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Articles

Laozi's Eclipse and Comeback

The Narrative Frame of the *Benji jing*

FRIEDERIKE ASSANDRI

Abstract

The Six Dynasties, Sui, and early Tang dynasties were a period of intense and complex development for Daoism. New scriptures, new gods, and new cosmological systems appeared, and Daoism found its way into the highest levels of society and the imperial court. This necessitated a streamlining and integration of very different traditions and teachings. Imperial patronage, competition with Buddhism, as well as dedicated work by proponents of different Daoist currents created a complex interplay, which still has to be studied in detail. This task is especially daunting because historical or historiographical documentation concerning the development of Daoism in the Six Dynasties is rather scarce.

In this paper, I propose a hermeneutic reading of the framework narrative of the *Benji jing* 本際經 (Scripture on the Original Beginning) to gain some insights about this development. The text was composed during the Sui and early Tang dynasties, a time when the process of integration was well advanced but had not yet concluded. The framework narrative, as seen in the hermeneutical context of the historical development of Daoism, reflects internal Daoist struggles and highlights the problems of the esoteric transmission of scriptures. A closer look at the position of the deity Laozi in the text, moreover, betrays tensions between him and the various deities of the southern traditions. The latter had increasingly eclipsed him until the rise of the Tang re-established him in the first ranks of the Daoist pantheon. I argue that these tensions may very well reflect tensions among different groups of Daoists in the process of integration during the Sui and the early Tang.

Historical Background

The *Benji jing* appears at a crucial time in the history of Daoism. The first organized communities, of the Heavenly Masters, had spread from a local base in Sichuan to northern China, first to the state of Wei (220-265) and then to the Western Jin (265-316). In the south, some members of aristocratic families who were considered Daoists (*daoshi* 道士) had long been cultivating and transmitting esoteric knowledge, often concerning immortality and longevity.¹

When the north was lost to invading tribes in 317, the Jin elite fled south and brought Heavenly Masters Daoism along. There it encountered existing religious trends, including shamanistic excursions, communication with ancestors, and the alchemical tradition. The result were new Daoist movements, such as the Highest Clarity (*Shangqing* 上清) and Numinous Treasure (*Lingbao* 靈寶) schools that emerged in 364-370 and the 390s respectively. Bringing forth new scriptures, cultivation methods, and rituals geared to the interests of an aristocratic elite, these schools opened the way of Daoism into the highest levels of society (see Robinet 2000; Yamada 2000).

In the south, these two schools combined with other developments, notably the Three Sovereigns (*Sanhuang* 三皇), and gradually integrated into a system called the Three Caverns (*sandong* 三洞) that followed the model of the Three Vehicles of Buddhism (see Ofuchi 1979). The model was formally established in 471, when Lu Xiuqing 陸修靜 (406-477) presented a catalogue of Three Cavern scriptures to the court. The highest deity of this system was the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Commencement (Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊), the revealing deity of the Numinous Treasure scriptures (see Nickerson 2000).

In the north at the same time, Daoism developed differently. In 415, Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之, a descendant of an influential northern family and follower of the Heavenly Masters, received a revelation of the deified Laozi 老子, the Highest Lord Lao (Taishang Laojun 太上老君), teaching him various cultivation methods, offering a new organizational code (the "New Code"), bestowing upon him the rank of new Heavenly Master,

¹ See for example Ge Hong's 葛洪 *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (The Master Who Embraces Simplicity, DZ 1185), 19.96-97 for an account of the texts and teachings of Ge Hong's Master.

and asking him to restore and reform the Daoist religion. He succeeded to gain the attention of the prime minister Cui Hao 崔浩 who conveyed his proposal to the Toba emperor who ruled northern China under the dynastic name of Wei 魏 and caused Daoism to become the official state religion of the Wei (see Mather 1979; *Weishu* 114). After Kou's death in 448, the system declined; it ended with Cui Hao's execution 451, followed closely by the death of the emperor in 452 (see also Kohn 2000).

In its wake, many Daoists made their way to Louguan 樓觀 (Look-out Tower), a monastic institution built in a place that was considered the original home of Yin Xi 尹喜, the Guardian of the Pass and first recipient of the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture of the Way and its Power) during Laozi's western emigration.² Louguan was also the location where northern teachers settled down after obtaining the esoteric southern scriptures of the Three Caverns.³

In the second half of the sixth century, Emperor Wu of the Northern Zhou inherited his father's vision of the empire's unification and actively pursued a new ideology largely based on Daoism. As part of this effort, aside from staging major court debates between the three teachings (see Kohn 1995), he established a temple in the capital to serve as a Daoist study center. Many Louguan Daoists were invited to this new Tongdao guan 通道觀 (Temple of Understanding the Dao).⁴ A look at the contents of the *Wushang biyao* 無上祕要 (Esoteric Essentials of the Most High, DZ 1130), presumably compiled at this institution, shows that the teachings

² On Louguan and its brand of Daoism, see Kohn 1998, 121; 258-89; 2004, 10. See also Qing, 1994, 1:114.

³ According to Lu Guolong (1993, 99-103), there were two individual masters who initiated the transmission of southern texts into a northern context. One was Lu Jing 陸景 who initiated Chen Baochi 陳寶熾 (468-544) into the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經 (Perfect Scripture of Great Profundity) on Mount Hua 華山. The other was Zhao Jingtong 趙靜通 who lived on Mount Song 嵩山 and transmitted the Three Cavern texts to Wei Jie 魏節, a Louguan master and commentator on the *Xisheng jing* 西昇經 (Scripture of Western Ascension). See Kohn 1991, 167-68. Both Wei and Chen settled in Louguan.

⁴ See Lagerwey 1981, 15. Buddhist sources speak of over 120 or 300 residents (*Guang hongming ji*, T 2103, 10.153a; *Xu Gaoseng zhuan*, T 2060, 512b). Daoist sources seem to indicate fewer. The Yuan-dynasty hagiography *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* (Comprehensive Mirror Through the Ages of Perfected Immortals and Those Who Embody the Dao, DZ 296) mentions ten and twelve (30.13b-14a).

of the Three Caverns scriptures were of major importance.⁵ This is also borne out in the *Shengxuan neijiao jing* 昇玄內教經 (The Inner Teachings of Ascension to the Mystery, DZ 1122, DH 41)⁶, another text compiled at this time.

Altogether, this suggests that the emperor invited Louguan Daoists not so much because of their connection to Laozi and the *Daode jing* but because they had been initiated into the Three Caverns scriptures. The emperor's unexpected death in 577 brought to a halt the plan of unifying China as well as to the efforts of creating a unifying ideology based on Daoism. Only the succeeding Sui dynasty achieved the unification of the empire after more than three centuries of division; they did it under rather more Buddhist auspices, although they continued to pay homage to Lord Lao (see Kohn 1998, 44).

After unification, Daoists active in the southern capital began to gravitate towards the new center of power in Chang'an. One case is the famous Wang Yuanzhi 王遠知, an heir to Tao Hongjing 陶弘景, who had revived the esoteric Shangqing tradition on Maoshan 茅山 in the south. In 611 the Sui emperor Yangdi invited him to reside in the palace.⁷

The Sui emperors pursued religious politics of balanced support to Daoism and Buddhism but concentrated their ideological interests on Buddhism. The *Shengxuan neijiao jing*, written under the preceding dynasty and thus in its outlook a reflection of the aim to create a great all-embracing teaching based on the Three Caverns teachings, remained an

⁵ See Lagerwey 1981 for a translation of a Dunhuang manuscript containing the complete table of contents of this encyclopedic work. Similarly the biography of Wang Yan 王延 in the Song encyclopedia *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven Tablets from a Cloudy Satchel, DZ 1026) states explicitly that the Three Caverns scriptures were collated in the Tongdao guan (85.5b). So does the account of his life in the *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* (30.7a).

⁶ The abbreviation "DH" refers to Dunhuang texts as numbered in Komjathy 2002.

⁷ A study of Wang's biography and impact appears in Yoshikawa 1990.

important work in the Daoist mainstream.⁸ The bibliographic section of the *Suishu* 隋書 (History of the Sui Dynasty) confirms this.⁹

However, this was to change with the Tang. The Tang rulers claimed Laozi as imperial ancestor¹⁰ and elevated Daoism to the highest place among teachings at court. This ultimately entailed major doctrinal adjustments for the Daoists in the capital, especially because Laozi's role had been inferior to that of the Heavenly Worthy in the preceding period. The *Benji jing* reflects this important adjustment and thus allows some unprecedented insights into the evolution of medieval Daoist doctrine.

The *Benji jing* 本際經

According to Xuanyi's *Zhenzheng lun* 甄正論 (Essay on Examining What is Right, T 2112), the Daoist Liu Jinxi 劉進喜 wrote a text called *Benji jing* in five chapters during the Sui dynasty. In the early Tang, his friend and colleague Li Zhongqing 李仲卿 added another five chapters for a total of ten (569c).

Both authors were active in Chang'an. Liu Jinxi was originally from Danyang 丹陽 in the south, where the Three Caverns system originated. By the early Tang he was already well established in Chang'an. We know little about Li Zhongqing, only that in his polemical text *Shiyi jiu*

⁸ See P. 2474, ch. 8, in Wan 1998b, 280; P. 2434 in Lu 1993, 88. For the dating of the text, see Assandri 2004, 603; Wan 1998, 280. Fragments are collected in Yamada 1992.

⁹ *Suishu* 35 (*Jingji zhi* 4) notes that when Daoists presented their teachings, they did so on the basis of Laozi, Zhuangzi, and the *Shengxuan neijiao jing* (Lu 1993, 83).

¹⁰ The rise of the Tang was accompanied by many auspicious omens, among them a multiple epiphany of a deity, which eventually declared to be Laozi, ancestor of the Tang. See Benn 1977, 29-34; Bokenkamp 1994; Kohn 1998. The Tang seem to have responded early and efficiently to the stimulus of such omens. Gaozu 高祖 declared Daoism first among the three teachings in 625 (Benn 1977, 35; see also *Fo Dao lunheng* (A Collection of Discussions of Buddhists and Daoists, T 2014, 3.381a22). This ranking was confirmed by Taizong 太宗 in a 637 edict (*Quan Tang wen* 1.26ab; *Fo Dao lunheng* 3.382; see also T 2103, 25.283c). The edict formally established definitely the fact that Laozi was the imperial ancestor (Benn 1977, 38; Weinstein 1987, 16-17).

milun 十異九迷 論 (Essay on the Ten Differences and Nine Errors) he forcefully pits Laozi against Buddha (*Guang hongming ji*, T 2103, 5.118b).

The text of the *Benji jing* has survived in many Dunhuang manuscripts, which testifies to its popularity during Tang times and allowed a reconstruction of the outline of the text.¹¹ They are as follows:

•1.	護國品	Protecting the Country ¹² (S 6027, P 2448, P 3790, P 2827, 北 8455, 4864, 4867, 8730 背, P 3371, P 3790)
•2.	付囑品	The Entrustment (DZ 59, 1111, P 2392)
•3.	聖行品	The Actions of the Holy Man (P 2795)
•4.	道性品	The Nature of the Dao (P 2463, P 2806)
•5.	證實品	Bearing Testimony on the Truth (P 2366, P 2438)
•6.	淨土品	The Pure Land (P 3310, P 2231, P 2860)
•7.	譬喻品	On Similes (DX – 110A)
•8.	最勝品	The Ultimate (P 3674, DX 294)
•9.	秘密藏品	The Mysterious Treasure Store (DZ 329, P 3280)
•10.	道本通微品	The Origin of the Dao Penetrates the Subtle (S 2999)

It has not yet been established which chapters belong to the first version by Liu Jinxi and which were added by Li Zhongqing.

¹¹ A collection of facsimiles appears in Wu 1960; a critical edition of ch. 7 is found in Z. Chen 1990; a punctuated and collated edition, based on more manuscripts is in G. Chen 1998. Few chapters are still fragmentary, but we do get a clear idea of the contents and the narrative.

¹² The numbers refer to the manuscripts as collated in Wan 1998; Z. Chen 1990. “S” and “P” refer to the Stein and Pelliot collections, DX indicates the Russian collection; and DZ connects to the numbers in Schipper and Verellen 2004. A convenient new edition of the manuscripts is found in Li 1999.

The Teaching

The *Benji jing* integrates Daoist teachings and Buddhist concepts, notably ideas of karmic retribution and the Pure Land,¹³ into a systematic whole. Its fundamental outlook represents mature Twofold Mystery thought (*chongxuan xue* 重玄學).¹⁴ The term "Twofold Mystery" derives from the last paragraph of *Daode jing* 1, which speaks of "mysterious and again mysterious" (*xuan zhi you xuan* 玄之又玄). The phrase was used to exemplify a reading of the text in the light of Mādhyamika dialectics. Like Buddhist Mādhyamika teaching, Twofold Mystery promised enlightenment and liberation through correct understanding and the complete elimination of attachments to all one-sided views about being and nonbeing.

It employs the dialectical process of the *tetra lemma*, which consists of four statements about the nature of being, each negating the preceding one. One begins with the understanding of being or things as (1) existing and moves to understanding them as (2) non-existing. Then one goes on to understand them as (3) both, existing and non-existing at the same time, and finally reaches the perception of being as (4) neither existing nor non-existing. The method guides the adept to the enlightened insight of a truth beyond conceivable dichotomies. Eventually he reaches an understanding that transcends duality and realizes ultimate unity. The realization of ultimate unity, moreover, entails the salvation from suffering (Assandri 2005, 428). In the *Benji jing*, the teaching of Twofold Mystery teaching is praised as the Great Vehicle that offers universal salvation.

While the *Benji jing* refers frequently to the *Shengxuan neijiao jing* and the Three Caverns scriptures as the correct teaching, it also purports to be the last teaching of the Heavenly Worthy before he ascended to the highest realm. From there he is no longer visible to lower beings, having reached a state like the Buddhist ultimate cessation. The *Benji jing* thus claims to contain the highest, ultimate truth and to include and surpass all other scriptures.

¹³ The Pure Land (*jingtu* 淨土) is a notion appropriated in Daoism: ch. 6 relates how The Heavenly Worthy in a former life used the magical power of the *Benji jing* to change a land full of sorrow into a Pure Land. The narrative device of former life accounts (*jataka*) is a common Buddhist feature.

¹⁴ For presentations of Twofold Mystery, see Robinet 1977; Kohn 1991.

The Framework Narrative

While the philosophical teaching of the scripture promotes nonduality in the form of Twofold Mystery, the framework narrative shows traces and reflections of the Daoist integration and tends to betray conflict and polemics. Written in Chang'an in two installments and under two different dynasties with differing attitudes toward Daoism, the text reflects various aspects of the integration process.

To begin, remnants of several separate traditions become obvious when we look at the "main protagonists" of the narrative: the deities who reveal the teachings in the different chapters and the interlocutors who question the gods and prompt them to explicate the teaching.

In the first chapter, the Heavenly Worthy reveals the essential teaching of Twofold Mystery.¹⁵ He also illustrates the magical efficacy of the scripture, which is apt to help any country and its ruler to overcome all kinds of difficulty. This is because the Heavenly Worthy himself has ordered all other deities, including dragon kings and nature spirits, to protect any place where the scripture is properly venerated.

In the second chapter the Heavenly Worthy, about to leave this world forever, invests the Highest Lord of the Dao (Taishang daojun 太上道君) as his successor. He answers ultimate questions of three Perfected: Xu Laile 徐來勒, the Sovereign of Celestial Perfection (Tianzhen huangren 天真皇人) and the Lord Azure Lad (Qingtong jun 青童君). These three are usually associated with the revelation and transmission of the Highest Clarity and Numinous Treasure scriptures.¹⁶ In the end the Heavenly Worthy leaves, having entrusted the Highest Lord of the Dao to remain and continue his mission to save all beings.

¹⁵ He "demonstrates the meaning of Twofold Mystery (*chongxuan yi* 重玄義) and opens the gates of all mysteries" (P 3371, line 40; Wan 1998, 384).

¹⁶The Sovereign of Celestial Perfection figures as the one of the first who sees the celestial script of the Numinous Treasure texts forming (*Wushang biyao* 32; *Duren jing* 度人經 (Scripture of Salvation, DZ 1; 4.26b). Xu Laile, also called the Perfected of Great Ultimate (Taiji zhenren 太極真人), is associated with the transmission of several important texts of both schools (*Wushang biyao* 32.1b, 3b, 6a; 27.7b; 43.12a). The Azure Lad plays an important role as transmitter of several Highest Clarity scriptures (Bokenkamp 1997, 281).

The third chapter introduces Zhang Daoling 張道陵, originally revered as the founder of the Heavenly Masters, but co-opted at a comparatively early stage in the Three Caverns tradition (Kobayashi 1990, 175; see also Liu 2006). He asks the Highest Lord of the Dao about the Heavenly Worthy's spiritual cultivation. The chapter emphasizes that the latter is the spiritual master of the former, and that the Highest Lord is the spiritual master of Zhang Daoling, thus creating an integrated lineage of teachings.

In the fourth chapter, Zhang Daoling is established as preceptor of all immortals. He admits that he formerly (presumably when he founded the Heavenly Masters school) did not understand the great teaching, just like the immortals. To enlighten them, the Highest Lord preaches a great sermon on Dao nature (*daoxing* 道性).

The framework narrative of these four chapters thus presents a coherent story, establishing master-disciple relationships between the Heavenly Worthy as the first deity and master teacher, the Highest Lord of the Dao as his disciple, and Zhang Daoling as the latter's student. This fits nicely in a Numinous Treasure or Three Caverns context.¹⁷ The gods are classic and the divine interlocutors are known from the Three Caverns scriptures. Even Zhang Daoling fits in this context: although originally associated with the Heavenly Masters school, he was co-opted early into the Three Caverns system.

The fifth chapter breaks this narrative thread. Without any transition, Laozi appears as the revealing deity. He entrusts his disciple Yin Xi to carry on his mission of saving all beings – just like the Heavenly Worthy has entrusted the Highest Lord in the previous chapters. Laozi's teaching of Twofold Mystery is revealed in a meeting with the immortals. This shows signs of a polemic struggle between Laozi and the immortals

¹⁷ See this with the *Shengxuan neijiao jing*, where the revealing deity claims: "...Sometimes I am called Heavenly Worthy, sometimes I am called Lord Lao, sometimes I am called Highest Lord, sometimes I am called Tathāgata . . . (ch. 8, P 2474; Li 1999, 4:2185). The *Benji jing* instead shows a much more differentiated attitude toward the various deities. Its complex and well-orchestrated narrative establishes precise teacher-disciple relationships between gods and other important figures of the different Daoist traditions. Also, even though Buddhist influence is there, the text does not claim the identity of the Buddha and any Daoist deity.

and may well reflect a contest between proponents of the esoteric tradition of the Three Caverns and adepts of other traditions, maybe related to Louguan.

The following chapters do not mention Laozi again. The revealing deity is again the Highest Lord of the Dao, in cooperation with or deferring to the Heavenly Worthy. Zhang Daoling as main mediator, moreover, has been replaced by the Heavenly Sovereign of Great Tenuity (Taiwei tiandi 太微天帝), a celestial emperor and deity of ancient roots. In older texts, Great Tenuity was a stellar constellation, said to serve as the court of the divine emperor.¹⁸ In later texts, the god appears as transmitter of Highest Clarity texts.¹⁹

In the sixth and seventh chapter, the Highest Lord relates concepts and similes regarding Buddhist-inspired terms, such as the Pure Land and the noble truth of suffering.

In the eighth and ninth chapters, he presents complex philosophical concepts tied to the notion of the bodies of the Dao—along the lines of, but not identical with, the reasoning of the three bodies of the Buddha (*trikaya*). This establishes his ultimate identity with the Heavenly Worthy: when Great Tenuity asks him about a vision of millions of Heavenly Worthies in the lands of the ten directions (reminiscent of the imagery in the *Lotos sutra*), he asserts that they are all are emanations from his own body (*Benji jing* 8, P 3674, line 22; Wan 1998, 53).

The tenth chapter, clearly originally independent,²⁰ relates a heavenly scene where the Heavenly Worthy receives the perfected beings and relates stories of their former lives.

¹⁸ See Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 commentary to the *Liji* 禮記, ch. 31, as cited in *Liji zhengyi* (Shisan jing zhushu 十三經註疏 edition, 2:1487c) about the heavenly emperors. See also *Liji* 34, 2:1506a, where Zheng Xuan asserts that the king's ancestors consist of the essences of the five heavenly emperors of Great Tenuity.

¹⁹ See e.g. the *Wushang biyao*, a text which reflects relatively well texts in circulation at the time. In ch. 32, under the heading "The transmission of the scriptures by the hosts of saints," the Heavenly Sovereign of Great Tenuity is mentioned as a major agent in the transmission of Highest Clarity texts.

²⁰ This chapter contains internal chapter headings, from 2 to 4, which seem to indicate sections of an originally separate scripture (Wan 1998, 471, line 84; 475 line 169; 477 line 221).

Laozi

While there is much to discuss about this narrative frame, I will focus here on the fifth chapter, the only one where Laozi and Yin Xi appear. The obvious break in the narrative suggests that it was added later, possibly after Laozi was declared the imperial ancestor of the Tang and that his new importance might have been the motive for the very creation and insertion of the chapter.

The chapter not only emphasizes Laozi as the main deity, it also gives particular weight to the *Daode jing* and to Yin Xi. In fact, the latter is first introduced here. The text says::

The Highest Perfected Master at the Beginning of the Scriptures (Wenshi xiansheng 文始先生, i.e. Yin Xi) had studied with Lord Lao. His work of converting [people to Daoism] was rather accomplished, thus he first received the rank of Lad of the Perfected (*tongzhen* 童真, a rank of immortals) and later followed Lord Lao... (P 2366, line 1-2, Wan 1998, 428)

According to early legend as already outlined in Laozi's biography in the *Shiji* (Historical Records, ch. 63), Yin Xi was the guardian of the Hangu Pass when Laozi decided to leave the Zhou. An accomplished Daoist and astrologer, he foresaw the arrival of the master and asked Laozi to transmit his teachings. Laozi thus wrote the *Daode jing* upon his request and left it with him. Later the location was shifted to Louguan where and new and more complex elements were added, such as a set of oral instructions, which Laozi supposedly passed to Yin Xi in addition to the written text of the *Daode jing*.²¹

The chapter begins with an introduction of the spiritual accomplishments of Yin Xi, then proceeds to describe Lord Lao answering questions regarding different Daoist practices that are posed by an audience of "sage emperors or perfected kings, lords or counts, grand tutors or prime ministers" (P 2366, line 7-8; Wan 1998, 428). This introduction presumably serves to establish Laozi as the trusted advisor of emperors

²¹ A study of Yin Xi and the Louguan tradition is found in Kohn 1997; 1998, 255-73. Laozi's oral instructions were "recorded" in the *Xisheng jing* (Kohn 1991, 39).

and ministers – a role traditionally ascribed to the god and which possibly gained more impetus in the context of court Daoism. After this, the actual story of the chapter starts, its general tone quite polemic and conveying the impression of an underlying tension between Laozi (or his followers) and the gods and adepts of the southern traditions.

An immortal called Meng Deran 孟德然,²² acting as speaker for a large group of immortals, asks Laozi to impart his teaching to the immortals. She describes the situation of the immortals as rather miserable:

We are without a chance to get ahead. Although we can live for a long time, we yet do not have any benefits for ourselves. . . . We do not know how to cultivate [ourselves] or which merit brings the best karma. I have heard that the *Daode jing* which [you], honored by all divine spirits, have expounded is the way to rise to heaven in broad daylight. It is the superior teaching of nonaction and thus called the *Scripture of the Great Vehicle*. (P 2366, line 26-28; Wan 1998, 429)

After this polite and flattering request, Lord Lao's response is surprisingly harsh:

The food of the Great Sacrifice (Tailao 太勞)²³ is not to be eaten by small children, the essence of Dao and virtue is not what immortals of medium rank should know. . . . [My] liberating teaching was meant to convert the six barbarians²⁴ and the

²² This immortal appears in Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 *Zhengao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected, DZ 1016, 14.9a) and in his *Zhenling weiye tu* 真靈位業圖 (Chart of the Ranks and Positions of Perfect Spirituals), 1.17b. The latter describes Meng as the "female teacher of Zheng Jing[shi] 鄭景 [世] 女師," holding the fifth rank under the category miscellaneous ranks (*sanzwei* 散位). This refers to divinities who have not yet received an official appointment in the divine hierarchy (*weishou qi ye* 未受其業); the fifth rank indicates earth divinities and immortals.

²³ *Tailao* refers to an ancient imperial sacrifice of a cow or bull, a sheep and a pig.

²⁴ This refers to the barbarians of the east, the south-west, and the west as well as of the Qiang 羌, the Xiongnu 匈奴, and the Xianbei 鮮卑. By extension it refers to all non-Chinese people.

people who have the ten bad characteristics.²⁵ It is not to teach 'gentlemen' of the small vehicle who cling to one-sided views!

Furthermore, all of you immortals have already obtained the comforts of long life. You roam freely in the mountains and waters and have a whole life of happiness. You got what you coveted, so what else do you want?

The immortals are desolate because of his refusal, they humbly admit to arrogance and adherence to wrong teachings, but to no avail. Laozi remains adamant, accusing them of being conceited and self-righteous. The dialogue continues, the immortals humiliate themselves, acknowledge their faults, cry and wail. However, Laozi does not give in.

At this point, mediation is needed. The Great Emperor of [the mythical sun island] Fusang (Fusang taidi 扶桑太帝),²⁶ known as the ruler of the immortals, intercedes on their behalf. He reminds Laozi that the Highest Lord has commissioned him to spread the great conversion widely and save all beings from the visible and the invisible [realms] everywhere, and that this should include the immortals as well.

Fusang's intervention makes Laozi sneer. He points out that the sacred teachings of Highest Clarity, which Fusang treasures, are never taught to lower immortals. Who, then, is he to urge him to do so?

At this point Lord Lao showed a friendlier bearing. He smiled and answered: "The secret scriptures of Jade Clarity which you, Lord Emperor, treasure, the eminent decrees of Highest Clarity, the prayer texts of Divine Perfection, the potent cinnabar of Great Clarity (太清)²⁷, the *Scripture of the Inner Luminants of the Yellow Court* (黃庭內景經)²⁸ – if you want to recite them, you

²⁵ This refers to ten characteristics or deeds which lead into hell, an originally Buddhist concept (Zürcher 1959, 1:166).

²⁶ Also known as Lord King of the East (Dongwang dijun 東王帝君) this figure is the male counterpart of the Queen Mother of the West in ancient legend. However, he is also an important intermediary in the Highest Clarity tradition, who is said to have issued many of its scriptures. See Kohn, 2004, 145; *Wushang biyao* 32.4b, 5b, 8b; 33.1a; 96.2b.

²⁷ These lines refer to the scriptures of the Three Caverns matching the three heavens of Great Clarity, Highest Clarity, and Jade Clarity.

²⁸ *Qinxin* 琴心 refers to an alternative title of the *Huangting neijing jing* (Kohn 2004, 145).

only do it in deepest secrecy! You never let immortals of medium rank hear them, yet now you call on me and urge me to teach the profound subtleties of Dao and virtue to these low ranking creatures? How do you explain that?"

Fusang cannot but excuse himself. He claims his failure to teach inferior beings is not because of a lack of goodwill; it is due to the inherent limitations of his scriptures. He praises Laozi's teaching as superior precisely because it is accessible to all. He says:

Being of poor virtue and little capability, my position has to be like this. It is not that I do not think of transmitting [these texts] to less gifted students, but the severe prohibitions [to divulge the scriptures to the uninitiated] are hard to oppose.²⁹

When it comes to the great origin of merit and virtue which you, Divine Man, spread [i.e. the teaching of the *Daode jing*], it is not abridged, defiled, or superficial. It is only good and right! Thus, of the great things, there is nothing it does not enclose; of the tiny things, there is nothing where it does not enter.

Since you, Divine Man, spread this teaching, glare is tempered, dust is smoothed;³⁰ it raises the myriad beings. These low ranking immortals, even if their disgrace is severe, are not [something] great compassion should discard; I cannot bear, what I see; thus I dare to make this plea: I only wish that you, Divine Man, can make them content.

Laozi is obviously pleased by this humble request of the great Fusang who explicitly recognizes the superiority of his teaching. He finally consents to impart it to the lower immortals. Still, his reaction seems to con-

²⁹"Severe prohibitions" refers to the prohibition of divulging the scriptures to the uninitiated. See Bokenkamp 1997, 313, 283, 427.

³⁰ This is a reference to *Daode jing* 4: "The Way is like an empty vessel that yet may be drawn from without ever needing to be filled. It is bottomless; the very progenitor of all things in the world. In it all sharpness is blunted, all tangles untied, all glare tempered, all dust smoothed. It is like a deep pool that never dries. Was it too the child of something else? We cannot tell. But as a substanceless image it existed before the Ancestor" (Waley 1977, 146).

tain some irony (and a sense of humor), as he plays puns on the attributes of the Dao in the *Daode jing*:³¹

Laojun said: "Since I have the mind of an idiot³² and live in confusion,³³ I do not know even whose son I am,³⁴ but just take the formless form.³⁵ There is something formless yet complete. I do not know its name. Forced to name it, I call it Dao.³⁶ Taishang thought I was unrestrained and straightforward, vague and obscure.³⁷ [Therefore] he entrusted me with a weighty position. Now, since you, Lord Emperor, have so fervently urged me, how could I not help [the immortals] to overcome their stupidity and shortcomings?" (P 2438, line 65-74; Wan 1998, 435)

Now that Laozi is finally moved to pity the immortals and agrees to teach them, all the deities of the highest heavens, including the Heavenly Worthy, send their officials to venerate him and beg him to teach.

At this point we find Laozi, formerly marginalized in the teachings of the Three Caverns tradition and a lower player among their illustrious

³¹ The following seems at first to be almost a parody, certainly a very ironical treatment of *Daode jing* citations. However, since Laozi is also regarded as the personification of the Dao, even these statements underscore his superiority.

³² This refers to *Daode jing* 20: "...Mine is indeed the mind of a very idiot, so dull am I. The world is full of people that shine, I alone am dark" (Waley 1977, 168).

³³ The term *chunchun* 淳淳 (honest, genuine) may refer to *Daode jing* 58: "When the government is tranquil, the people are genuine." I suspect, however, that it is a variant or copying error for *dundun* 沌沌 (dull, confused) from *Daode jing* 20.

³⁴ This refers to *Daode jing* 4: "I do not know whose child it is." This is usually interpreted as referring to the Dao: "Was it too the child of something else?" (Waley 1977, 146). Since Laozi is the personification of the Dao in the *Benji jing*, the text refers to him.

³⁵ This echoes *Daode jing* 14: "They are called shapeless shapes, formless forms." (Waley 1977, 159).

³⁶ These two phrases go back to *Daode jing* 25.

³⁷ *Daode jing* 21: "Such is the scope of the All-pervading Power that it alone can act through the Dao. For the Dao is a thing impalpable, incommensurable" (Waley 1977, 170). I use more colloquial adjectives in my translation.

gods, again surrounded by the emissaries of all the highest deities, humbly begging him to reveal his great teaching.

At the time, the Highest Lord of Jade Dawn³⁸ in the Pearly Palace,³⁹ the Heavenly Worthy in the Three Primes Palace,⁴⁰ the various Numinous Treasure Worthies of the ten directions, the Sovereign of Great Tenuity,⁴¹ the Lord Goldtower,⁴² all the Lords and Elders of the Three Clarities and the Great Ultimate⁴³-- they all looked with their eyes of the Dao⁴⁴ at the immortals as they were toiling and pitiful.

They then sent the highest perfected among the immortal officials . . . They arrived from all directions and performed acts of ceremony and veneration. . . . They said: "For the sake of all earth immortals, water immortals, heavenly immortals, and human beings, we beg you to expound the great teaching." (P 2438, lines 81-82; Wan 1998, 435)

At this point, miraculous signs appear and Lord Lao teaches the truth of Twofold Mystery. He says:

You all have received the teaching of the divine law [dharma] in former bodies a hundred world ages ago and you should have obtained the way of the superior immortals. Only be-

³⁸ According to the *Zhenling weiye tu*, the present is ruled by the Lord of Jade Dawn (Kohn 1998, 122).

³⁹ The Pearly Palace (Ruizhu gong 蕊珠宮) is the abode of the Lord of Jade Dawn in Highest Clarity. See *Yunqi qijian*, chs. 11, 12, and 68.

⁴⁰ The Three Primes Palace (Sanyuan gong 三元宮) is the residence of the Heavenly Worthy, located in Jade Clarity. Its lord is also called Primal Ruler of the Three Simplicities (Sansu yuanjun 三素元君). (See Bokenkamp 1997, 434n6.

⁴¹ My translation *follows Bokenkamp (1997, 312). Great Teunity resides in Jade Clarity.

⁴² This refers to Jinque dijun 金闕帝君, the Sage of the Latter Heavens of Highest Clarity, by his human name known as Li Hong. See Bokenkamp 1997, 295. A study of this important messianic figure is found in Strickmann 1981.

⁴³ "Great Ultimate" has many connotations. Here it seems to indicate a palace in Great Clarity, the lowest of the Three Clarities. See the Laozi hagiography *Youlong zhuan* 猶龍傳 (Like Upon a Dragon, DZ 773; 2.7b) (Kohn 1998, 200).

⁴⁴ The term "eyes of the Dao" indicates all-pervading vision in Buddhist and Daoist deities.

cause you criticized the teaching of the Great Vehicle, did you fail to establish great merit. . . . You only cultivated insignificant good deeds, trying to save your physical life. You did not eliminate your [clinging to a concept of] ego, therefore futile distinctions arose.⁴⁵ Because distinctions arise, one clings to concepts like 'everything exists', or 'everything does not exist', or 'everything does exist and also not exist' or 'everything does neither exist nor not exist'.⁴⁶

He who clings [to the concept of] 'everything exists', thinks, that [the concept of] 'everything does not exist' is wrong, and that [the concept of] 'everything does exist' is right. He who clings [to the concept] that 'everything does not exist', thinks that [the concept of] 'everything exists' is wrong, and [the concept of] 'everything does not exist' is right.

He who clings [to the concept of] 'everything does exist and also does not exist', thinks that [the concept of] 'everything does neither exist nor not exist' is wrong, and that [the concept of] 'everything does exist and also does not exist' is right.

He who clings [to the concept of] 'everything does neither exist nor not exist' thinks that [the concept of] 'everything does exist and does not exist' is wrong, and that [the concept of] 'everything does neither exist nor not exist' is right. (P 2438, line 91-98; Wan Yi 1998, 436).

So far, Laozi's reasoning seems to follow the pattern of the classical *tetra lemma* as applied in Mādhyamika and Twofold Mystery thinking. However, its logic usually works only in one direction in order to arrive at a *reductio ad absurdum*. Therefore, in a regular *tetra lemma*, step three ('everything does exist and also does not exist') should be treated as the negation of the previous two statements, but not as a negation of the fourth statement, as it is in this text. In a regular *tetra lemma* logical procedure, the fourth statement negates the third statement and does not leave space for further negations.

Quite different from the normal pattern, Laozi here has step three and step four negate each other, creating a paradox instead of a logical *reductio ad absurdum*. This harks back to the traditional Daoist expression of the ineffable or absolute in terms of paradox. It seems that the Buddhist logic of the *tetra lemma* is thus "re-directed" to express the Daoist view. Laozi then continues:

⁴⁵ The discriminating mind, which perceives differences and creates distinctions, is one of the major factors that impede enlightenment, since the ultimate is oneness beyond all distinctions. Both Buddhists Daoists teach this.

⁴⁶ This is the classic formula of the *tetra lemma*.

Now, the Dao originally does not have marks like 'existing,' 'not existing,' 'both existing and not existing,' or 'neither existing nor not existing'. When it is said in the scriptures ['everything is] 'existing' or 'not existing,' and so on, then these are words the sage uses as skillful means in order to cure the illness [of clinging to one-sided conceptions]. How could there be emptiness or reality? Falsely you make these distinctions; falsely right and wrong arise.

This is what I call a heterodox view. Since it is a heterodox view, it is part of the Small Vehicle. Because you studied the Small Vehicle, you only managed to obtain ranks below the earth immortals. Not only can you not attain the highest Dao; [the situation is worse:] Since what you see is not the same, you revile each other continuously and always quarrel about merit and fame—which brings about more karmic retribution for these faults and are bound to fall into the hells. (P 2438, lines 99-106, Wan 1998, 436)

Laozi refers here to an argument of his prior refusal to teach the immortals before Fusang interceded. He had argued that if he told them even a fraction of the true teaching, and then they would not practice it properly, this would add to their bad karma. (P 2366, lines 47-49, Wan 1998, 429). The underlying issue of the discourse is the philosophical problem of the relation between ethics and non-duality. Non-duality teaches that distinctions like good and bad should be overcome, while ethics, referring to human behavior, distinguish between good and bad. The logic outcome of non-duality could be an elimination of the concept of ethical behavior, since ethics works within a frame of distinctions between good and bad. However, this is not what the religion wants.

Laozi then goes on to analyze the reasons for this problem:

Why is it like this? It is only because you did not discard the ego mind. When I admonished you before about the transgressions of showing off and being self-righteous, you answered:

"Indeed, we see other people acting badly and therefore think they are wrong; we see ourselves doing good and must necessarily say we are right. Because we are doing good, we say we can ascend to the immortals; because others are acting badly, they fall into the hells. Today we have received instruction and admonishment to the effect that even those who think

that doing good is right do not actually ascend to the immortals. On the contrary, they fall into hell. Now this has added even more confusion to our minds."

Now I am going to advise you! Listen very carefully! You have discarded evil and done good, and still you cannot avoid falling into the hells and entering the three bad rebirths. How can I tell you to discard good and act badly? What I said before about your transgressions of showing off⁴⁷ and being self-righteous does not mean that I think acting badly is right and doing good is wrong. Instead [I mean]: acting good originally serves in order to destroy evil; once evil is eliminated, the 'good' is also not 'good' anymore. [If] there is no more [concept of] 'good', it is futile to think of anything as good. This is what I mean by 'showing off.' To consider this 'showing off' an advantage, moreover, is called 'being self-righteous'⁴⁸. ..." (P 2438, lines 99-118, Wan 1998, 436-437)

In other words, good exists only as a relative term and when applied in relation to its opposite. If one side of the pair is eliminated, the other side automatically ceases to exist because it is not definable anymore. However, this is definitely not an invitation to total relativism. It does not question or put into doubt the practical need of good action, or good moral conduct, which is a prerequisite for spiritual cultivation. The deity makes sure to underscore that under no circumstances should the epistemological consideration be confused with ethical considerations. His statement thus guards against the relativism of ethical values, potentially a logical derivative of non-dualism. It shows that Daoists perceived, understood, and addressed this issue.

After Laozi's essential instruction to the immortals, the framework narrative continues by having him install Yin Xi as their preceptor. The audience recites a formula, which confirms the text as part of integrated Daoism:

With all my heart I take refuge in the highest limitless Dao.

⁴⁷ Here I follow the reading of P 2366, line 120 (Wan 1998, 432) instead of P 2438, line 113 (Wan 1998, 436) which seems corrupt.

⁴⁸ See Laozi ch. 22: "He does not show himself off, that's why he shines; he is not self-righteous, that's why he is distinguished, ..."

With all my heart I take refuge, in the scriptures in thirty-six sections [of the Three Caverns].

With all my heart I take refuge in the great preceptors of the mysterious center. (P 2438, line 145-148; Wan 1998, 438)⁴⁹

A similar chant also appears in the slightly later *Fengdao kejie* 奉道科戒 (Rules and Precepts for Worshiping the Dao, DZ 1125; Kohn, 2004, 124). Applied at scripture recitations, rituals, and ordinations, it is usually repeated three times.

This formula underscores that even if Laozi is the revealing deity here and has gained a status more important than the illustrious Heavenly Worthy and other deities of the Three Caverns, this change in status of Laozi does not claim to originate in a new tradition. While some earlier movements, like the northern and southern Heavenly Masters, had claimed new revelations of Laozi, aiming at replacing or superseding existing traditions, this formula sets our text explicitly within the context of the forming integrated Daoism.

Conclusion

To sum up, chapter 5 of the *Benji jing* shows how Laozi was making a forceful comeback in the early Tang dynasty after having been overshadowed and marginalized during the Six Dynasties in the Three Caverns teachings and by the figure of the Heavenly Worthy. His explication of Twofold Mystery not only matched the teaching of the Mādhyamika, propagated in the popular Three Treatises (Sanlun 三論) school of Buddhism and possibly regarded as the most evolved form of logic and thinking at the time.⁵⁰ Laozi's teaching also promised universal salvation accessible to all.

This latter point underscores an important issue in the formation of integrated Daoism: the question of universal salvation versus secret and esoteric teachings. Daoism had in fact a daunting problem in this that

⁴⁹ My translation follows Kohn 2004, 124.

⁵⁰ The monk Jizang 吉藏, a famous representative of Mādhyamika teaching in this period, writes in his *Sanlun xuanyi* 三論玄義 (Profound Meaning of the Three Treatises) that Buddhism is superior to the teachings of Laozi because of the use of the *tetra lemma* (Han 1987, 32; see also Assandri 2004, 509-511).

may have begun as early as the creation of the Numinous Treasure scriptures. The latter were the first to aim at incorporating a broad soteriological model of universal salvation into the teachings of the southern tradition (Bokenkamp 1997, 376). Before Numinous Treasure, members of this tradition, inheriting the methods and ideas of ancient magical practitioners (*fangshi* 方士) and alchemists, had jealously guarded powerful magical scriptures that contained secret incantations or hidden methods for long life and immortality. They had transmitted their teachings individually only after a painful selection process, choosing a select—and paying—clientele. Many stories tell of the efforts adepts had to undertake in order to behold and study these well-guarded materials (Chen 1963, 19-26). Their magical power derived from protecting deities, who would wreak havoc with the lives of anyone who flaunted the rules of secrecy (Bokenkamp 1997, 313, 351-52, 427; Assandri 2005, 434).

When this kind of esoteric Daoism made its way into higher social strata and the court environment, it found itself on a public stage where it competed with Buddhism for patronage and paying clients. Buddhists proposed universal salvation and offered rulers a means to "save all." This concept was so appealing that Daoists, in particular those of the Numinous Treasure school, incorporated it with gusto (Bokenkamp 1997, 375-77; Kobayashi 1990, 155-56). Yet, the idea of esoteric scriptures promising eternal life, splendid bliss, and divine protection for the empire held a great appeal as well. But this esoteric quality of the materials did not go well with claims of universality. Even worse, it did not allow public propagation of the scriptures (Assandri 2005, 434).

The *Benji jing* clearly works with this issue. It emphasizes consistently and conspicuously that its text is accessible to all. The context for this emphasis is illustrated in the fifth chapter: Laozi's teaching of Two-fold Mystery is superior to the teachings of the Three Caverns precisely because it is universally accessible.

However, there is also a clear undertone of great frustration and mean vindictiveness in the description of Laozi's reaction to the immortals' requests. The text depicts a certain gloating when Laozi first addresses the plight of the immortals. It has ironic humor mixed with bitterness. This may well mirror the fact that for over a century Daoists who were not among the 'chosen few' initiated into the Three Caverns were denied access to these powerful sources of bliss and eternal life.

In terms of the socio-historical context, moreover, the chapter may mirror tensions between Louguan Daoists, where Laozi and Yin Xi were traditionally revered, and a growing faction of Highest Clarity proponents. In fact, although officially Laozi was the high god of Daoism under the Tang, it is often said that at the time Highest Clarity was the most powerful Daoist teaching.⁵¹ Considering that in the developing hierarchy of integrated Daoism, initiation into the Highest Clarity scriptures was the last in a series of transmissions and therefore led to the highest ranks within the forming Daoist organization,⁵² there seems to be a point to regard the Highest Clarity teachings as the most powerful.

This tension may have had less to do with the doctrinal developments of Daoism, than with the socio-political realities at the court in Chang'an. Many of the traditions subsumed in the newly emerging order of initiation were originally independent, often centered in specific definite local areas, temples, and monasteries. Louguan is one obvious example. One member of the group, Chi Hui 歧暉, had been helping Li Yuan 李淵, the later Tang Gaozu 唐高祖, substantially in his campaign to conquer the capital.⁵³ The Daoist Wang Yuanzhi, Master of Highest Clarity teachings and allegedly initiated by Tao Hongjing, served as legiti-

⁵¹ See Miller 2003, 116-17; Qing 1994, 1: 31; Qing and Tang 1994, 90; Robinet 1997, 118. See also the account on the website of the Daoist Culture Database of the Hongkong-based Fung Ying Seen Koon Daoist Center: "Generally speaking, the unity of Daoism in the Sui Dynasty was centered round the Maoshan sect of the South, and laid a foundation for the prosperity of Daoism in the Tang Dynasty in which the Maoshan sect played the central role." Li Gang, translated by Ginny Yu, copy edited by David Palmer, <http://www.eng.taoism.org.hk/general-daoism/development-of-daoism/pg1-2-4-1.asp>. Another example appears in Isabelle Robinet's entry on "Shangqing" in the *Encyclopedia of Taoism*: "Also thanks to his [Tao Hongjing's] work, the [Shangqing] school became the foremost Taoist tradition between the sixth and tenth centuries." Pregadio 2007, 2:858.

⁵² See Kohn 2004, 67, 131-46 for lists of the ritual order of the transmission of the scriptures translated from the *Fengdao kejie*. The texts associated with Louguan tradition are transmitted at an earlier stage than the texts associated with the Highest Clarity lineage or the Three Caverns scriptures in general.

⁵³ *Hunyuan sheng ji* 8.1b-2ab. He helped the future Li Yuan's daughter to leave the capital of the Sui (Benn 1977, 26-27). He also provided a prophecy about the future emperor's ascendance to power (Benn 1977, 33). For more on Daoist prophecies and visions at the beginning of the Tang, see Bokenkamp 1994.

mizing sage and supported the cause of the early Tang rulers with divine prophecies and his sagely presence (*Jiu Tang shu* 192.616a). Both belonged to strong traditions calling themselves Daoist, however, these traditions were quite different doctrinally, socially, and institutionally.

A gloss in Daoxuan's *Fo Dao lunheng* shows that until the reign of Tang Taizong every Daoist – presumably as a resident of a monastery – received a land allotment of thirty *mu*⁵⁴ when initiated into the Three Sovereigns level, a lower section of the Three Caverns. This level came after the texts of the Louguan tradition had been taught. Only in 638, after the *Sanhuang jing* (Three Sovereigns Scripture) was censured for containing potentially subversive sentences, did the land allotment come to depend on the knowledge of the *Daode jing* (T 2104, 3, 386ab). There was therefore quite likely also an economic dimension to the a struggle for the predominance of Laozi over the teachings of the Three Caverns, a struggle between Louguan and the temples in the capital.

