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Competition and Ideological Conflict among Daoist Editors: Tao Hongjing's Criticism of Lu Xiujing and Gu Huan in the *Zhen'gao*

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Abstract

The formation of Daoist texts was a complex and dynamic process. Unlike many religions that center on a single divine text or the words of a specific founder, Daoist scriptures originate from diverse sources and continue to be revealed over time. Therefore, Daoist editors played a significant role in compiling, commenting on, and authenticating these scriptures. Given the esoteric nature of these texts, editorial commentaries and annotations became indispensable guides for readers. As a result, most Daoist scriptures bear multiple layers of editorial intervention, reflecting both the interaction and competition among editors. This paper investigates one of the most significant works of the Shangqing tradition, the *Zhen'gao* (Declarations of the Perfected 真誥), compiled in the fourth century, with particular attention to its editor, Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536 CE), and his critique of other Daoist editors. In his postscript to the *Zhen'gao*, Tao Hongjing, distinguished himself by presenting his work as a meticulous authentication of manuscripts while simultaneously critiquing the editorial efforts of earlier figures such as Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406–477 CE) and Gu Huan 顧歡 (425–ca. 479 CE). Although Tao explicitly presented himself as a faithful transmitter of revelation, committed to restoring texts to their original form, his critiques reveal more complex intentions. On one level,

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they reflect disagreement among Daoist editors over how to classify the Daoist canon. On another, his engagement with fellow editors exposes an ideological struggle concerning the authenticity of Lingbao scriptures and their relationship to Buddhist texts. Tao's editorial strategies operated as a calculated compromise within the broader dispute over the alleged plagiarism of Buddhist sutras by Lingbao scriptures. Tao Hongjing's case demonstrates that even though the authenticity of the Daoist texts was an explicit concern for both editors and readers, and the ability to distinguish authentic scriptures provided a powerful competitive advantage for Daoist editors, the issue of "identifying authenticity" was also intricately intertwined with ideological competition within the socio-historical context. While the works of those who lost this editorial contest did not survive, Tao Hongjing's notes and postscript provide valuable insights into the historical and ideological struggles that shaped the formation of the Daoist canon.

Keywords: *Zhen'gao*, Tao Hongjing, Lu Xiujing, Gu Huan, Daoism

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The ancient Chinese texts were usually compiled and edited by multiple individuals, even when attributed to a single author. Therefore, the surviving versions of the texts reflect layers of editorial intervention accumulated over time. Xiaofei Tian regards all of those involved in editing any manuscripts as readers. She argues: "In the age of manuscript culture . . . a scribe—a particular sort of reader—could participate actively, confidently, in the reproduction of the works of Du Fu, one of the greatest classical Chinese poets, and the scribe might have been just about any literate person—a professional copyist, an illustrious member of the literati, a nobleman, a literate but hardly learned commoner, or a talented courtesan." Such readers, she notes, played an active role in shaping these texts: "To the degree that they were engaged in the production of manuscript copies by copying, editing, altering, and revising, we are no longer talking about the readers' reception of a stable text, but about the readers' dynamic participation in the very process of creating a text that is essentially protean."[1] Her argument reminds us that texts bear historical traces, urging us to not only examine their textual and editorial layers but also situate these layers within their socio-historical context. On the surface, the editors apply various techniques, such as verifying the authenticity of the texts, reordering fragmented or disorganized manuscripts, and shaping their reception by strategically emphasizing or critiquing particular arguments through editorial commentary, all undertaken in service of the texts' coherence and authority. However, at times, the texts themselves serve the editors' intentions, undergoing revision, reorganization, and annotation—though this deep purpose is obscured by claims of restoring and safeguarding the texts' authenticity. Moreover, we must take care to distinguish the deliberate editorial work of renowned editors from those revisions that were made by anonymous readers or scribes. While highlighting one's own editorial role or maintaining anonymity may seem to be opposite approaches, both function as strategic editorial choices in shaping a text's authority.

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[1] Xiaofei Tian, *Tao Yuanming and Manuscript Culture: The Record of a Dusty Table* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 8–9.

The existence of multiple textual and editorial layers is particularly common in the Daoist corpus. However, the interactions among editors of Daoist scriptures have not received significant scholarly attention. Most extant Daoist texts survive in the printed edition of *The Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Era* (*Zhengtong daozang* 正統道藏) from the Ming.[2] Each scripture included in the Daoist Canon underwent numerous transcriptions, copies, and editorial modifications through the manuscript era, or even the age of print. In some cases, editors explicitly recorded where they made changes and why. However, more often than not, editors and scribes left no indication of their alterations. For instance, the Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) scriptures originated in the fourth century, yet Stephen Bokenkamp's meticulous research has shown that these texts were edited during the sixth and seventh centuries to remove Buddho-Daoist elements that were deemed offensive by Daoists. A similar process likely occurred with Shangqing 上清 (Upper Clarity) texts.[3] Since conflicts between Daoists and Buddhists during the Six Dynasties were not only cultural but also political, later compilers and editors deliberately "purified" Daoist scriptures by removing those controversial contents. These modifications were often carried out in secrecy and without attribution, as editors sought to erase unwanted material without drawing attention to its absence.

However, in certain Daoist texts, the editor's name is not merely mentioned but deliberately foregrounded, with his identity as both a Daoist master and a learned scholar explicitly accentuated. This strategy stands in marked contrast to the practices of anonymous scribes, who often removed or adjusted content quietly in order to avoid drawing attention to their interventions. By contrast, the overt display of the editor's name serves as a deliberate assertion of authority, legitimizing his editorial choices and endowing them with doctrinal and intellectual weight. In this way, the editor does not

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2 Zhengtong 正統 (1436–1449) was a reign period during the Ming 明 (1368–1644).

3 Stephen Bokenkamp, "Research Note: Buddhism in the Writings of Tao Hongjing," *Daoism: Religion, History and Society* 道教研究學報：宗教、歷史與社會 6 (2014): 247–268.

simply transmit a received text but actively positions himself as an interpretive guide, shaping how readers are to approach and understand the work within a particular doctrinal and exegetical framework. One such editor was Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536 CE),[4] who provided extensive editorial notes and a postscript for the *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (The Declaration of the Perfected), a foundational Shangqing text that emerged during the Six Dynasties (222–589 CE).

The *Zhen'gao* is a collection of revelations from the Perfected (*zhenren* 真人) that were first received and transcribed by a spirit medium named Yang Xi 楊羲 (330–373 CE), under the patronage of Xu Mi 許謐 (303–ca. 373) and Xu's family. Yang Xi's manuscripts were damaged and scattered after his and Xu Mi's deaths. Following this, many Daoists traveled to Mount Mao and Jurong 句容 area (in modern Zhenjiang 鎮江, Jiangsu 江蘇 Province), where the Xu family had lived, in search of their manuscripts. Accordingly, before Tao Hongjing, Yang Xi's writings had already been compiled, copied, and collated by various individuals. However, it was Tao Hongjing who ultimately finalized this collection by verifying the authenticity of the handwriting, reorganizing the manuscripts, and adding comments and corrections. We know this editorial history thanks to Tao Hongjing's postscript, which appears as the final chapter of the *Zhen'gao*, titled "Aiding the Collation of Perfected Gleaning" (*Yi zhen jian* 翼真檢).[5] However, since his version—entitled the *Zhen'gao*—is the only one that has survived, our understanding of this editorial process is inevitably filtered through his perspective.

