Assessment for China sessions on gender sex and sexuality in module hphp4014

1. Essay titles:
   1) How is the concept of yin-yang applied by Chinese in their understanding of gender?
   2) What are the characteristics of Daoist understanding of sex and sexuality in comparison with that of Confucianism?
2. Materials for textual analysis:
   1) Give your analysis on the below passage from modern western author for a introduction to Sex Techniques to see how far it is connected to the real Daoist philosophy.

   The Taoist sexual practices – also called Fangzhongshu or the "Arts of the Bedchamber" – are ancient Chinese Taoist directives on practicing sexual activity. Historically, the roots of Taoism can be traced back to the 4th century BC and the techniques concerning sexual practices evolved gradually in the next 1500 years, spanning various Chinese imperial dynasties. Fangzhongshu techniques deal for the most part with sexual skills, methods and techniques with regard to intercourse between men and women. The basic concepts cover sexual harmony and how to reach it, attention for flirting and foreplay before sex, and artistic ability in sexual behavior. In fact, the Fangzhongshu has a lot in common with the well-known ancient Indian *Kama Sutra* texts. It also contains many directives and techniques for treatments that cure erectile dysfunction, premature ejaculation, anejaculation, and other kinds of sexual dysfunction or problems. That is, the Fangzhongshu describes a large number of special sexual positions that serve to cure or prevent illnesses and discomforts. The Fangzhongshu practices are also known as "Joining Energy" or "Joining the Essences," and this is important because it's claimed by several sources that the real meaning of the Fangzhongshu is not so much the sexual arts itself but using sexual activity to stay in good health, retain and produce Jing (a nutritive essence and one of the so-called Three Treasures Jing, Qi and Shen), promote Life Energy (Qi essence) and longevity, and grow in Spiritual Wisdom (Shen essence). For instance, many Taoist practitioners connect the loss of ejaculatory fluids to the loss of vital life force and energy, resulting in premature aging, illnesses, and general fatigue. Thus, it's believed that decreasing the frequency of – or even totally avoiding – ejaculation is essential to preserve life essence. Yet, female orgasms, on the other hand, are claimed to be spiritually energizing, and not draining. Over time, Taoists developed different methods to control ejaculation such as pulling out immediately before an orgasm, certain breathing and focusing techniques, or applying pressure on the perineum and thereby retaining the sperm. Another important idea is that the union of a man and a woman (i.e. lovemaking) can result in the creation of sexual energy and Jing essence, which in its turn can be transformed into Qi to replenish Life Force. This process is called *Sexual Alchemy*. Now, by having as much sex as possible one has the opportunity to transform more Jing and experience many health benefits. The Fangzhongshu is certainly not only for men. Women should be stimulated and pleased also in order to be able to benefit from the sexual act. If sex is performed in this manner, women can create more Jing, benefitting both men and women.

   2) Analysis on below passage from 金瓶梅 *The Plum in the Golden Vase/ The Golden Lotus* for any Daoist influence:

P'an Chin-lien, who was standing to one side, picked up on this, saying, "If you object to someone's having been born to a concubine, who among the parties involved was not born to a concubine? This child of the Ch'iao family was also born to a concubine. Truly: When the Spirit of the Perilous Paths runs into the God of Longevity; If you refrain from commenting about my height, I'll not complain about that shortness of yours."

When Hsi-men Ch'ing heard these words, he was enraged and cursed at her, saying, "You lousy whore! Mind your own business. While we're talking here, for you to Stick your beak in and wag your tongue, is completely out of place."

Chin-lien's face turned crimson with embarrassment, and she beat a hasty retreat, muttering as she went, "Whoever said I had the right to speak? It's obvious I haven't the standing to say anything."

Gentle reader take note: When Chin-lien observed the way in which Yu¨ ehniang and Ch'iao Hung's wife agreed to the betrothal at the party that day, with the result that Li P'ing-erh was draped in red fabric and had artificial flowers stuck in her hair, while wine was presented to her, she became very sore at heart. The fact that Hsi-men Ch'ing saw fit to curse at her this way on her return home only made matters worse, and she withdrew to Yu¨ eh-niang's inner chamber to cry.

Hsi-men Ch'ing then asked, "How come your sister-in-law didn't come back with you?" "Kinswoman Ch'iao," explained Yu¨ eh-niang, "on learning that so many wives of officials would be at our place tomorrow, declined my invitation, and I suggested that my sister-in-law stay on at their place, so she could bring her along with her on the morrow." "Just as I said," remarked Hsi-men Ch'ing, "the seating plan at the party tomorrow is going to be awkward to arrange. I don't know how we're going to handle it when we get together in the future."

They talked for a while longer, after which Meng Yu¨-lou came into the inner room and found Chin-lien crying there.

"What are you so upset about?" she asked. "Let him have his say, and forget about it." "Fortunately you were there to hear it with your own ears," said Chin-lien. "What did I say that was disparaging of him? But I had a point to be made. He said that the other family's child was born to a concubine. I said, 'Was the Ch'iao family's child not born to a concubine? She was also born to a concubine.' Does he think that: By wrapping it in a paper bag, He can fool anyone? You'll come to a bad end, you lousy ruffian! Then he opened his eyes wide and started cursing at me in a way that was so: Unfeeling and unjustifiable. Why shouldn't I have the right to say what I think? He's had a change of heart, and, in the days to come, he'll: Suffer the consequences before my very eyes. What I didn't say was that that infant relative of the Ch'iao family's at least came into this world with something of Old Man Ch'iao's spunk in her, whereas that child of yours: Has strayed out of familiar territory. Who knows whose seed he was sired by? If people want to play the game of seeking marriage alliances in order to enhance their social standing, what right does that give you to take out your annoyance on me? What's my cunt got to do with it that you should start in cursing me? How old is your son, anyway? He's nothing but a puny armload of a bladder's spawn. And you're already putting him on the marriage market for no good reason. You've got so much money you don't know what to do with it. If you tug on the sheet until it's torn, you'll have no cover. The dog who bites the inflated bladder, will find his excitement deflated. Right

now the relationship may be wet enough, given the age of the parties involved, but, in the future, if you don't watch out, it may turn out to be no more than an arid pseudo relationship. If you blow out the lamp and close your eyes, You can hardly expect to see what is to come. People may feel well disposed toward each other at the time they make such alliances, but, more often than not, they end up feeling differently three or five years later." "As disingenuous as people may be nowadays," said Meng Yu¨-lou, "they seldom go in for this sort of thing. If you stop to consider it, it's early days yet. For children who are hardly out of the womb, what's the point of exchanging cuttings from your lapels? It's no more than playing the game of seeking marriage alliances in order to enhance one's social standing, that's all." "Even if that wife of yours is so wantonly anxious to play the marriage alliance game," said Chin-lien, "what right does that give the lousy refractory ruffian to start cursing at me for no good reason? It seems that: All you get for raising toads is dropsy. What's the point of it all?" "Whoever told you to blurt out your thoughts in such an imprudent way?" said Yu¨-lou. "If he doesn't curse you, Should he curse the dog instead?" "It would have been awkward for me to say it right out," said Chin-lien. "Was I supposed to pretend that the child was not born to a concubine, but to the principal wife? Even though the Ch'iao family's child was born to a concubine, at least it came into the world with something of Old Man Ch'iao's spunk in her, whereas that child of your's: Has strayed out of familiar territory. Who knows whose seed he was sired by?" When Yu¨-lou heard this, she sat for a while without saying another word, until Chin-lien went back to her quarters.