The *Benji jing* chapter underscores that the Daoist integration in the Sui and Tang was at times accompanied by bitterness and power struggles. It also shows that the process of doctrinal and organizational unification was not an abstract linear process but rather varied in direction and momentum depending on concrete circumstances and people. It may furthermore be one reason why "Daoism" in the Six Dynasties and Tang is sometimes very hard to grasp and can only be defined with difficulty when looking its vast literary corpus: at times "Daoism" not only denotes different traditions but also indicates opposing and struggling social entities.

⁵⁴ One *mu* corresponds to about 450-600 square metres (Kohn 2004, 64).

Appendix

Revealing Deities and Interlocutors

Chapter	Revealing deity	Main Interlocutor	Other Interlocutors
1. 護國品	元始天尊	左玄真人法解，仙人 普得妙行，張道陵	
2. 付囑品	元始天尊	太上道君.	太極法師真人徐來勒，天真皇人，青童君
3. 聖行品	太上道君	張道陵	
4. 道性品	太上道君	張道陵	仙人豆子明, 紀法成，
5. 證實品	老君	無上真人 文始先生尹喜 仙人 孟德然 扶桑太帝	，太微天帝，金闕帝君，三清太極一切諸君丈人
6. 淨土品	太上道君	普得妙行，青童君, 太微帝君	張道陵徐來勒
7. 譬喻品	太上道君	太微帝君	左玄真人
8. 最勝品	元始天尊 太上道君	太微帝君	太極真人
9. 秘密藏品	太上道君	太微帝君	
10. 道本通微品	元始天尊	東方青元天君, 南方丹霍天君, 西方素德天君, 北方玄德 天君。	真人海空行 玄和先生 徐來勒 寶子明 = 豆子明

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Do Immortals Kill?

The Controversy Surrounding Lü Dongbin

STEPHEN ESKILDSEN

Abstract

This paper examines what Buddhist texts, vernacular novels and Daoist texts variously tell us about Lü Dongbin's sword, and whether or not he ever used it to carry out or attempt murder. It then proceeds to examine—through Tang and Song Daoist sources—what sorts of actual Daoist practices and claims may have been instrumental in engendering such stories.

From at least the 12th century, allegations abounded that Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓¹ possessed a magical flying sword, which he used to commit or

¹ Throughout this paper Master Lü will be referred to by his style name (*zi* 字) “Dongbin” since he is most commonly known by this name. His personal name (*ming* 名), we are told, was Yan 巖 (or 嵒), and his sobriquet (*hao* 號) was Chunyang 純陽. While his historicity is uncertain, Daoist hagiographical records indicate that he was born at the end of the eighth century. Various internal alchemical writings (discourses and poems) are supposed to have come through his hands, and hagiographies are full of his miraculous feats. He is also an important deity among popular spirit-writing cults.

Chunyang dijun shenhua miaotong ji 純陽帝君神化妙通紀 (abbreviated hereon as *Miaotong ji*; DZ 305 [work number 305 of the *Daozang* 道藏, as catalogued in Schipper and Verellen eds. (2004)]), compiled by the Quanzhen monk Miao Shanshi 苗善時 (fl. 1324), records in detail his conversion and tutelage under Zhongli Quan 鍾離權, and presents over a hundred stories of his subsequent

attempt murder. Daoist textual sources refute such allegations on the grounds that Lü Dongbin's character was too virtuous for such a thing,² and claim that the allegations have been formed by taking his metaphorical utterances too literally, or by altering key phrases in his poetry.³ For us to try to confirm or refute the allegations concerning Lü Dongbin would probably be fruitless. It is extremely difficult even to determine whether Lü Dongbin was a historical figure at all; much less can we decisively sort out what is factual within the massive and frequently contradictory lore concerning him. More likely than not—given his well established place within the lore and literature of Daoism by the Northern Song 宋 period (960-1127)—he was a real person involved somehow in the early development of *neidan* 內丹 (internal alchemy); this, however, is the extent of what one should venture to guess at this point.

Nonetheless, the debate surrounding the murderous allegations is worth investigating, since it speaks volumes about the perception of

miracles and exploits. Accounts of his life are also given in *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑 (DZ 296; by Zhao Daoyi 趙道一, ca. 1294), *Jinlian zhengzong ji* 金蓮正宗記 (DZ 173; by Qin Zhi'an 秦志安, 1241) and *Jinlian zhengzong xianyuan xiangzhuan* 金蓮正宗仙源像傳 (DZ 174; by Liu Zhixuan 劉志玄 and Xie Xichan 謝西蟾, 1326). Two other major compendia of hagiography, poetry and discourses related/attributed to Lü Dongbin that appeared after the Yuan period are *Lüzu zhi* 呂祖志 (DZ 1484) of the late 16th century, and *Lüzu quanshu* 呂祖全書 (compiled in 1742 by Liu Tishu 劉體恕 [Hong Kong: Qingsong Guan 青松觀, 1979]). Also see Baldrian-Hussein (1986), and Katz (1999), 52-93.

Among the various *neidan* manuals associated with Lü Dongbin's legacy, perhaps the most substantial and influential works are *Zhong-Lü chuandao ji* 鍾呂傳道集 (In *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 [DZ 263] 14-16), *Bichuan Zhengyang zhenren lingbao bifa* 祕傳正陽真人靈寶畢法 (DZ 1191), and *Xishan qunxian huizhen ji* 西山群仙會真記 (DZ 246), which most likely date to around the 11th century. The definitive Western-language scholarly study of what may be termed the "Zhong-Lü *neidan* tradition" is still Baldrian-Hussein (1984). See also Schipper and Verellen eds. (2004), 801-812; and Boltz (1987), 139-143.

² Contrary to the common perception that Daoists are not much concerned with morality, virtue, and rules of conduct, it can in fact be noted that the Daoist tradition over the centuries has frequently and quite consistently enjoined moral conduct, and has provided its adherents with extensive rules and guidelines for behavior. This point is argued most thoroughly and compellingly in Kohn (2004).

³ See Ang (1984), 48-50

Daoism and *neidan* among outsiders (Buddhists and others), as well as the claims that Daoist *neidan* adepts were making in regard to the fruits of their endeavors. Lü Dongbin has been the most lauded Daoist Immortal since the Song period; practically all major *neidan* lineages (including the Quanzhen 全真 School) have included him as a major figure in their legendary lines of transmission.

Daoist sources affirm the notion that Lü Dongbin had mastered a “sword method”, although accounts vary as to who taught him the method, and where he was taught it.⁴ Daoist sources often disagree or are ambiguous as to what exactly the “sword” is. Is it an actual sword, or is it a psychological metaphor? Is it a ritual implement, or a deadly weapon? Is it employed within the realm of meditation, ritual, or combat? Addressing such questions probably will not lead us to any reliable facts about the historical Lü Dongbin. However, it should shed some light on the beliefs and practices of internal alchemists. The “sword method” does indeed seem to refer to certain types of powers to which real-life internal alchemists aspired and laid claim. These claims in turn seem to have excited the imaginations of various sorts of polemicists, story-tellers and novelists. While some of the slanderous or fanciful accounts may be crafted from mere misinterpretation and miscommunication (accidental or otherwise) of words attributed to Lü Dongbin, some may perhaps be inspired by the claims and deeds of real Daoists.

In what follows, we shall first examine the allegations put forth in Buddhist sources, followed by those found in the novel *Feijian ji* 飛劍記 (Chronicle of the Flying Sword).⁵ We will then examine how certain Dao-

⁴ According to the *Jinlian zhengzong ji* (1/6a), Lü Dongbin received the “Sword Method of the Heavenly Fugitive” (*tian dun jian fa* 天遁劍法) from Zhongli Quan on Mt. Lu 廬山 (Jiangxi). In *Miaotong ji* (2/9b-10a), we are told that he received instructions on a “sword method” from Zhongli Quan, but that this took place in a secret “grotto heaven” in the Zhongnan mountains 終南山 (Shaanxi). “The Main Biography of the Perfected Man” in the *Lüzu zhi* notes that he acquired the “Sword Method of the Heavenly Fugitive” from the Perfected Man Fire Dragon (Huolong Zhenren 火龍真人), without specifying the location (1/10a-b). “The Main Biography of Patriarch Lü” in the *Lüzu quanshu* tells us that he obtained “the Sword Method of the Heavenly Fugitive” from the Perfected Man Fire Dragon on Mt. Lu (1/1a). Buddhist sources say that he learned his method from Zhongli Quan on Mt. Hua 華山 (Shaanxi).

⁵ On the *Feijian ji* account, see also Ang (1994), 53-57.

ist sources have refuted the allegations. In the final section we shall examine, strictly from Daoist sources, what the internal alchemist's sword is, and what powers it is supposed to bestow.

The Allegations

Perhaps around the 12th century, within Buddhist circles, a story began circulate concerning a meeting that occurred between Lü Dongbin and a wise Chan master, which turned hostile and violent. The story is narrated as follows in Zhipan's 志磐 (1220-1275), *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統紀 (Comprehensive Chronicle of the Buddhist Patriarchs):

Lü Dongbin traveled to Mt. Hua. There he encountered Zhongli Quan 鍾離權 and had the Golden Elixir and the Sword Method transmitted to him. Later, he passed through Mt. Huanglong 黃龍山 in Ezhou 鄂州 (Wuhan, Hubei). Just as Chan Master Ji 機禪師⁶ ascended the hall (took his place to begin his lecture), [Lü] boldly asked, "'One grain of millet contains the whole world; boil the mountains and rivers in a half-pint tripod cauldron.' What does this mean?"

The Master said, "You corpse-guarding demon!"

Dongbin said, "Why, then, is there an elixir of immortality in the bag?"

The Master said, "Even if one lives through 80,000 *kalpas*, in the end one will fall into emptiness and perish."

[Lü Dong]bin was displeased. That night he threatened him with his flying sword. The Master, knowing beforehand [that Lü would do so], covered his head with his Dharma robe and seated himself in the abbot's quarters. The sword circled about him several times, and when the master pointed at it, it fell to

⁶ As has been pointed out by Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein, this in all likelihood refers to Master Huiji 晦機 (fl. 904-907) of Mt. Huanglong. His surname before ordination was Zhang 張, and he was at the height of his eminence bestowed the purple robe and the title, Chaohui 超慧 (Transcending Wisdom). His biography can be found in *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (T.2076 [work number 2076 in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經]; Compiled by Daoyuan 道原 in 1004) and *Liangdeng huiyao* 聯燈會要. X.1557 [work number 1557 in the *Xinbian wanzi xuzanjing* 新編卅字續藏經]; Compiled by Jingci 淨慈 in 1183). See Baldrian-Hussein (1986), n. 105.

the ground. [Lü Dong]bin came forward to apologize for his misdeed. The Master interrogated him saying, "I shall not even ask about the half-pint tripod cauldron; how can a grain of millet contain the whole world?"

[Lü Dong]bin was suddenly enlightened, and thereby uttered the following verse (*gāthā*) while taking leave:

"Once I had encountered the Yellow Dragon, I realized that in the past I had use my mind wrongly."⁷

This story appears in at least three other Buddhist sources (the incident—if factual—would have occurred in the early 10th century).⁸ The agenda behind the inclusion of this story in Buddhist literature is in all likelihood polemical; thus in the story Lü Dongbin is defeated, humbled and converted by the Chan 禪 Buddhist master of Mt. Huanglong (Yellow Dragon Mountain). Lü Dongbin, as depicted here, lacks wisdom and is deluded by alchemical superstition; even worse, he is petty, cruel and violent in character. Curiously, however, the text cites as its source a certain *Xianyuan yishi* 仙苑遺事 (Matters Left behind from the Garden of the Immortals); a so far unidentified text that bears a Daoist-sounding title.

As has been admirably discussed by Isabelle Ang, numerous other versions of this story have been preserved in texts of different periods and genres (such as vernacular stories and novels, plays and Daoist hagiography), often with dramatic variation in how the two antagonists (Lü Dongbin and the Yellow Dragon Chan master) are portrayed, as well as in the nature and final result of their conflict.⁹

⁷ *Fozu tongji* (T.2035), 42/320. In translating this passage I have largely followed the rendering of Baldrian-Hussein (see Baldrian Hussein [1986], 148-149).

⁸ Along with the *Fozu tongji*, the story is also narrated in Zhengshou's 正受 (1146-1208) *Jitai pudeng lu* 嘉泰普燈錄 (X.1559); Puji's 普濟 (13th c.) *Wudeng huiyuan* 五燈會元 (X.1565), 8/151b-152a; and Qu Ruji's 瞿汝稷 (fl. 1602) *Zhiyue lu* 指月錄 (X.1578). See Baldrian-Hussein (1986), n. 103; and Ang (1984), 46-48.

⁹ See Ang (1984). Isabelle Ang's study revolves around (and provides a full, annotated French translation of) the version of the story (entitled "Lü Dongbin feijian zhan Huanglong" 呂洞賓飛劍斬黃龍) included in Feng Menglong's 憑夢龍 (1574-1646) *Xingshi hengyan* 醒世恆言 (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue Chubanshe, 1981). In Feng Menglong's version, unlike in the Buddhist versions, the Yellow Dragon Chan master is identified as Huanglong Huinan 黃龍慧南 (1002-1069), rather than as Huiji. In the 16th century play (*zaju* 雜劇), *Lü Chunyang dianhua du*

Of all versions of the story, perhaps the most unflattering depiction of Lü Dongbin is found in *Feijian ji*, a vernacular novel by Deng Zhimo 鄧志謨 (fl. 1566-1618).¹⁰ Here, the circumstances leading to the assault differ from those described in the Buddhist version, and tend to cast an even more negative light on Lü's character. Lü, we are told, had disguised himself as a handsome scholar to seduce a young woman named Bai Mudan 白牡丹, and had been performing sexual yogic cultivation methods with her. In the process, the girl's vitality was being drained. Her mother, worried by her haggard, listless countenance, took her to see Master Huanglong 黃龍 (Yellow Dragon) of Changgansi 長干寺 Temple (near Jinling 金陵 or modern Nanjing). (Thus in this narrative Huanglong is the master's name, but not the location of his temple.)

Master Huanglong saw that the girl was inflicted with evil *qi* 氣, and declared that in her present condition she had at most one month to live. After having her mother coax out of her the details concerning her inauspicious sexual affair, Master Huanglong gave them advice that would foil Lü's techniques and save her life. During her next sexual encounter with Lü, Bai Mudan tickled and kissed Lü Dongbin in the manner prescribed by the Chan master, causing him to ejaculate into her. Consequently, the girl regained her health, while Lü Dongbin lost the "treasure in the elixir field" that he had been so carefully nurturing. Infuriated, Lü pulled out one of his two swords—his "male sword" (*xiong-*

Huanglong 呂純陽點化度黃龍 (Lü Chunyang Instructs and Saves the Yellow Dragon; in *Guben yuanming zaju* 孤本元明雜劇 [Beijing: Zhongguo Xiju Chubanshe, 1958], 28:1-14), it is Lü who converts the Yellow Dragon master to Daoism, after defeating him in a contest of supernormal power (the ability to project the Spirit outside body during meditation)—no violent act occurs. See Ang (1984), 50-53. In the novel *Sanxi Bai Mudan quanji* 三戲白牡丹全集 (Comprehensive Collection on the Three Frolics with Bai Mudan; Taipei: Wenhua Tushu, 1960), the Yellow Dragon master is a Daoist (Huanglong Zhenren [Perfected Man Huanglong]) to begin with, and is in a jealous conflict with Lü over the affections of the maiden Bai Mudan. He ultimately transforms into an actual yellow dragon, and is literally slain by the sword of Lü Dongbin. (See Ang [1984], 58-62.)

¹⁰ See Ang (1984), 53-57. Deng Zhimo wrote other supernatural, Daoist-themed novels such as *Tieshou ji* 鐵樹記 (about the dragon-slayer Xu Sun 許遜) and *Zhouzao ji* 咒棗記 (About the Thaumaturge Sa Shoujian 薩守堅).

jian 雄劍)¹¹—intent on killing the poor girl. Bai Mudan, horrified, begged for her life and informed Lü that it was Chan Master Huanglong who had advised her to do what she had done.

Lü, intent now on killing Master Huanglong, hurled the sword in the direction of Changgansi. Master Huanglong, upon seeing the sword flying his way, yelled, “don’t be rude, you evil beast!” and pointed at the sword, whereupon the sword missed his body, and got stuck in the ground. After waiting some while in vain for his male sword to return to him, Lü Dongbin hurled his other sword—the female sword (*cijian* 雌劍)—toward Changgansi, but with the same result. Puzzled, Lü mounted a cloud and flew out to the Changgansi himself. Master Huanglong then pointed at him, causing him to come falling down. All Lü could do now was ask for mercy.

Master Huanglong did forgive him, but only after rebuking him for his cruelty. When Lü asked for his two swords back, Master Huanglong only gave him back the female sword (he kept the male sword as a protective amulet for his temple), on the condition that he would use it only against evil spirits. He was from here on to carry the sword on his back, rather than at his hip. If he were ever to try to wield the sword against a human being, he would end up chopping off his own head while pulling the sword out. Lü then confided that now, having lost his treasure in his elixir field, he was unable to ascend, and pleaded for advice on how to correct this problem. Master Huanglong advised him to travel to a remote location and “nurture his *yang* 陽” in solitude for nine years. Lü did as directed, and replenished his vitality for nine years

¹¹ Earlier on in the novel we are told that the Perfected Man Fire Dragon gave Lü Dongbin two swords—a “male sword” and a “female sword.” In doing so he told Lü that he could use the swords for slaying the wicked (demons, presumably) and for self-defense, but that he must not use the swords to kill a human being. He also told him that the swords, “firstly cut off confused thoughts, secondly cut off lust, and thirdly cut off greed and anger”, meaning apparently the one who wields the swords is supposed to also wield the the inner “swords” of wisdom, purity and fortitude. (See *Feijian ji* [Taipei: Tianyi chubanshe, 1985], 59-75) These injunctions strongly echo the views of the Daoist mainstream—to be examined later on in this paper—put forth in rebuttal of the murderous allegations against Lü. However, in this novel, Lü Dongbin initially fails to wield the inner “swords”, and immediately resorts to lustful, violent behavior.

through yogic methods that involved stilling his mind and body (essence, energy and spirit) and imbibing cosmic ethers (*Feijian ji*, 47-50).

Thus, the Lü Dongbin depicted in the *Feijian ji*, one could say, is an even greater scoundrel, since he is also given to lustful behavior. Even worse, he persists in this behavior at the expense of the health of an innocent maiden, and is so cruel as threaten to slay her when his ploys are foiled. However, once he is humbled and properly guided by Master Huanglong, Lü's character is refined and perfected. His conduct throughout the rest of the novel is impeccable. Unlike the case with the Buddhist narrative, Master Huanglong, though superior to Lü in spiritual attainment, does not disdain *neidan* and the quest for immortality (he only disapproves of sexual techniques); in fact, he gives Lü directions on how to regain the inner elixir of immortal ascension.¹² The novelist, it would appear, does not bear an anti-Daoist polemical agenda. His narrative seems to reflect the perception that Buddhists and Daoists share very similar goals and methods of self-cultivation. This indeed seems to be a rather widely held perception by the 16th century, as is amply reflected in the famous novels *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Journey to the West) and *Fengshen yanyi* 封神演義 (The Enfeoffment of the Gods), as well as in major Daoist *neidan* works of the period such as the anonymous *Xingming guizhi* 性命圭旨 (The Angular Jade Instructions on Nature and Life) and Wu Shouyang's 伍守陽 (1563-1632) *Xianfo hezhong yulu* 仙佛合宗語錄 (Collected Sayings on the Combined Traditions of the Immortals and Buddhas).

¹² Another well-known folk novel that prominently features Lü Dongbin is Wu Yuantai's 吳元泰 (fl. 1522-1565) *Baxian dongyou ji* 八仙東遊記. While his showdown with Master Huanglong does not appear in this work, he does seduce Bai Mudan (but is foiled through the intervention of fellow-immortals Li Tieguai 李鐵拐 and He Xian'gu 何仙姑). However his character seems to remain somewhat lustful, vain and violent throughout the novel. Out of spite against his mentor Zhongli Quan, he uses his martial powers and military acumen to aid barbarian forces in battle against the legitimate Chinese Song Dynasty (but is foiled by Zhongli Quan). At the very end of the novel, when the blessed female Bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音 (Avalokitesvara) appears to arbitrate the titanic struggle between the Eight Immortals and the Dragon Kings, it is revealed that Lü Dongbin had at one time flirted with the lovely Bodhisattva.

Daoist Rebuttals

The notion that Lü Dongbin received guidance from a Chan Master has even been given credence by certain devout Daoists. The *Lüzü quanshu* 呂祖全書 (The Complete Patriarch Lü Anthology), a deeply pious anthology of writings pertaining or attributed to Lü Dongbin (compiled in 1742 by Liu Tishu 劉體恕),¹³ describes Lü's encounter with the Chan master as follows:

Patriarch Lü arrived at Mt. Huanglong in Wuchang. Just as Chan Master Huiji was taking his seat [to begin his lecture], the Patriarch climbed the drum platform to listen to the lecture.

The Master asked Lü: "Who is this beneath my seat?"

"I am a man of the Dao, amidst the clouds and rivers (*yunshui daoren* 雲水道人; i.e., an itinerant Daoist)."

"What will you do when the clouds are gone and the rivers have dried up?"

"[I (?)] will scorch the Buddhist monk (*heshang* 和尚) to death."

"The Yellow Dragon has appeared!"

"I shall slay it with my flying sword!"

The Master, laughing loudly said, "Ugh! I sure can't fight you with my mouth and tongue." Thereupon he pointed out and illuminated the Great Way for him.

The Patriarch thus presented him with a verse that read as follows:

"I throw away my gourd and bag, and I crush my zither.

The Great Elixir is not only the metal within the water.

Ever since I met with the Yellow Dragon,

I tell the common folk to seek attentively."

He thereby bowed and took his leave. (*Lüzü quanshu*, 1.2/16a)

¹³ The materials assembled within *Lüzü quanshu* are quite eclectic, both in terms of provenance and literary genre. What they do all have in common is that they convey to us an image of a completely holy, virtuous and wise Lü Dongbin. The earlier materials among them (which include numerous brief hagiographic anecdotes, some poems and the *neidan* manuals *Zhong-Lü chuandao ji* and *Lingbao bifa*) date to the Song and Yuan, and largely replicate materials found in the Ming Daoist Canon. The rest of the material most likely is contemporaneous to the compiler (i.e., 18th c.), and much of it is the product of spirit-writing.

In this narrative, Lü Dongbin attempts no act of violence. His showdown with the Chan master is merely a spirited, cryptic dialogue typical of Chan discourse. He exhibits no unbecoming character traits (aside from some seeming rudeness in speech and manner—which is not at all uncommon within Chan discourse), and apparently displays a degree of spiritual attainment sufficient to compel the Chan master to confer special teachings on him. Despite the violent language, the mood between the two men is amicable.

The compiler of the *Lüzü quanshu* (who appears to have been affiliated with a non-monastic Daoist group or temple that engaged extensively in spirit-writing [*fúji* 扶乩])¹⁴ was apparently aware of the allegations of malice and violence present within Buddhist hagiography and vernacular novels. Affixed to the statement, "I shall slay it with the flying sword", uttered by Lü in the above narrative, we find the following editorial comment:

[People of] the world, based on this statement, created the strange tale about [Lü Dongbin] slaying the Yellow Dragon (Chan Master Huiji of Yellow Dragon Mountain) with the Flying Sword. Perfected Man Liu, in discussing this matter has said, "[Because of] his sharp tongued replies, [people have] believed that such was the case." (*Lüzü quanshu*, vol. 1, 2/16a)

In other words, the compiler's claim is that certain people, whether due to fancy, ignorance or a polemical agenda, took Lü's statements literally and embellished the facts.¹⁵ In making this claim, he defends the charac-

¹⁴ Spirit-writing is a method of channeling spirits through automatic writing that continues to enjoy immense popularity within lay sectarian and Daoist circles, particularly in Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas Chinese communities. On this practice, see Jordan and Overmyer (1986).

¹⁵ It is somewhat possible that the editor is refuting tales (found in the *Feijian ji* and *Dongyou ji*) in which Lü Dongbin slays actual dragons. However, it certainly seems more likely that he is referring to allegations of his assaulting the Chan master, especially since his own anthology elsewhere contains a narrative confirming that he used his sword to kill an evil *jiao* 蛟 dragon when he traveled to regions of the rivers Jiang 江 and Huai 淮 (vol. 1, 1/4b). (The same thing is also stated in the canonical Ming Daoist anthology, the *Lüzü zhi*, 1/10b.)

ter of the Immortal he so admires. Nonetheless, it is interesting that he seems to have no problem acknowledging that Lü Dongbin would have received guidance at the hands of a Buddhist. Deeply rooted here, it would appear, is the assumption (shared, as we have seen, by some authors of late Ming novels and *neidan* manuals) that masters of high spiritual attainment, both Buddhist and Daoist, pursue spiritual paths that ultimately converge, or are at least of a complementary nature. Thus, in this view, one degrades neither Patriarch Lü nor the Daoist religion by acknowledging that he, at one point in his spiritual progress, benefited from the advice of a Chan master. This view, it would also seem, is also influenced by the highly eclectic orientation identifiable in most late traditional and early modern spirit-writing groups that are variously deemed as “Daoist”, “popular Buddhist” or “lay sectarian.”

However, earlier Daoist sources—probably issuing in many cases from monastic circles—do not seem to share this view, and do not admit or acknowledge that Lü Dongbin ever learned anything from a Buddhist.¹⁶ Since at least the mid-12th century, a putative “autobiography” of Lü Dongbin was in circulation; several alternate versions of it also existed by the 13th century.¹⁷ In three different versions of this “autobiography” quoted in texts found in the Daoist Canon, one finds Lü Dongbin refuting homicidal allegations:

[People of the] world say that while selling ink I took a person's head [off] with my flying sword (alternate translation: “...I take off human heads with my flying sword [?]”). I hear this and I laugh. In fact I have three swords. The first one cuts

¹⁶ Wu Shouyang, one of the most influential Daoist internal alchemists of the late Ming, seems to take an intermediate stance here. As has been discussed by Isabelle Ang, Wu Shouyang was a strong advocate of the view that Daoism and Buddhism shared the same methods and goals. However, he objects to the notion that Lü Dongbin ever received instruction from the Yellow Dragon Chan Master, since in his view Lü was far superior in his attainments and powers. (See Ang [1984], 57-58; *Xianfo hezong yulu* [in *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書, vol. 5], 107a-108b.)

¹⁷ The earliest extant version of the “autobiography” was inscribed on a stele erected at Yuezhou 岳州, and is preserved in Wu Zeng's 吳曾 (fl. 1127-1160) *Nenggai zhai manlu* 能改齋漫錄. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 504. See Katz (1999), 60-61; Baldrian-Hussein (1986), 163-165.

off confused thoughts, the second one cuts off greed and anger, and the third one cuts off lust. This is my sword method.¹⁸

In the world, many [people] claim that I am able to slay people with my flying sword. When I hear this I laugh and say that compassion is what a Buddha is. An Immortal is like a Buddha. How could [an Immortal such as myself] take a human life? The swords that I have are different from this. The first one cuts off greed and anger, the second one cuts off lust, and the third one cuts off confused thoughts. These are the three swords.¹⁹

My sword of wisdom slays the Three Corpses (*sanshi* 三尸)²⁰ and Six Bandits (*liuzei* 六賊),²¹ [along with] greed, anger, lust and confused thoughts. Would I ever take off a human head? Furthermore, what grudge do I hold against Chan Master Chao 超禪師?²²

Thus, in the various versions of his "autobiography", Lü Dongbin responds to allegations that he took a human life with his "flying sword", or that he is capable of doing so. As he explains, he possesses no sword for slaying human beings. His "sword" is a metaphor for his wisdom and fortitude that enables him to "slay" his inner demons, i.e., his bad mental states such as greed, anger, lust and confused thoughts, or the inner forces that generate temptation (Three Corpses, Six Bandits). The

¹⁸ This passage is found in *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*, 45/3b, where it quotes his "self-composed biography" (*zizuo zhuan* 自作傳).

¹⁹ This passage is found in *Lüzü zhi*, 1/16b-17a, in a section bearing the heading "The Perfected Man's (i.e., Lü Yan) Personal Account" (*zhenren ziji* 真人自記). At the end of the section one finds a note stating, "this account can be viewed (on a stone stele?) at the Pavilion Overlooking the River in Jiangzhou."

²⁰ This refers to three evil spirits living in the human body that desire the person to die in order that they can be liberated, and thus cause temptations (lust, greed, vanity, hunger) that are destructive to the person's life. This belief has existed since at least the fourth century. See Kubo (1961).

²¹ This refers most likely to the sensory capacities of sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch and cognition.

²² *Miaotong ji*, 1/7a. The passage is quoted from "The Perfected Man's Account of his Divine Transformations" (*Zhenren shenhua ji* 真人神化記), within compiler Miao Shanshi's analytical comments attached to episode number 3 ("The Hidden Merit of Compassionate Rescuing").

sword, then, is merely a psychological metaphor, which people have ignorantly misconstrued and taken literally.

The first of the above three passages (which is probably the earliest, dating no later than the mid-12th century),²³ pertains not to any encounter with Master Huiji of Mt. Huanglong, but to some other incident (or recurring incidents) that allegedly occurred when he was selling ink. This version of the “autobiography” seems to be a Daoist rebuttal of stories of Lü’s violent deed(s) and extraordinary martial powers (flying sword) that perhaps circulated prior to the polemical Buddhist tale of the run-in with the Chan Master.

The second passage refers more generally to Lü’s reputation for possessing extraordinary lethal powers. In its rebuttal of the allegations it exhibits something of the syncretic attitude that we saw in the *Lüzu quanshu* and *Feijian ji*, by stating that an Immortal such as Lü is very much like a Buddha, and thus always behaves with compassion.

The third passage appears to be a direct rebuttal of the Buddhist polemical story. “Chan Master Chao” probably refers to none other than Master Huiji of Mt. Huanglong, since this master also possessed the honorary, government-sanctioned title, Chaohui Dashi (Grand Master of Transcending Wisdom). This passage is quoted by Miao Shanshi 苗善時 (fl. 1288-1324)²⁴ in his editorial comments to episode #3 (“The Hidden Merit of Merciful Rescuing”) of his *Chunyang dijun shenhua miaotong ji* 純陽帝君神化妙通紀 (Chronicle of the Divine Transformations and Wondrous Powers of the August Lord Chunyang; a pious collection of Lü Dongbin tales, compiled in 1310; abbreviated hereon as *Miaotong ji*).²⁵ In these comments, Miao Shanshi carries out a spirited rebuttal of the Bud-

²³ The “autobiography” quoted in the *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* is roughly similar to that preserved in *Nenggai zhai manlu*; the portion quoted above is identical to the corresponding portion in the latter text.

²⁴ Miao Shanshi, who hailed from Jinling (Nanjing) was a leading disciple of the eminent *neidan* master Li Daochun 李道純, who claimed affiliation with both the northern and southern Quanzhen lineages. An eminent internal alchemist in his own right, Miao’s utterances have been preserved in a text entitled *Xuanjiao dagong’an* 玄教大公案 (DZ 1065). See Boltz (1987), 182-183.

²⁵ This is a collection of 108 hagiographical episodes (some of which are now missing) featuring Lü Dongbin.

dhist polemics.²⁶ In examining his rebuttal it is first necessary to briefly overview episodes #2 and #3 of *Miaotong ji*.

In episode #2 ("Awakening from the Yellow Millet Dream"),²⁷ we are told that the ambitious twenty-one year-old Lü Dongbin, in the year 810, went to the Tang 唐 capital Chang'an 長安 (Xi'an) to take the civil service examination. He took up lodging at an inn, where he got to conversing with a distinguished looking Daoist (Zhongli Quan, the Immortal),²⁸ who urged him to "enter the Dao." Lü responded that he first wished to bring glory to his family through a prominent government career, after which, certainly, it would not be too late to seek the Dao. The Daoist, changing the subject, proposed that they partake in a meal together. Lü consented, and ordered a servant to begin cooking. The servant immediately started to cook a pot of millet. Suddenly, Lü became sleepy, whereupon the Daoist took a pillow out of his sleeve and offered it to him. Lü accepted it and soon fell asleep. While asleep, he had a lengthy dream in which he witnessed himself attaining high government office, amassing great wealth, taking two wives and siring many children. However, subsequently in the dream he was convicted of certain crimes, and as a result lost his job, family and all possessions, and finally found himself standing desolate, beaten by wind and snow. When he awoke from this dreamful sleep, he discovered that the millet had not yet finished cooking, even though while dreaming it had seemed as though more than forty years had elapsed. This experience made Lü acutely aware of the fleeting nature of worldly glory and happiness, and instilled in him the resolve to abandon the secular world.

In the subsequent episode #3²⁹ we are told that Lü Dongbin then returned to his hometown, which just happened to be in the midst of a famine. Lü generously gave away all of his great wealth and grain sup-

²⁶ Miao Shanshi's rebuttal is also discussed in Ang (1984), 48-50.

²⁷ *Miaotong ji*, 1/3a-5a.

²⁸ Zhongli Quan (sobriquet, Zhengyang 正陽; style name, Yunfang 雲房) is said to have been the teacher of Lü Yan. Although he almost certainly is a fictional character, he is said to have been a government official and military general during the end of the Han Dynasty and the beginning of the Western Jin 晉 Dynasty (i.e., third century A.D.). Accounts of his life are found in *Lishi zhenxian tidaotongjian*, *Jinlian zhengzong ji* and *Jinlian zhengzong xianyuan xiangzhuang*.

²⁹ *Miaotong ji*, 1/5a-7b.

ply, thus saving the lives of some twenty or thirty thousand people. After disdaining the urgings of town elders and relatives that he keep some of his wealth for himself and for his descendants, he composed the following farewell poem (after which he went seeking Zhongli Quan in Mt. Zhongnan):

I shatter the gourd and trample the zither.³⁰
 Flapping my sleeve, I exit the forest of the literati.
 The true countenance of the Great Beginning is as pure as jade.
 The primordial True Suchness (*tathatā*) is as lustrous as gold.
 The cinnabar-red flame rises to the heavens and no person can fathom it.
 The sword and spear enter the earth and demons have difficulty finding them.
 Ever since I woke from the yellow millet [dream],
 I have come to believe that in the past I have wrongly used my mind. (*Miaotong ji*, 1/5b)

In his commentary, before quoting the passage from Lü's "autobiography", editor Miao Shanshi presents his own commentary to the above poem, and then states as follows:

It is to be pitied that folks deluded by self-hood (*renwo zhi tu* 人之徒) have taken this poem, eliminated four stanzas, changed "*yi jiao*" 一覺 (once I awoke) into "*yi jian*" 一見 (once I met), and [changed] "*huangliang*" 黃梁 (yellow millet) into "*huanglong*" 黃龍 (yellow dragon). When it is like this, the question and answer are not one. [They] regard the Imperial Lord (Lü Dongbin) as having assailed the Yellow Dragon [Chan Master] with the flying sword. How ignorant! (1/6b)

The last two stanzas of the poem, altered in the way described above, become the poem that appears at the end of the Buddhist polemical narrative of Lü's run-in with Master Huanglong. Miao Shanshi thus claims that the Buddhist polemicists ("folks deluded by self-hood"), in creating their slanderous tale, took an authentic poem out of context and altered

³⁰ According to notes by the editor, the "gourd" refers to illusion and materiality, and the "zither" refers to sounds and forms of the kind that evoke lust.

it in a way implying that Lü was enlightened through the guidance of the Chan master.

Miao Shanshi thus not only objects to the notion that Lü tried to kill a human being, but also does not accept the view that Lü received tutelage from a Chan master. Miao concludes his comments to episode #3 with the following words:

Because of the facts recorded in thirty-some sections of the *Xi-hua jing* 西化經 of our religion,³¹ Song Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. 1023-1064) said, "In the east [Laozi] instructed Father [Zhong]ni 尼父 (Confucius) and in the west he converted the Golden Immortal (*jinxian* 金仙 ; Sakyamuni Buddha)."³² Also, Perfected Man Han 韓真人 ordained Chan Master Hui 慧禪師, who entered the Dao to become the Perfected Man Venerable Master Feng 憑尊師.³³ Perfected Man Ziyang 紫陽真人 (Zhang Boduan 張伯端) ordained Chan Master Daoguang (Xue Dao-guang 薛道光), who entered the Dao to become Perfected Man

³¹ No scripture by this title is to be found in the Daoist Canon. However, the scripture alluded to here appears to be one of the genre that propagates the controversial legend of Laozi "converting the barbarians."

³² The source of this quote is unclear. The legend of Laozi instructing (re-buking) Confucius dates back to the late Warring States or early Han period; it is narrated in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記, and alluded to in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. (See Graham [1998].) Legends maintaining that Laozi went to India and founded Buddhism (whether by becoming the Buddha, converting the Buddha or however else) originate as early as the 2nd century C.E. (See Ch'en [1964], 50-51.) The practice of referring to the Buddha as the "Golden Immortal" appears to have gained currency during the Northern Song, among parties sympathetic to Daoism. (The tacit implication made by the title seems to be that the Buddha was actually a practitioner of Daoist immortality methods). In 1119 Northern Song Emperor Huizong 徽宗—as a part of his agenda to propagate Daoism—decreed that the Sakyamuni Buddha was to be henceforth known as the Golden Immortal of Great Awakening (Dajue Jinxian 大覺金仙). (See Qing [1996] 2:864) Although Huizong's religious policies were not perpetuated by his successors, Daoist texts occasionally continued to observe the usage of this appellation.

³³ Unfortunately, I have been able to locate further information on this Perfected Man Han and Venerable Master Feng.

Zixian 紫賢真人.³⁴ Also, Perfected Man Lü ordained more than ten virtuous Buddhist monks.³⁵ These are all facts. In transmitting our teaching we certainly do not exaggerate or boast. Here those folks deluded by self-hood have composed crafty writings in order to cover up [the facts]. As for the Master [Lü] having had occasion to study from a Buddhist monk...ha! ha! (1/7a-b)

It appears that in Miao Shanshi's view, the superiority of Daoism (and great Daoists such as Lü Dongbin and Laozi) is beyond question. While it is a quite natural and frequent occurrence for great Daoist masters to teach and convert Buddhist masters, vice versa would be absurd.

Interestingly, however, among the episodes compiled by Miao Shanshi, we also find one (#52 "Beckoning Hou Yonghui 候用晦 ") in which a Daoist cleric fancies that Lü Dongbin might kill people with his magical sword. The story goes roughly as follows:

Lü Dongbin was at the Jianji Guan 簡寂觀 Daoist Temple at Mt. Lu in Jiangzhou 江州 (Jiangxi). He was refining his sword by the steps of the temple when he was approached by a Daoist cleric named Hou Yonghui. Hou asked Lü Dongbin, "What do you use it (the sword) for?" Lü Dongbin answered, "I use it to eliminate all injustice from the face of the earth." The two men then shared some drinks (during which Lü Dongbin writes a poem in liquor on the temple wall, which miraculously becomes legible in black ink letters), after which Hou asked Lü Dongbin more about his sword method. Lü Dongbin replied, "I have the sword of the Dao (*daojian* 道劍) and the sword of ritual (*fajian* 法劍). The sword of the Dao is formless. The sword of ritual involves a technique. In adminis-

³⁴ Zhang Boduan (d. 1082) and Xue Daoguang (d. 1191; he was in fact initially a Buddhist monk) are famous internal alchemists, whose names are commonly enumerated within the transmission lineage of the Southern School (Nanzong). Curiously, however, Miao Shanshi does not quite seem to have his facts straight. Xue Daoguang was ordained by Shi Tai 石泰 (d. 1158), who was a disciple of Zhang Boduan. See *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*, 49/13b-14b.

³⁵ Although the specific incident(s) that Miao Shanshi has in mind here is unclear, there are indeed various stories—recorded in *Miaotong ji* (episodes #52 [5/1a-b], #95 [7/1a-2a], #108 [7/13a-b]), *Lüzu zhi* and *Lüzu quanshu*—in which Lü Dongbin instructs, converts and enlightens (or renders immortal) Buddhist monks.

tering it, it can be seen by the eyes of worldly folk. It is capable only of exorcising monsters/ghosts and eliminating hauntings." Hou then asked, "Now, if you were to use the sword of the Dao to execute evil people among the teeming masses, would this not prove your [miraculous power] to secular folk?" To this Lü Dongbin answered, "The sword of the Dao is the sword of sincerity. It only slays the evil within oneself. The sword of ritual is a technique. [The sword of the Dao] is not like this. You make the spirit the mother and the *qi* the child. When the spirit is preserved, the *qi* is preserved. When the spirit leaves, the *qi* scatters. Just cherish your spirit and treasure your *qi*. Hereby you slay unrighteous demons and spirits." Hou remarked, "These are truly the words of a Perfected Immortal! I beg to ask you your name." After revealing his name, Lü Dongbin threw his sword into the air, and then flew away after it, and after a while disappeared.³⁶

It would appear that by thus disappearing from Hou, without providing him with further instructions in the art of inner alchemy, Lü Dongbin shows tacit disapproval of his shallowness of understanding, and his callousness toward human life. While the historicity of this story is highly questionable (as may be the case with practically all Lü Dongbin lore), one wonders whether Hou's attitude is representative of what some Daoists were inclined to believe in or hope for.

What is the "Sword"?

From the point of view conveyed in most Daoist sources, the taking of life is objectionable. Any notion that Lü Dongbin killed or would try to kill must be denied and refuted. However, the notion that he wielded a sword and possessed supernatural martial powers is not problematic, as long as his adversaries are malignant or demonic, and his motives are righteous and benevolent. Stories where Lü slays malevolent tigers, dragons, ghosts or demons need not be refuted; in fact, some of the Daoist hagiographies contain such stories.³⁷

The "sword", as we see in the story of his encounter with Hou Yonghui, can be the actual concrete object, or a metaphor for his invul-

³⁶ *Miaotong ji*, 5/1b-2b (Episode number 52, "Inviting Hou Yonghui").

³⁷ See *Luzu quanshu*, vol. 1, 1/4b; and *Lüzu zhi*, 1/10b.

nerability to temptation that he has fostered through his *neidan* practice. The visible sword he carries can be used only for “exorcising monsters/ghosts and eliminating hauntings.” It is the “sword of ritual”; in other words, the ritual implement commonly used by Daoist priests, particularly for exorcism and therapeutic ritual.³⁸ Hou Yonghui’s comments perhaps express a wish held among some practicing Daoists that the wondrous martial powers of the Daoist ritual master could somehow be put on display in a more tangible way for all to see, so that the skepticism of non-believers can be dispelled once and for all. If the Daoist master could slay a visible foe with an invisible sword—rather than vice-versa—would people not be more impressed with the marvels of the Dao?

Indeed, one ritual manual preserved in a 12th century source,³⁹ has a procedure where the priest is supposed to exhibit a power very similar to what Hou Yonghui had hoped to see in Lü Dongbin:

Whenever a person meets with an evil wind on the road, this is caused by a baleful evil spirit. If it is causing misfortunes to people, you should form the Heavenly Soldier hand signal and visualize yourself in the form of a Stalwart Heavenly Soldier. [Then] form the Heavenly Big Dipper Demon-slaying hand signal and visualize the Four Upright Spirit Generals chasing

³⁸ The ritual sword is one of the two main ritual instruments of Daoist priests (the other is the bowl of consecrated, “lustral” water [to borrow Schipper’s terminology]), that are officially bestowed upon them on the occasion of ordination. See Schipper (1993), 71. Ritual swords, bearing special diagrams and inscription have been produced by Taoists since early medieval times. These objects have been deemed to possess demon-quelling properties not only when wielded by a priest, but also when simply kept in one’s possession. Such swords have also been used to serve as surrogate corpses in the procedure of Corpse Liberation (*shijie* 尸解) where adepts are said to feign their deaths while undergoing transformation into an immortal being. See Little and Eichmann eds. (2000), 214-217; Strickmann (1979); Cedzich (2001). For two noteworthy stories pertaining to the Daoist ritual sword, see Du Guangting’s 杜光庭 (850-933) *Daojiao lingyan ji* 道教靈驗記 (DZ 590; 8/10a-b, 13/9a-10b).

³⁹ *Taishang zhuguo jiumin zongzhen biyao* 太上助國救民總真秘要 (DZ 1227); the preface to this text, by its compiler Yuan Miaocong 元妙宗, is dated 1116. A good portion of the text is devoted to the rites of the Tianxin 天心 dispensation, that was gaining great popularity at the time.

and restraining the harmful monster, and throwing it into the *yin*-Dipper cage. Capture it, and then slay it with the golden blade hand signal. The wind will split into two columns. Again slay it with the *yin*-Bushel cage and the golden blade hand signal. The wind will naturally fall down on its own or scatter in pieces. Below there will definitely be blood. (*Taishang zhuguo jiumin zongzhen biyao* 太上助國救民總真秘要, 5/7a-b)

The priest here is instructed on how to combat a demon that—although apparently initially invisible—manifests itself objectively in the form of “wind.” The priest visualizes himself as a divine warrior and employs the “golden blade hand signal” which serves in effect as an invisible sword. Once the sword is used, physical evidence of the deed is manifested in the form of the blood of the demon. (Earlier on in the same text we can find descriptions of methods by which the sword-wielding priest, by employing visualizations, dance steps, incantations and talismans, dispatches various sword-wielding divine warriors to remote locations in order to combat the demons and monsters blamed for causing diseases, natural disasters and the like.)⁴⁰

However, as Lü Dongbin in the narrative explains to Hou Yonghui, the invisible sword forged through *neidan* practice—the sword of the Dao—is used only on one’s own internal demons. Elsewhere in *Miaotong ji* (episode #7 Sword Method of the Secret Seal), we find a description—uttered by Zhongli Quan to his attentive disciple, Lü Dongbin—of how the internal alchemical “sword” is made, and how it is used:

In cultivating Perfection and embodying the Dao you must rely completely on the power of wisdom. Hold it firmly to enter the marvels and go toward the mysteries. First you must be courageous and resolute; thereby, you can be unwavering from utter beginning to end. Your great functions and great machinations will be unfathomable to demons and spirits. Therefore the sage carries the precious sword and overturns the Big Dipper. Wielding the mighty spear, he crushes the devils and monsters. Therefore there is the metaphor of the sword method. As for this sword, [this is how you forge it]:

Gather the ultimate essence of the limitless and combine it with the primal *qi* prior to Heaven. Borrow the furnace and

⁴⁰ See *Taishang zhuguo jiumin zongzhen biyao*, 4/2b-3a, 10b-11a

bellows of *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤 (i.e., Heaven and Earth, *yang* and *yin*).⁴¹ Move the tongs and hammer of the Original Commencement. Fire it to completion with the fire of wisdom. Polish it sharp with the numinous spring. The Great Ultimate is the sword guard. The strong center is the hilt. Beautiful sharpness is its blade. Clarity and purity is the sword-case. It is dazzlingly white and radiant, pure and firm. Move the mechanisms of creation. Wield the commands of benevolent might. When raised, there is no present or past; when held there is no prior or latter. The spirits and demons of the Six Heavens surrender to it. The monsters and devils of the Three Realms beg for their lives. It destroys the barriers [erected by] your confused thoughts. It eliminates the causes of greed and attachment. It slays the seven emotions and it executes the Six Bandits. It cuts off anger. It eradicates delusion and wickedness.

