

**HANDBOOKS
FOR
DAOIST PRACTICE**

Louis Komjathy

修道手冊

〔共十冊〕

HANDBOOKS FOR DAOIST PRACTICE

修
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手
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A Total of Ten Volumes

(共十冊)

Translated and Edited by Louis Komjathy

圓玄學院

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Introduction to Handbooks for Daoist Practice

Orientations

During recent years, I have had the opportunity to meet and speak with various Daoist teachers, dedicated practitioners, and interested students about the Daoist tradition. In a variety of contexts, public talks, course lectures, conferences, seminars, and practice sessions, many have expressed a sincere interest in deepening their understanding and practice of Daoism. This series of translations, these “handbooks for Daoist practice,” are for them and those who follow.

Handbooks for Daoist Practice (*Xiudao shouce* 修道手冊) consists of ten “handbooks.” These include handbooks two through ten (the nine booklets that are the Daoist translation series proper). These are translations of nine important, representative, and praxis-orientated Daoist texts. The first (or tenth) handbook is an introduction to the series as a whole.

In this introductory handbook, I discuss Daoism as a Chinese religious tradition and Daoists as those for whom “cultivating the Dao” (*xiudao* 修道) is their fundamental concern; important publications in the field of Daoist Studies, which may serve as resources for self-education; some philosophical issues in the study of “Daoism”; significant aspects of the history and development of the Daoist tradition; principles for Daoist practice; the importance of “scripture study”; the motivations behind my choice of texts deserving translation; and my translation methodology.

Daoism (Taoism) is a Chinese religious tradition in the process of being transmitted and adapted to a global context. On the most basic level, “Daoism” refers to an indigenous Chinese religious tradition(s) in which reverence for and veneration of the Dao (Tao) 道, translatable as both the Way and a way, is a matter of ultimate concern. In contrast to adherents of

other Chinese religious and cultural traditions, Daoists (Taoists) understand the Dao as Source of all that is, unnamable mystery, all-pervading numinosity, and the cosmological process which is the universe. The Dao is impersonal and simultaneously immanent and transcendent. Broadly understood, the point of a Daoist way of life is to cultivate alignment and attunement with the Dao.

Daoism is a Chinese religious tradition. Daoism is Chinese because it originates in Chinese culture and, in some sense, because it is most clearly understood through Chinese language and views of being. Daoism is a “religion” because it involves an orientation towards and relationship with the sacred. Daoism is a “tradition” because it is a community of dedicated practitioners connected to each other as a historical and energetic continuum.

At the same time, Daoism is now being transmitted and adapted to a global context. Daoism is no longer merely a Chinese religious tradition. It is now a global religious and cultural phenomenon(a), existing in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Italy, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, and practiced by people of a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. It is also slowly becoming established in the United States in various forms, with varying degrees of connection with the earlier Chinese religious tradition. Without an understanding of such historical precedents, Daoism in the West will simply be a fabrication, a fiction, and a fantasy. This does not mean that there should not be adaptation and modification; change necessarily occurs when a religious tradition enters a new cultural context and when religious practitioners have different concerns and motivations. But it does mean that without a connection and collective memory such “innovations” become meaningless names.

The Daoist tradition is a community of practitioners connected to each other as a historical and energetic continuum. Daoists are those for whom cultivating the Dao (*xiudao* 修道) is their most important orientation.

The identity of Daoists derives from their *being and presence*. One is a Daoist based on the extent to which one is aligned with and embodies the Dao in its multi-layered numinosity. One is a Daoist based on the extent to which one embodies Daoist principles and follows a Daoist *way of life*.

Daoist identity does not come from some supposed “orthodoxy” associated with Zhang Daoling 張道陵, the receipt of registers (*lu* 籙), “religious licenses,” and/or some magico-ritual performance. This is the province of *certain* Daoist priests (*daoshi* 道士), which must be recognized as one way among many revealed by the historical contours of the Daoist tradition. The models of Daoist practice-realization, established, modified, and confirmed through some 2,000 years of history, are many and varied.

Daoists recognize the Dao as Source, all-pervading mystery, and immanent numinosity. The immanent numinosity of the Dao pervades one’s being; it is one’s innate nature and innate capacities. Throughout Daoist history, the Dao has become manifest through the revelations of specific deities and immortals, through their interaction with and self-disclosure to human beings. From the perspective of classical Daoist “theology” (discourse on the sacred), based on emanation and immanence, such divine beings are *embodiments* of the Dao.

Fortunately, for the interested student of Daoism developments in Daoist Studies over the last ten years have been dramatic. There are now a variety of resources for the study of Daoism. We now have books that are written *by* specialists but not only *for* specialists.¹ These include both introductory articles on the Daoist tradition (Seidel 1978; Baldrian 1987; Kirkland 1997; 2000; 2002; Schipper 2000) and book-length introductions by trustworthy and competent members of the field of Daoist Studies (Robinet 1997; Kohn 2001a; Miller 2003; Kirkland 2004; Torchinov forthcoming). Students will also want to consult two important reference works, namely, the *Daoism Handbook* (Kohn 2000a) and *The Encyclopedia of Taoism* (Pregadio forthcoming). Helpful “timelines” of Daoist history may be found in Julian Pas’ *Historical Dictionary of Taoism* (1998) and in Livia Kohn’s *Daoism and Chinese Culture* (2001a). For those interested in the various ways in

which “Daoism” has been understood, interpreted, and constructed, J.J. Clarke’s *The Tao of the West* (2000) deserves careful reflection.²

Interested readers may also want to access other resources for self-education. Some very helpful bibliographies have been compiled. The seminal publication in this area is Anna Seidel’s “Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West” (1989-90). Also well done and fairly available are Julian Pas’ *A Select Bibliography of Taoism* (1997 [1988]), much of which also appears in his *Historical Dictionary of Taoism* (1998), and Knut Walf’s *Westliche Taoismus- Bibliographie / Western Bibliography of Taoism* (2002 [1997]). These guides may be supplemented by the bibliographies for the various articles contained in the *Daoism Handbook*.

Because of the relatively recent ascendancy of the internet or World Wide Web (WWW) as the most easily accessible source of information, some websites deserve mention. But first a caveat: discernment is a human faculty too rarely employed, especially with regard to the internet. There are differences among information, knowledge, and wisdom. Here I am speaking pragmatically. Information is simply unrefined “stuff”; believing that “information” for its own sake is beneficial or makes any contribution is similar to believing that unlimited consumption, the acquisition of manufactured “goods,” makes life worth living. Information is frequently disseminated by those who have not dedicated themselves to the study and skills required to represent things accurately, that is, beyond the limitations and deficiencies of one’s own personality, unquestioned assumptions, and habitual perception. Knowledge, in contrast, has been filtered and refined more thoroughly. Knowledge evidences fundamental qualities: consideration, reflection, discernment, and evaluation. The attainment of knowledge involves being an engaged being. It also requires an openness that benefits from those who have dedicated themselves to study and the search for accuracy. One might, in turn, suggest that it is “knowledge in the service of life” that is most needed.³ Moreover, as the *Laozi* 老子 (Lao-tzu; Book of Venerable Masters) explains, “To know that you do not know is best;/To not know that you are knowing is sickness./To be sick of sickness is the end of sickness” (ch. 71).⁴ Knowledge is not something to be used as a way of inflating one’s ego or dominating others. One must always

recognize how little one actually knows and that knowing *itself* is often a limitation. Thus, chapter two of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Chuang-tzu; Book of Master Zhuang) informs us, “One who dreams of drinking alcohol may weep when morning comes; one who dreams of weeping may in the morning go off to hunt. While you are dreaming you don’t know it’s a dream, and in this dream you may even attempt to interpret the dream. Only after you wake up do you know it was a dream. Someday there will be a great awakening (*dajue* 大覺) when we know that all this is a great dream (*dameng* 大夢). And yet, the ignore-ant believe they are awake, deceptively assuming they understand things. They call this man lord, that one commoner – how dense! Qiu (Confucius) and you are both dreaming! And when I say you are dreaming, I am dreaming too.”⁵

According to classical Daoism, abiding in a condition of “non-knowing” (*wuzhi* 無知) creates the space through which a connection (*tong* 通) with the Dao may be established, maintained, and communicated. Finally, wisdom is more than knowledge. On one level, wisdom is knowledge that is engaged with and refined by the actuality of *living* and *experiencing*. It has been clarified by one’s own life experiences. More than this, wisdom involves insight; it involves one’s “awakened nature” (*wuxing* 悟性). Here consciousness and being have been expanded to include as many possible realities and lives as possible. Insight must be “ecological,” in the sense that one understands the various communities that one participates in and affects. Insight comes from a place both within and beyond oneself.

Returning to the internet as a resource for understanding Daoism, there are few websites that are actually dedicated to considering and re-presenting the Daoist tradition *as a tradition*, as a Chinese *religious* tradition deserving respect and consideration. Without an understanding of such historical precedents, Daoism in the West will simply be a fabrication, a fantasy and a fiction.⁶ This does not mean that there should not be adaptation and modification; change necessarily occurs when a religious tradition enters a new cultural context and when religious practitioners have different concerns and motivations. But it does mean that without a connection and collective memory such “innovations” become meaningless names. And as

Kongzi 孔子(Confucius) reminds one in chapter thirteen of the *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects), the “rectification of names” (*zhengming* 正名) is essential. A river is not a “river” without certain qualities. Beyond this, chapter one of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 emphasizes that “names are the guest of reality” (*ming zhe shi zhi bin ye* 名者實之賓也). Much of “popular Western Taoism” should probably be named something else.⁷

In terms of beneficial internet resources, first there is the Daoist Studies website (www.daoiststudies.org), which is a collaborative academic site. This site enables people to follow recent developments in the field of Daoist Studies. For reliable historical information, one may access a number of other sites. These include the Center for Daoist Studies; Taoist Culture & Information Centre; “Taoist Studies in the World Wide Web”; “Taoism Information Page”; “Fabrizio Pregadio’s Homepage”; “Russell Kirkland’s Homepage”; “The Golden Elixir”; and Taoist Restoration Society.⁸ An annotated guide may be found on the Center for Daoist Studies website (www.daoistcenter.org/weblinks.html). Many of these sites also contain helpful links to other organizations and resources. For those attempting to find information on Daoist teachers and organizations in North America, one may access the lists contained on the websites of the Center for Daoist Studies, Taoist Restoration Society, and Pluralism Project.

As many high-level resources are available, it is unnecessary to give a comprehensive account of the Daoist tradition here. However, some foundational knowledge of Daoism is required. Any interpretation must be evaluated based on its accuracy, viability, as well as breadth and depth of coverage. To begin, there is one misinterpretation of Daoism that is so widespread as to be epidemic.⁹ This centers on the distinction between “philosophical Daoism” and “religious Daoism,” with the former being constructed as “original” and “pure” Daoism and the latter being identified as a “corrupt” and “degenerate” adjunct to the former. Some also mistakenly equate “philosophical Daoism” with the Chinese *daojia* 道家 (lit., “Family of the Way”) and “religious Daoism” with the Chinese *daojiao* 道教 (lit., “Teachings of the Way”). With regard to the former, the Western construction of “philosophical Daoism” has no correlation to the Chinese term *daojia*, a taxonomic category used by Han historiographers as

a way of classifying texts and as a veiled reference to the Huang-Lao tradition. With regard to the latter, the use of *daojiao* as a designation for a self-conscious Daoist religious tradition did not emerge until the fifth century C.E. This occurred in the struggle for imperial patronage and court influence, in attempts to distinguish “Daoism” from Buddhism. It was also employed as a legitimizing factor in Kou Qianzhi’s 寇謙之 (365-448) reform movement known as the New Way of the Celestial Master, also known as the “Northern Celestial Masters.” That is, there are no theoretically grounded, historically accurate, or anthropologically relevant referents for the Western distinction between “philosophical Daoism” and “religious Daoism.” Moreover, this bifurcated interpretative framework fails to consider the complexity and diversity of the Daoist tradition. Any bimodal (bipolar) understanding of Daoism should be discarded.

Moreover, *there is no such thing as philosophical Daoism*. Philosophical Daoism is wholly a modern Western construct that has no correspondence to actual historical events or personages.¹⁰ From its “beginnings,” here dated to the Warring States period (480-222 B.C.E.), “Daoism” was a “religious tradition.”¹¹ “Religion” here is not used in a restrictive sense as a veiled reference to Catholicism, that is, as a highly structured institution with priestly hierarchies and ritualistic activities, although such characteristics are clearly part of many religious traditions (including certain movements in organized Daoism). As I use the term, “religion” involves an *interaction* between the human dimension and the sacred dimension(s), often through trans-rational responses.¹² This “definition” suggests that the core of religious traditions centers on “mystical experiences” or “encounters” with that which a given community defines as “sacred” or as “ultimate reality.”¹³ It centers on a “more.” This does not entail that other, non-mystical experiences, such as a feeling of communal belonging, are not equally valid and important. What it does suggest is that, especially emphatically speaking, many forms of communal organization fail to *re-member* such connections with the sacred. My claim that “Daoism is a religious tradition” from the very beginning is based on both a close reading of classical Daoist texts, such as the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power) and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang), and a more comprehensive understanding of the tradition as a whole.¹⁴ With

regard to the former, these texts, which are held up as *the* representative works of “philosophical Daoism,” contain references to specific techniques, stage-based training regimens, specific types of experiences, and accounts of successful and venerated models for “realizing the Dao” (*dedao* 得道). In addition, there are clear references to specific master-disciple lineages in the *Zhuangzi*, and I would argue that *the very existence* of the relevant texts, being anthologies of earlier oral teachings, provides evidence for self-conscious religious communities that focused on the unnamable mystery and all-pervading numinosity of the Dao as their ultimate concern.

While many scholars comment on the “received view” of Daoism as misleading, obsolete, and wholly inadequate,¹⁵ an inevitable question arises: what alternative interpretative frameworks are available? First, I think that the response of excluding everything before the Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) movement, the “first organized Daoist tradition,” is misguided.¹⁶ Without an understanding of earlier historical precedents, such as the classical texts, medical and hygiene practitioners, as well as Han-dynasty “formula masters” and seekers of “immortality,” much of the later, fully organized Daoist tradition seems nonsensical and may be incomprehensible. In addition, an emic or insider’s view of the tradition would recognize many of these pre- Han dynasty developments as “Daoist.”

The most fully developed alternatives center on a periodization model. The first scholar to fully articulate such a model was Russell Kirkland (1997). In its most recent expression, Kirkland’s periodization model consists of two major and four minor divisions:

I. Classical Daoism

II. Later Daoism

1. Early Daoist Movements
 2. Aristocratic Daoism
 3. Ecumenical Daoism
 4. Late Imperial Daoism
- (Kirkland 2002)¹⁷

This model and similar ones (Kohn 1998; 2000b; Miller 2003) offer viable alternatives, but from my perspective Kirkland's proposed schema, especially its two-part primary division, does not fully express the historical complexity. We need to consider and familiarize ourselves with the entire Daoist tradition, beginning with "classical Daoism" and ending with contemporary Chinese and non-Chinese developments as well as the history of Daoist Studies (including its categorizations and self-representations). Developing the periodization model further, I would propose the following:

- I. Classical Daoism
- II. Early Daoism
- III. Early Medieval Daoism
- IV. Late Medieval Daoism
- V. Late Imperial Daoism
- VI. Modern Daoism
- VII. Contemporary Daoism

These would correspond roughly to major watersheds for Daoism in Chinese dynastic and post-dynastic history: (I) Warring States (480- 222 B.C.E.), Qin (221-207 B.C.E.) and Early Han (202 B.C.E.-9 C.E.); (II) Later Han (25-221 C.E.); (III) Period of Disunity (221- 581)¹⁸ and Sui (581-618); (IV) Tang (618-906), Song (Northern: 960- 1126; Southern: 1127-1279),¹⁹ and Yuan (1260-1368); (V) Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911); (VI) Republican (1912-1949; 1949-) and Communist (1949-). Period VII encompasses more contemporary developments in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. It also includes the transmission and transformation of Daoism in other Asian, European, and North American contexts, as well as the establishment of the field of Daoist Studies throughout the world. While helpful, such periods should not lull one into believing that they encompass the dramatic changes that occurred between, for instance, the Tang and Song periods.

