

Four Steles at the Monastery of Sublime Mystery (Xuanmiao guan): A Study of Daoism and Society on the Ming Frontier

INTRODUCTION

Long after Edouard Chavannes' pioneering study early in the twentieth century, Daoist steles have once again begun to draw scholarly attention.¹ Chinese scholars, following the lead of Chen Yuan 陳垣, have compiled several important collections of Daoist epigraphy,² and Western scholars have contributed to the study of Daoism by concentrating on specific steles.³ Susan Naquin's recent study of late-

I WOULD like to thank John Kieschnick and *Asia Major's* two anonymous referees for their useful suggestions.

¹ See Edouard Chavannes, "Le jet des dragons," *Mémoires concernant l'Asie orientale* 3 (1919), pp. 68–128; Chavannes, *Le T'ai Chan: Essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris: Leroux, 1910), pp. 266–68, 296–307, 354–97.

² Chen Yuan, comp., Chen Zhichao 陳智超 and Zeng Qingying 曾慶瑛, eds., *Daojia jinshi lue* 道家金石略 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1988); Wu Gang 吳綱, comp., *Louguan tai Daojiao beishi* 樓觀臺道教碑石 (Xi'an: Sanqin, 1995); Long Xianzhao 龍顯昭 and Huang Haide 黃海德 et al., comps., *Ba-Shu Daojiao beiwen jicheng* 巴蜀道教碑文集成 (Chengdu: Sichuan daxue, 1997); Liu Zhaohe 劉兆鶴 and Wang Xiping 王西平, comps., *Chongyang gong Daojiao beishi* 重陽宮道教碑石 (Xi'an: Sanqin, 1998); Yang Shihua 楊世華 et al., comps., *Maoshan daoyuan lidai beiming lu* 茅山道院歷代碑銘錄 (Shanghai: Shanghai keji wenxian, 2001).

³ See Florian Reiter, "A Chinese Patriot's Concern with Taoism: The Case of Wang O (1190–1273)," *OE* 33.2 (1990), pp. 95–131; John Lagerwey, "The Pilgrimage to Wu-tang Shan," in Susan Naquin and Chün-fang Yü, eds., *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China* (Berkeley: U. California P., 1992), pp. 311–15; Kenneth Dean, *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1993), pp. 34–41; K. M. Schipper, "Note sur l'histoire de Dongyue miao de Pékin," in Jean-Pierre Diény, ed., *Hommage à Kwong Hing-foon: Etudes d'histoire culturelle de la chine* (Paris: Collège de France, Institut de hautes études chinoises, 1995), pp. 255–69; Stephen R. Bokenkamp, "The Yao Boduo Stele as Evidence for 'Dao-Buddhism' of the Early Lingbao Scriptures," *CEA* 9 (1996–1997), pp. 55–67; Stanley K. Abe, "Heterological Visions: Northern Wei Daoist Scripture from Shaanxi Province," *ibid.*, pp. 69–83; Paul R. Katz, "Temple Inscriptions and the Study of Taoist Cults: A Case Study of Inscriptions at the Palace of Eternal Joy," *Taoist Resources* 7.1 (1997), pp. 1–22; Vincent Goossaert, "La Création du taoïsme moderne: L'ordre Quanzhen" (Ph.D. diss., Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, 1997); *idem*, "The Quanzhen Clergy, 1700–1950," paper presented at the International Conference on Religion and Chinese Society: The Transformation of a Field and Its Implications for the Study of Chinese Culture, May 31, 2000, Hong Kong; Marianne Bujard, "Le Joyau de Chen: Cults historique -- culte vivant," *CEA* 10 (1998), pp. 131–81; *idem*, "Célébration et promotion des cultes locaux: Six stèles des Han Orientaux," paper presented at the International Conference on Religion and Chinese Society; the articles by K. M. Schipper, Vincent Goossaert, Pierre Marsone, Caroline Gyss-Vermande, Yuan Bingling 袁冰凌, Alain Arrault

imperial temples in Beijing has demonstrated what the formation and transformation of all the city's temples, not just Daoist, can reveal about Beijing's social and cultural life.⁴ A team led by Kristofer Schipper has also conducted a research project, the "Holy City of Beijing," which makes extensive use of epigraphy and other kinds of material to reconstruct the religious activities of metropolitan Beijing, in particular those related to Daoism. As the national capital during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing eras, Beijing must be seen as a national and also local center of religious activity.

Now, however, scholarship should turn to religious institutions and establishments in small and medium cities, away from the unique national status of Beijing. The religious life of northwest China in general, and particularly Ming-era Lanzhou 蘭州, a frontier city of strategic importance, is needless to say understudied. Recent work on the Temple of the Eastern Peak (Dongyue miao 東嶽廟) of Beijing has paid attention to the steles that reveal the affiliated religious associations 會. This sort of approach sheds light on the relationship between a Daoist temple and the local communities and broadens our understanding of Daoist institutions and popular cults.⁵ In the same vein, the present essay explores the Monastery of Sublime Mystery (Xuanmiao guan 玄妙觀), a Daoist temple in eastern Lanzhou during Ming times. The aim is to characterize its religious and historical background and to place in a larger context its relationship with lay society.

and Fang Ling 方玲 published in *Matériaux pour l'étude de la religion chinoise: Sanjiao wenxian*, as part of a project under the direction of Kristofer Schipper. For Japanese scholarship, see Fujishima Kenju 藤島建樹, "Zenshinkyō no tenkai: Mongoru senkenka no Katō no baai" 全真教の展開モンゴル政権下の河東の場合一, in Akizuki Kan'ei 秋月観暎, ed., *Dōkyō to shūkyō bunka* 道教と宗教文化 (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1987), pp. 425-38.

⁴ Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900* (Berkeley: U. California Press, 2000).

⁵ See Schipper, "Note sur l'histoire de Dongyue miao de Pékin," pp. 255-69; Schipper, "La grande stèle de l'association de nettoyage (Pékin, Dongyue miao, 1774)," *Matériaux pour l'étude de la religion chinoise: Sanjiao wenxian* 3 (1999), pp. 169-79; Schipper, "Stèle du temple du Pic de l'Est (Dongyue miao) de la Grande Capitale, par Wu Cheng (1249-1333)," *ibid.* 2 (1998), pp. 85-93; Schipper et al., "Inscription pour la reconstruction du temple Pic de l'Est à Pékin par l'empereur Zhengtong (1447)," *ibid.*, pp. 95-102; Schipper et al., "Stèle de l'association pour les divers objets utilisés dans le monde des ténèbres (Pékin, Dongyue miao, 1591)," *ibid.* 1 (1997), pp. 33-46; Vincent Goossaert, "Portrait épigraphique d'un culte: Inscriptions des dynasties Jin et Yuan de temples du Pic de l'Est," *ibid.* 2 (1998), pp. 41-83; Goossaert et al., "Inscription de l'association pour célébrer les bureaux (Pékin, Dongyue miao, 1769)," *ibid.* 1 (1997), pp. 47-60; Pierre Marsonne et al., "Inscription de la bonne association du sanctuaire stationnal du Pic de l'Est (Pékin, Dongyue miao, 1560)," *ibid.*, pp. 25-32; Caroline Gyss-Vermande et al., "Stèle commémorative pour la restauration des images saintes du temple du Pic de l'Est (1570)," *ibid.* 2 (1998), pp. 103-12; Yuan Bingling, "Beijing Dongyue miao beiwen kaoshu" 北京東嶽廟碑文考述, *ibid.* 3 (1999), pp. 137-58.

Whereas several Daoist establishments named Monastery of Sublime Mystery (Xuanmiao guan) are famous, for example, monasteries of exactly that name in Suzhou, Nanyang 南陽, Henan province, and Hangzhou, the one so named in Lanzhou, Gansu province, is hardly known today. It fell into disuse and eventually disappeared in the twentieth century. From the Ming to the early-Republican period, however, the monastery was a major Daoist base and enjoyed popularity among commoners as well as the elite. Early in that span of time it was one of two major Daoist temples of Lanzhou; later in that period it was one of three, the other two being the Monastery of Golden Heaven (Jintian guan 金天觀) and the White Cloud Monastery (Baiyun guan 白雲觀).⁶ The Monastery of Sublime Mystery at Lanzhou, a Zhengyi monastery, handed down four main steles dated 1540 and 1541, that is, years nineteen and twenty of the Jiajing reign; they are now kept in the Gansu Provincial Library of Lanzhou. The four are precious because both the front 碑陽 and the reverse sides 碑陰, except for one stele, are fully preserved. Thus, the present essay takes them as a key source for an analysis of Lanzhou.

The steles reveal that while promotion of Daoism operated broadly as a national policy of the Ming court, the activities and maintenance of the Monastery were the result of support from the Establishment of the Prince of Su 肅藩, one of the many dynastically created princely households set up around the empire. Studies of particular royal pa-

⁶ *Ming yitong zhi* 明一統志, *Shaanxi tongzhi* 陝西通志 (1542), *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1667), and *Lintao fuzhi* 臨洮府志 (1687) only mention two Lanzhou Daoist monasteries – Sublime Mystery and the Monastery of Golden Heaven. See Li Xian 李賢 (1408–66) et al., *Ming yitong zhi* (n.p., 1588; SKQS) 36, p. 9a; *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1542); *Zhongguo xibei xijian fangzhi xuji* 中國西北稀見方志續集 edn.) 36, p. 16b; *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1667) 29, p. 30a; *Lintao fuzhi* (1687) 6, p. 23a. *Lanzhou zhi* 蘭州志 (1686) only mentions Sublime Mystery, White Cloud, and Concentrated Prosperity (Ningxiguan 凝熙觀). See *Lanzhou zhi* (1686; 1959 transcribed edn.) 1, p. 28(A)a. As late as 1943, Zhang Wei 張維 (1890–ca. 1950) claimed that the most important Daoist temples in Lanzhou were the Xuanmiao guan (Donghua guan 東華觀) and the Monastery of Golden Heaven. See Zhang Wei, *Lanzhou gujin zhu* 蘭州古今注 (1943; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* 中國西北文獻叢書 edn.; hereafter, *Lanzhou GZ*), p. 19a.

Just a brief note on terminology: In Western-language works on Daoism and Buddhism there are unavoidable ambiguities in the usage of *si* 寺 and *guan* 觀; and this is made more complex when discussing *miao* 廟 concurrently. Generally speaking, in Chinese a temple (*miao*) refers to a religious establishment that is either of small size or whose origin is in folk or state religion. I use “temple,” however, not just for that context, but also in some instances for religious establishments generally, since in Chinese it also has that meaning. Unfortunately, one cannot always imagine the architectural layout or liturgical role of such “temples” through the English or Chinese words by themselves. Moreover, *si* and *guan* are translated in this article as “monastery”; but the former Chinese word always means a Buddhist temple, and the latter a Daoist one. They both tend to be large temple complexes that house priests, monks, adepts, and the like. In my main text, I give the full Chinese name of a site or establishment upon first usage.

tronage of local religion are not very frequent, and this article argues that the prince of Su served to mediate between the official religious policy and the interests of commoners. In addition, the temple festivals of the Monastery of Sublime Mystery show us some of the activities and beliefs of Ming military servicemen who worshiped Zhenwu 真武 at those holy occasions. Moreover, the temple figured in the lives of merchants who, organizing their associations as guilds, used it as their congregation and as a temple market. Next we have the participation of the many Daoist clerics functioning as a reliable indicator of the activities of Zhengyi Daoists in Ming-era Lanzhou. We learn of their roles as intermediary between the royal clan's religious orientation and the lay communities' concerns and interests – somewhere between official Daoist institution and popular cult. They functioned as a unifying force, bringing together the upper and lower classes of society under the umbrella of Daoism. Finally, four temple associations supported and maintained the Monastery, each with its own community and ritual traditions. Thus we can picture the temple as a locale of laymen and priests, and of secular concerns and religious performance. Below, I present evidence for the participation of all of these groups in the activities of the Monastery of Sublime Mystery of Lanzhou.

LANZHOU

Lanzhou was situated at the northwest edge of Ming China, neighboring the Mongols to the north, various Tibetan tribes to the south, and many Muslim tribes and states in the so-called Western Regions. It was a militarily strategic point.⁷ In the Ming, the city belonged to Lintao prefecture (Lintao fu 臨洮府), which in turn belonged to the Shaanxi Administration Commission (Shaanxi buzheng shisi 陝西布政使司). In addition to this civil administration, there were also several military administrations in Lanzhou. Of these, the most important one was the Lanzhou Guard (Lanzhou wei 蘭州衛), which was co-controlled by the Shaanxi Regional Military Commission (Shaanxi du zhihui shisi 陝西都指揮使司), the Guyuan Defense Command (Guyuan zhen 固原鎮), and the Shaanxi Branch Regional Commission (Shaanxi xing du zhihui shisi 陝西行都指揮使司).⁸ Lanzhou was also an important route between

⁷ *Jiubian tushuo* 九邊圖說 compiled by the Ministry of War in 1569 calls Lanzhou an “extremely crucial [strategic] point” (*jichong difang* 極衝地方). See Ministry of War, *Jiubian tushuo* (1569) (Taipei: Guoli Zhongyang tushuguan, 1981), p. 141b.

⁸ *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1542) 9, p. 6a; 39, p. 8a; *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1667) 14, pp. 7b–9a; Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–82), *Tianxia junguo libing shu* 天下郡國利病書 (Taipei: Yiwen, 1964; hereafter, *TJLS*), *ce* 18, p. 26a.

China and the west. To the north lay the Yellow River, and the Ming dynasty's Great Wall cut through Lanzhou city on both sides of the River.⁹ Because the Great Wall was crucial to the Ming government for both military and economic reasons, the government built, restored, or renovated this section eighteen times from the early Ming to the Wanli reign (1573–1620).¹⁰ Some parts of Lanzhou were situated north of the Yellow River and became targets of Mongol attack.¹¹

Because Lanzhou was a city with an important military camp,¹² and was treated as one of the “most crucial” strategic places, the Ming court had a heavy military presence and an unusually large military population there.¹³ Military units included frontier garrisons, provincial troops in charge of the regions inside the Great Wall, a unit in charge of state-owned military horse herds, Escort Guards and Ceremonial Guards for royal princes, and native Tatar soldiers serving the government. Many were based inside Lanzhou. In addition, there were surrounding forts 堡 and passes 關 that belonged to the Lanzhou military units.¹⁴ The population of military households made up half or even more of the whole population of Lanzhou.

At this point in Gansu the Silk Road split into three ways, one of which led through Lanzhou to cross the Yellow River.¹⁵ As a crucial

⁹ For a discussion of the Ming Great Wall in Gansu, and esp. in Lanzhou, see Chen Shouzhong 陳守忠, *He-Long shidi kaoshu* 河隴史地考述 (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue, 1993), pp. 238–42; Guo Houan 郭厚安 and Chen Shouzhong et al., *Gansu gudaishi* 甘肅古代史 (Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue, 1989), pp. 483–85; Chen Shouzhong, “Weiwei xiongguan e'e Changcheng” 巍巍雄關峨峨長城, in Guo Houan and Wu Tingzhen 吳廷楨 et al., eds., *Youjiu de Gansu lishi* 悠久的甘肅歷史 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin, 1988), pp. 47–48; Wang Zhenya 王震亞 et al., *Gansu gudai shihua* 甘肅古代史話 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin, 1991), pp. 321–26; Cheng Zhao-sheng 程兆生, *Lanzhou tan'gu* 蘭州談古 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin, 1992; hereafter, *Lanzhou TG*), pp. 98–100; Arthur Waldron, *The Great Wall of China: From History to Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1990), pp. 142–43.

¹⁰ On this issue, see Wang, *Gansu gudai shihua*, p. 322; Hu Tiejun 胡鐵軍 et al., *Ai wo Zhonghua ai wo Gansu* 愛我中華愛我甘肅 (Beijing: Beijing shifan xueyuan, 1991), p. 63.

¹¹ See Yang Yiqing 楊一清 (1454–1530), “Wei cunliu shoucheng guanjun yi fang luhuan shi” 爲存留守城官軍以防虜患事, in Tang Jingshen 唐景紳 and Xie Yujie 謝玉傑, annots., *Yang Yiqing ji* 楊一清集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 2001), pp. 130–31 (j. 4); *Lanzhou TG*, pp. 38–39; Guo Houan, “Mingdai de Hexi zoulang he Guanxi qiwei” 明代的河西走廊和關西七衛, in *Youjiu de Gansu lishi*, p. 156.

¹² Zhang Yu 張雨 (fl. 1546–47), *Bianzheng kao* 邊政考 (1547; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.) 3, p. 30a; Xu Lun 許論 (1495–1566), *Jiubian tulun* 九邊圖論 (*Congshu jicheng xubian* 叢書集成續編 edn.), map, p. 10; Ministry of War, *Jiubian tushuo* (1569), p. 144b.

¹³ Ministry of War, *Jiubian tushuo* (1569), p. 141b; Gu Zuyu 顧祖禹 (1624–80), *Dushi fangyu jiyao* 讀史方輿紀要 (Taipei: Xinxing, 1967) 60, p. 8b.

¹⁴ *Lintao fuzhi* 臨洮府志 (1604) 11, pp. 2a–4a; *TJLS*, ce 19, pp. 38a–39b; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, pp. 15a–b; *Gaolan xianzhi* 皋蘭縣志 (1774) 11, pp. 6a–b.

¹⁵ See *Lanzhou TG*, pp. 28–29; Tian Hengjiang 田恒江 and Zhou Deguang 周德廣, *Sichou zhilu manji* (*Gansu fence*) 絲綢之路漫記 (甘肅分冊) (Beijing: Xinhua, 1984), p. 123.

point on the way to the China's far-western area and Mongolia, Lanzhou played an important role nationally and internationally. During the Ming, envoys, merchants, and distant travelers passed through Gansu to Beijing, many of them staying in Gansu to engage in commercial activities.¹⁶

More importantly, in order to ensure that adequate supplies of grain reached the armies on the borders, mainly in the north, the government instituted the so-called “*kaizhong fa* 開中法” (salt barter system), under which salt was a strict state monopoly. The Ming government issued to some merchants salt vouchers with which they would have access to salt and monopolize its sale, in exchange for delivery of grain and other military supplies to the frontiers.¹⁷ The merchants involved in this trade tended to be from Shaanxi (including Gansu during the Ming) and Shanxi.¹⁸ To lower the transport costs, some *kaizhong* merchants bought land and set up merchant colonies (*shangtun* 商屯) – agricultural estates under merchant control – for the purpose of local grain production.¹⁹

In addition, the Ming government set up Horse Trading Offices 茶馬司 on the northern and northwestern border to regulate the sale of tea to nomadic Turkish and Tibetan-speaking peoples in order to acquire horses for the Chinese military.²⁰ Lanzhou and its neighboring

¹⁶ See Wang, *Gansu gudai shihua*, p. 321; Tian and Zhou, *Sichou zhilu*, p. 124; Guo, “Mingdai de Hexi zoulang,” pp. 156–58.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the salt barter system and the distribution of salt, see Ray Huang, *Taxation and Governmental Finance in Sixteenth-Century Ming China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1974), pp. 193–95; Lee Lung-wah 李龍華, “Mingdai de kaizhong fa” 明代的開中法, *Journal of The Institute of Chinese Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong* 4.2 (1971), pp. 371–493; Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote et al., *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 8, The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 2* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1998), pp. 71, 139, 514, 679–81.