When affairs and objects come before you, meet them with the blade and sever them. If you hide it, your body will be without life and death and will embody [that which is] prior to forms. If you wield it, in governing you can pacify the nation and purify [the realm] under Heaven. Its radiance is good and sharp. [It is] melded to perfection, strong in its center. Wicked ones, upon seeing it, will take fear. Infidels, upon hearing it will burst their gall bladders [in horror]. [If] you strive diligently you will bring it to completion, and you will bravely and freely roam about the great empty space. (*Miaotong ji*, 2/9b-10a)

The above discourse is quite abstract in various places, and seems to be pregnant with meaning beyond what can be immediately discerned. On the whole, it primarily seems to describe a mental quality or power, brought to completion through Daoist internal alchemical self-cultivation, which serves to help one overcome one's own ignorance, passions, desires and temptations. To this extent it essentially seems to reiterate what Lü Dongbin is saying in his "autobiography" and in the narrative of his encounter with Hou Yonghui. However, here this subtle, inner "sword" also is attributed with considerable potency that can be exhibited upon

⁴¹ *Qian* and *kun* are trigrams/hexagrams from the *Book of Changes*. *Qian* is composed entirely of solid lines (*yang*) and symbolizes Heaven. *Kun* is composed entirely of broken lines (*yin*) and symbolizes earth.

the outer world. It brings to submission not only one's "inner demons" but also the spirits, demons, monsters and devils of the outer world. It can be used to bring peace and justice to the empire. It brings terror to the heart of the scoundrel and the infidel. What specifically does this mean? It is possible, perhaps, to conclude after all that the "sword" is nothing other than supreme wisdom and fortitude, which makes one utterly courageous in the face of worldly difficulty, sagely if consulted for advice by rulers, and unbeatable in debate with Buddhists and other "infidels." However, at the same time one gets the impression that the author of this passage might also have in mind some sort of demon-quelling, wonder-working martial power or technique to which internal alchemists liked to lay claim.

Lü Dongbin's sword is also referred to fairly frequently in the poetry that has been attributed to him and preserved in relatively early Daoist sources (13th century).⁴² Some of the poems certainly contain language and imagery capable of inspiring martial lore:

When sword is raised, the stars scamper and [the wicked within] 10,000 *li* are executed.

Where the wind and thunder follow, the sound of rain is fierce.

A human head(s?) is carried forth from which there still is speech.

Prancing about and singing loudly, I pass by the five lakes.

Sir, Sir, your countenance is menacing.

As you brandish your sword before your breast, the ethers and clouds clash.

Thrice you issue shouts of "Quickly! Quickly!" (*ji ji* 急急; this reminds one of the standard phrase *ji ji ru lü ling* 急急如律令 ["quickly, quickly in accordance with the rules and commands"] found frequently in Daoist ritual formulas)

Suddenly a human comes flying down from empty space.

Raising my bushy eyebrows, with a spirit of malice,

⁴² The sources in question are *Chunyang zhenren huncheng ji* 純陽真人渾成集 (DZ 1055; compiled in 1251 by the Quanzhen monk He Zhiyuan 何志淵) and *Jindan shijue* 金丹詩訣 (compiled ca. 1220 by the *neidan* master Xia Yuanding 夏元鼎 [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991]).

I leap into the air, 10,000 *li* 里.⁴³
In the box (sheath) on my back is a sword of 3 *chi* 尺.⁴⁴
On behalf of Heaven I use it to slay unjust people.

Polish and sharpen the 3 *chi* sword of the azure wind.
The metal hammer (*jinchui* 金鎚) in my sleeve, I do not wield
recklessly.
I only use these to take revenge on my enemies.
I certainly do not allow myself not to be a man within the Way
of Humans.

Raising my wild brows, my speech is like thunder.
When I hear of grudges and enmity, I put down my wine cup.
I hold up my sword in the air, and it goes 1000 *li*.
It leaves me during the first watch [of the night] and returns by
the second watch.

This morning I rise early to erase the utter darkness.
I take vengeance on my enemies 1000 *li* away within a short
moment.
Lying on its side with my sleeve is the head of a dead person.
In its mouth it is speaking according to its will.

At the eastern edge of the southern mountain we suddenly
meet each other.
Holding your hands I speak to you with care, in a manner
similar to Zhong[li Quan].
When the sword technique is completed and when you leave
me, slay the *jiao* 蛟 dragon wherever there is a *jiao* dragon.
(*Chunyang zhenren huncheng ji* 純陽真人渾成集, 2/15a; *Jindan
shijue* 金丹詩訣 11)

This describes a flying sword that can swiftly travel great distances and can slay all kinds of enemies, including dragons and humans. Are these poems best understood as descriptions of the ritual powers of sword-wielding priests? Do they pertain rather to the inner battles of the internal alchemist striving toward enlightenment? Or are the references to chopping off human heads, taking vengeance and slaying unjust people

⁴³ One *li* is roughly 500 meters.

⁴⁴ One *chi* is roughly 30 centimeters.

to be taken literally? Do all three levels of interpretation hold true? Can the same sword used for the internal, psychic battles, also be used on external foes?

There is substantial evidence that during a quite early period in the history of *neidan* (ca. 8th or 9th century) there existed a contemplative, internal alchemical technique for "forging" a "sword", which was not merely a psychological metaphor. This, interestingly enough, is roughly the same period in which Lü Dongbin would have lived, if he were a historical person. The evidence in question—which may just hold the key to better understanding "Lü Dongbin's" poems quoted above—is to be found in two texts—the *Zhen longhu jiuxian jing* 真龍虎九仙經 (The Perfected Dragon and Tiger Nine Immortals Scripture; abbreviated hereon as *Jiuxian jing*),⁴⁵ and the *Taibai huandan pian* 太白還丹篇 (The

⁴⁵ DZ 227. This text takes the format of a discourse uttered by an ancient immortal named Tianzhen Huangren 天真皇人 (August Man of Heavenly Perfection) to the legendary Yellow Emperor, with commentaries by "the two Perfected Men Luo and Ye." This refers to Luo Gongyuan 羅公遠 (ca. 655-758) and Ye Fashan 葉法善 (ca. 616-720), two renowned Daoist masters of the high Tang. A synopsis of the text and commentary is also found in *Daoshu* (DZ 1017; compiled by Zeng Zao 曾慥 [fl. 1131-1155]) 31 under the title *Jiuxian pian* 九仙篇. Here the full names of the commentators are given. Perhaps most interestingly, this *Jiuxian pian* also quotes one other commentator, who is none other than Yixing 一行 (683-727), the renowned Buddhist monk, astronomer and mathematician.

Luo Gongyuan hailed from Pengxian 彭縣 (Sichuan), or according to other accounts, from Wuchang (Hubei). Sichuan, particularly Mt. Qingcheng 青城山, was his principal sphere of activity. An account of his life can be found in *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (DZ 1032; Compiled by Zhang Junfang 張君房 [fl. 1008-1025]), 113/2b-3b; and in *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*, 39/7b-10b. See Ren (1991), 1253.

Ye Fashan hailed from the region of Guancang 括蒼 (Zhejiang), and belonged to a family of hereditary Daoist priests. Accounts of his life can be found in *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 39/1a-5a; and in *Tang Ye zhenren zhuan* 唐葉真人傳 (DZ 779). The latter text, which seems to date from the Southern Song period, records his numerous alleged miraculous feats and his interactions with Tang Emperors, particularly Xuanzong 玄宗. See Boltz (1987), 96-97; and J. Kirkland (1992), 47-86.

Also, *Daojiao lingyan ji* preserves one anecdote apiece on the thaumaturgic prowess of Luo Gongyuan (9/5b-7a; also *Yunji qiqian* 119/9b-11a) and Ye Fashan (14/8b-9a; also *Yunji qiqian* 120/13b-14a)

[Master of Mt.] Taibai's Chapter on the Recycled Elixir).⁴⁶ The former is particularly rich in material for our consideration. The main text of this scripture states as follows:

Refine the essence and efflorescence to make a sword. Wander about under the four heavens [of the east, south, west and north]. You will be able repay gratitude and exact revenge. This is what is called "a heroic stalwart." (*Jiuxian jing*, 11b.)

This passage would indicate that the intended readers of the text—practitioners aspiring to become Immortals—are supposed to try to some day forge and wield the sword themselves. They are to employ the weapon within this world ("under the four heavens"). What is meant by "repay gratitude and exact revenge" is not quite clear, but it seems to mean that one wields one's sword in some fashion helpful toward one's friends or benefactors, and deadly towards enemies. Since the sword-wielding Immortal is to be "heroic", perhaps one can surmise that in helping friends and vanquishing foes, justice and goodness are to be served in the process, rather than merely a mercenary agenda or personal vendetta. The "essence and efflorescence" that one refines to create the sword are entities that exist in the body to begin with or are perhaps "imbibed" from the sun and moon through procedures of visualization and air/saliva-swallowing.⁴⁷ In other words, it would appear that the

⁴⁶ This treatise is included in *Daoshu* 27. The treatise begins with the phrase, "Qingxuzi 清虛子 said...." Zeng Zao provides a note informing that this Qingxuzi was the Man of Mt. Taibai (Taibaishanren 太白山人), Wang Yuanzheng 王元正, who "referred to himself (in some other text that Zeng Zao had available?) as a person of the Zhenyuan 貞元 era of the Tang (785-805)." Mt. Taibai is a (historically) prominent Daoist mountain in Western Shaanxi.

⁴⁷ The *Taibai huandan pian*, within its discussion on how to cultivate health, longevity and immortality, describes how one can swallow the sun and the moon. To swallow the sun, one should at sunrise sit facing the east (where the sun is rising), visualize the sun in the shape of a round wheel, and make 72 swallowings (of air and/or saliva?). After this one is to transport the solar nutrients up to the head through the visualization technique known as the "river chariot." To swallow the moon, one should sit facing the moon when the moon makes its appearance in the evening sky, and undergo a procedure similar to that used to swallow the sun, albeit with 81 swallowings. Based on this evidence, it would

"sword" is to be "forged" through contemplative, internal alchemical procedures. This conjecture is readily confirmed in the commentary to this passage, which is attributed to Ye Fashan 葉法善 (ca. 616-720):

To refine a sword you first gather the essence and efflorescence. Later you give rise to the heart-fire. The lungs are the bellows. The liver-wood is the charcoal. The spleen is the yellow mud. The kidneys are the sun and moon. The essence is the steel. The kidneys are water. The spleen is earth and is the mud mold. The body is the hearth. Within a single breath you carry out the method. The breath completes the breath-energy (*qi*) of the sword. Refine this in the gallbladder.

The heart is fire. Bake the essence and efflorescence. Internally refine it and polish it again in the gallbladder nine times. Each time you polish it, steep it in the blood from the liver. Thus it is called "hitting with the iron of Ye Gorge." In other words it is the essence and efflorescence. The lion-gallbladder polishes. The golden adornment of resplendent water. In other words, when the heart-fire burns, the lungs are melted by the fire. The metal melts and drips on to the sword. When the blood of the Water Dragon washes and polishes, this is the steeping by the blood of the liver.

If you wish to forge the metal hammer, the method is different. Each time you swallow the solar and lunar efflorescences, you gather them into the lungs. Because the lungs correspond to the agent metal, it is called the metal hammer. Also, when the metal hammer emerges, it is of gold (yellow metal), as before. Originally the lungs correspond to white. How can it contrarily be yellow? Originally, the lungs are the child of the spleen. The spleen is in charge of tears. If you swallow the solar and lunar efflorescence and gather them into the lungs, after twelve months you can raise the heart-fire, send down the fire, and forge it. Fire conquers metal, and thus in a single moment it will melt down. The spleen is earth and is the mold. This is called "the child going to the mother"; in other words, it resembles how a child follows its mother. When the yellow breath-energy of the spleen rises, the strength of the repelling

appear that the lunar and solar efflorescences that are used as the "steel", are procured through a similar yogic procedure. See *Daoshu*, 27/8b.

fire is about to complete the metal hammer. All adepts who have finished forging a sword become Heroic Immortals.⁴⁸

This presents a lengthy description of an internal alchemical “sword-forging” method that is quite reminiscent of the method allegedly taught to Lü Dongbin by Zhongli Quan in the *Miaotong ji*, yet not quite the same. The method in the *Miaotong ji* is described in extremely abstract terms, and seems to pertain primarily to moral discipline and the cultivation of mental serenity. The description in Ye Fashan’s commentary to the *Jiuxian jing*—though admittedly in some places quite unintelligible to non-practicing outsiders (myself included)—pertains to much more concrete physiological procedures involving bodily organs, gases, fluids and energies, which are activated and mobilized through controlled respiration, the swallowing of saliva and active imagination. Through these procedures one creates two kinds of weapons—a “sword” and a “hammer.” (It most certainly bears noting here that one of the putative Lü Dongbin poems quoted earlier also mentions a “hammer” that goes along with the “sword.”) The subsequent comments go on to further confirm that these weapons are to be used in combat against external foes:

A heroic stalwart wanders under the four heavens and within space and time. Defeating [evil] and pacifying [the world], he dwells among the masses. He must not do wrong. If there are people who meet them, they can have the metal hammer, sword and dagger transmitted to them. [Such people] all have spiritual penetrations (*abhijna* [Sanskrit]; supernormal powers). (*Jiuxian jing*, 13a-b)

⁴⁸ *Jiuxian jing*, 12b-13a. *Taibai huandan pian* contains a more concise description of what appears to be the same technique: “An Immortal always has a sword. In forging it, he makes his body his hearth, his essence and energy his iron, the lunar and solar efflorescences his steel, his liver his charcoal, his lungs his bellows, his heart his fire, his spleen his mud, his kidneys his mold, and his gall-bladder his whetstone. With the remaining iron he makes a dagger. How does he forge them (the sword and dagger)? [Wang Yuanzheng] said, ‘Simply by contemplation.’ Furthermore, there is also the [method for forging] the metal hammer. Each time you swallow the Dragon and Tiger you gather them above the lungs so that they do not reach the kidneys. The lungs [correspond to the agent] metal. With one forging it is complete.” (*Daoshu*, 27/13a.)

The Immortal ("heroic stalwart") is to bring peace to the world with his exploits and must never use his fighting prowess for evil purposes. The passage concludes by saying that those fortunate enough to encounter such Immortals can be bestowed with marvelous weapons, or perhaps rather with the know-how for making the weapons. They thus come to possess supernormal powers, although it is unclear whether the wielding of the weapons automatically imbues one with supernormal powers, or whether the "hammer, sword and dagger" are really themselves terms denoting some miraculous fighting power that one comes to possess within one's own psychic and physical being.

The other commentary attached to the text—attributed to Luo Gongyuan 羅公遠 (ca. 655-758)—indicates that the nature of the weapon, and the powers it possesses and bestows upon one who wields it, varies greatly according to the rank and caliber of the Immortal in question:

1) Heavenly Stalwarts (*tianxia* 天俠) are originally Heavenly Immortals who have been bestowed a sword by the Supreme Thearch (Shangdi 上帝).

2) Immortal Knights (*xianxia* 仙俠) [are those who] after cultivating the practices for the heavenly ascension of the Perfected, further refine the *qi* to forge a sword.

3) Holy Stalwarts (*lingxia* 靈俠) [are those who after] already having become Earthly Immortals, dwell in a mountain as its protector. Once they have refined their sword and dagger to completion, they become able to instantly dispatch the flying sword to any location within 10,000 *li*, as soon as they hear of any injustice.

4) Wind Stalwarts (*fengxia* 風俠) are also Earthly Immortals. In refining the sword and dagger, they practice only intermittently and do not reach the ultimate efficacy. When they hear of injustice, they can arrive instantly with body and sword wherever wind can penetrate (they cannot penetrate solid surfaces).

5) Water Stalwarts (*shuixia* 水俠) are originally Water Immortals (*shuixian* 水仙).⁴⁹ When the refining [of the sword] is

⁴⁹ A Water Immortal, we are told, is a type of immortal that lives underwater, in the rivers and seas. According to the Luo commentary, the method for becoming a Water Immortal consists of stabilizing the breath and refining the *qi* while visualizing the kidneys transforming into black clouds that exit and enter

completed, they are called Water Stalwarts. They cannot fly if there is no water.

6) Fire Stalwarts (*huoxia* 火俠). When they practice this, they naturally are set on fire. This is also known as The Samadhi of Fiery Radiance. Once they have completed the refining of the sword and dagger, and when the body is about to fly, they require a ball of Transformation Fire, on which to ride upon to come and go. Thus they are called Fire Stalwarts.

7) Air Stalwarts (*qixia* 氣俠) [are those who have] only learned to stabilize the breath. Thereby with the essence and efflorescence they refine the sword. When the sword is complete it is like air. [Because they] wield [this] while coming and going, they are called Air Stalwarts.

8) Ghost Stalwarts (*guixia* 鬼俠). People cannot see their form. They had originally cultivated [the way of] the Spirit Immortal (*shenxian* 神仙). They have a water and ink form, and a water and ink sword. In exiting, entering, coming and going, they are no different from air.

9) Sword-Encountering Stalwarts (*yujianxia* 遇劍俠) are those who, having come upon a precious sword, can transform and appear at will in the East and West.⁵⁰

There thus exist among us some beings ("Heavenly Stalwarts") that from the beginning possess the "sword" due to the fact that they once dwelled as Immortals in the celestial realms and had it divinely bestowed upon them. Thus they are here on earth perhaps because they have been divinely commissioned for some worthy task, or are "fallen Immortals" who have committed some indiscretion in the celestial realms and have been banished to the earthly realm temporarily. Whatever the case, their condition is pre-endowed and their "sword" is not something that is "forged" through the internal alchemical procedure endorsed in the *Jiuxian jing* and *Taibai huandan pian*.

However, items 2 through 8 ("Immortal Stalwarts"... "Ghost Stalwarts") constitute descending grades of "swords" that can be internally "forged" by practitioners of various levels of internal alchemical attain-

from the ears. After practicing this for 100 days, one should be able to go underwater and attain immortality there. The Ye commentary states that a Water Immortal is inferior to an Earthly Immortal in status. (*Jiuxian jing*, 11a-b.)

⁵⁰ *Jiuxian jing*, 11b-12b.

ment. (Item 9 describes somebody who has for some reason or other has obtained the "sword"—and with it special powers—without the trouble of personally "forging" it.) The Immortal Stalwart is somebody who has mastered *neidan* to the point where he is capable of ascending to heaven (fully in the body),⁵¹ but instead of doing so immediately, proceeds to forge the "sword" through *neidan* technique, presumably in order to perform righteous martial exploits on earth. From the combined descriptions of the Holy Stalwart, Wind Stalwart, Water Stalwart, Fire Stalwart, Air Stalwart and Ghost Stalwart, it appears that the "sword" is supposed be able to fly rapidly to a remote location where some sort of "injustice" is to be found, as is the body of its wielder (such is most likely also meant to be understood in the case of the Immortal Stalwart). The consistency and appearance of the flying sword and its wielder, how they fly, and where they can fly, all vary according to the degree of internal alchemical attainment.

In regard to the body that wields the sword and rapidly travels remote distances with it, this is in all likelihood—at least in the case of most of the Stalwarts—intended to refer to a marvelous internal spirit-body of sorts, that the seasoned internal alchemist is supposed to be able to send out through the top of his/her head while in meditation. (For sake of convenience we shall refer to this as the Spirit; in the larger internal alchemical tradition this gets referred to by terms such as Radiant Spirit, Single Numinous Perfect Nature, Golden Elixir, Body Outside the Body, etc.). Both the *Taibai huandan pian* and *Jiuxian jing* contain lengthy descriptions of processes by which the practitioner, through visualization, controlled breathing, air-swallowing and saliva-swallowing, endeavors to create a "child" (*ying'er* 嬰兒 ; as referred to in the *Taibai huandan pian*) or "holy body" (*shengshen* 聖身 ; as referred to in the *Jiuxian jing*).⁵² Once thus formed, the Spirit, which initially indeed bears the countenance of a small child, is to be sent out on frequent journeys. Although it can initially travel only a few steps out of the body, within ten months to a year it becomes able to travel enormous distances, and

⁵¹ According to the *Jiuxian jing*, the highest form of immortality is heavenly ascension of both the body and Spirit, which is attainable after one has refined the five viscera (liver, heart, spleen, lungs, kidneys) after having already created an immortal Spirit (see 13b-14a).

⁵² See *Daoshu*, 27/11a-b; *Jiuxian jing*, 10b-11a.

grows in size and maturity to where it is a complete replica of the adept's physical body. At this point, according to the *Jiuxian jing*, the adept has attained the status of Earthly Immortal (*dixian* 地仙; immortal in body and Spirit, but not yet ready to physically ascend to heaven), which is better than that of Spirit Immortal (immortal and capable of ascension in the Spirit; but the physical body remains mortal and incapable of ascension).⁵³

The diminishing powers of the Stalwarts that get described as one moves down to items 7 and 8 (Air Stalwarts and Ghost Stalwarts), reflect the inferior qualities that are possessed by the Spirits of less accomplished or downright misguided internal alchemists. As is frequently related in internal alchemical discourses and in hagiography, a truly proficient adept produces a Spirit that is of pure *yang* constitution—thus it can appear fully visible to the naked eyes of mortals; can fully take on solid, corporeal traits; and can perform unlimited physical feats.⁵⁴ However, the Spirits of low-caliber adepts are of a *yin* quality; they are obscure or completely invisible and cannot muster much in the way of solidity. Thus the Air Stalwart, through the narrow practice of breath control wields an invisible “air sword”, while a Ghost Stalwart can only appear before the eyes in black and white. In sum, the manner in which the lower ranked Stalwarts are described, seems to provide a further clue that it is the Spirit that is supposed to wield the sword, fly away and do some fighting.

The descriptions of the powers of the various sword-wielding Stalwarts are certainly reminiscent of the “sword and hammer” mentioned in the poems attributed to Lü Dongbin, as well as of the popular and Buddhist allegations regarding the lethal capabilities or deeds of Lü Dongbin.⁵⁵ According to these allegations, Lü wields a flying sword (or

⁵³ See *Jiuxian jing*, 11a.

⁵⁴ See *Xiuzhen shishu*, 14/3a-b (*Zhong Lü chuandao ji*); *Xishan qunxian huizhen ji*, 1/4b; *Bichuan Zhengyang zhenren lingbao bifa*, 3/11a-b; *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*, 49/7b-11a; *Miaotong ji*, 3/11a-12a; *Dadan zhizhi* 大丹直指 (DZ 244; attributed to Qiu Chuji 丘處機 [1143-1227]), 8b-9a; and Eskildsen (2004), 92-94.

⁵⁵ Many of us are also likely to be reminded of things we have read about in popular novels such as *Xiyou ji*, *Fengshen yanyi*, and of course, *Feijian ji*, where religious adepts (of Daoist, Buddhist or eclectic/miscellaneous persuasion) fly

swords) and can slay foes in remote locations. Although he is supposed to use the sword(s) only for benevolent purposes against non-human foes, it was alleged by some that he in fact violated this principle. All of the Immortal Stalwarts wield such flying swords; the Air Stalwart wields an invisible sword—which brings to mind the narrative in the *Miaotong ji* where the Daoist cleric Hou Yonghui expresses the wish that Lü Dongbin would slay evil people with his invisible “sword of the Dao.” Here we see that the notion that Daoist internal alchemists could wield such powers was seriously entertained and promoted by internal alchemists themselves, at least during the very early phases of the internal alchemical tradition during the mid to late Tang. Furthermore, the statement, “he must do no wrong” in the Ye Fashan commentary would seem to reflect a fear that internal alchemists, if not given such warnings, may indeed abuse their magical martial powers.

The Stalwarts of the *Jiuxian jing* are presumably not meant to be mere objects of entertainment and fantasy. The reader is supposed to seriously aspire to possess the weapons and powers described. Certainly it may seem far too implausible, even to the most zealous practitioners, to physically, in this fleshly body, while wielding a heavy weapon, fly through air or water, penetrate solid spaces, transform into fire etc. However, if these are things to be done with the Spirit that is sent out in a state of trance, one can more readily surmise that a significant enough number of real adepts did experience—or claim—success at such feats, at least at the subjective level. Perhaps the historical Lü Dongbin, or the person(s) on whom the character was based, was just such an adept. The sword alluded to in “Lü Dongbin’s” poems, and in his lore, was probably originally neither a mere ritual implement nor a psychological metaphor; it was a psycho-physiologically crafted magical weapon reputed to have lethal power in both the supernatural and mundane realms.

One can most plausibly surmise that the internal alchemist’s “sword” described in the *Jiuxian jing* and the *Taibai huandan pian* was intended primarily or exclusively for use in apotropaic ritual. The bulk of evidence within Daoist sources (hagiography, self-cultivation manuals and ritual manuals) would suggest that the foes are supposed to be largely of the non-human and/or supernatural variety, and that the

about wielding magical weapons and performing heroic exploits with miraculous martial powers.

“fighting” probably occurred primarily within the context of rituals for healing illnesses or quelling natural disasters. The adversaries that sword-bearing Daoists confront are never human.⁵⁶ They are either spirit beings or reptiles.⁵⁷ This, as we have seen, is also the case with Lü Dong-

⁵⁶ It is probably significant to point out here that both Ye Fashan and Luo Gongyuan are extolled in hagiography primarily for their prowess at wonder-working rituals. Most interestingly, one hagiography (*Tang Ye zhenren zhuan*) portrays Ye Fashan as a person who combines the traits of the Heavenly Stalwart (#1) and the Sword-Encountering Stalwart (#9). During his youth he encounters Immortals who bestow him with swords, talismans and seals, and reveal to him his true identity—an Immortal banished from heaven and entrusted with the task of rescuing people by slaying ghosts and demons (and personally accumulating merit to qualify for reinstatement in Heaven in the process). With his divinely bestowed powers he proceeds to perform numerous thaumaturgic feats, such as quelling hauntings in the imperial palace, healing a victim of fox possession and subduing a water dragon that had been causing boats to overturn and people to drown. Interestingly, in one episode, he uses his sword to perform surgery. He heals the wife of a local official by cutting her belly open and removing the disease, and by gouging out her eyes and washing them clean. Both procedures were completely painless and left no scarring.)

⁵⁷ By far the most famous sword-wielding Immortal of medieval Daoism is Xu Sun 許遜, putatively a 3rd century figure to whom numerous feats of dragon-slaying had come to be attributed by the late Tang period, and whose cult rose to the height of prominence in the Song and Yuan periods. According to the lore that had developed by the 13th century, Xu Sun was also a Sword-Encountering Immortal, who was bestowed “precious swords” by five young girls who day after day amused themselves with sword fighting at his mansion. Xu Sun knew that they were in fact “sword immortals”, and humbly acquired their method of the “divine sword.” With his acquired skills and powers, and aided by eleven disciples (one of whom was Wu Meng, who was originally his teacher), he vanquishes various types of dragons that were guilty of various crimes such as causing floods and boating accidents, emitting noxious gases that cause epidemics, or possessing and impregnating unsuspecting humans. Throughout all his adventures, Xu Sun never causes injury to a human being; in fact, in one instance he mercifully spares the lives of baby dragons (born from an evil mother dragon), on the grounds that they had yet to commit any evil. As a reward for his life of heroic exploits, he finally ascends to heaven in broad daylight, accompanied by six disciples, forty-two family members, as well as some of his chickens and dogs. (See *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian*, 26/1a-16b.)

bin, as far as the Daoist sources are concerned. The tangible benefit thus brought to humanity is, generally speaking, the curing of disease or the quelling of natural disasters. More broadly speaking, within all of the hagiographic material available in the Daoist Canon, one seldom, if ever, can find any record of an Immortal or eminent Daoist adept committing an act of violence against a fellow human being.

Yet, the moral injunctions occasionally put forth in the *Jiuxian jing* in fact can also be taken as acknowledging that Immortal Stalwarts can and do at times kill, even though such an act is not to be condoned. This text was once proscribed by the government during the Dazhong 大中 reign era (847-860) of the Tang;⁵⁸ could this be due to perceived dangers (black magic, or perhaps sedition) posed by the methods it teaches? Could this perceived danger and the threat of further suppression be the reason why later Daoist hagiographers describe Lü Dongbin's sword as either a ritual implement or a psychological metaphor, but not a deadly weapon? It is also significant to point out here that "Jiuxian pian", an abridged version of the *Jiuxian jing* found in the early 12th century Daoist anthology *Daoshu* 道樞, preserves a short version of "Ye Fashan's" description of how to make the sword, but omits all other pertinent passages pertaining to the "sword", including "Luo Gongyuan's" descriptions of the Immortal Stalwarts.⁵⁹

One cannot by any means dismiss the notion that there may have been Daoist adepts—internal alchemists—who had a propensity for violent, unruly behavior. One passage of considerable interest in this regard can be found in *Chongyang zhenren jinguan yusuo jue* 重陽真人金關玉鎖訣

On the various hagiographies on Xu Sun, as well as the cult to him (which in the 13th century evolved into a ritual dispensation known as the Jingming Way of Filial Piety and Loyalty 淨明忠孝道), see Boltz (1987), 70-71. The oldest of the extant hagiographies on him is *Xiaodao Wu Xu er zhenjun zhuan* 孝道吳許二真君傳 (DZ 449), which dates to the ninth century.

⁵⁸ This information is stated in Ma Duanlin's 馬端臨 (fl. 1273) *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考. See Schipper and Verellen eds. (2004) 1:403; and Ren Jiyu ed. (1991), 163-164. The latter source speculates that the proscription may have come about due to the presence of strange—possibly Tantric Buddhist influenced—topics such as "entering a womb" (selecting a womb for rebirth) and "changing the dwelling" (taking over the body of another person).

⁵⁹ See *Daoshu*, 31/5a-13b.

(Perfected Man Chongyang's Lesson on the Golden Pass and Jade Chain; abbreviated hereon as *Yusuo jue*), a text attributed to Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (1113-1170),⁶⁰ the founder of the influential Quanzhen School (the predominant school of monastic Daoism). It reads as follows:

[The (anonymous) interlocutor] asked, "Within the great Dao, how many types of divine Immortals are ranked?"

[Wang Chongyang] explained, "I have heard that in the *Chuandao ji* 傳道集 there are five types of divine Immortals. Immortals of the first (lowest) type do not obey the precepts, do not avoid alcohol and meat, do not take life (*sic?*), and do not think of [doing] good [deeds]. These belong to the category of Ghost Immortal. The second type is those who nurture their perfect *qi* and have long life. They are Earthly Immortals. *The*

⁶⁰ DZ 1156. There is considerable controversy concerning this attribution. This text, unlike most of the major works of Wang Chongyang, is not mentioned in Quanzhen hagiographic sources. Also, it deals extensively with matters of health and physiology, to a degree far surpassing the other extant works of Wang Chongyang, and employs some terms and allusions not typically found in early Quanzhen works. (The most glaring example—which seems not only idiosyncratic but even somewhat anachronistic—is the term Longhua Sanhui 龍華三會 [Dragon Flower Third Assembly; 12b]. This term usually denotes three auspicious future occasions where the Maitreya Buddha preaches—a theme that would become prominent in the literature of popular sectarian societies of the Ming onward.)

However, in many important ways, the text's teachings are consistent with the spirit of Wang Chongyang and the early Quanzhen movement. This text first and foremost extols inner purity and virtuous action, and endorses a regimen of strict mind and body discipline. It describes the body as "provisional" (*jia* 假), yet essential for cultivation Perfection; it states that while knowledge and mastery of one's physiology is essential, it is but a preparatory complement to the completion of the Perfect Nature, a.k.a., *Yang* Spirit. This text also extols the veracity and harmony of the Three Teachings (Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism)—a most frequently noted trait of the early Quanzhen movement. See Eskildsen (2004), pp. 60-61.

In his new book, Louis Komjathy provides a complete, annotated translation of the *Yusuo jue*, along with a thoughtful introduction on its provenance and content. He considers the text to have most likely issued from the hands of Wang Chongyang's direct disciples, who had kept records of their direct conversations with their famous master. See Komjathy (2007), 265-367.

third type is those who are fond of warfare. These are Sword Immortals (*jianxian* 劍仙) (emphasis added). The fourth is those who cultivate through meditation. These are Spirit Immortals. The fifth type is those who care for their teachers, elders, fathers and mothers with filial piety. They practice the six perfections,⁶¹ and in their myriad deeds they rescue all sentient beings with expedient means. They cut off the ten evils.⁶² They do not take life, do not consume alcohol or meat, [nor do they] commit evil or theft. What ever comes from their minds accords with the heart of Heaven. They are direct and honest, without corruptions that come from self-interest. These are called Heavenly Immortals. (*Yusuo jue*, 13a.)

The *Chuandao ji* cited here is probably the *Zhong Lü chuandao ji* 鍾呂傳道集 (Compilation of [Master] Zhong[li]'s Transmission of the Dao to [Master] Lü), an influential *neidan* 內丹 manual (of ca. 11th c.) that takes the format of a dialogue between Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin. This text indeed contains a discussion of five types of Immortals;⁶³ however, the contents of this discussion differ considerably from the typology presented above by Wang Chongyang. Wang Chongyang—if it is indeed he who speaks—has either reproduced the text of the *Chuandao ji* inaccurately from memory, or had access to some alternate version of the text

⁶¹ This refers to six types of virtues or practices that a bodhisattva—or in this case, an Immortal—practices to perfection; they include 1) giving of alms, 2) keeping the precepts, 3) withstanding difficulty and insult, 4) striving zealously along the religious path, 5) meditation and 6) enlightened wisdom.

⁶² The ten evils referred to here most likely are killing, theft, sexual misconduct, lying, mindless chatter, verbal insult, gossip, greed, anger and perverse views—the standard set referred to in Buddhist literature.

⁶³ See *Xiuzhen shishu*, 14/2b-5b. The five types of Immortals listed there are as follows: 1) Ghost Immortals- ghost-like beings who have left the physical body after practicing inferior meditation techniques; 2) Human Immortals- people who have attained longevity through a particular macrobiotic method; 3) Earth Immortals- people who have gained earthly immortality in the physical body through practicing the lower tier of *neidan* methods; Spirit Immortals- people who have created a pure *yang* Spirit, and thereby emancipated themselves from their physical body and from mundane society, and live on the Three Islands of the Immortals; Heavenly Immortals- Spirit Immortals who have earned their way into the celestial bureaucracy by accumulating many virtuous deeds.

then in circulation. Whatever the case, the typology set forth above seems to convey the perception that some Daoist adepts are not particularly pure or altruistic in conduct (although it is such holiness that defines and sets apart the best of adepts), and that some in fact enjoy “warfare.” Perhaps this merely denotes spiritual “warfare” against demons; however, there is no compelling reason to conclude that mortal combat against humans is not what is meant here.

The fact that a passage such as this occurs within a treatise by and for *neidan* adepts seems significant. Rather than claim that adepts and Immortals are too kind and virtuous to ever kill a human being, Wang Chongyang apparently acknowledges that some adepts may fall short of the ideal ethical standards, yet manage to attain some degree of longevity/immortality or supernormal power from their practice. Fighting prowess is perhaps one such power, which some might employ against fellow humans, even though such behavior is not to be condoned.

Conclusion

Are the murderous allegations regarding Lü Dongbin true or false? As stated at the outset, it is impossible to answer this question. However, a historical Lü Dongbin would have lived during a time (8th or 9th century) when some *neidan* adepts were claiming to possess supernatural weapons and fighting techniques that were deadly if used on humans and other mundane creatures. Of course, the primary (if not exclusive) sanctioned use of such weapons and techniques was probably within the context of demon-quelling ritual. Nonetheless, people in and outside the Daoist tradition seem to have held some degree of fascination with such *neidan* claims of lethal power. Buddhists appear to have used these claims to their own advantage, for polemical purposes.

Daoist sources frequently affirm the notion that Lü Dongbin possessed a sword (or swords) of some sort. However, the murderous allegations were enough of an embarrassment to compel Daoists to offer rebuttals. The standard view put forth among Daoist writers from at least the 12th century onward is that Lü Dongbin’s “sword” is either a ritual implement or a psychological metaphor. The potentially incriminating notion that it was a lethal magical weapon (i.e., a form of black magic, or a deadly martial skill) was either forgotten or suppressed.

Was perhaps some of this embarrassment being caused by actual misdeeds of deviant Daoists who committed, boasted of or threatened homicidal acts with their special powers? This question needs to be addressed in the future through a much broader inquiry. It may also be worth our while to investigate a possible connection between the internal alchemist's "sword and hammer" and the martial arts currently being practiced by Daoists. It appears that already by the mid or late Tang, some Daoists were aspiring to attain martial prowess along with longevity and immortality (or at least fantasized about becoming martial heroes), and thought that their *neidan* techniques could be applied toward this end. Although their fighting techniques, concretely speaking, probably consisted exclusively of visualizations and ritual gestures, a broader and deeper future inquiry might prove otherwise.

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Mapping the Daoist Body

Part One

The *Neijing tu* in History^{*}

LOUIS KOMJATHY

Abstract

This article examines the history and content of the *Neijing tu* 內經圖 (Diagram of Internal Pathways), a late nineteenth-century stele currently housed in Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery; Beijing). The diagram is one of the most well-known illustrations of the Daoist body, though its historical provenance has not been sufficiently documented to date.

The present article provides a more complete account of its context of production and dissemination, namely, within the context of Baiyun guan, the late imperial Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) lineage of the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) monastic order, and elite imperial court culture. I then turn to a systematic study of its contents and the Daoist methods expressed in its contours. Within its topographical landscape, one finds a specific vision of the Daoist body, a body actualized through Daoist alchemical

^{*} The present article is part of my ongoing research project on Daoist body maps and Daoist views of self. I am grateful to Livia Kohn, Liu Xun, Jiang Sheng, and the anonymous readers of the *Journal of Daoist Studies* for their helpful comments. I also wish to thank Kate Townsend for her many insights into Daoist cultivation and Chinese medicine.

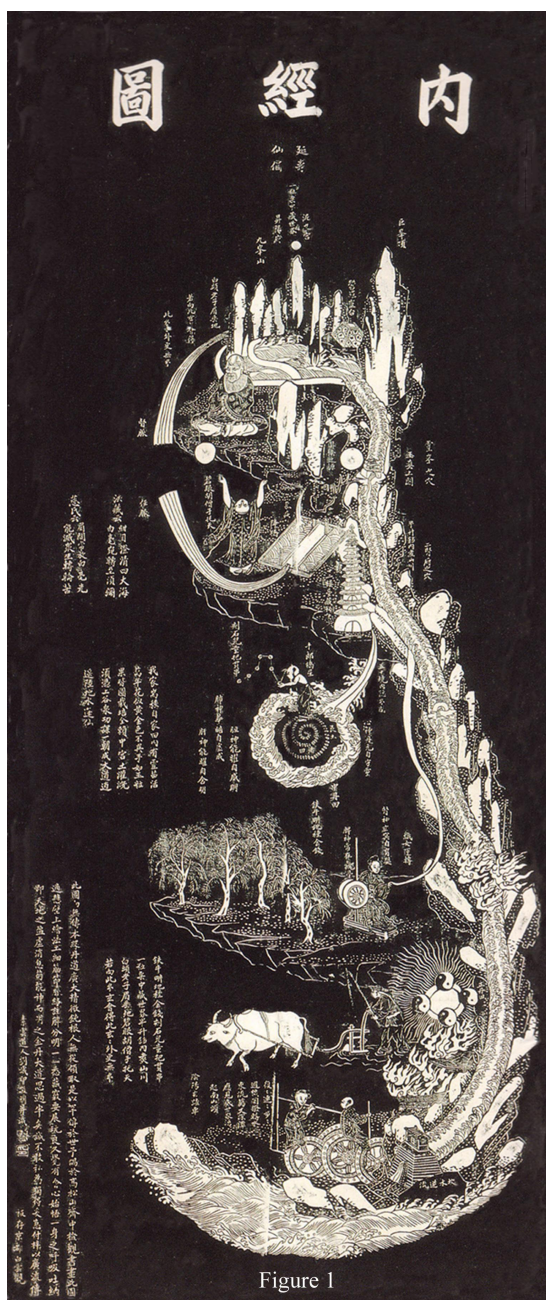
praxis. As such, the *Neijing tu* and its various rubbings were more than likely intended as visual aids for Daoist religious training.

For readability, the article has been divided into two parts. The current section discusses the diagram's historical and terminological dimensions. The second part, scheduled to be published in the next issue of the *Journal of Daoist Studies*, focuses on content and includes a complete bilingual translation with illustrations.

Throughout the history of the Daoist tradition, Daoists have been expert and extraordinary cartographers. Whether through textual descriptions or visual representations, Daoists have sought to map the patterns and constituents of both internal and external worlds. They have charted the cosmos through star diagrams, including the forms of the five planets and the twenty-eight lunar mansions. They have mapped the layers of the heavens, the subtle realms of the universe, and the stellar abodes inhabited by the Perfected (*zhenren* 真人). They have diagramed the mountain peaks of this terrestrial landscape and the hidden grotto-heavens (*dongtian* 洞天) branching out like veins through the earth. They have charted the geomantic contours and qualities of place. They have mapped the internal spirits associated with the various orbs¹ and the process by which one realizes the givenness of cosmological situatedness. They have diagramed the alchemical process of self-transformation and the subtle physiology of human aliveness.² In short, Daoists have mapped the universe in its various layers and mutual influences—a universe which is simultaneously cosmos, world, landscape, community, and self.

¹ On the translation of *zang* 藏/臟 as “orb” see Porkert 1974. Although *zang* has been translated in numerous ways (organ, viscera, depot, etc.), orb seems the best choice as it includes the larger process-oriented *qi* theory.

² Examples of these various maps may be found throughout the pages of Needham et al. 1983; Despeux 1994; 2000; Little 2000. On the importance of specific geographical locations in the Daoist tradition see, e.g., Naquin and Yu 1992; Verellen 1995; Hahn 1988; 2000; Qiao 2000.



The *Neijing tu* 內經圖 (Diagram of Internal Pathways; see Figure 1) is one such diagram.³ The *Neijing tu* is a map of the Daoist internal landscape and a storehouse of Daoist cultivation practices, specifically visualization and alchemical techniques. The diagram depicts the head and torso of the Daoist body as seen from the side and in seated meditation posture. It illustrates more commonly recognizable aspects of the human body in combination with Daoist subtle anatomy and physiology. The spinal column, framed on the right and connecting the lower torso with the cranial cavity, draws one's immediate attention. The conventional representation of the spinal column is supplemented by specifically Daoist realities: on closer examination one notices three temples within the

³ The rubbing in my personal collection was acquired at Baiyun guan in 2002. Like other modern rubbings from the extant stone stele, it lacks the *guangxu* 光緒 inscription in the upper right-hand corner (see Eichman 2000a), which is discussed below as a key to the history of the diagram. Of late, the *Neijing tu* has become a sort of logo for Daoist Studies in the West. It has appeared in numerous publications, with varying degrees of reflective consideration. For example, it has appeared on the cover of Thomas Cleary's *The Inner Teachings of Taoism*, in Livia Kohn's *The Taoist Experience* (Kohn 1993, 177), in John Lagerwey's *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society and History* (Lagerwey 1987, 289), and in Schipper's *Le corps taoïste* (Schipper 1982, 143) without any explanation. The most detailed studies to date are Rousselle 1933; Sakade 1991; Wang 1991/92; and Eichman 2000a. Additional comments may be found in Chia 1995; Cohen 1997, 152-55; Despeux 1994, 44-48; 2000; Li 2003; Liu n.d.; Needham et al. 1983, 114-16; Schipper 1978, 356; Skar 2003. Rousselle and Wang provide fairly systematic accounts, with Wang translating much of the diagram, but from an art historical perspective. Both also provide some information on the relationship between a rubbing of the *Neijing tu* and an unidentified painting. Eichman's comments are included in the art catalogue *Taoism and the Arts of China*, and, like Needham and Despeux, are fairly general. Needham, Despeux and Skar also provide some insights into the historical and doctrinal relationship between various Daoist body maps, including the *Neijing tu*. Here it perhaps deserves mentioning that most of the discussions of Daoist body maps rely on and often closely follow Needham et al. 1983. Note also that the *Neijing tu* (and many of the original images) was not reproduced in the English translation of Schipper's *La corps taoïste*, where we find the following note: "See the image of the Inner Landscape on page 000, where the lower Cinnabar Field (*hsia tan-t'ien*) is represented by an irrigated rice field being tilled by a young body" (Schipper 1993, 235, n. 24).

spine, corresponding to the Three Passes (*sanguan* 三關) through which Daoist adepts engaging in the process of alchemical transformation endeavor to circulate qi. In addition, the three elixir fields (*san dantian* 三丹田)⁴—with the lower one corresponding to the ox (abdominal region), the middle to the Cowherd (heart region), and the upper to the old man (head region)—are clearly discernable. One also notes the head as a series of mountain peaks and the presence of bridges and pagodas inside the body. In addition, streams are flowing throughout the map (and throughout the body). These various details, as well as the textual and visual contours yet to be mentioned, reveal the *Neijing tu* as a detailed mapping of the Daoist body. It reveals the internal landscape discovered and actualized through Daoist cultivation, specifically within certain circles of late imperial Daoism and branches of Daoist internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹),⁵ notably the Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) branch of Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) at Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery; Beijing) in the late nineteenth century. Although such historical qualifications must, perhaps, be made, in its textual content, visual representations, and praxis-based concerns, the *Neijing tu* finds clear precedents in both Song-Jin (tenth-thirteenth century) lineages of internal alchemy and late imperial internal alchemy.⁶ In addition, the diagram has retained a central place of importance within Daoist com-

⁴ "Elixir fields" (*dantian* 丹田), discussed in more detail below, are subtle, often "mystical," energetic locations in the body, which frequently include a non-spatial dimension (e.g., mystical cranial locations). They are places in which the body's physical and energetic aspects, the "ingredients" for the alchemical medicine and the foundation for immortality, are stored and transformed. The essential materials for elixir-formation are vital essence (*jing* 精) associated with the kidneys, *qi* 氣 associated with the lower abdomen, spirit (*shen* 神) associated with the heart and "brain," and bodily fluids (*jinye* 津液), which have a variety of associations. Some internal alchemy systems also place emphasis on the ethereal soul (*hun* 魂) and the corporeal soul (*po* 魄). For an attempt to map Daoist elixir-formation in terms of Chinese medical theory see Komjathy 2007, ch. 6.

⁵ For some insights into the history and practice of internal alchemy see Baldrian-Hussein 1983; Needham et al. 1983; Robinet 1989b; 1995; Pregadio and Skar 2000; Skar 2003; Komjathy 2007.

⁶ The exact lineage of internal alchemy documented in the *Neijing tu* awaits future research. While I make some suggestions, a complete study of late imperial *neidan* and Longmen may clarify these and related historical issues.

munities into the twenty-first century, a testament to the enduring power of its mapping of the Daoist body and Daoist religious praxis.⁷

In part one of this article, I discuss the historical background of the *Neijing tu* as well as the layers of meaning embedded in its title. In part two, which will appear in the next issue of the *Journal of Daoist Studies*, a detailed study of the graphic and textual components of the diagram is presented. I also draw attention to three specific Daoist cultivation methods illustrated in the *Neijing tu*, namely, praxis-oriented applications of classical Chinese medical views of the body; visualization methods which draw their inspiration from the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Scripture on the Yellow Court; DZ 331; 332)⁸ and which find clear historical precedents in early Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) Daoism; and the alchemical technique known as the Waterwheel (*heche* 河車) or Micro-cosmic Orbit (*xiao zhoutian* 小周天).

