

Article

Daoism and Sacrifices to the Five Sacred Peaks in Tang China (618–907)

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Abstract: The five sacred peaks had both political and religious significance in traditional China. Daoism profoundly impacted the state sacrifice to the sacred peaks in the medieval era. Through examining related stone inscriptions, we argue that the establishment of the Shrines for the Perfected Lords of the five sacred peaks, the Shrine for the Elder of Mount Qingcheng, and the Temple for the Envoy of the Nine Heavens at Mount Lu were in debt to the suggestions of the Daoist master Sima Chengzhen during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756). The constructions of the shrines manifested Daoist masters' efforts to transform the state sacrifice system. Nevertheless, the shrines were not able to replace the state sacrifice system but functioned as Daoist abbeys to pray for the state, the emperor, and the people. In the late Tang dynasty, the imperial authority in turn permeated the Daoist sacred geographic system. Interestingly, the elevated status of Daoist Perfected Ones and Transcendents was widely recognized in Tang folklore.

Keywords: Daoism; five sacred peaks; Tang China; Sima Chengzhen; shrines for the perfected lords of the five sacred peaks



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1. Introduction

Sacrifices to the five sacred peaks (*wuyue* 五岳) originated from the worship of mountains and rivers in ancient China. Records of ancient people worshipping and offering sacrifices to mountains and rivers can be found in the *Shanhaijing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas), which features a rich shamanic connotation. After the Shang and Zhou (ca. 1600–256 BCE) states, sacrifice to mountains and rivers became a state-level ritual. These sacrifices had both religious and political functions. The notion of five sacred peaks developed from a mere concept in the pre-Qin period to a reality in the era of the unified Qin and Han empires (221 BCE–220 CE). Regular rituals were eventually systematized in the period of Han Emperor Xuan (r. 74–48 BCE), by which time religious constructions such as *yuemiao* 岳廟 (temple for sacred peak) were erected. Since then, the five sacred peaks were not only geographical concepts but also an enormous coordinate system that transcended its natural characteristics, as well as a set of cultural symbols that manifested imperial legitimacy and governmental capacity (Gu 1963, pp. 34–45; Tang 1997, pp. 60–70; Tang 2000).

During the Sui (581–618) and Tang dynasties (618–907), two significant developments in state sacrifice to the *yuedu* 岳瀆 (sacred peaks and waterways) took shape. On the one hand, iconographic practices were adopted in the sacrifices. This form was officially protected by the state although it differed from prescriptions in the Confucian classics. On the other hand, mountain and river deities, including the five sacred peaks and four waterways,

were granted ranks of nobility in the human realm, which was an implementation of the Confucian ideal that “offering sacrifice to the five sacred peaks is on a par with the Three Dukes” (*wuyue shi sangong* 五岳視三公) in state institutions (Lei 2009, pp. 42–43).

We suggest that a gradual Daoist involvement in the implementation of state sacrifices to mountains and rivers was seen in the Sui and Tang dynasties.¹ This Daoist involvement was a more profound development, and it laid the foundation for the Daoization of the five sacred peaks in later times. The establishment of the Shrines for Perfected Lords (*zhenjun* 真君) of the five sacred peaks during the reign of Tang Emperor Xuanzong marked the formation of a deep connection between the Daoist and *yuedu* sacrifices. The Daoist priest Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647–735), the twelfth patriarch of the Shangqing lineage, created the theoretical basis for and initiated the construction of the shrines.

Officials of Confucian rituals also participated in certain state sacrifices reformed with Daoist ideas. What was the historical and religious background of their cooperation? What were the impacts made on popular beliefs? In order to answer these questions, this paper also explores the interactions between Daoist beliefs and state sacrifices and, at last, briefly introduces the acceptance of Daoist ideas into popular beliefs.

This study intends to investigate the profound Daoist development by utilizing extant historical and Daoist texts and under-studied stele inscriptions from the Tang dynasty to restore a timeline and the details of the establishment of the Perfected Lord Shrines and the other two sacred shrines at Mount Qingcheng and Mount Lu. These close readings of the historical and Daoist writings can also help us understand the historical and religious context for Sima Chengzhen’s utilization of Shangqing Daoist ideas in the formation of the sacred shrine system.

2. Daoist Traditions and Sacrifices to the Five Sacred Peaks from the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589) to the Tang Dynasty

Since the Northern and Southern dynasties, Daoism had shown a strong interest in participating in state sacrifices, and this was particularly evident in the Northern dynasties, during which many rituals of the new Celestial Master Daoism established by Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (365–448) were closely integrated with state sacrifices. Starting from Emperor Taiwu (r. 423–452), every Northern Wei (386–534) emperor had to receive Daoist talismans and registers when ascending to the throne. Furthermore, after Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471–499) relocated the capital to Luoyang (493), he established Daoist altars in the Southern Suburb where sacrifices to heaven were held (Wei 1974, 114.3052–55; Wei 1973, 35.1093). The sacrifices to the five sacred peaks were deeply influenced by Daoism as well. In the “Houwei zhongyue Songgao lingmiao bei” 後魏中岳嵩高靈廟碑 (Stele of the Spiritual Temple of the Lofty Song, the Central Sacred Peak, of the Later Wei Dynasty) erected in the Taiyan reign period (435–440) of Emperor Taiwu, it is recorded that the Northern Wei dynasty sent Daoist priests to build the Temple of the Central Sacred Peak (Zhongyue miao 中岳廟) for Kou in recognition of his assistance to the Perfected Lord, Emperor Taiwu, in bringing peace to the human realm. Although the stele has been severely damaged, fortunately, a clear rubbing survives (Shao 1962; Shao 1965). From the rubbing we can see that, first, in addition to building the shrine of the central sacred peak for Kou, the Northern Wei imperial court also built shrines for other sacred peaks, such as the Shrine of Mount Hua. Second, those responsible for constructing the new shrines were Daoist priests. Last, the sacrifice was “a ritual that makes offerings, offers prayers to deities in spring, and recompenses in autumn” 奉玉帛之禮, 春秋祈報, which is similar to traditional Confucian ritual. These traits are very similar to the “Da Dai Huayuemiao bei” 大代華岳廟碑 (Stele of Mount Hua of the Great Dai) that was erected at the same time.²

The integration of Daoist rituals with Southern Suburb ceremonies in the Northern Wei was abolished in the Northern Qi dynasty (550–577), but the Daoist influence on the sacrifices to the five sacred peaks was to some extent inherited by the Sui dynasty (581–618). According to the *Suishu* 隋書 (Sui History), “in the fourteenth year of the Kaihuang reign (594), [Emperor Wen (r. 581–604)] was going to offer sacrifices to Mount Tai; hence, he

ordered the commissioner to deliver stone statues to the place where offerings are made to deities” 開皇十四年，將祠泰山，令使者致石像神祠之所 (Wei 1973, 22.621). In the first month of the fifteenth year (595), “on the *gengwu* day, due to a great drought, the emperor offered sacrifices to Mount Tai to apologize for his offense and fault. A Great Amnesty for all-under-heaven was granted” 庚午，上以歲旱，祠太山，以謝愆咎。大赦天下 (Wei 1973, 2.39). We know very little about the ritual that Emperor Wen employed to offer sacrifices to Mount Tai. However, prominent Daoist elements can be found in the ritual that offered sacrifices to the northern sacred peak, Mount Heng (Hengshan 恆山), in the eighth month of the fourth year of the Daye reign (608) made by Emperor Yang of the Sui (r. 604–617). The *Suishu* records that “in the mid-Daye period, Emperor Yang visited Jinyang and thus offered sacrifices to the sacred peak, Mount Heng. The ceremony notably adopted the rituals used by Emperor Gaozu when making offerings to Mount Tai. The emperor commanded two additional altars to be established and ordered tens of Daoist priests and priestesses to set up the *jiao* ritual within the short wall surrounding the altar. In the tenth year (614), the emperor visited the eastern capital and passed by and offered sacrifices to Mount Hua. A ritual space was set up beside the temple” 大業中，煬帝因幸晉陽，遂祭恒岳。其禮頗采高祖拜岱宗儀，增置二壇，命道士女官數十人，於壇中設醮。十年，幸東都，過祀華岳，築場於廟側 (Wei 1973, 7.140, 3.71). Thus, Daoist priests participated in sacrifices to Mount Tai by Emperor Wen and the rites to Mount Heng and Hua made by Emperor Yang. Furthermore, the *zhaijiao* 齋醮 liturgies were employed in the sacrifice.³ The early Tang historians who composed the *Suishu* criticized this matter from a Confucian stance: “These events are not in accordance with the Confucian classics, and they are not rituals established by the pertinent bureaus” 事乃不經，蓋非有司之定禮也。

Compared with the previous dynasties, the state’s management of the sacred peak temples was significantly enhanced in the Tang dynasty. The *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 (Old Tang History) records that “in temples of the five sacred peaks and four waterways, there is one Director who ranks 9a (upper class), thirty Gentlemen for Retreat and three Supplication Scribes in each temple” 五岳四瀆廟，令各一人，正九品上。齋郎三十人，祝史三人 (Liu 1975, 44.1924). Thus, the rank of Directors of Sacred Peak Temples was greatly promoted compared with the Sui. In the Sui, “a medium in the vicinity was responsible for the maintenance of sacred peak temples” 側近巫一人主知灑掃, but in the Tang, they were replaced by Court Gentlemen for Retreat and Supplication Scribes within the state sacrifice system. As for Court Gentlemen for Retreat, “the middle male children in the household who were above sixteen years old should be used and sent back at the age of twenty” 取年十六以上中男充，二十放還, miscellaneous taxes and corvées were also exempted (Tianyige Museum and Institute of History of Chinese Academy of Social Science 2006, pp. 393, 432). As a state institution in charge of sacrifice, sacred peak temples enjoyed all the privileges provided by the bureaucratic system. The five sacred peak temples each took possession of one *qing* of the government-owned land (*gongxietian* 公廨田), and the directors, according to their official rank, were each entitled to 1.5 *qing* of land (*zhifentian* 職分田) (Li 1992, 3.75–76).

