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Articles

Zhuangzi and Wittgenstein on the Self

YUMIN AO & ULRICH STEINVORTH

Abstract

We criticize an approach to culture theory requiring us to start investigations from presuming different conceptions of crucial terms in historical sources such as self, rather than from relying on an uncontroversial sense understood in all civilizations.

We argue that we can understand the differences between concepts in different civilizations better by first clarifying the commonalities that are given in the uncontroversial sense. For our claim we use Zhuangzi as an example that shows the advantages of our approach, not least by demonstrating that many of the traditional oppositions between the Chinese and the Western civilization cannot be confirmed. Hence, our approach, though starting from commonalities between civilizations, is strong at uncovering prejudice.

The perhaps uncontroversial starting point of the investigation of self is that different cultural experiences have produced importantly different conceptions of self and that these different conceptions of self need to be factored into any responsible evaluation of contemporary issues and problems. (Ames 1994, vii-ix, vii)

This view has been popular among anthropologists and culture theorists, since Durkheim, Mauss, and other anthropologists argued for the dependence of concepts on social conditions, in particular of the concept of the self or the person (Mauss 1985, 1-25).¹ We claim that rather than

¹For a critique, see the papers in Carrithers et al. 1985. Another thesis strengthening Mauss is that in the 18th century in Western Europe, a “new kind of personality” emerged. As Trilling has argued, “at a certain point in history men became individuals ... certain things (a person) did not have or do until he became an individual. He did not have an awareness of ... internal space. He did not ...

starting from different conceptions of the self it can be more informative to start from what is common to the talk on the self. Against the claim that the concept of the self lacks universality (Maraldo 1994, 72f), we maintain that there is an uncontroversial concept of the self that is the same in all ages and societies. All human beings are concerned about themselves, speak to themselves, are proud and ashamed of, praise and blame, and decide for, themselves. The self is what we thus relate to, neither a mindless body nor a bodiless mind, but an agent aware of itself. As Charles Larmore notes,

That the self is defined by a relationship to itself that makes it precisely a self ought to be beyond dispute. Being a self means being a self for one-self . . . each of us is a self in virtue of having a relation to ourselves—and one that is essential, as opposed to some turning back on ourselves that we may choose to perform or not. Even in our most insignificant thoughts there resides an unavoidable relationship to ourselves, since these thoughts only count as ours because we express ourselves in them. (2010, xi)

In distinction from this uncontroversial sense of the self, there are *controversial* senses regarding questions such as whether the self is what remains unchanged in us while we, our body and our mind, are changing; of what kind and substance such an unchanging self is; whether what we refer to in self-reference is something private. Such controversial concepts of course cannot be the starting point in historical and anthropological research on the self.

Starting from the uncontroversial concept of the self as what we refer to in self-reflection we can distinguish conceptions of the self. Differ-

imagine himself in more than one role, standing outside or above his own personality; he did not suppose that he might be an object of interest to his fellow man ... simply because as an individual he was of consequence. It is when he becomes an individual that man lives more and more in private rooms ... looks into mirrors, larger and much brighter than those that were formerly held up to magistrates ... If he is an artist the individual is likely to paint self-portraits ... And he begins to use the word 'self' not as a mere reflexive or intensive, but as an autonomous noun referring, the O. E. D. tells us, to 'that ... in a person [which] is really and intrinsically *he*...', as that which he must cherish for its own sake and show to the world for the sake of good faith" (1971, 24-25). For a critique of this view, see Steinvorth 2016, ch.11.

ences result from different answers to questions asked in both west and east about what the fact of self-relating entails in practice. We'll pick out for further consideration the following set of questions: Does the fact of our self-relating entail that

- (1a) We have a private inner sphere inaccessible to the other or
- (1b) that we can perfectly understand other minds?
- (2a) We can autonomously distinguish right from wrong, true from false, or
- (2b) that we only follow social standards?
- (3a) We have a natural right to autonomous decisions or
- (3b) that we have a natural duty to use the standards of our societies?
- (4a) We are irreducibly responsible for our decisions or
- (4b) that we are determined by our nature?

Western thinkers often tend to answer these questions in favor of the (a) option, Easterners in favor of (b). We claim that even if there were such inclinations, they could not explain anything. We must examine, for any author, how they side in alternatives such as (1) to (4). As an example, we argue that Zhuangzi differs from both the allegedly oriental and the allegedly occidental answer, as he supports (1b), (2a), (3a) and (4b).

Other Minds: The Happy Minnows

In his famous story about the minnows freely swimming under the bridge that crosses the Hao River (17.76),² Zhuangzi implies he knows the mind of the fish, for he says they are happy. As he defends his knowledge against Huizi's claim that he, Zhuangzi, cannot know that the fish are happy, Zhuangzi makes his assertion on knowing the minnows' mind not in a philosophically non-committal way but as an explicit philosophical claim. He takes a stance on the philosophical problem, controversial to date, of whether I can know other minds, siding with the position that today is most effectively represented by Wittgenstein and his adherents, against skeptics who like Huizi claim we cannot know other minds.

²The number before the dot refers to Zhuangzi's chapter in Ziporyn's 2009 edition, the number after to the page of this edition. In Graham's edition of 1981 the referred story is on p. 123. We use Ziporyn's translation.

The problem that Zhuangzi takes a stance on is not just a controversy that for some accidental reason can be called philosophical; rather, it is the very same problem of other minds discussed still today. This is shown by the arguments exchanged. Huizi's first argument against Zhuangzi's claim still misses the principal claim of modern skeptics of other minds. It only argues that since Zhuangzi is not a fish but a member of the different species of men, he cannot know the happiness of fish, allowing the conclusions, on the one hand that if he were a fish he did know, on the other that as a man he can know the minds of other men.

However, Zhuangzi's reply to this first argument brings Huizi to the principle of the skeptic position, which is not that individuals of one species cannot know the minds of another species but that any individual cannot know the mind of any other individual. Zhuangzi replies that since Huizi is not Zhuangzi, Huizi cannot claim he knows that Zhuangzi does not know the happiness of the fish. In this reply, Zhuangzi presupposes that Huizi's reason for denying him the knowledge of the fish's happiness is not that Zhuangzi is not a fish but that Zhuangzi is another individual than any of the fish whose happiness he claims to know.

Against this reproach of logical inconsistency Huizi accepts Zhuangzi's presupposition. Saying that "I am not you, to be sure, so I don't know what it is to be you", he affirms that we cannot know the mind of any being for the mere reason that they are different. On this new basis he claims again that Zhuangzi cannot know the happiness of the minnows under the bridge, as obviously Zhuangzi is not only not a fish but also even if he was, his mind would still be different from that of any other fish under the bridge.

Now, we should be clear about the nature of Zhuangzi's reply to this consistent skepticism on other minds. It is entirely insufficient as an argument against Huizi. Zhuangzi's reply is that Huizi asked *whence* Zhuangzi knew the fish's happiness rather than asking *how* he could know or simply stating that he could not know. Asking *whence* he knew implies *that* he knew. At this reply, Huizi and any other skeptic could only laugh, telling Zhuangzi that the *whence*-question is only a polite form of formulating a skeptic rejection of Zhuangzi's claim.

However, although Zhuangzi's reply cannot convince a hard-headed skeptic, it can convince the undecided. For it reminds us of the burdensome consequences of a consistent skepticism of other minds. In

particular, it shows that if we take this skepticism seriously, we cannot claim to know anything about another person's mind. It is of the very same nature as Wittgenstein's argument against skepticism about other minds, expressed in these lines: "Just try—in a real case—to doubt someone else's fear or pain" (Wittgenstein 1963, I § 303).

Like Wittgenstein, Zhuangzi appeals to our sober non-philosophical understanding of people. It is an appeal to a non-philosophical authority, but is a philosophical argument nonetheless. It is philosophy aware of its dangers of losing contact with reality by forgetting the way we can refer to reality at all—by learning the use of words from people whose minds we must know to learn from them the use of words. So, in the controversy between (1a) and (1b), Zhuangzi clearly opts for (1b).

Truth and Falsity: The Butterfly Dream

Zhuang Zhou's famous dream of being a butterfly, waking from which "he did not know if Zhou had been dreaming he was a butterfly, or if a butterfly was now dreaming it was Zhou" (2.49), is often taken for proof of Zhuangzi's relativism that denies humans the capacity to make universal validity claims, to distinguish between true and false and right and wrong.

Against this interpretation we claim that Zhuangzi, by imagining being a butterfly, implies that humans can also imagine being other humans, can understand their validity claims, can deliberate, in common, their claims, and can judge them in an objective, universally valid way, in particular can decide with universal validity whether they are dreaming and who it is who is dreaming.

We base our claim on an analysis of the dialogue between Nie Que (Gaptooth in Graham's translation) and Wang Ni at the end of Chapter 2, some three pages before the butterfly dream is told (2.39-41). Nie Que asks Wang Ni whether there is something that might be considered knowledge. Wang denies it, arguing he doesn't know how to distinguish between knowing and not-knowing. Nie replies that then "you can't even tell benefit from harm", implying that this is an absurd, untenable position, and adds as an argument the rhetorical question, "Does the Consummate Person really fail to distinguish between benefit and harm?"

Wang answers Nie's question with a description of the Consummate Person—who "chariots on the clouds and winds, piggybacks on the sun and the moon"—that puts him beyond ordinary human capabilities; "even death and life can do nothing to change him—much less the transition between benefit and harm!" This answer may seem to imply that Nie's anti-relativistic insistence on the validity of the distinction between benefit and harm is wrong, to be replaced by a relativism that declares the distinction between right and wrong completely dependent on the properties of the individual that raises a validity claim. As Wang's answer concludes the dialogue, it seems to express Zhuangzi's view.

However, Wang's description of the Consummate Person, although intended as a rejection of Nie, implies neither relativism nor the falsity of Nie's anti-relativistic insistence. It can only show that the distinction between benefit and harm does not apply to the Consummate Person. Similarly, Wang's earlier references to the different conditions for the well-being of eels and humans, monkeys and humans, and deer, snakes, eagles and humans cannot show, as Wang wants them to show, that we cannot validly distinguish between benefit and harm. They only show that different species have different conditions of well-being. Hence, all of Wang's examples show not that universal validity claims lead us into contradictions, as Wang thinks they do, but that they do so only if we are stupid enough—as stupid as Wang—not to indicate or restrict the scope of their reference.

To maintain that Zhuangzi is a relativist it would be necessary to argue that he assumes the scope of reference of a claim always and necessarily is restricted to what the speaker thinks or feels so as to allow him to assert only something about his own mind. Such an assumption, however, is incompatible with Zhuangzi's claim to know the happiness of the minnows.

Our claim that Zhuangzi rejects relativism implies that he defends a kind of realism, a position according to which validity claims refer to an objective reality that can be checked by all humans. However, such realism, implying that our sentences can refer to a reality that decides on their truth or falsity, seems to be mocked at and rejected by Zhuangzi. He presents this realism by quoting its defenders, "But human speech is not just a blowing of air. Speech has something *of which* it speaks, something it refers to" and answers,

Yes, but what it refers to is peculiarly unfixed. So is there really anything it refers to? Or has nothing ever been referred to? You take it to be different from the chirping of baby birds. But is there really any difference between them? Or is there no difference? Is there any dispute, or is there no dispute? Anything demonstrated, or nothing demonstrated? (2.14-15)

Despite his mocking tone, Zhuangzi does not simply reject realism. Rather, he directs the reader's attention to the question of what the reality is that speech refers to. By saying it is "peculiarly unfixed" we think he wants to say not that the incessant transformations that reality consists in is such a state of flux that it cannot be referred to, but that what speech means, or what speaker mean by their speech, has not been determined. Theorists imagine too quickly the meaning of speech to be facts or states of affairs that can be checked for their being there or not being there. They ignore that the chirping of baby birds indicates not a reference to facts but the expectation of being fed or some other excitation. Likewise, Zhuangzi implies, human speech often indicates not a reference to facts but an excitation. What Zhuangzi reminds his readers of is similar to what Wittgenstein pointed to when he said,

Think of the tools in a tool-box: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw-driver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws. The functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects. (And in both cases there are similarities.) Of course, what confuses us is the uniform appearance of words when we hear them spoken or meet them in script and print. For their *application* is not presented to us so clearly. Especially when we are doing philosophy! (Wittgenstein 1963, I § 11)

As little as Wittgenstein does Zhuangzi imply that words do not refer to something or that we cannot raise universally valid claims with them. On the contrary, he implies that we can raise and check them if we know how words are used and checked. Such knowledge is given by the specific conditions or circumstances of a word usage. Zhuangzi says,

What is circumstantially right is also circumstantially wrong, and vice versa. Thus, the Sage does not proceed from any one of them alone but instead lets them all bask in the broad daylight of Heaven. And that too is only a case of going by the rightness of the present "this" (2.16).

Zhuangzi is explicit that the way to decide on right and wrong and true and false is universally valid, as he calls the method of the Sage “the Course as Axis, the axis of all courses” (2.17).

So, in the controversy between (2a) and (2b), Zhuangzi clearly opts for (2a).

Rights and Duties: Proper Mourning

Zhuangzi explores ideas of duties and rights most prominently in his references to ways of mourning. It would be too much to say that he defends the modern idea of unalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, but he does develop an idea of individual autonomy and autonomous decisions that is close to the idea of unalienable rights.

Zhuangzi criticizes traditional mourning rites as incompatible with what he considers death to be. He extols Quin Shi’s stopping the traditional wailing for Laozi and highlights his defense of neglecting mourning traditions, saying that wailing the dead is “to flee from the Heavenly and turn away from how things are” (3.8). He implies that death is not a disaster that could justify wailing, but a stage in the “flow” (3.8) or the incessant “transformation” of things. How important it is for him to understand that the world is an incessant transformation, and therefore death no disaster, is shown by the frequency of his pointing out that we are facing transformations, also in the change from the dream of being a butterfly to the state of being Zhuangzi remembering his dream (2.49). The importance also appears in the fact that he makes other philosophers such as Confucius say that the world is a series of transformations at many other passages in the Inner Chapters (4.7, 5.3, 5.15, 6.41-42, 6.51).

Consistently, Zhuangzi approvingly reports the friendship of three men who, after one of them dies, make unconventional songs at the corpse and mock a disciple of Confucius who takes offense at their ritual impropriety, laughing “What does this fellow understand about the real point of ritual?” (6.46) Zhuangzi probably uses irony when he makes Confucius, the great defender of traditional ritual, explain “the real point of ritual” of the three friends,

Men such as these look upon life as a dangling wart or swollen pimple, and on death as its dropping off, its bursting and draining ... Why would they

do something as stupid as practicing conventional rituals to impress the eyes and ears of the common crowd? (6.47-48)

We think that by his reference to Confucius here and at other passages that relate to mourning rites and transformations (4.7, 5.3, 5.15, 6.51), Zhuangzi wanted to point out not only that humans have a right or even a duty to act in accordance with "how things are" in the case of mourning practices, but also in all other practices. We have to understand Zhuangzi's defense of unconventional mourning practices as a defense of individuals' inalienable right to choose their own ways of practicing their attitude toward life and death, which is their right to liberty.

His defense is conditional, though. It is conditioned on an accordance of the practice with how things are, or to be less dogmatic, on having a good reason for a practice. The two friends who mourn their friend by jolly songs are justified to do so because they consider death a passage to another, if not better stage in the flux of transformations.

Such conditioning of the right to liberty does not conform to its modern idea, but it does conform to the modern idea of autonomy. For no one will be considered autonomous in the West either who cannot give a convincing reason for his actions.

Therefore, we may say that in the controversy about individuals' rights and duties, Zhuangzi clearly opts for (3a), the party that claims there is something like a natural right to autonomous decisions, and rejects position (3b), held at his time by the Confucians, that people have a natural duty to use the standards of their societies.

Individual Responsibility: Authentic Self-Being

Zhuangzi's remarks on responsibility form part of his critique of the Confucian virtue of Humanity and Responsibility, as Ziporyn translates *ren yi*, the virtue that requires behavior to conform to one's social role and standing and to the given conventions and rites. Zhuangzi's critique is based on the idea expressed also in *Daode jing* 18, "When the Great Dao is abandoned, there are Humanity and Responsibility." Humanity and Responsibility are considered false, corrupting substitutes for a kind of spontaneity or naturalness that is conceived to be more original and

morally superior to the Confucian virtues. Perhaps the most suggestive picture for Zhuangzi's and the Daoist idea of this naturalness is given in chapter 9.

Here are the horses, with their hooves to tramp over frost and snow and their coats to keep out the wind and cold. Chomping the grass and drinking the waters, prancing and jumping over the terrain – this is the true in-born nature of horses. Even if given fancy terraces and great halls, they would have no use for them.

Then along comes Bo Le, saying, "I am good at managing horses!" He proceeds to brand them, shave them, clip them, bridle them, fetter them with crupper and martingale, pen them in stable and stall – until about a quarter of the horses have dropped dead. Then he starves them, parches them, trots them, gallops them, lines them up neck to neck or nose to tail, tormented by bit and rein and by whip and spur behind. By then over *half* of the horses have dropped dead. (9.60-61)

Replace the horses with people, and you have the core of Zhuangzi's critique of the civilization of states, comparable in its comprehensiveness to Rousseau's critique of civilization and Marx's critique of capitalist economies. And just as Marx supports his critique by the argument that the money exchange necessary for capitalism alienates people from their true nature, Zhuangzi supports his critique by the argument that the discipline necessary for states alienates people from their true nature.

The idea of alienation that Zhuangzi, Rousseau and Marx share implies an opposition of a human nature conforming to natural laws or regularities, and human conventions deviating from human nature, similar to the Sophists' opposition of nature, *phusis*, and *nomos*, human law and convention. This idea allows us to ask how Zhuangzi conceives the true human nature of people. He cannot conceive it as shaped by social conditions; else he could not oppose to the Confucian virtue of Humanity and Responsibility his idea of a spontaneous and natural behavior. Rather he needs to conceive it as something that can be distorted but not destroyed by social conditions without destroying the individual.

In the European tradition, such a conception is held by both the critics and the heirs of the Sophists, by rationalists such as Plato, Aristotle, and Descartes, empiricists such as Locke, Hume and Rousseau, and ma-

terialists such as Epicurus and Marx. Some of them ascribe to people self-determination, that is, the power to determine their actions by a will that, even if produced by nature, is independent of natural conditions; some deny them such a power, claiming that people are as much determined by preceding conditions as, in principle, billiard balls are. The former can ascribe to people an irreducible responsibility for their actions that is based on free will, while the latter reduce responsibility to the capacity to adjust one's actions to punishment and reward, a capacity clever dogs and pigeons share with men, as B. F. Skinner has demonstrated.

The question we ask is, which side does Zhuangzi side with? The next passage seems to show Zhuangzi on the side of the determinists.

Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, plans and regrets, transformations and stagnations, unguarded abandonment and deliberate posturing—music flowing out of hollows, mushrooms of billowing steam! Day and night they alternate before us, but no one knows whence they sprout. That is enough! That is enough! Is it from all of this, presented ceaselessly day and night, that we come to exist? Without *that* there would be no me, to be sure, but then again without *me* there would be nothing selected out from it all. This is certainly something close to hand, and yet we do not know what makes it so. If there is some controller behind it all, it is peculiarly devoid of any manifest sign. Its ability to flow and stop makes its presence plausible, but even then it shows no definite form. That would make it a reality with no definite form. (2.7-9)

Now, this is Ziporyn's translation; if you read Graham, you get quite a different impression of what Zhuangzi wanted to say. Yet let's stick to it for a while nonetheless. It suggests that Zhuangzi compares our mental life—joy and anger, sorrow and happiness—to the sounds the wind makes when flowing out of hollows. The implication is that we as individuals whose life is constituted by a flow of consciousness or experiences—"transformations and stagnations" rather than physical conditions—are the result of natural processes without the power to act back on the conditions that produced us, as little as "music flowing out of hollows" has the power to act back on the wind that produces it. True, Zhuangzi emphasizes that not only would we not exist without "*that*", the stream of consciousness we are dependent on, but also without us

“there would be nothing selected out from it all,” that is, no experience we have of the world.

However, this does not mean that we can act back on the world; it only means that without us the part of the world we experience would not be experienced by us. Although Zhuangzi does think of the possibility of controlling the processes that produce us and our experiences and actions, he thinks of it only by considering if there is “some controller behind it all”, that is, some transcendent power rather than a power within an individual. Moreover, as such a transcendent power would be “devoid of any manifest sign” and “with no definite form,” Zhuangzi would anyway accord it too little practical relevance to be reckoned with. In Graham’s translation, the passage on the “controller” reads,

It seems that there is something genuinely in command, and that the only trouble is we cannot find a sign of it. That as ‘Way’ it can be walked is true enough, but we do not see its shape; it has identity but no shape. (Graham 1981, 51)

Zhuangzi here refers to “something genuinely in command” rather than to “some controller behind it all”, asking whether some part or organ of our body might be such a controller and which one it might be. For in Graham’s translation, Zhuangzi goes on immediately to ask,

Of the hundred joints, nine openings, six viscera all present and complete, which should I recognize as more kin to me than another? Are you people pleased with them all? (Graham 1981, 51)

Of course, in Ziporyn’s translation too, Zhuangzi similarly asks which one of my bones, openings and organs “is most dear to me” (2.9) and if “there exists a genuine ruler among them” (2.10), answering that “whether we could find out the facts about (such a genuine ruler) or not would neither add to nor subtract from that genuineness”. Yet these questions and the answer seem to confirm the prior point, namely, that we cannot find “some controller behind it all”. Just as the controller behind it all is at best a “reality with no definite form”, Zhuangzi seems to say, so whatever may control us lacks a definite form too. This proposition, however, is also what Zhuangzi wants to say in Graham’s translation, the difference between Graham’s and Ziporyn’s Zhuangzi being

only that Graham's Zhuangzi does not consider some controller behind it all while Ziporyn's does. Hence, in both translations Zhuangzi seems to commit himself to an empiricism of Hume's brand who similarly thought of humans as constituted by a stream of ever changing impressions, as bundles of experiences that lack the power of acting back on what has produced them.

However, if so, what then is left of Zhuangzi's critique of the civilization of states, his reproach that it alienates people, destroys their true nature and coerces them into corruption and hypocrisy? Doesn't such a critique presuppose a human ability to return to the incorrupt state of purity, and doesn't such an ability to return imply a power to act back on the conditions that produced us?

These are questions that ask for Zhuangzi's conception of the self. We started with the assumption that the self is what we relate to in pride, shame and other forms of self-reference, and that different self-conceptions result from different answers to questions asked in both west and east about what the fact of self-relating entails in practice. In particular, we expected different self-conceptions to result from different answers to the four questions listed in the beginning. Now, having looked at Zhuangzi's answers let's sum up his conception of the self.

He assumes we can know other minds as well as we can know our own minds; he ascribes to humans the power of autonomously distinguishing right from wrong and true from false; he ascribes to everyone a right to autonomous decisions, and he seems to conceive the self as a bundle of ever changing impressions lacking persistence through time, hence unable to act back on the powers that produce it. If we neglect his position on other minds, Zhuangzi's conception of the self is quite similar to Hume's conception of the self. But it also shares with it a kind of incoherence. If the self is nothing but a bundle of ever changing impressions, how can it autonomously distinguish true from false and right from wrong? Will this distinction not depend on the accidental impressions that constitute our self at the time of our distinction, hence be different at t_1 from a distinction at t_2 ? And who or what is the entity that has something like a right to autonomous decisions? If we ascribe such a right to us, can the self plausibly be held to have no power to act back on the conditions that produced it?

We leave these questions unanswered. Maybe someone will find a better interpretation to give more consistency to Zhuangzi's teachings; maybe we should remind that there is no great philosopher without some inconsistency. Anyway, our intention here was to show that Zhuangzi can be better understood by following the problems he discussed rather than by ascribing to him specifically Chinese "cultural experiences," and we hope to have made this claim more convincing.

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Xu Mi's Network

A Different Perspective on Early Higher Clarity Daoism

THOMAS E. SMITH

Abstract

This paper explores the official and social connections of Xu Mi 許謐 (303-376), one of the founders of the Shangqing 上清 or Higher Clarity movement in Daoism, with the aim of developing a clearer narrative for what was occurring in his social network in the 360s, around the time that his spirit-medium Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-386) was having his visions. Although certain aspects of these connections have been explored by scholars such as Yoshikawa Tadao (1998) and Kamitsuka Yoshiko (1999), among others, these do not fully explain how a relatively minor official like Xu Mi, together with Yang Xi, could attract a steady stream of high-ranking official visitors seeking advice, medicines, and scriptures, as described in the eighth fascicle of *Zhen'gao*.

This paper examines the life and extensive connections of Xu Mi's older brother Xu Mai 許邁 (b. 301), as well as both Xu Mai and Yang Xi's connections with Sima Yu 司馬昱 (320-372) when the latter was still Prince of Kuaiji 會稽 before becoming Emperor Jianwen of Jin 晉簡文帝 (r. 372). It also examines a hitherto overlooked historical record of Xu Mi's participation in a court debate, which illustrates one way in which Xu Mi was attempting to give support to the Sima family. With this background, the paper then analyzes the list of Xu Mi's visitors. A recent archaeological discovery also sheds new light on a connection between two of these visitors. This paper concludes that Xu Mi's visitors were drawn to his home after Yang Xi, during his brief service under Sima Yu, had convinced them of his abilities through a very public demonstration of his spiritual powers. Furthermore, several of these visitors were already putting the new Higher Clarity teachings into practice when they asked for assistance.

For many years, whenever scholars have had to introduce the Higher Clarity movement in Daoism, one of the most common approaches has been to start with a discussion of the social and political background of the Eastern Jin dynasty. The loss of the old capital Luoyang in 311 had forced the ruling Sima 司馬 house and the northern aristocracy to flee south and establish a new capital at Jiankang (Nanjing).

For many decades afterward, the tense relations between the old southern aristocracy and the displaced northern aristocracy often led to conflict and rebellion. The differences extended into the religious sphere as well. Generally, the northerners followed the Celestial Master tradition, while the southerners followed their own lines of belief, with the writings of Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343) often taken as representative. The Higher Clarity movement, then, has often been seen as a kind of fusion and transformation of these northern and southern traditions.

Now, there is nothing wrong with this view—it provides a useful macro-perspective on the emergence of this new form of Daoism, and as an added advantage it is fairly easy to grasp, even for those who are not specialists in the history of this period. However, getting beyond that is a real challenge.

Some aspects of Higher Clarity's early formation have been thoroughly studied. First, many scholars, starting with Chen Guofu (1963), have turned to Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 (456-636) essay in the 19th and 20th fascicles of *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (DZ 1016; hereinafter abbreviated ZG), a very rich source, to trace the transmission of the Higher Clarity scriptures *after* they left the hands of the spirit-medium Yang Xi (330-386), his patron Xu Mi (also known as Xu Mu 許穆; 303-376), and Xu Mi's son Xu Hui 許翮 (341-370). But what happened *before* Yang Xi had his visions?

Some have tried to trace the early days of the movement by examining who received which scriptures from whom, i.e., through master-disciple relationships, or by gleaning clues from the sequence of "esoteric biographies" (*neizhuan* 內傳) of earlier figures like Wei Huacun 魏華存 (251-334) and Wang Bao 王褒 (b. 36 BCE). Some good recent examples of this approach are Xiao Dengfu (2005, 1-50) and Zhang Chaoran (2008). However, what I shall attempt to do here is fill in a few gaps about Xu

Mi's political and social connections, a topic which I believe has not been investigated adequately.¹

When analyzing the beginnings of Higher Clarity, Kamitsuka Yoshiko (1999, 27-28) argues that although the young, otherworldly Xu Hui was probably the intended leader of the nascent movement, it would not have taken root if not for his more worldly father Xu Mi: a hut in the mountains does not make a religious movement. She thus examines Xu Mi's connections: first his older brother Xu Mai (b. 301), and then his visitors, described in ZG 8. Yoshikawa Tadao (1998, 3-22) provides a helpful overview of the life of Xu Mai and examines all the people with whom he came into contact. These studies, if taken together, go a long way toward delineating the Xu family's connections. What is still missing, however, is a broader narrative—we need to connect more dots.

Turning to the last two-thirds of ZG's eighth fascicle, we find that during the 360s an entire series of officials, including a prince, had sought help from Xu Mi and Yang Xi for their spiritual and medical problems. Most were southerners, but a significant number had northern origins. We may list them as follows:

- (1) Mr. Kong 孔氏, from the southern branch of the Kongs based in Kuaiji Commandery (ZG 8.2b6-3b6).
- (2) Liu Yuanzhi 劉爰之 (n. d.), a southerner, native of Pei 沛 Commandery, around present-day Pei, Xuzhou, Jiangsu (ZG 8.3b7-4b5).
- (3) Lu Na 陸納 (c. 325-395) and Lu Shi 陸始, southerners from Wu 吳 (ZG 8.4b5-5a1).
- (4) Yu Zhao 虞昭, possibly from the Yu clan of Kuaiji Commandery (ZG 8.5a2-5a7).
- (5) Yu He 庾穌 (c. 329-366), a northerner, native of Yanling District 鄴陵縣, Yingchuan 潁川 Commandery, in today's Henan (ZG 8.5a8-5b4).
- (6) Chi Yin 郗愔 (313-384), a northerner, native of Jinxiang 金鄉 in Gaoping 高平 Commandery, present-day Shandong (ZG 8.5b5-8a9).

¹Zhong Laiyin (1992, 47-66) has perhaps done the most to explore this area thus far, with a focus on Xu Mi's support for the Jin ruling house, but he tends to skirt difficult issues in dating the ZG's undated passages, which leads to a few errors. For example, Zhong dates Yang Xi's prediction of the future of the ruling house (to be discussed below) as occurring in 372; I believe it should date to late 369. This greatly affects how one interprets the prediction.

- (7) Gao Qi 高騫 (n. d.) and Xie Feng 謝奉 (fl. c. 340-370), both southern: Gao from Guangling 廣陵 (Yangzhou), Xie from the Xie clan of Kuaiji (ZG 8.8a9-9b5).
- (8) Sima Yu 司馬昱, Prince of Kuaiji and the future Emperor Jianwen 簡文帝 (320-372; r. 372), a northerner (ZG 8.9b6-8.12a8).

Clearly the old northerner-southerner division seemed not to be affecting Xu Mi's connections very much. Southerners still dominate the list, but that is to be expected—Xu lived in the south, and even most of the “northerners” by this time had been born and raised there. They all had varying levels of interest in Daoism, and many practiced the art of pure conversation (*qingtán* 清談) besides. Despite their dissimilar family backgrounds, they were beginning to overcome the old northerner-southerner tensions forty to fifty years after the fall of Luoyang. Xu Mi had managed to be on good terms with a number of high officials despite all the political tensions of his time, which indicates that he was not only socially adept but also reasonably capable as an official. In modern parlance, Xu Mi knew how to network. He may have hoped that his broad contacts in the official world would help to spread the Higher Clarity teachings and elevate their status as well. But how did a relatively minor official like Xu Mi manage to build such an impressive network?

In a way, Xu Mi benefited by being born at the right time. Most Jin officials came from a relatively small group of elite families to begin with: their members knew one another, married one another, and used many different means to retain their status from one generation to the next. In fact, class division and the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a tiny percentage of the population were perhaps more severe during this period of Chinese history than in any other (Yu Rusong 2009, 3-4). Thus, even though Xu Mi's own position was relatively minor, his *family* would have been well-known to those in power. They would still view him as “one of us,” as opposed to the vast multitude of ordinary folk.

The Xu Mai Factor

To explore the Xu family network, a convenient place to begin is by looking into the life of Xu Mi's older brother Xu Mai, because there is so much information concerning him.² If we examine the biographical materials that have been preserved about him in *Jinshu* 晉書 (JS), ZG, and elsewhere, it soon becomes apparent that they were based on the unofficial biography or *biezhuan* 別傳 that his close friend, the "sage of calligraphy" Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361) had written about him.³ Only fragments of the *biezhuan* remain. However, its material formed the basis of much of Tao Hongjing's capsule biography of Xu Mai (ZG 20.7b8-8a7), as well as the biography of Xu Mai preserved now only in fragments in *Daoxue zhuan* 道學傳 (Bumbacher 2000, 130-43).

In later ages, the episode of Xu Mai's trial before spiritual authorities from ZG 4.9a8-12b7 was readapted and combined with the *biezhuan*-based material, as evident from the Xu Mai biographies found in *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (DZ 1032), 106.25b10-30a7 and *Xuanpin lu* 玄品錄 (DZ 781) 3.3b1-6a3. However, the *biezhuan*-based JS biography and the ZG 4 account differ sharply on Xu Mai's ultimate outcome: the *biezhuan* implies that he "transformed into a feathered being" (*yuhua* 羽化), while the ZG describes him as achieving an inferior type of immortality by means of an apparent corpse. The preserved fragments are also sometimes at odds with one another on the location of certain events in Xu Mai's life. Even so, if we assemble the bits and pieces of information in JS, the *biezhuan*, and the ZG, we can develop a better grasp of his life.

We are told that Xu Mai from the start had a calm, peaceful demeanor and had no desire to pursue an official career. When he was 20, he sought advice from Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324). After Guo Pu cast milfoil in divination and received highly favorable portents about the young

² I shall limit myself here to a chronological summary of Xu Mai's life; for a more extensive study on Xu Mai, see Yoshikawa 1998, 3-22.

³ The penultimate sentence of Xu Mai's *Jin shu* biography obliquely indicates that it is in fact an abbreviated version of the biography written by Wang Xizhi: "Xizhi wrote his biography, which narrates a great many miraculous and strange deeds that cannot be recorded in detail [here]." Fang Xuanling, ed., *Jin shu*, 80.2108 (hereinafter abbreviated JS).

man before him, he told Xu he should study the way of ascending to distant realms (*shengxia zhi dao* 升遐之道).

Xu Mai then set off in search of a suitable teacher. He established contact with Bao Jing 鮑靚 (d. c. 330), a former governor of Nanhai 南海 Commandery (present-day Guangdong),⁴ probably by going through the Xu family's Celestial Masters libationer at the time, Li Dong 李東 (ZG 13.2a1-3; Kamitsuka 1999, 104n10). In 322, when Xu Mai was 23 *sui*, he received from Bao the *Liujia yinyang xingchu fu* 六甲陰陽行廚符. Thus Bao Jing was willing to teach him, but Xu Mai was still concerned about his aging parents, so he felt that he could not yet put Bao Jing's teachings fully into practice. Even so, Bao Jing advised him to go to Mount Xuanliu 懸壺 in Yuhang 餘杭 District (present-day Hangzhou), near Maoshan in the Yanling region (about 35 km southeast of Nanjing), since it was the west gate of Dongting 洞庭; its underground thoroughfares reached to the Five Marchmounts, and it was a spot where immortals like Chen Anshi 陳安世 and Mao Gu 茅固 often stayed.⁵

Xu Mai meanwhile had married, and he probably had at least one concubine as well. His wife was the daughter of one Sun Hong 孫宏, whom the *Daoxue zhuan* identifies as a Cavalier Attendant-in-ordinary in Wu.⁶ Now, Sun Hong was a descendant—probably a grandson—of Sun Xiu 孫秀 (before 234-301/302), a member of the imperial family of the Three Kingdoms state of Wu and one of Wu's top generals. In 270, when Sun Xiu thought that the last Wu emperor, Sun Hao 孫皓 (242-284; r. 264-280), no longer trusted him and was preparing to have him removed, he fled to the rival state of Jin with his family and close associates; a few months later, five thousand of his men also switched their allegiance to the Jin under Emperor Wu 武帝, i.e., Sima Yan 司馬炎 (236-290, r. 265-

⁴ Bao Jing has a biography in Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳; trl. Campamy 2002, 295-97 and 485; see also Espeset in Pregadio 2008, 1:211-12. Bao may have been Ge Hong's father-in-law. He is generally associated with the *Baojian jing* 寶劍經 and the technique of escaping death by means of an apparent corpse.

⁵ Chen Anshi has a biography in *Shenxian zhuan*; trl. Campamy 2002, 137-39; Mao Gu is the second of the three Lords Mao.

⁶ Cited in Li Shan, *Taiping yulan*, 666.6a6-11; trl. Bumbacher 2000, 142. Sun Hong's name but not his title is given in ZG 20.8a5.

290).⁷ Wu never fully recovered after this, and it was destroyed ten years later. The Simas thus treated Sun Xiu well, though other officials tended to avoid him (JS 66.1768). Returning to Xu Mai, then, his marriage with a daughter of the Suns would have boosted his social standing by indirectly drawing him closer to the ruling family.

One of the *Daoxue zhuan* fragments also records that while Xu Mai was still young, he formed a close friendship with Xu Xun 許詢 (fl. 347-373), a noted poet and practitioner of pure conversation who was also closely connected with Sima Yu (Bumbacher 2000, 137n99). The same passage describes Xu Mai as a man of extensive learning and a skilled writer.⁸ Thus another indirect connection between Xu Mai and the Simas would have come through his youthful friendship with Xu Xun.

Despite having a good family background, a wife from a prominent family, abundant talent, and connections, he turned his back on all of these things in his quest for immortality. Following Bao Jing's advice, he built a meditation hut at Mount Xuanliu, from which he traveled back and forth to the cave-chamber in Maoshan. He put aside worldly affairs. The site was also convenient because he could still visit his parents and attend to them—but he limited his visits to the first and fifteenth day of each month.⁹ During this time, the *biezhuan* reports, he sent his concubine(s) back home.¹⁰

After his father passed away, he could finally break free of his filial obligations. First he moved to Mount Huan 桓山 in Tonglu 桐廬 District (in present-day Jiande 建德 City, Zhejiang, about 75 km southwest of Hangzhou). He gathered medicinal herbs and ate atracylodes for three years, with the goal of gradually removing grain from his diet. However,

⁷ Chen Shou, *Sanguo zhi*, 48.1168 and 51.1213.

⁸ Preserved in Li Shan, *Taiping yulan*, 409.2b12-13; trl. Bumbacher 2000, 136-37.

⁹ Concerning his parents, his father Xu Fu 許副 had outlived his mother Hua Zhuan 華轉 (from the Jinling Hua family—the same that produced Xu Mi's earlier spirit-medium Hua Qiao 華僑 and his daughter-in-law Hua Zirong 華子容) and remarried a woman named Ying Laizi 應來子, who died around 365-366 (ZG 6.14b4-6.15a10; 20.6b1-2), long after Xu Mai's ultimate disappearance. Thus Xu Mai stayed only as long as his father was still alive—he did not wait for his step-mother to pass away.

¹⁰ Cited in Li Shan, *Taiping yulan*, 489.4b3-4 and Ouyang Xun, *Yiwen leiju*, 29.512.

the place was still too close to population centers, and it was difficult for him to find the solitude necessary to meditate. Even though he surrounded his mountain dwelling with a hedge, seekers of the Way were constantly approaching him for instruction. It seems likely that during this period he accepted two students named Yan Qing 閻慶 and Peng Chu 彭初, whom he taught for a period of three years. He taught Yan to absorb pneumas in order to eliminate grain from his diet, but he recommended that Peng eat atractylodes. When they were about to leave, Xu Mai burned some incense and produced smoke in five colors.¹¹

The *Daoxue zhuan* also reports that Xu Mai visited many other mountains, including one in Xincheng 新城 District.¹² By this time he had fully cut grain from his diet and was capable of holding his breath longer than an ordinary person taking a thousand breaths.

In 346, Xu Mai moved to “West Mountain in Lin’an” or “the mountains west of Lin’an” 臨安西山 (JS 80.2107); Lin’an was a District 縣 within Wuxing Commandery 吳興郡 that corresponds to present-day Lin’an City, Zhejiang. There he climbed the steeps and nibbled on polypores. He thought the place so sublime that he resolved to end his days there. He changed his name to Xuan 玄 and adopted the style Yuanyou 遠遊 (“Wanders Afar”). Soon afterward, he sent his wife a farewell letter, part of which is preserved in one of the *Daoxue zhuan* fragments:

I wish to hear the reverberations of distant thunder and the songs of alpine birds, which surely the nine parts of the [Great] Shao music cannot improve upon, and to accompany my shadow through green foliage and find a roost

¹¹ The passages about Yan Qing and Peng Chu (sometimes called Xuanzhi 玄之) are preserved in *Daoxue zhuan* cited in *Sandong zhunang* (DZ 1139), 3.24b4-9 (trl. Bumbacher 2000, 132-34), and in the *biezhuan* cited in Li Shan, ed., *Taiping yulan*, 871.2a10-12.

¹² The name Xincheng appears in *Daoxue zhuan*, cited in *Sandong zhunang* (DZ 1139), 3.24b2 (trl. Bumbacher 2000, 131) and *Xuanyuan bianzhu* (DZ 596), 2.3b8 (trl. Bumbacher 2000, 136). Although Bumbacher tentatively identifies the place as Xincheng in Huainan Commandery (in Anhui), I would favor the likelihood of it being the Xincheng District that is now a part of present-day Fuyang District 富陽區, Hangzhou City. All this is guesswork, however, considering the vast number of places named Xincheng in China’s history: several dozen are listed in Morohashi 1984, 5:635-6 (13572:259).

in a cliffside chamber, which palatial halls and broad mansions cannot surpass. [Such things] have put an end to my desires; my ambitions break off here. I am going! We part forever!¹³

A passage in *Jiankang shilu* indicates that Xu Mai in his letter had also instructed her to remarry, and that she had sent him a letter of reply, which was preserved in an anthology of women's writings. Unfortunately, the reply letter and anthology have not survived to the present.¹⁴

We should pause here to discuss the delicious ambiguity in the phrase, "accompany my shadow" (*oujing* 偶景, i.e., the same as *ouying* 偶影), which as Stephan Bumbacher (2000, 142-3n119) points out, shares the meaning of the line, "Accompanying my shadow, I travel alone" (偶景獨遊) by the poet Tao Qian 陶潛 (325-427).¹⁵ Not many years later, Yang Xi and the Perfected beings with whom he was in contact gave the term an entirely different meaning—mating Lights with a spiritual partner. The Lady of Purple Tenuity discusses the term in ZG 2.2a1-6 (trl. Smith 2013, 79). Yang Xi was surely familiar with Xu Mai's story and probably knew about his letter. Is it any wonder, then, that when Mao Gu describes Xu Mai's activities on West Mountain (or the western mountains) of Lin'an, that he says, "By dark, still waters he rested alone; roosting in isolation, he paired with the Perfected"? 玄渟獨宴，子栖偶真 (ZG 4.9b1; cf. Smith 2013, 276 and 284). This was probably one of the ways in which Yang Xi reinterpreted Xu Mai's story.