The primary focus of the present study is the textual and visual content of the diagram itself, especially as one depiction of the Daoist “alchemical” or “mystical body” (see Komjathy 2007) and as one map of Daoist religious praxis as undertaken in the late imperial period. The major contribution of this paper is, in turn, threefold. It provides the first complete translation of the *Neijing tu*, including bilingual renderings of the diagram as divided into three sections. Second, it supplies greater specificity than any previous study concerning the actual historical context in which the original stele was commissioned and in which the original version may have been produced. Finally, I argue for reading the *Neijing tu* as a map of Daoist cultivation as understood and undertaken in the context of late imperial Daoism and in the Longmen branch of Quanzhen, specifically at Baiyun guan during the late Qing dynasty (1644-1911). On the most basic level, the diagram is an aesthetically pow-

⁷ Some claims have also been made concerning the *Neijing tu* as part of “Chinese medical history.” See Fu et al. 1999; Li 2003. While purely medical explanations prove unsatisfactory in terms of the diagram’s content, the overlapping contours of “Buddhism,” “Daoism,” and “Chinese medicine” may give one pause at the reified nature of those categories. The *Neijing tu*, like contemporaneous sources, reveals a complex pattern of interaction, adaptation, and transformation of “traditions” in the late imperial period.

⁸ Daoist texts are cited according to Komjathy 2002, with numbers for the Ming-dynasty Daoist Canon paralleling Schipper’s system.

erful depiction of the human body, and thus of the aspiring Daoist adept's own psychosomatic possibility.⁹ On another level, it is the body as actualized through meditative praxis, and thus points towards two additional dimensions: seated meditation becomes represented as the normative and normalizing posture for human beings; and, like earlier mappings of Daoist cultivation, the *Neijing tu* was more than likely used (and continues to be used) as a visual aid for meditation.

Historical Contours

The received *Neijing tu* is a stone stele housed at Baiyun guan in Beijing. Baiyun guan is the seat of contemporary Quanzhen Daoism, the official state-sponsored Daoist monastic tradition in mainland China, and the headquarters of the Chinese Daoist Association (Zhongguo daojiao xiehui 中國道教協會).¹⁰ It is also the chief monastery of the Longmen branch of Quanzhen, traditionally said to have been established by Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (Changchun 長春 [Perpetual Spring]; 1148-1227), but historically traced to Wang Changyue 王常月 (Kunyang 崑陽 [Paradisiacal Yang]; 1622-1680) (Esposito 2000, 628; see also Esposito 1993; 2001).

The received *Neijing tu* stele is a reproduction of a late-nineteenth century engraving. According to the inscription in the upper right-hand corner of at least some rubbings of the *Neijing tu* (see Eichman 2000a), the engraving of the original stele occurred in the first third of the sixth lunar month in 1886 (*guangxu bingwu nian heyue shanghuan* 光緒丙戌年荷月上浣), that is, towards the end of the late imperial period and of the Manchu Qing dynasty (1644-1911). The *guangxu* 光緒 inscription only occurs in some extant rubbings, and this historical detail, from my perspective, provides an important clue into the history of the diagram now known as the *Neijing tu*. In contrast, the extant *Neijing tu* stone stele of Baiyun guan, similar reproductions distributed to various Daoist temples (e.g.,

⁹ In this respect, the *Neijing tu* is not simply an "artifact," a trace of some lost historical moment or a monument to disappearing tradition. It remains an enduring presence in various Daoist communities and in the lives of specific Daoists. Cf. Eichman 2000b: 231.

¹⁰ For information on Quanzhen Daoism see Yao 1980; Tsui 1991; Qing et al. 1996, vol. 3; *Journal of Chinese Religions* 29 (2001); Eskildsen 2004; Komjathy 2007. For a study of the history of Baiyun guan see Marsone 1999.

Baxian gong, Chongyang gong, Qingyang gong), and modern rubbings lack this inscription. This, in turn, points to an earlier engraving, regarding which its current status (extant or not), possible location, and original material (wood, stone or bronze) remain a mystery.

The original engraving was commissioned by a Longmen monk and court eunuch (*taijian* 太監) named Liu Chengyin 劉誠印 (d. 1894), whose Daoist name was Suyun 素雲 (Pure Cloud).¹¹ Liu Chengyin was born in Dongguang 東光 county, Zhili 直隸 province (present-day Hebei), an area known for its poverty and hence its steady supply of young boys who were often sold by their parents to be castrated and trained as eunuchs for the imperial household. Little else is known about Liu's early life and his career. As Liu Xun points out,

¹¹ The most readily available biographical information appears in a stele inscription written by Xiyou 禧祐, a Manchu bannerman, and entitled "Liu Suyun daoxing bei" 劉素雲道行碑 (Stele on the Daoist Activities of Liu Suyun; dat. 1886). It seems that this stele was originally located in the western front of the Nanji dian 南極殿 (Shrine of the Southern Polestar), which is now named Leizu dian 雷祖殿 (Shrine of the Patriarch of Thunder). Wang Chiping 王持平 (pers. comm.); author's field observations (cf. Goossaert 2007, 224). For reproductions see Koyanagi 1934, 158-59; Li 2003, 714. Other important, related steles include the "Suyun zhenren daoxing beiji" 素雲真人道行碑記 (dat. 1895), "Suyun zhenren Liu xianshi beiji" 素雲真人劉先師碑記 (dat. 1895), "Liu Suyun taming" 劉素雲塔銘 (dat. ca. 1900), and "Baiyun guan Changchun gonghui beiji" 白雲觀長春供會碑記 (dat. 1886). On these and contemporaneous steles see Goossaert 2007. Most of the present biographical information on Liu Chengyin comes from the first inscription and from Liu Xun's study (2004a) of a series of paintings honoring Bixia yuanjun 碧霞元君 (Primordial Goddess of Cerulean Mists), which had been commissioned by Gao Rentong 高仁峒 (1841-1907), twentieth-generation abbot of Baiyun guan (see also Liu 2004b). The relevant information on Liu Chengyin appears on pages 84-94. Liu's article also provides the interested reader with a fuller appreciation of the complex interaction among the Qing imperial elite, powerful Longmen clerics, and court eunuchs during the end of the Qing dynasty, with special attention to the late-nineteenth century Baiyun guan environs. See also Vincent Goossaert's *The Taoists of Peking* (2007), which provides a more complete picture of the religio-cultural context of Beijing during the late imperial and early modern periods. On Gao Rentong see especially pages 172-75; information of Liu Chengyin appears on pages 218-23.

Official Qing sources generally neglect the history of eunuchs like Liu whose profession and social class were widely stigmatized. Nonetheless, circumstantial evidence found in non-official sources attests to Liu's powerful influence and connections at Qing court, and to the immense personal wealth he garnered from these connections. (Liu 2004a, 85)

Liu Chengyin was a powerful court eunuch to Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧 (1835-1908) and a generous patron of Baiyun guan.¹² He became one Cixi's most trusted chief eunuchs following the execution of An Dehai 安德海 (d. 1869). More germane to the present study, Liu Chengyin received formal Longmen ordination under Zhang Yuanxuan 張圓璿 (Gengyun 耕雲 [Tilling Clouds]; 1828-1887), one of the most famous Quanzhen monastic leaders of his era. This ordination ceremony occurred in 1871 and included several hundred ordainees, one of whom was Gao Rentong 高仁峒 (Shoushan 壽山 [Longevity Mountain]; 1841-1907),¹³ who would become the twentieth-generation abbot of Baiyun guan after the death of Abbot Meng Yongcai 孟永才 (d. 1881). As a Longmen monk at Baiyun guan, Liu Chengyin served as an altar attendant (*hutan huazhu* 護壇化主) (Min and Li 1994, 482); as a patron of Baiyun guan and court confidante, he was a generous donor to and advocate for the monastery.

¹² It seems that a major motivation for court eunuch interest in and support of Quanzhen Daoism centered on a popular imagining of Qiu Changchun. In circulation since at least the sixteenth century, though without historical support in terms of Qiu's actual life, this legend claimed that Qiu castrated himself in order to resist sexual favors bestowed on him by Chinggis Qan (Genghis Khan; ca. 1162-1227; r. 1206-1227), the Mongol ruler. Remembrance of Qiu's legendary self-castration became central during festivities surrounding his birthday. Occurring from the first day of the first moon through the nineteenth day of the first moon, these festivities culminated in the celebration of Qiu's birthday on the nineteenth day, which was popularly known as Yanjiu 燕九. See Liu 2004a, 88-91. On Qiu Changchun see Yao 1980; 1986; Zheng 1995; Zhao 1999.

¹³ Gao Rentong, as was traditionally the case for Daoist clerics, had a number of names, including Yuntong 雲峒, Tongyuan 峒元, Yunxi 雲溪, and Mingdong[tong] 明洞[峒]. Liu 2004a; Min and Li 1994, 825. The latter source also includes brief entries on Liu Chengyin (482) and Zhang Yuanxuan (586).

Between 1871 and 1890, he helped the monastery raise a total of some 44,000 taels of silver, more than half of which came from Liu himself. Most of the funds went to pay for ordination ceremonies, including the one that occurred in 1871, and the renovation and construction of monastic buildings. Liu Chengyin was also instrumental in funding the carving and erecting of several major stele inscriptions. Among these, he commissioned the engraving of the *Neijing tu*, which was erected at Baiyun guan in 1886. Later this stele was inlaid together with the *Xiuzhen tu* 修真圖 (Diagram for Cultivating Perfection) (see Despeux 1994; Skar 2000), another, more complex diagram on internal alchemy, on a wall in the rear garden of the monastery compound in 1890. The engraving of the *Xiuzhen tu* stele, like that of the *Neijing tu*, was commissioned by Liu. As is evidenced from such patronage, Liu Chengyin was interested in the practice and dissemination of internal alchemy practice, at least partially through the circulation of rubbings of the *Neijing tu* and *Xiuzhen tu* (see also Goossaert 2007, 285-93). In addition to studying and practicing under Zhang Yuanxuan, Liu allegedly built a small self-cultivation retreat called Zizhu daoyuan 紫竹道院 (Daoist Cloister of Purple Bamboo), located in the modern park of the same name in the western suburb of Beijing, where he engaged in *neidan* training after his retirement from court.

Outside of the internal textual dimensions, the only known available historical information on this diagram comes from inscriptions in the *Neijing tu* itself. According to Liu Chengyin's colophon in the lower-left corner (see Figure 1):

This diagram has never been transmitted before. The fundamental reason for this is because the Way of the Elixir is vast and subtle, and there are obtuse people who do not have the ability to grasp it. Consequently, it rarely has been transmitted in the world.

I happened to observe the diagram among the books and paintings in the study (*zhai* 齋) of Gao Songshan 高松山. By chance, it was hanging on a wall. The skill used in its painting technique is finely executed. The annotations of the joints and articulations (*jinjie* 筋節), meridians and vessels (*mailuo* 脈絡) are clearly distinguished, and each one contains specific cavities (*qiao* 竅).

I examined [the diagram] for a long time and realized that my comprehension was growing. I began to realize that exhalation and inhalation (*huxi* 呼吸) as well as expelling and ingesting (*tu'na* 吐納) of the human body are the waxing and waning as well as the ebb and flow of the cosmos.

If you can divine and gain insight into this, you will have progressed more than halfway on your inquiry into the great Way of the Golden Elixir (*jindan dadao* 金丹大道).

In truth, I did not dare to keep this for myself alone. Therefore, I had it engraved on a printing block [so that it might be] widely disseminated.

Engraved with deep reverence as an inscribed record by
Liu Chengyin, the Daoist Suyun

Printing block preserved at Baiyun guan in Beijing

With regard to the Gao Songshan mentioned in the above passage, it has most often been taken as a geographical name (Needham et al. 1983; Despeux 1994; 2000; Eichman 2000a; Wang 1991-92), but more than likely refers to a personal name. With regard to the former, Gao Songshan has been translated conventionally as "tall Pine Mountain" or as "lofty Mount Song." If these characters refer to a geographical location, the mountain mentioned here remains unidentified. There are numerous mountains called Songshan 松山 ("Pine Mountain") and presumably several of them or the pines on them were high.¹⁴ Despeux suggests that it refers to Songshan 嵩山 in Henan (1994, 44; 2000, 521), but the character *song* 嵩 ("lofty") in the famed Songshan is different from that in the *Neijing tu*.¹⁵ Liu Xun has recently suggested that Gao Songshan is a per-

¹⁴ See, e.g., the relevant entry in the *Zhongwen da cidian* 中文大辭典.

¹⁵ The famed Songshan 嵩山 does, of course, receive the designation Songgao 崧高 in a poem by that name in the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry) (see Legge 1893-95, vol. 4, 535). However, the context of the original *Neijing tu* engraving, that is, among Qing-dynasty court elite and by a court eunuch and Longmen monk, was most likely the urban environment of Beijing. There is no evidence that Liu Chengyin went "mountain-hopping" or "cloud-wandering" during which he happened upon the diagram, or that he received some esoteric transmission in a secret mountain cave, as much as such details would prove satisfying to Western romanticized ideas about "Daoism." Here we are dealing with a socio-economic and religio-historical context of imperial patronage and Daoist participation, which is substantiated by the fact that the original painting was

sonal name and most likely refers to Gao Rentong. This conjecture is based on the fact that Liu Chengyin had a close relationship with Abbot Gao and that Gao Rentong's Daoist name was Shoushan 壽山 (2004a, 94, n. 51). Moreover, historical contextualization, the fact that Liu was a Longmen monk at Baiyun guan, an associate and fellow ordinand of Gao, and a chief eunuch in Beijing, supports such a reading. However, if this is the case, then why does *song* 松 replace the character *shou* 壽 in Gao Rentong's Daoist name as engraved in the *Neijing tu* stele? One possibility is that Songshan was a nickname used by some of the Longmen Daoists at Baiyun guan, although I have found no evidence to support this conjecture. Another, complementary possibility is that the two characters, though visually unrelated, were seen as synonymous in a Daoist cultivational context. How would this be the case? Because pine trees (*song*), as evergreens, are a traditional symbol of longevity (*shou*).

Based on Liu Chengyin's testimony, the *Neijing tu* stele was produced from a painting or hanging scroll: "I happened to observe this diagram among the books and paintings in the studio of Gao Songshan. By chance, it was hanging on a wall." This scant piece of information is intriguing in terms of the physical location of the painting and the possible context of its use. Liu's comments, implying happenstance and fortuitousness, perhaps suggest that the painting was out of place or obscured by other aspects of Daoist and elite material culture. Was it just one item among other literati paraphernalia and thus simply part of the environment of late imperial court culture, an aesthetic representation of the human body? If so, how can one explain the clear embodiment of Daoist cultivational culture in the diagram?

The content, specifically the Chinese medical and Daoist alchemical dimensions, point in a different direction: as a visual aid for Daoist religious praxis, both as an overall existential approach and as a distinctive set of meditative techniques based on alchemical transformation. Under this reading, the painting may have only been taken out and hung during specific practice times—it "happened" to be out because Gao Songshan either had been studying the diagram, was about to begin seated meditation, had just completed a training session, or had not put the painting away after meditation. This possibility, in combination with the

most likely executed by a high-level artist in the service of the Qing imperial household (below).

specifically Daoist content of the diagram, give further pause for reflection: Was the original *Neijing tu* painting specifically made for Gao Rentong, perhaps under his personal direction regarding content and graphic depiction? Or, was it perhaps a gift from the Qing imperial household upon his ascent to the position of abbot of Baiyun guan in 1881 (five years before the engraving of the *Neijing tu*)? If so, the fact that Gao Rentong possessed such a painting tells us something noteworthy about the relationship among the Qing ruling elite, Baiyun guan, and the Longmen lineage in the late nineteenth century: Baiyun guan and its abbot were recognized as an integral and necessary dimension of Qing imperial power (see Esposito 2000; 2001; Liu 2004a; 2004b; Goossaert 2007).

Beyond such conjectures, Liu's brief remarks point us towards an earlier painting that was the original version of the *Neijing tu* and served as the basis for the commissioned and received *Neijing tu* stele. One such painting is currently housed in the Zhongguo yishi bowu guan 中國醫史博物館 (Museum of Chinese Medical History) in Beijing, and this painting appears to be the original Qing-dynasty one (see Fu et al. 1999, 200; also Rousselle 1933; Wang 1991-92, 143; Li 1992, 85; Despeux 1994, 44; Liu 2004a, 94, n. 51). It is generally held that this painting was a product of the Ruyi guan 如意館 (Ruyi Studio), the Qing imperial art academy and part of the Qing Imperial Household Department (*neiwu bu* 內務部). It too thus dates to the Qing dynasty, though the exact date and architect of production are currently unknown. In textual and visual content, the extant painting directly parallels the *Neijing tu* stele of Baiyun guan with some minor discrepancies.¹⁶

¹⁶ As both Joseph Needham et al. (1983) and Catherine Despeux (1994) have pointed out, at least some of the inspiration for the *Neijing tu* derives from earlier Daoist drawings and illustrations of the human body found in the Ming-dynasty Daoist Canon. It is beyond the scope of the present study to document all of the earlier precedents for the *Neijing tu*, both in terms of textual and visual content. From my perspective, the most significant earlier diagrams are as follows: the late Tang (618-907) *Shangqing dongzhen jiugong zifang tu* 上清洞真九宮紫房圖 (DZ 156), which includes parallel diagrams of the body and pavilions, with the latter resembling the depiction of the first pass in the lower section of the *Neijing tu*; the thirteenth-century *Huangdi bashiyi nanjing zuantu jujie* 黃帝八十一難經纂圖句解 (DZ 1024), which contains diagrams entitled *neijing tu* 內境圖 (4a-5b), the first of which closely resembles the received *Xiuzhen tu* 修真圖; the *Zazhu jiejing* 雜著捷徑, as contained in the early fourteenth-century *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 (DZ 263),

Certain features also stand out. First, the colors used in the painting increase the aesthetic power and energetic quality. The green and brown sections of the painting create a heightened contrast and visual impact with the white, red, and blue sections, with the latter being some of the most important locations for alchemical transformation. The painting also substantiates the fact that the two circles in the head region are the eyes: the left one is red, representing the sun, and the right one is white, representing the moon. In addition, the energetic movement depicted in the painting, and perhaps being activated in the viewer's own body, is even stronger than in the extant stele and related rubbings. The movement clearly begins at the base of the torso, moves up the spine, and around the head. The connection between the Ren 任 (Conception) and Du 督 (Governing) vessels (below) receives greater emphasis through the two sets of five bands being multi-colored in the painting. Finally, the painting contains an additional visual dimension: two complete circles of white light. The first surrounds the torso and represents the joining of the Ren and Du vessels, with the peak of the head clearly emphasized. The second surrounds the head. Both suggest the formation or activation of the Daoist subtle body, including the emergence of pure white or golden light as a sign of alchemical transformation.

which has not only diagrams and an essay entitled *neijing tu* 內境圖 (18.2b-3b) but also essays on inner observation (*neiguan* 內觀), the Nine Palaces (*jiugong* 九宮), three fields (*santian* 三田), five yin-orbs (*wuzang* 五臟), and so forth (18.5b-9b); and the *Jindan dayao tu* 金丹大要圖, DZ 1068, which contains a diagram of the human body as a mountain that includes some parallel content with the *Neijing tu*. In terms of "extra-canonical" texts, there are important diagrams in the early seventeenth-century *Xingming guizhi* 性命圭旨 (ZW 314), late eighteenth-century *Huiming jing* 慧命經 (ZW 131), early twentieth-century *Xingming fajue mingzhi* 性命法訣明指 (ZW 872), and of course the received *Xiuzhen tu*. Most of these were in circulation and/or accessible in the Baiyun guan environs of the late nineteenth century. However, one clear difference stands out: the *Neijing tu* is solely a mapping of the Daoist subtle or alchemical body, lacking flesh and a "body" as conventionally understood. It is the body within the body actualized through alchemical praxis. For an attempt to trace the history of diagrams related to "cultivating perfection" (*xiuzhen* 修真) see Skar 2000. For a chronological chart of such maps in terms of Chinese "science" see Zhu 1995, 343.

Terminological Contours

The title of the *Neijing tu* has been rendered into Western languages in a variety of ways.¹⁷ Most commentators agree on the standard rendering of *nei* 內 as "inner," "interior," or "internal," though *nei* may also have the connotation of "esoteric." Similarly, *tu* 圖 poses relatively little difficulty, and is commonly translated as "illustration," "chart," "map," or "diagram" (see Reiter 1990; Despeux 2000; Strassberg 2002). The crux of the translation enterprise rests on *jing* 經, most frequently encountered in the sense of "scripture," "classic," or "text." The character is composed of the "silk" (*si* 絲) radical and the phonetic *jing* 罍. Taken in this way, various meanings branch out: "text/classic," "to pass through," "to regulate," "to arrange," "the warp (of a fabric)," and "meridians" or "arteries." Equally plausible, and implied by some of these connotations, is that the *jing* phonetic element is also a meaning-carrier. Etymologically speaking, it refers to streams running underground or flowing water. Thus, one could translate the *jing* 經 of the *Neijing tu* as "watercourse;" the *Neijing tu* might then be understood as the "Diagram of Internal Watercourses."

While my own preferred translation is "Diagram of Internal Pathways," a variety of meanings are intended. On one level, it is a diagram of the "inner currents" or "inner meridians." Here one may recall the following passage from chapter one of the *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞 (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic: Numinous Pivot; DZ 1020):

Generally speaking, the twenty-seven [locations through which] qi ascends and descends are as follows: where it [qi] emerges is called wells (*jing* 井); where it flows is called brooks (*ying* 榮); where it rushes forth is called rapids (*shu* 瀾); where it proceeds is called streams (*jing* 經); where it disappears is called confluences (*he* 合). (DZ 1020, 1.3b; see also *Nanjing* 難經 ch. 68; Unschuld 1986, 577)

¹⁷ The title of the *Neijing tu* has received the following translations: "Die Tafel des Inneren Gewebes" (Rousselle 1933, 207); "Diagram of the Internal Texture of Man" (Needham et al. 1983, 114); "Diagram of the Internal Circulation of Man" (Wang 1991/92, 141); "Carte de la vision intérieure du corps" (Despeux 1994, 47); and "Illustration of Inner Circulation" (Eichman 2000a, 350).

The precise medical meaning of this passage remains open to a variety of interpretations, but *jing* is clearly present in the sense of “stream” and forms part of the technical description of the width and depth of the body’s qi-flow. In contemporary Chinese medical usage, these *jing*-stream areas are the places where the qi of the meridians is bigger, wider, and deeper. In these places, the flow of qi resembles a large current. They are commonly used in contemporary acupuncture as treatment points.¹⁸ While the *Neijing tu* obviously is not a map of the *jing*-stream locations, it nonetheless carries the sense of such technical medical terminology. It is a diagram of the meridians, the energetic pathways, of the human body. These views are confirmed by Liu Chengyin’s own comments in the colophon: “The skill used in its painting technique is finely executed. The annotations of the joints and articulations, meridians and vessels are clearly distinguished, and each one contains specific cavities.” In addition to “Diagram of Internal Watercourses,” one could thus translate the title as the “Diagram of Internal Meridians.”

The above comments suggest that multiple layers of meaning have been inscribed and encrypted in the *Neijing tu*. In addition to the various connotations of *jing* 經 as “stream” or “meridian,” I also would argue that two additional characters are implied by and embedded in the title. This argument is based on the actual contents of the *Neijing tu*, the intertextuality implied in its images and passages, and earlier historical precedents found in related Daoist body maps. The two characters to which I am referring are homonyms/cognates of *jing* 經-pathway. They are *jing* 境-landscape and *jing* 景-luminosities. With this implication, the *Neijing tu* is an illustration not only of the meridians of qi running through the body, but also of the Daoist body as terrestrial and cosmo-

¹⁸ For a discussion of these points in the context of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) see, e.g., Maciocia 1989, 335-53; Ellis et al. 1989; Deadman et al. 2001. In the present article, I use the phrase “Traditional Chinese Medicine” to refer to the medical system developed in Communist China during the second half of the twentieth century, specifically under the influence of allopathic medicine and a Western scientific and materialistic paradigm. “Classical Chinese medicine” refers to the worldview and practices documented in the early classics. For the most comprehensive English-language sources on the history of Chinese medicine see Lu 1980; Unschuld 1985; Eck 1996, 37-195; Needham et al. 2000; also Sivin 1987. Academic studies of Chinese medicine during the Qing dynasty are only beginning to be undertaken. See Unschuld 1998.

logical landscape and as the dwelling-place of inner luminosities or efulgences. From a Daoist perspective, the human body corresponds to, *embodies*, various "external" presences—mountains, altars, colors, rivers, constellations, temples, spirits, forests, and so forth. The *Neijing tu* maps the landscape which is the human self; in this sense, *jing*-pathway also alludes to the character *jing* 境 meaning "region" or "landscape." The *Neijing tu* may be understood as the "Internal Landscape Map." This argument is supported by the fact that the titles of earlier diagrams that also illustrate the internal regions of the body contain the phrase *neijing tu* 內境圖 (see *Zazhu jiejing* 雜著捷徑, DZ 263, 18.2b-3b; *Nanjing zuantu jujie* 難經纂圖句解, DZ 1024, 5a-6b; Needham et al. 1983, 109-10; Despeux 1994; Skar 2003).

Along with mapping the watercourses or meridians of the human body (*jing* 經-streams), and the landscape which is the human body (*jing* 境-landscape), the *Neijing tu* also alludes to the *jing* 景-luminosities which reside in various areas of the body. The *Neijing tu* maps various dimensions of the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Scripture on the Yellow Court), which survives in a *neijing* 內景 (DZ 331) and *waijing* 外景 version (DZ 332) (see Schipper 1975; Robinet 1984; Huang 1990; Kroll 1996).¹⁹ Although in the titles of the *Huangting jing* these designations can and perhaps should be read as "esoteric" or "inner view" and "exoteric" or "outer view" respectively, in Shangqing Daoism and as a Daoist techni-

¹⁹ The technical terminology of the *Huangting jing*, especially its various esoteric names for the Daoist subtle body (e.g., *mingmen* 命門, *yuchi* 玉池, *sanguan* 三關, *santian* 三田, *jianggong* 絳宮, etc.) was utilized by internal alchemy lineages from the late Tang onwards (see Robinet 1989b; Pregadio and Skar 2000; Komjathy 2007). The Yellow Court (*huangting* 黃庭) of the title and mentioned throughout the scripture is most often read as referring to the spleen region. See, e.g., the eighth-century *Huangting waijing jing zhu* 黃庭外景經注, DZ 263, 58.1b-2a. However, it may also refer to the lower elixir field, associated with the abdominal region. In this respect, it corresponds to the location of the Ocean of Qi (*qihai* 氣海) in some *neidan* lineages. See, e.g., the tenth-century *Chuandao ji* 傳道集, DZ 263, 15.14b; and the seventeenth-century *Xingming guizhi* 性命圭旨, ZW 314, 9.518. Various attempts were also made in the Tang dynasty (618-907) to create visual representations based on the *Huangting jing*. See, e.g., *Huangting neijing jing zhu* 黃庭內景經註, DZ 402; also DZ 1032, 11.1a-12.27b; DZ 263, 55-60; and *Huangting neijing tu* 黃庭內景圖, DZ 432; also DZ 263, 54.

cal term *jing* 景 also alludes to the “luminosities” or “effulgences” in the body (see Homann 1971; Robinet 1989a; 1993). These are the inner body gods or radiant spirits which reside in different corporeal locations, specifically in the five yin-orbs, and which have associations in the Five Phase (*wuxing* 五行) system of correlative cosmology, specifically animal, direction and color associations (see below). In the central region of the *Neijing tu*, these body gods are identified according to the esoteric names of the orb spirits as found in the *Huangting jing*. In this sense, the *Neijing tu* may be understood as the “Diagram of Inner Luminosities,” adding yet another possible layer to already multiple meanings.

Topographical Reflections

The history of the received *Neijing tu*, a stone stele housed in the Quanzhen monastery of Baiyun guan, is as complex as its mapping of the Daoist body. Historical evidence, both internal and external to the diagram itself, suggests that the received stele (and its various rubbings) was based on an earlier stele, which was in turn produced from a still-earlier color painting. That painting may be considered the “source-text” and is possibly still extant in the Museum of Chinese Medical History of Beijing. The original painting of the *Neijing tu* was most likely produced within the Ruyi Studio, the Qing imperial art academy. It may have been made for or given to Gao Rentong (1841-1907), the twentieth-generation abbot of Baiyun guan, upon his ascension to abbotship in 1881. This painting was subsequently seen by Liu Chengyin (d. 1894), a Longmen monk and chief eunuch to Empress Dowager Cixi. As a major supporter of Longmen and Baiyun guan, and as a fellow ordinand and close friend of Abbot Gao, Liu Chengyin was instrumental in maintaining connections among the Longmen lineage, Baiyun guan and the Qing imperial house. He also commissioned the engraving the *Neijing tu* stele. This occurred in 1886, and the stele was later inlaid in the monastic compound of Baiyun guan with another Liu-commissioned stele depicting the Daoist body, namely, the *Xiuzhen tu* (Diagram on Cultivating Perfection).

These various details not only provide a window into late imperial Chinese religion and society; they also suggest a Daoist cultivational context in which seated meditation and alchemical praxis occupied a central position. The received *Neijing tu* is a map of the Daoist body, the Daoist

internal landscape utilized and actualized in Daoist practice. As such, it is the *Map of Internal Pathways*, charting the contours of the Daoist body as envisioned within the context of late imperial Daoism, especially within the Longmen and Wu-Liu *neidan* lineages and within the Baiyun guan environs. The terminological layers of its title, considered in concert with its contents, are multifaceted: it maps the body as alchemical crucible, as landscape, as cosmos, as soteriological locus.²⁰ It maps the many dimensions of Daoist conceptions of self, including, naturalistic, cosmological, theistic and alchemical visions. These incorporate earlier Daoist views, practice modalities, and parallel diagrams as well as dimensions of Chinese medicine and Buddhism. Within its contours, one finds mountain paths to be traversed, summits to be ascended, fields to be tilled, numinous presences to be awakened, and mystical corporeal spaces to be entered. In this way, the *Neijing tu* is one representation of the Daoist body, a body actualized through Daoist alchemical praxis.

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²⁰ The actual contents of the *Neijing tu* will be analyzed in part two of the present article, which will appear in the next issue of the *Journal of Daoist Studies*. In the second half of the study, I also examine contemporaneous, late imperial *neidan* literature that provides clues into the potential lineage of the *Neijing tu*.

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Stress Management and the *Zhuangzi*

ROBERT SANTEE

Abstract

This paper examines the relevance of the teachings of the *Zhuangzi* to addressing stress and the physical and psychological problems associated with it. It views the teachings of the *Zhuangzi* within the context of two basic approaches to addressing stress: the cognitive approach and the experiential approach. And it explores the relationship between the teachings of the *Zhuangzi* and mind/body medicine, psychoneuroimmunology, and cognitive therapy within the framework of stress management.

Stress is a fundamental problem in the United States. It compromises physical health, psychological well-being, interpersonal relationships, occupational performance, and is noticeably linked to illness and disease. The "Stress in America Survey" (N=1848) by the American Psychological Association (APA), released October 24, 2007, clearly indicates that adult Americans view their lives as quite stressful (2007). Results indicate that 79% believe that stress is a normal part of life, with 32% indicating extreme levels of stress and 17% noting that their highest levels of stress are experienced fifteen or more days a month. 77% reported experiencing stress-related physical symptoms within the last month (46% indicated their physical health was compromised). 73% noted psychological symptoms in the last month due to stress (49% indicated their emotional well-being was compromised). 48% reported stress-related sleeping problems with an average loss of 21 hours of sleep per month. 43% linked stress as having an impact on diet while 36% noted that a meal was skipped because of stress. 54% indicated that as a result of stress, within the last month, they had interpersonal relationship problems.

Spector indicates that occupational stress has a significant impact on the overall health of employees (2002, 133-34). The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), reporting the results from a series of separate surveys of employees, noted that 75% felt that there was more "on-the- job stress today than there was a generation ago," 40% indicated that their job was "very or extremely stressful," and 29% reported they felt "quite a bit or extremely stressed at work" (Sauter et al., 1999). The "Stress in America Survey" indicated 55% of respondents felt that their job performance/productivity suffered as a result of stress, while 52% noted they have made/considered a decision about their career because of workplace stress (APA 2007).

For the existential psychotherapist Irvin Yalom, stress is part of the human condition to varying degrees. He says that psychopathology reflects the individual's problematic defense mechanisms relative to coping with stressors in the environment and notes:

How then, one may ask, can a theory of psychopathology rest on factors that are experienced by every individual? The answer, of course, is that each person experiences the stress of the human condition in highly individualized fashion. . . The overwhelming majority of patients suffer from stress that to differing degrees is part of every person's experience. . . The universality of stress is one of the major reasons that scholars encounter such difficulty when attempting to define and describe normality: the difference between normality and pathology is quantitative, not qualitative. (Yalom 1980, 11-12)

Given the wide range of problems associated with stress and the fact that it appears to be part of the human condition, it is important to understand what exactly stress is and to find and utilize various teachings, methods, approaches, and techniques to address, cope with, and reduce it. As individuals are highly diverse, they have to have a variety of options to select the teachings and techniques that best fit their personality relative to addressing and reducing stress.

One set of teachings that appear relevant to reducing stress are those of Daoism. Kohn notes that Daoist techniques for cultivating the body are beneficial for addressing stress, improving health, and nurturing well-being (2006a, 3-5, 16). Ivanhoe argues that the *Zhuangzi* 莊子

employs the notion that all perspectives are equal as a therapeutic process to help free individuals from their narrow perspectives, release them from excessive dependency on the intellect, reduce anxiety and conflict, and assist them in finding their place in the world (1996, 209-10). Utilizing this healing aspect of Daoist teachings as the framework of the paper, it focuses on determining which specific practices or methods, from the *Zhuangzi* are amenable to understanding, addressing, coping with, reducing, and eliminating stress.

Stress

The natural mechanism that human beings have received over millennia through the process of heredity to assist them in adapting to the environment is known as the stress response. McEwen argues that the activation of the stress response is the body's natural reaction to demands in both internal and external environments (1998, 171-72; McEwen and Lasley 2002, 5-7). At its extreme, where there is a perceived threat to well-being, it is known as the fight-or-flight response. The body goes through a series of physiological changes: increased heart rate; higher blood pressure; contracting and dilating of blood vessels; rapid, shallow breathing; increased blood sugar levels; hyper-arousal and hyper-vigilance; the generation of anxiety; tensing of muscles; increased levels of stress hormones such as adrenalin (epinephrine), noradrenalin (norepinephrine) and glucocorticoids (cortisol); and increased sweating in order to warn the individual of the potential threat and to assist, through the re-distribution of energy, the individual in addressing and resolving the threat (Santee 2007; see also McGrady 2007).

If the fight-or-flight response cannot assist the individual in addressing and resolving a perceived threat and remains activated due to the individual's continual thoughts about it, normal adaptive physiological changes that were only supposed to be short-term become long-term. At this point the physiological changes become maladaptive and can harm the body.

Sapolsky notes that the fight-or-flight response can be activated by our mere anticipation of an event and/or our worrying about a certain state of affairs (2001, 7-8). In other words, our mere thoughts can create

stress with all its physiological changes, even though there is no obvious, real, physical threat in the environment. Unlike its activation by a real, physical threat which is deactivated once the threat is no longer present or has been successfully addressed, its stimulation by the individual's thoughts is maintained until the individual stops thinking or worrying about the potential, imagined threat.

Nesse and Williams point out that the anxiety associated with the fight-or-flight response can be useful insofar as the physiological changes it causes allows people to address an immediate and real threat by either fleeing or fighting. They also note that while it is clear that anxiety can be useful, in many situations it is not because there is no real threat \ which it can address and resolve. In fact, the continual activation of the fight-or-flight response and the presence of anxiety harm the body (1996, 212-14).

McEwen, and McEwen and Wingfield refer to the activation of the natural stress response as allostasis (McEwen 1998, 171-72; McEwen and Wingfield 2003, 2-4). When the threat or challenge is resolved, the system is inactivated or turns off. When the stress response is not allowed to turn off, on the other hand, the physiological changes are maintained and can be quite harmful. McEwen calls the continual activation of the stress response the allostatic load (1998, 172-77; 2003, 200). He also notes that not only can the response be activated and maintained by the individual by simply envisioning a threat; it can also be generated and maintained by how an individual treats his or her body (1998, 171, 175-77; McEwen and Lasley 2002, 9-10). Poor diet, inadequate sleep, and lack of exercise can all lead to chronic stress.¹

Kemeny indicates that in acute situations the activation of the stress response is adaptive, but when it is not allowed to turn off, it is detrimental— cognitively and physically—to the individual (2003, 126). Stefano, Fricchione, Slingsby, and Benson note that the physiological mechanisms associated with the stress response evolved to address acute threats not chronic threats. They argue that chronic stress can compromise immune system functioning and point out that an individual can create it simply though his or her perception of and continued thinking about or dwelling upon a stressor (2001, 7).

¹ For more on stress, see Seyle (1984), Jones and Bright (2001), Esch, Stefano, Fricchione, and Benson (2002), McEwen and Wingfield (2002), and Lovallo (2005).

Kroenke and Manglesdorff after reviewing the records of 1,000 outpatients from an internal medicine clinic, across a three year period, found that only 16% of the presenting common symptoms could be explained by an organic diagnosis (1989, 262-63). 10% of the symptoms were classified as being "psychologic" in origin. The etiology of the remaining 74% could not be explained. They suggest that psychosocial factors such as stress may be associated with many unexplained symptoms and conclude that an approach only focusing on organic causes as an explanation for common symptoms may not be adequate (1989, 265).

Sobel argues that medical practitioners need to treat patients in a more holistic manner, such that mind/body interventions are integrated into treatment (1995, 242). He clearly connects patient thoughts, attitudes, and social support to varying degrees with the beginning, development, continuation, and management of disease and cites research by Kaiser Permanente indicating that over 60% of office visits to medical doctors were "by the worried well" (1995, 234-39). In other words, no organic based medical diagnosis for the presenting symptoms was obtained.

Benson, in his testimony before the United States Senate, citing research-based evidence, noted that 60 to 90% of all office visits to medical doctors in the United States have no identifiable or measurable physiological correlate which can be diagnosed or determined as the cause of patients' symptoms. He indicated that the symptoms were associated with "stress and other mind/body interactions," then defined stress as the "perception of a threat or danger that requires behavioral change" and noted that physiological changes occurring as a result of stress are also known as the fight-or-flight response (1998, 3-4).

Psychoneuroimmunology

Ader and Cohen established a clear link between biological and psychological processes by demonstrating that the immune system processes could be modified through classical conditioning (1975, 338-39). This was one of the seminal studies in the field of psychoneuroimmunology. Ader describes psychoneuroimmunology as the study of the reciprocal relationship between behavior, the brain, the nervous system, the endocrine system, and the immune system. He indicates that the immune system is compromised by stress, but the reduction in its performance is contin-

gent upon a series of variables such as age, context, and the nature of the antigen (2001, 94-95). He notes that the overwhelming evidence supporting the relationship between behavior, the brain, the nervous system, the endocrine system, and the immune system requires a paradigm shift that must integrate immunological responses with an individual's cognitive and behavioral responses to environmental contexts (2001, 94, 97).

Herbert and Cohen in their meta-analysis of the relationship between clinical depression and the immune system found solid evidence indicating that clinical depression alters immune system processes and linked it to the physiological systems associated with the stress response (1993, 481-82). McGrady notes that the latter consists of two fundamental physiological systems: 1) the sympathetic nervous system and the adrenal medulla, and 2) the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal cortex axis (2007, 19-20). He indicated that chronic activation of the stress response increases the potential for problems with self-care, attention, judgment, selectivity, sleep, short and long term memory, diet, mood, anxiety, excessive worrying, panic, the immune system, stress-related illnesses, neurotransmitter levels, breathing (hyperventilation), heart rate, self-destructive behaviors (alcohol and drug abuse), energy levels, muscular tension, and chronic pain (McGrady 2007, 19-22).

Ray indicates that not only are beliefs, thoughts and behaviors associated with health and illness, but they are also clearly linked to the three leading causes of death in the United States. (2004, 38-39). He notes that research continues to validate the mind/body relationship and that a "biopsychosocial model" is necessary to best address both illness and well-being. (2004, 38-39).

Cognitive Therapy

Cognitive therapists Beck and Weishaar argue that processing information is an integral aspect of an organism's ability to survive and adapt to environmental contexts. The structures and organization of processed information are known as cognitive schemas. These filter, guide, and evaluate the individual's experiences in the world (2005, 238-39). Beck and Weishaar also indicate that at its most primitive or survival level, the human being processes information in a self-serving, unquestioned, inflexible, and mechanical manner (2005, 245). The perception of the threat

activates the stress response which in turn assists the individual cognitively, affectively, behaviorally, and motivationally in addressing the perceived threat. When the threat is resolved, the stress dissipates.

While this "primal thinking" may have been functional relative to our survival, it can be dysfunctional in the normal course of events if precipitated by imagined, unrealistic or insoluble threats (Beck and Weishaar 2005, 239, 248). Once a threat is perceived, even though it is imagined, unrealistic and/or insoluble, the stress response is still activated and the individual experiences stress. Normal reasoning is compromised and primal thinking surfaces. Insofar as the stress response is unable to assist in eliminating the threat, the threat remains and primal thinking dominates. This leads to ongoing primal thinking, cognitive distortions, and chronic stress.

Beck and Weishaar further suggest that cognitive distortions are "systematic errors in reasoning" which occur "during psychological distress" (2005, 247). If, for example, a stressed individual is locked into black and white, dichotomous, or polarized thinking such that he or she is only able to perceive or experience an event as, for example, being either good or bad, right or wrong, or correct or incorrect, then the individual is manifesting a cognitive distortion (Pretzer and Beck 2007, 483). Magnification (making something far more important or significant than warranted) or minimizing (making something far less important/ or significant than warranted) are other examples of cognitive distortion (Beck and Weishaar 2005, 246-47). Pretzer and Beck indicate that cognitive therapy (client and therapist) would focus on addressing, restructuring, and changing any errors in thinking (schemas, cognitive distortions, etc.) such that the individual will be able to reduce stress and functionally adapt to various environmental contexts (2007, 486-487).

Albert Ellis, the creator of Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT), argues that emotional and behavioral dysfunctionality is due primarily to irrational beliefs (2005, 166-69). He indicates people who hold irrational beliefs, which are unconditional, rigid, dogmatic, and absolute, and refuse to accept reality, tend to significantly stress themselves (2001, 81-82). Ellis and MacLaren indicate that at the core of the irrational beliefs are three absolute, unrealistic musts or demands that the person requires to be happy and significantly impact the individual's ability to adapt to their environment: those regarding the individual: I must do

well, I must succeed, I must get what I want, etc.; those regarding others: everybody must behave the way that I expect them to, etc.; and those regarding the context: everything in my universe must be exactly as I want, etc. (2003, 32-34). When these musts are not met, the individual is threatened absolutely (I can't stand it, I am worthless, I am inadequate, I am a failure, I am doomed, I have no options, it is awful, it is terrible, it is a catastrophe, etc.), which results in emotional and behavioral stress such as anxiety, depression, and hostility (2003, 34-36).

The therapeutic intervention from the perspective of REBT is to confront and dispute the irrational beliefs by asking the client to provide the evidence that you absolutely must always do well, get what you want, never feel uncomfortable, etc. As the absolute beliefs are irrational and illogical, the client is unable to provide the evidence. The irrational thoughts are then replaced with more rational or preference-based thoughts such as: I would prefer to do well, I would prefer to get what I want, I would prefer not to feel uncomfortable, etc. These new rational thoughts are then linked to more positive changes in feelings and behaviors (Ellis 2001; 2005; Ellis and MacLaren 2003).

Ellis as well as Beck and Weishaar note that the integration of and reciprocal relationship between the individual's cognitive, emotional and behavioral components is required to address, respond and adapt to the environment (Ellis 2001 18-19; 2005, 166; Beck and Weishaar 2005, 239). In other words, the individual is essentially, thinking, feeling and behaving simultaneously. They also note that information processing is biologically based, an ability that evolved in organisms to assist them in adapting to their environments (Ellis, 2001, 18; Beck and Weishaar 2005, 239). There is considerable research supporting the efficacy of their respective therapeutic approaches across a number of areas (Beck and Weishaar 2005, 243; Ellis 2005, 173; Roth and Fonagy 2005, 480-90).

The *Zhuangzi* and Stress

The sense of chronic stress permeating all aspects of human life is pointed out early on in the *Zhuangzi*. The consequences of chronic stress on body and mind is plainly seen, as in the following selection, in compromised sleep, inability to focus, apprehensiveness, a sense of being

overwhelmed, distractibility, obsessiveness, loss of control, self-doubting, and eventual demise. The text says:

When people are asleep, their spirits are knotted up. When they are awake, their form is scattered. Interacting in the world creates entanglements. Daily their mind/hearts battle: plodding, concealing, and tentative. Their small fears result in apprehensiveness. Their large fears result in being overwhelmed. In judging right and wrong, their words shoot out as if an arrow was released from a bow. They hold onto their judgments as if they were sacred oaths. Guarding what they call their victory, they are executed like autumn moving into winter. (3/2/10-12)²

Given the evidence cited from mind/body medicine, psychoneuro-immunology, and cognitive therapy regarding the chronic activation of the stress response and how it harms the body, the *Zhuangzi* appears prophetic. The following selection from the text is clearly indicative of irrational thinking (musts) and cognitive distortions (dichotomous thinking) and how these types of cognitive processing are related to stress and negatively affect the body. People create a dichotomous world of enjoyment/suffering, rich/poor, right/wrong, life/death, approval/disapproval, respect/disrespect, high status/low status, comfort/discomfort, etc., and then tell themselves and others that in order to be happy they absolutely must attain the positive component of the dichotomy. Otherwise they will be unhappy. It notes:

That which is respected in the world is wealth, status, longevity and approval. That which is enjoyment is a comfortable life, tasty food, beautiful clothes, pleasant sights and sweet sounds. That which is not respected is poverty, dishonor, dying young and disapproval.

² All translations and interpretations of the *Zhuangzi* are my own. The format 3/2/10-12 indicates the page/chapter/lines in HYSIS 20 (Guo 1956). I use the *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (1974) was used to supplement translation and interpretation (also my own).

That which is viewed as suffering³ is a life that is not comfortable, a mouth that does not have tasty food, a body that does not have beautiful clothes, eyes that do not have pleasant sights and ears that do not have sweet sounds. Because of the fear of not attaining these, there is overwhelming stress. Those who treat the body in this way are indeed foolish. Now for those who are rich, the person suffers and is made ill as they accumulate more wealth than they can possibly use. Those who treat the body in this manner are fragmented.