In the ceremonial system of the Tang, sacrifices to sacred peaks, strongholds, seas, and waterways (*yue-zhen-hai-du* 岳鎮海瀆) were ranked as middle-level sacrifices: “The five sacred peaks and four strongholds should be offered sacrifice once a year at the five suburbs on the day that greets the seasonal *qi*” 其五岳四鎮，歲一祭，各以五郊迎氣日祭之 (Ouyang 1975, 15.380). The locations were: Qianfengxian 乾封縣 of Yanzhou 兗州 for Mount Tai, Hengshanxian 衡山縣 of Hengzhou 衡州 for Mount Heng 衡山, Huayinxian 華陰縣 of Huazhou 華州 for Mount Hua 華山, Quyangxian 曲陽縣 of Dingzhou 定州 for Mount Heng 恆山, and Dengfengxian 登封縣 of Luozhou 洛州 of Mount Song. These were regular sacrifices in the ritual codes. In the Tang, sacrifices were frequently offered because of major events such as floods and drought, foreign invasions, grand ceremonies in the suburbs, and the enthronement of new emperors. Daoist aspects were gradually incorporated into these rituals.⁴

3. The Perfected Lord Shrines of the Five Sacred Peaks and State Sacrifices in the Tang

Tang Emperor Gaozong's (r. 649–683) period was critical in shaping religious policy in the Tang, and the *fengshan* sacrifices (i.e., sacrifices to heaven and earth) to Mount Tai were an epoch-making event in this process. For the first time, Laozi was granted honorific titles in Gaozong's period (Liu 1975, 5.90), and Daoism was henceforth accorded a special status. Lei Wen adequately discussed Daoist factors manifested in Gaozong's *fengshan* rituals (Lei 2009, pp. 138–53). Barrett has also considered the Gaozong period a turning point for Tang's policy on Daoism, which led to the full development of theocracy (Barrett 1996, pp. 29–30). The close connection between Daoism and sacrifices to sacred peaks and waterways reached its pinnacle during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756), marked by the establishment of the Wuyue Zhenjun 五岳真君 (Perfected Lords of the Five Sacred Peaks) Shrines. The *Jiu Tangshu* biography of Sima Chengzhen states:

In the ninth year of the Kaiyuan reign (721), Emperor Xuanzong furthermore sent a commissioner to escort [Sima Chengzhen] to the capital. The emperor received the ritual register in person from him and bestowed handsome rewards on him before and after. In the tenth year (722), the emperor returned to the western capital. Chengzhen requested to go back to Mount Tiantai again, and Xuanzong composed a poem to send him off. In the fifteenth year (727), Xuanzong summoned him to the capital once again. The emperor asked Chengzhen to choose an advantageous location on Mount Wangwu to build altars and chambers to reside in. Chengzhen hence reported: "Now the gods' shrines on the five sacred peaks are all for the gods of mountains and forests. They are not legitimate and true deities. There are cavern bureaus in the five sacred peaks; in each of them there is a perfected being who descended from Upper Clarity to take the post. Mountains, rivers, winds, rains, *yin* and *yang*, and the order of *qi* are all governed by them. The official headgear, attire, and the assistant gods and Transcendents all have their names and numbers. I request to establish separate shrines for making retreats and rituals". Xuanzong approved his request and hence issued an edict for erecting a Shrine of the Perfected Lord on each of the five sacred peaks. Chengzhen was ordered to examine Daoist scriptures and creatively work out the images [of the deities] and the style of the shrines accordingly. 開元九年，玄宗又遣使迎入京，親受法籙，前後賞賜甚厚。十年，駕還西都，承禎又請還天台山，玄宗賦詩以遣之。十五年，又召至都。玄宗令承禎于王屋山自選形勝，置壇室以居焉。承禎因上言：“今五岳神祠，皆是山林之神，非正真之神也。五岳皆有洞府，各有上清真人降任其職，山川風雨，陰陽氣序，是所理焉。冠冕章服，佐從神仙，皆有名數。請別立齋祠之所”。玄宗從其言，因敕五岳各置真君祠一所。其形象制度，皆令承禎推按道經，創意為之。 (Liu 1975, 192.5128)⁵

Most of the historical sources on the establishment of Perfected Lord Shrines on the five sacred peaks during the reign of Xuanzong were so incomplete that historians in the Song dynasty no longer knew much about it. For instance, the colophon written by Ouyang Fei 歐陽棐 (1047–1113) for the rubbing of the “Huayue Zhenjun bei” 華岳真君碑 (Stele of the Perfected Lord of Sacred Peak Hua) he collected, which is included in his *Jigu lumu* 集古錄目 (Catalogue of Collection of the Antiquities), states that the stele was “composed by Tao Han, Assistant Magistrate of Huayin, and written by Wei Teng. In the nineteenth year of the Kaiyuan reign (731), deities of the five sacred peaks were bestowed the divine title of Perfected Lord. The shrine was built, and the stele was erected at that time”. 華陰丞陶翰撰，韋騰書。玄宗開元十九年加五岳神號真君，初建祠宇，立此碑 (Shike shiliao xinbian 1977, 24.17976). In fact, the alleged “bestowing of titles” is a complete misunderstanding of the matter. Although contemporary scholars of Daoist history have paid some attention to it, they have mostly skirted over it as merely an achievement by Sima Chengzhen (Chen 1963, p. 56; Imaeda 1987, p. 175). Further research is therefore needed on the causes and consequences of this event, the relationship between Perfected Lord Shrines and state sacrifices in the sacred peak temples, and the deeper context it reflects. As a matter of fact,

the establishment of Perfected Lord Shrines was accompanied by the erection of the Shrine of the Elder at Mount Qingcheng (Qingchengshan Zhangren ci 青城山丈人祠) and the Temple of the Nine-Heavens-Envoy at Mount Lu (Lushan Jiutianshizhe miao 廬山九天使者廟). Therefore, this was a holistic event reflecting the endeavors of Daoist representatives to transform the state sacrificial system with their own theories.

3.1. The Related Stone Stele Inscriptions

Materials documenting this event are very sporadic. In addition to the “Biography of Sima Chengzhen” in the *Jiu Tangshu*, there are also the “Annals of Xuanzong” in the *Jiu Tangshu*, the *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government), the *Cefu yuangui* 冊府元龜 (Outstanding Models from the Storehouse of Literature), the *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 (Record of the Social Institutions of the Tang), the *Yuhai* 玉海 (Sea of Jade Encyclopedia), the *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven Slips from a Cloudy Satchel), and so on.⁶ Although these texts have minor discrepancies, they should derive from the same historical source. Thus, we only have a very limited amount of material to work with. Fortunately, stone inscriptions can provide a wealth of information. The inscriptions are listed in Table 1.

Unfortunately, only the full texts of the inscriptions about Mount Hua, Mount Qingcheng, and Mount Lu have survived. The *Jinshilu* 金石錄 (Records of Stone and Bronze) preserves only the titles of the inscriptions for the northern, southern, and eastern sacred peaks, or mentions them in the preface or colophon of other inscriptions. The newly published entombed epitaph of Tian Tui, a Daoist priest in the High Tang era, references the Perfected Lord Shrine of the central sacred peak. From the epitaph, we learn that the person who went to set up the shrine on Mount Song was Tian Tui, who was then the eminent priest of the Jinglong Abbey. He was accompanied by Secretarial Court Gentlemen Wei Zhi (Lei 2019). These stone inscriptions are crucial for our comprehensive understanding of this event.

Table 1. Stele inscriptions recording the event of building shrines on the sacred peaks.

| Name | Built Time | Commissioner from Central Government | Local Official | Writer and Scribe | Note |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| “Daiyue guan bei” 岱岳觀碑 (Stele of the Daiyue Daoist Abbey) | 11th m., KY 19th y. (the 11th month of the 19th year of Kaiyuan, 731 CE); 2nd m., KY 20th y (732). | Zhang Youwu 張遊霧, Abbot of the Dahongdao Abbey in Chang’an; Yang Wan 楊琬, Eminent Priest of the Jinglong 景龍 Daoist Abbey in Luoyang. Hu Ji 胡寂, Imperial Commissioner and Palace Receptionist Directorate of the Palace Domestic Service; Ning Jun’ai 寧君愛, Administrative Assistant, Work Supervisor of the Female Services Office. | Officials of Specialized Duties: Shangguan Bin 上官賓, Gentleman for Closing Court (prestige title), Assistant Magistrate of Qufu; Wang Qufei 王去非, Court Gentleman for Promoted Service (prestige title), District Defender of Qianfeng xian. | | “Dongyue Zhenjun bei” 東岳真君碑 is only mentioned in the preface of “Daiyue guan bei”, no stele preserved. The Imperial Commissioner dispatched in the 20th year seems to be the same event. See Chen (1988, p. 114). |
| “Tang Beiyue Zhenjun bei” 唐北岳真君碑 (Stele of the Perfected Lord of the Northern Sacred Peak of the Tang) “Tang Huayue Zhenjun bei” 唐華岳真君碑 (Stele of the Perfected Lord of Sacred Peak Hua of the Tang) (Lei 2005, 2:76–88). | 1st m., KY 20th y (732). After the 2nd m., KY 20th y (732). | | Wei Yan 韋衍, County Magistrate of Huayin. | Written by Fang Feng 房鳳, transcribed in the <i>bafen</i> 八分 calligraphy style. Written by Tao Han, Assistant Magistrate of Huayin; transcribed by Wei Teng from the capital region. | Zhao (1985, 6.107). Jigu lumu. See Shike shiliao xinbian (1977, 24.17976). |

Table 1. Cont.

| Name | Built Time | Commissioner from Central Government | Local Official | Writer and Scribe | Note |
|---|------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| “Tang Nenyue Zhenjun bei” 唐南岳真君碑 (Stele of the Perfected Lord of the Southern Sacred Peak of the Tang) | 10th m., KY 20th y (732). | | Yuan Zhi 元晔 (courtesy name Guangda 光大), Assistant Prefect of Hengzhou. | Written by Zhao Yizhen 趙頤真, transcribed in standard writing by Xiao Cheng 蕭誠. | Zhao (1985, 6.107) . See the colophon mentions this inscription in Zhao (1985, 26.478) . |
| “Qingcheng shan Zhangren ci miaobei” 青城山丈人祠廟碑 (Temple Stele of the Shrine for the Elder at Mount Qingcheng) | 1st m., KY 20th y (732). | | Yang Liben, Prefect of Shuzhou; Xue Yi 薛倚, County Magistrate of Qingcheng. | Written by Xu Taiheng 徐太亨; transcribed by Gan Yirong 甘遺榮 in the <i>bafen</i> style. | Dong (1983, 351.3560–61) ; Zhao (1985, 6.107) . |
| “Zhangren ci ji furui jie” 丈人祠紀符瑞碣 (Stele Inscription Record of Auspicious Omens at the Elder Shrine) | ? | | | Transcribed by Gan Yirong in the <i>bafen</i> style. | Wang Xiangzhi’s 王象之 <i>Yudi beijimu</i> 輿地碑記目 (Catalogue of Stele Inscriptions of the Realm) See Shike shiliao xinbian (1977, 24.18564) . |
| “Jiutianshizhe miao bei” 九天使者廟碑 (Stele of the Temple of the Nine-Heavens-Envoy) | 25th day, 1st m., KY 20th y (732). | Zhang Fengguo 張奉國, Commissioner of Establishing the Shrine, Official of the Inner Palace; Zhang Pinggong 張平公, Commissioner of Arranging Retreat. | Dugu Zhen 獨孤禎, Prefect of Jiangzhou; Yang Chuyu 楊楚玉, Prefect Aide; Hungfu Chuyu 皇甫楚玉, Adjutant; Wei Chang 魏昌, County Magistrate of Xunyang. | Written by Li Zi 李泚 (or Pin 毗), transcribed by Zhou Jiabin 周嘉賓. | Chen (1988, pp. 114–16) ; Dong (1983, 373.3792–94) . |
| “Tang shizhe zhengxiang ji” 唐使者徵祥記 (Record of Auspicious Omens of the Envoy) | 8th d., 3rd m., KY 20th y (732). | | | Written and transcribed by Pan Guan 潘觀 (or Hui 翺) in standard writing. | Dong (1983, 397.4050) ; Zhao (1985, 6.107) . |
| “Tang Jinglongguan weiyi jianjiao xiugongde shi Tian Zunshi muzhiming” 唐景龍觀威儀檢校修功德使田尊師墓誌銘 (Entombed Epitaph of the Venerable Master Tian, the Disciplinary and the Commissioner for the Cultivation of Merit and Virtue of the Jinglong Daoist Abbey of the Tang) | Tianbao 6th y (747). | Tian Tui 田僊, Eminent Daoist priest of the Jinglong Abbey; Wei Zhi 韋陟, Secretarial Court Gentlemen. | | | Tian Tui and Wei Zhi went to the central sacred peak to construct the Perfected Lord Shrine together. See Lei (2019) . |

