THE DEVELOPMENT OF BUDDHIST REPENTANCE IN EARLY MEDIEVAL CHINA

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Religious Studies

University of the West

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

De Hong

Fall 2014

APPROVAL PAGE FOR GRADUATE

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies.

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December 3rd, 2014

Development of Buddhist Repentance in Early Medieval China

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I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted

as an exercise for a degree at any other institution,

and that it is entirely my own work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation has been made possible through the guidance and support from many people including: my professors, my mother and siblings, relatives, and friends. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to and acknowledge the following significant contributors:

First and foremost, I would like to thank Dr. Joshua Capitanio. Dr. Capitanio has provided me the most unprecedented guidance and encouragement. He has kindly read my dissertation and offered invaluable and meticulous advice on the structure, content, and details of the dissertation.

Next, I would like to thank Dr. Iwamura for her expert advice on the organization of this dissertation, from its proposal stage to its completion. She has graciously spent a great of time advising me on the organization and details of the dissertation. In addition, I would thank Dr. Chu for his support on the dissertation. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Hisayo Suzuki for her assistance in editing this dissertation.

Third, I would like to thank Dr. Lancaster for his invaluable advice and guidance in the past five years. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the teachers who have taught me in the past six years and a half in pursuit of the master and doctor of philosophy degrees. A heartfelt appreciation goes to the International Buddhist Education Foundation for its financial support of my graduation education.

Finally, many thanks go to my mother and siblings, relatives, and friends for their enduring support.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the development and legitimation of repentance rituals within the initial formative period of Chinese Buddhism in the early medieval period. Repentance can be considered as one of the many phases in the process of Sinicization of Buddhism. Repentance scriptures were initially developed, as a liturgy, for the purpose of eradicating unwholesome karma and attaining *samādhi* or Buddhahood by the individual. They gradually became part of the cultivation process in many Chinese Buddhist traditions as well as a dynamically living tradition of devotion among the Chinese Buddhists.

Out of the dozens of repentance scriptures dated up to the sixth century CE, the *Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Manjuśrī's Teaching of Repentance* 佛說文殊悔過經 T. 14, No. 459 (271 CE) prescribes one rather simple six-part repentance ritual involving prostrations in front of Buddha statues. By performing repentance, one would be able to purify one's transgressions and attain *samādhi*, the scripture claims. The major components in the repentance rituals, I argue, resemble the discourses of confession and punishment and prostrations in pre-Buddhist China along with the acts of grace and were subsequently accepted and integrated into daily Buddhist liturgy in Chinese religious life.

These early repentance rituals were later modified into many complex rituals for the living as well as on behalf of the deceased. By studying the repentance rituals, this dissertation attempts to determine if there are any changes in structures and contents over time. Such an examination allows us to see the development and transformation of a simple Indian confession practice into a genre of repentance rituals with different soteriological goals that are still in practice in East Asia and beyond today. This

dissertation makes a valuable contribution to the field of religious studies in Chinese Buddhism by providing insights into an understanding of the development and acceptance of repentance rituals into Chinese religious life in the early medieval period.

PREFACE

My interest in Buddhist repentance (*chanhui* 懺悔) goes back to eight years ago prior to becoming a Buddhist monk in 2004. As a layman, I was taught by several Vietnamese Buddhist nuns to perform repentance rituals on the uposatha days and as much as possible. The Buddhist nuns, and all monastics and lay Buddhists in the Mahāyāna tradition, believed that repentance rituals can eradicate negative karmic deeds. It was claimed that negative karmic deeds were the source of hindrances in one's path for enlightenment. After taking the tonsure and before my full ordination in the Vietnamese Mahāyāna tradition in 2006, I was instructed to perform various types of repentance rituals. After being ordained as a Buddhist monk, performing repentance rituals was again a regular part of my daily cultivation.

Upon starting my master degree in Buddhist Studies at University of the West, I tried to research on the history and reasons for the practice of repentance rituals. However, due to time constraint, I was unable to achieve the expected goal and ended up choosing the *Compassionate Water Repentance Ritual* (*Cibei shuichan fa* 慈悲水懺法) for my master's thesis. The reasons why repentance rituals were accepted in early medieval China and continue to influence present day practices by most Mahāyāna Buddhists remained unanswered.

Thus, as I completed my Ph. D. coursework and was in the process of researching for a topic for my dissertation, I decided to continue my quest to determine why repentance rituals were developed and gained acceptance by Chinese Buddhists in the early medieval China. To my surprise, much of the Chinese cultural characteristics before the arrival of Buddhism and the development of repentance rituals were really identical

with many attributes found in many of the Buddhist repentance scriptures and practices. The parallels between the Chinese culture and Buddhist repentance rituals enabled the Chinese, especially Chinese Buddhists, to accept repentance rituals as a form of practice for their salvation and spiritual enlightenment. It is my hope that this study contributes to the academic study of Chinese Buddhism as a whole and helps us to understand the process of Sinicization of Buddhism in China in particular.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Aṣṭa *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*

BQZ *Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳

CSZJJ *Chu sanjangji ji* 出三藏記集

GHMJ *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集

GSZ *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳

HMJ *Hongming ji* 弘明集

Ratna *Ratnaguṇasaṁcayagāthā*

SVS *Samantabhadra Visualization Sutra*

Ugra *Ugrapariprcchā*

Upāli *Upālipariprcchā*

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Almost all human beings make mistakes, intentionally or not, in their conduct, personally, socially, and spiritually. There are common laws and penal codes under the legal system in secular governments (both in the West and the East) established to deal with offenders and punishments. However, historically common laws in Western civilization, both in the European countries and the United States, have been designed to seek justice for the victims and punish the criminals. The legal systems do not offer the violators a chance to confess and make amends. Neither do they offer the opportunity for the lawbreakers to express their remorse, pay compensation to the victim(s), and be allowed to return to society.[1] On the other hand, countries in Eastern civilizations, such as that of China, had a different justice system dealing with criminals. China's penal codes had special provisions in their penal codes that allow offenders to confess their crimes dated 122 BCE during the Eastern Han dynasty, or possibly earlier. The provisions stipulate that as long as the offender confessed and paid damage for their crimes, he would either be set free or have his penalty reduced, provided that the crime was not severe.[2] In other words, the offender would be able to return to his normal way of life without any written record or any sort of punishment for his crime.

Correspondingly, Buddhism, one of the world's oldest religions, prescribes various Vinaya procedures laid down by the Buddha for his disciples who became monastics and lived in the sangha communities to deal with their transgressions. A *bhikkhu* who intentionally broke a precept would be required to confess and have his

[1] Etzioni and Carney, *Repentance*, 1.
[2] Rickett, "Voluntary Surrender and Confession in Chinese Law," 798-799.

transgression absolved as long as it was not one of the four *pārājika*. Depending on the severity of transgression, the *bhikkhu* may have to undergo a procedural hearing and penalty. Upon completion of penalty, he would then be able to return to his *bhikkhu* status in the sangha.[3] Thus, the Buddha took into consideration the severity of the crimes committed by his disciples and made the rules, known as the Vinaya, and the penalties accordingly. Overall, confession was an important practice in monastic life and sangha communities in early Indian Buddhism during the Buddha's time.

After the Buddha's death and due to schisms, Mahāyāna Buddhism gradually took shape. Along with Mahāyāna Buddhism, Buddhist repentance scriptures were also composed. It is believed that Buddhist authors had confession in mind when they formulated repentance scriptures. As Mahāyāna Buddhism sporadically began to enter China, a country with a high and complex culture, repentance scriptures were also brought into this foreign land. By the end of the sixth century, various types of repentance scriptures with different forms of soteriological goals found a wider and greater acceptance amongst the different classes of Chinese citizens. It is in consideration of this historical background that the development of repentance in early medieval China is the focus of this dissertation.

This chapter begins by discussing the practice of confession according to the Vinaya found in the Pali Canon to provide readers some background of the early Indian Buddhist rite of confession. It then describes the three types of repentance rituals developed along with Mahāyāna Buddhism, provides a literature review on repentance scriptures and rituals, delineates the methodology used by the present dissertation, and provides helpful chapter summaries.

[3] Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code I*, 21-22.

I. Confession in Indian Buddhism

The review here is meant to provide some historical information on the confession practice and procedures by Buddhist monastics in regard to their transgressions and how to deal with them. Further, it can also enable the readers to recognize the motivation behind the formation and development of Buddhist repentance.

The ritual of confession or Uposatha in Indian Buddhism according to the Pali Canon consists of confessing one's offenses and reciting the Pāṭimokkha on the Uposatha days (full and new-moon days). The purpose of the Uposatha, to be held with at least four *bhikkhus*, is to prevent the decline of the sangha communities and the common affiliation of the sangha members. The Uposatha is so important that all members of the sangha of the same affiliation, including the *arahants*, are required to attend.[4] The Uposatha basically consists of preparation and the recitation of the Pāṭimokkha to be performed by an experienced and competent (or most senior) *bhikkhu* while the rest of the sangha members listen.[5] The preparation process includes announcing the occasion, setting up the chosen uposatha hall by sweeping, getting seats ready, lighting, providing washing water and drinking water, verifying the purity of all the *bhikkhus* (meaning they have already confessed their offenses), and taking attendance. No lay person is allowed to participate during the recitation of the Pāṭimokkha.[6] Once ready, the reciter will start the recitation through a motion. The Pāṭimokkha must be clearly and loudly recited in full without interruption. If there is an obstruction, then the Pāṭimokkha can be recited in

[4] Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code II*, 255-256.
[5] Ibid., 261–262.
[6] Ibid., 270–275. If a *bhikkhu* is either sick or traveling, he can be excused from going to the Uposatha by sending his purity to his sangha affiliation.

brief.[7] Thus, the Uposatha can be considered as a privately monastic affair and liturgical service. It was observed to "fortify and confirm correct external behavior rather than to excuse or express inner attitudes and ideas."[8]

Prior to attending the Uposatha, any *bhikkhu* who has committed an offense must formally confess face-to-face to another *bhikkhu* or a group of *bhikkhus* excepting the *pārājika* offenses. Confession is done at any time as soon as a *bhikkhu* recognizes that he has violated a precept and must particularly be done in time for the Uposatha.[9] There are seven types of offenses according to the Pāṭimokkha. One of the categories, the *Saṅghādisesa* with thirteen major offenses, requires a special confession and penance with penalty and a group of twenty to decide if the offender has been rehabilitated. If so, he can return to his previous *bhikkhu* status. If not, penance with penalty will be imposed upon him.[10] The other six types of offenses may be exempted through confession. For the *pāṭidesanīya* category (with four offenses), there is the following confession:

"Friend, I have committed a blameworthy, unsuitable act that ought to be acknowledged. I acknowledge it."[11] This offense also requires a unique procedure for penance and penalties, which is addressed later.

The other five categories of offenses, according to the *Cullavagga*, can be absolved through the following face-to-face generic formula:

> Confessant: Friend, I have fallen into an offense of such-and-such a name. I confess it.
> Acknowledger: Do you see (the offense)?
> Confessant: Yes, I see it.

[7] Ibid., 275–276.
[8] Chappel, "Formless Repentance in Comparative Perspective," 254.
[9] Ṭhere are provisions in which the offender would have to deal with accusations by a *bhikkhu* or lay person and how the issue would be settled formally or informally. See Thānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code I*, 153–164; 182–186; 479–480; 550–554.
[10] Ibid., 179–181.
[11] Ibid., 573.

Acknowledger: You should restrain yourself in the future.[12]

Once confessed, the *bhikkhu* is considered "pure" and allowed to participate in the Uposatha. However, the confessant would have to undergo some form of disciplinary actions prescribed by the community to settle the offense depending on its severity.[13] All the listed offenses, classified according to their categories, have the standard procedures for the confessant to make amends. Once the procedure is followed through, the confessant would be allowed to continue his practice.[14] Due to the uniqueness of its offense, the *pāṭidesanīya* has its own procedure with penance and probation.[15] The other five types of offense usually require a confession and no further penalty. However, depending on the severity of the offense and intention and other circumstantial factors of the offender, it may call for a procedure and penance to clear his offense.[16] The purpose of the penance and penalties without any physical punishment is for the offender to develop a sense of remorse and conscience that will prevent him from consciously committing any similar or new offense again in the future.[17]

Briefly, the practice of confession in early Buddhism as evidenced in the Pali Canon is not a simple one-step process. It consists of (1) a face-to-face confession by the confessant to one or more *bhikkhus* and (2) the recitation of the Pāṭimokkha during the fortnightly session conducted in the designated uposatha hall. Let us closely examine the generic confession formula for the five types of offenses (a total of 206 offenses). It

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[12] Ibid., 573–576. The five categories of offenses are: *thullaccaya*, *nissaggiya pācittiya*, *pācittiya*, *dukkaṭa*, and *dubbhāsita*. The *Majjhima Nikāya* also provides a similar formula with some minor variations.

[13] Ibid., 542.

[14] Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code II*, 358.

[15] Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code I*, 509–517; Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code II*, 358–359.

[16] See Thānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code I* from chapters five to twelve for further details.

[17] Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code I*, 21–22; Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu, *The Buddhist Monastic Code II*, 358.

appears that whatever precepts a bhikkhu breaks, he just recites the formula and his transgression will be absolved. It should also be noted that karma, not the focus of this study, is not addressed in the confession process or in the Uposatha by the sangha. In his study on confessions in Indian religions, Christian Haskett clearly states that there is no absolution despite the fact that the offending *bhikkhu* confesses and is allowed to return to his sangha.[18] The Uposatha is classified as "Communal Repentance" by scholars due to the development of Buddhist repentance which will be addressed next.

II. Repentance in Chinese Buddhism

Following the development of Mahāyāna, Buddhist repentance (*chanhui* 懺悔)[19] (or rituals of confession and repentance)[20] began as early as the first century BCE and over a few centuries became a practice with soteriological goals once Buddhism reached Chinese soil. In its initial stage, Buddhism met with fierce opposition from Confucianism and the Chinese emperors as well as the Confucian elite. China, starting from the second century CE was in a state of civil war for decades and suffered frequent natural disasters and diseases. Its citizen could not rely on Confucianism alone for their spiritual needs to cope with wars and diseases. Coincidently, this was the period when the indigenous

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[18] Haskett, "Revealing Wrongs," 10.

[19] There are several definitions for *chanhui* found in the Chinese Buddhist canon as well as in the Western scholarship. In *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀, Zhiyi defines *chan* as 陳露先惡 "expressing and confessing one's unwholesome actions" and *hui* as 改往修來 "transforming the past and cultivating the future," T. no. 46, vol. 1911; according to Shi Darui 釋大睿, *Chan* is a transliteration of *kṣama* 懺摩 which means seeking forgiveness from others for one's transgression. *Hui* is a Chinese word meaning remorse (Shi, 35-36); in Rongxi Li's *Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia: A Record of the Inner Law Sent Home from the South Seas by Sramana Yijing*, 83-84: Yijing 義淨 (635-713) clarifies that *kṣama* means forbearance in Sanskrit. In the context of confession, "*kṣama*" means "please forgive me and do not be angry with me!" Thus, *kṣama* can be translated as repentance; and Chanju Mun, *Buddhism and Peace: Theory and Practice*, 386-387: According to Steven Heine, *kṣama* refers to "the act of penance or contrition, implying a sense of patience and confession, and to the determination to make reforms.

[20] Petra Rösch translates *chanhui* as ritual of confession and repentance. Citing Kuo Li-ying's French translation, confession et contrition, Rösch argues that "the action of confession itself should be reflected in the translation, as lengthy litanies of sins are enumerated and recited by the practitioner." See Petra Rösch, "The Fifty-three Buddhas of Confession," 115.

Daoism began to establish itself and Buddhism was sporadically brought into different parts of China via foreign monks and travelers. Both religions were able to create new religious scriptures and practices, in particular the Daoist rites of confession (to be examined in chapter three) and Buddhist repentance rituals, which eventually appeased the religious sensibilities of the Chinese in various strata of Chinese society. Both Buddhism and Daoism were able to succeed and gradually became state religions by the end of the sixth century.

Repentance can be considered as one of the many phases of Sinicization of Buddhism in the early medieval period. As early as the second century CE, various types of Buddhist scriptures were brought into different regions of China, one of which was repentance scriptures. A few repentance scriptures in Sanskrit from India were already in existence as early as the first century BCE, such as the *Triskandhaka,* probably before Buddhism was brought to China.[21] And two of the earliest repentance scriptures translated into Chinese approximately in the middle of the second century CE are *The Buddha Speaks of King Ajātaśatru Sutra* (佛說阿闍世王經)[22] and *The Buddha Speaks of Śāriputra Repentance Sutra* (佛說舍利弗悔過經).[23] Consequently, over the next four centuries, a total of sixty-one repentance scriptures were translated into Chinese. Thus, this demonstrates the popularity and success of the repentance rituals.

Briefly reviewing the repentance rituals, we find that they prescribe various techniques in terms of performance and can be classified into three types of rituals: (1) Communal Repentance, (2) Visionary Repentance, and (3) Formless Repentance, which

[21] Nattier, *A Few Good Men,* 45.
[22] T. no. 15, vol. 626.
[23] T. no. 24. vol. 1492.

are discussed below:[24]

1. Communal repentance 作法懺悔 or social confession: this type of practice, mostly done by monastics, can be found in both the Mahāyāna and Theravada traditions.[25] As discussed above, the ritual is performed when a monastic has violated any of the precepts (except the four *pārājika* offenses, which entail expulsion from the sangha). The confession must be done prior to the Uposatha which is discussed in Section I. This form of practice, in which monastics are brought together as a collective group, serves "to strengthen the bonds attaching the individual to the society of which he is a member"[26] and maintains "the moral purity of the sangha, the religious community."[27] The purity of the sangha is an affirmation of the presence of the Buddha's Dharma.[28] Since the ritual brings people together on a regular basis to renew both the sense of group membership and the sacred symbols that they represent.[29] In addition, this confession allows the monastics to adjust their internal interactions, maintain their group ethos, and restore a sense of harmony.[30] Again, the ritual is limited to Buddhist monastics only.

[24] There have been numerous theories on the practice of rituals and their purposes. See Catherine Bell's *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* and Ronald Grimes' *Readings in Ritual Studies*. However, due to the scope and its limitations, ritual theories are not covered in this research.

[25] Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan Qinggui*, 13. Since monks and nuns have different precepts, the recitation is held in separate locations. According to the confessional rituals on Uposatha 布薩差使悔過等法, the Buddhist nuns will send a representative to invite a Buddhist monk to preside over their ceremony.

[26] Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 25.

[27] N. Standaert and Adrianus Dudink, *Forgive Us Our Sins: Confession in Late Ming and Early Qing China*, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series, 55, Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2006, 108.

[28] Holt, "Ritual Expression in the Vinayapiṭaka: A Prolegomenon," 53.

[29] Stets and Turner, *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions*, 135-136.

[30] Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 29.

2. Visionary or auspicious sign repentance 觀相懺悔:[31] This type of repentance, found in various Mahāyāna scriptures, can be practiced by both monastics and lay people, especially when the laity want to "undergo ordination with the bodhisattva precepts of the *Brahma Net Sutra*."[32] For monastics, the bodhisattva precepts are transmitted last as part of their ordination.[33] Thus, this repentance is performed: (a) to receive the bodhisattva precepts and (b) if a monastic or lay person has violated any of his or her (Vinaya or bodhisattva) precepts (except the five grave offenses) and needs to purify his or her transgression.[34] To repent, according to Zhiyi, the transgressor chooses a repentance scripture to practice,[35] keeps his mind in a state of tranquility, and will eventually witness one of the auspicious signs (lights, halos, flowers, or Buddha rubbing one's crown). Any of these signs is an indication that the transgression or infraction has been eradicated and a confirmation of one's practice.[36] If no sign appears, it means that the effort has been to no avail.[37] However, according to the *Bodhisattva Stage*, if a bodhisattva commits a

[31] Weinstein et al., *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, 5. The *Bodhisattva Stage*, the *Brahma Net Sutra*, and the *Bodhisattva Adornments Sutra* provide rituals of purification and repentance in order to obtain a vision of the Buddha.

[32] Ibid., 7; Nattier, 117-121.

[33] X. no. 60, vol. 1127.

[34] Wayman, *Untying the Knots in Buddhism: Selected Essays*, 395-416. In Tibetan Buddhism, the *Upāliparipṛcchā* scripture, the names of the thirty five Buddhas, has been used by Buddhists to confess and purify their defilements. Once the defilement is purged, the participants will be able to see all thirty-five Buddhas which means that they have been liberated; Zürcher and Sander, 486-515.

[35] Zhiyi did not specify any particular Buddhist scripture. By his time, there were a few repentance scriptures circulating in China: *Methods on Eradicating Transgression by Repentance from Various Sutra* in three fascicles 眾經懺悔滅罪方法三卷 by Baochang 寶唱 (c. 495-528) of the Liang in 517, *Sutra of the Buddha Names* in 12 fascicles 佛說佛名經 (T. no. 14, vol. 440) by Bodhiruci 菩提流支 (?-527) of the Northern Wei in 524, and *Sutra of the Buddha Names* in twenty fascicles from Dunhuang 佛說佛名經敦煌本 in 557 (Bai 103). It appears that it is more important for the individual to repent with a state of mind in tranquility rather than selecting a particular text.

[36] Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission*, 89.

[37] T. no. 46, vol. 1916, p.485c18-c23.

major offence and loses a precept, he can repent in front of three or more people. He can then receive the bodhisattva precepts again. If there was no one to uphold the Dharma, he would give rise to a pure mind and recite: "I will never commit this transgression again. In the future, I will always uphold the moral precepts." Once he does, his transgression is expiated.[38] This type of ritual has a metaphysical or mystical dimension that may induce a sense of reverence in human beings.[39] However, the vision is subjective and cannot be confirmed or verified.

3. Formless[40] repentance (*Wuxiang chanhui* 無相懺悔): Performing this form of repentance could eradicate innumerable eons of major transgressions.[41] Also known as "the great repentance" (*Da chanhui* 大懺悔), this is the third mode of religious practice, or "repentance in a separate sanctuary"(*Biechang chanhui* 別場懺悔) for monastics as described by Zhiyi in the *Guoqing bailu* 國清百錄 and *the Great Calming and Contemplation* (*Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀).[42] Some of Zhiyi's elucidations on formless repentance include:

- "The practitioner must give rise to the mind of great compassion, pity all sentient beings, and examine deeply into the source of transgression. He will see that all dharmas are, themselves, void and tranquil--行大懺悔者應當起大悲心憐愍 一切深達罪源一切諸法本來空寂."

[38] Weinstein et al., *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, 25.
[39] Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, 16.
[40] Chappell, "Formless Repentance in Comparative Perspective," 258. Formless is commonly used in most translations. However, Chappell prefers the term "markless" because markless refers to the absence of any permanent attributes (*laksana*), which is the "mark of emptiness."
[41] T. no. 46, vol. 1916, p.486b28-b29.
[42] Gregory, "Tsung-mi's Perfect Enlightenment Retreat: Ch'an Ritual During the T'ang Dynasty,"48.

- "If one wants to eradicate transgression, he must turn inward and contemplate as such-若欲除滅但當反觀如此."
- According to the *Sutra of the Visualization of Samantabhadra* (*Puxian guanjing* 普賢觀經), when one contemplates that the mind itself has no mind and that dharma has no place to reside, one's mind itself is void. Then transgression and merit have no owner. All dharmas are the same way.[43] In other words, in contemplation, the nature of one's transgression or offense is in itself empty and cannot cling onto anyone--普賢觀經中說觀心無心法不住法我心自空罪福無主一切諸法皆悉如是.

  Another well-known Ch'an monk, Huineng 慧能 (638-713), known as the Sixth Patriarch of Ch'an Buddhism,[44] also spoke of formless repentance 無生懺悔 in *the Platform Sutra*. He defined that formless repentance[45] is the process by which the practitioner, in every moment of thought (past, present, and future), would repent the defilement of stupidity, deceitfulness, and jealousy and vow never to let it rise again.[46] This would eradicate his transgressions of the three periods (past, present, and future) and purify the three sources of karma (mind, body, and speech).[47] Both Zhiyi and Huineng claimed that performing formless repentance would eradicate one's transgressions from the past. It should also be pointed out that there was

[43] T. no. 46, vol. 1916, p.486a21-b15.

[44] Bai Jinxian 白金銑, *Tang dai chan zong chan hui si xiang yan jiu* 唐代禪宗懺悔思想研究, 17-18. Bai finds that Chan placed great importance on repentance in their practice from the 6th and 7th centuries during the Tang dynasty.

[45] T. no. 48, vol. 2008, p.353c18-354a01.

[46] Huineng and John R. McRae, *The Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, 46-48.

[47] T. no. 48, vol. 2008, p.353c16-c17; Bai, *Tang dai chan zong chan hui si xiang yan jiu*, 307.

almost no debate or doctrinal justification to show that repentance rituals were efficacious.[48] In review, the communal repentance mainly concerns the monastic communities while the second and third types of repentance, allowing the participation of lay devotees, are about social responsibility and commitment.[49] Further, the communal repentance and visionary repentance are said to be repentance at the phenomena level while formless repentance is repentance at the principle level.[50]

There have been several studies in the past few decades, to be reviewed in the following section, on the three types of repentance mentioned above.

III. Literature Review

Repentance has been one of the most popular rituals coming out of Mahāyāna Buddhism and was successfully incorporated into the regimens of the Buddhist religious life, monastic and lay, by the end of the early medieval period. It was "adapted and developed for various uses by different Mahayana groups with different interests."[51] The successful inclusion of repentance rituals in Chinese religious life is seen as an attempt by the Chinese Buddhists to establish this foreign religion, Buddhism, for the commoners.[52] There are two possible reasons, in my view, for the acceptance of Buddhist repentance practice and its inclusion in the Chinese religious life. First, it met the needs of the spiritual and religious sensibilities of most Chinese, the elite and the commoners. Second,

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[48] Williams, *Mea Maxima Vikalpa: Repentance, Meditation, and the Dynamics of Liberation in Medieval Chinese Buddhism, 500-650 CE*., 21.

[49] Mun, *Buddhism and Peace: Theory and Practice*, 384-385.

[50] Faure, "The Concept of One-Practice Samādhi in Early Ch'an," 104.

[51] Nancy J. Barnes, "Rituals, Religious Communities, and Buddhist Sutras in India and China," in *Collection of Essays 1993: Buddhism Across Boundaries: Chinese Buddhism and the Western Regions*, ed. Zürcher, E., and Lore Sander (Taiwan: Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Buddhist & Culture Education, 1999), 506-507.

[52] Yin Shung 印順, Hua yu ji II 華雨集二, 165.

it was to counter the Confucian elite's hostility and obstructions, ensuring Buddhism's survival.

Beginning in the middle of the second century CE of the Eastern Han, China experienced chaos, on-going civil wars, diseases, natural disasters, and occasional epidemics until the unification of China in the Sui 隋 dynasty (581-618). Many of the Han Chinese and other ethnic minorities living in this era were frequently dislocated and yearned for the ideal of Han unity.[53] China underwent profound social and political changes. This period also gave rise to the establishment of the Chinese indigenous religion, Daoism, as well as the introduction of Buddhism, which "fueled major renovation in Chinese tradition."[54] In addition, the era "proved conducive to the flourishing of new ideas and practices, and yielded fertile ground for Buddhism to sink its roots in China."[55] There was an urgent need for Buddhist scriptures as well as practical rituals. Consequently, Buddhist texts were translated and rituals adopted.

Foreign monks from India and Central Asia, with the help of native Chinese, were able to slowly translate and produce various types of Buddhist scriptures based on repentance, one of many topics of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The Chinese translations of two early Indian Mahāyāna sūtras, the *Ugrapariprcchā* (*Ugra*) and *Upāliparipṛcchā* (*Upāli*), contain the formula and ritual of confession of *Triskandhaka* which has become the bases for most repentance rituals. Nancy Barnes examines the contents and functions of the various extant Chinese translations from the second to the fifth centuries of the *Ugra* and *Upāli* in her article. According to Barnes, the goal of these two sūtras is about "how the

[53] Scott Pearce, Audrey G Spiro, and Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200-600*, 3.
[54] Alan Kam-leung Chan and Yuet Keung Lo, *Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China*, 1.
[55] Ibid., 11.

bodhisattva should conduct himself in the world while progressing toward the ultimate goal of perfect enlightenment."[56] She suggests that the *Triskandhaka* ritual serves as the source of expiating transgression by the bodhisattva, lay and renunciant, as well as their recommitment back to the path.[57] These are probably two earliest Indian Sanskrit-based texts claiming eradication of transgressions via repentance.

The earliest documented account of repentance ritual for the bi-monthly *uposatha* in early medieval China is attributed to Daoan 道安 (312-385) of the Eastern Jin 東晉 (317–420).[58] Most of the scholarly research in western languages has centered on the well-developed repentance rituals from the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties. Studies on repentance rituals in early medieval China are scanty and primarily in Japanese and few in Chinese. These studies primarily focus on the influence of Chinese religions and the historical development of various repentance rituals.

As part of the Mahāyāna text translations and production, Buddhas' epithet scriptures were also introduced to China at this time, fueling the growth of the repentance rituals. According to Wang Chuan 汪娟, there are a total of twenty-four scriptures based on the Buddhas' epithets, out of the sixty-one repentance scriptures. By venerating these scriptures, it was said that one could eradicate unwholesome karma, achieve exorcism and protection, and guarantee rebirth in the Pure Land. The Buddha's epithet scriptures have also influenced politics, art, culture, and Chinese society.[59]

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[56] Barnes, "Rituals, Religious Communities, and Buddhist Sūtras in India and China," 493.
[57] Ibid., 225.
[58] Yifa, *The Origins of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China: An Annotated Translation and Study of the Chanyuan Qinggui*, 8-16; Wu Yiyuan 吳藝苑, *Ci bei shui chan yu zhong guo fo jiao chan hui si xiang* 慈悲水懺與中國佛教懺悔思想, 18; 汪娟, 敦煌禮懺文研究, 23; Pei-Yi Wu, "Self-Examination and Confession of Sins in Traditional China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 39, No. 1 (1979): 10.
[59] Wang Chuan 汪娟, "*Foming jingdian he fojiao lichan de guanzi 佛名經典和佛教禮懺的關係*," 35-69.

By chronologically examining the repentance scriptures, Bai Jinxian 白金銑 concludes that the *ksama* practice (repentance rituals) changed over time. He states that the repentance ritual was influenced by the Confucian and Daoist thoughts and rituals during the Han Wei period. From the *Book of the Later Han*, Emperor Ming's 漢明帝 brother, Chu Wangyin (楚王英) actually repented for his transgression and fasted for three months in addition to offering robes to the foreign monks in the capital in 65 CE.[60] If this event was authentic, it could be the first account of a repentance ritual by a lay Buddhist in early medieval China. Bai notes that several early repentance scriptures were translated in the second century CE and that the idea in these scriptures is similar to the Confucian practice of self-reflection and self-transformation and Daoist ritual.[61] He does not offer any textual evidence of Daoist confession, which was already in practice in the middle of the second century CE.

The repentance scriptures translated during the Western and Eastern Jin dynasties (265-420) contain the elements of bodhisattva mind and precepts, wisdom, and Confucian filial piety with less influence from Daoism. In the Liu-Song period (420-479), repentance scriptures involved seeing one's self-nature (*zixing* 自性), meditation, and *samādhi*. From the Qi (479-502) to Liang (502-557) dynasties, repentance scriptures translated in these decades contain various soteriological purposes. The repentance scriptural rituals were later categorized by scholars into three types according to their

[60] Bai Jinxian 白金銑, "Weijin liuchao fijiao chanhui de shijian yu yiyun 魏晉六朝佛教懺悔的實踐與義蘊," 129-130.

[61] Ibid., 134-139.

functions: communal repentance, visionary repentance, and formless repentance.[62] By the middle of sixth century, repentance rituals were practiced for different soteriological goals.

