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Articles

Spontaneous Arising

Creative Change in the *Hengxian*

ERICA BRINDLEY

Abstract

This paper explains how, in a relatively short, newly excavated bamboo text called the *Hengxian*, the author provides an intriguing version of what it means for humans to act in accordance with the creative forces of the cosmos. I show that, rather than focus on effortless action per se, the author presents an account of the creation of the entire cosmos, which lays the foundation for understanding the central process of creative change in the cosmos: that of spontaneous arising.

He then uses his cosmological account of spontaneous arising to serve as the basis for a fundamental ethics of creative change, applicable to the human world of politics and individual action, thought, and belief. After outlining the meaning and importance of creative change in the early cosmos, I show how the author's version of spontaneous arising serves as a positive formulation of *wu-wei* in the human world. I also show how this particular, positive manner of articulating a Daoist ideal of action is philosophically subtle, insofar as it presupposes a certain ever-changing concept of the self in space and time.

The *Hengxian* 恆先 (The Primordial State of Constancy) is a newly excavated bamboo-strip text, dating to approximately 300 BCE. It consists of thirteen strips, packed with information about an early Chinese view of the cosmic order.¹ The text begins with a genesis account of the cosmos and proceeds to discuss the creation of material things, time and space,

¹ For more on the text and its background, see volume 12 of *Dao* (2013). The current essay draws upon the translation of the text found there (Brindley, Goldin, and Klein 2013).

as well as the myriad living creatures. From such a lofty and grand beginning, it then jumps to discuss more mundane concerns in the human realm. Ultimately it ends with a series of seemingly disjointed statements about important questions of the day, such as the roots of language (*ming* 名, “names”), the roots of endeavors (*zuo* 作, “arising”), the basic truth behind actions (*wei* 為), and the applicability of the text’s teachings to the official realm of government the literate classes of elites.

Scholars tend to classify the *Hengxian* as a Daoist text, mainly because it shares basic vocabulary and concepts with those found in Daoist classics, especially the *Laozi* 老子. For example, the *Hengxian* speaks of Heaven’s Dao (*tiandao* 天道), Constancy (*heng* 恆), energy (*qi* 氣), as well as the contrast between having and not having (*youwu* 有無). It ends by recommending action that allows things to happen of themselves. Unlike the *Laozi*, the text consistently emphasizes cosmic, spontaneous arising (*zizuo* 自作), and spontaneous generation (*zisheng* 自生), rather than effortless action or nonaction (*wuwei* 無為).² Another factor unlike the *Laozi* is that, instead of stressing Dao as an abstract, elusive concept, it focuses primarily on a fundamental mode of cosmic operation represented by the term Constancy.³

In this paper I present the *Hengxian* as a paradigmatic example of early Daoist discourse compatible with teachings found in the *Laozi*. I do so by providing an in-depth account of a central concept of the text, spontaneous arising, which I believe serves as a positive formulation of the essentially Daoist concept of *wuwei*. My analysis isolates the funda-

² I have written elsewhere about the importance of the concept of spontaneous generation in the text, which also features in the cosmogonic section and is practically synonymous with *zizuo*. My focus on spontaneous arising in this essay shows how the author uses the term *zuo* to link his discussions of both the cosmic and human realms. In much of my discussion on spontaneous arising, one could substitute “spontaneous generation” to much the same effect, and indeed, the two might be considered to point to the same cosmic process. See Brindley and Goldin 2013, 191-196.

³ Wang Zhongjiang explains how the *Huangdi sijing* texts, unearthed at Mawangdui, also do not refer to Dao, but rather to Great Oneness (2015, 31). I differ from Wang in thinking that the operational concept in *Hengxian* is not “Hengxian” (which Livia Kohn translates as “Constancy Before”) but merely Heng (Constancy).

mental nature and distinctive aspects of spontaneous arising as a creative cosmic process of change. In doing so, I underscore how boundary-making in time and space help define cosmic creativity as endless change, and I show how such an interpretation of cosmic creativity might be transposed to the human realm of action and activity, as suggested in the *Hengxian* itself. My analysis of boundary-making in space and time drives home an important concept in Daoist ethics: the necessity of cosmic creativity as the best and most fundamental type of action in the world. This gives meaning to Daoist forms of self-cultivation that recommend an individual's return to a more pristine and primary state of cosmic oneness, cosmic unity, or cosmic likeness.

The Text

The *Hengxian* is unique in the context of early Chinese studies in that it provides one of the most complete cosmogonies—a cosmological genesis story—found in the classical tradition. Other seminal texts, too, contain relevant passages, such as the *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi* 莊子, *Taiyi shengshui* 太一生水, and *Huainanzi* 淮南子. However, the *Taiyi shengshui* aside, the short, simple descriptions in these works are quite different from the more elaborate cosmogenesis in the *Hengxian*.⁴ Its provenance and history are highly problematic (Goldin 2013, 153-60), since its bamboo strips first surfaced on the black market and were later sold to the Shanghai Museum, which published the text in 2003—among many others in the past decade.

Normally the scholarly community would rejoice unabashedly at the discovery of a text utterly new to the tradition and especially one that had not been transmitted or discussed through the ages, even under another title. However, the fact that the strips were not uncovered and documented properly by archaeologists means that scholars lack solid information concerning their discovery contexts. Certain clues that may have aided in a more complete understanding of the text—for example, regarding the strips' placement, their link with other texts and buried

⁴ For excellent analyses of early genesis stories in China, see Lewis 2006; Puett 2000. For a translation of the *Taiyi shengshui*, see Cook 2013. A recent analysis of various early sources appears in Wang 2015.

objects, and information about the social status or history of the tomb's occupant—are unretrievably lost. For these reasons, there are certain limitations as to what we can surmise about the text.



These difficulties notwithstanding, most scholars who have worked on the *Hengxian* believe it to be an authentic piece that dates to around 300 BCE, just before the unification of China under the Qin in 221. Both the text's concepts and its discussion suggest that it is contemporary with other late Warring States (481-221 BCE) thinking on cosmology. For this reason, in this essay I discuss it as an important product of this time—one that not only extends our knowledge of ancient views on cosmology, but one that special-

ly enriches our understanding of ancient perspectives on Daoism as a broad-based religious orientation. Its addition to the corpus of classical texts provides valuable insights into the ways early Daoist cosmological thinking permeated and helped formulate modes of idealized human action in society.

Back to the Beginning: Space-Time Boundaries

In the beginning of the manuscript, all of space and time emerges as a process of unfolding that appears to occur simultaneously with the emergence of *you* (有 having)—some sort of material existence. Certain elements are crucial for the cosmic state of having or “somethingness” to emerge, differentiated from its counterpart, “not-having” (*wuyou* 無有) or “nothingness.” Underlying everything and every process in the cosmic state of having is boundary-making, to be understood as a process immanent in creative change. Indeed, it is through the concept of bound-

ary-making in the cosmos that we might better understand the text's central area of interest: cosmic creativity as spontaneous arising. The text begins:

In the primordial state of Constancy, there is no material existence. There is simplicity, stillness, and emptiness. Simplicity is Great Simplicity; stillness is Great Stillness; emptiness is Great Emptiness.⁵ It fulfills itself without repressing itself. [Bounded] space arises.⁶ Once there is [bounded] space, there is *qi*; once there is *qi*, there is material existence; once there is material existence, there is a beginning; once there is a beginning, there is the passage of time.⁷ (Brindley, Goldin, and Klein 2013, 146-147)

Since the text begins with the "primordial state of Constancy," it is necessary to say a few words about how such a term links the *Hengxian* to early Daoism and the *Laozi*. Readers familiar with the transmitted versions of the *Laozi* may not realize that excavated manuscripts from both Mawangdui (A and B) and Guodian employ the term *heng* 恆 rather than *chang* 常 for "constant" or "constancy." Indeed, the two Chinese terms are nearly synonymous.

To uphold the taboo of the personal name of Emperor Wen of the Han (r. 180-157 BCE), writers since then systematically substituted *chang* for *heng*. If the *Hengxian* was buried prior to this period or if it had somehow avoided the taboo (like the Mawangdui versions), it would have retained the use of *heng*—as seems to be the case. Given that *heng* and *chang* were either identical or synonymous in early literature, it is likely that the beginning of the transmitted *Daode jing*—"The Dao that can be spoken of is not the constant Dao; the name that can be spoken of

⁵ Readers may wish to consult the Mawangdui *Daoyuan*, where both the terms *jing* 靜 and *daxu* 大虛 appear in a description of the beginnings of the cosmos. See Guojia wenwu 1980, 145-46.

⁶ The manuscript has *huo* 或 for the first graph, but this is frequently used for *yu* 域 in both received and paleographic literature. The reading *yu* is critical for the interpretation of space and time that I present in this paper, especially since it most literally refers to the boundaries of a given space or region.

⁷ 恒先無有，樸，靜，虛。樸，大樸；靜，大靜；虛，大虛。自厭，不自忍。域作。有域，焉有氣；有氣，焉有有；有有，焉有始；有始，焉有往者

is not the constant name"—probably used *heng* rather than *chang* prior to 180-157 BCE. This means that the operative word in the *Hengxian* is also a central concept in the *Laozi*.

Conceptually, there are differences in each text's usage of *heng*. The *Hengxian*, for one, points to *heng* as a noun representing the primary force or spiritual power of the cosmos, read "Constancy." The *Laozi*, however, uses *chang* as an adjective to describe the ineffable, unbounded Dao of the cosmos. The *Hengxian* prioritizes and nominalizes the adjective *heng* to refer to something for which, perhaps, a normal noun would not be fitting. This aspect of the cosmos has the quality of being constant—hence, the term, "Constancy," or "the Constant."

I think it makes sense to label an object deemed incapable of being labeled by referring to it with a non-label, or by using a term without strong associations of designation or "thing-ness." A term like this would force readers to think about the object in question not as an object but as a flavor of existence, an aspect of being. Indeed, the nominalization of a descriptive term such as "constant" provides the mystery and vagueness of the Dao without calling it "Dao." Referring to Dao as Constancy may have become a practice in some Daoist circles to refer to the "constant Dao," although the reference to Great Oneness in the *Huangdi sijing* 黃帝四經 manuscripts suggests that perhaps there was no standardized way of referring to Dao (Wang 2015, 31).

The *Hengxian* states that the primordial state of Constancy is fundamentally altered by the onset of the process of cosmic creation. It speaks of [bounded] space arising (*yuzuo* 域作). At this point it behooves us to try to understand not only what *yu* means in this context, but also to guess what its philosophical role in the genesis story might be. Indeed, this is the moment where something is created out of nothing, where the miracle of the cosmos begins. There is neither a creator in charge of everything nor are there specific figures, such as Heaven and Earth," creating the cosmos. Rather, the most elemental of entities appears as the initial spark for the emergence of basic material existence in the cosmos: boundaries, or "bounded space." *Yuzuo* becomes clearer in the following line.

There are not yet Heaven and Earth; there are not yet arising, progression, emergence, or engendering. Empty, still they are, and as though one. Mud-

dled and murky! All is still and homogeneous. There is not yet light, not yet teeming life.⁸ (Brindley, Goldin, and Klein, 2013, 147)

This state of affairs characterizes the pre-boundary-making state before the creation of Heaven and Earth and the processes, by which differentiation occurs. It is also such a state that seems to be characterized by the text's title, written on the back of Bamboo Strip 3 (see Brindley, Goldin, and Klein 2013, 146n2). The author (or perhaps commentator) rightly emphasizes the homogenous state of non-differentiation attributed to the pre-cosmos. This underscores the unique state of affairs that arises when space enters the stage and processes of boundary-making and differentiation begin to occur. It provides the necessary contrast for the movement of arising and generation that emerge with the state of somethingness that creates the cosmos.

The text distinguishes *hengxian*, what we may call pre-cosmos, from *henghou* 恒後, i.e., cosmos or universe, a term that never occurs in the text itself but is implied throughout. It clearly points to different states—one characterized by utter stillness, simplicity, and homogeneity; the other by movement, complexity, and differentiation. The primordial stage is precosmic, while the latter is characterized by "having," i.e., change, material existence, and *qi*, as well as the production of things. Thus, anything related to the phenomenal world of existence in space and time is related to cosmos (*henghou*), while the state before its arising is a pre-cosmos.

The text then proceeds to outline a particular series of emergences: bounded space, energy, material existence, beginning, and the passage of time. It may seem to present them in order of appearance, however, careful consideration shows that they simply cannot emerge in that order. Material existence cannot precede energy (*qi*), because that would defy all common understandings of *qi* as a kind of force that also has a material existence. Moreover, one is hard-pressed to have any material existence (being or "somethingness," *you*,) let alone *qi*, or even a process of continued emergence, without space and time. For this reason, it seems necessary to imagine that as soon as boundaries in space emerge, so do

⁸ 未有天地，未有作行出生。虛靜為一若。寂寂夢夢！靜同，而未有明、未有滋生。

all the other things in the sequence, simultaneously, as a logical outcome of the emergence of spatial boundedness.

The word “space” for *yu* is, therefore, critical. Its literal meaning is “boundary.” Boundaries require an act of marking space, the creation of distinctions and differences, of something differentiated from undifferentiated chaos, such as the morass described as the primordial state of Constancy. It requires breaking free of stasis, Constancy, and the absolute. Difference and relativity appear through the emergence of boundary-making as a cosmic process. Space and time must emerge simultaneously to make boundary-making possible and meaningful. Space is necessary as a field, upon which material existence in various forms can produce difference; time is necessary for difference to continue to occur, providing the movement that allows differences in material existence to occur from one moment to the next.

The emergence of space and time in the text is, therefore, intimately linked to the elemental process of boundary-making. This characterizes what happens in the creative process of both the pre-cosmos (insofar as it creates the initial “boundary” between pre-cosmos and cosmos) and the cosmos. In the context of early Chinese thought, the fact that the *Hengxian* foregrounds these foundational aspects of genesis draws the reader’s attention not to the concept of Dao as an unchanging, eternal, constant factor in any sort of absolute state, as hinted in the *Laozi*. Rather, it focuses on the process of change and the creative aspects of Constancy as encapsulated in the first moments of creation, when the generative capabilities of the cosmos begin to move and manifest themselves. Despite what the title *Hengxian* implies, the focus of the text is more on cosmological creativity after the primordial state of Constancy. The primordial, absolute state of the pre-cosmos is but a backdrop, a jumping-off point for a world of bounded and constantly changing creativity. It is, indeed, the world we live in.

Motivating Forces Intrinsic to the Cosmos

The beginnings of the cosmos as described in the *Hengxian* are not created by any kind of anthropomorphic god or deity; rather, they simply occur in spontaneous fashion without any kind of prompting. No reason is provided as to why space, time, and material existence should arise

suddenly and out of nothing. The only explanation provided relies on the use of simple verbs that describe rather than interpret the process: things "arise" (*zuo* 作) and are "produced/ born of their own" (*zisheng* 自生). So important is the spontaneous, creative nature of things in space and time that the author goes out of his way to clarify that such activities occur "of themselves" or "of their own accord," and do not rely on some external creator or force. The following statement illustrates the point: "*Qi* is self-generating; Constancy categorically does not engender *qi*. *Qi* is self-generating and self-arising"⁹ (Brindley, Goldin, and Klein 2013, 146).

What, then, does it mean for something, along with *qi*, to arise "of itself"? If there are no boundaries within anything to begin with, then there can be no internal creator, either, and the very notion that a creator could be external or internal becomes problematic.¹⁰ Anything, whether material existence or *qi*, arises by making boundaries to form an entity in time and space. There is no creation from within the entity, for there is no "fixed entity" to begin with—only constant boundary-making in any given space and time.

Accordingly, the location where creative arising occurs actually helps constitute or define the creation of a thing, not any power within. The process of generating "of itself" is thus not so much a process being fueled from within (an unchanging self), nor is it attributable to the essential powers of an entity itself; rather, it is a process intrinsic to both the boundary-making powers of the cosmos—its Constancy— and its unfolding in a particular place at a particular time. Change and boundary-making are the operative concepts here, not fixed entities or selves.

While the text provides no answer or clues as to what motivates change and the sudden demarcation of boundaries or space in this cos-

⁹ 氣是自生，恒莫生氣，氣是自生自作

¹⁰ Lest our own conceptualizations of inner and outer sources of creativity block us from intuiting what is being described here, we might pay attention to the author's emphasis not on inner and outer, but on a language that stresses boundaries in space (material existence) on the one hand, and boundaries in time (change) on the other. Indeed, the rise of boundary-making serves as an epic moment of change in this genesis story, after which change becomes the norm, alongside the original Constancy, perhaps in its dual role as absolutely fixed or absolutely relative.

mogony, it speaks of arising and creation in terms of the necessary ingredients of space and time. It is as though the very emergence of the process of change intrinsic in space and time were responsible in and of itself for the arising and production of things and *qi* “on their own.” So *qi* arises “of itself” (*zi*) insofar as arising happens to form a particular configuration of boundaries in a particular place at a certain time.

Given that such processes of arising seem to be always ongoing and changing in the realm of the cosmos (after all, arising occurs spontaneously out of nowhere in the pre-cosmos), what constitutes a “thing,” “entity,” or “self” in this cosmos is therefore always naturally changing *according to its place and time*. In other words, things such as *qi* arise “of themselves” not because they are fuelled by an internal motivator or creator—there is no absolute “internal” in a ceaselessly changing “self” or “thing”—but because a spontaneous process of generating and arising (*sheng/zuo*) that is associated with a particular place and time is occurring to help define the very boundaries of *qi* in the world.

Given the above comments about spontaneous generation and arising, the statement that “*qi* is self-generating; Constancy categorically does not engender *qi*” makes sense because *qi* is something that is simultaneously formed in the process of bounded space-making. Significantly, such a process occurs in the context of the pre-cosmos of Constancy but is not caused by it as some sort of external force, especially since in the pre-cosmos there is no such thing as an external force. The paramount question in interpreting this text, then, is not, “What causes things to be created and transformed?” but, “How are things created and transformed?” The answer, I suggest, lies in the notion that creation is a spontaneous process of boundary-making in which everything has the potential to change according to its proper, cosmic place in space and time.

The Self as a Process of Boundary-Making

The text continues by moving on to discuss spontaneous arising in the realm of human action. It presents an important parallel between the way the cosmos works to create and generate things in the first place and the way human beings should proceed in their actions and thoughts. This parallel is quite common ancient Daoist literature, often described as a form of naturalism related to Laozi and Zhuangzi. The idea is that

the human world should mimic (literally, not figuratively) the cosmic realm by having humans tap into the very forces of nature or the cosmos that created them and the world to begin with. This idea goes back to the belief that the human realm is a microcosm of the larger cosmos. Only when an individual can revert to the most elemental characteristics of the cosmos can he or she act appropriately in this world.

The *Hengxian* reveals its ethical orientation through its emphasis on the creative, spontaneous force of the cosmos, something first seen when somethingness and a process of boundary-making emerged from the pre-cosmic, primordial state. In this process, cosmic entities formed as byproducts of an ongoing process of boundary-making in time and space. Similarly, the individual's ability to allow Constancy to express itself fully through his or her behavior is also associated with boundary-making in time and space. The text speaks of this as proper arising and a proper place: "[As for] the arisings of the world: if they do not go against Constancy, there will be nothing that opposes its place"¹¹ (Brindley, Goldin, and Klein 2013, 150).

Here, the ethics of right and wrong is implicit in a spiritual outlook that assumes that what is right corresponds to what is cosmically proper for any given self in any given moment. Place (*suo* 所) comes to represent a general location for the cosmic doings of Constancy, and "its place" (*qi suo* 其所) specifies such doings at a particular space and time—in a particular, concrete context. These constitute the "correct and appropriate" arisings associated with an entity in the world.

The text here provides a definition of arising that points to the importance of place or space in the processes of creation. Arising in this context is the act of "not going against one's place." As *zuo* is the same verb used in the cosmogonic first section of the text to describe the emergence of space and time, material existence and *qi*, it may well refer to the same cosmic process in the human realm. The concept of spontaneous arising, then, bridges the two realms of cosmos and humanity, providing people with a means of fulfilling their role as cosmically creative selves in space and time. In this place-dependent understanding of creation, such a role is naturally and ethically proper; it is defined by the space people occupy and the trajectory upon which they should proceed

¹¹ 天下之作也，無违恆，無非其所。

as beings with specific cosmic coordinates—coordinates that are always changing according to the flow of boundary-making, indeed, their boundary of self-arising in the world.

The second half of the text makes a philosophical break between the idealized creativity of the cosmos latent in Constancy and the actions and thoughts of human beings. It says, “Primordially, there is good, order, and no disorder. Once there are humans, there is not-good. Disorder emerges from human beings”¹² (Brindley, Goldin, and Klein 2013, 148).

The text does not explain why humans should have deviated from the primordial goodness and order of the natural cosmos and introduced all that is “not-good” (*bushan* 不善) in the world. Perhaps it is because the authors assume that we know we lead a problematic existence in a world filled with injustices and evil. Regardless of why it focuses on a description of the way things are rather than an explanation, the passage shows that a gap between good and not-good came about through humanity. The implicit textual imperative is that humans need to do or stop doing something in order to close that gap and once again achieve a state of order and goodness. This is precisely where those boundary-making ingredients of the pre-cosmos, those that made *qi*, space and time, and material existence manifest in the cosmos, enter the human stage.

The heavenly, cosmic and human realms are not the same yet should be grounded in the same material ethics. As the *Hengxian* has it, heavenly endeavors (*shi* 事) are ideal and there are clear differences between the realms of Heaven and all under Heaven, i.e., the social realm of humanity). “Regarding the endeavors of Heaven: they will arise of themselves to become endeavors. How then could they not be continued?”¹³ (Brindley, Goldin, and Klein 2013, 149).

There is, therefore, an ideal realm that operates according to cosmogonic processes of arising as described in the first part of the text. Things arise of themselves to fulfill themselves spontaneously as endeavors; such is the unceasing process of cosmic creation that should be understood as a given or normative way of the world. Later the text speaks of the human world. “All under Heaven” ideally mimics the realm of Heaven in its spontaneous arising: “Regarding the actions of the

¹² 先者有善，有治無亂；有人焉有不善，亂出於人。

¹³ 舉天之事，自作為事。庸以不可廢也。

world: by neither avoiding nor partaking in them, they can happen of themselves"¹⁴ (Brindley, Goldin, and Klein 2013, 150).

Here the author shows humans how they might go about closing the gap between their actions, the root of disorder, and those of Heaven that arise of themselves and should always be continued. By instructing humans to "neither avoid nor partake in" their actions, the author encourages individuals to revert to the elemental process of boundary-making and self-arising that occurs spontaneously in the cosmos as the correct mode of action.

In this section, the text does not use *zuo* (arising) but chooses *wei* 為 (to act, do, happen), perhaps to better identify this as being relevant to the human realm. The phrase is "happen/do of themselves" (*ziwei* 自為) and not "non doing/happening" (*wuwei*), the central concept of later Daoist spirituality. It de-emphasizes what the individual does (*wuwei*) to become one with Dao, instead focusing on how action might "happen of itself" (*ziwei*) in accordance with Dao *at the very site of the individual*. It shows that the author of *Hengxian* is especially committed to using a language that detaches the self from any sense of an enduring, essentialized entity that creates or causes event to happen of its own will. Rather, the "self" that "creates" is at the same time being created through a ceaseless process of change—of cosmic boundary-making and unmaking locatable in a specific time and place. The subject is thus a new kind of self: the self as an ever-changing process of boundary-making in space and time, attributable to the foundational characteristics of Constancy, not to an essentialized "self" or even an external power of Constancy.¹⁵

The text idealizes the arisings associated with Constancy, which are distinct from normal or mundane doings of human beings. It exhorts

¹⁴ 舉天下之為也，無舍也，無與也，而能自為也。

¹⁵ This reading of the self will undoubtedly strike some as being similar to Buddhist conceptions of *anatman*, or the ever-changing, non-essentialized self. I do not wish to claim that this text was influenced in any way by ancient Indian thought, though perhaps these types of ideas about spirituality and the cosmos may have been popular throughout south and southeast Asia/south China at the time. I merely wish to show that the *Hengxian* emphasizes change and a certain vision of creativity that has consequences for its understanding of the self as a spiritual agent.

people to step back and find their proper “place”—which involves allowing things to happen of themselves, especially concerning the self and its decisions-making processes. This suggests that human decision-making should mimic the processes of arising in the cosmos: it should allow for the intrinsic arisings in Constancy to take place in a specific location and time, thereby defining the proper boundaries of the self along an axis of change. In such a way, the agency of the individual is transposed onto the agency of the cosmos, whose Constancy enables “action through the individual,” so to speak. This is reminiscent of what *Zhuangzi* meant in his reference to the “panpipes of Heaven” (Wang 1993, 43-113).

A later passage in the *Hengxian* summarizes arisings as cosmic creativity that make the world go round. It links the text to other early Daoist works insofar as it speaks of this creative force as “Constancy,” something humans can obtain and lose—akin to what other texts may call Dao: “Regarding the arisings of the world: there are none that do not, having obtained their Constancy, come to fruition and get passed on.”¹⁶ How is it that there are some who obtain it and some who lose it?” (Brindley, Goldin, and Klein 2013, 150).¹⁷ This makes it clear that, when arising occurs in agreement with Constancy, when it “obtains its Constancy” (*deqi-heng* 得其恒), it is complete and passed on (*guoshu* 果述), thereby fulfilling the natural cycles and transmissions of creation. An arising that follows this course is simply following along the inevitable course of change: Constancy.

Each arising, moreover, does not follow along just any path of Constancy, but it must obtain and fulfill its particular Constancy (*qi-heng* 其恒). Again, Constancy in the phenomenal world is not generalized but specific, associated with individual arisings that occur at specific locations and moments of time. Such specificity is signaled in the phrasing, “an arising . . . obtains its Constancy.” It underscores yet again the significance of boundary-making, differentiation, and change in space and time. This, then, demonstrates the specificity and relative nature of crea-

¹⁶ I have altered the 2013 translation here according to my own revised sense of the passage. It used to read: “Regarding the arisings of the world: there are none that do not obtain Constancy and have their results passed down.”

¹⁷ 舉天下之作也，無不得其恒 而果述。庸或得之，庸或失之。

tion and overall action in the text. It also underscores the author's strategy for underscoring how Dao should work in cosmic and human terms. By invoking a language of spontaneous arising in time and space and by de-emphasizing agency or action that has been caused by any force not intrinsic to this process, the author presents an ethics of action based on the pure creative forces of change in the cosmos.

Conclusion

The ancient cosmogonic work *Hengxian* focuses on essential creativity, especially as expressed in its concept of spontaneous arising. It places central importance on space and time as necessary ingredients in the inevitable process of change and boundary-making, undergirding its entire vision of creation and creativity.

Space and time, place and change forming such integral parts of the creative, boundary-making process in the early cosmos, their key nature is that they "arise of themselves." Instead of thinking of the creative process as intrinsic to a thing-of-itself, we should understand it as intrinsic to Constancy and its boundary-making forces, as and when Constancy is expressed through specific places and times. Any concept of Constancy as an external force that causes things to change is faulty, as much as the concept that attributes idealized agency to a fixed or bounded self that acts upon itself as though acting externally.

Rather, the manifestations of the creative forces of Constancy are spontaneous yet always different: they accord with the specificities of things created in relative time and space. So when something "arises of itself," spontaneously, it arises not from within itself, since "it" is constantly emerging and changing, without fixed boundaries. Rather, it emerges as a function of a creative cosmic force acting through space and time, giving each of its creations a proper time and place.

Cosmic creation, then, forms the roots of all human action. The self here is porous and open-ended: it matches space and time constantly defining and giving parameters to the process of spontaneous arising. In contrast to this, a self with absolute, fixed boundaries would not change with time, nor would it be susceptible to the constant creative forces of boundary-making.

The second half of the text discusses human actions as endeavors, arisings, and doings. It suggests that idealized human actions stem from an ability to allow things to arise on their own. Here it is helpful to consider the legacies of our own language. We speak of “human beings” rather than “human doings” as that which defines us as a species. “Human beings,” however, is not an idealized state of being. Similarly, in the *Hengxian*, the author seems to want to emphasize our mundane identity, but instead of thinking of us as human beings, he focuses on action and sees us more as “human doings” that brought disorder to the world by our very emergence in it.

The author of *Hengxian* also suggests how humans might recapture the idealized state of cosmic order before people arose on the scene with their plethora of doings. He seems to want humans to reimagine themselves neither as “human beings” nor “doings” but as “cosmic doings”—that is, as human manifestations of cosmic creative processes as expressed in specific places and times. The text implicitly calls for humans to close the gap between their imperfect and disorderly world of “human doings” and arrive at a state in which arisings occur of themselves. This all points to a belief that it is the creative processes of the cosmos—otherwise referred to as Constancy in the text—that should be defining each individual as a “cosmic doing” of utmost creativity, which abides and acts according to its proper and ever-changing cosmic place.

This emphasis on change as creativity renders the *Hengxian* special in the context of early Chinese thought, specifically because the author depicts Constancy not as an undifferentiated state of being but as the fundamental process by which cosmic doings emerge and propagate themselves in a world of ceaseless boundary-making. The purpose of the entire text, then, is not to highlight the original act of creation—although indeed it starts out by doing so—but to integrate the initial and original act of creation into the entire, ongoing process of creation and rejuvenation, both of the larger cosmos and in everyday human life.

The *Hengxian* may have its own, unique way of formulating a concept of Dao and idealized human action—not as *wuwei* but as *zizuo*—still it presents merely a variation on a common theme in Daoism and not a major deviation alien to the tradition. The very first statement of the *Daode jing*, “The Dao that can be *dao*-ed is not the constant Dao,” closely echoes the emphasis on Constancy in the *Hengxian*. Similarly nonaction

(*wuwei*) in the *Daode jing* may well be a negative formulation of the *Hengxian*'s spontaneous arising (*zizuo*)—both emphasizing to let things happen or arise spontaneously in the cosmos.

This means that the *Hengxian* is but another seminal articulation of what early Daoist thinkers meant by the notion of the ineffable Dao as a force that both creates the cosmos and allows for creative change within it. In this context, the *Hengxian* provides a philosophically subtle version of how creative cosmic change functions at both the cosmic and human levels. It invites a reconsideration of the Daoist understanding of creative change as it relates to all selves and entities, directing attention to the most fundamental aspects of how such selves and entities should exist and interact in the world: as boundaries of spontaneous arising that are in constant flux.

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Comparative Resources

Continental Philosophy and Daoism

STEVEN BURIK

Abstract

I argue that continental philosophical resources are more appropriate for comparative philosophy regarding classical Daoism since they in various ways challenge the dominant metaphysical orientation of Western thought and give us a better and more appropriate vocabulary to make sense of important Daoist ideas within the confines of Western languages.

Since classical Daoism is largely non-metaphysical or at least not metaphysical in the same way as the Western history of philosophy is, it makes sense that those within the Western tradition who have sought to displace the dominant metaphysical tradition would be more in tune with such non-metaphysical considerations. I focus on Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida and present three interrelated areas of comparison with classical Daoism. First, I discuss the constant complication of any seriously dualist approach and with that the attempt to put humans in a constructive and primarily interdependent relationship with the rest of the world, which points to a form of process philosophy. Second, I focus on ideas regarding the use and limitations of language that both traditions display, and on the resulting efforts to understand language differently. Lastly, I present the decentering of the subject or the self is another feature prominent in both Daoism and the continental thinkers, although in different ways.

Is it a coincidence that many comparative philosophers have employed the philosophies of continental thinkers in their efforts to understand and engage philosophies from other cultures? Or is there more to it? Many of the most influential comparative thinkers until today have at

least dabbled with continentals, or have been involved with them in some way even though continental thought was not their specialization.

Several comparative thinkers have employed continental ideas in relation to Chinese thought. First, there are the famous volumes, *Heidegger and Asian Thought* (1987) and *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* (1991), both edited by Graham Parkes, where well-regarded scholars explore the relations between Heidegger, Nietzsche, and various strands of Asian philosophies. A. C. Graham has employed the idea of deconstruction in Derrida, most importantly in *Disputers of the Tao* (1989). He notices profound similarities: "The affinity of Laozi and Derrida is that both use reversal to deconstruct chains in which A is traditionally preferred to B, and in breaking down the dichotomy offer us a glimpse of another line which runs athwart it—for Laozi the Way, for Derrida the Trace" (1989, 227, 323).

Furthermore, Hall and Ames, in their *Anticipating China* (1995), argue that the perspectivism in Nietzsche, the destruction inherent in Heidegger's approach to ontology, and Derrida's attacks on the metaphysical language of presence are important contributions to understanding classical Chinese thought. As such, we can expect the language of these thinkers to be more conducive to conveying the intricacies of certain parts of classical Chinese thought. For example, they take Derrida's notion of *différance* to be well suited to explain at least partly certain important language features of classical Chinese thought (1995, 228). James Sellmann observes that Zhuangzi's approach shows affinity to the core of deconstruction, "drawing attention to the liminal concepts and propositions that support philosophical systems" (1998, 164).

Other prominent scholars have written about the affinity between Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida on one side, and classical Chinese thought, mainly in the form of Daoism, and Chan or Zen Buddhism on the other. While I realize that merely mentioning comparative scholars and their interest in continental thinkers does not constitute a special bond, I do indeed think that there is more to the connection.

One point of caution: it might also be the case that some continental philosophers are drawn to Daoism because of the fact that they find it easier to apply their ideas to it. In addition, there are even suggestions that thinkers such as Nietzsche and Heidegger may have—unwittingly or in full knowledge—appropriated key ideas of Chinese thought into

their own work. Reinhard May's *Heidegger's Hidden Sources* is a good example.

Still, it may well turn out that continental philosophy is more conducive to comparative thought than standard or traditional Western thought, which I conflate with and summarize under the term "metaphysics." My claim is that classical Daoism is largely non-metaphysical or at least not metaphysical in the same way as the Western history of philosophy is understood to be. If this is true, then it makes sense that those within the Western tradition who have sought to attack the dominance of this version of metaphysics would be more in tune with such non-metaphysical considerations, and the most famous continental philosophers in this attacking line are Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida.

In the following, I present three interrelated areas of comparison of their way of thinking with classical Daoism. First, there is the constant complication of any seriously dualist approach and with that the attempt to put humans in a constructive and primarily interdependent relationship with the rest of the world, which points to a form of process philosophy present in both traditions. Second, I focus on the ideas on the use and limitations of language that both traditions display, and on the resulting efforts to understand language differently. Lastly, the decentering of the subject is another feature prominent in both Daoism and the continental thinkers, although in different ways. My focus will rest more heavily on Heidegger and Derrida, but I will show Nietzsche to have similar concerns in many areas.

Complicating Dualism

Thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida have spent considerable time thinking through and attacking the dominant metaphysical position and its resultant dualistic character. There are of course many significant differences between the attempts at overcoming dualism from the Daoists and the continental thinkers. For example, Daoists never had to struggle against a dominant and exclusive metaphysics, or with its offspring in the form of creator-god religions, and consequently their approach to dualism is much more one of balancing than of overcoming.

In fact, as many scholars have pointed out, the only way to see Daoism as non-metaphysical is in recognizing that it was not overly con-

cerned with metaphysical issues in the first place (e.g., Hansen 2010). Nevertheless, I still think that the way of thinking behind both ways of doing philosophy is similar, and I will focus on these similarities.

Dualism is one of *the* defining features of most Western metaphysical philosophies,¹ and as such does not fit well with Daoism, where dualism is constantly complicated, denied, or given a different interpretation. The strength in recent continental philosophy lies in trying to undo the metaphysical emphasis on dualism by actively searching for different ways of thought, which compares well especially with Daoism. Complicating dichotomies is what both post-modernism and Daoism do. The dominant Western metaphysical tradition is quite narrow-minded in that it sets rigid limits to what can be called philosophy and what not, and as such traditionally has conveniently identified Daoism as esoteric, mystical, primitive, or non-philosophy.

Instead, in recent continental thinking we find much more conducive explorations of ideas of difference and sameness, which reveal an effort to bring back the correlativeness into thinking, as opposed to that kind of thinking that has been dominated for a long time by dualism and its forms of isolation and separation. The strategy used by most continental thinkers is a preliminary reversal of the hierarchy within dualistic pairs, followed by a complication of the dualism of the pair itself.

This seems to be the exact same strategy as classical Daoism employs. Graham has argued that whether or not dualism is a feature of thinking per se or not, it is still a fact that the standard form of Western dualism has tended to think in hierarchies and oppositions, with one

¹ The idea of metaphysics I use is narrow on purpose, and in line with Derrida, who defines metaphysics as "the enterprise of returning 'strategically,' 'ideally,' to an origin or to a priority thought to be simple, intact, normal, pure, standard, self-identical, in order then to think in terms of derivation, complication, deterioration, accident, etc. All metaphysicians, from Plato to Rousseau, Descartes to Husserl, have proceeded this way, conceiving good to be before evil, the positive before the negative, the pure before the impure, the simple before the complex, the essential before the accidental, the imitated before the imitation, etc. And this is not just one metaphysical gesture among others; it is the metaphysical exigency, that which has been the most constant, most profound and most potent" (1988, 236). There may be other forms of metaphysics, but I do not address those here.

side of any dualist pair establishing superiority or even annihilating the other, whereas classical Chinese philosophy has been more concerned with thinking of opposites as complementary ends of a spectrum (Graham 1989, 331-32). Let me continue by pointing to some examples where the continental thinkers complicate traditional dualism.

Nietzsche

Starting with Nietzsche's work, we can say that it is mostly concerned with overturning the metaphysical tradition before him. Many of his themes are diatribes against dualism, often in the form of profound criticisms of the ideas of objectivity and truth. Nietzsche's skepticism and perspectivism are direct examples of this, since he recognized that to search for Truth with a capital T is futile, and thus the standard approach of metaphysics is denied. But Nietzsche goes further, since he does not provide a new truth or principle, but instead in his skepticism seeks to overcome that particular way of thinking in terms of truth so characteristic of dualist metaphysics, for example in his idea of the *Übermensch*, which has been compared to either the sage (*shengren*) or the genuine person (*zhenren*) on numerous occasions.

The idea of the eternal return seeks to upset the alpha to omega linearity of metaphysics. The death of god so famously proclaimed in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is an obvious attempt to undo the dichotomy between this life and afterlife, with the further ideas of the immortal soul versus the mortal body and of the ideas or forms versus matter being complicated as well.

On another level, both the overturning of values and *Beyond Good and Evil* seek to overcome the whole system of dualism altogether. The most obvious example here is found in *Beyond Good and Evil*, of which the title says enough, and where right in the beginning Nietzsche says that the "fundamental belief of metaphysicians is the *belief in oppositions of values*. . . . But we can doubt, first, whether opposites even exist and, second, whether the popular valuations and value oppositions that have earned the metaphysicians' seal of approval might not only be foreground appraisals" (Nietzsche 2002, 6).

In all these cases, Nietzsche starts with a reversal strategy, yet this is not so much to turn a given dichotomy around, but to overcome the di-

chotomy as a whole. Moreover, Laozi and Zhuangzi are well known for employing reversal for the same strategic reasons. Laozi for example emphasizes the so-called yin qualities, but only as a strategic counterbalance to the perceived dominance of the more yang, and in the end to come to the understanding that both are part of the workings of *dao*.

Heidegger

Next let us consider Heidegger's *aletheia* as a possible other version of the idea of truth that the Daoist might find more palatable. Opposing the idea that "truth" is the correctness of our assertions, or the correspondence of what we say with how the world is, Heidegger presents *aletheia* as the play between unconcealing and concealing, as the way in which the world operates. In Heidegger, unconcealing truth is always also concealing, and the clear and distinct objective knowledge of things as they are is forever relegated and subsumed under the awareness of the interplay between concealing and unconcealing. The ground is reversed into the abyss (*Ab-grund*). As Heidegger puts it: "Truth is never only clearing, but also holds sway as sheltering-concealing, equally originally and intimately along with clearing. Both, clearing and sheltering-concealing, are not two but rather the essential swaying of the one, of truth itself" (1999, 244).

Similarly, in Daoism there is a distinct appreciation of the mystery or inaccessibility or ineffability of *dao*, or the way the world works. *Dao* always stays in the background, it never becomes present. For example, in *Zhuangzi* everything has its "this" and "that," from one perspective things light up in a certain way, but this means that some other perspective or way that these things also are, gets obscured. Concealing and unconcealing always go together, and there is no objective way to see things within this way of knowing and seeing things. Heidegger provides at least a better understanding of the unfolding of truth that would seem more in line with an understanding of *dao* as "the way things are."

The Western notions of being and nothing are important in metaphysical philosophy, and Graham was of course right to note that we should not conflate *you* and *wu* with any superficial likeness to being and nothing. However, we could ask ourselves if a comparison becomes more fruitful once the terms being and nothing get radically rethought,

as has happened in the case of Heidegger? Consider the following: “We have for a long time been accustomed to set being opposite becoming, as if becoming were a kind of nothingness and did not even belong to being; and this because being has for a long time been understood to be nothing else than sheer perdurance” (1975, 31). Here Heidegger tries to rethink the metaphysics behind the ontological presence. For him, being is no longer to be opposed to nothing or to becoming, but it is the whole process of being that rather includes becoming and nothing. Absence and presence and growth and decay belong to the same process.

Here it would be instructive to consider Nietzsche’s affirmation of life. In Nietzsche’s notion of the eternal return, we find the similar idea that all is in continuous flux, and that this is something to be welcomed: “Everything goes, everything returns; eternally rolls the wheel of existence. Everything dies, everything blossoms forth again. . . . All things separate, all things again greet one another; eternally true to itself remains the ring of existence” (1885, 232).

In Heidegger’s terms, such a process philosophy is stated in the following passage, where he talks about the “proper” understanding of being not as presence, but as lingering: “Whatever lingers awhile in presence comes to presence insofar as it lingers; all the while, emerging and passing away, and the jointure of the transition from approach and withdrawal, continue. This lingering endurance of the transition is the enjoined continuance of what is present. The enjoined continuance does not at all insist upon sheer persistence” (Heidegger 1975, 43-44).

Effectively seeking to destruct the metaphysical readings of eternal substance and presence, Heidegger succeeds in creating a way of thinking close to Daoism in its approach to change and transition from being to nothing, as he seems to understand these terms closer to the ideas of being present and being absent as part of the same process. While I am still uncertain whether this will give us a better approximation of the characters *you* and *wu* as used in Daoism, I firmly believe that this way of understanding being and nothing is much closer to the way Daoists think.

Related to this, Heidegger’s ontological difference may be considered a candidate for understanding what is meant by *dao*. Being is different from beings, because being is not a being, but at the same time beings *are*. If being is thought not as a metaphysical principle, then understand-

ing *dao* along such lines may be illuminating. Although I am definitely not suggesting that being and *dao* are in any way interchangeable, there is definite merit in employing the ontological difference in our quest to understand what is meant by *dao* in a Western language, even if this language is Heideggerian.

Derrida

To illustrate the compatibility between Derrida and Daoism in this area I will focus on the notion of "trace." Derrida employs many terms with regard to this trace thinking, which have definite parallels to *dao*, if read as way-making. In this context, "breaching" (Ger.: *Bahnung*; Fr.: *frayage*) is important in Derrida's thought. "Spacing" and "supplement" are other terms that appear here.

In my view, these terms stand for the play of otherness, of differences, that which no longer belongs to presence, and has no real origin or source. Derrida calls this play of *différance* temporization (Derrida 1982, 8), implicitly bringing attention to the deferral aspect of his thought. Presence is always deferred, traces are all we have. The trace for Derrida is that which is "[a]lways differing and deferring, the trace is never as it is in the presentation of itself. It erases itself in presenting itself, muffles itself in resonating..." (1982, 23).

Trace(s) are thus not to be understood as traces of some deeper origin behind their appearances: "The trace is not a presence but the simulacrum of a presence that dislocates itself, displaces itself, it properly has no site—erasure belongs to its structure" (1982, 24). The fact that *différance* is "the play which makes possible nominal effects, the relatively unitary and atomic structures that are called names" (1982, 26) does not mean that there is something outside of this play that would function as a metaphysical guiding principle. The play is all there is.