3.2. The Textual Verification of Related Historical Facts

3.2.1. The Timeline

There should be no problem dating the establishment of the Perfected Lord Shrines, as the inscriptions mentioned above indicate that these events undoubtedly occurred between the nineteenth and twentieth years of Kaiyuan (732). However, the discrepancies in the relevant texts, especially the ambiguous record of the time in the “Biography of Sima Chengzhen” in the *Jiu Tangshu*, have led many modern scholars of Daoism to continue to follow the erroneous claim that the establishment of the shrines was in the fifteenth year. Chen Guofu’s *Daozang yuanliu kao* 道藏源流考 (Examination of the Origin of Daozang Scriptures) adopts this claim. In addition to the biography, Chen also bases his claim on the *Nanyue xiaolu* 南岳小錄 (Lesser Record of the Southern Sacred Peak) written by Li Chongzhao 李沖昭, a Daoist priest in the late Tang ([Chen 1963, p. 56](#)). Noguchi Tetsuro and Ishida Kenji argue that the Perfected Lord Shrines should have been erected in the fourteenth year, while the Shrine for the Elder at Mount Qingcheng and the Temple for the Envoy of the Nine Heavens at Mount Lu were built in the twentieth year ([Noguchi](#)

and Ishida 1983, p. 56). This assertion is problematic since they divide a single event into two parts. As late as 1996, in his book *Taoism under the T'ang*, Barrett still followed Chen's statement, arguing that the nineteenth year of Kaiyuan still seemed too late even for implementing the construction, and cited the *Nanyue xiaolu* as the basis for his argument as well (Barrett 1996, pp. 54–55). Therefore, there is still a need to examine this issue.

The extant historical materials include three different dates for Emperor Xuanzong's acceptance of Sima Chengzhen's proposal to establish the Perfected Lord Shrines: the ninth (721), fifteenth (727), and nineteenth (731) years of Kaiyuan. Records in the "Annals" of *Jiu Tangshu*, the *Zizhi tongjian*, and the *Yuhai* are identical; namely, the official edict of building the shrines was issued on the fifteenth day of the fifth month of the nineteenth year of Kaiyuan (731). As for the record in the *Cefu yuangui*, both the year and date accord with the other materials, except that the phrase "the fifth month" (*wuyue* 五月) becomes "the first month" (*zhengyue* 正月). This is probably due to the similarity in the forms of the characters "五" and "正". The month and date (the fifteenth day of the fifth month) in the *Nanyue xiaolu*, which Chen Guofu and Barrett cite as evidence, are also consistent with the *Zizhi tongjian* and the *Jiu Tangshu*, except that the year is given as the "fifteenth year". This is a discrepancy that may still be due to an error in the process of reprinting—the words "nine" (*jiu* 九) and "five" (*wu* 五) are also easily confused. Regarding the "twelfth month of the ninth year of Kaiyuan (721)" recorded in the *Tang huiyao*, I suspect that it is a mistake of "the second month of the nineteenth year of Kaiyuan (731)", which is the time that Sima Chengzhen's proposal was sent—it is not difficult to see with the aforementioned inscriptions that Xuanzong issued the edict to establish the Perfected Lord Shrines on the fifteenth day of the fifth month in the nineteenth year of Kaiyuan (731). It is hard to imagine that Sima Chengzhen's proposal was made ten years earlier. The following is a brief timeline of the establishment of the Perfected Lord Shrines, the Elder Shrine, and the Envoy Temple.

- A. In the second month of the nineteenth year of Kaiyuan (731), Sima Chengzhen made the proposal.
- B. On the *renxu* day, the fifteenth day, of the fifth month same year (731), Emperor Xuanzong issued the edict of building the Perfected Lord Shrines of the Five Sacred Peaks.
- C. On the twenty-first day of the eighth month, the emperor issued an imperial order: set up the Elder Shrine of Mount Qingcheng and the Envoy Temple of Mount Lu (Xu 1983, 351.3651).
- D. On the twenty-fifth day of the eighth month, the emperor issued an imperial order: the Elder Shrine and the Envoy Temple should follow the convention of the Perfected Lord Shrines—pick five outstanding Daoist priests for burning incense and making offerings.
- E. In the eleventh month, the Perfected Lord Shrine of the eastern sacred peak was established. Fasting was performed for three days and three nights.
- F. In the first month of the twentieth year of Kaiyuan (732), the Perfected Lord Shrine of the northern sacred peak and the Elder Shrine were completed. Steles were erected for commemoration.
- G. On the twenty-fifth day of the first month of the same year (732), the Envoy Temple was completed. People set a vegetarian feast, performed the *zhaijiao* ritual, and erected a stele for commemoration.
- H. After the second month, the Perfected Lord Shrine of the western sacred peak was completed. A stele was erected for commemoration.
- I. In the third month, moreover, the stele of the "Zhengxiang ji" was erected at the Envoy Temple.
- J. On the *jiyou* day of the fourth month, the emperor ordered: "Since the Perfected Lord Shrines were firstly built on the five sacred peaks, the emperor had prayed for the fortune of the common people. Thus, it is suitable to have the Commissioner for Mountain Sacrifice select extremely faithful Daoist priests and set up *jiao* rituals

according to time. The temples of the Envoy and the Elder are allowed to have this sacrificial ritual as well". (Li 1988, p. 862)

- K. In the tenth month, the Perfected Lord Shrine of the southern sacred peak was completed. A stele was erected for commemoration.

It should be acknowledged that this timeline is not comprehensive. First, the date of Sima Chengzhen's proposal is still speculative. Besides, the completion time of the Perfected Lord Shrine of the central sacred peak is not available for examination. In addition, the reason for the long construction period of the southern sacred peak's Perfected Lord Shrine is unknown. All these questions remain to be investigated further.

3.2.2. The Shrine for the Elder at Mount Qingcheng and the Temple for the Envoy of the Nine Heavens at Mount Lu

Although the Shrine for the Elder at Mount Qingcheng and the Temple for the Envoy of the Nine Heavens at Mount Lu are not mentioned in the "Biography of Sima Chengzhen" in the *Jiu Tangshu*, it is noteworthy that they were built on the basis of Sima's suggestion as well.

According to the *Luyi ji* 錄異記 compiled by Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933), the establishment of the Elder Shrine and the Envoy Temple came from Sima Chengzhen's interpretation of a miraculous dream by Emperor Xuanzong (Du 1988a, pp. 856–57).⁷ As mentioned above, the bases of Du Guangting's account are the "Jiutianshizhe miao bei" erected on Mount Lu in the first month of the twentieth year of Kaiyuan (732) and the "Tang shizhe zhengxiang ji" erected in the third month, which are credible evidence. However, the claim that "temples were erected on each of the five sacred peaks and the three mountains" cannot be fully confirmed. This is because in both stone inscriptions and extant texts, no record has been found of the establishment of the Jiutiansiming 九天司命 (Director of Destinies of the Nine Heavens) Temple at Mount Qian in the Kaiyuan period (713–741). In the "Jiutian Shizhemiao bei", in the description of the relationship between the two shrines at Mount Qingcheng and Mount Lu with the Perfected Lord Shrine, there is no mention of the Qianshan Simingzhenjun 潛山司命真君 (Perfected Lord of Directing Destinies of Mount Qian). The earliest known stele inscription of the Perfected Lord Temple of Mount Qian is the "Tang Siming Zhenjunmiao bei" 唐司命真君廟碑 (A Tang Stele of the Temple for the Perfected Lord of Directing Destinies) erected in the eighth year of the Dali period (773) of Emperor Daizong (r. 762–779). Judging from its content, this temple was established in the ninth year of Tianbao (750), nearly 20 years after establishing the shrines of the five sacred peaks, Mount Qingcheng, and Mount Lu (Lei 2008).

Evidently, Sima Chengzhen attempted to transform or even replace the state ritual system with Daoist theories. He not only contributed to the establishment of the Perfected Lord Shrines of the five sacred peaks but also used the opportunity of interpreting Emperor Xuanzong's dream to bring about the construction of the Elder Shrine of Mount Qingcheng and the Envoy Temple of Mount Lu. According to the *Lushan Taipingxingguo gong Caifang Zhenjun shishi* 廬山太平興國宮採訪真君事實 (Veritable Facts Concerning the Perfected Lord Investigator of the Taiping Xingguo Temple of Mount Lu), at that time, "emperor [Xuanzong] ordered Wu Daozi (685–758) to paint a portrait [of the Perfected Lord], and commanded Zhang Fengguo, Eunuch Official of the Inner Palace, and Zhang Pinggong, Ritual Master, to bring the image to Jiangzhou. The emperor ordered the Prefect, Dugu Zheng(zhen), and the Magistrate, Wei Chang, to establish the shrine at the north side of Mount Lu" 乃詔吳道子肖像, 敕內供奉張奉國及法師張平公等, 齋像詣江州, 命刺史獨孤正(禎), 縣令魏昌建祠於廬山之陰 (Ye 1988, p. 662). The "Feng an yuce ji" 奉安玉冊記 (Record of Placing the Jade-Slips upon Imperial Order), erected on Mount Lu in the first year of the Chonghe (1118) era of the Song Emperor Huizong's reign, recorded that "[the emperor] commanded Wu Daozi to paint [a portrait of the Perfected Lord] and dispatched an Eunuch Official in the Inner Palace to bring the true image of the Envoy and to construct a temple on the north side of the mountain. Emperor Xuanzong bestowed the hall plaque, and himself wrote the calligraphy in the *miuzhuan* style for the plaque. The text on the

plaque reads ‘The Hall of the Envoy of the Nine Heavens,’ while it does not contain the deity’s title of ‘Caifang.’ The plaque is still there” 命吳道子寫之，遣內供奉持使者真圖建立祠廟於山之陰。明皇帝親書繆(篆)殿額以賜之，其文曰‘九天使者之殿’，而無‘採訪’之稱。其榜固在也 (Ye 1988, p. 687). If this is true, the image of the Envoy was painted by Wu Daozi, and the calligraphy for the plaque was written by Emperor Xuanzong—the significance speaks for itself.

