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Articles

Blending Dao

An Analysis of Images in the *Daode jing*

PAUL D'AMBROSIO

What cannot be told of, we want to know, knowing also that we cannot say: the ineffable is that about which all that is to be said is that nothing more is sayable. Still, one persists in wanting to know...
— Arthur C. Danto (1974, 46)

Abstract

The well-known ambiguity surrounding the concept of Dao, especially in the *Daode jing*, has led some scholars to argue for “religious” interpretations. They find the difficulty in defining Dao intentional and argue that Dao cannot be appreciated through language, but requires some personal change. In this essay I will argue that these types of interpretations, generally speaking, reduces the text to a mainly religious (i.e. faith based) thought by ignoring important philosophical elements of *Daode jing*. The inability to put Dao into words does not negate any or all comprehension of Dao; it merely informs readers that Dao cannot be *exhausted* in words. Accordingly, elucidating this idea seems to be one of the major focuses of the text, which is done mainly through the wide use of a variety of images. In order to tackle this issue I propose a “cross-cultural image analysis.” I will use metaphor interpretation of Western cognitive science to examine images in the *Daode jing* and show how they are related to aid in *an* understanding of Dao. I employ the “multiple blend” metaphor analysis purposed by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner (2003), a template that explains how a series of metaphors can work together to produce new dimensions of comprehension. When Fauconnier and Turner describe multiple blends they do so in order to explain how the mind works (2003, 17-18). This “multiple blend analysis” is slightly different: it explains how one *could* think of the images in *Daode jing*.

The *Daode jing* is riddled with images, ambiguity and “darkness,” to use a term coined by Hans-Georg Moeller (2004). “Literal” translations of this text have been criticized for taking advantage of unclear passages and “Christianizing” or “Westernizing” the text (Ames and Hall 2004, xi). In particular, the concept of Dao 道 (or “way”) has often been disputed. Dao has been confused in Western philosophy with more familiar metaphysical concepts such as God or Aristotle’s primordial Being. The confusion has arisen for good reason. The first chapter reads:

The Dao (Way) that can be told of is not the eternal Dao;
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth;
The named is the mother of all things.
Therefore let there always be nonbeing so we may see their subtlety,
And let there always be being so we may see their outcome.
The two are the same,
But after they are produced, they have different names.
They both may be called deep and profound (*xuan*).
Deeper and more profound,
The door of all subtleties! (Chan 1989, 139)

However, the inability to put Dao into words does not negate all understanding of Dao. Some scholars think that Dao can only be understood through personal cultivation, and never explained in words. For example, Arthur Danto, in his article “Language and the Tao,” concludes that “regarding the ineffability of the Dao . . . [one is] reduced to rather than having arrived at silence” (1973, 54). Danto’s suggestion is that the “religious language” of *Daode jing* is supposed to challenge the limits of our understanding, leading to a point “beyond which we cannot proceed except by changing our lives” (1973, 55).

In this paper I argue against Danto’s “religious” reading, and any similar interpretations of the *Daode jing*. I disagree with Danto’s suggestion that Dao cannot be spoken about, and that one must be reduced to silence on this topic. His suggestion that Dao cannot be appreciated through language, but rather requires some type of personal change is also suspicious. Here I will argue that a reading such as Danto’s ignores important philosophical elements of *Daode jing*, and reduces the text to a mainly religious (i.e. faith based) thought. In my reading the inability to

put Dao into words does not negate any or all comprehension of Dao; it merely informs readers that Dao cannot be *exhausted* in words. In fact, describing Dao, mainly in relation to images, seems to be one of the major projects of *Daode jing*.

Despite what *Daode jing* 1 says, the book is certainly not silent about Dao. Descriptions of Dao are certainly one of its central focuses. Although it does not explore the definitive aspects of Dao, it relates Dao to several different images time and time again (see Ivanhoe and Van Norden 2001, 158; Chan 1989, 138). A. C. Graham advises scholars to use these images or metaphors as "correctives" for understanding Dao (1989, 223). Likewise, Hans-Georg Moeller describes Dao (and other aspects of Daoist philosophy) through these images and their linkable qualities (2004; 2006). I use Graham's suggestion that the images are "correctives" and combine it with Moeller's suggestion that the images in *Daode jing* have certain "linkability" in terms of their similar characteristics. Thus I hope to further the projects of these two great scholars by showing the images associated with Dao in a more comprehensive and well-structured manner.

To comprehensively structure the linkable characteristics of the images associated with Dao, I propose a "cross-cultural image analysis." In other words, I will use metaphor interpretation of Western cognitive science to examine images in the *Daode jing* to show how they are related and aid in *an* understanding of Dao. I employ the "multiple blend" metaphor analysis purposed by Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner (2003), a template that explains how a series of metaphors can work together to produce new dimensions of comprehension. I use the idea of multiple blends in a way that may be somewhat unique, though not totally different from what they intended. When Fauconnier and Turner describe multiple blends they do so in order to explain how the mind works (2003, 17-18). This "multiple blend analysis" is slightly different: it explains how one *could* think of the images in *Daode jing*.

A multiple blend does not merely "intertwine" two or more metaphors; the blend attempts to go beyond a mere "meshing" of metaphors (2003, 281). The metaphors in the blend interact and become part of a selective process whose product is "emergent" and therefore greater than a blind combination of input metaphors (2003, 42-44). This kind of analysis is perfect for the images in *Daode jing* because they are more

than just metaphors.¹ The images are to be attributed to Dao on a more matter-of-fact level than mere metaphors. As demonstrated below, many characteristics of the images in *Daode jing* describe Dao quite literally.

This analysis does not violate the ineffable and indefinable nature of Dao. Instead, it shows insights that much can be gained through reading these images in a way that is less enigmatic. In order to accurately do this, I first explain Fauconnier and Turner's idea of "multiple blends," then place Daoist images into this analysis template.

The Structure and Analysis of Multiple Blends

Fauconnier and Turner describe the fundamental workings of a complex metaphors or "blends." The authors use the idea of multiple blends to show how a metaphor can have several different, yet equally valid, meanings that contribute to, and further, the metaphor's quality. The aim of the multiple blends description is to describe *how* people can understand metaphors. Their analysis describes how complex conceptual integrations are part of even the simplest thoughts (2003, 18), such as the common metaphor such as "I see what you are saying" (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). However, the multiple blend becomes more confusing when it attempts to analyze more complex ideas with a high number of input spaces. The number of input spaces is the criteria to judge the complexity of an idea. The more complex the idea the more generic spaces to arise, and more difficult it becomes to blend. The like concepts between a larger number of input spaces often becomes more narrow, and the blend becomes increasingly more selective. This complicated idea is best understood by actually applying it to a metaphor.

Fauconnier and Turner's simplest example of multiple blends is given in their analysis of a newspaper editor's metaphor:

What President Clinton did, bravely and brilliantly, I think, was to gamble that the repertory actors of the health care industry have frightened Ameri-

¹ In an discussion I had with Dr. Moeller he described the images as being more literal then mere metaphors, in other words, when *Daode jing* says Dao is like a root that means that it *literally* shares many of the characteristics of a root, and is therefore an image and not a metaphor.

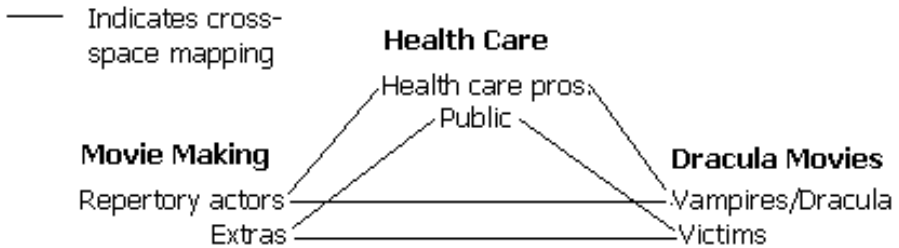
cans so badly that we are willing to accept anything, including higher taxes, rather than to continue being extras in a medical melodrama that resembles nothing so much as an endless "Dracula" movie where the count always wins, right up to the lost drop....The Dracula crowd scream "socialized medicine" and moan that you won't be able to pick your own doctor. (2003, 280)

This example presents three distinct input spaces.² The first space is the health care industry, the second is movie making, and the third is, more specifically, Dracula movies. This metaphor is a multiple blend because it is able to integrate these three spaces into a large and highly complicated metaphor. First, the different input spaces are recognized, next each space is related to one other space creating "generic spaces," and finally all three input spaces and generic spaces are combined to form the "blend space."

In order to come up with the generic spaces (and eventually a blend space) these three input spaces need to be recognized for their similarities by doing a "cross-space" mapping. Cross-space mapping is the combining of analogous terms or concepts in separate mental spaces (2003, 41). Fauconnier and Turner show that each of these spaces has two parts (2003, 281). The health care industry is made of health care professionals and the public, movie content breaks into repertory actors and extras, and the Dracula movies contain Dracula or vampires and victims. These aspects are coupled in a cross-space mapping:

Now that the input spaces and their cross-space mapping are understood generic spaces can be formed. The first generic space is between the movie making input space and the health care input space.

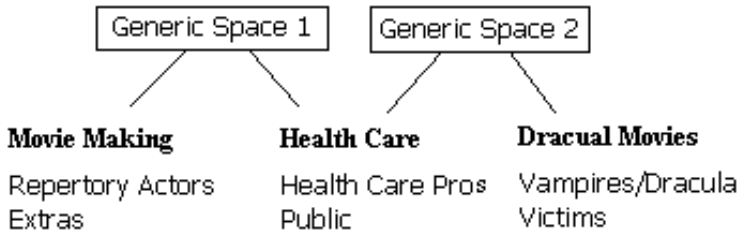
² Fauconnier and Turner describe mental input spaces as "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for the purposes of local understanding and action." They can have any content; anything from a person to part of a riddle. In basic terms an input space is one part of a metaphor (2003, 41, 47, 62).



The repertory actors are (cross-space) mapped onto health care professionals and the extras to the public. This becomes a generic space because the health care industry is set up so as to treat the public like nobodies, or extras in movie making. The only important people are the health care professionals, or the actors, every one else is basically ignored and used as props. The second metaphor, being connected to this first metaphor, furthers this idea.

The second generic space is between the health care industry and Dracula movies. This second metaphor uses the now familiar breakdown of the health care industry into health care professionals and the public. These two aspects are associated with Dracula (or vampires) and the victims in Dracula movies, respectively. The health care professionals are like Dracula or vampires, and the public is linked to victims of these vampires. Once again it seems that the health care industry is made up of professionals who act negatively by sucking out the public's commodities. Actually, this blending network is more negative because it suggests that the health care professionals are violent and take something away from the public that is vital for their lives, namely blood. Vampires suck the blood of their victims, and so, according to this metaphor, health care professionals are sucking money from the public.

This makes it clear that there can also be another, third generic space: movie making and Dracula movies. Dracula or vampires would be the repertory actors while the victims are, for the most, part extras. And so we have seen that there are three possible generic spaces that connect these three different input spaces. The fourth and final space – the blend space – is what connects all three input spaces, and allows the multiple blend to be understood.



Fauconnier and Turner argue that looking at the individual generic spaces is useful; however, these spaces are not as important as the blend. The generic spaces are somewhat simple, easily recognized and lack content; they are only important because they aid to the blend. The blend space is able to add understanding to the metaphor because it is the space that all of the input spaces can be reconciled within, it brings forth the most depth in meaning. In this particular multiple blend we find the blend space specifically when the author writes "The repertory actors of the health care industry have frightened Americans so baldly" (2003, 280). Here we see all three input spaces coming together. When these inputs all come together, and the blend is then understood, and the meaning of the multiple blend becomes clear.

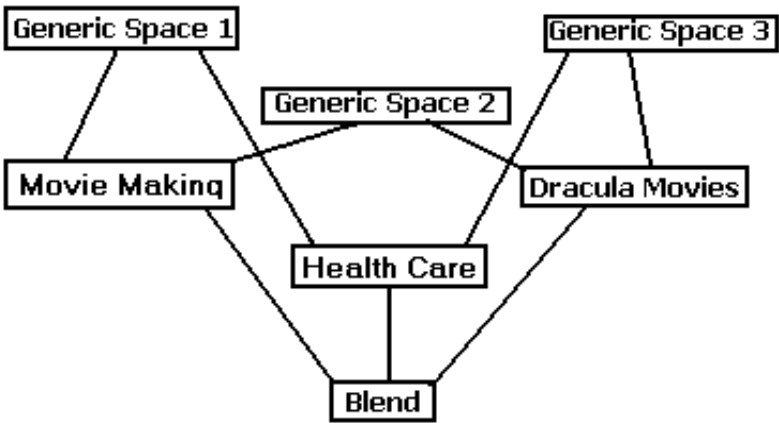
The three input spaces of Dracula movies, movie making and the health care industry come together in the blend to give the reader incredible insight into the author's intended meaning. Fauconnier and Turner explain the blend as such:

In the blend, where the force of the victimization relation is projected from the vampire space, the compatible actors/extras structure severs to add useful features and subtract others. . . . Repertory actors, whatever their faults, do not typically frighten extras or Americans. "Frightened" is projected from the vampire space. . . And we find in the blend the kind of opportunistic recruitment often noted for other examples: "The count always wins, right up to the last drop." . . .

The link, however, is not part of the relevant cross-space mapping between the vampire input and the health care space: The editorialist is not accusing the hospital of trying to take human blood away from patients. Rather, bloodsucking from the vampire space is conventionally mapped to deprivation of resources, money, and energy. In the blend, of course, mon-

ey and blood are the same, doctors and vampires are the same, and the opportunistic recruitment works splendidly. (2003, 281-82)

This suggests that Fauconnier and Turner’s hypothesis is correct. The editor (of the newspaper article) was not merely making a “mega-metaphor” or using several metaphors to show his point. The editor’s idea, which at first seems clear and concise, actually requires a great deal of mental activity to be correctly understood. According to Fauconnier and Turner, the editor’s point cannot be understood as merely two intertwined metaphors, but as something more active and selective—a blend (2003, 281).



The diagram below clearly shows that a blend is more than a metaphoric coupling of like terms or concepts. “The blend develops emergent structure that is not in the inputs”(2003, 42). The blend is selective; it combines useful aspects of different inputs, ignoring parts that cannot be combined or parts that do not seem to fit well. Metaphors try to find the similarity in terms or concepts by mapping each input onto one another. Blends work differently. A blend contains a selective composition of certain aspects of the input spaces (*ibid*). The blend is then able to complete any terms or aspects that do not fully or properly relate, and an entirely new mental space is formed.

The new mental space, the blend space, is one that understands the relation of two or more mental spaces with much greater depth and meaning than any metaphor could. The blend space is also unique in that

it allows contradiction or impossibilities to be imagined in order express meaning and understanding.³

Images, Ambiguity, and Darkness

The *Daode jing* contains much ambiguity that and can be understood in a variety of contexts. Interpretative slants range from Christianity to the modern business world (Autry et al. 1999). The flexibility of this text resides in its complex metaphors, ambiguous images, and simple yet convoluted language. It can present just as much frustration as insight. Readers are as often confused with the text as they are delighted or moved by it. One of the most difficult concepts to understand is Dao. Referring to the "unnamable" (Fung 1948, 94) or "ineffable" (Moeller 2004, 141), most scholars comment that Dao cannot be put into words. But, perhaps Dao can be "put into images."

Fortunately the *Daode jing* describes Dao with a large amount of images that can help give *an* understanding of Dao. These images are helpful because they demonstrate different "qualities" or "attributes" of Dao, however, their exact relation to each other and Dao, is never clear and highly mysterious or "dark." The Dao, being non-present, does not have any fundamental qualities or essence, and so one should not expect to find any description of that here. What will be shown is what Dao is like (not what qualities or essences it may have).

Many images are used in the *Daode jing* to describe Dao. The most prominent images are the uncarved block, water, mother, enigmatic female, gate, root, valley, wheel, empty vessel, ancestor, child, one, the formless form or nothing, and finally the image of the Way (i.e. Dao) itself.⁴ Many of these images appear multiple times in the texts, to demonstrate the ambiguity I present just one example of each image.

³ Impossibility: a contemporary scholar arguing with Kant (2003, 59-62). Contradiction: two monks, who are the same monk, walking on a mountain on two different days which are the same day (2003, 39-47).

⁴ Scholars such as Chan, Ivanhoe, Van Norden, Ames and Hall, Moeller, and Graham all recognize and point to some or all of these images in their respective works. For a more exhaustive list of prominent images and themes in *Daode jing*, along with a list of each chapter they appear in see Ames and Hall's thematic index (2004).

How raw! Like uncarved wood.
How impenetrable! Like muddy water.
How vast! Like the valley (ch. 15; Moeller 2006, 8)

The world had a beginning;
This can be considered the mother of the world (ch. 52).⁵

She [Dao] is called the “Enigmatic Female.”
The portal [or gate] of the Enigmatic Female;
[Dao] is called the root of Heaven and Earth. (ch. 6)

Thirty spokes are joined in the hub of a wheel.
But only by relying on what is not there,
do we have the use of the carriage. (ch. 11)

The Dao is like an empty vessel: no use could ever fill it up.
Vast and deep!
It seems to be the ancestor of the myriad creatures. . .
Deep and clear! . . . I do not know whose child it is. (ch. 4)

[Dao is] the gate of all mysteries! (ch. 1)
This [Dao] is known as the Enigmatic Unity. (ch. 56)

This [Dao] is called the formless form, the image of no thing.
This is called the confused and indistinct. (ch. 14)

Clearly these images express something about Dao, seem to point to certain aspects, but their exact function remains ambiguous at this point.⁶ The variety of images that are so often repeated gives testimony to their importance, but at systematic interpretations has hitherto been overlooked. Therefore, a proper analysis of these images is useful because it provide some understanding of Dao, clearing some of the ambiguity in this text. By understanding the characteristics of each of these images,

⁵ The following *Daode jing* passages all follow the translation in Ivanhoe and Norden 2001.

⁶ Many scholars recognize images and metaphors in the *Daode jing*, but none philosophers have attempted to explain exactly how and to what extent they relate to Dao.

and then relating these characteristics to those of all other images a systematic understanding of how these images relate to both each other and Dao may be had.

Each image is distinct, but not autonomous in describing Dao. All of these images do share similar attributes and can all be linked in a way to further understand Dao. Hans-Georg Moeller recommends that we read the eighty-one verses of the *Daode jing* as a hyper-text. This recommendation relies, in part, on his demonstration of the similar qualities that many of these images have. He writes, "The bridges that connect the chapters and verses of this 'chaotic,' disorderly text, the hinges that keep the text together and constitute its unity, are . . . the images and symbols . . . that repeatedly occur in close succession" (2006, 6-7). Following this advice, I examine these images as though they are linked, not only to their individual multiple occurrences, but I also suppose that images that shared similar characteristics are linked. Furthermore, it is my proposal that the systematic investigation of the "link-ability," or similarities between these images, affords one a somewhat new and distinct in-depth understanding of the ineffable Dao. To better understand the linking of these images it is possible to use the modern "multiple blend" analysis to blend the like qualities and have some understanding of Dao.

Important Images

In Fauconnier and Turner's example of a multiple blend, they analyzed a short paragraph with three distinct input spaces. This multiple blend analysis of Dao is much more complicated. The entire *Daode jing* be considered as the multiple blend, the input spaces being the images, the generic spaces the "link-ability" of these images, and the blend being Dao. The entire text does not have to be shown (remember it is to be read as a type of hyper-text), only the important aspects of images, as well as references to those aspects. And so, to understand Dao as a blend of these images, one must understand the input spaces, cross-space mapping, generic spaces and blend space.

The input spaces of this multiple blend are in particular: water, mother, un-carved block, enigmatic female, gate, root, valley, wheel, empty vessel, ancestor, child, one, the formless form or nothing. Each of these images has several connotations or aspects that can be considered

for the blend. By simply explaining the qualities of each of these images one can see what characteristics may be related to Dao. The aspects of these images that appear to be the same or similar make up the generic spaces and the selective blend represent an understanding of Dao. This is not simply the Dracula-Health Care blend that was shown above; aspects of these images do not match perfectly and are not shared by all thirteen images. However, if an aspect is shared by at least two images it is deemed important enough to be considered for the blend. This process may serve as a kind of “validation,” weeding out the aspects of certain images that may not relate to Dao. As further assurance of the validity of this method the characteristics that are related to Dao also be shown as directly attributed to Dao itself in *Daode jing*. Furthermore, once this model is completed it will be placed side by side with other prominent scholar’s interpretations.

Uncarved Block

The first image (or input space) is the uncarved block (of wood). This input has several important aspects. It is one, a whole, not yet split, which makes it formless with no definite characteristics. Only when a certain “character” is imposed or carved out of the block does it begin to have form. Words cannot describe this pre-cut block because it does not have any character or form, making it, like Dao, unable to be categorized by words. A.C. Graham likens Dao to an uncarved block, relating them as both being “out of which all things are cut” (1989, 223). In other words, things are shaped and become things only after this block is cut. The uncarved block symbolizes pre-definite being. It exists, but only as itself; “things” do not exist until the block becomes cut and thereby characterized (and then also namable). This nameless block can also be seen as a quite useless object. Of course there is a certain “potential” of the block, once it is cut the block enters a state of change and things emerge. But the block is indifferent to whatever may be cut from it.

The initial problem of this project, namely, the ineffability of Dao, becomes clearer when it is seen in relation to the characterless uncarved block. The Dao cannot be put into words because there is nothing clear or distinct about it; it literally has no character, attributes, or aspects. Danto’s interpretation, given at the beginning of the text, sees Dao as

somehow escaping language by transcending it. However, by relating Dao to the uncarved block it becomes clear that Dao is not above or transcendent of language, but that it is instead below or pre-linguistic. Unlike the Christian God Dao does not contain "super" attributes or aspects. The Dao does not exist above language because of an inability to reach its amazing essence, it is precisely the opposite. The Dao lacks any particular attributes and therefore cannot be spoken of. According to Graham's interpretation things are not yet cut/formed out of Dao; so how could there be a name for that which lacks any characteristics? Both Dao and the uncarved block are without name because they lack any attributes. In the forty-second chapter of the *Daode jing* we find:

Dao gives rise to continuity,
Continuity gives rise to difference,
Difference gives rise to plurality,
And plurality gives rise to the manifold of
everything that is happening. (ch. 42; Ames and Hall 2004, 142))

Clearly, Dao itself shows no defining characteristics, not even continuity, and therefore Dao cannot be defined. It seems that Dao is that which things are born from, but not a thing itself.

Mother

The emergence of things is also an important characteristic of the second image, the mother. "There was a beginning of the universe/ Which may be called the Mother [Dao] of the Universe" (ch. 52; Chan 1989, 164). This passage, from chapter fifty-two, is closely associated with the above quote from chapter forty-two above. In both passages Dao is related to that which is before things (perhaps even before Being). And so, things in the world emerge from Dao, which in this case is the mother.⁷ Extend-

⁷ There are overlaps with the mother and the uncarved block. Things are carved from the uncarved block, and children come from the mother. The parallel here is that the differences that these images give rise to, or more literally the things/children, are literally made up of the "stuff" that they were carved/born from. When the major characteristics of two images are so soundly related, it seems fair to suggest that their commonalities can be directly attributed to Dao.

ing this image, and looking at Dao as a mother, and not just some uncarved block, further characteristics are given. First and foremost the image draws upon femininity. Here, and (as be shown later) other places as well, the feminine is shown as having a direct relation to Dao. One aspect of femininity, and specifically mothers (that differentiates this image from the uncarved block) is that mothers are responsible for the children that they bear (or the things/differences that arise from them). As bearer of the children the mother's responsibility is to nourish and care for her children. And these children are, in a sense, made of their mother, making the mother pervasive throughout the children who emerge from her.

Through the analysis of these two images alone contradictory characteristics appear. The mother cares about her children, whereas the uncarved block is indifferent about the things that are carved from it. To resolve that tension, and any other tension between contradictory characteristics, textual evidence has to be employed. It is also quite likely that among contradictory characteristics the one that prevails be that which is prevalent among various images.

Valley, Water, and Wheel

The third image is the valley, which, in the quote above, is described as vast. But, unlike the mother's relation to her children, and the uncarved block's relation to things, the valley is not all pervasive, it is viewed in contrast to mountains. The mountains are higher, and in relation to the sky more "full," leaving the valley as something that is low and empty. However, the valley is still able to be a source of life and nourishment. Animals and plants thrive in the vast lushness of a valley. Another characteristic of the valley, which aids in resolving the tension described above, is its indifference. The valley can be described as uninterested with regard to the animals and plants that rely upon it for sustenance.

However, according to the multiple blend model, the attributes of all images must first be displayed. Attributing understandings to Dao prematurely is like blending with a single generic space instead of the entire blend, thereby limiting the effects of the blend model.

This same type of indifference with regards to nourishment is also seen in the fourth image, water.

Water shares many of the same characteristics with the valley. Moeller describes four major aspects of water: "Water as the flowing of *Dao*, as a nourishing source, as that which always takes the lowest position and as the soft which overcomes the hard" (2006, 36). The valley also shares these four aspects of water, and a fifth, indifference, can also be added. Just as the valley does not "care" for what becomes nourished by it, water too is complete unconcerned with regards to who or what becomes nurtured by it. Water is, also, formless or shapeless, it does not contain its own shape but rather it changes and takes the shape of its container. It does this because it always takes the lowest place, and therefore fills the bottom of the container, thus taking its shape. In a certain sense water is also all-pervasive; it is a fundamental aspect of living organisms. But it is also something that is extremely weak, water is not commonly thought of as powerful, yet it can carve canyons and destroy cities. As Moeller described it is "*the* soft which overcomes the hard" (2006, 36) it is something weak, though its weakness is still powerful in a certain sense.

The fifth image, the root, shares many of the same characteristics as water. Both water and the root are in the lowest position and are able to nourish life. Roots are hidden in the ground, the plant life emerges from the root and it feeds the plant nutrients from the ground. The plant may blossom and wither throughout the seasons, but the root stays constant and without seasonal changes. Interestingly the Chinese character *bu* (不) originated from a pictograph of a root, as follows:



This is important because it implies that the meaning of *bu* may in some way correlate to the characteristics of the root. When character *bu* is put in front of another word it has a negating effect, it implies the opposite. And so these characteristics are aspects of the root image, which relates to *Dao*. Another tension, between the constant unchanging character of the root, and the shapeable formless water, arises at this point. Luckily the sixth image, the wheel, can resolve this contradiction.

The wheel is one of the more complicated images; it allows for several apparent contradictions to be explained, which may be evidence of its value as possibly one of the most “complete” images. In fact, one could argue that the wheel, on its own, can describe the whole of Daoist political philosophy, which may be one goal of *Daode jing* (see Moeller 2004, 26-36). A wheel is made up of several parts that can be most basically broken down into the hub and the spokes. The hub, which is what allows the wheel to be useful, is both empty and singular. Without this empty center the wheel could not be connected to a cart and therefore it would be useless. The empty non-moving hub is where the spokes connect and it allows them to rotate, be useful and move. The hub is the part that carries the characteristics of Dao while the spokes are likened to present things. Addressing the above issue, the spokes of the wheel move, while the hub stays constant. And so the apparent contradictions between being/negation and constant/changing, are resolved by investigating this image.

Gate and Child

The next image is that of the gate. The character that is used for the word “gate” in *Daode jing* is often used in connection with the mother or femininity (see Dor 2013). This gives the gate a curiously feminine characteristic. The femininity of the gate connects with the idea that things emerge from it. Relating again back to chapter forty-two of *Daode jing* Dao as a gate is that which things emerge from. The gate is one and unchanging allowing different things to pass through it. The gate can therefore also be characterized as something that is before being. Different things may pass through the gate, but this gate is before those different things and their distinctions.

The eighth image, the child or infant, is also in some ways before distinctions. The child does not see distinctions; everything is in a sense equal. It is not until the child becomes older that it sees more and more distinctions. With these distinctions language comes as well. The image of the child used in *Daode jing* seems to relate to a very young child, or an infant, someone who could not even speak. In this way the child can be described as ineffable. It is before speech and the distinctions inherent within language. Children around that age are quite useless. A young

child is incapable of almost everything, and perhaps cannot even walk or crawl. The child is weak and soft. Its bones are not yet hardened and it can scarcely hold up its own head. Yet, despite all these limitations the child is full of life. One may say life emerges from the child because it is so full of life. Obviously life does not literally come from the child, but it is full of life, and therefore the lively child exudes life.

Female, One, and Vessel

The ninth image, the female, shares some similar characteristics of the child. This image is also likened to the child in that it is supposed to be seen in a certain fashion. Like the child being understood as extremely young, many of the characteristics of the female relate to sex. Sexually the female is, like the child, both soft and weak, and also low, or in the lower position (at least this was the general understanding in pre-Qin culture). But the female is not limited to these sexual characteristics, the female is also described as mysterious. This mysterious nature means that the female is, in this interpretation, ineffable. Ineffability is also shared by the next image, "one".

The image of the number one has several characteristics, all of which have already been attributed to one image or another. The first characteristic is in regards to one as a number, which connotes its being low. The one is only one, and is pervasive because it is not contrasted with a multiplicity. The one is also ineffable because, again, not being contrasted with a multiplicity there is no way to definitely describes it. One is then also before distinctions, and therefore is unchanged or unchangeable.

The twelfth image is the empty vessel. The empty vessel is empty and therefore contentless. There is nothing in the vessel, it is a negation, which, because it is empty, is at once both totally usefully and totally useless. It is useless in that there is nothing in it to be used, but useful because it can be used to hold many different things. Here another glaring contradiction becomes evident. The *Dao* has now been explained as the water that fills a container, as well as the container itself. This is quite curious indeed and be better understood, and the apparent contradiction explained below.

Formlessness

The last image is the formless or *wu* (无), which paradoxically enough, has the most characteristics attributed to it. It is, obviously, nothing, a negation, and thereby ineffable, because no words can truly describe nothing, there is precisely nothing there to describe! It is a contentless mystery of unknowable nothingness that is before, or out side of being. In light of various chapters, such as forty or forty-two, it seems quite appropriate to give *wu* the characteristic of before being. This would also mean that life emerges from *wu*. Being pre-distinctions it follows that if life or things emerge, as distinct things, they would have to emerge from *wu*. Emptiness is therefore another characteristic of *wu*. It is empty of any content or being, unchanged and before distinctions in this emptiness.

Water	Formless/wu	Uncarved block	Root
Nourishes life	Nothing/negation	Shapeable	Hidden (invisible)
Soft	Ineffable	Formless	Nothing/negation
Formless	Contentless/wu	One	Useless
Life Emerges from	Mysterious	Things emerge from	Life emerges from
Changeable	Unknowable	Useless	Unchanged
Pervasive	Before being	Ineffable	Low
Weak	Empty	Before Being	Pre-distinctions
Indifferent	Unchanged	Indifferent	
pre-distinctions	Life emerges from	Pre-distinctions	
Low	Pre-distinctions		
Child	Female	One	Valley
Full of life	Ineffable	One	Full of life
Useless	Mysterious	Pervasive	Low
Soft	Feminine	Ineffable	Empty
Weak	Soft	Low	Nourishes life
Indifferent	Low	Unchanged	Vast
Pre-distinctions		Pre-distinctions	Indifferent
Ineffable			
Empty Vessel	Mother	Ancestor	Wheel
Empty	Nourishes things	Before being	Empty center (wu)/useless
Useless	Things emerge from	Unknowable/Ineffable	Full spokes (you)
Useful	Gives Life	Hidden/invisible	Spokes-changing/moving
Nothing/negation	Gives Shape	Things emerge from	Center- unchanged/still
Contentless/wu	Pervasive	Mysterious	Center- one
	Feminine	Life emerges from	

These images are an attempt to show characteristics of *Dao* in its most literal sense. If interpreted as relating to all thirteen images described above then one may assert that images, and their characteristics, are directly related to *Dao*. And so, the characteristics of these images must be examined for similarities, which are most likely to be the aspects most directly related to *Dao*. The characteristics of the thirteen images can be summarized as seen in the table below. Although many of the characteristics of these images relate quite well to one another, some aspects correlate better if they are modified. Therefore, some of the characteristics be modified and adjusted to fit together. For example, the valley is vast and water is all-pervasive.

The two characteristics are not the same, but the vastness of the valley may be understood as all pervasive in the context of the blend. Also, in light of chapter forty-two, the idea of the "taking the lowest place" and being "ineffable" or before names, also be coupled.

Being hidden also be coupled with non-present or *wu* (Moeller 2004, 129-37). Furthermore, the common characteristic of "things emerge from" or "life emerges from" be seen as the same concept (see Chan 1989, 164). Also, chapter 42 seems to suggest that *Dao* gives birth to everything and so organic and inorganic beings be coupled.

Indifference and Nonaction

There are hermeneutical dangers in this "blend" model. To avoid misinterpretation before the blend is actually analyzed it is important that each characteristic is understood exactly as it is described. Even the slightest misinterpretation can cause extraordinarily incorrect ideas. For example, by presenting the mother as an image that contains the "nourishing" characteristic I have deliberately not used the word 'care'. In fact, I think ascribing care to *Dao* is a grave mistake. Certainly one can attribute care as the feeling a mother has towards her children, however, this is a particularly humanistic idea⁸ that opposes the intended use of this image in *Daode jing*.

⁸ Not all animals feel the same "parental instincts" that humans have (e.g. some animals eat their young); and even those animals that seem to have it often do not harbor this instinct for the same duration that humans do.

Understanding Dao as something that nourishes like a mother one can easily fall into a relation between Dao and the Christian God. Using into these Western, and particularly Christian, notions of care can be misleading when used to explain the *Daode jing*. This type of understanding would tend to draw one toward the idea that Dao, like the Christian God, is concerned with taking care of its “children” or the things that emerge from it. However, this Christian idea of care is directly rejected in *Daode jing*. In fact it seems that *Daode jing* frankly rejects care and is in favor of its opposite, namely indifference. The “way” of Dao (how it operates) is quoted as being indifferent towards all things (including humans). We find:

Heaven and earth are not benevolent;
They treat the myriad creatures as straw dogs. (ch. 5)

To appreciate this fully, we must understand the indifference straw dogs were treated with. In some ancient Chinese ceremonies straw dogs were statues made of straw that, during said ceremonies, were revered and given value, however, after the ceremony was finished these statues were typically neglected and often trampled (Ames and Hall 2004, 206).

This makes it clear that Dao is indifferent to all things, including humans. Unlike Christian thought, the human is not revered as some special pinnacle of creation for which they receive special care. Humans and all other beings are treated equally and they can all be subject to the same indifference that straw dogs are given. This is not to say that humans or the things that emerge from Dao will be trampled; it only means that they can be just as easily ignored as they are revered. That things can just as easily, and without divine purpose, fall into or out of luck.

Dao still retains its nourishing characteristic, but that be better understood as a characteristic of water or the valley, then of the mother who cares. Neither water nor the valley *care*. Both water and a valley *can* nourish, but it is not their goal or purpose. There is no *telos* of water or a valley that requires them to nurture living things. Unlike the Christian God, water and a valley do not actively seek out individuals to care for. Similarly there is no judgment/test for those who become nourished by water or a valley. Instead, Dao should be understood as something that

can nourish life, but it certainly does not strive to do so. In fact the indifference is another, and perhaps the most radical, characteristic of *Dao*.

The indifference of *Dao*, is important for understanding other possible misinterpretations of the characteristics of *Dao* described in this model. As noted above, *Dao* does not create things, though things certainly do emerge from it. The idea of creation, which is again a trait of the Christian God, cannot be mapped onto *Dao*. Again the mother image can be misleading here, but the dominate characteristic is not of creation, but allowing things to emerge. For example, with the image of the gate and the uncarved block things simply emerge from them, they do not actually *create* anything. Nothing is made or shaped on purpose, things are just allowed to become whatever they become "naturally" or "according to themselves" (*ziran* 自然).

Dao does not act on things, it allows them to go about their business however they (*wushi* 无使). In stark contrast, creation, as exemplified by the Christian God, implies direct intent, purpose and/or plans. When something is created there is a goal, *telos*, or plan for that thing, but *Dao* is never described as having any purpose or intent. Instead, *Dao*, having already been described as indifferent, would clearly not even care enough to create anything. The indifferent character of *Dao* results in a lack of concern for creating things, (if it would even have that ability), and it also means that there is no reason it would not let things emerge from it. In fact, it seems that *Dao* does little if anything at all.

A well-known (but often misunderstood) concept in Daoism is non-action (*wuwei* 无为). More precisely this concept can be defined as acting without intent or purpose. This concept is attributed to Daoist sage-ruler in *Daode jing*, but it is also a characteristic of *Dao*. Following the above description, it is already clear that *Dao* is indifferent; it lacks care for things, and yet nourishes them. From this the idea that *Dao* "does nothing" makes sense. If *Dao* truly is indifferent and does not care for anything, then there is no reason that it would ever assert anything. Any sort of action that can be attributed to *Dao* is now seen as somewhat accidental and non-intentional. Things emerge from *Dao* and are thereby subsequently nourished by it (perhaps more accurately things follow in-line with it) but *Dao* does not choose or intend this to happen; things simply happen this way.

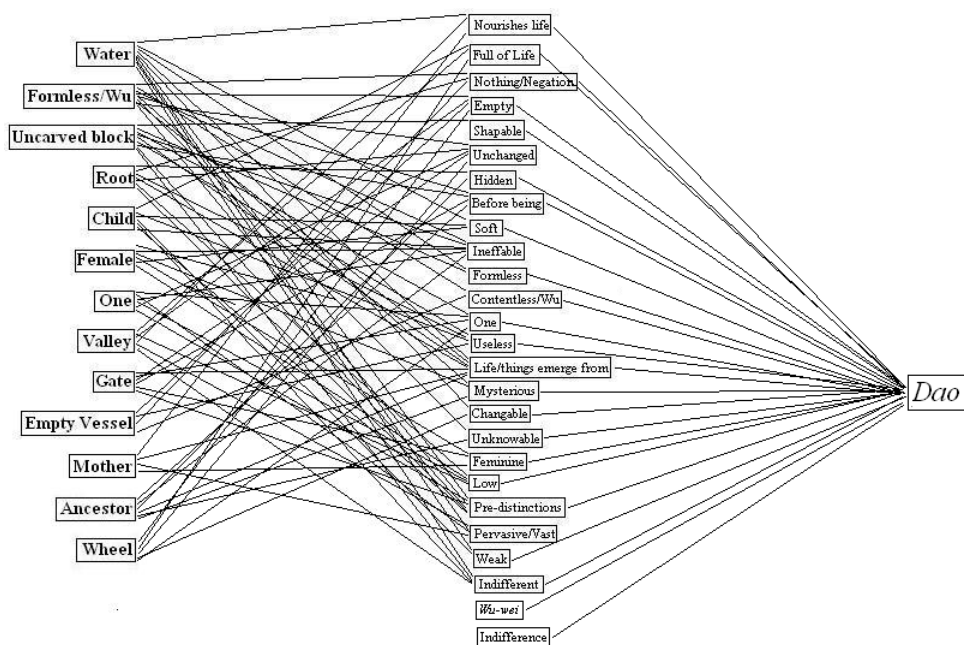
So the characteristics of indifference and *wuwei* can also be attributed to Dao, although they were not explicitly apparent through the classification of the images, they are apparent in the text and therefore be considered in the blend.

A Multiple Blend Synthesis

The blend, or Dao, is then the selective combination of the characteristics listed above. Inline with the *Daode jing* these can be selected only if they appear in connection to more than one image. Therefore, only the following characteristics be blended: nourishes life, nothing/negation, shapeable, hidden, soft, ineffable, formless, contentless/*wu*, one, useless, life/things emerge from, mysterious, changeable, unknowable (*wuming*), feminine, low, pre-distinctions, pervasive/vast, weak, indifferent, full of life, empty, unchanged, changing, before being, *wu-wei* and indifference. Since each of these qualities is context dependent there can be no “true” generic spaces. In Fauconnier and Turner’s work generic spaces represent non-content oriented topics or descriptions. In light of their description these characteristics can be understood as “quasi-generic spaces,” at best. The relation between these characteristics, images and the blend, or Dao, is represented below.

Dao is then understood as a “great image”(ch. 35), which is made up of the various aspects of several other images. Each of these characteristics is also literally attributed to Dao throughout *Daode jing*. *Wu*, as hidden nonpresence appears when Dao is said to be before things, and is therefore before being (ch. 42). This leaves Dao in the lowest place, the place before naming; “[Dao] is really nameless”(ch. 32). In this “pre-name” state Dao must be changeless, for non-presence cannot change (ch. 25), however, things emerge from Dao and these emergent things change.

The emergence of things from Dao is, at one place, described in as, “[Dao] is bottomless, perhaps the ancestor of all things”(ch. 4). These things are literally all the myriad of things (ch. 42), which make up the ever-changing world and all of its events (ch. 4). The text further validates this changing aspect: “Great Dao flows everywhere./It may go left or right” (ch. 34). It also describes Dao as “everywhere,” or all-pervasive, again in “ [Dao] is continuous, and seems to be always existing . . . an unbroken, gossamer thread” (ch. 6). This all-pervasive Dao still remains



formless and nourishing: “Dao is empty[] it may be used [nourishing] but is never exhausted. It is perhaps the ancestor of all things [all-pervasive] (ch. 4).”

The nourishing aspect of Dao is also found when the text says, “the myriad creatures rely upon it for life” (ch. 34). The fact that Dao can be relied upon for life also signifies the “liveliness” of Dao. This chapter is also significant because it calls Dao and signifies Dao as singular, meaning there is only one Dao. There are several chapters that refer to Dao as the mysterious one, expressing both its mysterious and unified qualities (e.g., ch. 39). It is called One generally in reference to humanity (Graham 1989, 221). The mysterious nature of Dao is also obvious in, “She [Dao] is called the Enigmatic Female” (ch. 6).

This feminine characteristic is similar to weakness because the feminine is understood in terms of yin, which is also weak. This weakness is literally attributed to Dao: “Weakness is how the Way [Dao] operates” (ch. 40). This weakness, still quite powerful, is expressed in the nonaction *wei*. Dao’s “actions” are described as: “[Dao] does nothing yet nothing is left undone” (ch. 37). This also validates the uselessness of Dao: it is nou-

rishing but not really useful for forceful action. The nonaction of Dao can be interpreted as non assertive action in one keeps in mind the indifferent characteristic, “The way [dao] of tian [天] shows no partiality” (ch. 37). Although the lack of partiality is here attributed to the way of heaven and not necessarily Dao, it can be understood as a characteristic of Dao: “Heaven [tian] models itself on the Way [Dao]” (ch. 25).

All this shows that the blend’s characteristics all validated by the actual words of *Daode jing*. Being able to find the characteristics of the blend literally attributed to Dao is important, it shows that this type of “blend” model is valid in terms of *Daode jing*.

Conclusion

A common misinterpretation of this type of project would suspect that it makes an attempt on the final word about the ineffable Dao. Like other scholars, I do not mean to present the multiple blend model as some kind of all encompassing definition on the nature or character of Dao. This work is, at best, an attempt to understand Dao in a new way. Western philosophy is often concerned with getting at the very essence of a thing, describing every possible characteristic, and then boldly stating that said thing is understood, completely and finally for all time. The model I have presented is perhaps more inline with the Chinese thought it represents. This description of Dao is certainly not final, nor does it claim to describe the ontological nature of Dao. This model merely purposes a way of putting simple aspects attributed to Dao in a structured template that is perhaps more palatable to Western thought, and in particular Western Philosophy. This project is a new way of looking at an old concept (if one may call it such).

Scholars have often understood Dao by loosely associated at least some of the images described in the blend. Never quite sure what to make of Dao especially in light of the first chapter, the images have played a prominent role in analyzing Dao in the *Daode jing*. A.C. Graham describes Dao as “unhewn, the block out of which things are cut, or their mother or their root, the valley which is the lowest and emptiest in them or the gate through which they come.” Similarly, Moeller describes it in terms of several images (2004, 27-43). Other scholars such as Wang, Ames and Hall, as well as Ivanhoe and Van Nodran, have all referenced

(at least some of) these images with great regard. Each of these scholars selected certain characteristics of select images to describe Dao. The multiple blend analysis of Dao in *Daode jing* furthers this trend by putting perhaps the most prominent images into a structured manner, and expanding the images used and characteristics attributed to Dao.

By understanding Dao as a blend of the thirteen images one may, for the first time, to see the characteristics of Dao through a well-organized broad description. The blend allows one to understand Dao in a way that is not literal, but figurative. This figurative description does not violate the ineffability of Dao; and allows room for the contradictions and paradoxes that *Daode jing* famously contains. In no way does this analysis devalue the interpretations of previous scholars. Using the concept of "multiple blends" merely offers a different way of viewing many old ideas. The blend model only claims to explain (not describe) some elements (not the entirety) of Dao in a more coherent fashion.

The blend, allowing contradiction, paradox, ambiguity and darkness, has afforded *an* understanding of Dao, remaining silent on whether or not *the* understanding is possible.

The outward appearance of great Virtue comes forth from the Way[Dao] alone.

As for the [Dao], it is vague and elusive.

Vague and elusive! Within is a thing.

Withdrawn and dark! Within is an essence.

This essence is genuine and authentic. Within there is trust.

From ancient times until the present day, its name has never left it.

It is how we know the origin of all things.

How do I know what the origin of all things is like?

Through this! (ch. 21; Ames and Hall 2004, 107)

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The Many Faces of Master Redpine

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Abstract

This paper discusses early beliefs concerning Master Redpine, using his biography in the *Liexian zhuan* as a point of departure. After briefly discussing the *Liexian zhuan* account's relationship to ancient rain-making rituals, it illustrates Master Redpine's relationship with other ancient Chinese rain gods, with reference to the findings of Max Kaltenmark (1953), particularly through their associated colors (red and green) and movements. The author concurs with Kaltenmark's description of Master Redpine, on one level, as a kind of tree sprite, specifically of the Chinese tamarisk, and provides more supporting textual evidence for this. This paper then explores Master Redpine's role in the early Higher Clarity Daoism, in which Redpine becomes but one manifestation of a deity who can appear in many different guises—a primordial being of pure energy, the Star of Longevity, the planet Mars, a wandering teacher, and even a terrifying spirit who comes to mete out punishment. The possibility that Master Redpine is effectively the father of Yang Xi's (330-386) celestial spouse, Consort An, is explored. The paper finally returns to consider the significance of the placement of Master Redpine's biography at the head of the *Liexian zhuan*, and to contrast it with the last biography in order to bring out that text's broader perspective on the world.

Master Redpine (Chisongzi 赤松子) is one of the most prominent immortals in ancient Chinese belief, but he wears many faces: as soon as one tries to establish just who or what he is, his identity suddenly becomes difficult to pin down. Like many other immortals, he is certainly capable of changing his identity, but this should not prevent us from trying to explore it.

In this essay, I use Master Redpine's biography in the *Liexian zhuan* 列仙傳 (Biographies of Famous Immortals; DZ 294) as a point of depar-

ture for investigating his origins. The *Liexian zhuan*, traditionally attributed to Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 BCE), probably dates to the second century CE. The immortals' biographies it contains are plainly written and very concise but have a certain origami-like quality, by which I mean they suggest or imply a great deal with their terse language. As I have investigated these biographies through the years, I find that almost every passage may be "unfolded" and then related to a host of other sources. Here I shall make ample use of Max Kaltenmark's unsurpassed 1953 translation in French, which is copiously annotated and admirably brings out the *Liexian zhuan*'s unostentatious yet allusive style, but I shall attempt to go beyond Kaltenmark and explore his findings at greater length, even though it is still hard to surpass in this digital age what he already accomplished in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The *Liexian zhuan* opens with Master Redpine's biography—an indication of his importance. Comparison of its text in the *Daozang* version of *Liexian zhuan* with its many citations in other early sources reveals that this biography is mostly intact.¹ Only one three-character phrase seems to have dropped out over the centuries: "roaming among the people" (*you ren jian* 遊人間), preserved in the *Soushenji* 搜神記 version of the story (Wang Shaoying 1979, 1.1). With the inclusion of this phrase, it reads as follows:

Master Redpine was Rainmaster² in the time of Shennong.³ He imbibed jade in water,⁴ [a diet which] he taught to Shennong. He could enter

¹ Besides the DZ text of *Liexian zhuan*, the most important traditional edition, *Liexian zhuan jiaozheng* 列仙傳校正, was edited and annotated by Wang Zhaoyuan 王照園 (1763-1851), the second wife of Hao Yixing 郝懿行 (1757-1825); it was then printed in *Hao shi yishu* 郝氏遺書, and reprinted in Shou Yizi 守一子, (pseudonym of Ding Fubao 丁福保) ed., *Daozang jinghualu* 道藏精華錄 (rpt. Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1989), vol. 2. Komjathy (2002, 78) lists this as JHL 88. Several modern Chinese annotated editions are also available: Wang 1995; Qiu 1996; Zhang and Chen 1997. Annotated Japanese translations are found in Sawada 1969 and Maeno 1975.

² The Rainmaster (Yushi 雨師), both a rain god and a shaman involved in summoning rain, is often associated with the Wind Earl (Fengbo 風伯).

³ Shennong 神農, the "Divine Farmer," is the first of the mythical Three Sovereigns (*sanhuang* 三皇) who ruled China in high antiquity. He may be consi-

fire and let himself be consumed. He always went to the top of Mount Kunlun and often stayed inside the stone chamber of the Queen Mother of the West.⁵ He followed the wind and rain up and down. The Fiery Thearch's young daughter⁶ chased him and also attained immortality; together they departed. In the time of Gaoxin⁷ he was Rainmaster again, roaming among the people. The Rainmasters of today originated with this.

dered the same figure as the Fiery Thearch (Yandi 炎帝) mentioned below. As Shennong he is credited with the invention of agriculture and irrigation, and for tasting all plants to decide which were medicinal or poisonous. As the Fiery or Red Thearch (Chidi 赤帝) he is the supreme deity of the south. According to the dominant correlative theories of the Han dynasty, he is primarily "red," but his capacity to nurture the "green" should not be overlooked.

⁴ Jade in water (*shuiyu* 水玉) refers to pulverized jade or possibly rock crystal in suspension. In a discussion of Redpine's diet, *Baopuzi neipian* adds another detail that might have been "lost" from our text: "Master Redpine consumed jade by dissolving it in the blood of cicadas, so he could ride smoke up and down." 赤松子以玄蟲血漬玉爲水而服之，故能乘煙上下也。 (Wang 1983, 11.204; compare translation in Ware 1966, 188). The standard term for jade in Chinese medicine today is *yuxie* 玉屑 or "nephrite grains" (Jiangsu Xinyixueyuan 1985, 554, no. 1158; Hu 1980, 183, no. 2217).

⁵ The Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu 西王母) is one of the most important deities in ancient Chinese belief. By the Han dynasty, when the *Liexian zhuan* was written, she was believed to reside on Mount Kunlun, a mythical mountain in the remote west. Much as been written about her: Dubs 1942; Komimami 1975, 1991; Loewe 1979, 86-88; Fracasso 1988; Wu Hung 1989: 108-32; Smith 1992, 1:54-69; Cahill 1993; Goldin 2002.

⁶ She is one of many divine maidens described as the daughters of sage rulers or deities. The Queen Mother of the West calls herself *dinü* 帝女 before King Mu of Zhou, in *Mu tianzi zhuan* 穆天子傳 3.15b (*Sibu congkan* edition), and the goddess in the poem "Xiang furen" 湘夫人 (The Lady of the Xiang) in *Chu ci* 楚辭 is called *dizi* 帝子. For a study on such women see Schafer 1980. The daughter of the Fiery Thearch is named Nüwa 女娃 in *Shanhai jing* 山海經, 1.44a-b (ch. 3); trl. Birrell 1999, 48. Another tale, from the early Tang dynasty collection *Guan-gyi ji* 廣異記 (A Broad Record of Anomalies) and preserved in Li Fang 李昉 ed., *Taiping yulan*, 921.4a-b, describes her rising from fire.

⁷ Gaoxin 高辛, one of the mythical Five Thearchs (*wudi* 五帝) of antiquity, is also known as Thearch Ku or Diku 帝嚳. He is the great-grandson of the Yellow Thearch (Huangdi 黃帝), who has his own *Liexian zhuan* biography.

To this the *Daozang* text appends an encomium of later date—probably the fifth or sixth century:

Receding, receding—Master Redpine;
 Floating, floating—the young woman.
 Holding hands, they fluttered and flew:
 Calmly they rose together.
 [Master Redpine] leapt on a steady breeze
 And soon winged to the Mystic Orchard.⁸
 Subtly apprehending [the trigrams] *xun* and *kan*,⁹
 He created a model for controlling rain. (1.1a)

Master Redpine's biography may be deceptively easy to read, almost like a fairy-tale, but it masks many layers of myth. Like many of the other biographies in the *Liexian zhuan*, it is in fact highly allusive, and once one starts digging into it, there is seemingly no end to its layers.

Master Redpine and Rainmaking

Master Redpine's biography mentions that he "could enter fire and let himself be consumed" (*neng ru huo zi shao* 能入火自燒); a variant of the passage reads, "... could enter fire without being burned" (*ru huo bu shao* 入火不燒).¹⁰ The correctness of the current reading is borne out chiefly on

⁸ The Mystic Orchard (*xuanpu* 玄圃) is the part of Mount Kunlun most closely associated with the Queen Mother of the West.

⁹ *Xun* 巽 and *kan* 坎 are two of the eight trigrams in the divination system of the *Yijing* 易經 (*Classic of Changes*). The eight trigrams were early associated with the eight orthogonal and diagonal directions. *Xun* corresponds to the southeast, wind, and the eldest daughter; *kan* corresponds to the north, water, and the middle son. The *Shuogua* 說卦 commentary of *Yijing* equates *xun* with the wind and *kan* with the rain; cf. *Zhou yi* 9.3b-4a. The line may thus be understood, "With a subtle apprehension of wind and rain."

¹⁰ Most early citations (too many to list here) agree with the DZ text in the wording of this phrase; the variant appears in the following: commentary to Fan Ye 范曄 (398-445) and Sima Biao 司馬彪 (d. ca. 306), *Hou Han shu* 後漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), *liezhuan* 18B.988; commentary to *Liuchen zhu wen xuan* 六臣註文選, 21.30a; Wu Shu 吳淑 (947-1002), *Shilei fuzhu* (Taipei: Xinxing, 1969),

comparison with corresponding phrases in the *Liexian zhuan* biographies of Ning Fengzi 甯封子, Xiaofu 嘯父, and Shimen 師門 (1.2a, 1.6b, 1.7a), but there are other reasons as well, and these have to do with the cluster of beliefs and practices to which Redpine's biography alludes. The classical Chinese reader for whom the *Liexian zhuan* was intended would have understood and appreciated this biography's allusive level immediately, without the need for further commentary, but for us, removed by half a world and nearly two thousand years, the cultural context is missing. Our understanding of and appreciation for Master Redpine's biography changes once we know more of the missing context. Part of the missing context is basically this: one important ancient Chinese rain-making custom involved the ritual exposure or burning of male or female shamans.

In a classic article, Edward Schafer (1951) thoroughly discusses this ancient custom,¹¹ so I will only summarize his findings here. In brief, the rainmaking ceremony was known as *chi* 赤 (literally "reddening" or exposing) during the Shang dynasty. By the Han dynasty, even though the role of male and female shamans in state rituals was much reduced and often criticized by the literati, the practice or exposing or burning shamans reappeared whenever a severe drought occurred. In this regard, the biography of Master Redpine ("Reddened Pine"?) bears closest resemblance to other accounts of officials during the Later Han dynasty who prepared to burn themselves to relieve a drought. For example, during one dry year, an official named Dai Feng 戴封 found that prayers to relieve the drought were ineffective. He then "piled up firewood and sat on top of it in order to burn himself. As the flames rose, a great rainstorm arrived (*Hou Han shu*, *liezhuan* 71.2684). Likewise Liang Fu 諒輔, a General-Purpose Clerk in his commandery government, took matters into his own hands when the Governor's prayers met no response. He "piled firewood and gathered dry reeds around himself. He had fire brought next to him, but as he was about to burn himself, just before noon, the

9.11b; Li Fang, ed., *Taiping yulan*, 38.5b and 805.7a; Gan Bao, *Soushenji* in Wang 1979, 1.1, and *Sandong qunxian lu* 三洞群仙錄 (DZ 1248), 6.3b.

