
The Discourse on the Thunders 雷說, *by the Taoist*

Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 (1093–1153)

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During a sojourn in Sichuan 四川 province I toured Mount Ch'ing-ch'eng shan 青城山 near Cheng-tu 成都 city and engaged Taoist priests in informative conversations. I learnt that they still heed the age-old traditions that are known as Heavenly Master Taoism. The *Scripture of Tao and its Virtue* (*Tao-te ching* 道德經) was said to be at the very heart of Heavenly Master Taoism. This venerable book would make Taoism a generally accepted asset of Chinese culture. However, I soon found out that these priests also performed various ritual methods that were thought to effect spiritual salvation, when local people or tourists visited the mountain and asked for religious support. The name for these methods was said to be Thunder Magic or Five Thunder Magic (*Wu-lei fa* 五雷法). Some Taoists knew stories to tell about people who did not believe in, or even despised, Thunder Magic. These were reportedly punished by thunder divinities, who are considered to be a fierce troop, do not tolerate any insult, and tend to strike in a deadly manner. I also was told that a thorough understanding of how the cosmos operates is the very basis for Thunder Magic.

Some priests on Mount Ch'ing-ch'eng shan 青城山 explained that Thunder Magic became officially accepted and sponsored by the imperial administration during the reign of emperor Sung Hui-tsung 宋徽宗 (r. 1100–1126), who admired the Taoists Lin Ling-su 林靈素 (1076–1120) and Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 (1093–1153). Today, Thunder Magic is clearly an important and living tradition in religious Taoism. The practitioners of Thunder Magic are well aware of the historic background that appears to bolster the legitimation of their ritual methods. In the light of this experience on Mount Ch'ing-ch'eng shan 青城山, I took up the study of the literary documentation of Thunder Magic in the *Taoist Canon* (*Tao-tsang* 道藏, abbr. TT) and decided to concentrate on the activities of Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿. The literary output of this Taoist is considerable and still available (TT). His writings are mainly theoretical expositions, some in the form of “prefaces” to lists of divine names and powers. He also formulated “prayers” or “spells” that address thunder divinities.

Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 succeeded Lin Ling-su 林靈素 as court Taoist, when the Sung Dynasty (Pei Sung 北宋) began to crumble under the military pressure of Tartar (*nü-chen* 女真) invasion. The information that I had received from those Taoists on Mount Ch'ing-ch'eng shan 青城山 proved to be correct, but it referred only to a small part of the story of Thunder Magic. Studying historical sources concerning Thunder Magic, I found Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 to be the key figure in the early history of this Taoist endeavour. His literary works say much about the inner structure of Thunder Magic and its amazing

complexity. To know more about the reasoning and the scholarly justification of Thunder Magic, it is necessary to study the texts written by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿, but we can appreciate his writings in depth by considering the religious context of Thunder Magic.

The background for the Taoist activities of Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿

It is obvious that Thunder Magic combines two rather distinct phenomena. On the one hand, there is the specific understanding of the cosmos and its operations that Chinese scholars had long developed, mirrored, for example, by the famous *Book of Changes* (*I-ching* 易經) and its commentaries. On the other hand, we have the vast domain of religious Taoism. The sources of Thunder Magic in the *Taoist Canon* are numerous, but in many cases they are very hard to attribute to individual authors. Impressive biographies in the *Taoist Canon* document the lives of Lin Ling-su 林靈素 and Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿, but only Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 left behind substantial texts that reveal his perception and practice of Thunder Magic. His canonical biography and the so-called *School-Talks* indicate that he was in command of a range of ritual practices.¹ For instance, he staged *chiao* 醮 rituals as thanksgiving in the palace of emperor Sung Hui-tsung 宋徽宗 when exorcist rituals of Thunder Magic had produced the desired effects. The biography of Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 features many miracles, such as the expulsion of fox spirits and the clearing of the skies in order to support the performance of state rituals. We also learn that this Taoist, who was close to emperor Sung Hui-tsung 宋徽宗, successfully transmitted messages from the divine spheres to the emperor. The emperor finally accepted the divine advice that he had to step down, when the Tartars were about to conquer Northern China.² The close relationship between the emperor and this Taoist make it especially worthwhile to know more about the latter's theoretical approach and exorcist methods, so appreciated by the imperial administration of Sung 宋 China.

Thunder Magic was performed by official representatives of Heavenly Master Taoism. Sources frequently mention the 30th Heavenly Master Chang Hsü-ching 張虛靜 (1092–1126), who, after his departure from this world, made a career as a divine patron of Thunder Magic rituals. He could be addressed in prayers and magic spells. This is well documented in the literary collection *A Corpus of Taoist Ritual* (*Tao-fa hui-yüan* 道法會元) that dates from the fourteenth century. This collection abounds with sources of Thunder Magic.³ The

¹ See F. C. Reiter, "A Preliminary Study of the Taoist Wang Wen-ch'ing (1093–1153) and his Thunder Magic (*lei-fa*)", in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* [henceforth ZDMG], 152, 155–184, esp.; p. 160 sq. for a translation of his biography in TT 296 *Li-shih chen-hsien t'i-tao t'ung-chien* 53, 16a–21b. The same article also evaluates TT 1250 *Ch'ung-hsü t'ung-miao shih-ch'en Wang hsien-sheng chia-hua* (*School-Talks*). Also see R. Hymes, *Way And Byway: Taoism, Local Religion, And Models of Divinity In Sung And Modern China*, p. 114 sq. (Taoists, Local Gods, and the Transformation of Wang Wen-ch'ing) (Berkeley 2002).

² T. Yoshida, *Hui-tsung*, in H. Franke (Hrsg.), *Sung Biographies*, Münchener Ostasiatische Studien, Vol. 16, 1, (Wiesbaden, 1976), p. 461.

³ TT 1220 *Tao-fa hui-yüan* 道法會元, on this text see P. van der Loon, "A Taoist Collection of the Fourteenth Century", in W. Bauer (comp.), *Studia Sino-Mongolica. Münchener Ostasiatische Studien* 25 (Wiesbaden 1979), pp. 401–405. Concerning Chang Hsü-ching, see F. C. Reiter, "Some Notices on the Magic Agent Wang (Wang *ling-kuan*) at Mt. Ch'i-ch'ü in Tzu-t'ung District, Szechwan Province", in ZDMG 148, p. 333. Also see L. Skar, "Ritual Movements, Deity Cults, and the Transformation of Taoism in Song and Yuan Times", in L. Kohn (comp.), *Daoism Handbook* (Leiden, 2000), p. 446. J. M. Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries*, (Chang Chi-hsien 張繼先) (Berkeley 1986), pp. 194–195. Also see Hymes, *Way and Byway*, p. 273. See TT 1463 *Han t'ien-shih shih-chia* 3, 1b sq.

performances of exorcist thunder rituals are independent events that do not need the larger liturgical frame of *chiao* 醮 rituals. The *chiao* 醮 ritual is the prominent platform at which Heavenly Master Taoism displays its religious meaning and potential. Here it is that the Taoist priest exhibits his literary erudition and enacts his priestly standing.⁴ Our sources show that Chang Hsü-ching 張虛靜 and Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 guided performances of such *chiao* 醮 rituals, while at the same time they were also deeply involved in Thunder Magic. Thunder Magic became an integral part of Heavenly Master Taoism that was founded by Chang Tao-ling 張道陵 in Sichuan 四川 province in the late second century A. D. This integration developed slowly and came to its peak with official acknowledgement in the twelfth century during the time of emperor Sung Hui-tsung 宋徽宗. This success was due to the activities of Lin Ling-su 林靈素 and Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿. Heavenly Master Taoism, however, continued until today to constitute the large frame and basis for any Taoist activity.⁵

The relationship between Thunder Magic rituals and Heavenly Master Taoism is a complicated matter, which we do not yet know in detail. The 43rd patriarch of Heavenly Master Taoism Chang Yü-ch'ü 張宇初 (1361–1410) explains in his *Ten Rules for the Taoist* (*Tao-men shih-kuei* 道門十規) that a priest should pursue only “one method” and hold only “one register” (*lu* 籙). The Taoist has to be able to communicate with the divine luminaries (*shen-ming* 神明). The indispensable precondition is that he cultivates his spiritual forces and vital energies all day long. Chang Yü-ch'ü 張宇初 claims that even a “minor method” (*hsiao-fa* 小法) suffices and works perfectly well, if the practitioner maintains the proper inner attitude.⁶ *A Corpus of Taoist Ritual* (*Tao-fa hui-yüan* 道法會元) presents many “minor methods” or rituals, which mostly have rather low ranking divine patrons, who may be called “messengers” or “generals”.⁷ *A Corpus of Taoist Ritual* also shows that some meritorious Taoists were posthumously elevated to transcendent divine ranks. The Taoist priest who actually performed a “minor method” of Thunder Magic could address in his prayers the respective “messenger” or “general”, who was believed to be the patron of that particular ritual.

The pantheon of the *chiao* 醮 ritual of Heavenly Master Taoism is different. It refers to a category of divinities that belong to the so-called “Anterior Heaven” (*hsien-t'ien* 先天).⁸ The most famous names are the “Three Pure Ones” (*san-ch'ing* 三清), who are the “Heavenly Worthy of Prime Origin” (*Yüan-shih t'ien-tsun* 元始天尊), the “Heavenly Worthy of the Numinous Jewel” (*Ling-pao t'ien-tsun* 靈寶天尊) and the “Heavenly Worthy of Tao

⁴ This aspect was explored from various perspectives, see especially J. Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (New York & London, 1987); M. Saso, *Taoism and the Rite of Cosmic Renewal* (Washington, 1972); N. Ôfuchi, *Chûgokujin no shûkyô girei* (Okayama, 1983); K. M. Schipper, *Le corps taoïste* (Paris, 1982).

⁵ F. C. Reiter, *Grundelemente und Tendenzen des religiösen Taoismus, das Spannungsverhältnis von Integration und Individualität in seiner Geschichte zur Chin-, Yüan- und frühen Ming-Zeit*, in *Münchener Ostasiatische Studien* 48 (Stuttgart 1988), pp. 52–55. Also see Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature*, pp. 26–27.

⁶ TT 1232 *Tao-men shih-kuei* 11b. See Reiter, *Grundlagen und Tendenzen des religiösen Taoismus*, p. 39.

⁷ See the rituals that are based on spiritual patrons like Sa Shou-chien 薩守堅 and Wang Shan 王善 (*ling-kuan* 靈官), see F. C. Reiter, “Some Notices on the Magic Agent Wang (Wang *ling-kuan*) at Mt. Ch'i-ch'ü in Tzu-t'ung District, Szechwan Province”, in *ZDMG* 148, pp. 323–342. Hymes also discusses this theme in his book *Way and Byway*, see above note 1.

⁸ Such a listing is TT 1220: 56.5a–10a (*Lei-t'ing shen-wei* 雷霆神位) that has a “preface” by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 (*hsü* 序). This list contains only ranks and files of the “Anterior Heaven”.

and its Virtue” (*Tao-te t'ien-tsun* 道德天尊). Their realm, the “Anterior Heaven”, is quite beyond the standard of all those inferior divine “messengers”, “generals”, “wardens” and “stalwarts”, who represent the “Posterior Heaven” (*hou-t'ien* 後天). Tradition connects this latter category with the names of real people, such as the Heavenly Master Chang Hsü-ching 張虛靜, who was deified posthumously due to the merits that he had earned in real life.⁹

The Taoist notion of the divine is based on the understanding that, before birth, the human body receives a maximum allotment of the divine power of life, which is assembled during the embryonic stage of development. Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 shared this understanding, which scriptures like the *Scripture of the General Welfare* (*T'ai-p'ing ching* 太平經) and many other texts had long documented.¹⁰ All these books contributed in one way or another to the historic development of meditative “internal alchemy” (*nei-tan* 內丹)¹¹ that flourished greatly during the Sung 宋 period. Particularly during this period “internal alchemy” made its way into the theoretical expositions and meditative practices of Thunder Magic. Indeed, I am reminded of the meditation on the five human viscera (*wu-tsang* 五臟), which may result in the apparition of the thunder divinity “Great Divinity of Blazing Fire”, Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫. Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 presents in his writings this meditative experience.¹² He frequently uses the terminology of “internal alchemy”, which he applies to ritual matters. In this sense, he speaks about “the judge” Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫 and two other divine apparitions that are named Hsin Han-ch'en 辛漢臣 and Chang Yüan-po 張元伯. Together they form a trio called “three marshals” (*san-shuai* 三帥). The Taoist practitioner can visualise them in the heart, in the gall and the kidneys respectively.¹³ Recent studies by Chinese scholars present Thunder Magic as an important arena for internal alchemy. These scholars steer away from dealing with the phenomenon of religion and, hence, seem to clear Thunder Magic of the stigma of being superstition.¹⁴ In this article I offer a translation of the *Discourse on the Thunders* (*Lei-shuo* 雷說) by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 that documents his notion of Thunder Magic. This *Discourse* and some additional short tracts by the same author certainly provide much new information for further consideration.