3.2.3. Basic Information and Primary Functions of the Seven Shrines

At this point, we have a general understanding of the basic process of setting up shrines on the five sacred peaks and the two mountains, namely Mount Qingcheng and Mount Lu. First, Sima Chengzhen made the blueprint of the shrines and sketches of the deities’ statues according to the Shangqing scriptures (the sketch of the Envoy’s statue probably was made by Wu Daozi). Then, palace eunuchs served as Commissioners for Establishing Temples (Zhimiao shi 置廟使) and eminent Daoist priests from the two capitals served as Commissioners for Arranging Retreats (Shezhai shi 設齋使) went to the mountains to guide the establishment of shrines. Site selection, construction, and other work was the responsibility of local administrations. After completion, there were usually vegetarian feasts, circumambulation rituals, and the *toulong* sacrifice, as we saw in the “Daiyueguan bei” and the “Jiutian Shizhemiao bei”. Finally, steles were erected for commemoration.

The specific locations of the Perfected Lord Shrines on each sacred peak are not recorded in historical sources. The entry “Sima Chengzhen” in Shen Fen’s 沈汾 *Xuxianzhuàn* 續仙傳 (Supplementary Biographies of Transcendents) says that “an imperial order was issued to construct a temple for transcendent officials on the summit of each of the five sacred peaks” 詔五岳於山頂別置仙官廟 (Zhang 2003, 113.2507), which is probably unfounded. Based on the materials available today, some sites are not far from the sacred peak temples, and both the Perfected Lord Shrine of the southern sacred peak and the Sitian Huowang 司天霍王 (Heaven Governor King Huo) Temple (i.e., Hengyue Temple 衡岳廟) located at the foot of Huagai Peak (Huagai feng 華蓋峰), and they are very close to each other (Li 1988, p. 862). Some shrines are farther away from the sacred peak temples, such as the Perfected Lord Shrine of the northern sacred peak at the foot of Jiahe 嘉禾 Mountain, 10 miles northeast of Hengyang 恆陽 County in Dingzhou 定州, and the shrine at the foot of Mount Heng (Hengyue 恆岳) located 40 paces west of the county (Li 1983, 18.514–15). The locations of the Perfected Lord Shrines of the other three sacred peaks are lost today.

The Qingcheng Elder Shrine is located east of Mount Zhangren (lit. elder) at the foot of Mount Guicheng 鬼城. It was renamed Jianfu 建福 Palace upon the imperial order in the Song dynasty, but it appears to have been moved from the old site on Mount Tianguo 天國, which is at a deeper location in Mount Qingcheng. Du Guangting’s *Daojiao lingyanji* 道教靈驗記 (Evidential Miracles in Support of Daoism) records: “The Perfected Lord’s image in the Daoist Abbey of the Elder at Mount Qingcheng wears the crown that canopies heaven, the robe of vermilion luster, and the seal of three *ting*, to dominate the five sacred peaks and to overawe and control myriad deities. In the middle of the Kaiyuan period (713–741), Emperor Xuanzong dreamed of him. Hence, he ordered to make the image of the lord and deliver it to the mountain. The Daoist abbey was moved to its current location from the shrine on Mount Tianguo. It is probably because people make offerings to the mountain in every spring and autumn, and Mount Qingcheng is slightly closer to the county while Mount Tianguo is too far away” 青城山丈人觀真君像，冠蓋天之冠，著朱光之袍，佩三亭之印，以主五岳，威制萬神。開元中，明皇感夢，乃夾紵制像，送於山中。自天國祠宇，移觀於今所。蓋取春秋祭山，去縣稍近，以天國太深故也 (Du 2003, 118.2594–95). It is evident from the above text that, first, by the late Tang and the Five Dynasties, the Elder Shrine had been called the Elder Daoist Abbey. Second, the Elder Shrine had already existed before and was moved to the present site in the middle of the Kaiyuan period. This may be the reason why Yang Liben 楊勵本, Prefect of Shuzhou, was going to “comply with the imperial order, respectfully pondered over the spiritual temple, painted the plan by himself, and changed the construction” 奉遵宸旨，恭惟靈廟，親畫規模，改興版築, as stated in the “Qingchengshan

Zhangrenzi miaobei” 青城山丈人祠廟碑 (Stele Inscription of the Elder Shrine of Mount Qingcheng). Third, not only were the plans of the shrines sent from Chang’an, but so was the image of the Perfected Lord, which proves the inscription’s description of the deity’s image: “[Its] divine posture is gorgeous and beautiful just like it has descended afar from the Nine Heavens; the splendid brilliance of the ravishing statue will long live in the three *shu* regions” 神姿麗美, 遠降於九天. 麗像昭輝, 長存於三蜀. Last, the Daoist abbey was moved to facilitate the annual spring and autumn sacrifices to the mountain for Qingcheng County. According to the *Tang liudian* 唐六典 (Compendium of the Sixfold Administration of the Tang Dynasty), “Mount Zhangren of Qingcheng County in Shu Prefecture shall be offered vegetarian delicacies in every spring and autumn. The Magistrate is entrusted to conduct [the rites]” 蜀州青城丈人山, 每歲春秋二時享以蔬饌, 委縣令行 (Li 1992, 4.123). The location where mountain sacrifices were held is the Elder Shrine. As for the Envoy Temple of Mount Lu, according to the aforementioned Du Guangting’s *Luyiji*, it was located at the northwest of the mountain. The *Yudi jisheng* 輿地紀勝 (Record of the Superb in the Yu Realm) states that “the Envoy Temple is thirty *li* south of the prefecture and it is also known as the Taipingxingguo Palace” 使者廟, 在州南三十里, 即太平興國宮也 (Wang 1992, 30.1313). The more specific location needs to be further examined.

These seven shrines were all Daoist abbeys, so they needed Daoist priests to live in them for maintenance. Although the scale of the buildings was not small, the number of Daoist priests was very limited, only about five priests per abbey. For instance, the “Qingchengshan Zhangrenzi miaobei” records that “according to the imperial edict issued on the twenty-fifth day of the eighth month of [the nineteenth year of Kaiyuan], the Qingcheng Elder Shrine should pick five outstanding Daoist priests for burning incense and making offerings, in accord with the regulations of the Perfected Lord Shrines” 又奉[開元十九年]八月二十五日敕, 青城丈人廟准五岳真君廟例, 抽德行道士五人, 焚香供養. The “Jiutian Shizhemiao bei” also states that “on the twenty-first day of the eighth month of the nineteenth year of Kaiyuan (731), an imperial order was issued to have the Elder Temple of Mount Qingcheng and the Envoy Temple of Mount Lu follow the regulations of the Perfected Lord Temples of the five sacred peaks and to select five outstanding Daoist priests for burning incense and making offerings. Officials who oversee this matter should select and place Daoist practitioners who have splendid religious attainments and report their ages and names to related bureaus” 開元十九年八月二十一日降明旨曰: 青城山丈人廟, 廬山使者廟, 宜准五岳真君廟例, 抽德行道士五人, 焚修供養. 仍委所管揀擇灼然道行者安置, 具年名申所由. Moreover, as recorded in the *Cefu yuangui*, on the *jiyou* day of the fourth month, the emperor ordered: “Since the Perfected Lord Shrines were first constructed on the five sacred peaks, I continued to pray for the benefit of the common people, it is suitable that the Commissioner for Peak Sacrifices select extremely faithful Daoist priests and arrange the *jiao* rituals according to the proper time. The Envoy Temple and the Elder Shrine are allowed to have this sacrificial ritual as well” 五岳先制真君祠廟, 朕為蒼生祈福, 宜令祭岳使選精誠道士, 以時設醮, 及廬山使者, 青城丈人廟, 並准此祭醮 (Wang 1982, 53.590). Thus, resident priests were selected by both local officials and the Commissioner of Mountain Sacrifices dispatched by the central government, and the lists were to be reported to and recorded by the central government. “Zhang Chongji, the Daoist priest of the Gateway of Mystery, and others” mentioned in the last part of the “Jiutianshizhe miao bei” should refer to the selected priests for the Envoy Temple. Their primary function was to pray for the emperor, the state, and the people with Daoist *jiao* rituals on specific days. The establishment and main functions of the temple both strongly show the government’s involvement.

It is not surprising that shrines and temples of the five sacred peaks and two mountains would have a privileged status in the local religious community. Take the northern sacred peak as an example, an official sacrifice to the sacred peak is recorded in the “Datang Bolingjun beiyue Hengshan feng Antianwang zhi ming” 大唐博陵郡北岳恒山封安天王之銘 (Stele Inscription of Conferring the Title of Heavenly King of Peace to Mount Heng, the Northern Sacred Peak, of Boling Prefecture of the Great Tang) (Shike shiliao xinbian 1977,

2.1486) erected on the twenty-fifth day in the seventh year of Tianbao (748). The list of those who participated in the sacrifice inscribed on the back of the stele includes “Liu Chuyi, former imperial attendant, who jointly refined the elixir of hundred-blossom-syrup for the emperor, Daoist priest of the Three Caverns of the Perfected Lord Temple of the Northern Sacred Peak” 前供奉合煉百花漿北岳真君廟三洞道士劉處一 in addition to various officials of Heng Prefecture and Hengshan County, the director of the sacred peak temple on Mount Heng, and supervisor of the temple. The participation of the Daoist priests of the Perfected Lord Temple in the state ceremonies highlights the status of this temple in the local religious community. Until the late Tang dynasty, the Perfected Lord Temple of the northern sacred peak continued to receive official patronage. For example, the temple’s two reconstructions done in the fifteenth year of the Xiantong era (874) and the second year of the Qianfu era (875) were recorded in the “Beiyue zhenjun xusheng jian zaixiumiao ji” 北岳真君敘聖兼再修廟記 (Narrative of the Sage, Perfected Lord of the Northern Sacred Peak, and Record of the Reconstruction of the Temple) erected in the fourth year of the Qianfu (877) in Emperor Xizong’s reign (873–888). The second reconstruction was made upon the imperial order (Chen 1988, p. 185).⁸

3.3. *Sima Chengzhen and the Theoretical Basis of the Establishment of Perfected Lord Shrines*

What was the theoretical basis for Sima Chengzhen, the key figure in the establishment of shrines and temples for the five sacred peaks and the two mountains? As is well known, Sima was the patriarch of the Shangqing tradition after Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536), Wang Yuanzhi 王遠知 (528–635), and Pan Shizheng 潘師正 (585–682), and he played an essential role in the religious and political arena in the high Tang.⁹ He said in the aforementioned memorial presented to Xuanzong: “There are cavern mansions in the five sacred peaks, in each of them there is a perfected one of the Upper Clarity descended to take the post. Mountains, rivers, winds, rains, *yin* and *yang*, and the order of *qi* are all governed by them”. The “Tang Huayue zhenjun bei” clearly indicates that “preserving essence derives from the images and numbers [in the *Book of Changes*], establishing blessings is based on divine plan. [Emperor Xuanzong] clarified the lost writs of the Great Cavern, and verified the ancient aspirations of Shangqing” 儲精出乎象數, 建福本乎神機. 澄大洞之逸文, 驗上清之舊志. Evidently, Sima Chengzhen based his ideas on notions from the Shangqing tradition. Most of the Transcendents and Perfected Ones enshrined in the seven temples can be found in Tao Hongjing’s *Zhenling weiye tu* 真靈位業圖 (Table of the Ranks and Functions in the Pantheon) (Tao 1988, pp. 276–77), which is probably the source for Sima Chengzhen’s so-called “the perfected ones of Shangqing”. However, in the divine genealogy of the *Zhenling weiye tu*, the five sacred peaks, Mount Qingcheng, and Mount Lu are not an organic whole. What integrates them into one system are texts of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* 五岳真形圖 (Chart of the True Forms of the Five Sacred Peaks) system.

