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Articles

Reading *Zhuangzi* Eco-Philosophically

TAEHYUN KIM

Abstract

This paper examines the philosophy of the *Zhuangzi* from the perspective of Western ecophilosophy. They are similar in that they are both anthropocentric in outlook and founded on a dualism defined through human criteria. The philosophy of the *Zhuangzi* begins with the tension between humans and nature; it criticizes people for thinking of themselves as the center of the universe. The critical anthropology of the text can be interpreted as anti-anthropocentrism in the context of modern ecology.

I find the concept of wandering in the *Zhuangzi* a way of creating “multicentric landscape through Dao.” By devotion to Dao as universal reality, the *Zhuangzi* invalidates human dualism and retrieves the meaning and value of the individual in nature. Discussing the problem of social hierarchy and discrimination, the text provides a comprehensive framework to approach the relationship among self, society, and nature. Ecology in the *Zhuangzi* thus has three main tenets: 1) defending anti-anthropocentrism, 2) recovering the status of the myriad things through and by nature, 3) working towards self-purification for harmony with society and nature.

Anthropocentrism

Etymologically, “anthropocentrism” combines the Greek word *anthropos* (human) with *centrism*, the concept of seeing something as central. In terms of meaning, there are three main definitions: (1) considering human beings as the most significant entity of the universe; (2) interpreting or regarding the world in terms of human values and experiences; and

(3) assuming humans to be the final end and aim of the universe.¹ In contemporary ecology, it is usually a synonym for human-centeredness; some scholars also characterize it as human chauvinism, speciesism, or anthropo-parochialism. In sum, anthropocentrism is an idea that regards humans as the most valuable beings in the world and judges all things only from the human perspective.

Putting human-centeredness into hegemonic centrisms such as androcentrism, eurocentrism, and ethnocentrism, Val Plumwood, an Ecofeminist, extracts the characteristics that are shared and patterned among those centrisms, and applies them to anthropocentrism (2002, 97-109; also Plumwood 1993, ch. 2; 1999, ch 3).

She points out that all kinds of hegemonic centrisms are founded on the dualism which consists of the One as a dominant center and Others as peripheries. Lacking ideological and physical forces which express themselves in their own way, Others only depend on the fallacious images the One makes and projects. The fallacious images in turn produce the polarization which supports discontinuation, enlarges differences between them and makes the differences disparate. Plumwood divides the process producing the polarization into two phases: radical exclusion (or hyper-separation) and stereotyping (or homogenization). In the former, the One segregates Others from itself; in the latter, it renders differences among Others meaningless (2002, 100-3).

Plumwood subdivides the process of polarization in three ways: 1) denial: the One negates the commonalities and relationship shared between the One and Others; 2) backgrounding: by denying commonalities, Others are degraded from the original position; 3) incorporation or assimilation: by not acknowledging Others as subjects having identities of their own, the One defines them only in relation with itself. Instrumentalism is a specified case of the assimilation, which is generated in the sense of value and utility (2002, 104-6).

According to this analysis, the dynamics of anthropocentrism are as follows. By privileging human characteristics like reason and morality and rendering them justified grounds to govern other beings, humans thoroughly separate themselves from nature and make themselves the core and apex of the universe. Nature in turn is demoted as a category of

¹ <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/anthropocentric>; Grey 1998, 10.

homogeneous beings without separate identities that only serve as instruments for humans who deny their intrinsic value.

The reason to find ecological insights in the philosophy of Zhuang Zhou 莊周, a thinker of the Warring States period (d. ca. 290 B.C.E.), is that he denied the inalterability and absoluteness of all criteria humans set up to create the polarization of One and Others and that he found authority for his critiques in nature as Dao. How, then, can the *Zhuangzi* be read eco-philosophically?

Dao and Heaven

The text *Zhuangzi*, as it has been transmitted today in 33 chapters, goes back only to the third century C.E. when the editor and commentator Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312) compiled it. Within this edition, most scholars agree, the seven Inner Chapters are the most authentic and representative of Zhuangzi's thought (Graham 1986), although even there some passages may be interpolations by later editors (Kim unpublished B; Kanaya 1997, 306-30).

In this part of the text, the term *dao* 道 means two things: the origin and foundation of the world; and the truth as highest wisdom in the individual's mind (Liu 1988, 102-23). While most passages in the Inner Chapters bear out the latter, the idea of Dao as the foundation of the world is mainly present in one paragraph in chapter 6.² Based on this, it is possible that Zhuangzi, unlike the compilers of the *Daode jing*,³ was not

² See Graham 2001, 86-87; Watson 1968, 81-82; Mair 1994, 55-56; HYSIS 16/6/29. "HYSIS" stands for "Harvard-Yenching Sinological Index Series" and refers to the series of concordances to classical texts published by the Harvard-Yenching Institute, Cambridge, Mass.

³ There are several early manuscripts of the *Daode jing* or the *Laozi*, as it was then called. Comparing the *Guodian* 郭店 and the Mawangdui *Boshu* 帛書 editions with segments quoted in the *Hanfeizi*, I do not support the suggestion that the text was completed before the middle of the Warring States period. Rather I assume that various versions coexisted until the end of the era. I conclude that highly refined metaphysics of Dao (as in chapter 1) as well as ideas of the governance of the sage, appeared under the influence of other Daoists, especially the Huang-Lao school, after the middle of the Warring States period (Kim unpublished A). It also seems to me that the *Daode jing* we have today, which is quite

interested in the true nature of reality but only in the mind. One may also suggest that parts of chapter 6 were, as Qian Mu argues (1993, 52), not actually by Zhuangzi himself. Even so, it is still necessary to explain why and how the idea of Dao as ultimacy was incorporated into and associated with the Inner Chapters. In other words, how can the thought of Zhuangzi plausibly be matched with the idea of Dao? We may find an explanation in the context of the ancient Chinese understanding and pursuit of Dao as origin and truth. Zhuangzi being part of the intellectual atmosphere of his time by necessity came to share the meaning of Dao as origin and truth with the *Laozi* and the school of Huang-Lao.⁴

close to the *Boshu Laozi*, was completed between the late Warring States and the early Han. In this I follow Qian Mu, who thought so even before the discovery of the latest manuscripts (1991, 21-59). Ning (2005), moreover, examines how the texts were incorporated and expanded at this time.

³ Uchiyama defines Dao in the inner chapters of *Zhuangzi* as “the principle to be in things and to make the individual as they are” (1987, 60). He focuses on the individual relationship of Dao with all things. That is, his understanding of Dao in ch. 6 is similar to the term myriad principles (*wanli* 萬理) of the later Cheng-Zhu 程朱 School of Song Neo-Confucianism. As the concept of the myriad principles always assumes the presence of one underlying principle (*yili* 一理), the Great Ultimate (*taiji* 太極), this may be related to the concept of Dao in ch. 6 of the *Zhuangzi*.

⁴ To understand the uniqueness of Zhuangzi’s thought, we must understand the thought of Huang-Lao school as well as those of Laozi, Hui Shi, and Xunzi. Huang-Lao thought was a highly influential intellectual trend in northern China, spread mainly through the Jixia 稷下 Academy of Qi 齊, right at the time of Zhuangzi and his followers. Some early Daoist texts were closely related to this schools in terms of their editing and development. (On the Jixia Academy as foundational for Daoism at the time, see Chen 1991, 369-384). The compilation and expansion of the *Daode jing* and the *Zhuangzi* seem also be associated with the intellectual influence of the school. In the case of the *Zhuangzi*, regardless of whether Zhuangzi actually knew of Huang-Lao thought, it is significant that some disciples sought to compromise Zhuangzi’s thought with that of Huang-Lao (as shown clearly in parts of the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters and, to me, even in the Inner Chapters). Several sections of the Inner Chapters show that Zhuangzi’s followers held various views, matching intellectual competition and struggle at the time. I suppose the Inner Chapters have two different philosophical inclinations: logician and Huang-Lao (Kim unpublished B; C). The former,

Rather than using the term Dao, Zhuangzi frequently resorts to the term Heaven (*tian* 天) to refer to the origin and foundation of all things—comparable to Dao in the *Laozi* (Xu 2002, 324-29).⁵ "Heaven" here has three meanings: sky (*tiangong* 天空); myriad things and great nature (*tiandi* 天地); and spontaneity which is so of itself (*tianran* 天然), a term synonymous with *ziran* 自然 (Lee 2006, 180).

In its second meaning, Heaven is not only a generic term for all beings, but also connotes the origin of the world and the base for the completion of individual beings. Heaven here is close to the use of Dao in the *Laozi* and in the Huang-Lao texts.⁶ Since Heaven is the great being, in

approving the prevalent theory that all things are one body, developed Zhuangzi's perspective of epistemology, language, and logic in the competition with Gongsun Long, Hui Shi, and the Mohists. The latter are responsible for ideas of human ethics, the perfect being as ideal man, the politics of the sage, and the cosmology of *qi* in the Inner Chapters. While the ideas of former are mainly concentrated in chapter 2, those of the latter are broader in theme and more widely spread in various anecdotal fragments. Altogether, this shows that the *Zhuangzi* was under some impact of Huang-Lao influence during its editing and development.

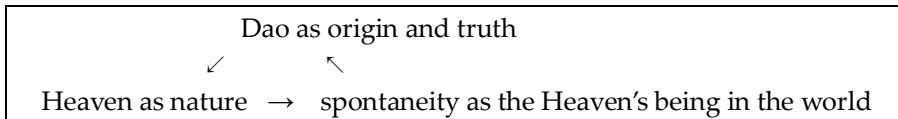
⁵ As Fukunaga points out, the compilers of the Outer Chapters tended to subordinate Dao to Heaven (1966, 2:4). However, the Inner Chapters do not show this explicit subordination. Contrary to Fukunaga's interpretation, I think that the term for true reality in the Inner Chapters is not only Dao but also Heaven (Fukunaga 1966, 1:3-4). According to HYSIS, the Inner Chapters contain the term Heaven 46 times, compared to Dao, which appears 38 times (HYSIS, 274-77; 213-20). This shows that Zhuangzi paid attention to ultimate issues.

⁶ The formation of Huang-Lao resulted from the fusion of ideas in ancient China matching the political intention toward building one empire. By Huang-Lao I mean a philosophy based on the theory of Dao as the ultimate reality of the universe that seeks to unify body, state, and nature into one system. This concretely developed into the theory of *qi* 氣 which proposed cosmic energy as the elementary substance of the universe, and the theory of resonance (*ganying* 感應) following from speculation on *qi*. The latter, part of the vision of complementary dualism (yin-yang 陰陽), approached the movements and transformations of all things, beings, and communities as being due to a shared underlying substance, which corresponds to Heaven as Dao (Kim 2003). Huang-Lao thought had two basic dimensions with regard to realizing the natural order in the human world. One was to define and expand on Heavenly Dao (*tiandao* 天道) in establishing social order and the governance of the sage king—as presented in the *Huangdi*

order to show fundamental human contradiction and relativity, Zhuangzi often compares it with heavenly infiniteness. Heaven implies all beings and their creator, so that one can translate the term as “(mother) nature” when placing it in the context of contemporary Western ecology. In this sense it is quite different from the concept nature as only secularized and disenchanted.

The third meaning of Heaven, finally, clarifies the relationship between the Heaven and spontaneity. Zhuangzi in this context tries to cover the flow and mode of being of Heaven or Dao in the world.

We can now draw an organic relationship of the three terms – Dao, Heaven, and spontaneity – in a diagram showing how Dao is spontaneously in the world of beings and how it exists and manifests in the world of spontaneity:



Yet another important term is things or beings (*wu* 物) that make up the world as individuals. The *Zhuangzi* deals with this term mostly in the Outer and Miscellaneous Chapters. Here *wu* indicates three distinct characteristics of beings. For one, things or beings are material objects of sense, language, and cognition; they have external forms and names. For another, they exist in changeable conditions, are restricted in time and space, and are dependent on mutual counterparts or opposites. And third, they originate from Dao (or Heaven); however, since Dao is known

sijing 黃帝四經, part of the Mawangdui manuscripts (see Ryden 1997; Chen 1995, 29-45). The other was concerned with the cultivation of the sage king in his effort to realize Dao in the world. That is, it was about cultivating body and spirit (*yangxing yangshen* 養形養神), which emphasized knowing and embodying the heavenly principle in the human body. This appears most clearly in four chapters of the *Guanzi* 管子, i.e., “*Neiye*” 內業, “*Xinshu*” 心術 I & II, and “*Baixin*” 白心. The former paid attention to identifying the order of Dao in the political community; the latter focused on the human body as a microcosmos as realized by the sage king. Huang-Lao thought on politics as referred to in this paper mainly relates to the former.

in the world as beings or things, the two are interdependent.⁷ Dao should not transcend the world completely because it always manifests in beings and things.

Nature

The *Zhuangzi* sees nature in a variety of ways. To begin, nature is the entity that gives birth to and brings up all beings in the universe. They live and blossom in nature. It is the root and basis of the perfection of beings, but does not ask any recompense for bearing and nurturing them. Thus nature and/or Heaven is the maker of things (*zaowu zhe* 造物者) and the creator and transformer (*zaohua zhe* 造化者), the one that "fashions and transforms us" (ch. 6; Graham 2001, 88).

Beyond this, nature is also the genuine criterion of cognizance and judgment. Only by entrusting oneself to nature can one overcome relativity and obtain a true standard. In this sense as the true criterion of Dao, nature is called the true master (*zhenzai* 真宰) or the true lord (*zhenjun* 真君) (ch. 2).

Third, nature endows human beings with fate, literally "that which is decreed" (*ming* 命). The *Zhuangzi* uses this term in two opposite directions: one is the decree given by Heaven to humans; the other is the orders that issue from humans' inner mind toward Heaven. The former is the decree of Heaven (*tianming* 天命) than to the Mandate of Heaven in the sense of public duty and political legitimation as which it is central to the thought of Confucius and Mencius. The latter is ongoing or trans-

⁷ Li Zehou's statement—made in comparing Neo-Confucian ethics with Kant—is relevant here: "Clearly separating reason from recognition and noumenon from phenomenon, Kant understood that practical reason is related to absolute imperative and duty, not with any kind of emotion, idea, cause, effect, and time-space in the phenomenal world at all. Only when doing so, [he believed], the status of noumenon beyond experience is thoroughly secured. Compared with this, the practical reason of Chinese philosophy is associated with the pursuit of the noumenous in phenomena. That is, the Chinese seek to transcend the world by participating in it, and their philosophers have continually emphasized phrases like "Heaven and humanity becoming one," "all things are one body," "substance and function share one root," and "substance and function have no distance between them." See Li 1985, 236.

forming fate (*yunming* 運命), a notion that emphasizes a person's inner experience in the relationship with nature. The life of all beings is conditioned by Heaven, and all beings—and especially humans— should be aware of and follow the order of nature as it issues 'he mind.⁸

Human Beings

The critical discourse on human beings in the *Zhuangzi*, when read in modern ecological terms, is a form of anti-anthropocentric anthropology. It comes in two critiques: one of human reason, the other of the social order as an extension of human-centeredness. The former is the introspection of the self, and the latter of community matters as human society and politics.

Human Reason

Western philosophers, as is made clear in the dispute over anthropocentrism in contemporary ecology, have tried to demonstrate that human beings justifiably have the highest value and top status in the universe because of their capacity for reason. For example, Immanuel Kant said:

Now, a human being really finds in himself a capacity by which he distinguishes himself from all other things, even from himself insofar as he is affected by objects, and that is reason. (1996, 99)

As exemplified here, Western thinkers have seen reason as a uniquely human capacity which gives people the position of dominating all beings and things. The question of whether plants and animals are subjects of intrinsic (or inherent) value with the right to live and blossom is accord-

⁸ Uchiyama understands Heaven is a determinant of existence and the state of all things in nature, including humans. At the same time, he points out the difference in the character of Heaven as found in the *Analects* or the *Mengzi* and the Inner Chapters of the *Zhuangzi*. While Heaven in the *Zhuangzi* cannot be recognized through reason, in the Confucian works it can (1987, 58-59). However, Heaven in both traditions is fundamentally similar: ineffable, beyond human reason and language, and a sense of reverence toward great being.

ingly closely linked with whether they can rationally think.⁹ Thus Western philosophers have insisted that reason is indisputable proof for human dominion in the universe, proposing a focus on rationality in explaining the value of being. The evaluation of reason in explaining the value of human beings has been so influential that even Deep Ecology, a defender of biospherical egalitarianism and one of the most radical ecological movements in the West, emphasizes that human reason should not be underestimated (Naess 1991, 169-71). Although Deep Ecologists do not think that rationality alone justifies human superiority, they approve the proposition that human reason has valuable meaning and status in nature (see French 1999, 127-45).

The *Zhuangzi*, on the contrary, tends to support anti-rational thought (Graham 1991, 176-83). Two grounds for the distrust are given. First, human cognition and judgment take root in the inner mind, which is full of desires and ego-oriented knowledge.¹⁰ Reasoning based on the mind inevitably leads one to the fulfillment of desires or self-justification, while human certainty is bound within the limitation of knowledge and experiences. Thus humans never reach absolute correctness by using them.

Second, all conditions for cognition and judgment such as specific situations as well as object and subject are constantly exposed to the changing reality of the world. All criteria undergo changes in time and space, so any truth believed at one time may change into falsehood at another. Any reasonable judgment restricted in time and space can never be absolute. The conclusion is thus necessarily that on human reason cannot be an authority guaranteeing the superiority of human beings.

⁹ The term "intrinsic value" appears with various meanings in environmental ethics. According to John O'Neill, it has three main denotations: "a synonym for non-instrumental value," "the value an object has solely in virtue of its intrinsic properties," and "a synonym for objective value, i.e., value that an object possesses independently of the valuations of valuers" (2003, 131-32). Also, the difference in meaning between inherent value and intrinsic value is not clear. A clear distinction is made in Wetlesen 1999.

¹⁰ For more on the meaning and importance of the mind as a philosophical subject in ancient China, see Nivison 1987, 6:477-78.

The critique and denial of human reason are further connected to the deconstruction of dualism, reducing the relation between oppressor and oppressed. As described in ch. 3:

When his apprentice had had his fill of gazing at it he ran to catch up with carpenter Shi. "Since I took up the axe to serve you, sir, I have never seen such noble timber. Why is it that you didn't deign to look at it, didn't even pause as you walked?"

"Enough, don't mention it again. That's good-for-nothing wood. Make a boat from it and it will sink, make a coffin and it will rot at once. . . . This wood is wretched timber, useless for anything; that's why it's been able to grow so old. When Carpenter Shi came home, the sacred oak appeared in a dream and said to him. With what do you propose to compare me? Would it be with the fine-grained wood? . . .

"Besides, you and I are both things, what nonsense! That one of us should think it is the other which is the thing; and the good-for-nothing man who is soon to die, what does he know of the good-for-nothing tree?" (Graham 2001, 73)¹¹

According to this anecdote, human-centered judgments on other creatures result in the neglect of their intrinsic value and just serve as a justification for instrumentalizing them. Carpenter Shi's treatment of trees is based on the dualism useful versus useless (*yong/wuyong* 用/無用). Instead of respecting the sacred oak as an entity with value in itself, he stereotyped and homogenized it just as good-for-nothing wood.¹² The

¹¹ This anecdote is related to a similar one in ch. 20. See Watson 1968, 209-10; Mair 1994, 185-88; HYSIS 51/20/1. The author states that he would be halfway between useful and useless, i.e., denies human-centered criteria. However, he deepens the alternative in taking a position halfway by pointing out that even the alternative is set as another norm for humans to be followed; even the mean (*zhong* 中) should still be infinitely negated.

¹² According to Joseph Needham, this passage can be read as a Daoist denial of "general teleology" (1962, 2:55). Needham seems to understand the meaning of general teleology as the human assumption as in the Christian faith that everything has its ground to complete itself from God and that its completion is only for human use. Teleology usually implies that the "ethical requirements or recommendations are directed entirely toward [some ideal of] the good con-

anthropocentric judgment causes the denial of the characteristics and values the tree; it contains inherently the denial of all things and beings, seeing them only as entities after a "rational" process of backgrounding and incorporation.¹³ All exclusions and discriminations accordingly come from the human certainty of reason. Zhuangzi's critical anthropology thus questions human analytical framework built on the trust of reason. He soon expands this criticism to the social structure.

Social Order

Murray Bookchin, the founder of Social Ecology, argues that human despoiling of nature is an outcome of human dominion over other humans, represented as the universal social pattern of hierarchy.¹⁴ The *Zhuangzi*, too, supports the idea that the formation of a hierarchical society is closely related to the centering of humans in the universe. As ch. 4 says:

In the state of Lu there was a mutilated man, Toeless Nuncle Hill, who went plodding along on his heels to see Confucius.

"Because you weren't careful," said Confucius, "you have long since brought such a misfortune upon yourself. Although you've come to see me, it's already too late."

"It's only because I didn't know my duty and was heedless of my body that I lost the front of my feet," said Toeless. "In coming to you now, I am still possessed of something more precious than my feet and that's why I am striving to preserve it whole. There is nothing that Heaven does not cover; there is

ceived independently of those requirements or recommendations" (Slote 1992, 2:1235). If one approach the teleology in the environmental perspective, not as the usage in the Christian theology, that all living things are inherently their own center of life regardless of human use or purpose, as Paul Taylor suggests, the term virtue (*de* 德) is open to be apprehensible as Daoist teleology which could be represented as nature of Dao. It is because Dao in Daoism only gives all things lives and orientations to fulfill, but never intervenes in their lives. For further understanding of teleological center of life in environmental ethics, see Taylor 1986.

¹³ Here I disagree with Kanaya who emphasizes that nature in early Daoism was "an idea as a whole," and that early Daoists were not interested in nature of particulars (1997, 85).

¹⁴ He says: "By hierarchy, I mean the cultural, traditional, and political systems to which the terms class and state most appropriately refer" (1991, 68).

nothing that earth does not support. I thought of you as Heaven and earth, sir. How could I have expected that you would treat me like this?" (Mair 1994, 45)

This anecdote presents two opposite settings: one is order as rites and punishments (*li/xing* 禮/刑) defended by Confucius; the other is the order of Heaven and Earth (*tiandi* 天地) as presented by Toeless. Mutilation as a punishment of course implies social structures and hierarchies—especially since such penalties were inflicted only on commoners (*shumin* 庶民) and not on the upper classes (*daifu* 大夫) in the Warring States period.¹⁵ Confucius's response is thus a justification for the maintenance of vested rights in the social order.

The *Zhuangzi*, on the other hand, shows that the ideal social order as based on ritual propriety in the Confucian system is actually distorted to a hierarchy characterized by exclusion and discrimination. Toeless defines the Confucian order as anthropocentric, finding its base in the refutation of the natural order. Heaven and Earth neither exclude nor discriminate against any being, but embrace and nurture the all equally. By comparing the social order with nature, he invalidates the human hierarchical structure of dominion and suggests the egalitarianism of all beings in nature.

How, then, can one break through anthropocentrism? The answer has to do with self-cultivation as a specific method of immersion in nature.

Self-Cultivation

As regards the actual process of how to go beyond human-centeredness and turn back to nature, the *Zhuangzi* presents two ways: opening a path through politics and practicing self-cultivation of the inner mind—two ways that, moreover, are not incompatible contradiction but present levels of priority.

¹⁵ The *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites), compiled in the Western Han, says: "The practice of rites does not apply to commoners; the execution of punishments does not apply to the noble" (ch. 1).

Limitation of Politics

The *Zhuangzi* in general tends to deny politics as a way of turning back to nature, claiming that political activities are associated with egoistic desires for fame and self-aggrandizement. It thus criticizes the human motivation for political participation but does not deny the essential human need to live together.¹⁶ In this, the text differs from Huang-Lao documents, which have a more positive outlook on the question whether human beings are able to construct a social system analogous to the human that matches the law and reflects the flow of Dao.¹⁷

The *Zhuangzi* is much more prudent and negative on that point. It notes repeatedly that all externalization through human language, ideas, or social structures necessarily brings about distortion. Its vision of the ideal person is accordingly more individualistic and internally focused—in contrast to that of the *Daode jing*, where the sage is a political being. But this does not imply that the text denies human communal life.¹⁸

¹⁶ Quoting a dialogue between Xiegong Zigao 葉公子高 and Confucius (Watson 1968, 59-60; Graham 2001, 70; Mair 1994, 33; HYSIS, 10/4/40), Ōhama claims Zhuangzi admitted that fealty and service to a lord were inevitable destiny. He differentiates Zhuangzi's position from the Confucian hierarchical order and argues that what is important in the *Zhuangzi* is the acceptance of the inevitability in the mind. He concludes that Zhuangzi neither supported nor justified hierarchical segregation and discrimination (1978, 334-36).

¹⁷ The *Huangdi sijing*, based on an idea of Dao-Law (*daofa* 道法), explicates this kind of understanding. For example, a book of the *sijing*, *Jingfa* 經法 says in its first sentence, "Dao births Law" 道生法, and it means, only from the order of nature as Dao, the order of state should be established. Since law exactly reflects the principle of Dao, to follow and obey an institutionalized law of state is same to participate in the cosmic principle; and in turn to enact law is to sanctify the human political community by the sacred principles. This sanctification of society is possible and perpetuated by and through the human Sage. The emphasis on the Sage King rendered the Huang-Lao thought to hold a perspective, that Heaven-Earth-Man are one body (*tianzhiren yiti* 天地人一體). In this, the core of the doctrine is in the ascending power and status of humans, which became equally matched with Heaven and Earth in the end. That is, the perspective of the one body was an expression of awakening and ambition of human power and capacity of the Huang-Lao school.

¹⁸ Sima Qian 司馬遷 has contributed to the understanding of Zhuangzi as a political skeptic. Although his perception of Zhuangzi's thought emphasizes its peculiarity when compared to other thinkers of the time, it is still open to ques-

While the *Zhuangzi* is concerned with tragic human reality and seeks solutions for overcoming it, recognizing the fundamental limitations of externalization such as language and social systems, it keeps silent in addressing political alternatives. The text's silence on the ideal community, moreover, is contrasted indirectly and negatively in several visions of ideal places and holy persons, such as faraway Guyi Mountain in ch. 1.

In terms of ecological concerns, it is hard to imagine Zhuangzi persuading us to completely abandon the will to save the Earth in crisis.¹⁹ Truly if he consistently distrusted humans and thought of them as not understanding that anything was wrong, he would recognize neither the problem of humans against nature nor the necessity of self-cultivation. However, exposing his critical view of humans and society, Zhuangzi invites people to self-cultivation in an ethical dimension.²⁰ In this, his

tion how much Sima's position helped the overall understanding of the *Zhuangzi*. There seems to be two possible reasons why Sima stressed the reclusive and anti-political tendencies in the *Zhuangzi*: First, placing the *Zhuangzi* with other early Daoist works associated with Laozi, Shen Buhai 申不害, and Han Feizi, he needed to focus on Zhuangzi's political uniqueness and oversimplify its position. Second, as Guan points out, Sima Qian wanted to criticize the Confucianism of his time by referring to *Zhuangzi* chapters that present challenges to the Confucian social order (1961, 322). The chapter titles Sima uses, too, reflect his inclination to read the text in the perspective of political anarchism. However, the problem of Sima's intentional description cannot be clearly verified, since we do not know if his text was the same as ours.

¹⁹ Kirkland cautiously sees a possible transformative power of the ideal person in the *Zhuangzi*, contrasting it with Yearley's interpretation of the *Zhuangzi* as persuading people to abandon any will to save the earth (2001, 283-304). Similarly, comparing the thought of the *Zhuangzi* with Confucianism and Mohism, Wang Bo also tries milder thought experiment: should one who knows that a bucket of water cannot help the fire still assist his neighbor? Wang suggests that Zhuangzi's idea is much more dispassionate than comparable visions in Confucianism and Mohism (2004, 3-4). Implying that Zhuangzi pondered and sought to overcome the dominant role of human emotions without reflection in judgment and determination, I partly agree with Wang.

²⁰ I agree here with Allison's critical analysis of relativistic interpretation of the *Zhuangzi* (1989, 111-26). However, I doubt that there can be a clear distinction between spiritual transformation with mystical and religious means in the *Zhuangzi* (see Allinson 1989, 7-9).

skeptic position seems to be a therapeutic prescription for a harmonious life with nature (Kjellberg 1996). Therefore, his critiques of humans and society go against the anthropocentric origin of human judgment and morals, not against humans as such. Thus I believe that for Zhuangzi the ecological quest to save the earth is justifiable in principle.

Cultivation of Mind

Since Zhuangzi finds the root of anthropocentrism in human ignorance and inner desire—rather than in the spread of the mechanistic view of nature, the rise of capitalism, and the formation of a hierarchical society, he sees the true method to dissolve desire and to return to nature as self-cultivation.²¹

Despite all relativity and self-contradictions, human beings need to cultivate themselves and are able to achieve transformation. Where then can one find the potential to cultivate? The text suggests:

"Once when I was on a mission to the state of Zhou," said Confucius, "I happened to see some little pigs sucking at their dead mother. After a short while, they all abandoned her and ran away hastily. It was because they no longer sensed her to be their kind. What they loved about their mother was not her physical form but that which animated her form." (ch. 4; Mair 1994, 47)

Zhuangzi emphasizes that what makes humans move is not their outer shape and that humans already acknowledge it through an inherent sensibility. In the following, he explains more clearly that the key factor is virtue.

²¹ It would be fair to suggest in the view of Social Ecology or Ecofeminism that the *Zhuangzi* simply reduced the problem of the contradiction of social system to that of the subjective mind. However there would also be a fundamentally questionable point as follows: whether it is truly possible or appropriate to separate human individual self from society itself in explaining and analyzing social phenomenon. The ancient Chinese, including Zhuangzi, who did think the relationship between individual self and society not as just conflicted or incompatible but as prior and naturally extended, would not agree the modern approach to understanding humans and society.

What do you mean when you say his virtue takes no form? Among level things, water at rest is the most perfect, and therefore it can serve as a standard. It guards what is inside and shows no movement outside. Virtue is the establishment of perfect harmony. Though virtue takes no form, things cannot break away from it. (Watson 1968, 74)

He makes three points: the potential for self-transformation is distinctly defined as virtue; it has no form; and its perfection brings about the harmony of all things, including humans and society.

The notion of virtue as formless closely relates to Zhuangzi's critique of externalizations like language, ethics, and social order as based on human-centered reason. Externalizations without cultivation merely reflect desires, and what comes to appear as virtue is necessarily distorted. His contention that the perfection of virtue brings about social harmony, moreover, allows us to match Zhuangzi's thought with an ecological perspective. He affirms here that the myriad things can be in harmony, and that people can communicate and make friends with each other without external forms like language. This can be realized in a state of being at peace with the decreed (*anming* 安命) as is made clear in the following stories:

There was a man of Lu, Princely Nag, who had been mutilated by having one of his feet cut off, yet those who followed him in his wanderings were as numerous as the followers of Confucius.

Chang Ji inquired of Confucius, "Princely Nag has had one of his feet cut off, yet those who follow him in his wanderings divide up half the state of Lu with you, master. He neither teaches when standing nor discourses when sitting. Yet those who go to him empty come back full. Is there truly a 'doctrine without words,' a formless mental accomplishment? What kind of person is he?" "Sir," said Confucius, "he is a sage.... I would lead the whole of the empire to follow him." (Mair 1994, 42-43)

Master Si, Master Yu, Master Li, Master Lai were all four talking together. Who can look upon nonbeing as his head, on life as his back, and on death as his rump? they said. Who knows

that life and death, existence and annihilation are all a single body? I will be his friend! The four men looked at each other and smiled. There was no disagreement in their hearts and so the four of them became friends. (Watson, 83-84)²²

In the first, Zhuangzi admits that people hope to follow Wang Tai (Princely Nag), a sage who had his foot amputated. This sends two messages: even those punished and excluded from the social order can become sages in virtue, contrasting inherent goodness with the injustices of man-made law, social hierarchies, and human judgment (see also ch. 2). And it makes clear that for Zhuangzi all human beings can be disciples of the sage, which means all people have both the potential and the inherent will toward the completion of virtue.

The second story, too, sends two messages: in nature there is ultimately no dualism of life and death, existence and annihilation as established by human beings; and through the transmission (*tong* 通) of mind we can truly form friendships and solidarity thus creating community.

These stories thus present an alternative vision of human beings and social life, as based on the practice of self-cultivation. The method, moreover, that the *Zhuangzi* extols to reach this goal is the cultivation of the mind through "forgetting and emptying."

Since all anthropocentrism ultimately comes from the mind, it is essential that people forget and empty themselves of all cognition, judgment, and social patterns as set up in a human-centered way. "Sitting in oblivion" (*zuowang* 坐忘), outlined in ch. 6, is a typical example of this emptying cultivation. It clearly shows how humans can dismantle their human-centeredness, beginning by clarifying that anthropocentrism begins with accepting organ-based sensory data, recognizing external forms, and creating knowledge about things. These in turn lead to formal ethics and a hierarchical social order, matching in every way the expansion of human desires. Thus it is that human beings act against nature as flow of Dao in the world. By articulating his methodology of *zuowang*,

²² Graham here translates *shu* 孰 as "which of us" (2001, 87). This limits the boundary to make friends to only the four men themselves. Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 reads the passage: "If anyone who can know this [principle of nature] exists, I will be his friend" (Guo 2006, 258). I prefer this understanding.

Zhuangzi thus asks his followers to dissolve any momentum causing human-centeredness.

Together with forgetting, moreover, Zhuangzi proposes an emptying of the mind. This is presented in “the fasting of the mind” (*xinzhai* 心齋). According to this, human senses and the mind easily give in to desires, then project established values, criteria, and systems into the world. He accordingly insists that people stop using them, replacing their ordinary way of sensing and thinking with “primal breath” (*qi* 氣). He notes that when the *qi* as purified fluid has come to be tenuous, the mind will be emptied of knowledge generated from humans and society. Then one can perceive and respond to nature.²³

Humans, who come to dissolve all desires by forgetting and emptying, now agree to and follow the truth of nature without reluctance.²⁴ The apex in dissolving anthropocentrism in oneself is expressed as “I lost myself” in ch. 2. The subject of this sentence, the “I” is a being of nature while the object, the myself, is filled with desires against nature. The expression presents the highest stage in freeing ourselves from any desire against nature.²⁵ This reveals Zhuangzi’s ideal relationship between humans and nature.

²³ Fukunaga argues that *qi* in the *Zhuangzi* is closely present in two dimensions: as cosmology and self-cultivation (1978, 127-28). In cosmology, it is the fundamental ground of creation and the equality of things; in cultivation, it is the ideal purified state of emptiness. Cosmology and cultivation based on the concept of *qi*, moreover, formed the foundation of Chinese soteriological medicine. As regards the relationship of Dao and *qi* in the *Zhuangzi*, Fukunaga reserves his judgement and thinks it possible to understand Dao as equal to “one *qi*” (1978, 129-30), while Ling asserts that Dao is prior to *qi* (2004, 94-95).,

²⁴ Mair also points out the close connection between forgetting and wandering (1982, 109, 112). Kanaya agrees that participating in the principle of Nature is ultimately on the religious dimension in the *Zhuangzi* (1997, 87).

²⁵ Quoting and analyzing a paragraph in ch. 23, Møllgaard presents the term “in-between” and suggests: “In the *Zhuangzi* the perfection of humanity implies that human beings, through the interplay of skill [*qiao*; technical action] and clumsiness [*zhuo*; the break with technical action], properly situate themselves *in-between* man (*ren*) and Heaven (*tian*), and it does not imply an animal-like unity with the world. . . . The *Zhuangzi* does not suggest that we return to the

Free and Easy Wandering

Breaking through dependence on language, ethics, culture, and social order, the practitioner comes to face the flow and ongoing change of nature as being itself. The *Zhuangzi* expresses this in terms of "staying restfully with that which is decreed" (see Liu 1988, 143-53). Thus human beings come to consider nature as the heart of existence. The Inner Chapters take up the question of the decreed several times. For one, they speak of that which is decreed as the "inevitable" (*budeyi* 不得已), which means there is no need for it to be admitted and adopted but creates the perfect opportunity to engage in free and easy wandering.²⁶

Zhuangzi found that true freedom and liberation could not be attained through political requirements or the realization of personal desires. His pursuit of wandering is accordingly different from the idea of freedom from real and ideological hierarchies and suppression, as proposed in Social Ecology and Ecofeminism. Even if there was no clear outward force to dominate others, desires as the ultimate source of such a mental tendency would have to be eliminated. Genuine freedom and

unmediated spontaneity that is characteristic of animal, to do so would be to lose our humanity" (2007, 59).

However, concerning this, I emphasize the truth of equalizing things that humans should not differentiate themselves from the animals in terms of order or hierarchy of beings—a distinction that, according to the *Zhuangzi*, brings about a distortion of reality. Obviously, the truth of equalization the *Zhuangzi* proposed was not to annihilate the innate nature (*xing* 性) of each being. Rather, the repudiation of the truth aimed at human-centered valuation to things. Along the same logic to separate humans from other beings, one might not recognize difference between Heaven and man, an idea present in the description of the perfect being (*zhenren* 真人) in ch. 6 (see Graham 1991, 195-99). However, this raises two issues: the authenticity of the *zhenren*; and the difference between Heaven/man and man/things. See Kim unpublished C.

²⁶ Ōhama outlines nine states of wandering in the *Zhuangzi*: 1) a state of no-self, no-achievement, and no-name, 2) a state of dependence upon nothing, 3) a state of knowing the principle of equalizing things and being penetrated by absolute knowledge, 4) a state of forgetting, 5) a state of being changeable in necessary process of nature, 6) a state of free and spontaneous acts, 7) a state of being awakened as the decreed and to be controlled by it, 8) state of being in the place of origin, 9) state of the highest level of the world (1978, 425).

liberation first come from the mind; they are not provided by outer conditions. Thus for Zhuangzi, staying at peace in the decreed is a prerequisite for all freedom and liberation; only by attaining this state can humans wander freely and easily in nature. They can then coexist harmoniously with all beings, in their relationship with things completely giving up all human-centeredness and instrumentalism. They have been transformed into beings who truly respect the intrinsic value of all beings. As the text says:

The sage leans on the sun and moon, tucks the universe under his arm, merges himself with things, leaves the confusion and muddle as it is, and looks on slaves as exalted. Ordinary men strain and struggle; the sage is stupid and blockish. He takes part in ten thousand ages and achieves simplicity in oneness. For him, all the ten thousand things are what they are, and thus they enfold each other. (Watson 1968, 47)

Far away on Guyi Mountain there dwells a spirit man whose skin is like congealed snow and who is gentle as a virgin. He does not eat any of the five grains, but inhales the wind and drinks the dew. He rides on the clouds, drives a flying dragon, and wanders beyond the four seas. His spirit is concentrated, saving things from corruption and bringing a bountiful harvest ever year. (Mair 1994, 6-7)

The ideal relationship is realized not by making nonhumans one's instruments but by recognizing the world and all beings as they are. The wandering sage thus respects all things just as they are. This state can be defined as a 'multicentric landscape through Dao' in the ecological sense.

The concept of multicentrism first appears in the work of the Anthony Weston (2004, 26:25-40).²⁷ He begins by separating the human be-

²⁷ Multicentrism challenges and ideally overcomes the ecophilosophical position of expanding circles (concentrism), which is the strategy to ascertain identification between humans and nature. The expansion of circles is only possible by the same quality from outside of the circle as the quality of existence inside the circle. This means that whether self and thing for instance can become identified is made possible only in the condition that applies to the element of identification inside the human. So, in the strategy of identification, the utmost decisive

ing from the ruling center and assumes that the human is not the only moral being. He points out that the expansion of the human being is based on a dualism that separates self and non-self, and demands that one resist the assimilation and marginalization accompanying dualism.

Beyond the dualism, to describe the present world, Weston borrows William James's concept of the multiverse, which means that there are numerous structures in different dimensions and that the world consists of multiple power fields, each of which have their own center in the network of complicated structures. These structures form the multiverse. Taking this into the ethical realm, Weston demands that one should respect the rights of all beings in this multiverse. Developing a moral consideration towards others, one should adopt an open attitude so that ethics become inviting and welcoming. Acknowledging the existence of other centers, the moral subject furthermore is not only the human being any longer, but includes also non-human beings. Ethics accordingly have to be constructed in cooperation with them and by taking their rights and needs into account.

Despite their differences in explaining their views, Zhuangzi and Weston have some significant similarities in their vision of decentering humans by invalidating all dualisms and accepting the intrinsic moral value of all beings. They hope to eliminate any—and especially human-imposed—projection, subordination, and hierarchies. Most importantly, they share a vision of the world as a multiverse and see all beings as having their own center which must not be violated by others.

Nevertheless, unlike Weston, the *Zhuangzi* clearly emphasizes the Dao as universality. The Dao has the fundamental characteristic of being an agent who realizes and completes the nature of all beings and things without forcing or violating them. Dao or nature invalidates all artificial hierarchies and systems of domination so that all beings retrieve their own center of existence. In this respect, Dao is the open center that embraces and nurtures all things as they are; it is never the hegemonic center. Through Dao as the foundation for things to be themselves, each and every being can actualize itself and realize its full potential without in-

criterion is in the end the human being himself (Weston 2004, 26-28). This criticism of concentricism by Weston is similarly to Zhuangzi's refutation of Confucian moral projections on society and nature.

tervention or violence. So, in Zhuangzi's ecophilosophy, the true centric landscape is possible only through the Dao. Despite his focus on the individual as the main respectable subject, he still holds an ultimate concern for the Dao; thus presenting an alternative form of Daoist ecology.

Deficiencies

Zhuangzi's ecology can be considered deficient in the following three points.

First, he denies the need for political change in society. His politics are affected by two main factors: the anarchic tradition as presented by recluses and the ideal tradition of the sage behind the scenes as presented by Confucius. At first glance, Zhuangzi seems to defend political skepticism resulting from anarchism; however, since he also acknowledges the potential existence of the virtuous community, he may not in fact have given up the ideal of a perfect society completely. Rather, he objected to the representation and justification of external moral and political standards.

One may also criticize Zhuangzi for his lack of short-term, specific, and practical prescriptions for ecological earth-construction.²⁸ On the other hand, in order to revolutionize the world, Zhuangzi also demanded that people approve human-originated limitations and reexamine themselves as political subjects. Instead of offering an immediate practical ecology, he suggested the priority of self-purification toward nature through potentially politically oriented introspection.

Second, he shows no concern with the particular—which is not to say that he was not interested in the individual.²⁹ Indeed, most pre-Qin

²⁸ Activism for political and economical change in the real world is a significant in ecology. Although often misunderstood, Deep Ecologists also support the justification of political and economical change. See Naess 1991, 104-29; 130-62. Ramachandra Guha proposes a meaningful critique on the potential influence it has in the real life of people in the Third World (1989, 71-83; also Guha 1999, 473-79).

²⁹ For example, Joanne Birdwhistell suggests from an ecofeminist viewpoint that Zhuangzi separated what is heavenly (or universal) from what is human (or local) and ignored the latter (2001, 23-44). She says: "The concepts of Dao in the

thinkers focused less on individuals or particular groups—such as, for instance, women or barbarians—but made universal issues such as Dao their main subject. However, Zhuangzi specifically claims that by trusting the principle of Dao one can overcome all human divisions and distinctions. In this deconstruction, the value and meaning of all things are restored and raised back to their original state.

In this sense, it is reasonable for Guo Xiang to understand Zhuangzi's philosophy as one of "self-creation and lone transformation" (*zisheng duhua* 自生獨化), emphasizing the independent existence of individual beings and things in the world. Guo Xiang, of course, wrote in the age of Mysterious Learning (*xuanxue* 玄學) and thus rejected the role of Heaven or Dao as origin and instead dissolved it into individual things. In this point he was different from Zhuangzi. Yes, Guo Xiang's restoration of the particular as a significant aspect of Zhuangzi's thought also implies that the original text valued and respected particularity. Particularity preserves uniqueness and value within and throughout universality, while universality manifests itself in the nature of which particularity consists.

Third, Zhuangzi consistently denies human uniqueness, a point highly relevant in terms of its ecological implications. Along very similar lines, Murray Bookchin castigates Deep Ecology and its declaration of biospherical egalitarianism, saying that lowering human status implies a refusal of responsibility to transfer our ecological situation to free nature—the latter understood as a synthesis of first and second nature. He also notes that the realization of dialectical reason is the completion of human potential as endowed by and in nature as it evolves historically (1995).

Zhuangzi's strong denial of human capacity and responsibility in the universe appears already in the *Xunzi* 荀子, a Confucian work of the late Warring States period. He says that "blinded by Heaven, Zhuangzi ignores humans" (HYSIS 79/21/22), which shows that he penetrated Zhuangzi's thought.³⁰ Influenced by Daoist thought, especially of the

Zhuangzi and *Laozi* often focus on and emphasize the universal (pattern of change) while depreciating particular, individual experiences" (2001, 35).

³⁰ Zhuangzi emphasizes Heaven while downgrading the independent status of humans. In this, he differs from the Huang-Lao understanding of the human role in society and the universe. Xunzi's critical reference to Zhuangzi

Huang-Lao school, Xunzi tried to establish the ultimate justification of Confucian values in close resonance with nature. Relating the rearing and blooming of all beings and things to the presence and actions of a responsible sage, the maker of principles of the social order (*li* 禮), Xunzi hoped to extend Confucianism into a more cosmic dimension.³¹

Beginning with his work and continued from Han-dynasty *Yizhuan* 易傳 (Commentaries to the Book of Changes) well into the Neo-Confucianism of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529), Confucian thinkers successfully proposed the cosmic sage as a unique being superior to all things, a peace-bringing leader of humanity, and one who could coordinate the relation of human beings and nature. This vision of being responsible toward nature through the human Dao (*renzhidao* 人之道) might match the ecological approach known as “weak anthropocentrism.”³²

However, the epistemological, practical, and ethical persuasiveness of weak anthropocentrism being secured in terms of inevitability and an ethical concern with personal and social interests, it might also lead to

shows that he touched the core of the dispute among the schools. His recognition of a Daoist group also appears in his critique of the *Laozi*. In his chapter, “Discourse on Heaven,” he says: “Laozi knew about shrinking back, but not about stretching out” (HYSIS 64/17/51). Taking account that the early text of the *Laozi* was enlarged and edited by Huang-Lao scholars in Xunzi’s time, it becomes clear that Xunzi differentiated between Laozi and the Huang-Lao. Some members of the Huang-Lao school, as shown in the *Huangdi sijing*, tended to propose the doctrine of revering yang (*chongyang* 崇陽) by assimilating both Confucian and Legalist statecraft and justifying them under the auspices of Daoist cosmology.

³¹ Despite the fundamental limit that it was concerned with and raised for human use, the ecological virtue that Xunzi’s thought has is to emphasize human responsibility to care other beings. It is presented as follows: “If it is the season when the grasses and trees are in the splendor of their flowering and sprouting new leaves, axes and halberds are not permitted in the mountain forest so as not to end their lives prematurely or to interrupt their maturity. ... He [a sage king] scrutinizes Heaven above and establishes on Earth below; he fills up and puts in order all that is between Heaven and Earth; and he adds his work to the myriad things” (Knoblock 1990, 2:105).

³² See Kim, unpublished D, on ecology from Confucius to Wang Yangming. Also Ivanhoe 1998, 59-76. On “weak anthropocentrism,” see Norton 1984; 1995.

the justification of human chauvinism.³³ Because it still holds a dualism which creates binaries such as human over nature, male over female, Western over non-Western, and civilized over primitive, the weak anthropocentrism possibly validates existing relationships and turns them into a hierarchy of beings as ruling and ruled or superior and inferior.³⁴

Anthropocentrism as justified by Xunzi relates to his confidence that only humans have morality. Unlike Kant, Xunzi claimed morality as a logical ground to differentiate human beings from non-humans and govern them.³⁵ In addition, to him even beings other than human still have to call upon the existence of a human sage for their perfect living and maturation. This means that they fundamentally lack the ability or power to grow and blossom in their way. Therefore, such ways of Xunzi or the Huang-Lao with its qualified human-centeredness, when confronted with an irresolvable conflict between humans and nature, might yet come to support a view no different from anthropocentrism.

