

MONUMENTA SERICA MONOGRAPH SERIES

LX

The People and the Dao

**New Studies in Chinese Religions
in Honour of Daniel L. Overmyer**

Edited by

PHILIP CLART and PAUL CROWE

Institut Monumenta Serica • Sankt Augustin

Sumptibus Societatis Verbi Divini (S.V.D.)

Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP Cataloguing-in-Publication-Data

A catalogue record for this publication is available from Die Deutsche Bibliothek.
For further information, see: <http://dnb.ddb.de>

Sankt Augustin – Nettetal 2009

Copy editors: DIRK KUHLMANN and ROMAN MALEK

Cover and layout: ROMAN MALEK

Technical assistance: JOZEF BIŠTUŤ

Printed by: DRUCKEREI FRANZ SCHMITT, Siegburg

Copyright: INSTITUT MONUMENTA SERICA
Arnold-Janssen-Str. 20
53757 Sankt Augustin, Germany
Fax: +49-2241-237486
E-mail: institut@monumenta-serica.de
<http://www.monumenta-serica.de>

Distribution: STEYLER VERLAG
Postfach 2460, 41311 Nettetal, Germany
Fax: +49-2157-120222
E-mail: verlag@steyler.de
www.monumenta-serica.de

ISBN 978-3-8050-0557-9

ISSN 0179-261X

THE WHITE DRAGON HERMITAGE AND THE SPREAD OF THE EIGHT GENERALS PROCESSION TROUPE IN TAIWAN

WANG CHIEN-CH'UAN
Translated by PHILIP CLART

Processions figure prominently among the activities of Taiwanese temples. Many different types of troupes may appear in a procession: musical bands, Song Jiang troupes, lion dancers and so on, but the characteristic appearance and movements of the Eight Generals troupe (*Bajiajiang*) always generate the most interest.¹ In recent years there has been public concern about the increasing youthfulness of Eight Generals performers and their involvement with underworld gangs.²

Earlier scholars such as Shi Wanshou, Lü Yizhong, Donald S. Sutton, and others who have studied the Eight Generals have provided us with useful initial descriptions of such aspects as the troupe's origins, dress and adornments, membership, choreography, and ritual.³ However, they have not dealt in de-

Translator's note: The Chinese original of this article was completed before Donald S. Sutton's study, *Steps of Perfection: Exorcistic Performers and Chinese Religion in Twentieth Century Taiwan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), appeared in print. Thus, this article does not address findings presented by Sutton in his new book. However, the translator used the book as a guide in choosing English equivalents for technical terms used among Eight Generals performers. It should also be noted that Wang Jianchuan's [Wang Chien-ch'uan's] Chinese manuscript was cited by Donald Sutton in his book.

¹ *Zhongguo shibao* 中國時報, 17 June 2001. Report by Wu Minglun.

² *Zhongguo shibao*, 7 May 1998. Report by Xiao Chengxun.

³ Shi Wanshou 石萬壽, "Bajiajiang tuan—tianren heyi de xunbu zuzhi" 八家將團—天人合一的巡捕組織 [The Eight Generals troupe: a procession group that unites heaven and humanity], *Tainan wenhua* 台南文化, N.S., 22 (1986): 47-65; Lü Yizhong 呂一中, "Tainan xian Jiali zhen Zhenshan Gong Bajiajiang" 台南縣佳里鎮鎮山宮八家將 [The Eight Generals of the Zhenshan Gong in Jiali township of Tainan county], *Taiwan zongjiao yanjiu tongxun* 台灣宗教研究通訊 3 (2002): 1-20; Donald S. Sutton, "Transmission in Popular Religion: The Jiajiang Festival Troupe of Southern Taiwan," in *Unruly Gods: Divinity and Society in China*, ed. Meir Shahar and Robert P. Weller (Honolulu: The University of Hawai'i Press, 1996), 212-249; Huang Wenbo 黃文博, "Weimeng shenwuzhe—Bajiajiang de zuzhi yu biaoan" 威猛神武者—八家將的組織與表演 [Fierce spirit warriors: organization and per-

tail with the historical origins and spread of the Eight Generals troupe in Taiwan and have thus left a considerable gap in our knowledge of this phenomenon.

The present article will try to fill this gap by sketching the development of the Eight Generals troupe in Taiwan on the basis of reports in the Japanese-period newspaper *Taiwan riri xinbao*, field observation, interviews, and other materials. Related troupes such as the Six Generals or the Ten Generals will be included in the discussion.⁴

1. White Dragon Hermitage as the Point of Origin for Taiwan's Eight Generals Troupe

In an article published in 1984, Shi Wanshou has the following to say about the Taiwanese origins of the Eight Generals:

The Eight Generals' point of origin is the White Dragon Hermitage (Bailong An) [...] though the historical record is less than clear about this. Oral traditions differ so widely that it is difficult to decide on the correct version. Mr. Cai Jinyong, the temple historian of the White Dragon Hermitage, thinks the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings (Wufu Dadi) subjugated pirates and made them into generals who were to capture demons and exorcise evil influences. Mr. Cai Huocheng of the Xilai Hermitage (Xilai An, "Come-from-the-West Hermitage") is of the opinion that their models were the servants of rich and influential families. Mr. Lan Desi, also of the Xilai Hermitage, believes that they are incarnations of perfected lords from Datong Heaven (Datong tian), who became the guards of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings. [...] Due to similarities between the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings and the police spirits of the City God temple, a fairly common view is that the Eight Generals are a kind of law-enforcement team made up of the City God, the Emperor of the Eastern Marchmount, the Great Emperors of the Five

formance of the Eight Generals], in *Taiwan xinyang chuanqi* 台灣信仰傳奇 (Taipei: Taiyuan chubanshe, 1995), 230-242; Chen Dinglin 陳丁林, "Shangshan fa'e cha zuiqing: Jiali Sanwujia Zhenshan Gong Bajiajiang" 賞善罰惡查罪情: 佳里三五甲鎮 山宮八家將 [Rewarding the good, punishing the evil, investigating transgressions: the Eight Generals of the Zhenshan Gong in Sanwujia of Jiali], in *id.*, *Nanying yizhen zhi* 南瀛藝陣誌 [Performance troupes of Nanying] (Tainan: Tainan wenhua zhongxin, 1997), 290-317; Ye Mingsheng 葉明生, "Lun 'Bajiang' zai Fujian de liubu, bianyi ji nuo wenhua yiyi" 論「八將」在福建的流布、變異及儼文化意義 [On the spread and transformation of the Eight Generals in Fujian and their meaning in its exorcistic culture], *Minsu quyi* 民俗曲藝 85 (1993): 63-103.

⁴ The conclusion of the present article contains a detailed analysis of the meaning of the designation "Eight Generals."