Tao Hongjing preserves another telling detail about Xu Mai and his wife: "After he divorced her, she was returned to her ancestral home, for she had no son" (ZG 20.8a5-6).

Around this time Xu Mai also sent out a set of twelve poems describing matters pertaining to the immortals (JS), but these unfortunately have not been preserved. The ZG 20 biography reports, based on the Xu family genealogy, that in 348, two years after Xu Mai moved to Lin'an,

¹³ *Daoxue zhuan* cited in Li Shan, *Taiping yulan*, 666.6a8-11; cf. Bumbacher 2000, 142-43.

¹⁴ Xu Song 許嵩, *Jiankang shilu* 建康實錄, 8.19b2-3 (*Wenyuange siku quanshu*); see Yoshikawa 1998, 21n5.

¹⁵ Tao Qian, preface to "Shiyun" 時運 (Shifting of the Seasons), *Jianzhu Tao Yuanming ji* 箋註陶淵明集, 1.2a5 (*Sibu congkan*); cf. Luo 1988-1994, 1:1548.

he disappeared. This could not have been his final disappearance, however—the family more likely lost track of him as he visited other peaks or went deep into seclusion. One *Daoxue zhuan* fragment states that when he went into the mountains to gather medicinal herbs, he would sometimes disappear for months at a time.¹⁶

If we exclude for the time being the ZG 4 account of Xu Mai's trial before spiritual authorities and his final transformation, most of the remaining reports about him concern his friendship with Wang Xizhi. The great wealth of information on Wang makes it possible to determine that this friendship could have begun only after Wang had resigned from official life in 355 (Mai 1999, 51). Wang's JS biography tells us:

Once Xizhi left office, he traveled the mountains and streams with local gentry from the eastern lands; birding and fishing were his pleasures. He also met with the Daoist adept Xu Mai, with whom he practiced dietetics, and in gathering medicinal herbs and minerals they did not consider a thousand *li* to be distant. They roamed the various eastern and central commanderies, visited all the mountains of renown, and sailed upon the blue-grey sea. He exclaimed, "In the end I shall die of happiness!" (JS 80.2101)

We do not know how exactly Wang and Xu first established their friendship, but they certainly shared a number of friends—Xu Xun could have been the person who introduced Xu Mai to Wang. We should also keep in mind that Wang had come from a very prominent northern family of officials, and that as a child he was forced to flee from Luoyang together with his family when the capital fell in 311. He too was a member of the displaced northern aristocracy. Nevertheless, he could form very close friendships with the "local gentry from the eastern lands" such as Xu Mai, which indicates again that some of the old northerner-southerner antagonism was beginning to break down.

Xu Mai's JS biography (which, we must remember, was probably based on the *biezhuan* that Wang himself had written), reconfirms the close affinity between the two: "Whenever [Wang] Xizhi visited him, he would always forget about returning home for days on end; he consid-

¹⁶ *Daoxue zhuan* cited in *Xianyuan bianzhu* 仙苑編珠 (DZ 596), 2.3b4-10; trl. Bum-bacher 2000, 135-136.

ered the friendship as from beyond the world" (JS 80.2107). Tao Hong-jing (ZG 20.7b9-10) adds that the friendship extended to Wang Xizhi's sons as well: "He made his rounds with General of the Right Wang [Xizhi] and his sons; Ziyou [=Wang Huizhi 王徽之 (d. 386/387)] respected his instructions as if [they had come] from the three [authorities (father, teacher, and lord)]." The final bit of information concerns a letter that Xu Mai sent to Wang Xizhi. In it, he describes how his vicinity in Lin'an was filled with golden halls, jade mansions, and immortality-conferring polypores and herbs, and he states that a number of Zuo Ci's 左慈 followers stayed there at the end of the Han dynasty.¹⁷

For the remainder of Xu Mai's story, we must depend on the ZG 4 account. The Perfected Mao Gu, the narrator, strongly implies that Xu Mai, just before his worldly end, used the technique of escaping from death by means of a simulated corpse at Mount Zhuye 竹葉山, which is more commonly known as Mount Gaizhu 蓋竹山 (south of Linhai 臨海 in present-day Zhejiang). In a cave in this mountain, he and three contemporaries joined four immortals who had entered the cave together at the end of the Han dynasty. One of the four had just been promoted to the status of a Perfected official. Since Mao Gu, speaking in 367, says that Xu Mai entered the cave "just four years ago," we can infer that Xu Mai reached the end of his earthly existence in 363 (ZG 4.9a8-12b7; trl. Smith 2013, 275-86).

Xu Mai and Sima Yu

In the summary of Xu Mai's life above, I deliberately omitted one colorful episode from JS that records a brief meeting between him and Sima Yu, the Prince of Kuaiji and future Emperor Jianwen. Sima Yu, during his many decades as prince, encountered a serious problem as he entered middle age: all but one of his sons had died, and the only one left had been disgraced and deemed incorrigible, so he lacked an heir. The episode appears as part of the biography of Emperor Jianwen's primary consort, Empress Li 李:

¹⁷ JS 80.2107; Xu Jian, *Chuxue ji*, 8.189. Zuo Ci, a prominent immortal, has biographies in Fan Ye and Li Xian, eds., *Hou Hanshu, liezhuan* 72B.2747-48 and in Ge Hong, *Shenxian zhuan*; trl. Campany 2002, 279-86, with many notes.

The Filial, Martial, and Civil Empress Dowager Li, whose taboo-name was Lingrong 陵容, originally rose from humble station. In the beginning, when Emperor Jianwen was [still] Prince of Kuaiji, he had three sons, but they all died young. After [his presumed heir Sima] Daosheng 道生 was deposed [348] and Prince Xian [Sima Yu 郁] died young, for nearly a decade none of his various concubines became pregnant.

The [future] Emperor ordered the diviner Hu Qian¹⁸ 扈謙 to divine [the situation] by milfoil, and Hu said, “There is one woman in the rear palaces who is sure to bear two noble males, one of whom in the end will prosper the house of Jin.” Soon Worthy Lady Xu gave birth to the Princess of Xin’an [Sima Daofu 道福]; Xu was favored for her virtue and beauty. The [future] Emperor had always hoped she would become pregnant, but through the years she never had a son.

At that time there was a certain Daoist adept, Xu Mai, who many court officials and notables of the time claimed had found the Way. The [future] Emperor calmly asked him about it. [Mai] replied, “I am a man who loves the mountains and streams, [but] from the first I have not possessed Daoist arts. In this matter, surely I cannot make any judgement! But Your Highness being of abundant Virtue and profound blessings should increase and magnify the line for successive generations. You must heed Hu Qian’s words in seeking the Way of extensive intercourse.” The [future] Emperor agreed with this and further increased the selection and induction [of women into the palace].

After several more years, he still had no son. Then he ordered that all his favorite concubines be summoned and shown before an excellent physiognomist. For all of them [the latter] said, “This isn’t the one.” Again he had all the various concubines’ maids shown to him. The [future] Empress at the time was a palace woman in the weaving workshop. [She had] a lanky figure and dark complexion, so all the [other] palace women called her “Kunlun.”¹⁹ Once she arrived, the physiognomist excitedly said, “This

¹⁸ Hu Qian was a diviner who predicted future events relating to the imperial house in other situations as well; see JS 8.215 (where he predicts Emperor Fei’s removal even before he ascends the throne in 365) and 28.846 (where he predicts the death of Emperor Mu in 361). His biography in *Dongxian zhuan* 洞仙傳 (Biographies of Cave Immortals), preserved in YJQQ 111.8b8-10a10, makes him a great wine-drinker.

¹⁹ Kunlun 崑崙 was a derogatory term for people from Southeast Asia (Luo 1988-1994, 3:833-34).

is the one!" The [future] Emperor, through the [triennial] Great Reckoning,²⁰ summoned her to attend to him in the bedchamber.

Later, she frequently dreamt of two dragons pillowing themselves on her knees and the sun and moon entering her embrace. Thinking these were auspicious signs, she described them to her cohorts. The [future] Emperor hearing of this thought it unusual. She subsequently gave birth to [the future] Emperor Xiaowu [Sima Yao 司馬曜; 362-396, r. 372-396], Prince Wenxiao of Kuaiji [Sima Daozi 司馬道子, 364-403], and the Grand Princess of Poyang.²¹

Emperor Xiaowu's "basic annal" (*benji* 本紀) thus begins, "Emperor Xiaowu, whose taboo-name was Yao and whose style was Changming 昌明, was Emperor Jianwen's third son."²² However, the basic annal's conclusion provides another anecdote concerning his birth, Sima Yu's delight, and the meaning of the baby's style-name:

In the beginning, Emperor Jianwen had read a prophecy that said, "The Jin legacy will be utterly brilliant (*changming*)."²³ When Emperor [Xiaowu] was in the womb, Empress Dowager Li dreamt of a divine man who said to her, "The boy you give birth to shall be styled Changming." When she gave birth, the east was beginning to brighten, so he was thus named. Emperor Jianwen came to the realization later on, then wept (JS 9.242).²³

²⁰ The Great Reckoning (*daji* 大計) was a triennial evaluation of officials (Hucker 1985, 463). The ancient basis for this procedure is found in *Zhou li*, 1.19a6 (*Sibu congkan*).

²¹ JS 32.981. Of the Grand Princess of Poyang, neither her name nor dates were preserved. Another fanciful account among the fragments of the *Daoxue zhuan* describes Emperor Xiaowu's birth as the result of a petition by an immortal named Pu Yang 濮陽; see Bumbacher 2000, 283-85. That tale, however, seems to be a later invention.

²² JS 9.224. Emperor Jianwen actually had several more sons before Sima Yao was born, but Sima Yao was only the third to survive infancy.

²³ JS 9.242. A similar account appears in the Liu Jun 劉峻 (462-521) commentary to *Shishuo xinyu* (Yu Jiaxi 1993, 2.144; cf. Mather 2002, 74). Liu Jun cites as his source a now-lost work by Liu Yu 劉彧 (439-472; the future Emperor Ming of the Liu-Song dynasty, r. 466-472), *Jiangzuo yilai wenzhang zhi* 江左以來文章志.

The nearly ten-year period of Sima Yu's quest for sons largely coincides with the period of Xu Mai's friendship with Wang Xizhi. Because Wang met Xu after retiring in 355, it is unlikely that he was one of the officials who recommended him to the prince—it had to have been someone else (Xu Xun?). Ironically, Xu Mai is called to counsel the prince on producing an heir, when he himself had no heir—at least by his wife. Once he appears before the prince, however, his remarks are wisely circumspect. He simply uses the proper polite expressions, modestly denies having any special knowledge, and recommends that the prince follow the other diviner's advice. What else could he have said?²⁴

Hu Qian's prediction of two sons born by one woman is in its own way exceptionally clever. Considering that Sima Yu had numerous consorts, concubines, and maids and had already fathered many children, predicting that one of these women would have two boys would not be too much of a statistical long-shot. However, the verification could require many years, even decades, and after the birth of even one son, the happy prince would concentrate his attention on the mother in order to fulfill Hu's prediction—thereby increasing the probability of its fulfillment.

Yang Xi and Sima Yu

The ZG, meanwhile, gives a very different version of the Sima Yu story. According to Tao Hongjing, Xu Mi and Yang Xi had known each other for some years before Yang Xi began to contact the Perfected regularly for Xu Mi, and during this time, Xu Mi had recommended Yang Xi to Sima Yu, who employed him for a while in his “lordly establishment” (*gongfu* 公府) as a houseman in personal attendance (ZG 20.11b4-5). Tao does not say *why* Xu Mi recommended Yang Xi, but considering Sima Yu's predicament, we may infer that Xu figured that Yang could help the

²⁴ Zhong Laiyin (1992, 49), on the basis of this episode, writes that it demonstrates Xu Mai's political support for Sima Yu and that the two had a “profound relationship” (*shenhou guanxi* 深厚關係), but that is surely an overstatement. The broad arc of Xu Mai's life shows that by the time he was called to court, he had already been assiduously avoiding all contact with officialdom for decades. His appearance before Sima Yu was probably not a matter of choice for him.

prince with his problem. Surely if Yang were successful, would this not help Xu Mi to support and ingratiate himself with Sima Yu? The failure of his older brother's suggested solution may have been weighing more and more heavily on his mind. How would he keep himself in the prince's good graces? How would he preserve the Xu family's reputation?

Basically, the ZG attributes the birth of Sima Yao, the future Emperor Xiaowu, not to the intervention of Hu Qian or Xu Mai but to Yang Xi; the unnamed "excellent physiognomist" of JS may well have been Yang, as we shall see. The ZG here does not treat us to any narrative of the events. Instead, the ZG presents a first-hand document consisting of three messages that Yang Xi received on August 10, 361 from two of the Perfected—the Lady in Attendance Within (Zhonghou furen 中候夫人) and the Lady of Purple Tenuity (Ziwei furen 紫微夫人)—then passed on to Sima Yu (ZG 8.9b6-10b7).²⁵ It may seem strange to see these two Perfected women here offering instruction not on how to avoid sex but on how to produce male offspring, but even these rarified beings can sympathize with the need for heirs—and this is an exceptional case. Their language is sometimes extremely cryptic.

The Lady in Attendance Within begins with a statement on Sima Yu's situation. She observes that "the Artisan of Virtue" (Dejiang 德匠)—perhaps this was Sima Yu's child-name, or a name he had received from his teacher—has been doing everything he should to cultivate himself, but still lacked an heir (ZG 8.9b6-9). She goes on to observe: "Sometimes, the withering and falling may be due to disorder in the Numina's Passes—the hidden shuttle hasn't been subdued" (ZG 8.9b9-10). Now, what is it that withers and falls? What is the hidden shuttle? Behind the weaving imagery, it would appear that Sima Yu, as he approached middle age, had difficulty sustaining the regimen of "extensive intercourse" recommended to him earlier. The "Numina's Passes" (*lingguan* 靈關) is a

²⁵ Zhong Laiyin (1994, 223-28) provides a very informative analysis of this ZG passage but errs in identifying the first speaker in her second speech (identified only as "Zhonghou") as Li Zhonghou, who wrote the esoteric biography of the three Lords Mao (ZG 8.2a9). To clarify: the Lady in Attendance Within is named Wang Guanxiang 王觀香; she is a younger half-sister of Wangzi Qiao 王子喬; see ZG 3.2a8-2b7; trl. Smith 2013, 157-59. The Lady in Attendance Within would be a most appropriate speaker for Sima Yu, since she was once an earthly princess.

term that appears in the 19th stanza of *Huangting neijing jing*, where according to the Tang-era commentator Bai Lüzhong 白履忠 (fl. 722-729; better known by his sobriquet Liangqiuzi 梁丘子), it refers broadly to the Three Passes, Four Passes, and so on that are found throughout the body.²⁶ These are strategic points where various spirits, both good and bad, can pass, so they must always be guarded. Disorder at these points (literally, “missing weft threads” or more technically, “errant picks”) is due to poor control. Mastery of the shuttle will ensure the weft’s proper spacing.

After the Lady discusses various favorable astronomical signs auguring marriage and conjugal relations, she comments that the “mystic moisture on the embryonic sprout will [cause] the growth of its irrigated root” (ZG 8.9b10-10a2): the embryo’s development into a male infant is assured. She follows this with a discussion of bamboo:

I note that the text of the *Esoteric Treatise from [the Palace of] Ninefold Assembly* states, “Bamboo is the superior seminal essence of the North Polestar and receives pneuma from the dark-balconied lodgings.” Therefore, it is round, hollow, and gleams within; where yin is double, it holds in its immaculacy. Indeed, in all instances when it sets root, it spreads fruit and proliferates in great abundance. (ZG 8.10a3-5)

The quotation alludes first to the ancient and familiar association between the Polestar and the emperor, but what about the “dark-balconied lodgings”? These refer to the women’s quarters, situated on the dark or north side of the palace. Bamboo’s rich symbolism and its association with reproduction has been thoroughly explored by Wang Sanmao (2009, 71-75), who points out, among other things, that the practice of planting bamboo by windows during the Southern Dynasties was a common expression of romantic love and desire. It is a frequently recurring motif in the palace-style poetry of the period. Inside the palace, it also symbolized the competition among palace women for the emperor’s

²⁶ *Huangting neijing yujing zhu* 黃庭內景玉經駐 (DZ 402), 3.9a5-6a5 (YJQQ 12.11b2-12a2). Zhong Laiyin (1992, 52) describes the Numina’s Passes as an alternate term for Numinous Root (*linggen* 靈根), the male reproductive system. However, I agree with his assessment that the ZG passage alludes to Sima Yu having some erectile difficulty.

favor. Citing the ZG passage above, Wang writes (2009, 73): "Clearly the bamboo has reproductive capabilities, and has connotations of the male gender. Therefore, when palace women stuck bamboo stalks in front of their windows, the symbolic meaning was that they anticipated receiving favor."

The counterpart to the bamboo (male) is expressed through the term *chongyin* 重陰: double yin or "where yin is double." *Chongyin* refers generally to places or situations where yin is at peak ascendance, such as midnight (the most yin time of the yin night), double-layered clouds, clouds and rain together, soil below the surface, double layers of shade, and so on (Luo 1988-1994, 10:387). The Japanese translators' rendition, "in the earth" (*tsuchi no naka de* 土の中で; Yoshikawa and Mugitani 2000, 290), without comment, unfortunately eliminates all the other associations. The insertion of the bamboo stalk in the soil, however, has a fairly obvious sexual connotation; the usual dictionary definitions of *chongyin* also neglect to mention any anatomical meaning.

Paradoxically, Polaris, the celestial counterpart for the earthly emperor, may also be classified as *chongyin*, because it is ultimate north and belongs to the night—and yet it gleams in the darkness. The emperor likewise is traditionally positioned in the north, the position of peak yin, associated with water, winter, and the color black according to the Five Phases system. He always looks south as he surveys his domain. Even so, from water, the only way forward is to wood, spring, green, and rebirth, the position of ascendant yang. In medical terms, as the *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問 puts it, "Double yin must become yang" (重陰必陽),²⁷ which perhaps explains why sons are expected.

This brings us to the final part of the Lady's speech:

Your Highness, as an experiment you may plant bamboo outside of the north apartments of the inner [palace] and have a beautiful woman wander there below it. You will then move the heavenly god of the Mechanism [=Polestar] greatly to continue the line. Not only will the pregnancy be brought safely to full term, the newborn will also have long life. When arousing the hidden and the apparent, always hold to harmony and up-

²⁷ *Huangdi neijing suwen buzhu shiwen* 黃帝內經素問補註釋文 (DZ 1018), 5.10a3; cf. Unschuld and Tessenow 2011, 104.

rightness. This is a secret rule of the mystic ones. Putting it into practice is very effective. (ZG 8.10a5-8)

Part of the reasoning behind this should by now be apparent. The woman wandering below the bamboo reenacts the stars' movements around Polaris, and this puts the prince in harmony with his celestial counterpart. "The hidden and the apparent" (*weizhao* 微著) obliquely refer to yin and yang, female and male, etc.

The Lady of Purple Tenuity provides a short poetic summary (ZG 8.10a10-10b3) replete with allusions to the *Shi jing* that hint at numerous progeny;²⁸ its wording also contains an echo of one description of the inception of the immortal embryo.²⁹ The Lady in Attendance Within concludes the visit with a firm prediction: "Fuhe will surely have two sons, and for their abundant Virtue they will be known throughout the world" (ZG 8.10b5). This is almost the same as Hu Qian's prediction, but this time a specific woman is named. As it turns out, Lady Li (Tao Hongjing notes that Fuhe was probably her personal name) did have two sons as well as one daughter, as described in JS. If we accept the ZG account as genuine and not back-dated from a later time, then Yang Xi managed to pull off the remarkable feat of solving the prince's problem and correctly predicting the outcome. Meanwhile, his prediction, by not going against Hu Qian's, would preserve both Hu Qian and Xu Mai's reputations.

How do the JS and ZG accounts relate to each other? They are not necessarily contradictory, and in fact they complement each other. One gives a kind of outsider's view of what happened, the other an insider's view. There is the appearance of the characters *yao* 曜 (Sima Yao's name) and *chang* 昌 (part of his style) in the Lady of Purple Tenuity's poem (Zhong Laiyin 1994, 227). Also, the nameless "excellent physiognomer" in JS could well have been Yang Xi himself, and Yang Xi's prediction may be considered a refinement of Hu Qian's. If we put the two versions together, we get a picture of Sima Yu consulting various officials and diviners for help, and they can only recommend "extensive intercourse."

²⁸ Specifically, to the poem "Zhongsi" 螽斯 (Locusts), for which see Legge 1994, 4:11-12; a far better translation is found in Karlgren 1974, 4. It secondly alludes to "Yong" 雝 (In Harmony); trl. Legge 1994, 4:589-90.

²⁹ The final stanza of *Shangqing dadong zhenjing* 上清大洞真經 (DZ 6), 6.14a5-8.

By the time Yang Xi arrives, he knows the conventional method is not working. When he describes withering and falling, missing threads, and the lack of a well-controlled shuttle, he is effectively telling Sima Yu to pace himself and exercise greater control or moderation. The suggested experiment with the bamboo also seems to indicate that he was to focus on one or a select few women instead of attempting to "bestow favor" on as many women as possible. Over the long term, the adjusted method would also be more satisfying from a psychological or emotional perspective. If indeed Yang was the "excellent physiognomist" who chose Lady Li, a woman who did not fit the usual standards for beauty, he would have been considering some other factor. Perhaps he thought the skillful maid from the palace's weaving workshop could help control the shuttle?

Emergence of the Broader Network

Around this time, Xu Mi had another opportunity to support and assist the Sima clan. The episode I am about to introduce has been overlooked by most scholars who have written about Higher Clarity's early years, but it sheds some light on the formation of Xu Mi's network. One of the persons whom ZG 8 describes seeking Xu Mi and Yang Xi for medical and spiritual assistance had earlier joined him in a courtly debate on a Confucian issue that took place during the Ascendant Peace era (Shengping, 357-362), right when Sima Yu was most desperately trying to beget an heir. Other debate participants were very closely connected to the ZG figures. First, some background is necessary.

According to research by the Taiwanese scholar Zheng Yaru (2001), among Confucian thinkers during the Jin dynasty one of the most hotly debated subjects (and the kind of ritual issue often forgotten today) was the proper way for sons to mourn mothers, step-mothers, and father's concubines. The duration of the mourning, the type of mourning clothes to be worn, and so on were determined by a bewildering array of criteria that unfortunately tended to leave sons, especially sons of concubines, feeling that they were not permitted to mourn their mothers enough (Zheng 2001, 11).

Sima Yu had personal experience of this problem. He was Emperor Yuan's 元帝 (276-323; r. 318-323) youngest son, by a favorite concubine.

His father had many years earlier designated his accomplished eldest son Sima Shao 司馬紹 (299-325) as successor; Sima Shao, moreover, was the son of the Empress Xun 荀. Even so, Emperor Yuan named Sima Yu Prince of Langye 琅邪王, the title usually given to the intended heir. Sima Yu was only three when his father died, so the throne readily passed to Sima Shao, i. e., Emperor Ming 明帝 (r. 323-325). Unfortunately, this promising ruler died young, so the throne passed to his two-year-old eldest son Sima Yan 司馬衍 or Emperor Cheng 成帝 (321-342; r. 323-342). In 326, when Sima Yu was six, his mother Zheng Achun 鄭阿春 died, and he started the full three-year mourning for her. However, because she was a concubine who had outlived her husband, and because Sima Yu already bore a princely title, someone objected, stating that the degree of mourning should be reduced. This upset the boy, and he tried to defend himself in writing, stating his own feelings (probably with much editorial assistance from the Dowager Empress, who would have wanted him out of the way). As a result, he was replaced as Prince of Langye and given the title Prince of Kuaiji instead—effectively a demotion (Zheng 2001, 65-70).

Despite this setback, through the sometimes short reigns of his nephew and grand-nephews over the next few decades, Sima Yu went on to serve in many important military and civil positions. During the reigns of Emperors Mu 穆帝 (343-361; r. 344-361) and Ai 哀帝 (341-365; r. 361-365), he became regent and Minister Prince (*xiangwang* 相王), though his authority was being gradually eroded by the warlord Huan Wen 桓溫 (312-373). In sum, during this entire period he remained a key player in the government and may still have quietly hoped for a chance to ascend the throne one day.

The issue of mourning reemerged with Sima Yu's half-brother Sima Xi 司馬晞 (316-381). The compendium *Tongdian* 通典 (Comprehensive Institutions) records that during the Ascendant Peace era (357-361), Sima Xi petitioned the court for permission to mourn his mother, a concubine, for three years wearing hemmed, very coarse hempen cloth (*fu qicui san-nian* 服齊衰三年). This was far more than what the ritual rules usually permitted, because—as in Sima Yu's case—his mother was only a concubine who had outlived his father, and because he had received a title. The court decided after a debate that he could only mourn her for nine

months wearing hempen cloth of medium coarseness (*dagong jiuyue* 大功九月). The five officials who contributed to the debate included the following:

- (1) The Erudite Kong Hui 孔恢 (fl. 327-361);
- (2) The Minister of Personnel Xie Feng 謝奉 (fl. c. 340-370; he appears in ZG 8.9a8-b3);
- (3) The Director of the Granaries Section (*cangbu lang* 倉部郎) Xu Mu 許穆—this would be the Xu Mi of the ZG;
- (4) The Gentleman of the Ministry of Personnel Gao Song 高崧 (d. 366; his son Gao Qi appears in ZG 8.8a9-9b5);
- (5) The Director of the Ministry of Sacrifices Cao Chudao 曹處道 (no other information about him is preserved).³⁰

Although Tao Hongjing’s short biography of Xu Mi in ZG 19 does not mention any official service in the Granaries Section, it is entirely possible that Tao’s list of Xu’s official titles is not exhaustive.³¹

Kong Hui is known only from a brief passage describing how he had run afoul of the law in 327 while serving as the District Magistrate of Jurong 句容, but he received an imperial pardon.³² He participated in several other debates recorded in *Tongdian*; in one he debates again with Gao Song.³³ I suspect that he was one of the Kongs of Kuaiji.

Xie Feng, together with Kong Chen 孔忱, Wei Yi 魏顗, Yu Qiu 虞球, and Yu Cun 虞存, were considered paragons of their clans, each based in Kuaiji.³⁴ Xie served as Governor of Guang Region 廣州 (Guangdong and Guangxi), of Wu Commandery, and Danyang 丹陽 Commandery. After serving as Minister of Personnel, he was dismissed around 361 and returned to his home in Kuaiji (Mather 2002, 560; Yu Jiaxi 1993, 1:373n1).

³⁰ Du You 杜佑 (735-812), *Tongdian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 82.2230.

³¹ The short biography of Xu Mi preserved in *Jiankang shilu* also does not preserve this title. See Xu Song, *Jiankang shilu*, 9.9a7-10a2 (*Wenyuange siku quanshu*).

³² Li Fang, ed., *Taiping yulan*, 646.7a5-6.

³³ Du You, *Tongdian*, 81.2215.

³⁴ JS 78.2062. The corresponding *Shishuo xinyu* passages are found in Yu Jiaxi 1993, 1:105, and 469; trl. Mather 2002, 54 and 249.

Several *Shishuo xinyu* anecdotes mention him. He is perhaps most famous for having collected Wang Xizhi's calligraphy on wood.³⁵

The *Tongdian* passage unfortunately omits Gao Song's surname. The relevant phrase thus seems to read, "The Gentleman of the Ministry of Personnel Song Zhong deliberated...." 吏部郎崧重議曰. Zheng Yaru (2001, 71-73) consequently refers to him as "Song Zhong" 崧重 since Song is a surname, albeit rare. However, I interpret the phrase to read, "Gentleman of the Ministry of Personnel [Gao] Song further deliberated..." because Gao is in agreement with Xu Mu, the previous speaker in the debate, but he arrives at his position via a different argument. *Zhong* should be read *chong*. No other record of a "Song Zhong" exists. However, Gao Song had served as Commander of the Pacification Army (*fuzhun sima* 撫軍司馬) under Sima Yu,³⁶ and the capsule biography of Gao Song in Liu Jun's 劉峻 (462-521) commentary to *Shishuo xinyu* preserves a detail not found in his JS biography: he had indeed once served as a Gentleman of the Ministry of Personnel (*libu lang* 吏部郎; Yu Jiayi 1993, 2.139). Gao Song and his wife achieved a kind of belated posthumous renown after their intact tombs, complete with inscriptions and sumptuous grave goods, were discovered in 1998 just east of Nanjing.³⁷ From the inscriptions we know that Gao Song died in 366, and that his wife had come from the Xie clan of Kuaiji—the same as Xie Feng's. Thus, Gao Song and Xie Feng were probably in-laws (this also explains why in ZG 8, Gao Qi appears together with Xie Feng).

During the debate, Xu Mu (Xu Mi) and Gao Song argue that Sima Xi should wear the hemmed, coarse hempen cloth for one year (*qicui zhou* 齊衰周). Kong Hui recommends the finely woven hempen cloth for five months (*xiaogong wuyue* 小功五月), and both Xie Feng and Cao Chudao recommend the very finely woven hempen cloth for three months (*fu sima* 服緦麻). That is, Xu Mu and Gao Song adopt the position closest to

³⁵ See Yu He 虞穌 (fl. 467), "Lun shu biao" 論書表 (Memorial Discussing Calligraphy), preserved in Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (c. 815-after 875), *Fashu yaolu* 法書要錄 (Essential Records Concerning Model Calligraphy), 2.8a8-b2 (*Wenyuange siku quanshu*).

³⁶ JS 71.1894-96. For a biography of Gao Song in English, see Mather 2002, 574.

³⁷ Nanjing shi bowuguan 2001; for an abridged English version, see Nanjing Municipal Museum 2002.

Sima Xi's. They would have been fully aware that the regent Sima Yu had once been in the same situation as Sima Xi, and that based on precedent it would be impossible for the court to agree with Sima Xi's request for three-year mourning. However, by arguing for the position closest to Sima Xi's, they would have also pleased Sima Yu.

Xu Mi like his contemporaries was so steeped in the Confucian ritual texts that he would have been ready to debate the finer points of mourning practices at any moment. The ZG also preserves a set of documents (usually ignored) that portray him in this light. At one point during Yang Xi's service to Xu Mi—probably early in 366—Xu Mi's step-mother died, and Xu, who may have felt close to her, wanted to go ahead with the full three-year mourning, in line with long-established precedent; he even pressured Yang Xi to assist him with the funerary rites. The Perfected deities Mao Gu and Lady Right Blossom 右英夫人 then issued stern warnings against excessive mourning, and Consort An 安妃 warned Yang Xi against involvement in funeral matters.³⁸ Xu Mi responded to Lady Right Blossom with a spirited defense of mourning, but in the end he acquiesced to her demand not to grieve and wail to excess (ZG 6.14b9-15a10). He was keenly aware of ritual's role in showing one's feelings and promoting social harmony. He worried about appearances and conforming appropriately—especially because, as an official, he was in the public eye. People did watch, and they talked, and there were dire consequences for not conforming to the rules for mourning.

Xu Mi's Visitors

Xu Mi's concern about appearances would have stemmed also from the stream of important visitors he and Yang Xi were receiving. The list at the beginning of this article no doubt represents only a fraction of the total. What could have drawn them to Xu's home in Jurong? I believe

³⁸ ZG 6.14b4-8 preserves a part of Mao Gu's warning to Xu Mi not to mourn his step-mother with extreme sorrow, and ZG 6.14b9-15a10 preserves Xu Mi's letter in response to Lady Right Blossom, who had given him a similar warning (since lost). Both are undated, but Consort An's warning to Yang Xi not to involve himself with mourning and funerals (ZG 7.1a4-2b7) is dated February 6, 366, so Xu Mi's step-mother probably died in early 366.

that it was Yang Xi's proven and very visible success with Sima Yu. Is it any coincidence that Yang Xi's visions for Xu Mi and Xu Hui began in 365, after Sima Yao, the future Emperor Xiaowu, and his brother Sima Daozi were born respectively in 362 and 364? Conditions were ripe for new revelations, and many people (not all, of course) were now convinced that Yang was genuinely in touch with the spirit world.³⁹ There are signs that his scriptures and teachings were already finding an eager audience. Let us focus on a few of Xu Mi's visitors listed at the beginning of this article. What indications do we have that at least some were already following the new teachings?

L.u Yuanzhi. A court calligrapher and Governor of Xuancheng 宣城 (in Anhui), he would have been in his mid-50s, based on the few pieces of information about him.⁴⁰ He sought medicine for his ailing mother.⁴¹ The Perfected discuss heart medicines, so we may infer that the old woman suffered from a heart problem of some kind. As for Liu himself, at several points the Perfected remark that he has cultivated his heart, or that he has a good heart and devotes himself to worship. Furthermore, they allude to the fact that in his petition he mentions the "devil-dispellers' healing of disease" 有言消磨之愈疾 (ZG 8.3b7; *xiaomo* or "devil-dispellers" are medicines). It seems that some difficulty was later encountered when trying to obtain the senega (*yuanzhi* 遠志; *Polygala tenuifolia*) for the prescription, so Xu Mi also asked for some from the Lu brothers, the subjects of the next document collected in ZG. The declarations for Liu were issued on the Double Seventh festival of an unspeci-

³⁹ For example, in ZG 17.20a1-2, Tao Hongjing writes, "At the time some acquaintances and nobles had heard of Yang being visited by spirits. Many of those who believed had some request, while those who did not believe came up with reproachful slanders."

⁴⁰ Apart from Tao Hongjing's note, Liu Yuanzhi is known only through an anecdote in *Shishuo xinyu* and the accompanying Liu Jun commentary, which cites Xu Guang's 徐廣 (352-425) now-lost *Jinji* 晉紀 (Annals of the Jin Dynasty). See Yu Jiaxi 25.812; trl. Mather 2002, 453, 586. The relevant ZG passage is also briefly discussed in Strickmann 1981, 162.

⁴¹ Stanley-Baker (2014, 126-32), who translates much of the previous section (on "Mr. Kong") somehow mixes its content with that of the present one, so that he construes the recipes discussed here as relating to Mr. Kong's child; the old woman's heart medicine is thus transformed into a pediatric medicine.

fied year, but 366 is likely, because one of the figures (Yu He) in the next passage from the same document probably died in 366.

For our purposes, what is remarkable about this section is that Liu Yuanzhi seems already to know something about the *Xiaomo jing*, a Higher Clarity scripture, and the Perfected say positive things about his self-cultivation practices. Could this indicate that he too was studying the Way of Higher Clarity?

Lu Na and Lu Shi. Lu Na had a long, distinguished official career and served in a number of capacities. Of his brother Lu Shi, however, the official history reports only that he served as a Palace Attendant (*shizhong* 侍中) and Imperial Secretary (*shangshu* 尚書). Oddly, Lu Na's nephews figure prominently in his biography, and it seems that he was entirely responsible for raising them. They also gave him plenty of trouble, because they chafed at Lu Na's adherence to a family tradition of extreme frugality (JS 77.2026-27; see also Strickmann 1981, 163).

In ZG, the section involving the Lus probably dates to 366 and differs from the others because the petitioners are not seeking medicine—instead, Xu Mi is seeking the medicinal herb senega from them, for Liu Yuanzhi's mother. Moreover, one of the brothers, called Lu Gouzi 陸苟子 in ZG, had already sworn to follow a painstaking purification regimen for one year in order to obtain scriptures from Xu Mi and Yang Xi. Tao Hongjing comments that it is unclear which brother this was. However, if this person was so dedicated, then I believe he had to have been Lu Shi—who had been letting Lu Na raise his sons. The Perfected warmly praise the Lu brothers for being “pure, sincere, honest, and single-minded” (*qingzhen chunyi* 清真淳一; ZG 8.4b5). They are also sure to enjoy blessings due to the hidden virtue of their grandfather. The Perfected enjoin Xu Mi (or Yang Xi—it is not clear) to reevaluate the scripture-petitioner's worthiness, presumably before he gives him scriptures. In sum, the Lus have already committed themselves to the way of Higher Clarity.

Yu He. The Perfected Director Protecting Life Mao Zhong 茅衷 expresses little hope for Yu He's recovery. Because of Yu's “status as a worldly official with nobility and power” (ZG 8.5a8) he has shown little faith and accumulated a lifetime of sins. Only now, at death's doorstep, he wants to part with a thousand in gold in a last-ditch effort at self-

cultivation. It is “too little, too late” for him. He died in 366 (Mather 2002, 637, based on JS).

Now there were plenty of Jin officials who had “nobility and power,” but Yu He is a kind of extreme case. If we look at his imperial connections alone (not to mention all his other familial and marital connections with powerful officials), we find that he could number among his relatives an empress aunt, an empress first cousin, two emperor first cousins, and three emperor first cousins once removed, including the reigning emperor at the time Yang Xi was receiving his visions. If this declaration was made in 365 or 366, which is likely, his empress first cousin would have been the current empress. Of course, Ge Hong in the *Baopuzi neipian* had emphasized the virtual impossibility of emperors and nobles mastering the Way (Wang Ming 1985, 2.17-18; trl. Ware 1966, 42-5). For our purposes, however, the presence of Yu He here is meaningful in two ways. First, it illustrates that Xu Mi and Yang Xi’s reputation had spread further among the families connected to the ruling Sima clan. Second, the phrase about “a thousand in gold” hints that Yang’s Perfected advice and recipes may have commanded high prices.

Chi Yin. Chi Yin’s connection with the Xus would have come primarily through his brother-in-law Wang Xizhi, Xu Xun, and Xu Mai (see also Strickmann 1981, 163-64; Yoshikawa 1998, 10-12). When reading the numerous passages (ZG 8.8.5b5-8a9) relating to Chi Yin, son of the eminent general Chi Jian 郗鑒 (269-339), it is important to note that the first passage still comes from the document with the previous three sections (probably dating to 366, based on the Yu He passage), while the ones that follow come from another, *earlier* document. In the first passage, Mao Ying states unequivocally that the things of the immortals’ Way are far from Chi Yin, but in the other passages the Perfected still express hope for him or offer instruction and advice. The first passage is directed to Xu Mi, probably a response to a question by Xu Mi about Chi Yin’s spiritual status, but the others are intended for Chi Yin. The poems addressed to Chi and other materials relating to him in Part One of ZG (ZG 2.18b7-19a3, 3.6b5-9, 3.7a6-7b2; trl. Smith 2013, 139, 182-83, 186-87) all date to September and October 365, and these likewise reflect a more hopeful mood.

What explains this shift in tone? When Chi Yin joined Xu Mi in his Daoist pursuits, his official career was in hiatus, following the death of his brother Chi Tan 郗曇 (320-361). He spent time with Wang Xizhi and Xu Xun, cultivating various Daoist practices, and supposedly severed his ties with human affairs for "more than ten years" (JS 67.1802). However, that is an exaggeration. Elsewhere (JS 8.212) we read that in October-November 367, Chi Yin was *already* serving as Governor of Kuaiji and had received a new appointment to the position of General Pacifying the North. Thus his period of reclusion could not have lasted much longer than four years. If we fit this information with the record in ZG, we see that the favorable or hopeful statements concerning Chi Yin could only have taken place late in 365, or early 366 at the latest. After that, he resumed his official career and went elsewhere—a move that surely would have earned him scorn from the Perfected. In short, his active discipleship lasted only a few months.

The person primarily responsible for summoning Chi Yin back into government was none other than Sima Yu; Chi resumed his official career with great reluctance (JS 67.1802). Chi Yin's later career need not concern us. However, in Chi Yin we see a person who is connected to Xu Mi through family friendships, political association with Sima Yu, and shared religious interests.

Sima Yu. We have already discussed the first half of the ZG section on Sima Yu, which concerns his search for an heir, but the second half concerns something else entirely—a prophecy on the future of the Jin dynasty. It is undated, but some of the astronomical signs described in its preface correspond to events occurring in late 368 and early 369,⁴² so we may be certain that it dates to mid-369, possibly later. Sima Yu would have asked Yang Xi about the dynasty's future only after Yang had sufficiently convinced him that he was in touch with the spirit world.

⁴² In ZG 8.10b9-11a2, the description of agitated heavenly pneumas corresponds with JS 12.344 (dated October 12, 368 and June 9, 369). The description of a nova below the Purple Palace asterism corresponds with JS 13.394 (the nova emerged in March-April 369 and disappeared in September), and the description of anomalous changes in moonlight corresponds with descriptions of lunar haloes in JS 12.346 (dated February-March, 369).

I will not delve into the content of the prophecy (worded, as prophecies usually are, in very difficult, often ambiguous language), since it would take us too far afield, but it does sound many warnings about the future. Generally speaking, it urges Sima Yu not to ponder or hesitate before doing things: he should be a man of action, acting decisively against rebels whenever possible. He need not worry about himself, but for five reigns (*wushi* 五世) the Jin will see its fill of tragedy and upheaval. Usurpation is only “a matter of time” (*cuan li you shu* 篡歷有數; ZG 8.12a4). There is a hint that the position of the reigning emperor at the time, Sima Yi 司馬懿 (342-386, r. 366-372), known to future generations as Feidi 廢帝, “the Deposed Emperor,” or Haixi gong 海西公, the Duke of Haixi, is already precarious.

The prophecy is actually rather conservative in the sense that it does not say anything beyond what a person in 369 might reasonably have anticipated. Even so, if Yang did deliver such a dire prophecy to Sima Yu, he was a brave man indeed. When committing it to writing, he took the precaution of scrambling the text and putting it in a 12 x 12 block of characters, which Xu Hui copied (Tao provides both the scrambled and his own unscrambled version).

How does this tally with the prophecy described in JS and the *Shishuo xinyu* commentary? Again, the latter prophecy, like many others, may be read two ways. Sima Yu read it positively after his son's birth: whether it was 晉祚盡昌明 or 晉氏祚盡昌明, he clearly interpreted it as “The Jin legacy/rule will be utterly brilliant.” But we are more at liberty to read it negatively: “The Jin legacy/rule ends with Changming.” After all, who had preserved that anecdote? Liu Yu 劉彧, the future Emperor Ming of the Liu-Song dynasty, whose tacit purpose in recording it would have been to show how the previous dynasty was fated to decline. In this light, Sima Yu's joy over the birth of his son instead becomes an expression of delusion.

The descendants of the reigning emperor at the time, Sima Yi or Feidi, did not last very long. After Huan Wen removed Sima Yi on trumped-up charges and installed Sima Yu in his place, he ordered the execution of Sima Yi's three sons and their mothers, and they were all strangled to death in January 372 (JS 9.220, 28.847). Sima Yu by this time

was reduced to an unwilling figurehead, given to spells of weeping. He ruled only a few months before he died.