¹¹ Parts of this article that discuss Shang dynasty practices and Zhou references to exposing and burning shamans build on an earlier article by Chen Mengjia (1936).

clouds in heaven darkened and gathered, and in a moment a drenching rain soaked the entire commandery" (71.2694). A salient feature of these accounts is that the two men *survived* their ordeals, much as Redpine the Rainmaster "could enter fire and let himself be consumed."

Reddening to relieve drought and nurture the growth of green food-crops relates to the colors suggested in the *Liexian zhuan* biography: a red evergreen, the Fiery Emperor who is also Shennong, the inventor of agriculture, and so on. In later Daoist belief, power over fire continued to be one of the hallmarks of the adept. However, there is more to Redpine the Rainmaster than his association with the reddening ceremony, and that is what I would like to explore in the rest of this essay.

The Rainmaster and Other Deities

Besides denoting a shamanic official, Rainmaster is the name of a rain god, often mentioned together with a storm-bringing colleague, the Wind Earl (Fengbo 風伯). The Rainmaster has several other names: Pingyi (written 萍翳 or 屏翳) and Xuanming 玄冥. Pingyi, in turn, has also been identified with a figure named Shangyang 商羊, and Xuanming with a figure named Yujiang 禺疆, Yuqiang 禺強, or Yujing 禺京. This generates two lines of association: Rainmaster / Pingyi / Shangyang and Rainmaster / Xuanming / Yujiang-Yujing-Yuqiang. There are connections as well with dragons, the Hyades (*bixing* 畢星), and so on, and in fact the complexity of all these connections can rapidly spiral out of control—but this suggests that from the outset Master Redpine was conceived as a very multifaceted being. Here I shall very briefly outline some of the connections to bring out more of the mythological and ritual underpinnings of Redpine's biography. I shall first explore the connections between the Rainmaster and Wind Earl and then (in order) Pingyi, Xuanming, and Yujiang-Yujing-Yuqiang. On the basis of these associations, in the next section I will tentatively identify who I think Master Redpine "was" originally. Again, much of the information given here may also be found among Kaltenmark's comments to Master Redpine's biography, but I am attempting here to expand upon them.

Wind Earl: In ancient mythology, the Rainmaster and Wind Earl are described as serving either the Yellow Thearch 黃帝 or his archrival

Chiyou 蚩尤. In *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, which dates to the third century BCE, we read how the Yellow Thearch gathered all the demons and gods, including Chiyou, the Rainmaster, and the Wind Earl, on Mount Tai for a performance of the Pure *Jiao* Music 清角 (3.3a). In *Shanhai jing* 山海經, however, we read of Chiyou attacking the Yellow Thearch. When the Yellow Thearch's *ying* dragon (*yinglong* 應龍) counterattacks with flood, Chiyou has the Wind Earl and Rainmaster to unleash great wind and rain (2.82a, ch. 17; Birrell 1999, 186-87). Just as wind and rain may be beneficial or destructive, the Rainmaster and Wind Earl could serve the commands of either the Yellow Thearch or Chiyou. Thus when Master Redpine follows the wind and rain up and down in *Liexian zhuan*, he is acting in his shamanic capacity as the Rainmaster, summoning and acting as the god at once. The encomiast's mention of *xun* and *kan* also alludes to the pairing of wind and rain.

Pingyi: Wang Yi 王逸 (c. 89-158), Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324), among others,¹² identifies the Rainmaster with Pingyi, whose name means literally, "duckweed screen." The humble duckweed—the tiny, simple plant that floats in ponds and waterways—would be a good indicator of sufficient rainfall. The variety having medicinal value, according to the great Ming herbalist Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518-1591), is called *ziping* 紫萍 or "purple duckweed," which has leaves green on top and "red as blood" 赤若血 on the bottom.¹³ This happens to be *Spirodela polyrrhisa* or "greater duckweed," a very common variety (Jiangsu xin yixueyuan 1985, 1949-50, no. 4005), and of course its colors immediately bring to mind those of Master Redpine.

Shangyang: The associations among rain, duckweed (red and green), and ditches or waterways already come together in a story collected in *Shuoyuan* 說苑 by Liu Xiang.¹⁴ First a strange object (we learn later it is

¹² *Shanhai jing*, 2.47b (ch. 9), Guo Pu commentary. An early linkage between Pingyi and rain may be found in "Tian wen" 天問; see *Chu ci buzhu*, 3.18a; trl. Hawkes 1985, 130.

¹³ Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1982), 1:1367 (fasc. 19). Duckweed in medicine is described in many earlier sources, but Li is the first to go into detail on which kind is used.

¹⁴ The text is cited according to the *Sibu congkan* edition—as are all Chinese texts in this article unless otherwise stated.

bright red) bumps against King Zhao of Chu's 楚昭王 boat. He sends an envoy to show it to Confucius, who says it is the fruit of the duckweed, an auspicious sign received only by hegemons. Then in Qi a one-legged bird comes down in front of the palace and hops about with wings spread out. The Marquis likewise sends an envoy to Confucius, who says it is the Shangyang, a sign of great rain. Confucius advises that ditches and channels be built right away. As a result, only Qi is spared from flooding. When Confucius' disciples ask him more about these events, he comments that the duckweed fruit's appearance came in response to a children's ditty in Chu. As for the Shangyang, he says:

Children also linked themselves in pairs, [each] bending a leg and leaping, and they sang, "When the heavens are about to rain, / Shangyang will begin to dance." Now Qi's getting [the Shangyang] was also a response. (18.17a-18a; as emended in Lau and Chen 1992c, 18.21/157/10-16)

Several other ancient authorities also refer to the Shangyang and its peculiar dance as a precursor to rain.¹⁵ If we look back at the third line of the encomium to Master Redpine, we find that it too suggests something similar: a pair of figures, a man and woman, hold hands and rise birdlike into the air. In other words, it is not just a romantic image conjured up by a hack poet—it reveals an awareness of rain-making rituals, including those described by Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 BCE).¹⁶ When the couple rise into the air, they are doing a kind of Shangyang dance.

Rainmaster's concubine, snakes, directional associations: In this connection, we may note that the Rainmaster is said to have a concubine who lives north of Fusang 扶桑 ("Propped Mulberry"), the tree of sunrise. According to *Shanhai jing*, "The [land of the] Rainmaster's concubine is to its north. Its people are black, and in each hand they hold a snake. They have green snakes at their left ears and red snakes at their

¹⁵ Kongzi jiayu 孔子家語, 3.18b-19a (ch. 14) and Wang Chong 王充 (32-92), *Lunheng* 論衡, in Huang Hui 1990, 15.649-650 (ch. 43).

¹⁶ Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu fanlu* in Su Yu 1992, 16.436-437 (ch. 74): "In all four seasons, on the day gengzi, men and women among the officials and commoners shall be instructed to cohabit. . . ." 四時皆以庚子之日，令吏民夫婦皆偶處。 The passage is discussed at length in Bodde 1964.

right ears" (2.47b; see Birrell 1999, 128). In Guo Pu's commentary to this passage and in at least one other early citation, found in the *Taiping yulan* (933.6a), however, the word for "concubine" (*qie* 妾) does not appear, so the passage may refer to the land of the Rainmaster himself. This description is quite similar to that for the land of Shaman Xian (Wu Xian 巫咸), just north of the country of Nüchou 女丑, a sorceress who was scorched by ten suns: "In his right hand he holds a green snake and in his left hand he holds a red snake. It is Mount Dengbao whence groups of shamans go up and down" (2.41a; see Birrell 1999, 116). The associations among red, green, and the rain-making rituals in which the shaman "goes up and down" thus reappear.

Ying Shao 應劭 (fl. 189-194), in his discussion of the Rainmaster, cites relevant passages from several ancient texts. Among these, *Zhou li* 周禮 (The Rites of Zhou) states that one of the duties of the Minister of Rites (*dazongbo* 大宗伯) was to offer burnt sacrifices to the Rainmaster (5.10ab). Ying Shao links the Rainmaster with the asterism Bi (*bixing*, the Hyades), and he cites *Shi jing* 詩經 (The Poetry Classic; Mao no. 232; Legge 1992, 4:422) to observe that when the moon is in Bi, great floods result. He also writes, "The god of [the earthly branch] *chou* is the Rainmaster, so on a *jichou* day one sacrifices to the Rainmaster in the northeast" (*Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義, in Wang Liqi 1981, 8.365-6). The branch *chou* is associated with the direction north to northeast, which corresponds with the locations specified in the *Shanhai jing*.

Xuanming: Let us now move on to explore the Rainmaster / Xuanming / Yujing association. Ying Shao also identifies the Rainmaster with Xuanming, which is both a name ("Dark and Mysterious," suitable for denizens of the north) and the title for an official in charge of waterways, thus recalling the passages related to ditches and channels above. Ying Shao cites as his authority two passages from *Zuo zhuan* 左傳. In one of these, however, he seems to have mixed words and phrases from a third passage. If we assemble the three *Zuo zhuan* passages concerning Xuanming the deity or official, we find the first describing a hard-working Master of Waterways (*xuanming shi* 師) who clears the channels of the Fen 汾 and Tao 洮 Rivers, embanks the great marsh, and makes the plain habitable; he eventually becomes the god of the Fen (Zhao 1; Legge 1992, 5:573). In the second, exorcistic sacrifices against fire are offered to

Xuanming and Huilu 回祿 (a fire god) (Zhao 18; Legge 1992, 5:669). The third describes ancient officials in charge of the Five Phases: for wood, Jumang 句芒; for fire, Zhurong 祝融; for metal, Rushou 蓐收; for water, Xuanming; and for earth, Houtu 后土. Four of the officials are said to cross over to Qionsang 窮桑 in the time of Shaohao 少皞 (Zhao 29; Legge 1992, 5:729).¹⁷ This last passage ties Xuanming's northern orientation with still-developing cosmological views that eventually culminated with the complex correlative theories of the Han dynasty. When the Han literatus Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132-192) presented correlations among the figures mentioned in *Zuo zhuan*, he placed the deity Xuanming and the Thearch (*di*) Zhuanxu 顓頊 in the north (*Duduan* 獨斷, 1.10ab), so that, by extension, the Rainmaster's association with the north remained unchanged.

Yujing: Guo Pu, in his *Shanhai jing* commentary, extends this network of associations by identifying Xuanming with a figure named Yujiang or Yujing. The relevant passages in *Shanhai jing* are:

Yujiang in the northern regions has a human face and a bird's body. He wears on his ears two green snakes and treads on two green snakes. (2.45b; see Birrell 1999, 124)¹⁸

On the isles in the Northern Sea is a spirit with a human face and a bird's body. He wears on his ears two green snakes, treads on two red snakes, and he is named Yujiang. (2.80b; see Birrell 1999, 185)

On an isle in the Eastern Sea is a spirit with a human face and a bird's body. He wears on his ears two yellow snakes, treads on two yellow snakes, and he is named Yuhao. The Yellow Thearch sired Yuhao, and Yuhao sired Yujing. Yujing lives in the Northern Sea and Yu-

¹⁷ Although commentators usually gloss Qionsang as the style of Shaohao, who supposedly rose to heaven at a place in the north of Lu called Qionsang, I suspect that Qionsang is Kongsang 空桑, "Hollow Mulberry," on the basis of the verb used here: *ji* 濟, "to cross over" a stream or any body of water. During the Han dynasty this place was frequently considered as being situated in the north (Henricks 1995).

¹⁸ Guo Pu's comment reads, "His style-name is Xuanming, a water deity. Zhuang Zhou says, 'Yujiang stands at the Northern Pole.' One source calls him Yujing. One edition reads, 'Yujiang 禺疆 in the northern regions has black face, hands, and feet, and he rides two dragons.'"

hao lives in the Eastern Sea. These are sea gods. (2.65a; see Birrell 1999, 160)

The second passage especially brings us full circle to the red-green imagery associated with Pingyi. The first and third passages lack that color scheme but preserve the northern and eastern associations.¹⁹ We may note also that *Zhuangzi* places the god (Yuqiang 禺強) at the Northern Pole (Guo 1983, 3A.247; Watson 1968, 82).

Taking stock of what we have covered thus far, there seem to have been two closely related ritual-mythological traditions around the figures Rainmaster/ Pingyi/ Shangyang and Rainmaster/ Xuanming. In both, the red-green motif and a northern orientation are quite pronounced. During the Han and Six Dynasties, commentators like Ying Shao and Guo Pu were already struggling to impose some kind of order on these related yet conflicting accounts.

Master Redpine and the Tamarisk

We have seen that the purple duckweed, by its red-green coloration and connection with ditches and channels, bears some relationship with the Rainmaster. However, there is another plant of similar coloration that relates more directly to him, since *yushi* is one of the names of the southern Chinese tamarisk tree (*Tamarix chinensis* Lour.). There are many names for this tree—actually a deciduous shrub with sessile, often scale-like leaves—in Chinese. Perhaps the most common is *heliu* 河柳 ("river willow"), but it is also known as *cheng* 檉, *chicheng* 赤檉, *chengliu* 檉柳, *chengyang* 檉楊, *chiguailiu* 赤怪柳, and so on. Because the editors of *leishu* and other sources usually classify it as a willow, it is sometimes difficult to untangle information on the tamarisk from the voluminous willow lore. However, after examining what Chinese writers of the past have to say about the tamarisk, I believe that it is in fact the original "red pine."

Because the tamarisk is mentioned in the *Shi jing* (Mao no. 241; trl. Legge 1992, 4:450), a vast amount of information about it may be gleaned

¹⁹ Yuan Ke (1985, 242-243n1) has an interesting theory that Yujiang-Yujing is the figure behind *Zhuangzi*'s fabulous opening passage on the northern fish named Kun 鯢, but that would take us very far afield.

through lexicons and commentaries. *Erya* 爾雅, a lexicon of the third century BCE, defines *cheng* as *heliu*, and Guo Pu's commentary to *Erya* states: "Now the little red-stemmed willow on the sides of rivers" (3.6a, ch. 14). Lu Ji's 陸機 (3rd c.) commentary to the *Shi jing* reads, "It grows on the sides of rivers; its bark is pure red, like scarlet. One name for it is the Rainmaster. Its stems and leaves are like those of the pine."²⁰ *Guangya* 廣雅, a lexicon of the fifth century, writes, "The Rainmaster is the tamarisk."²¹ The contrast between its red bark and green pine-like leaves is celebrated in poetic works such as Jiang Yan's 江淹 (444-505) "Cheng song" 檉頌 (Hymn to the Tamarisk), Li Qi's 李頎 (690-754?) "Wei Cangcao dongtang chengshu" 魏倉曹東堂檉樹 (The Tamarisk in Granary Administrator Wei's East Hall), and others.²² Today we have the benefit of color photography and the Internet to confirm easily that the southern Chinese tamarisk shows a red-green contrast, but the best photograph I have encountered showing the brightness of that contrast is still in a printed source.²³

To my knowledge, the earliest extended description of the tamarisk may be found in Luo Yuan's 羅願 (1136-1184) *Erya yi* 爾雅翼 (Commentary to the *Erya*):

Its bark is pure red, like crimson, and its leaves, fine as silk threads, are graceful and charming. When the heavens are about to rain, the tamarisk first causes a *pneuma* (*qi*) to rise in response to it. Therefore one name for it is Rainmaster, and its [proper] name derives from "sage."

²⁰ Lu Ji 陸機, *Mao shi caomu niaoshou chongyu shu* 毛詩草木鳥獸蟲魚疏 (abbrev. title *Shi shu* 詩疏), 2.4b. *Shi jing dongzhiwu tujian congshu* edition (1:323).

²¹ See Wang Niansun 王念孫 (1744-1832), *Guangya shuzheng* 廣雅疏證 (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1978), 4:10B.1353. I regard *chengkui* 檉欐 to be yet another compound for the tamarisk; as for *kui* in isolation, its meaning is uncertain, since commentators describe it as either a tree or bamboo; Legge (1992, 4:450) translates the word as "stave-tree."

²² Jiang Yan 江淹, *Liang Jiang Wentong wenji* 梁江文通文集, 10.9b; Li Qi's poem appears in Cao Yin 曹寅 (1659-1712) and Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 (1645-1719), ed., *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 133.1354.

²³ Xiao Peigen 1988, 1:120 (no. 213); compare with a northern tamarisk species (*Tamarix junipera* Bunge), pictured in 6:110 (no. 2724).

The *Zishuo* 字說 (An Explication of Characters) states: "In sensing the rain and responding, it is joined with the Way of heaven. Although the tree by nature is humane and sagely, [these qualities] are still un-separated from the tree. Since the little tree is sagely, "humane" (*ren* 仁) is inadequate for its name to derive therefrom. It is pronounced *cheng*, meaning "purity of red." It is said the god descends and makes it red.

Not only can the tamarisk sense rain, it can also bear frost, snow, and great cold without withering. In this it is unlike other willows. Now Zhuangzi understood that the pine and arborvitae remain green through winter and summer because they receive their destinies from the earth, and he compared them with Shun's receiving his mandate from heaven. Does this also account for *cheng*'s derivation from *sheng* 聖 (sageliness)?²⁴

The passage mentioning the god's descent, the tree's ability to sense rain, and its enduring quality are highly suggestive: was Master Redpine originally a kind of tree-sprite? If he was, would not his jade-and-water diet begin to make sense? After all, would these not represent a tree's purest nutrients? As for the way the tamarisk signals rainfall, Hao Yixing 郝懿行 (1747-1825) quotes Luo Yuan and adds, "Today we verify that when it is about to rain, the tamarisk flowers first. This statement by Luo Yuan is not groundless."²⁵ The fact that the tamarisk flowers three times per year, in pale red spikes three to four inches long, and is sometimes called *sanchunliu* 三春柳 ("three-spring willow") would also relate to this.

Li Shizhen's *Bencao gangmu* again proves to be an excellent source for more information on the tamarisk. After quoting Luo Yuan, Li cites an unspecified source on the way the tamarisk's branches droop when it rains. He cites *Sanfu gushi* 三輔故事, a Six Dynasties text of which only fragments are preserved, on a willow in the shape of a man in the Han Emperor Wu's garden. It was called the "Human Willow" (*renliu* 人柳). It woke up and went to sleep three times per day and was regarded the sage among tamarisks and willows. Li goes on to say that the tamarisk

²⁴ Luo Yuan 羅願 (1136-1184), *Erya yi* 爾雅翼 (rpt. Hefei: Anhui sheng guji zhengli chubanshe, 1991), 9.98. The *Zhuangzi* passage to which Luo Yuan alludes may be found in Guo Qingfan 1983, 2C.193 (ch. 5); trl. Watson 1968, 69.

²⁵ Hao Yixing 郝懿行, *Erya yishu* 爾雅義疏 (rpt. Liyi Zhonghetang 歷邑中和堂, 1866), *xia zhi er* 下之二, 9b.

was also called the “Willow of the Longevous Immortal” (*changshou xianren liu* 長壽仙人柳) and “Guanyin’s Willow” (Guanyin *liu* 觀音柳) because Guanyin used it to sprinkle water.²⁶

Although the description of the “human willow” by itself does not prove the existence of belief in a kind of animating spirit or sprite behind the tamarisk, the preponderance of the associations I have uncovered do indicate this. We may compare it with the following two accounts from Six Dynasties *zhiguai* literature:

Sheng Yi 盛逸 from Kuaiji 會稽 once got up at dawn, while the roads were still devoid of travelers. On a willow tree that grew within the gates [of his home] he spotted a man only two feet tall who wore vermilion robes and an official’s cap. He was bending down to lick the dew on the leaves. After some time, he suddenly noticed [Sheng] Yi. With an expression akin to alarm, he immediately hid from view.²⁷

Many familiar elements reappear: the red-green contrast (vermilion robes against green leaves), the tree (willow or tamarisk), water, and a figure who is at once a Daoist (robed in vermilion, drinking dew) and an official.

The second tale makes the association with Master Redpine explicit, though the arborvitae, a tree often said to resemble the tamarisk, is mentioned instead:

Deng Shao 鄧紹 of Hongnong 弘農 once went to Mount Hua on the first day of the eighth month to gather medicinal herbs. There he saw a boy holding a five-colored sack to collect dew from the leaves of arborvitae. It beaded like pearls and filled his sack. Shao asked him, “What is this used for?” and he replied, “Master Redpine takes it to brighten his eyes” [i.e., sharpen his eyesight]. As soon as he finished speaking, he disappeared. The “eye-brightening bags” [*yanmingdai* 眼

²⁶ Li Shizhen, *Bencao gangmu*, 1:2035 (fasc. 35). For an English summary see F. P. Smith 1979 [1911], 428.

²⁷ Kong shi *zhiguai* 孔氏志怪, as cited in Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641), ed., *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚, 89.1531. The tale is not included in Lu Xun’s 魯迅 (1881-1936) anthology *Gu xiaoshuo gouchen* 古小說鉤沉.

明袋] that people nowadays make on the first day of the eighth month are an abiding symbol of this event.²⁸

Making "eye-brightening bags" on the morning of the first day of the eighth month is described in other Six Dynasties sources.²⁹

The name "Guanyin's Willow" points to yet another possible line of investigation. During the Tang dynasty and afterward, the bodhisattva Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara) was said to have 33 forms, of which the first is Yangliu Guanyin 楊柳觀音 (Willow Guanyin) or Yaowang Guanyin 藥王觀音 (Medicine King Guanyin) and the thirty-third is Sashui Guanyin 灑水觀音 (Water-Sprinkling Guanyin; Mochisuke 1954-1963, 2:1545a). In Buddhist art Guanyin is often portrayed with a small willow next to her, or sprinkling pure water from a willow wand or branch. One Buddhist *sūtra* translated into Chinese during the Eastern Jin dynasty describes a ritual procedure for begging forgiveness and relieving epidemic: a preparatory step involves offering pure water and a willow branch to Guanyin.³⁰ Although that probably has a non-Chinese origin, certain embellishments on related practices are also highly suggestive of the imagery discussed above. For instance, one *sūtra* states that if a believer wishes to get rid of an illness, he should contemplate the image of the Medicine King Guanyin, who holds a willow branch in his right hand and covers his left breast with his left hand, palm outward; the image should be set to the northeast.³¹ In general, however, the connections between Budd-

²⁸ Wu Jun 吳均 (469-520), *Xu Qixieji 續齊諧記*, 6b (*Gujin yishi*). In another edition of *Xu Qixieji*, 1.7b (*Wenyuange siku quanshu*), the bag is said to be in the shape of a lotus flower.

²⁹ For example, Zong Lin's 宗慄 (c. 500-c. 560) *Jing Chu suishiji* 荆楚歲時記 and the Liang Emperor Jianwen's 梁簡文帝 (r. 549-550) preface to his *Yanming-nang fu* 眼明囊賦; both are cited in the definition of *yanmingnang* 眼明囊 in Luo Zhufeng 1988-1994, 7:1214. Daoist texts also contain instructions on various eye-washes, e.g., *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣 (DZ 421), 2.8b-9a and *Shangqing zijing junhuang chuzi lingdaojun dongfang shangjing* 上清紫精君皇初紫靈道君洞房上經 (DZ 405), 1.9b4-10a1.

³⁰ *Qing Guanyin pusa xiao fuduhai tuoluoni zhu jing* 請觀音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼經 (T. 1043), 20:34c.

³¹ *Qianguangyan Guanzizai pusa mimi fa jing* 千光眼觀自在菩薩祕密法經 (T. 1065), 20:122bc and 126a; Mochisuke 1954-1963, 5:4933a.

hism and earlier Chinese ideas about the willow or tamarisk are, as far as I can tell, very tenuous.

I shall conclude this section by citing a “missing” passage from *Baopuzi neipian*: “Fire polypore is often gathered in the summer. The tops of its leaves are red and its stalk below is green. Master Redpine consumes it. He is often before the Queen Mother of the West, riding the wind up and down, coming and going east and west.”³² The red-green contrast and connection with fire and summer remains, but the tamarisk has been transformed into one of *Baopuzi neipian*’s fantastic polypores.

Master Redpine as Immortal: Early References

The *Liexian zhuan* is not the first text to mention Master Redpine, for he seems to have been a rather popular figure already in the Warring States era. In fact, the poetic literature of the Han era alludes to him together with Wangzi Qiao, whose biography also appears in *Liexian zhuan*, so frequently that the relevant phrases are virtually cliché. The earliest reference to him, which appears in *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 (Intrigues of the Warring States), already follows this pattern, suggesting that Master Redpine and Wangzi Qiao, in terms of longevity, were considered somehow typical of the entire category of immortals (3.74b; Crump 1996, 150). Another early and fairly typical reference probably dating to the early Han may be found in the poem “Yuan you” 遠遊 (Distant Wandering) in *Chu ci*: “I heard of Chisong[zi] washing off the [world’s] dust / And wanted to carry on the pattern he had left behind” (5.2b; see Hawkes 1985, 194). Zhang Liang 張良 (d. 189 BCE), the early Han statesman who capably assisted the founder of the Han dynasty, once expressed the intention to retire by saying, “I would like to give up trivial human affairs—I only want to follow Master Redpine on his wanderings.” Empress Lü managed to dis-

³² Wang 1985, 360; the passage may be found in Ouyang Xun, *Yiwen leiju*, 98.1702 and was probably once a part of the *Baopuzi neipian*’s 11th chapter. One cannot help but wonder whether the last phrase on coming and going east and west might have also once been part of the *Liexian zhuan*. Another description of a different “fire polypore” is also given on the same page of *Yiwen leiju*.

suade him from doing so.³³ *Han shi waizhuan* 韓詩外傳 (Exoteric Commentary on the Han Redaction of the Poetry Classic) refers to him as a teacher of the legendary Thearch Ku 帝嚳.³⁴

Gymnastic and breathing exercises are already associated with Master Redpine (as well as Wangzi Qiao) in *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (The Master of Huainan). Both of the relevant passages describe them expelling the old and absorbing the new, breathing in the harmony of yin and yang, pacing the void, riding clouds, and so on.³⁵

In his youth Huan Tan 桓譚 (43 BCE–28 CE) composed a "Wang xian fu" 望仙賦 (Rhapsody on Gazing upon Immortals) that describes Master Redpine and Wangzi Qiao in very similar terms to the ones seen in *Huainanzi*, albeit greatly expanded in line with the conventions of the rhapsodic form. The rhapsody proper dwells on their breathing and gymnastic exercises, their circulation of pneuma, and journeys through the heavens, where they are accompanied by jade maidens and welcomed by assorted divine beings. In a way prefiguring the "jade in water" passage in the *Liexian zhuan* biography, the rhapsody describes both Master Redpine and Wangzi Qiao as "imbibing jade in suspension, eating blossoming polypore, rinsing their mouths with jade fluid, and drinking golden liquor." In the preface Huan Tan states that he was inspired to write the piece while staying in a "hall of immortals" inside one of the Han Emperor Wu's (r. 141–87 BCE) old palaces. Although Huan does not say explicitly, the hall was likely decorated with portraits of Master Redpine and Wangzi Qiao.³⁶

³³ Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145–ca. 86 B.C.E.). *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 55.2048 (compare Watson 1993, 1:113); Ban Gu 班固 (32–92), *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 40.2037.

³⁴ Han Ying 韓嬰 (2nd c. BCE), *Han shi waizhuan*, 5.15a; compare also Lau and Chen 1992a, 5.28/40/12 and Hightower 1952, 185. Hightower notes that the parallel passage in *Lü shi chunqiu* (Mr. Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals) lists Bozhao 伯招 instead.

³⁵ *Huainanzi*, 11.8b–9a, 20.6b–7a; Lau and Chen 1992b, 11/99/13, 20/214/15; trl. Major et al. 2010, 414, 809–10.

³⁶ The rhapsody is preserved wholly in Ouyang Xun, *Yiwen leiju*, 78.1338 and partly in Yu Shinan 虞世南 (558–638), *Beitang shuchao* 北堂書鈔, 102.4a. See also Pokora 1975, 231–2.

Kaltenmark (1953, 40-41) observes that the popularity of Master Redpine during the Han was probably linked to his connections with fire and the color red, emblems under which the Han ruling house derived its power. As part of his argument he cites a *Soushenji* story (certainly originating from prophetic “weft” literature) that relates how Confucius, after a dream, discovers a young boy, a gleaner, who has injured a unicorn and covered it with bundles of kindling. The boy’s name is Chisong Shiqiao 赤松時喬—a kind of mishmash of Redpine and Wangzi Qiao. When he shows Confucius the unicorn, it spits up three small scrolls with writing foretelling the end of the Zhou and rise of the Han.³⁷

Master Redpine earns Ge Hong’s frequent praise in *Baopuzi neipian*, but one passage describes a *Chisongzi jing* 赤松子經 in connection with a discussion of the way one’s lifespan may be lengthened or shortened by good or evil behavior, inherited merit or demerit, and so on.³⁸ Redpine thus becomes an authority on the regulations affecting destiny, a role that prefigured one of his roles in Shangqing Daoism.

Master Redpine in Shangqing Daoism

Master Redpine occupies an important place within the pantheon of the Shangqing 上清 (“Higher Clarity”) movement that began with Yang Xi’s 楊羲 (330-386) visions in the years 365-370. First of all, he figures in the *Qingling zhenren Pei jun zhuan* 清靈真人裴君傳 (Biography of the Perfected Man of Pure Numinosity, Lord Pei; YJQQ 105). Lord Pei was one of the “saints” of the Maoshan community from which the Shangqing movement developed. According to this text, several years after Lord Pei receives his initial instruction from Zhi Ziyuan 支子元, Master Redpine appears and recommends that he meditate on the five planets. The spirits of the five planets, he promises, will each come down and give him further instruc-

³⁷ Gan Bao, *Soushenji* in Wang 1979, 8.111; trl. DeWoskin and Crump 1996, 107-108. Wang Shaoying notes that the tale had appeared earlier in the weft text *Xiaojing youqi* 孝經右契 (Right Tally of the Classic of Filial Piety).

³⁸ Ge Hong, *Baopuzi neipian* in Wang 1985, 6.125; trl. Ware 1966, 115. *Chisongzi zhongjie jing* 赤松子中誡經 (Scripture of Master Redpine’s Precepts, DZ 185; trl. Kohn 2004, 155-68) is probably a much later scripture inspired by the *Baopuzi* passage.

tions. Then Master Redpine suddenly vanishes (7ab). Lord Pei quits his earthly official positions and withdraws to the mountains, where he follows Master Redpine's advice and eventually receives the instructions.

The headings of the early Shangqing works, *Shangqing taishang dijun jiuzhen zhong jing* 上清太上帝君九真中經 (Central Scripture of the Nine Perfected of the Most High Thearchic Lord of Higher Clarity; DZ 1376; trl. Miller 2008, 163-210) and *Shangqing jiuzhen zhong jing neijue* 上清九真中經內訣 (Esoteric Instructions on the Central Scripture of the Nine Perfected of Higher Clarity; DZ 908), state respectively that they were "transmitted" and "narrated" by Master Redpine. *Xiaomo jing* 消魔經 (The Scripture of Demon-Dispelling), an earlier scripture that was taken into the Shangqing movement, was also said to be revealed by Lord Blue Lad (Qingtongjun 青童君) to Master Redpine. A passage from the current version of that scripture relates how, when Master Redpine was still studying the Way, he contracted a severe illness that persisted until he chanted the *Zhihui wen* 智慧文 (Writ of Knowledge and Wisdom) and *Xiaomo jing* three thousand times (DZ 1344; 1.2a).

In *Dongxuan lingbao zhenling weiye tu* 洞玄靈寶真靈位業圖 (Chart of Positions of the Perfected Numinous Ones; DZ 167), based on a chart that Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536) had compiled, Master Redpine is given three different positions. His first two positions rank him highest in the Shangqing pantheon among all the *Liexian zhuan* immortals except for Laozi, in the left of the second tier (with many other Shangqing figures): one title is "The Left Sage Perfected Man and Left Immortal Duke of the Southern Pole and Southern Marchmount, and Perfected Man of Grand Vacuity, Master Redpine" 左聖南極南嶽真人左仙公太虛真人赤松子 and the other is "Lord of the Way at the Center in Grand Vacuity, Who Ascends to the Empyrean and Flies at Dawn" 太虛上霄飛晨中央道君 (1.3a). Later on, as plain "Chisongzi," he appears on the left of the fourth tier (1.13a) with several of the more eminent immortals in *Liexian zhuan* such as Ning Fengzi, Dongfang Shuo 東方朔, and Peng Jian 彭鏗 (Pengzu 彭祖). His multiple appearances in the pantheon may be attributed to his still-expanding roles and manifestations in Shangqing scriptures. His association with the Southern Marchmount, then Mount Dahuo 大霍山 in Zhejiang (Robson 2009), places him nearer to the center of early Higher Clarity activities.

What or where is this Grand Vacuity where he also now resides? The term first appears in *Zhuangzi* 22: “This is why they don’t pass beyond Kunlun or wander through Grand Vacuity” (Guo 1983, 7B.758; Watson 1968, 244). It often functions as a kind of abstract realm of space and mystery, but Grand Vacuity also has a strong eastern association, probably based on *Zhuangzi*’s balancing it with Kunlun in the west. The term also appears once in *Baopuzi neipian*, where it is contrasted with a tip of autumn down—it is a vast space (ch. 9; Wang 1985, 9.170; Ware 1966, 151).

Not surprisingly, *Zhen’gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected; DZ 1016), the text that describes many of Yang Xi’s visions, often mentions Master Redpine. There, whenever Lord Pei appears in a vision, he often refers to his teacher by various combinations of name and title: “Master Redpine of the Southern Marchmount” 南岳赤松子, “Perfected Man of Grand Vacuity and Red Lord of the Southern Marchmount” 太虛真人南岳赤君, and so on (5.1a, 5.2a, 5.5a). Master Redpine is also said to transmit the Way of Perfection to the immortals Guo Jing 郭靜 and Master Zheng 鄭先生 (14.11b), as well as Wang Zhongfu 王仲甫 (10.18b). However, despite the frequency with which *Zhen’gao* mentions or quotes him, only one passage records direct instructions from him, and it concerns, again, the way human conduct affects the allotment of destiny. The *Zhen’gao* editor Tao Hongjing casts some doubt on the passage, saying that it may have been reported to Yang Xi by one of his more frequent visitors.³⁹

In short, there was a large and still-growing mass of conflicting material on Master Redpine—but fortunately the *Zhen’gao* preserves a passage that attempts to form it all into something coherent. Its three verse stanzas and prose conclusion, as well as Tao Hongjing’s notes, deserve to be cited in full:

³⁹ *Zhen’gao* 6.7b-8a; for Tao Hongjing’s critical comment, 6.10a. The declaration is part of the section adapting the Buddhist *Sishi’er zhang jing* 四十二章經. Instead of beginning each passage with “The Buddha said...” (*Fo yan* 佛言), it begins with Lord Blue Lad, Master Redpine, and other high-ranking figures in the Shangqing pantheon (see also Bumbacher 2006). Despite Tao Hongjing’s misgivings, the higher status of Yang Xi’s visitors here would have given an authority to their words equivalent to those spoken by the Buddha.

Where is the man of utmost accomplishment?
 In the bright, scintillating southern chronograms,⁴⁰
 Holding numinosity within for a myriad generations,
 Riding the Lights, circuiting on high,
 Creating through transformation three paths
 With the sun and moon his neighbors.
 Truly mysterious, truly a preceptor,
 He is called a "Primal Man" (*yuanren* 元人).
 He changes into the Triple Old [Lord],⁴¹
 And is a friend of the Thearch's forebear.⁴²

How would the man of utmost accomplishment be known
 Were he not to come roaming about?
 Observing transformation⁴³ among the masses,
 He mixes with common folk, becoming their companion.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ The southern chronograms (*nanchen* 南辰) should be taken as a general reference to the southern asterisms; when the term reappears below, it becomes the location for the Old Man of the Southern Pole (*nanji laoren* 南極老人) or α Carinae (Canopus), the Star of Longevity, concerning which, see Schafer 2005, 67-80. Yoshikawa and Mugitani (2000, 539n1) indicate that the southern chronogram should be the planet Mars, citing *Shangqing taishang basu zhenjing* 上清太上八素真經 (DZ 426), 1.11b-13a, which describes the "Way of Volant Ascent to Mars." One passage (p. 13a) calls Mars the "southern chronogram." However, if that reading is followed, then the statement on *nanchen* in the prose conclusion below becomes nonsensical.

⁴¹ There are many single deities and triple sets of deities known as the Triple Old [Lord(s)] (*sanlao* or *sanlaojun* 三老君)—too many to list here—but this one may perhaps be considered singular.

⁴² That is, friend of the Way. The line alludes to *Laozi*, ch. 4: "I do not know whose son it is—it seems to be the Thearch's forebear." *Laozi*, 1.3a (*Sibu beiyao*); Yoshikawa and Mugitani 2000, 539n5.

⁴³ Observing transformation (*guanhua* 觀化) recalls a dialogue on life and death in *Zhuangzi*: "You and I for a time observe the transformation, and when the transformation comes to me, why would I resent it at all?" Guo Qingfan 1983, 6B.616 (ch. 19); compare Watson 1968, 193.

⁴⁴ A Tang official, Yang Yuling 楊於陵 (753-830), alludes to this couplet—indeed, this entire passage and a *Soushenji* story to be discussed below—in his poem, "Zeng Mao xianweng" 贈毛仙翁 (For Old Immortal Mao): "You, sir, are a

Setting aside his plumes, damping his little bells,
He rests in this southern marchmount recess.
Is this not why he is loved by the masses?
Though stained with vulgarity, long he lingers.

[Tao Hongjing]: *Qisheng xuanji* 七聖玄紀 [Mystical Records of the Seven Sages] states, “When the Red Lord descends to teach, he alters his traces, becoming a *śramana* [mendicant or homeless wanderer] accompanied by six disciples, and all reveal their surnames and names.”⁴⁵

Stained by vulgarity for the world’s sake,
He does not match [his appearance] when he emerged:
As Red Anomaly, he lurks and terrifies;⁴⁶
At the Three Posts, he causes disaster.⁴⁷
As a worthy, he travels south—
To the Sanyue [Islands] he goes.⁴⁸
When the Mystic Lord comes by,
Who knows who he is?

companion of Redpine, / Mixing with common folk, roaming in the human world. / Kun[lun] and Wild[wind]—an endless road. / When will you come down from the old mountain? / At a thousand years, you retain a child’s substance, / And your hidden arts save the dusty realm. / Don’t just shoot off into the heavens— / Clouds and thunderbolts I cannot climb.” Cao Yin 曹寅 (1659-1712) and Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 (1645-1719), ed., *Quan Tang shi*, 330.4a (*Siku quanshu huiyao*).

⁴⁵ This passage does not appear in either of the two scriptures of the Ming canon (DZ 1379, DZ 1361) that correspond to *Qisheng xuanji* 七聖玄紀 (Robinet 1984, 2:226; Yoshikawa and Mugitani 2000, 540n8).

⁴⁶ The Red Anomaly (Chiguai 赤怪) of the south, Mars, is a punishing spirit that in *Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章曆 (DZ 615), 3.11a must be exorcised. There are also the Blue or Green Anomaly of the east (Jupiter), White Anomaly of the west (Venus), Black Anomaly of the north (Mercury), and Yellow Anomaly of the Center (Saturn). The *Zhen’gao* lines may allude to a tale in *Soushenji* (discussed below).

⁴⁷ The Three Posts (*sanzhu* 三柱) names part of the constellation of the Five Chariots (*wuche* 五車). The Three Posts are where the heavenly horses are tethered. They consist of three sets of three stars: (1) ε, ζ, and η Aurigae; (2) ν, τ, and υ Aurigae; and (3) χ and 26 Aurigae, the third uncertain. Disaster occurs when Mars strays into the territory of the Three Posts, according to the commentary to Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 27.1304-05.

⁴⁸ Sanyue 三嶽 may refer to three coastal islets near Ningbo, Zhejiang.

[Tao Hongjing]: The Red Anomaly is the star Sparkling Deluder [Mars]. The Three Posts are the Three Posts among the stars of the Five Chariots.⁴⁹ [*Zhu* ("Posts") uses] [*zhi*]⁵⁰ and *lǚ* reverse[-cut pronunciation].

At the Primal Pneuma, he is the Primal Lord 元君; at the Mystic Palace,⁵¹ he is the Mystic Preceptor 玄師; among the southern chronograms, he is the Old Man of the Southern Pole;⁵² at Grand Vacuity, he is the Perfected Man of Grand Vacuity; at the Southern Marchmount, he is Master Redpine. This means he is the Preceptor of the Four Perfected Men of the Heavenly Thearch, and a friend of Grand Unity.

[Tao Hongjing]: These four passages were copied out by the Senior Aide [Xu Mi 許謚 (303-376)]. I have not determined which scripture originally contained them. Together they are intended to describe the Red Lord of the Southern Marchmount descending to teach. The titles Preceptor and friend are at slight variance with the various [Shangqing] scriptures. (14.18b-19a)

The passage above delineates the transformations of a deity for whom Master Redpine is but one guise. He may be the Star of Longevity, Canopus; he may be the Red Lord; he may come down to earth and appear as a wandering teacher with six disciples; he may be the terrifying Sparkling Deluder (Mars) or the punishing Red Anomaly; a worthy traveling south; the Mystic Preceptor in the Mystic Palace, and so on. His identification as Mystic Preceptor helps to explain the *Hanshi waizhuan's*

⁴⁹ The Five Chariots (*wuche*) in Western astronomy are α Aurigae (Capella), β Aurigae (Menkalinan), β Tauri (Elnath), θ Aurigae (Bogardus), and ι Aurigae (Al Kab).

⁵⁰ Emendation of *bu* 步 to *zhi* 陟 per Yoshikawa and Mugitani 2000, 538n1.

⁵¹ The Mystic Palace (*xuangong* 玄宮) is in the far north; it is mentioned in *Zhuangzi*: "Zhuangxi found it [the Way] and dwells in the Mystic Palace." Guo Qingfan 1983, 3A.247 (ch. 6); compare Watson 1968, 82. Recalling Master Redpine's association with Yujing / Xuanming, the rain god, we should note as well the next sentence: "Yuqiang found it and stands at the Northern Pole." This may explain the *Hanshi waizhuan's* assertion that Master Redpine taught Zhuangxi.

⁵² The Old Man of the Southern Pole (Nanji laoren 南極老人), mentioned already in Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 30.1306, is the star of longevity (*shouxing* 壽星), known in Western astronomy as α Carinae (Canopus). The term *nanchen* in this phrase cannot be Mars.

assertion that Redpine taught the Thearch Zhuangzi, whom *Zhuangzi* places in the Mystic Palace. However, the same figure, as the Mystic Lord, can wander among ordinary people—and who knows who he is?

Regarding the line about him becoming Mars, the Red Anomaly (*chiguai* 赤怪) that lurks and terrifies, *Soushenji* preserves a tale in which the Sparkling Deluder near the end of the Three Kingdoms era appears before some children, and he frightens them with his strange appearance: like a six or seven year old boy less than four feet tall, but with flashing eyes. He predicts the eventual fall of the Wu, Shu, and Wei kingdoms to the Sima clan, then he transforms and rises into heaven.⁵³ It so happens that the strange boy wears *qing* 青 clothes, which may be “blue” or “dark,” but I am inclined to say “green”—recall that one of the names of the tamarisk is *chiguailiu* 赤怪柳, the “Red Anomaly’s willow.” His bright eyes may also relate to Master Redpine’s eye-brightening formulas.

Master Redpine’s identification as “Primal Lord” (*yuanjun* 元君) in the passage is especially noteworthy, because the title is usually associated with high-ranking female Perfected.⁵⁴ However, the title does not make him female. It derives instead from his association with the “primal pneuma” (*yuanqi* 元炁) from the emergence of the universe.⁵⁵ He was a friend of the Way from the beginning. He is probably the same wind and rain-controlling “Primal Lord” whom Ge Hong describes as Laozi’s teacher (Wang Ming 1985, 4.76; trl. Ware 1966, 79-80), and so the *Zhen’gao* passage speaks of him as “Preceptor of the Four Perfected Men of the Heavenly Thearch,” a group that includes Laozi.⁵⁶

⁵³ See Gan Bao, *Soushenji* in Wang 1979, 113-14; trl. DeWoskin and Crump 1996, 109-10; also discussed in Schafer 2005, 215-16.

⁵⁴ Li Fang et al., ed., *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1963), 58.358, citing *Wei furen neizhuan* 魏夫人內傳.

⁵⁵ *Zhen’gao*, 5.1a; trl. Smith 2013, 306: “The Way was mixed all together; from this was engendered the primal pneuma. After the primal pneuma became complete, then there was the Grand Ultimate. As for the Grand Ultimate, it is father and mother to heaven and earth and the deep origin of the Way.”

⁵⁶ *Zhen’gao*, 5.1b-2a mentions Four Perfected Men of the Grand Ultimate, of whom Lord Lao is one. However, Tao Hongjing there describes Lord Lao as Master Redpine’s teacher.

Thus besides Master Redpine's common "Perfected Man of Grand Vacuity" title, he may also be the "Primal Lord of Grand Vacuity" mentioned in the commentary to the 31st stanza of the foundational Higher Clarity scripture, *Shangqing dadong zhenjing* 上清大洞真經 (DZ 6). The commentary states that in Grand Vacuity there is a Drumbeat Mansion (*pengpeng shi* 彭彭室) where the Primal Lord of Grand Vacuity lives.⁵⁷

Master Redpine's expanded titles are critical for understanding one of the most important episodes in *Zhen'gao*—that of Yang Xi's wedding to the Perfected Consort An of Purple Clarity 紫清安妃. Consort An's parentage is described three times: (1) When Yang Xi's prospective bride is first introduced to him, she is said to be "the young daughter of the Higher Perfected Primal Lord of Grand Vacuity [and?] Lady Li of the Golden Terrace" 太虛上真元君金臺李夫人之少女. (2) In the next sentence, Consort An is said to have been sent to Tortoise Mountain by "the Primal Lord of Grand Vacuity" 太虛元君 (1.12b; trl. Smith 2013, 60). (3) On the wedding night, Consort An says, "I am the youngest daughter of the Primal Lord, the beloved child of Lady Li of Grand Vacuity" 我是元君之少女，太虛李夫人之愛子也 (1.15b; trl. Smith 2013, 65).

Now most translators of this episode have made Lady Li the only parent mentioned here, because of the feminine-sounding *yuanjun* title.⁵⁸ However, Lady Li's usual full title is "Displayer of Numina on Fangzhang Terrace," 方丈臺昭靈, not Grand Vacuity Terrace; her association with Grand Vacuity comes through Master Redpine. Once we realize that Consort An is Master Redpine's daughter, several other passages in *Zhen'gao* are clarified.⁵⁹ However, the main point to be made here is

⁵⁷ *Shi sanshijiu zhang jing* 釋三十九章經 (Exegesis of the Scripture in Thirty-nine Stanzas), in YJQQ 8.11b. Frustratingly, neither *Shangqing dadong zhenjing* nor the commentary explicitly identifies this Primal Lord with Master Redpine.

⁵⁸ Yoshikawa and Mugitani (2000, 31), Wiles (1986, 225), Ishii (1991, 73n), and Bokenkamp (1996, 172 and 175) mention only Lady Li as a parent; Kominami (1981, 443) leaves an appropriate ambiguity; Hyland (1984, 110 and 116) mentions the father only for the marriage, not the betrothal.

⁵⁹ For example, an otherwise rather cryptic remark concerning Grand Vacuity by Zhou Yishan 周義山, one of the wedding guests, becomes a statement reassuring the bridegroom that he need not worry about his father-in-law (2.2a; trl. Smith 2013, 80). Also, the arrangement of the seventh to ninth poems in

that when Yang Xi becomes Master Redpine's son-in-law, he puts himself in an incomparable position for transmitting more scriptures to the world. By gaining such a close connection with one of the main divine scripture-revealers, he boldly assumes a position at the head of a new scriptural lineage on earth.

The foregoing by no means proves once and for all that the deity who sometimes appears as Master Redpine is Consort An's father, but the signs point in that direction. I might add that when Consort An first appears before Yang Xi, he observes of her clothing: "The divine woman wore a one-piece dress of cloud brocade, cinnabar red on top and *qing* 青 below, the patterns and colors glittering brightly" (1.11b; trl. Smith 2013, 58). Although I translated *qing* as blue ("cyan blue" to balance the phrase), it would be equally acceptable to translate it as green. Surely the colors of Consort An's raiment, like those of the Red Anomaly, are somehow significant. Can it be that she wears her father's colors?

Later References to Master Redpine

Later Daoist literature amply reflects the proliferation of Master Redpine's roles and identities, and I can only provide a small sampling of these later references. Most worthy of note, however, is the elaboration of his gymnastic methods in scriptures such as *Taiqing daoyin yangsheng jing* 太清導引養生經 (Grand Clarity Scripture of Gymnastics and Cultivating Life; DZ 818).⁶⁰ *Chisongzi zhang li* 赤松子章歷 (Master Redpine's Almanac of Petitions; DZ 615), which probably dates to the late Tang but contains much earlier material from the third to fifth centuries, opens with a brief dialogue between Redpine and the Heavenly Elder Pingchang 天老平長 on the writing of petitions (see Nickerson 1997). Authorship of *Huangdi yinfu jing jijie* 黃帝陰符經集解 (Collected Annotations on

Zhen'gao's "Dependency and Non-dependency" debate is also clarified—the poems' singers become respectively mother, daughter, and father (3.2b-5a; trl. Smith 2013, 159-65 and Kroll 2012, 577-86).

⁶⁰ These are discussed in Maspero 1981, 542-45. Redpine's method is translated on pp. 543, 546. The same scripture provides gymnastic methods ascribed to other *Liexian zhuan* immortals such as Ning Fengzi, Peng Zu 彭祖, and Wangzi Qiao. Parallel passages may be found in YJQQ 34.

the Scripture of the Hidden Talismans of the Yellow Thearch; DZ 108) is also attributed to him, together with several other immortals. The Song-era *Jinhua Chisong shan zhi* 金華赤松山志 (Treatise on Mount Jinhua-Chisong; DZ 601) preserves much information concerning later beliefs surrounding Master Redpine: that he had retreated to Mount Jinhua to refine elixir and became the teacher of the brothers Huang Chuqi 皇初起 and Chuping 初平, and so on.⁶¹ Finally, the *Yunji qiqian* collects descriptions of several herbal and alchemical formulas attributed to Master Redpine⁶² as well as breathing and gymnastic methods.⁶³ He is also described, in the *Laozi zhong jing* 老子中經 (Central Scripture of Laozi, YJQQ 18), as being to the right of the Queen Mother of the West's counterpart, the Kingly Sire of the East (Dongwanggong 東王公); Wangzi Qiao is on his left (2ab).

Kaltenmark (1953, 42) mentions two tales from later Six Dynasties *zhiguai* literature relating to Master Redpine and links both with the Six Dynasties and Tang custom of collecting dew on the first day of the eighth month and using it to clear one's eyesight. I have already cited the first, from *Xu Qixie ji* 續齊諧記 (More of Qi Xie's Records), in which Master Redpine is said to have collected dewdrops on arborvitae leaves in a multicolored sack. The second tale is taken from *Han Wudi bieguo dongmingji* 漢武帝別國洞冥記 (Record of the Han Emperor Wu's Penetration into the Mysteries of Separate Realms), which probably dates to the sixth century.⁶⁴ However, this tale does not relate as much to the dew-collecting custom as to the plentiful "snake pearl" lore of the Han and Six Dynasties.⁶⁵ Furthermore, when reading the *Han Wudi bieguo dong-*

⁶¹ Huang Chuping (and Chuqi) are the subject of biographies in Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan*, where, however, we read that Huang Chuping only changed his style to Chisong; see Campany 2002, 309-311 and 496-498. Mount Jinhua, also known as Mount Chisong, is located in Jinhua District, Zhejiang.

⁶² YJQQ 66.13b-14a (a method for making cinnabar from lead and mercury), 74.18b-19a (a method for making *gouqi* pills), 75.7b-8a (a method for ingesting mica), 75.22b (method for ingesting mica powder).

⁶³ YJQQ 34.1a-2a and 59.5a. The former is cited from *Daoyin jing* 1.1a-2a.

⁶⁴ *Han Wudi bieguo dongmingji* in Wang 1989, 86; Smith 1992, 2:633.

⁶⁵ An early source for the snake pearl story is a "missing" passage from Gao You's 高誘 (fl. 205-212) commentary to *Huainanzi* preserved in the commentary

mingji, one must keep in mind that it is written in order to express the hidden relationships among separate things via symbolism derived through belief in the Five Phases, yin and yang, and so on.⁶⁶ The various elements of this passage, by their colors or substances, are together symbolic of the Five Phases. Master Redpine is inserted mainly to bolster the color scheme.

Conclusion

If we turn back now and reread Master Redpine's *Liexian zhuan* biography and its encomium, many of the underlying patterns and connections described above should forcefully emerge. Consider, for example, Shennong / the Fiery Emperor: he is associated on the one hand with plants (green) and fire (red). His young daughter likewise makes a perfect counterpart for Master Redpine: she is not only fiery but also young. If youthfulness, nascence, emergence, and so on may be associated with the color green, then she too embodies red and green qualities. The column of wind and rain relates to the Rainmaster and Wind Earl. The Rainmaster is shaman, deity, red-and-green tree sprite, symbolized also in red-and-green duckweed (indicative of sufficient rain). Later on, these initial associations are greatly expanded, so that he becomes broadly linked with Canopus, the star of longevity, the planet Mars (red, but dressed in green in an earthly appearance), a wandering teacher, a revealer of scripture, a master of gymnastics, and so on—roles not necessarily based directly on the *Liexian zhuan* biography itself, but derived through long chains of association.

Having read a great deal of Han and Six Dynasties literature over the years, I always watch for arrangements of words that relate to one another through Five Phases correspondences, as with the *Han Wudi biguo dongmingji* passage above. Master Redpine's biography also exhibits these patterns: besides the many red (south) and green (east) elements, there is white jade, the Queen Mother, and Kunlun (west), water (north), and Gaoxin, the great-grandson of the Yellow Thearch (center). The Five

of *Liuchenzhu wenxuan* 六臣註文選, 42.18a. The snake pearl later becomes a stock poetic metaphor for literary talent.

⁶⁶ On reading this text as an allegory, see Smith 1992, 1:274-324.

Phases are thus subtly represented in full here—but one looks in vain for a similar pattern in the *Liexian zhuan*'s other biographies. This is only to be expected: Master Redpine's biography is chronologically first, so it describes an ideally balanced world that has faded into the distant past.

Elements of his biography, however, are echoed by others in *Liexian zhuan*. I have mentioned Ning Fengzi, Xiaofu, and Shimen, who could also ride smoke or rain up and down, but there is another rather large group of immortals who, like Master Redpine, ascend to the heavens or simply disappear with a partner or spouse: Xiao Shi 蕭史, Duzi 犢子, Yuanke 園客, Wen Bin 文賓, Hu Zixian 呼子先, and Nü Wan 女丸.⁶⁷ However, the level of these immortals' departures noticeably declines through the ages. The idea that society is gradually declining from the halcyon days of antiquity subtly undergirds the book's structure.