We may now turn toward a survey of Daoist history.²⁰ Any adequate discussion of Daoism must begin, at least, with the "classical period."²¹

This historical phase corresponds to the Warring States period (480-222 B.C.E.) through the Early Han (202 B.C.E.-9 C.E.). With regard to Warring States “Daoism,” the most commonly discussed (and translated) texts are the *Laozi* 老子 (*Lao-tzu*; Book of Venerable Masters; abbr. LZ), more commonly known as the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Tao-te ching; Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; abbr. DDJ), and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Chuang-tzu; Book of Master Zhuang; abbr. ZZ).²² The former is associated with Laozi 老子 (Master Lao or the Old Master), while the latter is attributed to Zhuang Zhou 莊周. In terms of traditional attribution and biographical material, the standard source is chapter sixty-three of the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian) at least partially compiled by Sima Tan 司馬談, Grand Astrologer of the Han court during the early years of Emperor Wu’s reign (r. 141-87 B.C.E.), and completed by his son Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145-86 B.C.E.). The *Records of the Historian* tells us that Laozi was a man of Chu 楚 with the surname Li 李, given name Er 耳, personal name Boyang 伯陽, and posthumous name Dan 聃. Thus, Laozi is sometimes known as Li Er 李耳 or Lao Dan 老聃. In this account, Laozi is said to have been an archivist of the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770-256 B.C.E.) and a senior contemporary and teacher of Kongzi 孔子 (Confucius; ca. 551-ca. 479 B.C.E.). The same chapter of the *Records of the Historian* explains that Zhuangzi (Master Zhuang) was a man from Meng 蒙 with the family name Zhuang 莊 and given name Zhou 周. Concerning these personages, there is general agreement in modern scholarship: Laozi was a composite figure, and is thus pseudo-historical, while Zhuang Zhou was an actual historical figure.²³ Relating these personages to their related texts, modern scholarship divides the received version of the *Zhuangzi* into a number of distinct textual layers; for our purposes, we may note that the so-called “inner chapters”(1-7) are attributed to Zhuang Zhou. In contrast, the *Laozi* or *Daode jing* is seen as an “anthology,” with no identifiable author and containing a wide variety of textual layers.²⁴ This is partially a result of its varied content and partially a result of recent archaeological finds.²⁵

While the *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi* are frequently elevated as the most representative texts of “classical Daoism,” recent revisionist scholarship by Harold Roth and others would include parts of other important texts as well, including the *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan), *Huainanzi* 淮南子

(Book of the Masters of Huainan), and *Lushi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals of Mister Lu).²⁶ Roth refers to this early form of “Daoism” or “proto-Daoism” as “inner cultivation lineages.”²⁷ Many of these texts provided foundational cosmologies, principles, practices, and models for later organized forms of Daoism. For instance, the quietistic approach to self-cultivation, advocated in such texts as the “Neiye” 內業 (Inward Training; abbr. NY) chapter of the *Guanzi*, reemerges in the Tang-dynasty Clarity-and Stillness (*qingjing* 清靜) literature and in Sima Chengzhen’s 司馬承禎 (647-735) emphasis on self-observation and emptiness meditation. While such revisions are important for giving us a fuller appreciation of classical Daoism, it should also be pointed out that in the later Daoist tradition the *Daode jing* occupied a most important position. Over one hundred extant commentaries, both complete and partial, are housed in the Ming-dynasty Daoist Canon (see Robinet 1977; 1998; 1999). In addition, there is the Dunhuang 敦煌 manuscript of the *Laozi Xiang ‘er zhu* 老子想爾注 (Xiang’er Commentary on the *Laozi*; DH 56), an early Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) commentary.²⁸

It was also during the classical period that a number of religious tendencies and movements emerged that would influence and set patterns for the first organized Daoist movements. Such historical precedents included a variety of models: therapeutic or medical, magico-religious, and self-divinization. The Early Han witnessed the codification and standardization of earlier medical traditions. Previous to the Early Han, there were a number of conceptions of and related treatment modalities for “disease” (*bing* 病),²⁹ “ancestral” (disease as caused by discontented ancestors) and “demonic” (disease as caused by malevolent entities) for example. During the Han, a new model emerged and gained orthodoxy; this centered on correlative and naturalistic explanations. In this model, disease was caused by harmful external influences, such as wind and cold, which generated internal imbalance. However, in this model, unlike the ancestral or demonic, there was no malevolent or “subjective” intent involved. This model became the centerpiece of “classical Chinese medicine,” as documented in the *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Yellow Thearch’s Inner Classic) texts. The emphasis here on naturalistic explanations and systems of correspondences (e.g., the

Five Phases [*wuxing* 五行]) provided much foundational knowledge for later Daoism (see Unschuld 1985).

Similarly, the Early Han witnessed an increase in the authority of longevity practitioners, “formula masters” (*fangshi* 方士), and immortality seekers. The search for “immortality” or “transcendence” (*xian* 仙)³⁰ centered on two paradisiacal, terrestrial realms called Penglai 蓬萊 Island (in the east) and Mount Kunlun 崑崙 (in the west).³¹ The latter was overseen by Xiwangmu 西王母 (Queen Mother of the West), who occupies a central place in the larger Daoist tradition as well. Mythically speaking, the Queen Mother of the West was believed to oversee a celestial park, which contained the famed Turquoise Pond (*yaochi* 瑤池) and orchard where the “peaches of immortality” (*xiantao* 仙桃) were grown. These peaches came to fruition every thousand years or so, during which time a huge feast would be held and anyone who acquired one of the blessed fruit instantly became an immortal.³² In some sense, in the Early Han we see the major patterns of religious activity that would come to dominate the organized Daoist tradition more generally: personal health and healing, magical control of the cosmos, and the search for self-divinization.

The classical period was followed by the “early period.” During the Later Han (25-221 C.E.), numerous communal and populace-supported forms of religious activity began to become more viable and widespread. It was also during this time that Laozi 老子 became imperially recognized as the deity Laojun 老君 (Lord Lao). Thus, there is the *Laozi ming* 老子銘 (Inscription for Laozi), which dates from 165 C.E. and is the earliest textual evidence about the official cult of a deified Laozi. The Han dynasty also embraced and disseminated the Confucian conception of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命). In this socio-political and cosmological system, the emperor was viewed as the Son of Heaven (*tianzi* 天子) and given a certain mandate or fate by Heaven, an anthropomorphized cosmological process. Here the emperor was a kind of cosmocrat or thearch, like the earlier Shangdi 上帝.³³ Abnormal or extraordinary astronomical and natural occurrences, such as comets, floods, famines, etc., were often seen as signs that the imperial house had lost its mandate and that the time had come for rebellion.

In the Han context of popular interest, two movements became established that proved to be seminal for a more fully organized and coherent Daoist tradition. The first movement was called Taiping dao 太平道 (Way of Great Peace), which has also received the designation of the “Yellow Turbans” in Western literature. The latter name is somewhat misleading because of the image that “turban” conjures up. Members of the Way of Great Peace wore yellow kerchiefs (*huangjin* 黃巾) on their heads as a sign that the “azure” (*qing* 清), the color of the Wood phase, of the Han imperial house was becoming overtaken by the “yellow” (*huang* 黃), the color of the Earth phase, of the Way of Great Peace. Here one notices the presence of correlative cosmology as a way of mapping sociopolitical and cosmic transformations. Based in northeast China, the Way of Great Peace centered on Zhang Jue 張角 (fl. 2nd c. C.E.) and a millenarian conception of the world as found in the *Taiping jing* 太平經 (Scripture of Great Peace; partially lost; DZ 1101). It was imagined and taught that the world would be transformed, through violent revolution, into an era of “Great Peace.” The rebellion was initiated in 184 C.E., *jiazi* 甲子 or the first year of the 60-year Chinese calendar.³⁴

Although this rebellion was defeated in the late second century, it established a model of prophetic world-leaders, cosmological rebellion, and Utopian vision. It also severely weakened the power of the Han imperial house to the point that it was eventually overthrown.

Perhaps more importantly for the Daoist tradition, the Han’s concern for this rebellion impeded its ability or willingness to address additional developments in the southwest. Around the same time as the Way of Great Peace was attempting to gain control, a new movement became organized in present-day Sichuan. This was the Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) movement, which is frequently elevated to the position of the “first organized Daoist tradition.”³⁵ According to traditional accounts, in 142 C.E. Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (fl. 140 C.E.?) received a revelation from Laojun 老君 (Lord Lao), the “deified” form of Laozi and personification of the Dao, on Mount Heming 鶴鳴 (Crane Cry).³⁶ The Celestial Masters are sometimes referred to as Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity), because of a description of

its founding revelation as the “covenant of orthodox unity” (*zhengyi mengwei* 正一盟威), or Wudoumi dao 五斗米道 (Way of Five Pecks of Rice), because of its supposed requirement of an annual donation of “five pecks of rice” for religious membership. During Lord Lao’s revelation, Zhang was appointed as terrestrial representative, the “Celestial Master,” and given healing powers as a sign of his empowerment. The movement in turn became patrilineal, passing from Zhang Daoling to his son Zhang Heng 張衡 and then to his son Zhang Lu 張魯 (fl. 190 C.E.). The Celestial Masters established “parishes” (*zhi* 治) with hierarchically-ranked followers, wherein the so-called libationers (*jijiu* 祭酒) were highest. The intent was to establish “seed people” (*zhongmin* 種民) that would populate an earth made ritually and morally pure. If a moral transgression occurred, a purification rite was performed. This consisted of an officiating priest utilizing his “registers” (*lu* 錄), which gave him or her power over specific spirits, and submitting “petitions” (*zhang* 章) to the so-called Three Bureaus (*sanguan* 三官) of heaven, earth, and water. This was done through burning, burial, and submersion. In addition, the individual was secluded in “pure rooms” or “chambers of quiescence” (*jingshe* 靜舍; *jingshi* 靜室/靖室; or *qiugshi* 清室), where they were supposed to reflect upon their actions and repent. Little original source material survives from this formative phase of the Celestial Masters. We do have the *Xiang’er* 想爾 (Thinking of You; DH 56) commentary on the *Laozi*, perhaps composed by Zhang Lu, and its related precepts (*jie* 戒) as found, for instance, in the first section of the *Taishang laojun jinglu* 太上老君經律 (Scriptural Statutes of the Great High Lord Lao; DZ 786). However, as there is some doubt concerning the date of the *Xiang’er* and as so little early Celestial Masters’ material survives, claims concerning this tradition must remain tentative. In particular, recent claims by Western teachers to represent the lineage of Zhang Daoling are highly questionable, especially as the Celestial Masters lineage was broken (and later reconstructed) during the Tang dynasty (618-906) and as contemporary Zhengyi traditions in North America evidence profound influences from contemporary Taiwanese adaptations and from a variety of other religious systems.

Nonetheless, the religious program of the Celestial Masters proved convincing and viable. After the armies of Zhang Lu were defeated by those

of the famous general Cao Cao 曹操, the eventual founder to the Wei dynasty (220-265), in 215, the Celestial Masters were forced to migrate to various parts of northern and southern China. This brings us to the “early medieval period.” It was during this period that Buddhism established viable monastic institutions, with its alternative models of self-identity and religious participation. Many Buddhist texts were translated and disseminated, and Buddhism began its transformation from a “barbarian religion” to a fully Sinicized tradition.³⁷ Parallel to these developments, new types of scriptures, new forms of religious expression, were introduced. These included monastic rules (*vinaya*) and the *Prajnaparamita* (Perfection of Wisdom) texts, which emphasized the emptiness (Skt: *sunyata*; Chn.: *kong* 空 / *xu* 虛) of independent existence.

It was also in the early and early medieval periods that we see the beginnings of Daoist commentary literature. Four early commentaries on the *Daode jing* and one on the *Zhuangzi* are still extant. The earliest surviving Daoist commentary in the Daoist Canon is that of Yan Zun 嚴遵 (Junping 君平; fl. 83 B.C.E.-10 C.E.), originally Zhuang Zun 莊遵. Yan Zun was a formula master who spent his days in the markets of present-day Chengdu engaging in divinization and prognostication and his nights teaching cultured elite the intricacies of the Chinese literati tradition. For instance, he taught Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 B.C.E.-18 C.E.), a famous Han poet and philosopher. He in turn wrote the *Laozi zhigui* 老子指歸 (Essential Meaning of the *Laozi*; a.k.a. *Daode zhenjing zhigui* 道德真經指歸; DZ 693), which reads the *Daode jing* from the perspective of a magico-religious practitioner. Unfortunately, very little work has been done on this text. We also have the above-mentioned Celestial Masters’ commentary, namely, the *Laozi Xiang’er zhu* 老子想爾注 (Xiang’er Commentary on the *Laozi*; DH 56). Next, there is the commentary by Heshang gong 河上公 (Master Dwelling-by-the-River; fl. 160 B.C.E.?); this is the *Laozi zhangju* 老子章句 (Commentary by Chapter and Verse on the *Laozi*; a.k.a. *Daode zhenjing zhu* 道德真經註 [Commentary on the Perfect Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power]; DZ 682). This commentary is one of the most influential Daoist commentaries; here Heshang gong reads the *Daode jing* as a manual on longevity (*yangsheng* 養生) techniques, including its references to the “country” as relating to internal corporeal realities. Finally,

we have the *Daode zhenjing zhu* 道德真經註 (Commentary on the Perfect Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; DZ 690) by Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249), a member of the Xuanxue 玄學 (Profound Learning) hermeneutical tradition, which is sometimes incorrectly identified as “Neo-Daoism” in earlier Western scholarship. Here Wang Bi emphasizes cosmological aspects of the *Daode jing*, especially a distinction between “being” (*you* 有) and “non-being” (*wu* 無) and the concept of emptiness (*kong* 空 / *xu* 虛). This commentary has exerted a profound influence on Western understandings of the text, so much so that it is the only commentary to have been translated into English more than once (Lin 1977; Rump and Chan 1979; Lynn 1999; Wagner 2003).³⁸ The earliest extant commentary on the *Zhuangzi* was also written by a member of the Profound Learning school; this is the *Nanhua zhenjing zhashu* 南華真經註疏 (Commentary on the Perfect Scripture of Nanhua; DZ 745) by Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312). This early hermeneutical model established a pattern that would eventually result in the composition of hundreds of commentaries on the *Daode jing*.

A wide variety of Daoist sub-traditions also developed during the so-called Period of Disunity (221-581). First, we know of a southern tradition with its roots in the Han-dynasty *fangshi* and immortality seeker movements. This is Taiqing 太清 (Great Clarity), a tradition of laboratory or operational alchemy (*waidan* 外丹; lit., “external elixir”). Great Clarity is known to us principally due to the efforts of its most well-known member, namely, Ge Hong 葛洪 (Baopuzi 抱朴子 [Master Embracing Simplicity]; 287-347). Ge Hong came from an aristocratic family based near Jiankang (present-day Nanjing). His grand-uncle, Ge Xuan 葛玄 (164-244), was a renowned *fangshi*, and his presence would play a major role in the later Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) tradition. Ge Hong wrote two seminal works, the *Baopuzi* 抱朴子 (Book of Master Embracing Simplicity; DZ 1185; DZ 1187) and the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (Biographies of Spirit Immortals; JHL 89). The latter is a collection of some 100-odd hagiographies (“biographies of saints”), while the former is a *summa* of fourth-century religious traditions and related methods, providing information on the production of elixirs (*dan* 丹) through laboratory alchemy, the highest religious pursuit according to Ge. Great Clarity emphasized levels of

attainment and involved the concoction of a mineral elixir, which consisted of highly toxic elements such as realgar, mercury, cinnabar, etc. The early traditions of laboratory alchemy, including the famous *Zhouyi cantong qi* 周易參同契 (Token for the Kinship of the Three According to the *Zhouyi*; DZ 999; 1001; 1008), continued to play a significant role even into the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).

Around this same time, certain literati and self-cultivation communities became prominent. One of the most famous groups was known as the “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove” (*zhulin qisheng* 竹林七聖). This group consisted of seven aristocrat recluses. The group established themselves on the estate of their leading member, Ji Kang 藉康(223-262), who is known in Western literature as Xi Kang. The group engaged in a variety of leisure activities, including poetry and prose writing, drinking contests, as well as narcotic and psychedelic drug ingestion, with the latter including the notorious Cold Food Powder (*hanshi san* 寒食散). Such practices resulted in numerous visions of celestial realms, much of which is beautifully expressed in their highly-refined poetry. This group helped to establish a model of escapism and the literati-recluse.

Slightly later, with the forced migration of the Celestial Masters, many of its leaders began a gradual movement south. This eventually led to a division, which is commonly referred to as the “Northern Celestial Masters” and the “Southern Celestial Masters.” The establishment of the Northern Celestial Masters centers on Kou Qianzhi 寇謙之 (365-448), who was trained in a Celestial Masters’ family and received a revelation from Lord Lao in 415. According to this revelation, Kou was empowered to replace the Zhang lineage as Celestial Master and to reform many of the tradition’s earlier practices. He eventually became recognized by the rulers of the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534), so much so that in 440 the emperor received Daoist initiation and changed his reign title to Taiping zhenjun 太平真君 (Perfected Lord of Great Peace). This moment in Daoist history is often described as a “Daoist theocracy,” as it marked the first time that Daoism became state orthodoxy. Kou also established guidelines for Daoist conduct known as the “new code” (*xinke* 新科), which are still partially

extant in the *Laojun yinsong jiejing* 老君音誦誡經 (Precept Scripture of Lord Lao for Recitation; DZ 785).

Simultaneously, the members of the Celestial Masters who had migrated south began their interaction and competition with more firmly established southern traditions. As the Celestial Masters movement gained a foothold, new revelations and textual traditions emerged. The first was Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity). In the 360s, members of the aristocratic Xu 許 family, Xu Mai 許邁 (b. 301), Xu Mi 許謐 (303-373) and his son Xu Hui 許翮 (341-ca. 370) hired the spirit medium Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-386?) to establish contact with Xu Mi's wife Tao Kedou 陶可斗. Through a series of revelations from underworld rulers, divine officers, denizens of Huayang dong 華陽洞 (Grotto of Brilliant Yang), and former leaders of the Celestial Masters, Yang Xi described the organization and population of the subtle realms of the cosmos, particularly the heaven of Shangqing. Also deserving note is the presence of the deceased female Celestial Master libationer Wei Huacun 魏華存 (251-334) as a central figure in the early Highest Clarity revelations. These various celestial communications included specific methods for spirit travel and ecstatic excursions,³⁹ visualizations, and alchemical concoctions. A wide variety of texts are important for understanding the religious worlds of Highest Clarity, two of the most important being the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經 (Perfect Scripture of the Great Grotto; DZ 6) and the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Scripture on the Yellow Court; DZ 331; 332). The revelations were, in turn, written down by the Yang Xi and the Xu brothers in a calligraphic style that seemed divine. After some generations, the texts were inherited by Xu Huangmin 許黃民 (361-429) who disseminated them throughout the region. Then, Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536), a descendent of Tao Kedou and an advanced Highest Clarity adept, came across an original manuscript and became inspired to collect them. Tao Hongjing had established a religious center on Maoshan 茅山 (Mount Mao; present-day Nanjing),⁴⁰ where he pursued alchemical and pharmacological studies. From there he traveled throughout southern China in search of the original Highest Clarity manuscripts. In the process, he developed a critical analysis of calligraphic styles for determining textual authenticity. His collection efforts resulted in the *Zhen'gao* 真誥縞 (Declarations of the Perfected; DZ 1016).

