers, where will you find peace? Escape from this sea of suffering and quickly turn your heart [toward good].

> Military soldiers and people of the great earth
> Confused lost and inebriated without waking
>
> Quickly and urgently turn your heart around
> And take care of the path ahead in advance

The Clear River Attracts[45]

In ancient times at the Lingshan assembly the Venerable Mother's[46] two eyes wept, heartbroken. The ancient Buddha thought upon the August Children.[47] All the Buddhas in the Palace of Heaven saw men and women without good hearts, lost and unable to return home. I urge the soldiers to uphold vegetarianism and the precepts so as to avoid seeing Lord Yama.

The ancient Rutong Buddha[48] saw the August children come and attend the assembly, their covetous stares high as a mountain, their evil-doing as deep as the sea. I urge you to practice good deeds quickly and soon, and wash clean your heart. Right away obey the transmitted Way of long life, together [we will] go to the Dudou heaven.[49]

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45 *Qingjiang yin* 清江引. Another unclear instruction.

46 *Lao Qinniang* 老親娘. Identical in meaning to the more traditional *laomu* 老母, but using a different term for 'mother', possibly to avoid government persecution.

47 *Huangtai* 皇胎. This seems to be a reference to human beings, perhaps referring to their lofty origins according to sectarian mythology.

48 When Shakyamuni Buddha existed as Rutong Bodhisattva (*rutong pusa* 儒童菩薩) in a former life he offered flowers to Dipamkara Buddha (*randeng fo* 然燈佛) and was desingnated as a future Buddha.

49 *Dudou tian* 都斗天.

APPENDIX B: Selected Translation of *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy*[1]

破邪詳辯
A Detailed Refutation of Heresy

黃育楩
by Huang Yupian

(Selected portions)

Preface

Serious indeed is the great harm done by heretical teachings to the people. When I served as administrator in the weak county of Qinghe[2], I gained a deep awareness of its harm. Accordingly, I published a notice strictly forbidding any evil teachings, divided it into numbered pages, and pasted them together into folio sheets, so that one could open it up at any time. I then bound [the pages] into a book, so that it could be forever passed on. At that time I published over 30,000 copies, and apart from sending copies to neighbouring areas, I also sent one to the gentry of every village in Qingyi,[3] with orders to often discuss its contents with the villagers. During the [first] year of its circulation, it was quite successful.

However, where it discussed the refutation of evil teachings, only case logs were consulted as evidence, whereas I had never actually seen the scriptures of the evil

1 This translation is based on the text provided in Sawada. Where the translation of a term or phrase is significant to an argument in the body of the paper, or the specific term used in the original text is otherwise important, the original text is provided in a footnote with pinyin and Chinese characters. When a portion of the text has been omitted from the translation, the section will be marked with [...].

2 Huang took up the post in 1830 according to Sawada, 6. Qinghe was a county in Zhili province, present-day Hebei, close to Shandong. Gu Tinglong, ed., *Zhongguo Diming Cidian* (Dictionary of Chinese Placenames), (Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, 1989), 804.

3 Qingyi 清邑 here refers to the county of Qinghe. See Ling, 2275.

teachings themselves. In early winter of 1833, I was posted to Julu.[4] This also was a den of heretical sect activities.[5] I immediately began an investigation under strict secrecy, and worked without interruption from start to finish. In addition, while hearing cases[6] I undertook an audit of the *baojia* system. As a result, while on tours of the countryside[7], whenever I met gentry or commoners I invariably offered advice [on this matter], [and all] repeatedly swore to be earnest [in not following evil teachings].

The number of heretical scriptures subsequently copied from the people, as well as those which my predecessor[8] had collected, was over 20 in total. They were printed in large characters, produced in cloth slip-covers, with sutra covers, scroll sleeves, and embroidered decoration. On the front and back of the books were painted Buddha images. It was all in the style of a legal document, and quite similar to a real Buddhist scripture. They were all produced between the Wanli [1573-1619] and Chongzhen [1628-1643] periods. Reading their contents, they were evil falsities, perverse and erroneous, annoying and superfluous, and full of mistakes. None went beyond the "True Home of Emptiness" and "Eternal Mother" type of talk.