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[4] Many scholars have examined Tao Hongjing's life and works. Representative studies include those by Mugitani Kuniō 麥谷邦夫, "Tō Kōkei nenpu kōryaku" 陶弘景年譜考略, *Tōhōshūkyō* 東方宗教 47 (1976): 30–61; 48 (1976): 56–83. Wang Jiakui 王家葵, *Tao Hongjing congkao* 陶弘景叢考 (Jinan: Qilu shushe, 2003). Zhong Guofa 鍾國發, *Tao Hongjing pingzhuan* 陶弘景評傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 2005). Stephen Bokenkamp, "Daoist Pantheons," in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220–589 AD)*, eds., John Lagerwey and Lü Pengzhi, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1179–1213. Bokenkamp, "Research Note," 247–268.

[5] Bokenkamp has translated the entire postscript. See Stephen Bokenkamp, *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family: The Zhen'gao, or Declarations of the Perfected*, vol. 1 (California: University of California Press, 2020), 29–97.

In his commentary, Tao Hongjing presented himself as a meticulous scholar and discerning editor. In his postscript, he confidently asserted that he understood the essence of the Perfected's revelations better than ordinary scholars.[6] Viewing himself as the most qualified expert, he took it upon himself to distinguish between authentic and spurious scriptures and to evaluate the work of other editors. Tao Hongjing was particularly critical of his predecessors, such as Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406–477 CE)[7] and Gu Huan 顧歡 (425–ca. 479 CE),[8] who had previously collected and collated Yang Xi's manuscripts. Through these critiques, he implicitly sought to challenge Lu Xiujing's classification of Daoist scriptures, establish his own system of categorization, and suppress Gu Huan's version of the *Zhen'gao*, titled *Zhenji* 真迹 (*The Traces of the Perfected*).

Some scholars observe that while Tao Hongjing was deeply committed to distinguishing authentic scriptures from forgeries, his efforts had little influence on his Daoist contemporaries or later generations. Hirose attributes this to Tao Hongjing's lack of centrality within the intellectual and religious landscape of the Six

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6 DZ1016, 19.2a. For citations from *The Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Era (Zhengtong daozang* 正統道藏*)*, I use the photo-reduced edition by Hanfenlou (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1923–1926). The number of the scriptures are cited from Kristofer Schipper's and Franciscus Verellen's *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), preceded by the abbreviation DZ and followed by page and line number.

7 Lu Xiujing 陸修靜, courtesy name Yuande 元德, and posthumous name Jianji 簡寂, was a prominent Daoist compiler and ritual specialist who enjoyed imperial patronage during the Liu Song dynasty. He is best known for compiling the first comprehensive Daoist Canon, which he named the "Three Caverns" (Sandong 三洞). For this reason, he also referred to himself as the "Disciple of the Three Caverns" (Sandong dizi 三洞弟子).

8 Gu Huan 顧歡, courtesy names Jingyi 景怡 and Xuanping 玄平, studied both Confucianism and Daoism. His biographies are collected in the "Biographies of the Recluses" (Yinyi 隱逸) chapters of the *Nanshi* 南史 (History of the Southern Dynasty), in *Sikuquanshu* 四庫全書, 75.1874–1880; and "The Lofty Recluses" (Gaoyi 高逸) of the *Nanqi shu* 南齊書 (Book of the Southern Qi), in *Sikuquanshu*, 54.928–935.

Dynasties.[9] However, after examining Tao Hongjing's critiques of Lu Xiujing and Gu Huan, I argue that the varying legacy of their texts resulted from competition among editors rather than serving as its cause.

In a word, identifying authentic Daoist texts was the first and most crucial task for an editor entering the realm of textual compilation because the texts they were dealing with were not human writings but celestial scriptures. The editors were supposed to authenticate and preserve rather than modify or refine them. Some editors of Daoist texts, such as Tao Hongjing, left detailed notes, prefaces, and postscripts to explain why they had reordered passages, omitted sections, or revised content in order to indicate their efforts to restore the character of the original divine texts. However, they also subtly guide readers in a desired direction through editorial techniques and the addition of prefaces or postscripts. As their true intentions were not always explicitly stated, their editorial notes, annotations and prefaces and postscripts provide a window for us to explore the intentions hidden behind their editing.

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1. Tao Hongjing Disagreed with Lu Xiujing's Catalogue

In his postscript to the *Zhen'gao*, Tao Hongjing traced the transmission history of Yang Xi's manuscripts and described the challenges he encountered in collecting these scriptures. In addition to criticizing certain Daoists such as Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫 (fl. 397) and Wang Lingqi 王靈期 (fl. 420), for fabricating Lingbao and Shangqing scriptures, Tao also expressed dissatisfaction with his predecessors who had compiled and edited Yang Xi's manuscripts, including Lu Xiujing and Gu Huan. He faulted their editing of the manuscripts for both unintentional errors and deliberate alterations.

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[9] Hirose Naoki 廣瀬直記, "Re-examination of the Shangqing School in the Six Dynasties: Center on Tao Hongjing" 六朝道教上清派再考ー陶弘景を中心に (Ph.D. diss., Waseda University, 2017), 30–44.

Lu Xiujing was a highly influential Daoist master who played a pivotal role in shaping Daoist catalogue of scripture and ritual. He gathered the original Lingbao scriptures and developed new liturgies based on their teachings. He also presented the first comprehensive catalogue of Daoist scriptures to the emperor, organizing them into three "Caverns" (*dong* 洞). Lu Xiujing's classifications—Shangqing, Lingbao, and Sanhuang 三皇 (Three Luminaries)—established a hierarchical structure for Daoist practices.[10] His reputation was so significant that it attracted the attention of Emperor Liu Yu (劉裕).[11] The enduring success of this system is evident in later Daoist canons, which have all retained this fundamental structure.

Lu Xiujing presented himself as a dedicated scholar and Daoist practitioner committed to collecting and distinguishing authentic scriptures. In a text preserved in *Seven Labels from the Bookbags of the Clouds* (*Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤) and titled "Preface to the Index to the Catalogue of Lingbao Scriptures" 靈寶經目序, Lu Xiujing asserted that he had been fond of Daoist works since childhood and that his collections were trustworthy.[12] He even

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[10] Ofuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾, "On Ku Ling-pao-ching," *Acta Asiatica* 27 (1974): 33–56. Franciscus Verellen also explores Lu Xiujing's place in the religious and intellectual history of the southern Liu Song dynasty (420–479). See Franciscus Verellen, "Disciple of the Three Caverns," *Imperiled Destinies: The Daoist Quest for Deliverance in Medieval China* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2019), 126–148.

[11] As Bokenkamp suggests, although Lu Xiujing was not the originator of the term *sangdong* 三洞, he was the first to promulgate the concept among Daoist communities. Stephen Bokenkamp, "Lu Xiujing, Buddhism, and the First Daoist Canon," in *Dimensions of Thought and Action in Six Dynasties China*, ed. Patricia Ebrey (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1999), 187.

