

THE DAOIST BODY IN THE LITURGY OF SALVATION THROUGH  
REFINEMENT

by

BINGXIA BIAN

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written by Bingxia Bian  
has been approved for the Department of Religious Studies

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Terry F. Kleeman

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Loriliai Biernacki

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Holly Gayley

Date\_\_\_\_\_

The final copy of this thesis has been examined by the signatories, and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above mentioned discipline.

Bian, Bingxia (M.A., Department of Religious Studies)

The Daoist Body in the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement

Thesis directed by Professor Terry F. Kleeman

### Abstract

This thesis will address the concept of the body and souls in the context of a Daoist ritual, the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement (*liandu yi* 鍊度儀) based on the "Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures" (*Lingbao dalian* 靈寶大鍊) in the *Great Rites of Shangqing Lingbao* (*Shangqing Lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法) written by Wang Qizhen 王契真 (fl. ca 1250).

The first chapter is a brief review of traditional Chinese ideas toward the body and souls. People believed that the deceased live in the other world having the same need as they alive. Gradually, they started to sought methods to extend their life in this world and to keep their souls alive in the other world. Daoist ritual provided refinement as a solution for that need.

The second chapter will trace the concept of refinement from texts in early Celestial Master Daoism (founded in 142 C.E.) and Shangqing revelation (after 360s). The third chapter will discuss a few scriptures from the Lingbao tradition (after 390s) to see the concept of refinement gradually became a practice in ritual performance before and during the Tang dynasty (618-907 C.E.).

The final chapter carefully examines the section "Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures" which represents a typical procedure of the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement since Song dynasty (960-1279 C.E.). It includes a translation of that section with an analysis of the metaphors of the pools of water and fire as a process for refinement. Moreover, it will present the correlative relationship between the body and deities, and the ideas of souls and purgatory.

This study intends to explore, on the one hand, the transformation of the Daoist body and the souls which will be saved from purgatory during the liturgy so that we can get a better understanding of the concept of body and souls in Song China. On the other hand, it will also improve the knowledge of ritual performance, especially the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement from its origin to its development in Song dynasty.

## CONTENTS

## CHAPTER

I.	INTRODUCTION .....	1
	Traditional Chinese Concepts .....	2
	<i>The Physical and Non-Physical Body</i> .....	3
	<i>Souls and After Life</i> .....	4
	Literature Review.....	7
	<i>Limitations</i> .....	12
II.	REFINEMENT OF THE FORMS, CORPSE AND SPIRITS .....	13
	The Refinement of Forms.....	13
	The Refinement of Corpse.....	16
	The Refinement of Spirits .....	17
III.	SALVATION THROUGH REFINEMENT IN LINGBAO TEXTS .....	22
	Universal Salvation.....	22
	Refinement through Physical Petitions .....	23
	Inner Refinement .....	24
IV.	THE LITURGY OF SALVATION THROUGH REFINEMENT IN SONG DYNASTY .....	28
	Introduction .....	28
	Retreat, Offering and Sacrifice .....	29

From Self-Refinement to the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement.....	31
The Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures.....	34
<i>Preparation for the Liturgy</i> .....	34
<i>Translation</i> .....	35
Harmonizing Water and Fire .....	38
The Transformation of the Daoist Body .....	40
<i>Communication with spirits</i> .....	41
<i>Understanding the Daoist Body</i> .....	42
The Rescued <i>Hun-</i> and <i>Po-</i> Souls.....	44
<i>The Idea of Purgatory</i> .....	44
<i>The Appearance of the Hun- And Po-souls on the Altar</i> .....	45
<i>Women Who Die in Delivery</i> .....	47
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	48
CONCLUSION.....	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	52

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This study will address the concept of the body and souls in the context of a Daoist ritual, the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement (*liandu yi* 鍊度儀) based on the "Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures" (*Lingbao dalian* 靈寶大鍊) in the Great Rites of Shangqing Lingbao (*Shangqing Lingbao dafa* 上清灵宝大法) written by Wang Qizhen 王契真 (fl. ca 1250). The *Great Rites of Shangqing Lingbao* is a ritual text in the Lingbao tradition (starts from 390s) which gives a detailed instruction for the Ritual Masters (*fashi* 法師) to conduct ritual performances. In the section of the "Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures," it describes the procedure of the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement about how the Master visualizes different parts of his body becoming pools of water and fire for refining the suffering souls and saves them from the purgatory. This study intends to see how the body and souls transformed in the context of ritual performance to get a better understanding of the concept of body and souls in Song China.

For that end, in this first chapter, I will provide a brief introduction of the traditional Chinese understanding of the body and souls as a context to see how the idea of refinement come up, as well as a literature review to show what research products we have related to this topic. The second and third chapter will use some texts from early Celestial Master Daoism (founded in 142 C.E.), Shangqing school (after 360s) and Lingbao tradition (after 390s) to reflect the development of salvation of refinement from earlier self-refinement technique, such as the refinement of forms, corpse and spirits. The fourth chapter will give a carefully examination of the section of the "Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures" with original translation.

From this study, there are at least three findings distinctive. First of all, it appears that the development of the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement can be clearly traced from earlier self-refinement technique in the Celestial Master Daoism and the Shangqing school. Besides, the idea of water- and fire-refinement existed in Lingbao tradition before it became a part of ritual performance. Secondly, the relationship between the Daoist and the spirits who are summoned in the ritual during preparation are actually the ones reside in the Master's body. This emphasis of bodily spirits minus the value of external powers and presents the attitude of the Lingbao tradition towards spirits. Thirdly, the souls who will be saved after the ritual will appear in the alter and are able to communicate with the audience. This is peculiar considering that the water- and fire- refinement are invisible to the audience, the observation of souls become distinctive.

### Traditional Chinese Concepts

By the Han dynasty, the Chinese had created an entire system helping them understand the movement of universe, the cycle of life and death, and the changes that occur in the body and souls. Daoism formed its theories based on those traditions and added original ideas. The body is inevitably fading each day with breathing in and out, what will be left when the body is gone? Chinese in the Han believed that there it is not only the body itself that represents a person; various spirits and souls exist within the body. How to keep this body, with all its components, alive as long as possible and how to stay "alive" after the body was extinguished became key problems looking for solutions from religion. Moreover, the

ethic of filial piety brought up a question: are the ancestors suffering in another world and how should we save them?

Daoist ritual provided such services beginning in the Song dynasty (960-1279 C.E.) showing people that, no matter whether they are commoners or Daoist priests, moral or sinful, there is a way to save them from purgatory. This study will address the Daoist view of the human body and souls, and Daoist ritual performances concerning with salvation of suffering souls and self-transformation. Certain concepts in traditional China will be briefly introduced below. The review of those ideas will provide background on elements of traditional Chinese thought that were adopted by the Daoists.

### *The Physical and Non-physical Body*

The notion of body in traditional China is not merely an integration of material parts but consists of physical components and non-physical components. The physical components, designated by terms like the form (*xing* 形), body (*shen*/*ti* 身/體), and corpse (*shi* 尸) are the containers of the non-physical parts of the body: the pneuma (*qi* 氣), essence (*jing* 精), and spirits (*shen* 神). Each of the fluid components have energy flowing around the body.<sup>1</sup> *Qi* is the basic stuff of all existence, from the most substantial physical object to the most immaterial of airs and forces. It is influenced by the continual alterations of yin and yang, as well as the cycle of the five-phases (*wuxing* 五行, i.e. metal, wood, water, fire and earth). The *qi* constitutes the body, but specific types of *qi* reside in or flow through the human body. In the body, *qi* is refined to become essence, and then essence is used

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<sup>1</sup> Ishida Hidemi, "Body and Mind: The Chinese Perspective," in *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques*, ed. by Livia Kohn, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan, 1989, pp.41-72.

to nourish spirits. The essence is what brings people into life and is the energy along with the spirit that enable human beings to have emotions and intelligence.

The ancient Chinese saw the universe as governed by correlative principles that reflect the influence of *yin-yang* and the five-phases (metal, wood, water, fire and earth). The five phases are present in the human body directly through the five viscera (lungs, liver, kidney, heart, and spleen). This chain of correlation therefore provides a foundation for Chinese traditional medicine, which seeks to heal the body of disease through correcting the disorders of the five-phases. It was believed, further, that there are numerous deities who reside in the human body.

Because the ancient Chinese believed the body constituted a microcosm, a replica in miniature of the cosmos, the spirits in the body correspond to deities or transcendents in Heaven, and report to the same recording authorities concerning the conduct of their host.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, the body corresponds to the entire external universe. The body is a landscape, with the eyes corresponding to the sun and moon, the veins transporting blood and qi to the rivers, etc. Ultimately, the body contains or is the cosmos, including all the stars and constellations in Heavens, and these stars are also deities internal and external. The deities are in fact manifestations of the nature of the Dao. Those people who can manipulate the bodily spirits will have a whole body and achieve the Dao.

### *Souls and After Life*

The traditional Chinese view of the concept of souls changed from antiquity to Han period. What the Chinese commonly aware that there are three *hun*-souls

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<sup>2</sup> Rolf Stein, *The World in Miniature: Container Gardens and Dwellings in Far Eastern Religious Thought*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990.

which are light and return to heaven after death, while the seven *po*-souls are heavy and return to earth nowadays, did not appear until the sixth century B.C.E. The concepts of souls came with the tradition of ancestor-worship. Evidence from oracle bones in Shang dynasty (17<sup>th</sup> -11<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.E.) and bronze inscriptions in Zhou dynasty (11<sup>th</sup> c. -256 B.C.E.) indicated that people sacrificed to their deceased relatives and believed that the dead still feel hungry in the afterworld.<sup>3</sup> Although it is hard to precisely conclude the idea of afterworld in ancient China, Yü Ying-shih believes that based on the archaeological evidences about sacrifice in Shang and Zhou dynasties, the worship of ancestors had begun and people at that time believed the deceased's souls had the same consciousness as they alive.<sup>4</sup> He uses an example from a narrative history book, the *Commentary of Zuo* (*Zuozhuan* 左傳), talking about a nobleman from Jo-ao clan in 604 B.C.E. who worried about his clan would suffer starvation because “the spirits of the dead are also in need of food,” and states that the core of Chinese ancestor worship is that the worship can only come from the male descendant who own the same qi of that clan.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, if one's clan exterminated then no one would be able to offer sacrifices to the spirits of those ancestors.

The question follows the ancestor-worship is that what part left after the death of a person that being feed? To answer that question people came up with the conceptions of souls. Before the concept of *hun*-souls (*hun* 魂) appeared, the *po*-souls (*po* 魄) alone stands for the notion of soul. Wang Kuo-wei examined the Zhou oracle bones and indicated that the character of *po* has original meaning as bright

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<sup>3</sup> Yü Ying-shih, “O Soul, Come Back! A Study in the Changing Conceptions of the Soul and Afterlife in Pre-Buddhist China,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47, no. 2 (1987), pp.363-95.

<sup>4</sup> Yü Ying-shih, “O Soul, Come Back!” pp. 363-95.