Now, those who hold a position of high status are troubled, day and night, about good and bad. Those who treat their body in this manner are out of touch. People are born and all of life is a participation in stress.⁴ Those who seek a long life are of a confused mind. They are chronically stressed about death. Is this not suffering? To treat the body in this manner is to be far away from it. (46/18/2-6)

Guo Xiang 郭象 (252-312) in his commentary notes: "If all of these are let go, the body is not affected. Yet if you attain them your very nature is harmed. Nowadays everything is reversed. If you do not attain them you become stressed. This is foolish" (Guo 1974, 317).⁵ Cheng

³ "Suffering" translates *ku* 苦, a term directly associated with stress. If individuals are not getting what they believe they must have, they are dissatisfied. Uncertain about when they will ever get what they want, they feel threatened and are stressed. Being stressed, they suffer. If not satisfied with what they do have and uncertain about getting more, they feel threatened and are thus stressed. Being stressed, they suffer. It is interesting to note that *ku* is used to represent the Buddhist concept of *dukkha*. For more, see Santee (2007).

⁴ "Stress" here translates *you* 憂, which generally means anxiety, melancholy, grief, worry, sorrow, and sadness. All these are manifestations of stress. I translate it as "stress" because anxiety is part of the changes that occur as the result of the stress response. The individual displays anxiousness or anxiety because he or she is reacting to a perceived threat or a sense of uncertainty, which itself is a threat, and as such is stressed. If the threat is not resolved the stress becomes chronic. Given the context of this selection from the *Zhuangzi*, it is apparent that the text is discussing chronic stress, phrased as *jiuyou* 久憂, and the harm it does to the body as it relates to the threats associated with life itself, death awareness, and not getting what you believe you must have to be happy.

⁵ For a discussion of the philosophy of Guo Xiang see Kohn (1992, 69-80).

Xuanying 成玄英 (fl. 631-652) in his sub-commentary adds: "All of these things are not beneficial to people. Yet the prevalent fashion is that if you do not attain them you are suffering" (Guo 1974, 317).⁶ Given Cheng's commentary, it is quite apparent that having a comfortable life, tasty food, beautiful clothes, pleasant sights, and sweet sounds is directly related to social status and norms. In both text and commentaries, it is thus clear that seeking or desiring social status is a source of stress. For the *Zhuangzi* it is even an overwhelming stress that is harmful to the body.

Not only is attaining status stressful, but the fear of losing it is also stressful. The *Zhuangzi* notes that those who hold positions of high status are constantly worrying about their behavior. These individuals are afraid that, if they engage in behavior outside of the social standards of good and bad, they will lose everything. Thus they are constantly stressed about the future and harm themselves physically and psychologically. Cheng's commentary to states:

Now, those who have positions of high status are deeply stressed as they worry about their future good fortune. Thus day and night their ruminations about doing good and avoiding evil fatigue their bodies and frighten their mind/hearts. Is it not careless to constantly treat the body in this manner? (Guo 1974, 317)⁷

In addition to stress being associated with social status, this selection from the *Zhuangzi* also links it to concerns with and awareness of death. These concerns appear ongoing as the text notes that people are chronically stressed about death, seeking ways to extend their lives and apparently attempting to deny the naturally changing process. Being chronically stressed about death results in suffering and harms the body.

For the *Zhuangzi*, social status, absolute dichotomous values, social standards and judgments, and a denial of change and death are reflective of an artificial realm created by human beings. The text then contrasts

⁶ For an inquiry into understanding the *Zhuangzi* during the Tang dynasty through the commentary of Cheng Xuanying see Yu (2000).

⁷ Kabat-Zinn echoes the insight of the *Zhuangzi* by noting that perceived threats to "social status" are a significant source of stress (2005, 54).

this artificial realm with that of the natural realm of the body, clearly indicating that the artificial, stress-producing realm is harmful to the body.

This contrast between the artificial world created by human beings and the natural realm of the body is more readily seen in the discussion between Zhuangzi and Huizi regarding the nature of emotions (ch. 5, 14/5/55-60). For Zhuangzi, problematic and harmful emotions are those evoked by the artificial realm created by human beings, involving absolute dichotomies such as good/bad and right/wrong. He then makes a strong contrast with the natural body.

Michael in his analysis of the *Zhuangzi* distinguishes the natural, physical body from the artificial or “constructed self” (2005, 121-22). The natural, physical body refers to everything originally received from nature (*tian* 天), while the artificial (*ren* 人) refers to the contrived, absolutistic, rigid knowledge, concepts, standards, beliefs, values, and desires which have been added on/created by human beings (2005, 122-23). Only the latter is harmful to the body.

In the *Zhuangzi*, the primary source of stress is the artificial realm created by human beings, which is not consistent with the actual behavior of existence. It contains absolute, rigid, abstract distinctions; dichotomous thinking and knowledge; the denial of death and change; and an emphasis on social status and unchanging societal values, concepts, standards, beliefs, distinctions, and desires. There is a continuous battle in this artificial realm regarding which perspective is absolutely correct regarding these distinctions. All of this contributes to stress which harms the body both physically and psychologically.

Now that we have identified the source according to the *Zhuangzi*, let us next examine the potential solutions that may be extracted from the text and ask how they can be used in addressing stress in contemporary society.

Cognitive Approach

Death and Change

In the *Zhuangzi*, the solution to eliminating the chronic stress associated with death and its many symbolic layers, i.e., resisting change on all lev-

els, is to embrace the fact that you are going to continually change. Embracing change is accomplished both cognitively and experientially. It is to experience your self as part of the natural, integrated process of change. To undo the restrictions brought about by dichotomous and irrational thinking. It is to focus on commonality and naturalness not on absolute differentiation and artificiality to experience life.

Chapter 6 (17/6/45-53) has a discussion between the four masters Zi Si, Zi Yu, Zi Li, and Zi Lai on fully embracing the continuous process of change. Of particular importance is the response of Zi Yu to Zi Si regarding the illness that is re-arranging his body. Zi Yu does not resist or deny the changes, because there is congruence, a harmony if you will, between his understanding of existence and how existence actually behaves. He understands existence, which he is integrated with, to be a continually changing, integrated process. That, in fact, is how existence actually behaves. Given that existence is a continually changing, integrated process, there will be a sense of uncertainty. Zi Yu is not threatened by the uncertainty of existence because it is embedded in his understanding of existence. His vision of the world being in harmony with the behavior of existence, he is not threatened, and thus is not chronically stressed.

Rather than resisting it, Zi Yu is adapting to the process of change. He is in harmony with the processes of dying, going along with the changes that will lead to what people call death. Death itself is nothing more than a natural change common to all life forms. Because his understanding of existence is consistent with how existence actually behaves, Zi Yu does not engage in absolute dichotomous thinking. There is no separation between the body undergoing changes and the body that perceives them. Sorrow and joy do not disturb him; he is not controlled by things or affairs in the world. Zi Yu is free from the restrictions of separation, the need for certainty, and the search for an unchanging reality.

To behave in a certain manner regarding death because society and its various rituals deem it to be absolutely and unquestioningly required is simply not acceptable for the author or authors of the *Zhuangzi*. This is apparent when the text discusses Zhuangzi's his behavior at the death of his wife, when he sings and drums rather than following prescribed procedures of mourning (46/18/15-19). It is natural to feel sad with the loss of a loved one; it is not natural to engage in a prescribed behavior or have an emotional reaction because society expects or demands it. This

type of reaction is artificial and denies change. To have excessive emotions and/or to engage in extensive ritualistic behavior is to not understand the process of change. To not understand and not accept the process of change leads to chronic stress.

In the *Zhuangzi*, the reason people are chronically stressed is that there is an inconsistency between their understanding of or thinking about existence and how existence actually behaves. Ordinary people understand existence as consisting of absolute, unchanging, abstract, rigid distinctions. They hold on to and are bound up by the belief that they are separate, different, and not subject to the overall process of change. They are bound up by this belief because they engage in absolute dichotomous thinking which creates an artificial realm that fragments their relationship with the natural process.

Because existence does not behave according to the demands and expectations of the artificial realm created by people, there will be uncertainty. Uncertainty is a threat to their artificial, certainty-based realm of understanding. Unresolved uncertainty activates and maintains the stress response. This being the case, even though they resist or deny change, they are still subject to physical and psychological harm associated with chronic stress.

To overcome resistance to change and death, to eliminate the absolute dichotomous thinking together with the chronic stress associated with the artificial realm of understanding, and to embrace existence in the manner suggested in the *Zhuangzi*, obviously requires changing how you think about the world. It requires cognitive re-structuring to the extent that you begin to focus on change, commonality, and integration instead of focusing on absolutes, differences, and separation. It is a cognitive restructuring that centers on the natural as opposed to the artificial. This cognitive restructuring then leads to an understanding of existence consistent with its actual behavior. The focus of this type of cognitive restructuring on naturalness, change, commonality, and integration is clearly applicable to addressing and managing stress in the current age where much attention is being paid to the artificial, to absolutes, to differences, and to separation.

Dichotomous Thinking

As noted in the discussion between Huizi and Zhuangzi regarding emotions, Zhuangzi argues that dichotomous thinking is artificial and harmful to the body. The solution is to analyze the dichotomous thinking and make transparent that its polarities are relative not only to each other but also to the underlying perspectives from which they are generated.

The *Zhuangzi* argues that words do not have any fixed or unchanging meanings (ch. 2, 4/2/23-31). The dichotomy of "right and wrong" is placed within the context of leading Confucian and Mohist perspectives, which each have their own set of what they consider "right and wrong." The text argues that polarities such as "this and that" and "possibility and impossibility" are not only relative to each other but that they produce each other. The goal is to make transparent that language is relative not only amongst polarities but also relative to individual perspectives. As long as individuals are trapped in some sense of absolute perspectives and/or absolute dichotomies, not seeing the relativity of their perspective, they will argue about right and wrong, good and bad, life and death, etc. from their particular perspectives. Locked into irrational and dichotomous thinking (I must be right and you must be wrong), they follow a type of primitive, fragmented thinking that is related to the perception of a threat (I might lose, I might be wrong) and the activation of the stress response. The *Zhuangzi* clearly sees this type of reasoning as being, restrictive, artificial and harmful.

The *Zhuangzi* continues the argument of relativity of language, dichotomies, and perspectives into the arena of evidence, discussing how to determine a winner and loser in a debate (7/2/84-92). What evidence will absolutely substantiate the truth of one perspective over and against another? What evidence will absolutely substantiate the truth of one component of the polarity over and against the other? The *Zhuangzi* makes it clear that if one component of the polarity were really true, it would be so different from the other component that there would be no need for debate. The passage concludes that the individual's understanding should be in harmony with the natural boundaries of existence. Absolutes, artificial concepts, dichotomies, perspectives, and boundaries should simply be forgotten. In other words, how you understand exis-

tence should be consistent with how existence actually behaves. This being the case, how you think about existence will not harm the body.

Zhuangzi's teachings to address and manage stress in relation to change and death meant a cognitive restructuring with a focus on naturalness, change, commonality, and integration. His teachings on dichotomous thinking similarly is a cognitive restructuring, but it focuses on the understanding that language, concepts, dichotomies, and perspectives are not absolute in nature but are rather interrelated and relative. Accepting this perspective, people will see that the function of language is to communicate meaning: communicate but do not get entangled in the artificial realm of absolutes. Any such entanglement leads to stress:

A net is used for fish. Once you get the fish, forget the net. A trap is used for rabbits. Once you get the rabbit, forget the trap. Words are used for meaning. Once you get the meaning, forget the words. Where can I find a person who has forgotten words, so I can have a word with him/her? (75/26/48-49)

The goal of cognitive restructuring is to match people's conceptions of existence with how existence actually behaves. Then chronic stress will be removed and the individual will not be harmed by his or her thinking.

Social Status

Social status is based in a belief system that argues that individuals can actually possess a separate thing called status, be it tangible or intangible, and that the possession of this thing somehow makes the individual important and often superior to others. Individuals believe that if they do not have status, in one or more of its infinite variety of forms, they are somehow lesser or inadequate human beings. This is clearly a threat to their sense of self, which sets off the stress response. In addition, the uncertainty associated with obtaining and/or maintaining status is also conducive to the chronic activation of the stress response and harmful.

The belief system associated with social status consists of a variety of absolutes and is thus, according to the *Zhuangzi*, part of the artificial realm created by people. The solution in the text is simply to recognize social status for what it actually is and understand what it does to the

person. This recognition and understanding are made clear in chapter 17 where Zhuangzi refuses the offer to participate in the administration of the kingdom of Chu. He tells the two envoys that, like the sacred tortoise in the imperial temple, he would prefer to be alive and drag his tale in the mud (45/17/81-84).

For Zhuangzi, having an elevated position, being honored, and residing in a royal temple are akin to being dead to life. Social status is thus restrictive and limiting; it compromises embracing life. Guo's commentary suggests the same: "Each wants to be at peace in order to preserve their nature." Cheng adds: "Zhuangzi guarded against the false road of social status. He focused on and valued a mind-heart that was free within the natural boundaries" (Guo 1974, 317).

The following selection provides guidelines about how to embrace life, how not be stressed, and how not to harm oneself. It is quite clear that social status, in this particular case fame, must be avoided as it is compared to a corpse. The text has:

Don't be a corpse of fame. Don't be a residence of schemes.
Don't be controlled by interactions. Don't be ruled by knowledge. Live your life in the endless and roam in the boundless. Use up that which you received from nature, and do not see any attainment. Be empty (*xu* 虛), that is all! The actualized person uses the mind/ heart like a mirror. Neither leading nor welcoming. Responding and not storing. Thus, they are able to succeed without being harmed. (21/7/31-33)

Cheng notes: "Valuing your body and forgetting fame, your mind/heart will be at ease. Therefore, you will not be ruled by fame and reputation" (Guo 1974, 165). Fame, reputation, material wealth, and position are all examples of social status, part of the artificial realm of restrictions, created by human beings, which evoke stress. The *Zhuangzi* is quite clear that in order to avoid the controlling and restrictive nature of the artificial realm and not be harmed, the individual needs to become empty.

Commenting on the command to "be empty," Guo notes: "If you are not empty, you will not be able to reside amongst the masses in a true manner" (1974, 165). To be empty and reside amongst the masses in a true manner, the individual needs to use the mind/heart like a mirror.

Essentially this is interacting in the artificial and social status laden realm of people and not being stressed about, dwelling upon, being moved by, or affected by the interaction. In other words the mind/heart is empty of all restrictions before, during, and after the interaction. For a person who is empty, an interaction in the artificial realm of people does not give rise to emotions. Guo notes, "Examine and be without emotions" (1974, 165).

This selection from the *Zhuangzi* transitions from the cognitive approach into the experiential approach for eliminating stress. The reader is told that in order to be free from the restrictions and boundaries of the artificial realm, he/she should become empty. Although the cognitive approach provides an example of how to become empty through the use of the mirror metaphor, the actual process of becoming empty is more completely addressed through the experiential approach.

Experiential Approach

The *Zhuangzi* presents two primary methods of the experiential approach to empty the mind/heart of artificial boundaries and limitations: sitting in forgetfulness and mind/heart fasting. Both remove primal thinking, irrational and dysfunctional thoughts, cognitive distortions, and chronic stress. Although the manner in which they are removed differs significantly from the cognitive approach, both approaches complement each other. There is considerable research supporting the benefits and effectiveness of similar types of experiential approaches for reducing or eliminating chronic stress and increasing overall well-being (Benson 1998; Davidson et al. 2003; Dusek et al. 2006; Wallace and Shapiro 2006; Walsh and Shapiro 2006).

Saso indicates that sitting in forgetfulness and mind/heart fasting are both about emptying the mind/heart (1995, 24). He notes that sitting in forgetfulness is about emptying the mind of judgments while mind/heart fasting is about emptying the heart of selfishness. He views both processes as being conducive to healing and well-being. He describes the practice of both sitting in forgetfulness and mind/heart fasting as a centering or focusing the will on the abdomen which allows the mind/heart to become like a mirror (1995, 89). When the mind/heart is like a mirror it is empty of artificial concepts, restrictions, limitations,

judgments, social status, and a sense of an absolute self. In other words, the individual is not stressed.

Sitting in forgetfulness and mind/heart fasting are both focused on the direct, holistic experience of the practitioner. Through the process of forgetting and emptying the mind/heart, social status, absolute distinctions, dysfunctional thinking, and cognitive distortions simply dissolve. Any sense of an absolute self vanishes as the practitioner realizes his/her identity with the continual process of change. This identity or sameness is not a denial of change, a validation of eternity or a conformation of freedom from death! It is a realization of the commonality of all things. Both sitting in forgetfulness and mind/heart fasting are approaches to fully and functionally engage the natural, continually changing process of existence. They are ways of eliminating any sense of an absolute, separate and distinct self. These methods not only integrate mind and body, but they also integrate mind, body and environment.

By sitting in forgetfulness and practicing mind/heart fasting the individual is no longer simply thinking that everything is interrelated and continually changing. The individual experiences the integrated continually changing process called existence. This experience validates the cognitive approach of consciously focusing on naturalness, commonality, interrelationships and change. The cognitive approach of distinguishing the artificial from the natural and focusing on the natural prepares a foundation for the experiential approach.

In the case of the descriptions of both sitting in forgetfulness and mind/heart fastings, Confucius and his favorite student Yan Hui are utilized, in a satirical manner, to present each of the methods.

Sitting in Forgetfulness

Chapter 6 has a discussion between Confucius and his disciple Yan Hui regarding the process of sitting in forgetfulness (19/6/89-93). Yan Hui describes his experience of sitting in forgetfulness to Confucius, explaining that concepts, knowledge, senses, and body have all fallen away and that he is at one with the great passageway (*datong* 大通).

Guo Xiang and Cheng Xuanying both link the experience of sitting in forgetfulness with the natural processes of continuous change because

as much as everything changes, everything is ultimately the same. There are no absolutes. There are no permanent dichotomies. Guo Xiang notes:

Sitting in forgetfulness, what is not forgotten? Outward signs are forgotten. Moreover the signs of a self are forgotten. Internally, there is no awareness of a distinct body. Externally, there is no indication of the existence of heaven and earth. There is just the vastness where the continual process of change, without any obstructions, becomes form. Nothing is different. There are no distinctions or judgments. Being there are no distinctions or judgments, what is good? What is bad? By continually transforming, everything is the same. Only continual transformation is the case. Thus, there are no absolutes. (Guo 1974, 153-54)

Cheng Xuanying comments in a similar vein:

Empty, the mind-heart is unaffected. Therefore, he is able to sit properly and forget. This is the meaning of sitting in forgetfulness. . . The great passageway is the great Dao. All things are able to emerge in the passageway of Dao. Therefore, it is said that Dao is the great passageway. . . Being the same as the great Dao, there is no right and wrong or good and bad. Every thing is dissolved by the process of continual change. There are no absolutes to hold on to, grasp or maintain. (Guo 1974, 153-54)

The actual practice of sitting in forgetfulness is further clarified in the *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論 (A Discourse on Sitting in Forgetfulness) by Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647-735).⁸ In the *Shouxin* 收心 (Taming the Mind) section, the author notes:

When you begin to study the Dao, it is essential to sit peacefully, focus your attention, separate from all boundaries, and not dwell on anything. Because you are not dwelling on anything, you are not affected by a single thing. You will naturally enter into emptiness. The mind/heart merges with Dao.

⁸ For a brief discussion of Sima Chengzhen and his work, see Kohn and Kirkland (2000). A translation and discussion of this text appears in Kohn (1987).

If you completely eliminate the obstructions of the mind/heart and open up to recognize the root of the spirit, this is called cultivating Dao. When you do not repeatedly drift with the waves, are joined with Dao, and are at peace in Dao, it is called 'returning to the root'. Maintaining the root and not being separate, it is called 'the establishment of stillness'. Stillness being established, in the course of time, illness disappears and life is restored. . .

When you dwell on something, the mind/heart is strained. This is not only irrational, it causes the individual to become sick. But if the mind/heart is not affected by anything, then it will not be moved. This is authentic stabilization and the correct foundation.

This passage adds the component of not dwelling on anything to the practice of sitting in forgetfulness. When the mind/heart does not dwell on anything it is not distracted or agitated. It is not affected by anything. This being the case, the mind/heart is still. When the mind/heart is still illness disappears and the individual's well-being increases.

On the other hand, if the individual dwells on things the mind/heart is distracted (repeatedly drifts with the waves) and is agitated (not still). This being the case, the mind/heart is stressed and as a result the individual will get sick. This selection is quite consistent with research in mind/body medicine, psychoneuroimmunology and cognitive therapy regarding stress and stress management.

Sitting in forgetfulness not only disengages the practitioner from absolute, demanding, ethical categories (the outside/inside world of how you must behave), but it also releases the individual from any notion of a distinct and separate world and body (the outside/inside world of where you must behave and interact), gets rid of primal thinking, irrational thoughts, cognitive distortions and discursive knowledge (inner world of how you must think) and, finally, eliminates any sense of a disconnected, absolute, unchanging mind/heart and self (inner world of how you must see your self). It is a total emptying out of restrictions and limitations. As a result of the practice, mind, body, and environment are fully integrated. The practice of sitting in forgetfulness is clearly a potentially useful technique for managing stress, removing illness and increasing health and well-being.

Mind/Heart Fasting

The second experiential technique, that of mind/heart fasting, appears in a discussion between Confucius and Yan Hui in chapter 4 (9/4/26-29). It outlines the process with a focus directed toward unifying the will, listening with *qi*, becoming empty, and eliminating the self.

The text makes it quite clear that having a unified will is of utmost importance for practicing mind/heart fasting. Guo Xiang suggests that a unified will means to “dismiss differences and allow a single focus.” Cheng provides even more depth and notes, “Your mind/heart is without differences, is very still, is empty, forgets and dissolves to be in accord with the single process of transformation” (Guo 1974, 81).

The focus of the practice of mind/heart fasting is listening with the breath (*qi*).⁹ Both the senses and the mind/heart itself are cluttered and restricted by artificiality and, as a result, are subject to dwelling upon/holding on to things. Dwelling upon/holding on to things gives rise to stress. In order to eliminate the stress the individual needs to be empty of the artificiality. This is accomplished by being in accordance with the breath. The breath does not dwell upon anything and as such is empty. By being in accordance with the breath the practitioner will become empty. Being empty the individual is not affected by artificiality and thus not subject to chronic stress. Commenting further on this passage Guo notes:

Exile the senses, get rid of feelings and thinking, and be in accord with the disposition of *qi* itself. Take its emptiness to wait for things. Your mind/heart being empty, the actualized Dao will gather in your bosom. Before practicing mind/heart fasting you will have a body. When mind/heart fasting is properly practiced, you are without a body. (Guo 1974, 81)

⁹ Given the framework of this paper and the focus on application, *qi* should here be interpreted as breath. In addition to meaning breath, it has a much broader and deeper meaning of life force or life energy. For an exploration of the meanings of *qi* see Saso (1995), Cohen (1997), Engelhardt (2000), Kohn (2005), Despeux, (2006), Jackowicz (2006), and Kohn (2006b).

Differences, the senses, feelings and thinking are clearly seen to be problematic. The problematic aspect, of course, must be seen within the context of the artificial realm. The solution to the removal of the problem of the as chronic stress associated with the artificial realm is to be in accordance with the breath.

Cheng, expanding on Guo's commentary, notes how holding on to or dwelling upon knowledge, feelings and boundaries makes the individual subject to their influence. He emphasizes the importance of being in accordance with breath in order to remove restrictions and allow the mind/heart to open up (Guo 1974, 81). When the mind/heart is opened, artificiality has no influence and chronic stress will be eliminated.

The actual application of mind/heart fasting in a social context appears to be suggested when Confucius advises Yan Hui in regard to Yan's potential meeting with the ruler of Wei. His instructions are clearly applicable to eliminating chronic stress. Confucius explains:

If you are able to enter and roam about in his cage and not be affected by his fame, then have a conversation with him. If he is not amenable to what you say, then stop. If you are able to reside in a unified space, without any restrictions, judgments, or distractions, you will be close. (9/4/29-30)

The Authentic Person

Given both the cognitive and experiential teachings that have been found to be potentially applicable to managing and eliminating chronic stress, the next step is to examine an example or model, from the *Zhuangzi*, of an individual who has put these teachings into practice. In other words, how does an individual who is free from chronic stress act cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally, and physically.

The model, from the *Zhuangzi* is that of the authentic person (*zhenren* 真人).¹⁰ The authentic person is described in chapter 6 (15/6/4-9), as an individual who has simplified his or her life. The authentic person has no fear of death, has eliminated concerns about social status, and has

¹⁰ For further discussions of the concept of the *zhenren*, see Coyle 1998; in the context of Chent's commentary, see Yu 2000, 113, 148-51.

removed dichotomous thinking. The authentic person does not add on to life. This being the case, how the authentic person thinks about, feels and behaves regarding existence is consistent with how existence actually behaves. As a result, the authentic person does not interfere with him/her self, does not interfere with others, and is not entangled in the affairs of the world. The authentic person is clearly without any chronic stress. In comparison everybody else is described as, essentially, being chronically stressed.

There is no rigid, absolute, egocentric thinking, feeling or behaving associated with the authentic person. The authentic person does not dream. Guo observes that the authentic person does not dream because "He does not have expectations" (Guo 1974, 124). Cheng notes:

Those who dream have vain hopes and unsatisfied wishes. The authentic person is without emotions and has cut off deliberation. Therefore when he sleeps he is anchored in a quiet place and does not dream. (Guo 1974, 124)

If this is the case for the authentic person, then it would seem to follow that those who dream are egocentric, dissatisfied, bound up in the artificial, value laden, dichotomous realm of distinctions created by human beings, feel threatened, and are controlled by expectations (musts and demands) and self/society imposed restrictions. In other words, they are chronically stressed.

When the authentic person wakes up there is no stress. There is no stress because the authentic person does not feel threatened. Guo commenting upon "awoke without stress" states, "Accepting whatever is encountered, he is at peace." Cheng, once again expanding on Guo's comments, notes, "To the extent that you realize that everything is what it is, you will be without stress" (Guo 1974, 124). Given that other people are obviously dissatisfied and driven by expectations and demands, they quite likely will be unwilling to accept whatever is encountered as simply being what it is. This being so, it follows that they would not be at peace and would be stressed.

When the breathing of the authentic person is compared to the breathing of ordinary people, the issue of stress becomes quite apparent. The authentic person breathes very deeply. Deep, abdominal, diaphrag-

matic breathing is natural and stress free breathing (Fried 1993; Cohen 1997; Kohn 2005; Santee 2007). Ordinary people breathe rapidly and shallowly. Fried associates compromised breathing with stress, noting the similarities between the symptoms of stress and the symptoms of hyperventilation (1993, 306). Of all the symptoms he lists, the most relevant to the description provided by the *Zhuangzi* of how all other people breathe is that of dyspnea. He defines dyspnea as the "inability to catch one's breath, choking sensation, feeling of suffocation, frequent sighing, chest heaving, lump in the throat" (Fried 1993, 310). The similarity between dyspnea and the breathing pattern noted in *Zhuangzi* regarding all other people is quite striking: "All other people breathe from their throats. Being restricted, their words are like a throat retching." Guo, in his commentary to how all other people breathe states, "The breath is not even and free flowing" (Guo 1974, 124). Again, the observation is that breathing is compromised.

The notion that the *Zhuangzi* is describing all other people as being chronically stressed is further supported by his description of their chronic unresolved desires harming their bodies (natural processes). Evidence from research in mind/body medicine, psychoneuroimmunology, and cognitive therapy is clear that chronic worry, rumination, musts, demands, primal thinking, etc. generates stress which, in turn, harms the body.

The descriptions provided in the *Zhuangzi* shows a clear, interdependent and reciprocal relationship between thinking, feeling, and behaving. The evidence from mind/body medicine, psychoneuroimmunology, and cognitive therapy overwhelmingly supports the integral relationship between thinking, feeling and behaving. It is also clear that these processes are all part of a continually changing, natural process called the body. There is no indication in the *Zhuangzi* of an absolutely separate and distinct mind, self or soul. All the evidence comes down on the side of a naturally integrated, reciprocal process called the body.

The *Zhuangzi* focuses on cultivating the body both cognitively and experientially to remove chronic stress generated by artificial limitations and restrictions. Chronic stress not only harms the individual but fragments him/her from the environment. By removing chronic stress, the individual can improve health, increase overall well-being, and become integrated with the surrounding environment.

Conclusion

The teachings of the *Zhuangzi* relative to identifying, addressing and eliminating stress are consistent with a number of findings of mind/body medicine, psychoneuroimmunology and the various approaches of cognitive therapy. There is no separation between mind and body. The human being is an integrated process. Thinking, feeling and behaving are understood as being interrelated and mutually influencing. How you think about things can affect you positively and negatively. *Zhuangzi* clearly presents a number of teachings that have clear potential for assisting individuals in managing stress. For the purpose of this paper they have been divided into two approaches: cognitive and experiential.

For the cognitive approach there are three interrelated areas that are applicable to addressing stress. The first is the contrast between how individuals think about existence and the actual behavior of existence. Individuals tend to think about existence in a very categorical, rigid, dichotomous, abstract, and absolute manner. The focus is often on unchanging differences and separation. This type of thinking generates demands and expectations about how existence should and must behave. When existence does not behave according to the individual's expectations and demands, the individual feels threatened which in turn generates the stress response.

The *Zhuangzi* views this contrast as one between the artificial realm created by people and the natural realm. The solution offered by the *Zhuangzi* to addressing the threats associated with the contrast is, essentially, a cognitive restructuring where the individual focuses upon and thinks about existence in a manner that is consistent with how existence actually behaves. In other words existence is understood as a natural, continually changing, integrated and interrelated process. This type of re-structured thinking eliminates the inconsistency between the artificial and the natural, gets rid of unrealistic demands and expectations, removes chronic stress, and increase the overall health and well-being of the individual.

The second interrelated area for addressing stress is that of dichotomous thinking. The *Zhuangzi* is quite clear that this type of thinking is harmful to the individual. Not only is dichotomous thinking problem-

atic but arguing about which pole of the dichotomy is correct and which pole is incorrect is also harmful to the body. These arguments create threats which are conducive to activating and maintaining the stress response. The solution offered by the *Zhuangzi* is to understand that the poles of the dichotomy are not separate and are, in fact, relative to each other.

The third interrelated area for addressing stress is that of social status. Value judgments, demands, expectations, self-centeredness, discriminations, beliefs in unchanging objects, both tangible and intangible, and the needs/desires to possess these objects are all integral aspects of social status. They all interact to create an artificial realm. The perception of a threat activates the stress response. The solution offered by the *Zhuangzi* to address social status is to understand its artificiality and restrictiveness, its foundation in dichotomous thinking, the relativity of its components, the fact that there are no absolute unchanging objects which can be held on to, and the harm it causes. In addition to re-structuring your thinking in this manner, the *Zhuangzi* also introduces the practice of making your mind like a mirror: empty, reflective and not holding on to anything. By changing how you understand and think about social status and putting into practice the technique of making your mind like a mirror, the individual will become empty of another source of stress.

The experiential approach consists of two basic, interrelated practices: sitting in forgetfulness and mind/heart fasting. Both practices require individuals to center, concentrate their attention, unify their will and still their mind/heart. When the mind/heart is stilled it will become empty. Being empty the individual is not affected by the artificial realm. This being the case there is no chronic stress.

While the cognitive approach allows the individual to understand existence as a natural, continually changing, integrated, interrelated process, the experiential approach allows the individual to experience existence as a natural, continually changing, integrated, interrelated process. Both of these approaches from the *Zhuangzi* are conducive to simplifying one's life, eliminating stress, improving health and increasing overall well-being. Both approaches are clearly applicable and contribute to the need for a variety of teachings and techniques for addressing and eliminating stress in today's environment.

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Establishing the Altar

The Realized Writ of the Announcement Rite in the Grand *Jiao*¹

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Abstract

An analysis of the structure, content, and function of the *Zhenwen* in the Announcement (*suqi*) ritual shows that its purpose is to enact a feudal-like “contract” with the cosmic powers, spiritual officials, and the Holy-Emperors of the five directions. The ritual provides an opportunity for the priest’s mystical union with the Dao. The *Zhenwen* offers a strong sense of security to the community that sponsors a Festival of Renewal (*jiao*) in which the five *Zhenwen* are implanted in the universe. Because the *Zhenwen* contacts and “contracts” the sovereign deities of the five directions and their various subordinates, such as the controllers of the charts and registers, this ensures that the proper functioning of the universe continues, and it prevents natural disaster or untimely death. Thus, the *Zhenwen* fulfills an important role in religious Daoism in that it spiritualizes both the Daoist priest in mystical union and the religious community in securing harmony. The *Lingbao zhenwen* plays a pivotal function in the liturgy.

¹ I owe a special “thank you” to Livia Kohn, the journal’s anonymous referee, and to Professor Sung-hae Kim at Sogang University, Seoul, Korea, for their helpful suggestions to improve the manuscript.

Before the winter solstice, a Daoist priest (*daoshi* 道士) should perform the rituals of cosmic renewal (*jiao* 醮) by petitioning the Five Holy-Emperor Deities or Thearchs (Wudi 五帝) of the *Zhenwen chishu* 真文赤書 (Realized Writ Inscribed in Red). It is commonly understood that the primordial "red inscription" (*chishu* 赤書) refers to the five sections of the *Zhenwen*. The *Zhenwen* is arranged according to the system of the Five Holy-Emperor Deities, guided by yin-yang and the five phases. It moves with the pivot of the Nine Heavens, and is transmitted via the brilliant light of the five planets (Li 1977, 581a).

The *Lingbao zhenwen chishu* 靈寶真文赤書 (The Realized Writ of Numinous Treasure Inscribed in Red) simply referred to as the *Zhenwen* 真文 (Realized Writ) is a classical text of Daoist liturgy. It acts as a talisman with cosmic proportions due to its cosmos renewing functions in the *suqi* 宿啓 (Announcement) ritual which is performed at the Daoist Grand *Jiao* or rite of cosmic renewal.² I identify which texts in the *Daozang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon) contain the *Zhenwen*. The *Zhenwen* is extremely important in the liturgical Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) school, because of the pivotal role it performs in one of the oldest rituals of Daoist liturgy, the Announcement rite. The structure and content of the *Zhenwen* require analysis. To explicate the significance of the *Zhenwen*, I offer an interpretation and a translation.³

² I have observed two *jiao* festivals: one in Honolulu, December 1979; the other in Jaiyi, Taiwan, December 1983. The ritual is described in Saso 1972, 42, 75-77, 82-83, 94; Saso 1978a, 22, 200-5, 279n29, 289n29; Schipper 1968, 31-32. See also Lagerwey 1987.

³ The four liturgical sources of the *Zhenwen* are: *Jinlu jiqi tanyi*, HY 266, 8b-9a; *Suqi*, HY 264, 1a-2a; *Wushang biyao*, HY 770, 24.8b, 9b, 11a, 12b, 13b-14a; and the *Jinlu jie tanyi*, HY 266, p. 1b-2a. Note the brevity of the text. The apocryphal texts state that the *Zhenwen* verse consists of 174 characters and with the binome directional sector heading before each verse, the *Zhenwen* consists of 184 characters total (Saso 1978, 22, 272 n29, 272 n30).

The Text

There is a need to identify the precise text because of the fact that there are various other texts in the Daoist canon that carry the name *Zhenwen* in their lengthy titles. These texts do not contain the five pieces of poetic liturgy used in the Announcement ritual. Appendix I provides a translation of the *Zhenwen*. Appendix II contains a copy of the *Zhenwen* taken from the *Jinlu jietan yi* 金錄接談儀 (Observances at the Altar of the Golden Register HY 266, 1b-2a).⁴ With minor character variants the *Zhenwen* appears, at least, seven times in the Daoist canon: four times in ritual liturgy,⁵ and three times in other literary genre of the *Daozang*.

When the liturgical texts refer to the *Lingbao zhenwen*, it is simply called the *Zhenwen*, or each of the five *Zhenwen* are referred to individually as the Realized Writ of the respective directional sector, e.g., *Dongfang zhenwen* 東方真文 (Realized Writ of the Eastern Sector). This is true of the ritual texts currently in use by Daoist priests in Taiwan.⁶

Similar copies of the *Zhenwen*, with minor character variants, occur outside the ritual texts. In those sections of the canon, the *Zhenwen* is associated with or directly referred to as an inscribed in red text. Generally speaking, there are other “red texts.” In the *Lingbao* tradition, “red texts”

⁴ Numbers for texts in the *Daozang* are based on the *Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series* (Weng 1935).

⁵ The other three occurrences of the *Zhenwen* in the canon are: the *Yuanshi chishu jing*, HY 26, 1. 7b-8a, 11b-12a, 16b-17a, 21b-22a, 26ab; the *Taishang chishu jing*, HY 178, 1.7b-14b; and the *Taishang zhongjian wen*, attributed to Lu Xiuqing, HY 191, 7a-11b. Note that the versions of the *Zhenwen* in HY 26 and 191 are written in a highly stylized pseudo-Sanskrit print. The HY 191 edition deciphers these esoteric characters. For a discussion of the significance of similar pseudo-Sanskrit characters see Bokenkamp 1997, 381, 387, 398n25, 398n27, 399n 30, 422. An analysis of the character variants found in the different editions must be left to a later study. Here I point out that the variants appear to be due to different writing styles or the homophonic nature of the Chinese language. For example, the greatest number of variants occur in the *Zhenwen* for the center apparently due to the confusion of “yellow” (*huang*) and “august/majestic” (*huang*).

⁶ These texts are still in use today. They are found in Saso 1976, 5:1355-61, and in Saso's personal copy of the edition found in the British Museum. See also Dean 2000, 659-82; Miller 2003, 50-52.

refer to the earliest written characters or text to emanate out of the primordial *Dao*. Although the *chishu* is probably an early register of spirits (*lu* 籙), nevertheless, the names *Chishu* 赤書 (Inscribed in Red / Red Book) and *Chiwen* (赤文 Red Writ) are now synonymous with the *Zhenwen* proper (Saso 1978a, 203, 287n35, 287n36). After examining the copies of the *Zhenwen* in the Daoist canon, it is apparent that the *Zhenwen* is a section of a Daoist book with *chishu* as part of its title.⁷

The *Zhenwen*, as a whole, is referred to as the *Wufang zhenwen chishu dazi* 五方真文赤書大字 (Magnificent Characters of the Realized Writ of the Five Sectors Inscribed in Red). As a section of the books titled *chishu*, the individual sections of the *Zhenwen* are subtitled by the directional sector, number of *qi* 氣 (vital-forces / breaths, cosmic and personal), and the color-title of the respective heaven, e.g., the *Zhenwen* begins *Dongfang jiuqi qingtian zhenwen chishu yujue* 東方九氣清天 真文赤書玉訣.⁸

Zhenwen is the most common name for these five poems, unless they are referred to specifically as the Realized Writ of one of the five directions. It is necessary to precisely identify the particular piece of liturgical literature under analysis so as not to confuse this set of five poems with another text of similar title, such as the *Zhenwen shangjing* 真文上經 (e.g., HY 167, in one chapter).⁹ I now turn to discuss the significance of the *Zhenwen* for liturgical Daoism.

Until textual historians provide an exact date for the *Zhenwen*, our understanding of it remains incomplete. The *Zhenwen* does occur in the *Zhongjian wen* (HY 191) which is attributed to Lu Xiuqing 陸修靜 (d. 479), but that book is probably of a later date. A collection of early texts, the *Wushang biyao* 无上秘要 copy of the *Zhenwen* is most accurately dated to the late sixth century (ca. 561). Given the conservative assumption of a

⁷ The term *Chishu* occurs in the HY 26 and 178 titles of the texts which contain the *Zhenwen*, see note 4; the *Wushang biyao* cites the *Dongxuan chishu jing* as its source for the text of the *Zhenwen*; and the HY 191 version of the *Zhenwen* refers to the *Zhenwen* as the *Chishu* in a subtitle, *Taishang zhongjianwen*, HY 191, p. 7a. The Dunhuang (Tun-huang) manuscripts need to be examined for the *Zhenwen*, which may assist in dating the text.

⁸ See *Taishang zhongjian wen*, HY 191, 7a; and *Chishu jing*, HY 178, 1.8a.

⁹ Weng 1935, 87, 53; cf. HY 16, 51-53, 167, 120, 618, 881-883, 878, 1031, 1009, and 1052. These "realized" texts do not contain the five poems.

three century pre-existence of the *Zhenwen* within the esoteric oral (*kou-jue* 口訣) transmission of liturgical material such as these five poems before their exoteric publication in the *Chishu jing*, that is, the source cited by the *Wushang biyao*, then this piece of Lingbao liturgy was probably composed by the end of the third century.¹⁰

The Announcement ritual is one of the oldest Daoist rites and the *Zhenwen* is the core of that ritual.¹¹ It is important to keep in mind that although the *Zhenwen* functions “like” a talisman, nevertheless, the five poems which comprise the *Zhenwen* ought not to be confused with the five talismans that are burned before each poem is read.¹² The historical background and foundation for the five part compass-mandala system employed in the *Zhenwen* is derived from the *Yueling* 月令 (Monthly Commands) chapters in the *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Spring and Autumn of Mr. Lü; ca. 240 B.C.E.), the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Book of the Master of Huainan), the *Guanzi* 官子 (Book of Master Guan), the *Liji* 禮記 (Book of

¹⁰ Saso 1978a 36; historical research still has not exactly set the date of the *Zhenwen*, see note six. Strickmann disputes Saso’s dating of the Lingbao liturgy, putting it seventy-five years later. See Strickman 1980, 215-216. As I proposed previously, the question here does not concern the Lingbao liturgy as a whole but rather the precise dating of the *Zhenwen* as the core of an important ritual in that liturgy. See Sellmann 1983. Ding Peiren and co-authors contest my proposal. They speculate that the core text existed a century earlier. See, Yu 2000, 337.

¹¹ Saso 1972,75; Schipper 1968, 31-32.

¹² It is easy to confuse the five *Zhenwen* with these five talismans because of the talisman-like function of the *Zhenwen* and because the five talismans are used in connection with the *Zhenwen* in the *Suqi* rite. It is also unclear exactly what K. Schipper meant when, in discussing the *Zhenwen*, he claimed, “I hope to be able to prove one day that this text is in reality that of the *Ling-pao wu-fu* the Five Tal-lies (*sic.*) of the Divine Treasure, which are one of the oldest and most fundamental elements of religious Taoism.” Schipper 1968, 32, 32n105. The five talismans (*wufu* 五符) referred to here are not the *Taishang Lingbao wufu* 太上靈寶五符, HY 167, which is an early pharmacology; rather, they are five specific Daoist talismans. These five talismans can be found in the *Yuanshi chishu jing*, HY 26. A few pages after each *Zhenwen* is presented in the esoteric script, the talisman is given; see 10b, 15b, 20b, 25a, and 29a. For a discussion of the *Lingbao wufu* see, Robinet 1997, 80-81. After discussing the differences between the *Zhenwen* and the *Wufu*, Ding Peiren, et. al conclude that “... the early text of the *Book of the Five Perfected Writs* is the same as the *Five Talismans*.” See Yu 2000, 340.

Rites) and other Han dynasty traditions, yet there is no definitive date given to the *Zhenwen* at present.¹³ The development of the *Zhenwen* is related to the famous *Hetu* 河圖 (River Chart),¹⁴ and the text has historical significance for liturgical Daoism.

The *Zhenwen* in the Announcement

Scholars agree that the Announcement is one of the oldest Daoist rites, and the *Zhenwen* forms the core of that ritual. For those unfamiliar with the rite, a brief description of the role of the *Zhenwen* in the Announcement follows. For more details see the works cited in note two.

The ritual is conducted by a priest of high merit (*gaogong fashi* 高功法師) and four altar assistants.¹⁵ Ideally it is performed at a Renewal Festival – a series of rituals enacted over a three to five day period. Because the Announcement marks the end of the first stage in a series of rituals, it demarcates a crucial turning point in the festival. The Announcement completes the purification and establishment of the sacred area or altar (*tan* 壇). At the same time, the establishment of the *Zhenwen* secures the head priest's spiritual purification and transformation via contact with the Five Holy-Emperor Deities or Thearchs, and ultimately mystical union with the magnificent Dao.

The chief purpose of the Announcement rite is to implant or install the *Zhenwen*. Each of the five writs is written on wooden slips or paper; then, they are pressed into five respective "bushels" or containers of rice. Symbolically they are implanted into the universe. Thus the five *Zhenwen* establish an altar—a sacred mandala-type construction within which the

¹³ See the *Lüshih chungqiu*, the *Huainanzi*, the *Guanzi*, and the *Liji*. The system of correlations in the *Guanzi* differs the most from the other three.

¹⁴ Saso 1978b, 399-416; 1971, 12; 1972, 83; 1978a, 22. He contends that the Announcement ritual in general and the *Zhenwen* in particular "... make use of formulae found in the *Yueling* chapters of the *Book of Rites*..." (1978a, 35-36).

¹⁵ The altar assistants are usually Daoist priests or the head priest's disciples or sons aspiring to become priests. However, the laity may serve as assistants when necessary. In fact, women may also assist provided they are ritually pure, i.e., not menstruating. All attendants, priests and laity alike, must practice month long fasting and meditations before the rituals begin.

head priest is “in the court of the Dao,” and is thereby able to achieve mystical union with the Dao. In a number of ways, the implanting of the *Zhenwen* synthesizes bipolar opposites, e.g., winter and summer, yin and yang, disaster and benefit, universal and particular, individual and society. For example, the Announcement is primarily used at a festival in the dead of winter (*yin* 陰) to symbolically rekindle the life or generative powers (*yang* 陽) of the earth and spring’s rebirth.

On the cosmic level, the *Zhenwen* is symbolically implanted within the cosmos to rejuvenate the primordial vital-forces (*yuanqi* 元氣) and the life-producing power of the five phases (*wuxing* 五行).¹⁶ The alleged rejuvenating and life-giving powers were considered important in a mostly closed agrarian society. On the microcosmic level, within the body of the Daoist priest, the *Zhenwen* is symbolically implanted into the five main organs for internal meditative alchemical (*neidan* 內丹) refinement of the forces in the body, e.g., yin-yang, five phases, essence (*jing* 精), *qi*, and spirit (*shen* 神). Installing the *Zhenwen* in the body is undertaken for the purpose of attaining physical immortality (Saso 1974, 1-20; Schipper 1978, 355-87; 1993). Through the power of the ritual, the *Zhenwen* balances the tension between individual and society. It harmonizes the particular individual with the natural forces--sealing off the sacred area, allowing the priest to achieve union with the *Dao*. In rekindling the cosmic life forces, it benefits the community sponsoring the *Jiao* festival.¹⁷

The religious significance and cosmic attributes of the *Zhenwen* are discussed in the following commentary which precedes the *Zhenwen* in the *Jinlu jiqi tanyi*. The following passage supports the argument that the *Zhenwen* is a type of *Hetu*, a spiritual formula or talisman, because many of its uses are for controlling natural disaster.