It is noteworthy that resonance theory or the doctrine of the responsible sage king does not appear as a major topic in the Inner Chapter

³³ Some contributions to the volumes *Confucianism and Ecology* and *Daoism and Ecology* approve the cosmic resonance theory, first developed by the Huang-Lao school then taken over into Confucianism, as an environmentally friendly idea. The theory, however, privileges the responsible cosmic sage as the highest and noblest being in contrast to any non-human beings.

³⁴ One may also apply Weston's critique on the logic of expanding circles or concentricism in the critical understanding of weak anthropocentrism (2004, 26-28). In the context of ancient China, a case of the expanding circle appears in the "Great Learning" chapter of the *Liji*.

³⁵ It is noteworthy to pay attention to how and why Xunzi strove to privilege human status and justify social hierarchy: "Fire and water possess vital breath but have no life. Plants and trees possess life, but lack awareness. Birds and beasts have awareness, but lack a sense of morality and justice. Humans possess vital breath, life, and awareness, and add to them a sense of morality and justice. It is for this reason that they are the noblest beings in the world. In physical power they are not so good as an ox, in swiftness they do not equal the horse; yet the ox and horse can be put to their use. Why is that? I say it is because humans alone can form societies and animals cannot. Why can man form society? I say it is due to the division of society into classes. How can social divisions be translated into behavior? I say it is because of humans' sense of morality and justice. Thus, if their sense of morality and justice is used to divide society into classes, concord will result." (Knoblock 1990, 2:103-4)

of the *Zhuangzi*, although some passages, for example in chapter 7, show that the authors were under some influence of the prevalent intellectual currents at that time. His main concern was how humans could abdicate their superiority, never how they could ascend to the central throne of universe. What, then, is the authentic implication of Zhuangzi's harsh critique of human beings, especially since it neither forces the selection of another alternative nor arises from misanthropism. Instead, Zhuangzi uses it to thoroughly ask human beings to understand why they should always be moderate in their interaction with nature and other beings. Zhuangzi's main concern is an invitation of nature given by the infinite negation of dualism from human origins.

Conclusion

The *Zhuangzi* has three teachings that are highly relevant to contemporary ecological issues. Revolving around his understanding of nature, human beings, and self-cultivation, they are as follows.

As regards nature, Zhuangzi asks humans to reexamine the term. In the contemporary world, nature is strongly disenchanted and secularized, understood as things completely isolated from the human world and as mere objects to be taken at will. However, in the *Zhuangzi*, nature not only consists of things as all beings but is also the origin and the base of completion of all beings—including humans—in the Dao. All beings and their origin are always closely associated; forming a network of beings in and through Dao, all things are equal and mutually linked with each other. Free and easy wandering then comes from the successful relationship of nature and things; from the perspective of ecology, it can be understood as the multicentric landscape empowered by Dao.

As regards human beings, Zhuangzi raises the question of reason in argument and suggests a thorough self-reflection and modesty in the knowledge of nature. Human beings deny their relationship to all beings and things in the world; they withdraw from them and try to occupy a position of sovereignty over all. They do all this, believing in the absolute accuracy of reason—a faculty they alone possess—and by realizing the desires that arise in their minds. Zhuangzi warns against essential human dogmatism and an anthropocentric worldview, thus collapsing all

hegemonic dualism. Here is where the *Zhuangzi* emerges as a core text of anti-anthropocentrism.

As regards self-cultivation, Zhuangzi proposes the need to cultivate the mind in the individual if anthropocentrism is to be overcome. Awakening to the idea of human finiteness in relation to infinite nature, forgetting conscious distinctions, and emptying oneself of desires are necessary actions in this context. The moment one thus comes to participate in Dao, the horizon of wandering through nature in liberation and freedom opens. As the human self undergoes transformation, self-purification and refinement become the ground of creating a truly harmonious relationship with society and nature.

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Eating Your Way to Immortality

Early Daoist Self-Cultivation Diets

SHAWN ARTHUR

Abstract

This paper examines health- and body-related claims made in the *Lingbao Wufuxu* (The Preface to the Five Lingbao Talismans of Numinous Treasure), an early medieval Daoist text that contains seventy recipes for attaining health, longevity, and spiritual benefit. Synthesizing the text's myriad claims and analyzing their implicit assumptions, I work to develop an integrated picture of what was considered crucial for a healthy body, what techniques were used to attain this ideal, and what goals were sought using these practices. I examine the text's claims about becoming physically and spiritually healthy, its proposed stages of purification and refinement, and the range of indicators by which adherents can measure progress toward their ideal state. Not only does this study provide a new interpretation of the *Wufuxu*'s dietary regimens, it also illustrates how Chinese medical theories influenced the text's authors to present immortality as a logical evolution of health-perfecting practices. This analysis leads to questions of how the idea of perfecting one's health functions within the worldview and ritual practices of early Daoists.

Daoists are well known for their emphasis on self-cultivation practices aimed to attune them to the Dao and to achieve longevity. One significant practice which has received relatively little attention is religious dietary asceticism. As with other Daoist practices, dietary regimes integrate a wide range of ideas – such as cosmological correlation, medical theories, and religious symbolism – to develop a beneficial and comprehensive exercise that is expected to compliment other self-cultivation and religious ritual practices.

This project focuses on the *Taishang lingbao wufuxu* 太上靈寶五符序 (Preface to the Five Most High Numinous Treasure Talismans),¹ which was written and edited from the second to the fifth centuries CE in the Jiangnan 江南 region in southeastern China. The *Wufuxu*'s first *juan* 卷 (scroll/chapter) includes instructions for specialized breathing practices as well as a description of the idealized lineage associated with the text and its talismans from its emergence during the generation of the cosmos through its various attributed owners – including ancient mythological figures, Masters of Esoterica (*fangshi* 方師), and famous immortals. The text's third *juan* includes a detailed transmission ritual for the five Lingbao talismans, which are presented (3.9b1-11b) and which are well-known for their claimed ability to protect their wearer from harm when exploring wilderness areas in search of immortality elixir ingredients.² The formal transmission ritual, first presented in this *juan* (3.3a-7b3), became the ritual model adopted by Daoists from the fifth century forward (Raz 2004, 8, 15, 363-81).³

Situated between these sections, the middle *juan* of this text provides an extensive and detailed example of Daoist dietary practices – many of which are attributed to the figures discussed in earlier parts of the text. This section, whose contents is the subject of this essay, is a technical manual of seventy recipes (listed in the appendix) that focuses on the attainment of perfected health and physical immortality through the ingestion of herbal- and vegetal-based prescriptions.⁴

¹ DZ 388; hereafter cited as *Wufuxu*. The numbering system in this work is based on that found in Komjathy's *Title Index to the Daoist Canon* (2002). For a detailed discussion of the history of the various editions of this text and its close relation to other early manuscripts such as the *Lingbao jing* 靈寶經 and *Lingbao wufu* 靈寶五符, see Raz (2004, 9-12, 142-150).

² For example, see *Wufuxu* 3.8b7-9a10; Ge Hong's *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity, DZ1185) 11.3a1-8a2; trl. Ware 1966, p.179-6.

³ For a complete list of the contents of the text's first and third scrolls, see Raz (2004, 31-37).

⁴ Although lacking an explicit explanatory statement, the context and placement of these recipes also seem to indicate that they function as preparatory practices for participation in the later formal ritual – which relies on the adept having attained many of the goals presented in the recipes, such as having one's energy purified and strengthened, having the ability to fast, being in communication with the gods, and having the protection of the Jade Maidens.

Techniques

To introduce Daoist diets, it must be recognized that all of the *Wufuxu*'s dietary practices and their expected benefits are predicated on early Chinese medical understandings of the physical body and the food it consumes in energetic terms. *Qi* 氣 (organic, material essential energy) is the fundamental energy that is found in everything throughout the cosmos, including the human body, which requires *qi* to maintain health and life.

This idea is reflected throughout the *Wufuxu*, especially in its many recipes that present “benefiting and increasing 益長” *qi* as a basic self-cultivation achievement.⁵ For example, properly ingesting a compound of China Root fungus (*fuling* 茯苓; *Poria cocos*), Rehmannia (*dihuang* 地黃; *Rehmannia glutinosa* Libosch), sesame seed (*huma* 胡麻; *Sesamum indicum*), and asparagus root (*tianmendong* 天門冬; *Asparagus cochinchinensis*) powders is thought to strengthen one's *qi* in just thirty days and to double it within one hundred days – necessary attainments before further refinement can take place (2.15a3-8; recipe 20).

One result of this worldview is an attempt to ingest the most efficacious forms of *qi* in order to have the best starting place for proficiently refining and transforming one's body to its ultimate potential. For example, the text states: “Eating that which is clean and pure brings long life, and eating that which is unclean and corrupt causes one's life (*ming* 命) to be interrupted” (2.23b2; recipe 28). Therefore, proper selection and preparation of foods is crucial to Daoist self-cultivation. In fact, the *Wufuxu* is filled with admonitions to ingest only ingredients that are harvested and prepared on particular days associated with optimal *qi* conditions and correspondences.

The *Wufuxu* contains seventy-three different ingredients, the most popular of which are Sesame seeds, Asparagus root, Rehmannia, China root fungus, Pine tree sap (*songzhi* 松脂; *Pinus*), Poke root (*shanglu* 商陸; *Phytolacca acinosa*), Locust tree seeds (*huaizi* 槐子; *Sophora japonica*), Wolfberries (*Gouqi* 枸杞; *Lycium chinense*), and Ginger (*jiang* 薑; *Zingiber officinale*).⁶ Each ingredient has its own medicinal properties, many of which

⁵ See recipes 1, 2, 7, 12, 14, 20, 25, 27a, 28, 36, 43, 44, 46.

⁶ The text contains forty-one plant-based active ingredients, as well as twelve varieties of rice (*mi* 米), wheat (*mai* 麥), and millet (*chishumi* 赤黍米, *shu-*

are stated explicitly in the text and which correspond to other early materia medica information (see Arthur 2006a, 190-213).

In addition to the ingredient's innate qualities, the text stipulates that adepts must take into consideration various important cosmological correlations – especially dates, seasons, yin-yang states, and Five Phases energies when collecting, preparing, and ingesting the various ingredients. For example, "A Recipe for Lengthening Years and Improving Life Expectancy 延年益壽方" discusses harvesting the chrysanthemum plant (ju 菊; *Chrysanthemum morifolium*), each part of which has a special name indicating its key property, and says:

During the course of the three spring months, on the *jiayin* 甲寅 day in the middle of the day, gather 'transform life' 更生 leaves. During the course of the three summer months, on the *bingyin* 丙寅 day... in the middle of the day, gather the 'replenish and refill' 周盈 stalk... During the three autumn months on the *yuyi* 庚寅 day in the afternoon, gather the 'sun's essence' 日精. 'Sun's Essence' is the chrysanthemum's flower. Always in the winter in the tenth month on the *wuyin* 戊寅 day at dawn, gather the 'spirit essence' 神精... These are the chrysanthemum's seeds... In winter in the eleventh or twelfth month on the *renyin* 壬寅 day at sunset, gather 'longevity' 長生. 'Longevity' is the chrysanthemum's roots. (2.7a9-9a1; recipe 12)⁷

In other words, to maximize efficiency in attaining their goals, adepts must remain aware of the medicinal and *qi*-based properties of the ingredients they are ingesting. This is done in part because these characteristics can change depending upon the times the plants are harvested, prepared, and ingested, but also because this requires adepts to be cognizant of their own energetic needs when choosing an appropriate diet.

daomi 秬稻米) that are fermented to produce alcohols with the addition of vegetal active ingredients. Additionally, there are a few non-vegetal active ingredients [mica (*yunmu* 雲母), deer antler (*mijiao* 麋角), mercury (*shuiyin* 水銀), and tin (*xi* 錫)], and many non-vegetal, non-active ingredients such as water, honey, and the animal fats used for frying in some recipes.

⁷ See Arthur 2006, 60-5 and Raz 2004, 361-2 for discussion of the Chinese calendrical system and its usage in the *Wufuxu*.

Ideally, normal eating habits also should be abandoned in favor of ingesting special elixir-like compounds and cosmic *qi*, since these contain more specialized and rarified *qi* than normal foods. Accordingly, the *Wufuxu* contains three basic types of self-cultivation dietary regimen, each requiring a different level of commitment.

The first of these I label ‘mildly ascetic’ because it involves eating special vegetal and herbal formulas as supplements to normal meals or slightly reduced food intake. Many of the *Wufuxu* diets proclaim that practitioners should ingest herbal medications before (recipe 16) or after (recipes 12, 14, 34) eating meals, or with any other foods they desire (recipes 9, 21, 47, 66). For example, after harvesting and preparing the orchid Red Arrow (*chijian* 赤箭; *Gastrodia elata*), the text says:

As regards the proper method of ingestion, take a small spoonful after meals. This generally retards old age. After ten days you will know its effectiveness. After thirty days your *qi* will become great. Once you have taken it for over 100 days, in addition to the above, your body will become light, and your ears and eyes will become astute and clear. After one year, teeth and hair will re-grow. (2.9b2-2.10b3; recipe 14)

The least demanding of the text’s regimens, this diet type seems to focus on improving overall health and as an introduction to more sophisticated techniques. Similar to typical medical practices, the ingredients used in these mildly ascetic recipes are expected to retain their efficacy regardless of any additional foods that are ingested.

Second, many of the *Wufuxu*’s recipes advocate an ‘ascetic’ diet involving food replacement therapy. This practice involves small amounts of special ingredients and herbal-vegetal compounds being consumed – in the form of pills or cakes or herb-infused alcohols – without additional ordinary foodstuffs other than water. For example, “A Common Recipe for Ingesting and Eating Non-Glutinous Rice 服食粳米散方,” following a string of similar recipes, implies that adepts should not eat additional foods when it says:

Take one *dou* (斗; a peck) of non-glutinous rice (*gengmi* 粳米), three *dou* of alcohol, and combine the two things. Soak [the rice] until all the alcohol has dissipated; then stop and take it out. Only eat a little of it. If you are thirsty, then drink water. After

thirty days this will be used up, and you can make more as above. (2.35b4-6; recipe 63)

Although only ten recipes⁸ state that the medicinal preparations are to be used in lieu of normal food consumption during the regimen, the tenor of the text – combined with the fact that most recipes advocate the continued ingestion of a medicinal compound – indicates that this form of asceticism is the expected dietary norm. Subsequently, this type of ascetic diet functions on multiple levels for Daoist adepts: as an important self-cultivation practice, as a basic fasting purification method for ritual preparation, and as a useful survival technique when food was scarce or when travelling alone in the mountains in search of special ingredients and spirit plants (excrescences, *zhi* 芝) for immortality elixirs.

For example, when discussing the benefits of ingesting Solomon's Seal (*huangjing* 黃精; *Polygonatum sibiricum*), the *Wufuxu* claims, "The gods can bring about longevity and can extend [life], but [typical] people do not succeed. Even though the gods are bright, they are easier to see if you eat this food" (18b8-9; recipe 27a). Furthermore, people can ingest small spoonfuls of the spring-harvested root or egg-sized portions of the summer-harvested root three times daily, and it will "function as food when there is not enough to eat. In unfortunate years, this herb can help the old and young cease eating grains and can feed them" (22a4-5; recipe 28).

While this regimen would be demanding, the third and most important of the *Wufuxu*'s diets requires a 'strongly ascetic' commitment to extensive fasting practices – which include avoiding dietary staples, eating no food at all, and ingesting cosmic *qi* through specialized breathing and visualization practices. The *Wufuxu* contains ten recipes that use the term *bigu* 辟穀 (lit. 'to avoid grains') or its equivalent.⁹ The original intention of the term *bigu* was likely a rigorous fasting regimen that required the practitioner to stop eating the five main grain dietary staples of rice,

⁸ Recipes 7, 8, 10, 15, 18a, 53, 59, 60, 61, 64.

⁹ Several other terms express the same basic idea as *bigu* and are used interchangeably in the literature. They include *duangu* 斷穀 ('to cut off grains'), *quegu* 却穀 ('to eliminate grains'), *xiuliang* 休糧 ('to cease cereals'), and *jueli* 絕粒 ('to abandon the staples'). See Arthur 2006, 105-11. Recipes 7, 8, 9, 15, 20, 27a, 28, 43, 65, 66.

wheat, oats, millet, and beans; however, not all uses of the term indicate strenuous or total fasting.¹⁰

The *Wufuxu* uses the term in different contexts, typically in recipes which prohibit ingesting any foods or which claim that adepts will lose their appetite naturally and will be able to live without normal food-stuffs. For example, “A Perfected One’s Recipe for Grain Abstention and Eating Sesame 真人絕穀餌巨勝法” claims that mixing steamed and pounded sesame seeds with China Root fungus and honey will allow adepts to “obtain strength and increase it very quickly. You will be able to replenish your vital essence (*jing* 精) and marrow (*sui* 髓). Gradually you will not hunger. If you thirst, then just drink water” (2.6a10-6b1, recipe 8).

The other major practice associated with *bigu* is the most ascetic of Daoist dietary regimens: *qi*-ingestion (*shiqi* 食氣). In this practice, adepts utilize various breathing and visualization techniques to swallow the *qi* of the sun, moon, stars, and Five Phases in order to nourish their bodies and to enhance their connections to cosmic energies and deities. *Qi*-ingestion practices, during which the adept forgoes eating any physical food substances, are discussed throughout the *Wufuxu* as superior to ingesting vegetal substances, which are thought merely to function as health-related preparations which can acclimate the body to more serious and subtle energy regimens. As such, *shiqi* regimens are necessary for proper self-cultivation, ritual purification, and formal transmission of the *Wufuxu* and its talismans.¹¹

For example, in a recipe for the key self-cultivation practice of expelling the Three Worms (*sanchong* 三蟲) with China Root Fungus and poke root, an addendum states: “Locust seeds are also good if you are able to ingest their *qi*. Do not use these [earlier-stated preparation] techniques if you can also ingest their *qi*. The perfected *qi* is the essence of the Green Sprout (*qingya* 青牙) of the Five Directions. Daoists ingest this for

¹⁰ See Kohn 1993, 149; Arthur 2006, 94, 114-17; Eskildsen 1998, 43-44, 60; Zhang 2003, 288.

¹¹ *Shiqi* is only mentioned in recipes 28, 29, and 44, but it plays a prominent role in other parts of the text (1.11b5-14b9; 1.18b8-26a8; 3.21a5-22a1). See also Harper 1998, 304-9; Huang 1987; Jackowicz 2006, 68-88; Raz 2004, 382-397.

twenty-one days and the Three Worms flee and leave" (2.24b6-8; recipe 29).

Although not consistent throughout, the *Wufuxu* indicates that *qi*-ingestion is the most efficacious practice for achieving the highest levels of immortality, such as when it states: "Those who are able to cultivate *wuwei* (無爲) and ingest *qi* and their own saliva will ascend" (2.23a3-4, recipe 28). As a result, many of the text's self-cultivation-oriented recipes promote the adoption of an ascetic lifestyle while replacing normal food intake with special vegetal and herbal preparations. The text indicates that it is through the sustained practice of these regimens that adepts can best attain their religious goals, such as health, physical and energetic perfection, communication with the gods, and immortality.

Perfecting Health

In spite of any hopes to the contrary, the *Wufuxu* clearly indicates that achieving its religious goals is not a simple task. Rather, the text's recipes present immortality as the culmination of a generally lengthy and arduous process that – building on the idea of a continuum between prevailing medical theories and religious perspectives – begins with perfecting one's health through ingesting the proper medicinal substances.

Through a structuralist analysis (see Lévi-Strauss 1966) involving the concurrent examination of the recipes' structure and contents, multiple patterns and details become evident within the text's presentation and organization of information; and these discernable patterns, along with frequent attributions to important figures in the text's lineaged transmission, indicate the lengths to which the text's redactors went in order to produce a cohesive, consistent, and unified text. Synthesizing the text's myriad health- and body-related claims and analyzing their implicit assumptions, the remainder of this article illustrates the incorporation of ideas regarding what was considered crucial for a healthy body and how this directly relates to the perceived stages that lead to immortality.

The *Wufuxu*'s recipes follow a uniform style and format beginning with the recipe's title and ingredient list, followed by discussion of preparation and ingestion methods, and ending with declarations about expected benefits that will occur if an adept properly adheres to the rec-

ipe's directions. One of the most concise examples of this format, "A Recipe for Extending the Years and Increasing Longevity 延年益壽方," states:

Place ripe locust tree seeds in a cow's intestine (*niuchang* 牛腸), and put this in a dark place to dry for one hundred days. After that, swallow one piece with your meal in the morning and evening. After ten days your body will lighten. After thirty days your white hair will revert to black. After one hundred days your face will become radiant. After two hundred days, a galloping horse will not be able to keep up with you. (2.16a9-b2; recipe 23)

The recipes also contain descriptions of the various changes that are expected to occur within the body from having ingested the recommended medicines. Also similar in style, organization, and content, the recipes' many proclamations begin with healing the body as the first goal of practice; and this typically takes place in the first few years. After this, the body is thought to gain extraordinary abilities, and only then can it become perfected and spiritualized as the adept comes into contact with the cosmic and body gods who give the adept's body even greater and more miraculous powers. Finally, the adept is expected to become an immortal and to ascend to the heavenly realm in as few as five hundred days (recipe 30), but it may take as many as fifty thousand days (recipe 17). For example, "The Perfected One's Recipe for Fermenting Asparagus Alcohol 真人釀天門冬酒方" says:

If you ingest this medicine for three years the hundred diseases will all heal themselves, and skin diseases and worms will all bore through the skin at the joints and will be expelled. Ingest it for three [more] years and your balding head will re-grow hair. Ingest it for ten years and you will be able to control your destiny and the chaos of your previous life. Ingest it for twenty years and in the winter you will not be cold, and in the summer you will not be hot. Ingest it for thirty years and an old man of one hundred years of age will look like a young man of fifteen.

After ingesting it for forty years, you will be able to communicate with the gods; and at this time, there will be a spirit maiden to bring medicine and to encourage you. If you obtain

it, ingest this spirit medicine. Three days later, you will shed your body like a caterpillar sheds its skin and attain immortality. Even if you have already obtained and ingested a spirit elixir, obtaining this alcohol still will be beneficial and auspicious. (2.31a6-b5; recipe 49)

My analysis of the text indicates that purifying the body and perfecting its health can be divided into four major categories, the first three of which are curing disease, expelling the Three Worms, and eliminating hunger – all indicative of strengthening the physical body's structure and internal functional components. The fourth health category involves refining the external physical body and its components, especially through attention to transforming the body's abilities and outward appearance.

Curing Disease

To begin the path toward perfection and immortality, adepts must first attain health and rid the body of disease, which has physiological, energetic, and paranormal origins. In all, more than half of the *Wufuxu*'s recipes directly refer to curing illness in the body including the twenty-one recipes making the general claim that they are able to cure 'the hundred illnesses' (*baibing* 百病; i.e., all illness) and the eight recipes claiming to make the body healthy by naturally "benefiting it" (*yi* 益) and "nourishing it" (*yang* 養).¹² In fact, health issues comprise a larger proportion of *Wufuxu*'s recipes than any other concern. This indicates that the health of the body is of paramount importance to attaining any major religious goals; and subsequently there are two basic classes of illness that need to be cured: energetic issues and ailments of daily life.

Clearly indicating that the text's redactors had at least basic knowledge of Chinese medical ideas and diagnostic terminology, the ideal pattern of *qi*-flow is presented as balanced, strong, and smooth-flowing throughout the body. One central form of illness that is essential to eliminate is wayward and pathogenic (*xie* 邪) *qi*-flow, which involves *qi*

¹² Recipes 1, 7, 8, 12, 16, 21, 25, 28, 35, 37, 40, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 57 for curing illness; and recipes 1, 2, 10, 17, 26, 27a, 35, 52 for benefiting and nourishing the body.

blockages and excessive flow, especially due to the effects of the Six Pernicious Influences: excess cold, dampness, heat, wind, dryness, summer heat (see Kaptchuck 1983, 146-57; Despeux 2001, 126). For example, referring to cakes made of a mixture of pine sap, China Root fungus, and honey, the text claims:

After a hundred days your body will become light. After two hundred days you will have no more cold or heat. After three hundred days you will have no more windy head and blurry eyes. After four hundred days you will have no more of the five troubles (*lao* 勞) or the seven injuries (*shang* 傷). After five hundred days you will have no more cold belly, indigestion, or concealed obstructions of *qi*. (2.12b8-10; recipe 17)

Supposing that previous exercises had rid the body of heteropathic *qi* and had balanced and strengthened the internal body, another facet of health in the *Wufuxu* involves refining the body's other crucial internal energy: *jing* 精. Often translated as vital essence, *jing* is the sexual energy associated with the kidney and reproductive system, and seven recipes focus on 'protecting and increasing *jing*' because once *jing* is exhausted, death occurs.¹³

The second type of disease emerges from the problems of daily life. Thirteen *Wufuxu* recipes purport to alleviate joint pains and rheumatism, to counteract the 'five troubles and seven injuries' associated with life and work, and to deal with women's gynecological and birth-related problems.¹⁴ In fact, one recipe's title explicitly states that the medicine is thought to be particularly useful for labor-oriented and women's health issues: "The Recipe for Expelling the Three Worms; Killing the Concealed Corpses; Healing Black Facial [Disease]; Benefiting Wisdom and Remembering; and Curing All of the Five Troubles and Seven Injuries of Men and Women, Wives' Breast Milk, Bearing Offspring, Excess 'Below the Belt' Illnesses, and Red and White Secretions 去三蟲殺伏尸治面黥黑

¹³ Recipes 1, 2, 8, 14a, 17, 27a, 36. See Unschuld 1985, 126-7.

¹⁴ For alleviating joint pains, see recipes 25, 52, 54. For healing the five troubles and seven injuries, see recipes 15, 17, 40, 43, 54. For gynecological issues, see recipes: 4, 14, 15, 43, 45.

益智不忘男女五勞七傷婦人乳產餘病帶下去赤白皆愈方" (2.10b10-2.11a7; recipe 15).¹⁵

The focus of curing common ailments and pregnant women indicates that some of these recipes likely originated among sources outside the Lingbao Daoist school. The lineage associated with the compilation of the *Wufuxu* was predominately comprised of male members of the literati-class – meaning well-educated and well-to-do patrons with time and money to practice the often-ascetic regiments found in the Lingbao corpus (Yamada 2000).

Originally, the *Wufuxu*'s recipes were propagated by *fangshi*, whose social roles included acting as wandering doctors and magic workers throughout eastern and southern China. These *fangshi* are thought to have sold their recipes to aristocrats, merchants, and farmers, and possibly used recipes such as those in the *Wufuxu* to cure the general populace (see Raz 2004, 38-49; Campamy 2002, 6). Recipes focused on curing issues common to laborers and women indicate that they were culled and adapted from extant recipes and medical treatment techniques being propagated by *fangshi* rather than originating with literati Daoists.

Expelling the Three Worms

The other main components of strengthening the physical body's structure and functional components involve intestinal issues. Previous studies of the *Wufuxu* (such as Yamada 1989) have focused on the Three Worms (*sanchong* 三蟲) as central to the text; however, only eleven recipes mention expelling the Three Worms and 'Concealed Corpses' (*fushi* 伏尸) from the body.¹⁶

These malevolent creatures are understood to be both parasites and spiritual agents that live in people's bodies, feed on decaying matter in the intestines, and hasten their death by causing diseases such as those emphasized throughout the text, by rendering food and medicine ineffective, and by causing peoples' destined lives (*ming* 命) to be short-

¹⁵ The names of these women's problems – "Excess 'Below the Belt' Illnesses; and Red and White Secretions" – refer to venereal diseases, genital infections, menstrual problems, and other issues.

¹⁶ Recipes 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 27a, 28, 29, 34, 43, 49.

ened.¹⁷ The later happens when the Three Worms, acting as moral agents, emerge from their sleeping host on the *gengshen* 庚申 day just before the new moon (the fifty-seventh of the Chinese sexagesimal calendrical cycle) and report the person's transgressions to the heavenly Director of Destinies (Siming 司命) who then decreases the length of the person's life by the proper amount according to the infraction.

One method for expelling the Three Worms involves fermenting China Root fungus, poke root, alcohol, wheat flour, and yeast, and then making large pills (*dan* 彈) which are ingested thrice daily for one hundred days. The recipe explains:

These three Corpses are born together with the person, and they often desire to cause the person to die. When the last day of the dark moon and the first day of the new moon arrives, they will want to ascend to Heaven [in order to report] the transgressions of commoners. When the last day of the moon arrives, you must grasp your heavenly soul (*hun* 魂) and restrain your earthly soul (*po* 魄) and then guard them through the night's *gengshen* hour. Through this action, the Three Corpses will be unable to rouse to action... The Three Corpses generally desire the person to die; therefore, they want to attack and snatch away that which is being discussed [i.e., souls].

Generally, Daoists (*Daoshi* 道士) are also doctors; however they know how to cultivate the body with recipes but do not know that the Concealed Corpses that live in people's abdomens limit the drug's powers and cause the medicine to be ineffective.¹⁸ This is all caused by the Three Worms... If you are unable to expunge them; however, you just cheat yourself. Once you expel them, then you will not again have hunger. Your

¹⁷ See *Wufuxu* 2.24a; Arthur 2006, 102-4; Campany 2002, 49-52, 166; 2005, 43-4; Yamada 1989, 107-10; Kohn 1993, 149; Eskildsen 1998; and Forke 1907-11, 2.363. A ninth century text, the *Chu sanshi jiuchong baosheng jing* 除三尸九蟲保生經 (The Scripture on Expelling the Three Corpses and Nine Worms to Protect Life; DZ 871), provides one of the most comprehensive and detailed discussions of this phenomenon.

¹⁸ This critical reference to Daoists also indicates that Daoists did not create the recipe.

heart/mind (*xin* 心) will be peaceful and without thoughts, and you will be able to obtain and follow the life of a Perfected Person (*zhenren* 真人). (2.24a3-b3; recipe 29)

According to the *Wufuxu*, progressing towards a healthy state requires that the Three Worms must be eliminated. Ridding the body of these parasites, and keeping them from returning – through ingesting anthelmintic, parasite removing, medicine or performing *bigu* fasting – is also equated with the adept being able to retain a high level of moral thought and action, thus introducing an important moral dimension to Daoist self-cultivation. In addition to allowing the adept to live out his/her original life span, killing the Three Worms is also a crucial step to calm one's heart/mind, to attempt advanced self-cultivation, and to get rid of hunger – also a weakness of the body that can be cured by following the *Wufuxu*'s regimens.

Physical Improvements

In addition to curing disease, refining the body's energies, and expelling the Three Worms, the *Wufuxu*'s redactors included forty-five different claims that explain ways to improve the physical body and its psychological attributes through further development of the body's integrated physical and energetic components. Interestingly, the aspects of the physical body that are subject to proposed improvements can be directly correlated to the most apparent characteristics of a young person, such as clear eyesight, acute hearing, strong bones and muscles, supple flesh, black hair, being light, being invigorated, and having all of one's teeth. In other words, these Daoists were explicitly concerned with overcoming the manifestations of an aging body.

The most common enhancements are to the adept's eyesight and hearing – with eleven and ten recipes respectively.¹⁹ Besides health-related benefits, eyesight and hearing also are important to Daoist religious practices such as being able to read a text during a nighttime ritual, honing one's ability to see various spirit beings and excrescences, and

¹⁹ Recipes 2, 5, 12, 14, 15, 17, 25, 27, 28, 43, 45 for eyesight improvement, and recipes 1, 2, 5, 12, 14, 15, 25, 27, 43, 45 for hearing improvement.

being able to listen to communication from spirit beings and gods.²⁰ Additionally, we can interpret claims about the eyes and ears in terms of the Five Phases correlative theory used throughout the text in order to highlight another level of possible meaning for basic health improvements. Accordingly, eyesight improvement is related to lessening anger and increasing courage; while curing hearing loss can be related to kidney issues such as increasing *jing*, perfecting wisdom, and lessening anxiety (see Kohn 2006, 57). Thus, health of the physical body corresponds to mental health as well.

The other major aspect of perfecting the physical body relates to improving the body's appearance. Analyzing the text indicates that appearance is one of the most important signs of being healthy and having strong *qi*. In fact, of all of the *Wufuxu*'s specific health-related claims, more are related to 'rejuvenating the complexion,' making the skin look glossy, smooth, shiny, and youthful; and making the white hair of old age 're-grow and return to black' than to any other issue.²¹

For example, one recipe which advocates eating small cakes made of pine tree sap, China root fungus, alcohol, and honey addresses improvements to the body and its appearance; and readers can easily deduce that health and youthfulness are but initial steps along the lengthy path towards immortality. The recipe says:

After six hundred days your facial complexion will be stabilized. After seven hundred days, you will have no more black facial skin. After eight hundred days new black hair will grow. After nine hundred days burns and scars will be eradicated. After a thousand days both eyes will become clear. After two thousand days the complexion will change. After three thousand days you will be able to walk without leaving a trace. After four thousand days every mark [on the body] will be eliminated. After five thousand days nighttime will appear illuminated.

²⁰ See *Baopuzi* 11.3a1-8a2; trl. Ware 1966, p.179-6.

²¹ Recipes 1, 2, 4, 12, 13, 15, 17, 20, 20a, 28, 36, 43, 45 for rejuvenating the complexion; recipes 2, 4, 5, 12, 14, 17, 23, 27, 28, 35, 45, 48, 49 for re-growing black hair; and recipes 4, 12, 15, 17, 28, 39, 43, 45, 48, 49, 50 for skin improvements.

After six thousand days the muscles and skin will change.
After seven thousand days the skin and pulses will be able to
be concealed. After eight thousand days the *jing* and *shen* will
be strong. After nine thousand days the youthfulness of a child
will be reached. After ten thousand days [27+ years] the body
will be naturally healthy. (2.12b10- 13a6; recipe 17)

Here, in the overall progress towards immortality, there is evidence of some concepts of reversal – but only to a rightfully healthy state. In other words, tooth loss, hair loss, wrinkles, and white hair are all signs of unnecessary aging and bodily decay which will disappear once a healthy state is regained. This seems to signify that the intended audience for these recipes would have been the older generations, especially of the aristocracy among which the text circulated, who would have the time and ability to adopt ascetic practices. Age reversal, it was hoped, would also give interested people additional time and an increased chance of achieving their religious goals.

Overall, the *Wufuxu*'s proposed health improvements correspond to common ailments and limitations of the body as it grows older. Thus, Daoist health does not merely indicate a lack of disease. The text's redactors included many examples of aggressively seeking to combat problems associated with old age and death on all fronts: from its outward manifestations in bodily weakness and degradation to internal states of disease and energy imbalance. Indicating that the adept is progressing toward immortality, this state of perfected health must be successful for further cultivation and refinement to occur.

Extraordinary Attainments

The *Wufuxu* presents the adept's next stage of development as a natural extension of the continuum of medically-oriented theories about the body: if the physical body can achieve a healthy state and retard the aging process, then with sustained religious ascetic self-cultivation practices, it should be able to completely transcend 'normal' capabilities. These advanced attainments are expected to include extreme health, protective characteristics, and extraordinary abilities.²² Based on the extent to which Chinese medical and correlative theories can be applied, extraordinary abilities are presented as the likely, reasonable, and natural products of religious self-cultivation regimens as presented in the *Wufuxu*. For example, the text claims: "Those with a clean nature (*xing* 性) receive perfected *qi*. For those who are clean, longevity is their natural (*ziran* 自然) destiny" (2.23b4-5).

By extreme health, I refer to the extension of earlier medically-based health attainments to levels beyond the scope of traditional medical ideas. It is here that I argue ideal religious expectations replace more limited medical possibilities. For example, five recipes claim to be able to radically improve sight and hearing – so much so that adepts will be able to see things a thousand miles away, to see in the dark, to hear voices that are ten thousand miles away, and to have "clairvoyance" (*yuanzhi sifang* 遠知四方; lit. 'far-reaching knowledge of the four directions'; 2.3b6; recipe 2; see also recipes 12, 16, 17, 27a). This seems to represent a metaphorical claim to an ability to see the earthly spirits and cosmic gods in their abodes and to hear their communication.

Additionally, the text contends that strengthening one's *qi* should continue until it is so concentrated that the body obtains one hundred times normal strength, the storehouse organs never become exhausted, and various bodily parts (such as the eyes, hands, and gall bladder) begin to radiate *qi* as light. Furthermore, continued self-cultivation is expected to lead to the body's protection from all manner of possible problems such as drowning while underwater and being physically or spiri-

²² I use the term 'extraordinary' rather than 'supernatural' because the ancient Chinese thought that the gods, spirits, souls, and ghosts were a natural part of the cosmos, not separate from or beyond the real world.

tually injured, poisoned, and attacked. The basic warding off of the Six Pernicious Influences is extended so that the adept becomes impervious to any extreme external condition such as fire, extreme cold, heteropathic energies, and malevolent spirit beings. Other extraordinary abilities include traveling by unconventional means such as flying or running faster than a horse, consciously "roaming about with your spirit" while dreaming, becoming invisible, communicating with the gods of the body and cosmos, controlling spirit beings, and being able to control one's destiny.

"A Recipe for Lengthening Your Years and Extending Your Life Expectancy 延年益壽方" offers a useful example of the text's range of extraordinary benefits, which are expected to occur after the adept achieves a healthy state. This chrysanthemum-based recipe states:

If you ingest it for an entire year, the hundred illnesses will all leave, your ears will become more astute, your eyes will see clearly, your body will become lighter, and your *qi* will increase. Also, you will add two years to your life. If you ingest it for two years, your face and complexion will be joyous and smooth, your *qi* and strength will increase one hundred-fold. Any white hairs will return to black, and any lost teeth will grow again. Also, you will add three years to your life.

If you ingest it for three years, when you walk in the mountains you will not need to avoid snakes, dragons, ghosts and spirits. You will never encounter warriors or weapons. Unless they are flying birds, no one will dare to overtake you. Also, you will add thirteen years to your life. If you ingest it for four years, your name will be reported to the gods (*shen-ming* 神明) as well as the Five Phases. Also, you will add forty years to your life.

If you ingest it for five years, your body will bring forth a radiant light (*guangming* 光明), your eyes will illuminate both day and night, and there will be radiance in your inner parts, bridges, intersections, and joints. Your body will be so light that even though you do not have feathers or wings, by mere intention you will be able to travel by flying. Ingest it for six years in order to increase your longevity by three hundred years.

If you ingest it for seven years, the Dao in your *shen* will desire perfection and your longevity will increase by one thousand years. If you ingest it for eight years, your eyes will be

able to see for one thousand miles (*li* 里), your ears will be able to hear for ten thousand *li*, and your longevity will increase by two thousand years.

If you ingest it for nine years, your *shen* will be perfected and will become like golden stone. At death you will be able to come back to life. Your longevity will increase by three thousand years. On your left will be the green dragon, on your right will be the white tiger, and gold will become your chariot. (2.8a-b recipe 12)

These abilities are presented as the culmination of extensive self-cultivation work on the part of the adept, and are based on the early medieval worldview that humans could transcend normal limitations through self-cultivation and magico-religious practices, and that valorized persons who attempted this work.²³ However, these powers are not meant to be a goal for the adept; they are merely indications that the adept's inner spiritual cultivation is progressing and that the body's physical, mental, and spiritual components are being thoroughly transformed. However, the extraordinary abilities and greatly increased *qi* are integral to the adept's journey toward immortality because it is these characteristics that seem to be noticed by the cosmic deities, who eventually will contact the adept and lead the adept into the next stage of cultivation: spiritualization or self-divination.

Spiritualizing the Body

The *Wufuxu*'s penultimate stage of self-cultivation signifies that the adept has been cleansed and purified, has adopted a life of quietude, and has developed a tangible connection to the spirit realm that propels him/her toward even more advanced transformation of the physical and spiritual bodies. *Shen* 神, spirit energy, is part of the body's inherent energetic cosmic connection from birth, and six recipes claim to 'increase and nourish the *shen*.'²⁴ It seems that adepts strive to store and purify their *qi* in order to allow their *shen* to become more prominent and active.

²³ See Raz 2005, 117; the argument throughout the *Baopuzi*; see Ware 1966.

²⁴ Recipes 1, 17, 25, 27a, 37, 46.

Shen, a more subtle manifestation of *qi*, is then amplified and further refined to take on numinous characteristics – indicating that adepts are attempting to spiritualize or divinize the physical body.²⁵ One lotus-based recipe, for example, integrates cosmological correlations and plant parts to prepare a medicinal compound meant to enhance the *shen*.

Everything is from the same plant. On the 7th day of the 7th lunar month collect seven parts lotus flowers (*ouhua* 藕華). On the 8th day of the 8th lunar month collect eight parts lotus root (*ougen* 藕根). On the 9th day of the 9th lunar month gather nine parts lotus seeds (*oushi* 藕實). Mix the plant stuffs together to prepare them. When complete, ingest an inch-square spatula full. (2.16b7-9)

Ingest for one hundred days then stop. Your inner lord (*zhu* 主) will arrive and your inner being will be enhanced. Your *qi* will get strong and will nourish your *shen*. You will not hunger and will expel the one hundred illnesses. After a long time of ingesting, your body will become light. You will extend your years, not grow old, and then turn into a spirit immortal (*shenxian* 神仙). (2.17a8-9; recipe 25)

The result of the completion of this final stage of preparation, then, is considered a perfected body, which is physically similar to earlier stages but is replete with a significantly more subtle quality of essential energy.

At this point, Daoists adepts expect to have an intimate connection with cosmic energies and direct knowledge of how to wholly embody and synchronize earthly and cosmic principles; thus they begin to manifest characteristics of spirit beings. This advanced level of spiritualization, in turn, is expected to attract the attention of spirits guardians. For example, five recipes claim that ingesting medicines of sesame, Solomon's seal, or asparagus root tincture will attract Spirit Maidens (*shennü* 神女),

²⁵ There is no discussion of transmuting *qi* into *jing* and then into *shen* as with later internal alchemy; however, the organization of the text's myriad claims indicates that purifying, harmonizing, and strengthening one's *qi* and *jing* is necessary before the adept is able to more actively cultivate their *shen* and align it with that of the gods.

Jade Maidens (*yunü* 玉女), and the six Armored Spirits (*jiashen* 甲神) who will serve and protect the purified adept from harm.²⁶

With this defensive spirit retinue in place, it is anticipated that various cosmic deities such as Taiyi (太一; Great Unity) will visit and communicate with the adept.²⁷ Building on the importance of communicating with various gods discussed throughout the full text, and its focus on detailed and lengthy self-cultivation, the *Wufuxu* implies that the path beyond health and longer life eventually requires some form of divine intervention on behalf of adepts.

The first step in this process is to attract the attention of the cosmic deities, who are expected to recognize when an adept has sufficiently purified him/herself. After contact has been established to verify the adept's preparation is complete, three recipes contend that aspects of the cosmic deities will descend from their celestial abodes to take up residence in the adept's internal palaces – the energy centers in the body which include the various organs as well as the lower *dantian* (丹田; lit. 'cinnabar/elixir field') just below the navel, the middle *dantian* at the heart level, and the nine-room Niwan Palace (泥丸) in the upper *dantian* in the head.²⁸ Eventually, it is hoped, that these gods will invite the adept to live in the heavenly realm as an immortal. For example a Solomon's Seal recipe claims:

Ingest and eat this herb over the four seasons, and do not stop. It can bring about an extension of your years if you are able to cast aside society and its customs and live a hermit life on a famous mountain. If you ingest and eat this herb, you can live as long as Heaven and Earth. The multitude of gods will convene together, and Taiyi will be expecting and will welcome you. You will ascend and be promoted to [the rank of] Officer of Heaven. (2.19a3-5; recipe 27a)

²⁶ The *jiashen* are associated with the six calendrical *jia* dates, which are the first of the ten Heavenly Stems (*tiangan* 天干), that occur during each sixty-day cycle (see Arthur 2009, forthcoming). Recipes 2, 8, 27a, 30, 49.

²⁷ Recipes 10, 15, 17, 27, 27a, 28, 49.

²⁸ Recipes 2, 25, 27a. According to the *Wufuxu*'s first chapter, the three *dantian* are the corporeal offices of the Three Ones – Heaven, Earth, and the Crimson Child – within the body (1.22b2-b7; see Raz 2005, 352-3).

Daoists thought that the corporeal deities originally were present in people's bodies but normal life's stressors and extreme emotions had sullied the body to such a degree that the gods were driven away. Thus, it takes a great deal of cultivation and purification to coax the various body gods to return to their rightful places within the complex internal landscape of the adept's body. For example, tasting the strong flavors, smelling putrid odors, hearing loud sounds, and seeing sex or defecation all can negatively impact the adept's sensitive constitution and its rarified subtle energies, and can thus upset the body gods, causing them to flee from the adept. The *Wufuxu* says: "As you practice consistently, avoid foods like fresh fish, pork, scallions, and strong vegetables [as all have strong smells and tastes]. Also avoid gazing upon mourners and corpses, as well as dogs and pigs in the process of giving birth or defecating. Be very careful!" (2.2b10-3a1; recipe 2).

The various manifestations of the cosmic deities that take up residence in the adept's body signify the adept's complete transformation from base human to the full embodiment of the sacred macrocosmic reality.²⁹ Once the corporeal deities have taken up residence, the adept's microcosmic body has become a direct correlate to the macro-cosmos. With this attainment, another abstract mystical experience is thought to occur: the capacity "to leave the obscure and enter the profound" (*chuyao ruming* 出窈入冥; 2.1a5; recipe 1) – to achieve union with the Dao.

Immortality

At this point in the adept's development, the final major goal of the *Wufuxu*'s dietary regimes is met: the adept attains extended life and immortality. Just behind curing illness, extreme longevity is the most common benefit promoted by the text. Nearly half of the text's recipes declare that practitioners can attain varying degrees of longevity and eventually become an immortal being (*xian* 仙). Although numerous, the claims about extreme longevity lack specificity; there are no fewer than thirty-six different phrases employed in the text to denote life extended beyond normal expectations – for example, 'to obtain long life' (得長生),

²⁹ This idea is not unique to the early medieval Daoism; it originated in the pre-Qin era and became prominent during the Han dynasty (Raz 2005, 340-41).

‘to live many thousands of years’ (壽至千千), ‘to halt the progression of years’ (住年), and ‘to lengthen existence’ (長存)(2.1a2-2a10; recipe 1).

For clarity’s sake, I have divided the text’s ideas about this phenomenon into three categories: minor longevity, major longevity, and immortality. Seven recipes purport to lead to minor longevity – i.e., to extend the adept’s life by a few years, but less than an additional full lifespan, or to ‘retard old age’ (不老).³⁰ For example, “Another Recipe for Repelling Old Age 又却老方” does not explain what is meant by its title when it says: “Beginning on the first *si* 巳 day of the tenth lunar month, ingest locust seeds once daily. Increase the dose by one [each day] until you reach ten days. Again, return and repeat from the beginning. To do correctly you must begin eating them on the first *si* 巳 day” (2.16b3-16b5; recipe 24).

I classify explicit claims of increasing life to at least double a normal person’s life expectancy as major longevity. Here, the body’s natural life and death processes allegedly are transcended. For example, a recipe that combines mica, curly cypress (*juanbo* 卷栢; *Selaginella tamariscina*), water plantain (*zexie* 澤瀉; *Alisma orientalis*), Edible Greens’ Fruit (*xianshi* 莧實; *Amaranthus*), and pine tree sap claims that ingesting this compound for seven years: “Your body will live forty-three thousand years and will not die” (2.14b5-15a2; recipe 19). Similarly, ‘avoiding death’ (可不死), ‘endless longevity’ (無極延年), and ‘living as long as Heaven and Earth’ (壽若乾坤) are used as synonyms for the idea of immortality.

It seems that the text’s many claims of extreme longevity are ideologically similar to those of immortality where the adept continues to reside on earth or in the heavens for an extensive period of time in a purified form of their original physical body. Whether or not these statements signify an absolute permanent existence (see Raz 2005, 110n176), they certainly indicate a life that is far longer than the norm, and there are thirteen recipes that couple the term ‘immortality’ with claims of dramatically increasing the length of the practitioner’s life – hence I argue that they should be considered a form of immortality.³¹ In addition to achieving an elongated lifespan, the text also mentions four examples

³⁰ Recipes 1, 12, 14, 16, 24, 25, 27a.