Blessings, and a certain royal lord (*wangye*). However, the best-known Generals troupe is that of the Ruyi Tang (“As-you-like-it Hall”) of the White Dragon Hermitage, which is regarded as the troupe’s point of origin. The principal deities there are the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings. [...] There is no clear record of when these spirits first appeared in Tainan, but it is quite possible that they were originally tutelary spirits worshipped by soldiers from the Fuzhou region who arrived in Tainan after the assumption of Qing rule over the island. When later these spirits attracted more and more believers due to their awe-inspiring powers, and also came to be misused by religious frauds, they attracted the attention of the authorities and their cult was prohibited. Between 1819 and 1820, when Yao Ying was magistrate of Taiwan, there was a case of religious unrest which led to the burning of the images of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings (see the “Judgment on the Burning of the Five Demon Images” in *juan* 4 of Yao Ying’s *Dongming waiji*), but that did not terminate their worship by the people of Tainan. After the Daoguang period [1821–1851], soldiers and civilians of Fuzhou extraction established the White Dragon Hermitage on the premises of the township offices. Soon the shrine attracted a following of Zhangzhou and Quanzhou believers and a branch shrine was established in Tingzaijiao Street (now Youth Street, in the section west of the City God temple), which was named Xilai Hermitage and proved very popular with worshippers. Thus the White Dragon Hermitage and the Xilai Hermitage became the earliest temples in Taiwan devoted to the cult of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings.⁵

When we compare this account with the available historical documents, we find several errors, among them the alleged prohibition of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings by Yao Ying.⁶ However, Shi’s identification of the

⁵ Shi Wanshou’s essay “Bajiajiang tuan—tianren heyi de xunbu zuzhi” was first published in 1984 in the magazine *Shilian zazhi* 史聯雜誌 (no. 4, p. 1-9); in 1986 it was reprinted in *Tainan wenhua* 台南文化, no. 22, N.S. I have used the 1986 edition. The above quotation is taken from Shi Wanshou’s article, 48-49.

⁶ The “Judgment on the Burning of the Five Demon Images” in *juan* 4 of Yao Ying’s 姚瑩 *Dongming waiji* 東溟外集 [Further writings on the eastern ocean] refers to the Great Emperors of Five Manifestations (Wuxian Dadi) of Tainan’s Five Emperors Temple (Wudi Miao), not the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings. During the Jiaqing period (1796–1820), the cult of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings apparently had not yet entered Tainan. See Yao Ying’s *Zhongfu Tang xuanji* 中復堂選集 [Selected writings from Zhongfu Hall] (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1960), 29-30. As for the history of the White Dragon Hermitage, Mr. Lian Lichang’s 連立昌 research has established that the White Dragon Hermitage of Fuzhou was founded during the Jiaqing period (personal communication, 21 August 1997). Thus it must have arrived in Taiwan after that reign period (more details below). How then could Yao Ying,

White Dragon Hermitage as the source of the (Eight) Generals troupe is worth paying attention to, as many Eight and Ten Generals troupes of long standing claim to be derived from this temple in Tainan.⁷

When was the White Dragon Hermitage built? Was it really, as Shi Wan-shou claims, established by soldiers and civilians of Fuzhou extraction after the Daoguang period? There is no firm basis for Shi's judgment—it seems mere guesswork. According to an official investigation conducted in the early Japanese period, the White Dragon Hermitage was located in “Zhentai Street” of Tainan and had been founded in 1862.⁸ According to other documents, the gods worshipped in the “White Dragon Hermitage” were the Five Numinous Lords (Wu Linggong) Zhang, Liu, Zhong, Zhao, and Shi, who were also called the “Great Emperors of the Five Blessings.”⁹ Why was this temple of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings called “White Dragon Hermitage”?

A clue is provided in a collection of poems by Wang Kaitai of the late Qing period:

Why was the temple called White Dragon Hermitage? According to popular tradition, an incense burner was recovered from the well in Guan-yin Pavilion Street, which bore the inscription “White Dragon Hermitage, Fujian province.” This event led to the building of a temple, where soldiers went to pray to the gods and ask for blessings.¹⁰

This passage tells us three things: (1) The naming and founding of the “White Dragon Hermitage” had to do with the miraculous discovery of an incense burner with the inscription “White Dragon Hermitage, Fujian province;” (2) before the founding of the White Dragon Hermitage, there had been people in the Tainan area who had worshipped at the White Dragon Hermitage in

who was magistrate in the 24th and 25th years of Jiaqing (1819–1820), have had occasion to prohibit the cult?

⁷ Such as the Jisheng Tang (“Auspicious Victory Hall”) and Gongyi Tang (“Common Righteousness Hall”) in Jiayi. See below for details.

⁸ Wen Guoliang 溫國良 (trans.), *Taiwan zongdufu gongwen leizuan zongjiao shiliao huibian* 台灣總督府公文類纂宗教史料彙編 [Collection of historical sources relating to religion from among official documents of the government-general of Taiwan] (Nantou: Taiwan sheng wenxian weiyuanhui, 1999), 403.

⁹ This information is derived from two articles in the Chinese edition of the *Taiwan riri xinbao* 台灣日日新報: “Yingshen suoshuo” 迎神瑣說 [Trivial remarks on welcoming the gods], 13 September 1898; “Shen yi fu shen” 神亦附神 [Gods also rely on spirits], 5 April 1921.

¹⁰ Wang Kaitai 王凱泰, “Xuyong shi'er shou” 續詠十二首 [Twelve more songs], in *Taiwan zayong heke* 台灣雜詠合刻 [Songs about Taiwan, collated edition] (Taiwan wenxian congkan edition, Taipei: Taiwan yinhang, 1958), 50.

Fuzhou; (3) the worshippers at the Tainan White Dragon Hermitage were soldiers.

If we combine these items with the information that the hermitage was located “to the right of the township offices” or “beside the Tainan *yamen*,”¹¹ it is likely that the temple’s worshippers included not just ordinary soldiers, but also officers and officials. This can also be deduced from the fact that in spite of its unofficial character, the White Dragon Hermitage’s plague expulsion activities were never officially prohibited.¹² The section “The Present Situation of Local Customs” in the *Miscellaneous Records of Anping County* (*Anping xian zaji*) provides the following information on local customs in Tainan:

[...] In the sixth month, the White Dragon Hermitage sends off a boat. Every year a day is chosen by the Five Royal Plague Lords for the opening of the hall (*kaitang*), when thousands of people make pilgrimage to it. After three days, a royal boat made from paper is floated out to sea. On the preceding day, an animal is sacrificed, and its polluted blood is gathered in a wooden bucket named “thousand-pound load” (*qianjindan*). A man of good fortune is chosen to carry it out of the city, where it is burned together with the royal boat. People give each other gifts of rice buns, which are called *tianzai* (“increasing one’s possessions”). On the day the boat is floated out to sea, there is a great noise of gongs and drums. This happens once every year.¹³

In popular parlance, this most important yearly event of the White Dragon Hermitage was called “greeting the venerable lords” (*ying laoye*).¹⁴ “Opening the hall” refers to the establishment in the temple of a “*yamen*, complete with runners, plaintiffs, and official documents, just as in a magistrate’s office.”¹⁵ Before the opening of the hall, the temple first had to issue an announcement to the people. The following is a form used for this purpose:

¹¹ The former address is given in Lian Heng 連橫, *Taiwan tongshi* 台灣通史 [General history of Taiwan], *juan* 22, “Zongjiao zhi” 宗教志 (Taipei: Liming wenhua gongsi, 2001), 713. The latter appears in the Chinese edition of the *Taiwan riri xinbao*, “Shen yi fu shen,” 5 April 1921.