<sup>5</sup> Yü Ying-shih, “O Soul, Come Back!” p. 370.

light of the new moon.<sup>6</sup> Based on Wang's study, Yü Ying-shih came up with the theory that the circle of moon was associated with "presence and absence" of po-souls which also indicates the circle of life and death.<sup>7</sup> Historical records around sixth century B.C.E. in the *Commentary of Zuo* reflected that people at that time believed that once the po leave the human body then the person will die.<sup>8</sup> Since 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E., historical documents in the *Book of Rites (Liji 禮記*, written during 5<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.E. -8 C.E.) showed the dualistic idea of *hun-* and *po-* souls existed and corresponded with other pairs of ideas such as *yin* and *yang*, the body and breath, the heaven and earth and so on. The *hun-* and *po-* souls on the one hand rely on the breathing and eating of the body, on the other hand, they govern the spirit and body respectively. After the body perished, the *hun-*souls are light and return to heaven, while the *po-*souls are heavy and return to earth. However, the functions and differences between *hun-* and *po-* souls were not declared in materials at that time.

From Daoist works in Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.), such as the *Scripture of Grand Peace (Taiping jing 太平經)*, the separation between this world, the heavenly court, and the underground became clear.<sup>9</sup> After a person dies, the *hun-*souls will return to heaven and the *po-*souls are buried in the ground with the

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<sup>6</sup> Wang Kuo-wei found the term of jipo 既魄 in Zhou oracle bones and identified the po is identical with the use of ba 霸 which indicated the bright light originally from the light of new moon. Link up with later on historical evidence and bronze inscription, he indicated that the terms of *jisheng po* 既生魄 and *jisi po* 既死魄 which often phrased in historical documents means "after the birth of the crescent" and "after the death of the crescent." See Wang Kuo-wei, "Sheng pa ssu-pa k'ao," in *Kuan-t'ang chi-lin*, Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1959, pp.19-27; Yü Ying-shih, "O Soul, Come Back!" p. 370.

<sup>7</sup> Yü Ying-shih, "O Soul, Come Back!" p.370. Poo Mu-chou also agrees with his argument, see Poo Mu-chou, *In Search of Personal Welfare: A View of Ancient Chinese Religion*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998, pp.62-66.

<sup>8</sup> It was considered the earliest evidence discovered so far directly addressing the po as a soul in human body and the separation of the po and the body will cause death. See Yü Ying-shih, "O Soul, Come Back!" p.371; and Poo Mu-chou, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>9</sup> Yü Ying-shih, "O Soul, Come Back!" p. 382; Poo Mu-chou, *In Search of Personal Welfare*, pp. 62-68.

body. The *po* remains in the grave and its preservation is very likely depended on the condition of the body. The *hun*-souls however are not returned to the heaven directly. It normally goes to the world of the dead (*yinjie* 陰界 or *diyu* 地獄, literally the yin-realm or the earth prison), after going through a process of refinement and purification according to Daoist ideas appeared later on, they return to Heaven.

### Literature Review

Generally speaking, current studies related to the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement fall into three distinct categories. The first type consists of descriptions of Song Dynasty (960-1279C.E.) religion in general, introducing important figures and discussing a variety of rituals in diverse texts. Edward. L. Davis in his *Society and the Supernatural in Song China* reflects a world that, although dominated by Confucian ideology, had been significantly influenced by Daoist practice. Because of widespread belief in a relationship between demons and misfortune, exorcistic techniques performed by either the Ritual Masters (*fashi* 法師) or local shamans flourished, and were diffused rapidly from local communities to major urban centers.<sup>10</sup> *Exorcism in Daoism*, edited by Florian C. Reiter, collects articles on diverse medieval exorcistic techniques.<sup>11</sup> The paper contributed by Florian Reiter himself explores how rituals of Thunder Magic (*leifa* 雷法) were recorded in a Song Dynasty ritual compendium, the *Corpus of Daoist Rituals (Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元), and remain alive among Northern Taiwan Daoist priests

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<sup>10</sup> Davis, Edward L., *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001.

<sup>11</sup> Reiter, Florian C., ed., *Exorcism in Daoism: A Berlin Symposium*, Asien-und Afrika-Studien der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 36, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011.

today.<sup>12</sup> Since the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement is a part of almost every Retreat, examinations of Daoist rituals have not given enough attention to this part of the Retreat.

The second type of study addresses the Salvation through Refinement ritual from the perspective of literature and history. Such works translate the text and analyze the metaphors while comparing them with other texts. Although this kind of study could clarify for future scholars the development of a specific concept or thought, it does not thoroughly probe the roots of this liturgy, which is the refinement of the soul and the body, and its function as a path toward salvation. An example is Judith Boltz's *A Survey of Taoist Literature: Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries*. Here Boltz describes the new Daoist schools that arose since the Song Dynasty, such as the Divine Empyrean (*Shenxiao* 神霄), Purified Tenuity (*Qingwei* 清微) and Celestial Heart (*Tianxin* 天心) lineages. She introduces the historical origins of each group, summarizes hagiographies of the founders, and describes the major textual products.<sup>13</sup> In addition, chapters by Lai Chi-tim (*Li Zhitian* 黎志添) and Zhu Yiwen 祝逸雯 in a recent collection of essays on Song Daoism directly address the topic of the Retreat of Yellow Register and refer to the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement. Lai Chi-tim examined the *Great Rites of Lingbao* (*Lingbao dafa* 靈寶大法) compiled by Jin Yunzhong 金允中 in the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279 C.E.). He focused on the structure of the Ritual of Yellow Register, especially one liturgy in this ritual called Investigating the Ghosts and Summoning the Spirits (*kaogui zhaoshen* 考鬼召神), with comparison with similar

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<sup>12</sup> Reiter, Florian C., "Daoist Thunder Magic and the Elimination of Obnoxious Spirits, with Reference to A Corpus of Daoist Ritual (道法會元) and Exorcist Rituals in Northern Taiwan," in *Exorcism in Daoism: A Berlin Symposium*, ed. by Florian C. Reiter, *Asien-und Afrika-Studien der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin*, 36, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Boltz, Judith M., *A Survey of Taoist Literature, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, Berkeley, Calif: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Center for Chinese Studies, 1987.

features in Buddhism. Zhu Yiwen's article examines the order of visualizations in the rite, seeking to answer questions such as how different sequences of water refinement and fire refinement might influence the efficacy of the entire ritual. This chapter also discusses the employment of talismans and compares several cognate texts to understand the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement as recorded in the *Standardized Rituals of the Great Retreat of the Supreme Yellow Register (Wushang huanglu dazhai lichengyi 無上黃籙大齋立成儀)*.<sup>14</sup>

The key term, refinement (*lian 鍊*), in the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement has been examined by some scholars. Hsieh Shu-wei (*Xie Shiwei 謝世維*) carefully looks into the change from refinement of forms (*lianxing 鍊形*) to the salvation through refinement (*liandu 鍊度*). He first reflects the development of the term of salvation through refinement in Song dynasty. He agrees with former research conclusion that the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement did not appear until Song dynasty and the *Great Method of the Jade Hall of the Three Heavens, of the Supreme Mysterious Origin (Wushang xuanyuan santian yutang dafa 無上玄元三天玉堂大法)* is the first ritual text included this liturgy. After that, he traces the previous notion of refining the forms in the Grand Darkness (*taiyin lianxing 太陰鍊形*). He claims that the development from self-refinement to a salvation for others provides a basic structure of early Daoist ritual performance. Besides, he believes that the influence from Buddhism cannot be taken as the only element that derived this development, but an integration of multiple effects from local cults and other Daoist communities. Although his article provides a brief

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<sup>14</sup> Lai Chi-tim (Li Zhitian 黎志添), ed., *Daojiao tuxiang, kaogu yu yishi : Songdai daojiao de yanbian yu tese 道教圖像、考古與儀式：宋代道教的演變與特色*, Hong Kong : Xianggang zhongwen daxue chubanshe, 2016, pp. 208-266.

analysis of the development of the term of salvation through refinement, he did not give an analysis of a particular Lingbao scripture for the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement, but only mention the conception before it was adopted in ritual performances.<sup>15</sup>

What's more, the term of refinement in ritual texts is also analyzed by Judith Boltz in her article "Opening the Gates of Purgatory: A Twelfth-century Taoist Meditation Technique for the Salvation of Lost Souls." Here Boltz traces the shifting meanings of the term, concluding that when the refinement technique was adopted by the Lingbao tradition, its main character became universal salvation and came to involve funeral rites.<sup>16</sup> The Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement was not an independent ritual, for instance, in the late Tang Dynasty; rather, the liturgy for refining and saving souls was the last section of the Retreat of the Yellow Register (*Huanglu zhai* 黃籙齋). During this part of the Retreat, the Officer of High Merit (*Gaogong* 高功, i.e., chief priest) visualizes an immortal form and body for the souls of the deceased based on the priest's practice of inner alchemy, and then helps the souls be reborn in the heavens.<sup>17</sup> Boltz relied on the text *Great Rites of the Numinous Treasures Scripture of Limitless Salvation* (*Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* 靈寶無量度人上經大法) for the sequence of visualizations and compares the refinement technique in this text with other earlier Shangqing texts such as the *Esoteric Formulae for Cultivating Perfection* (*Xiuzhen mijue* 修真祕訣) and the *Scripture on Feminine Unity* (*Ciyi jing* 雌一經). Although Boltz translated this text and made reference to many other texts, she did not illustrate

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<sup>15</sup> Hsieh Shu-wei (Xie Shiwei 謝世維), "Lianxing yu liandu: liuchao daojiao jingdian dangzhong de sihou xiulian yu wangzhe jiudu," 練形與鍊度：六朝道教經典當中的死後修練與亡者救度 *Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yanjiusuo jikan*, 83 (2012): pp.739-777.

<sup>16</sup> Judith Boltz. "Opening the Gates of Purgatory; A Twelfth-century Taoist Meditation Technique for the Salvation of Lost Souls," in *Tantric and Taoist Studies: in Honour of R.A. Stein*, ed. by Michel Strickmann, Bruxelles: Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1983, pp. 487-511.

<sup>17</sup> Lai Chi-tim, ed., *Daojiao tuxiang, kaogu yu yishi*, pp. 219-220.

comprehensively the transformation and refinement of the Daoist body and the ancestral souls in this article.<sup>18</sup> This thesis will treat some of the same texts discussed by Boltz.<sup>19</sup>

When the texts discussed by Boltz are compared with the “Lingbao Great Refinement,” a couple of differences stand out. First, the transformation from hun-souls to infants happens in the beginning of the liturgy in the Great Rites of Limitless Salvation, but in the “Great Refinement”, the souls can only become infants after walking through the pool of water and the pool of fire. Second, the high deity Heavenly Worthy of Prime Commencement (*Yuanshi tianzun* 元始天尊) plays a significant role in the Great Rites of Limitless Salvation but is absent from the Great Refinement rite.

The third type of study emphasizes the terms related to the Daoist body, but most such studies focus on metaphysical content in the very early period rather than ritual performance. The body in Chinese conception consist both physical parts and non-physical parts. The spirits in the heaven and earth correspond to those inside human body. Ultimately, the body also corresponds to the landscape and entire external universe. R. A. Stein emphasized the importance of this macrocosm-microcosm paradigm in understanding diverse realms of activity, such as gardens and architectures as well as religion and myth.<sup>20</sup> Kristofer Schipper’s *The Taoist Body* explores the correspondence between the body, landscape, and the universal

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<sup>18</sup> J. Boltz, “Opening the Gates of Purgatory,” pp. 487-511.

