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Articles

The Creation of Daoism

PAUL FISCHER

Abstract

This paper examines the creation of Daoism in its earliest, pre-Eastern Han period. After an examination of the critical terms “scholar/master” (*zi* 子) and “author/school” (*jia* 家), I argue that, given the paucity of evidence, Sima Tan and Liu Xin should be credited with creating this tradition. The body of this article considers the definitions of Daoism given by these two scholars and all of the extant texts that Liu Xin classified as “Daoist.” Based on these texts, I then suggest an amended definition of Daoism. In the conclusion, I address the recent claim that the *daojia* 道家/*daojiao* 道教 dichotomy is false, speculating that disagreement over this claim arises from context in which Daoism is considered: among the other pre-Qin “schools of thought” or among other world religions.

Daoism is of fundamental importance to East Asian intellectual history, its influence pervasive across a broad spectrum of cultural endeavors, from cosmogony and art to politics and health. For two and a half millennia, it has never been far from the collective mind of China’s long line of scholars. It would follow, then, that the history of Daoism would more or less be set in stone. But in recent decades some Western scholars have described early, “philosophical” Daoism in rather non-traditional ways that have left some of us puzzled. In this article, I describe the creation of Daoism, while arguing *against* some modern depictions and insinuations, and *for* a new definition (albeit based squarely on the old one). My intended audience consists, I hope, of peers, colleagues, and students, with the intention of facilitating a few friendly conversations on this sublime and robust philosophy. Among the great traditions studied in Western academia, I think “philosophical Daoism” has been relatively under-appreciated, and still awaits its proper place in our ever-more-globalized

aesthetic. Perhaps the growing rapprochement with China will soon facilitate a higher profile for this tradition in the West.

In this essay, I first present a context for the creation of Daoism by examining two important terms, often translated as “master” and “school.” These are important because putative masters narrate, write, and/or transmit texts within ostensible schools of thought, of which Daoism is of course only one. Then I present the two earliest definitions of Daoism, those given by its creators, Sima Tan 司馬談 (d. 110 BCE) and Liu Xin 劉歆 (46 BCE–23 CE), two early scholars well known to sinologists. Next, I analyze the earliest collection of books to be labeled “Daoist.” I include here the nine fragmented texts that have received less attention than the six received texts of this tradition. These latter two sections may be thought of as the theory and practice of early Daoism. Last, I argue for an amended description of Daoism, in which I revise the earlier definitions with a few ideas gleaned from the texts they purport to describe.

I might begin with the first thing many of us tell undergraduates in our Daoism courses. Which is: there is no such thing as Daoism. While the terms “Dao” and “ism” exist in Chinese, there is no such word as “Daoism” in Chinese: it is a Western invention. There only is, and only ever has been, *daojia* 道家 (literally, “Daoist school” but usually rendered “philosophical” or “literati Daoism”) and at least a dozen kinds of *daojiao* 道教 (literally “Daoist teachings” but usually translated as “religious” or “organized Daoism”).¹ There are also other objects of inquiry that might

¹ Some people now prefer to translate *daojia* as “early” or “classical” Daoism, but I retain the older translation for three reasons. 1. It mirrors the fact that in China *daojia* is taught in Philosophy Departments and *daojiao* in Religion Departments. 2. While I agree with the complication that most ancient philosophies are somewhat religious and most ancient religions are somewhat philosophical, the common usage of the term “philosophical” is simply “a system of thought,” which works well here. 3. “Early” and “classical” are both temporal terms that inevitably lead to confusion. For example, when Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) and Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312) spoke of the Dao, they were certainly not referring to the Dao “revealed” to Zhang Ling 張陵 (d. 156) in “sacred scriptures” brought to him by a “heavenly being” a century before. The first half of the “*daojia*/literati-*daojiao*/organized” locution seems a good choice, but “organized” or “communal” Daoism implies that there is no difference in content (only in social organization), whereas I will argue in the conclusion that the difference is significant. A

be put under the umbrella of Daoism: "transcendence Daoism" (also known as "immortality Daoism") say, or Huang-Lao Daoism. Some argue that some or all of these things do constitute a coherent entity that might be called "Daoism," (or, in recognition of this being a modern construct, "Taoism"), because "they all follow the Dao," but this is like claiming that Christianity and Islam are the same thing because they both worship "God." It may be true in some essential or meta-sense, but it is historically inaccurate and I suspect it obscures more than it clarifies. At any rate, this article deals only with the earliest of the several things that may or may not constitute a unified "Daoism": philosophical Daoism. There are no gods or priests, liturgies or confessions of sin here; all that lies outside the purview of this essay. The temporal and geographical scope of this article, already hinted at in the title, is the five hundred years prior to the common era in China.

Context

There is ambiguity in the terms "scholar/master" and "author/school" in early China, and this ambiguity sometimes leads to the idea that masters (with students) and schools (with lineages) were the norm. But if we keep in mind that not all scholars were masters, with implied students or disciples, and not all authors engendered schools of thought that transmitted what they said or wrote, then we will not automatically see social organizations where there may have been none. That these two Chinese words have these four English translations should be uncontroversial, but let me nevertheless provide some examples for clarification.

When Shizi 尸子 (ca. 390-330) lists six masters and their talking points he clearly has in mind their status as the progenitors of lineages

"dao/jia/literati-dao/jiao/religious" taxonomy makes sense to me, but I retain "philosophical" in this paper for four (admittedly rather marginal) reasons. 1. It is already established, and I find the arguments to disestablish it unconvincing. 2. It tracks the way it is taught in academia (at least in China—American philosophy departments by and large remain shamefully Euro-centric). 3. "Literati" is a socio-economic term, so while anyone can sometimes be "philosophical," it sounds slightly classist to refer to an uneducated person as "literati-ish." 4. "Philosophical/religious" highlights the lack/abundance of supernatural elements in the two systems more clearly than "literati/religious." I will return to this puzzlingly contentious issue in my conclusion.

with specific ideas transmitted across time.² Yet the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (ca. 241 BCE) uses a similar list of people, in a similar context, and refers to them not as masters but as individuals.³ Further, Kongzi 孔子 (551-479) is the best-known master in Chinese history and the titular *zi* typically implies his status as a master, with many students. However, as the *Shiji* 史記 (Scribal Records) documents, dozens of his top students were also called *zi*, and no one takes this to mean that they all necessarily had students of their own (ch. 67; Nienhauser 1994, 63-85). Thus, the protagonists in the story of the creation of Daoism should be conceived as a group of scholars, some of whom attracted students that passed on their teachings.

The semantic range of “scholar” (*zi*) and “author” (*jia*) overlap, in English as in Chinese, given that the former may imply—but does not necessitate—the latter.⁴ One way to accommodate this is to translate either, in certain contexts, as “expert” (see Petersen 1995). Nevertheless, a more contentious issue lies in the other direction: the degree to which “author” can also mean “school [of thought].” I think it can mean either. No one assumes that *jia* as “school” refers to a physical school building or even to something that one might “attend.” The sticking point seems to be over whether or not it can be any kind of social institution.

Thus, in the case of *daojia*, it is incontestable that there were a number of Daoist *authors*—even if they did not self-identify as “Daoist,” since

² *Shizi* 10 (dat. 330 BCE): “Mozi valued impartiality, Kongzi valued public-mindedness, Huangzi valued centeredness, Tianzi valued equanimity, Liezi valued emptiness, Liaozi valued dispelling closed-mindedness. Their students mutually denied each other, stopping [only] after several generations: [but] all were trapped in selfishness.”

³ *Lüshi chunqiu* 17.7 (dat. 241 BCE): “If you heed the arguments of a multitude of individuals as a means of ordering the state, it will be endangered in no time. How does one know that this is so? Lao Dan esteemed softness; Kongzi, benevolence; Mo Di, wholeness; Gatekeeper Yin, purity; Liezi, emptiness; Tian Pian, equanimity; Yang Zhu, the self; Sun Bin, strategic position; Wang Liao, going first; and Ni Liang, going last.” Slightly modified from Knoblock and Riegel 2000, 433.

⁴ This is why the *zhuzi* 諸子 (many masters) are often the same as the *baijia* 百家 (hundred authors). This is also why it is no exaggeration to speak of a *baijia* in early China: there certainly were a hundred, or hundreds, of authors, even while there were clearly not that many schools.

the term had not yet been invented—but what do we mean when we say there was a Daoist *school*? I am content with “school” insofar as it implies “school of thought,” because this English phrase does not necessarily imply any social institution. There may be a “school of thought” in this country that holds that cooking with butter is better than cooking with oil, but this does not necessarily mean that its “members” get together on Tuesday evenings to discuss the matter.⁵ With Daoism, all evidence that the authors of Daoist texts ever congregated as such is ambiguous.⁶ On the other hand, somebody wrote those texts, and somebody put in the

⁵ Several scholars have recently argued that “school” is too “confusing” or “misleading” a translation for *jia*. However, their arguments are either overstated—insisting or implying that a “school (of thought)” must denote a textual lineage, which I contend, by appeal to ordinary English usage, it does not—or are undermined by the unstated necessity of using some other phrase synonymous with “school (of thought).” Peterson uses “areas of thought” or “kinds of specialists” (1995, 36-37). Queen uses “intellectual tendencies” (2001, 56n14). Smith has “traditions” (2003, 138), “conceptual areas,” and “people with a particular ideology” (2003, 148). Csikszentmihalyi and Nylan speak of “individuals and their methods” (2003, 65) and “experts in a particular discipline, technique, or field” (2003, 69). These scholars remind us to conceive of these schools of thought as retrospective categories that unite scholars who may not have belonged to an eponymous social organization—as with the “school of thought” that prefers butter to oil, or Dalmatians to Dachshunds—but this caveat is far easier to countenance than the dismissal of the term “school” altogether. A final example. The opening sentence of the last article states: “One major obstacle to understanding the early history of China is the still-prevalent notion that discrete schools of thought contended in the Warring States and Han periods, and that these schools of thought were text-centered.” While I agree with this sentence as it stands, if one were to remove “discrete” and change “centered” to, say, “influenced,” then I must disagree.

⁶ Harold Roth has spent much of his career presenting evidence for a social organization in early Daoism. I find his arguments interesting and compelling but ultimately speculative and hence, not “unambiguous.” By “speculative” I mean, it is a fact that some early Daoist texts refer to self-cultivation, and it follows that actual people practiced such self-cultivation. Still, it is less clear that such people *congregated* to practice these techniques (though this is not an unreasonable assumption), or that they congregated *as self-identified Daoists* (though, again, they may have). In any case, Roth argues for the existence of a particular strand within Daoism, while in this article I seek to define it as a whole. For one early instance of his work in this area, see Roth (1991).

effort to transmit them over the past two and a half millennia. So, while I do not argue for early Daoism as a social entity, I would not argue against it either.⁷

The term *jia* as “author/expert” goes back at least to Zhuangzi 莊子 (ca. 300 BCE)⁸ and Han Feizi 韓非子 (ca. 250 BCE).⁹ This use is later reflected in Liu Xin’s library catalog (6 BCE), famously reprinted with only minor alterations by Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) in his own catalog (90 CE). But Sima Tan certainly was not referring to six “authors” or “experts” when he formulated his “Six schools” (*liu jia* 六家). As has been noted elsewhere, these six “schools” were of at least two types: those with known lineages, and those presumably without.¹⁰ It should also be repeated that Sima Tan’s “Six schools” is not a comprehensive account of the intellectual climate of the time, because he specifically says that he was discussing these schools due to their views on government. Thus, of the total possible number of schools extant in his day, these six, to his mind, were the ones that had views on government that he wished to discuss. And although Sima Tan’s list of schools is often considered to be the earliest, there is reason to think that he may have drawn upon precedent, as the

⁷ I hope the hackneyed assertion “absence of evidence is not evidence of absence” might still apply here.

⁸ *Zhuangzi* 25: “Little Knowledge said, ‘Jizhen’s “no one does it” and Jiezi’s “something causes it”: of these two expert’s/author’s theories, which is true to his situation and which is (merely) partial in his order (of things)?”’ Watson 1968, 292; Graham 1981, 152; Mair 1994, 265 all translate *jia* as “school.” Legge 1962, 129 and Ziporyn 2009, 111 avoid translating it altogether; but Guo 1961, 915 cites Cheng Xuanying’s 成玄英 (fl.631-652) *Zhuangzi shu* 莊子疏 as referring to them as “two worthy people” (*er xian ren* 二賢人) from Jixia 稷下; at any rate, it is clear from context that these are two people or two authors, not two “schools”. The *Zhuangzi*, like most early Chinese texts, coalesced over time with multiple authors and editors; I will not attempt to date this particular passage (and remain not entirely persuaded by other well-known attempts to parse the text).

⁹ *Hanfeizi* 43 (dat. 240 BCE): “Someone asked: ‘Shen Buhai and Gongsun Yang: (regarding) the doctrines of these two experts/authors, whose is more urgent for the state?’” Liao 1959, 212 translates *jia* as “authorities.”

¹⁰ These may well be indicated in the first paragraph in *Shiji* 3289, where he uses *ruzhe* 儒者 and *mozhe* 墨者 but *fajia* 法家, *mingjia* 名家, *daoia* 道家, and *yinyang zhishu* 陰陽之術.

Yinwenzi 尹文子 has a matching list of five.¹¹ Thus, we should probably translate *zi* first as "scholar" and only secondarily as "master," if we have evidence of students (or make it clear that "scholar" and "master" derive from the same word in classical Chinese). We also need to keep in mind the three meanings of *jia* (author; loosely-defined school of thought; and later: teacher-student lineage school) in these contexts and translate accordingly.

The context within which Daoism was created, then, was one of great intellectual ferment. There were many scholars (the *zhuzi*) with more or less specific philosophical positions, a good number of which had written texts (the *baijia*). Some of these scholars attracted students while others did not. Thus, when it seemed helpful to group some of these scholars into categories, called "schools of thought" (*jia* 家), some had lineages of students while others did not. Yet, as helpful as these groupings may have been, they must be seen as generalizations, and not as discrete entities. They overlapped with each other and splintered within one another. Correlativists (*Yin-Yang jia* 陰陽家) did not have a monopoly on Yin-Yang ideology or correlative thinking, nor Ruists (*Ru jia* 儒家) on filiality or loyalty, Mohists (*Mo jia* 墨家) on hiring worthies or anti-aggression, Designatists (*Ming jia* 名家) on correctly designating titles or actions, Legalists (*Fa jia* 法家) on having laws or using rewards and punishments, or Daoists (*Dao jia*) on the Dao or changing in response to things.¹² Schools of thought also split, as Han Feizi famously noted (ch. 50; Watson 1964, 119). It was within such a vibrant intellectual matrix as this that Sima Tan and others first made their school distinctions.

Theory

Sima Tan was the first person we know of to define Daoism. Thus, since the Daoist authors later identified as such by Liu Xin did not, as far as we know, self-identify as "Daoist," and even though the earlier author of the *Yinwenzi* plainly implied the category, we may say that Sima Tan created

¹¹ Xu 1996, 6. Li 2011, 17-19 argues that the relevant section of the *Yinwenzi* predates Sima Tan.

¹² Though "Correlativist" and "Designatist" are unlovely translations, they are the best I currently know of, and succeed only in signaling the focus on correlative thinking in the former and on designating titles and actions in the latter.

Daoism. That is, although the *Yinwenzi* may be the earliest text to implicitly *identify* a school of thought called Daoism, we may say that Sima Tan created it by explicitly *defining* it. Sima Tan's definition is well-known, but bears repeating. I have analyzed twelve specific precepts from the two places where he describes this nascent school (*Shiji* 130.3289, 3293). If you are a successful Daoist, then:

1. your quintessential spirit should come together in unity (*jingshen zhuan yi* 精神專一); further below, we are recommended to stabilize our spirit (*ding shen* 定神), which I take to be the same thing;

2. your actions should harmonize with the formless (*donghe wuxing* 動合無形);

3. you should feel sufficient and satisfied with the myriad things (*shan zu wan wu* 贍足萬物);

4. you should shift and move with the seasons (*yushi qian yi* 與時遷移); below it says you should have the method of no-method and (thereby) accord with the seasons for accomplishing tasks (*you fa wu fa, yin shi wei ye* 有法無法，因時為業), which I take to be the same;

5. you should change and transform in response to things (*ying wu bian hua* 應物變化);¹³ below it says you should have a standard of no-standard and (thereby) accord with things and harmonize with them (*you du wu du, yin wu yu he* 有度無度，因物與合), which I take to be the same;

6. you should act without contrivance, but leave nothing undone (*wu wei... wu bu wei* 無為... 無不為);¹⁴

7. you should take emptiness (i.e., an open mind) and indeterminacy as the root (*yi xu wu wei ben* 以虛無為本);

¹³ The final sentence of this paragraph I take to be Sima Tan describing how Daoists actually are, and not as goals that Daoists should strive for. "In establishing practices and carrying out projects, there is nothing inappropriate; (their) directives are concise and easy to perform: (thus their) projects are few but achievements are many."

¹⁴ This makes more sense in Chinese: "uncontrived" means "without artifice" (*wei* 為 = *wei* 偽), and since human action is perhaps usually a calculated response to our environment, the injunction to act without artifice is followed by the caveat that this does not mean that we should withdraw from the world. On the contrary: we should act *with* it.

8. you should take accordance and reliance as the means (*yi yin xun wei yong* 以因循為用);

9. you should have no fixed position or abiding form so that you can see the actual disposition(s) of the myriad things (*wu chengshi, wu changxing, gu neng jiu wanwu zhi qing* 無成執，無常形，故能究萬物之情);

10. you should treat emptiness (i.e., an open mind) as the constancy of the way (*xuzhe dao zhi chang* 虛者道之常);¹⁵

11. you should harmonize with the great Way (*he da dao* 合大道);

12. you should not over-use your spirit or belabor your body (*shen da yong ze jie, xing da lao ze bi* 神大用則竭，形大勞則敝).

A century later, Liu Xin (or his father) described the Daoists with three principles:¹⁶

13. you should be pure and empty in order to maintain yourself (*qing xu yi zi shou* 清虛以自守);

14. you should be humble and flexible in order to sustain yourself (*bei ruo yi zi chi* 卑弱以自持);

15. you should beware rejecting protocol and learning, and of abandoning goodness and propriety (*juequ li xue, bing qi ren yi* 絕去禮學，兼棄仁義).

Here I will take the liberty of summarizing these fifteen "commandments" into six: relax (#12); know contentment (#3); focus (#1); keep a pure and open mind (#2, 7, 10, 13, 15); be humble, flexible, and responsive to your changing environment (#4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 14); and act with grace and perseverance (#6).¹⁷ Here we have, even before any names of Daoist

¹⁵ There follow two precepts for the ruler, which I do not include in my list because they are not applicable to Daoists who are not rulers: "Accordance is the ruler's principle. (When) the various ministers arrive together, (he) makes each one clarify himself." He does this so that he can ascertain whether or not their claims accord with their actions.

¹⁶ I realize that both Sima Tan and Liu Xin had their own biases that may have made their descriptions less than perfectly objective. But given just how little we know about those biases, I am giving them the benefit of the doubt.

¹⁷ One might ask how many of these does a person need to follow or a text need to evince to be counted as "Daoist"? But such a question would surely be pedantic or naïve, as one might as well ask whether or not a "true" Hindu must read the *Vedas*, a "real" Muslim must pray five times a day, or an "authentic" Platonist must believe in reincarnation.

people or texts, a theoretical description of Daoism. To those familiar with the transmitted texts of philosophical Daoism, none of these characterizations will be the slightest bit surprising.

Practice

But how does theory fit with practice? That is, how do these two earliest definitions of Daoism fit with the narrative of the earliest Daoist texts? Liu Xin is the first person we know of to create a library catalog with a section labeled “Daoist.” In it, he listed thirty-seven Daoist texts (*Hanshu* 1732). Unfortunately, twenty of them are lost. Six of the remaining seventeen are more or less fully extant, with all six available in English translations. Let us briefly review these six, before moving on to the eleven that survive only in fragments. I follow the order given by Liu Xin.

1. *Guanzi* 管子: W. Allyn Rickett, the foremost Western scholar of the *Guanzi*, said the text is a mix of Daoist, Correlativist, Huang-Lao, and Legalist writings authored from the fifth to first centuries BCE (Rickett 1985, 3, 37). The text is too long and varied to be amenable to a simple argument of why Liu Xin might have classified this text as Daoist; in fact, imperial catalogs since the *Sui shu* 隋書 (656 CE) classed it as Legalist. But the text does open with a line reminiscent of the “you should shift and move with the seasons” advice given above: “All those who possess territory and shepherd people must pay heed to the four seasons....” More importantly, it contains three seminal chapters on mental and physical self-cultivation: *Xinshu shang*, *xia* 心術上下 (Mental Techniques I, II) and *Neiye* 內業 (Inner Workings; see Roth 1999, 27).

2. *Laozi* 老子: The premier text of Daoism, and one of the greatest works in the “wisdom tradition” of world literature, the *Laozi* poetically discloses themes of mystery (*miaoxuan* 妙玄), introspection (*fanben* 反本), holding to the One (*bao yi* 抱一), naturalness and spontaneity (*ziran* 自然), ingenuousness (*wuwei* 無為), flexibility and humility (*rou* 柔 / *ruo shui* 若水), and contentment (*zhizu* 知足).

3. *Wenzi* 文子: According to Paul van Els, the original *Wenzi* was extensively altered sometime between the 3rd and 5th centuries CE (van Els awaiting publication).¹⁸ In its basic worldview the original *Wenzi* was

¹⁸ This argument was made possible by the 1973 excavation of a tomb in Dingzhou 定州 that contained fragments of what appear to be the original *Wenzi*.

similar to the *Laozi*, but was more amenable to traditional Ruist virtues and was more overtly aimed at a political ruler. The revised *Wenzi*, which is also the received *Wenzi*, presents an even more syncretic vision of Daoism and Huang-Lao thought, as it is heavily laced with revised passages from the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (dat. 139 BCE).

4. *Zhuangzi* 莊子: The other beloved classic of undergraduate classes on philosophical Daoism, the *Zhuangzi* is a celebration of vivacious anecdotes characterizing the Daoist sage. It illustrates leitmotifs of relativity (*xiangdui zhuyi* 相對主義), selflessness (*wuji* 無己), mind-fasting (*xinzhai* 心齋), and skillfulness (*shulian* 熟練).

5. *Liezi* 列子: A. C. Graham, who translated this work into English, was of the opinion that much of the received version of this text also dates to just after the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE). Its topics, by his reckoning, include the smallness of humans in a vast universe, a non-anthropomorphic Dao, the transience of life, the impossibility of knowing what comes after death, unending change, and the relativity of values (Graham 1960; 1990, 13).

6. *Heguanzi* 鶡冠子: Carine Defoort, in her analysis of its textual history, said that the text, although probably influenced by Huang-Lao thought, "fits remarkably well" with Sima Tan's description of Daoism (Defoort 1997, 39). Marnix Wells, a recent translator, said "It may be called 'Daoist' in an ecumenical sense, but it articulates political programs of universal resonance" (Wells 2013, 2). Outside of its chapters on government and warfare,¹⁹ it speaks of cosmology (with a clear articulation that everything derives from *qi*-substance: *mobu fa yu qi* 莫不發於氣), the role of spirits (*shen* 神), specific and unusual sage rulers like Cheng Jiu 成鳩,²⁰ five modes (*wu xing* 五行) theory, and the importance of one's situation/disposition (*qing* 情).

No surprises here, as all six of these texts fit comfortably within the framework sketched by Sima Tan. But what of the remaining eleven ti-

¹⁹ They belong to either or both *Pang Xuan* 龐煖 texts listed in the *Hanshu* catalog's "Diplomatic" (Zongheng 縱橫) or "Military Strategist" (Bingquan mou 兵權謀) sections (*Hanshu* 1739, 1757; Defoort 1997, 37). These chapters do promote some rather un-Daoist ideas, like prioritizing humans over heaven, and not following the seasons, because they are "hard to know" (*nanzhi* 難知).

²⁰ Taiyi 太一, interestingly, is considered a "sage ruler" by Defoort (1997, 120), but a "god" by Wells (2013, 156).

tles on Liu Xin's list? Two of them we can set aside at the outset; one due to its extreme brevity, the other to the fact that it was only recently excavated and a transcription has not yet been published.²¹ Thus, I will summarize my readings of nine fragmented Daoist texts.²²

1. *Yi Yin* 伊尹: There are six short sections of what remains of this text. While the first specifies which tribes should present which tributary gifts to Shang King Tang 湯王 (ca. 1550 BCE), the second describes from where the best cooking ingredients—ape lips, phoenix eggs, and the like—derive. The explicit point of the latter is that if one follows the Dao and becomes a true Heavenly Scion, then all of these foodstuffs will be forthcoming as tribute, the realm will be tranquil, and the ruler's dinner exquisite. The third section avers that for a ruler to follow the Dao, he must first practice physical self-cultivation (*zhishen* 治身). The fourth section is brief and describes the nine types of administrators that King Tang had.²³ The fifth chronicles how Yi Yin during a drought divided the fields and taught the people better farming methods. The last section is a brief, generic miscellany of stories about why a ruler should choose worthy ministers and how a ruler should heed omens. Only the first half of this text seems particularly Daoist.

2. *Yuzi* 鬻子: The *Yuzi* has a dozen or more sections, depending on how you divide them, plus a number of sayings culled from other texts, like the *Liezi*.²⁴ Except for the *Liezi* citations, it does not read like a specifically Daoist text, which may be due to the fact that Liu Xin listed both a Daoist *Yuzi* and a Miscellaneous *Sayings of Yuzi*, and those who have reconstructed the text have put them all together.²⁵ It counsels rulers to

²¹ The *Xinjia* 辛甲 is only a few sentences long. See Ma 2004, 2686. A *Zhouxun* 周訓 is part of the Beijing University Western Han bamboo strip collection, acquired in 2009, and is not yet published.

²² These reconstructions come from Ma (c.1885; 2004), except the *Yuzi*, *Guanyinzi*, and *Huangdi ming*. A “reconstructed” text is usually just a collection of quotations from other sources.

²³ Some scholars think that a text called “Yi Yin and the Nine [Types of] Rulers” (*Yi Yin jiuzhu* 伊尹九主) excavated in 1973 at Mawangdui is another version of this chapter. See Yates 1997, 38-39, 179-91.

²⁴ Much of what has been reconstituted of the *Yuzi* derives from the *Qun shu zhiyao* 群書治要 (631 CE), but there are several other sources besides this one.

²⁵ The *Sayings of Yuzi* (*Yuzi shuo* 鬻子說) is in the Miscellany (*Xiao shuo* 小說) section (*Hanshu* 1744).

appoint officials²⁶ that are liked and respected by the people, and that they should operate with a degree of transparency ("make plans along with the people": *yuren mouzhi* 與人謀之). It also notes that worthy officials are more important when the ruler is less than sagely and that rulers should emulate the good kings of antiquity. Actions speak louder than words, rulers should make use of the way (Dao), harmony (*he* 和), faithfulness (*xin* 信), and goodness (*ren* 仁), always listening to the complaints and suggestions of the people. All of this is rather standard fare for early Chinese scholars' texts (i.e., *zishu* 子書). One line says: "Only after heaven was there earth, only after earth were there discriminations, only after discriminations was there propriety, only after propriety was there teaching, only after teaching was there the way, only after the way was there principle, only after principle were there calculations" (Zhong 2010, 20). Placing the "way" after "propriety" and "teachings" does not seem particularly Daoist.²⁷ On the other hand, the four quotes of *Yuzi* in the *Liezi* are about constant change, flexibility, naturalness, and the bother of reputation.

3. *Guanyinzi* 關尹子: Livia Kohn said that the nine chapter version of the received *Guanyinzi* is substantially a later confection, influenced by inner alchemical thought, that "dates to Song [960-1279] times and probably goes back to [the Quanzhen patriarch] Yin Zhiping (1169-1251)," an alleged descendant of Gatekeeper Yin. (1997, 87). This leaves us with only a couple of quotes each from the *Zhuangzi* and the Syncretist *Lü shi chunqiu*, but they contain some philosophical gems. Yin Xi 尹喜 was said to value purity (*gui qing* 貴清) and he therefore advised us to keep the heavenly within us intact (*qi tian shou quan* 其天守全), and to unify our nature, cultivate our *qi*-substance, and harmonize our virtues (*yi qi xing, yang qi qi, he qi de* 壹其性，養其氣，合其德). But he also pragmatically asks us to examine the reasons for things (*cha qi suo yi* 察其所以), rather than merely examine their appearance.

4. *Gongzimou* 公子牟: This only offers praise for *Zhuangzi*, advice to value life (*zhongsheng* 重生), and the observation that office-holding will

²⁶ Here I translate both *li* 吏 and *shi* 士 as "officials".

²⁷ I typically write "Way" when I think the referent is a Daoist cosmic principle that comes before all else, and "way" when it seems to refer to human endeavors, for example, the right "way" to rule. This convention, of course, does not obtain in Chinese.

lead to power. This, in turn, may lead to wealth, which probably will lead to honor, arrogance, and causing offense, which may well result in one's death (*guan, shi, fu, gui, jiao, zui, si* 官, 勢, 富, 貴, 驕, 罪, 死).

5. *Tianzi* 田子: *Tian Pian* 田駢 was said to value equanimity (*jun* 均) and/or equilibrium (*qi* 齊). With typical Daoist optimism, he said, "Changes and correspondences all have (their own) principles: rely on inner nature and let things be, then everything will be as it should."

6. *Laolaizi* 老萊子: Sometimes this author is conflated with Laozi, but this text rails against Ruist pride and their penchant for praising the ancients, and is for humility, hesitance, flexibility, frugality, and not talking too much. In one anecdote, he acts like a child in order to amuse his aged parents.

7. *Qianlouzi* 黔婁子: In its current state, this is a very brief work. We have none of his actual words, just two descriptions of him and a certain Yuan Xian 原襄 refusing office to remain poor recluses.

8. *Huangdi ming* 黃帝銘: The *Huangdi ming* (Yellow Thearch's Inscription), was originally in five sections, of which it seems only one is now extant. This chapter is called *Jinren ming* 金人銘 (Bronze Statue Inscription), because it was supposedly inscribed on the back of a metal statue of a person with its mouth sealed shut three times. This statue was located at the base of some steps in an imperial shrine. The import of the inscription matches both the statue itself as well as some famous lines in the *Laozi*: it is not good to talk too much. Human speech is likened to fire and water; both are quite useful in small amounts, but when either gets out of hand, then disaster follows. It also advises humility and "holding to the female" (*zhi ci* 執雌), a metaphor for humility.

9. *Zhengzhangzhe* 鄭長者 (Elder of Zheng): This is now just a brief story from the *Hanfeizi*. In it, an elder from the state of Zheng advises the ruler to be tranquil, uncontrived, and not showy (*xujing, wuwei, er wuxian* 虛靜, 無為, 而無見), all clearly Daoist virtues.

These nine fragmented texts both add to the common corpus of early Daoist literature and reinforce the picture of Daoism bequeathed us by Sima Tan and Liu Xin. The *Guanyinzi* and *Zhengzhangzhe* both emphasize tranquility (*jing* 靜); the *Laolaizi* and *Huangdi ming* both advise against too much talking; and the *Tianzi* values equanimity (*jun* 均/*qi* 齊): all of these virtues are also found in the *Laozi*.

Perhaps the most interesting addition to the Daoist vocabulary comes from the *Guanyinzi*. Since it comes from *Zhuangzi* 19, it is nothing new to those familiar with the latter text, but I nevertheless think it bears repeating. He says, "Do not develop (only) the heavenly of being human, but develop the heavenly of Heaven (too). Developing the heavenly empowers life, while developing (only) the human harms life. Do not reject the heavenly, but do not neglect the human either—then people will draw near to what is true" (cf. Ziporyn 2009, 78). This means, do not rely solely on your conscious will to follow your natural destiny;²⁸ remember to also tap into your originally good nature in order to accord with its creative spontaneity. If you rely on your originally good nature, then true virtue will effortlessly arise within you, but if you rely only on your knowledge and will, then your life will be impoverished. Always keep a connection to your originally good nature, but also develop your knowledge and will: in this way, everyone will come closer to the ideal union of poetic inspiration and prosaic deliberation.

The phrase "develop the heavenly of Heaven" is striking and unique. Guo Xiang glosses this as "to know without deliberation" (*bulü erzhi* 不慮而知), which I take to mean being open to creative spontaneity. This is at the center of the Daoist critique of Ruism: it may be a good thing to specifically articulate the way of sages so that we may follow in their footsteps, to an extent. But it is also absolutely crucial that we allow ourselves to be open to wherever it is that inspiration comes from, to have the freedom to follow the unintentional, the extemporaneous, the unself-conscious. Since no one really knows where artistic inspiration comes from, we might as well use the metaphor of "Heaven."²⁹ Only then can we become sagely ourselves, and not mere imitators of other

²⁸ Destiny should not be confused with fate: destiny refers to individual potential while fate refers to unavoidable circumstance. You can fail your destiny through laziness or a failure of will, but you cannot "fail" your fate.

²⁹ The adjectival "heavenly" of both humans and Heaven refers to here to "what is best in," much as "spiritous" (*shen* 神) in early Chinese texts can sometimes mean "acute" or "in the early stages of" something. Daoist Heaven is not a supernatural entity, but rather the active half of the heaven-earth dyad of which the cosmos—from our vantage point—is composed. One might also translate "heaven" as "nature" if one has a positive view of the natural world: "develop the natural within Nature...."

people. After all, destiny and fate vary from person to person, so self-cultivation is necessarily a singular process.

Conclusion

The picture of Daoism painted above is, I think, relatively straightforward. Yet it has been attacked on three fronts. First, its historicity has been denied by scholars who, in my opinion, have a too-narrow definition of “school of thought.” My defense of it as a school (of thought), such as it is—since my argument rests solely on the perceived semantic range of the word “school”—I have already given above. A second problem arises from the fact that other terms related to Daoism came, over time, to accrue many other meanings, such as the Huang-Lao theory of government prevalent in the Han. A final problem comes from the religious (and scholars of religion), who often incorrectly construe early Daoism as simply an amorphous and inconsequential nonentity upon which later believers constructed their divine confabulations.

H. G. Creel describes how philosophical and religious Daoism might have been conflated in the first place: “The immortality cult needed the shelter of a respected philosophy. Taoism was highly respected in Han times, and many of the sayings attributed to Lao Tzu were so ambiguous that they could be interpreted to mean almost anything” (1970, 20). This may have been construed as inflammatory by some. Laurence Thompson problematizes Creel’s description of religious Daoism as simply “immortality” (*xian* 仙) Daoism, acknowledging the complex range of beliefs and rituals old and new, borrowed and indigenous. However, Thompson also repeats a sentiment that was becoming popular among Western scholars of religious Daoism. He notes: “When Creel opines that Taoist philosophy and Taoist religion are two different animals, he is using Western categories to reduce Chinese phenomena to intelligibility” (1993, 19). This is only half true: the categories of *daojia* and *daojiao* are Chinese categories, while the nomenclature of “philosophical Daoism” and “religious Daoism” are Western. Thompson subsequently asserts that *daojiao*/religious Daoism is really the same as *daojia*/philosophical Daoism, insofar as “Once we see that transcendence of death is logically transcendence of those unnatural obstacles that impede the operations of Tao, the apparently irreconcilable conflict between calm acceptance and techniques of avoidance is resolved” (1993,

21). Not quite. This is like claiming that eating a healthy diet is the same as cryogenically freezing yourself so that someday in the future, once science has figured out how to extend life quite beyond its normal limits, you can be thawed out to take advantage of the new techniques. Furthermore, the differences between philosophical and religious Daoism are far more numerous than mere longevity.

Many other Western scholars of Daoist religions have similarly tried to erase the obvious line between philosophical and religious Daoism.³⁰ Robinet (1997, 3) notes that "this division has no significance." Kirkland (1997, 73) says, "The concept of 'philosophical Taoism' is, to a large extent, a modern fiction...."³¹ Raz (2012, 7) insists that "the use of these terms creates a false dichotomy between two types of texts...." Komjathy (2013, 4) finds the division "wholly inaccurate and untenable."³² Inasmuch as I have never met a philosopher or sinologist, Chinese or Western, who would agree with this claim, this matter may well be a case, within Western academia, of "if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail."³³ That is, if one works in a Religion department, then "Daoism" is *daojiao*, but if one works in a Philosophy department, "Dao-

³⁰ Many, but certainly not all. For accounts that acknowledge the difference between philosophical and religious Daoism, see Bokenkamp 1997, 10-13, and Kohn 2000, xxix (though she prefers a six-stage classification scheme; see p. xxx). Elsewhere (Kohn 2009), she tries to elide the differences into a single narrative.

³¹ He also says that "most scholars who have seriously studied Taoism, both in Asia and the West, have finally abandoned the simplistic dichotomy of *tao-chia* and *tao-chiao*—'philosophical Taoism' and 'religious Taoism'" (2004, 2).

³² He further says that the claim of "two Daoisms"—that is, the referents of *daojia* and *daojiao*, in use for millennia and still current today among all Chinese speakers—are somehow "Victorian," "rooted in colonialist legacies," "endemic among non-specialist accounts of Daoism," and "should be taken *ipso facto* as inaccuracy" (2013, 4-5).

³³ Philosophers like Roger Ames, Hans-Georg Moeller, and Steve Coutinho routinely refer to the distinction between philosophical and religious Daoism. See Ames 1998, 1; Moeller 2006, ix; Coutinho 2014, 7. The latter says, "It is clear that the syncretist metapolitical movement to which Sima Tan belonged, *daojia*, and the religious institutions known as *daojiao* are significantly different."

ism" is *daojia*. This situation makes us look like we scholars of early China are talking past each other, which does a disservice to our students.³⁴

I presume the denial of the independent existence of philosophical Daoism came about due to anthropologists of religion coming to accept the biases of the people they study, with a resultant loss of "outsider" objectivity. A religious Daoist, ancient or modern, may well claim that philosophical Daoism was just a building block in the foundation of the complex group of edifices that make up religious Daoism. That is, they may claim that they *own* philosophical Daoism. But religions appropriate things all the time. Christianity and Islam both appropriate Judaism, and both see themselves as building upon the ("incomplete") foundation of Judaism. But that does not mean that Judaism was never an entity unto itself. Similarly, though philosophical Daoism does not have official spokespeople to come to its defense, it is simply incorrect to deny its very existence. I understand that religious Daoism has suffered ridicule at the hands of scholars who preferred philosophical Daoism to religious Daoism. I also understand that religious Daoism covers a variety of complex entities. It is also true that philosophical and religious Daoism share an interest in meditation (or at least mental concentration) and health—as do many traditions in the ancient world. However, these considerations are beside the point: the differences simply vastly outweigh the similarities. Religious Daoism has anthropomorphic gods, ordained priests, temples, liturgies, community rituals, talismans, ideas of sin, confession, forgiveness... in short, all of the things that make it religious. Philosophical Daoism has *none* of these.

I wrote this paper to bring focus to philosophical Daoism, which seems to be in danger of fading away in Western academia as a subject of inquiry. Most philosophy departments do not deal in non-Western philosophy and most Religion departments focus on religious Daoism. Some sinologists claim that since we have no evidence of a group of people, with a teacher-student lineage, who self-identified as "philosophical Daoists," we should not speak of a "Daoist school." I contend that early China had a great many scholars and authors (see Fischer

³⁴ Russell Kirkland says as much in his section of the "Introduction" to the *Daoism Handbook* (Kohn 2000, xv). Yet he too insists that the position taken in this paper is "of the deeply distorted Victorian/Confucian construct." I hope the evidence shows that my analysis is neither Victorian nor Confucian.

2008), some of whom were teachers with students. When people like Sima Tan and Liu Xin decided to organize and classify the texts these scholars and authors produced, they were justified in creating a (retrospective) Daoist school of thought based on ideological similarities. They coherently defined and gave thirty-seven textual exemplars of this entity.

I further think that the English phrase "school of thought" is a quite adequate and useful description of this group of authors, editors, texts, and transmitters, a school of thought that, while perhaps not officially organized, has persisted in China, East Asia, and the world and remains an intellectually interesting and aesthetically powerful philosophy.³⁵

Recently, some religious scholars have sought to delegitimize philosophical Daoism. But the salient facts remain. Despite the unfortunate matter of the singularity of the Western word "Daoism," there has always only ever been *daoia* and, later, *daoiao*(s).³⁶ Perhaps someday scholars will settle on translations for these terms that are more amenable to scholars of philosophy and religion alike. As I opined above, "early Daoism" and "classical Daoism" rely on a time scheme that assumes *daoia* died when *daoiao* was born, which is incorrect, inasmuch as even today one might refer to a painting or poem or political viewpoint as "Daoist," where the referent is decidedly philosophical Daoism and not religious Daoism. More importantly, the texts and traditions these two terms denote are far more different than they are the same. To be sure, Religious Daoists do make use of the philosophical Daoist texts, appro-

³⁵ One of the best places to encounter scholars interested in philosophical Daoism is in the pages of the Chinese journal *Daoia wenhua yanjiu* 道家文化研究, in print since 1992. This journal, which routinely employs the distinction between *daoia* and *daoiao*, recently had an issue (#22) devoted to philosophical Daoism and modern life (*daoia yu xiandai shenghuo* 道家與現代生活).

³⁶ These two terms have not always been used with perfect clarity and consistency in Chinese history, but their semantic parameters were generally apparent in early times and are perfectly clear in modern Chinese. Sivin 1978, 305 briefly discusses some of the problems that these terms caused across the intervening two millennia. Regarding my use of the word "later," Schipper says "During the same period of the Han [i.e., the same period as Sima Qian's use of *daoia*], we also find the name *Tao-chiao* [i.e., *daoiao*], 'Taoist teaching,' to refer to the Mysteries" (1993, 219n.16). He does not cite his source(s) for this claim, so I do not know what he is referring to. The "(s)" is to highlight the fact that there are at least a dozen kinds of religious Daoisms (not unlike other major religions).

priating parts of it for their own ends. But the textual metaphors often point to very different referents, much as Jews and Christians think very different things when they read about the “suffering servant.” Religious Daoism has several well-defined schools, multiple heavens inhabited by various pantheons of gods and goddesses (some of whom “resonate” with the bodily organs of their human adepts), revealed scriptures, secret rituals, alchemical potions, faith-healing, exorcisms, various and sundry magical abilities (which usually do not appear to be construed metaphorically), and hundreds of rules. Philosophical Daoism, again, has none of these.

Philosophical Daoism is a philosophy of remaining calm yet focused, of keeping an open and pure mind, of prizing humility, tranquility, equanimity, contentment, and silence. Most importantly, it is about acting with grace, flexibility, perseverance, and skillfulness in response to an ever-changing environment, and about harmonizing the yin and yang of the “heavenly” and the human, of integrating the mysterious spark of creativity with the hard work of rational analysis. This Daoism is often summarized as “the harmonization of the heavenly and the human into a unity” (*tian ren he yi* 天人合一). It is not a harmony of the human with the divine (as with religion) or of humans among themselves (as with humanisms such as Daoism’s sibling rival, Ruism), but rather of the human individual with the natural world, which remains, somehow, the matrix for uncontrived inspiration. This definition, this coherent and interesting worldview, provides philosophical Daoism the intellectual matrix within and behind the historical reality of its textual corpus.

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Ge Hong's *Xian*

Private Hermits and Public Alchemists

THOMAS MICHAEL

Abstract

This article addresses the position of Ge Hong (283-343) in early medieval Daoism by provoking a reconsideration of earlier forms of Chinese religion. The article argues that Ge Hong's greatest innovation was his bringing together two separate traditions of early Chinese religion, namely that of the *xian* (often translated as "immortal") that I identify with early Daoism, and that of alchemy that somehow was related to the *fangshi* movement. The article examines the historical trajectory of these two traditions as Ge Hong received them by exploring two of his major works, the *Baopuzi neipian* and the *Shenxian zhuan*, and examines the ways in which he relates these two early traditions to each other. He does this by portraying and describing two kinds of *xian*, which I call "private" and "public." The article shows that Ge Hong's accomplishment had a deep and lasting impact of the future traditions of medieval Daoism.

Ge Hong and (the Imagining of) History

Early China—from the Warring States through the Han—saw certain lineages, movements, and traditions in constant states of fluidity that were not self-announcing. They are, as a result, difficult to locate and designate. Current scholarship speaks of a *fangshi* 方士 (technique masters) tradition, but hardly anyone confidently designates anything in this early period that could sustain the label "Daoist," certainly not until the second century CE. Still, it is not impossible to speak of an early Daoist tradition. One way to pinpoint it more closely is to look at the writings—paintings, songs, or other materials used for making sense of the past—

of those who stand somewhere between us and those earliest, protean shapes from which traditions sometimes emerge.

Ge Hong 葛洪 (283- 343) is one such person. He left behind a stunning vision of a religious past that may or may not have been what he imagined it to be, but he did imagine that past to be very real and very important. One reason that he thought his imagined past was both real and important is because he drew a meaning from it that he thought deeply affected his future, and an endless future at that: longevity leading to immortality. Yet his imagined past was still constrained by the historical records he had at hand, including a wide-array of materials, from poems to myths to imperial documents and much else besides.

This article explores some of those materials, hoping to contribute to a better understanding of Ge Hong's achievements in bringing together two of those nearly indistinguishable shapes—early Daoism with its ideal of *yangsheng* 養生 (longevity)¹ and the *fangshi* with their often alchemical techniques (*fangji* 方技). Both involved rigorous regimes of cultivation, directed toward long life and immortality.² I intend to deal with these two modes separately in the contours of what is made available by a handful of the historical records, then examine how and why Ge Hong brought them together.³

¹ *Yangsheng* as a category marker indicates four separate practices of physical cultivation: *qi* circulation (*xingqi* 行氣), dietetics (*fushi* 服飯), sexual arts (*fangzhong shu* 房中術), and healing exercises (*daoyin* 導引). When the term *yangsheng* appears not as a category marker but as a term for a specific practice, it primarily refers to *qi* practices: *qi* circulation, *qi* cultivation (*qigong* 氣功), and "to spit out the old and take in the new [*qi*]" (*tugu naxin* 吐故納新).