How did Sima Yu or Emperor Jianwen's descendants fare? After he died, his son Sima Yao or Emperor Xiaowu succeeded him and reigned until 396. He was relieved of the threat from Huan Wen when the latter died of illness in 373. The fortunes of the Jin revived somewhat during Xiaowu's reign, but the throne was still often dominated by one or another powerful official or warlord. Emperor Xiaowu was murdered at the age of 35 *sui* by one of his concubines. His eldest son, Sima Dezong 司馬德宗 or Emperor An (382-419; r. 397-419), was so disabled that "from childhood through adulthood, he was unable to speak and lacked the wherewithal even to distinguish the change of seasons. All acts [in his name] were not on his own initiative" (JS 10.267).

Even so, Emperor Xiaowu had designated *him* to be his successor, probably to give his brother Daozi the opportunity to rule. Dezong's younger brother Sima Dewen 司馬德文 (386-421; Emperor Gong 恭 (r. 419-420), meanwhile, looked after Emperor An and made sure that his personal needs were being met (JS 10.270). Consequently, the actual power behind the throne from 397 to 399 rested with the young men's uncle, Sima Daozi. Unfortunately, by this time Sima Daozi was a complete drunkard, and his ambitious seventeen-year-old son Sima Yuanxian 司馬元顯 (382-402) deposed him. Only three years later, Sima Daozi, Sima Yuanxian, and the latter's six (!) sons were all executed by Huan Wen's youngest son, the warlord Huan Xuan 桓玄 (369-404), during his brief usurpation of the throne, thus putting an end to that line of the descendants of Sima Yu.

Huan Xuan in turn was overthrown and executed in a rebellion led in part by Liu Yu 劉裕 (363-422). Liu restored Emperor An, but during the next decade he gradually consolidated his own power and eliminated possible rivals. He had Emperor An assassinated in 419, but believing a prophecy that the Jin "will have two emperors after Changming" 昌明之後有二帝 (this seems to relate to the ZG prophecy), he installed Sima Dewen as Emperor Gong (JS 10.267), only to remove him the next year and set himself up as emperor of the new Liu Song dynasty. Liu Yu had Emperor Gong assassinated in 421. Emperor Gong, perhaps fortunately this time, had no sons.

Yang Xi's prophecy says nothing of another important future event that he was expecting: the return of the latter-day sage lord Li Hong 李弘 in 392, an event that would be preceded by all kinds of calamities which only the "seed people" (*zhongmin* 種民) would survive.⁴³ The measly, corrupt, terrestrial realm of Jin by that time would have disintegrated. For Yang Xi the "five reigns" would have been even shorter than they turned out to be.

Conclusion

The Xu family had enjoyed a reputation for spirituality going back several generations. Xu Mi could claim an old family connection with Ge Hong, the "Master Embracing the Unhewn," since his great-grandfather and an uncle had both married women from the Ge family, near neighbors who also lived in Jurong District (ZG 20.6a1-2; 20.7b4-6; see also Strickmann 1977, 8 and 40). But that was already many decades in the past, and Xu Mai and Xu Mi were perhaps aware of the need to preserve this spiritual reputation while their other brothers were off pursuing official careers, often in the employ of one or another warlord. We still do not really know *why* Xu Mi was so supportive of Sima Yu, but he likely thought this prince was far more receptive to the Way.

In any case, I believe that we have gathered enough bits of information to permit us to construct a narrative of what was happening right around the time Yang Xi was starting to have his visions. The Minister Prince Sima Yu had been having difficulty producing an heir, so he sought advice from various officials as well as the diviner Hu Qian and recluse Xu Mai. They recommended "extensive intercourse," which on the surface was the most logical course of action—the prince had already proven his ability to father children, and as a prince he could gather many concubines for his purpose. Hu Qian predicted one of the women would bear two sons. Xu Mai, a few years later, recommended keeping to Hu Qian's advice. But even more years passed, and no sons were born.

Xu Mi would also have worried about this, since *his* family's reputation was now at stake. Somehow he found Yang Xi and, convinced of the

⁴³See *Shangqing housheng daojun lieji* 上清後生道君列紀 (DZ 442), 1.4a2-3 (trl. Bokenkamp 1997, 346); ZG 2.8b10 and 2.14a3 (trl. Smith 2013, 98 and 117).

young man's abilities, recommended him to the prince. Yang Xi then adjusted the prince's heir-seeking strategy, predicted *which* palace woman would produce two sons (he may have selected the woman as well), and taught Sima Yu the rudiments of his Way. Yang's prediction beat the odds and proved correct. These were not long-shot odds, just moderately lucky ones—but it was enough to convince many observers of his spiritual abilities. Thus, when he returned to Xu Mi's employ and began having his visions in earnest, Xu Mi was also welcoming a steady stream of distinguished guests seeking medicine, advice, instruction, and scriptures. Some of them were already embracing the new teachings. The conditions were right for the birth of a new religious movement.

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The Formation of a Daoist Pictorial Iconography in the Tang

New Images from the Longmen Caves

Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky

Abstract

Imperial patronage of Daoism in the Tang dynasty led to developments in the teachings and an expansion of the pantheon. These high-level patrons commissioned the construction of a great number of temples and icons creating a demand for art. It was the court artists, not Daoist artists, who were enjoined to create the religious art and the great advances such masters made in the representational arts at court, especially in portraiture, are evident in depictions of the various Daoist gods. They portrayed both their physical appearance and aspects of their divine nature and visually distinguished the growing members of the expanded pantheon by size and placement in the group and by personal attributes. Donor portrayals too appear among the panoply of divinities. These achievements of the Tang artists in the service of Daoist patrons were the basis for later temple art.

Daoism in the Tang dynasty (618-907) enjoyed unprecedented imperial support. Presaged in Daoist messianic prophecies and portents, the founding family, the Li, beginning with emperor Gaozu (高祖, r. 618-626), claimed to be descendants of Laozi.¹ Gaozu awarded Daoism a primary

¹ Wechsler (1985, 61-72), gives an extensive description of numerous portents and their interpretations. For example, such portents as the vision of a man in white robes who appeared as a messenger for the gods of Mt. Huo or as a divine emissary from Mt. Yang Chia accompanied Li Yuan's rise to power. See also Weinstein 1987, 6-7.

place as state religion, as did his son and his successor Taizong (太宗 r. 627-649). But it was Emperor Xuanzong (玄宗 r. 712-756) who established the supremacy of the Daoist church: ordained as a Daoist priest, he was personally involved in ritual activities (Kohn and Kirkland 2000, 346); wrote a commentary to the *Daodejing*; sponsored a printing of the Daoist canon, which he ordered become a subject in the state civil exams; commanded that a research academy for study of the scriptures be established in the capital and in each province, and more.²

The construction of imperially sponsored temples followed. According to Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933), the late Tang chronicler, by the end of the dynasty there were nearly two thousand Daoist temples.³ With such patronage naturally changes appear in the art. One of the most striking new icons is that of the Emperor Xuanzong, which he had set up in Daoist temples for worship along with those of the main deities, and in some cases, images of his son and grandson accompanied them on the altar (Liu 2001, 239). Imperial patronage of Daoist teachings, in tandem with a great building campaign, led to the need for a plethora of art; and under the guidance of the Daoist masters, the iconography developed quickly. It later became the basis of subsequent temple art.

One example of a new iconographic formulation was the creation of the representation of the Daoist pantheon of Supreme Clarity (Shangqing 上清), with its sacred trinity and grand retinue. A great number of icons must have been commissioned, however very few have survived. Thus the few cave sculptures at the Buddhist site of Longmen 龍門 in the Tang capital of Luoyang 洛陽 in Henan, which have been identified as Daoist, are particularly important. These and other examples of Tang caves with Daoist images that have not been widely published will also be considered in this study of the development of Daoist art and iconography in the Tang dynasty.

The evolution of Daoist art in the Tang was not unrelated to the flourishing of court art; and not surprisingly, the height of both the rep-

² Kirkland 1986. See also Welch 1967, 153; Kirkland 1997, 89.

³ Kirkland (1997, 93) notes that 550 of the temples were for women. For a translation of Du Guangting's women's hagiographies, see Cahill 2006.

resentation of Daoist icons and pictorial art occurred during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong, who was renowned for his interest in both. The emperor commissioned palace artists to create images of Lord Lao (Laojun 老君) (Liu 2001, 259). Examples of Daoist medieval art housed in museums, like the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Shanghai Museum, and others along with the recently published examples found in the Buddhist caves of Longmen substantiate these observations.

We begin with a brief introduction to the creation of Daoist imagery by viewing examples from the Six Dynasties Period and follow the stylistic trajectory to the high Tang era, the climax of its artistic and iconographical evolution.

Steles from the Six Dynasties Period

A narrow stone stele in the Beilin Museum 北林博物館 in Xi'an is not specifically identified by the museum as Daoist, however it reflects those teachings. An inscription records the name of the donor Tian Liangkuan, 田良寬 but there is no date preserved; however, it exhibits characteristics belonging to the primitive style of the early Northern Wei period (Fig. 1)

Seated in a pavilion with a tiled canopy in the upper area is a slender deity dressed in long-sleeved robe, wearing a tall cap and holding a discussion fan (*tanshan* 談扇), a symbol of authority."⁴ The fan is often an attribute of Lord Lao, and this may be an early occurrence of its use. Flanking him on either side are much smaller youthful attendants wearing long sleeved gowns with tall caps. Below the niche two donors flank a ritual hill-shaped incense burner (*poshanlu* 博山爐) accompanied by awkwardly inscribed characters; below are a series of six line engravings of patrons, also with inscribed names (Fig. 2).

⁴ Such attributes are elegant literati accouterments used in philosophical debates to indicate the desire to speak. Later they became a symbol of Daoist achievement and leadership, see Liu 2001, 50. They include also the discussion stick (*tanbing* 談柄) and discussion deer tail (*tanzhu* 談麈).



Figs. 1-2. Stele Donated by Tian Lingkuan, Northern Wei, Belin, Xi'an

Already at this early stage the artist has appropriated visual symbols of royalty to suggest divinity, including the architectural frame with its trabeated arch and elegant curtains, aristocratic garb, and the central position of the deity, with smaller flanking attendants. In addition, the inclusion of such details as the fan and ritual hill shaped incense burner identify the deity as Daoist. There is also an apotropaic monster mask on the ridge of the roof. Much scholarly discussion has focused on the ori-

gin and development of the Daoist triad and its relationship to Buddhist art and the cult at Louguantai 樓觀台, but these arguments are not relevant to this study.⁵

Another format of this era is the presentation of the twin sages with three attendants, making it a pentad group. One stele dated 527, now in the National Museum of History in Beijing and measuring 27.8 x 27.5 cm. shows nearly identical presentations of Laozi and the Jade Emperor (Yuhuang 玉皇) (Wang 1988, 3:80-81, 27, 73).



Fig. 3. Stone stele dated 527, now in the National Museum of History in Beijing,

⁵ The evolution of Daoist icons is a complicated issue that has been the subject of several studies. Wu Hung and others maintained that Daoist icons were based on and stimulated by Buddhist ones. See Wu 1986; 2000, 91; Wong 2004, 109-12. While Livia Kohn has asserted an aniconic policy forbade representation of the deities (2001, 72). Liu Yang argued that an iconic tradition showing deities in a frontal posture evolved from native sources that can be traced to the Shang dynasty (2001, 31-64).

Each has a long triangular beard, which is the one of the features that differentiates Daoist icons from Buddhist ones, as does the garb of a tall cap and long gown. He raises his right hand in a gesture of greeting, familiar in Buddhist icons where it signifies “fear not”. The inscription identifies a female donor, date, and dedication.

On the twenty-fifth day of the eleventh month of the first year of the Longxu reign [527] the female officer [nūguan] Wang Ashan commissioned two sculptures. May my mother and son have virtuous households.

Other inscriptions are on the back:

The Daoist Female officer Wang Ashan [who] rides in a cart; and The niece Feng Wufang [who] rides a horse; the Son Feng Faxing who rides a horse. (Little 2000,171)



Fig. 4. Maluosi Stele, Northern Zhou, China Historical Museum, Beijing

A second example in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Inv. No. 10.311) dated to 515 is quite similar. The central icon that appears on a marble stele donated by Maluosi 馬洛子 is inscribed: “In the Northern Zhou Baoding era (北周保定, 560-565), Maluosi had an image of Lord Lao made. May seven generations of family receive the benefit.” Now at home in the China History Museum in Beijing, the stele has several stylistic anomalies (Wang 1988, 53: pl.138). The centrally placed distinctly elderly man in long robes strokes his beard in a contemplative manner and sits with his right leg bent and resting on his knee.

The triad format, which is now common, features two youthful attendants wearing long robes with low petal caps, with their hands clasping a discussion stick. Below the niche are two lions: a common feature in Buddhist icons: lions refer to the family name of the Buddha, solar imagery and royal associations with the king of the jungle. A short inscription on the left side accompanies a seated figure and reiterates Mao's dedication.

Sui Dynasty Steles

Images from the Sui dynasty include a crisply carved portrait of Lord Lao with a well-groomed beard and fanciful low cap, like the one in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Lord Lao and Two Attendants, dat. 587, MFA, Boston, Inv. No. 07.732.

Here, too, the artist employs visual symbols closely associated with Buddhist iconography, in this case it is the halo and the lotus, the latter appears as a lotus rosette design on the halo and on the throne with its down turned lotus petals. Two attendants, who wear long robes and hold their hands before their chest, now clasp a discussion stick. In addition, two large size lions flank the triad. Lord Lao is identified in the inscription is dated 587:

Great Sui Kaiyuan era 7th year 6th day, the Daoist layman Su Zun respectfully had one sculpture of Lord Lao made in order that in High seven generations of his ancestors, men and women, the parents who gave birth to him, and all of his dependents and relatives may achieve the Way at the same time. ⁶



Fig. 6. Daoist Triad, dat. June 3, 589, MFA, Boston, Inv. No. 07.732.

⁶ Translations of the inscriptions on the steles in the Boston Museum of Fine Art come from their website: www.bmfa.org.

Another stele with a Daoist triad dated to 589, also in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, is different in its style (Fig. 6). Softer and more youthful in appearance, the main icon rests his hands on a small portable table, this feature, like the discussion stick, an aristocratic literati accouterment, becomes an iconographical feature. The deity, unidentified in the inscription does not wear a cap, but a low lotus petal crown. The attendants resemble those on previous stele. The inscription reads:

Great Sui Kaiyuan era 9th year, 9th month, 5th day, the Daoist layman...respectfully had one stone statue made on behalf of his deceased parents. He wishes that seven generations of [his] ancestors, men and women, his parents who gave birth to him, all his living relatives, and all living beings may always meet with good fortune.

In sum, in these pre-Tang steles, the physical appearance of the main icon varies. But there is some conformity in these depictions: the triad is a consistent format, and the garments, the postures and attendants are all similar. We also see the introduction of such iconographical details as the halo, lions, portable desk, discussion fans and sticks, incense burner, and lotus in this early phase of the development of Daoist iconography.

Tang Style

In the early Tang, these characteristics are maintained but the inscriptions grow in size, challenging the primacy of the icon, for scriptural traditions have singular importance. The seated central icon of the triad dated 623 in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Inv. No. 10. 308) has high piled hair, his hands rest on the portable table, two tiny lions flank his dais, and two attendants whose upper body have sustained damage, stand at either side (fig. 7). The inscription reads:

The Daoist layman Li Junwu hopes that his deceased relatives will become immortal and all his living relatives may ascend and achieve the enlightenment.



Fig. 7. Celestial Venerable, dated 623, stone stele MFA, Boston, Inv. No. 10 308

Similarly configured on a stele in the Boston Museum (Inv. No 07.743) dedicated by Yao Qing in 665 is a seated deity wearing a low lotus petal cap. His beard begins at his clean-shaven chin, a stylistic characteristic that becomes consistent among Daoist icons. Here the tilt of his head and sharply defined facial features reveal the accomplishments of portraiture at court (Fig. 8). Care has been taken in delineating the drapery visible beneath the portable desk: its graceful folds cascade over his crossed legs. Two figures attend him. The inscription reads,



Fig. 8. Yao Qing's Daoist trinity, dat. 665, MFA, Boston, Inv. No 07.743

The Daoist layperson Tian Rungnu [or Kenu?] respectfully had one stone sculpture made on behalf of his deceased mother, in the hope that his whole household, old and young, may obtain peace, . . . [and that] His Majesty the emperor above and all living beings below may attain the True Enlightenment.

The Longmen Caves

In contrast to these steles, the Tang images identified in the Luoyang caves differ significantly from the above examples. The icon on the north wall of the Laolong Cave 老龍洞, which measures 45 cm tall and is dated

to the reign of Gaozong, has the familiar beard, long sleeve gown, and a cap.

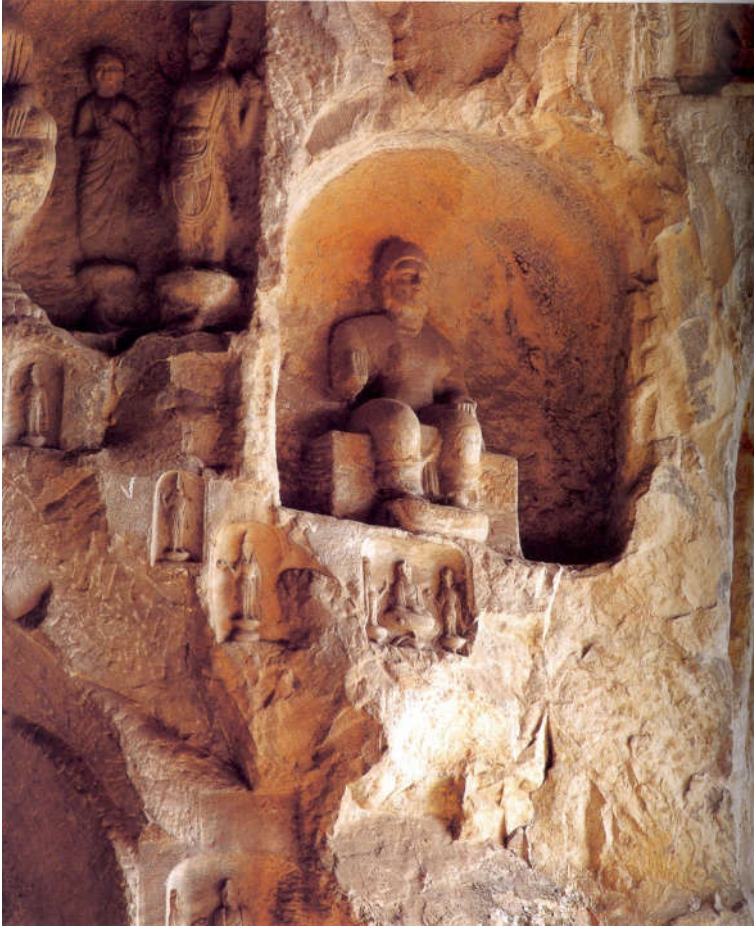


Fig. 9. Daoist Icon, Laolong Cave, Longmen, 649-683

He has his right hand raised, but he is seated on a high throne in "western style posture" with both legs pendent and has a thick body. (Wen 2001, 54: pl. 154) (fig. 9).

The pose, unusual for a Daoist image, is prevalent in Buddhist representations of Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future. What is more, the pendant leg is frequently employed in sculptures commissioned by Em-

press Wu, a major patron at Luoyang and at other sites China where this type of image, identified as the Buddha of the Future, reaches colossal proportions, like the one in Cave 96 at Dunhuang 敦煌. Empress Wu 武则天, known for her lavish patronage of Buddhism, was also a sponsor of Daoist rituals, like the throwing of the dragon and tallies (Liu 2001, 210). Thus, this singular image might be associated with her court (Rothschild 2015, 228-30).

Surrounding the niche are small Buddhist figures. The Daoist icon located on the north wall is also dated to Gaozong's reign (Wen 2001, 54: pl.155). Measuring 80 cm tall, the sculpture's head has been damaged (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10. Daoist Figure, Laolong Cave, Longmen, 649 -683.

Here, too, an unusual pose has been adopted, the body, which sits on a tall rectangular base, is in the pose of princely ease—one leg pendant the other resting on the knee, common to Buddhist iconography.

Even the body resembles a shapely bodhisattva, or Buddhist divine helper, of that era. Two disciples in long robes stand on either side. The third niche located on the south side of the terrace of Fengxian temple 奉先寺 is dated to the reign of Xuanzong (Fig. 11) (Wen 2001, pl. 164).



Fig. 11. Yuanshi Tianzun, Laodung, Longmen, 712–756

Identified as the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning (Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊), the figure, measuring 160 cm tall, is full bodied, with a tall pointed topknot. He stands gracefully on a double circle base holding his left hand before his chest and pointing with the right hand, a strikingly unusual pose. The two flanking images, identified as truly realized men (*zhenren* 真人), are similarly attired, but in smaller scale, their

two hands clasp a staff in front of their chests. None of these examples conform to the early Tang icons discussed above.

It is clear that the Buddhist artists at the site made small changes to render the Daoist icons, but relied on the styles they employed elsewhere at the site. The sharing of Buddhist iconographical details, methods of presentation, and stylistic similarities has been apparent since the earliest period of Daoist art. The visual language that expressed divinity that had developed over the centuries was shared; it was only the application of certain attributes that distinguished Daoist icons. By the time of the Tang, a religious visual language had come to fruition and professional artists accomplished in both Buddhist and Daoist commissions, used the same figure types and compositional dispositions, altering only the iconographical characteristics. Precedent is found in the famous artist Gu Kaizhi 顾恺之 (344-406) who was a member of the Celestial Masters, yet painted both Buddhist and Daoist murals (Karetzky 2014, 176-80). As the need to render more specific religious themes such as a particular scripture or certain doctrine arose, the artist further expanded the visual vocabulary.

As regards the evolution of Daoist imagery, these examples of art establish that even by the mid-eighth century, conformity has not yet been achieved, but there is marked advancement in the representational skills of the artist. For example, Lord Lao appears more personal and at the same time more majestic in a sensitive sculptural rendering of the august sage preserved in the Beilin Provincial Museum in Xi'an (Fig. 12). Now badly damaged and partially restored, it was once placed in the Chaoyuan Hall of the Huaqing Palace 華清宮 in the ancient capital of Chang'an, one of the scenic spots favored by Xuanzong and his consort. The garments fall naturally in an uncomplicated cascade of cloth. The ornate square hourglass- shape base on which he is seated has lush peony engraved designs. This portrait like sculpture reflects the achievements of specialist painters at Xuanzong's court such as the heralded Wu Daozi 吳道子 (ca. 680-759) (Soper 1950, 7) and Zhou Fang 周昉 (ca. 730-800) (Soper 1950, 10), who strove to visually distinguish the individual identities of their subjects.

Such skills are also evident in the depiction of new deities. In the following examples from caves in Sichuan, we see for the first time, the

representation of the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing 三清): a deified Laozi, now called the Celestial Worthy of the Way and its Power (Daode tianzun 道德天尊), the Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning, and the Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure (Lingbao tianzun 靈寶天尊). They also depict an ever-expanding Daoist pantheon and visually identify some of its members as individual personalities.



Fig. 12. Lord Lao, dat. 713-756, Laozi Palace of Lishan, Lintong, Xi'an



Fig. 13. Three Pure Ones, Niche 40, Niujiiaozhai, dat. 749



Fig. 14. Ibid, detail.

Niche 40 at Niujiangzhai 牛角寨, Renshou County 仁寿县, Sichuan, dated by inscription to 749 (Li 1988, 32: pl. 97-98,) has a grand presentation of twenty-seven divine figures of various ranks measuring 232 cm tall. Only a few can be identified with certainty. There are the Three Pure Ones, wearing long robes and small cap. Two have beards, and the figure on the left holds a fan, distinguishing him as Lord Lao (Figs. 13-14).

The long inscription identifies the principle deities as the Three Treasures (Sanbao 三寶) and accords the merit of the making of the cave to all living creature and family members (Liu 2001, 241).

Ascribed to the mid-Tang (ca. 750), Cave 44 at Niujiangzhai presents a larger assembly: Thirty-five are arranged in two rows and among these are even more individualized portraits (Li 1988, 32: pl. 98) (fig. 15).



Fig. 15. Detail of Daoist Retinue, Cave 44, Niujiangzhai, ca 750 (232 cm tall).

The figures along the back wall are distinguished portrayals, with a sensitive rendering of an elder haloed deity, and two younger ones with tripartite beards. A third example is from the site of Xuanmiaoguan 玄妙觀 in Anyue 安岳, Sichuan (fig. 16). Found in niche 11, and inscribed and

dated to the period between the Kaiyuan and Tianbao eras (713-756), it has an even more expanded assembly of various gods.

At its center is a triad with a large haloed central bearded figure, the main icon, seated on a tall lotus bud base has a tall topknot; he sits behind a small portable desk (Li 1988, 34-35: pl. 103-104). Flanking him are two smaller standing figures in long robes, the one on the right holds a narrow tablet. On both side walls of the niche are a pair of attendant deities.



Fig. 16. Daoist Triad, Xuanmiaoguan, Anyue, 712-756.

Of the nine standing figures in the upper part of the rear wall of the niche, one is a prominent female; athletic guardians on the sidewalls flank the group. The outer frame of the niche also has guardians—a tall heavenly guardian wearing armor is on the left, and a haloed Daoist figure holding a sword is on the right. Filling this outer area are figures of varying size. In addition, a row of thirteen small seated figures fill the upper frame, and there are twelve more on the bottom frame. The hierarchical organization of the deities is emphatic.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with the support of Tang imperial and high-level patrons and the resultant increase in temple building projects, the need for icons greatly increased. Court artists, who were enjoined to create both secular and religious art, made great advances in the representational arts, creating skillful portraits at the court, and depictions of the various Buddhist and Daoist gods. Improvements in the artists' ability to render not only their physical appearance but also aspects of their divine nature result in sensitive portrayals of sagacity and august divinity. In addition, artists were required to give body to the ever-expanding pantheon and to define its members by the inclusion of attributes, as well as size placement in the group. Donor portrayals too appear among the panoply of divinities. These achievements of the Tang artists in the service of Daoist patrons were the basis for later temple art.

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Daoist Seals

Part 1: Activation and Fashioning¹

SHIH-SHAN SUSAN HUANG

Abstract

The oldest Daoist seals appear in the Eastern Han dynasty, growing in importance and complexity throughout the middle ages. In particular, the so-called Yue Seal had an enduring reputation in Daoist healing and exorcism, its transmission, reproduction, and transformation ranging from the Han to the Tang and Song. The preferred materials for Daoist seal-making were first stone and metal, and later wood notably wood struck by lightning. Various ritual rules applied to carving, including selecting auspicious dates and properly venerating and placing the seal.

The Chinese joined other ancient civilizations in the Near East, Egypt, and Greece as the earliest to create seals and sealing practices, primarily for authentication and securing property.² Certain seals produced in these diverse traditions were also deemed amuletic, wielding additional healing and protective powers, and used in religious or shamanic contexts (Collon 1997). In some cultures, especially in China, the impression of a seal was also called “seal” and was respected as equally authentic. As Verity Platt convincingly notes, the seal, compared to other forms

¹ I would like to thank Paul Copp, Shu-wei Hsieh, Ian Boyden, Norifumi Sakai, and Richard Smith for their inspiring suggestions, and Jesse Richard Green and Livia Kohn for their editorial assistance. I am grateful for Andrew Taylor for his preparation for most illustrations.

² See Gibson and Biggs 1977; Collon 1988; 1997; Boardman 2001; Platt 2006; Zhou 2010; Sun 2002; 2004; 2010; Hu 2005. The earliest Chinese seals were from the Shang (1600-1000 BCE) (Tsien 1985, 137). See also Wagner in Collon 1997, 205.

produced by casting and moulding, "is the only form of reproduction which was not carried out by specialist craftsmen within workshops but was frequently enacted by anybody who owned" it (2006, 238-39). This "self-replicatory power" creates an automatic tension between the "original" and "copies" (2006, 234, 238), making seals a unique medium in the realm of visual and material culture.

Seals were cut in relief or in intaglio on hard-surface materials such as jade, ivory, or wood. In Chinese, both the noun and the verb of "seal" is called *yin* 印. The term can also mean print or printing, primarily woodblock printing, invented around the 7th to 8th centuries (Tsien 1985; Barrett 2001; 2008). The linguistic interchangeability of seal stamping and block printing sheds light on their close relationship in Chinese culture, prompting scholars to see their carving and impressing as the technical precursor of Chinese printing (Tsien 1985, 136).

Unlike the picture-based seals from the Near East and Mediterranean, the mainstream Chinese seals throughout history were heavily loaded with writings and scripts, only some early exemplars bearing pictorial images (Luo 1987; 2010, 52-55; Collon 1997, 219, Fig. 12/3; Tseng 1993, 100; Copp 2018). Before the boom of Chinese archaeology in recent decades, researchers relied primarily on catalogues transmitted in history. While the now-lost *Xuanhe yinpu* 宣和印譜 (Seal Manual of the Xuanhe Reign) under Emperor Huizong (Ebrey 2008, 2014) was arguably the earliest imperially-patronized catalogue, most extant manuals date from after the mid-16th century. Selected listings in Wang Qiu's 王俅 (ca. 12th c.) *Xiaotang jigulu* 嘯堂集古錄 (Antiquity Collection of the Whistling Hall; pref. 1176) and Zhao Yanwei's 趙研衛 *Yunlu manchao* 雲麓漫抄 (Free Copy of the Cloudy Foothill; pref. 1206) in the Southern Song form an exception.³

In addition, scholars also turned to collectors' seals, stamped on portable paintings and calligraphic scrolls, especially those collected at the imperial courts and by elite scholars. Their scholarship is known as the study of seals (*yinxue* 印學) or the connoisseurship of seal impres-

³ *Xiaotang jigulu*, xia zhi shang: 20a-25b; *Yunlu manchao*, 15:1a-13b. The next earliest extant seal manual is Gu Congde's *Jigu yinpu* 集古印譜 dated 1572; see *Zhongguo guyinpu jicheng*, *Jiguyinpu* 中國古印譜集成. 集古印譜 (Jinan: Shandong meishu chubanshe, 2011).

sions (*yinjian* 印鑑). It is essential to students of Chinese art (Wang 1966; Shanghai 1987; Wu 2010). In general, the overarching methodology governing the study of Chinese seals has been squarely visual: the main goal of the pursuit has been devoted to deciphering the inscriptions of seals, dating, and distinguishing the originals from the forgeries (Peng 2008, 2009, 2014).

Daoist seals have not formed the subject of any studies to date. They appear in abundant illustrations in the *Daozang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon; dat. 1445)⁴ and were also found variously in archaeological sites. Going beyond the approaches used in traditional connoisseurship or art history, stressing mainly the visual analysis of objects, I incorporate more recent contextual and interdisciplinary approaches, treating Daoist seals as material objects and mediators, enabling and enacting Daoist belief. I examine Daoist seals within multi-faceted Daoist practices, in which they were produced, viewed, and used. Thereby, I provide a Daoist response especially to the various thought-provoking publications by the Christian art historian David Morgan, who fervently encouraged researchers to treat “material religion” or “visual religion” as a newly-integrated area of inquiry, drawing established methods from both art history and religious studies (2000; 2004; 2010).

Seals join talismans, charts, writs and other miscellaneous forms of Daoist documents to shape the “true form” of Daoist visual culture, whose unique underpinning lies on the constant blending of writings and graphs (Huang 2012, 11-12). To borrow J. T. W. Mitchell’s picture theory, Daoist seals are noted for their “imagetext” quality that denotes “a composite, synthetic form” (Mitchell 1994, 83).

Compared to other forms of Daoist imagetexts, such as talismans,⁵ Daoist seals have received little attention even within the field of Daoist studies.⁶ However, Daoists have used seals along with talismans in exor-

⁴ Daoist texts from the *Daozang* are numbered according to Schipper and Verellen 2004 and follow the Sanjia ben edition in 36 volumes (Beijing Wenwu; Shanghai: Shanghai shudian; Tianjin: Gujin chubanshe, 1988).

⁵ See Li 1997; Despeux 2000; Verellen 2006; Ren 2006; Mollier 2003; 2008; Legeza 1975; Tseng 1993, 79-96; Bokenkamp in Pregadio 2007, 1:35-38.

⁶ Studies include Wang 2000, 2001; Li and Lu 2002; Li 2003a, 2003b; Liu 2007; Ren 2006, 246-73.

cism, healing, and other ritual performances. Their roles are sometimes interchangeable: The Daoist adept stamps a seal onto a talisman before putting it into operation. Alternatively, the Daoist healer inks the seal with mineral substances, stamps it on paper, and burns it to ashes, thus creating a liquefied medicine the patient would ingest.

From the perspective of Daoist hierarchy, seals have a higher status than talismans. As the Southern Song (ca. 1200) *Duren shangjing dafa* 度人上經大法 (Great Rites of the Book of Universal Salvation; DZ 219, 3:1021) so vividly puts it:⁷

If one only possesses the talisman and not the seal, it is like having soldiers without a general. If one only possesses the seal and not the talisman, it is like having a general without soldiers.⁸

The general-and-soldiers analogy further highlights the military overtone that often underlies Daoist exorcism and salvation rituals; their higher status may also explain why there are many fewer seals than talismans recorded in the Daoist Canon. Flipping through the collection, illustrations of seals are not the most eye-catching, mainly because they are tiny compared to often flamboyant talismans. Indeed, Platt raised the paradox of the seal, contrasting its "great significance" with its "tiny size" (2006, 237). Susan Stewart's oft-cited theory of the gigantic versus the miniature proves to be helpful in unpacking such a paradox (1984, 47-48; Platt 2006, 237). The seal, analogous to "the miniature object," does not lose its monumentality because of its physical size. Rather, its minute scale entails concentration, hence further empowering the esoteric and symbolic meanings carried within. It is the reduced physical appearance of a seal that brings to the fore the magnitude of its "ideological properties" (2006, 237).

⁷ On the text, see Skar 2000, 436; Lagerwey in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1028-32; I Skar in Pregadio 2007, 1:678-79.

⁸ This is stated in the context of the Seals of the Divine Tiger (Messengers) (*Shenhu yinzhang* 神虎印章) used in salvation ritual. The same expression is in *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法, DZ 1221, 31:9.

The Oldest Seals

Daoists of the Eastern Han to the Wei-Jin periods inherited ancient Chinese seal culture and expanded their function from authentication and security to religious dimensions that included exorcism and healing (Bumbacher 2012). Abundant archaeological finds of ancient seals brought to light the early development of Daoist seals.⁹

The earliest Daoist seals date from the Han dynasty. Fashioned after official seals, they were mostly bronze, with legible characters cast in seal script (Liu 2007, 132). Selected seal inscriptions suggest that the Monarch of Heaven (Tiandi 天帝) and the Yellow God (Huangshen 黃神) were the most frequently evoked divinities. There are an important group of seals and clay impressions for sealing (*fengni* 封泥), whose inscriptions read “Messenger of the Monarch of Heaven” (Tiandi shizhe 天帝使者) (Fig. 1), a self-imposing title referring to the Daoists using the seals (Wang 2001, 437, no. 8).¹⁰

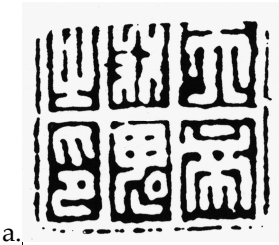
Most of these seals and clay impressions were probably used by Celestial Master Daoists in exorcism, as specimens of the Demon-Killing Seal by the Monarch of Heaven (*Tiandi shagui zhi yin* 天帝殺鬼之印) may indicate (Liu 2007, 138-40; Zhang and Bai 2006, 1:256; Wang 2001, 437, nos. 13-14). One such example (Figs. 2a-b) shows the seal with two carved surfaces. On the “front” side, six characters carved in seal script were evenly divided in two registers marked by a grid (Fig. 2a). On the “back” side (Fig. 2b), the seal bears a pictorial design of horses under a two-storied building, which may be purely decorative without any particularly religious connotation. The seal’s grid design, script style, and pictorial styles all compare to what was current in the seal visual culture at that time (Luo and Wang 1963, 56, 71; Luo ed., 1987, 9-13; Tseng 1993, 100; Copp 2018).

⁹ See Wang 2000, 10-23; 2001, 3-15; Zhang and Bai 2006, 1:245-56; Liu 2007, 131-74; Shao and Zhou 2001.

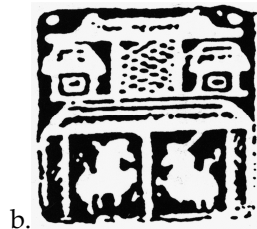
¹⁰ For more studies, see Wang 2000, 13-23; Zhang and Bai 2006, 1:249-53; Liu 2007, 136-38; Zhao 2007. The script style of this sealing clay compares to numerous other samples of sealing clays of this period discovered in archaeology. For more study of Qin and Han sealing clays, see the Qing compilation by Chen Jieqi 陳介祺, *Fengni kaolue* 封泥考略, 10 vols. (Haifeng Wushi, 1904); Sun 2002.



Fig. 1: Sealing clay of the Messenger of the Monarch of Heaven, excavated in Gaoyou, Jiangsu province. Eastern Han dynasty. Nan-jing Provincial Museum collection (Wang 2000, 21, no. 8)



a.



b.

Fig. 2: The double-sided Demon-Quelling Seal of the Monarch of Heaven, Zhejiang Provincial Museum collection— a. The front side of the seal; b. the back side of the seal. (Wang 2000, 21, nos. 14-1, 14-2)



a.



b.

Fig. 3: The double-sided Yue Seal—a. The front side; b. The back side (Wang 2000, 20, no. 21-1)

Perhaps the best documented and yet most enigmatic of all, are the numerous seals bearing four characters that read "Huangshen yuezhang" 黃神越章, interpreted as the spells of the Yue region [sanctioned] by Yellow Emperor,¹¹ hereafter called the Yue Seals. One specimen bears

¹¹ Wang 2000, 20-21; Wang 2001, 435-36, 440-41; Liu 2007, 146-57; Luo 1987, 86-87.

double-side carvings (Figs. 3a-b).¹² While one side contains four legible characters that read “Huangshen yuezhang,” whose script style compares to the mainstream Han official seals (Luo ed., 1987, 9-73), the other side is filled with twenty semi-graphic writs, each placed evenly within a square unit of the 5x4 grid (Fig. 3b). One can vaguely make out the four-unit vertical line near the right edge of the impression as the four characters that read “Demon [Killing] Seal” ([sha] gui zhi yin [殺]鬼之印), echoing the demon-quelling notion evoked in the other double-sided seal discussed earlier (Fig. 2a).

Pertinent to this is an infusion dispelling inscription (*jiezhu wen* 解注文), dated 133 CE and written in vermilion ink on the infusion dispelling earthenware jar (*jiezhu ping* 解注瓶) (Fig. 4), found in an Eastern Han tomb in Shaanxi.

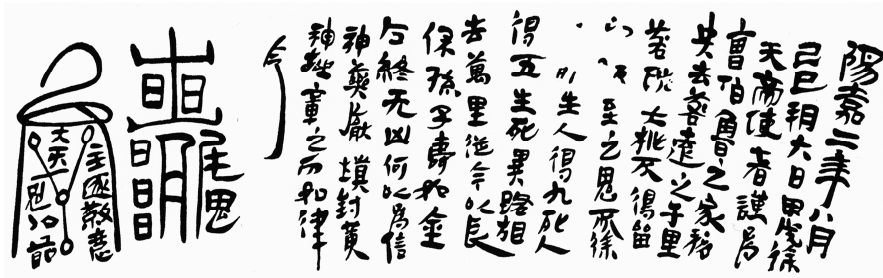


Fig. 4: Inscription and talismans on a jar, from the tomb of Cao Lubo, Zhujiabao, Huxian, Shaanxi. Dated 133. Eastern Han dynasty (Wang 2000, 22, Fig. 11; Wang 2001, 444).

The inscription further situates the use of the Yue Seal in a funerary context, identifying the Messenger of the Monarch of Heaven as the seal user who expels ailments for the tomb occupant. The inscription documented a funeral ceremony at the grave entrance of the layman Cao Bolu

¹² Wang 2000, 13, 20. Wang Yucheng’s reproductions of the seal in 2000 and 2001 were based on Shang Chengzuo 商承祚, *Qizhai guyin cun* 契齋古印存; see Wang 2000, 20, no. 21-1; Wang 2001, 436, no. 21.

¹³ Wang 2000, 18-20; Wang 2001, 443-44; Ren 2006, 158; Robson 2008, 136-37. For more studies of the ample infusion dispelling inscriptions on funeral urns or jars in Eastern Han tombs, see Wang 1991; Zhang and Bai 2006, 1:1-330; Liu 2007, 11-98; Seidel 1987; Sakade et al., 2007, 66-70.

曹伯魯 and performed by a Daoist who used the Seal of the Yue Spells to expel the deceased person's illness. The written text is followed by two talismans bearing graphs referring to suns, moon, stars, and demons.¹³

The Yue Seal

The Yue Seal appears first in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (284-363) *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (DZ 1185, 28:241-42; Ware 1966, 298-99; Wang 2001, 441-42). According to this, the seal is four *cun* wide, i.e., about ten centimeters, and bears 120 characters. While it is compelling to imagine how a seal surface that is 10x10 square centimeters can be filled with as many as 120 words, no archaeological finds to date confirms this description.¹⁴

Ge Hong notes that the Yue Seal had immense powers of exorcism and protection and was a "must-have" emblem of any seeker venturing into mountain wilderness. The seal could be put into operation in multiple ways: wearing or carrying it on the road and impressing it on the mud to make sealing clays to safeguard the environment, preventing attacks by tigers and wolves. A story Ge cites extends the Yue Seal's efficacy from exorcism and protection to healing. It recounts Daoist Dai's subjugation of demonic spirits previously residing in the Tortoise Pool and causing people to fall ill. The Daoist cured the sick by throwing hundreds of sealing clays into the pool, thus expelling all demonic tortoises (Ware 1966, 298-99; Lin 2008, 219).