⁹ See F. C. Reiter, *Religionen in China. Geschichte, Alltag, Kultur*, in Becksche Reihe 1490 (München, 2002), pp. 99, 132–134.

¹⁰ TT 1101 *T'ai-p'ing ching*. I list a few reference works that also point to other Taoist titles in the canon, see M. Kaltenmark, “The Ideology of the *T'ai-p'ing ching*”, in H. Welch and A. Seidel (eds), *Facts of Taoism; Essays in Chinese Religion* (London, 1979), pp. 19–52; B. Kandel, *Tai-ping Jing, the Origin and Transmission of the Scripture of the “General Welfare”: The History of an Unofficial Text*, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens, Vol. 75 (Hamburg, 1979); K. M. Schipper, ‘Le Calendrier de Jade, Note sur le Laozi zhongjing’, in *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 125, pp. 75–80. Also see R. Homann, *Die wichtigsten Körpergottheiten im Huang-t'ing ching* (Göppingen, 1971).

¹¹ This means literally “the inner elixir”.

¹² See TT 1220: 124.1b–2a; “Assembling the Divine Force”. See Reiter, “A Preliminary Study”, pp. 172–173.

¹³ TT 1220: 82. 28a (*Lei-t'ing san-shuai hsin-lu, shih-hsi shih-shih* 雷霆三帥心錄世系事實). For an adaptation of astral realities to the human internal spheres, see e.g. TT 1220: 82. 18a–18b, where we find the connection between the heart of man with its seven holes and the Northern Dipper (seven stars). Also see Li Yüan-kuo 李遠國, “*Tao-chiao lei-fa yen-ko k'ao*” 道教雷法沿革考, in *Shih-chieh tsung-chiao yen-chiu* 世界宗教研究 2002, 3, p. 95 (“*jen-shen hsiao t'ien-ti*” 人身小天地); and especially p. 96.

¹⁴ For example see Li Yüan-kuo, “*Tao-chiao lei-fa yen-ko k'ao*”, see preceding note; and the same, “*Lun tao-fu ti chieh-kou yü pi-fa*” 論道符的結構與筆法, in *Tsung-chiao hsüeh yen-chiu* 宗教學研究 1998, 2, pp. 8–13. See Liu Chung-yü 劉仲宇, “*Wu-lei cheng-fa yüan-yüan k'ao-lun*” 五雷正法淵源考論, in *Tsung-chiao hsüeh yen-chiu* 宗教學研究 2001, 3, pp. 14–21; and the same, *Tao-chiao fa-shu* 道教法術 (Shanghai, 2002).

The Discourse on the Thunders (Lei-shuo 雷說)

Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 fostered a distinguished interest in the organisation of the world, of time and space. The traditional means of analysing the cosmos are the so-called “stems” and “branches” (*t'ien-kan/ti-chih* 天干地支), the trigrams (*pa-kua* 八卦) and hexagrams of the *Book of Changes* (*I-ching* 易經). These symbols pin down the course of the stellar divisions in space and time. Thunder divinities essentially identify and administer this cosmic structure where they are at home.

Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 also employs a large set of notions concerning the correspondences of numbers and colours. He displays explanations that correlate all these elements in a unique way, reflecting his very individual understanding. We do not find any other specialists of Thunder Magic who either completely copy or transmit the interpretation that Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 elaborated in his *Discourse on the Thunders* (*Lei-shuo* 雷說). Generally speaking, the sources of Thunder Magic are characterised by manifold local traditions and a huge variety of individual theoretical approaches. Thus, the presentation by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 represents an early, and excellent, example of the attempt to rationalise nature within the context of Thunder Magic. Furthermore, we can see the ways and means by which this Taoist transferred his theoretical notions to religious practice. This is the very specific value of his literary contribution to Taoist culture. His *Discourse on the Thunders* often refers to the hexagrams *k'un* 坤☷, *k'an* 坎☵, *li* 離☲, *chen* 震☳, *ken* 艮☶ and *sun* 巽☴. Each of these hexagrams simply doubles the respective trigram of the same name. Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 also employs the hexagram *ta-chuang* 大壯☳ (“The Power of the Great”), in order to support his considerations. The hexagram *ta-chuang* 大壯☳ combines the two trigrams *ch'ien* 乾☰ and *chen* 震☳. Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 is convinced that these trigrams and hexagrams together embody the very nature of the thunders.¹⁵

The following translation of the *Discourse on the Thunders* precedes the presentation of two shorter parts of another major text that we can also attribute to Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿. These two additional texts demonstrate the way in which Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 applies his theoretical concepts to Thunder Magic. They comprise, firstly, a short descriptive tract that introduces the *Great Method of the Five Thunders that sever and investigate at the Jade Pivot of the uppermost Shen-hsiao [heaven]* (*Kao-shang shen-hsiao yü-shu chan-k'an wu-lei ta-fa* 高上神宵玉樞斬勘五雷大法), and, secondly, the exorcist formula *Decree and Spell* (*ch'ih-chu* 敕祝), found at the end of his text, the *Great Method*.¹⁶ The *Discourse on the Thunders* and large sections of the *Great Method* are theoretical and descriptive essays, whereas the *Decree and Spell* is a religious prayer.

The descriptive *Discourse on the Thunders* is loaded with the formal emblems that have already been indicated. They are the emblems of the Chinese calendar, the “stems” (of heaven) and the “branches” (of earth), the trigrams (*pa-kua* 八卦) and some hexagrams of

¹⁵ See *The I Ching or Book of Changes*, the Richard Wilhelm Translation rendered into English, by C. F. Baynes (henceforth *Book of Changes*), nr. 2, p. 10 sq.; nr. 29, p. 114 sq.; nr. 30, p. 118 sq.; nr. 51, p. 193 sq.; nr. 52, p. 200 sq.; nr. 57, p. 220 sq. (New York, 1967). For technical reasons, I have to write the hexagrams that, however, combine two trigrams of the same name.

¹⁶ TT 1220: 61.1a–6b; 17b.

the *Book of Changes* (*I-ching* 易經); they all matter greatly. For the sake of convenience, these emblems are presented in the following tables.

Table 1. The ten “stems” and the twelve “branches” (read from left to right)

<i>chia</i> 甲	<i>i</i> 乙	<i>ping</i> 丙	<i>ting</i> 丁	<i>mou</i> 戊	<i>chi</i> 己	<i>keng</i> 庚	<i>hsin</i> 辛	<i>jen</i> 壬	<i>kuei</i> 癸		
<i>Tzu</i> 子	<i>chou</i> 丑	<i>yin</i> 寅	<i>mao</i> 卯	<i>ch'en</i> 辰	<i>ssu</i> 巳	<i>wu</i> 午	<i>wei</i> 未	<i>shen</i> 申	<i>yu</i> 酉	<i>hsü</i> 戌	<i>hai</i> 亥

Table 2. Refers to the formula “Nine-and-Five” (p. 21b), which represents cosmic correlations in the *Discourse on the Thunders*

East	<i>jen-tzu</i> 壬子	<i>keng</i> 庚	nine (9)	<i>keng-shen</i> 庚申
North	<i>ping-tzu</i> 丙子	<i>keng</i> 庚	five (5)	<i>keng-ch'en</i> 庚辰
Centre	<i>keng-tzu</i> 庚子	<i>keng</i> 庚	one (1)	<i>keng-tzu</i> 庚子
South	<i>Mou-tzu</i> 戊子	<i>keng</i> 庚	three (3)	<i>keng-yin</i> 庚寅
West	<i>Chia-zu</i> 甲子	<i>keng</i> 庚	seven (7)	<i>keng-wu</i> 庚午

Table 3: Shows the combination of the “earth”, “heaven” and the stars of the Big Dipper,¹⁷ which the “branches”, “stems” and trigrams (*k'un* 坤, *k'an* 坎, *ken* 艮 and *li* 離) represent. They connect “earth” with the star *kang* 亢 at the centre of the Big Dipper (p. 21b)

<i>keng</i> 庚	earth	<i>shen</i> 申	<i>k'un</i> 坤	nine (9)
<i>ch'en</i> 辰 (pos. 5)	<i>kang</i> star 亢	5/ centre position		
<i>tzu</i> 子	<i>k'an</i> 坎	1st position		
<i>yin</i> 寅	<i>ken</i> 艮	3rd position		
<i>li</i> 離	<i>li</i> 離	seven (stars)		

Discourse on the Thunders in A Corpus of Taoist Ritual (Tao-fa hui-yüan 道法會元)
ch. 67. 21a–25a:¹⁸

(p. 21a) “Now, the thunders and thunderclaps are the pivot and motivating power of heaven and earth. Heaven is the pivot and earth is the motivating power.¹⁹ The two platforms that are named

¹⁷ Another name is “Northern Dipper” that stands for the constellation *Ursa Major* (Great Bear), see J. Needham (ed.), *Science and Civilisation in China*, Vol. 3: *Mathematics and the Science of the Heavens and the Earth* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 238, 260 (Table 25). See *Sung-shih t'ien-wen* 宋史天文 (*History of the Sung Dynasty, Astronomy* 2) 49, 2, 975. Ed. Chung-hua (Peking, 1985). Also see TT 287 *T'ung-chan ta-hsiang li-hsing ching* 1.3a–4a. The names of the stars are different from those Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 uses. The Big Dipper is a crucial element in Taoist ritual, see for example TT 200 *Pei-tou ch'i yüan-hsing teng-i* and related texts in the *Canon*.

¹⁸ TT 1220: 67.21a–25a. There are some more titles *Discourse on the Thunders* (*lei-shuo* 雷說 in TT 1220 *Tao-fa hui-yüan*). They were written by some other authors. For example, there is Sa Shou-chien (薩守堅), who was initiated in Thunder Magic by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿. Concerning his tract *Lei-shuo* 雷說 see TT 1220: 67.11a sq. A similar title is *Lei-fa shuo* (雷法說) in TT 1220: 84. 8a–9b, which was not written by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 although his “introduction” *Huo-lei hsü* 火雷序 (TT 1220: 84. 5b–7b) precedes the text. See the statement about the patriarch (*tsu-shih* 祖師) Shih-ch'en 侍宸 (Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿) and the encounter with his reputed teacher master, who was the “fire master and perfected Lord Wang” (*Huo-shih Wang chen-chün* 火師汪真君), see TT 1220: 84.8b/4.

¹⁹ TT 15 *Wu-shang chiu-hsiao yü-ch'ing ta-fan tzu-wei hsüan-tu lei-t'ing yü-ching* 3b. On this important text see Jen Chi-yü et al. comp. *Tao-tsang t'i-yao*, nr. 0015 (Peking, 1991), pp. 16–17. “Motivating power” stands for *chi* 機. “Trigger” could be another suitable translation.

pivot and motivating power have their positions in the East and the West.²⁰ They manage and assist the seventy-two offices of the thunders and thunderclaps. *Yang* 陽 has the thunders, and *Yin* 陰 the thunderclaps. The pivot is *Yin* 陰, and the motivating power is *Yang* 陽. Thunders are good, and thunderclaps are evil. Thunders being good are vital energies that give life. Thunderclaps being evil are vital energies that kill.²¹ When the vital energies that give life and the vital energies that kill, these two energies assemble altogether, they command the danger of their dashing and slaughtering forces that are the very mystery of the thunders.

“East corresponds with number three; South with number two; North with number one; West with number four, and the Centre with number five.²² The divisions *mou* 戊 and *ssu* 巳 belong to the Centre²³ that is the ancestor of the great numbers.²⁴ The thunders are attached to *k'un* 坤 and [the element] earth.²⁵ They are assigned to and guard the Central Palace.²⁶ Thunders and thunderclaps carry the orders of the god emperors, and they are endowed with the central breath of heaven and earth. Therefore, thunders exclusively kill what is not correct, what is weird and evil.