¹⁸ See Tian Peidong 田培棟, *Shaanxi shangbang* 陝西商幫 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua, 2000), pp. 1–3, 38–42, 48, 52–53, 89–90, 109–10; Zhang Haiyin 張海瀛 et al., *Shanxi shangbang* 山西商幫 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua, 2000), pp. 4–7, 11–12, 20–21; Fujii Hiroshi 藤井宏, “Mingdai enshō ni ichikōsatsu (II)” 明代鹽商一考察, *SZ* 54.6 (1943), pp. 69, 86. Fujii Hiroshi, in *ibid.*, pp. 69–70, points out that in the late Ming Shanxi-Shaanxi merchants dominated the salt trade.

¹⁹ For a general discussion of Ming merchant colonies, see Shimizu Taiji 清水泰次, “Shōton kō” 商屯考, in his *Mindai tochi seidoshi kenkyū* 明代土地制度史研究 (Tokyo: Daian, 1968), pp. 367–83; Wang Ch'ung-wu, “The Ming System of Merchant Colonization,” in E-tu Zen Sun and John de Francis, trans. and eds., *Chinese Social History: Translations of Selected Studies* (Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1956), pp. 299–308. For a discussion of Ming merchant colonies in Gansu, see Wei Mingkong 魏明孔, “Ming-Qing shiqi de tunken” 明清時期的屯墾, in Guo and Wu, *Youjiu de Gansu lishi*, p. 176.

²⁰ For a general discussion of the tea-horse trade in the Ming, see Morris Rossabi, *China and Inner Asia: From 1368 to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), pp. 78–83; Twitchett and Mote, *Cambridge History of China*, pp. 90, 145, 242, 245, 255–58, 514, 521, 681–82. For a discussion of the tea-horse trade in the Ming northwestern frontier, see Rossa-

areas had several such offices.²¹ Lanzhou thus became the tax center for collecting tea submitted by merchants for the horse trade.²²

In addition to official trade, smuggling was common. Since Lintao prefecture was one of the smuggling centers,²³ Lanzhou must be seen as an important node of the tea and horse markets.²⁴ As these commercial activities developed, merchants, especially those from Shanxi-Shaanxi and Jiangxi, assembled in Lanzhou. They formed various associations, and various *huiguan* 會館 (native-place, or occupational, lodges) were set up by merchants in different temples.

Thus, the local Lanzhou community was composed of great numbers of military men and, to a lesser degree, merchants, especially those from Shanxi, Shaanxi and Jiangxi. A memorial written by Yang Yiqing 楊一清 (1454-1530) mentioned three kinds of people in Lanzhou – military servicemen, the members of the princely establishments and their households, and merchants and peddlers.²⁵ As we see, below, these key elements of the population in and around Lanzhou were the chief source of patronage and support for the Monastery of Sublime Mystery.

THE DAOIST BACKGROUND

With the significant number of Turkish- and Tibetan-speaking peoples and Chinese Muslims in Gansu, Tibetan Buddhism and Islam were, and are, the two strongest religious traditions. Yet, for non-Muslim Chinese, religious Daoism has also been important. As early as 265 ad, the Great Peace Monastery (Taiping guan 太平觀) was built in the Didao 狄道 (present-day Lintao) area, neighboring Lanzhou.²⁶ From then on, Daoism spread throughout Gansu.²⁷

Mount Xinglong 興隆山, located forty-five kilometers southeast of Lanzhou, is the earliest known Daoist headquarters in Lanzhou and in Gansu as a whole. This mountain is characterized by Daoist estab-

bi, *China and Inner Asia*, pp. 25, 78-83; Twitchett and Mote, *Cambridge History of China*, pp. 243, 245, 254-55; Li Mingwei 李明偉 et al., *Sichou zhilu maoyi shi* 絲綢之路貿易史 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin, 1997), pp. 594-608; Yang Shaoyou 楊紹猷 and Mo Junqing 莫俊卿, *Mingdai minzu shi* 明代民族史 (Chengdu: Sichuan minzu, 1996), pp. 227-28, 516-19.

²¹ *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 6, p. 22b.

²² *TJLS*, ce 19, p. 37a.

²³ See Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525-82) et al., eds., *Ming Shizong shilu* 明世宗實錄 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1965) 140, p. 1a.

²⁴ Wang, *Gansu gudai shihua*, p. 344; *Lanzhou TG*, pp. 30-31; Tian and Zhou, *Sichou zhilu*, p. 124.

²⁵ Yang, "Wei cunliu shoucheng guanjun yi fang luhuan shi," pp. 129-33.

²⁶ See Zhang Bing 張兵 and Li Ziwei 李子偉, *Longyou wenhua* 隴右文化 (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu, 1998), p. 273.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

ishments. The major temples were built in the Ming, for example the Travel-Palace of the Jade Emperor (Yudi xingong 玉帝行宮), Monastery in Homage to Primordiality (Chaoyuan guan 朝元觀), and the Pavilion of the Primordiality of Chaos (Hunyuan ge 混元閣). By 1820, there were sixty-two Daoist temples on Mount Xinglong.²⁸

The Lanzhou area was home as well to prominent Daoist priests associated with Zhengyi Daoism, men like Sun Biyun 孫碧雲 (1345–1417).²⁹ Zhengyi Daoism was most influential in the Daoist community and society of Lanzhou. For example, during Ming the Monastery of Concentrated Prosperity (Ningxi guan 凝熙觀), the Temple of the Eastern Peak, and the Great-Unity Palace of Lasting Celebration (Taiyi yanqing gong 太乙延慶宮) were all controlled by the Zhengyi Daoist clergy, who were appointed by the princes of Su. Later in the Ming, the Monastery of Golden Heaven was controlled by the married Zhengyi Daoists. Into early Qing the main City God Temple of Lanzhou was co-controlled and staffed by both Zhengyi clerics and Quanzhen priests. The Temple of the Western Peak (Xiyuemiao 西嶽廟) and the City God Temple of Xigu (Xigu Chenghuang miao 西古城隍廟), Lanzhou, were also Zhengyi temples.³⁰ Many Daoist temples there had close relations with the Heavenly Master of Mount Longhu 龍虎山 in Jiangxi, the headquarters of Zhengyi Daoism.³¹

Related to this phenomenon, although there were some large Quanzhen (Complete Perfection) Daoist monasteries in Lanzhou, most Daoist clerics hired by local people for rituals were Zhengyi Daoists, commonly known as Huoju Daoshi 火居道士 (“hearth-dwelling Daoists”)

²⁸ Li Yanping 李焰平, Zhao Songyao 趙頌堯, Guan Lianji 關連吉 et al., eds., *Gansu kuta simiao* 甘肅窟塔寺廟 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin, 1999; hereafter, *Gansu KS*), pp. 294–303; Li Gufan 李孤帆, *Xixing zaji* 西行雜記 (1939; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.), pp. 257–59.

²⁹ See Feng Qianshan 馮千山, “Sun Biyun kaolue” 孫碧雲考略, *Wudang* (1992.4), pp. 29–30, 42; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 3, p. 48a; *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* 重修皋蘭縣志 (1892) 27, p. 12b; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* 甘肅全省新通志 (1909; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.) 98, p. 12b; *Gansu tongzhi gao* 甘肅通志稿 (1936; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.), “Gansu minzu zhi” 甘肅民族志 6, pp. 15b, 17a; Mu Shouqi 慕壽祺, *Gan Ning Qing shilue* 甘肅青史略 (1932; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.), “Juanshou” 卷首 2, p. 57b; Zhang and Li, *Longyou wenhua*, p. 275. On Sun Biyun’s life, see Ren Ziyuan 任自垣 (fl. 1406–31), *Dayue Taihe shanzhi* 大嶽太和山志 (1431; *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 edn.), pp. 929–30; Fang Sheng 方升 (fl. 1536), *Dayue zilue* 大嶽志略 (Wuyuan: Fang family’s print, 1536) 2, pp. 11a–b; Feng, “Sun Biyun kaolue,” pp. 2930, 42; Wang Guangde 王光德 and Yang Lizhi 楊立志, *Wudang Daojiao shilue* 武當道教史略 (Beijing: Huawen, 1993), pp. 194–95, 200–1; Pierre-Henry de Bruyn, “Le Wudang Shan: Histoire des récits fondateurs” (Ph.D. diss., Université Paris VII, 1997), pp. 265–68, 391–93.

³⁰ *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu minzu zhi” 6, p. 17a; Yuan Zongshan 袁宗善 (*hao* 無聊子), *Lanzhou Daojiao gaibian* 蘭州道教概編 (Lanzhou: Private Printing, 2001; hereafter, *Lanzhou DG*), pp. 28, 76, 78, 81.

³¹ *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 10, p. 2b; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu minzu zhi” 6, p. 17a; Mu, *Gan Ning Qing shilue*, “Juanshou” 2, pp. 57b–58b.

or locally known as Huoban Daoshi 伙伴道士 (“companion Daoists”); they had families and received pay for their services. *Gansu sheng xiangtu zhigao* 甘肅省鄉土志稿, a local gazetteer compiled in 1943–46 states,

The majority of Buddhist monks or Daoist priests invited by ordinary people to practice Buddhist or Daoist rituals are those “companion Daoists” (Huoban Daoshi) or “companion Monks” who have wives and children. In normal times they live at home as ordinary people. Whenever they are invited, they come with various ritual implements such as gongs and drums, and musical instruments. After they finish the rituals, they go home with remuneration (mostly cash).³²

Eight of the Lanzhou Zhengyi Daoist clergy families were the Zeng 曾, Sun 孫, Yang 楊, Liu 劉, Zhang 張, Zhou 周, Tian 田, and Fu 傅; they were known as the “eight big hereditary families 八大家,” and they controlled some of the major Daoist temples.³³

We have no idea of the number of Daoist clergy in Gansu and Lanzhou in Ming times. At present, according to an interview with a Gansu Daoist leader, in that province there are 700 Quanzhen Daoists and 3,000 Zhengyi Daoists with licenses.³⁴ That is to say, the number of Zhengyi Daoists would be more if we count those who do not have licenses. In Lanzhou there are 60 Quanzhen and 350 Zhengyi Daoists.³⁵ If the Lanzhou ratio of six Zhengyi to one Quanzhen applied in similar fashion for the Ming, then Zhengyi would have predominated in Lanzhou as well.³⁶ The broad general distribution of Daoism dur-

³² *Gansu sheng xiangtu zhigao* (1948; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.), p. 227. See also *Lanzhou DG*, p. 98.

³³ *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu minzu zhi” 6, p. 17a; *Lanzhou DG*, p. 98. One version writes Zhang 章 instead of Tian.

³⁴ I conducted the interview on November 21, 2002, with Yuan Zongshan, a Daoist priest and president of the Lanzhou Daoist Association and vice-president of the Gansu Daoist Association. According to the official statistics of 1993, in Gansu Province there were slightly over 300 Quanzhen Daoists, and 800 Zhengyi Daoists who have licenses. See Bureau of Religious Affairs, Gansu Province, “Gansu sheng Daojiao xiehui fahui le zongjiao tuanti yingyou de zuoyong” 甘肅省道教協會發揮了宗教團體應有的作用, *Zhongguo Daojiao* (1993.3), pp. 14–15.

³⁵ *Lanzhou DG*, p. 95.

³⁶ Lanzhou was home as well to the legends of prominent Daoist master Zhang Sanfeng 張三丰 (1314?–1418?). See Yang Yi 楊儀 (fl. 1526–32), *Gaopo yiwen* 高坡異纂 (*Shuo ku* 說庫 edn.) 1, p. 2a; Jiao Hong 焦竑 (1541–1620), *Guochao xianzheng lu* 國朝獻徵錄 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng, 1965) 118, pp. 112b, 114a; *Liaodong zhi* 遼東志 (1537), 6.82b–83a; *Xiangyang fuzhi* 襄陽府志 (1584) 41, p. 12b; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 98, pp. 12a–b; *Gansu tongzhi* 甘肅通志 (1736) 41, pp. 10b–11b; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu muzhi” 6, p. 15b; Wong Shiu-hon 黃兆漢, “The Cult of Chang San-feng,” *Journal of Oriental Studies* 17.1–2 (1979), p. 15. In addition, Quanzhen Daoism was popular to a certain extent in Lanzhou, though it seems to have come to Lanzhou later than Zhengyi. Both the Longmen and

ing Ming is attested by the existence of at least fifty-two active Daoist temples in Lanzhou.³⁷

People in Lanzhou were said to have worshipped gods and deities.³⁸ They attended wedding and funeral rituals, especially the latter, which required large expenditures of money. They also practiced ancestor worship.³⁹ Many of the local seasonal and religious customs were characterized by Daoist elements. For instance, the inhabitants practiced the tomb rites and carried out the procession for the City God at the Qingming Festival.⁴⁰ The major City God Temple (Chenghuang miao 城隍廟) of Lanzhou was also the site of an important Daoist establishment, namely, the Daoist Registry (Daozheng si 道正司), the administrative unit responsible for certifying and disciplining Daoist practitioners,⁴¹ although City God temples are generally understood as local or popular religious institutions.

On the occasion of the Lantern Festival, people undertook the procession to various nearby Daoist temples, burning incense and praying for blessings.⁴² On the second day of the second month, people made offerings to the earth god (*tushen* 土神), and went to the two Grot-

Yushan 嶽山派 lineages of Quanzhen Daoism had establishments in Lanzhou. The famous Qing Quanzhen priest Liu Yiming 劉一明 (1734–1821) was once based in Lanzhou, too; see *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu minzu zhi” 6, p. 17a; *Gaolan xian xuzhi* (1843) 12, p. 84a; *Gansu KS*, pp. 295, 297–98, 300, 303; *Lanzhou DG*, pp. 59–61, 67–73.

³⁷ These temples are named in *Gansu KS*, pp. 237, 242–43, 249–50, 263–73, 285–87, 295–303, 568–74, 682, 705; *Lintao fuzhi* (1687) 6, pp. 8a–b, 12b–13a, 23a; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 28, pp. 1a, 9b–10a, 11a–12a, 13a–15b, 19b–20b; 30, pp. 1a, 4b–5a, 6a–7b; *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 6, pp. 11b–12a, 18a, 29b; *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* (1892) 16, pp. 3b–8a; 18, pp. 21a–23a, 27a–28a, 30a; 19, pp. 5b–11a; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu jianzhi zhi” 甘肅建置志 3, pp. 1b–6b, “Gansu minzu zhi” 6, p. 17a; *Gansu tongzhi* 12, pp. 2b–3a, 6a–b; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, p. 28(A)a; *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 12, pp. 4b–6b; 18, p. 23a; Huang Jian 黃諫 (1412–ca. 1457), “Jincheng guan ji” 金城關記, in Zhang Wei, ed., *Longyou jinshi lu* 隴右金石錄, in *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編 (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1977; hereafter, Zhang) 6, p. 6b; *Lanzhou DG*, pp. 4–5, 12, 15, 18–19, 23, 28–31, 47, 49; Li, *Xixing zaji*, pp. 205–7, 211, 213, 257, 259; *Lanzhou shi Chengguan quzhi*, pp. 1007–8, 1064; Gao Liangzuo 高良佐, *Xibei suiyao ji* 西北隨輶記 (1936); *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.), pp. 388–89; *Lanzhou GZ*, p. 4a; Sun Ximeng 孫希孟, *Xizheng xulu* 西徵續錄 (recorded in 1906–7; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.) 1, p. 30. I only count the Daoist temples that can be reliably dated. Many more have no clear information in local gazetteers of whether they were built in the Ming or the Qing. Also recorded are many temples of local cults that might have been related to Daoist traditions, e.g., temples of King Guan. For the sake of accuracy, I exclude these.

³⁸ *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 4, p. 17b; *Gansu tongzhi* (1736) 21, p. 2a; *Lanzhou fuzhi* 蘭州府志 (1833) 2, p. 37b.

³⁹ *Gansu tongzhi* (1736) 21, p. 2b; *Lanzhou fuzhi* (1833) 2, p. 37b; *Gaolan xian xuzhi* (1843) 4, p. 31b; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 11, pp. 1b–2a, 13b–17b; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu minzu zhi” 9, p. 2b.

⁴⁰ *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 11, p. 15b; *Gansu sheng xiangtu zhigao* (1948), p. 183.

⁴¹ *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 6, p. 18a; *Lintao fuzhi* (1687) 6, pp. 8a–b.

⁴² *Lanzhou DG*, p. 143.

toes of the Medicine King (Yaowang dong 藥王洞) and made offerings there, burning incense and praying for blessings and the healing of disease.⁴³ On the third day of the third month, people went to Mount of the North Tower (Beita shan 北塔山) celebrating the Festival of the Peach of the Queen Mother of the West. The same day is the birthday of the god Zhenwu 真武 (Perfect Warrior), when others made pilgrimage to Mount Renshou (Renshou shan 仁壽山).⁴⁴ On the eighth day of the fourth month and the seventh day of the seventh month were offerings to Goddess Golden Flower (Jinhua xiangu 金花仙姑), a local Ming Daoist goddess, in several temples dedicated to her, and the temple festival lasted several days.⁴⁵ On the thirteenth day of the fifth month, worshipers attended the temple festival on Misty Mountain (Yunwu shan 雲霧山) to celebrate King Guan's 關王 revelation.⁴⁶ And on the eighth day of the eighth month Lanzhou residents celebrated the temple festival of the Thunder Altar (Leitan hui 雷壇會, or Leitan miao hui 雷壇廟會) at the Daoist Monastery of Golden Heaven and participated in the ritual there.⁴⁷

THE MONASTERY OF SUBLIME MYSTERY AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS

The Monastery of Sublime Mystery was founded in the Song and was also known at various times as the Monastery of Eastern Florescence (Donghua guan 東華觀).⁴⁸ As early as Song times it was located at the north side of today's Zhangye Road 張掖路, at the northeast corner of the Chengguan district 城關區 of Lanzhou. The Monastery underwent extensive repairs in 1363, 1418, 1430, 1536–40, and several more times in the Qing. After 1941, it was for the first time transformed into a hospital, and then a police bureau.⁴⁹ Some Lanzhou residents in their sixties or seventies claim that it was destroyed in Republican times, but do not remember the exact date of its destruction.⁵⁰ After 1949,

⁴³ *Gaolan xian xuzhi* (1843) 4, p. 31b; *Gansu sheng xiangtu zhigao* (1948), p. 183.