² Many terms indicated alchemy, but *dan* 丹 is most common. It is also called *liandan* 鍊丹, *jindan* 金丹, *waidan* 外丹, and *huangbai* 黃白.

³ Ge Hong composed mainly two works that feature in this study, the *Baopuzi neipian* 把朴子內篇 ((Inner Chapters of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity; hereafter *Neipian* 內篇, cited as NP) and the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of Spirit Immortals; cited as SXZ). James Ware (1966) has published a complete but dated translation of the *Neipian*, to which I have taken limited recourse, preferring my own. The original edition is the *Baopuzi neipian jiaoshi* 把朴子內篇校釋.

The *Shenxian zhuan*, consisting of around one hundred separate biographies, is more complicated. The original transmission of the text was lost, and the biog-

Early Chinese *Xian*

Early Daoism appears first as a system of soteriological practices targeting the physical body that intends to bring it into union with Dao. The *Daode jing* 道德經 (Book of Dao and Its Virtue) calls figures at one with Dao *sheng-ren* 聖人 or “sages,” but by the time that Ge Hong adopted this tradition, the primary term for those at one with Dao was *xian*, reflecting a central notion of early Daoism post-dating the *Daode jing*.

The term *xian* in its verbal meanings centers around the act of ascending, while its nominal meanings refer to a divine being, a hermit living on a mountain, a human who has ascended, an immortal, or even an alchemist. Campany translates *xian* as “transcendent.”

This term is often translated as ‘immortal,’ but, strictly speaking, the texts promised neither a once-and-for-all immortality nor an escape from time and change into an eternal stasis, as can be seen from the fact that there were distinct degrees or levels of *xian*-hood. . . . In translating *xian* as ‘transcendent(s)’ when it denotes one or more transformed persons, as ‘transcendence’ when it names their exalted status, as ‘transcend’ when it names what they do. . . . I do not mean to suggest an absolute metaphysical difference between *xian* and lesser beings but rather to capture the essential fact about *xian* as portrayed in texts and images that they have ascended to links in the chain higher than those occupied by even the best human beings. (2002, 4-5)

Several hesitations arise when considering this translation and its rationale. First, Ge speaks of multiple varieties of *xian*, including those that ascend to the celestial bureaucracy as “heaven *xian*” (*tianxian* 天仙)

ographies have come down to us in separate versions with at times substantial differences among them. In 1796, Ma Junliang 馬俊良 compiled and printed He Yunzhong’s 何允中 1592 edition, reissued in the *Longwei mishu* 龍威秘書. The imperial encyclopedia *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書 marks another important effort to reconstitute as closely as possible the original tradition, and its collection relies on the version edited by Mao Jin 毛晉 (1599-1659). Robert Campany (2002) has produced and translated his own reconstitution (2002, 375-86). See Barrett 2003 for critical remarks. My base text is the *Longwei mishu* edition in conjunction with the *Siku quanshu*, but I also use Campany 2002.

and those who ascend into mountain reclusion as "earth *xian*" (*dixian* 地仙). "Transcendence" does not cover both types. Second, in the evolution of the term, it also denoted beings and actions earlier and other than "transcendence." Finally, the term "transcendence" or "transcendent" carries a heavy implication with Western metaphysics in spite of Campany's caveat. As Zhang Ji says,

The term 'transcendence' . . . promotes the motif of departure to a transcendental realm where a person has been transfigured into a divine being. . . . In Campany's 'transcendent' the motif of 'ascending' is similar to the biblical imagery of the transfiguration of Christ. . . . Although Campany accepts that there is no transcendence without the body in Daoism, this term still implies the departure of the 'dead' to an otherworldly eternity, just like the Christian saints in the eternal presence of God." (2012, 116)

I personally maintain the Chinese term *xian* (and Ge's compound *shenxian* 神仙) in its transliterated and untranslated form. This reflects also the comments of Timothy Barrett.

As for *shen* (that is, 'holy', 'numinous', 'daemonic', or what you will) *xian*, the topic of Ge's biographies, words evidently fail us in English, for Campany, while rejecting 'immortal', as favored by Penny and many others, in favor of 'transcendence,' as championed by some American scholars, cautions that even this does not mean what we think it does, and indeed Penny shows in another study that transcending, or going beyond, normal human expectations is a description much better applied to a different category of wise men altogether. (2003, 233-34)

There are three different characters for the term *xian*—the earliest form is 僊 (a "human" radical next to "go," "move"); the rarest form is 仝 (a human on top of a mountain); and the common form is 仙 (a human next to a mountain). The *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Annotated Character Dictionary), an early 2nd century dictionary, defines *xian* 僊 nominally as well as verbally as "[one who has] longevity and *xian* goes away," denoting an act of ascension, but whether to a mountain or to the sky is not clear (2006, 383). It also defines another closely associated term, *zhen* 眞, as "a *xianren* who has transformed his/ her body and ascended into the heavens" (2006, 384).

The earliest use of the term *xian* is found in the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Songs): when the guests have gotten drunk, then they “continuously dance and caper about [*xian xian*]” (Ode 220). Karlgren translates *xian* as “to caper about, dance” (1957, 72). Note the relation of this verbal usage of *xian* with intoxication, where *xian* most likely refers to the jumping up of their dancing, which is a form of ascension. The *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang), like *Shijing* 220, also uses the term as a compound; here, we find a sage in a conversation who suddenly says, “I dancingly, dancingly [*xian xian*] will get up and go back now” (ZZ 11, 390). The *Zhuangzi* uses the term in the sense of ascension, where we find another sage who says, “After a thousand years, when the sage tires of the world, he leaves it and ascends among the *xian*. He mounts the white clouds and goes to the place of the gods” (ZZ 12, 421).

Early Daoist discourse uses a complex of terms to describe physically and spiritually advanced beings, including *xian*, *shengren* (sage person or sage; this is *Daode jing*’s preferred term), *shenren* 神人 (spirit person), *zhiren* 至人 (arrived person, rarely used), and *zhenren* 真人 (authentic person; this is the *Zhuangzi*’s preferred term); over time, *xian* would become early Daoism’s preferred term. The *Zhuangzi* says, “The *zhiren* is without self, the *shenren* is without worldly merit, the *shengren* is without name” (ZZ 1, 17). It then describes a *shenren* whose skin is white like snow, whose manner is like a virgin, who does not eat grain (a sure mark of the *yangsheng* regime) but gets nourishment from dew, and who mounts dragons to course throughout the lands. When the *Liezi* 列子 later takes up this story, it will add that “the *xian* come to serve the *shenren*” (LZ 2, 45).

The *Zhuangzi*’s *shenren* share many hallmarks of the *xian*, including ascension and the avoidance of grains. Nonetheless, the text’s descriptions of the *zhenren* are most numerous, the most striking found in chapter 6, “The ancient *zhenren*... ascended heights without fear, entered water without drowning, and passed through fire without burning . . . The breathing of the *zhenren* comes from their heels” (ZZ 6, 228).

The *Chuci* 楚辭 (Songs of Chu), an anthology of verses initially compiled in the Warring States period, further develops the imagery of *xian*. In “Yuan You,” we read that the poet “honored the marvelous *de* 德 (vitality, power) of the *zhenren*, and coveted those of the past who had

ascended to *xian*" (CC 5, 164). Wang Yi 王逸, the great Han Dynasty commentator to the *Chuci*, comments on this line, "*Zhen* 真 is also written *zhi* 至, as in *zhiren*. . . *xian* 仙 is also written as *xian* 僊" (CC 5, 164).

The chapter "Shouzhi" also connects *zhenren* with *xianren*, "The *zhenren* roam and soar [in the sky]", and Wang Yi's gloss to this line is, "the *zhen* is a *xian*" (CC 17, 327). Finally, "Aishi Ming" identifies itself with early Daoism by giving a depiction of two of the tradition's most popular *xian*, Chi Song 赤松 and Wang Qiao 王喬, playing the zither when the poet, who is undertaking an otherworldly journey, says, "I thought of my long life and becoming a *xian*" (CC 11, 228-29).

This brief examination of the term *xian* shows that it falls under the umbrella of early Daoism. Some significant motifs associated with it are the longevity that comes as the consequence of a perfected and transformed body, the ability to ascend or soar to either mountainous regions or paradisiacal lands, and the rejection of normal foods for natural products like dew. Motifs that are not yet but soon will be associated with the *xian* are alchemy and immortality.⁴ This image of the *xian*, however, takes a dramatic turn with the historical appearance of Zou Yan and the *fangshi*.⁵

⁴ Left to itself, any tradition of early Daoism is already difficult to specify, but particularly when it coheres around hermits who lie outside of the mainstream of transmitted writings, when so much of our growing knowledge of the currents of early Chinese religions comes from texts excavated from tombs such as those from Baoshan, Zhangjiashan and Mawangdui. The presence of even shadier lineages and traditions (namely the *fangshi*) that existed for some time next to an early Daoist tradition and that had entirely separate origins from it, which then had some of its central components absorbed by early Daoism (and *vice-versa*), only serves to challenge our attempts to understand it even more.

⁵ The term *fangshi*, like the term *daoia* 道家, owes its importance to the *Shij*, which presents its earliest recorded textual instance. I leave *fangshi* untranslated for the same reason that I also leave *xian* untranslated. DeWoskin, who also leaves the phrase untranslated, writes, "The word '*fang*' in its various common contexts meant 'efficacious,' 'formulaic,' 'parallel,' 'correlative,' 'comparative,' 'medicinal,' 'spiritual,' or 'esoteric'" (1983, 1). When the term *fangshi* is translated, it is either as "recipe gentlemen" or "masters of esoterica." The former is Harper's preferred translation (1999, 818), and the latter is Campany's (2002, 6), which Raz opts to employ (2012, 41).

Early Chinese Alchemy

The early Chinese tradition of alchemy historically lingers next to the tradition of early Daoism, but they held their own places apart from each other in their earliest histories. Alchemy, however, did not play a major role in early Chinese religions until Ge Hong demonstrated its centrality in the quest for immortality.

Modern scholars all too often identify alchemy with the wider tradition of the *fangshi*. However, it was not only peripheral to the *fangshi*, but also historically later than traditionally supposed.⁶ As Pregadio points out, scholars who look to an early origin of Chinese alchemy often call upon ambiguous evidence. This includes its putative origins with Zou Yan⁷ and a questionable reference to it in an edict by Emperor Jing of the Han (r. 156- 141 BCE),⁸ *Shiji* 史記 (Record of the Historian) records depicting Anqi Sheng 安期生 (who has a biography in the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 [Immortal's Biographies]) and Li Shaojun 李少君 (who has a biography in the *Shenxian zhuan* which names Anqi as his teacher);⁹ as well as

⁶ This wholesale attribution is seen in the best modern Western studies of the *fangshi*, including those by Ngo (1976), DeWoskin (1983), and Robinet (1997); Zhang writes (erroneously, I contend), "Many *fangshi* were both alchemists and medical practitioners" (2012, 60). The different view that I take relies on the researches of Pregadio, "Although few *fangshi* were skilled in elixir compounding, later tradition credits some of them with the transmission of alchemical texts and practices" (2000, 166). He also notes that "DeWoskin, 'A Source Guide to the Lives and Techniques of Han and Six Dynasties *Fang-shih*,' does not record any reference to alchemy in approximately 250 biographies of *fangshi* found in about two dozen sources" (2006, 260-61). The origins and development of alchemy are not identifiable with the *fangshi*.

⁷ Pregadio says, "Although some scholars in the past have speculated on his role in the origins of *waidan*, Zou Yan's biography does not contain any allusion to alchemy, and no text on the elixirs has ever been attributed to him" (2006, 25).

⁸ Pregadio states that this edict refers not "to the practice of alchemy and does not mention the compounding of elixirs," but it does forbid "the counterfeiting of gold" (2006, 27-28).

⁹ The *Shiji* states that "Anqi Sheng occupied himself with the transmutation of cinnabar into gold" (28, 1385); that Anqi Sheng was a *xian* from the island of Penglai who spent three days with Qin Shi Huangdi and invited him to visit him there (28, 1385); and that Li Shaojun told Han Wudi "to transmute cinnabar into

a single reference in the *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論 (Discourse on Salt and Iron; ca. 60 BCE), representing the first textual mention of ingesting an alchemical elixir.¹⁰

Indications that alchemy was practiced around the court of Liu An 劉安 (the prince of Huainan and an uncle of Emperor Wu of the Han) appear a little more solid. Liu An famously convened a series of assemblies or symposiums of sorts from which, according to the records, were produced several collections of writings, the only one of which to have been transmitted was the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Book of the Master of Huainan).¹¹ When Liu An was executed in 122 BCE, Liu De, the father of Liu

gold and make that into a plate and a cup, and eating and drinking from them would prolong his life" (8, 1385). Note that this would not endow immortality, and also that the product of the alchemical work is not itself ingested.

¹⁰ The *Yantie lun* claims to record a series of court debates from 81 BCE. The section of it in which the ingestion of an elixir is mentioned itself is said to have occurred during the time of Qin Shi Huangdi, "The *fangshi* (from Yan and Qi) . . . asserted that the immortals had eaten of gold and drunk of pearl; after this had been done, their lives would last as long as heaven and earth" (Sivin 1968, 26, also quoted by Pregadio 2006, 31). Sivin continues, "Though no one would seriously maintain that this embellishment of a twice-told tale yields sound information about the First Emperor's time, the idea of immortality drugs prepared by alchemical means clearly existed early in the first century" (1968, 26). Note that Campamy uses this phrase, "to live as long as Heaven and Earth," for the title of his translation of the *Shenxian zhuan*.

¹¹ Roth names nine other collections in addition to the *Huainanzi* that are associated with Liu An, including the *Huainan neipian* 淮南內篇 (Inner Chapters), *Zhongpian* 中篇 (Middle Chapters), and *Waipian* 外篇 (Outer Chapters). The *Zhongpian* was also known as the *Zhenzhong hongbaoyuan bishu* 枕中鴻寶苑祕書 (Secret Pillow Book of Extracts from the Vast and Precious) that "was devoted to esoteric alchemical techniques for the transmutation of gold, the prolongation of life, and the attainment of immortality" (1992, 23-24). Le Blanc quotes Ban Gu (who compiled the *Hanshu*), "[The *Zhongpian*] discusses the techniques of the immortals and of the 'yellow and white' and contains more than two hundred thousand words" (1985, 42). Le Blanc explains that this rather substantial collection was transmitted for a time before parts of it "gradually became detached from the main corpus and circulated as distinct units under new titles... these titles were *Hongbao*, *Yuanbi*, and *Wanbi*... In some cases they were preceded or followed by the term *Zhenzhong* (Confidential Pillow [Case])" (1985, 44).

Xiang, confiscated Liu An's entire library, which he passed on to his son. Liu Xiang (credited with compiling the *Liexian zhuan*) is said to have performed some of the alchemical procedures presented in the *Zhongpian* 中篇, but was not successful.¹²

Although I am unable to clarify the absolute origins of early Chinese alchemy (and I do not even have an idea of how that task could be pursued given the records at hand), I would suggest that there are three discernible lines of alchemical transmission visible to our gaze, where by "transmission" I mean both texts and oral teachings. The first two lines seem to have not borne fruit, due to the non-transmission of texts (to Li Shoujun) or the non-transmission of the requisite oral instructions (to Liu An). The third line, however, is entirely different, and Ge's writings provide the more or less complete story, which begins with Zuo Ci 左慈.

In his *Shenxian zhuan* biography, we read about Zuo Ci's initial encounter with alchemy, "During his meditations on Mount Tianzhu, he obtained the *Jiudan jing* 九丹經 (Scripture of Nine Elixirs) and the *Jinye jing* 金液經 (Scripture of Gold Liquor) from inside a cave; these were methods from the *Taiqing dan jing* 太清丹經 (Scripture of the Grand Purity)" (SXZ 5, 6a).¹³ Finding these writings in a cave is a mark of their di-

¹² The story of how Liu An composed the *Zhongpian* is (somewhat indirectly) given in his *Shenxian zhuan* biography (SXZ 4, 1a-5a); the story of how Liu Xiang came into possession of it, as well as his failure with its methods (due to the absence of a master who could give him the requisite oral instructions) was familiar to Ge Hong, as were the texts themselves, "The accounts of the compounding of gold are all in the *shenxian* writings; the King of Huainan [Liu An] transcribed them in the composition of the *Huangbao zhenzhong shu*. Although these texts exist, each of them has kept secret their essential teachings, and the oral teachings are absolutely necessary" (*Neipian* 2, 21).

¹³ Zhang states that the *Jiudan jing* is also known as the *Jiuding dan jing* 九鼎丹經 (Scripture on Nine Tripods Elixirs); the *Jinye jing* is also known as the *Jinye dan jing* 金液丹經 (Scripture on the Golden Liquor Elixir); and the *Taiqing jing* is also known as the *Taiqing dan jing* (Scripture on the Grand Purity Elixir); he writes, "Historically these three texts formed the major corpus of the early tradition. According to Chen Guofu's canonical study, the three volumes of *Grand Purity* are lost. One volume of *Nine Tripods* and one volume of *Golden Liquor* still exist" (2012, 240); Pregadio has a similar set of findings on these three scriptures

vine provenance, and this is as close as we can get to their origins.¹⁴ A passage from the *Neipian* clarifies this, "Formerly, while Zuo Yuanfang [Zuo Ci] was in meditation on Mount Tianzhu, a *shenren* presented him with the *xian* scriptures on golden elixirs" (NP 4, 71).

Because of the military unrest in the region at the time, Zuo relocated to a different mountain in the south of China that will turn out to be a certain Mount Tong where, we can surmise, he successfully compounded the elixir, because from then on in his biography he demonstrates marvelous abilities, such as bodily transformation.

Ge Hong's great uncle, Ge Xuan 葛玄, has a biography in the *Shenxian zhuan* which states that he "received from Zuo Yuanfang the *Jiudan jing* and the *Jinye jing*" (SXZ 7, 7b), while the *Neipian* says that, in addition to these texts, he also received the *Taiqing jing* (NP 4, 71). From that point on in his biography, Ge Xuan also begins to exhibit the same marvelous abilities as Zuo Ci, so we can surmise that he too successfully compounded the elixir.

As an adolescent, Ge Hong studied under Zheng Yin 鄭隱 for five years. Zheng Yin has no biography, but in the *Neipian*, Ge Hong writes, "My own teacher, Lord Zheng (Yin) was the student of my ancestor, Lord Xian (Ge Xuan), and he received [these scriptures] from him" (NP 4, 71). Ge further writes, "Formerly, I personally received the *Jiudan [jing]* and the *Jinyinye jing* from Sire Zheng. Lord Zheng said that once when he was with Lord Zuo (Ci) on Mount Tong in Lüjiang, he tried [the recipes] and they had all proven successful" (NP 16, 283), and this is where he certainly met and spent time with Ge Xuan. Ge Hong continues, "I personally served him [Zheng Yin] for a very long time sprinkling and

(2000, 173), and Zhang provides a study of the contents of the surviving two volumes (2012, 240-54).

¹⁴ Pregadio writes, "The alchemical doctrines and practices are deemed not to have their origin in the human world; instead, they enter the world through a divine revelation, or through the transcription of scriptures originally kept in heaven" (2006, 35). Zhang writes, "Most alchemical texts claim divine authorship, and it is believed that the cosmic creator Yuan Jun revealed the *Grand Purity* text... But such a style of claiming divine authorship is a common practice in Daoism. The claim is soteriological. One can attain immortality through alchemical means" (2012, 248).

sweeping [the floor]. Then I erected an altar on Mount Maji where I swore an oath and received [the scriptures], together with the oral instructions which may not be written down" (NP 4, 71).

In the course of events, Zheng Yin toward the end of his life went into reclusion on Mount Huo to compound the elixir, and Ge Hong, long after in the last years of his life, went into Mount Luofu to do the same, and both of them, we are sure, took with them their alchemical scriptures. To explore the value of these specific scriptures for the later history of Daoism would take me too far afield, but Pregadio (2000, 167) writes, "References in later texts show that these three scriptures mentioned above formed the nucleus of the main alchemical corpus of early China."

This, then, is the third line of early alchemy, the only early Chinese line to have been kept alive, and this is entirely due to Ge Hong; Zhang writes, "One of Ge Hong's greatest achievements was to make the secret tradition public. He was the first alchemist to publish the sacred texts" (2012, 242). My claim about Ge Hong's greatest achievement is slightly bolder, he coupled alchemy to the *yangsheng* practices of early Daoism identified with the *xian* and thereby radically transformed the *xian* ideal by incorporating alchemy into the systems of Daoist practice; Ge writes, "Originally, these texts were not known in Dongjiang. They came from Zuo Yuanfang. Yuanfang then presented them to my great uncle, and he presented them to Lord Zheng, who presented them to me. Therefore, other Daoists know nothing about them" (NP 4, 71).

Let me repeat this for emphasis. "Other Daoists know nothing of them." This sentence dramatically marks Ge Hong's creative genius as a religious writer, because it paves the way for his bringing together two entirely different systems of practice: *yangsheng* with its promise of longevity, and alchemy with its promise of immortality. He brought these systems together under the aegis of a shared classification, i.e., *shenxian*. His classification, however, still reveals a distinct difference in the two different kinds of *xian*, long-lived *dixian* ("earth *xian*") who specialize in *yangsheng* and immortal *tianxian* ("heaven *xian*") who specialize in alchemy.¹⁵ Ge provides an initial indication of how these systems work together:

¹⁵ Below *tianxian* and *dixian* (who together make up the category of *shenxian*), Ge places two other types of figures, but a detailed study of these latter

Someone asked, 'The recipes [*fang*] and methods [*shu*] are extremely numerous, and it is difficult to completely prepare all of them. Aside from alchemy, which of all the remaining ones that can be cultivated are the best?' Baopuzi [Ge] replied, 'If you have not yet mastered the great recipes and methods of highest value [alchemy], then you must be thoroughly familiar with the lesser ones [*yangsheng*]. (NP 6, 124)

Private and Public *Xian*

According to the *xian* scriptures, the highest practitioners who elevate their bodies and ascend into the void are called *tianxian*. The middle practitioners who roam throughout the famous mountains are called *dixian*. The lowest practitioners who first die before sloughing off their bodies are called *shijiexian*." (NP 2, 20)

This typology appears in the *Neipian*, and, although Ge Hong does not explicitly apply it in the biographies of the *Shenxian zhuan* (they are depictive biographies rather than explanatory essays of the kind that fill the pages of the *Neipian*), the division remains decisive for his total understanding of the *xian*. *Tianxian*, accordingly, ascend to take their place in the celestial bureaucracy, while *dixian* remain in this world. Also note that Ge does not himself take credit for the typology, instead attributing it to the "*xian* scriptures" 仙經 (*xianjing*), which he does not directly name. I assume that they are in the line of what Harper has called "*fang*-literature" (1998, 52), as well as the *shenxian* writings listed under the fourth category of *fangji* writings in the "Yiwenzhi" bibliography.

is outside of the scope of this piece. The first is *shijiexian* 尸解仙 (translated by Campamy as "escape-by-means-of-a-corpse-simulacrum transcendent"); *shijiexian* are identical to *tianxian* in virtually every aspect, the only difference between them is their method of attaining final immortality: *tianxian* do so directly with their body, while *shijiexian* do so by simulating their body into a corpse; I treat both as *tianxian*. Note below that Ge places *shijiexian* beneath both *tianxian* (properly speaking) and *dixian*. The notion of *shijie* plays a central role in Daoism; see Cedzich (2001). The second type is *dixia zhu* 地下主 (translated by Campamy as "Agent beneath the Earth"); this figure does not achieve immortality, but they are granted powers of healing by the *xian* due to their merit. Campamy discusses each of these titles in more detail (2002, 75-80).

Both *tianxian* and *dixian* achieve longevity, but only *tianxian* go on to achieve immortality. They ascend to heaven and assume a position in the heavenly bureaucracy, while *dixian* either refuse that ascension or are unable to achieve it. There are various reasons as to why *dixian* remain on earth. One is that, because their attainment is lower than *tianxian* (as every *xian* who discusses this in the *Shenxian zhuan* testifies), they are unable to ascend. Another reason is that they deliberately chose to remain on earth in order to be free of the duties and responsibilities that go with any bureaucratic position.

Few scholars have attempted to provide an interpretation of the differences between *tianxian* and *dixian*, but two studies stand out. In the first, Lai concludes that Ge regarded *dixian* more highly than *tianxian* because of a new found value of freedom from bureaucratic structures.

I shall focus my study on the self-consciousness and interpretative positions deployed in his discourse and how they are recursively developed to resolve Ge Hong's struggle to change his own destiny and to create a new perfect self-identity as an "Earth Immortal" [*dixian*] for himself. In short, I shall show that the internal dynamics of his conception of "earth immortals" precipitates his discourse of *xian*-immortality, the dynamics of which . . . he employed to configure and represent his own ideal identity to himself and others. (1998, 192)

In the second, Campamy concludes that Ge regarded *tianxian* more highly precisely because they mastered bureaucratic structures.

The final ascent to heaven that caps many [of the biographies] amounts to a promotion to celestial office. . . . In Ge Hong's pages, then, celestial transcendents [*tianxian*] escaped the underworld bureaus of death only to join purer, more exalted bureaus on high; they eluded one administration to join another. It was apparently for this reason that some transcendents are on record as having preferred to remain here below rather than ascend to the bureaus above. . . . Earthbound transcendents [*dixian*] were the recluses of the celestial appointment system. Ge Hong, however, ranked this option beneath that of celestial transcendence. (2005, 213-14)

My reading is different from both Lai and Campamy. As far as I can see, *dixian* specialize in *yangsheng*, the hallmark of early Daoism, and *tianxian* specialize in alchemy. In both the *Neipian* and the *Shenxian zhuan*,

Ge Hong provides methodical articulations of how these two systems ideally function together, bringing them into relation by designating the ideal figure of each by the same single title, *xian* (and sometimes *shenxian*). Whereas I speak of Ge Hong's greatest achievement as merging the tradition of *yangsheng* and the tradition of alchemy as separate components of the total vision of the *xian*, Zhang speaks of this in a slightly different way.

Ge Hong's religious philosophy is a converging point of three different intellectual streams. First, from the early philosophical stream derived from Laozi and Zhuangzi, Ge Hong inherited cosmogony as the general worldview. . . . The second stream was fed by many traditions related to the belief of attainable physical immortality. Ge Hong systematized the belief by inserting ethics into the collective hope for health, longevity, and immortality. . . . The third stream derived from a medical and alchemical tradition passed down to Ge Hong through his family lineage. (2012, xxv)

Note that in Zhang's "three streams" (early Daoism, longevity and immortality, and alchemy), I find that longevity is identified with early Daoism, and immortality is identified with alchemy; thus I find only two "streams," not three.

What unites *dixian* who practice *yangsheng* and *tianxian* who first practice *yangsheng* before graduating to alchemy, is that both share a commitment, not primarily to *yangsheng* or alchemy, but to the more general goal of longevity (the stated goal of *yangsheng*). It is precisely because of this commitment that both types of *xian* are called Daoist, and this is the key to the puzzle of their shared designation as *xian*; Ge succinctly puts it like this, "The greatest virtue of Heaven and Earth is giving birth; to give birth is to love beings. Therefore, of all the things that Daoists (*daojia*) value in utmost secrecy, nothing surpasses the recipes for attaining longevity" (NP 14, 252).

Ge Hong systematically depicts *dixian* as living in reclusion where they pursue *yangsheng* to achieve their ultimate goal, longevity; I label them "private hermits." He systematically depicts *tianxian* as pursuing alchemy to achieve their ultimate goal, immortality, represented by their ascension to the celestial bureaucracy; I label them "public alchemists." My labels for each are in keeping with my division between "private

Daoists" and "public *fangji*," because these indeed are the two traditions that Ge Hong masterfully brought together in a grand synthesis.¹⁶

There is, however, another category of *xian* that I impute to the *Neipian* and the *Shenxian zhuan*, namely the householder *xian*, referring to those *xian* who maintain their householder status without becoming full-time hermits, but who also do not take up alchemy. This type of *xian* is best represented by Peng Zu, and Harper has an intuition of this where he writes that his teachings are "directed to an elite, male audience; and it encompasses various activities that promote a healthy, enjoyable, and long life" (1998, 110-11).

This is an important category, because private *xian* are notoriously silent, whereas householder *xian* like Peng Zu are used by Ge Hong (as well as, for example, the writers of the Mawangdui manuscript *Shiwen* [Ten Questions] and the Zhangjiashan text *Yinshu* [Stretch Book]) to bridge the gap between the silence of the hermits and the public advertisements of the *fangji*. Peng Zu gives voice to the *yangsheng* teachings of private Daoism; without such householder *xian*, we would have scant representation of *yangsheng* before and around their adoption by the elites of early China once those practices received some degree of publicity (due, among other factors, to the circulation of *Daode jing* once it went public around 250 BCE).¹⁷

¹⁶ Many scholars have recognized Ge's efforts to synthesize earlier systems of practice, and their assessments of the value and coherency of his endeavor are extremely varied. Kirkland writes, "Daoist writers firmly believed that one can transcend 'the human condition' if one can only learn the subtle secrets and practice them diligently enough. The most famous of all such writers was Ge Hong, whose incoherent ramblings on 'inner studies' and alchemy were long falsely imagined to constitute the core of 'religious Daoism'" (1998). Lai on the other side notes, "Given the scope and complexity in systematizing, rationalizing, and recreating the ancient Chinese religious traditions of the nourishing of life and the cult of *xian*-immortality, Ge Hong's *Baopuzi* is undoubtedly a classic of the religion" (1998, 191).

¹⁷ On the topic of the silence of hermits, DeWoskin states, "Contact with immortals carried with it the possibility of acquiring secret formulas or, even better, the elixirs or herbs of immortality themselves. By virtue of the fact that immortality is demonstrable only by something not happening, the biographies in this group are the least specific in their narration of actual events. There are

I recognize both *dixian* and householder *xian* as private, and *tianxian* and *shijiexian* as public, and their distinguishing differences are readily seen. Private *xian* practice *yangsheng* exclusively; they only very rarely are seen in the public sphere; they only very rarely engage in dialogue; and their healings rely on non-compounded products from the natural world. Public *xian* also invariably practice *yangsheng* during their initial careers as Daoists, but at some point they graduate to alchemy; they invariably are highly educated and extremely literate; they hold political position, accept patronage by elites, or enjoy both position and patronage; and their healings rely on compounded products and talismans (often for exorcisms).

The defining difference between private *xian* and public *xian*, however, can be restated in terms of their ultimate goals: private *xian* aspire to longevity, while public *xian* aspire to immortality. The issue of longevity versus immortality has vexed scholars for a long time, ever since the phrase from *Daode jing* 59, "Long life and lasting vision," was first attended to by modern scholars. Is the *Daode jing* talking about longevity or immortality, or something else altogether? It is my contention that *Daode jing*, together with the other texts of early Daoism (primarily the *Neiye* and the *Zhuangzi*, but also the Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan texts, themselves next to but not part of early Daoism), only have longevity in mind; notions of immortality only emerge with the development of the alchemical tradition.

Harper clearly recognizes the differences between longevity and immortality; referring to the Mawangdui and Zhongjiashan texts as well as the "*Neiye*," the *Zhuangzi*, and *Daode jing*, he writes that "the texts' goal of long life is not identical to the *xian*-cult of immortality and transcendence" (1998, 114).

claims about subjects, what they ate, how youthful they looked and how aged they really were, and what remarkable powers over nature they had achieved. The immortal is characteristically eremitic, and he emerges into public view only in the rarest of circumstances. The historians not only had little of written record to convey, but they had little by way of praise to extend to this group" (1983, 18), and this is in fact the greatest difficulty in speaking about the hiddenness of early Daoism.

Note that he often uses the phrase “*xian*-cult of immortality,” but this exactly is the problem. As I have argued above, the term *xian* has multiple significations, including longevity *and* immortality, but all too often scholars conflate the *xian*, the *fangshi*, and immortality, as if they signified one and the same thing. Immortality, in the end, is the exclusive prerogative of alchemy, not the *xian* (at least not before Ge Hong). Ge Hong is explicit that certain *xian* achieve longevity (*dixian*), and other *xian* achieve immortality (*tianxian*). This in itself is a major reason why I do not translate *xian*, and I particularly hesitate to translate it as “transcendent.”¹⁸

I only very recently encountered the work of Zhang, who is the only other scholar that I am aware of to speak of the distinction between longevity and immortality in ways similar to mine. Discussing the *shenxian* (which he unfortunately translates as “immortal beings”), he writes:

There is a distinction in Ge Hong’s writings between immortality and longevity. The former is unlimited existence, whereas the latter is a natural process. Long-lived people can still die, just as a long-lived turtle or a thousand-year-old pine tree can still perish. Even though longevity could turn into immortality, it is a lower form of existence. Longevity can be managed by cultivating natural life (*yangsheng*), whereas immortality can only be attained through alchemy. But longevity is a necessary step toward immortality that no one can bypass. (2012, 106)¹⁹

¹⁸ Cedzich also conflates *xian* and immortality; she writes that “*xian*-ship or immortality had by that time [referring to the *Zhuangzi*] become a goal humans reached for, and however we are inclined to understand Zhuangzi’s particular objectives, the vast majority of Chinese sources, especially later Daoist texts, suggest that immortality was not just a matter of an individual’s mind, spirit, or soul transcending the mortal body, even if practitioners had to face the prospect of physical death. To the extent that continued existence of the individual self was what immortality seekers strove for, that self was inextricably bound to the individual body. For this reason, I prefer the conventional translations ‘immortal’ or ‘immortality’ to the terms ‘transcendent’ or ‘transcendence’ for the Chinese term *xian*” (2001, 3-4). I would reiterate, once again, that the term *xian* is not a one-way street to immortality, but it also and especially includes longevity.

¹⁹ Zhang continues, “They are not equal, but overlapping. Longevity still has a limited end conditioned by death. Immortality is the extension of longevity with no definite ending. The central difference between the two rests in the trans-

The uniquely characteristic point of identity between private and public *xian* is their shared achievement of longevity. Having achieved it, public *xian* go on to attain immortality. Ge writes, "I heard my late teacher say that some *xian* ascend to heaven and others remain on earth. What matters is that they all have achieved longevity; where they go to live depends on their personal preferences" (NP 3, 52).

Longevity and/or Immortality

It is finally time to examine the ways in which Ge Hong brings together the systems of *yangsheng* and alchemy, and it starts with the most famous householder *xian*, Peng Zu, and his *yangsheng* practice.

As a youth he roamed everywhere, occasionally returning home. No one knew where he went, and those who tried to observe him could never see him. . . . Sometimes he would be away for several hundred days at a stretch, and sometimes for several weeks, and he never took any provisions with him. . . . He would often shut off his *qi* and breathe internally. From sunrise to noon he would sit rigidly, rub his eyes, and knead his body and limbs, while licking his lips, swallowing his saliva, and ingesting *qi* several dozen times. Only then would he rise, move about, and converse. If there was any illness, fatigue, or discomfort in his body, he would practice healing exercises and shut off his *qi* so as to attack what was troubling him. He would fix his heart by turns on each part of his body: his face and head, his nine orifices and five viscera, his four limbs, even his hair. He would cause his heart to abide in each location, and he would feel his *qi* circulate throughout his body, starting at his nose and mouth and reaching down to the tips of his ten fingers. (SXZ 1, 7b-8a; Campany 2002, 174-75)

formation of the original body. Immortals have turned the body inside out by preserving life permanently within, whereas long-lived humans have not changed the natural process of aging during which the bond of the body and inborn *qi* is increasingly loosened... For Ge Hong, longevity is the best that humans can achieve within a normal course of life. It can be managed by medicine. Ge Hong's medical approach includes physical exercise, dietary regulation, emotional self-care, sexual arts, controlled release of reproductive energy, and prevention of illness. Immortality, however, can only be obtained through alchemical means" (2012, 128). This is exactly my own reading of Ge Hong.

In Peng Zu's *yangsheng*, the body itself is the sole object of attention, and the practices are based on *qi* circulation which, through cultivation, becomes more and more powerful in its internal movements. To provide a clearer understanding of these *yangsheng* practices, in three places the *Neipian* provides a more or less systematic explanation of them. In each, it is not hard to recognize the priority given to practices involving the circulation of *qi*, but there are two (or three in one passage) further components of *yangsheng* that Ge discusses and systematizes. The first is dietetics and the second is the sexual arts, while in a separate passage he names healing exercises as a third.

Although ingesting medicines is the root of longevity, if a person at the same time also is able to circulate *qi*, then the beneficial results will be experienced even more rapidly. If a person is unable to obtain medicines, but circulates *qi* thoroughly according to the principles, that person will obtain several hundred additional years; a person must, however, also know the sexual arts for that to happen. If a person does not know the methods of *yin* and *yang*, but consistently labors at it and depletes oneself, then it will be extremely difficult to have the energy for *qi* circulation. (NP 5, 114)

Here, then, the separate practices that make up the system of *yangsheng* are comprised of the practice of a special dietetics, *qi* circulation, and the sexual arts. The following passage from the *Neipian* underscores all of these practices:

For anybody who practices *yangsheng*, you must desire to have extensive knowledge of it and learn to embody the essentials; experience it deeply and be good at selecting. Being partial to the cultivation of only one aspect of it is insufficient and unreliable, and being overly fond of only one aspect also poses a danger to those students who only depend on those aspects of it for which they have an aptitude. Those who know the methods of Xuan [nū] and Su [nū]²⁰ claim that only the sexual arts can enable a person to go beyond the world. Those who only understand "the way of spitting out and taking in [*qi*]" claim that only *qi* circulation can enable a person to ex-

²⁰ Xuannü and Sunü are the two most popular female instructors in the history of Chinese sexual arts; they famously were (separately) Huangdi's teachers; see van Gulik (2003, 74-75, *passim*). Wile has provided the most thorough study of these two figures (1992).

tend the years of their life. Those who know "the rules of bending and stretching" claim that only healing exercises can enable a person to retard old age. Those who know medicinal recipes claim that only the ingestion of medicines can enable a person to be without exhaustion. If someone studies Dao without success, it is entirely due to such partialities. (NP 6, 124)

In this passage, Ge Hong criticizes those who follow the system of *yangsheng* but who only do so partially; for him, the achievement of longevity requires mastery of all its aspects. The fullest exposition of this system of *yangsheng* is articulated most clearly in the following; also note his comment about the need to find a qualified master.

If a person desires to become a *shenxian*, all that is needed is the acquisition of the ultimate essentials. The ultimate essentials consist in treasuring *jing* [preserving sperm], circulating *qi*, and ingesting the one great medicine [read as "the elixir"]; this is sufficient, there is no need to complicate things. However, these three practices can be carried out either profoundly or shallowly. Nothing is more imperative than encountering an enlightened teacher. If a person does not commit to diligent and assiduous practice, then there will be no possibility for any immediate and thorough realization. Although we speak of *qi* circulation, there are numerous rules for it; although we talk about the sexual arts, there are over a hundred recipes and rules for the separate activities involved in it. Although we discuss the ingestion of medicines, their recipes number over a thousand. (NP 8, 149)

In the immediately following passages of the *Neipian*, Ge provides a detailed exposition of *qi* circulation and the sexual arts, but he does not then go on to provide one on dietetics. He also sharply differentiates this total system of *yangsheng* from the total system of alchemical practices that he extolls and places above *yangsheng* in his discussions and depictions of the public *xian*. These separate attainments are given a rough presentation in the hagiography of Liu Gen:

As for *xiandao* 仙道: there are those who ascend into the heavens and stride among the clouds; there are those who roam among the Five Mounts; there are those who by means of a special diet do not die; and there are those who become *xian* via escape by means of a simulated corpse. (SXZ 3, 4b; Campney 2002, 244)

Liu Gen here names four separate attainments. Although immortality by immediate ascension and immortality by a simulated corpse might appear to be strikingly different at first glance, they both lead to essentially the same end, ascension into heaven, the special prerogative of public *xian*. As well, to roam among the mountains and to maintain a special diet (consisting of such things as raw roots and raw herbs), are consistently conjoined and mark an earthly freedom, the prerogative of private *xian*. In other words, public *xian* typically ascend to heaven, and private *xian* typically live on mountains.

An intriguing element of the *Shenxian zhuan* is the absence of any dramatic tension between private and public *xian*; there is not a single instance in which one encounters the other face to face. Their seemingly harmonious placement together under a single labeling term, *shenxian*, however awkward or painful this forced veneer of identity may have been either then or now, appears seamless, and this as well is a distinguishing feature of Ge Hong's writings. What tension there is between them is only discernible at those points where they consciously and deliberately explain the various paths to longevity and immortality. In these explanations, there are clear differences between *yangsheng* and alchemy, but no exclusivity. *Yangsheng* is recognized as a preliminary requirement for alchemy, but there are those *xian* who do not adopt alchemy, remaining firmly with their *yangsheng* practices.

This again raises the question explored by Lai and Campamy of whether private *xian* deliberately eschew alchemical immortality in order to remain on the earth because of the freedom that offers, or whether they remain on earth because they are unable to follow through with the demands required by alchemical immortality. In general, the *Shenxian zhuan* makes it clear that immortality is a substantially higher achievement compared to longevity, but then there are episodes in which private *xian* justify their attainment of longevity as if it lacks for nothing more; the two most telling passages depicting this latter option both involve Peng Zu. The first is from the *Neipian*, the second appears in the biography of Baishi Xiansheng:

Peng Zu said that in the heavens above there are many honored officials and great divinities [*shen*] and that newly arrived ones hold low ranks and their assignments are without limit, and that this is even more toilsome and

bitter. Therefore it is not worth it to so eagerly strive to ascend into the heavens. So he remained in the human realm for more than eight hundred years. (NP 3, 52)

Peng Zu asked him, "Why do you not ingest medicines that would enable you to ascend into the heavens?" Baishi Xiansheng replied, "Can one amuse oneself on high in the heavens more than in the human realm? I wish only to avoid growing old and dying. In the heavens above there are many venerable ones to be honored and to serve them there would be harder than to remain in the human realm." (SXZ 2, 1b; Campany 2002, 294)

Despite these and other rare passages, Ge Hong continues to value immortality over longevity, but at least he does give voice to private private *xian* such as Baishi Xiansheng from time to time.

Although we never see private and public *xian* face to face, Ge Hong finds ways to situate *yangsheng* in relation to alchemy, and when he does, alchemy is systematically, even forcefully, set forth as the higher of the two. The clearest examples of how he accomplishes this in the *Shenxian zhuan* are found separately in the biographies of Peng Zu, a householder *xian* who speaks for private *xian*, and Liu Gen, a public *xian*. Peng Zu says,

If one wants to elevate one's form, ascend to heaven, and get promoted to the office of a *xian*, one must employ gold and cinnabar [alchemy]. . . . This *dao* is the greatest of all; it is not something that lords and kings are capable of practicing.

Next there is the method whereby one loves and nourishes one's *jing* [vital essence] and *shen* [spirit] and ingests medicinal herbs. By these means, one may obtain longevity, but they do not permit one to dispatch ghosts and spirits or ride through the void or travel by flying. (SXZ 1, 8a- 8b; Campany 2002, 175-76)

Peng Zu sharply distinguishes alchemy and *yangsheng*, and he clearly grades the former above the latter. Next to this is Liu Gen, who describes the relation between alchemy and *yangsheng* in the following:

Of all the methods of cultivating *xiandao*, the most essential consists of ingesting medicines. But of these there are higher and lower types, just as among the *xian* there are distinct grades. . . . Among the highest type of

medicines are Nine-cycled Reverted Elixir and Grand Monad Gold Liquor. Whoever takes these will ascend at once to heaven without needing to wait days or months. Next there are cloud-mother, male yellow, and their ilk. Although with them one will not immediately mount the clouds or harness a dragon, one may still command and summon ghosts and spirits, perform transformations, and achieve longevity.

Next are the herbal and vegetal medicines. They permit one to cure illnesses, "supplement the void," "fix one's appearance," abstain from grains, and benefit one's *qi*, but they cannot cause a person not to die. The best of them will allow one to live for several hundred years; the lowest of them will only permit a person to live out his allotted years and may not be relied upon for long. (SXZ 3, 4b-5a; Campany 2002, 244-45)

Liu Gen makes a double separation. First, alchemy with its compounded and transmuted chemical medicines is differentiated from *yangsheng* with its organic herbal and vegetal medicines. Second, he differentiates a higher and lower form of each of those. Both Peng Zu and Liu Gen claim that it is only by way of alchemical medicines, otherwise known as elixirs, that one can achieve celestial ascension (immortality), whereas *yangsheng* can only provide longevity. In addition, those who practice alchemy can "command and summon ghosts and spirits," but those who practice *yangsheng* cannot, a point with which Peng Zu is in full agreement, and this point too is another decisive distinction between private and public *xian*.

Peng Zu further claims that *yangsheng* can endow longevity; Liu Gen, on the other hand, is more adamant in claiming that *yangsheng* cannot endow immortality. While we should not be surprised that Liu Gen grades alchemy over *yangsheng*, we should be surprised to hear Peng Zu grade *yangsheng* inferior to alchemy. It needs to be kept in mind, however, that Ge Hong is using both of these figures as his own mouthpiece, and his bias that sets alchemy over *yangsheng* as holding the higher position is absolutely solid here. Possibly Ge's most telling statement about private *xian* in relation to the celestial ascension of the public *xian* is seen in this passage from the *Neipian*:

Simply put, those who pursue longevity treasure the objects right in front of them. They are fundamentally not eager to ascend into the void, and flying and soaring is not better to them than remaining on the earth. If they

are fortunate and can stay at home without dying, what reason would they have to quickly pursue ascension into heaven? If becoming a *xian* means that they can no longer remain in the human realm, then this is a different thing altogether. According to what Peng Zu said, this is only echoing the human natural reaction. (NP 3, 53)

This passage suggests that Ge Hong did not disdain the longevity of the private *xian*, he only believed that they had not yet come to the full realization of the higher value of the immortality and celestial ascension of the public *xian*. Further, he describes several private *xian* who, having enjoyed their earthbound freedom for centuries, do come to this realization later in their careers. They thereby commit themselves to undertaking the alchemical procedures for making the elixir, finally giving themselves to immortality. Examples of such *xian* in the *Neipian* are An Qi, Lord Ning of Longmei, Lord Xiu Yang, and Yin Changsheng, all of whom remained as private *xian* on the earth "for a thousand years; only then did they leave it" (NP 3, 53).