³¹ Recipes 1, 2, 5, 12, 13, 17, 19, 25, 26, 27, 27a, 28, 32, 44, 46, 47, 48.

of adepts 'transcending' (*dushi* 度世) the physical world and ascending to reside in the Heaven of Great Clarity (*Taiqing* 太清) where they may be received by the god Taiyi and be given the rank of Immortal Person or Officer of Heaven (*tianfu* 天府).³²

The *Wufuxu* does not provide a concise explanation of what its redactors meant by the term immortality, and analysts are limited to inferring ideas from passages which contain the term, from the text's short hagiographical accounts of immortals,³³ and from the presentation of immortality as the culmination of attaining sufficient purity and refinement through extensive self-cultivation and long-term maintenance of ascetic dietary regimens. The text does not include a hierarchy of immortal achievements as found in Ge Hong's *Baopuzi*, which differentiates between celestial immortals, earthly immortals, and corpse-liberated immortals (2:9a; Ware 1966, 47-8). Yet, other examples in the *Baopuzi* do not discuss this hierarchy because all 'immortals' supposedly have attained the crucial benefit of longevity.³⁴ These instances support the *Wufuxu*'s implication that there is little significant difference between forms of major longevity and immortality other than the adept's final place of residence.

³² Recipes 1, 2, 17, 27a. The ideas of the Heaven of Great Clarity and the god Taiyi first featured in the Shangqing school of the 4th century (Hu 1995, 1457; Robinet 2000, 215). For discussion on the ascent to Taiyi, see Bokenkamp 1990.

³³ Recipes 2, 6, 7, 13, 16, 17, 19, 25, 26, 27, 27a, 28, 30, 32, 36, 49. These short accounts, of figures such as Master Red Pine in recipe 17, are similar to those found in other narratives and major hagiographic collections: the *Liexian zhuan* (列仙傳; Biographies of Immortals; Kaltenmark 1953); the *Shenxian zhuan* (神仙傳; Biographies of Spirit Immortals; Campamy 2002); and chapter 82 of the *Houhan shu* (後漢書; History of the Later Han; "Fangshu liezhuan" 方術列傳; Traditions of the Esoteric Arts; Ngo 1976 and DeWoskin 1983); also Raz 2005, 43n14).

³⁴ See *Baopuzi* 3.52; Ware 1966, 65; Campamy 2002, 77, 181, 292-94; Raz 2005, 110-12.

Conclusion

Although missing many necessary details for an all-inclusive, contextual understanding, the *Wufuxu* does provide a great deal of information about the path of early medieval Daoist self-cultivation and the mechanics of its dietary procedures. Amalgamating the text's various claims and analyzing their implicit and explicit suppositions, I have developed a relatively comprehensive typology regarding the *Wufuxu*'s expectations for a healthy body, for longevity, and for achieving its specific religious goals. This analysis leads to questions of how the idea of perfection – especially of one's health and one's energies – functions within the worldview and ritual practices of early Daoists.

The structure and organization of the majority of the text's entries illustrate a time consuming step-by-step transformation of all aspects of the adept's body. This process first requires balancing, purifying, and refining the mundane aspects of the body. Demonstrating the holistic nature of Daoist claims of perfection throughout the text, the body's physical, energetic, and spiritual components are interconnected and related to prevalent medical and cosmological correlative theories. In other words, adepts begin by balancing and transforming the body's microcosm based on perceived patterns, correlations, and ideas about *qi*.

Eventually, the text indicates that integrating characteristics of the macrocosm, especially in the form of the Five Phases energies which are internalized during *qi*-ingesting practices, will cosmicize and spiritualize the body to such a degree that longevity and immortality are the result. In fact, the text's extraordinary abilities and achievements, which indicate a belief that normal human limitations can be transcended through ascetic dietary and religious practices, are predicated on perfecting the health, and in many cases they also can be directly correlated to fundamental concepts of health as presented in the text.

Interestingly, all of the transformative processes mentioned in these recipes are oriented toward adepts strengthening and harmonizing their own internal physical, mental, and energetic processes and characteristics. The text only discusses one crucial external agential influence – the cosmic gods, who are attracted to the adept because of his/her continued internal self-cultivation.

On a more practical level, the improvement of health is paramount in the *Wufuxu*'s second chapter because it allows the Daoists who practice its dietary regimens to more fully embody central religious ideals – such as communication with the gods – as they take part in the formal talisman transmission ritual in the text's third chapter. Furthermore, the long lists of benefits found in the text's recipes seem to be intended to be a map of key indicators that adepts could follow as they progressed from a normal life toward their ideal state.

Although the *Wufuxu* was compiled as a synthesis of longevity ideas and practices from disparate groups (see Yamada 1989, 114; Raz 2004, 9-12), the coherence of themes and patterns within the text is a strong indication that its redactors diligently worked to develop a coherent and unified set of practices of which ingesting herbal concoctions for facilitating health, perfecting the body and its essential energies, developing a connection with the divine realm, and achieving immortality was an integral part.

Appendix –The *Wufuxu*'s Recipes

1. The Numinous Treasure Ingestion of the Essence of the Five Wonder Plants.
靈寶服食五芝之精 2.1a2-2a10
2. The Recipe of the Three Heavens of the Numinous Treasure.
靈寶三天方 2.2b1-4a7
3. Various Lingbao Recipes Involving Sesame.
靈寶巨勝眾方 2.4a8-4b2
4. Divine Methods of Extending the Life Expectancy and Increasing Longevity.
延年益壽神方 2.4b3-5a1
5. Recipe for Sesame Cakes.
餌胡麻法 2.5a2-5a10
6. Sesame Paste.
胡麻膏 2.5b1-5b5
7. A Perfected One's Abstention from Grain Recipe.
真人絕穀方 2.5b6-6a2
8. A Perfected One's Method for Grain Abstention and Eating Sesame.
真人絕穀餌巨勝法 2.6a3-6b1
9. A Perfected One's Recipe for Lightening One's Food Intake and Avoiding Grains Without Hunger.
真人輕糧辟穀不食方 2.6b2-6b5
10. A Recipe of Ingesting Food to Provide Extraordinary Benefit to the Body.
出外益體服食方 2.6b6-7a2

11. A Recipe to Differentiate the *Ju* (Chrysanthemum) and *Yi* (100,000-Petalled Flower).
 辯菊億法2.7a3-7a8
12. A Recipe for Lengthening Years and Improving Life Expectancy.
 延年益壽方2.7a9-9a1
13. A Recipe for Apricot Seed Cakes.
 餌杏子法2.9a2-9b1
14. The Recipe of a Perfected Person as Received by Yu of the Xia.
 夏禹受真人方2.9b2-10b3
- 14a. No Title.2.10b4-10b9
15. The Recipe for Expelling the Three Worms, etc.
 去三蟲殺伏尸治面黥黑益智不忘男女五
 勞七傷婦人乳產餘病帶下去赤白皆愈方2.10b10-11a7
16. The Recipe for Causing People to Not Grow Old, Have a Long Life, etc.
 令人不老長生去三蟲治百病毒不能傷人方2.11a8-11b9
17. A Perfected Person's Recipe for Lengthening One's Life, Expelling the Three Corpses, Prolonging One's Years, and Turning Back Whiteness.
 真人長生去三尸延年反白之方2.11b10-14a7
18. A Recipe of Master Red Pine.
 赤松子方2.14a8-14a9
- 18a. A Recipe for Entering the Mountains and Never Eating Again Until the End of One's Life.
 如山終身不食方2.14a10-14b4
19. The Four Substances for Immortality Recipe As Received By the Yellow Emperor from Huang Qing.
 黃帝受黃輕四物仙方2.14b5-15a2
20. A Perfected Person's Four Ingredient Medicinal Powder to Eliminate Grains.
 真人四物却穀散2.15a3-15a8
- 20a. No Title2.15a9-15b7
21. Another Recipe to Ingest Food and to Heal Illness.
 又服食治病方2.15b8-16a4
22. Another Method to Expel the Three Worms.
 又去三蟲法2.16a5-16a8
23. A Recipe for Extending the Years and Increasing Longevity.
 延年益壽方2.16a9-16b2
24. Another Recipe for Repelling Old Age.
 又却老方2.16b3-16b5
25. A Perfected One's Additional Lotus Powders to Retard Aging.
 真人住年月別一物藕散2.16b6-17b2

26. A Recipe to Arrest Aging.
住年方 2.17b3-17b8
27. The Recipe for Ingesting and Eating Musk Deer Antler to Greatly Extend the Years; and If You Take More, to Make the Ears and Eyes Astute and Clear and the Hair Black.
服食麋甬延年多服耳目聰明黑髮方 2.17b9-18a4
- 27a. No Title. 2.18a5-20b3
(This portion seems to be the first half of the following recipe.)
28. A Lingbao Recipe for Solomon's Seal.
靈寶黃精方 2.20b4-23b5
29. An Immortal's Method for Expelling the Three Worms and Concealed Corpses.
仙人下三蟲伏尸方 2.23b6-24b8
30. Lezichang's Method for Refining Sesame Paste.
樂子長鍊胡麻膏方 2.24b9-25a3
31. Lezichang's Method for Ingesting Sesame.
樂子長服胡麻法 2.25a4-25a7
32. The Talisman for Hiding the Living in the Great Mystery of the Numinous Treasure.
靈寶太玄陰生之符 2.25a8-25b8
33. Medicine for Corpse-Liberation.
尸解藥 2.25b9-26a7
34. A Recipe for Expelling the Concealed Corpses and Three Worms.
去伏尸三蟲方 2.26a8-26a10
35. A Spirit Immortal's Recipe for Cultivation and Nourishing [Oneself].
神仙修養方 2.26b1-26b6
36. A Spirit Immortal's Method of Fermenting Alcohol.
神仙釀酒方 2.26b7-27a4
37. A Recipe for *Shu* (*Atractylodes macrocephala*) Alcohol.
朮酒方 2.27a5-27a9
38. A Recipe for Spirit Alcohol.
神酒方 2.27a10-27b3
39. A Recipe for Sesame Alcohol.
胡麻酒方 2.27b4-27b7
40. A Recipe for the Spirit Alcohol of *Rehmannia*.
地黃神酒方 2.27b8-28a4
41. A Recipe for Pine Sap Alcohol.
松脂酒方 2.28a5-28a9
42. Another Recipe.
又一方 2.28a10-28b2
43. A Recipe for Poke Alcohol.

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| 章陸酒方 | 2.28b3-28b10 |
| 44. A Recipe for Wolfberry Alcohol. | |
| 枸杞酒方 | 2.29a1-29b2 |
| 45. A Recipe for Five Eggplant (<i>Acanthopanax</i>) Alcohol. | |
| 五茄酒方 | 2.29b3-29b9 |
| 46. A Recipe for Asparagus Root Liquor. | |
| 天門冬酒方 | 2.29b10-30a8 |
| 47. A Recipe for Fried Asparagus Root. | |
| 天門冬煎方 | 2.30a9-30b7 |
| 48. A Recipe for Ingesting and Eating the Numinous. | |
| 服食神方 | 2.30b8-31a5 |
| 49. A Perfected One's Recipe for Fermenting Asparagus Root Alcohol. | |
| 真人釀天門冬酒方 | 2.31a6-31b5 |
| 50. A Recipe for Immortality Alcohol to Strengthen the Body. | |
| 健體仙酒方 | 2.31b6-32a2 |
| 51. A Recipe for Curing the Hundred Diseases with Spirit Alcohol. | |
| 治百病神酒方 | 2.32a3-32a8 |
| 52. A Lingbao Recipe for Ingesting and Eating Rehmannia and Wolfberry. | |
| 靈寶服食地黃枸杞酒方 | 2.32a9-32b10 |
| 53. A Recipe for Asparagus Root. | |
| 天門冬酒方 | 2.33a1-33a7 |
| 54. A Recipe for Wolfberry Alcohol. | |
| 枸杞酒方 | 2.33a8-33b2 |
| 55. A Fermenting Method. | |
| 釀法 | 2.33b3-33b8 |
| 56. A Recipe for Producing Spirit Alcohol. | |
| 作神酒方 | 2.33b9-34a4 |
| 57. A Recipe for Spirit Alcohol. | |
| 神酒方 | 2.34a5-34a8 |
| 58. A Spirit Immortal's Method for Drying Alcohol. | |
| 神仙乾酒法 | 2.34a9-34b3 |
| 59. A Spirit Immortal's Recipe for Ingesting and Eating Green Millet. | |
| 神仙服食青梁米方 | 2.34b4-34b10 |
| 60. Another Recipe. | |
| 又方 | 2.35a1-35a5 |
| 61. Yet Another Recipe. | |
| 又一方 | 2.35a6-35a8 |
| 62. A Method for Drying Alcohol. | |
| 乾酒法 | 2.35a9-35b3 |
| 63. A Common Recipe for Ingesting and Eating Non-Glutinous Rice. | |

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| 服食粳米散方 | 2.35b4-35b6 |
| 64. A Recipe for Ingesting and Eating Rice from the Paddy. | |
| 服食稻米方 | 2.35b7-35b10 |
| 65. A Recipe for Ceasing Grains. | |
| 休粮方 | 2.36a1-36a5 |
| 66. Lezichang's Recipe for Holding a Jujube Nut in One's Mouth. | |
| 樂子長含棗核方 | 2.36a6-36b3 |

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MAPPING THE DAOIST BODY

PART TWO

THE TEXT OF THE *NEIJING TU*

LOUIS KOMJATHY

Abstract

Part One of the present article, published in JDS 1 (2008), presented the historical and terminological contours of the *Neijing tu* 內經圖 (Diagram of Internal Pathways). As a late nineteenth-century stele commissioned by the Longmen monk and court eunuch Liu Chengyin 劉誠印 (Suyun 素雲, Pure Cloud; d. 1894), it is currently housed in the Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery; Beijing). This installment focuses on the content of the diagram as well as the Daoist cultivation methods embedded in its contours.

I first provide a thorough analysis of the textual and visual dimensions of the *Neijing tu*, including a complete translation with the diagram divided into three sections. The article also clarifies some influences on this Daoist body map and its corresponding internal alchemy system, specifically indicating a possible connection with the emerging Wu-Liu 伍柳 sub-lineage of Longmen.

This analysis is followed by a reconstruction of Daoist alchemical practice as expressed in the *Neijing tu*. I emphasize three methods: praxis-oriented applications of classical Chinese medical views of the body; visualizations which draw their inspiration from the *Huangting jing* and find clear historical precedents in Shangqing Daoism; and the alchemical technique known as the Waterwheel or Microcosmic Orbit. The three techniques form an interconnected system, wherein the adept's overall psychosomatic health is maintained and strengthened, his body is osmicized, and he awakens the mystical body, the body-beyond-the-body or yang-spirit, i.e., the culmination of alchemical transformation and the precondition for post-mortem transcendence.

Textual and Visual Contours

The major textual components of the *Neijing tu* are two poems written in regulated verse (*lüshi* 律詩), or eight seven-character lines. They are located above and below the strand of trees on the left-hand side of the diagram. Since various lines from these poems are distributed throughout the diagram, attention to them is a prerequisite for further exploration. The most significant convergence between the lines of the poems with the visual content occurs in the following locations: the abdominal region, where the ox is plowing the lower elixir field (poem 2, line 1, abbr. 2.1); the heart region, where the Cowherd is stringing together coins to form the Northern Dipper (2.2); and the head region, where Laozi sits in meditation above the Buddhist monk with upstretched and supporting arms (2.5-6).

Other more general descriptions are also found, including references to the body as fields (*tian* 田) in the abdominal, heart and head regions (1.1, 2.1); the white pearl above the head as the grain of millet that contains the world (2.3); and the head region or the Ren and Du vessels as the location where the mystery beyond mystery is realized (2.7-8). Finally, there are a number of streams flowing into and through the head, which parallel the reference to the spring in the Upper Valley (1.6). Certain sections of *Neijing tu* thus seem to have been executed as specific illustrations of these lines.

The poems themselves are found in the fifteenth-century *Lüzu zhi* 呂祖志 (Records of Patriarch Lü; DZ 1484).¹ They are attributed to Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 (Chunyang 純陽 [Purified Yang]; b. 798 C.E.), the semi-legendary patriarch of various internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) lineages. Numerous *neidan* texts have been attributed to Lü Dongbin and his supposed teacher Zhongli Quan 鍾離權, which form the so-called Zhong-Lü 鍾呂 textual tradition (see Baldrian-Hussein 1984, especially 23-31; Boltz 1987, 139-43). Lü Dongbin is also recognized as a patriarch of both Quanzhen and the so-called Nanzong 南宗 (Southern School). The inclusion of these poems in the *Neijing tu* points to its internal alchemy con-

¹ Numbers for works appearing in Daoist textual collections follow Komjathy 2002, with those for the Ming-dynasty Daoist Canon (DZ) paralleling Schipper and Verellen 2004. Other abbreviations include JH (*Daozang jinghua*), JHL (*Daozang jinghua lu*), JY (*Daozang jiyao*), and ZW (*Zangwai daoshu*).

text, though the exact lineage of late imperial *neidan* is currently unclear and awaits further research. Does the *Neijing tu* embody a distinctive synthesis, which in some respect represents a new *neidan* lineage? Or did it emerge as one expression of a specific lineage of internal alchemy? As discussed in the previous installment of the present article and below, there are some clear and intriguing parallels with the emerging Wu-Liu 伍柳 sub-lineage of Longmen and with the sub-sect of the Wu-Liu lineage called the Qianfeng 千峰 lineage,² which was established in early twentieth century by Zhao Bichen 趙避塵 (Shunyi 順一 [Attuned Unity]; 1860-1942) and which came to occupy a central place in modern Daoism. In terms of the *Neijing tu*, the former, as an identifiable lineage, is roughly contemporaneous, while the latter is slightly later.

The upper poem reads:

I am properly and attentively cultivating my own field—
 Inside there are numinous sprouts that live for ten thousand years.
 The flowers resemble yellow gold, their color not uncommon;
 The seeds are like jade grain, their fruits perfectly round.
 Cultivation completely depends on the earth of the Central Palace;
 Irrigation necessarily relies on the spring in the Upper Valley.
 The practice is completed suddenly and I attain the great Dao—
 I wander carefree over land and water as an immortal of Penglai.
 (See also DZ 1484, 4.16a)

The emphasis here is on self-cultivation and alchemical transformation. The central metaphor is agricultural—just as the horticulturalist must attentively tend his or her garden, so the Daoist adept must focus on specific elixir fields (*dantian* 丹田) throughout the body. In the *Neijing tu*, these fields are identified by name: the middle elixir field just below the heart is “Gen-mountain earth” (*gentu* 根土),³ while the lower elixir

² This sub-lineage derives its name from the Mount Qianfeng (Hebei), and Zhao Bichen was directed to found it by his teacher Liaokong 了空 (Realized Emptiness; fl. 1895), who was a Chan monk. Interestingly, Liaokong claimed to have received direct instruction under Liu Huayang in 1799. See *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, ZW 872; *Weisheng sanzhi fajue jing*, ZW 873; Lu 1970; Despeux 1979.

³ The phrase “Gen-mountain” appears in the *Neijing tu* near the Cowherd and refers to the trigram 艮 designating “mountain” as well as to hexagram 52,

field near the level of the navel is called the "correct [standard] elixir field" (*zheng dantian* 正丹田).⁴ Like tilling, planting, and harvesting crops, the process of internal alchemy involves a cultivation cycle; one must prepare the ground and develop the appropriate physiological and cosmological aspects, for which the *Neijing tu* serves as a map of the Daoist internal landscape and as a visual aid for alchemical transformation. In the above poem, the fruits of Daoist cultivation are "flowers the color of yellow gold" and "seeds like jade grain," both poetic descriptions of specific alchemical experiences. Planted as a seed in the lower elixir field, and nourished through consistent attentiveness (*yi* 意) and dedication (*zhi* 志), qi accumulates and expands. With yellow being associated with the Earth phase in Chinese correlative cosmology (see, e.g., Unschuld 1985; Major 1993), and as one of the esoteric names of the lower elixir field is the Yellow Court (*huangting* 黃庭), the poem suggests that the perfect qi (*zhenqi* 真氣), the qi activated and circulated in internal alchemy practice, becomes a stronger presence in the body. The body becomes rarified.

"Gen-mountain" 艮. In Daoist internal alchemy, the trigrams represent various psycho-physiological aspects of the human being and stages in self-transformation. The "Gen-mountain" trigram may, in turn, express the state of stillness as well as practices that help nourish such a condition. In the present case, the reference to the heart region as the "field of Gen-mountain earth" suggests that excess emotional and intellectual activity has become stilled. An example of this type of Daoist exegesis on the *Yijing* 易經 may be found in Liu Yi-ming's 劉一明 (Wuyuan 悟元 [Awakening to the Origin]; 1734-1821) *Zhouyi chanzhen* 周易闡真 (True Explanation of the *Yijing*), collected in his *Daoshu shier zhong* 道書十二種 (Twelve Daoist Books). The *Zhouyi chanzhen* appears in ZW 245 and has been translated in Cleary 1986. In terms of the present discussion, see especially Cleary 1986, 103-5, 194-97, and 207-9.

⁴ It should be noted that the locations of the upper, middle, and lower elixir fields change depending on the system of alchemy being employed. As in the *Neijing tu*, the most frequent locations are in the head, solar plexus/heart region, and the lower abdomen. See, for example, the eleventh-century *Yunji qiqian*, DZ 1032, 59.2a; also Li 1991, 70, 80, 139; Min and Li 1994, 70, 110, 125, 272; Hu 1995, 482, 745, 1141, 1449, 1675, 1681. In some contemporary forms of *neidan*, the three elixir fields are the head, lower abdomen and perineum, with the latter referred to as Huiyin 會陰 and associated with vital essence. Author's field observations.

This is one manifestation of the golden elixir (*jindan* 金丹) mentioned in the poem and in Liu Chengyin's colophon. "The earth of the Central Palace" most likely refers to the Scarlet Palace (*jiangong* 絳宮), the area just below the heart. This interpretation receives substantiation by the placement of the poem in the *Neijing tu* in line with the Cowherd (the heart region). Following the mapping of Daoist cultivation in the *Neijing tu*, the Daoist practitioner must still the emotions and nourish spirit, both associated with the Fire phase and thus with the heart. In addition, the poem emphasizes the practice of swallowing the Jade Dew (*yuye* 玉液; saliva), a central component of forming the elixir of immortality (see Komjathy 2007, ch. 6). At the end of the poem, we also find an allusion to chapter one of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang; DZ 670), entitled "Xiaoyao you" 逍遙遊 (Carefree Wandering); the Daoist adept, like the great Peng bird, wanders effortlessly through the troubles of the world and maintains a more all-encompassing perspective. According to the author of the poem, dedication to such cultivation techniques will lead to attunement with the Dao and immortality, symbolized as entrance into the eastern paradise of Penglai Island.

The second poem again orients one towards the importance of cultivation. Through alchemical transformation, the Daoist adept comes to encompass and be encompassed by the entire universe. The mutual resonance between the human body and the cosmos, and the embodiment of the cosmos within and as the human body, becomes realized (see Schipper 1978; 1993; Kohn 1991a).

The iron ox plows the field where golden coins are sown;
Engraving the stone, the young lad holds a string of cash.
A single grain of millet contains the entire world;
Mountains and streams are decocted in a half-*sheng* cauldron.
The eyebrows of white-headed Laozi hang down to the earth,
And the blue-eyed foreign monk holds up the heavens.
Orient yourself towards the mysterious and it is realized—
Outside of this mystery there is no other mystery.

(see also DZ 1484, 5.11a)

The first line emphasizes the practice of tending to the body's fields. While this involves effort and prolonged practice, symbolized by the ox (cf. Needham et al. 1983, 100; Wang 1991-92, 151; Eichman 2000a, 351),

the outcome will be golden coins. Based on the illustrations of the *Neijing tu* and the placement of the poem, the primary body location being emphasized is that of the lower elixir field. Again taking into account the above-mentioned associations of yellow and gold with the Earth phase and with the lower elixir field, the sowing and gathering of "golden coins" indicates an increased level of energetic presence in the lower abdominal region, the primary storehouse of qi in the body. Like the previous encounter with "flowers of yellow gold," and like the discovery of gold in general, this fruit is a rare and precious occurrence in the world.

"A grain of millet contains the world" alludes to the famous "Yellow Millet Dream" (*huangliang meng* 黃粱夢) of Lü Dongbin. According to one hagiography, found in the Yuan-dynasty (1260-1368) *Zengxiang liexian zhuan* 增象列仙傳 (Illustrated Biographies of Arrayed Immortals; see Kohn 1993, 126-32; cf. *Chunyang shenhua ji*, DZ 305, 1.3a-5a), until the age of sixty-four Lü Dongbin, although practicing Daoist cultivation, still harbored political aspirations. Having failed to pass the imperial examination twice, one day Lü encounters Zhongli Quan, an accomplished Daoist adept. Zhongli Quan in turn invites Lü to an inn for a meal, during the preparation of which Lü falls asleep. He then dreams of an entire official career, beginning with success and fame and ending with failure, humiliation, and despondency. When he awakens from this dream, the millet is still being cooked. In even less time than it takes to cook millet, Lü experiences one possible life and the dissipation involved in seeking fame and reputation. He in turn becomes the disciple of Zhongli Quan (who knew of the dream before Lü told him), and eventually commits himself solely to Daoist cultivation, thus coming to represent the aspiring Daoist practitioner in general.

Through such dedication, "mountains and streams are decocted in a half-*sheng* cauldron." One engages in the actualization and refinement of internal presences and comes to reside in a larger matrix of being. The entire universe is the context for one's cultivation and one's very existence becomes cosmicized. As illustrated in the contours of the *Neijing tu*, the adept engaging in alchemical praxis discovers that the body contains streams, mountains, fields, forests, temples and constellations. One's body is the cosmos, and the cosmos is one's body. Although such conventional distinctions like "cosmos" and "self," or "internal" and "external," are potentially necessary at the beginning of alchemical praxis, the

final outcome of alchemical transformation, rarification and perhaps self-divinization, results in the activation of the Daoist mystical body (see Komjathy 2007), a body which is transpersonal and infused with the Dao's numinosity. This involves "orienting yourself towards the mysterious." The final lines of the poem, with the frequent repetition of "mysterious" (*xuan* 玄), invoke chapter one of the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power): "Mysterious and again more mysterious—the gateway to all wonders." The Daoist adept merges with the twofold mystery which is the Dao. He or she literally shifts ontological conditions, abiding in a state of mystical pervasion with the Dao as a mystery beyond mystery, as a mystery simultaneously present and absent in its own mysteriousness. It is this presence-absence that also circulates through the adept's own body as numinous currents. Here one encounters perhaps one of the most significant Daoist challenges to conventional understandings of human being: one's physiology literally is sacred. One *embodies* the Dao, and one may experience the Dao through/in/as one's own psychosomatic and energetic being. The bifurcation of "transcendent divine" and "mundane material processes" breaks down in this Daoist vision of self.

Beyond the two poems which provide a general description of the alchemical endeavor, the diagram as a whole can be seen to depict the Daoist alchemical practice of reversal in combination with the Microcosmic Orbit method. Here I concentrate on the textual and visual aspects of the *Neijing tu*, while in the subsequent section I provide a more systematic explanation of the practices in the context of Daoist internal alchemy praxis. The aspiring adept must seal himself or herself off from various sources of dissipation, including sensory and emotional distractions. He or she must turn inward through meditative praxis to realize a return to psychosomatic and cosmological integration. For male adepts in particular, they must prevent dissipation of their core vitality, vital essence (*jing* 精), which occurs through sexual activity and resulting seminal emission. One of the foundations of the alchemical process is the retention, circulation and transformation of the body fluids (see Komjathy 2007). In the *Neijing tu*, this is depicted as movement of vital essence, the water of the body, being reversed and transferred upward.

Beginning at the first pass, one notices a boy and a girl working a treadmill, representing yang and yin respectively (see Fig. 2).

The caption next to them reads "the mysterious yin-yang treadmill." The longer textual component explains,



Repeatedly, constantly, [the treadmill] is peddled in cycles;
When the mechanism revolves, the water flows eastward.
The water, ten-thousand fathoms deep, is seen straight to its bottom;
A sweet spring bubbles up, rising to the summit of Southern
Mountain.

By using the intent and sealing the lower gate, the perineum, the adept reverses the flow of vital essence. Instead of moving outward in the form of seminal emission for male adepts and menstrual blood for female adepts, both primary forms of dissipation, the vital essence becomes conserved, stored, circulated and transformed. Reference to the eastward flow of the vital essence (*jing* 精) also makes sense when read in relation to Weilü 尾閭 (Tailbone Gate; the coccyx) as the first pass.⁵ According to the *Zhuangzi*,

Considering the waters of the world, none is greater than the ocean. Ten thousand streams flow into it—there has never been a time when they ceased, but the ocean is never full. The water leaks out at Weilü—there has never been a time when it stopped, but the ocean is never empty. (17/42/6-8; cf. Watson 1968, 176).

The occurrence of Weilü in the *Neijing tu* also adds an additional “mythological” component to its mapping of the Daoist body and the Daoist internal landscape. Just as the waters of the ocean are turned into vapor at the Weilü rock, so too the body has a corresponding place in the coccyx, identified as the first point on the Governing vessel (GV-1) in contemporary Chinese medicine (see Ellis et al. 1989; Deadman et al. 2001). The lower section of the *Neijing tu* informs the viewer that “the Kan-water flows in reverse”, that is, the vital essence, associated with the

⁵ The Three Passes (*sanguan* 三關) are usually identified as Tailbone Gate (*weilü* 尾閭; the coccyx), Narrow Ridge (*jiaji* 夾脊; mid-spine), and Jade Pillow (*yuzhen* 玉枕; occiput). See, for example, the thirteenth-century *Jindan dacheng ji* 金丹大成集, *Xiuzhen shishu*, DZ 263, 10.6b; the thirteenth-century *Dadan zhizhi* 大丹直指, DZ 244, 1.4a, 1.5a, 1.12a; and the seventeenth-century *Xingming guizhi*, ZW 314, 9.518.

trigram Kan-water ䷜ and the kidneys,⁶ is redirected upwards. In contrast to the "normal" flow of essence outward as a source of dissipation, the Daoist adept, using his or her intent, guides vital essence and qi through Weilü and initiates the "reversion" (*fan* 反; *huan* 還) of vital essence to repair the marrow and brain (see below).

With regard to the ascent of the bubbling spring to Southern Mountain, Wang suggests that Southern Mountain "should be the mountain range of the same name in the south of Xinjiang, which is regarded as a major branch of Mount Kunlun" (Wang 1991-92, 150). As the head is frequently referred to as Mount Kunlun 崑崙 in Daoist cultivation,⁷ Southern Mountain suggests the movement of the vital essence and qi from the lower regions of the body (north) into the upper regions (south), specifically into the head area. Mount Kunlun in the west, in addition to Penglai Island in the east, is a terrestrial paradise and home to various immortals (*xian* 仙). In chapter eleven of the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (Classic of Mountains and Seas), a major source of Chinese mythology which contains material from the third century B.C.E. to the second century C.E., Mount Kunlun is described as an epicenter of the universe, where the heavens and the earth are perfectly harmonized (see Birrell 1999a, 139-41; 1999b, 183-85). This aspect of the map hints at the Daoist goal of attaining immortality, realizing complete cosmological alignment, mystical

⁶ In Daoist *neidan* praxis, the eight trigrams (*bagua* 八卦), commonly associated with the *Yijing* 易經 (Classic of Change), have various correspondences. The trigrams are as follows: (1) Qian-heaven (*qian* 乾) ䷀, (2) Kun-earth (*kun* 坤) ䷁, (3) Li-fire (*li* 離) ䷄, (4) Kan-water (*kan* 坎) ䷜, (5) Dui-lake (*dui* 兌) ䷹, (6) Zhen-thunder (*zhen* 震) ䷲, (7) Sun-wind (*sun* 巽) ䷸, and Gen-mountain (*gen* 艮) ䷳. See the tenth-century *Chuandao ji* 傳道集, DZ 263, 14.11b; and thirteenth-century *Jindan dacheng ji* 金丹大成集, DZ 263, 10.12b.

⁷ One of the earliest usages of Kunlun as a reference to the head, and thus to the interiorization of paradise and immortality, appears in the third-century *Huangting waijing jing* 黃庭外景經, DZ 332, 1.1b, also 2.1b. See also the eighth-century *Huangting waijing jing zhu* 黃庭外景經注, DZ 263, 58.7a; *Jindan dayao tu*, DZ 1068, 3a; *Xingming guizhi*, ZW 314, 9.318. For some classical references to Kunlun in Daoism see Li 1991, 339; Min and Li 1994, 637; Hu 1995, 1164, 1176, 1381, 1644.

pervasion and/or self-divinization.⁸ In addition, the reference to the “spring bubbling up” (*quanyong* 泉湧) may be an inversion of Yongquan 湧泉 (Bubbling Spring), located in the center of the sole of foot and identified as the first point on the kidney meridian in contemporary Chinese medicine.⁹ This reading adds additional support for the connection of Kan-water ䷜ with vital essence, as the kidneys house vital essence.

Above “the mysterious yin-yang treadmill,” there are two furnaces with flames flaring up, four Taiji diagrams, and a ploughboy tending his ox (see Fig. 2). Based on their location in the diagram, the furnaces symbolize the elixir fields where vital essence and qi are stored, transformed and circulated.¹⁰ According to the contours of the *Neijing tu*, the aspiring Daoist adept must focus his or her intent on various locations in the body, especially on Weilü (Tailbone Gate; the coccyx), Qihai 氣海 (Ocean of Qi; the abdomen), and Mingmen 命門 (Gate of Life; between the kidneys) to increase the fire and circulate qi. As noted, agricultural metaphors abound, and the ploughboy and ox suggest focused attention on the process of alchemical transformation, especially on the conservation, transformation and circulation of vital essence and qi.

⁸ The meaning of *xian* 仙 (“immortal” or “transcendent”) varies according to the specific Daoist sub-tradition and historical moment. In the *Neijing tu*, immortality would seem to refer to long life and alchemical transformation. It also seems to be taken as parallel to “enlightenment” or “realization” in Chan Buddhism. In the case of the Daoist tradition, whether or not becoming a *xianren* 仙人 or *zhenren* 真人 means personal continuation after death is an open question, and one that requires critical reflection and more in-depth historical research.

⁹ Within Daoism, a clear depiction of Yongquan as located in the center of the soles of the feet appears in the *Xiuzhen tu*. See Despeux 1994; 2000.

¹⁰ In *neidan* lineages, a distinction is often made between the “stove” or “furnace” (*lu* 爐) and “cauldron” or “tripod” (*ding* 鼎). E.g., the fourteenth-century *Yuqing danjue* 玉清丹訣, DZ 240, 2.16a; cf. *Xiuzhen shishu*, DZ 263, 10.2b.

The four Taiji diagrams may be interpreted in a variety of ways.¹¹ Under one reading, and the one that I would suggest is primary, the diagrams symbolize the harmonization of the Five Phases through attentiveness on lower elixir field, the central storage location for qi. In this case, the four diagrams would represent all of the phases (Wood [east, azure, liver, ethereal soul], Fire [south, red, heart, spirit], Metal [west, white, lungs, corporeal soul], and Water [north, black, kidneys, vital essence or will]) except that of the Earth, which often occupies the center, or stillness, in Daoist cultivation. Stillness, sometimes spoken of as Perfect Earth (*zhentu* 真土), unites all of the other phases.¹² An alternative reading, proposed by Schipper, suggests that these Taiji diagrams represent the qi phases of the elixir field (Schipper 1978, 356).¹³ There is no reason to believe that such interpretations are mutually exclusive; these layers of meaning, along with others unmentioned here, may all be embedded in this section of the *Neijing tu*. The most important thing to note is the centrality of the lower elixir field in the *Neijing tu*, in its mapping of the Daoist body, and in its system of alchemical transformation.

Moving up the spine still further, one arrives at the flames between the vertebrae below of the second pass. This is Mingmen 命門 (Gate of Life), which is again connected with vital essence and its transformation into qi.¹⁴ Charted according to function in contemporary Chinese medi-

¹¹ The history of the standard, modern Taiji symbol, and the ones depicted in the *Neijing tu* (i.e., a circle divided into interconnected white [yang] and black [yin] aspects that contain a dot [seed] of the alternate colors [yin-yang aspects]), is currently unclear. For some insights see the relevant entry on the "Critical Terms" page of the Center for Daoist Studies website (www.daoistcenter.org). Its historical usage in Chinese culture and among Daoists is complex.

¹² There are a variety of extant diagrams called *Zhentu tu* 真土圖 (Diagram of Perfect Earth), wherein "perfect earth" is associated with the Yellow Court and intent, or thinking (*yi* 意). See, e.g., *Zazhu zhixuan pian* 雜著指玄篇, DZ 263, 1.5a; *Xingming guizhi*, ZW 314, 9.523. The latter diagram emphasizes stilling the heart center.

¹³ Unfortunately, Schipper does not provide a detailed explanation of these "qi phases of the *dantian*." Such technical information might add a deeper understanding of Daoist cultivation.

¹⁴ The term appears as early as the third-century *Huangting jing*. See DZ 331, 11b; DZ 332, 1.1a. According to the eighth-century *Huangting neijing jing zhu*, "The Gate of Life is the lower elixir field" (DZ 402, 3.19b). However, both the

cine, where it is identified as the fourth point on the Governing Vessel (see Ellis et al. 1989; Deadman et al. 2001), Mingmen as an energetic location in the body has the ability to regulate the Governing vessel, to tonify the kidneys, to nourish the spine and marrow, and to strengthen the five yin-orbs (*wuzang* 五藏). Ascending still higher, there are two captions: “cavity of the two kidney storehouses” and “mountains and streams are decocted in a half-*sheng* cauldron” (see Figs. 3, 4).

Comparing the *Neijing tu* stele with the Qing-dynasty colored painting (see Fu et al. 1999, 200), the first caption, which reads “cavity of the left and right kidney storehouses” in the painting, should have been engraved at the level of the Weaving Maiden (the kidney region). It obviously refers to the kidneys and their corresponding location in the lower section of the map. Here is one direct convergence between this mapping of Daoist alchemical transformation and classical Chinese medical views: the kidneys are the storehouse of vital essence and thus the foundation of one’s core vitality (see *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問, chs. 3, 8, 9, 10, 23; Ross 1985; Maciocia 1989, 67-110; Unschuld 2003, 124-44; also Needham et al. 1983, 22; Wang 1991-92, 150; below). Thus one can make the argument that the centrality of Mingmen and the kidneys in this section of the *Neijing tu* and in its corresponding system of self-cultivation strengthens the adept’s physical constitution and prepares the way for more advanced training, specifically rarification through alchemical transformation.

Ascending the mountain path still further, there are two additional phrases in line with the third temple or hut in the spine: “upper pass of jade perfection” and “cavity of the numinous peak.” These lines refer to the upper pass known as Yuzhen 玉枕 (Jade Pillow). Passing through these various locations, the vital essence and qi eventually enter the head. Attention is drawn to the Three Passes as they are areas through which it is difficult for the qi to pass and thus the intent is often used to help open them.

Xiuzhen tu and *Xingming guizhi* (ZW 314, 9.518) clearly place Mingmen in the kidney region along the spine.



Passing through the final pass, one arrives at the mountain peaks that, from a Daoist perspective, are the various energetic locations in the head (see Fig. 4). While the upper section of *Neijing tu* contains a variety of textual components that can easily lead to confusion, an attempt to negotiate them offers significant contributions. First and foremost, one notices the graphic component depicting the Nine Peaks (*jiufeng* 九峰), some of which are in the center of the head. Sometimes synonymous with the Nine Palaces (*jiugong* 九宮), these peaks are associated with traditional Daoist subtle anatomy and physiology and are utilized in Daoist meditation methods.¹⁵

The second most elevated peak, corresponding to Baihui 百會 (Hundred Meetings; GV-20), the crown-point in contemporary Chinese medicine, is identified as the “Niwan Palace” (*niwan gong* 泥丸宮),¹⁶ a term that transliterates *nirvana* and literally means “mudball.” The point is also known as “prefecture of rising yang” (*shengyang fu* 昇陽府), shown in the diagram as a pearl or ball of light and related to the line “a grain of millet contains the world” from the Lü Dongbin poem. All of this, in combination with the phrase “to prolong longevity and [attain] immortality and Buddhahood,” suggests the final goal of Daoist internal alchemy—the creation of an immortal embryo (*taixian* 胎仙), also known as the “yang-spirit” (*yangshen* 陽神) or “body-beyond-the-body” (*shenwai shen* 身外身) (see Komjathy 2007). It may also be understood as nothing more than recovering the seed of original yang (*yuanyang* 元陽) that was within the practitioner all along. The fact that the diagram equates immortality and Buddhahood may add support for the suggestion that it

¹⁵ See the *Yuandan shangjing* 元丹上經, DZ 1345, 2b-8a; also *Zazhu jiejing*, DZ 263, 18.6ab. The fourteenth-century *Jindan dayao tu* 上陽子金丹大要圖 contains an earlier Daoist map of the body as a mountain that includes some of the names of the Nine Palaces. See DZ 1068, 3a; also Needham et al. 1983, 105; Despeux 1994, 41; Komjathy 2007, chs. 4 and 6.

¹⁶ In the *Neijing tu*, *niwan* is located above the head, and seemingly refers to Baihui as the location where the yang-spirit exits the adept’s body. However, Niwan is often associated with the upper elixir field. See, for example, the *Jindan dacheng ji*, DZ 263, 10.3b. For some depictions of the exit of the yang-spirit from the crown-point see *Xingming guizhi*, ZW 314, 9.585, 9.590; *Huiming jing*, ZW 131, 5.881; *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, ZW 872, 26.114, 26.119, 26.120.

derives from the Wu-Liu 伍柳 sub-lineage of Longmen (below), as that community has a text titled *Xianfo hezong* 仙佛合宗 (Common Lineage of Immortals and Buddhas; ZW 843).

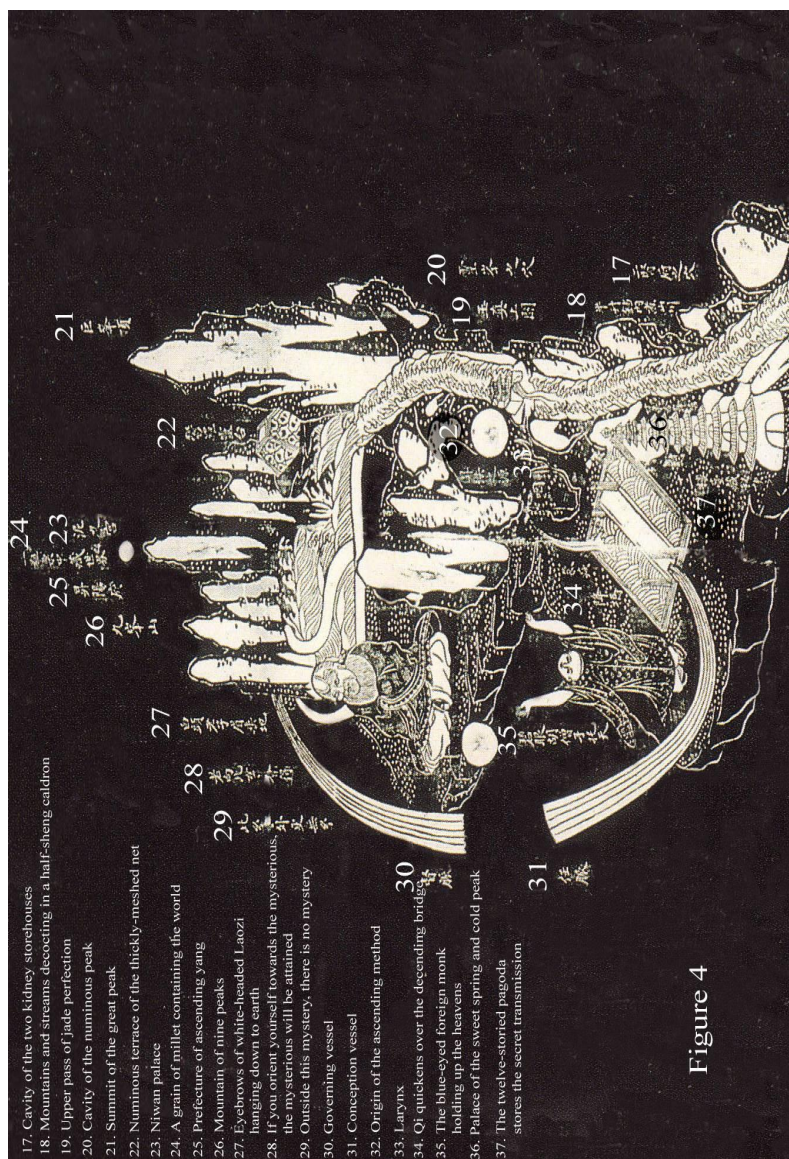


Figure 4

Here one also notices the “numinous platform of thickly-meshed net,” a phrase which also occurs in the fourteenth-century *Jindao dayao tu* 金丹大要圖 (Diagram of Great Essentials of the Golden Elixir; DZ 1068), a diagram depicting the Daoist body as a mountain and a clear precursor to the received *Neijing tu*. Eichman suggests that this phrase (and its corresponding graphic depiction) “implies the ultimate goal of alchemy, an audience with representatives of the celestial hierarchy” (2000a, 350). Like his or her terrestrial bureaucratic counterpart in relation to the terrestrial emperor, the Daoist practitioner seeks an audience with the highest realms of spirit beings, the gods and Perfected (*zhenren* 真人). This section of the diagram, then, invokes higher levels of alchemical refinement, ending (or beginning) in an energetic merging with the Dao. “If you orient yourself towards the mysterious, the mysterious may be realized” (see also Wang 1991-92, 145-46).

In the upper section of the diagram there is an old man sitting in meditation (see Fig. 4). He wears a robe with the stylized character for longevity (*shou* 壽), and above him there is the following inscription: “The eyebrows of white-headed Laozi hang down to the earth.” Below him is a figure with up-raised arms and the corresponding inscription: “The blue-eyed foreign monk holds up the heavens.” Both of these lines come from the Lü Dongbin poems. The most straightforward interpretation of the two figures identifies them as Laozi and Bodhidharma, respectively (see Rousselle 1933; Needham et al. 1983, 116). However, Wang, in a fairly convincing art historical discussion, argues that the iconography of the old man figure suggests the Immortal Old Man of the Southern Pole-star, the eighth spirit of the brain (Wang 1991-92, 146). This interpretation may partially derive from the figure’s placement at the energetic location corresponding to higher levels of consciousness, either Mingtang 明堂 (Hall of Light) and/or Zuqiao 祖竅 (Ancestral Cavity).¹⁷ Wang also challenges the identification of the blue-eyed monk as Bodhidharma, arguing instead that he should be understood as a combi-

¹⁷ As mentioned, in certain forms of Daoist meditation, Mingtang is included as one of the Nine Palaces and identified as a mystical cranial location. References to Zuqiao as another mystical cranial location at the center of the head appears in the *Xingming guizhi* (ZW 314) and throughout the pages of the *Xingming fajue mingzhi* (ZW 872).

nation of the Laughing Buddha and the element mercury and/or as Maitreya, the future Buddha (Wang 1991-92, 149).

While convincing from an art historical perspective and accounting for certain iconographic features, this reading fails to provide an adequate explanation of the two figures in terms of the larger Daoist tradition in general and *neidan* lineages associated with Lü Dongbin and late imperial Daoism in particular. Why would the person or community who originally envisioned, commissioned and produced such a mapping of the Daoist body include the Laughing Buddha and/or Maitreya?