As Zhang Xunliao and Bai Bin have pointed out (2006, 256), the Yue Seal also stirred disturbing reactions from medieval Buddhist monks. Numerous Buddhist treatises, including those compiled in the *Hongming ji* 弘明集 (T52.2102:49b) and *Guang hongming ji* 廣弘明集 (T52.2103:149c), see the Daoist uses of the Yue Seal in killing demons (*shagui* 殺鬼) as a

¹⁴ Compared to the ample archaeological samples of Daoist seals dated to the Han, there are fewer Daoist seals dated to the Jin period. An unusual Daoist seal of this period contains twelve characters 黃首朱官玉女蘭房教導之印 evoking celestial maidens to expel tigers and wolves, see Wang 2000, 25; Liu 2007, 144. The other Jin seal discovered in Dantu 丹徒, Jiangsu bear carved characters in six sides, each side containing four characters, see Wang 2000, 28. For an undated Daoist seal bearing thirty-six characters on a single side, see Feng and Wang 1996.

heterodox practice; they further trace this practice to the Celestial Master Daoism.¹⁵

The Tang work *Zhengyi fawen xiuzhen zhiyao* 正一法文修真旨要 (Essentials of the Practice of Perfection; DZ 1270, 32:578) elaborates the Daoist use of the seal in a therapeutic context (Strickmann 1993, 10-20; 2002, 124-32; Zhang and Bai, 1:256). The procedure involves visualizations (*cun* 存), spells (*zhou* 咒), and stamping of the seal (*xiayin* 下印), as well as five ritual objects: a bowl of water, a sword, a bell, a lithophone (*qing* 磬), and a seal. The highlight of the master's healing performance consists of seven steps:

1. The Daoist master spews water from the bowl, both into the environment and on to the patient, for purification (*penshui jiehui* 噴水解穢).

2. He goes through a series of visualizations, summoning the cosmic divinities including the true official (*zhenguan* 真官), the essence of the seven stars of the Dipper (*beidou qixing zhi jing* 北斗七星之精), the five planets, divinities of the four directions (vermillion bird, azure dragon, white tiger, and tortoise), the jade boy and maiden who put the seal into operation (*xingyin yutong yunü* 行印玉童玉女), the sun, the moon, and the body gods from his own organs.¹⁶ In the visualization, the true official performs the seal healing for the patient: he visualizes this bureaucratic god pacing the ritual choreography of the Steps of Yu (*yubu* 禹步), stamping the seal on the patient's heart, stomach, and finally on wherever the patient feels pain (Strickmann 2002, 128). The visualization ends with a vision of "the toxic vapors coming out of the patient and rushing away" (*xiangjian duqi bensan erchu* 想見毒氣奔散而出) (Strickmann 1993, 15).

3. He walks to the patient by performing the Steps of Yu.

4. He calls the myriad spirits' attention by striking the bell and the lithophone six times respectively.

¹⁵ Wang Yucheng links the Yue Seal to the Taiping Daoism 太平道 or Wudoumi dao 五斗米道, see Wang 2001, 440. Past scholarship has revealed the Buddhist use of talismanic seals; see Wang 2000; Strickmann 2002, 132-78; Copp 2011; Suchan and Sørensen 2013.

¹⁶ The text mentions three body gods in each organ. Strickmann failed to include the three body gods from the master's lungs; see Strickmann 2002, 128. For more study of body gods in Daoist visual culture, see Huang 2010; 2012, 25-85.

5. He recites the preparatory spells that evoke the all-encompassing power of the Divine Seal of the Monarch of Heaven (*Tiandi shenying* 天帝神印) (32:578; Strickmann 2002, 128-29).

6. He stamps the seal on the patient.

7. With each stamp, he evokes the power of the Yue Seal by chanting spells with a repetitive formula: "Stamp (body part), from (body part) out" (yin [] cong [] chu 印[]從[]出) (Fig. 5a). The context makes it clear that the Daoist should stamp the seal on the various ailing body parts to draw out toxic vapors:

With the Yue Seal, I stamp on the patient's heart—take the ailment out of his heart! 吾今以黃神越章之印，印心從心出

Stamp the abdomen, it comes out of the abdomen! 印腹從腹出

Stamp the liver, it comes out of the liver! 印肝從肝出

Stamp the lungs it comes out of the lungs! 印肺從肺出

Stamp the kidneys, it comes out of the kidneys! 印腎從腎出

Stamp the spleen, it comes out of the spleen! 印脾從脾出

Stamp the head, it comes out of the head! 印頭從頭出

Stamp the back, it comes out of the back! 印背從背出

Stamp the chest, it comes out of the chest! 印胸從胸出

Stamp the waist, it comes out of the waist! 印腰從腰出

Stamp the hands, it comes out of the hands! 印手從手出

Stamp the feet, it comes out of the feet! 印足從足出

Swiftly, swiftly, in accordance with the statutes and ordinances!¹⁷ 速出！速出！急急如律令

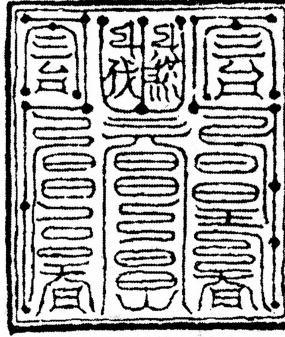
Michel Strickmann also published the untitled seal and analyzed it in a visually sensitive way (1993, 19; 2002, 131) (Fig. 5b, hereafter called Strickmann seal). Although it does not bear any label, it is likely that it is regarded as the Yue Seal or the Divine Seal of the Monarch of Heaven mentioned in spells. Alternatively, it may also refer to the actual seal used by the Daoist master in healing that evokes both seals mentioned in the spells.¹⁸

¹⁷ My translation is modified after Strickmann's (Strickmann 2002, 129); I translate the verb "yin" as "stamp" and not as "seal."

¹⁸ Wang Yucheng labels the seal as the Seal of the Monarch of Heaven, see Wang 2001, 473, no. 70 (he gave the wrong reference in Wang 2000, 60, no. 70). Wang

以黃神越章之印印心從心出印腹從腹出
 印肝從肝出印肺從肺出印腎從腎出印脾
 從脾出印頭從頭出印背從背出印臂從臂
 出印腰從腰出印手從手出印足從足出速
 出速出急急如律令印下又誦一遍然後舉

a.



b.

Fig. 5: *Zhengyi fawen xiuzhen zhiyao*, 32:578—a. selected citation of the text; b. an illustration of the seal.

Strikingly different from earlier samples, the Strickmann seal is filled with complicated graphs. Strickmann drew additional graphic analysis of the seal to highlight the scoop-shaped “doublet of the Northern Dipper and numerous renditions of the archaic logograph for the sun” (1993, 19; 2002, 131, Fig. 1a-b). Beyond that, some other legible words appear on the upper part of the seal design. They evoke the constellation known as the three terraces (Santai 三台),¹⁹ and exorcising actions such as “strike dead” (*sha* 煞) and “subjugate” (*fa* 伐). The overall graphic and script elements embedded in the seal match the Daoist master’s visualization of stars and his analogy of healing to demon-killing during his seal-healing performance. The seal calls to mind the wooden seal with engraved images of the constellations, the sun and moon used

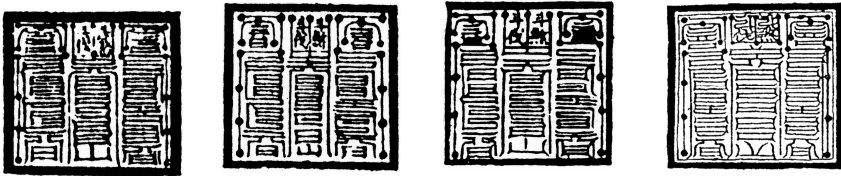
Yucheng reproduces six Qin-Han “compound” seals, whose identical title integrates the evocation of the Yue Seal with that of the Monarch of Heaven (Huangshen yuezhang Tiandishen zhiyin 黃神越章天帝神之印); see Wang 2001, 438.

¹⁹ The Three Terraces refer to the constellation in charge of nurturing lives; see, for example, *Chisongzi zhongjie jing* 赤松子中誡經, DZ 185, 3:445; *Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing* 靈寶無量度人上品妙經, DZ 1, 1:289.

by Daoists in healing, as recorded in the 6th-century *Suishu* 隋書 (History of the Sui Dynasty) (Strickmann 1993, 7).²⁰

Later Versions

Moving beyond these early specimens, there are various groups of Daoist seals illustrated in Southern Song-to-Yuan liturgical sources that show two different graphic templates closely comparable to the seal Strickmann reproduced (Figs. 6a-d, 7a-d).



a. b. c. d.
Fig. 6: The first group of the Yue Seals sharing an identical design—a. Seal of the Yue Spells. *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, DZ 1221, 30: 902; b. Seal of the Yue Spells. *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, DZ 1223, 31: 399; c. Seal of the Yue Spells. *Daofa huiyuan*, DZ 1220, 30: 168; d. Small Seal of the Yue Spells. *Sanhuang neiwen yimi*, DZ 856, 18: 583.

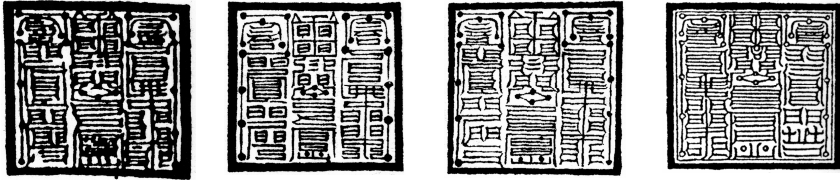
Like the Strickmann seal, these also have considerable healing powers (DZ 1221, 30:902, DZ 1223, 31:401; DZ 856, 18:583). While the graphic design underlining the first group (Fig. 6a-d) are almost identical with that of the Strickmann seal,²¹ the design of the second group indicates

²⁰ "[The Daoists] make wooden seals, on which they engrave the constellations, the sun, and the moon. Holding their breath, they grasp them in their hands and stamp them. Many sick persons are cured by that means" (Strickmann 1993, 7). For more on the use of talismans and seals in healing, as recorded in medical texts compiled by the Northern Song government and in other Daoist texts, see Lin 2013; Li in Li et al., 2000, 130-38, 163-67; Wang 2000, 37-38; Hinrichs et al. 2013, 108-11, 119-22.

²¹ They are numbered nos. 215-1, 216, 217-1, and 44 in Wang Yucheng's illustrated index of the Daozang seals; see Wang 2000, 66-68, 72-73; 2001, 482, 491.

²² These are numbered nos. 196-1, 197, 198-1, and 45 in Wang Yucheng's illustrated index of the Daozang seals; see Wang 2000, 59, 63, 66, 72; 2001, 482, 490.

slight modifications (Fig. 7a-d).²²



a. b. c. d.
Fig. 7: The second group of the Yue Seals sharing an identical design—

a. Seal of the Yellow Emperor. *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, DZ 1221 (juan 27), 30: 902;
b. Seal of the Yellow Emperor. *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, DZ 1223 (juan 10), 31: 399;
c. Seal of the Yellow Emperor. *Daofa huiyuan*, DZ 1220 (juan 183), 30: 168; d. Great Purity Seal of the Yellow Emperor. *Sanhuang neiwen yimi*, DZ 856, 18: 583.

Here the two graphic symbols of the Northern Dipper remain in their original symmetrical positions, while the *fa* and *sha* characters are replaced and enclosed by a constellation with a grid embedded with four “sun” characters. Also, there are more sun-and-star-inspired graphs.

In most cases, the two types of seals were illustrated as a pair that form a set of the Yue Seals. The first group is often referred to as the Yuezhang Seals (*Yuezhang yin* 越章印); the second group, as the Huangshen Seals (*Huangshen yin* 黃神印). Both versions of the *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 (Great Lingbao Method; DZ 1221, 30:902; DZ 1223, 31:399), one compiled by Wang Qizhen 王契真 and transmitted by Ning Quanzhen 寧全真 (1101-1181), the other edited by Jin Yunzhong 金允中 in the 13th century, tie the practice of the Yue seals to the ancient tradition. The measurement for each seal, for instance, is one *cun* and eight *fen* per side, using the Zhou measuring system (*Zhou chi* 周尺).²³ The use of the two paired seals in healing, furthermore, should also follow the ancient writings (*yi guwen yong er yin* 依古文用二印).

The seal templates preserved in the 14th-century *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 (A Corpus of Daoist Ritual, DZ 1220, 30:168; Schipper and Yuan in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1105-13; Loon 1980; Skar 2000, 430-31) are most illuminating (Figs. 6c, 7c). Their accompanying textual guidelines instruct that one should wear the Huangshen Seal to the left (Fig. 7c) and

²³ On the Zhou measuring system, see DZ 1221, 30:901; Wang 2001, 83, 494.

the Yuezhang Seal to the right (Fig. 6c). Furthermore, both seals have their back sides minutely incised with spells (*beiwén* 背文), containing more than 100 legible characters rendered in small regular script (*kaishu* 楷書) (Figs. 8a-b).



a.



b.

Fig. 8: Spells incised on the back of the set of the Yue Seals (DZ 1220, 30:168)—a. The incised spells on the back of the Huanshen Seal; b. The incised spells on the back of the Yuezhang Seal.

The spells incised on the Huangshen Seal contain 103 characters; those on the Yuezhang seal, about 110.²⁴ Similar, if not identical, illustrations appear in the *Shangqing lingbao dafa*.²⁵ Taken as a whole, these complicated seals with highly repetitive designs reflect the longevity and popularity of the Yue Seal through reproduction.

²⁴ The two seals were first reproduced in Wang 2000, 72-73 (nos. 198-2, 217-2). Similar, if not identical, illustrations of the incised texts on the back sides of the Yue Seals set are recorded in Wang Qizhen's *Shangqing lingbao dafa* (DZ 1221, 30:902). They are reproduced in Wang 2000, 73 (nos. 196-2, 215-2).

²⁵ DZ 30:902; Boltz 198, 41-46; Despeux 2000, 526-27; Lagerwey in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1021-24. They are reproduced in Wang 2000, 73 (nos. 196-2, 215-2). A Southern Song text of the Pure and Clear Way Daoism illustrates a double-sided Divine Seal of Subjugating Demons (*Fumo shen yin* 伏魔神印) that also bears many characters; see *Lingbao jingming xinxiu jiulao shenyin fumo bifa* 靈寶淨明新修九老神印伏魔秘法 (preface by He Shouzheng 何守証 dated 1131), DZ 562, 10:548. As partially reproduced in Fig. 11 of this article, the seal's front side bears twenty-six characters in cloud-seal-script, and its back side bears thirty-five characters in small regular script.

The two spells begin with an evocation of different divinities: the Huangshen seal evokes the Monarch of Heaven and the Yellow Emperor, while the Yuezhang seal links to the authority of the Highest Lord Lao (Taishang laojun 太上老君). In contents they are quite similar, both summoning various stars, including the North Dipper, in charge of subjugating the evil spirits and healing illness. These seal spells are abbreviated versions of the so-called Yuezhang Spells (*Yuzhang zhou* 越章咒) and the Seal Spell (*Yinzhang zhou* 印章咒) recorded in the 14th-century *Sanhuang neiwen yimi* 三皇內文遺秘 (Transmitted Secrets of the Inner Writs of the Three Sovereigns; DZ 856, 18:583; Andersen in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 977). Here the two versions of the front designs—comparable to the first and second groups analyzed earlier—are also illustrated.

The Northern Song encyclopedia *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Bookcase of the Clouds with Seven Labels; DZ 1221) recounts a vivid story first told by the Tang ritualist Du Guangting (850-933),²⁶ attesting to the Yue Seal's power of "spreading the *qi*, healing the ailment" (*buqi zhibing* 布氣治病) (DZ 1221, 30:902, DZ 1223, 31:401), and "subjugating all evil spirits" (*zhifu wanxie* 制伏萬邪) (DZ 856, 18:583). It tells of the Chengdu master Yuan Guizhen 袁歸真 deploying a newly-carved Yue Seal to cure a layman. By stamping the seal on his heart and back multiple times, he exorcised a demonic bat that had caused disease. The impression of the Yue Seal was visible on the bat's back as it flew out of the layman's mouth (Wang 2001, 442; Copp 2018).

The Physical Seal

Extant seal specimens show that early Daoist seals were typically made of hard materials such as stone, jade, bronze, and other metals. On the other hand, the majority of seals recorded in the Daoist Canon and Dunhuang manuscripts were made of wood. This preference for wood as a carving material is in line with the blossoming of woodblock printing in Tang-Song China, further connecting seal carving and woodblocks.

²⁶ See the story entitled "Miracle of the Huangshen Seal in curing Zhang Rang's sickness" (Zhang Rang Huangshenyin jiuji yan 張讓黃神印救疾驗), in *Yunji qiqian*, juan 118 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 4:2650.

Meticulous guidelines of Daoist seal materials specify the priority of specific woods. Peach (*taomu* 桃木) and jujube (*zaomu* 棗木) are preferable, although maple (*fengmu* 楓木), locust (*huaimu* 槐木), pear (*limu* 梨木), and sandalwood (*tanxiang* 檀香) are also recommended.²⁷

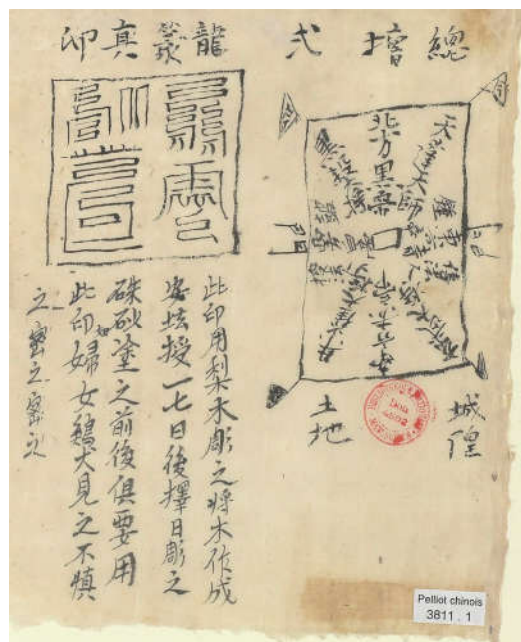


Fig. 9: Detail of the Dunhuang manuscript illustrating Daoist seals, talismans, and a ritual altar, P. 3811, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

For example, the True Seal in Dragon Seal Script (*Longzhuan zhenyin* 龍篆真印) (Fig. 9), illustrated in a Daoist manuscript (P. 3811), specifies peach as the material for carving.²⁸ In preparation for carving, Daoists

²⁷ See *Daofa huiyuan*, DZ 1220, 29:151, 30:103, 108, 120, 317; *Huangdi taiyi bamen rushi bijue* 黃帝太一八門入式秘訣, DZ 587, 10:779; *Taishang yuanshi tianxun shuo Beidi fumo shenzhou miaojing* 太上原始天尊說北帝伏魔神咒妙經, DZ 1412, 34:401, 415; *Kuigang liusuo bifa* 魁罡六鎖秘法, DZ 582, 10:755; *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* 靈寶無量度人上經大法, DZ 219, 3:809; *Bizang tongxuan bianhua liuyin dongwei dunjia zhenjing* 秘藏通玄變化六陰洞微遁甲真經, DZ 857, 18:596.

²⁸ Wang 2000, 38-41; Wang 2004, 153. See the Bibliothèque nationale de France, <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8303207b/f1.item.r=Pelliot%203811> (retrieved 10/4/2016). Originally dated to the 8th to the 10th centuries, Wang Ka finds it no

would color certain woods, especially peach, with auspicious overtones and Daoist writings to increase their apotropaic power. As Li Yuanguo notes, the earliest Daoist talismans were “talismans on peach wood” (*taofu* 桃符) (Li et al. 2000, 162-63; Li 2003a, 342).²⁹ Wang Yucheng also called attention to the peach tree described in the *Shenzhou jing* 神咒經 (Scripture of Divine Spells; DZ 335, 6:2; Wang 2000, 88).

Growing in the celestial Jade Capital Mountain (Yujingshan 玉京山), the peach tree is charged with magical powers for expelling demons. Similarly, the *Daofa huiyuan* ranks peach wood as the best for seal carving, although certain kinds are better than others. For example, the wood from a tree facing the east is superior, perhaps because it is associated with the yang energy growing in the east and its exposure to the rising sun.³⁰ Peach wood found in graveyards possesses the most supernatural powers (*Daofa huiyuan* 29:151; Wang 2000, 87).

While some have auspicious associations, most recommended woods tend to be dense with smooth grain to facilitate carving. This matches the woods commonly chosen for printing blocks in the Song and Yuan. According to late Tseun-hsuei Tsien (1985, 196), fruit trees such as pear, jujube, and catalpa, are not only suitable for printing blocks but also abundantly available. Their smooth texture and medium hardness make them ideal carving materials. While pear has an even and smooth texture, “ideal for carving in any direction,” jujube is harder and bears an even grain with fine pores (1985, 196). Among surviving fragments of Song woodblocks, two are cut from jujube (Shi 1981, 71).

earlier than the Guiyijun 歸義軍 occupation of Dunhuang, i.e., mid-9th to early 11th centuries (2004, 153-54; Yu 2006, 95).

²⁹ For various medicinal values associated with the peach blossoms, peaches, peach tree roots, peach tree leaves, peach pits, peach skin, and so on, see Li Yuanguo in Li et al., 2000, 163.

³⁰ The east-facing wood calls to mind the “east-facing peach tree branch” (*tao dong zhi* 桃東枝) recorded in a Mawangdui document. Yu Xin connected the term to “sunny peach branch” (*yang taozhi* 陽桃枝), another term mentioned earlier in the same document; see Yu 2006, 332. It is likely that later Daoism also adopted this ancient concept and regarded the east-facing peach tree branch as more efficacious in expelling evil spirits. I am grateful for Yu Xin’s feedback.

Daoists believed that natural phenomena transmits cosmic energy and supernatural power to wood struck by lightning, establishing a uniquely Daoist criterion for the materiality of seals: "divine wood" (*shenmu* 神木), "wood struck / shaken / petrified / broken by thunder" (*leipi / chen / jing / po mu* 雷劈[霹]/震/驚/破木).³¹ Jujube lightning-struck wood appears most frequently. The paired Yue Seals recorded in the *Sanhuang neiwen yimi*, for example, have instructions that highlight the core of jujube struck by lightning (*leizhen zaomu xin* 雷震棗木心) as preferred material (18:582). One exception occurs in the *Daofa huiyuan* (30:317). Here the material for the Seal of the Highest of the Three Heavens (*Santian taishang yin* 三天太上印) should not be carved in jujube or catalpa struck by lightning, because it may "contain killing *qi*." The association of seals with the power of thunder, moreover, may connect to the growing Daoist Thunder Rites (*leifa* 雷法), performed widely in various sects in the Song and Yuan for rain-making, exorcism, and healing.³²

Parallel to the wood associated with thunder power is the "wood petrified by a dragon" (*longjingmu* 龍驚木),³³ an enigmatic category likely inspired by the lightning-struck wood. One case recorded in *Lingbao liuding bifa* 靈寶六丁秘法 (Secret Lingbao Method Concerning the Spirits of the Six Ding Days; DZ 581, 10:751) is the Seal of the Mysterious Maiden of the Nine Heavens (*Jiutian xuannu yin* 九天玄女印). To test its authenticity, one should leave it in water and see if it floats and moves by itself.

³¹ *Guiguzi tiansui lingwen* 鬼谷子天髓靈文 (DZ 867, 18:679-82); *Xuanpushan lingqin bilu* 玄圃山靈金秘錄 (DZ 580, 10:747), *Huangdi taiyi bamen rushi bijue* 黃帝太一八門入式秘訣 (DZ 587, 10:779), *Taishang yuanshi tianxun shuo Beidi fumo shenzhou miaojing* 太上原始天尊說北帝伏魔神咒妙經 (DZ 1412, 34:415), *Taishang dengzhen sanjiao lingying jing* 太上登真三矯靈應經 (DZ 286, 5:4), *Gaoshang shenxiao yuqing zhenwang zishu dafa* 高上神霄玉清真王紫書大法 (DZ 1219, 28:617), *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 (DZ 1220, 30:103), *Shangqing liujia qidao bifa* 上清六甲祈禱秘法 (DZ 584, 10:762). See also Wang 2000, 76-81, 82, 85.

³² See Matsumoto 2001, 205-31; Li 2003a, 2007; Reiter 2007; Skar 1996.

³³ *Lingbao lauding mifa*, DZ 581, 10:751; *Taishang chiwen dongshen san lu* 太上赤文洞神三錄 DZ 589, 10:797. See also Wang 2000, 76, 79.

Other Dimensions

Moving beyond the Daoist arena, comparative information on seal making also comes from Buddhist talismanic seals, illustrated in selected 8th-to-10th-century Dunhuang manuscripts and other canonical sources, such as the *Longshu wuming lun* 龍樹五明論 (Nāgārjuna's Seal Collection; T21n1420).³⁴ Both Xiao Dengfu (1993, 189) and Michel Strickmann (2002, 152-53) have pointed out to the medieval (7th c.?) Buddhist text *Foshuo Changquli dunü tuoluoni zhou jing* 佛說常瞿利毒女陀羅尼咒經 (The Book of the Spells and Dhāraṇī of the Jāngulī Woman; T21n1265; McBride 2011, 212) that illustrates a talismanic seal (Fig. 10a) "made of the wood from a jujube tree struck by lightning" (T21n1265:295a). Since this criterion is not seen elsewhere in Buddhist sources, it may well be Daoist-inspired.

According to Paul Copp, Buddhists uniquely used "the wood of the root of the Bodhi Tree" (*puti genmu* 菩提根木) (Copp 2011, 211)—where the Buddha attained enlightenment—to carve their seals. It appears in at least two manuscripts, P. 2153 (Fig. 10b) and P. 3874.³⁵ More generally, Buddhist sources show a slight preference for white sandalwood (*bai tangxiangmu* 白檀香木), although peach and jujube were also popular (Strickmann 2002, 173). The Buddhist seal evoking the healing power of the Tantric deity Vajrākumara (Jingang tongzi 金剛童子) and illustrated on S. 2498 presents an example (Fig. 10c).³⁶

The text below the seal illustration specifies that it is made of white sandalwood, measuring one *cun* and three *fen* on each side, and is suitable for stamping on a patient—a therapeutic use of seals comparable to that of the Yue Seals used in Daoism.

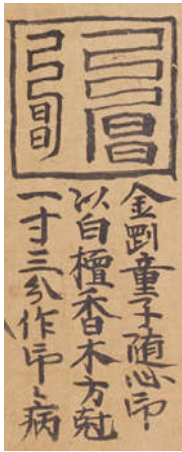
³⁴ Osabe 1982, 234-47; Strickmann 1993, 55-64; 2002, 170-78; Xiao 1993, 192-94; Copp 2011; Robson 2008. For the most recent study of seals found in Stein 2498, Pelliot 2153, 2602, 3835, 3874, see Copp 2011. For more on Buddhist seals, see Wang 2000, 41-53; Wang 2001, 459-70; Strickmann 1993; Xiao 1993, 187-94; Gao 1999, 451-55; Suchan and Sørensen 2013. Dating remains a thorny question for the study of these Dunhuang manuscripts. In a personal correspondence, Paul Copp tentatively dated the Buddhist Dunhuang manuscripts to the 9th-10th centuries. I am also grateful to Hsieh Shu-wei for his input on *Longshu wuming lun*.

³⁵ I would like to thank Paul Copp for offering this information.

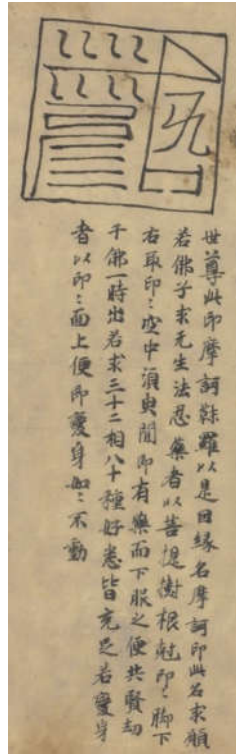
³⁶ Cf. a similar rendition of the same seal in the other manuscript (P. 2153).



a.



c.



b.

Fig. 10: Buddhist talismanic seals—a. Seal made of wood from a jujube tree previously struck by lightning, *Foshuo Changquli dunü tuoluoni zhou jing*, T21n1265:295a; b. Detail of P. 2153, Bibliothèque nationale de France; c. Detail of S. 2498, British Library.

Beyond materiality, size also matters in seal making. Most square seals recorded in the Daoist Canon range from one to five *cun*, with 2.4 being most frequent. The Southern Song *Jiulao shenyin fomo bifa* 神印伏魔秘法 (Secrete Rites for the Quelling of Demons by Divine Selas; DZ 562, 10:548; Schipper in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1120-21), with a preface by He Shouzheng 何守証, dated 1131, further associates specific measurements of the length, width, and height of a two-sided Divine Seal for Quelling Demons (*fumo shenyin* 伏魔神印) with cosmic orders (Fig. 11).

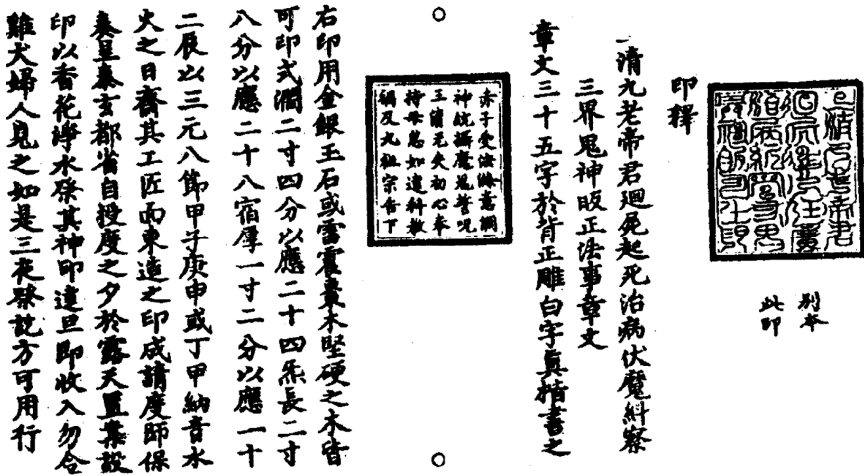


Fig. 11: *Jiulao shenying fomo bifa* 10:548. Southern Song.³⁷

Made of gold, silver, jade, or lightning-struck wood, it measures 2.4 *cun* in width, matching to the *qi* of the twenty-four solar periods or nodes. On the other hand, the seal's length of 2.8 *cun* corresponds to the twenty-eight lunar stations, while its height of 1.2 *cun* corresponds to the twelve cosmic nodes or months. In addition, the texts advise the artisan (*gongji-ang* 工匠) to face east while making the seal, echoing preferences for east-facing wood.

Other than wood, especially when used in healing, seals were also stamped on paper, then on occasion burnt to ashes, mixed with water and other herbal ingredients, and ingested by the patient. Thereby, the stamp-pad materials became part of liquefied "medicine." Alternatively, seals not meant for making an impression were sometimes coated with stamp-pad materials in conjunction with Daoist exorcism and other esoteric techniques.

The most popular dye in Daoist seal imprints is cinnabar (*zhusha* 朱砂),³⁸ a standard pigment used in traditional Chinese stamp pads³⁹ and in

³⁷ Note that one side of the double-sided seal bears thirty-five words in small regular script comparable to the back-sided designs of the Yue Seals illustrated in Fig. 8a-b of this article.

Daoism associated closely with immortality. According to Joseph Needham, cinnabar contains mercuric sulphide (1974, 177, 639), whose transformative connection to silver and gold have long been valued in Daoist alchemy.⁴⁰ To serve as the substance of a Daoist stamp pad, cinnabar was sometimes mixed with milk (*Daofa huiyuan* 10:317; Wang 2000, 77)—a supplement for glue, or bezoar (*niu Huang* 牛黃) (*Lingyin jing* 靈印經, DZ 859, 18:613; Lagerwey in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 977-78). The latter is a mass retrieved from a cow’s gastrointestinal system, highly regarded in Chinese medicine because of its anti-toxic quality.

Ritual Formulas

Seal making further involves a series of rules and rites. The basic procedure consists of two major parts, a seal-making formula (*zaoyin shi* 造印式 / *zhizao xingyin shi* 製造行印式) and a method of consecration (*jiyin shi* 祭印式 / *jiyin fa* 祭印法 / *shouchi yinzhang fa* 受持印章法).⁴¹ Key points include selected auspicious dates for seal carving and the logistics detailing how the altar and offerings should be set up to activate the seal.⁴²

Specific dates, such as the 5th day of the 5th month and the days of the Three Primes (*Sanyuan* 三元), devoted to self-confession and ances-

³⁸ See, for example, *Xuanpushan lingqin bilu*, DZ 580, 10:747; *Gaoshang shenxiao yuqing zhenwang zishu dafa*, DZ 1219, 28:617.

³⁹ Compilers of seal catalogues noted the variant qualities of cinnabar that were made into stamp pads; see *Zhongguo gu yinpu jicheng*, *Jigu yinpu*, 400-401.

⁴⁰ The oft-cited Hejia Village 何家村 hoard in Xi’an 西安 dated to the Tang dynasty contains cinnabar remains stored in a silver box—a material manifestation of its medicinal value in medieval China; see Huang 2014, 129, 164-65; 2012, 178.

⁴¹ For samples of the seal-making formula, see *Gaoshang shenxiao yuqing zhenwang zishu dafa*, DZ 1219, 28:616; *Daofa huiyuan*, DZ 1220, 29:829. For samples of the formula of offerings to the seal, see *Bicang tongxuan bianhua liuyin dongwei dunjia zhen jing* 秘藏通玄變化六陰洞微遁甲真經, DZ 857, 18:597-98; *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, DZ 1221, 30:904-905, 31:9; *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa*, DZ 219, 3:1021-22; *Lingbao jingming xinxiu jiulao shenyin fomo bifa*, DZ 562, 10:548; *Daofa huiyuan*, DZ 1220, 29:138. For more, see Wang 2000, 87-90; Ren 2006, 259-62.

⁴² For the Daoist rituals in which Daoist masters or Daoist gods put seals in operation, see Wang 2000, 75-87; Ren 2006, 252-58.

tral worship, are particularly auspicious.⁴³ Sometimes, additional rites honor the carving material. A case in point appears in the Dunhuang manuscript (P. 3811) illustrating the True Seal in Dragon Script (Fig. 9). It shows a diagram of the altar entitled the “Method of the Head Altar” (*zongtan shi* 總壇式) (Wang 2000, 39; 2001, 456; Wang K. 2004, 152-53; Yu 2006, 95-96). Read together with the seal guideline, it shows an outline of the space layout, where the selected seal’s material—in this case pear wood—should be venerated. Only after honoring the wood for 17 days can one pick an auspicious date to carve the seal (Wang 2000, 39).

As marked on the diagram, the square altar is located along a north-south axis, with two doors open on the east and west sides. The altar is decorated with flags at four corners. The rest of the diagram is filled with names of divinities, summoned to the altar and in charge of different directions. The north is presided over by the Black Emperor of the North (Beifang heidi 北方黑帝), flanked by the Great Master of Tianpeng (Tianpeng dashi 天蓬大師) and Great General of Black Killer (Hesha dajiang 黑殺大將). To the south, there are the Red Emperor of the South (Nanfang chi di 南方赤帝), accompanied by the Great General of the Dark Martial (Xuanwu dajiang 玄武大將) and the Great General of the Vermilion Bird (Zhuque dajiang 朱雀大將). The east side of the altar, where a bell is present, is presided over by the Green Emperor of the East (Qingdi 東方青帝), and is the place for the master transmitting the seal (*chuanfa ren* 傳法人). The west side of the altar, where a drum is present, is presided over by the White Emperor (Baidi 白帝), and is the place for the person who receives the seal (*shuofa ren* 授法人).

The seal activation ritual usually takes place in a purified chamber (*jingshi* 淨室), after which the seal is placed on the altar with offerings. A repetitive phrase in various versions of the ritual formula stresses the secrecy of such a ritual, forbidding women and animals to be around.

One elaborate formula concerning the activation of the Seal of the Celestial Maid (*Tiannü yin* 天女印, hereafter the Maid Seal)(Fig. 12) is em-

⁴³ E.g., *Sanhuang neiwen yimi* 18:582.

bedded with material and visual specifics.⁴⁴ The Maid Seal, one *cun* on each side, should be carved of the core of a jujube tree struck by lightning on either the days of the Three Primes or Double Five.

此印用雷劈棗木心方員一尺於三元日
或五月五日淨室焚香雕刻念溪女呪
五遍呼溪女名天女名祝罷於日午前刊
畢放在香案上神女前供養畢用栢木作
匣盛之用羅錦袋之放在匣中當日神女
前祭獻如要用取出用之此印神通不可
思議能令萬事成就



天女印
印即
也六
甲

Fig. 12: Ritual formula of the Seal of the Celestial Maid, *Shangqing liujia qidao bifa*, DZ 584, 10:762.

On the chosen date, the seal carver—either the Daoist master himself or an artisan—should chant spells and the names of the celestial maidens (*tiannü* 天女) and ladies from the stream (*xinü* 溪女), while carving the seal in a purified chamber accompanied by burning incense. After carving is complete before noon, the seal should be placed on the altar dedicated to the divine maidens as a token of offering. After this, it should be kept in a brocade bag and stored inside a box (*xia* 匣) made of

⁴⁴ *Shangqing liujia qidao bifa* 上清六甲祈禱秘法, DZ 584, 10:762; probably Tang. See Kalinowski in Schipper and Verellen 2:1241; Wang 2000, 40-41; 2001, 457; Mugitani in Pregadio 2007, 695-97.

cypress and put back on the altar.⁴⁵ The Daoist can then take the seal out whenever he needs to use it. The formula ends by praising the seal's efficacious power, noting its incredible magic and assistance in all tasks.

From a visual angle, the seal illustrated shows lined dots of the constellations and switchback layers of undulations. The overarching graphic idioms compare—albeit remotely—with the Yue Seal Strickmann first reproduced from the Tang Daoist text (Fig. 5b); they also call to mind the Seal of the Six Jia (*Liujia yin* 六甲印) (P. 3810; Wang 2000, 40; Wang K. 2004, 152-53) and the Daoist-inspired Buddhist seal for healing (P. 3874; Copp 2011, 220-24) illustrated in two Dunhuang manuscripts respectively (Figs. 13-14)—possibly dated to the 9th or 10th century.⁴⁶

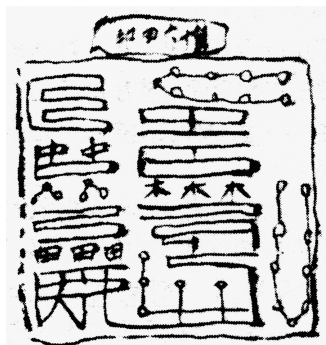


Fig. 13: Illustration of the Liujia Seal, Dunhuang manuscript fragment, P. 3810, Tang dynasty (?), Bibliothèque nationale de France.

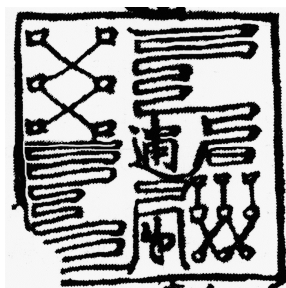


Fig. 14: Detail of the fourth Buddhist seal sample illustrated in the Dunhuang manuscript, P. 3874, (9th or 10th c.), Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Conclusion

This study of Daoist seals has brought to light the multi-faceted significance embodied by miniature Daoist seals. Ancient seals from archaeo-

⁴⁵ Boxes, caskets, containers, bags play a symbolic role in concealing, securing the secrecy of Daoist treasures. For more study, see Tsai 2006.

⁴⁶ The design of the *Liujia* Seal in the Dunhuang manuscript is almost identical with two extant seals, one even used by the contemporary Daoist master in Taiwan; see Wang 2000, 41 (Figs. 17-1, 17-2); 2001, 458. The Buddhist seal in discussion is one of a series of twelve Buddhist seals illustrated in P. 3874, see Wang 2000, 48-49; 2001, 466; Copp 2011.

logical discoveries connect to an exorcistic and shamanic context at the dawn of Daoism. Some divine spirits evoked back then, such as the Monarch of Heaven and the Yellow Emperor, remained crucial supernatural powers summoned by Daoist seal users in medieval and later times.

Of all the seals transmitted, the Yue Seals enjoyed the longest legacy because their power extended from demon-expelling to healing. By the Tang-Song, stamping a talismanic Yue Seal on a patient was an efficacious act of healing. The intricate designs of the seals, retrieved from the Southern Song-Yuan Daoist texts, are the best exemplifications of Daoist miniature imagetexts, as one template of the double-sided Yue Seal bears more than one hundred characters in small regular script.

The power of a seal derives not only from the intricate imagetext engraved on its surface, but also from the physical material it is carved on. The wood from a tree struck by lightning marks the most uniquely Daoist criterion of materiality, quite possibly connected to the potent veneration of thunder troops, divinities in charge of thunder, lightning, wind, and rain. It may also be a straightforward response to the Thunder Rites thriving in Song-Yuan China.

While the Daoist seals under discussion are meant for use by Daoists to serve various purposes, newly-made seals are first and foremost the objects of veneration. As documented in both Dunhuang manuscripts and the Daoist Canon, rituals designed to activate the power of freshly-made seals take place under auspicious timing and subscribe to the principles of purity and secrecy.

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Daoist Ritual Manuals in Vietnam

Activating Stars and Trigrams

EKATERINA ZAVIDOVSKAIA

Abstract

This paper examines visual representations—charts, talismans and drawings—in Daoist ritual manuals from the collection of approximately 200 Chinese-language manuscripts originating from the Sino-Vietnamese borderland and, supposedly, belonging to ritual specialists of Zhuang and Yao ethnic minority groups (now stored in private collection in Taiwan), dates on several manuscripts show that these copies were made in the first half of the 20th century in Vietnam, manuscripts served for the needs of living and deceased members of rural community. Visual representations either serve as “instructions” to be followed by officiating priest, or as representations of ritual action per se.

From 2014 to 2016, I participated in a research project on “principles of visual reproduction and transmission of scientific knowledge” at the National Tsing Hua University in Taiwan and examined a set of approximately 200 ritual manuals from areas in northern Vietnam that border on China and present forms of traditional Chinese sciences (e. g., divination, astrology, geomancy) and techniques of magical healing. The texts also contain various types of visual representations, talismans and charts, used in Daoist ritual.

In 2006, Professor Aleksey Volkov of National Taiwan University investigated a group of texts supposedly belonging to Nùng minority from the private collection of Professor Nguyễn Hồng Vi in Hà Nội (later donated to the Institute of Han-Nom Studies). A considerable number of them relate to astrology, divination, and magic healing. Professor Volkov

and his group also digitalized about 200 manuscripts, thus providing the ground for my work.

While most manuscripts belong to the Daoist school of Orthodox Unity (*zhengyi* 正一), their degree of "purity" in terms of Daoist doctrine is not uniform, and certain names of deities and verbal formulas include items from Buddhist or local traditions. Ritual specialists of two ethnic groups, the Zhuang 壯 (Viet.: Nùng, Tày) and the Yao 瑶 (Viet.: Dao) are seen as their potential holders. This attribution arises from frequent mention of names and religious notions characteristic of these two groups. Since they inhabited the imperial periphery, it is likely that ritual specialists contributed to the dissemination of traditional sciences and Daoist rituals in these areas.