Understanding *dao* in this manner it becomes impossible to see it as a metaphysical principle, since that already implies that there is something guiding something else, before something else, a presence before the trace. Consider the *Daode jing*: "Way-making [*dao*] is the flowing together of all things (ch. 63; Ames and Hall 2003, 173). This passage suggests a process thinking comparable to Derrida's trace: there is nothing behind the flowing together of things, meaning first that there is no guid-

ing principle behind it, and second that all things flow together in the sense that they have traces in each other. There are only traces.

Other *Daode jing* passages can be read in a similar way. Chapter 1 mentions that *dao* is ineffable, but this need not be because it would be some metaphysical principle, but because as the whole of everything flowing together, it cannot be given a name without reducing it to something *within* that flow. Chapters 4, 6, and 14 describe *dao* as elusive, as only seemingly there, validating the idea that there is no getting beyond the traces. Chapter 21 takes a similar position:

As for the process of way-making,
It is ever so indefinite and vague.
Though vague and indefinite,
There are images within it.
Though indefinite and vague,
There are events within it. (Ames and Hall 2003, 107)

A traditional metaphysical interpretation of this passage would suggest that behind the appearances, which are vague and indeterminate, there is a real presence, a sort of Platonic world of principles, forms, or ideas. Reading with Derrida, I see this passage as meaning that within context, only differences function and thus only traces are to be found. The context itself is nothing else than this play of differences, but *within* that context and arising *out of* context, there are indeed references or images. These references or images however never refer to that full presence suggested by the metaphysical tradition.

There is thus in Daoism a thoroughly contextual approach where everything is related and this-worldly. It is here where we can begin to appreciate the non-metaphysical approach in Daoism. For example, Zhuangzi, in Hansen's words, "invokes no contrast between a world of appearance, a sensible world that is in flux, and a world of thought and reasons, and abstract unchanging one" (2010, 48). He also argues convincingly that the mentions of a "true ruler" should not be read in a metaphysical way, but rather as skeptical assertions of the possibility of such a true ruler (2010, 42-44). The *Zhuangzi* states something comparable. Where everything has a "this" and a "that," full presence is repudiated and the way is opened for an understanding that focuses on traces.

As Zhuangzi says:

There is a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be a beginning. There is being. There is nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. There is a not yet beginning to be a not yet beginning to be nonbeing. Suddenly there is being and nonbeing. But between this being and nonbeing, I do not really know which is being and which is nonbeing. (ch. 2; Watson 2003, 38)

We can always take one further step, and as such any Truth with a capital T or *dao* will always be deferred. Traces are all that is left.

The play of yin and yang forces important in Daoism also suggests that otherness is always already there. Yin is always yin becoming yang, and vice versa. There is a continuous process; hence we cannot perceive things other than as infinite traces only identifiable within or through an ever increasing context. Before the beginning, there is another beginning, and so on. Thus beginning never really refers to some metaphysical principle that started the process, but can only make sense from within the process. I see this also as corroborated by the birthing metaphors and the focus on generation within a system in the *Laozi*, rather than ideas of creation by some outside force.

Thought of in this way, outside and inside then become categories that are no longer strictly separable. Graham describes this thought in a persuasive manner: "Perhaps *Laozi's* Way is how the Trace will look to us when we are no longer haunted by the ghost of that transcendent Reality the death of which Derrida proclaims" (1989, 228).

Knowing Process and Overcoming Dualism

Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida challenge preconceived and dominant notions of truth, reference, identity and wholeness or completeness, thus opening the way for new understandings of relationality and difference, which have strong connections to process philosophy where change is important and stability is relative. Instead of the usual metaphysical attempt to halt the process, continental thought aims to show that this is not possible, nor desirable. It is of course true that the process thought present in pragmatism can capture some of this in a different

way, but it seems that this interplay of different particulars, this relationality or interdependence, is more clearly brought out in continental thought.

Consider some of these examples: process philosophy is present in Heidegger's *Ereignis* (event of appropriation) and in his concept of the *Geviert* (fourfold). Both actively seek to engage or rather reinstate humans within a configuration of the world, rather than to abstract them from it, as happens in the dualist metaphysical distinctions of subject/object, mind/body, form/matter. And such thought is present in the idea of being as becoming in Nietzsche, as well as in Derrida's *différance* and trace thinking. Man is put back into the world, and the knowing of the subject becomes at best secondary to the knowing experience of continuity. In the case of Daoism we find a similar approach, as Hall and Ames put it: "Knowledge is always proximate as the condition of an experience rather than of an isolated experience. Situation has primacy, and agency is an abstraction from it" (1998, 220).

Zhuangzi similarly disparages conventional knowledge in favor of the kind of knowing that sees the self as one or continuous with the world. Knowledge (*zhi*) only arises when man artificially separates himself from the world, subject from object, mind from matter, and artificially creates distinctions between things at the price of the continuity or wholeness. Ames and Hall suggest that any form of philosophy that sees knowledge in this way, based on ontological presence, is not suited for understanding Daoism.

Wuzhi . . . actually means the absence of a certain kind of knowledge—the kind of knowledge that is dependent upon ontological presence: that is, the assumption that there is some unchanging reality behind appearance. Knowledge grounded in a denial of ontological presence involves acosmotic thinking: the type of thinking that does not presuppose a single-ordered ("One behind the many") world, and its intellectual accoutrements. It is, therefore, *unprincipled* knowing. (Ames and Hall 2003, 40)

Then it would be the case that those ways of thinking that actively seek to attack that form of thought based on ontological presence would be more conducive to comparisons with Daoism, and this is exactly what continental philosophy is all about.

We could relate this to *Gelassenheit* (releasement) and *wuwei* 無為 (non-assertive action). Heidegger sees representational thought as wrongful abstractions, whereas the real way of knowing and being is found in *Gelassenheit*, which indicates a belonging to the earth in the constellation of *Geviert*, connected to such ideas as *Ereignis* and *entsprechen*. Although at first *Gelassenheit* and *wuwei* sound passive, a closer examination reveals that it is about undoing the dichotomy between passive and active, and according to Heidegger entails a "higher acting" (1966, 61). It is not just letting things be; this requires effort in an active opening up of your own thought structures, necessary for other ways of thinking to find an entrance.

Daoist thinkers similarly perceive this in terms of spontaneity and non-interference with the way the world is, using a terminology that seeks to express an attitude of openness and respectful responsiveness to the world, quite similar to what we also see in Heidegger and Derrida. *Wuwei* is not non-doing, but a certain kind of doing which seeks not to impose or interfere with the natural inclinations of things to be themselves.

Although Derrida has no term similar to *Gelassenheit* or *wuwei*, his thoughts on otherness could be instructive here. Without going into details, whenever Derrida talks about otherness, he insists that otherness is always already inserted into self or identity, but that traditionally, philosophy as metaphysics has insisted on denying otherness in favor of self-sameness. In short, Derrida argues we must re-prepare to let the other come, because this other is not something we can summon in neither our language nor our conceptuality. Rather, it is something that has to come of its own, "[y]et it is necessary to prepare for it; to allow the coming of the entirely other, passivity, a certain kind of resigned passivity for which everything comes down to the same, is not suitable. Letting the other come is not inertia ready for anything whatever" (2007, 39).

In comparative philosophy, this injunction is of special importance. Comparative thinking must seek to find a way in which otherness can show itself as itself, but this is complicated immediately by the fact that other and self are always already inserted, and that we can only approach otherness from a certain perspective. This realization is what thinking along the lines of Heidegger and Derrida seek to convey, and

can then be used to understand ideas as spontaneity and non-assertive action.

Another similarity in relation to dualism lies in the denial of the importance of transcendence or a creator or higher principle for both continental thinking and Daoism. Ames and Hall have argued for the absence of any real importance of transcendence or creator gods at length. Heidegger and Nietzsche employ a similar strategy: they do not deny that there may be gods, but they definitely deny that such gods should have any import on thinking. Gods are mentioned in Daoism, but play no important role in the way of thought and life proposed by either Laozi or Zhuangzi. And of course both Heidegger and Nietzsche have argued that bringing gods into philosophy, or rather bringing religion into philosophy, is the worst one can do. A system of thought, or a philosophy, should be enough by itself, and need not have recourse to outside transcendental principles, especially not in the form of gods.

Whenever gods do enter thought, they appear as intimately connected to this world, in fact as not apart from it. Heidegger understands the *Geviert* as heaven and earth and man in one. Zhuangzi relates a similar understanding when he has Lao Dan describe the interchanges between yin and yang, heaven and earth and all the myriad things rising, transforming and decaying, and then ask: "What else but this is the Ancestor from which we descend?" (Graham 2001, 130). The ancestor is not something different from the process; it *is* the continuous process of generation.

The last similarity to do with dualism lies in Heidegger's thoughts about the same and the identical (*das Selbe* and *das Gleiche*). We should avoid trying to make things identical (what Heidegger calls *das Gleiche*), but we should treat them as being similar in a different way, which translates Heidegger's notion "the same" (*das Selbe*). As he says: "But the same is not the merely identical. In the merely identical, the difference disappears. In the same the difference appears" (1969, 45). It is vital to be clear on the difference between the same and the identical. The same is not a metaphysical construct; it is not an overarching concept, but only functions because of difference. Heidegger says:

The same never coincides with the equal, not even in the empty indifferent oneness of what is merely identical. The equal or identical always moves

toward the absence of difference, so that everything may be reduced to a common denominator. The same, by contrast, is the belonging together of what differs, through a gathering by way of the difference. We can only say the same if we think difference. (1971, 216)

The identical then is part of a typical metaphysical striving for identity, generalization, and unity. Things that are the same should not be forced to become identical. Sameness only exists as a function of difference. Differences, or the play of differences, must be understood as the more originary.

How does all this overcome dualism? One would think Heidegger looks like a proponent of dualism here. Yet, on closer inspection, it is the tendency of metaphysical dualism to "reduce all differences to a common denominator," to deny diversity by appealing to a higher, unitary principle. Instead, giving diversity, difference, room, is part of a kind of thinking that is indeed plural but not hierarchical or oppositional in dualist fashion.

Zhuangzi observes that "the wisest, because they have a full view of far and near, do not belittle the smaller or make much of the greater, knowing that measuring has no limit" (ch. 17; Graham 2001, 145-46). The sages see all things as the same, and with Heidegger, we can now see that this does not reduce those things to a oneness, but rather to a continuity in the sense of a belonging together. Ames and Hall mention that in Daoist philosophy, in the absence of a One-behind-the-many-metaphysics, "difference is prior to identifiable similarities" (2003, 14), but such differences are only in an intimate relationship. For example, in the *Daode jing*, "determinacy (*you*) and indeterminacy (*wu*) give rise to each other" (2003, 80). "Grasping oneness," for example, in chapters 10 and 22, lies in acknowledging the interminable interplay of differences so pervasive in Daoism. Even the oneness in chapter 42 can be understood as the continuous harmonizing of yin and yang, and needs not be understood as a reduction to oneness in the sense of identity or unity.

The Use and Limits of Language

So far we can say that in its efforts to overcome dualism continental philosophy has been forging new paths of inquiry, opening up new avenues

of thought and re-connecting what may seem to be separate identities. In this attempt the continental thinkers have found themselves struggling with the language of metaphysics as well. Continental philosophy has challenged the metaphysical language of presence in many ways. Nietzsche pointed out long ago that language and culture have much to do with each other, and that the metaphysical system owes much to the possibilities and employment of language.

Where there is an affinity of languages, then because of the common philosophy of grammar (I mean: due to the unconscious domination and direction through similar grammatical functions), it is obvious that everything lies ready from the very start for a similar development and sequence of philosophical systems; on the other hand, the way seems as good as blocked for certain other possibilities of interpreting the world. (2002, 20)

The Sapir-Whorf thesis on linguistic relativism, too, supports such ideas. Thus that Zarathustra can say, “New paths do I thread, a new speech comes to me; tired have I become—like all creators—of the old tongues” (Nietzsche 1886, 82). The “old tongues” of Western thinking are metaphysical to the core, and since metaphysical languages are representational, in general they do not provide a good match for the worldview of classical Daoism. Continental philosophy opens up not only possible equivalents or similarities to Daoist thought, by rethinking language it also opens up the space between them in a different way. For that space to get actualized, new ways of understanding and using language are needed.

Many scholars have already argued that the classical Chinese language is substantially different from Western languages, and that this difference results in important differences in doing philosophy. In multiple ways, comparative scholars have acknowledged that the efforts of continental philosophy here might have some benefit to bring to comparative philosophy. As Hall and Ames have it, “The movement from representational to non-representational understandings of knowledge and truth might well provide an appropriate bridge to the consideration of classical Chinese sensibilities on these topics” (1998, 144).

Derrida has said something similar. In his work, *Of Grammatology*, he argues, “Logocentrism is an ethnocentric metaphysics. It is related to

the history of the West" (1976, 79). Later, he hypothesizes that we have in the classical Chinese language "the testimony of a powerful movement of civilization developing outside of all logocentrism" (1976, 90).

The idea of non-phonetic writing, or at least of a non-phonetic moment or movement in writing, which Derrida saw present in the Chinese language, is important since it "menaces substantiality, that other metaphysical name of presence and of *ousia*. First in the form of the substantive. Nonphonetic writing breaks the noun apart. It describes relations and not appellations" (1976, 26). The menace to substantiality and presence lies in the fact that systems of language are not closed to change. Hansen has argued that Daoism, and especially Zhuangzi, were well aware of the provisionality of language systems. "There is nothing ultimate or constant in such systems. And, as the *Laozi* points out, the reason no such discourse is constant is that language (names) is inconstant—artificial, conventional, changeable. No *dao* is constant because no name is constant" (Hansen 2010, 36).

Overall, we can say that metaphysical language has limited possibilities, and that seeing language differently may indeed be conducive for understanding how the Daoists saw things differently, and thus expressed them differently.

A Different Approach

In the case of continental philosophy, the most important strategy used is what I would call the stretching of language, which includes the formulation of neologisms and the twisting of grammatical functions. In Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida this becomes the way they try to open up thought structures that are otherwise too embedded within the Western metaphysical history.

According to Nietzsche, language in general, and especially metaphysical language, is not up to the task of showing us the process character of the world. "Linguistic means of expression are useless for expressing becoming; it accords with our inevitable need to preserve ourselves to posit a crude world of stability, of things" (1967, 380). Highly suspicious of language as this metaphysical stability generator, Nietzsche says that it can nevertheless be used in new ways: "it is enough to create new names and estimations and probabilities in order to create in the long

run new things" (1974, 122). Far from discarding language, which he sees as metaphorical in its core, Nietzsche urges us to accept the inherently metaphorical nature of language, and to create new metaphors and to use language freely, as he himself consequently does.

Perhaps the most profound attempt at using language differently lies in Heidegger. He uses language in various ways to overcome the shortcomings of metaphysical language, and was in these endeavors most certainly inspired in some way by Eastern thought, and mostly by Laozi and Zhuangzi. From his ideas of *Geviert* to *Ereignis*, from crossing out being or writing it as *beyng*, Heidegger did explore all the richness of language at his disposal. But also in his appropriation and retranslation or reinterpretation of the ancient Greeks, etymologically rigorous, but also challengingly difficult, Heidegger used language to point to a different way of thinking.

With his free use of language also came the realization that there were things that cannot be said, the shortcomings of language are inherent and point us to the openness to mystery. "That the essential sway of be-ing is never definitely sayable does not indicate a lack. On the contrary, it indicates that the non-definite knowing precisely holds fast the *abgrund* of, and thus the essential sway of, be-ing" (1999, 324). The mystery of the abyss (*Abgrund*) is not to be feared, but embraced. Just as much as *dao* cannot be spoken, since it is the whole of the ten thousand things flowing together, being must be crossed out or it will be perceived as a being.

One of the most pertinent examples of Heidegger's more daring exploits of language conducive to understanding Daoism appears in his verbalization of nouns. Phrases such as *Das Ding dingt*, the *Welt weltet*, explore the process character through the shortcomings of metaphysical language. Heidegger means with this that there is nothing behind the process of things *thinging* or of the world *worlding*.

This understanding is prevalent in Chinese philosophy in general. For example, in Confucius we find the idea of the father fathering, the son sonning etc. And according to Hall and Ames, classical "Chinese language is not logocentric. Words do not name essences. Rather, they indicate always-transitory processes and events. It is important, therefore, to stress the gerundative character of the language. The language of

process is vague, allusive, and suggestive" (2001, 16). Graham, too, makes this point (1989, 227).

This can be used to help understand that *dao* is nothing other than *wanwu*. Way-making is the myriad things thinging. Heidegger argues extensively in *Das Ding* that the true nature of thinging lies in the four-fold, and "stays earth and sky, divinities and mortals. Staying [*verweilend*], the thing brings the four, in their remoteness, near to one another" (1971, 175). Further on, he puts the interplay in this way: "None of the four insists on its own separate particularity. Rather, each is expropriated, within their mutual appropriation, into its own being. This expropriative appropriating is the mirror-play of the fourfold" (1971, 177).

Then he mentions that "in the strict sense of the German word *bedingt*, we are the be-thinged, the conditioned ones. We have left behind us the presumption of all unconditionedness [*unbedingt*]" (1971, 178-79). His play with language reveals our interdependence, or relationality, in a profound way. *Dao* is nothing other than the interplay of all things or processed, but at the same time this interplay is what keeps everything hanging together. In their thinging, all things connect and bring together the larger whole.

Much can, and has been said, against Nietzsche's aphoristic way of writing, Heidegger's dense jargon, and Derrida's playful style, to the extent that they have been accused of not being real philosophers, since they do not play by the rules and are too vague, allusive, and suggestive. Still, I think that this is exactly what puts such thinkers as Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida into the nearness of Daoism. I do not mean to say that Daoism is therefore not philosophy and is not rigorous, but I state that the dominant metaphysical tradition is too narrow-minded in its thinking and thus or because of that in its language is not able to do justice to the richness of Daoist thought. Perhaps it is exactly in the stretching of language, and in the search for forgotten or new ways of meaning, that comparative philosophy finds its place.

Translation and Enlarging the Discourse

Although both Nietzsche and Heidegger have written about translation, here I only work on Derrida to explain how the continental thinkers think about turning different kinds of thinking into Western discourse.

Derrida's impact lies in the realization that meaning is never pure; it is influenced or contaminated by language. In the words of Zhuangzi, as soon as we start making discriminations, something is inevitable lost.

Relating this to the practice of translation, an ever important topic for comparative philosophy, Derrida denies the possibility of the ultimate goal of translation. He notes that he does "not believe that translation is a secondary and derived event in relation to an original language or text" (in Wood and Bernasconi 1988, 5). By questioning the status of what is traditionally seen as the original text, Derrida does not deny that there is a text translated or transformed into another, but questions the idea that the original means anything *outside* of or *without* its ever expanding context, which consists precisely of its interpretations and translations. What he calls the demand of the original for translation may well be the inevitable and continuing *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the original. Derrida challenges the fullness or purity of any identity (the text to be translated), and rather understands identity as relative to difference and interpretation (the text translated) and as such, living.

A serious problem in comparative philosophy is not only that translation is always transformation or interpretation, but that this interpretation "does not begin . . . with what is commonly called translation. It begins as soon as *a certain type of reading of the original text is instituted*" (Derrida 2004, 19; italics added). Consulting Derrida's work on translation, we may make more sense of the fact that there is really no one meaning to any original Daoist work. Meaning only arises out of interpretations, something which the actual *Wirkungsgeschichte* or evolution of the Daoist texts through their commentaries and interpretations endorses.

I suggest that one of the functions of comparative philosophy is similar in that in and through its comparisons, it questions standard (or instituted) conceptions, interpretations, and explanations. Traditional Western metaphysics typically offers those from a place between different philosophical traditions. This means first that culturally different paradigms of thinking need to be confident that their ideas will not be appropriated by comparative philosophy, since that is what has usually been instituted as our normal type of reading. It also means that the relationality between different philosophical traditions must be reconsidered.

As regards this second point, Derrida explains the contextuality or relationality inherent in his thought by saying "that nothing exists out-

side context . . . , but also that the limit of the frame or the border of the context always entails a clause of non-closure. The outside penetrates and thus determines the inside" (1988, 152-53). Context itself is not only constitutive of any identity, yet it can never be closed off: it is structurally and inherently open. Naming it *the* context would even be wrong, as this could still suggest a closed context with an identifiable content. Similarly, translating *dao* as "the Way" ignores the fact that *dao* is largely processual, and in a way it is similar to context, of which Derrida says it is nothing more or less than "the entire real-history-of-the-world" (1988, 136). In this regard, *dao* is like context: "Way-making [*dao*] is the flowing together of all things" (*Daode jing* 62; Hall and Ames 2003, 173),

When comparative philosophy is not well served by referring to the metaphysical conceptual frameworks, it is necessary to enlarge the philosophical discourse. Derrida is interested in liberating thinking from what has become the too stringent metaphysical and analytical philosophy. He cares about "a thinking, let's say, that is not confined within the particular way of thinking that is philosophy or science. There are forms, . . . there are perhaps *pensées* that are more thinking than this kind of thinking called philosophy" (1995, 202).

This move reminds us of Heidegger's statement that there might be "greater thinkers" (1963, 24) outside of Western philosophy. Derrida's deconstructions entail a thinking which is no longer purely philosophical, or it is differently philosophical, in that it questions the traditionally philosophical from various standpoints which are themselves not necessarily philosophical in the traditional sense. Such deconstructions are "perhaps no longer scientific or philosophical, in the sense in which these words can be determined today. It is in fact this indetermination and this very opening that we designate . . . by the word 'thinking'" (2004, 202-03).

Like Derrida, the strategic provocations employed by Zhuangzi are not about the total meaninglessness of words but about the mistake of assigning dogmatically fixed meanings. Essentially, both Derrida and Zhuangzi are aware that there is no way they can ever permanently escape the workings of language, and they accordingly challenge the inflexibility or determinateness of the ways of thinking in which they were brought up. It is not language per se that they are against, it is the absolutist way in which it gets interpreted and used. They wish to replace it with a sense of indetermination. Such indetermination sounds challeng-

ing to us since through our languages we have become so accustomed to our metaphysical heritage, that it is very hard to even conceive of profoundly different ways of thinking, especially ways of thinking that would like to leave certain things open.

Style

All this goes to say that a way of thinking and a language have much in common. Ever since Sapir-Whorf some version of linguistic relativism is plausible. It stands to logic then that not only would critics of the dominant way of thinking seek to stretch language to try to think differently, they would naturally also change style. Indeed, this is what we see in Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and Daoism (especially Zhuangzi).

Nietzsche has a major influence in the area of language use. Not necessarily known as an inventor of new words, he was nevertheless profoundly different in his writings, and knew well how style and content go together (e.g., 2002, 29-30). As such, he did not really argue in the same way as philosophers had done, but pointed very much to philosophy's shortcomings and mocked existing morality and culture. Nietzsche recognized that in order to be effective in this endeavour, he needed to have a style to match.

We thus see a blending and appreciation of the literary aspects of philosophy more in these continental thinkers. Such is present in Heidegger's ruminations on thinking and poetry, and in his later, meditative thinking and writing, and are part and parcel of Derrida's work and its playful, but incredibly dense style, as well as Nietzsche's highly metaphoric and narrative style and his briefness or aphoristic language.

The play with words that characterizes especially Zhuangzi is matched in Derrida. Both display a great awareness of the provisionality of language. Mark Berkson has argued that this kind of language use points to an apophatic or denying intention. Examples include Heidegger's crossing out of being, Derrida's "under erasure," Zhuangzi's turning his attacks on himself, Nietzsche's awareness of the futility or the perspective nature of his own attempts, and Laozi's admission that *dao* cannot be spoken about while yet writing a book about it. All these point to two things: direct or representational language is impossible, and the way things then are said has to be different. Berkson argues convincingly

that the language use of Derrida and Zhuangzi—but we could extend that to the other thinkers—aims at forming a pact with the reader, and thereby inviting the reader to do more than just read, but to become involved on many other levels through and by the text (1996, 109-13).

To read the continentals and Daoism is very much an aesthetic experience. For example, by letting words explode against each other, by exploiting the fullest range of meanings of any term, by bringing out ambiguities and inconsistencies, Zhuangzi and Derrida show us how language is not up to the promise of pure medium. We are trapped in a way because we have to use language, meaning we are always in a web of signification and can only operate from within this web. This is something the classical Chinese philosophical tradition was aware of much earlier than that of the West. However, if this is understood as possibility, then Heidegger, Derrida and Daoism advocate a use of language that seeks to explore it to its fullest possibilities, and this with full awareness of its dangers and limitations, rather than discard it. Again as Graham puts it, speaking of Zhuangzi (but the passage could equally well apply to Derrida or Nietzsche):

In one of his many aspects he is himself a true sophist, fascinated by the subversion of received opinions and intoxicated by the plunge which imperils rationality in the course of discovering its possibilities. He is also, even in the flow of reason itself, a poet who changes course as new insights explode, elliptical even when most logical. One of his persisting thoughts is that in accepting what fits in with one's ideas as 'this' and rejecting what does not, analytic thinking lights up only a lesser whole around the thinker and casts the rest into darkness. (1989, 178)

Yet it is also to be said that both the continental thinkers and Daoists are aware that this is somewhat inevitable, and that language style thus needs to change. In Graham's words, as he says about Laozi and Derrida: "Both use a language which already escapes the opposition logic and poetry, a language in which contradictory statements do not cancel out, because if made in the appropriate sequence or combination they set you in the true direction" (1989, 227).

A different style is used to set the reader in a different way, to entice her into a different style of thinking. Great emphasis is also put on the

idea of silence as conveyor or thought. That of which one cannot speak in any style, one should be silent about. Yet although we know language is artificial and that silence is better, we must overcome even this dichotomy in a thoughtful saying aware of its own shortcomings. "In what is neither speech nor silence may discussion find its ultimate" (Graham 2001, 153). "Where can I find a man who has forgotten words so I can have a word with him?" (Watson 2003, 141). Or in the words of Heidegger: "The truly fateful encounter with historic language is a silent event [*Ereignis*]. But in it the destiny of being speaks" (1975, 57).

Criticism of the Self

Although there are perceived similarities between continental and Daoist thought, the cultural and philosophical environments in which these similarities arose are vastly different. Daoists never had to agitate against a system that isolates subject from object, self from other, agent from action, and mind from matter. They never needed to undo such strict notions of self, agent, or person. Continental thinkers, on the other hand, worked hard to overcome the metaphysical dominance in this area.

It may well be that the typically modern Western notions of self or identity do not feature in any prominent way in classical Chinese thought. It is certainly quite realistic to say that something like the Subject-Object distinction was not really present in Daoism. I will therefore use the terms "self," "subject," and "personhood" with some license and without making the finer distinctions between them only made in modern Western metaphysics. Despite these cautions and divergences, the end result conceptions of what a person or self is are remarkably similar, and lie again in the similar tendency not to abstract the particular from the totality.

Next, I must admit that most of Nietzsche's thoughts regarding the self or person do not really fit in well with what the Daoist sage should be. Nietzsche was passionate about the strong and noble person who exerted the will to power, and he seems to have had little respect or affection for the person as embedded within a tradition. But that may have had to do more with his particular tradition, which he saw as degenerate. Nevertheless, to compare the *Übermensch* with the Daoist sage in terms of self or person, as has been done, would be pushing it on many levels. For

one, although both the *Übermensch* and the Daoist sage share a certain strength of character, the way they use it is vastly different.

Where Nietzsche's *Übermensch* sets out to assert power and control, and makes much of solitude, we obviously do not find such intentions with the Daoist sage of Zhuangzi, although there may be something to be said for it in Laozi's ruler. Yet there are some similarities that surface in Nietzsche's understanding of the self. In the Zarathustra, Nietzsche argues that the self is not the mind or some abstract thing, but resides in, or rather is, the body (1886, 29-30). But I confess that this is where in this case the similarities seem to end. Nietzsche is evidently against the yielding and non-interfering attitude of the Daoist. But he nevertheless does have interesting criticisms on the metaphysical conception of the self, so his thoughts may be useful there.

Resituating the Self

There are many suggestions that the relation of self to otherness that prevails in metaphysics is in dire need of rethinking, and again, this is what continental philosophy has primarily focused on. The dualist approach has it that the self or subject is isolated or abstracted from its world, and that the true or real self, subject or identity lies exactly in this abstraction. Retractable to a large extent to Descartes's *cogito*, the metaphysical tradition sees the self as an abstract entity, both separate from the world and self-sufficient, and as an enduring, non-physical substance behind the changing external world. In this sense the metaphysical idea of the self is a perfect example of the 'one behind the many' approach. But such a view is highly artificial, and underscores again the abstracting tendencies of the metaphysical tradition. But the continental thinkers have criticised this belief in such a self or subjectivity in many ways.

Subsequently, because they criticize the metaphysical idea of self, continental thinkers such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida are frequently accused of attempting a nihilistic eradication of concepts such as self, identity, or subject. This is patently false. What they do want to highlight is that the traditional metaphysical understanding of these concepts is in need of serious revision. In Derrida's words,

To deconstruct the subject does not mean to deny its existence. There are subjects, 'operations' or 'effects' [*effets*] of subjectivity. This is an incontrovertible fact. To acknowledge this does not mean, however, that the subject is what it *says* it is. The subject is not some meta-linguistic substance or identity, some pure *cogito* of self-presence; it is always inscribed in language. My work does not, therefore, destroy the subject; it simply tries to resituate it. (in Kearney 1984, 125)

The continental thinkers definitely do not want to give up on the idea of self or identity, but to reinvestigate how a self is produced or formed. There is a similar perspective in classical Chinese thinking. For example, Youru Wang states that Zhuangzi's "forgetting" of the self

plays at the boundary between self and non-self. While it transcends the closure of self, it does not attempt to annihilate all individual lives. It merely opens their closure and leads them to the authenticity of life that lies precisely in the absence of the distinction between self and other. (2000, 355).

Nietzsche also recognises the fictionality of the metaphysical idea of a substantial "subject" behind the appearances of a changing subject: "The subject: this is the term for our belief in a unity underlying all the different impulses of the highest feeling of reality. . . .The subject is the fiction that many similar states in us are the effect of one substratum" (1967, 268-69).

Decentering the subject or rethinking selfhood or identity does not totally negate self, but rather resituates it by undoing the artificial and hierarchical distinctions such as mind/body, or self/other. Heidegger, for example, talks about *Dasein* instead of human being or subject. Being-there (*Da-sein*) suggests a situational and always particular (*jemeinig*) point of view, without this particularity being subsumed under the Subject-Object distinction. The idea of *Dasein* instead of human being is meant to point to the simple fact that we are *in* the world. *Dasein* is not man as subject, but "that belongingness that, holding unto the ab-ground, belongs to the clearing of be-ing" (Heidegger 2006, 286). Elsewhere Heidegger talks about how a self is only generated by understanding it from its embeddedness in the world first:

Transcendence means to understand oneself from a world. *Dasein* is as such out beyond itself. Only a being to whose ontological constitution transcendence belongs has the possibility of being anything like a self. Transcendence is even the presupposition for *Dasein's* having a character of a self. The selfhood of *Dasein* is founded on its transcendence, and *Dasein* is not first an ego-self, which then oversteps something or other. (1982, 300)

We can also see how Heidegger uses the metaphysical language in different ways. Transcendence for him is not some otherworldly thing, it is firmly grounded in the world here. Zhuangzi gives us a similar message: "Without an Other there is no Self, without Self no choosing one thing rather than another" (Graham 2001, 51). The idea of a self or identity is not totally denied, but said to arise only as a function of relationality.

Similarly, Heidegger's notion of *Ereignis* (appropriation, event, happening; see Heidegger 1989) suggests thinking beyond the subject-object dichotomy, in the sense that the subject is always already included in the event. The subject belongs to the more primordial event and can only be derivatively understood from *Ereignis*. This idea is similar to the idea of *dao* as interpreted by Hall and Ames in terms of focus and field. According to them, *dao* is way-making (2003). The basic similarity lies in the fact that both the notions of *Ereignis* and *dao* as way-making make it clear that the spotlight is on the focal self as embedded in the world as field. Again, *er-eignen* as appropriating, or *dao* as way-making, should not be read metaphysically as a subject appropriating an object to itself, making it its own, or possessing an object. Both *Ereignis* and *dao* are better understood as processes, referring to both the singular processes of entities and the entire process of the world within which humanity belongs.

As such this leads to the idea that "within the open expanse of unconcealment each lingering being (*weiliges*) becomes present to every other lingering being" (Heidegger 1975, 47). Any idea of self only arises out of such interdependence or becoming present. The same idea is expressed in *Zhuangzi*: "the myriad things and I are one" (Graham 2001, 56). Not only is it necessary for a self to begin or arise from the other, but it is better not to see self and other as *detached*, since if we focus too much on the individual self, we will be too one-sided in our appreciation of the

multifaceted process called *dao*. It is also in this sense that we must understand Zhuangzi's "The utmost man is selfless" (2001, 45).

Again, this reading does not require a denial of identity, personhood, or self. Rather it requires a deeper understanding of the self as *fundamentally* relational. This reading does not try to secure or abstract the self or its essence *from* the world of change, as does the traditional metaphysical interpretation, but seeks instead to *locate* the self within a world of change and arising out of such a world, rather than standing opposed to it.

The Pluralist Person

So, how should such a selfless person be understood? After analyzing the characters for self or person and the context in which they are used by Zhuangzi, Chris Jochim comes to the conclusion that modern notions of self are not applicable to Zhuangzi, and that Zhuangzi's has a "pluralistic conception of the person, not a unitary one built concentrically around an inner, spiritual core" (1998, 53). This coincides quite closely with what continental thinkers have proposed. In Nietzsche's terms, "The assumption of one single subject is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects, whose interaction and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness in general" (1967, 270). Or, as David Hall notes, "The postmodern, plural, aesthetic self has an awareness of its plurality and the insistent particularity of the elements that variously focus that plurality. This aesthetic self-consciousness rehearses the Taoist vision of no-soul, no-self" (1994, 232).

This leaves us with the relationship between self and other. It would be natural to expect that if the self is rather seen in terms of a person embedded within a world, that the relationship between self and other would be radically different from that of modern Western metaphysics. Zhuangzi speaks of the daemonic man (*shenren*) whenever he speaks of the person who is no longer as self, but through whom heaven (*tian*) is acting. Graham says that then "the self dissolves, energies strange to him and higher than his own (the daemonic) enter from outside, the agent of his actions is no longer the man but Heaven working through him" (2001, 69). Cook Ding says that "nowadays in am in touch through the dae-

monic in me, and do not look with the eye" (2001, 63). In Heidegger, and to a certain extent in Derrida, language speaks through us.

Heidegger acknowledges that an *Auseinandersetzung* or confrontation with the other is necessary for any self to become itself, but it must be noted that this encounter is not a mere appropriation or incorporation of the other. The other as other is not to be overcome in a dialectic way; it is the encounter that matters, so that "The appropriation of one's own is only *as* the encounter [*Auseinandersetzung*] and guest-like dialogue with the foreign" (1996, 142). The encounter does not presuppose two different identities; it is rather that the identities are side effects of the more primordial encounter. In Daoism, as Hall and Ames have it,

Spontaneous action is a mirroring response. As such, it is action that accommodates the "other" to whom one is responding. It takes the other on its own terms. Such spontaneity involves recognizing the continuity between oneself and the other, and responding in such a way that one's own actions promote the interests and well-being both of oneself and of the other. (2003, 24)

In early Heideggerian terminology, *Dasein* is always *Mitsein* (being-with), and its way of being is *Sorge* (care). The previously discussed fourfold (*Geviert*) of the later Heidegger similarly suggests that we, as mortals, are part of the world in a unity with the heavens, earth and divinities, and thus to care for ourselves we have to care for the world. Such thinking is also found in the Daoist sages, who in *Daode jing* 7 satisfy their own needs by being unselfish. We can also see such thinking back in chapters 22 and 81. As Hall and Ames note:

In a world where process and change are deemed prior to form and rest, there can be little incentive to develop notions of discrete agency. From the classical Chinese perspective, agents cannot be decontextualized and superordinated. . . . Agency and action, subject and object, are not contraries, but interchangeable aspects of a single category: experience. (1998, 227)

Conclusion

There are many resources in continental philosophy that would make it easier to understand classical Daoism and that would be conducive to the comparative endeavor of relating different thoughts from vastly different traditions and times to each other. Continental thinkers have given us tools to overcome the inherent dualism in most of Western philosophy, using reversal strategies that in the end seek to upset the dualistic tendencies.

They also show how we could use language differently, important for translation strategies and to see how we could understand our place as persons in the world. I do not make the claim that there are no other vocabularies or ways of thinking that might also be conducive to such endeavors, but I do think that the struggle against the metaphysical dominance that is apparent in the continental thinkers I have discussed is of great use for understanding Daoism as a non-metaphysical way of thought.

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Stealing Words

Intellectual Property in Medieval China

FRIEDERIKE ASSANDRI

Abstract

This paper explores the question of claims to intellectual property of texts and terminologies as they were raised in debates between Buddhists and Daoists in the 7th century CE. In some apologetic texts, Buddhists accuse Daoists of “stealing” their words and scriptures. Can we interpret this as a concept of intellectual property? What could possibly constitute a theft of words and texts in a culture where literati had a large common stock of reference to use? Where unmarked citations in all kinds of writings abound? Where terminology of Daoist texts translated Buddhist texts? And where Buddhist authors often drew on the classics to elucidate their teachings? Using a methodological approach of the philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) on intellectual property, this essay presents different conceptions of property of texts and ideas in early medieval Buddhism and Daoism.

In 570, the official Zhen Luan 甄鸞 (6th c.) in his *Xiaodao lun* 笑道論 (Laughing at the Dao),¹ accused Daoists of plagiarizing (lit., “steal and change,” *yugai* 偷改) Buddhist scriptures.

Thus, the *Miaozhen jie* 妙真偈 [Song of Wondrous Perfection] says, “Even if the *śravakas* [who heard the teaching of the Buddha] were as many as the sands of the Ganges and combined all their mental efforts, they could not measure the wisdom of Dao, try though they may with their combined ef-

¹ Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou (r. 561-578) ordered Zhen Luan to evaluate Buddhist and Daoist scriptures. Zhen concluded that Daoism was not to be taken seriously and called his essay Laughing at the Dao. It appears in Daoxuan’s 道宣 *Guang Hongming ji* 廣宏明記 (T 2103; 9.150c); transl. Kohn 1995.

forts." I laugh at this and say: This text merely changes the phrase "wisdom of the Buddhas" of the *Lotus Sūtra* to "wisdom of Dao." (9.150c22; cf. Kohn 1995, 130; see also *Lotus Sūtra* T 262, 6a3)

Ninety years later, in a public debate at the court of the third Tang emperor, the Buddhist monk Jingtai 靜泰 accused his Daoist opponent Li Rong 李榮.

In the language of [today's] Daoists, there is the word *tanyue* 檀越 [*dānapati*], which they stole from the language of the sangha (已竊僧首). The text just cited speaks of *jie* 劫 [*kalpa*], another term stolen from Sanskrit! . . . In this country, there are people who should be called thieves! (T 2104, 4.392a5)

The term "stealing" (*qie* 竊) implies a concept of ownership or property of things stolen, i.e., the words and scriptures. Is this concept of ownership comparable to ideas of intellectual property today? Can we consider these claims of theft as a form of copyright infringement? Who in medieval China would qualify as the owner of a text? And how is this ownership justified?

Intellectual Property

A survey of the history of copyright and intellectual property suggests that it first arose in the West after the invention of printing around 1450. Because of the increasing ease of producing large quantities of "tangible" books, it became necessary to determine the rightful owner of any profits accruing from selling books. Intellectual property became a legal issue.

The first law on intellectual property rights in Europe was the British Statute of Anne. Established in 1710, it provided legal provision to recognize the rights to print and publish as lying with the author of a book rather than with the printer or publisher, at least for the limited time of fourteen years. Authors should have an incentive to create by having access to at least part of the material gains of their work.

In this sense, the Chinese issue does not fall under copyright provisions, because the matter of direct economic gain from the written work, rarely reproduced before the invention of printing, was not at the centre of discussion. As in the West, so in China economic questions only rose

to the forefront after the invention of printing. Thus, under the Song (960-1276), the state strove to monopolize certain categories of books and to control publication by issuing licenses and collecting depository copies of all works printed. However, since "copyright proved impossible to enforce," the concept disappeared during the Ming (1368-1644) (Twitchett 1983, 60-62).

Still, intellectual property goes beyond economic issues. Apart from the question of material gain derived from tangible objects like books, it concerns intangible issues that create the need for copyright protection while making enforcement difficult. As a result, discussions of intellectual property issues in traditional China also concern the cultural and historical background that might facilitate or hinder it.²

A closer look at the debates about stealing words and scriptures in the early Tang shows that while the Chinese in early medieval China did not have a concept of intellectual property comparable to ours today, both Daoists and Buddhists had strong conviction of scriptural and terminological ownership.

Throughout much of China's long history, Buddhism and Daoism coexisted with the official ideology based on the classics and the teachings of Confucius.³ By the 7th century, both had developed institutionalized religious communities, unfolding in close contact over several centuries and accordingly they developed similarities in teachings and practices (Mollier 2008, 7-22). However, at the same time they also competed fervently against each other on several levels, from offering religious services to lay followers to presenting religious support and legitimation to the emperor in exchange for imperial patronage. Between these two tendencies of increasing similarity and growing competition grew a dy-

² See, e.g., Alford's inquiry into concepts of intellectual property in China's traditional political culture (1997, 9-30). Similarly, Ivanhoe points to underlying attitudes and beliefs about the nature of truth and the concept that human knowledge has to serve society; withholding it from society would constitute a moral failing (2005, 133). According to him, this is one reason why China did not develop a robust conception of intellectual property (2005, 126). I would like to thank Ulrike Middendorf for bringing Ivanhoe's work to my attention.

³ The different teachings constantly negotiated a balance, only sporadically leading to persecutions of either or both teachings not officially connected to the state and its cult.

namic struggle of demarcation and self-definition, scriptural traditions and terminology providing major defining moments.

Analytic Approach

In the late 18th century, the philosophers Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) were involved in a heated debate against the publisher J. A. H. Reimarus (1729-1814). In his essay, "On the Unlawfulness of Reprinting Books," written in 1793, Fichte raised the question of what exactly can be "owned" in a book. The physical paper? The words on the paper? The idea that the words express? And what rights to what "thing" exactly does a buyer acquire when he purchases a book? Since a substantial element of any literary or artistic expression is the idea, which is not tangible, the definition of intellectual property, or of what can be owned of a thought expressed in writing, is a challenging issue.

Fichte proposed to distinguish ideas, as common property of all humanity, and wording, as the property of an individual author.

We can distinguish a book according to two levels: the *physical*, i.e., the printed paper, and the *intellectual*. Through the sale of the book, the property of the first undeniably turns over to the buyer. He can read it, and lend it out, as often as he wants, sell it again to whom he wants, as expensive or as cheap as he wants or can, or tear it up, or burn it; who could argue with him about that?

However, since one also rarely buys a book for this, and most rarely buys one only to show off with its paper and print, or paper the walls with it; so one must also think of coming by a right to its intellectual aspect through the purchase.

This intellectual aspect is namely further divided into the *material*, the contents of the book, the ideas it brings about; and into the *form* of these ideas, the manner and connection in which the phrases and wordings are brought forward. (1793).

The distinction between the words as form that present a given idea and their contents, that is, the idea as the material contained in the words, which can theoretically be used and expressed differently, is fundamen-

tal. In Fichte's proposition, the words are the personal property of the individual author.

Now, why does one regard the use of a writer's own words quite different from the use of his ideas? In the last case, we utilize what we have as common property with him, and prove that it is thus, by giving it our form; in the first case, we take possession of his form, which is not our property, but exclusively his. (1793)

The words are the form, the way in which an idea is expressed, and they are highly idiosyncratic. He adds,

It is more improbable than the most improbable that two people were to get exactly the same chain of ideas and think the same images when regarding a thing, if they do not know anything about each other. But it is not absolutely impossible, however; but that one, who in the first place must have got the ideas through another, would adopt this into his own system of ideas in the same form, is absolutely impossible.

