Introduction

Daoism in the Early Tang. In the early Tang dynasty, Daoism became a state-sponsored and state-supporting religion with a newly streamlined organization. Inspired by messianic prophecies that a man named Li 李, a descendant of Laozi 老子, would become the new ruler, Daoist institutions had aided the campaign leading to the establishment of the dynasty.¹ Most notable in this respect were the Louguan 楼观 monastery in the Zhongnan mountains 紫南, whose support assured the confidence of Daoists in the newly rising ruler, and the visions received on Mount Yangjiao 羊角山 (Ramhorn), which granted miraculous predictions of victory (see Bingham 1970, 95-96; Wechsler 1985, 69-70). Both, as well as the appearance at court of the prescient Daoist Wang Yuanzhi 王遠知, helped to legitimize the new dynasty and put Daoism on a positive footing with the new rulers.² This support resulted in the expansion and new foundation of Daoist institutions by the state. Louguan, for example, received lands and grants and in 620 was renamed Zongsheng guan 宗聖觀 (Monastery of the Ancestral Sage).³ Mount Yangjiao was renamed Longjiao 龍角山 (Mount Dragonhorn) and a new monastery was built there, the Qingtang guan 趙唐觀 (Monastery of Blessings for the Tang; see Kohn 1998a, 47). Similarly, the temple at Laozi’s birthplace in Bozhou 蘭州, the Taiqing gong 太清宮 (Palace of

¹ See Hendrischke 1993, 113; Barrett 1996, 20; Bokenkamp 1994, 60.
² See Kohn 1998a, 47-48; Reiter 1998, 2-3; Yoshikawa 1990, 79-83.
³ This is recorded in the inscription Zongsheng guan ji 宗聖觀記 (Record of the Monastery of the Ancestral Sage), erected at Louguan in 625. It is today contained in the Gu Louguan ziyun yanqing ji 古樓觀紫雲宴清記 (DZ 957), 1.1a-4b; and in Chen et al. 1988, 46-47. Texts in the Taoist Canon (Daozang 道藏, abbreviated DZ) are given according to Schipper 1975.
Great Clarity), was expanded and greatly endowed, and became the object of many Tang rulers’ visits and sacrifices (Barrett 1996, 63-64; Reiter 1998, 4-5; Kohn 1998a, 313).

The rulers, however, not only lavished great gifts and privileges on Daoist institutions, but also strove to control and streamline them. Thus, in 637 the first set of official rules for recluses, both Buddhist and Daoist, appeared—the Daoseng ke 道僧科 (Rules for Daoists and Buddhists). General legal codes, moreover, such as the Tang liudian 唐六典 (Six Departments of the Tang) and the Tang lü  shuyi 唐律疏義 (Supplementary Interpretations of Tang Laws), contained rules and punishments for priests and monastic residents. The codes were especially harsh in cases of murder and robbery committed by monks or nuns, but they also punished cases of desecration and other forms of bad conduct (Ch’en 1973, 96-102). In response to this tendency toward tightening religious organizations, Daoists at the time standardized their priestly hierarchy and religious institutions. Monasteries in the proper sense, with rules and celibate inhabitants, became the norm, continuing the institutions of north China (such as Lou-guan) and increasingly replacing the more informal centers (guan 聞) of south China, where celibate practitioners had worked side by side with married followers and both Buddhist and Daoist deities were worshipped. The lay organization of the Celestial Masters, moreover, was placed at the bottom of the hierarchy, but many of its rules and standards became part of the monastic institutions.

Monastic Manuals. One way standardization occurred was through the compilation of monastic manuals and rule books. The most important among them was the Fengdao kejie 奉道科戒 (Rules and Precepts for Worshiping the Dao, DZ 1125; trl. Reiter

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4 Lost today, it can be reconstructed from its Japanese counterpart, the Sōni ritsu 僧尼律 (Regulations for Monks and Nuns). See Ch’en 1973, 95.
5 The hierarchy encompassed priests from four major schools and specified which texts and precepts were to be transmitted on each level. For a study of the ranks and the ordination procedures, see Benn 1991.
6 On the Daoist centers before the Tang, see the work of Stephan-Peter Bumbacher (2000) on a reconstruction and study of the lost Daxue zhuan 優學傳 (Biographies of Students of the Dao). On the overall development of Daoist monasteries, see Schipper 1984. The concrete situation in Tao Hongjing’s institution on Maoshan is discussed in Strickmann 1978, 471.