<sup>19</sup> The section Judith Boltz translated is the *Private Tutor of the Nine Spontaneously Generating Ling-pao Heavens of Primordial Commencement: On Latent Refinement for Transcendent Salvation and Vitalizing Transformation*, in *DZ 219 Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* 靈寶無量度人上經大法, 57:2b7-5b3.

<sup>20</sup> R.A. Stein, « Jardins en miniature d'Extrême-Orient, le Monde en petit », *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (Hanoi, Paris), XLII (1943), 1-104.

One in the Daoist context.<sup>21</sup> Livia Kohn borrows theories from quantum physics, energy medicine, and energy psychology to explain traditional Daoist views of the human body.<sup>22</sup> These studies approach the Daoist body mainly from a metaphysical perspective, and are particularly useful in understanding the early Daoist worldview. This thesis will try to understand the mature Daoist body of the Song dynasty and later from a ritual perspective, examining how Daoists employed ritual actions, visualizations, talismans, and other sacred symbols to bring about the refinement of the body and the salvation of the individual.

### *Limitations*

In conclusion, current research products about the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement are premature and more questions need inquiries. The problem toward this topic draws on two categories. On the one hand, the abundant ritual materials become obstacles for scholars of ritual studies to draw certain conclusion on a particular concept and ritual. For example, the *Great Rites of Shangqing Lingbao* compiled by Wang Qizhen has sixty-six scrolls, it will take much effort to examine every single term not to mention when it comes to the comparison with other texts. On the other hand, the short of secondary materials makes it hard to pursue some researches toward the Buddhi-Daoism influences and to trace its social context throughout history. Scholars have not paid enough attention to the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement as an independent ritual. I believe more questions will raise in the field.

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<sup>21</sup> Kristofer Schipper, *The Taoist Body*. Trans. Karen C. Duval., Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

<sup>22</sup> Livia Kohn, "Daoism- Enhancing Cosmic Energy: The Daoist Body in the Twenty-first Century," in *Transhumanism and the Body: The World Religions Speak*, ed. by Calvin Mercer and Derek F. Maher, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 35-50.

## CHAPTER 2

### REFINEMENT OF THE FORMS, CORPSE AND SPIRITS

This chapter will take up the issue of ritual processes applied to the body to refine or change its nature, referred to primarily through the terms of the refinement of corpse (*lianshi* 鍊尸), refinement of forms (*lianxing* 鍊形) and refinement of spirits (*lianshen* 鍊神) in texts belonging to the Celestial Master and Shangqing (Supreme Purity) textual traditions in order to understand the background of the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement (*liandu yi* 鍊度儀). Celestial Master Daoism was founded in 142 C.E. by Zhang Ling. It was known for its strict code of precepts governing human conduct and for petition rituals through which a Daoist priest could intervene with Heaven to change one's fate. Such petitions were the primary means of maintaining health, extending life, and affecting one's fate after death. The idea of the refinement of forms is found in many of its texts which focus on the gaining merit and practice the Dao to reborn in a better place.

The Shangqing revelations (364-70) shifted the focus to self-cultivation. Daoist adepts sought to attain transcendence through the inner visualization of spirits within the body that correspond to the external Daoist pantheon. The practices advocated in Shangqing texts show that the Daoists did not rely on sacrifice, but rather used a spiritual connection to reach out to supernatural power. The refinement of the corpse and spirits are such practices.

#### The Refinement of Forms

The refinement of forms is a technique in early Celestial Master Daoism for extending life. It is also known as the refinement of forms in Grand Darkness (*taiyin* 太陰). One's physical form is an obstacle for becoming a transcendent, therefore, the refinement will bring the Daoist a transformed new form based on the old one, rather than creating a new form from nowhere.<sup>23</sup> Fabrizio Pregadio claimed that when the practitioner came in to a state that his old form cannot provide such place for his further practice, he will need to find a new place which is feigning his death in *taiyin*.<sup>24</sup>

In the third-century, an anonymity commented on the *Book of Lao* (*Laozi* 老子) and created the text known as the *Xiang'er Commentary to the Laozi* (*Laozi Xiang'er zhu* 老子想爾注).<sup>25</sup> The place of *taiyin* in the *Xiang'er Commentary* depicted as the Palace for refinement of forms.

Grand Darkness is the palace where those have accumulated the Dao refine their forms. When there is no place for them to stay in the world, the worthy withdraw and, feigning death, pass through Grand Darkness to have their images reborn on the other side. This is to be “obliterate without perishing.” The profane are unable to accumulate good deeds, so when they die it is truly death. They are taken away in service of the Earth Offices.<sup>26</sup>

太陰道積練形之宮也。世有不可處，賢者避去託死。過太陰中，而復一邊生像，沒而不殆也。俗人不能積善行，死便真死，屬地官去也。

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<sup>23</sup> Isabelle Robinet, “Metamorphosis and Deliverance from the Corpse in Taoism,” *History of Religion* 19, 1(1979), p. 38.

<sup>24</sup> Fabrizio Pregadio, “The Notion of ‘Form’ and the Way of Liberation in Daoism,” *Cahiers d’Extrême-Asie*, Vol. 14 (2004), pp. 95-130.

<sup>25</sup> The *Xiang'er Commentary to the Laozi* is anonymous, but was widely attributed to Zhang Ling, or in one source to Zhang Lu. See Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scripture*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, pp. 29-77.

<sup>26</sup> Zhang Jiyu, ed., *Zhonghua Daozang*, Beijing: Huaxia chuban she, 2004, Vol. 9, p.174c.

According to the *Xiang'er Commentary*, not every individual has the chance to refine in the Grand Darkness, but only the worthy ones who have accumulated the Dao and gained enough merit have this privilege.

When a Daoist's practices are complete, the spirits of the Dao will return to his body. Departing the world through feigned death, the person passes through Grand Darkness to be born again and not perish. That is longevity. Commoners have no good merits, and when they die, they belong to the Earth Office. That is to perish.<sup>27</sup>

道人行備，道神歸之，避世託死，遇太陰中，復生去為不亡，故壽也。俗人無善功，死者屬地官，便為亡矣。

However, the *Petition Almanac of Master Redpine* (*Chisong zi zhangli* 赤松子章厲), another Celestial Master text existed around the Six Dynasties (220-589 C.E.) claimed that, the refinement in the Grand Darkness is not restrained to the Daoists or the worthy ones, on the contrary, all commoners will be passively refined when they die even if they have not completed their practices yet.

I humbly bow on the floor and send the petition. Invite the General White Horse with Simple Chariot along with a hundred thousand soldiers, and the Lord of the Grand Mysterious with one hundred and twenty officials and generals above to coming down together, so they can help the deceased's hun-souls and wraiths to leave the Three Paths forever and have their name written on the Six Heavens. I am willing to save them and release them from their felonies.<sup>28</sup>

臣謹為伏地拜章，上請素車白馬將軍，兵士十萬人，又請太玄君一人，官將百二十人，一合來下，主為亡人魂爽，永離三塗，名書六天，願為度脫重罪。

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<sup>27</sup>Zhang Jiyu, ed., *Zhonghua Daozang*, Beijing: Huaxia chuban she, 2004, Vol. 9, p.182b.

<sup>28</sup> DZ 615 *Chisong zi zhangli* 赤松子章厲, 6: 2a.

Hsieh Shu-wei compared the *Xiang'er Commentary to the Laozi* this early Celestial Master Daoist text with other texts belong to the Southern Celestial Master Daoist traditions, such as the *Petition Almanac of Master Redpine*, the *One hundred and Eithty Precepts of the Lord Lao* (*Laojun shuo yibai bashi jie* 老君說一百八十戒)<sup>29</sup>, and the *Oral Instructions to Zhao Sheng by the On and Orthodox Heavenly Master* (*Zhengyi Tianshi gao zhaosheng koujue* 正一天師告趙昇口訣)<sup>30</sup>, concluded that in the *Xiang'er Commentary*, the Daoists who completed their practice can enter in to the Grand Darkness for further cultivation, and this entrance is an objective decision made by the Daoist himself, while in the *Petition Almanac of Master Redpine*, the Daoist seed people who had not yet completed their practice of the Dao can be refined in the Grand Darkness under the help from the Daoists by sending out petitions.<sup>31</sup>

### The Refinement of Corpse

The refinement of corpse in the *Petition Almanac of Master Redpine* is close to the technique of the Liberation from the Corpse (*shijie* 尸解) in later Shangqing texts. The notion of corpse is a reference to the mortal body in general instead of the dead corpse only, the refinement of the corpse therefore provides an alternative of death for the livings.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Collected in the *Canonical Precepts of the Supreme Lord Lao* (*Taishang laojun jinglv* 太上老君戒律), in DZ 786. It is an important text of the history of early Daoism and reveals the codes for the Daoist preists especially male adepts (*nanguan* 男官).

<sup>30</sup> Zhao Sheng 趙昇 were a disciple of the founder of the Celestial Master Daoism, Zhang Daoling. This work presents the apocalyptic prophecies that Zhang Daoling told before his transcendent. See K. Schipper and F. Verellen, *The Taoist Canon*, Vol. 1, pp. 123-24.

<sup>31</sup> Hsieh Shu-wei, *Lianxing yu Liandu*, pp. 750-51.

<sup>32</sup> Fabrizio Pregadio, "The Notion of 'Form' and the Ways of Liberation in Daoism," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, 14 (2004), pp. 116-17.

Though I have devoted myself to restraint and stimulating (the Dao), I am entangled by the corpses and worms which involved me in a hunger of desires, so that in every action I violate the precepts.....Some, relying on the deliverance of the corpse, traverse briefly through the Grand Darkness, where the hun-souls and the body spirits are investigated. The form is lodged in the Earth Office, and when the karmic affinities are resolved, he will be able to return to his previous residence and ascending to heaven in complete form.<sup>33</sup>

雖志自克勵，而爲尸蟲所纏，累在嗜欲，觸事違戒.....或託尸解，暫經太陰，魂神受對，寄形地官，因緣期訖，得還故宅，一時俱昇。

Isabelle Robinet declared that, “in essence, to transform oneself is to correspond to all things in nature.”<sup>34</sup> The Deliverance or Liberation from the Corpse is a lower-level technique for those who want to transform themselves but they do not know how, because they have not “rendered their bones and flesh immortal.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, they have to feign their death, go through the Grand Darkness and receive further refinement. Hsieh believes that the refinement of forms in both Celestial Master Daoism and Shangqing School are very private and for self-cultivation only. He also concluded that the technique of Liberation from the Corpse in the Shangqing school requires the death of the practitioner. Only after the practitioner died, he can enter the Grand Darkness for refinement and ascend to heaven.<sup>36</sup>

### The Refinement of Spirits

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<sup>33</sup> DZ 615 *Chisong zi zhangli*, 6: 14a-15b.

<sup>34</sup> I. Robinet, “Metamorphosis in Taoism,” pp. 38-40. Isabelle Robinet was a specialist of Shangqing school, in this paper, she indicated that the Deliverance from the Corpse (*shijie* 尸解) is very similar to another Shangqing technique — Transform (*bianhua* 變化), both of which are escapes from the forms attached with desire to those with purer spirits.

<sup>35</sup> I. Robinet, “Metamorphosis in Taoism,” pp. 57-66.