“There are “Thunder One”, “Thunder Two”, “Thunder Three”, “Thunder Four” and “Thunder Five”. They control and assist the four poles. The four poles occupy the centre. It is for this reason that the thunders (p. 21b) are commands issued by heaven. Their might is absolutely great. The three realms, the nine earths, just everything belongs to thunder offices that assist comprehensively the course of the five thunders. Five times the division *tzu* 子²⁷ returns to *keng* 庚²⁸ *chia* 甲 has the thunders, and *keng* 庚 has the thunderclaps. The division *chia-keng* 甲庚 are then commands for the thunders and thunderclaps.²⁹

“As to the operation of the formula “Nine-and-Five”,³⁰ starting from the East and the division *jen-tzu* 壬子 and then returning to *keng* 庚 the number *nine* is reached.³¹ Starting from the

²⁰ Compare TT 99 *Chiu-t'ien ying-yüan lei-shen p'u-hua t'ien-tsun yü-shu pao-ching chi-chu* 1.12b. For this text see Jen Chi-yü et al. comp., *Tao-tsang t'i-yao*, nr. 0099, p. 76.

²¹ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 3b.

²² TT 15: 3b. Wang Wen-ch'ing combines the direction East with the corresponding number nine in another context. See the text of the *Discourse on the Thunders* below, and compare above Table (2).

²³ These two have the middle positions among the “stems” and “branches” respectively. In Reiter, “A Preliminary Study”, p. 181, *ssu* (巳) was by mistake written *chi* (己).

²⁴ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 3b, where the sequence of the statements slightly varies. See TT 1220 *Tao-fa hui-yüan* 67.3a/3–4 (Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵 *Wan-fa t'ung-lun* 萬法通論). The diction in *Lei-shuo* 雷說 by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 is almost identical with the phrasing in the text by Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵, who most certainly lived some time after Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 see below note 88.

²⁵ TT 1220: 79.2b. For the combination of *k'un* 坤 and earth in this sense, see e.g. the much later text *Tao-miao* (道妙) in: TT 1220: 84.2b. TT 1220: 103: 1a/4 lists *ch'ien*, *k'un*, *ken*, *sun* (乾坤艮巽) and correlates them with the elements “earth”, “water”, “fire” and “wind”.

²⁶ TT 1220: 67.3a does not mention the element earth and *k'un* 坤.

²⁷ Compare TT 1220: 67.3a. For the sake of convenience I often add the word “division” without brackets. The word “division” refers to the “stems of heaven” and/or “branches of earth”, meaning the divisions or sections of the cyclical characters, compare H. A. Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary* (repr. Taipei, 1972), pp. 28–29, tables D and E. Also see Table (1) in this article.

²⁸ This shows the circuit of the five thunders, and so do the following statements. Compare Table (2). See for example TT 1220: 67.3b, 4a–4b. In this case, I also could translate *kuei* (歸) with “unites with ...”.

²⁹ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a/5–6. TT 1220: 67.3b/7–8 (Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵).

³⁰ TT 1220: 67.3a/5 sq. (*Wan-fa t'ung-lun* 萬法通論 by Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵). The text defines the five thunders by explanations that closely resemble the formulation of Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿.

³¹ Again, I eventually insert the word “division”, referring to the “stems” and “branches”, see above note 27. This also could read “uniting with *keng-shen* 庚申”, see TT 1220: 67.3a (Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵). It takes nine steps to reach *keng [-shen]* 庚[申], starting out from *jen-tzu* 壬子. Also see TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a.

North and the division *ping-tzu* 丙子 and then returning to *keng* 庚, the number *five* is reached.³² Starting from the centre and the division *keng-tzu* 庚子 and then returning to *keng* 庚, the number *one* is reached.³³ Starting from the South and the division *mou-tzu* 戊子 and then returning to *keng* 庚, the number *three* is reached.³⁴ Starting from the West and the division *chia-tzu* 甲子 and then returning to *keng* 庚, the number *seven* is reached.³⁵

“Due to these processes, *tzu* 子 five times returns to *keng* 庚, realising the operation [called] “Nine-and-Five”.³⁶ *Keng* 庚 is attached to [the element] earth. Are not all the creatures managed by earth? The number *nine* is present in *shen* 申 and is attached to *k'un* 坤.³⁷ Does it not perfectly serve *k'un* 坤?³⁸ The number *five* is present in *ch'en* 辰,³⁹ and *ch'en* 辰 has the *kang-* 亢 [star].⁴⁰ Therefore earth is endowed with the greatest and utmost unyielding vital energies. The number *one* is present in *tzu* 子. Does it not toil at *k'an* 坎?⁴¹ The number *three* is present in *yin* 寅. Does it not complete *ken* 艮?⁴² The number *seven* is present in *li* 離, and does [trigram] *li* not again face [another trigram] *li* 離?⁴³

“The element wood of the division *jen-tzu* 壬子 is the root of the East.⁴⁴ Wood is present in *mao* 卯 and is attached to *chen* 震 that has the thunders.⁴⁵ The element wood of the division *jen-tzu* (p. 22a) is complete (*ch'an* 巛) at *hai* 亥.⁴⁶ The element water of the division *ping-tzu* 丙子 is the source of the North.⁴⁷ Therefore, the thunder divinities assemble at the six *ping-* 丙 divisions.⁴⁸

³² This also could mean “uniting with *keng-* [ch'en] 庚[辰]”, see TT 1220: 67.3a/6. It takes five steps to reach *keng-[ch'en]* 庚[辰], starting out from *ping-tzu* 丙子. See TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a.

³³ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a says: “The remaining *keng-tzu* 庚子 belongs to *keng* 庚, and thus there is the number one”. Actually, there is no step made away from *keng-tzu* 庚子. TT 1220: 67.3a has “the central *keng-tzu* 庚子 originally has the number one. Again returning to *keng-hsü* (庚戌) one additionally gets number eleven, which altogether add up to number twelve”.

³⁴ This could mean, “uniting with *keng-yin* (庚寅)”. See TT 1220: 67. 3a: It takes three steps to reach *keng-yin* 庚寅, starting out from *mou-tzu* 戊子. See TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a.

³⁵ This could mean “uniting with *keng-wu* 庚午”, see TT 1220: 67.3a. It takes seven steps to reach *keng-wu* 庚午; starting out from *chia-tzu* 甲子. See TT 15: 4a.

³⁶ *Keng* 庚 is the seventh “stem”. *Tzu* 子 is the first “branch”. Wang Wen-ch'ing 汪文卿 seems to extend the text of TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* by adding the compass directions. Whereas Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵 at this point introduces some reasoning about the number “thirty-six”, Wang Wen-ch'ing 汪文卿 continues along other lines of theory. A statement pointing to the endless cosmic cycle, is TT 1220: 67.3b/1-2, “... therefore, it is the thunders and thunderclaps that attain to the *tao* 道 of Nine-and-Five”. See Table (2).

³⁷ TT 1220: 67:3b/3 adds “water and earth”, the division *tzu* (子) and the number five. *Shen* 申 has position nr. nine among the “branches”.

³⁸ In Reiter, “A Preliminary Study”, p. 182, *shen* 申 was read by mistake as *chia* 甲. Compare TT 1220: 84.2b. See *Book of Changes*, nr. 2, pp. 10 sq. (“*The Receptive*”). The hexagram *k'un* 坤 consists of two trigrams *k'un* 坤. The trigram represents “earth”. The Chinese character shows the combination of “earth” (*t'u* 土) and *shen* 申.

³⁹ *Ch'en* 辰 has position number five among the “branches”. Also see TT 1220: 67.3b/4.

⁴⁰ This star has position nr. five within the Northern Dipper, see below, the drawing of the Big Dipper that copies TT 1220: 67.24a.

⁴¹ *Tzu* 子 is the first “branch”. In trigram *k'an* 坎 there is just one *yang* 陽 stroke in the middle that is called the “middle son”. Hexagram *k'an* 坎 doubles trigram *k'an* 坎, see *Book of Changes*, nr. 29, p. 114 sq. (“*The Abysmal (Water)*”). Also see J. Blofeld, *I Ching; The Chinese Book of Change* (London, 1986), p. 216.

⁴² *Yin* 寅 is the third “branch”. See *Book of Changes*, nr. 52, pp. 200 sq. (“*Keeping Still, Mountain*”). The hexagram *ken* 艮 consists of two trigrams *ken* 艮. The *yang* 陽 stroke is in the third (top) position (“Youngest Son”).

⁴³ This refers to the Hexagram *li* 離 that consists of two Trigrams *li* 離. See *Book of Changes*, nr. 30, p. 118 sq. (“*The Clinging, Fire*”).

⁴⁴ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a; without referring to the element “wood”.

⁴⁵ See Blofeld, *I Ching*, p. 217. The Trigram *chen* 震 is associated with “thunder, spring et al”. It has position nr. four in Fu Hsi's 伏羲 arrangement of the trigrams. The first stroke is a *yang* 陽 stroke, the “eldest son”. For the hexagram, see *Book of Changes* nr. 51, p. 197 sq. (“*The Arousing (Shock, Thunder)*”). *Mao* (卯) is the fourth “branch”.

⁴⁶ TT 1220: 67.3b/4; 131.8a (*Lei-fa shuo* 雷法說, “wood comes to life at *hai* 亥”, which is the twelfth “branch”).

⁴⁷ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a. TT 1220: 67.3b/7.

⁴⁸ There are six possible occurrences or combinations with the term *ping* 丙 in the Chinese time cycle.

“Chia 甲 is the Yang- 陽 thunders, and keng 庚 is the Yin- 陰 thunderclaps.⁴⁹ When chia 甲 and keng 庚, dragon and tiger, meet each other, then the dragon cries and the tiger roars.⁵⁰ Wind and clouds then immediately arise. Jen 壬 is the office⁵¹ of thunders and thunderclaps. Therefore, the thunder divinities establish their office at jen-tzu 壬子. The division ping 丙⁵² is the assembly point of the thunder divinities. Therefore, the thunder divinities assemble at the division ping, in order to receive reverently the commands. Tzu 子 is the common ground (tsung 宗) for thunders and thunderclaps, and therefore they are rooted in and based on k'an 坎.⁵³ The “Water Department”, the “Milky Way” and the “Thunder Gates”,⁵⁴ are all based on k'an 坎. The “Gate of Heaven” and the “Window of Earth” take the divisions ssu 卩 and hai 亥 as their operational basis (yung 用).⁵⁵

“The thunders are called sun-palace 巽宮,⁵⁶ because the middle position [between] the chia- 甲 division holds chi 卩.⁵⁷ As the division chia-tzu 甲子 fades away (tun 遁), the division chi 卩 is reached.⁵⁸ What gets chi-chi 卩卩 on its top, this is [hexagram] sun 巽. The middle position [between] the jen- 壬 division holds ting 丁, which is sun 巽. The middle position [between] the ping- 丙 division holds xin 辛, which is sun 巽. The middle position [between] the keng- 庚 division holds i 乙, which is sun 巽.⁵⁹ Therefore, the thunder divinities of the divisions chia 甲, ping 丙, keng 庚, and jen 壬 do assemble at the window of sun 巽 (sun-hu 巽戶).⁶⁰ They hide away

⁴⁹ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a, without naming yin 陰 and yang 陽.

⁵⁰ Compare TT 1220: 84.17a–17b (*Lung-hu* 龍虎).

⁵¹ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a. “Office” is understood in the sense of “position” as on a chessboard.

⁵² TT 15: 4a.

⁵³ TT 15: 4a. This section almost completely resembles TT 1220: 67.3b/8–9 (Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵). Concerning k'an 坎, see Blofeld: *I Ching*, pp. 216–217 (“water”).

⁵⁴ For the twelve gates of the thunder wall, within the context of a ritual or meditative activity called “facing the early morning sun”, see TT 1220: 83.6b (*lien-fa* 鍊法). Also see TT 1220: 84.2b–3a.

⁵⁵ Ssu 卩 and hai 亥, possibly should be chi-hai 己亥 (“stem” of heaven and “branch” of earth), instead of two “branches”.