[12] The words read as follows, "From a young age I have loved the savor of the Mystery and set my will on the scriptures. I hope that these trifles I have assembled equal even a thousandth part [of their celestial perfection]. If [the scriptures I have collected] are in truth worthy of honor, how would I dare, through my clear words, place myself under a sentence of the 'wind-borne knives' [through slandering them]?" 余少耽玄味，志愛經書，積累錙銖，冀其萬一. DZ1032, 4:6a. Translation adapted from Stephen Bokenkamp, "Scriptures New and Old: Lu Xiujing and Mastery," in *Xinyang, Shijian yu wenhua tiaoshi* 信仰，實踐與文化調適 (Belief, Practice and Cultural Adaptation, Papers from the Religion Section of the International Conference on Sinology), vol. 2, eds., Paul Katz and Liu Shu-fen 劉淑芬 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 2013), 459.

swore: "If [the scriptures I have collected] are in truth worthy of honor, how would I dare, through my clear words, place myself under a sentence of the 'wind-borne knives' [through slandering them]?" 若信有可崇，何苟明言坐取風刀乎？[13]

However, in his postscript to the *Zhen'gao*, Tao disclosed a startling fact—that Lu Xiujing, despite presenting himself as an expert in recognizing authentic Daoist scriptures, concealed the original Perfected Scripts and instead promoted his own teachings for selfish purposes. Tao wrote:

> A copy of *The Five Talismans of Lingbao* transcribed by Yang Xi, one scroll, was originally in the possession of Ge Can of Jurong. During the Taishi (Grand Inception)[14] reign (465–471), Ge showed it to Master Lu [Xiujing]. Lu had already elaborated and taught *The Perfected Texts Written in Red*, *The Five Man-Bird Talismans*, which had achieved wide circulation. He did not wish to reveal this divergent text and thus purchased it with silk goods from Ge and kept it in the strictest secrecy. Gu [Huan] heard about it and strenuously begged to view it, but [Lu] would not give him even a glimpse. Lu transmitted it only to Sun Youyue (399–489) of Dongyang and to his female disciple Mei Lingwen. When Lu perished, they took it with them back to Mount Lu.
>
> 楊書《靈寶五符》一卷，本在句容葛粲間。泰始某年，葛以示陸先生。陸既敷述真文赤書、人鳥五符等教授，施行已廣，不欲復顯出奇迹，因以絹物與葛請取，甚加隱閉。顧公聞而苦求一看，遂不令見。唯以傳東陽孫遊嶽及女弟子梅令文。陸亡，亦隨還廬山。[15]

According to this passage, before Lu Xiujing had a chance to see Yang Xi's manuscript of *The Five Talismans of Lingbao*, Lu had already been teaching and circulating his own writings on two scriptures—*The Perfected Texts Written in Red* and *The Five Man-*

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[13] Translation adapted from Bokenkamp, "Scriptures New and Old: Lu Xiujing and Mastery," 449–474.

[14] Taishi 泰始 is the reign title of Emperor Ming of the Song 宋明帝 (439–472), personal name 劉彧, in the Southern dynasties.

[15] Translation adapted from Bokenkamp, *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family*, 72. In this paper, I largely follow his translations of Tao Hongjing's postscript; however, I revised certain terms based on my own understanding. Translations without footnotes are my own.

Bird Talismans.[16] Fearing that dissemination of Yang Xi's manuscript would undermine his authority, Lu Xiujing secretly acquired it and concealed it with the utmost secrecy. Tao strongly implies that the scriptures which Lu taught were either altered versions or outright fakes of Yang Xi's *Five Talismans of Lingbao*. The preface to *The Five Talismans of Lingbao* suggests that Lu was aware of discrepancies between different versions and attempted to account for variations in size and content.[17] However, he conspicuously avoided mentioning Yang Xi's version altogether.

The Five Talismans of Lingbao and its preface were ancient texts from the library of Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343) and were later included in the Lingbao canon.[18] As Catherine Bell suggests, this text was probably the immediate basis and symbolic source for the whole corpus of the Lingbao canon created by Ge Chaofu.[19] Given its importance within the Lingbao canon, Bokenkamp argues that "Lu's considerable reputation as a Taoist master was heavily dependent on the primacy of the Ling-pao canon with its spurious Preface version of the Five Ling-pao Talismans."[20] Therefore, Tao's

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[16] *The Perfected Texts Written in Red* refers to the *Scripture of Celestial Writing*, *Perfect Script in Jade Tablets*, *Written in Red by Five Elders of Primordial Commencement* 元始五老赤書玉篇真文天書經. It is unclear what *The Five Man-Bird Talismans* refers to. According to Chen Guofu 陳國符, several relevant titles containing the terms *renniao* 人鳥 or *wufu* 五符 were quoted by the Daoist scriptures, such as the *Scriptures of Man-Bird on Five Talismans* 五符人鳥經 quoted by *The Most High Efficient Retreat Ritual of the Yellow Register* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀, and *Scripture and Chart of the Man-Bird Mountain for the Contemplation of the Mystery* 玄覽人鳥山經圖 quoted by *Yunji qiqian*. Chen Guofu 陳國符, *Daozang yuanliu kao* 道藏源流考 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), 55–56.

[17] Gil Raz, *The Emergence of Daoism: Creation of a Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 122.

[18] Bokenkamp suggests: "The Preface to the Ling-pao Five Talismans is, then, an ancient work which has found its way from the library of Ko Hung into the Ling-pao canon." See Stephen Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honor of R.A. Stein*, vol. II, ed. Michel Strickmann (Bruxelles: Institute Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1983), 450.

[19] Catherine Bell, "Ritualization of Texts and Textualization of Ritual in the Codification of Taoist Liturgy," *History of Religions* 27, no. 4 (1988): 376.

[20] Bokenkamp, "Sources of the Ling-pao Scriptures," 454.

critique of Lu not only undermined Lu's reputation as a sincere Daoist master but also cast doubt on the authenticity and value of the Lingbao scriptures themselves.

Tao Hongjing's critique is particularly harsh, given the sacred status of the Perfected scriptures among Daoists of that time. It also implies Lu Xiujing's hypocrisy—despite presenting himself as a devoted scholar of authentic scriptures and claiming that he would risk punishment if his collections were unreliable, he allegedly concealed *The Perfected Scripts* for personal gain. Although the truth of this accusation cannot be definitively proven, Tao was clearly displeased with Lu's actions. As Catherine Bell has noted, "In reconstructing the original corpus of Ling-pao scriptures from among a multitude of imitations and forgeries, Lu worked to present these texts as the culminating revelation of the Tao in history, thereby inhibiting further revelations and securing some closure on an early canon."[21] This suggests that Lu Xiujing's goal was not only to authenticate and organize scriptures but also to create a standardized order for all Daoist scriptures, replacing other catalogues and standards. As an editor engaged in similar work, Tao Hongjing would have fully understood Lu's intentions. Therefore, his accusation should not be seen merely as a critique of Lu's dishonesty but as a reflection of deeper concerns about establishing the comprehensive catalogue of Daoist scriptures.

In Daoist history, Lu Xiujing's greatest contribution was the systematization of Daoist scriptures into "Three Caverns" (*sandong* 三洞)—the Cavern of the Perfected (*dongzhen* 洞真), the Cavern of Mystery (*dongxuan* 洞玄), and the Cavern of Spirit (*dongshen* 洞神)—which correspond to the scriptures of Shangqing, Lingbao, and Sanhuang, respectively. As a result, Lu Xiujing referred to himself as a "Disciple of the Three Caverns" (*Sandong dizi* 三洞弟子)[22] and was hailed by others as "Master of Ritual of the Three Caverns" (*Sandong fashi* 三洞法師). Although his catalogue became

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[21] Bell, "Ritualization of Texts and Textualization of Ritual in the Codification of Taoist Liturgy," 366.