Thus, the words or form provide the defining moment of what belongs to an author, while ideas are considered shared or common property.

Read in this light, the accusation of the Buddhist monk Jingtai that Daoists "stole" words from Buddhists would constitute a valid claim of copyright infringement. The words declared to "belong" to Buddhists are in fact phonetic transliterations of Sanskrit terms. Since Sanskrit is the language of Buddhism, foreign to China and different from Chinese, these terms constitute an obvious case where a Buddhist can speak of 'his' words in a sense of an intellectual property which is not shared by all, but belongs exclusively to the group of the Buddhists, who trace their teachings back to the Buddha's teachings in India. Here words are indeed intellectual property of a specific group not shared by all.

Zhen Luan's case of plagiarism, too, accuses Daoists of using a "stolen form of expression." He points out that only minimal changes were made before claiming the text to be Daoist. Again, this is consistent with Fichte's analysis, placing property of intellectual content with their form of expression. Still, there are significant differences between early medieval China and late modern Europe.

Authenticity versus Creation

In modern copyright law, the term intellectual property “refers broadly to the creations of the human mind. Intellectual property rights protect the interests of the creators by giving them property rights over their creations” (WIPO 2006, 4). Western understanding of intellectual property is tied closely to conceptions of ownership based on exclusive rights to the item concerned.⁴ These rights, moreover, hinge on the notion of creation, a value conditioned by culture and judged quite differently in traditional China.

Traditional Chinese generally assumed that the classics contained all possible wisdom and truth, going back to the period around 500 BCE, which Karl Jaspers (1883-1969) has called the Axial Age (1953). Buddhism, which entered China only after the 1st century CE, confirmed this attitude, since the Buddha is said to have lived around the same time as Confucius (Wagner 1995, 259). Chinese and Western understanding differs mainly in that the former does not envision dynamic development on the basis of the classics but sees a static presence of truth, fixed once and for all in written form. Later thinkers have lost immediate access to this truth and need to work hard to rediscover and properly understand it.⁵

As a consequence, the creation of something new, so highly valued as a driving force for development in the modern West, is less meaning-

⁴ Jeremy Waldron says, “Strictly speaking, ‘property’ is a general term for the rules that govern people’s access to and control of things like land, natural resources, the means of production, manufactured goods, and also (on some accounts) texts, ideas, inventions, and other intellectual products. . . . Intellectual property provides an example of property rules that do not respond directly to scarcity; moreover unlike material objects, the objects of intellectual property are not crowdable, for their use by any one person does not preclude their use by any number of others” (2004).

⁵ Rudolf Wagner notes, „Sie [i.e. die Klassiker] werden als definitives Repositorium von Weisheit angesehen. Alle notwendige und sinnvolle Erkenntnis ist in ihnen enthalten und kann entsprechend aus ihnen geläutert werden. Ihre Etablierung zieht eine endgültige Trennlinie zwischen der grossen Zeit, in der diese Bücher entstanden sind und der Zeit der Nachgeborenen, deren Aufgabe es fürderhin sein wird, diese Bücher zu verstehen“ (1995, 258-59).

ful in China than the rediscovery of a truth in the texts of the ancients.⁶ This makes a significant difference in concepts of intellectual property. For one, in China commentaries became a major vehicle of expressing a vibrant and rich intellectual life.⁷ For another, most kinds of writing involved the classics as a toolbox from which to extract quotations in support of ideas expressed in different forms, such as essays and debates.

The Literati Tradition

Throughout medieval China, literati education rested on the study and memorization of the classics. Beginning in early childhood and reaching into the civil service examinations, all literati including religious clergy had the same educational background, working from the same classics. This provided a large pool of common stock references. There was no need to explicitly mark citations from the classics; all readers or listeners recognized them instantaneously. Thus, participants of public debates, whether Pure Talk meetings, court debates, or other exchanges integral to intellectual life, routinely used unmarked quotations from the classics to cement arguments or underscore points (Assandri 2004, 469-70).

What, then could be considered a "theft" of words? What could actually be owned, other than the physical paper of the scripture, to make theft theoretically possible? Fichte's analytical proposition, based on the notion of an idiosyncratic use of words, fails at this point. Using the

⁶ Peter Bol points out, the medieval Chinese mentality assumed that "models and forms that made up culture were elaborations, imitations and variations on forms from the past; the new had been built upon the old in a cumulative fashion to create a tradition that stretched back to the beginning of civilization under the Former Kings, a beginning still accessible through the Classics. Second, the original creations from which the cumulative tradition arose replicated and continued the manifest patterns of heaven-and-earth. ... In building upon these cultural foundations in composing wen-chang, later men were thus continuing a culture that originally corresponded to the integrated organization of heaven-and-earth (1992, 77).

⁷ Even Buddhism promoted the culture of commentaries, since the process of translation of numerous sutras essentially followed a model of commentarial discourse. In fact, translation academies also produced a rich commentarial literature (Mayer 1992, 125).

words of a classic—even without stating the source—to describe a particular situation, idea, or proposition was perfectly normal and acceptable. Certain forms of expression, even entire sentences or passages from the classics, were so much part of the shared corpus of knowledge that everyone used them freely. Thus, early translators of Buddhist sutras employed words and phrases from Chinese philosophical classics like the *Daode jing* to translate Buddhist ideas and terminology.

While this methodology became obsolete under the influence of Dao'an 道安 (312-385) and Kumārajīva (344-413), it seems that at least into the Tang dynasty, Daoists and Buddhists did have a common stock of reference, using worldly classics as well as Buddhist sutras and Daoist philosophers. Thus, when Emperor Taizong (r. 627-650) ordered the monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (600-664) to translate the *Daode jing* into Sanskrit in collaboration with a group of Daoists, Cai Huang 蔡晃 (7th c.) claimed to have studied the scriptures of the Buddhist Three Treatise School and the *Vimalakīrti sūtra* so well that phrases from them issued “spontaneously” in his discourse (T 2104, 3.386c; Pelliot 1912, 391). Nobody, it seems, objected.

Buddhist Terminology

There was objection, though, to Daoist usage of Buddhist terms in the polemic (e.g., T 2112, 1; T 2051, 3; T 2103, 5; T 2110, 8; T 2104). The issue was not to defend a single author's rights to his personal creation, but a claim of arguing infringement of an entire group's rights to their intellectual property, including particular terminology, iconography, style of dress, and more. Concepts of ownership involved here relate to the conservation of tradition and authenticity, the specific stylistic characteristics of the Buddhist sangha.

While most cases cited refer to single terms, specific loan words, or particular artistic expressions, there are also indications of “unlawful reprinting,” accusations formulated on terms close to modern concepts of plagiarism. The most explicit and most comprehensive appear in Daoshi's 道世 (d. 683) Buddhist encyclopedia *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林 (A Forest of Pearls in the Garden of the Dharma; dat. 668). Under the chapter heading “Falsely Transmitting Heretic Teachings,” he describes how Daoists steal Buddhist sutras, listing not only specific texts but also giv-

ing names of plagiarizers as well as places and even circumstances of the action plus, on occasion, the reactions of the authorities (ch. 55; T 2122, 703-04).

Openly comparing the stealing of words with that of precious clothes or food, he makes it clear that he considers it a crime, not just a "slight" or "elegant offense" (Alford 1997). In addition, he provides a lengthy list of Daoists who "authored" works in the past, such as the first Celestial Master Zhang Daoling 張道陵, the Numinous Treasure sponsor Ge Xuan 葛玄, and more. To indicate authorship, he uses the term *zao* 造, to create or fabricate, in a polemic fashion, indicating fraudulent production, the opposite of authenticity. The accusation of fabricating scriptures was severe in medieval China, not least because Daoist scriptures claimed divine revelation. He connects the long-standing Daoist tendency toward fabrication with the current theft of words, arguing from the understanding that the basis for the attribution of ownership of intellectual property was authenticity rather than creation.

Later, when Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou persecuted the two teachings, there were the Daoist Zhang Bin 張賓⁸ from Huazhou, who by imperial order had been appointed governor of Huazhou; the Daoist Jiao Zishun 焦子順, aka Daokang 道抗; the Daoist Ma Yi 馬翼 from Fufeng; as well as the assistant governor of Yongzhou . . . In the fifth year of Tianhe [570], working in the Yuzhen Temple 宇真寺 of Old Town, the four stole Buddhist sutras and fabricated more than a thousand scrolls of Daoist scriptures. A person called Su Jiao 素皎 from the Wannian district mounted them. But when they saw Zhen Luan's *Xiaodao lun*,⁹ they got rid of them. (T 2122, 55.703a)

⁸ This Daoist is known also from other sources as a favourite of the emperor (Kohn 1995, 27). The *Beishi* 北史 (History of the North) mentions him as the governor of Huazhou, east of Chang'an (ch. 30). Another passage describes him as the Daoist who, together with Jiao Zishun, prophesied the ascension of Emperor Wen of the Sui (r. 581-601) (ch. 89).

⁹ The *Xiaodao lun* was presented at court in the fourth month of 569, discussed by the ministers, censored, and burned three weeks later. However, this does not necessarily discredit the story. Daoshi lived almost a century later. Although destroyed, the text found its way into Daoxuan's *Guang hongming ji* (T

Rather than the theft of words, this accusation focuses on the plagiarizing of scriptures. The event is set at the time when Emperor Wu was persecuting both Buddhism and Daoism, causing particular difficulty for the Buddhist clergy. The Daoists mentioned apparently decided to self-censor their works, presumably because they feared detection after Zhen Luan had brought up the subject of plagiarism at court. Daoshi continues his account with a further example of plagiarism.

Recently, at the end of the Daye period [605-618], the Daoist Fu Huixiang 輔慧祥 of the Wutong temple 五通觀 did not speak for three years. Then he copied the *Nirvana sutra* under the title *Chang'an scripture* 長安經 [Scripture of Eternal Peace]. At the time, the regulations did not permit the Daoist to leave the city gates.¹⁰ Someone saw that he wore a yellow robe under his cloak and detained him. The affair of the copied scripture was reported to the Secretary Wei Wensheng 衛文昇 [ca. 540-617] and brought to the emperor's attention. [The Daoist] was executed on imperial order outside the Gold-splendor Gate.¹¹ This recent event I have witnessed with my own ears and eyes. (T 2122, 55.703)

Daoshi continues his account with a contemporaneous example,

In the first year of the Linde era [664], . . . the Daoists Li Rong, Yao Yixuan 姚義玄, and Liu Daohe 劉道合 from the Dongming temple 東明觀 [in Chang'an], Tian Renhui 田仁慧, Guo Gaizong 郭蓋宗, and others from the Huisheng temple 會聖觀 collected all the various scriptures Daoists past and present have produced, including the ones that have been always hidden and have never circulated. They reedited these scriptures, stealing from Buddhist sutras by taking in their essential gist while changing any

2103), which was presented to the court in 667. It could well have been circulating at the time.

¹⁰ T 2122, 703b4-5. Compare the almost identical report of the event in Yancong's 彥琮 *Falin biezhuàn* 法林別傳 (Special Biography of Falin, T 2051, 209b). It has, "At the time he was arrested and not allowed to leave the city gates." I am indebted to Ulrike Middendorf for pointing out this reading.

¹¹ Goldsplendor Gate (Jingguang men 金光門) was to the west of the city. This execution is not mentioned in other sources, but others are (*Suishu*, ch. 70; Wright 1979, 147).

words and sentences that might be traced back to Buddhist language. (T 2122, 55.703)

This description of a process of revision and self-censoring of scriptures by a group of Daoists in the capital suggests not only that Buddhists had a keen sense of what was theirs, but also that Daoists were aware of the problems of plagiarizing scriptures. The context of the Daoist clergy's revising and censoring their own texts was the exacerbating competitive struggle with Buddhists at court (Assandri 2004, 145-52). Therefore, the authorities, although not actively involved, may have been part of Daoists' considerations inasmuch as they feared detection and official censoring or at least a loss of credibility. However, Daoshi accuses the authorities of an overall disinterest and non-interference,

In the Daye era [605-617], the Daoist Fu Huixiang from Wutong temple copied the *Nirvana sutra* into the *Chang'an jing*. He was soon killed, and the text did not circulate. But now the [plagiarized] text has reappeared as the *Taishang lingbao yuanyang miao jing* 太上靈寶元陽妙經 [*Wondrous Scripture of the Primordial Yang of the Numinous Treasure of the Highest Lord*].¹² (T 2122, 55.703)

This accusation is verifiable. The *Yuanyang miao jing* has survived in the Daoist Canon (DZ 334), and its tenth chapter is clearly an adaptation of the first chapter of Tan Wuqian's 曇無讖 (ca. 385-433) translation of the *Nirvāṇa sutra* (T 374)—Buddhist technical terms, personal and place names are replaced by Daoist equivalents.

After one more example, Daoshi brings up the issue of "stealing words" as additional proof of Daoists plagiarism.

Daoist scriptures originally did not contain [terms like] *upāsaka* 優婆塞 [lay follower], *pāṣikā* 優婆夷 [female lay follower], *dānapati* 檀越 [chief donor],

¹² The Sui rulers (589-618) favored Buddhism in their imperial ideology, while the Tang (618-906), under which Daoshi wrote his *Fayuan zhulin*, preferred Daoism. This may be one reason for the different approach to the texts, but also for Daoshi's accusation.

bhadra 賢者 [worthy]¹³, and *dakṣinā* 達親 [donation]. Yet, today Daoists all use them illegitimately. We don't even know if these terms are Chinese or Sanskrit. If they were Chinese, how come the histories do not mention them? If they are Sanskrit, we do not know what they mean originally. Laozi and Zhuangzi were not Western men: Thus I know that the [Daoist] use of [these terms] is illegitimate. (T 2122, 55.703)

Daoshi further extends his accusations of theft from Sanskrit words to iconographic characteristics, such as portraying the highest deity in a golden color, and to the appropriation of Buddhist terminology, which did not originate in the foreign language. An example is the term *daoshi* 道士, which Daoshi claims was originally Buddhist and later stolen to replace the ancient designation of Daoist priests, i.e., libationer (*jijiu* 祭酒).

Daoshi thus reveals a concept of intellectual property tied to particular wording or form of expression, not unlike Fichte's understanding. The rightful owner of the intellectual property is the Buddhist sangha, representing an attitude strikingly different from that of lay Chinese literati. He concludes by pointing out that the Buddha himself had announced the stealing of words and teachings.

This is why in the *Nirvana sutra* and in the *Baiyu jing* 百喻經 [Sutra of a Hundred Similes; T. 209], [the Buddha said:] After my passing, there will be [followers of] heretic teachings, which will steal my words and pass them off as representing their own teaching¹⁴, claiming they were always theirs. Since they do not understand the arrangement [of the teaching], they will confuse beginning and end. It is like those mountain tribes, who stole the king's precious clothes. Although they obtained them, they did not know the proper order, and so they wore them upside down.¹⁵ It is also like the thieving dog entering a person's house at night, not knowing where the food is kept.¹⁶ (T 2122, 55.704a)

¹³ While the first three terms reflect transliteration and clearly show their foreign origin, the term "worthy" (*xianzhe* 賢者) is not of Sanskrit origin. Daoshi does not seem to realize this.

¹⁴ See *Baiyu jing*, T 209; 1. 544a, simile no. 7; 2.548a, simile no. 32

¹⁵ This refers to *Baiyu jing* 1.8. For the simile of the mountain tribes who stole the official's cart and belongings, see 1.544a.

¹⁶ This refers to an account in the *Nirvana sutra* T 374.397b, T 375. 637c.

This excerpt from Daoshi's *Fayuan zhulin* contributes several interesting facets to a consideration of a possible concept of intellectual property in early medieval China.

Explicit accusations of theft and plagiarizing concern the use of distinct Sanskrit terminology, which is considered part of a distinct and exclusive Buddhist heritage. With regard to the references to plagiarizing scriptures, two extant texts are mentioned, the Daoist *Yuanyang miaojing* 元陽妙經 (Wondrous Scripture of Primordial Yang, DZ 334) and the Buddhist *Daban nieban jing* 大般涅槃經 (*Nirvana sutra*, T 374). Comparing the two reveals in fact blatant plagiarism. Personal and place names, as well as some technical terms have been substituted, but the overall wording is identical.

Daoshi thus refers the issue of plagiarism back to a prediction of the Buddha, recorded in two sutras. The Buddha himself—possibly in the context of the open, lively, and competitive intellectual environment of his times in India—warned that his teachings and words would be stolen or appropriated by others after his death.

The fact that the Buddhist explicitly refers the issue of plagiarizing and theft of words back to the words of the Buddha suggests that the conception of intellectual property, which we can discern in the accusations of the Buddhists against the Daoists may have been formed under the influence of Buddhist or Indian concepts from the sutras he mentioned. This seems also probable in view of the absence of similar concepts in the literati tradition.

However, the discussion cannot be complete without considering the side of the accused, the Daoists called thieves, in order to evaluate the context of the polemic accusations and the question if there did exist a concept of intellectual property.

Esoteric Scriptures

No explicit statements of Daoists concerning plagiarism survive in documents about debates with Buddhists; Daoxuan 道宣 in his *Ji gujin Fo-Dao lunheng* 集古今佛道論衡 (Collection of Critical Evaluations of Buddhism and Daoism from the Past and Present, T 2104) hints at a related issue. In a long and heated accusation against Daoists, the Buddhist debater Jingtai 靜泰 asks,

[Daoists] steal from Buddhists and confuse everything, from beginning to end they never pay attention to the inner logic [of the Buddhist texts] and make everything incoherent. Even if [Li] Rong's texts have been changed, and there are no more words to trace them back to the Buddha,¹⁷ there are still Daoist scriptures in the imperial library. Please, why don't you present them to the Buddhist scholars so they can decide if they are authentic or fabricated. (T 2104, 4.391c)

Here the accusation of stealing scriptures is followed by a request to the emperor to show Daoist scriptures to Buddhist examiners for inspection. This suggests that Daoist texts were collected in the imperial library, but not commonly accessible to Buddhists.

It also underscores that most medieval Daoist scriptures were esoteric.¹⁸ Especially those from the Jiangnan area, notably of the Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity), Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure), and Sanhuang 三皇 (Three Sovereigns) traditions, were kept secret to be offered only to select clients (see Strickmann 1979; Pregadio 2006; Campany 2009; Bokenkamp 2012; Raz 2012). This southern tradition of Daoism had grown out of largely esoteric master-disciple lineages, who shared a common socio-historical background (see Strickmann 1977; Bokenkamp 1983), including the masters of esoterica (*fangshi* 方士) of the Han as well as early alchemists, summarily described as Taiqing (Great Clarity 太清) tradition (Pregadio 2006).

It produced an extensive and sophisticated scriptural tradition, seeing scriptures as originally celestial writings that spontaneously emerged from primordial energy (Bumbacher 1997, 415). In their celestial form only intelligible to the highest deities, they underwent a series of transmissions to be handed down step by step through the ranks of gods and immortals, until eventually revealed to carefully chosen humans.¹⁹ This

¹⁷ This probably refers to similar editing of Daoist scriptures as related in the *Fayuan zhulin* (T 2122).

¹⁸ As Stuckrad points out, esotericism is not an independent tradition or school of thought of European history, but an analytic construct of modern researchers (2006, 21). Therefore, it seems admissible to use the term in reference to early medieval Daoism.

¹⁹ See Bumbacher 1995, with references to the *Suishu* 隨書 (History of the Sui Dynasty, Jingji zhi 4), as well as Daoist texts, like Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 (456-

revelation occurred in different ways. In some cases immortals dictated the scriptures in dreams; in others, recluses discovered them on the walls of caves.²⁰ Either way, they were esoteric and could not be transmitted freely to other human beings; they were thought to be guarded by protecting spirits who would punish anyone who obtained them by dishonest means or passed them on to the unworthy (Bokenkamp 1997, 410, 313). For the legitimate proprietor, on the other hand, the scriptures contained valuable methods on how to attain immortality.

This soteriological understanding, then, is at the root of the strong Daoist emphasis on secrecy and esoteric scriptural transmission. Common sense suggests that physical or even spiritual immortality cannot and *should* not be attained by all, because it would disturb the natural balance of life in this world. In contrast, the Buddhist ideal state of bliss in heavenly paradises like those of Amitābha or Maitreya,²¹ as much as the goal of liberation in *nirvana*, are understood to be available to all, having impact mainly on the afterlife. The this-worldly empowerment of the individual as much as the mystique and esoterism of Daoist teachings, therefore, formed an inherent component of their attraction. They were something special, not attainable to everybody, highly valued and precious to their owner (Bumbacher 1995; 2012, 121).

When it comes to knowledge dissemination in the context of esoterism, moreover, representatives of the tradition must find a balance between dissemination to ensure the continued practice of their techniques, formulas, and instructions and theories of their lineage, on the one hand, and the restriction of this operational knowledge to select and assumedly worthwhile people, on the other.

536) *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected; DZ 1016; transl. Smith 2013) and Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of Divine Immortals; transl. Campney 2002).

²⁰ An example of the former appears in the transmission of key Shangqing scriptures by immortals to Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-ca. 386); the latter are represented by the Sanhuang scriptures, which were found by Bao Jing 鮑靚 in a cave.

²¹ The enthusiastic reception of these promises of afterlife bliss in heavenly paradises in early medieval China is well documented in archaeological relics. See Hou 1998, 108-16.

The Daoist Take

Medieval Daoists of the Jiangnan region reconciled these conflicting needs with the help of precise transmission rituals, often in combination with requirements of spiritual cultivation and temporal limits. As Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283-343) *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity, DZ 1185, ch. 19) notes, formal scriptural transmission involved a covenant between master and disciple, complete with an oath of secrecy. Quite like blood covenants in ancient China that established fighting groups beyond kinship boundaries (see Lewis 1990), Daoist transmission lineages served as a source of legitimacy and authority for texts and the knowledge they contained. To qualify for initiation, the adept had to have merit of cultivation besides making substantial material "pledge offerings" (*faxin* 法信; *mengxin* 盟信) (see Kohn 2003).

While the spiritual conditions are hard to pinpoint concretely, also because they certainly depended on individual judgments of the master, the material conditions were regulated in a straightforward manner. Texts as well as ritual manuals contain specific lists of pledge offerings required for transmission and, in later centuries, ordination. These offerings include rice, firewood, writing utensils and other items of practical use, but also gold, money, and bolts of silk, often used as a currency (see Hansen and Wang 2013; Sheng 2013).

Since proper transmission of the texts was of major concern in Daoism, many texts detail the rules and regulation, complete with lists of pledge offerings. For example, the 5th century Shangqing text *Jiuzhen mingke* 九真明科 (The Sworn Code of the Nine Perfected, DZ 1409) says,

The second part of the upper chapters of the Mysterious Capital says: In order to transmit the 39 verses of the *Dadong zhenjing* to students, one has to do the covenant with 10 *liang* (139.2 grams) of good gold, 25 *liang* of bronze (or copper), five pairs of golden buttons, a golden fish and a jade dragon, one *liang* of blue silk-threads, to be wound around the gold buttons, as a pledge.

The *Sanhuang yi* 三皇仪 (Observances of the Three Sovereigns, DZ 803), probably from the early Tang, has,

40 feet of white silk, 3 *liang* of gold, 3 *liang* of silver, 2 *liang* of real cinnabar, 5 pecks of rice, 2 bundles of firewood, 9 kerchiefs, 9 knives, a bathtub, a washing bowl, 40 feet of yellow silk, 6 pairs of golden rings, 39 feet of red patterned silk, 1 pair of silver rings, 5 pound of red ink, 40 feet of purple damask, 5 *liang* of silk threads, 80 feet of yellow cloth, 100 sheets of yellow paper, one pair of yellow brushes, a golden knife, 39 feet of silk in the colors of the five directions: 9 feet of green for the east, 3 feet of red for the south, 7 feet of white for the west, 5 feet of black for the north and 12 feet of yellow for the middle, all made of patterned silk. These 21 constitute the pledge offerings for transmission of the Sanhuang scriptures. (1b; see also Benn 1991; 2000, 328-30)

As these lists show, the required offerings for the transmission of texts were so substantial, that they certainly excluded adepts from the less privileged classes. A detailed study of the function of pledge offerings still remains to be done, but, as scholars have pointed out, they probably formed a solid source of income for active Daoists (see Benn 2000; Strickmann 1977, 21-26; Sun 2013).

While the particular conception of scriptures in the Daoist tradition as stemming from divine revelation precludes the existence of individual authors, the system of their esoteric transmission yet implies certain elements of intellectual property based on particular spiritual merit.

In terms of Fichte's analytical criteria, all this means that the owner of any physical manuscript, even if its transmission involved proper initiation and all the necessary pledge offerings, had very limited "property rights.: According to Fichte, the owner of a given book can "read it, lend it out as often as he likes, resell it to whoever he wants, as expensive or as cheap as he wants or can, tear it up, or even burn it" (Fichte 1793 op. cit.). The only thing a Daoist can legitimately do with his scripture, on the contrary, is read and recite it. The scriptures themselves spell out the rules restricting handling, usage, and transmission, including the production of copies. More than on issues of intellectual property, Daoists focused on the magic and esoteric properties of their scriptures, engaging widely in discussions of their sacred nature. Still, as Bumbacher notes, it seems that this sparked a substantial production of scriptures and eager search for them.

Given the ominous character of the holy scriptures, given their divine nature that could render their owners immortal, given the social prestige the possession of scriptures gave to the owners, there is small wonder that in the fifth century literati and wealthy noblemen systematically searched for Daoist scriptures. On top of their shopping lists were the transcripts in Yang Xi's own famous calligraphy of those scriptures he had been dictated by the immortals during his nightly visions. Apparently, demand was much greater than supply and so a whole industry emerged that was specializing in producing scriptures that were said to be the work of the early patriarchs of the Maoshan—the tradition which was set up by Yang Xi and his noble sponsors, the Xu family. (1995)

On occasion, Daoists transmitted their esoteric scriptures to emperors, which means they became part of the imperial collection, but they were not made generally available to officials or other clergy, including Buddhists.

Zhen Luan himself was imperially ordered to investigate the Daoist scriptures. An ex-Daoist himself, he also had personal access, and used this opportunity to publicly denounce them at court as fabrications and plagiarized Buddhist sutras. With his ample citations from Daoist scriptures, his work, although censored and destroyed, became a major source for Buddhists in their knowledge of Daoist scriptures,²² greatly raising the alarm about scriptural theft. The Daoist concern about secrecy must have added to these preoccupations.

Concluding Remarks

Conceptions of intellectual property and property of texts emerging from early medieval texts reveal the coexistence of different concepts of ownership, including the physical manuscript, words, and ideas contained in a given text. However, none refer to a single author or unique creator.

Daoist scriptures were for the most part esoteric, said to originate through divine revelation. While individual authorship was not an issue, the actual possession and use of a scripture were strictly regulated both

²² Another text of the same period reflecting intimate knowledge of Daoist scriptures is the polemic *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論 (T 2110) by the monk Falin 法林 (572–640), another ex-Daoist (Assandri 2004, 169).

in terms of the physical manuscript and its content and wording. In order to obtain a scripture, adepts needed to qualify not only in terms of material payments, but also of spiritual cultivation.

Against the backdrop of Daoist esoterism and the refusal to show their scriptures to Buddhists, combined with concrete examples of plagiarism as presented by Zhen Luan, the Buddhist sangha spoke out in defense of their intellectual property. Their claim to ownership of scriptures and even iconographic details and words was based on the concept that they alone were qualified to represent the teaching of the Buddha. In other words, it was based on a perceived exclusive right to conserve authenticity.

Buddhists found a model of ownership and the related accusation of theft in two early sutras, which show the Buddha himself predicting that heretics would "steal" his words after his passing. Various polemics against Daoist plagiarism emphasize the foreign, i.e. Indian, origin of Buddhist sutras, teachings, and terminology. Sanskrit loan words in Daoist texts clearly indicated adaptation and even theft.

The voluminous religious literature of early medieval China shows that both Daoists and Buddhists resorted to plagiarism (Mollier 2008, 10-19). However, the earliest instance of a Daoist accusing Buddhists of plagiarism appears much later, in Du Guangting's 杜光庭 (855-933) *Daojiao lingyan ji* 道教靈驗記 (Record of Daoist Miracles, DZ 590) (Mollier 2008, 112-13; see also Verellen 1992).

Thus, in early medieval China in Daoist and Buddhist environments there did develop a concept of intellectual property as belonging to a certain specific group. However, compared to modern Western concepts, there are important differences. Intellectual property or ownership of texts by a specific group like the Buddhists was not based on auctorial creation, but on conservation of authenticity.

Furthermore, the involvement of the worldly authorities in these questions of intellectual property was different from the intellectual property issue in modern times in the West and in China as of the Song dynasty after the invention of printing. While in both latter cases the state reacted to a growing business of publishing, motivated by economic reasons and by the need to maintain its monopoly and general control on what kind of books, containing what kind of thoughts, were

distributed inside the country as well as outside the country, the case of the early medieval debates was different.

Here not the state or his representatives, but the Buddhist clergy took the initiative to defend a violation of its rights as the sole conservator and transmitter of the teachings of the Buddha. The immediate inspiration for this vehement defense of their rights against plagiarism and theft was possibly the combination of the public exposure of the otherwise esoteric texts of the Daoists by Zhen Luan and a prophecy of the Buddha about future theft of his teachings and words contained in the *Nirvana sutra* and the *Baiyu jing*, which seemed to verify itself in the exposures of Zhen Luan.

The Buddhists brought the issue of the Daoist theft of words and scriptures to the attention of the authorities. Since the matter of plagiarism in medieval China was related to the question of authenticity, and authenticity of texts as well as its counterpart, the unauthorized production of texts were issues that could influence the stability of the ruling power, this could be taken seriously by the emperor. History had shown that apocryphal writings could be connected to subversion and rebellion; therefore, fabrication and falsification of scriptures was a political crime. However, it seems that the actual reaction depended on how much the emperor would actually perceive the fabricated or plagiarized text a concrete threat to his power or to social stability.

As far as we know, in the case of the accusations of theft of words in court debate, there was no specific reaction of the emperor. In the case of Zhen Luan's report, which revealed Daoist plagiarisms, the emperor actually censored and burnt the report, before he decided to persecute both, Buddhism and Daoism. The case of the plagiarized *Nirvana sutra* accounted by Daoshi is said to have resulted in the execution of a culprit of plagiarism during Sui dynasty, yet the same plagiarism does not seem to have caused consequences in Tang dynasty, even though Daoshi pointed it out explicitly and mentioned the names of all persons involved.

This stands in contrast to other cases, where authorities would interfere in the issues of religious texts, when there was a direct concern for the state²³, like for example in the case of the censoring of the Daoist

²³ Important examples in this context are also texts related to calendar calculation and prognostication, which could originate in any tradition. Prognostica-

Sanhuang jing during the reign of emperor Taizong (r. 627-650) (T 2104, 3.386b-c; see Assandri 2004, 144).

Still, the reactions of the authorities were based on a perceived threat to the imperial rule or to social stability, but not on considerations of abstract authenticity or authorship per se (Alford 1997, 17). Thus, in most cases signaled by the Buddhists the culprits were not punished, nor were any steps taken to impede future plagiarisms.

As long as the acts of plagiarism and theft of words signaled to the authorities did not imply a direct challenge to imperial powers, they remained in their eyes an inconsequential squabble between representatives of two teachings – teachings that coexisted with each other and with the official imperial ideology in varying grades of mutual tolerance throughout centuries.

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tion as well as calendar calculation were potentially dangerous for the state, since they laid claim on knowing not only phenomena of heaven, but often also the mandate of heaven at the foundation of imperial legitimation. Thus, while prognostications and reports of omen would play a steadily growing role in supporting and managing ascension to the throne, any emperor usually would as soon as he had established his power, control prognostication and calendar calculations closely, in order to avoid any potential successor or usurper use them for their own ends. Compare Alford (1997, 13): the earliest edict concerning the prohibition of unauthorized copies of texts after the invention of printing in China, from 835 CE was directed against the production of 'calendars, almanacs, and related items that might be used for prognostication. See also Twitchett 1983, 15.

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Possession and Ritual

Daoist and Popular Healing in Taiwan

Shu-Wei Hsieh

Abstract

This paper focuses on the everyday realities of religious healing cultures in the particular ethnographic context of Taiwan. In order to understand therapeutic aspects of religion in both the traditional and contemporary contexts as well as its local and global manifestations, I explore religious healing in the traditionally observant city of Tainan, which offers three compelling cases studies. From there, I explore the theoretical understanding of spirit, body, and illness in traditional Chinese society. The analysis focuses on healing through ritual and spirit possession, providing vivid accounts of the role spirit possession and ritual performance play in healing individuals and communities in Chinese society. It also increases our understanding of healing and spirit possession in southern Taiwan. Core issues involve the agency of ritual and medium of deities and spirits in accounting for and dealing with a range of psychological and physical trauma.

Western medicine, at the core of any modern notion of medicine, takes its basis from modern biological sciences, developed from the Enlightenment period. In the globalized present-day world, Western medicine holds a leading role as the most authoritative of all medicinal systems. Certain critical voices have emerged, however, including Michel Foucault who, in 1965, published his first investigation of the authority that Western medicine holds vis-à-vis the human body, as a specialized field, and as an overarching monopoly. A few decades later, in 1987, Bryan S. Turner published his examination of the discourse of power relative to this monopoly, as well as the bureaucratic rationality in constructing a medical system.

Going beyond sociological investigations, anthropologists have produced similarly focused studies on Western medicine. Since the early 1980s, when Emily Ahern (1975), Jean Comaroff (1981), and Arthur Kleinman (1980) first published research they conducted in Taiwan, many other studies have appeared.¹ To gain a comprehensive understanding, an integrated explanation must place medicine and illness into relevant socio-cultural contexts. Systems for explaining pathology and cosmological systems are intimately related, as are illness, kinship, environment, nature, and spirituality—all structurally connected parts of one system. When this system becomes unbalanced, illness arises.

The experience of, and conduct during, illness should thus be seen as part of the social structure, and human understanding of illness and medicine closely relate to culture. Dissimilar medicine systems can interpenetrate each other; they can also create entirely new or hybrid systems of understanding. This is how the process of compromise and adaptation between Western and traditional medicine works.

In the 1990s, Chinese academics first focused on the connection between medicine and culture. An important figure in this context is Zhang Xun 張珣, who has conducted and published research on religious medicine over several decades (Zhang 1989; 2007, 2008, 2009). According to her, so-called popular medicine falls into two categories: broad and narrow. Broad popular medicine can encompass religious and secular aspects while narrow popular medicine only refers to secular traditional practices.

Using this scheme, she has undertaken a penetrating investigation of Taiwanese religious medicine. For example, examining a series of offertory rituals, she has been able to dissect the concepts of medicine found in ethnic Han society. Investigating rituals performed by Master Li Youkun 李游坤 and religious medicine as practiced in the Bao'an Temple 保安宮 in Taipei, she explains popular perceptions of chronic, unknown, and severe illness, as well as how people understand medicine by way of rituals known as "alleviation of terror" or "containing fright" (*shoujing* 收驚), "reversal of fortune" (*gaiyun* 改運), and "offering

¹ Other important early works include Chen et al 1985; DeGlopper 1977; Furth and Chen 1992; and Gould-Martin 1975; 1976. More recently, noteworthy are Aldridge 2000; Kleinman 2006; McClenon 2002; Watts 2011.

and resolution" (*jijie* 祭解). She also explains the various symbols of these systems, which touch on the notions of the spirit or cloud and material or white souls (*hun/po* 魂魄) as well as on astrology—both strong foundations of ethnic Han medicine.

Zhang Xun's research is of great value and forms the foundation of this study: an examination of Taiwanese religious medicine from the standpoint of possession and ritual. Spirit possession occurs when a spiritual entity descends into the body of a medium (*jishen* 乩身), who then carries out a series of ritual, religious, and medicinal practices to help a patient. Ritual indicates a fixed sequence of formal religious practices, where a ritual master (*fashi* 法師) carries out a series of religious procedures involving some kind of medicinal action on behalf of a patient.

Spirit possession of a medium, sometimes a young boy, with a subsequent question-and-answer session occurs frequently in Taiwan (see Dean 2000; Lin 2005). The spirits active in the event have medicinal powers; the treatment involves both talismans from Daoist sources and herbal preparations based on traditional recipes. Mediums in trance use both physical examination and pulse diagnosis to determine the cause of the ailment. In other words, when a spirit practices medicine through a medium, that spirit utilizes commonly known medical methods, showing just to what degree religious medicine, popular, and traditional medical systems are syncretized in the practice.

Transcendent Cao Fei

A case in point is Cao Fei, the Great Transcendent 曹飛大仙, of the Qingyun Temple 青雲寺, part of the Xilong Sanctuary 西龍殿 in Tainan 台南. Founded in 1738 under the Qing dynasty and consecrated to Chifu Qiansui 池府千歲, it was rededicated in 1971. At this time, the community ordered construction of a new hexagonal hall, dedicated to Cao Fei and his acolytes Xiao Shi 蕭世 and Huang Liangren 黃良仁.

According to the founding myth, Cao Fei was one of the Three Great Thearchs of Cao Fu 曹府三大帝. He underwent three reincarnations. He first appeared in prehistory as a giant numinous bird (*peng* 鵬) that saved people with medicinal herbs it carried in its beak and thus

earned great merit. Second, he was born in the Spring and Autumn period as field marshal Cao Gui 曹蒯 of the state of Lu 魯. Third, he came to life as Pian Que 扁鵲, the master physician of the Warring States period. Pian Que traveled through all the different states and was widely famous for his astounding medical skills. Not only internal and external medicine, he also mastered gynecology, pediatrics, acupuncture, massage, palliative care, stone-needle acupuncture, surgery, and the preparation of herbal decoctions. He excelled at pulse diagnosis, complexion analysis, auditory examination, and all the four ways of traditional diagnosis. When his achievements reached the ears of the celestial powers, the Jade Emperor (Yuhuang dadi 玉皇大帝) appointed him as one of the Three Great Thearchs of Cao Fu.



Fig. 1. Cao Fei examines a patient.

About fifty years ago, Cangfu Qiansui, the main deity of the Xilong Sanctuary celebrated his 500th *kalpa* anniversary and vacated his post among the Three Great Thearchs of Cao Fu. Cao Fei replaced him and took up take residence in the Qingyun Temple next door. Aware of Cao Fei's dutiful deeds, the god lent his own official seal and thus empowered him to perform healings and give succor to the world. This situation will remain for one sixty-year cycle, after which the senior deity returns to his previous post.

Thus, Cao Fei now has a divining and examination service for a fixed period on the first floor of the Qingyun Temple. Twice a week, in the early evening, priests burn incense and chant relevant scriptures, enticing him to descend into the body of a medium. The divining service begins at 7 pm, catering to an audience of ordinary people, mostly come to ask questions about a physical problem or disease. Cao Fei first gives them an oral examination, inquiring about their condition. Then he takes the pulse and pronounces a diagnosis, usually formulated in terms of the person's five inner organs and the circulation of *qi* and blood. The rite concludes with his prescription of herbs and instructions in their use.

Usually, when Cao Fei undertakes a visual examination, the medium's eyes are half-closed. He speaks in a high voice, using Fujian dialect in an oddly pitched sequence. This is hard to understand, so that the patient has to rely on the interpretative assistance of a religious functionary stationed at his side. In addition to herbs, Cao Fei also often issues talismans, which the patient is to wear on his person or ingest after burning. Since Cao Fei uses the learning and experience from his prior incarnation as Pian Que to give succor to the world and practice medicine in his current post, he is classified as a medicine god. Worshipers, in turn, tend to follow his fame and hope for aid, most commonly with chronic conditions, mysterious ailments, terminal diseases, and overall feelings of being unwell.

Beyond spiritual medicine, Cao Fei also uses examination techniques, herbal prescriptions, and diagnostics from traditional Chinese medicine and matches his interpretation of pathology to it. For example, he sometimes tells patients to abstain from certain foods, (such as those hot or cold in nature), to practice breathing or specific forms of exercises, and the like. Privileging deficiency over excess, he gives voice to the understanding that people in modern societies are prone to overindulgence. Rather than prescribing additional tonics or more nourishment, he admonishes them to develop more moderation in their food habits and a greater emphasis on lighter foods.

The Celestial Master

Another case is the Guangxi Palace 廣熙宮 in the Sanchong 三重 district of Xinbei City 新北市. Part of the greater Zhuwei 竹圍 area, it is the do-

main of the Wang 王, Lin 林, and Zheng 鄭 families prevail who join together to form the Thearch Lord's Association (Dijun hui 帝君會), centering on the Celestial Master (*tianshi* 天師).

Once a week, at 9 pm, they open their doors to divination, which involves a child-medium (*jitong* 乩童), table chief (*zhuotou* 桌頭), and scribe (*bisheng* 筆生). First, the table chief purifies the altar and ritual area with gold paper (*jishi* 金紙). He places two divine writs on the medium's seat, the "Order to Be Submitted to the Celestial Master of Orthodox Unity" (*Feng Zhengyi tianshi suling* 奉正一天師敕令) and the "Talisman of Clarity and Purity" (*Qingjing fu* 清淨符). Should the ritual area be unclean, he "binds the realm" (*jieshi* 結界) in the five directions and cleanses it.



Fig. 2. The Celestial Master descends.

Next, the table chief chants incantations and scriptures, summoning the spirit(s). After about ten minutes, the medium comes to sit on his seat. The table chief continues to chant incantations. Another ten minutes later, a Celestial Master descends. Worshipers take turns asking their questions, while the scribe records the deity's prescriptions, talismans, registers, and other advice. Afterwards, the table chief chants additional divine incantations and escorts the Celestial Master back to his mount. Af-

ter burning gold paper, he practices the rite of "thanking the altar and sending the deities off" (*xietan songshen* 謝壇送神).

The same procedure also applies to the divination of the Old Transcendent (Laoxian 老仙), a fox deity associated with Mount Longhu, the headquarters of the Celestial Masters in Mainland China, as well as to the Green Dragon Celestial Master (Qinglong Tianshi 青龍天師), both acolytes of the main deity. Other gods activated in the same fashion include the Great Thearchs Shunyi 順義 and Baosheng 保生, as well as the Sagely Mother in Heaven on High (Tianshang shengmu 天上聖母), the Ancestral Master of the Clear Waters 清水祖師 (Qingshui zushi), the Perfected of the Great Monad 太乙真人 (Taiyi zhenren), the Prime Lord of the Five Grains 五穀先帝 (Wugu xiandi), Bodhisattva Dizang (Dizang pusa 地藏菩薩), and others.



Fig. 3. The spirit medium writes out a talisman.

On March 14, 2011, I conducted interviews at the temple and recorded the process of opening the altar. According to a temple functionary, about 70 to 80 percent of attendees come with some kind of physical ailment, while the remainder have various situations. The Celestial Master possessing the medium uses pharmaceutical remedies or talismanic orders in order to effect a cure. The Guangxi Temple holds a continuous stock of the various medicines typically prescribed by the Celestial Mas-

ter in addition to commonly used medicines prescribed by other divinities and a set of folk remedies. Due to the authorization of the Celestial Master, his medicines are dispensed most frequently.

When I was there, I saw about eight people join the divining service. Six had come to ask about physical ailments; one was there to inquire about images of divinities with radiating light; another wanted to know when best to collect the remains of a deceased family member. Participants would write their questions down together with their full name and astrological birth data. When they asked the question, the table chief directed it to the child medium, who in turn gave a prompt response.

For instance, one of participants had a child with an allergic respiratory reaction. Upon supplying the patient's name and astrological birth data and announcing his particular condition, the Celestial Master prescribed a pharmaceutical concoction that consisted of twelve herbs. They were licorice root (*gancao* 甘草), fresh celery (*shengzhi* 生芪), raw ginseng (*yuanjiang* 元蔘), powderbright (*fenguang* 粉光), eucommia (*duzhong* 杜仲), *Wolfiporia extensa* (*fuling* 茯苓), silkworm granules (*cansha* 蠶砂), earth-dragon (*dilong* 地龍), ancient-moon (*guyue* 古月), almonds (*xinren* 杏仁), stream mussels (*chuanpei* 川貝), oily cassia (*yougui* 油桂), straight agarwood (*zhenshen xiang* 正沉香), and phoenix-tail-links (*fengwei lian* 鳳尾連). He then outlined how much of each to take, how to prepare the concoction, and when and how often to take it.