⁵⁶ See *Book of Changes* nr. 57, p. 220 sq. (“The Gentle (The Penetrating, Wind)”). Sun 巽 has two identical trigrams sun 巽. TT 1220: 67.4b/10 identifies the “sun region (sun-fang 巽方) with the window of earth (ti-hu 地戶) and the gate of the wind (feng-men 風門). These terms do not turn up in the *Lei-shuo* by Wang Wen-ch'ing. Concerning the sun 巽 palace, we may compare for example TT 1220: 195. 6a, where this palace is connected with the heavenly stalwart and ice demon Chao Feng (趙逢). This demon cares about a variety of natural phenomena and also can save sprouts and the harvest. This documents again the wide use that was made of the system of the pa-kua 八卦 in Thunder Magic. Also see the commentary TT 99 *Chiu-t'ien ying-yüan lei-sheng p'u-hua t'ien-tsun yü-shu pao-ching chi-chu* 1.3a. Concerning this paragraph in *Discourse on the Thunders* the reader may consult table (1).

⁵⁷ The division chia 甲 is the first of the “stems of heaven”. After the following four positions the division chi 卩 is reached, and again going on another four steps we get to the first division chi 甲 of a new cycle. We are not speaking about a static condition but deal with cosmic cycles. This explains my translation “... middle position [between] ...”. The same simple reasoning has to be applied to the following statements in *Discourse on the Thunders*. Also see above Table (1), showing the ten “stems” in the first row. Also see TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a, no mention is made of the sun 巽 palace. Also see TT 1220: 67.3b/9.

⁵⁸ This again indicates the cyclic movement and repeats in other words the preceding statement. The cycles refer to space and time.

⁵⁹ The term “the middle position” refers to the fact that always five steps separate the respective middle position from the initial and final cyclical characters or “divisions”. In each case we have even numbers. This is identical with TT 1220: 67.3b/9–10. TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a has all these statements, albeit without any reference to the hexagram sun 巽. Compare TT 1220: 62.1a/6–7 (*Lei-t'ing kang-ch'i fang* 雷震壘氣方), which also points to sun 巽 (thunders) and “centre” [star] for the thunderclaps. The kang- 壘 [star] is said to be positioned at k'un 坤! Also see TT 99 *Chiu-t'ien ying-yüan lei-shen p'u-hua t'ien-tsun yü-shu pao-ching chi-chu* 1.3a with a statement identifying sun 巽 with “earth in the middle of heaven”.

⁶⁰ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a has “therefore the thunders are the dominant forces [at the divisions] chia 甲, keng 庚, ping 丙, jen 壬; the thunderclaps are the dominant forces [at the divisions] i 乙, hsin 辛, ting 丁, chi 卩”. No mention is made of deities and the hexagram sun 巽.

at *ken* 艮 and come to the fore at *ch'ien* 乾. They ascend at *k'un* 坤 and charge forth at *sun* 巽.⁶¹ This (p. 22b) is the operational basis of the *yang*-thunders (*yang-lei* 陽雷).

“A position [between] the *jen*- 壬 division holds *i* 乙. As the division *jen-tzu* 壬子 fades away, the division *mao* 卯 is reached.⁶² *Mao* 卯 gets *i* 乙 on top of it, and *mao-mao* 卯卯 is [hexagram] *chen* 震.⁶³ A position [between] the *mou*- 戊 division holds *hsin* 辛, which is *chen* 震. A position [between] the *chia*- 甲 division holds *ting* 丁, which is *chen* 震. A position [between] the *ping*- 丙 division holds *chi* 己, which is *chen* 震. In fact, this has all the baleful forces of the divisions *i* 乙, *ting* 丁, *chi* 己, *hsin* 辛 and [hexagram] *chen* 震 to be present at *mao* 卯.⁶⁴ *Chen* 震 [is the position] at which *yin*-thunderclaps 陰霆 rule.

“What has four *yang*-陽 strokes, this is [the hexagram] 大壯 “Thunder Heaven, the Power of the Great” *Tā-chuang* 大壯.⁶⁵ [The hexagram] of the eleventh month has one *yang*- 陽 stroke. [The hexagram] of the twelfth month has two *yang*- 陽 strokes. [The hexagram] of the first month has three *yang*- 陽 strokes. [The hexagram] of the second month has four *yang*- 陽 strokes. The third solar term (*ching-che* 驚蟄) is then to be encountered.⁶⁶ Therefore, the thunders then dispatch their sounds, and all the creatures are shaken and made move. They open up scaly armours and make them splinter. All the creatures come to life. The *Book of Changes* (*I-ching* 易經) says: “It all comes out of *chen* 震”.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Concerning a divinisation of these elements within the context of Thunder Magic, see TT 1220: 103.1a–1b (*Wu-lei ch'i-tao ta-fa* 五雷祈禱大法). This text says that *ch'ien* 乾 is the “Lord Deity of Heavenly Thunders” (T'ien-lei chu-shen 天雷主神). *Ken* 艮 is the “Lord Deity of Fire Thunders” (Huo-lei chu-shen 火雷主神). *Sun* 巽 is the “Lord Deity of Wind Thunders” (Feng-lei chu-shen 風雷主神), and *k'un* 坤 is the “Lord Deity of Water Thunders” (Shui-lei chu-shen 水雷主神).

⁶² In this case in the category of the “branches”, compare Giles, *A Chinese English Dictionary*, e.g. p. 30. It is the division (stem/branch) *i-mao* (乙卯), see the following statement. We have to take 3 and 7 steps until we reach the “position in between” that is in consideration. These odd numbers point to the earth or the *yin*- 陰 sphere. See TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a.

⁶³ *Mao-mao* 卯卯 indicates the two identical trigrams *chen* 震 that are components of the hexagram *chen* 震. Also compare TT 1220: 112.7b (*Kan-chih yung-kua* 干支用卦). Concerning a *chen-kung* 震宮 and a *sun-kung* 巽宮 being lodges of the thunder king (*Lei-wang* 雷王) and the wind king (*Feng-wang* 風王) respectively, see *Feng lei shui huo ssu-wang ch'u-ju* 風雷水火四王出入 in: TT 1220: 170.16a–16b (*Hun-t'ien fei-chuo ssu-sheng fu-mo ta-fa* 混天飛捉四聖伏魔大法). See the same source concerning the combination of these powers with bodily energetic facilities. Also see TT 1220: 103.1b/7 (*Wu-lei ch'i-tao ta-fa* 五雷祈禱大法). See TT 99 *Chiu-t'ien ying-yüan* 1.1a (*chen-kung* 震宮). The hexagram *chen* 震 has four *yin*-陰 strokes, paralleling the four *yang*- 陽 strokes of the hexagram *Tā-chuang* 大壯. See *Book of Changes* nr. 51, p. 197 sq.; and Blofeld, *I Ching*, pp. 185–186.

⁶⁴ See preceding note.

⁶⁵ The *Lei-shuo* shows the graph of the hexagram. See *Chou-i* 周易 ch.9 *hsia* 下, *Tā-chuang* 大壯, pp. 14–18; this hexagram has the trigram *chen* 震 on top of the trigram *ch'ien* 乾. Also see *Chou-i* ch. 18, *shuo-kua* 說卦 p. 34 *chen wei lei wei lung* 震為雷為龍 (“*chen* has/is the thunder, has/is the dragon”), compare e.g. TT 997 *Ku-wen lung-hu ching chu-shu* 2.6a sq. (*chen-lung* 震龍), 8a sq.; and TT 1001 *Chou-i ts'an-t'ung ch'i* 2.4a. Concerning *ta-chuang* 大壯, see *Book of Changes* nr. 34, pp. 133 sq. (“*The Power of the Great*”). Also see Blofeld, *I Ching*, pp. 153–155.

⁶⁶ This means early in March, the time of the “excited insects”, see Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 26 (*The Calendar*). See TT 1220: 148. 12b (“*Trigrams of the Twelve Months*” *Shih-erh yüeh kua* 十二月卦), concerning the names of the respective hexagrams. They read as follows: *fu* 復 ䷗, *lin* 臨 ䷒, *t'ai* 泰 ䷊, *ta-chuang* 大壯 ䷡. This list accords with the text *Discourse on the Thunders* by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文鼎 Compare *Book of Changes*, p. 97 (“*Fu/Return – The Turning Point*”); p. 78 (“*Lin/Approach*”); p. 440 (“*T'ai/Peace*”); p. 133 (“*Tā Chuang/The Power of the Great*”).

⁶⁷ See *Chou-i* ch. 18, *shuo-kua*, p. 30: *Ti ch'u hu chen* (帝出乎震); *Wan-wu ch'u hu chen* (萬物出乎震). Compare *Book of Changes*, S. 648: “The trigram Chên means the coming forth of God in the spring and also the reawakening of the life force, which stirs again from below”.

“Only the divisions *mou* 戊 and *kuei* 癸 initiate fire.⁶⁸ Fire is attached to *li* 離⁶⁹ The Trigram *li* 離 is empty in its middle part,⁷⁰ and it is the ruling position of thunders and thunderclaps.⁷¹ When *yang* 陽 is at its zenith, the fire of thunder is stimulated to charge forth and transform as to be the lightning (*tien* 電).

“The thunders guard the Central Palace.⁷² Therefore, [the divinity] “Blazing Fire”⁷³ has the brightness of the zenith of *yang* 陽. At noon, on *ping* 丙 and *ting* 丁 days⁷⁴ this divinity comes down into the world of man. Judge Hsin 辛判官 is attached to the element water and has the brightness of the zenith of *yin* 陰.⁷⁵ At 11 p.m. until 1 a.m. (*tzu-shih* 子時), on *jen* 壬 and *kuei* 癸 days, (p. 23a) this divinity comes down into the world of man. Messenger Chang 張使者 is attached to the element wood and the breaths of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽.⁷⁶ At 5 a.m. until 7 a.m. (*mao-shih* 卯時), on *chia* 甲 and *i* 乙 days, this divinity comes down into the world of man. The Three Marshals must not separate. Another appellation for these [marshals] is “Three Marvellous Ones” (*san-ch'i* 三奇).⁷⁷ In case that one divinity [of this trio] is about to enter a temple, but the other two divinities do not do so, then employ the thunder office on your hand in order to prevent the one divinity from entering the temple. There are some separate instructions for keeping a divinity away from entering a temple. (In small print: three prescriptions for the ritual dance steps *Lei-t'ing kang* 雷霆罡⁷⁸).

“All the six divisions from *tzu* 子 to *ssu* 巳 are *yang* 陽,⁷⁹ and *ssu* 巳 is the zenith of *yang* 陽. The divisions from *wu* 午 to *hai* 亥 have the zenith of *yin* 陰 [in *hai* 亥]. That *ch'ien* 乾 is opened up and *sun* 巽 is crushed, this is due to the operation of the zenith of *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 respectively. The middle position [between] the *chi*- 丑 division has the star *huo-she* 火蛇 of the constellation *i* 翼 and the star *shui-yin* 水蚓 of the constellation *chen* 軫.⁸⁰ These two stars dominate the administration of wind and clouds. The middle position [between] the *hai*- 亥 division has the star *huo-chu*

⁶⁸ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a. Also see TT 1220: 67.4a (Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵).

⁶⁹ The text actually shows the trigram *li* 離, but I had to write the hexagram of the same name (*li*) for technical reasons. As to “fire” and *li* 離, see TT 1220: 90.20a, a statement that we most likely can attribute to Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿. He correlates the number nine to the heart/mind of humanity.

⁷⁰ See TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a, which does not quote the hexagram of the *Book of Changes*. A *yin*- 陰 stroke is at the very centre of the *li-kua* 離卦. See TT 1220: 112.7b (*Kan-chih yung kua* 干支用卦), which correlates the *li-kua* 離卦 with “fire”, and with the two “stems” *ping/ting* (丙 丁) and the “branches” *ssu/wu* (巳 午).

⁷¹ TT 1220: 67.4a. The passages in the following paragraph concerning deities do not appear in the text by Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵. Also see Blofeld, *I Ching*, p. 216.

⁷² Compare TT 1220: 79.2b (*Ssu-yü wei na-chia* 四隅謂納甲).

⁷³ TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 19a, 24a. TT 1220: 61.2a–2b. See Reiter, “A Preliminary Study”, in ZDMG 152, pp. 174 sq., and p. 174, note 62. The term “Blazing Fire” is part of the title of the divinity, who in fact is Teng Po-wen 鄭伯濶, see below.

⁷⁴ See Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 28 (table E).

⁷⁵ TT 1220: 61.2b.

⁷⁶ TT 1220: 61.2b. Concerning these two figures, Hsin 辛 and Chang 張, see Reiter, “A Preliminary Study”, p. 177, note 77. See TT 1220: 70.5b (*Hsüan-chu ke* 玄珠歌) that correlates the three marshals with three viscera in terms of internal alchemy.