I say that if evil teachings are strictly forbidden, but the evil scriptures themselves are not refuted in detail, then the people will not be aware of the falsities contained within, nor will oneself be aware of the falsity of the teachings. Although they be punished to the full extent of the law,[9] [the people] have already sunk deep into the trap [of heretical

4 Another county in Zhili province, present-day Hebei.
5 *Chumo* 出沒.
6 Huang served as magistrate in Julu county and heard cases in this capacity.
7 Following Sawada's gloss for 公下鄉. Sawada, 6.
8 This was one Wu Guomou 吳國謀. *JLXZ*, 363.
9 *Jinfa chengzhi* 盡法懲治. Huang uses this phrase several times. 'Full extent' has the connotation of pointing out the extent or limits of the power of the law.

teachings], and rescuing them will be indeed difficult. I therefore took the evil scriptures, selected the portions which contained their core ideas, and made a detailed refutation. My work was to ensure that their wickedness be revealed, while ignoring that which was harmless, and I called this [work] *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy*. I used the phrase "it simply cannot be believed"[10] to separate the different sections, and made sure each section contained the word "Alas!"[11] [This word,] alas, is a pained sound. In harming the people, heretical teachings cause great pain. Thus I used the word 'alas' to punctuate the text. Preceding 'alas' is [a selection from] the text of an evil scripture. After 'alas' are my anti-heretical writings. These words must come out clearly, so that people may easily understand their meaning. I had no time to calculate how much work I put into the text.

The first chapter reverently includes the *Sacred Edict*,[12] so that the people would know the essentials of doing good, and would not mistake evil words for them. Next is the *Law Code*, and also the *High Instructions*, so that the people would know the severity of the law, and, of their own accord, clearly uphold the prohibitions within.

In the first and second chapters, I selected evil writings from every [heretical] scripture and document, so that the people would know that I had read them throughly before refuting them, and that these refutations were not simply my subjective comments on the writings. The third chapter looks at evil scriptures in general, as well as recent statements from evil teachings, so that the people knew that I had collated the scriptures, and categorized their points according to their true meaning. My only wish was to establish a differentiation between evil and correct [teachings], and to make clear the

10 *Bu kexin* 不可信.
11 *Yi* 噫.
12 A series of edicts issued by the Kangxi Emperor in 1670, expressing a throughly Confucian morality, and designed to promote the image of Kangxi as a 'sage ruler'. Spence, 60.

[separate] sources of fortune and disaster, [so that the people] would not fall lightly into the net of the law. I encouraged them to clarify and uphold the *baojia* system, promote schools, and often recite the *Sacred Edict*. In summary, I used the idea of 'rectify yourself to lead others'[13] as the basis. The essentials for those who hold office are precisely the requirements for prohibiting heresy, therefore the people were made to discuss these matters with me.

It may be said: "*A Detailed Refutation of Heresy* can only persuade and instruct[14] good people. Those who have fallen into the trap [of heretical teachings] are certain not to listen, so of what benefit is it?" Those who are unaware of evil teachings are, in the beginning, also good people. Because of the delusions of evil teachings, good people gradually turn toward them. If one makes careful distinctions, urges and instructs [the people],[15] so that those who are good people know fully that heretical teachings are harmful, extremely evil and painful, the heretical teachings will be driven off without respite. How could the people be misled?

This instruction of good people is precisely the means to strictly prohibit heretical teachings. As for criminal cases involving evil teachings, we can only punish to the full extent of the law[16], as an admonishment to future [criminals]. However, I'm not so pedantic as to suggest the use of persuasion and instruction, [setting up] fine distinctions and instructing the people in this way, and [yet] not to punish to the full extent of the law. Nevertheless, to punish evil teachings to the full extent of the law, and to offer clear

13 *Zhengji shuairen* 正己率人.
14 *Quanyu* 勸諭. Huang often uses this two character phrase, which incorporates both a neutral verb 'persuade', and one which is the action of a superior to an inferior, 'instruct'.
15 *Kaiqie quanyu* 剴切勸諭.
16 *Jinfa chengzhi* 盡法懲治.

