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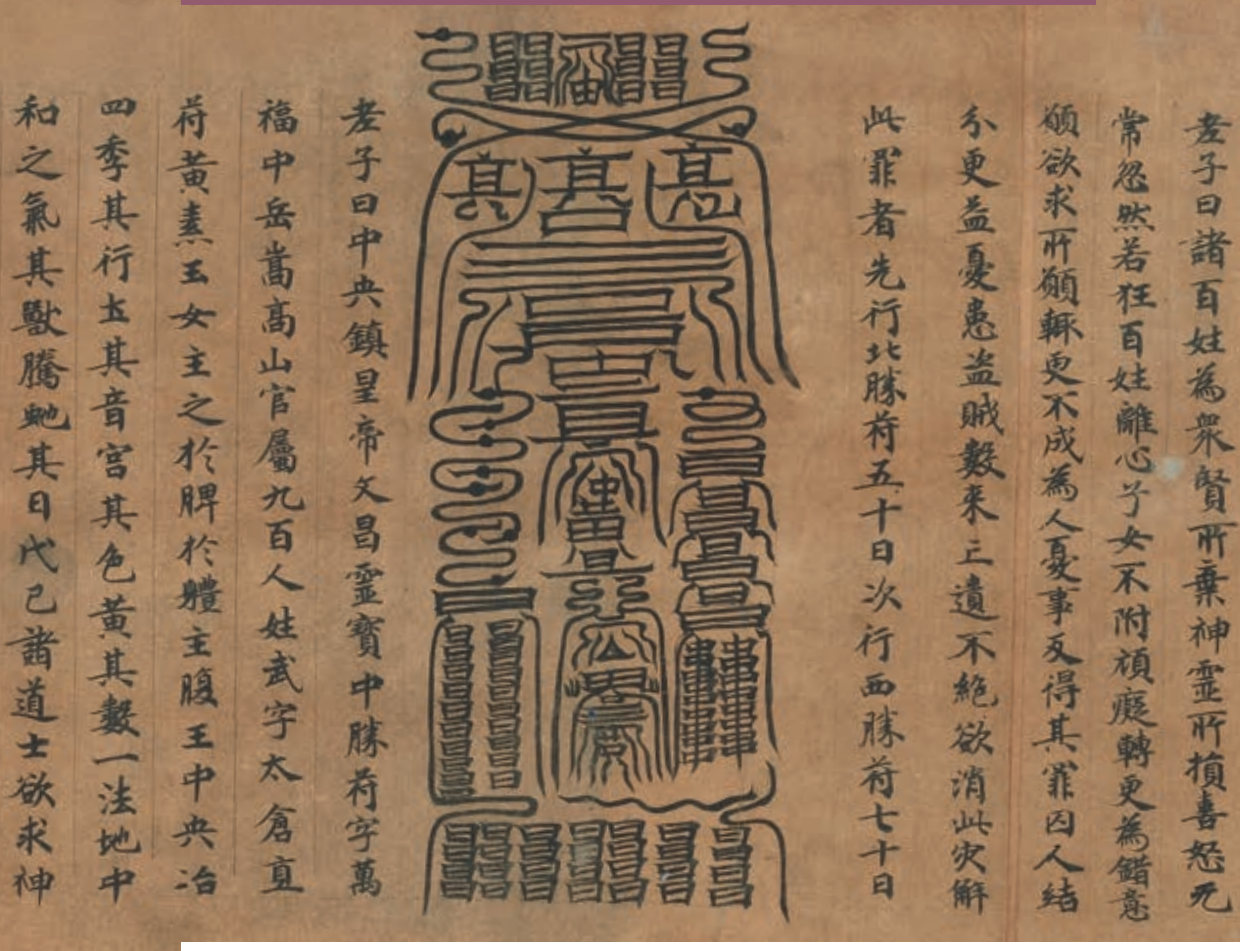

Edited by Gil Raz and Anna M. Shields

Religion and Poetry in Medieval China

The Way and the Words

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Conventions for Frequently Cited Works

Standard dynastic histories are cited by their *Zhonghua shuju* editions.

DZ Refers to works in the Ming Daoist canon *Zhengtong daozang* 正統道藏. Citations are by title, followed by DZ number, followed by folio page as they appear in the 1926 reprint of *Zhengtong daozang* as photo-reduced in the 60-volume edition by Xinwenfeng (Taibei, 1977). DZ numbers follow *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*, edited by Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

DKW Refers to *Dai kan-wa jiten* 大漢和辭典, edited by Morohashi Tetsuji 諸橋轍次. Tokyo: Taishūkan shoten, 1955–60.