⁷⁷ Obviously the three marshals are the three preceding names that must not be intermingled for example with the “general class” powers Ch'en yüan-shuai 陳元帥, Ma yüan-shuai 馬元帥 and Chu yüan-shuai 朱元帥 of the source *Ling-kuan Ch'en Ma Chu san-shuai k'ao-chao ta-fa* 靈官陳馬朱三帥考什大法 in TT 1220: 229.1a–33b. They are called “Magic Agents of Orthodoxy and Unity” (*Cheng-i ling-kuan* 正一靈官), with the names Tu-t'ien 都天, Heng-t'ien 橫天和 Ch'ung-t'ien 衝天 respectively. Also, see TT 1220: 230.1a sq. (*Shang-ch'ing Ma Ch'en Chu san ling-kuan pi-fa* 上清馬陳朱三靈官秘法).

⁷⁸ We do not get any information on this ritual method.

⁷⁹ These positions are all “branches” (referring to “earth”). TT 15 *Lei-t'ing yü-ching* 4a–4b. TT 1220: 67.4a (Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵) links this statement with the “*tao* of Nine-and-Five”.

⁸⁰ The two constellations are the numbers 27 and 28 among the 28 stellar divisions, see Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, pp. 26–27 (*V. The Calendar*, table B). TT 1220: 129. 1b says that the constellations *i* 翼 and *chen* 軫 rule

火 貉 of the constellation *shih* 室 and the star *shui-yü* 水 籟 of the constellation *pi* 壁.⁸¹ These two stars dominate the administration of wind and clouds.⁸² Thunders, rain and lightning therefore control and assist heaven and earth, in order to let all the creatures either prosper or wither away. They break up and open scaly armours. They initiate and extinguish the four seasons. There is a subtle instruction in all of this, which is the operation of “Three-and-One” (*san-i* 三一).⁸³

“The number three indicates the ancestral vital energies of the East. The number one indicates the “number of life” of the North. Thus, the northern region and the division *tzu* 子 have the thunder office.⁸⁴ The Eastern (**p. 23b**) region and the division *mao* 卯 have the thunder gate.⁸⁵ The thunder gate is located in the East, the thunder fire (*lei-huo* 雷火) in the South, and the thunder command (*lei-ling* 雷令) in the West.⁸⁶ There are thunder offices at the divisions *tzu* 子, *chia* 甲, *ping* 丙, *keng* 庚 and *jen* 壬, and the *yang*- 陽 thunders dominate them. [There are thunder offices at] the divisions *yi* 乙, *ting* 丁, *chi* 己 and *hsin* 辛, and the *yin*- 陰 thunderclaps dominate them.⁸⁷ The divisions *mou* 戊 and *kuei* 癸 are the administrative positions for thunder fire (*lei-huo* 雷火).⁸⁸ *Tzu* 子 is the source of the water in the North.⁸⁹ “Heaven-and-One” (*t’ien-i* 天一) give birth to water, and the Southern Dipper (*nan-tou* 南斗) keeps guard.

“The thunder wall (*lei-ch’eng* 雷城) is eighty-one *chang* 丈 high. It has twelve gates in a row. They altogether accord with positions that the *t’ien-kang*- 天罡 star points at.⁹⁰ [The stars] *t’ien-kang*

over the thunders (*Fa-shuo* 法說 in: *Lei-t’ing chien-sha nien-yüeh shu-chi* 雷霆箭筈年月樞機). Compare *Sung-shih t’ien-wen* 宋史天文 (*History of the Sung, Astronomy*) 51.4, 1063; 1064–1065;

⁸¹ The two constellations *shih* 室 and *pi* 壁 are the numbers 13 and 14 among the 28 stellar divisions, see preceding note (H. A. Giles).

⁸² The repetition of wind and clouds most likely is a mistake.

⁸³ TT 15 *Lei-t’ing yü-ching* 4b, where *san-i* 三一 and *chiu-wu* 九五 (*chih tao* 之道) are said to be identical, being the *tao* 道 of the thunders and thunderclaps. TT 1220: 67.4a/4, Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵 explains the identical nature of the *tao* 道 of “Three-and-One” and “Nine-and-Five”. For a different application of the code “Three-and-One” see for example TT 463 *Yao-hsiu k’o-i chieh-lü ch’ao* 2.3a–8a (*chiang-shuo ch’ao* 講說鈔).

⁸⁴ TT 15 *Lei-t’ing yü-ching* 5a. Except for the sequence of names, this passage accords with TT 1220: 67.4a/7–8. The thunder office is said to be located in *tzu* (子) that represents the North and “water”.

⁸⁵ TT 15 *Lei-t’ing yü-ching* 4b, 5a. TT 1220: 67.4a/5. For this statement also see TT 1220: 129.1a. This text says that *tzu* (子) is the thunder cave (*lei-hsüeh* 雷穴), *sun* 巽 the thunder window (*lei-hu* 雷戶), and *li* 離 the thunder location (*lei-suo* 雷所).

⁸⁶ TT 15 *Lei-t’ing yü-ching* 5a.

⁸⁷ TT 1220: 67.4a/8 says: “they are *yang-lei* 陽雷 /...*yin-t’ing* 陰霆”.

⁸⁸ TT 15 *Lei-t’ing yü-ching* 5a. TT 1220: 67.4a/9. At this point, the close parallelism between the two texts *Lei-shuo* 雷說 and *Wan-fa t’ung-lun* 萬法通論 breaks off. Chang Shan-yüan 張善淵 continues with a description of the workings of nature, defining e.g. “clouds” or “snow” (TT 1220: 67.5a–5b). Furthermore, reference is made to unspecified concepts of “internal alchemy” (*nei-tan* 內丹) speaking about the human body. This seems to show a development of theory that departs from where Wang Wen-ch’ing 王文卿 stands, see above note 24.

⁸⁹ Compare TT 15 *Lei-t’ing yü-ching* 4a where no mention is made of “water”. All of this can be connected with traditions concerning the martial divinity “Black Warrior”, see F. C. Reiter, “The Ch’üan-chen Patriarch T’an Ch’ü-tuan (1123–1185) and the Chinese Talismanic Tradition”, in ZDMG 146, pp. 151–154.

⁹⁰ Compare TT 1220: 84.3a (*Tao-miao* 道妙), which conveys exactly the same notion. This text mentions subsequently “that Wang Wen-ch’ing had secretly founded this Method”, referring to the correlation between the astral spheres and Thunder Magic. The *Tao-miao* 道妙 most certainly was composed some time after Pai Yü-ch’an 白玉蟾 (fl. 1209–1224). The astronomic aspects of Thunder Magic were later greatly elaborated, see for example TT 1220: 129. 1a sq. (*fa-shuo* 法說). See TT 1220: 77.12a–21a, esp. 14a (*T’ien-kang shuo* 天罡說). TT 1220: 212.11a–9b contains *Chung-huang tsung-chih fei-hsing huo-yao t’ien-kang ta-fa* 中皇總制飛星活曜天罡大法. This text is said to have been narrated (*shu* 述) by Wang Wen-ch’ing 王文卿. However, the proper names and theorems of this text cannot be easily connected with other texts attributed to Wang Wen-ch’ing 王文卿. See TT 99 *Chiu-t’ien ying-yüan* 2.9a, concerning the term “thunder wall” (*lei-ch’eng* 雷城). TT 99: 2.11b connects the twelve gates of the thunder wall with the twelve “branches of earth”.

天罡 and *ho-k'uei* 河魁 are administrative offices that dispatch the thunders and summon the thunderclaps".⁹¹

The following table shows the three stars of the Big Dipper and those correspondences that Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 features in the following lines of his *Discourse on the Thunders*. Four "branches of earth" identify positions of three stars within the Northern Dipper. Three of these "branches" are explicitly said to represent "earth". In other words, they link earth with the cosmos. (Read the table from left to right). (Also refer to the drawing of the Big Dipper that copies the picture of the constellation in this Taoist text⁹²).

Table 4. Showing the three stars of the Big Dipper and those correspondences that Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 features in the following lines of his *Discourse on the Thunders*

<i>tzu</i> 子	<i>k'uei</i> star 魁	first position/top	<i>ch'en</i> 辰
<i>lien-chen</i> star 廉貞	<i>chung-kang</i> star 中罡	fifth position/centre	<i>ch'ou</i> 丑
<i>wu</i> 午	<i>p'iao</i> star 魍	seventh position	<i>hsü</i> 戌
all months		<i>p'iao</i> star 魍	<i>yin</i> 寅
		<i>kang</i> star 罡	<i>yin</i> 寅
		<i>k'uei</i> star 魁	<i>yin</i> 寅

Second part of the translation of the *Discourse on the Thunders*:

(p. 23b/6) "Three-and-Five" (*san-wu* 三伍), this means the mysterious operation of the dipper. Within the Northern Dipper the division *tzu* 子 is the *k'uei*- 魁 star.⁹³ The fifth position within the Northern Dipper is [named] *lien-chen*- 廉貞, that is the [central] *kang*- 罡 star,⁹⁴ [and] *wu* 午 is the *p'iao*- 魍 star.⁹⁵ If the Big Dipper (*pei-tou* 北斗) in the first month sets up *yin* 寅, at darkness then the *p'iao*- 魍 star points to the *yin*- 寅 division.⁹⁶ At midnight the *kang*- 罡 star points to the

⁹¹ TT 1220: 77.12b, 14b sq. For a divinisation of the star *ho-k'uei* 河魁 see *Lei-t'ing san-yao i-ch'i huo-lei shih-che fa* (雷霆三要一氣火雷使者法). The star is identified with the divine name Ho-k'uei ta-sheng chieh-tu chen-chün, [named] Tung Wan-ch'un (河魁大聖節度真君董萬春), in: TT 1220: 93.1a. Also see TT 1220: 125.18b–19a for the "great and holy amulets of [the stars] *t'ien-kang* and *ho-k'uei* (天罡河魁). This, however, belongs to a presentation of an amulet that most certainly was coined after the time of Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿. The "great rituals" in TT 1220: 125.1a sq. (*Chiu-chou she-ling man-lei ta-fa* 九州社令鑾雷大法) list the Taoist Hsü Sun (239–292? 許遜) to be their very first spiritual patron saint. This title refers to an extended set of presentations concerning thunder rituals. Although TT 1220: 127.1b appoints the "Heavenly Lord" Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫 to the first rank in the "General Class", the following names are different from those encountered in texts attributed to Wang Wen-ch'ing. Concerning Hsü Sun (許遜) and his *Ching-ming chung-hsiao tao* (淨明忠孝道), see Reiter, "A Preliminary Study", pp. 159–160.

⁹² TT 1220: 67.24b, and see below.

⁹³ Compare, TT 1220: 77.12b. See TT 1220: 151.3b (*T'ien-kang shuo* 天罡說). See the drawing in *Lei-shuo* 雷說 p. 24a. *Tzu* 子 marks the top position and represents the first star of the Big Dipper.

⁹⁴ "[central]" was inserted following the drawing on p. 24a. See TT 1220: 77.12b, concerning *k'uei* 魁 and *kang* 罡 [stars]. Also see TT 1220: 84.3a (*Tao-miao* 道妙).

⁹⁵ Again, see the drawing on TT 1220: 67.24a: *tzu-k'uei* 子魁 is the first or "highest" position, topping the drawing of the Northern Dipper. Counting four steps down the line, passing altogether five positions, one reaches the central star (*chung-kang* 中罡) called *lien-chen* 廉貞. *P'iao* 魍 and *wu* 午, both characters are barely readable. They define the last position or tail of the Big Dipper.

⁹⁶ This refers to the tail of the Big Dipper with the *p'iao*- 魍 star pointing to *yin* 寅. Compare Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 193, nr. 1592, referring to the terms *chien-tzu* 建子, *chien-ch'ou* 建丑 et al.

yin- 寅 division, and at dawn in the morning the *k'uei*- 魁 star points to the *yin*- 寅 division. This is just the same for all the other months [of the year].

“The first [star] of the Northern Dipper is the *k'uei*- 魁 star that is attached to the division *ch'en* 辰.⁹⁷ The fifth [star of the Northern Dipper] is the *kang*- 罡 star that is attached to the division *ch'ou* 丑, and the seventh [star of the Northern Dipper] is the *p'iao*- 魃 star that is attached to the division *hsü* 戌. The three stars are all “earth” (*shih-t'u* 是 土).⁹⁸ The Northern Dipper is attached to *k'un* 坤 and earth. (p. 24a)



The thunders are the dipper, and the dipper is the thunders.