¹² This much at least can be inferred from He Cheng 何澂 [He Jingshan 何竟山], *Taiyang zayong* 台陽雜詠 [Mixed songs of Taiyang]; first published in 1881, now included in *Taiwan zayong heke*, 67.

¹³ “Fengsu xiankuang” 風俗現況 [Current state of folk customs], in *Anping xian zaji* 安平縣雜記, 32-33 (early Japanese period, manuscript version reprinted by Chengwen chubanshe, Taipei, 1983).

¹⁴ “Yingshen suoshuo,” *Taiwan riri xinbao*, 13 September 1898.

¹⁵ This expression was used by Haiwai Sanren 海外散人 in his *Rongcheng jiwen* 榕城紀聞 [Notes from the Banyan City/Fuzhou] in the entry for the second month of the

The Numinous Lords have been empowered with jurisdiction over all of Taiwan. Zhang, head of the Department of Plagues at the White Dragon Hermitage, minister of judicial investigation, makes the following announcement. The minister has been granted jurisdiction over all of Taiwan, to investigate *yin* and *yang*, distinguish good and evil, patrol the land throughout the year on behalf of Heaven, establish *jiao* and build boats, and drive plagues and pestilences out to sea, so that the people may live in peace. The current summer season is the right time to hold major events. The eighteenth day of the fifth month has been chosen for the gathering of lotus flowers and the building of a dragon boat. On the second day of the sixth month the hall will be opened for the conducting of affairs. On the sixth, seventh, and eighth days, for three days and nights processions will be conducted and a *jiao*-rite, as well as a rite of universal salvation will be held. On the seventeenth day, a visit will be made to the shrine of the Lord of Heaven to submit a memorial [...] This is to inform all sponsors of these events. Between the day of the hall's opening and the 24th of the month, you should come to the temple to register your names, so that they may be recorded on the *jiao* list. Obey the command and do not tarry. This proclamation is given with all dispatch on the ... day of the ... month of the ... year.¹⁶

This announcement states that the gods of the White Dragon Hermitage “investigate yin and yang, distinguish good and evil, and patrol the land throughout the year on behalf of Heaven.” This shows that the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings of the White Dragon Hermitage have taken over the official powers of the city god and the royal lords. Even more importantly, it reveals that around the opening of the hall the White Dragon Hermitage conducted several related rituals. Ahead of it, lotus blossoms were gathered and a boat was built. Afterwards, *jiao* and universal salvation rites were held and a memorial was submitted at the shrine of the Lord of Heaven.

According to the relevant documents, the White Dragon Hermitage's annual plague expulsion event unfolded in the following stages:

15th year of Chongzhen reign period (1642); the context is a description of the Five Emperors cult of Fuzhou. In an article in the *Taiwan riri xinbao* (“Pinji heduo” 品級何多 [How many ranks?], 25 July 1907) we find the following statement: “Recently in Tainan it was again the time for the procession of the Xilai Hermitage's Great Emperors of the Five Blessings. The Generals troupes first opened their halls, just as officials do.” Another article (“Yingshen suoshuo,” 13 September 1898) tells us: “When the Generals left, the hall was sealed amidst the sounds of firecrackers. A sign was posted that the deities were out on official business and would not return before the seventh month.”

¹⁶ Quoted in Kataoka Iwao's 片岡巖 *Taiwan fuzokushi* 臺灣風俗史 [Customs of Taiwan] (1921; reprint, Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1994), 1048-1049.

1. Gathering lotus blossoms and building a dragon boat (a paper boat);
2. opening the hall;
3. procession, and collecting of the polluted blood (thousand-pound load);
4. *jiao* and universal salvation rites;
5. submission of a memorial;
6. *tianzai*; floating of the boat out to sea.

The processions lasted two to three days and were the high point of the plague expulsion feast. In 1906, the *Taiwan riri xinbao* published the following report about this rich festival at the end of the Qing period:

On the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the old calendar, the Xilai Hermitage of Tainan holds a festival for the welcoming of the gods and expulsion of plagues. On the nineteenth and twentieth days, the White Dragon Hermitage holds a festival for the welcoming of the gods and expulsion of pestilences. Every year around the sixth month, these two temples open their halls to a hugely wasteful display, which is patronized by all the lower classes of our island. More than ten years ago, labourers confessed their guilt and crawled in front of the gods, hoping to be relieved of calamity and illness. On the road one could even see some who had cuffed and fettered their hands and feet, wearing convicts' garb and shackles. Praying with raised incense sticks, they fell down every three steps and rolled in the mud. Wearing marked black headbands, the crowds followed behind, their sweat like rain, their incense like wind. Fluttering clothes filled the neighbourhood and a thunder-like clamour reigned for three days, as the teeming masses kept kowtowing. In front of the deities' sedan chair there was a gilded giant, sixteen feet tall, its head large as a bushel and wearing the helmet of a halberd-bearer. With flowing movements it proceeded with giant steps. On a large lamp were written in red characters the words "Great Deity" and the sounds of clapping sticks were awe-inspiring. On a pole were raised vermilion stomachers and red feathered insignia, awaiting their use by spirit-mediums when they were possessed by gods. These mediums cut their tongues until the blood flowed and with it wrote talismans on yellow paper, which were deemed to protect against misfortune. The people of this island consider these deities efficacious and call them rulers of the Department of Plagues, or also "ministers" (*butang*). They are divided into five departments. [...] Their underlings are particularly fierce. If you touch them, you will fall ill. If you pray to them, they will respond. Their fierce demeanour cannot be described with brush and ink. They are even more awe-inspiring than ox-ghosts and snake-spirits. There were some whose heads were three spans in circumference, and their bodies several spans. They had protruding eyes and tongues, and beards and tiger-like eyebrows that reached the ears. Their hands were moved with ropes in

such a way that they seem to snatch at people. When they danced swiftly through the streets at night, the sounds of the gong were very ominous. Their faces were black as lacquer, their wide mouths kept opening and closing; they rolled their eyes like real people, and could stop the cries of children or scatter the people in their path. Each had his own surname. At the appointed time they were welcomed and carried out. Sacrifices to Heaven were performed and an official designation was attached outside, just as when an official opens his hall for people to lodge their reports. They patrolled the streets, holding a tiger-headed sign on which were inscribed the four characters “rewarding the good and punishing the wicked.”¹⁷

These fierce spirit-generals were called “General-Lords” (*jiangye*) and were divided into two types: either carved from soft wood or played by costumed men. The latter “had dishevelled hair and faces painted in many colours, giving them an extremely fierce and malevolent appearance.”