distinctions, urge and instruct the good people, this is the benefit that *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy* offers to the people. It is no small thing. It's only that among the foolish people of the countryside, those that can read are few in number. I most earnestly wish that the gentry of every village will read and become familiar with this book, and transmit it across the wide multitude, so that the ignorant people will all turn from evil back toward what is correct, transform from miscreants into good people, respect the gloriousness of the *Sacred Edict*, feel the depth of the Emperor's grace, and get along with one another in this tumultuous world. This [would be] a boon to the people, and it is also the responsibility of the gentry. I cannot resist looking forward in anticipation to its success.

Signed, the first day of the first month of the year 1834, [by the] magistrate of Julu county, Huang Yupian, also called Rengu, of Gansu.

Chapter 3

The Eight Characters Mantra

In a certain heretical teaching there is an 'Eight Character Mantra[17]', namely "True home of emptiness, father and mother without birth"[18]. This phrase 'true emptiness', refers to the Buddhist sutra which states "The four elements are all empty."[19] Alas. When Buddhism speaks of "emptiness", [it means] the void, silent extinction, unsullied by the dust of the mundane. When heretical teachings speak of "emptiness", [it implies that] the orthodox moral fabric has become unraveled, and cannot be gathered back up again.[20] Because of this, when followers of these teachings gather and assemble, men and women mix together, fishing for advantage and licentiousness, strolling about without shame. It comes to the point where rebellion is plotted in secret, they are immediately apprehended, and are themselves subject to the ultimate punishment; families are publicly executed and their lineage is ended. This treatment of the orthodox moral fabric by heretical teachings cannot be called 'emptiness', and yet they call it such. Also, as for what those licentious heretical bandits certainly call 'emptiness', it also cannot be emptiness, but it's as if they use "True Emptiness" to seduce people. It simply cannot be believed.

True Home of Emptiness

17 *Zhenyan* 真言.

18 In the original, of course, this phrase is eight characters long: *zhenkong jiaxiang, wusheng fumu* 真空家鄉無生父母. Another possible translation of *wusheng fumu* is Naquin's "Eternal Progenitor", but I have chosen this translation because Huang later dissects the phrase as translated in order to argue against it.

19 This phrase appears in the *Foshuo Dafang Dengxiangwang Jing* 佛說大方等頂王經 , Taisho Tripitaka Vol. 14, No. 477.

20 *Lunji gangchang, buneng yueshu* 倫紀綱常，不能約束.

A heretical sect teaches “True Home”, because it is believed[21] that the practitioners are the sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents, all originally born in the heavenly palace, so the heavenly palace is taken to be the “True Home”. Alas. If the practitioners are all the sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents, then as for non-practitioners, whose sons and daughters are they? Those who are not the sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents generally do not transgress the rules, and are peaceful and obedient people. Now, the sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents are of a stubborn type, difficult to change, and are the sort of people who break the laws and violate discipline. These sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents are far from human. Those who are not the sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents will be found in[22] prosperous or virtuous families. Whereas the sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents will certainly be found in the backward countryside or barren districts, evil on the whole, vulgar and inferior, knowing nothing of rites or righteousness, not fearing punishment. These sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents are far from human. Those who are not the sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents have bravery of the highest degree, and [some] are illustrious officials. They also have idyllic happiness,[23] and naturally [achieve] pure good fortune. Whereas the sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents will certainly fall into the punishments of the cangue and the stick, strangulation and beheading, slow slicing,[24] and be extinguished in the end, not leaving anything to the world.[25] In this, also, these sons and daughters of the

21 Taking 以 to mean 'to take as such', or roughly, 'to believe as such'.
22 Huang plays on different meanings of *sheng*, to be born, or to produce. The sons and daughters of the un*born*, are also those who do not *produce* riches or virtue.
23 *Youle tianyuan* 有樂田園.
24 *Lingchi* 凌遲. One of the most severe forms of capital punishment at the time.
25 Taking 余種 as 'spare grains'. In this context, it means what one leaves when one dies. There is also a connotation of not leaving descendants, children being likened to seeds.