Appropriately enough, the last biography in *Liexian zhuan*, that of Xuan Su 玄俗, presents a distorted contrast to Master Redpine's. Xuan Su peddles medicine and lives on a diet of mica⁶⁸ and croton (a powerful laxative). The King of Hejian 河間王 suffers from an intestinal blockage, so he purchases some of Xuan Su's medicine and expels ten snakes. Xuan Su then explains that the king's ailment was caused by a residuum of evil from past generations, but because he had once freed a doe that was actually the dam of a unicorn, the king was able to encounter him. Xuan Su himself is observed to cast no shadow (presumably, his form has been emptied). The king wants to marry off his daughter to him, but Xuan Su disappears during the night, only to reappear at the foot of Mount Chang 常山 (2.16b). In this biography, there are no ascents. Master Redpine rises to the top of Kunlun, but Xuan Su stays at the foot of a nearby mountain. Redpine teaches his jade and water diet to Shennong, but the King of Hejian buys the medicine that Xuan Su peddles in the market: commerce initiates the teacher-disciple relationship. Redpine visits Xi-wangmu, Xuan Su is summoned by a regional prince. Redpine rises and descends on wind and rain, Xuan Su voids himself with a laxative. A young woman takes the initiative to pursue Redpine, but the King of Hejian tries to have his daughter marry Xuan Su. Redpine does not

⁶⁷ *Liexian zhuan* 1.17a, 2.2b-3a, 2.4a-b, 2.9a-b, 2.11b-12a, 2.14a.

⁶⁸ The mica part of his diet is not mentioned in the DZ text but is preserved in Li Fang, ed., *Taiping yulan*, 743.6b and 933.6b, and other sources.

spurn female companionship, but Xuan Su does. The contrast between Xuan Su and Redpine neatly encapsulates the *Liexian zhuan* author-compiler's views on the ways the world has declined through the ages.

We may pause to consider the components of Xuan Su's name: "mystic/ mysterious/ dark" and "vulgar/ common/ secular." Could he be the Mystic Lord, who is "stained by vulgarity" as he roams among the people? It is an intriguing possibility. "Who knows who he is?"

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The “Other” Dao in Town

Early Lingbao Polemics on Shangqing

DAVID BOYD

Abstract

Most studies on Daoist polemics have focused on the conflict and competition between Buddhism and Daoism. An equally important and hitherto understudied field of inquiry is the polemics revolving around the early conflicts and competition between different Chinese religious movements commonly labeled, or rather aspiring to the label “Daoist.” This paper examines polemics in early Daoist scriptures concerned with issues of “identity” and “orthodoxy.” Ironically, the use of the label “Daoism” has had a homogenizing effect on our understanding of the internal relations of the various traditions subsumed by it and has smoothed over internal competition with a thin veneer of semantic unity masking the historical competition over just who should rightly be called “Daoist.” The 4th century saw the rise of two distinct forms of Daoism: Shangqing and Lingbao. Rarely in the history of religion have two traditions emerged in such close temporal and geographical proximity to one another. This proximity created fierce competition for patronage and prestige. This article examines the direct, indirect, and camouflaged ways in which the emergent Lingbao tradition sought to assert its superiority over its neighboring Shangqing rival.

What attention scholars have paid to the issue of Daoist polemics has tended to focus on the conflict and competition of the Buddho-Daoist debates involving northern Celestial Masters during the Northern Wei 北魏 (386-534 CE), recorded in 520, the Northern Zhou 北周 (557-588) in 570 and reoccurring in the Tang Dynasty with the debates of the Daoist Fu Yi 傅奕 in 621-23 and Li Zhongqing 李仲卿 held in 626 (see Kohn 2000 287-88; Kohn 1995). However, as Erik Zürcher has noted these often con-

temptuous and accusatory anti-Buddhist polemics are surprisingly absent from early Daoist scriptures (1980, 89).

On the contrary, Zürcher has observed that polemics in early Daoist scriptures are unilaterally concerned with issues of “orthodoxy” and internal conduct (1980, 89). Stephen R. Bokenkamp has similarly noted that the frequency with which early writers address such issues in the early period “attests to a fairly high level of anxiety concerning questions of self-definition” (1997, 11). This is not surprising, given that Michel Strickmann has argued that the term Daoism “has been pressed into service to qualify a highly disparate assortment of phenomena” and has proposed instead the idea of “various” Daoisms (1977, 1; see Bokenkamp 1997, 10).

Is it surprising, then, that these disparate traditions were in competition with each other? Ironically, the very use of the label “Daoism” has had a homogenizing effect on our understanding of the internal relations of the various traditions subsumed by it and has served to smooth over internal competition with a thin veneer of semantic unity. This thin semantic veneer masks the historical competition over just who should rightly be called Daoist.¹ In regards to Daoist polemics, then, an even more important field of inquiry, one that has hitherto been largely unstudied but that may yet yield powerful insights into the early conflicts and competition of different Chinese religious movements commonly labeled, or rather aspiring to the label “Daoist” – movements that sought to position themselves as local and regional “orthodoxies” – is the internal polemics of the various Daoisms (see Campany 2003).

A prime example is the relationship between the Daoisms practiced in southeastern China during the second half of the 4th century, which had a profound and far reaching impact on the development of both Daoism and Chinese religion. Stephen R. Bokenkamp has observed: “During the latter half of the 4th century, the prefectural town of Jurong,

¹ This is not simply an issue of the inaccuracy of Western classificatory nomenclature, but is rather the result of a cursory reading of the various traditions that were each asserting themselves as the “true Daoists.” Thus, the term “Daoist,” far from being a label of common membership was, in the early period, a fiercely contested category over which wars of orthodoxy were waged. See Bokenkamp 1997, 11; Stein 1979, 53-81.

just southeast of modern Nanjing, was the scene of a series of events which were to redirect the course of China's indigenous higher religion and lay the foundations for the Daoist canon" (1983, 2:434).

This "series of events" revolves around the emergence of two distinct movements, first the Shangqing 上清, "Highest Clarity" or "Supreme Purity" tradition, and a few decades later, the Lingbao 靈寶, or "Numinous Treasure," each promoting a radically different worldview and modality of practice. Though it is not uncommon for new religious movements to emerge in response to established religious traditions, such as the emergence of Christianity and Islam in lieu of Judaism or the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism amidst the backdrop of Brahmanic and Vedic traditions, and while new religious ideologies are scarcely created *ex nihilo* in a spiritual void, what is unique about these southern Chinese movements is the close temporal and geographical proximity in which they emerged. Indeed, Bokenkamp has argued: "The appearance of a second collection of divinely-inspired scriptures in Jurong within only twenty-seven years of the last entries in the Shangqing corpus (370) is a somewhat surprising phenomenon" (1983, 442).

More than surprising, perhaps nowhere else in the history of world religions have two distinct scriptural canons emerged in such close proximity to one another. How did this proximity influence the ways in which the emerging Lingbao movement responded to its neighbor Shangqing, literally the other Daoism in town? Regarding constructs of otherness, Jonathan Z. Smith has insightfully proposed:

'Otherness,' it is suggested, is a matter of relative rather than absolute difference. Difference is not a matter of comparison between entities judged to be equivalent; rather difference most frequently entails a hierarchy of prestige and ranking. Such distinctions are found to be drawn most sharply between 'near neighbors,' with respect to what has been termed the 'proximate other.' (1985, 15)

In examining the "sharp distinctions" drawn between "near neighbors" commonly labeled Daoist, the existence of polemics directed toward internal orthodoxy and orthopraxis betrays a "proximate" otherness. Thus otherness becomes central to internal polemics. Smith has further argued that "'otherness' is an ambiguous category. This is so be-

cause it is necessarily a term of interrelation. 'Otherness' is not so much a matter of separation as it is a description of interaction. . . The relation to the 'other' is a matter of shifting temporality and relative modes of relationship" (Smith 1985, 10).

Understanding the "other" in Daoist polemics, then, will increase our understanding of the interactions and "relative modes of relationships" between the proponents and subjects of early internal Daoist polemics. Therefore, this study examines the complex attitudes of the Lingbao scriptures toward the Shangqing tradition and presents the often overlooked Lingbao "polemic" against the "proximate other" Daoism in town. Before moving onto to that discussion, however, it is first necessary to develop a taxonomical rubric for a study of Lingbao polemics.

Defining Polemics

In her book *Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative*, Yairah Amit recounts the warfare etymology of the word "polemic" in the Greek πόλεμος, meaning "war" or "military confrontation" and documents its metaphorical use in polemical rhetoric, suggesting, "The argument articulated within a text defined as polemical, and pertaining to some war of ideas, is intended to strengthen or to reject an explicit or covert position taken by that text" (2000, 7); see Williamson 2002; Marcus 2004).

Thus, by a "polemical discourse" or Lingbao polemic I mean a divisive discourse or recurring set of discursive structures throughout the Lingbao texts that argue for and assert the superiority and primacy of the doctrines, practices, and worldview of the Numinous Treasure, in this case, in opposition to and at the expense of its neighborhood rival Shangqing. This type of discourse tends to promote, respond to, and/or anticipate internal contention, conflict, and controversy, as opposed to an irenical discourse, which may be defined as "tending to promote peace," especially in relation to theological or ecclesiastical differences" (<http://dictionary.oed.com>).

Amit explores the phenomena of religious polemics in Hebrew Biblical literature, distinguishing between explicit, implicit, and hidden polemics. She defines an explicit polemic as a polemic in which both the subject and the stance taken are directly mentioned, leaving no question for the reader (2000, 56). An example of this kind of polemic is, "peaches

are bad," which leaves no doubt as to the author's stance toward peaches. An implicit polemic directly states its subject, but indirectly states its stance through a variety of components (2000, 57). To modify our former example: "peaches are fruit, fruit decays, decay is sickness, sickness is bad," in which the subject is directly stated, but the stance only emerges through a series of associative components. Once the chain of associations is forged, the polemic becomes clear to the reader.² The third type of polemic Amit identifies is the concealed or hidden polemic, which she defines as a polemic in which the subject is not explicitly mentioned or that is mentioned in an unexpected formulation (2000, 93). In a hidden polemic the subject is camouflaged while the stance may be executed in either an explicit or implicit manner. Thus, the relationship between the stance and the subject can only be discerned through certain clues within the text (2000, 93).³ Amit explains:

Through various hints, the reader is left with the feeling that a double effort has been made within the text: on the one hand – to conceal the subject of the polemic, that is, to avoid its explicit mention; on the other – to leave certain traces within the text (referred to below as "signs") that through various means will lead the reader to the hidden subject of the polemic. The signs serve as both ruses to bypass explicit mention of the subject. (2000, 97)

Amit proposes that such hidden polemics possess a rhetorical persuasion that removes initial opposition to a stance that might not be accepted if stated explicitly while creating an accumulating residue, guiding the reader to the final stance, "The hidden polemic is like a fine rain, whose accumulated drops create a suitable background and preparatory framework for the reader's discovery" (2000, 97).

² This is, obviously, a grossly simplistic example. In a more complex implicit polemic the statements need not appear sequentially, but may be scattered throughout a text like clues for the reader to find.

³ The complexity and covert nature of such "hidden polemics" makes their reduction into a simplistic example such as the peach above difficult. To uncover a hidden polemic against peaches would require a close reading of the text, which would through a variety of clues eventually lead one, without explicitly stating the subject, to the conclusion that peaches were somehow bad.

Amit argues that this kind of polemic carries far greater persuasive power, as it subtly redirects the reader away from the conclusion they anticipate toward the as yet undiscovered polemic. I have found her rubric quite useful for understanding polemics and therefore use it as a point of departure for my analysis and discussion of specific passages containing Lingbao polemics against Shangqing with one final caution from Amit:

Polemics, with the various stances represented, are not presented as systematic discussion, within which one may distinguish a theoretical level, a sequence of arguments, or at least a summarizing presentation of the problem. . . . Moreover, in a text presenting a polemic or a polemical stance, the parts frequently do not add up to a unified statement; rather, the various stances are intertwined with one another. (2000, 26)

The lack of systematic presence of polemical stances and their intertwining nature is an important observation to keep in mind for examining Lingbao polemics. Furthermore, Amit understands the emergence of polemics as “an expression of a variety of ideological struggles” reflecting the processes of cultural and religious formation and struggle, the temporal continuation of which “constitutes the framework for the existence of polemics and polemical writing” (2000, 3). As such, the story, and therefore the polemic, is grounded in the early medieval Chinese cultural history that shaped elite society in the south and formed the backdrop for the interactions of several aristocratic families in Jurong in the 4th century.

Historical Background

Following the sacking of the Western Jin Dynasty (265-317) capital of Luoyang by a confederation of nomadic Xiongnu 匈奴 tribes in 317, northern elite émigrés led by remnants of the Jin court fled south, relocating the capital to east of the Yangze in Jiankang 建康 (south of modern Nanjing city in Jiangsu Province) and establishing the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420). This forced emigration resulted in bitter factional struggles between the northern émigrés and the long established southern aristocratic families (Strickmann 1977, 6-7). More significantly for our

purposes, the northern émigrés brought with them northern Celestial Masters Daoism, which had spread throughout the north under both the Wei 魏 (220-265) and the Jin Dynasties following the pious surrender of Zhang Lu 張魯 (fl. 191-216 or 252; see Bokenkamp 1997, 150, 161) to the Wei General Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220) in 215 and immediately set out to subdue popular southern religious cults (Strickmann 1977, 7).

In the wake of this spiritual and political colonization, Strickman has argued that the religious situation was quite tense, with southern practitioners launching aggressive spiritual campaigns against their new overlords. In the midst of this tenuous spiritual confrontation, southern converts to northern Celestial Master Daoism first assimilated, and within a few generations began to produce comprehensive spiritual syntheses of the northern import with indigenous southern practice, "forging a spiritual counterforce in their interest" (Strickmann 1977, 12). Thus, both the Shangqing and Lingbao movements represent southern responses to Celestial Master incursions, which synthesized it with aspects of Buddhism and popular southern practices (Bokenkamp 2007, 171-172).

Since Zürcher's article, "Buddhist Influences on Early Taoism" began circulating in 1980, it has become common to speak of "Buddhist influence" in regards to Daoism and popular Chinese religion. However, while the impact of Buddhism on the religious landscape of China is undeniable, the directionality implied by the term "influence" is somewhat misleading, particularly in the case of Lingbao.⁴ Bokenkamp has provided a thorough analysis of this of "influence," revising Zürcher's terminology and arguing that to "properly assess Buddhist elements in the early Lingbao corpus, we must avoid simplistic notions of 'influence'" and "focus analytical attention on the 'appropriating system'" (2004a, 317).

⁴ Although Zürcher's article is quite nuanced in its treatment, acknowledging that terms such as "influence" and "borrowing" are vague and cover a wide variety of phenomena (1980, 86), a certain reductionist mentality has resulted in an un-nuanced use of the term, implying that the various forms of Daoism were passive recipients of the "Buddhist conquest of China." However, nothing could be further from the truth and Zürcher's article was designed to open discussion on the topic not to serve as the capstone of the investigation.

Kristofer Schipper has similarly argued that the nature of the Lingbao scriptures is far more complex than simple Buddhist “influence,” arguing instead for a “multiple synthesis” of old southern traditions with the liturgical institutions of the northern Celestial Masters and Buddhist doctrines with “the most traditional and ancient cosmology of China proper” (in Schipper and Verellen 2004, 14). He has also noted that the Lingbao scriptures synthesized Buddhism primarily by liturgical integration based on southern traditions not through doctrinal blending (2004a, 212). A proper understanding of this directionality is thus extremely important, not only for Lingbao but for later Daoist developments as well. Bokenkamp says:

With their synthetic concerns, the Lingbao scriptures prefigure the unifying trend that was to characterize the Daoism of the following centuries. This trend was continued by Lu Xiuqing (406-477). . . . From this point on, the traditions we have been discussing were merged, at least conceptually, and we can begin speaking of a unified Daoist religion. (1997, 9)

The Lingbao scriptures, then, set a precedent for incorporating Buddhist elements that would become a hallmark of later, more unified Daoist traditions. This notion of synthesis advanced variously by Strickman, Bokenkamp, and Schipper more accurately points to the active role played by Chinese adepts in the selective adoption and reformulation of Buddhist elements into Lingbao.

Shangqing Origins & the Emergence of Lingbao

When Xu Mai 許邁 (b. 301) and Xu Mi 許謐 (303-73) hired the spirit-medium Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-386?) to contact the latter’s wife, Tao Kedou 陶科斗, who had died in 362, to determine the cause of some unexplained illnesses and misfortunes in the family, she introduced them to a hitherto unknown spiritual realm and its glorified denizens, one of whom was Lady Wei Huacun (251-334), a former Celestial Master libationer, and inaugurated a new era of religious development. During the years 364 to 370, Yang Xi received regular midnight visitations and revelations from Lady Wei and other female Perfected for his Xu family patrons and their intimates.

Among the close friends and family who submitted questions for the Perfected Beings to Yang Xi and the Xu family was Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫. Chaofu was a direct descendent of the famous would-be alchemist Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-413) and the renowned transcendent Ge Xuan 葛玄 (Ge Xiaoxian 葛孝先). Moreover, he was also closely related by marriage to the Xu family (Bokenkamp 1997, 445-46). It has also been suggested that he was "an active member of the nascent Shangqing community" (Yamada 2000, 225). Bokenkamp notes, "It is natural that members of the Ge family should have formulated questions concerning the otherworldly status of the one member of their family to have gained local renown as a transcendent, Ge Xuan" (1983, 442).

It was thus no surprise that Yang Xi inquired of the Perfected regarding Ge Xuan. What is striking, however, is the response he received from them, as recorded in the *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected; HY 1010):

Regarding your inquiry into Ge Xuan, he excels at transformation yet is clumsy at employing his body. Presently, he has only just attained deathlessness and that is all. He is not a transcendent being. When he was first at Mt. Chang, he entered Gaizhu. For his part, he is able to ride tigers and dispatch demons. There is nowhere he does not go, but he almost did not achieve any rank at all. (12.3a.7-9.; Bokenkamp 1983, 442)

According, to Ge Hong's hagiography, contained in the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of Divine Transcendents), Ge Xuan had the power to dispatch ghosts and demons, sit amidst fire without being burned, sit underwater without drowning, practice multilocation, transmute tree sap into fine liquor, and make animals dance, before he performed corpse-deliverance (Campany 2002, 151-59; 401-06). While, some of these elements are acknowledged in Yang Xi's response from the Perfected, the claim that Ge Xuan was not a transcendent and had only achieved deathlessness, literally, a state of not dying (*busi* 不死) and a low rank in the newly revealed Shangqing celestial bureaucracy must have been quite disconcerting (Bokenkamp 1983, 442). This is somewhat striking considering the longstanding marital ties between the two families and Robert Campany's observation that Ge Xuan plays a pivotal role in the filiation of some early scriptures adopted by Shangqing (2002, 405).

Nevertheless, it constitutes an explicit polemic against the spiritual heritage of the Ge family.

Moreover, as Strickmann has pointed out, the primary feature of the Shangqing revelations was “access to higher celestial regions” and “more exalted and powerful immortal intercessors” (1977, 9). Aspects of their formulation seem to supplant the spiritual legacy of the Ge family:

The Perfected were far superior in rank (even as they were more highly refined in substance) to those other Immortals, mere *xian* 仙, whom it had been Ge Hong’s ambition to behold, and in due time join. Likewise the Heaven of Supreme Purity, Shangqing, was high above that of the Great Purity [Taiqing 太清], whence the arcane methods inherited by Ge Hong purported to originate, and whither they promised to elevate their successful practitioner (1977, 9; see also Lai 1998).

The Xu family thus apparently tried to assert the superiority of their own spiritual pedigree over the long-standing heritage of the Ge family. For, in their formulation of Shangqing, or perhaps by means of the revelation of Shangqing by the Perfected, Yang Xi and the Xu family launched an implicit polemic against the Ge family that spatially and hierarchically subordinated the renowned ideals collected by Ge Hong beneath the newly revealed Shangqing Heavens and their Perfected. In addition to the explicit polemic against Ge Xuan, this “hierarchy of prestige” is critical to our understanding of the polemics of the Lingbao response, for Bokenkamp has argued:

Ge Chaofu asserted the celestial ascendancy of his family with its own arcane tradition against the rival claims of his neighbors. Because the Perfected had slighted his ancestors, for Ge Chaofu the Shangqing scriptures presented a skewed and partial picture of the celestial domain. He was well aware of the extent to which Shangqing texts served the interests of Yang Xi and the Xu family, Yang’s patrons, and he was ready to let the same principles operate in his own portrayal of celestial scenes. This awareness of the self-aggrandizement of the Shangqing scriptures suffuses Ge Chaofu’s specific references to them. (1983, 443)⁵

⁵ He also notes that the attribution of the Lingbao scriptures to Ge Chaofu, “though historically attested” may be “fictive,” proposing that for the Lingbao texts as a whole Ge Chaofu should “stand for author(s)” (2004b, 407-08).

If the Shangqing scriptures elevated the prestige of the Xu family in Jurong, then the Lingbao scriptures would do the same for the Ge family and Ge Xuan would play a prominent role (Bokenkamp 2007, 171). Nor would Ge Chaofu forget the ancestral anxiety caused by the implicit and explicit Shangqing polemics launched against his spiritual heritage. As Bokenkamp has surmised: "It is difficult to imagine that the appearance of a rival canon in Jurong was not occasioned by a more earthly struggle between the representatives of the two traditions over sources of patronage and ultimate control in ministering to the needs of the region" (1983, 448).

Thus, the stage was set for conflict and Lingbao polemics against Shangqing should be understood as stemming initially from this religious competition. Indeed, it appears that all was not well in the spiritual interactions of several prestigious families in Jurong. How did this conflict for spiritual control work itself into the early Lingbao corpus?⁶

Lingbao Attitudes toward Shangqing

Isabelle Robinet has argued that the early Lingbao corpus adopted and preached the Shangqing texts, especially the *Dadong zhenjing* (Scripture of Great Pervasion, HY 6) (1997, 152). Livia Kohn has similarly suggested that the Shangqing texts were included by Ge Chaofu in the Lingbao scriptures (1989, 146). Wang Chengwen has likewise argued that the early Lingbao scriptures absorbed the content of Shangqing scriptures and ceremonies on a large-scale while maintaining their great worth (2002, 213). Given the competition between these two groups, it is important to examine the exact nature of their inclusion as well as the Lingbao attitudes governing their adoption. All of these statements are based on cer-

⁶ By "early Lingbao corpus" I refer to the body of Lingbao texts catalogued by Lu Xiuqing 陸修靜 (406-477) in the 5th century, reconstructed by Ōfuchi Ninji, based on a Tang Dynasty manuscript discovered at Dunhuang (P. 2256) and several corroborating passages in early encyclopedic texts. See Ōfuchi 1974. This reconstruction has been adopted by Bokenkamp, who also provides brief introductions to each text in an appendix (1983, 479-84). I have identified each text from the corpus by their LB number in the corpus and their HY concordance number in parentheses. Unless otherwise stated all *juan* and line numbers are to the standard *Zhengtong Daozang* 正統道藏.

tain references to Shangqing in the Lingbao corpus, whose polemical contexts have been largely overlooked. Indeed, I will demonstrate below that such characterizations look only at the “camouflaged” portion of the covert polemics operating in the passage.

Bokenkamp has presented a more nuanced assessment, observing that in the Lingbao corpus the Shangqing scriptures “are portrayed as authentic and valuable, but emanating from heavens lower than those in which the Lingbao texts are to be found and, worse yet, as having in some cases been transmitted to the world by female divinities” (1997, 377). His observation provides us with our first glimpse into a Lingbao polemic against Shangqing, one that asserts the hierarchical superiority of the origins of Lingbao over Shangqing as well as impugning the central means of their transmission to humanity.

How, then, does the early Lingbao corpus characterize Shangqing and what sorts of polemics can we discern from those characterizations? The following five characterizations in the early Lingbao corpus constitute clear polemics:

1. Shangqing as spatially and hierarchically inferior to Lingbao.
2. Shangqing as divulged celestial secrets.
3. Shangqing as a proscribed excellence in the rhetoric of praise.
4. Shangqing as a “Lesser Vehicle.”
5. Lingbao as the Hidden Potency of Shangqing.

Shangqing as Inferior to Lingbao

The first polemic, which implicitly asserts the superiority of Lingbao over Shangqing has already been noted by Bokenkamp. Just as Shangqing claimed that their heavens were higher than those known to the Celestial Masters, so too did this reasoning open the door for Lingbao to posit still higher heavens, loftier even than the Shangqing heavens. As Bokenkamp notes: “The Lingbao scriptures were composed to replace all previous spiritual knowledge with higher and more enduring truths. This they state quite explicitly from beginning to end” (2004b, 408).

Suffusing the Lingbao scriptures, then, is the claim that they relate “the workings of the Dao from highest antiquity through a new pantheon of deities held to be more ancient and thus more exalted than those described in earlier scriptural traditions” (1997, 9). This is perhaps the

most apparent of the Lingbao polemics and is implicit in nature. Any assertion of what Lingbao is must be understood in relation to what that means for the "other" Daoism, in this case, Shangqing. The formulation is quite simple and twofold in nature:

1. Lingbao emanates from the highest Heavens = Highest Truths
2. Lingbao deities reside in the highest Heavens = Most Exalted

By asserting that Lingbao possesses the highest truths from the highest heavens guarded and transmitted by the most exalted spiritual denizens, the superiority of Lingbao over any "other" formulation of Daoism, most proximately Shangqing, is clearly evident. Thus, without identifying Shangqing as inferior, the Lingbao scriptures have subordinated the heavens, deities, and truths of their Shangqing rivals. This polemic is so pervasive and uncontroversial so as to require no further elaboration here.

Shangqing as Divulged Celestial Secrets

The second polemic insinuates the improper transmission of sacred celestial texts into the world by the Shangqing female Perfected to the Xu family. It constitutes a very subtle hidden polemic, in which Shangqing is, again never explicitly condemned or even mentioned as the prime example of "leaking" sacred scriptures into the world. Nevertheless, the reader gets a sense that the Lingbao emphasis on proper textual transmission both in the heavens and on earth and the condemnation of improper textual transmission is covertly directed toward Shangqing. This polemic has been analyzed in detail by Bokenkamp, from whom much of this summary is drawn (1983, 443-45).

Three hymns of praise appearing separately in the fragments collected and annotated by Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536) in the *Zhen'gao* are re-written, appearing as part of a single revelation, the *Dongxuan Lingbao Shengxuan buxu zhang* 昇玄步虛章 (Stanzas for Ascending to Mystery and Pacing the Void, LB4, HY 1439), also called *Dongxuan Lingbao Yujingshan buxu jing* 洞玄靈寶玉京山步虛經 (The Lingbao Scripture from the Jade Capitol Mountain on Pacing the Void). Both serve as a prelude to receiving the *Taisu jing* 太素經 (Scriptures of Grand Sublimity), another term for the Lingbao scriptures. Bokenkamp has identified the purpose of Ge Chaofu's re-working of these poems as an attempt "to

provide a reference to the Lingbao scriptures in the Shangqing revelations" (1983, 444). Immediately preceding the poem is a passage in which the Duke-Transcendent Ge Xuan explains through an implicit polemic why the Lingbao scriptures were not bestowed upon Xu Mi. The passage reads:

The words of the Supreme Ultimate Perfected Being recited joyously by the myriad transcents are not to be proclaimed to inferior and common people for they are deposited within the Jade Chamber of the Golden Tower.

The Duke-Transcendent said: Those to whom the words may be transmitted to are those who have practiced the Lingbao retreat. It is impermissible to show them to frivolous disciples. Respect them! Respect them! (HY 1439, 7a8-7b1)

The formula for the implicit polemic is as follows: Xu Mi was supposed to receive the Lingbao scriptures at a future time. However, there are clear prerequisites for their transmission, including the practice of the Lingbao retreat. To none other are they allowed to be transmitted. The implication from a "reliable source" (i.e., Ge Xuan) is that if Xu Mi did not receive the Lingbao scriptures, then he did not practice the Lingbao retreat qualifying him for their receipt and is therefore to be classified amongst the "frivolous disciples" to whom they were not permitted. Moreover, Bokenkamp has noted that the poems have been modified in subtle ways. One such emendation in the final line of the Lingbao version of the poem emphasizes Chaofu's view of Xu Mi's female Perfected, "who will be my companion in the dust?" from the *Zhen'gao* version "why should I hasten amidst the dust?" (8a.4). In Bokenkamp's analysis: "This emendation reveals Ge Chaofu's low opinion of the female Perfected who occupied such a prominent place among Yang Xi's nightly visitors" (1983, 445).

The implication is that the Lingbao scriptures were not bestowed upon Xu Mi because he did not practice the Lingbao retreat (*zhai* 齋) before receiving the words of the Perfected but instead spent his time fraternizing with female Perfected who did not adhere to the strictures of textual transmission.

Shangqing as a Proscribed Excellence

Several passages in the Lingbao corpus appear to laud the excellence of the Shangqing scriptures. However, that praise is not unqualified, but is itself part of a complex hidden polemic against Shangqing. The *Taiji zhenren fu Lingbao zhajie weiyi zhujiing yaojue* 太極真人敷靈寶齋戒威儀諸經要訣 (Instructions from All the Scriptures for the Ritual of the Lingbao Retreat, Expounded by the Perfected of the Grand Bourne, LB 24, HY 532), states:

The [Shangqing] *Dadong zhenjing* in thirty-nine chapters should not be recited among the people. The reason it is so is that it is a scripture of esoteric ascension of the Perfected Way. The thearchs and kings of all the heavens descend to welcome it, scattering incense and blossoms, the officers of the great Demon Kings of the Six Heavens who attend to and protect it, proclaiming its blessings, all come and bow their heads to receive their affairs. The spirits and numina of the mountains and seas will all follow as one's servants and messengers. Reciting a single verse, all the heavens arrange rituals – how much more so the demons and spirits? Therefore, one cannot recklessly practice it among the people. The Lingbao scriptures are the utmost scriptures of the Daoist lineage, are the Mysterious Ancestor of the Great Vehicle. (12b.1-7)

At first glance this passage seems quite laudatory in its assessment of the *Dadong zhenjing* and it is easy to understand how it might be understood as unqualified praise. However, the praise is preceded and concluded with the injunction that the text should not be recited in public. What is it then about the praise that supports the surprising conclusion that it should not be recited? Therein rests the hidden polemic. The reason the text should not be publicly recited is because of its greatness.

The passage opens with an explicit injunction that the text "should not be recited among the people." This is because it is a "scripture of esoteric ascension of the Perfected Way." It is supposed to be a secret text. The passage then goes on to describe the great reverence with which the text is handled in the Heavens, describing the spiritual denizens that attend to it and its great potency as further evidence for its secret status. The passage concludes that, given its treatment by the lofty deities in the Heavens above, the profane demons and spirits should do even more to

protect its secret status and proper transmission. Therefore, it is not a text that should be casually recited amongst the populace.

This argument carries with it the implicit polemic that anyone reciting it in public does not respect the text or its potency and has, in some sense, participated in “leaking” it from the heavens. Again, one is left to wonder if this might not have been an indirect assault implying that the Shangqing scriptures were supposed to be well guarded celestial secrets that were subsequently disclosed from the Jade Heavens by the female deities cavorting with Yang Xi and the Xu family in the world?

Regardless of the resolution of that question, the text serves an additional function. At a fundamental level, setting aside the rhetoric of praise, this polemic is about “ultimate control in ministering to the spiritual needs of the community” and thereby to sources of patronage, as it prohibits the public recitation of the Shangqing scriptures and asserts the superiority of the Lingbao scriptures, proclaiming them the “utmost scriptures of the Daoist lineage” and the “Mysterious Ancestor of the Great Vehicle.” The former asserts the primacy of the Lingbao scriptures in what Jonathan Smith termed a “hierarchy of prestige and ranking” while the latter, through an allusion to the *Daode jing*, identifies the Lingbao scriptures as the progenitor of the Great Vehicle. Thus, the rhetoric of praise employed toward the *Dadong zhenjing* is designed to lead the reader to the conclusion that, on the one hand, the apex scripture of the Shangqing corpus does not belong in this world and, on the other hand, the Lingbao scriptures are superior anyway. Thus, the excellence of Shangqing is proscribed, while the primacy of Lingbao is reaffirmed.

A similar injunction is found in the *Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao zhi-hui benyuan dajie shangpin jing* 太上洞玄靈寶智慧本願大戒上品經 (Lingbao Scripture on the Great Superior Rules and Original Vows of Wisdom; LB 25, HY 344), which similarly states, “The *Dadong zhenjing* . . . cannot be transmitted to the general populace. All who would practice and recite it must be practitioners capable in the study of the transcendents” (12b.1). Here again, we see an injunction against the open transmission of the *Dadong zhenjing*, stipulating that it only be transmitted to advanced practitioners. In this case, the rhetoric of praise serves to curtail the open transmission of the text, implying an evaluation based on Lingbao standards as a prerequisite for anyone possessing a copy. In

short, only those practitioners deemed advanced enough by Lingbao authority should possess the Shangqing scriptures. In short, a concession is made here allowing Shangqing to retain its privileged status among a small number of people but prohibiting it from disseminating widely among the populace, replacing it instead with the Lingbao scriptures.

Following a section of lengthy praise for the *Dadong zhenjing*, the *Taiji Zuoxiangong qingwen jing juanshang* 太極左仙公請問經卷上 (Upper Fascicle of the Scripture of the Grand Bourne Duke Transcendent of the Left's Questions; LB 26a, S. 1351) states:

If one desires to complete the Way of the *Cavernous Perfection*, it can be recited to bring down cloud dragons, but it should not be recited among the people. If it is recited among the people the great Demon King will defeat it.... The *Cavernous Perfection* can be the culmination it cannot be the commencement. Of those who have commenced with it, few there are who have obtained the Way. The remaining scriptures each have an order and a level, they cannot be passed over. (*Dunhuang daozaog* 2317:13-18)

Again, the passage acknowledges the efficacy of the text in bringing down dragons, but insists that it should not be recited publicly, lest the Demon King defeat the practice. Thus, though suitable as a final text, it is ill suited as a beginning text and the deified Laozi warns that those who have tried to start with it seldom attain the Way, for there is a proper sequence and order to the Daoist scriptures that cannot be circumvented. Here, again the implication is that the Shangqing scriptures have been leaked from the Heavens and should not be allowed to circulate freely. Thus, the Shangqing scriptures are proscribed and the only way to gain authorized access to them is by first mastering the Lingbao scriptures. In his analysis of the preceding passage in S 1351 (lines 36-41) Bokenkamp notes:

Laozi brings to Ge Xuan the comforting message that all religious practices are essentially the same in their fundamental goal, the cultivation of good deeds. Nonetheless, there is a hierarchy of practices; the highest, what he calls the "Great Vehicle" [*dasheng* 大乘], being the performance of Lingbao retreats for the salvation of all living beings. Since Laozi has observed the world since the beginnings of time with his "dharma eyes" [*fayan* 法眼], he

has a bit to say about both Shangqing Daoism and about Buddhism. (2004b, 411-12)

In asserting a “hierarchy of practices” or, as J.Z. Smith has proposed, a “hierarchy of prestige” Ge Chaofu found a powerful polemic in the Buddhist discourse of the Māhāyāna and Hinayāna, and adopted this dichotomy and its rationales, identifying Lingbao as the “Greater Vehicle” and Shangqing as the “Lesser Vehicle.”

Shangqing as a “Lesser Vehicle”

The *Zhongsheng nan* 衆聖難 (Trials of the Sages; LB 27, HY 1115) records that Ge Xuan gathered thirty-two disciples to Mount Laosheng 勞盛山 on February 11th, 240 to respond to their questions concerning why none of them, though they practiced for hundreds of years, could match his attainments. Ge Xuan revealed that their inability to do so was a result of their quest for individual transcendence through Shangqing practices, an enterprise Ge Xuan characterizes as the “lesser vehicle,” while he has worked for the salvation of all (see Bokenkamp 2007, ch. 5).

Only desiring to save yourselves, you have not considered saving others; Studying for yourselves, you have not considered teaching others; Seeking the Way for yourselves, you have not considered others obtaining the Way; You have not believed in the vast and broad words of the great scriptures, not practiced the retreats and the precepts, not venerated the Law Masters of the Three Caverns, and have been fond of and taken joy in the laws of the Lesser Vehicle. Therefore, you have obtained terrestrial transcendence and the Way of corpse-deliverance, thereby coming and going at will, foot-loose and fancy free, possessing long life and not dying, but not yet having surpassed the Three Realms, roaming throughout the ten directions, you have only gazed upon the Golden Towers of the Jade Capital and that’s it. If you desire that the wheel of the Law rise quickly, or to soar throughout all the Shangqing heavens, then you should establish merit and save the king and the people from calamity and suffering. Then, when your great merit is sufficient, the Most High will welcome you! (1b.6-2a.3)

This passage clearly places the failure of Ge Xuan’s students to achieve his level of success to their selfishness and infatuation with individual practices such as the Shangqing. Later in the passage, Ge Xuan explicitly

states that his will became fixed on the Greater Vehicle (i.e., Lingbao), which is why he was able to ascend to the highest heavens to attend the court of the most exalted gods. Ge Xuan further counters with the assertion that if they really wanted to achieve the individual aims of Shangqing practices they would engage in the Lingbao practices of universal salvation. Lingbao thus becomes a more effective way of practicing Shangqing and of achieving Shangqing goals of individual transcendence. However, an even stronger stance than the polemic of the "Greater Vehicle" is evident in other passages, in which the very potency of Shangqing resides in the Lingbao.

Lingbao as the Hidden Potency of Shangqing

Another passage in the *Taiji zhenren fu Lingbao zhajie wei yi zhu jing yao jue* heaps great praise upon Shangqing, yet underlying that praise is a covert polemic that undermines its efficacy.

The *Dadong zhenjing* in 39 chapters was spoken by thirty-nine Perfected – it is unproduced script. These Perfected have simply transmitted it. These beings are the perfected Qi of the Way and its Potency that merged and transformed in the Self-Generating to become Perfected Beings. They are the companions of Laozi. If they were not people who studied the Way or who were not people who had arrived at sufficient merit through generations of past-life graces through inexhaustible eons of time, then none of them would have been able to accord with this righteousness.

All their teachings are of the self-generated palace rooms of the unexcelled Three Heavens with their myriad creatures, mountains, and streams. Their mountains and streams and myriad creatures have names the same as in our world, but it is not the case that they are worldly mountains, streams, and myriad creatures – they are all self-generated phenomena – this can be heard of, but is difficult to argue against. The Jade Clarity scriptures of cavernous perfection broadly outline their meaning, but are unable to explain in precise detail every strand. How wondrously unfathomable! Those who serve them arrive at great blessings, their bodies obtain long life and their ancestral temple is pacified. Reciting them one becomes a king of Perfected Beings, their Way is unexcelled. (19b.1-20a.1)

At first glance, this seems extremely favorable toward Shangqing, bestowing great prestige upon the Perfected who revealed the scriptures as

well as to the heavens they emanated from. Indeed, Wang Chengwen cites this passage as evidence to support his claim that Shangqing was highly venerated by Lingbao. However, he omits the crucial last line in his discussion, thereby missing the polemical undertones, which reads: “In the past, those who obtained the Way of Higher Transcendence and Utmost Perfection are all those who served the Numinous Treasure scriptures” (20a.1-2).

This asserts that, regardless of how great the Shangqing scriptures and the Perfected who transmitted them may have been those who attained the Shangqing path in this life served the Lingbao scriptures in past lives and more importantly achieved their current success in Shangqing because of their former loyalty to Lingbao. Thus, Lingbao is posited as the true potency behind success in Shangqing practice. The polemical implication is that Shangqing has no efficacy in and of itself, but is only viable because of the merits of Lingbao. A simple breakdown of the implicit polemic, then, is:

Shangqing is wonderful, great, and unsurpassed → Lingbao is the true potency behind Shangqing → Lingbao is truly wonderful, great, and unsurpassed → Shangqing is an empty vessel.

Thus, all the praise given to Shangqing is then redirected toward Lingbao and the rhetoric of praise simply uses Shangqing as a vessel or conduit for praising Lingbao, the true but hidden potency. As such, any praise given to Shangqing automatically applies in infinitely greater amounts to a Lingbao tradition that is both hierarchically and spatially superior and that is the potency of Shangqing anyway. A more explicit version of this polemic exists in the story of the past life of Laozi as the phoenix daughter.

The past life in question was once contained in the *Benye shangpin* 本業上品 (Upper Chapters of Original Undertakings; LB 13, P. 3022), also cited in the 6th- century *Wushang biyao* 無上祕要 (Esoteric Essentials of the Most High ; HY 1130, 15:1a-8a.7) and in the 11th-century *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven Tablets in a Cloud Satchel HY 1026, 101.12b.9-14b.8)

(Bokenkamp 2004b, 417-18). The portions of the story relevant here focus not on the phoenix daughter but on her mother.⁷

According to this account, many kalpa-cycles ago the king of the paradise world of *Weiluo* captured a Numinous Phoenix chick born in his realm. He gave the chick as a present to his eldest daughter Pei Ying, a princess he was extremely fond of and often played with. The princess raised the phoenix and kept it by her constantly. The Numinous Phoenix frequently (or perhaps "once") fanned her face with its two wings and she miraculously conceived in her twelfth year. Three months later, the king noticed something strange and became suspicious. Misunderstanding, he beheaded the phoenix and buried it in a mound. The princess subsequently gave birth to a daughter who could speak from the moment she hit the ground.⁸

Eight years later, the princess, still sequestered in the palace by her father, had no appetite for even the finest foods and a great blizzard lasting an entire year had fallen upon the land. The snow was over ten feet deep and the birds and animals were all starving. The princess, filled with compassion, prayed for their relief and in response another numinous phoenix arrived and took her to the mound where her beheaded phoenix was buried. Peering down on it she recited:

My Numinous Phoenix, . . . the Long Return.
 Troubled, troubled are my thoughts,
 Everything always goes against my wishes.
 For myriad kalpas we have no meeting date,
 When will you come flying?

Thereupon, the phoenix that had been beheaded by the king suddenly came alive. It hugged the princess and they flew off together into the clouds. Presently, the princess has received documents atop the Phos-

⁷ Bokenkamp summarizes the story, which focuses largely on the phoenix daughter who would be reborn as Laozi rather than on the mother of interest here (2004b, 418).

⁸ The Phoenix Daughter, who is the physical incarnation of the celestial Lingbao deity Haoling Huanglao jun 皓靈皇老君 (Illustrious Ancient Lord of the White Numina), one of the Five Ancient Lords, goes on in the story to demonstrate her own virtue and amass her own merit, eventually being reborn as Laozi.

phorous Imperion giving her the celestial rank of Upper Primal Sovereign of the Southern Extremities where she frequently rides a nine-colored phoenix. The most important aspect of this story for our purposes is what follows: “This woman had in previous lives already served the Numinous Treasure for ten thousand eons, which resulted in the Numinous Phoenix’s bodily descent and her obtaining the estate and title of Upper Primal Sovereign of the Southern Extremities” (*Yunji qiqian* 101.13b.6-7).

The story explicitly asserts that the mother of the Phoenix Daughter received the visitation by the Numinous Phoenix and her rank of Nanji yuanjun because she had served Lingbao for countless eons in her previous lives. This is the reason she was graced with the immaculate conception of the Phoenix Daughter. How does this comprise a polemic?

The title *yuanjun* is a Shangqing innovation, appearing about a dozen times in the *Zhen’gao*, referring to a Perfected and later associated dominantly with women (Smith 2013, 75). Thus, Laozi’s mother becomes a Shangqing female Perfected through her devotion to Lingbao during countless previous eons of time. Moreover, although unattested in the fragments collected in the *Zhen’gao*, Nanji yuanjun is, in fact, one of the female Perfected who descended to Yang Xi, bestowing upon him at least three poems, two of which still exist with a brief hagiography in *Yunji qiqian* 97 under the title “Nanji Wang furen shou Yangxi shi san-shou” 南極王夫人授楊羲詩三首.⁹

Thus, this story asserts that a known Shangqing Perfected achieved her station in the Shangqing pantheon because of her devotion to Lingbao, making Lingbao the true potency of Shangqing. Given, the general misogyny of the Lingbao scriptures, it makes sense that she was originally a Shangqing deity who was appropriated for a Lingbao polemic asserting that the Numinous Treasure was the secret potency of Shangqing.

⁹ The two extant poems in the collection, accompanied by a brief hagiography, seem typical of the Shangqing “seduction song” in which the female Perfected offers words of encouragement to an earthly betrothed. For a translation of this type of poetry, see Kroll 1996; Smith 2013.

Conclusion

While a good deal of attention has rightly been paid to the issue of Buddho-Daoist polemics, this study has sought to delineate the internal polemics of two Chinese religious traditions in southern China in the 4th century CE as a means of exploring the interaction, competition, and tension involving the two powerful aristocratic families behind Lingbao and Shangqing Daoism against the backdrop of the spiritual and political colonization of the Eastern Jin Dynasty. The insights gleaned have further benefited from Jonathan Smith's theoretical constructs of the "proximate other" and from Yairah Amit's taxonomy of implicit, explicit, and hidden polemics, borrowed from her work on the Hebrew Bible. The polemics of the early Lingbao scriptures against Shangqing have proved excellent for applying her rubric as a case study of the interaction between two early medieval Chinese religious movements in competition with each other for prestige and patronage.

In the formulation of Shangqing Daoism resulting from the communications of female Perfected from the Highest Clarity heavens to the Xu family through the spirit medium Yang Xi, which unveiled hitherto unknown reaches of exaltation, the Xu family initiated an implicit polemic on the spiritual traditions venerated by the descendents of Ge Hong, to whom the Xu family were related by marriage. Furthermore, at a time when the Ge family seemed poised to join the burgeoning Shangqing movement, Yang Xi explicitly belittled the status of Ge Xuan, an already established master of esoteric arts with a hagiographic tradition of his own. This explicit polemic laid the foundation for the formulation and emergence of Lingbao as a response, not only to Buddhism, to Northern Celestial Masters, or even to longstanding southern religious practices, but most immediately to their close neighbors of the nascent Shangqing community.

This response was comprised of several intertwined polemics that sought not only to assert the spiritual ascendancy of Lingbao over Shangqing, but by so doing, the prestige and spiritual pedigree of the Ge family over the Xu's and Yang Xi. Throughout the Lingbao scriptures, assertions of the spatial, temporal, and doctrinal superiority are made in opposition to the "proximate other" of Shangqing through a combination of no less than five implicit and covert polemics. The first polemic fol-

lowed the Shangqing pattern, which asserted its own superiority over Celestial Masters by locating previously unknown heavens of higher exaltation. By asserting that the Lingbao heavens were even more exalted and located higher in the spatial hierarchy, the Lingbao corpus implicitly asserted that Shangqing was spatially and hierarchically inferior to Lingbao.

The second and perhaps most “hidden” or covert polemic condemns the Shangqing as divulged celestial secrets leaked from the heavens at an inappropriate time by the female Perfected. The clues of this polemic reside in the Lingbao emphasis on proper textual transmission and timed release as well as in several re-written Shangqing poems appearing in the early Lingbao corpus that intimate that the Shangqing scriptures were preparatory for Xu Mi’s ultimate receipt of the Lingbao scriptures, which he failed to realize because of his unworthiness.

Much of the scholarly work stating that Shangqing is venerated, praised, or incorporated into Lingbao is derived from an incomplete reading of passages pertaining to the third polemic, which presents Shangqing as a proscribed excellence within a rhetoric of praise. This rhetoric of praise camouflages the restriction of public transmission and recitation of Shangqing scriptures such as the *Dadong zhenjing* through elaborating its celestial excellence and the great care it receives in the heaven.

Moreover, combined with the polemical emphasis on proper textual transmission and the stringent condemnation of those “frivolous disciples” who disrespect the potency of the text by participating in the dissemination of Shangqing scriptures, this polemic sought to effectively proscribe the transmission and dissemination of Shangqing through public recitation. In tandem with this polemic was the notion that there was a proper level and order to spiritual progression. Within this sequential hierarchy, Lingbao asserted its precedence over Shangqing through its insistence that practitioners could not skip levels of practice, thus redirecting would-be Shangqing practitioners toward Lingbao.

The fourth polemic fully embraces the Buddhist dichotomy of the “Greater” and “Lesser” Vehicle, positing Lingbao, with its emphasis on universal salvation as the “Greater Vehicle” and condemning Shangqing, with its individual practice, as the “Lesser Vehicle.” It is also argued that,

as the Greater Vehicle, Lingbao is a more effective means of attaining Shangqing's individual goals.

The fifth and final polemic identified in this study asserts that Lingbao is, in fact, the hidden or secret potency of Shangqing. In this polemic success and station in Shangqing is identified as the result of devotion to Lingbao in previous lives. This polemic is best exemplified in the example of the female Perfected Nanji Yuanjun, a known Shangqing deity who descended to Yang Xi and bestowed several poems upon him. In the Lingbao scriptures, she is identified as a princess in a prior world system who conceives immaculately to give birth to a phoenix daughter who is later reborn as Laozi. The story explicitly states that she was honored with the grace of birthing the phoenix daughter and subsequently bestowed her rank as a female Perfected because she had served Lingbao in countless previous lives.

Given the manner in which many of these polemics are intertwined within the same scriptures, it is impossible at this stage of knowledge to locate a particular stance or polemical tact within a given layer in the development of the early Lingbao corpus. Perhaps as our understanding of the formation and development of this corpus of texts matures the presence of these polemical strands will help us identify the various hands that wove such a complex religious tapestry together. At the very least, this study has identified the pigments of polemics infusing that tapestry as a whole, pigments that have remained largely unacknowledged and which retain the residue of a vibrant period of religious competition in southern China in the 4th century.

The exact impact of these polemics remains shrouded in the mists of time. However, what is clear is that the early Lingbao corpus rapidly achieved immense popularity after its timed release in 400. For, shortly thereafter in 404, Xu Mi's son and Ge Chaofu's in-law Xu Huangmin 許黃民 (361-429) relocated eastward to the Shan 剡 mountain regions in eastern Zhejiang, taking with him what original Shangqing scriptures remained in Jurong (Strickmann 1977, 16; Bokenkamp 1983, 448). The popularity of the Numinous Treasure ensured the Ge family an enduring legacy in the Daoist religion and succeeded, at least temporarily, through a variety of explicit, implicit, and hidden polemics in asserting its' tem-

poral, spatial, cosmological, hierarchical, sequential, and doctrinal superiority, in surpassing the “other” Dao in town.

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Dao Learning and the Golden Elixir^{*}

Shared Paths to Perfection

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Abstract

This article is, to some extent, a continuation of thoughts expressed in a previous article in the *Journal of Daoist Studies* (Crowe 2010), where motion and stillness were examined as sources of continuity between the “three teachings” as imagined by Li Daochun and his disciples. The present article considers that continuity from a different vantage point, turning the focus on our characterization of the relationship between *Ru* 儒 (literati) *daoxue* 道學 (Learning of the Way) and *jindan* 金丹 (golden elixir) ways of cultivation. It is suggested here that common ground is found, not by bridging two essentially and categorically differing groups, but rather by bringing to light shared perspectives on soteriological ends and on the framing of praxis intended to realize those ends.

How are we to situate the Confucian “Learning of the Way” (*Ru daoxue*) approach to cultivation in relation to that of Daoist adepts of the golden elixir (*jindan*)? In reading *jindan* texts there is an assumption that much is shared. One sees this evidenced in quotations from and allusions to the “Four Books” (*Sishu* 四書): *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects), *Mengzi* 孟子 (Mencius), *Zhongyong* 中庸 (Equilibrium Amid Ordinary Affairs), and *Daxue* 大學 (Great Learning). On the other hand, when reading *Ru* accounts we wit-

^{*} I owe many thanks to Fabrizio Pregadio for his careful reading of this article in draft form, and for his thoughtful suggestions. Of course, any errors or omissions in the article are entirely my own.

ness the rhetoric of identity at work in ways that either create or amplify distinctions. What I attempt here is a stepping back from the rhetoric of both to simply ponder how we might characterize their relationship on a wider cultural plane.

As a point of departure, discussion commences by considering two attempts to use religion, first as a lens through which to shed light on a convergence of *jindan* (*neidan* 內丹) and *Ru* approaches to cultivation, and second, to provide a more complete picture of Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) *daoxue* 道學 (Learning of the Way). Discussion continues by acknowledging the general advantages of such recommendations, while also considering drawbacks associated with an approach that tacitly validates the usefulness of "religion" versus "philosophy" as categories for organizing our thoughts about and interpretations of both *jindan* and *daoxue* texts.

The second half turns to *jindan* and *daoxue* texts to draw attention to some basic shared assumptions about the nature of cultivation and the process of learning necessary for its advancement. References avoid specific reflections by the writers on what they see as continuities or discontinuities, and instead look to more neutral observations that lie on the periphery of such interested rhetorical concerns. The passages cited are related to the general conceptualization of human beings in relation to a larger order and to how the process of learning is understood.

Jindan and *Ru* through the Lens of Religion

Two academic works separated by twenty years will serve as points of departure and as foils for the discussion that follows. These two texts were, and indeed still are, valuable contributions to our present thinking-through of the relationship between *jindan* and *daoxue* accounts of personal cultivation. The first is a forward-looking article by Judith Berling (1979) in which she discussed what she saw as a convergence between *neidan* 內丹 (inner alchemy) and *Ru* approaches that becomes more apparent when they are considered from within a religious framework.

Similarly, the second work, a meticulous book-length study by Julia Ching, examined Zhu Xi's approach to cultivation by looking at its religious dimensions (Ching 2000). One can see Ching's work as an answer to Berling's suggestion that we ought to "pay increasing attention to the

spiritual dimensions of Neo-Confucianism" (Berling 1979, 124). Ching's book takes Zhu Xi as its focus and is useful in the present context for two reasons: First, anyone who has read *jindan* texts composed or compiled during the Song (960-1279), Yuan (1271-1368) or later dynastic periods is well aware of the pervasive influence Zhu Xi's ideas had on these texts. Thus, a book that considers the cultivational dimension of his work commends itself to scholars who study *jindan* texts. Second, the discussion is valuable on a methodological level as it shows promising directions for interpretation of "intellectual" history more generally, while at the same time importing somewhat problematic assumptions into the discussion that need to be foregrounded for the purpose of critical reconsideration.

Seeking Common Ground

The recommendation that we approach the reading of both *daoxue* and *jindan* texts through the lens of religion is useful, in principle, because it shifts the register of discussion to matters of praxis and shared ideals related to achieving human perfection or at least profound improvement. In this way it readily provides a common, historically located, ground for their mutual consideration. Conversely, while the recommendation of such a shift is helpful it also has its shortcomings: In consciously reframing the reading of such texts in the light of religion, the categories of "philosophy" and "religion" are implicitly reified, validated and reinscribed. By "reified" I do not refer to the much-debated *sui-generis* view of religion (see, e.g., McCutcheon 1997). Instead, the reification here refers to effectively discrete categories of "religion" versus "philosophy," a binary that serves well the present institutional differentiation of academics and their respective departments at their colleges and universities, but into which the texts, rites, bodily practices and soteriological efforts of *Ru* and alchemists do not fall without doing violence to the basic cultural assumptions informing what they have said and done.

Judith Berling looks at two approaches to cultivation—in her terms, that of inner alchemists and Neo-Confucians—and ponders how we might conceptualize the relationship between them. She dismisses, as largely unhistorical, contemporary attempts to understand the relationship through the assumption that influence was due to the sophisticated Neo-Confucians' appreciations of classical and Neo-Taoist philosophers

representing "the apogee of Taoist philosophical subtlety" (Berling 1989, 123), which would, we can suppose, have been more palatable to their metaphysical predilections. Instead, she suggests, we would be better off considering the nature of influence as something arising out of historical context, as the above approach "ignores the fact that influence tends to arise from confluence, the convergence of concerns and questions in response to a specific historical and social setting" (Berling 1989, 123). Her claim that "Daoism" and "Confucianism" experienced a profound religious or spiritual crisis during the Song dynasty may be problematic for various reasons¹ but some key observations are very helpful.