Another aspect to the relation between *yangsheng* and alchemy not brought out in these passages is the sequential progression from one to the other, but only as applied to public *xian*. In other words, private *xian* study, master, and remain with *yangsheng*; public *xian* study it but do not master it to the same degree. They only achieve some extension of their lifespan to provide the extra years needed for their pursuit of immortality. They eventually put it aside to study and master alchemy.

Almost every public *xian* demonstrates at least some familiarity with *yangsheng*, but not a single private *xian* demonstrates any familiarity with alchemy. There are good reasons for this. Public *xian* begin their career as private *xian*, i.e., they study *yangsheng* before dedicating themselves to alchemy. This point is brought home by Liu Gen as he recounts what he was told by a *shenren* named Han Zhong.

You must have the bones of a *xian*; that is why you were able to see me. But at present your marrow is not full, your blood is not warm, your *qi* is slight, your brains are weak, your sinews are slack, and your flesh is damp. That is why, when you ingest medicines and circulate *qi*, you do not obtain their benefits. If you wish to achieve immortality, you must first cure your illnesses; only after twelve years have passed can you ingest the *xian* drug. . . . One who is ignorant of the sexual arts, circulating *qi*, healing exercises, and

divine minerals, cannot achieve immortality. (SXZ 3, 4b; Campany 2002, 243-44)

This presents a powerful justification as to why *yangsheng* must precede alchemy in the career of the public *xian*: without purifying the physical body through *yangsheng*, it will never be able to absorb the powerful effects of the alchemical elixir. Each of the exercises enumerated by Liu Gen (sexual arts, circulating *qi*, healing exercises, and dietetics) falls squarely into the rubric of *yangsheng*, and directly reflects the total regime of Peng Zu. The *Shenxian zhuan* systematically maintains that public *xian* have taken the next step, from *yangsheng* to alchemy, whereas private *xian* never take up alchemy, remaining instead with *yangsheng*.

In the *Neipian*, Ge Hong also adamantly claims that *yangsheng* practices can endow longevity, but only alchemical practices can endow immortality. Immortality is the more valued goal on the scale of perfection and it is undertaken only after one has mastered *yangsheng*, because *yangsheng* can provide for a longer life with which to devote to the time consuming pursuit of the elixir (although, as we have seen, private *xian* sometimes consciously choose not to progress to alchemy); Ge writes,

Somebody asked, "In the world, there are people who ingest medicines, circulate their *qi*, and undertake healing exercises, but they are unable to avoid death; why is this?"

Baopuzi answered, "Those who do not obtain golden cinnabar [the alchemical elixir] but who only ingest medicines and cultivate the lesser arts [*yangsheng*] can only extend their years or delay death. They do not become *xian*." (NP 13, 243)

Ge also writes,

The *xian* scriptures state that although a person ingests medicines and thereby obtains several hundred years of additional life, if they are ignorant of the divine elixir then they will be unable to become a *xian*. Speaking from this basis, we realize that medicines can only prolong a person's years, but they are not medicines for immortality. Not yet having compounded the elixir, they can be ingested only in order that a person may maintain oneself [until the elixir has been successfully compounded]." (NP 11, 208)

Concluding Thoughts

In this piece, I have pursued and explored three relatively contentious claims about early and medieval Chinese religions. First, that there was an early tradition of Daoism that was not primarily oriented to philosophical debate, but to a specific type of physical cultivation, called *yangsheng*; I characterize this tradition as private. Second, that there was an early Chinese tradition of alchemy, but it was not the original property of the *fangshi* tradition, given that its earliest origins are as protean as early Daoism. Third, that Ge Hong brought these two separate traditions (early Daoism and early Chinese alchemy) together through his own innovative genius, in a sense bringing both to completion. He accomplished this by situating them next to each other, in which the first (early Daoism directed to longevity) could have an independent autonomy all to itself, but also by placing the second (alchemy directed to immortality) on top of the first while at the same time making the longevity of the first a prerequisite for the immortality of the second.

This brings me to the end of this article, but not to the end of further study of Ge Hong, his work, and his tremendous achievements both in terms of his making sense of earlier forms of Chinese religiosity and his impact on later forms of it. Much remains to explore in the study of this brilliant and fascinating writer and practitioner. I hope to have opened new avenues to be taken in approaching his formidable body of work, and also to have shed some new light on that most mysterious of religious traditions known as early Daoism.

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Changing Views on Sexuality in Early and Medieval China

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Abstract

The discourse on sexuality underwent tremendous transformations in early and medieval China. While early imagery and terminology of sexual intercourse reflect a naturalistic attitude toward sexuality, writings from the Han dynasty and the division periods largely reflected the Daoist perception of body, gender, and sex. Such domination gradually gave way to a diverse discourse on sexuality in the Tang, largely due to Buddhist influence and the rise of the examination culture. Tang discourse on sexuality, with its emphasis on sensuality, pleasure, and spiritual bliss, shaped ideals of femininity, masculinity, and intercourse.

Sexuality in pre-modern China has been much studied in history, religion, and literature. Scholars have variously pointed out that sex and sexuality served as fundamental building blocks of early Chinese philosophical thinking. Early imagery and terminology of sexual intercourse in the *Shijing* 詩經 (Book of Songs), *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (Mr. Zuo's Commentaries), and early philosophical writings provide an important source for the exploration of early Chinese perceptions of social and political relationships (see, e.g., Goldin 2002). While these texts do not necessarily discuss gender ideology or the perception of sexuality, they nevertheless reflect an openness and matter-of-fact attitude about sexuality.¹

¹ Douglas Wile, for example, observed that "Chinese sexual theoreticians had the audacity to believe that any metaphysics worth its salt should be valid in the bedroom, and one senses that much of Chinese metaphysics itself was actually inspired by the mundane physics of sex" (1992, 11).

The earliest extant texts specifically addressing sexuality date mostly from the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE); their discourse mixed Daoist thought with medical knowledge (Harper 1987). In addition, post-Han writings on bedchamber arts, while continuing the longevity tradition, reflect pronounced Daoist concepts of uniting yin and yang through intercourse.² The Tang perception of sexuality has been widely studied, and scholars tend to agree that the period displayed an unprecedented openness toward sexuality and erotic culture (Levy 1962; Shi 1999; Du 2002; Yao 2013).

The aim of this study is to explore how the knowledge and perception of sexuality changed in the early and medieval periods, and what factors contributed to these changes under the augury of Michel Foucault's concept of discourse (1977; 2003a; 2003b).³

Sexuality in Early Medieval China

The Han dynasty witnessed a substantial increase in writings about sexuality. The most important Han texts on sexuality are undoubtedly the *Mawangdui yishu* 馬王堆醫書 (Mawangdui Medical Manuscripts), fifteen medical texts discovered in the tomb at Mawangdui. Among them, the *Shiwen* 十問 (Ten Questions), *Tianxia zhidao tan* 天下至道談 (Discourse on the Culminant Way under Heaven), and *He yinyang* 合陰陽 (Conjoining Yin and Yang) speak explicitly about the bedchamber arts.⁴ Along with rituals relevant to sexuality, they presented the earliest documentation of sexual culture in ancient China.⁵

² For an overview of the Daoist concept of uniting yin and yang through intercourse and sexuality in Daoism in post-Han literature, see Despeux 1990.

³ This paper does not attempt to provide a critical analysis of how such discourse acted as medium, through which power relations produced speaking subjects, nor does it look at its role in legitimizing power and excluding the underprivileged.

⁴ For studies of the *Mawangdui yishu*, see Harper 1987. The article presents the first published philological study of a Chinese sexology text in English. Later, Donald Harper published a more comprehensive study on these texts (1998).

⁵ Xiao Jianyi (2003), for example, points out that quite a few phallus-shaped objects, made of bronze or animal bones, have been excavated from Han tombs. Xiao attributed such popularity to Han emperors' patronage of Daoism, as the

The *Mawangdui yishu* combine cosmological concepts with medical knowledge: some texts stress sexual intercourse as resembling the union of yin and yang, while others discuss its benefits for physical well-being. Perceptions of gender and sexuality as seen in these texts are two-fold. On the one hand, they emphasize the importance of pleasure in the female during intercourse and recommend that all human beings have a healthy balance of yin-*qi* and yang-*qi*, achieved through intercourse. On the other hand, they clearly address men. For the sex act to have any medical value, the male had to make sure that the female reached orgasm and emitted her yin-*qi*. This is probably the main reason why there are so few instances in ancient Chinese literature of homoeroticism (Goldin 2002, 6-7).

Post-Han discourse on sexuality is distinctly more Daoist (see Schipper 1994; Lin 2001; and Yan 2007). Many legendary Daoists were associated with sexual cultivation and even specific schools, e.g., Rongchengzi 容子成 and Pengzu 彭祖, both known for their longevity (Zhu 2002). The popularity of their teaching made the Daoist art of the bedchamber a widespread practice among nobles during the period (Zhu 2001).

Among writings on sexuality, the most influential traditional texts were the *Sunü jing* 素女經 (Classic of the Plain Woman),⁶ *Yufang bijue* 玉房秘訣 (Secret Instructions of the Jade Bedchamber) (see Goldin 2006),

objects were all dated before the rule of Emperor Wu (r. 140-87 BCE), who made Confucianism the state orthodoxy.

⁶ For a study of the *Sunü jing*, see Gulik 2003, 121-25. In addition, Harper stresses the similarity between *Sunü jing* and the *Shiwen* (1987, 547n16). The text was lost after the Tang, but kept in Japanese medieval medical anthology, *Is-himpō* 醫心方, along with, among others, *Dongxuanzi* 洞玄子 (Secret Instructions of the Jade Bedchamber and Master Dongxuan). For a translation of the *Ishimpō*, with introduction and annotations, see Hsia et. al. 1986. The text reemerged in China in 1914 when Ye Dehui 葉德輝 (1864-1927) included it in his *Shuangmeijing'an congshu* 雙梅景闇叢書 (1914). For a study of Ye Dehui and his effort in publishing "lost books," see Shen 2012. Some scholars have dated the *Sunü jing* to the Han dynasty. See Zhu 2004; 2000, 49. Zhou Yimou 周貽謀, however, suggests that the earliest version of the *Sunüjing* appeared in the Warring States Period (475-221 BCE), continued to evolve, and was finalized during the Wei-Jin period (220-420) (Zhou 2005, 34).

and *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Scripture of the Yellow Court).⁷ A more ritual text is the *Shangqing huangshu guodu yi* 上清黃書過度儀 (Liturgy of Passage of the Yellow Writ of Highest Clarity), which dates to the fourth or fifth centuries (see Robinet 1984; Raz 2008).

They tend toward a Daoist perspective. Some scholars argue that, because Daoism considers attaining yin-qi crucial for reaching thisworldly immortality, and since sexual intercourse constitutes a prominent technique to reach this goal, early literature on the art of the bedchamber appeared to promote sexual vampirism (Goldin 2006). Others cite texts such as the *Shangqing huangshu guodu yi* as evidence that women were essential and "functioned as equal partners" (Despeux and Kohn, 2003, 14-15). The text stipulates that sexual intercourse formed part of a Daoist initiation ritual, known as "the harmonization of qi" (*heqi* 合氣). It involved the combination of male (yellow) and female (red) sexual energy to realize the harmony of the universe (Yan 2001; Raz 2008). Overall, however, the theory of yin and yang was clearly the basis of sexual practitioners, and most importantly, the intellectual and religious interpretation of sexuality during the division era.⁸

Still, Daoism was not the only voice in discourse on sexuality in the early middle ages. Scholars have suggested that Buddhist monks were reportedly quite popular in teaching women of eminent families the art of sex. *Weishu* 魏書 (History of the Wei), for example, claims that the famous monk and translator of the *Da niepan jing* 大涅槃經 (*Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*), Dharmarakṣa (Tanwuchan 曇無讖, 384-433)

⁷ According to Harper, this text is also called *Huangting waijing yujing* 黃庭外景玉經 (Outer Scripture of the Yellow Court). Composed around the second or third century, it was the oldest scripture to discuss sexual cultivation in Daoism. Its "inner" counterpart, the *Huangting neijing yujing* 黃庭內景玉經, was composed within the Shangqing school around the fourth to fifth centuries (1987, 541n4). For a study of the outer scripture, see Schipper 1994, 130-59.

⁸ Wile further points out that in terms of intellectual orientation, the Ma-wangdui manuscripts and householder manuals represented pre-Tang thinkers' search for a theory of sexuality, whereas the sexual alchemists, as seen in the *Guodu yi*, were metaphysicians in search of a practice. However, all were interested in changing the material conditions of life, and both continually generated theory to account for their experience and project new possibilities (Wile 1992, 10-11).

taught “the art of intercourse between man and woman” (*nannü jiaojie zhishu* 男女交接之術) to young wives of eminent families.⁹ In addition, early Buddhist sutras provided Chinese laymen with a spiritual foundation for defining gender relations and sexual fulfillment. For example, the *Fo shuo Shijialuoyue liufang lijing* 佛說尸迦羅越六方禮經 (*Srgalavada sutra*), supposedly translated by An Shigao 安世高 (mid-second century), singles out the satisfying husband-wife relationship as one of the ethical cornerstones of a blessed family. The text was so popular it underwent three other translations from the fourth to the fifth centuries in south China. It is yet another example that Buddhism served as a source of wisdom for householders, and especially for sexual life between husband and wife (Lo, forthcoming).

More importantly, rather than competing with Daoists and Buddhists, Confucians during that period seemed happy to embrace their guidelines. Van Gulik speculates that their endorsement was because the traditions’ interpretation of sexuality “answered a real need” within the Confucian tradition, since patriarchs depended on their advice to manage their inner chambers with multiple concubines (2003, 109). Indeed, the importance of the continuation of the family line propelled Confucians to become strong supporters of sexual guidance, and their approval certainly contributed to the rise of sexology in pre-Tang China (see Wang 2004).

Early texts on the art of the bedchamber, whether intended for spiritual development or physical wellbeing, all reflect a rational rather than romantic perspective. Separately, though, literature of love and longing for feminine beauty, mostly expressed in poetry, prospered during this period, and added a new voice to the discourse. Many poems in the *Yutai xinyong* 玉臺新詠 (New Songs From a Jade Terrace), a collection of 769 poems from the Han to the mid-sixth century (Xu 1985; Birrell 1982), for example, express intense desire for physically reaching the “fine lady” (*jiaren* 佳人), who always resides on the other side of the river (*zai shui yi fang* 在水一方). In addition to conventional terms for describing female features, such as beautiful eyes (*meimu* 美目), white teeth (*haochi*

⁹ See “Juqi mengxun zhuan” 沮渠蒙遜傳 (Biography of Juqu mengxun), in Wei Shou’s *Weishu* (Beijing, 1974), 99. Some scholars have doubted the accuracy of this account; Yan Shanzhao, however, suggests it was accurate (2007, 368-69).

皓齒), red lips (*zhuchun* 朱唇), and jade-like fingers (*yuzhi* 玉指), the poems stress the delight of the female body, indicated by her fragrant dress (*xunyi* 薰衣) and slender waist (*xianyao* 纖腰). Several poems in the collection might imply sexual encounters, but descriptions are rather indirect and metaphorical. The poem, "Huanwen ge yi" 歡聞歌一 (Song of Joyful Sound: One), by Xiao Yan 蕭衍 (464-549), i.e., Emperor Wu (r. 502-549) of the Liang dynasty (502-557), for example, has often been interpreted as describing a lovemaking scene. It says,

Sleek, sleek girl in a golden house, 艷艷金樓女
 Her heart like a jade pool lotus. 心如玉池蓮
 With what to repay her lover's favor? 持底報郎恩
 A promise to roam with him in the Buddhist paradise. 俱期遊梵天
 (Birrell 1982, 285)

This poem seems to use several insinuations to describe a sexual affair. The "jade pool lotus" (*yuchi lian* 玉池蓮) is often an analogy for the female sex organ, while "roaming in Buddhist paradise" (*you fantian* 游梵天) might imply reaching buddhahood, or Great Bliss, through sexual intercourse (see Fu 2003).

Xiao Yan's poem points to the complexity in perception of sexuality in medieval China. They actively combine Daoist longevity teachings, the traditional cosmology of yin and yang as well as Buddhist ideas, court literature, and Confucian perspectives.

Changing Dynamics in Tang Discourse

Discourse on sexuality underwent an extensive transformation during the Tang dynasty, reflecting dynamics in the religious landscape as well as the particular composition of the ruling class.

The change in the religious backdrop had to do with the broad impact of Buddhism on Tang society. To be sure, Daoist knowledge of sexology thrived throughout the dynasty; nevertheless, it did not experience the same vigorous development as earlier. The most important Tang text of Daoist sexology, *Dongxuanzi* 洞玄子 (Master Dongxuan), for example, largely reiterates earlier tenets of Daoist texts on the bedchamber arts, continuing to advocate the sexual cultivation of "returning the essence to

replenish the brain" (*huanjing bunao* 還精補腦).¹⁰ Furthermore, its various descriptions and names of intercourse positions or formations in are similar to those in the *He yinyang* and *Sunü jing*.¹¹ The text also stresses that sexual union should "follow the laws of the heavens and the earth and understand the mechanism of guiding yin and yang" (*fa tianxiang digui yang juyin* 法天象地，規陽矩陰) (Xia et al. 1986, 156).

Another important Tang text on the art of the bedchamber, "Fangnei buyi" 房內補益 (Benefits within the Chamber), written by the Daoist medicine theorist Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682), appears in Sun's *Qianjin yaofang* 千金要方 (Important Recipes Worth One Thousand Gold Pieces) (see Gulik 2003, 93-197; Wile 1992, 114-19). It focuses on techniques of returning the essence to replenish the brain and outlines the benefits of following the laws of yin and yang; it also attaches great importance to instructing men over the age of forty and the techniques to prolong life. Scholars have accordingly suggested that Tang texts on bedchamber arts did not go beyond the sexology of Mawangdui times, except to expand the medical components.¹²

The popularity of Buddhism in general and the introduction of Vajrayana Buddhism in particular probably added the most important new dimensions to the Tang ideal of body, gender, and sexual intercourse. Vajrayana is tantric Buddhism, in Chinese *mizong* 密宗, originally a development of esoteric practice.¹³ While most Mahayana schools ad-

¹⁰ The *Dongxuanzi* is preserved in *Ishimpō*. For study of the text, see Zhou Yimou 2005. Scholars have debated whether the technique of "returning the essence to replenish the brain" meant returning semen (*jing* 精) or returning the vaporous form of sexually generated *jing*. For a discussion of the technique and the debate, see Harper 1998, 137-40. Harper, in opposing Joseph Needham's argument, was convinced that *jing* here meant the latter, most scholars, however, have sided with Needham.

¹¹ For translations of intercourse methods and formations in *Dongxuanzi*, as well as *He yinyang*, and *Sunü jing*, see Hsia et. al. 1986, 177-85. For a comparison of the postures in these works, see Umekawa 2005, 265-68.

¹² For a comparison of writings of the art of the bedchamber between the Tang texts and the Mawangdui texts, see Shi et. al., 1999, 35-55.

¹³ In India, esoteric Buddhism developed earlier than tantric Buddhism and stressed the secret teaching of reaching buddhahood within one's present body.

vocate refraining from indulgence in desires, sexuality was nevertheless central to the Buddhist teaching. As Bernard Faure points out, discourse on sexual desire formed a key component in Buddhist hermeneutics of desire, and salvation or awakening has always to do with sex, whether sexuality is denied, affirmed, or displaced (1998, 15-47).

Early Buddhism required celibacy and continence as an absolute necessity because of the fear that sexuality binds human beings to existence. Classic Yoga, on the other hand, prescribed it so disciples could discard perturbations of self-mastery and find increased energy through renunciation. Tantric Buddhists, however, used sexuality as a source of spiritual energy, drawing the ultimate consequence from the cardinal Mahayana tenet that passion and awakening are identical at the level of ultimate truth. "But it even goes further when it asserts that the energy of the passions is the necessary catalyst of awakening" (Faure 1998, 48).

Faure suggests that by emphasizing the identity of passion and awakening, tantric Buddhism developed the notion of "wisdom as bliss" and asserted the possibility of reaching buddhahood in the present body. Tantric texts commonly pair wisdom with meditation or passion in sexual allegories as in, for example, the male and female sex organs (see Cabézon 1992). Perfect spiritual union attains in the union of a male and female practitioner: "The Great Bliss (*mahāsukha*) that ensues coincides with the realization of emptiness" (Faure 1998, 50).

Closely reading the texts, David Gray further points out that as tantric Buddhism developed, the "secret" of awakening increasingly centered on the practice of sex. Thus, one of the most important tantric texts on the practice of highest attainment, the *Shengle lunjing* 勝樂輪經 (*Cakrasamvara tantra*) begins: "And now I will explain the secret, concisely, not extensively. Union with Sri Heruka is the means of achieving all desired aims."¹⁴ The sutra discloses that the secret is none other than bodily sexual practices (Gray 2005).

Tantric Buddhism embraced the esoteric teaching and passed on its "secret" through texts, which are increasingly on sex. See Gray 2005.

¹⁴ For a complete translation and discussion of the *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, see Gray 2007. For a Chinese translation based on an early Tibetan version of the text, see Li 2005.

During the seventh century, although tantric Buddhism in India became more systematic and increasingly emphasized philosophical contemplation, its original fervor remained and found its way into China along the Silk Road. It officially reached the Tang court during the eighth century (see Zhou 1944).¹⁵ By the ninth century, it had penetrated all sectors of Tang society. Its emphasis on the body as a means of reaching buddhahood profoundly affected Tang representations and perceptions of sexuality.¹⁶

This may also have contributed to the rise of erotica and romantic (*yanqing* 艷情) literature as part of the changing perception of sexuality in Tang China. However, most scholars see it connected to the influence of Daoist bedchamber arts. Some argue that Tang literati writing sensual and romantic poems were familiar with bedchamber literature (Zhang 2008). Others point out that Tang erotica, such as the *Tiandi yinyang jiaohuan dale fu* 天地陰陽交歡大樂賦 (Poetic Essay on Great Bliss of the Sexual Union of Heaven and Earth and Yin and Yang) by Bai Xingjian 白行簡 (776-826), used similar terms as those in bedchamber literature. Its terminology and syntax, as Donald Harper has shown, echo the *Shijing*, *Yijing*, *He yinyang*, and *Dongxuanzi* (1987, 580). In addition, it directly borrows Daoist terms of sexology (Umekawa 2005, 259-68).

¹⁵ Some scholars insist that it received Daoist influence on the way, e.g., Shi 2003. Thus, van Gulik, in his chapter on “Indian and Chinese Sexual Mysticism,” for example, argues that “it may be stated that ancient Chinese Taoist sexual mysticism, having stimulated the rise of Vajrayana in India, was thereafter re-imported into China in its Indianized version at two different times at least” (2003, 256).

¹⁶ Xia speculates that Tang erotica was influenced by tantric ideas and practices of sexual power (2008, 292). Tang Shang attributes the open attitude toward sexuality in the Tang dynasty to both Daoism and tantric Buddhism (2006). On the other hand, some scholars argue that the idea of sexual intercourse as a means to reaching Great Bliss was introduced to China much earlier. See Matsunaga 1977; Lü 1995. The *Lenjia jing* 楞伽經 (Lankavatara Sutra) translated by Monk Bodhiruci (Chinese name: Putiliuzhi 菩提流支) of the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534), for example, states that “intercourse between a man and a woman produces everything, and this is called Nirvana” (*Nannü hehe sheng yiqie wu ming niepan* 男女和合生一切物，名涅槃). See *Dazangjing* 大藏經 (T.32.157c).

That is to say, while Daoist sexology undoubtedly played an important role in how Tang society perceived sexuality, Buddhist influence clearly transformed its writings. Even the term "great bliss" in Bai's poem is essentially tantric, as is the idea of deifying sexual pleasure. In addition, the text was discovered among manuscripts in Dunhuang, in the most concentrated extant collection of tantric texts.

The Rise of the Literati Class

The extensive tradition of Daoist sexology, the introduction of Buddhism, and the development of romantic poems all set the stage for the transormation of discourse on sexuality during the Tang. It reached its completion when Tang literati rose to dominance in the dynasty's power structure. As van Gulik points out, pre-Tang writings on sex usually served a didactic purpose and for the most part had no intention of amusing the reader (2003, 202). Even though Six Dynasties poems presented detailed depictions of women's physical features, they did not aim at arousing the sexual desire of their readers. The Tang dynasty thus represents a departure point in the history of the bedchamber arts and marks the beginning of an erotica culture (Liu and Hu 2007, 301).¹⁷ During the Tang, writings about sexuality, especially erotic and romantic ones, were much more candid in pursuing sexual pleasure and focused more on sensuality, intuition, and emotional fulfillment.

This development had to do with the rise of the examination culture. The late Tang after the An Lushan rebellion (755-763) was a period of transition when the dynasty's political capacity and economic prosperity underwent massive decline. As the preeminent clans and leading aristocrats lost power, the government increasingly relied on civil service examinations to recruit high-ranking officials, and graduates became increasingly influential in the power structure (Ebrey 1978; Johnson 1977;

¹⁷ Even though erotic works in the Ming and Qing (such as the *Jinping mei* 金瓶梅) quite possibly were the product of prominent literati, they appeared anonymously. Scholars have correctly observed that writings on sex first explored basic human need, then became romantic and elegant during the Tang. From the Song to the Qing, however, love and desire became separate, and writings changed from elegant to vogueish (Liu 2000).

Pulleyblank 1965; Twitchett 1973). The majority of these graduates still came from eminent families, but many also rose from lower social levels. They also greatly contributed to the Tang dynasty becoming the golden age of Chinese literature.

As attending the civil service examinations in the capital of Chang'an became the lifelong ambition of officials-to-be, many came to live there, often in the Chongren 崇仁 Ward, near both the Pingkang 平康 entertainment section and the Bureau of Appointments of the Department of State Affairs (Xiong, 2000, 109-113; 217-220).

Exam preparations often took six months or even up to a year, yet candidates remained even after they passed, waiting for an appointment. No longer bound by tight study schedules, they would entertain themselves with courtesans, celebrating their success and spreading news of their new status.¹⁸ To the examination candidates, frequenting public houses and making merry with the courtesans not only brought them pleasure, but also offered an opportunity to display pleasure. For this reason, such pleasure visits became a significant theme in Tang literature. In addition, the banquets Tang emperors held to celebrate the graduates' success added a royal blessing to such publicity, giving individual graduates the chance to create a grand show of power and pleasure (see Yao 2002).

In the meanwhile, since the Tang court patronized both Daoism and Buddhism, the literati elite embraced these religions as well, utilizing them to good effect in their writings. In his autobiography, Bai Juyi (772-846), Bai Xingjian's older brother, says, "I trained my heart with Buddhism. At the same time, I found pleasure in mountains, rivers, love, songs, poetry, zither playing, and wine" (Zhu 1988, 6.3815; Yao 1997, 22-27).

While their penchant for Daoist bedchamber arts clearly impacted their writings, again confirming the close connection (see Harper 1987,

¹⁸ The celebrations often began right after candidates paid their respects to the emperor. The graduates considered courtesan entertainment as indispensable as wine-drinking during their celebration. The late-Tang literatus Wang Dingbao 王定保 (870-?) recounts that, when graduates received news of their success, they would set off carrying a sack stuffed with wine cups and money to cavort with courtesans (Wang 1978, 25).

580; Umekawa, 259-268), Tang literati also expressed their Buddhist faith, recording their frequent social exchanges with Buddhist monks and their studies in Buddhist monasteries (Zhang 2002, 292-380). The Buddhist poet Wang Wei 王維 (701-761), for example, lived on a vegetable diet and frequently practiced lengthy fasting. In his later years, he would feed over a dozen monks every day, taking pleasure in discussing Buddhist ideas with them (*Jiu Tangshu* 190). Among 42,931 poems collected in the *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Complete Tang Poetry), moreover, 2,700 (or 6 percent) speak of visiting Buddhist temples and monasteries, reading or changing sutras, and socializing with monks. In addition, 2,500 are composed by Buddhist monks (Guo 1987, 231).

Another theme linked to Buddhism is the dream, common in Tang novelettes; it reflects the understanding that the world as we know it is an illusion (Zhou 2005). It is also possible that interactive dialogue, a prominent feature in erotica (e.g., Zhang Zhuo's 張鷟 (660-740) *You xianku* 遊仙窟 [Merry Making in a Fairy Dwelling]), reflected the influence of the recorded sayings of Buddhist masters in dialogue with their disciples (see Li 2001).

All these factors contributed greatly to the transformation of discourse on sexuality under the Tang, which brought forth the first two extant erotica in Chinese history, the *Tiandi yinyang jiaohuan dale fu* and the *You xianku*. The texts represent the new elite's effort to define sexual pleasure, linking it to physic charm, aesthetic sensibility, refined manners, and spiritual bliss.

Conclusion

The Chinese discourse on sexuality from the Han to the Tang underwent significant transformation. While writings on sexuality in the Han and following centuries were largely dominated by Daoist cosmology and sexology, Buddhism and court literature nevertheless made great strides in reconfiguring the overall perception of gender, body, love, and sexual intercourse. Confucian families seemed embraced both Daoist and Buddhist sexology. The diverse discourse continued during the Tang, expanding under the more pronounced effort to define sexual pleasure as a mode of enjoyment and linking it to sensuality, refined tastes, good manners, and spiritual bliss. The Tang discourse on sexuality is unique

due to the increased influence of Buddhism and the rise of the examination culture, developing and expanding yet never losing sight of its Daoist foundations.

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The Transformations of Xuanwu/Zhenwu

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Abstract

This paper examines the various pictorial representations of Xuanwu/Zhenwu, whose cult has spread since the Song dynasty. It identifies various gods and their images that were gradually subsumed by his cult to visually demonstrate the complexity of both the nature of the Daoist deity and of the evolution of Daoist iconography and religious practice.

Xuanwu 玄武, the Dark Warrior, is one of the most ancient deities in China. Since the Song dynasty, his cult has enjoyed the support of many factions of society, from the members of the imperial family to court literati and local worshippers. His broad based appeal lay in the multifaceted nature of his character. One indication is the various names by which he is known: Xuanwu, changed to Zhenwu 真武, the True or Perfect Warrior, due to an imperial Song appellation taboo, as well as Beidi 北帝, Emperor of the North; Beidou 北斗, Northern Dipper;¹ and Xuantian shangdi 玄天上帝, Highest Emperor of Dark Heaven.

Although icons of Zhenwu proliferate in the Song dynasty and after, they are not standardized. Rather, the deity is portrayed in a number of postures: seated, standing, or in vigorous motion; with varying attributes, including the snake-entwined tortoise, a sword and banners. He also appears in a number of guises—martial warrior, celestial emperor, and Daoist adept.

Many variations are the result of the amalgamation of several earlier deities whose identities gradually merged with his. Visual analysis of

¹ Poul Andersen explains that Beidi, the God of the North, is the ruler of the dark regions, lord of death, and a powerful exorcist (2004, 2:1188).

the various icons accompanied by textual sources reveals the gradual process of the absorption of these deities in the formation of the character of Zhenwu, whose worship reached its pinnacle in the Ming dynasty. At that time, icons proliferated, and the imperial family lavishly patronized his temple home and cult center on Mount Wudang 武當山, Hubei.

This study demonstrates how various changes in his posture, dress, and attributes come to identify the various gods appropriated in Zhenwu representations. It looks primarily to the images, seeing in the numerous iconographical features the stages of the god's development. Sacred texts substantially support the development seen in art. The view of the visual manifestations of the deity demonstrates the complexity of both the nature of Zhenwu and of the evolution of Daoist iconography and religious practices.

Recently several important studies have appeared about the god. Most notable among them are those by Shin-yi Chao (2011), Pierre De Bruyn (2010), Stephen Little and Shawn Eichman (2000), Xiao Haiming (2007),² and Noelle Giuffrida (2008).³ None of these studies, however, have focused on the how multiple divine characters affiliated with the north became part of Zhenwu's image and how his attributes reflect his assimilation of their powers. Moreover, several illustrations considered here, notably those from the Wudang Museum, have never yet appeared in English language studies; others have yet to be considered in Chinese works. Although Zhenwu is pictured among the Four Saints, as in the Yuan-dynasty Yongle gong 永樂宮 (Palace of Eternal Joy) in Shanxi (Jin

² This examines the corpus of illustrated biographies, organizing the material into pictures of Zhenwu performing miracles and those showing him being worshiped, while comparing them with images of other gods. The first chapter of his book traces the evolution of Zhenwu from the aniconic image of Xuanwu to Zhenwu as a martial god, an ancient sage and a heavenly emperor. But the main focus of his study, presented in chapter three, is an analysis of the pictorial hagiographies that present the life of the deity from the birth, to living as a practitioner in the mountains and the climax in his enfeoffment by the Jade emperor.

³ This work, especially chapter five, is devoted to a detailed study of illustrated Qing-dynasty biographies of Zhenwu, such as the *Wudang jiaqingtu* 武當嘉慶圖 (Wondrous Illustrations of Mt. Wudang); *Xuantian shangdi ruiying tulu* 玄天上帝瑞應圖錄 (Illustrated Record of the Auspicious Manifestations of the Highest Emperor of Dark Heaven); and *Beiyouji* 北遊記 (Journey to the North).

1997; see also Guiffrida 2008, ch. 3), this study centers on representations of the deity as a single figure. Also, as fascinating as illustrated hagiographies are, they are not included in this purview.

Xuanwu

Since ancient times, Xuanwu, spiritual guardian of the north, one of the four directional spirit animals (*sishen* 四神) appears as a tortoise entwined by a snake. This curious manifestation has been the subject of much speculation, especially in light of the fact that the three other spirit animals of the directional quadrants are not compound images but discrete entities—the Red Bird of the south, the Green Dragon of the east, and the White Tiger of the west. Since the Neolithic, these directional deities were important apotropaic figures who were later described in such literary accounts as the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Book of Mountains and Seas). A Han-dynasty work, parts of which may be as old as the 4th century BCE, the text describes the structure of the cosmos and the supernatural creatures that inhabit it (Loewe 1979, 148n11; Mathieu 1983; Strassberg 2002). As K. C. Chang and Sarah Allan have shown, the spirit animals protect the center. Being in the center, moreover, one is to be imbued with political and spiritual powers in life and protection in death (Chang 1977, 291; Allan 1991, 75-78).

As the principle of centrality dominated the organization of Shang cities, tombs, and altars, the four spirit animals guarded the sacred middle. They were temporal as well as spatial indicators associated with the rising sun in the east and the setting sun in the west as well as the four winds, the four seasons, and four primary colors (Chang 1983, 66; Allan 1991, 99). As protectors of the center, the four spirit animals next appear on the backs of late Zhou bronze mirrors, where they fly through the ether, clouds trailing their outstretched limbs. The Warrior of the North here is cast in the earthbound guise of a tortoise entwined by a snake and remains relatively immobile. As John Major points out, the hostility between the snake and the tortoise locked in an antagonistic confrontation is a consistent feature in their representation.⁴ Alternatively, they are

⁴ John Major (1986) cites two Zhou examples: a mirror in the Beijing Historical Museum with tiger, dragon, bird, and horse (Spring and Autumn period),

linked in sexual embrace, the snake being the female form of the tortoise (Chao 2011, 14). By the 1st century BCE, bronze mirror feature the four spirit animals in cosmological designs, such as the TLV pattern which delineates the symbolic presence of the earth, constellations, world mountains, seas, and clouds (see Fig. 1).⁵



Fig. 1.
Xuanwu in a Western Han mirror with TLV pattern and the three other spirit figures. 1st c. BCE - 8 CE, 19 cm d., Cleveland Museum (1995.301).

Bernard Karlgren found evidence of their continued apotropaic function in inscriptions on bronze mirrors that call upon the dragon and tiger as protective spiritual entities—harbingers of auspiciousness and protectors against baleful threats. “To the left the dragon to the right the tiger eliminate what is baleful; the red bird and black warrior conform to the yin and yang forces” (1934, 49). The four spirit animals rendered in dynamic postures further orient the designs of tombs. Their importance as symbolic decor on ceilings and walls continues well after the Six Dynasties (Yin 2008, 8-9). Xuanwu as the symbol of the north achieves anthropomorphic representation in the 6th century, as found on stone coffins in Luoyang (see Figs. 2-3) as well as in a Northern Qi mural in the

and a damaged mirror in the Freer Gallery in Washington D.C. (Warring States period).

⁵ These geographical features appear in different designs in the concentric patterns on the periphery of the mirror; the raised bosses in the area nearer the center may be representations of the constellations. See the example from the 1st c. BCE in Chou 2000, 1995.301, (19 cm d.).

tomb of Zhen Cuifen 镇崔芬 in Taiyuan, Shandong (Huang 1987, 53, fig. 34; Yin 2008, pl. 57; see also Rawson 2001).



Fig. 2.
Humanized Xuanwu
Spirit Animal of the
North. Rubbing from
stone coffin end. Coffin
of the Ascendant Sage,
discovered in the
northern suburbs of
Luoyang in 1977
(Huang 1987, 51).

Appearing as a warrior in the mural, the deity wields an upright sword, but wears the silken robes of a courtier, not armor. His hair is tied in a topknot. Riding an enormous tortoise entwined by a snake through a sparsely vegetated landscape, Xuanwu has a demonic dragon-like attendant, and is categorized as yin, i.e., darkness and the phase water. Despite the creation of an anthropomorphic image of the deity, the ancient emblem persists.

The appearance of this anthropomorphic icon may be related to the development of new Daoist self-cultivation techniques in the Highest Clarity (Shangqing 上清) school, which began with a set of revelations in the mid-4th century and was codified by its official first patriarch, Tao



Fig. 3. Guardian of the North, mural, tomb of Zhen Cuifen, Taiyuan, Shandong, Northern Qi, dat. 555 CE (Huang1987, fig. 34).

Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536). Practitioners invoked the spirit animals in their ecstatic meditations and for the preparation of the elixir of immortality (Strickmann 1979, 169; de Bruyn 2010, 110). For example, the *Lingshu ziwen shangqing* 零書紫文上經 (Upper Scripture of Purple Texts Inscribed by the Spirits, DZ 639), says,

Once this is complete, the white pneuma will suddenly change into the celestial beasts. Cause the two green dragons to position themselves in your eyes and the two white tigers to place themselves within your nostrils. These should be facing outward. The vermilion sparrow should be above your heart, facing your mouth. The gray-green tortoise should be below your left foot and the numinous snake below your right foot. (Bokenkamp 1997, 325)

By the 8th century, sources record a cult dedicated solely to Xuanwu. Autonomy achieved, Xuanwu becomes the focus of Daoist ritual with the important function of guarding both the high priest and the sacred arena (Lagerwey 1992, 295).

Zhenwu

Imperial patronage for Xuanwu appears first in the Song dynasty, when auspicious signs associated with the deity appeared in the capital of Kaifeng. In response, Emperor Zhenzong (r. 998-1022) ordered the construction of a temple dedicated to the god in 1017 (Chao 2011, 30).⁶ At that time, the deity's name became Zhenwu based on a name taboo of the dynastic ancestor Zhao Xuanlang 趙玄郎. A Song text surviving in a Yuan-dynasty redaction, the *Ziwei shenbing huguo xiaomo jing* 太上說紫微神兵護國消磨經 (Scripture of Quelling Demons by the Divine Soldiers for the Protection of the State, DZ 814; Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 2:1194) describes the deity as the protector of the state and provides a biography of the god.

Various new Song schools, such as Celestial Heart (Tianxin 天心), Divine Empyrean (Shenxiao 神霄), and Pure and Subtle (Qingwei 清微), appropriated Thunder Rites (*leifa* 雷法) in their repertoire. These were rituals addressed specifically to Beidi, the Emperor of the North, and his demon kings, including Zhenwu, to control thunder and to exorcize evil and calamity (Chao 2011, 47). The rituals were often based on military techniques and involved the positioning and disposition of spirit soldiers and the mastery of the military arts (Kagan and Wasecha 1982; Huang 2012, 325-26). From then on, Xuanwu's cult gradually absorbed Beidi (Andersen 2004, 2:1188), whose appeal largely comprised his martial power to protect the vulnerable northern regions and his ability to cure disease. There is no extant evidence that Beidi ever appeared in anthropomorphic form.

⁶ Many literary passages refer to early Song chapels Daoist clerics dedicated to Zhenwu. The imperial temple began with a shrine set up by soldiers, who saw an apparition of the turtle and snake, subsequently a spring with healing capabilities appeared nearby. Hearing of it, the emperor built a temple there. It remained important to successive Song emperors (Chao 2011, 31).

The Northern Dipper

The second ancient celestial cult assimilated under Zhenwu was that of the Northern Dipper constellation. Comprising seven stars, the gods were also known as “perfected” (*zhenren* 真人) and commonly summoned to exorcize malevolent forces. Like the four spirit animals, the Northern Dipper is an indicator of centrality, but it actually represents the sacred center and as such appears on an early artifact, a lacquer box from the 5th century BCE tomb of the Marquis of Zheng.

The box shows the Northern Dipper painted at center, surrounded by an inscription naming the twenty-eight lunar mansions; flanking the composition are a snake-like dragon and tiger, mystical symbols of the east and west that orient the design (see Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Northern Dipper and 28 Lunar Mansions Painted on Lacquer Box from the Tomb of Marquis Yi, Zheng State, dat. 433 BCE. (Yin 2008, fig. 11).

On the other side are curvilinear striated cloud designs punctuated with circles representing the stars. Later Han star maps on bronze mirrors and in tomb murals often feature the Northern Dipper as a configuration of seven orbs linked by bars. Painted on the ceiling, they replicate the night sky, as in the one found in a late Western Han tomb near Xi'an (see Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Sky map, late Western Han tomb in Xi'an, ceiling mural with lunar mansions around the periphery (Sun et al. 1989, pl. 9).

The perimeter of the heavenly vault shows representations of the lunar mansions, occupied by small humanoids: these are perhaps the earliest occurrence of their anthropomorphic delineation. The funereal shrine of Wu Liang 武梁 in Shandong, dated 151 CE, also has a representation of the Dipper, but here a male figure seated in a chariot ascends into the sky surrounded by seven orbs linked by bars; to the right are a kneeling figure and two standing attendants (Liu and Yue 1991, 135).

The Northern Dipper (*Ursa Major*) was an essential constellation in traditional China, presiding over the welfare of the state. As Edward Schafer notes, "These celestial deities were always paramount in the state cult, since they had a special relationship with the imperial house, the earthly nexus of power that radiated from them" (1977, 221). Schafer also points out that they were essential in Han ritual, as rites were conducted on altars decorated with images of the sun, moon, and the Dipper stars (1977, 49). Isabel Robinet adds, "The Dipper provides a ritual area and gives entry to it; it dictates the time and form of actions to be carried out. Director of the auspicious aspects of the world, it is also a protector charged with apotropaic powers. As the center, it is the abode of the Supreme One, Taiyi" (1997, 143).

This symbolism remained important throughout the medieval period when Daoists, believing that Dipper worship led to immortality, appropriated its cult. Adepts could commune with the Supreme One

through the practice of “pacing the nine stars of the Northern Dipper” (two of which were hidden from view) (Robinet 1997, 144). Such meditative practices focused on an internal configuration that replicated the stellar one, as shown in a twelfth century manual (Schafer 1977, 240). In the Tang, Highest Clarity practitioners lay on a board inscribed with the stars of Northern Dipper, meditating on the gods’ names and praying to them to help them build an inner immortal body to ascend to heaven (1977, 241). What is more, representations of the Northern Dipper as a series of seven circles linked by bars are a consistent theme on star swords and other ritual objects used to exorcize baleful spirits (Little and Eichman 2000a, 215). Finally, the Dipper, affiliated with the yin or dark element, is associated with the power of water.

Inspired perhaps by the syncretic spirit of the late Song, various deities associated with the north became more closely affiliated. As John Lagerwey notes, a number of ritual texts appeared that associated the Dipper with the Emperor of the North. For example, the *Ziwei shenbing huguo xiaomo jing* 紫微神兵護國消魔經 (Scripture of Spirit Soldiers of Purple Tenuity Protecting the State and Quelling Demons, DZ 655) links the exorcist spirits of the north with Zhenwu (Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 2:1194). Other texts extol the Dipper as the master of human destiny and identify him with the Emperor of the North. Thus, the *Beidou benming yanshou dengyi* 北斗本命驗收燈儀 (Lamp Ritual to the Northern Dipper for Individual Destiny and Extending Longevity, DZ 201; Lagerwey in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 2:965) calls Xuanwu Highest Emperor, implying “of the North,” a title he officially received in 1108. Other ritual texts, such as the *Beidou qi yuan xing dengyi* 北斗七元星燈儀 (Lamp Ritual for the Seven Primes of the Northern Dipper, DZ 200; Lagerwey in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 2:964) show how devotees appealed to the stars for forgiveness of sins, success in an official and mercantile careers, conjugal harmony and plentiful descendants.