If one follows a relatively straightforward reading that recognizes the potential connection between the textual and visual contours of the *Neijing tu*, then these figures are Laozi and Bodhidharma. In the poems attributed to Lü Dongbin, Laozi is mentioned by name and "the blue-eyed foreign monk" (*biyan huseng* 碧眼胡僧) is a standard name for Bodhidharma (a.k.a. Damo 達摩; see Xingyun 1989, 5848; also Ding 1939). In addition, with regard to late medieval *neidan* lineages, one finds these two figures as symbolic referents for alchemical ingredients: the old man symbolizes lead (*qian* 鉛), while the monk represents mercury (*hong* 汞) (see also Wang 1991-92, 147; Eichman 2000a, 351). They are referred to as such in the "Danfang baojian zhi tu" 丹房寶鑑之圖 (Diagram of the Precious Mirror of the Elixir Chamber), which is contained in *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 (Ten Works on Cultivating Perfection; DZ 263, 26.5b-6a), an anthology of the early fourteenth century. Here mercury (Bodhidharma) is said to correspond to the jade *ye*-fluids (*yuye* 玉液), spirit water (*shen-shui* 神水), the Maiden (*chanü* 姮女), white snow (*baixue* 白雪), and the azure dragon (*qinglong* 青龍), among other things; lead (Laozi) is said to correspond to the gold *ye*-fluids (*jinye* 金液), Jade Pond (*yuchi* 玉池), the Child (*ying'er* 嬰兒), yellow sprouts (*huangya* 黃芽), and the white tiger (*baihu* 白虎), among other things. In other *neidan* discussions of these alchemical symbols/ingredients, lead may refer to vital essence (*jing* 精) or original spirit (*yuanshen* 元神), while mercury may refer to spirit (*shen* 神) or original *qi* (*yuanqi* 元氣).¹⁸

Based on these correspondences, a number of readings are possible. First, and most basic, the adept accumulates and gathers saliva, the *ye*-

¹⁸ Cf. *Ershisi jue* 二十四訣, DZ 1158, 1b and *Danyang yulu* 丹陽語錄, DZ 1057, 15b. See also *Chuandao ji*, DZ 263, 15.11a-15a.

fluids associated with Bodhidharma, in the mouth, the Jade Pond associated with Laozi. These fluids are then swallowed down to purify the heart and eventually commingle with original qi in the lower elixir field. In this respect, one may again reflect upon the symbolic meaning of Bodhidharma and Laozi as one's own physiology. Another possible reading is that original qi, associated with mercury and the figure of Bodhidharma, and original spirit, associated with lead and the figure of Laozi, become commingled in the adept's upper elixir field.

Reading the upper figure in the *Neijing tu* as Laozi also makes sense because Laozi is frequently recognized as the "founder" of the Daoist tradition and as the high god Laojun 老君 (Lord Lao).¹⁹ In the lives of specific Daoists and Daoist communities, he also came to symbolize the culmination of Daoist cultivation. He himself, after all, transformed into the universe:

Laozi transformed his form. His left eye became the sun, and his right eye became the moon. His head became Mount Kunlun. His beard became the planets and constellations. His bones became dragons; his flesh, wild animals; and his intestines, snakes. His belly became the ocean; his fingers, the five sacred mountains; and his hair, grasses and trees. His heart became the Flowery Canopy. Finally, his two kidneys were united and became the true father and mother. (*Xiaodao lun* 笑道論, T. 3102, 52.144b13-15; cf. *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤, DZ 1032, 10.7b-8a; see Maspero 1981, 340; Schipper 1993, 114; also Kohn 1995, 54-55)²⁰

Laozi is the supremely long-lived, for he is the cosmos and the cosmos is he. The *Neijing tu* suggests that Laozi represents the Daoist adept's own possibility—each person's eyes, the two circles in the diagram, are the sun and the moon, and each practitioner's consciousness contains the numinous presence which "Laozi" embodied, at least from

¹⁹ For a revisionist historical analysis of the construction of Laozi as a "historical" personage see Graham 1998 (1986). For studies of the some of the ways in which he has been represented in the Daoist tradition see Seidel 1969; Kohn 1999.

²⁰ Here Laozi takes the place of the primordial being Pan Gu 盤古 (see Birrell 1999; Kohn 1993, 168-69; 1995).

certain emic perspectives. According to the diagram, the "essence" of the Dao and the Daoist tradition is literally contained in one's own brain. The human being, from this Daoist perspective, is a cosmological being: one's very own body contains mountains, temples, constellations and the locus for immortality and perfection. In some forms of Daoist religious praxis, specifically visualization (*cunxiang* 存想) and inner observation (*neiguan* 內觀) forms of meditation during the early and late medieval periods, the Daoist adept turns the light of the sun and moon (the eyes) inward, thus illuminating the internal landscape which is his or her own body (see Kohn 1989; Robinet 1989a; also below). One can also argue that, if the *Neijing tu* originates in a Longmen context, the significance of Laozi finds substantiation in the fact that he is identified as one of the so-called Five Patriarchs (*wuzu* 五祖) of early Quanzhen and as one of the Three Purities (*sanqing* 三清) in later Quanzhen. This, at the very least, may help to explain the enduring power of the *Neijing tu* as a mapping of Daoist existential and ontological possibility.

The significance of Bodhidharma is a bit more difficult to determine. One interpretation is that Bodhidharma, paralleling Laozi's place in many sectors of the Daoist tradition, represents the origin and essence of Chan (Zen) Buddhism. That is, the Chan tradition, considered as a whole, identifies him as the "founder" (Dumoulin 1988, 85-94).²¹ In addition to the above-mentioned alchemical symbolism, the inclusion of Bodhidharma may have been a way of gaining cultural capital, suggesting that *neidan* practice and Chan meditation led to the same goal. If this reading is convincing, the *Neijing tu* may also be suggesting the importance of cross-tradition cultivation practice. Here one thinks of Bodhidharma's mythic nine years of meditation, or "wall-gazing" (*biguan* 壁觀), as a symbol of intensive and dedicated religious praxis.²² Chan-inspired emp-

²¹ Critical and revisionist historiography on the Chan tradition in general and Bodhidharma in particular, paralleling such research on Daoism and Laozi, questions the historicity of Bodhidharma. See Broughton 1999; also Faure 1993.

²² In this respect, one's interest is peaked by the presence of the four diagrams on "Chan 禪" practice (walking, standing, sitting, and lying down) that are included in the *Xingming guizhi*, DZ 314, 9.554-555. In the chart on meditation practice, one is urged to engage in prolonged periods of seated meditation. In addition, Liaokong 了空 (fl. 1895), one of the teachers of Zhao Bichen (founder of the Qianfeng lineage), was a Chan monk who practiced *neidan*. Zhao Bichen is, in

teness meditation becomes represented as the foundation for alchemical transformation, which also takes place in a seated meditation posture as represented in the *Neijing tu*. At the same time, there may be a polemical dimension—the Buddhist is placed beneath and in support of the Daoist. It is also plausible to interpret the “blue-eyed foreign monk holding up the heavens” as an illustration of the Zygomatic arch (cheekbones), and “Laozi’s eyebrows hanging down to earth” as the gaze becoming aware of internal aspects of Daoist subtle physiology.²³ Again, all of these layers may be occurring simultaneously in the diagram’s mapping of the Daoist body and Daoist religious praxis.

Just to the left of the blue-eyed foreign monk, there are two additional textual components, which read as follows:

Fazang says: “Violet eyes clarify the four great oceans; the white light pervades Mount Sumeru.”

Cishi says: “Between the eyebrows white light constantly emanates; this can liberate all sentient beings from the suffering of ceaseless reincarnation.”

Here Fazang 法藏 most likely refers to the historical Fazang (643-712),²⁴ the third patriarch of Huayan Buddhism who systematized its teaching, but preliminary research indicates that none of these lines are contained in Fazang’s extant works. The figure could also be, as Wang

turn, identified as an eleventh-generation member of the Wu-Liu sub-lineage of Longmen. See Xi 2004, especially 1-16. Taken together, this means that there were Daoist monks practicing “Chan” meditation, and Chan monks practicing “Daoist” internal alchemy in the Baiyun guan environs and nearby Buddhist sacred sites at a time roughly contemporaneous with the commissioning and engraving of the *Neijing tu*. The central importance of Bodhidharma and Chan again adds support for a Wu-Liu connection, as Liu Huayang, the co-founder, was a Chan monk. For additional insights on Daoism and the overall religio-cultural context of Beijing during the late imperial and early modern periods see Goossaert 2007.

²³ In terms of Western physiology, the figures also could be interpreted as the sphenoid bone and the pituitary gland, housed in the *sella turcica* portion of the sphenoid bone.

²⁴ With regard to “Fazang,” Rousselle (1933, 213) suggests that Fazang refers to Dharmagupta, but Wang points out that Dharmagupta’s Chinese name was Fami (Wang 1991-92, 148).

suggests, an allusion to the name of Amitābha before his attainment of Buddhahood (1991-92, 149). Cishi 慈氏 ("the merciful one") is the name of Maitreya, the future Buddha. It is this portion of the *Neijing tu* that I believe provides some of the clearest internal evidence for a Wu-Liu 伍柳 connection. The Wu-Liu branch of internal alchemy, generally identified as a sub-lineage of Longmen, traces itself to Wu Shouyang 伍守陽 (Chongxu 沖虛 [Infused Emptiness]; 1574-1644) and Liu Huayang 柳華陽 (Chuanlu 傳盧 [Transmitted Containment]; 1735-1799). Wu Shouyang identified himself as an eighth-generation Longmen adherent, and he may have studied directly under Wang Changyue 王常月 (Kunyang 崑陽 [Paradisical Yang]; 1622-1680), the key figure in the late imperial systematization of Longmen.²⁵ Liu Huayang, a Chan monk who converted from Confucianism, identified himself as the spiritual successor of Wu, possibly having received mystical instruction from him in 1780.²⁶ The name Wu-Liu was first used in 1897 in the *Wu-Liu xianzong* 伍柳仙宗 (Immortal Lineage of Wu and Liu),²⁷ a compilation that was edited by Deng Huiji 鄧徽績 (fl. 1897). That collection is thus roughly contemporaneous with the *Neijing tu*. Perhaps most relevant for present purposes, Liu Huayang continually cites the *Huayan jing* 華嚴經 (Skt.: *Avatamsaka Sūtra*; Flower Garland Sutra) throughout his writings. For example, in the *Huiming jing* 慧命經 (Scripture on Wisdom and Life-destiny), Liu explains that the eight diagrams illustrate the combined teachings of Daoist internal alchemy and the *Huayan jing* (ZW 131, 5.878, 5.881). So, within the emerging, late imperial Wu-Liu sub-lineage of Longmen, Fazang was a patriarch, and the *Neijing tu* in turn evidences some connection with that *neidan* system.

The content of the Fazang and Cishi couplets is intrinsically Buddhist, showing the degree to which "Buddhist" worldview was an inte-

²⁵ For information on Wu Shouyang's life see his *Tianxian zhengli zhilun zengzhu* 天仙正理直論增注 (JHL 77; ZW 127) and Min Yide's *Wu Chongxu lüshi zhuan* 伍沖虛律師傳 (JHL 7).

²⁶ For information on Liu Huayang's life, see *Huiming jing* preface (ZW 131).

²⁷ The collection includes Wu's *Tianxian zhengli* 天仙正理 (ZW 843) and *Xianfo hezong* 仙佛合宗 (ZW 843) as well as Liu's *Huiming jing* 慧命經 (ZW 131) and *Jinxian zhenglun* 金仙證論 (ZW 132). A popular translation of the latter two works appears in Wong 1998.

gral aspect of Daoist cultivation models in the late imperial period.²⁸ The textual and visual contours of the *Neijing tu* represent a commingling of the worldviews and goals of Buddhism and Daoism, perhaps most clearly expressed in the final goal of “prolonging longevity and [attaining] immortality and Buddhahood” at the highest point of the diagram. Both quotations speak of expansions of consciousness, extraordinary abilities, and liberation from suffering. That is, one encounters further attempts to inspire the observer to cultivate more perfected ontological conditions.

In addition to the main course of qi circulation along the spine, the diagram depicts smaller circulation routes. Some streams flow down from the upper mountains, while others move from the center of the head to the Descending Bridge (*jiangqiao* 降橋). The former relates to the Jade Nectar (*yujiang* 玉漿), Sweet Dew (*ganlu* 甘露) and Spirit Water (*shenshui* 神水) (see also Needham et al. 1983, 114; Eichman 2000a, 350). In the process of alchemical refinement, the perfect qi (*zhenqi* 真氣) rises up the Governing Vessel through the Three Gates, where it combines with the Spirit Water, a symbolic name for the saliva, to descend back to the central regions of the body (Needham et al. 1983, 77-78). Daoist cultivation methods increase the production of saliva, which is, in turn, swallowed and made to descend towards the lower elixir field. This involves dropping the tongue, represented in the *Neijing tu* as the Descending Bridge, from its normal position of touching the upper palate and drinking the Jade Dew. The saliva then passes through the “Twelve-Storied Tower” and the “Palace of the Sweet Spring and Cold Peak,” both names for the trachea.²⁹ The Jade Dew descends through the Scarlet Palace (*jianggong* 絳宮) to cleanse the heart, before it splashes and expands in the Ocean of Qi (*qihai* 氣海).

Then, of course, there are the Cowherd (*niulang* 牛郎) and the Weaving Maiden (*zhinü* 織女) (see Fig. 3). The Cowherd, corresponding to the Western star of Altair in the Aquila constellation, is shown standing in the heart region holding the Northern Dipper (Ursa Major). Next to him

²⁸ There is a similar tendency in such Daoist texts as the *Xingming guizhi* (ZW 314), *Huiming jing* (ZW 131), and *Xingming fajue mingzhi* (ZW 872).

²⁹ See the *Huangting jing*, DZ 332, 1.1b; eighth-century *Huangting waijing jing zhu*, DZ 263, 58.7a; and thirteenth-century *Jindan dacheng ji*, DZ 263, 10.4b.

is the following line from the lower Lü Dongbin poem: "Engraving the stone, the young lad holds a string of cash." The Weaving Maiden, corresponding to the Western star of Vega in the Lyra constellation, sits near the strand of trees working her loom. The textual component near her reads, "The Weaving Maiden transports and transfers." According to early Chinese mythology, the Cowherd and Weaving Maiden are lovers fated to meet only once a year. They are separated by the Sky River (Milky Way), over which a magpie bridge is believed to form on their annual meeting day (see Birrell 1999b, 165-67; Schafer 1977; Sun and Kistemaker 1997).³⁰ The figures suggest the meeting of two things that should be united, but which ordinarily remain separated. Based on their locations in the *Neijing tu*, and on one alchemically-symbolic level, the Cowherd represents the trigram Li-fire ☲, and is thus associated with the heart orb and with spirit. The Weaving Maiden represents the trigram Kan-water ☵, and is thus associated with the kidney orb and with vital essence. Like the magpie bridge, the Daoist practitioner must strive to unite these two physiological and energetic aspects. This is frequently referred to as the dual cultivation of innate nature (*xing* 性), associated with spirit and consciousness, and life-destiny (*ming* 命), associated with vital essence and physical vitality (see, e.g., *Xingming guizhi*, ZW 314; *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, ZW 872).³¹ In the context of Daoist *neidan* praxis, the Kan-water ☵ and Li-fire ☲ trigrams are frequently related to "Later Heaven" (*houtian* 後天) conditions, while Kun-earth ☷ and Qian-heaven ☰ trigrams are related to "Prior Heaven" (*xiantian* 先天) conditions. The aspiring Daoist adept is urged to complete the process of inversion (*diandao* 顛倒): replacing the yang-line — in Kan with a yin-line — to create the pure or perfect yin condition of Kun, and replacing the

³⁰ I leave open the possibility that there is an actual astronomical aspect to this section of the *Neijing tu*, wherein the adept connects with and ingests the astral qi of these stars. Whether or not this is the case, the diagram again reveals the practitioner of alchemical transformation as a cosmicized being.

³¹ Note that the *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, a text from a late imperial *neidan* context similar to the received *Neijing tu*, seems to contain a direct reference to the diagram. See ZW 872, 26.67. However, under the interpretation of the Chan Buddhist Liaokong, the two figures take on a Buddhist hue, becoming associated with an inconstant mind and desire. Liaokong reverses the symbolism, believing that the Cowherd relates to qi and the Weaving Maiden to the heart.

yin-line - - in Li with a yang-line — to create the pure or perfect yang condition of Qian (cf. *Xiuzhen tu*).³²

Like most esoteric alchemical symbolism, this process may be and has been interpreted in a variety of ways. First, based on the association of the kidneys with vital essence and the heart with intent, the process of inversion here involves directing intent toward the Mingmen area. This initiates an upward movement of vital essence (the yang line), which includes the generation, transformation and circulation of bodily fluids. Some of these fluids then descend into and through the heart region (the yin line), cleansing and purifying consciousness, before finally being absorbed into the lower elixir field, the Ocean of Qi. This, in turn, creates Qian-heaven, associated with the upper elixir field and original spirit, and Kun-earth, associated with the lower elixir field and original qi. Such an interpretation also adds an additional layer of meaning and practice: the Later Heaven condition of heart, characterized by emotional and intellectual turbidity, is Li-fire, while the Later Heaven condition of the kidneys, characterized by depletion of vital essence, is Kan-water. The Daoist adept transforms these ontological conditions into their original and perfected correlates: by conserving and transforming vital essence, original qi becomes abundant in the lower elixir field; by stilling and purifying the mind, original spirit becomes concentrated in the upper elixir field.

Finally, as Schipper observes, “the infant born out of the union of the weaver and the cowherd strings pieces of cash together that form the constellation of the Dipper—the star of fate, thus creating a new life for the body” (Schipper 1978, 356). The image of the Cowherd and Weaving Maiden thus reminds the viewer that prolonged Daoist cultivation leads to a transformed mode of being, to a different ontological condition, confirming yet again that “my fate is within me, not with the heavens” (*wo ming zai wo, bu zai tian* 我命在我、不在天) (*Baopuzi neipian* 抱朴子內篇, DZ 1185, 16.7a; *Xisheng jing* 西昇經, DZ 666, 3.6a) (see Schipper 1978, 365; see also Kohn 1991b, 250). The Northern Dipper (*beidou* 北斗) is often identified in the Daoist tradition as the primary determinant and influence on one’s “fate” or “life-destiny” (*ming* 命) (see Min and Li 1994, 369).

³² See, for example, the eleventh-century *Yuqing neilian dan jue* 玉清內煉丹訣 DZ 240, 1.10b; Li 1991, 310.

In the *Neijing tu*, this constellation is no longer located in the external cosmos. It has become formed and issues from the Daoist adept's own heart-mind. Through dedication to cultivation and alchemical transformation, the practitioner initiates a shift in ontological condition: from ordinary being, separated from the Dao and destined to dissipate, to Perfected, merged with the Dao and transcending the vicissitudes of mundane identity. One creates and inhabits a different cosmos, or at least the cosmos as completely integrated in, as and through one's own being.

Cultivational and Alchemical Contours

From the above analysis of the textual and visual contours of the *Neijing tu*, we have seen that the *Neijing tu* represents a sophisticated and multi-layered mapping of the Daoist body and Daoist religious praxis, specifically alchemical transformation as undertaken in the late imperial period and more than likely in the emerging Wu-Liu *neidan* sub-lineage of Longmen active in and around the environs of Baiyun guan during the late Qing dynasty (1644-1911). As charted in the present study, the *Neijing tu* provides illustrations for a wide variety of Daoist cultivation methods. Three in particular stand out: 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) 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 Microcosmic Orbit (*xiao zhoutian* 小周天). These three techniques form an interconnected system, wherein the adept's overall psychosomatic health is maintained and strengthened, wherein the adept's body becomes cosmized, and wherein the adept awakens the mystical body, the body-beyond-the-body (*shenwai shen* 身外身) or yang-spirit (*yangshen* 陽神), that is the culmination of alchemical transformation and the precondition for post-mortem transcendence. Each of the techniques thus complements and supplements the others.

The *Neijing tu* contains multiple layers of meaning, including various earlier Daoist visions of the body. Generally speaking, the foundational Daoist understanding of the human body in self-cultivation line-

ages parallels that of classical Chinese medicine.³³ The basic system incorporates yin-yang and Five Phase (*wuxing* 五行) cosmologies, with the Five Phases consisting of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. These basic cosmologies, reconciled into a consistent worldview by Zou Yan 鄒衍 (ca. 305-240 BCE), underlie some of the earliest of the received medical classics, the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classics) (see Unschuld 1985; 2003). In these texts, the Five Phase system involves specific correspondences, some of which include direction, season, color, taste, grain, constellation, yin-orb (*zang* 藏/臟), emotion, sense organ, and sound (see, e.g., *Suwen*, ch. 5; Unschuld 2003, 99-124). In addition to a medical application of the now combined yin-yang and Five Phase cosmology, these medical texts provide foundational information on qi theory, theories of disease, and the meridian system.

The *Neijing tu*, in turn, draws attention to the classical Chinese medical view at the foundation of specific forms of Daoist cultivation, including various lineages of internal alchemy (see Robinet 1989b; 1995; Pregadio and Skar 2000; Komjathy 2007).³⁴ One obvious textual strata in the diagram that echoes the *Huangdi neijing* texts is the importance of the Du 督 (Governing) and Ren 任 (Conception) vessels, two of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels (*qijing bamai* 奇經八脈), which are mentioned by name in the upper section of the *Neijing tu* (see Fig. 4). Here is the *Neijing tu* as the "Diagram of Internal Pathways." Generally speaking, the Governing Vessel is the central meridian on the back of the body, while the

³³ Livia Kohn identifies three major Daoist views of the body, corresponding to three distinct methods and intellectual traditions within Daoism: (1) the body as an administrative system, rooted in the worldview of the *Daode jing*, and realized in quietistic and medically-oriented meditation; (2) the body as the residence of spirits or gods and associated with Shangqing visualization practices; and (3) the body as immortal universe, a vision developed under the influence of Buddhist insight meditation (Chn.: *guan* 觀; Skt.: *vipaśyanā*) (Kohn 1991a, 230). For additional insights on Daoist views of the body see Schipper 1978; 1993; Lévi 1989; Andersen 1995; Saso 1997; Komjathy 2007; for Chinese views in general see also Ames 1993; Kuriyama 1999. For relevant translations see Kohn 1993, 161-88.

³⁴ The study of the cross-pollination between Daoism and Chinese medicine is only just beginning, but see Unschuld 1985; Strickmann 2002. For some of the better theoretical discussions of Chinese medicine see Porkert 1974; Liu 1988; Maciocia 1989.

Conception Vessel is the central meridian on the front.³⁵ The former basically begins at the coccyx, the Weilü point or first of the Three Passes mentioned above, moves from the base of the spine up the middle of the back, around the crown-point, to the upper lip. The latter basically begins at the perineum, moves up the centerline of the front of the body, to the lower lip.³⁶ These vessels are most clearly depicted in the *Neijing tu* as the two pairs of five bands near the front of the head—the Governing Vessel contains the qi of the five yang-orbs (gall bladder, small intestine, stomach, large intestine, bladder), while the Conception Vessel contains the qi associated with the five yin-orbs (liver, heart, spleen, lung, kidney).³⁷

One also notices the presence of the five yin-orbs, combined with the gall bladder, in the textual material at the center of the *Neijing tu*. While only the traditional iconography of the liver is illustrated—the strand of trees corresponding to the Wood phase (see Fig. 3)—the most basic layer of meaning here refers to the health of each orb and thus the health of the entire organism,³⁸ with health being the smooth flow of qi throughout the body. Thus, we find the following passage in the *Suwen* where Qi Bo 岐伯 answers the Yellow Thearch's inquiries about the orbs:

³⁵ Eichman (2000a, 351) confuses the Governing Vessel with the Thrusting Vessel. The Thrusting Vessel, not the Governing Vessel, is the only meridian that traverses the center of the body from top to bottom. In Daoist cultivation, diverging here from Chinese medicine, this vessel ascends and descends through the core of the body from Huiyin (Meeting of Yin; CV-1), the perineum, to Baihui (Hundred Meetings; GV-20), the crown-point. See, e.g., *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, ZW 872, 26.94. Passages from the *Huangdi neijing* on the Thrusting Vessel may be found in *Suwen* chapter 60 and *Lingshu* chapters 33, 38 and 62, and 65. For a classical discussion of the system of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels see Nanjing chapters 27 and 28. Modern overviews of the system may be found in Larre 1997 as well as in Matsumoto and Birch 1986.

³⁶ For some classical references to the Governing Vessel and Conception Vessel see *Suwen* chapters 41 and 60 and *Lingshu* chapters 10 and 65.

³⁷ Although still developing, future research on Chinese views of embryogenesis may provide additional insights into the Daoist *neidan* emphasis on the Eight Extraordinary Vessels. If the Thrusting, Governing, and Conception vessels are the first meridians to develop, the Daoist adept would thus be accessing a more primordial moment in the differentiation of self.

³⁸ Recall the four Taiji diagrams mentioned above. See Figure 2.

Qi Bo replied, "The heart is the root of life and transformations of spirit (*shen* 神)...The lungs are the root of qi and the residence of the corporeal soul (*po* 魄)...The kidneys are the root of quiescence and storing and the residence of vital essence...The liver is the root of extremes and the residence of the ethereal soul (*hun* 魂)...The spleen and stomach, along with the large intestine, small intestine, Triple Warmer, and the bladder, are the root of storage and the residence of nutritive [qi] (*yingqi* 營氣). (DZ 1018, 9.15b-18b; cf. 18.8a-9b)³⁹

As expressed in the presence of the five yin-orbs in the *Neijing tu*, the Daoist adept must understand the specific functions of each orb and the various relationships among them.⁴⁰ The health of each orb and the harmonization of their respective functions is a necessary precondition for further alchemical work. If one takes the guidelines of the *Suwen* seriously, this involves a system wherein dietetics, seasonal attunement and cosmology are interwoven: one eats different types of foods and different flavors depending on one's constitutional tendencies, stage of life and the dominant seasonal influence (see, e.g., *Suwen*, chs. 1 and 2). It is difficult to know if this aspect of Chinese medicine and of Daoist cultivation is embedded in the *Neijing tu*, but the diagram clearly orients the adept towards the importance of the Five Phase system in general and the five yin-orbs in particular. One may say that this textual strata and level of training, rooted in a classical Chinese medical view, underlies the more obvious allusion to the *Huangting jing*, namely, the esoteric names of the orbs occurring in this section of the *Neijing tu*.

Before moving from this discussion of praxis-based applications of classical Chinese medicine to the potential visualization practices expressed in the diagram, a few additional points deserve reflection. In the previous section on textual and visual contours, I have emphasized that

³⁹ In Chinese medicine, the Triple Warmer (*sanjiao* 三焦) is one of the six yang-orbs (*liufu* 六腑). It is paired with the pericardium (*xinbao* 心包), which was added to the five yin-orbs (*wuzang* 五臟) in order to create parallelism. For an attempt to chart its significance in Daoist alchemy in general and Quanzhen in particular see Komjathy 2007, ch. 4.

⁴⁰ For some contemporary discussions see Maciocia 1989 and Ross 1994.

the *Neijing tu* draws the attention of the viewer, and of the aspiring adept utilizing it as an aid to his or her training, to specific locations in the body. One must, of course, know the importance of such locations in Daoist alchemical practice to identify them in a diagram that lacks flesh, in a diagram of the subtle body and inner realms. The associations of these points in Daoist alchemical praxis has already been partially discussed above and receives clarification below, but it is also possible to chart them according their medical function in contemporary Chinese medicine. While potentially anachronistic in terms of the context in which the diagram originated, these comments are meant to show that there are clear psychosomatic effects and therapeutic benefits. Some of the relevant corporeal regions are as follows: perineum (yin-yang treadmill; Huiyin 會陰 [Meeting of Yin]; CV-1), coccyx (lower temple/pass; Weilü [Tailbone Gate]; GV-1), lower back (flames in the spine; Mingmen 命門 [Gate of Life]; GV-4), mid-spine (middle temple/pass; Jiaji 夾脊 [lit., "Beside-the-Spine"; Narrow Ridge]; GV-6), occiput (upper temple/pass; Yuzhen 玉真 [Jade Pillow]; BL-9 and/or Naohu 腦戶 [Brain Door]; GV-17), crown-point (second highest peak; Baihui 百會 [Hundred Meetings]; GV-20), upper lip (end of upper bands; Yinjiao 陰交 [Gum Intersection]; GV-28), and lower lip (end of lower bands; Chengjiang 承漿 [Fluid Receptacle]; CV-24) (see also *Xingming guizhi*, ZW 314, 9.518; *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, ZW 872, 26.17).⁴¹ As this list indicates, all of these points are on the Governing Vessel (GV) and Conception Vessel (CV), which are considered "extra" meridians in contemporary Chinese medicine, meaning that they are not part of the standard twelve meridians associated with the yin-orbs and yang-orbs. One understanding of the so-called Eight Extraordinary Vessels is that they store "overflow" qi and are empty or inactive in most people (see Larre 1997; Matsumoto and Birch 1986).

In addition to being "reservoirs" of qi, they are related to vital essence, one's core vitality, and "protective qi" (*weiqi* 衛氣), the qi that protects one from exterior pathogenic influences. The activation of these meridians in Daoist alchemical praxis thus stabilizes one's overall health and increases one's resiliency to disease. These forms of Daoist cultivation also increase the levels of qi in the body, which fill the Eight Ex-

⁴¹ For more on the function of these various points in contemporary Chinese medicine see Ellis et al. 1989; Deadman et al. 2001.

traordinary Vessels. The ordinary person has twelve active meridians and eight latent meridians; the Daoist alchemist has twenty active meridians, including those associated with “psychic” abilities. In addition, although it is beyond the scope of the present study to provide a complete explanation, the above “acupoints” or energetic locations in the body have specific functional/therapeutic associations in contemporary Chinese medicine. Taken together, they connect the Governing, Conception and Thrusting vessels; harmonize the entire orb-meridian system; strengthen the kidneys and vital essence; nourish the marrow, spine and brain; strengthen the digestive system; and calm the heart and spirit. In short, by activating and concentrating on these locations, Daoist adepts strengthen their overall psychosomatic wellness and awaken latent energetic layers of their being.

As expressed in the *Neijing tu*, Daoist religious praxis also involves visualization methods which draw their inspiration from the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Scripture on the Yellow Court; DZ 331; 332) and which find clear historical precedents in early Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) Daoism, specifically visualizing the five yin-orbs in terms of *wuxing* color and light associations.⁴² As mentioned, an additional layer of the *Neijing tu*’s title is the “Diagram of Inner Luminosities”; that is, the diagram may be read/employed as an aid for visualizing/activating/lodging the inner body gods (see Kroll 1996). In the textual component near the heart region (see Fig. 3), the various orbs are identified according to the esoteric names of their specific spirits as found in the *Huangting neijing jing* (DZ 331, 3a). This section of the *Neijing tu* reads as follows:

The spirit of the heart is [called] Elixir Origin, given name

Guarding the Numen.

The spirit of the lungs is [called] Brilliant Splendor, given name

⁴² Robinet (1993) provides information on the place of the *Huangting jing* in Shangqing Daoism (see also Robinet 1984; 2000). Schipper 1975 provides a critical edition with an index, while Homann 1971 gives a preliminary analysis of the *Neijing jing*. Partial translations appear in Kohn 1993; Kroll 1996. A complete translation appears in Huang 1990. Michael Saso (1995) has also published a “translation,” but the reader is forewarned that many of the translated passages bear little resemblance to the original text. For insights on earlier Shangqing visualization practices see especially Robinet 1989a; 1993, ch. 2.

Emptiness Complete.
 The spirit of the liver is [called] Dragon Mist, given name
 Containing Illumination.
 The spirit of the kidneys is [called] Mysterious Obscurity,
 given name Nourishing the Child.
 The spirit of the spleen is [called] Continuously Existing, given
 name Ethereal Soul Pavilion.
 The spirit of the gall bladder is [called] Dragon Glory, given
 name Majestic Illumination.⁴³

Comparing the two passages, the *Neijing tu* has a number of discrepancies with the standard, classical list. In addition to the use of *zi* 自 ("personal [name]") instead of *zi* 字 ("style name"), the diagram's text inverts the first name for the lungs: the *Huangting jing* reading *haohua* 皓華 ("Splendid Brilliance"), and the *Neijing tu* reading *huahao* 華皓 ("Brilliant Splendor"). More significantly, the *Neijing tu* substitutes *neng* 能 ("able to") for *long* 龍 ("dragon") in the names of the liver and gall bladder, and the first name for the liver spirit is incorrect. In the diagram, it reads *nengyao* 能曜 ("Capable Glory") instead of *longyan* 龍煙 ("Dragon Mist"), thus reproducing the name for the spirit of the gall bladder from the *Huangting jing*.

The associations of the orbs with light and spiritual presences parallel those documented in the *Huangting jing* texts, and the section of the *Huangting neijing jing* in which the above esoteric names appear concludes as follows: "The spirits of the six yang-orbs and five yin-orbs are the vital essences of the body....By visualizing (*cun* 存) them day and night,⁴⁴ you will naturally attain longevity" (DZ 331, 3b; see also *Huangting neijing fuzang liufu buxie tu*, DZ 432).

⁴³ I have put the orbs in their order of occurrence in the *Huangting neijing jing* even though the diagram's text does not follow a recognizable pattern. I have also corrected the names in my translation in Figure 3. I leave open the question of whether or not the efficacy of the technique is affected by utilizing incorrect names.

⁴⁴ Or "by preserving them day and night." In the context of Shangqing practices, *cun* 存 is usually translated "to visualize." However, I leave open the possibility that *cun* should be taken in its more standard sense of "to preserve." That is, the *Huangting jing* may be more about stabilizing an abode for the various orb

Reading Daoist religious praxis solely in terms of the diagram, the most that one can reasonably say is the adept must know the esoteric names of the orbs and their related spirits, and he or she must practice an inner observation (*neiguan* 內觀) and/or visualization (*cunxiang* 存想) technique in which colors and numinous presences are central. Here one must know the following *wuxing* correspondences: Wood - liver (gall bladder) - azure - dragon - east; Fire - heart - red - vermilion bird - south; Earth - spleen - yellow - — - center; Metal - lungs - white - tiger - west; and Water - kidneys - black - north - Mysterious Warrior (snake-turtle). Based on the above passage and the corresponding correlative cosmological associations, the Daoist adept brings his or her awareness to the heart, recalls the esoteric names *danyuan* and *shouling*, and visualizes the heart as an orb of red light. Next, the adept brings his awareness to the lungs, recalls the esoteric names *haohua* and *xucheng*, and visualizes the lungs as an orb of white light. This is followed by the same process for the liver, kidneys, and spleen. Finally, the adept brings his awareness to the gall bladder, recalls the esoteric names *longyao* and *weiming*, and visualizes the gall bladder as an orb of azure light.⁴⁵ This proposed reconstruction of the visualization technique is substantiated by the following additional passage from the *Huangting jing*:

[The youth (*tongzi* 童子) of the lungs wears] white brocade robes with sashes of yellow clouds...[The youth of the heart wears] flowing cinnabar brocade robes with a jade shawl, gold bells and vermilion sashes...[The youth of the liver wears] azure brocade robes with a skirt of jade bells...[The youth of the kidneys wears] black brocade, cloud robes with dancing dragon banners...[The youth of the spleen wears] yellow brocade, jade robes with a tiger-emblem sash...[The youth of the

spirits, about becoming aware of and observing these, than about imagining something to be the case.

⁴⁵ The gall bladder is the yang-orb paired with the liver, and thus associated with the Wood phase. In the context of the *Huangting jing*, it is unclear why the gall bladder is singled out. Here I would also mention that *dan* 丹 in the name of the heart and *xuan* 玄 in the kidneys suggest a cinnabar-red color in the former and deep blue color in the latter.

gall bladder wears] nine-colored brocade robes with a green
flower skirt and a gold belt (DZ 331, 3b-6a).⁴⁶

That is, the *wuxing* color associations are mentioned in the section of the *Huangting jing* that directly follows the passage listing the esoteric names of the orb spirits. If the middle section of the *Neijing tu* is an encrypted and abridged reminder for the Daoist adept utilizing the *Huangting jing* as a visualization manual, then the technique being employed is even more complex than my outline suggests. The *wuxing* colors are primary, but there are also secondary colors as well as "anthropomorphic" images for the orb spirits.⁴⁷ The adept encounters and becomes inhabited by body gods with very specific visual appearances, including robes with corresponding colors and symbols.⁴⁸

The praxis-oriented applications of classical Chinese medical views of the body and the visualization of the five yin-orbs based on their esoteric names in the *Huangting jing* and corresponding *wuxing* associations are integrated into a comprehensive and interconnected system of Daoist cultivation and alchemical transformation in the *Neijing tu*. In this respect, the diagram also clearly illustrates the *neidan* technique known as the Waterwheel (*heche* 河車) or Microcosmic Orbit practice (*xiao zhoutian* 小周天; lit., "Smaller Celestial Cycle").⁴⁹ Generally speaking, this practice

⁴⁶ This is a tentative translation, as the various references to jade and clouds may be to "patterns" in the clothes, "colors" of the clothes, or actual jade and clouds. I have attempted to stay as close to the original as possible.

⁴⁷ In terms of continuities in Daoism in general and *neidan* lineages in particular, it is noteworthy that these esoteric names of the orb spirits appear in, for example, the *Xiuzhen taiji hunyuan zhixuan tu* 修真太極混元指玄圖, DZ 150, 7a (see Baryosher-Chemouny 1996) and the *Xingming guizhi*, ZW 314, 9.529.

⁴⁸ Beyond this narrow and relatively conservative reading of the diagram, one finds similar visualization methods in texts which slightly predate or which are contemporaneous with the *Neijing tu*. See, e.g., the seventeenth-century *Xingming guizhi*, ZW 314, 9.516, 9.519; *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, ZW 872, 26.101, 26.119. Cf. *Jindan dacheng ji*, DZ 263, 10.7a; *Dadan zhizhi*, DZ 244, 1.4b, 2.1a, *passim*.

⁴⁹ Wang (1991-92, 152), following Needham et al. (1983, 72-80; 114-16), identifies the Smaller Celestial Cycle (*xiao zhoutian* 小周天) with the circulation of the perfect qi between the heart (the Cowherd) and the kidneys (Needham's "reins;" the Weaving Maiden), while the Larger Celestial Cycle (*da zhoutian* 大周天) involves the spinal column. In contrast, in more contemporary practices the Micro-

involves circulating qi up the Governing Vessel and down the Conception Vessel in a continuous cycle.⁵⁰ The centrality of this alchemical technique in the *Neijing tu* is substantiated by various diagrammatic contours: the Three Passes, including the importance of the perineum area (yin-yang treadmill); the two sets of five-bands, identified in the map as the Du (Governing) and Ren (Conception) vessels; the heart-region, through which the Sweet Dew and qi descend; and the lower elixir field, where the perfect qi becomes stored. In addition, the colored dimensions of the painting increase one's awareness of this aesthetic-practical depiction and the corresponding energetic movement through the body.

As expressed in the *Neijing tu* and other late imperial Daoist sources,⁵¹ the Microcosmic Orbit practice was a central component of late imperial Daoist *neidan* praxis. In one version of this cultivation method, the Daoist practitioner uses the intent (*yi* 意) to combine vital essence with qi and circulate it up the Governing Vessel and down the Concep-

cosmic Orbit focuses specifically on the Governing and Conception vessels, while the Macrocosmic Orbit involves circulating qi through all of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels. See, e.g., *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, ZW 872.

⁵⁰ The history of the so-called Microcosmic Orbit technique is currently known. There are clear historical precedents in Song-Jin *neidan* lineages, where the practice is usually referred to as the Waterwheel (*heche* 河車) and sometimes as the Celestial Cycle (*zhoutian* 周天). However, as far as my reading goes, most of those methods involve circulating vital essence and qi up the spine, thus corresponding to the practice of "reverting vital essence to restore the brain" (*huanjing bunao* 還精補腦). That is, they do not utilize the Conception and Governing vessels. See, e.g., the tenth-century *Chuandao ji* which has a chapter entitled "Heche" (DZ 263, 15.19b-23b). Some related diagrams may be found in the *Dadan zhizhi*, DZ 244; *Huangdi bashiyi nanjing zuantu jujie*, DZ 1024, 4a. See also the *Xiuzhen tu* and the thirteenth-century diagram entitled the "Yixue lei" 醫學類 (Section on Medical Learning), which is preserved in the fifteenth-century *Shilin guangji* 事林光記 (Needham et al. 1983, 112).

⁵¹ See, e.g., *Xingming guizhi*, ZW 314, 9.518-19; *Huiming jing*, ZW 131, 5.879-890; *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, ZW 872, 26.28, 26.94. On these texts see Wilhelm 1962; Lu 1973; Despeux 1979; Needham et al. 1983, Wong 1998; Darga 1999. A more thorough comparison between the *Neijing tu* and contemporaneous texts might clarify its relationship to such late imperial lineages as Longmen and Wu-Liu. It is also noteworthy that these texts are widely circulated among contemporary Quanzhen monastics. Author's field observations.

tion Vessel in a continual cycle. The *Neijing tu* draws attention to this particular cultivation method through the presence of not only the above-mentioned vessels but also the three temples or huts along the spinal column. These are the Three Passes (*sanguan* 三關) through which it is difficult for the qi to pass. The passes, from lower to middle to upper, are as follows: Weilü 尾閭 (Tailbone Gate; coccyx), Jiaji 夾脊 (Narrow Ridge; literally, "beside-the-spine"; mid-spine), and Yuzhen 玉枕 (Jade Pillow; occiput). In the Microcosmic Orbit practice, particular attention is given to these three locations in order to open the vessels and ensure the efficacious movement of vital essence and qi through the body. In one version of the practice, the adept uses the intent to consecutively open Huiyin (perineum), Weilü (coccyx), Mingmen (between kidneys), Jiaji (mid-spine), Yuzhen (occiput), Baihui (crown-point), Shenguan 神關 (Spirit Pass; third-eye), and Yinjiao 陰交 (Gum Intersection; cleft of upper lip).

Next one uses the tongue to gather saliva and swallow it down through the Twelve-storied Tower and Scarlet Palace, before it joins with the perfect qi in the lower elixir field. Each of these positions in turn corresponds to one of the twelve branches (*dizhi* 地支), with the perineum being *zi* 子 (north; midnight; winter solstice) and the crown-point being *wu* 午 (south; noon; summer solstice) (see *Xingming fajue mingzhi*, ZW 872, 26.17, 26.94). Recalling the two sets of five bands in the *Neijing tu*, the Microcosmic Orbit practice leads to the activation and maintenance of the other meridians and their related orbs. That is, circulating qi through the Governing and Conception vessels harmonizes the entire subtle body. The activation of and/or encounter with this subtle body is thus a central dimension of Daoist *neidan* praxis as documented in the *Neijing tu* and as expressed in late imperial Daoism. In addition, if the Daoist adept is also incorporating the above-mentioned *wuxing* correspondences and visualization techniques, as the *Neijing tu* seems to indicate, then his or her practice literally embodies a transformed condition, a transforming process. Astral effulgences and various subtle realities are introduced into, merged with, and circulated through his or her very being.

Reorientations

In the previous installment of the present article, which covered the historical and terminological contours of the *Neijing tu*, I emphasized its origins in the Longmen monastic community of Baiyun guan during the late Qing dynasty (1644-1911). These historical details have now been clarified based on internal textual evidence. The intermingling of Chan Buddhist and Daoist *neidan* concerns, specifically the reference to Fazang, indicates a potential connection with the emerging Wu-Liu sub-lineage of Longmen. In addition, analysis of influential late-imperial Daoist texts, including works that were roughly contemporaneous with the *Neijing tu* and that also circulated within the Longmen monastic community, indicates strong parallels. Of particular note in this respect is the strong emphasis that Liu Huayang, one of the nominal founders of the Wu-Liu lineage, places on the *Huayan jing* and the Microcosmic Orbit practice in his *Huiming jing*.

From the discussion of the textual and visual contours, as well as the cultivational and alchemical contours, it has become clear that the *Neijing tu* represents a detailed and multilayered mapping of the Daoist body and Daoist religious praxis. On the one hand, it parallels various earlier *neidan* lineages and related diagrams of Daoist bodies. On the other hand, the *Neijing tu* seems to be a unique synthesis. It expresses a vision of the Daoist body as actualized through alchemical praxis and transformation. At the core of this vision is an emphasis on self-cultivation: the body contains fields to be tended, seeds to be sown, and grain to be gathered. That grain contains the universe, a universe which is simultaneously cosmos, world, landscape, community, self. It is a universe actualized through *neidan* praxis, which according to the *Neijing tu* involves the conservation and transformation of vital essence, production and ingestion of saliva, visualization of the inner orbs, and activation of the Daoist “alchemical” or “mystical body” (see Komjathy 2007). This is the yang-spirit or the body-beyond-the-body that is the precondition for post-mortem survival. It is a “mystical body” because one’s body becomes cosmicized, rarified and possibly divinized. One’s very physiology becomes experienced as the numinous presence of the Dao made manifest and *embodied*. It is also “mystical” because there are non-spatial and subtle dimensions that require actualization. Based on the *Neijing tu*,

it is unclear if the ultimate goal of religious praxis expressed in its contours is unification with and absorption into the Dao, enlightenment conceived of as the emergence of divine radiance, or the formation of a yang-spirit that will transcend the death of the physical body. Placed in the context of similar systems of internal alchemy, especially those of the late imperial period, it is perhaps the latter: a yang-spirit which exits through the crown-point upon the death of the physical body, expressed as the pearl of white light above the head in the *Neijing tu*.

To conclude, one may recall the wonder expressed by Liu Chengyin when he first encountered this diagram in the studio of Gao Songshan.

I examined [the diagram] for a long time and realized that my comprehension was growing. I began to realize that exhalation and inhalation as well as expelling and ingesting 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.

According to Liu, Daoists viewing this map see their own possibility for psychosomatic transformation reflected in its lines and images, in its mapping of the Daoist body and Daoist religious practice. Simultaneously, the map is not the territory (see Smith 1993). The purpose of a map is to familiarize the traveler with the landscape, and the map is merely a preliminary stage in developing a deeper awareness of and relationship with a particular region, to develop the appropriate orientation. Until one becomes so familiar with, so oriented towards, the landscape that one may burn the map as kindling for a mountain fire, the map has failed to serve its purpose. As a map of the Daoist body, the *Neijing tu* urges aspiring Daoist adepts to dedicate themselves to alchemical transformation, to religious praxis that will result in the emergence of numinous presences and a subtle body. This is the Daoist body not as map but as actuality.

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Lord Lao's Mountain

From Celestial Master Daoism to Contemporary Daoist Practice*

VOLKER OLLES

Abstract

The Mountain of Lord Lao (Laojun shan 老君山) in Xinjin 新津 District, Sichuan 四川 Province, has been identified as the center of a former diocese of Celestial Master Daoism (Tianshi dao 天師道). Moreover, it remains a famous sanctuary for the worship of Laozi 老子. The temple on Mt. Laojun is today an active religious institution that belongs to the Dragon Gate (Longmen 龍門) lineage of Complete Perfection (Quanzhen 全真) Daoism. In the late Qing dynasty and Republican times, the temple was closely connected with a popular religious movement called the Teachings of the Liu School (Liumen jiao 劉門教), which was founded by the Confucian scholar Liu Yuan 劉沅 (1768-1856). In this paper, several aspects of Mt. Laojun's past and present will be highlighted. Special emphasis will be placed on the Liumen movement and the impact that this community made on the recent development of the sanctuary. We will see that the current hagiographic legitimization of Mt. Laojun, which holds that Lord Lao once dwelled there and engaged in secluded self-cultivation, very likely has been fabricated by the patriarchs of the Liumen movement. This sacred site is an excellent example of a former Celestial Masters' diocese that still functions as a Daoist institution in contemporary China, and the multifaceted Daoist traditions of Sichuan are reflected in its modern history.

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The well-known *Loushi ming* 陋室銘 (Inscription on the Humble Chamber), traditionally attributed to the Tang poet Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842), begins as follows:

The [significance of a] mountain does not consist in its height.
If there are immortals [dwelling on it], [the mountain] is famous. The [magnitude of a] river does not lie in its depth. If it has a dragon [residing in it], [the river] is numinous (*ling* 靈).¹

According to these verses, it is not the outward appearance or mightiness of a locality that constitutes its fame, but a distinct spiritual or numinous quality. Liu Yuxi's description perfectly matches the characteristics of a Daoist sacred site in Sichuan, which belongs to the earliest sanctuaries of China's native religion.