Kristofer Schipper and Yamada Toshiaki have studied this Chart and its associated beliefs in depth (Schipper 1967; Yamada 1987). Cao Wanru and others have pointed out that, in terms of the presentation and content of its ancient version, the *Wuyue zhengxing tu* found in the *Daozang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon) probably evolved from sketch maps of specific mountains, namely, a practical map provided for Daoist priests to collect herbs and inquire into Daoist matters at the five sacred peaks (Cao and Zheng 1987). Zhang Xunliao’s study innovatively combines the Chart with Daoist artifacts such as the *Wuyue zhenxing jing* 五岳真形鏡 (Mirror of the Perfected Forms of the Five Sacred Peaks) and the *Shangqing hanxiang jing* 上清含像鏡 (A Shangqing Mirror that Contains Images) (Zhang 1991; Zhang and Bai 2006, pp. 1751–833). Zhang believes that the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*, similar to *Hanwudi neizhuan* 漢武帝內傳 (Inner Traditions of Han Emperor Wu), which has the earliest record of the Charts, was a work by Ge Hong 葛洪 (ca. 284–363) using a pseudonym, or “a work created together by Ge with his teacher, father-in-law, and wife”. The reasons for this are: “First, the earliest texts documenting the materials of the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* are all attributed to Ge Hong, and some of them are intentionally fabricated by using predecessors’ names. Second, except for some fictitious characters and ungrounded materials, the Charts were

transmitted through a single line down from Ge Hong to his disciples and then gradually promoted (Zhang and Bai 2006, p. 1756)". There are two versions of *Wuyue zhenxing tu* preserved in the *Daozang*. One is the *Dongxuan lingbao wuyue guben zhenxing tu bingxu* 洞玄靈寶五岳古本真形圖并序 (Ancient Manuscript of the Perfected Forms of the Five Sacred Peaks with Preface, a Dongxuan Lingbao Scripture) (Dongxuan lingbao wuyue guben zhenxing tu bingxu 1988, pp. 735–43), although this text probably was written in a later time.¹⁰ The other one is the *Wuyue zhenxing xulun* 五岳真形序論 (Preface and Discourse of the Perfected Forms of the Five Sacred Peaks) collected in the *sheng* section of the *zhengyi* division (Wuyue Zhenxing Xulun 1988, pp. 628–36). Schipper has dated this text to the late Six Dynasties (220–589). The *Wuyue zhenxing xulun* consists of four kinds of texts. The first text is the story about the West Queen Mother bestowing the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* to the Han Emperor Wu (r. 141–87 BCE); the second text includes two documents for the ritual of transmission of the talisman; the third is the *Baoshi peishiyong* 鮑氏佩施用 (Instructions for Use by Mr. Bao [Jing]), and the fourth is the *Wuyue tuxu* 五岳圖序 (Preface to the Image of the Five Sacred Peaks), which was attributed to Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (ca. 161–93 BCE) (Schipper and Verellen 2005, pp. 265–66). The *Wuyue tuxu* records:

The lord of the eastern sacred peak, Mount Tai, leads five thousand and nine hundred deities, is in charge of life and death, and is the chief commander of hundreds of ghosts. He is the one who those blood-eating temples revere . . . The lord of Mount Tai dons an azure robe, bears the dark emerald crown of seven *cheng*, and carries the seal of peace that penetrates *yang*. 東岳泰山君, 領群神五千九百人, 主治死生, 百鬼之主帥也, 血食廟祀所宗者也 . . . 泰山君服青袍, 戴蒼碧七稱之冠, 佩通陽太平之印.

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Qingcheng Elder was appointed by the Yellow Thearch and is in charge of earth Transcendents. He is the superior officer to the five sacred peaks and oversees various officials. The Elder leads ten thousand transcendent officials. Daoist priests who enter the mountain see him donning a robe of vermilion luster, bearing the crown that canopies heaven, and carrying the seal of the Three Courts. He rides a carriage without a canopy and comes with various spirits to welcome the Daoist priests. 青城丈人, 黃帝所命也, 主地仙人, 是五岳之上司, 以總群官也. 丈人領仙官萬人, 道士入山者, 見丈人服朱光之袍, 戴蓋天之冠, 佩三庭之印, 乘科車, 從眾靈而來迎子.

The Envoy of Mount Lu was appointed by the Yellow Thearch. His official rank equals the Court Censor, and he directs all the transcendent posts as he is the surveillance officer of the five sacred peaks. When Daoist priests enter the mountain, the Envoy will don a dark vermilion robe, bear the cap of peaceful blossom, and carry the seal of the true form of the Three Heavens to welcome the Daoist priests. 廬山使者, 黃帝所命, 秩比御史, 主總仙官之位, 蓋五岳之監司. 道士入其山者, 使者服朱緋之袍, 戴平華之冠, 佩三天真形之印, 而來迎子.

Descriptions about Mount Huo, the crown prince for the southern sacred peak, and Mount Qian, the second crown prince, are listed after that of the Envoy of Mount Lu. In addition to the five sacred peaks, the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* also includes Mount Qingcheng, Lu, Huo, and Qian.¹¹ The *Wuyue zhenxing tu xu* explains the reason for their inclusion with the five sacred peaks: "[The Yellow Thearch] . . . thus presented a memorial to the Most High Lord of the Dao of the Three Heavens to command Mount Huo and Mount Qian to be crowned princes. His request was approved. Thus, the Yellow Thearch built the mountains and painted the images by himself to attach at the end of the Charts of the Five Sacred Peaks. Moreover, he commanded to promote Mount Qingcheng as the Elder and appointed Mount Lu as the Envoy. The images were attached in the proper order. This method started with the Yellow Thearch" [黃帝] . . . 乃章詞三天太上道君, 命霍山潛山為儲君. 奏可, 帝乃自造山, 躬寫形像, 連五圖之後. 又命拜青城為丈人, 署廬山為使者, 形皆以次相續, 此道始于黃帝耳.

It is worth noting that the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* records the numbers of “various deities”, “transcendent officials”, and “jade maidens”, and gives detailed descriptions of the robes, crowns, and seals of the lords of the five sacred peaks, the Elder of Mount Qingcheng, the Envoy of Mount Lu, and the Crowned Princes Mount Huo and Qian. As mentioned above, Sima Chengzhen states in his memorial that the Shangqing perfected ones who were sent to govern the five sacred peaks all have distinct prescribed clothing and servants. The records in the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* seem to be the basis of Sima’s statement. Taking the description of Qingcheng Elder in the “Qingchengshan Zhangren ci miaobei” as an example: “Yellow Thearch appointed him as Elder of the Five Sacred Peaks, and thus he was addressed as such. He dons a robe of vermilion luster, bears the crown that canopies heaven, and carries the seal of the Three Courts. He rides a carriage without a canopy and is in charge of the five sacred peaks” 黃帝拜為五岳丈人，因以為稱。服朱光之袍，戴蓋天之冠，佩三庭之印，乘科車，主五岳。 This is almost identical to the description in the *Wuyue zhenxing tuxu*. However, in Sima Chengzhen’s plan to reshape the state’s sacrifices to the five sacred peaks using Daoist ideas, he did not intend to build temples on Mount Huo and Qian. This probably is because Mount Qingcheng and Mount Lu were the superiors of the five sacred peaks, while Huo and Qian were only the crown princes of the southern sacred peak, which means they were not at the same level.

In his study on the worship of the Envoy of the Nine Heavens of Mount Lu, Florian Reiter has suggested that some relatively ancient traditions, such as the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*, had a new prevalence in the Tang (Reiter 1988, p. 275). The *Zhenguan gongsi huashi* 貞觀公私畫史 (History of Official and Private Paintings from the Zhenguan Era) compiled by Pei Xiaoyuan 裴孝源 (fl. 627–649) in the thirteenth year of Zhenguan (639) lists the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* in one fascicle. Pei comments that these paintings are “extremely fine and marvelous. They were obtained by seeking and inquiring in private households since the Sui (581–618)” 甚精奇，隋朝以來，私家搜訪所得 (Pan and Yutang 1999, p. 19). The *Wuyue zhenxing tu*, the *Wuyue gongyang tu* 五岳供養圖 (Charts of Making Offerings to the Five Sacred Peaks), and the *Wuyue zhenxing tu xu* were listed in the *Lingbao zhongmeng jingmu* 靈寶中盟經目 (Scripture Catalogue of Middle Covenant of Lingbao) in fascicle 4 of the *Dongxuan lingbao sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* 洞玄靈寶三洞奉道科戒營始 (Regulations and Precepts for Daoist Practices in Accordance with the Scriptures of the Three Caverns, a Dongxuan Lingbao Scripture) by Jinming Qizhen 金明七真 in the early Tang as ritual texts that Dongzhen Ritual Masters must acquire (Jinmingqizhen 1988, p. 758).¹² Furthermore, the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* is also listed as a ritual register conferred on Daoist priests in the renowned Daoist ritual master Zhang Wanfu’s 張萬福 *Chuanshou sandong jingjie falu lueshuo* 傳授三洞經戒法錄略說 (Brief Explanation of the Transmission of Scriptures, Precepts, and Ritual Texts of the Three Caverns) (Zhang 1988, p. 190).¹³ As a master of scriptures of the Three Caverns and various schools, Sima was undoubtedly well-versed in the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*.