First that a convergence of concerns took place, which is evident in the consonance of language in *jindan* and the *daoxue* 道學 (Dao-learning) texts of the *Ru* during the Song and Yuan dynasties; secondly, this convergence took form as a shared way of structuring personal cultivation amid the efforts of those who, in diverse ways, promoted *Daojiao* 道教 (teachings of the Dao),² Teachings of the Buddha (*Fojiao* 佛教), or those of the varied *Ru* "family" (*Rujia* 儒家) who valued, and continually reinterpreted and re-imagined, the classical corpus.³ The constituent purveyors of these "ways" directed their efforts in service to finding a means "by which to achieve the full potential of the unsullied human mind and spirit" (Berling 1989, 124). Berling sees this avenue of exploration as creating a frame for discussing shared ideals in a way that effectively circumvents differences described by her as a "philosophical gulf."⁴ To her mind, the religious plane, defined as a concern for transcendence and the way to achieve it, provides a more fruitful avenue of exploration to that of the philosophical.

Ching too, is keen to situate her exploration of Zhu Xi's religious dimensions within the broader context of his times, though the strategy employed in her book is directed to different ends; she wishes to shed light on the religious dimension of his thought in order to address what

¹ How, for example, do abstract nouns experience crisis and what constitutes content for the essentializing placeholders "Daoism" and "Confucianism"?

² *Daojiao* here refers to its use by individuals who were writing about *jindan* during the Song dynasty and later, and is not intended to refer to the deeply problematic ahistorical binary of *Daojia* versus *Daojiao*.

³ The present discussion concerning the degree to which there is a shared repertoire of praxis and language is focused only on the *Daojiao* and *Rujia*.

⁴ Much more will be said on the nature of this gulf later in this section.

she perceives as a major gap⁵ in the scholarly treatment of Zhu Xi, who has often been represented as a rationalist philosopher (Ching 2000, 5).⁶ As with Berling's suggestions *vis-à-vis* the religious dimension of inner alchemists and Neo-Confucians, the broader project is aimed at disclosing the "mystical dimensions" of Zhu Xi's writings in order to reveal an individual whose cultivation, through study and praxis, was "a quest for an ultimate or absolute" (Ching 2000, viii). If this dimension can be revealed and appreciated it will follow that the continuities between the "three teachings" will become more recognizable while, at the same time, a more subtle perspective on their divergences can emerge.⁷

These efforts to rethink the discussion in terms of religion hold the promise of creating a shared domain of discourse, that of personal cultivation and the attendant quest for realizing the highest potential of an individual human being's life. Texts describing these two trajectories of cultivation, *jindan* and *daoxue*, seem beyond comparison until one assumes this recommended perspective. So what is to be made of how the perceived differences are constructed? Religion, and more precisely, personal cultivation, spans a divide, which Berling describes in the following terms:

This relationship has remained virtually untouched because of the philosophical gulf between these two schools. Inner Alchemy Taoism is an arcane, mystical system of meditation based on an elaborate and highly technical symbology. Neo-Confucianism is a broad rational, ethical system grounded in a sophisticated metaphysics and cosmology. (1989, 124)

The difference, it seems, is philosophical. Concerning these two "schools," *daoxue* is preoccupied with morality and is both rational and sophisticated in its metaphysics and account of the universe while "Alchemy Taoism" is characterized as mysterious and mystical in approach and described in elaborate technical language.

⁵ Earlier efforts in this regard, made by Wing-tsit Chan, Du Wei-Ming, William Theodore DeBary and Liu Shu-hsien, are acknowledged (Ching 2000, 264, note 8).

⁶ Ching has in mind Jesuit missionaries frustrated by the lack of theistic focus in Zhu Xi's thought. Ching mentions Stanislas Le Gall's (1858-1916) accusation that Zhu Xi imposed a detestable materialist hermeneutic on Chinese scholars for centuries (LeGall 1894, 5).

⁷ These matters are given sustained consideration in chapters eight and nine of Ching's book.

We find a similar binary at work in Ching's book. Zhu Xi is characterized as "basically a rationalist" (Ching 2000, 155) and he has a tendency to "transform religious beliefs into philosophical concepts" (152). When, for example, meditation is considered, this binary forms the backdrop for its characterization. Thus, based on observations found in the *Zhongyong* 中庸, for "the Confucian," meditation is directed, in a practical manner, to achieving a state of "transformed *wei-fa* or *yi-fa*."⁸ Such contemplative efforts are directed to a moral end in the form of habitually well-regulated thought and conduct (Ching 2000, 121). For "the Taoist," on the other hand, "meditation usually begins and ends with visualizing light in the cosmos, while the practice is of the inner elixir" (Ching 2000, 117). "The Confucian" is at once engaged in practical ways with the world, and is rational, and intellectual. "The Daoist" is reclusive, mystical and otherworldly. Despite this, Ching does not equate a mystical turn, on the part of Zhu Xi, with Daoist escapism; she sees Zhu Xi both as a rational, practical philosopher and as a mystic:

It is my belief that Chu Hsi's doctrine of personal cultivation belongs to the realm of practical moral philosophy while also going beyond it to embrace a spiritual and ascetic doctrine with mystical implications. It is also firmly grounded in the more speculative parts of his philosophy, namely, in his metaphysics of human nature, especially in his view of the human being as the microcosm of the universe, participating in the cosmic process and assisting in the perfection of the universe through efforts of self-perfection. (Ching 2000, 113)

The single person of Zhu Xi must be seen to embrace two modes of functioning and being: "religious" and "philosophical" though, despite the focus on the religious dimension, one gets a strong sense that the philosophical is paramount. For both Berling and Ching the challenge is to demonstrate the usefulness of looking at the *Ru* through the lens of religion in order to perceive and to demonstrate how this brings to light continuities that a purely philosophical examination would leave opaque or perhaps invisible. Thus, we have the dividing-lines.

⁸These terms are central to the *Zhongyong*. *Weifa* 未發 (not yet come forth) refers to the state prior to manifestation of the emotions while *yifa* 已發 (already come forth) refers to the state in which emotions have taken form.

Reflections on the Dividing Lines

In some ways it is unfair to take up critical reflections on an article more than three decades after its publication, though perhaps less so in the case of a work published a dozen years ago. So much has happened in the intervening years and, doubtless, scholars of Berling's or Ching's standing will have considered these, as we all do, in continually striving to find more useful ways of situating the texts and individuals we study. It needs also to be reiterated that both took innovative steps in urging a different perspective from which to interpret the relationship between *Ru* and *jindan*—or, for Ching, *Ru*, Daoist and Buddhist ways of cultivation. The principal motivation for looking more closely at the language of these scholars is as a point of departure for thinking through the suggestion that there is indeed a shared frame of reference within which to read and relate *Ru* ideas in *jindan* texts, but to consider how this may be differently conceived.

What of the general project of assuming common ground, and what of the terminological and categorical fault-lines dividing the *jindan* writers and practitioners from the *Ru*? I would argue that both Berling and Ching are helpful in urging a move beyond the “philosophical” plane of analysis and interpretation but that their recommendations could go further. It is more helpful to abandon these categories altogether and get on with the work of describing the common ground without the terms “philosophy” and “religion.” Both have their uses in many contexts but they are more trouble than they are worth when reading or describing *jindan* texts or when considering the historical relationship of *daoxue* and *jindan* approaches to becoming better people. Even “Daoist” can be a knotty term fraught with unwarranted assumptions and, as Peter Bol has pointed out, “The use of ‘Confucian’ and ‘Confucianism’ as general terms for the Chinese political elite and their values obscures distinctions among men and changes over time” (Bol 1994, 15).

Religion

Concerning “religion” I find myself in agreement with an observation made by Wm. Clarke Hudson: “In studying Chinese religions, the emphasis should not always be put on religions, but instead it may often be better put upon traditions, practices, discourses, or repertoires, which

may cut across the boundaries of various religions" (Hudson 2007, 21).

This is excellent advice because it suggests inquiry be directed to the provisional and fleeting—to the contingent and continually renegotiated fields of identity, affiliation and cultivation approaches or methods. Given this, what of cutting across boundaries between "various religions?" I am not entirely convinced that "religions" is a useful term for sorting out the shifting domain of approaches to cultivation in China during the period in which *daoxue* and *jindan* teachers were developing novel ways of framing their various paths to sagehood and transcendence. What would we lose if we dropped the term at this point? Might we simply say that practices, discourses, or repertoires may cut across texts, ritual performances and associated claimed affiliations and identities? Thus, we are not obliged to label Chen Zhixu 陳致虛 (1290-1343+) or Li Daochun 李道純 as "prototypical" Daoists or even as Daoists at all if we can find no evidence that they identified themselves as such; this, it seems, can be instructive.

The adjective, "religious," can be applied to a negotiable subset of human activity and we can debate the legitimacy of its application in any given case based largely on context. The more concrete and yet still abstract noun, "religion," is more problematic. By its very nature the term tends to be viewed as logically prior to the participants situated under its categorical presumptions and rigidities. Thus, for example, Chen Zhixu may be designated, by a twenty-first century European or North American scholar, as a member of the "Daoist religion," but what does that really tell us? Given the bewildering diversity of activity, institutions, texts, ritual (or lack of ritual), diet, meditative practices, claimed allegiances and lineages and so on, I would argue, not very much. In considering the matter of how we might define Daoism, Hudson notes Nathan Sivin's suggestion that we would be better off not trying to find a singular definition but instead be very specific about what we mean by the term in a given context (Hudson 2007, 19).⁹ He goes on to describe his carefully considered polythetic, family resemblance approach to defining the term:

The set of elements by which we define Daoism includes the figure of the saint and *qi*-cosmology ...a discourse on [sic] 道 (sometimes 道 means "the

⁹ Nathan Sivin's now-classic article "On the Word 'Taoist' as a Source of Perplexity" (1978) is the locus for this comment.

Dao," sometimes [sic] "*a dao*") a discourse privileging life, physical transcendence or immortality, self-cultivation, salvation of ancestors, correspondences between micro- and macrocosm or corporeal and celestial spirits, rituals for communicating with a celestial bureaucracy, and more. (Hudson 2007, 20)

In the final section of this paper I will try to show why many of the lines of division drawn between cultivation, as expressed in *jindan* and *Ru dao**xue* texts, should be erased, or at least rendered very faint, partly because a significant number of the features listed above could be applied quite convincingly to both. If they share significant metaphors that generate the contours of their respective terminology and approaches, and if basic assumptions about the place of the body and its *qi* 氣 in relation to the larger world and emotional states is largely congruent, then the question might be not how to describe their convergence but rather, what strategies do they use in the service of differentiation?

Absent the totalizing, deceptively tidy and culturally incongruent¹⁰ concept of "a religion," the fact that Chen Zhixu self-identifies as a Daoist only once would come as no surprise. A brief aside concerning that lone example: The one example in which he may claim Daoist identity is said to be the following: 何不反思吾教之學何也, translated as "Why don't they reflect on what it is that we study in our religion"? (Hudson 2007, 52n36). *Jiao* 教 is translated as "religion" based on Campany's observation that in medieval China *jiao* 教 could be used synecdochically and nominally to denote an entire religion (Campany 2003, 299). My reading of the same section of the article is as a set of cautious observations about the translation gap between *jiao* 教 and any given "ism" or religion. Concerning compounds formed with the character *jiao* 教 (teaching) Campany says:

¹⁰ As Campany points out, it does not follow from the mere fact that a language does not include a word for "religion" that we are not at liberty to apply it as a second-order conceptual tool (2003, 289). My point here is that, at times, it is more useful to suspend application of that term when it may obscure the possibility that an individual may identify, not with "a religion," but rather with a master and a circle of students or fellow seekers. In such cases background assumptions concerning to which religion they might belong are neither useful nor interesting.

Only with extreme rarity do such compounds seem to gather up and nominalize everything that one might mean in Euro-American discourse by a term such as "Buddhism," and even when one does find such cases, the ambiguity of the syntax usually permits other, nonreifying readings. (Campany 2003, 307)

The word "nonreifying" is very important here. It is, as Campany notes throughout his article, quite easy for "isms" to take on a life of their own. They can easily become abstract nouns possessed of agency and identity divorced from the particularities of context. As such they can be wielded to make sweeping statements that not only leave out details, but also positively reconfigure the field of discourse in ways that can lead to very nearly willful misreading.¹¹ Thus, "our religion" (*wu jiao* 吾教) could reflect the flux and contingency of the historical situation so carefully detailed by Hudson if it were rendered simply as "our teaching." That is, the solidarity we as a group share through association with this body of teachings linked to a shared claimed lineage. Given this I would argue that even the lone example of self-identification with "a religion" is worth reconsidering.¹²

Philosophy

The term "philosophy" has long been used by Western academics in conjunction with "religion" to manufacture more or less distinct cultural domains in China. As with "religion" it is not a term native to the language of those who discussed, described and engaged in self-cultivation during the period in which *jindan* and *daoxue* ideas took shape and were promoted. Indeed it did not become a part of the Chinese lexicon until the nineteenth century by way of the Japanese neologism *tetsugaku* 哲学. "Philosophy" (*zhexue* 哲學) was used in conjunction with that other late neologism "religion" (*zongjiao* 宗教) to establish a hierarchical binary that supported a division between the more base elements of culture asso-

¹¹ See Campany 2003, 307, for a clear example of where reading can be led off track by the baggage of our categories and the expectations they import.

¹² In my reading of various texts by Li Daochun and his circle of followers I too have been hard-pressed to find a single unambiguous case of self-identification as a "Daoist" or, more generally, with "Daoism." This tells us a lot about how to characterize his religiosity and the limits of that term's applicability.

ciated with religion and those loftier, more pristine and rational elements designated as philosophy (see also Crowe 2012). An early expression of this binary at work in describing “the Daoist religion” is found in a source that served as a textbook in my undergraduate introduction to “world religions.” Huston Smith lamented the fall from pristine philosophy, represented by the *Daode jing*, to the mire of popular Daoist religion: “To pass from the lofty heights of the *Tao Te Ching* to the priestcraft of Popular Taoism is like passing from a crystal mountain spring to the thick, fetid waters of a stagnant canal” (Smith 1958, 107). While it is now easy, from our present vantage point, to see the shortcomings of such a crude and fundamentally flawed hierarchy, the divisions of philosophy and religion continue to be in play.

This split personality was reflected in two publications on Chinese “philosophy,” the importance of which for future generations of scholars is hard to overstate. Both Fung Yu-lan and Wing Tsit-chan produced impressive works that lay before non-readers of Chinese a rich assortment of literature that they considered worthy of gathering together between the covers of their respective books: *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Fung 1952) and *A Sourcebook of Chinese Philosophy* (Chan 1963). What they crafted shaped conceptions of Daoism and Confucianism by what was absent. While it is not possible to include more than a representative sample in such works, it is unfortunate that of nearly fifteen hundred works in the Daoist Canon only two are represented, the *Daode jing* 道德經 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子; and, as Russell Kirkland has contended, it may be more accurate not to regard them as Daoist texts at all given that during the period they were written there were no “Daoists” (Kirkland 2004, 73).

The works of Fung and Chan were intended as contributions to world-philosophy; they held up examples of Chinese thought that could rightfully stand alongside the great philosophers of ancient Greece, Europe and the Middle East. Thus, matters-religious were left to one side and a tacit assumption made that the rational domain of Chinese thought could best be presented as philosophy. One can still find mention, even in recent work, of two species of Daoism: so-called “religious” and “philosophical.”¹³ Though certainly not applied in this way, both Berling and

¹³ Perhaps Russell Kirkland was prematurely optimistic in 1997 when he observed: “I believe it is safe today to state that most scholars around the world

Ching do appear to rely on the divisions of philosophical and religious though do not invest them with any (Berling) or at least not a pronounced (Ching) hierarchical bias. This is obvious given the great value they both see in bringing to light what they conceive of as the religious side of neo-Confucian cultivation.

In the second half of this paper I will try to make a case for looking past this binary, which is implied by bridging *Ru* and *jindan* modes of cultivation through use of the religious lens. Instead, I will suggest that any confluence of approach to self-cultivation is a matter of shared basic metaphors and of shared assumptions informing attempts to become a better human being. This shared repertoire does not result from selecting an alternative lens so much as from dropping assumptions based on categories that function to obscure what is already evident.

Shared Assumptions

What follows is a description of root-assumptions shared by *jindan* and *Ru* writers, teachers and practitioners that shaped their respective approaches to self-cultivation. It is hoped this will demonstrate a strong continuity between the two while demonstrating the lack of any need to rely on the categories "religion" and "philosophy."

Looking at the broad contours of soteriology we see a shared assumption at work: That the process of cultivation is framed in terms of reconnection or reunion between human beings and the larger process within which they function, expressed as *Tian* or *Dao*. These two terms frequently function as synonyms in both *daoxue* and *jindan* texts, evoking the larger process within which human beings are subsumed.

Daoxue: Dao Learning

Reconnection is described as resulting in a natural, spontaneous way of conduct that accords with the larger indefinable force at work beyond the particularities of daily life. Already, in the *Mengzi*, we see evidence of

who specialize in Taoist studies no longer see the fundamental historical issue as being a differentiation between 'tao-jia' and 'tao-jiao,' or between 'philosophical Taoism' and 'religious Taoism'. In the West, virtually all specialists stepped beyond that issue in the 1980s" (Kirkland 1997, 58).

this perspective: "Exhausting¹⁴ one's heart is knowing one's inner nature. If one knows inner nature then one knows *Tian*. Maintaining one's heart and nourishing one's inner nature is the means for serving *Tian*" (1/67/15; 7A.1). The inner nature is conceived of as coextensive with the larger order, in which each person functions like a conduit through which activity can be directed. The key is to exhaustively (*jin* 盡) plumb the depths of one's heart rather than dealing superficially with daily affairs. There is a sense in which the individual cedes control to *Tian*.

This dynamic is anticipated in the *Lunyu* 論語 when Kongzi 孔子 (Confucius) reflects on how, having understood the commands of *Tian* (*zhi tianming* 知天命), by the age of seventy he had internalized learning to such a degree that he could permit his heart free rein without it going astray (2.4/3/1). Again, we find Kongzi praising the sage-king Shun 舜 for his ability to affect government through non-intentional action (*wuwei* 無為) (15.5/42/9). The function of the rites (*li* 禮) too, as presented in the *Lunyu*, can be understood as a way of mitigating headstrong agency in favor of a greater awareness of social context and an attitude of deferral. As such, the emphasis is on a mode of social action finely attuned to a continually shifting nexus of social interconnections and multiple obligations grounded in an individual's multiple and simultaneous societal roles. Excellence (*de* 德)¹⁵ is expressed by those who are virtuosic¹⁶ in their well-attuned social sensibilities and able to accord with them in the interest of contributing to the integrity of their social network. The source of the excellence one aims to express, by being free of the constraints of bias, desires and selfish intent, is *Tian*.¹⁷ This basic theme of

¹⁴ *Jin* 盡, which literally means to use up or exhaust, when used here refers to exhaustive attention to one's heart or perhaps attending fully to the heart so as to plumb its depths where-in one's Inner Nature resides. D.C. Lau renders the first phrase as "For a man to give full realization to his heart" (Lau 2004, 145)

¹⁵ I have not qualified this excellence as "moral" because I believe it is beside the point. The *Lunyu* does not provide a moral theory. Rather it provides descriptions of practices, perspectives and suggestions concerning how one might approach embodying all of the noble qualities, abilities and habits required of the sagely ideal.

¹⁶ "Virtuosic" is how Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr. characterize the sage (*shengren* 聖人). This also harkens back to the work of Herbert Fingarette whose contributions they acknowledge (Ames and Rosemont 1998, 62).

¹⁷ Joseph Adler draws attention to this in a brief article on the religiosity of

the need to recognize a link between individuals and *Tian* is later amplified in the oft-cited opening line of the *Zhongyong*: "The commands of *Tian* we call inner nature. Following this inner nature is called Dao. Cultivating the Dao is called the teaching" (52.1a).

The requisite precondition for *Tian*'s successful expression is equilibrium (*zhong* 中) of the heart throughout one's ordinary daily affairs (*yong* 庸). Application of the teaching is described in terms of maintaining equilibrium among four principal emotional states of happiness (*xi* 喜), anger (*nu* 怒), grief (*ai* 哀) and pleasure (*le* 樂) before they emerge, and maintaining their harmonious accord (*he* 和) after they emerge. If this equilibrium can be maintained then it serves as "the great root of everything under the sky" (天下之大本也; *Zhongyong*, 52.1b). Thus, a reciprocal relationship is asserted between human beings and their larger world-context. This assumption extends back to the Shang period (ca. 1600-ca. 1046), in which it was already assumed that human actions affected the highest power, Shangdi 上帝, just as Shangdi affected the fates of the Shang people through influence on rain and storms.

This assumption that such a connection could and should be achieved was given systematic expression by Zhu Xi, who made extensive use of the three texts mentioned above. Quoting Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107), he echoes the *Zhongyong*: "Thus, a person of realization restrains his emotions, causing them to unite with equilibrium to rectify the heart and nourish inner nature" (52).

Zhu Xi equated inner nature with *taiji* 太極 (supreme ultimate), and *taiji* comprised the grand unity of all pattern (*li* 理) inherent in and defining particular things. He also expressed this relationship in terms of Dao, which he identified unequivocally with an individual's inner nature. "Dao namely is inner nature and inner nature namely is Dao. Certainly and simply, they are one thing" (ZZYL, 5.1b).¹⁸ Like many before him, he understood the process of cultivation in terms of achieving the realization of, and reconnection with, our inner natures, identified with *Dao* or *Tian*. The result of such a connection would be transformation of one's

Confucianism citing *Lunyu* 7.20, part of which he translates as "Heaven gave birth to the virtue [*de* 德] in me" (Adler 2010, 11). See *Lunyu* 7.23/16/21.

¹⁸ A related phrase appears in *Chongyang zhenren Danyang ershi jue* 重陽真人授丹陽二十四訣 (Twenty-four Explanations Offered by True Man Chongyang to Danyang; HY 1149, CT 1158; abbreviated (CYESS)), 4b.

heart and conduct.

This connection between the human heart and *Tian* or *Dao* as source (*ti* 體) of its actions (*yong* 用) is predicated on maintaining stability (*ding* 定), but this goes beyond ordinary conceptions of the term. Zhu Xi provides an account that underscores his preference for unity when considering the highest levels of cultivation. His perspective is expressed with reference to the words of Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032-85). The passage opens by considering a question posed to Cheng Hao by Zhang Zai 張載 (1020-77), "Inner nature that is stable is unable not to move because it is still tied to external things; what do you think?" (JSL 55). Cheng Hao replies:

What I call "stability," when in motion it is stable and when still it is stable; it is without sending off¹⁹ or welcoming, without inner or outer. If you take external things as external and, dragging yourself along, follow them, this is to take one's own inner nature as having inner and outer. (JSL 55)

What Cheng Hao proposes here is a level of stability that operates outside the usual distinctions of motion and stillness. Zhu Xi appears to view this higher-order stability as the place from which sages respond to the world around them. Since actions issue from one's inner nature and Zhu Xi, later in life, wished to avoid assuming a duality within one's inner nature, this account of stability outside motion and stillness makes good sense. Adler suggests that this relationship of stillness (*wei fa* 未發) and motion (*yi fa* 已發) is best thought of as "interpenetration."

Activity in the midst of stillness can be understood in the sense that in a practice such as quiet-sitting, or even in sleep, one is nourishing one's Heaven-endowed moral potential. An example of this would be Mencius' description of the restorative effects of the "morning *qi*" in his famous Ox Mountain allegory (*Mengzi* 6A8). (Adler 2008, 65)

Zhu Xi's cultivation practice combining meditation and study yielded the all-important disposition of attentive reverence (*jing* 敬), which at once embodies stillness and motion at an existential, experiential level. An individual who can maintain this disposition is able to take action in

¹⁹ I follow Zhang Jinghua's gloss of *jiang* 將 as *song* 送 (JSL, 56, note 2) and agree with Wing Tsit-chan's interpretation that *jiangying* 將迎 (or *songying* 送迎) implies not being pulled from one's stable position: "One does not lean forward or backward to accommodate things" (Chan 1967, 39).

a manner directed by inner nature and thus by *Dao* or *Tian*.

In the fourth section of *Jinsi lu* 近思錄 (Reflections on Things at Hand), Zhu Xi provides additional insight into the experiential process involved in moving closer to the level of a sage:

Someone asked: "Sagehood, can I learn this?" Master Lian Xi²⁰ said: "You can." "Is there something essential?" "There is." "May I please ask how so?" "Unity²¹ is essential." As for unity, it is a lack of desires. If you lack desires then, in stillness, you will be empty (*jing xu*)²² and in motion you are direct (*dong zhi*).²³ If you are still and empty you will be bright (intelligent) and if you are bright you will be penetrating. If in motion you are direct then you will be impartial. Being impartial you will be vast. Bright, penetrating, impartial, vast—nearly there! (*JSL*, 217)

While sages act within the world, their intentions, rooted as they are in fundamental unity—unity of inner nature with/as *Tian* or *Dao*—are beyond the fray of worldly motivations. Hence the frequent mention of lessening desires as a means to equilibrium. The basic path to sagehood is not so remote from that of the *jindan* adept. The Buddhist lotus metaphor for immanent transcendence could well be applied to both. The next section considers how these ideas are expressed in *jindan* texts.

***Jindan*: The Golden Elixir**

The *jindan* and Ru approaches to, and ultimate aims of, self-cultivation are much closer than is generally supposed. Further, there is little need to invoke the characterizations of one as predominantly philosophical in outlook while the other is best understood in terms of religion. This adds no explanatory value, imposing artificial and wholly superfluous catego-

²⁰ Lian Xi 濂溪 is the name of a stream that inspired Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-73) and a name by which he became known.

²¹ In a section of the ZZYL where the *Taiji tushuo* 太極圖說 (An Explanation Concerning the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate) is discussed in relation to learning to become a sage, Zhu Xi provides a definition of "unity" (*yi* 一) as follows: "Unity is simply what I call the Supreme Ultimate" (一即所謂太極; ZZYL, 94.66b).

²² *Jing xu* 靜虛 is described in relation to equilibrium: If equilibrium rules then there is emptiness (中有主則虛) (ZZYL, 94.65b)

²³ *Dong zhi* 動直 is defined as motion that is unimpeded (ZZYL, 94.65b-66a).

ries on universes of discourse whose relationship is better understood by parting with the conceptual constraints they impose.

As with the *Ru* orientation to cultivation, *jindan* practitioners shared an assumption that personal transformation is linked to the ideal of unity; reconnecting with *Dao* or *Tian* is supported by the absence of emotional turmoil and bias. The following passage from the eleventh-century *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇 (Chapters on Awakening to the Real; HY 263, CT 263) provides an illustration of this point:

Grief and joy, gain and loss; admiration and insult, danger and ease;
My mind does not see in a dual way; peaceful, it is unified in its considerations.
Not bringing about the start of fortune, nor the beginning of calamity;
Affected, I respond; compelled, again, I rise.
Since I do not fear sharp knives; why dread the tiger and rhinoceros? (30.9b)

While this passage evokes section fifty of the *Daode jing*, in which weapons, tigers or rhinos do not threaten “companions of life” (*sheng zhi tu* 生之徒), it also emphasizes non-duality with reference to the nature and function of mind. The mind is responsive to shifting circumstances, but from an abiding still-point. While it is easy to play up the “quietist” dimensions of the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi*, they also recommend how to take action. The well-known account of Cook Ding’s efficiency in slicing up oxen for many years, without dulling his blade, is attributed to fluid, decisive gestures made possible by his union with *Dao*:

What I care about is the Way, which goes beyond skill. When I first began cutting up oxen, all I could see was the ox itself. After three years I no longer saw the whole ox. And now—now I go at it by spirit and don’t look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants. I go along with the natural makeup, strike in the big hollows, guide the knife through the big openings, and follow things as they are. (*Zhuangzi*, 3/8/4; Watson 1996, 46)

Evident here is a disposition of deferral to a level of order ordinarily inaccessible to a mind filled with uncertainties of gain, loss, doubts and fears. Burton Watson’s translation, itself a remarkable literary work, mutes the presence of a perspective that anticipates later developments represented by thinkers of Zhu Xi’s time. He renders 依乎天理 as “I go along with the natural makeup.” *Yi* 依 could easily be read as “to place

one's trust in something" or "to depend on something." This brings to light the shared notion of deferral to something beyond the ordinary constraints of human agency. "Natural makeup" is one way to read *tianli* 天理 but it obscures a significant term. Cook Ding is deferring and attuning himself to *Tian's* pattern.²⁴ Cook Ding's success in motion is predicated on stillness, which permits access to the pattern of *Tian*; knowing, for example, comes to a halt (*zhi zhi* 知止). Motion and stillness figure in Li Daochun's texts where they are reconciled, so that neither predominates, making possible motion in stillness and stillness in motion.

Integrity, clarity, quiet, and stability are the foundation of Dao.

Movement and stillness cause each other and in no case are they not the same.

If you daily employ, without wavering, the preservation of unified uprightness

Spontaneously the influence of the pattern of *Tian* will penetrate everywhere. (QAYCZ, 6.21b).

圖妄照



Li distinguishes two types of mind, one that is illuminating (*zhao* 照) and one that is deluded (*wang* 妄). The former gains its illuminative capacity through integrating motion and stillness in such a way that even when in motion the mind is still. The diagram here provides a schematic overview of this relationship, though here, the translation is offered in conventional verse form.

Diagram of Illumination and Delusion

The illuminating mind is constantly still.
If it moves then it responds to the myriad transformations.
Although it moves its fundamental substance is constant stillness.

The deluded mind is constantly moving.
Even if it still there arise myriad thoughts.
Although still, its fundamental substance is constant movement. (*Zhonghe ji*, 1.8b)

²⁴ There are other significant uses of *li* 理 (pattern) elsewhere in the *Zhuangzi* that underscore its significance to the vision of sagehood in that text. See, for example, 17/44/32 and 17/45/13.

This verse, in diagrammatic form, assumes a binary of motion and stillness, yet also assumes the possibility of higher-order stillness ever-present in daily activities. This approach of resolving the binary of motion and stillness is very close to the unity Zhu Xi sought between the two as described in the previous section. The challenge, as he saw it, was to find a connection between complete stillness and the movement required in the course of our daily lives. Zhu Xi's answer, as already noted above, was reverent attentiveness (*jing* 敬), a disposition of stillness that made possible spontaneous, effective and, of course, appropriate action.

The notion of ceding agency to *Tian* or *Dao* is given clear expression through the metaphor of marionette and puppeteer in the *Zhonghe ji* 中和集 (Anthology on Equilibrium and Harmony; HY 249, CT 249). The metaphor is used to answer a question posed by a disciple to Li Daochun, concerning the Mysterious Pass (*xuanguan* 玄關): "All exilir scriptures say: 'Concerning the wonders (of the work of cultivation), the essentials lie in the Mysterious Pass.' I do not know this Mysterious Pass; exactly where is it located?" (*Zhonghe ji*, 3.3a). Li responds by discounting the possibility that the Mysterious Pass could be located on the body or indeed, anywhere. He then proceeds to explain in metaphorical terms:

I will now set forth a metaphor to make it easy for you to understand. Now it is like a marionette; the movements of hands and feet in a hundred kinds of dances are located at the top of the string connected to the twisting, which in reality issues from the master (puppeteer) who causes it. (3.3a)

The way of cultivation outlined in the *Zhonghe ji* and the *Qing'an yingchan zi yulu* 清庵瑩蟾子語錄 (Dialogic Treatise of Master Qing'an Yingchan) locates the Mysterious Pass (the strings) in an intermediary position on a metaphorical axis, with the Supreme Ultimate (the puppeteer) occupying the top position and human activity (the marionette) occupying the bottom position. Recognition and preservation of the Mysterious Pass, which can be equated with cleaving to equilibrium (*zhizhong* 執中), makes possible a unity of the Supreme Ultimate (equated in this context with inner nature) with the individual as the point of origin for activity in the world.

The Process of Learning

What was the basic orientation toward gaining understanding necessary for realizing reunification, the ultimate end for the *Ru* and for those who pursued the path of *jindan*? We might fall back on general characterizations such as the intellectual, active *Ru* and the mystical, reclusive inner alchemist; one placing high value on literacy and refined expression while the other retreats from language and values simplicity. Concerning meditation we might view the *Ru* reliance on this practice as aimed at practical ends while that of the alchemist is to treat the same practice as an end in itself (Ching 2000, 120). Once again, if we take time to look at each more closely we find the differences are less pronounced than might be assumed.

Book-Learning

Jindan texts have a somewhat ambiguous relationship to language. Words evoke symbolic relationships intended to provide a general frame of reference for somatic and mental experiences that are inherently illusive. The ultimate end into which one creatively transforms (*zaohua* 造化) is indescribable. Thus:

The real matter is not found on paper. This is analogous to a boat crossing over a river. Having ferried the people across, once they step onto the other shore, the boat is useless. A former worthy (Zhuangzi) said: "Once you have got the rabbit forget the snare. Once you have the fish, forget the trap" [ch. 26]. This is what I am saying. Moreover, concerning this, my present anthology, you must not cling to what is on the paper. (QAYCZ, 6. 8b-9a)

Again, in the *Wuzhen pian*, a passage from a verse praising the *Zhouyi cantong qi* 周易參同契 (The Seal of the Unity of the Three According to the Book of Changes; HY 996, CT 999)²⁵ states:

For those who understand it is simple and easy,
[but] for those who are deluded as doubts increase, complexities
increase.
Therefore the scholar who cultivates the real,

²⁵ Numerous versions of the *Cantong qi* with various commentaries are found in the *Daozang* 道藏. Ten are listed in sequence: HY 996-1005, CT 999-1008.

and reads the *Seal of the Unity of the Three*,
does not dwell on muddy signs nor cling to the written-word.
(29.19a)

If we look directly to the *Cantong qi*, quoted frequently by generations of *jindan* adepts, we find the following observations in a set of verses under the title “Erroneous alchemical methods”:

In this world there are many learned men,
Eminent, wondrous, and of excellent talent.
Unless they suddenly have the unexpected encounter,
They squander their fire and in vain waste their wealth.

Relying on opinion and written words,
They foolishly act as they like:
Their principles have no foundation,
And their attitude lacks firmness. (Pregadio 2011, 86; 274)²⁶

Obviously, the point in each of these cases is not to eschew the written word. After all, highly literate individuals wrote these texts. However, they understood the function of written and spoken words in terms of provisional means to deeper understanding based on direct experience. Suspicion of language was reserved for what they perceived as an unproductive and even dangerous tendency to substitute formalism and imitation for true understanding.

Wang Zhe 王嘉 (1113-70) provided advice on how to read books in the second of his fifteen verses in *Chongyang lijiao shiwu lun* (CYSWL) 重陽立教十五論 (Chongyang’s Fifteen Verses Setting Forth his Teaching; HY 1223, CT 1233). There he cautions:

Concerning the way (*dao*) to study books, one must not look to formal literary style, which will confuse the eyes. (CYSWL, 1b)

Instead one should pluck out the inner pattern (*caili* 採理) of the text in order to fully merge the meaning with one’s mind. Further, to engage only in superficial formal reading,

²⁶ For the sake of correlating the translation with the Chinese text I have included the text as it is found in the appendix of Pregadio’s translation. Note that Pregadio added verse titles for ease of reference (67).

Merely to remember much and be widely read so as to chatter and talk in front of people, boasting and astounding them with your talent and intelligence, this is of no use for cultivation and will cause injury to your spirit and *qi*. (CYSWL, 2a; also in Yao 1980, 73-85; 1984-85, 41-54)

This same cautious attitude to texts is reflected among *Ru* of the Song and Yuan dynasties whose reaction to formalism was quite similar. Bol (1992) describes a sweeping transition away from the approach of literati during the Tang (618-907). During Tang times there was a shift in how *wen* 文 was to be understood. It meant a corpus of classical texts associated in various ways with the hand of Confucius. These texts held within them a normative cultural pattern (including writing, governance, and behavior) and they were understood in terms continuous with Sky and Earth (*Tian di* 天地) or the natural order. The job of the educated elite was to preserve and perpetuate this cultural pattern. Through the Northern Song those who promoted *daoxue* challenged this. They sought to internalize the way of the Sage in the form of cosmic order linked to inner nature. They rejected the idea of a normative and cumulative cultural tradition opting for a moral pattern innate in the world and in individuals (Bol 1992, 3).

We see this general disposition in some of Zhu Xi's observations and in his recorded sayings of other *daoxue* teachers. In the above passage Wang Zhe cautions that superficial reading damages the spirit and *qi*. Here Zhu Xi records Cheng Yi's caution that such an approach damages the Dao. Of the sages he says:

Their words embrace all the principles of the world, they are very simple. People of today, however, give their first attention to literary composition when they pick up a book. In their lifetime they are more active than sages. But what they do contributes nothing to the world. . . . Not only is it useless; as it misses the essential, it departs from truth and becomes incorrect, and thus will surely damage the Way. (*JSL*, 59; Chan 1967, 42)

Again, disapproval is expressed toward those who look to books for purposes associated with literary formalism:

The Dao of the sages enters through the ear, and is preserved in the heart. Stored up there it becomes excellence in one's actions. Acted upon it becomes our various undertakings. As for those who take up literary compositions and nothing more, they are vulgar people. (*JSL*, 51)

Thus, the whole point of reading and study in general is to make possible the embodying of Dao in one's conduct. To do this one must see and go beyond the words and allow the text to resonate with one's heart/mind.

Again, it seems the general attitude of Zhu Xi and his precursors to books and to study is not so dissimilar in spirit to that of Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (d. 1082), Wang Zhe or Li Daochun. Obviously their specific aims and perspectives differ but they do not approach study in ways that might be distinguished as more or less rational or as inherently religious as opposed to philosophical.

Meditation and Ultimate Aims

Zhu Xi's interest in meditation is, according to Ching, linked to his need to cultivate an abiding attitude of reverence throughout daily affairs (Ching 2000, 120). This is a "practical teaching," not to be mistaken as a means to a more mystical end: "Chu continues to teach the usefulness of quiet-sitting, or meditation, but only for contemplating the mind-and-heart rather than for achieving any mystical breakthrough" (Ching 2000, 120). This characterization is intended to reflect Zhu Xi's determination to distinguish his mode of self-cultivation from that of Buddhists, whom he viewed as dishonoring the Han tradition of family loyalties and disregarding wider social obligations. To a lesser extent this was also an attempt to differentiate his practice from that of Daoists who, like the Buddhists, view meditation as an "exercise by which the mind concentrates upon itself to the exclusion of all distracting thoughts and for the sake of achieving unity with one's innermost self" (Ching 2000, 120).

I wholeheartedly agree with and laud Ching's careful attempt to see more than the so-called practical dimensions of Zhu Xi's teachings. That said, in what follows I will provide reasons to allow that his motivations for meditative practice may be much more consonant with those of *jindan* practitioners. First we can consider the "practical," this-worldly dimension of *jindan* meditation and the nature of the ultimate end to such practice. Secondly, we can consider the "mystical" orientation of Zhu Xi's recommended course of cultivation. By way of such an approach we might arrive at a middle-ground shared by both, while once again avoiding talk of religion and philosophy.

One cannot argue that all who practiced *jindan* shared the same out-

look. It may indeed be that some embraced the hope of spirit-flight beyond the travails of human life and that others elected to hide in mountain retreats. Such individuals would provide a compelling contrast to Zhu Xi, though he seems to have lived much of his life as a quiet scholar outside the bustle of court life and official intrigue. We do though have important examples supporting the claim that *jindan* could well be practiced without an escapist emphasis or one focused on living forever.

Zhu Xi understood meditation as supporting reverence (*jing* 敬) throughout one's daily affairs. It was not to be used as a means of escape but as a preparation for life. The same could be said of meditation among *jindan* adepts. Wang Zhe makes a helpful observation in a verse titled *Lun dazuo* 論打坐 (A Discourse on Meditating):

Generally, the practice of meditation ought not to be described simply as the body being correctly positioned and the eyes closed. This is false meditation. Concerning true meditation, throughout the twelve double-hours of the day, whether standing, walking, sitting or reclining, in all cases amid movement and stillness, one's mind should be like Mt. Tai. (CYSWL, 3b)

Once again, resonating with Zhu Xi's interpenetrating motion and stillness and the still-point of reverence (*jing* 敬) ever-present, we see here the binary of motion and stillness in daily life, but in a context that allows for the stillness of Mt. Tai in their midst. The intention here is to transform daily activity in such a way that stillness abides in all affairs.

Meditation need not be taken as an end in itself, or as a denial of daily life. Even in the *Wuzhen pian*, a basic reference for *jindan* practitioners, we find a repudiation of those who go looking for herbs or giving up grains in their diet. All they do is leave themselves with empty stomachs (*Wuzhen pian*, 26.31b). Concerning retreat from family and the idea that some have of divorcing their wives, it is said to simply lead to dishonor and the separation of *yin* and *yang* (*Wuzhen pian*, 26.30b).

Related to this, we can consider Wang Zhe's definition of leaving the household (*chujia* 出家), a Buddhist term synonymous with a monastic life. Certainly Wang and his senior followers embraced a monastic life as did following generations, but they also popularized the Way of Complete Perfection (*Quanzhen Dao* 全真道) beyond the confines of monastic institutions. Thus, *chujia* is defined, not with specific reference to the family, but in relation to cultivation of the heart or mind. In the

Chongyang zhenren Danyang ershi si jue (CYESSJ) 重陽真人授丹陽二十四訣 (Twenty-four Explanations Offered by True Man Chongyang to Danyang; HY 1149, CT 1158) Wang's disciple, Ma Danyang 馬丹陽, inquires:

Danyang again asked: What is it we refer to as "leaving the household?"

The Master answered saying: Concerning "leaving the household," it means the myriad conditions do not cause anxiety to one's numinous intelligence; this is leaving the household. (CYESSJ, 2a)

Ma poses the same question later in the same text, and his teacher answers by quoting the *Taishang laojun shuo changqingjing jing* 太上老君說常清靜經 (Scripture on Constant Clarity and Stillness Spoken by the Most High Lord Lao; HY 754, CT 755; also HY 755-58, CT 756-59): "If people are able to be constant in their clarity and stillness, sky and earth will in all cases be restored. Having meritorious conduct and cultivating the excellence of the genuine is leaving the household" (CYESSJ, 3b). What we see in these approaches to definition is a space that is opened to a more universal language of cultivation not so far removed from that of *daoxue* teachers. This tendency to move beyond talk of mysterious points on or within the body and various herbs, minerals and compounds is a defining trait of *jindan* as a process of cultivation.

Li Daochun takes pains to elaborate on the divisions between higher and lower grades of cultivation (see also Pregadio 2012). He relegates people preoccupied with material remedies, exercises and numerous other practices to the lower levels, while describing the higher levels in terms more abstract and closer to the language of *daoxue* texts. In all he lists nine inferior grades divided into three groups; then he describes the higher grades of cultivation, before finally providing his account of the most high vehicle (*zuishang yisheng* 最上一乘) (Zhonghe ji, 2.12b-17a). Within this category he redefines *jindan* terminology in relation to their ultimate referents. Thus, for example, the foundation of the cinnabar is "clarity and stillness" (*qingjing wei danji* 清靜為丹基), while the "mother of the cinnabar" is non-purposive action (*wuwei wei danmu* 無為為丹母) (Zhonghe ji, 2.16b). The same approach is taken to "lead and mercury," "fire and water" and the "merging of metal and wood."

Concerning the centrality of long life or immortality, a few words are warranted. While it is reasonable to consider the pursuit of good health as a basic stage of self-cultivation among *jindan* practitioners (as I would argue it was with *daoxue* followers), it would be a mistake to see it

as the primary and certainly sole motivation for the practice. Again Ma Danyang asks his teacher what "extending life and no death" (*chang-sheng busi* 長生不死) means. Wang Zhe explains that it refers to the true inner nature being free from turmoil and the anxieties of the myriad conditions (CYESSJ, 2a-b). In the same vein, Wang Zhe explains the ultimate aim of his teaching:

As for leaving the ordinary world, it is not a bodily departure; it refers to the ground of mind. The body is like a lotus root while the mind is like the lotus flower. The root is in the mud while the flower is in emptiness. A person who attains Dao, their body is in the ordinary world yet their mind dwells in the realm of the sages. Concerning people today who desire eternal life and no death and departure from the ordinary world, they are great idiots who do not understand the pattern of the Dao. (CYSWL, 5b-6a)

One would be hard-pressed to find a more blunt and unequivocal declaration concerning the immanent nature of the transcendence Wang has in mind. What he seeks in his path of cultivation is the same as Zhu Xi, Cheng Yi or Cheng Hao, insofar as he aims for personal transformation while living in the ordinary world, and that transformation entails a reunion with Dao through cultivation of his inner nature.

Zhu Xi hopes to realize a reconnection at an existential level with *Tian* or *Dao* through achieving an abiding stillness, from which he can be both active and still at different moments of his daily life. I would agree with Ching that this is a fundamentally religious orientation, but I also believe that this is how his entire system of cultivation should be understood. Further, there is ample evidence that his way of framing cultivation is not essentially divergent from that of *jindan* practitioners. At the level of metaphors, motion, stillness, and reunion/reconnection shape the contours of his path in very much the same general way.

Conclusion

I have tried to make a case for characterizing the relationship of *daoxue* and *jindan* in ways that see them sharing a broad cultural domain of discourse and, to a lesser extent, praxis. This shared domain belies relevance of the categories "religion" and "philosophy." Their basic presuppositions and metaphors are shared. The language they use points to agreement on the general nature of their shared problematic. Human

beings, in order to improve themselves, must find a way to reconnect with the larger world process within which they are subsumed. That process (*Tian* 天/*Dao* 道) is a pattern (*li* 理), underlying and defining the particularities experienced in and constituting daily life through the cycle of seasons reflected in trees, grass and flowers, celestial events and the birth, growth and aging of human beings.

Both conceive of the need to be open to the guidance of the larger process. This is achieved by muting, or at least lessening, the background interference associated with the distractions of emotional turmoil, intellectual confusions and preoccupations, and an overriding concern for securing personal advantage.

Through the process of human development each expresses some caution concerning the lure of formalism associated with study. Both sets of examples also reveal a shared concern for not mistaking praxis for the ideal toward which personal cultivation is directed. Meditation is never an end in itself but a way to transcendence. Transcendence, in both cases, clearly remains immanent and is well represented by the stock metaphor of the lotus with its roots in the mud and its flower in the sunlight.

These few textual examples are intended only to problematize easy distinctions and to reflect on a need to consider a wider and shared cultural space, as a point of departure when reading *daoxue* or *jindan* texts. This is a space of shared language, metaphors and basic assumptions. One still meets those who prefer to study Daoist philosophy rather than Daoist religion. This article suggests that such a preference represents a fundamental misunderstanding, with considerable methodological implications, of the subject of study. It says more about our intellectual tastes than it does about the texts, rituals, and music of the people we elect to call Daoists or Confucians.

I have made my case by drawing attention to some specific observations made by *daoxue* and *jindan* proponents, in the hope that seeing them side by side may shed light on how they shared a basic perspective on becoming fully human that had little to do with European categories of “rational” versus “mystical” or “religion” versus “philosophy.”

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The Three Treasures *

An Enquiry into the Writings of Wu Shouyang

PAUL VAN ENCKEVORT

Abstract

This essay examines the concept of the three treasures—*jing*, *qi* and *shen*—in the writings of Wu Shouyang as an example of late imperial discourse on internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹). A well-known concept basic to Daoism as well as Chinese culture in general, the three treasures are differently interpreted in various contexts, and the specific ideas associated with each of them shape the views of human nature and immortality in which they play a central role. While the metaphorical registers are the most distinctive characteristic of inner alchemy discourse, the three treasures are presented by Wu and other inner alchemy authors as the basic ontological categories to which most metaphors refer. As such, they connect the theory and practice of cultivation with ordinary human experience, and place both in a broader cosmological perspective. Moreover, one of the main soteriological objectives of cultivation—the creation of a yang spirit (*yangshen* 陽神)—should be understood within the matrix of ideas associated with the three treasures. A close analysis of these ideas, therefore, reveals much about the fundamental aspirations of internal alchemy and the meaning of immortality (*xian* 仙) in this context.

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The significance of *jing* 精, *qi* 氣, and *shen* 神 in pre-modern Chinese culture requires little argument. These three treasures (*sanbao* 三寶) play a central role in what could be loosely termed “Chinese metaphysics,” and by extension in such diverse and fundamental fields as, to mention the most obvious, cosmology, philosophy, medicine, and religion. Already the earliest examples of Daoist discourse on human nature contain theoretical speculations about basic human functions centered on these notions; they continue to play the same central role until late imperial times, and even, often in new interpretations, in contemporary Daoist discourse. But, as Catherine Despeux remarks, “[t]he ideas and practices associated with each term, and with the three terms as a whole, are complex and vary considerably in different contexts and historical periods” (in Pregadio 2008, 562).

This essay focuses on the writings of the late Ming author, Wu Shouyang 伍守陽 (1574-1644?), examining a range of passages to illustrate the meanings he attaches to the three treasures in his vision of internal alchemy, as well as in pivotal moments during cultivation.¹

The Three Treasures Revisited

Two aspects complicate the simple idea of “three” treasures. The first is the coincidence of two schemes of representation, one dyadic and one triadic, which causes the notion of *jing* to be sometimes represented as a separate notion and sometimes used as just a different name for *qi*. The second is the distinction between two cosmo-ontological states, which multiplies the threefold *jing*, *qi* and *shen* into three pre-creation (*xiantian* 先天) and three post-creation (*houtian* 後天) variants. Wu says,

¹ The most extensive discussion of Wu Shouyang to date can be found in Ding 2006. For a general introduction, see the entries by Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein on “Wu Shouyang” and “Wu-Liu pai” in Pregadio 2008 (2:1046-47, 1049-50). For a short study of Wu’s life and ideas, including some translations, see Liu 1984. An excellent introduction is also found in Tang 1996. Both Monica Esposito (1993; 2001) and Mori Yuria (1994) have written on him in the context of the Longmen lineage. For more on his Quanzhen and Longmen identity, see Van Enckevoort 2014.

Teacher Cao² once told me: "The way of immortality is simple and easy; it only consists of *shen* and *qi*." Cultivators must use the three treasures: *jing*, *qi* and *shen*. If only *shen* and *qi* are mentioned here, it is because *jing* is present within *qi*, and *jing* and *qi* are fundamentally one. One *shen* and one *qi* are equivalent to one yin and one yang.³

These are the opening words of Wu's preface to his foundational text, the *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu* 天仙正理直論增註 (The Correct Principles of Celestial Immortality, Straightforward Essays with Additional Commentaries). Several things stand out here. First, this fragment shows the fundamental significance of the three treasures: the entire way of immortality can be reduced to *shen* along with *qi* and *jing*. He also notes that *jing* and *qi* are essentially one and the same thing. Thus, speaking of *shen* and *qi*, the notion of *jing* is already included in *qi*.

This shows that there are two basic arrangements of presenting these facts. First is the triadic scheme of the "three treasures," which includes the notions of *jing*, *qi* and *shen*. Because of its triadic structure it lends itself easily to being used in schemes of correspondence with other schemes of three. Simultaneously, there is a dyadic scheme, based on the original duality of yin and yang. This arrangement pairs *shen* with *qi*, while *jing* is implied in *qi*. This, allows for association with all kinds of other dyadic pairs—most importantly inner nature (*xing* 性) and life-endowment (*ming* 命). These associations then connect the arrangement of the three treasures with another famed principle of internal alchemy: the "integrated cultivation of inner nature and life-endowment" (*xingming shuangxiu* 性命雙修). This looks as follows:

Three Treasures	<i>Jing</i>	<i>Qi</i>	<i>Shen</i>
integrated cultivation	life endowment		inner nature
basic dyadic pair	yang		yin

² This refers to Cao Huanyang 曹還陽 (1563–1622; *hao* Huanyang 還陽, *faming* 法名 [ordination name] Changhua 常化), Wu's first and only Daoist teacher from Nanchang County (in present-day Jiangxi Province), with whom he studied for a period of some nineteen years (between 1593 and 1612).

³ *Tianxian zhengli zixu* 天仙正理自序, 4.1a, 7543. Quotations from Wu's works refer to the *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要 edition; they include references to page numbers in the Xinwenfeng reprint, vol. 17. The abbreviation "DZ" refers to the numbering system used for *Daozang* texts in Schipper and Verellen 2004.

For Wu, inner nature and life-endowment are not only associated with *qi* (including *jing*) and *shen*, but *qi* and *shen* are their concrete manifestations in the human being. In many ways, they basically function as synonyms in certain contexts. While with life-endowment and *qi* this synonymy is somewhat more implicit, inner nature is repeatedly said to be the same as the inactive *shen*. Also, the cultivation of both is actualized through the cultivation of *shen* and *qi*: “The way of immortality is accomplished through the integrated cultivation of original *shen* and original *qi*. Therefore it is fitting to speak of the ‘integrated cultivation of inner nature and life-endowment’” (4.3a, 7544).

Another organizational scheme that complicates the discussion of the three treasures is the division of cosmological time into before the creation of “heaven” (*xiantian*), and the phase that starts with the creation of “heaven” (*houtian*). Wu Shouyang defines the creation of the cosmos as the result of the introduction of activity (*dong* 動) into the Great Ultimate (*taiji* 太極) state of unitary inactive (*jing* 靜) *qi*. After the introduction of activity, post-creation cosmic conditions are characterized by the duality of yin (inactivity) and yang (activity). This process of cosmic separation repeats itself on a microcosmic scale during pregnancy, when the unborn child journeys from pre- to post-creation. When this differentiation is applied to *jing*, *qi* and *shen*, six different aspects result.

Jing, *qi*, and *shen* are usually translated as essence, breath (vital energy, pneuma), and spirit. The term “post-creation essence” (*houtian jing*) may then be understood as “semen,” since it is clearly defined by Wu as the “stuff” that leaves the body through sexual activity and has the potential to create new life. Similarly, the term post-creation *qi*, in its basic meaning signifying the air we inhale and exhale, can be understood as “breath.” Post-creation *shen*, moreover, is “thought” (*siliu* 思慮), sometimes best rendered “cognitive spirit.”

The Cosmos

Cosmological models connect to the three treasures in two ways. First, the origin of the universe provides the background for an ontological explanation of *qi*—the progenitor of the other treasures—and for the basic principles that govern its dynamics. Second, the narrative of the cosmogony, provides a three-step scheme of transformation that supplies

the framework for both the theory of human nature and the theory of cultivation. As Wu says in his *Daoyuan qianshuo* 道原淺說 (A Concise Explanation of the Dao, the Origin):

How come we say that yin and yang are inner nature and life-endowment? Before there were heaven and earth and before a human body comes into being, everything belongs to Emptiness and nonbeing. This is like the time of Ultimate Nonbeing followed by the Great Ultimate as described in the *Yijing* [Book of Changes]. In this nonbeing there was something vague and indistinct as if there was one [unitary] *qi*.

This *qi* was for a long time inactive and one; then it gradually became active and divided. The yang floated upwards to form heaven; this is analogous to humans having inner nature. The yin sank down to form the earth; this is analogous to humans having life-endowment. When yang reaches the peak of its activity it becomes inactive, and when yin reaches the peak of its inactivity it becomes active. Humans are born from the interaction between the *qi* of yin and yang.⁴

This passage starts with relating the dyadic model of human nature—inner nature plus life-endowment—to the dyadic model of the cosmos—yin plus yang. Wu then outlines a brief model of cosmogenesis. Cosmological time is divided into pre-creation—before the first division into yin and yang, heaven and earth—and post-creation—after the division, i.e., the ordinary conditions of human life “as we know it.” Pre-creation begins with an absolute absence of anything: emptiness (*xu* 虛) and nonbeing (*wu* 無). This corresponds with Ultimate Nonbeing (*wuji* 無極), defined here as a state of the utmost absence of *qi*. Citing the famous formulation of the Song philosopher and cosmologist, Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–73), Wu says that the Great Ultimate (*taiji*), follows Ultimate Nonbeing (*wuji*).⁵ Great Ultimate is a state when *qi* is everywhere: there is

⁴ *Tianxian zhengli qianshuo* 天仙正理淺說 (The Correct Principles of Celestial Immortality: A Concise Explanation [of the Dao, the Origin]), 5.4a–5a, 7598–99. Wu belongs to those authors who make an orthographic difference between [*xiantian*] *qi* 炁 and [*houtian*] *qi* 氣. The *Daozang jiyao* edition, however, contains several instances where the discourse clearly suggests *qi* 炁 but the text has *qi* 氣. I have amended such instances through comparison with other editions.