[22] In the "Preface to the Index to the Catalogue of Lingbao Scriptures" 靈寶經目序 preserved in *Yunji qiqian*, Lu Xiujing called himself "Disciple of the Three Caverns" (Sandong dizi 三洞弟子). DZ1032, 4:4a.

widely accepted as the foundational model for all later versions of the Daoist canon, his concept of the Three Caverns was not universally embraced by his contemporaries. Tao Hongjing, for instance, proposed a different classification—the "Three Ways"—and elaborated on this perspective in his preface to the *Zhen'gao*:

> Seeking up into the Daoist scriptures, we find that the highest chapters of the Upper Clarity [scriptures] serve to reveal fully the enterprises of the Higher Perfected. The Buddhist scripture *Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma* brings together the complete understandings of the single vehicle, and the Transcendent writings of the Inner Chapters of *Zhuangzi* thoroughly explore the meanings of the realms of those who abandon themselves to the mysteries. These Three Ways are sufficient to encompass every phenomenon on earth, and embody all that is manifest and hidden.
>
> 仰尋道經，上清上品，事極高真之業；佛經妙法蓮華，理會一乘之致；仙書莊子內篇，義窮玄任之境。此三道足以包括萬象，體具幽明。[23]

In this passage, Tao Hongjing emphasizes the significance of three types of Daoist scriptures: the Shangqing scriptures, the Buddhist *Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma* scripture, and the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi*. Notably, he incorporated Buddhist sutras into the Daoist canon. Although he did not present this as a classification system, he likely would have adhered to this framework if he had undertaken a comprehensive categorization of Daoist scriptures. Actually, Tao did compile a catalogue of Daoist scriptures, as noted in Meng Anpai's 孟安排 (fl. 700) *Pivot Meaning of the Daoist Teaching* (*Daojiao yishu* 道教義疏):

> The Caverns, as for the scroll numbers and titles, are all represented by those catalogues, such as Master Lu [Xiujing]'s *Catalogue of the Scriptures for Three Caverns*, Master Meng's *Catalogue of the Scriptures for Seven Sections on the Jade Weft*, Tao Yinju's *Catalogue*,

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[23] Translation adapted from Bokenkamp, *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family*, 35. I have a different understanding of the term *daojing* 道經. Bokenkamp's original translation is "scriptures on the Way." But I think Tao Hongjing used the term "Daoist scriptures" to encompass all three kinds of scriptures, which he called *sandao* 三道 (Three Dao, or Three Ways).

> *Catalogue for All Scriptures of Most High*, *Catalogue of Reverent Scriptures for Thirty-Six Sections*, etc.
>
> 洞者，其卷數題目，具如陸先生《三洞經書目錄》、孟法師《玉緯七部經書目》、陶隱居《經目》、《太上眾經目》、《三十六部尊經目》等所明。[24]

This passage reveals that, following the proliferation of Daoist scriptures during the Six Dynasties, Daoist scholars created their own catalogues based on their differing understandings of scripture classification. Tao Hongjing himself even composed three catalogues, though unfortunately, all have been lost. It remains unclear whether his catalogues aligned with the "Three Ways" mentioned in his preface to the *Zhen'gao*. What is certain, however, is that he disagreed with Lu Xiujing's catalogue of Three Caverns, particularly the Cavern of Mystery, which refers to the Lingbao scriptures. Beyond accusing Lu of concealing Yang Xi's manuscript of *The Five Talismans of Lingbao* for personal gain, Tao also criticized the Lingbao scriptures themselves. For example, in his annotations to the *Zhen'gao*, he writes:

> The number of those who are learning the upper Dao is scant. Most of them only study the Retreat of Lingbao and its Petition and Talisman.
>
> 學上道者甚寡。不過修靈寶齋及章符而已。[25]

In the *Zhen'gao*, when someone inquired about the life of Ge Xuan 葛玄, Yang Xi's Perfected responded that Ge Xuan had merely attained the state of a non-dying being, rather than that of a Transcendent.[26] However, in the Lingbao scriptures, Ge Xuan was revered as the "Left Transcendent Duke of the Most High" (Taiji Zuo Xiangong 太極左仙公), the primary recipient of the Lingbao scriptures. Tao dismissed this claim, stating: "What the Lingbao called 'the Left Transcendent Duke of the Most High' was absurd." 《靈寶》所云太極左仙公，於斯妄乎.[27]

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[24] DZ1129, 2:3b–4a.
[25] DZ1016, 11:15b.
[26] Ibid., 12:3a.
[27] Ibid., 12:3b.

Tao also challenged the use of the term *dongxuan* 洞玄, which he saw as mistakenly applied to the Lingbao scriptures:

> The *Cavern of Mystery* refers to the *Mysterious Scripture of the Great Cavern*. Reciting it ten thousand times ensures that seven generations of one's ancestors, as well as their descendants, will all be able to refine their corporeal forms in the Southern Palace and transform into embryos of Transcendents. It is not what we now call the *Lingbao Scriptures of the Cavern of Mystery*.
>
> 《洞玄》即《大洞玄經》，讀之萬遍，七祖已下，並得鍊質南宮，受化胎仙。非今世所稱《洞玄靈寶經》也。[28]

Evidently, Tao Hongjing did not think the Lingbao scriptures, categorized under the Cavern of Mystery in the Three Canon, were the original scriptures that bore this title, the *Cavern of Mystery*. Rather, he rejected the authenticity of the widely accepted Lingbao scriptures and questioned the proper use of the term "Cavern of Mystery." Tao's skepticism toward the Lingbao scriptures stood in stark contrast to Lu's efforts to promote them. Many scholars have discussed how Lu dedicated himself to compiling and disseminating these texts. As Bokenkamp notes: "Lu's writings do, however, reveal a profound reverence for the Lingbao scriptures. Even his treatise addressed to followers of the Way of the Celestial Masters cites these scriptures at least once."[29]

Tao not only questioned the authenticity of the Lingbao scriptures but also cast doubt on the Sanhuang scriptures, which were included in Lu's *Cavern of Spirit*. In the *Zhen'gao*, Tao noted that even though a scripture titled the *Inner Writings of Three Luminaries* (*Sanhuang neiwen* 三皇內文) existed, it was not an authentic copy.[30] According to the treatise "Discussion of the Scripture of Sanhuang" 三皇經說 in the *Yunji qiqian*, the Sanhuang scriptures were discovered and transmitted by Bao Liang 鮑靚. However, in the *Zhen'gao*, Yang Xi's (or Yang Xi's Perfected's)

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[28] DZ1016, 13:1a.
[29] Bokenkmap, "Lu Xiujing, Buddhism, and the First Daoist Canon," 187–188.
[30] DZ1016, 5:4a.

evaluation of Bao Liang was far from positive. He described Bao as having only a superficial understanding of Daoist teachings, with a stubborn and insensitive personality.[31] Tao echoed this perspective, relegating Bao to the rank of Lord of the Other World (*dixia zhu* 地下主), considered the lowest tier among deities.[32] These details about the Sanhuang scriptures and their first known transmitter, Bao Liang, indicate that while Tao did not reject the value of the Sanhuang scriptures outright, he questioned the authenticity of the version being circulated. Also, since Bao was not regarded as a highly talented Daoist, the version of the Sanhuang scriptures that he transmitted should not, in Tao's view, be ranked highly in the Daoist canon. Therefore, it is evident that Tao questioned both the authenticity and the value of the Sanhuang scriptures included in Lu's *Cavern of Spirit*.

Given Lu Xiujing's reputation at that time and the fact that Tao had studied under Lu's disciples, it is reasonable to assume that Tao was well acquainted with Lu's works. During Tao's childhood, Lu Xiujing was already a renowned Daoist master, highly respected by Emperor Ming of the Song 宋明帝,[33] who even granted him a temple.[34] When Tao matured and developed an interest in Daoism,

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[31] In the *Zhen'gao*, "What Liang learned was originally shallow and superficial. His personality was stubborn and nonsensitive. Therefore, he could not learn a lot." 覩所受學，本自薄淺，質又撓滯，故不得多也. DZ1016, 12:2b–3a.

[32] Tao Hongjing said in his annotation to the *Zhen'gao*: "Bao also could communicate with spirits. However, he loved and advocated the Technique of the Inner Chamber. Therefore, he was described as stubborn and insensitive. Later on, he took Lord Yin's Talisman of Great Mystery Yinsheng, and practiced the method of 'release by means of a corpse.' He should hold the highest rank among the Lords [presiding over the underground world]." 鮑亦通神，而敦尚房中之事，故云撓滯，後用陰君太玄陰生符，為太清尸解之法，當是主者之最高品矣. Ibid., 12:3a.

[33] The Emperor Ming of the Song 宋明帝 (439–472), personal name Liu Yu 劉彧, courtesy name Xiubing 休炳.