ZHDZ Refers to *Zhonghua daozang* 中華道藏, edited by Zhang Jiyu 張繼禹. Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 2004. Citations are by title, volume number, and page number.

SSJZS Refers to works collated in *Shisanjing zhushu, fu jiaokan ji* 十三經注疏附校勘記, edited by Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764–1849).

T. Refers to works in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 太正新修大藏經 [Taisho Buddhist canon], edited by Takako Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡辺海旭. 85 vols. Tokyo: Daizo shuppan kai, 1924–33. Citations are by title, followed by volume number, number of work, page number, and register letters.

TC Refers to Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen, eds. *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the* Daozang. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

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Introduction

Gil Raz and Anna M. Shields

Studies of the ancient Chinese classics, medieval Chinese history, Buddhism, Daoism, poetry, and prose have all too often been constrained within traditional disciplinary silos, such as literature, politics, philosophy, art, and religion.[1] As a consequence, historians have infrequently read religious texts, scholars of Tang poetry have rarely engaged with archeological and epigraphic materials, while scholars of Buddhism have not often explored Daoist materials. Authors and readers in medieval China were of course not constrained by such boundaries. On the contrary, government and military officials, historians, poets, Buddhists, Daoists, and authors of tomb epitaphs and of imperial inscriptions shared cultural interests, and medieval authors read and found inspiration in each other's diverse works. Our contemporary disciplinary labels tend to simplify the identities of medieval Chinese people—as adherents to a particular religion, or writers of a specific literary form—and thereby occlude the reality of their intertwined, multiple cultural practices. Indeed, people were rarely restricted to a single social identity or narrow set of cultural interests. But the blind spots in our understanding of medieval Chinese culture are not merely a result of contemporary disciplinary views: they are also shaped by the contours and gaps in the textual archive as it was transmitted and refashioned by centuries of readers. The surviving textual record from early and medieval China represents only a minute portion of the cultural productions of this era. In order to create a richer understanding of lived medieval culture, including the intersections of religious and literary practices, we need to not only read across the grain of modern disciplinary categories but also to expand our source base to include epigraphic and artistic materials, among others that have survived outside orthodox compilations of literary and scriptural traditions.

The subtitle of this volume, "The Way and the Words," points to a fundamental critique of our very project. The Dao, the Way, is formless and nameless; it is the "teaching without words." However, as humans we are forced to use words to communicate, and we are constrained within specific language and script communities. People in medieval China sought to

1 In this volume, we use the term medieval to refer to the period extending from the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) to the end of the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE).

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attain the Way, and they realized that their words were mere traces of the ineffable. And yet, as the poems, inscriptions, scriptures, and commentaries explored in this volume demonstrate, medieval people continually sought to use words to trace the ineffable, and their ceaseless efforts to do so require our careful, attentive reading.

The essays in this volume were written with an interdisciplinary perspective intended to cut across traditional disciplinary categories and limited sources, focusing in particular at the interfaces of religion, literature, art, and material culture revealed in a wide range of textual and visual media. We explicitly read across traditions and disciplines, providing new contexts for their specific topics, whether reading Daoist scriptures in light of medical compilations, determining the religious leanings of compilers of poetry anthologies, and of poets, examining archeological and epigraphic sources across religious traditions, and delving into the complexities of Buddhist and Daoist interactions. All these chapters offer new insights that challenge unidimensional visions of medieval Chinese culture. Each essay provides a deep examination of particular medieval authors, texts, stele inscriptions, and collections, and together they present a broad exploration of the intersection of religion and literature in medieval China.

The volume is centered on the impact of Buddhism and Daoism on elite and popular literary texts and religious practices. While it is nearly impossible for a single scholar to master all the necessary linguistic, methodological, and technical skills to fully explore the entangled religious and literary phenomena of second- to eleventh-century China, the essays demonstrate the potential of shared scholarly expertise to shed light in many directions. Grouped in three broad topical categories, the chapters explore the interfaces of several shared thematic concerns. Forms of textual transmission, adaptation, and reformulation are central to all the essays in the volume. Medieval textual adaptation includes explorations of Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian syntheses, which reveal a variety of adaptive tendencies and modalities. Exploring these syntheses leads several of us to rediscover hidden or heretofore unnoticed Daoist and Buddhist dimensions within the texts and in the motivations of their authors. Several essays also illuminate the social and political implications of poetic corpora and religious practices, showing the embeddedness of authors in multiple practice communities. Another goal of the volume is to enhance our awareness of the significance of material and visual sources and the materiality of texts. Discussions of materiality examined here include embodiment and the somatic dimensions of literary and religious practice, which in some cases are even difficult to

distinguish. Finally, two of the essays survey the field of medieval Daoism and provide a historical perspective on its development.