<sup>36</sup> Hsieh Shu-wei, *Lianxing yu Liandu*, p.755.

Besides the technique of Liberation from the Corpse, many texts in the Shangqing corpus mention the refinement of bodily spirits to achieve transcendence. The central text of the Shangqing revelations is the *Supreme Purity Perfected Scripture of the Great Cavern* (*Shangqing dadong zhenjing* 上清大洞真經) where it instructs the reader of the refinement of *hun*- and *po*- souls, which will avoid all diseases and disasters, ascend to the heaven in broad daylight and also release the sins of seven generations of ancestors to let them ascend to a blessed hall. This text is key in linking personal cultivation to the fate of one's ancestors, prefiguring later developments.

I humbly request that my three hun-souls be adjusted and harmonized, and that my seven po-souls be controlled and refined, so that the corpses and worms in my body will sink into oblivion, my viscera and storehouses will be made bright and shining, the hundred illnesses will not arise, and all disasters will vanish, my countenance will return to that of an infant, and I will ascend to heaven in broad daylight. I also request that the sins of my ancestors in seven generations all be absolved, and they can achieve rebirth in a blessed hall above.<sup>37</sup>

伏願調和三竈，制鍊七魄，尸蟲沉落，腑藏光華，百病不生，災害消滅，色返嬰孩，白日騰翥，願七祖罪解，上生福堂。

The *Scripture of the Yellow Court* (*Huangting jing* 黃庭經) is the text devoted to the technique of Tending Life (*yangsheng* 養生). Two versions of the *Scripture of the Yellow Court*: the *Scripture of the Inner Scene of the Yellow Court* (*Huangting neijing jing* 黃庭內景經) and the *Scripture of the Outer Scene of the Yellow Court* (*Huangting waijing jing* 黃庭外景經), each was adopted by a Daoist school. In general, the *Scripture of the Outer Scene* was spread during the second to the third century with the popularization of Celestial Master Daoism and it mainly focus on

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<sup>37</sup> DZ 6 *Shangqing dadong zhenjing* 上清大洞真經, 1: 5a.

the value of reciting the scripture. While in the *Scripture of the Inner Scene*, a text revealed during the Shangqing revelation (after 360s) dealing with gods in the human body and their correspondence with organs, it emphasizes the technique of meditation and visualization of the body spirits.<sup>38</sup>

The center of the *Scripture of the Yellow Court* is to practice inner vision through which the priests will be able to see the spirits in their bodies. Among those spirits, the five spirits dwell in the five viscera are the fundamental ones coordinate with the five phases. Besides, there are twenty-four spirits with eight of them reside in each of three cinnabar fields (in the head, near the heart and below the navel) control the major sections of the body. It is said that:

Also practicing the spirits of Eight Scenes in the form, those twenty-four perfected are the pneuma of Dao in the nature. If one can sit obliviously, practice non-action, then the hun- and po-souls will stay calm. The state of pure and quiet will make the spirits visible and talk to me.<sup>39</sup>

兼行形中八景神，二十四真出自然。高拱無爲魂魄安，清靜神見與我言。

Similar to the *Supreme Purity Perfected Scripture of the Great Cavern*, the *Scripture of the Yellow Court*, through practicing inner observation, the “seven generations of the ancestors will not suffer in the netherworld” and the priests themselves will attain immortality.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> See DZ 331 *Taishang huangting neijing yujing* 太上黃庭內解玉經; DZ 332 *Taishang huangting waijing yujing* 太上黃庭外解玉經; F. Pregadio, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, pp. 511-14; P. Kroll, “Body God and Inner Vision: The Scripture of the Yellow Court,” in *Religions of China in Practice*, ed. by Donald Lopez, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, pp.149-150.

<sup>39</sup> DZ 263k *Xiuzhen shishu huangting neijing yujing zhu* 修真十書黃庭內解玉經注, 2:18a-b.

<sup>40</sup> DZ 263k *Xiuzhen shishu huangting neijing yujing zhu*, 3:22a.

Ye Fashan 葉法善, a Tang dynasty Daoist, commented on the *Book of the Nine Immortals and of the Real Dragon and Tiger* (*Zhenlong hu jiuxian jing* 真龍虎九仙經) where he cited the *Scripture of the Yellow Court* (*Huangting jing* 黃庭經) to discuss the spirits in human body. He said that there are three hun-souls under the navel, called Embryo Brightness (*Taiguang* 胎光), Luminescence Numina (*Shuangling* 爽靈) and Shaded Essence (*Youjing* 幽精); if they are settled, then the many spirits in the body will be stable. Contrarily, if someone neither cultivate the spirits inside, nor constrains their desires outside, then the three hun-souls along with other numerous spirits in the body will loose and eventually die which will also cause illness of the person. If that situation happens, the cure of the illness is by using the water in the kidney and the fire in the heart as medicine. If the person has a minor disease, use the water in the kidney to wash it away; if the disease is severe, use the fire in the heart to burn it away. To defeat the most severe disease, use the fire in the heat to exorcise the fierce ghosts which are the real cause of the disease.<sup>41</sup> He continuously stated that to achieve the Great Dao (*dadao* 大道), the person needs to refine the spirits of the five viscera. The Great Dao is not far away but exist in the human body, once the heart is calm and the five viscera are refined, the Dao will be achieved.<sup>42</sup>

From the discussion in this chapter, we can conclude that the Celestial Master Daoism and the Shangqing school generated the technique of refinement for self-cultivation. In the Celestial Master Daoism, more focus was put on the Grand Darkness and emphasizes the level of cultivation of the Daoist priests. While in the Shangqing school, the inner visualization and harmonization with bodily spirits are the key to further cultivation. Hence, both schools provide the background and

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<sup>41</sup> DZ 227 *Zhenlong hu jiuxian jing* 真龍虎九仙經, 2a-3a.

<sup>42</sup> DZ 227 *Zhenlong hu jiuxian jing*, 7a-b.

basics for the Lingbao tradition to come up with the notion of salvation through refinement as we will see in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### SALVATION THROUGH REFINEMENT IN LINGBAO TEXTS

This chapter will look into some texts in Lingbao School to see how the salvation through refinement defined and explained. The Lingbao revelations (390s) brought a renewed emphasis on ritual performance for summoning the inner and outer spirits to aid in the refinement. Visualization was an important meditative practice of the South China occult tradition, adopted by both the Shangqing school and the Lingbao school.<sup>43</sup> The technique of refinement became a part of rituals to refine the ghosts and hun-souls in purgatory through physical preparation and visualization. The refinement of forms or spirits in an individual body is not enough for Daoism to propagating its teaching during this period under the competition of Buddhism.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, because of the emphasis on ritual performance, the Lingbao school developed a series of ritual texts directly mention the technique of Salvation through Refinement. The Salvation through Refinement renewed Chinese traditional theories like yin-yang and the five phases and put them in ritual texts to instruct refinement for self-cultivation and saving other lives as well.

#### Universal Refinement

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<sup>43</sup> The Lingbao school prevailed in Medieval time (late-fourth to sixth century). Starting with the revelation of Lingbao scriptures to Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫. More information on this, see S. Bokenkamp, "Lingbao," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, ed. by Fabrizio Pregadio, London: Routledge, 2011, pp. 663-69.

<sup>44</sup> Lai Chi-tim, "The Daoist Identity of the Yellow Retreat in the Southern Song: A Case Study of Jin Yunzhong's Great Rites of Lingbao," in *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, Vol. 20 (2011), p. 66.

The *Lingbao Scripture on the Origin and the Appearance of the Cosmic Cycles and Kalpa Periods* (*Dongxuan Lingbao benxiang yundu jieqi jing* 洞玄靈寶本相運度劫期經)<sup>45</sup> involved Buddhist ideas about karma and cyclical rebirth. In this scripture, the Heavenly Worthy of Numinous Treasure and a Daoist called Blazing Brightness (*Yanming* 炎明) have a dialogue about the flourishing and decline of a country where people used to have endless lives and enjoy the beauty of nature without worries or desires. In this dialogue, the Heavenly Worthy of Numinous Treasure reveals that the reason why the men and women enjoyed the nature and live longer than usual was because he transmitted the Spontaneous Words of the Great Chaos of the Heavenly Scene (*Tianjing dahun ziran wenzi* 天景大混自然文字) to this land where the words were refined by fire and water. The men and women in this country bath their body in the pool of fire every three years and drink the water which would adjust their belly for three years. According to this scripture, the pools of water and fire are not inside a Daoist body but have physical shape in the world. Additionally, the refinement is not targeted to a single individual or several persons or souls who need to be saved, but is available to all commoners, even if they do not appreciate the “Three Treasures” of Lingbao (*sanbao* 三寶).

### Refinement through Physical Petitions

Although most refinement is a technique including visualization and meditation, some methods rely on sending petitions to communicate with the deities. In the “ancient Lingbao scriptures,” the *Marvelous Scripture of Salvation through Extinction: Refinement of the five (spirits) for revivifying the corpse*

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<sup>45</sup> The scripture presumably revealed in the sixth century shares similar terms with one of the Dunhuang manuscript the *Scripture of the Origin and the Appearance* (*Benxiang jing* 本相經). See K. Shipper and F. Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*, pp. 247-48.

(*Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao miedu wulian shengshi miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶滅度五鍊生尸妙經) plays a distinctive role in explicating to the technique of Salvation through Refinement. According to the scripture, during the rite, the Master needs to successively place petitions in the five directions (including the center) of the tomb and recite spells commanding his bodily spirits to aid him in saving the five transcendents (i.e. five body guards sealing the corpse) through refinement. The refinement here emphasizes the usage of spells and heavenly texts (*tianwen* 天文). The Master successively commands the Numinous Officials of the five directions to save the five spirits by storing their corpse in the Grand Darkness for refinement. Although the scripture does not explicitly mention the procedures for refinement, it explains that the refinement is conducted by a combination of yin and yang, which corresponds to the transformations of nature.

### Internal Refinement

The texts discussed below are related to refinement in the Master's body. The Master visualizes water and fire as representations of yin and yang. The operation of yin and yang imitates the movement of the cosmos, thus, everything in that will be transformed to be consistent. First is the *Operative essentials of Lingbao on practicing and maintaining the esoteric directives of grand refinement* (*Lingbao dalian neizhi xingchi jiyao* 靈寶大鍊內旨行持機要).<sup>46</sup> The *Operative Essentials* gives a summary of the Great Lingbao Method, describing the souls transformed and saved by inner visualization in the Daoist Master's body. The Master first visualizes

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<sup>46</sup> DZ 407, *Lingbao dalian neizhi xingchi jiyao* 靈寶大鍊內旨行持機要 (Operative essentials of Lingbao on practicing and maintaining the esoteric directives of grand refinement). Its author is unknown, and it presumably appeared during the Six Dynasties (222-589 C.E.). See K. Schipper and F. Verellen, eds., *The Taoist Canon*, pp.1037-38.

an infant generated from the Water Resident of the lower cinnabar field. The infant then becomes the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Commencement, who has the power to open the hell below the two kidneys and release all the sinful hun-souls. All of the sinful hun-souls will get bathed in the Spiritual Water coming from saliva in front of the Water Residence. After the bath, the hun-souls will go across the Great Rite Bridge for Rising to the Heaven to the Scarlet Palace of Vermillion Cliff for fire-refinement. Fire-dragons in the fire will carry those souls up to the Realm of Jade Purity where the souls are saved and reborn.