⁴⁴ *Lanzhou DG*, p. 143.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

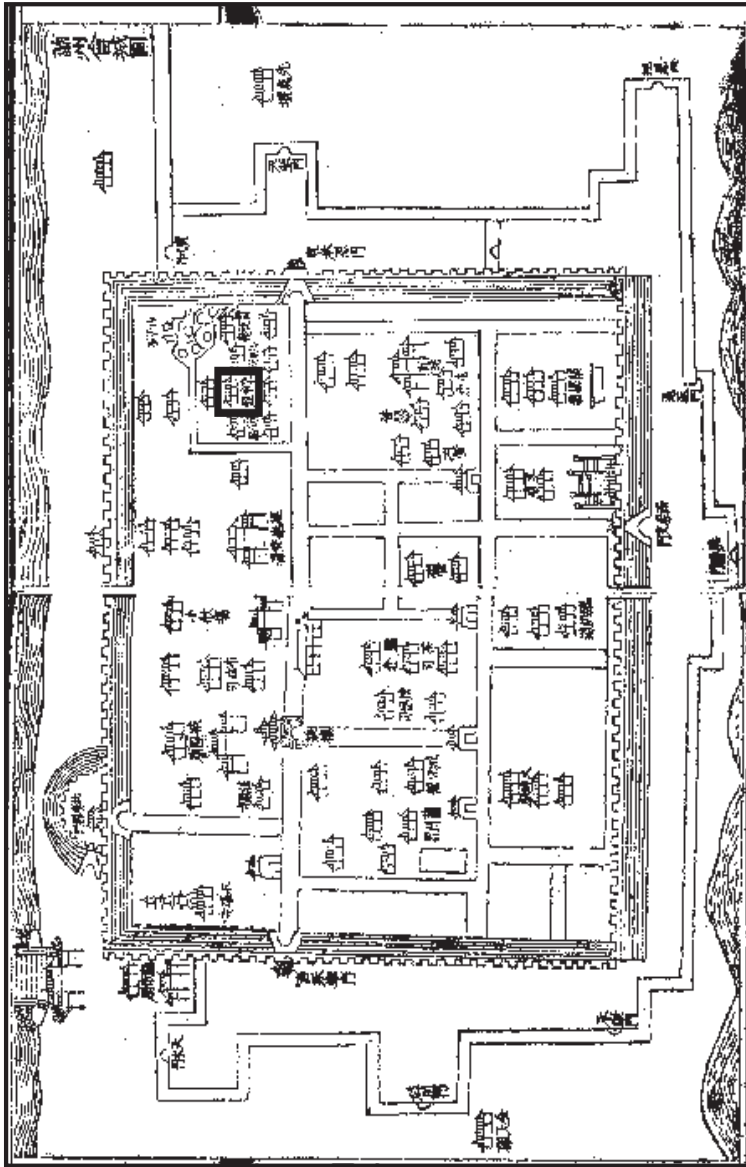
⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ See *Lanzhou GZ*, p. 19b; Lanzhou compiling board, *Xinxing de gongye chengshi: Lanzhou* 新興的工業城市蘭州 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin, 1987), p. 192; Cheng Xianjia 程先甲, *You Long congji* 游隴叢記 (1922; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.) 2, p. 1a; *Gansu KS*, p. 267; *Lanzhou DG*, p. 143.

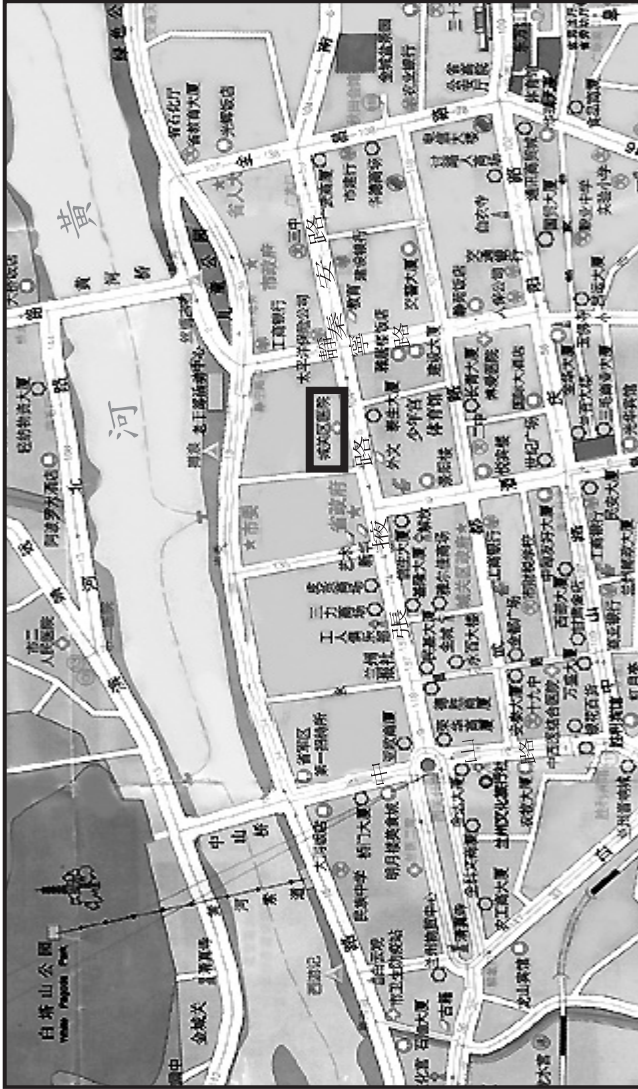
⁴⁸ On the founding date of Xuanmiao guan, see *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* (1892) 19, p. 6a; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* 30, p. 4b; *Lanzhou TG*, pp. 66, 68.

⁴⁹ See *Lanzhou GZ*, p. 19b; *Lanzhou TG*, p. 68; Compiling Committee for the Gazetteer of Chengguan District, Lanzhou, *Lanzhou shi Chengguan quzhi* 蘭州市城關區志 (Lanzhou: Lanzhou shi Chengguan qu difangzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui, [1990s]), pp. 711, 1018.

⁵⁰ This information was provided by Zhang Xiaolin 張曉林, a Lanzhou native and a doctoral student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where I met him.

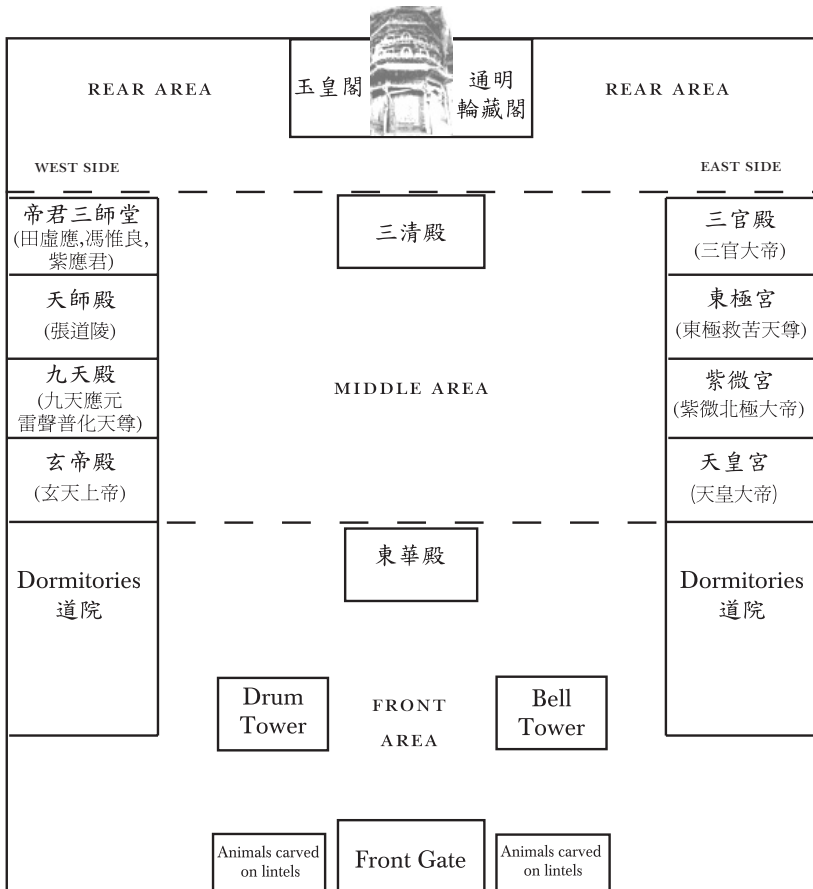


*Map 1. Lanzhou in the Early Qing
From Gansu tongzhi 甘肅通志 (1736); structure at upper-right enclosed in rectangle
represents Xuanniao guan.*



*Map 2. Modern Location of Xuanmiao guan
Detail from Lanzhou jiaotong liyou tu 兰州交通旅游图 (2000). Rectangle marks
original location of Xuanmiao guan; now site of People's Hospital of the Chengguan
District.*

the original site off Zhangye Road was occupied variously by the staff quarters of the Public Security Department of Gansu province, a supply and marketing cooperative, some stores, and residential apartments, while the ancient architecture and Daoist facilities in the establishment were completely dismantled.⁵¹ Even Daoist priests at the Monastery of White Clouds in Lanzhou, the main surviving and active Daoist monastery today, have only heard about it but do not know the details of its history. The former location is now the site of the People's Hospital of the Chengguan District, Lanzhou City (Lanzhou shi Chengguan qu renmin yiyuan 蘭州市城關區人民醫院) (see maps 1 and 2).⁵²



Schematic Diagram of the Monastery of Sublime Mystery

⁵¹ *Lanzhou DG*, pp. 46-47.

⁵² *Lanzhou shi Chengguan quzhi*, p. 1018.

When the steles were set up in mid-Ming times, the Monastery had three gates, and the compound divided into three halls – front, middle, and rear. The front hall area consisted of the Hall of Eastern Florescence (Donghua dian 東華殿) where the Emperor of Eastern Florescence (Donghua dijun 東華帝君) was worshipped, the dormitories for Daoist priests containing various statues of Daoist gods, and the bell and drum towers.⁵³ (See the schematic diagram provided here.) The “four spiritual beings” (the Blue Dragon, White Tiger, Red Bird, and Dark Warrior) were engraved on the lintels over the two sides of the front gate. In addition, at least in the Qing, Sublime Mystery had a printing shop that produced many woodblock prints, some bound into large, thick books.⁵⁴ We do not know whether this workshop already existed in Ming or not.

In the center of the middle-hall area at Sublime Mystery was Hall of the Three Clarities (Sanqing dian 三清殿).⁵⁵ The east side-rooms, to the rear of the priests’ quarters, constituted various palaces and halls for Daoist divinities. In them stood statues of the Great Celestial Thearch (Tianhuang Dadi 天皇大帝), the Great Thearch of Purple Tenuity of the North Pole (Ziwei Beiji Dadi 紫微北極大帝), the Exalted Heavenly Worthy of the East Pole Who Gives Relief to the Suffering (Dongji Jiuku Tianzun 東極救苦天尊), and the Grand Monarch of Three Lords of Heaven, Earth, and Waters (Sanguan Dadi 三官大帝).

The west side-rooms of the middle hall consisted of halls containing the statues of the Supreme Emperor of the Dark Heaven (Xuantian shangdi 玄天上帝) or Zhenwu (Perfect Warrior), the Universe-Converted Heavenly Worthy of Thunder Who Corresponds with the Prime within the Nine Celestial Realms (Jiutian yingyuan leisheng puhua tianzun 九天應元雷聲普化天尊), the Heavenly Master Zhang Daoling 張道陵, and the three Daoist masters who are the three manifestations of the Highest Venerable Lord (Taishang Laojun 太上老君), namely Tian Xuying 田虛應, Feng Weiliang 馮惟良 and Ziyingjun 紫應君.

⁵³ See the entry “Donghuaguan zhong” 東華觀鐘 (1469), in Zhang 6, p. 12a; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, p. 28(A)a, where the Hall of Eastern Florescence is also called Donghua jixian dian 東華集仙殿. Zhang Wei, a native of Lintao, compiled several local gazetteers of the areas neighboring Lanzhou and recorded historic sites of Lanzhou. *Longyou jinshi lu* collects all the bronze and stone inscriptions available in Gansu and Ningxia provinces in his time. As the most comprehensive epigraphic collection of this area, the work supplements data in *Daojia jinshi lue* such as the seals on the stele inscriptions, the bronze inscriptions, and the identification of certain patrons at Xuanmiao guan.

⁵⁴ See *Lanzhou GZ*, p. 19b.

⁵⁵ According to *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, p. 28 (A)a, there was a Hall of Liaoyang (Liaoyang dian 寥陽殿); and according to *Lanzhou TG*, p. 68, there was a Palace of Jade Purity (Yuqing gong 玉清宮). Both the Liaoyang dian and Yuqing gong seem to have been other names for the Sanqing dian.

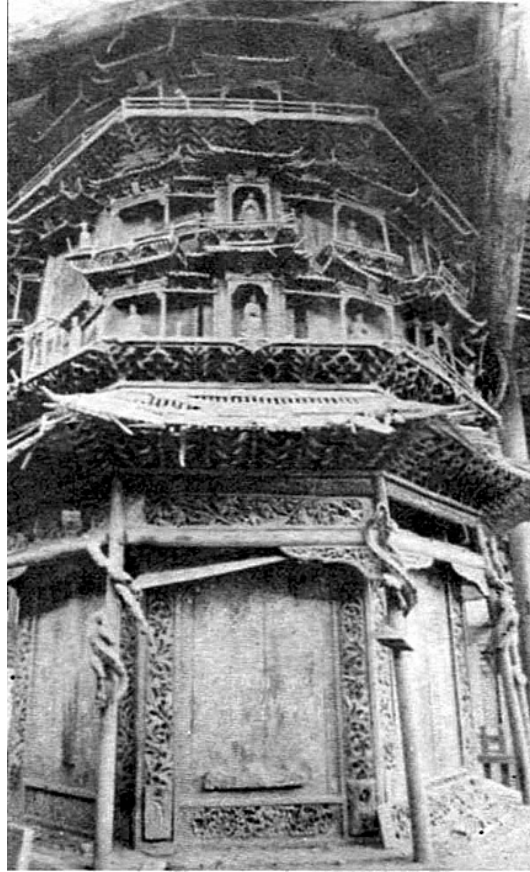
In the rear hall area of the Monastery were pavilions devoted to the Jade Emperor (second floor) and the Prayer Wheel (first floor; see figure 1). The Pavilion of the Jade Emperor was also known as the Pavilion of Pure Luminousness (Qingming ge 清明閣), in which the Jade Emperor was enshrined.

A key feature of the first floor was a tall wooden prayer wheel or prayer cylinder 嘛呢法輪 (or 轉輪), which seems to have originated in Tibetan Buddhist ritual. Turning the wheel was thought to be equivalent to reading scriptures or incantations. In Tibetan it is called *Ma-ni-chos-'Khor* ("Mani religion wheel"). The prayer wheel in the Monastery, like its Tibetan counterparts, must have had protruding spokelike handles by which worshippers could spin the wheel with a single push. The wheel was octagonal and had three levels, on which the Nine Luminaries 九曜 and the Twenty-eight Lunar Mansion constellations 二十八宿 were represented. Under the prayer wheel were eight robust statues of deities, one on each side, who appeared to be carrying the prayer wheel.⁵⁶ When turned by passers-by or those entering the temple, the images of the constellations carved on the prayer wheel would shift one by one. At the four corners of the prayer wheel stood four huge pillars on which four coiled dragons were fastened. In addition, on each of the four cardinal directions there was a statue of a standing god who was riding clouds, twelve of them in total from all the three levels (see figure 1).⁵⁷

⁵⁶ The Nine Luminaries refer to the sun, moon, the five planets, i.e., Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn-Rāhu 羅候 (the spirit that causes eclipses), and Ketu 計都, a comet. On the twenty-eight lunar mansion constellations or twenty-eight lunar mansions, see Joseph Needham and Wang Ling, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1959) 3, pp. 231–32. The Nine Luminaries were of Buddhist origin. Daoism, however, has adopted them into its own cosmological system. The twenty-eight lunar mansions have had both astronomical and Daoist significance.

⁵⁷ On of layout details and architectural features, see Zhu Zhenjing 朱真澗 (r. 1518–55), "Chongjian Xuanmiao guan ji" 重建玄妙觀記 (hereafter, Zhu), in Chen, *Daojia jinshi lue*, p. 1283; Zou Yancai 鄒彥才 (fl. 1540–56), "Chongjian Xuanmiao guan beiji" 重建玄妙觀碑碣 (hereafter, Zou), in *ibid.*, pp. 1283–84; Wu Daodong 吳道東 (fl. 1528–40), "Chongxiu Xuanmiao guan biji" 重修玄妙觀壁記 (hereafter, Wu), in *ibid.*, pp. 1284–85; Xiao Sheng 蕭笙 (fl. 1541), "Sanshitang ji" 三師堂記, in *ibid.* (hereafter, Xiao), pp. 1285–86; "Donghuaguan zhong" (1469), in Zhang 6, p. 12a; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, p. 28(A)a; *Lanzhou GZ*, pp. 19a–b; *Lanzhou TG*, p. 68. This description of the temple is mainly drawn from the four Ming inscriptions, the Ming bell inscription and the early-Qing gazetteer, which claims that "all [the halls and facilities of the Xuanmiao guan] are ancient remains," that is, at least the remains of the Ming. Cheng Zhaosheng's description is mainly derived from Zhang's *Lanzhou gujin zhu* (1943), which clearly depicts the old situation. Thus, every feature of the Xuanmiao guan was described in the Ming and early-Qing sources except the details of the prayer wheel. Given that Zhu, Zou, and Wu already mention the Pavilion of the Luminous Prayer Wheel (Tongming lunzang ge 通明輪藏閣), or Pavilion of the Luminousness (Tongming ge 通明閣), and an association that supported the rebuilding of Xuanmiao guan in the Ming with a stele inscription is named the Association of the Celestial Prayer Wheel (Feitian falun hui 飛天法輪會), the prayer wheel certainly existed in mid-Ming, and its details must have reflected the original condition.