Dates can be confirmed for a small portion of the documents, which have them on the front pages, years written in the traditional manner with stems and branches plus reign titles. The manuscripts were physically produced in the first half of the 20th century or slightly after and systematically copied by members of ritual lineages, but their original compilation may be much earlier. In most cases they were handed over from master to disciple to perform life cycle rituals for the fellow villagers. The manuals ensured that ritual codes and practice norms remained in tact. Most frequent are: 1. rituals for the soul of the deceased (*dumang* 度亡); 2. rituals for the living, including prayers for good fortune and the elimination of evil influences, epidemics, and diseases (*jisheng* 濟生); 3. divination works (*zhanshu* 占書) that range from issues of daily living through marriage to the curing of disease.

Previous Scholarship

Many manuscripts of ethnic minorities in southwest China, northern Vietnam, Laos, northern Thailand, and Burma have been recently collected and studied. Thus, the Japanese scholar Shiratori Yoshirō 白鳥芳郎 published a facsimile reproduction of several Chinese-language religious texts of the Yao (1975). In 1995, the Department of Rare Manuscripts of the Bavarian State Library in Munich, Germany, purchased and cataloged over 2,800 Yao manuscripts as part of the "Yao Manuscripts Project" (Höllmann and Friedrich 1999; 2004; Obi and Müller 1996; Chin. 2005). In addition, Oxford University holds over 300 Yao scriptures re-

lated to Daoism, bought in the early 1990s in local communities of northern Thailand. In Taiwan, Professor Wang Chiukuei 王秋桂 and his assistants collected over 1000 manuscripts of the Zhuang minority in southwest China. Recently Chen Meiwen 陳玫紋 has completed an electronic catalog of this collection (National Tsing Hua University, no. 970709), but she has not yet done any further research (pers. comm., April 2012).

Studies of Zhuang culture focus either on identified ethnic texts relevant to cosmology, ritual, songs (Holm 2004; 2013), or oral religious tradition (Kao 2011; 2014). Daoism among the Yao has been studied in much better detail (Lemoine 1982; Alberts 2006; Zhang 2007). I am aware of only two volumes that study Daoist military altar (*wutan* 武壇) priests of the Meishan 梅山 lineage (*shigong* 師公) from the Liuzhou 柳州 area in northern Guangxi (Pang and Wang 1995; Pang 2000).

Chen Meiwen, moreover, has undertaken field research on Daoist practices and scriptures by the Pangu Yao 盤古瑤 from Tianlin 田林 county in Guangxi (2003). She has also collected a considerable amount of hand-written Zhuang ritual texts from Bama 巴馬 and Mashan 馬山 counties. David Holm's investigation of some textual sources from Cao Bằng and Hà Giang provinces in North Vietnam prove that Maoshan 茅山 Daoists (*daogong* 道公) use Chinese to perform rituals, while shamans (*mogong* 麼公) use the Zhuang language for their liturgy (2013). Alexei Volkov, finally, has published on traditional Chinese sciences and divination among ethnic minority groups in Vietnam, stressing the lack of studies of the transmission of this type of knowledge (Volkov 2010; et al. 2012).

It is thus safe to say that field data collected by a number of scholars in Guangxi are awaiting in-depth study. However, there is even less evidence for Daoist rituals, traditional sciences, and magical healing among ethnic groups in the Sino-Vietnamese borderland. The examination, then, of some twenty manuscripts has allowed the following typology of visual images and their usage:

1. Graphic charts in circular shape with cyclic symbols or trigrams, connected by lines that belong to the Nine Palaces or *Luoshu* magic square system and are related to the practice of pacing the cosmic pattern of the nine stars of the Dipper (*bugang* 步罡), performed by Daoist priests;

2. Graphic representations of a self-cultivation technique called "seven returns, nine revolutions/reversions" (*qifan jiuzhuan/huan* 七返九轉/還);

3. Textual formulas related to the body parts and inner organs, probably needed for visualizations or outward ritual actions;

4. Diagrams for pacing the Dipper and other constellations;

5. Talismans depicting human figures that aim to heal diseases and expel evil forces from the body;

6. Thunder-related characters or talismans, forming an essential part of Daoist texts with important protective roles during various rituals.

Charts of the Nine Stars or Palaces

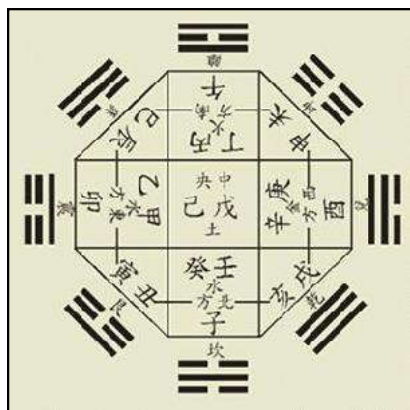


Fig. 1

		离		
巽	4 ☴	9 ☲	2 ☶	坤
震	3 ☳	5	7 ☱	兑
艮	8 ☶	1 ☵	6 ☰	乾
		坎		

Fig. 2

In the divination based on the Nine Palaces, the position of the Eight Trigrams is fixed, Figs. 1 and 2 represent the postnatal (*houtian* 後天) sequence of the trigrams and numbers of the *Luoshu* 洛書 (Writ of the Luo River). They form the pattern of the "Nine Palaces and Eight Trigrams" (*jiugong bagua* 九宮八卦), also known as the *qimen dunjia* 奇門遁甲 divination system. "Each star has a Luo number as well as a five-phases value . . . Each star has a designated color. . . The five phases correspond to the five 'moving' stars" (Field 2008, 101). Schematically it looks like this:

Kan 坎 = water star 水星 (Mercury) = 1

Li 离 = fire star 火星 (Mars) = 9

Zhen 震 = wood star 木星 (Jupiter) = 3

Dui 兑 = metal star 金星 (Venus) = 7 etc.

As Stephen Field notes,

Divination is conducted by following the nine stars as they rove, or “fly”, like their planetary counterparts, through the Nine Palaces according to the sequence of numbers in the *Luoshu*. Since they are nine numbers, there are nine cycles of stars. Each cycle represents the “flying” of each number in each square of the *Luoshu* from its original position to the next square in the sequence, the first year is the first palace... and so on until the ninth palace. The tenth year then returns to the first palace as the cycle starts over. (2008, 102)

The diviner matches a certain date or hour with the “six *yi*” 六儀 (including the stems 戊, 己, 庚, 辛, 壬, 癸), the “three *qi*” 三奇 (i. e., 乙, 丙, 丁) and the “nine stars” 九星 (that is, 蓬, 任, 冲, 輔, 英, 芮, 柱, 心, 禽). Each Palace has a fixed *qi* and matches one of the six *yi*. According to this system, the total number of compositions (*geju* 格局) amounts to sixty. This matches the sixty combinations of the heavenly stems and earthly branches, which in turn connect to the twenty-four solar periods. Below I illustrate this system with some examples from charts in discovered manuscripts.

Stars, Times, and Officials

A complex correspondence system plays a key role in manuscript V147,¹ which consists of three parts. First, it addresses two deities protecting children, the Zhuang gods Flower King (*huawang* 花王) and Flower Sister (*huamei* 花妹), followed by a prayer that the children sleep well and have enough breast milk (p. 033). Next there is a set of ritual incantations for the living (*jiao* 醮) to improve fate and expel evils, related to marriage, children, grain, and livestock. Third, there is the initial stage of the ritual, when the Daoist puts on his garb and calls upon the star spirits. It mentions of Thunder King (Leiwang 雷王)—prominent in the Zhuang pan-

¹Numbers of manuscripts follow the system of Professor Volkov.

The second sequence runs: Center—Earth God (Houtu)—South Pole—East Pole—Emperor of the Stars—Center—Emperor of Heaven—Jade Emperor—Great Clarity—Highest Clarity.

While this lists all three divine emperors, it has only two of the Three Clarities and only two out of four poles. The lines, moreover, go twice through the starting point of the Center. In the manuscript two diagrams on Fig. 3 are called “Mudra [Palm] of Inviting the Buddha” (*qingfo zhang* 請佛掌).

Similarly, Fig. 4 shows a chart, where cyclical symbols in the same sequence are matched with notions of astrology and the lunar calendar:

Upper Prime (*shangyuan* 上元) = Winter Solstice (*dongzhi* 冬至);
 Superior Living (*shangsheng* 上生) = the Lord of the Southern Dipper;
 Surpassing Evil (*duwei* 度厄) = Star in the Northern Dipper;
 Increasing the Reckoning (*yisuan* 益算) = Lord of Enhanced Longevity;
 Enhanced Longevity;
 Upper Prime = Waking Insects (*jingzhe* 驚蟄) = 3rd solar period;
 Director of Emoluments (*silu* 司祿) = 6th star of Wenchang 文昌;
 Director of Destiny (*siming* 司命) = 4th star of Wenchang;
 Lower Prime (*xiayuan* 下元) = *qingming* 清明 and 3rd lunar month;
 Middle Prime (*zhongyuan* 中元) = Summer Beginning (*lixia* 立夏).

The Three Primes are important for the Nine Palaces divination and represent the Three Officials (*sanguan* 三官). They make nine when combined with the Six Palaces, or Six Dippers and their deities. The latter include:

Fu Palace 府宮 = Star Lord Directing Destiny
 Xiang Palace 相宮 = Star Lord Directing Emoluments
 Liang Palace 梁宮 = Star Lord Enhancing Longevity
 Tong Palace 同宮 = Star Lord Increasing the Reckoning
 Shu Palace 樞宮 = Star Lord Overcoming Disasters
 Ji Palace 機宮 = Star Lord of Superior Living

Unlike the divination to find out a particular auspicious or inauspicious day or hour, which uses Nine Palaces (see Field 1999; Kalinowski 2003, 108-10), within the context of this manuscript, the diagrams represent a specific part of the ritual that focuses on inviting deities and spirits to the

altar. At this point the officiating Daoist ritually paces the points drawn on the diagrams while visualizing deities and heavenly forces.

Protection and Exorcism

Related information also appears in manuscript V143-2, which is not complete. Its title is *Fan xianrenxiao shengdu* 凡賢人小昇度 (Lesser Ascent and Transcendence of the Various Wise Ones). The copy gives its date as has the year *gengchen* 庚辰, which might be 1820, 1880, 1940, or even 2000. A second cover adds that it was copied in that year and mentions the scribe by his Daoist name (*faming* 法名) Nong Changde 農德昌. This might refer to any of numerous Daoists named Nong in the Zhuang areas of Guangxi.

The text is a manual for Daoist priests of the Zhengyi school, with headquarters on Mt. Longhu 龍虎山 in Jiangxi. It also mentions other ritual specialists, such as male and female shamans or ritual masters (*fashi* 法師), who may cooperate with the priest during the ritual of passing the soul of the deceased over the bridge.

The location Great Southern State Cao Bằng 大南國高平 (p. 292-054) is prominent, followed by a blank space for the name of a village, echoing the pattern of standard Daoist memorials. While parts of the text serve as mortuary liturgy (*jishu* 齋書), it does not include the entire ritual of saving souls from hell, but describes how the Daoist undertakes his journey to hell with a torch, summons the deity that serves as the savior from hell, and eventually brings the soul back over the Naihe 奈何 Bridge to save it from torture. The priest then turns into the Heavenly Worthy Who Saves from Suffering (Jiuku tianzun 救苦天尊). This ritual was commonly performed as a separate liturgy from the main service of breaking down the walls of hell.

Another key feature in the text is the ritual of feeding orphaned souls, with the specific purpose of saving the soul of a dead relative. In the end, it mentions deities of the Shenxiao 神霄 (Divine Empyrean) school as well as some key terms from its main scripture, the *Duren jing* 度人經 (Scripture of Salvation). They include Vermilion Hill (Zhuling 朱陵), one of the thirty-six grotto heavens located in Hunan, and the land of Eternal Enjoyment (*xiaoyao* 逍遙). The manuscript includes numerous

incantations about taking the soul to the immortals as well as chants to the Thunder God to expel evil influences. In addition, it contains a passage about creating a golden elixir by transforming the organs of the body (p. 292 043). The term for “visualization” is *xiang* 想. The text ends abruptly when describing how the priest presents wine and meat offerings to the deities.

It contains one chart of the Nine Palaces (Fig. 5), including other cyclical symbols that match the Eight Trigrams. In an earlier passage, it mentions inviting the four seasons, the saints on the right and left, and

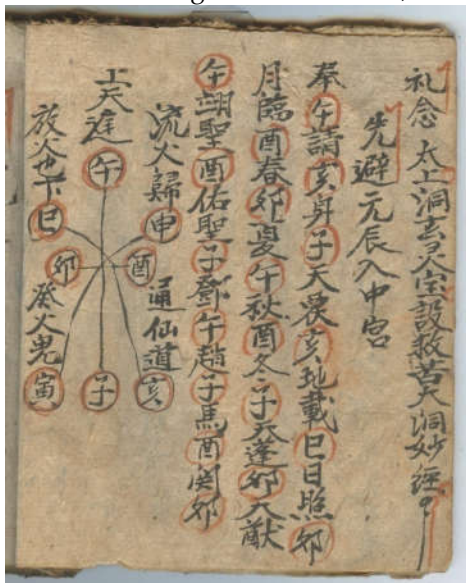


Fig. 5. V143-2: 292-006

the three marshals Deng 鄧, Zhao 趙, and Ma 馬, divine protectors in the Shenxiao school. The circles with cyclical symbols are accompanied by incantations the in four directions: “The falling star is back, open the way to immortality (*tong xiandao* 通仙道), set forth the fire demon, set forth the fire and burn the demon with fire . . . the roaming fire returns.” The purpose of the rite is to bring the cloud soul (*hun* 魂) to the abode of the immortals.

Salvation of the Soul

A local tradition of liturgy is best represented in manuscript V26, which contains many unknown names. Lacking a cover page with a formal title, the text consists of two parts written in different calligraphy, indicating two scribes. The first pages are in vernacular Chinese and resemble a narration rather than incantations. They mention worshiping at the “separation/Trigram Li hall” (*litang* 離堂), maybe an error for “worship hall” (*litang* 禮堂), rites involving locusts (*huangfeng* 蝗蜂), as well as several unknown females (外公凄—the last character is unknown), con-

nected to children and possibly representing the spirits of childless women. The deities take the seeker away in a chariot and later appear as "guardians of the fetus" (*shou nüdai tai* 守女代抬/胎).

Later (p. 24-020) the text is reminiscent of a ritual of salvation for dead children, probably new-born, because the word "fetus" occurs frequently. Perhaps the mother has died in child-birth, too: there is mention of the blood pan (*xuepan* 血盤), an attribute of salvation for death in child-birth. Next (p. 24-027) follow incantations of the evil bull (*eniu* 惡牛), relating to a cult of the bull among the Tai people (Holm 2003). In a related ritual, the bull is killed in the field and his head used for salvation of the dead. Closer to the end are incantations of protecting the priest's body that address the savior Thunder deity Puhua tianzun 普化天尊, while the priest represents Lord Lao 太上老君. The last pages contain mantras to avoid happening of different unfortunate and strange things, caused by demons. The astrological portion of the work Fig. 6) focuses on the stems and branches of the individual's year of birth (*benming* 本命), connects him to the Northern Dipper and enters him into the Central Palace (*ru zhonggong* 入中宮), i.e., Palace of Great/Purple Tenuity. The sequence goes with an incantation:



Fig. 6. V26: 24 050-051

"The Central Palace" where the person's birth is located matches the 5th trigram in the southeast" (辰/巽) with the words:

"The Northern Dipper steps to bring the three soldiers in motion."

It links to the 4th trigram in the east (卯/震) with the words:

"The sound of the thunderbolt,"

It further links to the 8th symbol and earth (未/坤) with the words:

“... [gap in text] Door of Humanity (人门),”

It next links to the 12th earthly stem and north (亥/子) with the words:

“Soaked with water and waves.”

It further connects to fire and the trigram *li* (午/离) with the words:

“The imperial chariot, disc of fire.”

It further matches the 7th trigram and the 2nd earthly stem (艮/丑) with the words:

“The mountain seals the demon gate.”

It also relates to the 8th trigram/10th cyclical symbol and the west (酉/兑) with the words:

“Hero soldiers,”

It next connects to the 5th heavenly stem and the 2nd trigram (戌/兑) with the words:

“The Highest Emperor resides in his palace.”

This sequence represents pacing the North Dipper along the lines of the postnatal *Luoshuo*, accompanied with incantations either spoken out loud or pronounced inwardly. The incantations look typical of Thunder Rites, featuring soldiers, demon gates, and thunderbolts. The priest probably summons the soldiers to protect him during the salvation ritual.

Summoning the Heavenly Army

The manuscript V88 represents a ritual ordination text of the Zhengyi school, since it mentions the Celestial Master Zhang and other perfected (*zhenren* 真人). According to the ritual, the sacred verses (*zhang* 章) are sent from above. Gods and celestial officials, receiving a summons, take up their positions around the priest who offers incense and flowers.

The text has no red marks, circles, or rain talismans, and contains only few diagrams. Its writing style is elevated. It mentions the three generals Tang 唐, Ge 葛, and Zhou 周, three brothers from different fathers, who the Zhuang Daoist tradition considers as the founders of the Meishan 梅山 school. Their location on the altar matches that of the Three Primes: Upper Tang Daoxiang 上元唐道相, Central Ge Dingying 中元葛定应, Lower Zhou Huzheng 下元周護正 (Lemoine 1982, 115). In addition, the text also speaks of the four officials of destiny (*siming gongcao* 四命功曹). They play an important role of control during the ritual. The final pages, moreover, discuss the properties and ability of the sa-

cred verses and talismans Daoists use. The manuscript probably forms part of larger liturgy. Alternatively it may also be incomplete.

It has a line precluding the diagram: "The priest (probably not a Zhengyi Daoist) performs pacing the Dipper and pronounces the names of the trigrams" (Fig. 7). Starting from the middle at the Central Palace

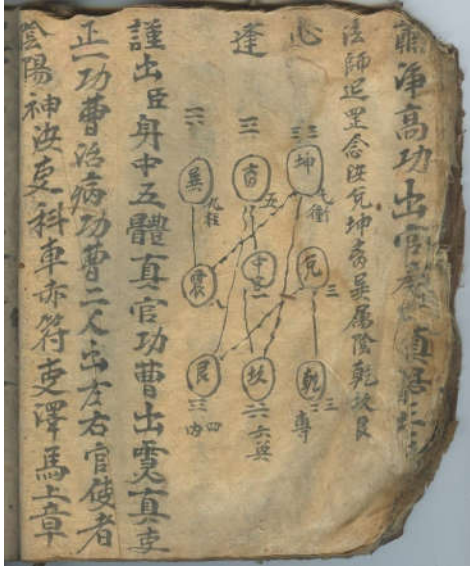


Fig. 7. V88: 19 036

中宮, he moves through the trigrams: Li 離 (fire)—Gen 艮 (mountain)—Dui 兌 (lake)—Qian 乾 (heaven)— . . . [break in the scheme]—Sun 巽 (wind)—Chen 震 (thunder)—Kun 坤 (earth)—Kan 坎 (water)—Central Palace. Compared to the diagram in manuscript V26, this represents more of a cosmic pace, indicated by the use of the word *gang* 罡 and the particular way the sequence moves from one symbol to another.

Diagrams for Good Fortune

The manuscript V89 presents standard memorials (*biao* 表) Daoists chant during their liturgy, with names and details left blank to be filled in as the occasion requires. The Daoist who made the copy was Nong Daorong 農道榮, which allows us to track the text to a family of hereditary Daoists in the area.

The ritual charts in the end deserve special attention. They probably serve a ritual aiming to drive away bad influences caused by baleful stars and most likely performed for a particular client during the year when such stars (e.g., Ketu) are in power. Diagrams or mudras show short (*duangong zhang* 短宮掌) as well as taboo constellations (*jigong* 忌宮) as they apply to personal fortunes.

Both men and women undertake starry pacing, but move in different directions. The calligraphy and style of the writing display a high level of literacy and knowledge of Daoist terminology. The text is written in elevated style, which means it does not belong to the local tradition of ethnic minority shamanism. Most importantly, there are additional notes made in Vietnam that point to the locality, identifying the province as Ha Giang 河陽 / 河江 and the county as Huyện Vĩ Xuyên 渭川縣, and indicating places in Guangxi over the border.

The text was copied from an earlier version of the late Qing or early Republic, reaching Vietnam around 1918. It came from Zhengbian County 鎮邊縣 in China, populated mainly by Zhuang people, who are close to the Thai in Vietnam. The text shows few traces of minority beliefs and only once mentions a local deity. The work is written in two styles, its bulk showing a more delicate calligraphy, while information on the front and back pages is in a coarser pattern, most likely being added later in Vietnam. Its overall purpose focuses on prayers for health, wealth, prosperity, and the elimination of bad influences. It probably refers to a ritual of blocking the bad impact of the baleful star of the particular year, focusing especially on Ketu, most harmful for women.

Several pages containing diagrams toward the back of the manuscript may be relevant to a “lantern-maze walking” ritual as practiced by Zhuang Daoists. However, the number of points to be walked here is lower than that common in lantern-mazes. David Holm notes,

Lantern-maze dances are called either Treading the Flower Lanterns (*cai huadeng* 踩花燈) or Breaking Open the Five Directions (*po wufang* 破五方). A rectangular array of lanterns is set out on flat, open ground in front of the offering table, leaving a space of one meter or so between lanterns. The array usually consists of $8 \times 7 = 72$ lanterns. . . .

During the dance, the officiating priest, carrying the soul pennant, leads the rest of the Daoist troupe through the lantern maze, first going around the perimeter, then dancing the rows horizontally, back and forth one row after another, then in the other direction backwards and forwards, then diagonally, then diagonally in the other direction, and finally around and through the maze in a complex series of dance figures such as Hemp Flowers and Cabbage Hearts.

The dancing priests carry drums, gongs and cymbals as they dance slowly at first with a mince-step (*suibu* 碎步), then faster, then running, and finally running and leaping at break-neck speed. (2004, 25-26)

Page 29-040 shows two diagrams of short constellation palms are walked in different sequences for the Southern Dipper—its six stars starting from the Director of Destiny—and the Northern Dipper—its nine stars beginning at Ferocious Wolf (*tanlang* 貪狼).

The Southern Dipper sequence begins from the Fate Star and moves clockwise by 10, 20, and 30. It passes through Director of Emoluments, Enhanced Longevity (*yanshou* 延壽), Increasing the Reckoning, Surpassing Disaster (*du'e* 度厄), and Eternal Life (*changsheng* 長生).

The pacing of the Northern Dipper starts from Ferocious Wolf and moves counter clockwise, followed by all other Dipper stars: Wide Gate (*jumen* 巨門)—Prosperous Life (*lucun* 祿存)—Literary Song (*wenqu* 文曲)—Pure Modesty (*lianzen* 廉貞)—Martial Song (*wuqu* 武曲)—Ruined Army (*pojun* 破軍)—Sustainer on the Left (*zuofu* 左輔)—Equalizer on the Right (*youbi* 右弼).



Fig. 8. V89: 29-040



Fig. 9. V89: 29-041

Page 29-041 (Fig. 9) speaks of a divination involving taboo constellations, including different directions for men and women. Probably, this refers to a ceremony of pacing along certain patterns while following a priest. Women proceed counterclockwise from Ketu, using a jumping step. Men go clockwise from Rahu. The maze is the same in structure for both.

Page 29-042 (Fig. 10) contains a chart called “Mudra [Palm] of the Bridge Palace” (*qiaogong zhang* 橋宮掌) for a pace along the Eight Trigrams without a Central Palace. Here men and women follow the same path, but move in different directions.



Fig. 10. V89: 29-042

The Salvation Ritual

The manuscript V142 is entitled *Zami bianyong ke* 雜秘變用科, which means either “Liturgy of Miscellaneous Secret Transformations” or Zami’s Applied Changes,” Zami Yong 雜秘用 being the name of the Daoist priest Lu Jinggui 陸景桂. Dated to 1924, as indicated by the reign title Khải Định (1916-1925), the work thus either serves to describe the mysterious transformations a priest undergoes during the ritual or points to changes in the name and nature of Zami.

The first part of the book is neither yang, i.e., for the living, nor yin, i.e., funereal or for the dead. The second part mentions a descent to hell. Here the Daoist priest performs the role of the Great One, the Heavenly Worthy Who Saves from Suffering, by means of visualization. The central part contains “thunder characters” or talismans created for different purposes and rituals with use of the sixty cyclical signs, the trigrams, the five phases, and other basic elements of the universe. The first part

probably outlines an internal ritual, during which the priest visualizes the summoning of the gods and calls upon the generals located in the different parts of the body. The deities' names are typical of the Thunder Rites of Divine Emphyrean.



Fig. 11. V 142: 307 026 detail

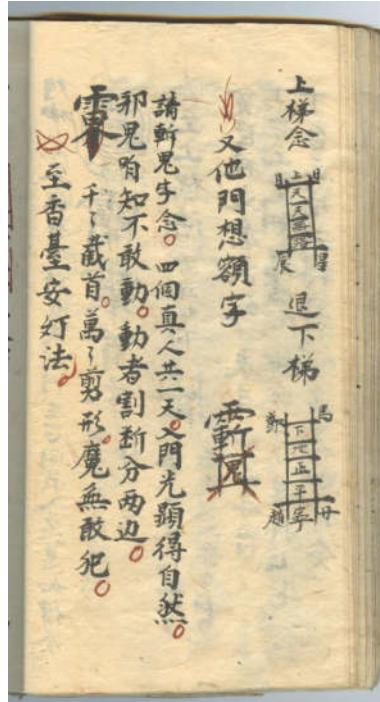
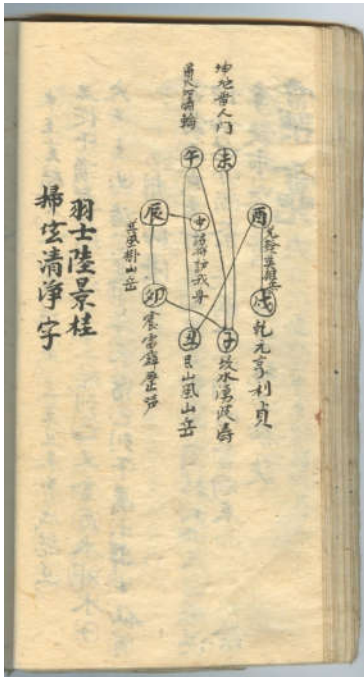


Fig. 12. V 142: 307 026

Page 307 026 (Figs.11-12) contains a diagram different from those discussed above, looking like bars. The text on the previous page mentions the process of entering the gate and shows a picture of a demon behind bars. This symbol of blocking the demon is quite common. Rather than a ritual diagram, this looks more like an illustration, its purpose possibly to clarify the actions the priests should perform.

Two further drawings depict the process of climbing up and down the ladder—possibly made of knives (*daoti* 刀梯). The Daoist literally climbs it with bare feet while in trance. According to Lemoine, this ritual is part of the ordination procedure (*dushi* 度師) among the Yao (1982, 25). It also forms part of the initiation ritual among Yao and Miao youths,

here called “the fourth pass” (*di siguan* 第四關) (Xu 2006, 32). In addition, the Yao have a ritual of “climbing the blade ladder, crossing the sea of fire” (*shang daoshan guo huohai* 上刀山過火海), involving an almost-four-meter-high construction consisting of twenty blades, built by ritual specialists in the open space (Huang and Huang 1990, 10).



The upper chart depicts ascent; the lower, descent. The upper contains sun, moon, stars, and hours, saying, “There is no road to heaven.” The lower has the surnames of the generals Ma 馬, Zhao 趙, Deng 鄧, Kang 康, or Zhou 周 plus the phrase, “The land is in quietude.” Page 307 032

(Fig. 13, on the left) shows a diagram of the Nine Palaces similar to that found in V26 (Fig. 6), but here it appears after a description of the Method of Visualizing the Eight Immortals (*xiang baxian fa* 想八仙法). The same diagram serves various purposes in ritual practice, as seen from the textual formulas supporting it.

The chart has the following accompanying phrases:

Center 中: “All generals protect my body” 請將護我身.

Chen 辰: “And wind hanging on the mountain peak” 並風掛山嶽.

Mao 卯: “The sound of the thunderbolt” 震雷霹靂聲 (similar to V 26).

Zi 子: “Big waves flowing and raging” 浚水湧波濤.

Wei 未: “Earth ?? gate of humanity” 坤地 . . . 人門.

Zi 子: “Soaked with water, waves” 水淹波濤.

Wu 午: “Fire in Li, add waves wheel” 離火加濤輪.²

² In V 26: page 24 050-051 this position has: “Palace is riding fire wheel” 宮駕火輪.

Chou 丑: "Wind in mountains, wind in peaks" 山風山嶽.³

You 酉: "Dui dispatches hero soldiers" 兌發英雄兵 (same in V 26).

Mao 茂: "Earth is fundamentally good, benefits all 坤元亨利貞."⁴

Another, related text is manuscript V 30, entitled *Shengdu Xuanling tongzi bamen changmi daquan* 昇度玄靈童子八門掌秘大全 (Great Compendium of the Mysterious Lad's Secret Ascension Methods of the Eight Gates). Here, "eight gates" is a fortune-telling term referring to the eight phases, also used in the *qimen dunjia* divination system: *xiu* 休, *sheng* 生, *shang* 傷, *du* 杜, *si* 死, *jing* 景, *jing* 驚, and *kai* 開. Three among them—*xiu* (rest), *sheng* (rise) and *kai* (open)—are auspicious, while the other five are inauspicious. The text was copied in 1935 under the reign of the emperor Vua Bảo Đại, 1926-1945. Its owner was Lu Daocong 陸道聰, probably a member of a hereditary Daoist family, just as V142 belonged to Lu Jing-gui.

The text presents a liturgy for the soul of the dead, helping it to ascend into the realm called Vermilion Hill (Zhuling 朱陵), also mentioned in V 143-2. In the beginning, it has seven repetitions of a formula for summoning the soul. Lads or children are ordered to act as mediums, descending into hell to summon the soul (*zhaohun* 招魂) and make sure all the white and cloud souls gather in one place. The son of the deceased, the "filial son" (*xiaonan* 孝男), is asked to step on the bridge (p. 17), probably involving a ritual model. Here he has to rotate and see how the soul of the deceased emerges.

All participants and the priest then pay their respects to the perfected lords of the halls in the subterranean prefecture (*difu* 地府), where the soul is interrogated. The Bodhisattva Who Saves from Suffering performs the salvation. Opening the doors of heaven and hell, he breaks down the walls of the hell to release the soul. A second liturgy shows a similar purpose, including also the use of a banner to summon the soul and perform its salvation.

³ In V 26, this position has "Mountains block the demon gate" 山封鬼門.

⁴ This is a formula from the *Zhouyi* 周易 about the prosperity of the four virtues (*side* 四德). In V26, this final position has the words: 宮上帝.

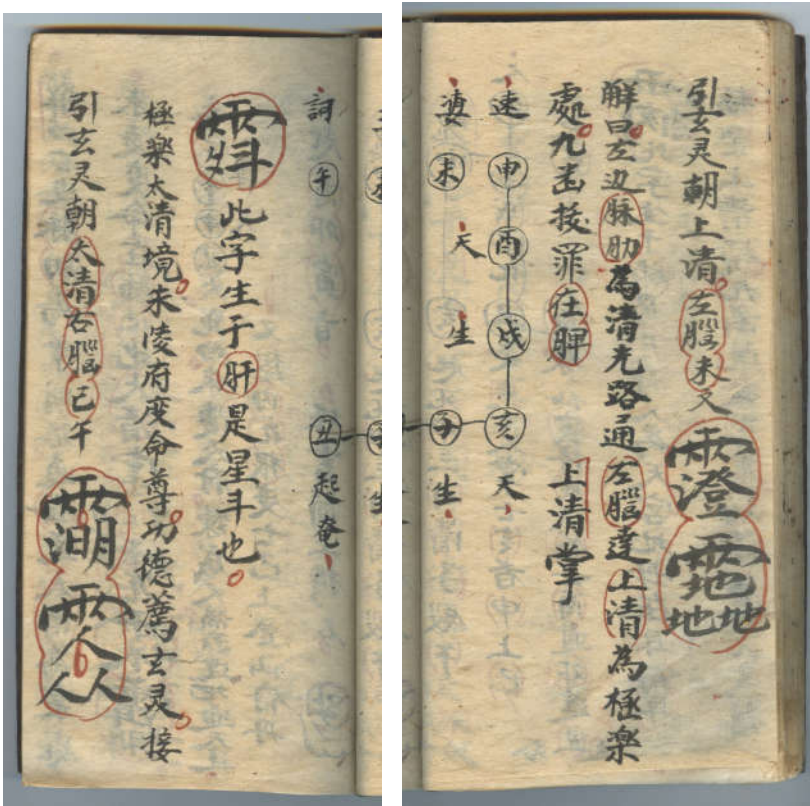


Fig. 15. V 30: 43-44

Page 48 (Fig. 16) shows a similar case of a graphic explanation of the sequence of the seven steps, matching the number of the stars in the Northern Dipper. Here the trigrams are related to different organs: "The miraculous medicine (*lingdan miaoyao* 靈丹秒藥) is located in the gall bladder (*dan* 胆)," which somehow connects to the heaven ladder—possibly a metaphor of the way the soul ascends to heaven—located in the spinal column.

The diagram is accompanied by names of five perfected: the Perfected Emanating Light (*tengguang zhenren* 騰光真人), the Perfected Who Knows the Dharma (*shifa zhenren* 識法真人), and the Perfected Following

the Records (*suilu zhenren* 隨箒真人). They are not common or easily identified in Daoist literature.



Fig. 16. No. V 30: 48



Fig. 17. No. V 30: 50

Page 50 (Fig. 17), next, has a diagram of the nine stars, not unlike that found in other sources (cf. V 147: 37-0018; V 88: 19 036, V 26: 24 050 - 051). Four positions are marked with red dots, and the text beneath seems to provide incantations to be used while stepping on each of the cyclical symbols:

- zi = constrain the demons (*zhimo* 制魔);
- wei = support (*baoju* 保舉);
- si = salvation (*dupin* 度品);
- yin = Southern Palace (*nangong* 南宮);
- chou = soul of the dead (*sihun* 死魂);
- center = receive testing with some ordeal (*shoulian* 受煉);
- wu = transform into a human (*chengren* 成人).

Other Traditions

A yet different manuscript that probably represents the Yao tradition bears the title *Zhu guantou xiaoer* 諸關頭小兒 (Going through the Passes for Children) and is associated with Priest Luo from the Mysterious Gate 玄門羅道 (Fig. 18).



Fig. 18. Book 2: IMG 7090.

It describes a form of divination with the help of lucky or unlucky constellation as well as the eight characters (*bazi* 八字), describing year, month, day, and hour of birth, for a total of eight patterns. It also contains a chart that may well be an illustration of pacing the cosmic maze, including instructions for men and women. Both start at the Dui palace, and walk to the constellation of their birth—men clockwise, women counterclockwise—in order to eliminate calamities.

In this context, the nine-star or nine-palace charts as described earlier work with each trigram and center, making a total of nine points, that then match either two or three cyclical symbols. The majority of manuscripts uses a standard pattern, usually in rectangular shape, but in some cases the cyclical symbols are drawn as a line.

For the most part, the trigrams can be correlated with the pace of the Northern Dipper as performed by the Daoist. Apart from the fact mentioned by Stephen Field that this method was used for divinatory purposes, the manuscripts show just how important it was in mortuary and salvation rituals. This leads to the conclusion that charts of cosmic steps found commonly in North Vietnam manuals resemble, but do not fully match, two types of postnatal celestial pacing of the Eight Trigrams and the Dipper (*houtian bagua* / *beidou bugang* 後天八卦/北斗步罡) (Figs. 19, 20, based on Xu and Xue 2005)

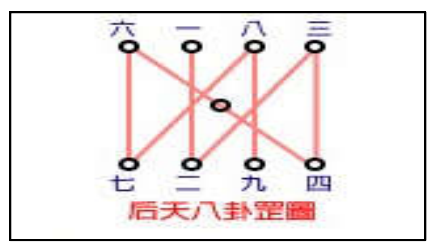


Fig.19

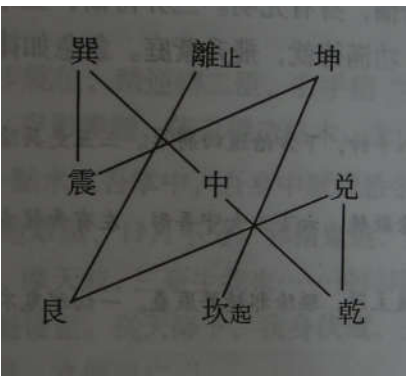


Fig. 20

Conclusion

This study has focused on two types of diagrams used in Daoist ritual manuals from North Vietnam. The first is based on the Nine Palaces and graphically represents the nine steps of the Northern Dipper, walked in a certain sequence and performed in different contexts. Called the Postnatal Eight Trigrams Pacing of the Network, this sequence represents the inner transformation experienced by the priest performing the ritual or indicates elements of visualization practice. It also appears when the officiating priest summons heavenly generals to defeat an army of demon soldiers or assists a soul after death to enter the land of joy and happiness in the cause of the salvation ritual.

The second type represents steps walked by male and female believers in order to eliminate negative influences produced by baleful stars, whose impact tends to higher in the individual's year of destiny (*benming nian* 本命年). Both are highly relevant to our understanding of Daoism, and their appearance in Vietnam reveal just how far and deep the tradition has penetrated East Asian culture.

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Forum

on

Contemporary

Practice

Daoist Literary Criticism

JOHN LEONARD

Philosophical Daoism, it may seem, has no time for literary criticism, for the same reason that Plato was opposed to poetry in *The Republic*: poetry or literature is a second order representation, a description or imitation of life not the immediate thing. The Daoism of the *Daode jing* and, particularly, the *Zhuangzi* tends to be interested in people's acceptance of Dao—in what happens and what is—excluding any ideological or emotional glosses on that immediate experience. When Daoist writers in these works discuss language, it is often to denigrate false ideas wrapped in eloquent words and to return to reality: as the *Zhuangzi* has it, “Words are for catching ideas; once you’ve caught the idea, you can forget about the words” (ch 26; Mair 1994, 277).

Literary Practice

Both the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi* are notable for their literary stylistics. The *Daode jing* could be viewed either as manual on statecraft, or a parody of a manual of statecraft, either way there is no doubting the literary and poetic sophistication of its text(s). The *Zhuangzi* is even more renowned as a treasure-house of fine writing, “Impressive for both its bold philosophical imagination and its striking literary style” (De Bary 1968, vii). And indeed in the *Zhuangzi* it is impossible to escape specific discussion of literary method. In the chapter after the stern injunction to forget words quoted earlier, a section is devoted to this very topic.

Zhuangzi or one of his followers—chapters 26 and 27 are part of a group of chapters held to have been written by a “school of Zhuangzi”—mentions (in Mair’s translation) first “metaphors,” effective nine times out of ten, then “quotations,” effective seven times out of ten. But the

writer's preferred mode of discourse is by "impromptu words [which] pour forth every day and harmonize within the framework of nature" (ch. 27; Mair 1994, 278-79). In other words, inspired Daoist writing that can remove people from the problem of imposing their own values on the world and return them to a cogent view of what is:

Impromptu words pour forth every day and harmonize within the framework of nature... There are grounds for affirmation and there are grounds for denial... Why are things so? They are so because we declare them to be so. Why are things not so? They are so because we declare them to be not so... All things are possessed of that which we may say is so; all things are possessed of that which we may affirm... If it were not for the impromptu words that pour forth every day and harmonize within the framework of nature, who could last long?

If the school of Zhuangzi were still functioning today they would no doubt point out that our ideological concerns, our concern to affirm or deny, were getting in the way of vital action that needed to be taken on, for example, on global warming, which definitely "is," beyond affirmation or denial.

In later Daoist texts a concern with a Daoist literary practice continues. For example, the *Liezi* reuses a passage from the *Zhuangzi* (ch. 33; Mair 1994, 341), originally applied to self-cultivation in a social context, in a passage which turns the stress towards to literary technique, the Daoist here is simply to reproduce what is experienced, with no expectation that this understanding gained will be used in immediate social actions:

If nothing in you stays rigid,
Outward things will disclose themselves.
Moving, be like water.
Still, be like a mirror.
Respond like an echo. (Graham 1990, 90)

And by this period in history works of pure literary criticism, or how-to books on writing, heavily influenced by philosophical Daoism were already being written, such as the *Wen Fu* by Lu Chi (Hamill 1991). The history of the influence of Daoism on Chinese literary culture in later

centuries, as well as on art, has been summarized by Chung-yuan Chan (1963).

In 2010 Three Pines Press published my work *The Way of Poetry*. I wrote this work as a practicing poet concerned to show how western poetry, and particularly English poetry, could be considered within a Daoist framework and how poets could use Daoism as a guide in poetic composition.

I wrote particularly about "understand[ing] how the principles of Daoism can be applied to the writing of poetry in the modern age" (Leonard 2010, Preface). I resolved this by describing the manner of a putative Daoist poetry: a poetry characterized by naturalness and flow, compassion, humility and restraint, with the poetic means suited to the poetic ends (14). I also wrote about the subject matter of this Daoist poetry, which was likely to be largely "great creating-Nature" (Shakespeare 1623, 292), now more than ever relevant in view of the ongoing ecological crisis and the sixth great extinction of life (human-induced) (17, 52).

I also wrote, whilst discussing the concept of "non-action":

The Way of Poetry as I conceive it is not a series of instructions which aims to *solve* problems in the world. Instead it is way of approaching poetry which suggests the attitude to be taken towards life more generally. (30)

In line with this, I realized after writing the work that there is also the possibility, beyond a poetic *praxis*, of a Daoist practical literary criticism, in the tradition of I. A. Richards.

Practical Criticism

Richards, in his work *Practical Criticism* (1930), presented a series of responses that university undergraduates had written about poetry that had been given to them for comment without the author's name or a date for the text. Richards observed the difficulty the students had in describing what was in front of them without resorting to emotional reactions or ingrained prejudices.

