

Religious Taoism and Dreams: An Analysis of the Dream-data Collected in the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*

Fu-shih Lin

Résumé

Le taoïsme religieux, tel qu'il est présenté dans le *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, possède sa propre vision sur le phénomène des rêves. Les taoïstes adoptaient, en général, une attitude négative à l'égard des rêves. Certains textes suggèrent même que "ne faire aucun rêve" devait être le but ultime de la pratique taoïste. Croyant que certains mauvais rêves étaient provoqués par des démons, les adeptes taoïstes élaborèrent différentes techniques pour empêcher les cauchemars. Ils croyaient aussi que d'autres rêves étaient utilisés par les esprits pour faire passer un message aux humains, aussi bien pour leur venir en aide que pour leur porter préjudice. En d'autres termes, les rêves étaient considérés comme un moyen de communication spécifique entre les humains et les divinités. Pour les adeptes taoïstes, ils restaient, toutefois, une méthode inférieure d'entrée en contact avec les esprits. Il n'en demeure pas moins que les taoïstes avaient souvent recours à des histoires relatives à des rêves pour prêcher leur croyance dans l'existence et le pouvoir surnaturel des divinités taoïstes.

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RELIGIOUS TAOISM AND DREAMS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE DREAM-DATA COLLECTED IN THE YÜN-CHI CH'I-CH'IEN*

Fu-shih LIN

Le taoïsme religieux, tel qu'il est présenté dans le Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien, possède sa propre vision sur le phénomène des rêves. Les taoïstes adoptaient, en général, une attitude négative à l'égard des rêves. Certains textes suggèrent même que "ne faire aucun rêve" devait être le but ultime de la pratique taoïste. Croyant que certains mauvais rêves étaient provoqués par des démons, les adeptes taoïstes élaborèrent différentes techniques pour empêcher les cauchemars. Ils croyaient aussi que d'autres rêves étaient utilisés par les esprits pour faire passer un message aux humains, aussi bien pour leur venir en aide que pour leur porter préjudice. En d'autres termes, les rêves étaient considérés comme un moyen de communication spécifique entre les humains et les divinités. Pour les adeptes taoïstes, ils restaient, toutefois, une méthode inférieure d'entrée en contact avec les esprits. Il n'en demeure pas moins que les taoïstes avaient souvent recours à des histoires relatives à des rêves pour prêcher leur croyance dans l'existence et le pouvoir surnaturel des divinités taoïstes.

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I. Introduction

Many scholars have pointed out the close association between dreams and religion. In the nineteenth century, Edward Tylor suggested that the idea of the soul, the basic substratum of religion, arose from man's attempt to account for the phantom visitors in sleep and dreams and to explain the differences between

* The author is indebted to Professor Franciscus Verellen, Dr. Paul Katz, and Miss Dora Ching for providing valuable comments and materials.

sleeping and waking, not to mention life and death.¹ As a result of Tylor's work, the dream has come to be considered a major influence on the origin and development of religion.² Many anthropologists have relied upon the abundant ethnographic data collected from a variety of societies to illustrate the religious functions of dreams,³ as well as to establish what they consider to be a universal theory that dreaming has been a key source of religious inspiration in prophetic and millenarian movements.⁴

These studies have enhanced our understanding of the phenomenon of dreaming and its relationship with religion. However, Chinese dream-data have long been ignored by scholars attempting to determine the "universal" nature of dreams and their religious connections. Furthermore, up to the present, only a few Sinologists have recognized the significance of the study of this topic.⁵ Therefore, I believe that a comprehensive study of the relationship between dreams and religion in a Chinese context should shed some light on general theories of dreams and religious studies. As a starting point, in this paper I only intend to explore the relationship between dreams and religious Taoism; that is, to examine the Taoist beliefs, rituals, and stories related to dreams in order to illustrate Taoist adepts' attitudes toward dreaming, interpretations and treatments of dreams, and utilization of dream-stories. A comprehensive study of this subject would involve the entire corpus of Taoist literature; however, in this paper, I use only data collected in Chang Chün-fang's 張君房 (961?-1042?)⁶ *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* 雲笈七籤 as an example. This is because the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, as an encyclopedic anthology, not only contains essentials of the most important Taoist literature dating to medieval times (third to tenth

¹ See E. B. Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind and the Development of Civilization* (London: Bradbury, Evans, and Co., 1870), pp. 5-10.

² See Roy G. D'Andrade, "Anthropological Studies of Dreams," in Francis L. K. Hsu, ed., *Psychological Anthropology* (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1961), pp. 296-332.

³ See G. E. von Grunebaum and Roger Caillois, eds., *The Dream and Human Societies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), and James Gollnick, *Dreams in the Psychology of Religion* (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1987).

⁴ See Vittorio Lanternari, "Dreams as Charismatic Significants: Their Bearing on the Rise of New Religious Movements," in Thomas R. Williams, ed., *Psychological Anthropology* (Paris: Mouton Publishers, 1975), pp. 221-235, and John Homiak, "The Mystic Revelation of Rasta Far-Eye: Visionary Communication in a Prophetic Movement," in Barbara Tedlock, ed., *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 220-245.

⁵ See Laurence G. Thompson, "Dream Divination and Chinese Popular Religion," *Journal of Chinese Religions* 16 (1988), pp. 73-82, and Michel Strickmann, "Dreamwork of Psycho-Sinologists: Doctors, Taoists, Monks," in Carolyn T. Brown, ed., *Psycho-Sinology: The Universe of Dreams in Chinese Culture* (Washington, D. C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1988), pp. 25-46.

⁶ For a study of Chang Chün-fang's life, see Lu Jen-lung 盧仁龍, "Chang Chün-fang shih-chi k'ao-shu 張君房事跡考述," *Shih-chieh tsung-chiao yen-chiu* 世界宗教研究, 1990: 1, pp. 55-64.

century A.D.) but also represents a Sung synthesis of Taoist teachings (see below).