Partially in response to these Highest Clarity revelations, in combination with the more pervasive influence of Mahayana Buddhism (including its bodhisattva ideal and vision of universal salvation), the Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) tradition developed. “Numinous Treasure” refers to a central belief that precious talismans created and maintain the cosmos. For our purposes, Numinous Treasure refers to the tradition established by Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫 (fl. 390s), a Highest Clarity adept and relative of Ge Hong. Ge Chaofu, who inherited the library of Ge Hong, claimed that the original Numinous Treasure revelation went back to Ge Xuan, and were thus older (=more authoritative) than the Shangqing revelations. Numinous Treasure centered on a cosmocrat (cosmic ruler) and magical manipulation of the cosmos. This cosmocrat, who resembles Mahavairocana of the Buddhist Tantric tradition, was Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊 (Celestial Worthy of Original Beginning); later, Yuanshi tianzun would become the center of a three-part pantheon known as Sanqing 三清 (Three Purities/Three Pure Ones; also including Daode tianzun 道德天尊 [Celestial Worthy of the Dao and Inner Power] and Lingbao tianzun 靈寶天尊 [Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure]). Ge Chaofu emphasized levels of celestial realms, celestial administrators, and a host of divine beings, in combination with Han-dynasty correlative cosmology, *fangshi* ideas and practices, and Celestial Master ritual. A representative work documenting the magical dimension of Numinous Treasure is the *Lingbao wufu xu* 靈寶五符序 (Explanation of the Five Numinous Treasure Talismans; DZ 388). These “five talismans” were the foundation for harmony and control, whether personal, communal, socio-political, or cosmological. Numinous Treasure also maintained soteriological aims, namely, the salvation of humanity as a whole. The scriptures of Numinous Treasure became codified by the Daoist ritualist and bibliographer Lu Xiuqing 陸修靜 (406-477) in the so-called “Lingbao Catalogue.” It was also Lu Xiuqing who compiled the earliest known catalogue of Daoist texts, namely, the *Sandong jingshu mulu* 三洞經書目錄 (Catalogue of the Scriptures and Writings of the Three Caverns). As the name suggests, the central organizing principle was (and remains) a tripartite classification system known as the Three Caverns (*sandong* 三洞).

Dating from at least as early as the fifth century, this system originally referred to three distinct or revelatory traditions: (1) Cavern Perfection (*dongzhen* 洞真), corresponding to the Highest Clarity tradition; (2) Cavern Mystery (*dongxuan*, 洞玄), corresponding to the Numinous Treasure tradition; and (3) Cavern Spirit (*dongshen* 洞神) corresponding to the Sanhuang (Three Sovereigns) tradition.

The early medieval period also witnessed the development of monastic Daoism, again under the influence of Buddhism. At the end of the Northern Wei dynasty, members of the Northern Celestial Masters congregated in a newly established center in the Zhongnan mountains (near present-day Xi'an). This was Louguan 樓觀 (Lookout Tower Monastery; called Louguan tai 樓觀臺 today), which was founded by Yin Tong 尹通 (398-499?) and became the first Daoist monastery.⁴¹ Yin Tong claimed descent from Yin Xi 尹喜, the “guardian of the pass” who legend tells us received the *Daode jing* from Laozi as he left China for his western travels. Louguan eventually grew significantly and rose to prominence under the leadership of Wang Daoyi 王道一 (447-510). A number of visions of Lord Lao appeared there, which also helped to solidify the temple's place of importance in the geo-political landscape. Some representative works from Louguan include the *Laojun jiejing* 老君戒經 (Scriptural Precepts of Lord Lao; DZ 784), *Xisheng jing* 西昇經 (Scripture on Western Ascension; DZ 666; DZ 726), and *Chuanshou jingjie* 傳授經戒 (Transmission of Scriptures and Precepts; DZ 1241). Louguan Daoists also compiled encyclopedias, including the important *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要 (Esoteric Essentials of the Most High; DZ 1138).

A final aspect of the early medieval period that deserves mention is the Buddho-Daoist debates. During the sixth century, a series of debates were imperially sponsored, with the intention of determining which religious tradition was doctrinally superior and which was most applicable to socio-political concerns. One occurred in 520 under the Toba-Wei (386-535) and the other in 570 under the Northern Zhou (577-581). In terms of the motivations of the Buddhists and Daoists, these debates were clearly attempts to gain imperial patronage and acquire political authority. Imperial sponsorship entailed increases in financial viability and cultural capital. The

debates centered on the so-called “conversion of the barbarians” (*huahu* 化胡) theory, and the related text of the *Huahu jing* 化胡經 (Scripture on the Conversion of the Barbarians; partially lost; DH 76; ZW 738; 739) that is attributed to a certain Celestial Master libationer Wang Fou (fl. 300).⁴² The Daoist *huahu* theory held that after Laozi left China on his Western travels he eventually arrived in India where he became Sakyamuni Buddha, the historical Buddha. The first set of debates centered on the issue of dating. The Buddhists emerged victorious, making a convincing argument that the Buddha was in fact older than, and thus different from, Laozi. The second set of debates developed because of a proposal by a disenfranchised Buddhist monk named Wei Yuansong 衛元嵩 (fl. 570); Wei argued for a new Buddhist world order with the emperor as divine Buddhist ruler, the officials as the *sangha* (Buddhist community), and the people as the congregation. This entailed the dissolution of independent religious communities and laicization of clergy. Understandably, the Buddhists and Daoists scrambled to show the ways in which their present systems supported and could be used to support the state. Debates were held to determine whether or not to adopt Wei’s proposal. The emperor in turn ordered reports evaluating the teachings, which resulted in the *Erjiao lun* 二教論 (Discourse on the Two Teachings; T. 2103, 52.136b-43c) and the *Xiaodao lun* 笑道言論 (Discourse on Laughing at the Dao; T. 2103, 52.143c-52c). The latter was written by the ex-Daoist Zhen Luan 甄鸞 (fl. 570) and criticized various aspects of Daoist belief and practice. It is interesting to note that the title brings to mind chapter forty-one of the *Daode jing* which reads as follows: “When the superior adept hears about the Dao, he diligently practices it. / When the average adept hears about the Dao, he doubts its actuality. / When the inferior adept hears about the Dao, he laughs loudly.” From a classical Daoist perspective, Zhen Luan’s work suggests ineptitude, and perhaps it is no coincidence that his given name could be misread as *luan* 亂 (“chaotic” or “rebellious”). The critique of Daoism that occurred within the debate did not persuade Emperor Wu 武 (r. 561-578) of the Northern Zhou, who imagined a Daoist theocracy as a viable sociopolitical model. He established Tongdao guan 通道觀 (Monastery for Connecting to the Dao) as an official Daoist research center and supported Louguan research efforts. It was here that the first Daoist encyclopedia, the *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要 (Esoteric Essentials of the

Most High; DZ 1138), and the *Xuandu jingmu* 玄都經目 (Scripture Catalogue of the Mysterious Metropolis; lost), a canonical collection of scriptures, were compiled. Such debates established one pattern of interaction among Daoists, Buddhists, and the state, including the devastating Yuan (1279-1368) debates of 1255 and 1258, which resulted in the burning and destruction of Daoist texts, textual collections, and printing blocks in 1281.

Although Wu's vision of a Daoist-based orthodoxy was rejected by the Sui dynasty (581-618), whose rulers adopted Buddhism, something else occurred during the Tang dynasty (618-907). The Tang dynasty marks a major watershed moment in Chinese history in general and Daoist history in particular. It also marks the beginning of the "late medieval period" in the periodization model advocated here. During the Tang, Daoism was accepted and sponsored as state orthodoxy. However, it should be remembered that international trade and a climate of cosmopolitanism characterized the cultural environment of the Tang dynasty. The Tang rulers were generally tolerant of and even fascinated by various religious traditions, including Nestorian Christianity, Manichaeism, Tantric Buddhism, and Islam. Chang'an, the Tang capital, became a cosmopolitan center.

Nonetheless, many Tang emperors and their courts showed imperial favor for the Daoist tradition. As noted above, Lord Lao as the deified Laozi became central to the Chinese state as early as the Han dynasty. Similarly, the patterns of millenarian prophecy were also well established. During the beginning of the Tang, the rulers embraced a prophecy centering on a figure with the surname Li 李 (Li Hong 李洪) as the future Lord of Great Peace. Interestingly, Li was the surname of both Laozi (Li Er 李耳) and the founders of the Tang dynasty. Thus, the Tang rulers became linked with both Laozi, the preeminent figure in the Daoist tradition and now the Tang's own original ancestor, and the vision of a Daoist Utopia. Numerous miracles centering on divine appearances of Lord Lao occurred. One such vision took place at Bozhou 亳州, Laozi's supposed birthplace, where Lord Lao caused a withered cypress tree to bloom again. Miraculous material signs were also discovered throughout China and at various Daoist sacred

sites; these included inscribed stones, divine statues, and images on walls and cliffs. Such discoveries, of course, helped to ensure continued imperial patronage for places such as Louguan. Tang emperors gave extensive privileges to the Daoists, offered lavish gifts to temples and monasteries, established a Daoist track in the imperial bureaucracy, sponsored Daoist collection efforts, honored Lord Lao with the title Xuanyuan huangdi 玄元皇帝 (Sovereign Thearch of Mysterious Origin), and aided the success of the tradition in general. Especially under Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713-755), Daoism flourished and membership grew extensively. A number of imperial princesses were given Daoist initiation in elaborate ceremonies. Monasteries (*guan* 觀), first established between the fifth and sixth centuries, were staffed by Daoist priests and priestesses (*daoshi* 道士), who performed *jiao* 醮 (“offering”) and *zhai* 齋 (“purification”) rituals for integrating society and cosmos. The Tang dynasty also established a system of official control, including a state-controlled ordination system and legal codes governing religious behavior. It was in this context that the *Laozi* (Book of Venerable Masters) was formally elevated to the status of a *jing* 經 (“classic” or “scripture”), that is, the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power). In addition, the *Daode jing* became required reading for the imperial examinations.

The Tang dynasty also witnessed the emergence of new forms of Daoist literature. The first set of texts may be referred to as “Clarity-and-Stillness literature.” This series of texts includes the famous and highly influential *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 620). As the name indicates, the Clarity-and-Stillness texts focus on the cultivation and development of clarity (*qing* 清) sometimes rendered as “purity,” and stillness (*jing* 靜), sometimes rendered as “tranquility.” Drawing some inspiration from the earlier Buddhist *Xinjing* 心經 (Heart Sutra; T. 250-57), these texts emphasize self-cultivation and mystical realization through the establishment of internal serenity. Many of the related texts claim to be revelations from Lord Lao, containing the phrase “as spoken by the great high Lord Lao” (*Taishang laojun shuo* 太上老君說). It was also during the Tang that a variety of Buddhist-inspired and modified forms of Daoist meditation emerged.⁴³ These texts often utilize the language of Clarity-and-

Stillness texts to discuss meditation principles, but they also provide a level of detail fairly rare in earlier periods of Daoist history. The Tang-dynasty Daoist meditation texts most frequently emphasize emptiness (Skt.: *sunyata*; Chn.: *xu* 虛; *kong* 空) and a mind-based or consciousness-orientated form of realization. In this way, they move away from earlier Daoist concerns with the body and with physiological processes. Through the influence of Buddhist views, these meditation texts understand Daoist cultivation primarily in terms of consciousness and psychological processes.

With regard to major figures in Daoist history, a few important and representative ones will be discussed here. One such person was Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647-735), the twelfth patriarch of Highest Clarity Daoism. Highly respected and supported at the Tang imperial court, Sima Chengzhen is most well-known for his systematic discussions of meditation and personal refinement. This Tang-dynasty form of Highest Clarity meditation differs considerably from the earlier visualization (*cunxiang* 存想) methods. Sima Chengzhen's writings place primary emphasis on the mind and evidence a synthesis of Daoist and Buddhist meditation practices. In particular, we find the influence of Buddhist insight meditation (Skt.: *vipasyana*; Chn.: *guan* 觀) and a concern for the development of wisdom (Skt.: *prajna*; Chn.: *zhi* 智). For instance, Sima's *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論 (Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness; DZ 1036) maps out Daoist meditation in terms of seven stages: (1) Respect and Trust; (2) Interception of Karma; (3) Taming the Mind; (4) Detachment from Affairs; (5) Perfect Observation; (6) Intense Concentration; and (7) Realizing the Dao. Although one notes much Buddhist influence, Sima Chengzhen clearly has a Daoist orientation. Interestingly, the title of the *Zuowang lun* refers to a passage on Daoist meditation that is found in chapter six of the *Zhuangzi*.

In addition to such models of self-realization, Daoism during the Tang dynasty maintained ritualistic and scholastic concerns. In this respect, Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933) stands out. Du Guangting lived at the end of the Tang dynasty, a time of radical socio-political upheaval. In the gradual disintegration of a unified Chinese empire that followed from such

rebellions as that of An Lushan 安祿山 (755- 763), Du set out to preserve and systematize earlier Daoist traditions. He compiled ritual compendia that became the basis for later forms of Daoist liturgy and hagiographies of outstanding Daoists, including the first hagiographical collection on female Daoists. This is the *Yongcheng jixian lu* 壙城集仙錄 (Records of Assembled Immortals from the Walled City; DZ 783). In addition, Du Guangting had a profound interest in the *Daode jing* and its commentarial tradition. He reviewed and collated more than sixty previous commentaries, dividing them into five groups. In the process, Du became the leading codifier of the Chongxuan 重玄 (Twofold Mystery) hermeneutical school. Drawing inspiration from the Buddhist Madhyamika or Sanlun 三論 (Three Treatises) school, Twofold Mystery emphasized the realization of an ontological condition where neither being nor non-being exists. This is the state of “oneness,” and Twofold Mystery adherents such as Du Guangting equated this with realization of the Dao. This is evident in the name “Twofold Mystery,” which is a reference to chapter one of the *Daode jing*: “Mysterious and again more mysterious— / The gateway to all that is wondrous” (*xuan zhi you xuan zhongmiao zhi men* 玄之又玄眾妙之門). Du’s commentary is found in his *Daode zhenjing guangsheng yi* 道德真經廣聖義 (Expansive and Sagely Meaning of the Perfect Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; DZ 725).

With the fall of the Tang dynasty, China eventually came to be divided into three distinct states: the Khitan state of Liao (907-1125) in the northeast, the Tangut state of Xixia (990-1227) in the northwest, and the Chinese state of Song (Northern: 960-1126; Southern: 1127- 1279) in the middle and south. Under the Northern Song, Daoism continued to receive imperial support. The Song emperors in general viewed their mandate as a reflection of a larger Daoist dispensation, with legitimacy partly based on Daoist revelations at Louguan. The ideal of Great Peace (*taiping* 太平) also formed the basis of Emperor Taizong’s 太宗 (r. 976-997) consolidation of the empire. A number of Northern Song emperors also initiated and supported the compilation of Daoist textual collections. Moreover, Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. 1100-1126) recognized two Daoist sacred sites in southern

China: Maoshan 茅山, associated with Highest Clarity, and Longhu shan 龍虎山 (Dragon-Tiger Mountain), associated with the Celestial Masters, now known as Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity).

It was also during the Song dynasty that the Chan 禪 (Zen) tradition, a Buddhist monastic tradition, reached national prominence. Chan was a monastic and meditation movement focusing on realization of one's inherent Buddha nature (Skt.: *tathagata-garba*). In terms of Daoist history, the Chan Buddhist tradition deserves special attention. Traditionally speaking, this tradition focuses on a lineage of “patriarchs,” beginning with Bodhidharma,⁴⁴ a legendary Indian meditation master, and culminating in the well-known division between the so-called “Northern School” and “Southern School.” While recent revisionist scholarship has challenged the historical accuracy of this division, including the “rhetoric of immediacy” and claims of “sudden enlightenment” of the Southern School, such “constructions” clearly had an impact on Daoism in the late medieval period. For our purposes, it is important to note that Chan became a nationwide monastic tradition during the Song dynasty; this emphasis on monasticism and intensive meditation would have a major influence on later Daoist traditions. However, it should also be mentioned that scholars, especially Buddhologists, too frequently characterize later forms of Daoist monasticism as inferior forms of Buddhism. This fails to appreciate the complex cross-pollination that occurred between these traditions. It is clear that Chan Buddhism is indebted to the Daoist tradition, especially the *Zhuangzi* and earlier precedents for the “recorded sayings” (*yulu* 語錄) genre of literature that became popularized through Chan. Moreover, although “anthropological evidence” has yet to be developed, it is clear that Daoists and Buddhists cohabitated and commingled at various sacred mountains such as Tiantai 天台 and Zhongnan 終南.

Towards the end of the Tang and beginning of the Song, traditions of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) became systematized. The roots of these movements can be found in a number of earlier Daoist movements such as “inner observation” (*neiguan* 內觀) meditation practices, longevity techniques (*yangsheng* 養生), laboratory alchemy (*waidan* 外丹), and *Yijing* 易經 (Classic of Change) symbolism.⁴⁵ Internal alchemy,

alternatively referred to as the “Golden Elixir” (*jindan* 金丹), uses a highly symbolic language to describe a process of spiritual refinement, a shift in ontological condition from ordinary human being to a more cosmological being. The goal was the attainment of “immortality” or “transcendence” (*xian* 仙) as a form of ecstatic otherworldly existence through a series of energetic mutations of the body, which would transform it into a spiritual entity known as the “immortal embryo” (*xiantai* 仙胎). Generally, internal alchemy traditions emphasize the so-called Three Treasures (*sanbao* 三寶), namely, vital essence (*jing* 精), subtle breath (*qi* 氣), and spirit (*shen* 神). These psycho-physical “substances” are utilized in a three-stage process of self-transformation: (1) Refining vital essence to become qi (*lianjing huaqi* 煉精化氣); (2) Refining qi to become spirit (*lianqi huashen* 煉氣化神); and (3) Refining spirit to return to Emptiness (*lianshen huanxu* 煉神還虛).