In her book, *Tientai chanfa zi yanjiu* 天台懺法之研究 (*Research on Tientai Repentance Ritual*), Shi Darui 釋大睿 provides a general discussion on the early development of repentance ritual as well as a comprehensive list of repentance scriptures dating from the second to the sixth centuries CE. In congruence with Bai's argument, Darui reasons that repentance rituals in Chinese Buddhism are influenced by Confucianism and Daoism. According to the *Analects* and the *Mencius*, a Confucian, especially the ruler, would reflect on one's faults and express a sense of remorse. Then he would continuously perform good deeds to cultivate his virtue. As a result, the practice would resonate with heaven. This is one way to be granted protection and blessing from heaven and to avert disasters. Darui states that this practice is in accordance with the repentance thought in Chinese Buddhism and became the base of Buddhist repentance ritual.[63] It should be noted that confession in Confucianism would be done privately and individually. The practice was never done in public or in a communal group. Neither would the Confucian admit his shortcomings to any individual or to the public. In fact, Peiyi Wu finds that there was no such practice after examining "many school regulations and tracts on moral education" before the 15th century.[64] We can say that the confession prescribed in Confucian texts was mainly written for the rulers and court officials.

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[62] Bai, "Weijin liuchao fijiao chanhui de shijian yu yiyun 魏晉六朝佛教懺悔的實踐與義蘊," 167-169; Shi Darui 釋大睿, "Zhongguo fojiao zaoqi chanzui zi xing cheng yu fazhan 中國佛教早期懺罪之形成與發展," 325-326; Chappel, "Formless Repentance in Comparative Perspective," 251-267.

[63] Shi Darui 釋大睿, *Tientai chanfa zi yanjiu* 天台懺法之研究, 12-15; Shi Darui, "Zhongguo fojiao zaoqi chanzui zi xing cheng yu fazhan," 314-315.

[64] Wu, "Self-Examination and Confession of Sins in Traditional China," 22.

Darui also includes Daoist confession in her study: the Daoist confession prescribed in the *Taiping jing* (太平經) really "became characteristic of the early Daoist movements."[65] Daoist penitents at this time already practiced confession, assisted by Daoist priests, to avert disasters and cure diseases, and to cultivate merits and protection. They also held purificatory (*zhai* 齋) rituals and performed prostrations six times a day. Confessing one's transgressions and praying for protection have been part of the Chinese indigenous religion prior to the formation of Daoism. The *Taiping jing* prescribes purificatory rituals, confession, praying, and chanting the scriptures in addition to Daoist *fangshu* (方術), qi (氣), and good health.[66] According to Darui, Daoist confession became the foundation of Buddhist repentance. In addition, the enduring chaos and disunity of imperial China and natural disasters gave Buddhist adepts opportunities to skillfully adapt the practice of repentance rituals into Chinese Buddhism.[67] Surveying the Chinese Buddhist canon, Darui gathers sixty-one scriptures involving repentance dated from the Eastern Han (25–220 CE) to the Northern and Southern dynasties (420–589). All the scriptures appear to be devotional with certain soteriological goals. They prescribe different forms of repentance, from repenting the body, the six faculties, or the mind through veneration of the Buddhas or contemplation. The results these repentance scriptures describe range from eradicating the transgressions of the four *parājikā* and the five grave offenses, averting the fruits of unwholesome actions, achieving *samādhi*,

[65] Hendrischke, *The Scripture on Great Peace: the Taiping Jing and the Beginnings of Daoism*, 2006, 26.

[66] Shi Darui, *Tientai chanfa zi yanjiu*, 16-19; Shi Darui, "Zhongguo fojiao zaoqi chanzui zi xing cheng yu fazhan," 316-317.

[67] Shi Darui, *Tientai chanfa zi yanjiu*, 20-23; Shi Darui, "Zhongguo fojiao zaoqi chanzui zi xing cheng yu fazhan," 317.

increasing wholesome dharma, to attaining arhatship or *nirvāṇa*.[68]

Along with the repentance rituals, cults of deities such as Amitābha, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra were also being established, though not organized, in early medieval China.[69] In terms of textual lineage, the cult of Samantabhadra was solely based on one repentance text, *Samantabhadra Visualization Sutra* (SVS). In his dissertation, Cuong Mai analyzes the contents of the text with regards to the rites of repenting the six faculties and visualizing the empty nature of transgression.[70] Mai states that repentance is "a spiritual discipline, a constant process of purification" and "a skill to be cultivated, a discipline by which one can attain a refined state of existence and a reversal of the destiny of an impure being bound to an impure world."[71] He evidently finds that cults of Samantabhadra were holding purificatory rituals (*zhai* 齋) in many different areas in fifth-century China. These retreats were primarily held and organized by Buddhist monks.[72] The SVS could be interpreted as "a call to recite and chant the text itself as a part of the repentance liturgy."[73]

Despite the growth and popularity of repentance rituals and an abundance of literary proses on Buddhist repentance in Chinese Buddhism, the topic has received very little attention from scholars in the field of Buddhist studies. Bruce Williams cites several reasons why there has been a lack of interest in repentance by Buddhist scholars in his dissertation.[74] I would like to add (1) that obviously the Buddha did not expound

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[68] Shi Darui, *Tientai chanfa zi yanjiu*, 25-47; Shi Darui, "Zhongguo fojiao zaoqi chanzui zi xing cheng yu fazhan," 320-329.

[69] Mai, *Visualization Apocrypha and the Making of Buddhist Deity Cults in Early Medieval China with Special Reference to the Cults of Amitabha, Maitreya, and Samantabhadra,* 2009.

[70] Ibid., 268-272.

[71] Ibid., 273.

[72] Ibid., 289-291.

[73] Ibid., 293.

[74] Williams, "Mea Maxima Vikalpa," 2–16.

repentance in his discourses and (2) the act of prostration prescribed in many of the repentance scriptures appears to be a form of worshipping (and kowtowing), which most likely does not appeal to modern scholars. The works by Darui, Bai, and Wang only focus on the general historical aspect of Buddhist repentance and certainly are not critical in their analysis. My dissertation seeks to expand on their studies by closely studying the *Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Manjuśrī's Teaching of Repentance* 佛說文殊悔過經 (hereafter referred to as *Manjuśrī Repentance*) and some major repentance scriptures, translated during the early medieval period, and possibly determine the reasons why repentance rituals were popular and widely embraced by many Chinese.

Of the many repentance scriptures, the *Manjuśrī Repentance* is one of the few early scriptures dating back to the third century CE. For some unknown reason, this scripture has not been examined at all in either western or Chinese scholarship. The scripture centers on Mañjuśrī as the main speaker expounding the proper methodology of repentance to an audience of incalculable bodhisattvas with the standard 1,250 *bhikṣus*. The Buddha is briefly mentioned at the beginning and the end of the scripture to confirm Mañjuśrī's teaching.

By examining the scripture in the context of its ritual and contents, this dissertation attempts to carefully examine the contents and terminologies embedded in the scripture based on Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism and consider how repentance ideas resonate with the Chinese spiritual and religious sensibilities from the perspective of philosophy and culture. We may be able to understand why repentance scriptures and rituals received contemporary support from many Chinese, Buddhist and lay. We will also analyze the *Manjuśrī Repentance* from a ritual perspective and see how it may have

contained the structural format that is seen in later repentance rituals. The study also evaluates the compatibility issues of the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and a Daoist confession, *Petition for Healing Diseases* in a structural context. Thus, this dissertation is methodologically guided by the following questions:

1. What were some of the general cultural characteristics of Chinese society and conditions at the time of Buddhism's arrival that may have played a role in the formation and legitimation of repentance rituals?
2. What is the structure of the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and what are its components? What influences does it possibly have on later repentance rituals?
3. What are the distinctions in terms of structure and major components between the Indian Buddhist *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the Chinese indigenous Daoist rite of confession, *Petition for Healing Diseases*? How compatible are they?

IV. Methodology

The approach to this study is primarily philological, textual, and historical. The *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* will be carefully studied in its historical and social context. Further, I will review selected philosophical texts in pre-Buddhist China written before the second century CE in reference to the practice of confession and punishment in addition to some historical texts from the Han dynasty discussing the issue of amnesty by Chinese emperors. The purpose is to show that complimentary Chinese cultural characteristics already existed before Buddhism and in particular before the translation of repentance scriptures appeared in China.

Though the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* is written for liturgical purposes, it seems to have the format of a ritual. Thus, I will construct the ritual out of the scripture and compare it to two complete repentance rituals composed in the sixth and ninth centuries to see if there is any correlation between them. Lastly, I will investigate the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the Daoist confession from the structural perspective to see how divergent they are.

The limitations of this research are the scarcity of written documents on the practice of repentance rituals and their incorporation into Chinese religious life and paucity of archeological evidence such as inscriptions or edicts due to decades of civil wars and the displacement of many Chinese citizens in the early medieval period. We still do not know how repentance was incorporated into the liturgy of Chinese monastic life. Further, the lack of a movement or Buddhist leader exclusively focusing on the cultivation of repentance makes it a challenge to truly understand the acceptance of the practice by the Chinese, elite or commoners. Thus, I will have to make certain assumptions going into the study as well as when making my arguments. Lastly, it should be noted that much of the literature, Buddhist scriptures or historical texts, were for the most part written by and for the literati and cultured monks; again we are not at all certain how widely repentance was practiced by the general Chinese population due to the lack of documentation on them.

V. Chapter Summaries

Chapter one introduces the ritual of confession as practiced in Indian Buddhism according to the Pali Canon, and the three types of repentance rituals, and then presents a literature review on repentance rituals, the methodology, and chapter summaries.

Chapter two provides an in depth review of some of the characteristics of confession found in Chinese culture prior to the arrival of Buddhism in the second century CE: recognition, regret, and self-reproach posited in the Confucian texts and pre-imperial Chinese classics; prostrations in Chinese culture; voluntary surrender and confession according to the Chinese penal code as well as the granting of amnesty and pardoning criminals by the emperors throughout Chinese imperial history, with emphasis on the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) period. This will shed light on the culture and conditions of the Chinese at the time Buddhism arrived in China. The Chinese cultural characteristics, when examined thoroughly, literally resemble some of the significant features in the repentance scriptures.

Chapter three discusses the political environment and social conditions which provided an almost perfect fertile ground for both Daoism and Buddhism to flourish and take root in China in the early medieval period. The era witnessed China undergoing the most profound transformation in its history. Chinese living at that period yearned for a unified and harmonious China so they could live peacefully. Due to their spiritual longing, they sought ways to lessen their suffering. Further, many believed that they suffered because of their transgressions. Daoist priests from the Yellow Turbans and the Celestial Masters realized the opportunity and constructed various types of rituals for their devotees to purify their transgression, one of which was the Daoist rite of confession with different petitions serving numerous purposes.

In chapter four, the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* is examined in terms of its historical and social context along with its author, Dharmarakṣa, the various themes found in the scripture, and how this scripture can be turned into a repentance ritual. We will also see if

there was an influence of language from the Han dynasty and analyze the efficacy that enabled the repentance rituals to be accepted and integrated into Chinese religious life.

Chapter five compares *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* to Zhiyi's *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and Zongmi's *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat*. The aim is to look at the changes, if any, in terms of the structure and components of repentance rituals, in general, over the centuries. Second, I will explore *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the Daoist confession rite, *Petition for Healing Disease*, from the cultural and structural perspective. This will enable us to see the distinctions of each ritual and their compatibility for future integration and appropriation of each religion in a broader context. Lastly, we will discuss the historical development of repentance rituals over time in China as one phase of the Sinicization of Buddhism.

Chapter six concludes with a summary of the new research and arguments on the topic of repentance rituals, in particular, on the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance*. I will also offer some insights for further research on this topic.

CHAPTER TWO

Confessional Practices in Pre-Buddhist China

This chapter examines several characteristics of confession found in the Confucian texts and pre-imperial Chinese classics, voluntary surrender and confession in Chinese legal justice system, and the act of prostrations in the Chinese culture as well as the amnesty system throughout Chinese imperial history. The confession practices consist of fault recognition, regret, and self-reproach, which are discussed in many philosophical texts. Composed during or before the Warring States period, when China was in a state of war and chaos, the various forms of confession were aimed at the purification of the rulers and court officials. Most people at the time believed that wars and chaos, a sign of punishment from heaven, were the result of their improper conducts. Therefore, it was conceived that, by performing confession, it could purify their transgressions and they would be considered "gentlemen," especially the rulers and court officials. As a result, life would be brought back to an orderly state.[75] We see that confession is embedded in the belief surrounding the Chinese cosmos and governance of life.

One of the postures in performing confession is the act of prostration, an essential feature in many aspects of Chinese culture. Depending on the purpose and context, prostrations are meant to show one's humility and respect for emperors and elders, and in formal ceremonies, an admission of guilt and demonstration of veneration toward celestial beings and ancestors.[76] Prostration is common in many Asian cultures, including India and China, since ancient times. It is still a popular practice in Chinese culture today.

[75] Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 149–151.
[76] Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 105–108.

Related to the ritual of confession, there is a provision, dated possibly back to the Western Zhou, in the Chinese penal code for criminals to voluntarily surrender and confess their crimes with the authorities. As long as the crime was not severe, the offender would be allowed to go free if he voluntarily admitted his crime and made financial compensations to the victim.[77] This provision is very unique to China's legal justice system since ancient times and is rarely found in other countries.

The last, but not least significant, cultural characteristic is the act of pardon (amnesty) formulated and observed by many emperors throughout Chinese history even before the imperial period. Most Chinese emperors had a tendency to issue amnesties releasing prisoners of most crimes once every two years on average. The emperor in China was the most powerful figure who had the authority to free prisoners despite the fact that they had committed crimes, major or minor.[78] We will see in chapter four how the Buddhas (and bodhisattvas of the ten directions), similarly to the role of an emperor were implored to absolve the ritual performer's transgressions in the cultivation of repentance rituals.

The cultural characteristics briefly discussed above provide a glimpse into the philosophical, legal, and religious vicissitude of the emperors, the literati, as well as the court officials of pre-imperial China in regard to the practice of confession in their lives. They may have been the basis and motivation for the development and acceptance of wide-ranging repentance rituals by Chinese of all strata in the initial formation of Buddhism beginning in the Eastern Han dynasty. We will examine these characteristics

[77] Rickett, "Voluntary Surrender and Confession in Chinese Law," 797–798.
[78] Johnson, *The T'ang Code*, 184–189.

individually in the following sections and see in chapter four how they can be identified in many of the repentance scriptures.

I. Fault Recognition, Regret, and Self-reproach in Confucian texts and Pre-imperial Chinese Classics

The Warring States 戰國時代 (475-221 BCE) era was tumultuous and eventually witnessed the breakdown of China into seven states. Each state was ruled by a duke and his clans.[79] At the same time, each state was fighting the others and looking for strategies to survive and win. Various strands of philosophical schools were consequently founded and they competed with each other by claiming that their school would offer the Way of the ancient sages to unite and govern the empire. Some of these dominant schools were Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism, Legalism, Logicians, and Yin and Yang.[80] Each of these schools had its own rhetorical texts and commentaries which differed from each other in many aspects. By 221 BCE, the Duke of Qin conquered the other six states and finally unified China. He declared himself the emperor, Qin Shihuang 秦始皇 (r. 221-210 BCE) of the Qin dynasty (221-206 BCE). In this short-lived dynasty, Legalism (*Fajia* 法家) became the state ideology that triumphed over its competitors.[81]

After the Qin, China was ruled by the Western Han 西漢 (206 BCE-9 CE), Xin 新 (9-24 CE), and Eastern Han 東漢 (25-220 CE) dynasties. The early founding emperors of the Western Han, recognizing the failure of Legalism, deliberately chose Confucianism to be the state orthodoxy during the early Western Han, and Confucianism continued to be the state religion throughout most of China's imperial history. One of the reasons an

[79] Xu, *Ancient China in Transition: An Analysis of Social Mobility, 722-222 B.C.*, 39–52. The seven states are Qin 秦, Qi 齊, Chu 楚, Yan 燕, Han 韓, Zhao 趙, and Wei 魏.

[80] Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires*, 208.

[81] Xun and Chen, *Hsün Yüeh and the Mind of Late Han China*, 11.

eclectic Confucianism was successful was because Han Confucians at the time "on the one hand were open and flexible, syncretic and inclusive, and on the other hand they retained power from unifying the thought by controlling and containing other doctrines."[82] It was the effort of the eminent Confucian scholar, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179?-104 BCE), who took the initiative in developing a comprehensive and dynamic Confucian doctrine acceptable to the Han emperors.[83] Han Confucianism had "a universalistic and holistic view providing inescapable sanctions for the deeds of men and the ordering of society, and a place in the cosmos for the imperial system."[84] Dong decided to use the Confucian classics and also composed several treatises found in the *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu fanlu* 春秋繁露). He believed that people should be subordinated to the emperor and the emperor to the principles of Heaven, which would be responsive to his virtue. As a result, this would maintain social order and avoid disturbances from the natural world. This belief provided Han Confucianism its theological foundation favored by the imperial rulers. Han Confucianism covered many aspects of life, such as the metaphysical, theological, social, moral, and psychological.[85] All of these can be found in the Confucian texts and commentaries, some written a few centuries earlier, for learning and references.

The Confucian texts and commentaries pertaining to this dissertation are the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語), *Mencius* (*Mengzi* 孟子), and *Xunzi* (*Xunzi* 荀子), in addition to the *White Tiger Compilation* (*Baihu tong* 白虎通), the *Annals of Lu Buwei* (*Lushi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋), the *Disquisitions* (*Lunheng* 論衡), and the *Historical Records* (*Shiji*

[82] Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 83.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Twitchett and Loewe, *The Cambridge History of China. Vol. 1*, 754.
[85] Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 84–86.

史記). All of these texts contain references to recognition of fault (*guo* 過), regret (*huiguo* 悔過), and self-reproach (*zize* 自責). However, they are not part of any confessional ritual or liturgy; neither are they used to express one's own transgression to the public in Confucianism "which put so much emphasis upon propriety and discretion."[86] The references found in these narratives would concern the character development of a gentleman (*junzi* 君子).

A. Recognition of Fault (*guo* 過)

There are extensive discussions of recognizing one's fault and correcting it in the three Confucian texts. In the *Analects*, attributed to Confucius (551-479 BCE), there are several examples concerning the realization of one's fault and its eradication through contemplation, but they do not entail the process of how to eradicate faults.

"A person's various faults (*guo* 過) are all of a piece. Recognizing your faults is a way of understanding Humanity."[87] Here Confucius states that a man is virtuous when he realizes and contemplates on his own faults.

"Above all, be loyal and stand by your words. Befriend only those who are kindred spirits. And when you are wrong, do not be afraid to change."[88] Confucius advises that one possesses the quality of loyalty and makes friends with similar qualities. Further, if he makes a mistake, then he should work on correcting it. In the following conversation, Confucius is speaking to a messenger of Qu Boyu 蘧伯玉.

"Qu Boyu sent an emissary to see Confucius. Once they were seated, Confucius asked: 'What is your master working on?' 'He is trying to reduce his faults,' replied the

[86] Wu, "Self-Examination and Confession of Sins in Traditional China," 15.
[87] Hinton, *The Analects of Confucius*, 34.
[88] Ibid., 97.

man, 'but he is not having much luck.'"[89] From the dialogue, Qu Boyu, a court minister,[90] engages in doing the right things but has not been successful. Besides recognizing one's mistakes, one should correct them. "To be wrong without trying to change, that is called wrong indeed."[91] Lastly, gentlemen are not afraid to admit their mistakes and correct them[92] while petty men (*xiaoren* 小人) are hiding them.[93]

According to these examples, besides learning the Confucian classics and ritual propriety, one needs to concurrently observe one's faults and correct them in the process of training to become a gentleman. This is a continuing process of cultivation and contemplation. Further, once becoming a gentleman, there is a possibility that one can still make mistakes. If one does, one has to promptly address it, especially the ministers or court officials. Even though the examples in the *Analects* refer to men or gentlemen, they ultimately aim at the emperors as well as court officials, since they are considered gentlemen. They are involved in governing the empire and its bureaucracy.[94] The *Analects* serves the empire's political purposes although it is not clearly stated.

In *Mencius*, there are at least three references where Mencius offers his advice to the rulers or ministers on governing the empire. In a conversation with Chen Jia 陳賈 about the Duke of Zhou 周公, Mencius said: "In ancient times, when the noble-minded made mistakes, they knew how to change. These days, when the noble-minded make mistakes, they persevere to the bitter end."[95] Mencius specifically lamented at the character of the gentlemen of this time who did not realize their mistakes.

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[89] Ibid., 161.
[90] Ibid., 242.
[91] Ibid., 178.
[92] Ibid., 222.
[93] Ibid., 219.
[94] Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 102–117.
[95] Hinton, *Mencius*, 73.

King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 asked Mencius how ministers from royal families should treat their ruler. Mencius replied: “If the sovereign is making grave mistakes, they admonish him. If they have to admonish him over and over, and he still refuses to listen--they replace him.” For ministers from common families, Mencius said: “If the sovereign is making mistakes, they admonish him. If they have to admonish him over and over, and he still refuses to listen--they resign and leave his country behind.”[96] According to Mencius, the ministers, having exhausted their efforts, should either overthrow or leave their ruler should he refuse to change after making mistakes.

In answering Chenzi’s 陳子 question about the gentlemen’s characteristics when they take office, Mencius told him that gentlemen would learn and change in response to their mistakes. They would be prepared to work through chaos and worry. They would then gain people’s trust and confidence in their ability, revealed through their innate nature, to govern.[97]

> Here the dialogues are complete and the questions are different in nature than those from the *Analects*. Mencius (Mengzi 孟子, 372-289 BCE), influenced by his view that human nature is inherently good, views that through self cultivation one’s innate moral dispositions (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and a sense of right and wrong) can be fully developed to serve Heaven.[98] And if he, implying the ruler, does not recognize his wrong, then it means that he loses his Mandate of Heaven. Therefore, he has lost his ability to rule.[99] It also means that people have the power to bring order to their country.[100]

Lastly, *Xunzi* also offers its own take on the recognition of one’s faults. According to *Book 3-Nothing Indecorous*, a gentleman through his inner power, can criticize and correct others’ faults but not to exceed his limit. Neither will he slander the

[96] Ibid., 193–194.
[97] Ibid., 230–231.
[98] Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 84–86; Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, 17–18; Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, 163-173.
[99] Hinton, *Mencius*, xxiii–xxiv.
[100] Puett, *To Become a God*, 144.

faulted individual. He cannot accept rewards even when his superior is not aware of his shortcomings.[101] In *Book 6-On the Way of a Lord*, based on four guiding principles, the lord (*jun* 君) is an expert at constraining faults and refining people, in providing a way of living for his people, in giving men orders, and in providing principles. These four guiding principles allow him to preserve the Way and in turn the state.[102] Finally, in *Book 22-On the Correct Use of Names*, the gentleman thinks with an impartial mind, dwells in the Way, speaks humanely, and listens attentively. He is not distracted by his eyes and ears. He is not concerned with praise or compliments. According to An Ode, which is now lost:

> This long night drags on, I constantly ponder over my faults.
> If I do not neglect high antiquity,
> If I do not err in ritual and morality,
> Why be distressed over what men say?[103]

Xunzi (Xunzi 荀子, 310-230 BCE) theorized that human nature is evil but can be transformed through rigorous learning of the Confucian classics, self-cultivation, and ritual propriety. Heaven is nature, constant, and will not change by human actions.[104] The above examples show that a person, once trained as a gentleman, is able to realize and correct others' faults. He contemplates on his shortcomings and is indifferent towards praises or criticism. He is able to rule and protect the empire. In a broader context, the *Analects* focuses on the individual's recognition of fault while Mencius and Xunzi advise individuals, mostly court officials, to scrutinize others' faults as well as their own.

B. Regret (*huiguo* 悔過)

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[101] Xunzi and Knoblock, *Xunzi Vol. I*, 1988, 166, 175, 179–180.
[102] Xunzi and Knoblock, *Xunzi Vol. II*, 1988, 181–182.
[103] Xunzi and Knoblock, *Xunzi Vol. III*, 1994, 133–134.
[104] Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation*, 29–37; Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China*, 290–302; Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 76-80; Goldin, *Rituals of The Way*, xi-xvi.

The term *huiguo*, found in several pre-imperial Chinese classics, refers to a sense of remorse or philosophical reflection on one's past mistakes. In book 16, chapter 4 of the *Annals of Lü Buwei* (*Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋),[105] Duke Mu of Qin wanted to make a surprise attack on the state of Zheng, which was thousands of *li* 里 away. His minister, Jian Shu, foresaw the problems and advised against it. Despite Jian Shu's grave warning, Duke Mu went ahead and sent his army to attack Zheng anyway. The army made its way through the state of Zhou and headed toward Zheng, where they met two Zheng merchants. Through a conversation with one Zheng merchant, the Qin army thought that Zheng was fully prepared to defend itself. Therefore, they turned around and tried to return back to Qin. Unfortunately, the Qin army was attacked and its three leaders were captured by the state of Jin. Upon hearing the news, Duke Mu put on his mourning garb and went to his ancestral altar where he cried about the defeat to the spirits of his ancestors. To the public he acknowledged, "Heaven does not help the state of Qin. Since it made this Unworthy Man not heed the criticism of Jian Shu, we have come to this catastrophe."[106] According to this narrative, Duke Mu suffered great defeat for not listening to the advice of his minister. To demonstrate his regret, he dressed in mourning garb and cried at his ancestral altar. The acknowledgement of his mistake to the public would not have been approved of or done in Confucianism, especially with regard to the head of a state.

[105] See Knoblock and Riegel, *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, 27–55 for an analysis of this text.
[106] Ibid., 385–388.

The second reference can be found in fascicle four, titled "Catastrophe," of the *White Tiger Compilation* (*Baihu tong* 白虎通):[107] So why are there catastrophes from Heaven? It is to warn the ruler that he must be conscious of his actions and it is Heaven's desire to order him to regret his faults, cultivate virtues, and profoundly contemplate.[108] This discussion shows the belief in Mandate of Heaven by the Han emperors to constantly purify their actions via confession in order to be protected by Heaven.

In another narrative on the punishment by Heaven on the son of heaven, the *Disquisitions* (*Lunheng* 論衡)[109] has several accounts of individuals being pardoned by Heaven for expressing remorse or punished for their transgressions if they do not repent.

> Heaven inflicts its punishments on man, as a sovereign does on his subjects. If a man thus chastised, submits to the punishment, the ruler will often pardon him. Tse Hsia (子夏) admitted his guilt, humiliated himself, and repented. Therefore Heaven in its extreme kindness ought to have cured his blindness, or, if Tse Hsia's loss of sight was not a retribution from Heaven, Tse Hsia cannot have been thrice guilty.
> Is not leprosy much worse than blindness? If he who lost his sight, had three faults, was then the leper (whose name is Po Niu 伯牛 suffering from leprosy) ten times guilty?
> Yen Yuan (顏淵) died young and Tse Lu (子路) came to a premature end, being chopped into minced meat. Thus to be butchered is the most horrid disaster. Judging from Tse Hsia's blindness, both Yen Yuan and Tse Lu must have been guilty of a hundred crimes.[110]

Again, this narrative shows the belief in rewards and punishments by Heaven. Be it a commoner or a ruler, no one can escape Heaven's control. These are just a few of the

[107] See Loewe, *Early Chinese Texts*, 347–356 for a study on the authenticity and various versions of this text.
[108] Ban and Chen, *Bai hutong shuzheng*, 6,627.
[109] See Forke, *Lun-heng: Part I*, 8–13 for discussions on the study of this text.
[110] Ibid., 165.

many examples of the use of *huiguo* in the pre-imperial Chinese classics.[111] The next term to be considered that is associated with regret is self-reproach.

C. Self-Reproach (*zize* 自責)

In the process of expressing regrets, the transgressor usually blames himself for the wrong that he has done. Therefore, occurrences of *zize* are addressed in various circumstances in several pre-imperial Chinese classics. In book 18 chapter 2-*Sympathetic Emotions* (*ganlei* 感類)[112] of the *Disquisitions*, it retells the account from the *Book of Documents* (*Shujing* 書經)[113] in which King Tang of Shang 商湯 (1766-1753 BCE) blamed himself for the drought occurring in the first seven years of his thirteen-year reign. It was alleged that he accused himself of five or six types of faults and sincerely prayed to Heaven in the mulberry grove: "If I alone am guilty, may my guilt not affect the then thousand people, and if the guilt be theirs, may it fall on me alone." He then cut off his hair and clipped his nails, tied his hands to the back, and offered himself as a sacrificial victim. In response, rain immediately fell from the sky.[114] As early as the Shang dynasty, it was believed that when Yin and Yang was out of balance, calamities would arise. It was for the rulers to take responsibility for these problems by blaming themselves for everything and performing sacrifices.[115]

In addition, according to book 19 chapter 8, *Difficulties of Making Promotions*

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[111] Other texts containing the term *huiguo* are: the *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji* 史記), the *Lost Book of Zhou* (*Yizhou shu* 逸周書), the *Chronicle of Zuo* (*Chunqiu Zuozhuan* 春秋左傳), and the *Book of Han* (*Hanshu* 漢書).

[112] Forke, *Lun-heng Part I*, 1962, 56. Wang Chong 王充, author of *Lun-heng*, actually disputed the belief and argued that a thunderstorm was not the direct result of Heaven's anger.

[113] Forke, *Lun-heng: Part II*, 16. Footnote 4: This account does not exist in the extant *Shujing* but is mentioned in the third century CE *Genealogical Records of Emperors and Kings* (*Diwang shiji* 帝皇世紀) quoted in the tenth century CE *Imperial Readings of the Taiping Era* (*Taiping yulan* 太平御覽-chapter 83).

[114] Forke, *Lun-heng: Part II*, 182; Legge, *The Chinese Classics Vol. 3*, 190: Concluding Note.

[115] Forke, *Lun-heng: Part II*, 16.

(*junan* 舉難), of *the Annals of Lü Buwei*, it would be very difficult to use perfection as a standard to measure all men. A gentleman would make himself accountable according to the standard of morality. Further, he would hold others accountable according to their standards. Therefore, he would be conscientious of his actions and less likely to make mistakes. On the other hand, a lesser man would completely do the opposite. As a result, he would do whatever he pleased and would not blame himself for his mistakes that brought the destruction of his empire. Such men are found in kings Jie 桀 [of the Xia], Zouxin 紂辛 [of the Shang], and You 幽 and Li 厲 [of the Western Zhou]. Accountability and expression of regret were important characteristics found in gentlemen.[116]

In brief, historical records evidently show that people from the Zhou dynasty or earlier to the Eastern Han periods were concerned with the development of a gentleman and his relationship with Heaven. If there was calamity, the emperor would have to rectify his fault, else, he would be deemed a failure and be in need of replacement. By the Eastern Han, the Confucian texts focus on the process of education and self-cultivation for the intellectuals besides the emperor himself. In connection to confessing one's fault, people tend to prostrate or bow in most instances.

II. Prostrations in Chinese Culture

In the historical and traditional context, the act of prostrations (*guibai* 跪拜) or bowing has been a form of showing humility, respect, an admission of guilt, or veneration toward celestial beings and ancestors in Chinese culture since as early as the pre-imperial China. Prostration is certainly not unique in China, since it has been performed in other cultures as well. The textual source for prostrations can primarily be found in the *Records*

[116] Other books referencing the term *zize* are the *Book of Han* (*Hanshu* 漢書), *Biographies of Exemplary Women* (*Lienu chuan* 列女傳), and *History of the Later Han* (*Hou Hanshu* 後漢書).

of Rituals (*Liji* 禮記), one of the five Confucian classics dating back to the Warring States period. This compilation consists of ritual propriety and etiquette covering almost all aspects of Chinese life: moral, social, and religious activities of the Zhou aristocrats. The religious rituals mainly center on sacrifices performed by the rulers and became the political tools of the Zhou and later emperors.[117] Many of these prescribed rituals involve various types of bows (*bai* 拜) or prostrations (*jishou* 稽首) during the interactions by men at the time.[118] This is to show one's respect, humility, reverence, or deference in the hierarchical structure and the five human relations of the Chinese society.[119]

First and foremost is prostrating by the ruler during sacrifices to Heaven and the proper etiquette between the ruler and his ministers in the court. The ruler, considered the Son of Heaven and a sage,[120] would command much respect and power from his position. Therefore, to maintain the Mandate of Heaven, the king would be required to ritually perform sacrifices for the purposes of prayer and giving thanks to Heaven.[121] It was one of his primary duties as a king. He would be required to prostrate with his head to the ground in extreme reverence. The act showed his submission to Heaven which in turn would respond appropriately.[122] The ministers would also have to make sacrifices at the local temples of their prefectures in spring and autumn as well as the first and fifteenth of

[117] Legge et al., *Li Chi: Book of Rites Vol. I*, xxix–xxx. There is also the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) which primarily focuses on the state's administrative rules and regulations.