[34] The *Pearl Bag of the Three Caverns* 三洞珠囊 quotes the *Biographies of Daoist Learners* 道學傳, saying: "Emperor Ming of the Song thought about proclaiming Daoist teaching, so he widely sought for people with reputations and virtues. He admired the style of Master [Lu Xiujing], then sent someone to summon and invite him. . . . Emperor Song then built a Hotel of Admiring Voidness in a northern suburb to serve him." 宋明帝思弘道教，廣求名德，悅先生之風，遣招引。……宋帝乃於北郊築崇虛館以禮之. DZ1139, 2:5a.

he sought guidance from Lu's most prominent disciple, Sun Youyue 孫遊嶽 (399–489), studying with him for three years (484–486). During this period, Tao "consulted and requested Daoist talismans, charts, scriptures, and rituals" 咨稟道家符圖經法.[35] This suggests that Tao was well-versed in the teachings of both Lu Xiujing and his disciples. However, in Tao Hongjing's surviving writings, he does not express particular reverence for Sun Youyue or Lu Xiujing. Another telling piece of evidence is that Lu was omitted from Tao's most significant work, *Chart of the Ranks of the Perfected Numina* (*Zhenling weiye tu* 真靈位業圖), which ranked all of the Transcendent and Perfected.[36] This omission indicates that Tao Hongjing did not fully endorse Lu's works and teachings.

All of this evidence points to one key fact—that although Tao and Lu agreed on the supreme status of the Shangqing scriptures, Tao fundamentally disagreed with Lu's catalogue of Daoist scriptures. Tao questioned the authenticity of several texts included in Lu's catalogue and even cast doubt on Lu's reputation as a sincere editor. In response, Tao proposed his own classification, elevating three types of scriptures—Shangqing, the Buddhist *Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma* scripture, and the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi*—as the most valuable teachings. By positioning himself as the most authoritative editor, Tao sought to shift readers' perspective, emphasizing the equal significance of these three categories and reshaping their understanding of the so-called "Three Ways." He further argued that the essentials of the *Zhen'gao* were vastly different from ordinary works—something, he lamented, that

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[35] According to "The Record of the Origins of Master Huayang Yinju" 華陽隱居先生本起錄 in *Yunji qiqian*, Tao Hongjing visited Sun Youyu for three years from 484 to 486. The passage reads as follows: "During the three years of Jiazi (484), Yichou (485), and Bingyin (486), Master visited the lord of the Hall of Xingshi, Sun Youyue from Dongyang, consulting and asking for Daoist talismans, diagrams, scriptures, and rituals." 先生以甲子、乙丑、丙寅三年之中，就興世館主東陽孫游嶽，咨稟道家符圖經法. DZ1032, 107:8a.

[36] The author of this chart is still debatable. But more evidence shows that it should be attributed to Tao Hongjing. For more on this, please see Zhang Yanyong 張雁勇, "*Zhenling weiye tu zuanzhe wei Tao Hongjing xinzheng: jian yu Hirose Naoki deng xiansheng shangque*" 真靈位業圖纂者為陶弘景新證——兼與廣瀨直記等先生商榷, *Diyu wenhua yanjiu* 地域文化研究 1 (2023): 92–108.

most scholars failed to grasp.[37] His ultimate goal was to reveal the core truth of the revelation and guide readers toward his vision of the "Three Ways." If readers approached Yang Xi's manuscript with this pre-established framework, they would not be surprised by the incorporation of the *Zhuangzi*[38] and Buddhist scripture[39] into Yang Xi's revelation.

Even though both Lu Xiujing and Tao Hongjing intended to integrate Buddhism into Daoist scriptures, their approaches differed significantly. Unlike Lu, who synthesized Buddhist terminology and concepts into the Lingbao scriptures,[40] Tao chose to incorporate Buddhist scriptures as a separate section. This distinction may explain why Tao's catalogue disappeared, whereas Lu's method of categorizing Daoist scriptures became the fundamental model for later Daoist canons. In fact, the question of how to incorporate

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[37] Tao Hongjing says: "The essentials of the Declaration of the Perfected were very different from the mundane works . . . those common scholars saw it but did not understand." 夫真人之旨，不同世目…… 俗儒觀之，未解所以. DZ1016, 19:2a.

[38] For the adaptation of the *Zhuangzi* in the Zhen'gao, see my forthcoming paper, "The *Zhen'gao*'s Reading of the *Zhuangzi* as a Prophetic Text," in *Global Reception of the Classic Zhuangzi*, eds., Tobias Zürn and Mark Csikszentmihalyi (working title), 2025.

[39] The *Zhen'gao* mentions the first arrival of Buddhism and the Buddhist *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* 四十二章經. Some scholars suggest this is Yang Xi's plagiary of the *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections*, such as Hu Shi 胡適 (1891–1962), "Tao Hongjing de Zhen'gao kao" 陶弘景的真誥考, "Ershisi zhang jing kao" 四十二章經考, in *Hushi wenji* 胡適文集 vol. 5 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2013), 126–157. Eric Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China* (Leiden: Brill, 2007). But Bokenkamp suggests we should pay attention to the Daoist response to Buddhism by exploring those passages plagiarized by Yang Xi. See Bokenkamp, "Chapter Four: Introduction to the 'Eight Pages of Lined Text'," *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family*, 122.

[40] Bokenkamp has discussed those words in the English language that are descriptive of intellectual, spiritual, or material mixing, which to a greater or lesser extent are pejorative, including *hybridization*, *synthesis*, *synthetic*, *amalgam*, *influence*, *pastiche*, *borrowing*, *eclecticism*, and even *mix*, which scholars often used to describe the Lingbao texts. For the convenience of discussion, I still use *synthesis* here. See Stephen Bokenkamp, "The Silkworm and the Bodhi Tree: The Lingbao Attempt to Replace Buddhism in China and Our Attempt to Place Lingbao Taoism," in *Religion and Chinese Society, vol. 1: Ancient and Medieval China*, ed. John Lagerwey (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2004), 320.

Buddhism remained one of the greatest challenges for Daoist editors—a topic explored in the next section.

2. Tao Hongjing's Criticism of Gu Huan

Tao Hongjing's *Zhen'gao* was not the first compilation of Yang Xi's revelations. According to Tao's postscript in the *Zhen'gao*, his edition was based on an earlier collection by Gu Huan titled *Zhen ji*. In discussing the transmission and editorial history of this manuscript, Michel Strickmann, in his article "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," points out that while Tao's version included extensive annotations, Gu's work consisted solely of facsimile reproductions (tracings) of the original manuscripts.[41] If Strickmann's claim about Gu's version is accurate, Tao's version, by contrast, offers readers substantial editorial commentary to guide their understanding of the texts. Given the significant role of the editor in the *Zhen'gao*, Tao's criticism of his predecessor Gu Huan offers valuable insight into the intentions behind his own editorial approach.

In his postscript to the *Zhen'gao*, Tao Hongjing harshly criticized Gu Huan's editorial methods and ability. Given that Tao intended to replace Gu's version with his own revised collection, it is unsurprising that he belittled Gu's work. However, this rivalry was not merely a personal matter. When considering Gu's identity and the broader social context, it becomes clear that these editorial disputes were part of a larger debate between Daoism and Buddhism.

Gu Huan's "Treatise on Barbarians and Chinese" (*Yixialun* 夷夏論) sparked a heated debate between Daoists and Buddhists. As scholars have discussed, Gu was neither the first to call for the elimination of Buddhism nor the most aggressive critic of Buddhism during the Six Dynasties.[42] However, he became the focal point of the controversy. Tao Hongjing, who was thirty years younger than

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[41] Michel Strickmann, "The Mao Shan Revelations: Taoism and the Aristocracy," *T'oung-Pao* 63 (1977): 32.