The earliest known tradition of internal alchemy is referred to as the “Zhong-Lu 鐘呂 tradition.” This is a textual tradition associated with Zhongli Quan 鐘離權 (Zhengyang 正陽 [Upright Yang]; 2nd c. C.E.?) and Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 (Chunyang 純陽 [Pure Yang]; b. 798?), with the latter eventually becoming the patriarch of internal alchemy traditions in general. The related texts center on dialogues between these two immortals; two representative works are the *Chuandao ji* 傳道集 (Anthology of the Transmission of the Dao; DZ 1309) and *Baiwen pian* 百問篇 (Chapters of One Hundred Questions; DZ 1017, j. 5).

The Zhong-Lu textual tradition provided much of the foundations for later, more anthropologically real movements. Conventionally speaking, a distinction, which follows Chan Buddhism, is made between the so-called Beizong 北宗 (Northern Lineage) and Nanzong 南宗 (Southern Lineage). The Northern Lineage refers to the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) movement, founded by Wang Zhe 王壘 (Chongyang 重陽 [Redoubled Yang]; 1113-1170), while the Southern Lineage refers to a textual tradition (but this time with historically identifiable persons) that revolves around “five patriarchs.” These include Liu Cao 劉操 (Liu Haichan 劉海蟾; fl. 1031); Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (d. 1082), author of the seminal *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇 (Chapters on Awakening to Perfection; DZ 1017, j. 26-30); Shi Tai

石泰 (d. 1158); Xue Shi 薛式 (d. 1191); and Chen Nan 陳楠 (d. 1213). The well-known Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (1194-ca. 1227) was a disciple of Chen Nan. Both of these internal alchemy lineages owe a great deal to the slightly earlier textual tradition known as the “Zhong-Lü tradition.”

Although traditional Chinese historiography and Western Sinological history tends to exclude “non-Chinese” states from “Chinese history,” Daoist history in general and the late medieval period in particular cannot be understood without such inclusion. The Khitan-Liao was eventually conquered by the Jurchens, a semi-nomadic people from an area in the far northeast (previously called Manchuria) and ancestors of the later Manchus. The Jurchens established the Jin dynasty (1115-1234) and in the process conquered the Northern Song, forcing the court elite to flee south and establish the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279). It was under the Jurchen-Jin dynasty that one of the most important sub-traditions in Daoist history emerged. This was the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) movement, which is the only Daoist monastic tradition to survive into the modern world especially in the modified branch known as Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate).⁴⁶ Complete Perfection was founded by Wang Zhe 王勰 (Chongyang 重陽 [Redoubled Yang]; 1113-1170), a solitary ascetic and mystic who after years of intense seclusion began accepting disciples. The most well-known of these disciples are the so-called Seven Perfected (*qizhen* 七真): (1) Ma Yu 馬鈺 (Danyang 丹陽 [Elixir Yang]; 1123-1183); (2) Tan Chuduan 譚處端 (Changzhen 長真 [Perpetual Perfection]; 1123-1185); (3) Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (Changchun 長春 [Perpetual Spring]; 1148-1227); (4) Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 (Changsheng 長生 [Perpetual Life]; 1147-1203); (5) Wang Chuyi 王處一 (Yuyang 玉陽 [Jade Yang]; 1142-1217); (6) Hao Datong 郝大通 (Taigu 太古 [Great Antiquity]; 1140-1212); and (7) Sun Buer 孫不二 (1119-1182), a woman who became centrally important in later female alchemical traditions.⁴⁷ Over time, Quanzhen attracted more and more followers and eventually established “associations” or “meeting halls” (*hui* 會 / *she* 社 / *tang* 堂), sometimes rendered as “congregations,” throughout northern China. In the year 1222, Qiu Chuji met Chinggis Qan (Genghis Khan; ca. 1162-1227; r. 1206-1227) and received *de facto* control of the whole of north China’s organized religious communities. An account of Qiu’s travels may be found in the well-known *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (Record of Western

Travels; DZ 1429). This period was followed by Quanzhen's rise in status and membership to become a fully established and widely-disseminated form of monastic Daoism. This privileged status was short-lived and a number of anti-Daoist edicts were issued under Qubilai Qan (Khubilai Khan; Emperor Shizu 世祖; 1215-1294; r. 1260-1294), a warlord of the Mongol Yuan dynasty, which was the first non-Chinese dynasty to control the whole of China. The anti-Daoist edicts culminated in the burning and destruction of Daoist texts, textual collections, and printing blocks in 1281. The *Chongyang lijiao shiwu lun* 重陽立教十五論 (Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses to Establish the Teachings; DZ 1233) is frequently held up as a representative text concerning early Complete Perfection beliefs and practices.

The Song and Yuan dynasties also saw the emergence of more popular forms of religiosity. In particular, deity cults and new ritual lineages became established. As noted, Lü Dongbin received much veneration and devotion, with different patrons and believers characterizing him differently depending on their socio-economic position. In terms of ritual lineages, five in particular are currently known: (1) Qingwei 清微 (Pure Tenuity); (2) Tianxin 天心 (Celestial Heart); (3) Shenxiao 神霄 (Divine Empyrean); (4) Tongchu 童初 (Youthful Incipience); and (5) Jingming 淨明 (Pure Brightness), also known as Zhongxiao dao 忠孝道 (Way of Loyalty and Filiality). Generally speaking, these lineages emphasized ethical rectification and ritual intervention as efficacious for communal well-being. They tended to concentrate on securing good fortune and healing disease (including exorcism). It was also in the context of such ritual lineages that “thunder magic” (*leifa* 雷法) developed. This type of atmospheric magic involved harnessing and channeling the power of thunder and lightning for self-transformation and healing. There was also a new celestial Department of Thunder (Leibu 雷部), to which petitions and memorials were submitted by the ritual master (*fashi* 法師).

The Mongol Yuan dynasty was eventually conquered by a native Chinese nationalist rebellion, which resulted in the founding of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). This brings us to the “late imperial period” of Daoist history.

Unfortunately, research on Daoism in the periods following the late medieval period is just beginning. Thus, this section and those which follow must be understood as fragmentary, preliminary, and provisional. The cultural trend of “syncretism,” fully established as normative during the late medieval period, continued during the late imperial period. Syncretism, an approximation of the Chinese *sanjiao heyi* 三教合一 (“the three teachings made one”), refers to the tendency of distinct religious traditions adopting and adapting aspects from other distinct traditions. In the case of Daoism, this meant borrowing and transforming various beliefs and practices from Buddhism and Confucianism in particular. A good example of the syncretistic tendency is Lin Zhaoen 林兆恩 (1517-1598), a Confucian scholar who had affinities with both Chan Buddhist theories of mind and meditation practice as well as Daoist internal alchemy. Lin Zhaoen simplified internal alchemy, in some sense psychologizing it and emphasizing “nine stages of mind-cultivation.” He eventually founded a school that focused on healing and public relief efforts.

Two characteristics of the late imperial period in turn deserve note: simplification and popularization. For example, during this historical phase, internal alchemy became simplified, with much of its esoteric language either systematically defined or discarded. Similarly, Daoist beliefs and practices became mingled with and appropriated by folk religious traditions. In terms of the Daoist tradition itself, popularization involved a greater attention to the needs and activities of the common people. Thus, a number of local and popular deities became incorporated into the Daoist pantheon. In addition, new and powerful gods entered the scene. Some of these included Xuanwu 玄武 (Mysterious Warrior), also known as Zhenwu 真武 (Perfect Warrior), Wenchang 文昌 (God of Literature), Tianfei 天妃 (Celestial Consort), also known as Mazu 媽祖 (Mother Ancestor), Bixia yuanjun 碧霞元君 (Primordial Goddess of Morning Mists), and Doumu 斗母 (Dipper Mother).⁴⁸ Also deserving emphasis is the fact that the Daoist mountain Wudang shan 武當山 (Wu Tang) achieved national prominence during the Ming. This was partially a result of its association with the efficacious god Zhenwu. Wudang shan was later mythologized as the residence of Zhang Sanfeng 張三丰 (14th c.?), a pseudo-historical figure,

and associated with the development of “internal style” (*neija* 內家) martial arts such as Taiji quan 太極拳 (Tai Chi). In fact, historical research suggests that Taiji quan was created in Chen 陳 village probably in the sixteenth or seventeenth century.⁴⁹ The increased popularization of Daoism is also evident in the expanded practice of “spirit-writing” as well as in the production of “precious scroll” (*baojuan* 寶卷) literature and morality books (*shanshu* 善書). With regard to spirit-writing, it is interesting to note that many contemporary cults in southern China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan channel Lü Dongbin during seances and identify themselves as Complete Perfection lineages.

Other significant developments also occurred during the Ming dynasty. Of particular note is the imperial sponsorship of the *Zhengtong daoze* 正統道藏 (Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong Reign), the earliest surviving Daoist textual collection and the basis for the development of modern Daoist Studies. Containing some 1400 texts, this “canon” was overseen by Orthodox Unity priests and was completed in the early 1440s.

The final imperial dynasty was the Manchu Qing (1644-1911), a time of non-Chinese rulers who were the descendants of the Jurchens. The Qing dynasty saw the Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) lineage of Complete Perfection rise to national prominence. Although traditionally associated with Qiu Chuji of early Complete Perfection, recent research suggests that the established lineage of Dragon Gate goes back to Wang Changyue 王常月 (Kunyang 崑陽; 1622-1680), abbot of Baiyun guan in the mid-1600s. In the Qing, a variety of energetic and charismatic leaders helped secure recognition for Dragon Gate. These included such figures as Min Yide 閔一得 (Lanyun 懶雲 [Lazy Cloud]; 1758-1836), an eleventh-generation (according to Dragon Gate lineage formulation) lineage holder and compiler of major textual collections, and Liu Yiming 劉一明 (Wuyuan 悟元 [Awakening to the Origin]; 1734-1821), another eleventh-generation lineage holder and author of the *Daoshu shier zhong* 道書十二禾重 (Twelve Daoist Books). The *Daoshu shier zhong* has become highly influential in the West through Thomas Cleary’s (b. 1949) various translations of texts contained therein.⁵⁰ As mentioned the Complete Perfection tradition and the Orthodox Unity tradition, most likely

established on Mount Longhu in the eleventh century, are the only two distinct traditional Daoist movements in name that survive into the modern and contemporary periods.

The late-imperial trends of simplification and popularization are also evident in the increase of internal alchemy literature during the Qing. Such texts include the *Jinhua zongzhi* 金華宗旨 (Secret of the Golden Flower; ZW 334), *Xingming fajue mingzhi* 性命法訣明指 (Illuminating Pointers to the Methods and Instructions of Innate Nature and Life-destiny; ZW 872) by Zhao Bichen 趙壁塵 (b. 1860), and the *Huiming jing* 慧命經 (Scripture on Wisdom and Life- Destiny). The latter is associated with a new internal alchemy lineage that emerged during the Qing. This was the Wu-Liu 悟劉 lineage. It centers around two historical figures: Wu Shouyang 伍守陽 (1563- 1644), a Ming-dynasty Daoist master, and Liu Huayang 劉華陽 (fl. 1736), a Chan Buddhist monk. This school draws on internal alchemy traditions of the Song and Yuan, combining them with aspects from Chan and Huayan Buddhism.

It was also during the late imperial period that the first Western missionaries arrived in China, bringing with them a whole set of new cultural influences, sensibilities, and prejudices. One of the most well-known early missionaries was Matteo Ricci (1551-1610), a representative of the Roman Catholic Jesuit order⁵¹ who was based in Macao in the 1580s. It seems that Ricci was received favorably at the Ming court partially because of his knowledge of astronomical occurrences, which the Ming rulers, like Chinese imperial courts in general, saw as important signs concerning the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命). In this process of cultural exchange and cross-pollination, Matteo Ricci became somewhat Sinified, wearing Confucian robes and gaining a profound respect for the Confucian tradition.⁵² Such mingling with “inferior races,” “primitive cultures,” and “idolatrous religions” did not go unnoticed by other Christian missionaries and church authorities. The Jesuit policy of accommodation and assimilation was opposed by rival orders, particularly by the Dominicans. The controversy that would eventually bring an end to missionary activity in China revolved around the proper attitude that a Christian should adopt towards Confucianism,

including its doctrines and practices. This is often referred to as the “rites controversy,” as it partially revolved around whether or not Confucian rites were religious. The Jesuits claimed that the ceremonies were non-religious and thus permissible, while the Dominicans held the opposite position. Eventually, the papacy intervened and ruled against the Jesuits. In 1704, the Pope condemned Chinese rituals, and in 1742 a decree was issued that settled all points against the Jesuits. This remained the position of the Catholic Church until 1939. However, emperors such as Shengzu 聖祖 (Kangxi 康熙; r. 1662-1722) and Gaozong 高宗 (Qianlong 乾隆; r. 1736-1795) promoted the Jesuit position. This led to the proscription of Christianity in 1724.

It was not until 1846 at French insistence that the proscription was lifted. The period between 1860 to 1900 saw the gradual spread of missionary stations into every province. One of the central figures in this missionary activity and in the Western “invention” of Daoism was James Legge (1815-1897), a Scottish Congregationalist and representative of the London Missionary Society in Malacca and Hong Kong (1840-1873). Legge was one of the first Westerners to translate Daoist texts beyond the *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi*. His translations became highly popular, to the point of becoming canonical (they are still in print through Dover). They were published in Max Muller’s *Sacred Books of the East*, published in 50 volumes between 1879 and 1891. Legge’s *Texts of Taoism* made up volumes 39 and 40. Legge, like his Victorian and Christian missionary counterparts, viewed and disseminated the *Daode jing* as the “Daoist bible” and Laozi as the “founder” of Daoism. This also involved the distinction between a so-called “philosophical Daoism” and “religious Daoism,” with the former being “pure” and “original” Daoism and latter being a degenerate and superstitious adjunct to the former. There can be little doubt that the “Victorian invention of Daoism,” the “Leggian view” of the Daoist tradition, established many of the dominant interpretative lenses for the West’s interaction with the tradition. That is, Legge’s portrayal of Daoism, influenced by Confucian literati officials, is the “received view” of Daoism, the most widespread construction of Daoism in the West. One might even go so far as to call it the “Sinological prejudice” concerning Daoism,

because of the widespread influence of Confucian literati, Victorian translators, and their intellectual progeny.

The end of the Qing dynasty was an extremely turbulent time, filled with violence, socio-political upheaval, and radical cultural transformation. This was the result of the imperialist ambitions of major European colonial powers and Japanese attempts to control the region. The interest of the dominant European colonial powers in China was principally due to tea, porcelain, and textiles, especially silk. The end of the late imperial period saw the vying for geographical control, which culminated in the Opium Wars (1839-1842; 1856-1860). Following this war, there were Germans in Shandong, French and British in Shanghai, British in Guangdong and Hong Kong, Portuguese in Macao, and a number of other smaller protectorates along the coast. It is no coincidence that the origins of modern Daoist Studies began in two of the principal imperialistic countries from this period, namely, France and Japan.

The presence of European forces and missionaries and the related oppression led to two native Chinese millenarian rebellions. Between 1850 and 1864, Hong Xiuquan; 洪秀全 (1814-1864) began to gather followers and initiate the (second, modern) Taiping 太平 (Great Peace) Rebellion. Under the influence of Christian missionization, Hong saw himself as “God’s Chinese son” and Jesus’ younger brother, partially due to the fact that the early Chinese transliteration of Jehovah contained the same characters as Hong’s name. That is, Hong Xiuquan was somehow miraculously related to the divine hierarchy of Christianity. Drawing also on traditional Chinese millenarianism, with its emphasis on a future era of “Great Peace” established by a visionary leader named Li Hong 李洪, Hong gathered a massive army to fight imperial powers.⁵³ This mass following was partially the result of the Taiping’s vision of the world as inhabited by demons (Manchus and Europeans) that needed to be exorcised.⁵⁴ Wherever the Taiping armies passed, they destroyed not only Manchu installations, but also Daoist and Buddhist temples. By the time that the rebellion was finally defeated in 1864, over thirty million Chinese people had died in a population of 400 million. It is both ironic and tragic that a movement

known as “great peace” would cause the death of almost ten percent of the Chinese population. This was followed by a much smaller rebellion called Yihe quan 義和拳 (Righteous and Harmonious Boxers), known in Western literature as the Boxer Rebellion, which took place in 1900. The members of this uprising were martial artists who believed that they had achieved such high levels of attainment that they were impervious to bullets. Needless to say, this rebellion also failed. So began a movement toward complete socio-political and cultural transformation that led to the diminishment of traditional Chinese culture and the beginning of modernization. In such a historical context and the related Chinese concern for base survival, how could Daoists and the Daoist tradition not suffer?

With the fall of the Qing to the Chinese nationalists in 1911 and the subsequent establishment of the Republic of China in 1912, China ceased to be an “imperial” state ruled by a given emperor and his court (including its patterns of imperial patronage).⁵⁵ The “last emperor of China” was Pu Yi 溥儀 (Xuanton 宣統; r. 1909-1911). This marks the beginning of the “modern period” in the periodization model employed here. The Republic of China (1912-1949; in Taiwan, 1949-) was the first modern and “secular” Chinese government, established by the physician and committed democrat Sun Yat-sen 孫逸仙 (Sun Yixian; 1866-1925). There can be little doubt that this change produced many benefits relating to issues of democratization, social justice, and a more egalitarian approach towards humanity. However, it also led to a de-emphasis on traditional Chinese culture and a view of religion as “feudal superstition.” That is, Daoists were, by definition, deluded and engaged in an older (= antiquated) way of life. European cultural influences and modernization shifted the dominant worldview: the cult of antiquity (older = more authentic), with its “logic of precedence,” was replaced by the cult of newness (newer = more beneficial), with its “logic of subsequence.” The latter is clearly rooted in apocalyptic and Utopian forms of perception.