Their clothes were all made from multicoloured silk, shining and extraordinary, the costumes vying with each other for extravagance. Eight men made up one troupe, called the “Eight Generals in Front of the Sedan.” If there were ten, they were called the “Ten Generals.” Arranged in ranks, they stood guard in front of the deity’s sedan chair, charging to the sides every now and then, thereby frightening little children, who would run off upon seeing them.¹⁸

According to the records, altogether five Eight Generals troupes participated at the White Dragon Hermitage’s procession in 1906.¹⁹ Thus we know that by 1906 at the latest, White Dragon Hermitage had already five such troupes. What were the names of these troupes? Shi Wanshou’s field research gives us one name: Ruyi Tang.²⁰ Japanese colonial government records contain another name: Jingshen Tang (“Respecting-the-Spirits Hall”).²¹

¹⁷ “Tainan da saishenhui” 台南大賽神會 [A great temple festival in Tainan], *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 15 August 1906.

¹⁸ “Yingshen suoshuo,” *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 13 September 1898. See also Wang Jianchuan 王見川, “Xilai An shijian yu Daojiao, luntang zhi guanxi: jianlun qi zhoubian wenti” 西來庵事件與道教、鑾堂之關係—兼論其周邊問題 [The links of the Xilai An incident with Daoism and spirit-writing cults; including a discussion of some related issues], in *Taiwan de zongjiao yu wenhua* 臺灣的宗教與文化 [Religion and culture of Taiwan], ed. Wang Jianchuan 王見川 and Li Shiwei 李世偉 (Luzhou: Boyang wenhua gongsi, 1999), 312.

¹⁹ *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 15 August 1906.

²⁰ Shi Wanshou, “Bajiajiang tuan—tianren heyi de xunbu zuzhi,” 50. The *Quantai Bailong An yan’ge* 全台白龍庵沿革 [History of the All-Taiwan White Dragon Hermitage], a temple history compiled by the sacrificial committee of the White Dragon

At the beginning of the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, the building of the White Dragon Hermitage had been taken over by Japanese troops and was used as an army engineer workshop²² and as an officers' mess and barracks

Hermitage contains the following record concerning the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings and their retinue:

Emperor	Zhang	Zhong	Liu	Shi	Zhao
Title	Xianling Gong	Yingling Gong	Xuanling Gong	Yangling Gong	Zhenling Gong
Taboo name	Yuanbo	Shixiu	Yuanda	Wenye	Guangming
Birthday	7/10	4/10	3/3	9/1	3/15
Office	ruler	censor	submitter of memorandums	bursar	punishments
Colour of Robe	gold	green	red	blue	white
Name of Hall	Fushou Tang	Fushan Tang	Fuliang Tang	Fuzhong Tang	Fu'an Tang
Hall Name of Generals	Ruyi Zengshou Tang	Rushan Fansi Tang	Ruliang Yingxing Tang	Rushun Xiexing Tang	Ruxing Xixiang Tang
No. of Generals	ten	four	eight	six	eight
Composition of Troupe	First rank: Gan Ye & Liu Ye. Second rank: Da Ye & Er Ye, then the Four Seasons and the Civil and Military Judges	Two persons in the first, and two in the second rank.	Two pairs each in the first and second ranks.	First rank: two persons. Second rank: Da Ye & Er Ye.	First rank: two persons. Second rank: Da Ye & Er Ye, and the Four Seasons.

From this table we can see that the full name of the Ruyi Tang must be Ruyi Zengshou Tang and that it is a Ten Generals troupe under the command of Xianling Gong Zhang Yuanbo. We also learn from this source that each of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings is assigned a "generals troupe."

²¹ Tōkō bemmusō 東港辨務署 [Donggang commissioner's office], "Tōben hihatsu dai 43 gō" 東弁秘發第 43 號 [Secret communiqués of the Donggang commissioner's office, no. 43], 24 September 1900 (in *Taiwan sōtokufu kōbun ruisan gen Tainan ken* 台灣總督府公文類纂元台南縣 [Official documents of the government-general of Taiwan, referring to Tainan county], 1900, Eikyū hozon 永久保存, vol. 46 (kōhitsu-kai kan 降筆會卷 [On spirit-writing cults])).

²² *Taiwan zongdufu gongwen leizuan zongjiao shiliao huibian*, 225.

of the Third Company of Garrison Engineers.²³ The temple and its images had been moved to the central hall of the Yuanhe Gong in Dachong Street.²⁴ Due to the unsettled conditions, the White Dragon Hermitage did not hold any plague expulsion rites for several years after the relocation.²⁵

From the currently available material we can see that the White Dragon Hermitage resumed these rituals around 1899. They were prohibited by the authorities for some years and were next held again in 1906.²⁶ They continued

²³ *Ibid.*, 228.

²⁴ *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 19 May 1915 (“Luocheng jianjiao” 落成建醮 [Successful holding of a *jiao*]).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, Chinese edition, 19 April 1899 (“Quwen xunli” 驅瘟循例 [A plague expulsion in the traditional manner]): “The White Dragon Hermitage in Tainan used to practise the custom of driving epidemics out to sea, something that the people of this prefecture relied on for their safety. During the five years since the temple has fallen into disuse this ritual has been neglected. The Great Emperors of the Five Blessings of the hermitage have been moved and are now worshipped in Datong Street. Many now say that the frequent epidemics of recent years are no coincidence, but are due to the fact that no plague expulsion rites were held. Therefore on the third day of this month the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings again moved in procession through their territory, just as in the past. The procession was headed by a robed officer on horseback who cleared the way. He was followed by the Eight Generals and other troupes, all as it was done before, except that the event was much less intense than in the past. However, there were still many who carried incense burners to purify the route, so that an exquisite aroma pervaded the streets. Representing the correct pneuma of Heaven, incense is said to expel evil influences and pollution. From this day on the welcoming ritual was revived at the White Dragon Hermitage.”