Another scripture demonstrated the initial goal of the Lingbao school, universal salvation. The *Scripture of Salvation* is a text the first chapter of which was part of the “ancient Lingbao corpus” revealed by the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Commencement.<sup>47</sup> It explains the power of reciting spells and how it will help the adepts understand the cosmic sphere. Xue Youqi’s (fl.740-54) commentary to the *Scripture of Salvation* is a valuable source to explore the Daoists’ understanding of certain concepts and ideas in the Tang dynasty (618-907 C.E.). Instead of emphasizing the acquisition of cosmic power, Xue paid more attention to the benefits this text could bring to the world of the living and to the ancestors in the other world.<sup>48</sup>

As a text oriented toward universal salvation, the scripture claimed that people in many kinds of situation will be saved if they recite this scripture. They will either be reborn as honored men or become transcendents flying in the heaven of Jade Capitoline.

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<sup>47</sup> The complete title is *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing* 元始無量度人上品妙經 (the Primordial’s Limitless top-class marvelous scripture of salvation). The version quoted here is DZ 87 *Yuanshi wuliang shangpin miaojing sizhu* (Four commentaries on the Primordial’s Limitless top-class marvelous scripture of salvation). It was compiled with four commentaries by a Song Daoist Chen Jingyuan 陳景元.

<sup>48</sup> I. Robinet, ed., *Daoism Handbook*, pp. 240-41.

The Dao said:

Whenever anyone chants this scripture ten times, all the heavenly beings will arrive together. The myriad generations of ancestors, those souls suffering in darkness as well as those bitter wraiths—all alike will be saved and ascend on high to the Vermillion Palace. After the regulation nine years' detainment, they will receive rebirth as honored personages. Some of them who delight in studying the highest scriptures, once their achievements and virtues on earth are accomplished, will ascend through the Golden Porte to roam and feast in the Jade Capitoline.<sup>49</sup>

道言：凡誦是經十過，諸天齊到。億曾萬祖，幽魂苦爽，皆即受度，上昇朱宮。格皆九年，受化更生，得爲貴人。而好學至經，功滿德就，皆得神仙，飛昇金闕，游宴玉京也。

Xue commented that those who came to the Southern Palace will be refined by fire for nine years, then reborn as nobles. He also noted in a later section that the fat of the flowing fire is what refines the ghost-natures of those dead hun-souls when they came to the Southern Palace, therefore, they could be transformed and become transcendents.<sup>50</sup> Although the text mentions that all mortals will be saved by reciting this scripture, as the matter of fact, the mortals will reborn or be transformed to different places based on their mastery of the scripture:

When the best scholars recite this scripture ten times, the Five Thearchs will stand guard over them and those in the three realms will bow their heads to them. Demonic spirits will lose their sight; spectral incursions will be destroyed. Salvation will extend even to the dying, who will expire then come back to life.<sup>51</sup>

至學之士，誦之十過，則五帝侍衛，三界稽首，魔精喪眼，鬼祿滅爽。濟度垂死，絕而得生。

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<sup>49</sup> DZ 87 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu* 元始無量度人上品妙經四注, 1: 22b. The translations are from Stephen Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, p.411.

<sup>50</sup> “幽棲曰：死魂舉度於南宮，則以流火之膏鍊其鬼質，從茲改化，便得仙也，” in DZ 87 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu*, 2: 39a.

<sup>51</sup> DZ 87 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu*, 1: 20a.

When those with higher attainments in the Learning recite and practice this scripture, they will immediately be saved and fly up to the Southern Palace. When ordinary mortals receive and recite it, they will extend their years and lengthen their lifespan. Later, all will achieve the way of release from the corpse. Their cloud-souls (hun-souls) and bodily spirits will be obliterated for only an instant and will not pass through the earth-prisons, but will be immediately returned to their forms so that they might roam the Grand Void.<sup>52</sup>

上學之士，修誦是經，皆即受度，飛昇南宮。世人受誦，則延壽長年，後皆得作尸解之道。魂神剷滅，不經地獄，即得反形，游行太空。

The Vermillion Palace has been popular mentioned as the place where the refinement takes place. Although the entire ritual performance is different from that reflected in later texts, the idea of attaining transcendent status through refinement, through which the impurity will be refined by fire, the spirit and form will return to their previous form and change to a child-like appearance, shares similar conceptions with later rituals. In the next chapter, there be a discussion of the “Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures” (*Lingbao dalian* 靈寶大鍊), a section in Wang Qizhen’s (fl. ca 1250) the *Great Rites of Shangqing Lingbao* (*Shangqing Lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法) which gives a detailed instruction for the Master who performing the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement (*liandu yi* 鍊度儀). From later discussion, it is easy to identify that the procedure of Liandu in both the Scripture of Salvation and Lingbao are identical. The difference is that the Scripture of Salvation focuses on self-refinement, even when it said about helping other priests, they were not performed in public ritual contexts like in Song dynasty.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> DZ 87 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu*, 1: 23b.

<sup>53</sup> DZ 87 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu*, 3: 47b.

## CHAPTER 4

THE LITURGY OF SALVATION  
THROUGH REFINEMENT IN SONG DYNASTY

## Introduction

This chapter will use the “Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures” (*Lingbao dalian* 靈寶大鍊), a section of the Song ritual compendium, the *Great Rites of Shangqing Lingbao* (*Shangqing Lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法), as an example addressing the transformation of body and souls. The compiler of the *Great Rites of Shangqing Lingbao*, Wang Qizhen was a student of Ning Benli 寧本立 who was the first one in ritual tradition who build the Great Rites of the Numinous Treasures. Most work of Wang’s the *Great Rites of Numinous Treasures* corresponds to the teaching of Ning Benli, The Great Refinement of Lingbao detailed described the procedure of the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement (*liandu yi* 鍊度儀) including the visualization of the presence of Heavenly and Earthly spirits, the appearance of souls on the alter, and the transformation of the pools of water and fire from the heart and kidneys in the Master’s body. This chapter includes the translation of the *Lingbao dalian* with a brief introduction to the external and internal preparations for the liturgy. Next, it will analyze the meaning of the metaphors of water and fire and its reflection during the liturgy. Then, it will explain the Daoist view of human body and how does the Master communicate with spirits. Finally, the emphasis will be put on demonstrating the suffering souls who will be saved after the performing of Salvation through Refinement.

## Retreat, Offering and Sacrifice

In Daoism, retreat (*zhai* 齋), offering (*jiao* 醮), and offering (*ji* 祭) are the three distinct rituals performing different functions. *Zhai*, or retreat, originally meant abstaining from meat, wine and all sullied food and behaviors. The aim is to keep the body and mind pure and empty, so the bodily spirits are purified in order to interact with the Dao. “The Lingbao (Luminous Treasures) School has retreats and the Tianshi (Celestial Masters) School has offering” became a common idea in the Song Dynasty.<sup>54</sup> Here a retreat is not an individual act to purify the self but a whole ritual program to achieve a certain end, such as praying for blessing for the prosperity of a country, or save the ancestors’ souls from purgatory. Although retreats and offerings cannot be categorized strictly by lineage, most retreat rituals are considered Lingbao, whereas offering and sacrifice on the other hand, are performances to show respect and appreciation to the heavenly or earthly gods who offered help during the ritual. The difference between the offering and sacrifice is that offering rituals only place vegetables and fruits on the altar, while sacrifice uses meat and blood. Offering in most cases are held after a retreat to thank the gods and spirits who came to provide power during the retreat ritual. It is also a way for gods to get promoted on their rank. But sometimes, the offering ritual is performed independently.

The Liturgy of Liandu is often performed as one segment of the Retreat of the Yellow Register (*Huanglu zhai* 黃籙齋). The Retreat of the Yellow Register, one of nine major retreats of the Lingbao tradition, is a ritual performance combining a variety of liturgies, such as the Liturgy of Offering Food (*shishi yi* 施食儀), the

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<sup>54</sup> Zhang Zehong 張澤洪, *Daojiao shenxian Xinyang yu jisi yishi*, Taipei: Wenjin chuban she, 2003, pp.19-49.

Liturgy of Dividing Lamps (*fendeng yi* 分燈儀) and the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement (*liandu yi* 鍊度儀), etc. Each liturgy is performed to achieve a certain aim. The Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement aims at refining the dirty-nature (*huizhi* 穢質) of *yin*-souls and transforming them into infants who can be reborn in a better place.

To help the Daoists realize the value of the Lingbao Retreat, the Great Rites of Shangqing Lingbao reveals that:

On the highest level, there is the way of cultivating perfection and inner refinement, where flesh and bone both fly; on the middle level, there is the method for long life, surviving the world, and release from the corpse; on the lower level, there is the teaching to save the ancestors and promote them in rank.<sup>55</sup>

上有修真內鍊骨肉同飛之道，中有長生度世尸解之法，下有昇祖度玄之教。

It continues, claiming that learning the *Great Rites of Lingbao* can protect Heaven and Earth, forestall disasters, and exorcise demons in general, but also cure individuals of their illnesses and bring the dead back to life. The rites thus, in the world of light, sing to the wind and thunder, transforming all the spontaneous numina, while in the netherworld, they provide command over the spirits, so that one can see the sacred texts of all Ten Heavens.<sup>56</sup> However, Wang argues against a common custom of performing a retreat just for a couple ancestor. He stated that, on the one hand, it is unfilial to assume the ancestors are constrained in the purgatory, so what the descendants need to do, is to ask the Daoists performing a repentance ritual. On the other hand, performing a retreat means the opening of all

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<sup>55</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法, 1: 26a.

<sup>56</sup> “大則保鎮天地，正天宿度，愈災却魔之格。小則有治療沉痾，回尸起死之功。明則有嘯詠風雷，變化自然之靈。幽則有策役鬼神，徹視十天之文。故曰備有萬法，” in DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 1:6a-6b.

the purgatories of Nine Abysses, however, the Thearch would not issue a universal amnesty (*qushè* 曲赦) for just a couple people. Wang therefore encouraged those who insist to perform a retreat for their ancestors to accept an attached sacrifice (*fujian* 附薦), i.e. a salvation opens to public.<sup>57</sup>

### From Self-refinement to the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement

Starting from the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127 C.E.), the Salvation of Refinement became an independent ritual segment included in the Yellow Retreat. Although it is unclear if the ritual was a public service at the time that related ritual texts appeared, at least since the Southern Song (1127-1279 C.E.), the Yellow Retreat became public so as the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement.<sup>58</sup> Lai Chi-tim believes that the technique of inner refinement (*neilian* 內鍊) that developed into the Liturgy of Liandu was partly influenced by the Buddhist Retreat of Water and Land (*shuilu zhai* 水陸齋).<sup>59</sup> The major aspects between the Daoist and Buddhist rituals for universal salvation, examined by Matsumoto Koichi are: first, destroying of the earth-prisons; second, summoning the souls from the purgatory and opening the roads; third, giving bath, clothes and food to the souls; and last, subjecting the souls to salvation and conversion.<sup>60</sup> The most distinctive feature of the ritual from both religion is the banquet, in Buddhism it is called

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<sup>57</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 34: 5a.