The volume is organized into three topical categories: *Poetry, Visuality and Materiality*, and *Texts and Contexts*. Part One, *Poetry*, includes four essays exploring poetry on Daoist sites, figures, and topics from different historical moments. The first essay, by Jonathan Pettit, "Brushing Past Rainbows: Religion and Poetry in the Xu Mi Stele," examines an inscription composed in 519 by Tao Hongjing upon completion of the Scarlet Solarity Lodge on Mount Mao. While providing careful analysis of the poetic and prose sections of the inscription, and discussing Tao's combined Buddhist and Daoist practices, Pettit emphasizes the materiality of the stele on which this text was inscribed, the esoteric topography that pervades the medieval imaginary, and the ritual contexts alluded to in the poem.

In his chapter, "Li Bo and Hu Ziyang: Companions of the Way," Paul W. Kroll explores a series of poetic and prose compositions by High Tang poet Li Bo dedicated to Hu Ziyang, a Daoist master who transmitted to Li Bo the esoteric technique of absorbing solar essence and conferred Daoist registers on other of Li Bo's companions. Li Bo's most extensive composition on Hu Ziyang is an inscribed stele erected at his tomb site, again alerting us to the significance of materiality in discussing the effect and efficacy of texts. As Kroll reminds us, Li Bo was asked to eulogize Master Hu by the Buddhist monk Zhenqian, revealing the close personal links among Buddhist monks, Daoist priests, and poets.

The third essay in this part, Franciscus Verellen's "Gao Pian (822–87): Poet and Patron," examines the Daoist poems by general Gao Pian, who was also an alchemist, an engineer and architect of citadels, and a poet with deep interest in Daoism, as well as in military cults and esoteric techniques. The ten poems analyzed in this essay were inspired by the Daoist rite of "Pacing the Void," alchemical practice, and local cults. Several poems were dedicated to Daoist masters sought by the general. The Daoist poetry of Gao Pian reminds us of the complex and contested socio-cultural identities of Tang officials and military leaders.

In the fourth essay in this part, "Traces of the Way: The Poetry of Divine Transcendence in the Northern Song Anthology *Literature's Finest* (*Wen cui*)," Anna M. Shields questions the very categories of religion and poetry as she explores the classification of poems in an important yet still understudied Song anthology. By tracing the shifting conceptualizations of Daoism, Buddhism, and "religion" in this anthology, she reveals that we may be hampered in understanding Tang Daoist poetry not only by our

own modern categorizations, but also by dynamic changes in cultural and literary contexts that shaped the reception of Tang literature during the Song.

The two essays in Part Two, *Visuality and Materiality*, focus on different aspects of materiality in Chinese religious culture, ranging from textual problems of Daoist and medical recipe manuscript culture, to intertwined discourses and practices of medieval Buddhists and Daoists.

Wang Zongyu's "A Reexamination of the Second Chapter of the *Array of the Five Talismans* (*Taishang lingbao wufu xu*)" is a philological analysis of different recensions of medical recipes in the seminal Daoist text *Array of the Five Talismans*, found in Daoist and medical collectanea. Beyond reminding us of the common discourse and practice among Daoists and physicians, Wang's essay alerts us to the materiality of manuscripts that is occluded not only by modern print editions but by traditional woodblock prints as well.

In the second essay in this part, "'True Forms' and 'True Faces': Daoist and Buddhist Discourse on Images," Gil Raz notes that the rhetoric of Buddhist devotional inscriptions changed at the same time that Daoists began to produce anthropomorphic imagery of Lord Lao in the late fifth century. Analyzing a variety of scriptures, poems, and epigraphic sources, Raz reveals complex trends of convergence: Daoists adapted Buddhist iconographic practices while Buddhists adopted Daoist notions of ineffability to explicate the use of images, showing hitherto unnoticed impacts of Daoist ideas on Buddhist attitudes to images.

The four essays in Part Three, *Texts and Contexts*, reflect on the history of religion in China, from the lived religion of medieval Daoists to modern constructions of medieval religion. In his chapter "After the Apocalypse: The Evolving Ethos of the Celestial Master Daoists," Terry Kleeman reconstructs the lived religion of the Celestial Master community during the fourth and fifth centuries by careful collation and readings of the extant scriptures. During this period, characterized by less millennial fervor and more Buddhist impact, the community transitioned to a more routinized and established structure. This nuanced and detailed analysis provides a far more granular portrayal of the Celestial Master community and its continuing evolution in medieval China.