[118] See Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 107-108 for discussions on various forms of prostrations. In most of the references found throughout the *Record of Rituals*, it only specifies bowing (*bai* 拜) and prostration (*jishou* 稽首). It is not clear if *bai* means bowing while standing or kneeling. *Jishou* involves kneeling with one's forehead touching the ground.

[119] Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism*, 217. The five human relations are ruler-subject, father-son, elder-younger brother, husband-wife, and friend-friend.

[120] Ibid., 159.

[121] Legge et al., *Li Chi-Vol. I*, 448.

[122] Ibid., 445–446.

each lunar month. It was part of their official duties to be present and make prostrations on these occasions.[123]

In the court, when a eunuch or minister addressed the ruler on a daily basis, he would need to prostrate twice with his head to the ground.[124] This etiquette was prescribed in the Warring State period and thus it was subject to change throughout the history of imperial China.[125] When a minister went to meet with the duke of (another) state, the latter should bow to acknowledge the honor. A duke would have to perform a standing bow to a low-rank officer of a different state. A minister would return a bow to any of his officers regardless of rank.[126] Also, when a low-rank officer visited an officer of higher rank, he would have to bow at the gate before going in. And if the higher rank officer bowed to him, he would move to the side to avoid the honor.[127] When a messenger delivered an announcement from the ruler to the minister, the minister must kneel on the ground to receive the announcement.[128] The same etiquette applied when a gift by the ruler would be delivered to the minister's house.[129]

As another manifestation of this practice, prostrations are required in Chinese indigenous religious practices, especially in funeral services. In the state funeral where a king passed away, all ministers and guests from another state coming to offer

[123] Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, 353–355.
[124] Legge et al., *Li Chi-Vol. I*, 106.
[125] On the controversies over British ambassador George Lord Macartney's refusal to prostrate to Qing Emperor Qianlong 乾隆 (r. 1735-1796) in 1793, see Reinders, "The Iconoclasm of Obeisance," *Numen.* 44, no. 3 (1997): 296-322; Reinders, *Borrowed Gods and Foreign Bodies*, 100-112; Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar*; Hevia, "Sovereign and Subject: Constituting Relations of Power in Qing Guest Ritual" in *Body, Subject and Power in China*, edited by Zito and Barlow, 181-200.
[126] Legge et al., *Li Chi: Book of Rites Vol. I*, 1967, 105.
[127] Legge et al., *Li Chi: Book of Rites Vol. II*, 1967, 17.
[128] Legge et al., *Li Chi: Book of Rites Vol. I*, 1967, 86.
[129] Legge et al., *Li Chi: Book of Rites Vol. II*, 1967, 21–22.

condolences must bow to the deceased ruler.[130] Sometimes, the ruler would come to condole the passing away of his minister or a low-rank officer. The mourners would prostrate with heads to the ground while the ruler would say a few words, but he did not have to prostrate to the deceased. According to the *Book of Rites*, "When (the mourner) bows to (the visitor), and then lays his forehead to the ground, this shows the predominance of courtesy. When he lays his forehead to the ground, and then bows (to his visitor), this shows the extreme degree of his sorrow."[131]

In the funeral of an ordinary family, at the death of his father or mother, the eldest son would lay his head on the ground to welcome the guests. He then got up and bowed to them. For the death of her husband or son, the wife would prostrate with her head to the ground and then bow to the visitors who come to offer condolences.[132] There were instances where a son or daughter would wail, weep, become sad, and bow his or her head to the ground without regard to his or her demeanor. It would be considered the highest form of sorrow.[133]

Another major aspect of Chinese indigenous religion is ancestral worship. On the first and fifteenth of each lunar month, or whenever there is a memorial of a deceased relative, the Chinese would make offering and prostrate before the ancestral tablets dedicated to the spirits of their parents and ancestors.[134] It is a way for them to honor the deceased and share the happiness of their descendants.[135]

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[130] Legge et al., *Li Chi: Book of Rites Vol. I*, 1967, 104–105.
[131] Legge et al., *Li Chi: Book of Rites Vol. II*, 1967, 122–123, 144-145.
[132] Ibid., 41–42.
[133] Ibid., 378.
[134] Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, 217–225; Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 39.
[135] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 108.

Bowing between the host and his guests was required in social gatherings for drinking festivities and wedding ceremonies. At social gatherings, bowing represented honor, humility, purity, and respect between gentlemen. This led to no contention, no rudeness, no quarrels, and no disorder. Therefore, gentlemen did not suffer calamity as ordinary men did. That was the reason sages of the past observed this ceremony to attain such result.[136] In wedding ceremonies, the groom and bride would kneel and bow four times at an altar table representing Heaven and Earth. This was to receive blessing from Heaven and Earth. At the ancestral tablet, the couple would kneel and bow eight times toward the ancestral spirits. Subsequently they turn around facing each other and bow with their head to the ground four times.[137] The prostration at the ancestral tablet was to introduce a new member of the family to the ancestral spirits as well as to receive their protection. In addition, the prostration between the groom and bride was to show respect and acknowledgement of each other. Since pre-imperial China, bowing was required by the emperors in ritual sacrifices, by officers and ministers in court, and in most social settings, religious ceremonies, and wedding ceremonies. It is a sign of reverence, humility, or respect. Since pre-imperial China, when reporting to and addressing a judge, the individual would have to kneel in the court, especially when the offender had to confess to a crime.

III. Voluntary Surrender and Confession in Imperial China's Penal Code

One unique feature of imperial China's law and penal code is its treatment toward offenders who voluntarily confessed their crimes. Traditionally, China had a long history of law enforcement that might have been established as early as the Zhou dynasty 周朝

[136] Legge et al., *Li Chi: Book of Rites Vol. II*, 1967, 435–436.
[137] Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, 86.

(ca. 1046-256 BCE). Some scholars also believe that those laws already existed from as early as the Shang dynasty 商朝 (ca. 1600-1050 BCE).[138] Herrlee G. Creel concludes that some forms of [written] laws existed at least by, if not before, the Western Zhou.[139] Evidence showing the existence of law can be found in the *Announcement to the Prince of Kang* (康誥 *Kang Gao*) involving several conversations between King Wu 周武王 (r. 1046-1043 BCE) and Prince Kang. In the conversations, King Wu directed Prince Kang to establish some forms of laws and punishments in order to protect their people and ultimately keep the country in harmony. The king narrated several instances in which the law enforcer must be intelligent and righteous in interpreting the laws and administering punishment and killing.[140] From the conversations, Chinese law at the time already displayed the unique characteristic of its long history, "an ineradicable association of punishment with law."[141] King Wu tells Kang that the he needs to be virtuous in creating and applying these rules, designed to subdue evil.[142] Considerations, based on the principles of heaven, must be applied in order to ensure fairness and justice in each case.[143] The ruler himself and court officials would objectively examine each case and decide punishments accordingly.[144] Most significantly, he says to Kang. "But in the case of great crimes, which are not purposed, but from mischance and misfortune, accidental, if the offenders confess unreservedly their guilt, you may not put them to death."[145] According to the *Kang Gao*, emperors from the pre-imperial period were consciously

[138] MacCormack, *Traditional Chinese Penal Law*, 1; Herrlee Glessner Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 163–166; Derk Bodde and Clarence Morris, *Law in Imperial China: Exemplified by 190 Ch'ing Dynasty Cases*, 16.
[139] Creel, *The Origins of Statecraft in China*, 165.
[140] Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 391.
[141] MacCormack, 2; Creel, 450.
[142] Legge, *The Chinese Classics*, 383, 386.
[143] Ibid., 386–387.
[144] Ibid., 392–394.
[145] Ibid., 388.

concerned of the rules and their applications. Also, voluntary confession was already being considered in the legal system.

One of the worst offenses, according to King Wu, was being unfilial to one's parents and disrespectful toward the elders.[146] In this pre-imperial period, Chinese rulers already emphasized the ideal of filial piety a few centuries before the birth of Confucius. This is one of the rules that had been implemented in the penal codes of all later dynasties.[147] Since the Han dynasty, each succeeding dynasty used and modified the existing [penal] code from the previous dynasty.

The *Tang Code with Commentaries* (唐律疏議 *Tanglü shuyi*, hereafter referred to as the *Code*) from the Tang dynasty is the earliest version in extant in its entirety today.[148] The Code is considered the final work of the "Confucianization of the law" which began in the Han period.[149] In its first chapter, the Code presents Shang Yang 商鞅 (d. 338 BCE), a Legalist and prime minister of the Qin state, as the expounder of the canon of laws and reformer of the Qin dynasty, which unified China in the third century BCE. Further, archeologists found in Hubei province portions of the Qin code written on bamboo strips in 1975. These bamboo strips are concrete evidence of the earliest written laws, found in the Code, from the Qin dynasty that we have today.[150] Furthermore, in his scholarly research and reconstruction of Han law, Anthony F. P. Hulsewé has carefully tried to "assemble the fragments of Han law and legal practice, scattered through the

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[146] MacCormack, *The Spirit of Traditional Chinese Law*, 2; MacCormack, *Traditional Chinese Penal Law*, 2-3.

[147] MacCormack, *Traditional Chinese Penal Law*, 3.

[148] Johnson, 5. The Tang code is used in this dissertation to discuss the aspect of voluntary surrender and confession in penal code. The Tang Code also has several rules on amnesty which is discussed in section IV.

[149] Ch'ü, 274–279; Bodde and Morris, 27-29; Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law*, 5; and Bodde et al., *Essays on Chinese Civilization*, 182-184.

[150] Johnson, *The T'ang Code*, 7.

histories of the Earlier and the Later Han dynasties, as well as in other writings, and archeological finds."[151] His book yields a partial picture of Han law at the time but allows us to see how the remnants of the Han code became the basis of the penal code in later dynasties.[152] In other words, the Tang Code is based on the Qin and Han codes. Hulsewé concludes, "The main principles of imperial rule as laid down by the Han persisted, even down to details in both administrative and penal law."[153] In addition, recently excavated bamboo-slips of the Zhangjiashan 張家山 tomb 247 containing twenty-seven statues and one ordinance dated 186 BCE shows the partial existence of the Han code which adopted the Qin code's various original texts.[154] This is historical evidence that the Chinese law and penal code have existed in China for more than two millenniums.

The purpose of the Code is for its citizens to maintain proper order in society as well as in harmony with heaven and its cosmology.[155] The Code also aims to instill values and deter individuals from breaking the laws. The emperor, the ultimate authority, is regarded as an important connection between the human and natural order.[156] Ultimately, the Code is meant to serve as a centralized and bureaucratic state protecting its power throughout the whole empire.[157] In addition, a significant part of the Code centers on family relationships, with the intent to hold the family together. Four of the ten abominations, great irreverence 大不敬, unfilial piety 不孝, discord 不睦, and incest 內

[151] Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law*, 4.
[152] Bodde and Morris, *Law in Imperial China: Exemplified by 190 Ch'ing Dynasty Cases*, 55–59.
[153] Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law*, 11.
[154] Li and Wen, "New Light on the Early-Han Code: A Reappraisal of the Zhangjiashan Bamboo-slip Legal Texts," 126–143; Nylan and Loewe, *China's Early Empires*, 254–255.
[155] Johnson, *The T'ang Code*, 14.
[156] Ibid., 10.
[157] Ibid., 12.

亂, deal with offenses disrupting and harming family members and their relatives.[158] Family kinship is an important characteristic of the Chinese culture, influenced by Confucianism. The Code can be regarded as the source of power from the emperor and must be strictly followed.

The Code consists of two parts in 502 articles: part one (Book I) is the general principles of criminal law with 57 articles, and part two (Book II-XII) covers the specific offenses with the corresponding punishment for each offense, for the remaining 445 articles. The article relevant to this dissertation is Article 37, "Confession of Crimes that Have Not Yet Been Discovered," found in Book I: General Principles. The rules on confession, concealment, and accusation of relatives were in existence in the Han, though their content and when they were introduced into the code is not certain.[159] In pre-imperial and imperial China, voluntary confession was very important in its judicial system. If a crime was committed and there was confession, it would allow the judge to render his judgment and close the case. Otherwise, some type of torture might be exercised in order to obtain confession from the offender. Therefore, the traditional legal system of China uniquely designed a law with special provisions regarding the act of voluntary surrender and confession, known as *zishou* 自首,[160] before the crime is discovered.

It is not certain when the law on confession was introduced into the Chinese legal system. The earliest written account of confession is found in Chapter 118 of the *Historical Records* (*Siji* 史記) by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145 or 135 BCE-86 BCE). In

[158] Ibid., 69–82; MacCormack, *The Spirit of Traditional Chinese Law*, 2.
[159] MacCormack, *Traditional Chinese Penal Law*, 162.
[160] Rickett, "Voluntary Surrender and Confession in Chinese Law," 797. The term *zigao* 自告, transliterated as voluntary surrender, was used in pre-imperial period until the Han dynasty.

brief, the account narrates that, in 122 BCE, Prince Liu Xiao 劉孝, son of king of Heng Shan 衡山, was accused by the authorities of hiding Chen Xi 陳喜 who was arrested. Liu was knowledgeable of Chen and Qiu He 救赫 plotting to dethrone the emperor with the king of Heng Shan. Liu heard that those voluntarily confessing their crime would possibly be found not guilty of it. He reported the plot to the commandment of justice and was pardoned by the emperor.[161] This account suggests that the law on voluntary confession was already in practice in the Han dynasty and most likely earlier.

Article: 37.1a states, "In all cases where there is confession of crimes that have not yet been discovered the crime will be pardoned." Its sub-commentary explains that "if persons are able to correct their faults and come and confess their crimes, they will all gain pardon."[162] This article clearly defines the outcome of a case if the offender takes the initiative to confess the crime as long as it has not been discovered by the authorities. However, there are conditions that the offender will have to meet in order to be pardoned and free. Specifically, if the offense involves illicit goods, they must be returned to the owner. If the goods have been consumed or lost, then the owner must be repaid. If the case is about robbery, then the payment to the owner must be doubled. Even if there is an amnesty, the illicit goods should still be returned or repaid.[163] In the case where the offender is being investigated for a minor crime, if he also is involved in a major crime and confesses to it, the law of confession still applies and he can be pardoned.[164]

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[161] Sima and Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China Vol. 2: The Age of Emperor Wu*, 390–392.
[162] Johnson, *The T'ang Code*, 201.
[163] Ibid., 201, 184–189.
[164] Ibid., 202.

Article 37.1a also takes into consideration that someone, be it a relative or not, can confess on the offender's behalf. "Sending a representative to confess is the same as confessing oneself."[165] Therefore, the same rule applies to the case. If the offender does not completely confess to the crime, he will be punished as if he has not confessed. But if the punishment is a death sentence, then it will be reduced by one degree.[166] Further, in the case where the offender knows that someone will accuse him in court or has first fled but confesses to the crime, his sentence will be reduced by two degrees. However, he must be present in court when the judge decides the outcome of the case else he will not be pardoned.[167]

Lastly, there are also exceptions for which voluntary surrender and confession cannot be considered. Nor can the offender be pardoned. This exception applies to an offender who intentionally injures or wounds someone, or the stolen articles (seals, items that ordinary citizens cannot possess) cannot be returned. In addition, a member of the inferior class having illicit sexual intercourse is not deemed to deserve pardoning. Those who are unauthorized to study astrology and astronomy will be prosecuted despite confession.[168] These exceptions served to protect the empire and ensure justice for the victims.

Thus, Chinese laws from pre-imperial and imperial periods allowed remission of punishment for offenses already committed when the crimes had yet to be discovered by the authorities, provided goods or payments were made to the owner(s). Crimes with the intention to injure or kill could not be pardoned even if the perpetrator(s) voluntarily

[165] Ibid., 202–203.
[166] Ibid., 204.
[167] Ibid., 207.
[168] Ibid., 208–209.

confessed. The rule on voluntary surrender and confession was part of the justice system in accordance with Chinese philosophy and worldview regarding restoring harmony and preserving the natural world after a disruption by criminals. "Therefore, as mentioned above, an offense which could be cancelled out by repentance and restitution required no punishment."[169] The inclusion of voluntary surrender and confession in the penal code is very unique in Chinese culture during the pre-imperial and imperial periods. The Chinese justice system appeared to be lenient toward those who made mistakes and allowed them a chance to be integrated into society if they sincerely admitted their crimes.

IV. Amnesties and Acts of Grace

Amnesties (*Ense* 恩赦 or acts of grace), decreed by Chinese emperors, have played a significant role in China's justice system throughout Chinese history for more than two millenniums. Since ancient China, it was believed that those ordinary citizens who committed crimes would be punished via the legal justice system. However, during the process, there might be miscarriages of justice and justices deemed too long which were often thought to be responsible for disturbances in society and natural forces. Further, in the Western and Eastern Han, most of the elite sincerely believed that human misconduct could potentially lead to catastrophic disasters and illnesses. Therefore, documented sources before the early medieval period advised that criminals be freed, those uncaught be forgiven, ongoing cases be dismissed, men sentenced to death be pardoned, and those in exile allowed to go home.[170] The amnesty system is a unique and prominent feature in Chinese justice system that is not seen in other cultures.

[169] Rickett, "Voluntary Surrender and Confession in Chinese Law," 813.
[170] McKnight, *The Quality of Mercy*, 113.

This practice of amnesty can be traced to the Western Zhou 西周 (ca. 1027-771 BCE) and evidently became a periodic observance by Chinese rulers since then. It initially began with King Wu of Zhou, who expressed his leniency toward those committing crimes through mishaps or without intention.[171] Soon after, it became a periodic tool of political acts by Chinese emperors to demonstrate their mercy and fairness toward those under their rule. They believed that by declaring these amnesties they could also bring order to the world.[172] Thus, it would allow them to keep everything, including their enemies, under control.

In China, an amnesty (or act of grace) was an imperial order by an emperor to free criminals or reduce their sentences in the judicial system. Generally, the order usually pardoned offenders who committed ordinary crimes. In cases of a great act of grace, criminals guilty of heinous crimes, former traitors, and villains were also freed. All of these people would be allowed to return home and reintegrate back to society, giving them another chance to restart their lives.[173]

The textual sources for most of these amnesties, including acts or great acts of grace, mostly come from historical, philosophical, and ritual texts such as the *Book of Documents* (書經), *Commentary of Zuo* (左傳 *Zuo Zhuan*), *Rites of Zhou* (周禮), *Guanzi* (管子), and *Book of Rites* (禮記). These texts provided the emperors inspiration and justification when they decided to issue amnesties or great acts of grace. There are many accounts of rulers issuing amnesties for different reasons and arguments. According to the *Book of Documents* and *Zuo Zhuan*, people unintentionally committing offenses were to

[171] Ibid., 2.
[172] Ibid., 3.
[173] Ibid., 2.

be pardoned while those repeatedly committing heinous crimes would be put to death.[174] The *Rites of Zhou*, influenced by Confucianism, endorsed a greater decentralization of authority to grant pardons. It states that court officials from various offices had the power to reduce punishments or free criminals from death row. Further, pardons should be granted in times of natural disasters or major epidemics. The book had a much more radical view by asserting that court officials should listen "to the voice of the people asking for execution or pardon. If the people say 'Kill,' the Lesser Overseer of Brigands kills; if the people say 'Pardon,' the Lesser Overseer of Brigands pardons."[175] The *Guanzi*, inspired by cosmological-numerological thought, advises that the proper behavior (of the ruler) during springtime is to show benevolence and mercy by pardoning offenders and freeing people who are being detained for investigation. Spring is the season of birth and growth; by freeing criminals, the ruler's act would be in tune with nature and preserve it.[176] In addition, the *Book of Rites* presents specific details for each lunar month in regarding to handling down pardons and punishments by the ruler.

> In the second month of Spring [the Son of Heaven] orders the appropriate officials to visit the prisons, to stop the use of fetters and manacles, to forbid the inflicting of arbitrary beatings, and to put a stop to criminal accusations and trials…
> In the first month of Summer…they decide cases for which the punishments are light; they make short work of small crimes, and liberate those who are in prison for small offenses…
> In the second month of Autumn…beheading and [the other] capital punishments must be according to [the crimes] without excess or defect…
> In the second month of Winter…if there be among [those hunting or gathering in the forests] those who encroach on or rob the others, they should be punished without fail.[177]

[174] Ibid., 2–4; Chen, *Huang en hao dang*, 18-20.
[175] McKnight, *The Quality of Mercy*, 6.
[176] Ibid., 10.
[177] Ibid., 10.

We see that the attitude toward the amnesty system was philosophically influenced by Confucianism, cosmology, and the Decree of Heaven and changed over time. Further, these sources do not distinguish between act of grace and great act of race--neither do they prescribe specific instructions for when and how often the emperors should issue amnesties. Therefore, the type and frequency of amnesties issued usually were at the emperor's discretion and actually depended upon his personality and style.[178]

One of the purposes of the amnesty system was to reinforce the central role of the emperor and the extent of his power. He wanted to show that he, as an authoritative figure, had the ability to set things right and bring order back to his empire.[179] He also wanted to lead as an example for his ministers and their subordinates to follow.[180] The amnesties moreover demonstrated his concern for the welfare of those unjustly accused or imprisoned and his merciful benevolence. The amnesty system was seen as "a reflection of the belief that the emperor had the power to cleanse individuals of their taint and reintegrate them into the social body."[181] Yet another beneficial result was reducing the perennial overload of the judicial systems. It also spared the judicial personnel from fines and punishments that they would otherwise pay for outstanding and long delayed cases in their hands.[182] Finally, the amnesty system also worked in place of a statute of limitations. Traditionally, the Chinese legal system had no clear provision specifying the length of time in which a case could be raised. With the amnesty system, no cases older than a few years could be brought to court.[183] Therefore, the victims would not be able to file

[178] Ibid., 20.
[179] Ibid., 11, 17.
[180] Ibid., 2.
[181] Ibid., 113.
[182] Ibid., 120.
[183] Ibid., 120–121.

charges against the criminals in the court of law and that criminals would not be prosecuted after a certain period of time.

I will discuss in detail the amnesty system in the Qin/Han dynasties and early medieval period in terms of its purposes and frequency of implementation. It is believed and argued that amnesties would have been issued in times before the Qin dynasty; unfortunately, due to the lack of written records, it is not possible to research and provide any concrete evidence.[184] During the Warring States (475-221 BCE), several kings, predecessors of the Qin's first emperor, Qin Shihuang 秦始皇 (259-210 BCE), had actually granted many amnesties, including several great acts of grace. There is an account of pardoning more than three hundred men for killing a good horse by Duke Mu 秦穆公 (r 659-621 BCE) in the *Historical Records* which, according to McKnight, became the source of issuing amnesties for many emperors. They granted at least six amnesties, two of which were great acts of grace. McKnight also notes that the kings tended to issue amnesties on the occasion of their accession to the throne.[185] These amnesties were to demonstrate their benevolence toward their citizens. After unifying China and declaring himself the emperor, Qin Shihuang did not issue a single pardon during his eleven-year reign. After his death, his son became emperor and issued a great act of amnesty amidst military defeat but he was overthrown, effectively ending the Qin dynasty.[186] We see that the Qin dynasty, though its government was primarily based on Legalism, still offered pardons to offenders.

[184] Ibid., 24.
[185] Ibid., 12–14.
[186] Ibid., 14–15.

Following the Qin, emperors of the Han dynasties, especially the first emperor Han Gaozu 漢高祖 (256-195 BCE), set precedent for the tradition of amnesties that impacted China's judicial system for almost two millenniums. In a span of almost four hundred years, most Han emperors issued many amnesties on any occasion, regardless of whether it was auspicious or not, and with greater frequency.[187] McKnight finds that Han Gaozu granted nine amnesties in just ten years.[188] He might be considered the only emperor who granted numerous amnesties with a high frequency rate even though he was significantly influenced by Legalism and aware of the Qin's harsh political policies.[189] According to the records of Gaozu's acts of grace and great acts of grace, he issued the most amnesties pardoning criminals committing minor, major, and heinous crimes. He also forgave outlaws, rebels, and officials and ministers who had committed crimes and not been persecuted.[190] Emperors of the Western Han after Gaozu followed his example and continued this tradition of "comprehensive act of judicial mercy."[191] The emperors of the Eastern Han likewise continued this policy, issuing amnesties at a frequency of once every 1.2 years to once every 3.75 years. Even Wang Mang 王莽 (r 9-23 CE) who ruled China under Xin dynasty also issued nine amnesties in seventeen years.[192] Further, in the Eastern Han, there were more great acts of grace compared to acts of grace.[193] The question is why did most emperors of the Western and Eastern Han dynasties frequently issue amnesties? It should be noted that not all amnesties were documented. Closely examined, the amnesties granted were not associated with any specific auspicious events.

[187] Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law.*, 225; Chen, *Huang en hao dang*, 23.
[188] McKnight, *The Quality of Mercy*, 24.
[189] Ibid., 12–13.
[190] Ibid., 16.
[191] Ibid., 13; Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law.*, 226-242.
[192] McKnight, *The Quality of Mercy*, 24–25.
[193] Ibid., 34.

It is speculated that it was due to the Western and Eastern Han's religious and philosophical world views as well as short-term political considerations.[194]

After the fall of the Eastern Han, the tradition of amnesties continued from the early medieval period, with sporadic records, through the Tang dynasty. The early medieval period features several unique changes to the amnesty system. Sources show that amnesties were granted under the Northern Wei (396-529), with several great acts of grace.[195] One of the features in this period was the one hundred-day limit on the pardon itself beginning with Liu Song (420-479) to the Tang and later dynasties. As long as the offenders came forward within the specified time limit, they would be pardoned according to the proclamation.[196] The second feature is the expungement of the offenders' criminal records during a great act of grace, which dated back to the Southern Qi 南齊 (479-502). An act of grace would still leave the offender's record in the judicial system.[197] This feature did not exist in the Han's amnesties. The last, but not least, feature is the absence of granting benefit to offenders in religious groups, mainly Buddhist and Daoist, in the Tang dynasty.[198] Surprisingly, the amnesty system did not expressively pardon religious offenders even though both Daoism and Buddhism had a prominent presence in the imperial courts. The two great acts of grace that included pardoning religious groups occurred in 711 CE and 738 CE.[199]

McKnight reports that a great act of grace was granted once every eighteen plus months from the Western Jin dynasty 西晉 (265-420) to the end of the Tang in 907. The

[194] Ibid., 25–26; Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law*, 249.
[195] McKnight, *The Quality of Mercy*, 38.
[196] Ibid., 43.
[197] Ibid., 47.
[198] Ibid., 45.
[199] Ibid., 140.

Southern Qi and Liu Song 劉宋 (420-479) dynasties were most generous offering a great act of grace every thirteen months. On the other hand, the Northern Qin 北齊 dynasty (550-577) was restricted to a great act of grace every twenty-seven months.[200] From the above statistics, offenders of major and minor crimes in almost all categories could expect to go home in either a little over a year or two and a half years. They would not be ever persecuted again--this led statesmen and court officials to voice their concern about the injustice as well as the fact that amnesties did not deter crimes.[201] Kuang Heng 匡衡, Chancellor of the Western Han, said: "After these great amnesties, villainy and evil do not decrease or stop; when today a great amnesty has been granted, the laws are transgressed tomorrow…If the fundamentals are not changed, even annual amnesties will make it difficult to have the punishments instituted but not used."[202]

V. Chapter Conclusion

In summary, the ideology of confession in Chinese culture was already developed as early as the pre-imperial period and can be found in many aspects of Chinese life. "Repentance and humanity were closely embedded in Confucian thinking, and indeed were among its striking facets."[203] As the first point of note, many references on confession are illustrated in the Chinese historical and philosophical treatises as well as the Confucian texts. A closer look at the aforementioned texts, according to the characters in those references, reveals that confession was initially written for rulers to perform sacrifices and repent to Heaven. Therefore, we find that a ruler would have to publicly

[200] Ibid., 71.
[201] Ibid., 35–36.
[202] Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law.*, 248.
[203] MacCormack, *The Spirit of Traditional Chinese Law*, 121.

perform penitence for catastrophes else he would be overthrown.[204] Confession found in the Confucian texts in later periods focus on the development of the gentleman for most educated Confucians.

The second feature that merits attention is the fact that prostration and bowing were part of the court rituals, social relations, and religious practices as prescribed by the *Record of Rituals*. Prostration was also integrated into part of Chinese religions, mainly Buddhism and Daoism, as a form of practice throughout imperial China. Many of these rituals have been transmitted through two millenniums and some are still being observed in ancestral worship and wedding ceremonies in modern day China.

Thirdly, since pre-imperial times the Chinese penal code had specific provisions to pardon criminals who voluntarily confessed their offenses. Confession, mutual concealment, and accusation, as a totality, are considered an example of "economy of means."[205] If a person confessed to his crime and met the requirements according to the Code, he would be pardoned and allowed to be integrated into society. This lessened the burden on the Chinese court and prison system.

The last characteristic that I delineate is how the amnesty system is a unique feature of imperial China that traces its roots to the Zhou dynasty and continues through its imperial period. The system shows the emperors' virtue, humaneness, and power on the one hand; it gives offenders a chance to return to society on the other.[206] It certainly eased the burden on the legal system, though it was not without critics. The emperor was seen as a powerful figure who had the authority to eradicate one's transgression.

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[204] Baum, "Ritual and Rationality: Religious Roots of the Bureaucratic State in Ancient China," in *The Early State, Its Alternatives and Analogues*, ed. Leonid E. Grinin (Volgograd: Uchitel Publishing House, 2004), 199.

[205] MacCormack, *The Spirit of Traditional Chinese Law*, 158.

[206] Hulsewé, *Remnants of Han Law.*, 249.

These are the cultural characteristics in practice from pre-imperial and imperial China. They provide the background for an understanding of the philosophical and religious vicissitudes of the Chinese during the Qin and Han periods prior to the unanticipated arrival of Buddhism in late second CE and may arguably be considered as the sources for the development of repentance rituals and the genre of repentance literature. This leads to chapter three, which is about the political climate and social environment as well as the confessional and repentance practices of Daoism and its religious movements.

CHAPTER THREE

Daoist Rite of Confession in the Early Medieval Period

The four centuries following the Eastern Han can be grouped into three phases: (A) the Three Kingdoms (San guo 三國: 220-265) and the Western Jin dynasty (Xi jin 西晉: 265-317), (B) the Eastern Jin (Dong jin 東晉: 317–420) and the Sixteen Kingdoms (Siliu guo 十六國: 304 to 439), and (C) the Southern and Northern Dynasties (Nanbei chao 南北朝: 420 to 589). These centuries witnessed the geographic division of China into several empires and the invasion of non-Chinese rulers in the North until the unification of China in the late sixth century by the Sui dynasty (Sui 隋: 518-618).[207] This period also resulted with extraordinary growth in aesthetics, ethics, hermeneutics, literature, and religion that "left an indelible mark on the subsequent development of Chinese thought and culture."[208] In particular, China experienced the development and rise of a foreign religion, Buddhism, and its indigenous religion, Daoism; both religions actively and skillfully competed for recognition as state religion. In this chapter, we will review the political background and social climate in this era and the popular rites of confession in religious Daoism beginning from the mid-second century.

I. The political background and the Social Climate

A. The Three Kingdoms and the Western Jin dynasty

The Three Kingdoms period was the first in a series of disunion of China's empire though it was temporarily united by the Western Jin dynasty for approximately five decades, with the last two decades descending into a civil war. From the middle of the second century CE, the Eastern Han began to crumble with the rise to power of the

[207] Harrist, *The Landscape of Words*, 17–18.
[208] Chan, *Interpretation and Literature in Early Medieval China*, 1.

eunuchs in 168 and the 184 major rebellion by the Daoist cult, Way of the Great Peace 太平道 (also known as Yellow Turbans), founded by three brothers Zhang Jue 張角 (d. 184), Zhang Bao 張寶 (d. 184), and Zhang Liang 張梁 (d. 184) in 170.[209] The Yellow Turbans were quickly crushed within a few months but the empire was further weakened with the installment of a child emperor, Xiandi 獻帝 (r. 189-220), by General Dong Zhuo 董卓 (d. 192) who basically controlled the court.[210] After Dong Zhuo's death, Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220), another powerful general, rose to power in court. This sequence of events signaled the weakness of the Eastern Han and the different factions arising to power as a result and served as the catalysts leading to the China's political disunion for almost four centuries.