II. A Survey of the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*

In general, we can regard the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* as a by-product of the *Ta-Sung t'ien-kung pao-tsang* 大宋天宮寶藏 which was completed in 1019. The compilation of *Ta-Sung t'ien-kung pao-tsang* began either shortly before or soon after November 10, 1012.⁷ The Sung 宋 Emperor Chen-tsung 真宗 (r. 993-1022) sent all the Taoist books of the Pi-ko 祕閣 (the imperial library) and the T'ai-ch'ing 太清 [Temple or Library]⁸ to Hangchow 杭州, ordering the Prefect Ch'i Kuan 戚綸 and the Fiscal Intendant of Liang-che circuit Ch'en Yao-tso 陳堯佐 to oversee textual revisions and the compilation of a set of the *Tao Tsang* 道藏. However, when Ch'i Kuan was transferred to another prefecture on April 19, 1014, this project was still incomplete. Therefore, between November 15, 1015, and February 10, 1016, Chang Chün-fang was appointed as Assistant Draftsman with the sole responsibility of seeing this project through to its completion. In addition to the texts previously sent around 1013, Chang Chün-fang received collections from Shu-chou 蘇州, Yüeh-chou 越州 and T'ai-chou 台州, as well as another consignment of Taoist books and Manichaean scriptures collected from Fu-chou 福州, Chien-chou 建州, etc. Together with a group of Taoist masters Chang Chün-fang classified and collated the material, thus completing a Canon of 4,565 *chüan* 卷 in 466 cases, numbered by the characters of the *ch'ien-tzu-wen* 千字文, from *t'ien* 天 to *kung* 宮. The title of the new Canon was *Ta-Sung t'ien-kung pao-tsang*. By the spring of 1019 seven sets had been copied and submitted to the Emperor.⁹ After completing the Canon, he selected 10,000 essential

⁷ The basic source concerning the process of the compilation of *Ta-Sung t'ien-kung pao-tsang* is Chang Chün-fang's preface to the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*. For studies of this event, see Ch'en kuo-fu 陳國符, *Tao-tsang yüan-liu k'ao* 道藏源流考 (Peking 北京: Chung-hua shu-chü 中華書局, 1960), pp. 131-135, and Piet van der Loon, *Taoist Books in the Libraries of the Sung Period* (London: Ithaca Press, 1984), pp. 30-34.

⁸ T'ai-ch'ing 太清 was interpreted as the T'ai-ch'ing lou 太清樓 (the private library of the emperor) by van der Loon, but Ch'en Kuo-fu claimed that it might refer to the T'ai-ch'ing kung 太清宮 (a Taoist temple) in Po-chou 亳州; see Piet van der Loon, *op. cit.*, p. 31, and Ch'en kuo-fu, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁹ See Chang Chün-fang, "Hsü 序," *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* (*Cheng-t'ung Tao-tsang* 正統道藏 [Shanghai 上海: Shang-wu yin-shu-kuan 商務印書館, 1923-1926], *ts'e* 冊 677-702), *chüan* 卷 1, pp. 1a-2a. However, Piet van der Loon claims that Chang's preface is untrustworthy. He finds some discrepancies in this preface, such as that the character for *kung* is not the 466th but the 425th in the *Ch'ien-tzu wen*, and the Pi-ko as well as T'ai-ch'ing [lou] kept only part of the available Taoist books. Moreover, since this preface is not mentioned in official sources before the Southern Sung, and Chang's role in the compilation of the Canon does not figure in any Taoist source, van der Loon argues that Chang Chün-fang did not go beyond his instructions to supervise the preparation of the manuscripts; see Piet van der Loon, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34.

items from the work in the compilation of the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* and submitted them to Emperor Jen-tsung 仁宗 (r. 1023-1063) around 1028 or 1029.¹⁰

Kristofer Schipper has claimed that the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* poses a number of problems. First of all, a number of Manichean works included in the compilation of the Canon are mentioned by Chang in his preface. This has drawn the attention of historians studying Manicheism, but the results of their research have been disappointing, particularly since the present edition of the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* contains no identifiable Manichean material.¹¹ However, in his preface, Chang only mentioned that he had "received" some Manichean scriptures when he was editing the Canon. He did not tell us whether those Manichean scriptures had been compiled into the Canon or not. Moreover, he did not inform us of any relationship that existed between his *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* and these Manichean scriptures. If Manichean material is preserved in the Canon or the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, further research on the Manichean scriptures of Sung China as well as the Taoist Canon and the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* would be necessary before reaching any conclusions. Therefore, it is reasonable to question Schipper's observation.

Secondly, Schipper noted that the extant *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* is not divided into seven parts, despite Chang's intention to do so in his preface.¹² Such a claim may also be considered suspect. Judging either from the title or from the preface, Chang Chün-fang seems to have had no intention of dividing the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* into seven parts. As interpreted by Ch'en Kuo-fu 陳國符, the title, *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, simply means, "The Essentials or Outlines of the Seven Sections of the Taoist

However, there is also reason to doubt van der Loon's arguments. First, the content and sequence of characters of the *ch'ien-tzu wen* used by Chang Chün-fang may differ from that we have today. Second, Chang Chün-fang did not say that Pi-ko and T'ai-ch'ing kept all the available Taoist books. Besides, T'ai-ch'ing may not refer to T'ai-ch'ing lou but to T'ai-ch'ing kung. Finally, Chang Chün-fang did not claim that he himself alone completed the Canon. Actually, Chang Chün-fang told us how the various sources were gathered in Hangchow, and admitted that many Taoist masters and other officials had joined this program and had contributed to the classification and collation of the material. Furthermore, we can see Chang Chün-fang's profound knowledge of Taoist literature and history through the compilation of the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that Chang Chün-fang really played a crucial role in the compilation and completion of the *Ta-Sung t'ien-kung pao-tsang*. At least, it is unnecessary to deny the close relationship between the *Ta-Sung t'ien-kung pao-tsang* and the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*. For a detailed discussion of Chang Chün-fang's role in the compilation of *Ta-Sung t'ien-kung pao-tsang*, see also Lu Jen-lung, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60.

¹⁰ See Piet van der Loon, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

¹¹ K. M. Schipper, "Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien," in William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 966-968, esp. p. 967.

¹² *Ibid.* A similar argument can be found in Boltz's work; see Judith M. Boltz, *A Survey of Taoist Literature, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1987), pp. 229-230.