⁵ This phrase is from Zhou Dunyi's *Taijitu shuo* 太極圖說 (Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate), which opens with the words: *Wuji er taiji* 無

only this *qi*, one and undivided. This is the pre-creation *qi* or the *qi* of Dao that forms the substrate of existence.

Commenting on the above passage, Wu refers to the “old saying”: “One brings forth Two, and Two brings forth Three,” part of *Daode jing* 42: “Dao produces the One, the One produces the Two, the Two produce the Three, and the Three produce the Myriad Things.” This abstract numerological model of development forms the framework for his cosmogony as well as of his vision of human development and cultivation practice.

Dao matches Ultimate Nonbeing and also emptiness and nonbeing. The One corresponds to the Great Ultimate and specifies the state of undivided *qi*. One is thus also oneness or unity instead of duality. The Two of the *Daode jing* is precisely this duality: activity and inactivity, yin and yang. Going from unity to duality signifies the creation of heaven and earth—the transition from pre-creation to post-creation. The Three finally does not have a straightforward referent in the cosmological model. Three somehow has to be reconciled with the related yet separate notions of yin and yang, on the one hand, and activity and inactivity, on the other. What Wu seems to suggest is that the first duality is between active and inactive *qi*, while Three corresponds to the duality of yin and yang in combination with this first duality. The nuances of this point, interesting perhaps from a philosophical perspective, are of little consequence for the uses of this model. The Three, in the model of human nature and in cultivation practice, simply refers to *jing*, *qi* and *shen*.⁶

Humanity and Immortality

While unified *qi* is central in the cosmic perspective, in the human being it mutates into various modes of the three treasures as it forms, grows, and develops to completion. The phases and dynamics of this development are conceptualized to correspond with cosmic development. Thus,

極而太極。The grammatical form of this sentence allows for two interpretations: “While *wuji*, also *taiji*” or “[First] *wuji* and then *taiji*.”

⁶ The “Three” is usually interpreted as the interaction between the “Two” their harmony and their union: “The division of the One into two distinct principles is followed by the reunion of the two in order to form a third principle which is the image of harmony and the condition of all life” (Robinet 1993, 122).

analogous to the cosmos, the *qi* of the human being is subject to the operations of Dao and moves from inactivity to activity. As a result, it separates into yin and yang, manifest as inner nature (yin) and life-endowment (yang) or, in more "concrete" terms, *shen* and *qi*.

The emphasis here is always on process, or cosmogony rather than cosmology, as already apparent in the name sometimes given to such speculations, the "way of heaven" (*tiandao* 天道). Through microcosm-macrocosm correspondence, it parallels two distinctive scenarios in the human perspective. On the one hand, there is the "way of humanity" (*rendao* 人道), defined by Wu as the process of birth and development leading to adulthood.⁷ On the other hand, there is the "way of immortality" (*xiandao* 仙道), which signifies the way to "achieve immortality" (*chengxian* 成仙), or Buddhahood as these concepts are equivalent for Wu. The way of humanity follows the natural order (*shun* 順, lit., "continuation"), while the cultivation of immortality is its inversion (*ni* 逆, lit., "inversion").

The way of humanity has the same structure as the process abstractly formulated in *Daode jing* 42: the narrative of development is demarcated and punctuated by the idea of "three changes" (*sanbian* 三變). The first change occurs during conception and signifies the transition from the emptiness of the childless womb to the unity of a particle of *qi*—originating from a union of two particles of *qi*, one from each parent—that forms the beginning of the embryo, the equivalent of a zygote. This corresponds with the step from Dao, or emptiness, to One.

The second change takes place after ten months of gestation at the moment of birth. This change is defined by the complete differentiation of a distinct *shen* (representing inner nature) and a stock of *qi* (representing life-endowment). This matches the transition from One to Two, from unity to duality. The third change occurs at age fifteen (16 *sui*), when—in this idealized scheme—sexual adulthood is reached: *shen* and *qi* reach their full potential and *jing* starts to differentiate from *qi*. This corresponds to the transition from Two or duality to Three or triality.

⁷ This term *rendao* is used in several meanings in Neidan texts, including the "Confucian" meaning of a "normative way of humanity," and the "Buddhist" meaning of "way of humans" as one of the "six *gati*" (*liudao* 六道 or *liuqu* 六趣).

In terms of the three treasures, this process moves from emptiness to the unity of *qi*, the duality of *qi* and *shen*, and finally to the triality of *jing*, *qi* and *shen*. Wu explains:

With regard to following the course of the three changes in the way of humanity, the pass of the first change is the union of one *qi* from a state in which there is no *qi*. The two *qi* of the father and the mother initially unite in the womb. There is only this pre-creation unitary *qi* and the terms *shen* and *qi* do not apply.

When [the embryo] grows and seems to acquire form, there is a little breath 氣, and there seems to be respiration, but it has not yet developed into [actual] respiration; this is the time when *shen* and *qi* are about to separate but have not yet done so. When respiration has developed and follows the mother's respiration, *shen* and *qi* have already separated but not yet reached completion. Once [*qi*] has separated into a duality [of *shen* and *qi*], [the embryo] belongs to post-creation. . . . This pass of the second change indicates the division of unity into duality.

At the time of the delivery of the embryo, the pre-creation *qi* is still in the navel, the post-creation breath is in the mouth and the nose, and the respiration of mouth and nose is connected to the navel. The pre-creation *shen* is still in the heart and when it emerges from it, it spreads as sentiments and desires. Thus, although *qi* and *shen* are two, they are always caught up in the same cycle of activity and inactivity of the heart. (*Tianxian zhengli qianshuo*, 5.6a-7a, 7599-7600)

Only after the completion of the way of humanity do human beings possess *jing*, *qi* and *shen* in their full potential. This process must be completed before any cultivation of immortality can begin. Here the three-fold structure of the *Daode jing* becomes concrete through the familiar concept of the "three passes" (*sanguan* 三關):

- 1) The "first pass" (*chuguan* 初關) of "refining *jing* and transforming it into *qi*" (*lianjing huaqi* 煉精化炁)
- 2) The "middle pass" (*zhongguan* 中關) of "refining *qi* and transforming it into *shen*" (*lianqi huashen* 煉炁化神)
- 3) The "upper pass" (*shangguan* 上關) of "refining *shen* and returning it to emptiness" (*lianshen huanxu* 煉神還虛).

While the natural course leads from emptiness to the three treasures and thus to the completion of humanity (*chengren* 成人), the inverted course leads back from the three treasures to emptiness and thus to the completion of immortality (*chengxian* 成仙). In Wu's words: "Therefore the way of humanity is completed through a sequence of three changes. Accordingly, the way of immortality is also attained through a cultivation in three passes" (*Tianxian zhengli qianshuo*, 5.5b, 7599).

These different threefold structures are shown in the table below, the first column outlining the abstract formulation of this scheme as found in *Daode jing* 42:

<i>Daode jing</i>		Heaven's Dao	Humanity	Immortality
Dao	道	emptiness & nonbeing	emptiness	emptiness
One	一	<i>taiji</i>	<i>qi</i>	<i>shen</i>
		activity & inactivity		
Two	二	yin & yang	<i>qi</i> & <i>shen</i>	<i>qi</i> & <i>shen</i>
		heaven & earth		
Three	三	?	<i>qi</i> , <i>shen</i> & <i>jing</i>	<i>qi</i> , <i>shen</i> & <i>jing</i>

This shows that the inversion of the way of immortality is not a linear return. A straight return would entail that cultivators transform their *shen* into *qi* and thus end up with a literally senseless accumulation of *qi*. Instead, the ingenuity of the "way of immortality" is that they take a detour: instead of returning to the Oneness of *qi*, they return to Oneness by transforming their yang *qi* into *shen*. By this act of transformation, the originally yin *shen* changes into yang, and thus acquires a state of immortality. The yang *shen*, in other words, is immortal.⁸

⁸ The idea for this table was based on a similar table by Fabrizio Pregadio (in Pregadio 2008, 556). This table differs in that I left out the fourth step of the "myriad things" because, at least in Wu's theory, it does not seem to play an actual role and it has no clear referents in the parallel perspectives. I have also added the perspective of the three changes in human development.

Qi and Breath

How, then, do the three treasures function in the lives of ordinary people and in the path to immortality. How do *jing* and *shen* derive from *qi*? What is the significance of their transformation?

Pre-creation *qi* plays various roles. First, it is the core stuff of the cosmos and of the human being; *jing* and *shen*, as well as their post-creation variants, are its transformations. In Wu's words: "Original *qi* is the basis of the birth of a body. Everything that exists in a body is generated and transformed from original *qi*" (*Tianxian zhengli zhilun*, 4.7a, 7552). Second, *qi* is intimately connected with life-endowment. Wu describes this connection as people having a life-endowment—in this context understandable as corporeal life—owing to having a stock of *qi* in the body. The third important role of *qi* is that of a resource of yang *qi*, which can be used to "yangify" the yin *shen*.

These latter roles reveal the significance of the "integrated cultivation of inner nature and life-endowment." Wu frequently notes that inner nature and life-endowment are cultivated by refining *shen* and *qi*. One has a inner nature and a life-endowment by virtue of having *shen* and *qi*; they are different sides of the same coin. The "integrated cultivation" does not only suggest that both *shen* and *qi* are cultivated, but also, and perhaps even more so, that the cultivation of the one requires the application of the other. Wu says: "In the initial refining of *jing* and its transformation into *qi*, you must definitely use *shen* as the refuge for the *qi*. When it comes to the refining of *qi* and its transformation into *shen*, analogously you use the *qi* as the refuge for *shen* (4.19b, 7558).

It is near the end of the first stage of cultivation, when all *jing* has been (re-)transformed into *qi*, that cultivators attain the first degree of proper immortality; that of "human immortality." All yang *qi* is at this stage accumulated at the lower cinnabar field, but sexual function has not been completely eliminated yet and in one unguarded moment of arousal it is still possible that *qi* transforms into *jing*. But as long as cultivators are able to keep their stock of yang *qi* intact in the lower cinnabar field, they can continue to live. In his *Xian Fo hezong yulu* 仙佛合宗語錄 (Recorded Sayings on the Common Lineage of Immortals and Buddhas), Wu quotes the August One of Heavenly Perfection (Tianzhen huangren 天真皇人) as saying: "If the *qi* does not disperse, the life-endowment will

not be lost. If the life-endowment is not lost, the body will not perish" (1.51a, 7428).

Wu's theory on cultivation allows for several scenarios of transformation. Although the highest stages of spirit immortality (*shenxian* 神仙) and celestial immortality (*tianxian* 天仙) are always assumed to be the objective and are presented as the pinnacle of cultivation, he suggests that some people might just be after human immortality (*renxian* 人仙) or terrestrial immortality (*dixian* 地仙), and they would thus be satisfied with obtaining corporeal immortality by preserving their stock of *qi* at the cinnabar field. For those, however, who want to become a spirit or celestial immortal, the retransformed yang *qi* has to be used as a resource to transform *shen* from yin into yang and thereby transpose the quality of immortality from the body to *shen*. The integrated cultivation of inner nature and life-endowment then means that inner nature or *shen* is first employed to cultivate life-endowment or corporeal immortality, and then this life-endowment (*qi*) is employed to cultivate inner nature or "spirit" immortality. This suggests that cultivators first secure their life-endowment by preventing the loss of yang *qi*, then use this to transform inner nature by creating a yang *shen*. As Wu describes it:

Shen originally belongs to yin and *jingqi* originally belongs to yang. Relying on this real yang *jingqi* [you can] create a yang *shen* that is pure yang. If you do not rely on *jingqi*, you cannot create a yang *shen* and it will remain yin. (4.60a, 7578)

How, then, is this pre-creation *qi* supposed to transform into post-creation *qi* ("breath")? Wu does not discuss the issue, but he mentions two relevant aspects. First, "breath" and "respiration," contrary to the other post-creation variants of *jing* and *shen*, play an important role in the cultivation process. Second, he describes this role:

Master Chongxu said: I once read the *Yuhuang xinyin jing* [Scripture of the Mind Seal, by the Jade Sovereign]: "The three superior medicines are *shen*, along with *qi* and *jing*."⁹ This is certainly true. There is, however, a secret to this that has to be discussed straightforwardly and I have an explana-

⁹ The passage appears in the *Gaoshang yuhuang xinyin jing* 高上玉皇心印經 (Scripture of the Mind Seal, by the Most High Jade Sovereign; DZ 13), 1a.

tion for it. In the case of *shen* and *jing*, only pre-creation is used and post-creation is avoided. In the case of *qi*, however, you must use both pre-creation and post-creation as a basis for the prolongation of life and the transcendence of the kalpic cycles. Thus Patriarch Lü [Dongbin] became a celestial immortal after having received the purport of the pre-creation *qi* and the post-creation *qi*. (*Tianxian zhengli zhilun*, 4.1a-2a, 7549)

Thus, post-creation *jing* (semen) and post-creation *shen* (thought) play no role in Wu's conception of cultivation. Still, cultivators must use the "breath" in order to be successful. Just like the notions of *shen* and *qi* are connected in an interdependent relationship, pre-creation *qi* and post-creation *qi* also require each other during cultivation. As Wu maintains, "the pre-creation must be gathered by means of the post-creation" and "it is because of the post-creation that the pre-creation has something to rely on" (*Tianxian zhengli zixu*, 4.4a, 7545). Thus, during the first stage of practice, not only must *shen* unite with *qi*, but this combination must also unite with the breath.

The notion of breath and its connected notion of ordinary "respiration through mouth and nose" (*koubi huxi* 口鼻呼吸) is closely related to the complex concept of "fire" and "fire phasing" (*huohou* 火後). This "fire" is sometimes explained as simply referring to *shen* or its actions, but there are many different referents for it, including breath. During the first stage, *jing* to be gathered and transformed back into *qi* is formless (*wuxing* 無形) and has no marks (*wuxiang* 無相), i.e., imperceptible to cultivators. They cannot become aware of it (*zhi* 知) and they cannot see it (*jian* 見). They thus rely on the perceptible fire of the breath to gather the formless *jingqi*: "The so-called gathering is a gathering without [real] gathering. Fire is used for the gathering. There are no visible forms or traces of the medicine; there is only awareness of the fire" (*Tianxian zhengli qianshuo*, 5.16a, 7604).

During the second stage, the accumulated *qi* in the cinnabar field will itself be like a "pearl of fire" (*huozhu* 火珠) and perceptible to cultivators, and they can gather it directly, but during this first stage the "fire," as an effect of the breath of normal respiration, functions like a marker for cultivators to focus *shen* on. The *qi* attaches itself to the breath (or "fire") and thus *shen* and the two *qi*—*qi* and breath—are all able to unite.

From *Qi* to *Jing* and from *Jing* to Semen

In Wu Shouyang's works, the term *jing* 精 always has one of two meanings. First, he defines pre-creation *jing* as basically identical to pre-creation *qi*, the only difference being that *qi* is *jing* when active (*dong* 動). Some statements thus imply that *jing* and *qi* are one and the same, that *jing* is within *qi*, or vice versa. The single character *jing* can also refer specifically to post-creation *jing*, i.e., the "*jing* of sexual intercourse" (*jiaogan zhi jing* 交感之精) and thus the fluid that leaves the body through sexual arousal and leads to "procreation."

In a male, *qi* first "transforms" into pre-creation *jing* (when activated), then into post-creation *jing* (semen). There are basically two scenarios discussed in the texts. The first concerns an ordinary person not involved in cultivation: his *qi* is occasionally activated, transformed into pre-creation and post-creation *jing*, then lost through "leakage." The second scenario involves a person engaged in cultivation: he supposedly senses this natural transformation process, adequately assesses the proper time to act, and then makes use of a window of opportunity to intervene in and invert this process.

Qi in the body is continuously subject to the same dynamics that play out in the cosmogonic process of the macrocosm. It is engaged in an endless cycle (*xunhuan* 循環) of activity and inactivity, and each time one of them reaches its ultimate (*ji* 極), the cycle continues with the opposite; moving from activity to inactivity back to activity, and so on. The same holds true for *shen*: its activity (and inactivity) connects to that of *qi*, so that the two influence each other, agitating into activity or calming into inactivity.

Look, *qi* and *shen* both have activity and inactivity, and it is precisely at the moment when inactivity reaches its peak that there is the trigger of activation. As soon as *qi* is activated, *shen* is also activated, and this trigger of activation allows one to cultivate immortality. Because of this, the trigger forms the junction of either giving birth to a human being or giving birth to an immortal or a Buddha; it is the critical pass to enter death or life. (*Tianxian zhengli qianshuo*, 5.8b-9b, 7600-7601)

Qi is engaged in this constant cycle; when active, it is synonymous with pre-creation *jing*. The decisive point is the moment when inactivity

reaches its ultimate and is about to change into activity. There is a “trigger of activity” (*dongji* 動機), a crucial moment of opportunity. Thus the “trigger of activity” is said to be the reason for the existence of the “divergent paths” (*fenlu* 分路)—the normal and the inverted—that lead to either reproduction or immortality.

A male is supposed to be fully developed around age 15, when his *jingqi* reaches a state of maximum abundance. Wu’s definition is clear-cut: before birth, one is an “embryo” (*tai* 胎), and between birth and the first emission of semen (the first transformation of *qi* into post-creation *jing*) one is a “virgin” (*tong* 童). What, then, happens at age 15?

When *qi* at times passes through the yang pass [wherever that may be], *shen* of sexual desire also arrives there. When *shen* and *qi* unite, they follow the ordinary course and form the basis for procreation. This is the time when *qi* transforms into *jing*. This is what is called the third change. (5.7a-b, 7600)

As Wu states elsewhere, *qi* always goes through the cycle of inactivity and activity, but before “puberty,” *shen* is not supposed to have “misleading perceptions” (*wangjue* 妄覺) and *qi* is not “directed” (*zai* 宰) by *shen* (5.9b, 7601). Only when the easily “distracted” mind of puberty (loosely interpreting *shen* here as mind) is affected by the activation of *qi*, or conversely, when *qi* is stirred by an aroused *shen* (either caused by spontaneous thoughts or by exterior distractions), will *shen* and *qi* unite and *shen* “direct” *qi* through the yang pass and out of the body. This yang pass seems to mark the point of no return: here *qi*, or pre-creation *jing*, transforms into semen (post-creation *jing*). To cultivators, it has now become useless. Even more, this transformation into semen represents the main reason for the dissipation of *qi*, the resultant deterioration of general health and, ultimately, the cause of death.

This sequence of transformation is essential for cultivators who must determine the exact moment of intervention. Indeterminate language is used to describe the distinctive conditions here. Contrary to the post-creation, in the Great Ultimate situation the cosmos is about to divide, but it has not divided yet. It seems like there is activity, but there is no (real?) activity yet. In the human being, *jing* (active *qi*) seems to be there, but is not (really?) there. There is activity but is has not “fully developed” (*cheng* 成) into activity. Thus, when *qi* goes through its (pre-creation) cycle of activity (and inactivity) it repeatedly arrives at the

point of maximum inactivity. Exactly here is the "trigger of activity," at which point there seems to be activity but this activity has not really started yet. As long as this initial activity is not allowed to develop into fully grown activity people are still in the formless conditions of the pre-creation. When the activated *qi* (pre-creation *jing*) is allowed to develop into clear activity and to reach its point of maximum activation it will transform into post-creation *jing* or semen.

The Preconditions of Retransformation

Jing is needed for cultivation at all times, despite the fact that the objective is to eliminate all *jing*, and cultivators ideally start from a situation of maximum potency. How, then, would an older person or someone of decreased potency regain his ability to produce *jing*? Also, how does *jing* function during sex or sexual practices? And what is the role and validity of the so-called arts of the bedchamber (*fangzhongshu* 房中術)?

For Wu Shouyang, cultivating immortality involves the inversion of the normal course of things. He says, "if there is no following [of the normal course], there can be no inversion." This means that a cultivator is supposed to have an abundant stock of *qi*, active and able to transform into *jing*. He describes several scenarios of how someone may lose *jingqi* and experience a fading of the reproduction mechanism. Besides impotence (*yang wei* 陽痿) as a naturally occurring phenomenon with old age, these are heavy indulgence in sexual activity (*fanglao* 房勞) and engagement in sexual practices (*caizhan* 採戰; lit. "the battle of gathering").

It is possible for an older person or someone of lesser potency to cultivate immortality, but he must start as soon as possible. Besides avoiding any further loss of *jing* by observing sexual abstinence, he should ingest herbal preparations to stimulate the activation of *jingqi*. Should he be impotent, however, he should apply active sexual methods resembling the bedchamber arts. Wu does not specify the content of these practices, but simply refers to them as "beating of the bamboo to call out the turtle" (*qiaozhu huangui* 敲竹喚龜) and "plucking of the zither to summon the phoenix" (*guqin zhaofeng* 鼓琴招鳳).

Both expressions, as Wu notes, come from the *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇 (Folios on Awakening to Perfection; DZ 263; no. 53; Wang 1990, 116).

Traditional commentaries to these lines contain both nonsexual (pure cultivation) and sexual (dual cultivation) interpretations, as generally the terms have sexual connotations: the turtle's head is an image of the glans penis, while the zither refers to the clitoris (see Wile 1992; West and Idema 1991). Wu belongs to the tradition of pure cultivation, but he clearly places these expressions in a sexual context. He seems to indicate the manual stimulation of the sexual organs, presumably leading to the activation of *qi*, without yet resulting in the transformation of this *qi* into semen.

What, then, is Wu's view on sexual practices? He emphasizes that the practices of "beating the bamboo" and "plucking the zither" are different from the bedchamber arts. While he advises the stimulation of the sex organs to regain potency, he yet accords absolutely no validity to sexual practices and is strictly against them. He rejects anything involving a female partner leading to sexual arousal and presumably ejaculation. Although his objection might also involve moral considerations, his main argument is technical. The yang pass represents a point of no return; the transformation of *jingqi* into semen is irreversible: sexual practices that lead to the generation of semen mean loss of *jingqi*.

The Retransformation of *Jing* into *Qi*

Ordinary human beings follow the natural course of things, the progressive path of procreation: they allow their *qi* to transform into *jing*, they copulate, produce offspring, squander their stock of *qi*, and die. Trapped as they are in the inevitability of *samsara*, they are born again and go through the same pattern over and over again. Cultivators of immortality, on the other hand, intervene in this natural course and reroute their destiny toward immortality. This begins, after some preparation, at the "trigger of activity" that presents itself during the dynamic cycle of *qi*. It is at the height of inactivity, right before the trigger of activity turns into *real* activity.

This starting point marks the beginning of the first stage, the "first pass," of actual internal alchemy: "Refining *jing* and transforming it into *qi*" (*lianjing huaqi*). Wu explains:

"Transforming *jing* into *qi*" is just a term used to indicate the sequence, which sets the time of the first pass. Because *jing* is transformed from *qi*,

when activated, do not allow *qi* to transform into *jing*; [instead] cause the real *qi* to become complete again. Because the original *qi* returns to being original *qi*, we speak of "transforming into *qi*." This original *qi* is precisely the formless original *jing* that has not followed its ordinary course and not transformed into something of form [post-creation *jing*]. Therefore we speak of "transforming *jing* into *qi*." (*Xian Fo hezhong yulu*, 3.1a-b, 7511)

The cultivation process here does not involve any transformation (*hua* 化) of *jing* into *qi*, and while he often refers to "supplementation" (*bu* 補), this seems not to be happening here. All these are just "forced names" (*qiangming* 強名):

The true great way of the Golden Elixir does not need to be sought outside. When *jing*, *qi*, and *shen* present in the body generate and nurture something outside, they should just be revolved within the body, united as one, and caused to go back to their roots and return to life-endowment. [*Daode jing* 16]. They spontaneously generate and nurture something inside and they are spontaneously complete and full. If one is forced to give this a name, one speaks of "supplementing" and "filling." In reality, there is no supplementation and no fullness. (3.8a, 7514)

The three treasures thus exist in the body. Cultivators should prevent these inner "substances" from spreading outside the body, or even outside their proper location in the body. As soon as they are active and disposed to move, they should stop them in their tracks and return them to their original location. The many details of this process and its connections with other facets of internal alchemy make up a large part of the discourse.

A further indispensable precondition to the first stage is the preparation of *shen*, here referred to as the self (*ji* 己), its preparation being "self-refinement" (*lianji* 煉己). The process involves behavioral modification and the observance of precepts, but most importantly the attainment of a state of no-mind (*wuxin* 無心) with regard to all sensory input, a stabilization of the mind and return to emptiness. *Shen* is both the target of cultivation as well as the key agent of transformation. The refinement prepares it for the moment of intervention in the cycle of activation of *qi*. When *shen* becomes aware of the right moment (*shizhi shenzhi* 時至神知)—the window of opportunity—it must act upon the *qi*. Proper refinement assures that the original *shen* acts and not the cognitive *shen*. It

should also assure that this original *shen* is pure enough to sense the activation of *qi*, avoids being affected by it and does not unite with it, which would lead to “following the natural course,” instead of gathering the *qi* to return it to its original location.

The exact timing of the transformation of *jing* and the gathering of *jingqi* by *shen* corresponds with the moment of activation: the ambiguous timeframe that occurs at the peak of inactivity, right before the actual activation of *qi*. From the perspective of the natural course, at this moment *qi* is about to transform into *jing*. For cultivators, it represents the start of action: the *zi* hour (*zishi* 子時). It thus forms part of a spatiotemporal scheme that organizes cultivation: it informs cultivators which actions to take when, and connects these actions in a complex system of correspondences.

The Intelligent *Shen*

The relationship between *qi* and *shen* is different from that between *qi* and *jing*. While *qi* first transforms into *jing*, then retransforms into *qi*, there is no transformation of *shen* into *qi*. The cultivation process is asymmetric: while all treasures originate from *qi*, cultivators do not return to *qi* but to *shen*. There are two distinctive transformation processes from *qi* to *shen*. First, during the embryogenesis, *shen* differentiates from *qi*, which simultaneously continues to exist in its original form in the urogenital system or the “kidneys” (*shen* 腎). After this differentiation, *shen* forms a distinctive “entity,” located in the heart and independent from the *qi* in the urogenital system but still connected with it and subject to the same dynamics of activation and deactivation.

Second, during the cultivation process, when the first pass has been navigated by successfully transforming all *jing* into *qi*, the cultivator aims to accomplish the second pass of the transformation of *qi* into *shen*. While during the first transformation the original *shen* differentiated from *qi* as yin *shen*, during the second transformation the yang *qi* accumulated at the cinnabar field is used as a resource to unite with it in order to transform it into a yang *shen*.

Shen here refers to the pre-creation *shen*, synonymous with original *shen* (*yuanshen* 元神). The terms inner nature and *shen* are supposed to refer to two different aspects of one and the same entity. When this enti-

ty is active, it is called *shen*; when inactive, true inner nature (*zhenxing* 真性). The terms are often interchangeable. While *shen* frames a discussion in the triadic scheme of the three treasures, referring to the same entity as inner nature, the latter frames the discussion in the dyadic scheme of inner nature and life-endowment, yin and yang.

Other ways of referring to *shen*, such as "true me" (*zhenwo* 真我), "self" (*ji* 己), or "one's own original face" (*ji zhi benlai mianmu* 己之本來面目), point out that cultivators' *shen* is not just an object to be used in the process of cultivation, but also the cultivators themselves as subjects. Finally, by using the familiar substance-function polarity (*ti* 體 and *yong* 用), Wu Shouyang uses the term true intention (*zhenyi* 真意) to specifically denote the *function* or application of inner nature or *shen* (the *substance*). Like *jing*—and like everything else—*shen* is ultimately an accumulation of *qi*. But, unlike *jing*, it is not just that but a distinctive substance, considered numinous (*ling* 靈).

The seventh question: Perfected Man Ziyang (Zhang Boduan) once said: "Original inner nature is not something else. It is also just *qi* that has coagulated and has become intelligent. Could you please go into detail about the meaning of this?"¹⁰

Master Wu answered: Just look at heaven and earth. They are also just *qi* that has coagulated and become intelligent; the small heaven and earth of humans is just like this. Perfected Man Zhang gave expression to what had never been expressed yet through the ages to let people really understand the meaning of inner nature and life-endowment.

Further: "How does this *qi* coagulate and become intelligent?"

[Master Wu] answered: When a male first combines from the two *qi* of his father and mother, it is just one *qi*. This *qi* gradually transforms into a tenuous form. In the middle of this is one particle of intelligent radiance as bright and dazzling as the rays of fireflies. Gradually, subtle activity turns into respiration. When respiration is fully developed and form and structure [of the body] are complete, there is a bright *shen* and one is born. When you look at it like this, isn't it [a matter of] *qi* [first] coagulating and then becoming intelligent?

¹⁰ This is a non-literal quotation from the *Yuqing jinsi qinghua biwen jinbao neilian danjue* 玉清金笥青華祕文金寶內鍊丹訣 (Alchemical Instructions on the Inner Refinement of the Golden Treasure, a Secret Text from the Golden Box of the Jade Clarity Transmitted by the Immortal of Green Florescence; DZ 240), 1.8b.

We can further say something about the mystery of *qi* coagulating and becoming intelligent with regard to the way of immortality. As concerns “*jing* transforming into *qi*,” *jing* is [first] a transformation of *qi*. Do not allow this *qi* to transform [again] into *jing*, but instead supplement it again to its fullness. When the way of immortality is complete by transforming *qi* into *shen*, there is simply one *shen* and no *qi* at all. If that is not [a case of] *qi* coagulating and becoming intelligent, what is it? This singular intelligence is called original *shen*, when you make use of its activity, original inner nature, when inactive. (*Xian Fo hezong yulu*, 3.35b-36a, 7528)

What, then, is this quality of *shen*? Daoist scholars commonly render *ling* as “numinous,” but some also use “efficacious.” In this context, where *shen* indicates a soul-like entity residing in people and possibly surviving them after death, *ling* is a quality of *shen* itself. This is distinctive and sublime, possibly best interpreted as “intelligence” or “consciousness.” It differentiates *shen* from a mere senseless accumulation of *qi*, makes it into the simultaneously subjective and objective Self, and designates it as the “master” (*zhuren* 主人) of both people and the cultivation process.

What happens to this intelligent *shen* in ordinary circumstances, after the completion of its development? First, it goes through a gradual process of deterioration, linked to the gradual depletion of the individual’s stock of *jingqi*. Wu sees two processes. On the one hand, the original stock of *shen* is gradually depleted (*hao* 耗), weakens (*ruo* 弱), and eventually is exhausted (*jin* 盡). On the other hand, its yin quality can increase, so that *shen* becomes unstable (*buding* 不定), scattered (*sanluan* 散亂), confused (*hun* 昏), and lethargic (*shui* 睡). Such an unstable and confused *shen* is especially vulnerable to exterior impressions (*waijing* 外景) and easily seduced by (sexual) desires. A deteriorated *shen* loses its clarity (*qing* 清) and brightness (*ming* 明) as well as its intelligence (*ling*). In the end, when all *jingqi* is depleted and the person dies, the deteriorated yin *shen*, as Wu describes it, goes through a process of transmigration and rebirth, plainly modeled after Buddhist examples.

Humans, Ghosts, and Immortals

The second transformation of *qi* into *shen* is the "middle pass" of the refinement of *qi* and transformation into *shen*. Yang *qi*, produced during the first stage and accumulated at the cinnabar field, now becomes a resource to enhance the yang nature of the yin *shen*, leading to the formation of a yang *shen*.

At the end of the first stage of cultivation, cultivators already have attained a certain degree of immortality. By transforming *jing* into *qi* they have become human immortals and as such can enjoy longevity as long as they preserve the replenished stock of *qi*. Next, they reach terrestrial immortality, having eradicated the entire mechanism of sexuality and thus lost the very ability to let *qi* transform into *jing*. Both kinds of immortal are still under bodily constraint; their *shen* has not yet transformed into a yang *shen* and they live only as long as their bodies stay intact.

Following this, cultivators ideally continue to the second stage and reach spirit (*shen*) immortality. As such they have transferred the property of immortality from body to *shen* and are ready for the highest level of celestial immortality. Such beings may take up positions in the celestial bureaucracy or return to emptiness and unite with Dao. At a certain point during the third stage, as the texts suggest, the very notion of *shen* becomes meaningless. Although beyond the ordinary "heaven and earth of yin and yang," these beings are yang *shen* (2.21b, 7475). Thus, from spirit immortality onwards, the property of immortality becomes a qualification of *shen* and thus of inner nature rather than life-endowment. Immortality is thus something that qualifies inner nature.

The foolish people of the world are unaware that an immortal is precisely a form of inner nature, just like a Buddha is just a form of inner nature. That is why the whole world talks about immortality, but no one knows how to learn it and no one achieves anything. (*Tianxian zhengli zixu*, 4.6a, 7546)

The tenth question: "The immortal gentleman, patriarch Zhongli [Quan], said that there are five ranks of immortals: celestial, spirit, terrestrial, human, and ghost. Ordinary people have certainly all heard of them. But I still do not understand why they are not ranked according to the differences in

their cultivation and verification [practice and proof]? I wish to inquire about it.”

[Master Wu] answered: Although immortals have five ranks, they fall into two categories. What are they? They involve the difference between yin *shen* and yang *shen*. Ghost immortals belong to the category of yin intelligences. The four [ranks] of the celestial, spirit, terrestrial, and human immortals belong to the category of yang *shen*. (*Xian Fo hezhong yulu*, 2.14b, 7471.)

This demonstrates the combination of two schemes of representing immortality, one based on the dyadic scheme of yin and yang, the other based on the model of five degrees of immortality first outlined in the *Zhong-Lü chuandao ji* 鍾呂傳道集 (Anthology of Zhongli Quan's Transmission of the Dao to Lü Dongbin).¹¹ The twofold classification involves ghosts (*gui* 鬼) and immortals, their distinction determined by the ontological quality of *shen*: a ghost is a pure (*chun* 純) yin *shen*; an immortal is a pure yang *shen*—purity being unadulterated completeness. This implies the notion of an ordinary human being containing a mixture of yin and yang. Zhongli Quan says:

Immortals are not all the same: those of pure yin without yang are ghosts; those of pure yang without yin are immortals; those of mixed yin and yang are humans. Only humans can become either ghosts or immortals. (*Zhong-Lü chuandao ji*, DZ 263, 14.2b)

The central position of humans in this spectrum of “intelligent beings,” with unique access to both the resources of a yin *shen* and yang *jingqi*, then, allows them to engineer their own ontological status and become either a yin ghost or a yang immortal. They occupy the second level, one up from yin ghosts, where the status of immortality is a property of the body, or perhaps of the whole person. In the higher registers, on the other hand, immortality is a property of *shen*. There is, thus, a continuum of intelligent beings, incorporating ghosts, humans and immortals. Still, all these ranks or levels of beings are “immortal,” participating in the same

¹¹ I do not consider here that the classification of immortals becomes much more complex in other parts of Wu's texts where he, among other things, attempts to reconcile virtually every term that denotes a state of attainment in Buddhist sources with a corresponding notion of immortality.

nature. Immortality, thus, does not only denote one specific class of being but becomes an attribute of *all* kinds of intelligent beings, a discrete variable that quantifies degree.

Shen as the concretization of the subjective self, therefore, is the "master" of the cultivation process effecting its own transformation as the object of cultivation during the second stage. To do so, it constantly interacts with *qi*, the resource of its transformation. The texts use various metaphors to illustrate this relationship: *shen* and *qi* are mercury and lead, dragon and tiger, earth and heaven. A key term in this context is "*shen* power" (*shentong* 神通), the ability of *shen* to go somewhere or through something, to be in communication with an object. It has both a general and a specific sense. Wu says:

When self-cultivators can steer *qi* with *shen* and let *shen* enter the Cavity of Qi (*qixue* 炁穴) without letting them separate, this is called inner *shen* power. When they can let *shen* enter great concentration, become pure yang and exit from concentration [let the yang *shen* leave the body during meditation] and experience endless transformations, this is called outer *shen* power. These are all abilities of *shen* and thus *shen* power is something that is displayed by a *shen* that steers the *qi*. (*Tianxian zhengli zixu*, 4.1b, 7543)

The basic idea of *shen* power is thus the ability of *shen* to be, or be transported to, where the cultivator wants it to be, to connect particularly with *qi* and control its movements. At times this ability seems a precondition for successful cultivation; at others, its result.

The specific sense of *shen* power is an adaptation of the Buddhist concept of *abhijñā*, listed in groups of three, five, six, or ten. Wu has six:

- 1) Power of celestial eyes (*tianyan tong* 天眼通)
- 2) Power of celestial ears (*tianer tong* 天耳通)
- 3) Power of past lives (*suming tong* 宿命通)
- 4) Power of the minds of others (*taxin tong* 他心通)
- 5) Power of the conditions of *shen* (*shenjing tong* 神境通)
- 6) Power of terminated outflow (*loujin tong* 漏盡通)

This last power, with a completely different meaning in its Buddhist context as "the supernatural insight into the ending of the stream of transmigration" (Soothill and Hodous 1937, 425), differentiates yin from yang *shen*. That is to say, while yin *shen* displays the first five powers, only

yang *shen* has acquired the sixth, the power of terminated outflow—that is, only *shen* that has the power to terminate outflow can become yang *shen* (*Tianxian zhengli zhilun*, 4.61b, 7579). For Wu, this “termination of outflow” signifies the end of all loss of *jing* through ejaculation and thus of the dissipation of yang *jingqi*. It is a result of the successful realization of the first stage of cultivation (refining *jing* into *qi*), while the other five are obtained at the end of the second stage (refining *qi* into *shen*).

Shen interacts with *qi* to effect its own self-transformation, but how is this *qi* supposed to transform into *shen*? Symbolically, this process is sometimes referred to as the “copulation of *qian* ☰ and *kun* ☷,” signifying the interaction between the pure yang (*qian*) of the *jingqi* and the pure yin (*kun*) of *shen*. This occurs in Wu’s scheme during the so-called macrocosmic orbit (*da zhoutian* 大周天), when the yang *qi* circulates through the body to “nourish” the embryo, a metaphor for *shen*, in the “chamber of *shen*” (*shenshi* 神室; i.e., the “heart”). Other metaphors and analogies refer to the same process. “Transformation” (*hua* 化) is occasionally specified as a process of “transformation by projection” (*dianhua* 點化; or simply “projection”). This latter term from operative alchemy suggests the transformation or change of a large quantity of one substance by the addition of a small quantity of another substance. Different from *jing* and *qi*, said to be originally one, *shen* and *qi* (originally two) are imagined to “unite” (*he* 合). This is a gradual process of replacing yin, part for part (*fen* 分), with yang. Simultaneously, the yang *qi* gradually becomes part of *shen* and ultimately disappears as a distinctive entity. Finally, there is no more *qi*; cultivators only have pure yang *shen*.

Why, finally, is it preferable to have a yang *shen* over a yin *shen*? For one, the ordinary yin *shen* deteriorates as part of the aging process. Arresting and reversing this, the practice of internal alchemy reinvigorates *shen* (and its mental operations) to the point of excellence. For another, while the yin *shen* is doomed to live in the netherworld as a ghost, invisible to ordinary human beings, the yang *shen* can travel freely in the world of light and the heavens as an immortal, able to manifest itself in human form and visible in this world.

The uncultivated *shen* of an ordinary person, after its peak at age fifteen, progressively depletes and becomes increasingly yin. This *shen* becomes unstable, scattered, confused, and lethargic, more and more

vulnerable to defilement and distracted by sexual desires. The cultivation reverses this. Even aged cultivators escape from this negative trajectory and supplement their *shen*—letting it become abundant (*wang* 旺)—until they recover its original completeness (*quan* 全). At the same time, *shen* becomes more stable (*ding* 定), clear, and bright. The thoroughly replenished and yangified *shen* is also more intelligent or numinous, acquires more dharma power (*fali* 法力), and eventually obtains the remaining five *shen* powers, i.e., extraordinary skills of perception.

The texts suggest, both implicitly and explicitly, that the yin *shen* leaves the body and continues its existence as a disembodied ghost. In the context of cultivation, this concerns mainly cultivators who make their *shen* leave the body prematurely, i.e., before it is fully yang, or those who practice the wrong procedures. Wu Shouyang identifies the latter predominantly as Chan Buddhists who only focus on cultivating inner nature (yin *shen*) and neglect to cultivate life-endowment (yang *jingqi*). Ideal cultivators practice their integrated cultivation and wait for the *shen* to be completely yang before letting it exit. The yang *shen* can live in the world of yang (yang *shi* 陽世), that is, the land of the living. It can also make itself manifest in bodily form.

A yang *shen* can manifest itself clearly; its transformations are unfathomable. It can see and know what ordinary people cannot; do what they cannot. It can cause to exist what does not exist and cause to not exist what exists. Everybody can see this. What is enabled by *shen* power to manifest itself in the world of the living is called a yang *shen*.

[A yin *shen*], unable to manifest itself in corporeal form in the world of the living, cannot do what humans cannot do. It cannot cause to exist what does not exist, nor cause to not exist what exists. This is because [the yin *shen*] has no *qi*, which is yang and strong. Only in that it can know and see things in advance is it superior to humans. Because it can only appear in the yin darkness and gloominess of the world it is called yin *shen*. It is the complete opposite of yang *shen* and therefore inferior to its *shen* power. (*Xian Fo hezong yulu*, 1.93b, 7449)

Ghosts, being yin *shen*, are thus a most lamentable kind of being. Although they have five of the six *shen* powers and are thus superior to mortals, they are doomed to live in the world of darkness, sometimes referred to as the world or space of yin (yin *shi/jian* 陰世/間), unable to

take on human form and thus never seen or acknowledged in the world of light. The yang *shen*, on the other hand, can manifest itself among human beings in the world as people; they have all six powers. The primary explanation Wu offers to account for this difference is that a yang *shen* is yang because it has merged with yang *qi*, and it is this yang quality that makes it strong.

Conclusion

The first and second stages of internal alchemy form a discrete and essential part of the cultivation process. They reveal the significance and practical accomplishment of the integrated cultivation of inner nature and life-endowment: "Immortals verify their inner nature by cultivating their life-endowment; therefore the first pass consists of cultivating life-endowment; and the middle pass of verifying inner nature" (*Tianxian zhengli zhilun*, 4.21a, 7559). However, the cultivation process continues to a third or even more stages.

The discourse on the third stage changes from the rather technical descriptions in the earlier levels. The rejection of conceptual language becomes an objective in itself. All verbalizations of the method of practice seem inadequate, as cultivators are supposed to refine themselves to the point that the concept of cultivation itself loses all meaning. Along with this deconstruction of meaning, some passages critically undermine the basic assumptions of the earlier stages. As Wu says about the significance of the disembodied yang *shen* and its crucial ability to manifest itself in human form:

The value of the yang *shen* is of course not limited to the possession of a "body." Its manifestation with its first exit is simply used as proof of the ability to have a body. *Shen* still needs to be returned to emptiness and nonbeing, which means that returning to not having a body after having a body is the utmost wonderful mystery of returning to emptiness and uniting with Dao. Why should one limit oneself to rejoice in the possession of a

body and in the fruits of the middle accomplishment, instead of [striving for] the highest achievement of awakening to the inner nature?¹²

Thus, the higher stages modify the significance of earlier levels to some degree, especially when cultivators learn that the creation of a "body outside the body" is not so important after all.

The story of immortality does not begin with the three treasures nor does it end with them. Nevertheless, a large part—probably the largest—revolves around this notion. For Wu Shouyang, their preeminence, reduced to the dyadic pair *shen* and *qi*, is clear: "The way of immortality is simple and easy; it only consists of *shen* and *qi*." He makes it obvious that for him, *jing*, *qi* and *shen* were actual substances in the body alluded to by various imaginative metaphors. His stated ambition was to speak straightforwardly about them and their dynamics, as reflected in the title of his foundational work. He also wanted to explain the various metaphors and analogies as part of his theoretical discourse. His work self-consciously departs from, and reacts to, an earlier trend of internal alchemy that favored the proliferation of metaphors; it presages the ever greater trend toward simplification and popularization that emerged during the Qing and Republican periods, culminating in the creation of the qigong paradigm today. It is thus not surprising that his writings were among the first internal alchemy classics to be republished and studied in the late 1980s and 90s.

The three treasures being the ultimate referents of the proliferation of metaphorical references and the assumed ontological basis of theory and practice in internal alchemy, they are essential to the study of modern Daoism, placing the theory of internal alchemy squarely among larger views on human nature and cosmology. The definitions various authors give for the three treasures, and the dynamics they assume to govern their behavior, are key to understanding their views on vitality, sexuality, respiration, perception, and other human functions. They are also key to understanding the specifics of each tradition's conception of theory and practice, and the differences and similarities between them.

¹² *Xian Fo hezhong yulu*, 2.47b, 7488. Wu refers here to the notion of the "body outside the body" (身外有身), which is understood to have form (形) and (hence) to be visible (相可見) to other people.

The three-step scheme of change found in *Daode jing* 42 gives formal structure to much of Wu's theory. Human life is similarly punctuated by three changes. Being conceived in an empty womb, the embryo starts out as a particle of *qi*, is delivered with *shen* and *qi*, and attains its peak when sexual maturity evolves with *jing*. Ordinary human life after the third change of adulthood is prone to decline; cultivators of immortality strove to halt this decline and reverse the process. This reversal again follows three moments of transformation: the three passes. First, cultivators practice sexual abstinence and prevent *qi* from transforming into *jing*. They thereby accomplish the first goal of cultivation, securing life-endowment and reaching (conditional) corporeal immortality. Next, having gained time to work on inner nature, they use the accumulated yang *qi* to transform their yin *shen* into yang *shen*. Instead of returning to a singularity of *qi*—as a symmetric inversion of the way of humanity would suggest—they return to *shen* and thus only retain their intelligent self. This immortal self acquires the extrasensory skills of the six *shen* powers; being physically as well as spiritually immortal makes them superior to both ghosts and humans.

Cultivators would then proceed to gradually train their *shen* to leave the body on short excursions until, after three years, it can effortlessly travel great distances and stay at faraway places for a prolonged time while the body awaits its return in a state of deep meditation. Finally, there are several scenarios of how this *shen* would emancipate itself from the corporeal abode to become a celestial officer, return to emptiness, or unite with Dao.

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Forum

on

Contemporary

Practice

Sage-Knowledge and Equality in the *Zhuangzi*

ESKE J. MØLLGAARD

The *Zhuangzi* has many dimensions, and it can be read in many ways. In the following I try to sound its philosophical depths. But here we immediately face an impasse. Philosophy is a Greek invention, and in its specificity foreign to the *Zhuangzi*. And yet it seems unreasonable to deny philosophical depth to the *Zhuangzi*. This impasse has been the source of interminable discussion. The present essay contributes to this discussion a modest proposal. If, as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari suggest, the death of the sage is the precondition for philosophy (1994: 3), then we may say that the *Zhuangzi* inaugurates philosophy in China. For, as we will see, in the *Zhuangzi* the idea of sage-knowledge (*shengzhi* 聖知) is abandoned and the search for equality and freedom begins aided only by friends and our common intelligence.

Critique of Sage-Knowledge

According to the Quqie 胠篋 chapter (ch. 10), rulers of states are nothing but great thieves (*dadao* 大盜). As we say in English, steal a little and they put you in jail, steal a lot and they make you king. The king, of course, needs to have some legitimacy in order to secure his position, and sage-knowledge is the ideology that provides this legitimacy and so guards (*shou* 守) the great thieves who rule the state. Sage-knowledge and the robbers who rule the state are two sides of the same coin. They arise together, and they fall together.

Confucians will object that surely we can separate Confucian sage-knowledge from corrupt state power. For while it is true that in the imperial period Confucianism served as ideological support for a corrupt and repressive state, there were many upright Confucians in history who were not corrupted by power but stood up for humaneness and righteousness. That is no doubt true. But this objection misses the point of the critique of sage-knowledge in the *Zhuangzi*. The point is that it is the very belief that there is an uncorrupted center in the state of corruption that makes people submit to the actually existing state as sure as the grass bends to the wind.

According to the Quqie chapter, rulers of states are great robbers—they do not just pick your pockets and snatch your purses, they take your houses and your land—but those who promote sage-knowledge are even bigger robbers. This is because sage-knowledge robs people of their natural intelligence. How does sage-knowledge rob people of their natural intelligence? It does so by objectifying virtue, or as the chapter says, by “establishing their virtues on the outside” (*waili qide* 外立其德; 10/25/19—references to chapter, page(s), and line(s) in *Zhuangzi* 2000). That is to say, virtue (*de* 德) is objectified in the social order, in noble men (*junzi* 君子) and rituals (*li* 禮). The common people are taught that virtue is not something they themselves possess but an outer (*wai* 外) standard to which they must submit. In order to conform to this outer standard the people must follow the directions of those who know the profound meaning of rituals and the behavior of the noble man. For the people themselves are not able to understand this (*Lunyu* 8.9; *Mengzi* 7A5). In this way the common people are robbed of their natural intelligence.

Having had their natural intelligence stolen away, the people are seen as being stupid and not fit to govern themselves. The people are treated like children or sheep that must be guided by the wise ruler and his Confucian scholar-officials. But it is not just Confucians who have this view of the people. It is widespread, also in modern times. For enlightened reformers, the common people have no principles but are like loose sand on which one cannot build the new society. For nationalists, the common people lack moral fiber and are unfit to become soldier-citizens and engage in nation building. For communists, the people are unaware of their class interests and must be educated and moved to ac-

tion by the Party. In capitalist societies, the people are seen as selfish consumers who must be regulated by technocrats who understand the economy. The critique of sage-knowledge in the *Zhuangzi* may have a specific target, namely the Confucians, but it has universal significance.

With the introduction of sage-knowledge, the world divides in two: those who know and those who do not know. Confucianism is a militant humanism where, to quote Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976), "one divides into two" (*yi fen wei er* 一分爲二). The Way divides in two (*dao er dao* 二): humanity (*ren* 仁) and non-humanity (*buren* 不仁) (*Mengzi* 4A2). Virtue (*de*) splits in two: the virtue of the noble man (*junzi zhide* 君子之德), which is like the wind, and the virtue of the common man (*xiaoren zhide* 小人之德), which is like the grass that bends to the wind (*Lunyu* 12.19). Intelligence splits in two: those who are first to know (*xianzhi* 先知) and those who only know later (*houzhi* 後知) after they have been awakened (*jue* 覺) by those who know (*Mengzi* 5B1). Just like the split between the humane and the non-humane robs entire groups of people—the barbarians, those who do not follow proper ritual, and so on—of their humanity, the split between the virtue of the noble and the virtue of the vulgar robs the common people of their virtue, and the split between those who know and those who do not know robs the common people of their natural intelligence.

After the rise of sage-knowledge, the social world is based on the division between those who know and those who do not know and on the objectification of virtue. Living in this social world we lose our natural abilities to see, hear, and understand, and we are dazzled, stressed out, and confused by the spectacle of objectified virtues (*Zhuangzi* 10, 25/18). Even worse, this complete disorder in the outer world is presented to us as the highest order, or as "sagely law" (*shengfa* 聖法). In order for us to come to our senses and regain our reason it is necessary to do away with this sagely law. The *Quqie* chapter says that once we have done away with the sagely law, "then we can begin to reason together with the people (*min shi ke yu lun yi* 民始可與論議)" (10/25/14). Once sage-knowledge is rejected then we discover that the common people can reason, and we begin to reason together with each other as equals. That certainly was great news two thousand years ago, and it is also good news today. This message is entirely opposed to Confucian politi-

cal ideology, for Confucius teaches us that “when the Way prevails in the world, then the common people do not express their opinions” (*tianxia you dao ze shuren buyi* 天下有道則庶人不議) (*Lunyu* 16.2). If you cannot voice your opinions then, of course, you cannot reason together with others.

Just as intelligence arises once sage-knowledge is abolished, integrity manifests once the outer objectification of virtue is rejected. The Qujie chapter encourages us to “cast aside humaneness and righteousness,” for then “the integrity of the world will begin to be mysteriously common (*tianxia zhi de shi xuantong yi* 天下之德始玄同矣) (10/25/17). That is to say, when we do away with the virtue (*de* 德) that is objectified in the outer social order, the virtue that divides us into noble and vulgar, then we return to our true, common integrity (*de* 德). (The *Zhuangzi* uses the word *de* in two opposed senses, which I translate “virtue” and “integrity” respectively). In integrity we become equals (*tong* 同). The *Zhuangzi* names it “common integrity” (*tongde* 同德) (9/23/24), for integrity does not divide us into noble and vulgar but is common to all from the beginning. This common integrity is dark and profound (*xuan* 玄), not because it is something extraordinary, it is entirely ordinary, and it is precisely because it is so ordinary that it is hard to see.

Sage-Knowledge versus Natural Intelligence

In the *Waiwu* 外物 chapter (ch. 26), there is a strange story of the misfortune of a sacred tortoise. A ruler dreams of a man with disheveled hair who tells him that he travelled rivers and deeps but has now been caught by a fisherman. When the ruler awakes he asks his advisors what the dream means. They tell him that he dreamt of a sacred tortoise that has been caught by a fisherman. The ruler summons the fisherman to court to present the tortoise. It is a large white tortoise. The ruler is advised to kill it and use it for prognostication by drilling small holes in the shell, applying heat, and then read the cracks in the shell. They kill the tortoise and drill seventy-two holes in its shell, and all the prognostications are correct (26/78/11-18).

The moral of the story is that knowledge can get one into trouble, and that even ultimate knowledge (*zhizhi* 至知) can not make you secure.

The sacred tortoise had superior knowledge that enabled it to prognosticate infallibly, but it could not escape being killed. The philosophical lesson added at the end of the story is threefold. First, we are told that if we "get rid of petty knowledge then great knowledge will be bright" (*qu xiaozhi er dazhi ming* 去小知而大知明) (26/78/19). That is to say, great knowledge (*dazhi* 大知) is not something to be attained, it naturally lighten up when small knowledge is set aside. Great knowledge is then our natural intelligence. In the context of the story petty knowledge (*xiaozhi* 小知) must be sage-knowledge, the unfailingly correct response that was imputed to the poor tortoise. Furthermore, the story also implies that petty knowledge (sage-knowledge) is in the service of the state, and that the one who is supposed to have it is caught in the net of the state and therefore in danger of coming to a bad end.

The second philosophical lesson appended to the story is related to the first. We are told that if you "get rid of good then you will be good of yourself" (*qu shan er zishan yi* 去善而自善矣). As mentioned in the discussion of the Quqie chapter, in the *Zhuangzi* there are two kinds of virtue: virtue that is objectified in the outer social order and our natural, inner integrity. To have integrity means being whole, and it is opposed to being fragmented by imposed outer virtue. Objectified virtue leads to fragmentation, because, as the Laozi says, when you name something "good," then the bad also pop up (*Laozi* 2). In *Zhuangzi*, integrity (*de*) is a state of mind that does not split up the world in good and bad. The good we should get rid of is then the good as an objectified virtue in the outer realm. When this outer good is rejected, then we will naturally be good, although in a sense of good that eludes the opposition between good and bad. "To be good of oneself" (*zishan* 自善) means that we have the integrity to be who we are, as opposed to be good according to some outer, social standard.

In a well-known story, Confucius tells Robber Zhi, a son of good family, that it is a shame that he roams around as a robber when he has many virtues, and, with a little help from Confucius, could become a sage-ruler. Robber Zhi answers: "Even if you had not praised me, would I not know by myself?" (29/87/17). Here we should give the phrase *zizhi* 自知 "know by oneself" its full weight and read it parallel to the phrase "good by oneself" (*zishan*) in the passage above. To know by oneself is

the opposite of knowing through praise (*yu* 譽), one of the ways objectified virtue is imposed on us. If Confucius praises you for your virtue, you may not, like Robber Zhi, have the strength and courage to stand firm on your own knowledge, and you may be swayed by the supposedly superior knowledge of Confucius. In that way Confucius is robbing you of your natural intelligence, and Robber Zhi rightly tells him: "There is no greater robbers than you. It beats me why the whole world does not call you Robber Confucius and yet call me Robber Zhi?" (29/87/30).