An anthropomorphic depiction of the Dipper appears among the murals at the 14th-century Yongle gong, built in the Tang and reconstructed under the Yuan in 1247 under the name Da Chunyang Wanshou gong 大純陽萬壽宮 (Temple of Great Longevity of the Great Chunyang [Lü Dongbin]) (see Katz 2000, 139). Its Sanqing dian 三清殿 (Sanctuary of Three Pure Ones) contains numerous murals, dated by an inscription of

1325. It identifies the artist as Ma Junxiang 馬君祥 and his atelier (Katz 2000, 139). Amidst floating clouds, the stars appear dressed in long silk robes, along with portrayals of other members of the Daoist pantheon of the Complete Perfection (Quanzhen 全真) school (see Fig. 6).



Fig. 6.
Stars of the Northern Dipper,
mural at Yongle gong 14th-c.
Shanxi (Yun 2001, 164)

However, these figures, like the multitude of other divinities portrayed in the mural, lack distinguishing features and have their names inscribed near them to assure certain identification. Though the stars of the constellation wear crowns, haloes, and hold a ritual object in their hands, bereft of their attributes, they could easily be taken for slender aristocrats at court.

The personification of the Dipper stars, which may have obtained anthropomorphic form as early as the Han dynasty, no doubt continued throughout, but no images are extant from before the Yuan. But there are extant anthropomorphic delineations of the planets, which have survived in copies of sixth-century originals (Little and Eichman 2000a, pl. 12), as well as Tang clay figurines dressed in ministerial robes with ani-

mal heads embodying the zodiacal signs (Kuwayama 1987, no. 86). Quite probably, this manner of representing stars as humans dressed in aristocratic silken robes continued with little change for over a thousand years.



Fig. 7.
Gods of the Northern Dipper, mural, Pilusi, Hebei; dat. early Ming (Kang 1998, pl. 56).

Early Ming dynasty murals, such as those at the Pilusi 毘盧寺, a Buddhist temple in Shijiazhuang, Hebei, replicate the generic manner of portraying the stellar divinities seen earlier at the Yongle gong, but the Northern Dipper is now part of a greater celestial pantheon in murals devoted to the Land Water Ritual (Kang 1998, pl. 56) (see Fig. 7). The celestial bodies appear as anthropomorphic deities dressed in long silk robes, each holding a ritual object. They wear small crowns, possibly replacing the haloes worn by the gods at the Yonglegong. The Dipper is important here as the keeper of the roster of the names of the dead; he has the power to prolong life by eradicating names on the list.

Buddhist Guardian of the North

A third deity subsumed by Zhenwu is the Buddhist guardian of the north, Vaiśravaṇa, one of the four directional heavenly kings (*tianwang* 天王/ *devaraja*), whose worship originated in India. Extant images go back to the second century BCE (Soper 1959, 232).⁷ His veneration, along with icons, traveled east along the Silk Route. By the sixth century, the four guardian kings, dressed in armor and striking militaristic poses are a common feature of Buddhist altars in China, where they protect the four directions.⁸ Along the northern frontier, by far most vulnerable to attack, Vaiśravaṇa's worship was particularly prominent, eclipsing the other three celestial guardians, much as Xuanwu overwhelmed the other spirit animals.

With the development of esoteric Buddhism, moreover, the armed deity of the north achieved primacy (Berger 1994; Béguin and Colin 1994, 139; De Bruyn 2010, 26). Independent icons of Vaiśravaṇa are plentiful, many found in the library Cave 17 at Dunhuang 敦煌, Gansu. Here he appears as a long-haired, burly, armor-clad warrior, his scarves enlivened by a divine wind.⁹ Holding a long lance in his right hand, the deity has an entourage clustered around him, one of whom standing on the left holds his pendants set in motion by a strong wind. A woodcut illustration accompanying a passage of text dated to 945, also from Dunhuang and now in the British Museum, depicts him facing front and standing flat-footed; holding up his feet, the earth god emerges from the ground, while scarves swirl in arabesques around his arms (see Fig. 8).

⁷ The eminent seventh century monk Xuanzang recorded wonder-working statues of Lokapalas, or Guardian Kings, in his *Da Tang xiyuji* 大唐西域記 (Great Tang Record of The Western Countries). Soper 1959, 246.

⁸ See the pillar caves at Dunhuang where in the later Northern Wei period Guardian Kings stand in postures of defense at the corners of the niche see Dunhuang 1980, 1.pl. 38.

⁹ There are several other examples from Dunhuang. One inscribed with the local governor's dedication is illustrated in Whitfield and Farrer 1990, 106. It is a woodblock print from Cave 17, dated to 947, 40 x 26.5 cm (01 1919.1-1.245). Another one is ascribed to the same period, ink and colors on silk, 61.8 x 57 cm (01 1919.1-1.045).



Fig. 8.
Vaiśravaṇa woodcut print from Dunhuang, dat. 947. Jin Dynasty, ink on paper, 40 x 26 cm (OA 1919.1-1.0245). Whitfield and Farrer 1990, 106.

Over a dozen such woodcuts survive from the site. The Jin dynasty leaders may have been instrumental in forging identification of the Buddhist deity with Zhenwu, being devoted Buddhist and patrons of Zhenwu as well.¹⁰ Anthropomorphic depictions of Xuanwu holding a sword appear as early as the Six Dynasties period, and he was shown with flowing locks, barefoot and bearing his sword as one of the four saint protectors in group portraits from the Song dynasty,¹¹ but icons of Zhenwu as seen in the Ming dynasty show the influence of representations of Vaiśravaṇa.

¹⁰ The Jurchen-Jin in the twelfth century constructed a temple dedicated to Zhenwu as a martial god, and they placed him in a prominent role in their religious system (Chao 2011, 104).

¹¹ See Little and Eichman 2000a, 298 for a Ming dynasty silk painting showing the group of divine protectors from Baoning Temple, Shanxi. Chao (2011, 72) has a discussion of the assimilation of the Four Saints and the cult of Zhenwu.



Fig. 9.
Xuantian wudi, Pilu Temple,
Hebei, early Ming (Kang 1998,
pl.38).

The Daoist god is now similarly standing flat footed, dressed in armor, with the excited ribbons of his costume encircling him as the Ming mural in the Pilu Temple, where identified by a cartouche, Xuanwu shangdi stands, in full armor, his left hand grasping his sword at a downward angle.¹² The ancient symbol is excluded, perhaps because here Xuanwu is identified by a cartouche and is part of the great pantheon of the Land Water Ritual (Kang 1998, pl. 38) (see Fig. 9).

The Dipper appears as a separate persona at this site. In another example, an ink rubbing of a stele, dated to 1586 and found in the Six Harmonies Pagoda in Zhejiang, Zhenwu appears in the same manner and his feet rest the symbol of the tortoise and snake, not on the earth god featured in the Buddhist icon (see Fig. 10).

¹² Vaisravana wood cut from Dunhuang dated 947 Kaiyuan era 開元, Jin Dynasty ink on paper 40 x 26 cm OA 1919.1-1.0245 (over a dozen found).



Fig. 10.
Zhenwu. Ink rubbing of a stele, dat.
1586 (Wanli era). Six Harmonies Pa-
goda, Zhejiang (Nelson Atkins Muse-
um, F88-45/345).

The inscription records the efforts to restore the images on the pagoda: "On the fifteenth day of the first month of spring in the year *bingxu* of the Wanli reign [1586] Zhong Yin of Qiantang [Hangzhou] saw the image of the Saint [shengxiang] at the Six Harmonies Pagoda [Liuhe ta], which people had rubbed to ruin. Manifesting his intent, he again restored [the stele] and washed...and made [this] offering" (Little and Eichman 2000b, 310)

Like the Buddhist god of the north, the long-haired armor-clad Zhenwu turns to the right, but he holds a sword rather than a lance; he also has an attendant on the left who holds a pennant. In addition, a stream of water in the left foreground represents the yin element related to the deity. The anomaly, the deity standing flat-footed, yet wielding the sword in a thrusting manner, distinguishes this particular Daoist icon. Still, Zhenwu's bare feet are an essential part of his iconography. As going bare foot is exceedingly rare for deities, one may surmise that this may have to do with the practice of the martial arts, a strong feature in Zhenwu hagiography.



Fig. 11. Zhenwu in armor, Shanxi; 23.7 cm tall (Yeung 2003, 13).



Fig. 12. Bronze Zhenwu, 5' tall, Wudang Museum

These representations, moreover, largely accord with materials found in a Thunder Rites text from the Celestial Heart School. The *Shangqing tianxin zhengfa* 上清天心正法 (Correct Method of the Celestial Heart of Highest Clarity, DZ 566) says,

One hundred feet tall, with disheveled hair in golden armor he steps on the numinous turtle of five colors which is also known as the turtle of the eight trigrams [encircled by a] leaping snake. One [of his] Hands forms the seal of pacifying demons. Lightning comes out of his eyes. The other hand holds a sword as he stands still. (Chao 2001, 56)

Sculptural icons also employ the convention of showing Zhenwu in armor with wind-swept ribbons encircling his body, but these are often seated like the ones in the Shanxi Provincial Museum (see Fig. 11) and the Wudang Museum (see Fig.12).

In both cases, Zhenwu's identity is affirmed by his stance, naked feet, and the snake entwined tortoise (Yeung 2003, no. 13). These military

personas mark the eminence of the deity in a pantheon growing first in the late thirteenth to the early fourteenth centuries (Chao 2011, 77).

The Emperor of the North

Imperial associations with Xuanwu began in the Song dynasty when Emperor Taizong (r. 976-997) conferred national status on the deity. In recognition of several miraculous omens including a vision of a turtle entwined by a snake, Zhenzong established a temple for him in Kaifeng in 1017 (Little and Eichman 2000b, 291; De Bruyn 2010, 114-16). Worshipers appealed to Zhenwu to fight disease and provide protection from hostile northern nomads. Oracle texts like the *Xuantian shangdi baize shenghao* 玄天上帝白字聖號 (Holy Appellations in One Hundred Characters of the Emperor of the Dark Heaven; DZ 1482) provided a eulogy of Zhenwu, addressing him as “emperor.” The text, supposedly written by Song Renzong (r. 1023-63), actually dates to the Yuan dynasty and was not completed before the late Song dynasty (Kalinowski in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 2:1199).

Another relevant document is the *Xuantian shangdi qisheng lu* 玄天上帝啟聖錄 (Record of the Epiphany of the Supreme Ancestor of Dark Heaven, DZ 958). A collection of materials from the Tang, Five Dynasties, and Song periods (7th- 13th c.), it provides a Zhenwu hagiography, outlining his birth, wanderings, and reclusive Daoist practice all the way to his final ascent into heaven. It calls him Highest Emperor of Dark Heaven, a title formally conferred in 1303. During the Yuan dynasty, imperial patronage continued. In 1304, Emperor Chenzong granted him the title “Supreme Emperor of Dark Heaven, Primal Sage, and Benevolent Majesty” (Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 2:1200-01).

This is when his association with Mount Wudang began. Devotional literature of the time commemorates his ability to make rain, a power specially associated with dark yin and the phase water (Lagerwey 1992, 298), an element that earlier was associated with both Xuanwu and the Northern Dipper.

The amalgamation of various northern forces is visible in a Yuan-dynasty hanging scroll, now found in the Reiunji 靈雲寺 (Numinous Cloud Temple) in Tokyo. Here the deity, haloed and crowned, is at the center of the composition and shown frontally. Seated like an emperor

on a grand throne, he has a large retinue comprised of six burly warriors placed in the four corners. Flanking him on the left are two female attendants; on the right, there are two bearded dignitaries dressed in court robes. The ancient emblems of the turtle entwined by a tortoise appear at his feet and seven circles and bar symbols representing the Northern Dipper appear prominently on a standard held by an attendant on the left. Clouds surround the group, and in the upper area is a view of the sky. It is important to notice that the deity does not have long flowing hair and is neither barefoot, nor armed, or holding a sword. Nevertheless, as his cult expanded, he acquired these attributes (Saso 1972, 6).

The early Ming emperors continued to seek Zhenwu's favor, celebrating his birthday and day of ascension at Mount Wudang, but his great ascent came under the Yongle Emperor (r. 1403-1424). His strong imperial patronage focused on the god and he made Mount Wudang the center of the deity's cult (De Bruyn 2010, 206-08). Lagerwey thinks that Zhenwu's divine intercession allowed the Yongle Emperor to secure the throne in 1403; it also helped maintain peace and prosperity in the empire (1992, 298). The imperial espousal led to a great building campaign on Mount Wudang: the Zixiao gong 紫霄宮 (Purple Emyrean Palace) complex replicated the Forbidden City in Beijing. According to Li Chi, these efforts were a means to unifying the recalcitrant south with the rest of his empire. Soon images of Zhenwu presented him as an emperor. Li contends that the Yongle Emperor may even have suggested that he himself was an incarnation of the god (1971, 157, 33-36). In addition, practitioners submitted written petitions to Zhenwu, like those offered up to the emperor (Chao 2011: 70-71), although it is clear from the Reijunji painting that this image was already formulated in the Yuan dynasty.

A multitude of Ming dynasty images present Zhenwu as Emperor of the North, impassively seated on a throne, surrounded by attendants holding various imperial regalia, such as standards and flags. Dressed in a silken robe, he is barefoot and has no crown. The deity's awesome dignity manifests in his posture and throne. Unlike Buddhist icons, whose attributes are codified and allow for little variation, the image of Zhenwu has different characteristics. For example, the deity is sometimes bald, sometimes has long flowing locks. He may or may not have a moustache

and chin beard. His hands, symmetrically placed, may rest on his knees palm down, however, his right hand is often before his chest in a hand gesture that shows the index and third fingers extended, while the left hand rests on his thigh (Giès et al. 2010, 222).

There are also several mid-dynasty grand bronze icons, now housed in the museum at Mount Wudang (see Figs. 13-14).



Figs. 13-14. Bronze Zhenwu, 5' tall, housed today in Wudang Museum

About five feet tall, they imperiously sit on thrones, their silken robes falling in gentle folds over their legs. The aniconic emblem, in tiny scale, still appears, before them. In addition, small-scale icons in a variety of materials replicate this iconic formula. A small Wanli era 萬曆 blue and white porcelain figurine portrays Zhenwu wearing a silk gown emblazoned with an imperial five-clawed dragon sitting on a throne in a stiff frontal position.¹³

Addressed in devotional prayers as Dark Emperor, the god of Wudang remained the protector of the dynasty whose rulers continued to invoke his blessing (Seaman1985, 26-30). This image affirms both the

¹³ Ming dynasty blue-and-white porcelain figurine of enthroned Zhenwu, dat. 1573-1620. Boston Museum of Fine Arts, 1979.785, 46 cm tall. See Little and Eichman 2000b, 297.

role of Emperor and Martial Guardian of the North, an identity forged by imperial sponsorship.

Daoist Practitioner

Zhenwu's hagiography is told the scriptures as well as in the late-Ming novel *Beiyouji* 北遊記 (Journey to the North), a story based on revelatory texts (Seaman 1985, 5, 12; Dudbridge 1970, 32-37). It represents an important transmission of the god's biography, telling his early life through his apotheosis in a conventional fashion that recalls the Buddha's hagiography. A Daoist practitioner, Zhenwu leaves his parents to study at Mount Wudang (Lagerway 199, 305). After forty-two years of assiduous training, he ascends to heaven, where the Jade Emperor bestows the rank and powers of the Great Dark One upon him. The novel also explains some of his iconographical attributes. For example, he has long, flowing hair because he was unable to change his appearance after his investiture.

Zhenwu thereby connected with Daoist practitioners on Mount at Wudang. The mountain was originally a site sacred to both Buddhist and Daoists (De Bruyn 2010, 74-77), but in the Yuan dynasty, Daoists promoted the myth that Zhenwu achieved perfection here. They identified the Wulongci 五龍祠 (Five Dragon Shrine) as the location of his apotheosis. As they promoted the god further in their writings, they integrated local folklore and published his story in gazetteers and regional albums of paintings. Some had endorsements by such leading figures as Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫, the famous Chinese calligrapher and painter who held a high position in the Yuan government (Chao 2011, 86-87).

A sacred place with resident Daoist masters, Mount Wudang attracted numerous pilgrims and practitioners. It flourished until the destructive attacks at the end of the Yuan dynasty and was rebuilt in the early Ming. From this time onward, the popularity of the mountain had increased steadily: as a scenic and spiritual site, a place of pilgrimage and religious retreat.

Zhenwu appears as a Daoist sage in an illustrated version of the Ming text *Xuantian zhenwu* 玄天真武 (Dark Heaven Perfect Warrior), dated to 1598. It is now in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris (Chinois 9546/1196).



Fig. 15.
The god as depicted in *Xuantian zhenwu*,
dat. 1598, now in Bibliothèque Nationale de
France (Chinois 9546/1196). Schipper and
Verellen 2004: vol. 2:1198

Here the haloed deity stands barefoot, with long hair cascading over his shoulders, wearing a flowing robe with flying ribbons. However, the ancient symbol still prevails—before him is a small-scale representation of the snake entwined around the tortoise (see Fig. 15; Schipper and Verellen 2004, 2:1198). Ming sculptures also show him a Daoist sage standing in a casual pose, wearing long robes like the wooden figurine in the Shanxi Provincial Museum or the life size bronze sculpture in the Wudangshan Museum. Both present him in plain robes, without armor or adornment.

Conclusion

Zhenwu appears in several types of icons. One reason for this variety may have to do with regional preferences and varied scriptural and literary sources. Examining hundreds of temples in north China, Willem Grootaers observed that nearly every village had mural narratives dedicated to the god. From the transmissions of revelatory texts he concluded that these were part of separate pictorial lineages that had little to do with scriptural sources (Grootaers 1952, 165). To this point, it has been

shown here that a visual tradition representing celestial beings associated with the north often preceded textual descriptions. This is clearly the case with the aniconic symbol Xuanwu as appearing as early as the late Zhou era, representations of the stellar configuration of the Northern Dipper which figured often in later Han dynasty art, and the anthropomorphic image of Xuanwu which emerged in the Northern Wei period.

Quite possibly, the Daoists at Wudang wove the various aspects of the god into one multifaceted grand persona. Nevertheless, all later portrayals have deep roots in earlier incarnations of deities associated with the north. Their worship was gradually subsumed into the cult of Zhenwu.

One painting in particular, dating from the Qing dynasty and today in the Art Institute of Chicago, shows the complex of divine personalities combined. Here Zhenwu is dressed and seated like an emperor. Above his head are the eight trigrams and emblems of the Northern Dipper constellation. A small tortoise entwined by a snake appears at his feet. Thus, the ancient god the north Xuanwu, transformed into Zhenwu in the Song dynasty, still maintained the emblem of the militant snake and tortoise entwined in mutual animosity.

Another assimilation linked him with the important deity of the Northern Dipper, worshiped since antiquity. This is evident in the appropriation of articles emblazoned with the image of the constellation as the star sword and the silken banner. Identification with the Buddhist guardian of the north, next, was perhaps the most important in the transformation. It changed the seated, silk-robed deity into a standing burly and armor-clad war god.

Next, with the elevation of Zhenwu to Northern Emperor in the Yuan dynasty, came the portrayal of the supreme god as ruler, seated in frontal position, immobile on a throne. Lastly, in accord with Daoist tradition, Zhenwu appears as a long-haired adept living on Mount Wudang, wearing long, flowing robes. Zhenwu as deity, protector, and model practitioner is thus a multi-faceted, ever changing divine power with pervasive influence throughout Chinese history.

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The Record of Purity and Brightness

Versions and Contents

GUO WU

Abstract¹

This paper inspects three versions of the *Jingming zongjiao lu* 淨明宗教錄 (Record of the Lineage and Teachings of [the School of] Purity and Brightness). It introduces the many different scriptures contained in this compendium and explores its relationships to the Ming-dynasty *Daozang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon) to offer a deeper understanding of the key sources of this school in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

The *Jingming zongjiao lu* is an important scripture of the Daoist school of Purity and Brightness (Jingming dao 淨明道), compiled under the Ming and Qing. The school is also known as the Way of Purity and Brightness, Loyalty and Filial Piety (Jingming zhongxiao dao 淨明忠孝道), and as such arose in southern China during the Song and Yuan. Its main teaching is expressed in the *Jingming zhongxiao quanshu* 淨明忠孝全書 (Complete Compendium of Purity and Brightness, Loyalty and Filial Piety, DZ 1110): “Take loyalty and filial piety as the root, respect Heaven and venerate Dao, aid all living beings, and providing salvation for the dead” (ch. 1).

It was one of the four great Daoist schools under the Ming and Qing,² the others being Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi dao 正一道), Highest

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² So described in Zhang Yuchu’s 張宇初 (1361-1410) *Daomen Shigui* 道門十規 (Ten Rules for Daoists, DZ 1232). Zhu Quan 朱權 (1378-1448), in his *Tianhuang*

Clarity (Shangqing pai 上清派), and Numinous Treasure (Lingbao pai 靈寶派). Interacting closely with these schools (see Guo 2005), Purity and Brightness exerted a tremendous influence on the moral life of the Chinese people—promoting, for example the ledgers of merit and demerit (*gongguo ge* 功過格). But its influence has been rather weak in mainland China after 1949, at least until its ancestral home, the Wanshou gong 萬壽宮 (Wanshou Temple) on Xishan 西山 (West Mountain) near Nanchang 南昌 was restored by Zhang Jiyu 張繼禹, vice-chairman of the Chinese Daoist Association in recent years. Most academic studies of the school focus on its evolution and role under the Song and Yuan and especially on its legendary original founder, Xu Xun 許遜 (see Guo 2000). The reason why studies do not deal as much with its history under the Ming and Qing is that many important scriptures survived in various editions but were not included in the *Daozang*.

The Record

One essential document is the *Jingming zongjiao lu*, contained in the 19th-century *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要 (Collected Essentials of the Daoist Canon; JY 160), edited by Jiang Yuanling 蔣元庭 (1755-1819). Called here *Taishang lingbao jingming zongjiao lu* 太上靈寶淨明宗教錄, it is fragmentary work, which lacks both preface and postscript. A preface, on the other hand, appears in the *Xiaoyao shan wanshou gong zhi* 逍遙山萬壽宮志 (Gazetteer of the Wanshou Temple on Mount Xiaoyao; ZW 736),³ edited under the Guangxu Emperor (1875-1908).

According to this, the *Zongjiao lu* was compiled by three Daoists: Hu Zhimei 胡之玫, Zhu Liangyue 朱良月, and Zhuo Zhanyue 周占月. They did so, because they perceived a lack of comprehensive compilation of the school's materials, "causing believers to act in different ways and move to opposite poles, even if they studied the same books." They

zhidao taiqing yuce 天皇至道太清玉冊 (Jade Fascicles of Highest Clarity on the Ultimate Dao of the Celestial Sovereign, DZ 1483), mentions several ritual practices of the school popular at the time.

³ ZW stands for *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 (Daoist Texts Beyond the Canon), published in Chengdu by Bashu shushe in 1992. The numbering for this, as well as all other Daoist collections (e.g., the *Daozang jiyao*), follows Komjathy 2002.

hoped that through their compilation, “the various Daoist methods would find harmony and return to one ancestor, enhancing the singular mind of harmonious virtue and internal brightness.” They put together ten scrolls in one work and called it the “Record of Lineage and Teachings.” In other words, they included materials created new after the Ming dynasty, which rarely appeared elsewhere.

A yet different version of the text was preserved in Japan, in the treasury of the Rinōji 輪王寺 in Nikkō 日光. Called *Xu Zhenjun Jingming zongjiao lu* 許真君淨明宗教錄, it was printed by Caoxuanju 草玄居 in the 31st year of the Wanli Emperor, i.e., 1603 (Yan 2000). A third, illustrated copy, known as the *Chuxiang Xu Zhenjun Jingming zongjiao lu* 出像許真君淨明宗教錄, remains in the library of Peking University. Also printed by Caoxuanju, it consists of fifteen scrolls. Beyond this, there is a thread-bound edition in ten scrolls, preserved by the Daoist Ye Zhiming 葉至明 of Mount Lu 廬山, recently reprinted with punctuation (Hu et al. 2008). Another early version is in the possession of the Daoist Zhang Xinfu 張興發 of the Wanshou gong 萬壽宮. There also seems to be a version in eight woodblocks housed in the Nanjing City Library, but it is not yet accessible to the public. A yet different version, in ten scrolls, is rumored to survive in Jiangxi, at least according to Guo Shusen 郭樹森, research fellow at the Academy of Social Sciences, but it has not surfaced to date.

What, then, is contained in the different versions we can access so far? How do they relate to that in the *Daozang jiyao*? What contribution do they make to our understanding of Purity and Brightness?

The Illustrated Version

The illustrated version, housed at Peking University, mentions Caoxuanju as its printing company and begins with images of the founding fathers of the school (see Fig. 1). Its preface, by the famous publisher Yang Erzeng 楊爾曾, describes its publication history. Compiled in the Ming dynasty, it also includes the *Jingming guiyi neijing* 淨明歸一內經 (Inner Scripture of Perfect Integration of Purity and Brightness), described as “written by Shuijingzi 水晶子 of Nanji 南畿, recorded by Chen Yaoliang 陳堯鄉, and printed by the publisher Zhan Yizhai 詹易齋.”



Fig. 1. Image of Zhang Yun 张蕴, aka Hongya Zhenjun 洪崖真君 on the frontispiece of the illustrated version.

Its postscript says, "This text was written by Zhao Yiming 趙一明, common name Shanwei 善為, aka Ziran 自然 or Shuijingzi. The heir of Purity and Brightness, he was ordered to compile it by the Highest Emperor as a senior administrator in the capital of high heaven. It was printed in the Wanshou gong, a reconstruction of the Huangyan Cave on Mount Lu in Nankang Prefecture, Jiangxi." The text further notes that it was "printed by the Xiqingtang 西清堂, owned by Mr. Zhan, in the Jiachen reign of the Wanli Emperor" (see Fig. 2).

This means it is quite possibly identical with the Japanese version: both of them bear the printing company name Caoxuanju and go back to the same period, the latter being dated to 1603-04.

Almost all its chapters also appear in the other versions. Thus, the first scroll in both Ming and Qing editions consists of the following texts:

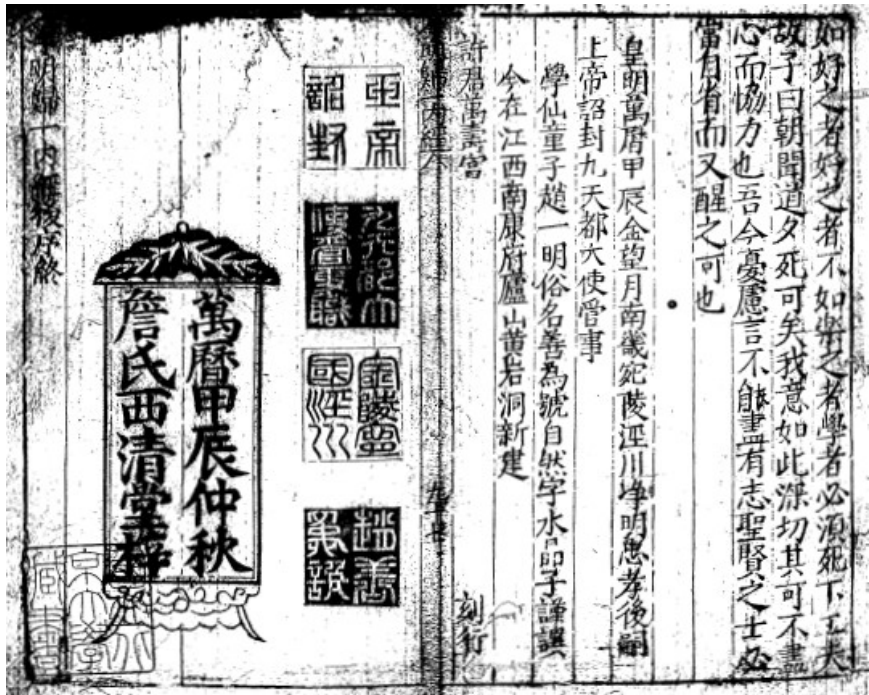


Fig. 2. A sample page of the illustrated edition, compiled 1603-04.

Jingming daoyuan zhengyin jing 淨明道元正印經 (Scripture of the Orthodox Seal of the Foundation of Dao of Purity and Brightness, DZ 1105)

Jingming sigui mingjian jing 淨明四規明鑒經 (Book of the Fourfold Mirror of Purity and Brightness, DZ 1107)

Jingming zhonghuang bazhu jing 淨明中黃八柱經 (Scripture of the Eight Pillars of Central Yellow of Purity and Brightness, DZ 1109)

Jingming dongshen shangpin jing 淨明洞神上品經 (Superior Scripture of Per-vading Divinity of Purity and Brightness, DZ 1103) (see Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1123-24).

The second scroll has the *Jingyang Xu zhenjun zhuan* 旌陽許真君傳 (Biog-raphy of Perfected Lord Xu Jingyang), also found in scroll 6 of the Qing version. Scrolls 3-5 contain the *Xu zhenjun bashiwu hualu* 許真君八十五化錄 (Record of the 85 Transformations of Perfected Lord Xu), not found in

the Qing version, but contained in the *Daozang* (DZ 448; Lévi in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 901-02).

The sixth scroll includes the following nine texts, all also present in the Qing version, notably in scrolls 3 and 7:

Lingbao jingming faxu 靈寶淨明法序 (Introduction to the Ritual Methods of Purity and Brightness of Numinous Treasure)

Lingbao jingming rudao pin 靈寶淨明入道品 (Instructions for Novices of Purity and Brightness of Numinous Treasure, DZ 557)

Yuzhen lingbao tanji 玉真靈寶壇記 (Altar Record of Numinous Treasure of Jade Perfection)

Chuishi babao 垂世八寶 (Eight Treasures Descending into the World)

Zui sixian ge 醉思仙歌 (Songs of the Drunken Immortal)

Jingming dadao shuo 淨明大道說 (Explanations of the Great Way of Purity and Brightness)

Jingming daofa shuo 淨明道法說 (Explanation of the Ritual Methods of Purity and Brightness)

Jingming fa shuo 淨明法說 (Explanation of the Methods of Purity and Brightness)

Yuzhen litan shu 玉真立壇疏 (Notes on Establishing the Altar of Jade Perfection)

The seventh scroll has the *Lingjianzi* 靈劍子 (Master of the Numinous Sword, DZ 570), not otherwise published in the Qing dynasty but scattered in fragments in the Qing version of the text. Scroll 8 consists of the *Yindao ziwu ji* 引導子午記 (Noon Record of Stretching and Guiding), also in scroll four of the Qing version. Scrolls 9-10 has the *Shihan ji* 石函記 (Record of the Stone Container, DZ 951, JY 159, ZW 183), also in scroll 2 of the Qing version. Three texts found in scrolls 11-13 are recouped in scroll 8 of the Qing version: the *Yuzhen yulu neiji* 玉真語錄內集, *waiji* 外集, and *bieji* 別集 (Inner, Outer, and Separate Collection of the Recorded Sayings of Jade Perfection). Scroll 14 contains the *Zhonghuang xiansheng da wen* 中黃先生問答 (Dialogues of the Master of Central Yellow), a work not found in the Qing version, but part of the *Jingming zongxiao quanshu* in the *Daozang* (DZ 1110).

The one text that is unique to the illustrated version is the *Jingming guiyi neijing*, placed in a scroll by itself before the main body of the compendium. It begins with a short preface, followed by twenty illustrations

of various charts and images related to the practice of internal alchemy. After that, it has a series of discussions, treatises, and poetic outlines (songs) on the theory and practice of internal cultivation, showing the great emphasis the school placed on internal alchemy.

The *Jiyao* Edition

The *Daozang jiyao* version (Weiji 危集 4) appears in its reprint at the Erxian an 二仙庵 (Two Immortals Hermitage) of Chengdu, dated to 1906, and is also contained in the *Zangwai daoshu* of 1992. After a table of contents and short introduction (*fanli* 凡例), it consists of two parts. The first gives as its compiler the Daoist disciple Hu Zhimei, religious name Dezhou 德周, in cooperation with his son Shixin 士信, religious name Hongdao 弘道. It includes the same four scriptures as the illustrated version with sub-commentaries (*shu* 疏) and additional explanations (*yan* 衍). An outstanding feature is that each scripture begins on a new page.

Part two contains a series of texts, including the *Tanji*, *Chuishi babao*, *Dadao shuo*, *Daofa shuo*, and *Fa shuo* found in scroll 6 of the illustrated edition, plus the following works, together with sub-commentaries and additional explanations, each with a poem attributed by Lü Chunyang (i.e., Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, senior member of the Eight Immortals).

Zhenquan 真詮 (Perfect Truths)

Songsha ji 松沙記 (The Prophecy about a Pine and a Sandbank)

Daojie 道誡 (Daoist Precepts)

Quanjie shi 勸誡詩 (Poems of Admonition and Regulation)

Guo Jingchun yuzhen tanshu 郭景純玉真壇疏 (Guo Jingchun's Altar Explanations of Jade Perfection)

Chunyang Lü zhenren ziji 純陽呂真人自記 (Personal Record of the Perfected Lü Chunyang)

Wuyan lüshi ershou 五言律詩二首 (Two Poems in Five Character Verse)

Zhenren Chan Yulong gonghui xiangge ji 真人蟾玉隆宮會仙閣記 (Record of Perfected Chan's Immortal Songs at the Yulong Temple Assembly)

Yulong wanshou gong yunhui tang ji 玉隆萬壽宮雲會堂記 (Record of the Cloud Assembly at the Yulong Wanshou Temple)

Xu Jingyang zan 許旌陽贊 (Praise for Xu Jingyang)

Ti Yulong gong bishi 題玉隆宮壁詩 (Poems on the Walls of the Yulong Temple)

Untitled: A section of over twenty questions and answers on internal alchemy.

The introduction, moreover, includes the *Taishang lingbao jingming faxu*, signed as written by Xu Jingyang, described as *gaoming taishi* 高明太史 (see Fig. 3). In fact, this is a much older text.

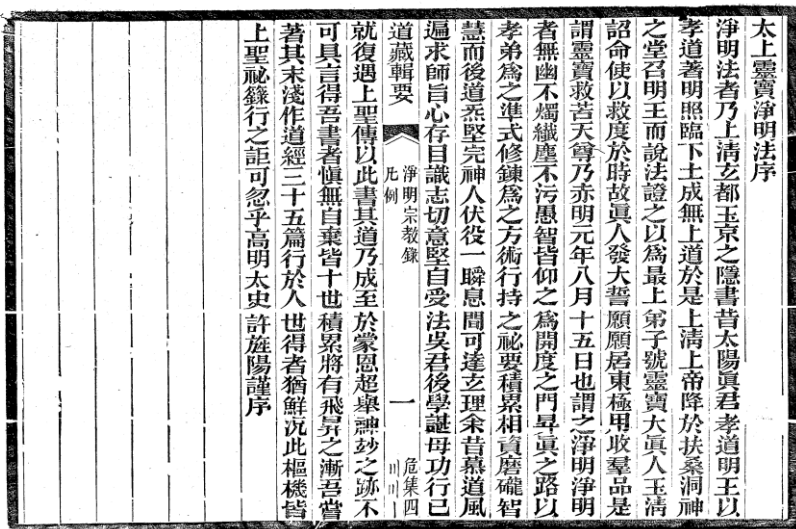


Fig. 3. The *Faxu* in the introduction of the *Jiyao* edition.

In the *Daozang*, it appears as the preface, but not in the beginning, of the *Taishang lingbao jingming bifa pian* 太上靈寶淨明秘法篇 (Compendium of the Secret Rites of Purity and Brightness of Highest Numinous Treasure, DZ 562), revealed by six celestial beings to He Zhengong 何真公 under the Southern Song and dated to 1131 (Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1120).

The introduction further contains the *Rudao pin*, complete with supplementary explanations, which in other editions comes much later and seems to be in the wrong place here. The text was compiled in the Ming dynasty and appears in the *Daozang* (DZ 557; Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1118). In addition, it has the *Lingbao Jingming yuan zhenshi migao* 靈寶淨明院真師密誥 (Secret Instructions by the Perfect Masters of Purity and Brightness of Numinous Treasure, DZ 558) and the *Taishang*

lingbao jingming fayin shi 太上靈寶淨明法印式 (Model for the Ritual Seals of Purity and Brightness of Numinous Treasure, DZ 559).



Fig. 4. A poem by Lü Chunyang, newly included here.

Other overlaps include the lost second part of the *Shangpin jing* contained here but not in the *Daozang* (DZ 1103) as well as two of its chapters, the *Guoshu keru pian* 國書可入篇 (ch. 16) and the *Miaoyou baotu pian* 妙有寶圖篇 (ch. 17). Many other works, moreover, appear in the *Jingming zhongxiao quanshu* while some are reprints of Song dynasty works originally contained in the *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 (Ten Works on the Cultivation of Perfection, DZ 263). Some, such as the *Songsha ji*, *Daojie*, and *Quanjie shi* are also contained in the *Lingjianzi* and *Xiaoyaoshan wanshou gong zhi*. The only difference is a poem by Lü Chunyang, which seems be a new production (see Fig. 4). While claimed to be by Lü Dongbin, its style is very much like words revealed through automatic writing (*jiwen* 乩文).

To sum up, the texts contained in the *Jiyao* version appear for the most part also in the *Daozang*, but some supplementary explanations are

new here. Where did they come from? Maybe the other version can shed some light on this question.

The 10-Scroll Version

The title page here lists the two masters Zhu Liangyue and Zhou Zhanyue as compilers and the place as Qingyunpu 青雲譜 (see Fig. 5).

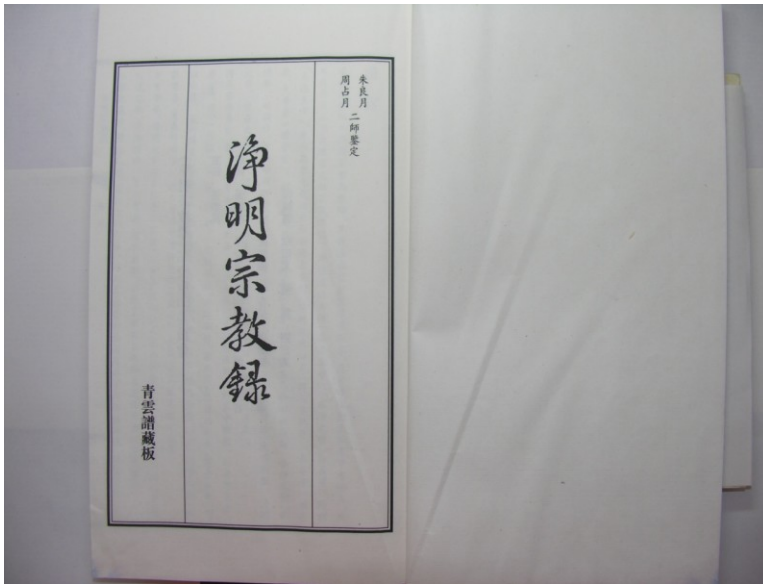


Fig. 5. The cover page of the 10-scroll version.

Like the *Jiyao* edition, it has a preface signed by Hu Zhimei, adding that he is from Xichang 西昌 and studied with the Complete Perfection master Zhu Daolang 朱道朗 from Qingyunpu. The text also contains a separate chapter, entitled "Ruyi xiandan fang bing Jingming tang zhufang" 如意仙丹方並淨明堂諸方 (Various Recipes of Wish Fulfilling Immortal Elixirs and Others of the School of Purity and Brightness), complete with a hand-written seal by Zhu Daolang. The tenth scroll, moreover, names Li Yingcai 李應彩 as additional editor and Dong Hance 董漢策, described as *tianshu yili* 天樞逸吏, as additional proofreader. Also, it appears that Hu Zhimei's son-in-law Xia Yijia 夏以鉞 offered some assistance.

All this shows that the work was not put together overnight but involved a varying number of people over several years. Since Zhu Daolang lived in the early Qing dynasty (see Guo 2008), this version probably goes back to this time, to be eventually donated by Wang Lingce 王令策, a descendant of the compilers who lived in Nanchan and there had it punctuated and reprinted by the Wanshou Temple.

In contents, it closely matches the other editions. For example, scroll one here contains the same texts as the first scroll of the illustrated version. Scroll two has some texts discussing internal alchemy, in contents matching the *Shihan ji* as found in scrolls 9 and 10 of the illustrated version.

Scroll three includes four texts that contain numerous talismans and incantations: the *Feixian furen jingfa* 飛仙度人經法 (Scriptures and Methods for Salvation through Flying Immortals, DZ 563) and the *Lingbao duren fuluo wupian* 靈寶度人數落五篇 (Five Sections of Numinous Treasure Scattering Flowers for Salvation). The former originated in the Southern Song dynasty, focusing on salvation as advocated by the Lingbao school and heavily citing the *Duren jing* 度人經 (Scripture of Salvation, DZ 1), especially in its incantations (Guo 2007, 203-08). The latter appears also in scroll 14 of the *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (Great Rites of Highest Clarity and Numinous Treasure, DZ 1221), compiled by Wang Qizhen 王契真 of the Southern Song, as well as in scroll 69 of the *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* 靈寶無量度人上經大法 (Highest Scripture Great Rites for Limitless Salvation of Numinous Treasure) of the Ming—here under the title *Wupian yuzhang* 五篇玉章 (Five Sections of Jade Verses). Both texts are also found in the illustrated version—as the first two texts in scroll 6—which, too, originated in the Southern Song and includes the elementary magic arts (*fashu* 法術) of the school (Guo 2007).

Scroll four has five texts related to practical methods for good health. The first three also appear in scrolls 7 and 8 of the illustrated version; the last two reflect popular methods for health enhancement: the *Shiduan jin* 十段錦 (Ten Brocades) and *Liuzi jue* 六字訣 (Six Healing Sounds). In this version, the texts include some explanatory notes (*zhu* 注) as well as sub-commentaries (*shu* 疏), but there is no mention of a specific author.

Scroll five contains lists of precepts of Purity and Brightness together with rituals of initiation. Texts here include:

Shier shangpin quanjie jing 十二上品勸戒經 (Twelve Highest Precepts of Admonition, DZ 182)

Jingming chuzhen jiejing 淨明初真戒經 (Purity and Brightness Precepts for Initial Perfected)

Jingming zhengzhen jiejing 淨明正真戒經 (Purity and Brightness Precepts for Advanced Perfected)

Jingming shangzhen jiejing 淨明上真戒經 (Purity and Brightness Precepts for Highest Perfected)

Jingming zaijia fengchi jieyi 淨明在家奉持戒儀 (Purity and Brightness Precepts and Worship Observances for Householders)

Jingming nüzhen jieyi 淨明女真戒儀 (Purity and Brightness Precepts and Observances for Female Perfected)

Jingming sanzhen kejie weiyi 淨明三真科戒威儀 (Purity and Brightness Rules, Precepts, and Dignified Observances for Three Kinds of Perfected)

Only the first appears in the *Daozang*, the others are new works. They contain various kinds and levels of precepts, revealed by various divinities, such as the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Beginning (Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊) and the Sovereign of Emptiness (Xuhuang tianzun 虛皇天尊), and related to different levels of initiated practitioners, from beginning through advanced, from householders to women..

Scroll six is called *Jingming zongpai* 淨明宗派 (Lineages of Purity and Brightness). It includes biographies of the founders and various famous disciples. Most of these biographies are new and not found elsewhere.

Scroll seven has the title *Duxian wenji* 都仙文集 (Collected Works of Capital Immortals). It contains various writings and verses of the founders, such as Xu Xun, Lü Dongbin, Hu Huichao 胡慧超, Guo Pu 郭璞, Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾, and others. All these also appear in part two of the *Jiyao* version, except the poem revealed by Lü Chunyang described earlier (see Fig. 4 above).

Scroll eight in contents is the same as scrolls 11 to 13 of the illustrated version. It contains the oral teachings of Master Liu Yuzhen 劉玉真, an important innovator of the school under the Yuan who promoted it extensively so it came to exert a great influence on Chinese society. Most of Liu Yuzhen's oral teachings are found in the *Jingming zhongxiao quanshu*, compiled by his successors (see Guo 2007).

Scroll nine is a new work, entitled *Jingming fa zangtu* 淨明法藏圖 (Illustrated Collection of the Methods of Purity and Brightness). It provides

instructions on how to select a good site for building a monastery and how to find appropriate companions for cultivating life and practicing Daoism.

Scroll ten also contains new works. Its three texts are:

Chaozhen lidou jingchan jietan zhangzhou dengshi 朝真禮斗經懺戒壇章奏等式
(Rites for Audience with the Perfected, Worshipping the Dipper, Reciting
Scriptures and Repentances, Submitting Petitions on the Altars, and
More)

Jingming qirang liandu kewen 淨明祈禳煉度科文 (Ritual Models for Prayers,
Exorcism, and Salvation of Purity and Brightness)

Jingming keyi zaowan kesong 淨明科儀早晚課誦 (Chants for Morning and
Evening Services of Purity and Brightness)

All these serve to elucidate rituals for helping the living, saving the dead, and staying in positive contact with the divine on a daily basis. They also contain numerous registers and talismans (see Fig. 6).

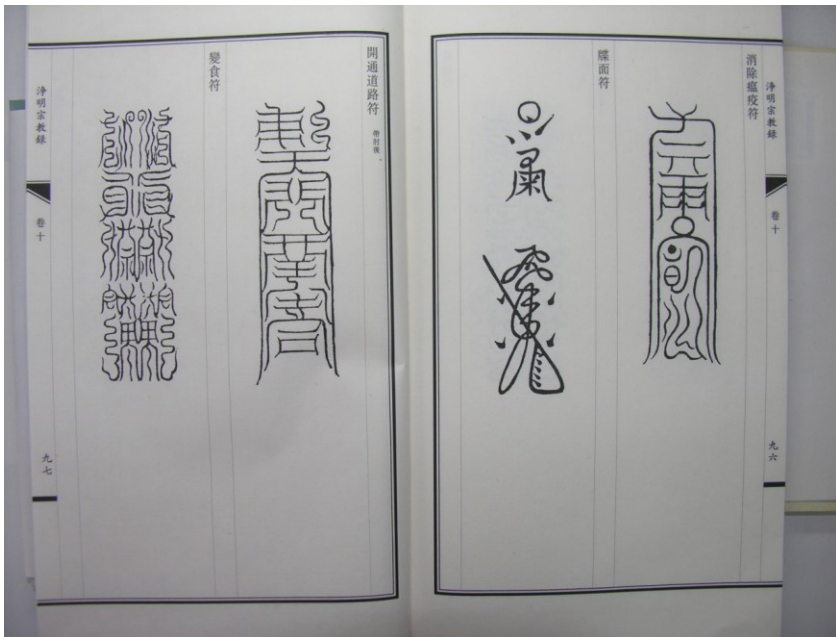


Fig. 6. Talisman in the ten-volume edition.