This prayer wheel may have received influence at some level from Tibetan Buddhism. However, while a prayer wheel in Tibetan Buddhism is used to gain Buddhist merit, the wheel in the Monastery was molded to Daoist needs. For instance, whereas the prayer inscribed on the typical Tibetan prayer wheel is generally the six-syllable mantra, “Om mani padme hum,” the Ming-era Lanzhou monastery wheel had the Daoist cosmos (Nine Luminaries and Twenty-eight Mansions) carved on it, without the principal six-syllable mantra at all.⁵⁸ Piet van der Loon has demonstrated that the use of the prayer wheel has a long history in Daoism. In Daoist tradition, it can at least be traced to the thirteenth century, when prayer wheels, also called *feitian da falun* 飛天大法輪 (“Prayer Wheel of the Grand Model of the Flying Heavens”) were installed in Daoist temples. A fourteenth-century prayer wheel is described in the following terms:



*Figure 1. Prayer Wheel on Mt. Douchuan
After Xiao Dingpei, Douchuan shanzhi.*

⁵⁸ For an introduction to the prayer wheel or prayer cylinder in Tibetan Buddhism, see Emil Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet: Including a Description of the Materials Collected by H., A., & R. de Schlagintweit during the Scientific Mission to India and High Asia* (London: Susil Gupta, 1968), pp. 120–21, 229–32; Robert B. Ekvall, *Religious Observances in Tibet: Patterns and Function* (Chicago: U. Chicago P., 1964), pp. 115, 120–23; Franz Michael, *Rule by Incarnation: Tibetan Buddhism and Its Role in Society and State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 151–52; L. Austine Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons Limited, 1971), pp. 149–50.

Supported by figures of dragons and other supernatural beings, this repository rotated on a vertical axle. The books were stored inside: the upper part was decorated with carvings representing the constellations, which revolved around the Dipper. When people suffered from misfortune, they would come to the temple, release the “hollow bar 窳塞,” and turn the huge structure. The priests sounded their clapper bells and struck the big bell; they sacrificed to the stars and made the steps of the Dipper.⁵⁹

Van der Loon personally observed the prayer wheel and the ritual related to it. According to him, in Daoism “the term ‘turning the repository’ (*zhuan zang* 轉藏) still survives today in a ritual to deliver from the Lake of Blood the souls of those who have died from unnatural causes, including women who have died in childbirth. A paper cylinder, four to seven feet high, is used for this purpose.”⁶⁰

While the prayer wheel in the Monastery of Sublime Mystery no longer exists, I was able to observe one of the surviving Daoist prayer wheels in the Hall of the Flying Heavens Prayer Wheel (Feitian zang dian 飛天藏殿), Monastery of Cloudy Rock (Yunyan si 雲巖寺), on Mount Douchuan 竇圖山 at Jiangyou 江油, Sichuan. It provides us with concrete details. The prayer wheel cylinder on Mount Douchuan is 10.8 meters high and 7.5 meters in diameter. It was constructed in 1181, and was also known as the Prayer Wheel with Prayer of the Sutra (*Zhuanlun jingzang* 轉輪經藏). Like the prayer wheel in the Monastery, this one was also a Daoist prayer cylinder able to be spun by a passer-by or worshipper by a single push, for seeking good fortune, and also octagonal and tri-level. The top level shows sophisticated heavenly and immortal palaces and pavilions. On all three levels are more than 200 wooden statues of Daoist immortals, some large, some small, originally carved in the Song period and renovated later.⁶¹ Each of the eight octagonal corners presents a twisting dragon. In front of the prayer wheel stand two huge pillars on each of which is fastened a large twisting dragon. The dragons function similarly to the twelve standing gods that rode clouds at the prayer wheel at Sublime Mystery. Although there is no such Daoist motif as the Nine Luminaries and Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions carved on the Mount Douchuan wheel, the latter is, however, known locally as the Chariot of Stars (*Xingchen che* 星辰車). Thus, it

⁵⁹ Piet van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period: A Critical Study and Index* (London: Ithaca Press, 1984), p. 57.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ At the lower level, only six large wooden statues of Daoist immortals are preserved.

must have been associated with the Daoist constellations.⁶² In short, Van der Loon's historical study, his observations, and my fieldwork on the Douchuan wheel demonstrate that the prayer wheel has a long history in the Daoist tradition, and that the prayer wheel of the Monastery, in Lanzhou, would have been significant in a Daoist establishment and in Daoist rituals (see figure 1).

The Four Stele Associations

Each of the four steles that comprise the subject of our investigation was connected to a society that supported the rebuilding of the Monastery of Sublime Mystery. The four societies were: the Xuanji Association (Xuanji hui 璇璣會), Association of the Celestial Prayer Wheel (Feitian falun hui 飛天法輪會), Association of Jade Light (Yuguang hui 玉光會), and the Association of the Dark Emperor (Xuandi hui 玄帝會).

The term *xuanji* 璇璣 originally referred to an instrument made of jade, and “unquestionably the term ... came to be applied ... to certain stars,” namely, the second and third stars (Celestial Armillary and Celestial Template) of the Big Dipper.⁶³ “Sometimes the two words form a compound used to indicate the group of four stars that form the bowl of the Dipper.”⁶⁴ Thus, the Xuanji Association seems to have been dedicated to the cult of the Big Dipper, which, as the most potent of constellations, determines one's fate.⁶⁵ In addition, according to Isabelle Robinet, “The Bushel [or, Dipper] also plays the role of a vehicle which transports the faithful to the heavens.”⁶⁶ More importantly, *xuanji* is a name of a type of Daoist ritual (*xuanji fa* 璇璣法, *xuanji zhai* 璇璣齋) which appeared in the late Northern Song and was well known

⁶² On the prayer wheel on Mt. Douchuan, in addition to my fieldwork of May 23, 2001, see Xiao Dingpei 蕭定沛, *Douchuan shanzhi* 寶圖山志 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin, 1991), pp. 37–38, 43–44, 128; Luo Shunxiang 羅順祥 and Huang Shilin 黃石林 et al., *Douchuan shan jianjie* 寶圖山簡介 (Jiangyou: Jiangyou shi wenwu baohu guanli suo, n.d.), pp. 3, 5–7; Ding Yahong 丁雅鴻 and Liu Zhiwen 劉志文, comp., *Douchuan shan yinglian xuanzhu* 寶圖山楹聯選注 (Jiangyou: Jiangyou shi wenwu guanli suo, 1991), pp. 26–27.

⁶³ Needham and Wang, *Science and Civilisation in China*, v. 3, p. 334. See also Edward H. Schafer, “Wu Yün's Stanzas on ‘Saunters in Sylphdom,’” *MS* 35 (1981–83), p. 338, n.126.

⁶⁴ Paul W. Kroll, “Li Po's Transcendent Diction,” *JAS* 106.1 (1986), pp. 110–11. See also Isabelle Robinet, *Taoist Meditation: The Mao-shan Tradition of Great Purity*, trans. Julian F. Pas and Norman J. Girardot (Albany: State University of New York P., 1993), pp. 166–67, 195, 200–24 for a treatment of the symbolism of the Big Dipper in relation to Daoism, and the latter's use of the constellation.

⁶⁵ *Taishang xuanling beidou benming changsheng miaojing* 太上玄靈北斗本命長生妙經 (DZ 623), p. 1b, states that the Northern Dipper is in charge of life and death. See also Kroll, “Li Po's Transcendent Diction,” p. 110.

⁶⁶ Robinet, *Taoist Meditation*, p. 209, for a discussion of the “Method for Passing On to Life and Certifying Immortality.” See also *Dongzhen Shangqing kaitian santu qixing yidu jing* 洞真上清開天三圖七星移度經 (DZ 1317) 1, pp. 2a–b; 2, pp. 3b–4a.

and performed in the Ming. The *xuanji* rite is associated with the cult of the Big Dipper and its features. The phrase, as well as the rite itself, is seen to function in various retreats (*zhai* 齋), liturgies (*yi* 儀), litanies (*chan* 懺) and seals (*yin* 印), and sometimes the *xuanji* rite consumes an entire day.⁶⁷ Hence, we may assume that it was practiced in the Monastery for ordinary patrons and, in particular, for the members of the Xuanji Association.

The Association of the Celestial Prayer Wheel seems to have been connected with the Pavilion of the Luminous Prayer Wheel, where a wooden prayer wheel was set up. This wheel, as described above, was associated with such Daoist motifs as the Nine Luminaries and Twenty-eight Lunar Mansions. Moreover, as Piet van der Loon's study demonstrates, the prayer wheel is related to certain Daoist rituals. As in the case of the *xuanji* rite, mentioned above, the prayer wheel at Sublime Mystery was used in particularly for members of the Association of the Celestial Prayer Wheel. In addition, the Jade Emperor was worshipped in the Pavilion of Pure Luminousness on the upper level of the Pavilion of the Luminous Prayer Wheel. Thus, the Association of the Celestial Prayer Wheel would actually have been dedicated to the cult of the Jade Emperor. The association was thus responsible for the maintenance of the pavilion.

The identification of the Association of Jade Light is unclear. However, since probably all the members had Daoist names, it may have been a professional association of Daoists – clerics and/or ordained lay Daoists. The association was characterized by the rite of Salvation through Refinement by an Iron Jar, a specific Daoist ritual (to be discussed, below).

The Association of the Dark Emperor was dedicated to the cult of the Dark Emperor (Zhenwu). The configuration of the Monastery contained a Hall of the Dark Emperor, and from the inscription it is clear that the association maintained the hall.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ See Jin Yunzhong 金允中 (fl. 1223–25), *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (DZ 1223), "Preface," p. 6b; 10, pp. 7b–8a; Ning Quanzhen 寧全真 (1101–81), *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* 靈寶領教濟度金書 (DZ 466) 213, pp. 1a–9b; Zhou Side 周思得 (1359–1451), *Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu* 上清靈寶濟度大成金書 (*Zangwai daoshu* edn.) 4, p. 64a; 6, pp. 36a–41a; 9, pp. 40b–41a; 10, pp. 58a–62b; 25, p. 57b. See also Liu Ts'un-yan 柳存仁, "Wudai dao Nan Song shi de Daojiao zhajiao" 五代到南宋時的道教齋醮, in his *Hefeng tang wenji* 和風堂文集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1991), pp. 777–78; Ding Huang 丁煌, "Guoli zhongyang tushuguan cang Ming Xuande banian kanben Shangqing lingbao jidu dacheng jinshu sishi juan chuyan: Daozang shisoushu xilie yanjiu zhi yi (1)" 國立中央圖書館藏明宣德八年刊本上清靈寶濟度大成金書四十卷初研道藏失蒐書系列研究之一, *Daojiaoxue tansuo* 2 (1989), pp. 50–51.

⁶⁸ Xiao, pp. 1285–86.

From the above, we see that the four associations affiliated with it may have had different functions and responsibilities. Actually, it was a common practice for different organizations or associations of a temple to have varying tasks, for example maintaining a part of a temple, as in the case of the Temple of the Eastern Peak in Beijing.⁶⁹ The societies connected with the Monastery of Sublime Mystery took responsibility for renovating and maintaining the different halls.

PATTERNS OF PATRONAGE

During Ming times, Lanzhou patrons would have had many choices of a preferred temple to receive their benefactions. The Chinese Buddhist monasteries, for example, were:

Hualin Monastery 華林寺
 Chongqing Monastery 崇慶寺
 Fuyun Monastery 法雲寺
 Jieyin Monastery 接引寺
 Baiyi Monastery 白衣寺
 Puzhao Monastery 普照寺
 Jiafu Monastery 嘉福寺
 Xingyuan Monastery 興遠寺
 Cuiying Monastery 萃英寺
 Lingfeng Monastery 靈峰寺
 Cuiling Monastery 萃靈寺
 Gan'en Monastery 感恩寺
 Taer Monastery 塔兒寺
 Qianfeng Monastery 乾峰寺.

We know of Tantric Buddhist monasteries, for example:

Datong Monastery 大通寺
 Duoda Monastery 硃磧寺,

as well as state and popular religious temples:

Qidao Temple 旗纛廟
 Wuhou Shrine 武侯祠
 Huozu Temple 火祖廟,

all in addition to Daoist establishments.

The temples were supported by the princes, eunuchs, military servicemen, and possibly by the local elite and merchants as well.⁷⁰ Not

⁶⁹ For a succinct discussion of the temple associations dedicated to the Temple of the Eastern Peak in Ming Beijing, see Naquin, *Peking*, pp. 232–36, 239.

⁷⁰ See *Gansu KS*, pp. 185, 234, 242, 254, 259, 287, 303, 308, 312, 681–83; *Gansu quan-*

only did they donate to these monasteries and temples and participate in their festivals, but we see a good level of patronage of the Monastery of Sublime Mystery in addition. From it we begin to see the patterns of patronage and the meaning that this particular Daoist temple had for its patrons.

The four main inscriptions of the Monastery, with lists of contributors and patrons, provide rich information of the temple and lay associations.⁷¹ The patrons can be divided into royalty, eunuchs, military servicemen, civil officials, the local elite, merchants, Daoist clerics, and other town folks.

Royal Patrons

This group includes the Ming princes and their family members. In 1418, prince Zhuang of Su 肅莊王 (Zhu Ying 朱楨; titled 1378–1419) restored Sublime Mystery.⁷² The inscriptions mention that the former's son, prince Kang of Su 肅康王 (Zhu Zhanyan 朱瞻焰; titled 1424–64), restored the temple in 1430.⁷³ A grandson, prince Gong of Su 肅恭王 (Zhu Gongzong 朱貢綜; titled 1487–1536), ordered rebuilding in 1536.⁷⁴ The last prince of Su, Zhu Zhihong 朱識鋹 (ca. 1612–43), whose Daoist name was Taihua Daoren 太華道人, wrote the horizontal inscribed board at the Hall of the Three Clarities, in the Monastery.⁷⁵

Prince Duanhui of Chunhua 淳化端惠王 (Zhu Zhenhong 朱真泓; titled 1500–52), with a Daoist name of Yuanyi Daoren 元一道人, sponsored the rebuilding and commissioned, with his seal, a temple inscription by Xiao Sheng 蕭笙 in 1541.⁷⁶ Prince Ronghe of Qianshan 鉛山榮和王 (Zhu Zhenjing 朱真澗; titled 1518–55), wrote an inscription for the Monastery in 1541,⁷⁷ and Prince Zhuanghui of Huining 會寧莊惠王 (Zhu Zhenrun 朱真潤; titled 1531–68) supported the rebuilding and impressed his seal

sheng xin tongzhi (1909) 30, pp. 2a–3a; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu jianzhi zhi” 3, pp. 2b–3a; *Lanzhou shi Chengguan quzhi*, pp. 1008, 1010; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, p. 25a; Zhang 6, pp. 11b, 25a; *Lanzhou TG*, p. 129; *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 6, p. 11a; *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* (1892) 18, p. 27b.

⁷¹ The *Daojia jinshi lue* edition of “Chongjian Xuanmiao guan beiji” eliminates twenty names from the list of the Association of the Celestial Prayer Wheel, although other names are retained. See Zou, pp. 1283–84.

⁷² See *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu jianzhi zhi” 3, p. 2b; Zhu, p. 1283.

⁷³ Zhu, p. 1283. According to this inscription, Xuanmiao guan was restored in 1430 by Zhu Ying, who had died in 1419. Thus this renovation must have been conducted by Zhu Zhanyan.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1283; Zou, pp. 1283–84; Wu, pp. 1284–85; Xiao, pp. 1285–86.

⁷⁵ *Lanzhou TG*, p. 68.

⁷⁶ Xiao, pp. 1285–86; Zhang 6, p. 22a.

⁷⁷ Zhu, p. 1283. The *Longyou jinshi lu* edition of this inscription claims, however, that the inscription was written by Song Shi 宋式 instead of Zhu Zhenjing, but stamped by Zhu Zhenjing. See Zhang 6, pp. 21b–22a.

on an inscription for the temple by Zou Yancai 鄒彥才.⁷⁸ Prince Zhuangyi of Yanchang 延長莊懿王 (Zhu Zhenjing 朱真澆; ca. 1521–90), whose Daoist name was Baozhen Daoren 寶真道人, also sponsored the rebuilding and stamped an inscription by Wu Daodong 吳道東.⁷⁹ Finally Wu Jing 吳經, whose Daoist name was Xuanton 玄通 and who was a relative of the prince of Su, was a member of the Association of the Dark Emperor. In 1565, consort Wu 吳妃, wife of prince Huai of Su 肅懷王 (Zhu Jindu 朱縉堵; fl. 1557–64), claimed herself “a follower of Dao” and commissioned the printing of 3,000 copies of the very popular Daoist *Scripture of the Three Offices* (*Sanguan jing* 三官經), distributing them to readers as a form of religious merit.⁸⁰ In addition to this consort Wu, wife of prince Huai of Su, another consort Wu, wife of prince Ding of Su 肅定王 (Zhu Biguang 朱弼光; 1500–62), also had the same last name. Because their surname Wu was the same character as Wu Jing’s, and they and Wu Jing appeared to have lived at the same time, Wu Jing might have been a relative of one of the consorts Wu. In two steles, Wu Jing’s name appears a total of twice.⁸¹ In addition, Sublime Mystery was restored and renovated time and again by various unidentifiable princes of Su, for example, the reconstruction of 1537.⁸²

Eunuchs

From the inscriptions we learn about several eunuchs, among them He Xian 賀賢, an attendant (*chengfeng* 承奉) of the Princely Establishment of Su, rank 6a, and retired in 1540.⁸³ Other eunuch patrons include Yan Shun 閻順 and Sun Qian 孫遷, two other Attendants.⁸⁴ The latter’s names appear twice in two steles.⁸⁵

Military Servicemen

The name Lu Jing 魯經 (ca. 1501–1556) appears on one inscription. Lu was a Mongol and native of Zhuanglang 莊浪 Guard (present-day Yongdeng 永登). His was a hereditary military-officer family; their

⁷⁸ Zou, pp. 1283–84; Zhang 6, pp. 21b–22a.

⁷⁹ Zou, pp. 1283–84; Zhang 6, pp. 21b–22a; Wu, pp. 1284–85.

⁸⁰ Zhou Shaoliang 周紹良, “Xinkan Wudang zuben Leibian quanxiang qisheng shilu shuji” 新刊武當足本類編全相啓聖實錄書記, *Wenxian* (1985.2), p. 170. For the *Sanguan jing* whose complete title is *Taishang sanyuan cifu shezui jie’e xiaozai yansheng baoming miaojing* 太上三元賜福赦罪解厄消災延生保命妙經, see *Taishang sanyuan cifu shezui jie’e xiaozai yansheng baoming miaojing* (DZ 1442).