Canon.”¹³ Chang Chün-fang’s preface itself lends support to Ch’en’s interpretation. The preface reads, “[After having completed the Canon, I hence] selected the essentials of the seven sections of Taoist literature, in order to provide an imperfect treasury of the profound writings of various Taoist masters.”¹⁴ Although the number of volumes of the *Yün-chi ch’i-ch’ien* is 122 *chüan* 卷 instead of 120 *chüan* claimed by Chang himself in his preface, we have no reason to conjecture that the organization of this text had been altered dramatically in Sung times.¹⁵

Moreover, although the almost total absence of the public liturgical forms of Taoism in the *Yün-chi ch’i-ch’ien* should be acknowledged,¹⁶ it is undeniable that the *Yün-chi ch’i-ch’ien* covers almost all aspects of Taoism. There are thirty-seven headings of the *Yün-chi ch’i-ch’ien*’s sections (*pu* 部) which can be identified.¹⁷ The first section is devoted to the philosophical definitions of *Tao* 道 and *Te* 德. Sections two to six are about cosmogony and scriptural transmissions. Sections seven to eleven deal with Heaven and Earth, the stars, and the sacred space. Sections twelve to twenty-six deal with various techniques of immortality and longevity, including hygiene, diet, physical therapy, ritual purification, meditation, embryonic respiration, alchemy, prescriptive pharmaceuticals, talismans and diagrams, liberation of the corpse (*shih-chieh* 尸解), etc. Sections twenty-seven to thirty-two contain doctrinal and philosophical treatises mostly concerning immortality and longevity. Sections thirty-three to thirty-five are selections of verse. The last two sections are devoted to hagiography.¹⁸ In comparison to the

¹³ Ch’en Kuo-fu, *op. cit.*, p. 241. See also Nakajima Ryüzō 中嶋隆藏, “Unkyū shichisen no shohon ni tsuite 雲笈七籤の諸本について,” *Shūkan Tōyōgaku* 集刊東洋學 56 (1986), pp. 66-76, esp. p. 67.

¹⁴ Chang Chün-fang, “Hsü,” *Yün-chi ch’i-ch’ien*, *chüan* 1, p. 2b.

¹⁵ Boltz even conjectures that if Chang’s encyclopedic anthology was radically altered, the changes seem most likely to have taken place sometime between 1114 and 1244; see J. M. Boltz, *op. cit.*, p. 230. However, since we can find some odd duplications in the content of the extant *Yün-chi ch’i-ch’ien*, Nakajima Ryüzō suggests that the Ming edition (either the *Tao-tsang* edition or the Ch’ing-chen kuan 清真館 edition) of 122 *chüan* comes from a blend of various Sung editions, each composed of 120 *chüan*; see Nakajima Ryüzō, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁶ Kristofer Schipper claims that the liturgical forms of Taoism (such as retreats, offerings, petitions, memorials) are totally absent in the *Yün-chi ch’i-ch’ien*. He hence proposes that the *Yün-chi ch’i-ch’ien* cannot be regarded as a digest of the Sung Canon; see K. M. Schipper, *op. cit.*, p. 967. However, some petitions, memorials and rituals still can be found in the *Yün-chi ch’i-ch’ien*, even though they are only a small portion in comparison to the great amount of liturgical literature in the Taoist Canon. For a discussion of this problem, see J. M. Boltz, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

¹⁷ See John Lagerwey, “Le Yun-ji qi-qian: structure et sources,” in K. M. Schipper, ed., *Projet Tao-tsang: Index du Yunji Qiqian* (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1981), pp. xix-lxxi.

¹⁸ The English translation of these headings follows that in K. M. Schipper, *op. cit.*, p. 967, and J. M. Boltz *op. cit.*, p. 231.

twelve sections (*shih-erh pu* 十二部) of the Taoist Canon, we may conclude that except for “public rituals” (*wei-i* 威儀) and “petitions and memorials” (*chang-piao* 章表), the topics of the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* represent all the major features of Taoist literature.¹⁹

Furthermore, most scholars agree that the majority of texts included in the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* evoke an earlier epoch, largely dating to the Six Dynasties and the T'ang Dynasty.²⁰ In view of this, I would suggest that the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* represents the crystallization of religious Taoism from the late Han to early Sung periods.²¹ Through the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, we can investigate various Taoist ideas prevalent in medieval China. In addition, this work reveals Chang Chün-fang's understanding of religious Taoism, since Chang not only collected voluminous sources and arranged them into a well-organized book but, also, occasionally added his own introduction and comments to some sections of this anthology. However, Chang Chün-fang may have been indebted to other Taoist adepts who worked on the compilation of the *Ta-Sung t'ien-kung pao-tsang* in classifying and arranging the various sources, and tracing the history of Taoism. Therefore, to a certain degree, we can regard the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* as a Sung synthesis of Taoism. Nevertheless, in this paper I consider the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* as representative of medieval Taoism as regards the relationship that existed between religious Taoism and dreams.

III. Taoist Attitudes Toward Dreams

Before we discuss Taoist practices and interpretations regarding dreams, we should briefly examine Taoist attitudes toward the phenomena of dreaming. In the section entitled “Miscellaneous Methods of Cultivation and Hygiene” (*Tsa-hsiu-she* 雜修攝), an excerpt from the *Book for Nourishing the Vital Principle and Prolonging Life* (*Yang-hsing yen-ming lu* 養性延命錄),²² one finds the followings:

Movement subdues the cold; Stillness subdues the heat. The reason for

¹⁹ For a survey of the twelve sections of the Taoist Canon, see Ch'en Kuo-fu, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

²⁰ See K. M. Schipper, *op. cit.*, pp. 967-968, and J. M. Boltz, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-231.

²¹ A similar opinion can be found in Fukunaga Mitsuji 福永光司, *Dōkyō shisōshi kenkyū* 道教思想史研究 (Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten 岩波書店, 1987), pp. 455-471.