Sima Chengzhen authored the *Dongxuan lingbao wuyue mingshan chaoyi jing* 洞玄靈寶五岳朝儀經 (Dongxuan Lingbao Scripture of Ritual Protocol of the Five Sacred Peaks and Renowned Mountains) in one fascicle in length and now lost.¹⁴ Judging from the title of the book, it seems to be a scripture dedicated to sacrifices to the five sacred peaks. His work, the *Shangqing tiandi gongfu tujing* 上清天地宮府圖經 (Shangqing Scripture of Charts of Palaces and Mansions in the Heavens and on Earth), is a systematic study summarizing the notions of *dongtian* 洞天 (cavern-heaven) and *fudi* 福地 (blissful-realm),¹⁵ in which he specifically discusses the names of the deities and Transcendents who have descended to the cavern-heavens in the five sacred peaks. For example, among the “ten great cavern-heavens”, there is the “fifth cavern-heaven in Mount Qingcheng. Its perimeter is two thousand *li*, and it is called ‘the cavern-heaven of nine chambers of treasured transcendent.’ It is located in Qingcheng County, Shuzhou, and governed by the Qingcheng Elder” 第五青城山洞，周回二千里，名曰寶仙九室之洞天，在蜀州青城縣，屬青城丈人治之。 The cavern-heavens of the five sacred peaks are listed among the “thirty-six lesser cavern-heavens”:

The second is the cavern in the eastern sacred peak, Mount Tai. The perimeter is one thousand *li*. Its name is Pengxuan Cavern Heaven. It is in Qianfeng County, Yanzhou, and is governed by Child Shantu. 第二東岳太山洞。周回一千里，名曰蓬玄洞天，在兗州乾封縣，屬山圖公子治之。

The third is the cavern in the southern sacred peak, Mount Heng. The perimeter is seven hundred *li*. It is called Zhuling Cavern Heaven. It is located in Hengshan County, Hengzhou, and is governed by the Transcendent Shi Changsheng. 第三南岳衡山洞。周回七百里，名曰朱陵洞天，在衡州衡山縣，仙人石長生治之。

The fourth is the cavern in the western sacred peak, Mount Hua. The perimeter is three hundred *li*, and it is called Zongxian Cavern Heaven. It is located in Huayin County, Huazhou, and governed by the perfected one, Huiche zi. 第四西岳華山洞。周回三百里，名曰總仙洞天，在華州華陰縣，真人惠車子主之。

The fifth is the cavern in the northern sacred peak, Mount Chang. The perimeter is three thousand *li*. Its name is Zongxuan Cavern Heaven. It is located in Quyang County of Changshan, Hengzhou. The governor is the perfected one Zheng Zizhen. 第五北岳常山洞。周回三千里，名曰總玄洞天，在恒州常山曲陽縣，真人鄭子真治之。

The sixth is the cavern in the central sacred peak, Mount Song. The perimeter is three thousand *li*. It is named Sima Cavern Heaven and is located in Dengfeng County of the eastern capital, Luoyang. The governor is the Transcendent Deng Yunshan. 第六中岳嵩山洞。周回三千里，名曰司馬洞天，在東都登封縣，仙人鄧雲山治之。

According to the “Dili zhi” 地理志 (Treatise on Administrative Geography) of the *Xin Tangshu* 新唐書 (New Tang History), Hengshan xian “originally was affiliated with Tanzhou. It became a part of Hengzhou in the third year of the Shenlong era (707)” 本隸潭州，神龍三年來屬[衡州] (Ouyang 1975, 41.1071). Accordingly, the *Shangqing tiandi gongfu tujing* was written after this date. Therefore, it is conceivable that Sima’s statements about the cavern-heavens, the descent of Transcendents and Perfected Ones, and their functions are based on his own work; and that the five Transcendents and Perfected Ones, including Child Shantu and Shi Changsheng, are “Shangqing perfected ones” whom he believed to have descended on the five sacred peaks. Although these five perfected ones have already appeared in Tao Hongjing’s work, there is no mention of them governing the five cavern-heavens.¹⁶ Therefore, their association with the five sacred peaks is probably Sima Chengzhen’s own creation.

Sima also provided specific guidance on the construction of temples and deity images, as is indicated in his biography in the *Jiu Tangshu*. He was able to do this, first of all, because he was conversant with Daoist literature and various institutions. After a long period of development, a wealth of experience had been accumulated in the construction of Daoist palaces and abbeys by the Tang dynasty. For instance, detailed instructions about establishing abbeys and making images are presented in the *Sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* (Jinmingqizhen 1988, pp. 744–49). Sima Chengzhen’s “creativity” was thus not just a figment of his imagination, as he must have consulted the experience and achievements of his predecessors. Due to our limited materials, we do not know the architectural plan of the seven shrines of the five sacred peaks and two mountains. However, from the description of the “Jiutianshizhe miaobei”, it seems that this temple at least included the Court of Assiduous Meditation (Jingsi yuan 精思院), the Court of Pure Precepts (Jingjie yuan 淨戒院), a Scripture Tower, a kitchen, and so on. Its design is very close to the regulations in the *Sandong fengdao kejie yingshi* about the setup of Daoist abbeys. Perhaps this was a typical design of Daoist abbeys in the early Tang, which Sima must have known very well.¹⁷

Secondly, Sima’s creativity is also inseparable from his profound artistic skills. Chengzhen was adept in poetry, music, painting, and calligraphy. For example, he was ordered to “make the ‘Daoist Music of Mysterious Perfect’” 製玄真道曲 (Ouyang 1975, 22.476), which made him more compatible with Emperor Xuanzong, who knew music well and had

personally composed the music of *Buxu* 步虛 (pacing the void). In terms of calligraphy and painting, he was “erudite and literate, adept in seal script, and had established his own style. His seal scripts were praised as the ‘writing of golden scissors’” 博學能文, 攻篆, 迴為一體, 號曰‘金剪刀書’ (Shen 2003, 113.2505). He painted the mural in his residence on Mount Wangwu (Zhang 1964, 9.186) and wrote the *Shangqing di shichen Tongbo Zhenren zhentu zan* 上清帝侍晨桐柏真人真圖贊 (Encomium of the Perfect Image of the Shangqing Perfected Tongbai, Aide of the Thearch) in one fascicle (Sima 1988, pp. 157–63). Although Chengzhen was not the painter of the paintings in the encomium, it is undoubtedly that this book contains the paintings. He also composed the *Shangqing hanxiang jian jian tu* 上清含象劍鑒圖 (Shangqing Chart of the Mirror and Sword of Containing Images) and cast swords for Xuanzong. He simplified the *Zhenxing tu* that mapped the geographic features of the five sacred peaks into an artistic symbol and placed it in the center of the mirror. His creation made a significant impact on later materials of the *Zhenxing tu*.¹⁸

In conclusion, Sima Chengzhen’s fundamental ideas for establishing temples of the five sacred peaks derived from concepts of the Shangqing tradition and were combined with the notions in the *Wuyue zhenxing tu*. Thanks to his mastery of Daoist scriptures on the one hand and his artistic skills on the other, he creatively constructed his theories of cavern-heavens and blissful-realms.

4. State Sacrifices, Daoist Beliefs, and Popular Worships

It is evident that the Tang Daoists put a great effort into participating in and reforming state sacrifices to the five sacred peaks, judging from the Daoist elements in Emperor Gaozong’s *feng* and *shan* sacrifices and the establishment of Perfected Lord Temples on the five sacred peaks and two mountains. In fact, the close relationships between Daoism and the state manifested in many other aspects. For instance, when Emperor Xuanzong endowed the title of Jintianwang 金天王 (Gold Heavenly King) on the deity of Mount Hua in the eighth month of the second year of the Xiantian era (713), he commanded “Ye Fashan 葉法善 (616–720), a Daoist priest at the Jinglong Abbey, who enjoys the same status as Chief Minister of the Court of State Ceremonial for Foreigners, and Duke of Yue Kingdom, to prepare for the ceremony and offer sacrifices” 景龍觀道士, 鴻臚卿員外置, 越國公葉法善, 備禮告祭 (Song 1956, 74.418). Confucian ceremonial officials were often involved in the *toulong* rituals that the Daoist priests were ordered to perform, such as the event held on the seventh day of the sixth month in the eighteenth year of the Kaiyuan era (730). At this event, Vice Minister of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices, Wei Tao 韋縯, who specialized in managing the Five Rituals, together with Wang Xianqing 王仙卿, Abbot of the Dongming Daoist Abbey of Chang’an, went to Mount Qingcheng to set up the *jiao* ritual and made the *toulong* sacrifice (Chen 1988, p. 111). Confucian ceremonial officials of the time did not see any fault with the close relationship between Daoism and state sacrifices. What is the historical background of this phenomenon? What was the impact on popular cults in the Tang dynasty?

4.1. The Daoist Opposition to Blood Sacrifice

According to traditional Confucian rituals, state sacrifices, such as the *sheji* 社稷 sacrifices to the gods of soil and grain, the five sacrifices, and sacrifices to the five sacred peaks should be “blood sacrifices” (*xueji* 血祭). This tradition was honored by past dynasties, and sacrifices to the five sacred peaks in the Tang were no exception. Based on the *Tang liudian*, *tailao* 太牢 (ox, goat, and pig) were to be prepared as the offerings for regular sacrifices, while only *teniu* 特牛 (ox) should be used for praying for rain and a clear sky (Li 1992, p. 128). In the *Datang Kaiyuanli* 大唐開元禮 (Ritual Code of the Kaiyuan Era in the Great Tang), there are very detailed regulations on the types of animals and body parts to be used for sacrifices to sacred peaks and strongholds (Xiao 1972, 35.199).

Popular cults in China were often deemed “illicit cults” (*yinsi* 淫祀) by the officials. The *Liji* 禮記 (Record of Rituals) states: “regarding sacrifices, those who have been abolished should not be promoted; those that have been promoted should not be abolished. Offering

worship to those who should not be worshiped is called illicit sacrifice. There will be no blessings for illicit sacrifices” 凡祭, 有其廢之, 莫敢舉也; 有其舉之, 莫敢廢也。非其所祭而祭之, 名曰淫祀, 淫祀無福 (Sun 1989, 6.152–53). In the Tang, it was considered that “even if on sacred peaks, seas, strongholds, waterways, renowned mountains, great rivers; even if they are emperors, kings, and past worthies, if temples are built at improper locations, or they are not in the classics, sacrifices to them are deemed illicit. [Sacrifices] to men who have no laudable merits and virtues, nor have done righteous deeds to be awarded, are deemed illicit sacrifices” 雖岳海鎮瀆, 名山大川, 帝王先賢, 不當所立之處, 不在典籍, 則淫祀也; 昔之為人, 生無功德可稱, 死無節行可獎, 則淫祀也 (Zhao 1991, 5.497). This shows that during the Tang, ordinary people without significant merit and deeds of integrity could not receive offerings. Even sacrifices to great men and significant geographic landmarks were considered illicit if they were performed at improper locations. The most prominent feature of illicit sacrifices is that they were not included in ceremonial codes and were not recognized by the state. However, the boundary between these sacrifices and state sacrifices is rather vague, and they have one major common feature: both require blood sacrifice. Therefore, Terry Kleeman considers state religion and popular worship as two aspects of the same religion which he calls the “blood-eating realm” (Qi 1996, p. 551).