“Three times five makes fifteen, which means the operation of the *River Chart* (*Ho-t'u* 河 圖). This exactly means the own body (*pen-shen* 本身), the East, the *hun*- 魂 souls and [number] three, the West, the *p'o*- 魄 souls and [number] four, the North, the essences and [number] one. The divisions *mou* 戊 and *chi* 己 occupy the centre.⁹⁹ Therefore, an “elixir classic” (*tan-ching* 丹 經) says: “Yesterday night, the seven stars made their [stellar] order manifest at the bottom of the pool. They enlightened the transformation of the divine sword. This is the method of the dragon seat (*lung-tso fa* 龍 坐 法).¹⁰⁰ There is a secret transmission for the outside circulation and application [in the secular world].

“The division *tzu* 子 is the source of water, and the division *wu* 午 is the common ground for fire.¹⁰¹ *Tzu* 子 and *wu* 午 aiming at each other effect the vital energy of central harmony (*chung-cheng* 中 正).¹⁰² Smoothly moving down five positions [the position of] *lien* 廉 is reached, where the *kang*- 罡 star and the thunders are [located].¹⁰³ Moving three [positions] in the opposite direction, [the position of] *lien* 廉 is reached [again, and this] is the thunders, [this] is the *kang*- 罡 star.¹⁰⁴ The thunders then are the vital energies of the *kang*- 罡 star. This is the *Tao* of

⁹⁷ See TT 1220: 77.14a.

⁹⁸ “earth” refers to the *wu-hsing* (五 行) phases or elements. TT 1220: 77.15a–15b (*Fu t'ien shang t'ien-kang yang-ching yeh chen t'u yeh...* 夫 天 上 天 罡 陽 精 也 真 土 也...). Concerning the stars *k'uei* 魁 and *p'iao* 魃 as the last and the first position in certain ritual steps, e.g. see *Yin tou- p'iao pu-ch'i hui t'ien-men* (陰 斗 魃 步 起 回 天 門) and *Yang tou- k'uei ch'i hui sun* (陽 斗 魁 起 回 巽), in TT 1220: 149.8b.

⁹⁹ This refers to the list of the “heavenly stems”, see Table (1).

¹⁰⁰ This is a tentative translation. The seven stars most certainly are the seven stars of the Northern Dipper. I understand that they focus their rays at the “bottom”, which might refer to the body of the adept, who concentrates in meditation. The quotation was not identified.

¹⁰¹ See TT 1220: 112.7b (*Kan-chih yung-kua* 干 支 川 卦), which correlates the division *tzu* 子 and the trigram/hexagram *k'an* 坎 with “water”, and the same reasoning applies to *wu* 午; the *li-kua* 離 卦 and “fire”. *Tzu* 子 and *wu* 午 mark the top and tail of the Big Dipper respectively. Water sinks and moistens, fire rises upwards.

¹⁰² *Tzu* 子 and *wu* 午 (“water” and “fire”) mark the first and the last stellar positions in the Northern Dipper, see TT 1220: 67.24a. Concerning my translation “aiming at” for Chin. *tui-she* 對 射, an alternative translation could be “... projecting on each other”.

¹⁰³ Moving downwards from the top position of the Big Dipper. See the drawing of the constellation.

¹⁰⁴ Starting out from the tail of the Big Dipper.

“Three-and-Five” (*san-wu chih tao* 三五之道). The general merit of “Three-and-Five” lies just (p. 24b) herein, in the mystery of the thunders at the pivot of the dipper. The Northern Dipper keeps guard on this central area (*chung-yüan* 中垣).¹⁰⁵

“In the North the divisions *tzu* 子 and *ch'ou* 丑 mark the order of the constellations *tou* 斗 and *niu* 牛.¹⁰⁶ There is the appellation *Nan-tou ch'ih-hsiu* 南斗魁宿 for the constellation *tou-hsiu* 斗宿 that reaches from the division *shen* 申 to *ch'ou* 丑.¹⁰⁷ *Shen* 申 is attached to *keng* 庚 that is the killing force (*sha* 煞) of the *yin*- 陰 thunderclaps. The divisions *tzu* 子 and *ch'ou* 丑 then mark the region of the waters, which is the common ground for “Heaven-and-One” (*T'ien-i* 天一) that gives birth to water.¹⁰⁸

“Therefore, the six stars of the Southern Dipper¹⁰⁹ are the handle that crosses into the “Heavenly River” (*t'ien-ho* 天河).¹¹⁰ The “Heavenly River” downwards reaches to the Yellow River (黃河), and floating within its waters against the stream Mount Jade City (玉京山) up there is reached. The thunder gate and rain window are hidden inside the “Heavenly River”. When the two dippers first emerge they are located at *k'an* 坎,¹¹¹ and the handles of the dippers aim at each other (*tui-she* 對射). Water and fire are all around in empty space, and when *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 are added, the two killing forces (*sha* 煞) come into operation. They forcefully open up the thunder gate, and [consequently] wind, clouds, thunder, rain and lightning charge forth with all their noises.

“When the gentlemen of our time study the rituals and do not have any success performing them, the reason is that they did not encounter the correct ritual methods. Not having received the true transmission they instantly commit mistakes. Focus just on one altar, and there will be any response and any success.¹¹² How does it come that they do not know, that this method does not consist in amulets and instructions about vital energies and rituals paces. This method (p. 25a) requires only that the killing breaths forcefully charge forth [and are fast] like shadow and echo. Not one single failure at any time shall occur. Those, who are lucky enough to encounter this method, must not be easy handed and leak it [to unworthy people]. The imposing prohibitions weigh most heavily. Be careful, be cautious as to your decisions!

“Presented by Wang Chün 王俊, with the style Wen-ch'ing 文卿, who administers at the Eastern and Western Flamboyant Towers of *Shen-hsiao* 神霄 Heaven”.

¹⁰⁵ I notice that *chung-yüan* 中垣 may point to the constellation [Purple Subtlety] (*chung-yüan* [tzu-wei] 中垣 [紫微]). Concerning *Tzu-wei yüan* 紫微垣, see *Sung-shih* 宋史 49.2, 973 sq. (*History of the Sung Dynasty, Astronomy* 2). See G. Schlegel, *Uranographie Chinoise* (Leyden, 1875), p. 816, nr. 298 (*San-houan* et al.). However, I favour the literal interpretation that implies a projection of power from the constellation down onto the earth.

¹⁰⁶ See Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, p. 26, table V (B). Esp. see TT 1220: 78.6a (*Erh-shih-pa hsiu chü-t'u* : : 十八宿局圖), and TT 1220: 101. 6a–7b (*Erh-shih-pa hsiu hsiung-t'u* : : 十八宿星圖). See *Sung-shih t'ien-wen* (*History of the Sung, Astronomy*) 宋史天文 50–51, 3–4, 995 sq. (*Erh-shih-pa she shang/hsia* : : 十八舍上/下).

¹⁰⁷ This means the six positions and the six stars of the *tou-hsiu* 斗宿 constellation, see the following statements.

¹⁰⁸ For this statement, compare TT 1220: 131.6b (another title *Lei-fa shuo* 雷法說 of unknown origin).

¹⁰⁹ I.e. comprising the divisions: *shen* 申, *yu* 酉, *hsü* 戌, *hai* 亥, *tzu* 子 and *ch'ou* 丑.

¹¹⁰ This denotes the Milky Way. See TT 1220: 84.2b.

¹¹¹ See TT 1220: 90.17a, *Shih-ch'en shih-chüeh* 侍宸詩訣 (“A Poem and Instruction by [Wang] Shih-ch'en”). This poem varies the statement: “when the two dippers first emerge they point to (*chih* 指) [the positions of] *k'an* 坎 and *li* 離”.

¹¹² The statement demands the ritual specialisation on one method or register. This notion appears to be a standard demand, compare my introductory remarks about the Taoist patriarch Chang Yü-ch'ü 張子初, see above note 6.

The combination of thunder theory and Taoist religion

We would surely expect the world of the divine to be a key topic for Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿. Yet, the *Discourse of the Thunders* mentions only *en passant* the “three marshals” Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫, Hsin Han-ch'en 辛漢臣 and Chang Yüan-po 張元伯. The leading figure, Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫, is an apotheosis of the legendary hero Ch'ih Yu 蚩尤.¹¹³ His name certainly stands for the category “Posterior Heaven” (*hou-t'ien* 後天). The *Discourse of the Thunders* gives evidence, however, that the two categories of “Anterior Heaven” (*hsien-t'ien* 先天) and “Posterior Heaven” (*hou-t'ien* 後天) amalgamate in such distinguished names. Later Taoist writers seem to have documented this situation in their presentation of school lineages.¹¹⁴ The small and anonymous tract *Mystery of Tao* (*Tao-miao* 道妙) in *A Corpus of Taoist Ritual* (*Tao-fa hui-yüan* 道法會元) suggests that Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 was the first scholar who widened the explanatory frame of Thunder Magic to include explicitly the cosmic dimension and astronomy. Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 obviously used such formal concepts to rationalise and legitimise his religious ways and means.¹¹⁵ We can see this approach in his *Great Method of the Five Thunders that sever and investigate at the Jade Pivot of the uppermost Shen-hsiao [heaven]* (*Kao-shang shen-hsiao yü-shu chan-k'an wu-lei ta-fa* 高上神宵玉樞斬勘五雷大法). This *Great Method* also contains a fascinating short tract with the title *Decree and Spell*. This prayer or spell is well in line with the *Discourse of the Thunders* and shows the combination of thunder theory and Taoist religion.

Great Method of the Five Thunders that sever and investigate at the Jade Pivot of the uppermost Shen-hsiao 神霄 [heaven] in *A Corpus of Taoist Ritual* (*Tao-fa hui-yüan* 道法會元) ch. 61, 1a–3a; 17a–17b:

(p. 1a) “Now, the five thunders were transformed by the ancestral vital energies of Prime Origin. When the ancestral vital energies came into being, the Great Ultimate (*t'ai-chi* 太極) was hereby established. It is for this reason that “Heaven-and-One” (*t'ien-i* 天一) gives birth to water. The position of water is *k'an* 坎.¹¹⁶ Earth and [number] two give birth to fire.¹¹⁷ The position of fire is *li* 離.¹¹⁸ Heaven and [number] three give birth to wood.¹¹⁹ The position of wood is *chen* 震. Earth and [number] four give birth to metal. The position of metal is *tui* 兌. Heaven and [number] five give birth to earth. The position of earth is at the very centre. Thus there are the following names, the “five constellations”, the “five stars” and the “five holy mountains”. In fact, they all had been transformed by the five vital energies. When the five vital energies

¹¹³ *Shih-chi* 史記 1.1b (*Wu-ti pen-chi* 五帝本紀 1, Huang-ti 黃帝), also see Reiter, “A Preliminary Study”, pp. 174–175.

¹¹⁴ We have e.g. the “affiliation” (*shih-hsi* 世系) and the “factual account” (*shih-shih* 事實) that start out with prehistory (T'ai-hao 太昊, Chu-jung 祝融 et al.). They give Thunder Magic a grandiose dimension, see TT 1220: 82.23b–29b, authored by Pai Yü-ch'an 白玉蟾. See e.g. the *Ch'ing-wei* 清微 lineage TT 171 *Ch'ing-wei hsien-p'u* as example for a still later period. Concerning TT 171 *Ch'ing-wei hsien-p'u* see, F. C. Reiter, *Grundelemente und Tendenzen des religiösen Taoismus*, p. 50 sq.

¹¹⁵ In TT 1220 *Tao-fa hui-yüan*: 84.3a. However, I could not find traces of the astronomical theories of Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 in the section on astronomy in the “*History of the Sung*” *Sung-shih* 宋史.

¹¹⁶ TT 999 *Chou-i ts'an-t'ung ch'i* 1.1b. This text conveys the depth of the historic background. See the comprehensive study by F. Pregadio, *Zhouyi Cantong Qi, Dal libro dei Mutamenti all' Elixir d'Oro* (Venezia, 1996). See TT 1220 *Tao-fa hui-yüan* 112.7b, this ascertains the statement as well as the following explanations concerning *li-kua* 離卦 and *tui-kua* 兌卦. This text links “earth” with the *k'un-kua* 坤卦. See TT 1220: 67.23b (*Lei-shuo* 雷說 by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿; see above).