Eternal Parents are far from human. There is only one world, and only the sons and daughters of the Eternal Parents are far from human, moreover it is as if [they're from] some other world. This type of true home, if it is in the human world, will certainly be extinguished by the punishments [of the law]. It is as if by using the name 'True Emptiness', and saying that heaven contains this type of evil realm, then practitioners can ascend up to heaven. I'm afraid that the heavenly palace is not this dirty and corrupt. These heretical absurdities are themselves so extreme, how can one stand the state of their teachings? It simply cannot be believed.

Father and Mother Without Birth

The words of a heretical sect, "without birth", can be considered an imitation of the "without birth, without extinction"[26] of the Buddhist scriptures. Alas. "Without birth" must come to extinction, but it is also said, "without extinction"; this nothing is without, at no time does it not thusly fill limitless space. "Without extinction" must originate in birth, but it is also said, "without birth"; its beginning is without reason, in ending it does not complete its cycle; it is without limit. [When] these four words are linked together, their meaning is quite clear. Nowadays, when heretical teachings cut out the two words "without extinction", and only say "without birth", it is incomplete. What's more, before[27] "without birth", "father and mother" are added; this is even less clear. If we imagine a family, when a man and a woman are matched together they start being husband and wife, when a husband and wife have children they start being called parents. Now, when

26 *Wusheng wumie* 無生無滅. This phrase appears in many Buddhist scriptures.
27 In the original, "father and mother" are added after "without birth", but in English the order is reversed: "Father and mother without birth".

"without birth" is said, this means no sons or daughters, so whose parents are they?

Also consider the Way of Heaven and Earth,[28] which only arises in birth. If we speak in terms of the Book of Changes, the Supreme Ultimate gave birth to the two Appearances, the two Appearances gave birth to the four Images, and the four Images gave birth to the Eight Trigrams. Speaking in terms of the River Diagram,[29] heaven first gave birth to water, earth secondly gave birth to fire, heaven thirdly gave birth to wood, earth fourthly gave birth to metal, and heaven fifthly gave birth to soil. Speaking in terms of the "Birth Order of the Five Elements", soil gives birth to metal, metal gives birth to water, water gives birth to wood, wood gives birth to fire, and fire gives birth to soil. Moreover, speaking in terms of *Qiankun*,[30] *qian* is heaven, *kun* is earth. *Qian* is called the great birth, *kun* is called is vast birth. *Qian* is also called the Initial Substance of the Myriad Objects, *kun* is also called the Birth Substance of the Myriad Objects. In this separation of heaven and earth, first there must be birth, only then can there be the myriad things; men and women, husband and wife, father and son, ruler and minister, high and low. If there is no birth then there can be no myriad things, nor can there be humankind.

To speak of it in terms of one with a shallow approach, it can be compared to farmland: if there is birth then there will be a joyful, bountiful harvest, without birth one will suffer famine and drought. To compare it to a family, if there is birth then there will be sons and grandsons, without birth then one will become the last of one's line. To compare it to a person, if there is birth then one can speak and act, without birth one is [just] a dead body.

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28 *tiandi zhi dao* 天地之道.
29 Refers to Fu Xi's Eight Diagrams.
30 Two of the 64 hexagrams of the *Yijing*.

Nowadays heretical teachings say “father and mother without birth”, and also say “eternal venerable mother”, making offerings wantonly, offering incense daily, this can be considered sincerity. But, they are all guilty of crimes deserving death, and therefore use the name “without birth”, a portent of great evil, and must come to a tragic end. Nevertheless they strive for long life! It simply cannot be believed.