To hold on to the good one has in oneself, one's natural goodness, is very hard when a robber like Confucius roams the land. For with his imposed "it is so" (*ran* 然) Confucius, and other Masters, obscures the "it is so of itself" (*ziran* 自然) of being good and of knowing. The *Zhuangzi* urges us therefore to get rid of imposed goodness so our natural goodness will flower of itself, and to get rid of imposed knowledge, especially sage-knowledge, so great natural knowledge will shine forth by itself. This great natural knowledge is the clarity and intelligence (*ming* 明) *Zhuangzi* suggests we use instead of the "right" (*shi* 是) and "wrong" (*fei* 非) imposed by the philosophical schools (2/4/13-14), and the story of Robber Zhi, which is a magnificent example of gangster-Daoism, shows the courage it takes to use one's own intelligence and not rely on the knowledge that is objectified in the social order. In Kantian terms it exemplifies the courage to know by oneself, to use one's own intelligence, step out of tutelage, and attain autonomy.

To be sure, moral autonomy is experienced differently in the *Zhuangzi* than in Kant, where it implies knowledge of the moral law. In the Tian Zifang 田子方 chapter (ch. 21), Laozi tells Confucius how to let the mind wander in the origin of things, which is the ultimate beauty and joy. Confucius is impressed and says that this perfect integrity (*de*) must be the result of training the mind (*xiuxin* 修心). No, says Laozi, there is no training involved, it is perfectly natural. "The surging forth of water is spontaneous (*ziran*), an ability of non-deliberate action. The perfected person's integrity (*de*) is not cultivated (*xiu* 修) and nothing can escape it. It is like Heaven being high by itself (*zigao* 自高), the earth being substantial by itself (*zihou* 自厚), and the sun and moon being bright by themselves (*ziming* 自明). What does cultivation have to do with it?" (21/58/9-11). Heaven, earth, the sun and the moon, have integrity be-

cause they are as they are, and being who you are is not something you can cultivate. Other passages in the *Zhuangzi* also flat out deny that self-cultivation is necessary to reach perfection. In the Keyi 刻意 chapter (ch. 15), for instance, we are told to reject not only Confucian practices but also "Daoist" exercises and simply rest (*xiuxiu* 休休) in a state of natural tranquility and clarity that matches Heaven's integrity (15/41/1-25).

The descriptions of great perfection (*daquan* 大全) (21/58/11) and great knowledge (*dazhi*) in the *Zhuangzi* may remind us of descriptions of enlightenment in certain strands of Chan Buddhism, but in *Zhuangzi* great knowledge is not mystical knowledge. At the end of the story about the sacred tortoise in the Waiwu chapter, we learn that great knowledge is nothing but our basic intelligence, the intelligence that does not need to wait for instruction before it is activated. This is the third and last philosophical point appended to the story: "When children are born they have no Master Teacher (*shishi* 石師), and yet they are able to speak, for they are around those who can speak" (26/78/19-20). Children learn to speak not from a teacher's instruction but by exercising their own intelligence in the context in which they live. This intelligence, and not the knowledge of a teacher, or the petty knowledge of a sage, is great intelligence. It is called great, but it is perfectly ordinary, and this ordinary knowledge, our natural intelligence, is obscured by the extraordinary knowledge of sages.

Finally it is important to distinguish great knowledge (*dazhi*) in the *Zhuangzi* from what Mencius calls good knowledge (*liangzhi* 良知), the practical knowledge we naturally have without having to learn it, such as knowing to love parents, which is humanity (*ren* 仁), and to respect one's elders, which is righteousness (*yi* 義) (*Mengzi* 7A15). Zhuangzi exposes the spurious logic involved in reading objectified social virtue back into human nature: it is like claiming that "one can set out for Yue today and arrive yesterday" (2/4/10). In other words, the result of self-cultivation (objectified virtue) is taken as the starting point (the natural). For Zhuangzi, Mencius's internalization of Confucian virtues is much worse than the simple submission to ritual that Confucius advocates on occasion, for it entirely obscures the source of integrity. The point to emphasize here, however, is that Zhuangzi's natural knowledge is not knowledge of something (humanity, ritual, righteousness, and so on) but

the very potential to know. And the potential to know, intelligence, is always there equally in all.

Equality in the Inner Chapters

Equality and freedom are two of the main themes in the Inner Chapters (*neipian* 內篇). The second chapter of the *Zhuangzi* is one long discourse on treating things as equal (*qiwu* 齊物). But Zhuangzi does not just argue for equality, his discourse (*lun* 論) itself exhibits the very equality he is arguing for. In Zhuangzi's discourse there is no split between those who know and those who do not know. Those who know are never sure they really know anything, and those who speak are never sure they have really said anything at all. This indeed is our common human condition. In reading Zhuangzi we do not encounter sage-knowledge (*shengzhi*) but intelligence at work. Zhuangzi calls this intelligence *ming* 明. This intelligence is common to all, and in Zhuangzi intelligence, equality, and freedom go together.

Zhuangzi's philosophy of equality is opposed to the Confucian principle of socio-ethical inequality. Mencius tells a follower of the egalitarian teachings of Shennong 神農 that the social world by necessity is unequal. It is constituted by the divisions between ruler and ruled, noble and petty, intellectuals and manual laborers. There are those who toil in the fields and then there are the sages who are busy caring for the people (*yumin* 憂民). There are the distinctions codified in proper human relationships, and the distinction between Chinese and barbarians (and Mencius makes it clear that the egalitarian teachings from the state of Chu 楚 are barbarian). Mencius concludes: "The fact that things are not equal is the essence of things" (*fu wu zhi buqi, wu zhi qing ye* 夫物之不齊，物之情也) (3A4). It is this Confucian philosophy of ontological inequality that Zhuangzi is deconstructing with his discourse on the equality of things.

There are several stories in the Inner Chapters that explicitly deal with the notion of equality. In the Dechongfu 德充符 chapter (ch. 5), a punished criminal, who has had his foot cut off, and a high official are both studying with the same master. One day when they are about to leave the study hall the high official says to the mutilated: look I am a

high official and I cannot be seen leaving the hall together with you. A mutilated criminal is not equal to (*qi* 齊) a high official and you must step aside for me. The mutilated replies: when I am in the presence of our master I forget all about being mutilated. Inside the study hall we are equal and wander (*you* 遊) in the inner (*nei*), but you drag me outside (*wai*) into the world of socio-ethical inequality (5/13/23-14/5). In Zhuang-zi the inner world of equality is opposed to the outer social world of inequality. In this story the opposition is between inside the study hall, where inner equality rules, and outside the study hall where we have the world of social inequality.

In the Dazongshi 大宗師 chapter (ch. 6), we get a more formally philosophical description of this inner equality. Three characters ask each other: "Who can be with others in not being with others, do for others in not doing for others? Who can ascend to Heaven, wander in the mists, roam in the infinite, and forget themselves and others in [the experience] of life without end?" There is no answer to the question, just a silent inner experience of equality. "The three men looked at each other and smiled. There was no opposition in their hearts, and so they became friends" (6/18/9-11). But this inner experience of equality is not ineffable. It finds expression in a maxim that says: "do for each other in not doing for each other" (*xiangwei yu wuxiangwei* 相爲於无相爲).

This maxim may be called the imperative of equality, and it clearly contrasts with two well-known Confucian moral maxims. Confucius says: "What you yourself do not desire, do not do to others" (*ji suo bu yu, wu shi yu ren* 己所不欲勿施於人; 15.24). And Mencius says: "Do not do what one does not do, do not desire what one does not desire. That is all" (*wuwei qi suobuwei, wuyu qi suo buyu, ru ci eryi yi* 無爲其所不爲，無欲其所不欲，如此而已矣; 7A17). The Confucian maxims presuppose knowledge of the good. They presuppose that somebody knows what it is right to desire and what it is wrong to desire. The totality of that knowledge is sage-knowledge, which is the law of the socio-ethical order. The socio-ethical order is unequal and based on the split between those who know and those who do not know, and it operates on the principle of repayment (*bao* 報). Confucius says, "Repay injury with uprightness, repay virtue with virtue (*yi zhi bao yuan, yi de bao de* 以直報怨、以德報德; 14.34). The Confucian moral maxims refer to the outer realm of virtue

objectified in the social structure. This outer social order is based on exchange, and therefore virtue objectified in the outer world becomes something that can be exchanged.

Zhuangzi's imperative of equality does not presuppose knowledge of the good, knowledge of what one should and should not desire. It dispenses with sage-knowledge altogether. This moral imperative is not concerned with the outer social order, but only with an inner realm where there is "no opposition (towards the other) in one's heart" (*moni yuxin* 莫逆於心). It is not inscribed in the outer order of repayment (*bao*), and therefore the *Zhuangzi* says that in the state of true integrity (*de*) "one gives but does not seek repayment" (*yu er buqiu qi bao* 與而不求其報; 20/53/26). Zhuangzi's moral imperative only holds among friends, that is to say among equals, and friends do not expect repayment from each other.

Zhuangzi's moral imperative is close in spirit to Kant's moral imperative. Kant said: "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (Kant 1981: 30). Like Zhuangzi's moral imperative, Kant's categorical imperative does not presuppose knowledge of the good. The moral will is not predetermined by knowledge of what it is right and what it is wrong to desire. Like Zhuangzi, Kant is not concerned with the socio-ethical order based on repayment. According to Kant, an ethics based on repayment operates on the basis of hypothetical imperatives, and therefore it is not properly moral. Most importantly, like Zhuangzi, Kant rejects sage-knowledge and affirms our common ability to reason together. Kant's moral imperative does not tell us what to do. It simply tells us to act according to the moral law. It may seem to be completely empty, but in fact it gives us back our own ability to reason, which had been robbed from us by those who tell us to conform to an outer standard of virtue. It frees us from what Kant calls the state of heteronomy.

There is one more significant similarity between Zhuangzi's moral imperative and Kant's moral imperative: Both refer to an inner realm and in both it is hard to see how we get from the inner—in Kant the recognition of the moral law; in *Zhuangzi* the experience of equality and freedom—to the outer (the social order). As is well known, Hegel tries to realize Kant's moral law—the inner law of freedom and reason—in the

outer social order. In his myth of the master and the slave, the struggle for recognition between two self-conscious agents propels humanity into the social world. The one who wins the struggle becomes master, the one who loses becomes slave, and from the master-slave opposition develops the cultural and social order, which in due course becomes rational. In Hegel inequality is dialectically overcome as society takes proper, rational form.

The *Zhuangzi* explicitly denies that a dialectic of recognition can realize equality in the social world. The *Zhuangzi* often describes a state of perfect equality that existed before culture and state were developed. We should not take these descriptions literally as historical facts but as myths that show us that we must begin with equality, that equality is not something we construct or strive for but is the very foundation of our being-in-the-world. The social world of inequality is constructed, and it comes into being once we externalize virtue (*de*). Once that happens the world splits into those who know and those who do not know, those of noble virtue and those of base virtue, or, with Hegel, master and slave.

We now have a society based on the struggle for recognition. In the social world of culture (*wen* 文) and erudition (*bo* 博), says the *Zhuangzi*, "one mind recognized the knowledge of another mind" (*xin yu xin shi zhi* 心與心識知) (16/42/28; Mair 1994: 149). But here the great robbery begins. For those who are recognized as those who know "impoverish all under heaven with their knowledge" (*yizhi qiong tianxia* 以知窮天下) (16/43/7; Mair 1994: 150). That is to say, by being recognized as those who know, they rob the common people of their native intelligence. Therefore integrity (*de*) is lost in this dialectic of recognition. The *Zhuangzi* says: "Integrity is certainly not petty recognition. Petty recognition harms integrity" (*de gu bu xiaoshi, xiaoshi shang de* 德固不小識, 小識傷德) (16/43/8). Since recognition negates equality and integrity, the dialectic of recognition cannot realize equality in the social world. Are we then doomed to live in an unequal and corrupt society? To throw some light on this question, and show that it is a universal problematic, I will first briefly turn to another philosopher of radical equality who ends up in an impasse similar to what we find in *Zhuangzi*. Then I will outline Zhuangzi's solution to the problem.

To Do What We Are Not Able to Do

The French philosopher Jacques Rancière was a close student of Louis Althusser, one of the leading Marxist philosophers in France in the twentieth century. After the student-worker uprising in France in May 1968 Rancière broke with his teacher, for he realized that Althusser did not understand the idea of radical equality that was being acted out in the uprising. According to Althusser and other Marxist intellectuals, equality is a goal in the future to which the masses are led by the Party and its intellectuals. But Rancière realized that this idea only perpetuates the state of inequality, for it keeps in place the split between those who know and those who do not know.

Rancière formulates his own idea of radical equality in his book on the French schoolteacher Joseph Jacotot (1770-1840). Jacotot had fled France after the Restoration and in 1818 he found himself in Belgium teaching French literature at a university. He himself spoke no Flemish and his students spoke no French, so he was not able to teach in the usual way by explaining the subject to the students. Instead he gave the students a bilingual edition of a French book and asked them to apply their own intelligence to understand it. The students recited the book's opening lines, repeated its words over and over again, and to Jacotot's amazement, they were soon able not only to read French but to write beautiful essays in French about what they had read.

On the basis of this experience Jacotot developed a new pedagogical theory. Here I shall just summarize the main lesson Rancière draws from Jacotot's experience. There is, writes Rancière, a "pedagogical myth" that "divides the world into two. More precisely it divides intelligence into two. It says that there is an inferior intelligence and a superior one" (1991: 7). The inferior intelligence simply knows sensations and empirical verification. This is the intelligence of the common people. The superior intelligence knows things by reason and proceeds by method. This is the reason of the Masters. Since only they have reason and method, the Masters must explain the world to those of inferior intelligence. This procedure is taken for granted in our educational system. But, according to Rancière, the very split between superior and inferior intelligence makes us dull. It leads to "enforced stultification" (1991: 7). The French word *abrutir*, which is here translated "stultification," has the connotations "to

render stupid, to treat like a brute" (1991: 7, translator's note). Stultification, writes Rancière, "brings to a halt the movement of reason" (1991: 9), and in order to regain our reasoning powers we must return to the starting point, namely the fact that "all men have equal intelligence" (Rancière 1991: 18).

Rancière's argument for equality is similar to the argument for equality we find in the *Zhuangzi*. Both the *Zhuangzi* and Rancière argue that the split between those who know and those who do not know robs the common people of their intelligence, and they both agree that we must reject this split and from the beginning affirm that all people are of equal intelligence. How close Rancière and Zhuangzi are becomes clear when we consider Rancière's view of Socrates. For Rancière, Socrates is the Master who with his reason and method leads the other (in one case literally a slave) to knowledge. To be sure, Socrates professes that he knows nothing, but this not-knowing becomes part of the dialectical (dialogical) procedure that leads his interlocutor to true knowledge. Therefore, according to Rancière, the Socratic method is "a perfected form of stultification" (Rancière 1991: 29). Like Socrates Zhuangzi begins with not-knowing, but Zhuangzi does not overcome not-knowing through dialogue and dialectics. In *Zhuangzi* not-knowing does not become a method with which one can lead the ignorant to knowledge. Not-knowing is the negation of the split between the one who knows and the one who does not know, and it affirms our common intelligence: we are equally ignorant and therefore equally intelligent. Zhuangzi does not like Socrates develop a scientific method based on dialogue and dialectic, and this helps him avoid the stultification of reason Rancière so forcefully opposes.

Rancière and Zhuangzi both present us with a philosophy of radical equality and both end up with the same difficulty: radical equality is the fundamental experience in which we encounter the other, but it cannot be transferred into the social world. For Rancière, the social world does not and cannot embody equality. The social world is not based on reason; it is irrational, even pure madness. If we are lucky our social order is harmonious and we avoid disorder. But even a harmonious society is not based on equality but on the domination of some by others. That is the fundamental irrationality of the social order.

Nevertheless, according to Rancière, even in this irrational society it is still possible to experience “the miracle of reasonable moments arising” (1991: 96), and these miraculous moments give us reason to hope that equality might be realized in the social order. “[T]his might,” writes Rancière, “is the very thing that makes a society of humans possible” (1991: 73). Rancière stands in the Christian and Kantian tradition where the division between the two worlds—the worlds of equality and inequality, justice and injustice, reason and irrationality—can only be overcome by faith and hope.

Zhuangzi presents a different solution to the problem of how radical equality can be transferred into the social world. Zhuangzi does not like Rancière hope for a miracle. He asks us “to be able to do what we are not able to do” (*neng suobuneng* 能所不能) (22/63/24). To understand what Zhuangzi means by this, we must first understand what he means by the inner (*nei* 內) and what he means by nonaction (*wuwei* 無爲). For Zhuangzi the inner is not some hidden depth in the human heart and mind but the coming-into-being of the thing before it is objectified as a thing (*wu* 物). The inner is pure appearance. The inner is therefore already in the outer, and in a sense the inner is more outer than the outer (*wai*), for once the thing is objectified as a thing in the outer, then it negates its own coming-into-being, it negates its own appearance, it does not truly appear, and therefore it cannot be seen for what it is.

In Zhuangzi nonaction is the action that lets things appear without becoming things (*wu*). Nonaction simply brings about pure appearance. As an example of nonaction, Zhuangzi’s moral imperative “do for each other in not doing for each other” implies that we do for others without reducing them to a thing. Let me give an example. One person is American; the other is Chinese. The American cannot not be American; and the Chinese cannot not be Chinese. In that sense each of them has her nature (*xing* 性) and destiny (*ming* 命). You may call it an essence (*qing* 情), if you like. But that essence is constantly coming-into-being.

The one who cannot not be American may be a woman. A woman from Mississippi who loves Gong Bao chicken, has beautiful eyes, is easily agitated, has a tattoo on her left arm, has two kids, goes to Church on Sunday, likes to watch Korean melodramas, and so on and on—her American essence never ceases to appear. The one who cannot not be

Chinese may be a man. A young man from Kunming, who loves pizza, drives a Ford, writes poetry, has a nice smile, is somewhat forgetful, walks in size 42 shoes, thinks about getting married, likes to watch Korean melodramas, and so on and on—his Chinese essence never ceases to appear. But if their respective essences are objectified as cultural-psychological constructs such as "Chineseness" (*zhongguo xing* 中國性) and "Americanness" (*meiguo xing* 美國性), then their essences no longer appear. They become mere things among things, and then the struggle for recognition and supremacy begins. This is what Zhuangzi wants to avoid.

To avoid it we must let the essence appear without becoming a thing. But this is what we are not able to do. For everything we do or bring about (*wei* 爲) necessarily turns into a thing (*wu*). If we do (*wei*) for others like we want others to do for us, then we presuppose a notion of the good, an objective standard to which we must conform, and we have already fallen into the outer world of things (*wu*). Therefore Zhuangzi's moral imperative says "do for each other in not doing for each other." It asks us to do what we are not able to do. It asks us to do something without doing (*wei*). For when we are not doing (*wuwei*) anything everything gets done. In not doing for the other the other's essence and nature ceaselessly unfolds and appears without turning into a thing. Friendship and equality emerges as the bond between those who are able to let themselves and others appear in this way. We realize that equality is already there in the outer world; we just have to enact it through nonaction (*wuwei*). In this way, according to Zhuangzi, equality is realized in the social world.

Conclusion

The argument against sage-knowledge and for equality in the *Zhuangzi* is significant in several ways. First, sage-knowledge is taken for granted by most Chinese philosophers, and that is the reason Chinese philosophy is largely a discourse of Masters of wisdom as opposed to a dialogue between friends of wisdom. In rejecting sage-knowledge Zhuangzi moves closer to the Greek conception of philosophy. Second, the *Zhuangzi* shows that sage-knowledge, and Confucian sage-knowledge in particular, is ideological in the sense that it helps justify a particular social order.

Sage-knowledge is knowledge as power. Here the critique of sage-knowledge in the *Zhuangzi* has universal significance, and can be read as a critique of all forms of knowledge that justify a particular social order. But is there a kind of knowledge that is not tied to power and therefore inequality? The *Zhuangzi* says that if we get rid of sage-knowledge then our natural intelligence manifest and becomes the basis for equality. The problem is how to transfer this experience of quality to the social order that is based on inequality. The *Zhuangzi* may not solve this problem—philosophical problems are rarely solved—but it refuses to give up on the possibility for equality, and in doing so it takes up a genuinely philosophical position.

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Becoming One with the Dao

Meditation in *Daode jing* and Dōgen

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The *Daode jing* 道德經 (Classic of the Way and Its Power) is considered a product of the Warring States Period (403-221 BCE). Given the fact that it is often cited in late 4th and 3rd century BCE writings, including *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and *Hanfeizi* 韓非子, a 5th to 4th century BCE origin is reasonable (Ames and Hall 2003, 1-2; Henricks 1989, xi; Okudaira 1996, 20; Roth 1999, 186).

Attributed to the sage Laozi 老子, the *Daode jing* is an essential text of the Daoist canon. Even though the theoretical aspects of this work have been noted by a number of scholars (Ames and Hall 2003, Cleary 1994; Henricks 1989; Henricks 2000; Kohn and LaFargue 1998; Kohn 2001; Lynn 1999; Okudaira 1996; Pas 2006; Wing 1986), it also exhibits a more practice-oriented facet. Approached from the perspective of meditative practice, the *Daode jing* yields a rich store of understandings regarding meditation and the development of intuitive powers.

One essential teaching is Dao 道, the Way. The Way is a transcendent force that underlies all life and, in an “intentionless” (Dumoulin 1994, 168) and impersonal fashion, unfailingly coordinates the patterns of nature (Kohn 2001, 19-20; Williams 2007, 64). Essentially, it is emptiness. At its most basic, Chan Buddhism’s ideal of Buddha-nature (Skt.: *tathāgata*; Chin.: *foxing* 佛性; Jap.: *busshō*) is also absolute emptiness (*kong* 空) and impermanence (*wuchang* 無常) (Waddell and Abe 2002, 69, 72-75, 78, 81, 97-98). The goal of Daoist practice is realization of and unity with

the Way; in Chan (Zen) Buddhist training, the goal is to achieve enlightenment—to directly perceive and tap into the reality of Buddha-nature (Waddell and Abe 2002, 73)—a state that the Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng, calls “nonduality” and “no thought” (Dumoulin 1994, 134, 144).

The Japanese monk Dōgen Kigen 道元希玄 (1200-1253) journeyed to the Southern Song empire and received Chan training in the Caodong school 禪宗曹洞派 (Dumoulin 1994, 261, 374; Kodera 1980, 1, 51-56; Waddell and Abe 2002, ix-x). After he obtained his enlightenment experience and certification, he brought Caodong practice to Japan, where it became known as the Sōtō school of Zen. In his treatise, the *Fukanzazengi* 普勸坐禪儀 (Universal Promotion of the Principles of Seated Meditation; dat. 1227), he outlines six essential aspects of meditative practice: 1) sitting in a quiet room, 2) stopping all thinking, 3) turning the light inward, 4) maintaining an upright posture, 5) sustaining gentle, controlled breathing, and 6) preserving single-minded effort to become one with the Way. Although recorded a millennium and a half earlier than Dōgen’s tract, the *Daode jing* admirably addresses all six essential elements of his practice of seated meditation.

A Quiet Room: Essential for Meditation

First, Dōgen stipulates, “Seated meditation is best practiced in a quiet room.” *Daode jing* 26 indicates that stillness delivers mastery over agitation. Citing the *Yijing* (Book of Changes), Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249), the Three Kingdoms scholar from the state of Wei, comments: “The source of Heaven and Earth is the most quiescent nothingness. If earthly activity ceases, the original essence of Heaven and Earth can be seen” (Lou 1980, 32; Lynn 1999, 99). Suggesting the need for a quiet space in which to meditate, the *Daode jing* similarly states, “Stillness triumphs over hotness. Simplicity and tranquility will set straight the world” (ch. 45). Wang Bi points out that stillness is the point of origin: “By means of emptiness and stillness, one perceives the great return. All that exists begins in emptiness. Action begins in stillness. Even though All Things move and

act, in the end, they all return to emptiness and stillness" (Lynn 1999, 75).¹

Finally, the *Daode jing* offers this injunction: "Block the exchange. Close the gates. Dull the sharpness. Disperse the confusion . . . This is called Profound Identification" (*xuantong* 同玄; ch. 56). This above all seems to most clearly indicate the necessity of practicing in a space where quietness can promote the practice of seated meditation. Thomas Cleary further posits that this section denotes the "switching off or standing apart from conceptual consciousness" in order to "enter the realm of direct perception" (1994, 129). This passage from Chapter 56 seems to indicate that quietness of space and management of the senses can yield meditative progress and insight that is termed in the text as Profound Identification.

Ceasing Thought

Dōgen next directs that during meditation one should "cease all the movements of the conscious mind, the gauging of all thoughts and views"—in brief, to "firmly consider the state of no-thought." The *Daode jing* says about emptying the mind: "Achieve the highest emptiness, maintain profound tranquility. Every renewal returns to that source. Returning to the source is called tranquility" (ch. 16). Wang Bi identifies emptiness, or nothingness with the source of all: "Nothingness has neither form nor shadow . . . Its place is low and immovable. It maintains stillness and does not weaken . . . It is the greatest of all things" (Lynn 1999, 62; Wang Bi 2011, 2).

Hinting that the utility of stilled thoughts, or emptiness, has unlimited potential, the *Daode jing* suggests, "Great fullness seems empty, but its use is never exhausted" (ch. 45). R. L. Wing presciently explains, "When things are too full, they cannot be used effectively. Only when a cup is empty is it at its most useful; only when an accomplishment is open-ended does it continue to grow" (1986, 45). Hence, only when the mind is emptied is it most useful and approach an unlimited capacity.

¹ Original text found at http://www.360doc.com/content/09/0829/23/181184_5389141.shtml

In the *Daode jing*, Laozi's ideal person, one who lives in harmony with the Way, is called the Sage. He points out that the Sage influences the world by "emptying the mind and by realizing the abdomen" (ch. 3), the source of spirituality. Emptying the mind is straightforward, but realizing the abdomen appears to signify deep breathing and the development of *qi* 氣 (vital energy) by means of the lower elixir field (*xia dantian* 下丹田), located below and behind the navel and in the Daoist tradition an important source of life and energy (Noguchi 1994, 388-389).

The text continues by noting that the Sage "diminishes self-interest and strengthens the bones" (ch. 3), or perhaps, more figuratively, the fundamentals. In other words, in meditation, thoughts and desires are diminished, and "strengthening the bones" seems to indicate that a stable sitting posture, created by making use of the bone structure rather than the muscles that easily tire, is optimal. It adds to these images by revealing that "the Sage desires to not desire" (ch. 64). This also seems to be in harmony with emptying the mind in meditative practice. Wang Bi warns, "Even though preferences and desires may be small, they still serve to promote contention" (Lynn 1999, 171, Wang Bi 2011, 10).

In addition, Laozi employs a metaphor from nature that appears to relate to emptying the mind: "If you still muddy water, it steadily becomes clear . . . Those who maintain this Way do not desire to become full. Only by not being full can they become exhausted, and yet be revitalized" (ch. 15). When water is stilled, clarity gradually emerges as the turbid liquid sheds its impurities. This image is an apt one for the clarity that comes to a stilled mind. The second image in this passage, that of emptiness that allows for revitalization to take place, seems to resonate with: "Possessing and being full are not like stopping [or in other words, being satisfied]" (ch. 9) and "knowing when to stop will avoid danger" (ch. 32). The *Daode jing* clearly advocates stopping, stillness, emptiness, and the satisfaction that comes from turning within.

Laozi continues in this same vein, saying: "Simplicity and stillness will set straight the world" (ch. 45). Stillness and emptiness, as found in meditation, bring not only satisfaction, but also power from following the Way. "Those who follow the Way daily reduce [or simplify]. They reduce and reduce some more, until they arrive at nonaction . . . To lead

the world, you must always be without cares. And if you have cares, you are not equal to ruling the world" (ch. 48).

Here the text advocates ongoing reduction of matters from life and mind in order to gain unity with and power from the Way. Such persons, the text points out, are without cares. Nonaction in this text does not mean inaction or inertness; instead, it signifies a renunciation of petty personal strategies and agendas in favor of aligning one's efforts with the patterns of the Way (Kohn 2001:21-22). Such unity with the unfolding pattern of the universe accrues power for the individual by allowing larger forces beyond the self to bring matters to fruition. The *Daode jing* identifies this state of power from unity with the Way with the images of being without cares or desires, being a valley, being unhewn, or even occupying a low position. Persons in this state are equal to the challenges of being a successful leader and of positively influencing the world around them. Finally, Chapter 1 elucidates that persons who are "constantly without desire see the wonder of things." Regarding this passage, Wang Bi directs (Lynn 1999, 51; Wang Bi 2011, 1), "If you are always without desires and maintain emptiness, you can observe the wonder of things at their beginning." Here, Wang clarifies that individuals who control their desires and focus on emptiness, as in meditation, can receive insights that otherwise would elude them. There are many references to emptying the mind and relaxing desires in the *Daode jing*.

Directing the Light Inward

Dōgen further directs would-be meditators to turn the light inward. In *Fukanzazengi*, he instructs:

You must not pursue an intellectual understanding [of Buddhism] based on spoken or written words. Rather, you should learn the backwards step to turn the light inward. Through seated meditation, body and mind will naturally drop away of themselves and your original identity [face] will become apparent. If you would obtain suchness, with haste practice suchness.

In keeping with Dōgen's direction to turn the light inward, the *Daode jing* suggests that it is desirable to "harmonize the light" (ch. 4) and "use the light; return to understanding" (ch. 56). Cleary and Wing explain that

harmonizing the light refers to “enhanced, immediate awareness” that originates from the “intuitive mind” and allows the individual to be liberated from the constructs and obstacles of an overly active intellect (Cleary 1994, 128-29; Wing 1986, 52). The goal of meditation is to still the outwardly-focused rational mind in order to complement its insights with impressions that come from within. This appears to be the significance of harmonizing and using the light in order to obtain higher levels of consciousness through what the *Daode jing* calls Profound Identification. This same injunction seems to be echoed in “Can you understand the world without using the intellect?” (ch. 10).

Upright Posture

Fourth, Dōgen directs that upright posture must be maintained:

Sit with upright posture. Do not lean to the left or the right; do not lean forward or backwards. Keep your ears in line with your shoulders and your nose in line with your navel. Place the tip of your tongue on the roof of your mouth, lips and teeth are aligned and closed, and your eyes are always kept open. Breathe through the nose, gently and naturally. Having assumed the proper sitting position, exhale once, rock to the left and right, and then sit in a firm, unmoving position.

The *Daode jing*, too, appears to indicate that the Sage in meditation is able to diminish self-interest by emphasizing the bone structure while sitting; it reads, “Diminish self-interest; strengthen the bone [structure]” (ch. 3).

Dōgen’s advice to sit upright, steadily, and in a ramrod-straight position resonates well with this injunction to rely on the body’s bone structure to achieve a quiescent state of detached equilibrium. A state of calm can be affected by bringing the body into an orderly, stilled condition (see Roth 1999, 4). Rather than a position that makes use of the body’s muscles, an upright, seated position is most conducive to a state of focused physical and emotional relaxation as is achieved in productive meditative practice.

In the *Daode jing*, Laozi gives us an important clue about achieving unity with the Way, or emptiness. Rather than participating in grand rituals of state, the best method to realize the Way is “sitting [quietly]” (ch. 62). Sitting quietly is meditation. The *Daode jing* indicates in this pas-

sage that seated meditation is the most excellent means of becoming one with emptiness (see Despeux and Kohn 2003, 215-18). In his treatise *Fukanzazengi*, Dōgen further elaborates and then exhorts:

We should note the legacy of six years of seated meditation accomplished by the inherent sage, Lord Shakamuni [the historical Buddha]. And the famous account of how Master Bodhidharma, transmitter of the Buddha's mind seal [Zen practice] into China, sat in meditation for nine years at the Shaolin Temple can also be recalled. If it was so with the ancient sages, how can people of today not train similarly? If you would obtain suchness, with haste practice suchness.

Suchness and Buddha-nature are both Zen terms that match the Daoist concept of the Way, or emptiness. Dōgen hints that disciplined seated meditation confers a true enlightenment experience on earnest trainees.

As related to seated meditation, the *Daode jing* directs that the quality of heaviness grants access to the source, and stillness confers mastery upon persons who possess it. "Heaviness is the source of lightness. Stillness is the lord of agitation. Lightness in the extreme loses the source; agitation taken to the extreme loses mastery" (ch. 26). This passage hints at the ideal settled and steady posture for meditation enjoined by Dōgen. In this same chapter of the *Daode jing*, extreme lightness is equated with losing contact with the source while extreme agitation is identified with failure to achieve mastery. In light of these insights, the stableness and low center of gravity characteristic of seated meditation, or heaviness (which is the antithesis of lightness) as termed here, are uniquely physiologically suited to promote unity with the source, or primordial emptiness. In like manner, stillness as evidenced in seated meditation (the opposite of agitation) is the means by which the text directs that complete mastery, or understanding and skillfulness, can be obtained. Dōgen says,

O noble practitioners of seated meditation, I exhort you to not take pleasure in false Buddhism nor be suspicious of the true Buddhism called seated meditation. Devote yourselves to seated meditation that clearly shows the Way, directly experience the true world beyond all thought, and venerate the thoroughly enlightened ones. Furthermore, continue the way of seated meditation, transmitted by generations of the Patriarchs, that perfectly suits

enlightenment. By single-minded devotion to seated meditation, your treasure house will open on its own, and you will use its contents as you desire.

Here he speaks of the process of attaining Profound Identification, or in other words, reaching enlightenment, which both indicate being united with the emptiness that unifies the entire universe. He likens this transcendent goal of seated meditation to obtaining access to an unlimited treasure store that can be used at will.

In the *Daode jing*, the end result of spiritual training—in this instance, seated meditation—is not likened to a treasure house; rather, it is called the state of Deep Roots and Firm Foundation (ch. 59). The text here relates the process of spiritual attainment in the manner of a flow chart. The process begins with making do with less. In meditation, this would entail less agitation and fewer external stimuli. This is the means by which the individual can yield early to the Way, or become one with emptiness. Union with the Way confers significant amounts of power. With power that comes with being in harmony with the Way, the individual will always prevail and know no limits. Being free of limits is identified in the text as possessing both the organization and the organization's mother. This state of knowing no limits and being in control of the organization is what is known as Deep Roots and Firm Foundation—a state that confers the benefits of long life and enduring perspective.

Although the metaphors used to describe enlightenment—or union with the Way—differ, Dōgen's treasure house and Laozi's Deep Roots and Firm Foundation both describe a condition in which the realized individual can enjoy a state of unlimited scope of perspective and unbounded capability to influence both the microcosm and the macrocosm.

Breath Control

Dōgen further stipulates that gentle, controlled breathing is crucial to seated meditation, and in *Fukanzazengi* he recommends, "Breathe through the nose, gently and naturally." The *Daode jing* advocates "emptying the mind and realizing, or filling, the abdomen" (ch. 3). Emptying the mind involves quieting agitation of thought; this agitation in Zen parlance is generally known as the "mind monkey" (*shinen* 心猿). Realiz-

ing or filling the abdomen appears to signify deep breathing and the development of qi energy by means of the lower *dantian*.

The *Daode jing* asks, "Can you manage your body and embrace the One without interruption? Can you focus the breath (*qi*) and reach the highest flexibility as does an infant?" (ch. 10). This passage has direct application to the practice of seated meditation (Roth 1999, 149-150). Here, the text indicates a need for consistent management of the body, including upright posture and deliberate action, in order to encourage mindfulness or uninterrupted unity with the Way. Dōgen exhorts, "When ending a session of seated meditation, unhurriedly move the body, rising quietly and gently. Never move the body in a rough manner."

The *Daode jing* further indicates that, by focusing on the breath, a state of maximal flexibility can be realized (ch. 10). Controlled breathing appears to be the means by which pliancy and flexibility can be achieved. Several passages point out that flexibility triumphs over rigidity (ch. 36), is the source of true strength (ch. 52), overcomes strong obstacles (ch. 78), and is the origin of upward progress (ch. 76). Furthermore, flexibility seems to be a primary means by which a state of being without limits can be achieved (ch. 59). At any rate, controlled breathing in meditation appears to be the method by which extreme flexibility, both physiological and psychological, can be achieved.

The *Daode jing* says, "Cultivate the breath, [and] not the eye. Hence, by forsaking that [sense commotion] you receive this [Profound Identification]" (ch. 12). Here the text advocates abandonment of sense stimuli in favor of cultivation of the breath. We have heretofore seen ample metaphysical considerations in the *Daode jing* for cultivation of the breath; it makes the point that hedonistic gratification of the senses leads to harm and derangement. "[Overexposure to] the five colors will make you blind. [Overexposure to] the five tones will make you deaf. [Overexposure to] the five flavors will make the taste buds fail. Racing and hunting will make the heart insane" (ch. 12).

Dōgen cautions practitioners of seated meditation to guard against sense entanglement: "Abandon all worldly entanglements, discard all routine matters, do not think good nor bad, pay no heed to is or is not. Stop the movement of the conscious mind and the evaluation of ideas; do not entertain thoughts of achieving enlightenment."

By focusing on correct meditative practice and breath cultivation in particular, Dōgen promises:

What is called seated meditation is not stopping of thought [or, learning meditation]; rather, it is the Dharma gate of serene bliss. It is the most advanced of all Buddhist training; seated meditation is fully realized enlightenment. By realizing enlightenment through seated meditation, you become free by being released from consciousness of self.

Both Dōgen and the *Daode jing* endorse renouncement of sensory excess in order to attain Profound Identification by means of breath control.

Unity with the Way yields Profound Identification, a sure sense of intuition that is more reliable than even the information gathered by the five senses. The *Daode jing* provides the following insight regarding Profound Identification: “The Sage knows without going, describes without seeing, and succeeds without intending” (ch. 47). Here the Sage is said to describe or, in other words, to understand without having to see the objects or individuals involved. Profound Identification via cultivation of the breath is surer, more accurate knowledge than eyesight or other sense stimuli (ch. 12). Hence, by focusing on breath control, the Sage may understand without seeing and even know without having to go to other places. Dōgen further elucidates:

All the Buddhas and Patriarchs have directly passed on the same method of enlightenment and have exclusively done seated meditation. Even though there are several varieties of Buddhist training, unity with the Way through single-minded practice of seated meditation is most important. What need is there to abandon your own home and wander to foreign lands? If you entertain even a little rational consciousness [regardless of where you are], immediately you enter a completely different realm.

In effect, Dōgen is saying that Profound Identification, or enlightenment, comes from seated meditation and through breath control. There is no need to go anywhere else, so sit where you are, cultivate your breath, and tap into the great source of all knowledge that is within.

The *Daode jing* states: “The space between Heaven and Earth is similar to a tube blown to fan the fire. It is hollow and is never used up [is limitless]. It moves and more and more emerges. Many words become quite exhausted. It is better to maintain the [spiritual] center” (ch. 5). It

uses the image of an empty tube to express the insight that the quality of hollow emptiness allows this tool's use to be truly limitless and its utility to be unbounded. The Northern Song master Chen Jingyuan 陳景元 (1025-1094) (Noguchi 1994, 414) links this image of the tube's emptiness to the practice of the Sage (Cleary 1994, 111), explaining, "The Sage's heart is empty, boundless, and profoundly at peace, dealing with the world smoothly; like wind passing through a tube it is inspired . . . like a note within a flute it sounds."² This balanced, placid state of the mind comes from cultivating the breath; in fact, it is focusing on the breath that leads to a state of emptiness that permits the mind to be completely open, and hence, in a state of limitless use.

In the second part of this passage from the *Daode jing*, Laozi gives the insight that, unlike the hollow tube that is limitless in its usefulness and production, great amounts of speaking quickly reach a point of exhaustion and barrenness. Then the pearl of wisdom is proffered that it is better to guard the spiritual center. In other words, eschewing the voice, one must remain silent, focus on the breath, and continue to sit in meditation, thereby rendering the mind open, agile, and efficiently transcendent. Emperor Song Huizong 宋徽宗 (1082-1135) adds, "Be cautious about your inner state, block out external stimuli, withdraw your gaze and reverse your hearing, return to see the heart of Heaven and Earth. This is called Maintaining the Center."³ Sitting in meditation, managing the breath, and emptying the mind of thought leads to extreme flexibility that confers immeasurable capability. This is what is meant by the phrase "keeping the spiritual center".

The *Daode jing* reveals, "The mind applying breath is called vigorous" (ch. 55). This last insight means that when the mind is focused on nurturing the breath, the mind is at its most powerful.

For successful seated meditation, both the *Daode jing* and Dōgen recommend an upright posture; this physical manipulation of the body appears to effect a reduction of self-interest. Stillness of mind and body, in turn, seem to be the portal through which the practitioner of seated

² http://www.ctcwri.idv.tw/ctcwri-mts/CMT03_洞神/CMT0303_玉訣類/CH0303XX/CH030345_道德真經藏室纂微篇/CH030345_道德真經藏室纂微篇.htm

³ <http://yyuanyi.blog.163.com/blog/static/10900647201231110524637/>. Cleary 1994, 111; Noguchi 1994, 92.

meditation begins to achieve heightened levels of understanding and influence. Eventually, our sources indicate that, with experience, the practitioner can achieve the enlightenment that Dōgen equates with the metaphor of the treasure house; in the *Daode jing*, the state of transcendent insight and power is called Deep Roots and Firm Foundation. Although the *Daode jing* appears to be more detailed, in both instances it seems that, through proper posture and stillness, the individual experiences Profound Identification that allows him to enjoy unlimited insight and influence. Finally, the text suggests that management of the body and correct meditation posture are means by which constant negotiation of the Way and its attendant power can be realized.

Single-minded Effort

Finally, Dōgen indicates that unmitigated practice alone leads to unity with the Way, and in *Fukanzazengi* he stipulates: “Wholehearted devotion to upright seated meditation can lead anyone to become one with the Way.” He continues by explaining that serious training can benefit anyone at all: “Seated meditation is a great phenomenon beyond the grasp of the senses. It is a matter beyond knowledge. As a result, things like a person’s intellectual abilities, inherent genius, or learning are completely irrelevant.”

Dōgen makes clear that the benefits of earnest seated meditation are open to all. The *Daode jing* explains why: “He who devotes himself to the Way is one with the Way, and the Way also gladly receives him” (ch. 23). Here, the text offers the insight that absolute commitment to aligning oneself with emptiness (the Way) confers the benefit of unity with the Way. It further suggests that the reason why is that the Way gladly receives such persons. But we cannot help but wonder if these activities, such as meditating and focusing one’s thought and action on an environment conducive to apprehending the Way, cumulatively craft the individual in a real and subtle manner, culminating in experiences that yield Profound Identification and unity with pervading emptiness. One case in point are followers of the Shangqing school of Daoism who pursued meditation, visualization, and breath cultivation with the goal of experiencing unity with emptiness—expressly sought after as a means of achieving immor-

tality (Kohn 2001, 87, 91-92; Robinet 2008, 862, 865). The *Daode jing* enumerates the qualities of enlightened persons:

Those in harmony with the Way from ancient times are in harmony with the Way because of [their] clarity, because of [their] serenity, because of [their] excellence, because of [their] fullness, because of [their] productivity, [and] because of [their] integrity. These outcomes originate in unity with the Way. (ch. 39)

This passage indicates that the Sage demonstrates integrity. This quality summarizes the most apt characteristics of the Way, which in turn informs decisions made by the Sage. As mentioned before, the Way is emptiness and its effect is tranquility. This emptiness is equated in the *Daode jing* with the state of occupying a low position—with the valley being the favored icon—and the quality of being unhewn, as an unshaped tree or log is unhewn. The Sage maintains his close identification with emptiness by commitment to seated meditation.

As considered earlier, the text also likens the Sage to the valley concept: "Anciently, those skillful in the Way [were] oh! so free from worries and petty matters, as though the epitome of emptiness [the valley]" (ch. 15). Elsewhere the Sage is said to wield "the greatest power [that] is [empty] like a valley" (ch. 41). Furthermore, the text evokes the empty bellows tube, equating this image with few words in the Sage. It then offers the injunction that "it is better to maintain the [spiritual] center" (ch. 5). This center is emptiness. The would-be Sage should make do with less and yield early to the Way (ch. 59), or in other words, dispense with possessions and desires in order to achieve unity with nothingness. "Nameless, Essential Simplicity is also without [self-interested] desire. Without [self-interested] desire, there is serenity. The world will then become calm on its own" (ch. 37).

Being without desires places the Sage in a low position—that is, in a position of power. Beyond the realm of likes and dislikes, the Sage is free to experience a pervading sense of peace. Since the Sage abides in tranquility, that quality becomes the lens through which he sees the world and also the means by which he interacts with it. As a result, his own quietude extends outward, positively influencing his environment. For the Sage, the world becomes calm because he approaches it from a posi-

tion of stillness and emptiness. This quiet openness is one of the Sage's great treasures; it allows him to be unlimited.

Conclusion

All six essential aspects of meditative practice outlined by Dōgen in his tract are amply addressed in *Daode jing* passages. In particular, the essential aspects of seated meditation include: stilling the mind, sitting quietly, and focusing the breath. As has been established in this study, several outcomes result from stilling the mind and body and focusing on the breath in seated meditation.

The *Daode jing* hints that stilling the mind is similar to stilling turbid water. With time, the impurities settle and the water becomes clear. The result of effectively stilling the mind is unity with emptiness and an accompanying contentment that, in the Buddhist tradition, is identified with Buddha nature and the enlightenment experience. In Daoism, emptiness is equated with the Way, and the goal of spiritual training in this tradition is to become one with the Way. Regardless of which viewpoint we consider, apprehending emptiness is a means of conquering the self, experiencing tranquility, and harmonizing with the emptiness that connects the entire universe—something the *Daode jing* identifies as Profound Identification. A person who realizes this state can abide in a profound openness of mind and a primal wholeness, accessing limitless power that originates from harmony with the Way. In other words, the Sage lives in synchronization with the larger patterns of the universe, to cycles that lie well beyond the limited confines of the self.

The *Daode jing* implies that no practice surpasses that of sitting quietly (i.e. seated meditation), advancing in the Way. Sitting quietly with a low center of gravity is the means by which agitation of all varieties can be overcome. Sufficient freedom from confusion and distraction allows the individual to realize openness and unity with emptiness or, in Daoist parlance, the Way. This pervading peace of mind allows the adept to transcend the likes and dislikes that torment most human beings with desire, discontent, and passion. With the mind empty and the body lowly centered, a fullness of vacuity is realized that confers on the practitioner infinite potential, granting power over other beings and often expressing itself in others' unfailing support (see Roth 1999, 140-141).

The *Daode jing* links nurture of the breath with the highest degrees of flexibility. Breath focus is linked with extreme pliability that, in turn, is linked in the text with other attainments. Flexibility is identified as the source of true strength, a sure source of intuition, hailed elsewhere in the text as the spiritual center. Ultimately, the flexibility and openness that come with cultivation of the breath confer on the practitioner Profound Identification, or unity with the Way—that is, emptiness. Such an attainment confers on the individual unity with the wider world, a spiritually low position, and access to unlimited power. Furthermore, the pliability that comes through breath control places the adept in harmony with the substantive growth and development of the natural world.

At present, it cannot be conclusively established that the *Daode jing* text was used as a manual to guide the practice of meditation. But at the very least, it does appear that many passages and specific terms of this text are fertile ground from which sprung concrete meditative terminology and practice, one example being the Shangqing school. In particular, the strong emphasis in the *Daode jing* on blocking the onslaught of external stimuli and focusing on stopping and stillness—leading to Profound Identification—seems to be indicative of the harmony, equilibrium, and inner knowing that arise from meditation. When compared with Dōgen's six essential aspects of meditation, the *Daode jing's* encouragement to maintain the highest emptiness and greatest flexibility as a means of experiencing access to unlimited power further establishes that its teaching is very congenial to, if not a primer for, meditative practice.

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Spirit and Life in Balance

Zhao Bichen's Lasting Influence on Qigong and the Marial Arts¹

KENNETH S. COHEN

The transformation of Daoist longevity techniques (*yangsheng* 養生) into modern qigong is generally attributed to the influence of three figures: Liu Guizhen 劉貴珍 (1920-1983), Hu Yaozhen 胡耀貞 (1897-1973), and Jiang Weiqiao 蔣維喬 (aka Yinshizi 因是子, 1873-1958).² There was, however, another major influence on the development of qigong—especially its integration of the methods and terminology of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), and that is the esteemed Daoist master Zhao Bichen 趙避塵 (1860-1942), also known as Qianfeng laoren 千峯老人, The Old Man of A Thousand Peaks. His *Xingming fajue mingzhi* 性命法訣明指 (Clear Guide to Cultivating Spiritual Nature and Life) was published in Beijing in 1933. Translated into English by Charles Luk 陸寬昱 (1898-1978), it was published in 1970 as *Taoist Yoga: Alchemy & Immortality*. It was thus one of the first works to offer advanced internal alchemy instruction in English. But Zhao's teachings also formed the spiritual core of various Chinese martial arts, and many teachers of both martial and contemplative arts have been influenced by his lineage, myself included.

¹ A portion of this essay originally appeared in Cohen 2012.

² Details of this history may be found in Palmer 2007; Liu 2010. For Hu Yaozhen, see the exceptional outline by Yaaron Seidman at <http://hunyuanyuan.institute.com/huandhunyuanyuan.pdf>. On Jiang, see Kohn 2002.

Liu Guizhen was a leading doctor and scholar of Chinese medicine, recognized as the first person to promote the Daoist qigong method of Neiyang gong 內養功 (inner nourishing qigong), best known for its meditative methods of coordinating specific breathing patterns with healing affirmations. In 1948, suffering from tuberculosis, malnutrition, and other health conditions, he learned this technique from his uncle, the fifth generation master of the system. After practicing for a hundred days, he recovered from his various conditions. In the early 1950s, he collected and published research on the effect of Neiyang gong on digestive disorders. In 1954, he established the Tangshan Qigong Sanitarium 唐山氣功療養院. One year later, it won a government award, and his methods were introduced in hospitals across China.

Hu Yaozhen was a Daoist, qigong teacher, doctor of Chinese medicine, and master of the classic Neijia quan 內家拳 (internal martial arts; i.e., Taiji quan, Bagua zhang, Xingyi quan). He was friends with Liu Guizhen and, in the early 1950s, they first applied *yangsheng* in hospitals. However, because the Communist Party suspected Daoism of being “counter-revolutionary,” they realized that the only way to preserve these methods was by renaming and divesting them, at least in public discourse, of their Daoist roots. Thus, they popularized the little known term *qigong* and coined the phrase *yigong*, “medical qigong.” In 1956, Hu established the first qigong hospital in Beijing, and three years later demonstrated his skills at the first Chinese national qigong symposium. His books *Baojian qigong* (1962) and *Wuqinxi* (1963) are qigong classics and include methods that became part of the qigong fitness curriculum approved by the PRC Sports Administration in 2001. Hu’s most prized art, Hunyuan gong 混元功 (primordial qigong) was transmitted only to his senior disciple, the famed Chen-Style Taiji quan grandmaster Feng Zhiqiang 馮志強 (1928-2012). Feng began to share this art widely in the late 1990s, and this legacy continues today among many thousands of Hunyuan students in China and abroad (Feng 1998).

The third generally recognized “father of modern qigong” is Jiang Weiqiao, a Buddhist author, editor, and college professor. In 1914 he published the most popular Chinese work on meditation of all time, *Yinshizi jingzuo fa* 因是子靜坐法 (Quiet Sitting with Master Yinshi; Kohn 2002), which describes the practice and experience of *Xiaozhou tian* 小周

天 (Small Heavenly Orbit Meditation, aka Microcosmic Orbit). He was one of the first to try to explain meditation in physiologic and scientific terms. On 1 July 1957, Jiang became the senior advisor to the Shanghai Qigong Sanitarium 上海氣功療養院; soon after, he gave a qigong workshop at the influential qigong gathering at Beidaihe Sanatorium 北戴河氣功療養院.³

I contend that Zhao Bichen is the fourth "patriarch" of qigong. The sixteen chapters in his *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, referring to sixteen stages of Daoist meditation and alchemy, may also be considered a guide to Daoist qigong (*daogong* 道功). His work includes commonly taught methods such as swallowing the ambrosial "sweet dew" (saliva); unifying heart and kidney *qi*; nurturing the abdominal energy center known as *dantian* (elixir field); harnessing the power of inborn prenatal or "pre-Heaven" *qi* (*xiantian qi* 先天氣) and acquired postnatal or "post-Heaven" *qi* (*houtian qi* 後天氣); embryonic respiration, also known as "fetal breathing" (*taixi* 胎息); the interplay of the three generative forces—essence (*jing* 精), vital energy (*qi* 氣), and spirit (*shen* 神); the unification of the *qi* of the five phases (*wuxing* 五行); and, of course, the small heavenly orbit.

Charles Luk's translation of the latter as "microcosmic orbit" has become part of the standard lexicon of English language qigong texts, most notably in the works of Mantak Chia (e.g., 1983). But, of course, there are also many aspects of Zhao's alchemy that are unique to Daoism and less commonly found in qigong literature, such as the importance of sexual potency to alchemical success (Luk 1973, 164), the emergence of a new spiritual self (the immortal fetus) from the physical body, and the appearance of "countless transformation bodies riding on dragons and storks, walking on the sun and playing with the moon. . ." (1973, 174). Yet, underlying the complexity of imagery and technique, Zhao maintains the mystical philosophy of Laozi and Zhuangzi, in which Dao is realized through "utmost serenity" (Zhao 1963, 340). The highest stage is "emptiness" (*xu* 虛), in which not a trace of phenomena is left behind.

³ Tragically, not long after the workshop, Jiang committed suicide. He had learned that his son had just been labeled a "rightist," meaning an intellectual who promoted subversive, anti-communist ideas such as capitalism. Jiang knew that his son would become one of the hundreds of thousands of Chinese citizens "purged" through forced labor, persecution, or execution.

Unlike the common stereotype of the Daoist adept who devotes his life to one enlightened Master, Zhao visited more than thirty teachers altogether, among whom he had at least six principal masters (Despeux 1979, 16). Zhao's work is like a great river, fed by many smaller rivers and streams and then branching out into numerous tributaries that reach into the 21st Century. Among Zhao's main teachers of meditation and alchemy are Liu Mingrui 劉名瑞 (1839-1932), as well as the Buddhist monks Liaokong 了空 and Tanbo 潭柏.

Liu trained Zhao in the internal alchemy methods of the Complete Perfection (Quanzhen 全真) school. Under Liaokong's tutelage, he became the eleventh patriarch of the Wu- Liu 伍柳 school of Daoism while Tanbo initiated him as the third patriarch of the Gold Mountain sect (Jinshan pai 金山派). In 1921, on the advice of Liaokong, he founded his own branch of Dragon Gate (Longmen 龍門) Daoism called the Thousand Peaks Pre-Heavenly Sect (Qianfeng xiantian pai 千峯先天派). This tradition is carried on today by his great grandson Zhao Mingwang 趙明旺 (b. 1964).⁴



Fig. 1. Liaokong and Zhao

Alchemy in the Martial Arts

Both Zhao and his teachers had a profound effect on Chinese martial arts and their incorporation of Daoist cultivation (Bidlack 2012). For example, Liaokong also taught internal alchemy to Du Xinwu 杜心五 (1869-1955), the famed martial artist from the mountain village of Yanbantian in Hunan. At age 13, before he began training with Liaokong, Du learned from an eccentric Daoist named Dwarf Xu, who taught him Ziran men 自然門

⁴ <http://blog.ifeng.com/article/7762992.html>

(spontaneous boxing method), a system he had founded as well as light-weight skills (*qinggong* 輕功), enabling Du to leap to tremendous heights. Du taught his combination of Daoism and martial arts to Wan Laisheng 萬籟聲 (1903-1992), one of the five masters chosen by the Chinese government to direct the Central Martial Arts Academy in Nanjing in 1928. Wan also wrote major books on Chinese martial arts and qigong, most significantly *Wushu huizong* (1927). His students still teach throughout the world.