Upon Cao Cao's death, his son, Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226), dethroned emperor Xiandi and declared himself Emperor of Wei 曹魏 (220-265) in 220. This also led Liu Bei 劉備 (161-223) to immediately proclaim the establishment of Shu Han 蜀漢 (221-263), located southwest of Wei, in 221 and Sun Qun 孫權 (182-252) Emperor of Wu 東吳 (229-280), located southeast of Wei, in 229. The three states, also called the Three Kingdoms, were in constant battle with one another. Wei was the largest of the three states with stronger armies and, under the advice of the general Sima Zhao 司馬昭 (211-265), invaded Shu in 263. In 265, Sima Yan 司馬炎 (236-290), Sima Zhao's son, took over the throne and made himself the emperor of the Jin dynasty 晉 (265–316), which

[209] Ebrey, *China*, 70; Twitchett and Loewe, *The Cambridge History of China. Vol. 1*, 801–802; Hook and Twitchett, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of China*, 156; Twitchett and Fairbank, *The Cambridge History of China*, 814-815; Macgowan, *The Imperial History of China*, 126–127; Levy, "Yellow Turbans Religion and Rebellion at the End of Han," 214.

[210] Macgowan, *The Imperial History of China*, 128–133; Watt and Harper, *China: Dawn of a Golden Age*, 3.

was later renamed as Western Jin 西晉. By 279, the Jin defeated the Wu and finally unified China ending six decades of wars and division.[211] Repeating history the last Wei emperor suffered a similar fate to that of the Eastern Han's last emperor. Thus, China experienced a series of civil wars between the three states until it was temporarily united by the Jin.

Besides the chaos and wars beginning from the late Eastern Han, there were several changes taking place that are worth addressing. The first is the Nine Rank System (*Jiupin guanren fa* 九品官人法), a system of civil service recruitment, created by the Wei dynasty to choose local talented men to serve the government. Unfortunately, it soon became corrupted with powerful families securing the best positions for their male relatives. Thus, men without talents were able to secure the highest positions in the bureaucratic ladder.[212] Another event, considered most important, is the migration of the various nomadic tribes, Xiongnu 匈奴 and Xianbei 鮮卑 or Särbi,[213] referring to several nomadic tribes,[214] from the upper Northeast (modern-day Mongolia) toward southern China. Since the Western and Eastern Han, the Xiongnu tribes had settled in certain parts of China and had maintained their own tribal structures and way of life militarily. In addition, when Cao Cao defeated the Wuhuan 烏桓, another proto-nomadic tribe, he forcibly moved thousands of the defeated to interior counties and drafted many of the Wuhuan men into his armies.[215] These two issues would alter the course and direction of the civil wars in China for almost three centuries. The Nine Rank System served to

[211] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 2–3; Eberhard, *A History of China*, 107–114; Ebrey, *China*, 70–71; Macgowan, *The Imperial History of China*, 134-150.
[212] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 2–3; Ebrey, *China*, 70–71.
[213] Pearce, Spiro, and Ebrey, *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm, 200-600*, 5. Särbi is a reconstructed term based on the Chinese transcription "Xianbei."
[214] Watt and Harper, *China*, 7.
[215] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 5-6; Ebrey, *China*, 73.

destabilize the Wei court, while the migration of the nomadic tribes into China allowed them to strengthen their armies and take over most of northern China once the Western Jin collapsed, leading China further into darkness.

B. The Eastern Jin and the Sixteen Kingdoms

The unification of China by the Jin did not last long due to its inability to centrally govern and still the internal conflicts between the princes as well as the princesses. Once China was unified, the Jin dynasty declared a general disarmament, which was perceived as a failure, and did not focus on centralized governing of its empire and maintaining its entire armies. Each prince was allowed to maintain his own army. Eventually, fighting between the eight princes broke out as seen in the Yongjia Disorders 永嘉 (307-312), leading to the collapse of the Jin.[216] As a result, to protect themselves and their properties amidst the unrest, many people built fortifications and armed themselves. In the meantime, the powerful Jia family, one of the empress families, was believed to have assassinated another empress and potential heir to the throne. Adding additional miseries to the suffering Chinese, many parts of China were plagued with natural disasters (droughts and famine) and epidemics.[217] As the Jin weakened in 304, the various nomadic ethnic tribes (Xiongnu, Xianbei, Jie 羯, Qiang 羌, and Di 氐)[218] residing inside China took advantage of the chaos and invaded many of the Jin territories in northern China. The Xianbei took over Chang'an 長安 and the Xiongnu invaded Luoyang 洛陽, bringing

[216] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 3–4; Eberhard, *A History of China*, 115-116.

[217] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 6; Ebrey, *China*, 72; Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 58.

[218] Eberhard, *A History of China*, 116-119; Watt and Harper, *China*, 8. The names given to these tribes do not necessarily indicate a specific ethnicity. Each tribal group may consist of more than one ethnic or cultural peoples from other tribes.

northern China into one of the worst and most violent eras in Chinese history.[219] The five major tribes seizing northern China were known as the Five Barbarian Tribes Uprising (*Wuhu luanhua* 五胡亂華). Since there were smaller tribal units within each ethnic group and each unit had its own military, the major and powerful units, once they seized certain territories, each declared their own sovereigns, resulting in the period of Sixteen Kingdoms 十六國 (304-439).[220] The formation of the Sixteen Kingdoms officially ended the Chinese dominance in northern China and the beginning of non-Chinese rule. In the early years of the Sixteen Kingdoms period, there were reports of devastation and miseries throughout northern China. Local government offices were destroyed; roads were either ruined or obstructed; bandits were stealing whatever they could; corpses could be seen everywhere; people were starving; there were constant battles at the city gates; and people had to wear armor to protect themselves.[221] Some of the people did not have much of an option other than heading toward the South. Another observation from this period is regarding the non-Chinese rulers of the nomadic tribes: they were not prepared to centrally govern over their large territories. Most of the rulers were just military men with no knowledge and experience of Chinese bureaucracy and institutional infrastructure. Their subjects were the Chinese who, with much resentment and dislike toward the non-Chinese rulers, were expected to pay taxes and provide their labor. Former generals who surrendered were integrated into the military and allowed to run

[219] Ebrey, *China*, 73. The Jin in 284-285 moved some130,000 Xiongnu members into northern China. They experienced hardships and prejudice. At one point around the Chang'an region, it was reported that the Chinese became the minority.

[220] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 6; Eberhard, *A History of China*, 121-131; Wilkinson, *Chinese History*, 728–729. The term, Sixteen Kingdoms, is for conventional labeling since, according to Wilkinson, there were at least short-lived twenty three states on records representing nine ethnicities instead of the five standard tribes.

[221] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 6.

their own troops. Chinese soldiers were brought into the military to serve as porters or infantry, but not cavalry. Ethnic fighting between the Chinese and nomadic tribes constantly erupted.[222] All of these factors did not favor the non-Chinese regimes which gradually collapsed one after another.

In the meantime, as the Jin was being toppled by the non-Chinese forces in the North, one surviving Jin prince, Sima Rui 司馬睿, had to evacuate his family and whatever was left of his army and headed south to the city of Jiankang 建康 (modern day Nanjing 南京), where he reestablished his dynasty in exile which then became the Eastern Jin 東晉 (317-420). Sima Rui tried to politically legitimize his dynasty with Confucian values and modeled his newly relocated empire upon the former Jin in the North as much as possible.[223] The move greatly heightened the geographic division of the political disunion between the North, ruled by the so-called barbarians, and the South, held by the native Chinese. However, the subsequent rulers of the Eastern Jin were considered weak, since they were not able to keep the various factions under control. They had to cooperate with the émigrés and their own powerful armies, which consequently migrated south when the nomadic tribes took over northern China. People living in the South welcomed the Jin and the émigrés, who could defend them against the barbarian forces from the North. This arrangement worked until some of the powerful émigrés rebelled and took over control of some of the territories for themselves. Among them, Liu Yu's 劉裕 (363-422) army defeated many of them and in 420 declared himself

[222] Ebrey, *China*, 74–75.
[223] Holcombe, *In the Shadow of the Han*, 1–3.

emperor of the Liu Song 劉宋 dynasty (420-479), putting an end to the Eastern Jin.[224] This led to the third phase of the early medieval period which is the Southern and Northern Dynasties.

There were at least two cultural and social developments taking place as a result of this political disunion, one of which began in the late Eastern Han, when many of the elite turned away from politics toward a reclusive life. They were interested in the Mysterious Learning (*Xuanxue* 玄學) inspired by the *Daode jing* 道德經, *Zhuangzi* 莊子, and the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經). *Xuanxue*, defined as the "philosophical investigation of the unfathomable, profound, and mysterious Dao," became a part of the official curriculum by the fifth century CE.[225] Cao Cao and his son Cao Zhi 曹植 were interested in poetry, which also thrived in this period. There was a group of poets in this period known as the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove (*Zhulin qixian* 竹林七賢) who gained recognition for their contributions to poetry, music, and philosophy.[226] Despite the ongoing civil wars, poetry, literature, and music greatly thrived throughout these centuries.[227] The second development was the rise to power of the aristocrats and their families, which also started in the late Eastern Han and gradually declined in the early centuries of the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907).[228] "These families, their position assured by

[224] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 4–5.

[225] Chan and Lo, *Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China*, 2; Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China.*, 46.

[226] Chan and Lo, *Philosophy and Religion in Early Medieval China*, 8–9, 135-171; Ebrey, *China*, 72. The Seven Sages and many others' similar stories can be found in *A New Account of Tales of the World* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語) by Yiqing Liu.

[227] Eberhard, *A History of China*, 163.

[228] Dien, *State and Society in Early Medieval China*, 1–9. There have been several debates on the characterization of this group of powerful families as powerful and aristocratic when in fact they were not. They were not clans either. Dien argues that this group of people was part of certain lineages that had favorable access to the court. They were granted membership in a "pedigree." This type of arrangement can be best described "in terms of prestige and status."

wealth, hereditary privilege, and the prestige of their names, dominated much of public life for the next three centuries. Their power was never absolute; in varying degrees throughout this period they were kept in check by emperors, court favorites, generals, and new men who rose through talent or luck."[229] Therefore, the political disarray from the Three Kingdoms period allowed these families some control over appointments to the local offices and financial independence, which they could not have gained otherwise under the Qin and Western Han.

C. The Southern and Northern Dynasties

In the North the Tuoba 拓拔, a nomadic tribe of the Xianbei confederation, gradually overpowered other nomadic states to reunite northern China and establish the Northern Wei 拓拔魏 (386–534) dynasty by 439, putting an end to more than a century of bloodshed and the Sixteen Kingdoms period. The Tuoba immediately constructed a high wall and stationed troops of tribesmen in the North to prevent other nomadic tribes from entering China.[230] In its early years, the Northern Wei rulers dominated the native Chinese by keeping them under tight control. Many Chinese were forced to relocate and work in farms. Chinese men worked in administrative roles in the bureaucracy and, if drafted, only played limited support roles in the army and faced persecution if they made even minor mistakes. This policy of separating the Chinese from the Xianbei came to an end when Emperor Xiaowen 孝文 (r. 471-499), whose mother was Chinese, took over the throne. Emperor Xiaowen began a process of Sinicization that dramatically changed his empire. The imperial court's name was changed to Yuan 元; he assigned one-character surnames to Xianbei elites to use instead of their original surnames; court officials had to

[229] Ebrey, *The Aristocratic Families of Early Imperial China*, 1.
[230] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 7.

wear Chinese-style clothing and those under thirty years of age had to speak only Chinese; and he encouraged intermarriages between Xianbei elites and Chinese elites. He also decided to move his palace to Luoyang, which was the capital of the Eastern Han and Western Jin dynasties, from Pingcheng 平城.[231]

Beginning in 523, peace was disrupted when the Xianbei residing inside northern China began to rebel. Further, there was ethnic violence between the Chinese and the Xianbei. The Wei Empire was thrown into chaos when one of its generals slaughtered more than a thousand court officials and threw the empress dowager and the child emperor into the Yellow River. This consequently caused the once unified northern China to break part into Eastern Wei (534-550) and Western Wei (535-557), both of which later evolved into Northern Qi 北齊 (550-577) and Northern Zhou 北周 (557-581), respectively.[232]

In the South, the Liu Song emperors could not stabilize their empire and eventually lost to the Southern Qi 南齊 (479-502), followed by the Liang 梁 (502-557) and the Chen 陳 (557-589). One of the significant problems with the southern rulers was that they were not able to keep the military generals under control--thus, we see that powerful military generals rose up and took over the throne readily. These generals maintained their own troops and captured many non-Chinese men into their armies without totally submitting to their emperors. Another problem exacerbating the instability was the deep division between the northern émigrés and the local elites, between the Han Chinese and the southern indigenous peoples (Miaoyao 苗瑤, Tai-dakai 台-卡岱, and

[231] Eberhard, *A History of China*, 136-145; Ebrey, *China*, 76.
[232] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 9; Eberhard, *A History of China*, 148-149; Ebrey, *China*, 77-78.

Baiyue 百越),[233] and, most importantly, between the aristocrats in court and the generals in the battlefield defending their borders. All of these factors were prime causes of the short-lived dynasties in the South despite the fact that the southern economy experienced tremendous growth during this period.[234] By the late sixth century, the military general Yangjian 楊堅 of the Northern Zhou, dethroned the weakened Zhou emperor and made himself emperor, Emperor Wen of the Sui (r. 581-604), in 581. He defeated the Chen in 589 and ultimately unified China.[235]

In brief, the approximately four centuries from the Three Kingdoms to the end of the Southern and Northern Dynasties are considered one of the darkest moments in recorded Chinese history since the Xia 夏朝 (c. 2070 – c. 1600 BCE) dynasty. Throughout these centuries, wars constantly broke out between the Chinese factions, between the non-Chinese rulers, or between the Chinese and non-Chinese forces. The wars truly caused poverty and much destruction of lives and property throughout the Chinese empire. Yearly droughts, famine, and diseases exacerbated the situation.[236] Commoners and elite alike living in this period underwent tremendous chaos and calamities. Some were able to escape and migrate to more benign places, but many had nowhere to turn to other than desperately trying to survive. Confucianism disintegrated,[237] especially in northern China, since its teachings did not offer people an explanation of the miserable conditions that they faced. Some, mostly the elite, composed

[233] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 4.
[234] Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 9-10; Ebrey, *China*, 77–79.
[235] Hucker, *China's Imperial Past*, 138.
[236] Ebrey, *China*, 72.
[237] Watt and Harper, *China*, 6.

music[238] and poems and wrote essays to express their situation through art. Others turned to religion, the indigenous Daoism and the incoming Buddhism, to help them cope. Daoism began to develop as Buddhism was trying to find its way to penetrate into this hostile heartland. Both were actively developing various practices suitable to the different strata of Chinese society. In particular, Daoist confessional rites and Buddhist repentance rituals appealed to the religious vicissitudes of the majority of people at the time. In the following section, we will review the religious practices in the Qin and Han, the historical background of Daoism as it transformed from an indigenous tradition to a state religion, and the development of the Daoist rite of confession in the early medieval period.

II. Daoist Rite of Confession

A. Religions under the Qin and Han

Religious practices under the Qin and Han mainly consisted of ancestral worship, mortuary cults, and state cults with religious implication. Some of these cults such as the ancestral worship in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記), considered the source of many ritual practices, can be dated back, with archeological evidence, to as early as the Shang 商 (c. 1600 BC–c. 1046 BCE) and Zhou 周 dynasties (1122-221 BCE).[239] These practices are what Mark Lewis describes as modes of communication between the visible and invisible, which take different forms.[240]

Ancestral worship, observed by all strata of Chinese society, mostly involved ritual performance in the form of sacrifice done by a ritual specialist at the shrine or

[238] See Dien, *Six Dynasties Civilization*, 339–353 for his research on music and musical instruments in this period.

[239] Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires*, 185.; Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 23.

[240] Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires*, 178.

family altar.[241] The purpose of the sacrifices, as an offering, was to ensure salvation for the ancestors in exchange for protection of the living relatives from the dead.[242]

The mortuary cult, an aspect of ancestral worship, dealt with the elaborate preparation and rituals of a death, including burial. This whole process was followed by all strata of Chinese society, from the imperial families to the elite and the ordinary Chinese (if they could afford it), owing to the indigenous Chinese belief that horrific calamity would fall on the living members of the deceased if the rituals and sacrifices were not performed regularly or properly. The tomb of the deceased was built and decorated to reflect the home of the living, as it was believed that the dead would else appear to the living to make such a request.[243] By the late Eastern Han, some of the tombs of the elite were buried with images of deities, such as the Queen Mother of the West, and animals to transform the tomb into a universe for the dead. Lewis notes that existing records and archeological findings show the traces of the burial practice of the imperial rulers and the elite.[244] It does not really show how the ordinary Chinese buried their dead other than what is prescribed in the *Xunzi* and the *Liji*.[245]

Besides ancestral worship, the *feng* 封 and *shan* 禪 sacrifices, the state cults of the Grand Unity (*Taiyi* 太一) and the Earth Empress, and the tri-annual suburban sacrifice were commenced for political purposes with religious implications in the Han and continued in later dynasties. Dating back to the Warring State period, the *feng* and *shan*

[241] For a discussion on the three designs of altar tables from the sixth century, see Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*, 25–36.

[242] Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 29–33.

[243] Ibid., 29.

[244] Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires*, 189–196; see Loewe's *The Imperial Way of Death in Han China* (in *State and Court Ritual in China*, edited by McDermott) for a thorough discussion on the imperial tombs and shrines and procedures following an emperor's death.

[245] Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires*, 189; Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, 45.

sacrifice was initiated by the Qin emperor.[246] However, it was Emperor Wu of the Han 漢武帝 (?157-87 BCE; r. 141-87 BCE) who re-formulated this sacrifice and other rites, mainly based on Confucian philosophy, and turned them into powerful political rituals after he ascended the throne and took over other territories. These rituals continued to be performed by subsequent rulers until the Song dynasties (960-1279 CE) and became the basis of many religious practices during the Han.[247] The religious significance of these Han cultic practices is seen in the veneration of the celestial beings in heaven, immortals, and various spirits during the sacrifices. One of the religious elements of the *feng* and *shan* sacrifice considered significant is the written message, which was placed in a sealed chest and buried at the foot of the mountain to send to the high god as part of the ritual.[248] In addition to the rites of *feng* and *shan*, the imperial tour of the Five Sacred Peaks with sacrifices to four directions, serving as an announcement of a "territorial entity" to heaven and mother earth, demonstrated "the powers of conquest, the emergence of territorial states, the efficacy of administration through documents, and the sacralization of lordship as well as a fusion of the diverse regional traditions incorporated into the new empire."[249]

The cult of Heaven, a politically based cult, was formulated by Dong Zhongshu, who forged the Zhou ruler's sacrifice to Heaven on New Year or at the start of the agricultural season without citing textual references." It was consequently accepted by

[246] Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires*, 186; Bujard, "State and Local Cults in Han Religion," in Early Chinese Religion Vol. Two, ed. Lagerwey and Kalinowski (Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2011), 783.

[247] Lewis, "The Feng and Shan Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. McDermott (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 50-52, 80.

[248] Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires*, 186; Lewis, "The Feng and Shan Sacrifices of Emperor Wu of the Han," 75. This submission of written message to the god may have played a role in the Daoist confessional ritual which will be addressed in a later section of this chapter.

[249] Dien, *State and Society in Early Medieval China*, 79.

later rulers who performed the *jiao* 焦 sacrifice to Heaven making it an imperial ritual.[250] Other forms of religious practices involved spirit intermediaries, divination, omens and numerological calculations which were popular in Han times.[251] It is important to keep in mind that these are just some of the religious practices and that they do not represent all segments of Chinese society during this time, especially those of the common religion due to the lack of documentation.

By the middle of the second century, many religious movements, such as the Yellow Turbans, the Celestial Masters, and popular religious groups, arose and quickly developed into major forces in the Eastern Han—these movements will be presented in the following.[252]

B. Historical Development of Daoism

Religious Daoism, tracing its source to the texts of *Laozi* 老子 and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 produced around 400 BCE, can arguably be said to have begun in the Han dynasty and to have survived the political and social instability in China during its initial formation to transform itself to become a state religion by the end of the Southern and Northern dynasties period. According to Sima Qian 司馬遷 (c. 145 or 135 BCE – 86 BCE), the early emperors of the Western Han implemented in their court the philosophy of the School of Huang-Lao, founded approximately 400 BCE, which is a variant of Daoism. It was then replaced by Confucianism when Emperor Wu of the Western Han came to the throne.[253] This was the earliest political adaptation of a Daoist deity by the court and

[250] Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires*, 187–188.
[251] Ibid., 179–185.
[252] Ibid., 203–204.
[253] Fu, *China's Legalists*, 27; Yu, *History of Chinese Daoism*, 5.

served as political legitimacy of the dynasty.[254] Starting in the middle of the second century CE, amidst the political chaos and social unrest in the Eastern Han Empire accompanied by diseases and natural disasters,[255] the Yellow Turbans and the Celestial Masters, rooted in indigenous Daoist thought, emerged as two major religious military-style organizations to help and recruit ordinary Chinese.[256] One common belief in both movements was that diseases and illnesses in humans were caused by their transgressions and could be cured via confessional rituals with the assistance of a Daoist priest.[257] The Yellow Turbans, located in Qingzou 青州 (modern Shandong 山東), was based on the philosophy expounded in the *Scripture of the Great Peace*. They venerated ancestors, nature, and celestial beings and practiced Daoist meditation. Followers were instructed to believe that Zhang Jue and his two brothers, leaders of the movement, could lead them into an era of renewed longevity under a new court, with peace and a new cosmos. The Zhang brothers quickly attracted thousands of followers and divided them into thirty-six squares of six- or ten-thousand members in 183; each square was led by a deputy general. In 184, the Zhang brothers with some 360,000 members from eight provinces rebelled to overthrow the Han emperor but were defeated within months. Most members of the Yellow Turbans were killed and the whole movement was dismantled.[258]

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[254] Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History*, 254.

[255] Yu, *History of Chinese Daoism*, 172–174.

[256] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 134–135. There were also other popular movements, though smaller in scale, such as the Red Eyebrows (Chimei 赤眉), Great Master of the Southern Peak (Nanyue taishi 南嶽太師), and Emissary Sent by Lord Heaven (Tiandi shizhe 天帝使者) to name a few (see 135-138).

[257] Lagerwey, "Daoist Ritual from the Second through the Sixth Centuries," in *Foundations of Daoist Ritual*, ed. Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 135–136; Yu, *History of Chinese Daoism*, 172–192.

[258] Kohn, *Daoism and Chinese Culture*, 68; Levy, "Yellow Turbans Religion and Rebellion at the End of Han," 219–221.

The other major movement, founded by Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (34-156 CE) in 142 CE and located in modern Sichuan, was called the Celestial Masters (*Tianshi* 天師) or Five Pecks of Grain. The Celestial Masters worshipped three main deities: the Great Clarity of Mysterious Origin (*Taishang xuanyuan* 太上玄元), the Great Dao of Nonculmen in Higher Three Heavens (*Shang santian wuji dadao* 上三天無極大道), and the Lord Lao of Taishang (*Taishang Laojun* 太上老君).[259] It was said that Lord Lao revealed to Zhang that the end of the world was near and that people needed to repent and purify themselves in order to live in the new era. Zhang was appointed by Lord Taishang 太上 as his representative and purportedly endowed with healing powers which enabled him to begin his movement. His movement evolved into a powerful and popular organization after joining forces with Zhang Xiu's 張修 cult, occupying a major territory southwest of China. However, the cult, then headed by Zhang Lu 張魯 (?-216), was forced to surrender to Cao Cao and relocated to the north in 215. A great number of members fled and settled in other areas of China, causing it to spread throughout China and become the longest-surviving Daoist movement.[260]

Daoism continued to expand throughout China through the rise and development of various Daoist related religious movements, affiliated with the Celestial Masters, during the Three Kingdoms to the Jin dynasties period. Historical sources show that Cao Cao and the Wei dynasty engaged in a dual policy in which they employed the Daoist and popular cults for political gain and, at the same time, subdued them to prevent any political uprisings. Thus, Celestial Masters continued to develop in different movements

[259] Yu, *History of Chinese Daoism*, 142.

[260] Kohn, *Daoism and Chinese Culture*, 2001, 69–70; Yu, *History of Chinese Daoism*, 126-141, 157-160; Levy, "Yellow Turbans Religion and Rebellion at the End of Han," 223-224.

in northern China after Zhang Lu.[261] In East China, which was ruled by the Wu, its emperors also sought advice in regard to military and thaumaturgies from Daoist priests and financially supported them.[262] This shows that religious Daoist movements were active in the North and East of China.

In the Sichuan region, after the Shu Han was taken over by the Wei dynasty, other forms of Daoist related rebellious movements, such as those led by Chen Rui 陳瑞 (?-277), Li Te 李特 (?-303), and his son Li Xiong 李雄 (274-334), proved that Daoism also prospered, though their practice much differed from Zhang Lu's. Further, Li Xiong was assisted by an influential Daoist master Fan Changsheng 范長生 (?-318) in establishing the Chenghan 成漢 monarchy (304-347), one of the states in the Sixteen Kingdoms era. Fan Changsheng was appointed prime minister and helped Li Xiong rule the monarchy.[263] His appointment would be considered the first direct involvement by a Daoist priest who advised an emperor on political matters.

One of the most powerful and longest movements, lasting two centuries from the middle of the third century to the fifth century, is the Li Lineage Sect (*Li Jiadao* 李家道) in which the immortal Li-of-Eight-Hundreds (*Li Babai* 李八百) is the central figure in China. After migrating from Sichuan to Eastern China during the Wu dynasty, the sect, closely related to the Celestial Masters, was active and led by Li A 李阿 and Li Kuan 李寬. Both figures were identified as Li Babai.[264] There were several accounts of some Daoists being referred to as Li Babai. Further, the name Li Hong 李弘, a very popular

[261] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 283.
[262] Ibid., 500.
[263] Yu, *History of Chinese Daoism*, 221–229.
[264] Ibid., 230–232.

disciple of Li Tuo 李脫, was used by several rebel leaders for their uprisings throughout China against the Eastern Jin. The *Book of Jin* (*Jin Shu* 晉書) contains at least four accounts of Li Hong being executed for his rebellious uprising against the court. These movements show the power of the peasants everywhere in China trying to dethrone the regime.[265] Further, Li Hong was depicted as a true sage-king in several Daoist apocryphal texts expressing the public's dissatisfaction with the current political chaos and the desire to have a savior-ruler to lead them out of their misery.[266] Eventually, the Li Lineage Sect merged with the Celestial Masters and ceased to exist. This explains why there is a lack of historical sources on the Li Lineage Sect.[267] Following Li Hong, there were also other non-Daoist uprisings against the Eastern Jin due to the public's discontent with the state. By the end of the Eastern Jin, Daoism was spread throughout most geographical areas of imperial China, among the elite as well as the commoners.[268] Two important Daoist movements formed around this time were the Shangqing School 上清 and the Lingbao School 靈寶. The Shangqing School, led by Lady Wei Huacun 魏華存 (251-334) and subsequently Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-386), is based on the *Perfect Scripture of the Great Grotto* (*Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經) and the *Scripture of the Yellow Court* (*Huang ting jing* 黃庭經) involving a program of visualization of spirits and deities.[269] The Lingbao School is mainly based on the *Text of the Five Talismans* (*Wufujing* 五符經) and its descendant scriptures, revealed by Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫, grandnephew of Ge Hong 葛洪

[265] Ibid., 234–236. Similar tales about Li Hong's uprisings are also discussed in the *Song shu* 宋書, *Nan shi* 南史, *Wei shu* 魏書, and *Sui shu* 隋書.
[266] Yu, *History of Chinese Daoism*, 236–239; Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 273-274.
[267] Yu, *History of Chinese Daoism*, 239.
[268] Ibid., 248.
[269] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 196–199.

(283–343). This school's meditation and rituals remained Daoist but its beliefs (rebirth[270] and cosmology[271]) were heavily influenced by Buddhism. Both of these schools contributed much to the growth and complexity of religious Daoism.

In the era of Southern and Northern Dynasties, Daoism underwent major reforms to align itself to the new political and social environments. Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (365-448), founder of the Daoist theocracy, gained support from Emperor Taiwu 魏太武帝 (408-452) with the assistance of the prime minister, Cui Hao 崔浩 (381-450). Kou is credited with the transformation of Daoism from an indigenous folk religion to a state religion with newly refined rituals as well as inclusion of Confucian morals. He is believed to have authored several Daoist scriptures: *The Old Lord's Scripture for the Chanting of the Commandments* (*Laojun yinsong jiejing* 老君音誦誡經) and *The Perfect Scripture of Registers and Diagrams* (*Lutu zhenjing* 錄圖真經).[272] Both scriptures reflect the Northern Celestial Masters' religious messages and ritual practices in the fourth century.[273] This demonstrates the Daoist leaders' abilities to penetrate the court through closely connecting with the aristocrats.

After the collapse of the Northern Wei, Daoism continued to receive strong support from the Northern Zhou, which gave rise to a new Daoist sect, Louguan Daoism 樓觀道. By claiming that the *Daode jing* was transmitted through a legendary figure, Yin Xi, from the Zhou dynasty at Louguan (southwest of Xian 西安), Louguan became a sacred place and popular study center for some forty Daoists from the middle of the fifth

[270] Robinet and Brooks, *Taoism*, 153–159.
[271] Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 7–16.
[272] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 283–284; Kohn, *Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism*, 39–40; Lagerwey and Lü, *Early Chinese Religion. the Period of Division (220-589 AD) Part Two, V. 1*, 248–249.
[273] Reiter, *Purposes, Means and Convictions in Daoism*, vii.

century to the sixth century. Many Daoist scriptures and manuals of rituals were preserved, including those from the Shangqing and Lingbao Schools.[274] This era witnessed several government-sponsored debates between Daoists and Buddhists, two of which, occurring in 520 during the Northern Wei and in 570 during the Northern Zhou, were documented. The goals of these polemical debates were primarily for imperial recognition and political influence. The Buddhists triumphed in the 520 debate while the 570 debate continued for years without a clear winner. Several Daoist scriptures were produced as a result of these debates such as the *Scripture on the Conversion of the Barbarians* (*Huahu jing* 化胡經), *The Discourse on the Two Teachings* (*Erjiao lun* 二教論), and *The Discourse on Laughing at the Dao* (*Xiaodao lun* 笑道論).[275] The early Daoist communities formed by the Celestial Masters, Shangqing, and Lingbao provided the establishment and foundation for religious Daoism. They created their versions of pantheons and produced Daoist scriptures through revelations. They interacted and adopted Buddhist ideas and precepts into Daoist monastic life. Consequently, these movements played a major role in later Daoism.[276] The preceding discussion of Daoism took place in northern China. Following is the discussion on major development of Daoism in the South.

The development of Daoism in the South is complex, sporadic, and difficult to determine. Peter Nickerson finds that individuals or groups affiliated with Celestial Masters already existed before the collapse of the Western Jin approximately in the third century. General practitioners and Daoist priests, including the Shangqing priests,

[274] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 285–286; Kohn, *Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism*, 40–41.
[275] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 287–288; Nadeau, *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Chinese Religions*, 179–180.
[276] Nadeau, *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Chinese Religions*, 180.

continued to practice ritual techniques (sending up petitions) of the Celestial Masters.[277] This ritual practice resembles the *feng* and *shan* sacrifice performed by the Han emperors.

As the fourth century approached, several popular messianic movements, affiliated with Celestial Masters arose based on two Daoist scriptures, the *Zhao Sheng koujue* 趙昇口訣 and the *Nuqing guilu* 女清鬼律. These movements were neither related to the northern émigrés nor influenced by the southern aristocrats.[278] In fact, imminent Daoist masters such as Lu Xiujing and Tao Hongjing had to realign Daoist teachings to suit the current political ideals and religious environment.

Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406-477), an adherent of the Celestial Masters, was an eminent Daoist priest and best known for his creation of the Daoist canon, following the Buddhist model, in the fifth century. Lu, leaving his wife and children behind, led an ascetic life to cultivate the Dao. He emphasized detachment from family in one's training for the Dao.[279] Influenced by Buddhism, he was one of the earliest Daoist leaders, promoting monastic life. Lu collected most of the Lingbao scriptures and compiled them into a comprehensive catalog, known as the *Three Caverns* (*sandong* 三洞), which was presented to the Liu Song emperor in 471. He also refined most Daoist rituals from other schools, which would become standardized in all Daoist rites for precept ordinations (*jie* 戒), purificatory fasting (*zhai* 齋), and offerings (*jiao* 醮). Lu composed more than thirty works but about one-third of those are extant.[280]

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[277] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 256.
[278] Ibid., 258.
[279] Eskildsen, *Asceticism in Early Taoist Religion*, 36–37; Nickerson, "Abridged Codes of Master Lu for the Daoist Community," in *Religions of China in Practice* ed. Lopez (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 347.
[280] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 230–231; Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 9; Nadeau, *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Chinese Religions*, 179.

Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536), the first patriarch of the Shangqing School, is known for his expertise in medicine and alchemy. He studied under Sun Youyue 孫游岳 (399-489), who was a disciple of Lu Xiujing. He was a court official for the Northern Qi before retiring to Maoshan茅山 (modern Nanjing) in 492 to formally establish the Shangqing School. He also acted as an advisor to Emperor Wu of Liang and received the latter's financial support.[281] He wrote many treatises; two of his important works are the *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhengao* 真誥) the Shangqing history and the *Secret Formula on Ascending to Perfection* (*Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣) on pharmacology and alchemy experiments.[282] Tao also systematized the Shangqing's pantheon and divided the cosmos into seven domains.[283] These two eminent Daoist masters made extensive contributions to the rise and growth of Daoism in terms of Daoist literature and rituals. Their success shows their ability to be innovative and creative in the face of a changing political landscape and competion for state recognition.

Document sources reveal that the southern Celestial Masters maintained several practices such as the death ritual, meal ritual (kitchen feast), oratory for daily rituals, and healing petitions. Sexual rites were considered vulgar and deviated from the practice of Celestial Masters. Blood sacrifices and divination were proscribed, along with the use of medicine, acupuncture, and moxibustion for healing purposes. They believed in the efficacy of the rites of confession in healing diseases via petitioning to the heavenly court.

[281] Lagerwey and Lü, *Early Chinese Religion. The Period of Division (220-589 AD) Part Two, V. 1*, 8.

[282] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 78–79.

[283] Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, 45–47.

This rite continued to be practiced throughout this period.[284] This leads to the discussion on the development of the Daoist rite of confession in its early phase.

C. The Rite of Confession in Early Medieval Daoism

The early Daoist movements, Yellow Turbans and Celestial Masters, creatively developed a few simple rituals for a variety of purposes; one of the popular liturgical rituals is the rite of confession which was fully developed by the end of the sixth century. Zhang Jue, founder of the Yellow Turbans movement and considering himself a great physician, travelled around and issued talismans to the sick. Zhang Jue believed that sickness was caused by netherworld spirits, who appeared to be family members of the patient. The talismans, written to address the netherworld figures, would be burned and mixed in water for the patients to drink. The patient, if healed, would be considered a believer of the religion.[285] Here sources do not indicate if the patient would have to confess his transgressions in the oratory.

Similarly, Zhang Lu of the Celestial Masters prescribed the rite of confession and petition for curing illnesses.[286] The practice consists of having the patient to recollect his or her transgressions in an oratory and a formal prayer for healing by the Daoist priest. Then the demon-soldier (*guili* 鬼吏) would write down the confession of the patient on three petitions. Each would be officially submitted to the Three Bureaus of Heaven, Earth,

[284] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 274–279.

[285] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 153; Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 33; Levy, "Yellow Turbans Religion and Rebellion at the End of Han," 217.

[286] For a sequence of the petition ritual, see Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi's Petition Almanac," 296–298.

and Water as found in fascicle 8 of the *Book of Wei* (*Weishu* 魏書) in the *Records of Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo zhi* 三國誌):[287]

> In the Way of Great Peace, the leader wrote talismans and wove spells, holding on to a bamboo staff of nine sections. He told the sick people to knock their heads to the ground and remember their sins, then gave them a talisman, burned and dissolved in water, to drink. Those who got gradually better and were healed by this treatment were called good believers in the Dao. Those who showed no improvement were considered faithless.
> The methods of Zhang Xiu were by and large the same as those of Zhang Jue. In addition, he established a so-called chamber of tranquility or oratory, where the sick would retreat to reflect on their wrong doings…Also, he appointed so-called demon soldiers who were in charge of the prayers for the sick.
> To perform these prayers, they would write down the sick person's name while formally reciting his intention to expiate all sins. This would be done three times: the first version was offered to Heaven by being exposed on a mountain; the second was offered to Earth by being buried in the earth; and the third was offered to Water by being thrown into a stream. Together they were known as "petitions to the Three Bureaus.[288]

According to this account, past transgressions were the causes of illness. If the transgressor sincerely confessed his past mistakes and drank the talisman water, he would be healed: that meant that he was a true believer in Daoism (else he would be declared a non-believer). The act of confession by the Celestial Masters, I would argue, would have a psychological effect on the confessor and give him a sense of renewal. By confession, the individual would be allowed to recognize his own short falls and be conscious of his conduct. The sense of renewal came from drinking the talisman water and thinking that he had been forgiven by the celestial beings.

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[287] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 154; Masayoshi Kobayashi, "The Celestial Masters under the Eastern Jin and Liu-Song Dynasties," 22; Granoff and Shinohara, *Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place*, 35; Fowler, *Pathways to Immortality*, 138–139; Levy, "Yellow Turbans Religion and Rebellion at the End of Han," 217-218.

[288] Masaaki, "Confession of Sins and Awareness of Self in the *Taiping jing*," in *Daoist Identity History, Lineage, and Ritual* ed. Kohn (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 39; Kobayashi, "The Celestial Masters under the Eastern Jin and Liu-Song Dynasties," 21-22; Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 232; Strickmann and Faure, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 1–2.

In examining the *Scripture of Great Peace*'s discussion on the association of transgressions and illnesses through three elements: Heaven, Earth, and humanity, Masaaki infers that when a ruler did not act properly disasters occurred. Similarly, when an individual committed a crime that defiled his physical body, he would fall ill.[289] The idea that a ruler must act according to the Mandate of Heaven is a traditional Chinese belief, which has been addressed in chapter 2. Upon confession, the sick person also made a vow to the celestial beings that he would not transgress again else he would face death.[290]

In the Celestial Masters' teachings, illness was caused by either demons or spirits due to a lack of morality. Thus, the individual would have to confess one or all of his offenses which were thought to have caused his illness. He would then be able to obtain pardons from the demons or spirits and allowed to drink the talisman water. By the Eastern Jin, Kobayashi finds that over time the Three Bureaus (Heaven, Earth, and Water) of the Celestial Masters were replaced by the 1,200 celestial officials to whom the petitions would be submitted.[291] A" similar practice was observed by Ge Hong during the Jin dynasties and Lu Xiujing in the Liu-Song dynasty. [292] According to Lu Xiujing's treatise, *Abridged Codes* (*Daomen kelue* 道門科略):

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[289] Masaaki, "Confession of Sins and Awareness of Self in the *Taiping jing*," in *Daoist Identity History, Lineage, and Ritual* ed. Kohn (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 44.

[290] Ibid., 47.

[291] Kobayashi, "The Celestial Masters under the Eastern Jin and Liu-Song Dynasties," 22–23.

[292] Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 253n20. There are at least two accounts in secular sources where aristocrats practiced the rite of confession in the fifth and sixth centuries. The first account involves an aristocrat, Wang Xianzhi 王獻之 (344-388) who became very ill. He sought a cure from a Daoist priest. When pressed for his transgression during the confessional rite, he could not recall his past mistakes except that he had divorced his wife. Divorce was considered a cause for regret. The second story, dated in 513, comes from Shen Yue (沈約), vice president of the Imperial Secretariat of the Liu-song, whose illness was believed to be caused by a vengeful spirit of the last dynasty's emperor, Emperor He 和 of the Southern Qi). Shen Yue went to a Daoist priest and requested to send a petition stating that he was not directly involved in the abdication of Emperor He and succession of the new dynasty.

> The ill were not to take medicines or use the acupuncture needle or moxa. They were only to ingest talismans, drink water [into which the ashes of the burnt talismans had been mixed], and confess all their sins from their first year of life. Even all those who had committed capital crimes were pardoned, and those whose symptoms had accumulated and were distressed by major illnesses, none was not healed. Thus those of the highest virtue attained divine transcendence; those of medium virtue doubled their lifespans; and those of the lowest virtue extended their years.[293]

By the fifth century, while the rite of confession continued to be performed by members of the Celestial Masters, its message had evolved to include capital crimes committed by the patients and claims of attaining transcendence or longevity. A similar message is found in another fifth-century text, the *Scripture of the Inner Explanations of the Three Heavens* (*Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經),[294] also by the Southern Celestial Masters.

> Those afflicted with illness who are above the age of seven--that is, the age of cognition--are to personally seek forgiveness for their transgressions and to employ all proper offerings, protocols, petitions, and talismans. For even long-standing diseases or difficult maladies that physicians cannot cure, one need only to take refuge in the divine law and confess in order to be immediately cured.[295]

In northern China, texts by Celestial Masters, headed by Kou Qianzhi, also contained a similar practice such as Kou's *Scripture of Recited Precepts of Lord Lao,* known as *New Code,* (*Laojun yinsong jiejing* 老君音誦誡經):[296]

> If among the people of the Way there is sickness or illness, let it be announced to every home. The Master shall first command the people to light the incense fire. Then the Master from inside the Calm Chamber, and the people on the outside, facing toward the west with their hair unbound, striking their heads on the ground, shall confess and unburden their sins and transgressions. The Master shall command them to tell all-nothing is to be hidden or concealed-and to beg for clemency and pardon…Members of the sick man's family by day shall face the Calm Chambers, and by night facing north, shall strike their heads on the ground

[293] Nickerson, "Abridged Codes of Master Lu for the Daoist Community," in *Religions of China in Practice* ed. Lopez (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 352–353.
[294] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 261–262.
[295] Bokenkamp, *Early Daoist Scriptures*, 216–217.
[296] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 290–291.

> toward Heaven and Earth, confessing their transgressions, not allowing even a moment's omission.[297]

Here, Kou included family members of the sick person and that they would also need to strike their heads on the ground and continuously confess their transgressions just as the sick person did. Another confessional practice fully developed in the fifth century, the Rites of Mud and Soot (*tutan zhai* 塗炭齋), would allow the penitent to remit his own transgressions as well as others' (living and deceased) transgressions. The rite calls for the penitent to tie his hands, loosen his hair, put mud on his face, and beat his brows.[298] Here the remission of transgressions by the penitent on behalf of others (living and deceased), in my view, may have been influenced by the practice of Buddhist repentance.

In the sixth century, Daoist movements, influenced by Buddhism, would integrate many Buddhist ideas into their beliefs and written texts. This can be found in the *Scripture of Dignified Observances of Orthodox Unity* (*Zhengyi weiyi jing* 正一威儀經), which prescribes the rite of confession with the use of the Buddhist term repentance (*chanhui* 懺悔).[299] This reflects the state of competition and interactions between Buddhism and Daoism at the time. Next, we will examine a rite of confession, specifically the *Petition for Healing Diseases* (*Zibing yizhi zhang* 疾病醫治章), found in the *Master Red-Pine's Almanac of Petitions* (*Chisong zi zhangli* 赤松子章歷), a book of ritual liturgies for various purposes by the Celestial Masters dating back to the second century CE.[300]

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[297] Mather, "K'ou Ch'ien-chih and the Taoist Theocracy at the Northern Wei Court, 425-451," in *Facets of Taoism*, ed. Welch and Seidel (New Haven; London: Yale Univ. Press, cop. 1979), 117.
[298] Kohn, *Daoism Handbook*, 311.
[299] Kohn, *Daoist Identity: History,Lineage, and Ritual*, 2002, 41.
[300] Pregadio, *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, 148.

All petition liturgies follow a standard format with generic petitions edited for a particular purpose, corresponding deities, and the supplicant's name and pledges. The beginning (i) and end (iii) are very similar for most petitions; the only difference is the main body (ii). The *Petition for Healing Diseases* can therefore be constructed as follows:

i. When the penitent with a disease came to see the Daoist priest who would instruct the former to enter the oratory to confess.

> All that enter the [sanctuary of a] diocese must be serious and reverential. Their deportment must not be proud or extravagant. Those who enter a diocese must not give themselves censorious airs, speak vainly or inappropriately, nor chatter or jest. Within the diocese it is forbidden to expose one's body […]. Those who visit a diocese to request a petition to be saved from the tribulation of a disease are required to be girded and wear clogs. They should kowtow with reverence and make a full confession. They must not be haughty or malicious, nor brashly extol themselves. Offenders incur a third-degree punishment.[301]

The Daoist priest would take down the penitent's name, date of birth, address, and confession. The priest's personal information (liturgical rank and affiliation) would also be recorded. The penitent would be asked to provide some pledge offerings (rice, oil, silk, mats, writing brushes, ink, paper, silver or gold rings, incense, money, and fruits) to show his sincerity and as a form of redemptive payment. A date would be selected to perform the petitioning ritual. The priest would select the appropriate model petition[302] and fill out all the required information on the petition, including the specific deities.[303] The petition was considered sacred and must be correctly written with precise rules and proper ink

[301] Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi's Petition Almanac," 2004, 297; Fu Feilan 傅飛嵐 (Franciscus Verellen), "Tianshi dao shangzhang key: Chisong zi zhangli he Yuanchen zhangjiao licheng li yanjiu 天師道上章科儀-『赤松子章歷』和『元辰章醮立成歷』研究," in *Daojiao jingdian yu Zhongguo zongjiao wenhua* 道教經典與中國宗教文化, ed. Lai Chi Tim 黎志添, Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 2003, 40.

[302] Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi's Petition Almanac," 2004, 301. The selected model petition should be original. No used or old model petition should be used; Fu Feilan 傅飛嵐 (Franciscus Verellen), "Tianshi dao shangzhang key: Chisong zi zhangli he Yuanchen zhangjiao licheng li yanjiu, 41-43.

[303] Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi's Petition Almanac," 2004, 297-298.

color.[304] This would be done prior to the auspicious day of petitioning by the officiating priest.

ii. On the day of petition's presentation, the Daoist priest would first enter the oratory to meditate.[305] Afterward, he would walk to the altar and recite the certain incantations addressing the four directions,[306] followed by the rite of "activating the incense burner." He would then summon the merit offers, messengers and heavenly officials in order to convey the message of the petition to the celestial court.

For minor diseases, the priest would say: "Your servant X knocks his head to the ground and respectfully submits."

For severe sickness, he would say: "Your servant X, begging for pardon for his capital crime, knocks his head to the ground and respectfully submits." The same statement would be repeated at the end of the closing rite. He would continue:

> Your servant X and his disciples are the descendants of lowly rustics. Farm work is our livelihood. By a rare good fortune he got to serve the Great Tao. He was bestowed multiple ordination registers and honored with diocesan office. Celestial officials and soldiers guard this person. [Yet] he has amassed faults like mountains and seas, and not a shred of merit. Accountable to heaven and earth, he dares not rest at ease.[307]
>
> I [priest] respectfully submit, in conformity with the documents. Born on such-and-such day and month of the year such-and-such, in such-and-such prefecture, county, and village, this day [the client?] states and personally declares: a man of flesh born from a womb and descended from mortals, he was granted the rare good fortune to serve the Great Tao. Ever graciously favored, boundless is his exultation. Yet being a man of flesh, numerous are his failings in the faith. Thus

[304] Lagerwey, "Daoist Ritual from the Second through the Sixth Centuries," in *Foundations of Daoist Ritual*, ed. Florian Reiter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009) 136–137.

[305] Ibid., 137.

[306] Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi's Petition Almanac," 2004, 298; Strickmann and Faure, *Chinese Magical Medicine*, 6–8.

[307] Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi's Petition Almanac," 2004, 299.

he has invited harm and incurred manifold adversities. Suffering delusive thoughts and dreams, he has ungodly visions...

The heavenly officials invited are to be promoted and rewarded in accordance with the Three Assemblies Announcement of Merit. This pledge shall be honored without fail. May the Most High in his mercy resolve the matter.[308]

We respectfully submit [patient's name]. In recent days, the patient has contracted a disease that threatens to engulf his survival. He has approached your servant to request the presentation of a petition to the Three Heavens Department in the hope of redeeming his life. For ten days, he has been suffering unregulated chills and heat while [the circulation in] his vein is errant. Either he caught this disease because he was exposed to the wind and lay in the cold, or he is being punished with the Five Chastisements and Three Scourges. In our benighted ignorance we do not know, and ask that the case be heard and investigated. We send up our supplication to the Five Directions to engender the *qi* with which to effect a healing. We especially pray to the Most High Limitless Great Tao, the Most High Lords and Ladies, Merciful Father and Holy Mother, to remember him kindly. We respectfully call upon the Lords Heavenly Physician and Great Physician, in the seats of honor in the Department of Heaven, with their twelve officers, to descend into his body to the seat of the illness and effect a cure. We send up our request to the fifteen merit officers of healing on his behalf. We send up our request to the Department of Heaven to expunge the causes [of the disease] flowing from faults and transgressions committed in his previous existences and in this life, and to restore all deficiencies in his five viscera, four limbs, and hundred arteries. We next beseech Green of the east to engender its *qi*; Red of the south to engender its *qi*; White of the west to engender its *qi*; Black of the north to engender its *qi*; Yellow of the center to engender its *qi*, and that they may all descend into his body. We further ask the Lord of Acquittals, the Lord Savior, the Lord Extender of Life, the Lord Protector of the People, the Lord Eradicator of Scourges and Disasters, the general-in-chief Roamer in the Net [of Heaven], and the general-in-chief of the Terrestrial Realm to each control the demons of heterodox spirits, stale emanations, and pestilential poisons, and let the patient recover.[309]

iii. The rite would end with the return of the celestial officials, closing of the incense burner, and the priest exiting the altar.

[308] Ibid., 300.

[309] Ibid., 315–317. The model petition, *Petition for Healing Diseases* is selected for this research instead of the sixth century *Great Petition for Sepulchral Plaints* 大塚訟章 (discussed in Early Daoist Scriptures ed. Bokenkamp, 230-276) since the former is for the penitent to confess on his behalf and would closely correspond to the *Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Manjuśrī's Teaching of Repentance*.

At the end, the petition would be properly buried in the ground so that it would be sent to Heaven. In addition, prior to the closing of the burner, one copy of the petitions would be burned and the ashes would be mixed in the water for the penitent to drink.[310]

The above constructed rite of confession, based on the *Chisong zi's Petition Almanac*, perhaps represents a simple and typical Daoist confessional ritual by the Celestial Masters in early medieval China. It consists of (1) the penitent reflecting on and admitting his transgressions which would be written on petitions, (2) the Daoist priest lighting the incense burner (*falu* 發爐), (3) summoning messengers and invoking the celestial officials (*chuguan* 出官), (4) offering pledges to Heaven (*xinwu* 信物), (5) reading the model petition (*duzang* 讀章), (6) sealing the model petition in an envelope (*fengzang* 封章), (7) the Daoist priest visually traversing to Heaven to convey the model petition and back (*shangtian chaojin* 上天朝覲), and (8) closing the rite (sending the officials back and covering the incense burner (*fulu* 復爐)).

After the rite of confession, the penitent, if healed, would be declared a believer of the Dao. In other words, the penitent would be forgiven and free of transgression. This was the soteriology of the petition ritual. It was believed that the efficacy would lie in the written word on the petition and the penitent's sincerity.[311] If the penitent did not get well, he would be considered faithless. Thus, there was no guarantee that the petition ritual would work for everyone.

[310] Fu Feilan 傅飛嵐 (Franciscus Verellen), "Tianshi dao shangzhang key: Chisong zi zhangli he Yuanchen zhangjiao licheng li yanjiu," 58-59.

[311] Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi's Petition Almanac," 2004, 340.

It should be noted that the early Celestial Masters' petition ritual was primarily concerned with disease only through confessing transgression and invoking the divine powers. This was the one of the methodologies for changing the course of one's life.[312] Further, the deities at the time consisted of just the Three Bureaus: Heaven, Earth, and Water. This model petition does not prescribe that the priest would have to burn a petition and mix it in water for the penitent to drink. Eventually, the rite of confession became a popular religious practice for centuries among people of all strata of society since most believed that the rite was efficacious.[313] An analysis between the Daoist confessional rite and the Buddhist repentance ritual will be presented in chapter five.

III. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter reviews the political and social background of China from the Three Kingdoms to the Southern and Northern Dynasties, also called a Period of Division. This era witnesses the continuing civil wars between the different factions during the Three Kingdoms to the rise of the barbarian ethnic tribes ruling northern China under the Sixteen Kingdoms to the division between North and South. These civil wars caused the massive destruction of lives and property and the relocation of millions of Chinese. In addition, there were periodic occurrences of natural calamities and diseases adding to the miseries. People turned to religious specialists for various healing rituals and salvation. Some of these religious specialists were from the early Daoist movements, mainly Yellow Turbans and Celestial Masters, beginning in the middle of the second century. Daoism, an indigenous folk tradition, eventually became a state religion by the fifth century with its own standard pantheons and collection of Daoist canon. One of the original rituals

[312] Fu Feilan 傅飛嵐 (Franciscus Verellen), "Tianshi dao shangzhang key: Chisong zi zhangli he Yuanchen zhangjiao licheng li yanjiu," 39.

[313] Ibid., 341–342.

formulated by the early Daoist groups is the rite of confession and petitioning in order to heal diseases of the individuals. The rite calls for the recollection and confession of transgressions of the individual, which is written on a petition to be sent to heaven by a Daoist priest for absolution of his transgressions. The rite and its many petitions became a popular practice for its efficacy and were fully developed by the end of the Southern and Northern Dynasties.

CHAPTER FOUR

The *Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Manjuśrī's Teaching of Repentance*

This chapter reviews the arrival and rise of Buddhism in early medieval China and thoroughly examines the *Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Manjuśrī's Teaching of Repentance*. In dealing with Buddhism in China before the fourth century, we are faced with scanty evidence. There are virtually no written Chinese documents on this topic. There are, however, some Chinese Buddhist texts and compilations, dating from the sixth to seventh centuries, in the form of hagiographies and apologetics that provide a glimpse into the history and important figures of Buddhism in the early medieval era.[314] Some of the hagiographies are *Biographies of Eminent Monks* T. 2059 (*Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳, hereafter GSZ), the *Collection of Records Concerning the Translation of the Tripiṭaka* T. 2145 (*Chu sanjangji ji* 出三藏記集, hereafter CSZJJ), and *Biographies of Nuns* T. 2063 (*Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳, hereafter BQZ). The apologetics include *Collection Spreading the Light of Buddhism* T. 2102 (*Hongming ji* 弘明集, hereafter HMJ) and *Expanded Collection Spreading the Light of Buddhism* T. 2103 (*Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集, hereafter GHMJ). As a result, the description of the state of Buddhism in China in the early medieval period is incomplete and unbalanced. The studies that we thus have on early Buddhism in China are random and inconclusive. Most of the available Buddhist literature is attributed to primarily foreigners, some native Chinese monks and the laity. Thus, Erik Zürcher posits that the attitudes of the court and court officials, the social background and status of the Buddhist cultured clergy, and the rise of the monastic communities are important "social phenomena" that significantly contributed to the early

[314] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China.*, 10.

formation of Chinese Buddhism.[315] Further, Chinese Buddhists at the time were not exposed to Buddhism as "an organic whole" but through piecemeal and probably incomprehensible translated scriptures. This arguably led to the gradual and unavoidable process of the Sinicization of Buddhism.[316]

I. Arrival and Rise of Buddhism

The limited textual sources available from this period have been thoroughly studied by some prominent scholars. A review of some of these sources is presented here in order to provide a general background prior to this dissertation's study of the main scripture, including of its author. We will review the historical development of Buddhism in China and some of its highlights in three phases.

Phase 1: From the Beginning through the Three Kingdoms to the Western Jin

No one is certain when and where Buddhism first entered China. Erik Zürcher deduces that Buddhism came to China via the Silk Road to Dunhuang and then northern plain leading to Luoyang and was brought by merchants, foreign and Chinese-born immigrant monks, and travelers some time from the first half of the first century BCE to the middle of the first century CE.[317] Further, archeological evidence found at various locations in China in 1970s and 1980s confirms that Buddhism already existed in China in the time period mentioned above. The evidence shows that initially the Buddha was worshipped along with the cult of Huang-Lao by the emperors and court officials.[318] In addition, Buddhist elements such as the six-tusked elephant, an immortal riding a white elephant, and a seated Buddha with a halo were found in the practice of indigenous local

[315] Ibid., 1.
[316] Ibid., 2.
[317] Ibid., 22–23.
[318] Zürcher, "Han Buddhism and the Western Region," in *Thought and Law in Qin and Han China* ed. Idema and Zürcher (Leiden [u.a.]: Brill, 1990), 162, 167.

and popular cults. Buddha's images were also used in tomb burials and funeral practices. This demonstrates the integration of Buddhist elements and objects in popular religious practices as well as an association with religious Daoism at this stage, the "embryonic stage," which was not well-documented.[319] We can see that there was a connection between Buddhism and Daoism in court circles and that both religions shared similar concerns in popular religious practices in the Eastern Han. In fact, Buddhism and Daoism were initially thought of as one religion.[320]

The textual evidence and archeological findings available to us at this embryonic stage are fairly random and not representative of Chinese Buddhism. One of the earliest accounts of Buddhist repentance is the 65 CE imperial edict, mentioned in the *Book of the Later Han* 後漢書, by Emperor Ming (28-75 CE) 漢明帝 commending Prince Liu Ying, 劉英, King of Chu, for his generous offering to the cult of Huang-Lao and the Buddha to redeem himself in Pengcheng (presently Jiangsu 江蘇).

> The king of Chu recites the subtle words of Huanglao, and respectfully performs the gentle sacrifices to the Buddha. After three months of purification and fasting, he has made a solemn covenant (or a vow) with the spirits. What dislike or suspicion (from Our part) could there be, that he must repent (of his sin)? Let (the silk which he sent for) redemption be sent back, in order thereby to contribute to the lavish entertainment of the *upāsikās* (*yipusai* 伊浦塞) and *śramaṇas* (*sangmen* 桑門).[321]

The edict shows that court and court officials in the Eastern Han already had direct contact with Buddhism and followed its practices, in particular repentance.[322] In

[319] Ibid., 164–167.
[320] Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, 405.
[321] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 27.
[322] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China.*, 19; Erik Zürcher, "Han Buddhism and the Western Region," 159-160; Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 60–63.

addition, a memorial by Xiang Kai 襄楷 in 166 CE attests to an imperial sacrifice to Laozi and Buddha by Emperor Huan 漢桓帝 (147-167), who was mainly interested in Daoism. Again, this is further evidence showing the connection between Daoism and Buddhism in secular literature. There was no discussion of Buddhist monks involved with imperial bureaucracy yet during this period.[323]

The third account found in the *Records of the Three Kingdoms* reveals that a certain warlord, Zhai Rong 窄融, built a temple for people to study the Buddhist scriptures in the years 193-194. People also celebrated and observed the "Bathing the Buddha" ritual while the warlord offered food and wine to all visiting guests.[324] During this period, there was no discussion of Buddhist activities in the city of Luoyang 洛陽 until the late second century CE when there was a group of foreign monks as missionaries from neighboring countries coming to translate Buddhist scriptures into Chinese.[325]

During the Three Kingdoms period (220–280 CE), Buddhism did not experience much growth with the Wei dynasty (220–265 CE) due to its suppressive policy and the development of various philosophical schools of thought, such as the Dark Learning school 玄學.[326] There was a lack of written sources despite the fact that Luoyang was a popular center for Buddhism with more than a few foreign monks doing translation work. However, only a few scriptures were recorded; some of those significant scriptures

[323] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China.*, 37-38; Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 68-72.
[324] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China.*, 27–28; Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 72-75.
[325] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 30–32; Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 78-83.
[326] Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 119–133.

mainly dealt with the Vinaya. It is speculated that there was a lack of charismatic religious leaders leading to a period of non-activity.[327]

Under the State of Wu (229–280 CE), there were several Buddhist translators working at the capital, Wuchang 武昌 (in present-day Hubei), before 229. These noteworthy figures are Zhi Qian 支謙 (fl. 222-252 CE), an Indo-scythian *upāsikā*, Kang Senghui 康僧會 (?-280), a Sogdian monk, and two Indian masters: Vighna 維祇難 (d.u.) and Zhu Jiangyan 竺將炎 (d.u.). Together they translated some forty works of Buddhist scriptures. They mostly worked with the court officials or literati. This activity was a facet of Southern Buddhism.[328] There appears to be no written historical records on Buddhism under the Shu Han (221–263 CE). However, this does not mean that no Buddhist activities took place in that state since much of the religious practices was rarely reported.

Under the Western Jin (Xijin 西晉, 265–316), China was once again united, though unstable, and the Lao-Zhuang philosophy appealed to the court circles. There was barely any mention of Buddhism even though by this time there was a relatively small group of Chinese ethnic Buddhists in Luoyang. Also, Buddhism was still being treated as part of Daoism.[329] However, this era produced two influential Chinese-born immigrant Buddhists: Dharmarakṣa 竺法護 (c. 233-308) and Zhu Shulan 竺叔蘭 (d.u.). Dharmarakṣa's hagiography will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Phase 2: The Eastern Jin and the Sixteen Kingdoms

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[327] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 55.

[328] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 46-47; Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 141-145.

[329] Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 173–176.

Buddhism gradually expanded to the south of China, mainly the Southeast and the city of Jiankang 建康, and was warmly received by the imperial families and aristocrats under the Eastern Jin (Dongjin 東晉, 265-420 CE). One of the powerful aristocrat families in the early fourth century who was a strong supporter of Buddhism is the Wang clan, Wang Dao 王導 (276-339) and Wang Dun 王敦 (266-324), along with Emperor Ming 晉明帝 (323-326). Several relatives of the Wang aristocrats also went forth to join Buddhist monastic communities, strengthening their connection to the Buddhist religion. It is believed that their pro-Buddhist attitudes became the foundation for the later propagation of Buddhism among royal families and court officials in the capital and the southeast of China.[330] It is noteworthy that the growth of Buddhism in the South was due mostly to Chinese scholarly monks; the number of foreign monks in the area was relatively small.[331] Eventually, Buddhism flourished into a prominent religion with the support of the state, such as under Emperor Ming and Emperor Cheng 晉成帝 (326–343), who officially became devotees. Buddhist nuns also played an important role at this time, thanks to the imperial patronage by the empresses and their relatives. [332]

In the latter half of the fourth century, Buddhism continued to penetrate deeper into the South: Sichuan province, a stronghold of Daoism. In central provinces, Buddhism was influenced by northern Buddhism due to the migration of several Buddhist monks who were mostly disciples of Daoan 道安 (312-385) and Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416). This resulted in a change of southern Buddhism via the rise of several new

[330] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 97; Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 318–326.
[331] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 102–103.
[332] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 104–106; Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 416-430.

Buddhist schools of thought.[333] In the capital, Buddhist monks were invited to lecture on the early Mahāyāna sūtras for several Eastern Jin emperors and their court officials. Buddhism played a dominant role among the court's intellectuals despite several anti-Buddhist polemics by some Confucian officials within the court.[334]

Regarding northern China, which was ruled by non-Chinese rulers of different ethnic tribes during the Sixteen Kingdoms period (304-439), not much is known about Buddhism from 310-380 other than Fotudeng 佛圖澄 (died 349) and some of his prominent disciples: Zhu Senglang 竺僧郎 (ca. 315-400), Zhu Faya 竺法雅 (d.u.), and Daoan. Daoan and Huiyuan, Daoan's disciple, were leading Chinese scholarly monks of their time.[335] Fotudeng is credited with bringing Buddhism to the Later Zhao's 後趙 (319-351) rulers, who became generous supporters of Buddhism.[336] Chinese Buddhism, due to the rise of scripture translations and studies by foreign and Chinese monks, "underwent an extremely complex and many-sided transformation and development."[337] One of the most accomplished translators of this phase was the Kuchean Buddhist monk Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (334–413 CE)[338] who was revered and supported by the Later Qin's second ruler, Yao Xing 姚興 (366–416).[339] These are only some major highlights

[333] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 113–116; Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 440-441.

[334] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 149–152.

[335] For a thorough research of Daoan's life and work, see Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 2*., 657–756; Link, "Biography of Shih Tao-an," 1–48; see Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 2*, 759-821 for Huiyuan's life, treatises, and practice.

[336] Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 1*, 251–252, 284-285.

[337] Tsukamoto, *A History of Early Chinese Buddhism 2*, 657.

[338] See Tang Xiyu, *Hanwei liangjin nanbei chao fojiaosi*, 278–305 for his life and works; Yang Lu, "Narrative and Historicity in the Buddhist Biographies of Early Medieval China: The Case of Kumarajiva," 1–43.