As Kleeman has pointed out, both Buddhism and Daoism rejected the notions of mutual influence and communication between the human and divine realms advocated by state religion and popular worship. Moreover, Buddhism strongly opposed killing and blood-eating due to the concept of *samsāra* and retribution, and thus attempted to reform popular gods who accepted bloody offerings. Yan Yaozhong has shown that Buddhist monks in the Tang dynasty had integrated illicit sacrifices to various gods (such as mountain gods) in the Jiangnan region. He has pointed out that, as a result, Buddhism became much closer to the people, and illicit sacrifices became one of the bonds between the two (Yan 1996, pp. 51–62). Daoists also severely criticized blood sacrifice, for they believed that gods who receive bloody food are the “old *qi* of the Six Heavens” (*liutian guqi* 六天故氣), while the Daoist deities that reside in the heavens of the Three Clarities above the Six Heavens are the orthodox deities formed by the pure *qi* of the Dao. According to the *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經 (Scripture of the Inner Explanations of the Three Heavens) completed in the Liu Song dynasty (420–479), Zhang Daoling 張道陵 had an agreement with officials of the Han empire, the Three Officials, and the stellar deity Taisui 太歲: “The people shall not falsely offer illicit sacrifices to other ghosts and gods so as to make them not able to drink and eat . . . The people shall only make offerings to deceased relatives, ancestors, and parents on the five auspicious *la* days; in the second and eighth month, they can offer sacrifices in the shrines to the gods of soil and stove. Those not belonging to the orthodox rituals of the Three Heavens and the perfected Dao of various heavens are all old *qi*” 民不妄淫祀他鬼神 . . . 民人唯聽五臘吉日祠家親宗祖父母, 二月八月祠祀社灶。自非三天正法, 諸天真道, 皆為故氣 (Xushi Santiandizi 1988, p. 414; see also Ren 1995, pp. 950–51). However, Daoism held a more reserved attitude toward the state sacrifices that required the slaughtered livestock for blood-eating deities. Lu Xiuqing 陸修靜 (406–477) in his *Lu xiansheng Daomen kelue* 陸先生道門科略 (Master Lu’s Codes of the Daoist Portal, Abridged) states: “[The appropriate rituals] only include the son of heaven offering sacrifices to heaven, the three dukes offering sacrifices to the five sacred peaks, marquises offering sacrifices to mountains and rivers, and commoners giving offerings to ancestors on the five *la* days and to the gods of soil and stove in the second and eighth months. Other than these rituals, one should not make offerings. Giving offerings to ancestors not on the five auspicious *la* days or offering sacrifices to the gods of soil and stove not on the *she* days in spring and autumn are all transgressions of making illicit sacrifices” 唯天子祭天, 三公祭五岳, 諸侯祭山川, 民人五臘吉日祠先人, 二月八月祭社灶, 自此以外, 不得有所祭。若非五臘吉日而祠先人, 非春秋社日而祭社灶, 皆犯淫祠 (Lu 1988, p. 779).

Although Daoism has sought to reform state sacrifices, sacrifices to heaven and earth and those to ancestral shrines are too difficult to reform since they are directly related to the legitimacy of the dynasty. Therefore, it was easier to start the transformation from sacrifices

to sacred peaks and rivers. Since the Northern and Southern dynasties, Daoists began to actively participate in the state's sacrificial activities of sacred peaks, and consequently, these rites increasingly adopted Daoist aspects. Sima Chengzhen's proposal to erect shrines for the Perfected Lords of the five sacred peaks was a continuation of this effort. He directly expressed his aversion to the "blood-eating gods" and advocated that Daoist Perfected Ones and Transcendents were superior to the deities of the five sacred peaks who took blood sacrifices, signaling his intention to transform state sacrifices.

4.2. The Toulong Sacrifice for Sacred Peaks and Waterways in the Tang Dynasty

A deeper reason for Emperor Xuanzong's acceptance of Sima Chengzhen's proposal to establish shrines on the five sacred peaks and two mountains, in addition to his respect for Daoism, was the tendency to Daoize sacrifices to the five sacred peaks since the Northern and Southern dynasties. This tendency was even more evident in the *toulong* activities in the early Tang. By the time of the erection of the Perfected Lord Shrines, the fruit of Daoization was ripe for taking.

The earliest *toulong* activity in the Tang was held on Mount Mao by Wang Yuanzhi in the ninth year of Zhenguan following imperial order: "In the fourth month of the ninth year, he arrived at Mount Mao. An imperial edict was issued to dispatch Xue Yi 薛頤 (?–646), Director of the Astrological Office, Zhang Daoben 張道本, Editor of the Imperial Library, Huan Fasi 桓法嗣, Aide of Left Inner Guard Command of the Crowned Prince, and others, to deliver fragrant oils, colored silks, gold dragon figurines, and jade discs to the abbey to pray for blessings for the state" 貞觀九年四月至[茅]山, 敕文遣太史令薛頤, 校書郎張道本, 太子左內率長史桓法嗣等, 送香油, 鎮彩, 金龍, 玉璧於觀所, 為國祈恩 (Chen 1988, pp. 51–54).¹⁹ Since then, *toulong* activity seems to have become regular. In the second year of the Xianheng era (671), Lu Zhaolin 盧照鄰 (?–689) wrote a stele inscription for Gentleman Li, abbot of the Zhizhen Daoist Abbey 至真觀 in Yizhou 益州, which reads: "Riding the clouds and driving the *qi* day and night on mountain ridges; offering jade discs and casting gold dragons year by year to sacred peaks and waterways" 乘雲御氣, 日夕於關山; 薦璧投金, 歲時於岳瀆 (Lu 1994, 7.416). This kind of ritual activity had apparently been regularized. By the time of Xuanzong, activities that promoted Daoism reached a climax: "On renowned mountains in the realm, Daoist priests and palace eunuchs were ordered to jointly refine [elixir] and hold the *jiao* sacrifices repeatedly. They cast dragon tokens, offered jades, built temples, and picked herbs. Perfected instructions and transcendent traces increased every month and year" 天下名山, 令道士, 中官合鍊醮祭, 相繼於路. 投龍奠玉, 造精舍, 採藥餌, 真訣仙蹤, 滋於歲月 (Liu 1975, 24.934). The imperial court even issued special rules for the *toulong* ritual. Dunhuang manuscript P.2354 is an example of such a text. It is noteworthy that jade discs used in traditional state sacrifices to sacred peaks and waterways were added to the *toulong* ritual during the Tang, which demonstrated the convergence of Daoist and state rituals since the original *toulong* ritual in the Six Dynasties only had gold dragons, jade-slips, emerald ribbons, and gold knobs (Zhou 1999).

According to my preliminary statistics, most *toulong* activities were held on the eastern sacred peak. Nineteen of the rites were held on the eastern sacred peak, twice on Mount Song, once on Mount Heng, three times at Ji Waterway 濟瀆, and once at Huai Waterway 淮瀆 (Lei 2009, pp. 207–10). These are surely not all the *toulong* rituals on the five sacred peaks and four waterways during the Tang, yet evidently, *toulong* rites were considerably frequent by the time of Gaozong. Both the emperor and the public had long been accustomed to this. In this context, Emperor Xuanzong gladly accepted Sima Chengzhen's suggestion, which led to the establishment of the shrines on the five sacred peaks and the two mountains.

4.3. The Interactions between State Sacrifices, Daoist Beliefs, and Popular Worships

The establishment of the Perfected Lord Shrines of the sacred peaks, the Elder Shrine of Mount Qingcheng, and the Envoy Temple of Mount Lu indicate that the Tang court had partly accepted Daoist theories of sacrifices to the five sacred peaks. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Daoist system replaced the traditional state sacrificial system of the five

sacred peaks. On the contrary, the two coexisted to a certain degree. Each of the five sacred peaks had its own administrative institution, and even after establishing the Perfected Lord Shrines, their functions were never challenged. Moreover, the deities of the five sacred peaks were crowned as kings successively during Emperor Xuanzong's reign. In terms of rituals, sacrifices to the five sacred peaks were still held at the best location, *yuemiao*, and the nature of blood sacrifice remained unchanged. In the *Datang Kaiyuanli*, which was compiled almost simultaneously with the establishment of the Perfected Lord Shrines, the different types of livestock used in sacrifices were still specified in detail. Although the establishment of the shrines was based on Sima Chengzhen's intention of transforming the tradition of blood sacrifice, Xuanzong did not necessarily see it as such. Essentially, the primary function of the shrines was still to set up the *jiao* ritual for the state, the emperor, and the people to pray for blessings.

More importantly, from Sima Chengzhen to Du Guangting in the late Tang and the Five Dynasties (907–960), the notions of cavern-heavens and blissful-realms were instead profoundly influenced by the authority of the state. Du Guangting's *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* 洞天福地岳瀆名山記 (Records of Cavern Heavens, Blissful Realms, Sacred Peaks, Waterways, and Renowned Mountains) displays a significant change in the description of the five sacred peaks compared with Sima's *Tiandi gongfu tu*. Sima puts the ten great cavern-heavens at the top of the list while placing the five sacred peaks among the thirty-six lesser cavern-heavens, emphasizing their domination by Shangqing perfected ones. In doing so, Sima implies that Daoist Transcendents and Perfected Ones are superior to the blood-eating gods of state sacrifices. However, Du Guangting's *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* treated the five sacred peaks as follows:

The mountain deity of the eastern sacred peak, Mount Tai, is King Tianqi who leads ninety thousand transcendent officials and jade maidens. The mountain's perimeter is two thousand *li*, and it is in Fengfuxian of Yanzhou. Mount Luofu and Kuocang serve as Assistants of the Mandate. Mount Meng and Dong serve as Assistant Managers. 東岳泰山, 岳神天齊王, 領仙官玉女九萬人。山周回二千里, 在兗州奉符縣。羅浮山, 括蒼山為佐命, 蒙山, 東山為佐理。

The mountain deity of the southern sacred peak, Mount Heng, is King Sitian who leads thirty thousand transcendent officials and jade maidens. The mountain's perimeter is two-thousand *li*. Mount Huo and Qian are the Crowned Princes; Mount Tiantai and Juqu are the Assistant Governors. 南岳衡山, 岳神司天王, 領仙官玉女三萬人。山周回二千里, 以霍山, 潛山為儲副, 天台山, 句曲山為佐理。 (Du 1988b, p. 56)

...

Apparently, concerning the identification of the five sacred peaks' deities, Du Guangting not only accepted the titles of the five sacred peaks given by the imperial court (namely the ranks of nobility endowed by Emperor Xuanzong) but also sought to have the so-called "blood-eating gods" of Sima Chengzhen's writings lead transcendent officials and jade maidens. Thus, it is clear that state authority has permeated Du's interpretations of cavern-heaven and blissful-realm. To a certain degree, Du Guangting had given up on transforming the state sacrificial system with Daoist theories, which demonstrated a completely different purpose from that of Sima Chengzhen.