A Daoist practical criticism would similarly want to look at what is there in the literary text without resort to emotional reaction or prejudice, and at the same time would be able to investigate the text by attending to

the flow of the words and noting when these are disturbed. If you observe a lowland river running placidly along, any disturbances in the clear flow are likely to result from underwater rocks or snags. In a river this is simply a fact of the river's physical state at the time it is observed, in a literary work any disturbance to flow is likely to result from the author's mental preoccupations or perturbations, or perhaps from bad editing, or a combination of the two. (Equally, of course, there could be a text which is the literary equivalent of a mountain brook, which is nothing but perturbation).

Take as an example this passage from Shakespeare, Prospero's famous speech from the Act IV of *The Tempest*. In the First Folio it stands like this (with long 's's changed to modern ones and a couple of 'u's changed to 'v's):

Our Revels now are ended : These our actors,
 (As I foretold you) were all Spirits, and
 Are melted into Ayre, into thin Ayre,
 And like the baselesse fabricke of this vision
 The Clowd-capt Towres, the gorgeous Pallaces ,
 The solemne Temples, the great Globe it selfe,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
 And like this insubstantiall Pageant faded
 Leave not a racke behind : we are such stuffe
 As dreames are made on ; and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleepe . (Shakespeare 1623, 15)

It is a very famous passage, and one much anthologized (e.g., Heaney and Hughes 1982, 328) and set to music (by Vaughan Williams amongst others). Interestingly it also voices thoughts that are similar to some of the thought in the *Zhuangzi*, such as Zhuang Zhou's dream of being a butterfly (chapter 2).

I have a very poor verbal memory, and as an attempt to make it better I often try to memorize passages of poetry. I was trying with this passage, but try as I might I always remembered it as containing the phrase "And leave not a rack behind". I studied the passage closely for a few minutes and then I realized what my poor memory was trying to tell me and what no-one else seems to have noticed, despite 400 years of Shakespeare's fame and 80 years of "practical criticism" and "close reading":

that "And like this insubstantiall Pageant faded" is doublet of "And like the baselesse fabricke of this vision" and that the passage works much better if one or the other is omitted. (If this is done, then the phrase "And leave not a rack behind" will occur, see below). Or, to use the metaphor mentioned earlier, the occurrence of two lines which contain the same thought disturbs the flow of the passage, which would be expected, bearing in mind the thought and subject-matter, to be very placid.

You could come up with any number of theories as to how this passage arose. Ben Jonson noted Shakespeare's habit of rapid composition without revision:

I remember, the players have often mentioned it as an honor to Shakespeare, that in his writings (whatsoever he penned) he never blotted out a line... he flowed with that facility, that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped... (Jonson 1975, 394)

And it could have been that the concept of a theatrical scenery fading away to reveal nothing had a particular emotional fascination for Shakespeare and he unconsciously reproduced it twice in a passage where it was suggested without noticing the redundancy. It is thought that the Folio *Tempest* text came from a transcript by the scrivener Ralph Crane, and as this transcript is a very elaborate one with act and scene divisions, full stage directions &c, it is likely to come from prompt book with Crane supplying the act and scene divisions (Davies 2001b, 470). I suspect that the prompt book will simply have reproduced Shakespeare's manuscript (his "foul papers") for the text and not noticed the duplication.

Or perhaps Shakespeare *did* notice the duplication in writing and canceled one or other of the two lines, but this wasn't picked up on when the MS was transcribed. Or maybe he originally wrote only one of the two lines, and in revising the passage canceled it, writing another version in the margin and indicated where it was to go, but both were still retained. Interestingly Ralph Crane in transcribing *Measure for Measure* for the First Folio seems to have reproduced two scenes which duplicate each other's content, and where, presumably one or the other should have been suppressed (Davies 2001a, 284), perhaps indicating his attention was usually more fixed on the externals of a text than the content.

Structurally is the second of the two lines that is the intruder. If the “And like the baselesse fabricke of this vision” is omitted there is a quite a break in the sense, because the masque the characters in the play have just witnessed does not included towers or palaces or the great globe, and we would have to wait three lines in order to hear “And like this insubstantiall Pageant faded” to put these elements into relation with the masque’s more limited stage props.

I actually prefer this passage with “And like this insubstantiall Pageant faded” as the fourth line (because I think it is the better line of the two) with “And like the baselesse fabricke of this vision” omitted:

Our Revels now are ended : These our actors,
 (As I foretold you) were all Spirits, and
 Are melted into Ayre, into thin Ayre,
 And like this insubstantiall Pageant faded[,]
 The Clowd-capt Towres, the gorgeous Pallaces ,
 The solemn Temples, the great Globe it selfe,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
 [And] leave not a racke behind : we are such stuffe
 As dreames are made on ; and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleepe :

A method for this Daoist practical literary criticism would begin with looking at the poem or literary work to see whether it was, in the main, a lowland stream with occasional riffles, or a racing mountain brook (or a mixture of the two).

Incidentally it is not wholly fanciful to talk of English literary works using the metaphor of a watercourse. It is a metaphor that has had quite a history in English literature; in 1642, for example, John Denham, an English Cavalier poet, wrote a poem about the landscape around his house in Surrey, near London. “Cooper’s Hill” was a great success then and into the next century, and has remained highly regarded, though not generally very well known, by readers down to the present day. In one passage Denham apostrophizes the River Thames flowing past Cooper’s Hill:

O could I flow like thee and make thy stream
 My great example, as it is my theme:
 Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,
 Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full. (Denham 1974, 103)

In other words, I wish my poem could actually *be* a river and flow, instead of being *about* a river. Denham in this passage eulogizes the Thames (as he does the landscape around Cooper's Hill), and uses it as a metaphor for the Royalist version of English history: stable, unchanging, without violent revolution and so forth. We can note the use that Denham makes of the metaphor whilst disagreeing with his politics, of course.

Once it is ascertained what the character of the literary work is, it can then be read closely with an attention to the flow of the syntax. Readers, and particularly writers, with practice gain a sense of the flow of English in different kinds of discourse, and in the different varieties (regional and temporal) of the language, and can sense by a combination of the features of the work or portion of the work—vocabulary, phrase-length, complexity of syntax and so forth—what the effect of the words is on hearers or readers.

In places where the syntax appears disturbed so as to stand out from the context (or conversely, unexpectedly limp for a generally disturbed context), then reasons can be assigned for this: deliberate intention, affecting the meaning, or imperfect writing betraying authorial pre-occupations, or imperfect editing and transmission (as most likely with the Shakespeare passage discussed above).

And finally then a judgment can be made as to whether the words of the passage are indeed "impromptu words [which] pour forth every day and harmonize within the framework of nature" or otherwise. Interestingly, I. A. Richards seems to have the same project in mind when he concludes *Practical Criticism* with these words: "The lesson of good poetry seems to be that, when we have understood it, in the degree in which we can order ourselves, we need nothing more" (Richards 1930, 351).

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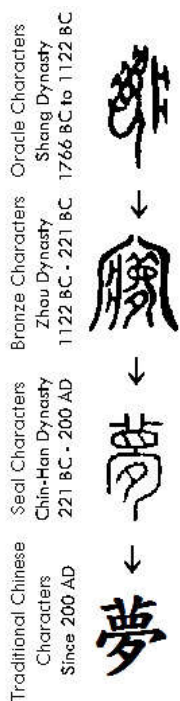
Daoist Views of the Dream State

ESMAEIL RADPOUR

None of you should feel grief about having no dream. For when a person becomes deep-rooted in knowledge, dream will be taken away from him.
— Prophet Muhammad

Words denoting dream, the vision occurring during sleep, mainly go back to two roots in Indo-European languages: *dhreugh* and *swepe* or *sup*. The first primarily means “to deceive,” while the latter indicates “to sleep” (Radpour 2015, 14). The old form of the Chinese character for dream, *meng* 夢, depicts an eye (seeing), a man (seer), a bed (sleeping), and a moon (indirect light), which imply the indirect visions of people during sleep (Sears 2003) (see Fig. 1 on the right). The Chinese word *meng*, then, is conceptually closer to the second among the two Indo-European roots and does not have the implication of deception, lie, or illusion.

Daoists tend to see dreams as products of day-time delusions or waking “dreams,” that is, as the result of mental agitation and egoistic tendencies toward external objects. They see the natural state of sleep as dreamless (*wumeng* 無夢), such as occurring among the true men or perfected (*zhenren* 真人) who have returned their human spiritual aspects of creativity, vitality, and intellectuality (*jing qi shen* 精氣神) to their primal (*yuan* 元) or pre-celestial (*xiantian* 先天) state. However, true men’s observations during sleep, called “dreamless dreams” (*mengzhong*



wumeng 夢中無夢) are quite different from the dreams of ordinary people.¹ They often appear as communications with radiant figures, immortals (*xian* 仙), deities (*shen* 神), and ancestors, and serve as a way of gaining knowledge, receiving divine mandates, and the like. The dreams of imperfect Daoists and the common people, on the other hand, are fall-outs of diseases caused by the “mischievous mentations” (*wangxin* 妄心) or even demons,² for which there are some specific religious treatments.

Ancient Dream Perceptions

Ancient Daoist sources mention the dream state only in fragmentary tales and aphorisms that speak of the waking state as being like a dream. Thus, the *Zhuangzi* tells the famous story of Zhuang Zhou seeing himself in a dream transformed to a butterfly, as real as if he had been always a butterfly, freely flying about and totally oblivious of his human identity. When he awakes he asks himself if he really is Zhuang Zhou dreaming of being a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming of being Zhuang Zhou and calls this state the “transformation of beings” (*wuhua* 物化) (ch. 2; see Fig. 2). As he also says,

One dreams of drinking wine, and he cries in the morning. One dreams of weeping all the night, and he goes out to hunt in the morning. Involved in dream, one does not know he is dreaming; he may even dream of dreaming in that state. It is only after awakening that he realizes he has been dreaming. Now if the great awakening (*dajiao* 大覺) happens, one comes to know that this all was a great dreaming (*dameng* 大夢). (ch. 2)

¹Among Daoist hierarchical levels of human perfection, true men who have returned to a perfect state of humanity are associated with notions of the beginning of a cosmic cycle, such as the natural or primordial state, the center, the period of high antiquity. Symbolically, humanity is associated with jade, the moon, and youth, while transcendent beings are linked with gold, the sun, and longevity (Guénon 2001, ch. 18; 2003, ch. 4).

²For a study of Daoist beliefs on the role of demons, notably the Three Corpses (*sanshi* 三尸), in the creation of demon-dreams and their treatment, see Lin 1995.

Another important notion of the text is the state of "no dreams," famous among the true men of old, who "had no dream while sleeping, had no anxiety while awake" (ch. 6)



Fig. 2. Zhuangzi's Butterfly Dream. Painting by Lu Zhi (Ming dyn.)

The *Liezi*, too, offers teachings on the dream state. It associates the body (*xing* 形) with the waking state and the spirit (*shen* 神) with the dream state. "In the day-time [i. e., waking state], one thinks; in the night-time [i. e., dream state], one dreams. Thus the meeting of the spirit and the body happens" (ch. 3). It speaks of eight types of the waking horizon and six types of dreaming perspective, the latter going back to the *Zhouli* 周禮 (Rites of Zhou, 3.130):

Waking horizons are happening, action, gain, loss, sorrow, happiness, birth, and death. These are the eight horizons with which the body is connected. Dreaming perspectives are direct dream, upside down dream, thoughtful dream, awakening dream, joyful dream, and fearful dream. These are the six perspectives with which the spirit is crossed. (ch. 3)

In the waking state, the body connects with external objects due to its attention and desire toward them. Similarly, in the dream state, the spirit seeks after dream objects, which are produced from a scattered mind, as a sequel to the waking state; however, “with condensation of the spirit, thoughts and dreams become disappeared themselves.” Therefore, similar to what Zhuangzi said about awaking and sleep of true men, Liezi says, “True men of old times were in self-oblivion while awakening, they were dreamless while sleeping” (ch. 3).

Spiritual Dreaming

Later Daoist texts variously discuss “spiritual sleep practices” (*shuigong* 睡功), notably ascribed to Chen Tuan 陳搏 (-989), the famous Daoist master of Mt. Hua supposedly able to sleep a hundred days without waking (see Kohn 2001). He is also said to have received the text *Zhelong fa* 蟄龍法 (Methods of Putting the Dragon to Sleep) from the immortal Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 (796-) in a mystical revelation (Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1257).

Most prominent in this context is the *Huashan shi'er shuigong zongjue* 華山十二睡功總訣 (General Instructions of the Twelve Spiritual Sleeping Practices of Mount Hua; trl. Takehiro 1990; Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Daoist in Spiritual Sleep.

The text presents a set of spiritual methods of sleeping in connection with internal alchemical practices, in a few occasions also dealing with dreams. For example, it says,

Life and death of the common people all are a dreamy illusion. In the case of perfect men (*zhiren* 至人), this is not so. Perfect men are without mischief [of the mind]. Free from mischief [of the mind], they are free from dreams. And even if a dream happens, it is connected to the truth, not a dream of passions and desires

[The mind of] the common people is breathlessly mischief, when passions and desires inflame each other, mind passively receives ten thousand colors, and the divine-spirit does not have peace and tranquility for even an instant. Vague and finicky, they dream during the day, they dream during the night. They dream while they are awake, they dream while they are asleep. (Zhou 1990, 137-38; Takehiro 1990).

Another important Daoist text on the dream state is the *Mengshuo* 夢說 (A Talk on Dreaming) by Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (aka Haiqiongzi 海瓊子, d. 1229), contained in the *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 (Ten Books on the Cultivation of Perfection, DZ 263, *juan* 42 [bk. 7]). A text by the same title, ascribed to Wang Daoyuan 王道淵 (aka Wang Jie 王玠, Hunranzi 渾然子, d. ca. 1380), appears in *Huanzhen ji* 還真集 (Collection of Returning to Perfection, DZ 1074, *juan* 2). According to Alfredo Cadonna, who translated both into Italian, they are different versions of the same work (2006, 196). However, sharing the same short title and containing similar observations happens often in later Daoist literature. It just means that the author of the second text must have seen the first. In any case, a comparative reading of both is helpful.

Thus, Wang's work tends to present a more psychological view of the process of different kinds of dreaming. However, both texts assert that the dreams of the common people (*fanfu* 凡夫) who do not understand the principle of dreamless dreaming are significantly different from those of the sages (*shengren* 聖人),³ who do "not dream in dreaming" or have "dreamless dreams."

Bai's work cites the famous passage from the *Zhuangzi* that "true men of old had no dreams while sleeping; they had no anxiety while

³ The term "sage" here does not imply the attainment of a specific level or rank but denotes all levels of the Daoist hierarchy of human perfection, including perfect man (*zhiren*), man of the way (*daoren* 道人) true man or perfected (*zhenren*), divine man or transcendent (*shenren* 神人), and immortal man (*xianren* 仙人). See Guénon 2001, ch. 18.

awake.” He associates the state of no dream with the dreamless dreams of the sages, whether a case of identification or gradation.

Both works mention accounts of the Divine Agriculturist Shennong, the Yellow Emperor Huangdi, the thinker Zhuangzi, and Confucius, noting that they all had extraordinary dreams. Although, Wang’s text is more detailed on the reports of the sages’ dreams, Bai’s work points briefly also to dreams of the sage-emperor Shun, the emperor Gaozong, the sage Laozi, and the immortal Lü Dongbin. He says,

The heart-mind of these sages was unified with Dao; when they dreamed the yang divine spirit illuminated the condensed yin: bright and luminous, clear and pure. Even if dreaming, they had no dreams, their visions rising as wonders of the divine spirit.

Yin and yang are opposite or rather complementary aspects, simultaneously present in all manifested things. Yang is male, bright, celestial, and positive, while yin is female, dark, terrestrial, negative, and so on. In the language of internal alchemy, the dominance of yang over yin refers to precedence of spirituality over materiality and hence of detachment over corporeal existence. In this state the divine spirit (*shen*) can be called yang divine spirit (*yangshen*). Because of their divine spirit being yang, the sages were free from the fantasizing operations of the heart-mind, the so-called mischievous mentations. Thus, they and had no dreams based on the daily accumulations of the mind.

Whether for sages or ordinary people, dreams are but “transformations of vapor spirit (*qihua* 氣化)” into form (see *Zhuangzi* 2).⁴ Now, when—due to calmness (or emptiness) of the heart-mind—the cloud-soul (*hun*), the celestial and divine aspect of subtle human animation, takes control of the white-soul (*po*), its terrestrial and demonic part, bright and clear dreams appear. But when the white-soul takes control

⁴ Vapor spirit (*qi* 氣), frequently identified with the Hindu concept of *prāṇa*, is a subtle energy circulating thorough the network of meridians. However, the Daoist tradition of inner alchemy distinguishes pre-celestial (*xiantian* 先天) and post-celestial (*houtian* 後天) states of each of the Three Treasures (*sanbao* 三寶), consisting three foundational subtle faculties of human life, with specific functions as vitality, creativity, and intellectuality, of which one is the vapor-spirit and the other two are the essence spirit (*jing* 精) and the divine spirit (*shen* 神).

over the cloud-soul, due to veils of desire before the eye of the divine spirit, confused, blurred, impure, and upside-down dreams come forth. Nonetheless, it seems that when the texts point out the notion of going beyond yin and yang, life and death, and pursuing the unification of the heart-mind with Dao, a concordance of the divine spirit and the vapor spirit and gaining the ability to rule over dreams, they refer to a yet higher level of dreaming.

Bai Yuchan's *Mengshuo*

夢說

神農夢天皇與之以嘗草玉書黃帝夢到華胥大庭之國舜夢拜乎丞高宗夢得說孔子夢見周公老聃夢遊罽賓此皆夢也彼乃不睡之睡非夢之夢也謂如莊周夢為蝴蝶又與呂洞賓夢為螻蟻大故殊途也南華經云其寢無夢其覺無憂此所以凝神不分聚氣不散而然也彼皆就義皇心地上著到故所謂夢者乃神交氣合誠而爾也非睡中妄想之夢也若不明夢中無夢之理則飛識遊魂泛然而無歸冥然而不返將見於見聞覺知境界而化為胎卵濕化之歸也況夫酬酢萬機唱賡百念事物膠擾方寸不寧此乃開眼之夢也何況於睡乎東坡云世間無眼禪駒一覺睡者此也嗟乎今之人也糟醢其一靈塵垢其一性甚矣古德云幻身是夢

The Divine Agriculturist dreamed of a celestial emperor and received instructions of the jade book of medical plants. The Yellow Emperor dreamed of traveling to the great palace of the land of Huaxu. The sage-emperor Shun [r. 2294-2184 BCE] dreamed of paying respect to Master Guangcheng. The Shang King Wuding's [r. 1300-1046 BCE] dream came

true. Confucius [551-479 BCE] met the Duke of Zhou in a dream. Lao Dan traveled in a dream to Jibin [Kashmir].⁵

They all had dreams. However, they were not sleeping in sleep, not dreaming in dream—like Zhuang Zhou's dream of being a butterfly and Lü Dongbin's dream of being a mole cricket. In the old days, there were various cases of this sort. The *Zhuangzi* says, "[The true men of old] had no dreams while sleeping, they had no anxieties while awake." This is because their integrated divine spirit was not diluted, their coagulated vapor spirit was not scattered. They all approached the loftiness of the Emperor [Fu] Xi's heart-mind to realize this. Therefore, such a dream is but interaction of the divine spirit and vapor spirit to form a whole. It is not the dream of mischievous mentation occurring during sleep.

If one does not understand the principle of dreamless dreaming, then his hanging awareness and his floating cloud-soul wander in the darkness with no return. He desires to see what he has seen and heard in the waking state to find out his elevation [in the origin], then as his returning, he falls into womb-born, egg-born, spawn-born, and born by transformation.

Moreover, there are those who are intoxicated with the ten thousand businesses, who sing hundred messy thoughts, involved with material things, with a disturbed heart-mind with no peace. How about the people who dream with open eyes [in the waking state]? Let alone their falling to sleep. [Su] Dongpo [1030-1101] says, "In this world of sightless snoozers, the one who is awake seems sleeping with loud snoring sound." Alas! He talks about today's people, indeed. They wash their precious internal subtle entity in wine; they dirty their unique innate nature in dust; many of them do so. There is an ancient saying, "the illusory self is a dream."

⁵ This refers to Laozi's western emigration to "convert the barbarians" (Zürcher 2013, 113-15). According to standard Daoist lore, this really happened and was not just a dream.

Wang Daoyuan's Mengshuo

卷中第八 還真集

夢說

夢之爲言因氣化而有也陽御於陰乃魄制
 魄神或有夢朗然清見也陰御於陽乃魂制
 魂神被物欲所蔽故夢遊昏亂闇然不明也
 昔者神農氏憂民疾苦夢遊天庭天皇賜與
 常草之書軒轅氏慕道夢遊華胥大庭之國
 莊周論道故夢化爲蝴蝶孔子贊周易故夢
 見於周公此聖人之心與道冥合因感而有
 夢陽神燦於群陰明明朗朗雖夢非夢乃出
 神之妙也是故凡夫之夢與此懸隔凡夫之
 心貪著其事流吹慾海沉滯愛河豈知一點
 元神晝則居于首眼貪觀於色神即染之於
 色此眼中之夢也耳貪聽於聲神即染之於
 聲此耳中之夢也鼻貪嗅於香神即著之於

香此鼻中之夢也口貪食於味神即染之於
 味此口中之夢也夫十夜則神歸棲於心繞睡著
 時陰魄裏魂夢寐昏濁無所不見顛顛倒倒
 隨念幻化此所以開眼有夢而瞋目即有夢
 也蓋因心田不清神不守室日積月增精神
 耗散故墮於六趣而入於夢幻之境古人所
 謂生死之根只是箇念頭造化即夢幻是生
 死根也是以大修行人無夢白日脫洒洒夜
 間亦脫洒洒神守於氣氣抱於神混融一片
 超出陰陽之外何夢之有學道人若能知夢
 裡是夢做得主宰便是出生死之外不被陰
 陽之所蔽也學者味之

What is spoken of as dream is that the vapor-spirit transforms [into forms] and hence it appears. As yang prevails over yin and the cloud-soul takes control of the white-soul, when the divine spirit experiences a dream, its observation is clear and pure. [On the other hand], as yin prevails over yang and the white-soul takes control of the cloud-soul, when the divine spirit is veiled by desire toward external objects its traveling into the dream state is blurred, confused, muddled, and not bright.

In the old times, the Divine Agriculturist had been sorrowful about sufferings and diseases of his people. In a dream, he went to a celestial palace, where the divine emperor instructed him with a book on medical plants. The Yellow Emperor pursuing Dao in a dream visited the great palace of the land of Huaxu. Zhuang Zhou uttered a talk on Dao, then dreamed of transforming into a butterfly. Compiling the *Zhouyi* [Book of Changes], Confucius met the Duke of Zhou in his dream.

The heart-mind of all these sages was unified with Dao. When they dreamed, the yang divine spirit illuminated the condensed yin,⁶ making it bright and luminous, clear and pure. Even when dreaming, they had no ordinary dreams, but visions risen wonders of the divine spirit.

The dreams of the common people, on the contrary, are baseless and veiled. Their minds are greedy, always involved with external affairs, drifting in the ocean of desire and submerged in the rivers of the passions. How could they ever know even a bit of the primal divine spirit, which stays in the head in the day-time [waking state].

When the eyes are greedily looking at colorful things, the divine spirit receives the quality of that thing. It is just a dreaming of the eyes. When the ears are greedily listening to the tones of a voice, the divine spirit receives the quality of that voice. It is just a dreaming of the ears. When the nose is greedily smelling a fragrance, the divine spirit receives the quality of that fragrance. It is just a dreaming of the nose. When the mouth is greedily eating tasty foods, the divine spirit receives the quality of that food. It is just a dreaming of the mouth.

In the night-time, the divine spirit returns to rest in the heart-mind. When the person falls asleep, if the yin white-soul binds the cloud-soul,

⁶ Condensed yin (*qunying* 群陰) is the complementary phase of dissipated yang, which corresponds to the Sufi notions of *qabdh* and *basth* (Guénon, 2001, ch. 6; 2003, ch. 4).

his or her dreams are blurred and impure. Whatever they see is all upside down. Therefore, what they remember of the dream state is metamorphosed. Opening their eyes, they dream; closing their eyes, they also dream.

Generally, when the field of the heart-mind is not clear, the divine spirit will not remain in its place. As the days accumulate and the months pile up, the essence spirit and the divine spirit separate and scatter, and the person falls in the six paths [of rebirth or *samsāra*], entering very more deeply into the realm of dreams and illusions.⁷ This is what the ancients called the root of life and death. In fact, the current of thoughts transforming into dream and illusion, that is the root of life and death.

Therefore, the great practitioners of spirituality have no dreams, they are like the shining sun bestowing light, radiating even in the nighttime [in their dream state]. Their divine spirit watches over their vapor spirit, their vapor spirit embraces their divine spirit—both merged into one integrated entity. Thus transcending yin and yang, how can they ever dream?

Those who have studied Dao may have the ability to know they are dreaming inside their dream, thus gaining control over it. This requires them to go beyond life and death, being free from all veils of yin and yang. May all initiates attain it!

⁷ The six paths of *samsāra* are *deva-gati*, the path of deities (*tiandao* 天道); *manusya-gati*, the path of humans (*rendao* 人道); *asura-gati*, the path of demons (*a'xiuluo dao* 阿修羅道); *tiryagyoni-gati*, the path of animals (*chusheng* 畜生道); *preta-gati*, the path of hungry ghosts (*e'gui dao* 餓鬼道); and *naraka-gati*, the path of hell (*diyu dao* 地獄道).

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Ways to Immortality

In Popular and Daoist Tales¹

WANG XIAOYANG & BAO YAN

Chinese traditional culture is full of stories of immortals, both in folk religion and Daoism, however, the religious experience they refer to is not the same. While Daoist practitioners attain immortality during their lifetime, first reaching extended longevity, then ascending into heaven after the physical body falls away, popular religion tends to describe immortality as a transformation that only occurs after death. Immortality in the former is a continuation of life after longevity; in the latter, it is a rebirth with no particular emphasis on long life. Daoism and popular religion, therefore, represent two different trajectories of life, alternative forms of the religious experience. To examine this feature more closely, we have studied immortal motives in oral folktales from Jiangsu, looking at how they describe and experience of longevity and immortality.

In the 1980s, China launched a nationwide fieldwork campaign to collect folk literature. Under the guidance of professional scholars, the campaign—unprecedented in the scale of its activities—used field surveys and questionnaires to collect materials from all over the country, creating a direct record of the people's oral heritage. Millions of items were assembled and eventually published in three major encyclopedias, focusing on folktales and stories, proverbs and sayings, as well as folk songs, respectively—presenting China's largest and most authoritative collection of folk literature. Within the encyclopedia of folk tales, more-

¹ Translated by Livia Kohn.

over, the volume on Jiangsu contains a total of 591 stories. It forms the foundation of our research.

Three Ways of Becoming Immortal

The Jiangsu volume contains 88 stories on immortals, 35 of which focus on the process of attaining the divine state—making up a relatively large proportion. All these tales describe how an ordinary mortal reaches advanced celestial stature, but their methods are not the same. Three major ways can be distinguished: perfecting special skills, doing good deeds, and receiving help from the gods.

Special Skills feature in three stories, focusing on excellence in self-cultivation practice rather than ritual or magical methods. Also, practitioners here tend to be social outsiders, not part of mainstream culture. This is a point of major difference to Daoism, whose practitioners tend to be socially integrated and members of mainstream society. For example, the “Sanguan laoye de chuanshuo” 三官老爷的传说 (The Story of the Three Officials) says:

The Three Officials were originally born in Shaanxi. They were three brothers who all greatly enjoyed doing good and giving to charity. Later they underwent Daoist training and attained immortality. The oldest, profound in his training, was most concerned with heaven, thus he became the Official of Heaven. The second was most concerned with earth, thus he became the Official of Earth. The third was most concerned with water, thus he became the Official of Water.

The other two tales that focus on skills are “Zhang Lata beibaota” 张邛邛背宝塔 (Sloppy Zhang Carries the Treasure Pagoda) and “Baixian zaomi” 八仙造米 (The Eight Immortals Create Rice).

Doing good deeds is the way to immortality in 15 Jiangsu stories. Their motifs overlap to a certain degree with those featuring special skills, however, here content tends to focus more on the material as opposed to the spiritual level of life. “Good” in these folk stories typically refers to actions that come with a positive reward and often center on daily affairs, where the realities of life are most intense. An example is “Fengxian de zaoshen” 丰县的灶神 (The Stove God of Feng County):

The Stove God originally was an ordinary mortal, who lived the life of a dissolute spendthrift. Eventually he came to repent and regret his earlier deeds, jumped into a large vat and boiled himself to death. The Jade Emperor, learning of his fate, appointed him as the Stove God.

Other tales of the same ilk include "Zhang Lata bei gege" 张邋遢背哥哥 (Sloppy Zhang Carries His Brother), "Liu Mengjiang de chuanshuo" 刘猛将的传说 (The Tale of Liu Mengjiang), and "Gege, woku" 哥哥我苦 (Brother, I Hurt).

Getting help from gods and immortals is the main way to ascension in 17 Jiangsu stories. While other types may also feature some divine support, the major distinguishing feature here is that the protagonists receive unconditional help and achieve long life directly, without going through laborious cultivation training or moral trials. The stories, thus, have a stronger element of destiny or fate and are the most religious in the collection. An example is "Binhai xian Nuwa ding shouxian gushi" 滨海县女娲定寿限故事 (The Story how Nü Wa from Binhai County Sets the Limit of Life), originally collected from Yancheng:

After the cosmic giant Pangu opened the heavens and settled the earth, Nü Wa produced living beings from mud, in each case deciding on their ideal lifespan and limiting the number of years they were allowed to live. People, horses, water buffalo, dogs, and chickens all came to Nü Wa to ask how long they were to sojourn on this earth. In the end, she decreed that people could reach over seventy years, horses and water buffalo over twenty, dogs about ten, and chickens five to six.

Other tales with similar trends include "Laotian ye de chuanshuo" 老天爷的传说 (The Tale of the Heavenly Official), "Zaoshen de youlai" 灶神的由来 (The Origin of the Stove God), "Zhang Lata chengxian" 张邋遢成仙 (Sloppy Zhang Attains Immortality) and more.

Types of Death

All the different kinds of popular immortality tales feature death in their plots, whether openly or more implicit. This is completely different from Daoism, where protagonists dedicate themselves firmly to one or the other cultivation or veneration method and attain an infinite extension of

life, never even passing through the dying process. In folk stories, death is a stage on the way to immortality that has to be navigated; it becomes an indicator of immortality. Here popular religion and Daoism part ways in terms religious experience. Three kinds of death, moreover, occur among Jiangsu tales.

The first and by far the most common kind is death as the end of physical body. Many tales insist that immortality only occurs after the adept has either undergone or at least fully confronted the dying process. An example appears in the three Mao brothers who are transformed only after facing the destruction of physicality at the end of life. The “Maoshan de chuanshuo” 茅山的传说 (Story of Mount Mao) says,

Three brothers became immortals on Mount Mao. At the foot of the mountain, they climbed on the clouds and rode the mist, flying off, flying far, flying all the way to the Labyrinth Mountains . . . Thus the three became the Three Mao Bodhisattvas. Right before they rode off, they had reached the river and saw a corpse floating by. The Buddha appeared to them and said, “This is your transformation body. As your physical body that came from an ordinary womb is now released, you can catch any light breeze of wind and float off, even as far as the Labyrinth Mountains in Jiangnan.

The second kind involves special ways of dying. Without fully describing a confrontation with death, some have the attainment of posthumous immortality occur after a particular way of transformation. The most prominent among them is by taking a highly poisonous elixir, thereby undergoing a death that leads to rebirth as an immortal. A case in point is “Zhang Lata chengxian”:

Sloppy Zhang was originally very poor, but fate gave him the opportunity to obtain an immortality elixir from Li Tieguai, a member of the Eight Immortals. After taking it, he turned into a spirit immortal, neither people nor ghosts knowing how.

The third kind of death involves avoiding it altogether by direct elevation. In popular tales from Jiangsu, social outsiders (hermits, eccentrics) typically merit a clear account of their death, while members of the mainstream are depicted as avoiding it. This represents a yet different

facet of stories on posthumous immortality, that is, they leave out the process of training for immortality altogether. The reason is that those members of mainstream society who manage to ascend and take on superior positions in the otherworld are typically from the higher classes, i. e., rulers, aristocrats, and officials. Rather than going off into the wilderness and practicing immortality techniques, they typically connect directly to the gods.

Thus, among the 88 Jiangsu stories, 24 mention the Jade Emperor, 10 speak of the Dragon King, 8 refer to the Eight Immortals, 7 feature the King of Hell (Yanluo wang), and 5 each make note of the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwang mu) and the City God (Chenghuang). In addition, many others contain references to the Earth God (Tudi gong), the Three Officials, the Stove God, the Three Mao Brothers, and the Seven Immortal Ladies (*qi xiannü*), and the like. All these are divine officers in the otherworldly hierarchy who did not undergo the standard immortality process, nor did they suffer through a common death. Unlike the first two categories of death, here it remains obscure and in the dark.

Why are members of mainstream society described as avoiding death? The main reason is the social stratification of traditional Chinese society. Mainstream members after ascension are always highly respected, attaining positions of emperor, king, official, or sage. In contrast, social outsiders or lower-class people, even if they reach immortality, never quite get to such a venerated level. For example, the story of Sloppy Zhang, recorded variously from Huaiyin, Lianshui, Pei, Jurong and other counties, is a wide-spread tale. It also appears in several variants in Jurong, such as "Zhang Lata bei gege" and "Zhang Lata bei baota." Still, he never got to the same height of veneration and remains unknown beyond the local sphere, reflecting the strong hierarchical nature of traditional society. Thus, more mainstream immortals ascend directly, avoiding death, while lesser beings have to work hard, undergo death, and remain on the lower rungs of the administration.

Immortality Before and After Death

The two major modes of attaining immortality—posthumous versus through life-extension—appear as central features in popular tales and Daoist hagiographies, respectively. They represent two entirely different

religious outlooks and life experiences. They can, in turn, also be described as fatalistic versus self-empowered—the latter being most strongly expressed in the classic Daoist saying, “My destiny is my own; it does not rest with Heaven” (*woming zaiwo, bu zaitian* 我命在我不在天), found first in Ge Hong’s 葛洪 *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity, DZ 1185, ch. 16).

Fatalism lies at the core of folk religious beliefs: everything in the world is determined by a mysterious force and people are passive and powerless in the face of life and death. The Daoist position, in contrast, rests on the fundamental conviction that “my destiny is my own”: people can achieve longevity and life extension intentionally by making the right efforts. Holding fate in their own hands, they take a strong initiative over life and death and attain immortality while still alive.

Reflecting these two opposing stances, representatives of folk religion and Daoism accordingly propose two divergent paths to immortality: transformation and elevation after death versus active efforts and systematic training. These, in turn, color the particular tales told among the people and manifest in two further characteristics.

First, the popular understanding of life as inevitably ending in death contrasts with the Daoist vision of an ongoing continuity of existence. In folk tales, the flesh and bones of the physical body as born from the mother’s womb are completely—ontologically and substantially—different from the life form of the immortals, and a transformation into the latter can only happen after the death of the former.

Daoist legends tell a different story. Here the flesh and bones of the physical body are fundamentally the same as the immortal life form—both consisting equally of vital energy (*qi*), albeit in more or less refined versions. It is thus possible to attain extensive longevity and move on from there into immortality without passing through death. Seen from the perspective of ordinary existence, folk immortals live a life that has a beginning and an end, while those of Daoism have continuous life in perpetuity.

This, in turn, leads to completely different trajectories in the literature. While folk tales contain numerous stories of ordinary people ascending to immortality, they always work with the premise of earthly life having to end first. People here—limited in the amount of longevity they can realize—only ascend to the higher spheres after passing through a

death that will not be denied. Daoist stories, in contrast, never tire of telling myths of no death, insisting that anyone, provided they practice enough of the right methods, can overcome the natural process of entropy and extend life indefinitely.

Another major characteristic, directly resulting from this fundamental difference, is a base attitude of passivity or receptivity versus activity or initiative. In popular tales, immortality is not something you pursue and there is no claim that everyone can become immortal. In no way is immortality under subjective control of the individual, be it based on special skills, good deeds, or help from the gods. In all cases, the destiny has to be right, circumstances must line up correctly, leaving the person in a position of passive receiving. Any form of cultivation in popular tales, therefore, has little to do with self-reliant training, focusing instead on devout worship, pray for disaster relief, and invocations for blessings.

In Daoist stories, on the other hand, immortality is a proactive thing, just as fate, destiny, or life resting entirely within the control of the individual. Many tales focus to a large extent on personal forms of active cultivation and training, showing that the pursuit of the right arts and skills will inevitably lead to ascension and the attainment of immortal status. Immortality here is the direct result of self-cultivation, a shedding of the old and transformation into the new, a planned, personal process of self-improvement and self-transcendence. This has nothing to do with reliance on any other but is entirely self-dependent. As the classic *Qing-jing jing* 清静经 (Scripture of Clarity and Purity, DZ 755) says,

Living long without dying,
Forever transforming in spirit pervasion,
You control the myriad beings
Regulate all time and space
And there is nothing you cannot do!

Conclusion

To sum up, in Chinese traditional culture, beliefs regarding immortality in Daoism and popular religion are very close and have always been difficult to distinguish. However, in the folk stories about immortality,

the two are clearly separate, representing two entirely different modes of the religious experience that manifest on three distinct levels.

First, on the level of the ontology of life and death, popular culture understands human existence as a completely different life form from immortality and recognizes the latter's attainment only after death. In contrast, Daoism sees life and death as part of the same continuum and regards immortality as a form of life extension.

Second, on the level of religious belief, folk religion tends to be fatalistic and encourages receptivity and passivity, while Daoism is more proactive, following the conviction that "my destiny is my own."

Third, on the level of religious practice, popular religion espouses devotion and prayer to the gods, inviting the positive response of divine agents who alone can transform the individual into an immortal. Daoism, on the other hand, emphasizes cultivation practices and systematic training, the refinement of *qi* within the individual leading to the desired goal of transcendence of physical reality and the worldly self.

Physics, Physicality, and Physiology

The Foundation of Daoist Self-Cultivation

STEVE JACKOWICZ

Daoist self-cultivation has a vast range of varied techniques. However, they can be broadly categorized into two taxonomic categories. The first is posture based approaches, including *daoyin* 导引, *taolu* 套路, *qigong* 气功, and the like. The second is seated approaches: *zuowang* 坐忘, *neiguan* 内观, *neigong* 内功, etc. Both of these taxonomies are intended to achieve some aspect of transformation, which can be physical, mental, or spiritual. In this sense physical transformation implies relaxation, flexibility, circulation, opening of channels of qi, or similar ends. Mental transformation can be calmness, patience, acceptance, or insight. Spiritual transformation indicates transcendence, cosmic consciousness, non-duality, or possible ascension.

All self-cultivation intends to unify with Dao, but the methods differ across the lineages and the specific purpose of a given technique. Complex terminology is often used to describe abstract changes. Terms such as Tendon Changing (*yijin* 易筋), Marrow Washing (*xisui* 洗髓), Clearing the Channels (*qingjing* 清經), Opening Du and Ren Channels (*tongdu tongren* 通督通任), Revert the Essence to Nourish the Brain (*huanjing bunao* 還精補腦), and Enter Emptiness, Unify with Dao (*ruxu hedao* 入虛合道) are bewildering to the modern aspirant. Separated by the gulf of history, as well as the challenges of cross cultural interpretation, the difficulty in understanding the ideas of a mystical yet physically grounded tradition seem insurmountable. But a deep understanding of the mechanics of the body can yield some interesting correlates that may unlock the door of some of the mysteries.

Although the methods of cultivation are disparate, they share a similar goal that is metered by the medium of the physical body, committed to a Daoist approach, which accepts the interweave of physical to meta-physical in the substrate of the qi dynamic. In this regard, body grounded spiritual transformation must correlate biometrics with psychometrics. Therefore, an inspection and appreciation of anatomy and physiology can benefit the Daoist aspirant.

Anatomical Considerations

Posture is maintained by two key anatomical complexes – the iliopsoas complex and pectoralis minor complex. Each of these has a potential impact on cultivation. First, the iliopsoas complex controls the cantilever of the pelvis. It contracts to shorten the relationship between the trochanter

and the lumbar spine, which allows it to raise the leg or stabilize the back when sitting.

If the iliopsoas complex is healthy, proper hip carriage is maintained and tension around the femoral artery and femoral vein remains at a homeostatic balance, and the sciatic nerve remains uncompromised. Further, circulation is maintained at normal ratios whether standing or sitting. However, if unhealthy, lax or spasmed, the hip carriage is uneven and the tension around the femoral artery and femoral vein will be inconsistent, and the sciatic nerve may be compressed. This morbidity will result in circulation being compromised to the lower body, and the sciatic nerve may become inflamed.

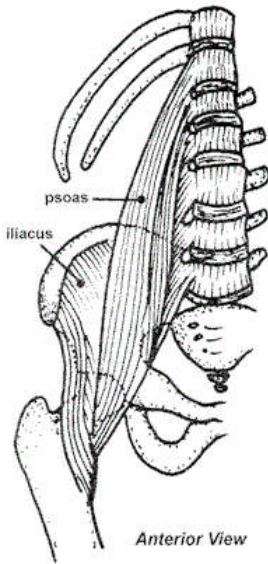


Fig. 1. Iliopsoas Complex

Turning to Daoist cultivation exercises, posture based self-cultivation approaches include a battery of techniques which are intended to "open the *gua*," the pelvic structure. These movements stretch and strengthen the iliopsoas complex.

Above that, the pectoralis minor complex controls both the cast of the shoulder assembly and the angulation of the thoracic to cervical spine. It contracts in antagonism to the rhomboids to move the shoulders in relation to the thorax or stabilize the shoulder. If healthy, proper shoulder cast and thoracic to cervical angulation is maintained and tension around the brachial artery, and brachial vein will remain homeostatic, the brachial nerve will have proper space in the thoracic outlet, the valgus nerve will be uncompressed, and the carotid artery and vein will have homeostatic tension patterns. Further, if the pectoralis minor complex is healthy, circulation to the upper body will be maintained at normal ratios whether sitting or standing.