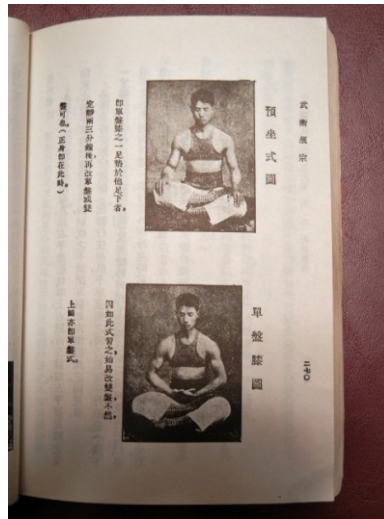


Fig. 2. Wan Laisheng meditating

Zhao's other teacher, Tanbo, lived near Beijing. His lineage continued not only through Zhao and his successors but also through another branch that eventually sprouted in the United States. Here is an outline: Tanbo taught Zuo Yifeng 左一峰, who became a lineage master of Gold Mountain Daoism. Zuo taught Zhang Maolin 張茂林 (on whom he conferred the Daoist name Wuxing 無形 [Formless]) and Zhang Qinlin 張欽霖 (aka Wuwei 無畏 [Fearless]). Zhang, in addition to being a Daoist, was a champion martial artist. He had been a student of Yang Jianhou 楊健候, son of the founder of Yang-style taiji quan. Both Zhang Maolin and Zhang Qinlin accepted Wang Yannian 王延年 (1914-2008) as their disciple. Wang, in turn, became one of the most beloved taiji quan grand-

masters in Taiwan, whose disciples included Scott Rodell in Washington D.C.; Tsui Wei 催巍 (1926-2010), originally from China but primarily working in Oakland, Calif.; and others in the U.S., Canada, Europe, and elsewhere. During the 1980s, I enjoyed several lengthy conversations with Tsui and greatly appreciated his integration of Daoist philosophy and breathing techniques into taiji quan practice.

To recapitulate, we have a line of transmission from Tanbo through Zuo Yifeng to Zhang Maolin and Zhang Qinlin, who both taught Wang Yannian. There are still other notable connections and inter-connections among these Daoist, qigong, and martial arts lineages. Zhang Qinlin taught Hu Yaozhen, mentioned earlier as one of the founders of the qigong movement in China (though Hu also learned from others). Zhang was furthermore an important teacher of Zheng Manqing 鄭曼青 (1902-1975), a “Master of the Five Excellences”: calligraphy, painting, poetry, Chinese medicine, and taiji quan. Zheng Manqing was one of the most influential taiji quan grandmasters in the world, and because of the school he opened in New York City (in 1964), his methods are practiced in most major cities in the United States.

Zhao Bichen was also a martial artist. In 1883, he became a disciple of Liu Yunpu 劉雲普 a master of his home village, from whom he learned Mizong quan 秘宗拳 (secret lineage boxing), Xinyi quan 心意拳 (mind-intention boxing), also known as Xingyi quan 形意拳 (body-intention boxing), an internal martial art based on the Five Phases, Yingzhao quan 鷹爪拳 (eagle claw boxing), and other martial arts as well as Daoist longevity and alchemical cultivation methods.⁵

Later Zhao taught internal alchemy, Xingyi quan, and possibly some other martial arts practices to Sun Xikun 孫錫堃 (1883-1952), another luminary in the spread of martial and qigong practice. Sun’s seminal work, *Bagua quan zhenzhuan* 八卦拳真傳 (The True Transmission of Bagua Quan) includes sections on Daoist cultivation, herbal formulas to heal martial arts injuries, and the life of Zhao Bichen. In his introduction, Sun describes how Zhao, then over seventy years old, looked like a man in his fifties. His hair had turned from frosty white to its original black, and he had truly “reversed old age and returned to youth.” Zhao was

⁵ See <http://www.zhgxw.org/daoxue/show2.php?itemid=2754>; July 1, 2013.

"proficient in the methods of striking acupuncture points [*dianxue* 點穴]" (Sun 1972, 12). He further taught T. Y. Pang 彭子游, who remains one of the outstanding teachers of martial arts and qigong in the United States.⁶ An early student of Sun Xikun named Liu Qian 劉騫 was also one of the teachers of Luo Dexiu 羅德修 (b. 1956),⁷ a famous Taiwanese martial arts teacher who offers workshops regularly in the United States and Europe.

Charles Luk's Legacy

Zhao's most famous student was probably the great scholar and lay Buddhist Lu K'uan-yü, popularly known as Charles Luk, who learned Daoist arts either from Zhao himself or from one of his students (Chan-Wyles 2012, 39). Like many people of his age, Luk practiced both Buddhism and Daoism and embraced the common saying, "The three religions [Daoism, Buddhism, Confucianism] return to unity" (*sanjiao guiyi* 三教歸一), that is, they complement each other. Luk was primarily a disciple of Xuyun 虛雲 (Empty Cloud; 1840-1959), the Buddhist master and holy man largely responsible for the revival of Buddhism in 19th- and 20th-century China.

Xuyun's extraordinary longevity may have inspired Luk's interest in qigong. The fact that he lived to the age of 119 is especially extraordinary considering that he survived illness, torture, beating, and persecution during a turbulent time in Chinese history. My theory is that Xuyun's longevity was the result of his regular and vigorous exercise of pilgrimage combined with the stress-reducing and transpersonal effects of meditation, prayer, and single-minded devotion to the dharma. He traveled thousands of miles on foot through China, India, Tibet, Sri Lanka, and Burma. After one of his journeys, he wrote, "The scenery changed every day but my pure mind was like a bright moon hanging solitarily in the sky. My health grew more robust and my steps were rapid" (Lu 1964). Xuyun was one with the *qi* of the universe, a kind of natural qigong!

⁶ See <http://www.typan.com/>

⁷ http://www.yizongbagua.com/YZ_SunXiKun_Baguazhang.htm (accessed July 9, 2013)

My own Daoist mentor, Dr. Huang Gengshi 黃庚世 (aka Henry K.S. Wong, 1910-1999) was also a student of Xuyun and a friend and colleague of Charles Luk, about whom he spoke fondly. Dr. Huang, Lu K'uan-yü, and author John Blofeld used to meet occasionally in Hong Kong (where Huang and Lu lived) to discuss Daoism and Buddhism and to practice meditation. Like Lu, Dr. Huang was a student of both Buddhism and Daoism. In addition to being a follower of Xuyun, Dr. Huang was a Dragongate Daoist abbot and served as the director of the Yunquan xianguan 雲泉仙館 on Mount Xiqiao 西樵山. The latter is a Daoist organization established in 1848 that emphasized spirit writing, the worship of the immortal Lü Dongbin, and charitable activities such as dispensing medicine (Ichiko 2002, 186, 198-99).



Fig. 3. The author with Dr. Huang

But Dr. Huang was also clearly influenced by Zhao Bichen, perhaps because of his friendship with Lu. Like Zhao, and the latter's teacher Liu Mingrui, Dr. Huang made his living as a doctor of Chinese medicine (Goossaert 2007, 299).

Dr. Huang often summarized his philosophy using terms also found in Zhao's writings such as, for example, the "dual cultivation of one's spiritual nature and the forces of life" (*xingming shuangxiu* 性命雙修). To put it simply, inner balance requires spirituality, meditation, and

qigong: a life of the spirit and a life in the world. Dr. Huang would concur with Dr. Chan-Wyles, "Zhao Bichen's Daoist equates the acquisition of the all-embracing emptiness that contains all things, with the state of Immortality" (2012, 39). Or as Dr. Huang puts it, "Daoists say: 'Refine *jing* (sexual essence) to transform *qi*; refine *qi* to transform spirit (*shen*), refine spirit to return to emptiness.' Why complicate your mind in that way? Although emptiness is the goal, it should also be the beginning. If your mind is truly empty, then essence, *qi*, and spirit are all full and in balance. If you put the Dao far away, it will always be far away!" I had the honor of being Dr. Huang's main lifetime student from 1976 until his passing in 1999. Like Zhao, Dr. Huang embraced the apparent contradiction of discipline and freedom, complex technique combined with an understanding that there is no way to arrive at a place that one has never left. "Form," the Buddhist *Heart Sutra* reminds us, "is not different from emptiness."

Too Esoteric for Americans?

In 2007, the United States Department of Health & Human Services estimated that there were approximately 625,000 qigong practitioners in the U.S. and an additional 2.3 million practitioners of taiji quan, many of whom include qigong in their training.⁸ Yet, very few North American students or teachers of qigong have ever heard of Zhao Bichen. I think that there are five main reasons why Zhao has not had a larger influence in the West.

1. *The Title*: Instead of doing a literal translation of the title *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, Charles Luk called the book *Taoist Yoga: Alchemy and Immortality*. Of course, he was writing at a time when Daoist terms like alchemy, qigong, or *yangsheng* were virtually unknown. But the name "Taoist Yoga" was probably confusing to many. People browsing in bookstores would wonder, "Is this a kind of Indian Yoga that evolved in China? Do Daoists practice Yoga?" I think that a better title to appeal to a wide market would have been "Spirit and Life: The Ancient Chinese Guide to Mind-Body Balance."

⁸ <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr012.pdf>

2. *The Writing Style*: Zhao's book uses esoteric terminology that is difficult for the average person to understand, whether American or Chinese. Luk's translation would have been far more useful both academically and practically had he included commentary or explanation. Additionally, most Americans would not know the historical and social reasons why Zhao may have preferred writing in a style that is obscure by today's standards. Zhao lived in a transitional period of Chinese culture and history, from the late Qing dynasty and through much of the Republican period. Although he sometimes made use of Western scientific and anatomical terms, like many others, he believed that the glory of China's over 5,000-year history was being overshadowed by the influence of the West.⁹ In reaction to this, I believe, Zhao made a valiant attempt to preserve traditional culture, Daoist terminology, and the classical style of Daoist literature.

3. *Readers' Lack of Background*: Zhao had a broad and deep background in Chinese religious practice and literature. His first formal teacher, Liu Mingrui, demanded that his disciples be familiar with the classics of the Three Teachings, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. Because most readers lack this foundation, they could easily misunderstand or miss the depths of *Taoist Yoga*. As an example, one need only look at frequent use of *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes) terminology such as *Kan* 坎 (water) and *Li* 離 (fire), or yin and yang as symbols of the diminishment or increase of life force.

Yang, as creative and rejuvenating power, reaches its peak at age sixteen in the male, age 14 in the female. Zhao tells us that after age sixteen, every ninety-six months a unit of yin develops, until by age sixty-four, "death closes in." Had he explained female alchemy, I believe he would have added that after age 14, every 72 to 84 months women develop a unit of yin, peaking, according to some accounts at age 49.¹⁰ The

⁹ We see this clearly in Hu Dazhong's 扈大中 introduction to the text. See the section that begins with *jinri dongxi ying kexue jinhua* 今日東西瀛科學進化 (Zhao 1963, 7-8).

¹⁰ See Sherrill 1977, 191-193. According to my teacher, Dr. Huang, the Daoist goal is to complete two Chinese calendar cycles and thus live to age 120, the biological life-span of humans. By that time the advanced practitioner's spirit or yang souls (hun 魂) and material or yin souls (po 魄) have fused into an immor-

process of internal alchemy restores the creative power of yang so that, instead of dying, one reverses aging, returns to youthfulness, and has time to create the golden elixir. This implies a much more detailed view of aging, one that only a reader familiar with the *Yijing* and Chinese medical literature would grasp properly.

Some of Zhao's fundamental concepts, such as the quest for immortality contain hidden paradoxes that, in my view, can never be resolved intellectually but only through the experience of Daoist cultivation. Modern readers are likely to think that Zhao strictly believed that becoming an immortal (*xian* 仙) meant living forever in this body. It is not so simple. Zhao was well aware of Daoist philosophers who accepted death as a natural part of life. And I am sure that he was also familiar with the *Zhouyi Canyong qi* 周易參同契 (Tally to the Zhou Changes) which says, "If you wish to nurture your spirit, prolong your life and avoid aging, think carefully about the end, and ponder the beginning. People have a physical body that, at its root, is nothing. The original essence spreads like clouds because life begins with *qi*." In other words, the paradox of Nei Dan is that we want to live a long and healthy life even though the body is fundamentally empty and already one with the original *qi* of heaven and earth!

Readers who lack the cultural background may take Zhao's words too literally or think that they defy common sense. They may believe that the "immortal embryo" is a physical being trapped in the body, like the frightening creature in the Hollywood movie *Alien*. Yet Zhao clearly says that this is mistaken: "This is not an actual embryo. And it is not a physical object with shape and form. Rather it is a transformation of *qi* and the unification of one's *qi* and spirit" (1963, 241).

Similarly, imagine the peril of trying to literally and forcibly achieve the four stages of serene meditation: "thoughtlessness, breathlessness, pulselessness, and extinction of worldly existence" (Luk 1973, 152; Zhao 1963, 424). In fact, Zhao is not recommending the impossible. A clue is the statement: "Unless he breathes naturally all the time, he will never reach the stage of indistinctness" (Luk 1973, 118) Also, most readers would not realize that "stopping the breath" is a kind of code in Daoism.

tal embryo (lingtai 靈胎), so that one dies by releasing one's spirit. Of course, few achieve this degree of longevity because of the stresses of modern life.

It means the breath seems to stop but does not actually stop but rather becomes so slow and slight that a down feather placed in front of the nostrils would not move. In any case, Zhao states variously that he is not talking about ordinary breathing through the nose and mouth but rather about the internal movement of *qi*. As the pulse lessens, the heart rate also slows down. This is natural—mental quiet and slow breathing both cause a change in heart rate. But this does not mean that the heart actually stops! I believe that Zhao balanced Daoist techniques with Daoist wisdom. In recent years there has been a great deal of interest among scholars East and West in the perennial wisdom hidden in Zhao's writings, thanks in large measure to the research and writings of the director of the U.S. Branch of the Institute of Chinese Wisdom Studies 美国中华智慧学会, Zhang Qingsong 张庆松, and his collaborative work with the University of Chicago.¹¹

4. *Limited View of Daoism*: The *Daode jing* is very popular in the United States. There are more than 300 English translations, more than any other book except the Bible. Unfortunately, most Americans think that Daoism is limited to the philosophy of the *Daode jing*. Because of this viewpoint, there have probably been many people who ignore Zhao Bichen's contribution and do not realize its importance in Daoist culture. Americans need to be educated about the relevance, wisdom, and science of internal alchemy in order to more fully appreciate Zhao's work.

5. *Lack of Patience*: Perhaps the most obvious reason why Zhao has not had a greater influence is that, sadly, very few people today have the patience or perseverance to slowly study and digest his work and ponder the meaning of the sixteen stages of cultivation. In this cut-and-paste, Google world, who would be willing to spend years in meditation or receive instruction from an accomplished teacher? Many people, I fear, pick up the brush and try to draw a tiger, but it will only look like a dog!

¹¹ <http://wisdomresearch.org/blogs/news/archive/2013/01/07/university-of-chicago-opened-u-s-china-exchange-on-wisdom-studies.aspx>

My Life with Zhao Bichen

I first became aware of Zhao Bichen's work around 1973, when I purchased Luk's translation. I could see that it was a complex and important book, but frankly I did not read it at the time. I was simply too busy with classes in Chinese language, taiji quan, qigong, and other aspects of Chinese culture. When I moved to Berkeley in late 1976, I became more deeply involved in Daoist studies with Dr. Huang and at the University of California with Drs. Michel Strickmann, Wolfram Eberhard, and others. This inspired me to return to various books that I had been saving for a later date. One day I brought my copy of *Taoist Yoga* to Dr. Huang's house. When he saw it, he was very pleased. "You should read this book. It was translated by my friend, Charles Luk, and has details about the cultivation of Spirit and Life. If you have any difficulties or questions as you study it, we can discuss it together." It was obvious that Dr. Huang had read the original Chinese, was familiar with the practices described in it, and had great respect for Zhao.

I am glad that I did not read *Taoist Yoga* earlier. By 1977, I had enough background to begin to understand the depths of the work. And I knew that I had to be cautious and not try to practice techniques without instruction from a teacher. Zhao was well aware of the danger his methods could present to students who had insufficient preparation or who were immature in their understanding. For example, he says, "If you do not receive instruction from an enlightened master you will never be clear about all this" (Luk 1973, 45). I knew an American psychologist who had never trained in Daoism but who tried to follow the instructions in *Taoist Yoga*. She developed insomnia and anxiety; luckily she stopped the practice before causing more serious harm.

For me, *Taoist Yoga* became a kind of map to understand the territory of Daoist meditation. But reading a map is not the same as walking on the land. I decided that I would only walk in landscapes that were familiar to me from my previous studies or illuminated by my training with Dr. Huang and other teachers. In 1980, I bought Catherine Despeux's meticulous study and translation of Zhao's *Weisheng shenglixue mingzhi* 衛生生理學明指 (Clear Explanations of Hygiene and Physiology; 1979). Then, around 1985, I was lucky to find a beautiful Chinese edition of the *Xingming fajue mingzhi* published in Taiwan in 1963 as a reprint of the

1933 Beijing edition; it was complete with photos or illustrations of Zhao and his teachers and associates. I loved the old photos of Zhao and Liao-kong so much that I began using them in slide presentations about the ancient roots of modern qigong. As a result, many thousands of acupuncturists, physicians, and conference attendees have seen their distinguished faces.

Personally I have learned a great deal from the book, though I have by no means mastered its contents. I continue to look at the text from time to time as a source of inspiration and knowledge. I do not, however, believe that we can accept everything in Zhao's book or should read it uncritically. No person or book has the complete truth. We must always weigh what we learn against our own wisdom, understanding, intuition, and experience.

Here are some areas that I do not fully accept. Zhao says that the practitioner can "dispense with eating" (Luk 1973, 116). This may be true temporarily, but I have not seen evidence of anyone accomplishing this for extended periods of time, unless the diet includes protein and other nutrients in liquid form. I agree with Zhao when he advises that, if *qi* is full, one may forget about eating or not need to eat as much. I also do not think it necessary to use a "wooden bun" to close the anus or a "clothes-peg" to shut the nose (Luk 1973, 146). These "mortal gates" can be effectively closed through internal control or muscular contractions.

I also question the common admonition to "quit the world's dust" (*bi shichen* 避世塵), a term reflected in his own name, Bichen. Zhao says that one must be free of worldly responsibilities, financially independent, and retired to the mountains to reach the highest stage. This makes immortality an impossible goal for most. And although Zhao does not deny women's cultivation practices, which have always formed an important part of Daoism,¹² and lists women among his fifty major disciples, his book is clearly written for men. Works on internal alchemy have tended to focus on either Kun or Qian, female or male, alchemy rather than the

¹² There were certainly historical and social restrictions on women's access to Daoists and ability to travel. "However, women had been practicing alchemy, albeit in numbers less numerous than men, from the beginning of *neidan*..." (Valussi 2009, 141). For more on women's practice, see Despeux and Kohn 2003; Valussi 2009, 141-178; Herrou 2013, 230-247).

complementarity of the two. I would love to see a new translation of *Taoist Yoga* with commentaries that reveal how women may apply Zhao's wisdom. And conversely, male readers would be interested to know how women's alchemy should be understood and practiced by them. There is a precedent for this, as female Daoists were known to sometimes accept male disciples.¹³ As the *Yijing* states, "A yin with a yang—that is what is called Dao."

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¹³ A modern example is 25th generation Dragontage Daoist from Mount Wudang, Zeng Yongxiang 曾永祥, whose principal teacher was female, the Wudang abbess Li Chengyu (1885-2003) 李誠玉. <http://www.taijiquandao.com/03paginasingles/03articles/02lichengyu.htm>; <http://www.wudangtao.com/content>; and <http://www.wdgm.com/html/201109/10346>. Accessed July 10, 2013.

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Tiandi jiao

The Daoist Connection

JU KEYI & LÜ XIANLONG¹

In June 2006, Harvard University held a conference titled “Between the Eternal and the Contemporary: Daoism and Its Reinvention in the Twentieth Century.” David Palmer presented a paper entitled “Tao and Nation: Lee Yujie’s (1901-1994) Reinvention of Huashan Daoism,” in which he pointed out that research on contemporary Daoism, aside from focusing on temple systems and school lineages, should also pay attention to how charismatic leaders inherit and develop its traditional elements. He traced Master Lee’s successive involvement in Tiande 天德 and Tianren jiao 天人教 which culminated in his founding of Tiandi jiao 天帝教. However, his paper neither specified what exactly Master Lee inherited from Huashan Daoism, nor did it tell how he reinvented Daoism in terms of thought, ritual, or cultivation.

Tiandi jiao thinks of itself as a religion that has existed timelessly in the cosmos. Due to the 1980 crisis of imminent nuclear warfare between the United States and the Soviet Union, Master Lee in his capacity as prelate of Tianren jiao offered prayers to Tiandi, the Lord of Heaven, saying that nobody in the human realm had moral credibility to save the world from the coming cataclysm. He thus had no choice but to resign from his leadership over Tianren jiao and plead with the Lord of Heaven to bring the Lord’s own religion once more into the human realm. The Lord of

¹ Translated from the Chinese by Denis Mair.

Heaven himself should be the central authority while Master Lee would hold his mandate and become his chief emissary.

He then wrote *A New Realm* (1990; 1994) as a teaching text for the new religion and widely propagated original quiet sitting, a practice he had developed on Mount Hua, to attract believers to join the effort of praying for world peace. Because the content of Tiandi jiao is founded upon Master Lee's intellectual attainments and his cultivation experiences, the course of his life is essential to understanding the religion.



Master Lee's thought draws from a confluence of Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist teachings. Since he lived in an era when China's traditional thought was subjected to major impacts from Western currents of science and philosophy, he also included Western concepts, such as the idea of "particles" in his book. Thereby he not only explained the phenomena of the boundless material world, but also explored the endless ethereal realm of spirit, opening new angles to the traditional Chinese inquiry into the relationship of Heaven and humanity. To clarify the objectives of such study, Master Lee's first son Lee Tseyi would later give it the new name "humanity-Heaven pragmatics." Considering that the 2012 Nobel Prize in physics was given to research on quantum effects, Master Lee's thought can be appreciated for being well ahead of its time. Still, Daoist philosophy and religious culture played an important role in the course of Master Lee's life.

Daoist Thought on Transcendence

Human beings have an innate destiny to reach the transcendent plane. In traditional China, not only Daoism but also Confucianism and Buddhism advocate transcendence. Confucians emphasize "making one's own virtue consistent with Heaven" as a way to the "union of Heaven and humanity." Buddhists emphasize "being enlightened to self-nature" as a way of reaching "true suchness of nirvana." Daoist thinkers emphasize

"naturalness and nonaction," leading to the "attainment of union with Dao on an unseen plane." Transcendence is thus a very high ideal and aim of Chinese philosophy of life.

Laozi held that to gain transcendent life, one should engage in step-by-step self-cultivation, developing one's mind to extend into emptiness while grounded in stillness and opening toward broader connectedness. As Wang Bangxiong points out, Laozi's metaphysics works through subjective realization and proceeds to physical, objective unfolding. Thus this is not metaphysics in a mode of actual existence; rather, it is metaphysics pertaining to a realm of attainment. Such a mode of attainment is like rising water that buoys up a boat: as the mind grows more luminous, the realm of attainment it manifests becomes more expansive (Wang 1986, 127-28).

Such expansion and heightening, once brought forth as heavenly virtue, becomes part of the ideal human character and the full realization of sagehood. By virtue of his inspiring personal presence and his ceaseless search for values, the sage transcends limitations and shortcomings. Thus he can be magnanimous and selfless; he can be one who gives succor to worldly people in adversity. Thus he can win honor in the world and be held in high regard. The sage's Dao is concrete yet subtle, and thus he manifests Dao-as-substance in the here and now: in other words, he is a "fleshly body perfected in Dao" (Fang 2005, 365). The sage's Dao is none other than Heaven's. If a person can cultivate himself unceasingly, his or her virtue becomes coextensive with Dao so as to evince, in each particular, the splendor of nature coming through.

Zhuangzi believed that the highest level of spiritual life was reached by the "ultimate man" or "perfected," a person who merges his own original *qi* with that of Heaven and Earth on the transcendent level of connectedness to Dao. The perfected embodies an independent spirit that keeps his inner fiber pristine; it puts him in touch with nature's sparks of divinity and lets him merge on an unseen plane with Heaven. "His spirit mounts to the Great Void, where his vision can range at will and he can probe for insights into life as a whole in the cosmos. . . . He wanders free and easy where there are no limits, experiencing each level of life's ascent" (Fang 2005, 368). He is thus someone who attains Dao through self-cultivation. For religious Daoists who revere immortals, cultivating this perfection is the same as cultivating immortality. They

realize this goal by working with external alchemy through ingesting potions and by growing an internal elixir in the dual cultivation of self-nature and life-force. In this, however, they went beyond the original aim of Laozi and Zhuangzi, which was transcendent life.

Cultivating the Internal Elixir

In philosophical Daoism the supreme guiding principle for cultivating life appears in the *Daode jing*: “Humanity patterns itself on Earth; Earth patterns itself on Heaven; Heaven patterns itself on Dao; Dao patterns itself on naturalness” (ch. 25). Later practitioners of internal alchemy saw this “Four Sentence Teaching” as the supreme path for cultivating perfection. They accordingly specified elixirs of the “three bases,” distinguishing those based on Heaven, Earth, and Humanity. The first referred to potions prepared from naturally occurring minerals or to the seed of a spirit or golden elixir bestowed by a realized being. The second included preparations made from herbs growing on earth, while the third referred to life’s potentials, tapped and turned to an inner elixir through control of desires, self-tempering, and nurturing of mind and body. As Xiao Tianshi points out, generations might pass before one might encounter a spirit-given elixir and manage to ascend into heaven. Earth-based elixirs, too, are rare and it is hard to find authentic formulas. As for humanity-base elixirs, nothing can surpass the dual cultivation of self-nature and life-force to temper yin and yang and transcend the worldly (Xiao 1977, 6). However marvelous these elixir methods might be, they must all be patterned upon Dao and naturalness. Thus the Great Dao of the Void or emptiness of body and mind here is the supreme mind-method for practitioners of internal alchemy.

Self-cultivation in internal alchemy values principles of longevity and cultivation, but also attaches importance to virtuous, meritorious action to rise above material things by strength of character. Over two millennia it has aimed at human perfection, growing gradually into different lineages and paths while inheriting the principles of Laozi and Zhuangzi. Among its various methods, the Wenshi School 文始派 is most elevated and the Shaoyang School 少陽派 is most widespread. The Wenshi School traces itself back to Yin Xi 尹喜, aka Guanyinzi 關尹子, the customs officer on the Hangu Pass who prevailed upon Laozi to

transmit the *Daode jing*. It cultivates the Great Dao of the Void and takes nonaction as its primary method, aiming for immediate transcendence and direct entry into Dao, so as to fulfill self-nature and let mastery of life-force take care of itself. The Shaoyang School goes back to Wang Shaoyang, who pioneered what later became the cultivation of Complete Perfection (Quanzhen). It takes the Great Dao of Yin-Yang as its main practice, proceeding from purposive methods onward to nonaction. Its mastery is cumulative and gradual, fulfilling life-force in such a way that self-nature is also realized. The Wenshi School sets an elevated tone that few can harmonize with, so its number of practitioners has decreased over time. The Shaoyang School is convenient and approachable: nearly everyone can practice it and nearly everyone can attain something, so it has spread widely in society (Xiao 1977, 6).

Master Lee received transmission from a somewhat different kind of master, but his system is connected by innumerable threads to both these schools.

Early Cultivation: Connecting to Jiang Weiqiao

Lee Tse-chien, formerly layout editor for the *New York Times*, is Master Lee's second son. In a memorial essay written on the occasion of his father's death at age 95, he wrote:

He was an extremely persevering, resolute man. Day in and day out for seventy years, my father never broke off his sitting meditation practice. He himself knew there were only a few practitioners who have as many decades of experience and such deep mastery in quiet sitting as he did. His cultivation and mastery in quiet sitting is what made it possible for him to enjoy good health into his nineties. (1995, 22-23)

Master Lee lived from the beginning to the very end of the twentieth century, passing through all the various wars and upheavals of China's contemporary history as well as the Nationalists' retreat to Taiwan and the arduous decades when they recouped their strength. During those years, he witnessed the economic, political and cultural miracle which maintained a corner of blessed ground on Taiwan. All his life, he was distinguished by his Confucian solicitude and was animated with

the vital force that made traditional Daoists “temper themselves arduously to give rescue in a time of apocalypse.”

He began his meditation practice of quiet sitting at age 20. As he himself notes:

I was physically frail and my ailments wouldn’t respond to Chinese or Western medicine. Then I met a teacher who transmitted the practice to me. I did three consecutive intensive sessions of 100 days each, and my experiments proved effective. I had three unbroken years of foundation building practice, after which I went to Huashan, the sacred Western Peak, for eight years. . . Since then I have devoted myself to this practice right up to the present day. (1990, 189)

Although I began to learn quiet sitting at age twenty, I did not really apply myself rigorously. It was an on-and-off thing. I did three consecutive hundred day sessions before I was married, but it wasn’t until I went to Huashan that I really applied myself rigorously for eight years. (2012, 1:141)

His basic motive for learning quiet sitting was thus to deal with health problems. According to the recollection of his first son, Master Lee was seriously nearsighted, with a correction rating of 1600-1800. He had no hearing in his left ear, and his spine was slumped. Even more serious were the bouts of vertigo he suffered around major holidays and festivals, forcing him to remain in bed. Thus he conceived an intention to study quiet sitting. Around that time Jiang Weiqiao’s 蔣維喬 *Yinshizi jingzuo fa* 因是子靜坐法 (Quiet Sitting with Master Yinshi), originally published in 1914, was gaining popularity (trl. Lu 1970). Its preface points out that quiet sitting was a technique for nurturing life used by the ancients and formed part of the national heritage, yet its main thrust had become cluttered with yin-yang and five-phases doctrines and arcane alchemical terminology. Jiang, himself a sickly young man, experimented with these methods and spontaneously experienced the *qi*-flow of the microcosmic orbit—which clears the Governing and Conception Vessels that run along the back and front of the torso—but understood them from a more Western, scientific perspective (Kohn 2002). He decided to write about his experiences in combination with modern interpretations based on physiology, psychology, and hygiene. Later he came

in contact with Buddhism and added Tiantai-based *vipāśyanā* or insight practice, expanding his work in a new 1918 edition.

Jiang was from the same county as Master Lee, and it is likely that the two first met in 1920 when Master Lee was 20 years old. Master Lee soon settled on the microcosmic orbit as his basic practice. Even when, many years later, he transmitted the Mind-Method of Highest Heaven, he still followed this principle. In addition, he followed Jiang Weiqiao in tempering his heart-mind according to the *Diamond Sutra* dictum that "where there is nothing to dwell on, there let the mind come alive." His later writings, too, notably the chapter "Spiritual Tempering" in *A New Realm*, are still colored by Jiang's approach: he consistently avoided forced associations with yin-yang and five-phases theory and allusions to arcane mystical secrets. Like Jiang, he did his utmost to adopt vernacular language and often drew on scientific principles to elucidate findings he had made through his own practice.

Lee Tseyi recalls that during the period when Master Lee was learning from Jiang Weiqiao, the latter said to him, "Later if you happen to encounter an enlightened master, you should study under him. Although I have cleared all my channels and peripheral meridians, I have not been able to clear my Gate of Heaven, so I have no way to refine my spirit back to the void" (Lee 1996, 1:18-19). Jiang Weiqiao, in his own narrative, tells of his search to open his Gate of Heaven, which led him to delve into Tibetan tantra.² However, Master Lee's affinity in the Dao lay elsewhere. In 1930, he went to the Erlang Temple 二郎宮 in Nanjing and met Xiao Changming 蕭昌明, leader of Tiande jiao.

One Practice: With Xiao Changming

Xiao Changming was a remarkable figure in the late-Qing early-Republican period. Born in 1894 in Sichuan, he gained deep understanding of Buddhism and Daoism at an early age. While still a boy he went forth to propagate the dharma and was associated with miraculous events. Later he was converted by Chu Yunlong 儲雲龍 (Cloud-Dragon Sage), who led him deep into the mountains of western Hunan. There he devoted himself to self-cultivation for ten years. He invented the "Twen-

² See Jiang's writings at: <http://vy85097855.myweb.hinet.net/bin4j-dj-1.htm>

ty Watchwords” and used them for spiritual healing, as a way of winning people over and rescuing them from the latter-day age of decline. Having attained Dao, Xiao emerged from the mountains and founded Tiande jiao, spreading it into Nanjing. Before long, Master Lee was practicing sitting meditation under Xiao, having received his master’s “initiatory touch,” and committing himself to the religious cause of rescue from the latter-day age of decline. At the same time, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to quiet sitting. As he says later: “It was my good fortune to be welcomed as a disciple by Master Xiao, so I exerted myself to the utmost and concentrated on a single path.”

In 1934, Xiao Changming, in order to train teacher-candidates for the nationwide propagation of his faith, rented the Shandong Provincial Hall in Shanghai to hold a hundred-day intensive course. He preached Dao for an hour each morning and afternoon, and led meditation in the morning and evening, and at noon and midnight. During these sessions, Master Lee had frequent visions of mountain crags and ridgelines. He was getting a foretaste of his future. As he recalls,

During my sitting practice the minute I closed my eyes I would see mountains. One scene of mountains would follow another... There were no temples, no people, just mountains. . . That’s what I spent my time on during the hundred day session—viewing mountains. (Lee 2012, 2:428)

Master Lee had just entered Dao and taken major vows: he was preoccupied with setting up the Religious Philosophy Association and the Oriental Spiritual Healing Institute. Although he pursued quiet sitting at the time, it was nowhere as intense as his later practice on Mount Hua. Even so, the practice caused significant changes in his physiology and *qi*-circulation. He no longer had any vertigo; his myopic vision returned to normal; the collapsed bridge of his nose became prominent again—causing his commitment to Dao to increase dramatically.

What was the content of the quiet sitting method transmitted by Xiao Changming? What was its relation to traditional schools of internal alchemy? Which components of Master Lee’s later method of original quiet sitting go back to Xiao? These are significant questions, but there is little material to answer them, since Xiao was reluctant to explain his techniques. The only reference is found in an early compilation by Mas-

ter Lee titled "Ruding jiejing" 入定捷徑 (Shortcut to Samadhi), made when his master ordered him to travel to Xi'an and hold a training class for mentors. This compilation, containing a preface by Xiao and twelve lecture summaries, takes up one section in a book of Master Lee's papers, *Chanjiao faru* 闡教法乳. (Lee 1935, 153-166)

The preface develops two key themes. One speaks of cosmogenesis as proceeding from the Nonultimate (*wuji* 無極) to the Great Ultimate (*taiji* 太極), then engendering the myriad beings, and eventually hatching a destiny of overall decline. The other speaks of the five major religions as emerging from the same source yet bound to enter into conflict. Xiao writes: "Having looked into various books on the (internal) elixir, I find places that are incompatible with original insights. So I am hereby making available this Great Dao of the Mystic Portal, so that kindred souls can grasp it for themselves" (Lee 1935, 154). He makes it clear that his way of entering *samadhi* differs somewhat from books of internal alchemy and does not belong exclusively to a particular sect.

Chapter One, "The Portal of Self-Nature," emphasizes that self-nature is innate and life-force is acquired. However, "if the portal of self-nature is cleansed, then the portal of life-force will be white." Xiao points out that self-nature can influence life-force and that each religion has its way of referring to it. Fundamentally, it is part of the Nonultimate, but it is also the "One Qi" which is innate. He says, "A multitude of faiths have something in common: they all go back to this One Qi. Speaking overall, it is simply Dao" (Lee 1935, 155). This is particularly striking in the light of the memory verse that Xiao gave to his disciples along with his initiatory touch. Lee Tseyi as an adolescent received initiation from Xiao Changming personally, and according to his recollection Xiao gave this oral transmission:

The innate *qi* comes down from Heaven, passing through the Great Void of outer space. It swirls down in eddies, until it arrives at the Gate of Heaven, then reaches the Node of Self-nature and the Palace of the Life-force. You keep watch over it right there. (1996, 2:120)

The second chapter, "Palace of the Life-Force," says that the Node is between the eyes while the Palace is the mother of yin and yang. "Watch over this, and your celestial cycle will activate. Once the celestial cycle

activates, the cinnabar furnace takes shape, and then the crucible is settled" (Lee 1935, 156). Viewing this in light of the phrase from Xiao's memory verse—"you keep watch right there," we see that "there" refers to the Palace point. By keeping watch here, one sets the microcosmic orbit into motion: furnace and crucible are stabilized and the elixir can be made. The power that activates the Palace must rely on the Node. This is what he means by saying, "if the portal of self-nature is cleansed, then portal of life-force will be white." This portal of self-nature draws down innate *Qi*, but the crucial precondition is that the Gate of Heaven has to be opened. Thus Xiao's initiatory touch served this purpose—constituting the crucial difference to Jiang Weiqiao's work.

Clearly the technique in "Ruding jiejing" (Shortcut to Samadhi) is a matter of drawing down innate *qi* and focusing attention on the Palace, where *qi* is converted from its innate to acquired state. Then it moves along the Conception Vessel to the lower elixir field where it supports the operation of the celestial cycle. This is distinctly different from traditional internal alchemy, according to which practitioners first focus on the lower elixir field: once *qi* has coalesced there, it passes through the coccyx and travels up the Governing Vessel along the spine, clearing the Three Passes. After that it descends again along the Conception Vessel, connecting the three elixir fields. Traditional internal alchemy thus relies largely on self-power to activate the *qi* set the water wheel into motion. Xiao instead speaks of drawing down innate *qi* to activate the water wheel at the Palace, using a different source to activate the cycle.

Innate *qi* cannot be separated from the Heaven-given order to rescue the world from the latter-day age of decline. Why? In the final chapter, "Union," Xiao elucidates the twofold meaning of "union." The first happens when bodily essence, energy, and spirit (*jing*, *qi*, *shen*) merge into one and coalesce at the mystic portal. When this process stabilizes around the Niwan Palace (pineal gland), firm *qi* arises. "It can fly like wind or enter into rock; it is poised between being and nonbeing; it seems to vanish yet seems to remain: at such a time the second self comes into its own" (Lee 1935, 165). This is the union of Heaven and Humanity of the small self. The second union occurs when "thousands of manifested bodies change one to the other at will. . . Boundless beings are taught and converted; billions of ravaged souls are saved so they can mount to the Land of Bliss together. This is man-heaven union of the

great self" (Lee 1935, 165). The path cultivated here thus needs to be supplemented by the power of one's vow to take on Heaven's order to rescue the world from decline. As Master Lee practiced meditation with Xiao Changming, he naturally also absorbed this more social dimension. It gave rise to an important feature of his later original quiet sitting: it serves as "preparation for rescuing the world from decline."

On Mount Hua: Divine Inspiration

In 1937, Master Lee went into seclusion at Dashangfang 大上方 on Mount Hua. Aside from his personal arduous practice during this period, he engaged in the communion of Heaven and Humanity, carefully writing down the results of his exchanges with divine presences, including earth-immortals who had remained in their corporeal sheath and dwelled in mountain grottoes as well as immortals from Highest Heaven of the Grand Network (大羅天).

On Mount Hua, the sacred peak of the west, deep among the white clouds, during eight years of quiet cultivation, I saw and met with admirable men of Dao who had been alive for hundreds of years. . . . Most of them were recluses from the Kunlun Mountains who visited back and forth from Kunlun to Mounts Taibai, Zhongnan, and Hua. (Lee 1999, 327)

I am a mundane fellow who went into seclusion on Pristine Precinct, beneath Whitecloud Peak. The Cloud-Dragon Sage would come in company with various personages of Kunlun, descending from the heights of Whitecloud. We would hold exchanges between the sacred and the mundane; mingling brilliance with common folkways.

When inspiration came, someone would strike up an ancient melody. We would laugh with high-minded companions at a cliff's edge, and our talk would range high and low, from ancient times to today. Later I learned that there were thousands of sages and perfected beings who had attained Dao through history and were able to remain, in physical form, in the grottoes of Kunlun. (Lee 1999, 330)

Among the masters whose bodies remained in the world, the Cloud-Dragon Sage was most important. Originally named Chu Yunlong, he was a military officer under Emperor Kangxi (1662~1722). Later he recited the *Yuhuang xinyin miaojing* 玉皇心印妙經 (Jade Emperor's

Mind-Seal Scripture) one million times, realized Dao, and received his honorary title. Ordered to do so by Heaven, he converted Xiao Changming and took him into the mountains of western Hunan to engage in cultivation. When the time was ripe and Xiao attained Dao, Cloud-Dragon began to address Xiao as brother, knowing that his own investiture from Heaven could not equal Xiao's. He should thus have been Master Lee's grandfather-master, but due to this change of reference he was Master Lee's uncle-master. As for Master Lee's followers, they call him great-uncle master. In 1936, Master Lee climbed Mount Taibai to find the Qixia Grotto and asked Cloud-Dragon for guidance in sitting meditation. The two-word answer he received was simply "be natural" (*ziran* 自然). This is the essence of nonaction as cultivation practice.

This connects to the Wenshi School whose practice, in gist and aims, tallies closely with Master Lee's original quiet sitting—both also emphasizing the Great Dao of the Void. As Master Lee used to say in his lectures: "The hardest thing is to know where to start. . . There seems to be no way to orient yourself, no place to get a footing. Actually if you simply keep up the practice, you naturally sense that within emptiness there is substance; within nonbeing is truth" (Xiao 1996, 102). The emphasis is thus to work at refining spirit directly back to the Void. "When you are grounded in empty quietude, essence transforms into *qi* on its own, and *qi* naturally transforms to spirit. The handle is in your own hands; destiny is your own to create. The stage of refining *shen* back to void could not be more simple or direct" (Xiao 1996, 105).

Aside from Cloud-Dragon and various Kunlun personages, Master Lee also received guidance in meditation from immortals of the Heaven of Grand Network. He recalls engaging in scholarly exchanges, through mediumistic communication between heavenly and human realms, exploring topics that went into *A New Realm*. During this process an exalted being would often come and take part:

One of these gold immortals from Grand Network would come, and I would have a chance to ask him questions. Now I teach the "natural nonaction mind-method of directly cultivating the great empty Dao of highest heaven." Part of that comes from the insights they shared when I questioned them on Mount Hua. . .

Although the Lord of Heaven was not ready to reveal some things, the immortals had foreknowledge. They said that while the latter-day age of decline is getting underway, people would have to put effort into tempering the physical body. But at a certain point there would be changes in temporal conditions. Sure enough, later on I was given special dispensation by the Lord of Heaven. Gradually a path opened up to let me through. (Lee 2012, 174)

Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, aka Lü Chunyang 呂純陽 (Pure Yang), was the most representative among the gold immortals. Master Lee honored Patriarch Lü as his "conversion master." Lee Tseyi fills in remarkable background on that segment of history:

In 1935, while Honored Teacher [Master Lee] was holding the first mentors' training session in Xi'an, he had a lucid dream, in which he saw Patriarch Lü waving at him. Upon waking, he asked his students if there was a shrine to Lü near Xi'an. They told him there was one in the Eight Immortals Abbey (Baxian gong 八仙宮).

That morning after breakfast he went to the abbey. As he walked through the door he ran into the temple overseer, a man named Tang Xu'an 唐旭庵, who asked him, "What's your name?"

Honored Teacher answered that he was named Lee. Temple Overseer Tang told our Master to wait a moment, then brought out a set of thread-bound books from an inner room. He gave them to the Master and said, "Last night while I was closing the gate, an old man in a blue robe stopped by and said that someone named Lee would come today, and that I should give him this set of books."

Our Master opened the case of books right there and saw that it was the *Zhong-Lü chuandao ji* 鐘呂傳道集 (Zhong-Lü Dao Transmissions). (Lee 1996, 1:17)

Records of Master Lee's Xi'an period can be read in *Chanjiao faru* 闡教法乳 (Ambrosia of Propagation). This book notes that in 1935 a poem was sent down from above, bearing the signature of "Minister Lü of the Jade Chancellery." It says:

Strains of fairy song drift down from Nine-fold Heaven
In the hour of dewfall come out on the Jade Stair
Flashes from a steely blade mount as high as the Dipper
Having saved all ravaged souls may he reach the rainbow lotus. (1935, 19)

To this Master Lee responded with “A Verse for My Conversion Master, the Pure Yang Patriarch.”

Vowing to help ravaged souls reach the rainbow lotus
 The hidden story came to light so I came to Qin Stream
 Wet with falling dew we arrive in Heaven together
 Bathed in light straight from the sun’s edge
 In person you bestowed the greater circulation of gold fluid
 Reading the *Daxue* [Great Learning] and *Zhongyong* [Doctrine of the Mean],
 I caught things you imparted
 Someday in Nine-fold Heaven your kind call will ring forth
 Let me be there in scholar’s cap and bow to your sagely mien.
 (Lee 2006, 114)

“Jade-Stair” is Master Lee’s personal name, and “at dewfall come out on the Jade Stair” refers to Lü’s high expectations for Master Lee’s future. Master Lee answers this note of expectation with his vow to “help ravaged souls reach the rainbow lotus.” Master Lee also expresses his knowledge of prior ties which he is now resuming with Patriarch Lü. He also shows gratitude for Lü’s lessons about the “greater circulation of gold fluid” and Lü’s heart-to-heart transmission that helped Master Lee read the *Doctrine of the Mean* with insight. This is why Master Lee honored Lü as his conversion master.

The *Zhong-Lü chuandao ji* is a book of dialogues between Zhongli Quan 鐘離泉 and Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 about Daoist cultivation and internal alchemy, Zhongli teaching and Lü learning. Topics range from the mortal condition of human beings to a participatory understanding of Heaven’s Dao. It puts forth stages for cultivation of the inner elixir, culminating with ascension of pure yang spirit, its particular contribution to internal alchemy that was adopted by many schools that all acknowledge the two as patriarchs. While the text provides the theoretical basis, its concrete methods appear in the *Lingbao bifa* 靈寶畢法 (Conclusive Methods of Numinous Treasure; trl. Baldrian-Hussein 1984). According to this, “all six feet of this body belong to yin with only a little spark of original yang.” To gain longevity or immortality, then, one is to refine that “little spark of original yang” into pure yang spirit.

When this ascends, breaking through the Gate of Heaven at the crown of the head, it is like a newborn babe: “Although *shen* has

emerged, at the sight of something terrible fear will arise, and at the sight of something desirable craving will arise. But if it goes along with those feelings it will lose itself and enter an obsessive state."³ When spirit first emerges from the body's shell, it only goes a few steps, then returns to its sheath-envelope to avoid being pulled off by visions of frightening or desired things. Gradually it moves off a few hundred yards, to separate far from the body without mishap after reaching full maturity. At this point the body-outside-the-body is accomplished and the immortal plane is attained. If the spirit chooses to maintain union with the corporeal envelope, then the body too can share in a subtle state, being within the world yet not vulnerable to its disasters. Similarly, the spirit can remain in the world to accumulate merit and be ready for a summons, at which time it will leave the shell and soar upward to become a celestial.

In his poem to Patriarch Lü, Master Lee wrote: "In person you bestowed the golden fluid's greater circuit." This is probably not just a literary metaphor. From the time he first visited the Baxian gong to his initial stay on Mount Hua, Master Lee practiced according to the method in "Shortcut to Samadhi," and a sacred embryo was beginning to form within him. Had he kept going in that direction, he would have approached that traditional achievement—"ascension of the pure yang spirit." But thanks to the guidance from immortals like Patriarch Lü, he embarked on a new road to the "immediate realization of a conferred spirit." This allowed a divinely bestowed seed to develop and grow directly in the upper elixir field in the head, rather than in the lower field, from where it would have had to rise up. From the upper elixir field the spirit can pass in and out through the Gate of Heaven. The sacred embryo in the body, moreover, became an energy source to serve the growth of the seed.

Because the seed is bestowed by heavenly order, a non-physical elixir from outside the body, not made by human intention, its growth does not require any contrived effort. This is the gist of nonaction in this system. What is more, because the sacred embryo's *qi* is no longer concentrated inward to nourish it, instead providing for the bestowed seed, "we do not focus effort on the physical body" (Lee 1992, 23). This, then,

³ *Changdao zhenyan* 唱道真言, Vol.1, *Zangwai daoshu*, vol. 10, Chengdu: Ba-shu chubanshe. For more on this break-through, see Eskildsen 2009.

is “a path of giving with both spirit and flesh.” After the yang *spirit* clears its upward path, one needs to supplement it with meritorious deeds, to save and assist others, and only then one will receive a summons from the Lord of Heaven to soar up from the bodily shell and enter the ranks of the celestial immortals. In contrast, the conferred spirit is a spirit-seed bestowed by the Lord in the first place to rescue the world from calamity: it exists to do the work of saving people of the world. During his eight years on Mount Hua, Master Lee succeeded in cultivating thirty-four such conferred spirits.

Conclusion

At the end of WWII Master Lee left Hua Mountain and returned to Shanghai. He devoted his efforts to furthering religious concord, hoping to dispel the strife between Communists and Nationalists through an appeal to spirituality. In 1949, acting upon a revelation from Cloud-Dragon Sage, he took his family to Taiwan, where he regularly offered up prayers for Taiwan’s safety and for a renaissance in China.

During his Taiwan period, Master Lee ran a newspaper—the *Independent Evening News* 自立晚报, intending to serve his country by offering a platform for open, informed discourse. After withdrawing from the newspaper in 1965, he actively engaged in capital investments, hoping that the earnings would support propagation of the Dao. In 1979 he began holding classes in original quiet sitting, and in 1980 he founded Tiandi jiao. Aside from setting up halls in Taiwan, America and Japan, the faith has followers scattered through many countries: Canada, England, Germany, Holland, Mainland China, Korea and Malaysia. Most members joined while learning about quiet sitting and *CHI* healing. Master Lee more than once remarked that Daoist teachers in ancient times went by strict rules in choosing disciples, but he chose to transmit the practice openly, allowing many people to benefit. Today Tiandi jiao has over 300,000 members.

Tiandi jiao’s training in meditation has four levels.

1) Serene quite sitting: The Twenty Watchwords are taught as a means of drawing down righteous *qi* of heaven and earth. Treated as a means of achieving health in body, mind and spirit, this belongs to the stage of nurturing life.

2) 100-day training sessions in original quiet sitting: During these sessions learners receive the Touch of Dao so as to draw down *zuqi* 祖炁 (primordial, innate *CH'I*). They also learn memory verses and protective visualizations. This belongs to the foundation-building stage.

3) 55-day Service Corps training retreats: This emphasizes tempering of original spirit.

4) 55-day Mentorship Corps training retreats: This enters the stage of cultivating a conferred spirit seed.

Basically Tiandi jiao's system of quiet sitting commences as a health-enhancing practice which leads step by step to concern for the human predicament. This is a path of rescue giving awareness in an endangered era. As a result many believers change their view of life and actively commit themselves to striving for all beings under Heaven. This fits with the emerging consciousness of global citizenship. Making a rough estimate, over 11,000 members completed a formal session of original quiet sitting and were personally initiated by Master Lee. By now over 70 sessions of this practice have been held in Taiwan, America and Japan. Over 1500 people have completed a Service Corps retreat, and 13 people have succeeded in cultivating a conferred seed of spirit.

In terms of Tiandi jiao as an organization, at the world level there is an Inception Hall; at the national level there are Presiding Halls; beneath that are regional halls, origin halls and chapels at province, city and county/township levels. There is also an active women's lodge, service organizations (Red Heart Association), a network of youth clubs, and adult education programs.

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Interviewing Daoist Masters

A Reality Check

CHRISTOPHER COTT

Much of the confusion and misinformation that have plagued Daoist studies until recently is due to Western scholars interpreting Daoist texts and teachings on their own terms. Had early missionaries and sinologists allowed living Daoists to have more of a voice in their research, rather than relying on often poorly translated texts and other sources from, for example, the Neo-Confucian tradition, a different picture may have emerged. Thus, while it is important that we form our own scholarly opinions about Daoists texts and ideas, we must also be sure to check in regularly with the living Daoist community and allow them a prominent voice in Daoist scholarship. On this background, as part of my dissertation on the utility of Daoism in psychology (Cott 2013), I recently went to China to confer with ordained Daoist practitioners regarding their views on Daoism.

Primary Considerations

Cott and Rock (2009) outline two primary sources of material for the academic study of Daoism. The first is the textual tradition as contained in collections such as the *Daozang* 道藏 and *Zangwai Daoshu* 藏外道書. The second is the living tradition as found in predominantly the *Quanzhen* 全真 and *Zhengyi* 正一 movements. Needless to say, scholars of Daoism spend a great deal of time with textual sources. These are relatively easy to come by and can be accessed without leaving the office. Fur-

thermore, they cover the entire spectrum of Daoism from virtually any point in its history. However, it is important that we do not neglect the living tradition for a number of reasons.



The Black/Green Ram of Qing Yang Gong.¹

Perhaps the first and most obvious reason for conferring with the living Daoist tradition, rather than relying solely on textual sources, is the Chinese language. Although many scholars of Daoism are proficient in literary Chinese, there are still often many possible interpretations of a given passage. It is common practice in Daoism to have verbal transmissions that go along with the texts but are passed on only by word of mouth. Indeed, the author has encountered complex explanations of the various components of single characters, let alone whole texts. It may therefore be beneficial for scholars to confer with living Daoists in order

¹ *Qing* 青 may be translated as either 'green' or 'black.' The ram appears black now, but is made of bronze so may have appeared green at an earlier date.

to consolidate which of a number of interpretations may be correct in a given context.

This is especially true where concepts specific to Daoism are involved. For example, a text might make mention of *jing* 靜, which might be translated as "stillness," "tranquility," or the like. A scholar reading this might assume they understand what "stillness" means and move on. However, the term may indicate a specific meditative state in a given Daoist school, which may or may not be just as we expect it to be, and may have profound implications for the interpretation of the rest of the text. In this case, a scholar who simply reads the text and assumes they understand the concepts based on their prior knowledge of different systems may well be misled unless they confer with living representatives of the tradition.

There are also fundamental psychological differences between the Eastern and Western minds (see Nisbett 2003). For example, Western cultures tend to be more individualistic, viewing the self as a unitary free-agent and valuing individual expression and personal achievement. In contrast, Eastern cultures tend to be more collectivist, viewing the self as part of a greater whole and privileging group harmony and collective benefit over individual expression and personal gain.

Easterners and Westerners also seem to experience the world in different ways. Easterners, more than Westerners, tend to emphasize background and context, even in simple things such as looking at a photograph, suggesting that they see the world more as a complex series of relationships, rather than a collection of independent components (e.g., Ji, Peng, & Nisbett 2000; Masuda & Nisbett 2001). Another interesting example can be found in Imae and Gentner (1994), who showed Japanese and American participants an object of a particular shape and substance (e.g., a cone made of cork). They then presented them with an object that was of the same shape as the first but made from a different substance plus yet another object of the same substance but shaped differently. When asked which of the two objects matched theirs, Japanese participants selected for substance, whereas Americans selected for shape.

The above are just a few examples of the many differences between Eastern and Western thought. Of course, the similarities often outweigh the differences, but these differences can still come into play in a variety

of circumstances. Researchers should, therefore, keep these differences in mind when attempting to extract meaning from Daoist material, and the living tradition can be a great help in clarifying this and avoiding misinterpretation.



A tree on Mt. Heming said to have been planted by Zhang Sanfeng.