In his contribution, "Shangqing Scriptures as Performative Texts," Robert Ford Campany focuses on the ritualized and performative aspects of the Shangqing scriptures. He shows that the multisensory impact of acting out the instructions would project the initiated practitioner into the imaginary of the scriptures. Thus, rather than future promises of salvation, we should understand the scriptures as scripts for the performance of

new esoteric identities, be they that of a divinely rejuvenated being or cosmic recluse.

James Robson's "My Back Pages: The *Sūtra in Forty-Two Chapters* Revisited" explores the fascinating history of the *Sūtra in Forty-Two Chapters*, the first Buddhist scripture to be translated into a Western language in the eighteenth century, and supposedly the first Buddhist *sūtra* translated to Chinese, in the first century. Intriguingly, the earliest witness to this text is the Daoist *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhen'gao*). Moving beyond a comparison of extant editions and recensions of this text in Daoist and Buddhist reformulations, Robson emphasizes the enormous impact of this text on modern Western (mis)understandings of Buddhism.

John Lagerwey, in his chapter "Taking Stock: The Scholarship of Daoism in Recent Decades," reflects on his journey as a scholar of Chinese religion. He provides a narrative of his realization that the dominant Eurocentric definition of religion and Confucian-centric vision of Chinese history occlude the historical social reality of Chinese religion, in which Daoism played a crucial role. This realization entailed moving away from the mainstream literary and historical canons, delving into the Daoist textual and, especially, the ritual tradition.

The epilogue of the volume, "Traversing the Golden Porte—The Problem with Daoist Studies," by Stephen R. Bokenkamp, is a response to the essays collected in the volume, a reflection on the intersection of poetry and Daoism, and a consideration of the state of Daoist Studies. Centered on the changing uses of a single Daoist image, the essay traces its deployment in poetic, prognosticatory, and political contexts. In Bokenkamp's signature style, the essay uses a closely argued philological analysis as a springboard for a wide-ranging discussion of issues of broader scholarly significance.

These essays all engage the work of Bokenkamp, one of the most influential scholars of religious Daoism. His scholarship has been groundbreaking for bringing together the many crosscurrents of religious, intellectual, and literary traditions in medieval China that are usually studied separately. His books and many articles (in English, Chinese, and Japanese) have given us a vivid picture of medieval Chinese religion and culture as it was actually lived.

Bokenkamp's research served as both inspiration and model for many of the scholars whose work is represented here. He has always crossed the imagined boundaries between ancient Chinese classics, medieval history, Buddhism, Daoism, poetry, and prose to show how the culture of medieval China can only be understood by close reading of texts from various genres and traditions. With a deep familiarity with the different religious and intellectual trends interacting in medieval China, Bokenkamp has revealed

the various modes of cross-fertilization, competition, and synthesis that constituted the culture of medieval China. While his main focus has been on the adoption of Buddhist ideas and practices in early medieval Daoist scripture, he has written on areas as diverse as somatic concepts, female lineages, metaphor, pantheon, tale literature, and alchemy.

We provide a few key examples of his scholarship here to explain his unique contributions to multiple fields. In an early essay, "The Peach Flower Font and the *Grotto* Passage," (1986) Bokenkamp explored a common trope in medieval literature and art, a journey of a sage to a hidden paradise within a cave.[2] By tracing the religious roots of this trope from second- and third-century prose narratives to eighth-century poetry, he showed the significance of this trope in the development of Chinese ideas of utopia, eschatology, and salvation. Perhaps most importantly, this examination reveals the profound effects of Daoist religious imagination on the arts and politics in medieval China.

In a later essay, "*Time After Time*: Taoist Apocalyptic History and the Founding of the T'ang Dynasty," Bokenkamp examined the transformation of Han era (first and second centuries) cosmological speculations through the synthesis of Buddho-Daoist eschatological imagination to form a theological basis for the establishment of the Tang Dynasty in the seventh century.[3] This essay demonstrates that Daoist and Buddhist messianic and cosmological speculations were critical for the Tang imperial project. Indeed, more familiarity with Daoist and Buddhist medieval eschatological and messianic writings would help clarify much of the textual and ritual means by which later dynasties justified their ascent. In both articles, Bokenkamp provided extensive translations and discussions of poetry, ranging from the Han through the Tang. This should remind us that his early training and passion was indeed in the study of poetry. His PhD dissertation was a study of the "Ledger on the Rhapsody" (*Fu Pu* 賦譜), a Tang era manual for the composition of rhapsodies for the examination for civil service candidates, which survives in a single manuscript in Japan.[4]