However, the idea that Daoist Transcendents and Perfected Ones were superior to sacred peak deities in the state sacrificial system promoted by Sima Chengzhen made a significant impact on popular worship in the Tang. In some *chuanqi* 傳奇 ("Transmitting the Strange") tales, an ordinary Daoist priest is able to have the mountain deity of Mount Hua wait for and greet him as far as thirty *li* outside of the Tong Pass (Li 1961, 35.221). Even a common Daoist priestess could make the southern sacred peak's deity greet and pay respect in front of her horse (Duan 1981, 8.83–84). A story in Dunhuang manuscript S. 6836, *Ye Jingneng shi* 葉靜能詩 (Ye Jingneng's Poem), also faithfully reflects this idea. In the thirteenth year of Kaiyuan (725), Ye Jingneng, a Daoist priest, prayed for rain following an

imperial order but in a manner of commanding the deities of the five sacred peaks (Huang and Zhang 1997, p. 337). Ye can call the deities hither and thither, implying that Daoist Celestial Masters were superior to the sacred peak deities. In a late Tang story titled “Liu Yuanjiong” 劉元迥, a magician persuaded Li Shigu 李師古 (?–806), Military Commissioner of Pinglu 平盧, to change the head of King Tianqi, the deity of Mount Tai, with gold in order to defraud him of money. He even said directly: “Although Tianqi is called a noble deity, he actually belongs to the ghost kind” 天齊雖曰貴神, 乃鬼類耳 (Li 1961, 308.2440). This is in line with Sima’s idea of “blood-eating gods”. There is a narrative pattern in Tang folklore: the son of the sacred peak deity (sometimes the deity himself) snatches a beautiful woman from the human realm, but the woman is saved by a transcendent master or eminent Daoist priest with a talisman (Jia 2000; Lei 2009, pp. 214–15). These stories can be used as footnotes to what Sima stated: “Nowadays on famous mountains, sacred peaks, and waterways, most sacrifices are to blood-eating deities. The Most High worries that they would exercise power arbitrarily to harm the multitude”. In addition to Daoist priests, these stories also include “wuzhe” 巫者 (sorcerers) or “shushi” 術士 (magicians), who eventually perform the magic to save the snatched women from the deities. These people undoubtedly played an important role in the dissemination of popular worship. With the circulation of such stories, sacred peak deities were no longer unreachable and exalted objects of state sacrifice but entered the personal lives of the people and their world of belief, although their relationship was not always pleasant.

5. Conclusions

Daoism, based on its opposition to blood sacrifice, endeavored to transform state sacrifices. From the Northern and Southern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang, the connection between Daoist *toulong* rituals and state sacrifices was evident. Various Daoist elements were clearly seen in Emperor Gaozong’s *feng* and *shan* rituals. This tendency reached its climax by the time of Emperor Xuanzong. Following the suggestion of Sima Chengzhen, the Shrines for Perfected Lords of the five sacred peaks, the Shrine for the Elder at Mount Qingcheng, and the Temple for the Envoy of the Nine Heavens at Mount Lu were constructed. However, they did not replace the state sacrificial system but mainly were utilized as Daoist abbeys to pray for the state, the emperors, and the people. Moreover, from Sima Chengzhen to Du Guangting, the descriptions of the five sacred peaks in the writings about cavern-heavens and blissful-realms changed significantly, demonstrating that the state authority had significantly impacted Daoist ideas. Meanwhile, Daoist Transcendents and Perfected Ones became more exalted than the sacred peak deities in many Tang folktales. The destruction of the superior status of sacred peak deities, lofty gods who were worshipped in state sacrifices, greatly increased their proximity to the lives and beliefs of the masses. Essentially, the state tended to manifest its legitimacy by strengthening its sacrality. The convergence of sacrifices to the five sacred peaks with Daoism and the circulation of related folk tales remarkably reinforced the sacrality of state power, and the sacrificial activities thus took on a strong symbolic significance.

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Notes

- ¹ Yoshikawa Tadao had briefly touched upon this topic in his earlier research (Yoshikawa 1991, pp. 213–82). Lucas Weiss notices the influence of imperial power on Daoist cavern-heavens. He especially investigates Mount Wangwu's function as the center of the Daoist sacred geographic system, and focuses on the roles of the five sacred peaks and the cavern-heavens as sacred spaces in gaining imperial recognition of ritual authority, arguing that Sima Chengzhen adapted the cosmology revered by the imperial authority to that of the Shangqing tradition by reforming the sacrifices for the five sacred peaks (Weiss 2012). Regarding the development in later Tang, Lennert Gesterkamp contends that Du Guangting synthesized sacred sites of various Daoist traditions including the Celestial Masters, Shangqing, and Lingbao. Additionally, many of the sacred sites Du Guangting added were sites for official state sacrifices, thus creating a convergence between the sacred sites of Daoism and the state (Gesterkamp 2017).
- ² The original stone stele has long been lost. Ouyang Fei's 歐陽棐 (1047–1113) *Jigu lumu's* 集古錄目 [Catalogue of Collection of the Antiquities] colophon in *juan* 3 states: "The writer's name was not written on the stele. It was transcribed by Liu Yuanming, General of Pacifying the West, Duke of Lueyang, and Attendant Gentleman. In the middle of the Taiyuan era, the temple was moved to a new place. Daoist priests were used for serving the temple. In the spring, they pray; in the autumn, they reward [deities]. If there are major events, they report. The stele was erected in the fifth month of the fifth year of the Taiyuan era (439)" 不著撰人名氏, 後魏鎮西將軍略陽公侍郎劉元明書。太延中, 改立新廟, 以道士奉祠, 春祈秋報, 有大事則告。碑以太延五年五月立 (Shike shiliao xinbian 1977, 24.17959).
- ³ Also, according to the late Tang Dunhuang manuscript S.5448 *Dunhuang lu* 敦煌錄 (Records of Dunhuang): "Stone Grease Hill is on the peak of the Black Mountain which is located at 256 *li* north of the prefecture. [It was named because] grease oozed out of the hill rocks. In the nineteenth year of the Kaihuang era (599), the Black Mountain turned white. The interior of the mountain was examined, and it turned out that it was not false. Daoist priest Huangfu Decong and the other six people were dispatched to perform the *jiao* ritual there. Since then, the mountain looked like a snowy peak when gazing from afar" 石膏山, 在州北二百五十六里烏山峰, 山石間出其膏。開皇十九年, 烏山變白, 中驗不虛, 遣道士皇甫德琮等七人祭醮, 自後望如雪峰。If it is true, in the period of Emperor Wen of the Sui, Daoist priests were sent to offer sacrifices to mountains on the state borders as well, which indicates that it was surely not a sole phenomenon of Daoist participation in sacrifices to the five sacred peaks. Li Zhengyu contends that this text is credible. See Li (1998, pp. 299–325).
- ⁴ Buddhists in medieval China performed rituals on the behest of emperors at the five sacred peaks as well. James Robson's groundbreaking work *Power of Place: The Religious Landscape of the Southern Sacred Peak (nanyue) in Medieval China* offers a thorough investigation of the Buddhist impact on the southern sacred peak. See Robson (2009).
- ⁵ The main source of this material is the "Wangwushan Zhenyi Sima xiansheng" 王屋山真一司馬先生 (Master Sima, whose sobriquet is Zhenyi, from Mount Wangwu) in the *Zhenxi* 真系 (Genealogy of Perfected Ones) composed by Li Bo 李渤 (773–831) in the late Zhenyuan period (785–805). See Zhang (2003, 5.82–83).
- ⁶ See the entry of the fifth month in the nineteenth year of Kaiyuan (731) in "Annals of Xuanzong" in *juan* 8 of the *Jiu Tangshu*, *juan* 213 of the *Zizhi tongjian*, *juan* 53 of the *Cefu yuangui*, *juan* 50 of the *Tang huiyao*, *juan* 102 of the *Yuhai*.
- ⁷ "Seeing Auspicious Omens" in *juan* 1 of the *Lushan Taipingxingguo gong Caifang Zhenjun shishi* has an accurate date for Xuanzong's dream: the fifteenth day of the second month in the nineteenth year of Kaiyuan (731). See Ye (1988). It is worth noting that this date is exactly the time when Sima proposes to build the Perfected Lord Shrines as I argued above.
- ⁸ About the situation of the Perfected Lord Temple of the northern sacred peak in the late Tang, see Gao Feng's 高飆 (fl. 934–966) "Datang Taishilinggong Taiyuangong chongxiu Zhenjun miao zhi bei" 大唐太師令公太原公重修真君廟之碑 [Stele of the Perfected Lord Temple Reconstructed by Duke of Taiyuan, Grand Preceptor of the Great Tang] in Chen (2005, 94.1155–57).
- ⁹ See Chen (1963, pp. 52–59) for more information about Sima Chengzhen. See also Kroll (1978, 6:16–30), and Kohn (1987).
- ¹⁰ Kristofer Schipper suggests that the dating of this text can be as late as the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). See Schipper and Verellen (2005, pp. 1236–37).
- ¹¹ Mount Huo and Qian are the same mountain, which is also known as Mount Tianzhu 天柱, but they are often deemed as two mountains in ancient texts. See Wu (1984, pp. 108–29).
- ¹² The completion time of this text is controversial. Scholars nowadays generally agree that the completion time should be the early Tang. See Kohn (1997, 13–14:91–118), Reiter (1998).
- ¹³ About this text, see Benn (1991).
- ¹⁴ The title can be found in the "Yiwen zhi" 藝文志 (Treatise on the Arts and Refined Writings) of the *Xin Tangshu* (see Ouyang 1975, 59.1522). It can also be found in the "Yiwen lue" 藝文略 (Digest of the Arts and Refined Writings) of *Tongzhi* 通志 (Comprehensive History of Institutions), see Zheng (1995, p. 1622). This book was lost in the Yuan dynasty and the title is collected in the *Daozang quejing mulu* 道藏闕經目錄 [Catalogue of Missing Scriptures in the Daozang] completed in the twelfth year of Zhiyuan (1352) (Daozang quejing mulu 1988, p. 504).
- ¹⁵ The main body of this text is preserved in *juan* 27 of *Yunji qiqian* and is entitled *Tiandi gongfu tu bingxu* 天地宮府圖並序 [Charts of Palaces and Mansions in the Heavens and on Earth, with Preface]. See Zhang (2003, 27.608–631).
- ¹⁶ Franciscus Verellen also points out that the cavern-heavens and the five sacred peaks are essential elements in the sacred geographical system of the Tang. See Verellen (1995).

- ¹⁷ About the layout of Daoist abbeys in early medieval times, see Kohn (2000, pp. 79–106).
- ¹⁸ See Zhang and Bai (2006) for information about the mirror. See also Wang (2000a, 2000b).
- ¹⁹ This stele was erected in the sixteenth year of Zhenguan (642).

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