[339] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 226.

of Buddhism in the North. It is not possible to account for all that took place in Chinese Buddhism in this era due to lack of evidence. This leads to the last phase of this section, the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589), in which Buddhism continued to receive support amongst emperors and court officials in both regions.

Phase 3: The Southern and Northern Dynasties

In the South, where it was ruled by Chinese emperors, Buddhism was able to grow and become a state religion in one of those short-lived sovereignties, the Liang dynasty. Under the Liu-Song (420-479) monarchy, several aristocrats, such as Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385-433) and Yan Yanzhi 顏延之 (384-456), were interested in Buddhism and even had many discussions on Buddhist scriptures and practices; one of the discussions was on the issue of gradual versus sudden enlightenment at court with the presence of Emperor Wen of Liu-Song 宋文帝 (407–453).[340] In addition, Prince Jingling 竟陵王 (460-494) of the Southern Qi 南齊 (479-502) made offerings to monks and invited them to give lectures on Buddhist scriptures to the Confucian educated officials on many occasions.[341]

It can be said that in the early medieval period Buddhism reached its highest pinnacle during the Liang Dynasty (502-557) in which Emperor Wu 梁武帝 (r. 502-549) was the most devout Buddhist. Emperor Wu made a great amount of financial donations to build numerous monasteries and support Buddhist monks and nuns. Several times he stayed in the monasteries for months at a time.[342] He underwent the ordination ritual and received the bodhisattva precepts in the year of 519 and was frequently involved in

[340] Tang Xiyu, *Hanwei liangjin nanbei chao si*, 416.
[341] Ibid., 457–458.
[342] Ibid., 474–475.

organizing several auspicious Buddhist ceremonies held at the capital.[343] The ordination led him to politically declare himself as a bodhisattva of his empire as well as the dharma protector of the sangha. Emperor Wu's activities reflect the gradual rise in Buddhist practices by lay devotees (imperial, literati, and commoners) seen in the fifth and sixth centuries.[344] One of the most important and popular scriptures still in practice today attributed to Emperor Wu is the *Precious Repentance of the Liang Emperor* (*Lianghuang baochan* 梁皇寶懺).[345] The repentance ritual found in this scripture demonstrates the development and popularity of repentance around this period.

The last sovereigns of the southern dynasties, both Emperors Wu 陳武帝 (r. 557-559) and Houzhu 後主 (r. 583-589), actually left the throne for the monasteries but were asked to return to rule the Chen empire (557-589). Both rulers studied Buddhist scriptures, and a good number of court literati received the bodhisattva vows from revered Buddhist monks.[346] Thus, Buddhism was still favored by the Chen dynasty until its collapse.

During the same period, in the North where the region was united and ruled by non-Chinese rulers, many of them had a favorable view toward Buddhism. Several of the rulers in the early the Northern Wei (386-534) provided financial support for the monasteries and the sangha, with the exception of Emperor Taiwu 魏太武帝 (408–452) (r. 424-452). Following the advice of his prime minister, Cui Hao 崔浩 (d. 450), Emperor

[343] Janousch, "The Emperor as Bodhisattva," in *State and Court Ritual in China*, ed. Joseph P. McDermott (Cambridge [u.a.]: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 112–113.

[344] Ibid., 113–114.

[345] See Bodiford, *Going Forth*, 40–64 for a detailed analysis of the ritual and a comparison to its counterpart Daoist ritual, (*Taishang cibei daochang xiaozai jiuyou fachan* 太上慈悲道場消災九幽法懺).

[346] Tang Xiyu, *Hanwei liangjin nanbei chao si*, 483–486.

Taiwu issued an imperial decree persecuting the sangha and destroying monasteries throughout the empire beginning in the spring of 446.[347]

When Emperor Xiaowen 孝文帝 (r. 471-499) took over the throne, he fully supported the Buddhist religion and sped up the process of Sinicization of his court in addition to relocating the capital to Luoyang from Pingcheng 平城 (presently Datong 大同) in 494. As a Buddhist, Emperor Xiaowen invited many scholarly monks to the capital to lecture on several Mahāyāna scriptures-- thousands attended.[348] This was also the time for the construction of many Buddhist caves, with hundreds of thousands of images: Yungang Grottoes 雲崗石窟 in Datong and Longmen Caves 龍門石窟 outside of Luoyang.[349] Many of these images can still be found at these two sites.[350] Buddhism continued to prosper through the Eastern Wei, Western Wei, Northern Qi, and Northern Zhou, except in 574 when it was dealt another persecution by Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou 周武帝 (543–578) (r. 561-578).[351]

The above accounts are just some of the major documented evidence of Chinese Buddhism from the Eastern Han to the Northern and Southern Dynasties. There are virtually not many reliable historical sources on the propagation of Buddhism before 300 CE. The early Buddhist arrivals were mainly foreign monks, travelers, and merchants. The initial contacts that Buddhism had were primarily with court officials and literati.

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[347] Tang Xiyu, *Hanwei liangjin nanbei chao si*, 493–496; Liu, *Ethnicity and the Suppression of Buddhism in Fifth-century North China: The Background and Significance of the Gaiwu Rebellion*, 1-2. This is the first and most devastating persecution of Buddhism by Emperor Taiwu. Liu argues that the suppression of Buddhism was due to political, religious, and ethnic reasons; it was not just Buddhism.

[348] Tang Xiyu, *Hanwei liangjin nanbei chao si*, 501–503.

[349] Ibid., 509–510.

[350] McNair, *Donors of Longmen Faith, Politics, and Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture*, 1–6; Wong, *Chinese Steles*, 1–11.

[351] Tang Xiyu, *Hanwei liangjin nanbei chao si*, 542–543. This is the second of the four major persecutions in the history of Buddhism in China.

The Buddha was worshipped along with the Huang-Lao cult by the court and its officials. This was the beginning of a complex interaction of Buddhism and Chinese culture and society. Only later did Buddhist scriptures and practices along with many aspects of Sinicization of Buddhism follow. Soon native Chinese joined the religion and in the process helped transformed Buddhism to become a state religion by the end of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. One of the aspects of Sinicization, repentance, was successfully developed and can be found in many Buddhist scriptures in early medieval China. One of these scriptures is the *Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Manjuśrī's Teaching of Repentance* (*Mañjuśrī's Repentance Sūtra* hereafter), attributed to Dharmarakṣa, who will be briefly discussed below.

II. Hagiography of Dharmarakṣa and his translation works

Dharmarakṣa (Zhu Fahu 竺法護) (c. 233-308), one of the very few talented translators of his time, contributed much to the formation of the Chinese Buddhist canon and laid the foundation for later translation works. He is believed to have translated 149 works.[352] Most of his works belong to the early strand of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Dharmarakṣa's translation style is much more literal which makes his translations seemingly obscure and difficult to understand. He had both foreign and native Chinese translators working for him; they were both monastics as well as laity amongst the translators.[353] Three of his translation texts dealing with repentance are: *Triskandhaka*, (*Sanpin huiguo jing* 三品悔過經), *Shelifu huiguo jing* 舍利弗悔過經, and the main text

[352] Boucher, "Dharmarakṣa and the Transmission of Buddhism to China," 23–26.
[353] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 68-69.

of this dissertation, *Wenshushili huiguo jing* 文殊師利悔過經 which will be carefully studied next.

III. Analysis of the *Sūtra Spoken by the Buddha on Manjuśrī's Teaching of Repentance*[354]

i. Structure

This one-fascicle scripture, translated in 271, is attributed to Dharmarakṣa; there is no word on its Sanskrit version. It is listed under part one of the *Records of the New Collections of the Sūtras, Vinaya, Abhidharma śāstras* (新集撰出經律論錄第一) in the CSZJJ.[355] One of the earliest Mahāyāna texts on repentance, this scripture was produced at the embryonic stage of Chinese Buddhism. In studying this text, it will be important to see the innovation of Buddhist masters in integrating Chinese cultural characteristics into a Buddhist ritual practice that gradually gained wide acceptance and popularity in Chinese religious life.

The text is a combination of question-answer and a descriptive narrative presenting a methodology of repentance and an exhortation of the Buddha's wisdom. Its original intent appears to be deity veneration and liturgical recitation. The text can be doctrinally and historically situated in the earliest Mahāyāna thought expressed in the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus, specifically the *Ratnaguṇasaṁcayagāthā* (hereafter the *Ratna*) and the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* (hereafter the *Aṣṭa*)[356] along with the initial development of the

[354] This text has another title, 文殊五體悔過經.

[355] Sengyou, *Chu san zang ji ji*, 35.

[356] Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, 168–84. In his article, "*The Composition of the Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*," Conze determines that the Chinese translation of *Aṣṭa* was available around 150 CE and its verse version, the *Ratna*, dated back to 50 BCE.

repentance literature.[357] The *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus and its thought form the major portion of the text which consists of several themes to be discussed in section iii. In addition, the doctrine of *śūnyatā* and the cultivation of a bodhisattva are also included in the scripture. As can be seen, this scripture is not just about performing repentance but also the propagation of Mahāyāna ideals. All of these are expounded by the central character of the text, Mañjuśrī.

ii. The Cast

The Buddha is mentioned at the beginning and end of the scripture as the authoritative eyewitness to Mañjuśrī's discourse and to praise the importance of the repentance ritual as a soteriology leading one to attain *samādhi* and Buddhahood. Accompanying the Buddha is the standard 1,250 *bhikṣus* and incalculable numbers of great saints and bodhisattvas who have attained enlightenment.[358] Ānanda is conspicuously absent in the text (Ānanda, the Buddha's personal attendant, would usually be present whenever the Buddha gave a discourse so he could memorize it).

In this scripture, Mañjuśrī is the main character occupying the Buddha's position prescribing the methodology of repentance as a ritual to eradicate transgressions in this and past lifetimes and ultimately to attain Buddhahood. When asked, Mañjuśrī is able to preach all sorts of Dharma to innumerous sentient beings, including the eight classes of gods and dragons, depending on their spiritual needs. In particular, he can also elucidate the doctrines of the three vehicles for the attainment of arhatship, pratyekabuddha, and

[357] Shi Darui, *Tian tai chan fa zhi yan jiu*, 25–30. Shi Darui provides a list of 61 Buddhist scriptures related to confession and repentance in the *Dazang jing* 大藏經 from the late Eastern Han to the Northern and Southern dynasties (147-577 CE).

[358] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0441c06-c10 and p.0448a01-a20.

Buddhahood.[359] Here Mañjuśrī is capable of taking the place of the Buddha to expound the Dharma to all sentient beings and may be considered as equal as the Buddha in terms of status.

The audience here consists of an assembly of mostly new learning bodhisattvas 新學菩薩 who come to hear the Dharma. Since they are new, according to the scripture, they do not know the causal conditions of transgressions and merits because their minds are obstructed by fabricated doubts. They were habitually confused and were not brave in their intention. Their minds were weak and they did not know where to begin to ask Mañjuśrī on how to eliminate the causes and conditions of all transgressions and suffering and on how to cultivate the various Mahāyāna stages and the path of unsurpassed enlightenment.[360] This is a typical setting found in many Mahāyāna scriptures in which an audience of bodhisattvas or other sentient beings would gather around the Buddha, in this case Mañjuśrī, waiting to hear the discourse.

In the meantime, there is a bodhisattva named Uniformly Illuminating Brilliance of the Tathāgata (*Rulai qiguang zhaoyao pusa* 如來齊光照燿菩薩, hereafter referred to as Tathāgata Bodhisattva), knowing the minds of all the bodhisattvas in the assembly and taking the role of initiating the question, who rises from the audience and asks Mañjuśrī about the meaning of repentance and the matter of no transgression.[361] Mañjuśrī immediately responds to Tathāgata Bodhisattva's inquiry and expounds the ritual of repentance and the exhortation of the Buddha which form the central themes of the text.

iii. Central Themes

[359] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0441c06-c24.
[360] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0441c25-c28.
[361] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0441c29–p.0442a02.

A thorough review of the text yields a repentance ritual consisting of six steps, which is summarized in section IV. The major themes in this sūtra are (a) repentance, (b) attributes of the Buddha, (c) the bodhisattva and his cultivation, (d) the doctrine of śūnyatā, (e) virtuous roots and (f) filial piety.

a. Repentance, the main theme of the text and this project, is a concept created during the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India and gradually brought to China. The rise and propagation of Mahāyāna Buddhism in China meant the development and translation of Buddhist scriptures, some of which are solely dedicated to repentance. During the four decades of the Wei era, there were about ten repentance texts that dealt with causes and conditions, retribution, and repentance to eradicate unwholesome karmic deeds.[362] Further, it should be noted that most of the repentance scriptures were primarily produced for lay Buddhists, allowing them the opportunity to participate in and propagate the Dharma--this is one of the primary goals in Mahāyāna Buddhism. From the Wei to the Jin dynasties, the majority of the repentance scriptures exclusively focus on the penitence methods as prescribed in the Vinaya. Buddhist scriptures, including those on repentance, penetrated China mainly through the court circles, royalties, court officials, and literati: this is one of the means repentance thought was propagated and embraced at the time.[363] All repentance scriptures primarily involve performing prostrations (repentance at the phenomenon level). As discussed in the introduction of the project, there were sixty-one repentance scriptures by the end of the Southern and Northern dynasties. Repentance methodology was expanded to include repentance at the phenomenal as well as principle (via some forms of simple contemplative practice) levels.

[362] For a listing of the scriptures, see 白金銑, "魏晉六朝佛教懺悔的實踐與義蘊," 131.
[363] Ibid., 131–132.

However, these scriptures do not make any distinction between the two. The contemplative practice can seemingly be found in some of the early repentance texts such as the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance Sūtra*, the *Daśabhūmika-vibhāsā-śāstra* (十住毘婆沙論), and the *Samantabhadra-bodhisattva-dhyana-carya-dharma-sūtra* (佛說觀普賢菩薩行法經). In the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance Sūtra*, repentance deals with the penitent's transgressions, in this lifetime, caused by the six sense faculties, delusion, as well as instructing others to commit crimes,[364] by the three karmic sources (thought, speech, and actions),[365] and by improper practices of the six *pāramitās* and the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment.[366] The penitent also has to confess all transgressions done from previous lifetimes.[367] Despite the fact that this is an early text, penitence can also be performed on behalf of others or all sentient beings.[368]

b. The second major theme, receiving greater discussion than repentance in this text, primarily praises the transcendent and physical attributes of the Buddha that the penitent aspires to achieve. The attributes are wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*), the ten powers (*daśa balāni*), the four types of fearlessness (*catvāri vaiśāradyāni*), omniscience (*sarvajña*), the *trikāya* (*dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, and *nirmāṇakāya*), supernatural cognition (*abhijñā*), merit (*guṇa*), skillful means (*upāya*), and the thirty-two major and eighty minor characteristics. These attributes have been presented in several of the early Mahāyāna texts: the *Aṣṭa* (道行般若經), the *Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra* (維摩詰所說經), the *Longer Sukhāvatīvyūha Sūtra* (佛說無量壽經), the *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* (正

[364] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442b12-c01.
[365] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443a05-a09.
[366] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443a12-b07.
[367] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442c02-0443a02.
[368] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443b14–b17.

法華經), the *Ugraparipṛcchā Sūtra* (the *Inquiry of Ugra* 法鏡經), and the *Akṣobhyatathāgatasyavyūha Sūtra* (阿閦佛國經), to name a few. These texts emphasize the path of a bodhisattva career and the great attributes of a Buddha (or the Buddhas of the ten directions). This indicates a process of evolution by Buddhist authors from depicting the Buddha as a human being in early Buddhism to a superhuman figure in (early) Mahāyāna Buddhism.[369] All of these attributes would enable the enlightened bodhisattva to travel throughout space to all the Buddha-lands and pay respect to all the Buddhas and to lead incalculable sentient beings everywhere toward perfect enlightenment as well.[370] Similar claims are also made in many other Mahāyāna texts. In a parallel rhetoric, the attributes are elucidated throughout this sūtra. The penitent is encouraged to take on the role of a bodhisattva and diligently strive to attain these qualities. For example, it is said that when the great bodhisattva himself confesses, he would be free of his transgression or calamity and able to obtain the wisdom of the Buddha.[371] After performing penitence, the penitent (or lay bodhisattva) gives rise to the mind of attaining perfect enlightenment and of being adorned with four types of fearlessness and the thirty-two major and eighty minor characteristics.[372] In several instances, the text encourages the bodhisattva to cultivate diligently in order to attain these attributes. Also, the Buddhas would examine all sentient beings and their five *skandhas* which were empty and could not be owned. While they would otherwise live in vain and misery, the Buddha would transform them by leading their minds toward omniscience. His wisdom would direct them to cultivate and achieve the *tathāgata-*

[369] Xing, *The Concept of the Buddha*, 179. In his book, Xing provides a thorough study of the many attributes of the Buddha in early Buddhism.

[370] Kumārajīva, Kubo, and Yuyama, *The Lotus Sutra*, 66.

[371] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443b28–29. 菩薩大士自首悔過, 無有罪害得至佛慧.

[372] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443c02-03 & p.0443c10.

kāya.[373] Furthermore, just as the Buddha would transform inexhaustible sentient beings via skillful means because of his saintly wisdom, he would bring about all bodhisattvas to cultivate the proper virtue.[374] This shows the capabilities of the Buddha and that the bodhisattva can also accomplish these once he becomes a Buddha. Last but not least is the Buddha's power to transcend both phenomena and time. He has the ability to traverse through phenomena or time from the past to the current period and from the current period to the future.[375] The attributes of the Buddha were widely praised and became the object of devotion in many early Mahāyāna texts.[376]

c. Throughout the text, the penitent, having repented, is exhorted to take on the role of a [great] bodhisattva.[377] The bodhisattva ideal was gaining popularity at the early stage of Mahāyāna development as a result of the claim that the historical Buddha, *Śākyamuni,* had undergone incalculable successive lives as a bodhisattva in the past before this last rebirth. In addition, over the course of many lifetimes, the Buddha had cultivated an innumerable amount of good deeds and all forms of virtues for the sake of his own enlightenment and for all sentient beings' enlightenment.[378] Prior to attaining perfect enlightenment, it is the bodhisattva's conviction that he must diligently cultivate various dharma practices in his path. These practices consist of the six *pāramitās*, the

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[373] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0445c02–c04. 察於眾生五陰之體, 猶如曠野而無有主悉無所有, 不曉了此唐為憂患, 化眾生類志薩芸若, 諸通之慧普入眾行取如來身.

[374] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0446a16–17. 猶如諸佛智度無極，善權方便所因聖慧，令眾菩薩行於正德.

[375] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0447b09–b14. 以過去事入於過去，又以過去入於當來，又以過去入於現在，其當來事入於當來又當來事，入於過去當來事者入於現在，又現在事入於現在，又現在事入於過去，一切過去當來現在入平等相，令其現在入於現在，其現在者入於過去，其去來今普入平等.

[376] Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom*, 55.

[377] For the development and definition of a bodhisattva, see Conze, *Buddhism, Its Essence and Development*, 125–127and Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, 54–67; Nattier, *A Few Good Men*, 144–147; Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, 10–18.

[378] Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, 34–35.

brahmavihāras, and thirty-seven factors of enlightenment.[379] These practices are specified throughout the text as part of the career of the penitent or lay bodhisattva.[380] These are the necessary steps that would assist him in progressing toward and attaining Buddhahood.

d. *Śūnyatā* or emptiness is one of the most important concepts in early Mahāyāna Buddhism as well as in this sūtra.[381] Ontologically, *śūnyatā* refers to "absolute transcendental reality beyond the grasp of intellectual comprehension and verbal expression."[382] Epistemologically, it is "the identity of yes and no" and "that which stands right in the middle between affirmation and negation, existence and non-existence, eternity and annihilation."[383] *Śūnyatā* is rigorously elucidated throughout several other Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Aṣṭa* and other editions of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*.[384] From another perspective, *śūnyatā* can be interpreted as "Suchness, because one takes reality such as it is, without superimposing any ideas upon it."[385] *Śūnyatā* takes on a variety of meanings, some of which are found in this sūtra. For example, upon contemplating on the five *skandhas*, "[the bodhisattva] is led to understand that everything has no intrinsic nature, just like there is no penitent in everything, he can then enter the ultimate reality."[386] In other words, "just as what the Buddha teaches, all

[379] Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, 80–269.
[380] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443c16-0444a10.
[381] Conze, *Buddhism, Its Essence and Development*, 130–135. Conze presents a doctrinal discussion on the term, emptiness.
[382] Conze, *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies*, 77.
[383] Conze, *Buddhism, Its Essence and Development*, 132.
[384] Conze, *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and Its Verse Summary*, 96–102, 142-148, 172-179, 193-199, 209-212, 236-241.
[385] Conze, *Buddhism, Its Essence and Development*, 134.
[386] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443b24–b25. 當令明了一切無本。假使一切無所行者乃能得入於斯本際.

dharmas have no origin and are non-abiding."[387] "[One would] contemplate on everything that exists in space such that they are empty. One can then enter the inconceivable *dharmadhātu*."[388] These are just some of the examples of the widespread application of *śūnyatā* in depicting the path toward enlightenment in the text. This demonstrates the rise and integration of *Prajñāpāramitā* concepts of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Chinese Buddhist texts. The next two characteristics of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, namely virtuous roots and filial piety, can also be found in Chinese culture as well.

e. Virtuous Roots (deben 德本)[389]

The term *deben* (Sanskrit: *kuśala-mūla*)[390] occurs extensively in the text, thirty-five times. This demonstrates the importance of spiritual development in one's cultivation at the time. The penitent, after confession, must constantly cultivate his or her virtuous roots. In other words, he or she must be free of greed, hatred, and delusion in order to attain perfect enlightenment. "The Buddhas of the three time periods all attain saintly wisdom by means of their virtuous roots. I (the penitent) would speak the virtuous roots to sentient beings everywhere and bring about them to enter the gates of the bodhisattva and be born

[387] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443c18–c19. 如佛所教一切諸法, 則無根原亦無所住.

[388] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0446a21-a23. 思惟**虛空**一切所有。等如**虛無**已能可意入於無量思法界.

[389] Soothill and Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 432. According to Soothill, *deben* or virtuous roots is (*kuśala-mūla* in Sanskrit and) defined as the root of the moral life, of religious power, or the root of virtue. Virtuous roots, found in many of Dharmarakṣa's translations, was eventually replaced with 善本 (*shanben*) by Kumārajīva (334–413 CE). This can be verified in Dharmarakṣa's 正法華經 and Kumārajīva's 妙法蓮華經. 德本 can be equivalent to 善本, (see 慈怡, 佛光大辭典, 4877-4878). 善本 is *kuśala-mūla* (see Hirakawa, *A Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary*, 373). Further, *kuśala-mūla*, translated as 善根, means wholesome faculties or roots of virtue referring "to the cumulative meritorious deeds performed by an individual throughout his or her past lives." In other words, *kuśala-mūla* denotes for the three wholesome roots: non-greed (無貪 *arāga*), non-hatred (無瞋 *adveṣa*), and non-delusion (無痴 *amoha*), (see Buswell's *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, 457 & 慈怡, 佛光大辭典, 4888). Thus, considering the use of *deben* and its context in the text, *deben* is best rendered as virtuous roots since it refers to the quality of one's spiritual development.

[390] Hirakawa, *A Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary*, 459.

in the *bhūmis*."[391] "Via these virtuous roots, I can see the sorts of form (*rūpa*) just like the Buddha's appearance. It is just as I can visualize the Buddha lands in the ten directions and can gloriously purify them."[392] Last but not last is the claim that people who cultivate their virtuous roots regardless of their ambition or character will be able to enter the gate of *dhāraṇī*.[393] These are just some of examples of the cultivation and power of virtuous roots in the text. I will next discuss the only major Confucian characteristic addressed: filial piety.

f. Filial piety is one of the most important characteristics in Chinese culture, with roots dating before the formation of Confucianism and the arrival of Buddhism. According to Chapter One of the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao Jing* 孝經),

> Filial piety is the root of (all) virtue, and (the stem) out of which grows (all moral) teaching. When we have established our character by the practice of the (filial) course, so as to make our name famous in future ages and thereby glorify our parents, this is the end of filial piety. It commences with the service of parents; it proceeds to the service of the ruler; it is completed by the establishment of character.[394]

The chapter goes on to emphasize that one of the worst offenses is being unfilial.[395] There are concerns included in the *Manjuśrī's Repentance* which states that the penitent, as part of his confession, has transgressed against his parents and the elderly in the past and vowed not to repeat the same mistake again.[396] The inclusion of Confucian characteristics in repentance scriptures is to appeal to the court, Confucian elite, and ordinary Chinese families to accept the practice. Besides filial piety, the text contains certain elements deemed to be of Han culture as well as Daoism through the use of vocabularies to convey

[391] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0446a27–b01.
[392] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0446b29–c01.
[393] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0446c23.
[394] Confucius and Legge, *The Sacred Books of China The Texts of Confucianism*, 466.
[395] Ibid., 481.
[396] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442a23 & p.0442c05.

its message.

iv. Han and Daoist Influences

The Indian Buddhist texts translated or produced from the second to third centuries CE were integrated with dissimilar Chinese linguistic and literary features to express new Buddhist ideals for a Chinese audience. In other words, we have a religion from a high culture civilization being transplanted into another in a foreign land. Buddhist translators for centuries had to reconcile the linguistic and literary differences between two distinct civilizations in their translation works: it was an extremely complex undertaking.[397] Understandably, early Buddhist translations were heavily influenced by Han culture. In a remarkable study on early Buddhist translations dating from the Eastern Han to the early sixth century, Erik Zürcher successfully demonstrates many of the issues that the early generations of Buddhist translators contended with, mainly examining linguistic features along with terminologies and styles.[398] According to Zürcher, most of the Eastern Han Buddhist translations are thought to be vulgar with simple syntactic patterns and limited vocabularies that would be found in secular works.[399] In addition, scriptural idioms and the vernacular language of the Han dominated in many of the translations, therefore causing deviations in the use of Classical Chinese.[400] In Zürcher's view, translation texts from the early second century CE, mainly those by An Shigao 安

[397] See Boucher, *Bodhisattvas of the forest and the formation of the Mahāyāna*, 87–92 for a discussion on certain issues of translations between these two high cultures in this period.

[398] Zürcher, "Buddhist Influence On Early Taoism," 97-98. Zürcher divides the translation period from the Eastern Han to the early sixth century into three phases: (1). Primitive translations (from the middle of the second century CE to 220 CE), (2). Archaic translations from 220 CE to c. 390 CE., and (3). Early versions (standardized by Kumārajīva) from the 390 to early 6th century CE.

[399] Zürcher, "Late Han Vernacular Elements in the Earliest Buddhist Translations," 178.

[400] Zürcher, "Late Han Vernacular Elements in the Earliest Buddhist Translations, 194; Zürcher, "A New Look at the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Texts," in *From Benares to Beijing: Essays on Buddhism and Chinese Religion in Honour of Prof. Jan Yün-Hua*, edited by Koichi Shinohara and Gregory Schopen, 279-281.

世高 (?- c.168 CE) and his contemporaries, are deemed vulgar, erroneous and unintelligible. By Lokakṣema's 支婁迦讖 (c. 147-?) time, his translations contain mostly vernacular language and transcriptions of both proper names and Buddhist technical terms.[401] This was due to the fact that the translators had no available sources or standards to consult in order to realize the linguistic and stylistic differences of the two divergent cultures. Further, the foreign translators were not familiar with the Chinese language either. Beginning in the third century, as literary idioms were conventionalized, a Chinese canonical language was distinctively developed due to "the persisting influence of the Indian original; the influence of classical Chinese; the role of the translator's personal sensitivity in creating new forms and ways of expression or in borrowing them from other sources."[402] Thus, this led to the development of a Chinese scriptural literary expression in terms of terminology and style--another aspect in the process of Sinicization.[403] However, translation procedures and styles had not become standardized yet in the development of the Chinese Buddhist canon.

By closely studying the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance Sūtra*, we found that the scripture contains literary features and linguistic issues which are consistent with Zürcher's findings for translation scriptures in the so-called archaic translation phase. The content of the scripture is largely in a four-syllable prosodic pattern. The first point of correspondence with Zürcher's category is that the lexicon compounds (two syllables) occurs widely throughout the text such as the verbal compounds 歡喜 (to rejoice), 悲哀

[401] Zürcher, "A New Look at the Earliest Chinese Buddhist Texts," in *From Benares to Beijing: Essays on Buddhism and Chinese Religion in Honour of Prof. Jan Yün-Hua*, edited by Koichi Shinohara and Gregory Schopen, 282-283.
[402] Ibid., 284–285.
[403] Ibid., 288.

(to mourn), nominal compounds 知識 (acquaintance), 處所 (place as a noun) and 爾乃 (then). There are also plenty of occurrences of binôme (reversible) compounds: reversible 照明 or 明照 (to be bright), 皆悉 or 悉皆 (all).[404] Secondly, there are instances of verbal complements: "purpose on the part of the agent" expressed by pre-verbs of motion such as 來聽 (come to listen), 棄去 (to abandon), and 捨去 (throw away).[405] On the other hand, according to Zürcher, personal pronouns such as 我 (I) and 吾 (I) are rarely used from the third century CE. However, 我 appears twenty times and 吾 thirty one times in this text along with copula verbs for different uses.[406] Morever, particles used as empty words were supposed to be obsolete but occur frequently, such as 而 (*er*: and, and yet, or but), 於 (*yu*: in, at, on, or interjection alas), and 者 (*zhe*: person, this).[407] A final point of contrast with Zürcher's research is the enclitic use of 故 (*gu*: because or therefore), 為 (*wei*: to function as, or to be), and 作 (*zuo*: as a transitive verb: to make or to do; as a semi-copula: to function as, or to be) throughout the scripture, though Zürcher states that their use would have gradually decreased by the third century.

Next, one of the literary borrowings used in the text once is the term 本無 (*benwu*: original non-being)[408] of the Xuanxue (Dark Learning) movement, indicating a Daoist influence. The use of literary borrowings expresses Mahāyāna concepts in order to appeal

[404] Zürcher, "Late Han Vernacular Elements in the Earliest Buddhist Translations," 179–182.
[405] Ibid., 183–184.
[406] Ibid., 185–189.
[407] Ibid., 189–191.
[408] For a discussion on the meaning and analysis of this term, see Lai, "Before the Prajñā Schools: The Earliest Chinese Commentary on the Aṣṭasāhasrikā," 97–99; Lai, "The Early Prajñā Schools, Especially 'Hsin-Wu,' Reconsidered," 62–68; Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 191–193.

to the Chinese literati.[409] In addition, an example of the hybridization of Mahāyāna Buddhism and *Xuanxue* developed by Daoan can be found in the term 無上正真道 (*wushang zhenzhen dao*: the supreme and perfect way) seen in this text.[410] Thus, this text is heavily influenced by the use of the Eastern Han linguistic features and styles as well as by Daoism. Next, we will look at the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* in the form of a repentance ritual.

IV. Components of the Repentance Ritual[411]

At first, the scripture appears to be a liturgical text for chanting purposes. However, from a ritual perspective, we can extract and reorganize the components, effectively turning them into a six-component repentance ritual: veneration, invocation, confession, vows, offering, and exhortation.

i. Veneration of the Buddha/Transfer of Merits

After performing a full prostration, the practitioner, kneeling on the ground with the right knee (this is the first posture), would say that it is his "desire to transform all sentient beings toward the path of equally unsurpassed true enlightenment---欲化一切眾生之類皆至無上正真平等之道."[412]

He would vow to attain perfect enlightenment just as the Buddha had done and would lead all sentient beings to also achieve Buddhahood.[413]

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[409] Boucher, *Buddhist Translation Procedures in Third-Century China*, 159.

[410] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 192–193.

[411] X. no. 74, vol. 1499, p.0983c03. According to the *Buddhist Rite for Deliverance of Creatures of Water and Land* 法界聖凡水陸大齋法輪寶懺, it divides this text into six components: 懺悔 (repentance), 勸助 (exhortation), 請法 (solicitation), 興供 (offering), 迴向 (transfer of merits), and 發願 (vows). This is not necessarily correct and does not reflect the order of the components in the text.

[412] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442a06-a08.

[413] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442a10-a12.