[42] See Li Yangzheng 李養正, "Gu Huan 'Yixia lun' yu 'yixia' zhibian shulun" 顧歡夷夏論與夷夏之辯述論, *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* 宗教學研究 3 (1998): 5–14; 4 (1998): 1–8.

Gu Huan, was both a witness to and a participant in this prolonged debate. Given this context, Tao's critique of Gu may not have been solely due to his poor editorial technique but might also have been influenced by broader disputes over the extent to which Daoism should incorporate Buddhist elements.

Now, we will examine how Tao Hongjing criticized Gu Huan in the *Zhen'gao*.

Although Tao claimed that Gu's version contained numerous mistakes, he still acknowledged Gu's efforts to preserve the sources of the *Zhen'gao*.[43] Gu was also the first to distinguish the authentic writing of the Perfected One's revelation, a point that Tao mentioned in his postscript. However, despite this contribution, Tao appears to have little appreciation for Gu's work. In Tao's postscript, he criticizes Gu's editorial mistakes more than fifteen times. Overall, Tao's critique focuses on four points:[44]

First, Tao rejected the title that Gu had given to the collection of manuscripts. Gu had named it *Zhen ji*, meaning "Traces of the Perfected," implying that the Perfected had left behind tangible traces. However, Tao argued that the Perfected did not leave any physical traces (*ji* 迹), but only dictated instructions. As a result, he replaced the title with *Zhen'gao*, meaning "Declaration of the Perfected."[45]

Secondly, Tao criticized Gu Huan's editorial skills, particularly his failure to accurately identify authentic manuscripts. He pointed out that Gu failed to recognize sections that had been added or altered by later individuals.[46] Additionally, Tao took issue with Gu's categorization of the Perfected's revelation, arguing that this approach resulted in significant disorder and confusion.[47]

Thirdly, Tao noted that Gu had mistakenly discarded certain passages related to Daoist practice, which he considered a significant

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[43] Bokenkamp, *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family*, 37.

[44] As Bokenkamp has provided a complete translation of the chapter, I will not present the primary texts and translations in full, but will instead summarize their main points. Ibid., 33–97.

[45] DZ1016, 19:2a.

[46] Ibid., 19:6a.

[47] Ibid., 19:7b.

oversight. To rectify this, Tao reinstated these passages in the *Zhen'gao*, providing explanations to clarify their importance.[48]

Fourth, Tao satirized Gu's ethical conduct through anecdotes, portraying him as arrogant and dishonest. One such story involves He Daojing 何道敬, who possessed copies of the Shangqing texts. When Gu learned of this, he eagerly sought out He. However, He, known for practicing the sexual alchemy of Peng Zu 彭祖 and Plain Woman 素女,[49] appeared youthful and vigorous despite his age. His rustic and unpolished demeanor made him look more like a farmer than a scholar. When Gu arrived at He's residence, he saw He carrying a hoe and mistook him for a servant. Failing to recognize He's true identity, Gu asked if "Elder He" was home. Offended, He refused to meet with Gu ever again. Despite Gu's lingering for several days, persistently pleading for an audience, He remained adamant in his refusal.[50] This anecdote serves as a pointed critique of Gu's arrogance and superficial judgment, suggesting that his snobbery cost him the opportunity to obtain genuine Daoist scriptures.

Another anecdote from Tao's postscript recounts how Gu received precious scriptures through deception. A man named Zhang Lingmin 章靈民 had come across several scrolls of scriptures in the capital. At that time, Zhang was unable to recognize their authenticity and dismissed them as ordinary Daoist texts. Upon returning to his hometown, Zhang showed the scriptures to Gu, who immediately recognized their true value. However, instead of informing Zhang of their significance, Gu quietly kept them for himself. Later, when Zhang realized he had been deceived, he went back to Gu and pleaded for their return.[51]

Through these examples, it is evident that Tao Hongjin dismissed the value of Gu Huan's *Zhen ji*, criticizing Gu's ability to identify authentic scriptures while also satirizing his character and moral integrity. However, an interesting contrast can be found in Tao's preface to *Secret Instruction for Ascending to Perfection*

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[48] DZ1016, 19:8a.

[49] Refers to the *Scripture of the Unadorned Lady* (*Su nü jing* 素女經), which is about the teaching of sexual alchemy by Peng Zu 彭祖.

[50] DZ1016, 19:14b.

[51] Ibid., 20:3b.

(*Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣), where he expressed more respect for Gu Huan. In this preface, Tao remarked, "If Gu Xuanping was there, he should know what thoughts were in my mind." 若使願[顧]玄平在此，乃當知我心理所得.[52] This preface appears in a discussion on the importance of writing annotations for scriptures or classics. Gu Huan was known not only for his controversial treatise *Yixialun* but also for his commentaries on the *Laozi*. Thus, Tao acknowledged that Gu, as an experienced commentator, would have understood the significance of the extensive annotations Tao included in the *Dengzhen yinjue*.

The contrasting attitude that Tao displayed toward Gu is quite intriguing. As Tao's predecessor, Gu was also dedicated to collecting Shangqing scriptures and promoting Daoist teachings. Given their shared mission, Tao might have been expected to view Gu as a kindred spirit and appreciate his efforts to preserve the Shangqing manuscripts. However, because Tao sought to replace Gu's *Zhen'ji* with his new revised edition, *Zhen'gao*, their relationship took on a competitive dimension. Tao was not only compiling a new collection but also asserting his authority and the authenticity of his version. To establish the superiority of *Zhen'gao*, he had to convince readers that his editorial work was more meticulous, professional, and faithful to the original revelations than that of his predecessor.

Furthermore, even though Tao Hongjing did not explicitly associate Gu Huan with Buddhism in the *Zhen'gao*, I discovered that Gu referred to both the Lingbao scriptures and the Buddhist *Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma* scripture during his debates with Buddhists. This connection provides further insight into Tao's concept of "Three Ways."

In Zhen Luan's 甄鸞 (ca. 535–566) "Laughing at the Dao" (*Xiaodaolun* 笑道論), a work that mocks Daoist practices and accuses Daoists of plagiarizing Buddhist texts, a debate between a Buddhist and Gu Huan is recorded. In this debate, Gu Huan refutes the Buddhist's accusation that the Daoist Lingbao scriptures

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[52] DZ1050, 1:20b–21a.

plagiarized the Buddhist *Dharma Lotus* (alternative title of the *Lotus Flower of the Wondrous Dharma*). He argues:

> The wondrous Lingbao scriptures, with their grand scripts of celestial writings, emerged by themselves. Originally, they were not Dharma Lotus. It was Kumārajīva[53] and Sengzhao[54] who presumptuously plagiarized our Daoist scriptures and changed them into the *Dharma Lotus*.
>
> 靈寶妙經天文大字出於自然，本非法華。乃是羅什妄與僧肇，改我道經為法華也。[55]

This quotation indicates that the Lingbao scriptures were central to the plagiarism dispute and a key focus of the debate between Gu Huan and the Buddhists. Like Lu Xiujing, Gu defended the authenticity of the Lingbao scriptures and even accused the *Dharma Lotus* of copying from them. When considering this quotation in light of my previous discussion, it becomes clear that Tao Hongjing held a significantly different perspective from both Lu Xiujing and Gu Huan. Although Tao sometimes regarded Gu as a like-minded scholar, when it came to the issues surrounding the Lingbao and Buddhist scriptures, he stood in direct opposition to Gu. This stance also influenced his negative attitude toward Gu's version of *Zhen'ji*, as Yang Xi's manuscripts contained references to both Lingbao and Buddhist teachings.