Spirits Practicing Medicine

These two cases exemplify how interrogating a patient about his sickness, one of the four key diagnostic methods of traditional Chinese medicine, combined with prescribing medicine for the disease, work through spirit possession. After first possessing the human medium, the questions the patient, then prescribes a remedy. Crucial to this process is the patient's faith in the particular deity associated with the event, as the power of the medical treatment derives solely from the deity itself.

The healing power of one particular god or transcendent undergirds the entire ceremony. In the first case, he is a major figure associated with ancient medicinal practice; in the second, he the original creator of Daoism. As a result, the deity is famous throughout the Chinese world, not only as the god of medicine but also as the benefactor of humankind.

This in turn means that to assume the position of healer in Daoism is not merely to possess medical knowledge, but literally to be possessed by a benevolent and powerful god.

This feat connects to the traditional Chinese view of indigenous medicine as central not only to the concept of health but also to its entire worldview. They think of their medicine as a holistic system more natural, herbal remedies and a strong focus on the body as an inherently balance structure whose equilibrium prevents and heals disease. The Chinese people's deeply rooted faith in traditional medicine has continued actively throughout the millennia. This has to do with the fact that it developed into a self-sustaining, functionally complete system during the middle ages and stands in sharp contrast to Western society, whose medical system did not flourish to the same level and has been overlaid by scientific thinking since the Enlightenment. As a result, Western societies today proscribe this kind of religious medicine in general and traditional Chinese possession medicine in particular, placing it outside the mainstream and into the category of unconventional or alternative treatment.

Unlike either, Daoist rituals construct a channel of communication between humanity and the gods, so that the human sufferer receives not so much a treatment from a spirit-medium but directly from an exalted and authoritative deity. The efficacy of the treatment is contingent not only on the spirit-medium's performance, however, but equally on the faith of the believer to receive the power of the Daoist gods. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the layperson to cultivate both faith and an attitude of reverence in their heart. Indeed, much research has shown that prayer, worship, and other religious behavior alone can provide some degree of healing. These phenomena are of particular utility for chronic diseases, where Western medicine has had little to offer in the way of remedies: hence the large numbers of suffering individuals who have turned to religion and/or alternative medicine for healing.

The two cases present here combine two alternative forms of medical treatment: religious healing and traditional Chinese medicine. Both typically involve an authoritarian figure, whose reputation adds credibility to their healing methods. Indeed, the entire possession ritual depends on the personage who is both a doctor and a medium. Although the Daoist shamans in our cases are not formally trained in traditional Chinese

medicine, despite their ignorance, upon being possessed by the Daoist deity, they are perfectly fit to question, diagnose, and prescribe as well as any doctor.

The medium's instantaneous acquisition of medical techniques demonstrates that he must be possessed by the deity, however, it is by no means the only indicator. Equally demonstrative throughout the ritual is the singing of incantations, the playing of ceremonial music, and—perhaps most notably—the specialized body language: closing the eyes, shaking the head, shivering, and ordering heaven to pause and wait.

The laity in attendance is familiar with this body language, taking it as a sign that the deity has descended into the spirit medium's body. In this way, the medium becomes a virtual deity, whose acts of prescribing medicine or chanting incantations are divine feats of the god. His behavior is a sign that verifies the believer's faith and also an evocation of a self-healing power that emanates from the now-invigorated faith of the believer (see Zhang 1996).

The majority of patients who seek healing through Daoist rituals such as these are already believers in the power of religious healing and traditional Chinese medicine. The power of these two authoritarian-based systems in the patient's faith serves to bolster the efficacy of the prescribed methods or medicines prescription. Beyond the curative power of traditional Chinese medicine itself, internalized affirmative psychological suggestions, as documented in research of religious healing, can have strong curative potential, not unlike the placebo effect. A synergistic enhancement takes place: belief in the Daoist deity is a positive psychological suggestion that reinforces trust in the power of the traditional medicines the deity prescribes via the medium.

The psychological nature of this self-curative power, however, is not merely a mental or imaginary feat effective only for mental conditions, as the majority of patients suffer from physical maladies. Many have chronic ailments or physical diseases that are incurable by Western medicine. The patients range from ardent, long-term believers to those who are just beginning to explore this venue. A significant number find the healing they search. These cases of successful healing have continued to uphold Daoist spirit-medium healing in the modern era of Western medicine.

Ritual Healing at Xingxin

A different form of religious medicine occurs in the performance of specific rituals for healing. A representative example is commonly held at the Xingxin Altar 醒心壇, officially called the Awakening Heart-Mind Altar of the Pure and Brilliant Dao of Mount Xi of the Mount Lü Method Sect 閩山法派西山淨明道醒心壇. Its head priest is ritual master Ke Tianjiang 柯天降, a famous Black Head 黑頭 Daoist of the Tainan area, often simply called Master Jiang. The altar dominantly offers rites to the Per-



fected Lord Xu Xun 許遜真君, the Three Lady Consorts (Sannai furen 三奶夫人), and the Grand Wardens Wang and Yang (Wangyang er taibao 王楊二太保).

A branch of this sanctuary is the Wuxin Altar 悟心壇 of the Shengde Hall 聖德堂 in Beigang 北港. Founded 1965, it centers on the Superior Thearch of the Arcane Heavens of the North Culmen (Beiji xuantian shangdi 北極玄天上帝). In its early stages, it was run by Master Jiang together with the two senior officers Bi Nengshi 碧能師 and Wang Huoshu 王火樹. Every year, on the

18th day of the 1st lunar month, they performed the Crossing the Boundaries rites (*Zaoqiao guoxian* 造橋過限).

Lacking both ordained masters and general manpower, they invited support from the Xingxin Altar as well as from the Xiuxin Altar 修心壇 in Banqiao 板橋. Master Jiang presided, while the priests from Banqiao took charge of the ritual.

Over the years, this pattern has continued. I attended the ritual on the morning of March 3, 2010. It centered on the establishment of a spirit substitute (*tishen* 替身) for the patient to help him pass through a number of calamities. These included potentially hazardous constellations, such

as the Year Star (Taisui 太歲) and the Heavenly Dog (Tiangou 天狗), as well as the Three Passes of the White Tiger (Baihu sanguan 白虎三關). He would also be able to avoid the ills of the Five Demons and Seven Killers (*Wugui Qiji* 五鬼七煞), while having the divine masters of his life expectancy and good fortune in the Palace of the Twelve Terrestrial Branch (*Shier shengxiao gong* 十二生肖宮) increase his longevity and primal spirit illumination.

More specifically the rites began with the erection of an altar. Seven lamps of the Dipper Mother (*Doumu* 斗姆), with floral coverings and specific talismans, were placed on it, followed by divine images of the Five Worthies, including also Linfu Qiansui 林府千歲, the primary deity of the Shengde Hall. To his left was the Superior Thearch of the Arcane Heavens; to his right, the Perfected Lord Xu Xun—both appearing in newly carved divine images offered by the participants. Further on the left, was General White Horse (Baima jiangjun 白馬將軍); on the outer right, Consort Chen Jinggu 陳靖姑.

The front of the altar is the Bridge of Peace (Pingan qiao 平安橋). Ideally, it should face the temple while at the same time border the ritual area. On either side, further spirit altars are to be set up, so that more divinities can be worshipped. The far end of the bridge ends in a border, where the command flags of the Five Encampments (*wuying lingqi* 五營令旗) are, each with the taboo-name of the commander of its respective encampment. Also on the border are the talismanic orders of Threefold Dao: Guanyin (yellow), the Mysterious Female of the Nine Heavens (green), and the Three Lady Consorts (red).

The distal terminus of the bridge bears talismans of divine generals. In the rear, talismans of the gods of the soil are placed. On the bridge itself, characters stitched on purple cloth form the talisman of Bodhi-sattva Guanyin. Below this is the image of the seven stars, represented by strategically placed coins. Both sides of the bridge feature willow branches, rice, and copper coins that are to be used during the ritual. The willow branches drive off demons and killer spirits as well as open up the road. The rice serves as structural material, while the coins are for railings and planking. On the bridge's pillars are the twelve zodiac animals and images of divinities and their taboo-names.

In front of the bridge hangs the image of Consort Chen Jinggu, right behind the commanders of the Five Encampments, with images their commanders and flags. Before the ritual, the altar must be cleansed and the divinities are formally invited. A small group of functionaries gathers around to first invite the divinities and then faces the Peace Pass. Master Jiang sprinkles a mixture of salt and rice on the bridge to purify it and its borders. He then grasps the Sword of the Seven Stars, dips it in both the pure water and salt-and-rice mixture, and calls out to begin the ritual. Another functionary uses a whip to demarcate the borders, which protect the bridge, moving toward the Eastern Encampment. A Daoist takes a black flag and waves it to signify the transfer of troops to guard the bridge. Finally, the Master sprinkles coins and rice, thereby declaring the bridge officially open and thus concluding this part of the ceremony.

Next, a master takes a ritual whip and walks on to the bridge, demarcating its borders. He slaps the bridge with a willow branch, then does the same at the borders of the ritual area, to indicate their purification. After this, the chief master presents three offerings of paper money, dedicated respectively to the Year Star, the White Tiger, and the Yin-Yang Bridge, while the group of functionaries continues to chant. After this, he reports that the foundation is complete; and three more bundles of paper money are offered. The priests next invite various protective deities to eliminate all possibility of disaster, resolve malicious influences, increase good fortune and longevity, and preserve peace. All the while, the functionaries continue their chanting.

Once the establishment of the bridge (*zaoqiao* 造橋) is complete, participants bring their substitutes forward to the altar, complete with astrological birth information and appropriate clothing. They each take three sticks of incense from the hands of the main priest. Their astrological information is read aloud, and the substitute ritually takes on all disasters and evils associated with that particular birth data. This allows the participant to "go beyond the boundaries" (*guoxian* 過限). Once this is done, the substitutes are brought together and discarded along with the evils they have absorbed.

Various masters assist participants to step before the altar. After the ritual, the participants wait together to go across the bridge. Once the general chanting is finished, the chief master chants incantations to the

twelve zodiac animals, followed by chants for Guanyin. The assisting masters, bearing whips and black flags, then lead the participants across the bridge. Each must cross the bridge three times, to symbolizes the crossing of the Year Star, the White Tiger, and the Heavenly Dog. Masters and functionaries cross after the laity. Assisting masters return to the divine table, still chanting to the twelve zodiac animals. This completes the entire rite.



Fig. 5. Ritual masters in action.

At this time nearby participants cross the bridge one by one; those who have just undergone the ritual now offer incense and throw their paper substitutes into the trash to be burned. Daoists affix seals to the collars or bodies of the participants (or whip their clothing) to remove disasters and killing influences. The functionaries finish their chanting, then purify the ritual area once more. At this point they leave, allowing people to walk beneath the bridge, in order to seek auspicious peace. This marks the completion of the entire ritual sequence.

Only one thing remains to be done: the celestial soldiers have to be rewarded. They receive a bonus for their excellent service during the demarcation and purification of the ritual area. To do so, the functionaries face the divine altar, invite the divinities, and offer them rewards.

Ritual Healing at Heyi

Another healing ritual typically occurs at the Heyi Hall 和意堂 in Tainan, famous as the headquarters of a key local Daoist group point of origin, currently under the leadership of Master Wang Zhengyu 王正裕.



Fig. 6. Master Wang Zhengyu (center) masters during the ritual.

Its main recipient of sacrifice is the Transcendent Master of the Seven Ancestrals (Qizu xianshi 七祖仙師), whose hagiography is inscribed in a tablet on site. Other deities in the complex include the field marshals and commandants of the Five Encampments: here people perform the rites of "alleviating terror," "reversal of fortune," and "offering and resolution."

Participants in the former may come of their own volition, be brought by third parties, or accompanied by family and friends. They typically come because something is terribly wrong in their lives: physical ailments, slow business, traffic accidents, personal disputes, marriage troubles, inability to conceive, traffic police hassles, construction issues, and more. A key technique utilizes a protective talisman: priests first write out a purifying talisman, then burn it to make it into talisman water. They place three drops of the water upon the participant's lips and apply the remaining amount in a poultice on the chest and back.

The rite begins with the Daoist master asking the participant what is wrong. He needs to establish the cause of the malady, ailment, or misfortune. In case of a physical ailment, he asks which part of the body has a problem. Next, he invites the spirits to descend. If the issue is physical, his key deities are medical in nature, including two of the Great Thearchs Defender of Life (Baosheng dadi 保生大帝) or Divine Farmer (Shennong dadi 神農大帝). For children, he may ask the Consort Mother (Furen ma 夫人媽). For cases of misfortune, he may summon the Astral Lords of the Southern Dipper or the Northern Dipper.

Once these deities are present, the Daoist master then invites the twelve spirit lords to come and perform the ritual. To do so, he performs rites to suppress and receive killing forces, chanting their respective incantations while throwing rice. Next, he stabilizes the patient's primordial spirit and receives the three spirit and seven material souls, then establishes the twelve primordial spirit palaces and sends the envoys of the five inner organs and six viscera to occupy their posts. After this follows a cleansing—he sprinkles talisman water on the patient's body. The phase of "crossing the fire" (*guohuo* 過火) is next. The master burns old-style golden spirit paper (*jingu zhi* 金古紙) and makes the patient walk over its glowing ashes. This symbolizes that old fortune is gone and new fortune has arrived. The ailment or terror in the person's life is thereby alleviated.

These rites are very popular locally. On any given day, about thirty people participate in it, about half of them children. Many people come back time and time again; certain regulars undertake the rite once every month.

The ceremony of "offering and resolution," too, follows a set procedure. To begin, the participant must supply his birth data in form of the eight cyclical characters. Next, an astrologer is consulted on his knowledge of the associated zodiac animals as well as auspicious days and times to ask for good fortune, when to make offerings to the stars, when to venerate the Dipper, and how to supplement one's luck. The ritual is held in a different location depending on the situation at hand: the altar in the Heyi Hall or the altar in the Jade Emperor's Temple.

As day breaks, the ceremony proper begins with setting up the altar and a ritual area around it. This takes an entire day. In the morning,

functionaries sound the drums, issue the proclamations, and invite the divinities. The chief Daoist chants the *Bei/Nandou jing* 北/南斗經 (Scriptures of the Northern and Southern Dippers). He pays homage to the Dipper and sets light to its seven stars. In the afternoon, he chants the *Sanguan jing* 三官經 (Scripture of the Three Officials) to symbolize the bestowal of good fortune, forgiveness of transgressions, and resolution of all evil influences. Next, he performs the astral sacrifice. Here the Year Star, White Tiger, Heavenly Dog, Five Demons, Illness Talismans, and Official Talismans all make their appearance.

As evening falls, the astral sacrifice concludes and the main rite begins. The Daoist prepares sacrificial animals, goods, and gold paper—emblematic offerings of wealth. At this point, all participants must cross the Seven Stars Bridge (Qixing qiao 七星橋) or stand on the Lotus Platform (Lianhua tai 蓮花台). Acolytes take paper effigies of evil astral spirits and gold paper and toss them away or cast them into water. Next, they present gold and silver ingots made from paper by placing them on in Pavilion of Primordial Spirit (Yuanshen ting 元神亭). This represents a change in fortune for everyone undergoing the ritual. From here, the ritual master calms the primordial spirit, allowing it to receive the three spirit and seven material souls. He further pacifies the twelve spirits and sends the envoys of the five inner organs and six viscera to their posts. Lastly, he gives thanks to all the spirits at the altar.

The rites take one entire day to complete and involves ten Daoist masters together with large amounts of offerings and paper goods. If the participants are infants, the rite only takes two hours and three masters. However, the rite does not occur as frequently as before: in the past, Master Wang's father, Jin Chan 金禪, performed it twice every week.

Usually, when Daoists set up the altar for this rite, they also hang a Field of Dao (*daochang* 道場) image. To cross the Seven Stars Bridge, they set up images of the Palace of the Three Realms (Sanjie gong 三界宮) as well as of the Southern and Northern Dippers. In the past, there were two image-makers serving Heyi Hall: Lao Wan 老萬 and Ah Tai 阿泰, both from An'nan 安南. Today there is only one, Chen Yongzhi 陳勇志.

Another common rite in this hall is "cut the snake" (*zhanpi she* 斬皮蛇), which is specifically intended to counter *herpes zoster* infections, or "shingles." The rites closely follow the rites for "alleviating terror," with

the sword of the Seven Stars being used to cut the snake while officiants chant: "The great snake enters the mountain, the small snake retreats to its source." This is followed by purification.

Another alternative rite for physical ailments is Venerating the Dipper (*baidou* 拜斗), used exclusively for individuals. Its protocol is much like that of the rites for "alleviating terror." It, too, takes one full day to accomplish. The main difference is that the key scripture is the *Wudou jing* 五斗經 (Scripture of the Five Dippers), whose purpose is to extend longevity and resolve problems with one's fortune.

A more communal version of the same rite is "reversal of fortune." It impacts the entire family, and members participate jointly. The most public ritual of all, however, is "crossing the bridge of the Seven Stars," open to anyone and benefiting all. It is not for either an individual or a particular family. Popular during temple festivals, it causes improvement in the life and fortunes of all participants in the temple area.

For the rites of "crossing the bridge of the Seven Stars," one must first set up an altar with the following spirits. In the center should be the Celestial Worthy Pan Gu (Pan Gu tianzun 盤古天尊); to his right, the Celestial Worthy Ten Thousands Fa (Wanfa tianzun 萬法天尊) and the Ancestral Master of Pu'an (Pu'an zushi 普庵祖師); to his left, the Celestial Worthy Miaodao (Miaodao tianzun 妙道天尊) and the Ancestral Master of Mount Lu (Lushan zushi 閻山祖師).

To begin the rites, the officiants first purify the five directions, then they invite the spirits. At this time, they must engage the Official Generals of the Five Directions, the Astral Lords of the Five Dippers, and the Thirty-Six Official Generals (*sanshiliu guangjiang* 三十六官將). Following this, they make offerings to the killing forces, including those of the five directions plus the year and the month. They also honor the 36 celestial stars of the Dipper and the 72 terrestrials killing forces. After this, they escort the killing forces to leave.

Next, the officiants undertake a cast of the cups, read aloud from commentary texts, and offer libations of liquor. They open the roads and passes, set the bridge, and place talismans for purification, suppression of killing forces, and pacification on it. The bridge bears the twelve zodiac animals and images of the four sages. Beneath are sacrificial animals,

some alive and some cooked. After this, the participants are invited to cross the bridge.



Fig. 7. People cross the Dragon Bridge

Masters chant the incantations of the twelve zodiac animals and the names of the celestial officials of that day. At one end of the bridge there is a Peace Wall (ping'an cheng 平安城), where a ritual master waits to lead the participants off. Two ritual masters on the left and right chant appropriate incantations to dispel disaster and evil influences from the participants. After this, they set fire to paper substitutes along with gold and silver paper, symbolizing the consumption and departure of disaster and evil influences. Eventually the master escorts the killing forces away, sprinkles salt and rice, and performs ablutions with talisman water. The last step is the giving of thanks at the altar and the rewarding of the spirit soldiers that guard the ritual area during the ceremony.

Over the last ten years, the Heyi Hall has performed very few such rites, focusing on other ceremonies, such as its annual "crossing dragon tiger roar" to celebrate the birthday of Guanyin in Luzhu 路竹. I participated in them as held at the Guanyin Pavilion in Yijia 一甲 township of Luzhu on March 23, 2011. The rites are very close to that of crossing

boundaries, except that the front of the Guanyin Pavilion has a pool of water with standing images of a dragon and tiger. The dragon's body is made into a bridge. The ritual took place here.

The rites begin around 7:30 am with a rite of "sacrifice talisman." At 8:00, the spirits are invited. For the ceremonial dragon and tiger roars, ritual masters paste talismans onto the head and tail ends of the dragon bridge: for suppressing killing forces and reuniting souls on both, one for pacification on the head only.



Fig. 8. The ritual of "offering and resolution."

After this, the local committee chair reads a speech. At 9:00, the bridge crossing begins. The child medium of Guanyin Pavilion leads the chair and committee members, followed by the Daoist laity. All walk single-file through the dragon-body bridge, into the dragon's mouth, through its body, and out through its tail. Five ritual masters wait at the dragon's tail. As each participant comes by, they perform the ritual of "offering and resolution" (*jijie* 祭解), which goes on until about 6:00 pm.

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Ritual Structure

The core of all these rites is "offering and resolution." In the lesser liturgy of the Heyi Hall, this is analogous to "reuniting souls," both working with the release of knots, as studied by Xu Liling and Zhang Xun (see Xu 1997; 1999; 2003).

The astrological birth information of a person represents his or her destiny. If this destiny crosses paths with baleful stars or killing forces, it produces phenomena related to transgression and death, leading to illness. The rites serve to remove these phenomena of transgression and killing forces and thus alleviate ailments. As the ritual masters use sacrificial offerings and golden paper, they dispel killing forces and eliminate disease.

The bridge crossing symbolizes going beyond the jurisdiction and power of the killing forces, notably through the passes of the Year Star, White Tiger, and Heavenly Dog. The central moment of the rites occurs when the ritual master takes the substitute from the hands of the layperson and, after having recited incantations, turns him toward the small paper image of a human being, the "substitute body," and exhales upon it. This represents the transfer of the participant's diseased *qi* into the substitute. The incantations, containing specific information on gender and astrological birth data, cause the substitute to replace the participant. Along with the substitute, the functionary bears a note of money to "supplement good fortune." When the diseased *qi* is transferred to the substitute, it is burned along with the money, symbolizing the elimination of all killing and diseased *qi*.

This medical rite has several layers. First, in the discourses of explaining and treating illness, lay participants and ritual masters alike use the traditional Chinese astrological system. A valuable cultural worldview, it weaves together spiritual killing forces and baleful stars as well as any ongoing illness with the 36 stars of the Dipper, 12 terrestrial killing forces, and other elements of the sexagenary cycle. Human destiny and the cosmos themselves connect closely in that both can encounter related negative influences. Therefore, curing illness closely relates to transforming overflowing or transgressing forces. The transgressions of either the individual or his ancestors can have a lasting effect, accumulating to the point of manifesting as disease. This process becomes a focus for discussions of pathology and medical practice.

Second, the participants undergoing the rites are subject to a number of semiotic systems. They perceive themselves crossing several liminal stages and areas, e.g., when crossing the passes of the Year Star, the White Tiger, and the Heavenly Dog. Finally, in consigning their negativity to the substitutes destined for immolation, they achieve a positive psychological shift or liberation.

The above cases represent collective healing rituals put on by a religious organization doing “small ritual” (xiaofa 小法); they differ significantly from the spirit medium cases analyzed earlier. To understand how the system conceives pathology and its healing, we have to understand it not only in the context of the semiotic and linguistic systems of the ritual, but also in the greater context of Chinese culture. Each pathology cured by the ritual has definite models of symptomatology, pathogenesis, and treatment. As these models build on a cultural value system, the pathologies are essentially cultural in nature. Through this context, we can begin to understand just how these rituals are able to achieve curative power.

It is essential to realize that the ritual is a semiotic system, based in turn on the core value system of Chinese culture. From the interior decoration of the ritual space through its chronology and protocol to the actual physical performance by priests and participants, all elements receive approval from, and establish themselves in accordance with, the norms of the cultural value system. The rite of “crossing the boundaries” brings this into sharp relief.

Above the altar stands a lantern to the Dipper Mother (Doumu 斗姆), the supreme female deity of Chinese folk religion and central figure

in Daoism. Next to the lantern are a majestic canopy and a figure of the deity. Five Daoist statues are consecrated to the altar. Behind is the black command flag of the Dark Warrior (Xuantian shangdi 玄天上帝), representative of the arcane heavens of the North Culmen; in front is the sword of the Seven Stars, representing the stars of the Dipper as controlled by the Dipper Mother. Next to it are further: the whip of the Law (*fasuo* 法索), ancient paper (*guzhi* 古紙) a vessel of holy water (*jingshui yu* 淨水盂), a container for offerings of salt and rice (*yanmi yu* 鹽米盂), as well as several ritual instruments.

These ritual instruments are both the source and intermediary of the deity's spiritual power, as much as the Bridge of Peace, which connects earth with the heavenly realms. The official edict hanging on the bridge states, "Bodhisattva Guanyin follows the cries of distress to rescue people from hardship, rid the land of calamity, and reverse misfortune," demonstrating her function as a goddess of salvation. By the same token, the sword of the Seven Stars symbolizes relief during child birth through the intercession of the Dipper Mother, while the willow brush used to sprinkle holy water represents the expelling of evil.

Finally, holding up the bridge is a pillar with the entire Chinese zodiac, including the name and year of each god: by extension, this encompasses every human being ever born. The full array of religious elements, derived from Buddhism, Daoism, and folk culture, constitutes a culturally integrated, semiotic system of pathology and medicine—based on the premise that the gods and their power can expel evil from one's life.

Observing the ritual of "crossing the bridge" also provides insights into the internal logic of the ceremony. Its various visual features, particular the replication of the Chinese zodiac, reveal the astrological system as its foundation. The zodiac's placement as a main pillar shows that the ceremony is literally built upon astrology.

According to this system, moreover, everyone's destiny rests with the astrological birth sign, which traverses the entire astrological system in the course of a year. This inevitably includes encounters with malevolent and conflicting spirit entities, notably a group of 108 demonic overlords—36 celestial powers (*tiangang* 天罡) and 72 earthly fiends (*disha* 地煞). In addition, there are also sixty martial guardians of earth who rotate their duties annually, plus various groups of baleful stars, demons, and evil spirits. These conflicts of an astrological nature occur on the spiritual plane and from there manifest as physical pathology, to be resolved by Daoist rituals. However, they are not the only cause of physical illness. A

Daoists' own sins and those of his or her ancestors also lead to pathology and antagonism with the gods, similarly requiring Daoist rituals for resolution. Thus, a uniquely Chinese cultural system of pathology in combination with a complimentary system of medicine or treatment lies at the root of the ritual.

Ritual in general is a system offering society a way to unite the masses through common experience. The two cases described here are both obligatory services the temple provides to the public. Many participants are lay Daoist followers, while others are Daoist disciples, making the ceremony a shared communal event. It is incumbent upon the temple to provide the participants with an expert to perform the rituals. Because the temple provides everything free of charge and is open to all, the ceremony has a deeply communal feeling. Its goal is to take the negative energy of the malevolent spirits in conflict with the participant's astral sign and redirect it into a paper proxy substitute. It is thus obligatory to appease a long list of spirits, including but not limited to the martial guardians of the year, the baleful stars, the five demons of pestilence and plague, and the seven evils. Only after resolving the conflict may the god of the participant's astral sign bless him and add years to his life, renewing the honor of his soul.

Unlike the rather passive ritual participant, the Daoist priest charged with performing the ritual plays an active role. Still, he is quite as much bound by Chinese culture and must perform both diagnosis and treatment in accordance with the protocol and symbols of the semiotic system. For example, he must alternatively step according to the choreography of "pacing the net" (*bugang* 步罡), blow the ritual horn, and crack the whip of the Law. All these form necessary parts of the curative mechanism. He also reads incantations and burns gold and silver paper, representing calamity and misfortune. Casting aside the ashes of evil, he sprinkles a mixture of holy salt and rice as well as, separately, holy water to purify the altar for its ultimate purpose. Only after this purification can he entreat the god to create a bridge between heaven and earth for the participant to receive divine healing. Once the bridge is established, the participant crosses it and sheds the evil enveloping his life.

Although the number of elements in Daoist ritual is legion, their common purpose is to bridge the divide between heaven and earth, the spiritual and the physical. Ritual arranges them into a unified system, made up in equal parts of folk religion and medicine. Through its protocol and procedure, symbolizing key components of Chinese cosmology, it eliminates all sorts of maladies that constitute the "cultural syndrome"

the participant may face. Doing so, the lay participant, the average man or woman of Chinese society, may move forward with his life unimpeded by illness and obstruction.

Conclusion

Since the Qing dynasty, Taiwanese medicine has developed various parallel yet interrelated systems. The *Taiwansheng tongzhi* 台灣省通志 (Comprehensive Record of Taiwan Province) records examples of Taiwanese, religious, and traditional medicine. Western medicine arrived under the Japanese occupation (1895-1945), but traditional systems continued throughout. After the war, the nationalist government set up a professional school and certification system for traditional medicine. As a result, people in Taiwan today see both traditional and Western medicine as standard, valid systems. In contrast, they see folk and religious medicine as alternative systems, simply because they are not subject to government regulation. Hovering on the edges of the law, these forms of medicine are of lower value, yet they have a strong hold on the people and deserve an honest and deep investigation.

Religious medicine, moreover, is not a single, unified entity but, as the cases presented here show, involve a number of activities that spill over into the domains of folk and traditional medicine. Classifying these with academic categories does not do full justice to their reality. Mutual interpenetration between folk, religious, and traditional medicine is common—quite naturally so since they share a common cosmological worldview and cultural value system.

Within religious medicine, moreover, scholars distinguish possession from ritual medicine. More specifically, possession medicine forms part of divinatory practices, since it features an entranced medium and possessing spirit engaged in dialogue. Via the medium the spirit inquires about the patients illness and situation, holds an oral medical exam, figures out how to improve the his condition, and issues pharmaceuticals and talismans. The medical system at play here combines belief in spiritual forces with the pathological system of traditional medicine. Participants believe in the spirits when they ask them for a diagnosis and take the prescription given. This spiritual system supplements the partici-

pants' physiological understanding of the workings of medicine, activating their holistic mind-body-spirit approach to healing.

Ritual medicine, on the other hand, employs symbolic systems to actualize healing. It links traditional notions of the cosmos, notably the stars, with those of the body. Here, when there is a problem with the body, such as disease, practitioners work with a link to astrologically determined destiny, specific forms of negative *qi*, and karmic conditions belonging to each individual being. The ritual process symbolizes the eradication or resolution of karma and *qi*, working through the transfer of bad fortune to a substitute, duly cast away or burned, opening new room for good fortune: this eradicates the illness and causes healing.

In either form, ritual medicine is a semiotic system. According to medical anthropology, how and why we fall ill depends closely on the structure of our dominant culture. In other words, how the individual understands illness, determines and describes his symptoms—even which medical system he chooses for treatment—are all bound to his inherent worldview and lived cultural patterns. Ritual medicine is a cultural practice of healing, embedded in layers of symbolic systems, which offers renewal to the patient on the emotional and spiritual plane, which in turn causes physical and psychological alleviation.

A medical system's effectiveness in healing closely relates to its system of discourse. This means that the system of religious medicine rests in a discourse relative to the value system and worldview of Chinese culture. It is best appreciated in the context of local social culture—including individual experience, social order, and history—rather than in that of healing efficacy. Possession and ritual medicine are both based on religious culture, giving the patient a number of choices in the medical marketplace. In spite of the global shift toward Western medicine in modern social culture, religious medicine continues to hold an important place in the hearts and minds of the almost two billion inhabitants of greater China.

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Immortals' Medicine

Daoist Healers and Social Change¹

GEORGES FAVRAUD

This article deals with a Chunyang 纯阳 Daoist transmission between female healers which takes place in the “Transverse Dragon Grottoe-temple” (Heng-longdong 横龙洞) situated in the vicinity of Pingxiang City 萍乡市 in western Jiangxi (near the Hunan border). The female masters of this community specialize in women’s internal alchemy (*nüdan* 女丹). They are regionally famous for their medicine that takes care of and heals children. Based on fieldwork observation and written materials gathered between 2004 and 2014, this article follows the transmission of this therapeutic-based Daoist tradition in the course of the 20th century. Its purpose is to shed light on some intrinsic links between Daoism and healing. It also highlights the way this literary and technical practice allows the internalization of rituals, shifts in roles and status, as well as the building of interpersonal networks between Daoist masters and official. These relationships have been instrumental both in the transmission of Daoism during the Maoist era and also more recently in its recomposition since the 1980s.

¹ I first presented this paper at the 9th International Conference on Daoism, organized by Livia Kohn and Thomas Michael at Boston University in June 2014. It formed part of the panel “Daoist Elder Masters Today,” organized by members of the French ANR SHIFU Program. I would like to thank Adeline Herrou, Wu Nengchang, and David Mozina, who participated in the panel and gave fruitful suggestions for its further elaboration. Marine Carrin, Harald Tambs-Lyche, and Catherine Despeux also provided important advice. It appeared earlier in German, in a slightly shorter version (Favraud 2014a). I appreciate the generosity of the German journal and its editor, Dr. Ute Engelhardt, for permitting the republication here.

Huang Fuming 黄复明 (b. 1970) is a female Daoist master who serves as the abbot of the Henglongdong 横龙洞 (Transverse Dragon Grotto) in the suburb of Pingxiang City 萍乡市 in western Jiangxi province. Women masters here not only specialize in women's alchemy (*nüdan* 女丹),² but are regionally famous for their medicine, focusing on the care and healing of children. Now in her forties, Huang Fuming directs the temple and teaches ritual and medicine to younger disciples. Representing a new generation that came to flourish after the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), she studied Daoism with masters of the Henglongdong but also graduated from the Kundao Academy (*kundao xueyuan* 坤道学院) at the foot of Nanyue 南岳, the Southern Peak, near Changsha. Here she studied standardized rituals, academic knowledge of Daoist history and philosophy, as well as managerial skills for a period of two years (see Yang 2011). Today, with the official and modern version of Chinese medicine (TCM; *zhongyi* 中医) quite well developed, Huang Fuming and other Daoist masters have also begun to open their oral and ritual medical studies to the reading of TCM textbooks.³

Based on fieldwork and the study of written materials gathered between 2004 and 2014, I will describe the current healing practices at the Henglongdong, and then particularly analyze the transmission of their therapeutic Daoist tradition in the 20th century. I hope to shed some light on the connection between Daoism and healing, then highlight how the literary and technical practice of medicine opens to an internalization of ritual, possible shifts in social status, and the building of interpersonal

² Women's alchemy is a late imperial development of physiological or internal alchemy (*neidan* 内丹), a Daoist method of self-cultivation using physical, breathing, and meditative techniques. It has been instrumental in the development of Chinese physiology and medicine, as well as of philosophy and ritual. An important feature of women's alchemy is "beheading the red dragon" (*zhan chilong* 斩赤龙), i.e., ceasing menstruation in order to retain the vital essence of the body (*jing* 精). This essence is then transmuted into vital breathes (*qi* 气) and from there into spirit (*shen* 神). For details, see Despeux 1990; Despeux and Kohn 2003.

³ For the synthesis, westernization, and institutionalization of local medical transmissions into an integrated modern and official TCM, see Hsu 1999; Scheid 2002; Taylor 2005. About its links to the *qigong* movement, see Palmer 2007.

networks between Daoist masters and officials. All these were instrumental in the transmission of Daoism under Mao and in its public reconstitution since the 1980s.

Contemporary Healing Practice

The Henglongdong community is heir to the Daoist lineage of Pure Yang (Chunyang 纯阳) in the Xiang River 湘江 basin. Located between the city of Yueyang 岳阳 and the sacred peak of Nanyue, it centers on the famous immortal Lü Dongbin 吕洞宾, aka Lü Chunyang. Having first arisen in the Song, this regional tradition was revived in the early 20th century by the local hermit and healer Zhou Fuhai 周福海, who received various revelations from ancestral master Lü. Afterwards, Zhou became famous for the efficacy of his ritual healing and trained numerous disciples, who continued his teachings. Soon after he disappeared in the 1930s, he was divinized as an immortal master (*xianshi* 仙师) and is now considered as the ancestral founder (*zushi* 祖师) of the contemporary ritual genealogies (of masters and co-disciples; see Herrou 2013) of several Chunyang communities in the area, among them also the Henglongdong (see Favraud 2014b).

Commonly parents or grandparents bring a young child to the temple to be healed, taking advantage of the low cost of ritual healing and herbal remedies. Once they face the healer, the father usually introduces the case while the mother sits on a chair and holds the child in her lap. They address the Daoist master as "doctor" (*yisheng* 医生). Increased prosperity over the last decade, as well as the spread of the national healthcare system, has reduced the number of emergencies, but other ailments are still commonly treated here. Thus Huang Fuming deals with common coughs, fevers, and stomach-aches, but also at times confronts cases that the city's hospital doctors were unable to cure (Kleinman 1980). In addition, many families bring their children every few months, sometimes coming back from Shanghai or Guangzhou once a year, for routine examinations and follow-up care. This reflects a culture that does not separate health and sickness as drastically as Western

medicine, but works with concepts of child development articulating physiological, divinatory, and ritual dimensions.⁴

Diagnosis is made on the basis of questions about particular symptoms combined with a physiognomonic inspection of the child (see Despeux 2003), rather than the better-known pulse-taking of traditional medicine. Huang Fuming first observes the child's face, looking and touching eyes and forehead, cheeks and chin. Next, she asks the child to lift his shirt and inspects his chest and belly. After this, she moves on to palms, fingers, and wrists, inspecting these sites important for body divination (see Homola 2014) where core points of the acupuncture channels (*jingmai* 经脉) are also located. In addition, she typically checks the skin for swelling and fluid retention; if such appears, she makes sure to drain it to facilitate the circulation and renewal of vital breathes (*qi*). While doing all this, she more discreetly utters ritual incantations (*zhou* 咒) (see Picard 1991) and draws talismans (*fu* 符) on the child hands and forehead with her hands displaying "hand seals" or mudras (*shoujue* 手诀) (see Baptandier 1994; 2015; Mollier 2003).

The Daoist healer often speaks to the child's family about nutrition, digestion, and defecation. This relates to the important role of the digestive system in the medical theory of the five inner organs and six viscera (*wuzang liufu* 五脏六腑) as well as to the continuity between alimentation and medication in traditional healing systems. She strongly emphasizes the noxious effects of ingesting too much cold food, such as watermelon. This connects to the literary classification of food and herbs into hot (*re* 熱) and cold (*han* 寒) (Héritier 1984). Such food avoidances also work with more specifically Daoist methods of "ritual fasting" (*zhai* 齋), one of the prerequisite for the practice of long life and self-cultivation through internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹). Prescriptions based on this often involve vegetarianism and the avoidance of "strong smelling foods" (*huncai* 荤

⁴ As Fang Ling has shown (2002; 2013), ritual medicine, based on exorcistic techniques aiming at curing disease and granting salvation, is common in Daoism (including Zhengyi, Quanzhen, and many other regional traditions). Ritual medicine has been part of official medical practice and training as promulgated by the state ever since the Sui dynasty (581-618). Under the Ming (1368-1544), due to the rationalist influence of so-called Confucian doctors (*ruyi* 儒医), it was excluded from the official curriculum.

菜), i.e., meat and fish, alcohol, as well as the five strong vegetables (garlic, onions, and leeks), as it is also often the case in Buddhist contexts. From the perspective of meditation, all these are considered impure and polluting since they exert too much stimulation on the hot breathes of the body. Since Daoist ritual fasting aims at developing a state of clarity and stillness (*qingjing* 清靜) (see Kohn 2010), such nutrients are considered to obstruct health and long life.

Dietetics of this sort serves as a guideline for herbal medicine, an important branch of Daoist healing at the Henglongdong. The female masters obtain wild herbs by gathering them near the temple and in local mountains, by purchasing them from local herbalists, and by cultivating them in their garden. The temple's pharmacy holds several hundreds of medicinal herbs. Once the healer prescribes an herbal concoction, the patient's family goes to the pharmacy, where another woman master prepares the remedy. She instructs them how to cook and administer it, emphasizing the importance of not using herbs to replace Western drugs. The two kinds of treatment are potentially complementary, but never exchangeable.

Henglongdong healers also produce thin cords of moxa, i.e., *artemisia vulgaris* (*ai* 艾), to burn on the acupuncture points of the children. They name this practice "lighting the lamp's flame" (*dadenghuo* 打灯火), and consider it as a kind of "acupuncture and moxibustion" (*zhenjiu* 針灸), despite the fact that they do not actually practice acupuncture with needles. As a form of moxibustion (*jiufa* 灸法), according to a modern TCM definition, this practice corresponds to "a therapeutic procedure involving ignited material (usually moxa) to apply heat to certain points or areas of the body surface for curing disease through regulation of the function of meridians and *zang-fu* organs" (Xie 2002, 495).

However, to understand it fully, we also have to take into account the Daoist use of lamps, involving a ritual fabrication of fire often employed to structure a ritual space (Schipper 1975). "Lighting the lamp" thus aims at stimulating, both physically (heat) and ritually (lamp), the dynamic structures mapped into the body and the person through acupuncture points and meridians. This approach follows a cosmology that does not separate nature and culture in the way modern science does (Descola 2013). The practice of "lighting the lamp" only appears between

the 10th and 5th lunar months, avoiding the hot season, when additional heat is counter-indicated. The last day they resort to this technique each year is the 5th day of the 5th month, the *duanwu* 端午 festival: the beginning of the summer, the mastery of water (usually through the more masculine dragon-boat races), and the expulsion of plagues and calamities. On that day, Daoists at the Henglondong welcome a crowd of several hundred families.

Daoist Encounters

The story of these healer's community began in 1947, when the female masters Li Tiantai 李天台, from Liling 醴陵 district on the other side of the Hunan border, and the Pingxiang native Peng Yuandeng 彭元澄, called upon their disciples, sponsors, and protectors to raise funds to buy the temple from a declining Buddhist community, to restore it, and to rename it Henglondong Chunyangguan 横龙东纯阳观.⁵

As described in contemporary oral testimonials and documented in her tomb stele, the *Li Tiantai zhenren muting ji* 李天泰真人墓亭记, placed next to the temple and dated to 1996, Li Tiantai was born in 1900 in Liling. In her teenage years, she asked Zhou Fuhai to heal her mother who had been confined to bed for three years. When Zhou arrived at their home, he was struck by a strong "predestined affinity" (*yuanfen* 原分) that allowed him to heal her with his rituals.

This "affinity" indicates a perception or feeling of close connection between two people, possibly because of similarities in their horoscopes (see Herrou 2013, 120-23). Independent of the personal will of the individual, "affinity" creates intimate personal relationships, of a mysterious or obscure (*xuan* 玄) nature. When traditional doctors often use it to explain why some could not be healed while another underwent successful treatment; Daoist masters also take recourse to this notion to explain or

⁵ According to the Pingxiang Gazetteer, this ancient temple developed gradually and has been restored many times over the past 800 years. In the beginning it was just a thatched hut next to a grotto in a verdant valley east of Pingxiang. Under the Ming, it received the formal title of Buddhist temple (*si* 寺) and was thus known as Henglongsì 横龙寺. The buildings extant today go back to the Qing: two huge halls plus monastic living quarters (Huang 1996, 1126-27).

justify their acceptance or refusal of someone as their disciple. This two-fold aspect of the term points to an underlying connection between healing and ritual transmission. Li Tiantai, too, was struck by Zhou's power and elected to follow him as a disciple together with various others, notably Zhou Tianhuang 周天煌, another Liling native (see Favraud 2014b).

Based on oral records and two stele inscriptions—the *Chongxiu Peng Yuandeng zhenren mubei* 重修彭元澄真人墓碑 and the *Mubeiji* 墓碑记, both dated to 2002—Peng Yuandeng was born in 1905 in a medical family from Pingxiang. Beautiful and intelligent, she was a natural vegetarian. When she was eleven years old, her parents wanted to marry her off. However, her “eight characters” (*bazi* 八字), the astrological coordinates describing the year, month, day, and hour of birth, did not match three potential suitors. Her parents became ever more desperate in their attempts to secure an alliance, pushing her so hard that she fell gravely ill. They applied various herbal remedies to her without any effect, and only Zhou Fuhai's disciple, Zhou Tianhuang, finally managed to heal her. Grateful and inspired, she became his disciple and entered the Chunyang ritual genealogy.

Peng Yuandeng being depicted as naturally vegetarian and with a horoscope unfit for marriage, this story underlines the natural spontaneity (*ziran* 自然) of her vocation and her closeness to the “original unity” (*hunyuanyuan* 混元). She went through a period of crisis and rupture, underwent healing, and after having left her family (*chujia* 出家), was resocialized in a Daoist ritual kinship. Her story in many ways is typical of narratives of religious vocation in Daoist monasticism. This, again, underlines a common succession from being ritually healed to entering an apprenticeship process in alchemical and ritual cultivation.