[…]

Men and Women Mingling Together

In a heretical sect men and women mingle together, selfishly carrying out their licentious desires, already accustomed to it as being natural. Alas. There is a type of woman who will [join a sect] either because [she herself] is ill, or because her child is ill. Heretical sects then grab hold of this opportunity, and entice her from all sides. They claim that as soon as offerings are made, then sickness will naturally get better. The woman is ignorant, and thereupon goes personally to make offerings, and enters herself into the list of members. No matter if the sickness improves or not, this person is already not under her own control. A while after entering the sect, honesty and shame all disappear. Furthermore, she also entices other women [to join the sect], but her vile manner already cannot bear helpful advice [from others].[31]

A woman in this world must first and foremost value her good name and integrity. Once her name and integrity are sullied, she has shamed her ancestors, and brought disgrace to her descendants. When it reaches the level of a criminal case, then she has met with even greater misfortune, and it is too late for regrets. One can only hope that those who are parents will control their daughters, those who are grandparents will control their

31 *Bukan shengyan* 不堪勝言.

daughters-in-law, and that those who are husbands will control their wives and concubines. In short, if one's family has someone who is ill, then immediately seek the employ of a well-known doctor, and treat the illness according to his methods. Whether a sickness improves or not is dependent on fate, and nothing else. If it is said that as soon as one enters a sect then sickness will be cured, then those are the words of a swindler; it simply cannot be believed.

[…]

Shakyamuni Takes Control, Maitreya Takes Control

A certain heretical sect claims that "Before it was Shakyamuni who took control of the world, later it will be Maitreya who takes control of the world. Just as he who takes control differs, so will the fate of heaven be different." Alas. This is the source of groundless falsehoods, yet they are not aware of the extremity of their error. Dipamkara[32] and Shakyamuni were born in a foreign land. Before Buddhism had yet entered China, it certainly could not 'take control' of China. The introduction of Buddhism into China dates from the Han dynasty. Subsequently, the emperors of every age have only employed Confucianism to rule the world, and not paid heed to the idea of using Buddhism to rule. The people of Buddhism are not, after all, antagonistic to the people of Confucianism. Thus we know that Shakyamuni has never taken control of the world. Those who worship and believe in Maitreya are only heretical sects. Thus, the people of heretical sects [are punished by] the cangue, or banishment to serve as a soldier, or strangulation, or slow slicing. Among those who practice [heretical] teachings there are the shallow and the

32 *randeng (fo)* 然燈(佛). Dipamkara Buddha, the twenty-fourth predecessor of Shakyamuni Buddha. Soothill and Houdous.

deeply [involved], so the punishment may be light or heavy. Those who wish to escape the net [of the law] by luck, and thus achieve a happy end, are no more than one or two in a hundred [people]. We therefore know that Maitreya cannot take control of the world.

Thus, this title of "world controller", to whom will it return in the future? The *Shijing* says: "The doings of high heaven have neither sound nor smell."[33] This is the high heaven of the world-controller. The *Shujing* says: "Thus I, the single one, will be felicitated, and the millions of people will have something to rely on."[34] This is the Son of Heaven who rules the world on behalf of heaven. Mengzi says: "They who are first informed should instruct those who are later in being informed, and they who first apprehend principles should instruct those who are slower to do so." This means assisting the Son of heaven in ruling by means of establishing teachings, and by means of world-controllers, [which are] the early saints and masters. From the Zhou dynasty onward, there has only been Confucius the Sage. Of those with whom I have spoken of the "world controller", those who have clearly changed their views [have done so] in this way.

Nowadays heretical sects take Shakyamuni and Maitreya as "world controllers"; vague and absurd, it simply cannot be believed.

[…]

'To Return to This Life'[35]

Alas. 'To return to this life', this is also in Buddhism. However, what Buddhism

33 James Legge, *The Shih King* [book on-line]; available from http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/9394; Internet; accessed 15 January 2005.

34 Following Medhurst, *The Shoo King* (Shanghai: The Mission Press, 1846), 316-7. "Something" appears as "somewhat" in the original text, which is either an error or an archaic usage. In either case, this amended translation stays true to the original.