First, the poems [of the *Zhenwen*] are used for controlling the stars, constellations, and natural calamities. The second use is

¹⁶ For a discussion of the origin and function of the *wuxing* see Rubin 1982, 131-159. Regrettably however, he does not discuss the Daoist liturgical use and understanding of these concepts.

¹⁷ The above description of the role of the *Zhenwen* in the Announcement is taken from Schipper 1968, 31-32; Saso 1978a, 200-2, 214-16, and my personal observations of the *Jiao* performed in Honolulu in December, 1979.

to control wandering souls, spirits, sickness, and epidemics. The third is for the control of floods and excessive rain. Fourth, the poems taken as a whole are the Jade Esoteric Central Doctrine. If the time of purification is over, then in reading the Realized Writ you should not use all of it. If you employ all of it, you will destroy the sacred area. If you treat it with respect, then all of the spirit-officials will comply with your reading of the incantation. (*Jinlu jiqi tanyi*, 8b)

The above passage does not convey all of the "powers" attributed to the *Zhenwen*; it provides enough information to see that these five poems are believed to have an effect on the whole cosmos. The *Zhenwen* functions like a talisman in that its spiritual power is connected with the constellations and stars, and it is used to fend off evil and suffering. The pre-Qin and early Han dynasty calendar rituals exorcized pestilence and demons in the winter months, and the Announcement rite continues that ancient tradition.

Structure and Content of the *Zhenwen*

The structure of the *Zhenwen* is determined by two factors: the Chinese five part organization of the cosmos; and its talisman-like application in the Announcement ritual. The Chinese system of organization, and hence its mandalas are based on a system of five via the five phases. Generally speaking because most mandalas are based on a system of four, Carl Jung would call the Chinese mandala a "disturbed" mandala because it is based on an "odd" number (Campbell 1978, 435, 435n181). The Chinese compass is also based on five points, that is, the four directions plus the center. This quintet compass and mandala system determined the five part structure of the *Lingbao zhenwen*.

The second factor in determining the structure of the Realized Writ is its talisman-like use in the Announcement rite. The characters of the *Zhenwen* are supposed to be inscribed on wood or paper, and pressed into five containers of rice to symbolize their implantation in the universe, binding a feudal-like contract with the heavens. If these materials are not available, the characters may be written in the air, and symbolically installed.

Similar to other elegant liturgy, the *Zhenwen* is written in a poetic style. The religious significance of the poems cannot be ignored. The poetic allusions are compact and confined to religious subjects due to the fact that the *Zhenwen* is used as a talisman. Thus the poems are relatively simple, ensuring an easy flow for the writing and implanting of the *Zhenwen*, and the performance of the ritual. This accounts for the brevity of the Realized Writ. The structure of the *Zhenwen* is derived from the Chinese five-point compass arrangement (see note 14), and it functions like a religious talisman in the Announcement.

An analysis of the content of the *Zhenwen* is in order. To analyze the origin, meaning and significance of all the terms, titles and deities mentioned in the *Zhenwen* would require a detailed study of *Weishu* 緯書 (Apocrypha) and Six Dynasties 420-589) literature which is beyond the present scope.

The content of the *Zhenwen* is not only influenced by the Lingbao scriptures and replete with references to its deities, but also its content is shaped by the astronomy, astrology, and numerology of Daoism which is based on the Yin-yang cosmology of the late Zhou and early Han dynasties. For example, Yin-yang influence is seen in the reference to Superior Yang (*taiyang* 太陽; south; line eight). The reference to the constellation which serves as the throne of the Five Deities, the Great Tenuity (Taiwei 太微; north; line four) reveals an astronomical and astrological concern. The name Eight Powers (Bawei 八威; north; line six) is an allusion to the eight trigrams (*bagua* 八卦) of the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes), exhibiting an influence from numerology and *Yijing* divination.

The reference to Taihua 太華 (Mount Hua; west; line four), the sacred peak of the West, exhibits an implicit relationship between the *Zhenwen* and the *Wuyue zhenxing tu* 五岳真形圖 (Chart of the True Shape of the Five Sacred Peaks).¹⁸ The "lung breath" (*feiqi* 肺氣; west; line nine)

¹⁸ Although the *Zhenwen* is related to the Chart of the Sacred Peaks, they are distinct. Saso disputes Schipper on this point (1971, 18n29). It is also interesting to note that when Robert Cheng, at the East Asian Languages Department of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, was transliterating a tape recording of Master Zhuang's Taiwanese pronunciation of the *Zhenwen* section of the rite, instead of Tai Hua (*Thài-Hoû*), he heard *Tai-ye* (*Thài-iâ*), i.e., great grandfather or great an-

is an allusion to an internal, meditative, alchemical process. Internal alchemy (*neidan* 内丹) is not only performed by the high priest during the implanting of the *Zhenwen*, but it is also an aspect of the Realized Writ itself. Another alchemical concept is the seven gates (*qimen* 七門; west; line three), energy centers in the Daoist's body which the high priest concentrates on in deep meditation—similar to the seven *chakras* of *kundalini*, a Hindu method of yoga meditation. However, these Daoist "gates" are located in different bodily positions from the *chakras* just as Daoist mystical union is markedly different from Hindu, Brahmanic mysticism. For example, only the gates in the heart and throat correlate with *chakra* centers. Daoist mystics unite with the natural forces of this universe, whereas Hindus seek a transcendent realm beyond this world.

The spiritual power of the *Zhenwen* is expressed in the opening lines of each of the five poems, for it is in the opening lines that the specific heaven or sovereign deity of the respective direction is called upon for assistance. Religiously, the significance of making contact with the deity or its heaven, represented by each of the five directions, is equivalent to renewing a feudal-like contract with that deity or heavenly emperor. Thereby, the priest ensures that the deity will properly control and regulate those forces of nature under its jurisdiction. The opening lines of the five *Zhenwen* refer to the following respective heavens:

The Indigo Firmament as the First August One (East, 2);
 The Cinnabar Firmament in the Southern sector;
 The Pearly-white Firmament in the Western sector;
 The Ebony Firmament in the Northern sector;
 Above the Yellow (Firmament) is the origin of (all) the Firmaments (Center, 2).

It is interesting to note that the parallel pattern is broken in the first and last poems, and that for the center direction the name of the heaven is not stated explicitly as it is in the other four *Zhenwen*. I propose that this exclusion is an allusion to the fact that it is at the center where the Daoist priest is to enter the Yellow Court of the Dao. Note that the opening line

cestor. This is an interesting variant reading in that Tai Hua is the sacred peak of the west and the seat of the lord of death and the realm of deceased ancestors.

of the Realized Writ of the center relates that: "The center controls spiritual affairs." The real power of the *Zhenwen* is not only rooted in its ability to contact the deities in control of the five directions and five forces of nature, but also its power is further strengthened by securing the Daoist priest's mystical union with the *Dao*.

The religious power of the *Zhenwen* is enhanced by the listing of lesser gods, spirits, and immortals who serve the Five Holy-Emperor Deities. About twenty-five percent or 44 of the *Zhenwen*'s 184 characters are used to refer to various spirits or spiritual powers and processes. These references amount to a little more than one-fourth of the Realized Writ. These secondary spirits cover a wide range of figures. For example, the references to Bixia Yuanjun 碧下元君 (daughter of the Lord of the Eastern Peak) and Yu Lü 郁 CHAR (one of the two famous Door Gods of China; east; line three) show that the popular gods of the common people are given recognition. The references to Shuanghuang 雙皇 and Taiwei 太微 (north; line four) demonstrate an esoteric concern for the spirits. The following is an analysis of the various spirits and spiritual processes such as immortality (*xian* 仙) or sublimation (*zhen* 真) found in the Realized Writ:

East: Bi Xia and Yu Lü (line 3); senior person (*laoren* 老人) (line 4); immortals (*xian* 仙) (line 6).

South: Magnificent Spirit (*dashen* 大神) (line 3); spiritualized immortals (*shenxian* 神仙) (line 7); Superior Yang (*taiyang* 太陽) (line 8).

West: white-spiritualized essence of metal (*jinling* 金靈) (line 3); mount Tai Hua (line 4); August Senior Magnificent Spirit (*huanglao dashen* 皇老大神) (line 8); in charge of instructing in the Nine Firmaments (*jujiao jiutian* 局教九天) (line 10); immortals (*xian*) (line 12).

North: Shuang Huang 雙皇 and Taiwei 太微 (line 4); immortals (*xian* 仙) and the Eight Powers (*bawei* 八威) (line 6); Shangdi (line 9).

Center: the Yellow (Firmament) (*huang* 黃) (line 2); Five Seniors (*wulao* 五老) (line 3); sublime or genuine essence (*zhenjing* 真精) (line 5); all immortals (*qunxian* 群仙) (line 6); myriad spirits (*wanshen* 萬神) (line 10). In a sense the *Zhenwen*'s functions are comparable to a *lu* or register of spirits. The *Zhenwen*'s talisman-like operation in the Announcement ritual is made efficacious by these various spirits who function within the boundaries of the five directional sectors.

The capacities of the *Zhenwen* are further expressed in references to the spirits who control the charts, registers, talismans and *ming* 命, "mandated" death or disaster. Each of the *Zhenwen* contains, at least, one reference to one of these concepts. The breakdown is as follows:

East: charts and registers (*tulu* 屠錄) (line 5);
 South: receive his orders (*shouming* 受命) (line 7);
 West: charts and registers (line 11);
 North: tallies and orders (*fuming* 符命) (line 5);
 Center: keeps and copies the mysterious charts (*dianlu xuantu* 典錄玄圖) (line 7).

The *Zhenwen* thus allows the Daoist priest to contact those divine spirits who manage the charts which control the cosmic forces, e.g., the *Hetu* 河圖, the *Loshu*, the *lu* 錄 or register of spirits, and the *ming* 命 or "mandated life course" of living creatures.

The ability of the *Zhenwen* to renew life can be seen in the references to the concept *qi*. *Qi* is the life-force or power of life which "vitalizes" the cosmos and all living creatures. *Qi* is one of the bodily forces which the priest must refine through inner alchemy. Given the cosmic significance of the *Zhenwen*, the references to *qi* not only imply inner alchemical practices, but they also imply a "cosmic alchemy" in which the elixir or boon is world harmony. The references to the occurrences of *qi* in the *Zhenwen* are as follows:

East: nine vital-forces (*jiuqi* 九氣) (line 1); controlling the vital-forces (*sheqi* 攝氣) (line 6);
 South: three vital-forces (*sanqi* 三氣) (line 6);
 West: seven vital-forces (*qiqi* 七氣) (line 6); and lung breath (*feiqi* 肺氣) (line 9);
 North: five vital-forces (*wuqi* 五氣) (line 2);
 Center: the vital-forces (*qi* 氣) (line 5); superior vital-forces (*taiqi* 太氣 or *shangqi* 上氣) (line 9).

It is interesting to note that the numbers which accompany the references to *qi* reveal that the numerical system assigned to the *Zhenwen* is unique. Although there is no explicit number given in the poem for the center, the characters *she* 攝 (unity) and *shang* 上 (foremost) imply the

number “one” which is the *Zhenwen*’s number for the center. This numerical system is of crucial importance to understand the *Zhenwen*.¹⁹ Thus, the *Zhenwen* explicitly states a concern for the mastery of the life forces of the universe.

The analysis of the structure, content, and function of the *Zhenwen* in the Announcement ritual shows that its basic significance is to enact or reenact a feudal-like “contract” with the powers and Divine or Holy-Emperors of the five directions. The ritual provides an opportunity for the priest’s mystical union with the *Dao*. The *Zhenwen* offers a strong sense of security to the community which sponsors a Jiao in which the five *Zhenwen* are implanted in the universe. Because the *Zhenwen* contacts and “contracts” the sovereign deities of the five directions and their various subordinates, such as the controllers of the charts and registers, this ensures that the proper functioning of the universe continues, and it prevents natural disaster or untimely death. Thus, the *Zhenwen* fulfills an important role in religious Daoism in that it spiritualizes both the Daoist priest in mystical union and the religious community in securing harmony. The *Lingbao zhenwen* can be said to play a pivotal function in the liturgy.

¹⁹ Saso 1978a, 215-218 and 292n77. The numerals assigned to the respective directions are as follows: the East is assigned the number nine; the South is given three, the West is seven, the North is five, and the Center is one.

Translation

The Eastern Sector

The Nine *qi* in the Eastern sector

[Generate] the Indigo Firmament as the First August One.

Bi Xia [Yuanjun, his daughter] and Yu Lü [the Door God] are there.²⁰

In it there is a senior person,

Generally collating the charts and registers,

Controlling the *qi* and is in charge of the immortals.

The Southern Sector

The Cinnabar Firmament in the Southern sector,

With the Jade Court of the Vermilion Holy-Emperor,

In it there is the Magnificent Spirit.

His title is designated "The Vermilion August One;"

Ascending fire and diffusing smoke,

Suddenly the three *qi* illuminate.

The spiritualized immortals receive his mandate.

He corresponds to and meets with the Superior Yang.²¹

The Western Sector

Pearly-white Firmament in the Western sector,

The White Holy-Emperor's seven Gate [Palace],

Brightly illuminated with the white-spiritualized essence of metal,

The *qi* circulate on [Mount] Tai Hua;

White stones towering lofty,

The Seven *qi* are like shimmering mist.

Above it there is the first generated one;

He is the August Senior Magnificent Spirit,

Managing and controlling the lung *qi*;

He is in charge of instructing in the Nine Heavens;

²⁰ Bixia yuanjun (Goddess of the Morning Clouds) is the daughter of the Lord of the Eastern Peak (Taishan); she is a fertility goddess and matron of child birth. Yu Lü is one of the ancient door gods; with his brother Shen Shu or Shu Yü, he guards the north-eastern Demon Gate (*guimen* 鬼門) to prevent calamities.

²¹ Superior Yang (*taiyang* 太陽) or the sun is the manifestation of the cosmic force associated with life, heat, solidity, maleness, and other contrasts to yin.

Compiling the charts and registers,
By edict he summons the superior immortals.

The Northern Sector

Ebony Firmament in the Northern sector,
Five *qi* linger there;
In it there is the Ebony Holy-Emperor.
Shuanghuang and Taiwei [are there].²²
Generally controlling the tallies and mandates;
Immortals and practitioners obey the Eight Powers.²³
[She wears] a blue-black skirt and feather shawl
With dragon patterns and phoenix [style] clothes.
[She is] directly appointed by Shangdi [the Highest Deity];
His edict arrives at [her] Jade Steps.

The Center

The center controls spiritual affairs.
Above the Yellow [Firmament] is the origin of [all] the Firmaments;
Among the first generated Five Seniors, The Yellow one in the middle is
exalted and venerated;
He is in charge of the *qi*, supervises the genuine-essence
Generally he commands all immortals,
Keeps and copies [registers] the mysterious charts,²⁴
The ancient bamboo texts and the jade writes;
Urging and operating the superior *qi*,²⁵
Generally he instructs the myriad spirits.

²² Shuanghuang, August Twins, might be a reference to the god of the kidneys (Shuang Yi), or a constellation. Taiwei is the Taiwei Yuan, the first of the three great constellations (*sanyuan*); it is south of the Big Dipper and north of the Zhen and Yi constellations. It has ten stars, and its pivot star is the throne of the Five Holy-Emperors.

²³ The Eight Powers (*bawei* 八威) is a name for the spirits of the eight trigrams housed in the Daoist's body; it occurs in inner alchemy meditation.

²⁴ The line *dianlu xuantu* 典錄玄圖, could also be translated as "keeps the registers and the mysterious charts." However, given the parallel structure, the character "lu" appears to be a verb rather than a noun.

²⁵ HY 266 has a textual variation: *shangqi* instead of *taiqi*.

A photocopy of the Zhenwen from the *Jinlujietyanyi*, Daozang 266, pp. 1b-2a.

東方

東方九炁 始皇青天 碧霞鬱壘 中有老人
總校圖錄 攝炁舉仙

南方

南方丹天 赤帝玉堂 中有大神 號曰赤皇
上炎流煙 三炁勃光 神仙受命 應會太陽
禮五

西方

西方素天 白帝七門 金靈皓映 大華流氛
白石栽栽 七炁綢繆 上有始生 皇老大神
總領肺炁 主校九天 檢定圖錄 制召上仙

北方

北方玄天 五炁徘徊 中有黑帝 雙皇太微
總領符命 仙鍊八威 青裙羽襪 龍文鳳衣
上帝所舉 制到玉階

中央

中央總靈 黃上天元 始生五老 中黃高尊
攝炁監真 總領羣仙 典錄玄圖 宿簡玉文
催運上炁 普害萬神

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Forum

on

Contemporary

Practice

Profile of a Quanzhen Doctor

Abbot Huang Zongsheng of Wuhan's Monastery of Eternal Spring

XUN LIU 劉迅¹

The following is a preliminary biographic sketch of Abbot Huang Zongsheng 黃宗勝 based on three interviews I conducted with him at his apartment in Wuhan's Monastery of Eternal Spring (Changchun guan 長春觀) on July 8, July 18, and November 20, 2007.² Throughout all three,

¹ I thank the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation for "Temples and Taoists" grant which supports my fieldwork in Wuhan. Dr. Mei Li 梅莉 of Huazhong Normal University, Mr. Wang Ping 王平 of Hubei Daoist Association, and Vincent Goossaert 高萬桑 of CNRS/EPHE not only actively participated in the first interview, but have also made useful comments which helped improve this biographical sketch. I am thankful to abbess Wu Chengzhen 吳誠真 of Changchun Monastery for her help with the interviews. I would also like to thank Dr. Fang Ling 方玲 of CNRS, and Livia Kohn for their suggestions and editorial help. Most of all, I owe my deepest gratitude to abbot Huang Zongsheng who has graciously granted me the interviews which allow us all to enter his world.

² The history of the Quanzhen monastery can be traced back to the Northern Song era. It was occupied by Quanzhen clerics during the Yuan, when it also acquired its present name. Most of its surviving structures were built after the anti-Taiping war in 1864, and again in 1925. See the essays by Li Zan 李簪, Li Yinchang 李印昌, and Gong Genglu 龔耕盧 in Li Li'an 李理安, *Changchun guan zhi* 長春觀志 4:51ab, 46b-47b; reprinted in Gao Xiaojian, ed., *Zhongguo daoguan zhi congtan* 中國道觀志叢刊 8 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2000).

Huang continued to see patients as they arrived at his apartment which doubles as his clinic. I was thus able to also observe Huang at work as a clinician. I took short-hand and long-hand notes through both interviews. The biographic sketch is based primarily on these notes and my later recollection of the interviews.

This biographical sketch and several others in preparation form part of a larger project on the social and cultural history of Complete Perfection (Quanzhen 全真) monasteries and clerics in modern China. I hope to achieve several goals by recording the lives and careers of Quanzhen monastic practitioners and healers such as Huang: first, to develop a sense of both the structure and texture of the social, economic, and personal dimensions of the Daoist institutional and individual life in modern times; and second, to obtain a picture of how Daoist medical practitioners were trained, how they practiced their craft, and how their practice related to their community, their monastic life, and to the economy; and lastly to figure out how Daoist doctors and healers approached illness, health, and healing, how they differed and/or were similar to one another, and how they compared to other traditional and modern practitioners of medicine. Related questions also address how they conceived of and represented illness and healing, and how they perceived themselves, their craft, and their relationship to earlier Daoist and medical traditions, and to modern science.

Early Life in Poverty

Huang Zongsheng was born in 1914 as Huang Qingquan 黄清泉; he is currently 94 years old. He grew up in a poor family of five in Qingshan 青山, east of Wuchang 武昌. He became a rickshaw driver in Wuchang at the young age of 18 in order to support himself and his family.

Huang became a renunciant (*chujia* 出家) under extreme circumstances of family loss and poverty at a time of national crisis when Wuhan had fallen to the Japanese. He recalls that after Wuhan fell, like many other residents who could not leave for the safety of other parts of China, he was rounded up by Japanese troops and transported to a refugee camp near White Sands Island (Baishazhou 白沙洲), an area east of

his hometown. There he lived for over two years and was forced to work as a collie for the Japanese authorities.

Huang recalls that every day he and other refugees would report to the Japanese authorities headquartered at the old Governor General's Mansion near the Military Review Plaza (Yuema chang 閱馬場) and be assigned various duties of hard labor. Sometimes he would work as a dock hand, helping to unload cargo from large transport ships docked at Wuchang and Qingshan. The pay was only 50 cents a day. He and his fellow coolies were initially given a military ration of the compressed biscuits. After eating the biscuits and drinking water, many of the Chinese coolies suffered from gauged stomachs. Protesting against this, they succeeded in getting the Japanese authorities to feed them regular rice.

In 1939, Huang moved from the labor camp to Hubu Street (戶部街) in downtown Wuchang. Reunited with his native family, he resumed rickshaw pulling to make a living. Due to the high rent (about 10 Yuan per day?) charged by the rickshaw company and the low fare paid by the Japanese clients, Huang could barely make ends meet. Two years later, he lost his parents and several siblings to poverty and illness. Completely alone and with no support, he had trouble supporting himself and could not even find a place to sleep. His neighbors suggested that he try working for the neighborhood police dispatch station (*paichu suo* 派出所), which provided sleeping quarters for two of assistants. However, Huang had qualms about working voluntarily for the Japanese and refused. He was now at his wit's end on how to survive.

Becoming a Daoist

Around this time, a fellow rickshaw puller suggested that he consider leaving the householder's life to become a Daoist. This man had once worked as farmhand for the Changchun Monastery, planting and harvesting rice and tending crops at the monastery's sprawling rice fields and vegetable garden east of Snake Mountain (She shan 蛇山). He knew the manor manager (*zhuang tou* 莊頭) and could introduce Huang. Thus it came about that Huang was admitted as a novice to the Shrine of Prince Luo (Luowang she 落王社) at the White Sheep Bridge (Baiyang qiao 白羊橋) in Qingshan. The shrine was relatively rich, controlling ex-

tensive lands used as vegetable gardens, and it supported many Daoist novices like Huang.

Huang began his Daoist career under Quanzhen master Hu Licai 胡理才 (n.d.), who had come from a family of learning, being the son of a councilor to the Hubei Commissioner of Finance (*fantai yamen* 藩臺衙門). Crippled in one leg, he was well-versed in classical learning and had first entered the order at the Shrine of Lord Guandi (Guandi miao 關帝廟) in Macheng. Later he rose to manager of the New Tang Temple (Xintang si 新唐寺) in Huang Family Village 黃家大灣, one of the suburbs of Wuhan. There he made a living by attending the vegetable gardens and local temples.

The local branch of the Dragon Gate lineage (Longmen pai 龍門派) Huang joined at the Shrine of Prince Luo consisted of a distinguished line of masters based in eastern Hubei. Huang recalls that Hu Licai's own master, Yang Zhicheng 楊至成 (aka Yuanzhangzi 元章子, b. 1883), had been a native of Huanggang 黃岡. He had left home to become a Daoist, studying first under Xiang Yuangong 項圓公 at the Shrine of Lord Guan in Macheng and later training under the legendary Quanzhen master Shen Mingdai 沈明待 (n.d.). He had received full Quanzhen ordination at the 1925 ceremony at the Monastery of Eternal Spring in Wuhan.³ Yang's teacher Shen Mingdai was originally from Hunan. He was widely known among the Quanzhen clerics in eastern Hubei, because of his unusual background. He had served as a regiment commander (*xie-tong* 協統) in the Qing Greed Standard army (*lü ying* 綠營) before joining the Macheng shrine. Besides Yang, Shen had at least two other disciples: Zhou Zhixun 周至訓, and Wu Zhihui 吳至慧.

Huang, therefore, was in good hands for his Daoist training. He had a relatively peaceful time for two years, but then after the outbreak of the Pacific War in the winter of 1941, Wuhan fell under frequent barrages of American air raids. The Qingshan area where the Japanese operated logistics centers and ran their Central China Expeditionary Forces 華中派遣軍, was particularly hard hit. To escape the bombings, Huang and

³ Huang recalls Yang being from Xingzhou 新洲, a region known for producing Daoist clerics. But Yang is officially reported as a native of Huanggang. See *Hubei Changchun guan yichou tan dengzhen lu* 湖北長春觀乙丑壇登真錄, p.19a.

other novices relocated to Huanggang, the original home of his lineage masters. There they settled at the Luo Family Shrine (Luo Family Shrine (Luojia miao 羅家廟) located in North Township of Li Family Fair (李家集北鄉). Life at the shrine was hard. Since the temple had only minor land holdings, Huang and the others had only a meager income from daily incense sales and could hardly support themselves. As a result, Huang had to beg for alms (*huayuan* 化緣) in the streets of Huanggang.

In the summer, the region suffered from the scorching sun, alternating with flash storms that flooded roads and streams. Wading through streams was part of Huang's begging routine. One summer, after crossing a stream on a hot summer day, Huang slept on a rock slab to cool off. After waking, he discovered that he had developed a bloated stomach. He could not eat or drink, nor pass any water or stool (*buchi buxie* 不吃不瀉), but suffered from persistent low temperatures for days. Local doctors were puzzled by his condition which continued to worsen. After several measures failed to bring relief, a local healer (*dangdi xiansheng* 當地先生) was brought in to see Huang. He ordered a bowl of sliced cucumbers soaked in boiled water to be placed in front of Huang. Before long, Huang regained his appetite and consumed the cucumber, which duly worked its magic. Huang passed stool and water, and his body heat dissipated. In the interview, Huang describes the rural healer's unconventional formula as "a potion that revives" (*yi ji qisi huisheng zhi yao* 一劑起死回生之藥). The experience left a lasting impression on him.

Medical Learning

In the fall of 1941, the Japanese surrendered, and Huang returned to Wuhan. He settled in a small shrine owned by the coppersmiths and copperware traders' guild (*tonghe gongsuo* 銅貨公所), located at Harbor-side Lane (Gangbian xiang 港邊巷) off of Long Embankment Street (Changti jie 長堤街) in Hankou. The shrine honored Lord Lao 老君 as patron deity of the coppersmiths and traders, and most guild members were from Huanggang 黃岡, Huangpi 黃陂, Xiaogang 孝感, and other eastern Hubei regions with a history of metal works. They dominated the copperware trade, repair, and recycling business in Wuhan, provisioning local temples and households with incense holders, gongs, and

cymbals used in rituals, to kitchen utensils and wash bowls for daily living.

Their guild shrine served as a ritual, social, and sometimes judiciary center. Aside from daily worship by local visitors and guild members, once a year it hosted the gathering of all guild members for social, business, and ritual purposes. Known as the “annual feast” (*nianfan* 年飯), this was held on Lord Lao’s birthday (15th of the 2nd month) and included worship of the god, discussions of the past year’s business, and the renewal of social, geographic, and cultural bonds among members.

Other craftsmen and merchants in Hankou similarly operated or owned their respective guild shrines, often housed in guild buildings to worship their particular deities or patriarchs. Huang recalls that the grain merchants (*liangshi ye* 糧食業) worshipped the Thunder Patriarch (Leizu 雷祖), while the lumber merchants and carpenters (*muye* 木業) paid homage to Lu Bang 魯班. Lord Xuanyuan 軒轅, the Yellow Emperor, was the patron god of tailors, Patriarch Luo was the saint of barbers (*lifajiang* 理髮匠), and the deity of Dukang 杜康 was the enshrined patron of wine sellers (*zhaojiu ye* 糟酒業). Each guild shrine held annual meetings where members gathered to offer incense to the gods and pray for blessings, peace, and prosperity. The meeting ended with an annual feast shared by all. The resident Daoist or Buddhist clerics were typically entrusted to manage the occasion in a practice known as “managing the annual feast (*ban nian* 辦年)” from which they could earn handsome pocket money.

Quanzhen clerics were in charge of the coppersmiths’ annual meeting and all daily ritual services at their shrine. When Huang returned to Hankou in 1941, the resident cleric was Li Yufeng 李玉峰 (n.d.), whom Huang calls “Teacher Uncle” (*shibo* 師伯) since he was senior to Hu in their discipleship to Yang Zhicheng back at the Shrine of Lord Guan in Macheng.

Li was originally from Shangcai 上蔡 in Henan. He left home at the age of eighteen to become a Daoist at the Black Tiger Shrine (Heihu miao 黑虎廟) in Macheng. He studied medicine and developed a reputation as an efficacious healer. He was both well-traveled and well-connected (*jiaoyou shenguang* 交遊甚廣), counting among his friends the governor

general of Nanjing 南京總督 (*sic*)⁴ as well as owners of medicinal and herbal stores such as Rong Jinfang 榮金方 in Wuhan. Being widely sought after, he was first retained to serve as resident Daoist manager at the shrine of the Sichuan Guild 四川會館 before settling at the copper-smiths' guild. Like many of his generation, Li developed a taste for opium over the years. His habit depleted his income, made up from the daily incense contributions plus a substantial sum from the annual meeting. To feed his drug habit, he had to rely on his medical practice and the sale of herbal formulas for extra income.

After Huang joined Li at the guild shrine in Hankou in 1945, he was immediately drafted as a student of herbs and medicine. He first learned to ground and mix dried herbs (*nianhe caoyao* 碾合草藥), then studied the preparation of herbal potions and pastes (*aozhi gao yao* 熬制膏藥). He also assisted Li in receiving and seeing patients, and sometimes accompanied him on home visits to rich clients; soon he started to study the medical classics. Huang recalls that when they were not seeing patients, Li would recline on his couch. In between his puffs at the opium pipe, he would teach him how to read the *Huangdi neijing* (Yellow Emperor's Inner Classic 黃帝內經). Over Huang's repeated protests, Li insisted that he make a study of the Former Four Lineages 前四家 of the Jin-Yuan era, and the Later Four Sages 後四賢 of the Ming-Qing period.⁵

Huang remembers that he benefited particularly from a medical text called *Guoyi zhinan* 國醫指南 (A Guide to National Medicine), published by a Jiangnan physician. For Huang, the book's detailed and specific discussions of the symptoms and diseases were especially useful, not only in terms of helping him understand the manifestations of the condition, but also to devise curative strategies with specific formulas. Not having been rigorously trained in the fundamentals of Chinese medicine, Huang found the introductory book a useful primer. In addition to this, he also read major medical classics, such as the *Jingui lu* 金匱錄 (Record of the

⁴ This is most likely a casual reference to Liangjiang zongdu 兩江總督 whose yamen was located at Jiangning 江寧 or the present-day Nanjing.

⁵ The former Four Greats refer to Liu Wansu 劉完素 (1110-1200), Zhang Congzheng 張從正 (1156-1228), Li Dongyuan 李東垣 (1180-1251), and Zhu Zhengheng 朱震亨 (1281-1358). Huang could not recall the names of the Latter Four Greats of the Ming and Qing period.

Golden Casket) and the *Shanghan lun* 傷寒論 (On Cold-induced Disorders).

A few months later, Huang left Li to take up residence at the Palace of the Supreme Way (Dadao gong 大道宮) located on Liji Road 利濟路 in the center of the bustling business district of Hankou. Guided by abbot Pei Zhibei 培至裴, he learned scripture recitation (*nianjing* 念經). The temple's ritual services, praying for peace and prosperity and for the salvation of the dead, were much sought after. Huang recalls that when clients requested a scripture recitation service, he and his fellow Daoists would earn about twenty cents a day. Although an important source of income for the monastery, the recitation could be both physically and mentally strenuous. In one instance, his group performed a recitation of the *Yuhuang jing* 玉皇經 (Scripture of the Jade Emperor) for a complete month because of a major drought. They earned a total of 3,000 Yuan for their service. Most strenuous in the process was the overnight service, which typically began at six in the evening and ended at six the following morning, making them go the whole night without sleep.

Aside from recitation services, the monastery also held an annual rite in honor of the Jade Emperor's Shrine (Yuhuang ge 玉皇閣), in the second month. On this occasion, resident Quanzhen clerics were not only asked to perform scripture recitations for their merchant patrons but were entrusted with preparing banquets on behalf of their clients. These annual festivities also allowed the residents to enjoy their best food and earn extra pocket money. Huang summarizes his two-year stint at the shrine: "I spent my time performing scriptural recitations during the day, and learning the crafts of visual diagnostics and pulse-taking at night."

Travels

Like all other Quanzhen monks, Huang underwent rigorous training in Daoist meditation and traveled extensively in search of learning and experience. He learned and practiced quiet-sitting (*jingzuo* 靜坐) on a regular basis, and stayed at many Quanzhen centers all over the country. Most of his travels took place in 1945 to 1947, after the war with Japan was over. They were partly sponsored by the Sichuan owner of the Huatong and Huayuan Steamship Companies 華同華源輪船公司, which op-

erated small passenger liners on the Yangzi River between Shanghai and Chongqing, partly by the government which granted free train travel to all monastics

During his travels, Huang visited the Eight Immortals' Shrine (Baxian an 八仙庵), Lookout Terrace (Louguan tai 樓觀臺), and various Quanzhen temples on Mount Hua near Xi'an. He also went to the Buddhist center on Putou Island and participated in temple fairs there. He spent some time at the Jade Emperor's Summit (Yuhuang ding 玉皇頂) near Hangzhou where he met the legendary abbot Li Lishan 李理山 (1873-1956). He notes that while it was easy to enter the monastery for a short stay, it was difficult to leave since Abbot Li required all temporary residents to participate in scripture recitations for the monastery's patrons, be they for salvation of the dead (*chaodu* 超度), elimination of misfortune (*xiaozai* 消災), or repelling illnesses (*quebing* 卻病).

The Black Tiger Shrine

Following this period, Huang moved to the Black Tiger Shrine in Hanyang, a guild shrine owned by vegetable growers from dozens of neighboring villages. They worshipped the Lord of the Southern Peak (Nanyue dadi 南嶽大帝) as their patron god and hosted an annual festival known as the Thunder Patriarch Festival 雷祖會 on the 24th day of the 6th month.

Huang served as manager (*zhuchi* 住持) of the shrine. The income from daily incense and annual festivals was so limited that he and his fellow Daoist Zheng Minghui 鄭明輝 had beg from the guild. Driven by his dire need, he soon began to prepare herbal formulas on the basis of the knowledge he acquired at the coppersmiths' shrine. Two of his formulas were in great demand: an eye formula for heat-related infections and swollen eyes; and a recipe for gynecological problems. Known respectively as the "Sheep's Gallbladder Eye Potion" (Yangdan-yan yao 羊膽眼藥) and "Female Benefit Pill" (Likun wan 利坤丸), the medicines were priced low to be affordable to a working-class clientele. The eye drops sold for only 50 cents a bottle.

Huang also offered his patients free trials of the medicines and did not charge them until they experienced some relief of their symptoms.

One story about his sales tactics involves the wife of a rice merchant near Qiuchang Street in Hankou. One day, Huang arrived at the rice store in his full Daoist regalia. Sitting cross-legged in front of her shop, he offered his newly prepared formulas. The woman got curious and came to chat with Huang, telling him about her conditions. He quickly made a diagnosis and offered her a free three-week sample of the pills. He promised that he would only come back for payment if her condition improved.

Three weeks later, he came back to sell his medicines again in front of her shop. The woman walked out and, all smiles, handed the money to Huang. Soon after that, the sales of both eye drops and gynecological pills took off. Huang found a niche for his products in the cut-throat competition for the middle and lower urban classes. He attributes his success to the trust which the poor placed in renunciants (*chujia ren* 出家人) like himself. At the same time, he also claims that his formulas included secret ingredients not found in comparable medicines on offer at the time street. His burgeoning sales brought in dozens of Yuan each day, and life at the shrine improved significantly.

Medical Philanthropy

At the Black Tiger Shrine and other commercial shrines, it was customary to hold clinics for the poor at nominal or no cost. Guilds and philanthropic halls (*shantang* 善堂) often retained medical practitioners and Daoist healers to provide such service. Known in the vernacular as “firing up” (*fahuo* 發火) or “releasing the dragon” (*chulong* 出龍), such clinics typically opened for service (*kaitang* 開堂) in May and closed again (*shoutang* 收堂) in late December. A retained doctor or healer usually divided his day into two parts. In the morning he devoted himself to the free clinic; in the afternoon he served paying clients. Huang recalls that doctors like himself would see patients free of charge until noon. Patients paid a nominal registration fee (*guahao fei* 掛號費) of 13 copper pennies. Each prescription, moreover, was free for the first three potions: they were known as “philanthropic potions” (*shanyao* 善藥). Only after that would patients pay the full price for their prescriptions.

Once one became a retained practitioner (*zuotang yisheng* 座堂醫生), one's reputation would grow immensely, attracting more and more patients, both indigent and paying. For instance, Chen Binghou 陳斌侯, retained at the Monastery of Eternal Spring, was widely sought-after throughout Hankou, Wuchang, and Hanyang. A late bloomer in the field of medical practice, he had until the age of forty made a living as a butcher. When he found his true calling in healing, Chen gave up his butcher shop, turned to studying medicine, and became an accomplished healer with a wide following in the city. He was said to be so skilled at his craft that he would know the right cause of his patients' illness by a quick feel of their pulse.



The free clinics sponsored by or affiliated with Daoist monasteries also operated their own small apothecaries to fill prescriptions from retained doctors, using ingredients donated by wealthy supporters, guild members, or the temples themselves. Huang notes that while he was at the Palace of the Supreme Way in Hankou, the monastery also operated a free clinic at its Shrine of the Two Sages (*Ersheng dian* 二聖殿). In addition, the monastery also hired two pharmacists to run its apothecary assisted by a few Quanzhen clerics there.

The Temple of Mystery and Wonder

Huang's own practice at the Black Tiger Shrine followed this pattern of the guild or temple sponsored free clinics in providing medical services to the local community. However, as the sales of his special formulas took off, local potentates became interested in their profits. Thus, in 1947, Huang received a messenger from Yang Han 楊瀚, the KMT magistrate of Hanyang County. He was also the head of the paramilitary Peace-keeping Corps (Bao'an tuan 保安團), known for devising various shake-down schemes to extort protection money from local businesses. The man arrived at the shrine claiming that he was working secretly for the Communists and had come to reclaim the thirty sets of the nationalist army uniforms which he had left at the shrine. Huang immediately realized the gravity of the situation. Frightened, he folded his booming medicine business at the Black Tiger Shrine and fled to take sanctuary at the much larger Temple of Mystery and Wonder (Xuanmiao guan 玄妙觀) on Great Western Street (Xida jie 西大街) in Hanyang.⁶

At the time the temple was under the leadership of Li Chongqin 李崇欽 (n.d.), who had left home during the latter years of Guangxu (1875-1908) and received ordination early. Li was a skilled acupuncturist who saw healing as a way to accumulate merit and refused to accept any payment for it. However, the temple was no longer the well-endowed universal monastery (*conglin* 叢林) it used to be in the mid-1920s. In those days it could afford to sponsor a massive ordination ceremony that consecrated nearly 450 Daoist clerics at its sister institution, the Monastery of Eternal Life. Over the years, its landholdings had dwindled, being solid due to economic pressure, suffering from tenant encroachment, and being squeezed by local ruffians and officials alike. By the late 1940s, much of the monastery's landholdings were gone, and the institution

⁶ The origin of the Daoist temple in Hanyang remains unknown. Under Song Zhenzong, in 1010, it was named Tianqing guan 天慶觀 (Temple of Celestial Celebration). Under Yuan Renzong, in 1313, it was renamed Xuanmiao guan. The early Ming saw the rebuilding and relocation of the monastery from its original site in eastern Hanyang to the west gate of the prefectural seat. See Zhu Yixiu 朱衣修, *Hanyang fuzhi* 漢陽府志 10:5a-6a (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1982).

had to rely on incense money, alms, and occasional patient donations. Li was barely able to make ends meet for himself and a dozen of aged and sickly Daoists.

After Huang settled at the temple, Li insisted that he learn acupuncture in order to serve clients. When he lived at the Palace of the Supreme Way, he had already studied the *Zhenjiu dacheng* 針灸大成 (Great Compendium on Acupuncture and Moxibustion), a Ming classic on the major tracts, meridians, and acupuncture points, but he felt too squeamish to insert long needles into people. Now, at Li's insistence, Huang declined all visitors and shut himself inside his room, poring over the Ming text, memorizing the acupuncture points and their functions, and trying to overcome his terror at poking needles into flesh. Before long, he became adept at the practice and began to see patients. He recalls that it was during this intensive learning and practicing at the Temple of Mystery and Wonder that he first started writing prescriptions (*kai fangzi* 開方子) for his patients.

Meanwhile, he clashed with Li over the latter's long-standing practice of not accepting payment for his services. Huang understood clearly that, while Li's benevolent act generated personal respect for himself and the moral prestige for the monastery, it also meant that the elderly Daoist residents had little or no income to feed and support themselves. Huang insisted that he held Li in great esteem, yet he disagreed with his approach to charity. He thought that a minimal charge had to be imposed for average patients in order to generate an income that would ensure the financial independence of the institution and provide for all its residents.

Gradually Huang persuaded Li to implement a basic fee schedule for their medical services. All those who could afford it paid a fee of 30 cents per visit, which bought about two catties of rice, enough to feed two clerics for a day. On busy days, he saw as many as thirty patients and the two of them made around ten to twenty Yuan every day. Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, the steady income from their joint medical practice thus allowed a dozen clerics to continue their practice at the temple.

The 1950s

In 1953, the temple's medical practice was disrupted by a mishap with legal consequences. A patient suffering from severe stomach problems (*weibing* 胃病) came to the monastery for help. Traditional acupuncturists usually observe ritual taboos against administering treatments on certain parts of the body on certain days and during certain hours, mainly because at these times the body gods are active and in communion with cosmic energies and higher deities. Any needle insertion at these precarious junctures was deemed dangerous and potentially life-threatening. Huang recalls the old proscriptions of his profession: "No needlework on the first and the fifteenth each month" 初一、十五不打針; and: "No treatment of the stomach at the *shen* hour 申時不治胃. Both Li and Huang normally adhered to these ritual taboos. But on this day, the ever-compassionate Li succumbed to the patient's pleas for intervention. Sure enough, the patient died at the clinic shortly after the treatment.

In the historical circumstances of the early 1950s, the Daoist clinic was highly susceptible to ideological and political campaigns denouncing "the old and the traditional society (*jiu shenhui* 舊社會). The family of the dead, encouraged by this propaganda, thus sued Li and the temple at the people's court in Hanyang. Li was arrested and taken into custody at the Hanyang Office of Public Security (*gong'an ju* 公安局).

The five-day public trial attracted thousands of spectators. While the proceedings went on inside the court, numerous supporters, former clients, neighbors, and friends gathered outside the courthouse and demanded Li's release. In the event, the court decided that it was a medical accident and ordered Li to pay the family's burial cost. Li was also ordered to discontinue his acupuncture practice at the temple. That court order effectively put an end to the clinic; and both Li and Huang went out of business.

The Hanyang district government, aware of Huang's value as a doctor for the people, in 1954 appointed him as the head of the newly established Hygiene Clinic (*weisheng yuan* 衛生院). Huang arrived to find the institution staffed with a mixed crowd, many rather ignorant about medicine, and immediately resigned. Eventually the Health Department gave up on running it as it was and conducted proper screening and se-

lection. After qualified physicians and practitioners were hired in 1955, Huang agreed to join and serve.

Far from living comfortably ever after, Huang soon came to suffer from new restrictions geared to reduce and ultimately remove his Daoist identity. As the "re-secularization" (*huansu* 還俗) program aimed at reforming traditional religion and religious specialists was put into effect, Huang together with tens of thousands Buddhist and Daoist clerics was forced to leave the monastic or ritual life and "return" to a secular occupation. Huang recalls the pressure officials put on him to cut off his Quanzhen topknot and how the hospital acted as a go-between and "introduced" him to a local female textile worker. A year later, in 1956, Huang had no choice but to marry her. The two later had two children.

In 1958, Huang joined Chinese medicine practitioners in a series of seminars to professionalize and standardize medical practice at the Hankou College of Chinese Medicine (Hankou Zhongyi Yuan 漢口中醫院). Seminars leaders included Xu Qingxian 許晴先, Hu Xiwen 胡西文, and Guo Huanzhang 郭喚章, all eminent resident practitioners at various free clinics before 1949. Topics ranged from cold-induced disorders (*shanghan* 傷寒) through gynecology and pediatrics (*fuyou ke* 婦幼科) to bone setting (*zhenggu* 正骨) and several subjects.

Huang continued to practice medicine at Hanyang Hospital until 1966, when he was transferred to Hanyang Pediatric Clinic (Hanyang Ertong Yiyuan 漢陽兒童醫院), where he served until his retirement in 1983. His younger son, too, ended up joining the hospital as a physician.

Shortly after his retirement, the Eleventh Plenum of the Chinese Communist Party initiates reforms towards openness. The municipal government of Wuhan revised and relaxed its religious policies, initiating new measures to revitalize traditional culture and advance the Daoist religion. They asked Huang to suspend his retirement to serve as a senior consultant of the process and to live as resident physician at the Monastery of Eternal Spring. He has since made his home there, again practicing medicine in a religious setting for the over twenty years.⁷

⁷ On three separate visits with Huang, I personally witnessed him seeing six patients in sessions from ten to thirty minutes. He takes pulse, makes inquiries, then gives a diagnosis and dictates prescriptions. Those who can afford to pay a consultation fee. Others may even receive support from him.

Preliminary Reflections

The story of Huang's life shows just how precarious the paths were Quanzhen Daoists took to become medical practitioners. It also reveals how closely Daoist healing was connected to local communities and how important it was for the livelihood of individual clerics and the overall monastic economy. For many small temples a successful residents' healing practice not only provided much needed medical services but had a direct impact on survival and prosperity. Huang's case illustrates how the Quanzhen lineage network and connections provided both opportunity and support for education and training in medical practice.

Another point made clear in Huang's story is how close the relationship was between merchant guilds and Daoist clerics. Guild shrines and Daoist temples with their various annual festivals often served as employers and patrons of Daoist doctors. Their philanthropic and ritual activities, moreover, provided the social, economic, and ritual milieu in which Daoist medical practitioners lived and served. Daoist medical practitioners were thus vital conduits that helped merchant elites and monasteries to build and strengthen their ties with local communities.

Third, it becomes evident that Daoist medical practice was essential to the survival and prosperity of hosting institutions. Small shrines that retained or hired Quanzhen clerics as resident physicians survived to a large extent on the income from the healing practice. This is made amply clear in the case of the coppersmiths' guild shrine and the Temple of Mystery and Wonder. Even larger temples supported medical practice as a major component of their philanthropic services, relying on it to contribute to the moral prestige of both the monastery and its active clerics.

Last but not least, Huang's life documents in vivid colors that, in addition to its inherent tradition of ritual and magic in healing, Daoism also possessed a medical tradition that did not rely on burning talismans or reciting mantras. Rather, much like Chinese traditional medicine, it depended on empirically based herbal formulas and the application of acupuncture. This Daoist medical tradition is closely related to canonical medicine with its origins in the medical classics of the Han and its various later branches, such as the theoretical innovations of the Jin-Yuan and Ming-Qing eras.