¹¹⁷ Compare TT 1000 *Chou-i ts'an-t'ung ch'i* chu 3.7a.

¹¹⁸ TT 999 *Chou-i ts'an-t'ung ch'i* 1.1b; see above.

¹¹⁹ TT 1000: 3.7a.

harmoniously spread, the four seasons came into operation, and all the creatures were born. The processes of transformation are inexhaustible.

“However, *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 eventually are not harmonised, and then droughts and inundations become plagues. All of this comes about when the five vital energies lose their proper measures. Only those, who severe and investigate [due to] the rituals of the “five thunders” take *Tao* to be their substance and the rituals to be their means of operation. Applied *internally* for cultivation, they (p. 1b) sever and destroy the [three] cadavers (*shih-kuei* 尸鬼).¹²⁰ They investigate and unite the heavenly motivating forces. They bring together and concentrate the five elements and unite in harmony the four signs (*ssu-hsiang* 四象).¹²¹ When water and fire are up to the mark, then metal and wood connect thoroughly. The sun lets refine and the moon lets boil. The embryo frees itself and turns divine as to become an immortal of supreme standing.

“When the rituals of the “five thunders” are applied *outwardly*, they sever and expel the bewitching forces and misfortune, and they investigate and bring together the thunders and thunderclaps. One inhales and exhales the seminal essences of the five vital energies and unites with the generals of the five thunders. This is called, centre on and command properly the five vital energies. Unite thoroughly with all the divine forces. Take the divine forces of the own existence and summon the divine forces of those spacious empty spheres. Take the vital energies of the own body and unite them with the vital energies of those empty spacious spheres.¹²² Additionally use the program of instructions for ritual paces, the secret spells and divine amulets. Expound and set to move the trigger of transformation. In case that one unites amulets and bonds, one transfers the thunders and thunderclaps onto the [own] palm and embraces heaven and earth within the own body.¹²³ One may say then “sunshine” and there will be sunshine, one may say then “rainfall”, and rail will fall. Therefore, the responses will be fast like shadow and echo.¹²⁴

“The *Book of Changes* (*I [-ching]* 易 [經]) says: ‘The firm and the yielding displace each other. The eight trigrams (*pa-kua* 八卦) succeed one another by turns. [Things] are aroused by thunders and lightning; they are fertilized by wind (p. 2a) and rain.’¹²⁵ This exactly is the mysterious operation of these rituals and this *Tao*. I certainly do not [suppose] that the profound creation and the subtle transmutations [are to be spoken about] other than with the words of the *Book of Changes* (*I [-ching]* 易 [經]). Now, these words of mine are meant to support what is correct and

¹²⁰ This points to internal demoniac molestations that devastate human life. See TT 1220: 100.13a, where it is said that “who first receives the five thunder methods ought to apply the vital energies of the thunders to support the mighty deities, first in order to discard the three cadavers and nine worms (*san-shih chiu-ch'ung* 三尸九蟲), to subdue the evil demons (*hsieh-mo* 邪魔). Then it is that [these methods] can be practiced and maintained...”. Also compare H. Maspero, *Le Taoïsme et les religions chinoises* (Paris, 1971), pp. 165–166. “Method” always means ritual method.

¹²¹ See *Chou-i* 周易 17; *hsi-tz'u* 繫辭 1/11, p. 26. The commentary says that the mutations of *yin* and *yang* and of old and young are being represented. The pair “soft and hard” can be added. Notice op.cit. (*hsi-tz'u* 1/10) p. 25 *Liang-i sheng ssu-hsiang, ssu-hsiang sheng pa-hua* 兩儀生四象四象生八卦. However, see TT 1220: 84.17b (*ho-ho ssu-hsiang* 和合四象), referring to the “four signs”, which are the green dragon (East), the red sparrow (South), the white tiger (West) and the dark warrior (North).

¹²² Closely compare TT 1220: 67.14a, where Sa Shou-chien 薩守堅 also explains that “Thunder Magic is the *tao* 道 of the Anterior Heaven”.

¹²³ Concerning the general idea that shapes this paragraph, compare for example TT 110 *Huang-ti yin-fu ching shu* 黃帝陰符經疏 1.1b/9–10 (*yü-chou tsai hu shou*... 宇宙在乎手... “the cosmos being well present in the hands ...”).

¹²⁴ For this comparison also see the *Lei-shuo* (雷說) by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 see TT 1220: 67. 25a.

¹²⁵ *Chou-i* 周易 17, *hsi-tz'u* 繫辭 1, p. 2. See *Book of Changes*, pp. 280 (“*Ta Chuang, The Great Treatise*”), for the quotation see esp. pp. 283, 284, where “lightning” is used instead of “thunderclap”. Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 reverses the sequence of the *I-ching* 易經 phrases in the first part of the quotation.

expel what is wicked, to execute what is evil and control what is poisonous. I certainly want to talk about things to laugh about, but the thunder orders are a mighty and stern matter. Those, who perform them must never be careless and in a light-handed way leak them and be neglectful. The punishment by heaven is hard to escape. Treasure them and keep them secret.

“All those gentlemen, who search for the immortals and long for *Tāo* [but] do not cultivate the inner elixir (*nei-tan* 内丹), shall have their [outer] appearances recede and deteriorate. Anyone, who does not make amulet water available [for the people], who neither apprehends the “three heavens” (*san-t'ien* 三天) nor amasses hidden merits, shall ever have any success at *Tāo*”.

“Preface by the “Grand Master of Highest Purity, the Attendant at the Temple of the Crystallized Divine Forces, Wang Chün Wen-ch'ing (*T'ai-su tai-fu Ning-shen tien shih-ch'en* 太素大夫凝神殿侍宸王俊文卿).”¹²⁶

The following list presents the “General Class” (*chiang-pan* 將班) of thunder divinities. Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫 heads this section. He has a superb religious title that shows him to be the “absolute superior heavenly emperor”. He is proclaimed to be “the most honourable head of the thunders in the nine heavens and the great immortal, who is in command of blazing fire”. Furthermore, he is the “heavenly marshal and god emperor of the smoky and fiery clouds”. He also is “the great deity of great loyalty and piety, who is in command of blazing fire”. (p. 2b) All these qualities give Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫 a chief position for the thunder rituals that Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 presents.¹²⁷

The following divine general is named Hsin Han-ch'en 辛漢臣.¹²⁸ His religious titles reveal his duties and his outer appearance. Hsin Han-ch'en 辛漢臣 is in control of the thunders and thunderclaps. He checks their fiery shining and rumbling noises. Having teeth made of silver and eyes that emit rays of light, he can reprove the three spheres of the cosmos and serve as great judge who explicates the law. Officiating these tasks he uses an iron writing brush. Hsin Han-ch'en 辛漢臣 is an executive officer. I find it remarkable that he fulfils those duties and functions that Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫 once had claimed for himself *vis-à-vis* heaven, well before his magic transfer to a divine position within the pantheon of thunder rituals.

The text then lists the name and title of the first spirit commissioner Chang Yüan-po 張元伯.¹²⁹ The commissioner responds by means of fiery thunders, acting on behalf of the alert divinity T'ai-i 太乙.¹³⁰ This group is complete with one more spirit general, who is named Ch'eng Man-ch'ing 程曼卿.¹³¹ He offers comprehensive assistance to all the world.

¹²⁶ Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 received this official title from Emperor Sung Hui-tsung 宋徽宗 in 1125, see Reiter, “A Preliminary Study”, p. 165.

¹²⁷ TT 1220: 61.2a–3a. Reiter, “A Preliminary Study”, especially see pp. 172–176, for a translation of the tract *Lien-shen* (鍊神) in TT 1220: 124.1b–2a. Compare also TT 1220: 80.1a sq. (*Yen-huo lü-ling Teng t'ien-chün ta-fa* 焮火律令鄧天君大法).

¹²⁸ Compare TT 1220: 81.1a sq. (*Fu-feng meng-li Hsin t'ien-chün ta-fa* 負風猛吏辛天君大法). Hsin Han-ch'en 辛漢臣 allegedly authors TT 193 *Yü-huang yu-tsui hsi-fu pao-ch'an*. TT 193 is a very late text of repentance (14th ct.).

¹²⁹ See TT 1220: 57.18a–19b; 133.27a; 138.9a–9b; also see TT 1220: 235. 2b, Chang Yüan-po 張元伯 is “the leading general of the South” (*Nan-fang chu-chiang* 南方主將). Also see the *Ch'ing-wei* 清微 text TT 224 *Ch'ing-wei chai-fa* 1.24a.

¹³⁰ Concerning the position of the astral divine power “Primordial Lord T'ai-i (T'ai-i yüan-chün 太乙元君), see for example TT 1220: 124.1a–1b; also see Reiter, “A Preliminary Study”, p. 171.

¹³¹ Compare TT 1220: 61.5a.

A commentary describes the outer appearances of all these figures that have a demonic face, the body of a quail and red hair. They are clad in metal armour, wear dark red robes and green boots. Their right hand brandishes a knife, and their left hand clutches an axe.

The following spirit esquire has red hair, the body of a quail and green garments. He holds in his hands a thunder bludgeon. His name is “thunder lord” Chiang Ho-ch'ung 江赫冲.¹³² The description of the thunder mother Hsiu Wen-ying 秀文英 follows.¹³³

(p. 3a) The goddess has black hair, wears red garments, and both hands emit the radiance of thunder. The “wind earl”, who holds the subsequent position, is named Fang Tao-chang 方道彰.¹³⁴ He has blue (*qing* 青) hair, wears a black cap and green garments. He holds with both hands the wind wheel. The rain master, who is named Ch'en Hua-fu 陳華夫, concludes this section. Ch'en Hua-fu 陳華夫 has black hair and wears a black cap. He holds the water wheel.¹³⁵

The subsequent pages contain a detailed survey of divine charges that stand for the physical and spiritual components of this world. All the official titles designate administrative honours and functions within the sphere of the divine, like the “three court gentlemen” or the “palace guards”.¹³⁶ We find a descending order of rank and responsibility. The divine titles precede, in most cases, personal names that seem to belong to real people, who had left this world long-since. Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫 is a case in point. We already know the historic tradition that gives a specific weight to this name. It would be very laborious indeed to trace all those other names that would, most likely, take us down to the depths of local history. While some of these names do appear repeatedly in *A Corpus of Taoist Ritual* (*Tao-fa hui-yüan* 道法會元) and other Taoist compilations, they rarely lead us beyond the threshold of Thunder Magic lore.

Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 is in line with old Taoist ways and means, which, for example, his presentation of the “spirit palace guards” documents. He introduces the names of ten “spirit palace guards” that he combines with the ten heavenly “stems”. They represent ten days. Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 lists the *chia* 甲, *i* 乙, *ping* 丙, *ting* 丁, *mou* 戊, *chi* 己, *keng* 庚, *hsin* 辛, *jen* 壬 and *kuai* 癸 [-days]. He has for each of them a divine power ranked “general”. One example may suffice: “The general of the *hsin*- 辛 day and the heavenly *T'ien-kang* 天罡 star is general Wang Yen 王言”.¹³⁷ He is said to wear plain white garments and metal armour. This general corresponds with “the white vital energies and the division *yu* 酉” of the tenth “branch” of earth. Finally, we learn that “each of the twelve generals holds an axe and a halberd, a crude iron whip and a bamboo stick. Their divine might is awful. They are able to know the human affairs, all what had passed by and what is bound to come. They know all the fortuitous and cruel events, disaster and good fortune. If one daily sets

¹³² Compare TT 1220: 82.1b (*Hsien-t'ien i-ch'i huo-lei Chang shih che ch'i-tao ta-fa* 先天一氣火雷張使者祈禱大法); TT 1220: 83.2a; for a listing of the following names. This text shows a “line of transmission” (TT 1220: 83.1a–1b, *shih-p'ai* 師派), naming Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 (1093–1153) and Po Yü-ch'an 白玉蟾 (fl. 1209–1224). This proves the text (*Hsien-t'ien lei-ching yin-shu* 先天雷晶隱書) to be a rather late production. Also see TT 1220: 90.4b (*Hsien-t'ien i-ch'i lei-fa* 先天一氣雷法).

¹³³ Compare TT 1220: 82.1b; 90.4b.

¹³⁴ Compare TT 1220: 82.1b; 90.4b.

¹³⁵ Compare TT 1220: 82.1b; 90.4b; 83.2a also lists the cloud messenger Kuo Shih-hsiu 郭士秀 (*yün-li* 雲史).