Practitioners' Impressions

When in China, I met with a number of ordained Sichuan Daoists. I hoped to validate a questionnaire measure of Daoist thinking.² I visited

² The following analysis is based on my dissertation; it can also be found in Cott, Mellor, Xu, and Mo (under review). It is worth noting that the version of the questionnaire attached to the current paper is subsequent to these further analyses, so some items that appeared in discussion with Daoist masters do not appear in the final version of the questionnaire.

various temples and holy mountains to interview Daoists of many diverse backgrounds. Although the temples were officially Quanzhen establishments, many paid homage to Celestial Master (Tianshi 天師) beliefs and practices. For example, one respondent was the head Daoist on Mount Heming, which is now a Quanzhen institution but was originally affiliated with the Celestial Masters. Tradition has it as the place where Zhang Daoling, the first Celestial Master, received a revelation from the deified Laozi in 142 CE. Another, similar temple is Tianshi gong on Mount Qingcheng, with several halls devoted to Celestial Master patriarchs.

I had in-depth conversations with eleven ordained Daoists plus less formal conversations along the way. Two Daoists were from Mount Heming, six from different temples on Mount Qingcheng, and the others came from Qingyang gong in Chengdu. Some of these temples were bustling tourist destinations, while others were off the beaten track. Each had its own unique charm and some illustrious history. For example, according to tradition, after Laozi transmitted the *Daode jing* to Yin Xi, he told him to "practice Dao for one thousand days and find me again at Qingyang market in Chengdu." This location is today the Qingyang gong, where the deified Laozi appeared to Yin Xi. In a similar fashion, he descended to Mount Heming to reveal Dao to Zhang Daoling.

Each practitioner was unique in his impression. Some were wise old men, subdued, and aloof from the world but with a light in their eyes that suggested they knew things most of us don't. Others were young and sharp, quickly penetrating the nature of reality. One of my favorite conversations was with a young master, of perhaps thirty years, about the preordained connection between people and the transcendence of language with heart to heart communication. Others still were just beginning their path. One middle-aged woman had just renounced lay life and moved to the mountain. She was working on the restoration of a temple in the back of the mountain, far off the tourist trail, with her husband. She was not confident enough to discuss Dao with us, but was kind and gentle and helped us on our way.

Although the masters generally met with the author's expectations, some practitioners were unique in this regard. For example, one female master was the head of the entire Qingcheng community. She seemed

highly suited to the busy position, active and constantly engaged in conversation about managing affairs. She did not, however, seem to embody some of the Daoist principles, such as nonaction (*wuwei* 無爲) or non-attachment. For example, before she met with us, she mentioned that she was extremely frustrated because a businessman had requested permission to use the mountain's name to promote his product. During the interview, she also insisted that one must learn Chinese to study Daoism properly. Although proficiency in the Chinese language is obviously of great assistance, this seems to go against the opening lines of the *Daode jing* that Dao transcends language.



Clouds of incense inside Shangqing Gong, Qingcheng Mountain.

The various interviews raise an interesting conundrum for Western scholars. While it is true that not everyone labeled Daoist embodies Daoist principles, how, as outside observers, are we to distinguish which views accurately represent the tradition and which do not? Do we have any right to suggest that an ordained Daoist practitioner does not represent the tradition? I don't claim to have an answer to these ques-

tions. One approach to dealing with this issue might be to not take any single viewpoint as representative, but to take the most common or most prominent one. This, however, excludes the possibility of exceptional people offering views that other members of the tradition have not yet realized. All we can do is persevere and do our best to be objective in our assessments. The important lesson is not to assume that all Daoists are going to act as we expect, and not to dismiss them if they do not meet our expectations.

The Learning Curve

General conversations aside, six Daoists gave direct feedback on our view of Daoism as expressed in seventy-two statements on a systematic questionnaire. Some statements found agreement by all six practitioners, providing strong support that they accurately represented Daoist views. They included: "I value simplicity over extravagance;" "I believe all things are ultimately One;" "Regardless of how they affect me I accept things as they occur;" "Interfering with the flow of situations won't result in the best outcome;" "Going too far in one direction results in things turning back on themselves;" and others. These statements represent my personal understanding of key Daoist concepts, such as nonaction, naturalness, and yinyang. I was greatly reassured that Daoists supported them.

Many statements in the questionnaire, on the other hand, were evaluated in ways that did not meet with our expectations, or only partially so. The vast majority of these were "reverse coded," i.e., they were phrased in the opposite direction of the expected answer. For example, if we expected a Daoist to not be possessive, a reverse coded statement might be: "I am very possessive." In scoring, the answer would be counted in reverse. Statements of this sort are included in a questionnaire to make sure participants do not just go through checking a "10" each time without actually reading and considering the statement. However, all but a few of these items proved problematic for Daoists—who were uncomfortable with the questionnaire format to begin with—and were eventually removed.

Then again, there were statements in straightforward presentation that elicited an unexpected response. The first of these was, "I prefer to

take the path of least resistance.” Two of six practitioners responded somewhere in the middle of the scale; two others valued this negatively. The statement was designed to capture ideas like that expressed in the *Zhuangzi* of the swimmer in the Lüliang waterfall who survives and even thrives in the roaring waters because he follows the natural currents. Given that the practitioners strongly endorsed similar items, such as “I think it is better not to try to go against the flow,” it is possible that the problem was the wording. Indeed, “path of least resistance” is quite an idiomatic phrase which maybe does not translate well into Chinese, possibly giving the impression of laziness or avoidance. However, we must also consider the possibility that this represents a nuanced difference in understanding of nonaction. It is possible, for example, that taking the path of least resistance is too passive a view, the scales being unbalanced in the direction of yin, as it were. Perhaps Daoists, while following the natural flow of events, are also influencing that flow by subtle, considered effort. At the very least, it has inspired me to consider the subtle interplay between leading and following in greater detail.

Another statement Daoists reacted to in unexpected ways was “I like to deal with things before they become a problem.” Three practitioners responded somewhere in the middle; one responded in the opposite direction to what was expected. The statement was designed to capture ideas expressed in *Daode jing* 64, closely rephrasing the chapter. Given that it came almost verbatim from one of the most influential Daoist texts, it is surprising that practitioners did not endorse it wholeheartedly.

This may again be due to linguistic issues. I attempted to use plain language expressions in the questionnaire, so that non-Daoists could respond according to their natural inclinations in day-to-day life. However, the statements were first written in English and then translated into Chinese, so that quite possibly their meaning was altered somewhat along the way. One practitioner also pointed out that sometimes things are already a problem when we come to them and suggested adding a “where possible” at the beginning of the statement. Although we eventually cut it completely from the questionnaire, I think the issue had more to do with translation than with differences in meaning. In this regard certainly the head Daoist at Mount Qingcheng was right: when communicating with non-English speaking Chinese Daoists, fluency in Chinese is a great asset.

Another tricky statement was, "I believe the universe will supply me with everything I really need." Two practitioners answered contrary to expectation; two others did not respond at all. We used "universe" instead of Dao or Heaven, so that the statement would be applicable to non-Daoists while hoping to capture the idea that if Dao is followed one need not worry about having all one needs. There are numerous passages in the *Daode jing* that suggest this idea, such as the sage putting himself last and being put first, Dao being inexhaustible, being "nourished by the Mother," Heaven and/or the Dao protecting the sage so that wild animals won't attack him, and so on. However, in all these points, the practitioner must actually be doing something, i.e., following Dao, and this was not captured in the statement. This is further emphasized by one of the practitioners noting that "if you do good things then this is true, but if you do bad things then it is not." Also, the item may have been problematic because it requires two stages of interpretation: what I really need and whether the universe will supply it.

Third, there are also a number of chapters in the *Daode jing* that seem to contradict this idea. For example, some passages state that the sage knows when it is enough and stops there, suggesting that he actively acquires things for himself and stops when he has enough (or gives away the excess). Even more prominent than this is the idea that Heaven and Earth treat people like straw dogs (impartially), not providing them with what they need. This leads to accepting loss and misfortune as part of the course. Such passages seem to suggest that the sage is not free from loss or misfortune, but because of his attitude is not affected negatively. It would seem then that Daoist views on loss and gain, having enough, acquiring what one needs, and so on, are extremely subtle and nuanced and require further consideration before we can fully understand them.

The statement, "People and events have a particular nature and I accept that without judging them," also proved to be somewhat problematic, with three practitioners answering somewhere in the middle and one failing to respond. The item was aimed at capturing the concept of naturalness (*ziran*), the "suchness" of things. One reason practitioners may have been non-committal is that people may change their nature through cultivation. There may also be an issue with the final part of the item regarding judgment. Although I would not expect Daoist practi-

tioners to pass judgment on others, there may have been a subtle difference in meaning after translation, with “judgment” being rendered more in terms of making an assessment regarding how to manage a situation, rather than making a value-laden judgment call.

Another item on which two practitioners answered in the middle and two failed to respond was “Sometimes, instead of trying to get something I want, I prefer to stop wanting it.” This item referred to non-attachment and was actually derived from my personal repertoire of techniques for relinquishing attachment. Although two of the practitioners endorsed the technique, it is not specifically Daoist. It is important not to lose objectivity when engaging in research and a personal technique should not have been included in a more general measure of Daoist thinking style. It was only after engaging with the Daoist practitioners that I noticed how much of this was my own. It again highlights the importance of dialogue with the living Daoist community.

To the statement, “I use techniques like meditation to control my mind,” two practitioners failed to respond, one answered somewhere in the middle, and two others answered in the expected direction but only after detailed clarification. It was included in the hope to find whether lay people engage in some form of cultivation practice. In hindsight, it was too vague and general for ordained Daoist practitioners, given the sheer variety of Daoist techniques. However, practitioners also suggested that the word “control” might be changed to something like “regulate,” indicating that the attitude of controlling the mind was too rigid and contrary to Daoist principles.

One further set of statements that required revising involved the word “try,” such as “I try to remain calm in all situations.” To this, two practitioners answered somewhere in the middle and one failed to respond. Although it sometimes did not pose a problem, the Daoists explained that in general they were not comfortable with the use of “try,” because it implied concerted effort that did not conform to ideas like nonattachment and nonaction. “I try to get in touch with the spiritual side of myself” also fell in this category, although one practitioner explained that it had another issue: the individual is a unified whole so that having a spiritual “side” made no sense. We then changed the statement to “I am a spiritual person.”

Conclusion

In this paper, I have reported on my experiences of meeting and conversing with ordained Daoist practitioners in Sichuan. I set out to examine my own beliefs and ways of understanding Daoism, to ascertain to just what degree they matched the beliefs and understanding of living practitioners. All the Daoists I met were helpful and happy to share their knowledge and experience. Although I found most of my perceptions confirmed, conversing with the practitioners I refined my understanding and became aware of some unwarranted assumptions. Overall, it was a thoroughly worthwhile exercise. I strongly suggest that both scholars and Western practitioners of Daoism are careful about becoming overly confident in their understanding of Daoism without first engaging with the living Daoist community.

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Daoist Thinking Style Questionnaire English

The following statements describe certain behaviors an individual might engage in or certain attitudes or beliefs that they might hold. We are interested in how closely each statement relates to you. Please check the box under the number from 0 to 10 to indicate how closely each statement resembles your behaviors or beliefs, with 0 meaning not at all and 10 meaning completely.

I never think this way	Mixed					Exactly like me				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

1. I believe I am ultimately one with all things.
2. Balance is important in everything I do.
3. Regardless of how they affect me I accept things as they occur.
4. Sometimes a soft approach can overcome a hard obstacle.
5. Sometimes it's better not to do anything.
6. I try to remain unmoved by both winning and losing.
7. I try not to be possessive.
8. I know when it is enough and I stop there.
9. Sometimes bad situations turn into good ones and good situations turn into bad ones.
10. I try to avoid being overly attached to a particular outcome
11. I accept people for what they are.
12. Sometimes keeping silent brings about the best result.
13. I try to maintain a calm, composed attitude, rather than get emotionally involved in things.
14. I remain calm in all situations.
15. I accept myself as I am.
16. I like to become still and quiet before I act.
17. I value simplicity over extravagance.

Coding:

Simplicity & non-attachment – 6, 7, 8, 10, 17

Ziran – 3, 11, 15

Nonaction – 2, 4, 5, 9, 12

Worldview – 1, 13, 14, 16

Daoist Thinking Style Questionnaire Chinese

以下描述了作为个人可能表现出的某些行为或者可能持有的某种态度或观点。我们希望了解，以下的这些描述在多大程度上与你相符合。请从 0 到 10 中进行选择并勾选下方的方框，以此说明该描述与你的行为或信念的相似程度，0 表示完全不符，10 表示完全一致。

从不这样想						部分符合						和我完全一样
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

- 1.我认为我是一个兼容并蓄的人
- 2.我做任何事都力求保持平衡
- 3.无论自己会受到什么样的影响，我都会接受现实
- 4.有时温和的方式可以解决棘手的困难
- 5.有时，无为胜于有为
- 6.我尽量做到胜不骄败不馁
- 7.我支配欲不强
- 8.我知“足”，并适可而止
- 9.有时候，祸兮福所倚，福兮祸所伏
- 10.我会尽量避免过于执着于某个结果
- 11.无论对方是什么样的人，我都能坦然接受
- 12.有时，沉默是金
- 13.我尽量保持冷静、自若的态度，而不是感情用事
- 14.我在所有情况下都保持冷静
- 15.我坦然接受自己的一切
- 16.我喜欢在行动前取得镇定和平静
- 17.我崇尚简朴而不是奢华

编码:

简易和非附着 - 6, 7, 8, 10, 17

自然 - 3, 11, 15

无为 - 2, 4, 5, 9, 12

世界观 - 1, 13, 14, 16

Laozi and the New Green Paradigm

MARTIN SCHÖNFELD

A curious feature of this century is that we are facing a biospherical crisis, while the cultural pretense is being made, most remarkably in the United States, that this crisis is either not real (according to the political right) or not requiring real responses (according to the political center). Right-wing climate denial persists together with a bipartisan downplay of the crisis. Meanwhile the crisis is transforming from a threat to the natural environment into a threat for global civilization. It is humanity that is now in the crosshairs.

The transformation of the crisis redefines what it means to be green. One can speak of a paradigm shift: there is a distinct *before* and an equally distinct *after*. In the 20th century, environmentalism was about wilderness preservation and endangered species protection. Environmentalists fought against pollution and degradation. But in the 21st century, these concerns integrate into a bigger picture, framed by worries such as biospherical stability, and queries of how to bring the requisite socio-economic sustainability about. Environmentalism today is the struggle to slow down climate change, to rein in resource depletion, and to head off possible social collapse. Current debates, such as the pros and cons of geo-engineering, reflect a larger problem, namely how aggressive, invasive or interventionist the needed solutions will have to be.¹

¹ An example of such new topics is the conference on *Religious/Spiritual Perspectives on Climate Engineering*, by the Institute of Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) and the Potsdam Institute of Climate Impact Research (PIK), in Berlin, 24-26 April 2013.

With its emphasis on nonaction, nonviolence, and gentleness, Daoism clearly belonged to old-style environmentalism, before the transformation of the crisis. But just these traits are raising now questions. How can gentleness be the proper response to ecological overshoot? How can climate change be reined in by nonaction? How can there be effective biospherical geo-engineering without doing violence to Mother Earth? At least some of the features that had made Daoism so attractive to environmentalists in the first place are now those that the shifting green paradigm seems to be leaving behind.

That, in theory, Daoism is essential to a green paradigm, no matter its shifts, strikes me as a foregone conclusion. I think Laozi offers us an evolutionary roadmap to a sustainable future (see Schönfeld 2012; 2013a; 2013b). The *Daode jing* 道德經 is one of the very few manuals of wisdom with genuine sensitivity to the dynamics of nature, and there is hardly another philosophy as clear on environmental values as that of Daoism. Still, in reality, how can Laozi be part of the new green, since the crisis makes his ideas look dated, especially nonaction (*wuwei* 無爲)?

Tricky in the study of this problem is its interdisciplinary character. Solving it requires reasoning that is both macro-level and yet deeply integrated. That is to say, determining whether and if so, how, Laozi still fits the new green, needs settling a set of subordinate issues, about the crisis, about culture, and about environmentalism. On the one hand, these issues need to be settled, otherwise the attempt at a solution begs questions (such as, is there really a crisis? Is it so really so bad? And why blame culture? Is it not a scientific problem? Why will culture have to change, and change so much? And why will noninterference not do the job anymore? Why resort to intervention?). On the other hand, successfully settling these issues will give the inquiry the appearance of going off track—after all, this is supposed to be about Laozi.

There is no way around this, and the goal can only be to integrate interdisciplinary information so that each step of reasoning furthers the inquiry. Since the burden of proof rests on those who advance claims, no question must be begged here, even at the risk of adducing too much empirical evidence. The first question is, what is the crisis about, and how has it been changing? Second, how is the crisis a cultural problem, and how is our culture in denial? What paradigm shift—and this brings

us to Laozi—rides on connecting the dots? Third, why is intervention warranted now, and how would it qualify the environmentalist appropriation of Laozi? Will the new environmentalism require us to qualify *wuwei*, or will *wuwei* qualify crisis intervention, or does a possible qualification perhaps even go both ways?

Crisis Then and Now

The first herald of crisis was the threat to scenic beauty when the American frontier rolled west. John Muir (1838-1914) pioneered wilderness preservation in the New World, and his efforts led to the protection of Yosemite Valley. He said, "The world, we are told, was made especially for man—a presumption *not* supported by all the facts" (1916, ch. 6). Elsewhere he notes, "When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe" (1869, ch. 6). The fight for scenic beauty, the reminder that we are not the center and the vision of interrelatedness are Muir's contributions to environmentalism. Each node of nature's web connects to others. Humans are part of a whole. The whole and its parts are beautiful.

The second harbinger of crisis was a farm- and rangeland expansion, which went astray in the dust bowl. Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) explored the idea of land health and argued that the system's integrity, not just scenic spots, needs to be protected. Land health is a good, and recognizing this would be the next step for civilization. It is typical of evolutionary steps to spark controversy. Calling this the A-B cleavage, Leopold wrote, "One group (A) regards the land as soil, and its function as commodity production; another group (B) regards the land as a biota, and its function as something broader" (1987, 221). Progress in human evolution, according to Leopold, is to move from mindset A to the outlook of B:

The 'key-log' which must be moved to release the evolutionary process for an ethic is simply this: quit thinking about decent land-use as solely an economic problem. Examine each question in terms of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. (1987, 224-25)

The crisis arrived in the 1960s with smog, dying rivers (or burning ones, as Ohio's Cuyahoga River did in '69), oil spills and toxic runoff. With pollution came poisons. Rachel Carson (1907-1964) described the impact of insecticides on bird populations and public health. The message implied in her *Silent Spring* (1962) was compelling: since the crisis was caused by interfering with nature, we need to abstain and desist. Messing things up is the problem, and stopping the mess is the solution. Mainstreamed into culture, this found expression in the 1997 Steven Spielberg movie *Lost World*. Dinosaurs cloned from ancient DNA escape from their island preserve, must be caught again, and are then shipped back to their island. All ends well, and in the final frame the founder of Jurassic Park (played by Richard Attenborough) says,

It is absolutely imperative that we work with the Costa Rican Department of Biological Preserves to establish a set of rules for the preservation and isolation of that island. These creatures require our absence to survive, not our help. And if we could only step aside . . . and trust in nature . . . life will find a way. (Koepp 1997)

These, then, are the two leitmotifs of old environmentalism: life will find a way if we can step aside; and, nature requires our absence, not our help. But as the crisis deepened, it began to change, driven by the very expansion that had brought the crisis about in the first place. The 20th century saw an event called *the great acceleration*: human population quadrupled, tripling in the second half, the global economy grew twenty-fold, growing fifteen-fold in the second half. In other words, expansion was speeding up (Steffen et al. 2007, 617; IMF 2000, 149).

The great acceleration has led to four spikes: a massive growth of population, matter/energy-consumption, CO₂ emissions, and species extinctions. These spikes boost one another, weaving an entanglement with the risk of cascading consequences (Ayres 2000). This puts the crisis on a whole new level. One aspect is that our impact on nature, at the turn of the millennium, is on a scale comparable to the shift from Cretaceous to Paleocene. For biodiversity, the global economy is like the comet that wiped out the dinosaurs. Civilization is so mighty that it is a planetary force. And indeed, geologists tell us that we are now in an era of our own, the Anthropocene.

Another aspect of this impact is *ecological overshoot*. Demographic and economic pressures on planetary biological productivity are now such that they exceed the renewal rates of resources, and that they overload the capacity of environmental services. So, human demand simply exceeds natural supply. The details of this overshoot—planetary boundaries, sustainable yield thresholds, and, most importantly, the carbon footprint—are well understood:

Human activities have exceeded the biosphere's capacity since the 1980s. This overshoot can be expressed as the extent to which human area demand exceeds nature's supply: whereas humanity's load corresponded to 70 percent of the biosphere's capacity in 1961, this percentage grew to 120 percent by 1999. In other words, 20 percent overshoot means that it would require 1.2 earths, or one earth for 1.2 years, to regenerate what humanity used in 1999. (Wackernagel 20002, 9268)

Since the 1980s, civilization has broken through three planetary boundaries: for climate change, for biodiversity loss, and for the global nitrogen cycle (Rockström et al. 2009, 32; Steffen et al. 2011). By 2008, our overshoot had grown to 150 percent or 1.5 earths (Assadourian and Prugh 2013, 41). ²This boundary-violation really changed the character of the crisis, transforming it from a crisis of distinct environments and life-forms into a crisis of the whole system.

Symptom of the crisis deepening into the entire structure is *climate change*. This is not just another problem; it is a game-changer (which explains the wish for denial). While the old problems were limited to certain species like tigers, or to some biomes like reefs, this new problem knows no limits: climate change affects the Arctic and equatorial Africa; it affects the acidity of the seas, the intensity of typhoons, and rainfall rhythms over farmland; it stresses tropical valleys, alpine meadows, and fish populations alike. For the planet, we are too many, and we want too much. Our impact forces the system out of the very balance the biosphere is adapted to and that agriculture is accustomed to. All this gives a formerly aesthetic issue, ethical wrong, and health concern, à la Muir,

² See also Global Footprint Network, *Annual Report 2012*, 27, 36. http://www.footprintnetwork.org/images/article_uploads/2012_Annual_Report.pdf. Accessed 11/1/13.

Leopold, and Carson, an *existential* dimension. Degradation and pollution were emblematic of the crisis in the past. Flailing governments, failed states, food insecurity, and forced migrations will be emblematic of it in the future.

Cultural Disconnect, Civil Evolution, and *Buji*

Yet, bad outcomes are not inevitable. The etiology of the crisis is known, and the boundary for stability, the 2° C guardrail, is well understood (Rockström 2009).³ Science tells us what is going on and what must be done. Engineering hands us the tools for building a sustainable civilization. With current technology, for instance, all U.S. energy needs can be met with wind energy alone (Brown 2009, 111). We know what to do. We have the tools we need. But we just don't do it.

That the crisis can actually be handled discloses its cultural essence. Climate change, ecological overshoot, and environmental degradation are not basic scientific problems, and solving them poses no technological difficulty either. They are *problems of culture*, and so are their solutions. Defusing the crisis will require (1) to decarbonize the energy infrastructure, (2) to reduce fertility rates, and (3) to create a stable, steady-state, no-growth economy. If we do these three things, our children and descendants will likely be fine. But this presupposes prioritizing the protection of life, children, and future generations. At present, however, another priority matters more: the protection of the market.

Consequently, political discourse on these requirements is taboo. The U.S. energy infrastructure is not being decarbonized; on the contrary, it now relies on fossil fuels whose recovery is energy-intensive and has a large carbon footprint of its own, such as deep water drilling, tar sands mining, and oil shale extraction, or is highly toxic, such hydro-fracking natural gas. As the depletion of conventional deposits makes the recovery of dirty substitutes profitable, the U.S. economy locks itself in a carbon regime.⁴

³ The 2° C guardrail means that a rise of average global surface temperatures of no more than 2° C from the 1980 baseline allows for climate stability.

⁴ 81% of U.S. energy in 2012 came from fossil fuels, in 1973, it was 93%; cf. "See how America's energy appetite has changed." *Time*, 24 Oct 2013,

Greening the economy would eat into corporate profits, while browning the economy is good for the market. If a politician today wanted to decouple the U.S. from gasoline and fossil fuels, and demand a Chinese-style investment in sustainable transit, and a German-style focus on sun and wind, she would be laughed right out of Congress. The cultural situation of fertility reduction is not different either. Public acceptance of gay marriage signals a welcome redefinition of sexuality as a healthy, happy part of human nature whose value is independent of procreation, but any politician who demanded lower birthrates and defended policies such as free access to contraception and abortion, penalties for ‘octomoms,’ and tax breaks for childless couples regardless of gender would spark outrage. Or consider the sanctity of the market. No politician today would dare to demand that market economies must stay within biophysical limits, and that the growth-based economic model must yield to a new model of sustainable planning. Yet it is precisely these taboo policies—and *only these policies*—that allow for stability.

The cultural heart of the crisis is climate denial. As recently as summer 2013, “some 55 percent of Republicans in the House and 65 percent of those in the Senate reject the science behind climate change or oppose action on climate change” (Goldenberg 2013). Overall, 58 percent of Republicans in the 113th Congress refuse to accept that climate change is happening and that humans are the cause (Germain 2013). Denial is worst on top: 70 percent of the Republicans on the House Committees on Energy, Commerce, and on Science, Space, and Technology are climate deniers, and so are 90 percent of the Republican leadership in House and Senate, as well as every single Republican on the Senate Committee for Environment and Public Works (Germain 2013).

There is no climate denial in the center. But the liberal mainstream fails to connect scientific facts and political implications. Avoiding the worst consequences of climate change requires cutting carbon emissions by 80 percent within the decade (Brown 2012, 116). But energy revolution and economic redesign are of marginal interest, and the pattern of information-flows shows how. News outlets catering to liberal readers,

like *Time* or *Huffington Post*, cover the crisis, but tuck this coverage away in 'science & tech' or 'nature' sections. So, for the right, the crisis is not real, and for the center, it is disconnected from cultural causes. As long as the crisis is solvable, it does not merit much attention, and when it will make attention-grabbing headlines, it may not be solvable anymore.

Denial and disconnect cannot be justified, but they can be explained. Mainstream culture is trapped in an ideology of individualism and consumerism, and this ideology needs to be there for market liberalism to stay unchallenged. Contrast this with the final statement in the *Daode jing* (ch. 81):

The sage never tries to store things up:
 The more he does for others, the more he has.
 The more he gives to others, the greater his abundance.
 The Dao of heaven is pointed but does no harm.
 The Dao of the sage is work without effect. (Feng and English 1997, 81)

A Daoist lifestyle would be good for the planet and for future generations, but it is bad for corporations and the superrich. Laozi's figure of the sage (*shengren* 聖人), like Confucius's figure of the gentleman (*junzi* 君子), is a role-model whose example everyone should follow. But now imagine everyone did. If we did not store things up (*buji* 不積) and opted out of the acquisitive society, consumerism would end. If we did more for others, dedicating ourselves to public service or economic cooperatives, capitalism would cease. Conversely, if no one heeded the final word of the *Daode Jing*, business as usual would go on, at least until the blowback from biophysical constraints will do it in.

The precept of not storing things up will be central to 21st-century environmentalism. The acquisitive society, with its ever hungry market, is now in open war against the Earth system; it fails to follow nature's way. Reminiscent of Leopold's A-B cleavage, this discloses a split—individualism versus socialism or social democracy, selfishness versus solidarity, or a Eurasian society of bikes, trains and windmills contrasted with a North American society of cars, SUVs, and oil tankers. Thus, sustainability requires a progression, a *civil evolution*, to a post-consumerist, post-capitalistic, and post-monetary world. The value of *buji*, of not stor-

ing things up, of letting them go instead, is of key significance. In this sense, a green future would have a rather Daoist ethos.

Climate Crisis, Intervention, and *Wuwei*

But should a green future also embrace the idea of nonaction (*wuwei*)? That nonaction should now be problematic marks a shift, because it is this idea—truly a leitmotif in the *Daode jing*⁵—that attracted ethicists to Laozi in the first place. In philosophy, Daoism was thematized from the very beginning of the environmental discourse. More specifically, environmental ethics emerged as an inquiry during a conference at the University of Georgia, held in Athens in 1971 under the title “Philosophy and the Environmental Crisis” (see Blackstone 1974). A journal, *Environmental Ethics*, was founded in 1979, also in Georgia.⁶ Essays on Daoism appeared early on (see Goodman 1980, Session 1981; Zimmerman 1983; Ip 1983). In 1986, an issue on Asian traditions with in-depth studies on Daoism came out (see Ames 1986; Cheng 1986), and the first academic book on Daoist environmental ethics appeared soon thereafter (Sylvan and Bennett 1990).

But all this happened before the crisis affected the Earth system. Now—and this is the turning point—noninterference will probably not suffice anymore. Granted, reducing CO₂ emissions is central to mitigation, and doing so surely represents a ‘stepping aside’ of humankind, and is thus *wuwei* in the conventional sense. But a reduction even of the full calculated amount, 80 percent in a decade, will not be enough to stop climate change.

Global climate is an inertial system, and such systems, when pushed out of balance and forced into a new regime, acquire momentum that will not suddenly dissolve when the push (the atmospheric input of CO₂ emissions) vanishes. This momentum alone can still push the system into a new steady state, such that global climate is forced into a new regime, hostile to human interests and destructive to biodiversity. Inertial

⁵ Nonaction (*wuwei*) occurs in chapters 2, 3, 37, 38, 43, 48, 57, 63 and 64.

⁶ A precursor is Richard Sylvan’s (aka Richard Routley) paper entitled, “Is There a Need for a New, an Environmental Ethic?” which he presented at the 15th World Congress of Philosophy in Varna, Bulgaria, 1973.

dynamic systems are like fast-moving freight trains. If you ease off the throttle, you will still coast for a while. Coasting, in this case, means that the climate would still change even if all emissions stopped tonight. To bring such a system to a stop—to rein global warming in—requires not just easing off the throttle, but also pulling the brakes. Pulling the brakes constitutes any of a wide range of interventions collectively known as *geo-engineering*.

The empirical question, whose answer is not yet known, is whether an emissions stop *without* geo-engineering will let climate change coast to a halt before hitting the 2° C guardrail. Maybe we get lucky, but there are various factors that make this risky: the persistence of atmospheric CO₂, the ocean heat sink, the Arctic summer sea ice melt-off, and the circumpolar permafrost thaw:

CO₂, once released, lingers in the air for decades, and as long as it lingers, it works as a greenhouse gas (GHG), and the so elevated GHG concentration adds to the climate forcing.

Oceans are not only carbon- but also heat sinks, and in the past decade they have absorbed more heat than expected from the air. This has slowed the rate of warming in the atmosphere, but this is a two-way street. Since even deeper marine layers are now warmer, climate change will continue for a while even without further human emissions because the oceans will gradually release the stored heat into the air.

Arctic summer sea ice is vanishing fast. The melt-off is now caught in a feedback loop because of the falling albedo (the surface reflectivity) caused by the disappearing ice.⁷

As the sea ice pulls in around the pole, it speeds up the permafrost thaw in the north of Eurasia and North America. The soils there are laced with frozen CH₄ or methane, a stronger GHG than CO₂. As the permafrost thaws, CH₄ frees up, and outgassing begins. This process is already underway (Shakova 2010). We do not know how much CH₄ is in the soil;

⁷ Ice, being bright, bounces back more insolation (solar radiation) than open water, being dark. As the ice melts, the bright, reflective area around the North Pole shrinks, and the surrounding dark, absorptive area grows. More insolation gets in. This energy input, in the form of heat, drives a feedback loop. The more ice melts, the more water warms, and the more water warms, the more ice melts.

we only know it may be enough to force the climate through the guardrail.

So the polar feedback brings very bad cascading consequences into view. Hence the likelihood of a natural escalation of climate change is now so high that merely stepping aside à la *wuwei* will be counterproductive. Climate may crash through the guardrail, and if that happens, it will be game over for many nation-states. This is why the new green paradigm hinges on intervention.

The tension between Daoism and interventionist practices is palpable in *Daode jing* 29:

Do you think you can take over the universe and improve it?
 I do not believe it can be done.
 The universe is sacred.
 You cannot improve it.
 If you try to change it, you will ruin it.
 If you try to hold it, you will lose it. (Feng and English 1997, 29)

Old-style environmentalism, as we have seen, is based on the ideas of conservation, preservation, and noninterference. In Laozi's injunction against improving the universe, *wuwei* corresponds to the idea of noninterference. Now, that intervention will be needed, environmentalism is changing, and the old abstain-and-desist maxim does not quite fit the transformation of the crisis. But note that there are three elements, not two, involved here. *Wuwei* fits noninterference, and noninterference is at odds with intervention. But does this mean that *wuwei* must be at odds with intervention as well? Is *wuwei* really reducible to noninterference, which is essentially a state of passivity?

Evidently, taking Daoist nonaction *literally* as "nonaction" not only overstates a connotation of *wuwei* but also gives us a misleading interpretation. Reflecting on the work of the psychologist Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, Livia Kohn proposes a reading of *wuwei* as an attitude of being in a flow-space, as, for instance, in Zhuangzi's notion of free and easy wandering (*you* 游): "Turn *all life* into a unified flow experience" (Kohn 2014, 19). This idea, that going with the flow is actually a *being in* the flow, and thus identical to it, suggests that *wuwei* cannot be passive and inert, since the flow, by its very nature, is active and dynamic.

An example of such a dynamic reading of *wuwei* comes to mind with the interplay of wind and canvas on a sailboat. Driven by the wind, a sailboat goes with the flow; the hull is aligned with the flow-space of the wind. But it is interesting to consider that being aligned with the wind's flow-space does not mean to sail precisely parallel to the wind in the direction it is blowing. If one imagines a sailboat as being on the dial of a clock, and the wind as coming from the direction of noon, then sailing towards six o'clock is actually slow going. A more efficient capture of the wind's force in the sail is to sail at an angle to the wind. In fact, the fastest, most dynamic travel would be to haul as close to the wind as the vessel allows; in a racing yacht, this can be all the way up to ten or two o'clock (it cannot be closer to noon because then the boat sits in irons). A sailboat runs under the power of the wind; it literally goes with the flow, and thus illustrates an example of *wuwei*. And the way to optimize going with the flow, to center nonaction in the unified flow experience, is to reach into the wind and zip off at an angle, not passively to be run by it, being pushed astern.

If this is *wuwei*, then nonaction is neither passive nor abstentious, because the sailboat actively engages the wind. *Wuwei* can be a style of engagement, and thus does not preclude intervention in principle. Add to this, in the context of the crisis, that the goal of intervention is not improvement, but rehabilitation, not change, but restoration, and not the attempt to control or to hold it, but rather the attempt to repair the damage done by the fossil economy. Intervention such as geo-engineering would be analogous to a surgical endeavor, serving the goal of fixing something that is broken, not the goal of improving on nature. While all surgeries are invasive, the best surgeries, with minimal trauma to the patient, and the best chance for recovery, are also the least invasive. What *wuwei* highlights, either in the context of sailing or in the context of surgery, is a harmonious alignment of action to context. So understood, *wuwei* is a smooth, strong, and gentle style. As a way of acting, it is *smart, frictionless efficiency*.

This, I hope, clarifies the issue of geo-engineering. Geo-engineering is not a wanton surgical procedure (as in cosmetic surgery done for cosmetic reasons), but a considered intervention for the sake of restoring systems integrity. And there is nothing in Daoism that prevents intervention for the sake of helping and promoting life. As long as the goal is to

save the planet, to heal Gaia, and to aid nature's flow, such intervention is warranted. A Daoist proverb says that humanity is the universe's elder brother who looks after the ten thousand things. Shouldering the Daoist duty of looking after the ten thousand things, I suspect, will make us embrace geo-engineering. So it is not the case that geo-engineering is incompatible with *wuwei*. Rather, *wuwei* can help to determine which strategies are better than others. Less invasive geo-engineering strategies, such as cool roofs and carbon scrubbers, are more compatible with *wuwei* than more invasive ones could possibly be, such as ocean fertilization or solar radiation management.⁸

This brings us back, in closing, to the role of Daoism in civil evolution. A sustainable civilization would appropriate the post-consumerist *buji*-meme as well as the elegance of *wuwei*, as a style of efficiency. The notion of smooth, frictionless action applies not only to the engineering side of the sustainability revolution, but also to its economic dimension. The clash between market and nature reveals an inverse relation between productivity and efficiency. An inefficient setup of cars driving on highways is good for the market, but bad for nature, just as an efficient high speed rail network is good for nature, but bad for the market. Inefficiencies spur market growth, and market growth worsens the crisis of the Earth system. The 2013 *State of the World* report puts it this way:

The more efficient we are, the less economic activity, raw materials, energy, and work are required to provide satisfying lives. When GDP rises faster than life satisfaction, efficiency declines. The goal should be to minimize GDP, subject to maintaining a high and sustainable quality of life. (Costanza et al. 2013, 139)

⁸ Cool roofs are a terrestrial albedo modification with reflective paints on rooftops, parking lots, and vehicle roofs, to offset the global warming produced by GHGs. Carbon scrubbers are machines, such as 'artificial trees' (K. Lackner, Earth Institute, Columbia Univ.), and 'scrubbing towers' (D. Keith, Univ. of Calgary), which can be mass-produced and filter CO₂ out (which can then be sequestered underground). Ocean fertilization is the dusting of seas with iron to create algae blooms, which take up CO₂ from the air. Solar radiation management involves ideas such as chemical cloud seeding or the dispersal of reflective metal flakes in the upper atmosphere, to reduce insolation.

In sum, *wuwei* as activity in a flowspace of efficiency serves as a yardstick for gauging which modes of geo-engineering are better than others, and as a compass needle for pointing a way out of the unsustainable economy.

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News

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Web Resources

A great link for free download of materials is found at: http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/chine_ancienne/auteurs_chinois.html#Anchor-Justus-35882
—Doug Gildow

This page has numerous links and contains the most comprehensive and useful collection of downloadable Daoist materials available to date:

<http://www.byscrj.com/jmm/> —Friederike Assandri

Conferences

Changing Fate in Religious Daoism

Erlangen, June 13-14, 2013

Convened by Terry Kleeman, this 2-day workshop explored the many different facets of fate in Daoism, including philosophical considerations, cosmological interpretations, ritual practices, and many more. Stephen Bokenkamp, Robert Campany, Vincent Goossaert, Barbara Hendrichske, Stephen Jones, Fabrizio Pregadio, and Michael Stanley-Baker presented. See <http://www.ikgf.uni-erlangen.de/events/event-history/workshops/2013/changing-fate-in-religious-daoism.shtml>

—Joachim Gentz

2013 International Conference on Religious Concern for Life

Kaohsiung, December 6-7, 2013

Held on the campus of Cheng Shiu University, this conference was primarily devoted to current issues among the Daoist faithful in Taiwan, though two presenters discussed end-of-life care issues from a Catholic perspective, and five speakers discussed topics in Daoist history. In the remaining six presentations, two general themes emerged: first, the necessity of making Daoist scriptures, doctrines, and practices more accessible to the general public, through the editing and publication of punctuated editions with easy-to-understand explanations, and through more effective outreach and systematic educational programs designed for children and for adults. The second theme, related to recent food quality scandals in Taiwan, concerned vigilance about diet and household use items—how can one properly practice inner alchemy, for instance, if one's food is filled with industrial chemicals? Presenters included Li Fengmao 李豐楙, Liu Guoliang 劉國梁, Thomas E. Smith, Maruyama Hirō 丸山宏, Yokote Yutaka 横手裕, and Weng Taiming 翁太明 (a Daoist priestess in Kaohsiung).

—Thomas E. Smith

Upcoming

Daoism: Tradition and Transition

Boston, May 29- June 1, 2014

The 9th International Conference on Daoist Studies will take place at its place of origin: Boston University. The focus is on Daoist thought, history, and practice—with particular attention to the impact Daoism has exercised in Chinese history and the contemporary world. Panel topics include *Daodejing*, *Zhuangzi*, *Huainanzi*, ritual, modern Daoism, military, martial arts, and qigong. Renowned qigong masters offer workshops throughout. For more details, see www.daoiststudies.org. To register, write to “daoconf@gmail.com.”

11th International Congress on Tao and TCM

Graz, September 25-27, 2014

This international meeting on Chinese medicine will focus on “Yangsheng Prevention—Better Aging” with a strong emphasis on Daoist-inspired methods. For details, please visit www-tcmkongress.at

4th Congress of Societas Medicinae Sinensis

Tutzing, October 3-5, 2014

Three days of presentations by major representatives of Chinese medicine, including Heiner Frühauf, Mazin Al-Khafaji, and senior Chinese professors like Deng Zhongjia and Hu Changjiang. For information, write to “sms@tcm.edu.”

Humanity between Heaven and Earth

October 31 - November, 2014

A meeting arranged in cooperation of the Schwabenakademie Irsee and the Medical Society for Qigong Yangsheng will offer new insights, vibrant discussions, and many practice sessions in southern Germany. For more, see www.schwabenakademie.de; www.qigong-yangsheng.de.

Science on Qi

Research Assessments

Khoury, B., Lecomte, T., Fortin, G., Masse, M., Therien, P., Bouchard, V., Chapleau, M.A., Paquin, K., & Hofmann, S.G. (2013). Mindfulness-based therapy: A comprehensive meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 33: 763-771. DOI: 10.1016/j.cpr.2013.05.005

This was a quantitative review of 209 research studies (n = 12,145 participants) that examined the effectiveness of various therapies that emphasized mindfulness meditation. Therapies were directed to a wide range of physical and medical conditions and psychological disorders in clinical and nonclinical populations. Mindfulness-based therapies (MBT) were more effective than psychoeducational interventions, supportive therapies, relaxation procedures and imagery/suppression techniques with small to moderate effect sizes that were clinically significant. MBT effects were equivalent to traditional cognitive behavior therapy, behavior therapy and pharmacological treatments. Effect sizes were larger when treating psychological disorders and smaller when treating physical or medical conditions. Anxiety disorders showed the largest effect sizes, followed by depression. Effectiveness continued after an average follow-up period of 29 weeks. In studies also examining measures of mindfulness, surprisingly only 45% of all studies, participants receiving MBT reported higher levels of mindfulness and that gains in mindfulness were maintained at last follow-up. Moreover, there was a strong positive relationship between levels of mindfulness in clinicians and patients and clinical outcomes, which suggests that changes in mindfulness mediate intervention effectiveness.

Chi, I., Jordan-Marsh, M., Guo, M., Xie, B., & Bai, Z. (2013). Tai chi and reduction of depressive symptoms for older adults: A meta-analysis of randomized trials. *Geriatrics and Gerontology International*, 13: 2-12. DOI: 10.1111/j.1447-0594.2012.00882.x

This quantitative review included 4 randomized controlled trials (n = 253 participants) that compared tai chi with wait-listed control groups, or control groups that received exercise, no exercise or health education.

All participants were at least 55 years old and reported depressive symptoms as measured by standardized rating scales. Participants came from community, outpatient and inpatient populations. Interventions that included only tai chi were included; studies that included tai chi as part of a more complex treatment were excluded from analysis. The primary outcomes examined were reduction in depressive symptoms. Tai chi was found to be effective in reducing depressive symptoms. Effect sizes were significant and small to moderate in strength.

Lakhan, S. E., Schofield, K.L. (2013). Mindfulness-based therapies in the treatment of somatization disorders: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *PLoS One*, 8(8): e71834. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0071834

This quantitative review included 13 randomized controlled trials (n = 1,032 participants who were almost all female) that examined the effectiveness of several types of mindfulness-based interventions (MBI; meditation, qigong, yoga, mindfulness-based stress reduction, and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy) on patients with a diagnosis of fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome or irritable bowel syndrome. Participants receiving MBI were compared to those assigned to wait-listed control groups, or control groups receiving education, support, relaxation, or treatment as usual. Outcomes included symptom severity, fatigue, pain, physical functioning, emotional functioning, global ratings of self-improvement, and adverse events. Compared to control group participants, those who received MBI demonstrated significantly more improvement in symptom severity for all somatization disorders, pain and quality of life for those with irritable bowel syndrome, and depression for those with general somatization disorder. Significant standardized mean differences favoring MBI were small to moderate in size. Mindfulness-based stress reduction and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy were more effective than eclectic forms of MBI.

Langhorst, J., Klose, P., Dobos, G.J., Bernardy, K., & Häuser, W. (2013). Efficacy and safety of meditative movement therapies in fibromyalgia syndrome: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Rheumatology International*, 33: 193-207. DOI 10.1007/s00296-012-2360-1

This quantitative review examined 7 randomized controlled trials (n = 362 participants diagnosed with fibromyalgia) that evaluated the effectiveness and safety of qigong, tai chi and yoga. The movement-based interventions were compared to wait-listed control groups or control groups that received education, emotional support, treatment as usual, or some form of active therapy. Outcomes included pain, sleep, fatigue, depression, and health-related quality of life. Treatments typically comprised 12 sessions for an average total of 18 hours. Collectively at the end of treatment, the meditative movement therapies demonstrated significant superior effects for reducing sleep disturbances, fatigue, depression and health-related quality of life. At follow-up assessment (median = 4.5 months), meditative movement therapies were more effective for reducing pain, sleep disturbances and health-related quality of life. Effect sizes were small to moderate in strength. There were no adverse effects.

Lauche, R., Langhorst, J., Dobos, G., & Cramer, H. (2013). A systematic review and meta-analysis of tai chi for osteoarthritis of the knee. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 21: 396-406. DOI: 10.1016/j.ctim.2013.06.1

This quantitative review examined 5 randomized controlled trials (n = 252 participants at least 50 years of age and diagnosed with osteoarthritis of the knee; 87% were female) that compared tai chi practice (yang and sun styles, tai chi qigong) to wait-listed and no-treatment control groups or control groups that received treatment as usual or placebos. Outcomes included pain intensity, physical function, stiffness, quality of life and safety. Treatment time typically lasted 12 weeks; treatment time was typically 2 hours per week for a total of 24 hours of training. Compared to controls, participants practicing tai chi demonstrated significant improvements in pain intensity, physical function, stiffness, and physical quality of life at the end of treatment. These short-term effects were moderate in size except for the effect for physical quality of life, which was large in size. No long-term (6 months) effects were found in the 2 studies that conducted follow-up assessments. Adverse effects were found in 3 studies; minor muscle soreness, foot and knee pain were reported at the beginning of treatment.

Wang, C.W., Chan, C.L.W., Ho, R.T.H., Tsang, H.W.H., Chan, C.H.Y.C., & Ng, S.M. (2013). The effect of qigong on depressive and anxiety symptoms: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2013: 1-13. DOI: 10.1155/2013/716094

This quantitative review examined 12 randomized controlled studies (n = 936 participants) involving patients with symptoms of clinical depression or burnout, depressed older adults with chronic illnesses, and patients with depressive symptoms secondary to chronic conditions including hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and perimenopause. Qigong types included *Baduanjin*, *Wuqinxi*, *Guolin*, and *Dejian* styles. Duration of treatment ranged from 4 to 16 weeks. Treatment sessions lasted from 40 to 90 minutes and occurred from once per week to once per day. Outcomes included depression and anxiety symptoms, sleep quality, and health-related quality of life assessed with standardized measures. Qigong groups were compared to wait-listed control groups or control groups receiving cognitive behavioral therapy, conventional exercise, health education, drug treatment, mindful relaxation, newspaper reading, or treatment as usual. All styles of qigong except *Guolin* style demonstrated significant effects compared to control group treatments for symptoms of depression and anxiety, sleep quality, and the physical dimension of quality of life. Effect sizes were small to moderate in strength.

Yan, J.H., Guo, Y.Z., Yao, H.M., & Pan, L. (2013). Effects of tai chi on patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: Preliminary evidence. *PLoS ONE*, 8(4), e61806, 1-8. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0061806

This quantitative review examined 8 randomized controlled trials (n = 544 patients diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). Interventions consisted of tai chi qigong and several styles of tai chi (Yang short form, Sun short form, Chen short form, 24-short form, and 13-short form) with or without other types of treatment. Primary outcomes included 6-minute walking distance and dyspnea. Secondary outcomes included lung function (forced expiratory volume in one-second and forced vital capacity) and health-related quality of life. Treatment was provided from 5 times per day to 2 times per week; training periods lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. Follow-up ranged from 12 to 48 weeks after completion of the intervention. Tai chi groups were compared to control

groups that received treatment as usual or general exercise. Tai was significantly superior compared to control groups for both primary outcomes of 6-minute walking distance and dyspnea. Effect sizes were moderate to large in strength. Tai chi was also significantly superior compared to control groups for both measures of lung function and health related quality of life. No adverse effects were reported. Long term follow-up results were not reported.

Research Articles

Chan, J.S.M., Ho, R.T.H., Wang, C.W., Yuen, L.P., Sham, J.S.T., & Chan, C.L.W. (2013). Effects of qigong exercise on fatigue, anxiety, and depressive symptoms of patients with chronic fatigue syndrome-like illness: A randomized controlled trial. *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2013: 1-8. DOI: 10.1155/2013/485341

This randomized controlled trial included 137 participants with a diagnosis of chronic fatigue-like symptoms who were randomly assigned to a treatment group that received qigong training (n = 72) or a wait-list control group (n = 65). At posttest measurement 119 participants remained; at 3-month follow-up assessment 111 participants remained. The trial examined the effectiveness of *Wu Xing Ping Heng Gong* qigong delivered by a Daoist qigong master with more than 20 years of experience. The qigong set is comprised of 10 movements and sitting meditation. In addition to training in qigong, the intervention included training in basic principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine, body stretching and other warm-up exercises. Training was provided twice per week, for 2 hours, for 5 consecutive weeks. Upon completion of training, participants were instructed to engage in home-practice for one-half hour per day for 12 weeks. At the end of the 5-week intervention period and at the end of the 3-month follow-up period comprised of home practice, participants in the qigong group demonstrated significantly less total fatigue, physical fatigue, mental fatigue, and depression than control participants. Change in total fatigue and anxiety significantly predicted changes in depressive symptoms. Effect sizes were moderate to large in strength. There were no significant differences in anxiety between the groups. No adverse effects were reported.

Ho, R.T.H., Chan, J.S.M., Wang, C.W., Lau, B.W.M., So, K.F., Yuen, L.P., Sham, J.S.T., & Chan, C.L.W. (2013). A randomized controlled trial of qigong exercise on fatigue symptoms, functioning, and telomerase activity in persons with chronic fatigue or chronic fatigue syndrome. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 44: 160-170. DOI: 10.1007/s12160-012-9381-6

This randomized controlled trial employed the same sampling procedures, qigong intervention and outcome measures used and described above in Chan, Ho, Wang, Yuen, Sham, & Chan (2013). In this study, the sample included 70 participants assigned randomly and equally to either the qigong treatment group or a wait-listed control group that provided a blood sample that was used to assess telomerase activity, an indicator of stress-related damage at the cellular level. Qigong participants reported significantly lower total, physical, and mental fatigue scores as well as improved mental functioning compared to controls. Qigong participants demonstrated significantly improved telomerase activity after the 16 weeks of qigong training and home practice compared to controls. There was no difference between the two groups in physical functioning. Results concerning improved telomerase activity suggest a potential pathway through which qigong may achieve its therapeutic benefits; qigong may induce beneficial buffering of stress at the cellular level.

Oh, B., Butow, P., Mullan, B., Clarke, S., Beale, P., Pavlakis, N., Kothe, E., Lam, L., & Rosenthal, D. (2013). Impact of medical qigong on quality of life, fatigue, mood and inflammation in cancer patients: A randomized controlled trial. *Annals of Oncology*, 21: 608-614. DOI:10.1093/annonc/mdp479

This randomized controlled trial included 162 patients (n = 79 in treatment group, n = 83 in a treatment as usual, wait-listed control group) with a confirmed diagnosis of malignancy at any stage and had an expected survival of at least 12 months. The medical qigong treatment was specifically designed to target the needs of cancer patients, in particular to control emotions and stress as well as to improve physical function. The qigong treatment was comprised of Dao Yin exercises for face, head, neck, shoulders, waist, lower back, legs, and feet as well as meditation and breathing exercises intended to regulate *qi*, relax and feel the *qi*, and visualization. A Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner with more

than 20 years of experience who was trained in medical qigong in Korea, Daoist qigong in China and Buddhist qigong in Australia delivered the treatment. The intervention was delivered for 10 weeks in 90-minute sessions that met twice per week; 15 total hours of training and supervised practice was provided. Patients were also asked to practice daily at home for at least one-half hour. Outcomes included quality of life, fatigue, mood and a biomarker of inflammation (C-reactive protein). Results showed that cancer patients in the qigong group demonstrated significantly higher quality of life (physical, social, emotional, and functional well-being), less fatigue and mood disturbance (less tension, anxiety and depression), and less inflammation than controls. Reduction of inflammation indicates a possible pathway through which qigong achieves its effective outcomes. This improved immune system function may also have other health benefits.

Cresswell, J.D., Irwin, M.R., Burkland, L.J., Lieberman, M.D., Arevalo, J.M.G., Ma, J., Breen, E.C. & Cole, S.W. (2013). Mindfulness-based stress reduction training reduces loneliness and pro-inflammatory gene expression in older adults: A small randomized controlled trial. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 26: 1095-1101. DOI: 10.1016/j.bbi.2012.07.006

This randomized controlled trial tested whether an 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) would reduce loneliness and loneliness-related pro-inflammatory gene expression in a sample of older adults (n = 20 in treatment group; n = 20 in wait-listed control group). The MBSR intervention employed the standardized mindfulness meditation components developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn. Outcomes included loneliness, mindfulness skills, indicators of increased pro-inflammatory NF-kB transcription factor, and increased monocyte-mediated gene expression. MBSR participants demonstrated increased mindfulness skills and significant decreases in loneliness at posttest compared to controls after controlling for baseline levels of loneliness. Genetic analysis of baseline data showed 87 genes up-regulated in high-loneliness individuals, and 169 genes up-regulated in low-loneliness individuals. To determine whether MBSR could reverse the loneliness-related pattern of gene expression, the magnitude of pre-post change in gene expression was examined across both groups. Analysis indicated reduced activity of NF-kB

target genes in MBSR-treated participants relative to controls. There was weak evidence for MBSR reducing protein markers of inflammation.

Rosenkranz, M.A., Davidson, R.J., MacCoon, D.G., Sheridan, J.F., Kalin, N.H., & Lutz, A. (2013). A comparison of mindfulness-based stress reduction and an active control in modulation of neurogenic inflammation. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 27: 1174-184. DOI: 10.1016/j.bbi.2012.10.013

This randomized controlled trial included 49 community volunteers aged 19 to 59 (39 female). Participants were randomly assigned to an 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) intervention that employed the standardized components developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn or to an active comparison group (Health Enhancement program—HEP) that included the aspects of MBSR that are known to produce positive outcomes but are not related to mindfulness mediation, e.g., supportive group atmosphere. In this way, the contribution of the meditation component to outcomes could be delineated more clearly. A modification of the Trier Social Test (giving a 5-minute public, impromptu speech followed by 5 minutes of mental arithmetic) was used to induce psychological stress in all participants. A neurogenic inflammatory response was induced in the forearm skin using topical capsaicin (.1%) cream. Capsaicin is a compound found in hot peppers that imparts their “hotness.” Questionnaires assessing physical and psychological symptoms and immune and endocrine measures of inflammation and stress were collected before and after MBSR training. Results showed that participants in both groups had comparable stress-evoked cortisol responses and equivalent reductions in physical and psychological symptoms. Those receiving MBSR training, however, demonstrated significantly smaller stress inflammatory responses compared to those in the comparison group, despite equivalent levels of stress hormones. Results suggest that the meditation component of MBSR may have unique benefits for chronic inflammatory conditions, chiefly through reduction in emotional reactivity. Moreover, mindfulness-based practices may be more effective than health-enhancement practices that exclude the meditation component.

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