During the modern period, the social unrest of the previous period continued, and various local warlords maintained control of their given regions, as imperial powers continued their profiteering. After Russia became communist in 1917, it sent emissaries to China which influenced

the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. Meanwhile, the Japanese had their own imperial ambitions, occupying Korea and Manchuria, and launching a major invasion of China in 1937. After the Japanese captured Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai, they set their sights on Nanjing (the home of early Shangqing Daoism). Nanjing fell in December of 1937, resulting in the infamous “rape of Nanjing” during which Japanese troops raped and pillaged. After seven weeks, it was all over and at least 42,000 people were dead. These developments involved the country in World War II, which ended in East Asia with the United States of America dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945. This resulted in yet another civil war in China, in which the Communists (Chinese Communist Party) under Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976) fought the Republicans (Guomindang [Kuo-min-tang] 國民黨) under Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (Jiang Jieshi; 1887-1975).⁵⁶ The war ended in 1949 with the flight of the Republic to Taiwan and the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC; 1949-). It was also the Communists, under the leadership of Mao Zedong, who invaded Tibet in 1950. This invasion, including the rape, murder, and ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Tibetan peoples by the invading Chinese forces, led to a state of complete social disruption. Some estimates suggest that over 1.5 million Tibetans have died under Chinese rule.

In addition, Chinese occupation and oppression caused the flight of the 14th Dalai Lama (Tendzin Gyatso; b. 1935) and some 70,000 refugees to India and Nepal in 1959.⁵⁷ The current Tibetan government-in-exile has established its headquarters and a major Gelugpa monastic university in Dharamsala in northern India. Such historical occurrences and patterns of interaction are necessary for a more complete understanding of the larger dynamics of global contact, cultural exchange, as well as adaptation, assimilation, and appropriation.

In terms of the overall religious context and Daoism in particular, the modern period was a time of dramatic change. Monastic life was attacked as a form of escape from a country in need of workers and soldiers, while religious worldviews and lifeways were condemned as superstitious and wasteful. Such critiques were partially rooted in Marxian and Stalinist

political ideologies, including the famous view that “religion is the opiate of the masses.”⁵⁸ Although the Marxist leadership of the PRC did not believe in the validity of religion, they did include “freedom of religious belief” in their new constitution. However, “religion” was very different from “feudal superstition.” Daoism fell into the latter, especially as it had no diplomatic significance. Traditional myths and stories were rejected, gods denounced, and organizations disbanded. Simultaneously, smaller scale and more regional forms of “religious” practice were more difficult to control; spirit-writing cults as well as longevity and martial arts societies flourished. The latter was also employed as a form of nationalistic up-building; the atrophied bodies of older Chinese imperial courts, perhaps most clearly represented by eunuch culture and the practice of foot-binding, would become replaced by a nation of soldiers with high-level martial arts prowess. Such changes manifested in two important ways for the Daoist tradition. First, Daoism was effectively banned in mainland China as feudal superstition, with its monks sent out to work, marry, or be “reeducated,” its monasteries destroyed, closed, or used for military installations, and its priests forbidden to conduct rituals. Second, such persecution and suppression initiated an exodus from the “Central Kingdom” (Zhongguo 中國). More and more Daoists fled to other East Asian countries such as Hong Kong, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan. Simultaneously, Chinese Daoists began a slow emigration to European and North American countries. That is, the Chinese communist revolution had the unintended consequence of disseminating Chinese religious culture throughout the world and helping to make Daoism a “world religion.”

More specifically speaking, we have seen that the two main forms of Daoism that survived into the modern period are the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) movement, specifically its Longmen branch, and the reconstituted Zhengyi 正一 lineage of the early Celestial Masters movement. In the years of the Republic, Daoists attempted to establish Daoist organizations. In 1912, a Central Association of Daoism was founded, but it was principally a local (Beijing) and sectarian (Longmen) organization. During the same year, Zhengyi Daoists created their own General Daoist Assembly of the Republic of China. Then, in 1932, another group came to the fore: the Chinese Daoist Association (Zhongguo daojiao

xiehui 中國道教協會). After World War II, Daoists in Shanghai planned the revival of Daoism. In 1947, they set up the Shanghai Municipal Daoist Association, with Zhang Enpu 張恩浦 (1904-1969),⁵⁹ the 63rd Celestial Master, and Chen Yingning 陳撓寧 (1880-1969) as leaders. After the establishment of the PRC, Zhang Enpu fled to Taiwan and established Taiwan as the *de facto* headquarters of the Zhengyi tradition, although Longhu shan would later return to prominence. It was also during the early years of the PRC (1957) that the national Daoist Association was founded. In 1961, they defined their objectives as follows: to study the history of Daoism, publish journals, and set up training programs for young candidates. However, the so-called “Cultural Revolution” (1966-1977), also referred to as the “Ten Years of Chaos,” with its socially engineered and fanatical youth brigade known as the Red Guards, stopped all efforts. All religious organizations suffered immensely, with monasteries and temples destroyed or closed and Daoist monks and priests forced into dominant ideological patterns. The degree of destruction is still evident in contemporary temples. Only since 1978 has there been a comeback. This began with the death of Mao Zedong and the new leadership of Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平 (1904-1997), who initiated the Four Modernizations, opened the country economically and politically, and paved the way for massive development. Since 1980, religious organizations and practices, as well as the academic study of religion, have undergone a revival. Religious associations have reopened, such as the Chinese Daoist Association based at Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery; Beijing). By 1986, twenty-one key monasteries were returned to the Daoists, and since 1990 training programs for new candidates have been initiated in Beijing, Shanghai, and Chengdu.

For the purposes of this account, I would date the “contemporary period” of Daoist history to 1978, when the PRC relaxed its restrictions on Daoist participation and organization, when Daoist Studies began to become fully established, and when the Daoist tradition began to be more formally adapted and transmitted to a global context. Three developments, then, must be presented: (1) the condition of Daoism in contemporary China;⁶⁰ (2) the history of Daoist Studies as a viable academic discipline; and (3) the

emergence of Daoist movements in European and North American countries.

As mentioned, Daoism in contemporary mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan consists primarily of Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity) and Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) traditions. The latter is most prominent in its Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) branch. The former is mainly community-based, family lineages. Orthodox Unity priests are householders, usually married with children, who perform rites for community welfare on calendrically important days and/or when employed by community members. They live and work in a given village or city. The Orthodox Unity tradition mainly flourishes in south and southeastern mainland China and Taiwan. The most important sacred sites for Orthodox Unity priests are various local temples in Taiwan and Longhu shan 龍虎山 (Dragon-Tiger Mountain; Jiangxi). Complete Perfection Daoists are monastics, celibate and formally initiated monks and nuns. Traditionally speaking, members of the various Complete Perfection lineages live in monasteries, established throughout China's major urban centers and sacred mountains. While Complete Perfection temples engage in ritual practice, the emphasis is more contemplative. Practicing Complete Perfection adepts often engage in scripture study and recitation, meditation (including internal alchemy), and longevity practices. Under the influence of Buddhism, Complete Perfection monks and nuns also tend to be vegetarian, a practice that is at odds with Chinese dietetics based in Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Some important sacred sites for Complete Perfection adepts are Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery; Beijing), Baxian gong 八仙宮 (Eight Immortals Palace; Xi'an), Huashan 華山 (Shaanxi), Qingyang gong 青羊宮 (Azure Ram Palace; Chengdu), and Qingcheng shan 青城山 (Azure Wall Mountain; Sichuan).⁶¹ Based on my field observations at these temples and monasteries (1997-1998; 2005-2006), a number of important details deserve mention. Traditional Complete Perfection temples are sited according to Fengshui 風水 (lit., "wind and water;" Chinese geomancy) on a north-south axis (sometimes actually so, other times ritually so).⁶² The central altar is most often occupied by the Sanqing 三清 (Three

Purities/Three Pure Ones), namely, Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊 (Celestial Worthy of Original Beginnings; center position), Lingbao tianzun 靈寶天尊 (Celestial Worthy of Numinous Treasure; left-hand side of Yuanshi tianzun), and Daode tianzun 道德天尊 (Celestial Worthy of the Dao and Inner Power; right-hand side of Yuanshi tianzun). These “deities” represent the three primordial energies of the cosmos, which came into being when the Dao began a process of differentiation. Complete Perfection adepts most often practice solitary meditation and group recitation, with the recitation focusing on “spirit invocations” (*shenzhou* 神咒). Such chanting traditionally is performed during the new and full moon and the Eight Nodes (*bajie* 八節), with the latter being the beginning of the four seasons and the solstices and equinoxes. The Complete Perfection tradition mainly flourishes in northern and western mainland China. The Dragon Gate branch, at least in name, has spread to not only Hong Kong and Taiwan, but also Canada, England, Italy, and the United States.⁶³

Daoist Studies, or the serious academic consideration of the entire breadth of the Daoist tradition, is a relatively recent occurrence. This is partially due to the fact that the scriptures of Daoism were largely inaccessible, seemingly non-existent, before the early part of the twentieth century. With the 1927 reproduction of the *Zhengtong daoze* 正統道藏 (Daoist Canon of the Zhengtong [Period]; hereafter Daoist Canon), a Ming dynasty (1368-1644) collection of over 1,400 texts, textual resources for in-depth inquiries into the Daoist tradition became available. Before this time, and for many years after, the *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi* received most of the scholarly attention. While the “rediscovery” of the Daoist Canon prepared the way for historical research on Daoism through textual studies, it was not until the publication of a reduced 60-volume edition in the 1970s that the academic study of Daoism began to flourish. It is no coincidence that the 1960s and 1970s witnessed a dramatic increase in research.

The principal early scholars were French and Japanese. Here I concentrate on Daoist Studies in the West. One may say that the father of Daoist Studies in the West, and the academic study of Daoism as a religion, appreciated and worthy of concern, begins with the publication of Henri Maspero’s

(1883- 1945) detailed inquiries into the Daoist Canon, published in article form from 1928-1950. These articles were posthumously collected by Paul Demieville (1894-1979) and published as *Le taoisme et les religions chinoises* (translated into English as *Taoism and Chinese Religion* [1981]). Maspero died in the death camps at Buchenwald in 1945. However, the seeds for the emerging field Daoist Studies were already beginning to germinate in Rolf Stein (1911-1999) and Maxime (Max) Kaltenmark (d.u.), students of Maspero and Marcel Granet (1884-1948). In 1951 and 1953, Stein and Kaltenmark returned from Asia, beginning their teaching careers at the Fifth Section “Sciences religieuses” of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris. Their weekly seminars began to produce a new generation of scholars devoted to the study of Taoism. While Kaltenmark himself published mainly in article form, the importance of his teaching career and subsequent influence on the emerging field of Daoist Studies should not be underestimated – Without Max Kaltenmark, Henri Maspero’s pioneering studies on Taoism might have remained books on the shelf. It was largely due to Kaltenmark’s extraordinary talent as a teacher that an impressive number of young scholars came to be trained in the study of the Daoist Canon and related subjects of Chinese religion. Kaltenmark was the teacher and mentor for many of the third-generation Western scholars who would come to more thoroughly investigate and explain the Daoist tradition in the coming decades. Under Kaltenmark’s direction, some of the senior and most important scholars of the field completed their dissertations: Kristofer Schipper (1965), Anna Seidel (1969), Catherine Despeux (1976), Isabelle Robinet (1977), Manfred Porket (1979), Michel Strickmann (1981), John Lagerwey (1981), and Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein (1984).

At the same time that Kaltenmark was carrying out his research and guiding the third-generation of Daoism scholars, the field of Daoist Studies was receiving new and important contributions from England and the United States. Associated with a variety of institutions in Cambridge, Joseph Needham (1900-1995) and his research associates published the first installment of *Science and Civilisation in China* in 1954. With new volumes continuing to be published (seven “volumes” so far, amounting to twenty-

two different books), the sheer scope of Needham's project is mind-bending. Particularly important for Daoist Studies are volume two (historical overview of Daoism), volume five (on laboratory and internal alchemy), and a variety of other volumes on such topics as astronomy and Chinese medicine.

In the United States, Edward Schafer (1913-1991) was exploring some of the more poetic and exotic aspects of the Chinese literary tradition as well as Daoism. Based at the University of California at Berkeley, Schafer had far-ranging and eclectic interests. He aspired first and foremost to be a philologist, but his detailed scholarship led to numerous inquiries into the Daoist tradition. Like Kaltenmark, Schafer was also responsible for training some of the foremost contemporary scholars on Daoism. Among those who either trained with him or completed their dissertations under him, there are the following: Donald Harper (1982), Suzanne Cahill (1982), Judith Boltz (1985), Stephen Bokenkamp (1986), and Livia Kohn (formerly Livia Knaul).

Two other major figures, occupying a historical position somewhere between Schafer and his students, and contemporaneous with the third generation of French scholars, are Michael Saso and Nathan Sivin. Saso was one of the first Western scholars to approach Daoism from an anthropological point of view. During his fieldwork in Taiwan, Saso, like Kristofer Schipper, received ordination and was thus initiated into the Daoist tradition.⁶⁴ Each of these scholars offers an emic (insider's) perspective on the daily lives, worldviews, and practices of modern Daoists in Taiwan through their own experiential understanding as participants in the tradition. On a different note, Nathan Sivin's research has addressed and continues to explore the alchemical, medical and "scientific" traditions of China, with frequent attention given to Daoism. In addition, Sivin has written one of the more frequently cited and still relevant discussions of the use and misuse of the term "Daoist": "On the Word 'Taoist' as a Source of Perplexity" (Sivin 1978).

The roots of Daoist Studies in the West had found stable ground with the dedication of Kaltenmark and Schafer and the enduring interest that they inspired in their students. A larger international exchange also began to take place. Three international conferences dedicated to exploring the Daoist tradition were organized. The first took place in Bellagio, Italy, in 1968, and the following scholars participated: de Bary, Doub, Eliade, Graham, Ho, Kaltenmark, Link, Mather, Miyuki, Needham, Saso, Schipper, Seidel, Sivin, Welch, and Wright. Some of the proceedings were published in *History of Religions* 9.3-4. The second conference commenced in Tateshina, Japan, in 1973, and was attended by Sakai, Miyakawa, Needham, Kaltenmark, Stein, Hon, Schipper, Seidel, Porkert, Dull, Mather, Sivin, Strickmann, and Welch. A portion of this conference's proceedings was published in *Facets of Taoism* (1979). Finally, the third international conference took place at Unterageri, Switzerland, in 1979, and participants included Chen, Fukui, Homann, Baldrian-Hussein, Kandel, Kimata, Lagerwey, Levi, Lu, Miyakawa, Murakami, Robinet, Sakai, Sawaguchi, Schafer, Schipper, Sivin, Strickmann, Wang, Yoshioka, Zimmerman, and Zurcher. The papers from this conference were not published as a collection. "It was largely - but not exclusively - due to their [these scholars'] effort that we today have a number of important indexes and concordances to the Daoist canon and certain specific texts" (Kohn 2000b, xxviii).⁶⁵

With this momentum, enormous advances in the understanding of Daoism have been made in the last twenty or so years. Daoism became distinguished from the various other religions of China, and serious research into Daoism became academically viable. The larger tradition, not just the "philosophical" classics, began to be presented as profound and worthy of respect. A large portion of the tradition has received preliminary attention, and new methodologies have been applied. Scholars have addressed and explored Daoism in terms of textual studies, Chinese history, anthropological fieldwork, social history, epigraphy, and comparative religion. Most importantly in my view, high-level translations of Daoist scriptures with appropriate exegesis have been and are currently being undertaken (see, for example, Kohn 1993; Bokenkamp 1997). The foundations of Daoist Studies in the West became stabilized by the

establishment and maintenance of a journal dedicated exclusively to publishing articles on Daoism; this was *Taoist Resources* (1989-1997).

While it is deeply regrettable that Daoist Studies has lost the life and work of Anna Seidel (1938-1991), Michel Strickmann (1942-1994), Isabelle Robinet (1932-2000), and Julian Pas (1929-2000), the high standards and innovative patterns of their research continue to inspire their students and younger members of the field. The “French tradition” of Daoist Studies remains strong and continues to develop challenging new perspectives. In addition to the above-mentioned scholars, Franciscus Verellen, Vincent Goossaert, Christine Mollier, and Pierre Marsone have provided substantial contributions, and we may look forward to the results of their ongoing research. In the “British tradition,” Timothy Barrett’s studies have been the most noteworthy. In terms of Daoist Studies in the West, the “American tradition” has the largest and most diverse number of members currently at work. Besides Schafer, s students, some prominent American scholars include Robert Campany (Indiana University), Edward Davis (University of Hawaii), Stephen Eskildsen (University of Tennessee), Norman Girardot (Lehigh University), Russell Kirkland (University of Georgia), Terry Kleeman (University of Colorado, Boulder), Stephen Little (Honolulu Academy of Arts), Peter Nickerson (Duke University), Michael Puett (Harvard University), and Harold Roth (Brown University). Scholars are also conducting important research in a number of other Western countries: Poul Andersen (Germany/America), Kenneth Dean (Canada), Ute Engelhardt (Germany), Monica Esposito (Italy/Japan), Barbara Hendrischke (Australia), James Miller (Canada), Benjamin Penny (Australia), Fabrizio Pregadio (Italy/Germany/United States), Florian Reiter (Germany), and Eugeny Torchinov (Russia).⁶⁶ In conclusion, it should be mentioned that Daoist Studies also flourishes in Japan, Korea, and more recently in China.