The district of Xinjin is located in the western part of the Sichuan basin, thirty-seven kilometers southwest of the provincial capital Chengdu 成都. About two kilometers south of the district town, the Mountain of Lord Lao (Laojun shan) rises up amidst a ridge of hills, surrounded by fruitful farmland and several new settlements between the rivers Minjiang 岷江 and Nanhe 南河. Mt. Laojun, a cone-shaped hill, is only 617 meters high, but it figures prominently among the historic sites of Xinjin District and remains a famous sanctuary for the worship of Lord Lao, the deified form of Laozi. Although the traditional temple-complex, hidden in a cypress grove on the summit, received its present shape only in the first half of the 20th century, the origins of this sacred site can be traced back to the very beginnings of the Daoist religion.

Sacred space is mainly legitimized through hagiographical traditions, in historical as well as present times. This legitimization, based on legends about immortals or other signs of spiritual power, changes and evolves in the course of history, constantly adapting to the successive manifestations of religious thought and practice. In the case of Mt. Laojun, the locality is firmly rooted in the sacred geography of early Daoism. Numerous accounts in Daoist scripture connect it to the lives and miraculous deeds of pivotal figures of the tradition. Today, the temple

¹ See *Guwen guanzhi* 古文觀止 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1988, reprint 1992), 7.475. On Liu Yuxi see the entry by Wolfgang Kubin in Nienhauser 1986, 592-93.

houses a monastic community of Daoists, and every year masses of pilgrims flock to the sanctuary on the occasion of major liturgical festivals. The central deity, who currently bestows spiritual authority upon the mountain, is Lord Lao, and consequently both locality and temple were named after the God of the Dao.

In what follows, I will provide basic information on Mt. Laojun's roots in the canonical tradition of Daoism, its historical development, and temple buildings. The focus then shifts to a popular religious movement and the new interpretation of Mt. Laojun's sacrality by the patriarchs of this community.

Roots in Sacred Geography

The twenty-four dioceses (*ershisi zhi* 二十四治) of early Celestial Master Daoism appear as a system of religious geography in various texts of the Daoist canon. These localities, mainly situated in Sichuan, are not as eminent as the five sacred mountains (*wuyue* 五嶽) or some of the grotto-heavens and blissful lands (*dongtian fudi* 洞天福地) within the sacred space of Daoism. They were, however, religious administrative districts of an early Daoist movement and as such played an important role in the founding process of this religion.

According to Daoist scriptures, the dioceses were revealed by the Highest Lord Lao (Taishang Laojun 太上老君) and put under the control of the first Celestial Master, Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (ca. 34-156).² The dioceses brought the celestial order down to earth, and thus correspond to the twenty-four "energy breaths" (*qi* 氣) of heaven and are joined to the twenty-eight "lunar mansions" (*xiu* 宿) as well as other systems of correspondence.³ Mountains or hills, surrounded by farmland, were the centers of these districts, where the members of the early Daoist community gathered for regular assemblies and ritual activities.

² For an overview of the sacred places of Daoism see Hahn 2000. On the dioceses in particular see the entry by Terry Kleeman (*zhi*, parish) in Pregadio 2008, 2:1274-76; Verellen 2003; Olles 2005a, 14-29. A comprehensive monograph on the topic is Wang 1996. For in-depth studies of single dioceses, which combine textual research and field-work findings, see Olles 2000; 2005a; 2005b.

³ On the geographical distribution of the dioceses and their cosmological correspondences see Verellen 2003, 20-28.

After this network of religious administration had lost its original structure by, at the latest, the third century C.E., the cosmological correlations of the system became predominant, whereupon the affiliation to a given diocese was determined by the individual's date of birth. Moreover, the names of the old parishes also have function as celestial spheres, listed in the registers (*lu* 籙) of Daoist priests.⁴ The dioceses thus constitute cosmological categories without direct relation to Sichuan localities; they are, as Kristofer Schipper put it, "located in the stars" (1993, 66; cf. Verellen 2003, 45-46).

Yet, the centers of the old dioceses, their holy mountains, were not forgotten, and became locations for temples and monasteries. They retained their aura as sacred space, and many of them have remained focal points of religious activity throughout history. Today, many of the former parishes can still be identified. Some are locations of Daoist temples, while others have become Buddhist sites, or include sanctuaries of both religious affiliations (Olles 2005a, 34-42).

The Daoist institutions are in all cases inhabited and managed by clerics belonging to the Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) branch of the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) monastic order. The Longmen lineage spread rapidly across Sichuan during the Kangxi 康熙 reign (1662-1722), and the majority of Daoist temples in this region came under its management.⁵ Probably the most influential Longmen Daoist in Sichuan at that time was Chen Qingjue 陳清覺 (a.k.a. Yanxia 煙霞 [Misty Cloud], Hansong 寒松 [Wintry Pine]; 1606-1705), a native of Wuchang 武昌 in Hubei 湖北, who received his Daoist training on Mt. Wudang 武當山. In 1669, he arrived in Sichuan together with five of his brethren and

⁴ A typical example is the Register of the Energy Breaths of the Twenty-four Dioceses of the Most High (*Taishang ershisi zhiqi lu* 太上二十四治氣籙), which is recorded in a collection of registers for lay adepts: *Taishang Zhengyi mengwei falu yibu* 太上正一盟威法籙一部 (DZ 1209 [work number 1209 of the *Daozang*, as catalogued in Schipper and Verellen eds. (2004)]), 13b-17a. On this collection see Ren 1995, 954 (no. 1199); Zhu 1996, 203 (no. 873); Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1:475-76.

⁵ On the Longmen lineage in general see the entry by Monica Esposito in Pregadio 2008, 1:704-06; Esposito 2000, 627-33. The Longmen conquest of Sichuan is discussed in Qing 1996, 4:133-48 (authored by Zeng Zhaonan 曾召南) and Wang 2000, 81, 93-96.

eventually became the patriarch of the Bidong 碧洞 (Jasper Grotto) sub-lineage, which became the dominant branch of Longmen in the area.⁶ Although written sources are scarce, we may presume that, during the 17th century, the old dioceses of Celestial Master Daoism also became a part of the Longmen domain.⁷

Mt. Laojun in Xinjin District is thus a representative example of a former Celestial Masters' diocese that is still in operation as a Daoist institution today. The sanctuary on top of the mountain, commonly referred to as Laojun miao 老君廟 (Temple of Lord Lao) or Laozi miao 老子廟 (Temple of Laozi), serves as residence for a community of Longmen clerics and Daoist lay adherents. Mt. Laojun has been identified as the center of the former diocese Chougeng (Chougeng zhi/hua 稠梗治/化).⁸ In his survey of sacred geography, *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* 洞天福地嶽瀆名山記 (Records of Grotto-Heavens, Blissful Lands, Peaks, Marshes, and Famous Mountains, DZ 599), the court Daoist Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933) gave the following description of the old Chougeng Diocese:

Chougeng Diocese [belongs to] water among the five phases
and to the vernal equinox among the [twenty-four] energy

⁶ On Chen Qingjue, see Min and Li 1994, 603 and the entry on Yi Xinying 易心瑩 (authored by Catherine Despeux) in Pregadio 2008, 2:1160-61.

⁷ The *Longmen zhengzong Bidong tang shang zhipu* 龍門正宗碧洞堂上支譜 (Lineage Register from the Jasper Grotto Hall of the Orthodox Dragon Gate School), which was compiled and supplemented in late Qing and Republican times, contains a list of temples whose abbots belonged to the Bidong sub-lineage. Only one name, Mt. Heming (Heming shan 鶴鳴山; Mount Crane-Call) in Dayi 大邑 District, explicitly relates to the location of a diocese; see Qing 1996, 4:137. The document is today kept in the main temple on Mt. Qingcheng (Qingcheng shan 青城山; Mount Green Citadel); see *ibid.*, 4:135, n. 1. On the two mountains see Pregadio 2008, 1:479 (by James Robson), 2:798-99 (by Vincent Goossaert).

⁸ See Wang 1996, 186-91; Verellen 2003, 48; Olles 2000; 2005a. The character *geng* 梗 in the diocese's name is also read *jing*. My choice follows the established local pronunciation of the name and the entry on the respective character in the *Ciyuan* 辭源 (4 vols. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1979-1983, reprint 1992), 3:2306-07. In Tang dynasty sources, the character *zhi* 治 for "diocese" is often replaced by *hua* 化 in order to avoid the personal name of Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 650-683), Li Zhi 李治.

nodes. Above [in the sky], it corresponds to the lunar mansion *kui* 奎. People, [who are born on] *renzi* 壬子 (49) and *renwu* 壬午 (19) dates [according to the sexagesimal cycle], are affiliated to [this parish]. [The diocese is located in] Shu 蜀, ten *li* 里 south of the district town of Xinjin. The Yellow Emperor (Huangdi 黃帝) refined cinnabar at this place. Atop the mountain are a heavenly pond and a stone stele, and the cinnabar furnace is preserved there.⁹

While Du Guangting's account of Chougeng Diocese is quite accurate, it is obvious that the Celestial Masters' parishes already were a set of historic religious sites in Du's time, which he integrated into the overall network of Tang dynasty sacred geography (Verellen 2003, 23-24; Olles 2005a, 82-84).

The most outstanding hagiographic feature of Chougeng Diocese is the legendary sojourn of the Yellow Emperor who allegedly engaged in alchemical self-cultivation on the mountain. The above description and various other works in the *Daozang* established a firm link between the parish and the Yellow Emperor, the classical sage ruler and cultural hero who eventually emerged as a model Daoist adept.¹⁰

Later hagiographies in the Daoist canon state that Zhang Daoling also visited Chougeng, where he practiced either meditative self-cultivation or scripture recitation, depending on the source.¹¹ However,

⁹ *Dongtian fudi yuedu mingshan ji* (DZ 599), 15a. This treatise was compiled in Chengdu; its preface is dated 901. See Verellen 1989, 136; Ren 1995, 431 (no. 594); Zhu 1996, 223 (no. 943); Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1:423 (entry by Florian C. Reiter). For a full analysis of *Daozang* sources describing Chougeng Diocese, see Olles 2005a, 74-87.

¹⁰ See Kohn 1998, 217-24. For a summary of the Yellow Emperor's Daoist career and further references, see Olles 2005a, 95-98. To my knowledge, the earliest account of the Yellow Emperor's sojourn at Chougeng Diocese is to be found in the sixth century encyclopedia *Wushang biyao* 無上祕要 (The Essence of the Supreme Secrets, DZ 1138), 23.6a; cf. Olles 2005a, 75-78. On *Wushang biyao* see Ren 1995, 888-91 (no. 1129); Zhu 1996, 349 (no. 1461); Schipper and Verellen 2004, 1:118-19 (entry by John Lagerwey).

¹¹ The Ming (1368-1644) work *Han tianshi shijia* 漢天師世家 (Lineage of the Han Celestial Master, DZ 1463; 2.3a) states that Zhang practiced meditation there. The Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) collection *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體

none of the *Daozang* texts make any mention of Lord Lao staying at Chougeng Diocese. Mt. Laojun's current appellation and its present spiritual aura are doubtless based on a much later tradition.

While the name Laojun shan for this locality appeared in written sources as late as in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), two other appellations of Lord Lao's mountain can be found in earlier historical and geographical treatises. The first of these, Tianshe shan 天社山 (Mt. Celestial Altar), probably originated in the designation of a stellar constellation and seems to refer to the ridge of hills south of the district town of Xinjin, of which Mt. Laojun forms a part. However, the name Tianshe shan is still used as synonym for Laojun shan in present days. The other appellation, Mt. Chougeng 稠梗山, matches the name of the old diocese in the *Daozang* sources. The exact meaning of *chougeng* 稠梗 is not clear. The word seemingly designates a medicinal herb or a kind of rice. To my knowledge, the geographical name "Chougeng" only occurs at this locality in Xinjin District and does not relate to any other place.¹²

Facets of History

Despite the rich hagiographic heritage of Mt. Laojun, very little is known about its history. While existing written sources and relics are insufficient for a complete reconstruction of the mountain's historical development, it is possible to gain insight into several stages of development.

Relics from the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.) have been found on Mt. Laojun and in its close surroundings, but none of these remains seems to have a direct connection to the Celestial Masters' diocese. Yet, the excavated relics attest to the sophisticated culture of the area where the Celestial Masters' parishes were established. In a cliff tomb at the eastern foot of Mt. Laojun, a pictorial carving was found, showing Confucius visiting Laozi and seeking the latter's instruction. Furthermore,

道通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror of Perfected Immortals Who Embodied the Dao through the Ages, DZ 296; 18.5a) reports that he recited sacred scriptures there, unperturbed by an apparition. Cf. Verellen 2003, 29-31; Olles 2005a, 98-102.

¹² The character *chou* (*Ciyuan*, 3:2310) means "crowded", "dense", or "thick"; *geng* (*Ciyuan*, 3:2298 [*jing* 稭], 3:2306-07) stands for non-glutinous rice. On Mt. Laojun's names and their occurrence in historical texts see Olles 2005a, 62-73.

two Han-dynasty cliff tombs are preserved on the plot of the temple and currently serve as sacred grottos, containing devotional images.¹³

Reliable information on the history of the temple on Mt. Laojun appears in an inscription on the iron temple bell dated 1796. The bell was still in use until recently and is now kept inside the rear hall of the sanctuary. The main text of the inscription reads as follows:

On Mt. Celestial Altar (Tianshe shan) temple buildings were erected since the Han and Tang dynasties. So they stood, lofty and imposing, until they were utterly destroyed in the *jiashen* 甲申 year (1644) of the Ming dynasty. In Qing times, in the 55th year of the Qianlong 乾隆 era (1790), the District Magistrate, Mr. Yang, proposed the rebuilding [of the temple], and [his successor in office], Mr. Luo, followed suit. Lei Wanchun 雷萬春 from Wen[jiang] 溫江 District came and cast a large bell, but it did not sound. Later on, the great meritorious deed was accomplished. All benefactors in the four directions added iron, and the bell was cast anew. [May their merit] be handed down forever and [continue into] eternity.
First day of the second month in the first year of the *Jiaqing* 嘉慶 era (March 9, 1796).¹⁴

The information on the origins of the Laojun miao in this commemorative text is rather vague. The mention of the Han dynasty, however, is in perfect accord with the tradition of Chougeng Diocese, which marks the beginning of Mt. Laojun's history as a Daoist sacred site.

It is also likely that the Daoist sanctuary on the mountain was rebuilt or enlarged during the Tang (618-907). The imperial family regarded Lord Lao as their ancestor, and Daoism enjoyed governmental sponsorship on a grand scale.¹⁵ Imperial Daoist temples were established all over the country. In 731, sanctuaries in honor of Lord Lao were set up

¹³ On these relics see Olles 2005a, 115-21, 191-96. Confucius' meeting with Laozi, in the light of Daoist revelations, is discussed in Kohn 1998, 291-95. On the relationship between cliff tombs and early Daoism see Wu 2000, 79-84.

¹⁴ Cf. Yan 1990, 15. A full analysis of the inscription is presented in Olles 2005a, 122-29; for the Chinese text see 2005a, 260 and the Appendix below.

¹⁵ On this period of Daoist history see Barrett 1996; Kohn 1998, 311-28.

on the five sacred mountains, and these temples were named "Laojun miao".¹⁶ So it is possible that the sanctuary on Mt. Laojun was modeled on these official religious institutions and received its present name in the Tang dynasty. However, there is no evidence in written sources that could prove this assumption.

The present inhabitants of the temple claim that a miraculous appearance of Laozi in 729 took place in the sanctuary on Mt. Laojun, but this could not be verified. In the 17th year of the Kaiyuan 開元 reign period (713-741), an image of Lord Lao suddenly appeared on a wooden pillar in a hall of a Buddhist nunnery in Xinjin District. After a close investigation had been carried out by various officials, Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756) was informed about the miracle, and the pillar with the divine image was eventually conveyed to the capital, where it was set up in a palace hall for worship. This manifestation of Lord Lao, which doubtless constitutes a significant event in the religious history of Xinjin District, is well documented in Daoist canonical sources and official writings. Yet none of these accounts provides any hint that the Buddhist nunnery was turned into a Daoist temple after the miracle or that Lord Lao's epiphany took place at the location of ancient Chougeng Diocese. So the connection between the Kaiyuan event and Mt. Laojun is best confined to the realm of recent religious fiction.¹⁷

The destruction of the temple in the transition period between the dynasties Ming and Qing is a fact that is also related in the local gazetteer of Xinjin District from the Daoguang 道光 era (1821-1850). It is stated there that the temple Laojun miao was devastated and burned to the ground by the rebel Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠 (1606-1647), which happened, as we know from the temple bell inscription, in 1644. In this year, Zhang Xianzhong set up his own regime in Chengdu. During this reign of terror, the rebel troops under his command butchered large parts of Sichuan's population and rejoiced in the destruction of cultural and religious sites. In 1647, Zhang was finally killed in a battle against the Man-

¹⁶ See *Jiu Tangshu* 舊唐書 8, *benji* 本紀 8, Xuanzong 玄宗 1 (*Ershisi shi* 二十四史. 20 vols. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 10:69b.

¹⁷ For a discussion of the "pillar miracle," including a German translation of the relevant story in the *Laojun lishi yinghua tushuo* 老君歷世應化圖說 (Illustrated Account of Lord Lao's Responses and Transformations through the Ages; Chengdu: Erxian an 二仙庵, 1936) and references, see Olles 2005a, 130-39.

chu army. According to the gazetteer, the sanctuary on Mt. Laojun was rebuilt by locals in 1793.¹⁸ To sum up, after the temple Laojun miao had been completely destroyed in 1644, it underwent reconstruction in the last decade of the 18th century. Two government officials, Yang Huiyin 楊會寅 from Shandong 山東 and Luo Gong 羅拱 from Hunan 湖南, who served as District Magistrates of Xinjin, initiated the rebuilding project.¹⁹

Earlier reconstruction dates are mentioned in Chinese secondary literature and informative material on Mt. Laojun, but it is not possible to verify these dates (Olles 2005a, 108). Given the rapid development of the Longmen branch of Quanzhen Daoism during the 17th century, the temple Laojun miao might have become a Quanzhen monastery after its reconstruction. The extant sources, however, do not contain any such evidence.²⁰

In the late Qing dynasty and Republican times (1912-1949), the sanctuary on Mt. Laojun was closely connected with a popular religious movement called the Teachings of the Liu School (Liumen jiao 劉門教), which was founded by the Confucian scholar Liu Yuan 劉沅 (1768-1856).²¹ Under the guidance of Liu Yuan and his descendants, the temple

¹⁸ *Daoguang Xinjin xianzhi* 道光新津縣志 (Gazetteer of Xinjin District from the *Daoguang* era; Compiled by Wang Menggeng 王夢庚 et al. Edition *Daoguang* 9 [1829]), 12.4a (*siguan* 寺觀); cf. *Zhongguo difang zhi jicheng* 中國地方志集成: *Sichuan fu xianzhi ji* 四川府縣志輯 (Chengdu: Ba-Shu shushe, 1992), 12:596a. On Zhang Xianzhong see the entry by Tu Lien-chê in Hummel 1943-44, 1:37-38.

¹⁹ On the two gentlemen see Olles 2005a, 127.

²⁰ It should be noted that the temple's alleged affiliation to the Bidong sub-lineage of the Longmen school, which has been purported in a recent publication (Li and Ding 2006, 26), most likely is a fabrication. Li and Ding cite the *Longmen zhengzong Bidong tang shang zhipu* (see above, note 7), but this document (as quoted in Qing 1996, 4:137-38) does not mention the temple on Mt. Laojun. The same applies to the Qingyang gong 青羊宮 (Palace of the Grey Ram) in Chengdu, which for a long time was led by Longmen abbots who did not belong to the Bidong sub-lineage; see Qing 1996, 4:140.

²¹ The Liumen movement, its history, scriptures, and its ritual tradition are the topics of my ongoing research project. For providing me with important source materials and valuable first-hand information, I would like to express my warmest thanks to the descendants of Liu Yuan in Chengdu, especially to Mr. Liu Bogu 劉伯穀 (b. 1930), great-grandson of the Liumen founder.

was repeatedly renovated, and rituals of the Liumen community were conducted in a shrine hall and the adjacent courtyard on the plot of Laojun miao. The Liu family's support for the sanctuary began in the late 18th century, and it is very likely that the above quoted bell inscription already alluded to their beneficent activities there. In 1799, 1821, and 1835, various temple buildings on Mt. Laojun were rebuilt or restored under the auspices of Liu Yuan. It is not known whether the temple Laojun miao functioned as Quanzhen monastery in those days.

However, beginning in the 1920s, Laojun miao was managed solely by the Liumen community, and also served as location for one of their charitable institutions.²² After a fire had destroyed most of the buildings in 1923, the whole temple-complex was rebuilt by descendants of Liu Yuan and members of the community. The Liumen movement occupied and shaped Mt. Laojun until the middle of the 20th century, and its patriarchs have left numerous inscriptions on the premises of Laojun miao. We will see that the present hagiographic legitimization of Mt. Laojun, which holds that Lord Lao once dwelled there and engaged in secluded self-cultivation, is intrinsically tied to Liu Yuan and his teachings. After the founding of the People's Republic of China (1949), the Liumen movement was outlawed as a "reactionary secret society", and, consequently, Mt. Laojun was deprived of its former protectors.

In 1961, the temple complex was declared a historic monument. Nevertheless, all statues, two halls, and the mountain gate were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The sanctuary was again designated a historic monument in 1985 and finally reopened as a religious institution in the following year.²³ Under the guidance of abbess Zhang Zhirong 張至容 (b. 1954), a Quanzhen nun who was instated on Mt. Laojun in December 1988, the sanctuary was renovated and extended. Today, the temple Laojun miao is an important Daoist site of the area that is particularly renowned for its liturgical activities and festivals (see Olles 2005a, 164-66).

²² Liu Bogu, September 2007 (personal communication).

²³ The situation of Mt. Laojun in 1987 is described in Hachiya 1990, 1:297-98, 2:288-91. Hachiya erroneously identified it as Pinggang zhi 平岡治 (1:297).

The Temple Buildings

The traditional temple buildings on Mt. Laojun were constructed during the Republican era, sponsored by adherents of the Liumen community. After the devastating fire in 1923, Liu Xianjun 劉咸綸 (style: Zhongtao 仲韜; 1871-1935), a grandson of Liu Yuan and the third patriarch of the Liumen movement, initiated the reconstruction of the sanctuary and collected money for this purpose. Under the direction of two Liumen adherents, Dong Shaotang 董紹堂 and Sun Xingwu 孫星五, the complete temple-complex was rebuilt between 1926 and 1944. The architectural ensemble was modeled on the famous Daoist sanctuary Qingyang gong in Chengdu, whereas arrangement and size of the buildings were skillfully adjusted to the shape of Mt. Laojun.²⁴

Climbing the mountain, one first arrives at the Temple Protector Hall (Lingzu lou 靈祖樓), which was reconstructed in the 1990s and houses images of Wang Lingguan 王靈官 (Numinous Officer Wang) and Zhao Gongming 趙公明. Both serve as guardians of Daoist sanctuaries, the latter being worshipped as a god of wealth at the same time.²⁵

On the next level uphill, the Hall of Chaos Prime (Hunyuan dian 混元殿) contains a statue of Lord Lao as Hunyuan zushi 混元祖師 (Ancestral Master of Chaos Prime), a precelestial manifestation of the deity who represents the Dao itself, “the seed of order in the midst of chaos” (Kohn 1998, 183). The god is flanked by divine representations of the sun and the moon. A level plot of land adjacent to this building is the location of the Hall of the Barge of Compassion (Cihang dian 慈航殿), which is dedicated to the bodhisattva Guanyin 觀音 (Avalokiteśvara). Next to this tiny shrine, just beneath the summit, three caverns open into the interior of the mountain. Two are Han-dynasty cliff tombs turned sanctuaries. One of them is equipped with an image of Guanyin. However, the most prominent grotto on the mountain is a natural cave that reportedly served as Lord Lao’s retreat.

²⁴ See Yan 1990, 67; Olles 2005a, 162. On the temple Qingyang gong see the entry by Livia Kohn in Pregadio 2008, 2:806-07.

²⁵ For an illustrated description of the main buildings on Mt. Laojun and an analysis of the temple’s pantheon see Olles 2005a, 167-236.

The major temple buildings are to be found on the summit of Laojun shan. The architectural highlight is the Pavilion of the Eight Trigrams (Bagua ting 八卦亭), which houses an image of Lord Lao riding his grey ox. This monument comprises all basic elements of the traditional Chinese world view. The eight trigrams of the *Yijing* 易經 (Book of Changes) are depicted on its sides, and the three fundamental powers (*sancai* 三才) of the universe are symbolized in its ground plot: The circular body of the pavilion represents Heaven, while its square enclosure stands for Earth and its octagonal base for the eight trigrams and Humanity. The main building of the temple, in which the daily liturgies are performed, is situated behind the pavilion. In the Hall of the Three Clarities (Sanqing dian 三清殿), the pre-eminent trinity of gods, who symbolize different aspects of the Dao, are worshipped together with a group of twelve Gold Immortals (*jinxian* 金仙). In the back part of this hall, facing a walled courtyard linking the Sanqing dian to the rear building of the temple, the Shrine of the Seven Perfected (Qizhen dian 七真殿) was built in honor of the eminent disciples of Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (1113-1170), the founder of the Quanzhen order. The Hall of the Three Primes (Sanyuan dian 三元殿), dedicated to the rulers of the Three Offices (Sanguan 三官) of Heaven, Earth, and Water and various other saints, is the rear hall of the temple-complex. Its upper story contains an image of Doumu 斗姥, the Dipper Mother, and is therefore called Doumu lou 斗姥樓 (Attic of the Dipper Mother).

Beside the main Hall of the Three Clarities, a modest shrine hall is situated, its front opening into a walled courtyard. The original name of this building is Rulin ci 儒林祠 (Ancestral Temple of the Literati); other current appellations are Liujia citang 劉家祠堂 (Ancestral Hall of the Liu Family) and Gongde ci 功德祠 (Shrine of Merit and Virtue). The architectural outline of the structure is based on the traditional form of an ancestral hall (*citang* 祠堂), the open-air courtyard allowing family members to assemble in front of the shrine while ancestral offerings are performed. Until the middle of the 20th century, the ancestral tablets of Liu Yuan's family were kept inside the hall. Today, ancestral tablets are still lined up on wooden racks on both sides of the shrine room, but they represent departed clerics and lay adherents of the present Quanzhen temple on Mt. Laojun and not members of the Liu family. However, the descendants of Liu Yuan still gather in order to worship their ancestors with the

appropriate liturgies on the annual Middle Prime Festival (*zhongyuan hui* 中元會) on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month. For many years, they continued to perform the rites on Mt. Laojun, with the approval of abbess Zhang Zhirong. Yet, due to the many tourists visiting Laojun shan and a recent conflict between the Longmen clerics and the Liu family, the descendants of Liu Yuan have now chosen a more remote sanctuary for their activities.²⁶

Inside the Rulin ci temple, an empty shrine with several inscriptions is still preserved. Above the shrine, a horizontal inscription on a wooden tablet reads as follows: “Mingjiao chuiguang 名教垂光 (The Teaching of Names [i.e. Confucianism] hands down its glory).” It is reported that this shrine contained a sacred image in former times, a statue of a Qing dynasty scholar who had a deep personal relationship to Mt. Laojun: Liu Yuan, the founder of the Liumen movement.

The Master of the Locust Tree Studio

Liu Yuan’s ancestors originally came from Hubei Province and settled in Sichuan by the end of the Ming dynasty.²⁷ The Liu family, which took up residence in Shuangliu 雙流 District southwest of Chengdu at the beginning of the Qing dynasty, was relatively poor and belonged to the class of low-level local intellectuals. The study of the Book of Changes was a family tradition, and it is reported that Liu Yuan’s father was an expert in this field.

Liu Yuan was born in the 33rd year of the Qianlong era (1768), and was styled Zhitang 止唐. From his early youth, he received a comprehensive education based on the classical scriptures of Confucianism. He attended the Confucian school of Shuangliu District and obtained the degree of a Graduate for Preeminence (*bagong* 拔貢) in 1789. In the year 1792, he received the degree of a Provincial Graduate (*juren* 舉人). He was admitted three times to the *jinshi* 進士 (Metropolitan Graduate) examination, but failed on each occasion. After that, Liu Yuan took no further interest in an official career. Furthermore, Liu Yuan had lost his fa-

²⁶ Liu Bogu, March 2007 (personal communication).

²⁷ For more on Liu Yuan and his movement see Ma and Han 2004, 2:1006-30; Olles 2005a, 140-63.

ther when he was only twenty-two years old, whereupon his mother had to maintain the family by weaving. For this reason, he was not willing to serve as official in other provinces and preferred to support his family by teaching at a private school in his home village.

At the age of 58, in the year 1826, Liu Yuan was appointed District Magistrate of Tianmen 天門 in Hubei, but he declined on the pretext of being in mourning for his parents. At that time, however, his mother had been dead for fifteen years, and the true reason for his refusal was his lack of interest in an official career. On the other hand, Liu Yuan was already a well-known personality in Sichuan where he gathered disciples and spread his teachings. He was then designated as Archivist in the Directorate of Education (*guozi jian dianbu* 國子監典簿), which in late Qing times was an "empty rank" without official duties. After a short stay in the capital, Liu Yuan asked for leave and returned to Sichuan where he taught and lived in seclusion. He never served in an office throughout his life, but had about a thousand students, more than a hundred of whom obtained academic degrees like *jinshi* or *juren*. Liu Yuan fathered eight sons, and he was a respected and prosperous man in his later years. Many people considered him as a great scholar and a master of high moral standing, and he was also venerated as a saint. At the end of the fifth year of the Xianfeng 咸豐 era (1856), Liu Yuan passed away at the age of 88, and he was buried in his home village in Shuangliu District.

On the plot of the Liu family's dwelling in Shuangliu stood an old locust tree (*Sophora japonica*), after which the house had been named Locust Tree Studio (Huaixuan 槐軒). Liu Yuan used the same name for his house in Chengdu, where he took up residence in 1807, since there were three locust trees on its premises. The teachings of Liu Yuan and the popular religious movement, which derived from the former, were thus known as Huaixuan dao 槐軒道 (Way of the Locust Tree Studio). Other common appellations were Liumen 劉門 (Liu School) and Liumen jiao (Teachings of the Liu School). It should be noted that contemporary descendants of Liu Yuan often present his teachings as a school of philosophical thought that should only be referred to as Liu School (Liumen). The name Huaixuan, on the other hand, became so important that it is still used today as a synonym for Liu Yuan himself.

Those works among his numerous writings which were consistent with the Confucian orthodoxy have been published by Liu's descendants

and students under the title *Huaixuan quanshu* 槐軒全書 (Collected Works from the Locust Tree Studio). The first edition of *Huaixuan quanshu* appeared in 1905, followed by two editions in Republican times. The collection contains commentaries on Confucian classics (ten works), historical treatises (two works), literary texts (two works), philosophical studies (five works), and miscellaneous writings (three works).²⁸ At a quick glance, these titles seem to represent pure Confucian scholarship, but many works in *Huaixuan quanshu* contain a good deal of Daoist and Buddhist thought, especially from the realm of internal self-cultivation and the nurturing of life – central aspects of Liu Yuan's teachings and the practice of the Liumen movement.

Liu Yuan's doctrine was based on the merging of Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist concepts. The underlying idea of "harmonizing the three teachings" (*sanjiao heyi* 三教合一) had become a dominant feature of Chinese thought and religion since the Song dynasty (960-1279). According to this theory, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism are just one single path to salvation and spiritual self-realization, and the three teachings are perceived as different branches of a single tree. The harmonizing of the three teachings was generally pursued under the aegis of Confucianism – at least on the surface. This was also the case with Liu Yuan who always presented himself as a Confucian. His teachings were mainly influenced by the traditions of Confucianism and Daoism, whereas Buddhist notions were of secondary importance. Compared to the Three in One Teaching (*Sanyi jiao* 三一教), which was founded by Lin Zhao'en 林兆恩 (1517-1598) in the middle of the 16th century, there are obvious similarities in terms of thought and self-definition. Yet, the organizational structures of the Liumen community are quite different from the Three in One Teaching, since the former remained a rather diffused tradition within the religious landscape.²⁹ Instead of building their own temples, the Liumen community was based in temples which already had a long history as Daoist or Buddhist sanctuaries – as is the case with the temple on Mt. Laojun.

²⁸ For a table of contents see *Huaixuan quanshu* (10 vols. Chengdu: Ba-Shu shushe, 2006), 1:8a-b. Cf. Ma and Han 2004, 2:1012-13; Olles 2005a, 147.

²⁹ See Dean 1998; Seiwert 2003, 343-64; Ma and Han 2004, 2:541-642.

The religious practice of the Liumen movement was not the outcome of a desperate attempt to imitate the imperial state cult or to invent new Confucian rituals. Individual self-cultivation and collective liturgies were completely derived from Daoist models. Today, a whole canon of ritual scriptures and a system of self-cultivation, both rooted in the Liumen tradition, still exist.

The self-cultivation, at its lower level, consists of techniques of nurturing life (*yangsheng* 養生) not unlike those exercises that are currently referred to as qigong. The system, named Jingyang gong 靜養功 (Exercises of Tranquil Nurturing), has four successive steps and is transmitted orally within an exclusive circle. These methods of self-cultivation, rooted in Daoist internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), were developed by Liu Yuan himself after inspiring encounters with two Daoist hermits and eight years of study with one of these masters.³⁰

Liu Yuan met Yeyun Laoren 野雲老人 (Elder of the Wild Clouds), an old man selling medicinal herbs, in a difficult phase of his life. After Yeyun Laoren had disclosed the essentials of Daoist self-cultivation to him, which Liu Yuan found to be in perfect accord with his Confucian principles, he became the disciple of this mysterious old man. From around 1796 to 1804, Liu Yuan studied with the hermit, whose real name was never revealed, and his health improved greatly. It is reported that the retreat of Liu Yuan and his master in those days was Mt. Laojun (Yan 1996, 60). Since Liu still dwelled in Shuangliu at that time, it is indeed possible that he frequently stayed on Mt. Laojun in neighboring Xinjin District. For the time being, I am not aware of any such confirmation in Liu's writings, but this may be due to the secretive manner in which Liu Yuan treats the subject of his Daoist studies. However, the significance of Mt. Laojun within the Liumen tradition confirms that the mountain played an important role in Liu Yuan's life. With regard to the current hagiographic legitimization of Mt. Laojun, an interesting detail has to be mentioned: According to legend, both Daoist masters of Liu Yuan, including Yeyun Laoren, were incarnations of Lord Lao.³¹

³⁰ This is related in Liu Yuan's autobiographical text *Zixu shi zi* 自敘示子 (Describing Myself for the Instruction of My Sons) in *Huaixuan zazhu* 槐軒雜著 4.59a-61a; see *Huaixuan quanshu*, 9:3473b-74b; cf. Olles 2005a, 154-57.

³¹ Liu Bogu, March 2007 (personal communication).

A ritual canon based on Daoist liturgical texts was also edited by Liu Yuan. The collection in fifty chapters (*juan* 卷) bears the title of *Fayan huizuan* 法言會纂 (Collected Words of Ritual Methods). The rituals recorded in this compilation cover the full range of religious services offered to the society of late imperial China. Special emphasis is put on rites for ancestors and desolate souls. Major Daoist divinities are called upon (Three Clarities, Lord Lao, Jade Emperor, Three Offices, Northern and Southern Dipper Constellations etc.). Interestingly, several members of the Liu family were also included in the pantheon and given divine titles and standard Daoist invocations (*gaowen* 誥文). Liu Yuan himself is referred to as Qingyang Shangdi 清陽上帝 (Supreme Ruler of Clear Yang) in this context. The rituals contained in *Fayan huizuan* differ significantly in contents and character. We find sophisticated liturgies, lengthy purification rites, bureaucratic memorials, and visualizations side by side with harsh exorcism, and divination methods. Each chapter includes instructions and texts for a “classified ritual” (*keyi* 科儀), and these rituals are combined to form the liturgical festivals of the Liumen community, which last three or four days. A preface by Liu Yuan, written in 1821, and an introduction by the Daoist Fan Daoheng 樊道恆, dated 1844, constitute the opening section of this compilation.³²

The *Fayan huizuan* canon very likely originated from the Quanzhen Daoist ritual tradition of Sichuan. In the Qing dynasty, a comprehensive collection of ritual texts was compiled by the Quanzhen Daoist Chen Zhongyuan 陳仲遠, a native of Sichuan. The huge compilation, titled *Guangcheng yizhi* 廣成儀制 (Ritual Systematization of Master Guangcheng), was printed in 1911 by the temple Erxian an 二仙庵 (Two Immortals Convent) in Chengdu, and the texts of this collection are still used in the ritual practice of Quanzhen temples in Sichuan today.³³ We can be sure that Liu Yuan drew heavily upon the work of Chen Zhongyuan and

³² The whole canon and a later supplement have been reprinted in *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 (36 vols. Chengdu: Ba-Shu shushe, 1992-1994); abbreviated hereon as ZW. See ZW 946 and 947 (30:456a-789b). For a table of contents see *ibid*, 463a-b and Olles 2005a, 159. The numbers of the titles follow Komjathy 2002, 104.

³³ See Esposito 2000, 641. *Guangcheng yizhi* is included in ZW 421-695 (vols. 13-15). For a list of titles, see Komjathy 2002, 92-98. On the editions of *Guangcheng yizhi* see Min and Li 1994, 146-47.

his fellow Daoists, for this is stated by Fan Daoheng in his introduction to *Fayan huizuan* (ZW 946, 30:459a-b).

It is beyond doubt that the liturgical aspect of the Liumen movement, just as its system of self-cultivation, is deeply rooted in Daoism. This is also the case with the actual performance of the rituals. Liu Yuan figured as chief editor of *Fayan huizuan*, but neither he nor his descendants actually performed the rites described in their canon. This was, and still is today, the duty of a Daoist priest whose profession is hereditary and who is familiar with the liturgies in *Fayan huizuan*. Liu Yuan and the following patriarchs of the Liumen community had no command of the necessary ritual methods (*fa* 法), and it seems that they made no attempt to interfere in this domain of professional Daoist practice. Many Daoist priests in Sichuan were affiliated with the Liumen movement and used the *Fayan huizuan* scriptures in their ritual activities. These practitioners constituted an independent liturgical tradition of non-monastic Daoism in the area, which is still extant and known under the name of *Fayan tan* 法言壇 (Altar of Ritual Words).

Liu Yuan was well versed in the Confucian classics, but he also studied a certain amount of Daoist and Buddhist scriptures that were popular in his time. This is demonstrated by the Collection of Sacred Scriptures and Litanies of Repentance (*Jingchan jicheng* 經懺集成) which was published for the first time in 1860 by Liu Yuan's disciples.³⁴ The compilation includes nine Daoist and three Buddhist text clusters with introductions and commentaries by Liu Yuan (in one case by Liu's father). Most of the scriptures have prefaces by various divinities, which were received through spirit-writing. The final part of the *Jingchan jicheng* collection is a supplement: the *Daode jing* 道德經 with a commentary by Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, re-edited by Liu Yuan.

Under the leadership of Liu Beiwen 劉棋文 (style: Ziwei 子維; 1842-1914), the sixth son of Liu Yuan, the Liumen community developed into an influential religious movement. New adherents were accepted on personal recommendation and a donation, which had to be in accordance with the income of the respective person. The recruits were admitted to the community through a ceremony and henceforth had to obey a set of

³⁴ ZW 948, 30:790a-1059a (reprint of the *Jingchan jicheng* ed., Chengdu, 1916).

precepts. Philosophical and ethical teachings as well as the methods of self-cultivation were transmitted to the adherents.

Every year, the Liumen community organized nine liturgical festivals (*jiuhui* 九會) which corresponded to important dates within the religious calendar of traditional China, e.g. the festivals of the Three Primes (*sanyuan* 三元). These major ritual events mainly focused on the worship of ancestors (*jianxian* 薦先) and the salvation of desolate souls (*jiyou* 濟幽). The most important center of the community was the cloister Yanqing si 延慶寺 in Chengdu, which was originally a Buddhist monastery that had been founded at the end of the Yuan dynasty (14th century). In the years after 1850, the cloister was converted into a sanctuary of the Three Teachings and equipped with Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian statuary, which also included an image of Liu Yuan. Many temples in Sichuan were managed by the Liumen community, and most of these centers also contained charitable institutions or schools of the movement. In late Qing and Republican times, the Liumen movement was an influential community in Sichuan, and also had adherents in other provinces. Until 1949, it was not considered as a heterodox sect and suffered no persecution.³⁵

The commitment of the Liumen community was not confined to their own centers. Liu Yuan and his descendants supported many sanctuaries, notably Daoist temples, with generous donations. It is hardly possible to find a Daoist temple in Chengdu and its surroundings where the patriarchs and adherents of the Liumen movement left no inscriptions. The present splendor of the temple Qingyang gong, a monastery of Quanzhen Daoism, is mainly based on extensive renovations that were funded by Liu Yuan and his descendants during the Qing dynasty.³⁶

³⁵ In the late Qing, governmental repression of popular religious groups was very widespread. The Liumen community, however, was not regarded as heterodox, which may be due to its Confucian credo; see Seiwert 2003, 479 (n. 47).

³⁶ See Li and Ding 2006, 8. The anthology *Chongkan Daozang jiyao* 重刊道藏輯要 (Chengdu: Erxian an, 1906) includes four inscriptions by Liu Yuan and one text by his son Liu Guiwen 劉桂文 (1837-1897); see work numbers 299 and 300 in Komjathy 2002, 74. A translation of these texts will be published soon.

Lord Lao's Retreat in Sichuan

Mt. Laojun in Xinjin District reportedly served as refuge for Liu Yuan and his Daoist master, Yeyun Laoren. If we take into account that Yeyun Laoren was considered as a manifestation of Lord Lao, it is quite obvious that the present hagiographic features and the current appellation of the mountain evolved under the patronage of Liu Yuan and his descendants.

In 1799, a poem, consisting of twelve verses with seven characters to a line, was engraved on a stone tablet. This inscription commemorated the renovation of the temple on Mt. Laojun at the end of the 18th century. The relic, though heavily damaged during the "Cultural Revolution", has been preserved in the main hall of the temple Laojun miao. In 1919, 120 years after the creation of the original stele, the text was copied and supplemented with a short commentary by the famous calligrapher Yan Kai 顏楷 (style: Yongqi 雍耆; 1877-1927). Yan Kai was an eminent member of the Liumen community. After studying law and politics in Japan, he served in various offices of the Qing dynasty administration. In 1911, he was among the leading members of the Association for the Protection of Local Railways (Baolu tongzhi hui 保路同志會) who fought against the nationalization of railways in Sichuan Province. He was also the teacher of the erudite Daoist Yi Xinying (1896-1976).³⁷ The inscription in Yan Kai's calligraphy was also carved on a stele, which is today kept in the Hall of Chaos Prime on Mt. Laojun. The poem, tentatively rendered below, was apparently spoken by Lord Lao:

Once [I] crossed the Han[gu] 函谷 Pass, riding a grey ox,
[then] hid away in Shu (Sichuan) to explore Tianshe shan (Mt.
Celestial Altar) anew.

A stone chamber was chiseled, up to the throne of Great Peace;
the smoke of the cinnabar furnace permeated the Nine Heav-
ens.

[At this mountain], girded by the Qiong 邛 River, the Minjiang
being its lapel,

[I] reined five phoenixes to welcome the immortal at the bridge.

³⁷ For further information on Yan Kai and an example of his calligraphy see Wang 1998, 271. On Yi Xinying see above, note 6.

The Penglai 蓬萊 Island in the ocean; how could it resemble
this place?

Sacred scriptures and jade ledgers, I transmitted them to [Yin]
Xi 尹喜.

Yet, in the first decade [of this dynasty, the temple] was rav-
aged [by rebels];

autumnal wind blew through the weeds, [chasing] chilly white
clouds.

Now, [I] display the numinous [power] of the Dao to make
[this mountain] flourish again,

and I am willing to hand down the holy scriptures one more
time.³⁸

What has happened to the hagiographic legitimization of this mountain? The spiritual heritage of the old Celestial Masters' diocese, which, according to various *Daozang* sources, linked the site to the Yellow Emperor and Zhang Daoling, has been replaced – or supplemented – by a new legend. The above quoted text and numerous other inscriptions in the temple, which were composed by Liu Yuan and his descendants, present the sacred site as Lord Lao's retreat. While it is possible that this legend already existed on a local lore level even before Liu Yuan, Lord Lao's central role in the hagiographic legitimization of Mt. Laojun was emphasized and most effectively propagated by the patriarchs and adherents of the Liumen movement.

The classical legacy of Lord Lao's hagiography was connected with the locality in Xinjin District, and the content of the text even implies the superiority of this site over the mythical island of Penglai.³⁹ The Hangu Pass and the grey ox are standard elements of the legends concerning Lord Lao (Kohn 1998, xi). Mt. Laojun is clearly identified by its alternative appellation Tianshe shan (Mt. Celestial Altar), the mention of two rivers, and the allusion to the destruction of the temple in 1644. Lord Lao's second encounter with Yin Xi, the guardian of the Hangu Pass and first recipient of the *Daode jing*, allegedly took place in Chengdu during the Western Zhou dynasty (1046 -771 B.C.E.). Yin Xi found Lord Lao, who had been reborn in the family of an official surnamed Li 李, with the help

³⁸ The text of the inscription is reproduced below; cf. Olles 2005a, 93-95, 104.

³⁹ On Penglai see the entry by Thomas E. Smith in Pregadio 2008, 2:788-90.

of a grey ram. Lord Lao then bestowed the rank of an accomplished immortal on his disciple Yin Xi. The alleged site of their encounter is today the location of the temple Qingyang gong (Palace of the Grey Ram).⁴⁰ On the basis of this traditional legend, the mountain in Xinjin was elevated to Lord Lao's retreat, where the Old Master dwelled in a cavern and engaged in self-cultivation. The new glory of the sanctuary and the further transmission of Lord Lao's scriptures, both alluded to in the inscription, were realized under the auspices of Liu Yuan and his community.

Furthermore, the inscription bears a mysterious signature at the end of the poem: Jiangyuan Xingjia 江原形家 (Geomancer of Jiangyuan).⁴¹ Jiangyuan is a place name that already existed in the Han dynasty and denoted a locality north of today's Xinjin District.⁴² However, the strange name is not just a sobriquet of the Qing dynasty author of the poem. Local legend has it that Jiangyuan Xingjia is none other than Lord Lao, and this is also confirmed by Yan Kai's commentary on the inscription.⁴³ The text was in all probability authored by Liu Yuan, and it may well be the product of a spirit-writing session.

Under the influence of the Liumen movement, Mt. Laojun received a new status within the sacred geography of Sichuan, based on regional traditions surrounding Lord Lao. The current appellations of the mountain and its temple certainly originated from the new definition of Mt. Laojun's spiritual authority at that time. It remains an open question whether or not the legend of Lord Lao's sojourn on the mountain is directly related to Liu Yuan's Daoist master, Yeyun Laoren. The recognition of Yeyun Laoren as an incarnation of Lord Lao was possibly the work of Liu Yuan's descendants or members of the Liumen community, who sought to glorify Liu's master retrospectively.

Today, Lord Lao is still omnipresent on the mountain. Images of the saint riding his grey ox are to be found inside the Bagua ting (Pavilion of the Eight Trigrams) and enshrined in a cave. The Cavern of Lord Lao (Laojun dong 老君洞), situated beneath the summit and decorated with

⁴⁰ See Kohn 1998, 20-21, 267-71; Olles 2005a, 91-92.

⁴¹ The term *xingjia* very likely denotes an expert on geomancy (*fengshui* 風水 or *kanyu xue* 堪輿學); see *Qinding Siku quanshu zongmu* 欽定四庫全書總目 109.11b (*Zibu* 子部 19, *shushu lei* 術數類 2).

⁴² Jiangyuan was close to today's Shuangliu District; see Tan 1982, 2:29, 53.