Under the guidance of Zhou Tianhuang and other Daoist masters, Peng Yuandeng began to recite the sacred scriptures (*nianjing* 念经) containing mythical and alchemical knowledge. The practice involves playing music, chanting, and engaging body and breathes to study and activate the texts while establishing clear lines of communication with the divine world during communal rituals. In terms of meditation, the *Mubeiji* notes that she studied the *Huangting jing* 黄庭经 (*Yellow Court Scripture*), an important precursor of inner observation (*neiguan* 内观) and internal alchemy. It works by visualizing and activating ancestral

masters, deities, and pure breaths of Dao in the bodily organs.⁶ Furthermore, she learned how to relate these internal explorations of the self and the body to the study of local medicine under the guidance of various Daoist masters, while actively absorbing literary knowledge from the medical classics.

Internalization of Ritual

When the Daoist healers settled in the Henglongdong in 1947, after decades of social and military unrest, there was neither Western medicine nor a public healthcare system in the Chinese countryside. As Peng Yuan 彭园, the son of Peng Yuandeng's brother who still lives in Pingxiang relates, she fulfilled an important function among the people. With the help of local and sometimes unorthodox remedies, such as cormorant spittle (*luci de koushui* 鸬鹚的口水), she healed high fevers and convulsions (*gaoshao choufeng* 高烧抽风), mumps (*saixianyan* 腮腺炎), NS cyanosis (*fagan* 发紺). Once, according to the tomb stele, she even brought a child back to life after he had been declared dead by the hospital physicians: from the Daoist hagiographic perspective, this is a miraculous resurrection. However, she was most well-known for her ability to help malnourished children, who were numerous at these times of social unrest. For doing so, she lighted moxa candles on various acupuncture points on their inflated bellies, extracted a yellowish liquid from their fingers with sewing needles, and prescribed herbal remedies to complete her treatment.

After the so-called peaceful liberation (*heping jiefang* 和平解放) in 1949, the Communist rulers instituted severe prohibitions on religious activities in Pingxiang.⁷ According to official sources, they ordered the

⁶ See Robinet 1993. The *Huangting jing* is the main source on meditation for contemporary female masters in eastern Hunan. It was revealed by Lady Wei Huacun 魏華存 (252-334), later the ancestral master of women's cults and transmissions, especially around Nanyue Hengshan since the Tang dynasty (618-907). See Robson 2009, 184-212.

⁷ Pingxiang is deeply marked by Communist history. After the defeat of the Autumn Harvest uprising of 1927, the Hunan-Jiangxi Soviet was first created there, nearby where the Long March started a few years later, in 1934.

temple's fields distributed to peasants and forbade all public rituals and devotional activities. Confining the Daoist masters to their living quarters, they made them participate in production work. In addition, they used the temple halls to house an agricultural high-school and a convalescence home for local administrators, notably the staff of the district's Bureau of Commerce (Huang 1996, 1126-27).⁸

Local testimonials, on the other hand, claim that, even when public rituals were prohibited, the Daoist masters still lived in the temple, practicing their basic precepts as well as their breathing and visualization methods in privacy. It is noteworthy that these meditative methods constitute the internalized and invisible side of both Daoist ritual and healing techniques. They involve the ability of the healer to observe the patient's vitality (*jingshen* 精神) and treat the disease in question (see Ro-chat 1988) as well as the capacity of the celebrant to build the inner chamber of stillness (*jing* 静) at the pivotal center of a communal ritual (see Lagerwey 1987).

Peng Yuandeng's tomb inscriptions reflect this fundamental structure underlying and linking Daoist meditation, communal ritual and healing methods. They explain how she could continue to practice Daoism internally despite the prohibitions. When both religion and society were "forcefully controlled" (*e* 扼), she found support with her softness in the Dao of Heaven (*tiandao zhu ruo* 天道助弱). Doing so, she managed to "guard the One and maintain perfection, thereby continually communicating with the spirits" (*shouyi cunzhen, nai neng tongshen* 守一存真乃能通神).⁹ This just show how important the invisible aspects of Daoist practice are and how Daoists can move beyond rigid outside constraints rather than confronting and resisting them.¹⁰ In other words, at the time and despite the prohibitions under Mao, several individuals continued

⁸ For a nation-wide overview of this period of the religious history of China, see Goossaert and Palmer 2011.

⁹ This expression refers to the aim of the Daoist master to build himself up as a microcosm by returning to the undifferentiated origin of life, from where all forms and destinies continually arise.

¹⁰ This approach to life through non-opposition is found in the *Daode jing* as much as in contemporary Daoist-oriented martial arts, such as taiji quan.

to practice their ritual internally while Daoist ritual space (*tan* 坛) retreated from public into the inner life of the masters.¹¹

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the Henglongdong healers still treated numerous sick children on a daily basis, using what they call a “immortals’ medicine” (*xianyi* 仙医). Despite the modernization and the official ban on “superstitious activities” (*mixin* 迷信), Peng’s and Li’s healing skills remained important locally and served the public interest. Their popularity, moreover, explains why the various Communist officials and cadres of the Bureaus of Commerce and Education were willing to coexist with the Daoist masters, sometimes even supporting and protecting their activities from the assaults of more fundamentalist revolutionaries.¹²

Shifts in Social Status

This cooperation, however, did not last, floundering during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). In 1969, the Red Star production brigade (Hongxing dadui 红星大队) in charge of overseeing the construction of a military railway line came to control the temple and transformed it into a warehouse for stocking electrical materials (see Huang 1996). They expelled all masters and disciples and forced them to return to lay life, to living “in the streets” (*jieshang* 街上), as they put it. Even then, from outside of the temples, some of these women managed to continue their Daoist practices and transmission more or less visibly, through shifts in their social status, made possible by their technical mastery of medicine and by their social networks.

Beyond using their medical skills within the family and neighborhood, some of them engaged in a career of “barefoot doctor” (*chijiao yisheng* 赤脚医生), carrying on Daoist medical conceptions under this official title. As the Chinese healthcare system developed, the Ministry of

¹¹ *Tan* basically means “altar,” however, it also designates all the persons, instruments, and spirits involved in a ritual, as well as the sociological networks and geographical territory involved in the cult community—not unlike the Christian term “parish.”

¹² For an account of local officials’ behavior regarding religious activities during that period, see Smith 2006.

Health sponsored a large-scale program to train "indigenous paramedics" in the basics of Western medicine, so that they could dispense emergency treatments in the countryside. Zhang and Unschuld suggest that "rather than herbs and acupuncture, antibiotics and western medicines were prescribed and even simple surgical operations commonly done" (2008). Still, *A Barefoot Doctor's Manual*, published by the Revolutionary Health Committee of Hunan Province (1974), shows that biomedical interventions were often accompanied by TCM acupuncture or herbal treatments, "purified" from ritual aspects.¹³ Fieldwork testimonials also confirm that this campaign allowed many Daoist masters of the martial and healing arts from different parts of the country to continue practicing their skills (Favraud 2011). The data invites a renewed study of the barefoot doctors' campaign, while questioning the deep intention of Mao's health policy regarding the development of Chinese medicine.

Yet, Peng Yuandeng went even further. As her nephew puts it, although "one could hardly avoid censorship in public opinion . . . she was charged [by official doctors] to open a pediatrics unit in the Pingxiang city hospital." Her medical skills, their social usefulness, and her social networks thus allowed Master Peng to develop a hospital unit under the auspices of the Chinese official healthcare system, which strove to institutionalize and standardize Chinese medicine. While the state claims that the overall medical modernization of the country involved getting rid of all "superstitious" concepts and practices—a process David Palmer describes as a "secularization of the body" (2011)—in fact, Peng's situation may have been not all that unusual. This means that Daoist and other local healers played a much greater role in the unfolding of modern Chinese healthcare and society than previously assumed.

Peng's hagiography next describes how she suffered from extensive fatigue due to her unceasing medical work. In 1971, with the Cultural Revolution still in full swing, she fell ill and died. In 1982, after Deng Xiaoping had begun the opening policy of the Four Modernizations, the State reestablished the principle of religious freedom at the national level. This provided a legal foundation for Li Tiantai, her disciples, and their

¹³ The manual teaches both biomedical anatomy and the body from a TCM perspective, and it contains a dedicated chapter on herbal medicine, displaying 400 different herbs. I thank Catherine Despeux for this information.

official patrons to charge the Red Star Brigade several thousand RMB in rent for their temple. However, it took them three more years to reorganize a personal network with local patrons and district administrators strong enough to restore the temple to its rightful owners and reestablish the liturgy.

Evolving officially into a “space of religious activity” (*zongjiao huodong changsuo* 宗教活动场所), the Daoist community since then has lived under the authority of the city’s Department of Religion, and the party’s United Front Division (*tongyi zhanxian bu* 统一战线部). Contemporary official narrative further legitimizes the temple’s existence by explaining that its ancient architecture is part of the Chinese cultural heritage and claims its location in beautiful natural landscape as part of the development of environmental tourism (see Weller 2006). Such a cultural policy aiming at reviving founding myths and cultural history at several levels of the society serves to strengthen the Nation-State’s legitimacy and identity both inside and outside the country (see David 2007).

In practical terms, this means that district officials of the Bureau of Culture patronize or use temple life for political ends, while Daoist masters sometimes base their own public relations on concepts of cultural heritage and relate to the Bureau of Culture more than to that of Religion. The medical skills of the Daoists, besides forming part of the cultural heritage, also serve as another strong point, since they are useful to the local population (Huang 1996). This official recognition of public usefulness in local society greatly helps the Daoist community in their procurement of economic support and political legitimacy, even though some parts of their practice are still labeled “superstitious.”

The Henglongdong being an important center of communal activities, its reopening also serves the local officials in building up their personal “channeling zones,” i.e., to extend and diversify their sphere of activities, wealth, and power, in a process of liberalization and of decentralization (see Chau 2012). This threefold legitimacy of officially sanctioned religion, cultural heritage, and public interest, along with the new ways local officials came to deal with local society, enabled the Daoist community to restart its ritual and healing openly in the 1980s. This still leaves the question to what extent one should speak of a “revival” and a “reinvention” of religious activities. Is it perhaps better to call it a “re-

constitution" of social and religious life in a new context, observable in the public reappearance of communal practices that had been partly lost, partly internalized, and partly diverted (outside what is commonly termed "religion") for several decades?

Healing and Salvation

Li Tiantai died in 1986. Afterwards, her disciple Liu Yangying 刘阳映 (1924-2013), who worked with Peng in the city hospital during the Cultural Revolution, took on the responsibility of the temple's activities and continued to treat children. In 2004, she retired from her healing activities and handed down the direction of the temple and its ritual space to her main disciple Huang Fuming, granting me some interviews in her free time.

In April 1993, Liu Yangying as well as two other Daoist elder doctors from different regions received a patriotic religious award from the National Daoist Association (*Zhongguo daojiao xiehui* 中国道教协会). Distinguished for her dedication to help the people through medicine, this award also states that her medical skills are a way to transmit and to develop Daoism (Ma 2011). It echoes with the discourse of local Daoists referring to Peng's methods as "immortals' medicine." As the tomb stele notes, her practice not only served to heal sick children, but in the same time "to save endangered children by pulling them out as early as possible from the ocean of suffering" (*jiu huan'er zao tuo ku hai* 救患儿早脱苦海). As Huang Fuming notes, healing children is easier and contains much greater promise. The destinies of adults being more determined and harder to change, it is much more "tiresome" (*wuliao* 无聊) to heal them. The master accordingly emphasizes the importance of the principle of "returning to the origin" (*huanyuan* 还元) and of the divinatory techniques aiming at "correcting destiny" (*gaiyun* 改运) in Daoist ritual and healing. The account goes far beyond merely materialistic medical support (see Berthier 1987; Baptandier 1996).

The concept of "salvation" (*jiu* 救) is pivotal in the relation of Daoism and medicine. It appears first in Laozi's *Daode jing* as a "structure of care" in connection with the role of the sage and his effort to prolong his own as well as other people's lives. Laozi's sage care of the people—as

opposed to “rejecting” (*qi* 棄) them—is based on his ability to see and act beyond appearances, by opening his mind to the world in full simplicity and regarding people as “children” (*hai* 孩) (Michael 2015; *Daode jing*, chs. 27, 49, and 52). In the course of history, Laozi’s idea of salvation underwent numerous changes, and their influences on Daoist medicine remains to be systematically studied. In the late Warring States period, it notably developed under the influence of immortality cults and practices, expanded into millenarian and liturgical visions after the 2nd century CE, and grew in conjunction with Buddhist notions, such as compassion (*ci* 慈), especially since the Tang dynasty (618-907) (see Verellen 1992). More recently, it has been imbued with the Christian concept of charity and institutionalized in religious NGOs, e.g., major Chinese religious organizations building hospitals, schools, orphanages, and working with other philanthropic activities (see Laliberté et al. 2011).

To sum up, Daoist medicine as practiced and transmitted in the Henglongdong remains embedded in an ancient “world of knowledge.” This is fundamentally different from modern ideas and practices on many levels. Intellectually it works with the cosmology of the five phases, traditional classification of plants, ancient representations of the body and the individual, as well as a particular understanding of nutrition and ritual purity. In terms of ritual, it utilizes genealogically and orally transmitted visualization, incantations, and talismans. As far as divination goes, it applies horoscopes and calendars, physiognomy, as well as concepts of fate, affinity of destiny, and personal encounters. Cultually, it emphasizes interactions with invisible entities, a process of returning to the origins of vitality, and ideals of the pure simplicity of childhood.

This system of representation and practice activates a Daoist conception of human life that articulates psycho-physical healing and cultivation, transformation of personal and social life trajectories, as well as this-worldly and other-worldly salvation. And, as the case of the Henglongdong medical tradition has made clear, this ancient paradigm still influences the development of contemporary medical practices and the modern Chinese healthcare system. Common statements that laud the capacity of traditional medicine to prevent pathologies and heal apparently complex diseases are accordingly tentative translations that serve to bridge the paradigmatic gap between two fundamentally different

cosmologies. They strive to reconcile the modern separation between the categories of nature and culture (see Descola 2013).

Daoist Strategies of Resistance

Only few of the twenty to thirty female Daoists who lived in the Henglongdong in the early 1950s came back to the temple after religious policy relaxed in the 1980s. Social change in China, from the 1898 reforms aiming at "transforming temples into [modern] schools" (*huimiao banxue* 毁庙办学; see Schipper 2008 [1998]; Goossaert 2006) to the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), caused significant religious devastation, reducing the number of temples and masters, destroying records, statues and ritual instruments, and fundamentally re-categorizing or eliminating ancient knowledge and institutions.

Nevertheless, fieldwork reveals that several aspects of Daoism continued to be practiced and transmitted outside of temples, in organizations not identified as "religious," even during the hard-core Communist era. These form the foundation that allowed the full reconstitution of Daoism in the public space since the 1980s. Following the case of Chunyang—a regional tradition among numerous others, often hidden in the shadows of the larger, officially sanctioned schools of Quanzhen 全真 and Zhengyi 正一—we can move beyond common interpretations in terms of frontal resistance or dissimulation. Three points are essential in this context.

First, Daoist knowledge and organizations survived through internalization of ritual. They had recourse to a "hidden transcript" (Scott 1990), e.g., an ability to dissimulate and elaborate their skills, opinions and strategies in secrecy or privacy. More than that, they also contained a core technical component of Daoist ritual with meaningful links to physiological alchemy, communal liturgy, and healing practices. The internal aspect of Daoist ritual not only structures and empowers the inner life of the masters, but also develops their agency and their ability to produce healthy relations. Ultimately, it is highly useful in dealing with hostile authorities.

Second, the close articulation of technical (i.e., medical) and ritual mastery (referred to as *fashu* 法术 in the Henglongdong) has allowed Daoist masters to maintain several of their roles in a context of strong

prohibition, through shifts in their social status. It shows that their power originates from a non-political source: namely a set of skills based on a worldview for which knowledge of the self and of the world are inseparable. As barefoot doctors or working in State hospitals, Daoists have put their skills into action and continued to transmit their teachings. They also were able to take part in the construction of the Chinese healthcare system, thereby exerting an influence on the building of modern institutions from the bottom up.¹⁴ These facts deeply question the drastic gap politically built by the Communist Party between a patrimonial “old society” (*jiu shehui* 旧社会) and a contemporary “new China” (*Xin Zhongguo* 新中国). Does this “great divide” merit academic credit? Or is it rather the case that Daoist masters continually adapt to, and even participate in, the historical elaborations and changes of Chinese civilization?¹⁵

Third, Daoist communities have long developed strong interpersonal networks with local administrators and the society in general. Indeed, they often play a mediating role between them. Chinese local societies often organize themselves inside temples, taking the form of “cult communities” and inviting ritual masters to coordinate their activities ritually. Daoist masters have thus pivotal roles in such networks of “affinities” and common interests meshed in the neighborhood, which also includes economic and political patrons. As these networks permeate modern hierarchies and institutions, not unlike under the imperial Confucian state, they were instrumental during the prohibitions of the 1950s. In addition, they facilitated and enhanced the masters’ shift in social status during the Cultural Revolution and the communities’ full reconstitution in the public space since the 1980s.

¹⁴ As Wu Nengchang noted at the 2014 Daoist conference, Master Dingling 鼎靈 (1929-2013) of Fujian was able to apply his ritual and martial-exorcistic Daoist skills (referred to here as *gongfu* 功夫) in the context of theater performances that served to implement Communist policies as well as educate and “entertain” the rural population with so-called folkloric, orally transmitted plays and mythological narratives. Such cases invite comparison with the Buryat shamans studied by Caroline Humphreys (1999) as “*bricoleurs* of the Soviet world”.

¹⁵ Fairbank (1986) suggests that, besides deep technological and intellectual changes, the contemporary history of China can be seen as a new dynastic cycle.

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Daoism Not as We Know It

MARNIX WELLS

Abstract

Daoism as a school of thought does not appear until after political unification. Its first definition goes back to the summary by Sima Tan 司馬談, father of grand historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-86 BCE), of the *Liujia* 六家 (Six Schools), i.e., Yinyang, Confucius, Mozi, Law, Logic, and Dao. In his view, Dao 道 (Way) is supreme because it encompasses the best of all the others (*Shiji jjie* [Taipei: Wenhua tushugongsi, 1974] 70, 555). Daoism thus could be seen as eclectic and non-partisan. The question is how and when was it formed?

Central to Daoism, I would argue, is the idea of unity, spiritual as well as geopolitical. Kidder Smith argues Sima Tan personally invented Daoism and other schools himself, which just goes to show the extent of the problem (2003). To solve it we need to re-evaluate Dao's role in the Qin empire, the elephant in the room. It was Qin that shaped the crucial transition from the Warring States to the Han empire—a period still poorly understood.

Inclusive Unity

Zhuangzi 33 (The Under-Heaven) depicts the Hundred Schools as fragments of the Way's integral and primal unity. Conspicuously Laozi and Mozi among others, but no Confucians, are included. Mengzi, rejecting the categorical extremes of Yangzi's autism versus Mozi's altruism, endorsed a Dao of inclusive unity. He refers to the expression "holding to unity" (*zhizhong* 執一), a phrase from early meditation texts *Xinshu* 心術 (Mind Technique) and *Neiye* 內業 (Inner Training) (in *Guanzi* 37, 223 and 49, 270. [Taipei: Shijie Shuju] *Guanzi*, *Shangjunshu*):

Zimo holds to the middle. Holding to the middle is close to it. Yet holding to the middle without expedience is like holding to unity. What I dislike

about “holding to unity” is that it robs the Way. It elevates the one but rejects the hundred. (*Mengzi huiqian* 7A.26)

This illustrates the point that unity is of two kinds, inclusive unity and exclusive unity. Mengzi distances himself from dogmatism and intolerance, even one under the guise of centrism. Xunzi (ca. 250 BCE) comparably attacked rival thinkers as partial or sectarian versions of the totality of the Dao: “Zhuangzi was obsessed by heaven but did not know men.” He further dismissed Lao Dan for having “insight into contraction but not into extension” (*Xunzi jinzhu jinyi* [Taipei: Shangwu, 1984], 17, 343; 21, 430). This is the first mention of the Laozi we know as author of *Daode Jing*, the classic of the “Way and Virtue.”

Thus, like Zhuangzi, these two leading Confucians associate Dao as the Way with an inclusive unity, a non-sectarian vision of whole objective truth. Such a *weltanschauung* is never far from the goal of political unity. This ideal is expounded most fully in the writings on Taiyi 太一 (Grand Unity) by Heguanzi 鶡冠子, the Pheasant Cap Master (tr. Wells 2013, chs. 5, 9, 10).

Centralized political unity came to China with the Qin annexation of the warring states in 221 BCE, followed in 206 by Han. How was it that a school of something called Daoism suddenly appears in the Han dynasty, fully armed as it were like Athene springing from Zeus’s head, without any obvious antecedent? Russell Kirkland in his groundbreaking *Taoism, the Enduring Tradition* elucidates the much ignored role played by Daoism in Chinese history, but omits the contributions of Qin, whose First Emperor was one of the earliest Daoist immortality seekers, but admits as an after-thought “further research on such matters remains to be done” (2004, 77-78, 236n4).

The greatest monument in Chinese literature to the diversity of Warring States thinkers is *Lüshi chungiu* 呂氏春秋 (Mr Lü’s Springs and Autumn Annals; ed. *Sibu beiyao*), published in 239 BCE by pre-imperial Qin. Here we have smorgasbord of ideas across the intellectual spectrum of classic Chinese philosophers arranged by topic. The first half is arranged as an almanac, ingeniously reconciling the clash of competing doctrines through the annual cycle of the seasons. It is a model for a unified society in which every opinion has its place and time.

It pays particular attention to "nourishing life" (*yangsheng* 養生), a health concept traced to the hedonist thinker Yang Zhu 楊朱, critiqued by Mengzi. In this regard, we should note Qin's probable engagement with the above mentioned meditation texts and the compilation of medical classics ascribed to the legendary Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 黃帝) and transmitted to Han.¹

Qin and Daoism

The mausoleum of First Emperor Zheng 正 (259-210 BCE) who ruled first as king of Qin from 247, then as emperor 221-210, has just begun to share its secrets. Its terracotta and bronze sculptures evidence an artistic revolution in realism and individuation on an industrial scale crafted in life-like detail. Twelve monumental statues from melted down weapons were erected at the Qin capital but did not survive beyond Han.

Calendars indicating auspicious and inauspicious dates with appropriate spells and rites have been recovered from the graves of Qin officials. There we find the earliest record of the animal zodiac cycle so basic to Chinese astrology. There is even a tract on the Dao of personal cultivation for magistrates (Wenwu 1990, 167-76, 180-255, 219-20).

In terms of state ritual and worship, the Han merely continued the Qin protocol for a century until in 104 BCE the Martial Emperor (Han Wudi, r. 140-86 BCE) decreed a new era Taichu 太初 (Grand Start), replacing Qin's water emblem with that of fire. "Water's virtue" (*shuide* 水德), adopted as dynastic sign by Qin, had been extolled by Laozi as the

¹ Kirkland 2004, 77-78, 236n4. Acknowledging Qin's *Lüshi chunqiu*, he says the *Xinshu* chapter "may represent Ch'in period reworkings of the *Nei-yeh*." He notes affinity between Legalist Hanfeizi's *Jie Lao* chapter on Laozi and the *Neiye* (2004, 28). On "nourishing life," see also *Zhuangzi* 3 chapter title; 23, 789. *Hanfeizi* 50; *Huainanzi* 13.

paragon of goodness and invincibility.² The water allegory theme continues into early Han, where it is then attributed to Confucius.³

In 140, Han Wudi established Confucianism as state orthodoxy, the official ideology of the Han dynasty and banned the “hundred schools,” then not a term celebrating diversity of thought, but a pejorative for heterodoxy earlier used as such by Confucian Xunzi (21, 425). Ironically, we hear of “Daoism” only after it was banned.

Still, Wudi was active like Qin’s First Emperor in visiting and supporting temples and shrines to a host of deities, and he further established a temple to Taiyi, the god of Grand Unity (*Shiji* 28, 225-26).

Contemporaneously, the dissident historian Sima Qian writing in secret informs us that Qin’s First Emperor had already systematized a hierarchy of “Heaven and Earth, famous mountains, great rivers demons and gods (28, 224). This would necessarily entail an imperially sanctioned priesthood and program of observances. It marks the start of Daoism as a religion organized on a national basis in a unified China.

Sima Qian recorded that the First Emperor became personally obsessed with the cult of immortality and in 212 even proclaimed himself a *zhenren* 真人 (true man), a Daoist immortal (6, 44).⁴ It was in this alchemical quest that he may have unwittingly poisoned himself far from his capital, thereby enabling eunuch Zhao Gao’s usurpation.

There is also a social dimension to Daoism. Laozi had criticized the militarism and oppression of the Warring States. The First Emperor then proclaimed a new unified world order of peace and morality, transcribed by Sima Qian from his sacred mountain inscriptions. Hereditary feudal barons were replaced by meritocratic bureaucracy, albeit under an auto-

² Laozi 8 on water’s goodness; 78 on water’s invincibility. See *Guanzi* 34, “Water and Earth” (*Shuidi*) on water’s virtues and its divinity (*shen* 神). *Shiji* 28, 225 on Qin’s “water virtue.” Qin proclaimed six as their governing number, echoing Heguanzi’s (9, 146) ruling by the “six rules” of music (*liulü* 六律) (9, 146)

³ *Kongzi jiaoyu* (ed. *Sibu beiyao*) cites Confucius on nine virtuous qualities of water (9.6b); and Confucius recalling that Lao Dan told him that the five agents had “gods called the Five Emperors” and that each royal dynasty adopted one in succession (24.1a).

⁴ “Mind Technique” spoke of the “straight man” (*zhiren* 直人) which may be a variant of the orthographically similar “true man,” which could thus be the earliest known usage of the term (*Guanzi* 36, 219).

cratic god emperor, Huangdi 皇帝 (Augustan Emperor), a title created by the First Emperor for himself.

This was a revolutionary development. Kingship had always had a divine sanction but the previous Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties had been ruled by *wang* 王 (kings), not emperors. Such terms were reserved for the pre-dynastic period of myth and legend. Yet it was to that period of prehistory, a time popularly ascribed to the Yellow Emperor and purported founder of Daoism, that the First Emperor evidently chose to reconnect. His chosen title has the same sound.

Qin's First Emperor was posthumously elevated to the Daoist pantheon as Northern Emperor in the underworld.⁵ The north quadrant was identified with water and the color black. Han founder Gaozu (r. 206-195), on learning in 205 BCE that Qin had venerated only White, Green, Yellow and Red Emperors, realized it was for him to make up the fifth as Black Emperor and re-instated the Qin high priests (28, 225). Thus, Han unobtrusively stepped into Qin's shoes.

Laozi's Apotheosis

However great his sins, the First Emperor was a man of big ideas as well as actions. For want of a better designation, we may use the word Daoism to categorize his cosmic vision. In this, Laozi and Pheasant Cap's prophecy of a coming Ninth Augustan, surely played a role. Sima Qian records that in 384 BCE Grand Historian Dan 太史儋 of the royal house of Zhou sensationally reported a prophecy to Duke Xian of Qin on his accession,⁶ "Zhou was anciently to Qin state joined but separated. Hav-

⁵ Tao Hongjing (456-536) in his *Zhenling weiye tu* 真靈位業圖 lists Qin's First Emperor as a god in the underworld of Fengdu on the seventh position on the left, as "Northern God-Emperor, Top Imagem (*Beidi shangxiang* 北帝上相).

⁶ Qin was first recognised as one of the *zhuhou* 諸侯 (barons) in 771 BCE, the seventh year of Duke Xiang (*Shiji* 14, Nianbiao 91). Counting forward five hundred and seventy years brings us to 201 BCE, twenty years after Qin unification. Perhaps the intended total was five hundred and fifty years. There is inconsistency in dates. *Shiji* 5 says 500+77, 28 just 500+17, and 63 has 500+70 years. Qin extinguished Zhou in 255.

ing been separated for five hundred years it will be rejoined. Having been rejoined for seventy years a king hegemon will issue from it" (5, 34).

Sima Qian merely remarks in his biography of Laozi: "some say that Dan was Laozi" (63, 355). True or false, this claim promoted a linkage of Laozi to Qin with a quasi-divine portent. The First Emperor's political agenda required such religious justification.

How did Laozi under the Han come to achieve revered status equal to or higher than Confucius? This process of apotheosis contained two key elements nascent in the late Warring States. First, that Laozi as Lao Dan was the teacher of Confucius as alleged in Zhuangzi and Qin's *Lüshi chunqiu* (2.99b; *Zhuangzi* 14, 516.). Second, that Laozi left the world by migrating west through the state of Qin, as alluded by Zhuangzi,⁷ where he is reputed to have composed the *Daode jing* on the western pass at Hanguguan, near Mount Hua (Wells 2013, 40).

The latter suggests that the elevation of Laozi to supreme status in Daoism was engineered by the state of Qin, known to be anti-Confucian. Laozi's barbs against conventional morality with his philosophy of inconstancy and change can be read as a critique of Confucian conservatism and hypocrisy. Legalist Hanfeizi (ca. 280-233) wrote two commentaries on Laozi, the earliest known, along these lines, likely for presentation to the King Zheng of Qin, the future First Emperor (20 and 21).

Zhuangzi repeatedly satirizes the person of Confucius and his disciples. As we saw, his concluding survey of rival schools in the philosophical landscape, which includes the Yellow Emperor and Lao Dan's Grand Unity while criticizing Mozi, Huizi, and others, completely omits Confucianism. Its mention of Zhuangzi himself obviously distances it from the man in person (*Zhuangzi* 33). Could this epilogue reflect a Qin audience?

Yellow Emperor and Laozi

Traditionally Daoists have honored the legendary Yellow Emperor as their founder. This figure as encountered in Zhuangzi is a mystic who "by unity... attained the lofty heavens" (6, 247), rather than a military

⁷ *Zhuangzi* has, "Lao Dan westward travelled to Qin" (27, 962). See also 3 end: "Lao Dan died. Qin Shi mourned him."

and political leader. He has a point of contact with the god Grand Unity in *Heguanzi* (11, 165) in that both are space travelers in the apparent sense of making shamanic spirit journeys (Kohn 2014, 53, 84, 158-59).

While Laozi became god of the Way, the Yellow Emperor Huangdi progenitor of the hundred clans and culture, became in effect the god of Law whose minister Cangjie was credited with the invention of writing. Pheasant Cap tells us: "Cangjie created law through writing" (Wells 2013, 128). Written law spelled the end for rule by feudal custom. Thus was born Huang-Lao, the Huang-Lao (Yellow-Old) school. It was the fusion of the Way and Law, (*daofa* 道法), with the key tenet of unity. This unity was no mere theoretical abstraction or pious hope.

It meant no less than the unification of the world, the Under Heaven under one supreme ruler. It meant the inauguration of the centralized Chinese empire. Following the example of the legendary Yellow Emperor who subdued the evil "rebel" Chiyou at Zhuolu, this was achieved through battle and law imposed by force of arms. This Huang-Lao or Daofa school remained dominant over the first sixty years of Han rule from BCE 206 after the fall of Qin (Kang and Wei 1976, 18-20; *Shiji* 61).

Following the accession of Han Wudi, the Martial Emperor, Huang-Lao was banned never to return and replaced by Confucianism. This must have been a tactical compromise by the emperor because in his personal sphere he emulated Qin's First Emperor, worshipping at the shrines on the sacred peaks, seeking the elixir of immortality, and sending his armies out to expand the empire. Under his reign, Chinese armies for the first time penetrated westward to Central Asia.

The Han Tomb at Mawangdui

Sima Qian's account of Qin's nefarious book burning has provided a ready explanation for gaps in the narrative of transition between the golden age of philosophers in the Warring States and the succeeding Han. Yet Han was itself responsible for suppression of heterodox writings.

The Mawangdui tomb in 1976 revealed at last was a Yellow Emperor, not as patron saint of immortality seekers, but militant apostle of imperial unification and law. Indeed the very first chapter is entitled *Daofa* 道法 (The Way's Law). This is a school of thought lost for over two thou-

sand years.⁸ In a subsequent chapter, *Chengfa* 成法 (Complete Law), god on high sends down a phoenix to announce the gospel of unification in one word: “Oneness and nothing more” (Wenwu 1980, 72). Here is geopolitical Daoism, boldly enunciated. Whose agenda did it serve?

Unity as a God

Pheasant Cap Master’s family name is unknown, but he is thought a native of the southern state of Chu. If so, this could help explain the overtly religious and lyrical aspects of his book, in particular his focus on Grand Unity as ideal and god (Wells 2013. 10-11, 256-60.).

Taiyi as a deity is celebrated in *Chuci* 楚辭 (Song of the South), translated by David Hawkes as “The Great One” and also prominent in the essay recently excavated *Taiyi shengshui* 太一生水 (Grand Unity Generates Water), both from the contemporaneous state of Chu (Hawkes 1957, 36, 115, 144, 158; Wenwu 1998, 123).

Scarce mention of gods in the philosophical discourses of north China centered on Qi and Lu (Shandong) has led scholars to see a disjunct between “philosophical” Daoism of the classic period and subsequent “religious” Daoism. Essays and dialogues compiled under the name of Pheasant Cap Master can help bridge that gap.

References to directly involved statesmen, places, and dateable events place Pheasant Cap in Zhao (southern Shanxi/Hebei) of about 250 BCE. Zhao was then a leading front-line state facing Qin. His work, unlike that of Laozi, now dated to before 300 BCE, provides precise internal evidence of its context.

Pheasant Cap appears to borrow verses from Laozi 14, although he never names other teachers or writers, in his chapter on the elusive *Ye xing* 夜行 (Night Walker; (3, 96-97). It is unclear whether this is of a metaphorical or supernatural being:⁹

⁸ By mediaeval times, *fa* was used to translate Buddhist *dharma*. *Daofa* then acquired the sense of the “Way’s magic.”

⁹ Their ultimate source is unproven since they do not occur in the only earlier Laozi manuscript to about 300 BCE, found in a teacher’s tomb in 1993 at Guodian (Hubei).

None knows his shape, pictures cannot depict,
 Names cannot raise.
 If forced to explain,
 I say:
 Vague oh!
 Murky oh!

Later (19, 210) he cites a maxim on winning without fighting from Sunzi's *Art of War* (3) again in the context of Night Walker which, as we will see below, adds a martial dimension to these words.

The *Lüshi chunqiu* of 239 BCE paraphrases the same Laozi verse to describe the Way and Grand Unity. The essay under "Mid-Summer on Great Music," a homonym for "Great Joy," says:

Myriad beings' origin was created by Grand Unity,
 transformed by shade and sunlight [yin and yang]. . . .
 The Dao—look and you do not see it,
 listen and you will not hear it.
 It is the shape of no shape. . . .
 It may not be named,
 If forced I call it Grand Unity (5.2.4a-4b)

Lü was premier of Qin and step-father (*zhongfu* 仲父) to Zheng, future First Emperor. It was at the Zhao capital Handan that he met the boy's father held political hostage there, where Zheng was born and lived his first nine years before return to Qin in 250.¹⁰ It was in Zhao that the vision of Grand Unity as an achievable practicality germinated in the work of Pheasant Cap.

Pheasant Cap Master and Mozi

Pheasant Cap uniquely took Grand Unity both as an anthropomorphic god who speaks and as a politico-religious goal. Pheasant Cap's book consists of essays, verses and dialogues centered on the theme of an in-

¹⁰ In 250, they returned to Qin from Zhao on succession to the throne of Zheng's father (250-246). The First Emperor himself had the surname Zhao (*Shiji* 6.39).

clusive unity of humankind and a prophetic blueprint for world unification. He illustrates this concept of mankind's intrinsic unity by the image of a fixed quantity of grain which no matter whether measured out in pecks or bushels is unaffected in its totality (9, 155).

From a *Realpolitik* perspective, he turns to a harsher metaphor. Six predators of different species, like the six rival warring states of the third century BCE, fight over a corpse, like that of the defunct Zhou empire, because the object of their desire is the same:

When tigers and wolves kill a man,
crows and flies from above,
worms and maggots from below,
gather on him.
These six are different species,
yet they they simultaneously converge.
Why?
What they desire is the same.

Paradoxically the thing that divides them is the thing that links them.

Activism and Fate

The problem then was how to bring about the new order. Mozi hoped to do this by converting existing rulers to his moralistic reasoning but without a plan for a new order. Pheasant Cap had a scheme of centralized bureaucracy whose operations would be strictly governed by a system of gradated reporting according to districts and dates in the annual calendar. He called this the "heavenly melody and solar technique" (9, 147). Yet, he harsh penalties prescribed for non-compliance are consistent with legalism.

Its implementation would require a form of divine intervention foretold in the stars hand ordained by the celestial personage of Grand Unity. The idea of *tianming* 天命 (divine mandate) for the Son of Heaven to rule the Under-Heaven was not new in China. Mozi (35, 163-65 [ed. *Mozi jian'gu*]) condemned the idea of *ming* or mandate as fatalism. Pheasant Cap paradoxically upheld it but insisted on its operation through human endeavor and contracts. In this, he seems at odds with

Laozi who reckoned things in the world would right themselves if left alone, as if by Adam Smith's "invisible hand."

Pheasant Cap like Mozi urges a program of *youwei* 有爲 (affirmative action, contrivance). Yet timely action may not be spectacular and so escape notice. This is exemplified by the case of a prescient doctor who cures a disease before its symptoms become obvious (16, 194). Thus, his achievement appears to the public as if he had done nothing.

Laozi himself implies the same: "When success has been achieved, the affair terminated, the hundred clans all call me spontaneous [*ziran* 自然]" (17). In other words, Laozi's *wuwei* 無爲 (non-contrivance) is not inaction but, like that of a good doctor, well-timed intervention that creates little stir and so passes virtually unnoticed.

Pheasant Cap's Sage adapts to the dynamic of timing and the intrinsic power derived from the compliance with individuals' innate desires, the physical realism or actuality of human *qing* 情 (emotional reality) (10, 163). By conforming to popular desire for change the small become great, the weak strong. Conversely, failure to do so will result in ruin.

Pheasant Cap warns a corrupt world of impending danger if reform is not implemented. He condemns militarism but cautions that military preparedness can never be neglected for a single day (7, 123).

Nine Augustans

Pheasant Cap's new order of unity and meritocratic utopia differs from that of Huang-Lao but has some points in common. It would be achieved by the inauguration of a golden age under *Chengjiu* 成鳩 (Complete Ninth). "Complete" here has the added sense of victorious as in the title Cheng Tang 成湯 (Victorious Tang) for the founder of the Shang dynasty. "Ninth" in his name is written with the added bird symbol *jiu* 九 + *niao* 鳥, which also give it the meaning of "dove." The word "nine" itself is a homonym for "long lasting."

Victorious Ninth is the last of a quasi-historical series of Jiu Huang 九皇 (Nine Augustans) or celestial emperors described in the Royal Axe chapter (9). Their cult, associated with the nine stars of the Dipper (two of which being invisible) was explained by 'Confucian' cosmologist Dong Zhongshu in the Han and became prominent in the state Daoism

of the Song dynasty (Wells 2013: 18, 69). It is still current with that of Doumu 斗母 (Dipper Mother) in Southeast Asia's Chinese festivals, as in Penang and Phuket (Cohen 2001, 25-27, 51-52) among others.

There it is celebrated with ecstatic rituals and body piercing by *ji-tong* 乩童 (mediums) following the ninth day of the ninth month. It is believed to have been introduced to Phuket by an operatic troupe from Jiangxi to combat a plague. One legend equates the nine to nine heroes of Ming executed by the Qing. This could help explain possible suppression on mainland China where it has virtually disappeared.

Parallel groupings of nine and similar eschatologies can be found in cultures around the world. India has the nine Jaina saviors and nine past avatars of Vishnu with one Kalki still to come (Doniger 2010, 474). The Mayans have nine lords of the night who guide sun under ground. A Muslim sect looks to the Tenth Imam.

Heaven's timing could be read in the stars. The northern Dipper or Plough constellation appears to revolve around the Pole Star like the hand of a celestial clock. It was believed to point the direction of success with its *xuange* 玄戈 (Dark Halberd) star (5.109). This is detailed on bamboo slat documents from a Qin tomb (Wenwu 1990, 187-88).

Cosmic Dynamics and Grand Peace

Fundamental to Pheasant Cap's thinking is the belief in the inherent unity of creation and its propensity to world union by the propensity of a *dashi* 大勢 (great dynamic). This is the force within the unity of opposites and their *huanliu* 環流 (circular flow). It encompasses a dialectic for positive change and recovery, rather than fatalist resignation or despair (5. 112-13).

The propaganda of the First Emperor's holy mountain steles proclaim his reign a new age of "enlightened law" (*mingfa* 明法), the 'Way's principles' *daoli* 道理, and Grand Peace (*taiping* 太平) (*Shiji* 6.42-44, dated to 219, 218 and 215 BCE resp.). This neologism Grand Peace became a slogan for subsequent Daoist-inspired utopian movements.

The first to use it was Gan Zhongke 干忠可 who at the cost of his life presented an apocalyptic revelation to Emperor Cheng (r. 32-7 BCE) announcing the commencement of a Grand Peace era in place of Han.

His movement gave rise to the first formal Daoist scriptures entitled *Taiping jing* (Grand Peace Classic). This millenarian dream culminated in the massive mid-nineteenth century Taiping rebellion of similar inspiration whose leader claimed Christian divinity.

At the same time as the first Taiping sect, the goddess cult of Xi-wangmu 西王母 Western Queen Mother, reflecting the dominance of the feminine principle in Laozi's classic, ignited peasant rebellion, that helped end Western Han. The mother goddess icon remained a key figure in popular religion and resistance to patriarchal authority (Naquin 1976, 2-3).

Then, Buddhist missionaries began entering the scene from the western regions. The new religion soon gained adherents from both Confucians and Daoists. Buddhas and bodhisattvas with attendant Hindu deities infiltrated the Daoist pantheon and gradually became assimilated with native gods and goddesses. In the north non-Han invaders accelerated the process.

The end of Eastern Han two centuries later in 220 was preceded by comparable insurrections. These ultimately succumbed to military defeat but serendipitously spawned a Daoist "church" under the Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Teachers) hierarchy, independent of secular authority.

Following Han, China underwent almost four centuries of disunion until the Sui, followed quickly by Tang, which established Daoism as state religion, as did the subsequent Song and Ming. The Mongol Yuan and Manchu Qing dynasties favored Tibetan Buddhism. Yet throughout all the Three Religions of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism co-existed for the most part in peace.

Daoism in Dramatic Art and Fiction

Popular religion was propagated through performing arts, musical story telling, drama, and fiction. Acts martial and comic, like the Baixi 百戲 Hundred Entertainments of Han, were already current at the First Emperor of Qin's court whose jester Youzhan's 優旃 jokes "matched the

Great Dao.”¹¹ Zhuangzi’s satires on Confucians could have found a ready audience there. Statuettes of dramatic narrators survive.

By the Tang, miracle tales (*bianwen* 變文) were narrated in a Buddhist context, as at Dunhuang where texts were preserved in a temple cave. Under the Jurchen Jin of twelfth century north China Grand Unity Daoism flourished. Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Truth) Daoism, with its syncretism of the Three Religions, under Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (1148-1227) gained patronage from Jurchen emperors (Kirkland 2004. 108-109). Its message was propagated under Mongol Yuan in operas enacting the adventures of the colorful Eight Immortals of their order often at Daoist temple theatres.¹²

The most comprehensive Daoist narrative is the prose epic *Fengshen Yanyi* 封神演義 (Ordination of the Gods), attributed to Quanzhen master Lu Xixing (ca. 1520-1601; see Liu 1976, 991-93). Here, against the backdrop of the historic war by Zhou close to three thousand years earlier to topple the corrupt Shang dynasty, men and gods on each side do battle with weapons of supernatural powers.