The Daoist tradition, however, is not simply an intellectual artifact. There are now Daoist practitioners and organizations throughout the world: the Belgian Taoist Association, British Taoist Association, Brazilian Taoist Association, French Taoist Association, Hong Kong Taoist Association, Italian Taoist Association and Sun Do (Korea/United States), for example. Daoism is currently in the process of being adapted and transmitted to a

global context. Here I concentrate on Daoist teachers and organizations in the North America that identify themselves as Daoist, some of which have identifiable connections with the larger Chinese Daoist tradition. Before beginning my brief discussion of Daoism in North America, some background information on Chinese immigration to the United States may be helpful. The most important dates and legislation are as follows: 1790, the Naturalization Act restricts citizenship to “free white persons;” 1849, after the discovery of gold the first ship of Chinese people arrives in California; circa 1853, the first Chinese temples (Tin Hou Temple and Kong Chow Temple) are built in San Francisco; by 1854, over 13,000 Chinese people, virtually all men, had come seeking riches in the gold mines; 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act effectively bans Chinese immigration and naturalization; 1917, the United States Congress passes the Immigration Act, which halts emigration from a “barred zone” in Asia that included Chinese and South and Southeast Asia (but not Japan and the Philippines); 1924, the Asian Exclusion Act imposes a national origins quota system that severely restricts emigration from Asia, including Japan; 1943, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 is repealed, and Chinese people are granted naturalization rights (however, the immigration quota for “persons of Chinese ancestry” was set at only 105 per year); 1952, the McCarran-Walter Act overturns 1790 legislation restricting citizenship to “free white persons” (the immigration quota for Asians is, in turn, set at 2,990); 1965, the Immigration Act puts an end to the national origins quota system which had severely restricted Asian immigration since 1924.

From a socio-historical and anthropological point of view, Daoism in North America is poorly documented and almost completely unknown. With regard to the first one hundred years of Chinese immigration, from 1849 to 1950, we currently know next to nothing about a Daoist presence in North America. This may remain the case. I do not know of any individual or teacher in North America who identified himself or herself as a Daoist during this time period. One possible exception is the “Daoist” representative at the World’s Parliament of Religion held in Chicago in 1893. Here a talk on Daoism was given, later published anonymously as

“Taoism, a Prize Essay.” The speaker and author are unknown, and a number of conjectures are possible. From my perspective, the least likely is that the person was an ordained or lineage-based Daoist. Based on the tone and content, it also seems unlikely that the person considered himself to be a Daoist. While intriguing, the identity of this person remains unknown. Any discovery concerning this “Daoist” or Daoism in North America during 1849 through 1950 would be a welcome contribution.

At the present time, and from a tentative historical point of view, it seems that the earliest identifiable and self-identified Daoist priest, whether Chinese or non-Chinese, in North America is Share K. LEW (b. 1918). Share Lew was born in Guangdong province, north of Guangzhou. As an orphan, Share Lew was taken in by a wandering monk from Wong Lung Kwan 黃龍觀 (Huanglong guan; Yellow Dragon Monastery). Eventually he was taken to this monastery in the Luofu shan 羅浮山 (Mount Luofu) area. After an apprenticeship of several years of menial labor, he was initiated and taught a variety of Daoist practices, including Daoist health and longevity techniques. This Daoist system is called Tao Ahn Pai 道丹派 (Daodan pai; Daoist Elixir sect), an internal alchemy system claiming Lü Dongbin as its founder. Share Lew lived and studied at Wong Lung Kwan for thirteen years. He left the monastery in 1948, shortly before the Communist revolution and moved to San Francisco, where he stayed within the Chinese community for several years studying Gongfu 功夫 (Kung Fu) with his uncle LEW Ben. In 1959, Share Lew accepted his first non-Chinese student and in 1970 began to teach Qigong to non-Chinese students. In that year, he and the late Khigh DHIEGH (Kenneth Dickerson; 1910-1991), a television actor, formed the Taoist Sanctuary in Los Angeles (now based in San Diego). According to one of Lew’s biographers, this was the first Daoist religious organization to receive federal status as a church. In 1979, Share Lew moved to San Diego, where he still resides, seeing people for health appointments, teaching small or private classes, and traveling to teach his students in workshops around the United States.

A number of other Chinese, East Asian, Euro-American, and Russian Daoist practitioners are now established in North America. Some of the

most public and recognizable figures and organizations are the following: Alex Anatole (b. 1941?; immigrated, Massachusetts, 1978?) and the Center of Traditional Taoist Studies (CTTS), based in Weston, Massachusetts; Mantak Chia 謝明惠 (b. 1944; immigrated, New York, 1979), Michael Winn (b. 1951), and Healing Tao, based in New York City; Ken Cohen (Gao Han 高漢; b. 1952) and the Qigong Research and Practice Center (formerly Taoist Mountain Retreat), based in Nederland, Colorado; Bill Helm (d.u.) and the Taoist Sanctuary of San Diego; Hsien Yuen 玄元 (b. 1938?; immigrated, New York, 1979?) and the American Taoist & Buddhist Association (ATBA; Meiguo daojiao fojiao lianhe xiehui 美國道教 佛教聯合協會), based in New York City; Liu Ming 劉明 (Charles Belyea; b. 1947) and Orthodox Daoism in America (ODA), now based in Oakland, California; Harrison Moretz (Mo Chenghua 墨承華; b. 1952) and the Taoist Studies Institute (TSI; Daojiao xueyuan 道教學院)/Temple of the Mysterious Pivot (Xuanji guan 玄機觀), based in Seattle, Washington; MOY Lin-shin 梅連羨 (1931-1998; immigrated, Toronto, 1970) and the Taoist Tai Chi Society (TTCS; Daojiao Taiji quan she 道教太極拳社)/Fung Loy Kok 蓬萊閣 (FLK; Penglai ge), based in Toronto, Canada; Ni Hua-ching (Ni Qinghe 倪清和; b. 1931?; immigrated, Los Angeles, 1976) and Universal Society of the Integral Way (USIW), based in Los Angeles; Brock Silvers, the Taoist Restoration Society, and the U.S. Taoist Association, now based in Honolulu, Hawaii; and Solala Towler (b. 1950), The Abode of the Eternal Tao, and *The Empty Vessel: Journal of Contemporary Taoism*, based in Eugene, Oregon.⁶⁷

With this general account of Daoism in place, one may better understand and appreciate the religious tradition *which is Daoism* and the historical precedents that have been established by the earlier Chinese tradition. This also allows practitioners to reflect on and determine the extent to which what they are doing is “Daoist.” Considering Daoist practice in particular, there are various “models” that emerge through the careful consideration of the entire breadth of the tradition.⁶⁸ These include but are not limited to ritualistic, cosmological, quietistic, hermeneutical, therapeutic, alchemical, shamanic, and mystical. Most often, a variety of these models are contained and combined in any given training regimen or lifeway, and these approaches can be individual or communal. Moreover, often such

combinations, on deeper consideration, can be in conflict with each other.⁶⁹ From my observations of Daoism in the West, most people are practicing or interested in a “self-cultivation” approach. This involves a wide range of concerns and motivations: from personal health and healing through self-realization to mystical unification.⁷⁰ That is, various self-cultivation models are embraced, advocated, and taught in the West, especially therapeutic, quietistic, alchemical, and mystical.⁷¹

Considered holistically, Daoist practice (Taoist practice) consists of cosmology, “theology” (discourse on the sacred), observation, practice principles and guidelines, meditation, health and longevity practices, ethics, dietetics, scripture study, seasonal attunement, geomancy, and ritual.⁷² At the root of these various dimensions of Daoist practice resides a commitment to self-cultivation and a recognition of the Dao as unnamable mystery and all-pervading numinosity. One endeavors to establish and maintain a connection with the sacred and realize the Dao as one’s own essential being, one’s own innate or original nature (*benxing* 本性). Such are the parameters of a Daoist way of life rooted in religious vocation and religious training.

While *Handbooks for Daoist Practice* technically falls within the category of “scripture study,” these texts in fact address most of the various dimensions of Daoist practice. Close reading, deep contemplation and dedicated application reveal the benefit and importance of scripture study for Daoist practice. The translations contained in this series are “handbooks for Daoist practice” precisely because they orient one towards the Dao and because they provide principles and instructions for “cultivating the Dao” (*xiudao* 修道). Such is the connective tissue that creates a network between them. In the present selection of Daoist texts, one finds guidance concerning cosmology and theology (*Inward Training*, *Book of Venerable Masters*, *Yellow Thearch’s Basic Questions*, *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness*, *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman*), meditation (*Inward Training*, *Book of Venerable Masters*, *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness*, *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice*, *Redoubled Yang’s Fifteen Discourses*, *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion*), health and longevity practices (*Inward*

Training, Book of Venerable Masters, Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions, Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses), ethics (*Inward Training, Book of Venerable Masters, Scriptural Statutes of Lord Lao, Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses*), dietetics (*Inward Training, Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions*), and seasonal attunement (*Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions*). In addition, each of these texts contains important insights into purification, observation and spiritual realization.

What one must keep in mind, and this is of cardinal significance, is that “Daoist practice” cannot be and should not be reduced to a mere set of techniques. Specific forms of seated meditation (*dazuo* 打坐) and nourishing life methods (*yangsheng shu* 養生術) are necessary at different stages of cultivation, but Daoist practice is multi-dimensional and based on personal requirements. Deep, authentic and holistic Daoist practice is based on internal cultivation (*neixiu* 內修) and is rooted in sustained and dedicated training as a life-long undertaking. For this, there is some helpful advice. Attend to your own practice-realization and remain unconcerned about other's accomplishments or lack thereof. Endeavor to free yourself from considering or ruminating about who is a “real Daoist.” It is also important not to allow other people to deny, marginalize, or obstruct your undertaking. Simultaneously, abstain from reacting to or criticizing others. Allow your life and practice to be a transformational presence in the lives of others, to contribute to their self-unfolding as manifestations of the Dao. When you meet those with whom you have a natural affinity and whose communication expresses something important and real, do your best to learn from them. Incorporate what is beneficial and discard what is deficient. In short, trust your own experience and maintain your own practice. Compare yourself to no one, and take nothing personally. From a Daoist perspective, each person's innate nature (*xing* 性), the heart-mind (*xin* 心) with which one was born (*sheng* 生), is the Dao. One may be distant from the Dao, but the Dao is never distant.

There can be little doubt that “scripture study” has occupied a central place in the Daoist tradition itself. The extant Daoist Canon, compiled in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), as well as “extra-canonical collections” contain

numerous commentaries (*zhu* 註) on earlier Daoist scriptures. As the late Isabelle Robinet (1932-2000), a pioneer in the field of Daoist Studies and the foremost Western scholar of Daoist commentaries on the *Daode jing*, has shown, there are over one hundred extant commentaries on the *Daode jing* in the Ming-dynasty canon alone. In addition, we have commentaries on such texts as the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Scripture on the Yellow Court), *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman), and *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness), among others. Unfortunately, next to none of this commentary literature has been translated to date.⁷³ The sheer volume of this hermeneutical tradition points towards the importance of the study and application of Daoist scriptures to the life-worlds of individual adepts and cultivation communities.

It is clear from the extant commentaries that certain texts received a venerated place in the Daoist tradition. These texts were frequently read in terms of the immediate concerns and practice modalities of a given religious community. For instance, in the context of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) lineages, the *Daode jing* was often understood as directly applicable to alchemical transformation. Moreover, the texts that were seen in this light were considered “revelatory,” often containing the phrase “as spoken by the great high Lord Lao” (*Taishang laojun shuo* 太上老君說). That is, these particular texts were “scriptures” (*jing* 經); they were understood to be “sacred” or emanations of the Dao. The character for “scripture,” like Chinese characters in general, contains two elements: the *si* 丝 (“silk”) on the left, and the *jing* 井, (“well”) phonetic on the right. A further etymological reading of this character might suggest that the *jing* phonetic is also a meaning-carrier. Under this reading, “scriptures” are threads and watercourses that form and re-form networks of connection. They connect the Daoist practitioner to both the unnamable mystery which is the Dao and the Daoist tradition, the community of adepts that preceded one, as a historical continuum.

If one then considers how to read Daoist texts *as a practitioner*, one would engage a given text as directly relevant to one’s immediate situation. That is, Daoist texts provide principles and practice guidelines, as well as

specific practices, for cultivating the Dao (*xiudao* 修道). However, creative and critical engagement also requires the recollection of the interrelationship among knowledge, insight, practice, and experience. These texts create the context for dialogue and discussion. One should not read these texts as authoritarian mandates or fail to consider the ways in which one's own realizations relate to the text at hand. As the *Lijiao shiwu lun* 立教十五論 (Fifteen Discourses to Establish the Teachings; DZ 1233), attributed to Wang Chongyang 王重陽, the founder of Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection), advises,

The way to study texts is not to strive after literary accomplishments, and thereby confuse your eyes. Instead, you must extract the meaning as it harmonizes with the heart-mind (*xin* 心). Abandon texts after you have extracted their meaning (*yi* 意) and grasped their principle (*ji* 理). Abandon principle after you have realized the fundamental ground (*qu* 趣). After you realize the fundamental, then attend to it until it completely enters the heart-mind. (2ab)

One also should not fail to confront, nor attempt to domesticate, the radical challenges that often arise through familiarity with Daoist literature. From a praxis-based perspective, these texts are here to clarify one's practice and to transform one's life.

For those committed to Daoist cultivation, Daoist texts are practice manuals. They contain detailed principles, guidelines, practices, goals, and ideals for a Daoist way of life. Daoist cultivation in turn involves self-reliance, responsibility (the ability to respond), and transformation. Daoist cultivation aims at a shift in ontological condition, a movement from habituated ways of being to more refined patterns of interaction. This process may be understood as a return to one's original endowment from the Dao (suchness or being-so-of-itself [*ziran* 自然]) and/or as the emergence of a new being (from *ren* 人 [human] to *xian* 仙 [immortal or transcendent]). "Returning to the Source (*guigen* 歸根) is called stillness (*jing* 靜); this means returning to life-destiny (*guiming* 歸命). Returning to life-destiny is called constancy (*chang* 常); knowing constancy is called

illumination (*ming* 明)” (DDJ ch. 16; also 52). The later Daoist tradition, specifically internal alchemy lineages, speak of such an orientation and commitment in terms of innate nature (*xing* 性) and life-destiny (*ming* 命). The character *xing* consists of *xin* 心 (heart-mind”) and *sheng* 生 (“to be born”); innate nature is the heart-mind with which one was born. The character *ming* may be associated with *ling* 令 (“mandate”); life-destiny is a decree from the cosmos made manifest as one’s corporeality. Generally speaking, innate nature relates to consciousness and the heart-mind (*xin* 心), while life-destiny relates to physicality and the body (*shen* 身). Daoist practice involves the dual cultivation of innate nature and life-destiny, a commitment to both stillness (meditation, for example) and movement (*daoyin* 導引 for example) practices.

At the most fundamental level, health and well-being are prerequisites for more advanced training. Here health is understood as internal harmony and integration. Following a classical Chinese medical understanding, as expressed in texts such as the *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問 (Yellow Thearch’s Inner Classic: Basic Questions),⁷⁴ health consists of the smooth flow of qi throughout the body’s various “organs” (*zangfu* 臟腑) and meridians (*mai* 脈). However, health and well-being also involve attentiveness to larger seasonal and cosmological cycles. Generally speaking, the *Yellow Thearch’s Basic Questions*, an anonymous text containing textual and historical layers from the second century B.C.E. to the sixth century C.E., emphasizes a preventative approach to illness: “Sages (*shengren* 聖人) do not regulate diseases (*bing* 病) after they are already a disease. They regulate them before they arise. They do not regulate disorder (*luan* 亂) after it is already disorder. They regulate it before it is disorder” (ch. 2). The *Yellow Thearch’s Basic Questions* provides principles, guidelines, and models for living in harmony with larger seasonal and cosmic cycles. The text is fundamentally about how to live well, which herein means a regulated and harmonious life that recognizes the larger context of one’s being. In some sense, the *Yellow Thearch’s Basic Questions* contains an ecological worldview, emphasizing interconnection and larger patterns of influence and dependency. The text advocates attentiveness to internal and external cycles, which affect one’s

overall health, well-being, and spiritual alignment. It is delusion to believe that one is unaffected by and independent from ever-expanding spheres of relationship: familial, communal, cultural, regional, national, global, and cosmological. For example, how can lunar cycles shift oceanic tides and not influence internal human conditions? The *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions* documents the basic constituents and subtle physiology of human beings and the ways in which these are affected by larger cycles.