With both knees and hands pressing against the ground (second posture),[414] he would realize that many people would now turn to repentance and cultivate wholesome deeds after realizing that they had led a fallacious way of life in the past.[415]

With both hands and knees touching the ground and supposedly having the mind touching the ground (third and last posture),[416] he vows to bring about all human beings to attain Buddhahood with all the great marks of a Buddha. He would take refuge in the Three Treasures by way of prostration and the merits resulting from this would cause all sentient beings to attain great enlightenment. That they would obtain the five spiritual faculties, the five strengths, the five supernormal powers, and the five types of visions from their cultivation.

ii. Invocation of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

Next, the practitioner would call on the benevolence and compassion of all the Buddhas to take pity on (all sentient beings). He would further call on the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions to protect the Dharma with their *dharmakāya* and to witness this methodology of realizing the merits and transgressions and the causal conditions of retribution.[417]

iii. Confession

The practitioner would confess all transgressions from this as well as past lifetimes, transgressions resulting from the three karmic sources: body, speech, and mind, transgressions from incorrectly practicing the six *pāramitās*, and from improper practice

[414] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442a12.
[415] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442a18–a20.
[416] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442a21-22.
[417] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442b04-b10.

of the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment. As a confirmation of this practice, all Buddhas and great bodhisattvas in the past have also performed repentance in their lives.

- Transgressions in This Lifetime

He would, from birth until death, have admitted to making all sorts of transgressions on matters against the Dharma. He would have been deluded and not able to comprehend the Noble Truths, impermanence, *dukkha*, *anātman*, and *śūnyatā*. He would have committed all unwholesome deeds and violated the Buddhist precepts and instructed others to do so. He would "have destroyed others' virtuous roots and caused (them) not to be able to accomplish (the path of enlightenment)--壞人德本使不成就."[418]

He would vow not to descend into the lower realms of rebirth, to be erudite of the scriptures, and to be able to always meet with the bodhisattvas. Now in front of the Buddhas of ten directions, he would repent, transform the past and cultivate (wholesome deeds) in the future, and would not dare to transgress again.[419]

- Transgressions from Previous Lifetimes

He would repent in the luminosity of the Buddhas of ten directions who would come to rescue him for all the impure actions that he had done in previous lifetimes.[420]

- Transgressions as a Result of Body, Speech, and Mind

He would repent for all the wholesome and unwholesome deeds done by the body, speech, and mind.[421]

- Transgressions from Incorrectly Practicing the Six *Pāramitās*

[418] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442b12-b20.
[419] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442b21-p.0442c01.
[420] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0442c02-p.0443a04
[421] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443a04-a11.

He would repent for incorrectly practicing and interpreting the proper meanings of *dāna*, *śīla*, *kṣānti* (forbearance), *vīrya* (diligence), *dhyāna*, and *prajñā*.[422]

- Transgressions from Improper Practice of the Thirty-Seven Factors of Enlightenment

He would repent for not cultivating the four forms of benevolence, not properly understanding the great enlightenment as well as the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment, not understanding the cultivation of a *śramaṇa*, and improperly developing the virtuous roots.[423]

- Buddhas in the Ancient Times Have Practiced Repentance

All Buddhas of the past, as practicing bodhisattvas, repented all their transgressions and the shield of their hindrances. In the same manner, he would repent just as they did and then cultivate and transform himself. He would take refuge in the Buddhas for their unsurpassed virtuous roots and unparalleled wisdom. All sentient beings from incalculable *kalpas* had been deluded and unrestrained in conduct accumulating all sorts of transgressions. They would repent all transgressions and the consequence of calamities and rebirths in the five paths of transmigration. Now he would prostrate on behalf of others to repent all transgressions and recognize the subtlety of repentance. That would eliminate all obstacles, allowing him to contemplate that all dharmas would be emptied. For those who repent would have neither transgressions nor retribution. They would not be defiled by the six sensory objects and be able to realize all

[422] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443a12-a24.
[423] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443a25-b07.

dharmas without the shield of hindrances. This is called "repentance of all transgressions."[424]

- Great Bodhisattvas Had Also Practiced Repentance

The great bodhisattvas in the past were bound by their wandering minds and actions and subject to wealth, property, and other causal conditions. Yet they would dwell in their space and repent. They would contemplate on the imbalance of *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *samjñā*, and *samskāra* and realize that everything has no intrinsic nature (無本). When they reflected that there were no practitioners in their cultivation, they would then be able to enter the state of ultimate reality. They are called the "Great Bodhisattvas." They would repent their transgressions which would result in the elimination of all transgressions and attainment of the wisdom of the Buddha; repentance would also eliminate all causal conditions of unwholesome deeds and the shield of all hindrances.[425]

iv. Making Vows

After repenting all transgressions, the practitioner would give rise to the mind of attaining unsurpassed enlightenment and eradicating all unwholesome deeds for all sentient beings and thus engendering them to achieve proper Buddhahood. He would bring about the thought of being endowed with the Buddha's adornment (thirty-two great marks and eighty beautiful features).[426]

Buddhas of the three periods, from the time of first giving rise to the desire for enlightenment until the time of achieving perfect enlightenment, would manifest the virtuous roots in their cultivation. They would properly cultivate the six *pāramitās*.[427]

[424] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443b07–b20.
[425] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443b20-p.0443c01.
[426] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443c03-c10.
[427] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443c16-c23.

They would have profoundly realized dependent origination, the four immeasurables, the four forms of benevolence, and parts of the thirty-seven factors of enlightenment. He is inspired to cultivate as such.[428]

v. Offering

The practitioner would make offerings of all precious treasures and the seven types of precious jewels (*sapta-ratnāni*)[429] to the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha for their purity and wisdom so that eventually he would be able to achieve the wisdom of the Buddha.[430] He would also make offering of incense, lamps, flowers, and fragrance to the Buddha's relics and keep in mind the unsurpassed enlightenment and wisdom of the Buddha.[431] From all the merits generated from offering, he would simply act in purity which would result in purifying self-nature and attaining perfect knowledge.[432]

vi. Exhortation

The Buddhas of the three time periods, before entering *nirvāṇa*, would gather with their disciples and help them to overcome their hindrances, guide them to attain the fruits of stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, *arhat*, *pratyekabuddha*, bodhisattva, and the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment. He would applaud the Buddhas to expound the Dharma in the resemblance dharma period.[433]

The Buddhas of the three time periods, when they were bodhisattvas, would act with skillful means and incalculable knowledge. Their cultivation would be virtuous and pure in order to achieve the wisdom of the Buddha. Thus, he would be encouraged to

[428] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0443c24-c29. Only the five spiritual faculties, the five strengths, and the seven factors of enlightenment are mentioned.
[429] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0445b22.
[430] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0444a11-a25.
[431] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0444b05–b08; T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0445c12.
[432] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0445c25–c27.
[433] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0444b09-b21.

cultivate in the same manner and aspire to attain perfect enlightenment. This would inspire all sentient beings to achieve Buddhahood once they would see the (image of the) Buddhas. They would already realize the virtuous roots and attain no-rebirth in order to be able to enter the Dharma. He would also exhort all the bodhisattvas to transform all sentient beings without differentiation. The great bodhisattvas would praise the wisdom of the Buddha and great enlightenment without failure.[434]

Supposing there are incalculable numbers of ten directions in the universe filled with all kinds of sentient beings, they would all be inclined in their minds to exhort all the Buddhas to turn the dharma wheel. The supreme dharma wheel would have long before enlightened and transformed all sentient beings.[435]

If the Buddhas and great saints were about to enter *nirvāṇa,* he would plead that they would not enter nirvana and forever dwell in the *dharma-dhātu* and instruct sentient beings for innumerable *kalpas*; they would dwell in the six *pāramitās* to save and transform all sentient beings and lead them to enter the gates of *dhāraṇī*.[436] They would then be able to see the *samādhi* of all Buddhas causing them to start cultivating. If they cultivate righteousness, establish great concentration, and exhort the great vehicle, then the realms of the Buddhas would appear before them.[437]

If he can repent all his past mistakes, give rise to the desire for perfect enlightenment, direct compassion toward all sentient beings without harboring any grief or rancor, exhort the virtuous roots, and request the Buddhas to turn the dharma wheel,

[434] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0444b29-c14.
[435] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0445a07-a12.
[436] Davidson, "Studies in Dhāraṇī Literature I: Revising the Meaning of the Term Dhāraṇī," 103. According to Davidson, *dhāraṇī* has several meanings. In the context of this scripture, *dhāraṇī* refers to the wholesome qualities leading to awakening.
[437] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0445b01-b07.

then all the treasures and jewels of the ten directions would be displayed in front of me, I would be able to take them and offer them to the Buddhas.[438]

Based on their virtue, the Buddhas of the three time periods have praised the wisdom of the saint to attain great enlightenment; so would he.[439] He would bring about the practice of the bodhisattva to forever exist and all sentient beings to realize the six *pāramitā* and dwell in the right path.[440] The Buddhas of the three time periods have instructed all sentient beings in the five paths of transmigration to infinitely cultivate based upon virtuous roots. They would be able to enter the gate of *dhāraṇī* with radiance of wisdom and glory that would eradicate celestial beings' and human beings' worries and afflictions and bring about all of them to enter the gate of the Buddha Dharma.[441] Intentionally, he would bring about all sentient beings to attain the state of single mindedness and see all the Buddhas in all the realms.[442] He would be able to enter and attain the *vajra-samādhi* with wisdom eyes, such that he would be able to see the minds of all sentient beings.[443] With their virtuous roots, he together with all sentient beings and he would be able to attain the *Buddhakāya*.[444] With their virtuous roots, he and all sentient beings would propagate the exhortation of the wisdom of the Buddha. This is the practice of the great bodhisattva.[445]

V. Component Analysis

As stated earlier, the text's original intent is for veneration and liturgical recitation by the practitioners. This is one reason why there are no clearly defined components of a

[438] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0445b12-b20.
[439] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0446a27-a28.
[440] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0446b22-b24.
[441] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0446c19-p.0447a03.
[442] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0447a22-a29.
[443] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0447b18-b22.
[444] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0447b25-c03
[445] T. no. 14, vol. 459, p.0447c23-c25.

repentance ritual. Further, there are no discussions on choosing a ritual location, setting up an altar, images, burning incense, and offering of any kind. It does not have room to specify one's name as seen in later rituals. However, a close review of the text does show a ritual structure with six components, which can be analyzed as follows.

The scripture begins with specific instructions for the penitent on performing prostrations in certain postures while reciting the narratives. This scripture has little mention of transfer of merits other than briefly discussing it at the beginning and randomly in a few other places later. This is one reason why Veneration and Transfer of Merits are grouped into one component. It is difficult to separate the two since the instructions seem to tie them together. This is an early text and perhaps one speculation is that transfer of merits did not play a major role in liturgical recitation or ritual practices in this early phase of Chinese Buddhism.

The second part is the general invocation of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions to be present during the recitation. It does not summon any specific Buddha or bodhisattva in particular.

The main component of the ritual is repentance, which involves, via recitation, confessing all transgressions done in this and previous lifetimes, expressing an utmost sincerity and a deep sense of remorse, and resolving not to commit such transgressions again. Since this is an early text, the transgressions listed appear to be simpler and briefer compared to later repentance texts. The list of transgressions is more individualized and focused on the mistakes made in regards to various practices of early Mahāyāna Buddhism. The penitence is done by the penitent on his or her behalf. The text mentions only once that he would repent on behalf of others (without specific description of who

"others" might be referring to). It also claims that repentance was performed by Buddhas and bodhisattvas in past lifetimes. The aim is to legitimize the practice of repentance for those who are interested in penitence in the current environment and setting.

The penitent, in the fourth component, sincerely makes vows to achieve perfect enlightenment and lead all other sentient beings to attain Buddhahood.

Fifth, the penitent would make offerings to the Three Treasures as well as to the Buddha's relics. The offerings are the usual standard items listed throughout most Mahāyāna texts.

The last and longest component of repentance is the exhortation of the Buddha and his characteristics. This includes praising the Buddha's wisdom, virtues, and his enlightenment. There is also a brief passage on soliciting the Buddhas to stay in the world to preach the Dharma and save all sentient beings instead of entering nirvāṇa. The foregoing ritual structure extracted from the scripture can be considered one of the earliest repentance rituals in Chinese Buddhism and appears to be similar to complex repentance rituals composed centuries later. Next, to look at repentance rituals in a broader context, we will carefully examine several typical repentance rituals and identify certain characteristics similar to those found in Chinese culture.

VI. Repentance Rituals in Chinese Historical and Cultural Context

In order to understand why repentance rituals were accepted and became popular among many Chinese Buddhists in the early medieval era, we need to comprehensively study other repentance scriptures and identify the characteristics that are considered identical in Chinese philosophical and legal texts and Chinese culture. The four characteristics, already presented in chapter two, are (I) recognition of fault, recognition,

regret, and self-reproach, (II) prostrations, (III) voluntary surrender and confession, and (IV) amnesty system. After briefly reviewing the sixty one repentance scriptures and with careful consideration, I have decided to choose five of them to examine to what degree these scriptures contain the said characteristics.[446]

Regarding the first characteristic: in the *Analects*, *Mencius*, and *Xunzi*, the gentleman, already discussed in chapter two, is supposed to recognize his own faults (*guo* 過) and rectify them. Further, *Mencius* and *Xunzi* give the gentleman the freedom to scrutinize others' faults as well; that citizens of a state could leave their country or overthrow the ruler. For most of the repentance scriptures, the penitent presumably recognizes his transgressions on his own and confesses them in front of the Buddha and or bodhisattva statues. He also vows not to repeat the same mistakes again. The repentance scriptures do not discuss or advise the penitent to pass judgments on others' transgressions. In the selected five scriptures, the penitent comes to the recognition of his own faults and confesses them prior to performing the penitence. For example, in fascicle nine of the *Ekottaragama Sūtra* 增壹阿含經, Nanda, a disciple as well as relative of the Buddha, realizes that after being reborn into the realm of heaven, he will eventually end up in the Avīci hell once his merit is exhausted. He goes to the Buddha and admits his

[446] Due to time constraints, it is impossible to examine all sixty-one repentance scriptures. I decided to carefully select five scriptures based on their time period and categories. The five scriptures are (1) the *Sūtra on the Five Precepts and Their Conducts* (優婆塞五戒威儀經) year 431 by Gunavarman (367—431), (2) the *Samantabhadra-bodhisattva-dhyana-carya-dharma-sūtra* 佛說觀普賢菩薩行法經 (hereafter referred to as *Samantabhadra-bodhisattva Sūtra*) translated by Dharmamitra (356-442) in 424, (3) Fascicle nine No. 7 of the *Ekottaragama Sūtra* (增壹阿含經卷第九 No. 7) year 397 by Saṃghadeva (fl. 365-397), (4) the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture* (大方等陀羅尼經) year 402 by Fa Zhong 法眾 (c.347-c.418), and the *Sūtra on the Buddhas' Epithets* (佛名經三十卷) year 502 author unknown. They are from the fourth, fifth, and sixth century. (1) and (2) are from the Mahayana sūtras: (1) is from the Vinaya; (3) is from the Agama collection; (4) is from the *dhāraṇī* category; and (5) is from the Buddhas' epithets category. They probably do not represent all the sixty-one scriptures but at least, they provide a glimpse into some of the repentance rituals in a variety of categories from different time periods.

shortcomings.[447] The other three scriptures are similar in nature except for the scripture, the *Sūtra on the five precepts and their conducts*, which prescribes a similar but unique scenario of confession since the sūtra belongs to the Vinaya collection. If a Buddhist laity, after receiving five precepts, were to violate a precept that belongs to the category of *duṣkṛta* (misdeed), then he or she must confess to a *bhikṣu* who would prescribe a proper repentance methodology. One notable difference in the five scriptures is the use of *zui* (罪): the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* employs (一切過, 罪過, and 所犯過)--both *zui* and *guo* (過) interchangeably to refer to the same thing. *Zui*, commonly translated as sin by modern scholars, is defined as "that which is blameworthy and brings about bad karma."[448] *Guo* is translated as transgression or error.[449] The change reflects the understanding of the meaning of Buddhist terminologies and linguistic use by translators of different times.

There are several pre-imperial classic texts that contain a few accounts of rulers (son of Heaven) having to express a sense of remorse (*huiguo* 悔過) for their errors or failures. Having repented, they would rectify their mistakes, cultivate virtue, and in turn avoid punishments from Heaven. The descriptions of the state of emotion and act of repentance in those texts are similar to those that are found in the many repentance scriptures. In the *Samantabhadra-bodhisattva Sūtra* in which the penitent would repent to purify all of his six sense faculties, in front of all the Buddhas he would have to confess all transgressions brought on by his eyes and, in the state of utmost sincerity, repent his

[447] T. no. 02, vol. 125, p.0592b07-08.
[448] Soothill and Hodous, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 409.
[449] Ibid., 414.

grasping at all sorts of form resulting from the causes and conditions of his eye faculty.[450] He would then continue to repent his eye faculty for creating major transgressions, hindrances, and filth: he was blinded and unable to see. Next, he would appeal to the Buddha's great compassion and sympathy along with Samantabhadra Bodhisattva's great dharma vessel to release all sentient beings from their suffering. He would ask the ten directions of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas with compassion to listen to his regrets on all the unwholesome karma caused by his eye faculty.[451] This is the repentance procedure for the eye faculty. The penitent would repent the other five sense faculties in the same manner. The other four scriptures express similar sentiment in their contents. Notable but not surprising is the fact that most Buddhist translators would use *chanhui* (懺悔) in place of *huiguo* in their translation works beginning in the fourth century.

In addition to confessing transgressions, the penitent would accept total responsibility and blame himself for all mistakes made. References of such nature can be found in Chinese historical texts before the Three Kingdoms period, as discussed in chapter two. Similarly, many repentance scriptures include identical narratives in which the penitent would confess and blame himself for his own transgressions. As discussed earlier in the *Ekottaragama Sūtra*, when Nanda confesses to the Buddha of his transgressions, he blames himself for his impure conduct and accepts responsibilities.

Next examining the second characteristic, prostrations and bowings are part of Chinese culture since pre-imperial times, as documented in several Chinese classic texts. It has covered many facets of Chinese secular and spiritual life from ancient times to present day. The practice of prostrations or bowing has been to show respect, humility,

[450] T. no. 09, vol. 277, p.0391c02–c03.
[451] T. no. 09, vol. 277, p.0391c13–c16.

sincerity, courtesy, or reverence toward the object of the prostrations or bows. Since Buddhism was propagated to China, prostrations and bowings have intimately become part of many rituals in Chinese Buddhism. The act of prostrations and bowings in Chinese Buddhist rites demonstrates one's utmost sincerity and respect toward a living master or a Buddhist statue. In the early days of Chinese Buddhism, prostrations and bowings were already integrated into many Buddhist rites, including repentance rituals. The act of prostrations in penitence rites is to fully admit one's transgressions and to show one's sincere desire to change and to practice toward enlightenment. Almost all of the early repentance scriptures prescribe various forms of prostrations with different postures. The most common posture most scriptures call for is "five limbs on the ground" (*wuti toudi* 五體投地) which is found in three of the five scriptures. The *Ekottaragama Sūtra* states that (Nanda's) head and face venerate the bhagavat's feet.[452] Also, according to the *Sūtra on the Buddhas' Epithets*, the penitent would kneel down with both palms joined together prior to reciting all the Buddhas' epithets.[453]

Thirdly, another Chinese cultural characteristic related to confession in Chinese Buddhism is the Chinese legal justice system and its judicial ruling on voluntary surrender and confession. The Chinese penal code began as early as possibly the Shang dynasty and continued until the end of the imperial dynasty in the twentieth century, already discussed in chapter two. There were provisions in the penal code stating that if an offender was to admit his crime(s), even before the crime(s) were to be discovered, he would either receive a very light sentence or be freed immediately, excluding severe crimes and so long that financial compensation be made to the victim(s). Further, the

[452] T. no. 02, vol. 125, p.0592b06. In Indian culture, one would prostrate with both knees and face touching the ground and two hands under the feet of the teacher in order to show one's respect.

[453] T. no. 14, vol. 440, p.0114a15.

penal code would allow others to confess on behalf of the offender. Ultimately, the offender would be forgiven and free of criminal records. He would be able to return to his daily life. In a similar manner, most Buddhist repentance scriptures claim that the penitent, by the very act of confession and repentance, would be able to eradicate his transgressions, continue to practice, and finally achieve enlightenment. For example, the *Ekottaragama Sūtra* states that, upon Nanda's repentance, the Buddha forgives him and tells him not to transgress again in the future. Nanda finally attains the fruition of arhatship.[454] Also, the *Sūtra on the Buddhas' Epithets* suggests that a good son or good daughter who accepts and recites the names of the Buddhas will live in peace, be able to avert disasters, and have all transgressions destroyed. He or she will definitely attain supreme enlightenment in the near future.[455] The other three scriptures also profess similar claims.

The last, but not least, characteristic of Chinese culture in relation to confession is amnesty or acts of grace. The primary purpose of the amnesty system by the emperors was to avert disasters or catastrophes due to the emperors' misconduct. In addition, it was to demonstrate their mercy and power to legitimize their rule. The practice, considered universal mercy, could be dated back to as early as the Western Zhou and became a periodic political tool. According to textual sources, it was calculated that on average an act of grace was declared once every two hundred years, giving hope to criminals that they could be free someday without having to serve their entire sentences.[456] On occasion, few instances of great acts of grace were issued in which most criminals would be exonerated, including those committing severe crimes. Therefore, we see that the

[454] T. no. 02, vol. 125, p.0592b13–b14.
[455] T. no. 14, vol. 440, p.0114c18–c20.
[456] McKnight, *The Quality of Mercy*, 72.

emperors in imperial China, the historical source of ultimate power had the authority to impose judgments and free criminals at their discretion. Analogously, in the Buddhist repentance scriptures, the penitent would confess and appeal to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions for their compassion to free and save him from retribution for his transgressions.[457] According to many of the Buddhist repentance scriptures, it is claimed that the penitent would be free of his transgressions after performing repentance. Thus, it can be argued that the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, similarly to the emperor on earth, would be the agents of salvation and have the power to help eradicate the penitent's transgressions, saving them from punishment and leading him toward enlightenment. Further, one of the important characteristics in Buddhist repentance is the penitent's utmost sincerity, which is highly emphasized in most repentance scriptures. His utmost sincerity would make him "worthy of being received and responded to" by the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.[458] Consequently, we see the aforementioned characteristics in four of the five repentance scriptures as well, except the *Ekottaragama Sūtra*. In the *Sūtra on the Five Precepts and Their Conducts*, the penitent would call on the Buddhas to have pity toward him and protect him and all sentient beings. The Buddhas would also lead him to supreme enlightenment.[459] Also, in the *Great Vaipulya Dhāraṇī Scripture*, the Buddha, out of his great compassion for all sentient beings, would speak this great *dhāraṇī*.[460] The above discussions demonstrate that most repentance scriptures contain several characteristics that are essentially

[457] Bodiford, *Going Forth*, 46–47. In later repentance rituals, one could repent on behalf of his living and deceased relatives as well as all sentient beings. Similar narratives are also found in Daoist confessional rituals.

[458] Ibid., 56.

[459] T. no. 24, vol. 1503, p.1120b21–22.

[460] T. no. 21, vol. 1339, p.0641b09–b10.

identical to those found in Chinese culture. These identical features or parallels are organized in the following table.

Table 1: The Parallels of Characteristics

Chinese Culture versus Repentance Scripture

1	Faults (*guo* 過)	Transgression (*zui* 罪)
2	Regret (*huiguo* 悔過)	Confession (*huiguo* 悔過) or repentance (*chanhui* 懺悔)
3	Self-reproach (*zize* 自責)	Self-reproach (*zize* 自責)
4	Prostration/bowing (*guibai* 跪拜)	Prostration with five limbs on the ground (*wuti toudi* 五體頭地)
5	Voluntary confession (*zishou* 自首)	Voluntary confession (*zishou* 自首)
6	Amnesties (*enshe* 恩赦)	Compassion (*enci* 恩慈, *daci* 大慈)

In retrospect, we have seen that the characteristics of confession, remorse, self-reproach, prostrations, voluntary surrender and confession, and amnesties were very prevalent and in practice in Chinese culture, prior to the arrival of Buddhism. Correspondingly, we have shown that these characteristics, through different terminologies and contexts, are also featured in many repentance scriptures that have been translated into Chinese: this is the parallel pattern between Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism and Chinese culture. Therefore, despite the fact that Mahāyāna Buddhism was a foreign religion, I would argue that the Chinese Buddhists were able to identify with the religious and spiritual sentiments found in the repentance scriptures upon studying them.

Further, the efficacy of performing repentance rituals and the claims of eradication of transgressions and spiritual attainment convincingly made the repentance rituals more believable. Ultimately, this was something that most Chinese at the time were looking for and that the Confucian ideologies did not adequately address. The idea of repentance certainly appealed to their religious sensibilities and helped them cope with their living conditions and environment. Gradually, the recitation and practice of repentance rituals were accepted and incorporated into Chinese Buddhist religious life by both monastics and laity. The fact that new repentance rituals continued to be composed and performed from the Sui through the end of the Tang dynasties concretely proves their popularity and strength: the inclusion of repentance in Chinese religious life can be considered as one aspect of the Sinicization of Buddhism.

VII. Efficacy of Repentance Rituals

One of the primary reasons that may have attributed to the popularity of repentance rituals is the claims of efficacy from performing repentance rituals. Efficacy is the criterion that the Chinese use when searching for and accepting a practice--regardless of the religion, as long as it appears to be working. In addition, a practice or ritual is considered even more efficacious when it is branded with a particular deity who has been locally authenticated with power.[461] The repentance ritual is a perfect example. It is attached to a deity, the omniscient Buddha, and by performing the repentance ritual, it is claimed that the penitent may be able to achieve some efficacious result. In the following, we will discuss some of the narratives found in Chinese texts and Buddhist miracle tales dating back to the early medieval period, evidently proving the miracles resulting from

[461] Sangren, "Great Tradition and Little Traditions Reconsidered: The Question of Cultural Integration in China," 9–10.

performing the repentance rituals.

One of the Buddhist miracle tales dates back to as early as the third century. According to the account, during the Three Kingdoms period, Emperor Sun Hao (242–284 CE) of the Eastern Wu dynasty (229–280) experienced a swollen penis for urinating on a statue of the Buddha. He was advised to repent which he did and the swollen pain disappeared. He later took refuge in the Three Treasures and accepted the five precepts under the monk Kang Senghui 康僧會 (?-d. 280).[462] In the fifth century *Records of Miraculous Retribution* (*Mingbao ji* 冥報記), there are several narratives concerning repentance which results in cancelling out unwholesome deeds. However, these accounts involve the bureaucracy of netherworld, modeled after the physical world, where king Yama (Yanlo Wang 閻羅王) would render his judgment on the dead based on his or her wholesome or unwholesome deeds.[463] In one of the cases, Zhang Fayi 張法義 was told by a monk to repent for all his transgressions in 636. It was believed that his repentance removed all unwholesome deeds up until 636. However, he cursed his father in 637. After he died and was about to face his punishment, the same monk appeared. Both went to King Yama to appeal for leniency. Out of respect for the monk, the king allowed Zhang to go back to earth and granted him an additional seven years to live.[464] Another source proving the efficacy of repentance rituals comes from the *Records of Signs from the Unseen Realm* (*Ming xiang ji* 冥祥記). Again, the three narratives in this text deal with the netherworld and rebirth in relation to repentance and its efficacy. Someone by the name of Yang Hu 羊祜 of the Jin dynasty performed a great number of repentance rituals

[462] Campany, *Strange Writing*, 332–333.
[463] Gjertson and Tang, *Miraculous Retribution*, 135–138.
[464] Ibid., 256–259.

and, according to the cause and effect narratives found in repentance texts and his belief, made major donations to monasteries in order to pay for the transgressions that he had made in previous lifetimes.[465] In the second narrative, a Buddhist monk named Huida 慧達, also of the Jin, was lectured to by Guanshiyin 觀世音, depicted as a male figure at this early stage of Chinese Buddhism, in the netherworld upon his death for seven days. Guanshiyin tells Huida that if monastics and laity can confess their transgressions from this and past lifetimes, their transgressions will be annihilated. The same result applies for those who are too weak or ashamed to admit their transgressions in front of the assembly but are willingly to confess in silence without missing anything. If one inadvertently omits a transgression in the repentance process, the retribution will be relatively light. But for those who will not make any repentance, then they will suffer the consequences in hell. After faithfully repenting for his transgressions, Huida suffered only minor retribution and was allowed to return to live.[466] The last narrative occurs in 421: a monk by the name of Senggui 僧規 spends two days in the netherworld and learns that if a person were to repent his transgressions, then he would be saved from the eight difficult conditions.[467] Interestingly, miracle tales on the efficacy of repentance continued to be written from the Liang to the Tang dynasty, as found in fascicle 86 of the *Fayuan Zhulin* 法苑珠林.[468] Most of the tales in this fascicle involve Buddhist monks making some major blunders that would result in hell. However, once they recognized their mistakes and sincerely repented, their transgressions were expunged and they were saved from suffering the hellish consequences.

[465] Campany and Wang, *Signs from the Unseen Realm*, 73–74.
[466] Ibid., 148–151.
[467] Ibid., 180–181.
[468] T. no. 51, vol. 2122, p.0919b20–0921a03.

The above examples of miraculous tales in Buddhist texts dating from the fifth to as late as the ninth centuries, primarily deal with the efficacy resulting from performing repentance rituals. Each story involves the performance of repentance and a deity (the Buddha or bodhisattva). The result is that the penitent is either healed or allowed to leave the underworld and return to life. The miracles and the efficacy of repentance genuinely strike at the heart of the Chinese religious ethos. The embracing of repentance rituals by the Chinese and their ongoing practice are an indication of the phenomenal success of Buddhism on Chinese soil.

VIII. Chapter Conclusion

The arrival and development of Buddhism in China from the Three Kingdoms to the Southern and Northern Dynasties eras is a complex and manifold process. The challenge faced by the researcher is the scarce and randomly available sources, which makes it difficult to obtain a complete picture of Chinese Buddhism during this period. What we have on record is scanty and incomplete, but it still enables us to gain some insights as to what took place in that period. In the first two centuries of the millennium, there were far and few foreign monks who migrated to China and brought Buddhist texts and religious practices. They mostly worked on their own. It was not until the third century that written records indicate some forms of official contact between Buddhist monks and nuns with the imperial court. As a result, Buddhism was able to penetrate the imperial court, to the emperors and gentry families, via a few cultured Chinese monks. It is reported that emperors Ming and Cheng took refuge in the Three Treasures and accepted the five precepts. Further, emperor Xiaowu 孝武帝 (430–464) even built a monastery in the palace. The support from emperors helped accelerate the propagation of

Buddhist practices in China, especially under Emperor Wu of Liang (464–549).[469] In the meantime, erudite monks such as Anshigao, Dharmarakṣa, Fotudeng, Daoan, Huiyuan, and Kumārajīva translated or composed Buddhist treatises establishing the Buddhist canon and practices in the process of Sinicization of Buddhism. Generally speaking, Buddhism received rather favorable treatment and enjoyed imperial support from the third century through the end of the Southern and Northern Dynasties.

Dharmarakṣa, one of the successful translators of his era, translated some 149 texts, three of which deal with repentance. The *Mañjuśrī's Repentance*, the main focus of the dissertation, is one of the earliest repentance texts with a prototype repentance ritual expounded by Mañjuśrī. The rite consists of six components that are essentially similar to subsequent popular rituals such as Zhiyi's *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and Zongmi's *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat*. The first step in *Mañjuśrī's Repentance,* similar to most repentance rituals found in the early medieval period, is that the retreatant would prostrate prior to performing repentance. Initially, he would invoke the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to be present, admit all mistakes and accept total responsibility. Next he would appeal for the leniency and power of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas to save him from retribution. Correspondingly, these characteristics in Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism can also be found in many of the Chinese classical texts before the arrival of Buddhism. Thus, the arrival of Buddhism and the translations of repentance scriptures and rituals undoubtedly appeased the religious sensibilities of the elite and commoners alike, during one of China's most tumultuous periods. Repentance rituals eventually became a soteriology and were incorporated into Chinese religious life. In addition, the

[469] Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China. The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*. 158–159.

compilations of Buddhist miracle tales on the efficacy of performing repentance boosted their popularity, so that they were fully embraced by both Chinese monastics and laity. Repentance rituals in China were carefully worded and modified into a devotional practice with several soteriological goals that worked for the Chinese-- after all, a case of successful Sinicization of Buddhism.