²⁶ On the resumption of rites in 1899 see *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 19 April 1899 (“Quwen xunli”). On the situation in 1906 see *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 15 August 1906 (“Tainan da saishenhui”), where we read: “Since the assumption of the Japanese administration, the authorities have not allowed private fundraising so as to protect the people’s wealth. When the government also established a department of public health, the local people adapted by setting up a charitable association called Leshan Tang (“Taking joy-in-Goodness Hall”) in the temple, after the fashion of Shintō shrines. Those who come to pray will leave donations in a bamboo tube, which has the same effect as collecting people’s pledges. It is the same in the Xilai Hermitage. The sixth month of this year is the time of the great festival, which corresponds to the month August of the new calendar. In this year, as usual, people from all walks of life have collected money and formed associations, and vast crowds participated in the festivities, though the number of people dressed up as convicts to redeem a pledge was greatly diminished. However, going by the expense figures of this year’s feast, the White Dragon Hermitage’s celebration was quite splendid, and the Xilai Hermitage’s was just as in previous years. Here is an overview of the processions on this day:

to occur during the Taishō period (1912–1926).²⁷ It needs to be made clear that religious activities at the White Dragon Hermitage did not cease during the years when no plague expulsion rites were performed. In 1901, for example, the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings of the White Dragon Hermitage and its General troupes were invited to contribute their plague-expelling powers to the processions of Fengshan and Donggang.²⁸

2. The Propagation of the White Dragon Hermitage's Eight Generals Troupe

2.1. The Eight Generals Troupe of the Xilai Hermitage

The Xilai Hermitage had better luck than its mother temple, the White Dragon Hermitage.²⁹ Not only was its building not confiscated, but it was also able

Xilai Hermitage	White Dragon Hermitage
24 performance floats	34 performance floats
10 musical (<i>beiguan</i>) troupes	5 Eight Generals troupes
40 riders on horseback	15 musical (<i>beiguan</i>) troupes
4 Eight Generals troupes	62 riders on horseback
1 paper dragon boat	1 centipede troupe (26 persons)
8 general-lords (<i>jiangye</i>)	1 paper dragon boat
	6 general-lords (<i>jiangye</i>)

On this day, forty to fifty thousand people crowded the New Boulevard, both local residents and visitors from Fengshan, Dagou, Jiayi, Madou, Ahou, Yanshuigang, Wanli, Damujiang, Guandimiao, and Anping.”

²⁷ *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 5 April 1921 (“Shen yi fu shen”). See also *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 4 August 1913 (“Yingshen shengkuang” 迎神盛況 [Lively scenes on welcoming the gods]): “For a long time the two temples White Dragon Hermitage and Xilai Hermitage in Tainan have worshipped the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings. Every year they hold processions in the sixth month of the old calendar, which are said to expel plagues. There are many among the city’s population who superstitiously believe in this claim. Because the Xilai Hermitage is being rebuilt and has not yet held a *jiao*, it has suspended its procession for this year. By contrast, the White Dragon Hermitage’s procession, held on the 28th and 29th days of the sixth month (= July 31 to August 1 of the new calendar), was several times more opulent and magnificent than in other years. In olden times, these processions would simply consist of flags and banners, gongs and drums, troupes of generals, and people carrying chains and shackles. Nowadays there are performance floats, troops of riders, its splendour exceeding that of the Royal Lords’ processions of Nankunshen—a clear sign how extravagant customs have become.”

²⁸ See n. 21.

²⁹ *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 25 July 1907, “Xunli yingshen” 循例迎神 [A traditional greeting of the gods]: “It is the custom in Tainan to welcome the Great

to hold a sumptuous plague-expulsion festival in the third year of the Japanese occupation.³⁰ Afterwards, the fortunes of the temple kept improving and its annual festivals attracted widespread attention and newspaper coverage.³¹ For example, an article in the Chinese edition of the *Taiwan riri xinbao* reported on 25 July 1905:

In Tainan's Tingzai jiao Street there is a temple called Xilai Hermitage. Its deities are called the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings. Their underlings are of particularly fierce and strange aspect. [...] Nicknamed "Great Gods," they are worshipped by the Taiwanese as powerful gods and are said to be in charge of expelling plagues and pestilences. On the nineteenth day of the sixth month the gods are welcomed—a rather noisy occasion whose bustle spills out into the alleys.

According to contemporary newspaper reports, four Eight Generals Troupes participated in the Xilai Hermitage's 1906 festival.³² Among them was one called Baihe Tang ("Hundredfold Harmony Hall"), and another Baishan Tang ("Hundredfold Goodness Hall").³³

Emperors of the Five Blessings during the sixth month. Two temples engage in this activity. One is called the White Dragon Hermitage, the other the Xilai Hermitage. The Xilai Hermitage is a branch temple of the White Dragon Hermitage. [...] The people are quiet and solemn; riders, incense poles, drums and gongs are all adorned with paper decorations. There are those with painted faces, called the Eight or Ten Generals, whose function it is to rid the district of pestilences. Their awe-inspiring appearance causes the people to respect and fear them. For unknown reasons, the White Dragon Hermitage has suspended its festival this year, but the Xilai Hermitage's was all the more extravagant. On the twenty-third and twenty-fourth of this month more than forty stages were set up, for which singing-girls were hired, dressed in colourful clothes and vying with each other in loveliness. All around, gaily dressed men and women, white-haired old men and golden youths were mesmerized by these shows. Others like poets and literati moved about in groups of three to five, feasting their eyes on the spectacle. Thus the streets of the city were almost blocked with people. It was said that on the previous day, three or four trainloads of visitors had arrived from the south and the north." For more on the Xilai Hermitage, see Wang Jianchuan, "Xilai An shijian yu Daojiao, luntang zhi guanxi," 310-315.

³⁰ "Yingshen suoshuo," *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 13 September 1898.

³¹ See *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 13 September 1908 ("Yingwang zaguan" 迎王雜觀 [Views of the greeting the royal lords]), and 14 July 1910 ("Kaitang jianjiao" 開堂建醮 [Opening the hall and holding a *jiao*]).

³² "Tainan da saishenhui," *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 15 August 1906.