The defeated and fallen warriors of both sexes are given fiefs as gods of the starry firmament to the number of three hundred and sixty-five. Yet it is also a contest between two types of Daoism, *chanjiao* 闡教 (open teaching), which enlists among others both Laozi and Buddha, versus *jiejiao* 截教 (exclusive teaching), i.e., inclusive versus exclusive religion (15.121).¹³ The exclusivists who remain stubbornly loyal to the corrupt Shang represent Orthodox Unity (Zhengyi 正一) Daoism, favored by the founding Ming emperor, against the inclusivists representing Quanzhen who forsake their vow against killing to rebel against a tyrannical emperor.

¹¹ The *Shiji* mentions Qin’s Second Emperor enjoying *juedi paiyou* 陂抵俳優 (wrestling and comic) spectacles at Sweet Springs’ Palace (Ganquan) (126.539; 87.428).

¹² Wells 2006, 59-61; “The Blue Sky Song” on *Qingtian’ge* 青天歌 and Qiu Chuji.

¹³ *Fengshen yanyi* 5.36-37 modifies a poem “Zundao Fu” 尊道賦 on the supremacy of Dao over Confucianism and Buddhism by the Northern Song emperor Renzong (r. 1023-1063) in the (Yuan) *Minghe yuyin* 鳴鶴餘音 (ch. 9).

From the Qing on, syncretic revelation cults such as Xiantian Dao 先天道 (Prior Heaven's Way), which later became Yiguan Dao 一貫道 (United Link Way), gained popularity in Tianjin after the fall of the Qing. Like Quanzhen, it combines elements of the Three Religions. Long banned by the authorities, it was legalized by Taiwan's R.O.C. government in 1987, though not by the P.R.C., and actively proselitizes overseas. I personally encountered it from 1970 among internal martial artists in Taiwan and in Chinese communities at Seoul, and London where I attended services of kowtows to an assorted series of past worthies, with a spirit writing séance and a vegetarian meal.

Conclusion

Daoism, though polytheistic, is inextricably permeated with the idea of unity, realized in doctrine and political reality. Arguably, this emphasis helped turn the subsequent development of Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism in an inclusive direction. Its connection with imperial power, and I argue its genesis from Qin, can be seen throughout history but also in the heavenly hierarchy of its pantheon which mirrored the earthly one. Parallels may be drawn first with Emperor Ashoka and later Kanishka's elevation of Buddhism in India or Emperor Constantine's adoption and institutionalization of Christianity throughout the Roman empire.

Qiu Chuji of Quanzhen Daoism on the eve of Mongol conquest sought to reconcile the Three Religions of Confucius, Laozi, and the Buddha with the ascendant power. In similar fashion, Pheasant Cap propounded a grand unification theory against the background of Qin conquest. It may be that he or disciples, like Qiu with Genghiz Khan in 1221 a millennium and a half later (De Hartog 1989, 124-27), reached an accommodation with the ancient "world conqueror" and point the way to peaceful world tomorrow.

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Forum

on

Contemporary

Practice

Daoyin Reimagined

A Comparison of Three Embodied Traditions

SCOTT PARK PHILLIPS & DANIEL MROZ

Abstract

This essay investigates three transmissions of esoteric movement from the perspective that religious, theatrical, and martial arts of China are a single subject. This is a comparative and speculative exploration of personal practice contextualized by current scholarship. The practices we examine are healing exercises (*daoyin*) as taught by American Daoist and Buddhist initiate Liu Ming (1947--2015), those taught by American martial arts and yoga teacher Paulie Zink (b. 1954), as well as Himalayan Rigdzin Trulkuhor transmitted by the Tibetan Buddhist sage Jigmé Lingpa (1729-1798) in the 18th century. We selected these practices for both systemic and phenomenological reasons: they have strong structural similarities, they treat the body in correlate ways and their effects on the practitioner are similar.

Daoyin 導引 is a term now used to refer to all sorts of Chinese physical practices (Chen 2003; Palmer 2007). It is described both as “Daoist Yoga” and as being an old term for qigong 氣功 exercise (Cohen 1997)

The character *dao* 導 means “to guide” in the sense of making small corrections to movement in order to return the practitioner to the ineffable path of the *Dao*. The character *yin* 引 means “to pull open” or “stretch apart,” i.e., open spaces within the body as in the action of drawing a bow (Kohn 2012, 109). The composite meaning of *daoyin*, then, is to adjust and transform the body by pulling, stretching, opening, pounding, and guiding it.

With its roots in pre-Han China, daoyin has been adopted by a wide range of Daoist and other communities and expressed in diverse forms.

One type evolved into a hermit yoga-type practiced in conjunction with long periods of physical stillness. Another type emerged at Shaolin to form a core part of the martial training of monks (*gongfu* 功夫; see Shahar 2008). Still another type was incorporated into actor training for Chinese theater (*xiju* 戲劇).

Daoyin is often highly specific in terms of method, yet it is more than a somatic practice that can be conceptualized in several ways not directly focusing on techniques. These may include seeing the practice as an exorcistic purification, a way of overcoming inhibitions or social constraints, or a means of discovering our true nature between the polarities of wildness and stillness. This perfect embodiment (*zhende* 真德) of our limitless nature is called becoming an immortal (*xian* 仙).

Intrinsic Commonalities

The three types examined here share the following characteristics:

Move- ments	Mostly on the ground, require specific postures, and include the actions of opening, closing, folding and stretching.		
Breathing Patterns	Spontaneously determined by the movement and position of the body. Controlled and independent of physical actions.		
Vigorous Self- massage	slapping, scraping rubbing, rolling jumping ¹	pounding with fists; banging on the ground.	stimulating specific meridians (<i>jingluo</i> 經 絡)
Visualiza- tion	Inside the body; outside the body. Transcending inside and outside.		
Enactment	Of animals, plants, and figures from Daoist or Buddhist iconog- raphy. Phenomenologically altered body.		

¹ Shahar (2012) traces the origins of body conditioning like vigorous mas-
sage and self-slapping, used in Iron Shirt and Golden Bell gongfu practices, to
ideas about emptiness already developed in the story of Siddha Gōrakṣa, re-
corded by the poet Allama Prabhu in 12th century India.

Perception of time	Time can slow down or speed up; past, present and future can coexist in an unproblematic way.			
Playful	Improvisation, humor, and asocial actions.			
Feeling / Sensation	sensation (<i>qi-gan</i> 氣感), heat, weight, vibration, expansiveness	emptiness (<i>xu</i> 虛): numb, hollow or dead; permeable (<i>toukai</i> 透開)	Body as container (<i>kong</i> 空), a puppet, or some other object.	“Letting go” of habitual perceptions the body; absence of familiar social-self
Perception of space	Scale can increase or decrease radically, distance and volume can expand or contract infinitely, objects and physical structures can appear to occupy the same space in an unproblematic way. Dispersing or absorbing imagined space, light or sound. E.g., imaging one’s skin as deep and dark as the night sky or as golden armor gleaming out into infinity.			

Liu Ming’s Daoyin

In his monograph on the process of Daoist meditation, *Dragon’s Play*, Liu Ming (aka Charles Belyea, 1947-2015) introduces daoyin as a practice from the Eight Heavenly Gates School of Daoism (Batian men 八天門; Belyea and Tainer 1991, 4). He received the method in Taiwan when studying with a Daoist hermit named Liu, and I (Scott Park Phillips) learned it from him in the late 1990s. It is a relatively short routine, performed very quickly. As in many traditions of prayer and recitation, speed is considered auspicious because it entails repetition and thus the accumulation of merit. Speed also creates heat and disorientation. Liu Ming advised against thinking of the daoyin as calisthenics, stretching, or any kind of exercise in the normative Western sense. Rather it is apophatic and transformational—inseparable from active visualization and spatial-mind awareness.

The practice can be performed for several hours or even days by alternating between daoyin and the non-conceptual sitting meditation practice known as sitting-forgetting (*zuowang* 坐忘). Specifically, it involves

(00:00) **Sparks and Flames**—Begin in a seated position on the ground, clap hands together hard so that they sting and rub them vigorously to create heat, then flick the hands and fingers away suddenly. Repeat 3 times.

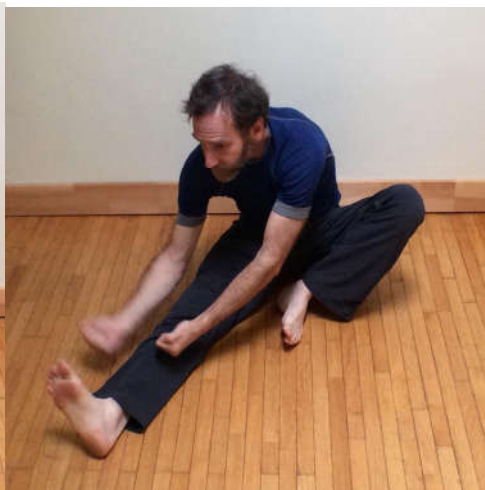
(00:09) **Heavenly Drum**—Pound loudly on the skull along the Governing Vessel, from the base of the skull to the forehead along the center line with the knuckles.

(00:12) **Sweep both palms** across the base of the skull to pull the ears forward and squeeze the face. Repeat 3 times

(00:15) **Aim for the Sky and Fire the Cannon**—Extend one arm straight ahead with a horizontal fist, slap the shoulder with the other hand, scrape forward along the top of the arm, then back along the bottom of the arm to slap the armpit. 3 times on one side, then switch arms. ²



Pounding the heavenly drum



Planting and Plowing

(00:20) **Wave to Friend on a Distant Mountain**—Extended fist as above. From the opposite hip reach in a large arc with the opposite hand to slap the shoulder blade, then vibrate the fingers to drill into the Bird's Nest (Lung-1). Repeat 3 times then switch arms.

(00:26) **Shooting the Wind Cannon**—Pound both the Bird's Nest three times with fists.

(00:28) **Pressing central channel**—Vigorously rub the sternum with the knuckles of the thumbs.

² The full practice can be watched at <https://youtu.be/fVg2f5NuRP0>.

(00:29) **Monkey Counts His Ribs**—Pull the elbows all the way back, open the palms and vigorously rub the ribs up and down just below the armpits with the heels of the hands

(00:30) **Rain Falling Clouds Swirling**—Round forward and reach behind to drum on the kidneys with loose fists, thumb wrapped inside, then gently rub in a circular motion around the kidneys.

(00:33) **Monkey Plays at Rolling**—Reach down and grab the feet, dig the thumbs into Bubbling Well (Kidney-1), roll all the way back, then forward, using this momentum to launch into the air. Repeat 3 times.

(00:45) **Ploughing and Planting**—Abruptly extend one leg. Pummel the insides and outsides of the leg with the side of the fists from the hip toward the feet, then sear a line on the leg using the tips of the thumbs to scrape back towards the hip. Repeat 3 times, then switch to the other leg.

(00:51) **Threshing Rice Grains**—Press down with the palm of the hand on one knee while using the other hand to squeeze Bubbling Well and lift the foot off the ground and create a slapping sound on the ground by releasing the foot. Repeat 3 times, then switch legs.

(00:58) **Monkey Plays at Rolling**—Same as above, repeat 3 times

(1:05) **Sky Cannon**—Making a fist with the thumb wrapped inside the hand, thumb tip at the base of the ring finger, punch the ground to propel the body into the air. Repeat 3 times

Repeat the entire sequence at least three times. Also, if desired, expand all specific repetitions of three to six or nine, then repeat the entire sequence six or nine times.

Paulie Zink’s Daoyin

Paulie Zink lives near Billings, Montana and occasionally travels to teach a form of daoyin he now calls Yin Yoga. In the 1990s, he was well known in martial arts circles for his consummate performances of Monkey Gongfu, or Taisheng quan 太聖拳, literally Great Sage Boxing, an allusion to Sun Wukong 孫悟空, the Monkey King in the *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Journey to the West) (see Shahar 1992). Zink can be described as a living treasure, not only because his practice is so exceptional, but because the basic training of his art is perhaps the most elaborate and detailed form of daoyin ever taught publicly.

Zink learned his art in Los Angeles over a ten-year period from Cho Chat Ling, a Hong Kong native, who learned the method from his uncle,

Cho Chi Fung, in turn the senior student of Ken Tak Hoi. The latter studied numerous forms of martial arts and was considered a master of Pek Kwar 劈掛掌, but he learned Monkey Gongfu and daoyin from a man called of Kou Sze (Cau Sei / Qiu Si 囚四), which literally means Fourth Convict. The story Zink tells is that Kou Sze developed the art in northern China while in prison for murder by watching monkeys he could see from his cell. After his release, he brought the art to the south (Zink and Matsuda 1999).

There are reasons to doubt this account. After the Opera Revolt in Foshan (1854-1861), traditional opera was banned and professional performers were hunted down along with their allies in the Heaven and Earth Society (Tiandihui 天地會) (Wakefield 1997, 139-56; Lei 2007, 133-72). However, low-caste (*jianmin* 賤民) performers were still in demand as their arts were both popular and an important part of the liturgical calendar (Ye 2003, 69; Johnson 2009). During the period directly after the Opera Revolt, it became prudent to claim origins outside the region.

In the aftermath of the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), during which the most common deity possessing the rebels was Sun Wukong, the potent mix of martial arts, acting, and religion became a magnet for ridicule by writers of the May Fourth Movement and successive governments (Cohen 1997; Morris 2004). At the same time, actors who had been members of the degraded *jianmin* caste found themselves legally freed to seek other occupations (see Ye 2003; Yeung 2010).

The lowest status roles among performers were animal specialists (Ward 1979; 1989). It is our suspicion that the daoyin that Paulie Zink learned from Cho Chat Ling was in fact the basic training used for these animal roles and may go back to a southern origin.

Be that as it may, Paulie Zink's practice centers on the notion that the five phases or elements are always transforming and dissolving into each other. Each of the twenty or so animals he uses manifests differently, depending on which element is visualized with its particular physical expression. Each expression, moreover, grows from the repetition of key insights transmitted by the teacher and eventually manifest spontaneously for the student. These transmissions can be divided into three traditional categories: the underlying body structure (*jing* 精), the animated qualities of movement (*qi* 氣), and the spirit of the animal spatially em-

bodied in its real, imagined or staged environment (*shen* 神). These qualities are far easier to see and feel than explain in words. Nevertheless, the elements can be described as follows: ³

Wood	continuous lengthening, extending, pliant
Fire	sudden opening, hollowed out, flaring, sparking, jumping
Earth	sinking to the ground, still, calm, plain
Metal	(also stone) tense, strong, solid, muscular, hard
Water	fluid, liquid, flowing, soft, yielding

The animals, in turn, are

Tree • Stump • Root		Fish	Seahorse	Crab	Frog
Caterpillar	Butterfly	Beetle	Snail	Seal	Rabbit
Cow	Ox	Cat	Dog	Pig	Bear
Five Monkey Roles: <i>wood, lost, tall, stone, drunken</i>					
Stone egg	Snake	Dragon	Phoenix	Turtle	Chair

Descriptions of two movement-animals follow, together with a brief descriptions of the remainder of the routine. All the movements are detailed and precise, with sudden transformations (*bianhua* 变化) from one animal to the next (Mair 2014). Dynamic flow and variety of movement are key qualities of this style of daoyin.

The Frog

(00:20) **Earth Frog**—Mouth (carp mouth) and eyebrows down, everything sinking. Swallow a fly and gulp down. ⁴

³ A video showing Scott Phillips performing Paulie Zink’s daoyin is available at <http://youtu.be/AuESx-VSNIi>.

⁴ This fly is not a fly, but Yin Xi, the guardian of the pass to whom Laozi transmitted the *Daode jing*. Yin Xi then turned into a tiny flying elephant, flew to India and into the mouth of the Buddha’s mother to grow into the Buddha (Bokenkamp 1997, 211-12).

(00:25) **Wood Frog**—Smile, eyebrows up, getting taller, ears lifting, armpits lifting, roof of the mouth lifting, underside of the knees lifting, only the bottom the feet and the fingertips stay on the ground.

(00:28) **Metal Frog**—Showing clenched teeth, fingers grip the ground, all “four hundred” muscles tighten, ready to spring.

(00:30) **Fire Frog**—Like landing on a hot brick, mouth open in a silent scream, toes and fingers spreading upwards, the inner cavities of the body are all expanding. Balanced on the buttocks.

(00:34) **Water Frog**—Fluid motion of the limbs, torso and face, like playing in water, while balanced on the buttocks.



Wood Frog



Fire Frog

The Caterpillar

(01:00) **Caterpillar rolls**—Pike position, hands holding feet or ankles; drop body as a unit to each side; whole body rolls. The structure of this movement stimulates the yang meridians, causing a feeling of tonic rebound.

(01:48) **Escape the cocoon and become a butterfly**—Balance on the buttocks, raise feet alternately while holding onto them with the hands.

(02:12) **Cross the legs to grab the opposite foot**—Movement in this position is of a butterfly trying to free itself from its cocoon; then arms crossed but legs uncrossed – cross and uncross while keeping balance.

(02:30) **Fully extended**—Arms and legs balanced position on the buttocks. Flop forward loudly to the ground, press up with fists into full straddle position and then surge forward to balance on chest and abdomen, hands and feet behind and off the ground in a flying position.



Butterfly from cocoon



Seahorse



The Ox



The Tree

Jigmé Lingpa's Rigdzin Trulkhor

This series of movements goes back to the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Jigmé Lingpa (1729-1798). It clearly uses martial, ritual, dance, and theater movements. Daniel Mroz learned it from Tsewong Sitar Rinpoche and his brother Lama Pema Tenzin in the secluded Bumthang Valley of central Bhutan in May of 2013, during a ten-day group retreat, organized by Canadian Buddhist teacher Lama Jigmé Jinpa (aka Asa Hershoff) and American explorer, writer, and medical anthropologist Ian Baker.

Rigdzin trulkhor, which means “yoga of the knowledge holders,” is an auxiliary training for *tummo*, the Tibetan practice of generating internal heat, which appears variously in all major Tibetan Buddhist sects as important methods for actualizing states of enlightenment, crucial to achieving the soteriological aims of Vajrayana (Yeshe 1998, 131-43; Gyatso 1982, 35-71). The technique closely follows ritual protocols, requiring specific clothes, dietary adjustments, sexual abstinence, and other limitations. The strictness and inconvenience of these protocols support the injunction that trulkhor is best practiced on retreat when such austerities are easier to maintain. The practice is secret and demonstrations to non-initiates are discouraged. The preliminaries resemble the exercises demonstrated in Jeffry Pill’s 2002 documentary “Yogis of Tibet” (at 41:16 to 45:10 mins.). Alejandro Chaoul (2006) and Tenzin Wangyal (2011, 60-73) discuss analogous procedures.

Trulkhor bears some resemblance to Indian and Chinese dance theater forms such as Kathak and Kunju 崑劇. Rigdzin trulkhor theatrically uses whole-body image-mime to portray Buddhist figures such as Humkara, Manjusri, and Nagarjuna. It consists of twenty-one short sections. The first five, called Yenlak Ngachang, are intended for daily practice. The remaining exercises are reserved for practice during meditation retreats.

Yenlak Ngachang means “cleansing of the five limbs.” It mobilizes the subtle energy channels (*tsa*) to clear obstructions and remove impurities from the body. To begin, ideally, one digs a shallow square pit in the earth, fills it with fallen pine needles, places a fitted square cushion in it, and lays a deerskin on top. Basic prayers and invocations are recited before taking the thunderbolt (*vajra*) pose. In this position, the legs are folded into a lotus posture, with the ankles crossed and the soles of the feet turned up. The elbows are as straight as possible and the hands are held in the *vajra mudra*, with the wrists folded forward and the backs of the fists pressed into the inguinal fold. The *vajra mudra* is formed by folding the fingers over the thumb and pressing the tip of the thumb into the first joint of the fourth finger. While performing trulkhor, practitioners hold the breath as much as possible. The initial action (*chen dep*) is similar to the opening of hands (*kai-zhang* 開掌) of some martial arts routines

(*taolu* 套路) from southern China, such as Cailifo quan 蔡李佛拳 and Hongjia quan 洪家拳, common in Guangzhou and Hong Kong.

The five sections of the Yenlak Ngachang

Dorjé Kyildrung	Vajra Pose
Kum Nyé	Massage
Sor Nöl	Interlaced Fingers
Pung Chü	Shoulder Twisting
Ja Pung	Vulture’s Shoulders

Here are the first two exercises:⁵

Dorjé Kyildrung—Vajra Pose (00:36)

Inhale and holding the breath, perform an opening salutation movement called *chen dep* by flicking the *vajra* fists out and along the top of the upper leg, then retract the fists along the sides of the upper leg until they are chambered at the hips.

Lift the fists up the sides, rub the ribs with the knuckles of the thumbs while letting the elbows rise outward to each side. Join the fists at the breast bone and then firmly strike the flanks by dropping the elbows down fast. Then thrust the fists outward at shoulder height with the wrists flexed and the palms facing forward. Repeat 3 times.

With the hands, make a flower shaped motion (*pekor*), raise them overhead, cross the wrists, and form the warrior mudra (*dig tsub*), in which the first and fifth fingers are extended while the thumb is folded over the nails of the curled third and fourth fingers.

Next, open the arms out to each side and snap the fingers before returning them to the position above the head. Repeat three times, then drop the hands to the knees and exhale making an aspirated ‘ha’ sound.

Kum Nyé—Massage (01:00)

From the *vajra* pose, inhale, hold, and perform a *chen dep*. Extend the fists forward and clap the hands together firmly. With the palms sealed together, press the hands down towards the solar plexus, keeping the palms horizontal. Reverse the upper and lower hands with each press. Repeat 3 times.

Bring the palms to a vertical position and rub them together in a circular shape three times. Next, apply the warmed palms to the eyes and rubs

⁵ A video of Daniel Mroz performing trulkhor can be seen at: <http://youtu.be/bLTI3BZo0wo>

three times clockwise and three times counterclockwise. Then place the right palm on top of the head and the left palm over the mouth, and again, massages vigorously in a circular pattern three times.

Following this, place the palms on the upper chest, right above left with the pinkie of the right hand holding the thumb of the left. Turn both palms three times clockwise and three times counterclockwise, firmly rubbing the chest and abdomen with a circular motion. From here strike the back of the left shoulder with the right hand and the back at the right kidney with the left hand, alternating striking these areas on each side three times.





From the *Kum Nye* sequence—
Note the resemblance between this
section and Liu Ming’s Planting and
Plowing

The Larger Context

One of the common features of the practices is the importance of visualization. The English term does not fully communicate the key idea in these practices (Kuriyama 1999). They replace real spatial perception with imagined one. Raw physicality is an important part, but not more so than the process of playing with or altering one’s experience of spatial perception. In practice, daoyin is spontaneous and immediate, while visualizations drive the movement: thus there are so many historic and dramatic variations.

Human nature flows within boundaries of stillness and wildness. Liu Ming’s practice alternates between long or short periods of stillness and intense channel flowing movement, massage, or self-pounding routines. This produces a kind of map, charting the parameters of experience; it opens up a view of what we actually are. Classically framed, this is the explicit experience of differentiating *jing*, *qi*, and *shen*. Stated differently, we experience the distillation of our story from our body, so that the two are both free, and free to interact. More specifically, there is a primordial order of perception and action, which appears spontaneously out of the experience of emptiness (*xu*). This emptiness is opened up and produced by the pull (*yin*) between wildness and stillness. One’s form becomes unhooked from one’s intent.

To be sure, for Liu Ming *jing*, *qi*, *shen*, and *xu* are felt and performative experiences, not abstract ideas. A good visual of a person’s experience here is an egg: *jing* is the substantive aspect, the yolk; *qi* is the animated aspect, the egg white; and *shen* is spatial awareness, the shell radiating out into space. *Xu* is the stage or the ground on which this percep-

tion and action ordering takes place. When *shen* acts on *jing* directly, it is like being hooked, or possessed by desire. *Qi* functions as the intermediary between *jing* and *shen*, keeping the two apart.

Paulie Zink's daoyin, on the other hand, focuses on the five elements and about twenty animals. His posture or movement routines are noticeably like Hatha Yoga, but far more animated, engaging immediately with the mind and body of the given animal. The animation, moreover, is imitative. The crab, for instance, looks like a crab moving. The five elements are primordial qualities that emerge spontaneously from stillness, and suddenly transform from one into another. The movements map out the vast dynamic parameters of fully embodied animals. Our intrinsic emptiness is discovered in the snapping of the bow (*yin* 弓) between one animal or element and the next, and in the discarding of preference for any given shape or emanation of being. The reordering of perception-action that results, is identical to that envisioned by Liu Ming.

The Tibetan practice is different yet again. When teaching Rigdzin trulkhor, Tsewang Rinpoche imparted that both trulkhor and *tummo* were to be undertaken from the perspective of Dzogchen, a core form of Tibetan Buddhism. Dzogchen claims that perception of our actual condition, often referred to as enlightenment, is directly, immediately, and constantly available. It does not come about through incremental methods. As Ian Baker notes, the practice of Dzogchen is not merely a conceptual or intellectual exercise, but is characterized by physicality serving to move both body and mind beyond conventional movements and ideas. Insight is produced by alternating between unrestrained imagination and physicality, and mental and physical quiet (2012, 236).

Baker's description of the physical practices associated with Dzogchen evokes the fruition of daoyin. This is unsurprising given the possible origins of trulkhor-like exercises that may have been introduced to Tibet from Mount Wutai in Shanxi, a center of both Daoist and Chan practice (Baker 2012, 222).

Comparative Analysis

All three forms of spiritual physical exercises access the primordial via similar experiences of animalness (see Farrer 2013), the elements, and emptiness. They spontaneously produce an experience of feeling outside

the body (see Johnstone 2012; Mair 2014). This allows the perceived body to be replaced by the imagination, or what we might call active visualization. This is a doorway to a larger experience, and is a kin to the experience of the golden elixir (*jindan* 金丹), centered on tradition-specific mysteries or secret teachings.

The experience of receiving secret teachings, or pointing out instruction, is always interactive and relational, that is, communicated to a student during the process of learning. It rejects the centrality of method, treating it as dynamic and responsive to the uniqueness of personal fate, time, context, and location. View teachings are often apophatic: the corrections or guidelines (*dao* 導) point toward the simplicity and ease of being upright (*zheng* 正), while always pointing back toward our intrinsic nature and return to Dao.

The framework for practice is this: views suggest methods, methods produce some fruition, fruition then verifies the initial view (Phillips 2009). Daoyin as a method is constantly being tested, refined, expanded, condensed, rejected, or modified by an evaluative process. This evaluative process is rooted in the dynamic interaction of the following three view categories, originally based on the *Daode jing* (ch. 23).

1) The nonaction (*wuwei* 無為) view refers to the absence of conceptual framing. It suggests methods that involve discovering the nature of things as they are. Sitting-forgetting is a primary example, but any method can be refreshed by returning to nonaction as concept-free experience or as not-knowing by discarding notions of purity, hierarchy, preference, self-improvement, or identity.

2) The perfection view (*zhende* 真德) refers to the process of refining, perfecting, purifying, or self-improving. It includes becoming god-like, perfect body mechanics, superiority at anything, radiant health, accumulating energy, awesome circulation, and the achievement of effortless skill or technique.

3) The powerful-allies view refers to making alliances with any form or embodiment of power. It is characterized by strategies for overcoming fear, talismans for acquiring health and power, black magic, sacrifice, channeling, devotion, extreme discipline or subordination, contractual trade-offs, and positive affirmations.

The three views feed into each other without priority. Nonaction can refresh any method, the desire to accumulate power can transform into perfect refinement, and the quest for health can be attained by accident.

Another way to look at this is to say that daoyin does not actually *do* anything; it simply reveals a truth about what it is to be human. Like the “Yang Zhu” 楊朱 chapter of the *Liezi* 列子 (ch. 7), daoyin reveals an intrinsic truth: that the totality of what we are is made up of just a body and a story (see Kohn 2011). We each have a body with a story attached. Changing the story has an effect on the body and vice versa. However, at the extremes of experience, a person can remove their body from the story they are in, and enter a completely different story. For instance, one can move to a new place and speak a new language. At the other end of experience, a person can dramatically change their body while keeping the story the same: a fat person can become slim, a stiff person can become flexible. Just as changes to the body can be intentional or accidental, the same is true for the story. While never completely separate, body and story can develop and function independently.

Daoyin, understood as a body practice (as distinct from a story practice), is concerned with releasing unconscious tension. It uses extremes of movement and stillness to trigger these sorts of releases. Once one becomes aware of unconscious tension, it can either return to unconsciousness, or simply resolve itself.

Understood as a story practice, daoyin is about freeing oneself from the constraints of the stories we tell ourselves. Our identity will resist with unconscious tension any movement not part of who we think we are. Any movement not part of the story we tell ourselves about ourselves, in turn, has the potential to trigger a release from our story, i.e., letting go of identity.

These movements are often asocial, like ferocious self-slapping or rolling around and snorting like a pig in the mud. As a body practice, they distort felt experience: slapping causes the feeling of *qi* and heat to float off of the skin. As a story practice, the asocial nature of the movements push the boundaries of who we think we are.

Daoyin viscerally integrates our imagination with our sense of space or empty openness (*xu*). The space referred to here is the specific

function of our perception, which acts unconsciously and continuously to orient itself and in kinesiology is referred to as perception-action (Committeri 2007). We move in space, but we also experience space moving. Daoyin uses our imagination to mimic our experience of space in the real world, until imaginary felt-space spontaneously links up with real felt-space. Thus, the imaginary world has an unrestrained and spontaneously supportive effect on the way we move, while the real experience of our physical body asserts no psycho-spiritual limitations.

Conclusion

Specialists who regularly perform ritual, theater, or martial arts, routinely have experiences that may sound mystical to outsiders but in practice are quite common. For instance, repeating a given movement over and over makes it possible for the mind to float off the body and view it from another angle (above, in front, behind), take an imaginary journey, or conjure up and hold complex visualizations. It is not surprising that intricate visualization practices are interwoven with ritual; it is simply what happens naturally when we do the same dance over and over.

Daoyin may have started as a remedial exercise, transformed into a solo-ritual meditation practice, later infused into martial arts and developed into a form of theater training. For someone who has done all these practices individually, such integration can occur without much effort.

Child-like playfulness, like performing, is an intensely stimulating form of conditioning. Martial artists distinguish between conditioning and cognitive learning, because the latter is inaccessible under intense stress while skills conditioned through play can be accessed even during violent encounters. Giddy, happy, child-like feelings are a sign that we are training correctly, that we are remaking ourselves. This feeling is key information. It tells us that we have accessed the part of our being which can shed identity, rigidity, conformity, subservience, devotion, arrogance, and certainty. This is the essence of daoyin.

The reason for the vast amount of variation in daoyin is that the actual practices are not specific physical actions like "rub the temples." Instead, they are active visualizations done from a body that is empty and thus endlessly variable. Whatever is experienced as real or full (*zhen* 真) is made fake or empty (*xu* 虛); whatever is experienced as imaginary is

made real. The practice of daoyin has the capacity to reveal that the body does not actually condition memory of itself as a body. Rather, it conditions memory of visualizations of movement through space. This embodied realization unlinks our bodies from our stories, revealing the uncertainty of our fate (*ming* 命) and the unbounded meanings of our daily actions and decisions (*xing* 性).

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Nonaction and the Art of Blending

Daoist Principles in Aikido

ANDREW COLVIN

Just as the way of heaven is to benefit all and not do harm,
Therefore, the way of the sage is to act but not compete (*Laozi* 81)

Scholars often describe the contemporary art of aikido, literally “way of harmony,” as the most sophisticated, as well as the most philosophical and spiritual of the martial arts (Stevens 2001, 7; Westbrooke and Ratti 1997, 17). Developed by Morihei Ueshiba 植芝盛平 (1883-1969) in the first half of the 20th century, aikido offers both a unique and effective method of self-defense and a subtle and profound form of spiritual practice. In recent decades, several studies attempting to uncover the philosophical and spiritual principles at the core of aikido have pointed to the influence of Zen, Shingon Buddhism, and the Ōmoto-kyō sect of Shinto (see Gleason 1995; Stevens 2001; Ueshiba 2007). However, in addition, I think, there are important correspondences between aikido and classical Daoist thought.¹

At first glance, there appears to be little basis for a comparative study of these two “ways.” Indeed the strict formal etiquette (*reigi* 礼儀) of the aikido practitioner stands in stark contrast to the well-known image of the Daoist as the irreverent eccentric, the easy-going scamp who

¹ Biographies of Ueshiba and studies of the spiritual foundations of aikido rarely mention of Daoist thought. Stevens (2001) correlates a few Daoist passages with aikido concepts, for example, the *aioi* 相生 and *Daode jing* 2.

playfully flaunts formality and social convention in pursuit of personal freedom and spontaneity.² Moreover, although Ueshiba was remarkably eclectic in his thought, he was, as George Ledyard (2005) put it, a Shinto mystic. He articulated the principles at the core of aikido not by appeal to Daoist thought, but in terms the arcane and esoteric Shinto doctrine of *kototama* 言靈 or “language of the spirit.”³

Nevertheless, I believe that the practice of aikido involves the cultivation and embodiment of ideals and principles remarkably analogous to those that form the basis of classical Daoist thought. There are two important reasons for outlining these similarities. First, while studies such as Gleason’s *The Spiritual Foundations of Aikido* (1994) argue that the development of aikido emerged from Ueshiba’s study of Shinto, Shingon Buddhism, and the arcane doctrine of *kototama*, these esoteric traditions are inaccessible and often not particularly helpful in illuminating the core principles and ideals of aikido.⁴ By turning to classical Daoist thought to shed light on these core principles and ideals, I hope to offer a perspective on aikido that is less abstruse and more accessible. Second, as I intend to show, the art of techniques of aikido can illustrate in a remarkable way key principles and ideals of Daoist thought and how these ideals can be cultivated by contemporary practitioners.

In this undertaking, I do not attempt to show that the founder of aikido was well versed in Daoist thought and practice. Although to my knowledge, the writings of Ueshiba and biographies of his life suggest no direct correlation, a study of the influence of Daoist ideas on the development of aikido might prove otherwise. Nor will I try to demonstrate that Daoist thought influenced the development of Shingon Buddhism and Shinto and from there moved to influence Ueshiba. I will not

² This image is popularized in works like the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 in the stories of the lives of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, and more recently in the essays of Lin Yutang 林語堂.

³ Gleason translates *kototama* 言靈 as “word souls.” He characterizes these sounds as “*a priori* dimensions of the universe that ... form the foundation of our spiritual constitution” (Gleason, 1995, 2). For an in-depth analysis, see Gleason 2009; Ledyard 2005.

⁴ Ledyard (2005) points out that very few people, including high ranking aikido instructors, understand the *kototama* doctrine or see aikido as Ueshiba understood it.

strive to show that aikido is really a form of Daoist practice. Such a re-description of aikido in Daoist terms would be misleading and unwelcome by aikido and Daoist practitioners alike.

Rather, my primary concern will be to show that that classical Daoist thought and the contemporary art of aikido recommend certain remarkably analogous dispositions and spiritual ideals. The cultivation of these dispositions and ideals, moreover, in both Daoism and aikido reflects a similar understanding of what might be called the way of the world.

Classical Daoist Thought

While the term "Daoism" covers a wide range of phenomena, including philosophical, scientific, mystical, religious, hygienic, and medical theories, practices, and institutions, it still encompasses clearly different strands. Most scholars agree that the earliest strand emerged with the textual tradition of Laozi's *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi*—the strand I refer to when I speak of Daoist thought (see Hansen 2008; Kohn 2001). Following the interpretation of Hall and Ames, I describe Dao as the "rhythm and regularity of the world as it unfolds around and through us" and Daoist thought as the attempt to understand this rhythm and regularity and to recommend a corresponding "regimen of self-cultivation that will enable one to optimize one's experience of the world" (2003, 23, 9).

From the classics through contemporary theories and practices, a central principle or ideal of Daoism is harmony (*he* 和) within the body and with the natural world. One might argue, given the relational emphasis in Chinese thought, that harmony constitutes a sort of *summum bonum*—not only in Daoism but in Chinese culture in general. However, while Confucians look to the family as the model and basis of harmonious interaction, Daoists tend to emphasize the "cadence of nature"—the harmonious alternation of day and night, the unfolding of the seasons, the ebb and flow of the tides, the phases of the life cycle, and so on. While post-Han thinkers adopted the complex vocabulary of the five phases (*wuxing* 五行) to express this cadence, the early philosophical texts describe it in more basic terms.

One of the most important passages in this context appears in *Daode jing* 40, “Reversal is the movement of Dao.” Moeller notes that “reversal” here refers to the circular processional movement of Dao: as things reach an extreme, they begin to move in the opposite direction. Day turns into night, and night turns into day, spring and summer give way to fall and winter, followed again by spring and summer (2007, 96). This circular movement of Dao appears symbolically in the well-known Taiji circle: when yang reaches fullness, it reverts into yin, and vice versa (see also Wang 2012).

This principle of reversion enhances awareness of how a situation has come about and anticipation of how it might develop. For Hall and Ames, this sort of “field awareness” is one of the central dispositions or habits of awareness championed in the *Laozi* (2004). Sensing the development and movement of things we are better able to avoid conflicts and to live in harmony with others.

The movement of reversal lies at the basis of what Moeller refers to as the strategy of paradox (2007, 86). As the text has it,

If you would have a thing shrink,
You must first stretch it.
If you would have a thing weakened,
You must first strengthen it. . . .
This is called sublime discernment. (ch. 36; Lau 2001, 53)

The submissive and the weak overcome the hard and the strong. Throughout the text, the *Laozi* celebrates qualities of yin, such as receptiveness, weakness, and softness, while denigrating opposite qualities of aggression and rigidity. The assumption is that, given the movement of reversal, the latter qualities are ineffective and self-defeating. As LaFargue notes, “confrontation is not the way. When something goes wrong, do not oppose it directly. Build it up, let it over reach itself, and come to its own ruin” (1992, 159). The text also says, is same recommendation is repeated in Chapter 78:

There is no one in the world that does not know
That the soft prevails over the hard
And that the weak prevails over the strong
And yet none are able to act accordingly. (ch. 78; Ames and Hall 2003, 197)

For Laozi, the best strategy to win is to become sensitive to the way the overall situation develops and mindful of the principle of reversion, thereby to anticipate the direction of development. From this basis, one can discern the moment when the aggressive, hard, and strong overreaches itself to turn into receptive, soft, and weak—and then act accordingly.

However to use the principle of reversal to contend against and to win out over others runs contrary the Daoist ideal of non-contending. As Joel Kupperman puts it, "Daoism emphasizes a kind of natural ease in life in which one's harmony with the world leads to a lack of struggle, confrontation, and risk" (2007, 115). Contending with or attempting to defeat others entails struggle, confrontation, discord, and harm. Thus Laozi ends the chapter by saying, "Just as the way of Heaven is to benefit all and not do harm, so the way of the sage is to act but not compete."

The strategy of not struggling or contending (*buzheng* 不爭) seems wise if things are headed in the desired direction. If, for example, one's boat is caught in a strong current headed down stream, and one's destination *is* in that direction, then it would be foolish to struggle against the current – rather one can just go with the flow. But sometimes one cannot and should not just go with the flow. If a swimmer were caught in a powerful rip current taking them out to sea, it would be foolhardy to simply go with the current. Clearly there are times in life when the strategy of leaving things alone, of not acting, of not contending, will not result in benefitting all. How, then, in such situations, does one act to benefit yet still remains free from contending?

Early Daoist here recommend not so much inaction, but a form of action that is indirect, albeit mindful of the momentum of the situation. Rather than struggling directly against the momentum or pushing back against the current, one might, as Kupperman puts it, work in a quiet and inconspicuous way to steer the course of events (2007, 114). This way one can work to benefit but without directly contending. In the case of the swimmer caught in the rip current, actively struggling to swim against the current will not work. Instead, one should swim perpendicular to the current without panicking until one is out of its grasp.

Nonaction

The notion of nonaction (*wuwei* 無為) is of central importance in classical Daoist thought. As Edward Slingerland (2003) and others have shown, in some contexts it quite literally means “not acting,” as “doing nothing,” “letting things take their course.” In other contexts, most notably in relation to government and spirituality, on the other hand, it does not so much mean doing nothing, but acting in a certain way, i.e., by “effortless action:

[Effortless action refers to] a state of personal harmony in which actions flow freely and instantly from one’s spontaneous inclinations—without the need for extended deliberation or inner struggle—and yet nonetheless accord perfectly with the dictates of situation at hand, and display an almost supernatural efficacy. (2003, 7)

Hall and Ames translate the ideal as “non-coercive action,” characterizing it as deferential, i.e., requiring a yielding to or non-interference with the particular focus of things. In this sense, it can be seen as *yin* in character (2003, 39). Jean-François Billeter describes it as a state of “perfect knowledge of the reality of the situation, perfect efficaciousness, and the realization of a perfect economy of energy” (1984, 50).

Based on these characterizations, a subjective and objective aspect to nonaction emerges. The subjective aspect is the state or attitude of the person performing the action: how the action is performed. For Slingerland and Billeter, such actions are effortless, spontaneous, harmonious, and efficient. The objective aspect is how the action accords with the context or situation: being perfectly aligned with, attuned to, or in accordance with whatever is going on in the world.

David Loy (1985) argues that while softness and yielding, naturalness, and spontaneity may all characterize nonaction, genuine spontaneity and naturalness are only possible in a non-dual state of mind. What typically makes actions unnatural and lacking in spontaneity, Loy argues, is a reflexive, intrusive self-consciousness. Only by achieving a state without awareness of an agent distinct from the act is true naturalness possible. Hence for Loy, nonduality—where there is no bifurcation be-

tween subject and object—is a central, defining characteristic of nonaction.

In short, then, nonaction as a spiritual ideal refers to the quality of an action, in terms of both the state of the agent performing the action, and how the action accords with the particular context or situation. Actions undertaken from a position of nonaction are variously described as natural, yielding, deferential, perfectly aligned, or attuned, utterly spontaneous and unself-conscious. Such actions sometimes have an almost supernatural efficacy, as see most clearly in the *Zhuangzi* stories of Cook Ding and he and ferryman (chs. 3, 19; Slingerland 2003). Acting in this way requires not only a harmony of mind and body and intention and act, but an inner stillness in the midst turmoil and commotion.

Nonaction, moreover, represents the embodiment of Daoist virtue as a whole. This includes an understanding of the propensity of events to transform in certain ways, sensitivity to the energy and rhythms within different situations, a willingness to yield to and work with things rather than against them in a spirit of cooperation rather than contention. It also implies an inner stillness in the midst of turbulence, a unity of body and mind allowing for naturalness, spontaneity, and the efficient use of energy. All these, then, are means to the core Daoist value of natural harmony.

Because people tend not to understand and respond to the world like this, classical Daoist texts spelled these principles out and recommended their cultivation. This still holds true today. Whether by nurture or by instinct, we stand on tiptoe to reach far; we speak loudly and eloquently to be heard. We become rigid and unyielding in the face of opposition, respond with fear, anger, and aggression when provoked. We also see contention as a means to self-fulfillment and the defeat of another as a victory for the self. Clearly the ideals and dispositions recommended in classical Daoist thought, then as now, are not organically given, but must be cultivated. The question is how.

Aikido

Aikido developed in the first half of the 20th century under the auspices of Morihei Ueshiba, known to practitioners as *o-sensei* or Great Teacher. Records show that he was a gifted martial artist who had mastered sev-

eral forms of both armed and unarmed martial arts by the age of thirty (see Stevens 1987; Ueshiba 2008). When he was in his mid-thirties he underwent a profound mystical experience, receiving a vision of the interconnectedness of all things. This experience transformed his understanding of the martial arts. He came to see “the true source of *budo* [martial arts] as the spirit of loving protection for all beings” (Stevens 1987).

In the following years, Ueshiba worked to develop a martial art that relied not on aggression, violence, and destruction but preferred nonresistance and the protection and nurturing of life through the realization of harmony with the universe. He called it aikido.

It does not rely on weapons or brute force to succeed; instead we put ourselves in tune with the universe, maintain peace in our own realms, nurture life, and prevent death and destruction. (Ueshiba 2010, 93)

The name “aikido” 合氣道 consists of three characters: *ai* 合 means “to unify” or “bring together;” *do* 道 is “the way,” and 氣 *ki*, indicating the vitalizing or animating energy behind and within all things. The name is commonly translated as Way of Harmony. It centers on the cultivation of harmonious interaction between mind and body, self and other, the individual and the rhythms and energies of the universe.