The appendix of this version contains some special recipes of the school, contained in two texts: *Duxian zhenjun shengong miaoji fang* 都仙真君神功妙濟方 (Prescriptions of Wondrous Rescue and Divine Efficacy from the Perfected Lord Xu Jingyang) and *Jingming tang shengong miaoji zhufang* 淨明堂神功妙濟諸方 (Various Prescriptions of Wondrous Rescue and Divine Efficacy from the Halls of Purity and Brightness). All these appear here for the first time.

To sum up, the ten-volume edition begins with the basic doctrines of Purity and Brightness, then moves on to discussions of internal alchemy. Next, it presents elementary rituals, introduces various practical methods of long life and good health, and proclaims precepts and relevant rituals. After that, this version records the status of the school, presents excerpts of papers, poetry, and writings of its Yuan-dynasty founders, and specifies ways of arranging the monastery. In addition, it also outlines how best to find a religious companion for the cultivation of long life and lists rituals to save all living beings, save the dead, and enhance daily religious life. Its appendix adds special prescriptions of the school. More extensive than even the fifteen-scroll version of the Ming dynasty, this is the most complete form of the text yet.

In addition, it contains all texts also found in the *Jiyao*, but the latter are often shorter and probably fragmentary. As its postscript says, the text was printed particularly to popularize and propagate the teachings and methods of Purity and Brightness. Its edition, moreover, was the work of Zhu Daolang, also known as Bada shanren 八大山人, a descendant of the Ming imperial family who converted to Daoism after the dynasty's collapse (see Guo 2009).

Conclusion

Comparing several key versions of the *Jingming zongjiao lu* of the Ming and Qing dynasties, several obvious differences emerge. For example, the ten-volume edition has detailed rules on monastic institutions not found in earlier versions. Also, the Ming edition tends to place higher emphasis on internal alchemy, including many different charts and diagrams—no longer present in the Qing version. Instead, the latter has more ritual procedures and manuals. This shows a pervasive shift of

emphasis away from internal alchemy and toward ritual in the school of Purity and Brightness during the Ming and Qing.

A Daoist school with the outstanding feature of practicing loyalty and filial piety, it adopted rituals from the Southern Song and, under the Yuan dynasty, treated loyalty and filial piety as new dimensions of internal alchemy (see Guo 2007). It is quite possible that the school's Ming emphasis on internal alchemy followed the increased flourishing of Complete Perfection. Its shift toward ritual, on the other hand, may well have to do with Zhu Quan 朱權 (1378-1448), son of the first Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398) and compiler of a major ritual compendium, who was also a follower of Purity and Brightness. Another major component of this shift is the importance of ritual in spreading the teachings among the people, as seen in the great series of ritual books *Guangchuyeng yizhi* 廣城儀制 (Ritual Patterns of Master Guangcheng) completed by Chen Fuhui 陳復慧, Qing monk of Complete Perfection (see Yin 2010).

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The Cult of Spirit-Writing in the Qing

The Daoist Dimension

LAI CHI-TIM

Abstract¹

In Chinese religions, “spirit-writing” is an oracular technique that channels communication between the realm of deities and groups of devotees. Popular in 19th-century China, there is little evidence that it was particularly Daoist and that spirit-written scriptures contained in the Ming *Daozang* emerged directly from traditional Daoist doctrine. However, its adoption in the Qing greatly influenced the development of the religion, sparking the growth of lay practice. Beginning in the early 17th century, literati-led spirit-writing altars flourished, devoted to the immortal Lü Dongbin. Small but widespread groups centering on altars since then have represented a third facet of the religion, besides monastic and fire-dwelling Daoism. Not founded by monks or priests, these groups are lay congregations centering on spirit-writing cults to Patriarch Lü. They place strong emphasis on the personal aspect of devotion and self-cultivation through internal alchemy and other methods, commonly revealed through spirit-writing. Central to their belief structure is a shift from institutionalized to local and personal religion, opening a different path to salvation and exploring new forms of meditative processes. The compilation, production, and circulation of different editions of their texts, such as the spirit-written *Lüzu quanshu*, shows an association network devoted to lay Daoist spirit-writing cults not only in the main centers of Wuchang, Changzhou, Hangzhou, Chengdu, Beijing, Guangdong, and elsewhere.

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In Chinese religions, "spirit-writing" (*fuluan* 扶鸞, lit. "supporting the phoenix"²), also called *fuji* 扶乩, lit. "supporting the planchette," is an oracular technique that channels communication between the realm of deities and groups of people devoted to spirit-writing cults. One or two spirit mediums, known as the "principal phoenix disciple" (*zhengluan shen* 正鸞生) or also as *jishou* 乩手, hold a writing implement, usually a Y-shaped wooden stick, believed to be directed by a deity to reveal characters in a sand tray (*shapan* 砂盤). A reader calls out the characters and a scribe transcribes the message onto paper. Usually, the séance takes place in the inner sanctuary of the shrine, an area before a central image of the deity, fenced off with a low wooden railing. A number of devotees and cult members may be present to observe the séance.



Fig. 1. A séance at a spirit-writing cult in Hong Kong.

² The *luan* 鸞 is a mystical bird similar but not identical to the *feng* 鳳, which is commonly rendered in English as "phoenix."

Unlike the “martial” form of mediumship paradigmatically seen in the exorcistic or violent practices of the so-called *tâng-ki* spirit medium in Taiwanese and other South Asian communities, spirit-writing takes a “literary” form of mediumship and transmits divine messages to humans in written format. The literary term for spirit-writing cults is “descending brush” (*jiangbi* 降筆), meaning the revelation of divine messages through a brush on a sand-covered surface.

The Daoist Connection

There appears to be little evidence that spirit-writing was particularly the domain of the Daoist tradition. Conversely, most spirit-writing altars promoted the syncretic nature of Chinese religious beliefs and ritual practices, combining Confucian morality, Daoist concepts of immortality, and the Buddhist liturgical method for the universal deliverance of the dead. In late imperial China, spirit-writing cults were often supported by a heterogeneous local elite consisting of scholar-officials, gentry, merchants, and wealthy people.

Spirit-writing in 19th-century China was a popular religious practice shared by many new sectarian groups, such as the Xiantian dao 先天道 (Way of Anterior Heaven), Tongshan hui 同善會 (Society for Sharing Goodness), Yiguan dao 一貫道 (Way of All-pervading Unity), and others. After the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, these sectarian communities were stigmatized as “reactionary secret societies” and forced to desist from all public activities. Therefore, spirit-writing has long been abolished in mainland China. In contrast, spirit-writing altars (*jitan* 乩壇) or phoenix halls (*luan tang* 鸞堂) still spread across many Chinese communities in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and North America. For instance, over five hundred phoenix halls reportedly share the popular Confucian orientation in Taiwan. In 1978, they set up an association of phoenix halls called the Republic of China Assembly of the Divine Teachings of the Confucian School (Zhonghua Mingguo Shejiao Hui 中華民國儒宗神教會) (Clart 1996, 8; 2003).

Spirit-writing was practiced in China for centuries and can be traced back to the 12th century under the Southern Song (1127-1278). An oracular technique, it was a common divination practice, in vogue among high-ranking officials and the literati as well as the common people.

While spirit-writing was mostly used as an oracle to solve believers' personal problems, it could be and was also used for writing books of revelations attributed to the deity worshiped by the cult.

According to Kristofer Schipper and Terry Kleeman, one of the earliest surviving scriptures contained in the Ming *Daozang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon), the *Wenchang dadong xianjing* 文昌大洞仙經 (Great Cavern Scripture According to Wenchang, DZ 5), is explicitly recognized to have been composed by spirit-writing or "descending the brush onto the phoenix terrace" (*jiangbi yu luntai* 降筆於鸞臺) ((Schipper 1994, 12-13; Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1204-05). It was revealed near Chengdu, Sichuan in 1168 by the Divine Lord of Zitong 梓潼帝君, a popular deity in northern Sichuan, to the medium Liu Ansheng 劉安勝, referred to as the Attendant Transcendent of the Phoenix Ministry (*luanfu shixian* 鸞府侍仙) (Kleeman 1993, 46; 1994, 16-19).

Liu's spirit-writing shrine was called the Altar of the Mysterious Union in Jade Vacuity (*Xuanhui yuxu tan* 玄會玉虛壇), established in the Pavilion of Central Harmony and Sincere Response (*Zhonghe chengying lou* 中和誠應樓) on the otherwise unknown Baoping shan 寶屏山 near Chengdu (*Gaoshang dadong Wenchang silu ziyang baolu* 大洞文昌司祿紫陽寶籙 1.3a; Kleeman 1994, 18). We have very little information about the medium or his spirit-writing group. Although some scholars regard his group as one of the earliest Daoist shrines (*daotan* 道壇) practicing spirit-writing, it is not clear whether Liu was a Daoist priest with patrons who formed an organized Daoist group centered on religious spirit-writing (Xie 2013, 125-26; Clart 1996, 13).

Unlike the traditional view that the rise of the spirit-writing cult had a close affinity with Daoism (see Xu 1999; Kleeman 1993, 60), my hypothesis is that it cannot be taken for granted that this example of Liu Ansheng's spirit-written scriptures emerged directly from the "internal structure of traditional Daoist doctrine" (Xu 1999, 9). Indeed, the 43rd Heavenly Master of Longhu shan in Jiangxi, Zhang Yuchu 張宇初 (1361-1410), in his *Daomen shigui* 道門十規 (Ten Rules for Daoist Followers) condemned the use of spirit-writing as unfit for orthodox Daoists (Schipper and Verellen 2004, 33, 35). In traditional Daoism, divinities were little more than the hypostasis of cosmic forces, invoked only through elaborate rituals performed by properly ordained priests. In

contrast, as Kleeman rightly points out, the religiosity of the spirit-writing cult represents the Song religious revolution, through which cult members had direct communication with the Divine Lord of Zitong (1994, 13; 1993, 63). In sum, it may not be justifiable to argue that, because they were transmitted in the *Daozang*, these spirit-written scriptures in honor of Zitong and revealed to Liu Ansheng should be viewed as created and developed as part of Daoism.³

Indeed, in his study of the Ming *Daozang*, Schipper delineates a new feature of Daoist theological evolution, namely the increasing influence of popular cults of local saints in lay society after the Southern Song. No longer defining itself against the cults of popular deities, as common in medieval times, Daoism during the Song came under the ever-increasing influence of the worship of popular saints associated with local temples and lay associations (*shehui* 社會). Some local saints such as Wenchang, Mazu 媽祖, Wenqiong 溫瓊, and Guangong 關公 became accepted in Daoism to a certain extent (Schipper 1994, 1-23). Schipper estimates that sixty of the 1420 texts in the Ming Canon relate to the popular worship of local deities. He explains that this adoption of popular cults brought about a certain theological shift in Daoism from the medieval concept of divinity as the hypostasis of cosmic *qi* to the “ephemerist theories which see gods as the transcendent spirits of erstwhile human beings” (Schipper 1994, 20).

Appreciating the adoption of cults of local deities into the Daoist pantheon is useful to the present inquiry concerning the relationship between spirit-writing cults and Daoism. Local literati practiced spirit-writing at home, in temples, and in special shrines founded in every prefecture and county capital under the Song, Yuan, and Ming. It is thus not surprising that it influenced the development of Daoism, and that the *Daozang* contains elements related to it. It has, moreover, also exerted significant influence on lay Daoist literati-congregations in modern China (see Shiga 2013).

³ Philip Clart presents a different view, arguing that “although our data on these Daoist spirit-writing cults are still fragmentary, they are sufficient to indicate the existence of a long and widespread pre-nineteenth century tradition of congregational groups dedicated to such deities as Wenchang, Chen Tuan, and Zhang Sanfeng” (1996, 15).

First Daoist Cults

Besides the *Wenchang dadong xianjing*, the *Daozang* also contains a collection of writings from a temple cult devoted to two local saints in central Fujian that flourishing from the Northern Song until the late Ming. It devoted itself to popular gods named the True Lords of Vast Mercy and Marvelous Succor (Honggen lingji zhenjun 洪恩靈濟真君), a divine title given to the euhemerized figures of the two Xu brothers. Among the many books reproduced by their cult and included in the *Daozang*, the earliest is the *Xuxian hanzao* 徐仙翰藻 (Literary Writings of the Immortal Xu Brothers), dated to the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368). Identifying it as a spirit-written scripture, Schipper says, "All the pieces contained in this collection [*Xuxian hanzao*] were written by the immortal Xu brothers themselves through spirit-writing (*luanji* 鸞箕 or *jibi* 箕筆)" (Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1211).

The worship of the popular deities of Zitong and the immortal Xu Brothers most likely is not typical of the widespread Daoist congregational groups devoted to revealing Daoist divinities by means of spiritwriting from the Southern Song to the mid-Ming. Indeed, the cults represent only some of the instances recorded in the *Daozang*. Nor do we have much evidence to conclude that there was a widespread organization of Daoist altars for spirit-writing before the late 16th century.

In contrast, it is beyond doubt that spirit-writing enjoyed considerable popularity among scholar-officials and literati in late imperial China. They often used it to ask about the outcome of examinations and what official posts they were to attain. For example, the literati-medium Jin Shentan 金聖嘆 (1608-1661), an eminent literary critic, was well-known for using his private spirit-writing practice to resolve the personal problems of many local literati in the Wu region (modern Suzhou, Jiangsu). Jin acquired his divine messages through planchette revelations received from a Buddhist saint by the name of Lean dashi 泐庵大師, who had re-incarnated many times since his death in the Chen dynasty (late 6th c.). In view of the popularity of spirit-writing among the late Ming literati in Suzhou, Lu Lin 陸林 notes that "during the reign of Emperor Zhenzong (1628-1644), there was a flourishing of planchette altars set up at home by many literati scholars in the Wu 吳 region" (2006, 158).

Beginning in the early 17th century, literati-led spirit-writing cults flourished devoted to the worship of the Daoist immortal Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓. Also known as Patriarch Lü 呂祖 (Lüzū), he was officially canonized as Fuyou dijun 孚祐帝君 (Imperial Lord, Savior of the Needy) during the Yuan. The school of Complete Perfection (Quanzhen 全真) honored him as their third major patriarch, closely linked to their founder Wang Zhe 王喆, aka Chongyang 重陽 (1113-1170) and his seven direct disciples. In the late 16th century, he began to communicate via planchette with many devotees of spirit-writing altars established in the Jiangsu and Jiangxi regions. The preface of the *Bapin xinjin* 八品仙經 (Immortal Scripture in Eight Chapters), written in 1589 by Li Yingyang 李應陽 and contained in the *Lüzū quanshu* 呂祖全書 (Complete Books of Patriarch Lü), specifies the details.

The *Bapin xinjin* descended from Patriarch Lü via spirit-writing. The first and second chapters were received in Guangling 廣陵 [Yangzhou 揚州]; the third and fourth chapters in Jinling 金陵 [Nanjing 南京]; the fifth scripture in Piling 毘陵 [Changzhou 常州]; the sixth and seventh chapters in Xinzhou 信州 [Shangrao 上饒]; and the eighth chapters in Linjiang 臨江 [Zhangshu 樟樹].

Patriarch Lü transmitted these chapters to all his believers for wider circulation. The Imperial Lord requested his disciple Qixuanzi 啟玄子 from Guangling to gather and publish the eight chapters. The disciple Li [Yingyang] wrote the preface to this compilation of Patriarch Lü's scripture. After Qixuanzi had finished collecting and editing the eight chapters, he pledged to the female immortal Ho [Xiangu] 何仙姑 and the immortal Zhang Ziyang 張紫陽 to conduct a proofreading by planchette. The final *Bapin xinjin* was printed at [Qixuan zi's] altar called the Pavilion of Gathering Immortals 集仙樓 located in Wandian 萬店 [of Guangling]. (9.Pref 5b)

Spirit-writing cults by private individuals composing scriptures like this, centered on revelations by Lü Dongbin, in the late Ming clustered mainly in the lower Yangzi region, from Jiangxi to Jiangsu. In contrast, Daoist spirit-writing during the Kangxi reign (1662-1722) spread throughout the empire. Four spirit-writing altars in particular distinguished themselves within the cult to Patriarch Lü by their explicit association with traditional lineages of Daoism and the worship of Daoist deities. They included the Gu hongmei ge 古紅梅閣 (Old Red Plum Hall) in Pi-ling, the

Hansang gong 涵三宮 (Palace Encompassing the Three [Teachings]) in Wuchang 武昌 (Hubei), the Yutan 玉壇 (Jade Altar) west of Tianxin Bridge 天心橋 in Sucheng 蘇城 (Suzhou), and the Jueyuan tan 覺源壇 (Altar of the Source of Awakening) in Beijing.



Fig. 2. Daoist spirit-writing activity devoted to Patriarch Lü.

The first three were all founded under Kangxi, while the last was famous for being directed by Jiang Yupu 蔣予蒲 (1756-1819), an elite-official at the Qing court under Qianlong (1736-1795). They represented a new type of lay Daoist movement that shared a belief in Patriarch Lü combined with spirit-writing, independence from monastic institutions, and the engagement of lay communities in the cult within certain congregational contexts in association with traditional lineages.

The *Jinhua zongzhi*

Monica Esposito and Mori Yuria recently studied the *Jinhua zongzi* 金華宗旨 (Tenets of the Golden Flower), an alchemical text attributed to Patriarch Lü that centers on the contemplative practice of the golden elixir (*jindan* 金丹) and in the West is known as *The Secret of the Golden Flower* (Wilhelm 1962; Cleary 1992). They show conclusively that it stems from a spirit-writing community named the Bailong jingshe 白龍精舍 (Pure As-

sembly of the White Dragon), and in the late 17th century was received by a branch of the Gu hongmei ge in Piling (Esposito 1998; 2013; Mori 2002). Members of both spirit-writing altars claimed to belong to the school of Pure Brightness (Jingming dao 淨明道), associated with the immortal Xu Xun 許遜, originally of the Jin dynasty (265-420).

In Song times (1112), Xu Xun was canonized by Emperor Huizong as the True Lord of Divine Merit and Marvelous Succor (Shengong miaoji chenjun 神功妙濟真君). His worship subsequently developed into a full-fledged Daoist school (Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1115). In the early Qing, its followers received texts on contemplative alchemical practices through spirit-writing. As Shao Zhilin 邵志琳 (1748-1810) notes in his preface to the *Jinhua zongzi*, around 1688 a group of at least seven people belonging to Pure Brightness came together at the Bailong jinshe altar in Piling. There they received the *Jinhua zongzi* from Xu Xun through intermediaries: the immortal Lü Dongbin joined by the well-known Complete Perfection masters Qiu Chuji 邱處機 and Tan Chuduan 譚處端.⁴

The text was first revealed as a dialogue between Patriarch Lü and the spirit-writing disciples. As a recipient named Pan Yi'an 彭伊安 describes it,

As I remember, it was in the *wushen* year [1668] that our holy patriarch Chunyang [i.e., Lü] began to transmit the 'Instructions.' The seven people who made a commitment to him bowed deeply and obtained [his teachings]. None but these seven received this transmission. The most profound teaching was [expressed in] no more than one or two words. It could not be put into words and letters. Afterwards, the seven questioned the Patriarch in detail. As our holy patriarch spared no mercy in giving clarifications, [his teachings were] compiled for days and months. Eventually they composed a volume. (*Lüzu quanshu* 49, Pref. 9a; Mori 2002, 167)

However, the volume lingered unfinished after the seven original recipients passed away. Only a second revelation to seven other mem-

⁴ Shao Zhilin, in his version of the *Jinhua zongzi* collected in the 64-juan *Lüzu quanshu*, criticizes this school: "Complete Perfection could flourish in its ultimate boom. It had a prosperous time among its followers but declined in the mind-transmission until it reached extreme disorder and confusion, reaching the replacement and decline seen at present" (49.1ab; Mori 2002, 170-71).

bers of the school in 1692 made its completion possible. In its first part, entitled *Kaizong chanjiao* 開宗闡教 (Clear Teachings on the Foundation of our Tradition), Tan Chudian reveals that, since the transmission of Xu Xun's teachings had disappeared for generations, this text had come to revive them. However, it required the beginning of a new Daoist sect by the name of Ritual Lineage of Great Oneness (*Taiyi fapai* 太乙法派) to be linked with Pure Brightness, since its genealogy "does not reside in the southern and northern traditions [of Daoism]" (Esposito 2013, 278). Founded as a new Daoist sect, it also honored Patriarch Lü as the "great Daoist founding master of the first generation." In its wake, its disciples received religious names taken from the post-creation (*houtian* 後天) sequence of the eight trigrams (*Lüzu quanshu* 49.26b).

Like most private spirit-writing altars in the early Qing, Bailong jingshe and Gu hongmei ge in Piling were presumably located in private homes. In contrast, the spirit-writing community of Hansang gong, in the northeast of Wuchang city, in the late 17th century distinguished itself by establishing an independent sanctuary (*gong* 宮) to receive Patriarch Lü's teachings. He began to deliver planchette revelations from heaven to a group of twenty elite scholars at this altar in 1702 (13, Lü Pref. 3a). This altar, too, was originally privately located, in the homes of Li Wushu 李務恕, Song Ticheng 宋體誠, and Qiao Yishu 喬以恕 (13, Huang Chengshu Pref. 3ab). Since their homes did not have enough space and might contaminate the holiness of the descending phoenix, they relocated their spirit-writing activity to a newly-built, independent sanctuary—the Hansang gong on Mount Chongfu 崇府山, northeast of the city.

Its congregation created an organization with its own altar rules, liturgical patterns, and séance officers; members came to fulfill specialized functions (3b-4a). The community further undertook the compilation of a first anthology attributed to Patriarch Lü, the *Lüzu quanshu* in 32 scrolls (see Lai 2013), published in 1744. It served as a model for other Daoist spirit-writing altars who soon came to publish their own editions of histransmissions.

Another spirit-writing altar linked with Patriarch Lü is the Jueyuan tan in Beijing during the Qinqong era (see Mori 2001). Its central figure was Jiang Yupu, also known as Huijue 惠覺. In 1781, he obtained the advanced official degree (*jinshi* 進士) and entered government service,

reaching a position in the Ministry of Revenue (*hubu shilang* 戶部侍郎) in 1808 (Esposito 2013, 205). Although the exact origin of the Jueyuan tan is unknown, an immortal named Enwu 恩悟 reports according to the *Lüzü quanshu zhengzong* 呂祖全書正宗 (Complete Works of the Orthodox Lineage),

In the winter of the *wuwu* 戊午 year [1798], the altar was [re]opened to receive the divine order. The True Lord of Proclaiming the Teaching [Hongjiao zhenjun 宏教真君, i.e., Liu Shouyan 柳守元, the legendary disciple and assistant of Patriarch Lü] was the resident deity, transmitting divine teachings received from the Imperial Master [Lü]. (ch. 1, Pref. 35a)

Following Patriarch Lü's transmission of alchemical teachings, Jueyuan tan members aspired to create a new orthodox Daoist line, called Celestial Immortal Lineage (Tianxian pai 天仙派) (Esposito 2013, 211). Unlike the Ritual Lineage of Great Oneness affiliated with Pure Brightness, it had no connection to this school nor did it use trigrams to designate its followers, applying instead a new twenty-character lineage poem (*paishi* 派詩):

Tranquilly without any being, 寂然無一物
 Marvelously unified with the former heaven, 妙合於先天
 Original Yang returns to its original position, 元陽復本位
 In solitude you pace the Jade Capital as an immortal. 獨步玉京仙
 (Esposito 2013, 285)

However, like other Daoist spirit-writing altars, they were keen to publish spirit-written scriptures attributed to Patriarch Lü. For instance, in his postscript to the new edition of the alchemical scripture *Jindan xinfa* 金丹心法 (Mental Methods of the Golden Elixir), Jiang Yupu claims: On the 18th day of the 6th month in the second year of Jiaqing [1797], I met Chizhen zi 持真子 in Jinan 濟南 and had a first glimpse of the book *Jindan xinfa*. I was struck with wonder, saying, 'Marvelous! This is [the manifestation of] the Dao.'

Spirit-writing altars like the Jueyuan tan played a major role in the later development of the Daoist tradition. As Monica Esposito notes, "This new lineage—created at the Jueyuan tan with its beliefs, aspirations, rules, and commitments—became the driving force in the compila-

tion of a new standardized Daoist Canon [i.e., the *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要, the Essence of the Daoist Canon], whose revelation lay in the magical hands of the founding patriarch Lü Dongbin" (2013, 211).

The *Lüzu quanshu*

Members of major Daoist spirit-writing altars all had an explicit lineage consciousness that placed religious beliefs and practices in the Daoist tradition. This clearly differentiated them from other spirit-writing shrines that incorporated certain self-appellations of the Confucian school (*rumen* 儒門) or popular sects. The latter tended to embed their syncretistic teachings within a popular ritual framework, linked to the worship of popular gods, such as the Venerable Mother of the Limitless of Yiguan dao. In addition, Daoist altars were religious sites independent of the monastic circles of the Complete Perfection school. Rather, they featured a congregational character, receiving Lü Dongbin's teachings via spirit-writing. In the early Qing, moreover, they produced a group of new revelatory Daoist texts, central to the later compilation of various anthologies of Patriarch Lü's writings.

In 1744, the Hansang gong community published the first *Lüzu quanshu* in 32 scrolls, followed by various editions with different numbers of scrolls, compiled at other spirit-writing altars. Between 1803 and 1805, Jueyuan tan disciples compiled a new anthology in 16 scrolls, entitled the *Lüzu quanshu zhengzong*. Another version, the *Lüzu quanshu zongzheng* 呂祖全書宗正 in 18 scrolls, was stored at the spirit-writing altar in the Suzhou area home of Pang Dingqiu 彭定求 (1645-1719), a Daoist devotee and eminent scholar of the Neo-Confucian teachings of Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1528) (Lai 2013, 202). The *Lüzu quanshu zong-zheng* was re-published in 1852 by Chen Mouzi 陳謀子 after he restored its original woodblocks.

Central to Chinese religious life in Ming and Qing society was the harmonious integration of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, acclaimed by all religious schools, sects, and lay associations. Daoist spirit-writing communities, too, adopted this pattern of thought into their religious system, enhanced with the belief that the immortal Lü Dongbin was the "Patriarch of all Three Teachings" (*Sanjiao zongshi* 三教宗師).

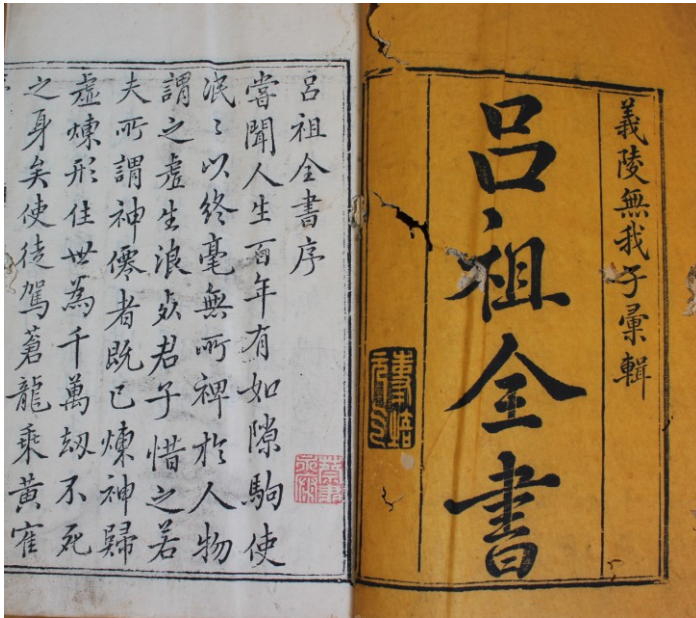


Fig. 3. The Lüzu quanshu of 1744

The *Qingwei sanpingjing* 清微三品經 (Immortal Scripture in Three Chapters of the Heaven of Pure Tenuity) states: “We know that the Dao of Confucianism is the same and interconnected with Daoism and Buddhism. Dao has no different intent, and both the schools of Confucianism and Buddhism ultimately derive from it” (*Lüzu quanshu* 14.6a).

The compilation Patriarch Lü’s teachings, furthermore, inspired the completion of the *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要 (Essence of Daoist Canon) by the members of the Jueyuan tan, the most important Daoist anthology after the Ming Canon, completed in 1445. Unlike their predecessor, Qing rulers did not undertake a major compilation of this kind, since they tended to repress rather than support Daoism. “The repressive measures instigated by the Manchu rulers and continued by their successors were so effective that in the 1920s only two or three copies of the Ming canon remained extant” (Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 39-40).

Today, the situation has changed. The canon has survived, and is now available in a variety of typeset and electronic editions, its 1500 texts essential for the modern study of the religion. Begun in 1406 by Zhang

Yuchu, it contains about 700 works from earlier canons, to which "the Ming editors added almost 800 new [Ming] books" (Schipper 1994,, 5). Published in 1445, it offers no materials on late Ming and Qing Daoism and contains few if any spirit-written materials.

The *Lüzü quanshu*, thus, serves as a major supplement to the canon. Even its first version, in 32 scrolls, contains a number of important texts:

Wupin xianjing 五品仙經 (Immortal Scriptures in Five Chapters)

Sanpin xianjing 三品仙經 (Immortal Scriptures in Three Chapters)

Cantong jing 參同經 (Scripture on the Equality of the Three)

Shende jing 聖德經 (Scriptures on the Virtues of the Saints)

Hanzan zayong 涵三雜詠 (Assorted Chants from the Palace Encompassing the Three)

Hanzan yulu 涵三語錄 (Recorded Sayings from the Palace Encompassing the Three)

These works consist mainly of esoteric alchemical teachings, moral injunctions, formal doctrines, treatises on the harmony of the three teachings—all allegedly transmitted by Patriarch Lü through spirit-writing, especially at the altar of the Hansan gong (see Esposito in Pregadio 2008, 726-28; Lai 2013). The *Lüzü quanshu* is thus not only an indispensable source for the study of Qing Daoist altars, but also the foundation and culmination of lay Daoist devotional practice, which largely displaced traditional methods dominantly tied to esoteric rituals performed by ordained priests. The *Lüzü quanshu* and *Daozang jiyao*, thus, provide canonical confirmation that these altars distinguished themselves as part of the Daoist tradition. Not only are their lineages affiliated with Daoist schools, but their compilation and publication of Patriarch Lü's transmissions represents their conscious effort to contribute to the completion of a new Daoist canon, supplementing and amending the omissions in that of the Ming.

In 1742, Liu Tishu 劉體恕, the main editor of the *Lüzü quanshu* in 32 two scrolls, and Huang Chengshu 黃誠恕, the spirit-writing medium of the Hansan gong, decided to gather all spirit-writing scriptures received from Patriarch Lü. When they published his "Complete Writings" in 1744, Huang praised the publication as a work constituting a great collection at the core of the Daoist canon and they announced that this an-

thology of revelations constituted the essence of the Daoist canon (*Lüzu quanshu* 14.6a, 18.32a).

Between 1803 and 1805, Patriarch Lü ordered the Jueyuan tan in Beijing to publish a new anthology entitled the *Lüzu quanshu zhengzong* in 16 scrolls, including various newly revealed scriptures. As a literati group of lay Daoist reformers, the altar members further followed an idealistic vision of Daoism, stressing the “method of the Golden Elixir” as the *non plus ultra* of orthodox teaching. Next, Patriarch Lü asked them to compile and publish a new standardized canon. They called it *Daozang jiyao* and claimed it was “to collect the quintessence of the entire canon and amend the omissions of the earlier version.” In other words, both texts were the result of altar members’ aspirations toward a reformed Daoism, of their longing to promote and spread the esoteric teachings of the Golden Elixir as received from Patriarch Lü writing. Authorizing this new vision of reformation, he announced before Lord Lao and the all the gods that this standardized canon should collect all texts to “synthesize the true transmission of the alchemical path and to gather together the essence of all scriptures” (Esposito 2013, 212).

Modern Daoism

During the Qing, Daoism was in decline or repression, since the Manchu rulers venerated Tibetan Buddhism and adopted a fundamentalist form of Confucianism, using it both for imperially endorsed rituals and as the basis of the examination system. At this time, “Daoism was not prominent in society and suffered from the generally low status of the clergy. . . . This low status deterred many intellectuals from taking the vow, depriving institutional religion of a supply of educated leadership” (Esposito 2000, 624).

The Qianlong census of all clerics in 1736-1739 shows just how much the Qing state repressed fire-dwelling Daoists (*huoju daoshi* 火居道士) of the Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi 正一) or Celestial Master (Tianshi 天師) school. The only Daoists to be issued a full Ordination Certificate (*dudie* 道牒) were monks of Complete Perfection, who had left the householder’s life (*chujia* 出家) and resided celibately in monasteries. Married Daoist masters living at home received a subordinate variant of

the certificate called a Ministry License (*buzhao* 部照) from the Board of Rites (Goossaert 2000).

In addition, the government reduced the official status of the hereditary Celestial Masters based on Mount Longhu 龍虎山. In contrast to the high court status his predecessors enjoyed under the Ming, the 56th Celestial Master Zhang Yulong 張遇隆 (?-1766) would no longer receive an audience at the palace after 1740. He was also demoted from third to fifth in rank at court and forbidden to request titles. By reducing the Celestial Master's formal title and privileges, the Qing state undermined his nominal powers in managing the Daoist religion, especially in the Jiangnan region (Goossaert 2004a, 125; Schipper and Verellen 2004, 39). The influence of the Celestial Masters continued to decline until, in the Daoguang period (1821-1850), the formal title Perfected of Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi sijiao zhenren 正一嗣教真人) disappeared altogether and the relationship between the court and the lineage came to an end (Esposito 2000, 627).

The Qing state officially only recognized the clergy of Complete Perfection, preferring them because they lived in monasteries and followed an ascetic and well-regulated life, conforming to government ideas of rule and control. This was significantly different from the Ming, when many monastic establishments disappeared and ordained clerics only survived by being absorbed into Orthodox Unity or popular temples (Goossaert 2000b, 702). In the early Qing, Complete Perfection experienced a revival, carried mainly by the seventh Dragongate (Longmen 龍門) patriarch, Wang Changyue 王常月 (?-1680), the abbot of the Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Abbey) in Beijing after 1656. He renewed the lineage and established the Baiyun guan as a major training center for all monks in preparation of formal ordination (*chuanjie* 傳戒) according to the *Longmen lüzong* 龍門律宗 (Dragongate Vinaya) tradition (Esposito 2013, 91-92; Esposito 2014, 12-13). Approved by the Qing state, Dragongate became the favored Daoist order and, within a few decades, claimed an exclusive monopoly on Daoist ordination. Over the next centuries, ordained clerics gained control of most Daoist monasteries in the country. The Qianlong census by "cautious extrapolation suggests a total of around 20,000 Quanzhen clerics for the whole of mid-eighteenth century China" (Goossaert 2004b, 717). The area of domi-

nance of the Complete Perfection clergy and their residential temples may well have extended into northeastern China, including areas such as Hebei, Shandong, and Liaoning (2004b, 718, 736-38).

The various measures of the Qing state, its demotion of married Daoists and Celestial Masters and enhancement of the monopoly of Complete Perfection in due course became a characteristic facet of Daoism in modern China, where political changes further disrupted the connections of Daoist masters with local temples, community life, and ritual services (see Lai 2012). On the other hand, neither had a great impact on local spirit-writing altars featuring groups of Daoist laypeople devoted to worshipping Patriarch Lü. Disassociating themselves from Orthodox Unity with its grand, classical liturgy (*keyi* 科儀), lay communities distanced themselves from the complexity and adulteration of the institutionalized performance of purgations (*zhai* 齋) and cosmic renewals (*jiao* 醮). This is clearly reflected in their choice of texts. “The new [Daoist] canon made the clear choice of leaving them [ritual texts and manuals of exorcism] out to focus on the quintessence of Daoist teaching [for the attainment of true immortality]” (Esposito 2007, 108).

At the same time, they inherited the practice of internal alchemy, the main meditative practice of Complete Perfection and the ultimate means for the attainment of immortality. However, their form of self-cultivation was different and they did not rely on clerics for instruction, and only later did ordained Daoists expand their practice into the laity. For example, in 1787-1792, the renowned Min Yide 閔一得 (1748/58-1836), eleventh Dragongate patriarch on Mount Jin’gai 金蓋山 (near Huzhou 湖州), founded a local group of lay disciples of Complete Perfection, called Lineage of Skillful Means (Fangbian pai 方便派), at a Daoist temple known as (Gu)meihuaguan (古)梅花觀 (Old Plum Blossom Abbey). This, however, has less to do with their desire to enhance lay practice than with the spread of spirit-writing cults dedicated to Patriarch Lü coming to influence the ordained tradition (Goossaert 2011). To borrow Mori Yuria’s words, “the new Dragongate lineage on Mount Jin’gai seems to have gained a guarantee of legitimacy from the spirit-writing of Patriarch Lü” (2002, 179).

In fact, Daoism did not become popularized or gradually lose its unique religious identity when it assimilated the popular cult of spirit-

writing. Rather, spirit-writing, especially dedicated to the worship of Patriarch Lü, created a reformation, a new dimension of Daoism, as evident in the compilations of the different editions of the *Lüzú quanshu* and the new *Daozang jiyao*. It means an emancipation of traditional Daoism into lay associations longing for Patriarch Lü's divine guidance and inspiration. Beyond the reach of the institutional arms of Orthodox Unity masters or Complete Perfection monks, lay devotees of spirit-writing altars directly honored Patriarch Lü as Master of Initiation (*dushi* 度師) or so Immortal Master (*xianshi* 仙師). Like Protestant movements in the West, they claimed to have direct communication with their lord, the Savior of the Needy. They placed strong emphasis on the personal aspect of their devotional practice by means of self-cultivation through internal alchemy and other methods, revealed via spirit-writing. Central to their belief structure was its shift from institutionalized to local and personal religion, opening a different path to transcendence or salvation and exploring new forms of alchemical and meditative processes.

The religious function of spirit-writing cults in effecting "improved access to the sacred realm" (Kleeman 1993, 63) is not merely the spread of lay Daoist altars centered on spirit-writing. As Philip Clart points out in his study of phoenix halls in Taiwan since 1853, their widespread development furnishes an illuminating example of the appropriation of spirit-writing cults into the popular Confucian tradition for the purpose of inventing a new Taiwanese religious tradition, comprising a syncretism of Daoist and Buddhist elements (Clart 1996). In a very similar manner, the spiritual function of spirit-writing cults also sparked the growth of lay Daoism throughout the Qing period. However, the compilation, production, and circulation of different editions of their texts, such as the spirit-written *Lüzú quanshu*, shows an association network devoted to lay Daoist spirit-writing cults not only in the main centers of Wuchang, Changzhou, Hangzhou, Chengdu, and Beijing but also in other parts of the country, notably Guangdong.

The earliest Daoist spirit-writing altar in Guangdong is the Yunqun xianguan 雲泉仙館 (Immortal Academy of Cloudy Springs), established in 1858 on Mount Xiqiao 西樵山 in Nanhai 南海. In 1965 and 1979, after they reestablished the Academy in Hong Kong in 1949, its followers published a 20th-century edition of the *Lüzú quanshu* in 33 scrolls, including

also the Southern Song alchemical text *Lingbao bifa* 靈寶畢法 (Complete Methods of the Numinous Treasure) (Lai 2013, 184n4). Outside the monastic and formal ordination system, the Yunqun xianguan goes back to a group of local literati with a focus on spirit-writing and self-cultivation. Members received formal admission by accepting a Daoist name chosen through spirit-writing. “There was no monastic system. The members did not wear their hair in Daoist fashion or dress in Daoist robes” (Shiga 2002, 199). Although the Academy had no formal ordination system, its lay believers received the status of Daoist (*daoshi* 道士), conferred by Patriarch Lü. As its spirit-written *Shanyu renting lu* 善與人同錄 (Record of Being Good to the Human Community) says,

The ancestral master [Lü] gave an oracle to all disciples, asking them a question: Why are all those who cultivate Dao called *daoshi*? [Patriarch Lü explains,] *Daoshi* refers to a state in which the literati [*shi* 士] are connected to Dao. This category of literati linked to Dao is parallel to other classes, such as literati skilled in literature [*wenshi* 文士] and scholars with degrees [*xueshi* 學士]. (1.7)

To distinguish a *daoshi*'s learning from other modes, the text further prescribes that “Daoist masters must widely practice goodness with merit-making and at the same time follow the path of cultivation and refinement.”

Conclusion

Small but widespread spirit-writing altars, including the Gu hongmei ge in Piling, the Hansanggong in Wuchang, the Jueyuan tan in Beijing, and the Yunqun xianguan in Nankai, represent a third facet of Daoism since the Qing dynasty. Not founded by monastic leaders or other clerical Daoists, they are lay congregations centering on spirit-writing cults honoring Patriarch Lü. Their devotees were elite scholars, some even official *jinshi* graduates who occupied high official rank. From the 17th to the mid-18th centuries, the number of small spirit-writing groups continued to grow. They actively received revelations on alchemical self-cultivation from Patriarch Lü and spread books with Daoist content along with the three teachings. The compilation and spread of the writings of Patriarch Lü, therefore, reflects an idealistic vision of Daoism that arose and

spread among literati and spirit-writing circles interested in self-cultivation who were caught up in moralistic and eschatological sentiments of sanctity and salvation.

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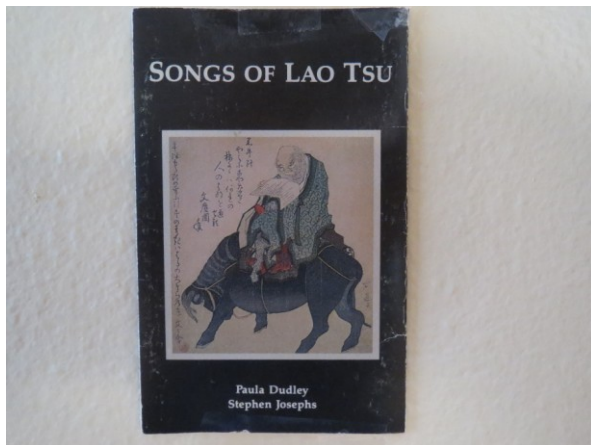
Practice

The Inspirational *Laozi*

Poetry, Business, and the Blues

LIVIA KOHN

In 1989, about a year after starting as assistant professor at Boston University, I attended a concert at the Old South Church in Copley Square. It was announced as “Songs of Lao Tsu” and involved a group of musicians and a singer presenting a poetic rendition of certain *Laozi* verses to blues and folk music. I enjoyed the performance and bought the cassette tape, little realizing what a treasure trove I held in my hand. The “Songs” have since been a valuable teaching aid in showing the contemporary transformation of ancient Daoist wisdom as well as a steady companion, bringing joy and harmony as well as profound insight into my life.



The “Songs” are in many ways a key to understanding the power of the *Laozi* in the West: both symptomatic for its continuous yet ever changing expression in art and literature, and also carriers of an inspiration that can only be described as wondrous. To begin, please go to www.dragonsatwork.com/those-who-would-take-over-the-earth/ and listen to a sample of the “Songs,” their rendition of chapter 29 of the *Laozi*.

The song you have just heard uses the translation by Witter Bynner (1881-1968), a highly poetic and deeply inspired version of the age-old text that stands out among the hundreds of translations it has received in English. The music is by Stephen Josephs (b. 1945), a highly contemporary and very American sound that merges blues, folk, and traditional rhythms. The vocals are by Paula Dudley (1955-2008), her voice carrying the beauty and inspiration of the text, at the same time challenging and haunting, serious and playful, light and intense. The combination of all three creates a unique expression of the *Laozi* that makes the ancient teachings relevant to our lives and brings them into our very bones in a new and unique way.

Witter Bynner

Harold Witter Bynner was born in Brooklyn, New York and grew up in Brookline near Boston. He graduated from Harvard in 1902 and was honored as its Phi Beta Kappa poet in 1907, publishing in *The Advocate*,

The Harvard Monthly, and other journals. He worked as a journalist and editor, then turned to writing and lived in New Hampshire for a while. In 1916, he was involved in a literary hoax; the following year, he traveled to Japan, Korea, and China, initiating a life-long fascination with East Asia.

A conscientious objector to World War I, he was drafted to do civil service and, in 1918-19, worked as an English teacher for the Students Army Training Corps at the University of California at Berkeley. There he met his Chinese muse and collaborator (see Kraft 1995; Horgan 2000).



Jiang Kanghu 江亢虎 (1883-1954), the son of a scholar-official family from Jiang-xi, was trained in the Chinese classics and educated in Japan. First, he worked as a newspaper editor, then became professor at Peking University in 1904. After a second stay in Japan in 1907, he turned radically socialist, campaigning for the abolition of private property and the institution of public schooling and women's rights—ideas that influenced the young Mao. After the Republic began in 1912, he founded the first socialist party of China, but was persecuted under the rule of Yuan Shikai and in 1917 fled to the U.S., where he taught at Berkeley.