³³ "Pinji heduo," *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 25 July 1907: "Recently in Tainan it was again the time for the procession of the Xilai Hermitage's Great Emperors of the Five Blessings. The Generals troupes first opened their halls, just as officials do. The names of these troupes vary; one is called Baihe Tang, another Baishan Tang. However, there is one troupe on whose placard is written in large characters,

2.2. The Ten General Troupes of the Jia'nan Area

In addition to influencing the Xilai Hermitage's Eight Generals troupe, the White Dragon Hermitage's troupes also spread to the Jia'nan area. The master of the famous Gongji Tang ("Saluting-the-Auspicious Hall") Ten General Troupe in Jiayi, Lin Jinlu, presents the following view of the troupe's history:

At the time, Mr. Liang Neng and Mr. Lu Yongji separately were teaching the troupe rituals, make-up, and steps. Their school was called Gongyi Tang ("Common Righteousness Hall"). Liang Neng had been hired from the White Dragon Hermitage in Tainan to teach the steps and rituals in Jiayi. He left all his knowledge to the brothers of the Gongyi Tang. Later the Gongyi Tang split into two groups within the City God temple: the Gongji Tang and the Jisheng Tang. The Gongji Tang's "gong" character was created by adding a "hand" radical to the Gongyi Tang's "gong" character to express the ideal of working hand in hand. My father, Lin Laide, was the Gongji Tang's master. Later, because of conflicts between older and younger troupe members, Lin Laide left the Gongji Tang with his disciples and went to the Zhennan Shengshen Gong ("Palace of the Sages and Gods Controlling the South") to establish today's Gongji Tang Ten Generals troupe of the ancient Peach City.³⁴

Troupe leaders all agree that Liang Neng and Lu Yongji are regarded as the founding patriarchs of Jiayi's Ten General Troupes.³⁵ Liang Neng's role

'Official residence of the Baipin Tang of the Six Generals in the service of the Ministry of Thunder'—how ridiculous! The Six Generals are exorcists who paint their faces in many colours and adorn their temples with horns. They look around with angry eyes and move in a fighting manner, just like the *Book of Changes*' 'great man who changes like a tiger.' Each acts in the character of the spirit he impersonates and they wear old-style robes. There are those with bare arms who hold staffs and those who dance and jump while clasping shields. Others again brandish iron awls and walk with dishevelled hair. Their appearance is very fierce and they seem like prison wardens from the times of the autocratic regime, bedecked with instruments of torture, causing people's hair to stand on end"

³⁴ Li Jianxing 李建興, "Jiaqian shenwei 'yipin huwei' zhi shi: gu Taocheng Gongji Tang Shijiajiang daoshi Lin Jinlu xiansheng cexie" 駕前神威「一品扈衛」之師——古桃城拱吉堂什家將導師林錦錄先生側寫 [An outstanding teacher of deities' escorts: on Mr. Lin Jinlu, the instructor of the Ten Generals troupe of the Gongji Tang in the Peach City/Jiayi], unpublished manuscript.

³⁵ Transcript of my interview with Lin Jinhuan, elder of the Jisheng Tang Eight Generals troupe of the City God temple in Jiayi, 29 May 2001. On the second floor of the Jiutian Dian Gongyi Tang in Jiayi there hangs a newspaper clipping that contains the following information: "... The Ten Generals troupe of the Jiutian Dian Gongyi Tang was founded more than eighty years ago. Its training was provided by Lu

was particularly important.³⁶ According to the testimony of the now seventy-five year old Lin Jinhuang,³⁷ the long-standing master of the Jisheng Tang of Jiayi's City God temple, Liang Neng "over eighty years ago went to all temples in Jiayi to encourage people to learn the Eight Generals, saying that such a lively display was nice to look at. Later he taught the Eight Generals at the Ciji Gong ("Palace of Compassionate Relief"). He had three students of considerable accomplishment. One established the Ruyi Zhenyu Tang in the Ciji Gong; the second established the Gongyi Tang in the Dizang Hermitage; and the third founded the Jisheng Tang ("Auspicious Victory Hall") in the City God temple.³⁸ From the two characters *ru* and *yi* in the name of the Ciji Gong's Ruyi Zhenyu Tang³⁹ we can see that it was derived from the White Dragon Hermitage. As to the question which troupe was founded first, we can refer to the account of the Gongyi Tang: "This hall has a history of more than eighty years. Its first master was Liang Neng [...] Together with the Zhenyu Tang of the Ciji Gong and the Jisheng Tang of the City God temple it ranks as one of the founding Generals troupes of the Peach City (= Jiayi)."⁴⁰ Thus the interpretation of Lin Jinhuang may be quite close to the actual situation, namely that the three troupes founded by the disciples of Liang Neng (the Ruyi Zhenyu Tang, the Gongyi Tang, and the Jisheng Tang) are the earliest troupes in Jiayi.

So, when did they first appear? If we extrapolate from Lin Jinhuang's estimate of "over eighty years ago," Liang Neng must have come to Jiayi during the Taishō years. In the Ruyi Zhenyu Tang hangs a plaque with the following inscription: "In commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary in the seventh month of the *wuwu* year of the Republic ... Ciji Gong Ruyi Zhenyu

Yongji, who had come from the Ruyi Tang in Tainan, and his teacher Liang Neng ..." (reported by the journalist Yu Xuelan).

³⁶ A photograph of Liang Neng hangs on the second floor of the Jiutian Dian Gongyi Tang in Jiayi, but there is no further information on this man.

³⁷ Interview on 29 May 2001.

³⁸ Transcript of my interview with Lin Jinhuang, elder of the Jisheng Tang Eight Generals troupe of the City God temple in Jiayi, 29 May 2001.

³⁹ Ciji Gong's Ten Generals troupe's Zhenyu Tang is located beside the temple. Inside are paintings of the Ten Generals troupe, which were produced by the (now 85 years old) painter Ye Hai, who specializes in Generals troupes motifs. The alternate name of this hall is "Ruyi Zhenyu Tang."

⁴⁰ Section on the "Jiutian Dian Gongyi Tang" 九天殿共義堂, in *Jiayi shi simiao minglu* 嘉義市寺廟名錄 [List of temples in Jiayi], edited by Wu Jiabin 吳嘉信 (Jiayi: Jiayi shi Chenghuang Miao, 2001), 268-270. The information on the temples in this book was provided by the temples themselves and thus represents their viewpoint.

Tang.”⁴¹ The *wuwu* year of the Republic corresponds to 1978;⁴² that year was the sixtieth since the founding of the Ruyi Zhenyu Tang. Thus, the Ruyi Zhenyu Tang was founded in 1918, the seventh year of Taishō; therefore, the White Dragon Hermitage’s Eight Generals must have been transmitted to Jiayi by 1918 at the latest.

These dates are important, because in 1922 we find a *Taiwan riri xinbao* report on the participation of Eight General troupes in the procession of Jiayi’s City God.⁴³

2.3. The Eight Generals Troupe of Jiali in Tainan County

Some scholars think that “the Eight Generals originated in Xiamadou of Tainan county, and then spread to Jiali, Tuchengli, and Tainan city [...], not even one hundred years ago (around eighty years).”⁴⁴ This view is doubtful. Chen Dinglin, the expert in the procession troupes of Tainan county, devoted a detailed study to the famous Eight Generals troupe of the Zhenshan Gong in Jiali township, which is included in the “Eight Generals” section of the *Nanying yizhen zhi*.⁴⁵ On the basis of oral testimony by the Zhenshan Gong’s Eight Generals master, Chen compiled the following historical overview:

The Sanwujia Eight Generals troupe was found in 1916. Its first teacher was Mr. Lin Zai; the second-generation teacher was Lin Mu, and the present teachers are Lin Shuimu and Lin Yuzhang. Their designated successors are Lin Quanxing and Lin Rongjun. In 1912, a *jiao* was celebrated at the Jintang Dian in Jiali and gods’ sedan chairs and civil and martial troupes from many places participated. At the time, Mr. Lin Mu’s elder brother Lin Huoshan, a Daoist priest, encountered in the

⁴¹ This plaque now hangs above the entrance of the Ciji Gong’s Ten Generals troupe’s Zhenyu Tang.