Your mind should be in harmony with the functioning of the universe; your body should be in tune with the movement of the universe; body and mind should be bound as one, unified with the activity of the universe. (Ueshiba 2010, 74)

Over the next forty years, Ueshiba worked to perfect the techniques of aikido, practicing and teaching until his death at the age eighty-six in 1969. Today his art has spread across the globe; there are aikido *dojos* throughout the world, and more than a million practitioners.

While Ueshiba drew on several martial arts, aikido can be seen as unique both in terms of its theory and its techniques. Unlike other martial arts, aikido was formulated as a purely reflexive and defensive art (Westbrook and Ratti 1970, 19). Like Daoism, aikido recommends yielding and non-contending rather than resistance and aggression; like Daoism, it is a yin way. As Ueshiba says, “it is the principle of nonresistance. Because it is nonresis-

tant, it is victorious from the beginning. . . . Aikido is invincible because it contends with nothing (2010, 93).

The primary emphasis in training is not on how to attack but on how to respond to an unprovoked act. The goal is either to diffuse aggression before an attack or, if this is impossible, to bring an attacker under control but without inflicting serious injury. Although the throws, joint locks, and pins it utilizes have the potential to cause injury, the techniques are designed in such a way as to inflict little or no injury. For Ueshiba, "To injure an opponent is to injure yourself. To control aggression without inflicting injury is aikido" (2010, 96).

Hence, aikido is unique in the way that it approaches conflict. While in most martial arts conflict is resolved through a zero-sum strategy—where there is a winner and loser—aikido, with its emphasis on leaving the attacker uninjured, sees conflict resolution in terms of a non-zero sum or win-win strategy. True victory, for Ueshiba was not winning out over another but rather the harmonizing of self and other and defeating the spirit of contention.

If, however, one is attacked, to effectively bring an opponent under control without injury aikido practitioners must learn to become sensitive to the direction and momentum of the attack, as Westbrook and Ratti write, to "replace certain instinctive responses (such as clashing directly into or against another's force) with more subtle and refined intuitive responses" (1970, 24-25). A central principle of aikido is that one should not meet an attack head on by clashing directly against its force. Instead, one should blend with the force of the attack, that is, move with the force. By doing so one is able to lead the attacker in such a way that they will become unbalanced or unstable, this allowing one to gain control over the attacker.

The principle behind the technique of blending is analogous to the Daoist principle of reversal. When the momentum of things reaches a certain point, their direction reverses. This is a natural shift from rising to falling, from expansion to contraction, from aggression to receptivity, from yang to yin, and so on. In the context of an attack, one is initially receptive while the force of the attack is dynamic. However as Westbrook and Ratti point out, there are definite limits of concentration beyond which the force of the attack (yang) diminishes leaving the attacker receptive (yin) and unbalanced (1970, 53-54).

If, for example, someone throws a roundhouse kick, as the kick unfolds it has a tremendous amount of power. Within a certain distance the kick can cause maximum damage. However beyond that limit the power of the kick rapidly diminishes and the person throwing the kick becomes unbalanced. At this point what is yang becomes yin; the attacker, now unbalanced becomes receptive. By blending with the momentum and direction of the attack, one is able to in fact lead and amplify the momentum of the attack to the point where a natural shift takes place and the attacker becomes receptive. At this point, the aikido student executes a throw or joint lock that allows him to bring the attacker under control.

Aikido techniques, when performed by a highly skilled practitioner, appear remarkably fluid and graceful. This is because they are designed to mirror and blend with the energy of the attacker in the most natural way possible, applying a minimum expenditure of energy. In performing techniques, the master remains calm and centered, never forcing things. Like Daoists, aikido students must learn to relax and go along with the natural flow of energy, so that the techniques move along naturally like a river. As instructor Lynn Seiser puts it, “You do not *make* aikido work; you follow natural patterns and principles and *let* aikido work” (2013).

In a typical class students take turns playing the role of *uke* 受け (receiver) and *nage* 投げ (thrower). The *uke* must learn the different forms of attack, while the *nage* must learn to respond to these with different techniques depending on his or her level of skill. To minimize the risk of injury the *uke* must learn to allow themselves to be thrown, to go with the natural flow and momentum arising out of the blending of energies. The interaction between the two is not competitive—but cooperative and harmonious.

By contrast advanced training in aikido involves the practice of free-style defense (*randori* 乱取り) (Nariyama 2010). In this exercise the practitioner confronts several attackers at once, so he must respond immediately and instinctively using the most natural technique given his current placement in relation to the ever-shifting positions of the attackers. In this situation one cannot rely on predetermined courses of actions. Like the Daoist, one must be flexible and adapt, sensitive to the momentum of the situation, calm and still in the midst of chaos.

It is commonly said at the lower levels—which for aikido is roughly up through third degree black belt—that the focus is on the physical and learning to move the body, while at the more advanced levels one is training the mind and learns to project their vital energy. Ultimately the goal is to achieve a degree of skill where there is no distinction between body and mind, the actor and the action. At this stage one is able, like the Daoist sage, to react spontaneously without deliberation, with a perfect integration of mind and body.

Conclusion

Classical Daoist thought and the contemporary art of aikido recommend certain analogous dispositions and ideals. Their cultivation in both traditions to a certain degree follows a similar understanding of what "the way of the world." In comparison, each illuminates the other.

A most appropriate summary is provided by Cook Ding, able to carve an ox with such skill that, throughout his long career, he never had to re-sharpen his knife. When Lord Wenhui marvels at this skill, he says

What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years, I no longer saw the whole ox. And now, now I go at it by spirit and do not look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are.

Lord Wenhui responds to this by exclaiming, "I have heard the words of Cook Ding and have learned how to care for life."

Like Slingerland's action in nonaction, Cook Ding's knife flows freely, effortlessly, and spontaneously without extended deliberation. It follows the natural lines and joints and thus accords perfectly with the situation at hand, displaying an almost supernatural efficiency. In other words, Cook Ding's skill manifests effortless action, a central secret to caring for life.

While training in aikido takes place in a *dojo* rather than a kitchen, the goal is similar. It encourages the internalization of skills to the point of being able to act spontaneously and without deliberation. Instead of

making the techniques work, practitioners learn to let them work of their own. At this point, two things appear to take place. First, as in nonaction, there is a transcendence of duality. The spontaneity and naturalness evident in the techniques of the skilled aikido master suggest that his thoughts and actions are one. There is no sense of a separate self performing the technique; rather, one lets go and allows the techniques to happen.

Second, there is a state of interpersonal harmony beyond the attainment of personal harmony or the integration of body and mind. Initially, practitioners harmonize opposing forces to such a degree that they barely distinguish the forces of attack and response, blending and throwing. Then again, they perform the techniques with an almost supernatural efficacy. A good documentation appears in films showing Morihei Ueshiba, even in his later years, sending attackers tumbling across the mat without a hint of effort or strain. Other movies show the fluid, balanced, and effortless technique of his grandson, Moriteru Ueshiba. Performed by these skilled martial artists, all movements, like Cook Ding's blade, "are flowing, and nevertheless direct and effective. When properly performed they seem to follow the lines of the universe" (McCarty 2009).

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Teaching with Dao

DAVID HESSLER

Mastering and teaching content is the beginning of the teacher's responsibilities, but only the beginning. Afterwards comes the development of mastery in teaching. This paper examines how Daoist concepts and careful reading of the *Daode jing* in particular, can guide one towards optimal teaching practices. This means moving beyond the traditional goal of classroom instruction. "Education in the classroom is directed towards giving students knowledge and skills but it is not primarily concerned with developing a certain kind of personal character" (Hori, 1994, 7). However, the way of the teacher in the *Daode jing* is more focused on developing the inherent character of each student.¹

Self-Doing

One of the most famous lines in the *Daode jing* is *daofa ziran* 道法自然, which has been translated variously. To me, it has two complementary meanings, i.e., doing something of itself, and Dao follows inherent inclinations or tendencies. "Doing something of itself" is to undertake an action in accordance with, or in conformity to, what is called for by the subject and situation. Understanding the true essence of all things under Heaven is the basis for any one who truly wants to follow Dao 道 or "the Way," but it also has some very practical applications to the profession

¹ I have found very few if any articles to address the relationship between Daoist practice and effective teaching. Therefore, this paper presents an initial foray into a relatively untouched field, focusing on how to apply lessons from the *Daode jing* to classroom teaching.

of teaching. After all, there are repeated references to the sage in the *Daode jing*. Understanding the truth of this passage can inform the way teachers construct their classroom environment and relationships with students.

“Dao follows inherent inclinations or tendencies” means understanding the true reality of all things. Professor Wang Zhongjiang of Beijing University, in his recently published book, *Daoism Excavated* (2015), has further enhanced our understanding of the expression *daofa ziran* with his insight that the closest literal translation, “Dao models itself on self-being” refers not to a property found in Dao, but to the “myriad things.” Professor Wang argues that Dao allows all things to develop into who, or what, they are by moving “in accordance with their self-being” (2015, 136-137).

Wang argues that Dao is like parents “giving birth to children and raising them without overly controlling them” (2015, 136). The relevant passage from the *Daode jing* is, “Dao gives birth to them [all things on earth] but does not own them” (ch. 53; 2015, 150). How can this inform classroom teaching? If Dao births and nurtures all beings, then they “continue to develop and manifest in life according to their particular unique characteristics, thereby fully realizing themselves” (2015, 151). This may be the key to better classroom teaching. A teacher who understands his profession can diagnose the difficulties of his students over the first few months of the academic year. Applying Wang’s concepts means that the next step is not to inform students of a diagnosis and expect change. Rather, the role of the teacher should be first to make a diagnosis, then foster conditions in the classroom to enable students to recognize their own self-being through a natural and organic process.

The First Step

The first step is for the teacher to develop practices to foster an understanding of himself through quieting the mind. This can be done through a variety of techniques but meditation, quiet sitting, or restorative yoga can be beneficial. As teachers learn to calm their minds, they gain the

awareness necessary to foster each student's self-being. This concept can be of immense assistance to teachers, as I have personally experienced.²

Why is it so important for the teacher to reach a quieter state of mind? The *Daode jing* says,

Attain the climax of emptiness,
preserve the utmost quiet;
As myriad things act in concert,
I thereby observe the return.
Things flourish,
then each returns to its root. (ch. 16; Cleary 1994, 17)

To understand one's own self-being requires that we develop a stillness practice. Only then can we see ourselves clearly and attain balance or evenness. It is quite like the surface of a lake. It is hard to see our reflection clearly, when the water is disturbed in some way. However, when the water is still, we can at least see our external selves with clarity. In returning to our original nature, we see the world unfettered with the baggage of our personal perceptions. It is, to reference a famous story from the *Zhuangzi* (ch. 2), as if we have awoken from a dream and now can see the true reality of all things.

This will have a powerful effect on teaching. For example, the terms used by teachers to describe students, such as good, bad, bright, positive, disruptive, troublemaker, etc., will no longer make sense: they obscure rather than reveal the self-being of each student. They imply a fixed nature to students that blocks a teacher's ability to see their natural tendencies or self-being.

One way teachers can help students understand their self-being is by varying class assessments. For example, about ten years ago, toward the end of a year-long course, I began giving an oral chapter test to my history students. I had come to understand that traditional written tests students typically took only assessed part of their abilities. I was limiting the ways my students could express their understanding of history and thereby created a flawed picture of their academic abilities.

² I think this applies to all levels of teaching, but I can only speak to the applicability of these concepts to the ages I teach, i. e., 14 to 19.

When I first announced at the beginning of the semester that they would be taking a test where the answers would be spoken rather than written, something curious happened. Some of my best students, who were quite adept at multiple choice and essay tests, became anxious. Some of my weaker students were visibly happy. “Yes, we don’t have to write!” one young man exclaimed exuberantly.

Over the years, I have seen those reactions over and over again. This does not mean that all of my students earning A-range grades struggle with writing, or vice versa. However, there are some cases every year where this holds true. What does it mean? To me, it means that I had previously operated under an incomplete understanding of my students’ abilities. Some of my weakest students on written tests were actually very good at gathering, organizing, and expressing their thoughts verbally even under pressure, exhibiting a potentially valuable skill. On the other hand, some of my strongest students on written tests struggled with the oral format. In this way, I could guide some students to understand their own previously underappreciated abilities and helped others see that they had some skills to work on in their academic profile.

Placing the Student First

Once the teacher has reached a level of calmness due to a stillness practice, he can work on the next step, i.e., assisting students in their individual learning process. The teacher is better able to serve the needs of his students because

[S]ages put themselves last,
and they were first;
They excluded themselves,
and they survived.
Was it not by their very selflessness
that they managed to fulfill themselves? (ch. 7; Cleary, 1997, 13)

Echoing this, there has been abundant research showing that students learn best when they are in charge of their own learning. As Alison King notes, the key role of a teacher is not to dispense large quantities of information to students they can download into their memory banks, but

to "facilitate the students' interaction with the material and with each other in their knowledge producing endeavor" (1993, 30). This is important for any teacher who aspires to mastery. Once he develops inner calmness, he no longer needs to be the center of attention. This is further supported by recent research, including the work of Douglas Fisher and Nancy Frey (2014). They postulate that teachers need to work through several steps to make students self-directed learners.

The ultimate goal of instruction is that students be able to independently apply information, ideas, content, skills, and strategies in unique situations. We want to create learners who are not dependent on others for information or ideas. (2014, 10)

The only way students can work toward the goal of self-directed learning is if they understand themselves and their preferred learning style. This relates back directly to the notion of "following inherent inclinations" and Professor Wang's understanding of self-being. However, it can only happen when the teacher creates a classroom environment that fosters students' willingness to engage in self-discovery. This is the beginning of understanding nature or *ziran* in the *Daode jing*.

Once the teacher understands himself, he can develop insight into the students' nature. Why is that? Because it is hard for teachers to see what students really need. Our own ideas of what is necessary or needed often follow ego-driven perceptions, rather than what the situation actually calls for.

For example, it has taken me many years to realize the simple truth that entertaining students is not the centerpiece of good teaching. In years past, I often made myself the focus of class. However, whenever I was in the spotlight, I could not really see my audience clearly. It has literally taken me two decades to get out of my own way and understand how to make the classroom a more student-centered space. With the teacher no longer occupying center stage, students have more room to determine their best learning practices.

Letting Go

One of the first things I did to see the “inclinations” or “tendencies” of students was to let go of my own political views. As a high school history teacher, this might seem antithetical to the profession, but it was essential. Early on, I believed that my personal opinions never leaked through in classroom political discussions. This was an illusion, like the story of the dreamer and butterfly found in the *Zhuangzi* (ch. 2). I was deluding myself while most students knew very well what my opinions and agendas were.

The dynamic created in this situation was at odds with the educational goals I hoped to achieve. My ego was right up front for the students to see. While students’ agreement with my views varied, they were all affected by them. Like a boulder in a river, my opinions forced them to alter their course and take a path I shaped. Only after fifteen years of teaching did I finally understand that this was a hindrance to students’ realizing their self-being. To become a better teacher, I had to let go of my personal investment in a particular outcome. As the *Daode jing* says,

Those who act on it will ruin it.
Those who hold on to it will ruin it.
The sage does not act upon things,
therefore he does not ruin them. (ch. 64; Wong 2008, 80)

This is not to say that a teacher following Daoist ideas should disengage from being a presence in the classroom. I still encourage political discussion among my students; however, I refrain from participating. Some students ask for my opinion, but I decline to offer one and leave responsibility for continuing the discussion in their hands. This is a chance for students to discuss politics with their peers. By taking myself out of the arena, students can more naturally develop their own beliefs without external input. I strive to create a place where students can “see” their reflection—at least of their exterior self—clearly in the water. This only happens when the teacher does less! The *Daode jing* echoes this,

When ruling the world and serving Heaven,
the sage uses simplicity in everything he does.

Simplicity comes from letting go of what you want.
(ch. 59; Kwok et al. 1993, 145)

Matching this, if the teacher uses simplicity, he acts without reaching. Living in balance, he can naturally discern what best serves the inherent inclinations of each student. The teacher conducts himself in a dispassionate manner. Without acting, the teacher fosters.

Non-Doing

While doing less is a good thing, this does not mean that teaching stops happening. In fact, it signals ways for a teacher to reach true mastery. The Daoist concept most significant here is nonaction (*wuwei*), literally being "without action." However, at a deeper level, the term points to an economy of action, i.e., doing the right thing at the right moment. Its application in the classroom can have profound effects for both students and teacher. Practicing non-doing, as Wang notes, is the way by which "social leaders can be least involved, yet most efficient in managing people" (2015, 153). And for teachers, the best way to manage the classroom is by seeing any problems or challenges when still small and easy to handle. The master teacher who works in non-doing, then, may well escape official notice since his classroom does not feature big dramatic moments. Instead, numerous small moments accumulate and allow students to learn in a way that best suits them.

To the casual observer, it may seem that the teacher practicing non-doing is not active enough in the classroom. That kind of thinking is contrary to the Daoist concept. In the United States, and especially in education, being busy is often equated with success. However, if a teacher is busy and constantly in motion, problems tend to arise. As long as the teacher is busy "doing," he cannot clearly see what the students need or what changes they have begun to make. He always remains in reactive mode and by the time he notices something amiss it is already a problem. The Chinese speak of this as having "a wild monkey inside their head."

My Daoist teacher, Meng Zhiling, once told me a story that relates to busyness and non-doing. Several years ago he lived as a hermit in northern China near a village. One day, several villagers came to him with a problem. They had invested in a small business. After some years

of successful operation, the factory was losing money because there were frequent power failures and the owners still had to pay the employees. What to do? Asking for more details, Master Meng discovered that the power failures were a recent phenomenon. He then learned that eight months earlier the villagers had fired an old electrician, employed for decades, replacing him with two younger men. Why had they done so? The villagers said it was because he was lazy and did nothing all day. Master Meng instructed the villagers to bring the old man back and have him train his replacements. After that, there were no more electrical outages.

In teaching us, Master Meng used this story to illustrate how one who practices non-doing might appear to others. The old electrician looked lazy because he could rectify issues before they became problems. The two electricians appeared to be better at their jobs because they were busy, dealing with problems after they had already created havoc. Master Meng's point was that the new hires were competent, but not experts at their job. They could discern the side issues but not the big issue. The old man, on the other hand, could see and resolve even big issues before they arose, but he looked lazy to the villagers.

Similarly, a teacher who understands non-doing may appear to be doing nothing but that is because he already addressed the needs of students. When we as teachers are able to quiet our mind, we can guide each student more accurately toward achieving his or her unique learning objectives.

Dao constantly abides in non-doing,
and yet nothing is left undone.
If ministers and rulers are able to guard it,
the myriad beings transform naturally.
In transformation, desires may arise;
I subdue them through nameless simplicity.
Through this nameless simplicity,
I come to be without desires.
Becoming desireless through simplicity,
all the world settles naturally. (ch. 37; Komjathy 2008, 67)

This makes a strong point about the teacher's role in fostering the optimal learning environment. As he is simple and calm in the classroom,

the students match his attitude. And once a student is calm, it becomes easy to discern his or her learning modes and objectives and to work toward them unfettered by emotional or psychological baggage. The more the teacher works in non-doing, the more students come to realize their self-being and become better learners.

Learning through Mistakes

To understand students' self-being means guiding them through defining experiences. If organized properly, these experiences help students understand themselves at a deeper level. An essential element to this process is students experiencing struggles.

One of the techniques a teacher following *daofa ziran* or doing things of themselves may use to free students toward being better learners is teaching what it means to make mistakes. I teach in a preparatory school, where every student plans to attend college. As a result, students often feel pressure to earn the highest grades. When told that an A is the only worthwhile grade, real learning declines. This is in part because students become afraid. Learning can happen under these circumstances, but in spite of this attitude, not because of it. Again, the role of the teacher is essential in changing a pressured classroom environment. The *Daode jing* expresses this, too,

Favor and disgrace seem alarming; . . .
 What are favor and disgrace?
 Favor is the lower: get it and you're surprised,
 Lose it and you're startled. . . .
 Why does high status greatly afflict your person?
 The reason we have trouble is that we have selves.
 If we had no selves, what troubles would we have?
 (ch. 13; Kwok et al. 1993, 51)

The problem for many achievement-oriented students is that they equate a high grade with success and any other grade with failure. However, as this text shows, people subjectively create these ideas of success and failure. They are not objective realities but unique to a specific individual and life situation. The solution is to let go of our "selves," forget all about "self."

The master teacher has to reveal this truth to students and guide them into letting go of expectations. Once students have done this, the teacher can help them accept mistakes as essential to the learning process: mistakes are learning opportunities. This in turn allows students to “figure out how to get better at what we are doing. They help us understand our thinking” (Tomlinson 2014, 11). Understanding our own thinking is just another way to understand our inherent inclinations. If the teacher can help students realize their own tendencies, then a mistake is no longer evidence of failure but a chance to see one’s self more clearly. It enables students to “do something of itself.” This will be done without thoughts of expected or hoped for outcomes.

Contemporary research has borne out the validity of this. As Carol Dweck argues, students tend to adopt one of two mindsets to learning.

In a fixed mindset, students believe their basic abilities, their intelligence, their talents are just fixed traits. They have a certain amount and that’s that, and then their goal becomes to look smart all the time and never look dumb. In a growth mindset, students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching, and persistence. They don’t necessarily think everyone’s the same or anyone can be Einstein, but they believe every one can get smarter if they work on it. (2012)

There are clear correlations between this “growth mindset” and the questions about favor and disgrace raised in the *Daode jing*. If we as teachers can encourage students to develop a growth mindset, success and failure no longer have the same meaning. and fear of failure no longer looms as large in their minds. As students with growth mindsets do not connect their identity directly to classroom grades, their minds become more balanced. The more teachers can foster this mindset, the more we see students naturally develop as learners.

Conclusion

Daofa ziran, if understood properly in the context of classroom teaching, involves training the entire person, not just teaching to a specific goal. As Victor Hori says, it is person oriented rather than task oriented (1994 7). Deeply appreciating and incorporating it into one’s teaching takes years

of effort, of mastering not only subject content, classroom management, and understanding students but also developing a stillness practice.

Although this may seem daunting, some basic practices help in the beginning. First among them is to demonstrate respect for yourself and your students every day. My judo instructor Yoshisada Yonezuka once said, "The instructor can't 'tell' students to show respect; they have to see it in action" (Interview, July 10, 2014). A second practice is kindness to oneself. Every teacher makes mistakes, but if he accepts this and learns from experiences, he is still a good teacher and on his way to becoming a better one. Also, if he cultivates an atmosphere of respect, students more easily forgive errors. Third, it is good to read a few *Daode jing* chapters every day, in whichever translation appeals most.

There are no shortcuts to becoming a master teacher in spite of what popular culture would have us believe. It took me years to begin recognizing the elements of my ego that got in the way of good teaching, but my Daoist beliefs and practices have helped me tremendously. I have learned how to create a classroom environment that allows students to develop their own abilities, where I as teacher am open to the nature of each individual student and constantly allow them to develop their own inclinations and tendencies.

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How Not To Be Thinged By Things

AVERY MORROW

Now up, now down, taking harmony for your measure, drifting and wandering with the ancestor of the ten thousand things, treating things as things but not letting them treat you as a thing—then how could you get in any trouble? This is the rule, the method of Shennong and the Yellow Emperor. (*Zhuangzi*, Watson 2013, 156-67)

King Ying of Wei had to compare himself to kings reigning on the horns of a snail, but since the mid-20th century we have all been blessed with a practical knowledge of our infinitesimal nature. We can comprehend the shortness of a 100-year lifespan in terms of a 6,000,000,000-year-old planet, and we can see for ourselves the size of the Earth among the stars as seen from Pluto. There has been no better era to live in and recognize the immensity of the universe. So why, in Zhuangzi's words, do we keep “getting thinged by things”?

For Zhuangzi, lack of perspective was one ailment afflicting humanity, but it was combined with more persistent, subtler errors in our worldview. To recognize the nature of his complaint, we must understand the context in which Zhuangzi views “things” negatively. The “getting thinged by things” discussion was prompted by the story of a healthy tree that avoids destruction, and a mute chicken that gets slaughtered. The woodsman describes the tree as “not timber” (*bucai* 不材). The Chinese word *timber* is equivalent with *material*, i.e. material for firewood. Because the tree will make poor firewood, it is not *material* for any purpose meaningful to him. The healthy tree is really not a *thing* for the woodsman at all.

The same term was used to refer to the useless oak in the Inner Chapters, but here Zhuangzi's disciples make a powerful logical leap: they use the same term "not timber" to refer to the slaughtered chicken. This use of the term is found nowhere else in the book. Something new is going on here: it is recognized that the crow of a chicken shares something in common with the timber of a tree. They both provide an end to others; they make a thing *material*. Yet immateriality's link to other Daoist virtues remains hazy to the disciples. Even though the term timber or material has been offered to them in a negative context, they slyly suggest to Zhuangzi that he is missing out on its positive aspects. The timber of a tree is only good material when the tree is destroyed, but the crow of a chicken is only good material while the chicken is alive. Might not there be things that people are good for, which cause their friends to want them to stay alive?

Zhuangzi does not offer a logical objection to this, although perhaps he recognizes that the slaughtered chicken was much more useful to his hosts as raw material for dinner. What his disciples are really talking about is having an external purpose in one's life, but Zhuangzi already knows that losing that purpose after you have it spells disaster for what you thought was the meaning of your life. So he tells them, "Things join only to part, reach completion only to crumble. If sharp edged, they are blunted; if high stationed, they are overthrown" (Watson 2013, 157; hereafter abbreviated "W"). Zhuangzi's disciples are hungry to offer themselves like firewood for some official station, but they do not understand the impermanence of such an arrangement.

"Getting thinged by things" is accordingly linked closely to usefulness and *telos*. The context of this discussion shows that Zhuangzi's objection is not ontological, nor does he anticipate postmodern buzzwords like objectification or intersubjectivity. The true man is still "treating things as things." "That which treats things as things is not limited by things" (W 183). He does not call the existence of objects into question, but things are unimportant to him, because they are not his end goal. Ordinary men, in contrast, "may be used by the world, but they are not worthy to make the world work for them" (W 103). In these parallel statements, Zhuangzi offers his readers two options: you can recognize the unimportance of the things (including ideas and other men) that you put to use, or those things will impose ends onto you.

Zhuangzi provides ample illustrations of both halves of this dichotomy. While some of his most famous personages are craftsmen, when he is speaking of putting things to use, he uses the example of an "enlightened king." A king, at the top of the human hierarchy, is a good example of someone who can eliminate the control of things over him. Some might expect Zhuangzi to approve of whimsical or unproductive behavior in a king, but in fact, in the Inner Chapters there is a clear sense of rule involved. A Daoist king has the duty of "making absolutely certain that things can do what they are supposed to do" (W 55), not attempting to make things different from what they are, but adapting his rule to the preexisting abilities of things. "Following along with things the way they are, he makes no room for personal views" (W 56). Here, as everywhere for Zhuangzi, likes and dislikes are to be avoided. The *res publica* should not be manipulated or taxed to fit the king's desires, since it has a natural function that is best unimpeded.

Because an enlightened king has no personal views that he desires to impose onto the country, "the people do not depend on him" (W 57). They do not place their hopes in him, and in fact he fades into the background, invisible and unimportant to daily life. But paradoxically, the king's "transforming influence touches the ten thousand things." Although this seems like a contradiction, it is easy enough to imagine: if a king removes his tastes from the picture, he will choose and dismiss his ministers based solely on ability, which will cause others to cultivate their abilities and set an example for their inferiors. *The enlightened king changes things without any desire to change.* "Being empty, you will do nothing, and yet there will be nothing that is not done" (W 197).

Yet the enlightened king, having eliminated his likes and dislikes, is no longer emotionally involved in his own success or failure. Adept at using things, the king is becoming less of a thing himself. In fact, he is well on his way to liberation: "Now the possessor of a state . . . who clearly understands that in treating other things as mere things, he himself is no longer a mere thing—how could he be content to govern the hundred clans of the world and do nothing more?" (W 82). Such a man will become a wanderer and perhaps a sage.

The enlightened king does not attempt to change things, since he is content to use their preexisting functions. There is no gain for him to do this, except to get closer to the Way. In contrast, his subjects are hungry

to make themselves into useful firewood for some cause or another. “The wise man is not happy without the modulations of idea and thought; the rhetorician is not happy without the progression of argument and rebuttal; the examiner is not happy without the tasks of interrogation and intimidation. All are penned in by these things” (W 202). A list of more common ambitions follows this quotation—it is notable that the king himself is missing from the list—but these three should suffice. If any of these men were to realize that concepts like “the progression of argument and rebuttal” are *mere things*, they would no longer be bound by them, and in fact, by analogy with the king becoming a sage above, they would no longer desire them.

But unlike the king, who possesses the nation and does not need anything more, virtually all of the subjects see visible gains in their lives from mastering trades and fulfilling their desires. They believe themselves to be taking advantage of circumstances, but in fact the circumstances are taking advantage of them. “*Servants to circumstance and things*, they delight in change, and if the moment comes when they can put their talents to use, then they cannot keep from acting. In this way, they follow along with the turning years, *letting themselves be changed by things*” (W 204). The ambitions of the subjects are fulfilled by becoming useful, timely, and responsive to change, so they are willing to submit to anything that seems promising for this purpose. If they were allowed to vote for a king, they would vote for the one who promised change.

Zhuangzi's portrait of the needy subjects is not terribly negative, but this final word about “being changed by things” shows that he sees some insufficiency in their way of life. The honest way to live is not attained by a servant of things. By that rule, neither is it admirable to “delight in change” or to hunger for the right moment for action. Hanfeizi relates that Zhuangzi once admonished a king trying to take advantage of an opportunity for war, since he failed to see the realities of his own kingdom (Liao 1939, 226). This is in accord with the King Ying of Wei story, where the ruler is so anguished over whether to make war that he has become totally subdued and enslaved by these “things.” An enlightened king would not fall into either of these traps, since he would not be hungry to gain territory, and the decision to make war would be one of “mere things.”

For the common people already in the snares of desire, Zhuangzi's program is not so clear. Where a king might find it relatively easy to become a user of things, we might find it relatively hard to distinguish the things we use from what uses us. Do we all have to quit our jobs and live in the mountains, or can we become like his butcher and wheelmaker? He offers sympathy: "Now that we've already become things, if we want to return again to the Root, I'm afraid we'll have a hard time of it! The Great Man—he's the only one who might find it easy" (W 177). Without delving too deep into how to become a Great Man, what does it mean to "treat things as (mere) things" in the way Zhuangzi recommends?

It is incorrect to believe that we can seize control over things through the force of our will. The examples of the intellectual subjects above show that all sorts of desire, even the subtler, intellectual desires, amount to enslavement by things. Zhuangzi asks us to abandon our attachments to all things, even our ideals. For the sage, "the ten thousand things are insufficient to distract his mind" (W 98). Being undistracted by things, the sage is the only one able to really use them. However, Zhuangzi posits a world where the sage freed of desire will still go "wandering" in the world, wherever the Way takes him. The Way does not come as a message from without, but is part of one's "inner nature." How do we tell the difference between distractions, or desires, and inner nature?

One lengthy passage in the Outer Chapters deals with this question. First, Zhuangzi disposes of our ordinary ideas of causality: "When you say that 'nothing does it' or that 'something does it', you have not yet escaped from the realm of things, and so you *fall into error*" (W 225). Here, Zhuangzi's famous liberality goes out the window, and he warns us that there is a *conceptual error* in our most basic assumptions about how the world works. When we assume, for example, that a footless man has been punished by the government, we are incorrectly assigning cause to a thing; if we assume he was born that way, we are incorrectly assigning cause to nothing. We have always assumed that we can observe agents causing things to happen (e.g. cutting off a foot indicates a punishment), and that we can imitate their behavior and use things in the same way. Now, without questioning the mere existence of things, we must question what acts on them, like the commander who explains that his feet were removed by Heaven (W 20).

Zhuangzi insists, contrary to our common sense, that it is not humans which use things but the Way, which is described akin to the Buddhist conception of emptiness by denying both its existence and nonexistence in the category of things, viz.: “The Way cannot be thought of as being, nor can it be thought of as nonbeing. In calling it the Way, we are only adopting a temporary expedient,” because it is not a *thing* at all. “Nothing does it, ‘something makes it like this’—these occupy a mere corner of the *realm of things*,” which is insufficient to explain the world, because to attribute an action to a *thing* is to attribute it to something *material*. A sophisticated point is being made here which goes back to the “useless tree” discussion. The tree, being useless for the sake of making firewood, was “immaterial” to the woodcutter. Conversely, something material is useful to an end—but it is not the material that determines what its own end will be. Zhuangzi’s disciples, hoping to offer themselves as material for an official post, believe that they are the ones taking the job, so they will be determining what they do. In fact, by making themselves useful, material things they are surrendering some of their ability to act in the Way.

When Zhuangzi denies our ordinary conception of causality, he is reminding us of something similar to the mistake Zhuangzi’s disciples make. We believe that we are the actors kicking the ball down the street, but in fact we are the material being used by whatever force is actually responsible for that action. That is to say, we are the timber being used to light a fire, yet we believe ourselves to be responsible for burning things. We must surrender our common ideas of causality and agency in order to really accept the highest duty of expressing the Way.

Another issue with causality is the impossibility of determining the full depths of a cause or an effect. “I look back for the roots of the past, but they extend back and back without end. I search for the termination of the future, but it never stops coming at me” (W 225-26). Even if we accept that the ball was kicked because it came into contact with my foot, there are additional causes of the ball being sewn together by someone, my being born, the ball somehow coming into proximity with me, and so forth—how can a really operative cause be determined? And after the ball rolls down the street, where does it go next? Will it cause me to run after it and get some exercise, and will I make a car to swerve and crash? What is the total extent of the effect of one action? If we extend cause and

effect into the vastness of the past and future, we perform a *reductio ad absurdum* on our foolish idea that we have the ability to use things.

Zhuangzi concludes that for "the perfection of the Way and things—neither words nor silence is worthy of expressing it. Not to talk, not to be silent—this is the highest form of debate" (W 226). This is because both talk and silence are behaviors you attribute to yourself, not to the Way. The Way is what acts on things, regardless of the behavior of the material being who foolishly believes that he can cause things to happen.

In modern times, it seems almost impossible to abandon the idea of things being caused by other things, because it is a key part of how we think. We offer up proofs that our problems originate in this or that *material* cause, and might be resolved by this or that order of things, an analysis which Zhuangzi rejects with similar disgust: "Let me try describing this analysis of yours. It takes life as its basis and knowledge as its teacher and from there proceeds to assign 'right' and 'wrong'. So in the end, we have 'names' and 'realities' and accordingly each man considers himself to be their arbiter" (W 196). The men of ancient times, more familiar with the Way, understood the shortcomings of this type of questioning (W 102). In the past, names and realities were *mere things* and of the least importance, but now they represent the most "solid" thing to people who have lost the Way, and they have been integrated into an irrational "analysis" that attempts to derive "right" and "wrong" from ill-founded knowledge.

Why, for those who hope to return to the Way, must our hard-won ideals be abandoned? It is precisely because "*each man considers himself to be their arbiter.*" This implies a multiplicity of Ways, which is contrary to the concept of the Way. The "right" and "wrong" founded on "life and knowledge", that is, one's personal opinions, necessarily fall short of the Way. The "shifting voices" (W 17) of the Inner Chapters cannot determine right and wrong no matter how many of them get involved in the argument, and this is because we have fallen under the delusion that we can figure it all out for ourselves. We have become convinced by the nonsensical idea that we might penetrate the Ultimate by analysis of materials alone. To lose this confidence in one's own abilities is to gain the Great Unity.

This is the origin of many of Zhuangzi's more oblique expressions such as "to lose everything and yet possess everything" (W 120), "discard little wisdom, and great wisdom will become clear" (W 231), or recalling good men like the enlightened king above, "they do what is right, but they do not know that this is righteousness" (W 94). The paradoxical truth of the world is that we can only do the right thing when it is not *our* right thing. When our possession is attacked, we must defend it; when someone else seizes it, we must wrestle it back. The Way, on the other hand, is a liberating truth that can be given freely without changing its nature.

To show how the Way is different from any artificial mode of life, Zhuangzi uses the metaphor of a river: "Even if we asked the wind and sun to remain constantly over the river, the river would not regard this as the beginning of any real trouble for itself—it relies on the springs that feed it and goes on its way" (W 213). Because the river has a Source, it will not fall into danger of drying up. Our mortal analysis, based only in our possessions of "life and knowledge", lacks that fundamental security.

Like the river, the True Man of ancient times "didn't forget where he began [in the Source]; he didn't try to find out where he would end [by the movements of wind and sun]. This is what I call not using the mind to repel the Way, not using man to help out Heaven." (W 43). Inventing a teaching like benevolence or righteousness to replace the Way, and trying to possess and defend that "thing" using the mind as a tool, only replaces the Way with a personal view, so Zhuangzi describes it as "using the mind to repel the Way." The injustice that we see in the world is our own perception; it is not our place to "help out Heaven" by trying to set it right.

One of Zhuangzi's very first assertions runs, "the Perfect Man has no self" (W 3). A "self" is the sort of thing that would impose rights, wrongs, forms, realities, and worst of all, analyses onto the world. All of these things cloud our clear vision of the Way. This does not contradict Zhuangzi's rejection of the "universal love and nonpartisanship" (W 104) advocated by the Mohists. They simply propose a different kind of teaching, like benevolence and righteousness, and they are therefore "using the mind to repel the Way." The correct way to go is the "fasting of the mind" (W 25), bypassing likes, dislikes, and conceptions and relying on

pure emptiness. This should eliminate the self and the mind that forms it, as it does for Yan Hui.

The Great Man who can accomplish this feat is no longer "getting thinged by things." "His face and form blend with the Great Unity, the Great Unity that is selfless. Being selfless, how can he look on possession as possession?" (W 82). A selfless man has no way to possess anything, and likewise, things cannot possess him. But he can still *use* things, in a very different way, not desirous for change himself and not invested in their changes, and thereby paradoxically directing those changes, like how a stream shapes itself around a big rock. Zhuangzi insists that, in fact, a Great Man is the only one who can do this: "Only what is still can still the stillness of other things" (W 35). *Yin*, the immensely heavy and still Great Man, employs the Pivot of the Dao and balances out the *yang*, the "things" that are light and desirous of change. Hence Hanfeizi says:

If the ruler has the reins of government in his grip, he is said to be "heavy." If the ruler does not depart from his seat, he is said to be "resting." If heavy, he can control the light. If resting, he can subdue the moving. (Liao 1939:210)

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Daoist Longevity and the Aging Society

YANXIA ZHAO

Abstract

The achievements of modern medicine in the treatment and detection of diseases, alongside the improvement of social welfare provision, have resulted in the significant reduction of premature deaths caused by the insufficient medical treatment and poor nutrition. Greater numbers of people are living longer. This continued growth of the elderly population (people over 65) and the proportionally smaller younger generation now characterizes our society. Whatever the benefits of longevity, an aging society presents its own problems. For governments these include increased costs in the form of medical spending, social care, and social welfare, a diminishing labor market, and, in general, a lack of vitality, energy and creativity in society. How to counter these newly emerging challenges has become a serious concern for many scholars, organizations, and governments. However, a solution may be found in the traditional Chinese self-help practices that are part of Daoism.

Distinct from the other world religions, Daoism is very much a religion of “this world.” It places a strong emphasis on the cultivation of the individual’s physical health, particularly in the form of spiritual wellbeing. From a Daoist perspective, working towards healthy longevity is crucial for the individual in order to pursue her/his religious goal of immortality. Old age should not be marred by sickness and debility. On the contrary, having a physically healthy body and an alert mind full of energy and vitality are essential characteristics of true longevity. Based on such an understanding, Daoist practitioners through history have created many effective *yangsheng* (wellbeing) exercises with particular focus on skills and techniques for nourishing and prolonging life. These exercises are especially appropriate for people who have already entered old age, because of their gentle nature and time requirement. This

paper aims to explore how Daoist *yangsheng* exercise may contribute to the emerging aging society.

Recent advances in medicine have brought about improved nutrition and better health education. Thus, greater numbers of people in the developed world and increasingly also in developing countries are living longer than ever before. The prolonged life expectancy of many individuals is not only possible, but has become an inevitable reality. The direct result of this longevity is the decline of the death rate and an increase in the elderly population.

This comes with another, related trend. We may all be living longer, but increasingly we are leading isolated lives. Social atomism has become a predominant feature of a society that indulges self-centered materialism. This has become apparent in the new lifestyle choices among younger people since 1980s: either to live a single, career-focused life, or to have a lifestyle or family structure, such as Yuppie (young urban professional) or Dinky (dual income no kids yet). This kind of lifestyle aspiration has led to a decline in the birth rate, which in turn causes a decrease in the young population. There are now more people over the age of 65 than youngsters. According the Department for Work and Pensions in the United Kingdom, the structure of society has changed dramatically in recent years. A larger portion of the populace is living longer than ever before:

Life expectancy has been growing steadily for over half a century and the UK has now reached a point where there are more people over State Pension age than children. In 1950, a man aged 65 could expect on average to live to the age of 76. Today, he can expect to live to 87, and by 2050 to 91. Today there are 10,000 people aged 100 or over. By 2050 there will be 275,000. By 2030, people over 50 will comprise almost a third of the workforce and almost half the adult population. (<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/aging-society/>. Accessed 7/18/2012)

The age statistics from the Administration on Aging in the Department of Health and Human Services in the U.S., too, shows that people over 65 numbered 39.6 million in 2009, representing 12.9% of the populace, that is, about one in every eight Americans. By 2030, there will be about 72.1 million older persons, about 19% and more than twice the number in

2000 (http://www.aoa.gov/aoaroot/aging_statistics/index.aspx; accessed 7/28/2012).

Research from the U.K. and the U.S. indicates that the aging society has become a determining feature in developed countries. But it is also happening to developing countries such as China. Since 1976, when Mao died, a “later, longer, fewer” policy has been the cornerstone of the Chinese birth control program, encouraging couples to get married later, wait longer to have children, and have fewer children altogether. In 1979, in order to control China’s burgeoning population and reduce the strain on scarce resources, the state issued the one-child policy alongside sweeping economic reforms. It has been spectacularly successful in reducing Chinese population growth, having prevented as many as 300 million births, and in improving the standard of living of Chinese families, especially in the cities.¹ For example, China now has one of the world’s lowest “dependency ratios,” with on average three economically active adults for each dependent child or old person. This means that it enjoys a larger “demographic dividend,” i.e., extra growths due to the high ratio of workers to dependents, than its neighbors.

However, this dividend is nearing the end of its ability to pay up. According to *The Economist* (7/21/2011), between 2000 and 2010 the share of the population under 14, that is, the future providers for their parents, slumped from 23% to 17%. China now has *too few* young people to take care of its elders. In the past, there were around 8 people of working age for every person over 65, but by 2050 it will only be 2.2. This is posing a very serious situation. Even Japan, which has seen a similar reduction in population, still has 2.6 people of working age to support every person over age 65 (<http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=128&catid=4&subcatid=15#240>. Accessed 7/29/2012. In the *Times* of London (4/29/2011), Leo Lewis suggests,

¹ Research shows that, in the 1970s, the average Chinese women had 5.8 children, today she has 2. The most dramatic changes took place between 1970 and 1980 when the birth rate dropped from 44 to 18/1000 (<http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=128&catid=4&subcatid=15#240>. Accessed 7/29/2012).

China may be forced to reconsider its one-child policy after census data revealed that rural-to-urban migration and rising life expectancies have led to a rapidly aging population. Even though China's population grew by 73.9 million people to 1.34 billion between 2000 and 2010 the number of young as a proportion of the population aged under 14 contracted by 6.3 per cent, while the over-65s grew by 1.91 per cent. (<http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=128&catid=4&subcatid=15#240>; accessed 7/29/2012)

Indeed, last year the new Chinese government under Xi Jinping had to adjust the one-child policy in order to solve potential difficulties emerging in society. Among new challenges human society never experienced before, the shortage of a young labor force is most serious. According to analysts, a sharp fall in the number of young people damages the economy, and a shrinking workforce combined with inflation might lead to the kind of social destabilization governments dread (<http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=128&catid=4&subcatid=15#240>; accessed 7/30 /2011).