<sup>58</sup> Hsieh Shu-wei, “Lianxing yu liandu,” *The Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology*, Vol. 82, (2012): 743-746; Lai Chi-tim, “The Daoist Identity of the Yellow Register Retreat in the Southern Song,” *Cahiers d’ Extrême-Asie*, Vol. 20, (2011):63-93.

<sup>59</sup> Lai Chi-tim, “The Daoist Identity of the Yellow Register Retreat in the Southern Song,” pp. 63-67.

<sup>60</sup> Matsumoto Koichi, “Songdai de shuiluzhai yu huangluzhai,” in *First International Conference on Daoist Immortal Culture*, Taiwan: Guoli zhongshan daxue yu Gaoxiong daode yuan, 2006, pp. 641-54; Lai Chi-tim, “The Daoist Identity of the Yellow Register Retreat in the Southern Song,” pp. 67-70.

Releasing the Flaming Mouths (*fangyan kou* 放焰口), and in Daoism, it is the ritual of Offering the Food (*shishi* 施食).<sup>61</sup> In addition to the common features, the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement is believed an unique ritual in Daoism. Hsish Shi-wei states that the Liturgy of Liandu represents the distinctive way of care for the death in Daoism.<sup>62</sup>

At the beginning of the Great Rites of Lingbao, we read that there are Seven Canons for practicing the rites of cultivation (*xiuyong zhifa* 修用之法): the way of Inner Observation of Primordial Commencement (*yuanshi neiguan* 元始內觀), which allows one to inspect the hundred spirits and infuse the Chaotic Prime; Visiting the Dippers (*candou* 參斗), where the adept can erase his name from the Book of Death, and inscribe it the Book of Life maintained by the Southern Tribunal (*nancao* 南曹); Paying Audience to the Primordial (*chaoyuan* 朝元); Assigning the Spirits to Govern affairs (*fenshen zhishi* 分神治事); Building a Residence among the Transcendents Clerks (*xiancao jian di* 仙曹建邸), Releasing the Ancestors from Purgatory (*chaodu xuanzu* 超度玄祖) and recording them under the administration of the Southern Dipper, and being Selected for Heavenly Promotion (*xuanying xuanju* 選應玄舉).<sup>63</sup> Here, the rites of salvation are equally mentioned as being a part of self-cultivation and it also considered one of the methods to gain merit for the Daoist.

I hide my body in the Three Realms, the center of Grand Void; the (heavenly) stems cannot invade me, the (earthly) branches cannot hurt me. I command that even Heaven and Earth cannot see my nature, the sun and moon cannot see my form, and the ghosts and spirits cannot see my body. Therefore, I can fly in the Grand Empty, go in and out the abysses.<sup>64</sup>

吾藏身於三界之內，太虛之央，干不能侵，支不能傷。即令天地不能見我質，日月不能見我形，鬼神不能見我身，飛行太空，出幽入冥。

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<sup>61</sup> Lai Chi-tim, "The Daoist Identity of the Yellow Register Retreat in the Southern Song," pp. 86-87.

<sup>62</sup> Hsieh Shu-wei, "Lianxing yu liandu," p.745.

<sup>63</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 2: 1a-1b; 3.

<sup>64</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 2:21b.

Unlike the technique of Refinement of Form (*lianxing* 鍊形) in previous texts, in the Great Rites of Lingbao, the practitioner should be able to penetrate the three realms, communicate with heavenly and earthly spirits, and even ghosts in the abysses. Those who want to study the Upper Way and become a transcendent should consider helping the living and saving the dead as a way to accumulate merit.<sup>65</sup>

Both the living and the dead can be saved by the Great Rites of Lingbao. The deaf, dumb, and blind, all suffering from disabilities and diseases will be cured, depending on how many times the scripture is recited.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, the effects of reciting the scripture are still differentiated according to the level of the practitioner:

The myriad generations of ancestors, those souls suffering in darkness as well as those bitter luminescences—all alike will be saved and ascend on high to the Vermillion Palace. After the regulation nine years' detainment, they will receive rebirth as honored personages. Some of them who delight in studying the highest scriptures, once their achievements and virtues on earth are accomplished, they will ascend through the Golden Porte to roam and feast in the Jade Capitoline. When those with higher attainments in the Learning recite and practice this scripture, they will immediately fly up to the Southern Palace on high. When ordinary mortals receive and recite it, they will extend their years and live long lives. At the end of their lives, they will achieve the way of release from the corpse. Their cloud-souls (*hun*-souls) and bodily spirits will be obliterated for only an instant and will not pass through the earth-prisons, but will be immediately returned to the body so that they might roam the Grand Void.<sup>67</sup>

億曾萬祖幽魂苦爽，皆即受度，上昇朱宮。格皆九年，受化更生，得爲貴人。而好學至經，功滿德就，皆得神仙，飛昇金闕，遊宴玉京也。上學之士，修誦是經，皆

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<sup>65</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 3:10a-10b.

<sup>66</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 4:17a-20a.

<sup>67</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 4:29b. The paragraph quoted here is identical with the description in the Scripture of Salvation. See DZ 87 *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu*, 1: 22b-23b.

即受度，飛昇南宮。世人受誦，則延壽長年，後皆得作尸解之道，魂神暫滅，不經地獄，即得返形，遊行太空。

The same explanation appeared in the original Scripture of Salvation, therefore, the ideal of universal salvation expressed in the Song ritual texts was inherited from early Lingbao texts.<sup>68</sup> The difference is that in Song dynasty, the ritual performance created detailed instructions, so the idea of universal salvation became possible in Daoist ritual.

The Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures  
(*Lingbao dalian* 靈寶大鍊)

*Preparations for the Liturgy*

The Great Refinement of Lingbao is almost the last segment in a retreat, yet not an insignificant one. On the contrary, scholars tend to believe that the Liturgy of Liandu is the key to the entire retreat because after all the preparations, it is the part when the salvation eventually occurs.<sup>69</sup> The preparation for the Great Refinement usually took two days in a three-day ritual, including segments labeled Charming the Food (*zhoushi* 呪食), Transmitting the Precepts (*chuanjie* 傳戒), Offering the Food (*shishi* 施食), Opening the Road for Ghosts (*kaitong guilu* 開通鬼路), Summoning the Hun-souls (*zhaohun* 召魂), burning the talismans, reciting the Scripture of the Five Kitchens (*wuchujing* 五廚經), and Releasing the Knots of Injustice (*jieyuan jie* 解冤結), etc. Ideally, these preparations will assemble all the heavenly and earthly spirits required for the liturgy, and all the hun-souls who will

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<sup>68</sup> DZ 87, *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing*, 1: 22b.

<sup>69</sup> Shi Xiaojun, "Lun Liandu yi," *China Taoism*, No. 1(2004), p. 28.

be saved from the purgatory have already come to the altar to await refinement. After the external preparations is ready, the Master starts to perform inner purifications. The inner preparation requires the Master to first complete the first Five Canons, after which the Master has permission to save ancestors.<sup>70</sup> The key to inner preparation is the refinement of the pneumas and visualization of the spirits, beginning with the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Commencement does.<sup>71</sup>

### *Translation*

There is no retreat ritual more difficult than the Salvation through Refinement, which is the way of transcending the profane and entering the divine, abandoning the embryo and changing the nature. Suffering hun-souls have sunk into the nine abysses, they will ride the sunshine in the morning and rise. If the principle is achieved, then the water and fire could blend with and assist each other, therefore, the dirty nature of yin-corpses will give birth to spirits at that point. If the method is not understood, even if you recite this scripture according to the code, you will turn your back on the nether world. This is the primary concern of the Priests of High Merit.

When the Master ascends the altar of Salvation through Refinement, he visualizes using five-colored purified rays of sunlight to luxuriously circle himself from top to the bottom. First establishing the pool of water, pressing the *hai* 亥 point in his hand, and using the pneuma in the North. Reciting the spells at the

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<sup>70</sup> “前之五經既備，方許超度祖玄，寄治南昌，具有靈寶黃籙齋法，更不重叙。...專行拔度...若一身大惡，故作重愆，則祖考墮落，復入鬼趣，有功更昇入青陽仙境，兆宜審思之，” in DZ 1221, *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 3: 17b-18a.

<sup>71</sup> “夫行靈寶上道，全在煉炁存神，如元始真身與元始同惠，方能洞達，” in DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 35:11b-12a.

direction of Northeast (*shen* 申) where he is standing, flying along the Northern Dipper, recite the Book of the Numinous, stirring the water while reciting the “Twelve Sources of River” thirty-two times. Then, seizing the pneuma of North and the water from the heavenly river into the pool. Burn the talismans of Perfected Water, Great Generals Who Control Water, and the Refinement of Water while visualizing the officials and lords standing around you.

Next, establish the pool of fire, pressing the *wu* 午 point in his hand, and using the pneuma of the South. Then, flying along the Southern Dipper, recite the Book of Numinous, and set up the fire. Recite the “Throw Fire to Ten Thousand Miles” thirty-two times. Put the fire pneuma of South into the pool. Burn the talismans of Perfected Fire, Generals Who Control Fire, and the Refinement of Fire while visualizing the officials and lords are standing around. The whole scenery transforms to resemble the World of Cinnabar Heaven.

After stabilizing the visualization, the Master transforms his body to a muddy-pellet filling the heaven and blocking the earth. He visualizes the realm of the Three Heavens. Then he visualizes the Nine Heavens and the thirty-two Heavens in his forehead, each of them has terraces and palaces. The left eye is the palace of the sun, the right eye is the palace of the moon, and the seven orifices are the Starry Dipper. The back of the neck is the Artemisia Palace of the Dense Gauze. The mouth is the Heavenly River. The neck is the Twelve-storied Tower. The heart is the Fire Residence of Vermillion Cliff. The spine is the heavenly stairs. The left kidney is the pool of water whence the jade water emerges, and the right kidney is the pool of fire whence the jade fire emerges. The coccyx is the Gateway of *Yin*. The transformation of the entire body is as the same as the transformation of heaven and the earth.

The body is constrained inside Heaven and Earth, while Heaven and Earth are also constrained inside this body. The Master will be unconscious of his form and appearance, but only be aware of the Lord of Cinnabar Primordial in his heart. Bear the prime pneuma ascending to the muddy-pellet above and transform it into the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Commencement who sits erect in the Cavern Chamber bestowing transformation on the upper Dao. The Officer Lords of Left and Right, the Jade Lads and Jade Lasses stand in attendance everywhere.

The [Heavenly Worthy of] Primordial Commencement emitted a great brightness, illuminating below. The Gateway of *Yin* opens. Innumerable ghosts all enter into the Enclosed Wild. The Master first pours the water from the Heaven River into the Eastern Well, whence it pours into the pool of water in the left kidney, and the moon light in the right eye flows directly into the pool of water. The glow of the water appears bright and clear. Next, the Master pours the fire of Cinnabar Heaven into the lake of fire in the right kidney, and the sun light in the left eye flows directly into the pool of fire. The glow of the fire appears blazing. The mix of light from the water and fire looks lustrous and clean.