⁴³ Liu Bogu, April 2008 (personal communication).

inscriptions by a grandson of Liu Yuan, is the spiritual heart of Mt. Laojun. The walls of the natural cave have been lined with bricks, and a shrine with a statue of Lord Lao has been set up inside this chamber. A stele with an inscription by Liu Yuan, dated 1854, has been preserved in the grotto, but, due to the weathering of the stone, the main text is not legible any more. This sacred cavern was embellished by Liu Yuan and his community during the Qing dynasty. It is clearly stated in the inscriptions on the shrine that Lord Lao, after his restless journey, found his ultimate retreat there.⁴⁴

Lord Lao also plays a dominant role in the religious activities that can be observed on Mt. Laojun today. The major festival of the temple Laojun miao is Lord Lao's birthday (*Laojun shengdan* 老君聖誕) on the fifteenth day of the second lunar month. Every year, the festival is celebrated within the Ritual Period of Spring Prayers (*chunqi fahui* 春祈法會), which lasts one week. On the date of Lord Lao's birthday, approximately one hundred thousand pilgrims and visitors flock to the temple to pay homage to the Old Master. During the ritual period, which lasts from the thirteenth to the nineteenth day of the month, various liturgies are conducted. Besides Lord Lao, the rituals address Numinous Officer Wang, the Three Offices, Wenchang 文昌, Guandi 關帝, the Jade Emperor, Guanyin, the Dipper Constellations, and other deities. The liturgical texts used in these rituals are all included in the collection *Guangcheng yizhi* (see Olles 2005a, 237-46). The celebration of Lord Lao's birthday within this liturgical framework is unique to the temple Qingyang gong in Chengdu and Mt. Laojun in Xinjin District. At both sites, the rituals are rooted in the liturgical tradition of Quanzhen Daoism. In the case of Mt. Laojun, however, the preeminence of Lord Lao in the religious life of the mountain has to be ascribed to the lasting influence of Liu Yuan and the Liumen movement.

⁴⁴ For these texts see Wang 1996, 189; cf. Olles 2005a, 189-91. While writing the monograph on Mt. Laojun, I was still reluctant to recognize the full impact of the Liumen community on this sacred site.

Conclusion

The Quanzhen Daoists on Mt. Laojun continue the tradition of the old Celestial Masters' diocese in their own way. Yet, the current hagiographic legitimization of the locality and the traditional temple buildings were shaped by the patriarchs and erudite members of the Liumen community. Although Liu Yuan and his descendants saw, and still see, themselves as Confucians, the Liumen movement significantly influenced the development of modern Daoism in the area of Sichuan. While the Fayan tan ritual tradition, which evolved under the patronage of the Liu family, is in itself a part of non-monastic Daoism, the Liumen movement as a whole was closely connected with institutions of Quanzhen Daoism, e.g. the temple Qingyang gong. The Liumen movement thus actively patronized Quanzhen Daoism and, at the same time, competed with this monastic form of the religion. On the other hand, the Liumen community certainly also substituted for traditional religious institutions unable to resist historical circumstances such as war and the growing influence of Western culture. The community's takeover of Mt. Laojun may be seen as one such example.

Today, after the state-controlled revival of religious life in the People's Republic of China, the Liumen movement and similar communities have been marginalized. The multifaceted and diffused nature of traditional Chinese religion conflicts sharply with the "rigid Western-derived Marxist-Leninist definition of religion" (Dean 1998, 10), that has been adopted by the present government. However, sacred sites like Mt. Laojun and Qingyang gong benefited greatly from the patronage of the Liumen community. In the case of Mt. Laojun, a former diocese of Celestial Master Daoism continues to flourish as a Daoist institution in contemporary China. Liu Yuan and his descendants spotted Lord Lao's retreat on this mountain and thus disclosed another manifestation of the Old Master, who appears through the ages as the teacher of humanity.

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Appendix

I: The Inscription on the Temple Bell (1796)

嘉慶元年二月吉旦	永垂萬古	四方眾善添鐵復鑄	鳴繼後大功告竣	來鑄洪鐘一口失	繼踵溫邑雷萬春	侯楊公議修羅公	乾隆伍十五年邑	甲申灰燼至清	修廟宇巍峨迨明	天社山自漢唐建
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II: The Lord Lao Inscription (1799 and 1919)

江原形家題	今顯道靈重振起願將經文再一傳	蓋新甸中遭燹燼秋風荒草白雲寒	海島蓬萊何似此玉冊經文授喜看	邛水爲帶岷江襟控五鳳而橋迎仙	石室鑿向太平座丹竈煙浮透九天	昔駕青牛過函關隱蜀新研天社山
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Daoist Nuns in Taiwan

A Case Study of the Gaoxiong Daode yuan

WAN-LI HO

Abstract

The Gaoxiong Daode yuan 高雄道德院 is the first and only community of celibate female Daoists in Taiwan. Established in 1960, it draws on practices from both the Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity, i.e., Celestial Masters) and Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) schools. The article argues that while the majority of Taiwan Daoists follow the Zhengyi tradition, the priestesses and nuns at the Daode yuan have adopted Quanzhen practices to create their own unique religious tradition. Their unique syncretism represents major modifications of the Daoist tradition and serves as an example of the interaction among different schools as they adapt to modern religious and social needs while preserving traditional roots.

The Zhengyi school in Taiwan is traditionally staffed by married male practitioners. While they occupy a dominant position in Daoist practice, there is an increasing acceptance of Daoist priestesses and female practitioners, as evident in the prominent leadership of women in public Daoist ritual. Although the number of fully ordained women is still relatively small, their role in conducting nation-wide rituals has been highly visible, such as in ceremonies to cleanse Taiwan of the SARS epidemic in 2003.

Their first and most important center is the Gaoxiong Daode yuan (hereafter called Daode yuan). It is an interesting institution that allows the study of various questions: How did it come to house the first (and only) community of Daoist nuns in Taiwan? What is their members' affiliation in terms of Zhengyi and Quanzhen? How did their practices and

worldview evolve in the interaction of these schools, especially since their founder was an adherent of Zhengyi while their dominant lifestyle follows Quanzhen? And how has the community managed to sustain and distinguish itself over the last five decades? I hope to present the materials I have gathered between 2002 and 2008 as a case study of the adaptation of religious traditions and rituals to a changing social environment and the evolution of the role of women in Daoism.

Historical Context

Daoism is both an indigenous religion and a marker of cultural identity for most Chinese. Since the 63rd Celestial Master, Zhang Enfu 張恩溥, arrived in Taiwan in 1949 the number of Daoist followers has increased significantly. In 1951, Zhang founded the Taiwan Daoist Association (Taiwan sheng daojiao hui 台灣省道教會); in 1964, Jiang Zhaozhou 蔣肇周 founded the Chinese General Daoist Association (Zhonghua daojiao zonghui 中華道教總會). About 70 to 80 percent of Taiwanese religious practitioners consider themselves Daoist adherents. Taiwan had 12,970 registered temples in 2002: 8,954 Daoist and 2,279 Buddhist.¹ Officially, there are over 8,954 Daoist temples, but their actual number is much larger because unofficial Daoist halls rarely register due to land ownership

¹ By the end of 2002, Taiwan had 11,423 temples: 78.4% Daoist and 20.0% Buddhist. The total number of registered believers was 1,068,550: 858,005 Daoist and 199,938 Buddhist (*Statistical Yearbook of Interior, Republic of China 2002*, Taipei: Ministry of Interior in Taiwan, 2003). However, religious participants are more numerous than registered ones, which means that 70 to 80 percent of religious practitioners in Taiwan follow Daoism. However, some claim that 70 to 80 percent believe in folk religion. Barbara Reed has argued that “popular religion and Daoism strongly influenced each other, but Daoists drew a clear line between themselves and what they considered excessive, immortal cults” (Reed in Sharma 1987, 169). In addition, any temple neither dedicated to Buddhism nor Confucianism is considered Daoist. These nuances can affect religious statistics. Recent publications estimate that Buddhism has flourished in recent years beyond previous expectations, estimating that 90% of Taiwanese consider themselves religious: 40% consider themselves Buddhist while 3.5% consider themselves Christian (including Protestants and Catholics). See Shi 2003, 28.

constraints. Scholars estimate that there are around 20,000 official and unofficial Daoist temples.²

Since the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) the Zhengyi and Quanzhen schools have been the key branches of Daoism. In Taiwan, Zhengyi is most popular. This school was founded in Sichuan by Zhang Daoling 張道陵 of the Eastern Han. The fourth generation Celestial Master, Zhang Sheng 張盛, moved the headquarters from Sichuan to Mt. Longhu 龍虎山 in Jiangxi (Lu 2006, 102). The school allows marriage and has mainly lay priests (Daoist Association 2003, 34). They use talismans and amulets in their rituals, adopting the practice from the Talismans and Records School (*fulu pai* 符錄派) (Fischer-Schreiber 1996, 11-24). In contrast, the Quanzhen school is monastic with a celibate clergy and strict discipline. In addition to various cultivation methods, they use internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) to transform into immortals.

Early Taiwanese Daoism followed the faith as found in Fujian and Guangdong and passed down by the Zhengyi lineage of Mt. Longhu. Quanzhen teachings were primarily transmitted to Taiwan after the liberation of the cross-strait economy in 1987. It spread into Taiwan through a conscious learning process rather than being transplanted naturally through immigration (Zheng 2004, ii). In particular, the Nantou cisheng gong 南投慈聖宮 began to transmit and emphasize Quanzhen ritual practices in Taiwan after its members studied them in mainland China.³

Daode yuan nuns not only visit Quanzhen temples often, but also tend to practice internal alchemy. This is important for this article because, while their practices of celibacy and internal alchemy derive directly from Quanzhen, they also draw heavily upon the rituals of the Zhengyi school. What accounts for this melding of traditions?

² Interview with Lee Fong-mao, Professor of Academia Sinica, January 28, 2004. I am indebted to Professor Li for his continuous inspiration.

³ The Nantou cisheng gong was founded in 1985. Its leader is High Priestess Huang Chongfa, originally called Huang Bishuang. She began as a practitioner of the Cihui system, which emphasized relieving suffering and intervening after disasters through charitable service. Later her institution evolved into a Quanzhen temple, adding practiced that focused inward and were based on meditation and spiritual development (Ho 2005).

The Overall Setting

Foundation

The Zhengyi priest Guo Cangying 郭藏應(1923-1998) began preaching in 1955 and established the Daode yuan in 1960. In 1976, the institution founded the Taiyi zhenlian zong 太乙真蓮宗 (Great One Lotus School).⁴ In 1988, he further established the Xiuzhen dao xue yuan 修真道學院 (Daoist Institute for Cultivating Perfection), a Daoist institute of higher learning.⁵ At that time, one of the founders of the Daode yuan, Sun Fanbin, a Zhengyi ritual master, taught Zhengyi rituals to the nuns in the Taiwanese language.

The physical Daode yuan complex follows nature's framework. Guo Cangying said: "The mountains associated with the trigram Xun 巽 are hospitable to Daoist priestesses; those linked with the trigram Zhen 震 are hospitable to Daoist priests."⁶ The land of the temple belongs to Xun-type mountains, so its priestesses are blessed. According to fengshui, such mountains are considered fortunate because they resemble a golden lion, a popular symbol of power and protection against evil.

The compound occupies approximately 1,400 *ping* (50,400 sq. ft.) and is adjacent to Golden Lion Lake, famous for its beautiful scenery. It houses resident female renunciants and offers a place for lay practitioners to worship or study. In addition, the temple bought 30 *jia* (29.1 hectares) in Jiaxian in central Taiwan to establish a monastery for monks. According to fengshui, this place is shaped like a turtle, a symbol of longevity, wisdom, and perseverance. Practitioners hope that it will become a "great Dao hall for spiritual practice" (*Daode Yuan Annals* 1990, 6).

⁴ The school considers itself an orthodox (*zhengtong* 正統) Daoist tradition. "Orthodox" describes those sects of Daoism which have always been accepted as part of the history, while still being separate from the Buddhist tradition. This information is from Weng Taiming, interviewed by author on December 18, 2003.

⁵ Daode yuan annals record 1988 as the first year of this institution. At that time, 317 people attended, however, only 107 students graduated in 1989. It still functions as a Daoist institute of learning today, mostly in southern Taiwan.

⁶ Xun has three lines: "yin, yang, and yang," read from the bottom. It represents the southeast. Zhen has the lines "yang, yin, and yin." It represents the east.

The principal gods worshiped at Daode yuan are the great Daoist gods: the Three Pure Ones, Ancestors of the Dao (Sanqing Daozu 三清道祖), the Highest Ancestor Lao (Taishang Laozu 太上老祖) and the Celestial Worthy of the Great One who Saves from Suffering (Taiyi Jiuku Tianzun 太乙救苦天尊). The latter is the most powerful of all. Other gods include the Lofty Thearch on High of the Mystic Vault, the Heavenly Jade Emperor, Grand Thearchs of the Three Offices, Celestial Master Zhang Daoling, Thearch on High of the Mystic Heaven (Zhenwu), Star Lords of the Northern and Southern Dippers, Most Sage Prior Teacher, Transcendent Elder of the Southern Pole, and others more. Among many companion deities who are worshipped at Daode yuan there are also goddesses such as the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwang mu 西王母), the Dipper Mother (Doulao 斗姥), Holy Mother in Heaven (Tianshang shengmu 天上聖母) and the Goddess of Mercy (Guanyin 觀音).

The *Daode jing* 道德經 (Book of the Dao and Its Virtue) serves as the primary religious text for the members of Daode yuan along with frequently read companion texts such as the *Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇 (Highest Book of Impulse and Response), the *Taishang qingjing jing* 太上清境經 (Highest Scripture of Clarity and Tranquility), the *Taishang daozi jing* 太上道祖經 (Highest Scripture of Ancestor Lao), the *Yuhuang xinyin miaojing* 玉皇心印妙經 (Marvelous Mind Seal Scripture of the Jade Emperor), the *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture of Secret Correspondences), the *Dingguan jing* 定觀經 (Scripture of Concentration and Observation), *Taiyi jiuku hushen miaojing* 太乙救苦護身妙經 (Marvelous Scripture of the Great One to Save from Suffering and Protect the Body), etc.

Leadership

The leader of the community is Weng Taiming 翁太明. She has devoted herself to this work since graduating from college in 1974 and especially after her 1976 ordination. Her masters Sun Fanbin and the 64th Celestial Master Zhang Yuanxian bestowed upon her the *Sanwu dugong jinglu* 三五都功經錄 (Scriptural Register of the Three and Five Inspector of Merits), which empowers her to perform Daoist rituals. At first, she worked closely with the founding master Guo Cangying; in 1986, she became the Daode yuan leader; in 1987, she also advanced to master of the Great One Lotus School. In 1995, she was granted the *Shangqing sandong wulei jinglu* 上清三洞五雷經錄 (Five Thunder Scriptural Register of Highest

Clarity and the Three Caverns) at the Zhengyi headquarters on Mt. Longhu. This is the highest accolade available for a Daoist priest or priestess not of the Zhang family lineage.⁷

Weng Taiming insists on maintaining pure Daoist ritual practices in her temple, not following any Buddhist models and using only Daoist texts, a policy she inherited from Guo Cangying. This is important to note because commonly those who identify with a “belief” in Daoism worship their ancestors, pay respect to the gods at public temples, and participate in “Daoist rituals that accompany community celebrations.”⁸ It also contrasts with some other groups. Thus, some Daoists also attend the Buddhist Compassion Belief Foundation (Ciji gongde hui 慈濟功德會), or worship Guanyin. But they do not perceive a conflict in these combined practices, since historically Chinese religions—Confucianism, Daoism, and Mahayana Buddhism—are neither monotheistic nor exclusive. Some Daoist temples also hold Buddhist-inspired rites,⁹ but this is not the case at the Daode yuan.

⁷ The *Tiantan yuge* 天壇玉格 (Precious Rules of the Jade Altar) is a Zhengyi ritual scripture for transmitting sacred registers. According to its stipulations, registers are divided into five grades: initial transmission of the *Taishang sanwu dugong jinglu* confers ranks 6 and 7; next, transmission of the *Zhengyi mengwei jinglu* 正一盟威經籙 confers ranks 4 and 5; transmission of the *Shangqing wulei jinglu* 上清五雷經籙 confers rank 3; succession of the *Shangqing sanding wulei jinglu* confers the rank of Orthodox Two; repeated succession of the *Sandong dadong jinglu* 三洞大洞經籙 confers the rank of Orthodox One. The latter is a ranked title of the Celestial Masters and not usually transmitted outside the family lineage. See Su 1978, 32-34

⁸ There are two kinds of Daoist rituals that accompany community celebrations: vernacular and classical. These two can be observed at festivals and at other occasions where ritual specialists conduct services. See Schipper 1985, 21.

⁹ For example, like the Songshan cihui tang 松山慈惠堂, one of the ten most important temples in Taipei according to the city administration, they have performed Reporting Repentances to the Supreme Ruler/Emperor (*Lianghuang bao-can* 梁皇寶懺), an annual Buddhist rite that serves to ask the gods for protection and support for one's living parents as well as the release of souls from purgatory in relation to deceased parents (*chaodu* 超渡). They have done this because many temple members are Buddhist practitioners (Ho 2005).

To clarify the terminology, nuns are women who retreat from secular life to perform contemplative practices, often involving vows of poverty and celibacy. Priestesses in addition are ordained formally and officiate at rituals; they are considered of higher rank. The Daoist clergy mainly consists of ordained priests and priestesses. Nuns may be considered low-ranking members of the clergy if they participate directly in officiating at rituals; otherwise she is not considered clergy.¹⁰ At the Daode yuan, believers address the priestesses as *daozhang fashi* 道長法師 (Ordained Daoist Ritual Master), and the nuns as *fashi* 法師 (Ritual Master). Weng has three priestesses and two nuns as her immediate assistants. One priestess, called Taiwu 太悟, has been ordained by receiving the *Zhengyi weimeng jinglu*; the others, Taiwen 太文 and Tairen 太任, received the *Sanwu dugong jinglu*.

In the Daode yuan community, all except three practitioners have bachelor's degrees. Though those three have not acquired a higher education, they have had over thirty years of learning experience in the Daoist Institute for Cultivating Perfection.¹¹ Most are older and were ordained over thirty years ago; the one exception is a forty-year-old nun who was ordained five years ago. None sought ordination to escape tragedy or failure in the lay world. Their motivation is to learn and listen to Daoist teachings, or to help Daoism thrive in Taiwanese society. They are devoted to the Dao and their desire to help others.

The nuns and priestesses wear their hair pulled back into pony-tails of varying lengths instead of keeping it in a traditional bun on the crown of the head. They all wear dark blue pants and white Chinese shirts called *tangshan* 唐衫. Their hair and clothes allow them to approach their work and daily activities with simplicity. During the rituals, they wear traditional Daoist robes, usually yellow in color and covered with the symbols of Three Pure Ones and yin-yang. The leader of the ceremony wears more decorated and magnificent garb.

¹⁰ Historically, three terms referred to female Daoist practitioners: "women Daoists" (*nü daoshi* 女道士), "female hats" (*nüguan* 女冠) due to their ritual head-dresses; and, more recently, "ladies of the Dao" (*daogu* 道姑). Despeux 2000, 384.

¹¹ In Taiwan there are three Daoist institutes: Xiuzhen dao xue yuan, which belongs to the Daode Yuan in Gaoxiong; Zhonghua dao jiao xue yuan which belongs to the Zhinan gong in Taipei; and Daojiao xue yuan.

The priestesses and nuns spend three hours in daily meditation. At other times they perform different kinds of work devoted to the Dao and in service of the spiritual needs of lay practitioners. When they talk about their devotion, they typically say that their greatest spiritual gain is the ability to help people become one with the Dao. They feel that they are privileged to be able to interact with the Highest Ancestor Dao through their devotion. One of the nuns says that she is fortunate to have found a tranquil place to devote herself to the Dao. Another nun said that everyday she looks forward to helping people to find the correct path in life.¹²

Weng Taiming has set up rules by which every priestess in the temple receives a small salary. As Taiwu points out, no priestess will accept any personal support from any lay sponsor, lest there be favoritism in the community of followers. Luckily, the families of priestesses and nuns are all very supportive. No matter how long their daughter has practiced the renunciation of worldly life, they continuously support her financially, being proud that a family member is dedicating herself to Dao and society (Dec. 26, 2004).

The priestesses and nuns also conduct rituals to reduce obstacles and difficulties in the lives of the faithful. When people have crises in their lives, they tend to think that their fengshui is negative, and request that the priestesses check on it. However, the priestesses seldom practice fengshui rituals. Instead, they try to intervene by developing ways to solve the problems, psychologically as well as spiritually, and encourage people to cultivate the virtue of Dao and do more good deeds for others.

Weng Taiming encourages her followers to love the Dao and observe community regulations. She demands strict discipline among the renunciants, but also shows them deep love. When I was interviewing two of the priestesses, Taiwen remarked: "Weng Taiming is a great leader. She would say that we are the masters of our own selves. She encourages us to follow the rules, observe our vows, cultivate ourselves intellectually, and respect ourselves and others" (July 5, 2003).

¹² Nuns Taiwen and Yicheng, interview on December 23, 2006.

Practitioners

Weng Taiming is much more lenient with lay followers. The basic requirement for them is to attend a day-long Daoist study session on the first day of the New Year. Priestesses and nuns pass along Daoist doctrines such as the Great Way of the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing dadao 三清大道), the Great Way of the Golden Elixir (Jindan dadao 金丹大道), and the Perfect Principle of the Great One (Taiyi zhenli 太乙真理). Beyond this, Weng Taiming also encourages communal learning through weekly study sessions organized.

The *Daode Yuan Annals* from 1988 through 2005 show that there were 2,588 practitioners committed to following Daoism. If we add converts from 1951 to 1987, there are more than 3,000 practitioners connected to the institution.¹³ During my fieldwork, I saw believers come to the temple from dawn until dusk to participate in rituals, receive services, volunteer to do chores, and bring vegetables for meals. Daode yuan facilities are all neat and clean, and people are careful to respect each other. During seasonal feasts or academic conferences, all participants single-mindedly focus on their work.

Once I spoke with Wang Yingmei, a middle-aged woman follower. She said: "Coming to the temple is like coming home. Although I have been to many other Buddhist and Daoist temples, I feel most comfortable here because I like Weng Taishi and every priestess here" (Dec. 19, 2003). Master Weng or Grand Master Weng of the Three Pure Ones and the Great One are titles people usually call the leader. Another believer, Mr. Ho Qiugui, said: "What I like most about Master Weng is that she is very fair to every believer. She will always treat a person the same regardless of wealth or poverty. Every week she gives us the opportunity to learn Daoist doctrine and texts and then encourages us to write down our reflections and remarks. From this training, I have accumulated a great deal of Daoist knowledge" (Dec. 19, 2003). From my conversations with these and other followers, it is clear that they feel love and respect for the clergy of Daode yuan. The leadership of the priestesses and the nuns is palpable.

When asked about their leadership, the nuns and priestesses will humbly claim that they do not occupy any leading roles at all. They sim-

¹³ The Daode yuan keeps chronological records of the events of successive years. 2,588 is the number of converts between 1988 and 2005.

ply say that they live under the tutelage of Highest Ancestor Dao and follow the guidance of Weng Taiming. Any leadership service they perform is done as part of their studies. If there is a real leader among them, it is Weng Taiming, of whom the priestesses, nuns, and lay followers all speak highly.

Weng earns merit as a source because she is a unique example of a Daoist priestess who despite her overall model behavior is yet not completely without fault. While she very seldom loses patience, she sometimes makes minor mistakes. For example, she once answered her phone and also had an outside conversation while talking into the earpiece. What sets her apart is her exemplary behavior, which she pairs with the charisma of other renowned religious leaders. Dharma Master Sheng Yen of the Buddhist faith is another example of such a powerful religious figure, but she does not have the same stature since she clings to the conservative notion that infidelity is not grounds for a woman to divorce a man.¹⁴ Although not always in accord with her followers, they still admire her for her enthusiasm. In the same way, Weng has earned the respect of all Daoists.

My interviews show that Master Weng sets an example for others to follow. She selflessly devotes herself to working for the benefit of the nuns, priestesses, and lay followers. She treats everyone fairly and equally. At the Daode yuan, lay status carries no weight. Once practitioners walk through the temple doors, all titles are dropped and everyone is merely a disciple of the Three Pure Ones and Ancestor Dao. From my varied interviews, I conclude that Weng seriously cares for everyone. She shares offerings after rituals as a way of sharing the blessing of the Highest Ancestor Dao.

People describe her as full of motherly love. She considers the safety and welfare of those who come to the temple for work or conferences. She teaches them how to cultivate their health and always insists that they eat well so that they do not have to work on an empty stomach. It is not surprising that Daode yuan disciples have no trouble completing their work for the Dao, given that Weng Taiming takes care to ensure everyone's well-being. After participating in a Daode yuan sponsored

¹⁴ Huang Chienyu Julia, Professor of National Tsing Hua University, personal communication with author, September 1, 2008.

conference—The First International Scholarly Symposium on Daoist Culture and the Transcendent Way in Gaoxiong (Nov. 11-12, 2006)—the Zhengyi priest Wu Zutian praised the temple and its disciples: "The disciples of the Daode yuan have a strong presence and proper demeanor. They treat everyone well. It is very rare to see this at Daoist temples these days" (personal communication, Nov. 2006).

Creating Religious Identity

In mainland China, Quanzhen still retains four traditional rules: not trimming one's hair, wearing Daoist garb, remaining celibate, and being vegetarian (Daoist Association 2003, 34). Weng Taiming's Daode yuan satisfies those conditions except for two: residents do not wear specific Daoist garb or put their hair in a topknot. In an interview in 2003, she said: "In mainland China, if they have 'left the family,' or gone into monastic life, clerics will be called 'Quanzhen,' while non-monastic clerics will be called 'Zhengyi.' According to this definition, we can be counted as the first Quanzhen group in Taiwan."

Some scholars have insisted that the above definition oversimplifies the distinction between Quanzhen and Zhengyi in that there may be issues other than marriage that distinguish them.¹⁵ Some have gone as far as to dispute Weng Taiming's ability to claim adherence to the Quanzhen school. However, I suggest that it is important for the scholarly community to recognize these people's self-perceptions, the religious designations they have embraced and claimed. While the scholarly community may not recognize Weng Taiming's official Quanzhen credentials, I argue that her claim to the Quanzhen tradition represents an identification with the practices and philosophies of Quanzhen. Rather than debate the legitimacy of Weng Taiming's claim, I argue that it is more instructive to focus on what Quanzhen practices mean to Weng's philosophy and the way in which she has claimed elements of that school's practice to create the unique identity of the Daode yuan.

I further argue that that the syncretic approach of the Daode yuan constitutes a way of searching for a unique identity through self-

¹⁵ Professors Xie Conghui and Zheng Zhiming, personal communication at the Sixth Religion and Spiritual Reform Conference, Dec. 18-21, 2003, Taipei.

definition; more than that, it is also a way of challenging traditional Daoism in Taiwan. Its syncretic approach means that the Daode yuan is rooted in both Zhengyi and Quanzhen but is also distinct from both school in several important ways.

Zhengyi in Taiwan is primarily non-monastic. Because of their secular lifestyles, the priests are commonly known as following the “fire dwelling path.” The title “fire dwelling” was a phrase coined by Buddhists who claimed that those who existed in the secular life would suffer like everyone else, thus living as if in a flame. However, Daoists do not embrace this claim, saying that they willingly embrace the secular life in order to create a professional class of religious men. In Taiwan, Zhengyi priests are often divided into two classes, the “black head” and “red head.” The black head priests generally specialize in the rituals of supporting purification (*zhai* 齋) and offering rites (*jiao* 醮), which are mainly for the redemption of the dead. Red head priests are commonly called upon for auspicious occasions such as festivals, destiny-correcting rituals, and other happy occasions (Lee 2003, 138-40).

The Daode yuan relates deeply to Zhengyi because its founder was of that school and the temple has continuously performed Zhengyi rites. However, many differences become clear when comparing its priestesses with other Zhengyi priests. First and foremost, while Zhengyi priests attempt to form a class of professional religious men, the priestesses of the Daode yuan are those who have “left the family” and entered monastic life. Secondly, while the Zhengyi priests primarily focus on four styles of ritual (temple festivals, seasonal feasts, rites of passage, and destiny-correcting rituals), Daode yuan nuns and priestesses only focus on temple festivals, seasonal feasts, and destiny-correcting rituals (Lee 2003, 132). In addition, an important mission for them is the perfection of self and they engage more in spiritual praxis as a basis of advanced internal cultivation.

A key aspect of the monastic community at Daode yuan is the vow of celibacy joined by the practice of alchemical transformation (*dandao* 丹道), which involves the use of meditation and the manipulation of the life force (*qi* 氣) (Xie 2000, 68-69). The practice divides into men’s (*nandan* 男丹) and women’s alchemy (*nüdan* 女丹). Although they have many

aspects in common,¹⁶ different techniques are involved: men's alchemy focuses on retaining semen, known as "subduing the white tiger" (*fu baihu* 伏白虎), while women's alchemy focuses stopping menstruation, known as "beheading the red dragon" (*zhan chilong* 斬赤龍).

The dragon is the symbol of a woman's period, and thus "beheading" it means stopping the menstrual cycle permanently. The phrase originated in the Tang dynasty while the technique involves "training the mind through yin force" (*Taiyin lianxing* 太陰鍊性) and thus a transformation of the female body.¹⁷ The goal of women's alchemy is to experience the ultimate Dao, which is free from gender differences (Yuan 1986, 68-69). In addition, ceasing menstrual flow is believed to allow women to attain a "new and higher level of spiritual power."¹⁸

In history, female alchemists have been less well known than male practitioners. In the eyes of Yuan Dunzi, this is a pity since in Daoism men and women are treated equally in both practice and theory. The only difference is that the body-freeing technique works faster in women than in men, allowing them to progress faster. While men may need three years to complete the practice, women finish in one year (Yuan 1986, 161). These ideas do not imply a bias against men; as part of yin, women are simply more tranquil and concentrated, thus they can reach goals that require these qualities more easily. Because the goal of ceasing

¹⁶ Both take essence (*jing*), energy (*qi*), and spirit (*shen*) as original materials. On *nüdan*, fourteen poems are attributed to the Quanzhen master Sun Buer. Ten of them explain techniques that can be used by both men and women, while parts of three describe techniques especially for women. The fourth poem, entitled "Decapitating the Red Dragon," speaks of techniques just for women. See Yuan 1986, 161.

¹⁷ "Some people also feel that if stopping the period is the goal, then old women can achieve it faster and easier than young women because the period stops naturally in old age. The advantage of using the technique for Decapitating the Red Dragon is that it enables the life force to grow while the old women's life force is withering. Therefore, old women who want to practice *nei dan* to achieve the state of freedom from one's body must first bring back the period and then cut it off. Female practitioners must do these practices before turning forty-nine" (Xie 2000, 64).

¹⁸ Catherine Despeux explains that stopping menstruation allows the introduction of a new blood, called "the white marrow of the phoenix," which demonstrates the power assigned to menstrual blood (2000, 406).

menstruation involves extensive and concentrated meditation, reaching higher levels of internal alchemy is thought easier for women (Xie 2000, 64). Nonetheless, although women supposedly have physical advantages for this practice, individual effort is essential. At the same time, this must be done with supervision from experienced practitioners, or there can be risks (Zhan 1990, 127).

Weng Taiming represents a unique case. In 1974, she renounced her worldly life and joined a Daoist monastery. After eighteen years of practice, at the age of 40, she succeeded in “beheading the red dragon.” For her, this was a manifestation of the effectiveness of Daoist techniques, but not a goal in itself. She had read many texts on women’s alchemy, but only as a background reference. She feels that the reason why she was successful in beheading the dragon is that her entire heart was in the Dao and that she never left it for even a moment. She always tried to be pure, natural, and in a state of nonaction. Rather than being controlled by emotions and desires, she thought about benefiting all beings and strove for their good.

Conjoining the heart with the Dao (*daoxin* 道心) and dedicating oneself to work and merit-making, she emphasizes, can lead to wonderful results. Weng feels that after beheading the red dragon she received two benefits: first, it was convenient because her teacher had previously prohibited disciples from performing rites while menstruating as a gesture of respect toward the gods. Second, her ritual performance and interaction with the gods grew more powerful. She always kept the teaching in mind: “When things come, you handle them; when things leave, you detach from them.” And: “During the four activities of walking, staying, sitting, and lying down, always maintain a pure and meditative heart.” In sum, her success in decapitating the red dragon was considered part of a gradual process of developing inner virtues and outer merits (Jan. 6, 2003).

Daode yuan residents meditate individually for three hours in a typical day. Their primary individual meditation technique is “remaining tranquil” (*shoujing* 守靜). It begins with breathing exercises to focus meditative energy, followed by 120 recitations of deities’ names to calm the emotions. Weng describes it as “non-attachment to inside and outside” (*bushou nei bushou wai* 不守內不守外). Practitioners relinquish con-

trol over thoughts about self or outside actions, allowing them to follow the process of nature. They enter emptiness and nothingness (*xuwu* 虛無), a realm of both being and nonbeing (June 20, 2008). In addition to remaining tranquil, residents also practice the cultivation of purity and stillness (*qingjing xiu* 清靜修), geared specifically to remove sexual desire and achieve a tranquil state of mind. When asked about the difference between the two, Weng said: "I will not tell you [because] you have not 'left home' (*chujia* 出家)," indicating that only renunciants should know this practice.

Supplementing the meditation, residents also practice "physical exercises to bring back spring" (*huichun gong* 回春功) to keep fit and nourish body and mind.¹⁹ They practice this for fifteen minutes individually or in groups.

The nun Tairen feels that these practices have helped her achieve harmony between heaven and earth. She says that such a feeling is like a cool stream washing over her body. Although this experience is very temporary, it increases her sense of tranquility and concentration while she completes tasks throughout her busy day (Dec. 21, 2006). Taiwu similarly mentions that she recites the names of the Three Pure Ones and of the Heavenly Worthy. When reciting, she says she feels very calm and her *qi* circulates smoothly, thus improving her health (Dec. 21, 2006). Most nuns agree that when they have free time, they chant deities' names in their minds, which increases their sense of tranquility. No matter whether they ever reach the level of beheading the red dragon, they all say they must reduce inner desire and increase essence, energy, and spirit to promote the natural relaxation of body and mind.

Priestess Taiwen also notes that, because the Daode yuan is located in the city, lay followers come and go frequently. This traffic in the temple sometimes forces the nuns to spend a lot of time serving the laity instead of meditating or focusing on internal work. She thinks it is very important to do things to benefit lay followers while internal alchemy it can be done slowly, step by step, day by day (Dec. 20, 2006).

¹⁹ The first movement involves circling the ankle: 36 times counter-clockwise and 36 times clockwise. The second involves spreading one's hands apart above the head in a circular motion. The third involves raising the arms above the head and slowly lowering them, placing them on the *dantian* while relaxing the body.

The Daode yuan also has good relations with institutions in mainland China, coordinating academic conferences and communicating with Quanzhen temples. Weng Taiming often travels there to observe temples and their organization. Since 1991, she has visited China once every two years and also attended special rituals. Each time she went with groups of twenty to forty people. For example, in 1998, she took 33 people to Maoshan and other Daoist temples (*Daode Yuan Annals* 1998).

Her motivation for going to the mainland is that Daoism and its organization originated there. Daoists go on pilgrimages to learn more and gain deeper understanding of the work done by their colleagues and to appreciate differences. Although Weng has visited many Daoist temples, she especially pays visits to grotto heavens and auspicious places (*dongtian fudi* 洞天福地). She feels that the most touching aspect of going to China is that many ancient sites still exist with Daoist taking care of them. While in China she especially wants to learn how to train and support the younger generation. She observes that in China Quanzhen clergy are celibate and more numerous; they are also more eager to discover young talent. She also admires the Chinese success in passing down Daoist music for generations and feels Taiwan may not be able to match the mainland in that regard.

In the mainland, Weng performs rituals, discusses doctrines, shares her learning, and provides encouragement. For example, on November 10, 2000, she officiated at a ritual in the Zhengyi temple on Mt. Longhu, performing an Altar Purification (*jingtian* 淨壇) and Pacing the Dipper (*bugang tadou* 步罡踏斗) in the main sanctuary. Her ritual was well received, and she gained enormous respect (*Daode Yuan Annals* 2000, 21-23). She also shares new ideas with her mainland colleagues such as inviting school children to join one-day workshops on Daoist studies at the temple. As of 2005, the Daode yuan had conducted three such workshops, and each time over one hundred children attended. On the other hand, Weng also invites mainland priests to Taiwan to perform rituals. The Daode yuan has worked with several mainland temples to perform peace rituals, for example at Xizi Bay in July of 2004, to seek blessing for peace and communication. The ritual was called the Great Rite Ground of Universal Blessings for Praying to Heaven and Earth for National Peace, Good Weather, and Peace across the Taiwan Straits. Sixty-two

Daoist associations, including temples, co-sponsored the event (see Huang 2004).

Given these observations, it becomes obvious that although some contrasts remain to both Zhengyi and Quanzhen schools, the priestesses identify themselves with both. It is as Weng says: the Great One Lotus school, which the Daode yuan belongs to, respects and cooperates with all established Daoist traditions.

Involvement in Society

Though the Daode yuan is a monastic community, priestesses and nuns do not live an insulated life, but work toward the spread of Daoism. In contrast to medieval Daoism, which had rules that forbade interaction with people of low character (Kohn 2003, 73, 80-86), the Daode yuan clergy likes to see everyone gain benefit from Daoist practice. In this they follow an age-old tradition. In the Tang Dynasty, priestess Huang Lingwei traveled widely throughout the country and restored the shrine to Wei Huacun (Kirkland 1991, 47, 64). Under the Jin and Yuan, Quanzhen nuns like Mu Shoumiao, Li Miaoyuan, and Dong Miaozen sought out monastic work, providing medical aid amongst laypeople and being active in temple construction (Chao 2008, 138-9). Their efforts resemble the work of Taiwan nuns today who work hard for the betterment of country and community.

Education

Daode yuan residents are very active in Daoist education. One project they work on involves public exhibitions that present Daoist artifacts from ancient to modern periods, thereby exposing growing numbers of people to Daoist history and learning. For example, they held the Ancient to Modern Daoist Artifacts Exhibition (Daojiao gujin wenwu bolan hui 道教古今文物博覽會) at the Datong New Century Department Store in Gaoxiong in November, 2002. It featured more than one thousand items, including Daoist ritual instruments, scriptures, historical explanations of Highest Ancestor Dao and even included a concert of Daoist music. It was the biggest Daoist exhibition in Taiwan to date (Huang 2002). In 2007, Daode yuan hosted a similar event at the Gaoxiong Cultural Center (Lu 2007).

For people who come to the temple to worship, the residents welcome them, and the temple provides free books to read and study. In 2007, it also began hosting three consecutive lectures on one Sunday each month. These 100-minute lectures, given by professors, scholars, and ritual masters, offer the opportunity for more people to learn Dao. The priestesses, nuns, and lecturers are hoping that everyone can reach the roots of Dao. When one's heart harmonizes with Dao, then one can perceive the needs of all beings and work effectively with Daoist practices.

Serious learners come to temple to study Daosim on a regular basis. On Mondays and Wednesdays residents teach courses that present classical Daoist rituals, *dantian* exercises, *qi* practice, meditation for enhancing long life, and readings in Daoist texts, doctrines, and rules. Lay followers can sign up for classes whenever the topic suits their needs. Besides studying Daoism, all are encouraged to practice morality, learn to treat people with kindness, and follow Dao and nature.

Also, many public gatherings at the temple focus on environmental education. The priestesses give lectures, using this opportunity to enhance environmental awareness and stress the relationship between human beings and nature. As the *Daode jing* says: "Man models himself after earth. Earth models itself after heaven. Heaven models itself after Dao. And Dao models itself after nature" (ch. 25; Chan 1963, 153). Zhuangzi says: "Heaven and earth were born at the same time I was and the ten thousand things are one with me" (ch. 2; Watson 2003, 38). In an interview with Weng, she said: "If we all feel as one in this world, how would we be able to harm animals and nature?" (May 15, 2007). The *Taishang ganying pian* notes that one should not harm trees or animals because they possess spirit and life. As matter of fact, the local Daoist temple is an important social organization in Taiwan, active in education and charity. The Daode yuan fulfills its responsibility to public education.

While Daoist monasteries are known as *daoguan*, Daoist temples go by many names, including abbey (*guan* 觀), temple (*miao* 廟), palace (*gong* 宮), altar (*tan* 壇), shrine hall (*ci* 祠), pavilion (*ge* 閣), grotto (*dong* 洞), and more. Confucian and Buddhist temples are often known by some of these names as well (Yoshioka 1979, 229). However, the Daode yuan does not call itself by of these names, as it is—by design of its founder—a "learning" temple (*yuan* 院) that promotes the study and

practice of orthodox Daoism.²⁰ In addition to the Daode yuan, Guo Cangying set up another Daoist foundation of learning known as the Daoist Institute for Cultivating Perfection. The materials this institution covers include Daoist doctrine, Zhengyi rituals and practices, Quanzhen history and doctrine, and Daoist philosophy and martial arts. Courses—usually one year in length—are taught by respected Daoist masters and university professors. After attending the classes, students often achieve a greater sense of tranquility from being united with Dao. This facilitates their participation in social projects that relieve suffering and allows them to better help others, including the living and the dead.

Philanthropic Activity

The philanthropic works performed by Daode yuan residents are done through the Charity Organization of Dao and Virtue (Daode cishan hui 道德慈善會), set up in 1975. The organization has 2,000 members who donate at least NT100 (US\$ 3.30) each month (*Daode Yuan Annals* 2001). Five people work together as a group, and 212 serve as executive members to make decisions and oversee the operation of the temple's projects. From 2003-2007, the Taiwanese Ministry of the Interior listed the Daode yuan as the top religious charity in Gaoxiong (Lu 2007). As Despeux and Kohn write in *Women and Daoism*, ethos joins the goal of immortality and personal cultivation with a strong urge to develop compassion and do good in the society around them (2003, 169).

Routinely, whenever the Charity Organization hears of people suffering from poverty, illness, or disaster, the member volunteers will first investigate the case and then decide how to relieve the suffering by giving financial, material, and/or spiritual help as required. For example, in Taiwan on September 21, 1999, an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter Scale killed more than 2,000 people. The Daode yuan gave a total of US\$ 450,000 to families of the disaster victims and provided coffins, fruit (used in memorial services in Taiwan), and food to many (*Daode Yuan Annals* 1999). Since the earthquake, Taiwan has suffered numerous natural disasters, but few other organizations have undertaken relief efforts, whereas Daode yuan has never failed to organize relief committees and help for the victims. For example, many families were affected by the Taozhi floods in 2001. The temple distributed US\$175 to each family.

²⁰ Weng Taiming, e-mail communication, May 15, 2007.

Some workers asked Weng Taiming whether they should give money to families belonging to the aboriginal community, since they were Christians; she replied affirmatively, without any hesitation. After the tsunami in Indonesia in 2004, Weng Taiming immediately asked the Taiwan priestess to lead the practitioners of Daode yuan to Indonesia to offer money and assistance to victims of the natural disaster. The Taiwanese volunteers gave every family affected by the tsunami US\$116 for a total donation of US\$13,000 (*Daode Yuan Annals* 2004).

Each year, one month after the first school semester starts, the Charity Organization divides into groups and travels to 166 elementary and middle schools in Gaoxiong and other counties to investigate the ability of parents to pay for their children's academic tuition and lunch expenses. Usually, the temple gives each school the money to supply 15 lunch scholarships and 13 academic scholarships per semester. Each year it dedicates between US\$200,000 and \$230,000 to this project (Lu 2007).

In these ways, Daode yuan has gained a reputation for charitable work almost equal to that of the well-known the Taiwan Cihui Temple Organization.²¹ Although the Daode yuan's has considerably less members than the Buddhist group, both share a reputation for charitable work of the same magnitude within their respective religious circles. The employment of similar models of outreach by both organizations has changed how female recluses, whether Buddhist or Daoist, are seen in Taiwan. The modernization of religious practices, moreover, has placed female priestesses and nuns at the center of social mobilization and community activism, opening new sphere for women to act religiously.

Response to Social Crises

The Daode yuan also offers specific rituals to relieve the suffering those who have died in accidents or natural disasters as well as of people who are psychologically troubled. Beyond their dedicated followers, they also

²¹ Dharma Master Sheng Yen founded this foundation in 1966. In 1994, it had over four million members. In 2002, its worldwide membership of five million included nearly twenty percent of Taiwan's population. By 2005, it ran 190 branches in 38 countries. See the website: www.tzuchi.org.tw. Accessed 16 August, 2000. See also Huang and Weller 1998, 379.

reach out to people whose religion does not offer a similar religious service come to Daode yuan to ask for help.

Furthermore, contributions made by the temple have been praised by its members and recognized by the society at large. The leadership of the temple in the public reaction to the SARS virus in 2002 illustrates its growing social role. The SARS outbreak in Taiwan disrupted people's daily lifestyle and claimed 83 lives.²² In China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan, Daoists performed a variety of rituals to boost people's resistance against the virus.²³ The Daode yuan, together with various other Daoist temples and organizations, set up altars to perform ritual blessings for those who had died of the epidemic and to pray for infected patients. In May, 2003 the Daode yuan in cooperation with the Buddhist Compassion Relief Foundation and the Taiwan Folk Village 台灣民俗村 coordinated a performance of a major Daoist rite to eradicate SARS in Zhanghua City.

Chaired by Weng Taiming, the ceremony was called the Great Rite for Eliminating Natural Disaster and Allowing the Good Forces of Yin and Yang to Harmonize Disease.²⁴ It was dedicated to SARS victims, infected patients and their families, as well as for medical officials fighting the virus. More than 10,000 people attended.²⁵ Different Daoist schools, including the Zhengyi, Chanhe 禪和,²⁶ Quanzhen, and Great One Lotus (represented by the Daode yuan) performed.

The basic goal of the four different schools was the same: deal with SARS religiously by casting off the pestilence demons (*quwen* 去瘟), and allow the good forces of humanity to contain the disease (*hewen* 合瘟). However, different schools implemented music and ritual differently to

²² Center for Disease Control and Prevention website, www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/ accessed February 11, 2004.

²³ <http://www.hiangtongkeng.org/sars.htm> accessed, February 11, 2004.

²⁴ Two kinds of ritual are performed at Daoist temples. Head priests conduct large communal services known as Great Rituals, while Small Rituals are shorter, more specific, and do not function as communal memorials. See Schipper 1974, 312, 322. The Great Rituals performed at the Daode yuan are aimed at solving problems on a large scale, involving society, the country and the world.

²⁵ Huang Chongfa, interview on May 16, 2008.

²⁶ The Chanhe school is smaller than Zhengyi and Quanzhen; it has operated in Taiwan since 1949 and performs Daoist rituals using Quanzhen texts.

achieve this effect. For example, Zhengyi priests burned ritual boats,²⁷ while Quanzhen masters used fire to commemorate the names of the victims and send the disease away. Great One Lotus representatives commemorated the names of the SARS victims by writing them on numinous tablets (*lingwei* 靈位), then burned them in a fire to allow the spirits to ascend to heaven and leave their good merits to their living descendants (Daode Yuan DVD, 2003).

In the rituals against SARS, the priestesses and nuns sought both to protect the living and to memorialize those who lost their lives. Daoist priests from the Zhengyi and Chanhe schools and priestesses from Quanzhen and Great One Lotus schools have the same power to perform rituals, regardless of gender. Both priests and priestesses have the power and authority to perform these ceremonies in order to respond to natural disaster and human suffering. The ritual ceremony illustrates the fusion of Zhengyi and Quanzhen and the cooperation among different Daoist schools. Through rituals relevant to broad public concerns and problems, not simply personal enlightenment, these groups have expanded the way of the Dao to be involved actively in social and secular life.

Interactions with Other Religions

Historically Daoism has been tolerant of other religions. Weng Taiming notes that every religion, including Buddhism, Daoism and Christianity, is important since they share some of the same goals: they all wish to cultivate morality and help people to pursue happiness in a harmonious society. Therefore she believes all religions should respect each other and cooperate with one another for the benefit of the general public (Daode Yuan 1997, ii).