Witter Bynner strongly connected with Jiang, "a gentle scholar and stimulating companion" (Bynner 1978, 3), and they became fast friends. In 1920, both returned to China, Bynner to travel with the sculptor Beniamino Bufano, Jiang to pursue his socialist vision, participating in the Comintern congress in Moscow and founding both the New Social Democratic Party of China and Nanfang University in Shanghai. They decided to collaborate in a major project of translating Chinese poetry, upon Jiang's suggestion selecting Sun Zhu's 孫洙(1711-1778) *Tangshi sanbai shou* 唐詩三百首 (Three Hundred Poems of the Tang) (Watson 1978, 15), the most popular and widely read collection of traditional poetry in China (Nienhauser 1986, 755; see also Harris 2009).

The project took most of the decade and appeared under the title *The Jade Mountain* in 1929 (Bynner and Kiang 1929). It was a collection of "remarkable accessibility," despite the fact that Bynner had little knowledge of Chinese, "almost miraculously free of basic error" (Watson 1978, 20, 23). Bynner showed "acute judgment and foresight in adopting the new form [of free verse] in his translations" (1978, 26), often producing "a pleasant flowing effect" and "creating many interesting and even arresting effects, "while "juggling the syntax of the original" (Watson 1978, 27, 28). The success of the project is even more astounding, since the two collaborators worked together in the same place for only a frac-

tion of the time, communicating mostly by overseas mail (Bynner 1978, 6; Lattimore 1978, 311).

Their later lives could not be more different. Jiang ran afoul of Chiang Kaishek in the late 1920s and had to flee the country again, spending three years in Canada, where he served as the first sinologist at McGill University. He returned to China in 1933, fled to Hong Kong during the Japanese invasion in 1937, then collaborated with the Japanese puppet government to ensure proper education of the masses. Arrested by the Kuomintang in the early 1940s, he died in prison in 1954.



Witter Bynner, in the meantime, returned to the U.S. in 1922 and settled in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Here he lived with his partner Robert Hunt in a traditional adobe house, now a Bed and Breakfast, called the Turquoise Bear Inn. He engaged in public service, taught various courses, and

wrote. He published his verse in personal collections, e.g., *Take Away the Darkness* (1947), as well as in prominent journals, such as the American magazine *Poetry*, which featured his "Inscriptions on Chinese Paintings" in 1957 (Parisi and Young 2002, 177-78).

Spending his winters in his second home on Lake Chapala, Jalisco, Mexico, he engaged with the great literary and artistic figures of his generation: Georgia O'Keeffe, D. H. Lawrence, Igor Stravinsky, Aldous Huxley, and more (Lattimore 1978, 313). In 1965, he suffered a debilitating stroke and died three years later (Kraft 1995; Horgan 2000). Upon his bequest, the proceeds from his estate served to create the Witter Bynner Foundation for Poetry in 1972, which is still active promoting poetry by providing grants to aspiring writers (www.bynnerfoundation.org).

Way of Life

Witter Bynner was deeply concerned with China for most of his life, and part of his continued attraction was the combination of art and politics, personal cultivation and public service he saw as characteristic of the traditional Chinese scholar-official. His vision of the *Laozi* matches this, and he cites with conviction the postscript of Herrymon Maurer's Laozi portrait, "The *Laozi* is one of our chief weapons against tanks, artillery, and bombs" (Bynner 1944, 16). The text plays this role because it is a major teaching instrument, bringing home to people the importance of how they live their particular lives.

"Democracy," Bynner says, "cannot be a successful general practice unless it is first a true individual conviction" (1944, 16). To him, Laozi has no "faith in any authority but the authority of the heart; he suggests that if those in charge of human affairs would act on instinct and conscience, there would be less and less need of organized authority" (1944, 25). His goal as an American—and, by adoption, Chinese—patriot in bringing Laozi's thought to the West, then, is to enhance the personal responsibility of the individual and thereby contribute to an overarching social and political transformation (Lattimore 1978, 316).

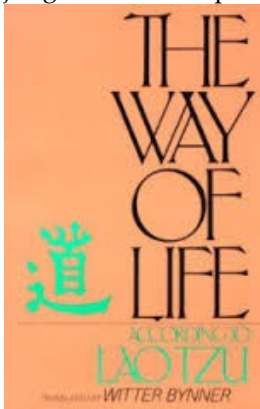
He is also mystified by the text and hopes, through deep engagement and prolonged study, "to uncover in Laozi's book the secret of his profound influence on China's loftiest thinkers and doers" (1978, 9). Reading numerous translations, he remains unsatisfied—notably with the most prominent ones at the time, those by Arthur Waley (1934) and Lin Yutang (1942). "I found myself little better satisfied with his [Lin's] presentation of Laozi in Western free verse than I have been with other English versions, most of which have seemed to me dry and stiff, pompous and obscure. And that is why I have been led to make my own version" (1944, 18; 1978, 9).

Paradoxically, since he had no support from Jiang, he had to rely entirely on those obscure and unsatisfactory renditions to create his own work (Lattimore 1978, 314, 318), among the hundreds of *Laozi* translations the only one that is "the creation of a distinguished original poet" (1978, 310). Not only this paradox but the entire translation process is a study in Daoist living, in moving along with the "natural processes"

(*ziran* 自然), free from “willed human interference” (*wuwei* 無為) (Lattimore 1978, 316).

Witter Bynner was not actually planning to do a *Laozi* translation. He came to look at the text only as a minor section in an entirely different book, *Chinese People and Poetry*. Nor was he planning to do any full-time writing in wartime. Serving as the New Mexico state chairman of United China Relief, he was fully engaged in annual fund-raising campaigns and other activities to aid the war effort (Lattimore 1978, 312). Then, however, he realized that the text had a lot more to offer than its translations warranted and decided to shift, to “make a personal contribution in the form of a book,” using the *Laozi* as a major defense against tanks (Lattimore 1978, 313).

To create his translation—which he completed in nine months as opposed to the nine years he took for *The Jade Mountain*—he gave up both, the rationally thought-out book project and his socially supported war relief work. Acting on an internal impulse and following a calling deeper than society and intellect, he let go of both useful activity and intellectual labor in favor of “a task that reasonable people would have judged at once impossible and redundant” (Lattimore 1978, 317).



The book, as it turned out, was a great success, bringing a voice of profundity and harmony to a war-torn world. As *The New Yorker* says, “A fresh simplicity and humane common sense prevail here . . . and the poems provide a delightful coolness for present disordered times” (1978, 325). It sold over 40,000 copies over the next few decades and has continued to inspire people from all walks of life.

After its publication in 1944, Bynner sent a copy to Jiang in his Nanjing prison. He did not hear back from him until 1948, when Jiang expressed his regrets of not having been part of the project but acknowledges the power of the work. “You chiefly took its interpretation from your own insight. It was your ‘fore-nature’ understanding—or in Chinese, *xiantian* 先天—that rendered it so simple and yet so profound. So the translation could be very close to

the original text even without knowledge of the words" (Bynner 1944, 7; 1978, 9).

In fact, the translation is not all that close to the original. As Owen Lattimore puts it, "If it does not always read like Laozi, it also does not read like a translation" (1978, 310). Witter Bynner chooses his own words for central concepts, varying them as context demands, which enhances readability but obscures connections within the original. To him, Dao 道 is "existence" (chs. 1, 32), "way of life" (ch. 25), "the way life flows" (chs. 4, 15), or "life whole as it is" (ch. 21). Great Dao 大道 is "bountiful life" (ch. 34) or the "fullness of life" (ch. 25). *De* 德, usually rendered "virtue" or "power," to him is "fitness" (ch. 38), while *xuande* 玄德 (mysterious virtue) is "the core of life" (chs. 10, 51), a phrase also used to render *wu* 無 (nonbeing) (ch. 1). *Shengren* 聖人, commonly translated as "sage," is "sane man" (ch. 2), "sound man" (chs. 27, 49), "sensible man" (chs. 12, 79), or "wise man" (ch. 22).

Some chapters read quite different from the original yet give voice to a profundity that shakes the reader up in unexpected ways.

Life on its way returns into a mist, 反者道之動
 Its quickness is its quietness again: 弱者道之用
 Existence of this world of things and men 天下萬物生於有
 Renews their never needing to exist. 有生於無 (ch. 40)

Others, although departing somewhat from the original, hit the nail on the head, packing an amazing punch that goes right to the core.

Which means more to you, you or your renown? 名與身孰親
 Which brings more to you, you or what you own? 身與貨孰多
 And which would cost you more if it were gone? 得與亡孰病
 The niggard pays, the miser loses. 是故甚愛必大費
 The least ashamed of men goes back if he chooses: 多藏必厚亡知足不辱
 He knows both ways, he starts again. 知止不殆可以長久 (ch. 44)

It was this power of the translation that made the *Laozi* so attractive to Stephen Josephs and inspired him to set certain chapters to music, including also this one (see www.dragonsatwork.com/Lao-Tzu-Poem).

The Songs

Stephen Josephs was born in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1945, received a B.A. in Psychology from Clark University, an M.A. in Education from Harvard University, and a Ed.D. (doctorate in education) from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (Josephs 2013, 294). His doctoral training was in a curriculum called “Aesthetics in Education,” which explored modes of teaching beyond words through music, art, dance, and other forms of self-expression, what we now call “embodied learning.” After graduation, he moved on to train in neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). Certified as a trainer, he founded the Massachusetts Institute of NLP in 1979.

Josephs first encountered Daoism as a practitioner in the 1980s.¹ Having spent most of the 1970s with Yogi Bhan studying Indian tantra and kundalini, he one day shook hands with Gunther Weil, one of his fellow seekers, and was amazed at the strong energy coming through him. “Where did you learn that?” he asked and was guided to Mantak Chia, who had just begun teaching in New England. Gradually moving away from Indian and toward Daoist practice, he began to study internal alchemy with Chia, in the process also becoming friends with Michael Winn, who underwent a similar shift around the same time (see www.healingtaousa.com/faq_michael_winn.html).

To cope with the transition, Josephs also went into psychotherapy, taking sessions with Mel Bucholtz in Cambridge, Massachusetts. On his birthday in 1982, Bucholtz gave him Witter Bynner’s *Laozi* translation as a present. He was amazed at the book and found it deeply inspiring, using it as the basis for meditation. To him, the *Laozi* in Bynner’s version opened the gate to a wider view of life and the integration various different belief systems. Held securely in Laozi’s arms, as he describes it, he could come to grips with the multiplicity of spiritual experiences and make better sense of the world.

Learning that the *Laozi* was originally a collection of aphorisms and consisted of rhymed verses or jingles that people would recite to commit to memory, he found the musical side of his nature attracted. A guitar

¹ * The following description of how the “Songs” came about is based on personal communication with Stephen Josephs, May 23, 2014.

player and composer, he especially liked the rhythmic verses in Bynner's translation, those that lent themselves to musical writing. He also recognized that music creates a platform for bringing words into deeper layers of the subconscious mind, embedding meaning deep in the individual's psyche. He thus selected thirteen chapters and began to compose music for them, using jazz (ch. 5), blues (ch. 44), renaissance chords (ch. 18), and more. Some chapters speak to sensory and meditation experience (chs. 10, 12, 35, 52); others deal with social skills and leadership in the world (chs. 3, 13, 18, 29, 67, 69). In all cases, the text provides a deep and profound meaning, vibrantly enhanced by the music and vocal presentation.

The vocalist, Paula Dudley-Tagiuri, was the girlfriend of his psychotherapist, similarly inspired by the *Laozi* and gifted with a wonderful voice. To begin, they played the "Songs" together, vocals accompanied by guitar.

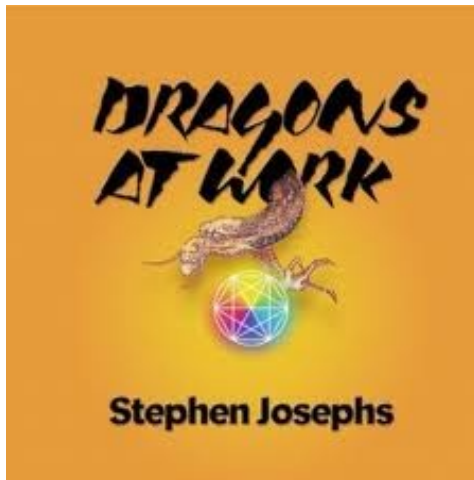


They recorded a sample tape and submitted it to Danny Goldberg of Gold Mountain Records, a well-known label in the field of popular music that also marketed Joan Baez and other famous singers. While interested in the project, Goldberg had too many other obligations, and the "Songs" were not a major priority.

Looking further afield, Josephs found a local company, Selcer Sound, in Brighton. He also decided to add further instruments, so that the recording now also has mandolin, banjo, piano, violin, clarinet, trombone, harmonica, and percussion as accompaniment. John Curtis and Larry Luddecke played a variety of instruments, and helped arrange the songs. Brian Ales mixed the sound. When the Witter Bynner Foundation gave its blessings, the project took off, leading not only to the creation of an audio recording but also to several live performances—such as the one I was fortunate to attend.

Business Application

The *Laozi* and the “Songs” have remained an important mainstay in Stephen Josephs’ career “as an executive coach and consultant” who helps “leaders build their vitality and focus to make their companies profitable and great places to work” (2013, 293). In California since 2002, his vision is to bring the Daoist sense of connectedness to the universe and its impulse toward social responsibility into business leadership, combined with taiji-enhanced feelings of ease and harmony in the physical body as well as a powerful, focused mental awareness. Hired by high-ranking executives who find themselves embroiled in struggles and contention, he teaches them various ways of relaxation, self-centering, and communication to both make their lives easier and increase their performance in business.



His method is best documented in his book, *Dragons at Work*, which tells of the transformation of Dan Schaeffer, a high-level executive “staggering under the weight of a project his command-and-control style cannot manage” (Josephs 2013, backcover). His executive coach, Michele Wu, has practiced taiji with her grandfather from an early age and has deep roots in both

Daoist wisdom and Western culture. She gradually raises Dan’s awareness and guides him toward a more balanced way of life, opening him to input from his team members and new perspectives on himself and his role.

Several of these new perspectives come directly from the *Laozi*. For one, to put work and money in their place, Michele asks Dan, “Which means more to you, you or your renown?” (ch. 44; 2013, 36). Later she receives advice from her grandfather who insists that Dan “needs to dis-

solve his small self and live in the awareness of his true self" (2013, 81). Laozi puts this in terms of rising above success and failure:

How can success and failure be called equal ailments?
Because a man thinks of the personal body as self.
When he no longer thinks of the personal body as self,
Neither failure nor success can ail him. (ch. 13)
(To listen, www.dragonsatwork.com/Winning-Losing-Blues)

An important part of reaching the higher self, moreover, is overcoming strong emotions by learning to embrace them and ride them out. Not only teaching Dan methods of deep breathing and some basic taiji moves, Michele also quotes the *Laozi*:

When a man is in turmoil, how shall he find peace
Save by staying patient till the stream clears?
How can a man's life keep its course
If he will not let it flow? (ch. 15; 2013, 163)

As he becomes whole in himself, the Daoist-inspired executive connects to a level deeper than himself, described as the "source of life" or "mother" of the world (*Laozi* 52; Josephs 2013, 191). From here, he can develop the ability to let his co-workers and subordinates come into their own, develop enthusiasm for their tasks, and be fearless in proposing new ideas and methods. As the *Laozi* formulates this "light touch,"

If you can guide without claim or strife,
If you can stay in the lead of men without their knowing,
You are at the core of life. (ch. 10; 2013, 94)

This also means that he overcomes all pride and the urge to take credit for good outcomes. Leaders' "pride deafens them to solutions not invented by them" or, as the *Laozi* says, "When the work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will all say, 'We did this ourselves'" (ch. 17; 2013, 183). The same freedom from pride and posturing, moreover, comes in handy when conflict arises.

As long as there be a foe, value him,
Respect him, measure him, be humble toward him;

Let him not strip from you, however strong he be,
Compassion, the one wealth which can afford him. (ch. 69)
(To listen, www.dragonsatwork.com/Lao-Tzu-Strategist-Song)

It is essential to remain full of care and concern for others from a position of security and personal integrity, what the *Laozi* calls “the invincible shield of caring” (ch. 67; Josephs 2013, 285). In the end, Dan lets go of his destructive behaviors, develops an integrative and respectful leadership style, which helps him to both retain good employees and foil a company plot to oust him. Learning to be ALIVE—an acronym that stands for the five essential qualities of “awareness, love, insight, vitality, and ease” (2013, 92), he moves to a whole new level of leadership, growing from Expert to Achiever and even reaching out to becoming a Catalyst.

Leadership Agility

These three stages are part of a model of “leadership agility” developed by Stephen Josephs and co-author Bill Joiner, in their book *Leadership Agility* (2007). Expanding on the understanding of the developmental stages of childhood as developed by psychologists, such as Jean



Piaget and Erik Erikson, as well as of spiritual unfolding as proposed by Ken Wilber, Bill Torbert, and others (Joiner and Josephs 2007, 235), the model divides human growth into nine stages. Each of these comes with greater power, expanding awareness, wide openness to ever larger contexts, and increasingly subtler ways of self-reflection and guidance of others.

The first three, at the pre-conventional level, reflect human growth through childhood. During the Explorer stage in the first two years of life, infants explore being in the world through physical sensations and interactions. The Enthusiast level, until about age six, is characterized by

the acquisition of language and an emotional sense of identity. The Operator, third, lasts into the early teens: it involves "the ability to think about the properties of specific objects and organize them accordingly" (Joiner and Josephs 2007, 237-38).

The next three stages make up the conventional level. The first is the Conformer, characterized by rudimentary abstract thought and a great urge to be part of the group and conform to others. Reached in young adolescence, this may be the highest level many people ever attain. From here, leadership stages evolve throughout adulthood, beginning with the levels experienced by Dan Schaeffer in *Dragons at Work*, the Expert and the Achiever. People on the Expert stage, which may be reached as early as the mid-teens, "develop a strong problem-solving orientation and an ability to think more independently and analytically," growing an interest in standing out from the group (2007, 239, 55).

In the Achiever stage, next, people expand their awareness to the wider context of society and develop "an explicit, consciously examined set of principles and ideals to live by" (2007, 240). They have a greater sense of empathy and more flexibility in dealing with various situations (2007, 80). Among business and society leaders, about half are Experts and 35 percent Achievers. They still focus strongly on putting themselves forward and take heroic measures to achieve their goals, being in many ways warriors in the world.

Only 12 percent of leaders reach the next level, the three post-conventional stages (or post-heroic agility) of Catalyst, Co-Creator, and Synergist—the latter being the rarest with only one percent (2007, 241). Dan Schaffer, guided by Michele's Daoist inspiration and her body-cultivation skills, made it to Catalyst. He learned to be open to other's viewpoints, able to zoom attention in or out as needed, and constantly self-reflecting even in tight situations (2007, 111, 113). No longer equating the exercise of power with self-interest, the Catalyst empowers all around him and stimulates things to evolve in new ways (2007, 115), becoming a great authority and major mover. The Co-Creator goes even further, plugging more into the larger social, even global context, always "intent on developing organizations animated by shared purpose," and able "to remain with difficult feelings for longer periods" (2007, 127).

The highest of the stages outlined here—although there may be even higher, transcendent ones beyond—is the Synergist, someone very

close to the sage in the *Laozi*, Witter Bynner's "sound man." Awareness here is present-centered and easily flowing, vision is expansive—global and even universal—purpose reaches far beyond the self to the greater good of all, and the execution of power is highly flexible (2007, 181-82). Synergists, like Daoist perfected, take a playful approach to life and are highly agile, creative, and imaginative. Purposeful without being rigid, they stay connected to the present and work with their intuition, allowing Dao to flow through them. They have "a feeling of rightness" about their actions that provides guidance from a higher power and expands into wider reaches. Synergists truly synchronize energies in ever widening circles, fully human yet also fully cosmic, inspired and deeply empowered people who bring benefits wherever they go.

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Daoist Wisdom for Teachers

A Diary Study

DAVID MCLACHLAN JEFFREY

Daoist wisdom as presented in the *Daode jing* is the philosophy of living in harmony with Dao, considered as the way everything exists. It is one of the three main Chinese worldviews, alongside Confucianism and Buddhism. Its mystical and individualistic essence emphasizes a realization of virtue (*de*) through an appreciation of paradox and nonaction (*wuwei*) as well as choosing simplicity and spontaneity or naturalness (*ziran*) in place of complexity and impulsiveness through adherence to the three core values of compassion, moderation, and humility.

Through the Daoist prism, everything coexists mutually and is interdependent because of the interaction of two interdependent elements known as yin and yang. These are not polar opposites but two sides of the same coin. Daoism regards all elements as being complementary in that each defines itself in relation to the other. With this come paradoxical notions of the seemingly weak overcoming the strong in the sense that flimsy bamboo yields to storms and survive while mighty oaks fall, and wind and water patiently flow around rocks while turning them into sand over time.

Teacher Diaries

One of the first philosophers to introduce Daoism to the West was Zen practitioner and thinker Alan Watts who lived from 1915 to 1973. Much of his prolific writing and speeches appeared posthumously, such as *Dao: The Watercourse Way* with Chung-Liang Huang (1975) and *Daoism: Way*

Beyond Seeking (1997). The subsequent growth of interest in Daoism among Westerners has led to many annotated English translations of the *Daode jing* such as those of Roberts (2001), Ivanhoe (2002), Ames and Hall (2003), Wagner (2003), Lin (2006), and Moeller (2007), to name a few. They have provided Westerners with insights into Daoism, supplemented by works on its application to daily life, found in works such as *The Dao of PooH* by Benjamin Hoff (1982) and *The Daoist Cookbook* by Michael Saso (1994).

Among educators, Flowers (1998), Nagel (1994) and Doerger (2004) among others, have introduced Daoist wisdom to the classroom. They have shown how it can be an inspiration to both teachers and students, emphasizing Daoist values of compassion, moderation, and humility to allow for gentleness (rather than strictness), patience (rather than impulsiveness), and flexibility (rather than rigidity). All these serve to nurture harmonious instruction and learning.

The *Daode jing* says, "Those who understand others are intelligent; those who understand themselves are enlightened" (ch. 33; Lin 2006). A teacher diary study fulfills this need of understanding not only the world around us but also our relation to the world in an introspective manner. It fulfills both needs of intelligence and enlightenment simultaneously.

Teacher diaries are written accounts of experiences that teachers encounter not only in the classroom but also in the broader context of their work, such as the administration, colleagues, and the wider professional, even personal, environment.

Bailey (1990), Nunan (1992), Jarvis (1992), and Bell (1993) are notable linguists who acknowledge the practical benefits of teacher diary studies as well as their wide-ranging applications for the professional development of teachers.

The entries are examined for recurring patterns leading to insights that advance personal-professional development. In addition, these studies are an effective and thorough means of attaining balanced self-perspectives, and give teachers the courage to challenge previously held rigid opinions that merely lead to burnout and limit intuitive opportunities to cope with adversity.

I have undertaken several diary studies over the past decade, and found them considerably helpful in paving the way to new insights. In one study, I applied *The Art of War* to education (Jeffrey 2010); in another,

the *36 Stratagems* (Jeffrey 2013). I then decided to undertake one applying the *Daode jing* to teaching, given that this classic lays the foundation to the philosophies of both the other works. I worked with this over a period of three years (2011-2014) while teaching at the Academic Bridge Program of Zayed University, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

One of the greatest challenges of undertaking this study was the need to embrace an appreciation of the inherent formlessness of Daoism, as well as the subtle interplay of paradoxical features. While conventional academic approaches might have been a valid tool to examine the text, I decided that it needed to be balanced with the individualistic and mystical characteristics that play an important role. Therefore, I considered a teacher diary study that was both individually introspective and uniquely reflective of my own classroom as an appropriate option, where my entries could be read and re-read, leading to both deeper and unconventional viewpoints that, in turn, lead further contemplations and applications.

My approach was to read the *Daode jing* in the evenings and highlight parts that struck a chord. I would then contemplate how best to embrace the wisdom I had highlighted the next day while teaching in the classroom. I put these intentions in writing, given that writing is a meditative means of clarifying thoughts (and a good way to recall thoughts that may otherwise be forgotten). The next day after each experience, I typed a page or two on my computer, reflecting on how it went and to what extent the experience had been helpful.

Later, the entries were read again and contemplated more deeply, and summarized further. The WordSmith Tools program (Scott 1997), normally utilized in creating concordances as an aid to studying corpora, was used to find key words within concordances. This was especially effective in directing my attention to underlying, related thought patterns throughout long texts. Looking at these concordances of sentences and paragraphs and regrouping them paved the way for several insights and highlighted the subtle underlying interrelationships of perspectives beyond my initial awareness. This part of the diary study, the sifting, shifting, and rewriting, was the most demanding and time-consuming component of the work, but it was also the most revealing.

With the refinement of the entries based on the above, the diary entries were eventually grouped into eight categories of philosophic

thought that had evolved over the course of doing the diary study, and short summaries were written on each. They were then given titles as follows: (1) Mysterious Unity, (2) Virtuous Non-Virtue, (3) Selflessness, (4) Less is More, (5) Unconditional Love, (6) Detachment, (7) Leadership by Example, and (8) Simplicity. These are elaborated on below, and all the *Daode jing* quotations are from the Lin (2006) annotation.

Insights Gained

1. Mysterious Unity

The Dao that can be spoken is not the eternal Dao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name. The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth. The named is the mother of myriad things. Thus, constantly without desire, one observes its essence. Constantly with desire, one observes its manifestations. These two emerge together but differ in name. The unity is said to be the mystery. Mystery of mysteries, the door to all wonders. (ch. 1)

Contemplation of Daoist Meaning: The Dao is ineffable: without form and in constant flux. It transcends all conventional definitions, contemplations, introspections, feelings, anxieties, interpretations, analyses, self-consciousness and judgments. Daoism encourages us to follow and tap into our individual natures and to be open to all approaches depending on prevailing situations.

Diary Extract: "I have until now seen myself as a distinct entity, and my students as another. But are we really so? Surely if our objectives are the same, then we should focus more on our similarities and less on our differences."

Diary Summary: Through applying this way of thinking, I began to see a working blend in my teaching between yang-oriented, direct instruction (such as teaching grammar structures) and yin-oriented, indirect instruction (such as inspiring creativity and personal insights). The classroom no longer remained a metaphor for the world but had rather become a world in itself where my students and I came to see the reality of learning as it was, and that instruction and acquisition are one and the same thing. Illusory distinctions between gain and loss, advantage and

disadvantage, fortune and misfortune, good and bad were lessoned, and the classroom atmosphere became less stressful.

2. Virtuous Non-Virtue

When the world knows beauty as beauty, ugliness arises. When it knows good as good, evil arises. (ch. 2)

Contemplation of Daoist Meaning: Making judgments based on self-opinions of situations create divisions that become hardened and inflexible. If something beautiful could be seen within what may appear ugly on the surface, it would be seen in terms of what it really is (its substance), and not as what it appears to be (its image). In this non-judgmental state of not seeking self-opinionated virtue (to the point where substance and image become merged and inseparable) lies the true virtue.

Diary Extract: “Am I really ‘better’ than my students because I hold the title of ‘teacher’? Surely it is their impression that would also qualify me as their teacher and not merely the impression I have of myself.”

Diary Summary: The benefit was to see more of the duality within seemingly opposed situations, rather than as polarities of each other. It helped me transcend seeing gain and loss as separate entities, and to rather consider their paradoxical mutuality. Divisions such as us versus them became less distinct, making goals less competitive and more mutual. Punishments became less severe, rewards became less excessive, and my perspective shifted away from categorizing students as good or bad to just accepting them the way they were.

3. Selflessness

Heaven and Earth are everlasting. The reason Heaven and Earth can last forever is that they do not exist for themselves. Thus they can last forever. (ch. 7)

Contemplation of Daoist Meaning: Nature does not have a distinct life span. Humans know of their mortality, thus focus on being distinct from nature and become self-fixated through seeking lofty reasons for exist-

ence. But, nature has no such introspective considerations, and because of this, exists indefinitely. Nature never hurries, yet leaves nothing undone. Humans are often in a muddled rush, and because of this much is left undone.

Diary Extract: "The semester has a set time-span, and so does a single class-time of instruction. If they arrive late, it is recorded as an absence. But, beyond all this, and of my expected role in it, if I can just step back once, and let things take their course, everything settles down of its own accord."

Diary Summary: This chapter made me realize that I had become too conscious of my formal role as a teacher (especially in terms of rules and regulations, and their enforcement). Likewise, my students were becoming too conscious of their perceived distinction between my role and theirs. This made barriers between us, and to the wider learning process. This false virtue was destroying the classroom ambience given that we were clinging to self-perceived impressions that were making us play mind-games and become confrontational towards one another. I then forgot about the image I was trying to portray of myself, and in so doing found more joy in being my truer self. The inner-peace this gave me released more energy to cope with the real needs of my students, and they seemed happier because of it.

4. Less is More

Holding a cup and overfilling it cannot be as good as stopping short.
Pounding a blade and sharpening it cannot be kept for long. (ch. 9)

Contemplation of Daoist Meaning: We are conditioned to believe that the more we accumulate things the safer and more satisfied we become. However, this quickly becomes addictive and leads to excessive clutter, a false sense of security and an endless struggle to protect whatever has been accumulated through a fear of loss. All forms of excess lead to distress and anxiety, and compound a false sense of deficiency.

Diary Extract: "When I try to cram more into our class-time, and into homework, students cannot recall much. But when I let things take more of their own course, and allow for engagement more in relating

real-life experiences and insightful stories related to them, students can not only better understand and relate to them, but also recall them..."

Diary Summary: I felt that my instruction was lacking something and crammed more into each lesson. The result was draining our energy, and the preoccupation in fulfilling tasks within limited time made us lose sight of the benefits of learning. The students needed to engage more in the intrinsic enjoyment of learning without the artificial struggle. So I gave them less tasks and less homework, and encouraged more autonomous study. This helped us to get beyond the mere teaching and acquisition of practical skills by rote for later regurgitation to where my students become curious, self-reliant and inquisitive, and where life itself also became their teacher.

5. Unconditional Love

Can one be without intellectuality? Bearing it, rearing it. Bearing without possession. Achieving without arrogance. Raising without domination. (ch. 10)

Contemplation of Daoist Meaning: Integration and sharing of all that which is basic to our existence, and the avoidance of intellectual emotions such as distrust and irritation is love. It does not contend. It accepts the way things are and lets them be.

Diary Extract: "Whenever I teach something robotically, in an exclusively intellectual way, the students get turned off, and soon forget it. But when I teach it with the same passion that I tell stories to my own child before bedtime, the students become much more engaged and remember."

Diary Summary: Too much clutter of excess concerns based on an intellectual analysis of what goes wrong in the classroom scatters emotional energy and destroys love. I was being too scientific and robotic, and overly concerned with so-called flaws in others and myself. My thoughts became blocked and I was starting to get in my own mental way and this was dampening the enjoyment of being together with my students. To remedy this, I aimed to free my students and myself of these inhibiting perspectives by regarding everything as being perfect in its own way and in its own right and with an attitude of unconditional love.

This helped me see all the little things that gave me satisfaction, and to which I had been blind before. I gained joy in merely accepting things the way they were, rather than continuously trying to shape them into how I thought they should be. This had the effect on the students of accepting me in an unconditional sense as well. In making the conditional more unconditional the classroom became a happier place, and a more meaningfully engaged learning environment.

6. Detachment

The five colors make one blind in the eyes. The five sounds make one deaf in the ears. The five flavors make one tasteless in the mouth. Racing and hunting make one wild in the heart. Goods that are difficult to acquire make one cause damage. (ch. 12)

Contemplation of Daoist Meaning: The muddled clutter of over planning dulls our innate attachment to our senses and results in a senseless waste of energy. By only fulfilling the most basic of our desires for happiness can we sustain our energy. The more we become attached to things, the more confused we become, and the less we achieve.

Diary Extract: "Just when I was in the middle of planning my lesson, I was interrupted. I came to the classroom unprepared. But the students identified positively with the "spontaneity" of events as they unfolded, and it turned into a fruitful lesson. And they told me they enjoyed it."

Diary Summary: Before contemplating this chapter I had seen detachment as indifference and apathy, but through the diary came to realize that it meant not to get too emotionally caught up with things and to be less interfering and controlling. In playing more of a supportive role, I was better able to guide my students towards their own creative discoveries rather than to unwittingly stifle their initiatives through my constant directives. In becoming more focused on detaching from short-term objectives on grades to becoming more focused on longer-term goals such as life skills, instilled a sense of trust that had not existed before and it was a motivational experience for us all. I came to notice that nothing is constant and change is ceaseless, and is a result of a multitude of interactions ranging from my instruction to the interactions between us. My

acceptance of this, and my flexibility to this, made the students contented.

7. Leadership by Example

If the rulers' trust is insufficient have no trust in them. Proceeding calmly, valuing their words. Task accomplished, matter settled. The people all say, "We did it naturally". (ch. 17)

Contemplation of Daoist Meaning: Leadership that is haughty and demanding merely leads to resentment and rebelliousness. Leadership should embrace appropriate actions that convey sincerity and humility, and follow through on promises. It should not insist upon blind obedience.

Diary Extract: "When my attempts to instill discipline at times of unruliness backfire, and I just sit back and smile at my students, discipline returns more quickly, and is sustained longer, that if I were to continue actively engaging."

Diary Summary: If it is true that more messages are conveyed through actions and body language than words, then leadership by example is an important consideration for teachers. I began to explain less and instead focused on my behavior and through that connection aimed to create awareness. I rid myself of the illusions that I felt were needed to convey a superior attitude merely because I was teacher. Instead, I facilitated an atmosphere of trust and encouraged my students to believe in their own abilities. I stood by to help at all times. I never became angry, and even when I did become, I never showed it. Smiling kept things cheerful. I refrained from negative comments and gave more complements instead. If I had to discipline a student, I made sure not to do so in front of others and focused on the problem and not the person. I noticed that before students would say, "Thanks for the A grade, sir," but later they began to say, "Thanks for showing us how to do it ourselves."

8. Simplicity

Cease learning, no more worries. Respectful response and scornful response. How much is the difference? (ch. 20)

Contemplation of Daoist Meaning: Becoming too fixated on trying to rationalize and explain everything is a futile and alienating exercise. It is often better just accepting the way things are, and in being content even with their apparent imperfections.

Diary Extract: "I tried to explain something in great detail, over and over again. The students merely became more perplexed. Then I took away the detail, and just related the essence of it in simple terms. Surprisingly, the students grasped onto that, and, not only so, but also added their own detail."

Diary Summary: I had been of the habit of taking on more than required rather than staying with simplicity. I had believed that the more complex one made things the better they would somehow work. On the contrary my complex approaches were merely entangling my students and myself unnecessarily and was detracting from instructional and learning effectiveness. I then adjusted my perspective to the way things in the classroom actually were, and adapted to them. Everything then appeared appropriate – as a form of perfection that merely appeared chaotic. Instruction and learning became more quality orientated, and more meaningful to both the students and myself.

Major Insights

Here are the main insights gained from the study.

The philosophy of the *Daode jing* should not be used merely as a technique to become an effective teacher, or a quick fix, because the Dao is much more than that. It is a way of life to be lived. It takes time, but in just becoming aware of the yin and yang unison of everything, together with the acceptance of consistent change and being spontaneous rather impulsive, immediate benefits can be reaped.

The chapters of the *Daode jing* are suggestive signposts along a path to finding solutions, and are not definitive instructions. It would be mistaken to follow the chapters as though they were precise instructions, as

they serve to inspire insights that underlie the ultimate actions to be taken, which in turn depend on changing circumstances.

The *Daode jing* can, and should, be interpreted differently from one teacher to the next. In the same way that no two rivers follow the same path to the sea but instead choose their courses in accordance with the uniquely changing terrains in which they find themselves, so too should no two teachers necessarily apply the *Daode jing* in exactly the same way given that their circumstances are often quite different. It is best not to regard it with a one size fits all mentality and to mechanically apply it as such, but rather to be flexible and tolerant, given that adaption to unanticipated changes is an inherent part of the process that is often indistinguishable from its outcome.

Accept the yin and yang elements of seemingly opposing circumstances, and focus on their underlying mutualism and dependency, to discover their endless tactical and strategic potential. The chapters of the *Daode jing* are merely bits of information, like the lines of a network. Excessive conscious attention on the lines of the network would merely lead to an inflexible mindset, and to judgmental perspectives, to polarized labeling and complication as well as over-classification. To be an effective teacher requires looking at the spaces between the lines of the network as well because, to effectively apply the *Daode jing*, it is essential to think in a holistic and multidimensional manner, to be uncluttered, uncomplicated and attentive to the infinite subtleties of change. It requires a certain amount of detachment from the network itself so as not to get too entangled with its lines, but without discarding the network as well.

Trust yourself, listen to your gut feelings, and do not excessively analyze the *Daode jing* to the point of confusion. Teachers tend to feel comfortable when their professional expectations are clearly defined, and when they are fully conscious of them. This is evident in clearly defined instruction manuals, course outlines, academic calendars and curriculums. Yet, as soon as it all seems to be figured out, there comes a myriad of unexpected surprises on a daily basis. These unexpected surprises happen so quickly and unexpectedly, and do not wait for us to make up our minds. Often teachers become thwarted by their own excessive cognizance of situations. Teaching is so demandingly multifaceted that much of it is beyond mental rationalization and mechanical im-

plementation. Flows and rhythms also have an important place in teaching. Thus, in not over analyzing the *Daode jing*, but in contemplating its philosophy nevertheless, teachers can tap into their own instincts, and solve many problems intuitively without even thinking too much about them. The starting point for this is to go with the flow of situations and to rely more on self-trust and less on extremely rigorous analysis that merely perplexes the situation.

Choose the simple path. The essence in applying the *Daode jing* to teaching is to walk a simple path, to be humble, to love and enjoy life, to be grateful, to follow nature, to accept the way things and people are, to be caring, and to follow the three jewels of Daoism: compassion, moderation and humility.

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Beyond Life and Death

Zhuangzi's Great Awakening

BRIAN HOFFERT

In his influential essay, "What is Daoism?" Herrlee G. Creel argues that the English term "Daoism" refers to two distinct traditions (1956, 139-52). One evolved out of the philosophical musings of Laozi and Zhuangzi, based on the principle of *wuwei* 無為 (nonaction). The other has its root in an immortality cult that sought as its ultimate goal the indefinite perpetuation of the physical body. The latter, according to Creel, had no connection to the philosophies of Laozi and Zhuangzi until around the first century BCE.

Although this sharp distinction between what came to be known as philosophical (*daoia* 道家) and religious Daoism (*daojiao* 道教) was once widely accepted in the West, it has been abandoned by an increasing number of contemporary scholars. Many agree with Livia Kohn's contention that "such artificial bifurcations...do not do real justice to the facts and serve little heuristic purpose" (2000, xi). This notwithstanding, I argue that the presumptions upon which this distinction is based continue to strongly influence how we read early Daoist texts.

For example, the tacit assumption that Zhuangzi is ultimately a philosopher rather than a religious practitioner typically results in the highlighting of philosophical aspects of the Inner Chapters at the expense of prominent religious themes, most notably those that focus on inner cultivation, the afterlife, and immortality.

I do not suggest that these religious themes ought to overshadow Zhuangzi's brilliance as a philosopher, but rather that these two dimensions of the text are not inconsistent and indeed allow us to develop a richer, more complex understanding of the text as a whole. In order to

explore the significance of inner cultivation, the afterlife, and immortality in the early Daoist tradition, I examine an early- to mid-fourth century BCE text called *Neiye* 內業 (Inward Training). It contains descriptions of mystical practices that, as Harold Roth persuasively argues, provide the key to developing a more cohesive picture of the Daoist tradition (1999, 5-9).¹

Roth identifies the technique of meditation described in the text as a form of apophatic or self-emptying meditation, whose ultimate goal is the attainment of “a fully concentrated inner consciousness of unity, which is filled with light and clarity and is not tied to an individual self” (1999, 125). More importantly, he provides solid textual evidence that this technique of inner cultivation was shared by the authors of both the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*. This leads him to conclude that the *Neiye* is “the earliest extant statement of the one common mystical practice that ties together the three phases of early Daoism, including the texts heretofore regarded as the sole foundations of this tradition, the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*” (1999, 8).

After establishing the mystical foundations of the early Daoist tradition, I explore Zhuangzi’s perspective on the relationship between this inward training and the metaphor of dreaming. I focus especially on his suggestion that we may one day attain a “great awakening” (*dajue* 大覺) that would appear to have a lot more in common with the later Daoist notion of immortality than is typically recognized. I do not intend to suggest that Zhuangzi’s conceptions of immortality and the means by which it might be attained are identical to those that developed in later organized Daoism. Still, I hope to show that the religious dimensions of Zhuangzi’s philosophy is an essential aspect of his overall system of thought that should not be overlooked due to lingering conceptions of a fundamental divide between the different kinds of Daoism.

Early Daoist Cultivation in the *Neiye*

Although the *Zhuangzi* is undoubtedly one of the most brilliant works in the Chinese intellectual tradition, most Western interpreters have fo-

¹ For the dating of the text, see Roth 1999, 23-27. All Wade-Giles transliterations are now in Pinyin.

cused largely on its philosophical insights. To appreciate these philosophical insights fully, however, it is necessary to explore the foundations of early Daoist cultivation. Despite Creel's suggestion that such "mystical incomprehensibilities" are unworthy of serious study (1956, 24), numerous passages in the Inner Chapters assume a context of mystical practice that is clearly related to the system of cultivation presented in the *Neiye*. Consequently, if we fail to consider the early Daoist context of mystical practice through which Zhuangzi's philosophical insights originally developed, we may end up misinterpreting the message he was trying to convey.

The meditation described in the *Neiye* consists of a "Fourfold Aligning" of body (*zhengxing* 正形), limbs (*zheng siti* 正四體), vital energy (*zhengqi* 正氣), and mind (*zhengxin* 正心). The alignments of the first two indicate a specific posture, which may have been quite similar to those described in ancient hygiene texts found at Mawangdui and Zhangjiashan. Once practitioners have assumed this posture, a form of upright kneeling, different from the cross-legged posture common in India and Buddhism, they focus on aligning vital energy. This involves regulating the breathing to make it stable and relaxed, and ensuring that it properly circulates through the body. Once body, limbs, and breath are stabilized, they go on to align the mind by allowing its contents to dissipate and thus reach a state of complete tranquility (Roth 1999, 109-12).

The last stage is particularly significant. Through alignment of the mind practitioners can draw directly on the spontaneous impulses of Dao—understood as currents of "power" (*de* 德) that ceaselessly flow from the cosmic Way. This causes human actions to be in harmony with the forces of nature. Although the attainment of such spontaneity represents one of the most fundamental objectives of both the *Laozi* and the *Zhuangzi*, clear descriptions of the physiological process appear only in the *Neiye*. For example, it says that once body and mind have been stabilized through Fourfold Alignment one can create a "lodging place" (*she* 舍) within the mind's core. One must then guide *qi* to this lodging place through the circulation of the breath, at which point it will transform into "vital essence" (*jing* 精). The latter is an extremely pure form of vital energy, serving as the ultimate source of life and, more specifically, as the means by which sagehood is attained (16:2a9-2b1; Roth 1999, 60, 101-03).

With regard to the “enlightening” capabilities of vital essence, the passage concludes by stating that “when it is produced there is thought; and when there is thought there is knowledge; but when there is knowledge one must stop; for whenever one’s state of mind goes beyond [this type of] knowledge, one loses vitality (16:2a11-2b1).” In other words, by emptying the mind of its usual contents, one allows the cosmic consciousness of Dao to enter, thereby giving rise to a particular form of knowledge that is “spontaneous” in the sense that it arises by itself—without the interference of the so-called “empirical self.” This is why “knowledge” that arises from Dao is beneficial, whereas any attempt to go *beyond* this type of knowledge results in the loss of vitality. This idea appears with greater clarity later in the text:

There is a spirit (*shen* 神) that naturally resides within [the mind];
 One minute it goes away, the next it comes back,
 Yet none are able to [grasp it through] thought.
 Lose it and [the mind] is inevitably disordered;
 Obtain it and [the mind] is inevitably well-ordered.
 Reverently clean out its lodging place
 And its vital essence will naturally arrive....
 When you obtain it and don’t let it go,
 The ears and eyes will not exceed [their proper functions],
 And the mind will have no other orientation [than the guidance provided
 by the vital essence].
 When an aligned mind resides within,
 The myriad things will be properly grasped. (16:2b9-3a1)

In short, through apophatic meditation the lodging place of the spirit is cleaned out, so that the vital essence of the cosmos spontaneously rests in the mind, where it ceaselessly produces appropriate responses to the constant flux of the myriad things in accordance with the individual’s place in the cosmic matrix of Dao.

The ability to live in harmony with the flow of energy that emanates from Dao provides practitioners with a variety of concrete benefits beyond the spiritual and psychological boon of attaining a perfectly clear state of consciousness. Since their responses to the world are spontaneously in accord with the constantly changing flow of circumstances in their immediate environment, all actions—or, rather, “nonactions”

(*wuwei* 無為)—are directed away from any potential dangers. They become pieces of driftwood, carried safely through rapids to calmer waters. This ability to avoid disaster occurs explicitly in several passages in the *Neiye*:

When there are no internal delusions,
There will be no external disasters.
When the mind remains intact on the inside,
The body will remain intact on the outside.
One who does not encounter disasters from heaven
Or meet with harm from humans
Is called a sage. (16.3a8-3b1)

Further benefits also accrue to sages who master this method of cultivation. They include the ability to make the people of the empire submit and listen and the maintenance of physiological health: good skin color, firm texture, acute hearing, clear vision, supple muscles, and strong bones. All these lead to the ultimate goal of "longevity" (*changshou* 長壽) (see Roth 199, 118-23) and perhaps even immortality, a feature of religious Daoism that may already be present here.