The principle of "Three Ways" serves as the opening statement of Tao Hongjing's postscript, suggesting that it fundamentally shaped his process of reorganizing the *Zhen'gao* manuscripts. As the Shangqing scriptures and the *Zhuangzi* are not the focus of this

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[53] Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (344–413), a Buddhist monk and translator of Chinese Buddhism. His masterpieces include *Diamond Sutra* 金剛經, *Dharma Lotus Sutra* 法華經, and *Treatise of the Great Perfection of Wisdom* 大智度論.

[54] Seng Zhao 僧肇 (384–414), a disciple of Kumārajīva. He was involved in translating the Indian treatises which formed early Chinese Mādhyamika Buddhism.

[55] Zhen Luan 甄鸞 (ca. 535–566), *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經, eds., Junjirō Takakusu and Watanabe Kaigyoku (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1932), vol. 52, T2130.150c.

paper, the next section will explore how Tao Hongjing underscored Buddhist teachings through his editorial skills.

3. Editorial Technique and the Concept of *Fofa* 佛法 or *Fodao* 佛道

Yang Xi's manuscripts record a significant story about Emperor Xiaoming of the Han Dynasty[56] 漢孝明帝 and his dream about the arrival of the Buddha, as well as the earliest Buddhist scripture, *Scripture in Forty-Two Sections* 四十二章經. Yang also describes a mysterious place called Lesser Fangzhu 方諸, believed to be the origin of the Buddha. Interestingly, Tao Hongjing placed these explicitly Buddhist-related accounts in the third chapter of the *Zhen'gao*, which he titled "Aiding Health and Prospects" (*Xie chang qi* 協昌期). In his postscript, Tao explains that this chapter "expresses principles relating to cultivation practice and the regulation [through drug and *qi*] of ingestion" 修行條領，服御節度. Thus, he grouped most of the fragments concerning Daoist practices and cultivations into this section. This suggests that, in Tao Hongjing's view, the concept of the Buddha was primarily associated with a specific method of practice rather than a distinct teaching. Fundamentally, he regarded Buddhism as a branch of Daoism that focuses on different practices while remaining the same in essence. Bokenkamp has discussed this perspective by analyzing Yang Xi's concepts of "Greater Fangzhu" 大方諸 and "Lesser Fangzhu" 小方諸. He explains: "According to these passages, Daoist spirits live on what is known as 'Greater Fangzhu,' while Buddhists superior to those who followed the dusty trade routes through central Asia live on two isles to the east and west of the larger island, known as the 'Lesser Fangzhu.' Tao, in his notes, is quite intent on pointing to other places in Yang's revelations where he talks about these 'Eastern Buddhists' whose practice accords with the Shangqing scriptures."[57]

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[56] Emperor Xiaoming of the Han 漢孝明帝 (r. 57–75), personal name Liu Zhuang 劉莊.

[57] Translation adapted from Bokenkamp, *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family*, 141.

Therefore, in the *Zhen'gao*, references to the Buddha (*fo* 佛), "the Methods of the Buddha" (*fofa* 佛法), and "the Way of the Buddha" (*fodao* 佛道) are, for the most part, associated with the Daoist pursuit of longevity and transcendence. For instance:

> In the past, there was a person named Huang Guanzi who was in favor of the Dao when he was young. His family served the Way of Buddha. Every morning, they worshipped and kowtowed in order to pray for a long life. He was doing this for forty-nine years. Later on, he took drugs and entered Mount Jiao.
>
> 昔有黃觀子者，亦少好道，家奉佛道，朝朝朝拜叩頭，求乞長生。如此積四十九年，後遂服食入焦山。[58]
>
> One of them was a female Perfected called Fu Lihe . . . she was from the north. Her family served the Buddha ardently and arduously. The lady often sprinkled water and swept the floor in front of the Buddha, and diligently worshipped and vowed. She wished to transform into a Transcendent. The spirits and deities oversaw her mind. Then she could come to this place [the Celestial Terrace].
>
> 其一女真是傅禮和……北地人，其家奉佛精進。女常旦夕灑掃佛前，勤勤祝誓，心願仙化。神靈監其此心，亦得來此。[59]
>
> The Perfected Pei[60] has thirty-four disciples. Among them, eighteen learned the Way of Buddha, and the rest learned the Way of Transcendents.
>
> 裴真人有弟子三十四人，其十八人學佛道，餘者學仙道。[61]

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The final quotation indicates that the Perfected taught both the Way of Buddha and the Way of Transcendents, affirming that both teachings belonged to the Daoist tradition. In Yang Xi's (or Yang Xi's Perfected's) view, the Way of Buddha was considered merely a

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58 DZ1016, 5.8b.

59 Ibid., 13.6a.

60 Perfected Pei refers to Qingling Zhenren 清靈真人 (Perfected of Pure Numinosity), who was one of the main Perfected that instructed scriptures to Yang Xi. He was also known as Lord Pei 裴君, personal name Xuanren 玄仁.

61 DZ1016, 14.7b.

branch or a module of Daoism. Tao Hongjing inherited this perspective and deliberately reinforced it by placing the section on Buddhism's origin and history within the third chapter, "Aiding Health and Prospects." Even though he claimed to remain faithful to the original manuscript, he still exercised his editorial authority to subtly convey his interpretation.

4. Tao Hongjing's Observation on the Competition between Daoism and Buddhism

Although Tao Hongjing sought to integrate the Way of Buddha into Daoism and equalize the value of the Shangqing scriptures, Buddhist sutras, and the *Zhuangzi*, he could not entirely overlook the ongoing competition between Buddhism and Daoism. In his postscript titled "Verifying the sources of the Shangqing scriptures," which traces the transmission history of the Shangqing texts, Tao acknowledged how the conversion of Daoist practitioners to Buddhism had negatively affected the preservation and transmission of the Daoist scriptures. For instance:

> Ma Lang's sons Hong and Zhen and Ma Han's sons Zhi and the others still continued to revere the scriptures. Toward the end of their years, though, they came to serve the Buddha and began to abandon the practice of [the Way of Shangqing].
>
> 朗子洪、洪弟眞、罕子智等，猶共遵向。末年事佛，乃弛廢之爾。[62]

The individuals mentioned in this passage were once fortunate to possess the authentic Shangqing scriptures. However, as they grew old, they turned to Buddhism, betraying Daoism. Regarding the fate of the authentic Shangqing scriptures they once possessed, Tao continues:

> In the fourth year of the Grand Inception reign [468], [Ma Han] died in Shan and [Zhong Yishan] moved to Mount Tiao in Shining. [Ma Han's son] Ma Zhi 馬智 was convinced by monks late in life and changed his allegiance to the Buddha dharma. He sent several tens of scrolls of Daoist scriptures to Zhong.

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[62] Translation adapted from Bokenkamp, *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family*, 64.

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> 泰始四年，(馬罕)終於剡。移還始寧峒山。馬智晚為眾僧所說，改事佛法。悉以道經數十卷送與鍾。[63]

According to this passage, Ma Zhi converted to Buddhism and sent dozens of scrolls of Daoist scriptures to Zhong Yishan 鍾義山. In another commentary, Tao notes that after Zhong's death, the remainder of the scriptures were likely entrusted to his niece and Qi Jingxuan 戚景玄. However, Tao was ultimately unable to locate these scriptures. This case indicates that the conversion of Daoist disciples to Buddhism—particularly those who had received the Shangqing scriptures—greatly endangered the survival of these manuscripts. Moreover, this was not an isolated incident, as the next passage of Tao's commentary recounts a similar case:

> Later, though, Wu served the Buddha, left home [as a monk], and gave the writings to anyone who asked until he had no more. Later, he gave up on the Buddha and returned to lay life. He took to reclusive roaming and passed away. I have not been able to determine the whereabouts of the various writings and oral instructions that he once owned.