²² The authorship of the *Yang-hsing yen-ming lu* is sometimes attributed to T'ao Hung-ching 陶弘景 (456-536), and sometimes to Sun Ssu-miao 孫思邈 (d. 682), while Henri Maspero asserts that it is a Sung work composed between 1013 and 1161. Whatever the case may be, the copy that Chang Chün-fang used to compile the *Ta-Sung t'ien-kung pao-tsang*, and also quoted in the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, cannot be dated after 1019. For a discussion of the authorship of *Yang-hsing yen-ming lu*, see Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, translated by Frank A. Kierman, Jr. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1981),

being able to attain long life is having the ability to move and to be still. Having purified the vitality one can then unite with the Tao. Chuang Tzu 莊子 said: "The Perfected Man (*chen-jen* 真人) does not dream whenever he sleeps." Shen Tzu 慎子 said: "If one does nothing during daytime, one will not dream at night."²³

This passage reveals that "not to dream" (*pu-meng* 不夢) was regarded as a symbol of having reached the highest stage of Taoist self-cultivation. Conversely, it implies that the person who still has dreams is considered a person who has not yet attained immortality. For example, in the section entitled "Recipes and Drugs" (Fang-yao 方藥), a quotation from Su Yu's 蘇遊 *San-p'in i-shen pao-ming shen-tan fang* 三品頤神保命神丹方 (preface dated 682) states that dreaming and thinking too much will disturb one's spirit and hinder one's ability to become an immortal.²⁴ A similar idea has been expounded upon more clearly in the section entitled "Outline of Denomination of the Seven Sections" (Ch'i-pu ming-shu yao-chi 七部名數要記), which consists of four articles: "Nine Guardings" (Chiu-shou 九守), "Thirteen Emptinesses" (Shih-san hsü-wu 十三虛無), "Seven Retributions" (Ch'i-pao 七報), and "Seven Wounds" (Ch'i-shang 七傷). In the "Nine Guardings," the text reads:

Lao-chün 老君 said that the so-called Perfected Man (*chen-jen*) is a person whose nature has united with the Tao. [The Perfected Man] follows the Tao..., guarding the simplicity of the Great Chaos and standing at the middle of Supreme Purity. He does not dream during his sleeping times, and does not manifest his intelligence. He moves with no shape and is still, with no body.²⁵

As mentioned above, we may conclude that Taoist adepts seem to have had negative attitudes toward dreams. To answer the question of why they possessed such attitudes, we have to turn to a discussion of Taoist theories of dreaming.

p. 485, note 78; Chu Yüeh-li 朱越利, "Yang-hsing yen-ming lu k'ao 養性延命錄考," *Shih-chieh tsung-chiao yen-chiu* 世界宗教研究, 1986:1, pp. 101-115; Jen Chi-yü 任繼愈 *et al.*, eds., *Tao-tsang t'i-yao* 道藏提要 (Peking: Chung-kuo she-hui k'o-hsüeh ch'u-pan-she 中國社會科學出版社, 1991), pp. 604-606.

²³ *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, *chüan* 32, p. 10a.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 78, pp. 14a-15a.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 91, pp. 11a-11b. It is noteworthy that in this section Chang Chün-fang does not note his sources. It is probable that Chang Chün-fang composed these four articles of this section by drawing on various sources from Taoist writings.

IV. Taoist Interpretations of the Causes of Dreaming

Taoist negative attitudes toward dreams are closely associated with the Taoist perception of the causes of dreaming. Taoist adepts believed that some dreams were caused by evil spirits. The *Middle Scripture of the Three Corpse-Demons* (*San-shih chung-ching* 三尸中經), quoted in the Keng-shen 庚申 section, states that:

In everyone's body dwell Three Corpse-Demons and Nine Worms (*san-shih chiu-ch'ung* 三尸九蟲) which are very harmful to that person. They usually ascend to heaven on the *keng-shen* 庚申 day to make a report to the Celestial Thearch (T'ien-ti 天帝). They record and report all the host's sins in order to stop the progression of the host's "life-register" (*sheng-chi* 生籍), for the purpose of reducing the allotment of life and prosperity of the host, and to cause the host to die quickly. After the host dies, the *hun* 魂 soul ascends to heaven, while the *p'o* 魄 soul descends to the earth. Then the Three Corpse-Demons will wander and are known as ghosts (*kuei* 鬼). They expect sacrifices during the four seasons and eight festivals. If the sacrifices are not exquisite enough, they will cause disasters. They will produce various diseases harmful to a human's life. The Corpse-Demon of the upper region, named P'eng Chü 彭倨, dwells in the head. He hurts the upper part of the body; causing near-sightedness, the loss of hair, a sour taste in the mouth, the aging of the face, and the loss of teeth. The Corpse-Demon of the middle region, named P'eng Chih 彭質, dwells in the abdomen. He hurts the five viscera; causing one to be short of breath and forgetful, making one fond of doing vicious deeds and overeating..., or causing one to have unexpected and confusing dreams. The Corpse-Demon of the lower region, named P'eng Chiao 彭矯, dwells in the feet. He causes one to be... out of control and licentious.²⁶

According to this text, we can infer that dreams were regarded as a kind of disaster or disease caused by the Corpse-Demons, specifically, the Corpse-Demon of Middle which dwells in one's abdomen.²⁷ However, this does not mean that the Corpse-Demons were believed to be the sole cause of dreaming. The *Secret Book of Great Cinnabar* (*T'ai-tan yin-shu* 太丹隱書), quoted in the section entitled "Secret and Essential Methods and Instructions" (*Mi-yao chüeh-fa* 祕要訣法), states that:

This method of expelling the nightmare was used by the Perfected Man of Supreme Simplicity (T'ai-su chen-jen 太素真人) to teach the initiates. The

²⁶ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 81, pp. 15b-16a.

²⁷ A similar theory can be found in the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, *chüan* 13, p. 13a, and *chüan* 82, pp. 9a-9b.

causes of frequent nightmares are: (1) *p'o-yao* 魄妖; (2) *hsin-shih* 心試; (3) *shih-tsei* 尸賊.²⁸

The so-called *p'o-yao* is a human's *p'o*-soul which sometimes can fight with the *hun*-soul and causes nightmares.²⁹ Sometimes, the *p'o*-soul, together with the corpse-demons, can invite various demons to intrude and dwell in one's body, which also can induce bad dreams.³⁰ Also, the *p'o*-soul can associate with "various breaths" (*pai-ch'i* 百氣) to attack the "mind" (*hsin* 心), and cause a nightmare,³¹ which may be the so-called *hsin-shih* (trial of mind). The so-called *shih-tsei* might refer to the corpse-demons mentioned above.³²

In addition to dreams that are caused by the corpse-demons, *p'o*-souls and other demons, the Taoists believed that some dreams are caused by other spirits. Such dreams were regarded as a specific way of communication between spirits and human beings. For example, *The Scripture of Ingesting the Breath of the Jade Cabinet of the Middle Mountain* (*Chung-shan yü-kuei fu-ch'i ching* 中山玉櫃服氣經), written by Pi-yen hsien-sheng 碧巖先生 and quoted in the section entitled "Ways of Breathing of Various Schools" (*Chu-chia ch'i-fa* 諸家氣法), states that:

There are five precepts which the True Lord of Supreme One (T'ai-i chen-chün 太一真君) teaches. Whoever follows them piously will reap rewards from the deities... If someone violates these five precepts, within a period of fourteen days, [the deities will] warn him in a dream to make him know [his faults].³³

According to this paragraph, we know that some dreams were believed to be used by deities to warn the people. *The Scripture of Inner Scenes of the Yellow Court of Supreme Purity* (*Shang-ch'ing huang-t'ing nei-ching ching* 上清黃庭內景經), quoted in the section entitled "Scriptural Teachings of the Three Grottos," states that whenever a Taoist adept intends to transmit this scripture to someone, he should request instructions from deities. If the Taoist is permitted to do so, he will be told

²⁸ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 45, p. 20a.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 82, p. 5a. In general, the Taoists believed that a human's souls are composed of three *hun*-souls and seven *p'o*-souls; see Fujino Iwatomo 藤野岩友, "Unkyū shichisen ni mieru sankon shichihaku 雲笈七籤に見える三魂七魄," in *idem*, *Chūgoku no bungaku to reizoku* 中國の文學と禮俗 (Tōkyō: Kadokawa shoten 角川書店, 1976), pp. 398-406.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 46, p. 15a.

³¹ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 46, p. 10b.

³² In the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, there are many quotations concerning how to deal with a nightmare caused by the Corpse-Demons: *chüan* 13, pp. 12b-14b; *chüan* 45, pp. 10b-11a; *chüan* 46, pp. 7a-7b, 15a-15b; *chüan* 81, pp. 15b-17a; *chüan* 82, pp. 2b-3a, 5a-5b, 8b-10a, 14b-17a; *chüan* 83, pp. 7a-7b, 8a-8b.

³³ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 60, pp. 6a-7a. The same text is quoted in *chüan* 83, pp. 1a-2a.

so by them in his dreams.³⁴ Moreover, the *Instruction for Guarding the Scripture of the True One of the Five Dippers* (*Shou wu-tou chen-i ching k'ou-chüeh* 守五斗真一經口訣), quoted in the section entitled "Secret and Essential Instructions and Methods," says that if one visualizes the Three Ones (*san-i* 三一) during the daytime on the first day of each month, at night on the same day he will see, in his dreams, a white bird, a white swan, a white tiger and objects such as gold and jade, all of which are transformations and revelations of the Three Ones. If one practiced ceaselessly, gradually one will be able to see the Three Ones with one's eyes.³⁵ According to this narration, we can conclude that dreaming was thought of as an inferior way to contact the deities.

To sum up, dreaming, either regarded as a kind of disease caused by demons, or as a tool used by deities to send their warnings, instructions, and other messages to humans, was disparaged by Taoists. In other words, the ultimate goal of a Taoist was "no dream."

V. Taoist Treatments of Dreams

No matter how the Taoists longed to reach a stage of not dreaming, in real life they might dream as frequently as ordinary people unless they took special measures. Furthermore, since some dreams were viewed as an obstacle to attaining immortality, Taoist adepts created some methods to deal with nightmares or calamitous dreams. Several of these techniques may be found in the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*. The first involves taking drugs. "The Method of Expelling the Three Corpse-Demons and Nine Worms" (*Ch'u-ch'ü san-shih chiu-ch'ung fa* 除去三尸九蟲法), recorded in the Keng-shen section, reads:

The Demons of the Three Corpses can change their shapes into various forms... Sometimes they cause a person to dream that his wife and children are sick or dead in order to frighten him and make him cry sorrowfully. Sometimes, they cause a person to dream of graves full of numerous poorly buried corpses... The *Scripture of the Immortals* (*Hsien-ching* 仙經) says, "If someone wants to take drugs of the immortals, he must first take the drugs which can expel the Three Corpse-Demons." The recipe is as follows:

- (1) tuber of *Aconitum Carmichaelii* Desboux (Fu-tzu 附子): seven stalks; prepared through decoction (*p'ao* 炮).
- (2) luxuriant weeds (Wu-i 蕪荑): two *liang* 兩; prepared by frying.
- (3) dried processed resin of *Rhus Verniciflua* Stokes (Kan-ch'i 乾漆): two *liang*; prepared by frying until smoke is produced.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 11, pp. 6a-6b.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 49, pp. 14b-15a.

These items need to be sifted and pounded into powder. Eat one *pi* 匕 of this concoction with wine before eating other foods twice a day.³⁶

Since the Three Corpse-Demons were believed to be the main cause of bad dreams, after the Three Corpse-Demons were killed or expelled by drugs bad dreams would presumably cease. Taoists also believed that the effectiveness of drugs can be revealed through the contents of dreams. A text collected in the Keng-shen section reads:

If someone suddenly dreams of building a house and bamboo fence, that means that the Corpses and Worms are living together within the abdomen. If someone dreams of having intercourse with a woman, that means that the Corpses and Worms are having a meeting. In a severe situation the person will become sick. If one takes cinnabar, and that is effective, one will dream of a great fire burning up one's house. If one consumes various other efficacious medicines, one will dream that one's parents have died, or that one's wife, children, brothers, and sisters, as well as women have been killed. Or one will dream that graves have been destroyed and coffins have vanished, and someone has been put to death by the "five types of mutilating punishment" (*wu-hsing* 五刑). All these indicate that all the Corpse-Demons and Worms are going to be expelled.³⁷

The second way to extinguish nightmares is to use talismans. The *Middle Scripture of the Three Corpse-Demons*, included in the Keng-shen section, provides three talismans for expelling the Three Corpse-Demons and explains:

The Three Corpse-Demons and Nine Worms can cause many types of diseases. A sick person who dreams of fighting in the night is actually tormented by these [Corpse-Demons] and worms. One can use peach-wood to make three talismans and bury them under the doorsill, thereby preventing the demons from causing harm. It is common to make talismans and bear them on a *keng-shen* day, and swallow them on a *keng-tzu* 庚子 day. After that, the three Corpse-Demons will leave the human body.³⁸

According to this text, there were three ways of using talismans to thwart the Corpse-Demons' nightmares and pains: burying them in one's residence, taking them with oneself, and swallowing them.

The third way to stop or prevent a nightmare is to practice the technique of "ingesting breath" (*fu-ch'i* 服氣). The *True Scripture of Middle Yellow of the*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 82, pp. 8b-10a.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 83, pp. 8a-8b.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 81, pp. 17a-17b.