The first two chapters of the *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions* also emphasize conservation and harmonization. When expressed in a vague way like “be natural,” such guidelines can easily be scoffed at and dismissed out of hand or seen as justification for some unregulated (“spontaneous” [read: egocentric and libertine]) way of life. But when considered from an energetic and “astro-geomantic” perspective and knowledge-base, various influences and networks become visible. In terms of the view expressed in the *Yellow- Thearch's Basic Questions*, the most fundamental form of harmonization begins with the body-self. One regulates one’s eating, drinking, sexual activity, and sleeping. One also becomes attuned to the internal circulation of qi, the condition and tendencies of the organs, and the overall condition of one’s being. The next sphere of influence is one’s immediate place; this relates to relationships, communal influences, as well as locality and region. These involve the possibility of “invasion” and disruption by external pathogenic influences (EPIs). The first two chapters of the *Yellow Thearch's basic Questions* clearly understand such causes of disease (*bing* 病) as relating to one’s own way of life and naturalistic harmful influences. The latter includes the so-called “six climatic influences” (*liuqi* 六氣): wind (*feng* 風), dryness (*gan* 乾), dampness (*shi* 濕), cold (*han* 寒), summer heat (*shure* 暑熱), and fire (*huo* 火) (see also ch. 8; chs. 66-74). A more complete understanding also recognizes other influences, such as vacuity (*xu* 虛), noxious influences (*xie* 邪), injurious winds (*zeifeng* 賊風), and wind-cold (*hanfeng* 寒風). That is, specific natural phenomena have the capacity to disrupt one’s internal equilibrium and health, giving rise to disease. From a practical perspective, this means that, in addition to self-regulation and energetic strengthening, one avoids exposure to such potentially harmful influences. For instance,

Daoist adepts frequently emphasize not exposing oneself to strong winds, heavy rain, and snow. If one must travel or move in such conditions, certain precautions are taken, such as covering the neck, lower back/kidneys, and shoulders with extra insulation. This involves the more general understanding that the lower body is associated yin and thus may be especially affected by cold and dampness, while the upper body is associated yang and thus may be especially affected by heat and wind. More specifically, dampness may easily affect the feet and ankles, cold the knees and lower back, and wind the upper back, neck, and head.

In a more positive sense, one attempts to live in more nourishing environments and become aware of the energetic qualities of place. There are a number of dimensions to this, including “ecological” and cosmological aspects. With regard to the former, one recognizes the effects of “landscape” (Fengshui 風水; geomancy), the places within which one is located and the communities within which one participates. Generally speaking, “natural places” contain a cleaner and more refined energetic quality. Locations with specific attributes, mountains, streams, forests, wildlife, etc., are most beneficial for human flourishing and harmonization. More specifically, there are types of mountains, trees, birds, etc., which each have a particular quality and influence. For example, pine trees have a strong yang quality, including a powerful upward movement. For someone with a tendency towards stagnation, it may be beneficial to live among pines. However, for someone with a tendency towards liver-yang rising and headaches, pine trees can exacerbate such conditions. Cosmologically speaking, the most easily observable and recognizable patterns involve the seasons and the sun and moon cycles. Following the seasonal cycles means becoming attentive to and resonating with their energetic qualities. Spring is associated with birth (*sheng* 生) and an outward energetic direction, summer with development (*chang* 長) and an upward energetic direction, autumn with harvesting (*shou* 收) and an inward energetic direction, and winter with storing (*cang* 藏) and a downward energetic direction. Agriculturally speaking, and note that the Daoist tradition frequently emphasizes “internal cultivation” (*neixiu* 內修), spring is the time to plant

seeds, summer to allow maturation, autumn to harvest, and winter to store. Cosmologically speaking, the cycles of the sun and moon are particularly important (astrology/astronomy). In this respect, practicing Daoists give increased attention to the new and full moon and the so-called Eight Nodes (*bajie* 八節): the beginning of the four seasons and the solstices and equinoxes. The emphasis on harmonious internal conditions, the uninterrupted flow of qi through the organ-meridian networks, and larger patterns of ecological and cosmological alignment and integration are the foundation of Daoist self-cultivation.

Another core guideline for Daoist practice centers on conservation or non-dissipation. In Daoist texts as historically distant as the anonymous fourth-century B.C.E. “*Neiye*” 內業 (Inward Training) and *Laozi* 老子 (*Book of Venerable Masters*), anonymous sixth-century C.E. *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31), and anonymous eighth-century *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 620), one finds repeated admonitions to refrain from behavior patterns that dissipate one’s foundational vitality. *Inward Training* understands Daoist practice as ultimately connected to consciousness and spirit (*shen* 神), with particular emphasis placed on the ability of the heart-mind (*xin* 心) either to attain numinous pervasion (*lingtong* 靈通) or to separate the adept from the Dao as Source. Here the heart-mind is understood both as a physical location in the chest (the heart [*xin* 心] as “organ” [*zang* 藏/臟]) and as relating to thoughts (*nian* 念) and emotions (*qing* 情) (the heart as “consciousness” [*shi* 識]). Intellectual and emotional activity is a possible source of dissipation and disruption. However, when stilled (*jing* 靜) and stabilized (*ding* 定), the heart-mind is associated with innate nature (*xing* 性), the givenness (*ziran* 自然) and the actualization (*xiu* 修) of one’s innate endowment from and connection with the Dao. This return to one’s original nature (*benxing* 本性) is the attainment of mystical unification (*dedao* 得道).

Inward Training is clearly concerned with possible sources for the dissipation of vital essence (*jing* 精), vitality (*sheng* 生), and spirit (*shen* 神). As the title suggests, emphasis is placed on cultivating the internal (*nei*

内), as innate connection to the Dao, over the external (*wai* 外), as potential disruption of one's personal harmony and stability. *Inward Training* identifies various psychological tendencies and patterns that may lead to disruption and destabilization. Vitality may be lost and the heart-mind confused through specific emotional and intellectual activities; such conditions include grief (*you* 憂), happiness (*le* 樂), pleasure (*xi* 喜), anger (*nu* 怒), desire (*yu* 欲), anxiety (*huan* 患), and profit-seeking (*li* 利). It should be mentioned that these aspects of human being are not, generally speaking, inherently harmful; rather, it is excessive and inappropriate activity and expression that exhausts one's vitality and numinosity. "Considering the vitality (*sheng* 生) of human beings, it inevitably occurs because of balance (*ping* 平) and alignment (*zheng* 正). The reason why balance and alignment are lost is inevitably because of pleasure (*xi* 喜), anger (*nu* 怒), grief (*you* 憂), and anxiety (*huan* 患)" (ch. 22). The loss of this vitality, associated with the dissipation of vital essence, destabilizes the foundations for more advanced inward training, which center on the heart-mind and spirit. An additional source of disruption and disturbance is the "five desires" (*wuyu* 五欲), which relate to the "five senses" (*wuguan* 五官) and their concern with the external. These include desire generated by hearing (ears), seeing (eyes), tasting (tongue), smelling (nose), and touching (body). "Regulate the five sense-desires and cast off the two misfortunes (*erxiong* 二凶). When both joy and anger [the two misfortunes] are negated, balance and alignment will permeate your torso" (ch. 21).

Similarly, the *Book of Venerable Masters* advocates a way of life based on "decreasing" (*shao* 少) and "lessening" (*gua* 寡). "Appear plain (*jiansu* 見素) and embrace simplicity (*baopu* 抱樸); decrease personal interest (*shaosi* 少私) and lessen desires (*guayu* 寡欲)" (ch. 19; also ch. 37). The heart-mind (*xin* 心) and one's innate nature (*xing* 性) become obscured by desire (*yu* 欲), knowing (*zhi* 知), contending (*zheng* 爭), selfishness (*si* 忒人), and excess (*tai* 泰)." Thus we may consider the sage's approach to governing (*zhi* 治) – Empty the heart-mind (*xu qi xin* 虛其心) and fill the belly (*shi qifu* 實其腹). Weaken the will (*ruo qi zhi* 弱其志) and strengthen the bones (*qiang qi gu* 強其骨)" (ch. 3; also ch. 12).⁷⁵ On the most basic level, this

passage emphasizes living closer to necessity and sustenance. However, from a Daoist perspective, “governing the country” (*zhiguo* 治國) also relates to “governing (regulating or healing) the body-self” (*zhishen* 治身). To empty the heart-mind is to decrease excessive intellectual and emotional activity; to fill the belly, *fu* 腹 also refers to the lower abdominal region, is to increase the qi stored in the body’s center.

The emphasis on the sense-organs and external concerns as possible sources of dissipation also finds expression in the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* and *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness*. The *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* explains that the Five Thieves (*wuzei* 五賊) disrupt the human heart-mind. Under one interpretation, the Five Thieves are excitement (*xi* 喜), excessive joy (*le* 樂), grief (哀), desire (*yu* 欲), and anger (*nu* 怒). Dissipating spirit and qi, the Five Thieves destabilize the heart-mind. The scripture also explains that “The aberrations of the Nine Cavities are in the Three Essentials” (1a). The Nine Cavities (*jiuqiao* 九竅) refer to the nine openings in the body, including eyes, ears, nose, mouth, anus, and urethra (see also *Inward Training* ch. 15). The Three Essentials (*sanyao* 三要) refer to the three orifices through which qi is most easily lost: the eyes (*mu* 目), ears (*er* 耳), and mouth (*kou* 口). Here the emphasis is on sealing the senses to prevent dissipation and distraction. This recalls the end of chapter seven of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang):

The emperor of the Southern Ocean was called Brevity (Shu 儻). The emperor of the northern ocean was called Suddenness (Hu 忽). The emperor of the Center was called Primordial Chaos (Hundun 混沌). Brevity and Suddenness often met in the land of Primordial Chaos, and Primordial Chaos treated them very generously. Brevity and Suddenness discussed how they could repay the inner power (*de* 德) of Primordial Chaos. They said, “All people have the Seven Cavities (*qiqiao* 七竅) so that they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. Primordial Chaos alone does not have them. Let’s try boring some.” Each day they bored another hole. On the seventh day Primordial Chaos died.

Like the disruption caused to Hundun's primordial unity through increasing differentiation, the sense organs may confuse and destabilize the Daoist adept's innate nature. Differentiated and conditioned modes of being separate one from one's original context of interrelationship.

The *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* suggests that the practice of observation (*guan* 觀) and the development of clarity (*qing* 清) and stillness (*jing* 靜) allow one to abide in suchness (*ziran* 自然). In this ontological condition, the "Six Desires" do not arise and the "Three poisons" are dispersed. The Six Desires (*liuyu* 六欲) are those originating from the six sense-organs (*liugen* 六根): eyes (sight), ears (sound), nose (smell), mouth (taste), body (touch), and mind (thought). The Three Poisons (*sandu* 三毒) are greed (*tan* 貪), anger (*chen* 嗔), and ignorance (*chi* 痴). By freeing oneself from the Six Desires and Three Poisons, by developing clarity and stillness, one awakens to innate nature (*xing* 性). As mentioned, innate nature is the heart-mind with which one is born. It is the personal half of the talisman - one's original connection to and attunement with the Dao. To cultivate clarity and stillness is to realize innate nature. This is nourishing the root; this is returning to the Dao.

In a later development, influenced by internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), the anonymous thirteenth-century C.E. *Nei riyong jing* 內日用經 (Scripture for Daily Internal Practice; DZ 645) advises the aspiring adept to nourish and protect the Seven Treasures (*qibao* 七寶), namely, vital essence, blood, qi, marrow, the brain, the kidneys, and the heart. The *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* suggests that the Daoist adept should consider and reflect on the various ways in which the Seven Treasures are dispersed. These aspects of human being are not simply substances and organs; it is also important to recognize the related associations, specifically the Five Phase correspondences. For instance, becoming overly engaged in listening may be detrimental to the kidneys and dissipate vital essence. Excessive emotional and intellectual activity may injure the heart, thus leading to instability of spirit. One should in turn adopt lifeways and practices that preserve and nourish the Seven Treasures.

Thus, at its most fundamental level, Daoist cultivation involves conservation, self-refinement, and cosmological attunement. Through a commitment to “inward training,” through the cultivation of clarity and stillness, one realizes and actualizes one’s innate connection with the Dao. One comes to be an *embodiment* of the Dao through one’s being-in-the-world. For anyone interested in developing a root in Daoist practice, Daoist texts provide guidance and clarification. Inspired by the *Book of Venerable Masters*, the so-called “Nine Practices” (*jiuxing* 九行) as contained in the sixth-century *Laojun jinglu* 老君經律 (Scriptural Statues of Lord Lao; DZ 786) represent an important beginning:

Practice non-action.

Practice softness and weakness.

Practice guarding the feminine. Do not initiate actions.

Practice being nameless.

Practice clarity and stillness.

Practice being adept.

Practice being desireless.

Practice knowing how to stop and be content.

Practice yielding and withdrawing.

Regarding the selection of the various handbooks for Daoist practice translated here,⁷⁶ I have utilized a number of criteria. Based on discussions with Daoist teachers and practitioners in North America and my observation and consideration of Daoist organizations in North America, I have recognized the personal nature of Daoist practice here and the need for relevant texts from the Daoist tradition. As there are few Daoist ritual communities and no Daoist monastic centers in North America as yet, it makes little sense in a series such as this to translate texts that discuss the performance of ritual or monastic requirements.⁷⁷ Instead, I have selected praxis-oriented texts that relate most clearly to “self-cultivation,” although the imagined identity of a separate “self” does not last very long in the course of Daoist training. This foundation of self-cultivation may enable the development of more dedicated forms of communal involvement as well.

As the “Daxue” 大學 (Great Learning) chapter of the *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites), a central text in the Confucian tradition, explains,

Those in antiquity who wished to illuminate luminous virtue throughout the world would first govern their states; wishing to govern their states, they would first bring order to their families; wishing to bring order to their families, they would first cultivate their own persons; wishing to cultivate their own persons, they would first rectify their heart-minds; wishing to rectify their heart-minds, they would first make their thinking sincere; wishing to make their thinking sincere, they would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge lies in the investigation of things. It is only when things are investigated that knowledge is extended; when knowledge is extended that thinking becomes sincere; when thinking becomes sincere that the heart-mind is rectified; when the heart-mind is rectified that the person is cultivated; when the person is cultivated that order is brought to the family; when order is brought to the family that the state is well governed; when the state is well governed that peace is brought to the world.

The Daoist texts translated in *Handbooks for Daoist Practice* have also been selected for conciseness and accessibility. Most of the present handbooks are relatively brief, while containing a certain concentrated insight. Such length restrictions make them more inviting and less intimidating to the potential reader. The observant reader will also notice that there is some repetition throughout the handbooks; this is done in order to ensure that each handbook is self-contained and that key points are reemphasized. I have also attempted to keep “scholarly conventions” at a minimum in order to increase accessibility. These handbooks are thus easily consulted in almost any time frame. In this way, Daoist practice may include every activity, and not be simply a hobby or recreational activity. One does not need to “make time” for Daoist cultivation.

Throughout the process of reading, re-reading, researching, interpreting, and translating these handbooks for Daoist practice, I have developed and

refined my own translation methodology. I have created a format that I believe enables the interested reader to deepen their engagement with and understanding of Daoist literature. Each translation in turn consists of a brief historical and technical introduction, the translation proper, and the original Chinese text. In the case of the Chinese texts, I have included punctuated versions that follow the conventional Western formatting: words arranged left to right and top to bottom. This stands in contrast to classical Chinese texts, in which characters are arranged from top to bottom and right to left. This format was adopted to make the texts more accessible and aesthetically congruent. Traditionally speaking, classical Daoist texts are unpunctuated, so I have tried to use the simplest punctuation possible. I have also endeavored to develop a standardized technical terminology that adequately approximates the original Chinese. In each case, I discuss these important technical terms in the introduction, often indicating when alternative readings are possible as well. In addition, as these translations are intended to be “handbooks for Daoist practice,” I have contemplated and tried to explain the ways in which Daoist practitioners have, do and would read them. This involves translating each text as praxis-oriented, which in most cases they historically are. With regard to the *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters) or *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power) in particular, this involves emphasizing certain chapters while de-emphasizing others, and reading certain more potentially “political” phrases as referring to Daoist praxis. In terms of the latter, I have translated *shi* 士, sometimes conventionally rendered as “knight” or “scholar-idealist,” as “adept.” This too may be historically viable in addition to being experientially sound.

The translation of these Daoist scriptures and related texts has benefited from the various translations mentioned in the introduction to each text. I am grateful for the guidance of the translators who came before me. Translating such challenging texts is always aided by a previous translation, regardless of one’s reservations concerning that work. In terms of citation method, Daoist texts, as reprinted in the Ming-dynasty Daoist Canon, form “scrolls” (*juan* 卷), which vary in length, and “folios” (*ce* 冊). These folios

in turn consist of “pages” (ye 葉). Thus, when citing a Daoist text consisting of more than one scroll, one first places the scroll number (Arabic numerals), followed by a “period,” the page number (Arabic numerals), and section number (letters [a/b] derived from the Greek alphabet). If one were citing from the second section of the ninth page to the first section of the tenth page of the fourth scroll of a five-scroll text, one would write the following: 4.9b-10a.

The present series was undertaken in respect for the sacred standing of these works in the Daoist tradition and in hopes that Daoism may gain a deeper root in the English-speaking world. In some sense, I endeavored to follow the practice guideline from the “Neiye” 內業 (Inward Training) chapter of the *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan): “Inwardly still, outwardly reverent” (*neijing waijing* 內靜外敬). It is my sincere hope that the lives of readers will be nourished and deepened by the insights and guidance of these handbooks for Daoist practice. May they lead to a deeper understanding of the Daoist tradition and Daoist practice. May they lead to more dedicated cultivation (*xiu* 修), refinement (*lian* 煉), awakening (*wu* 悟), and transformation (*hua* 化). May they lead to deeper connectedness (*tong* 通) and in the end a return to the Source (*guigen* 歸根).

Notes

1. Specialists frequently decry the “impoverishment” or “bastardization” of Daoism in the West, but few evidence a commitment to seriously considering the actuality of trans-Chinese forms of Daoism or to directly rectifying the various misconceptions in circulation outside of elite discourse communities. Let me be clear, beyond the most publicly visible forms of New Age appropriation, popular misunderstanding, and spiritualist commodification, there are, in fact, Daoist religious adherents and communities throughout the world.

2. For critical responses to Clarke’s research see the special edition of the *Religious Studies Review* 28.4 (2002).

3. By “knowledge in the service of life” I mean knowledge that is committed to sacred realities, ecological concerns, social ethics, and human flourishing. Keeping in touch with foundational Daoist concerns, it is knowledge which “nourishes life” (*yangsheng* 養生).