> (吳曇拔)其後事佛出家。悉分散乞人都盡。後又罷佛還俗。遂留宕而終。諸書訣竝未測所在。[64]

This is another case in which the loss of the Shangqing scriptures was caused by a Daoist disciple's conversion to Buddhism.

Although Daoist manuscripts were lost or damaged due to the competition between Daoism and Buddhism, Tao did not regard Buddhism as a rival in the *Zhen'gao*. Instead, he made an effort to convince readers that Daoist and Buddhist teachings were not mutually exclusive. As he emphasized in the postscript, "These Three Ways are sufficient to encompass every phenomenon on earth; and embody all that is manifest and hidden," suggesting that abandoning any one of them would be regretful.

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[63] Translation adapted from Bokenkamp, *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family,* 70.
[64] Translation adapted from Bokenkamp, *A Fourth-Century Daoist Family,* 74.

However, Tao's efforts were not successful. The competition between Daoism and Buddhism grew increasingly intense. To avoid Buddhist criticism, Buddhist elements were widely expurgated from Daoist scriptures starting at the end of the sixth century.[65] Tao's other signature exegetical work, *Dengzhen yinjue*, was among the scriptures that were later expurgated. This may have contributed to the loss of Tao's catalogue, which left no trace in the Daoist corpus, and also to his failure to replace Lu Xiujing's "Three Caverns" with his own "Three Ways." Fortunately, Tao's *Zhen'gao* surpassed Gu's *Zhen'ji*, becoming the only extant version of Yang Xi and his patrons' manuscripts. This allows us to understand the effort that Tao Hongjing made to incorporate Buddhism into Daoism by rearranging these manuscripts and applying editorial techniques in the *Zhen'gao* within the specific socio-cultural context of the Buddhist-Daoist contest.

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Conclusion

Daoist scriptures, like other ancient Chinese texts, or even more so, were unstable and subject to being edited, altered, revised, and expurgated, both intentionally and unintentionally. As a result, they contain multiple layers of editorial intervention. Most of the editors or scribes involved in this process remain anonymous, while the names of some are emphasized. These names serve as a source of authority, reinforcing the credibility of their editorial work and convincing readers of its reliability. In addition, these prominent names and the traces of their editorial choices not only reveal their interaction with intended readers, preceding editors, and other

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[65] Many scholars have argued this issue, including Anna Seidel, Stephen Bokenkamp, and Wang Chengwen 王承文. See Anna Seidel, "Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West 1950–1990," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, 5 (1989): 233, 235. Stephen Bokenkamp, "Stages of Transcendence: The Bhūmi Concept in Taoist Scripture," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 119–147. Bokenkamp, "The Silkworm and the Bodhi Tree: The Lingbao Attempt to Replace Buddhism in China and Our Attempt to Place Lingbao Taoism," 317–333. Wang Chengwen 王承文, *Dunhuang gu lingbao jing yu jin tang daojiao* 敦煌古靈寶經與晉唐道教, vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002), 83.

sources but also highlight the competition between editors who compiled and edited the same texts, as well as the ideological conflict underlying their editorial work.

My paper investigating Tao Hongjing's criticism of Lu Xiujing and Gu Huan in his *Zhen'gao* reveals that Tao's intention was not only to serve as a faithful editor of the revelation and restore the manuscript to its original form, as he explicitly claimed. On a deeper level, his editorial work offered a compromise in response to the dispute over alleged plagiarism between authentic Lingbao scriptures and Buddhist sutras. Tao questioned the authenticity of the Lingbao scriptures circulated by Lu Xiujing and diminished their value. At the same time, he integrated Buddhist content from Yang Xi's manuscripts into the section on Daoist practices, implying that Buddhism was only a branch or module of Daoist teaching. Therefore, he proposed his "Three Ways" to equalize the Shangqing scriptures, Buddhist sutras, and *Zhuangzi*. He also offered catalogues for the Daoist scriptures. And although his catalogues were lost, it is clear from his concept of "Three Ways" that his method of classification significantly differed from Lu Xiujing's. However, in terms of their influence on the later Daoist canons, Tao Hongjing was ultimately outdone by Lu Xiujing in this competition to popularize a Daoist catalogue.

In contrast, Tao Hongjing emerged victorious over Gu Huan in promoting his version of the collection of Yang Xi's manuscripts, the *Zhen'gao*. In his other writings, Tao Hongjing regarded Gu as a kindred spirit who was able to understand the thinking behind his annotations of the Daoist scriptures. This indicates that his criticism of Gu in the postscript of the *Zhen'gao* merely aimed to discredit and replace Gu's version of these manuscripts. Tao only regarded Gu as a rival when he sought to persuade readers that his *Zhen'gao* was superior to Gu's *Zhen'ji*. Moreover, Gu Huan was a central figure in sparking the intense debate between Daoism and Buddhism. Since Tao sought to incorporate Buddhist teaching into Daoist practices and considered Buddhism as a module of Daoist teachings, he disagreed with Gu's handling of Buddhist elements. Therefore, his effort to disprove Gu's version was also related to Tao's stance on Buddhism. Judging from their influence on later

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Daoist writings, Tao Hongjing ultimately succeeded in overshadowing Gu Huan's *Zhen'ji*, making his *Zhen'gao* the only surviving collection of Yang Xi's manuscripts.

Tao Hongjing's case demonstrates that even though the authenticity of the Daoist texts was an explicit concern for both editors and readers, and the ability to distinguish authentic scriptures provided a powerful competitive advantage for Daoist editors, the issue of "identifying authenticity" was also intricately intertwined with ideological competition within the socio-historical context.

Overall, the formation of Taoist texts is a complex and dynamic process. The interaction and competition between editors in compiling, commenting on, and transmitting Daoist texts is a critical issue that has not been widely attended to. Understanding the competitive nature of these editorial efforts provides valuable insights into the historical and ideological struggles that underpinned the formation of the Daoist canon.

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道教編輯間的競爭與意識形態衝突：陶弘景在《真誥》中對陸修靜和顧歡的批評

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摘要

道教典籍的形成是一個複雜的動態過程。與那些圍繞單一神聖文本或者某個創始人的言論而創立的宗教不同，道經的來源多樣而且不斷有新的神聖文本被揭示出來。因此，編輯在道經的編纂、註釋和鑑別真偽的工作上扮演了重要的角色。鑑於道經的神秘性，編輯的評論和註釋對於引導讀者的閱讀至關重要。因此，大部分道經都有多重編輯干預過的印記，反映了編纂者之間的互動與競爭。本文探討了公元四世紀出現的一部上清派的重要文獻《真誥》，並特別關注其編者陶弘景 (456–536) 對其他道教編輯的批評。在《真誥》後記中，陶弘景將自己定位為一絲不苟的專家，聲明他考證的抄本是一部嚴謹公正的著作，同時批評了陸修靜 (406–477) 和顧歡 (425– 約 479) 等其他編輯的工作。儘管陶弘景將自己定位為一個忠實的神聖文本的傳播者，致力於還原文獻的原始模樣，他的批評卻揭示了更為複雜的意圖。一方面，這些批評反映了編輯在道經分類上的分歧，另一方面，揭示了他們之間圍繞靈寶經真偽及其與佛教關係的意識形態之爭。陶弘景的編輯策略體現了他在靈寶經涉嫌抄襲佛經的廣泛爭議中所採取的折衷態度。陶弘景的案例表明，儘管道經真偽是編輯和讀者共同關注的問題，但是這項工作卻不僅僅與道經編輯的能力相關，而是與當時歷史背景下的意識形態競爭錯綜複雜地交織在一

起。雖然這場競爭中失敗者的著作已經不復存在，但是陶弘景的註釋和後記為我們理解道經在形成中的文化意識形態之爭提供了寶貴的視角。

關鍵詞：道教，顧歡，陸修靜，陶弘景，真誥

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