Supreme Purity (T'ai-ch'ing chung-huang chen-ching 太清中黃真經), written by Chiu-hsien chün 九仙君 with commentary by Chung-huang chen-jen 中黃真人, states that the Three Corpse-Demons always try to stir up one's various desires, particularly the middle worm which can make one dream and become absent-minded. Yet, this book insists, if one can firmly practice the technique of ingesting breath, the Three Corpse-Worms will die.³⁹ As a result, dreams which are caused by the middle Corpse-Worm will not occur again.

The fourth way is to pray and practice imprecations. After dreaming, a Taoist can send a memorial to ask the heavenly court to dispatch a spirit-lord leading hundreds of spirit generals and soldiers to descend and deal with his troubles.⁴⁰ Taoists can also pray to various deities, including the Jade-Emperor (Yü-ti 玉帝), the Great Tao-Lord of Supreme Upper (T'ai-shang ta-tao-chün 太上大道君), Golden Boys (Chin-t'ung 金童) and Jade Maidens (Yü-nü 玉女), as well as the *hun*-soul within one's own body, to guard his body and extirpate all the demons which caused the bad dreams.⁴¹ Another way is to imprecate demons by saying: "Three Corpse-Demons and Nine Worms, I know your abilities!" or "I know you are the Three Corpse-Demons and Nine Worms!"⁴² Also, a Taoist adept can simply face east and say: "The bad dream will be exposed to the weeds and trees."⁴³ Such a bad dream would supposedly not occur again.

The fifth and the simplest way is to keep silent. For example, the *Book for Nourishing the Vital Principle and Prolonging Life* states: "Tell your good dreams to others and do not say anything about your bad dreams. Then you will be able to prolong your life."⁴⁴

Nevertheless, some dreams were regarded as an auspicious omen or as a message sent by deities. Naturally, Taoists had different ways of treating these dreams. One of their approaches was to tell the content of a felicitous dream to others.⁴⁵ They believed that such an action would make the dream come true. Another way is to pray to deities to continue encountering good spirits and immortals in dreams.⁴⁶ However, some dreams were also viewed as messages, to which the dreamers should react properly in order to fulfill the demand of deities or to correspond with the deities' actions. In the next section, I will illustrate this idea more clearly by examining some Taoist dream-stories.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, chüan 13, pp. 12b-14a.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, chüan 45, pp. 9b-10b.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, chüan 45, pp. 20a-20b; chüan 46, pp. 10b-11a, 15a-15b; chüan 47, pp. 11a-12a.

⁴² *Ibid.*, chüan 83, pp. 7a-7b.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, chüan 35, p. 13b.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, chüan 32, p. 16b.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, chüan 45, p. 20b; chüan 46, pp. 18b-19a.

VI. Themes of Taoist Dream-stories and Their Implications

The tradition of using tales or miracles to support ethical or religious teachings had been developed from pre-Ch'in 秦 to Han 漢 periods. For example, Han Ying 韓嬰, a Confucian scholar living in the early stages of the Former Han Dynasty, wrote a book entitled *Han [Ying's] Tales Outside the Book of Songs* (*Han shih wai-chuan* 韓詩外傳), in which he used various stories to prove the eternal values of the teachings of the *Book of Songs* (*Shih-ching* 詩經).⁴⁷ Another Former Han scholar Liu Hsiang 劉向 (79-8 B.C.), in his works *A Collection of Tales* (*Shuo-yüan* 說苑) and *New Narratives* (*Hsin-hsü* 新序), also used many stories to exemplify the importance and value of the Confucian teachings and moral standards.⁴⁸ Taoist adepts, probably influenced by such an indigenous tradition or by the Buddhist tradition, also created and collected various miracle tales as an important tool for preaching their beliefs.⁴⁹ As a result, the sections entitled "Tales" (*Chuan* 傳), both in the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* and the Taoist Canon, have become indispensable for the study of Taoist values.

Although attaining the stage of "no dream" was perceived as the highest achievement of a Taoist, the core of many tales of *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien* is a dream-event. The dream of each story was essentially interpreted as a specific type of communication between humans and spirits, and not as a calamitous phenomenon caused by demons, particularly the Corpse-Demons. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that the primary audiences of these miracle tales were not Taoist adepts but lay devotees and the antagonists of religious Taoism. Hence, the presence of the commonly accepted idea that a dream was a form of communication between the human world and that of the spirits⁵⁰ was adopted by Taoist adepts and applied in the miracle tales to display the supernatural power of Taoist deities in order to

⁴⁷ For a study of *Han shih wai-chuan*, see Hsü Fu-kuan 徐復觀, "Han-shih wai-chuan te yen-chiu 韓詩外傳的研究," in *idem*, *Liang-Han ssu-hsiang shih, Chüan 3* 兩漢思想史卷三 (Taipei: T'ai-wan hsüeh-sheng shu-chü 台灣學生書局, 1979), pp. 1-47.

⁴⁸ For a study of Liu Hsiang's works, see Hsü Fu-kuan, "Liu Hsiang Hsin Hsü Shuo Yüan te yen-chiu 劉向新序說苑的研究," in *idem*, *Liang-Han ssu-hsiang shih, Chüan 3*, pp. 49-115.

⁴⁹ Franciscus Verellen argues that the Taoist tradition of collecting evidential miracle tales, as exemplified by Tu Kuang-t'ing's 杜光庭 (850-933) *Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism* (*Tao-chiao ling-yen chi* 道教靈驗記), is an adaptation of Buddhist tradition; see Franciscus Verellen, "'Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism': The Inversion of a Buddhist Apologetic Tradition in Late T'ang China," *T'oung Pao* 78 (1992), pp. 217-263, esp. pp. 227-233. The Buddhist influence on this Taoist tradition is undeniable, however, Tu Kuang-t'ing, in his preface to the *Tao-chiao ling-yen chi*, actually mentioned the Confucian tradition instead of Buddhism as his model. Hence, Confucian or indigenous influence on the Taoist tradition should not be underestimated.