Portrait of an American Daoist

Charles Belyea / Liu Ming

SCOTT P. PHILLIPS

Abstract

Liu Ming (born Charles Belyea) was perhaps the first American of European descent to identify himself as a Daoist priest for the purpose of teaching Daoism as a religious tradition. His organization Orthodox Daoism in America (ODA) introduced Americans to a particular, traditional Chinese orientation towards knowledge and commitment. His life and work, training and challenges are symptomatic of the ebbs and flows observable as Daoism winds its way into Western culture.

Early Years and Basic Training

Charles Belyea was born in New England in 1947. Like many Americans of his time, he reveled in a heroic struggle through drug use, unconventional sex, acts of righteous justice, and experimental diets—whose details are of little interest except to note that they prematurely ended his academic career and led to complete estrangement from his family.

While working at a record store on the MIT campus, he first encountered Buddhism through a presentation by Shunryu Suzuki and soon joined a campus *zazen* group. After viewing the film *Requiem for a Faith*, his interests turned to tantric Buddhism and he began to learn Tibetan, studying with Robert Thurman, the first ordained American Buddhist, who was then a graduate student at Harvard.¹

¹ Charles even baby-sat once for Thurman's now famous daughter Uma.

Charles moved to Berkeley in 1968 to study Tibetan Buddhism with Tarthang Tulku and Trumpa Rinpoche. There he completed the Tibetan Buddhist Ngondro practice of 100,000 prostrations and came to study of Chinese Buddhism, martial arts and calligraphy.

He then went back to the East Coast for a several years where he opened a restaurant, received teachings from H. H. Dodrupchen Rinpoche, and helped to establish the Maha Siddha Nyinmapa Center in Massachusetts. As his Tibetan improved, he began to read original sources and served as a translator (and cook) for visiting lamas. The experience of having to interpret Buddhist teachings to an American audience was formative and helped him over the years.

Although a committed Buddhist, he began to have some conflicts with the Tibetan community and, as a result, went traveling for a while in Europe and the UK. In 1978, he moved to Taiwan where he joined a Buddhist monastery near Taipei.

After a few months there, his Buddhist teacher and a few other monks organized a tour of a local sacred mountain. They all jumped in the back of a pick-up truck and proceeded to stop at various shrines where they talked to residents and burned incense. At one point they got out to view a sign which said: "This pathway leads to a hermit. Do not disturb!" Suddenly an old man came running down the path. The monks, fearing his wrath, ran for the truck or dived into the bushes, but Charles did not move and his Buddhist teacher stayed with him.

The hermit ran up to them and reached out to shake Charles's hand, but before he could do so, the Buddhist teacher struck Charles on the head and shouted for him to bow in prostration. As Charles flung himself to the ground, the hermit laughed, turned to the Buddhist teacher, and said, "Thank you. You can go now." Charles then moved in with the hermit and together they lived in a Daoist hermitage on the mountain.

The Daoist hermit, whose full name Charles never learned, had fled mainland China during World War II. All of his friends and family perished during the war. He was an Orthodox Daoist priest (Zhengyi daoshi) with the family name Liu and traced his lineage back to the royal family of the Han dynasty, referring to Liu An, the compiler of the *Huainanzi*, as a first ancestor of his lineage. He had been in solitary retreat for about thirty years.

Charles never became fluent in Chinese, but Master Liu had studied some English when he first arrived in Taiwan. Charles spoke to him in English and he spoke back in Chinese, each choosing not to butcher the other's language. After some time, Charles received formal investiture in the master's lineage, including methods of meditation, alchemy, ritual, daoyin, and dreaming. His teacher then went into a dramatic death retreat. The cave he had secluded himself in for over a month began to glow; there was a flash of light and a loud crack that could be felt everywhere in the surrounding valley. The following day Charles and some other hermits went in to find his clothes sitting upright permeated with a reddish powder.² His body was missing—only hair and long nails remained (see Belyea 1991).

Charles tells many stories about what he and his teacher did together. He explained the universalistic inspiration for his book, *Dragon's Play* (written in the 1980s and published in 1991) with the following encounter: Once he and his teacher paid a visit to the library of a Buddhist monastery. Charles pulled out a copy of the Chan-Buddhist *Ten Ox Herding Pictures*. His teacher looked at them and said that there were two images missing, which he went on to describe and explain. Charles then pulled out a Tibetan meditation image showing a pantheon of deities. To Charles's horror, his teacher took a pencil and made notes on the painting. Some of the deities, he said, were no longer there and a few were dressed in archaic clothing and held the wrong implements. Charles protested: "Master, this is Buddhism." His teacher responded: "No, it is just wrong." Apparently he had direct access to the source which inspired the creation of these religious artworks.

Another important story concerns his adoption into the Liu family at a large clan gathering. Once adopted, he could receive his teacher's heritage of 120 sacred texts, a collection that never left the hands of the

² His teacher's clothes were made into talismans after his dramatic death. An Italian reporter sent one of them to a lab to be tested for chemical constituents. One ingredient was identified as ancient bone, but from an unknown reptile. The lab sent it to various other labs around the world whose members debated its origins, some claiming it was a flying dinosaur but finally confirmed it as a mammoth bone. Liu Ming received a letter with copies of the lab reports, but lost them in a move.

family. Arrangements were made to have these books sent to a safe deposit box in San Francisco, where Charles was given access but not ownership. Further tales concern the other masters he encountered during his mountain stay. One was a martial arts teacher who constantly drank tinctured herbs and shouted a lot. Charles lived with him for a short time, staying in snake-infested huts beyond a wire-bridged ravine. The other teacher was a dream teacher who visited him at the hermitage for an afternoon but inexplicably left him with months of memories.

The Daoist Teacher

After Master Liu's dramatic passing in the winter of 1978, Charles spent a year in London where he pursued his interest in macrobiotic cooking. He then returned to California where he went into a year-long private retreat on an estate near Santa Cruz. After completing his retreat in 1981, he wrote the book *Dragon's Play* and began teaching what he called "Dragon Training." Methods included daoyin, meditation, shiatsu, and *Daode jing* studies. He co-founded a school and healing center called Twin Lakes, where he taught for a while.³

In 1984, he co-founded the Five Branches Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Santa Cruz. He worked as an administrator and taught courses in Chinese culture, history, and nutrition for twelve years. During that period he also started the Da Yuan Circle where he continued to teach the *Daode jing*, meditation, and daoyin.

In the early 1990s, he began publishing a quarterly newsletter called *Frostbell*. He also changed the name of his organization to Orthodox Daoism in America (ODA). *Frostbell* announced classes, explained commemorative and festival days in the Daoist calendar, offered recipes for appropriate foods, featured book reviews, and in general covered a wide range of teachings about Daoism and Chinese culture.

ODA was what Charles likes to call a "discreet" organization. Students were discouraged from talking about it to outsiders. The newsletter had about 200 subscribers; the inner group consisted of maybe 20

³ The school later moved to Northern California and changed its name to Heartwood Institute.

members. Charles gave small public talks on an irregular schedule, usually about some aspect of Chinese culture and its relationship to the history of Daoism.

In late 1996, he took a group of twenty members on a pilgrimage to Daoist sites in China, visiting Baiyuan guan, Qingcheng shan, and Maoshan. Shortly after returning to Santa Cruz, he officially changed his name to Liu Ming, which he had been given when he was adopted into the hermit's family. He also started to wear Daoist clothing full-time and tie his hair in a topknot.

Over the next two years, his core students similarly began to wear their hair in Daoist fashion and study groups took on the more formal name "investiture." A less formal open-to-all precepts meeting, held each month at the full moon, offered a study of the *Xiang'er Precepts*, the *180 Precepts of Lord Lao* and excerpts from the *Analects of Confucius*.⁴

While ODA's adoption of the topknot, the free precept meetings, and the *Frostbell* mailings seemed to indicate a move toward a more public face, members generally confined their discussions of Daoism to low-key commemorations or celebrations at Liu Ming's home, known as the Spring Street Tan (Altar). These social events were held several times a year and usually involved a lecture about the day being commemorated, the sale of talismans, calendars, incense, books, or tea utensils. Tea and snacks (sometimes even meals) were served to harmonize or tonify seasonal *qi*.

ODA became less discreet under the impact of the exhibition "Taoism and the Arts of China" at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco in early 2001 (see Little and Eichman 2000). The exhibit created an active, local awareness of Daoism which resulted in invitations for Liu Ming and his associates to speak to larger groups. At the time, I myself was contacted by the museum, and we both guided tours of the exhibit, taught classes, gave lectures, and put together titles for a small film festival.

⁴ For these meetings, Liu Ming put together a book of precepts known as *The Blue Book*. The third addition (O.D.A. 1998) acknowledges Hendrischke and Penny 1996; Bokenkamp 1997; Schipper 2001 (paper delivered in 1998).

The exhibit also led to an increased interest in investiture groups, which had been growing slowly but now involved more than thirty students, all committed to one- or three-year periods of study and paying \$60-\$100 a month. Among those newly interested was also Harrison Moretz, a martial arts teacher from Seattle who ran the Taoist Studies Institute there. When he offered to set up classes for Liu Ming to teach in Seattle, he began to travel north once a month.⁵

Another set of activities of the organization in 2001-02 was the holding of public retreats in Northern California, attended by as many as fifty people. At the second retreat Liu Ming, gave everyone in attendance a translation of a meditation text called "Purple Classic" from his secret personal collection.

Organizational Changes

In 2002, Liu Ming left his suburban home in Santa Cruz, the Spring Street Tan, due to his landlady's desire to sell the house. The location had held a small shop which supplied students with books, incense, and tea utensils as well as a Japanese tea room next to the kitchen. It also had a garden with exotic bamboo clusters, fruit trees, and a symbolic mountain to the north. Among the two garden entrances, one came from the east and

⁵ Two other people joined ODA in this period. One was Dharmanidhi Sarasvati, a European American who received a Kashmiri lineage in Kaula Shakta Tantric Yoga. He had been teaching mostly in Australia using *Dragon's Play* as a textbook. He soon moved his teaching operation to Berkeley, founded The Tantric College of America (later Yoga Mandala) and encouraged his students to study with Liu Ming (*Frostbell*, Summer 2002). The other was Nam Singh, an African American who spent his early years with his grandparents stationed in Taiwan. An expert at gourmet cooking with Chinese herbs, his strong bonds with the Chinese community in San Francisco led him to become a Daoist priest in the Complete Perfection school (Longmen lineage). With his investiture he received a collection of sacred texts and vestments which he wore all the time. He joined ODA because he wanted to understand the Daoist commitments he had already made. His public commitment and his quiet enthusiasm for Liu Ming's teachings brought a new level of confidence to ODA. (see nam-singh.com)

led to the teaching hall; the other entered from the south and led to the altar room. A second teaching and meditation hall with Japanese *tatami* mats had been set up in the garage.

Increasingly active in Seattle, Liu Ming spontaneously moved there, joining three of his students in an apartment. He soon began to teach out of their home and at the Taoist Studies Institute, where he developed a nine-year ordination procedure. Throughout this period, he continued to hold classes for his California students, returning once a month to teach out of a student's home in San Francisco.

In 2003, after about a year in Seattle, there was a break with some of his students, as a result of which Liu Ming moved back to the Bay Area, this time settling in Oakland (see Komjathy 2003). The circumstances surrounding the break revolved around the secret meditation text called the "Purple Classic," which Liu Ming had revealed at the second ODA retreat. Initially Liu Ming claimed the text was his translation of a book from the large collection of Daoist scriptures held for him in an undisclosed safe deposit box in San Francisco. One of the students living with him began doubting the existence of the original text, at least in part because Liu Ming only had basic language skills. It was incongruent that he should be guiding students in a nine-year ordination process, given that he himself had only been in Taiwan for a short time—not even long enough to learn Chinese. The student searched Liu Ming's room, looking for evidence of secret texts, and found nothing. He then accused Liu Ming of lying and making up the text and a good portion of his teachings as well; most notably, the orthodoxy of his lineage was challenged. Liu Ming admitted that there were no secret texts but still claimed the lineage was real. He was later ambiguous about whether the books actually existed or not. He told another student that he had thrown them all in the ocean.

Always adept at sudden changes in direction, Liu Ming stopped wearing Daoist garb and had his hair cut in standard American fashion after his move to Oakland. He discontinued the name Orthodox Daoism in America and reverted to the old name Da Yuan Circle. His teaching now de-emphasizes the importance of lineage and draws on a broader Daoist-Buddhist vision which embraces trance-mediumship as a possible source of Daoist inspiration and teachings which he continues to develop

for an active assembly of mild mannered students (see www.dayuancircle.com).

Channeled or received, Liu Ming's teachings would never have had the credibility they did if his students had not been able to verify their authenticity in the works of three Daoist scholar-initiates: Kristofer Schipper (1994), John Lagerwey (1987), and Michael Saso (1978), plus the various studies of Daoist historians, particularly Isabelle Robinet (1993; 1997). Not only testimonial for his accuracy, their work obviously created a strong foundation for his accounts.

There is a question of authenticity here. It is not clear how much of Liu Ming's accounts were generated from his readings of these various scholars. Future generations may ponder this question. However, it is beyond doubt that he brought transcendent glory, actual practice, and personal experience to otherwise dry academic presentations.

The Teachings

Liu Ming has described his teachings in *Frostbell* and in papers presented for academic audiences (e.g., Liu 2001; 2002). These descriptions include mention of Highest Clarity and Celestial Masters lineages, meditation, text study, hygiene, longevity practice, and ritual. But they fail to describe what actually happens when he teaches. Words like "paradoxical" or "inspired" also miss the profound particularity of each teaching.

For instance, Liu Ming teaches that we are in an American Protestant religious milieu, in which individuals see themselves on a journey seeking a personal relationship with truth. Or put in the vernacular: "Everybody thinks they're special." So if the subject were, for example, Chinese astrology, the teaching might be that everyone has the same amount of astrology, nobody is special. Then we would go on to look at how everyone has a unique fate at birth. It sounds completely ridiculous if you read it on a page. Are we special or not? The question would float.

Then we might look at larger questions, like "What is fate?" — "Is personal fate possible?" — "What perpetuates a particular fate?" — "Is fate physiological?" or "Can you change the meaning or persistent influence of something that has happened in the past?" These discussions would usually lead to some type of practice, some type of experiment that one could do at home, like marking auspicious practice days on the

Chinese calendar or making commitments based on calendrical auspices.⁶ The teaching would be filled in with stories, jokes, and tea drinking. We might talk about the habits of an emperor or a celebrity; we might reflect on the strengths and weakness of each others character. The teaching would saturate the environment in a disheveled way.

Liu Ming's teachings could usually be analyzed by the structure: view, method, and fruit, matching the structure used by the Dzogchen teacher Namkhai Norbu (see Shane 1986). Every teaching had an underlying view, an assumption or way of perceiving, which would suggest a method. If that method were practiced it would produce some fruition, which would verify the original view. For instance, let us say the original view is: "What a person eats has an effect on personal conduct." The method might be to study how the *qi* qualities of particular foods (and various cooking strategies) affect a person's appetite over time. As the method is practiced and internalized, the fruition is revealed. In this case it could be that one's appetite leads to food choices and portions which match one's energetic needs. When one has the right amount and type of *qi* for the task at hand, appropriate conduct usually results. In other words, fruition verifies view. Because each student is conducting their own experiments and drawing conclusions based on the results of those experiments, each student's degree of commitment and experience of fruition is unique.

Sometimes Liu Ming would talk about a specific practice and its place in everyday living, like how to chop broccoli, why it matters, or the posture of meditation and how to find it. At other times his teachings were gigantic, covering the entirety of religious experiences over the millennia, from head hunting through yogic transcendence to AIDS walk-a-thons. He taught that all religious experience is available at all times in the world as we know it; that Daoism itself is not a single way of being, but an infinite kaleidoscopic source of frameworks with which to become intimate with the way things are.

Scripture. Among all texts the *Daode jing* formed the main focus of study. Each month investiture students received a chapter in English for

⁶ For many years, ODA published a Daoist calendar with traditional cycles, holidays, and commemorative days. Robert Fenwick, one of Liu Ming's students, now sells them online at www.tongshu.com.

daily chanting. Liu Ming created his own commentary to accompany each chapter, month after month, often repeating a chapter with revised commentary and translation. He often used the *Xiang'er* and Heshang Gong commentaries to support his views as well as other ancient sources, such as *Zhuangzi*, *Huainanzi*, or *Hanfeizi*.

As other scriptures became available in translation, we studied them as well. After returning from the China trip in 1996, we read Steven Bokenkamp's *Early Daoist Scriptures* and began a study group to unfold the *Santian neijie jing* line by line.

Meditation. After a year of practicing sitting and forgetting (*zuowang*) daily, students were introduced to the golden elixir (*jindan*). These two practices were always done in private and served as a foundation for everything else Liu Ming taught. Investiture classes invoked innumerable textual, artistic, architectural, and iconographical references in the process of transmitting these practices.

Ritual. Although researched and discussed in great detail, Daoist ritual was never taught directly. It was made clear, though, that its purpose is the rectification of *qi*. Liu Ming taught that for ritual to be truly orthodox it would have to arise spontaneously from one's own experience in relationship to an actual constituency. This teaching was the basis for numerous experiments, from tea ceremony through food preparation and presentation to incense studies, altar creation, talisman making, ritual bathing,⁷ clothing, fengshui, the construction of personal meditation chambers, general remodeling, and ancestral offerings. Almost anything could be approached as ritual.

He taught that trance possession, by varying degrees, is a normal everyday occurrence; recognition of trance is what is unusual. A key aspect of a Daoist priest's mandate as an ritual exorcist, was to *not become possessed*. But he always made it clear that the possibility of possession or falling into trance was happening by degrees all the time. A ritual master's expertise in identifying various types of trance, is a tool of the trade that also facilitates not falling into one.

Daoyin. In addition to a movement sequence with pounding, slapping, scraping, rubbing, expanding, contracting, and bouncing— all

⁷ Around 1996, he composed a pamphlet called "Bathing," which covered three types of bathing: hygienic, purification, and ritual.

done in a small cave-like space—Liu Ming's teachings included details about shamanic forms of meditation. He felt that daoyin was primarily a hermit practice and taught that martial techniques like bagua zhang, taiji quan, qigong and gongfu in general had as much to offer urban people if practiced without an aggressive healing or martial orientation.

Dreams. In addition to all these, Liu Ming currently teaches dream practice from a universalistic point of view. During his ODA years, he held discussions about dream practice but gave little instruction.

While the reader could easily be forgiven for seeing the above list as a group of *methods*, in fact, each category is a self-contained complete set of teachings, which happen to overlap, but do not need to be taught together.

Personal Recollections

I first met Liu Ming in 1994, when he gave a public talk to about ten people at the Spring Street Tan on "The Shamanic Roots of Daoism." His speech was funny and engaging, overflowing with Chinese history and sometimes wandering into conjectural cultural anthropology.

I arrived there having read two articles in Frostbell, one about contractual relationships with deities to perform rituals at specific times and places, which is common to Native Americans and Chinese Daoists; the other an exposé on how Orthodox Daoism was not a universal religion, i.e., did not seek converts and it did not see itself as helpful or meaningful for everyone. Listening to Charles's talk, it occurred to me that he might be helpful in answering questions I had about the cultural milieu responsible for the creation of Chinese martial arts, a big interest of mine. His home was full of elegant Chinese furniture, art, books, fine incense. After the talk he spent over an hour answering my wide-ranging questions.

I attended a few other talks over the next few months and expressed interest in studying with him in more depth. He put me off for about six months at which point he said there would be one or two openings in a *Daode jing* meditation study group he was leading. If I was still interested, I should prepare a ten-page essay explaining my interest. I should also be prepared to commit to an hour of meditation every day for at least one year. There was also a questionnaire designed to discourage

applicants with health obsessions. The power to decide who among the five applicants would be admitted to the group was in the hands of the group and not Charles's. No one ever read my essay. I was not selected, but over the next couple of months I talked Charles into teaching me privately.

He and I met once a month all day for a year. We made lunch, drank tea, and discussed one chapter of the *Daode jing* which I took home and chanted for a few minutes everyday before practicing *zuowang*. I came home from each lesson with a new pile of books which he lent me or which I found on my own. They were mostly on Chinese culture, religion, history, and art. Each book would add weight and depth to our all-day discussions. After a year of this arrangement, in the winter of 1996, I accompanied Charles and a group of his students on a China tour, then joined the *Daode jing* meditation study group and became a member of ODA.

Reflecting on this period in my life and on Liu Ming as a Daoist teacher, I find that he is most of all a consummate storyteller. If the topic was history, it often seemed like we were interviewing an eyewitness. Asking for references and following up on his sources, I found that his knowledge of history was indeed excellent. Even though he sometimes admitted that conjecture played a significant role in his explanations, it was always clear that demonstrable facts were not that important because history was used as a vehicle for talking about human nature.

Liu Ming would often tell stories about his personal experiences. Initially I doubted many of these stories, particularly those that could have made a good script for a fantasy gongfu movie. Whether or not the details of this biography are true, I believe that Liu Ming has to be understood through his stories about himself. More than entertaining, these stories often had a point; they animated and gave meaning to our way of living. I often asked myself, "Does it matter if this story is true?" Most of the time it didn't.

If someone used the exclamation "Jesus!" you could watch the hair go up on Liu Ming's neck. The power of invocation was always alive around him. Words like "ghost" and "demon" had a tangible quality, and even more mundane expressions like "Thank you" or "I'm sorry" could cause a disturbance in 'the force.'

Over the years, many times I was surprised when someone from his past would show up and I had a chance to interview them about the veracity of Liu Ming's claims. Most people would back him up. For instance, Liu Ming told us that he was once married to a woman who was making a lot of money working in the computer industry in a skyscraper in San Francisco. When she got bored she would hook up her rock-climbing equipment and go for a climb on the outside of the building. Having heard and doubted this story several times over the years, one day his ex-wife Christine showed up unannounced, after not seeing him for over ten years. I pulled her aside and she verified every story I could think, not just her climbing out the window but also that Liu Ming had worked in a record store at MIT, and that for six months he spent all day doing 100,000 prostrations in their Berkeley garage.

As time went by, he started to tell stories about events I had actually witnessed. I sometimes felt that I had missed all the excitement because when he told a story about a minor event he made it sound miraculous. While he stretched the truth a little on occasion, it is quite normal to exaggerate the length of the fish that got away. Overall, the gist of the stories he told were true. Like in all good teaching environments, here too students were free to shout: "No way!" or "I've got a bridge to sell you if you believe that one." Students were not required to believe anything.

Sometimes when I challenged Liu Ming's declarative statements about, for instance, a sacred text, he would say: "The secret copy of this text that I received from my teacher has a note written on the margin." On reflection, I doubted the existence of these transmitted texts as often as I believed in their existence. Still I felt some betrayal when I heard the account of the Seattle students. Just how much material was Liu Ming making up to bluster his authority? He taught that Daoist inspiration is available anytime anywhere, yet he also said that it is easier to use roots that are already established. Thus we were led to believe that through his connection to an orthodox lineage we were taking a well trodden path.

On the other hand, if we were attracted to Liu Ming because of his amazing lineage, then finding out it was all a fantasy would be a perfect demonstration of how we desperately want to be in the proximity of people who help us to believe we are special. Given what Liu Ming taught about truth and the way he taught about it, it is not surprising

that he would make up details to enliven his otherwise mundane existence. It is also quite consistent with historical Daoist practice.

Before the Seattle break, I remember being surprised and humored to get an email from one of ODA's Seattle members asking for my feedback on a comprehensive outline of the nine-year ordination process. Liu Ming's teachings were always loose and permeable; he established order only to reorganize again after the dust had settled. When we were remodeling the Spring Street Tan, we put in new ceilings and moved the walls, then moved them again after the paint had dried. It may sound ridiculous, but Liu Ming was teaching us not to get attached to outcomes—and the process was a lot of fun. It is also possible he was *not* teaching us that, perhaps I just learned that as a byproduct of his fickleness? In essence he taught that it didn't matter which was true. So when I heard that the Seattle students were creating a document that would pin down the stages of ordination, I laughed. I just imagined a student asking him to please create a curriculum so that they would know in advance what they were going to learn, and Liu Ming saying, "What a great idea, why don't we do it together!" only to toss it to the wind after it was completed.

Throughout the nine years that I studied with Liu Ming, individuals would leave because they did not like spontaneous disruptions of whatever appeared to be true or stable. For months on end Liu Ming would keep explaining why, for instance, pizza was so bad for one's digestion. When we finally came around to denouncing and detesting pizza, he would surprise us by taking everyone out for "some really special" pizza. Liu Ming never permanently rejected anything, if you hardened your opinion, he would seek to undermine it. Everything has a place—even pizza. Thus ideas are freed to conform to situations as they arise.

Is this a Buddhist teaching? Is it something a shaman would do? Did he get it from reading *Zhuangzi* or the *Daode jing*? I don't know. Probably all those things are true. Did he learn it from a Daoist hermit? Maybe.

During the first years of my involvement with ODA, all of my close friends asked me if I was a Daoist. My answer is the same now as it was then. "Yes, I am a Daoist, but not if that makes me different than you. Not if that separates us."

The adapt has no fixed heart/mind,
but uses the heart/mind of the people...
The adapt trusts the trustworthy,
but also trusts the untrustworthy.
By this the nature of trust is understood.
---*Daode jing* 49

Are Liu Ming's teachings still significant even if the lineage story is false?
Do the teachings hold up once Liu Ming is out of the picture? Does Daoism have a future in America? I guess only time will tell.

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Daoists on the Southern Marchmount

ROBIN R. WANG

The Southern Mountain (Nanyue 南岳) in Hunan is one of the five central Daoist mountains, with a long history of living masters. According to legend, the Yellow Emperor lived there, and Zhang Daoling 張道陵, the founder of the Celestial Masters, visited the site. The female matriarch Wei Huacun 魏華存 (252-334), one of the key revealing deities of Highest Clarity, had a sanctuary there, and the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Yellow Court Scripture), a major meditative manual, is associated with the site. Today, the mountain is home to thirteen temples with over forty female and thirty male Daoists.

There is an Academy of Female Daoists (Kundao Xueyuan 坤道學院) in the main temple (Damiao 大廟) at the bottom of the Southern Marchmount.¹ Part of the Chinese Daoist College (Zhongguo Daojiao Xueyuan 中國道教學院), originally founded by the Chinese Daoist Association in 1990, the Academy houses a two-year program committed to train female Daoists.

Both the academy and the mountain are under the leadership of the well-known female master Huang Zhian 黃至安, president of the Hunan Daoist Association and also vice-president of the Chinese Daoist Association. She is one of the most prominent female Daoists in China today, at least in terms of political and social involvement. A member of the

¹ For more detailed information about this school, its trainees, and curriculum, see my "To Become a Female Daoist Master: Kundao in Training" in *Internal Alchemy: Energetic Transformations for Vitality and Transcendence* (forthcoming in 2009).

People's Congress as a Daoist representative, she regularly attends sessions at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. She is also the chief editor of the biannual journal *Hunan Daojiao* 湖南道教, which contains ten sections that range from discussions of current events through presentations of classical texts and Daoist history to contemporary moral issues. Master Huang has the long-term vision and firm commitment to promote Daoism in the contemporary world. Supported by various kinds of funding, she has recently acquired a large abandoned elementary school building and turned it to the site of the academy.

The first class of female students matriculated on September 12, 2005 and graduated on June 25, 2007. The class consisted of forty-eight female Daoists, selected from thirty-two temples in sixteen provinces. Its mission is summarized in the slogan: "Honoring Dao, Respecting De; Learning and Cultivation Progressing Together" 尊道贵德, 学修并进. The goal of the program is to train Daoist leaders who can manage temples all over the country and participate in the official administration of the religion. Upon graduation, the women return to their original temples and take on the responsibilities of managing them in a modern way.

Usually aged between 21 and 35, this newly trained elite is set to become a vigorous force affecting the development of Daoism in the coming decades. This group of students lives and studies in the temple facilities. Classrooms are located around a quiet courtyard; they are equipped with new equipment and computing facilities. Learning and living conditions are better than in many overcrowded Chinese colleges. Each dormitory is shared only by two students; a cafeteria provides three vegetarian meals a day. It even caters to the tastes of students from different regions, making saltier food for northerners and spicier food for southerners. This academy is financially supported through a variety of sources: a) local fund raising; b) annual donations by Hong Kong organizations; c) a small amount of local and central government funding.

Nanyue is located in Hengyang 衡陽 county of Hunan province. It is about 100 kilometers from Changsha 長沙, the provincial capital. Changsha's claim to fame is as the location of Zhu Xi's (1130-1200) Confucian academy and as Mao Zedong's hometown. Daily trains and buses connect it to Nanyue. The name of the stop is Hengshan 衡山. From there, a 20-minute cab ride will take the visitor to the temple. I flew from Bei-

jing to Changsha (about two hours) then arranged a private car to get to Nanyue in two hours. After concluding my work there, I took a train from to Mount Wudang 武当山, Hubei, which took about seven hours. During my stay, I roomed as a temple guest. Most temples offer low-price accommodation for relatives and friends of Daoists.

Although these Daoist mountains are also tourist sites with easy access for anyone, talking to female practitioners is a challenge and quite impossible without an internal introduction. I was accompanied by either a professor who also serves as an academy teacher or by people from local Bureau of Religious Affairs. I found that female Daoists are much more shy and discriminating than their male counterparts, but will open upon proper introduction through one of their teachers. The best way to undertake meaningful field work in Daoist mountains is thus through academics. All four Daoist mountains I visited have strong ties with professors in nearby universities. Through them I received initial contacts, then had to make my own way. Even then, talking with individuals presents many difficulties, not least local dialect and inherent reticence.

Most of the students in the Nanyue academy are from the countryside and have about nine years of schooling, with only few attaining a high school diploma. Their reasons and motivations for becoming a Daoist are multifaceted and complex; everyone has her own story. Personal tragedy, such as a death in the family; emotional stress in relationships with men or escape from an abusive marriage; as well as difficulties in finding a job and extreme poverty: those are all factors that can contribute to their choice. When they arrive at the mountain they have to go through a three-month probation period that allows them to try out the lifestyle of the temple and see whether they are suited to it. They also have to find a personal master who is willing to accept and guide them. Only those accepted can stay and become part of the highly select group of elite students.

I visited Nanyue several times over the last few years. Students are commonly busy with course work and test preparation, cramming for exams and writing essays. They have no time to talk to a stranger. However, some of the other other Daoists in the temple were willing to chat, and I heard many fascinating stories about their lives, challenges, and faith. For example, once I asked a 23-year old who was then in the three-

month probation period, why she wanted to be a Daoist. She shouted: "I want to penetrate the dust of this world" (*kan po hong che* 看破紅塵), and ran away.

Li, 32 years old and quite beautiful, is in charge of a small courtyard in the temple. Inspired by immortal and martial arts novels as a teenager, she left her poor home in Anhui province and went to Mount Wudang for Daoist training. However she got involved with a male Daoist there and became pregnant. Both of them were forced to leave the mountain and return to his hometown.

Soon after her son was born, the father left to go back to Wudang, unable to make a living in the village, Li with her young boy had no place to go and started to wander the city streets. Eventually she met a kind man who took them in and supported them. After a few years of a calm yet hard farming life, Li wanted to pursue her Daoist dream again. She discussed this with her generous partner and asked him to take care of her son.

Thus she left her boy behind and returned to Mount Wudang. There she requested permission to visit different Daoist mountains. I learned that there is an internal policy among Daoist mountains that allows practitioners to rotate every three years among them as long as one is willing to be the host. When I saw Li, she had been at Nanyue for one year. After two more years she hopes to move on to Mount Hua in Shaanxi.

I asked her about the life in temple and whether she misses her son. Although she is getting a stipend of only 20 yuan (\$3) per month, all her living expenses are taken care of. She is enjoying the temple life very much because she has the freedom and luxury to read books, play the *erhu* and *pipa* (Chinese musical instruments), and be far away from all kinds of stress. She is also very confident that her boy, now eight years old, is in good hands and that there is no reason for her to worry about him.

Other reasons for choosing the Daoist life included material security, personal training, and a will to serve the community. Many of the young women are truly inspiring in their dedication and, having undergone their advanced training, will serve the religion in a variety of functions. As for myself, I hope to return to Nanyue every so often and learn more about the lives, hopes, and careers of the *kundao*.

How I Became a Daoist Priest¹

MICHAEL RINALDINI

My search for a religious life began informally as a youth under the deep influence of certain events. Perhaps the starting point was my reading of *The Razor's Edge* by W. Somerset Maugham when I was in high school. This book opened my eyes to the value of a spiritual life and the meaning of walking a "path" to accomplish certain goals.

From the 1970s through the 1990s, I continued my search and explorations through various world religions. A significant book along the way was *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* by Shunryu Suzuki. Some of his sayings struck me most powerfully: "So whatever you do, or even though you do not do anything, enlightenment is there, always." And: "Buddha nature is our original nature."

Reading this inspired me to follow the Buddhist path for many years. Plus, the work led to my first significant insight or awakening experience. In addition, I spent six years in and out of Catholic contemplative monasteries. That was in the 1970s. In the following decades, I continued my studies in various forms of Zen, Insight Meditation, and Tibetan Buddhism, including Dzogchen.

It was not until the mid-1990s, and mainly due to health reasons, that I transitioned towards traditional Chinese medicine. At that time I began to train as an acupressure therapist and took qigong instruction from various American teachers. In a very short time, I realized that this

¹ An earlier version of this report appeared in *The Empty Vessel*, Winter 2007.

was the path I had been searching for ever since I first read *The Razor's Edge*.

By the year 2000, I was firmly established in the Chinese health practices of medical qigong, acupuncture, and tuina, as well as immersed in the study of Daoist classics and Daoist meditation. But it was only my first China trip that allowed me to fully experience the deeper significance of following a Chinese path of healing and spirituality.

In May of 2000, I traveled to Beijing to study with Master Wan Sujian (b. 1953). Raised in a family of army medical doctors, he had joined the army at age 17 and duly became a Western-trained physician. During the 1976 earthquake, he performed exemplary service and excelled in various outstanding performance over the following years. Master Wan has received numerous awards for excellence from the Chinese government. He is especially known for his outstanding humanitarian work, including his recent help in fighting the SARS epidemic, and for aiding the poor, disadvantaged orphans of China.²

When I first arrived in Beijing, he was still a military physician, but because of his outstanding performance he had been given permission to open a qigong clinic and training center, combined with a residential school of martial and healing practices for young people. This center, the Bagua Xundao Gong Red Cross Medical Exchange Center, located in the western mountains on the outskirts of the city, also opened its gates to train foreigners in qigong, gongfu, *qi*-healing and other Chinese cultural arts, like the Daoist tea ceremony.

During this first trip, followed by a second sojourn in 2001, I studied and practiced Master Wan's way of qigong (Bagua Xundao Gong Qigong) and learned his method of *qi*-healing. His Bagua Qigong consists of a set of movements, tonifying the three *dantian*, purifying the channels, strengthening the *jingqi*, or harmonizing the Yin and Yang energies. Most of his exercises are performed standing, but some are done lying down, or in sitting cross-legged postures. A usual practice session lasts about an hour.

² A more detailed biography of Master Wan is found in *The Empty Vessel*, Fall 2007.

His *qi*-healing is usually undertaken by a group of six to eight practitioners who stand around the seated or lying patient. Using both hands-on massage techniques and a nontouching form of external *qi* transmission, all send or channel universal energy into the patient together. Master Wan believes that this group effort is more powerful than the work of just one healer or doctor. A treatment of this kind is one of the highlights of the center's healing services.

In addition, Master Wan also provides training and appreciation of traditional Chinese and Daoist culture. For instance, many of his young students play Chinese instruments and perform them regularly for guests.

The center also houses a Daoist temple, consecrated on August 14, 2002. Dedicated to Lord Lao, who is represented in a fifteen-foot tall statue, it is the location of regular rituals, during which students play their music. Since 2001, the temple has been supervised by a resident Daoist priest, Ji Zhitong, formerly a resident of Beijing's White Cloud Temple and former teacher of its current abbot. Priest Ji teaches Daoist rituals to the students and frequently invites foreign guests to participate in Daoist blessing ceremonies.

Another Daoist activity in Master Wan's center is the Daoist tea ceremony. It involves the formal tasting of various kinds of tea while sitting around a large table in a specially designed chamber. I was fortunate enough to participate in it several times, most memorable being those when a Daoist priestess offered us tea in an ornate but simple ceremony.

After my return to California, I dedicated myself seriously to the study and practice of qigong as much as I could, given that I have a full-time job teaching art, qigong and other things to adults with developmental disabilities and a family: wife, son, and two daughters. I developed a strong passion to teach others the Chinese healing arts of qigong, meditation, *qi*-healing, as well as the Daoist practice of scripture study, chanting, and way of drinking tea.³

³ I have since been certified by various agencies, most importantly Master Wan's center, through which I became a Certified Teacher of Bagua Xundao Gong. I am also a Level IV (highest level) Certified Qigong Teacher as defined by the National Qigong Association.

Formalizing these efforts, I developed a Qigong Certification Program which presents qigong basics as well as key principles of Chinese medicine, such as five phases theory and the meridian system. The program also requires a beginning understanding of Daoism and the basic practice of Daoist meditation. For the most part, I find, qigong teachers and practitioners tend to ignore the influence of Daoism on their practice. My students, on the other hand, are highly appreciative of my efforts at bringing them this aspect of the work.

As time went along, I gradually became highly proficient in *qi*-practice and immersed myself more fully in the study of Daoism. Inspired by the religion, I found my old yearnings for the spiritual life resurfacing. So in the Fall of 2002, I asked Master Wan for guidance on how I could possibly satisfy my passion to enter the religious life and become a Daoist priest, both for my own self-cultivation and to spread Daoism in the West. His response was overwhelmingly positive. By this time, Master Wan had already met me twice in China, and knew my background studies in qigong and Daoist practices. He was very happy to hear that I wanted to spread Daoism in America and duly proceeded to make arrangements for me to receive Daoist ordination the following year.

Nine months later, in August of 2003, I was back in China. On the very first morning, still in a jet-lag daze, at 9 a.m., I was being ordained as a Daoist priest at the center's Daoist temple. The ceremony began with several assistants dressing me in a new set of Daoist clothes, including a full-length Daoist ceremonial robe, hat, and shoes. Priest Ji and an assistant priestess recited many texts, burned ceremonial paper, walked in special patterns, and bowed a lot. One of the special rituals Priest Ji did was opening the spiritual eye of a statue of Lord Lao, which I carried back to my home temple. He performed a similar ritual on myself, touching the third eye spot on my forehead. The whole ceremony took about two hours.⁴

During the brief time that I was there, I participated in several Daoist ceremonies, which lasted for hours with lots of incense. My main role

⁴ For some photos of my ordination, see my web page [http:// hometown.aol.com/michaelrqi](http://hometown.aol.com/michaelrqi).

during these ceremonies was to assist in playing simple musical instruments, namely cymbals.

During the next few days, Priest Ji and his assistant priestess spoke to me, through a translator, about the Quanzhen lineage and history. During one of these sessions, he gave me my 22nd generation lineage name Li. The name Chang was added to it, followed by Dao, to make my complete name, Li Changdao.

In another session, the priestess told me that to make progress as a Daoist priest, I needed to study and meditate on certain Daoist scriptures. She recommended that I study the *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi* in combination with a collection of other works important to Dragon Gate (Longmen) Daoists. They include the *Qingjing jing* (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness), and the *Yinfu jing* (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman).⁵ And of course, I should learn as much as possible about the Complete Perfection school, founded by Wang Zhe (1123-1170). She also recommended that I learn the Daoist invocations recited at the White Cloud Temple. Equipped with all these materials, I was ready to return home and begin my new Daoist career.

Shortly after my return, to my great surprise and good fortune, one of the monks I met at White Cloud Temple, Xuan Wen, sent me all the main texts, chants, and invocations for my daily recitation practice in *pinyin* transliteration. Now I could practice the sounds, but I did not understand their meaning. Then—once again meeting the right person at the right time—I encountered Louis Komjathy, then a Ph.D. candidate at Boston University, whose specialty is the early history of Complete Perfection.

Louis had just completed the translation of texts important to Complete Perfection Daoists,⁶ which naturally included the ones I had been told to study plus some others I found very inspirational. He had also translated the invocations chanted at the White Cloud Temple. I was de-

⁵ I recently learned that a similar recommendation was made to the group of British Daoists who were ordained in China. They were given the same list of Daoist scriptures to study when they returned home and formed the British Taoist Association. See their newsletter, *The Dragon's Mouth*, Spring 2004.

⁶ *Handbooks for Daoist Practice*, Wandering Cloud Press, 2003.

lighted with this find and continued my practice with great enthusiasm. Much later, Louis viewed the videotape of my ordination ceremony. He confirmed that the ritual was an announcement rite, wherein they announced my new identity as a Daoist and entered my name into the Celestial Registers. The ceremony included other rituals, like my investiture as a heavenly official and the burning of a petition that welcomed me into the religious order.

To this day, I am still discovering the mystery of what it means to be a Daoist priest. I can still see in my mind's eye the intense stare that I received from Priest Ji as he performed the ritual, looking ever so intensely into my eyes. I strongly feel that this was the true transmission of Dao and *qi*, being passed on into my body and my world.

The next step in this complex journey was the establishment of a training program for Daoist priests in America. Early in 2006, I told Master Wan and Priest Ji that more and more American followers of the Dao were approaching me about receiving ordination. I provided an update about my studies and special Daoist practices, notably the Thousand Day Daoist Scripture Recitation Retreat. This means that every day for 1,000 days I recite a selection from scripture collection, which includes the *Daode jing*, *Qingjing jing*, *Yinfu jing*, *Neiye*, *Nei riyong miaojing*, *Chongyang shiwu lun*, and *Zuowang lun*.

Reviewing my efforts, they agreed to grant me authorization to ordain others. When Master Wan toured the USA in November, 2006 he visited my qigong center in Sebastopol and presented me with a certificate that grants me the authority to train and ordain others as Daoist priests.

Priestly training as available today involves the completion of the Thousand Day Daoist Scripture Recitation Retreat as well as studies in the history of Daoism, especially of the Complete Perfection school. Beyond that, ordinands investigate current trends in Daoism and Daoist studies as, for example, the work of the British Taoist Association (BTA), whose magazine *The Dragon's Mouth* contains enlightening articles on Daoist practices and views on Daoist meditation. The training program also requires extensive experience in self-cultivation: qigong, meditation, retreats, personal self-enquiry, and the deep understanding and application of Buddhist and Daoist precepts.

A major area of focus is Daoist meditation. My approach to Daoist meditation is very similar to what I have seen described in *The Dragon's Mouth*. Shi Jing, the head of the BTA, says: "The original practice which is really the core of Daoism, regardless of what tradition, is *zuowang*, which means to sit and forget. *Zuowang* is a formless meditation" (2005.1). A key issue is how we approach *zuowang* practice. Shi Jing notes: "The first step is the view. The view is that our dualistic state of being is a distorted reflection of the non-dual mind" (2005.1).

As for my vision for the future of Daoism and Chinese healing arts in the West, I feel that my own situation is representative of current trends. For example, in 2007, I officially inaugurated the American Dragon Gate Lineage, as the umbrella organization for the activities and services of my Qigong & Daoist Training Center. A religious, non-monastic order based on my ordination as a 22nd generation priest, it receives continued support from Master Wan and Priest Ji.

Core services include ongoing qigong and meditation classes, qigong clinics, qigong certification trainings, affiliate teachers, and affiliate practice centers, plus the priestly training program. I think Daoism is ready to spread widely in the West. Centers like mine, some much larger and more developed, are being founded and are finding increasing support. Unlike the Longmen monastics in China, these new groups consist of householders (not monastics), with members having families, and membership does not require them to live together as a large, highly structured organization. To increase public awareness, I personally would like to see more general-audience books published on the experiences of accomplished Daoists, both from Chinese and Western perspectives. Just like the mysterious and deep Dao, the spreading of the Dao to the West will be full of mystery and the gateway to wonder.

Grand Offering in Hong Kong

LIVIA KOHN

The Grand Offering (*dajiao* 大醮) is traditionally held once every sixty years to renew the world, pray for peace, and enhance community cohesion. An elaborate event that can last from three days to several weeks, it involves the establishment of temporary altar facilities, the participation of several Daoist troupes, the invitation of major deities, and continued ritual services with full community participation. Historically the successor of the medieval purgation (*zhai* 齋), the first Grand Offering was held in 759 to pray for peace and stability after the devastation of the An Lushan rebellion. In the Song dynasty, the Offering became the main venue of public Daoist ritual, and various detailed descriptions survive from the eleventh and thirteenth centuries.

No major Daoist rites were held in China from 1947 to 1993, when a first Grand Offering took place at the White Cloud Temple in Beijing. This was followed by a ceremony on Mount Min in Shanxi in 2001. In addition, Offerings were held in Taiwan in 1980 (Gaoxiong), 1984 (Tainan), and 1998 (Taipei, at the Lü Dongbin temple). The most recent was a Grand Offering to the Highest Heaven (*luotian dajiao* 羅天大醮) held in Hong Kong in November, 2007.

The Hong Kong Offering

The specific purpose of this Offering, which lasted for eleven days, was to pray for world peace, the harmony of yin and yang, and the cessation of all disasters, as well as to give thanks for ten years of mainland rule

over Hong Kong and forty years of successful activities of the Hong Kong Taoist Association.

The ceremony was sponsored by various Daoist organizations in Hong Kong and was accompanied by a lecture series, an international conference, an art exhibition, a martial arts competition as well as several concerts and book publications. It took place at the Yuen-Yuen Institute, a Daoist center in Tsuen Wan in the southwest part of the New Territories. The Institute, which has both resident and visitor facilities and can easily accommodate large crowds for vegetarian meals, has ample space behind its main halls.

Situated auspiciously on a north-south axis, protected in the back by gorgeous mountains and overlooking both city and ocean, the sacred space was filled with six temporary halls plus an imposing triple gate for the ceremony. The timing was auspicious as well: activities began on the fourth of the tenth lunar month (Nov. 13), the day of the traditional La Festival, and ended on the fifteenth (Nov. 24), the full moon day which was also the day of Lower Prime Festival, the last of the Three Primes of the ancient Daoist calendar.

Over 400 Daoists, many of them women and including numerous lay disciples, participated in continuous ritual activities for those eleven days, with the exception of the eleventh (Nov. 20), which was considered unlucky. They came in groups of various sizes, representing Daoist institutions and bringing their various forms of Daoist ritual and incantation to the meeting. Groups came from Hong Kong (18), mainland China (14), Singapore (3), Taiwan (1), Macao (1), and Hawai'i (1).

Daoist Gods

The Offering was dedicated to the Highest Heaven and involved the presence of numerous Daoist deities, representing the entire pantheon. They were arranged in six halls. The Three Pure Ones (Sanqing), central to the main heavens, schools, and scriptures, were placed in the main sanctuary at the far end of the sacred compound. It was the site for the most important rites, in which all different groups participated.