¹³⁶ TT 1220: 61.3a–4a.

¹³⁷ TT 1220: 61.4a. See TT 1220: 67.23b (*Lei-shuo* 雷說) by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿, without naming Wang Yen 王言.

up [an altar] for each of them and offers religious veneration, the good and adverse that are still to come on that specific day, will be known spontaneously. The application of amulets in order to heal illness, the crusade against the evil, the expulsion of what is wicked, the presentation of petitions and documents [to the divinities], the general protection of the own person, all these tasks can be entrusted to the one spirit official [of the respective day]. Certainly, there will be an appropriate response".¹³⁸

This type of text contains systematic descriptions of divine apparitions and powers and serves as guides for meditation and ritual performances. The text refers to the determinants of time and space. The much older text (fifth century) *Blue Code of Commandments against Demons, for the Ladies [at the Central Palace]* (*Nü ch'ing kwei-lü* 女青鬼律) is a superb example of this tradition in Taoism.¹³⁹ The *Blue Code of Commandments* presents among other data the sexagenary cycle of the days. Each entry shows the name of the demon of the day. Such demons are said to be hostile elements that appear with a human body. Most of them are dreadful. They have red hair and do not wear clothes. Some of these demons may have ears but no eyes. They soar in the void and reputedly can cross thousands of miles. They are a real disaster, because they are without any piety and, above all, they are rebellious and harmful *vis-a-vis* Taoists. If a Taoist, however, knows the name of such a demon, the demon does not venture to encroach on him.¹⁴⁰ The name itself is the basic device that the Taoist uses for invocation and exorcism. The Taoist can subdue demons and make them serve. Any divine potential can be summoned or banned as soon as the actual name is known. The *Blue Code of Commandments* provides the divine names exactly for this purpose, and Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿, who lived many centuries later, knows very well how to handle the same technique. He shows in his expositions that he and his followers have the (name-) registers (*lu* 籙) that are required to employ the cosmic divine forces. On the other hand, Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 also shows that it may suffice to appeal to plain administrative ranks in order to have thunder commands executed. His short prayer or invocation *Decree and Spell* (*ch'ih-chu* 敕祝) is a convincing document.

A Corpus of Taoist Ritual (Tao-fa hui-yüan 道法會元) ch. 61. 17a–17b
“Decree and Spell”

(p. 17b) “The essences of the constellations *chiao* 角 and *chi* 箕 and the magic forces of the divisions *chia* 甲 and *i* 乙 may spread out like waves, drumming and dancing. Thunders and lightning may flare up quickly. The stars of the constellations *ching* 井 and *chen* 軫 and the magic forces of the divisions *ping* 丙 and *ting* 丁 may let fire soar over 10000 miles afar. Fires may follow, and smoke arise. The essences of the constellations *k'uei* 奎 and *shen* 參 and the magic forces of the divisions *keng* 庚 and *hsin* 辛 may sound the bells all around and grasp tightly the lightning. Their swords and halberds may interlock the evil. The essences of the constellations *tou* 斗 and

¹³⁸ TT 1220: 61.4a.

¹³⁹ See Jen Chi-yü 任繼愈 *et al.* comp., *Tao-tsang t'i-yao* 道藏提要 no. 0784, p. 569. This text was already known in the Northern Wei 魏 period (5th ct.) and may be connected with the activities of the famous Taoist reformer K'ou Ch'ien-chih 寇謙之 (425–451). My translation of the title derives from one of the many variant titles that the reference work lists.

¹⁴⁰ TT 790 *Nü-ch'ing kwei-lü* 1.4b–7b.

pi 壁 and the magic forces of the divisions jen 壬 and kuei 癸 may float like torrents and roaring waves. They may protect my person and body.¹⁴¹

“The magic forces of the essences of heaven, the blossoms of water and fire, the rumbling emissaries of the thunders, the fire bell generals, the stalwarts of the three heavens, the one million spirit soldiers, all their fire of thunder may speedily arise, wind and thunders may follow suit. Their platoons may be legions, all with crystallised halberds and battle axes. Where evil demons dare to be around and unorthodox divinities recklessly ask for blood sacrifices cruelly harming the living creatures,¹⁴² do detain such evildoers in custody, disregarding their seize, turn them in to the thunders and thunderclaps, and have them cut their heads innumerable times and slice endlessly their bodies. Those, who resist my orders shall die. Those, who harmoniously follow my orders shall live. Those, who venture to offend against my orders, they are like rebels against the heaven of highest purity (*shang-ch'ing* 上清). Do act most urgently on this order!”

The following table shows the names of the stars that matter in the *Decree and Spell*. The numbers in the first column refer to the position of the stars within the list of the twenty-eight stellar divisions:¹⁴³

Table 5. Showing the names of the stars that matter in the *Decree and Spell*

1	chiao 角	wood	Hornless Dradon 蛟	Virgo
7	chi 箕	water	Leopard 豹	Sagittarius
22	ching 井	wood	Tapir 犴	Gemini
28	chen 軫	water	Worm 蚓	Corvus
15	k'uei 魁	wood	Wolf 狼	(Mirach) Andromeda; Pisces, Aries
21	shen 參	water	Ape 猿	Orion
8	tou 斗	wood	Gryphon 獬	Sagittarius
14	pi 壁	water	Porcupine 獬	Pegasus

This text proves the prime importance of the powers that identify the “Anterior Heaven” (*hsien-t'ien* 先天). These powers have their basic location in astral spheres. We notice that

¹⁴¹ The divisions *chia-i* 甲乙, *ping-ting* 丙丁, *keng-hsin* 庚辛 and *jen-kuei* 壬癸 can represent “First and Second” (spring); “Third and Fourth” (summer); “Seventh and Eighth” (autumn); “Ninth and Tenth” (winter). Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 does not list *mou-chi* 戊己, which means “Fifth and Sixth” (the end of summer) and yet, he obviously wants to cover the whole year, when the divine protection is said to be effective. See L. Skar, “Administering Thunder: A Thirteenth-Century Memorial Deliberating the Thunder Rites”, in *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 9, p. 187. L. Skar also shows that the line of reasoning involving the astral spheres was continuously enlarged and was essential in later Thunder Magic. Also see TT 1220: 66.7a–7b, where these stars are listed as “heavenly flower thunder” (*t'ien-hua lei* 天華雷). They belong to the *Chinese Stellar Divisions* (*Erh-shih-pa hsiu* 二十八宿), see Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*, pp. 26–27 (*The Calendar*, B). As to these constellations see generally *Sung-shih t'ien-wen* (*History of the Sung, Astronomy*) 宋史天文 50, 3, 995 sq. (*Erh-shih-pa she* 二十八舍).

¹⁴² “Blood sacrifices” of human beings occasionally were a sad reality, and the Taoist specialists knew how to employ the forces of Thunder Magic in order to eliminate such cults. For example, Sa Shou-chien 薩守堅 is said to have employed Thunder Magic to save some young boys and girls, who were about to be sacrificed to the god of a local temple, see Reiter, “Some Notices on the Magic Agent Wang”, p. 337.

¹⁴³ Compare the preceding note (Giles, *A Chinese-English Dictionary*). Generally see *Sung-shih t'ien-wen* (*History of the Sung, Astronomy*) 宋史天文 50, 3, 995 sq. (*Erh-shih-pa she* 二十八舍).

the *Decree and Spell* names eight stars. Four stars refer to the element “wood” and another four stars to the element “water”. These powers can be summoned as thunder divinities and asked to show up in order to execute in a fierce way the commands of the Taoist. We do not see any personal names but divine ranks only. There are legions of such divine forces that operate on the basis of their omnipotent nature.

I have already remarked on the fact that *A Corpus of Taoist Ritual* (*Tao-fa hui-yüan* 道法會元) contains numerous listings of such divine forces. For example, the text *Divine Ranks of Thunders and Thunderclaps of the Three Vital Energies* (*San-ch'i lei-t'ing shen-li* 三氣雷霆神位)¹⁴⁴ displays a certain ranking according to the structure of the “three caves” (*san-tung* 三洞). The text was most likely compiled some time after the time of Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿. Starting out with divine entities without any personal names, the listing ends with a presentation of those divinities that do have personal names like real people. Such divinities surely belong to the category of “Posterior Heaven” (*hou-t'ien* 後天). For example, the pantheon contains names that are famous in Chinese cultural history, like those of the Hanscholar and poet Yang Hsiung (53 B.C.–18 A.D., 楊雄) and the renowned Taoist scholar T'ao Hung-ching (456–536, 陶弘景). They find themselves listed side by side in the section *Divine Appellations of Honour at the Court of the Jade Pivot* (*Yü-shu yüan sheng-hao* 玉樞院聖號).¹⁴⁵ The “three marshals”, whom we encountered in the *Discourse on the Thunders* by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿, again appear in the list *Divine Ranks* (see above), where they are members of the “ten Thunder Magic generals of the brahman vital energies of the Anterior Heaven” (*Hsien-t'ien fan-ch'i lei-fa shih-chiang* 先天梵氣雷法十將).¹⁴⁶ Here we find Teng Po-wen 鄧伯溫 as the “leading great marshal” in the section “Great Cave” (*Ta-tung* 大洞), whereas the thunder divinity Hsin Han-ch'en 辛漢臣 turns up in a group of “divine messengers” that wield their might in the netherworld.¹⁴⁷

Conclusion

The texts by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 show that divine entities are present in the world of man, where they may be identified with the names of real people, representing local and historic realities. We must keep in mind that the cosmic frame and the cyclic movement of space and time are basic for Thunder Magic. This was the main concern of the *Discourse on the Thunders* by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿, who translated a formal system into religious practice, which, for example, his *Decree and Spell* shows. It is noteworthy, however, that his formal system neither dominates all the contributions that are attributed to Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿 or the certainly later *School Talks* (*Chia-hua* 家話).¹⁴⁸ Concerning the authorship and the origin of the great bulk of Thunder Magic sources, there are still questions that need to be tackled. Most of these texts, for instance, do not show any indication of authorship. They can most likely be grouped on the basis of internal evidence, but this work has still

¹⁴⁴ TT 1220: 65.1a–22b. For another telling example see TT 1220: 66. 1a–9a (*Lei-t'ing kang-mu shuo* 雷霆綱目說, containing *San-ch'i lei-t'ing suo-shu* 三氣雷霆所屬).

¹⁴⁵ TT 1220: 65.12a.

¹⁴⁶ TT 1220: 65.22a–22b.

¹⁴⁷ TT 1220: 65.10a and p. 9b respectively.

¹⁴⁸ “*Chia-hua*” 家話 abbreviates the title TT 1250 *Ch'ung-hsü t'ung-miao shih-ch'en Wang hsien-sheng chia-hua* (沖虛通妙侍宸王先生家話).

to be done. We can also observe that the theories of Thunder Magic are not necessarily logical according to our current day standards, and so it is easy to find inconsistencies that are hard to explain. For example, we saw that the *Discourse on the Thunders* presents different numerical categories for the element “earth” without giving any explanation for this. This, however, may not be a contradiction but rather an expression of different perspectives.

The *Taoist Canon* and especially its compendium *A Corpus of Taoist Ritual* (*Tao-fa hui-yüan* 道法會元) contain quite a number of such theoretical expositions by various writers. Sa Shou-chien 薩守堅 (fl. second half of the twelfth century), for example, presents his own *Discourse on the Thunders* and even a *Continued Discourse on Wind, Rain, Thunder and Lightning* (*Hsü feng yü lei tien shuo* 續風雨雷電說).¹⁴⁹ Both texts are rather independent of those theories formulated by Wang Wen-ch'ing 王文卿. Sa Shou-chien 薩守堅 had his own standing in Thunder Magic. He is just one example of a great number of later Taoist scholars and writers, who developed their own explanations and contributed to the welter of Taoist scholarship. Anyway, we know that these Taoists considered Thunder Magic and the Taoist religion to be scientific by their standards and also effective in real life. All these texts are very elaborate: they continue to pose a challenge to the study of Taoist theories concerning the operation of the cosmos and the workings of religion in China.

Abbr.:

TT *Taoist Canon* (*Cheng-t'ung tao-tsang*) (Taipei, 1977), 61 vol., the title numbers follow K. M. Schipper (ed.), *Concordance du Tao-tsang* (Paris, 1975).

¹⁴⁹ TT 1220: 67.11a–18a; 18a–20a. See above note 3, Reiter: “Some Notices on the Magic Agent Wang”.