35 *zhuanshi* 轉世. Traditionally this term refered to a type of sage in the Theravada tradition, one who enters directly into Nirvana from the desire realm. Here this term refers to one who has been reborn into this world and, according to Huang's description, has memory of their past life. See Soothill and Houdous.

calls the one who returns to this life, this is meant as a single person. If in a former existence his[36] refinement is complete, then he is born into the present world. At the earliest time that he can talk, then he describes the place where he lived in the former existence, the disciples he to which he made transmission, and the deeds he did, and as for the scriptures, he is able to remember and recite all of them. Upon looking at this person, his appearance, speech and actions are all different than that of the multitude, and he starts being called a 'living Buddha.' Also, there are those who return from several existences, and those who return from several tens of existences. From the time of their birth, one can already determine [that they have returned to this life].

Nowadays, those whom heretical teachings call "Buddha so-and-so, returned to this life" they cannot be determined [to be one who has returned] from the time of their birth, but only when they teach their practitioners. As for the inferiority and evil of this person, not only do they not resemble the Buddhist ancestors, but they do not even resemble good people. It can be seen that the 'Buddha so-and-so, returned to this world" is not a fabrication, but is just [the result of] being misled by devils. There is even the fabrication 'Emperor returned-to-this-world';[37] this is an obvious result of rebellious secret plotting. The misfortune of punishment by death will appear in the blink of an eye. It is absolutely unbelievable.

True and False Place Names

Alas. When heretical teachings speak of place names, just one is not enough [for

36 Huang does not use a gender-specific pronoun in the original.
37 *Diwang zhuanshi* 帝王轉世.

them]. Thus, for names of mountains and rivers, some are from the *Yugong*,[38] some from the *Erya*,[39] some from the *Shanhaijing*[40] and *Hongyu Ji*, as well as from all the works of masters and historians. Not all the heretical scriptures touch on this. Those that do mention it, all are empty fabrications. Those places which are real and not fabrications, are only those within the territory of Zhili. As for place names in Zhili, of those which are spoken of distinctly, there is only the one location of the Zhaozhou bridge.[41] To summarize the popularly published pictorials of the Zhaozhou bridge, there is Zhang Guolao[42] who rides a donkey, carrying on his body four famous mountains, whose followers cross over top the bridge. Luban[43] is below the bridge, holding it steady with one hand, so the bridge does not collapse.[44] Heretical sects thereupon see it as a realm of spirits, and so there is the saying "Cross the Zhaozhou bridge, arrive at Sound-of-Thunder Temple."[45] They do not know that this type of pictorial is, from the beginning, absurd, but the heretical sects have taken it to be genuine, and in collusion with the theatre troupes

38 *The Tribute of Yu* (*Yugong* 禹貢), contained within the Venerated Documents (*Shangshu* 尚書), is an early geographical work. Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual – Revised and Enlarged* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 150.

39 *Examples of Refined Useage* (*Erya* 爾雅), an early dictionary written in the 3rd century bce and made part of the classical canon during the Tang. Ibid., 62.

40 *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* (Shanhaijing 山海經), a 'mythogeography' written from the Warring States period to the Han and Jin dynasties. Ibid., 150.

41 *Zhaozhou Qiao* 趙州橋. A famous stone bridge in Zhaozhou, said to have constructed by Lu Ban. The building of another, smaller bridge in the west of the city was attributed to his sister, Lu Jiang. Yuan Ke, ed., *Zhongguo Shenhua Chuanshuo Cidian* (Dictionary of Chinese Myths and Legends) (Shanghai: Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe, 1985), 269.

42 One of the eight immortals, said to have served in the court of Xuanzong 玄宗 [r. 712-756]. He is often pictured riding on a white donkey. Ibid., 220-221.

43 An supernaturally skilled craftsperson, Lu Ban 魯班 was first mentioned in the *Huai Nan Zi* 淮南子 of the Han dynasty. Gu, 391.

44 *buhuai gushi* 不懷故事. 'Is not destroyed by an accident" The story is told that one day, when Zhang Guolao was riding on his donkey, carrying the sun and moon, he decided to visit the famous bridge. Another immortal, Cai Wang, was pushing the Four Famous Mountains in a wheelbarrow, and also wanted to see the bridge. When they were both crossing the bridge at the same time, it began to shake, whereupon Lu Ban held it up from below. As a result, the bridge was even stronger than before. Yuan, 269.