The Master now commands the Great General Who Controls Fire and the officials and clerks of the Pool of Water to guide the hun-souls to enter the pool of water. What we call water is the essence of the Perfected One. Yin-spirits who enter the pool of water which cleans the dust and dirt and give them youthful faces that shine like jade. After that, the master burns the talismans of water-refinement, commands the Great General Who Controls Fire and officials and clerks of the Lake of Fire to direct the souls to enter the pool of fire for refinement. What we call fire is the pneuma of the perfect *yang*. Once the souls enter the pool of fire, they melt like baked dates. These *yin*-corpses return to the womb and transform their nature. Then, the master burns the talisman of fire-refinement and recites the secret

formulae while blending the pneumas of the four directions. He then burns the talisman of the true forms of the Five Thearchs to generate the spirits in the five viscera and six storehouses. Visualize the maidens giving the souls clean clothes for rising to heaven. The souls put on the clothes, with their faces shining brightly.

The officials direct the souls to ascend to the Fire Residence of the Vermilion Cliff through the Stairs of Heaven in the spine. The Master burns the Crossing the Bridge talisman and visualizes the souls all cross the bridge and leave. They are again refined by the sun light, their bones and appearances becoming extraordinary. There are limitless fire dragons who arise from the pool of fire, each of them carrying an infant, to fly up to the Artemisia Palace of the Dense Gauze, where they are reborn based on their [Heaven] ranks. The Master swallows his saliva, returning all the perfected pneumas of water and fire to the palaces they came from. Burn all the talismans and scriptures left after the completion of the liturgy.

### Harmonizing Water and Fire

The Numina are like yang; they have form but no nature. They join in the perfected nature of the Dao, creating an image above. In the human body, they are in silent agreement with the human spirits, thinking to transform the heart, that is why they are called Numina. The Treasure is like yin; it has form and also nature. It transforms the empty to form the real, collecting into a form below. In the human body, it nurtures blood to complete the body, and condenses the essence in the kidney, that is why it is called Treasure.<sup>72</sup>

靈者類乎陽也，有形而無質，與道合真，成象於上。在人則與人神默契，思化於心，故曰靈也。寶者類乎陰也，有形而有質，化虛成實，聚形於下，在人則滋血成身，凝精於腎，故曰寶也。

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<sup>72</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 54: 1a.

From the description above we can see that the whole teaching of the *Great Rites of Numinous Treasures* focuses on the combination and balance of yin and yang. The water- and fire-refinement are key to the Liturgy of Liandu. Since the harmonization of water and fire, as well as the metaphors of the pool of water and the pool of fire represent the harmony of *yin* and *yang*. In the Liturgy of Liandu, the water and fire are seized following the rites of perfected water and perfected fire.

The Perfected Water is a pneuma in yin. The heavenly one generates water..... This Perfected Water then flows into the Heavenly River, then the water in the Heavenly River is transported to the Eastern Well..... Heaven and Earth are founded upon yin and yang, consequently, the principles of the activity or inactivity of Heaven and Earth because of the principle that Heaven is mobile while Earth is quiet. Then running the Yellow Flourish above the Eastern Well, gathering the Numinous of the heavenly on and generating the fire of earthly two. Therefore, the water is above, and fire is below, they will flow into the three palaces.<sup>73</sup>

夫真水者，是陰中之一炁，是爲天一生水.....此爲真水流入天河，却運天河之水入東井.....天地本於陰陽，而天地動靜之理，是爲運黃華於東井之上，聚天一之靈生地二之火，故爲水上火下，流入三宮也。

The Perfected Fire is the fire in the middle of yang. This fire can exorcize yin defilements, refine them to form an embryo and then transport one's own pneuma to transform and combine them.... Now, the Southern pneuma refers to the pneumas of the southeast and the Northern pneuma refers to the pneumas of the northwest. Southeast is the direction of the Palace of Vermillion Cliff; this fire can nurture beings and it can produce transformation. Northeast is the direction of the Gate of Heaven; for this reason, the Heavenly One has produced this water, which can nurture living beings. This is what the Heavenly Thearch calls Raining Dew. Once the Raining Dew soaks in, then withered bones will flourish again.<sup>74</sup>

夫明真火者，是陽中之火也。其火能辟除陰滓，冶鍊成嬰，然後運自己之炁化合.....今南炁以東南炁，北炁以西北炁。東南乃朱陵宮，此火能育物，可以生化

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<sup>73</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 59:16a-16b.

<sup>74</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 59: 17b-18a.

也。西北乃天門，故天一生此水，能育物，乃天帝之治所號曰雨露。雨露既沾，則枯骨重榮……

According to this passage, the water refinement occurs first and the fire refinement comes second. In Wang Qizhen's Great Rites of Lingbao, the pool of water is established first, and the souls are guided to walk through the pool of water for purifying their dirty form, then pass through the pool of fire to refine them. In Jin Yunzhong's Great Rites of Lingbao, however, he claims that the order is decided based on the preference of the Master; instead, he emphasizes the sources of the water and fire.<sup>75</sup> As we see in the last quotation, Wang Qizhen believes that the Heavenly One generates water and the Earthly Two gives birth to fire; in this case, it is clear that the water-refinement has to happen before the fire-refinement.

The correspondences to *yin* and *yang* are reflected in the spirits who come to assist the liturgy, as well. There are said to be six male spirits of the *jia*-branch and six female spirits of the *ding*-branch, *yang*-spirits and *yin*-clerks respectively. Traditionally they are arrayed to the left and right when they are summoned; here the male, left side is considered higher, as we see in the following invocation:

Six Yang-Spirits of Jia, six Yin-Clerks of Ding.<sup>76</sup>六甲陽神，六丁陰吏。

Six Jade Ladies of Ding, six Spirit Lords of Jia.<sup>77</sup>六丁玉女，六甲神君。

Call out the six *jia* from the left, summon the six-*ding* from the right.<sup>78</sup>左呼六甲，右召六丁。

### The Transformation of the Daoist Body

<sup>75</sup> Lai Chi-tim, "Juqi hunling, jiuzhuan shengshen", pp. 244-247.

<sup>76</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 2:17b.

<sup>77</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 2: 18b-19a.

<sup>78</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 2:19a.

*Communication with Spirits*

The rituals in Wang Qizhen's Great Rites of Lingbao emphasizes the power of an individual priest instead of high-level heavenly spirits. That is to say, the priest is the subject during the ritual performance. Every spell recites, every step of the visualizations originates in the priest's body. In the Great Refinement of Lingbao we can see, "the Master transforms his body to a Muddy-pellet filling the heaven and blocking the earth.....The transformation of the entire body is as the same as the transformation of heaven and the earth."<sup>79</sup> The scripture informs the adept that, "I have the Heavenly Worthy, why bother going up to the heaven."<sup>80</sup> Here it explicitly states that the spirits are bodily deities. The preparations required from the Master are not to look for deities externally, but rather, through self-refinement, to be able to summon and communicate with these deities in his own body.

You now are drunk and full, enjoying limitless happiness. Whenever it is a fortune day, offerings arrive with summonses. On a normal day, you must not leave me. If a fortunate or unfortunate event is about to occur, you will report it to me in advance. You need to be aware that as long as my body is alive, you will be alive with me.<sup>81</sup>

汝等既醉且飽，欣樂無極。每遇吉日，祭召即至。常日之時，勿得離吾。未來吉凶，汝先報吾。知吾身常存，汝等亦存。

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<sup>79</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 59: 12a.

<sup>80</sup> "自己有天尊，何勞上望天," in DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 4: 4b; Shi Xiaojun, "Lun liandu yi," p.30.

<sup>81</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 5: 8a-8b.

In this passage, the Daoist Master asserts absolute control over his bodily deities. Those deities reside in the Master's body and have an obligation to report to him. It also mentions that the body spirits can only exist inside the Master's body, where they are refined according to the conceptions of the early Celestial Master church and the Shangqing revelations. The spirits and the body depend on each other. The Daoist body is complete with the body spirits, and only then can reach the Dao; the body provides for the spirits a place to reside and fulfill their duties.

### *Understanding the Daoist Body*

When the Master steps into Liandu altar, he first establishes the pool of water and the pool of fire in his left and right kidneys, and also visualizes the Lord of the Cinnabar Prime (*danyuan jun* 丹元君) in the heart, which is also the Fire Residence of Vermillion Cliff (*zhuling huofu* 朱陵火府). The kidney and heart seem to have crucial roles in the Great Refinement. The Great Rites of Lingbao instructs the Daoists that:

The fifth [canon] is to illuminate the human body. Modeling oneself on the [Celestial Worthy of] Primordial Commencement, establish Chaos, and then give birth to the divine embryo in the dharma body. The father and mother joined their essence. This one essence embraces harmony and splits into two pneumas which first gives birth in the kidney. The three pneumas separately begin operation, and are born into the Divine Storehouse, which is the heart....The two pneumas then separate, one being born above in the Muddy-pellet and the other descending to be born in the Water Storehouse of the Mysterious Valley.<sup>82</sup>

五則明人身體，法元始造立混沌，而生聖胎法身。父母交精，一點含和，二炁分坼，先生其腎，三炁分肇，而生神府，神府者心也。……二炁分判，上生泥丸，而下生玄谷，玄谷水府也。

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<sup>82</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 1:5a.

The adept must illuminate and clearly visualize the body in order to first refine himself and then perform this refinement for others. The heart is the “house of hundred spirits, residence of the five officials.”<sup>83</sup> Each of the five viscera is ruled by a lord corresponding to one of the five agents. Two of them are of special importance in the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement, the liver and the lungs, because they are the residence of the *hun* or cloud soul and the *po* or earthly soul:

I humbly summon the liver to be the Lord Void Blossom of the Green-blue Palace, Controller of Hun-souls. The pneumas of lesser-yang, the essence of wood and the Year star, are absorbed into the body to generate the liver. The three hun-souls live there. May the nine Wood spirits and their nine-thousand spirit clerks quickly send down their perfected pneumas to sustain and protect the skin and govern the hair.<sup>84</sup>

謹召肝爲青宮无英制魂君，少陽木精歲星之炁，納化身中以生肝。三魂處之，木神九人，神吏九千衆，速降真炁，榮衛皮膚，主其毫髮。

I humble summon the lungs to be the Lord White Prime of the Unadorned Palace, Manager of Po-souls. The pneumas of lesser-yin, the essence of metal, and the star Grand White are absorbed into the body to generate the lungs. The seven po-souls live there. May the seven Metal Spirits and their seven-thousand attending clerks govern the body, maintaining the muscle and bones, and governing the teeth.<sup>85</sup>

謹召肺爲素宮白元營魄君，少陰金精太白之炁，納化身中以生肺。七魄處之，金神七人，從吏七千衆，治其身，榮衛筋骨，主其牙齒。

These passages give us considerable information concerning the hun- and po-souls, first, they correspond with the colors of green-blue and white, and hence the elements wood and metal. Secondly, they represent the lesser-yang and lesser-yin

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<sup>83</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 4:5b.

<sup>84</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 6:29b.

<sup>85</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 6:32a.

and their residences are the liver and lungs. Their duties also correlate with the idea that the *hun*-souls will ascend to heaven and the *po*-souls will return to the earth, since the hair and skin that are governed by *hun*-souls are lighter and less attached to the body than muscles and bones.

### The Rescued *Hun*- and *Po*- Souls

#### *The Idea of Purgatory*

As said by the scripture, it is assumed that the Nine Abysses and Twenty-four Abysses are only metaphors of purgatory in human body and mind. The purgatory of Nine Abysses is a result of evil thoughts of the dead. Once the evil thoughts appear, there comes with the transformation of Nine Abysses and become the purgatory trapping the dead.