⁸¹ On the latter consort Wu, see *Mingshi* 明史 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1974) 117, p. 3586. See Wu, pp. 1284–85; Xiao, pp. 1285–86.

⁸² *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu jianzhi zhi” 3, p. 2b.

⁸³ Zou, pp. 1283–84.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 1283–84; Wu, pp. 1284–85.

⁸⁵ Zou, pp. 1283–84; Wu, pp. 1284–85.

ancestor Ašiytu-gümbü-šigia 阿失都鞏卜失加 surrendered his forces to the Ming in 1369. Like other members of his family, Lu Jing's role in service was as a military officer in the Gansu border defense. Promoted successively, he became a commissioner-in-chief (*dudu* 都督; rank 1a) of the Front Chief Military Commission (Qianjun *dudu fu* 前軍都督府) with the duty assignment of regional commander (*zongbing guan* 總兵官) in charge of the defense of Shaanxi, in 1540,⁸⁶ the very time when he sponsored the reconstruction of the Monastery. Regarding Lu Jing and his family, Henry Serruys rightly observes, "Lu Chien [魯鑑], his son [Lu] Lin [魯麟], and Lin's son [Lu] Ching, held high military posts, higher and more important than those which few Mongols ever occupied throughout the duration of the Ming empire."⁸⁷ Lu Jing's father, Lu Lin, had built a Daoist temple named The Yuanzhen Monastery 元真觀 at Zhuanglang Guard. And Lu Jing also founded a Daoist temple called The Thunder Alter 雷壇 in the same locale.⁸⁸

Liu Wen 劉文, a native of Yanghe 陽和 Guard (one source says Qingyang 慶陽 Guard), also appears in one of inscriptions. From 1522 on he was already a high-ranking general. In 1540, when he sponsored the reconstruction of the Monastery, he was promoted to commissioner-in-chief, rank 1a, of the Right Chief Military Commission (Youjun *dudu fu* 右軍都督府) with the assignment of regional commander in charge of the defense of the Gansu Guard, and with the prestige title of Pingqiang general (*Pingqiang jiangjun* 平羌將軍).⁸⁹

Chen She 陳畬 was a regional military commissioner (*du zhihui-shi* 都指揮使; rank 2a), with the duty assignment of grand commandant (*shoubei* 守備) in charge of the defense of the Hexi 河西 region in 1540, when he sponsored the reconstruction of 1536-40.⁹⁰

Miao Luan 苗鑾 was a native of Lanzhou. In 1522 he was already an upper middle-ranking general and finally gained promotion to regional

⁸⁶ For Lu Jing, see Lu Jixun 魯紀勛 (fl. 1851), *Lushi shipu* 魯氏世譜 (1851; *Zhongguo xibei wenxian congshu* edn.), pp. 7b-8b; Xu Qianxue 徐乾學 (1631-94), *Mingshi liezhuan* 明史列傳 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng, 1970) 45, pp. 14a-16a; Henry Serruys, "The Mongols of Kansu during the Ming," *MCB* 10 (1952-1955), pp. 336-37, 343-45; Gong Yin 龔蔭, *Zhongguo tusi zhidu* 中國土司制度 (Kunming: Yunnan minzu, 1992), p. 1307; *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1667) 18A, p. 113a; *Gansu tongzhi* (1736) 27, p. 27a; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), "Gansu jishi" 甘肅記事 4, p. 37b; Zou, pp. 1283-84; "Zhaoshi Yuezhen Haidu bei" 詔示嶽鎮海濱碑, reverse side, in Zhang Jiangtao 張江濤, comp., *Huashan beishi* 華山碑石 (Xi'an: Sanqin, 1995), p. 268.

⁸⁷ Serruys, "Mongols of Kansu," p. 345.

⁸⁸ See *Gansu KS*, p. 683.

⁸⁹ For Liu Wen, see *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1667) 18A, p. 114a; *Lintao fuzhi* (1687) 2, p. 15a; *Gansu tongzhi* (1736) 27, p. 77a; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 51, p. 51; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), "Gansu junzheng zhi" 甘肅軍政志 8, p. 53a, "Gansu jishi" 4, p. 38a; Zou, pp. 1283-84.

⁹⁰ For Chen She, see Zhu, p. 1283.

military commissioner, rank 2a. In 1540 he was a regional vice-military commissioner (*du zhihui tongzhi* 都指揮同知; rank 2b), with the duty assignment of regional vice-commander (*fu zongbing* 副總兵) and vice-commandant (*xietong shoubei* 協同守備) in charge of the defense of Ningxia Defense Command. In addition to Sublime Mystery, he patronized the City God Temple of Lanzhou and participated in the ritual of praying for rain by supplying calligraphy for the temple inscription.⁹¹

Song Hao 宋灝 was already an upper middle-ranking officer in 1529. In 1540 he was an assistant regional military commissioner (*du-zhihui qianshi* 都指揮僉事; rank 3a), with the assignment of grand commandant in charge of the defense of the Minzhou 岷州 Guard.⁹²

Song Tang 宋鏜 was a commander (*zhihui shi* 指揮使; rank 3a), of Lanzhou Guard, and in 1540 he was retired. He was a pious Daoist believer and a member of the Association of the Celestial Prayer Wheel and the Association of Jade Light.⁹³ He seems to have been one of the organizers of the rebuilding of the Monastery. His name appears a total of four times, on two steles.⁹⁴

Other names include those of Wei Tang 魏鏜, a regional military commissioner, rank 3a, assigned to supervise the Rotational Troops (*guanli banci* 管理班次),⁹⁵ and Gao Bing 高柄, a company commander (*baihu* 百戶; rank 6a, an upper-low rank), and a member of the Association of Jade Light.⁹⁶

Civil Official

We have just one civil official recorded on the steles – Lin Chao 林潮 (1470-1550), a native of Jinjiang 晉江, Fujian, and a *jinshi* of 1505. Lin Chao was a minor official of rank 7a from 1512-20. In 1541 he was promoted to secretary (*zhushi* 主事), a post of rank 6a, a lower-middle rank, in the Bureau of Construction (Yingshan qingli si 營膳清吏司) at the Ministry of Works (Gongbu 工部), with the duty assignment of superintendent of the Zhejiang grain boats (*tidu Zhejiang lianggang* 提督浙江糧舡) and the prestige title gentleman for fostering virtue (*chengde lang* 承德郎).⁹⁷

⁹¹ For Miao Luan, see *Ming Shizong shilu* 16, p. 6a; *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1667) 18A, p. 118a; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 2, p. 41b; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 64, p. 19b; Zhu, p. 1283; Zhang 6, p. 15b.

⁹² For Song Hao, see *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 51, p. 13a; Zhu, p. 1283.

⁹³ For Song Tang, see Zhu, p. 1283; Zou, pp. 1283-84; Wu, p. 1284.

⁹⁴ Zhu, p. 1283; Zou, pp. 1283-84.

⁹⁵ Xiao, pp. 1285-86.

⁹⁶ Zhu, p. 1283; Wu, p. 1284.

⁹⁷ On Lin Chao's life and career, see Wang Shenzhong 王慎中 (1509-59), "Lin Shaxi mu-

Local Elites

The next important group comprises the local elite, including Li Rui 李銳 and others. Li Rui, a native of Lanzhou, was a tribute student (*gongsheng* 貢生) at the National University (Guozi jian 國子監) of 1459. He was later appointed assistant instructor (*xundao* 訓導), an unranked minor official, of Henan 河南 prefecture, Henan province, and Jianzhou 簡州 county, Sichuan province, where he died in office. He was known for the filial piety expressed toward his step-mother and was included in biographical compilations called “The Virtuous of the Community” (*xiangxian* 鄉賢) and “The Filial and the Righteous” (*xiaoyi* 孝義) as contained in local gazetteers.⁹⁸ Li Rui was one of the leaders of the Association of the Celestial Prayer Wheel and supervisor of the reconstruction work for the Monastery. His name appears on three steles, for a total of four times.⁹⁹

Wu Daodong 吳道東 (*h.* Qingquanzi 清泉水), a native of Lanzhou, was also a tribute student at the National University in 1528. He was later appointed assistant instructor of Taikang 太康 county, Henan province, and instructor (*jiaoyu* 教諭), also unranked, of Jinghai 靜海 county, Jingshi (present-day Hebei) province.¹⁰⁰

Zou Yancai 鄒彥才, a native of Lanzhou, was a stipend government student (*linshan shengyuan* 廩膳生員) in the Lanzhou Confucian School in 1540. Then he was a 1556 tribute student, finally appointed assistant instructor of Luyi 鹿邑 county, Henan province.¹⁰¹

Xiao Sheng 蕭笙 (*z.* Dongqu 東渠), a native of Lanzhou, was an added student (*zengguang shengyuan* 增廣生員) admitted to the Lanzhou Confucian School in 1541.¹⁰² His elder brother, Xiao Yu 蕭籥, also native of Lanzhou, was a pious Daoist and the leader of the Association of the Dark Emperor.¹⁰³ From the data here (their stipends and Yu’s role in the association) we see that both brothers were of the local elite.

zhiming” 林沙溪墓誌銘, in Wang Shenzhong, *Zunyan ji* 遵嚴集 (SKQS) 13, pp. 15b–20a; Xiao, pp. 1285–86.

⁹⁸ For Li Rui, see *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 2, p. 17a; 14, p. 12b; *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1542) 30, pp. 22a–b; *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1667) 20B, p. 55b; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 3, pp. 11b, 20a; *Gansu tongzhi* (1736) 38, p. 4b; *Lanzhou fuzhi* (1833) 10, p. 3b; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 64, p. 17b; 73, p. 2b.

⁹⁹ Zou, pp. 1283–84; Zhu, p. 1283; Wu, p. 1284.

¹⁰⁰ For Wu Daodong, see *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 15, p. 52b; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 3, p. 12b; *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 2, p. 21b; Wu, p. 1284.

¹⁰¹ For Zou Yancai, see *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 15, p. 56a; *Lintao fuzhi* (1687) 12, p. 62a; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 3, p. 12b; *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 2, p. 22b; *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* (1892) 5, p. 13a; Zou, pp. 1283–84.

¹⁰² Xiao, p. 1285.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Chen Jing 陳經, Li Nai 李柰, and Yang Xiang 楊翔, listed together with Li Rui, were termed “*xiangqi* 鄉耆” or “*qilao* 耆老,” terms indicating status among the local elite. Yang Xiang was one of the leaders of the Association of the Celestial Prayer Wheel. Chen Jing and Li Nai were also supervisors of construction work. Chen Jing’s and Li Nai’s names appear four times, distributed among all four steles.¹⁰⁴

Bai Congluan 柏從鸞 and Chen Dajing 陳大經 were natives of Lanzhou and seem to have been the leaders of the Xuanji Association. Each man’s name appears three times in one single stele.¹⁰⁵ Finally, Ma Yin 馬寅 and Zhang Teng 張騰 were senior members of the Association of the Dark Emperor, and their names appear twice in one stele.¹⁰⁶ In addition to the above-mentioned men of the local elite, there are others in the inscriptions that are noted by the general terms *qilao* and *xiangqi*.¹⁰⁷

Merchants

I cannot identify names of specific merchants. We can deduce, however, that merchants constituted an important component of patronage because several inscriptions mention merchants generally by the terms *shangren* 商人 and *shanggu* 商賈.¹⁰⁸ I deal with the subject of merchant patrons, below.

Daoist Clerics

Liu Daoming 劉道明 (Liu Min 劉旻), a native of Lanzhou, was a Daoist priest in the Monastery of Golden Heaven. He was a member of the Xuanji Association, the Association of Jade Light, and the Association of the Dark Emperor. He convened meetings and organized the rebuilding of the Monastery, upon the request of Zhu Gongzong, prince Gong of Su. His name appears as many as fourteen times in all the four steles.¹⁰⁹

Liu Yuande 劉元德 was a teaching assistant (*zanjiao* 贊教) of the Mansion of the Grand Daoist Patriarch (Zhengyi sijiao da zhenren fu 正一嗣教大真人府). The latter was headquarters for Zhengyi Daoism on Mount Longhu in Jiangxi, in charge of the affairs of Daoist priests and institutions.¹¹⁰ Liu Yuande seems to have been of the same generation

¹⁰⁴ Zhu, p. 1283; Zou, pp. 1283–84; Wu, p. 1284; Xiao, p. 1285.

¹⁰⁵ Zhu, p. 1283.

¹⁰⁶ Xiao, pp. 1285–86.

¹⁰⁷ Zhu, p. 1283; Zou, pp. 1283–84.

¹⁰⁸ Zhu, p. 1283; Wu, p. 1284.

¹⁰⁹ Zhu, p. 1283; Zou, pp. 1283–84; Wu, pp. 1284–85; Xiao, pp. 1285–86.

¹¹⁰ Zou, pp. 1283–84.

as Shao Yuanjie 邵元節 (1459–1539), a senior Daoist priest of Zhengyi Daoism who was greatly in the Jiajing emperor's (r. 1521–66) favor.¹¹¹ A teaching assistant was the third highest rank of the Zhengyi Daoist hierarchy, only after the superintendent (*tidian* 提點) and the supervisor (*tiju* 提舉) of the Daoist institution on Mount Longhu. Liu Yuande was thus a high-ranking Zhengyi Daoist priest. He was also a member of the Association of Jade Light.¹¹²

Pan Zhonghe 盤中和 was a native of Lanzhou and a Daoist priest. He was a member of the Xuanji Association of. His name appears twice (distributed between two steles.)¹¹³ Bao Daoyuan 鮑道元 was the abbot of the Monastery of Golden Heaven. Wu Yuanzhen 吳元真 and Huang Xuanxiao 黃玄霄 were both Daoist priests in the Monastery of Golden Heaven.¹¹⁴ Wang Xuanji 王玄濟, another native, was a Daoist priest of Lanzhou.¹¹⁵ Other Daoist clerics are also present in the inscriptions, referred to by the term *daoliu* 道流.¹¹⁶

As mentioned above, the Monastery of Golden Heaven was controlled late in the Ming (or earlier) by the married Zhengyi Daoist clergy. Given the fact that such Daoist priests as Liu Daoming, Bao Daoyuan, Wu Yuanzhen, and Huang Xuanxiao were all from the Monastery of Golden Heaven, they were definitely Zhengyi Daoists. Since Liu was responsible for the rebuilding of the Monastery of Sublime Mystery, then the latter must have been a Zhengyi Daoist temple. The very presence of Liu Yuande, a high-ranking Zhengyi Daoist priest of Mount Longhu, also signifies a Zhengyi connection with the Monastery. Actually, in the Lanzhou Daoist community, it has frequently been referred to as a Zhengyi temple.¹¹⁷ In addition, since Liu Daoming was a member of the Xuanji Association, other Daoist clerics comembers, such as Pan Zhonghe, probably were Zhengyi Daoists.

Thus, so far, we have identified six Daoists as Zhengyi Daoist priests, and Sublime Mystery as a Zhengyi establishment. It seems likely that the majority of the rest of the Daoists named in the steles and in the temple rebuilding activities were also Zhengyi Daoists. Moreover, the Tieshi lineage 鐵師派 of Zhengyi Daoism, whose patriarch is said to have been Sa Shoujian 薩守堅 (fl. 1141–78?), was wide-spread in Lanzhou. The names of Liu Daoming, Bao Daoyuan, Huang Xuanxiao, Wang Xuanji, and Pan Zhonghe neatly correspond to characters in the first line of the founder-poem of the Tieshi lineage, and it seems that they

¹¹¹ For Shao Yuanjie, see Liu Ts'un-yan, "Shao Yüan-chieh and T'ao Chung-wen," in Liu Ts'un-yan, *New Excursions from the Hall of Harmonious Wind* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1984), pp. 168–70.

¹¹² Wu, pp. 1284–85. ¹¹³ Zhu, p. 1283; Zou, pp. 1283–84. ¹¹⁴ Wu, pp. 1284–85.

¹¹⁵ Zou, pp. 1283–84. ¹¹⁶ Zhu, p. 1283. ¹¹⁷ *Lanzhou DG*, p. 46.

belonged to this lineage as the generations of the master (Liu Daoming and Bao Daoyuan), disciple (Huang Xuanxiao and Wang Xuanji), and grand-disciple (Pan Zhonghe).¹¹⁸ If this is the case, then Wang Xuanji, whose affiliation we have so far not identified, would have been a Daoist priest of the Tieshi lineage. Hence, all the Daoist clerics whose names appear in the stele inscriptions were Zhengyi Daoists, and many of these Lanzhou Daoists belonged to the Tieshi lineage.

From the patron list of the inscription set up by the Association of Jade Light, probably a professional association of Daoists, we find further names that fit the Tieshi lineage: Cai Daoqing 蔡道清, Zhou Daoheng 周道亨, Xiao Daoxuan 蕭道玄, Yang Daoning 楊道凝, Zhu Daozhen 朱道真, Gou Daoyuan 苟道源, Ma Daoyuan 馬道源, Lu Daoheng 陸道亨, and Xu Daojing 許道靜, who were of the master generation, and Li Xuanzhen 李玄真, Zhu Xuanjing 朱玄靜, Li Xuanqing 李玄清, Xie Xuande 謝玄德, Chen Xuanjing 陳玄靜 and the royal relative Wu Jing with his Daoist name Xuanton, who were of the disciple generation.¹¹⁹ The lineage name Tieshi 鐵師 (Iron Master) indicates the Rite of Salvation through Refinement by an Iron Jar (*tieguan lian* 鐵罐煉) that is attributed to Sa Shoujian, who is also the main god of this rite.¹²⁰ Daoists of the Tieshi lineage must have been capable of practicing this particular rite.

The relationship between the Zhengyi Daoist priests and the temple associations is peculiar. Whereas most associations affiliated with Daoist temples mainly consisted of lay Daoists or devotees, the four associations at the Monastery of Sublime Mystery are characterized by the participation of Daoist priests as members of the associations, as mentioned just above. This phenomenon demonstrates that Daoist priests linked to the Monastery must have had close relations with lay communities, and that their joint participation in the temple associations (and thus temple festivals) signifies a common interest in and commitment to the Daoist religion and its gods.

¹¹⁸ *Lanzhou DG*, p. 98, where the first line of the lineage poem reads, “Qing Dao Xuan Zhong Yang 清道玄中養,” the second to fourth characters of which correspond to the middle characters of the names of the Lanzhou Daoists. This lineage name and poem are not included in such lineage lists as “A Comprehensive Register of the Lineages of All the Perfected” (“Zhuzhen zongpai zongbu” 諸真宗派總簿) preserved in the White Cloud Monastery of Beijing and “The Distinctive Lineages” (“Zongpai bie” 宗派別) preserved in the Palace of Great Clarity (Taiping gong 太清宮) of Shenyang. The Daoist lineages claiming Sa Shoujian as their patriarch already spread widely in the Ming. See Li Fengmao 李豐楙, *Xu Xun yu Sa Shoujian: Deng Zhimo daojiao xiaoshuo yanjiu* 許遜與薩守堅鄧志謨道教小說研究 (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1997), pp. 255, 269, 273, 285–86.