⁵⁰ From ancient times onwards, most Chinese people believed that human beings could contact spirits through dreaming and that the messages sent by spirits in dreams were usually real. For a survey of such an idea, see Roberto K. Ong, *The Interpretation of Dreams in Ancient China* (Bochum: Studienverlag Brockmeyer, 1985), pp. 17-46.

enhance lay devotees' belief in Taoism and even convert other lay people. In the following section, I will investigate the dream-stories of Tu Kuang-t'ing's 杜光庭 (850-933) *Evidential Miracles in Support of Taoism* (*Tao-chiao ling-yen chi* 道教靈驗記),⁵¹ which was quoted in the last section of the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*.

First of all, let us examine some major themes of these dream-stories to reveal the beliefs which Taoist adepts tried to propagandize. The first theme is that of a sick person having an extraordinary experience in his dream. For example, there is a story in which a Taoist cleric named Chang Jen-piao 張仁表 fell ill and dreamed that he was summoned by the "Director of Destiny" (Ssu-ming 司命) and taken to hell. Then, he asked the "Heavenly Worthy of Great Unity, Savior from Suffering" (T'ai-i chiu-k'u t'ien-tsun 太一救苦天尊) for help, and was rescued by this deity. Even his disease was cured in the dream.⁵² Another story informs us of a sick man who was healed by the Celestial Master (T'ien-shih 天師) deity in his dream.⁵³ Furthermore, there are several stories about sick persons who were cured by various Taoist deities such as Hsi-wang-mu 西王母, the Three Generals (San Chiang-chün 三將軍),⁵⁴ the deity of one's own destiny (*pen-ming shen* 本命神),⁵⁵ and the deity of Heaven (T'ien 天)⁵⁶ in dreams. Yet, in some dreams, the deity simply instructs the patient how to cure himself.⁵⁷ These tales imply that some Taoist deities were healers who could cure diseases in dreams.

The second theme is that of an individual visiting the spirit world or the underworld in a dream. For instance, one story tells us that the T'ang 唐 Emperor Tai-tsung 代宗 (r. 762-779) frequently dreamed that he, in the company of deities and following the deity Lao Chün 老君, traveled and visited various places of the spirit world such as the Three Islands of the Immortals (*san-tao* 三島) and the Ten Continents (*shih-chou* 十洲).⁵⁸ The other places which people visited in dreams included: (1) the court of the Heavenly Worthies (T'ien-tsun 天尊);⁵⁹ (2) the Grotto of Lo-ch'uan 羅川 where the Twenty-seven Immortals (*erh-shih-ch'i chen* 二十七真) resided;⁶⁰ (3) the immortal Yin Ch'ang-sheng's 陰長生 grotto;⁶¹ (4) the court of the

⁵¹ For a study of this book, see F. Verellen, *op. cit.*

⁵² See *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, *chüan* 118, pp. 5b-7b. An English translation of this story can be found in F. Verellen, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-242.

⁵³ See *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, *chüan* 119, pp. 1a-3a.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 119, pp. 7a-8a.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 120, pp. 14a-15a.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 120, pp. 20b-22a; *chüan* 121, pp. 18b-19b.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 120, pp. 3b-4b, pp. 12b-13a.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 118, pp. 10a-11a.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 15a-16a, pp. 16a-17a.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 18a-18b.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 18b-19b.

Heavenly Worthy of Great Unity (T'ai-i t'ien-tsun 太一天尊);⁶² and (5) the court of the Celestial Master (T'ien-shih 天師).⁶³ In addition, one person's visit to hell has been described as such:

A black city walled in iron and covered by smoke. Its gates and battlements were guarded by animal-headed, human-bodied warriors, with braided hair and arms twined round by snakes. Some of them had four mouths and eight eyes, others ten arms and nine heads. Their teeth were as bright as frost and snow, their fangs as keen as sword blades. It was truly like a scene in a painting of hell (*ti-yü* 地獄).⁶⁴

This might be a typical picture of hell in medieval China.⁶⁵ These stories show that beyond the human world there is another, supernatural world. They also indicate that humans can contact the other-world through dreaming.

The third theme is that of someone being punished or injured by spirits in a dream. One story states that:

Kung-sun P'u 公孫璞 was a native of Kao-ling 高陵 of Yung-chou 雍州... He frequently made his servants fish, hunt, and kill various animals for him to satisfy his appetite. One day, he dreamed that there were thousands of people, carrying swords, bows and arrows, entering his house to catch and kill him. He was sweating and frightened. As a result, he developed an ulcer... Yao Te-i 姚得一, a Taoist priest of Hua-shan 華山... told [Kung-sun P'u's son] that such a disease was caused by the numerous ghosts of various animals who had been killed unjustly [by his father].⁶⁶

In the case of Chang Jen-piao mentioned above, he was arrested in a dream and sent to the infernal prisons because he had committed the sin of speaking untruths.⁶⁷ Another story involves Yen Chuan 嚴譔, the Military Governor (Chieh-tu shih 節度使) of Hung-chou, who once attempted to remove a bell from the Sanctuary of the Flying Carpet (Yu-wei kuan 遊帷觀), a Taoist temple for the cult of Hsü Hsün 許遜,⁶⁸ and put

⁶² *Ibid.*, *chüan* 118, pp. 5b-7b.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 119, pp. 4b-5b.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 118, pp. 5b-7b. Cf. English translation in F. Verellen, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

⁶⁵ For other dream-stories concerning visiting the underworld in the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, see *chüan* 120, pp. 14a-15a, pp. 20-22a. For a study of scenes of hell in medieval Chinese literature, see Maeno Naoaki 前野直彬, "Meikai yūkō 冥界遊行," *Chūgoku bungaku hō* 中國文學報 14 (April 1961), pp. 38-57; 15 (October 1961), pp. 33-48.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 120, pp. 20b-22a.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 118, pp. 5b-7b.

⁶⁸ For a study of the cult of Hsü Hsün, see K. M. Schipper, "Taoist Ritual and Local Cults of the T'ang Dynasty," in Michel Strickmann, ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, vol. 3 (Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1983), pp. 812-834.

it in a Buddhist monastery. He stopped, however, because he was scolded by the deity Hsü Hsün in the dream. Afterwards, as he had been warned by Hsü Hsün in the dream, he died by decapitation.⁶⁹ All these tales signify that humans can be harmed by spirits in dreams. They also imply that spirits have the power to hurt humans.