In what is perhaps his best-known essay, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures," published in 1983, which remains the classic and unsurpassed examination of the Lingbao scriptures,[5] Bokenkamp traces with meticulous

2 Bokenkamp, "The Peach Flower Font and the Grotto Passage."

3 Bokenkamp, "Time After Time: Taoist Apocalyptic History and the Founding of the T'ang Dynasty."

4 Bokenkamp, "The Ledger on the Rhapsody: Studies in the Art of the T'ang Fu."

5 Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures."

care the filiation and complex intertextual relations between the Lingbao scriptures, composed around the year 400, and various earlier religious compositions, including the Shangqing 上清 scriptures, Ge Hong's 葛洪 works, and, perhaps most importantly, Buddhist texts. Many of these texts were composed in Jurong 句容, a town in the foothills of Mount Mao not far from the southern capital Jiankang 建康, within a closely knit group of elite families. In the following years, the complex and multifaceted interaction between Buddhism and Daoism, developed in the many texts produced within the influential Lingbao scriptural tradition, became Bokenkamp's primary focus as he further elucidated the adaptations, adoptions, and manipulations of texts, practices, and religious ideas in medieval China.

Another crucial aspect in Bokenkamp's oeuvre has been his particular care to present careful translations of primary texts. For Bokenkamp, translation is not simply a tool for analysis, but stems from a sincere effort to introduce these texts, be they Daoist scriptures or medieval poetry, to a non-specialist audience so as to expand the archive of Chinese texts known in the west. A prime example of this project was his first book, *Early Daoist Scriptures*,[6] which presented fully annotated translations of five key texts produced by different Daoist lineages between the second and fifth centuries. Each text is introduced with a detailed analysis of its specific historical context and theological premises. The introductions to the translations thus form a narrative history of Daoism. This book remains vital for the teaching of Daoism and Chinese religions. In a second book, *Ancestors and Anxiety*: *Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China*,[7] Bokenkamp explores the widespread, and near universal, adoption of the concept of individual post-mortem retribution and rebirth in Daoist texts in the early fifth century CE. Recognizing that the initiators of such a radical change in their religion were unlikely to record reasons for their choice, he collected a variety of family narratives and journal entries to demonstrate the threats newly adopted Buddhist ideas represented to traditional Chinese ancestral practice. Thus, rather than a typical history of religion text, Bokenkamp presents us with a vivid description of religion as lived and practiced among a tightly knit group of families in medieval China.

Recently, Bokenkamp published the first volume of *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family: The Zhen'gao, or Declarations of the Perfected*.[8] This publication, projected at three volumes, is a culmination of a multi-year intensive study

6 Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*.

7 Bokenkamp, *Ancestors and Anxiety*: *Daoism and the Birth of Rebirth in China*.

8 Bokenkamp, ***A Fourth-Century Daoist Family: The Zhen'gao***.

of the *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhen'gao*真誥), a magnum opus of twenty chapters compiled by the sixth-century alchemist and erudite Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536). This compilation consists of the revelations, letters, poems, narratives by Yang Xi 楊羲 (330–86), the revelator of the Shangqing scriptures. Alongside the transformation of indigenous traditions of alchemy and visualization, Bokenkamp also sheds light on Yang Xi's deployment of innovative concepts inspired by Buddhist text, including his version of the *Sūtra in Forty-Two Chapters*, the further history of which is studied by Robson in this volume. The *Declarations of the Perfected* is a key document for understanding the formation of the Shangqing revelations as well as for exploring the lived religion from which this form of Daoism arose.

All the essays in the volume are inspired by and respond to Bokenkamp's work in some fashion. We have engaged in interdisciplinary conversations with each other in which we read and reread medieval texts, whether Buddhist *sūtras*, Daoist scriptures, poems, inscriptions carved in stone or on tomb walls, or preserved as fragmentary manuscripts. We hope this collection provides new insights and textured understandings to the rich, multifaceted reality of the religious and cultural landscape of medieval China.

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Anna M. Shields, Gordon Wu '58 Professor of Chinese Studies, Princeton University, specializes in the literary history of the Tang through Northern Song. Her most recent book is *One Who Knows Me: Friendship and Literary Culture in Mid-Tang China* (2015); current research examines the reception of Tang literature, 10th–11th centuries.

Gil Raz is Associate Professor of Religion at Dartmouth College, specializing in the study of medieval Chinese religion. His book *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of Tradition* (2012) and many publications examine Daoist notions of space and time, sexual practices, and religious interactions in medieval China.