The Nine Abysses are the Eight Trigrams along with the Central Palace. They are divided based on the Nine Continents, each led by a local prefect. In the heavens they are the Nine Empyreans, on the earth they are the Nine Palaces, which transform to become the Nine Abysses prisons. Whenever the name contains “nine,” it is actually the transformations of one pneuma, responding to a single thought. Whenever the dead have an evil thought, a prison immediately appears, and the karmic retribution follows. Therefore, the Supreme (Lord Lao) displayed his mercy to save them, establishing nine retreat rites to rescue the suffering luminescences.<sup>86</sup>

夫九幽者，八卦中宮。按九州分野，各係社令主守。在天爲九霄，在地爲九宮，化形爲九幽獄。其名有九，皆一炁所化，一念所感。凡亡人一念之惡，其獄即現，其報隨之。故太上垂慈拯濟，立九齋法，超拔苦爽。

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<sup>86</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 34: 3b-4a.

Unlike the Nine Abysses, the Twenty-four Abysses prisons result from twenty-four sins committed by the living and twenty-four retributions they have to experience after death. The number of twenty-four correlates with the number of spirits in human body.

The Three Paths are the site for the Five Sufferings and Eight Disasters. [Each has] eight prisons, altogether there are Twenty-four Prisons. Now in the human body there are Three Sections, each with Eight Phosphors, making a complement of twenty-four spirits. Most [in the prisons] while alive desired affection and love, lodging their heart in an evil realm, tying knots and concentrating filth; they cannot get past this.<sup>87</sup>

三塗五苦，八難之場，八獄，共二十四獄，按人身中三部八景二十四神之數。多因在世貪着情愛，設心邪境，結節凝滓，不能開通。

This paragraph agrees with what the Great Rites of Lingbao says before that, “In the Eight Scenes in the upper part, the womb ties the Muddy-pellet; in the Eight Scenes in the middle part, the womb coils up the Vermillion Palace; in the Eight Scenes in the lower part, the womb releases the root of embryo.”<sup>88</sup>

#### *The Appearance of the Hun- and Po- souls on the Altar*

During the liturgy, the Master set up the altars of the Nine Abysses prisons and the Twenty-four Abysses prisons in advance, then summons the souls to this altar. The commoners can not only see the traces of the souls but also communicate with them.

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<sup>87</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 34: 11b.

<sup>88</sup> “上部八景，胎結泥丸。中部八景，胎盤絳宮。下部八景，胎解胞根。” in DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 2: 11b.

The deceased are attracted to this talisman, so their hun- and po-souls enter the altar. Everyone in the place can see their traces appear.<sup>89</sup>

亡人沾此符，乃魂鬼入壇，人人皆可見現跡也。

The banner established beside the altar is the signal to summon the deceased to come. The Master writes down the name and date of birth of the deceased, when the time comes, the three hun-souls and seven po-souls will come together.<sup>90</sup>

Nevertheless, the underground world is not the same as that of the living, and as the ritual performance recedes in time, there is a fear that the yin-pneumas of the deceased will come to fear the yang-pneumas of the living and scatter. Therefore, the Master will raise again the spirit flag to summon them, “open the gate of the dead for the deceased to enter and then close it.”<sup>91</sup>

While the souls of the departed are still in this realm, they can converse with their descendants:

All of the hun-souls will appear in their true forms immediately and speak with the living in clearly audible voices. You must not be sad or sob; if you are happy, all will show their forms.<sup>92</sup>

一切魂識立見真形，與生人通言語，歷歷可問，不宜悲泣，若歡喜盡現其形。

Thus, the *hun*-souls not only appear before the altar but can also communicate with their living family members. The records in the *Recording of the Listeners* (*Yijian zhi* 夷堅志), a Song dynasty historical material described a gentleman Xu Deke, who died in 1178 and his brother who invited a Daoist priest from the Gezao Mountain,

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<sup>89</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 35-15a.

<sup>90</sup> “師曰：召魂幡……符下寫亡人姓名，兩足寫生死年月日時，三魂俱赴，七鬼俱來，” in DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 35:18b-19a.

<sup>91</sup> “况煉度日遠，恐亡者怕生人陽炁，散亂陰魂。再以幡引歸聚魂壇，開死門入，復閉之，” in DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 35:11.

<sup>92</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 55: 26a-27a.

the origin of Lingbao school, performed a Yellow Register retreat. At that night, Xu Deke possessed his son and wrote down his gratefulness of the mercy of Heaven and had no regrets after all. The handwriting was exactly the same. So, the family believed in the presence of Xu Deke and graved his writing in stones to show the power of the retreat.<sup>93</sup>

### *Women Who Die in Delivery*

Giving birth to a baby in traditional China was a huge challenge for women; with limited knowledge of gynecology and a high death rate, giving birth was considered as dangerous as going through the boundary of life and death. Various groups of people are explicitly mentioned as constituting the intended audience for the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement, including the deaf, mute, blind, and lame, etc., hence it is not surprising to see a ministry designed for saving the women who die during pregnancy or delivery. The Ministry for Supervising Births (*Jiansheng si* 監生司) governs women who are pregnant, especially those who refuse to be born, or when the mother or both mother and child died together.<sup>94</sup> The souls in such conditions cannot be refined immediately; they must first be purified by displaying to them the Perfected Tract of Supervising Births (*Jiansheng zhenwen* 監生真文). There is another ministry, the Place for Flushing Filthiness (*Danghui suo* 蕩穢所), that cleanses two groups of people: First, women who died while giving birth upon death sink into the Blood Lake. The defiled bodies cannot be refined

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<sup>93</sup> Edward Davis, *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001, pp.180-181; Lai Chi-tim, "The Daoist Identity of the Yellow Register Retreat in the Southern Song," p.87.

<sup>94</sup> “夫普度大齋，廣濟沈魂，其中如有生存懷孕，胞胎不解，子母禾分，或子存而母亡，或子母俱亡，似此之徒，何緣解脫，” DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 55:28b.

until the blood and filth is washed away. The second group involves both men and women.

Again, there are many hun-souls that used to be male and female. Some contracted diseases while alive, forming carbuncles and ulcers covered in pus and blood; some were executed by the royal law, dying through throat-cutting, strangulation, or by weapons; some were kill, injured or slaughtered [in battle], some were eaten by tigers or killed by snakes. People like this all died bloodily.<sup>95</sup>

又有男女魂衆，或生前受疾，癰疽膿血，王法誅夷，勿縊刀兵，殺傷屠戮，虎啖蛇傷，似此之者，皆是帶血身殂。

Here we see that blood is considered polluting, and people polluted by blood are retained in the purgatory of Blood Lake and cannot receive refinement until they are cleansed. The Liandu liturgy deals with women who died during pregnancy or delivery, cleansing them in the Place for Flushing Filth and then sent to the Ministry of Supervising Births for further refinement. This procedure is popular in contemporary Taiwan where the Daoist master put a pot of water in the middle of a wooden Ritual Bridge for Ascending to Heaven (*Shengtian faqiao* 昇天法橋). The bridge therefore has another name called the Bridge of Blood Lake. The pot of water represents the Purgatory of Blood Lake where the women suffer. As the souls cross the bridge, the Master visualizes the souls being cleaned and refined and then ascending to Heaven.<sup>96</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>95</sup> DZ 1221 *Shangqing Lingbao dafa*, 55: 29a.

<sup>96</sup> Jiang Shoucheng, “Songyuan daoshu zhongde yinhun duqiao keyi,” *Hongdao*, Vol. 69, 4 (2016): 64-70.

The Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement is a segment of the commonly performed ritual, the Retreat of the Yellow Register. Through examining this liturgy, we can find that the technique of inner vision was fully developed in Lingbao ritual performances where the kidneys is the pool of water for cleaning the dirty nature of *yin*-nature of the souls, meanwhile, the heart is the Vermillion Palace provides fire for refinement. Additionally, the refinement was no longer a self-cultivated technique, combining with physical performance in Song dynasty, it plays the role of universal salvation for the commoners. The reason the development of the refinement from self-cultivation to a universal salvation in Song dynasty might because the plagues and wars among the Song court and the intruders from the North. The competition with Buddhism, local cults could be another reason driving the Daoist communities to produce such ritual.<sup>97</sup> Although scholars have done plenty of researches about the Liturgy of Liandu, there are still problems looking for answers. For example, it is still unclear where the souls will go after they “cross the bridge.” We have seen before from the Scripture of Salvation and the Great Rites of Lingbao that people in different ranks reborn in varies places, such as “flying in the Grand Empty.” However, the Great Refinement of Lingbao did not give any further description after the souls “reborn based on their [Heaven] ranks.” All in all, more studies are required for understanding the ritual performance towards the refinement and the understanding of the Daoist body in the future.

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<sup>97</sup> Shi Xiaojun, “Lun Liandu yi,” *Chinese Taoism*, pp. 26-32; Hsieh Shu-wei, “*Lianxing yu Liandu*,” pp. 743-747.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, the process of the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement was presented, along with an analysis of the metaphors of water and fire, the correlative relationship between the body and deities, and the transformation of souls from dirty-natures to purer forms who can rebirth upon their heavenly ranks. In the second chapter, scriptures such as the *Xiang'er Commentary* shows us that the idea of refinement of forms existed since third-century, the idea was to provide the Palace for Refinement of Forms, i.e. the Grand Darkness where the Daoists can further cultivate themselves instead of perishing in this world. The *Petition Almanac of Master Redpine* shows that not only the Daoists but also profane people have the chances to traverse in the Grand Darkness under the help of the Daoists. From here we can see that the Celestial Master Daoism has the technique of self-refinement early on. From Shangqing texts, such as the Scripture of Salvation, the Scripture of Yellow Court, etc., we can see that they generated the idea of correlation between the body and bodily spirits who need continuous refinement to become the perfected. Those ideas become the background for the notion of salvation through refinement in the Lingbao tradition. Lingbao tradition was known for its ritual performance. Build on the Shangqing revelations, Lingbao tradition uses the ideas from texts like Scripture of Salvation to present their goal of universal salvation. At the meanwhile, they adopted the technique of self-refinement and developed it to a part of retreat for refining the nature of suffering souls in the purgatory to help them rebirth.

Current researches of this topic either focus on the Retreat of Yellow Register, ignoring the status of the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement which is the final and core segment in the Retreat where the souls get saved; or did not

give more analysis of this liturgy in the context of ritual performance but examine the refinement in the category of the Inner Alchemy or visualization technique. Therefore, this study tries to present the entire procedure of the Great Refinement of Numinous Treasures and the transformation of body and souls during the liturgy. What's more, it focuses on answers the questions such as how is the relationship between the Daoist who is performing the liturgy, the spirits summoned to the performance, and the souls who will be saved established? How is the Master's self-cultivation affected by the performance of the ritual? It is an initial work to reflect the combination of the topic of transformation of body and souls with the context of the Liturgy of Salvation through Salvation. The Great Refinement of Numinous Treasure is one type of refinement in the Liturgy of Salvation through Refinement, for further research, more focus will be put on first, examine the common and differences between varies types of salvation through refinement, like the Refinement of Nine Heavens etc.; second, create a whole historical development toward the Liturgy of Salvation through Salvation since its appearance in the Song dynasty, and its interaction with other Daoist groups, local communities and the Buddhism; third, build on the historical and social context, find out its situation in contemporary China.

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