45 *Guo Zhaozhou Qiao, dao Leiyin Si* 過趙州橋，到雷音寺.

who perform the "Sound-of-Thunder Temple", have fabricated this location. Their understanding is shallow and backward, and it has already become extreme. It is simply unbelievable.

Heretical Scriptures and Theatre Performance

Alas. Those who create heretical scriptures, what class of people are they? Most people who read and study have clear intentions, and would absolutely not produce these words. Most people who do not read and study have no schemes, and could not produce these words. This being so, what sort of person creates heretical scriptures? I have observed folk theatre performances, and among Kunqu groups, many use songs such as "Lure of the Clear River", "Residing in the Soaring Clouds", "Child of the Yellow Oriole", and "Song of the White Lotus".

Recently, heretical sects also use these types of songs, keeping time with the clapping of a board, to facilitate the singing, all [in a style] similar to the texts of the *Kunqu* troupes. I have also observed clapper operas,[46] and many use the form of two lines of three characters, then one line of four characters, called "Ten Character *Luantan*".[47] Nowadays heretical sects also use the form of two lines of three characters, one line of four characters, repeated in threes and fours, [with words] in a mess and without formal structure, all similar to the lyrics of clapper operas.

Moreover, looking at the prose text of heretical scriptures, they are unbearably superficial, similar to the language of theatre prose, and also resembling the language of

46 *Bangzi qiang* 梆子腔.
47 *Shizi luantan* 十字亂談.

the *Gu'er*.[48] The song "Weeping Five Times" of the heretical scriptures appears in every text. Among the rough commoners it's even more [prevalent]; there are similarities to the sung words of the folk *Shi Buxian*[49] and "Song of the Lotus Flower" performances.

As for the characters in the heretical scriptures, they have actually been around since antiquity, but were often sung about in plays, and are thus those who often appear in scriptures. Those who are seldom seen in plays are those who are also not recorded in scripture. If among these [characters] there are those who are not found in plays, but appear in scripture, then certainly since antiquity they have never actually existed, but have come from those who fabricate [the texts]. Reading over the theatre music of the heretical scriptures, looking at the characters of the heretical scriptures, one may know that the fabricators of these texts were heretics of the late Ming, people who first learned theatre performance and later became practitioners of heretical teachings. Using the skills of theatre performance, they fabricate heretical scriptures, to the point of passing on their poison to later generations. Although punished to the full extent of the law, the influence of practitioners is already deep, and rescue will be difficult indeed; it is truly hateful. My only wish is [to use] heretical scriptures for the purpose of studying heretic criminals, [so that] all may know right away that one cannot believe in [them].

[…]

Academies and Public Schools[50]

Alas. To rectify the habits of the people, heretical teachings must be strictly

48 *Gu'er* 鼓兒. A type of performance where singing is accompanied by a drum, popular in northern China. Sawada, 78.

49 *Shi Buxian* 拾不閒. A type of street performance. Ibid.

50 The distinction here is whereas academies (*shuyuan* 書院) required tuition, and were for the sons of the elite, public schools (*yixue* 義學) were free to students. cf. Ling, 1779; 2271, where both are noted as archaic terms.

prohibited, and it is imperative to foster schools. When I became magistrate of Julu,[51] it had no academies; this was a deficiency. I therefore held monthly classes myself;[52] and solicited the incorrupt to lavish feasts, and [offered] substantial stipends to demonstrate my encouragement. Now the children who attend classes are more than 100 in number. Every time they meet, in addition to talking about compositions, they talk about the harm of heretical sects; these orders are transmitted to every student, every prohibition to every village. Also, in every village and town, I order that [funds] be solicited for the establishment of public schools.[53] If a temple site established with popular donations[54] is encountered, one with some reputation and sufficient support, and which has invited monks and priests from other areas to stay, it is ordered to change into a public school. If there were no public funds in a village, then policies were made to solicit donations, so that there would be no place without a public school; all would have one. If enthusiastic and obedient people were encountered, they immediately became people of righteous behaviour, and were considered for fine rewards, in order to show their glory. Now the public schools of the four villages are gradually growing day by day. Rectifying the habits of the people, perhaps this is fundamental.