To support education, the Daode yuan also publishes books on moral teaching and academic work. They encourage young scholars to

²⁷ They built a special ritual boat [called a *wangchuan* or “king boat” and in Singapore called *wenchuan* or “epidemic boat”] that represented the diseases and disasters. It was believed that diseases and disasters were brought in by spirits (*wenshen*). In Taiwan, after the rituals they burned the boat because the burning helped the god carry away the bad *qi* of the epidemic. In Singapore, after the rituals this boat was released and lighted ablaze in the sea. This signified the sending-off of the SARS virus out of Singapore.

study philosophical and religious Daoism and promote communication between Daoism and other religions. Starting in 1997, the temple has sponsored annual conferences on "Religion and Spiritual Reform." It has always been the primary organizer, while other organizations, such as Taiwanese Buddhist Temples, the National Library Association, and National Tsing Hua University have served as co-sponsors. The presenters are usually students from various graduate schools. Presenters not only receive scholarships, but also have the opportunity to receive academic criticism from well-established scholars. After they make revisions based on the suggestions, they can publish their work, usually part of their Master's Theses, in the journal *Zongjiao yu xinling gaige yantao hui lunwen ji* 宗教與心靈改革研討會論文集 (Anthology of Religion and Spiritual Reform).²⁸ The Daode yuan requires that at each annual conference there should be one more presentation on Daoist studies than on other religions, since Buddhism in Taiwan has been flourishing and there is an urgent need to showcase young scholars in Daoist studies. Conducting annual conferences has been one of the Daode yuan's most important projects, and has earned the temple an excellent reputation among academic institutes.²⁹ By late 2008, eleven conferences had been held, resulting in ten volumes of the above-mentioned journal.

The practitioners also travel with priestesses and nuns to participate and learn more about Daoism. In January 2004, I observed over twenty practitioners travel from southern Taiwan to Taipei to participate in a three-day conference. To my surprise, I found that the practitioners and clergy all paid their own travel expenses, including room and board. I wondered why they were willing to pay so much for a conference. Mr. Ho Qiugui said: "It is because Master Weng said this was a good opportunity to learn—especially in Taiwan, where there are currently very few Daoist learning institutes" (Dec. 29, 2004). In some sense, the Daode yuan seems to have a greater reputation for academic activity compared to other Daoist temples, as their annual Conference on Religion and Spiritual Reform draws on work done by university professors and graduate students.

²⁸ Each year they distribute CDs and 1,000 printed copies free of charge.

²⁹ The observation comes from my field studies at the Sixth Religion and Spiritual Reform Conference, December 18-21, 2003, Taipei.

The Conference has evolved in cooperation with Buddhist temples, which is a good way to foster mutual understanding. Additionally, the Daode yuan always tries to provide support for Buddhist monasteries. For example in 2002, when the Puxian Temple 普賢寺 of Foguang shan 佛光山 brought Buddha relics from China, members of the Daode yuan took part in the welcoming ceremony.

This multi-faith interaction is not limited to exchanges between Daoism and Buddhism. The Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages 文藻外語學院, a Catholic college near the Daode yuan, often hosts Catholic clergy from Western countries to learn about Chinese religion. Sometimes they also engage in contacts with Daoists. In 2002, for example, a group of Catholic sisters from various congregations visited the Daode yuan. Their visit coincided with the planning session for a larger gathering, the 13th Asian Meeting of (Catholic) Religious Women, held on October 13, 2003 in Taiwan. The Catholic sisters stayed at the Daode yuan for a few days in order to learn about a different religious tradition. The visit was memorable for both sides, not only because it was the first time a group of Catholic sisters had visited the Daode yuan, but also because of the extraordinary kindness and warm welcome given by Weng Taiming and her small community. "The Catholic sisters were deeply impressed by their visit, which was an unforgettable experience of genuine inter-religious dialogue."³⁰

It is thus clear that, above and beyond its collaboration with different Daoist organizations and temples in social work and of rituals, the Daode yuan actively engages in interreligious dialogue, particularly with Buddhists and Catholics. It is very supportive of other religious organizations. As, high priestess (*gaogong* 高功) Huang Chongfa 黃崇法 of the Nantou cisheng gongsays: "Among all the Daoist temples in Taiwan, I have found the Daode yuan most supportive as they have been known to refer our temple to other people" (Dec. 22, 2004).

Weng Taiming spends much of her time in prayer. She prays for one and a half hours in the morning, and a half hour to one hour at night. I asked her what she prays for. She said that she prays that the human heart will turn towards good, that society will be stable, that countries

³⁰ Rev. Albert Poulet-Mathis, a Catholic priest in Taipei involved in interreligious dialogue, e-mail communication, December 23, 2002.

will be peaceful, and also for harmony with nature, positive relations between China and Taiwan, and world peace (Jan. 6, 2003).

Conclusion

The Daode yuan is a unique phenomenon in the Taiwanese religious scene: unlike most Daoists who follow the Zhengyi school, it has created its own mode of practice. There are three sources of its specific developmental trajectory. First (historically), the founder Guo Cangying established a tradition of female clergy, trusting the nuns' ability and seeking to develop their leadership from. Second (spiritually), the priestesses fully devote themselves to the Dao as well as to meditation and internal alchemy, which they see as a great reservoir of strength. Third (practically), Weng Taiming's leadership has become an essential force in the community; her role is not limited to personal development of the nuns, but extends to caring for society and making connections between and among Daoist communities by translating Daoism into modern terms.

Most temple leaders in Taiwan are males who belong to the Zhengyi school, which traditionally allows them to marry and be non-vegetarian. By contrast, the leaders of the Daode yuan are priestesses and nuns. Daode yuan, which is a celibate community, emphasizes the "internal alchemy" ideas of the Quanzhen school while maintaining their practice of Zhengyi rituals. Their integration of elements from Quanzhen school represents major modifications of Daoist tradition in Taiwan which has been exclusively led by men in the Zhengyi school. By investigating the spiritual and physical practices of women recluses in a changing social context, we can see how Daoist nuns have challenged traditional practices in Taiwan as much as they still, in their rituals and ceremonies, adhere to Zhengyi practice. Overall, the nuns respect and cooperate with established Daoist traditions.

The material presented here introduces the first Daoist celibate community in Taiwan. In conclusion, the Daode yuan represents an example of the active combination of Zhengyi and Quanzhen. Zhengyi has historically influenced it because the temple's founder was a former Zhengyi master who passed the rituals on to his successor. Quanzhen is the root of its philosophy and practice of internal cultivation. The temple maintains good relations with Zhengyi groups and Quanzhen communi-

ties on the mainland. Because both Zhengyi and Quanzhen's influences on the Daode yuan have deeply roots, the temple identifies itself with both schools and encourages people to respect each equally.

One could argue that with this combination the Daode yuan does not follow traditional Daoist patterns. However, it is well known that those schools often modify their practices and rituals according to the locale of their temples. Localization is a common practice in Daoism: Zhengyi priests in Taiwan commonly shape their lifestyles based on local society and their neighborhoods. While the priests' willingness to modify rituals according to local customs places them in an ideal situation to perform rituals for clients who share their background, it also creates differences in ritual in different regions of Taiwan (Lee 2003, 152-154). Similarly, in Singapore the City God Temple (Chenghuang miao 城隍廟), one of the six largest Daoist temples, claims it follows the Quanzhen school because it hosts Quanzhen rituals and has Quanzhen music. However, at the temple's large festivals, Zhengyi priests are often invited to perform a number of rituals.³¹ Also, its clergy marry, unlike the renunciants of Quanzhen temples in mainland China. All this shows that the Daode yuan is not unique in syncretizing aspects of the schools.

Another important aspect of this study is that the experience of the Daode yuan can be seen as representing the transition from tradition to modernity. The temple sponsors different rituals, community celebrations, and festivals that may serve traditional functions but often also meet contemporary needs. Beyond its spiritual and ritual functions, the Daode yuan has, moreover, constructed more social involvement, such as educational projects for both Daoist followers and the larger community. Weng Taiming's responses to charity, social crises, and inter-religious dialogue are always prompt, attentive, and effective. She embodies the desire of the community to reach out in service while representing Daoism. As religious scholar and former Benedictine monk Wayne Teasdale says, "The monastic life is not a rejection of the world; it is a decision to engage with this world from a different dimension" (2002). The Daode yuan clearly embodies this perspective.

³¹ Zhuang Guangdong, Secretary of the Daoist Federation Youth Group (Singapore), interview by author, June 7 2007.

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Forum

on

Contemporary

Practice

The Dao Is Not for Sale

道是不賣的

HARRISON MORETZ

I have a pine breeze for sale, would you like to buy some?
For thirty thousand taels of gold, I shall give you one gourd full.
– Lü Dongbin

In the sixties, Zen Buddhism became popular in the West. While some students practiced authentically and attained real accomplishment—as seen in the thriving Zen communities that continue their tradition—there also arose a popular (mis)understanding of Zen. Certain notions from Zen had appeal for Westerners and casual interpretations worked their way into the mainstream, as evidenced by a plethora of books entitled “The Zen of ____ (fill in the blank)”.

That was Zen; this is Dao. The Dao is the new Zen. Just as with Zen, many people think the Dao is whatever they want it to be. Although Zen became a marketing device for many products, the austere nature of its practice kept it somewhat insulated from “brand” commercialization. Daoist practices are more diverse and more susceptible to abuse.

There is a saying: “Those outside the field judge by flashiness; those in the field judge by skill/knowledge” 外行看熱鬧，內行看門道. Popularity comes from flash; depth comes from proper method and context. Students get excited when offered secret teachings on esoteric knowledge, but true accomplishment does not rely solely on technique. Rather, it relies on the greater context of the Daoist teaching and the character of the practitioner’s awakening (*wu* 悟) and connection (*tong* 通). The context and manner, therefore, in which the teaching is delivered can hinder or facilitate true penetration and awakening; these are not for sale—in essence, they cannot be purchased, bartered, or acquired materially.

Cultivating Virtue

There are two important categories of Daoist cultivation. The one more familiar to people in the West is inner cultivation (*neigong* 內功). It includes both stillness and moving practices, such as meditation, internal alchemy, life-nourishing, qigong, and internal martial arts. Inner cultivation has its counterpart in outer cultivation (*waigong* 外功), which includes the cultivation of virtue and the accumulation of merit (*gongde* 功德), as well as doing good works (*xingshan* 行善). An essential part of cultivation is doing things for the benefit of others — both individuals and community. Virtue (*de* 德)—understood as a high level of personal integrity, responsibility for self and society, honesty, decency, truthfulness, as well as the classic Confucian ideals of filiality, loyalty, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom—is essential to cultivating the Dao. As already the fourth-century alchemist Ge Hong says:

If one seeks to become an immortal it is necessary to be first of all loyal, filial, harmonious, compliant, benevolent, and sincere. If one does not engage in the cultivation of virtue but only practices methods [*fangshu* 方術], one never realizes long life.

If a person desires to attain earthly immortality, he or she must perform 300 good deeds [*shan* 善]; if they wish to become a celestial immortal, they need 1,200 good deeds; if at 1,199, they do not keep the middle and commit even one bad deed, they must begin the count all over again. Thus good deeds are [not measured by] greatness; evil deeds [are not measured by] smallness.

The character of a person determines the extent to which his or her inner cultivation bears fruit. If one is sincere and consistent and acts outwardly for the benefit of all, then inner cultivation will bear fruit. Thus, if one only practices internal cultivation without pursuing outer cultivation, it is not possible to achieve genuine attainment. (*Baopuzi* 3.6)

Similarly, the seventh-century *Dajiao yishu* 道教義樞 (Pivotal Meaning of the Daoist Teaching) says: “Dao and virtue have one body but two aspects; they are one but not one, two but not two” (ch. 1). Dao and virtue are inner and outer aspects: Dao is unmanifest and ineffable while

virtue is its expression in the world of phenomena. Dao is the unformed source; virtue, its function in the world, the expression of the innate potency of Dao.

The *Daode jing* 道德經 (Book of the Dao and Its Virtue) notes that "Dao produces—virtue nourishes" (ch. 51). The Dao is what engenders the ten thousand things; virtue, its outward expression. It is the potency that nourishes them. As an aspect of Dao, it is the potency that allows function in the world. In people it is the reflection of Dao within oneself. The Tang emperor Xuanzong expresses it even more forcefully in his introduction to the *Daode jing*: "The Dao as it is in myself: that is virtue" 道之在我就是德.

What, then, are some human qualities of virtue? They are the qualities of the moral person, of someone of good character. One whose actions are benevolent and public (*gong* 公), engaged in the world for the good of others. In China, the understanding that cultivation is an essential and basic part of cultivation is reflected in two common Daoist sayings: "The root of long life solely requires goodness as (its) foundation" 長生之本，唯善爲基; and: "Virtue is the foundation of [cultivating] Dao" 德爲道之基.

It is the cultivation of virtue in action and manner that allows one to return to the state of harmony with the Dao. This is made clear again in the *Daode jing*: "Constant [abiding in] virtue without error [results in] return to the undifferentiated (*wuji* 無極)" (ch. 28).

There are many reasons why people study and cultivate Daoist methods: health, spiritual attainment, companionship, and fascination, to name a few. Common questions from students include: "Once I learn these practices, can I sleep less and have more sex more often and longer?" — "Will the practice increase my martial ability so I am a super person?" — "How long before I can teach?" All of these questions arise from faulty context, i.e., a lack of understanding virtue, and poor character development. Practicing within this faulty context only leads one further astray.

An important aspect of cultivating virtue is stillness. As the *Daode jing* says: "Through stillness, being without desire, the world rights itself" 不欲以靜 天下將自正 (ch. 37). Stillness is an essential foundation for any practice; its importance cannot be overstated. It does not matter

what kind of practice—internal alchemy, ritual, qigong, taiji quan—they all require a foundation of stillness to be safe and efficacious.

The foundation of inner cultivation is refining the self (*lianji* 練己). This means to cultivate true stillness; to reach a state without self. It is in the state of “no things no self” (*wuwu wuwu* 無物無我) that true attainment may be accomplished. If one’s actions and motivations are for the benefit of oneself then, through cultivation, one only becomes more attached to the self. Obviously, one will be unable to cultivate and attain a selfless state.

While stillness is dominant on the inside, on the outside one should show respect. The dual qualities of stillness (*jing* 靜) and respect (*jing* 敬) carry an important meaning in the context of cultivation. Respect is an aspect of outer cultivation, while stillness is fundamental to inner practice. Both together lead to the elimination of desire as part of a naturally rectifying practice that allows the practitioner to be in alignment, in accord with the Dao. These dual qualities are both safeguards of proper practice and the means by which attainment can be achieved.

Teaching the Dao

The greatest responsibility of teachers is to provide the true context of the Dao. They embody it to the extent that they are able through authentic teaching and practice. It is the integrity of the teacher that allows the proper alignment with the Dao and ensures that what is taught is appropriate and does not cause harm. As the saying goes: “When a heterodox person engages in an orthodox method, the orthodox method becomes heterodox” 邪人行正法, 正法悉歸邪.

The integrity of the teacher is as important as the outer content of the teaching. This is not to say that the outer content is unimportant, but that a true method without a true practitioner becomes a false method. The easiest thing for a student to learn from their teacher is the teacher’s shortcomings. The virtue or personal integrity of the teacher is the context for the “small-d” *dao* being taught. It is part of what makes it the cultivation of the Dao rather than merely the cultivation of method.

To maintain that the Dao is a commodity is a fundamental problem. There are those who have become wealthy selling the “Dao” and those who have left a swath of physiologically and emotionally injured stu-

dents. From philandering taiji teachers to charlatan qigong "masters," teachers have developed a mixed reputation.

From ancient times there have been teachers who were charlatans; some with intention and purpose to deceive, others fooling themselves. And students, as we have seen, seek teachers for a great variety of reasons: knowledge, techniques, status, power, belonging, health, and so on. Student's selfish motivations limit their cultivation, but all kinds of teaching for the sake of fame, profit, power, or sexual favors are "evil Dao" (*xiedao* 邪道.)

The eleventh-century *Zhong-Lü chuandao ji* 鍾呂傳道集 (Zhongli's Transmission of Dao to Lü: A Collection) says:

Not awoken to the greater Dao 不悟大道
Within the Dao obtaining a method 道中得一法
Within a method obtaining a skill 法中得一術

In other words, while people have not yet realized the Dao, they settle for getting concrete methods that seem to bear a relation to it; not quite getting there, they practice a skill—and yet think of themselves as being part of the Dao. Learning a skill and through the skill developing a method is a kind of accomplishment but it is not attainment of the Dao. Accomplishment of a power or skill is a far cry from the true attainment of cultivation. This is a great trap for students who see some aspect in a teacher that is developed and assume that because of this accomplishment, the teacher's overall cultivation is high.

Often "teachers" of Daoist practices obtain a skill and teach even though they are not yet versed in the method, or they attain a method but are still far from attaining the greater Dao. To expect that every teacher has attained great achievement is unrealistic; but to ask that they have the highest goal as their aim and the cultivation of virtue as their foundation is not only reasonable but essential. There is certainly a cultural respect for teachers in China, yet it is paired with a pragmatic viewpoint that is lacking in the West, where we often either undervalue or idolize our teachers.

A teacher has responsibility for the outcome of their teaching. If the teaching harms a student, it is in part the teacher's failing. If the student uses the teaching to harm or cheat others, this is also the teacher's failing. Teachers who intentionally impart false teachings or teach primarily for

material gain will find that their own cultivation becomes warped and that they become a reflection of what they do.

The onus, however, is not entirely on the teachers. Students often expect to buy information. They have been trained to accumulate goods and information with a mind full of desires and attachments. Often it is this mind that brings them to study the Dao. When the teacher reinforces this, it becomes more ingrained. Indeed, it is the responsibility of the student that their actions reflect well on the teacher, and the responsibility of the teacher to require the proper conduct of the student.

It is the responsibility for those who cultivate the Dao, and especially those who teach, to teach genuine material and, more importantly, to strive themselves to embody the teaching of the Dao.

Teaching should be imparted to those who are at a stage where they are ready for the teaching and have the sufficient complementary cultivation of virtue. The information taught is the coarse part of the teaching. The essence of true transmission is not through words. The method is the vehicle. When the vehicle is genuine then what it carries can be genuine.

Dangers of Practice

Traditionally the Chinese have viewed *qi* practice in any form as dangerous and difficult. People in West, on the other hand, see it as easy and safe. Both here and in modern China, many teach these practices outside of the cultural context from which they grew. This traditional cultural context was not materialistic in the way modern society is and contained within it a very strong foundation of morality. All understood that in order to gain the respect of a teacher one must show good qualities.

One aspect of modern views on inner cultivation that bespeaks this materialistic influence is the idea that *qi* is the primary thing that one cultivates. This in itself is deviant (*pian* 偏). Obsession with material goods is materialism; obsession with *qi* is applying the materialist model to *qi*. The overemphasis on *qi* easily attracts students with improper motivations and leads to practice-induced disorders.

Which brings me to the inherent dangers. People know one can practice cultivation to become a spiritually elevated being—a sage, a worthy, an immortal, or a Buddha (*shengxian xianfo* 聖賢仙佛). Most people do not know that one can also practice cultivation to become a ghost,

a demon, an evil spirit, or a monster (*yaomo guiguai* 妖魔鬼怪). Improper motivation is the quickest way to invite, or become, a ghost or demon. Sexual obsession, greed, and hunger for power or fame are all demons that preclude true attainment. Those who pursue these lose the Dao and risk extraordinarily serious consequences.

Not only will cultivating methods without virtue fail to lead to true accomplishment, it can be very dangerous. Unfortunately, because of their variety and emphasis on subtle energies, Daoist and pseudo-Daoist practices lend themselves more easily to abuse than Buddhist methods. It is for this reason, in part, that virtue is so vital as the foundation for proper motivation—the upright character required to not stray into false practices or to use skills developed from practice for selfish ends.

Improper or inappropriate practice leads to “reckless fire and the entering of demons” (*zouhuo rumo* 走火入魔). Reckless fire refers to a wide range of symptoms of *qi*-disorder. Proper fire is part of the normal physiological functions of the body: it warms, transports, and transforms the *qi*, blood, and body fluids. Reckless fire is fire that has an improper source, is in the wrong place, or rises in inappropriate intensity, a fire that injures rather than nourishes. Symptoms include all manner of disorders: irritability, insomnia, ticks, tremors, headaches, incessant sexual desire, and so forth.

The entering of demons literally means demons enter the practitioner or the practitioner enters into the state of being a demon. This refers to practice-induced mental disorders, most strongly manifest in people with a previous history of mental instability. They have to be especially careful with what kind of practices they undertake, if any. Even people with no previous problems may suffer from obsession with *qi* or too much intent in practice that can exacerbate preexisting patterns of disharmony or may produce new ones.

Having a virtuous character as a foundation is essential to avoid improper motivation, which can lead to disastrous consequences for one's physical and mental health. However, there are cases where otherwise virtuous students are attracted to a teacher with charisma, skill, or power. These attributes, in and of themselves, are insufficient criteria to determine the teacher's level of cultivation and ability to teach.

Another potential pitfall is duo-cultivation, Daoist sexual practice. It has a troubled history in China and was generally considered a hetero-

dox method—one that was hard to master as a form of true cultivation, and which frequently caused serious problems. Sexual methods are probably the most susceptible to influence by selfish motives. It is very difficult for even virtuous practitioners to engage in them without falling prey to passions and, as a result, losing sight of the true goal. But, more importantly, they are physically dangerous and should under no circumstances be seen as “safe and easy.”

It is irresponsible to lightly teach and popularize these techniques as cultivating the Dao. In most cases they cultivate sexual obsession and excessive sexual craving. In most cases the product of these practices—the “medicine”—is useless for true transformation. The foundation of Daoist practice is stillness. The cultivation of true essence, *qi*, and spirit requires stillness. Yet these techniques are taught in the West to students regardless of their moral character or their previous training.

Not only are these methods often useless to true cultivation and a great distraction from proper practice, but they also can cause serious health difficulties. They can lead to great stagnation of *qi* and blood in the lower abdomen in men, causing internal damage with such symptoms as thick grayish-brown ejaculate, enlarged prostate, testicular pain, and heat and hernia-like symptoms. In worse cases, they can lead to extreme insomnia, chronic headaches, ticks and tremors, and even brain tumors and death. Often, they form part of a pattern of sexual addiction.

The public teaching of duo-cultivation in the West represents the worst of the popularization and commoditization of Daoist methods. Along with fortune-telling, fengshui, and external *qi* healing (which is also dangerous without proper foundations), they are promoted the most. Daoists traditionally were not allowed to practice fortune-telling and fengshui for profit, yet these are among the most profitable enterprises for so-called Daoist teachers. These practices are enticing and easy to market but usually bypass the true work of cultivation; moreover, they can be dangerous. Clearly, the context of virtue has been neglected or simply never understood in the popular Western dissemination.

Attainment

A common theme in Daoist texts is that although there have been many practitioners of Daoist inner cultivation over the ages, only few have suc-

ceeded in reaching a high level of attainment. There is a conceit among Westerners that what has been difficult for diligent practitioners in history can be accomplished easily today by going to a few workshops. Over a long career of teaching, I have seen the truth of the following maxim borne out: "People are willing do anything to get better as long as they don't have to change" (Weed 1990, 1)

Rather than changing something in oneself that is not in accord with cultivation, Western practitioners change the practice and its requirements so that they can avoid changing themselves. They thereby reinforce their own patterns of disharmony and bypass the practices, processes, and context designed to bring about transformation.

Today, as ever, true cultivation is not easy; real attainment is not common. The basis of cultivation is simple, but few follow it. If you start out on a journey and are off by a fraction of a degree at the beginning you will miss the goal by a wide margin. It is only by keeping the middle and being in the proper place or relationship that one reaches the goal.

As we have seen, cultivation and transmission require virtue as the foundation of moral character, conduct, and motivation. Even more important is that it is essential for true attainment. If you act as though you are separate from the Dao, how can you obtain it? If one is selfish, one is separate from the Dao: no secret hand position, no special breathing, no mysterious meditation can lead there. Without cultivation of virtue, without true inner spiritual nature, the practices have mild health benefits at best and can easily instigate "reckless fire and the entering of demons"!

Conclusion

There are many methods of qigong and nourishing life suitable for virtually anyone to practice. They start with common-sense regulation of one's lifestyle. True Daoist practice is something more. The foundation of nourishing life coupled with cultivation of virtue form the foundation on which Daoist cultivation may be accomplished.

The opportunity to cultivate the Dao is in every moment, in everything we do. By including the outer cultivation of virtue—as our context and foundation for cultivation, our ability to cultivate and to facilitate others' cultivation can grow and flourish in a significant way. This emphasis on virtue is absolutely essential to avoid the dangers inherent in

teaching and cultivation, as well as to develop what is necessary for actual transmission and attainment of Dao. It is by modeling oneself on the Dao and its virtue that one is able to come more into alignment with it.

The fundamental Daoist tenets of naturalness, appropriate action and nonaction, and living in accord with nature are as potent as ever and needed desperately in the world today. We are in a unique position to be transmitters and translators of this authentic tradition, but only if we are able to first embody it ourselves. It is very simple: The Dao is not for sale. The Dao cannot be bought.

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Daoist Methods of Dissolving the Heart-Mind

MICHAEL WINN

"I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare."
—*Zhuangzi* 6

In the Daoist tradition, there are medical, martial, and spiritual approaches to dealing with imbalances arising in the heart-mind (*xin*). The Chinese notion of heart-mind is roughly equivalent to what new age Westerners call the "body-mind", implying an integrated continuum between the two. This is opposed to purely psychological mainstream Western notions of mind, ego or personality which tend to separate thinking and feeling functions of mind from what are considered autonomic body-sensory perceptions.

Broadly speaking, these methods have in common that they involve a process of "dissolving" resistance to change in the heart-mind. This commonality of "dissolving" is matched by a great divergence as to how far the dissolving process goes, and the degree of personal will or sagely intention that is cultivated in order to shape the *qi*-field afterwards or even while imbalances in the heart-mind are being dissolved. I offer a quick survey of some Daoist approaches to the heart-mind that have become popular in the West. These include standing and moving *qigong* (subtle breath skill); *neigong* (inner mind skill) meditation techniques such as the Inner Smile and *zuowang* (sitting and forgetting); and *neidan gong* (elixir skill) inner alchemy methods.

What does it mean to dissolve the heart-mind, and why would Daoists even want to do that? The simplest answer is that the heart-mind has become rigid or dysfunctional in some way, and this obstructs the free flow of *qi* within the individual. In the medical model of dissolving the stuck patterns using acupuncture, herbs, or massage, the *qi* can flow

more easily, improving both mental and physical health. In the martial model, repeated training of the heart-mind using movement supports the *qi* to be expressed more powerfully in relation to others.

In the spiritual model, excess fixity of the heart-mind may obstruct the unfolding of one's spiritual essence or moral power (*de*). Heart-mind rigidity prevents exchange of *qi* between the individual as microcosm and the collective macrocosm of Nature and Humanity. Zhuangzi advocates getting rid of the "mind of everyday life" (*sheng zhi xin*) in order to fly on the wings of the Dao. So dissolving the heart-mind allows spontaneous change to happen between the individual and the environment. The dissolving process is a spiritual prerequisite to cultivating a *wuwei* attitude of openness that promotes effortless change, a fundamental value of Daoists.

In qigong (including taiji quan and other internal arts), body movement and breath lead the process. Moving qigong is the most comfortable for Westerners, as its dynamic approach satisfies their need to "do" something with their mind at the same time their bodily energies are being productively directed. As a teacher, I have found qigong movement and breathing practices to be the quickest and most effective way to tame the "monkey mind", i.e., any mind that is easily distracted or fragmented. People who claim they are unable to meditate find themselves moving spontaneously into a space of tranquility and stillness after practicing qigong.

In most moving qigong there is no direct focus or intention to dissolve the heart-mind, it just happens after the mind achieves a deep entrainment with body movement and regulated breathing. The resultant benefits to both physical health and psychological health have been well documented in thousands of scientific studies.

Standing forms of qigong are more challenging, as the mind is forced to wait in stillness and give up its impatience to physically move, while it is simultaneously challenged by gravity. What happens eventually is the *qi* within the vertically aligned body begins to create micro-movements between the poles of Heaven and Earth. This produces an energetic detoxifying effect that gradually intensifies and breaks up old heart-mind patterns. Standing still also allows the ordinary mind to observe and release tension within the layers of the body's vital organ and muscular-skeletal structure, which in busy everyday life it would not do.

Dissolving-while-standing has been a central focus of both Daoist schools in the West (Frantzis 1992) and Buddhist schools of qigong such as Zhangzhuan. Even this school incorporates Daoist channel theory. At higher levels of practice, it goes far beyond standing empty-minded, using the vertical stance to absorb *qi* from the earth into the heels, which is then circulated in the Microcosmic Orbit. The historicity of this practice dates back to Laozi: "The Sage breathes through his heels". The standing method of dissolving is also useful in resolving ancestral issues stored in the bone marrow and blood. In Chinese theory, many heart-mind imbalances may in reality be ancestors seeking expression and completion. (Winn 2003)

Daoist meditation methods (*neigong*) often employ a more focused intention than *qigong* to dissolve the emotions, mental projections, judgments, and habitual or forced perceptions of the heart-mind. One of the most popular and powerful methods to take root in the West is the Inner Smile, transmitted in the 20th century by One Cloud, a Daoist hermit on Long White Mountain in northeast China, through Mantak Chia. The Inner Smile is the "meditative heart-glue" that binds together One Cloud's Seven Formulas for Immortality. Each formula begins and ends with the spontaneous practice of the Inner Smile. It is the default *wuwei* practice of utter simplicity.

The Inner Smile is based on the Daoist principle that the very density and resistance of the ordinary heart-mind provides an authentic ground for immortality. This is another way of saying that within human suffering and resistance to change is hidden a gift - the spiritual essence of its own salvation. The Inner Smile is a method for uncovering that gift. The "outer smile" suggests the Chinese notion of "face" that one shows the world to control it. Thus the smiling face of the ordinary heart-mind tends to be reactive to or manipulative of people and situations.

The Inner Smile is a method of dissolving this false outer layer of the heart-mind and opening the spontaneous spiritual joy of the inner heart (*ling*), perhaps best translated as soul. Ling is frequently mentioned in the *Laozi* text of the 5th century B.C.E. The Inner Smile dissolves the conditional heart-mind patterns so they do not interfere with the soul expressing its will. In this way, it allows one's destiny to be more effortlessly completed. Inner Smile helps induce a state where you forget the "little" self, and gradually dissolve the dense physical body into the *qi*-

field, where it functions as a more expanded energy body, the higher vessel for expressing the *ling*.

Inner Smiling is a simple and practical method of cultivating Daoist *tong*, defined as a state of unconditional openness and all-pervading great spirit (*dashen*). By smiling to and accepting every aspect of self unconditionally, all polarized perceptions of self simply disappear. The boundary between “self” and “other” gradually dissolves. A sense of peace and unity spontaneously arises, by opening perception of the deeper non-dual consciousness underlying all *yin-yang* creative tension.

Inner Smile was originally taught only with a *yin* phase, systematically focusing heart-centered unconditional acceptance on the brain, spine, three elixir fields (*dantian*), five vital organs, their *qi*-channels, and all other physical tissues (Chia 1985). One first allows a seed feeling of acceptance to effortlessly penetrate as a gentle, loving and warm radiance into one’s biology (the underlying *jing*). The blood, bones, skin, and spine are all infused with the Inner Smile until they begin to pulsate as one. This radiant feeling is then spread to the vital organ spirits (*jingshen*), which in turn control the channels of *qi*-flow and psychology.

In my own teaching I began adding a *yang* phase, i.e., reversing direction, and radiating from the heart a smiling wave beyond the body (Winn 2003). This *yang* version of the Inner Smile’s embraces everything outside the body, layer by layer: one’s aura, the room, one’s family, village, one’s enemies, the country; the planets, moon, sun, stars, and the blackness beyond. Smiling outwardly to one’s community and natural world offers a context for unconditionally accepting one’s worldly destiny. The adept then flips this perspective, reversing again the direction of the flow of acceptance, smiling through layers of the outer world back into the physical body. Finally this smiling wave dissolves back into the pre-natal formless sea of *qi* in the *dantian*.

The Inner Smile is a simple basic practice, easily learned by anyone. While smiling itself is effortless and natural, the Inner Smile takes a lot of practice for the heart-mind to stay present at higher levels of cosmic *qi* that emerge once the heart mind is dissolved into the larger field of *qi*.

The historical origins of the Inner Smile are not clear, as it was transmitted from a mountain lineage of wandering Daoist hermits. It may be an evolution or variation of “sitting in forgetfulness” (*zuowang*), the Daoist practice of emptying or “fasting” the heart-mind. Unlike the

Inner Smile, which employs a positive embrace to dissolve fixed perception, *zuowang* initially employs a negative method in the sense of releasing what is unwanted. The main difference is the Inner Smile stays heart-centered, whereas *zuowang* does not use ongoing heart-focus. The phrase "fasting the heart-mind" was made famous by Zhuangzi in 2nd century B.C.E. and later popularized by Sima Chengzhen's classic *Zuowang lun* in the 8th-century (Kohn 1987). Today "sitting in forgetfulness" survives as a staple of modern Chinese Daoist meditators and their acolytes in the West (Rinaldini 2008; Phillips 2008).

Zuowang practice helps the adept to surrender to the impersonal *qi*-field of heaven and earth. But it does not necessarily integrate human heartedness. *Zuowang* likely inspired Chan Buddhist "sitting in emptiness", which can feel a bit cold, too mental or impersonal for some Westerners. Yet Daoist *zuowang* differs from Chan methods and their Japanese Zen Buddhist offspring in that attaining absolute emptiness is not the goal. In *zuowang* the emphasis is more on process, on cultivating spontaneity and openness to ever-changing currents of the *qi*-field. The dissolving of the heart-mind is achieved by allowing each thought, feeling or sensation to manifest without resistance, and then surrender it to the larger flow of the *qi*-field to be creatively transformed. Eventually an unperturbed yet engaged state of mind is achieved. So *zuowang* ultimately shifts from release of the negative to a positive embrace of spontaneity and *wuwei*.

Robinet astutely points out in her preface to Kohn's translation of the *Zuowang lun* that the process goes beyond qigong, which grants only longevity. *Zuowang* is a method of salvation, and as such is actually preparatory for higher alchemy practice. *Zuowang* is a "double dissolving," first of the contents of the heart-mind and then of the mind's method of dissolving itself. She first quotes Sima Chengzhen:

"*Zuowang* means to forget the myriad projections, it consists in cutting out all delusions and firmly fixating one's mind. Once the mind is firmly fixated, there is nothing beneath it but the One, and nothing above it but emptiness. It will never stir, even when it is shaken."

At this stage, [Sima] adds, one is not yet delivered from yin and yang, rather one must take recourse to gold and cinna-

bar—to alchemy—to finally become free by means of the “transformation of wings”. Here we find an affirmation of the superiority of alchemy. . . over the meditation and absence of thought, i.e., over the meditations informed by Buddhism.(Kohn 1987,14)

How can inner alchemy dissolve the fundamental yin-yang force that controls the heart-mind, and re-shape it? This brings us to our final model of dissolving the heart-mind using inner alchemy. That Daoists had a sophisticated model of the mind in the 6th century B.C.E - before the *Daode jing* was written - has been well established by analysis of early texts such as the *Neiye* (Inward Training) chapter of the *Guanzi* (Roth 1991, 1999). These early Daoists were well aware of the *jing*, *qi*, and *shen* aspects of the heart-mind emptying and dissolving into each other. This is the fundamental basis for the model of alchemical dissolving of the heart mind that survives into the 21st century.

Later *neidan gong* lineages, such as One Cloud’s Seven Formulas for Attaining Immortality, claimed the secret of dissolving the heart-mind was to accelerate transformation of the *jing*, *qi*, and *shen* by coupling ever higher potencies of cosmic yin-yang forces. The adept uses these polarities to capture the Original Breath (*yuanqi*) hidden within the post-natal or physical *qi*-field. For this, a vessel or *dan* is needed to hold the higher vibration of the primordial *yuanqi*. The ordinary heart-mind’s vibration is too slow and too polarized to hold such potent primal force.

In the inner alchemy model, this is why the *ling*, or inner heart essence, must be cultivated by the adept and imbued into the elixir or *dan*. In Western terms, this is roughly equivalent to saying the soul of the Sage is the true intermediary between Heaven and Humanity. The soul or *ling* must be perfectly attuned to higher forces above it, forces which must be smoothly communicated to the ordinary heart-mind perceptions and decision-making process below it.

Both Chinese medicine and *neidan* theory map out these “forces below” as the yin-yang and five phases *qi*-flow that regulate the heart-mind. They are the vital organ “orbs” of the heart, spleen, lungs, kidneys, and liver and their partners the bowel spirits who comprise the “twelve officials”. They behave much like real politicians and bureaucrats. Collectively their job is to regulate the heart-mind, yet paradoxically they em-

body the very patterns of resistance and corruption that need to be dissolved when they block healthy change. But the heart-mind lacks the will to completely dissolve itself. Thus the deeper level of *ling* or soul must first be accessed. This view of the soul is becoming increasingly popular with modern Daoist healers in the West (Sha 2006).

In the Daoist alchemy model the human ability to concentrate *qi* to dissolve obstructive patterns in itself doesn't require perfection or absolute "emptiness" of mind in order to be successful. Dissolving is a process, not an end goal or fixed state. The heart-mind needs enough integrity to hold the center while absorbing higher cosmic forces, even if it is not yet physically, morally or spiritually perfected. In fact it may be the very flaws in the adept's heart-mind that guide the alchemical method of internal "refining" that is most successful.

These imperfections and the suffering they cause may inspire the adept to discover completely new ways to alchemically shape the *qi*-field. This model of flawed humans becoming immortal is well depicted in the Chinese legends surrounding the Eight Immortals. The flaws are what make each Sage a unique and loveable individual rather than spiritual clones of some borrowed ideal of absolute perfection or emptiness that may not be attainable nor even desirable while in human form.

The alchemical model integrates the soul's unconditional acceptance of its human imperfections with the heart-mind's ability to concentrate yin-yang forces. In One Cloud's system, this allows the dissolving power of the Inner Smile to become the most advanced practice. When a sage or immortal merges the essence of their concentrated heart-mind into the heart of the Dao, it signals they have surrendered to a process of total service. They now smile on behalf of the Dao, radiating a feeling of unconditional acceptance from the primordial *qi*-field. This smiling radiates a neutral force that lubricates the yin-yang *qi* flowing in all dimensions of Heaven, Earth, Humanity, and personal heart-mind.

This is a merger of the sage's personal heart-mind with the mind of Dao. It implies that humanity's highest destiny is to elevate Heaven and Earth with its purity of heart and the unique human ability to feel personal love/acceptance of the myriad beings. For Westerners, the Inner Smile's heart-centeredness and unconditional openness offers a bridge between Daoism and Christian teachings of unconditional love. In this light, "dissolving the heart-mind" in all of the models considered is not

meant to get rid of the heart-mind, but to replace the old patterns with a more expanded, all-embracing mode. The dissolving process is designed to make the heart-mind pliable enough to respond to the *qi*-field, thus empowering it to serve the Dao of Humanity in its ceaseless creativity and self-exploration.

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Exploring Daoist Women's Meditation*

CHARLOTTE FURTH

On November 8-9, 2008, a conference on "Female Meditation Techniques in Late Imperial and Modern China" convened at UCLA. The "Nüdan Symposium," as it was commonly called, was small, with about twenty people for most sessions, the large majority women. The original plan was that it would be a text reading seminar. Then papers were added, most of them comments on the texts.

The gathering was organized by Elena Valussi, a graduate from SOAS in London whose dissertation and current research both focus on *nüdan*, and Robin R. Wang, professor of Chinese philosophy and director of Asian and Pacific Studies at Loyola Marymount University, who also conducts fieldwork and has been interviewing Daoist nuns in China. I knew the most senior scholar, Livia Kohn (expert on Daoism), as well as Yao Ping and Suzanne Cahill (scholars of medieval Chinese women, including female religious personages). A couple of younger women scholars were new to me: Shin-yi Chao from Rutgers University at Camden, who offered a paper on a Song era (Jin dynasty) abbess; and Sara Neswald from McGill who now teaches at Mingchuan University in Taipei and is working on a computerized linguistic analysis of older *nüdan* texts. The only male Daoist scholar was Liu Xun from Rutgers at New Brunswick. He presented a translation of an early seventeenth-century text on meditative techniques for healing gynecological and obstetrical disorders, and a summary and passage translation of two Ming-Qing novels (*Yaohua zhuan* 瑤華傳 and *Chanzhen houshi* 禪真後史) that satirized female cultivation and sexual alchemy.

In addition, there were also some interesting outliers. Dominique Hertzner and Irmgard Enzinger are academics with Ph.D.s from the Uni-

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versity of Munich, Germany, who also practice qigong. Their main work is to bring Asian health practices to the wider populace, Dominique serving as an acupuncturist and university lecturer while Irmgard teaches Chinese at high schools and shares qigong practice. There were also four practitioners who work in the health/qigong field and practice Daoist sexual techniques. Besides Liu the two other men were Mr. Ng (Wu) Kingsing, a leader of the Hong Kong Taoist Association and senior member of a Daoist temple there; and Kelly Clark, professor of philosophy at Calvin College who is interested in philosophical exchange between China and the U.S. Ng's organization had contributed funding to the gathering, as did UCLA and Loyola Marymount University.

As a group, the members of the symposium provided fascinating perspectives on contemporary practice in China and the West. Both scholars and practitioners helped answer the question I came with: Why are people interested in Daoist meditation practices for women? Reflecting on what we were doing, I decided that the informal, text-centered format actually unfolded a possible shape for the larger story of *nüdan*.

The Origins of *Nüdan*

Today Daoism is regarded as China's major "indigenous" religious tradition both inside PRC and among scholars of religious history. There are plenty of aspects of its protean cosmology that suggest attention to gender and the feminine: privileging the yin aspects of nature (water, dark, receptive modes); the generative symbolism that suffuses meditative practices of internal alchemy (cultivating an immortal embryo, fetal breathing); and a strand of sexual mysticism (cosmogenesis as alchemical firing, imagined as coitus of the *Yijing* trigrams Qian and Kun, Li and Kan). Ever since early medieval Daoists developed a system of temples, monasteries, and textual canon modeled after Buddhism, there have been Daoist holy women called immortals, who lived in and out of monastic institutions designated as nunneries. Some of their lives have been briefly recorded in hagiographic biographies and on ancient buried grave tablets that archeologists have recovered. *Neidan* or internal alchemy—a meditative discipline of bodily self cultivation that promises health and longevity as well as immortality—was well known among

both lay and clerical men, who left the only written records we have about it.

Contrary to this, the 2000-year textual record of Daoism offers hardly any record of distinctive female religious and meditative practices before the eighteenth century. A few scattered Daoist and literati practitioners of internal alchemy (e.g., Cao Heng 曹珩 and Fu Shan 傅山 in the seventeenth and Min Yide 閔一德 in the nineteenth centuries) included instructions for women in their collected writings. But the main body of *nüdan* texts comes from two anthologies compiled by Fu Jinquan 傅金鉉 and He Longxiang 賀龍驤 at a variety of temple sites in Sichuan and published in 1813 and 1906 respectively. He's collection derives from the earlier one, but is by no means identical, and includes texts that are ascribed to earlier women practitioners such as Cao Wenyi 曹文逸 of the Northern Song or Sun Buer 孫不二 of the Jin. One of the texts claims to come from a historical figure, a holy woman resident of Mt. Emei. Both Fu and He say that they collected and published their anthologies at the behest of their mothers and other female kin who craved guidance. Their prefaces evoke a picture of proper, sex-segregated upper-class households where Daoist piety was practiced at home, and where temple going and other forms of public worship were out of bounds for women.

However, the majority of texts in these two collections appear to have been the product of spirit-writing séances. Spirit-writing was a well-known popular practice in many parts of China in the Qing period. Séances were group affairs, with texts written on sand by a medium in trance and copied by one or more participants. Many *nüdan* texts show traces of this process: they begin by invoking a lineage of goddesses and immortal women presumed to be speaking through the medium. Sara Neswald says her linguistic research shows traces of Sichuan dialects in some of them. Spirit writing is typically the product of religious enthusiasm, and it bypasses established religious hierarchies. We do not know anything about the groups who presumably originated the *nüdan* texts, including the gender of participants or who managed interpretations of the affair. We cannot even be sure that proper literati wives and mothers never conducted or participated in such séances.

What is clear is that the scholarly males who collected and printed these texts were ambivalent about perpetuating an understanding of

nüdan piety as the product of spirit-writing communities, even though He Longxiang made a conscious decision to include many “transmitted” texts in his compendium. We are left with a problem familiar to the history of women in pre-modern China: how to read sources by or about women which reached public audiences only through the filter of the interested males who interpreted and recorded them. *Nüdan* texts in the two collections are rich in moral admonitions concerning female conduct that would satisfy even the most conservative Confucian gentlemen. The impulse—seemingly male—to bring *nüdan* into the world of textual learning becomes the first problem in the interpretation of the *nüdan* tradition.

Most explanations, necessarily hypothetical, try to connect the *nüdan* emergence with larger social and cultural trends of High Qing society and politics. One can point to the spread of literacy and book culture among women, fostered by inexpensive printing. One can suggest that larger economic trends were increasing the power of markets, travel and trade, and leveling social distinctions; and that these reached women as well, allowing them more visibility in social production, extending to more public expressions of religious observance, such as philanthropy, temple going and pilgrimage. All these things might prompt some elite men in the thriving lay Daoist world of *neidan* to try and guide female piety along lines that minimized threats of disruption—either to the Confucian social order or to the reputation of Daoist practitioners as sharing in that order. Some of this may be better understood as we learn more about late imperial popular religion.

The Modern Era

What we do know is that *nüdan* texts published in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became a resource for Republican-Era Daoist modernizers who were looking for ways to make Daoism relevant and attractive to China’s “new women” of the May Fourth era. Here began the delicate doctrinal balancing act between respecting the original texts which emphasized female bodily difference in an established gender hierarchy privileging males and reaching for creative readings of Daoist cosmology affirming male female equality, while supporting more materialist and physiologically oriented understandings of the body itself.

Chen Yingning 陳櫻寧, the leader of a Shanghai-based Daoist fellowship influential in the 1920s and 1930s, had many female disciples and followed this path. In sum, by the end of the Republican Era in the mid-twentieth century the *nüdan* texts had become a sort of canon—sources of a new tradition of modern Daoism for women.

That this new tradition has resonance today was illustrated during our symposium most vividly by qigong teachers Irmgard Enzinger and Fay McGrew who had come to learn from the academics. Both women had studied qigong in the PRC, Irmgard being a follower of Liu Yafei 劉亞非, a famous master who travels the world holding workshops on "qigong for women" (*nüzi qigong* 女子氣功). Female participants had a three-quarter-hour practice session with Irmgard using Liu's sequence of moves and later saw a video of her performance.

It turns out that Liu is connected with the beginnings of qigong in the PRC in the 1950s, being the daughter of Liu Guizhen 劉貴珍 who first introduced the methods to communist party leaders in 1947. During the Cultural Revolution the party renounced its early sponsorship, and Mr. Liu suffered persecution. Today, perhaps as a consequence, Liu Yafei, who also has a Chinese M.D., insists that her qigong is for female health only and perfectly scientific and rational. Similarly, Fay McGrew in San Diego, who started out as a martial-arts champion and took up qigong only in her forties, reports that the language used by her PRC instructors was carefully neutral, avoiding all references to meditation and spirituality.

These interpretations clearly reflect the ongoing tensions in the PRC between religion and science, and the commitment of the TCM establishment to align traditional Chinese healing practices with those of biomedicine. Yet out in the diaspora, in both Europe and the US, there are women teachers of qigong who both see it as a healing practice and want to look for the more occult roots that seem implied by a history that links qigong to *nüdan*. These juxtapositions raise anew the old and often vexed questions of the relationship between Daoism, healing and religion.