The fourth theme is that of someone being rescued or helped by spirits in a dream. In addition to healing the sick, sometimes deities could rescue a human who was in danger. One story tells that:

Yang Nao-erh 楊鬧兒 was a native of Ch'eng-tu 成都... He was in the army... Once he was captured by enemy troops and sent to a stockaded-camp located in Nan-shan 南山... Every day and night, he frequently recited [the name of] Lao Chün, and prayed that he could meet his parents once more. One day, he dreamed that Lao Chün bestowed a cloud on him, and ordered a boy to take him to a plain area. That boy said, "You can go home now." He awoke and found that he had left the stockaded-camp. For that reason, he was able to return to his home.⁷⁰

In other stories, Lu Wei 盧蔚, a native of Fan-yang 范陽, was rescued by the Deity of One's Own Destiny (*pen-ming shen*) from hell,⁷¹ and Chang Jen-piao was rescued from the infernal prisons by the "Heavenly Worthy of Great Unity, Savior from Suffering."⁷² The message of these stories is that pious devotees of Taoism will be rescued by the Taoist deities whenever they are in danger. They also imply that dreaming is one of the ways in which the deities manifest their supernatural power.

The fifth theme is that of a deity demanding or requesting someone to do something in a dream. The following are examples: the stellar deity of T'ai-pai 太白 requested the T'ang Emperor Kao-tsu 高祖 (r. 618-626) to rebuild a temple for him;⁷³ the deities of Ko K'uei 葛瓚 required Wei Kao 韋皋 (d. 805) to build a temple for them;⁷⁴ the Heavenly Worthy (T'ien-tsun 天尊) begged the Chief Minister Ts'ui Yen-chao 崔彥昭 (fl. 9th century) to repair his icon and temple;⁷⁵ the Deities of the Twenty-seven Perfected Men requested the Chief Minister Cheng T'ien 鄭畋 (he became a *chin-shih* 進士 in 855) to repair their temple;⁷⁶ the True Lord (Chen-chün 真君) of Ch'ing-ch'eng 青城 mountain asked the T'ang Emperor Hsüan-tsung 玄宗 (r. 712-756) to manufacture an icon

⁶⁹ See *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, *chüan* 120, pp. 8a-9a.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 118, pp. 17a-17b.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 120, pp. 14a-15a.

⁷² *Ibid.*, *chüan* 120, pp. 5b-7b.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 4a-4b.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 12b-13b.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 15a-16a.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 18a-18b.

for him;⁷⁷ the deity of T'ai-shang [Lao-chün] solicited the prefect Yang Shih-mo 楊師謨 to restore his icon and temple;⁷⁸ the deity of a bell demanded that the local people dig it out from under the earth.⁷⁹ These stories imply that humans could also perform favors for deities, although most of the characters in these stories were very powerful people in the human world.

The sixth theme is that of spirits sending a particular message to a human in a dream. A story states that when Wei Kao (d. 805), the Prince (Wang 王) of Nan-k'ang 南康, was still a commoner, two deities approached him in a dream and encouraged him to leave his father-in-law's home in search of his own official career.⁸⁰ Also, when the Chief Minister Liu Chan 劉瞻 was banished from the capital and en route to the south, the Heavenly Worthy came to console him in a dream.⁸¹ Another story tells us that an unknown deity appeared simultaneously in the dreams of several craftsmen and Taoist priests in order to instruct them how to acquire the necessary wood to build a Taoist temple.⁸² Moreover, it is said that the True Lord of Ch'ing-ch'eng mountain once appeared in a villager's dream and instructed him to find money stored beside a stone tablet, instead of selling a gilded crown from the deity's icon to pay taxes.⁸³

There are also some tales which concern the prediction of one's fortune or a forthcoming event. For example, Yang Shih-mo was told by T'ai-shang [Lao-chün] that he would be appointed prefect of ten different prefectures in sequence;⁸⁴ Li Huai 李懷 was told by the Celestial Master deity that he would be appointed Prefect of Ling-chou 陵州;⁸⁵ Fan Hsi-yüeh 范希越 was told by a deity that the Huang Ch'ao 黃巢 rebellion would be quelled.⁸⁶ In addition, some tales inform us that deities could transmit Taoist scriptures to humans through a dream.⁸⁷ Similarly, some tales tell us that the ghosts of the dead could appear in dreams to inform the living of their situation in the nether world.⁸⁸ All these tales suggest that dreams were considered a common way of communication between humans and the supernatural world.

Based on the evidence presented above, we may conclude that these dream-stories were not primarily used to support Taoist adepts' theoretical arguments and

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 118, pp. 3a-4b.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 118, pp. 9a-9b.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 120, pp. 7a-8b.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 12b-13b.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 16a-17a.

⁸² *Ibid.*, *chüan* 117, pp. 14a-14b.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 118, pp. 3a-4b.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 118, pp. 9a-9b.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 119, pp. 4b-5b.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 120, pp. 11a-12a.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 119, pp. 15a-15b.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, *chüan* 120, pp. 18b-19b; *chüan* 121, pp. 18b-19b, pp. 19b-20b.

practices regarding dreams and dreaming, but to make these tales, which usually displayed the extraordinary power of Taoist deities, more reasonable and more persuasive to lay people.

VII. Conclusion

As exemplified by the *Yün-chi ch'i-ch'ien*, religious Taoism, just like other religions, had its own unique view of the phenomenon of dreaming. Taoist adepts believed that dreams, especially nightmares, were caused by demons, especially the so-called Corpse-Demons within one's body. Hence, they created various techniques to prevent nightmares or to stave off fears caused by nightmares. They also believed that some dreams were used by spirits to send messages to humans, not to mention harm them or help them. In other words, the dream was regarded as a specific form of communication between humans and spirits. At the same time, however, Taoist adepts declared that dreaming was an inferior way to contact spirits while "being possessed" or having a vision was much more efficacious and desirable.⁸⁹ Hence, they had negative attitudes toward dreams. Some Taoist texts even suggest that "no dream" (*pu-meng* 不夢; *wu-meng* 無夢) should be the ultimate goal for a Taoist to pursue. Nevertheless, dreaming was also a shared experience of most Chinese. Therefore, Taoists also used many dream-stories to preach their beliefs, particularly their belief in the existence and extraordinary power of Taoist deities.

⁸⁹ A similar idea can be found in Islamic teachings. See Fritz Meier, "Some Aspects of Inspiration by Demons in Islam," in G. E. von Grunebaum and Roger Cailliois, eds., *The Dream and Human Societies*, pp. 421-429.