⁴² Calculated according to Chen Tan 陳垣 and Dong Zuobin 董作賓, *Ershi shi shuorun biao* 二十史朔閏表 [Chronological tables for the twenty dynastic histories] (Taipei: Yiwu yinshuguan, 1977).

⁴³ “Jidian zhisheng” 祭典誌盛 [A sumptuous sacrificial rite], *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 26 September 1922. See also Wang Jianchuan 王見川 and Li Shiwei 李世偉, “Riju shiqi de Jiayi Chenghuang Miao” 日據時期的嘉義城隍廟 [Jiayi’s City God Temple during the Japanese period], *Taiwan zongjiao yanjiu tongxun* 台灣宗教研究通訊 2 (2000): 149.

⁴⁴ Shi Cuifeng 施翠峰, *Taiwan minjian yishu* 台灣民間藝術 [Taiwanese folk art] (Taichung: Taiwan sheng zhengfu xinwenchu, 1977), 76.

⁴⁵ Chen Dinglin 陳丁林, *Nanying yizhen zhi* 南瀛藝陣誌 [Performance troupes of Nanying] (Xinying shi, Tainan county: Tainan xianli wenhua zhongxin, 1997), 290-317.

temple the famous master Lin Zai from Madou. As they chatted, it became clear that Lin Zai could perform the various techniques of the Eight Generals. Thereupon Lin Huoshan formally invited Lin Zai to come to Sanwujia to organize an Eight Generals troupe. The three brothers Lin Huoshan, Lin Mu, and Lin Shuibo became his students. They gathered thirteen- to sixteen-year old boys in the village and in the evenings trained them in the performance moves.⁴⁶

Thus, it is correct that the Eight Generals of the Zhenshan Gong in Jiali were transmitted by Lin Zai.⁴⁷ But what was Lin Zai's background? Lü Yizhong's field research provides a clue:

According to Lin Yuzhang's report of the second-generation master Huang-Lin Mu's account, the latter was invited in 1916 by the first-generation master Lin Zai to come to Sanwujia and begin to train the Eight Generals. Therefore, if we want to discover the origins of this local troupe, Lin Zai's identity becomes an important issue. However, Lin Yuzhang stated that he didn't know who the teacher of Lin Zai was. He only knew that Lin Zai had once said that Taiwan's earliest Eight Generals troupe had started in the Dizang Wang Miao Beiyue Dian of Jiayi, and had been transmitted to Jiali via Madou. According to Lin Zai, the Eight Generals of the Beiyue Dian in turn had been transmitted from Fujian.⁴⁸

Thus, Lin Zai's Eight Generals stemmed from the Dizang Wang Miao Beiyue Dian in Jiayi. If we put this together with the previous information about the Dizang Wang Miao's Gongyi Tang, we can conclude that Lin Zai's Eight Generals derive from the Gongyi Tang. This means the Zhenshan Gong's Eight General troupe in Jiali originated in the Gongyi Tang of the Dizang Hermitage of Jiayi, and thus belongs ultimately to the lineage of the White Dragon Hermitage.

3. Concluding Discussion

Scholars generally believe that Taiwan's Eight Generals originate from the White Dragon Hermitage.⁴⁹ The currently available sources confirm this view.

⁴⁶ Cheng Dinglin, *Nanying yizhen zhi*, 292-293.

⁴⁷ Lü Yizhong, "Tainan xian Jiali zhen Zhenshan Gong Bajiajiang," 2.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Shi Wanshou, "Bajiajiang tuan—tianren heyi de xunbu zuzhi," 48-49. Lee Fong-mao 李豐楙, *Donggang wangchuan ji* 東港王船祭 [Sacrifice of the royal lord boats in Donggang] (Pingdong shi: Pingdong xian zhengfu, 1993), 103. Chen Zhengzhi 陳正之, "Tianhui dizhuan bu qixing: Shenjiangzhen" 天迴地轉步七星—神將陣 [Whirling and tracing the seven stars: the divine generals], in *Yueyun nixiang: Taiwan de chuantong yizhen* 樂韻泥香: 台灣的傳統藝陣 [Music and incense: Taiwan's tradi-

What needs to be kept in mind, however, is that the “White Dragon Hermitage” in question refers to the temple of that name in Tainan city. In the middle of the Qing dynasty, another temple of the same name that was also devoted to the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings had been founded in Zhanghua by Fuzhou immigrants,⁵⁰ but this temple apparently did not have an Eight Generals troupe. Great Emperors of the Five Blessings temples all had their generals who fulfilled functions during the “opening of the hall,” but these did not necessarily take the shape of Eight Generals troupes.

This state of affairs can also be observed in Fuzhou and other areas where the cult of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings was popular. According to the *Fuzhou difangzhi* (Gazetteer of Fuzhou, see page 96), in Fuzhou “there were nine temples that were called hermitages (*an*): the Fuchu, White Dragon, Jiufu, Wanshou, Chongsheng, Yizhen, Guanghui, Mingzhen, and Longjin Hermitages. There were eleven temples called *jian*: Dong Jian, Nan Jian, Xi Jian, Bei Jian, Tang Jian, Shui Jian, Jing Jian, Zhi Jian, Songshan Jian, Daxi Jian, and Yushan Jian.”⁵¹ Among the descriptions of the festivals of these temples to the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings (whom the people of Fuzhou just called the Five Emperors), only the late Ming/early Qing *Rongcheng jiwén* (Notes from the Banyan City/Fuzhou) and the nineteenth century missionary Justus Doolittle refer to Generals troupes.⁵² There is no trace of them in any other descriptions. Thus, the Eight Generals were not a necessary component of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings’ plague expulsion rites.

tional performance troupes] (Taichung: Taiwan sheng zhengfu xinwenchu, 1997), 85.

⁵⁰ Section on “Daye erye” 大爺二爺 in *Taiwan minqing fengsu yi juan* 台灣民情風俗一卷 [Taiwanese folk customs, vol. 1] (Japanese period manuscript, Collections of the Institute of Ethnology at the Academia Sinica, n.d.).

⁵¹ This source was sent to me by the Fuzhou scholar Lian Lichang on 21 August 1997, but he didn’t provide the publication year and author of the *Fuzhou difangzhi* 福州地方志.