¹¹⁹ Wu, p. 1284.

¹²⁰ For the *tieguan lian*, see Li, *Xu Xun yu Sa Shoujian*, pp. 237, 272–76, 280, 284.

Related to this issue, laymen's names usually appear only once among all the four associations, that is, each of them seems to have been a member of only one of the organizations. Some Daoist priests' names, like those of Liu Daoming and Liu Yuande, however, are included in more than one association. This indicates that the lay members fell into mutually exclusive categories, and overlapping of membership would not have been allowed. Nevertheless, Daoist priests did participate in different associations simultaneously probably due to their role as liaisons between the Daoist institution and lay communities. Some Daoist priests were entrusted by the royal princes with the renovation work. Thus, these Daoist priests may also have functioned as intermediaries between official worship and popular Daoist cults.

Other Patrons and Association Members

In addition to Daoist clerics, the inscriptions include other religious patrons by the terms *shanshi* 善士 (philanthropic gentlemen) and *shanlei* 善類 (philanthropists).¹²¹ In particular, the members of these associations were called "philanthropic people of the Dao 道流善人."¹²² The members of the Association of Jade Light all have Daoist names. This association thus seems to have consisted of Daoist believers, either clergy or laymen.¹²³

Townsfolk

Finally, the inscriptions mention the townsfolk of Lanzhou by the terms *shumin* 庶民 or *shuren* 庶人.¹²⁴

OCCUPATIONS AND SOCIAL GROUPS OF IDENTIFIABLE PATRONS

Of particular interest are the occupations and classes of some of the lay patrons. Since the names of ordinary patrons, association members, and townsfolk are unknown, we can say little about them. Turning to identifiable association members and other patrons, we can place them into five main groups.

Local Elite

Members of the local elite were educated in the National University or the local Confucian school. Some of them, not holding degrees,

¹²¹ Zhu, p. 1283; Xiao, p. 1285. ¹²² Zou, pp. 1283-84. ¹²³ Wu, pp. 1284-85.

¹²⁴ Zou, pp. 1283-84; Wu, pp. 1284-85.

were directly appointed unranked petty educational officials in county-level Confucian schools. But they were certainly influential locally in Lanzhou, because many were included in the gazetteers. In the rebuilding of the Monastery, they were leaders of the associations. This is a typical feature of temple associations and organizations nationally, showing a standard picture of temple activities in which the local elite participated. This confirms what Barend J. ter Haar observes: “the rich and powerful,” in the case of Lanzhou the elite, “play a large role in financing and organization” in temples in late-imperial China.¹²⁵

Princes and Relatives

This group consists of Zhu Ying, Zhu Zhanyan, Zhu Gongzong, Zhu Zhihong, Zhu Zhenhong, Zhu Zhenjing (prince of Qianshan), Zhu Zhenrun, Zhu Zhenjing (prince of Yanchang), and Wu Jing. As I demonstrated above, the household of the prince of Su and its branch princes had a tradition of Daoist belief, took Daoist names, and practiced Daoism, to the extent that some of them performed the rituals themselves as if they were priests. Wu Jing was even a member of the Association of the Dark Emperor, and an ordained lay Daoist probably belonging to the Tieshi lineage. While the the Monastery renovation work enhanced the princes’ Daoist identity, it also served to mediate between the Daoist institution and the royal religious needs.

In the Ming, princes and military aristocrats played an important role in disseminating traditional Chinese religions, including Daoism. Indeed, in the frontier regions, where many aboriginal peoples were concentrated and some forms of “foreign” religions such as Islam, Tibetan Buddhism, or indigenous religions proliferated, these Ming princes and aristocrats in charge of the frontier affairs more than likely advocated Daoism as a sign of Chinese identity, in addition to the official, and in these regions often ineffective, Confucian ideology. One example is from the Mu 沐 family’s patronage of the Temple of Concentrated Emptiness (Xuning’an 虛凝庵), a Daoist temple in Kunming, Yunnan.¹²⁶ The princes of Su and their branch princes in Ming Lanzhou functioned exactly the same.

One characteristic of the Lanzhou Daoist tradition was the marked presence of royal patrons and their tremendously important role in the

¹²⁵ B. J. ter Haar, “Local Society and the Organization of Cults in Early Modern China: A Preliminary Study,” *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions* 8 (1995), p. 23.

¹²⁶ For a detailed study of the Mu family’s patronage of the Temple of Concentrated Emptiness, see my article “The Daoist Stelae Inscriptions of Yunnan and the Xuning’an in Kunming,” in *Religion, Society and Regional Culture in South and Southwest China* (Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, forthcoming).

formation and transformation of this religious tradition. The Princely Establishment of Su 肅王 was based in Lanzhou during the Ming. It produced several households of commandery princes (*junwang* 郡王), who, as sons of an imperial prince other than the heir-apparent, were granted this lesser title. These commandery princes, as the descendents of princes of Su, lived also in Lanzhou. The family of the prince of Su had a tradition of Daoist belief, and members of his establishment and its branches such as Zhu Ying, Zhu Zhenhong, Zhu Biguo 朱弼果 (r. 1556–83), and Zhu Zhihong took Daoist names; they also sponsored the construction of Daoist buildings like Pavilion of the Kuixing (Kuixing ge 魁星閣), the Monastery of Golden Heaven, the City God Temple, the Monastery of Concentrated Prosperity, the Great-Unity Palace of Lasting Celebration, the Palace of the Dipper Mother (Doumu gong 斗母宮), the Temple of King Guan (Guanwang miao 關王廟), the Grotto of the Medicine King, the Temple of the Eastern Peak, the Palace of Northern Dipper (Beidou gong 北斗宮), the Temple of the Highest Thearch (Shangdi miao 上帝廟), and the Monastery of Sublime Mystery. Some of these princes had a good mastery of Daoist knowledge, talismans, and rituals, and even performed rites.¹²⁷ In addition, as I demonstrated above, consort Wu, wife of prince Huai of Su, Zhu Jindu, claimed herself “a follower of Dao” and commissioned a large printing run of a Daoist scripture. We have identified fourteen Ming princes of Lanzhou and a prince’s wife who sponsored the building and restoration of Daoist temples, showed interest in Daoism, participated in Daoist rituals, befriended Daoist priests, and sponsored printing. Even more such unidentified members of the princely family are recorded.¹²⁸

Eunuchs

He Xian, Yan Shun, and Sun Qian were all eunuchs in the Princely Establishment of Su, and had official title as attendant. Their enthusiasm for Daoism might have been encouraged by their bosses, namely

¹²⁷ See Zhu Ying, “Ci Xuxuanzi xiangzan” 賜虛玄子像贊, in Ren Ziyuan, *Dayue Taihe shanzhi* (1431), p. 838; Zhu Ying, “Ci Ren Zhanyu haiyue youxun shi bing yin” 賜任蟾宇海嶽幽尋詩并引, in *ibid.*, p. 838; Zhu Ying, “Jintianguan jiming” 金天觀記銘, in Zhang 6, pp. 2b–4a; Wu Qian 吳謙 (Ming), “Wuan Wang miaoji” 武安王廟記, in *ibid.* 6, pp. 26b–27a; Gao, *Xi-bei suiyao ji* (1936), p. 169; *Gansu KS*, pp. 263, 267, 269, 287, 682; *Lanzhou shi Chengguan quzhi*, p. 1009; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 28, p. 11a; 30, pp. 4b–6a; 92, p. 39a; Feng Qianshan, “Sun Biyun kaolue,” p. 30; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu jianzhi zhi” 3, pp. 2a–3b, “Gansu minzu zhi” 6, p. 17a; Zhu, p. 1283; Zou, pp. 1283–84; Wu, pp. 1284–85; Xiao, pp. 1285–86; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 4, pp. 54a, 55a–b; *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* (1892) 16, p. 4b; 18, pp. 27b–28a; 19, pp. 5b, 6b, 8b, 25b, 27a, 28a; Zhang 6, pp. 14b, 20b, 21b–22a, 23a, 25a; *Lanzhou TG*, p. 68; Shao Rulin 邵如林, “Gansu Ming Suwang chutan” 甘肅明肅王初探, *Xibei shidi* (1992.4), p. 68; *Gansu tongzhi* (1736) 12, p. 6; *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 5, pp. 5b–6b; *Lanzhou DG*, pp. 76–77.

¹²⁸ The fourteen are: Zhu Ying (prince Zhuang of Su, the first prince of Su and 14th son of

the princes. On the other hand, however, given the marginal social status of eunuchs and their life-style, many Ming eunuchs were very religious. Susan Naquin's study demonstrates that in Ming Beijing eunuchs greatly contributed to the religious infrastructure, outweighing any other type of donor.¹²⁹ In her words, "the geographic range of the temples patronized by eunuchs was likewise large and extended all over the empire."¹³⁰ Some of them were ardent believers and supporters of Ming sectarian religions – for example, Zhang Yong 張永 (1465–1529), who was eunuch director (*taijian* 太監) of the Directorate for Imperial Accouterments (Yuyong jian 御用監), and Feng Bao 馮保 (ca. 1522–86), the eunuch seal-holding director (*zhangyin taijian* 掌印太監) of the Directorate of Ceremonial (Sili jian 司禮監).¹³¹ Many were known patrons of Daoism, like, for example, Wang Jin 王謹 (fl. 1408–51), the eunuch director of the Directorate for Imperial Accouterments, Wang Zhen 王振 (fl. 1426–49), the eunuch director of the Directorate of Ceremonial, Gu Dayong 谷大用 (fl. 1492–1532), the eunuch director of the Directorate of the Imperial Horses (Yuma jian 御馬監), and even the powerful Wei Zhongxian 魏忠賢 (1568–1627), the eunuch pen-holding director (*bingbi taijian* 秉筆太監) of the Directorate of Ceremonial.¹³²

dynastic founder Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–98); Zhu Zhanyan (prince Kang of Su, son of Zhu Ying); Zhu Gongzong, grandson of Zhu Zhanyan (prince Gong of Su); Zhu Zhenyu 朱真淤 (fl. 1474–1526), heir-apparent of prince of Su with the posthumous title prince Jing of Su 肅靖王 and son of Zhu Gongzong; Zhu Biguang 朱弼光 (1500–62), son of Zhu Zhenyu (prince Ding of Su 肅定王); Zhu Jinjiong 朱縉炯 (1527–57), heir-apparent of prince of Su with the posthumous title of prince Zhao of Su 肅昭王 and son of Zhu Biguang; Zhu Shenyao 朱紳堯 (r. 1591–1618), great grandson of Zhu Zhenyu and nephew of Zhu Jinjiong (prince Xian of Su 肅憲王); the last prince of Su, Zhu Zhihong, a grandnephew of Zhu Jinjiong and fifth generation descendant of Zhu Zhenyu; Zhu Zhenhong, son of Zhu Gongzong (prince Duanhui of Chunhua); Zhu Biguo, son of Zhu Zhenhong (prince Kangmu of Chunhua 淳化康穆王); Zhu Zhenjing, son of Zhu Gongzong (prince Ronghe of Qianshan); Zhu Zhenrun, son of Zhu Gongzong (prince Zhuanghui of Huining); Zhu Zhenjing, son of Zhu Gongzong (prince Zhuangyi of Yanchang); Zhu Jinshou 朱縉綬 (fl. 1574–93), grandson of Zhu Zhenjing (Prince of Yanchang) and cousin of Zhu Jinjiong (prince of Yanchang); and consort Wu, wife of prince Huai of Su, Zhu Jindu.

¹²⁹ Naquin, *Peking*, p. 180.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹³¹ See Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, *Zōho Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū* 增補中國善書の研究, vol. 2, in *Sakai Tadao chosakushū* 酒井忠夫著作集 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 2000), pp. 277–87; Ma Xisha 馬西沙 and Han Bingfang 韓乘方, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi* 中國民間宗教史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1992), pp. 170, 499, 519, 568, 683; Daniel L. Overmyer, *Precious Volumes: An Introduction to Chinese Sectarian Scriptures from the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., Asia Center, 1999), p. 321; Sawada Mizuho 澤田瑞穂, *Zōho Hōkan no kenkyū* 增補寶卷の研究 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1975), pp. 74, 369, 403, 406; Asai Motoi 淺井紀, *Min Shin jidai minkan shūkyō no kenkyū* 明清時代民間宗教結社の研究 (Tokyo: Kenbun shuppan, 1990), p. 192; Richard Shek, "Religion and Society in Late Ming: Sectarianism and Popular Thought in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century China" (Ph.D. diss., U. of California, Berkeley, 1980), pp. 281–82; Thomas Shiyi Li 李世瑜 and Susan Naquin, "The Baoming Temple: Religion and the Throne in Ming and Qing China," *HJAS* 48.1 (1988), pp. 141, 162.

¹³² Epigraphic Division of the Beijing Library, comp., *Beijing tushuguan cang Zhongguo*

Merchants

Although anonymous in the stele records, merchants played an important economic role in Lanzhou, which was a frequent stop along the routes to the Western Regions and Mongolia. As shown above, the government's salt barter system assured large profits and stimulated the concentration of merchants in the northern frontier. The restriction favored the Shaanxi and Shanxi merchants who, familiar with the local environmental conditions for grain storage, were based near the northern frontier zone.¹³³ Some established merchant colonies.

We already briefly mentioned the tea monopoly, which figured into the horse markets and the nomadic horse dealers. The Ming government set up the Horse Trading Offices to supervise and control the tea-horse trade at border trading posts in Gansu as early as the early Hongwu reign (1368-98).¹³⁴ Two such offices, in Hezhou 河州 (present-day Linxia 臨夏) and the Zhuanglang Guard (present-day Yongdeng), were very close to Lanzhou. Moreover, Lanzhou had a Horse Trading Office, though its size, being relatively local, probably would have been small in comparison with the others.¹³⁵

The tea was supplied by merchants who purchased it wholesale through the license system and transported it to the Horse Trading Offices. In Lintao prefecture, half of the tea would be submitted to the Horse Trading Office in Hezhou for use in the horse trading, while merchants were allowed to sell the other half.¹³⁶ In 1563 a Tea Office was set up in Ganzhou 甘州 (present-day Zhangye 張掖) and tea was stored in Lanzhou. Later on Lanzhou became the tax center for collecting the horse-trade tea submitted by merchants.¹³⁷ In addition, smuggling of both horses and tea flourished since the middle of the Ming, replacing the official tea-horse trade as the main trade. Illegal tea and salt smuggling thus remained a chronic problem for the Ming court.¹³⁸

lidai shike taben huibian 北京圖書館藏中國歷代石刻拓本匯編 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji, 1989), vol. 51, pp. 121-22, 148-49, 153, 173, 178, 190, 198; vol. 52, pp. 8-9; vol. 54, pp. 18, 20, 74; vol. 56, pp. 34-35; vol. 57, pp. 83-84, 134-35, 188-89; vol. 58, pp. 2-3, 5-6, 192-94; vol. 59, pp. 166-67.

¹³³ See Fujii Hiroshi, "Shin'an shōnin no kenkyū" 新安商人の研究, *TYGH* (Tokyo) 36.2 (1953), p. 34 (part 2).

¹³⁴ See *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1542) 39, p. 20a; *Gansu tongzhi* (1736) 19, pp. 10a-b. For detailed information on Horse Trading Offices in Gansu during the Ming, see Tani Mitsutaka 谷光隆, *Mindai basei no kenkyū* 明代馬政の研究 (Kyoto: Tōyōshi kenkyūkai, 1972), pp. 55-57; Morris Rossabi, "The Tea and Horse Trade with Inner Asia during the Ming," *Journal of Asian History* 4.2 (1970), p. 144; Hu Xiaopeng 胡小鵬, "Chama hushi" 茶馬互市, in Guo and Wu, *Youjiu de Gansu lishi*, pp. 138-42; Guo and Chen, *Gansu gudaishi*, pp. 499-500.

¹³⁵ *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 6, p. 22b.

¹³⁶ *Lintao fuzhi* (1687) 10, p. 2a.

¹³⁷ See *TJLS*, *ce* 19, p. 37a.

¹³⁸ See Rossabi, "Tea and Horse Trade," pp. 150-61; *idem*, *China and Inner Asia*, pp. 33,

Lanzhou merchants formed various associations. A Shan-Shaan *huiguan* 山陝會館 in Lanzhou existed early in the Qing (1708). It was located in the Temple of Guandi 關帝廟 on the Huiguan Road 會館巷 in city's Shanzishi 山字石 area.¹³⁹ Given the powerful presence of the Shanxi and Shaanxi merchants during the Ming-Qing period, the establishment of the Shan-Shaan *huiguan* seems to indicate that the Shanxi and Shaanxi merchants would have been active in Lanzhou at least in the late Ming before they set up their *huiguan*. Moreover, the fact that the Huiguan Road already existed in the Ming indicates the existence of something like a compound of many *huiguan* for merchants.¹⁴⁰ And the Shan-Shaan *huiguan* early in the Republican Period identified itself as the “Old Shan-Shaan Society” (Shan-Shaan Laoshe 山陝老社), implying that it had had a long history.¹⁴¹

In addition, the Jiangxi merchants in Lanzhou worshipped the Perfected Lord Xu 許真君 in the Qianlong reign period (1736–95).¹⁴² The worship took place in two Palaces of the Iron Pillar (Tiezhu gong 鐵柱宮), Daoist temples, and two *huiguan* located in these two temples: the Jiangxi *huiguan* 江西會館 and Yuzhang xinguan 豫章新館.¹⁴³ Again, given the powerful performance of the Jiangxi merchants in the Ming-Qing era, it seems that the Jiangxi merchant community would already have been present in Lanzhou by late in the Ming. Thus, Fu Yiling 傅衣凌 and Fang Zhiyuan 方志遠 are right in pointing out that the Ming-time Jiangxi merchants often traveled to Gansu for trade and thus established their own *huiguan* there.¹⁴⁴

81; Tani, *Mindai basei no kenkyū*, pp. 80–88, 119–23; Henry Serruys, “Sino-Mongol Trade during the Ming,” *Journal of Asian History* 9 (1975), pp. 37–38, 45, 47. See also Hu, “Chama hushi,” pp. 140–42; Li, *Sichou zhilu maoyi shi*, pp. 608–10; Wu Tingzhen and Guo Houan et al., *Hexi kaifa shi yanjiu* 河西開發史研究 (Lanzhou: Gansu jiaoyu, 1996), pp. 351–52.