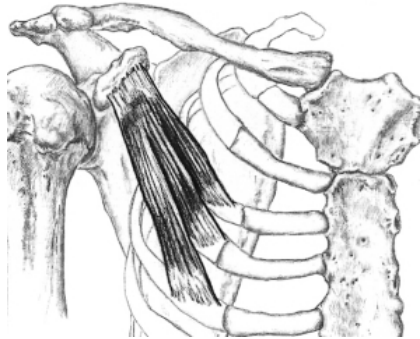


Fig. 2. Pectoralis Minor

If the complex is unhealthy, lax, or spasmed, the shoulder cast will be uneven, the thoracic to cervical curve will become severe, the tension around the brachial artery and vein will be inconsistent, the tension around the carotid artery and vein will become inconsistent, the brachial nerve and the valgus nerve may also be compressed. This will lead to circulation being compromised to the upper body and the brain. The brachial nerve or valgus nerve may become inflamed. The heart rate and respiration rate may be impacted such that inhalation volume may be

restricted lowering oxygen rates in the blood. The resultant hypoxia may have broad ranging impact on physiology over time ranging from muscle spasms to cancer. Posture based self-cultivation approaches include a body of techniques which are intended to “open the heart,” the thoracic-shoulder structure. These movements stretch and strengthen the pectoralis minor complex

Lymphatic Drainage

The lymphatic system enjoys circulation through a correlation to the muscle structure. Physical movement pumps the lymphatic system. Lymph glands are situated between muscle structures; the axillary fold, inguinal crease, between the muscles of the neck, between the muscles of the calves, and between the muscles of the forearm. Lymphatic fluid is a contiguous and continuous fluid substrate between cerebral spinal fluid, synaptic gap fluid, interstitial fluid, and blood plasma. Proper lymphatic circulation and drainage is a requisite for proper immune health, proper cerebral activity, elimination of cytotoxic wastes, as well as systemic delivery of hormones.

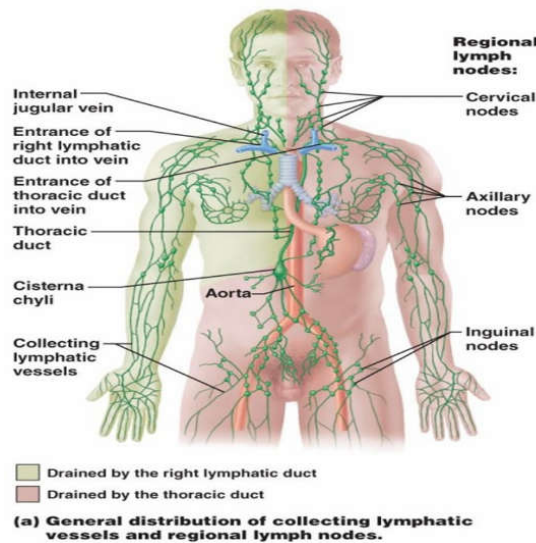


Fig. 3. The Lymphatic System

Daoist postural practices assist lymphatic circulation and drainage. Daoist seated approaches include admonitions to insure proper placement of the inguinal crease, axillary fold, neck and head carriage, calf and forearm position. Specific hand signs or "finger knittings" (*shouyin* 手印; see Mitamura 2002) create compression of the forearm tendons and muscles pumping the lymph glands of forearm. This effect is enhanced with subtle contracture of the finger posture. Coordination with breath further induces lymphatic movement through the subtle continuous tidal expansion and contraction of the intercostal muscles and the diaphragm.

Batson's Plexus

Batson's Plexus is a non-valvar venous structure which surrounds the spine. It allows the circulation of spermine and spermidine hormones from the genitalia to the brain which is then stimulated to secrete sonotropin and gonotropin. These hormones cycle back down to the genitals through effusion into the saliva and descent through the lymphatic system.

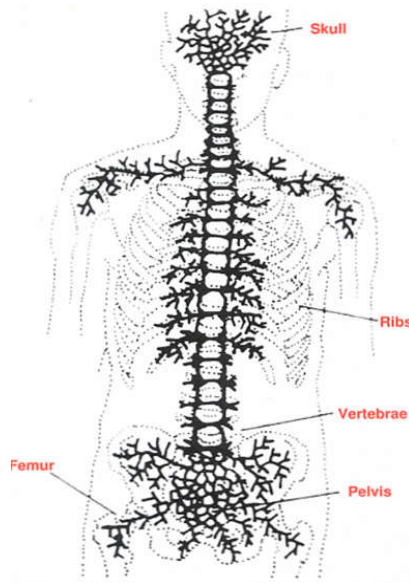


Fig. 4. Batson's Plexus

Batson's Plexus is shut off when the body is in a lying or recumbent posture. It requires a vertical relation to gravity to open, along with proper postural relations.

Daoist postural practices rectify the iliopsoas complex, and the pectoralis minor complex resulting in proper lymphatic drainage and an opening of the Batson's Plexus thereby allowing the circulation of the reproductive hormones to the brain. Daoist seated practices utilize the same underlying dynamics to create an anatomical relationship in the body that assists physiological states providing a platform for the deeper attainment of spirituality. Spiritual states are not simply correlates of anatomy and physiology, rather the proper anatomical and physiological precursors must be developed so that the physical building blocks of the redesigned spiritual state can be assembled.

Thomas McCombs has done extensive comparison of Batson's Plexus and the *Neijing tu* 内径图 (Chart of Inner Passageways; see Komjathy 2008; 2009). McCombs believes that the *Neijing tu* describes the mixing of genital venous blood with cranial venous drainage. Genital venous blood carries secretions with potent chemicals. Mixing genital blood with blood draining the pineal and pituitary would expose these glands to these secretions. Further, he argues that techniques of internal alchemy (*neidan* 内丹) deliberately enhance genital venous drainage into Batson's Plexus, from there upwards into the cranium, from there back into the abdomen as saliva.

Practice Implications

If the proper health of the iliopsoas complex, and pectoralis minor complex are a fundamental goal of Daoist exercise, then the aspirant can utilize the modern understanding of anatomy and exercise physiology as a lens to view the traditional postural practices and refine them to impact these complexes most efficiently. Further understanding the role of the lymphatic system, and Batson's Plexus in the physiology of self-cultivation can assist the aspirant in adjusting his practice to create the anatomical platform to assist lymphatic drainage and recirculation in Batson's plexus. Returning to the abstract principles noted as confounding the modern aspirant, the following anatomical parallels can be drawn:

Tendon Changing	Adjusting iliopsoas and pectoralis minor
Marrow Washing	Liberating circulation through femoral, brachial, and carotid artery and veins
Clearing the Channels	Promotion of lymphatic drainage
Opening Du and Ren Channels	Opening of Batson's Plexus through postural correction and pneumatic bellowing
Revert the Essence to Nourish the Brain	Cycle of spermine and spermadine to conjoin with secretion of gonadatropin and somatropin
Enter Emptiness, Unify with Dao	Attain neural plasticity and unlimited potential

Perhaps an understanding of anatomy can be a key to manifesting the profundity of Daoist self-cultivation. Subtle changes accounting for anatomical idiosyncrasies could result in physiological advantage and a potentiation of spiritual development as the aspirant find his own, perfectly unique path to Dao.

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Daoism and Peace Psychology

Ron Catabia

The problems of war and violence have plagued the human race since ancient times. Modern peace psychology began when William James, who thought war developed positive qualities such as self-sacrifice and personal honor, said that societies must find a moral equivalent to war (James 1970; Christie et al. 2008). Since James's speech 110 years ago, psychology has been searching for answers to the question of how to achieve peaceful co-existence between all people in the world.

Throughout the 20th century, many ideas and theories were put forth about living in peace. In 1990, peace psychology officially became part of the American Psychological Association (APA) when Division 48, The Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence was born. For the last 25 years, Division 48 has legitimized work for peace. It sends the message that peace psychology needs to be taken seriously.

Peace psychology may be defined as the use of psychological concepts, tools, and perspectives for the construction of peace and for the understanding, management, and prevention of destructive conflict at all levels, from the family to the international. Peace refers not only to the absence of organized violence but also to the presence of equity and social justice, tolerance and respect for human rights, reconciliation, and sustainable development. (Wessells 1996, 266)

Peace psychology defines two basic forms of violence: direct and structural. Direct violence refers to physical violence that harms or kills people quickly, producing somatic trauma or total incapacitation. Structural violence kills people slowly by depriving them of satisfying their basic needs (Christie et al. 2001, 14-15). War is an example of direct violence. Racism, job discrimination, and political oppression are examples

of structural violence. Peace psychology works on finding solutions for both.

Recent peace psychology research found that values of self-transcendence such as concern for the welfare, interests, and well-being of others support human rights (Hackett, Omoto, and Matthews 2015). Universal human rights are due to every person because of their humanity (Weiss and Thakur 2010). The United Nations, in 1948, issued a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 3 states, "Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person" (Boersema 2011). Living in peace is a human right. Human rights and peace are inextricably linked together and permeate all areas of human life (Said and Lerche 2006).

The Hackett, Omoto, and Matthews study (2015) also found that the relationship between self-transcendence values and human rights was strengthened by a psychological sense of global community. This is a sense of connectedness to people outside of one's immediate geographical location and encompasses an identification with all people in the world. Encouraging all people, no matter how different they are, to identify with each other, a psychological sense of global community is fundamental to the overall peace process because it strengthens the relationship between self-transcendence values and human rights.

Methods for Peace

The main causes of direct violence are differences in race, religion, status, wealth, and political power. These differences can lead to the formation of "us versus them" groups or "ingroup versus outgroup" distinctions (Staub 1989). "Us-them" distinctions form when one group perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of theirs (Christie, Wagner, and Winter 2001, Ch. 17). The ingroup often displays unbalanced emotions such as fear, anger, and frustration toward the outgroup.

In addition to creating in-group and out-group distinctions, individuals and groups who perpetrate violence often display psychological characteristics that devalue and scapegoat victims, believe in an ideology that will create a better world by eliminating the outgroup, seek power over others, and obey authority when told to commit violence (Staub 1989, 16-17).

Peace psychology has developed methods of conflict resolution and conflict transformation to create harmony between different groups. Conflict resolution between groups involved in direct violence begins with the use of nonviolent techniques that avoid dominance or oppression and try to meet the needs of all (Christie et al. 2001, Section 3). Working together, playing together, and living together are used to help people remove “us-them” distinctions. Finding ways to have children go to school together is also important.

Conflict transformation, a form of conflict resolution, attempts to guide the disputants to a new vision and understanding of the conflict, one in which they not only attain their goals but develop a new, constructive relationship with one another. Discussions between groups are directed toward consciousness raising to help both parties accurately understand the conflict from the other side’s point of view (Christie et al. 2001, Section 3).

Conflict resolution and transformation also necessitate the use of penetrative communication skills that eliminate misperceptions of others (MacNair 2003), openness to compromise in order to find solutions (Fry 2007), and the availability of psychotherapy for traumatized victims.

Peace psychology methods of communication, negotiation, understanding, compromise, and psychotherapy will always be essential to the peace process. However, a more powerful intervention is needed to diminish the behavioral and psychological characteristics of those who perpetrate violence. Such people need to experience deep changes at the foundations of their psyche in order to live together peacefully. “Although attempting to bring about world peace through the internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way” (Dalai Lama 1991). Human beings need to look deeply into themselves and change their core psychological makeup in ways that will allow them to experience and have a psychological sense of global community, self-transcendence values, and respect for human rights.

When humans change internally, then societies will integrate with each other to move toward wholeness. It is important that, “in our rapidly globalizing era, relevant models of peace must envision humanity as a collective whole rather than as contending parts . . . and must more fully incorporate the inward, spiritual dimensions of human experience . . . Peace means, therefore, building new societies that are more just

and more integrated, both internally and among themselves" (Said and Lerch, 2006). Staub adds that "a lasting decrease in the likelihood of war or genocide requires deeper changes in consciousness and perspective, in personalities, culture, and institutions" (1989, 261).

The concept that all human beings are part of a single universal whole is often found in Asian philosophy. However, some Western thinkers have expressed this idea. The prominent psychologist Gordon Allport thought that world peace required finding the common ground of human nature (Allport 1950). In a letter to a friend, Albert Einstein said,

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us the "Universe," a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free us from this prison by widening our circle of understanding and compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. (Calaprice 2000)

This paper examines how Daoism and Daoist methods of internal cultivation can be powerful methods for peace because they, a) create deep, internal human change which peace psychologists, as well as the Dalai Lama, deem essential for world peace, b) diminish the psychological characteristics of people who perpetrate violence, c) give us an experience of oneness with all beings which includes a psychological sense of global community, d) release us from what Einstein calls 'our prison of separateness', e) build self-transcendence values, and f) develop respect for human rights.

The *Daode jing*

The *Daode jing* expresses deep currents of thought about human beings, nature, and government highly relevant to the problems of the 21st century. Several themes directly impact peace psychology because they relate to self-transcendence values, respect for human rights, and a psychological sense of global community. The insights revealed in the *Daode jing* can be experienced through Daoist practices.

Returning to the Root

Practicing Daoism takes us back to the source of life. The *Daode jing* says:

Extend your utmost emptiness as far as you can
And do your best to preserve your equilibrium.
In the process of all things emerging together
We can witness their reversion.
Things proliferate
And each again returns to its root.
Returning to the root is called equilibrium.
Now as for equilibrium – this is called returning to the propensity
of things. (ch. 16; Ames and Hall 2003)

This states that practicing Daoism involves returning to our root. “Root” here means the essence and foundation of human existence in the universe. Daoist ontology understands both the cosmos and humans to have roots in the same source, the primal energy force at the center of the cosmos. Humans are cosmic beings. The makeup of a human being parallels that of the universe. Each human being is a little universe and the universe is a cosmic human (Robinet 1997, 13). Life-force energy (*qi*) in all human beings is connected to the cosmic primal energy which is our root. Experiencing the common root of humanity is the first step toward oneness with all things and begins directing us toward a psychological sense of global community.

Experiencing Oneness

Practicing Daoism leads to oneness with the Dao or oneness with the cosmos and all things.

We look at it and do not see it;
Its name is the invisible.
We listen to it and do not hear it;
Its name is the inaudible.
We touch it and do not find it;
Its name is the subtle (formless).
These three cannot be further inquired into
And hence merge into one.

Going up high, it is not bright, and coming down low,
It is not dark.
Infinite and boundless, it cannot be given any name;
It reverts to nothingness.
This is called shape without shape,

Form without objects.
It is the vague and illusive.
Meet it and you will not see its head.
Follow it and you will not see its back.
Hold on to Dao of old in order to master the
things of the present.
From this one may know the primeval beginning.
This is called the bond of Dao. (ch. 14; Chan 1963)

Experiencing oneness with Dao is a very long process. However, simply moving along the path toward oneness can have a positive effect on peace psychology. Oneness broadens the human perspective to move past "us-them" dichotomies. Daoism views the primal energy at the center of the cosmos to be original mind and the source of mind in all human beings. Original mind is the mind of the universe and it contains non-conceptual, primal insights which can only be experienced. The mind of the universe has a wider perspective than the human mind. From the universe's perspective, "us-them" is not reality. When humans practice the ways of oneness, they sit in the universe and realize that all people are the same.

Practicing oneness establishes deep primordial energy connections between all living things. This primordial energy connection creates a somatic awareness of being linked to all living things at a fundamental, cellular level. Identifying with each other at the cellular level develops respect and compassion for all life which in turn fosters responsibility for the well-being of others.

Energetically connecting to people at a somatic level has a form of morality embedded in it. If a person harms another, that person also harms himself because of his interactive *qi*-connection with the person. This is a somatic experience that is inevitable when we are energetically connected to each other at the core level of oneness. Being in touch with the energetic human essence of the people around you creates a higher

level of human maturity. Energetic oneness dissolves our separation from each other. We understand that when we harm another person, we also harm ourselves.

The Daoist experience of oneness goes beyond thinking and feeling. It is a non-conceptual, beyond language, qi experience of being with the core of all living things. Practicing the path toward oneness produces deep internal human change that eliminates the psychological characteristics of people who perpetrate violence, establishes a psychological sense of global community, and releases us from Einstein's "prison of separateness."

Nonaction

Wuwei is the Daoist principle of nonaction. Nonaction does not mean not doing anything. It means the absence of any action that interferes with letting all things follow their natural course. All living things should be allowed to develop and transform naturally.

Dao abides in non-action,
Yet nothing is left undone.
If kings and lords observed this,
The ten thousand things would develop naturally.
If they still desired to act,
They would return to the simplicity of formless substance.
Without form there is no desire.
Without desire there is tranquility.
And in this way all things would be at peace.
(ch. 37; Feng and English 1989)

With regard to human beings, nonaction means behaving in a manner that does not interfere with the natural course of another person's life. It is an inherent part of nature and human existence. Not interfering with another person's life includes not taking away his/her rights as a human being. Retention of human rights is directly related to non-violence, equality, and living together peacefully. Nonaction enhances these rights. When people are socially, politically, or economically exploited, this goes against the principle of nonaction and can easily result in the loss of peace. Practicing *wuwei* is respect for human rights.

No Use of Force

Nonaction also encompasses the idea that force and weapons should never be used. Not interfering with another person's life implies not using force of any kind against her/him. The text says:

One who assists the people's rulers with Dao
does not use weapons to force changes in the world.
Such activity usually backfires.
Where troops camp, thorns and brambles grow. (ch. 30; LaFargue 1992)

This describes how force never achieves its objectives. When force and weapons are used in war and other acts of violence, it usually backfires because there will always be resistance somewhere. The ground where force is used turns into thorns and brambles.

Daoist practitioners do not use or have weapons. The text has:

Weapons at best are tools of bad omen,
Loathed and avoided by those of the Way. . . .
Weapons are tools of bad omen,
By gentlemen not to be used;
But when it cannot be avoided,
They use them with calm and restraint.
Even in victory's hour
These tools are unlovely to see;
For those who admire them truly
Are men who in murder delight. . . .
A multitude slain! – and their death
Is a matter for grief and for tears;
The victory after a conflict
Is a theme for a funeral rite. (ch. 31; Blakney 1955)

Practitioners of the Way don't use weapons of war. Weapons, while sometimes needed, are evil. War is always a tragedy that has no victors. The protocols of military life are the same as that of funerals. People who use weapons have fear in their hearts. Human beings cannot live in peace when dominated by fear. We need to find a better way to exist on the earth. Practicing Daoism, applying *we-wei* and no force preserves the human right of peace.

The Sage

A person who practices Daoism seriously cultivates positive personality characteristics that can be a model for all people in the world.

Sincere words are not beautiful,
Beautiful words are not sincere.
He who knows is not learned,
He who is learned does not know.
He who is good does not have much,
He who has much is not good.
The sage does not hoard.
The more he does for others,
the more he has himself;
The more he gives to others,
the more his own bounty increases.
Therefore,
The Way of heaven benefits but does not harm,
The Way of man acts but does not contend. (ch. 81; Mair 1990)

The Daoist sage puts other people before himself by doing and giving more to others, not hoarding, not contending with others, acting in a way that benefits people, and does not cause harm to anyone. These characteristics are similar to what peace psychology calls 'self-transcendence' values. Self-transcendence values show concern for the welfare, interests, and human rights of others. Practicing Daoism builds the foundation of self-transcendence values.

Implementation

For all people in the world to understand the importance of living in peace, societies and cultures have to introduce peace education curriculums into their overall educational systems. Peace psychology and Daoist practices could provide a solid foundation for peace education.

Families and schools are primary factors in developing predispositions in children to hate and love. Children begin to understand peace between the ages of 6 and 10 (Myers-Walls and Lewsader 2015). In recent years, it has been increasingly recognized that our schools have to change in basic ways if we are to educate children so that they are for

rather than against one another. This recognition has been expressed in a number of interrelated movements in education such as "cooperative learning," "conflict resolution," "violence prevention," and "education for peace" (Christie et al. 2001, ch. 19). The purpose of peace education is "to promote the development of an authentic planetary consciousness that will enable us to function as global citizens and to transform the present human condition by changing the social structures and patterns of thought that have created it" (Reardon 1988).

Peace education will need to include practices that bring about internal change for developing universal states of mind that support peace. "Without the psychological change within people, the goal of peace in any permanent way will be harder to realize" (Enright, Enright, and Holter 2010, 291). Helping people realize the necessity for internal change may be the greatest obstacle to peace. More than 100 years ago, Leo Tolstoy said, "There can be only one permanent revolution—a moral one; the regeneration of the inner man. How is this revolution to take place? Nobody knows how it will take place in humanity, but every man feels it clearly in himself. And yet in our world everybody thinks of changing humanity, and nobody thinks of changing himself" (1900, 44). Daoism, however, is about change and this writer thinks that including Daoist practices and the study of basic texts, such as the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi*, in a peace education curriculum could have a significant impact on lowering resistance to internal psychological change.

Current debates on what should be included in a peace education curriculum focus on the development of skills such as listening, reflection, problem-solving, and cooperation between different groups (Opotow, Gerson, & Woodside 2003). In addition, cultivation of self-transcendence values, respect for human rights, developing a psychological sense of global community, and how to overcome resistance to internal change need to be included. The Daoist practices of returning to the root, cultivating oneness, and nonaction would make an important contribution to all aspects of the curriculum. Daoist practices of qi cultivation are self-empowering. Self-empowerment reduces resistance to deep internal change and liberates us to construct a new person in a new society (Lykes and Sibley, 2014).

Peace education should become part of all levels of the educational system. It is relevant to K-12 schools, undergraduate and graduate edu-

cation, professional workshops and in-service training, adult classes, and in community and faith-based programs . . . Peace education should be introduced into all sectors of society to strengthen the capacities of citizens and societies to deal with conflict non-violently, and to transform destructive conflict into dialogue (Opotow, Gerson, and Woodside, 2003).

Conclusion

Subjective psychological obstacles, like distrust, disappointment, anger, helplessness and hopelessness, greatly disable progress in the economical, political, legal, cultural, and security spheres. This is the manner in which wars continue their destructive path, many years after the peace agreement signing. Therefore, visionaries with inspiration should be sought, who are ready to incite their surroundings and their society to move forward in spite of obstacles. It is best when it happens that these visionaries are at the same time national leaders (Nebojsa, 2012). Absorbing the wisdom of the *Daode jing* through the practice of Daoism would significantly help visionaries and national leaders interested in building a peaceful world.

Implementing Daoist practices into educational systems and societies requires leaders with foresight. Many people in the world are struggling to survive. Many are primarily concerned with having enough food to eat, so practicing Daoism would be irrelevant to them. National leaders and visionaries should practice first to become models of peace, non-violence, and deep internal human change.

We need to get past societal norms, cultural values and beliefs that narrow our perspective about who we are and divide us into “us-them” groups. We need a way that contains universal wisdom so we can become universal beings. Daoism empowers us to take in wisdom from the cosmos and experience profound behavior changes that lead to living fully and peacefully. “Daoism is a belief in life . . . The Daoist seeks to dig down deep under all the layers of cultural and psychological silt that have accumulated in humans over the millennia and bring forth the shining pearl that lies beneath” (Towler 1996, ix).

Daoist practices and the *Daode jing* are valuable gifts to the world. When we learn to relate and connect to the primordial energy (qi) at the root of human existence, we realize our common human identity which

powerfully influences us to accept all people in the world, reject using force to control others, and live in peace. Experiencing oneness with all humans is the foundation for all peace methods. The text has,

Dao is eternal, but has no name;
 The uncarved block, though seemingly of small account,
 Is greater than anything that is under heaven.
 If kings and barons would but possess themselves of it,
 The ten thousand creatures would flock to do them homage;
 Heaven-and-earth would conspire
 To send sweet dew,
 Without law or compulsion, men would dwell in harmony.
 Once the block is carved, there will be names,
 And so soon as there are names
 Know that it is time to stop.
 Only by knowing when it is time to stop can danger be avoided.
 To Dao all under heaven will come
 As streams and torrents flow into a great river or sea.
 (ch. 32; Waley 1958)

The uncarved block, or oneness, is the primal essence of the universe. Through the experience of oneness, humans would dwell in harmony. Practicing Daoism involves interacting with the primal energy forces of the cosmos and, through this interaction, we gain a better understanding of the value of life and its meaning. The more we understand about life the more likelihood of having a world at peace. Connecting to our cosmic root to experience oneness, which encompasses a psychological sense of global community, is the Daoist way of peace.

The human race will have to undergo internal change in order to experience oneness and a psychological sense of global community. Human beings need to take the responsibility to begin working toward expanding and transforming themselves into universal beings who have a strong sense of world-wide community. The *Daode jing* describes the characteristics of humans as universal beings that live in peace.

Can you keep your soul in its body, hold fast to the one,
 and so learn to be whole?
 Can you center your energy, be soft, tender,
 and so learn to be a baby?

Can you keep the deep water still and clear,
so it reflects without blurring?
Can you love people and run things,
and do so by not doing?
Opening, closing the Gate of Heaven,
can you be like a bird with her nestlings?
Piercing bright through the cosmos,
can you know by not knowing?
To give birth, to nourish,
to bear and not to own,
to act and not lay claim,
to lead and not to rule:
this is the mysterious power. (ch. 10; Le Guin 1998)

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The American Transformation of Daoist Cultivation¹

LIVIA KOHN

Since 1965, when the Immigration Act was changed to allow Asians to immigrate to the United States, Chinese healing and longevity methods have become increasingly popular in America. Another major factor that propelled Asian healing into the public eye was the fact that James Reston, a writer for the *Washington Post*, came down with an infected appendix during Richard Nixon's first visit to China in 1971 and underwent surgery using acupuncture anesthesia. Over the years Chinese and Chinese-inspired health methods have become known as "complementary and alternative" and, supported by the National Institute of Health, have made their way into the general health-care system.

Several new fields of inquiry have since sprung up that connect Chinese-based methods with modern science. Aside from studies that relate Chinese cosmology to quantum physics (see Capra 1975; Zukav 1979; Bock-Möbius 2012), there are particularly energy medicine and energy psychology. Energy medicine explores what *qi* is and how to measure it, where in the body the meridians might be located, and how exactly acupuncture, acupressure, and related methods of energy manipulation work.² This research gradually makes *qi*-based medicine an acceptable mode of working with the body.

¹ Expansion of a paper presented at The Third Cross-Strait Sinology Forum & the Fourth Cross-Strait High-level Sinology Symposium, Xiamen, November 2012.

² See Eden and Feinstein 1998; Gerber 1988; Oschman 2000; Shealy 2011.

Energy psychology does something very similar with the mind. It teaches exercises to enhance “energy aptitude” that bear close resemblance to daoyin and qigong and uses specific tapping techniques to release tensions, emotional trauma, and other noxious psychological patterns.³ Studies that compare both systems with biomedicine find them vastly more efficient and less invasive, paving a promising future of Chinese-inspired health care in America.

In the wake of these developments, American health pioneers have also begun to adapt Daoist ideas and methods as based on the ancient classics. In the following I will introduce two: *Laozi* as cognitive therapy and *Zhuangzi* for stress reduction.

Laozi as Cognitive Therapy

Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is a common ailment especially among Chinese and Asian populations. Its key features are excessive worry and anxiety, coupled with overly high expectations of self and others and a general sense of lack of control. It is usually chronic and rather difficult to treat. In its extreme forms it can lead to a decrease in overall functioning, to various physical ailments, and to a shortened life expectancy.

Also common in mainland China, psychologists here have worked variously with cognitive and behavioral modes of therapy to alleviate the disorder. Especially Drs. Zhang Yalin and Yang Desen, based at the Mental Health Institute of Hunan Medical University in Changsha, have developed a particular way of utilizing concepts and life advice from the *Laozi*, finding its overall life principles and flexible approach to personality development particularly helpful (Zhang et al. 2002). The Daoist scholar Lü Xichen, moreover, from Central South University, also in Changsha, has described the philosophical background of the therapy in linking ancient Daoist thought as expressed in the *Laozi* with modern cognitive therapy (Lu 2011).

Classical cognitive therapy acknowledges the interrelatedness of cognition, affect, and behavior: how people understand and perceive

³ See Feinstein et al. 2005; Gallo 2004. See also www.energymed.org; www.energypsych.org.

events influences their responses on the level of emotion and action. As described by its founders Albert Ellis (1975) and Aaron Beck (1975), it therapy seeks to help the patient overcome difficulties by identifying and changing dysfunctional thinking, behavior, and emotional responses. It works thus by modifying beliefs, identifying distorted thinking, relating to others in different ways, and changing behaviors. The goal is a greater sense of inner authenticity reached through the appreciation of how one's thoughts and perceptions color emotions and lead to certain kinds of behavior, how certain ways of being in the world are unhelpful and dysfunctional and can be replaced by more appropriate and life-enhancing attitudes (Lu 2011, 37).

Most recently, the Daoist-based modification of cognitive therapy as grown in Hunan has been introduced into the U. S. under the name Taoist Cognitive Psychotherapy (TCP). It works in three stages of treatment and utilizes four pairs of principles from the *Laozi* as its central mode of cognitive modification. The three stages of treatment are:

1. Orientation and Assessment—developing a therapeutic relationship, introducing the overall principles, pinpointing specific patient problems, and planning the treatment.

2. Doctrine Instruction and Application—teaching key Daoist principles as based on the *Laozi* and facilitating their adaptation to specific problems and concerns.

3. Internalization and Reinforcement—summarizing the treatment process, enhancing specific principles, and discussing future application. The process takes about twelve individual therapy sessions of 45-50 minutes each that occur once or twice a week. That is to say, the whole course takes about two or three months, which is quite short for psychotherapy (Chang 2012, 6). Randomized clinical trials in China have shown the effectiveness of the method, not only for generalized anxiety disorder but also for panic attacks and obsessive-compulsive behavior patterns (Zhang et al. 2002; Chang 2012, 6-7).

The four sets of principles from the *Laozi* form the core of the treatment, the "Doctrine Instruction" in Step 2. They are:

Benefit without harm to yourself or others: *li er buhai* 利而不害 (ch. 81).

Do your best without competing with others: *wei er bucheng* 为而不争 (ch. 81).

Moderate desire and limit selfishness: *shaosi guayu* 少私寡欲 (ch. 19).

Know when it is enough and learn to be content: *zhizu zhizhi* 知足知止 (ch. 44).

Know harmony and be modest: *zhihe chuxia* 知和处下 (chs. 55, 68).

The soft can overcome the tough: *yirou shenggang* 以柔胜刚 (ch. 36).

Be clear and still and rest in nonaction: *qingjing wuwei* 清静无为 (chs. 45, 48).

Let nature take its course: *shun qi ziran* 顺其自然 (ch. 25).

Only half of these are actual citations from the *Laozi*, including one with a minor modification: *yirou shenggang* 以柔胜刚 from ch. 36 reads in fact *ruorou sheng gang-jiang* 柔弱胜刚强, leaving the meaning unimpaired. Three are composites, taking two characters each either from different lines in the same or different chapters. And the last one does not occur in the *Laozi* in this form at all—although, of course, both individual expressions and the sentiment are present in the text.

All eight statements are taken out of context, and ignore the fact that the subject of the action in question is not at all the same or that the grammatical mode may be quite different. Thus, for example, ch. 81 reads, “benefiting without harm is something characteristic of Heaven, while acting without competition is a feature of the sage.” By the same token, *zhizu zhizhi* from ch. 44 is a contraction of *zhizu buchen*, *zhizhi budai* 知足不辱，知止不殆: “Who knows when it is enough suffers no disgrace; who knows when to stop is free from danger” (Chan 1963, 161), leading to the ability to live long.

Not only are the basic textual passages changed to fit the psychotherapeutic context, but their meaning and implication are modified substantially. Thus, the first pair of principles in the original reads:

The sage does not accumulate,
The more he does for others, the more he gains himself
The more he gives to others, the more he has himself.
The way of Heaven is to *always benefit, never harm!*
The way of the sage is to *always act, never compete!* (ch. 81)

Or, in the reading of James Legge: "With all the sharpness of the Way of Heaven, it injures not; with all the doing in the way of the sage he does not strive."

The *Treatment Manual* personalizes these statements and applies them to the individual in ordinary life. It notes that *li er buhai* encourages patients not to take pleasure in others' misfortune or envy their success. "At the same time, we should not be overly self-critical or self-blaming for our failures, rather strive to do our best within our own capacity" (Chang 2012, 21). It then reinterprets *wei er bucheng* to be about internal comparison rather than outward competition. "Predators will pursue prey in order to survive, and will thus compete with other predators for the same target. However, they do not feel resentment or self-pity that another predator has caught more food" (Chang 2012, 21).

The lesson patients learn here is that one should do what one can in life according to one's own ability, strive to achieve one's own goals, while refraining from comparing oneself with others and seeking their approval. In other words, to live according to *wei er bucheng*, one must accurately appraise one's capacities, talents, resources, and abilities, adopt a clear view of oneself, then decide how best to act. What is a spiritual statement about the way of Heaven and the sage's adaptation to it in the *Laozi* thus has become a way of self-enhancement in a Western psychological mode.

The second principle has to do with reducing desire, being content with what one has, and knowing when it is enough. It, too, is modified from the original, where "being free from desires, you can see the wonder [of Dao]" (ch. 1), and placed into a more immediate personal context. This context involves a balancing act. On the one hand, "human desires and needs push citizens to progress, resulting in improvements in social and economic development and quality of life driven from self-interest." On the other hand, "excessive personal desire can foster stress, suffering, fatigue, and cause harm to others" (Chang 2012, 25)—a sentiment already expressed in the *Zhuangzi*: "More stuff piled up than they could ever use, grasping for more than they could ever hold, their mind is full of care and close to exhaustion, yet they still keep going after projects and things, not knowing when to stop—this is trouble" (ch. 29).

Studies have shown that happiness peaks at a certain point: when basic needs are met and there is about one third of the basic amount in

addition to save, finance larger projects (e. g., down payment for a house, children's education), and have fun. Once this point is reached, sufficiency thinking needs to replace deficiency—look to what you already have, appreciate non-material wealth (family, community, spiritual values), and—most importantly—stop trying to get more of what you don't need (Twist 2003). Again, a great deal of self-knowledge is needed: when and what exactly is *enough* for me?

The third set of principles combines statements in chapters 36, 41, 43, 55, and 78. It emphasizes the importance of harmony, modesty, humility, and softness, in the original placed in the context of warfare and political battles rather than personal interactions. Here they relate to core conflicts in the patient—either external (with other people, in the work place, in terms of social or cultural demands) or internal (such as pride, shame, self-criticism, perfectionism, the desire for control).

The key passage in this context is from chapter 55: *zhihe yue chang zhichang yue ming* 知和曰常，知常曰明. Wing-tsit Chan translates: "To know harmony means to be in accord with the eternal; to be in accord with the eternal means to be enlightened" (1963, 166). The *Treatment Manual* alters this to: "Knowing harmony is said to be constancy, knowing constancy is said to be clarity" (Chang 2012, 29) and interprets it as referring to the individual's purpose. "Constancy" is no longer the *chang* 常 of *changdao* 常道, the "eternal," but indicates the internal steadiness of one's perception of life. It leads, in turn, not to "enlightenment" but to clarity, a deeper understanding of one's own personal role in the larger scheme of things. This then leads to an attitude of modesty and humility, which in turn helps to reduce both interpersonal and internal conflict.

The last set of principles is the most hybrid in terms of the *Laozi*, yet includes several key Daoist concepts: clarity and stillness (*qingjing* 清静), nonaction (*wuwei* 无为), and naturalness or spontaneity (*ziran* 自然). They are of vast complexity and have been discussed variously in scholarly literature. The *Treatment Manual* interprets them to indicate "that people should cultivate a state of calm, quiet awareness so that they may see themselves, others, and world *as they are*, not filtered through dysfunctional automatic thoughts or assumptions about how things are." It recommends that patients choose a self-cultivation practice to undertake regularly, "be it meditation or another contemplative practice such as qigong, taiji, yoga, calligraphy, prayer, and the like" (Chang 2012, 33).

The practice of any of these techniques calms the mind and allows a wider perspective of life: "Wealth and poverty, suffering and blessings, moral and immoral, being and nothingness, as well as absence and presence are merely two sides of the same coin" (Yip 2005, 37). The goal is to find rest in one's own nature and flow with the world as it is in a state of nonaction, understood as

. . . not meddling or interfering with things, letting oneself and the world be: letting oneself be who and what one is, and is on one's way to becoming; letting others be who and what they are, and are on their way to becoming; and letting the world be what it is, and what it is on it's way to becoming. (Craig 2007, 188)

Allowing oneself, others, nature, and the world to be as they are and to flow along their natural paths lets patients relax the need for control, avoid setting excessive goals, let go of striving for material goods, take a step back from jockeying for social position, and give up the habit of self-criticism. It greatly alleviates the various worries and anxieties that have plagued the person.

Taken together, the four pairs of principles that form the foundation of Taoist Cognitive Psychotherapy therefore support individual development in four different aspects: general attitude to self and life, relation to material goods and social position, conflict resolution, and personal self-cultivation. The method is highly effective and utilizes several key tenets of ancient Daoist thought, reinterpreting the classic in a way that is relevant to modern life. It makes Daoist perspectives accessible to ordinary people while helping them to cope more adequately with the modern world.

Zhuangzi for Stress Reduction

Another psychological application of ancient Daoist thought and practice focuses on stress. Stress comes in three distinct forms: eustress, distress, and chronic stress.

Eustress is a term coined by the endocrinologist Hans Selye (1974). It is a sense of challenge and heightened awareness that enhances a positive sense of being alive. It means being in a cognitive and emotional

state that perfectly balances boredom and anxiety: there is enough interesting work, family life, or fun activity to deal with so that we are not bored, but neither are we overwhelmed by any of them to the point of producing anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi 1975). Eustress as a positive response to the challenges of life may include feelings of control, desirability, location, and timing, and usually involves an overall sense of meaning, hope, and vigor. It leads to a positive attitude and a life of satisfaction and well-being.

Distress, second, on the other hand, is the “flight or fight” response, a built-in biological reaction to severe outside threat. In the early stages of human evolution, it served to put the body on high alert when primitive man was confronted with a saber-tooth tiger or similar life-threatening situation. It enabled him to marshal all the body’s powers into one focus, to become stronger than usual, more alert, and with higher endurance. Running for his life or getting ready to fight to the death, he was using every part of the nervous system, increasing the force of the heart-beat and the overall heart-rate, looking with pupils wide open, quieting the bladder and the digestive system, and focusing all thoughts on escape or ways of attack. Distress is thus an elementary reaction to threats in the world necessary for survival and essential for continued well-being (see Jones and Bright 2001; Buss 2008).

However, it is not meant to be a continuous state of the human organism. The problem today is that people react to quite ordinary situations as if facing a saber-tooth tiger. The mind perceives threats as more dangerous than they are and people go into high alert. Worse than that, they get used to being in high alert, with its increased adrenaline rush and intense mental capabilities. The moment the high lets off, they find themselves slackening and either search out a new crisis to fight in or reach for caffeine or some similar stimulant to artificially prolong the stressful state (see Rice 2012). This is chronic stress, which the body is not set up to handle. It creates all sorts of difficulties and leads to severe disease: “In 2010, the American Institute of Stress has estimated that 75 to 90 percent of all primary care office visits to medical doctors are stress-related” (Santee 2011, 40; www.stress.org).

Several factors characterize the stress response. For example, every time one perceives a situation as threatening, breathing becomes shallow and short, and rather than correcting this with conscious effort, people

habituate to this pattern and accept it as the normal state of affairs (see Loehr and Migdow 1986). Another factor is a type of thinking that keeps us free from distractions and focused upon the perceived threat. "This type of thinking is self-centered, absolute, biased, black and white, dichotomous (win or lose; die or survive; right or wrong; good or bad; etc.), inflexible, mechanical, and automatic. . . . It is called primal thinking" (Santee 2008, 99; Beck and Weishaar 2005). Primal thinking together with shallow breathing and the caffeine habit serve to continue the vicious cycle of stress in body and mind, leading to a permanent state of hyper-vigilance, hyper-arousal, and intense anxiety.

The *Zhuangzi* offers several approaches to the resolution of the problem, leading people away from chronic stress and into an engaged, playful state that can be described as eustress. The text speaks of stress variously, using the term *you* 憂, usually translated "mournful," "sad," "anxious." It says that people experience *you* because they cannot get the things most valued in the world, such as wealth, position, long life, and approval (ch. 18) and that the perfected "sleeps without dreaming, is awake without *you*" (ch. 6; Santee 2011, 43, 45). It then offers both cognitive and somatic techniques to release this state and find wholeness in self and world.

Cognitively, the *Zhuangzi* teaches how to restructure human thinking in a global approach—going beyond the release of irrational thoughts and cognitive distortions that form the focus of cognitive therapy. It restructures how the individual thinks about existence at the very foundation of thinking while clearly noting that society with its contrived dichotomies and standards the primary source of dysfunctional thinking (Santee 2008, 107; 2011, 47). Numerous discourses and stories in the text—philosophical discussions of right and wrong as much as tales involving death and dreams—focus on what scholars have called "perspectivism," the realization that we cannot know for sure that we know and that each individual person and being on the planet has his or her very own way of seeing things and reacting to them. Often seen as a draw-back of Zhuangzi's thought, in the practical, psychological application this is a definite plus, a method that offers a way out of stress-based primal thinking.

Another dimension of the same feature is Zhuangzi's rejection of office and position. He asserts that people "slave day and night without stopping" to attain high status, then, when they have it, "they keep worrying constantly about whether they come across as being good at their job." Either way, they pursue things on the outside, creating stress and alienating themselves from their life (ch. 18; Kohn 2011, 5). On the other hand, "once you understand that the value of the self is higher than any career, you can give up position and income like shaking off mud, . . . flow along with the myriad transformations without end. Then, what could possibly cause you any distress?" (ch. 21).

Yet, this does not mean that we should never accept any position or avoid serving in society. It means that we need to remain clear about who we are and not identify with any position. As Sunshu Ao says, "I have no clue whether the honor resides in the position or in myself. If it is in the position, I have nothing to do with it; if it is in myself, the position is irrelevant." And goes off to take a leisurely walk to enjoy himself, parting with the words: "I really have no time to worry whether people honor or despise me" (ch. 21; Kohn 2011, 203).

On the more somatic level, the *Zhuangzi* provides several methods to still the mind and come back to a sense of openness and emptiness within. One has to do with breathing. Deep, abdominal, diaphragmatic breathing is natural and stress-free (Loehr and Migdow 1986; Cohen 1997; Santee 2007). Ordinary people breathe rapidly and shallowly, a clear sign of stress, manifest in symptoms like the "inability to catch one's breath, choking sensation, feeling of suffocation, frequent sighing, chest heaving, a lump in the throat" (Fried 1993, 310; Santee 2008, 117). The *Zhuangzi* similarly notes: "Ordinary people breathe from their throats. Being restricted, their words are like retching" (ch. 6). The advice is to learn to breathe more deeply, like the perfected who "breathes all the way to his heels," allowing the *qi* of the universe to flow freely through the entire body.