Publicizing the Sacred Edict

Thus, the way of instructing the people makes especial use of publicizing the sacred edict as an essential task. Currently, in urban places where people gather to trade, a

51 As above, Juyi 鉅邑 refers to Julu county.
52 The county gazeteer of 1886 notes that the Guangze Academy 廣澤書院 was established by Huang in 1837, and rebuilt in 1876 by then-magistrate Zhang Chunxi. JLXZ, 246.
53 There are ten public schools listed in the 1882 gazeteer. Most of them are located in temples, and most are listed as being funded by the gentry. JLXZ, 253-256.
54 That is, funds donated by the public, not provided by the local govenment.

temple building is selected, and on every market day, assistant teachers gather together, and respectfully offer talks and lectures.[55] Compared to this, when in the early morning of the first and fifteenth of each month, the lecturers [assemble] at the Minglun hall[56], the effect of the gathering is great. Also, on the gathering days of the four villages, each member of the assistant teachers rotates among them lecturing, and in every town there is a student who also lectures. If there comes a time when an official is unable to come, the student then assembles the local gentry, and lectures respectfully and sincerely, and the official must dispatch someone to check up on his level of diligence, and thus distribute rewards, so that the lecturing student will not be established for nothing.

Currently I have again solicited money from the honest and obedient from within the province to print more than 300 copies of the Sacred Edict, and issued copies to every village, ordering the gentry and venerable elders of the village to gather together and publicize it on the 1st and 15th of every month. Like the Four Books and Five Classics, everyone reads and recites it, so the true teachings will become clear, and heretical teachings will flee of their own accord.

Thus, to be able to rectify others one must first rectify oneself, and before observing the people one must first observe oneself. Wish only to be clear by means of steadying the mind, to be cautious by means of examining details, to be diligent by means of attending to matters [personally], to both know the truth and to make judgments, but to bring to trial and punish the implicated without the use of deception. In frugality, be honest in oneself, but be not so corrupt as to make excessive use of draft soldiers or

55 *Xuanjiang* 宣講. The lectures are for the purpose of publicizing the Sacred Edict.
56 This was one of the main halls in the local school. JLXZ, 162.

conscript labour. Make use of both city and countryside, but petty officials and slaves will not dare to sell their treason. Make use both of tolerance and of severity, but the wealthy and powerful will not stand to be cheated. All those who are strong that are able to be reached, make use of them. As for those powerful but unavailable ones, strive for them by means of admiring them, and fight corruption according to opportunity. In summary, make the prohibition of heretical teachings a vital task. The work of *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy* has come from simple honesty; it cannot end with me.

Afterword

Alas. With the writing and distribution of *A Detailed Refutation of Heresy*, perhaps there will be no futher heretical teachings in the world. Nonetheless, among the foolish people of the countryside, those who can read are few in number. I only wish that the gentry of every village will read and be familiar with this book. Every time that village groups from neighbouring areas come to socialize, use this book as a constant topic of conversation. To speak of a single part is to receive a part of its benefit, and to speak of several parts is to receive several parts of its benefit. To speak of it often, in many situations, and among many people, people will themselves gradually become aware of the falsities of heretical scriptures, and will certainly refrain each other from the crimes and disasters of heretical sects. The obedient now turn misfortune into fortune, advance toward prosperity and avoid the ominous. With enough to eat they work the fields, living peacefully and happy in their work, receiving the deep kindness of the Emperor, obeying the gloriousness of the *Sacred Edict*, and thus escape calamity and be saved, this is a boon to people, enviable if it were so.

However, it is all dependent on the gentry class to study this book in detail, and transmit [its teachings] everywhere, so people may be prevented [from becoming] practitioners, and save people from the punishment of death. To prevent countless people [from becoming] practitioners, is also to save countless people from the punishment of death. Accumulating a small amount of secret merit, one may enjoy a significant amount of just reward. This which is sought after by all the gentry, is it not truly essential?

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