Zhuangzi and the *Neiye*

The Inner Chapters, generally regarded as the authentic writings of Zhuangzi himself, contain numerous references to cultivation practices. For example, chapter 2 opens with the following passage:

Ziqi of South Wall sat leaning on his armrest, staring up at the sky and breathing—vacant and far away, as though he'd lost his companion. Yan Cheng Ziyong, who was standing by his side in attendance, said, "What is this? Can you really make the body like a withered tree and the mind like dead ashes? The man leaning on the armrest now is not the one who leaned on it before!" Ziqi said, "You do well to ask the question, Yan. Now I have lost myself. (Watson 1968, 36)

The reference to breathing in this passage, as well as the resulting state of stability, may well be an allusion to breath-control as described in the *Neiye*. The "loss of self" here clearly implies some type of

apophatic or self-emptying meditation. First, the text says that he “lost his companion” (*sang qi ou* 喪其耦), then Ziqi himself declares that “I have lost myself” (*wu sang wo* 吾喪我). In the end, again confirming *Neiye* statements, he interprets this loss through a metaphor of Dao as a cosmic wind that produces the piping of Heaven: “Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself—all take what they want for themselves, but who does the sounding?” (1968, 37)

In other words, Dao flows through each of the ten thousand things in a unique way, but the extent to which one responds to the breath of the cosmos depends on one’s ability to “clean out a lodging place” for this cosmic power to dwell. This process is accomplished by emptying the mind of its self-centered contents through apophatic meditation.

Besides the well-known passages in chapter 6 featuring Woman Crookback and the dialogue on oblivion (Watson 1968, 82-83, 90-91), the most pertinent *Zhuangzi* description of this kind of practice appears in chapter 4.

“May I ask what the fasting of the mind is?”

Confucius said, “Make your will one! Don’t listen with your ears, listen with your mind. No, don’t listen with your mind, but listen with your spirit [*qi* 氣]. Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with recognition, but spirit is empty and waits on all things. Dao gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the mind.”

Yan Hui said, “Before I heard this, I was certain that I was Hui. But now that I have heard it, there is no more Hui. Can this be called emptiness?”

“That’s all there is to it,” said Confucius. “You have heard of the knowledge that knows, but you have never heard of the knowledge that does not know. Look into that closed room, the empty chamber where brightness is born! Fortune and blessing gather where there is stillness. But if you do not keep still—this is what is called sitting but racing around. Let your ears and eyes communicate with what is inside, and put mind and knowledge on the outside. Then even gods and spirits will come to dwell, not to speak of men!” (Watson 1968, 57-58)

“Fasting of the mind” here clearly refers to apophatic meditation, defined as emptying the mind of all contents, just as a regular fasting empties the stomach. This is further confirmed by Yan Hui’s statement that after hearing his master’s words “there is no more Hui,” which indi-

cates a loss of self. In addition, Dao gathers in emptiness, attained by putting "mind and knowledge on the outside." Not only does this again refer to emptying the mind of all contents through meditation, but it also provides a close parallel to the *Neiye's* claims that the vital essence of spirit naturally comes to rest in the mind once a lodging place is made.

The Inner Chapters, moreover, contain numerous references to the benefits of Daoist practice that closely parallel those described in the *Neiye*. For instance, a dialogue between Jian Wu and Lian Shu in chapter 1 mentions divine beings with skin like ice or snow: "There is nothing that can harm them. Though flood waters pile up to the sky, they do not drown. Though a great drought melts metal and stone and scorches the earth and hills, they are not burned." Similar claims appear in chapter 6 on the perfected of old who "could climb high places and not get frightened, could enter water and not get wet, could enter fire and not get burned" (Watson 1968, 77). It also appears in chapter 2:

The perfect man is godlike. Though the great swamps blaze, they cannot burn him; though the great rivers freeze they cannot chill him; though swift lightning splits the hills and howling gales shake the sea, they cannot frighten him. A man like this rides the clouds and mist, straddles the sun and moon, and wanders beyond the four seas. Even life and death have no effect on him, much less the rules of profit and loss! (Watson 1968, 46)

In short, the Inner Chapters provide ample evidence that Zhuangzi worked within a context of mystical practice that closely resembled the system of cultivation developed in the *Neiye*. They also show that he assumed such practices would help practitioners avoid danger, prolong life, and even transcend the boundaries between life and death.

Zhuangzi on Death

With all these mystical practices in place, did Zhuangzi believe that such practices could lead to immortality as understood in later religious Daoism? What is his understanding of death? According A. C. Graham, Zhuangzi had no interest in preserving life beyond the years allotted by Heaven. He says,

The liberation from selfhood is seen above all as a triumph over death. His position is not that personal consciousness will survive death, but rather [that] in grasping the Way one's viewpoint shifts from 'I shall no longer exist' to something like 'In losing selfhood I shall remain what at bottom I always was, identical with everything conscious or unconscious in the universe'. (1981, 23)

Liberation is no doubt a triumph over death, however, numerous passages in the Inner Chapters suggest that Zhuangzi did not assume that the death of the body entailed a complete loss of personal consciousness. Chapter 6, which focuses primarily on the issue of death, shows how Master Yu faces a life-threatening illness with complete equanimity, calmly responding to his mutilated body by noting that "the creator is making me all crooked like this!" When asked if he resents the transformation, he replies:

Why no, what would I resent? If the process continues, perhaps in time he'll transform my left arm into a rooster. In that case I'll keep watch on the night. Or perhaps in time he'll transform my right arm into a crossbow pellet and I'll shoot down an owl for roasting. Or perhaps in time he'll transform my buttocks into cartwheels. Then, with my spirit for a horse, I'll climb up and go for a ride. What need will I ever have for a carriage again? (Watson 1968, 84)²

At first glance, this passage appears consistent with Graham's characterization of Zhuangzi's position on death: Master Yu states that the various parts of his body will simply return to the stuff of the cosmos, where they will transform into new things, both animate and inanimate. However, throughout these transformations, the author implies the continued existence of a self by the use of the first-person pronoun "I" (*yu* 予), which "keeps watch on the night," "shoots down an owl for roasting," or "mounts the spirit" like a horse so that he will never need a car-

² The authenticity of this story can be inferred not only from its thematic and linguistic connection to the transformation of things, but also from its prominent use of the term *zaowu zhe* 造物者 (Creator). The term appears in three other stories in the Inner Chapters, but only twice in the rest of the book—once with specific reference to Zhuangzi's philosophy, and again in an anecdote that appears to be an authentic early Zhuangzi fragment.

riage again. While this does not necessarily imply a continuity of personal consciousness after death, such a reading finds support in the conclusion of the story. Master Yu's friend, Master Lai, similarly takes ill and proclaims: "I think of heaven and earth as a great furnace, and the Creator as a skilled smith. Where could he send me that would not be all right? I will go off to sleep peacefully, and then with a start I will wake up" (Watson 1968, 85).

The idea that death is a kind of awakening also appears in chapter 2, where Zhang Wuzi asks, "How do I know that loving life is not a delusion? How do I know that in hating death I am not like a man who, having left home in his youth, has forgotten the way back?" (Watson 1968, 47). The text then tells the story of Lady Li who when kidnapped by the ruler of Jin was at first distraught at her condition, but then came to enjoy palace life. Just as "she wondered why she had ever wept," Zhuangzi asks, "How do I know that the dead do not wonder why they ever longed for life?" (Watson 1968, 47).

Zhuangzi clearly warns against becoming attached to life: this matches Graham's reading of the text. Yet he also suggests that human life does not end with the demise of the physical body. He avoids any assertion of a dogmatic perspective regarding the *form* in which we might continue to exist since asserting any dogma like this would only prove that he was still stuck in a dream of his own creation. However, he likens the fear of death to Lady Li's fear at being taken from her home to an unknown fate in Jin. Just as her new life proved far better than what she left behind, Zhuangzi suggests the possibility that the dead might actually be better off, wondering why they ever longed for life. Next, he compares life and death to dreaming and waking.

He who dreams of drinking wine may weep when morning comes; he who dreams of weeping may in the morning go off to hunt. While he is dreaming he does not know it is a dream, and in his dream he may even try to interpret a dream. Only after he wakes does he know it was a dream.

Moreover, it is only after one has a great awakening that one knows that this is all a great dream. Yet the stupid believe they are awake, busily and brightly assuming they understand things, calling this man ruler, that one herdsman—how dense! Confucius and you are both dreaming! And when I say you are dreaming, I am dreaming, too. If one affirms (shi 是) such words, it is called a paradox, but if after ten thousand generations one meets a great sage who

knows how to unravel their meaning, they will be just as 'true' (shi 是) as if one had met him or her in the span of a single day." (Watson 1968, 47-48; italics mine)

Here the text further intensifies the contrast between waking and dreaming, suggesting that those suffering in this life may wake to happier times in the hereafter. Although Zhuangzi does not make any explicit claim about what we might do in this life to ensure happiness in the next, the point is that the text assumes that there will be some type of afterlife.

Still more intriguing is his reference to the "great sage" (*da sheng* 大聖) who becomes one with all things and thereby transcends all boundaries, including the boundary between life and death. "A man like this rides the clouds and mist, straddles the sun and moon, and wanders beyond the four seas. Even life and death have no effect on him, much less the rules of profit and loss" (Watson 1968, 46).

Again, Zhuangzi does not provide a precise description of the process that might lead to such a state of unity, but it is presumably the result of a "great awakening" (*da jue* 大覺), through which one sees that life is all a great dream. Unlike the "awakening" in the previous example, which involves a transition from one dream-life to another, this "great awakening" allows one to see what is inherently "true" (*shi* 是) about each thing, resulting in the "equalization of all things" (*qiwu* 齊物), the title of chapter 2. Whether this leads to a literal transcendence of death through the attainment of immortality is not clear, although this is certainly suggested by the reference to participating in "ten thousand ages," as well as by the logical inference that one who is no longer dreaming will have no need to wake from a dream-life to a dream-afterlife.

The experience of awakening, moreover, appears in the famous butterfly dream at the end of chapter 2, where Zhuang Zhou enjoys the freedom of fluttering about in his dream but, after waking up, "does not know if he was Zhuang Zhou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Zhuang Zhou" (Watson 1968, 49).

This story obviously connects to the previous discussion of the "great awakening," as both challenge mainstream assumptions about dreaming and waking. However, Zhuangzi's dream experience is so vivid that upon awakening he considers the possibility that it might have been the butterfly who was awake and he who is now dreaming—as if

the "flitting and fluttering around" of the butterfly was somehow more *real* than the self-conscious Zhuang Zhou with whom he normally identifies.

In light of the shared mystical foundation of the *Neiye* and the *Zhuangzi*, this butterfly experience would appear to be a metaphorical description of ultimate nonaction (*wuwei*), a kind of free and easy wandering where one is carried along by the wind without any effort—a prominent metaphor for Dao in the Inner Chapters.³ Moreover, while Zhuangzi's "waking" experience is characterized by a dualistic awareness of the distinction between "Zhuang Zhou" and "the butterfly," his experience *within* the "dream" is entirely devoid of such a distinction, for we are explicitly told that the butterfly "did not know he was Zhuang Zhou."

The story concludes with an attempt to clarify the difference between mystical experience and the mundane experience of the "solid and unmistakable" Zhuang Zhou. The text speaks of the "transformation of things" (*wuhua* 物化), which may be a technical term for the shift in consciousness that takes place when one enters the mode of nonaction. This reading echoes Chen Guying's gloss, "when the boundary between self and things dissolves, the myriad things melt into one" (Chen 1989, 102). Of course, the butterfly experience is only temporary, and hence not quite the *full* awakening of the great sage, yet insofar as this experience represents a true loss of self, it may be thought of as a little awakening—insufficient to lead to immortality, but a glimpse of what such a state might be like.

³ The wind metaphor appears first in the opening story of chapter 1: an enormous bird called Peng must amass a lot of wind before he can rise up high into the sky for his journey to the Lake of Heaven (Watson 1968, 30). In other words, through the practice of apophatic meditation, one becomes empty, and since "Dao gathers in emptiness alone," one gradually accumulates enough "wind" to be transformed into a sage. The metaphor of the wind is picked up again in the opening story of chapter 2, where the wind appears as the "piping of Heaven...[that blows] on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself" (Watson 1968, 37).

The Great Awakening

All this shows that Zhuangzi was not merely a philosopher pursuing a conceptual notion of freedom, but a religious practitioner who employed apophatic meditation in the pursuit of a spiritual awakening. If the butterfly story is in fact autobiographical, as suggested by the use of the “personal” name Zhou rather than the honorific suffix *zi* (Master), it shows that Zhuangzi himself experienced the sense of egolessness on at least one occasion. Since words cannot adequately describe this type of mystical experience, it may be best understood as a dreamlike state without awareness of one’s own actions or any sense that these actions are rooted in the self-direction of the will. One experiences a stream of consciousness, where actions simply flow like a river, meandering this way and that in response to the terrain. Perhaps this is why Zhuangzi was drawn to the metaphor of the dream. Still, he ironically turns the metaphor on its head by associating this dreamlike state with awakening, so that our regular mode of ego-consciousness becomes the dream.

Yet Zhuangzi takes the dream metaphor a step further in his exploration of the relationship between life and death. If life is a dream (at least for the unawakened), then what happens when we die, when the dream ends? Since one normally wakes from a dream, Zhuangzi explores the possibility that we might similarly wake from the experience of death. This is suggested by the two examples of waking that immediately follow the line, “How do I know that the dead do not wonder why they ever longed for life?” It is also made explicit, when Master Lai says of his impending death, “I will go off to sleep peacefully, and then with a start I will wake up.” Of course, such awakenings are incomplete. Some may weep when they wake from a pleasant dream, others may go off to hunt after a weepy dream. Only the great sage attains the great awakening that affirms what is true about each of the ten thousand things, so that they can all be brought together in a timeless unity.⁴ In other words, since the sage is fully awake, he or she no longer experiences the “sleep”

⁴ The notion that the great sage attains a unity that transcends time is based on the lines, “(S)he participates in ten thousand ages and in oneness, attains simplicity. (S)he allows the ten thousand things to be themselves completely, using what is ‘true’ (*shi*) about each to bring them all together.”

of death (to borrow Master Lai's metaphor) and can therefore "participate in ten thousand ages." This may well refer to some kind of immortality—although it is not entirely clear whether this is a state of *literal* no-death, or whether it reflects Graham's notion of a "triumph over death," a form of transcendence of categories.

Unfortunately, Zhuangzi's references to the afterlife and immortality are vague and unsystematic, hinting at possibilities without making any substantial claims. To a certain extent, this may be due to his skeptical attitude toward truth claims in general, yet there is also a sense that even Zhuangzi feels that he is in uncharted territory, presumably because he has no direct experience of either the afterlife or immortality. Yet, the fact remains that the Inner Chapters are full of references to figures like the perfect man, on whom "life and death have no effect" (Watson 1968, 46), Woman Crookback who helps Buliang Yi enter a state in which "there is no life and no death" (1968, 83), and the spirit man of Mount Guye, who "doesn't eat the five grains, but sucks the wind, drinks the dew, climbs up on the clouds and mist, rides a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas" (1968, 33). While such examples can be read metaphorically, one has to wonder whether Zhuangzi might not have believed in the possibility of attaining something more than just a *metaphorical* immortality. Indeed, when Jian Wu refuses to believe the story of the Guye Mountain sage, he is firmly rebuked by Lian Shu:

We cannot expect a blind man to appreciate beautiful patterns or a deaf man to listen to bells and drums. Blindness and deafness are not confined to the body alone—the understanding has them too, as your words just now have shown. . . . There is nothing that can harm this man. (1968, 33)

Perhaps the "spirit man" will not drown in floods or be burned in fires because he refuses to accept the conceptual distinction between life and death, but such a reading strains credulity. Lian Shu clearly believes that he is *literally* beyond harm, for otherwise he would not have rebuked Jian Wu so severely. Of course, Zhuangzi's intentions are more difficult to assess, but the story seems to pick up a theme from the opening story of both the chapter and the book. Here a cicada and a dove cannot believe that the large Peng-bird (a metaphor for the sage) is able to fly ninety thousand *li*, when they can barely make it as far as an elm or

sapanwood tree (Watson 1968, 30). In both cases, the point is that we should not let our preconceptions of what human beings can and cannot accomplish blind us to our potential for fundamental self-transformation.

To sum up, the Inner Chapters contain so many references to apophatic meditation that one can only assume that Zhuangzi was deeply engaged in such practices. Of course, Zhuangzi makes it abundantly clear that he is a muddled dreamer like the rest of us, although he does claim minimal success in the butterfly story, where for the span of a dream he is able to flutter around in the wind (i.e., Dao). While this is hardly the ninety-thousand *li* journey of the Peng, who is able to “mount on the back of the wind” so that “nothing can hinder or block him” (Watson 1968, 30), it places Zhuangzi on a path that he clearly believed would lead to the ultimate transformation of sagehood. Although the precise details of this ultimate transformation remain vague, the various meditation passages suggest that it may well have included a conception of immortality that went beyond a fundamental indifference to life and death. Zhuangzi was not only a brilliant thinker, but also a serious religious practitioner. We should not treat the religious and philosophical dimensions of his thought as mutually exclusive, but explore their connections to deepen our understanding of the text as a whole.

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A Storehouse of Changes¹

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The *Zhouyi* 周易 (Changes of Zhou) took form early in the Zhou dynasty, approximately 3,000 years ago. The text builds upon an older tradition of ceremonial divination used during the second millennium BCE, during the Shang dynasty. In its overall form, the *Zhouyi* is a collection of oracular statements attached to sixty-four six-lined figures with symbolic names called “hexagrams.” While consultation of the *Zhouyi* features in chronicles of the Spring and Autumn period (722-481 BCE), some time during the Warring States (475-221 BCE), its explication and philosophical discussion crystallized into a number of treatises. Early in the Han, ten of these treatises (the so-called Ten Wings) were attached to the core text, forming the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes). This classic was included among the Five Confucian Classics from the Han onward. In listing the Five Classics, the *Yijing* comes first: it is “the head of the classics.”

Since the symbol matrix of the *Yijing* presents no discursive arguments, it is difficult to prove any one interpretation of a symbol. Much of the original text’s meaning (according to later strategies of interpretation) emerges from spaces of implication between symbolic elements. For those willing to probe such spaces, the *Yijing* presents a complex model of human experience in the face of universal change. It presents symbols within a matrix and invites us to consider the relations among them. Its laws as a relational system serve to stimulate thinking about change, and its symbols refer to salient cruxes or junctures in people’s experience of

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change. In this paper, I enumerate and briefly discuss certain resources offered by the *Yi*—a conceptual toolkit for thinking about change.

Fertility Symbolism

I believe that the structure of the *Yi* is based on fertility symbolism.² The forces that knit the world together are portrayed as two primordial tendencies—Heaven/ expansion/ creativeness versus Earth/ coalescence/ receptivity. #1 Qian ☰ and #2 Kun ☷ line up at the beginning of the text, and the subsequent exchange of lines between them results in all the other hexagrams. In other words, the symbolic armature represents an intertwining that produces the myriad situations of life. It is a dance of attraction, in which each entity changes due to its contact with the other.³ The idea of passion for life is part of this system. It implies a worldview, where each fiber of a living thing's being or each part of a dynamic sys-

² I base this on numerous symbolic features of the first two hexagrams. One item of evidence is an alternate name for hexagram #1, Jian 鍵, used in the Mawangdui silk manuscript version of the *Yijing*. Edward Shaughnessy points out in his translation that *jian* is an ideograph for a wooden pillar, presumably of phallic significance in ancient rites. I offer structural evidence in Mair 2005.

If we are to listen to skeptics, then the line statements of the *Zhouyi* are randomly related fragments. We have only to leaf through Gao Heng's books to find comments about the lack of meaningful relations among the lines. He ignores obvious contextual features such as contrasting themes in hexagram pairs and progressions from top to bottom lines. He also ignores analogies between lines in the first two hexagrams and lines of like polarity and position elsewhere. If the text is such a bundle of fragments, as he claims it to be, then it is hard to see what purpose would be served by explicating it. In the course of such context-free explication, one philologist will explain a word according to one ancient usage, and another philologist will explain it by another ancient usage. For instance, some scholars define the hexagram name of #15 as "Giant Hamster," and others define it as "Humility." I believe that understanding the symbolic context of line statements gives us a basis for choosing among the possible usages of words.

³ The theme of ebb and flow (based on rationalized ideas of yin and yang later philosophers have found in the *Yijing*) is only a part of the symbolism of the book as a whole. I believe that Qian and Kun in the *Yijing* are analogous to the world-creating dance of Shiva in the Hindu tradition.

tem—however far down one goes⁴—exists in a relation of passion with other parts. (If the relation is not passion, it is at least an intense give and take, with commensurate feelings for the participants.)

Since love forms an inherent part of this matrix of symbols, it is no surprise that it would come back out during acts of interpretation. I have in mind traditional thinkers who viewed human affairs against the backdrop of a natural order animated by the life-fostering force called *ren* 仁 (benevolence). The Song-dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 wrote in his *Lunren* 論仁 (Discourse on Benevolence): "*Ren* by its very nature is the life-giving intention of Heaven and Earth. Its presence inheres in all beings, and as particular conditions arise, its function is without limit." The modern scholar Yang Rubin 楊儒賓 explains this as follows: "Zhu Xi views *ren* as essential to the human heart/mind, and he also views it as the mind of Heaven. More precisely, the distinguishing characteristic of the human heart/mind is 'love' or 'sense of fellow-feeling,' i.e., an expression of the 'life-giving intention' of Heaven's mind."⁵

Traditional historians, too, evaluated human action according to *ren*. The modern scholar Zhang Qiang 張強 devotes the concluding chapter of his book on Sima Qian to his ideas of *ren*. Sima Qian "inherited Confucius' ideas on *ren* and used them to strengthen his positions; he undertook a critique of *ren* and anti-*ren* as these played out in human society" (2005, 467). The phrase "benevolence of the Heaven-mind" (*tianxin zhi ren* 天心之仁), recurrent in Neo-Confucian ethical discourse, over time found its way into historical works. For instance, in the *Mingshi* 明史

⁴ A tension or dialectic between contraries is an unmistakable feature in the wording of many line statements. For instance, #11.3—"No level ground not followed by a slope; no going forth that does not return;" #11.6—"The city wall falls into the moat." On a macrocosmic scale, the interplay of contraries shows in hexagrams #1 and #2. To find this same feature within single lines suggests that the symbolic structure is holographic, and that certain symbolic features can be extended indefinitely along a vector of greater or lesser graininess.

⁵ See his "Zhuzi lun ren" 朱子論仁, www.eastasia.ntu.edu.tw/chinese/data/broadcast/. Another Confucian philosopher who spoke of *ren* in this sense was Zhang Zai 張載: "Heaven is embodied in things without fail, just as *ren* is embodied in affairs and is nowhere missing. . . . You will nowhere find a creature that is without *ren*." From Zhang Zai, *Zhengmeng* 正蒙, ch. 3.

(History of the Ming Dynasty), the official Li Jun 李俊 is quoted as pleading with the emperor to cut back the gift-tribute system, so as to lighten the economic burden on commoners and “embody the benevolence of the Heaven-mind” (ch. 180, *Liezhuàn* 68). I believe that the source of *ren* as a philosophical concept is ultimately rooted in the kind of cosmology found in the *Yijing*.⁶ Since the *Yijing* has traditionally provided a framework for viewing change, I believe it is important to know that a bias toward life-fostering virtue may be built into it.

Meanings Contributed by Trigrams

The eight trigrams are composed of mingled broken and unbroken lines. Each trigram has a fundamental potency and image drawn from the natural world to represent a certain aspect of change.⁷ For instance, the trigram Gen ䷊ has the potency of keeping still and is associated with the natural image of mountain. It refers to a settled state or the result of a given action. In terms of broader processes, it represents the formation of fixed structures, or the sedimentation of history. This meaning of Gen, as pointed out by the Ming commentator Zhang Huang 章潢 in his *Zhouyi xiangyi* 周易象義 (XXX; 9: 43-45), is seen clearly in #18 Spoiled Legacy ䷧. The trial-and-error penetration (or circulation) of the Xun ䷴ trigram below comes up against the hardened formation of Gen above, and the growth of *xun* is thereby stymied.

⁶ The *Yijing* is concerned with beings that exist in a web of relationships. It represents a spontaneous, ongoing cosmogony where all entities, through their interplay with each other, act as agents of co-creation.

⁷ I have found the discussion of metaphor in Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (1999), to offer useful insights that I can use to talk about the *Yijing*. They say that metaphor begins with formative perceptual experiences from childhood. Generalizations formed from early perceptual learning form a source domain, mapped onto the target domain of various abstract concepts. Each trigram is “about” a perceptual or experiential state. The natural images and potencies cluster around this as a way to broaden the sphere of correlation. Such a core concept is like a template—we can correlate the same symbol with multi-level referents. The interesting things happen when the two clusters of implication interact, because the possibilities for abstract reference are multiplied.

Gen derives its meaning from its configuration as a binary figure. If we assume that changes move from the bottom up (a rule deriving from the binary expansion of trigrams) then the single yang line at the top of *gen* can go no further. In contrast, the trigram Zhen ䷲, with the natural image of thunder, represents the inception of a process. Its single yang line is at the bottom, suggesting that its path of development is still open. In each trigram, the descriptive meaning can be related to the binary figure.⁸ Here is a list of the eight trigrams with the aspect of process that each focuses on (based on my own inductive reading of the text). Trigrams are given in "family" order, with the parents first, followed by the sons and daughters.

- 1) ䷀ Qian, infinite relations;
- 2) ䷁ Kun, nurturing substrate;
- 3) ䷲ Zhen, triggering impulse;
- 4) ䷁ Kan, unpredictable flow;
- 5) ䷆ Gen, residue of action [or settled formation];
- 6) ䷆ Xun, homeostatic field;
- 7) ䷄ Li, highlighted relations;
- 8) ䷇ Dui, self-offered richness.

Hexagrams

The combination of trigrams into hexagrams is a way of showing two aspects of change in light of each other. Each of the sixty-four combinations constitutes a hermeneutic unit made up of two mutually conditioning halves. That is, the two juxtaposed trigrams become a portmanteau symbol where each trigram's significance is seen in light of the other. Associated meanings of the two trigrams feed into a hermeneutic loop like ingredients into a hopper. As mentioned above, the *xun* trigram takes on the meaning of stymied growth when it is situated below the Gen trigram in #18 "Spoiled Legacy" ䷧.

⁸ See my essays "Associations on the Trigrams" and "Rationale of the Yang Trigrams" on www.yijingpoetics.net.

However, this is only one way of looking at the symbol, i.e., the “fallen” meaning. The Xun trigram, like a wind that stirs things up, can bring its original characteristics of homeostatic circulation and exploratory growth to the situation. (Zhang Huang speaks of these characteristics as the “heavenly principle” of the trigram.)⁹ Hence, line 3 speaks of “dealing with a spoiled legacy, if there is a [worthy] young one, then the elders will be without blame.” The Gen trigram can also contribute its “heavenly principle” in the form of resources available for use. The slopes of the mountain are rich in timber, ore, and game for hunting; the mountain itself makes a spectacular scene. One who is dealing with a stymied situation can avail himself of these things. From this, we can see that although a trigram’s characteristics contribute to making a situation what it is, they may have a further function of dealing with that situation.⁹

The two-trigram structure of the hexagram has a built-in implication of inwardness and externality. The lower, inner trigram often indicates a subjective, inward state, while the outer trigram shows an external condition. For example, many commentators say that in #5 Waiting ䷟, the lower trigram represents strength capable of self-restraint, while the outer trigram represents a dangerous condition. Sometimes the inner and outer trigrams are seen on a time continuum. For instance, Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 says that the two trigrams in #3 Difficulty ䷛ (zhen ䷲ and kan ䷜) represent the first two stages of yang’s interaction with yin. Thus, this hexagram portrays the chaotic beginnings of creation, when Qian first collides with Kun (2004, 51-54).

The six lines of a hexagram represent six aspects of a situation. Usually, as we move upward from the bottom, a progression takes us deeper into the situation. Also, running concurrently with this, there is often a progression from latent to manifest. However, latent-to-manifest is only

⁹ The dual function (i.e., Janus-nature) of trigram characteristics is also seen in the Judgment Treatise of #36 ䷛: “Brightness has gone into the Earth: this is Wounded Brightness. Patterned brightness is within while acceptance is without—and thus exposed to great adversity: such was King Wen.” In other words, the Kun ䷜ trigram is both the obscuring circumstance and a person’s acceptance of the circumstance.

an idealized, abstract scheme. Actually, each hexagram has its own particular scheme. For instance in #5, the first three lines represent "waiting" in settings, getting progressively closer to something dangerous: 1) on the outskirts of town; 2) on the sand; and 3) in the mud. The next three lines represent three different attitudes one takes while waiting: 1) grit your teeth and bear the danger, while looking for an exit; 2) practice conviviality to build communal ties; 3) hole up but try to be prepared for what may come.

Changes of polarity in lines lead to a new situation/hexagram. Knowledgeable commentators do not explain a line change as the result of a single cause. Instead, they interpret a line change as resulting from a number of factors that come together and tip the line toward a change of polarity. Such factors include various symbolic interactions among lines and between trigrams. There must be a buildup of such impingements before a line changes polarity, and a line at the point of changing is in a state of tension between changing and not changing. Good commentators characterize such tension, since it would affect a person caught in that situation.

Relations and Centrality

A trigram consists of three lines, and three is the minimum number; it includes a relation of "betweenness" or "centrality." A hexagram thus has two clusters of variables, both with centers. The concept of "centrality" is the *Yijing's* way of characterizing states of balance and equilibrium. The second line of a hexagram is the central line of the lower trigram, and the fifth line is the central line of the upper trigram. There are 128 central lines in the sixty-four hexagrams. Although central lines make up only one third of the total lines, approximately half of the occurrences of the word *ji* 吉 (good fortune) appear in central lines. Thus, centrality appears as promising relatively good outcomes. A central line has access to more information than other lines: its betweenness lets it receive inputs from both companion lines. If we read through all the central lines of the *Yi* inductively, we find that states of balance are being described in many situations. Without prescribing moderation and balance, the system makes a case for it by an accumulation of perspectives on centrality.

For example, Hexagram #11 謙 (Peace) depicts an ideal relation between yin and yang, where yang (the lower trigram) adjusts itself optimally to working within yin (the upper trigram). The coalescence of yin contains the expansive activity of yang within it. "Heaven and Earth are in stable interchange." ("Judgment Treatise") This is not just peace; it is being fully alive. The focal point of yang's activity is Second Yang, the central line of the lower trigram. The line statement at Second Yang reads, "Embrace the uncouth, set about fording rivers on foot; do not forsake what is remote; let go of clubby ties. Find [a higher] value in centered action."

The Ming commentator Jiao Hong 焦竑 writes: "Line Two is firm yet able to yield. . . It connects with the yin outside and resonates with it, like one who fords a stream without misgivings. Though yin is distant, he does not forsake it; though yang is near he does not stick together with it. He alone leaves his friendly ties and acts in accord with the centered action of Line Five above." Zhang Huang has, "Line Two is a firm line in a yielding place and holds the center, thus its capacious heart can be tolerant of others. It embodies the strength and firmness of the Qian trigram, thus it can resolutely ford a river. It appears in the Tai hexagram, where inner and outer have interchange and utmost *ren* [benevolence] is without exclusion, hence it does not forsake what is remote. . . . The firm second line is matched with the yielding fifth line, thus [a higher] value is found in centered action."¹⁰

In other words, the strong line at Second Yang has humbled itself; now it recognizes worth anywhere it may be found. It reaches out, even to the "lesser ones" who are on the outside. In this way, "Heaven" and "Earth" come into interchange. To take the interpretation a bit further, the superior man at Line Two can recognize a person of worth at a center point, which originally seemed unlikely. The superior man may need to recognize a "new" center point hidden in humble trappings. When it is

¹⁰ Jiao Hong's quote is from his commentary *Yiquan* 易筌 republished in *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1984), Jing 11:32. The Zhang Huang quote is from *Zhouyi xiangyi*, ed. *Xuxiu siku quanshu*, Jing 9:309.

time for interchange, the unassuming stranger or plain object may play a pivotal role in bringing about peace.¹¹ Hence, this line in the *Yijing* is analogous to this passage in *Zhuangzi*:

Master Easturb inquired of Master Chuang, saying "Where is the so-called Way present?"

"There's no place that it's not present," said Master Chuang. "

Give me an example so that I can get an idea," said Master Easturb.

"It's in ants," said Master Chuang.

"How can it be so low?"

"It's in panic grass."

"How can it be still lower?"

"It's in tiles and shards."

"How can it be still lower?"

"It's in shit and piss." (Mair 1994, 217)

Interwovenness

As a whole, the *Yi's* symbol matrix is a model of complex interwovenness in nature. A hexagram can be read as two trigrams, a progression of six lines, an intersection of vectors with various outcomes, or a binary number. It can be part of the symmetry of binary numbers—the received sequence has many of these—or belong this or that hexagram cluster. These perspectives do not rule each other out. There is no cornerstone, first cause, or "groundstuff," from which the whole system can build. Each element of the system, at whatever level, is conditioned both formally and semantically by its relation to other elements. The sig-

¹¹ When I contemplate Second Yang of #11, I sometimes picture the floating focal point of a Chinese landscape painting [as opposed to fixed focal perspective of Western painting.] Somehow, this fits the imagery of the line, where one traverses distances toward a point not determined ahead of time.

There is another hexagram where a central line takes on new importance in a shifting situation. Second Yang of #59 Dispersion ䷺ reads: "In a time of Dispersion run to the platform." The word *ji* 机 is this line may be interchangeable with *ji* 機, so the line can take on many intriguing meanings: "In a time of Dispersion, run toward the X." Here X could mean a nexus of change, a point from which events unfold, a crux of development, the most organically alive point of a system, or the "chaotic attractor" that most affects the outcome.

nificance of each content-bearing element is over-determined, and all determinants of meaning densely overlay. In this respect, the system resembles the order of complex systems like neural networks, genomes, and social systems.

I believe that the *Zhouyi* text was ahead of its time with respect certain features of its structure, including this feature of complex patterning and interwovenness. In the past, there was no empirical language to describe such a feature. Many structural features came to be teased out and recognized only gradually over history.¹² For instance, only in the Ming dynasty did such people as Lai Zhide 來知德 point out the weighting of *zhenggua* (i.e., the trigrams Qian, Kun, Kan, and Li) toward the first half of the text.¹³ Only in the 20th century did mathematicians discover extensive numerical symmetries in the received hexagram sequence (see Rutt 1996).

The dense interlocking patterns in the text show a mode of organization that results when things come together naturally, according to organic principles, without a single aim or fixed purpose. Whoever put this system together had no dogmatic axe to grind; if they had, their minds would not have served as gardens wherein such a system could grow; it would never have come together. In this system, the multi-valence pertains to symbolic features, but it mirrors the multi-valence of

¹² I believe that the *Yi*'s internal structural features were obscured by an overlay of numerological correspondences that proliferated since the Han era. As far as I can tell, the later numerological systems do not have the elegant, interwoven quality and referential character (about experience) that the original symbol matrix has. The numerology seems cranked out according to numerous formulae, using numbers to generate other numbers and derive five-element correspondences. (Hence the relevance to fortune telling, which uses the numbers of one's birth date.) For instance, the *guaqi* system strives to reconcile the 60-step cycle of Earthly stems and Heavenly branches with the 64 hexagrams. In order to fit in the extra four hexagrams, a system of epicycles is introduced that cannot be used to contemplate any human situation or change of situation. In the original symbol matrix, everything refers to experience in some sense. Numerology marks a different direction of intellectual effort from the probing of symbols.

¹³ Lai Zhide's commentary contains discussion of the relative placement of *zhenggua* 正卦 [the trigrams Qian, Kun, Kan, Li] and *weigua* 維卦 [the trigrams Zhen, Gen, Xun, Dui] in the hexagram sequence.

elements in massively connected natural systems. The best parallel I can think of is gender in the biological world. Why is there such a thing as male and female all through the animal and vegetable kingdoms? Why do the two genders show such markedly different physical and behavioral characteristics? Biologists have devoted some intriguing thoughts to this question. Matt Ridley sums up some of their discussion on this issue. He brings up several different answers, each supported by scientific evidence (1995, chs. 1-5).¹⁴

The point he makes is that in complex natural systems, things do not happen for a single reason. It often happens that several purposes are served at the same time. It is intriguing that Ridley chooses the example of genders to make this point. The *Yijing* also talks about the strangely ubiquitous role of gender in nature. Like a good biology text, it complicates the idea of gender and shows it to be a composite construct, having no single purpose, emerging from interchange. For the *Yijing*, gender is more than just male or female—it forms the basis of extended metaphors that embrace many types of complementarity in the natural world. In other words, the *Yijing* uses gender to think philosophically about the interplay of contraries in nature. It avoids a simple-minded position about the purpose or basis of gender. In this sense, it is an excellent symbolic, pre-scientific model of many things that science is concerned with. The *Yijing* is above all else a system of interlocking contraries (or complementary pairs). That makes it a plausible framework for describing change, because contraries in the natural world have a way of tipping—over time—into different phases, where other states of equilibrium or disequilibrium obtain.

¹⁴ Ridley discusses hypotheses to explain gender, such as the needs to shuffle the genome, for regular transcription and correction of data on the chromosomes, to keep ahead of parasites, to avoid genetic warfare during exchanges of genes, as well as the convenience of haploid packaging during exchanges and the operation of positive feedback cycles under selective pressure.

Embodiment

After years of reading the *Yijing*, I have found that the *Yi* also addresses experiences of change in a less obvious way, or rather I should say in a way so obvious as to be hidden in the plain daylight of the reader's existential predicament. That is, the *Yi* deals in deeply personal terms with the experience of embodiment.

Embodiment can only happen to an individual, and because embodiment is an important subject of the *Yi*, the *Yi* presents a private world that other ancient texts do not touch upon. For example, #38 Divergence ䷥ deals with the dialectic of separateness vs. union in a relationship. One can neither escape the relationship nor give oneself fully to it. In this state of tension, one's thoughts and perceptions flit off in odd directions. Hence, First Yang says, "go down a narrow alley to meet your leader." Top Yin talks about mistaking people for muddy pigs and demons, and even being ready to shoot an arrow at them. This conveys a moment when rationality is not fully in charge, due to impulses of fear and revulsion.

Another example is First Yin of #47 Predicament ䷧: "In a predicament with your buttocks on a fallen log, there in a secluded valley, for three years you will not rise up." Second Yang of the same hexagram says, "In a predicament at meat and drink; the one wearing a crimson official tunic is coming." A sense of powerlessness makes the person in First Yin sit on that log, not any external coercion. Moreover, for many people it is enjoyable to sit at meat and drink, and to meet with officials is an ordinary thing. Yet the person in Second Yang clearly has reasons, based on his own private history, to feel oppressed by what is happening.

The second half of the *Yi* is full of pungent phrases that relate to a person's bodily, perceptual, emotional involvement in various situations. Examples include "flayed in the buttocks" (#43); "walk with a halting stride" (#43); "laughing wildly and then wailing" (#37); "a bond of trust like clasped hands" (#61); "bound as if by oxhide" (#49); "riding and carrying baggage at the same time" (#40); "changing one's stripes like a tiger" (#49); and "shooting at prey, down in a burrow, with a tethered arrow" (#62).

I believe the text can be read as a framework for describing the vicissitudes of an embodied being as it makes its way through Dao as a system of unfolding relations (*daoti* 道體). The themes of some hexagrams bear directly on embodiment. For instance, #24 Renewal ䷗, anticipating the focus on renewal in the *Daode jing* (ch. 16), shows a spark of yang acting within a material body (all yin) to animate it. The hexagram Tai (#11 ䷊) shows an ideal configuration of yang within yin, closely related to this theme. Here is what Zhang Huang has to say, in his *Zhouyi xiangyi*, about #11 in contrast to #12 Stagnation ䷋:

Kun below and Qian above make the hexagram Stagnation. It gets its meaning, because Heaven and Earth are cut off and do not have interchange. The hexagram statement speaks of 'the inhumanness of stagnation.' It does not say that Heaven and Earth are stagnant, but lays blame on people who are inhuman...To say that the superior depart and the inferior come is to say that yang goes outward and yin comes inward. This refers to the hexagram structure with Kun below and Qian above. What makes people human is that they 'bear yin like a burden and embrace yang within.' But now this hexagram has yin inside and yang outside, i.e., an image of being inhuman." (Jing 9:311)

Zhang Huang here refers to *Daode jing* passage that relates to embodiment.¹⁵ Living things actualize themselves to the extent that they embrace their true nature within and bear the burden of their material endowment. This is like saying that they stay pliant and mild outwardly, but keep their true nature (yang) centered inwardly. If one's yin, material tendencies take over inside and yang converts to mere external strength, one becomes "inhuman" or a "tyrant." The crucial hexagram #11 evokes the possibility of an ideal interchange of yin and yang—the marriage of Qian and Kun—but this ideal is dogged by a shadow, hexagram #12, i.e., failure at having such an interchange.

¹⁵ "The myriad creatures bear yin like a burden and embrace yang within. They make space for *qi*-energy and thereby achieve harmony. What all under Heaven hate most is to be orphaned, destitute, and helpless. Yet kings and dukes call themselves thus. Things may be diminished by being increased, increased by being diminished. . . . 'The tyrant does not die a natural death'. I take this [sentence] as my mentor" (ch. 42; see Mair 1990).

When we consider something, we tend to hold that thing up in front of our mind's eye and look at it first from one side and then the other. When this process is continued, our minds tend to work out a tree structure of possibilities. Eventually, since we have our own favored pathways of thought, a pruned tree of characteristic thoughts is inscribed in our minds. In the same way, out of the welter of impingements acting on any given element in the symbol system, we can sculpt our own interpretation of why a change happens. We can "discern the signs" of latent trends that will become actual. Whether by hindsight or foresight, our understanding of the course of change is an act of interpretation that is our responsibility. If the "medium is the message," then the Yi's reticence in prescriptive matters can be viewed as encouragement to face that responsibility.

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Daoist Martial Alchemy

The *Yijin jing* at the Tongbai Gong

HIRSH DIAMANT & STEVE JACKOWICZ

The *Yijin jing* 易筋經 (Changing Tendon Classic) is a text of classical martial arts widely taught in traditional China and popular in qigong circles today. Commonly held to reflect a practice created by Bodhidharma in the 6th century in Henan, it supposedly served to help monks at the Shaolinsi 少林寺 in their attainment of enlightenment. Several scholars have examined this legend, reaching the conclusion that the work has neither a connection to Bodhidharma nor to Shaolin (see Hu 1965; Henning 1999; Shahar 2008). At the Tongbai gong 桐柏宮 on Mount Tiantai 天台山 in Zhejiang, Daoist monks practice a form of the exercise under the same name yet attributed to the Daoist master Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (987-1082). It offers a case study in the culture and martial practice of self-cultivation in the Daoist tradition.

The Tongbai gong Tradition

There are numerous versions of the *Yijin jing*; one website on Daoism lists as many as eighteen, some allegedly of Shaolin origin, others claiming to go back to Daoist groups on Mounts Wudang or Emei (Mak 1996). Martial curricula at Shaolin include *Yijin jing* practice, and several monks have produced videos detailing it.

However, the version practiced at Tongbai gong is unique. Its alleged author Zhang Boduan, aka Ziyang 紫陽, was an aristocrat from Zhejiang, well trained in Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, medicine,

military strategy, astronomy and geography. After he failed to pass the civil service examination, he trained under the Daoist master Liu Haicao 劉海蟠, aka Qingcheng zhangren 青城丈人 (Hudson 2008, 82), and went on to synthesize a complex understanding of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹). He wrote his famous collection of alchemical poems, the *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇 (Awakening to Perfection; trl. Cleary 1987), as well as several other texts, including the *Jindan sibai zi* 金丹四百字 (Four Hundred Words on the Golden Elixir).



Zhang combined conceptual theory and physical practice, dividing the cultivation process into four stages. First comes building a foundation; second is refining essence (*jing* 精) into energy (*qi* 氣), followed, third by refining energy into spirit (*shen* 神), and fourth, refining spirit to merge with the void (*xukong* 虛空). He also incorporated Buddhist concepts, notably the role of mind (*xin* 心) and inner nature (*xing* 性) as requisites for the return to original nature (*yuanxing* 元性) (Lu 2009, 73).

The *Yijin jing* version used at the Tongbai gong consists of 160 characters, arranged into eight lines of twenty each. The lines further subdivide into five phrases of four characters. Its rhythmic organization lends itself to memorization and recitation. Neither the *Wuzhen pian* nor the *Jindan sibai zi* use the expression “tendon changing.” However, the text contains many similarities to the theories of Zhang Boduan.

沐浴守中: 雙手合十, 冥心泯意, 融入虛空, 洗清萬念
 鐵牛犁地: 雙手握拳, 拇指力挺, 虛頂垂尾, 拔背含胸
 海底歸元: 雙手推下, 真意貫充, 任督中通, 玄關神開
 兩儀融清: 雙手平推, 疏胸開節, 肝膽利導, 金木交化
 神象飛精: 雙掌前推, 三陽通利, 舒中強筋, 返元還精
 摘星望月: 單掌探月, 掌護命門, 紫霄撫龍, 坎宮守元
 鼎立乾坤: 下撈海川, 上推天頂, 水火即濟, 天地混合
 歸元丹田: 雙手合掌, 歸胞丹田, 儲立清心, 復歸寂靜

Text and Practice¹

First Set

沐浴守中: 雙手合十，冥心泯意，融入虛空，洗清萬念

Cleanse yourself and guard your center:

Bring hands together and unite the ten[fingers].

Deepen the mind and abandon desires.

Dissolve and enter the void.

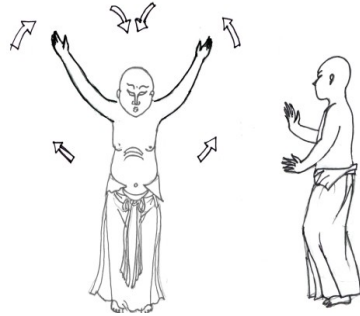
Cleanse to the purity of the 10,000 chants.



Muyu 沐浴 means "bathe," or "shower."