⁵² Haiwai Sanren 海外散人, *Rongcheng jiwén* 榕城紀聞, entry for the second month of the fifteenth year of Chongzhen reign period (1642). I have used the manuscript version edited by Zhu Weigan 朱維幹 that is kept at the library of Fujian Shifan Daxue. It has now been reprinted in the *Fujian congshu* 福建叢書, compiled by the Fujian Sheng Wenshi Yanjiuguan 福建省文史研究館, second series, vol. 9, “Pu bian jishi” 莆變紀事, *wai wu zhong* 外五種 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2000). J. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese* (New York: Harper, 1865), 276-287. On the cult of the Five Emperors in Fujian, see Michael Szonyi, “The Illusion of Standardizing the Gods: The Cult of the Five Emperors in Late Imperial China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 56.1 (1997): 113-135.

However, this is not to deny that the Eight Generals originated in the cult of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings, but is intended simply to differentiate between the two complexes. To make this clear: The Eight Generals did develop in the festivals of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings in Fuzhou, but they did not necessarily figure in every festival of a Great Emperors of the Five Blessings temple during the sixth month. In other words, the function of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings and the cult's "hall openings" required the services of "generals," but not every Great Emperors of the Five Blessings temple took the additional step of organizing a Generals' troupe.

The spread of the Eight Generals in Taiwan demonstrates that they came into being in the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings' festival and then gradually took on a life of their own. Not only were they invited to the festivals of other temples, but their members also trained and instructed the members of other temples, helping them establish troupes of their own. These new troupes would either use hall names of White Dragon Hermitage troupes or choose a name of their own. The deities worshipped by the troupes could be the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings or other deities, depending on which temple they were affiliated with. Thus, as the Gongyi Tang was originally attached to the Dizang Hermitage (*an*), its main deity is the bodhisattva Dizang Wang and the troupe's complete name is "Ten Generals Troupe of the Dizang Hermitage."⁵³

Shi Wanshou believes that the Eight Generals imitate official police patrols and that they thus had a connection with territorial units in the late Qing.⁵⁴ This view warrants further discussion. We know from the reports in the *Taiwan riri xinbao* and other sources that the Eight Generals imitated the local administration⁵⁵ not only in its policing function, but also in its judicial

⁵³ In 1987 the Gongyi Tang separated from the Dizang Hermitage and established its own temple, the "Jiutian Dian Gongyi Tang." However, the principal deity is still Dizang Wang Pusa.

⁵⁴ Shi Wanshou, "Bajiajiang tuan—tianren heyi de xunbu zuzhi," 50.

⁵⁵ "Tainan da saishenhui," *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 15 August 1906: "The people of Fujian worship the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings most piously. [...] Their underlings [...] all have surnames. At the appointed time they are welcomed and carried out. Sacrifices to Heaven are performed and an official designation is attached outside, just as when an official opens his hall for people to lodge their reports. They patrol the streets, holding a tiger-headed sign on which are inscribed the four characters 'rewarding the good and punishing the wicked.' [...]" "Pinji heduo," *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 25 July 1907: "Recently in Tainan it was again the time for the procession of the Xilai Hermitage's Great Emperors of the Five Blessings. The Generals troupes first opened their halls, just as officials do."

and record-keeping aspects. Therefore they certainly had links with late Qing territorial organization.⁵⁶ From the sources that document the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings' functions of judging *yin* and *yang*, distinguishing good and evil, and patrolling on behalf of Heaven, we can presume that the Eight Generals arose in response to such needs. Thus the Eight Generals' policing, judicial, and record-keeping functions are related to those of the Great Emperors of the Five Blessings.

As for the name "Eight Generals," some people think that this is just a general term and that the troupes may consist of four, six, eight, or more than ten members. The *shi* in *Shijiajiang* supposedly means "many," not "ten." Of course, troupes of eight are the most common, hence the designation "Eight Generals."⁵⁷

In fact, "Eight Generals" is the general, or better, summary term which stands for all Generals troupes. Troupes with six members then call themselves more specifically Six Generals, those with eight, Eight Generals and those with ten, Ten Generals.⁵⁸ The *shi* in *Shijiajiang* does mean "ten" rather than "many."

The foregoing shows us that Taiwan's Eight Generals could have come into being at the earliest by the founding of the White Dragon Hermitage in 1863, at the latest by 1898, when we see them already participating in the White Dragon Hermitage's procession. They spread from the White Dragon Hermitage in Tainan, first within the city, then in the Taishō period to Jiayi, and from Jiayi to Tainan county. Troupes also performed outside their home temple's processions: the White Dragon Hermitage's troupe participated in 1910 in festivals in Fengshan and Donggang. In 1925 someone from Xiatoujiao invited a Tainan Eight Generals troupe to participate in the Donggang Royal Lords procession.⁵⁹ At the beginning of the Shōwa period (1926–1989), the Weixinhui ("Reform Society"), an association for the improvement of customs in Taipei, began to issue calls opposing the Eight Generals

⁵⁶ Shi Wanshou points out that the organization of the Generals troupes evolved from the local policing institutions, but he mostly emphasizes that they *imitated* those institutions. "Bajiajiang tuan—tianren heyi de xunbu zuzhi," 50.

⁵⁷ Chen Zhengzhi, "Tianhui dizhuan bu qixing: Shenjiangzhen," 84.

⁵⁸ "Yingshen suoshuo," *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 13 September 1898.

⁵⁹ "Donggang yingshen xuwen" 東港迎神續聞 [Further news of the reception of the gods in Donggang], *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 3 May 1925: "In Donggang of Gaoxiong the Royal Lords will be received to tour in procession on 11 May, that is, on the nineteenth day of the fourth month according to the old calendar. [...] Xiatoujiao will invite the Eight Generals from Tainan, and the butchers' guild will invite the Zidi theatre troupe from Linbian zhuang"

als,⁶⁰ whereupon the numbers of people dressing up in this manner declined.⁶¹ In 1936, the festival of the Xiahai City God announced that the Eight Generals had been removed from its programme,⁶² though here it needs to be kept in mind that the Eight Generals troupes of Northern Taiwan represent a separate tradition from the southern Taiwanese troupes treated in this article.

⁶⁰ "Taibei hangjiazhuang Bajiajiang bennian jianshao le" 台北夯枷裝八家將本年減少了 [The shackled Eight General troupes number less in Taipei this year], *Taiwan minbao* 台灣民報, 30 June 1929; *Taiwan minbao*, 14 June 1930.

⁶¹ "Taibei hangjiazhuang Bajiajiang bennian jianshao le," *Taiwan minbao*, 30 June 1929.

⁶² *Taiwan riri xinbao*, Chinese edition, 2 July 1936, on the temple festival of the Xiahai City God.