To its right was a hall to the Jade Emperor, a popular deity adopted into the pantheon who is in charge of the celestial administration. To the left of the main sanctuary was the hall to stellar deities, such as the Dip-

per, Pole Star, and Purple Tenuity. Next were two halls for divinities associated with specific schools. On the right was the Celestial Masters Hall with an altar for Zhang Daoling. Opposite was a hall dedicated to Lü Dongbin, the Eight Immortals, as well as the founder of Complete Perfection, Wang Chongyang, and his main disciples, the Seven Perfected. Last, but certainly not least, and facing the main sanctuary was a hall dedicated to the Numinous Officials (Lingguan), a host of 1,200 celestial administrators arranged in a hierarchical system, commonly designated by the ranks of immortal, perfected, and sage.

Ornamentation

Each hall at the Grand Offering centered on an altar, featuring an image as well as the official seal of the residing deity together with various tablets and ritual implements. Colorfully veiled in red and yellow curtains of soft gauze, they created the feeling of a gradually deepening cave. In front of the hall was a table, ornately decked out with offerings of flowers, fruit, and incense, as well as a large incense burner where community participants would place joss sticks at specified intervals.

The halls were also provided tables and folding chairs for the participants to sit and do their chanting. On the left of the main sanctuary was room for the musical troupe, consisting of about ten players of percussion, string, and wind instruments. The entire area was wired for sound and large speakers created a massive presence of sacred sound.

In addition, the main area was widely covered with multi-colored flags, banners, and sacred lamps. The flags represented various levels of the cosmos by showing the symbols of the five sacred mountains, the four heraldic animals, and the twenty-eight lunar stations. The banners were printed with the mystic talismans of various groups of Daoist heavens, including the Three Clarities. The lamps again showed the holy signs of the twenty-eight lunar mansions, representing the order of time in the universe.

Ritual Activities

The Grand Offering usually involves an initial opening of the altar area and formal invitation of the participating deities—visualized in their

splendid garb by the officiating priest. It then proceeds through several cycles of scripture recitation, repentance ceremonies, and audiences with the gods (that include the submission of official presentations, memorials, petitions, and mandates) to conclude with the sending-off of the deities.

The Hong Kong ceremony, since it was carried by large numbers of different kinds of Daoists, featured many variations of these rites, so that on any given day there would be repentance services and audiences in several halls. Both the initial invitation and final send-off as well as the big offering to Highest Heaven were held at the main sanctuary and involved participants from all groups, as did the huge concluding banquet that celebrated the successful renewal of the cosmos.

Field Notes

Taoist Tai Chi Society & Fung Loy Kok Temple

ELIJAH SIEGLER

Master Moy Lin-Shin, a Cantonese immigrant, founded the Taoist Tai Chi Society (TTCS) in 1970 and the Fung Loy Kok Temple a decade later. They collectively make up the largest Daoist group in the Western hemisphere, yet it remains largely unknown to both scholars of Asian Religion in America and to North American Daoist practitioners, perhaps because it is based in Canada, a country that people in the United States often know little about.

TTCS was founded in Toronto and maintains its headquarters there. There are centers in most Canadian cities and several in the United States, notably in Tallahassee, Florida and Boulder, Colorado. The Society has a growing presence in Europe and the Caribbean. Its founder and spiritual leader was born in Guangdong (Canton) in southern China in 1931. He moved to Hong Kong in 1948 to escape the revolution. There he trained at the Yuen Yuen Institute, established by Longmen monks from Canton. Moy immigrated to Canada in 1970, both to teach martial arts and as a Daoist missionary. He modified standard Yang style taiji quan and coined the term "Taoist taiji."

As Moy's original students left Toronto, Taoist taiji quan clubs sprang up around Canada and later in the U.S. Moy's teachings attracted a graduate student from Hong Kong, Eva Wong, who became the organization's in-house intellectual until she broke with Moy in the 1990s. She

continues to write popular books about Daoism published by Shambhala Press.

Today the TTCS has centers in "more than 25 countries around the world" and claims to have some 10,000 dues paying members worldwide.¹¹ The Fung Loy Kok Temple, dedicated in 1981, is the religious branch of the organization. Temple spaces, which vary in size, are located upstairs or in adjoining rooms to the taiji quan studios.

The Temple "observes the unified teachings of the three religions of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism."¹² These are represented by the central triad of the temple altar as the Jade Emperor, Guanyin (Goon Yam in Cantonese), and Lü Dongbin respectively.

Today, after Master Moy retired from official leadership in 1995 and died in 1998, the Society is registered as a charitable organization, led by a board of directors. Religious activities occur regularly at the headquarters in Toronto. They are performed by lay members who seem to be divided equally into white Canadians and Cantonese immigrants (mainly elderly women). Chanting is performed in Cantonese, which is transliterated phonetically for non-Chinese members.

The TTCS also owns and operates an international retreat center in Orangeville, an hour's drive north of Toronto. In September 2007, the group opened a "Quiet Cultivation Centre" there, its architecture inspired by traditional Daoist monasteries. The Centre is the largest Daoist building outside Asia.³

The TTCS raises awareness by emphasizing the health benefits of practicing taiji quan and the service aspect of belonging to the Society. It runs a facility for seniors and a soup kitchen. Beginning students of taiji quan may be given the opportunity to practice chanting and worship, but most of them do not engage in these activities regularly. Unlike other

¹ International Taoist Tai Chi Society website: <http://www.taoist.org/content/standard.asp?name=AboutUs>. Accessed 3/21/2008.

² See their website: <http://www.taoist.org/content/standard.asp?name=FungLoyKok>. Accessed 3/21/2008.

³ See "How The West Was Won Over," by Stuart Laidlaw, *The Toronto Star*, August 4, 2007. Found on <http://www.thestar.com/article/242972>. Accessed 3/21/2008.

Western Daoist-inspired groups, moreover, the group does not emphasize philosophy, mysticism, or "spirituality."

Both organizations are a goldmine of research opportunities for scholars interested in Daoism in the West. For example, other than official biographies (usually hagiographic), little has been written about the life of Moy Lin-Shin, who certainly is among the pioneers of Daoism in the West. Even less is known about Mui Ming-do, the Daoist priest from the Yuen Yuen Institute who helped Moy open the first Toronto temple. The exact relationship between the TTCS and the Yuen Yuen Institute, moreover, merits investigation, as does the extent and nature of the Daoist initiation rites conducted by Moy or Mui during the 1980s.

Like many new or transplanted religious movements, the TTCS has been embroiled controversies, including strained relationships with former members, many of whom held leadership positions. This strain is often manifested by a mutual unwillingness on either side to discuss the nature of the split. Eva Wong is the best-known among such former members, but there are many more. The Society has also had controversial encounters with public institutions, including a community center in Toronto's Chinatown and a zoning board in Tallahassee. The newly opened cultivation center in Orangeville, finally, certainly deserves attention. What activities will be carried out here? How does it impact the future of the group? What does it herald for the development of Western forms of Daoism?

Daoist Neidan

Lineage and Secrecy Challenges for Western Adepts

MICHAEL WINN

October, 2002. I'm sipping tea with Chen Yuming, vice abbot of Mt. Hua. We're in Qingkeping monastery; above us sheer granite cliff rises up three thousand feet to West Peak. It's my fourth visit in four years to this sacred Daoist mountain, and we are now good friends. He's arranged hidden caves for me and my *neidan* students to meditate in, but I've carefully avoided ever asking him about his personal practice of internal alchemy. Today, I casually ask if he would like to meditate with me.

Chen Yuming flips open his cell phone. He must get permission, he informs me. He calls his teacher, and after an animated discussion, permission is finally granted. I ask him if the concern is that meditating with a "foreign devil" might pollute him spiritually. He smiles, and replies, "I am not allowed to meditate with anyone outside of our very small circle of initiates. It's to avoid any disturbing influences".

We meditate for several hours in silence. The *qi* field, in my perception, is "cooking." Afterwards, Chen Yuming says with obvious surprise: "That was fantastic!" I share with him the Seven Dao Formulas for Immortality of hermit One Cloud I've been exploring for twenty years. He shakes his head. "Those are very deep secrets. Very few in China know these methods".

He had difficulty grasping that these internal alchemy methods are being offered to anyone in the West who wishes to study them. On

Huashan, outside of small private circles, there is little public discussion of the deeper aspects of Dao. As a small example, I am told that Daoist cosmology is not something that would be casually discussed or debated at meals amongst the monks.

Daoist internal alchemy lineages are amongst the most secretive in Chinese culture. They rely on one-to-one or small group transmission and loyalty to lineage. Many Daoist adepts belong to what is called the "School of Seclusion" or "Hidden Secrets." The premise: after admission to a tiny club of initiates, the adept is taught most people are not worthy nor capable of receiving the transmission. Because each adept must pass on their knowledge to only one worthy student – which is a lengthy process that doesn't always happen – *neidan* within China is in danger of being slowly strangled into extinction by the School of Seclusion.

Secrecy is a huge barrier to the appropriation of Daoist spiritual technology by Western seekers. Westerners are considered untrustworthy, and face cultural racism as well. I once heard a Chinese teacher declare: "Westerners are incapable of experiencing *qi*, because they can't speak Chinese." But learning Chinese does not improve your chances of piercing the veil of secrecy. Chinese texts describe secret practices of internal alchemy, but they are "protected" by an obscure code, words only initiates can understand. Only close friendship and trust opens the doors of *neidan*.

Why all the secrecy? Ostensibly, to protect the purity of the lineage and prevent corruption by selfish people who might abuse the spiritual power gained. "Do not leak the secrets of the universe" is an ancient adage. One fear is that the secret methods will be used by power-hungry demon immortals to obstruct the will of Heaven. Other Daoists in China tell me: "We don't know why the ancients kept it so secret. We just imitate them." If this secrecy poses a steep challenge to ordinary Chinese, it is a quadruply high barrier for Westerners.

The most visible counter-force to this secrecy has come from Thai-Chinese teacher Mantak Chia, the most prolific modern appropriator and publisher of Daoist esoteric methods. (Ni Hua-Ching, based in Los Angeles, has published more books than Chia's thirty-plus works, but rarely gives away detailed methods). I was editor of Chia's *Healing Dao Books* for fifteen years, and ghostwriter or co-author of the first seven books that established his fame. Looking back, I was culturally very naïve. I

didn't realize the impact the appropriation process would have on Chinese people. I was shocked to discover how Chia was disliked, even hated, by some Chinese for revealing their "national treasures".

Example: an "inner door" student told me he spent ten years groveling before his Chinese *sifu* in New York city to get his "Daoist secret of secrets" – which turned out to be the "Small Heavenly Round" (i.e., the Microcosmic Orbit). The student was flabbergasted to discover far more complete information on the Orbit in Chia's \$12. book, *Awaken Healing Energy Through the Dao* (Aurora,1983). Its publication, he told me, caused his *sifu* to lose face and undermined him economically.

The publication of Healing Dao materials on internal alchemy forced other Chinese teachers in the West to publish their secrets or at a minimum, become more open in revealing their methods. Market competition exerted strong pressure on the flow of spiritual technology. That pressure is today amplified by the growing power of the Web, where seekers expect to find open disclosure of what is being offered.

A Chinese man once indignantly asked Chia: "Why are you revealing these precious Chinese methods to foreigners?" Chia, perhaps to save face, lied by assuaging him: "I don't give foreigners everything – I keep the most important part secret." The truth is that Mantak Chia, like myself, are "new world" Daoists who believe in openly sharing the appropriated technology as widely as possible, to advance a tradition of Dao liberated from the stifling secrecy of China. This conflicts with traditional Chinese esotericism, even as it fulfills the experimental nature of Daoist culture by spreading it to the West.

Healing Dao's success in the West, at its core, is the offer of an "open architecture" of esoteric Daoist practices that are not owned by anyone, and do not require allegiance or obedience to someone "controlling" that lineage in far away China. After receiving qigong or oral *nei-dan* transmission – often by audio or video - each adept must take responsibility for the integrity of their practice and life. Unfit students get screened out during the long progressive training.

This openness has attracted people from all paths, eager to embrace the inner nature of their body as mapped by Daoists. Many Westerners are attracted to Healing Dao methods by a desire to better manage their sexual energy or heal a physical ailment with qigong. But this quickly changes into the realization they must deepen their relationship with the

entire *qi* field and often leads to study of One Cloud's Seven Alchemy Formulas for Achieving Immortality.

I believe the time for secrecy is over; we live in a different era. It's a far greater danger to Earth to **not** empower a spiritually hungry and more educated public. Powerful spiritual technologies are needed to balance the domination, environmental degradation, and possible destruction of the planet by abuse of material technology. If "demon immortals" are the hidden movers behind this out-of-control application of technology, they have already nearly succeeded in chaining humanity to a polluted and greed-ridden existence.

Deep respect must be granted to lineages who guarded the secrets of Heaven in centuries past. But the decision to reveal secret methods is a responsible choice in the present moment of time. Daoist lineages ultimately trace their power to their "original ancestors" -- direct communion with deep earth, sun, moon, planetary and star beings. A modern adept must respond to the needs of all nature, not to a single human transmitter in China bound by obsolete cultural or spiritual imperatives.

The problem is not simply one of information sharing. It is a truism in internal alchemy that one cannot learn the methods from a book. The eyes and brain filter the energetic transmission and reduce it to mere conceptual information. But I have found that oral transmission is workable by recorded audio. Voice transmits into the ears, bypasses the brain filter and imprints directly into the *jing*/kidney level where deep bodily transformation happens.

Transmission is the heart of all *neidan* lineages. A vibrational frequency is energetically transmitted from teacher to student. But in my experience as a teacher, there is no actual "sending." You cannot force transmission on someone. The teacher creates a field that is alchemically charged with the potential for transformation. It is the student who must "choose" to resonate with or surrender to the vibrational qualities of that transmission. Mantak Chia recently told me "I am happy if twenty percent of the students who come to me can catch my frequency."

1,500 years ago in China, ownership of a hand-copied Daoist scripture (usually channeled) was itself proof of spiritual authority and hence ability to transmit a lineage. Later, mass production of books undermined that authority. This forced seekers to evaluate a teaching based on personal resonance with the teachers de or virtue. In modern mass cul-

ture, the initial transmission may occur through a video or audio recording.

Still, the core transmission process may not be that different. Even though a Daoist text may be multiplied out into a million books, or a teacher's image/voice projected to thousands of people via audio-video recordings – only those who are able to "pick up the frequency" will really get a transmission and be attracted to seek deeper teachings from live connection with the teacher. It's a self-selecting process, just happening on a mass scale. Critics who claim recordings reduce spiritual teachings to a material commodity miss the point. The Daoist principle behind all alchemy, resonant rapport (*ganying*), is still operative even when the training materials are mass-produced.

Although some Westerners seeking Daoist training feel imitation of the Chinese model is the only gauge of authenticity, in my opinion they will have to travel to China to get it. They will suffer the limitations of the School of Seclusion. I have seen no evidence that Chinese Daoist temple or uniformed monastic culture, including the School of Seclusion, will achieve much success in the West.

Quanzhen (Complete Perfection), the dominant Daoist school in China today, was designed to harmonize tension after the Mongol invasion. It synthesized Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. Its rapid growth was due to imperial backing. Today the Communist government maintains a similar influence, choosing the abbot of each monastery, and paying a stipend to each registered monk. This state-backing and tri-religion synthesis are irrelevant and not transferable to Western culture.

Western adepts of internal alchemy are finding their own way, their own language, and a level of openness suitable to their culture and needs. Chinese Daoists have taken notice of this Western interest in internal alchemy. On my 2004 trip to Huashan's caves and other Daoist sacred mountains, scholars David Palmer and Elijah Siegler interviewed many Chinese Daoists about their feelings towards Western practitioners. They found that the Chinese felt the Western interest in Dao elevated their own status in China and validated their choice of path. Yet they repeatedly expressed one concern: Did our *neidan* teachings originate from a lineage in China?

News

of

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Field

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Western Languages

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Dissertations

Bidlack, Bede, "The Universe at Prayer: Teilhard de Chardin and the *Duren jing neiyi* Body Chart" (Spring 2011), Boston College, supervised by Catherine Cornille (Bidlack@bc.edu)

A work on Christian comparative theology, this dissertation examines the theological significance of the body in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. Teilhard was a French Jesuit palaeontologist who, more than any other in the early 20th century, sought to write a theology around the theory of evolution. In *The Human Phenomenon*, he explains that anything one can say about the cosmos, one can say about human beings. The cosmos, he writes, has been moving towards divinization since the beginning of time. Teilhard presents humanity as the summation of the activity of the cosmos, but addresses humanity as a species without defining the body.

What, then, is the body's role in cosmic divinization? Does it have a role? Does Teilhard have the language to express it? Unlike him, Daoism has a language that explicitly connects body and cosmos in humanity's spiritual progress. The dissertation examines the *Duren jing neiyi* (DZ 90), and specifically its "Chart of the Body Image as the Ascending and Descending of Yin and Yang," as a comparative theological resource to interpret Teilhard through the language of body cultivation and divinization.

On this basis, Teilhard's work is then re-examined: What is the body for Teilhard in *The Human Phenomenon*? How does his more theological work, *The Divine Milieu*, explain the process of divinization? Can we use the term "cultivation" when speaking of the Christian process? What positive contributions does the body bring to Western ontology? Are we ontologically connected to the rest of the cosmos? Overall, the work hopes to expand Christian categories of body, divinization, and creation.

De Souza, Eduardo F. Alexander Amaral, "Nourishing Life: The Therapeutic Project of Classical Chinese Medicine" (February 2008), Social Medicine Institute at Rio de Janeiro State University, supervised by Madel T. Luz and Livia Kohn (edu.alexander@gmail.com)

In the last four decades Chinese medicine has established strong roots in Western countries. In the course of this process one current known as Traditional Chinese Medicine (*Zhongguo yi*, 中國醫) appears to have attained a hegemonic position. This current was conceived as a project for reconstructing Chinese medicine in the People's Republic of China after 1949. Looking for a synthesis between classical Chinese medicine (*gudai zhongyi* 古代中醫) and science, TCM has excluded or modified important notions of classical medicine for political, ideological or paradigmatic reasons. Displacing or eliminating important concepts such as *shen* 神, *ling* 靈 and *ming* 命, TCM has emphasized aspects more relevant for the biomedical paradigm and focused more curing diseases rather than creating and maintaining health..

The objective of this dissertation is to apprehend and analyze the conceptions and values that structure the therapeutic model of classical Chinese medicine, giving special attention to aspects that compose its health promotion (*yangsheng* 養生) dimension and reintegrating conceptions that have been excluded in modern forms.

Assuming that during its formative period in the Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.) classical Chinese medicine was closely related to early Daoist thought and immortality practice, I analyze the main concepts of Daoist cosmology that constitute the foundation of medical knowledge in the hope of presenting the case for a more integrative and spiritual appreciation of Chinese medicine.

Shin, Jeong-Soo, "Gardens and Parks in the Literature of the Southern and Northern Dynasties" (March 2010), University of Washington in Seattle, supervised by David R. Knechtges (jeongsoo@u.washington.edu)

This dissertation discusses various kinds gardens represented in early medieval literature of China and Korea. Using mainly the *Wen xuan* 文選, *Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文, and *A Record of Buddhist Monasteries in Lo-Yang*, it begins by reviewing the conventional division into imperial and scholars' gardens, arguing that further internal differentiation is inevitable in each type. In the case of imperial gardens, for example, the Han emperors' in Chang'an is completely different from the gardens of the Southern Dynasties in Nan-

jing both in terms of scale and atmosphere. Scholars' gardens, too, show a diverse spectrum of types: from 謝靈運 (385-433) enormous aristocratic family estate to Tao Yuanming's 陶淵明 (365-427) vegetation area. In addition, the work explores temple gardens that are of equal importance but have not been studied extensively to date. This part emphasizes their unique nature as religious embodiment of a specific cosmology and view of life. To conclude, the dissertation looks at the way in which originally Korean elements were interwoven with Chinese gardens and how both came to fruition in the construction of gardens in Korea.

Toader, Serban "On the Notion of *rang*" (September 2009), Bucharest University, Romania, supervised by Florentina Visan (EMAIL)

The project explores the Chinese notion of *rang* (yielding, backing, rebound) across different areas of culture, from its first appearance in classical texts to contemporary vocabulary and behavioral models—including its appearance in resuscitated "traditional" ethics in the post-Mao era. One substantial chapter is dedicated to the notion in Daoism, where it appears both explicitly and implicitly. This begins with an analysis of the *Daode jing* as a source of Daoist moral values, then moves on to a study of Daoist communities and their ethics. Another part of the thesis is dedicated to the ethical and practical aspects of *rang* in the martial arts, especially as transmitted to the West, where it appears both as a moral and strategic value. (serbantoader@excite.com)

Conferences

Focus on Daoist Ritual

American Academy of Religion, San Diego, November 17-18

Last year's AAR Annual Meeting was notable for its International Focus on China. As part of that focus, a scholarly panel entitled "Daoist Ritual in Taiwan: Performance and Interpretation" at the conference was accompanied by a public performance of Daoist ritual at San Diego State University (SDSU). The panel and performance brought together Daoist scholars from Taiwan and the U.S with Daoist priests from Northern Taiwan in a fruitful series of exchanges.

The panel "Daoist Ritual in Taiwan: Performance and Interpretation" provided case studies that raised questions of interpretive and analytical methodologies for Daoist ritual, an area of the field that still awaits further development. Daoist Master Li Youkun of Guangyuan tan in Jilong, in "Daoist Ritual in Practice," spoke on the Audience ritual (*chaoke*) which forms a critical centerpiece of Daoist communal rites, reflecting on the interplay between his dual roles as both practitioner and scholar.

Gil Raz (Dartmouth College), in "Ritual Theory in Medieval Daoism," analyzed ritual manuals composed between the fifth and eighth centuries to examine statements regarding the efficacy of ritual, using them to suggest elements of an emic Daoist theory of ritual.

Lee Fongmao (Academia Sinica) in "Sacrificing to the Killers, Pacifying and Securing (*anzhen*)," spoke of the dynamic interaction between Daoist priests and ritual masters as seen in the practice of earth-placating rituals in southern Taiwan.

Julius Tsai (SDSU), in "Pacifying the Dragon: Ritual, Habitat and Embodiment in a Contemporary Daoist Ritual," examined a Northern Taiwanese rite to purify and dedicate temple sites, illustrating connections between Daoist ritual and traditional geomantic practices.

On the following day, an all-day public performance of Daoist ritual was held at Scripps Cottage on the campus of SDSU. The event was organized by Julius Tsai and hosted by the Department of Religious Stud-

ies along with numerous academic and community sponsors. Performances featured Daoist Master Li Youkun, Chief Cantor Su Hsi-ming, and Assistant Cantor Chang Yu-lin. The morning program, "The Offering Rite in Daoism," showed an Audience ritual as part of the communal Offering (*jiao*) rites that seek to establish universal harmony. The afternoon program, "Pacifying the Dragon: Exploring Chinese Religion and Culture," featured the construction of a cosmic dragon out of myriad grains of rice in a traditional rite that "explores the relationship between human beings and the earth."

All of the programs were narrated and commented on by Lee Feng-mao. Roughly 200 people from the AAR meeting, area universities, the Chinese American community, and the general public attended the performances. A community reception followed. In all, the panel and performance served to highlight the richness of Daoist ritual, not only in its performative aspects, but also in its ability to spur scholarly reflection on the nature and function of ritual practice.

— Julius Tsai

Workshop on Internal Alchemy

Magdalena, New Mexico, Aug. 31- Sept. 3

Sponsored by Three Pines Press and the Hong Kong Taoist Association, this workshop assembled scholars and practitioners of internal alchemy to create an introductory volume for college classes and a wider general audience. Papers included overviews, discussions of practices of different schools, contemporary aspects, as well as comparative presentations. Present were Wai-Hop Tong and Andy Law from Hong Kong; Lü Xichen and Zhang Qin from China; Stephen Eskildsen, Livia Kohn, Louis Komjathy, and Robin Wang for American scholarship; Caryn Diel, David Capco, and Althea Orr as practitioners. Papers by Zhang Guangbao, Sara Neswald, Wang Li, and Elena Valussi were also discussed in absentia. The group enjoyed the spectacular scenery of the New Mexico retreat and joined together at delicious meals and fruitful discussions.

The volume is currently being edited. It will come out from Three Pines Press in 2009 under the title "Internal Alchemy: Energetic Trans-

formations for Vitality and Transcendence." Contents is as follows:

Livia Kohn, "Modes of Mutation: Restructuring the Energy Body in Internal Alchemy;" Zhang Guangbao, "Beginnings and Lineage Formation in Internal Alchemy;" Sara Neswald, "Body Visions in the *Xingming zhigui*;" Lü Xichen, "The Southern School: Cultivating Innate Nature and Destiny;" Louis Komjathy, "Complete Perfection Practice As Documented in the *Dadan zhizhi*;" Stephen Eskildsen, "*Neidan* Methods for Opening the Gate of Heaven;" Shinyi Chao, "Activation of the Inner Elixir in Daoist Ritual;" Liu Xun, "To Enter the Chamber: The Ethos of Dual Cultivation in Ming Internal Alchemy;" Elena Valussi, "Female Alchemy: An Introduction;" Robin Wang, "To Become a Female Daoist Master: Kundao in Training;" Caryn Diel, "Health, Recreation, and Spirituality: The Western Adaptation of Internal Alchemy;" Stuart Sovatsky, "Kundalini: The Energy Body and Its Transformation in India;" Althea Orr, "Internal Alchemy in the West: The Teachings of Hermeticism."
— Livia Kohn

Southeast Early China Roundtable Eleventh Annual Meeting

St. Petersburg, Florida, November 9-11, 2007

The eleventh annual meeting of the Southeast Early China Roundtable took place on the campus of Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, from November 9-11, 2007. It was sponsored by Eckerd's College Program Series and the Council of Faculty Fellows, and by the Luce Foundation, and organized by Andrew Chittick, E. Leslie Peter Associate Professor of East Asian Humanities.

The Roundtable is a yearly forum for early and medieval China specialists based in the southeastern United States to get together and share their research in a relaxed setting. A public lecture offered in conjunction with the meeting helps to disseminate knowledge about pre-modern China to the host community, and also brings in a specialist from outside the southeast region. Participants this year represented a wide range of

disciplines, including six in history, four in classical philosophy, three in religious studies, and one each in literature and art history.

Our guest lecturer this year was Steven Bokenkamp, currently at the School of International Letters and Culture at Arizona State University, who presented a public lecture on Friday evening entitled, "Ancestors and Anxiety: Daoism and the Family." Panel presentations on Saturday and Sunday included the following:

Tongdong Bai (Xavier U.), "Rulers in the *Republic* and in the *Analects*: A Comparison between the Understandings of the Private and the Public in Western and Chinese Philosophy;"

Liang Cai (Armstrong Atlantic), "A Class Merely on Paper?: A Study of 'The Collective Biographies of Confucians' in *The Grand Scribe's Records*"

Andrew Chittick (Eckerd), "The Rise and Fall of Local Administrative Communities in the Late Han"

Ashleigh Dean (North Florida), "Grand Dowager and Female Emperor: Paradigms of Power"

Eric Henry (UNC), "What *Shiji* Fails to Tell Us About Yue"

Yu Jiang (Florida Atlantic), "Tomb Space and Burial Goods in the Western-Zhou Date Yu Cemetery"

Russell Kirkland (U. Georgia), "Russian Perspectives on Early Daoism"

Keith Knapp (The Citadel), "The Shifting Boundaries of Loyalty in Medieval China"

Mario Poceski (U. Florida), "Hagiographic Transmutations and Evolving Images of the Classical Chan Teachers from the Tang Era"

Norman Rothschild (North Florida), "Wu Zhao and the Nymph of the Luo River"

Huaiyu Wang (Penn. State), "Diké vs. Yi: Two Paths of Justice"

Discussants and other participants included Alex Bush (Eckerd), Cynthia Chennault (Florida), Steven Geisz (U. Tampa), Hong Gu (Eckerd), Greg Moore (Eckerd), Carena Seward (Eckerd), Suzanne Simpson (Eckerd), Galway Traynor (Eckerd), and Christina Welter (Eckerd).

To see the conference program, please visit our website at <http://faculty.berea.edu/richeyj/seecr.html>.

—Andrew Chittick

Daoism in Action

4th International Conference on Daoist Studies
Hong Kong, November 21-25, 2007

This large gathering in Hong Kong was the fourth in the series “Daoism and the Contemporary World,” which first began in 2003 under the guidance of Daoist specialists, sinologists, scholars of Religious Studies and other academics with an interest in Chinese culture. Following the original conception of the congress, this meeting too was not only an international exchange of research but included also Daoism as practiced today. The practical aspect was in fact the main reason for choosing Hong Kong as its location. A large Grand Offering (Luo Tian Da Jiao) was held here November 13-24, 2007. Actively supported by local faithful, it was a mega-event orchestrated and manned by over 400 Daoist priests, monks, and nuns from numerous different countries and communities

The Grand Offering is traditionally held in China in varying intervals—anywhere from five to sixty or even more years; in the old days, it could only be sponsored by the emperor himself. The ceremony involves a series of rituals designed to create peace in heaven and earth. Conference participants were honored and fortunate to be able to join the festivities twice for half a day each in the course of the meeting. The ceremony was held at the YuanYuan Institute, an academic institution for the study of Daoism and also—together with the Hong Kong Taoist Association and the Hong Kong Institute of Education—a major sponsor of the conference. The latter, a college that specializes in the training and continuing education of teachers—located beautifully in the rolling hills of the New Territories—provided the location of the academic meetings.

About 200 scholars participated in the conference. Presentations and discussions were in two main languages: Chinese and English, in some cases both, in very few instances also German. The keynote speaker, Lik Kuen Tong, professor of philosophy at Fairfield University, Fairfield, Conn., began the event by pointing out the essential importance of free flow and explaining the key Daoist notion of openness and pervasive penetration (*tong* 通). About ninety presenters gave talks in a

total of thirty panels, arranged in five parallel venues. Areas of presentation—as in earlier years—included Daoist history, philosophy, ritual, medicine, self-cultivation, contemporary institutions, ecology, and many others more. A large Chinese contingent focused on the contemporary relevance of *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi*.

European presenters included Adeline Herrou (Paris) on contemporary Daoist monastic life, Leslie DeVries (Gent) on *Huangdi neijing* commentaries of the late Ming, Elisabeth Friedrichs (Augsburg) on similarities and differences between Western psychosomatics and Eastern medicine as manifest in diagnosis and treatment of TB, and Michael Friedrichs (Augsburg) on the influence of Daoism on German literature. A group of practitioners from the Berlin area, moreover, gave reports on their experiences and the modern interpretation of traditional practices.

The conference was another milestone in the growing constitution of a truly international Daoist academic community. Several key figures are dominantly responsible for brining this about. They include among Chinese scholars notably Qing Xitai, Zhang Qin (both Sichuan University, Chengdu) and Chen Yaoting (Academy of Social Sciences, Shanghai) as well as the Americans Livia Kohn (Boston University) and Liu Xun (Rutgers University). The German contribution stood out in 2006, when the conference was held at the Frauenwörth Convent on an island in a Bavarian lake (Fraueninsel im Chiemsee). At the time it was sponsored by Hans van Ess of the Sinological Institute at the University of Munich, the Medical Society for Qigong Yangsheng as well as the Societas Medicinae Sinensis (SMS). The next meeting is planned for June, 2009 in Danjiangkou (Hubei) at the foot of Mount Wudang, one of the key centers of Daoist culture and religious practice as well as a UNESCO world heritage site. After this, in June 2010, the conference will be held at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles.

For more details on the program of the 2007 meeting as well as copies of numerous papers, please go to www.daoistconference.org. Announcements for the next conferences will be posted there as well as on www.daoiststudies.org. We look forward to seeing you there.

—Elisabeth and Michael Friedrichs

International *Daode jing* Conference

The most important event in Daoist Studies in China in 2007 was the international conference on the *Daode jing*, held April 22-28 in Xi'an and Hong Kong. The event was sponsored by the Chinese Religious and Cultural Exchange Association in cooperation with the Chinese Daoist Association. It created a national and international forum of heretofore unknown proportions on the interpretation and application of the text.

Relating the text to current issues, the conference convened under the overarching topic "Harmonious World Unites with the Dao" Over 300 participants attended: religious leaders, cultural personages, and scholars from seventeen countries plus multiple Chinese communities. The organizing committee received 274 presentation proposals, coming to well over 1.5 million words. Panels convened on many different subjects focusing on four major areas: "*Daode jing* and harmonious culture;" "*Daode jing* and environment;" "*Daode jing* and contemporary management;" and "*Daode jing* and health cultivation."

What was particularly significant is that for the first time in fifty years the event provided excellent presentations and open discussions of a Daoist text on such a large scale. It also received unprecedented support from the Chinese government. A number of local and national representatives were present, most importantly Jia Qinglin, Chairman of the Chinese People's National Political Council, sent an official letter of congratulations; Liu Yandong, Vice Chairman of the Chinese People's National Political Council, gave an opening speech. The meeting also garnered international recognition and was honored to have the Secretary of the United Nations, the former president of France, and Prince Philip of Britain send letters of well-wishing and congratulations.

At the conference, "The Manifesto of International *Daode Jing* Forum" was announced. It focuses on the relevance of the *Daode jing* in the contemporary world as expressed in spontaneous vision and leadership, recognition of harmony, constancy, sufficiency, and potential limitations, as well as goodness toward all beings. However varied the cultural and ethnic multiplicity on the planet, ancient Daoist wisdom can give guidance toward a universal agreement to honor all life, benefit allbeings in encompassing goodness, and work for world peace.

Hunan Conference on Daoist Culture

Held in Changsha for two days in early November, the conference entitled "Hunan Daoist Cultural Forum" focused on 1,500 years of Daoist history as represented by the local Taogong Temple (founded by Tao Yan and Tao Huanshu in 507), one of the oldest Daoist establishments in this part of China. Sponsored by the Hunan Daoist Association and supported by the provincial administration, the theme of the meeting was "Compassion, Harmony, Progress."

The approximately one hundred participants and sixty presenters came from all parts of China and included important Daoist scholars such as Hu Fuchen, Li Gang, Li Yuanguo, Zhang Songhui, Lü Xichen, Gai Jianmin, Zhou Lisheng, Wang Xingguo, and Wan Li. Panel discussions focused on topics such as "The Historical Development of the Taogong Temple," "Daoist Culture and Social Harmony," "Daoism and Self-Cultivation," "Daoism and Ethics," and so on. Speakers placed great emphasis on encouraging a Daoist way of being in the world by developing a high level of moral awareness within the individual, a strong sense of cooperation and harmony among the people, and a feeling of integration and oneness in relation to the natural environment. All this, it was noted, would support the key concepts of the meeting, compassion, unity, and progress, and lead to a unified and harmonious society that could build a strong and sustainable future for the planet.

Important presenters included the chairman of the Chinese Daoist Association, Zhang Jiyu; the philosophy professor of Zhongnan University, Lü Xichen; the chief of the Hunan Province Religious Administration, Chen Shulin; the chairman of the Hunan Daoist Association, Ma Yongqi, and others. They gave lectures on "Daoist Culture and the Art of Living," "The Wisdom of Daoist Living," "Daoism and Social Integration," and "Langli and Taogong." In all cases, they promoted the further unfolding of Daoist culture in the contemporary world with its power to purify people's hearts, encourage virtuous living, raise world awareness, and build a strong and harmonious new society.

— Lü Xichen

Upcoming Conferences

Conference on Daoist Studies

University of British Columbia, October 24-26, 2008

Sponsored by J. J. Liou and the UBC Faculty of Arts, a small conference on Daoist Studies that spans philosophical, textual, and practice issues is being convened in Vancouver under the leadership of Edward Slingerland in October. Topics include "Daoist sagehood and emotions," "The Body in Daoist Practice," "Textual Issues in Daoist Thought," "Early Daoist Cosmology in Light of Archaeological Finds," as well as "Popular Daoist Practice" in various periods of Chinese history. Invited participants are coming from Canada, the U.S., Italy, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. The format focuses on discussion and text reading rather than the presentation of papers. There is room for a few outside observers. For more information, write to Jennifer Ritchie (jritchie@interchange.ubc.ca).

Workshop on Female Alchemy

Los Angeles, November 7-9, 2008

This is a small, concentrated workshop, sponsored by UCLA and Loyola Marchmont University, to discuss the social and ethical dimensions of *nüdan* theory and practice, focusing on questions such as: What are the ethical and moral justifications for the emergence of *nüdan*? Where do we find them in the texts? What is the role of moral and ethical injunctions in *nüdan* texts? How is the female cosmologically construed and described in *nüdan* texts? How is female physiology described in *nüdan* texts? How does the female body change through the practice? What is the role of healing in *nüdan* practice? How is the *nüdan* religious lineage construed? Who are common popular deities connected to it and why? Are there references to sexuality in *nüdan* texts? Are there examples of lay and monastic practitioners of *nüdan* in traditional China? What are some examples today?

Invited participants include Robin Wang, Elena Valussi, Livia Kohn, Xun Liu, Sara Neswald, Suzanne Cahill, Charlotte Furth, Shin-yi Chao, Irmgard Enzinger, and Dominique Hertzner.

Mornings are devoted to readings from primary texts, each dealing with a specific issue; afternoons are for participants' discussion of individual topics with emphasis on methodological, theoretical and historical issues and challenges arising from the research. Primary texts will be selected and mailed to participants in advance; participants should have read them and come to the discussions ready to tackle essential questions as well as issues of translation, terminology, and practice.

Visitors are welcome to attend, help with the readings, and participate in the discussions, but will not receive funding.

For more details, contact Robin Wang (rwang@lmu.edu) or Elena Valussi (elena_valussi@yahoo.com)

Web Resources

PDF versions of many of the classic works of French sinology and sociology (Durkheim, Mauss, Granet, Maspero, etc.) are now available free of charge from the following websites:

<http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/>
http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/chine_ancienne/chine_index.html

http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/groot_jjm_de/religious_system_of_china/religious_system.html

For the *Zhengtong Daozang* in PDF format, the new *Zhonghua daoang* in searchable DJVU format, as well as a number of other digitized versions of collections of Daoist texts, reference tools, and scholarship, go to one of the following sites:

http://wyx.nbtvu.net.cn/jmm/index_Taoism.htm
<http://www.byscrj.cn/>
http://taoism.xtop.idv.tw/index_Taoism.htm
http://taoism.indranet.co.uk/index_Taoism.htm

Many of the files are in RAR format, which is simply a type of compression; if you download the program WinRAR (it is shareware, but the trial version should work fine) then you can decompress the file:

<http://www.rarlab.com/rar/wrar371.exe>

Also, some of the files are in a format called DJVU (like DeJa vu), which is like PDF but usually searchable in Chinese characters. Tools for reading this format can be found at <http://djvu.org/resources/>

—Josh Capitanio

Foundations

As Daoist Studies broadens and moves up in the world, new foundations are being created that support Daoist research, translation, and practice.

Two such foundations exist so far, the Daoist Foundation (daoist-foundation.org; daoistcenter.org) and Legacy of Dao (legacyofdao.org). Both are nonprofit organizations dedicated to spreading ancient Daoist wisdom and life style in the modern world. They hope to attract donations that will enable them to fund translation, research, and archival projects as well as enterprises that bring Daoist worldview and practices to larger numbers of people with the goal of enhancing health, harmony, and prosperity and improving environmental peace and quality of life.

Legacy of Dao focuses mainly on grants to qualified scholars for the translation of Daoist texts and the completion of research projects. The organization also wishes to sponsor conferences and workshops in Daoist Studies and support projects that enhance the practical accessibility of Daoist methods and health practices. The Daoist Foundation is currently working toward establishing a Daoist Studies Archive that includes every major publication in Daoist Studies, with special attention to Daoist textual collections. Other major projects involve educating the general public about Daoism as a Chinese religious tradition and disseminating accurate, relevant information on Daoism in digital and media formats.

All academics involved in the study of Daoism as well as all practitioners dedicated to bringing Daoism to greater public attention have a

vested interest in working with these new organizations and in making these new initiatives known to the greater public and especially to potential donors. The creation of organizations such as these—as well as their unfolding and growth—is bound to have a major impact on making Daoist Studies a respected and well-received field in the modern world.

In China, too, new foundations are being created. Most recently, the Research Institute for Laozi and Daoist Cultural Studies 老子道学文化研究会 was inaugurated on March 30, 2008 in the Great Hall of the People. The first president of the organization is Hu Fuchen. According to its news release, the number of Daoist Studies specialists in mainland China has continuously increased since the 1980s. While there is great need for multifaceted academic exchange in the field, China until now has lacked a central, national association for Daoist studies, thus leading to a restriction in its academic activities and research quality. The newly established Institute is a top-notch national organization; it will provide a strong platform for promoting Chinese culture and developing the Daoist legacy. This institute has four committees: Academics, Comprehensive Development, Association for Daoist Business Entrepreneurs, and General Administration.

—Livia Kohn, Louis Komjathy, Robin R. Wang

Science on *Qi*

As Daoism makes inroads into modern technological (and especially Western) societies, its practices are increasingly integrated into contemporary lifestyles. This also means that traditional Daoist body techniques in modern guises, such as qigong and taiji quan, are spreading more widely and are coming under closer scrutiny in the medical and scientific community. Although they are not strictly speaking “Daoist” in the traditional sense, the evaluation of these practices from a scientific perspective plays a growing role in the presence and appreciation of the religion in the modern world. For this reason, we include a short column that presents recent publications on scientific trials involving *qi* exercises.

Qigong Research—Randomized Control Studies of Intervention Effectiveness

Cheung, B. M. Y., Lo, J. L. F., Fong, D. Y.T., Chan, M. Y., Wong, S. H. T., Wong, V. C. W., Lam, K. S., Lau, C. P., & Karlberg, J. P. E. (2005). Randomised controlled trial of qigong in the treatment of mild hypertension. *Journal of Human Hypertension* 19.9:697-704. — — Patients participating in a 16-week qigong training program showed reduction in blood pressure and heart rate and other indicators of physical and mental health. There were no differences when compared to a simple exercise group.

Lee, M. S., Lee, M. S., & Kim, H. J. (2003). Qigong related blood pressure and catecholamine levels of patients with essential hypertension. *International Journal of Neuroscience*, 113.12:1691-1701. — — Hypertensive patients in a 10-week qigong training program showed reduced blood pressure, norepinephrine, epinephrine, cortisol and stress level compared to patients in a wait-listed control group.

Lee, M. S., Huh, H. J., Jeong, S. M., Jang, H. S., Ryu, H., Park, J. H., Chung, H. T., & Woo, W. H. (2003). Effects of qigong on immune cells. *The American Journal of Chinese Medicine* 31.2:327-335. — — Patients trained to gather and move *qi* showed increases in white blood cells, lymphocytes, and monocytes and decreases in NK cells compared to patients in a sham procedure control group. Patients in a second group that received external *qi* healing from a qigong master showed increases in monocytes and lymphocytes compared to patients in a sham procedure control group.

Lee, M.S., Lee, M. S., & Kim, H. J. (2004). Effects of qigong on blood pressure, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol and other lipid levels in essential hypertension patients. *International Journal of Neuroscience* 114.7:777-786. — — Hypertensive patients in an 8-week qigong course showed reduction in blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides and other indicators of physical health compared to patients in a wait-listed control group.

Stenlund, T., Lindstrom, B., Granlund, M., Burell, G. (2005). Cardiac rehabilitation for the elderly: Qi Gong and group discussions. *European*

Journal of Cardiovascular Prevention & Rehabilitation, 12.1:5-11. — — Patients with coronary artery disease participating in a 12-week qigong training group that included group discussion showed increases in physical activity and improvements in balance and coordination compared to patients in a control group that received usual care.

Wenneberg, S., Gunnarsson, L. G., & Ahlström, G. (2004). Using a novel exercise programme for patients with muscular dystrophy. Part II: a quantitative study. *Disability and Rehabilitation* 26.10:595-602. — — Patients with muscular dystrophy in a 12-week qigong training program showed stronger maintenance of general health and physical balance and fewer declines in general health and physical balance than patients with muscular dystrophy in a wait-listed control group. Patients receiving qigong training also reported greater decline in use of positive reappraisal as a coping strategy than patients in the control group.

Taiji quan Research—Randomized Control Studies of Intervention Effectiveness

Channer, K. S., Barrow, D., Barrow, R., Osborne, M., & Ives, G. (1996). Changes in haemodynamic parameters following tai chi chuan and aerobic exercise in patients recovering from acute myocardial infarction. *Postgraduate Medical Journal*, 72.848:349-351. — — Patients following acute myocardial infarction in an 8-week taiji quan training program showed reduction in blood pressure compared to patients in an aerobic exercise group or non-exercise support group.

Irwin, M. R., Pike, J. L., Cole, J. C., & Oxman, M. N. (2003). Effects of a behavioral intervention, tai chi chih, on varicella-zoster virus specific immunity and health functioning in older adults. *Psychosomatic Medicine* 65.5:824-830. — — Patients in a 15-week taiji zhi training program showed a 50% increase in varicella zoster virus (shingles) cell immunity and improved physical functioning compared to patients in a wait-listed control group. Older patients with impaired status at the beginning of the study showed the greatest improvement in physical functioning.

Irwin, M. R., Olmstead, R., & Oxman, M. N. (2007). Augmenting immune responses to varicella zoster virus in older adults: A randomized, controlled study of tai chi. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 55.4:511-517. — — Healthy patients participating in a 25-week tai chi chih training program showed immunity and health functioning comparable in magnitude to patients receiving varicella zoster (shingles) vaccination; the two treatments were additive in that tai chi chih combined with vaccine produced substantially higher levels of immunity than vaccine alone. The tai chi chih group also showed significant improvements in self-reported physical functioning, bodily pain, vitality, and mental health.

Thornton, E. W., Sykes, K. S., Tang, W. K. (2004). Health benefits of tai chi exercise: Improved balance and blood pressure in middle-aged women. *Health Promotion International* 19.1:33-38. — — Sedentary but healthy patients participating in a 12-week taiji quan training program showed increased dynamic balance and decreased blood pressure compared to patients in a no-treatment control group.

Tsai, J. C., Wang, W. H., Chan, P., Lin, L. J., Wang, C. H., Tomlinson, B., Hsieh, M. H., Yang, H. Y., & Liu, J. C. (2003). The beneficial effects of tai chi chuan on blood pressure and lipid profile and anxiety status in a randomized controlled trial. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 9.5:747-754. — — Healthy patients with high-normal hypertension participating in a 12-week taiji quan training program showed reduction in blood pressure, cholesterol, and state and trait anxiety compared to sedentary patients in a no treatment control group.

Yeh, G. Y., Wood, M. J., Lorell, B.H., Stevenson, L. W., Eisenberg, D. M., Wayne, P. M., Goldberger, A. L., Davis, R. B., & Phillips, R. S. (2004). Effects of tai chi mind-body movement therapy on functional status and exercise capacity in patients with chronic heart failure: A randomized control trial. *American Journal of Medicine*, 117.8:541-548. — — Patients with heart failure participating in a 12-week taiji quan training program combined with usual care showed improved quality of life, exercise capacity, and decreased serum B-type natriuretic peptide levels compared with patients in the control group that received only usual care.

—Donald D. Davis

Notes on Contributors

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