¹³⁹ See *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* (1892) 12, p. 36a; *Lanzhou shi Chengguan quzhi*, p. 80. In *Gaolan xian xuzhi* 皋蘭縣續志 (1843) 3, p. 2a, the Shan-Shaan *huiguan* is said to be located behind the Temple of Wenchang (Wenchang Gong 文昌宮). In the early Republican Period, the *huiguan* had temple festivals dedicated to both Guandi and Wenchang. This indicates that it must have had a close relationship with the Temples of Guandi and Wenchang. See Tōa dobunkai 東亞同盟會, *Chūgoku shobetsu zenshi* 中國省別全誌 (Tokyo: Tōa Dobunka, 1917–20; rpt. Taipei: Nantian, 1988), vol. 6, pp. 775–77.

¹⁴⁰ In fact, there were many other Shanxi and Shaanxi *huiguan* in Lanzhou during the Qing and Republican Period such as the Sanjin *huiguan* 三晉會館, Shaanxi *huiguan* 陝西會館, Shaanxi *xin huiguan* 陝西新會館, Pingliang *huiguan* 平涼會館, Qingyang *huiguan* 慶陽會館, Wudu *huiguan* 武都會館 and Qin'an *huiguan* 秦安會館. We cannot be sure if they date to the Ming. See *Lanzhou shi Chengguan quzhi*, p. 81; Tōa dobunkai, *Chūgoku shobetsu zenshi*, vol. 6, pp. 145, 773–74, 777.

¹⁴¹ Tōa dobunkai, *Chūgoku shobetsu zenshi*, vol. 6, pp. 776–77.

¹⁴² Chen Yong 陳壩, “Tiezhu gong bei” 鐵柱宮碑, in *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* (1892) 18, p. 22b. See also Tōa dobunkai, *Chūgoku shobetsu zenshi*, vol. 6, pp. 145, 773.

¹⁴³ *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* (1892) 12, p. 36a; Chen Yong, “Tiezhu gong bei,” in *ibid.* 18, pp. 22b–23a; *Gaolan xian xuzhi* (1843) 3, p. 1b.

¹⁴⁴ Fu Yiling, “Mingdai Jiangxi de gongshangye renkou jiqi yidong” 明代江西的工商業人

The presence of the terms *shangren* 商人 and *shanggu* 商賈 in the Monastery of Sublime Mystery inscriptions signifies their important function in the rebuilding of the Monastery in the context of the massive congregation of merchants, their associations, and commercial activities in Ming-era Lanzhou. We have several parallel examples. During the temple festival of the Thunder Altar at the Monastery of Golden Heaven, a great number of merchants, including peddlers of paintings and calligraphic works and those who ran restaurants, teahouses and theaters, gathered at the Monastery of Golden Heaven for business.¹⁴⁵ The Temple of King Guan in the eastern side of Lanzhou attracted many merchants, along with military servicemen and townsfolk, to worship and make sacrifice there.¹⁴⁶

David Johnson has argued that the rise of the city-god cult and its temple building was closely connected with merchants, who contributed funds for the project. These merchants, in his words, “were behind the establishment of city-god cults and the spread of the idea of a city god,”¹⁴⁷ although not necessarily the only agents as Johnson asserts.¹⁴⁸ In the case of the Lanzhou City God Temple, a Daoist establishment, there was a market around the temple where merchants ran entertainment quarters, antique stalls, food stalls and groceries.¹⁴⁹ I thus hypothesize that there would have been many merchants and a marketplace around the Monastery as well.

More importantly, Sublime Mystery might already, during the Ming, have had a printing establishment and a publishing enterprise that printed religious as well as non-religious books, as did other temple printing establishments at the time.¹⁵⁰ If this was the case, then the

口及其移動, in his *Ming Qing shehui jingjishi lunwenji* 明清社會經濟史論文集 (Beijing: Renmin, 1982), pp. 191, 192; Fang Zhiyuan, *Jiangyou shangbang* 江右商幫 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua, 2000), p. 16.

¹⁴⁵ *Gansu KS*, p. 267; *Lanzhou GZ*, p. 20b; Cheng, *You Long congji* (1922) 2, p. 1a.

¹⁴⁶ Wu, “Wuan Wang miaoji” 6, pp. 26b–27a.

¹⁴⁷ David Johnson, “The City-God Cults of T’ang and Sung China,” *HJAS* 45.2 (1985), pp. 419, 420–24, 434, 443–44.

¹⁴⁸ For a critique of Johnson’s view that merchants rather than priests or officials played the major role in spreading the city-god idea, see Barend J. ter Haar, “The Genesis and Spread of Temple Cults in Fukien,” in Eduard B. Vermeer, ed., *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), pp. 354–55; Valerie Hansen, “Gods on Walls: A Case of Indian Influence on Chinese Lay Religion?,” in Patricia Buckley Ebrey and Peter N. Gregory, eds., *Religion and Society in T’ang and Sung China* (Honolulu: U. Hawaii P., 1993), pp. 93, 108–9, n.88,

¹⁴⁹ Hu Xiaochi 胡小池, *Biansai xing* 邊塞行 (Taipei: Xingguang, 1974), pp. 148–49.

¹⁵⁰ *Lanzhou GZ*, p. 19b. On temple printing activities and their features in the Ming, see Du Xinfu 杜信孚 and Du Tongshu 杜同書, *Quan Ming fensheng fenxian keshu kao* 全明分省分縣刻書考 (Beijing: Xianzhuang, 2001), “Beijing,” pp. 8a–b, “Hebei,” pp. 3a–b, “Shanxi,” pp. 2a, 3b, “Shaanxi,” p. 5b, “Jiangsu Family Printing,” p. 12a, “Jiangsu Official Printing,” p. 3b,

Monastery probably relied upon merchants to market books and even run the printing. Given that the Monastery was so important at that time, then it is fair to deduce that the assemblage of merchants and the activities of the market were also important. Wolfram Eberhard has pointed out that temple building may be regarded as an index of economic changes. “The building activities after 1550 cannot be explained simply as rebuilding of destroyed temples. The high activity seemed to indicate economic developments which should be studied in more detail.”¹⁵¹ The temple constructions at the Monastery, in which merchants were involved, thus also included economic aspects. For the merchants, these economic activities might have provided opportunities for commerce and needs for forming their associations functioning as guilds.

THE LANZHOU MILITARY PRESENCE AND THE CULT OF THE PERFECT WARRIOR

What makes the rebuilding of the Monastery of Sublime Mystery different from other temple projects of the time is not the above-mentioned local elite, but military servicemen. From the list of the association members, we know that, in addition to the presence of a few royal princes and many of the local elite, many more military officers participated in the temple festivals and joined the associations than civil officials. We have eight military officers but just one civil official. While the latter, Lin Chao, listed in the stele, was a minor official of rank 6a, the military officers ranked from a very high 1a down to 6a. It is very possible that others on the stele were military servicemen but with even lower ranks, or simply soldiers without any rank.

Lanzhou in the Ming was commonly a target of Mongol attacks,¹⁵² and therefore maintained a heavy military presence. The Lanzhou Guard, with its 1,364 troops, was located inside the city.¹⁵³ Other military units based inside Lanzhou included:

“Zhejiang,” pp. 19b–20a, 22b, 25a, 28b, 39a, 44a, 49a–b, “Jiangxi,” p. 4b, “Buddhist Printing,” pp. 1a–2b; Zhang Xiumin 張秀民, *Zhongguo yinshua shi* 中國印刷史 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1989), pp. 351–52, 361, 364, 367, 397, 491–92; Xiao Dongfa 蕭東發, *Zhongguo tushu chubanshi yinshua shilun* 中國圖書出版印刷史論 (Beijing: Beijing daxue, 2001), pp. 122–23.

¹⁵¹ Wolfram Eberhard, “Temple-Building Activities in Medieval and Modern China: An Experimental Study,” *MS* 23 (1964), pp. 267, 277–89.

¹⁵² See Yang, “Wei cunliu shoucheng guanjun yi fang luhuan shi,” 4.130–31; *Lanzhou TG*, pp. 38–39; Guo, “Mingdai de Hexi zoulang he Guanxi qiwei,” p. 156.

¹⁵³ See *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1542) 39, p. 9a; *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 11, p. 1b, where the figure is 1,350. According to He Tang’s 何鏗 (*jinsi* 1547) *Xiurang tongkao* 修攘通考 (1578), there were 11,302 troops belonging to the Lanzhou Guard, and according to Chen Zushou’s 陳祖

Lanzhou Training Division of the Assistant Regional Commander (*Lanzhou canjiang ying* 蘭州參將營) with 2,525 soldiers, which belonged to the Guyuan Defense Command;¹⁵⁴

Lanzhou Mobile Corps (*Lanying youji* 蘭營遊擊) with 500 soldiers based inside Lanzhou;¹⁵⁵

Central Escort Guard of Ganzhou (*Ganzhou zhong huwei* 甘州中護衛) protecting the Princely Establishment of Su with its 533 troops;¹⁵⁶

Ceremonial Guards (*yiwei* 儀衛) for the eight princely establishments, the number of which is unknown;

and the Battalion of Herds Office at Ganzhou (*Ganzhou qunmu qianhu suo* 甘州群牧千戶所) with around 1,120 soldiers.

In addition, the Division of Mobile Cavalry (*youbing ying* 遊兵營), Division of Patrol Cavalry (*Shaoma ying* 哨馬營), Division at the Spring of Drilling Fox (*Caohuquan ying* 操狐泉營) and Division of the Chilling River-Blockading (*Suo hanchuan ying* 鎖寒川營) were also based in the Lanzhou area.¹⁵⁷

There were also 68 forts and passes surrounding Lanzhou that belonged to Lanzhou, the Lanzhou Guard, and the Central Escort Guard. Each fort and pass was manned by soldiers ranging in number from 150 to 2,000.¹⁵⁸ Thus, statistically, soldiers in these forts numbered at least 10,200 and at most 136,000 or more. But the number of soldiers at most fortresses must have been close to the minimum. According to a 1541 record, there were 927 troops based at the bridge on the Yellow River and other Guards in Lanzhou.¹⁵⁹ A 1547 work records that 16,143 troops belonging to the Lanzhou Guard and the Central Escort Guard of Ganzhou were based there, including those based in the surrounding forts and passes.¹⁶⁰

綬 (*jinshi* 1634) *Huang-Ming zhifang liang jing shisan sheng ditu biao* 皇明職方兩京十三省地圖表 and Gu Zuyu's *Dushi fangyu jiyao*, the Lanzhou Guard commanded five battalions, for a total of 5,000 troops; He, *Xiurang tongkao* (*SKQS cunmu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書 edn.), "Guyuan" 2, pp. 37a-b; Chen Zushou, *Huang-Ming zhifang liang jing shisan sheng ditu biao* (*Xuanlan tang congshu* 玄覽堂叢書 edn.), 1.40b; Gu, *Dushi fangyu jiyao* 60, p. 15a.

¹⁵⁴ *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 9, pp. 7b-8a; *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1542) 39, p. 9a; *TJLS*, ce 18, p. 27a; *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 11, p. 1a.

¹⁵⁵ *Lanzhou TG*, p. 100; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, p. 11b.

¹⁵⁶ *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 9, p. 8a; *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 11, p. 1b.

¹⁵⁷ *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, pp. 16a, 23a.

¹⁵⁸ *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 11, pp. 2a-4a; *TJLS*, ce 19, pp. 38a-39b; *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, pp. 15a-b; *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 11, pp. 6a-b.

¹⁵⁹ Wei Huan 魏煥 (*jinshi* 1529), *Huang Ming jiubian kao* 皇明九邊考 (1541; *SKQS cunmu congshu* edn.) 10, p. 10a.

¹⁶⁰ Zhang, *Bianzheng kao* (1547) 3, pp. 44a-45b. See also He, *Xiurang tongkao*, "Guyuan" 2, pp. 37a-b.

In addition, there were a few Native Offices (*tusi* 土司) in the areas surrounding Lanzhou: eighteen in total.¹⁶¹ Among these aboriginal offices, Native Mongol Offices held by the Lu 魯 clan were particularly relevant because they controlled parts of Lanzhou with 500 troops.¹⁶² These Native Offices at the levels of guards 衛, battalions 千戶所, and companies 百戶所 comprised at least 5,000 Native Troops, though not all of them were based inside Lanzhou.¹⁶³

According to a retrospectively modern counting, about 110,000 to 120,000 military men were based in Gansu in Ming times.¹⁶⁴ An early-Qing account even estimates the Ming military population in Gansu as 218,490.¹⁶⁵ In Lanzhou itself, if we count the above-mentioned military units in Lanzhou even without including Native Troops, the number of military men was around 20,000.

Regarding the military population versus civilian population in Lanzhou, according to *Lintao fuzhi* 臨洮府志 (of 1604) Lanzhou had a population of 1,107 households with 6,342 people.¹⁶⁶ We do not know whether these estimates refer to civilian or military population. An early-Qing source also counted 6,372 non-military people from 1,107 households, including 875 civilian 民 households and 232 miscellaneous and service levy households.¹⁶⁷ This latter source seems to indicate that the figure in *Lintao fuzhi* would have referred to non-military population. An earlier source, the 1542 *Shaanxi tongzhi* 陝西通志, records that there were 6,164 civilian people from 885 households in Lanzhou, and 4,963 people from 1,330 military households in the Lanzhou Guard.¹⁶⁸ There is a discrepancy between the military population drawn from the above-mentioned military units and the one drawn from the household registers in these local gazetteers. In any event, the number of military men and their families, that is, military households, was astonishing. The population of military households made up from 45 percent to 76 percent of the whole population of Lanzhou, and there were more military than non-military households in Lanzhou.

¹⁶¹ See Gong, *Zhongguo tusi zhidu*, pp. 1282–93, 1306–18; *Lanzhou TG*, pp. 79–80.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 79–80.

¹⁶³ On the Mongols constituting part of the “military population” of the Ming empire, see Serruys, “The Mongols of Kansu,” p. 275.

¹⁶⁴ Guo and Chen, *Gansu gudaishi*, p. 491; Wu and Guo, *Hexi kaifa shi yanjiu*, p. 337; Wei, “Ming-Qing shiqi de tunken,” pp. 173–74.

¹⁶⁵ *Gansu tongzhi* (1736) 14, pp. 38b, 40b. ¹⁶⁶ *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 7, p. 2a.

¹⁶⁷ *Lanzhou zhi* (1686) 1, p. 30a.

¹⁶⁸ *Shaanxi tongzhi* (1542) 33, p. 23a. See also *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu minzu zhi” 5, p. 8b; *Lanzhou GZ*, p. 21b.

The northwestern frontier was harsh, and military life there was undesirable. First of all, the fierce natural environment made drought and famine common.¹⁶⁹ In addition, many soldiers were burdened with financial obligations. They had to provide their own equipment when called to active duty, keeping their cavalry mounts at their own expense. Even worse, the majority of soldiers, belonging to the hereditary category of the class *junhu* (“military families 軍戶”), were frequently underpaid by the government, and abused and taken advantage of by their officers. Such exploitative practices as officers’ withholding of pay and using soldiers as domestic servants and tenants without compensation compounded the difficulties frontier soldiers faced.¹⁷⁰

Finally, the frontier soldiers faced the constant threat of border warfare, which could be deadly. Mongol raids constituted a northern frontier threat throughout the Ming. Some Tibetan and Turk Uighur tribes or states from the west occasionally also invaded Gansu, and Lanzhou was one of the most accessible and vulnerable targets of these raids.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ For example, in 1520, there was drought in Lintao prefecture; 1525 severe famine in the whole of Lintao, including Lanzhou, to the extent that incidents of cannibalism were reported; 1529 drought in Lintao, and in 1529 famine and cannibalism there; 1537 a terrible famine in Lanzhou to the extent that 18 pits were filled with the deceased. In 1539 in Lintao famine caused many deaths; 1539 and 1549 famine struck again. In 1549 there was terrible famine in Lintao. See *Lanzhou fuzhi* (1833) 12, pp. 5a–b; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu bianyi zhi” 甘肅變異志, pp. 10b–11a; *Lintao fuzhi* (1687) 18, pp. 14a–b; *Gansu tongzhi* (1736) 24, pp. 13b–14a; *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 22, pp. 4a–b.

¹⁷⁰ On this issue, see Denis and Mote, *Cambridge History*, pp. 65–67; Shek, “Religion and Society in Late Ming,” pp. 35–38; Ping-ti Ho, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368–1911* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1962), pp. 60–62; Ray Huang, “Military Expenditures in Sixteenth Century Ming China,” *OE* 17.1–2 (1970), pp. 41–42; Chen Wenshi 陳文石, “Mingdai weisuo de jun” 明代衛所的軍, *ZYYZ* 48.2 (1977), pp. 198–200; Wang Yuquan 王毓銓, “Mingdai de junhu” 明代的軍戶, *LSYZ* 1959.8, pp. 30–31.

¹⁷¹ For example, in 1373, Dorjiba 朵兒只伯 raided Lanzhou and surrounding areas. In 1434, Adai Khan 阿台王子 of the Eastern Mongols ostensibly to pay tribute to the court raided areas near Lanzhou. Batu Möngke 巴圖蒙克 (1464–1524), better known as Dayan Khan 達延汗 of the Ordos Mongols, raided Lanzhou and surrounding areas in 1485, 1487, 1488, 1515 and 1516. Bars Bolod 巴爾斯博羅特, who was son of Dayan Khan and assumed the title of khan for a while, made raids on Lintao in 1518. Gün Bilik Mergen 覓必里克 (1502?–1542), the Mongol Jinong 濟農 or Viceroy, plundered Lanzhou in 1539 and 1541. Later on the Mongols invaded and plundered Lanzhou in 1542 and 1562, respectively. See Serruys, “The Mongols of Kansu,” p. 242; Wang, *Gansu gudai shihua*, p. 320; Dmitri Pokotilov, *History of the Eastern Mongols during the Ming Dynasty from 1368 to 1634*, tr. Rudolf Loewenthal (Chengdu: The Chinese Cultural Studies Research Institute, West China Union University, 1947; rpt. Arlington: University Publications of America, Inc., 1976), pp. 37–38; Henry H. Howorth, *History of the Mongols: From the 9th to the 19th Century* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1966), Part I, pp. 360–61; *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 46, pp. 30a, 32a, 34a; Mu, *Gan Ning Qing shilue*, “Zhengbian” 正編 14, pp. 42a, 43b; 15, pp. 14a, 39b; *Lintao fuzhi* (1604) 2, pp. 14b, 6.3a; *TJLS*, ce 19, p. 28b; *Lintao fuzhi* (1687) 2, p. 13b; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu jishi” 4, pp. 35a, 40b; Xu Rijiu 徐日久 (fl. 1598–1628), *Wubian dianze* 五邊典則 (1628–44) (Beijing: Zhongyang minzu xueyuan tushuguan, 1985) 18, pp. 4b–5a; *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 4, p. 12b; *Lanzhou fuzhi* (1833) 6, p. 16a.