CHAPTER FIVE

Ritual Comparisons

In this chapter, we will first take the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* as the base ritual and compare it to two Buddhist repentance rituals: Zhiyi's 智顗 *Lotus Flower Samadhi Confessional Liturgy* (*Fahua sanmei chanyi* 法華三昧懺儀 hereafter referred to as *Lotus Confessional Liturgy*) and Zongmi's 宗密 *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat* (*Yuanjue jing daochang xiu zhengyi* 圓覺經道場修證儀 hereafter *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat*). Next we will explore the ritual structure and liturgical sequence of both the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the Chinese Daoist confession, *Petition for Healing Diseases* (疾病醫治章 *Jibing yizhi zang*) for their adaptability since the rituals come from two different religions. We will then proceed to examine the possible motives behind the development of repentance, as an aspect of the Sinicization of Buddhism, from an Indian confession.

The reasons for choosing the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat* and comparing to the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* are because, first, I aim to show the progression of Buddhist repentance rituals over the centuries and to determine if there are any changes regarding the ritual structures and components. Secondly, each ritual supposedly represents a different Buddhist tradition and ideology; the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* is attributed to Zhiyi, founder of the Tiantai lineage, while the *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat* is composed by Zongmi of the Huayan tradition. At first, it may appear that the two rituals are purportedly distinctive from each other due to their tradition and scriptural bases. Peter Gregory has written an article on the *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat* and has commented on the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* as well. I

will include his findings when examining how the two rituals compare to *Mañjuśrī's Repentance*.

In examining the major features of the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the second century Daoist confession, the *Petition for Healing Diseases*, I wanted to demonstrate the compatibility issues between these two rituals since they are based on two highly different cultural religions. Both appear to be closer to each other in the context of time and purpose. At first sight, we expect to see how the two rituals contrast with each other. By studying the major features of the two rituals, we hope to determine whether or not they were compatible as Buddhism slowly entered China and interacted with Chinese culture and Daoism.

I. Comparison of *Mañjuśrī's Repentance Sūtra* to Zhiyi's *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and Zongmi's *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat*

The *Lotus Confessional Liturgy*, based on the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*, is a twenty-one day retreat consisting of performing repentance, reciting the prescribed scripture, cultivating *samādhi*, and circumambulating in six intervals throughout the day. At the end of the retreat, it is said that the retreatant may be able to attain profound *samādhi*.[470] There are seven major components in the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy*. Similarly, the *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat*, primarily based on the *Scripture of Perfect Enlightenment* and Huayan 華嚴 ideologies and composed in 828, is an intensive retreat consisting of repentance, scripture recitation, meditation, and circumambulation taking from eighty to 120 days depending on the capability of the individual, monastic or lay. According to Zongmi, the ultimate goal of the retreat for the retreatant is to enter the

[470] T. no. 46, vol. 1941, p.0953b25.

"realm of sagehood."[471] The ritual consists of eight major components which are placed in Table 2 alongside the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* for comparison.

[471] Gregory, "Tsung-mi's Perfect Enlightenment Retreat," 123–130.

Table 2: Comparison of the Three Rituals[472]

	Mañjuśrī's Repentance	*Lotus Confessional Liturgy*	*Perfect Enlightenment Retreat*
1	Veneration 禮佛 /Transfer of Merits 功德*	Offering 供養	Invocation 啟請
2	Invocation 請佛	Invocation 奉請	Offering 供養
3	Confession 悔過	Exaltation 讚歎	Exaltation 讚歎
4	Vows 發願	Veneration 禮佛	Veneration 禮敬
5	Offering 供養	Repentance 懺悔	Repentance 懺悔
6		-Repentance 懺悔	Miscellaneous Litanies 雜法事
		-Solicitation 勸請	-Solicitation 勸請
		-Sympathetic Joy 隨喜	-Sympathetic Joy 隨喜
		-Dedication* 迴向	-Dedication* 迴向
		-Vows 發願	-Vows 發願
			-Verses on Impermanence 無常偈
	Exhortation** 勸助		
7		Circumambulation 旋遶	Circumambulation 旋遶
8		Meditation 坐禪	Meditation 正思

* Transfer of merits 功德 was later replaced by Dedication 迴向.

** It appears that in earlier repentance rituals, "Exhortation" (*quanzhu* 勸助), which also includes solicitation, was used while later rituals (such as *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat*) employed the term "Exaltation" (*zantan* 讚歎) instead and became standard usage in many repentance rituals.

[472] The components for Zhiyi's and Zongmi's rituals are taken from Gregory's article, "Tsung-mi's Perfect Enlightenment Retreat," 129; X. no. 74, vol. 1475, p.0376b17-18.

By placing the three rituals together in the table, we can identify the differences and similarities in reference to their components and structures. The comparison allows us to observe the development of repentance rituals in imperial China over the centuries. First, with the exception of the last two components at the end of the ritual, the first six components of each ritual, or the first five for the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy*, are essentially the same except for the order of occurrence and some minor reorganization and additions. Circumambulation and meditation, based on various Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Sūra Spoken by the Buddha on the Cultivation Method of Visualizing Samantabhadra Bodhisattva* (*Fo shuo guang puxian pusa xingfa jing* 佛說觀普賢菩薩行法經),[473] were introduced and incorporated into many popular repentance rituals beginning in the sixth century. Zhiyi is believed to be one of the first Buddhist masters who integrated them into the rite as seen in the *Explanation of the Successive Dharma Gateways of Dhyāna Pāramitā* (*Shi chan bolomi cidi famen* 釋禪波羅蜜次第法門).[474] Further, in the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy*, Zhiyi placed Repentance, Solicitation, Sympathetic Joy, Dedication, and Vows under one major component, "Repentance." Similarly, Zongmi grouped Solicitation, Sympathetic Joy, Dedication, Vows, and Verses on Impermanence together in the *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat*. The three repentance rituals are essentially identical in reference to their structure and core components. Therefore, I would argue that the *Manjuśrī's Repentance* appears to be one of the earliest Indian Mahāyāna forms of repentance ritual introduced into China and that its basic structure and core components have been basically retained by Chinese Buddhists who composed their own versions of repentance rituals. Let us pause and turn to Daniel

[473] T. no. 09, vol. 0277.
[474] T. no. 46, vol. 1916.

Stevenson study of Tiantai's Four Forms of *Samādhi* and their original influence. His research shows that Zhiyi's repentance rituals and those composed by others contain "the imprint of a particular phase and type in the evolution of Buddhist ritual formulations"[475] and that liturgical forms and structures may have become standard by the late sixth century.[476] By examining the Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist sources for liturgical structures, he then concludes that Chinese repentance rituals were "deeply rooted in the Indian and Central Asian Mahāyāna tradition" and were "modified to conform to indigenous Chinese ritual sensibilities as well."[477] Since Stevenson limits his research to the fifth and sixth century period, he is unable to connect the repentance rituals to any earlier scriptural sources. Thus, based on Stevenson's conclusion, most likely the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* may have been the scriptural source for the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat* and other repentance rituals composed in consequent centuries, since they contains largely similar core components and maintain the same basic liturgical formula. Thus, repentance rituals have over the centuries maintained their Indian Mahāyāna liturgical structures while incorporating some Chinese nomenclatures and local ritual practices to appeal to the Chinese religious vicissitudes.

Another observation is that no matter how much the repentance rituals have been modified by masters of different Buddhism traditions over time, their structure and contents essentially remain consistent other than the approach to repentance. This can be seen in the sixty-one repentance scriptures composed or translated from second to the sixth centuries. The approach to repentance changes from prostrations and recitation, to

[475] Stevenson, "The T'ien-T'ai Four Forms of Samādhi and Late North-South Dynasties, Sui, and Early T'ang Buddhist Devotionalism," 458.
[476] Ibid., 461.
[477] Ibid., 463.

mainly prostrations, to recitation of *dhāraṇīs*, and to recitation with meditation. Also, the type of attainment from performing repentance rituals, most of the scriptures claim, varies from purification of transgressions to different forms of *samādhi* to Buddhahood. Regardless of the method of performance, the structure, sequence, and core components of most repentance rituals have changed negligibly, if at all.

Having discussed the repentance rituals and seen how they do not vary in terms of their structure over the centuries, we will now proceed to examine the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the Daoist confession rite, *Petition for Healing Diseases*[478]and how they contrast with each other in the context of their structure and ritual practices.

II. Compatibility Issues of the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and *Petition for Healing Diseases*

From a general perspective, in the context of their structure and ritual practices, both rituals are very distinct and apparently different from each other in regards to the reason and approach to the practice, the participants and their roles, cosmology, and the end result. From section I, the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* can be said to consist of six distinct parts. On the other hand, we find that the Daoist confession, the *Petition for Healing Diseases*, cannot readily be categorized into any major components. However, using the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* as reference, we can tentatively identify eight major components, as discussed in chapter three: (1) confession by the penitent, (2) beginning ritual, (3) summoning messengers and the celestial officials, (4) offerings, (5) reading the petition, (6) sealing and sending the petition to Heaven, (7) the Daoist priest traversing to Heaven, and (8) closing ritual.

[478] It is agreed by many scholars that the confession rite encompassed several Han religious characteristics dating back to the second century or earlier. See Verellen, "The Heavenly Master Liturgical Agenda According to Chisong zi's Petition Almanac," 293–294.

The development of and approach to the repentance in Buddhism and confession in Daoism reflects each religion's religious belief and ritual practices. In the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and most repentance rituals, the participant is the penitent himself who comes to recognize his own transgressions and the need to eradicate them. In the *Petition for Healing Diseases*, the participants consist of the penitent who is sick and the Daoist libationer (*jijiu* 祭酒), the ritual master. The sick individual, upon visiting the libationer, would be asked to reflect on his past wrongdoings and disclose them to the libationer who would write it down on a petition bearing his name and personal information. This is one of the most distinguishable features of Daoism. The libationer, an authoritative figure, serves as the intermediary between the penitent and the heavenly officials in the Daoist cosmology. The libationer's role is very important in the confession rite as well as in other Daoist rituals in general. He would be involved in all aspects of the ritual from the beginning to the end. However, his most important yet transmundane task would be, after reading the petition, to visually travel to heaven in order to appeal to the heavenly court directly on behalf of the penitent. This part of the confession rite would be considered Chinese indigenous practice. I would argue that this feature ensures the survival of the libationer's career and ultimately Daoism. In contrast, most Buddhist repentance rituals do not require a ritual master. The penitent can perform the ritual by himself. This gives Buddhist repentance rituals an advantage over Daoist confession rites.

The second major distinction between the two rituals can be found in their cosmology. The *Mañjuśrī's Repentance*, influenced by Indian Buddhism, presents the Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions as omniscient figures and the object of devotion. This is a common characteristic in most Mahāyāna scriptures. In the Daoist

confession, depending on a particular petition, several heavenly officials would be chosen out of the 1,200 deities of the Daoist divine bureaucracy found in the now lost manual, "Protocol of the Twelve-Hundred Officials."[479]

Last but not least is the result or achievement in each respective ritual. The result for the penitent in repentant rituals is that his transgressions would be eradicated and he would achieve *samādhi*, the scripture claims. On the other hand, the Daoist penitent would get well after participating in the ritual. If he did not, he would be told that he was not a faithful Daoist. Here, the penitent in the repentance ritual performs the ritual out of his spiritual motivation while his Daoist counterpart is hoping for a cure of his physical sickness, a mundane concern.

Despite the above distinctive features of each respective ritual, they actually do have some affinities, such as prostrations, offerings, the object of devotion, and the recitation of a scripture or petition. Both rituals require the penitent to perform a number of prostrations at the start of the practice. Also, in the Daoist confession, the libationer is also required to prostrate. This shows that prostration has been commonly practiced in many ceremonial activities in both Indian and Chinese cultures.

Next, the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* briefly discusses offerings of incense, candles, flowers, fruits, and relics that the penitent would make to the Buddhas. It does not state a specific amount in terms of finance that the penitent would have to spend. On the other hand, the confession rite requires that the penitent make some pledge, as a form of redemptive payment, of rice, oil, silk, mats, writing brushes, ink, paper, silver or gold rings, incense, money, and fruits. From a financial perspective, the Daoist confession may put a financial burden on the penitent since for some, especially ordinary Chinese citizens,

[479] Ibid., 297–298.

they may not be able to afford it.

Another affinity that both rituals have is the object of devotion which refers to the Buddhas of ten directions in the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and to the celestial officials in the *Petition for Healing Diseases*. In the repentance ritual, the penitent would appeal the Buddhas' compassion to save him from his transgressions. The ritual master in *Petition for Healing Diseases*, on behalf of his client, would directly address his client's concern to the celestial officials to heal the penitent. The deities in both rituals are believed to have the power to absolve each respective penitent's past mistakes, enabling them to either get well (Daoist penitent) or be purified and possibly achieve *samādhi* (Buddhist penitent). Despite each ritual's unique representation of its cosmology, the affinity between the two makes the interaction and appropriation of similar deities possible in later centuries.

Lastly, each ritual involves a certain amount of recitation. The repentance ritual is mostly reciting the scripture other than a few prostration postures. The Daoist confession involves reading the petition by the libationer. Historically, reciting scriptures is a dominant feature and constitutes a major portion of a typical ritual in Indian religions as well as Chinese religions. The contrast and affinities discussed above can be put together in the following table for easy identification and understanding.

Table 3: The Contrast and Affinities between the Rituals

	Major Features	*Mañjuśrī's Repentance*	*Petition for Healing Diseases*
I	Participants	Practitioner(s)	Libationer and patient
II	Cosmology	Buddhas and Bodhisattvas	Selected heavenly officials
III	Result	Samādhi or enlightenment	Return to health
1	Prostration	Yes	Yes
2	Offering	Yes	Yes
3	Object of Devotion	Yes	Yes
4	Recitation	Yes	Yes

Having discussed the distinctions and affinities of both rituals at the formative stage of both religions, it can be concluded that there appears to be almost no interaction between the two as late as the end of the third century. In the historical context, the Daoist confession rites were primarily influenced by Chinese cosmology and indigenous practices, while the Buddhist repentance rituals owed its structure and cosmology to the early Indian Mahāyāna ideals and liturgical practices. From a personal perspective, the Daoist confession rite appears to address an individual's mundane concerns while the Buddhist repentance enables the penitent to cultivate his own spirituality at his own pace. Overall, looking at the affinities between the two rituals, arguably these affinities would become the foundation for the ritual adepts in both religions to integrate and appropriate each other's cosmology, scriptural terminologies, and religious practices once Buddhism and Daoism began to interact with each other due to the formation of various Daoist movements: Shangqing 上清 and Lingbao 靈寶.

Thus far, we have examined the development of repentance rituals over the centuries by comparing the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* in relations to later repentance rituals, *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and *Perfect Enlightenment*. We subsequently looked at the compatibility issues between the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the Daoist confession rite, *Petition for Healing Diseases* in the context of their structures and components. We will now explore some possible reasons and conditions on how such a simple confession rite during the Buddha's time was developed into a repentance ritual during the rise of Mahāyāna and with much success in China.

III. From Confession to Repentance: One Aspect of Sinicization of Buddhism

Having witnessed the development of repentance rituals, we have learned that in the early medieval period repentance rituals were simply liturgical and devotional for certain individuals with spiritual purification. But in approximately three centuries, they were gradually developed into a genre of much more complex rituals with various soteriological purposes for devotees of different capabilities to practice. It is highly probable that repentance rituals are based on the fortnightly confession rite from early Buddhism in India. The rite of confession was basically created to ensure the purity of the sangha communities as well as the cultivation of enlightenment. There was no practice of confession for the laity during the Buddha's time. The only involvement by the laity on the fortnightly days was that they were invited to the monasteries to observe the eight precepts, which is still being observed today, according to the *Ekottara Āgama*. The aim of the eight-precept observance is to allow the laity to lead a wholesome life and practice meditation, which may lead to a better rebirth if not nirvana.[480] The observance provides the laity the opportunity to practice alongside the sangha, who could inspire them and

[480] T. no. 02, vol. 125, p.0625a28-c18.

serve as their living examples.

After the Buddha's nirvana came the formation and development of Mahāyāna movement due to a schism among the different factions within the sangha as early as the first century BCE.[481] The rise of the Mahāyāna movement led to the production of Mahāyāna scriptures under various themes in India as well as in China. The earliest-dated Mahāyāna scriptures are the series of *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*[482] and the *Saddharma-pundarīka-sūtra,*[483] composed between first century BCE and first century CE, and the *Ugraparipṛcchā* (hereafter referred to as the *Ugra*), written approximately in the first century BCE,[484] which references the three-part *Triskandhaka*.[485] The *Triskandhaka*, also included in the *Upāliparipṛcchā Sūtra* (hereafter referred to as the *Upāli*) and several other Mahāyāna scriptures,[486] is believed to be one of the earliest confessional rites in the early formation of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India and gradually brought to China. Thus, the ritual of confession was initially written as early as the first century BCE alongside the production of the Mahāyāna scriptures. It is speculated that the *Triskandhaka* was written mainly for the lay bodhisattvas who had made mistakes in their cultivation of enlightenment. Further, due to the absence of the Buddha, Buddhist adepts were well aware of the fact that monks and lay bodhisattvas would not have access to the sangha communities especially when Buddhism started spreading to South and Central Asia. The practice of the *Triskandhaka*, a sacred yet portable ritual, would allow them the

[481] Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 2.
[482] Ibid., 48.
[483] Ibid., 150.
[484] Nattier, *A Few Good Men*, 45.
[485] For a discussion on the variations of this ritual in several Mahāyāna scriptures, see Nancy J. Barnes, "Rituals, Religious Communities, and Buddhist Sūtras in India and China," in *Collection of Essays 1993: Buddhism Across Boundaries: Chinese Buddhism and the Western Regions*, ed. Zürcher, E. and Lore Sander (Sanchung, Taiwan: Fo Guang Shan Foundation for Buddhist & Culture Education, 1999), 486–515.
[486] Barnes, "Rituals, Religious Communities, and Buddhist Sūtras in India and China," 486–487; for a discussion on the evolution of the *Triskandhaka*, see 488-492.

opportunity to remove obstacles in their path and reaffirm their commitment to the religious life.[487] In other words, upon confession, a bodhisattva would be able to put his mistakes behind and continue his bodhisattva career.[488] Therefore, we see that the confession (or repentance) rite at the time was much simpler in structure and contained a clear and practical goal.

Starting from the third century to the sixth century, additional scriptures with longer and complicated confession rituals for various soteriological purposes were produced. There are approximately sixty-one scriptures from the Chinese Buddhist canon composed in this period. Though each has a soteriological purpose, they can generally be classified into four categories: liturgical repentance, repentance as prescribed in the Agama, repentance via *dhāraṇīs*, and repentance via the Buddhas' epithets.[489] From a historical and cultural perspective, the genre of repentance rituals arguably satisfied the religious vicissitudes of the Chinese in the centuries following the arrival of Buddhism. As discussed in chapters three and four, China, approaching the end of the Eastern Han in the second century CE, intermittently underwent decades of on-going civil wars and natural disasters, which caused much travail for the general population. Philosophically, the suffering was attributed to the behavior of an individual, particularly that of the ruler, who they believed could only be purified through means of confession. Further, the state-supported school of Confucianism did not provide the means for purification and became weakened upon the collapse of the Eastern Han. All of these factors produced an ideal

[487] Ibid., 492-493.

[488] Nancy J., Barnes, "The Triskandha, Practice in Three Parts: Study of an Early Mahāyāna Buddhist Ritual" in *Studies on Buddhism in Honour of Professor A.K. Warder*, ed. by Warder, A. K., N. K. Wagle, and Fumimaro Watanabe (Toronto, Ont: University of Toronto, Centre for South Asian Studies, 1993), 7.

[489] Darui, *Tientai chanfa zi yanjiu*, 25-47; Darui, "The Formation and Development of Repentance in Early Chinese Buddhism," 320-329.

environment for the rise and development of a new religion.[490] In fact, two religions arose in this period, the native Daoism and the foreign Indian Buddhism. The continuing development of the repentance rituals in response to the social chaos and intellectual crisis coincidently appealed to the Chinese of different strata: the ruler, the imperial relatives, the court officials, the elite, and especially the commoners. Many of the repentance scriptures feature ideals and nomenclatures that coincidently resembled several philosophical and legal characteristics already seen in China. Some of these characteristics are recognition of fault, regret, self-reproach, voluntary surrender and confession, and the authority's leniency, which is represented by Buddhas and bodhisattvas in repentance rituals. An educated Chinese Buddhist would be quick to identify with these characteristics found in the repentance scriptures. Further, most of the scriptures claim that the individual, upon performing repentance rituals, would be free of transgressions and might be able to attain *samādhi* or enlightenment depending on their capabilities. The repentance scriptures would arguably face less resistance by the Confucian officials and elites and were positively embraced by many Chinese citizens from various classes. Many Chinese were desperately looking for something, other than Confucian teachings, that would provide the answers and the means for hope and living in the face of political unrest and natural disasters. The practice of repentance, from the spiritual purification perspective, would appear to satisfy the religious vicissitudes of the Chinese citizens in several strata of society at the time. The accessibility of the scriptures and the convenience in performing repentance quickly became popularized at many levels of Chinese society. Anyone, monastic or lay, could literally pick up a repentance scripture that would meet his or her religious needs and perform the ritual at home or in

[490] Poo, "The Images of Immortals and Eminent Monks," 173.

the monastery according to his or her own schedule.

Finally, we have witnessed how repentance, possibly inspired by the simple confession practice in India, was established along with the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism around the first century BCE. Once Buddhism reached China, the practice of repentance thrived and was developed into a whole genre of repentance scriptures and rituals. In a larger context, the development of repentance rituals is considered as one of the many phases of Sinicization of Buddhism, which was at first deemed barbaric by several Chinese rulers and the Confucian elite. The popularization and acceptance of repentance rituals by Chinese at all levels allows Buddhism to take root on Chinese soil and flourish into a dominant religion by the end of the sixth century. This process took approximately four centuries since Buddhism was brought to China during the Han dynasty.

IV. Chapter Conclusion

To summarize, we have just looked at the three repentance rituals together and have examined the compatibility issues of the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the Daoist confession rite, *Petition for Healing Diseases*. In the comparison of the three repentance rituals, the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance*, the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy*, and the *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat*, we have found that all three rituals are very similar in terms of their structures and components. Therefore, it can be asserted with much certainty that the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance*, out of the sixty-one repentance scriptures translated or produced in the early medieval period, may be the one of the earliest Indian Mahāyāna repentance rituals brought into China in the third century. In addition, much of its structure and contents appear to have been maintained by Chinese Buddhists who composed new repentance rituals in later centuries. Furthermore, it is highly probable that

the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* may have, explicitly or implicitly, played a role in the development of the *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat* and many other repentance rituals after the early medieval period. This can be proven by the fact that most of those repentance rituals have largely preserved the Indian Mahāyāna liturgical structures, Sinicized with Chinese terminologies and ritual practices.

Next, by studying the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the Daoist confession rite, *Petition for Healing Disease*, we have determined the differences and similarities that make each ritual exceptional in its own way. Each ritual serves its own purpose and suits a particular devotee's religious needs. We can, therefore, deduce with certainty that there was not yet direct interaction between the two rituals in the late third century. Their interaction came around the middle of the fourth century, when various Daoist movements were formed. Despite their differences, it is the resemblance that would over the years become the basis for the interaction and appropriation of each other's religious ideals and practices.

Last but not least is the consideration of Buddhist repentance as an innovation by Buddhist adepts in the early stage of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, which was transformed into a Buddhist soteriology by the time it reached China. The initial works of repentance scriptures were mainly produced for simple purification purposes involving recitation. By the early fourth century, repentance scriptures contain multiple purposes calling for different approaches to practices with clearly defined soteriological goals. Repentance rituals in one aspect certainly meet the needs of Chinese religious sentiments. Over the centuries, the incorporation of repentance rituals into the Chinese Buddhist liturgy proves its lasting acceptance and popularity among the Chinese Buddhists, monastic and lay.

Inspired by a simple Indian confession, repentance rituals in highly cultured China have then become a part of the Chinese religious practice as well as the path to salvation. Ultimately, repentance can be said to be one of the many aspects of the Sinicization of Buddhism, which eventually established itself in Chinese soil to become a state religion by the end of early medieval period.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

The confession, authored by the Buddha as part of the Uposatha, is to maintain the reputation and purity of the sangha communities and their members, allowing them to stay on their path. On the contrary, Buddhist repentance or *chanhui*, a later development after the establishment of Mahāyāna, was created, in my view, for monks who were traveling or living alone, due to the absence of the Buddha and monastic communities. The early Buddhist authors who designed the repentance formula also had lay Buddhists in mind. The early Indian Buddhist scriptures with repentance dated first century BCE were simply devotional for the purpose of eradicating transgressions. Eventually, repentance scriptures were brought by either foreign monks or migrants from Central Asia heading east to China.

China was a country with a well-established philosophy and state education when Buddhism came to her land. Having gone through a few centuries of civil wars during the Warring States 戰國時代 (481-222 BCE), the founding emperors of the Eastern Han had established Confucianism as the state educational system.[491]

There were many several philosophical and Confucian texts from pre-imperial China devoted to the cultivation of character for the individual, especially the ruler and ministers as well as the elite, to better govern their country and to prevent punishments from Heaven.[492] One aspect of the cultivation was to correct one's conducts through a variety of confession practices, which include fault recognition, regret, and self-reproach.

[491] Lagerwey and Lü, *Early Chinese Religion. The Period of Division. Volume One (220-589 AD)*, 2.

[492] Lagerwey and Kalinowski, *Early Chinese Religion. Part One: Shang through Han (1250 BC-220 AD) Volume One*, 17.

The goal was to maintain the characteristics of a gentleman. Along with the ideology of voluntary confession, from a legal perspective, a series of legal issues and penal codes were reformed as well. One unique feature of the Chinese penal codes was its provision to allow the offender to go free if he was to voluntarily confess his crime.[493] In other words, as long as the crime was not severe, and if the offender came forward and paid financial compensation to the victim, his sentence would be largely reduced or he would be sent home. With regard to the authorities, who could decide when to free prisoners, starting with the Western Han dynasty or earlier, the authorities (primarily the Chinese emperors) had the tendency to pardon most criminals, including those committing major offenses, once every two years on average. These characteristics and the act of prostrations are typical features of confession found in pre-Buddhist texts, which appear to parallel the narratives in repentance scriptures but with a different context and terminologies. It is the resemblance between the two cultures that ultimately resonated with the religious inclinations of many Chinese. Ultimately, the majority of the Chinese Buddhists were able to relate to ideologies found in the repentance rituals in their search for spiritual purification or salvation. In practical terms, it helped them deal with daily issues while living with much chaos and uncertainty. Moreover, the miraculous tales about the efficacy of repentance rituals certainly attracted the attention of many Chinese Buddhists, who wanted something that worked for them. Resultantly, repentance rituals were broadly accepted by many, especially by the Buddhist devotees, and were subsequently integrated into the Chinese Buddhist liturgy. One obvious reason is the fact that repentance rituals over the centuries continued to be compiled and practiced in China, even in the present day. This demonstrates their acceptance by Chinese Buddhists and the

[493] Twitchett and Loewe, *The Cambridge History of China. Vol. 1*, 531–533.

success of one phase of the Sinicization of Buddhism.

In conjunction with the development of Buddhist repentance, from the second century CE, various regional movements, adhering to indigenous Daoism, including the Yellow Turbans and Celestial Masters, came up with their own version of confession for the devotees to practice in order to purify their transgressions. One of the documented petitions associated with the rite of confession is the *Petition for Healing Diseases*. In the ritual, the penitent recalled his transgressions, which would be written and sent to heaven by a Daoist priest in a formal setting. This is typical for many of the Daoist confession rituals, which can be dated back to the middle of the second century. The ritual became popular among the Daoist devotees for its efficacy and continued to be practiced through the late imperial China period. Historically, Daoism gradually established itself as a state religion by the end of the Northern and Southern Dynasties period through the help of various Daoist sects such as Lingbao 靈寶 and Shangqing 上清.

Repentance gave the Chinese at the time a sense of renewal and hope for a better life and future. Repentance scriptures, translated into Chinese from the fourth to the sixth centuries, are mainly devotional but contain a variety of Buddhist soteriological goals serving practitioners with different spiritual needs, be it *samādhi*, Buddhahood, or salvation for oneself or others. To better understand the initial development of repentance and its influence, I compared the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* to Zhiyi's *Lotus Confessional Liturgy* and Zongmi's *Perfect Enlightenment Retreat* in terms of structure and components. The three rituals basically have the same structure and identical core components. The *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* seems to be the one of the earliest repentance rituals and may have been arguably the source for repentance rituals composed in later

centuries. Further, since arriving in China, the Indian liturgical structure of repentance rituals has been preserved so that repentance rituals have not changed over the centuries other than accruing additional components and different terminologies.

To obtain a better understanding of the compatibility issues of Indian Buddhist rituals and the Chinese Daoist confessions, we explored the *Mañjuśrī's Repentance* and the *Petition for Healing Diseases*. It was found that overall both rituals were generally distinct from each other and could be said to have had no influence upon each other. However, there were some affinities in reference to some of the components. It was these affinities, after all, that become the foundation for further integration and appropriation between Daoism and Buddhism beginning as early as the fifth century due to the rise of various Daoist movements, such as Shangqing and Lingbao.

The achievement of repentance in terms of the number of repentance rituals was due largely to the translation efforts of Buddhist adepts such as Dharmarakṣa. The inclusion of repentance rituals in Chinese Buddhist liturgy proves their strength and popularity among Chinese Buddhists. Initially, Buddhist repentance, inspired by the Indian Buddhist rite of confession, was just a simple recitation liturgy for purification purposes. Within a three-century period, it developed into a genre of repentance literature and multifaceted rituals with various Buddhist soteriological goals: from purification of transgression, to *samādhi*, and to Buddhahood. The practice of repentance changed from recitation with prostration to solely meditation. From a practical perspective, repentance rituals satisfied the religious vicissitudes of the Chinese at many levels since their inception, and they remain a popular practice in East Asia and beyond in modern times. This demonstrates one successful phases of the Sinicization of Buddhism and can be

credited to the Buddhist adepts, foreign or native Chinese, who clearly understood the culture and mentality of the Chinese. Therefore, from a broader context, a simple ritual of purification from one high culture was transformed into a major religious marga in another. Ultimately, for a religion to survive, it must adapt to the local culture and religious sensibilities and only then will it be able to manifest into different forms of practice while still maintaining its core doctrines. In the context of Chinese religions, since its arrival in China, Buddhism has definitely taken root in China involving Chinese citizens of most social classes. This study contributes to the scholarship of Chinese Buddhism by providing layered insight into an understanding of the development and acceptance of repentance rituals into Chinese religious life in the early medieval period.

Many of the repentance scriptures and rituals have not been researched, especially those from the early medieval period. As an approximation, only four or five out of the sixty-one scriptures have been studied. We still do not know or have any information on how and when repentance was incorporated into the Chinese monastic life. Further, how was repentance accepted and practiced by the elite, especially the Confucian elites and ministers, and by ordinary Chinese? Was there any cult focusing exclusively on repentance at the time (of which I have not been able to locate any evidence of during this study)? Repentance rituals are historically considered one of the longest-surviving Buddhist practices in China. The following are interesting phenomena that have not been examined: (1) why are repentance rituals still being practiced by the monastics and laity? (2) What is the effect, psychological or spiritual, on the individual performing repentance rituals?

Another major area that has been largely neglected is the interaction between

Buddhist repentance and Daoist confession in particular and also the appropriation of scriptures and religious ideas between Buddhism and Daoism as a whole. Henrik Sørensen points out, that historically, both religions rose and grew together in the same approximate time period as well as the same locations within the same social and political landscape.[494] They also had to compete for the same political favor and financial support as well as devotees. Scholarly studies really have not focused on this aspect of the two religions. By comparing the two types of rituals, especially those composed in the fifth and sixth centuries of both religions, we may be able to better understand not only the interaction between them but also the history of each religion's development and ritual transformation. From a general perspective, we would be able to determine the extent of each religion's shared practices and beliefs resulting from two to three centuries of mutually integrating religious processes. Only through this sort of large-scale comparison might we be able to deduce the bases of each religion's "theoretical and conceptual framework"[495] from centuries of Buddho-Daoist exchanges.

[494] Sørensen, "Buddho–Daoism in Medieval and Early Pre-Modern China: A Report on Recent Findings Concerning Influences and Shared Religious Practices," 131.
[495] Ibid., 110.

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