This phrase refers to the movement in the practice where the practitioner raises both arms and brings them down as though imitating the movement of water cleansing oneself from head to toe. Next, the arms come in front of the body as though ready for a fight, corresponding to the term *shouzhong* 守中, "guard the center."

The arms protect center, i.e., the elixir field (*dantian* 丹田) below the navel.



This first set or opening sequence begins the practice; it is also repeated at the end of each set of movements and thus provides a consistent segmentation to the practice. Also, since some movements are physically strenuous, repeating the first set allows practitioners to rest and feel centered. The first four characters serve as the title of the set, describing movements further explained in the remaining four lines. This structure repeats consistently throughout the text.

As they undergo this initial practice, adepts enter a deeper state of mind, moving their intention inward while letting go of goals and aspi-

¹ Each posture has an attendant illustration drawn by one of the authors, Hirsh Diamant, in the traditional style.

rations. As Zhang Boduan advised, “Practitioners must purify the mind, eliminate desires, and take control of their thoughts” (Lu 2009, 76)

Second Set

鐵牛犁地: 雙手握拳，拇指力挺，虛頂垂尾，拔背含胸

Iron ox plows earth:

Both hands make fists,

Thumbs strongly extend.

Empty the head, tuck the tail,

Expand the back, and hollow the chest.

The terminology is reminiscent of the Map of the *Neijing tu* 內經圖 (Diagram of Internal Pathways; see Komjathy 2008; 2009) wherein the lower part of the body is depicted as a field being plowed by an ox (see below). The ox represents the raw strength and will of the practitioner. The quality of being “iron-like” refers to the unbending force of will needed for spiritual attainment.



Third Set

海底歸元: 雙手推下，真意貫充，任督中通，玄關神開

Ocean floor returns to the origin:

Both hands press down.

The true goal is perpetual abundance.

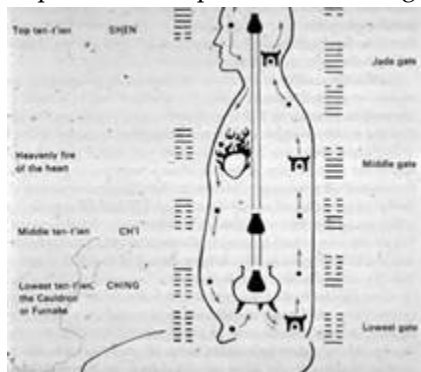
Conception and Governing Vessels centrally connect;

The mystery interconnects and spirit opens.



The imagery of the ocean is indicative of the lower part of the body as described in Daoist theory. The lower part of the body is under the control of by the kidney, the repository of water. The lower elixir field, moreover, is often described as an ocean, also seen in the *Neijing tu*. Also, the sixth point on the Conception Vessel in acupuncture, located on the lower abdomen, is known as the Ocean of *Qi* (*qihai* 氣海).

The first line speaks of the ocean floor, most likely referring to the perineum at the pelvic “floor.” This area is a meeting ground for the Conception and Governing Vessels (see below) and the location of the acupuncture point Meeting Yin (*huiyin* 會陰). Further, in Daoist thought, the Dao is “below” the body and supports it. As such, seeking the “ocean floor” in the body allows a return to the source of one’s being. The character *yuan* 元 means “primordial,” “source”, or “origin.” Each of these meanings illuminates the concept that it is a basis or foundation, from which one springs. The text thus indicates a sinking movement of *qi* to connect to the origin or primordial aspect of one’s being.



Zhang Boduan discusses the eight extraordinary vessels in his *Bamai jing* 八脈經 (Book of the Eight Vessels). He relates them directly to the process of internal alchemy. “Everyone has these eight vessels. However, since they all pertain to the yin spirit (yin shen 陰神) they are closed. Only the divine immortals are able to open them by infusing them with yang breath. By doing so, they obtain the Dao” (Predagio 2011, 28).

Fourth Set

兩儀融清: 雙手平推, 疏胸開節, 肝膽利導, 金木交化

The paired poles dissolve into purity:
Both hands press horizontally.

Unbind the chest, open the joints.

Liver and gallbladder come to benefit
fit

Metal and wood interrelate and
transform.



In the preceding section, the two polarities of yin and yang as manifested in the Conception and Governing Vessels coursed through the interior of the body. Here, the two polarities integrate, so that they consume each other. If yin and yang are equally appointed, their consummation leaves no remainder. The result is a state of clarity or purity (*qing* 清).



Fifth Set

神象飛精：雙掌前推，三陽通利，舒中強筋，返元還精

Spirit appears as elevated essence:

Both palms push forward.

Three yang course and benefit.

Settled center, strong tendons—

Return to the primordial and revert the essence.



This indicates that the spirit of practitioners is suffused with essence, which resides in the lower elixir field. If they have successfully worked the alchemical formulas of the earlier movements, they can now elevate essence to the upper elixir field where it will interact with the spirit. In traditional Chinese medicine, essence and spirit must interact to have any level of consciousness. In internal alchemy, the integration and commingling of essence and spirit in a controlled manner form a component of spiritual development.

Sixth Set

摘星望月：單掌探月，掌護命門，紫霄撫龍，坎宮守元

Pick a star, look for the moon:

One palm reaches for the moon;

The other guards the Gate of Ordinance.

Purple clouds nurture the dragon.

Trigram water's palace guards the primordial.



With one palm raised above the head as if reaching for a star and the other placed on the back protecting the area of the Gate of Ordinance (*mingmen* 命門), practitioners twist and turn their body as though looking for the moon. They remain in this position, twisted to the extreme around the vertical axis as long as is comfortable while breathing naturally. Then, they reverse the movement and repeat it in the opposite direction.

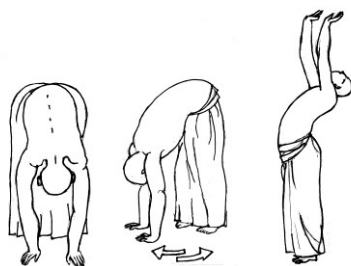
The text here refers to the Gate of Ordinance, a structure of the *qi* dynamic in Chinese medicine as well as internal alchemy. The former sees it as the meeting point of essence from the two kidneys, disseminated through the body to support physiological function (see Kohn and Jackowicz 2005). However, internal alchemy understands it more broadly. Here practitioners refine essence into *qi* and then into spirit, using the Gate as the path, through which essence enters the processes of the body. It acts like a flue in a furnace. Control of the flue regulates the flame. The Gate, therefore, controls how much essence comes into the system as well as where it goes. Its proper functioning is a key requisite for spiritual transformation.

Seventh Set

鼎立乾坤: 下撈海川, 上推天頂, 水火即濟,
天地混合

Cauldron erected between Heaven and Earth:

Below dredge the ocean and rivers;
Above push to the ceiling of Heaven.
Water and fire come to benefit;
Heaven and Earth dissolve in unity.



The “cauldron” is a reference to the external tool of the alchemist, who historically smelted minerals to create a physical elixir of spiritual immortality. However, the term moved into the vocabulary of internal alchemy to refer to the locus of the alchemical processes. The internal cauldron supposedly rested in the lower elixir field but, if properly utilized, could produce an elevation of spiritual substance to a higher state of development. Therefore, the cauldron must be “erected” or situated properly on the pole that connects Heaven and Earth. The expression “Heaven and Earth” here implies all things that range between those poles. If one orients one’s spiritual compass correctly between them, then spiritual elevation can occur. As the *Wuzhen pian* has, “First take Qian and Kun as the tripod and the cauldron...” (Pregadio 2011, 86).

Eighth Set

歸元丹田: 雙手合掌, 歸胞丹田, 儲立清心, 復歸寂靜

Return to the primordial elixir field:

Both hands join palms.

Return to embrace the elixir field,

Preserve the established pure heart,

Again return to quietude and stillness.



The successful operation of alchemy according to this means a return of adepts to the elixir field as embedded in the primordial source of being. Here “elixir field” most probably no longer refers to a center in the body, but rather to the core energy power of the universe. If the practitioner can become the focus of the universal forces around him, he will be able to exist indefinitely and perfect the alchemical formulas that lead to spiritual immortality.

This set capstones the practice; it is consistent with Zhang Boduan’s theories. As Xichen Lu points out, “Zhang suggests that practitioners should know and experience the flowing transformations, yet in their cultivation focus on its reversal: returning to the root and going back to the origins. He explains that as yin and yang return to the One, the elixir will naturally mature and spread throughout the body. Cultivation thus enables adepts to go against the natural order of progress and unfolding; it redirects the process of aging, sickness, and death, and allows practitioners to preserve eternal youth” (2009, 78).

The final lines describe the state that adepts attain after the practice. If they can reintegrate themselves into the world while maintaining the changes derived from alchemical operations, they will maintain a purified consciousness and gain the ability to return to a state of quietude and stillness. In his *Wuzhen pian shiyi* 悟真篇釋義 (Supplement), Zhang Boduan observes: “Thus one returns to the ultimate fundament of absolute emptiness and silence” (Pregadio 2011, 110). This is the goal of “tedon changing”: a transformed body and spirit, able to withstand the rigors of spiritual practice, while maintaining an active presence in the world, always remaining purified, unencumbered, and free.

At the end of this movement, practitioners return once more to the first set. As this is the foundation of the entire system, it serves also as its conclusion. Allowing practitioners to reassert their centrality throughout the practice, it ultimately serves as a vehicle for their return to normal yet enhanced consciousness.

Conclusion

The *Yijin jing* as practiced in the Tongbai gong is a living example of an historical tradition. Whether it actually originated with Zhang Boduan or is of later date remains inconclusive. However, faith in the power of the practice as the encapsulation of Zhang Boduan's wisdom creates a strong religious vibrancy within the practitioners. The practice provides monks with a lively and powerful connection to their local religious history; it serves as an exemplar of internal alchemical theory and provides a strong ritual link to the traditions enshrined at the temple. For modern practitioners, the text is also an inspiration toward transformative alchemical practice.

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The Daoist *Jiao* Celebration

MICHAEL SASO

The following analysis of Daoist *jiao* 醮 liturgy is based on the oral teachings of Daoist masters in Hsinchu, Taiwan (1955-1976, 2008-2013), and Mainland China (1986-2013). The primary written sources for the rituals listed here were published in the 25-volume *Zhuanglin Xu Daozang* 庄林续道藏 (Taipei: Chengwen Press, 1972). A second volume, *Dokyo Hiketsu Shusei* 道教秘诀集成 (Tokyo: Ryukei Press), containing the esoteric *mijue* oral teachings reserved for the use of Daoist masters, appeared in 1978. Audio and video productions of the entire *jiao* festival were made in 1969, 1972, and 1980. Readers may access them online, via YouTube, and the blogsite www.michaelsaso.org. Printed source materials are also available in CD and DVD format, making once overly expensive sources readily accessible. On-going field research, continuing to the present day, brings a much deeper understanding of the role of women Daoists in the meditative and liturgical traditions of mainland China. Men and women equally share, and perform the Daoist rituals described in this article

The Evolution of the Word *Jiao*

The word *jiao* in pre-imperial China (before 221 BCE), meant the ritual offering of wine and incense to the invisible spiritual forces that govern nature (Karlgren 1923, #1065-66). When China was united under a single visible emperor, during the Qin-Han dynasties, concepts of the spirit world, internal cultivation, and “rites of passage,” were unified through the acceptance of Yin-Yang Five Phases 陰陽五行 theory by the so-called New Text (Jinwen 今文) school as governing the rites of passage (see *Liji*

礼记, *Yili* 义礼). The expression "three teachings, one culture" (*sanjiao guiyi* 三教歸一) was later used to describe this unifying of China into a single socio-cultural system. Confucian teachings (*rujiao* 儒教) codified ethics for human relationships. Buddhism (*fojiao* 佛教), imported from India and altered substantially in China, was successful only after it provided ritual for pacifying the souls of ancestors and other "daemon" spirits in the afterlife. Daoism (*daojiao* 道教) provided a ritual system to mediate changes in nature, and relations with the spirit world. Daoists, from the period of division (3rd - 6th c.) by imperial order were graded or classified into nine ranks of perfection, as were the grades given to officials in the Confucian mandarin system. Daoists of Grade Five and above (*wupin* 五品以上) were given higher grades because they were able to practice of internal cultivation (*neigong* 内功) as a part of formal ritual observances (*keyi* 科仪). Daoists were not trained in *neigong* were given Grade Six (*liupin* 六品) or lower. The title of "Three-Five Surveyor of Merit" (*sanwu dugong* 三五度公) was, and still is, used to name Grade Six, and lower Daoists (*Dokyo Hiketsu Shusei*, p. 33b).

During the Han dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE), Daoists adopted *jiao* from Confucian liturgical sources and used it for a specific kind of "ritual of renewal." Anna Seidel and various Japanese scholars, including Kubo Noritada, have attributed this phenomenon partially to the conversion of New Text scholars, rejected by the dominant "Old Text" (Guwen 古文) school of the Later Han dynasty to Zhengyi 正一 or Orthodox Unity Daoism. The *Hetu* 河圖 (River Chart) and *Luoshu* 洛書 (Writ of the Luo) texts of the apocrypha (*gu weishu* 古緯書) were among its original sources. They show a strong influence of the *Yijing* 易经 (Book of Changes) and the *Laozi* as well as their various apocryphal commentaries on (e.g., 有易, 老子与已经) (see Seidel 1983).

Three kinds of *jiao* rituals appear in today's *Daozang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon): Golden Register *Jiao* (*jinlu jiao* 金籙醮) for village and temple renewal; Yellow Register *Zhai* (*huanglu zhai* 黃籙齋) for burials; and Jade Register *Jiao* (*yulu jiao* 玉籙醮) for imperial court and state rituals. Due to its colorful liturgies, Daoism was called the weft (*wei* 緯) and Confucianism the warp (*jing* 經), together forming the fabric of Chinese society.

Confucianism, as the "warp" or vertical threads of Chinese society, provided the classical Chinese source for texts defining socio-political

relationships. These texts were the basis for entrance by imperial examination into the upper strata of Chinese political bureaucracy. Daoism as the “weft” or horizontal threads of Chinese society provided rituals to keep people in harmony with cosmic changes and the seasons of nature. The four seasons, life cycles, and human connections with the invisible spiritual powers that affect us were the focus of Daoist ritual. Buddhism, imported from South Asia, provided subtle colors, painted on the surface of the Chinese social fabric, offering philosophical debates for the intellectual, and afterlife salvation for the masses. Thus, the phrase “three teachings one culture” defined China’s perennial culture.

The Daoist *jiao* ritual draws from all three of these Han-dynasty teaching systems to bless and renew Chinese family and village life, without any boundaries of social status, wealth, or political power. An analysis of the Jiao festival shows in fact a three-fold structure, which I term “A”, “B” and “C,” based on sources familiar to the people.

The Threefold Structure of the *Jiao*

“A” or Confucian shared rituals, derive from New Text models. They are used to purify the sacred ritual area, announce the coming of the Heavenly Emperor and his court, invite spirits to be present, present a memorial to the Heavenly Emperor, receive back an Imperial Rescript (*shuwen* 書文), thank the heavenly rulers, and send them off. Cooked, or ready to eat foods are used during the Jiao rituals, as offerings to the Heaven and Earth spirits, to be presented during their ritual presence.

“B” style chants, as also in Buddhist rituals, are called “texts of merit and litanies of repentance” (*jingchan* 經懺). They are used to free souls from the sufferings of an afterlife in hell or purgatory. As an aside, let me note here that, to the Chinese, only politicians stay eternally in hell; all others are released due to the prayers and merits of the living. Souls confined to the underworld receive raw, uncooked food, during the *jiao*, to be taken away, prepared in another place, after which they are “seen off” or freed to enter a Buddhist shared Pure Land.

“C” style rituals begin by acting out *Laozi* 42, “Dao brings forth the One; the One brings forth the Two; the Two bring forth the Three; and the Three give rise to the myriad creatures.” This ritual is called Dividing the Lamps (*fendeng* 分燈). Three lamps are lighted, one for each line of

the 42nd chapter, thereby to celebrate the Dao's gestation of all nature. Then, the Daoist master reverses this gestation process (*huiyuan fangen* 回源反根). He or she proceeds from the "myriad creatures" of nature back to an audience with the transcendent Dao, by moving from nine, to five, three, two and one, from the immanent, gestating female Dao (*youwei zhidao* 有为之道) to the eternal transcendent Dao (*wuwei zhidao* 无为之道), which is neither "he" nor "she," without image or title.

To do this, the high priest begins by performing the ritual of the nine-stage magic square mandala of the *Luoshu*, called "Purifying the Altar" (*jintan* 禁坛). The rite closes the Gate of Demons in the northeast, and opens the Gate of Heaven in the northwest, applying imagery drawn from the Eight Trigrams of the *Yijing*.

Next, a five-stage circular mandala along the lines of the Hetu is physically and meditatively built in a ritual called Nocturnal Announcement (*suqi* 宿启) or Hall of Light (*mingtang* 明堂). In this ritual, the five Lingbao Talismans are placed in five bushels of rice, while the Daoist master recites the *Lingbao wu zhenwen* 灵宝五真文 (Five Perfect Scripts of Numinous Treasure) and meditates on the five phases, thereby renewing the five inner organs of the human body and the entire cosmos. These rites are performed on the first day of the *jiao*.

On the second day, the Daoist high priest reverses the Dao's birthing process, refining "Three-Two-One," i.e., *qi*, *shen*, *jing* 炁神精, back into primordial chaos (*hundun* 混沌) or the state of the Great Ultimate (*taiji* 太極), the visible female Dao that gives birth to nature. These rites are called "Morning Audience, Noon Audience, and Night Audience" (*caochao* 早朝, *wuchao* 午朝, *wan chao* 晚朝). The text and music of all three rites are analogous, but the internal meditation of the Daoist used during each rite is quite different, and may not be shared with scholars or laity who are non-Daoist in belief or practice or who promote or even mention the "bedchamber arts" (*fangzhong* 房中), or other actions considered immoral. The Daoist ordination manual used at Longhu shan 龙虎山, Gezao shan 阁早山, and Maoshan 茅山 states specifically that only those "pure in heart and mind" may be taught the third, "C" level of Daoist internal meditation practice (p. 33).

Rites in Sequence

In the Daoist esoteric (*mijue* 秘诀) or orally transmitted (*koujue* 口诀 system), the blue-green wood of the east and the red fire of the south are refined into primordial *qi*, here written as *wu* 无 with the fire radical *huo* 火 underneath. The aura, which can be seen by those who actually know how to practice the ritual, produced in the Daoist's meditation, is a deep purple, descending from the pineal gland, and stored in the lower elixir field (*xia dantian* 下丹田), i.e., the actual physical center of the Daoist's body.

The earth in the center, taken from the "spleen," is refined in the alchemical fire of the belly into a bright gold, primordial spirit (*shen* 神) and stored in the belly during the Noon Audience.

The white metal of the west and the dark water of the north, finally, are refined into primordial essence (*jing* 精) during the Night Audience. The master stores them also in the belly. He envisions purple *qi* as a shell enfolding yellow spirit and bright white essence in the physical center of gravity. This is located between the kidneys and lined up with the fifth lumbar vertebrae, three inches below the navel. These meditations are described in the Qing-dynasty works of Liu Yiming 刘一明 (Liu Peiyuan 刘陪元), and still taught today at the Yuan Xuan Hui Yuan 原玄会院 in Hong Kong, as well as on Longhu shan, Maoshan., and by the nuns of Wudang shan 武当山道姑 and Qingcheng shan 青城山道姑.

On the third and last) day of the *jiao*, the Daoist master meets the transcendent Dao in an "audience" (*daochang* 道場), which takes place both within the sacred Daoist altar area (*tan* 坛) and in his personal wisdom center, the lower elixir field in the abdomen, also the physical center of gravity. During this ritual, the master meditatively sees primordial *qi*, spirit, and essence refined into the hierophant, a ruddy infant, and from there into the Great Ultimate. In the final stages of the meditation, all Daoist images are seen to burn off: nothing is left, except the unnamed, unseen Dao with whom the Daoist now has an "awareness-of-presence" audience. After this, a rescript from the Dao of Heaven, which answers the people's prayers, is carried into the sacred altar area. Here it is presented to the Daoist high priest by the deacon (*dujiang* 督讲). Next, the high priest dances the sacred nine-stage Steps of Yu (Yubu 禹步), re-

joicing that the people's petitions have been granted and the cosmos undergone full renewal.

On the afternoon of the third day, the high priest and his assistants further perform the Requiem (*pudu* 普度) rite for freeing all souls from the underworld. An effigy of Horsehead Guanyin 马头观音 is used to protect humans from unrequited souls freed from hell. The image is afterwards burned, together with folded gold and silver paper money, as a way of sending off the prayers and merits of the living, which will free all souls, bless humans, and benefit all nature. All images must be burned off or eliminated completely; all merit must be given away. Nothing can be kept for the self, lest the *jiao* ritual cannot succeed.

The *jiao* ritual ends with a rite to thank the spirits of heaven, earth, and the underworld and see them off. It is interesting to note that, from the Tang through the end of the Ming dynasty, the head of the Confucian Board of Rites, an official appointed directly by the Emperor, was always a Daoist who had both passed the *Jinshi* doctorate of Confucian classical studies and received a high "Grade Five" rank Daoist ordination. This is because the Hall of Light court ritual, which had to be performed five times each year, and the Daoist Nocturnal Announcement ritual used in the *jiao*, were analogous, if not identical. Only Daoists of Grade Five and above, from the Orthodox Unity, Clear Subtlety (Qingwei 清微), or Highest Clarity (Shangqing 上清) traditions were deemed spiritually and liturgically able and trained well enough to perform the classical ritual. The manner of performing the five basic *jiao* rites of renewal, i.e., the Nocturnal Announcement plus the audiences of Morning, Noon, Night and with the transcendent Dao, may not be fully explained to scholars or non-Daoists, foreign or Chinese, by order of strict Daoist precepts. The Daoist transmits the internal meditation aspects of these rituals only to one son or daughter plus to one disciple during the week before his passing.

Appendix: A Chart of the *Jiao* ¹

***Jiao* Rituals Used by all Daoist Schools and Ranks (Grades Nine through One)**

Fabiao 发表 announce — *Qingshen* 请神 invite spirits — *Jintan* 禁坛 purify altar — *Wuhong* 午洪 Noon offering — *Songbiao* 送表 send off a memorial to the Emperor of Heaven — *Shuwen* 疏文 receive back a rescript from Wuwei Dao, answering the petitions; *Xieshen* 谢神 thank the spirits — *Songshen* 送神 see the spirits off

***Jiao* and *Zhai* Rituals Modeled on Buddhist and Other Shared Rituals**

Nian wei gongde 念为功德 chant scriptures of merit — *Songchan* recite litanies of repentance, including lists of Daoist and “shared” spirits’ names — *Fang shuideng* 防水灯 float lanterns in a nearby stream or the ocean to send ancestral and other local spirits off to “western” heavens — *Pudu* 普度 or *Pushi* 普施 “feed” the hungry spirits with raw food, asking them to take the offerings away and cook elsewhere

Daoist Rites with Internal Meditation, Performed by Daoists of Grade Five or Higher

Jintan 禁坛 purify the sacred area, using the *Luoshu* or Eight Trigrams in the posterior heaven arrangement 先天河图八卦 — meditatively seal the Gate of Demons (*qian* 乾) in the northwest, using the *Qingwei* Thunder-Vajra mudra and mantra (*wulei shouyin zhouwen* 五雷手印，咒文), then opens the Gate of Heaven in the northwest — *Suqi* 宿启 / *Mingtang* 明堂 implant the five Lingbao talismans into five bushels of rice, positioned in the five directions of the sacred area — *Zaochao* 早朝, *Wuchao* 午朝, *Wanchao* 晚朝 refine the five phases into primordial *qi*, spirit, and essence, the three principles of gestation and renewal, via focus on the

¹ For a more complete description of the internal meditations used by the Daoist master, please see Saso 2013. For a comparison of the Orthodox Unity tradition of northern Taiwan and Daoist practices on the great mountains of Mainland China, see Saso 2014.

lower elixir field — *Daochang* 道场 perform internal alchemy meditation on the morning of the third day refine Dao into transcendent level and make present within — *Shuwen* 疏文 bring rescript from transcendent Dao back into the world — *Yubu* 禹步 perform Steps of Yu to show joy in Dao's birthing and renewing the cosmos.

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Conferences

Daoism: Tradition and Transition 9th International Conference on Daoist Studies

Boston, May 29 – June 1, 2014

Held on the campus of Boston University, this conference had a strong focus on issues of Daoist thought (four panels on the *Zhuangzi* alone), but also addressed topics of ritual, history, military, cultivation, and more. An entire section offered workshops by leading qigong masters. The about 180 participants came from ten different countries, representing a wide variety of Daoist studies worldwide. Keynote speakers were Lai Chitim from Hong Kong and John Berthrong from Boston. The conference included a festive banquet as well as a film showing (Dennis Willmont, *Return to the Mountain: A Taiji Journey*). A major highlight was the presentation by a group of Daoists from Mount Kongtong about their home, life, and rituals, arranged for by Zhou Xuanyun and Julianne Baecker. Three roundtables discussed issues of Daoist practice, women's alchemy, and ritual today, the latter featuring Daoist master Li Youkun from Keelung in Taiwan. Schedule and abstracts, as well as selected complete papers are available on www.daoiststudies.org. The 10th International Conference will be held in Taiwan, January 2016.

—Livia Kohn

Luoyang Symposium on Laozi Culture

洛阳老子文化国际论坛

Luoyang & Laojun shan, September 18-22, 2014

Sponsors of this conference, led masterfully by Chen Guying, included the Chinese Academy of Social Science, Center for Daoist Studies at Peking University, Philosophy Department of Qinghua University, Laozi Study Associations of Henan Province and Luoyang City, as well as the Luoyang Center for Social Sciences. It assembled about 130 participants, mostly from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, but also included invited

guests from Japan, Korea, Europe, and the U.S. The discussion—both in plenary and panel sessions—focused on different aspects of Laozi's thought: in relation to contemporary ethics, environmental issues, humanistic culture, traditional East Asian thought, Western-language renditions, and religious Daoist practices. After a visit to the Longmen Caves in Luoyang, the entire assemble moved to Mt. Laojun near the scenic town of Luanchuan, about three hours south of Luoyang. All took to buses and cable car to ascend, climbing the last hour to admire the pavilions reaching into the sky. The final session and concluding ceremony occurred under the gaze of a massive Laozi statue, a visible sign of the growing importance of Laozi's thought and its continued close connection to religious veneration.

—Livia Kohn

2014 Hong Kong Daoist Forum

Hong Kong, October 4, 2014

Arranged by the Research Center for Daoist Culture of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in close cooperation with the Hong Kong Daoist Association, this forum was part of the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, which went on for several days afterwards. The forum convened Daoist groups from various locations—Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Guangzhou, Fujian, Singapore, and Malaysia—who all brought their altars, music, rituals, and martial arts, including boisterous lion dancers at the main banquet. Its academic portion, skillfully arranged and chaired by Lai Chitim, included presentations on different aspects of Daoism by leading professors from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the U.S., as well as by top Daoist officials, including leaders of the Chinese, Shanghai, Hunan, and Malaysian Daoist Associations. The overall consensus was that Daoism formed an essential part of traditional Chinese culture and had important contributions to make to the modern Chinese state as much as to world culture. For more, see www.cuhk.edu.hk/crs/dao.

—Livia Kohn

American Academy of Religions

San Diego, November 20-25, 2014

The 2014 meetings of the American Academy of Religions included two panels organized by the Daoist Studies Group, plus a paper in a panel convened by the Chinese Religions Group. Both groups cooperated in convening an additional joint panel concerning the legacy of Tao Hongjing. Scholars from many different countries convened to discuss the papers. A recurring theme was the need to understand Daoist women, practice, lineages, and training in ways that attend to the profound influence of wider social and political contexts.

The four papers constituting the panel, "Daoist Women Crafting Alternative Spaces and Practices, from Tang to Contemporary times," covered a broad historical span and associated social transformations from the Tang through the Republican period and up to present times. The presenters were Jinhua Jia (Macau), Hsiao-wen Cheng (Cambridge, Mass.), Elena Valussi (Chicago) and Wai Ching Angela Wong (Hong Kong). Papers explored prescriptive injunctions directed to, and idealized representations of, Daoist women, including how social and often specifically male constructions have been in tension with the realities of women's lives. Despite conventional social constraints and expectations, Daoist women have embodied skill in cultivation and ritual, institutional management and, like many of their male counterparts, were capable of intellectual subtlety and sophistication. Cultivation, mediumship and ritual practice were also considered in relation to their role in crafting figurative and literal spaces for agency and construction of identity.

The panel, "Beyond the Daoist Canon: Alternative Approaches to the Study of Daoist Ritual," included three papers on the getting past the local versus scriptural distinction in ritual study. Sun Meizi, Lichien Hung, and Tyler Feezell, all from Taipei, presented, each providing anthropological and sociological perspectives in addition to textual study but taking different positions and examining different specific rituals.

The panel, "The Many Daos of Tao: The Polymathic Arts of Tao Hongjing," represented a wide-ranging reassessment of Tao and his contributions in four areas: textual codification and systematization of lineages, particularly with respect to the place of the southern cult of the

Three Sovereigns and its associated textual legacy; Tao's creative theographic work and its relationship to political expedience and matters of legitimacy; the development of medical knowledge, specifically concerning toxicology in relation to alchemical practice; and reconsideration of what we can know concerning Tao's somewhat ambiguous identity as Daoist, Buddhist or both. Dominic Steavu-Balint (Santa Barbara), Jonathan Pettit (Taipei), Yan Liu (Cambridge, Mass.) and Stephen R. Bokenkamp (Tempe) presented.

The Chinese Religions Group, moreover, organized a panel on "Educating Religious Experts for the Nation: Institutions and Curricula for Christian, Han Buddhist, and Daoist Specialists in Modern China." It addressed the need to view institutional training amid fluctuating wider social and political contexts. Papers focused on the late Qing to the present. Der-Ruey Yang (Nanjing) discussed the training of Daoist functionaries suggesting that recent reforms in the Shanghai Daoist College are based on a perceived need to adapt to social shifts in China where skills as missionaries may now supersede the need for ritual specialization.

—Paul Crowe

Third International Daoist Forum

November 25-26, 2014, Longhu shan, Yingtan

Sponsored by the Chinese Daoist Association and the China Religious Culture Communications Association and hosted by the Jianxi Province Committee for the International Daoist Forum, the meeting began with ceremonies featuring beautiful dance and song which interwove Taoist ideas. After that, its opening session featured speeches by Ren Farong, Martin Palmer, Zhang Jiyu, Stephen Bokenkamp, and others. Panels concerned issues of health and well-being, sincerity and trust, charity and compassion, as well as ecological wisdom in the Daoist Religion. Two periods were set aside for Chinese Medical treatments for attendees.

Following the meeting, attendees went on a tour of Longhu shan, and its temples of Immortal City. Afterwards they took a bamboo boat down the Luxi River, winding theirway past rock peaks full of burial caves from the Warring States Period.

—David Hessler

International Conference on Qing Daoism

清代道教研究國際學術討會

Hong Kong, December 11-13, 2014,

This meeting was convened by the Research Center for Daoist Culture of the Chinese University of Hong Kong under the leadership of Lai Chitim, in cooperation with the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris and Waseda University in Tokyo. It brought together a small but powerful group of specialists and focused mainly on beliefs connected to Lü Dongbin and issues of spirit-writing. Presenters included Vincent Goossaert, Mori Yuria, Vincent Durand-Dastes, Liu Xun, Elena Valussi, Daniel Burton-Rose, Takeuchi 房司 as well as Hsieh Tsung-Hui, Wu Guangzheng, Wu Zhen, Ye Qinming, and Lai Chitim.

UPCOMING

Daoism: Self, Science, and Society

10th International Conference on Daoist Studies

Sanyi, Taiwan, May 26-29, 2016

Generously hosted by the Tiandi jiao Foundation and chaired by Liou Tong-Miin (Tsing Hua University) and Livia Kohn (Boston University), this meeting will focus on issues of Daoist worldview and practice, both in history and today. It calls for papers on the cosmology, philosophy, arts, and practices of Daoism, with particular concentration on its understanding of body and self, its relationship to science both ancient and modern, as well as its social relevance in ritual and community. There will be twelve panel periods with three parallel sessions each, featuring both academic presentations and practice workshops in Chinese and English with concurrent translation. For details and to register, please contact "daoconf@gmail.com."

New Foundation & Conference Site

The Elling O. Eide Charitable Foundation began with the bequest of the late sinologist Elling O. Eide, who left his extensive personal library with numerous rare works, Asian artifacts, paintings, and family compound to create an endowed academic research facility. Consisting of a research library, art collection, conference center, and wildlife preserve, the foundation has its headquarters on a beautiful 72-acre campus on Little Sarasota Bay, in Sarasota, Florida.

The Library (under construction) primarily serves to provide scholars working in Chinese or Inner Asian studies as well as on Sino-Iranian contacts before the year 1000 AD and Chinese lexicography. Qualified scholars and specialists wishing to work at the Center can utilize these facilities; they can live on campus. In addition, the Center has meeting rooms that allow conferences for up to forty participants; they would stay in local hotels. For more details, please see www.ellingoeide.org.

Science on Qi

Randomized Controlled Trials

Aikens, K.M., Astin, J., Pelletier, K.R., Levanovich, K., Baase, C.M., Park, Y.Y., & Bodnar, C.M. 2014. Mindfulness goes to work: Impact of an online workplace intervention. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 56: 721-731. DOI: 10.1097/JOM.000000000000020. In a rare study of mindfulness in the workplace (Dow Chemical Company), participants who received a 7 week intervention comprised of training and home practice in mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) techniques adapted to fit the workplace reported less stress and greater mindfulness, resiliency and vigor compared to participants assigned to wait-list control group.

Black, D.S., Irwin, M.R., Olmstead, R., Ji, E., Breen, E.C., & Motivala, S. 2014. Tai chi meditation effects on nuclear factor- κ B signaling in lonely older adults: A randomized controlled trial. *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 83: 315-317. DOI: 10.1159/000359956. Older adults reporting a

high level of loneliness or stress who participated in a 12 week program of weekly, 2 hour tai chi chih sessions demonstrated lower levels of psychological stress and nuclear factor (NF)-kB, an important mediator for the transmission of psychological stress into inflammation, compared to an active control group that participated in a health education program.

Campo, R.A., Light, K.C., O'Conner, K., Nakamura, Y., Lipshitz, D., LaStayo, P.C., Pappas, L.M., Boucher, K.M., Irwin, M.R., Hill, H.R., Martins, T.B., Agarwal, N., & Kinney, A.Y. 2014. Blood pressure, salivary cortisol, and inflammatory cytokine outcomes in senior female cancer survivors enrolled in a tai chi chih randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*, published on-line August 28, 2014. DOI 10.1007/s11764-014-0395-x. Older female cancer survivors who participated in 12 week program of thrice-weekly, hour-long sessions of tai chi chih showed improvement in salivary cortisol and lower systolic BP compared to an active control group that participated in a health education program. There was no impact on inflammatory cytokines.

Chan, K.P. 2014. Prenatal meditation influences infant behaviors. *Infant Behavior and Development*, 37: 556-561. DOI:10.1016/j.infbeh.2014.06.011. Pregnant women who received training in 11 different mindfulness practices in 6 sessions while pregnant delivered babies that were physically healthier and demonstrated more positive temperament than babies delivered by pregnant mothers in a treatment as usual control group when assessed at 6 weeks and 5 months old.

Davis, M.C., Zautra, A.J., Wolf, L.D., Tennen, H., & Yeung, E.W. 2014. Mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral interventions for chronic pain: Differential effects on daily pain reactivity and stress reactivity. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, published on-line November 3, 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038200>. Patients with rheumatoid arthritis were assigned to a group receiving cognitive behavioral therapy, a group receiving mindfulness training that focused on awareness and acceptance, or to an active control group that received education about rheumatoid arthritis. Patients in the mindfulness group experienced greater reductions in pain-related catastrophizing, morning disability, fatigue and stress-related anxious affect.

Flook, L., Goldberg, S.B., Pinger, L., & Davidson, R.J. 2014. Promoting prosocial behavior and self-regulatory skills in preschool children through a mindfulness-based kindness curriculum. *Developmental Psy-*

chology, published on-line November 10, 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0038256>. Preschool children who experienced 12 week mindfulness based kindness meditation training and practice showed greater improvements in social competence, social-emotional development, cognitive flexibility, delay of gratification, higher grades, and less selfish behavior than children assigned to a wait-list control group.

Fong, S.S.M., Ng, S.S.M., Lee, H.W., Pang, M.Y.C., Luk, W.S., Chung, J.W.Y., Wong, J.Y.H., & Masters, R.S.W. 2015. The effects of a 6-month tai chi qigong training program on temporomandibular, cervical, and shoulder joint mobility and sleep problems in nasopharyngeal cancer survivors. *Integrative Cancer Therapies*, 14: 16-25. DOI: 10.1177/1534735414556508. Survivors of nasopharyngeal cancer often sustain head, neck and shoulder impairments, which in turn impair sleep, as a result of conventional treatment. Survivors of nasopharyngeal cancer who participated in a tai chi chih qigong group for 6 months (1.5 hour sessions, 4 sessions per week including self practice) showed improvements in cervical side flexion, mouth opening capacity, and reduced sleep problems compared to a treatment-as-usual control group. Shoulder joint and temporomandibular mobility remained unchanged. Results were maintained at 6-month follow-up assessment, with greater improvement in sleep function detected at follow-up.

Fong, S.S.M., Ng, S.S.M., Chung, J.W.Y., Leung, J.C.Y., & Masters, R.W. 2014. Effects of a 6-month tai chi qigong program on arterial hemodynamics and functional aerobic capacity in survivors of nasopharyngeal cancer. *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*, 8: 618-626. DOI 10.1007/s11764-014-0372-4. Survivors of nasopharyngeal cancer who participated in a tai chi chih qigong group for 6 months (1.5 hour sessions, 4 sessions per week including self practice) showed greater diastolic blood flow velocity, lower arterial blood flow resistance, higher palmer skin temperature, and greater functional aerobic capacity compared to participants in a treatment-as-usual control group. Only diastolic blood flow velocity continued to be higher in the tai chi chi qigong group at a 12-month follow-up assessment.

Kaliman, P., Alvarez-Lopez, M.J., Cosin-Tomas, M., Rosenkrantz, M.A., Lutz, A., & Davidson, R.J. 2014. Rapid changes in histone deacetylases and inflammatory gene expression in expert meditators. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 40: 96-107. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j>.

psyneuen. 2013.11.004. Long-term, experienced meditators who participated in a day of intensive mindfulness meditation were compared to a control group of participants with no meditation experience who engaged in leisure activities. After the brief intervention, those in the meditation group demonstrated reduced expression of histone deacetylase genes (HDAC 2, 3 and 9), alterations in global modification of histones (H4ac; H3K4me3) and decreased expression of pro-inflammatory genes (RIPK2 and COX2). Results point to the possible inflammation-reducing effects of meditation, which may explain how meditation enhances long-term health and longevity.

Kang, Y., Gray, J.R., & Dovidio, J.F. 2014. The nondiscriminating heart: Lovingkindness meditation training decreases implicit intergroup bias. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 143: 1306-1313. DOI: 10.1037/a0034150. Healthy, non-Black, non-homeless adults with no previous experience with lovingkindness meditation were assigned to a group receiving 6 weeks of lovingkindness training and practice, a group receiving 6 weeks of lovingkindness discussion, or a wait-list control group. Using a sophisticated assessment of unconscious attitudes, participants who practiced lovingkindness demonstrated greater reduction in implicit bias against stigmatized groups—homeless people and Black people. Reduced psychological stress mediated the effect for homeless people but not Black people.

Niu, R., He, R., Luo, B.L., & Hu, C. 2014. The effect of tai chi on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: A pilot randomised study of lung function, exercise capacity and diaphragm strength. *Heart, Lung and Circulation*, 23: 347-352. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.hlc.2013.10.057>. Patients with moderate to severe chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) were assigned to receive 4 sessions of supervised tai chi combined with 3 sessions of home practice per week for 6 months or to a control group that received only routine medical care. Tai chi participants demonstrated superior lung function and diaphragm strength compared to control group participants. There was no change in blood gas.

Wu, C.Y., Han, H.M., Huang, M.C., Chen, Y.M., Yu, W.P., & Weng, L.C. 2014. Effect of qigong training on fatigue in haemodialysis patients: A non-randomized controlled trial. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 22: 244-250. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ctim.2014.01.004>. Haemodialysis patients suffering fatigue were assigned to practice supervised qigong

for 10 minutes per day, 3 days per week and practice at home for 10 minutes at least twice per day for 6 months or to a treatment as usual control group. Fatigue was significantly lower in the qigong group at assessments of fatigue administered 8, 12, 16, 20, and 24 weeks after the study began.

Zernicke, K.A., Campbell, T.S., Specia, M., McCabe-Ruff, K., Flowers, S., & Carlson, L. E. 2014. A randomized wait-list controlled trial of feasibility and efficacy of an online mindfulness based cancer recovery program: The eTherapy for cancer applying mindfulness trial. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 76: 257-267. DOI: 10.1097/PSY.000000000000053. Cancer survivors exhibiting moderate to high stress within 3 years of completing primary cancer treatment were assigned to a group receiving mindfulness based stress reduction delivered online or to a control group that received treatment as usual. Participants receiving online mindfulness training demonstrated lower mood disturbance and stress and greater spirituality and acting with awareness compared to control patients.

Reviews of Research

Chi, I., Jordan-Marsh, M., Guo, M., Xie, B., & Bai, Z. 2014. Tai chi and reduction of depressive symptoms for older adults; A meta-analysis of randomized trials. *Geriatrics and Gerontology International*, 13: 3-13. DOI: 10.1111/j.1447-0594.2012.00882.x. Meta-analysis of 4 randomized controlled trials with 253 participants examined impact of tai chi on depression in older adults. Tai chi was shown to have a significant impact on reducing depressive symptom among older adults, with small effect sizes, compared to wait-list control group participants.

Fox, K.C.R., Nijeboer, S., Dixon, M.L., Floman, J.L., Ellamil, M., Rumak, S.P., Sedlmeier, P., & Christoff, K. (2014). Is meditation associated with altered brain structure? A systematic review and meta-analysis of morphometric neuroimaging in meditation practitioners. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 43: 48-73. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2014.03.016>. Meta-analysis of 21 neuroimaging studies with 300 meditation practitioners examined brain morphology. Eight brain regions consistently were altered in meditators, including areas devoted to meta-awareness (frontopolar cortex/BA 10), exteroceptive and interoceptive body awareness (sensory cortices and insula), memory consolidation and

reconsolidation (hippocampus), self and emotion regulation (anterior and mid cingulate; orbitofrontal cortex), and intra- and interhemispheric communication (superior longitudinal fasciculus; corpus callosum), with medium effect sizes.

Galante, J., Galante, I., Bekkers, M.J., & Gallacher, J. 2014. Effect of kindness-based meditation on health and well-being: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 82: 1101-1114. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0037249>. Meta analysis of 22 randomized controlled trials with 1,747 participants found that kindness-based meditation reduced self-reported depression and increased mindfulness, compassion for others, self-compassion, and positive emotions, with moderate effect sizes.

Goyal, M., Singh, S., Sibinga, E.M.S., Gould, N.F., Rowland-Seymour, A., Sharma, R., Berger, Z., Sleicher, D., Maron, D.D., Shihab, H.M., Ranasinghe, P.D., Linn, S., Saha, S., Bass, E.B., Haythornthwaite, J.A. 2014. *Meditation Programs for Psychological Stress and Well-Being. Comparative Effectiveness Review No. 124*. (Prepared by Johns Hopkins University Evidence-based Practice Center under Contract No. 290-2007-10061-I.) AHRQ Publication No. 13(14)-EHC116-EF. Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Meta-analysis of 41 randomized controlled trials with 2,993 participants examined interventions using meditation lasting from 4 weeks to 9 years in duration. Comparison with different types of active control groups showed that meditation is an effective treatment for anxiety, depression and pain, with moderate effect sizes, and for improvement in stress and mental health-related quality of life, with smaller effect sizes. No consistent effects were found for positive mood, attention, substance abuse, eating, sleep, and weight.

Hartley, L., Flowers N., Lee, M.S., Ernst, E., Rees, K. 2014, Issue 4. Tai chi for primary prevention of cardiovascular disease. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* Art. No.: CD010366. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD010366. pub2..Integrative, quantitative review of 13 randomized controlled trials with 1,520 healthy adults that examined impact of tai chi interventions lasting from 3 to 12 months in duration. Tai chi was effective for reducing systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, total cholesterol, low-density cholesterol, and triglycerides and for increasing high-density cholesterol. None of the studies reported adverse events.

Morgan, N., Irwin, M.R., Chung, M., & Wang, C. 2014. The effects of mind-body therapies on the immune system: Meta-analysis. *PLoS ONE*, 9: e100903. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0100903. Meta analysis of 34 randomized controlled trials with 2,219 participants that examined the impact on the immune system of tai chi, qigong, meditation, and yoga interventions that lasted at least 4 weeks in duration. Mind-body therapies are shown to be effective in reducing C-reactive protein, with moderate effect size; interleukin-6, with small effect size; and negligible effect for tumor necrosis. For anti-viral related immune and enumerative measures, there were small effects for CD4 counts and natural killer cell counts. Some evidence suggests that mind-body therapies may also enhance immune responses to vaccination.

Ni, X., Liu, S., Lu, F., Shi, X., & Guo, X. 2014. Efficacy and safety of tai chi for Parkinson's disease: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *PLoS ONE*, 9(6): e99377. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0099377. Meta-analysis of 9 randomized controlled trials with 409 patients with mild to moderately severe Parkinson's disease. Tai chi combined with medication was effective for reducing Parkinson's symptoms and indicators of balance and mobility compared to other exercise combined with medication or to medication alone control groups.

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