Another face of diasporic Daoism was revealed by Cindy Barlow and Lana Reichert, two practitioners from Boston. They had been introduced to Daoism via a book only few academics had heard of: *Sexual Teachings of the White Tigress* by Hsi Lai (pen name of Stuart Olson, who

runs the Phoenix Taoist Center). They tell us that he presents himself as a “renegade” Daoist from a so-called fox lineage he hooked up with in Taiwan and that among other things he conducts retreats in Arizona where selected paying clients can learn about Daoist sexual cultivation. But both Cindy and Lana (as well as Fay) are beginning to wonder about the authenticity of what they have been taught and may want to distance themselves from this master. They asked lots of questions. I found it fascinating that the hidden and faintly scandalous traditions of Daoist sexual mysticism and erotic practice, purportedly promoted by deviant masters like Zhang Sanfeng in late imperial China, had found a niche in our contemporary scene, and that women involved in it thought that *nüdan* might have something to teach them. Their presence also raised questions about whether historians should look for a more complex picture of women and sexuality in Daoism than that conveyed either by the pious rhetoric of the received *nüdan* texts or the bawdy fictional burlesques Liu Xun showed us.

Temples and Community

Back in China *nüdan* has yet another contemporary face, as we learned from Ng Kingsing and Robin Wang. Ng did not give a paper, but his occasional comments drew a picture of a stable temple community in Hong Kong—to which his family belonged due to the influence of his mother and where his grandchildren now participate. He said that ancient texts are not very important in this community. What matters is practice. But in case any one wonders, the women in his temple would just laugh at any scripture that told them to defer to their husbands as a matter of religious duty.

Robin Wang, on the other hand, offered a fascinating picture of a PRC project to bring women into leadership roles in the revived network of officially approved Daoist temples around the country. She has been interviewing women of the new Kundao¹ Academy at the foot of Nanyue, Hunan, not far from Mao Zidong’s home town (and current cult

¹ The term *kundao*, which today refers strictly to Daoist nuns in late imperial *nüdan* texts is used widely to describe female self-cultivators who could be either monastic or lay.

center). The Academy offers a two-year Master's certification in Daoist studies, cultural learning, and business/temple administration to classes of about fifty female Daoists competitively recruited from temples all over the country. Members of the Quanzhen school, the women begin as novice nuns and typically do not have more than an elementary or junior high school education. Robin's impression is that the authorities have not been able to locate a reliable cadre of male disciples and so increasingly turn to women to fill leading administrative posts. The Academy's curriculum matches that used to train Daoist monks in academies in Beijing and on Mt. Qingcheng. It includes classes in Chinese language and literature, calligraphy, history, political study, and English, as well as computer skills, accounting, business administration, and architecture—subjects of practical use to a temple manager. The religious education includes classical Daoist writings, ethics, and art, as well as self-cultivation. There are also classes in ritual, music, morning and evening services, and every student is expected to play a traditional musical instrument.²

In sum these young women are being trained to be managers and ritual masters, serving to make Daoist temples into showcases of traditional aesthetics, art, and morality. One of their teachers, Professor Lü Xichen, who is a professor of philosophy at Zhongnan University in Changsha, was also present at the symposium. She reflected on the role of the Qing *nüdan* texts as canon and model as well as on the tension between the message that Daoism is unique in esteeming women and the social precepts of the religion that stress womanly deference and service over self-assertion and entitlement. It also became clear that Professor Lü on the one hand is participating in an educational project that desexualizes Kundao students while at the same time lavishing praise on Daoism for its affirmation of the body and the (clearly sensuous) pleasure and joy to be found in the practice. We feminists were suspicious, and it was not clear how Lü will handle all these issues. In any case, there are no gender studies at the Kundao Academy, and Robin reported that the students were "secretive" about their practice and lifestyle. She

² A more complete presentation on the Kundao Academy is coming out in Livia Kohn and Robin Wang, eds., *Internal Alchemy: Self, Society, and the Quest for Immortality* (Three Pines Press, 2009).

suspects that many come from rural backgrounds where people still feel shameful about abandoning the family for the religious life. The principal of the school, however, is a national figure, a senior leader who suffered in the Cultural Revolution and says she is committed to training women with plenty of backbone.

To sum up, I came away from the symposium concluding that *nüdan* is part of a variety of lifestyle counter-cultures in the West, while in the PRC it is being retooled as part of official Chinese religion. As a tradition it is very much alive—a forum where concepts of sexual difference and spiritual meaning are being reworked continually and where different communities of practice deal with today's gendered relations of power. A follow-up conference will have a lot of interesting work to do.

Mt. Wudang and Daoism

YANG LIZHI, TODD STOLL, CHEN MEI

Mt. Wudang (*Wudang shan* 武當山) in Hubei Province has a long history in connection with Daoism. By the Tang shrines dedicated to the Five Dragons (*wulong* 五龍) and Taiyi 太乙 were firmly established on the mountain. By the end of the Five Dynasties, the stellar symbol of the north, Xuanwu 玄武 (Dark Warrior), developed into an anthropomorphized god—Zhenwu 真武 (Perfect Warrior). The emerging Daoist hagiography of Zhenwu in the Song (960-1279) identified Wudang as the mountain upon which the crown prince of Jingle practiced austerities for forty-two years, reached perfection, and ascended to heaven to be invested as a god by the Jade Emperor.

Song and Yuan

The Song imperial family promoted worship of Zhenwu and believed that he helped protect the dynasty. Song Zhenzong 宋真宗 rebuilt the Five Dragons shrine into a major temple, and the five dragons were incorporated into Zhenwu's hagiography as messengers of his ascension. Later Song emperors continued their support of the Zhenwu cult and bestowed honorific additions to his title. Also in the Song, the Maoshan Highest Clarity (Maoshan Shangqing 茅山上清) branch of the Orthodox Oneness (*Zhengyi* 正一) sect spread to Mt. Wudang. This sect later developed into the most prominent Daoist group on the mountain called the Highest Clarity Five Dragons Sect (*Shangqing wulong pai* 上清五龍派). This led to the formation of what would eventually be called the Wudang Tradition, characterized by: its worship of Zhenwu; its practice of internal martial arts; its advocacy of the Three Doctrines as One (*sanjiao heyi* 三教合一); and its emphasis on inner alchemy practices.

In the Yuan dynasty (1260-1368), Emperor Chengzong 成宗 raised Zhenwu to the rank of emperor in the Daoist pantheon, and Wuzong 武宗 bestowed titles on Zhenwu's parents. The next emperor, Renzong 仁宗, shared the same birthday as Zhenwu, the third day of the third lunar month, and each year on that day sent a delegation of officials and Daoist priests to Mt. Wudang to perform offerings. Later emperors continued that observance, and Wudang Daoism prospered with nine palaces and eight temples. Also during the Yuan, the Daoist priest Ye Yunlai 葉雲萊 brought Thunder Rites (*leifa* 雷法) of the School of Purity and Subtlety (Qingwei 清微) to Mt. Wudang. His followers, with Zhang Shouqing 張守清 as the leader, built the Tianyi Zhenqing Palace 天乙真慶宮 carved into the face of South Cliff 南岩. The name of the temple references the name of Xuanwu's palace in heaven. It is indeed a wonder: each of its component parts are carved out of stone to resemble a wooden structure.

The Ming Dynasty

The greatest period of imperial sponsorship and growth, however, occurred in the Ming. The Hongwu 洪武 Emperor observed auspicious manifestations of Xuanwu during the Battle of Lake Poyang, and in gratitude ordered yearly sacrifices to Zhenwu on his birthday and day of ascension (3/3 and 9/9). After receiving divine aid from Xuanwu during his usurpation of the throne, the Yongle 永樂 Emperor sent over 300,000 soldiers and artists to restore the former temples of the Yuan on Mt. Wudang that had been destroyed by wars and fire. The project far surpassed simple restoration, though, and by the time it was completed in 1424 Mt. Wudang held the grandest temples and largest Daoist communities of the empire. The Jiajing 嘉靖 Emperor later ordered a major renovation of these temples, and rebuilt the hall dedicated to Xuanwu that the Yongle Emperor originally built at the imperial palace in Beijing. During the Ming, the Orthodox Oneness was the most prominent sect on the mountain, and the Orthodox Oneness priests ranked as leaders in every palace and temple on the mountain.

Several of the major palaces and temples built during the Yongle period remain in good condition today. These include: five palaces (*gong* 宮: Zixiao 紫霄, Taihe 太和, Yuzhen 遇真, Chaotian 朝天, Tianyizhenqing

天乙真慶); three abbeys (*guan* 觀: Taichang 太常, Fuzhen 復真, Yuanhe 元和), and several other important buildings such as the Golden Hall 金殿, Bronze Hall 銅殿, and Imperial Scripture Hall 皇經堂 on the Golden Peak 金頂. In the past six years, major reconstruction has been underway, with projects at the Xuandi Hall 玄帝殿 of South Cliff and the Middle Temple 中觀 of the Qiongtai complex completed. In addition, major projects to rebuild the Five Dragons Palace (Wulong gong 五龍宮) and Jade Emptiness Palace (Yuxu gong 玉虛宮) are currently underway.

The Purple Cloud Palace (Zixiao gong 紫霄宮) is the seat of the Mt. Wudang Daoist Association. Fifty-two nuns and eighty-one priests belong to the association and live on the mountain practicing morning, afternoon, and evening rituals. Many younger nuns and priests have been attracted to the order due to an interest in Wudang martial arts and inner alchemy practices.

The Wudang Museum

The Wudang Museum is located in Wudang Town at the foot of the mountain. The museum opened its doors to visitors on April 23, 2008. Construction started in 2005, with a total floor space of 5,820 square meters. The exhibit area presently occupies 4,418.7 square meters. It is the only museum in China which focuses on Daoism. It has three floors, with seven halls exhibiting Wudang architecture, an introduction to the immortals and deities of the mountain, Tang through Qing dynasty statues, Daoist ritual items, Wudang palace music, the history of Wudang martial arts and health practices, and Wudang folk customs, respectively.

There are approximately four hundred cultural relics on display which were originally bestowed by the imperial court. Among these, a golden dragon, a jade *bi*, and calligraphy inscribed on bamboo by the Jianwen 建文 emperor (1399-1402) are most precious. The heaviest relic is the bronze statue of Zhang Sanfeng 張三豐 which weighs more than one ton; while the lightest relic is the golden dragon which only weighs 16 grams. Altogether there are more than two thousand relics, 70 percent of which rank as first class national treasures. These relics are an invaluable resource for the study of Wudangshan culture and the iconography of Daoist deities—especially of Zhenwu.

The Daoist Studies Institute

The Wudangshan Daoist Studies Institute (*Wudangshan daojiao xueyuan* 武當山道教學院) is located in Danjiangkou 丹江口, about 80 km east of Wudang Town. The institute stands adjacent to the Jingle Palace 靜樂宮, originally erected in the Yongle period of the Ming and then rebuilt in 2006. In September, 2008, the institute enrolled forty Daoist monks from temples across China.

Supported by the Chinese National Religion Bureau, it is the only Daoist institute in south-central China. It has a quiet and beautiful campus, with modern teaching facilities and experienced teachers. The curriculum consists of basic subjects such as history, Chinese, philosophy, and English in addition to religious subjects including readings in the Daoist canon, textual interpretation, rituals, Wudang martial arts, and Daoist music. The basic subjects are taught by associate professors and professors from the nearby Yunyang Teachers' College, and the major subjects are taught by qualified Daoists and scholars from institutes with Daoist Studies programs. While enrolled the students must follow academic rules and regulations in addition to maintaining a religious routine. After three years of study and successfully passing exams, the student can graduate with a college diploma.

In 2008 the institute launched four pedagogical training sessions in January, June, July and the middle of August to further raise the level of teaching and administrative expertise. The Wudangshan Institute is dedicated to improving the educational level of Daoist nuns and monks, and to providing a platform for Daoist research and outreach.

In 2009, the Fifth International Conference on Daoism is being held on Mt. Wudang in cooperation with Yunyang Teachers College. For details, see www.daoism-conference.cn.

Taiwanese Daoist Temple Parades and their Martial Motifs

BRIAN L. KENNEDY & ELIZABETH NAI-JIA GUO

Stilt walkers, exploding fireworks, cacophonous music, gigantic figures waltzing down the street, performers in demonic outfits and makeup, crowds lining the street, a mixed feeling of religious sentiment, and jovial community fun: this sounds like Mardi Gras, maybe in New Orleans or Rio de Janeiro. However, it is in Taipei, Taiwan and the religion is not Catholicism but Daoism. In this article we will take a look at different elements of typical Daoist temple parades in Taiwan.¹

Each Daoist temple in Taiwan has one main deity to which the temple is primarily dedicated. Temple officials on special occasions, normally on the “birthdays” of the deities, will take the deities from their altars for a tour of the neighborhood. Depending on who the deity is, they may take outings on other occasions too, but their birthday tour will generally be grandest. Temple tours involve parades with motorized vehicles, hand-drawn carts, people on foot, and the special types of performers that form the topic of this article.

One noticeable feature of Daoist temple parades is their martial tone and flavor. Although the characters and the deities featured in these parades are both civil and martial in background, nonetheless the overall feeling of the parades is martial. For example, the performers usually

¹ About the scope and method of research: The temple parades the authors observed took place in different locations in Taipei city and county. The photos which accompany this article were shot either in San Chung City 三重市, or the Wan Hua district 萬華區 of Taipei or an area of Taipei City near the Danshui River 淡水河. They were shot either in 2007 or 2008. As to the various facts about the temple parades, the sources for these were interviews of Taiwanese conducted by Mr. Kennedy.

stride about with somewhat of a John Wayne swagger and bravado. Heads hung low in modesty or religious supplication is not their style. And although a number of the deities seen in such parades, such as Mazu 媽祖 or Pangu 盤古, have no direct connection to the military or to martial episodes, many of the most popular ones, such as Lord Guan 關帝 or the 7th and 8th Lords 七爺, 八爺 are military figures.

Standard Elements

Taiwanese temple parades usually involve a number of stock performances and standard elements. They include hand-drawn carts or mini-trucks bearing commemorative plaques naming the involved temples or carrying the deities. Stilt walkers, mega-puppets, Lion and Dragon dancers, Eight Generals teams, musicians either in truck beds or on foot with mobile amplifiers also appear. Two distinct groups accompany the deities on foot, wearing a common uniform that usual consists of T-shirts and ball caps bearing the name of the temple. One group usually has somewhat rough looking young men; the other—in sharp contrast—has merry older folks, both men and women. The former group can loosely be defined as temple parade security; the latter comprises the faithful who believe they gather divine favor by accompanying the parades.

How many of these elements any given parade has depends on the economic resources of the temple. For example, Eight Generals performance troupes are not so common; nor are Lion or Dragon dance teams. Yet even modestly endowed temples can afford one or more mega-puppets and some form of music to accompany the deities on their tour.

Mega Puppets

Mega puppets are the highest profile aspect of any temple procession. They are bigger than life and represent various deities and historical figures. The performers handling them need stamina, keen balance, as well as other qualities that characterize Chinese martial arts.

The more ornate puppets can be over two and a half meters tall; they are constructed of wood and bamboo. The head and the hands are made of wood, while the torso and arms consist of a bamboo frame covered with thick, expensive clothing. One person manipulates them; he

sees out the little window in the god's stomach area. Inside the puppet is a harness arrangement with two large shoulder straps and a bamboo control bar attached to the puppet's body. The performer can rotate the torso left and right by gripping the control bar, which has two hand holds. He wears the puppet somewhat like putting on a large backpack.



"Mega-puppets" on the move.

The puppets have a characteristic slow arm swing. The performer activates it by slowly rotating the torso. Because the hands are made of heavy blocks of carved wood they can get a pendulum effect, a swinging back and forth. Being able to get the arms to swing smoothly and correctly, without flailing or banging against the frame, is a big part of the art. The performer also has to have the *gongfu* of not getting dehydrated and passing out, especially in the summer when Taiwan is hot and humid. The puppets are quite heavy and, with the gods' gowns reaching below the performer's knees, their inside is often stifling. When the performers take a break, one can see how they are drenched in sweat; helpers make sure they drink enough water and do not faint.

The puppets are extremely top heavy and it is quite easy to topple over while wearing them. They are therefore always accompanied by an entourage of assistants who act as "spotters" of any untoward movement. They protect the puppet, and also the performer inside, from accidents

and wayward moves. Given the high-centered weight of the puppet, handling it requires that the person must be able to keep both his and the puppet's weight centered and move as a coordinated and connected unit. His actions must be deliberate, slow, and controlled.

“Come Hell or High Water”

A number of deities appear most commonly in these mega puppets. Two of the most common are the 7th and 8th Lords. The Taiwanese legend surrounding them can best be encapsulated by the phrase “come hell or high water,” meaning that the person intends to do what they said, no matter what the obstacles, risks, or hardships.

According to the story, the 7th and 8th Lords were very good friends; they served as generals with a strong senses of duty and enormous courage. One day they decided to meet beneath a bridge that spanned a large river. The 8th Lord arrived first and saw that because of a heavy storm the river was rapidly rising and would soon flood the area where he stood by his horse. But he was determined to stay right where he said he would be and keep the appointment, determined to hold his position no matter what. The river rose rapidly and he was swept away. Barely a minute later, his friend and comrade in arms, the 7th Lord, arrived. Instantly he knew what had happened, that his friend would rather drown in the torrent than fail to be where he said he would be. Stricken with grief, the 7th Lord hung himself from a nearby tree.

Admittedly for many modern people this story seems to have no moral and from a modern perspective the actions of both Lords verge on psychotic stupidity. But for traditional Taiwanese culture the actions of the 8th Lord in not moving from his position and the suicide of the 7th Lord to accompany his friend into death reflect deep values: steadfast adherence to martial duty and personal loyalty even beyond death. The actions of the warriors in the *Iliad* may strike modern readers in the same way. The almost pathological stubbornness and tenacity of Achilles or Agamemnon reflected Greek warrior values in the same vein that the actions of the 7th and 8th Lords do in Taiwanese culture. The Lords are perhaps the most common mega-puppet figures and thus widely worshiped in Taiwan. When shown during a parade, one of them will have a longer, “stretched” face and a protruding tongue: this is 7th Lord.



The 8th Lord with General Qi Bread around his neck

His appearance is a macabre reflection of having died by hanging. The other one has a bloated, puffy face, the result of having drowned. In addition, both often have a large round bread hanging from their neck, which somewhat resembles a very large bagel. This bagel has a military history connection. In Taiwanese folklore, it is called General Qi Bread, named after the famous Ming general Qi Jiguang 戚繼光 who allegedly

invented the loaf to provide a durable staple for his troops in the southern amphibious campaigns; they are a kind of Chinese hardtack.²

Stilt Walkers

Equally high above the crowd are the performers walking on stilts. The stilt walkers depict different gods and their attendants, such as Guan Gong.



Stilt walkers portraying Guan Gong and his attendants

² Whether Taiwanese folklore reflects historical reality, we have no idea. General Qi fills the same kind of mythic role in southern China as General Yue Fei did in the north.

The wooden stilts are tied to the performers' feet with a stirrup arrangement. No hand grips come up from the stilts, so quite a degree of skill is required.

The stilt walkers tend to be far more mobile than the mega puppets and are thus more likely to interact with the crowds lining the procession. Of course walking on the stilts can be dangerous, particularly given the potholes, oil slicks, broken asphalt, and general litter that make up the average Taiwanese street. So, the stilt walkers are attended by spotters; they literally and figuratively move up as their skill and experience increase. In the beginning, they will portray a minor figure in the parade and use stilts that are only about half a meter high. As their skill is noted, they will eventually advance to more important figures which involves higher stilts and more ornate costumes—a greater chance of falling over due to weight.

The costumes and the make-up both come largely from the many forms of Chinese opera. Aficionados easily recognize what historical personage, mythical figure, or deity is being shown. The general public who may not be quite so familiar with Chinese myths or Chinese opera yet can tell whether the performer is martial or civil, the two major categories of characters. They can also discern their relative importance by their physical height.

Deities and Sedan Chairs

The actual deities are normally not at the front of the parade but placed in the center or sometimes towards the center-rear, carried in sedan chairs. In the 21st century, these sedan chairs have several forms. Sometimes they are open, on other occasions, the deity seems to prefer the privacy of a closed chair. Usually made of expensive hardwoods, such as mahogany or teak, the chairs are often ornately carved. They may be borne on the shoulders of a team of bearers or set on a wheeled cart that is pulled by hand. Some deities prefer more modern motorized conveyance and ride in open-air convertibles, usually modified mini-trucks. Like human politicians, they ride on the back ledge of the convertible while their attendants and security personnel walk beside them. The convertibles, moreover, are usually normally covered with artificial flowers or plaques naming the deity's temple.

We have spoken of the deities “preferring” this or that and we choose that wording quite on purpose because it makes an important point regarding the ontology of these icons. Sometimes in discussions of Taiwanese religious it will be said that the statutes that are present in Daoist temples and temple parades are “representations” or “symbols” of the deity. They are not. In the traditional Chinese view,³ the statutes *are* the deity and not mere symbols. When we say they are the deity we mean that in an ontological sense, the piece of wood has become the deity.

The process by which carved wood becomes a deity is complicated, a kind of Taiwanese Pinocchio story. Certain carvers specialize in carving deities. If an individual or temple wants a new deity the first step is to ask the deity if they would like to reside in the temple or the individual’s home, as the case maybe. This asking can be done any of a number of ways the most common is via the use of “divination blocks” 筊.⁴ If the deity agrees to reside at the temple or house, the next step is to contact a temple that already has a “living” or “empowered” deity of the same god, for example, Mazu or Guan Gong. The temple will ask their deity if it is okay to empower the new deity. If he or she agrees, the donor is expected to pay a fee, which may be quite large but matches an amount discussed in advance. Once everything is settled, the donor can commission a carver to fashion the deity.

Next the donor should consult a fortune-teller to determine an auspicious day to bring the deity to life. Once a day is set, the donor obtains a certain amount of incense ash from the parent temple to take to the carver. The latter next drills holes in the back base of the statue and, on

³ We are speaking in generalities. Given the old and wide river which is Chinese religion there are no doubt some teachers and schools that will view the wooden statutes as “representations” but they are the rare minority view.

⁴ These divination blocks come in pairs and are sometimes in English referred to as “moon blocks” because of their half moon shape. The questioner will hold the blocks in their hands and present their question to the deity. Then drop the blocks to the ground. The blocks will land either face up or face down; with two blocks that makes for three possibilities; double face up, double face down, one up and one down. The deities answer comes from a series of these drops. Questions have to be fashioned in a “yes-no” format and the deities answer will be either yes, no, or “you got to be kidding/unsure”.

the determined auspicious day, packs it with incense taken from the main temple. After the incense is in place, the piece of wood is no longer a mere piece of wood—it *is* Mazu or Guan Gong and has a distinct parentage, a lineage connected to the parent temple. Another trip to the fortune-teller will reveal the best day to move the now living deity from the woodcarvers shop to its new home. The leaders of the host temple will carry him or her with great reverence.

The fact that these deities are living creatures and not just pieces of wood, paint, and animal hair is evident from a social problem recently noted in Taiwanese newspapers.⁵ Perhaps because of the economic downturn, people have been abandoning their deities at neighborhood temples—rather than leaving them in the trash, which one shouldn't do with living entities. Those abandoned statues now become foundlings and must be cared for like abandoned children, which takes time, space, and money, overburdening the temples. Some simply do not have the altar space to contain all these figures; others do not wish to be invaded by newcomers. As a result, temples are putting out pleas to the public to stop abandoning their deities and instead retrieve those they already left behind.

Eight Generals—Celestial Cops

Another set of deities often depicted in parades are the Eight Generals 八家將. Although normally called Eight Generals in English, their name is better translated as Eight Retainers in the sense that they are staff officers working for a judicial court. For the Chinese, they are celestial cops or divine police officers who walk the toughest beat on earth. Like cops everywhere, their job is to protect the public from bad elements, but the bad elements in this case are invisible and preternaturally strong, with no scruples or compassion. They are ghosts, demons, and denizens of the netherworld who bring pestilence, plague, and misfortune.

To arrest and punish them, the Eight Generals carry wooden handcuffs and badges which resemble solid wooden fans. The badges imitate actual warrants carried by Qing-dynasty police to arrest criminals. The real-life magistrate would write out the arrest warrant; his bailiffs sealed

⁵ "Too many unwanted deities discarded in Suao," May 9, 2008, *China Post*.

it and pasted it on a wooden fan. The wooden badge-boards of the Eight Generals thus model the real-world version. They all carry weapons but one has a carved wooden tiger on his shoulder—who carries the executioner's sword on his back, secured by magic talismans.



The Eight Generals

The most popular story of the Eight Generals says that they serve the Emperors of the Five Blessings 五福大帝. Originally a gang of eight malicious mountain sprites 山妖 who lived in a cave on Mount Lu 廬山, they were so malicious and powerful that regular gods could not control them. But one of the Emperors of the Five Blessings was an expert in martial arts and skilled in Daoist demonology. He stepped up to face the challenge of catching and controlling the eight sprites. Toward that end he traveled to Mount Lu and promptly subdued the monsters. After defeating them, he held them captive rather than destroying them. To repay the favor of sparing their lives, they swore eternal allegiance to the Emperors of the Five Blessings and vowed to help them protect human beings. Thus the reformed demons became celestial cops called the Eight Generals.



Bao Ma Zai, the herald of parades, with the talismans on his hat and umbrella.

During a parade, the arrival of the Eight Generals is announced by a somewhat comic but powerful and good-hearted deity known as Bao Ma Zai 報馬仔. A Taiwanese god, he acts as a herald bringing news to the village or district. Always appearing in a standard form, he has one pants leg rolled up, wears eyeglasses on his face, and carries a small hand gong as well as a bandoleer of bagels for the children—smaller sized versions of General Qi Bread. People believe it is good luck for a parent to ask Bao Ma Zai for one of the bagels and give it to a child whose good health is thereby ensured.

Taiwan is well known for its pork products and Ba Ma Zai always carries a pig's foot and shank with him. In modern hygienic times, he has

the pig's foot in a clear plastic bag on his right hop. His rattan hat protects him from the natural elements of rain, sun, and wind but also protects him from the more baleful invisible dangers of ghost and demons.



Bao Ma Zai, in his stock appearance

The latter protection comes from the Daoist talismans pasted in a cross pattern on the top of his hat. The talismans indicate that the door to steal his soul is sealed closed. As a result he cannot be harmed by any ghost or demon.

* * *

To sum up: Taiwanese temple parades reflect an aspect of lived Daoism that is still very much alive and well and thriving in Taiwan. While the reality is that most Taiwanese can only vaguely remember some parts of the *Daode jing* or a story or two out of the *Zhuangzi*, almost all are familiar with the characters, stories, and escapades that appear in Daoist temple parades. Most neighborhoods host at least two or three parades a year and most people will, at least once a year, come to the curbside for a dose of street Daoism and to explain to one of their children, nieces, or nephews a bit about what is going on. The good news is that, at least in Taiwan, despite all modernization and secularization, there is no end in sight for Daoist temple parades.

News

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Field

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- Lü Xichen and Zhang Qin

Dissertations

Hsin-I Mei. "The Religious Realm of Jiangxi during the Song Dynasty, 960-1279" (Spring 2011), University of California, Los Angeles, supervised by Richard von Glahn (hmei@ucla.edu)

My research project will examine the religious world of Jiangxi in Song China. The purpose is to explore the developments of various religious beliefs, the relationship between new Daoist exorcistic traditions and popular cults, and the changes in local, regional, and national societies. The work will center on the institutions, theologies, and ritual practices of local cults, Daoism, and Buddhism, also involving a study of the social relations revealed by the interaction, cooperation, and competition among these religious traditions and social groups. Instead of treating them as separate, I regard them as parts of a holistic religious culture.

The research focuses particularly on local cults in Jiangxi as well as the development of Daoist traditions there, including Celestial Masters, Pure Brightness, and Divine Empyrean. What were religious groups in Jiangxi during the Song? How were they practiced and disseminated? What is the significance of the spatial and temporal context? What are the relationships among them and local, regional, and national communities? The answers to these questions will enhance our understanding of the multifaceted religious world of Song China, the changes it underwent, and the interplay between local, regional, and national levels that shaped this world.

Jennifer Lundin Ritchie. "The *Guodian Laozi*: A New Window into Daoist Thought" (Spring 2010), University of British Columbia, supervised by Edward Slingerland (jritchie@interchange.ubc.ca)

The focus of my graduate research is a new version of the *Laozi* (a.k.a the *Daode jing*), which was discovered in a tomb at Guodian village in Hubei, China, in 1993. The *Guodian Laozi* is 150 years older than the previous oldest version and contains a previously unseen third section, titled *Taiyi shengshui* (The Great One Gives Birth to Water), the cosmology of which decentralizes yin and yang—concepts heretofore fundamental to inter-

pretations of the text. The themes throughout the text also differ considerably from the received versions. Notably absent are the *Laozi's* characteristic references to water and the feminine, and its vehement criticisms of Confucianism. The majority of the passages have to do with *de* (Virtue) as it relates to statecraft, rather than the more 'mystical' *dao* (Way).

In my analysis, I plan to explore how the prominence of verses on statecraft and the de-centralization of yin and yang affect the interpretation and the flavor of the text as a whole. Can the *Laozi* still be read through the lens of dichotomy and reversal? What does this mean for the extensions of the yin-yang dichotomy metaphor (for example male-female, active-receptive, solid-liquid, full-empty)? Was the *Laozi* originally meant to be simply a handbook for ruling the state? The answers to these questions could certainly change in significant ways the manner in which the *Laozi* is read.

Research Projects

Daoism and Psychology

The government sponsored research project on "Reciprocal Influence between Daoist Thought and Western Psychological Treatments" 道学与西方心理治疗学的互动研究 was led jointly by Daoist scholar LüXichen 吕锡琛, Central South University, and psychologist Yang Deshen 杨德森. Completed in 2007, it resulted in a series of essays to be published by Chinese Social Sciences Press.

The project consists of three parts: the cultural background and philosophical foundation of the reciprocal influence between Daoist thought and Western psychology; Daoist teaching and Western psychological treatments; research on the applications of Daoist psychological theory.

In part one, the authors analyze the crisis in psychology and the changes in psychological methods due to the transformation of contemporary Western thought, notably the movements of phenomenology and existentialism and the methods of psychoanalysis. Phenomenology plays an important role in building the bridge between East and West during this process. On the one hand, some phenomenologists integrate tradi-

tional Daoist teachings into their theories with a highly beneficial results; on the other hand, phenomenology exerts a direct influence on Western psychological treatments, which in turn led to an interest in Chinese culture and ways of thinking as conceptual resources for Western psychology. Phenomenology explores the connections between Daoist thought and Western psychological treatments at the methodological level from humanistic, holistic and practical perspectives.

In part two, authors explore the works of Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961), Abraham Maslow (1908-1970), and Carl Ranson Rogers (1902-1987), focusing on their association with Daoist thought, how they integrated and applied Daoist ideas in their theories and how these theories in turn provided inspiration for contemporary Chinese psychological treatment and cultural studies.

In part three, the authors link various methods of Western psychological treatment with Daoist therapeutic wisdom to deal with a wide range of contemporary mental conditions in China. They also strive to explain the specific practice of “Daoist knowledge treatment” created by the psychologist Yang Deshen.

—Lü Xichen and Robin R. Wang

Conferences

Dreams and East-West Culture 梦与中西文化

Mt. Shizhu 石竹山, Fuqing 福清 (Fujian), October 6-8,

Mt. Shizhu, the detached palace of the immortal He Jiuxian 何九仙, has been a sacred place for dreams since the Southern Song and is known as the “Home of Chinese Dreams.” Many local and popular stories tell about the immortal’s dreams and a variety of related practices are still going on today.

Sponsored by the Daoist temple at Mt. Shizhu, the Fujian Center for Religious Studies at Sichuan University, the Center for Daoism and Traditional Cultural Studies at Xiamen University, the Fujian Association of *Yijing* Studies, the Fujian Association of Laozi Studies, this meeting convened about a hundred scholars who offered presentations interpretat-

ing the local dream phenomenon and discussing its historical and cultural origin.

They also examined its cultural characteristics, functions and efficacy, as well as its connections with internal alchemy and folk culture. Some presentations also made a connection between understanding dreams and Daoism, which acknowledges them as a pertinent experience in body cultivation. Some talks showed how dreams embedded the two main Daoist concerns of life and death and can be seen as a way to demonstrate and verify the ultimate Dao. Other scholars explored connections between dream culture and the teachings of the *Yijing*, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Chinese literature. To a lesser degree, participants came to analyze dreams from the perspective of modern science, psychology, and physiology.

—Zhang Qin and Robin R. Wang

UBC Conference on Daoist Studies

Vancouver, October 24-26

Jointly sponsored by the UBC Dean of Arts and the Liu Foundation (and in the presence of its chairman, J. J. Liou), this meeting on Daoism was convened by Edward Slingerland and administered by Jennifer Lundin Ritchie. It brought together approximately twenty scholars in the field—philosophers like Michael Puett, Alan Chan, Harold Roth, Liu Xiaogan, and Lee Yearley; manuscript specialists such as Robin Yates, Scott Cook, Xing Wen, Carine Defoort, Griet Vankerberghen, and Attilio Andreini; Daoist historians including Livia Kohn, Robert Campany, Terry Kleeman, and Paul Crowe; anthropologists such as Erin Kline, Dan Overmyer, and Yen Hsueh-Cheng; as well as *Yijing* scholars such as Richard Smith, Benjamin Ng, and Richard Lynn.

Topics ranged accordingly, focusing on the understanding of emotions, sagehood, and the body in Daoist thought through the evaluation of new textual evidence found in manuscript sources to various issues of Daoist practice both in ancient and contemporary China. A special session was dedicated to the *Yijing*, not usually part of Daoist discussions but a valuable supplement nonetheless.

Papers were posted ahead of time and most sessions were spent in animated discussion. The setting, at the Liu Centre for the Study of Global Issues on the scenic UBC campus, was comfortable and conducive to exchanges on all levels, and the participants enjoyed the close connection with others it afforded. There are no plans for publication of a volume; individual papers will appear separately, and some may even be published in this journal. For further information, please visit www.ubcdaoism.ca

—Edward Slingerland

Ritual and Sacred Space

American Academy of Religion, Chicago, November 1-2, 2008

At this year's AAR, three were panels devoted to Daoism, all strong and well attended. In addition, there were several individual papers that focused on or included Daoism. Below are the highlights.

The first panel, "Practices of Transformation in Daoist Ritual," scheduled on the first afternoon, explored how different ritual practices affect transformation of ritual space, of the human body, of material objects, and of moral dispositions. The panel started with Julius N. Tsai's presentation on the development of the ritual of the Nocturnal Invocation (*suqi* 宿啓) in an effort to identify and contextualize commentarial concerns and controversies. The second presenter, Mark Meulenbeld, elaborated on "transformation of the body" (*huashen* 化身) in Daoist ritual, arguing that it is a process of self-divination, mimicking the post-humous ascent of the spirit into the divine abode. Next, a multi-media presentation by David Mozina examined a thunder ritual currently performed by Daoist priests in Hunan to explain the rite's cosmology and physiology. Finally, Clarke Hudson articulated the practice of moral transformation in the Jingming ritual tradition during Song times and shed light on a little examined aspect of Daoist ritual.

The second panel, on sacred space, had three papers. The first one, "Lord Lao's Mountain: from Celestial Master Daoism to Contemporary Daoist Practice," by Volker Olles from Germany, discussed the complicated relationship between Daoism and a self-labeled Confucian sectarian group, Liumen jiao, over the Daoist sanctuaries on Mt. Laojun in Sichuan. It is printed in full in this volume. The second paper, "Modeling

Daoist Sacred Space: Imagining Emperors as Practitioners in Medieval China," by Jonathan Pettit, gave a close reading of a late seventh century stele inscription at the shrine to Mother of King Qi (Qimu 啓母) to show how stelae at temple sites functioned as a means to convey the rudiments of local practices. The third paper, "The Influence of Wu-Shamanism on Daoist Masters in Ge Hong's *Shenxian zhuan*," by Thomas Michael, argued that the fourth-century Daoist masters confronted and defeated local masters of popular religion, the shamans (*wu*), in order to push the limits of their fledgling religious authority in post-Han China.

The panel on "Chronicling the Dao: A Critical Appraisal of Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen's *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang*," scheduled on the final day, was a book review panel. Verellen presented but Schipper was unable to attend. The presenters' discussion covered the history and overview of the project as a whole (Terry Kleeman, Louis Komjathy), or focused on particular texts, themes, and critical perspectives (James Miller, Stephen Eskildsen). Verellen was gracious in recognizing the limitations of the project, which of course was ambitious. He sees the publication as "the end of the beginning" of Taoist canonical studies rather than "the beginning of the end." In other words, it is just a start, or a launching pad, for further research into the Canon.

In addition, Robert Campany's "The Dreamscape of Early Medieval China" included texts from Shangqing Daoism in a comparative study on dreams in medieval Chinese mentality. Ian Chapman, who had submitted a paper on Daoist inscribed images, was unable to attend.

— Shin-yi Chao and Randall Nardeau

Southeast Early China Roundtable

Jacksonville, Florida, November 14-16, 2008

The twelfth annual meeting of the Southeast Early China Roundtable took place on the campus of the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, Florida, on November 14-16, 2008. It was sponsored by UNF and organized by Norman Harry Rothschild, Associate Professor of History. This meeting, by far the largest in the history of the roundtable, was a three-day event, featuring the keynote address and five panels.

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 Suzanne Cahill, from the University of California at San Diego, who presented a public lecture on Friday evening entitled, "Government Attempts to Prescribe Material Expressions of Status and Identity: Essays on Vehicles and Clothing in the Official Histories of the Tang Dynasty." Panel presentations on Saturday and Sunday included the following:

Lai Guolong (Florida), "Religious Boundaries and Imperial Politics in Early China"

Keith N. Knapp (Citadel), "The Exemplary Everymen: Guo Shidao and Guo Yuanping as the Epitome of Confucian Commoners"

Liang Cai (Arkansas), "A Reshuffle of Power: The Witchcraft Scandal in the Western Han Dynasty"

Wang Huaiyu (Georgia College): "Benevolence, Affective Connection, and Early Chinese Rites Involving Spiritual Surrogates"

Mario Pocesi (Florida), "Teaching and Writing about the History of Chinese Religions"

Eric Henry (North Carolina), "Remnants of Ancient Vietic Kingdoms in China: A Field Report"

Jeffrey L. Richey (Berea), "Zhuangzi's and Liezi's Dreamless Sages"

Galway Traynor and Christine Welter (Eckerd), "Imagining a Deity: The Guan Yu Myth and Imagery in Early China"

Livia Kohn (Boston), "Healing Exercises in Highest Clarity Daoism"

Dorothy C. Wong (Virginia), "The Art of Huayan Buddhism at the Courts of Empress Wu and Emperor Shōmu"

Michelle C. Wang (Louisiana): "Mogao Cave 14 and Esoteric Buddhist Art of the Tang"

Hongjie Wang (Armstrong Atlantic), "Diplomatic Culture in Five Dynasties China: The Case of Former Shu-Later Liang Relations"

Norman Harry Rothschild (North Florida), "Wenmu and Wu Zhao: Two Mothers of Zhou"

Andrew Chittick (Eckerd), "Dragon Boat Racing in Tang Poetry"

Ashleigh Dean (North Florida), "Ill-Omened Turtles in the New Tang History's 'Treatise of the Five Elements'"

Jonathan K. Skaff (Shippensburg), "Heavenly Qaghans, Propaganda Wars, and the Origins of Simultaneous Kingship in Eastern Eurasia"

Discussants and other participants included Russell Kirkland (Georgia), Cynthia Chennault (Florida), and Soon Ong Keong (University of North Florida).

See the program at <http://faculty.berea.edu/richeyj/seecr.html>

—Norman Harry Rothschild

Daoism and Kyōsei 共生 Philosophy

Tokyo, December 17-19

The third in a series of joint American-Japanese conferences, this meeting was organized by Yamada Toshiaki and Terry Kleeman and sponsored by Toyo University and the Japanese Society for the Study of Daoism. Participants included Stephen Bokenkamp, Gil Raz, Liu Xun, Julius Tsai, Lowell Skar, and Elena Valussi from the American side as well as Asai Motoi, Asano Haruji, Ikehira Noriko, Kato Senchi, Kikuchi Noritaka, Mabuchi Masaya, Maruyama Hiroshi, Matsushita Michitaka, Shiga Ichiko, Tanaka Fumio, Umekawa Sumiyo, Yamada Akahiro, Yokote Yutaka, and Yusa Noburo among others on the Japanese side.

Topics ranged widely. They included general discussions of Daoist history, forms of Buddhist-Daoist interaction, sacred geography and

cosmology, practice issues in sexual techniques, thunder and other rituals, major figures and practices of internal alchemy, as well as modern martial arts and inner cultivation. For more details, contact Terry Kleeman (terry.kleeman@colorado.edu).

—Xun LIU

Upcoming Conferences

The Past, Present, and Future of Daoism

June 18-22, 2009, Wudangshan, Hubei, China

The fifth in a series of international conferences on Daoism to be held every year or two in China, Europe, or North America, this meeting follows conferences in Boston 2003, Chengdu 2004, Munich 2006; and Hong Kong 2007. The aim of the meeting is to promote academic exchange and research in the field of Daoism, and conferences will cover both contemporary and historical topics related to socio-cultural constructions of Daoist identities, beliefs, and practices.

Wudangshan is the devotional center of one of the most important deities of the Daoist pantheon—Zhenwu dadi (also known as Xuantian shangdi. Beginning in the Northern Song (960-1127), the Zhenwu cult received imperial sponsorship which continued and grew through the Ming (1368-1644). In the Yongle reign of the Ming (1402-1424), a massive project created a Daoist complex that was arguably the most ambitious and impressive architectural achievement of the empire outside of the Imperial Palace in Beijing. That complex is today recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, and continues to receive a large number of pilgrims every year from across China and Southeast Asia.

The conference is sponsored by Yunyang Teachers' College, Rutgers University, the Hong Kong Taoist Association, the Yuen Yuen Institute, Wudangshan Town, and the Wudang Daoist Association. Chief organizers are Yang Lizhi and Liu Xun, assisted by a steering committee which includes Li Gang, Lü Xichen, Zhang Qin, Mei Li, Shin-yi Chao, Tang Weixia, and Wu Jingxing.

Topics to be discussed include state and society, ethics, modernity, rites and rituals, architecture, iconography, martial arts, women, pilgrimage and religious tourism, health and longevity practices, local studies, as well as sectarian developments. Ideally they should link to the site of the conference, but more distant themes are also welcome. Presentations can be in English or Chinese, with abstracts translated into the other language. For more details and to register, go to www.daoism-conference.cn

—Liu Xun

Web Resources

Searchable Texts. There are several texts from the *Daozang* that are fully searchable on the web, but no complete version. One byproduct of the Daoist Canon project published by Schipper and Verellen is an index of names (in French romanization) that is online under the name “Tao-tsang. Travaux d’Index.” It has online copies of the fiches the project developed. It was compiled by K. M. Schipper and the Daozang Study Group: <http://www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/database/daozaang-idx/index.htm>. It is not a very convenient site but with lots of interesting information.

Compare this with the *Daozang suoyin* [and comparison for the five main versions of the indexes] to be found at the following site: http://www.sino.uni-heidelberg.de/database/daozaang_suoyin/index.htm

Another source is James Miller’s site which has a searchable database at <http://www.daoiststudies.org/daozaang/index.php> or, less conveniently, at <https://qspace.library.queensu.ca/handle/1974/189>. The latter is still mostly titles and authors and provides only a limited subject index. Many of the texts are available in pdf format, though.

A third venue for searchable texts is being created by Mugitani Kunio at the Jimbun kagaku kenkyujo of Kyoto University. His site is <http://www.zinbun.kyoto-u.ac.jp/~dokisha/>

—Lowell Skar

For another, convenient source of online Daoist texts, you can also go to <http://www.sinica.edu.tw/~tdbproj/handy1/>, scroll down, and click on 正統道藏.

—Shinyi Chao

Many Daozang texts are also found at the website of the Minglong gong 明龍宮 in Taipei: <http://www.ctcwri.idv.tw/CTCWRI-MTS/CH000.htm>. The texts derive from the *Zhonghua Daozang*. They seem to have been scanned since, at least within some texts, certain characters are consistently wrong.

—Fabrizio Pregadio

Daoist Iconography Project (DIP), under the guidance of Poul Andersen, University of Hawai'i, proudly announces that its collected materials are now available online: <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/daoist-iconography/index.htm>.

Science on Qi

Qigong Research

Chen, K.W., Perlman, A., Liao, J.G., Lam, A., Staller, J., & Sigal, L.H. (2008). Effects of external qigong therapy on osteoarthritis of the knee: A randomized controlled trial. *Clinical Rheumatology*, 27:1497-1505. - - One hundred twelve adults with knee osteoarthritis were randomly assigned to external qi healing or sham treatment (control group); 106 participants completed treatment and were analyzed. Two therapists provided five to six external qi healing sessions over three weeks. Healer one, with more than 15 years healing experience, was a lineage holder in an unnamed Daoist tradition who was famous for his anticancer treatment in China. Healer two, also trained in China with more than 35 years experience, was a fifth generation member of a qigong healing family. Both healers emitted qi to the painful area using similar and different techniques. Patients treated by healer two reported greater reduction in pain and improved physical functioning that persisted for three months after completion of treatment compared to controls. There was no significant difference in outcomes between participants treated by healer one and those in the sham control group.

Guo, X., Zhou, B., Nishimura, T., Teramukai, S., & Fukushima, M. (2008). Clinical effect of qigong practice on essential hypertension: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 14.1:27-37. - - Ninety-two research studies were identified, and 9 of these met selection criteria for quality to be included in the meta-analysis comprising a total of 908 cases. Those practicing qigong showed significant reductions in systolic and diastolic blood pressure. These reductions were greater than those experienced by non-specific intervention control group members but not superior to participants in drug control groups or conventional exercise control groups. Results that qigong is more effective in reducing blood pressure than no treatment and equal in effectiveness to other forms of exercise and drug treatment. Qigong combined with drugs has a more positive effect than drug treatment alone.

Energy Psychology Research

Feinstein, D. (2008). Energy psychology: A Review of the preliminary evidence. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, 45.2:199-213. - - Energy psychology is a controversial, new approach to psychotherapy that combines attention and visualization paired with tapping acupuncture points while being guided by a therapist to focus on specific thoughts and emotions. This is the first published review of research findings. Although preliminary, the evidence shows that this treatment seems to be effective for some phobias and for maintaining weight loss.

Taijiquan Research

Hackney, M.E., & Earhart, G.M. (2008). Tai chi improves balance and mobility in people with Parkinson disease. *Gait & Posture*, 28:456-460. - - Thirty-three participants with Parkinson disease were randomly assigned to either a group receiving 20, one-hour long, weekly tai chi training sessions completed over 10-13 weeks or a no-treatment control group that received only pre- and post-intervention measurement. The tai chi group improved more than the control group on several measures of balance. All tai chi participants also reported improvements in physical well-being.

Kerr, C.E., Shaw, J.R., Wasserman, R.H., Chen, V.W., Kanojia, A., Bayer, T., & Kelley, J.M. (2008). Tactile acuity in experienced tai chi practitioners: Evidence for use dependent plasticity as an effect of sensory-attentional training. *Experimental Brain Research*, 188.2:317-322. - - Fourteen tai chi practitioners were compared to 14 control participants matched for gender and age who were recruited from the local community. All participants were screened to exclude those with diminished tactile acuity due to a variety of causes. Tai chi practitioners had studied for at least 2 years with an average of 3 sessions per week with each session lasting 40 minutes or more. Tai chi practitioners demonstrated significantly greater tactile acuity compared to control participants. While younger participants demonstrated greater tactile acuity than older participants, there was a trend toward a significant interaction, with tai chi demonstrating a greater impact on improving tactile acuity among older practitioners. The results demonstrate that tai chi, as a somatosensory attention training practice, is associated with gains in sensory perception. This study is the first to demonstrate this connection.

— Donald Davis

Notes on Contributors

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