The large population of military men in and around Lanzhou produced an important source of patronage and support for the Monastery of Sublime Mystery, and their dominant presence in the temple inscriptions is not surprising. Ter Haar has argued that “the first and foremost way in which a cult bound together local people was by providing a locus for identification, which was invested with shared memories.”¹⁷² The identification as border military men and the memories of hardship, risks and monotony in military bases and forts near and on the Great Wall caused many to rely on religion for relief and salvation. The most explicit examples come from Luo Menghong 羅夢鴻 (1442–1527), better known as Luo Qing 羅清, a military boatman serving in the northern border who founded the Luo sect (Luo jiao 羅教), Puming 普明 (Li Bin 李賓) (?–1562), a soldier serving in the northern border who founded the Huangtian Dao 黃天道 (the Yellow Heaven sect), and Gao Yikui 高一奎, another military man serving in the northern border who founded the Hongfeng sect (Hongfeng jiao 紅封教), three popular sectarian religions that attracted many soldiers and officers as followers.¹⁷³ The cause for military men’s pious belief in and extensive patronage of the Lanzhou Monastery, in particular their worship of Zhenwu, would have been similar.

More importantly, Xuanwu (Zhenwu), or Xuandi, the Dark Emperor, known for his military prowess, was believed to be a military god.¹⁷⁴ We have many examples of northern frontier Ming military

¹⁷² ter Haar, “Local Society,” p. 7.

¹⁷³ On Luo Qing, Puming, Gao Yikui and the three sects, see Daniel L. Overmyer, *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U.P., 1976), pp. 113–17; Overmyer, “Boatmen and Buddhas: The Lo Chiao in Ming Dynasty China,” *History of Religions* 17.3–4 (1978), pp. 285, 297; Sawada, *Zōho Hōkan no kenkyū*, pp. 301–3, 305, 346–65; Sakai, *Zōho Chūgoku zensho no kenkyū*, vol. 2, pp. 282, 284–85; Ma and Han, *Zhongguo minjian zongjiao shi*, pp. 166, 168, 222, 242, 246–48, 250, 254–58, 343, 414–16; Richard Shek, “Elite and Popular Reformism in Late Ming: The Traditions of Wang Yang-ming and Lo Ch’ing,” in Sakai Tadao sensei koki shukuga kinen no kai 酒井忠夫先生古稀祝賀記念の會, ed., *Rekishu ni okeru minshū to bunka: Sakai Tadao sensei koki shukuga kinen ronshū* 歴史における民衆と文化酒井忠夫先生古稀祝賀記念論集 (Tokyo: Kokusho kankōkai, 1982), pp. 2–3; Shek, “Religion and Society in Late Ming,” pp. 203–8; Shek, “Millenarianism Without Rebellion: The Huangtian Dao in North China,” *Modern China* 8.3 (1982), pp. 307–12; Yu Songqing 喻松青, *Ming-Qing Bailian Jiao yanjiu* 明清白蓮教研究 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin, 1987), pp. 121–25; Wang Jianchuan 王見川, “Huantian Dao qianqi shi xintan: Jianlun qi zhipai” 黃天道前期史新探兼論其支派, in Gong Pengcheng 龔鵬程 et al., eds., *Haixia liang’an Daojiao wenhua xueshu yantaohui lunwen* 海峽兩岸道教文化學術研討會論文 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng, 1996), pp. 418–23.

¹⁷⁴ For a discussion of the imperial cult of Zhenwu as a military god, see Zeng Zhaonan 曾召南, “Song Yuan Ming huangshi chongxin Zhenwu yuanyou chuyi” 宋元明皇室崇信真武緣由芻議, *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* (1996.2), pp. 38–43; de Bruyn, “Wudang shan,” pp. 7–13; Wong Shiu-hon, “Xuandi kao” 玄帝考, in his *Daojiao yanjiu lunwenji* 道教研究論文集 (Hong Kong: The Chinese U.P., 1988), pp. 135–36, 138; Susan Naquin, *Shantung Rebellion: The Wang Lun Uprising of 1774* (New Haven: Yale U.P., 1981), p. 39.

men who believed in the Dark Emperor (or Zhenwu, the Perfect Warrior).¹⁷⁵ As early as in the Northern Song, Zhenwu was worshipped by the military.¹⁷⁶ In the Ming, the cult of Zhenwu reached a popular high point in its history. In the case of Lanzhou, a Temple of Zhenwu was built on the city wall of the Jincheng Pass 金城關, a military fortress on the north side of the Yellow River. It was obviously built for military men to worship Zhenwu there.¹⁷⁷ The Temple of the Dark Warrior (Xuanwu miao 玄武廟) was built on Mount Renshou 仁壽山 in Anning Fort 安寧堡, Lanzhou, a military base. Apparently, this temple was dedicated to Zhenwu by military servicemen.¹⁷⁸ Other Lanzhou military forts such as the Zhenlu Fort 鎮虜堡, the Yanchang Fort 鹽場堡, the Fort of Three Wells (Sanyanjing bao 三眼井堡), the Yongtai Fort 永泰堡, and the Fort of Xigu Town (Xigu cheng bao 西古城堡) all had temples or shrines dedicated to Zhenwu. The Zhenwu shrines in the Yongtai Fort and the Yanchang Fort were even built on the city walls, just like the Zhenwu temple in the Jincheng Pass, for the convenience of military servicemen on duty to worship the god.¹⁷⁹

Historically, the Zhenwu cult was associated with the threat from the north. From the Song to the Ming, Zhenwu as a god of the north was believed to possess the power to defend the north by wiping out barbarians and demons.¹⁸⁰ The Jiajing emperor thus once said,

[My ancestor] established the capital in You and Yan 幽燕 [Beijing], which corresponds with Occult Tenebrity (Xuanming 玄冥). Therefore [the Emperor of the Dark Heavens] wiped out the smell

¹⁷⁵ See, for example, *Beijing tushuguan cang Zhongguo lidai shike taben huibian*, vol. 58, pp. 76–77; Chongqing Municipal Museum et al., comp., *Zhongguo Xinan diqu lidai shike huibian* 中國西南地區歷代石刻匯編 (Tianjin: Tianjin guji, 1998), vol. 11, p. 15; Tan Dihua 譚棣華, Cao Tengfei 曹騰駢 and Xian Jianmin 洗劍民, comp., *Guangdong beike ji* 廣東碑刻集 (Guangzhou: Guangdong gaodeng jiaoyu, 2000), pp. 871–72.

¹⁷⁶ See Chan Hok-lam 陳學霖, “Zhenwu shen Yongle xiang chuanshuo suyuan” 真武神永樂像傳說溯源, rpt. in his *Mingdai renwu yu chuanshuo* 明代人物與傳說 (Hong Kong: The Chinese U.P., 1997), p. 92; Yang Lizhi, “Xuanwu Xuandi shen’ge diwei yanbian kaolue” 玄武玄帝神格地位演變考略, *Zongjiaoxue yanjiu* (1993.1–2), p. 10.

¹⁷⁷ Huang, “Jincheng guan ji” 6, p. 6b.

¹⁷⁸ *Gansu KS*, pp. 573–74.

¹⁷⁹ *Gansu quansheng xin tongzhi* (1909) 30, p. 7a; *Chongxiu Gaolan xianzhi* (1892) 19, pp. 8b–9a; *Gansu tongzhi gao* (1936), “Gansu jianzhi zhi” 3, pp. 5b–6a; Jing Zhoujun 荆州俊 (fl. 1599), “Sanyanjing bao ji” 三眼井堡記, in *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 18, pp. 22b–23a; Huang, “Jincheng guan ji” 6, p. 6b.

¹⁸⁰ On this issue, see Wang and Yang, *Wudang Daojiao shilue*, pp. 61–62, 68, 70–71, 86, 90–91, 164–65; Zeng, “Song-Yuan-Ming huangshi chongxin Zhenwu yuanyou chuyi,” pp. 38–40; Lin Shengzhi 林聖智, “Mingdai Daojiao tuxiangxue yanjiu: Yi Xuandi ruiying tu weili” 明代道教圖像學研究以玄帝瑞應圖為例, *Taida Journal of Art History* 6 (1999), pp. 137; Gary Seaman, “The Dark Emperor: Central Asian Origins in Chinese Shamanism,” in Gary Seaman and Jane S. Day, eds., *Ancient Traditions: Shamanism in Central Asia and the Americas* (Niwtot: U.P. of Colorado, 1994), p. 235.

of mutton (namely, the Mongols) and cleaned up China... Although sometimes there appeared one or two minor frontier alerts of ill-fate, they were exterminated quickly.¹⁸¹

According to a stone inscription not associated with the Monastery, during the Ming, in the Fort of Three Wells, which belonged to the Lanzhou Guard, military defenders there “built the temples of the Dark Emperor, King Guan, the Horse Deity, and the Mountain Deity for the purpose of praying for blessings. Within three years, there has been no alarm of barbarian raids.”¹⁸² Apparently, the Zhenwu cult in Ming-era Lanzhou functioned as a form of military protection, and was worshipped by military men for blessings.

According to Xu Daoling’s 許道齡 survey conducted in the 1940s, in Beijing there were thirty to forty Zhenwu temples dated to the Yuan-Ming period.¹⁸³ Susan Naquin also points out that in the Ming Imperial City of Beijing “a great many workplace shrines were dedicated to Zhenwu.”¹⁸⁴ Willem Grootaers in 1948 surveyed 348 villages in Shanxi and Hebei, all near the Ming northern frontier. He found 169 temples of Zhenwu, most of which dated to the Ming or earlier. Thus, Grootaers drew the simple statistical conclusion that perhaps about one in two villages had such a temple.¹⁸⁵ A more recent ethnological study of Xuejiawan 薛家灣, a village in Yongdeng county that in Ming times neighbored Lanzhou to the northwest and is part of present-day Lanzhou, shows that the main god of this community’s religious cult is none other than Zhenwu, locally known as Wuliang zushi 無量祖師.¹⁸⁶ In the Lanzhou area today, Zhenwu is still locally known as Wuliang zushi and is worshipped in many temples, some of which are dated to the Ming.¹⁸⁷ I assume that the situation in Lanzhou during the Ming period might have been similar.

¹⁸¹ Zhu Houcong 朱厚燾, the Jiajing emperor, “Yuzhi chongxiu Dayue Taihe shan Xuan-dian jicheng zhi bei” 御制重修大岳太和山玄殿紀成之碑, in Ling Yunyi 凌雲翼 (ca. 1547–ca. 1571) and Lu Chonghua 廬重華 (fl. 1567–ca. 1572), comp., *Dayue Taihe shanzhi* 大嶽太和山志 (1572), in Yang Lizhi, ed., *Mingdai Wudang shanzhi erzhong* 明代武當山志二種 (Wuhan: Hubei renmin, 1999) 2, pp. 280–81. Occult Tenebrity, or Xuanming 玄冥, refers to the fourth star of the Big Dipper.

¹⁸² Jing Zhoujun, “Sanyanjing bao ji,” in *Gaolan xianzhi* (1774) 18, pp. 22b–23a.

¹⁸³ Xu Daoling 許道齡, “Xuanwu zhi qiyuan jiqi tuibian kao” 玄武之起源及其蛻變考, *Shixue jikan* 5 (1947), p. 235.

¹⁸⁴ Naquin, *Peking*, p. 180.

¹⁸⁵ Willem A. Grootaers, “The Hagiography of the Chinese God Chen-wu (The Transmission of Rural Traditions in Chahar),” *Folklore Studies* 11.2 (1952), pp. 163, 181.

¹⁸⁶ Ke Yang 柯楊 and Zhao Baoxi 趙寶璽, “Xuejiawan ren de zhiye jiqi xinyang xisu” 薛家灣人的職業及其信仰習俗, *Minjian wenxue luntan* 1988.5–6, pp. 112, 117, 119; Zhang and Li, *Longyou wenhua*, p. 349.

¹⁸⁷ *Lanzhou DG*, pp. 14, 16–17, 19, 21–23, 25, 29, 38, 43–45.

The cult of Zhenwu spread to Gansu as early as the Northern Song, and continued disseminating in Gansu throughout the Song, Jin, Yuan and Ming time periods.¹⁸⁸ The concentration of military men in the stele lists and their participation in the religious activities and rituals of the Monastery show manifestly that this temple was extremely important to the military servicemen. If “by performing miracles for the good of the community” against bandits, attacks or raids, “the deity built up a broad local following” in the Ming,¹⁸⁹ then it is perhaps Zhenwu’s protection of the north that attracted these soldiers’ and officers’ involvement. Ter Haar has generalized that a temple or cult functions as the locale of communal organizations; in his words, “local cults generally stood for local communities.”¹⁹⁰ The Monastery meant the same for the military community in Ming Lanzhou. It was common in the Ming that military men in the frontier regions actively participated in Daoist temple festivals and temple building as in the case of the Temple of Concentrated Emptiness, Kunming.¹⁹¹ This distinguishes the Ming religious practice in military bases of the frontiers from other inland towns and cities.

CONCLUSION

The four major steles were installed in the nineteenth and twentieth years of the Jiajing reign, a strong time of Daoist activity due to the emperor’s personal belief in the religion. Thus, the rebuilding of the Monastery can be seen in the context of the dynasty’s official religious policy. This study has tried to demonstrate that renovation and maintenance were sponsored by the Princely Establishment of Su, which maintained a long tradition of Daoist belief. Thus, although the support of Daoism was a national policy, it is the efforts of the prince that made this particular temple active. This study enhances my previous hypothesis, based on a parallel discovered in Yunnan, that Ming princes and military aristocrats on the frontiers occupied an important place in propagating Daoism as an element in cultural and religious identity. While the princes’ patronage of the Monastery of Sublime Mystery functioned to this end, it also served to mediate between the official religious policy and commoners’ interests.

During the Ming era, the local Daoism of different regions had concomitant local features. While the cult of Zhenwu spread nation-

¹⁸⁸ See Wang and Yang, *Wudang Daojiao shilue*, pp. 96–97.

¹⁸⁹ ter Haar, “Local Society,” pp. 7, 32.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁹¹ Wang, “The Daoist Stelae Inscriptions.”

ally to the whole empire,¹⁹² different regions did have their own styles and ways of maintaining the cult.¹⁹³ In the Lanzhou area, the Zhenwu cult had strong military support. Thus, the military constituted one of the major patrons of the Monastery, which must have elicited specific meanings for the military servicemen, from highest-ranking officers down to ordinary soldiers and their families, in particular in the context of the Sino-Mongol war.

The participation of merchants, though nameless, in the Monastery of Sublime Mystery and the temple festivals is significant. Given the tremendous size of the merchant community in Lanzhou, the lively horse trading markets in and around Lanzhou, and the large-scale smuggling along the border, the enthusiasm of merchants for the maintenance of the Monastery and its activities must have been related to their daily secular concerns, in addition to their religious beliefs. The associations responsible for the maintenance of the temple would then have been professional guilds, as in the case of the associations of the Temple of the Eastern Peak in Ming Beijing.¹⁹⁴ Thus, I surmise that Sublime Mystery might have functioned as a congregation of merchants and a temple market, much as the Shanxi-Shaanxi merchants used the Temple of Guandi (Guandi miao) in the area of Shanzishi of Lanzhou as the *huiguan* (native-place, or occupational, lodge) for Shan-Shaan and as Jiangxi merchants used the two Palaces of the Iron Pillar (Tiezhu gong) of Lanzhou as the two Jiangxi *huiguan*.

Finally, many Daoist clerics were involved in the temple rebuilding. I have argued that they were Zhengyi priests and have identified Sublime Mystery as a Zhengyi establishment. The four temple inscriptions provide us with the information of the Zhengyi Daoist priests of Lanzhou and their activities, among which their ritual practices such as the *xuanji* rite, the rituals using the prayer wheel, and the *tieguan lian* rite are interesting enough to warrant further investigation. Moreover, Daoist priests related to the Monastery of Sublime Mystery must have had close relations with lay communities so that they were jointly involved in the temple associations and made the temple festivals possible. Some of these Daoist priests were entrusted by the princes with

¹⁹² On this issue, see Lin, "Mingdai Daojiao tuxiangxue yanjiu," p. 168.

¹⁹³ Lin has nicely demonstrated that in the Ming Jiangxi, Jiangnan, Fujian, Anhui, the Beijing Ming court, and north China had different iconographic representations of Zhenwu. See Lin Shengzhi, *ibid.*, pp. 152, 161, 162, 164, 166–67, 176.

¹⁹⁴ For a discussion of the associations of the Temple of the Eastern Peak in Ming Beijing, see Schipper, "La grande stèle de l'association de nettoyage," pp. 169–79; Schipper, "Stèle de l'association pour les divers objets," pp. 33–46; Goossaert, "Portrait épigraphique d'un culte," pp. 69–70; Yuan, "Beijing Dongyuemiao beiwen kaoshu," pp. 137–58.

the rebuilding of the Monastery while concurrently organizing or participating in various professional associations. Thus, the priests were the intermediary between the royal clan's religious orientation and the lay communities' concerns and interests, between the official Daoist institution and the popular cult. It was these Daoists who functioned as the unifying force bringing the upper and lower classes of society together as mutually independent communities under the umbrella of Daoism.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- Gansu KS* Li Yanping 李焰平 et al., *Gansu kuta simiao* 甘肅窟塔寺廟
- Lanzhou DG* Yuan Zongshan 袁宗善, *Lanzhou Daojiao gaibian* 蘭州道教概編
- Lanzhou GZ* Zhang Wei 張維, *Lanzhou gujin zhu* 蘭州古今注
- Lanzhou TG* Cheng Zhaosheng 程兆生, *Lanzhou tan'gu* 蘭州談古
- TJLS* Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, *Tianxia junguo libing shu* 天下郡國利病書
- Wu Wu Daodong 吳道東, "Chongxiu Xuanmiao guan biji" 重修玄妙觀壁記
- Xiao Xiao Sheng 蕭笙, "Sanshitang ji" 三師堂記
- Zhang Zhang Wei, *Longyou jinshi lu* 隴右金石錄
- Zhu Zhu Zhenjing 朱真澗, "Chongjian Xuanmiao guan ji" 重建玄妙觀記
- Zou Zou Yancai 鄒彥才, "Chongjian Xuanmiao guan beiji" 重建玄妙觀碑碣