The second serious problem of an aging society involves increased medical cost, notably hospitals and medical care for an elderly population with failing health, combined with the increasing cost of pensions and social security. The U.K. government has already cut funding for the National Health Service to reduce healthcare costs. It has tightened the requirements for personal pension provision and has increased the retirement age from 65 to 70 to save pension money. According to a BBC Wales news report (7/10/2012), based on the calculations of a local government council, in ten years, there will not be enough money to pay for children's playgrounds and care for the disabled; nor will they have any budget for residents' trash removal: all the funds will go toward care for the elderly. That means that, unless an effective solution is found for both hospital costs and the increasing demand for elder care, local and central governments will soon face increasing difficulties to find sufficient funds for the effective functioning of their welfare policies.

The third but by no means last problem is the lack of vitality, energy, and creativity of older people. As people age, their physical functions weaken, energy and vitality decline, and disease and illness become the norm. Malfunctioning internal organs or a decline in mental

health compromise the ability to recover a state of well-being, and the prospect is full-time care from either family or society. In societies where elder care depends entirely on social welfare, the cost of services becomes a great burden to the government. On the other hand, in countries without social care systems such as China, the financial burden and practical care falls on to the shoulders of family members.

When hospital costs and social service provisions are so expensive that neither society nor families can afford to pay them, serious political, economic, and human rights issues emerge. For example, increasing numbers of the elderly suffer from paralytic diseases or dementia, both requiring intensive 24-hour care. A Chinese family has only two ways to obtain assistance, either by paying for services or by using family members as “free labor.” For a family with neither the money nor the spare time, it is virtually impossible to provide humane and appropriate care. Thus, ensuring and protecting the rights of the elderly in sickness and decline is a huge issue. If a busy working family member takes care of their sick elderly relative(s), they in effect take on two full-time jobs, inevitably affecting their quality of life and health. The more people with no vital energy and creativity live in a given family or society, the more real crises come about.

Looking at these three problems, it becomes obvious that the central issue is the declining health of the elderly set against the diminishing vital energy and creativity of society members who focus primarily on their care. It may seem simplistic, but if we could find a way to maintain health in old age and thereby free up the energy and creativity of both the old and their would-be young caregivers, then many problems of the aging society will disappear. Not only will hospital costs and social care expenses decrease, but the main labor force no longer carries the burden of care and they can pay attention to other family and social activities.

How, then, can we provide for a way to maintain health, energy, and vitality long into old age? The Daoist tradition of nourishing life (*yangsheng* 養生) has great potential, offering simple and effective exercises for enhancing vitality and increasing longevity.

Yangsheng

English translations of *yangsheng* include "nourishing," "preserving," and "cherishing life." The *Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religion*, defines it as "Daoist practices, especially through breathing and directing the vital breath to prolong life and attain immortality" (Bowker 1997). The practice, originally documented in medical texts, has been part of Daoist cultivation for several millennia (see Kohn 2008). It has also played a continuous role in Chinese medicine as part of preventive care and life extension and in Confucianism as a tool for moral cultivation. Chinese Buddhists, too, notably Chan followers and the Shaolin monks have undertaken *yangsheng* as means toward spiritual enlightenment.

The term consists of two characters, "nourishing" and "life." The word for "life," *sheng* 生 in the ancient oracle bones resembles a new plant , showing how it grows or generates from the earth . Later the term came to mean "take place," "give birth," "live," "produce," and "renew." It indicated everything alive, the opposite of death. Thus, *sheng* refers not only to human life (*rensheng* 人生), but also life in general (*shengming* 生命), meaning the life span of any living creature.

Yang originally means "to graze sheep." It occurs in the oracle bones clearly showing two parts, a sheep  plus a hand , or a sheep  plus a hand holding a stick . Both variants indicate a human hand driving sheep to take care of them, raising and multiplying the herds. In later centuries, the graph changed, so that its seal script version reads , combining sheep  and food . This indicates a more complex meaning, including "to feed," "foster," "nourish," and "nurture." Over the centuries, the term expanded further to include the sense of "cultivate," "conserve," "support," "maintain," "protect" and "educate." As a form of personal cultivation, nourishing life serves to conserve life energy to prolong physical and sexual vitality and enhance life. Already the 3rd-century BCE thinker Xunzi 荀子 had remarked that everybody desires "warm clothing, filling food, and long life" (*Xunzi* 4.4-7). Although the practice later came to be dominantly associated with Daoism, it was ubiquitous in Chinese culture and appears in such diverse works as the

Mozi 墨子, Guanzi 管子, Hanfeizi 韓非子, Lüshi chunqiu 呂氏春秋, and Huainanzi 淮南子 (Knoblock 1988, 144).

Originally *yangsheng* only meant to “care for the living,” and is so used by Mencius (1A.3). However, the term soon came to indicate the particular practice of prolonging life. “The theme of nurturing life is associated in Xunzi’s mind with prolonging life and possibly with the elixir of immortality and the physical preservation of the body” (Knoblock 1988, 144). As Xunzi says,

If you employ the measure of excellence in every circumstance to control the vital breath and nourish life, you will outlive even Patriarch Peng, and if you use it to cultivate your character and strengthen yourself, you will establish a reputation equal to that of Yao and Yu. (2.2)

Rather than speaking of *yangsheng*, Confucians tend to focus on *yangqi* 養氣, nourishing vital energy, and *yangxin* 養心, cultivating the heart-mind. For example, Mencius stresses the cultivation of vital energy or cultivating the massively powerful (*haoran* 浩然) inner nature (2A), while Xunzi emphasizes ordering vital energy (*zhiqi* 治氣) in combination with nurturing the heart-mind (*yangxin* 養心) (Knoblock 1988, 152). Although he cites the example of the long-lived Pengzu to prove that longevity can be achieved with the proper methods (Knoblock 1988, 146), Confucians typically did not place a strong heavy emphasis on personal health cultivation or extended long life. Nourishing life in Confucianism, therefore, was more a political undertaking, providing people with sufficient food and essential spiritual well-being (Mencius 1A3.1, 3.3, 7.24).

Daoists, on the other hand, focus on the quality of life in this world, with a sharp focus on individual health and well-being. “The essential faith of Daoism is the belief of immortals, and the distinctive feature of Daoist doctrine is to emphasize life, enjoy it, treasure it, pursue longevity in the world, and only then obtain immortal status by realizing Dao” (Zhang 2003, 191). As Eva Wong puts it, “To live a healthy and long life, to be tranquil and untouched by the dust of the mundane world, and to become one with the life-giving energy of the Tao, these become the goals of the Daoist practitioner” (Liu Hua-Yang 1998, 3).

The first Daoist mention of nourishing life occurs in the *Zhuangzi*. Chapter 3 is entitled “Yangsheng zhu” 養生主, translated variously as

"Nourishing Life Is Central" or "What is Essential in Nourishing Life" (Wang 2014, 49). The story about Cook Ding speaks of the "way of nourishing life, indicating a process of cultivation that can bring body and mind into perfect unity, where perfection and Dao are vividly present. As the individual becomes one with Dao, his potential develops to utmost perfection and he can act with an immense power from within.

Chapter 19, moreover, "Dasheng" 達生 (Mastering Life), contains numerous stories showing how "a person who is skillful in nourishing life is like a shepherd, whipping any sheep lagging behind." Two cases were examined in this chapter. For example, Shan Bao was good at physical cultivation and health enhancement, and therefore he looked young and healthy even in old age. However, he retired to the mountains and ended up being devoured by tiger due to being isolated from society and unable to cultivate good relations. In contrast, Zhang Yi was good at social relationships, "mastering external conditions," yet he died young from an infectious disease.

Nourishing life here refers to keeping oneself in two aspects or dimensions: physical health and extended life expectancy, on the one hand, and social relationships and communal harmony, on the other. The *Zhuangzi* suggests that it is best to cultivate one's weak points in both these dimensions. "Rangwang" 讓王 (Giving Away a Throne, ch. 28) moreover, discusses *yangsheng* as the completion of life. The reason why certain sages of old were not interested in rulership was their belief that political power had nothing to do with the real value of nourishing life, i.e., fulfilling one's natural time on earth. Here nourishing life has the meaning of completing one's natural span of life in a natural way (Cao 1999, 429).

Later Daoists developed nourishing life into systematic theories and structured exercises to preserve life in the face of potential dangers encountered in natural, social, and political settings. They expanded it to include techniques to maintain and strengthen physical health, enhance spiritual well-being, and nurture inherent power (*de* 德). They also cultivated primordial energy (*yuanqi* 元氣) by systematically nurturing body, physical life (*ming* 命), and inner nature (*xing* 性) in order to attain immortality.

Thus, the would-be alchemist Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-363) in the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (The Master Who Embraces Simplicity) divides Daoist exercises into three levels. Most fundamentally, there are systematic self-healing exercises to cure sickness and disease. Second, there are longevity practices to enhance and improve health while increasing life expectancy. They include healing exercises, breath techniques and sexual practices, dietary specifications, as well as meditative methods with focus on using visualization and imagination (see Kohn 2012).

Third and highest are “immortality exercises” to reverse the course of aging and go beyond ordinary existence. They include the bedchamber arts as well as external and internal alchemy. Ge Hong says that those who only know “how to ingest herbal medicines, but ignore the essential “arts for reversing the course of aging,” although they may be free from disease, “they entirely lack of principle of long life. . . . Those who do not obtain the golden elixir and only ingest herbal medicines and practice minor arts [of longevity] can extend the number of their years and defer the time of death, but they will not attain immortality” (ch. 6; Pregadio 2006, 134-35). To reach immortality, therefore, one has to practice on all three levels.

Still, even without going that far, Daoist longevity techniques serve to enhance personal well-being, strengthen health, and allow people to live longer and more productive lives. Fundamentally different from the Confucian concern for social care, the Buddhist preoccupation with mental purity and enlightenment, as well as the medical focus on disease prevention, the Daoist tradition has yet integrated them all from the most ancient to the modern. This approach is also highly pragmatic, adapting methods and changing patterns as society requires. As a result, Daoist *yangsheng* has become a uniquely distinctive tradition that continues to be highly relevant today.

Dominant Attitudes

Daoism has a fundamentally positive attitude toward human life and the capability of people to deal with their own health, claiming that they should take full responsibility for their well-being. It focuses dominantly on life in the here and now rather than the hereafter, regarding human life as a treasure and the necessary vehicle for tran-

scendence. Its central teaching is that, as the *Lüshi chunqiu* has it, "nothing is a greater treasure than life" (ch. Guisheng; Chen 2002, 75). As the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (Scripture of Great Peace) of the 2nd century CE states,

Death for everyone under heaven is not a small thing. Once a person dead, he/she will never see the world that is manifested through heaven, earth, sun and moon again, and his/her body will turn into dust. Death and life are therefore a great business [for anybody]. Everybody who living between the heaven and the earth, can only has one life, no one can repeat his/her life again. (ch. 72; Wang 1997, 298)

Why should human life be such a treasure? It is because that unlike any other form of life, human life possesses both inner nature and physical life in a balanced way. The Ming scholar Zhao Taiding 赵台鼎 states in his work, *Maiwang* 脉望 (Perspectives on the Meridians):

Inner nature belongs to the consciousness, while physical life belongs to form and material existence. Ghosts and gods have inner nature [consciousness] but no physical life [form and material existence]. Grasses and trees have physical life but no inner nature. Animals have less inner nature and more physical life. Only beings possess both.

Because of the equal importance of the physicality and spirituality in humanity and because of the fragile nature of the individual human life, one should always place health and longevity first. As Shi Jianwu says in "On True Immortals" (ch. 1) of the *Zhong-Lü chuandao ji* 钟吕传道集,

If one wants one's human life cut off from the forever lasting incarnation wheel and therefore avoid from entering a body shell of other species, one has to try to let one's body in a no-sickness, never getting old and far away from suffering condition; one has to enlarge oneself in order to be connected and unified with the Heaven on high and the Earth below, and one has to be a person who carries the *Yin* and embrace the *Yang*. (Zhang 2003, 210)

Similarly, the *Taiping jing* suggests that enjoying life should be regarded as "the highest virtue," that "pursuing the Dao of longevity is a valuable weapon of the country" (ch. 40, 34; Wang 1997, 80, 18). Here the individual pursuit of health and longevity is not only the necessary

precondition of personal transcendence, but also forms the foundation of social sustainability. This is especially true for an ageing society.

Daoist *yangsheng* not only emphasizes the importance of valuing individual life, but it also stresses the capacity for maintaining and enhancing health and prolonging life expectancy. Rather than relying on a higher power or resigning themselves to a preordained fate or God, Daoists proclaim, “My life is in my hands not in those of heaven” (*Baopuzi* 16). It is our responsibility to look after our own health. If we practice the methods of nourishing life, we can reach longevity and even immortality.

Zhuangzi says, “Following the center line for guidance, we can protect the body, keep life intact, nurture our loved ones, and live our heaven-given life expectancy” (Palmer 2006, 4; Wang 2014, 52-52). This makes it clear that we can find health, longevity, and immortality. As Livia Kohn notes, “One can make the body basis, the root, the foundation of the cultivation process, anchor oneself in physicality and transform the very nature of bodily existence as part of the divine undertaking” (2006, 3). She believes that the Daoist approach is “a unique route that has yet to find its match among other religions and that has, with physicality becoming more relevant these days, a great appeal to modern Western seekers” (2006, 3).

Variety of Practices

Daoist longevity techniques are the product of centuries of experimentation, research, and development (Wong 1998, 1). They include a number of different methods linked with a variety of lineages. Some are simple to do; others are complex and need time and wisdom. However, the most basic involve self-care practices everyone could do at home. Among them, the most popular one is taiji quan, nowadays understood as a form of moving qigong.

According to Michael Winn, moving qigong is most comfortable for Westerners, as its dynamic approach satisfies their need to do something with their minds while also allowing their bodily energies to be directed productively. He claims even people who claim they cannot meditate after doing taiji for some time find themselves moving spontaneously into a space of tranquility and stillness. “The resultant benefits of moving

qigong to both physical health and psychological health have been well documented in thousands of scientific studies" (2009, 178).

Taiji as a form of meditation in motion has attracted practitioners from all over the world. There is growing evidence that this mind-body practice, originally a martial art, works for treating or preventing numerous health issues. A low-impact, slow-motion exercise, it is accessible to people of all ages and in any physical condition, from the fittest and youngest to the sickest and most elderly, even those confined to wheelchairs or recovering from surgery (<http://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-health-benefits-of-tai-chi>, accessed 3/24/ 2015).

There are other types of simple and easy-to-learn Daoist longevity techniques useful to the aging society. Michael Winn offers a quick survey of Daoist heart-mind cultivation methods that have become popular in the West. These include standing and moving qigong (subtle breath skills), *neigong* (inner mind skills), meditation techniques such as the Inner Smile and Sitting in Oblivion, as well as different forms of internal alchemy methods (2009, 177). Quite few scholars recognize that Daoist physical cultivation techniques can be beneficial to deal with stress, improve health, and nurture well-being (Kohn 2006, 3-5). According to Robert Santee, there is also considerable evidence supporting the benefits and effectiveness of oblivion practice and mind fasting as described in the Zhuangzi, notably in reducing or eliminating chronic stress and increasing overall well-being (2008, 95-6).

For our purposes, I would like to focus on two sets of healing exercises known as the Eight Brocades (*baduan jin* 八段锦) and Diamond Longevity Practice (*jingang changshou gong* 金刚长寿功), both are exercises for improving health through working on the vital energy of Qi flowing through the meridians. As scientists learn more about how acupuncture functions in relation to disease, and especially chronic disease, they also gain a better understanding how *qi* functions in healing and prevention. That is to say, exercises based on the meridians and energy patterns used in acupuncture are understood to have a direct impact on health.

Legend has it that the Eight Brocades goes back to two immortals of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), Zhongli Quan 钟离权 and Lü Dongbin 吕洞宾. The oldest version on record is an illustrated seated meditation that appears in Zeng Cao's 曾慥 *Daoshu* (道枢 Pivot of the Way; DZ 1017; dat.

1151) as well as in the *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十书 (Ten Works on the Cultivation of Perfection; DZ 263) of the 13th century. Its standing version, more popular today, goes back to the Ming dynasty and can be linked to the Buddhist Shaolin Monastery 少林寺 (Shahar 2008, 160-68; Kohn 2008, 180-83).

The latter works on the meridians with particularly designed movements. Thus, it begins by adjusting the Triple Warmer by raising both arms up toward heaven. Soon thereafter, one adjusts the spleen and stimulates the stomach by “separating heaven and earth,” i.e., lifting one arm while lowering the other. The fourth practice involves gazing backward to release any ailments caused by the five forms of physical weariness and seven emotional injuries. Following this, “clenching the fists and glaring fiercely,” serves to increase physical power and vital energy. Subsequent exercises strengthen the kidneys and the waist, release fire from the heart, and eliminate all kinds of disease.

Unlike this, Diamond Practice goes back to Zhang Zhishun 张至顺 (1912-2015, a 21st generation lineage holder of the Dragongate (Longmen 龙门) lineage within the school of Complete Perfection (Quanzhen 全真), who published it in 1993 when he was already over eighty. He describes that the exercise was originated in the Tang dynasty and it is still very efficient in building up the energy body of the practitioner. However, since its transmission went strictly from a senior master to only one disciple, it remained rather unknown (Zhang 1998, 5) even in its own Daoist school.

Like the Eight Brocades, this also consists of eight practices and strongly focuses on energy meridians and healing intentions. Unlike the other system, however, it comes in two separated parts, a yang or diamond section and a yin or longevity part. While the former bears some resemblance to the Eight Brocades and works dominantly with vigorous physical movements centering on the meridians, the latter emphasizes the enhancement of mental well-being and releasing psychological problems through soft and flexible motion.

In addition, Diamond Longevity Practice presents its eight exercises in a clear and logical order. It begins by opening the body through working with the meridian system, and then deals with issues caused by weariness and emotions, to finally focus on strengthening the physical power

and vital energy. All its practices follow the theory of Chinese medicine and the system of the five phases, working on the organ systems in the traditional conquest order, beginning with the kidneys. The kidneys come first because the heart is the central power in the body and thus has to be the central focus in nourishing life. But according to the conquest sequence, the kidneys conquer the heart, which means they have to be exercised first in order to strengthen the function of the heart. Also, the kidneys are the root of prenatal *qi*, providing the foundation of all life (Zhang 1998, pref. 1-2).

Still the kidneys and the heart are not neighbors in the conquest sequence. Rather, earth (spleen) contains water (kidneys), while wood (liver) penetrates earth (spleen) and metal (lungs) cuts down wood (liver). Fire (heart) comes last, not only because it melts metal (lungs) but also because its purification is the ultimate goal of the practice (Ni 1995, 101). In all cases, instructions and descriptions of the various movements in of each session are very clear and systematic.

Overall, the practice in both its yin and yang parts is quite simple, easily mastered by people of all ages. In addition, each of its eight parts has a clear link to Daoist philosophy or Chinese medicine, described clearly and lucidly. Together with the Eight Brocades, it makes an effective exercise for people of in the aging society, serving to release stress, eliminate worries, and recover vital energy.

Conclusion

Daoism with its distinctly this-worldly outlook places strong emphasis on the cultivation of the individual's physical health as part of spiritual well-being. Working toward health and long life is not only crucial for personal integrity but also important in spiritual unfolding and promoting Dao. For Daoists, human beings have the responsibility to take care of their health while being innately able to live a long and happy life. Old to them does not mean sick and decrepit. On the contrary, they see it as a great state, having a physically healthy body and an alert mind full of energy and vitality while enjoying the fruits of one's labors.

Throughout history, Daoists have worked with various forms of longevity techniques, emphasizing the need to nourish and prolong life. They have developed exercises of all different kinds and levels of diffi-

culty. Some are particularly simple and easy to learn. Those one can practice even lying or sitting down are particularly appropriate for Westerners in advanced stages of decline. On another level, the breathing and meditative aspects of the practice also greatly alleviate stress, the fundamental problem of the modern industrial world. "Stress compromises physical health, psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, occupational performance, and is noticeably to illness and disease" (Santee 2008, 93). As Daoist exercise reduce and even eliminate the stress response, they are good no only for the elderly but also for young and middle-aged adults, increasingly on the path toward a miserable decline in the aging society.

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News

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Obituaries

Liu Ming

Liu Ming was born as Charles Belyea in 1947. After wild teenage years, he encountered Buddhism and soon turned to Tantrism. After studying Tibetan with Robert Thurman for some time, he moved to Berkeley in 1968 to work with Tarthang Tulku and Trungpa Rinpoche. Ten years and some community conflicts later, he moved to Taiwan to live in a Buddhist monastery.



While there, he encountered Master Liu, a Daoist hermit and became his disciple. After Master Liu's passing in late 1978, Charles spent a year in London and studied macrobiotic cooking. After returning to California, he went into a year-long private retreat near Santa Cruz. In 1984, he co-founded Five Branches Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Santa Cruz in 1984, and served on its faculty for twelve years. Around the same time, he started his own Daoist group, Da Yuan Circle (at some point also called Orthodox Daoism of America, using a combination of diet, self-cultivation, and philosophy.

Liu Ming dressed in traditional Daoist garb, practiced Daoist ritual and meditation, and was instrumental in organizing the first joint conference of Daoist scholars and practitioners on Vashon Island in 2001. He is the author of *Dragon's Play* (1991), a new interpretation of the *Yijing* (2005), and a commentary to the *Daode jing* (2015).

For more, see <http://www.dayuancircle.org/about/liu-ming>; Scott P. Phillips in *Journal of Daoist Studies* 1 (2008).

Manfred Porkert

Born in 1933 in Bohemia (Czech Republic), Manfred Porkert was a gifted linguist who learned a variety of European and Asian languages. After studying philosophy and psychology in Munich, he earned a Ph. D. under Marcel Granet at the Sorbonne in 1957 with his work on the hagiography of the Shangqing master Zhou Ziyang (publ. 1979). He then moved back to Germany to go to medical school.

His sinological background inspired him to take a closer look at Chinese medicine, which he also studied practically in Taiwan. Exploring its fundamental worldview and methodology, Porkert created a new, standardized Western terminology. Culminating in a professional doctorate (Habilitation) in 1969, his work appeared in English in 1974 as *The Theoretical Foundations of Chinese Medicine* (MIT Press).

While teaching at the East Asian Institute of the University of Munich (1970-1996), Porkert trained numerous students, holding them to careful rendition and deep appreciation of original sources. In 1978, he founded the Societas Medicinae Sinensis (SMS) together with his senior disciples, Ute Engelhardt and Carl-Hermann Hempen, to bring Chinese medicine to Western physicians. It holds regular education courses and international conferences and publishes a quarterly journal, *Chinesische Medizin*. A reclusive personality, Porkert continued his research and writing after retirement, living in different parts of Europe. His work continues to guide and inspire scholars and practitioners alike.

Based on *Chinesische Medizin* 2015/2:134-35; <http://www.oirf.com/pdf/BridgeJuly2015.pdf>; Photograph by Rebecca Leist.



Alan J. Berkowitz

Alan J. Berkowitz was born in 1950 and grew up in Newton, Mass. Studying Chinese in Vermont and Taiwan, he earned his M.A. (1980) and Ph.D. (1989) at the University of Washington under the guidance of David Knechtges. Soon after, he joined the faculty at Swarthmore, where he taught classes in Chinese language, literature, and humanistic culture.

His research focused on medieval Chinese poetry and culture with a particular concern for hermits and patterns of reclusion, as presented in his main work, *Patterns of Disengagement* (2000). The study enhances our understanding of the social dynamic of recluses within the larger context of ancient and medieval Chinese society.

Berkowitz served as president of the Early Medieval China Group, as book review editor for *Early Medieval China*, and as board member of the T'ang Studies Society. At Swarthmore, he received a \$1 million grant from the Freeman Foundation for initiating the College's Japanese language, literature, and culture program. He also served as administrator and chair for initiating the Arabic language and literature program at the Tri-Colleges.

For more, see <http://www.swarthmore.edu/news-events/memory-alan-berkowitz>; <http://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=317>



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Newly Founded

Body and Religion, published twice a year by Equinox Publishing, is an internationally peer reviewed, interdisciplinary journal devoted to all issues of body and religion. Editors welcome English-language submissions from scholars who use diverse methodologies and approaches, ranging from traditional to innovative, to explore issues of "body" as a fundamental analytical category in the study of religion. The journal seeks to publish the widest possible diversity of critical inquiry into the relationships between all manner of bodies. For more information, visit <http://www.equinoxpub.com/journals/index.php/BAR/index>. To submit an article, contact Shawn Arthur: arthursd@wfu.edu
—Shawn Arthur

Studies in Chinese Religions, an official publication of the Institute of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, is published quarterly by Routledge. Peer-reviewed, the journal focuses on all forms of Chinese religions, including also popular and minority creeds. It seeks to promote multi-disciplinary approaches and encourages submissions from scholars working in a large variety of fields. For more information, see <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/rstu20/current#.VeGcrPIViko>

Journal of Martial Arts Studies, edited by Paul Bowman and Benjamin Judkins at Cardiff University endeavors to present the highest quality of scholarship in this area. Jump-started by the Martial Arts Studies Conference at Cardiff University in June, 2015, it includes excellent papers addressing Daoism, with many more to come in the future and particularly at the next conference in July, 2016. For more information, see <http://masjournal.org.uk>

A new **Nanyue Academy for Women Daoists** (*kundao* 坤道) was inaugurated at Hengshan near Changsha in Hunan on September 10, 2015. Many Daoist celebrities from all over the world attended the ceremony. Approved by the National Religious Affairs Bureau, the Academy is a three-year college, the only institution to train women Daoists. It continues a long history that can be traced back to the Wei and Jin dynasties and links to the early founding immortal of Shangqing Daoism, Wei Huacun 魏华存.

The Yangsheng Section as a new division on nourishing life of the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies (WFCMS) on 22-23 May 2015 in Beijing. Inspired by TCM University Chengdu, it will be led by Dr. Ma Lieguang with the goal to integrate yangsheng officially into the overall structure of Chinese medicine. The SMS, founded by Manfred Porkert, was in strong support and formally represented by Dr. Ute Engelhardt, who was duly elected vice president of the new organization. Other founding representatives included the president of the TCM University Chengdu, Prof. Liang Fanrong, the president of the WFCMS, Ms. She Jing, as well as the Daoist master Zhu Heting from Laoshan. The founding culminated in an international conference on yangsheng in relation to contemporary health systems, dietary practices, and qigong.

—Ute Engelhardt

Conferences

Religious Studies and Ancient History

Jinan, China, 23-29 August 2015

The 22nd International Congress of Historical Sciences, competently organized by Jiang Sheng and Nicole Belayche, convened seven key speakers and over 120 scholars from around the world. Focusing on the understanding of religion today and in history, presentations discussed the definition of religion, the concept of divine retribution, notions of personal identity, visions of healing in a religious context, social dimensions of community, eremitism, and immortality, as well as comparative perspectives, notably between China and Christianity. A number of Ph.D. candidates also used the opportunity to present their research, speaking on Daoist alchemy, funerary art, procedures of immortality, and various dimensions of scientific discovery—all accompanied by vibrant and active discussion.

—Jiang Sheng

Daoist Lives – Vies taoïstes

Aussois, France, 10-12 September 2015

An international conference, organized under the auspices of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes by Franciscus Verellen and Vincent Goossaert in honor of Kristopher Schipper's 80th birthday, this event brought together thirty senior Daoist scholars from six different countries, including China, Taiwan, Japan, USA, Canada, and France. Seven panels discussed different aspects of Daoist lives, both traditional and modern, lay and ordained, dedicated to cultivation and ritual, as well as questions of ethics and the environment. For more, see <http://www.gsrl.cnrs.fr/spip.php %3Farticle618.html>

—Vincent Goossaert

American Academy of Religion

Atlanta, 20-23 November 2015

Within the 2015 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion, the Daoist Studies Group and the Chinese Religions Group co-sponsored a fruitful panel, entitled "Querying Buddhho-Daoism." Attended by over seventy people, the panel served to ignite new conversations around the structure, contents, and boundaries of Chinese religions. Organized by Stephanie Balkwill, it had Stephen Teiser as president and featured Stephen Bokenkamp as discussant. Presenters included Gil Raz, Kwi Jeong Lee, Joshua Capitanio, and Stephanie Balkwill.

The Daoist Studies Group organized two panels. The first focused on "Medicine and Religion in East Asia," with David Mozina presiding and Elena Valussi responding. Concentrating on the intersections between medical, healing, and religious traditions, it discussed the social, epistemological, and soteriological implications of religious healing. Panelists were C. Pierce Salguero, Michael Stanley-Baker, Ori Tavor, and Benedetta Lomi.

The other discussed "Historical Models of Daoism and State Authority," with Joshua Capitanio presiding, featuring Mark Csikszentmihalyi, Terry Kleeman, Stephen R. Bokenkamp, and Jonathan Pettit. They characterized the relation between Daoism and the state in terms of heteropraxis sacrifice, state sponsorship and its impact on communal relations within the traditions, interactions between center and periphery, and the modern role of state-sanctioned religious organizations.

—Stephanie Balkwill

History of Daoism and Science

Chengdu, 4-7 December 2015

The fifth in a series conferences, this was held at Sichuan University in conjunction with a workshop on Daoism and science and technology in the Song through Qing dynasties. About sixty scholars from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the United States, Japan, and Spain attended. Sponsored by the Chenghuangmiao of Shanghai and led by the Center for Culture, Science, and Technology of Sichuan University, the meeting pursued three aims: the cultural basis of ancient Chinese science and technology, the local cultural basis of future scientific creativity in China,

and the compilation of the third volume of *The History of Science and Technology in Daoism*. Dozens of specialized presentations with comments and discussions focused on the methodology of scientific research in the age of big data, science explorers' groups and Daoist culture, Daoism and medicine, health preservation, physics, geography, architecture, alchemy and chemistry, and more. For details, see ccst.scu.edu.cn.

—Jiang Hong

Upcoming

Self, Science, and Society 10th International Conference on Daoist Studies

Sanyi, Taiwan, 26-29 May 2016

For the last twelve years, international conferences on Daoist Studies have been instrumental in enhancing the study, application, and awareness of Daoism throughout the world. Sponsored by the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy, a branch of Tiandi jiao, this year's focus is on issues of Daoist worldview and practice, both in history and today.

Panels will discuss Daoist cosmology, philosophy, arts, and practices, 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. Practitioners will hold workshops on a variety of themes, enhancing the appreciation of Daoist cultivation in the modern world. Some scholarships are provided. Registration deadline is 15 March, 2016. For more information and to register, please visit <http://ssrp.info/daoism>.

—Livia Kohn

Daoist Cultivation in Action

Montclair, New Jersey, 11-15 July 2016

Sponsored by the United States Taoist Association, this 5-day workshop on Daoist meditation, wisdom, taiji quan, and qigong features Master Meng Zhiling, the vice chairman of the Chinese Daoist Association and an expert in personal cultivation. The workshop will be held at Montclair

Kimberley Academy in both Chinese and English. For more information, contact David Hessler at dhessler@mka.org.

—David Hessler

Universal Consciousness Festival

Estes Park, Colorado, 8-11 September 2016

Hosted by Dao USA and the 25th-generation Wudang Longmen master Tseng Yunxang, this features symposium-style lectures from world renowned TCM doctors, Daoists, and qigong masters. Key speakers are Wang Zhihong, the vice president of the Chinese Acupuncture Association, and Li Guoyong, 17th-generation descendent of *Bencao gangmu* author Li Shizhen and creator of Guiyuan Nourishing Qigong. There will also be performances and workshops by Wudang martial artists David Wei, Lindsey Wei, Michael Vollero, and Mark Zanghi. For more information, please visit www.UniversalConsciousnessFestival.org.

Science on Qi

Various quantitative reviews (meta-analysis) of the research literature have examined physical and mental health outcomes of *qi*-cultivation practices, such as meditation, taijiquan and qigong that were published in the past year. Meta-analysis, the gold standard for research literature reviews, estimates overall effects after controlling for errors due to small sample size, poor measurement and other weaknesses in research design and methods. The estimated effect sizes are believed to represent more closely “true” outcomes than effects reported in any single research study, therefore one may have more confidence in these results.

Bendelow, B., Reitt, M., Röver, C., Michaelis, S., Görlich, Y., & Wedekind, D. 2015. Efficacy of treatments for anxiety disorders: A meta-analysis. *International Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 30: 183-192. DOI: 10.1097/YIC.0000000000000078

Pharmacological, psychological (including mindfulness-based therapies), and combined treatments were compared for patients demonstrating one of three major anxiety disorders (panic disorder, generalized anxiety disorder and social phobia). Two-hundred thirty-four studies involving 37,333 participants were reviewed. Medications (especially

serotonin-noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors) were associated with higher effect sizes than other forms of therapy. Mindfulness-based therapies demonstrated the highest effect size compared to other forms of psychological therapy (e.g., cognitive behavioral therapy). The effect size for mindfulness-based therapies ($d = 1.56$) matched or exceeded the effect sizes of numerous medications commonly used alone to treat anxiety.

Boccia, M., Piccardi, L., & Guariglia, P. (2015). The meditative mind: A comprehensive meta-analysis of MRI studies. *Biomedical Research International*, 2015: 1-11. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2015/419808>

Neuroimaging studies (functional magnetic resonance, fMRI, and structural magnetic resonance, sMRI) that examined the effects of meditation practices on brain structure and functioning were examined. Thirty-seven fMRI (642 participants) and sixty-three sMRI (1,652 participants) studies were reviewed. When meditators were compared to non-meditator control groups, results showed that meditators demonstrated greater activation in multiple areas of the brain as well as increased grey matter volume. Brain structures and functions most activated by meditation are involved in processing of self-referential information such as self-awareness and self-regulation, focused problem solving, adaptive behavior, and sensitivity to stimuli arising in one's body. These results document the biological substrate of meditation practice and identify potential processes through which meditation achieves its physical and mental health outcomes.

Gong, H., Ni, C., Shen, X., Wu, T., & Jiang, C. 2015. Yoga for prenatal depression: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Psychiatry*, 15:14. DOI 10.1186/s12888-015-0393-1

The effectiveness of two approaches to yoga (integrated yoga—which combined physical postures with meditation, pranayama and deep relaxation practices; physical-exercise-based yoga—which employed only physical postures) in the management of prenatal depression was examined in six randomized controlled trials (375 pregnant women between the ages of 20 and 40). When compared to standard prenatal care, the level of depression was significantly reduced in the integrated yoga group but not in the physical-exercise-based yoga group. Gotink, R.A., Chu, P., Busschbach, J.J.V., Benson, H., Fricchione, G.L., & Hunink, M.G.M. 2015. Standardized mindfulness-based interventions in

healthcare: An overview of systematic reviews and meta-analyses of RCTs. *PLoS ONE* 10(4): DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0124344

The effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) in improving a wide range of chronic conditions was examined in a review of 23 meta-analyses that reported the results of 115 unique randomized controlled trials (8,683 total unique participants). In essence, this was a meta-analysis of other meta-analyses. Compared to wait-list control and treatment as usual, MBSR and MBCT significantly improved symptoms in the following conditions: depression, anxiety, stress management, quality of life, and physical functioning.

Gu, J., Strauss, C., Bond, R., & Cavanagh, K. 2015. How do mindfulness-based cognitive therapy and mindfulness-based stress reduction improve mental health and wellbeing? A systematic review and meta-analysis of mediation studies. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 37 (2015): 1-12. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2015.01.006> .

Mechanisms that potentially explain the effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) were examined by comparing MBIs to non-active and active control groups in a review of 20 studies. Outcomes included depression, stress, anxiety, mood states, quality of life, and anger expression in clinical and non-clinical samples. MBIs achieved their effects chiefly through increased mindfulness and reduced repetitive negative thinking (rumination) and reduced cognitive and emotional reactivity. Some evidence suggests that enhanced self-compassion and psychological flexibility may also contribute to improving psychological outcomes.

Kelley, G.A., & Kelley, K.S. 2015. Meditative movement therapies and health-related quality-of-life in adults: A systematic review of meta-analyses. *PLoS ONE*, 10(6): 1-18. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0129181

Previously published independent meta-analyses that examined the effectiveness of movement therapies (taijiquan, qigong and yoga) were combined into an integrative meta-analysis. Results showed significantly improved quality of life in patients with breast cancer, schizophrenia, low back pain, heart failure and diabetes. Participants in effective treatments met 3 times per week for 71 minutes per session for a median length of 12 weeks.

Khoury, B., Sharma, M., Rush, S.E., & Fournier, C. 2015. Mindfulness-based stress reduction for healthy individuals: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 78 (2015), 519-528. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2015.03.009>

The effectiveness of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) was examined in 29 studies (2,668 participants). MBSR was effective in reducing stress, anxiety, depression, distress, and burnout and improving quality of life in healthy individuals.

Shonin, E., Van Gordon, W., Compare, A., Zangeneh, M., & Griffiths, M.D. 2015. Buddhist-derived loving-kindness and compassion meditation for the treatment of psychopathology: A systematic review. *Mindfulness*, 6: 1161-1180. DOI 10.1007/s12671-014-0368-1

The effectiveness of loving-kindness meditation (LKM) and compassion meditation (CM) was examined in 20 studies (1,312 participants). Significant improvements were found in positive and negative affect, psychological distress, positive thinking, interpersonal relations, and empathic accuracy in clinical and non-clinical samples.

Strauss, C., Cavanagh, K., Oliver, A., & Pettman, D. 2015. Mindfulness-based interventions for people diagnosed with a current episode of an anxiety or depressive disorder: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *PLoS ONE*, 9(4): e96110. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0096110

The effectiveness of mindfulness-based interventions with clinical populations experiencing current symptoms of depression or anxiety was examined in 12 randomized clinical trials (578 participants). Compared to control groups, participants receiving mindfulness-based interventions experienced reduction in depression symptom severity but no significant change in anxiety severity. Effects were stronger for mindfulness-based cognitive therapy than for mindfulness-based stress reduction.

Theadom, A., Cropley, M., Smith, H.E., Feigin, V.L., & McPherson, K. 2015. Mind and body therapy for fibromyalgia. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 2015:Apr 9; CD001980. doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD001980.pub3. Review.

The effectiveness of mind-body therapies (biofeedback, mindfulness, movement therapies and relaxation) was examined in 61 trials (4,234 predominantly female participants). Positive effects were found for im-

proved physical functioning and mood and reduced pain, but the quality of the evidence was low.

Visted, E., Vøllestad, J., Nielsen, M.B., & Nielsen, G.H. 2015. The impact of group-based mindfulness training on self-reported mindfulness: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Mindfulness*, 6: 501-522. DOI 10.1007/s12671-014-0283-5

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) claim to enhance mindfulness, which in turn is believed to influence numerous physical and mental outcomes. This review examined the extent to which this is true by integrating results from 72 research studies (2,901 participants). MBIs demonstrated an overall significant influence on mindfulness, but the effect was moderate in strength (Hedges' $g = 0.53$). Moreover, over half of the studies reported no effect on mindfulness. Poor quality of the measures used to assess mindfulness likely explains variability in results. This result documents the need to use psychometrically sound measures of mindfulness when claiming it to be a mediating causal process.

Xiong, X., Wang, P., Li, X., & Zhang, Y. 2015. Qigong for hypertension. *Medicine*, 94(1), 1-14. DOI: 10.1097/MD.0000000000000352

Qigong, alone or practiced in combination with antihypertensive drugs, was compared to no intervention, exercise, or use of hypertensive drugs alone in 20 randomized controlled trials (2,349 participants) conducted in China and Korea. Compared with no intervention, qigong significantly reduced systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Qigong was less effective than exercise in decreasing systolic blood pressure but equivalent to exercise in reducing diastolic blood pressure. Compared to hypertensive drugs use alone, qigong produced significantly greater reduction in diastolic blood pressure, and it produced a clinically meaningful but statistically non-significant reduction in systolic blood pressure. Combined with antihypertensive drugs, qigong significantly lowered both systolic and diastolic blood pressure more than use of hypertensive drugs alone. Only internal qigong practices were examined; external qi healing interventions were excluded from the review.

Yang, Y., Qiu, W.Q., Hao, Y.L., Lv, Z.Y., Jiao, S.J., Teng, J.F. 2015. The efficacy of traditional Chinese medical exercise for Parkinson's disease: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS ONE*, 10(4): e0122469. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0122469

The effectiveness of taijiquan and qigong in reducing symptoms of Parkinson's disease was investigated in 13 randomized controlled trials and 2 non-randomized controlled trials (799 participants with a mean age of 64.6). Compared to other forms of therapy, taijiquan combined with medication was superior to medication use alone and superior to other treatments in reducing symptoms of Parkinson's disease and improving balance and some aspects of motor function. Results for qigong practice were inconclusive.

Yang, G.Y., Wang, L.Q., Ren, J., Zhang, Y., Li, M.L., Zhu, Y.T., Luo, J., Cheng, Y.J., Li, W.Y., Wayne, P.M., & Liu, J.P. 2015. Evidence base of clinical studies on tai chi: A bibliometric analysis. *PLoS ONE*, 10(3): e0120655. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0120655

The effectiveness of taijiquan for treating specific diseases and health conditions was investigated by integrating results from 43 systematic reviews of clinical studies, 255 randomized clinical trials, 90 non-randomized controlled clinical trials, 115 cases, and 4 case reports. Most commonly studied diseases/conditions were hypertension, diabetes, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis or osteopenia, breast cancer, heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, coronary heart disease, schizophrenia, and depression. Yang style was most studied; interventions typically comprised 2-3 one-hour sessions per week for 12 weeks. Almost all of the studies (94.1%) reported positive outcomes. No adverse effects were reported.

Youkhana, S., Dean, C.M., Wolff, M., Sherrington, C., & Tiedemann, A. 2015. Yoga-based exercise improves balance and mobility in people aged 60 and over: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Age and Ageing*, Dec 25. pii: afv175. [Epub ahead of print]. doi: 10.1093/ageing/afv175

The effectiveness of physical yoga (excluding meditation and breathing exercises alone) was explored in 6 trials (307 participants). Physical yoga had a small effect on balance performance and a medium effect on physical mobility in participants.

Zeng, X., Chiu, C.P.K., Rong, W., Tian, P.S.O., & Leung, F.Y.K. 2015. The effect of loving-kindness meditation on positive emotions: A meta-analytic review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6:1693. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01693

The effectiveness of loving-kindness meditation (LKM) in strengthening positive emotions was explored in 24 studies (1,1759 participants). Results showed medium effect sizes for LKM on daily positive emotions when compared to wait-listed control groups in randomized controlled and non-randomized controlled studies and medium to large effect sizes for ongoing practice of LKM on positive emotions across different comparisons. Although results are inconclusive, they suggest that some types of LKM practice may be more effective than others.

Zheng, G., Li, S., Huang, M., Liu, F., Tao, J., & Chen, L. 2015. The effect of tai chi training on cardiorespiratory fitness in healthy adults: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS ONE*, 10(2): e0117360. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0117360

The impact of taijiquan practice on respiratory fitness was examined in 20 research studies: 2 randomized controlled trials, 8 non-randomized controlled trials, 3 self-controlled trials, and 7 cohort studies involving 1,783 healthy adult participants aged 45-75. Results showed that taijiquan practice compared to no-intervention had a significant positive impact on blood pressure, heart rate, stroke volume, cardio output, cardiorespiratory endurance, and lung capacity. No adverse effects were reported.

Zoogman, S., Goldberg, S.B., Hoyt, W.T., & Miller, L. 2015. Mindfulness interventions with youth: A meta-analysis. *Mindfulness*, 6: 290-302. DOI 10.1007/s12671-013-0260-4

The effectiveness of mindfulness meditation with participants younger than 18 was examined in 20 research studies. The overall effect size was small compared to active control groups across all outcomes. Effect sizes were larger for psychological symptoms and for participants from clinical samples.

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