Opening to *qi* is also the subject of another key method in the *Zhuangzi*, the "fasting of the mind" (*xinzhai* 心齋):

Unify your will and don't listen with your ears but listen with your mind. No, don't listen with your mind, but listen with your *qi*. Listening stops with the ears, the mind stops with matching [perception], but *qi* is empty

and waits on all things. Dao gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the mind. (ch. 4; Kohn 2010, 25)

Moving attention away from outside things and the cognitive mode of being, this encourages practitioners to reach for the inner emptiness that allows Dao to flow freely. Letting the mind rest, withdrawing the senses inward, one becomes aware of the *qi* vibrating within. Thus one can settle into one's physical existence and open a space of emptiness and no-mind. The same process is also extolled in the classic passage on "sitting in oblivion" (*zuowang* 坐忘) that involves letting go completely of body and mind, releasing all outside knowledge and conceptual perception (ch. 6; Kohn 2010, 7; 2015, 162).

The goal is to evoke the direct, holistic experience of the individual, undistorted by thoughts of gain and loss, praise and blame, society and world. As we get more deeply in touch with the energies within, we come to realize what really nourishes us the most: "worries about social status, absolute distinctions, dysfunctional thinking, and cognitive distortions simply dissolve" (Santee 2008, 111). We derive our identity no longer from outside sources and the validation of others but from deep within: from Dao, Heaven, the universe. As Robert Santee says,

Any sense of an absolute self vanishes as the practitioner realizes his/her identity with the continual process of change. This identity or sameness is not a denial of change, a validation of eternity, or a conformation of freedom from death! It is a realization of the commonality of all things.

Both sitting in oblivion and the fasting of the mind are approaches to fully and functionally engage the natural, continually changing process of existence. They are ways of eliminating any sense of an absolute, separate, and distinct self. These methods not only integrate mind and body, but they also integrate mind, body, and environment. (2008, 111)

Ultimately the practice leads to living life as a perfected, in free and easy wandering, in nonaction and perfect happiness. "Perfect happiness," the *Zhuangzi* say, "is being free from the need to be happy. Perfect accomplishment is being free from having to accomplish anything" (ch. 18). This describes a way of being in the world that is free from deficiency and strife, a feeling of completeness wherever we are and whatever we do (see also Wu 1990). Happiness is so full in itself that it does

not see itself as happy. The ultimate state is so just being of itself that it cannot be conceived as a separate entity or phenomenon. Any attempt to think about it or describe it necessitates its being separate, external, not just so. Similarly, accomplishment is fully realized when there is no more need for praise, reward, and completion. You just do what you do as you do it, and that is all. Chronic stress and primal thinking have no place in this way of being, which is playful and joyous, free and at ease. The *Zhuangzi* thus offers a cognitive and somatic solution for the problems of chronic stress and the various physical and psychological issues it causes.

Discussion

These two forms of the American transformation of Daoist worldview and practices are clearly distinct in several ways and represent different strands of the modern Western adaptation of traditional systems of meditation and self-cultivation.

The first, the adaptation of certain key concepts of the *Laozi* in cognitive psychotherapy developed in China and was exported to the U. S. primarily for use among Chinese or other Asian American communities and in response to the need of culturally appropriate therapy. From there it is now expanding into the mainstream, increasingly used also in non-Chinese populations. One may call this form Chinese-clinical.

The second, the use of *Zhuangzi* ideas and methods for stress reduction and in behavioral therapy developed in the U. S., professionals intentionally seeking out non-Western alternatives to enhance established methods. It thus belongs into the same class as Herbert Benson's relaxation response (1976) which adapts the concentrative mantra chanting of Transcendental Meditation into medical practice, and Jon Kabat-Zinn's mindfulness training (2005) which integrates insight meditation, zazen, and yoga into a systematic hospital-based stress-reduction program. It reflects the conscious choice of Asian meditation practices, their intentional selection, adaptation, and transformation into a clinical setting. It may be called Western-meditational.

Both are highly selective, picking certain aspects that suit their modes while ignoring the rest, thereby reducing the fullness of the tradition, the complexity of the ancient masters, to simple formulas to be ap-

plied in a medical and therapeutic setting. Several far-reaching questions arise.

First, is the American transformation of Daoist cultivation a debasement of the tradition? Is the use of spiritual visions and advanced meditation techniques for health purposes and stress reduction a decline, a selling-out, a betrayal—and thus to be condemned? Or is it rather a jumping-off point for the spread of Daoism, a basic foundation that invites people into the tradition and maybe leads them to a deeper appreciation, thus contributing to its survival and even growth?

Arguments can be made for both. There is no question that a patient of cognitive or behavioral psychotherapy is not a Daoist and has no serious idea what Daoism is really about. On the other hand, both historically and today there are numerous Daoist adepts, some even senior masters and major contributors (e.g., Sun Simiao, Jeffrey Yuen), who began their involvement with a disease that could not be cured with established methods. Medicine is and always has been an important stepping stone in the development of Daoist awareness and dedication.

The question is complex and not limited to Daoism. It equally applies to the issue of whether the practice of yoga in gyms debases the spiritual power of the tradition or leads to its spread and flourishing; whether the use of mindfulness meditation in the military (e. g., the Israeli army) presents an appropriate application of Buddhism or is in fact a complete distortion that violates its most fundamental credo.

Second, are these new modes of therapy and health enhancement in fact forms of Daoism? Or are they fake, imitations, replicas, some hybrid something? Is there even such thing as "American Daoism"? Some vigorously deny that it even exists. How many items of so-called Daoist worldview and practice does it take to make a technique Daoist? How much of exactly what belief, practice method, and life-style pattern does the individual have to follow to be rightfully called Daoist?

In this respect, Daoists have more of a problem than Buddhists, Hindus, or followers of other religions. Daoist identity is a thorny issue embedded in the very nature of the tradition. It is, after all, one of the major characteristic of Daoism—in contrast to other creeds—that it does *not* offer a systematic belief system, program, or organized step-by-step outline of the path to oneness with Dao. The reason for this is that—besides the fact that we are already one with Dao—there cannot be such

a thing: since each individual is unique, we each have to realize our own particular way of being Dao in our own particular way. As Krishnamurti says, "Truth is a pathless land." Or as Thomas Merton notes, "All deliberate, systematic, and reflexive 'self-cultivation,' whether active or contemplative, personalistic or politically committed, cuts one off from the mysterious but indispensable contact with Dao" (1969, 23).

Third, what do these new transformations mean for the development of the tradition in the future? Are they signs of its impending demise? Will Daoism soon be so watered down that there is no tradition to speak of any longer? Will it become part of the overall MacDonaldization of culture—one size fits all, everywhere the same, no cultural uniqueness? Or, on the contrary, do the American adaptations of Daoism make a creative contribution to the globalization of religion? Can they entice more and more people to appreciate the wisdom of Laozi and Zhuangzi, to apply their ways to live healthier and happier lives and create an altogether saner world? Will they open a path to new forms of Daoism, contributing to the growth and flourishing of the tradition in a yet unimagined world-wide form?

Again, Daoism is different from other religions. Most tend to be either ethnic or universal: they are either embedded in a certain culture to the point where one has to be born into a specific country or ethnic community or else adopt the culture to a large extent (e. g., Hinduism, Shinto, Judaism); or they contain core principles independent of local culture and can be freely chosen by any individual, thus moving easily from country to country, changing somewhat in the process but still retaining their essence (e. g., Buddhism, Christianity, Islam).

Daoism does not fall into either of these categories but has aspects of both. Its rituals, with formal petitions in classical Chinese presented in imperial-style audiences to various gods, many of whom are either socially or locally anchored in China, are more on the ethnic side and do not lend themselves easily to transmission. Its philosophy and practices, Laozi and Zhuangzi and the various cultivation techniques, have no such limitations. They can be translated into many different languages, are independent of local connections, and—most importantly—have a strong appeal to people all over the world. As a result, there is relatively little ritual Daoism in countries beyond China but a pervasive influence and growing culture of Daoist thought and health practices—such as the

new American transformations which may well lead to the absorption of the tradition in its host cultures and thus its gradual weakening or to a greater global awareness of its power.

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The Caishan Goddess Temple

Then and Now¹

WEI YANLI

In late May of 2012, the *Xuzhou dushi chenbao* 徐州都市晨报 (Xuzhou Metropolitan Morning News), the *Yangzi wanbao* 扬子晚报 (Yangzi Evening News), various television stations in the Xuzhou and Jiangsu areas, as well as other media reported an archaeological find in Liguó Township 利国镇 of the remains of an ancient Daoist temple hall complete with several murals. In the spring of 2014, I had the opportunity to visit the site several times. After a preliminary investigation, I found that the actual location of the temple is in Cai Village of Liguó Township, a place commonly known as Caishan 蔡山, and that it represents the remains of the local Goddess Temple (Nainai miao 奶奶庙). Although the discovery was over two years ago, few steps have been taken to preserve the site and no academic studies have been published. To remedy the latter, I present a survey of the temple and its remains, combining field reports with the examination of Daoist literature and local histories.

The Temple Today

Of this once flourishing temple, today only the front hall remains, surrounded by tenements and multifamily housing, including a local farmer's sheep pen on the east. The roof top has caved in, the grounds are overgrown, and it appears to be completely run down. However,

¹ Translated by Livia Kohn.

there are some exquisite standing pillars as well as rafters, purlins, and roof tiles in good order, serving as faint reminders of its ancient glory.

The front hall faces south, with a single line of eaves shaped in a curve. A door opens in its center, with two windows (now blocked) placed symmetrically to either side. The outer walls cover an area of 12 by 9 meters (36 x 27 ft), crowned by a high wooden structure of interlacing beams made from strong materials. The ridge column at a height of 9 meters shows a decoration of cloud heads, while the beams at the top of the six columns each measure about 23 centimeters (9 in) and the foundation stone is 35 centimeters (14 in). Since the roof top caved in many years ago, there is a clear danger of collapse. To prevent leaks, the authorities temporarily covered the entire structure in plastic.



Fig. 1. The beams and rafters of the front hall.

As regards the walls of the hall, those to the east and west are well preserved. Their foundation was laid on rectangular stones, then built up with bricks that are 26 by 7 centimeters (10 x 3 in) in size and held together with lime caulking. The north and south walls have undergone more repairs. Their inner surface was of brick, put together in a more variegated, rougher way, probably dating to the 1950s. Records show that, after the statues of divinities were removed, the building was used

as a village schoolhouse, warehouse, factory, sheep pen, and for other local purposes, suffering a lot in the process.

The East Wall Murals

Although dilapidated, the hall is precious since its east and west walls still contain fragments of ancient murals, the main media focus after its discovery. For example, the *Xuzhou dushi chenbao* announced that "large-scale murals were discovered in a Daoist temple in Ligu, possibly going back to the Tang or Song."

Meticulously painted by brush and executed in color, the original murals began about half a meter (1.8 ft) above the floor and covered both side walls, an area of 50 square meters (540 sq. ft). After the founding of the People's Republic, when the temple was converted to a school, the murals were covered with a layer of white plaster. Heavy rains in 2012 caused the roof top to cave. The resulting inflow washed away the plaster mud, uncovering the murals that had been concealed for decades. When I came to investigate them two years later, the colors had already faded quite a bit and there was some serious peeling in the walls, reducing the parts clearly visible for study.

As site surveys and collected photographs show, the murals on the east wall are slightly better preserved, depicting the celestial progression of the Taishan Goddess. The mural composition in its entirety is S-shaped, in traditional Chinese scattered perspective, meticulously executed with brush painting and other techniques. Mountains and rivers, trees and shrubs, towers and pavilions, carriage and horses, as well as personages are vividly depicted on one side of the wall. The highest point of the mural is somewhat hidden, but the looming shadows of several pine trees and mountain landscapes are visible.

Beneath it are some buildings nestled into the mountainside, probably representing the Taishan sanctuary of the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds (Bixia yuanjun 碧霞元君). In the lower right corner are images of carriages, horses, and various personages. At first glance they appear rather confused, but upon closer look, order becomes apparent. Four horse-drawn chariots to the far right are relatively clear. While the two lower ones only show parts of a canopy and the heads of two individuals, all else being destroyed, the two upper carriages are relatively intact.

One of them, complete with a charioteer, is a two-axle box car drawn by a single horse. Its canopy is in the shape of a turtle, its top rising in a lofty arch, its rim decorated with dangling pendants, and its sides covered in thick curtains of variegated brocade.



Fig. 2. The turtle-shaped canopy of the upper carriage.

Two servants with red peaked caps stand next to the charioteer, two others in similar attire are on horseback, guarding the chariot on the right and left. Two maids, with round cheeks and towering top-knots, are sitting in the front compartment of the wagon. Another, in similar dress, sits to the rear. In addition, there are several footmen holding banners that walk ahead of the chariot, and a leader on horseback clearing the path. The murals do not clearly show the dignitaries thus transported. However, we can surmise from the overall theme of the celestial progress of the Taishan Goddess that the personage in the central carriage—the largest and also the best preserved—is the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds with her close acolytes in the other vehicles: the Lady of Clear Eyesight (Yanguang niangnian 眼光娘娘) and the Lady Who Brings Children (Songzi niangniang 送子娘娘).

Murals on the West Wall

The murals remaining on the west wall are very small and not carefully drawn, thus easily misinterpreted. At first glance, they contain a clear image of two Daoist priests in the center, with a fish-shaped Taiji diagram below them. Accordingly, some scholars believe that this is a rare mural of a Daoist ritual. After careful examination, however, I have concluded that the image in fact forms another part of the Prime Lady's progress.

I have two reasons for this. First, the Taiji diagram is not part of a wooden fish used in Daoist ritual, but an embroidery on a fluttering banner. Looking closely, it becomes evident that to the left below it, there are two people with elaborate headdresses, standing side by side and facing left. Behind their heads, there is another slanted pole, with a peach-shaped top, just like a standard-bearing flagpole. This means the clear image of the Taiji diagram actually forms the lower part of the forward flag, its pole not being entirely visible. The diagram represents an embroidery on the flag, and the two people next to it are the flag carriers.



Fig. 3. The image of two Daoist priests on the west wall.

My second reason is that the relatively complete Daoists in the mural are not actually conducting a ritual but stand in a posture of bidding farewell. I am basing this on two factors. One, looking carefully at the

image, we notice that the priests seem to be standing inside something like an arched doorway, surrounded to the left and right by slanted and parallel lines that look like tiled bricks. Two, the Daoists are wearing long, blue robes with their heads covered by flat caps. Their eyes are crinkled into a smile, and they hold their left arms relaxed by their sides while waving with their right hands. Considering that the murals on the east wall depict the travels of the Taishan Goddess, it seems likely that those on the west wall complement the scene by showing her entourage and supporting Daoists.

Looking at the murals from both walls as one integrated whole, they indeed follow a clear logic presenting a comprehensive scene of faith. Numerous deities and worshipers are paying respect to the Taishan Goddess as she emerges from the sanctuary of the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds on Taishan, formally descends from the mountain, and executes a complete tour of the world, offering succor and protection to all beings. Wherever she passes, all welcome her with great joy, bowing deeply and offering obeisance. Although Cai Village is 265 kilometers (160 miles) south of Taishan, it is one of the classic way stations of the Goddess's progress. Thus the two figures appear in a position of worship, and the murals remaining on the temple walls are in honor of the touring Taishan Goddess, one of the aspects the Prime Lady. Very few temples of this type remain today, and even fewer contain murals of this intricacy, making this find particularly valuable.

Inscriptions

Li Zhiting 厉至婷, a disciple of the last abbot of the Caishan Goddess Temple, recalls that originally numerous inscriptions decorated the access from the main gate. However, they were removed in the 1950s and 60s to make way for a paved road. Today there are only a pair of drum-stand stones left outside the sanctuary door as well as a stone stele, about 1.7 meters (5.5 ft) from the southeast corner of the east wall.

The two drum-stand stones are damaged, the western one more so than the eastern. However, the threshold notch carved in their upper section as well as the hollows for door hinges are relatively intact, and show obvious signs of use. Curiously, their inner surface shows the engraving of a five-pointed star. Local investigations have shown that such

drum-stand stones were commonly used in temples of old, their surface containing inscriptions of religious content. During the Cultural Revolution, under the campaign to “eliminate the four olds”—ideas, culture, customs, and habits—often original carvings were rubbed out to be replaced by a five-pointed star. The drum-stand stones here are a case in point, bearing testimony to the craze of the times.



Fig. 4. Stele inscription inside the temple.

Fortunately, one inscription, deeply hidden in a dark corner of the hall, has survived and is still quite well preserved. It appears on a stone stele attached to the wall, which means that only one side is visible. Its surface is upright, 70 by 35 centimeters (28 x 14 in), edged with flowery ornamentation, the inscription in its center. Vertically engraved in standard script, it records a donation made to the temple. It reads:

Under the Great Qing dynasty, the faithful disciple Dong Shouqian and his wife of the Liu family, presently living in the countryside northeast of Tongshan County of Xuzhou Prefecture in Jiangnan, donated ten *mu* [1.5 acres] of land as well as a pair of flagpoles to the Caishan Goddess Temple.

This is to commemorate their good deed. May the Taishan Temple continue forever! Guided by the Daoist Shen Fujin. Spring of the *siwei* year of the Jiaqing reign [1799].

Composed by Gu Jiuli on behalf of the Jiang and Xu families. Flag contributed by the Xin and Zhu families. Banners of the four directions do-

nated by the Xu and Liu as well as the Wang and Chu families. Stone engraver: Li Fengchun; carpenter: Jiao Kui.

In charge of the proceedings: Daoist leaders Ding Bengui and Xin Benping.

The inscription thus commemorates a donation in the spring on 1799 by a couple of faithful lay followers of the temple. Living locally, they contributed a pair of flagpoles and some farm land, constituting a fairly large gift, rare enough in the history of the temple to merit a special ceremony and stele record. The text further records the names of various other supporting believers and construction workers as well as of the temple's abbot at the time. In addition, it gives the temple official name as Taishan Temple, indicating its close connection to the sacred mountain.

Personal Recollections

Today, given the run down and dilapidated state of the main hall, it is hard to imagine what the temple ever looked like. Fortunately, one of the disciples of the last abbot is still alive, and from his memory we can reconstruct the temple's former glory. 83 years old, Li Zhiting lives with his wife in a small farm house in Cai Village, where I went to conduct an interview with him.

The way he tells it, his close relation to the Caishan Goddess Temple began as a child, when he contracted a serious disease that resisted all efforts at improvement or alleviation. When he was 7, his mother saw that her son's ailment was not getting any better. She became very anxious and went to the temple to pray for help. To her amazement, when she got home, his disease took a sudden turn for the better and was eventually cured. Two years later, in recompense and to express her gratitude to the Caishan Goddess, she apprenticed 9-year-old Zhiting to the abbot who from then on provided for the child's food, clothing, and reading materials.

This abbot was Ping Mingjun 平明俊, originally from Greater Xin Hamlet 大辛庄, northeast of Caishan Village and now part of Fengcheng Ward 峰城区 in Zaozhuang City 枣庄市, Shandong. Although from Xin Hamlet, his last name was not Xin, in contrast to the Daoist leader men-

tioned in the Qing inscription, by the name of Xin Benping. Quite possibly both come from the same place originally. In any case, Ping was the last abbot of the temple; he died in 1956 at age 67. Although Li Zhiting's mentoring relationship to the abbot ended after Liberation, he still made sure to see his benefactor to his final resting place.

As he remembers it, the temple stood originally southwest of the village and consisted of two courtyards, surrounded by an area of about 80 *mu* (13 acres) of land, thus being comparatively extensive. While nearby Ligu Township also had its own, smaller temple of this kind, the Caishan Goddess Temple was the largest sanctuary to the Taishan Goddess north of Xuzhou and south of Tengzhou.

Approached toward the north, the complex began with a main gate to the far south. South to north, it consisted of two major halls, front and back, about 20 meters (60 ft') apart. In addition, there were various utility buildings as well as secondary worship niches to the east and west. The front hall was dedicated to the Goddess and her two acolytes, the Goddess of Clear Eyesight and the Lady Who Brings Children. Its walls, as we have seen, were decorated with extensive murals depicting the Goddess's travels. The back hall housed the statues of numerous additional deities, both in its center and along corridors to the east and west.

After these images were removed in 1954, the temple buildings served various civic uses over the next decades, including schooling and storage. Matching this change, the murals in the front hall mural were plastered over. During the Cultural Revolution, finally, the main hall was demolished, its bricks and timber used for other projects. Even today, ink-written slogans such as "Fight Selfishness, Repudiate Revisionism," "Make Revolution, Promote Production, Enhance Labor" are still visible on the remaining plaster of the east wall.

Written Records

As evident from the above description, from the mid-Qing to the People's Republic, the Caishan Goddess Temple was continuously active. However, how and when it was first founded needs further examination. The *Tongshan xianzhi* 铜山县志 (Gazetteer of Tongshan County), compiled in the early Republican period on the basis of Qing-dynasty records, notes,

Temple to the Jade Emperor (Yuhuangmiao 玉皇庙): There are ten: one near Jiahe 夹河, one in Tuocheng 坨城, one in Huangzhong 黄钟, one in Zhujia zhuang 朱家庄, one in Jijia shan 季家山, one in Liangshan 梁山, one in Louzi ding 楼子顶, one in Caijia shan 蔡家山, one in Sizuo lou 四座楼, and one in Yangjia lou 杨家楼. The above is based on an old gazetteer from the Daoguang period [1821-1851]. In addition, there is another Jade Emperor Temple northeast of the city, on Panma shan 盘马山.

Temple of Excellent Succor (Xianqi miao 显济庙): Located on the peak of Taishan, dedicated to the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds. Erected during the Jiaqing period [1796-1821], it goes back to the 43rd year of Qianlong [1778], when the prefect Yong Ling 永龄 sponsored the remodeling of the Prime Lady's old sanctuary. Since then the annual pilgrimage, from the 1st to the 18th of the 4th lunar month, came to flourish greatly and was known as the Taishan Festival.

The temple is also called Taishan Temple. It has subsidiaries in three Jijia shan, Caijia shan, and Zhengjia ji 郑家集. Known as Goddess Temple 奶庙, it is found in seven locations: one outside the north gate of the mountain, one on the north side of Zifang shan 子房山, one on Pangjia shan 庞家山, one in Gutai ji 顾台集, one in Huangjia ji 黄家集, one in Huang Village 黄村, one in Xinglong Gorge 兴隆峪. The above is based on an old gazetteer from the Daoguang period and matches the prefectural records. (Wang and Qi 1991, 197)

These two entries clearly refer to Caijia shan, thus providing a record of religious activities in Cai Village. The first notes that there was a temple to the Jade Emperor, while the second speaks of a Taishan Temple dedicated to the Prime Lady. It seems hard to fathom that such a small place should support two separate Daoist institutions. To clarify the point, I interviewed numerous local residents who all agreed that, in living memory, Cai Village only had one temple and none other—the Goddess Temple.

Could it be that the gazetteer was wrong? To check out this possibility, I closely examined related entries in the late-Qing *Tongzhi Xuzhou fuzhi* 同治徐州府志 (Comprehensive Gazetteer of Xuzhou Prefecture), focusing on information on Tongshan Country, then under Xuzhou jurisdiction. The text's "Cisi kao" 祠祀考 (Record of Altars and Offerings; ch. 14), describes both temples in question:

Temple to the Jade Emperor: Three found in Tongshan County: one near Jiahe, one in Tuocheng, and one in Huangzhong. (Wu and Zhu 1991, 446)

Temple of Excellent Succor: One found in Tongshan County, located on the peak of Taishan, dedicated to the Prime Lady . . . The temple is also called the Taishan Temple. (1991, 449)

Neither of these two entries makes an actual reference to Caishan. However, comparing their information with that cited above, it becomes obvious that the first, the Republican period gazetteer, is more detailed. For example, the Taishan Temple mentioned in the entry on the Temple of Excellent Succor was already active in Caishan Village during the Jiaqing period, yet the *Tongzhi Xuzhou fuzhi* does not mention it. It seems that the older document, the Qing-dynasty gazetteer, was deeply involved with local competitions and jealousies, while the Republican text sought to create a more comprehensive presentation of the entire county and is accordingly both more detailed and more reliable.

Names and Cults

The gazetteer's entries mentioning Caijia shan being entirely creditable, there must be another reason than erroneous recording for its claim that Cai Village also housed a Temple to the Jade Emperor. One possibility is that this reflects a yet different name of the Caishan Goddess Temple. Historically, the belief in the Jade Emperor goes back to a much earlier period than that in the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds. Already documented during the Sui and Tang dynasties, it rose to great popular prominence under the Ming and Qing. In other words, it is quite possible that the Caishan Goddess Temple contained a major sanctuary to the Jade Emperor before it was dedicated primarily to the Prime Lady, and the record in the gazetteer reflects its former name.

My surveys and interviews show clearly that the front hall remained dedicated to the Prime Lady even when the back hall fell into disrepair and destruction. The villagers are not clear which deities were housed in the latter. The *Tongshan xianzhi's* mention of a Jade Emperor Temple in the village thus may reflect an earlier reality, going back to the Daoguang period. Records referring to repairs made to the back hall dur-

ing this period may well mean that the dominant deity then was the Jade Emperor and that the entire complex at the time was commonly referred to as his sanctuary. This is not uncommon. Many Daoist institutions combined worship of the Jade Emperor with a veneration of the Prime Lady. Another case in point is the Temple of Assembled Immortals (Huixian guan 会仙观) in Wuxiang 武乡 Shanxi, which contains a hall to the Jade Emperor as well as a sanctuary of the Goddess (Ye 2008, 33).

Besides being dedicated to the Jade Emperor, it is also entirely possible that the Caishan Goddess Temple at some point functioned as a Temple to the Eastern Sacred Mountain (Dongyue miao 东岳庙), offering worship to the Lord of Taishan (Taishan fujun 泰山府君). The main reason for this speculation is the memory of many elderly villagers that the temple's main festival occurred on the 28th day of the 3rd lunar month—the Lord's birthday. In contrast to this, the birthday of the Taishan Goddess, i. e., the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds, is dated variously to 1/15, 3/15, 4/8, and 4/18 (Fan 1995, 28).

The fact that the temple's main festival coincides with the birthday of the Lord of Taishan confirms its close relation to the latter's cult. Going back to before the Ming dynasty, this cult was well represented in Tongshan County, with a sanctuary not far from Cai Village, right outside the Ligu line: "Built in the 9th year of the Zhenglong reign period under the Jin dynasty [1164], it has a stele inscription" (*Tongshan xianzhi*, p. 197). The cult of the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds, the daughter of the Lord of Taishan, developed in its wake and came to flourish under Emperors Xianzong and Xiaozong (r. 1465-1505) (Ye 2009, 36).

This opens the possibility that the Caishan Goddess Temple in an even earlier incarnation was dedicated to the Lord of Taishan, and that its relation to the cult of the Prime Lady was a later development. My guess would be that over time the Prime Lady's cult increased in popularity and came to overshadow that of the Lord until people no longer remembered its early stages and only knew it as a place of worship of the Taishan Goddess. However, the temple festival continued to follow the earlier convention, held on the birthday of the Lord of Taishan.

Early Evolution

The Caishan Goddess Temple, it thus appears, previously included a major sanctuary to the Jade Emperor and, prior to that, served as a worship center for the Lord of Taishan or combined the cult of both. As to when it evolved into its latest dimension, as a subsidiary of the Taishan Temple offering worship to the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds, the Jiajing period of the Ming dynasty (1522-1566) seems most likely.

The Prime Lady received her first formal sanctuary on the peak of Taishan during the Dazhong xiangfu period of the Song (1008-1016). Under the Jin, the temple was honored by the given greater honor and renamed Perfected Palace (*zhengong* 真宫) (Dai 2003, 33). Over the centuries, her cult came to flourish greatly, with Taishan as the center of a major expansion in all directions. Local temples adopted the cult, which exploded far beyond its home ground, reaching its heyday during the Jiajing period. “Most temples to the Prime Lady in Jiangsu were built during the Ming dynasty, with a particular spike during the Jiajing and Wanli (1563-1620) periods” (Dai 2003, 34). Thus, temples in Xuzhou, Huai'an 淮安, Jiangdu 江都, Songjiang 松江, and other locations date to the Jiajing reign (Meng 2012, 65).

The Caishan Goddess Temple being in northern Jiangsu, it was not only close to the epicenter of the cult to the Prime Lady, but also placed strategically right south of the Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal and east of the major iron-producing center at Ligu—ever since the Han dynasty a prosperous and important economic hub. Being well connected due to both the convenient closeness of major lines of transportation and the rich economic resources of the area, it is most likely that its cult to the Prime Lady began no later than the Jiajing period.

Also, according to an interview with Wang Zhonghua 王中华, president of the Xuzhou Daoist Association, a stone stele dated to this period was discovered in a ditch near the Daoist temple in Cai Village. Its inscription commemorates the restoration of the “Traveling Palace of the Prime Lady,” dated to the “Jiajing period of the Great Ming.” If this is true—and I have not been able to see it for myself despite several visits, so its veracity has still to be confirmed—the Caishan Goddess Temple was constructed right around this time, i. e., in the 13th year of

Jiajing (1534). The murals, then, depicting the divine progress of the Goddess, although in style much like Tang or Song paintings, would go back to after this date, being the product of late Ming culture.

Conclusion

Compared with houses in the surrounding environment, the front hall of the Caishan Goddess Temple naturally looks old and decrepit. However, looking beyond its obviously dysfunctional appearance, we can catch a glimpse of the profound religious and cultural connotations it embodies. Even leaving aside its early stages as a sanctuary to the Lord of Taishan and the Jade Emperor, it has served as a worship center for the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds for over 500 years.

During Ming and Qing, the temple flourished greatly, none its equal in the entire region north of Xuzhou and south of Tengzhou. After 1911, under the Republic with its frequent civil wars and the people's increasing destitution, the temple fell into decline until by the mid-1940s only two resident Daoists remained. After Liberation, it was used as a schoolhouse, warehouse, factory, sheep pen, and for other local purposes, shrinking in the process from its original two halls and 80 *mu* of land to the three bays still standing of the front hall. Fortunately, the murals on its walls have survived partially, opening a window into its former glory.

Combined with historical records, the murals allow a glimpse of the great culture of belief and religious devotion that once characterized Chinese society, as represented here by the beliefs associated with Taishan and its deities. Not only an important aspect of the overall cult of sacred mountains that used to pervade the country, Taishan is particularly powerful due to the political Feng and Shan sacrifices, its popular role as the seat of the otherworldly administration, and the many poetic and artistic accolades it received over the centuries. A central feature of popular religion, the Taishan cult was also adopted and expanded by Daoists. The increasing impact of one of its aspects, the cult of the Prime Lady of the Morning Clouds, moreover, since the Ming and Qing has been the result of the fruitful integration and cooperation of numerous different elements. Over time, it rose to such prominence that it eclipsed the worship of her father, the Lord of Taishan, becoming a core mainstay of popular religiosity in the region.

Cai Village being located in northern Jiangsu, less than 200 kilometers (130 miles) south of Taishan, remained firmly in the overall sphere of influence of the sacred mountain, thus it is not surprising that it featured a temple to the Goddess. What is amazing is that at a street corner between the temple's dilapidated front hall and the newly built houses of the villagers, there is still a stone with a red-ink inscription: "This Taishan rock blocks off evil!" What a testimonial to the lasting heritage of the culture of belief!

A great gift to our understanding of Daoist religious history, and the worship of the Prime Lady in particular, the remaining walls of the Caishan Goddess Temple with their precious murals are not only examined and reviewed, but also increasingly protected by the Xuzhou Bureau of Cultural Affairs and the Daoist Association. To date, they have covered the roof with two layers of tarpaulin to prevent further collapse due to rain and are working on taking more detailed measures toward protection and restoration.

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News of the Field

Obituaries

Tan Dajiang 谭大江



Tan Dajiang was a great teacher of Qigong, Wudang martial arts, Taijiquan, Inner Alchemy, and numerous Yangsheng exercises. Serving originally as a guardian of monument on Mt. Wudang, he learned numerous methods of the Wudang tradition from famous Daoist and martial arts masters.

Since 2010, he regularly visited Germany to teach qigong and Daoist methods for medical and qigong associations, participating in annual meetings and presenting important exercises from the Wudang tradition, including also the *Yijin jing* 易筋经.

Master Tan impressed not only as a very conscientious teacher with Confucian rigor and discipline, but also as a comprehensive scholar with great knowledge of history, Daoist methods, and cultural assets, even though he never attended university. Editor-in-chief of *Wudang Magazine*, he also authored numerous books on longevity and Daoist exercises and their historical, religious, and philosophical background.

—Ute Engelhardt

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—Bai Zhaojie

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—Shih-shan Susan Huang

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Taoist Texts Collection

The Centre for Studies of Daoist Culture and the Chinese University of Hong Kong Library have jointly established a special “Taoist Texts Collection,” using latest computer technology for digitalization. Materials center on texts that arrived in Hong Kong from Daoist abbeys on Mt. Luofu and other areas of Guangdong after the Republican period. The collectors donated the scriptures to the Chung Chi College Elisabeth Luce Moore Library in the 1950s. Stored in the Chinese University of Hong Kong Library, the collection provides significant information regarding the concepts and practices of internal alchemy as well as the cult of Lüzu and related spirit-writing altars. In addition, it holds several precious, often woodblock, editions of Qing-dynasty Daoist texts, including also the *Chongkan Daozang Jiyao* of 1907. To access this collection: <http://repository.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/en/collection/daoist/bibliography>. For the *Daozang Jiyao* see <http://repository.lib.cuhk.hk/en/collection/daoist> —Lai Chi Tim

Videos

Li Manshan: Portrait of a Folk Daoist, by Stephen Jones, is a documentary of a group of Daoism priests and musicians in north China, presenting scenes from their lives over three decades that provide insights into their life and personality. The film suggests the destruction of the great temples and much of their traditional ritual repertoire under Maoism, but reveals the persistence of Daoist liturgy and the importance of texts and music. It documents the evocative, ever-present centrality of writing (scriptures, talismans, calligraphy) in Daoist ritual while showing the day-to-day activities of the priests in the extraordinary landscape of the region. To watch, please visit: <https://vimeo.com/155660741>.

For more works and activities of the director, who has also just published a major volume on the subject, see stephenjones.blog

The Professor: Tai Chi's Journey West is a feature documentary about Tai Chi and one of its great masters, Cheng Man-Ching, a man who brought Tai Chi and Chinese culture to the West during the swinging,

turbulent 1960's. This film tells his remarkable story and features Tai Chi as a martial art and a spiritual practice. Available on DVD and Video On Demand. To see the trailer and for more information please visit the website: www.tai-chifilm.com.

Conferences

Fourth Japan-American Daoist Studies Conference

March 29-30, Tacoma, Washington

Organized by Terry Kleeman and hosted by Pacific Lutheran University, this meeting brought together eight Japanese and eight American scholars, plus three observers from Taiwan to discuss issues of transmission in Daoism. Japanese delegates include Asano Haruji, Hirose Naoki, Ikehira Noriko, Maruyama Hiroshi, Matsumoto Koichi, Mori Yuria, and Tanaka Fumio. The American presenters were Steve Bokenkamp, Daniel Burton-Rose, Michael Como, Stephen Eskildsen, Xun Liu, Gil Raz, and Terry Kleeman. Chang Chaojan (Fu Jen Catholic University), Erik Hammarstrom (Pacific Lutheran University), Hsieh Shu-wei (National Chengchi University), Lee Feng-mao (Academia Sinica emeritus), Yamada Toshiaki (Toyo University) observed the proceedings. Questions were raised about the distinction between genuine and apocryphal materials, forms of liturgy and services, with a particular focus on transmission rituals, as well as internal alchemy and local practices.

Quanzhen Daoist Studies Conference

October 21-20, Weihai, Shandong

Funded by the Blue Pine Monastery (Qingsong guan) of Hong Kong, and organized by Zhao Weidong of Shandong Normal University, the two conference was attended by eleven Daoist scholars from various institutions of China, US and Japan who presented recent research on the early development of Quanzhen Daoism. Participants included Xun Liu, Fan Guangchun, Zhang Guangbao, Yin Zhihua, Guo Wu, Zhou Ying, Zhang

Yisheng, Wu Guangzheng, Qin Guoshuai, Fu Haiyan, and more. Topics focused on doctrinal issues as well as the lives of Jin-Yuan period Daoist masters, lineages, and the development of major centers, such as Laoshan and Taishan.

International Symposium on Daoist Studies

July 29-31, Mufushan, Hunan

The inaugural meeting of a new joint venture, by Renmin and Rutgers Universities and organized by Liu Xun and He Jianming, this was held on scenic Mt. Mufu 幕阜山 near Ping-jiang in Hunan. It convened over 60 scholars, mostly Chinese, but including also representatives from Japan, France, and the US. Presentations focused on local and regional expressions of Daoism, especially in Hunan, covering a wide range of periods from the middle ages to modernity, and also ventured into textual and ritual studies. A fruitful and pleasant, highly engaging event.

Religious Practice and Literary Expression

December 14-17, Wuhan, Hubei

Sponsored by and held at Wuhan University, this third meeting on issues of religion and literature brought together 80-plus scholars from N. America, Europe, Japan, Hong Kong and Taiwan, including 23 from the host institution. They explored the presence of Buddhist and Daoist themes in traditional Chinese poetry as well as the development of key mythological themes in doctrine and fiction. Particular attention was paid to more recent manifestations, including Western studies of Buddhist literature, issues of translation, and new developments over the last few decades. Other areas explored include hagiography, the religious role of poetry, and religious themes in popular novels. Short excursions were also taken into popular religion and Christianity.

—Liu Xun

Third International Symposium of Quanzhen Daoism and Lao-Zhuang Studies

March 25-27, 2016, Wuhan, China

Sponsored by the Daoist Studies Center of Huazhong Normal University (Wuhan) and the Quanzhen Research Institute of Qingsong guan (Hong Kong), this conference convened 150 participants, including many young scholars, from seven countries (China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, Europe, USA). About ninety presentations focused either on traditional Daoist thought in Laozi and Zhuangzi or new explorations of the Complete Perfection School, notably of activities, institutions, and masters in specific locations in late imperial China. The conference had extensive plenary sessions, with only Saturday morning divided into three panels. There was little room for discussion, but commentators provided comprehensive integration and pertinent questions. The conference was followed by a two-day excursion to Xingzhou, an ancient walled city on the Yangtze, joined by seventy participants.

Daoism: Self, Science, and Society 10th International Conference on Daoist Studies

May 25-29, Miaoli, Taiwan

Sponsored by the Society for the Study of Religious Philosophy and held at the spectacular Tian'an Taihe Retreat Center of Tiandijiao, this convened 180 participants from 20 countries. In ten sessions of four parallel events each, over a hundred presenters offered their recent research and/or practice expertise to a highly appreciative audience. Panels discussed Daoism in relation to art, medicine, science, ritual, mythology, and regional diversity while also engaging in a detailed historical examination of traditions. Keynote speakers included Lee Fengmao and Paul Katz, both of Academia Sinica, as well as Li Hsien-kuang, the grandson of Tiandijiao's founder, Master Han-ching. The conference also included an excursion to local folk and religious centers and offered a variety of cultural and musical exhibits. For more, see ssrp.info/Daoism.

—Livia Kohn

Other Meetings

歷史與當代地方道教研究國際學術研討會暨，國際合作研究計劃工作坊， sponsored by National Chengchi University, July 12-14, 2016, Taipei.

丹道與養生文化研究會揭牌儀式，暨“丹道與明清思想、社會”學術工作坊， sponsored by 丹道與養生文化研究會, May 21-22, 2016, Beijing.

For more Daoism-related conferences and meetings in China, see also <http://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/U-U14WZcSiAi4Au-QSdwfQ>

UPCOMING

Fashioned from Holy Matter Workshop on the Semantics of Image-Making

Florence, Italy, July 6-7, 2017

Sponsored by and held at the Max-Planck-Institut, this cross-cultural workshop focuses on images made of or shaped from holy matter, such as earth, stone, blood, sweat, or wood. It seeks to explore how holy material becomes semantically charged and/ or redefined through the process of artistic creation. A related objective is to analyze the implications of meaning. For more details, contact the organizers, hoffmann@khi.fi.it and/or jessica.richardson@khi.fi.it.

Annual Meeting European Association for the Study of Religion

Leuven, Belgium, September 18-21, 2017

This annual meeting will focus on issues of communication, notably on how religions are communicated within their own tradition and toward outsiders. Topics include ways of creating “ideal” types or images of a tradition, handling moments of crisis, establishing and questioning

forms of authority and structure, coping with dissidence, balancing preservation and renewal, and how all these are communicated to the faithful. For more details, see <https://kuleuvencongres.be/easr2017/>

—Stephan Peter Bumbacher

Fifth Congress Societas Medicinae Sinensis

Tutzing, Germany, October 6-8, 2017

Assembling a number of major teachers of qigong and Daoist practice, this event will take at the Protestant Academy in scenic Tutzing on Lake Starnberg near Munich. Presenters include Li Hechun 李和春 with workshops on qigong in the Daoist tradition and Daoist methods of self-cultivation (taiji, qigong, music, tea), as well as possibly Li Yuanguo 李遠國, senior scholar of traditional Daoist practices. In addition, there will be a panel on longevity techniques, featuring senior European masters and scholars. For details of the program and registration, visit www.tcm.edu.

—Ute Engelhardt

Creativity and Diversity 11th International Conference on Daoist Studies

Nanterre, France, May 17-20, 2017

Continuing the tradition of international conferences on Daoist Studies, this year's meeting is generously hosted by the University of Paris at Nanterre. Its theme is "Creativity and Diversity." The focus is on the artistic and specific local expressions of Daoist worldview and practice, both in history and today. Panels and presentations—in English, Chinese, or French—focus particularly on anthropological studies and interactions between Daoism and art, music, ritual, theater, literature, martial arts, medicine, and various skills. For details and registrations, please visit www.daoiststudies.org and/or contact daoconf@gmail.com.

—Livia Kohn

Other News

Daoist Center in Switzerland



The Swiss Daoist Association, under the directorship of Dr. Fabrice Jordan, is building a major Daoist center on Ming Shan in the majestic alps at Bullet, between Lausanne and Neufchatel. Funding of the 5-million-francs project is secured, construction will commence this fall, and the opening is expected for 2018. The site follows the principles of Feng Shui, leaning against a mountain and overlooking a lake. Besides a major worship hall, it will house a library, dormitory, refectory, medical office, gift shop, and more.

For more details, see <http://www.24heures.ch/vaud-regions/nord-vaudois-broye/centre-taoiste-s-apprete-sortir-terre/story/30594937>

—Stephan Peter Bumbacher

Contributors

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