4. In this context, it is interesting that the character *chi* 痴, meaning “ignorance,” consists of *chuang* 疒 (“disease”) and *zhi* 知 (“knowing”). Ignorance, by extension, is a form of sickness of knowing.

5. This emphasis on dreaming and awakening exerted a profound influence on the Chan 禪 (Zen) Buddhist tradition, wherein one finds the parallel notions of delusion and enlightenment.

6. Thus, one might suggest that there is a “new religious movement” (NRM) that could be called “popular Western Taoism,” with “Taoism” pronounced with a hard “t” sound. See Siegler 2003; Komjathy 2006.

7. This has already happened. Many organizations are now calling themselves “Tao groups.” Similarly, one should recognize the presence of “Qigong movements” and “Tai Chi Chuan movements” in America.

8. The website of the Taoist Restoration Society (TRS) is recommended for getting some information on Daoism in contemporary China and a “taste” of Daoism in America. However, potential participants are forewarned that the organizers of this website have a particular agenda and that contributors often evidence a fairly superficial understanding of Daoism as a Chinese religious tradition.

9. This outdated interpretative framework is, unfortunately, perpetuated in Julian Pas’ *Historical Dictionary of Taoism* (1998). For a critical review see the Review Section at the Daoist Studies website. For discussions of such interpretative issues in Daoist Studies, especially key questions such as “Who is a Daoist?” and “What is Daoism?”, see Creel 1956; Sivin 1978; Saso 1978; Strickmann 1980; Thompson 1993; Kobayashi 1995; Kirkland 1997; 2000; 2004; Clarke 2000; Chinese Taoist Association 2002; Kohn and Roth 2002; Komjathy 2002; 2005; 2006; Wang 2005; Yin 2005.

10. When I say that “philosophical Daoism is a complete fiction” I am speaking historically in terms of the Chinese religious tradition *which is* Daoism. However, if one were to expand the discussion to include contemporary developments, it is clear that there are individuals, both Chinese and Western, who consider themselves “philosophical Daoists.” One such individual is Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢 (b. 1947). Internet groups, or “web-rings,” such as the Circle of Wandering Daoists fall into this category as well. While such individuals are clearly applying classical Daoist “ideas” to modern intellectual and social needs, much of their authority rests on the highly questionable claim of representing “original Daoism.” One must also reflect upon the domestication, colonization and fantasization involved in such appropriative agendas. Far too many, the majority in fact, of Western publications, academic and popular, fall into this category, usually under the guise of “intellectual history” or “comparative philosophy.”

11. For many historians, it is problematic to speak of “Daoism,” which in that reading is understood as an organized tradition with a self-conscious collective identity, before the second century C.E. This view centers on Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (fl. 142 C.E.?) and the early Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) movement. This view is misguided for two important reasons. First, it neglects historical precedents (see below); second, one could argue that “Daoism” was not an organized tradition with a self-conscious identity until the early medieval period (see Kobayashi 1995; Kirkland 1997; Kirkland 2004).

12. This definition is indebted to the work of Rudolf Otto, William James, Mircea Eliade, and Paul Tillich.

13. What exactly the “sacred dimension” is depends of the Daoist sub-tradition involved. There are also different types of “mystical experiences” in Daoism. For instance, Warring States adepts were directed towards “unification,” while early Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) practitioners aimed at joining a celestial bureaucracy. On types of Daoist mysticism see Kohn 1992.

14. Two additional points should be made. First, the modern Chinese approximation of the Western category “religion” is *zongjiao* 宗教, literally meaning the “teachings of the ancestors.” That is, in a Chinese context, “religion” is understood as involving a community that is both corporeal and spiritual. Second, my suggestion that religion involves an interaction between the human dimension and the sacred dimension would, arguably, be recognized and accepted by practicing Daoists. As will become clear, most Daoist movements originated in divine revelations, most notably from gods and immortals. For the moment, it is enough to note the importance of talismans (*fu* 符) in the Daoist tradition. Like a talisman, the Daoist adept’s practice culminates in a joining of two things that were originally unified but which have become separated over time.

15. For a summary see Kirkland 1997; Komjathy 2002a.

16. Early advocates of this position included Michael Saso (b. 1930) and the late Michel Strickmann (1942-1994). Their positions (especially Saso’s claims concerning “orthodoxy” [*zheng* 正 versus *xie* 邪] 挾, “Daoist” as only referring to “Daoist priests” [*daoshi* 道士], and the necessity of receiving “registers” [*lu* 錄]) have influenced popular interpreters of the Daoist tradition such as Liu Ming of Orthodox Daoism in America (ODA) and Brock Silvers of the Taoist Restoration Society (TRS). Recently, there has been a movement towards a postmodern and hyper-relativistic claim that the category “Daoism” is simply a modern Western construction. This position evidences the influence of popular discourse strategies, so much so that it too might be categorized as “popular Western Taoism.” Such a view is historically untenable and contains hidden political consequences as well. Many responses are possible. One could point towards the continuous historical compilation of Daoist textual collections, beginning with Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406-477). Similarly, from the early medieval period onward, there were attempts to establish ordination ranks, which centered on a hierarchical ordering of various Daoist sub-traditions. Such endeavors represent attempts to establish parameters for religious identity and

participation. For discussions of the issue of “Daoist identity” see Kohn and Roth 2002; Miller 2003, 16-35; Kirkland 2004; Komjathy 2004.

17. Kirkland’s article also provides helpful descriptions of the characteristics of each of these periods.

18. The “Period of Disunity” consists of a wide variety of Chinese and non-Chinese divisions.

19. This division is slightly misleading, as China was never unified under the Song. For instance, the Jurchen Jin dynasty (1115-1234) conquered north China and forced the establishment of the Southern Song. This was the period of Chinese history when the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) movement emerged.

20. Helpful timelines of Daoist history may be found in Pas 1998; Kohn 2001a; Komjathy 2005. The present overview is indebted to the various contributors to the *Daoism Handbook* (Kohn 2000).

21. Note that in Miller’s (2003) formulation, “classical Daoism” refers to “early Daoism” in my framework.

22. The *Daode jing* was, like similar classical texts, originally called the *Laozi* 老子 (Book of the Venerable Masters). It first became a “classic” (*Jing* 經) in the Han dynasty, under the imperial sanction of Emperor Jing (r. 156-141 B.C.E.). Nonetheless, the title *Daode jing* appears not to have been widely recognized until later, towards the close of the Han period. In the Tang dynasty (618-906) its canonical status was reaffirmed, when it was added to the imperial examination system. Traditionally speaking, “Laozi” refers to a pseudo-historical figure, concerning whom modern scholarship has demonstrated was a composite of a variety of historical personages and largely a response to the growing authority of the Ruists (“Confucians”). For Daoist adherents, Laozi may still occupy a venerated position as a “place-holder” for the classical tradition.

23. For an excellent discussion of the development of this myth concerning Laozi see A.C. Graham's "The Origins of the Legend of Lao Tan" (1986), reprinted in Kohn and LaFargue 1998. For Laozi's place in the Daoist tradition see Livia Kohn's *God of the Dao* (1998).

24. For an attempt to historically contextualize the *Daode jing* see Michael LaFargue's *The Tao of the Tao Te Ching* (1992).

25. These include the manuscripts found at Mawangdui 馬王堆 (datable to at least 168 B.C.E.) and at Guodian 郭店 (datable to at least 300 B.C.E.), with the latter sometimes referred to as the "Bamboo Laozi." Translations and studies of the Mawangdui manuscripts may be found in Lau 1989 and Henricks 1989. The Guodian fragments, which show marked contrasts with the received and standard editions of the *Laozi*, have been translated in Henricks 2000. For academic articles see Allan and Williams 2000.

26. The *Liezi* 列子 (Book of Master Lie) is often placed in the classical period. However, although the received text contains some early material, especially from the *Zhuangzi*, the *Liezi* was compiled in the fourth century C.E. For a catalogue and historical annotations of translations of Daoist texts see Komjathy 2003b.

27. This section is a concise outline of "Daoist history." Here one should remember that every view is partial. For details concerning the worldviews, practices, goals, and ideals of these and later Daoist texts, adepts, and communities see the introductions mentioned above. It should also be mentioned that the history of Daoism is fundamentally court history, that is, the history of Daoists who had some interaction with or recognition from Chinese imperial courts. Very little work has been done on Daoist eremitic (hermit) traditions, or, to borrow a category from Ken Cohen, on mountain Daoists. On Cohen's distinction between "courtly Daoism" and "mountain Daoism" see *The Empty Vessel* 2.1 (Winter 1995), 10. Some relevant information on lesser known Daoists may be found by reading Daoist hagiographies (biographies of saints). See Berkowitz 2000; Campany 2002; also Porter 1993.

28. The numbering system for citing Daoist texts follows the *Title Index to Daoist Collections* (Komjathy 2002b). “DZ” refers to the Ming-dynasty (1368-1644) Daoist Canon, with numbers paralleling those found in Kristofer Schipper’s *Concordance du Tao-tsang*. Other abbreviations utilized are the following: Dunhuang 敦煌 manuscripts (DH), *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要(JY), *Daozang jinghua lu* 道藏精華錄 (JHL), *Daozang jinghua* 道藏精華 (JH), *Zangwai daoshu* 藏外道書 (ZW), *Qigong yangsheng congshu* 氣功養生叢書 (QYC), and *Daozang xubian* 道藏續編 (XB).

29. According to Unschuld (1985), “*Illness* is defined here as the primary experience, that is, the subjectively perceived feeling of indisposition that can lead to changes in behavior. *Disease*, by contrast, is a socially determined, a conceptual reshaping of the primary experience of illness. Therefore, I characterize disease as a clearly defined deviation, within a specific set of ideas concerning the causation, character, and treatment of illness, from a normal state of human existence, however that normal state may be conceived. As a result, certain manifestations of illness, may, in different societies, be comprehended as completely different diseases” (19; italics in original).

30. There is some disagreement concerning the most accurate translation of *xian* 仙. Some prefer “immortal,” while others advocate “transcendent.” Neither is wholly successful. In the present context, I follow the more conventional rendering of “immortal.” In terms of etymology, this character contains the *ren* 人 (“person”) radical with *shan* 山 (“mountain”). A variant (僊) consists of *ren* 人 with *xian* 翺 (“flying”). Etymologically, then, a *xian* is a mountain recluse and/or an ecstatic traveler.

31. Mountains, both mythical and actual, have occupied a central place in the Daoist tradition from its earliest historical phases to the present. For example, the early Celestial Masters were associated with Heming shan 鶴鳴山 (Crane Cry Mountain; Sichuan), Highest Clarity with Maoshan 茅山 (Mount Mao; Jiangsu), and Complete Perfection with Kunyu shan 崑崙山

(Mount Kunyu; Shandong) and Zhongnan shan 鍾南山 (Zhongnan Mountains; Shaanxi). Daoists also recognize the Five Sacred Peaks, associated with the five directions: Huashan 華山 (Shaanxi; west); Taishan 泰山 (Shandong; east); Hengshan 恒山 (Shanxi; north); Hengshan 衡山 (Hunan; south); and Songshan 嵩山 (Henan; central). On the place of mountains in Daoism see Hahn 2000. On the various levels of meaning of mountains in the tradition see Schipper 1993. An account of encounters with contemporary Buddhist and Daoist hermits appears in Porter 1993.

32. A highly entertaining account of this mythology appears in the sixteenth-century Chinese novel *Xiyou ji* 西游記 (Journey to the West). The first volume (1977) of Anthony Yu's (b. 1938) four-volume English translation is recommended.

33. A thearch (the/ərɪk) is a divine ruler. Like theophany (divine manifestation) and theology (study of divinity), thearch is derived from the Greek *theos*, meaning "god" and relating to divinity more generally.

34. On Chinese astronomy and astrology see Walters 2002 (1987).

35. One should recognize the historical contingency of such claims. One might, in turn, wonder what would have happened, and what scholars would be claiming, if the Way of Great Peace or Red Eyebrows (*chimei* 赤眉) movements survived the Han crackdown and set the foundations for later "Daoism." That is, the elevation of the Celestial Masters and Zhang Daoling is retrospective history. This is partially the result of a Christian influence that desires to identify a "founder," such as Laozi or Zhang Daoling.

36. Zhang Daoling and Zhang Jue were not related, and it seems that the movements were unaware of each other during their initial formation.

37. When Buddhism first entered China in the second century C.E., it was seen as "barbarian" and an assault against "Confucian" traditions. By becoming monastics and renouncing the mundane world, from a Confucian, and thus a traditional Chinese, perspective, Buddhists forsook their moral

and social obligations to the family. Part of the “sinicization” of Buddhism involved the influence of Daoism, on which little research has been done. There was also the “Indianization” of Chinese religious traditions.

38. In fact, the prominence of this commentary in Western academic literature begs for a separate study. It tells us something important about dominant Western constructions of “Daoism.” I would argue that Wang Bi’s commentary represents what many Westerners *wish* the *Daode jing* means; it conforms to Western interpretations, scholarly and popular, of the text as “philosophy.”

39. The importance of spirit travel and ecstatic excursions in early Highest Clarity recalls the earlier “Yuanyou” 遠遊 (Distant Roaming) poem in the *Chuci* 楚詞 (Lyrics of Chu). For a translation see Hawkes 1959.

40. Because of Tao Hongjing’s centrality in Daoist history and his residence on Maoshan, Shangqing is sometimes incorrectly referred to as the “Maoshan sect.”

41. See Livia Kohn’s *Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism* (2003).

42. The character *hu* 胡 originally referred to a specific non-Chinese northern tribe. In later usage, it becomes a more general designation for any “barbarian” (non-Chinese) peoples.

43. By the end of the Tang dynasty, all of the major forms of Chinese Buddhism had been established. These included Chan 禪 (Zen), Huayan 華嚴 (Avatamsaka; Flower Garland), Jingtū 淨土 (Pure Land), Zhenyan 真言 (Tantra), and Tiantai 天台.

44. The mythical lineage of Chan begins when Sakyamuni held up a single flower to an assembly and his disciple Kasyapa smiled. Here began the mind-to-mind transmission (*yixin chuanxin* 以心傳心).

45. Livia Kohn (1989) has provided a discussion of the practice of *neiguan*. Isabelle Robinet (1989) has examined some of the influences on the

development of internal alchemy.

46. In both the early Complete Perfection movement and its later Dragon Gate branch, certain texts were centrally important. Two of the most important are the sixth-century C.E. *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31) and eighth-century C.E. *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 620).

47. Each of these seven early practitioners receives a place of veneration in contemporary Complete Perfection Daoism, as expressed in the *Xuanmen risong zaowan gongke jing* 玄門日誦早晚功課經 (Liturgical Scriptures of the Mysterious Gate for Daily Morning and Evening Recitation; ZW 936; ZW 937), the primary liturgical text of the contemporary monastic order. In that text, each of the Seven Perfected is associated with a specific lineage (e.g., Qiu Chuji with Longmen) and has a corresponding lineage poem.

48. Eventually, many of these goddesses became commingled, so much so that they are frequently seen as synonymous. In addition, these various female deities are often equated with Guanyin 觀音 (Hearer-of-Cries; Avalokitesvara), Xiwangmu 西王母 (Queen Mother of the West), and Yaochi jinmu 瑤池金母 (Golden Mother of the Turquoise Pond).

49. Later, it is not clear when, Daoists at Wudang shan did adopt and develop internal martial art forms, culminating in such techniques as the well-known and popularized Wudang Taiji quan.

50. Trained in East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University, Thomas Cleary is one of the most prolific translators of East Asian religious literature. Cleary's translations are often philologically accurate, yet they too often simplify the text in question and fail to supply the required historical contextualization. Cleary's various publications have been highly influential on popular Western Taoism.

51. The Jesuits were and are known especially for their erudition and openness to learning. In addition, their basis in Roman Catholicism makes

them more sympathetic to ritualistic expression and institutional hierarchies.

52. The Jesuit encounter with the Confucian classics, and their subsequent transmission to Europe, has led some to hold that European Enlightenment values were at least partially the result of Chinese cultural influence.

53. Note that the leader of the contemporary ethical Qigong 氣功 movement Falun gong 法輪功 (Exercises of the Dharma Wheel) is named Li Hongzhi 李洪志 (b. 1952). This popularized Buddhist Qigong movement has become known in the West because of its evangelistic approach and its recent suppression (1999-present) by the Chinese government. While many of its members are innocent health practitioners or simply socially engineered cult members that deserve sympathy, the dominant Western activism against such political suppression fails to understand the complexity of the situation. Li Hongzhi and his followers of course claim that Falun gong is only a health and ethical system. But deeper research reveals Li Hongzhi (note the appearance of the same characters 李洪) as a megalomaniac who believes himself to be the next Li Hong (world savior): “At the moment, I am the only person who is genuinely teaching Qigong towards higher levels at home [in China] and abroad” (Li 1998a, 1). And “Buddha Law (佛法) is the most profound, and the most mystic and supernatural science of all theories in the world.... During my lecturing session, *I’ll* first purify your bodies to prepare you for the advanced level cultivation. Afterward *I’ll* plant Falun (法輪) and Qiji (氣機 energy mechanism) in and around your bodies before teaching you how to practice these exercises. At the same time, *I’ll* have my Law bodies (法身) to protect you” (Li 1998b, 1, emphasis added). In the larger context of the Chinese history of millenarian rebellions, it should be no surprise that the Chinese government would be uneasy about such a messianic and millenarian leader who can mobilize tens of thousands of believers at will.

54. Here we see a core Chinese perspective, that of inside (*nei* 內) and outside (*wai* 外). In this way of perceiving, what is beneficial is inside, while what is detrimental is outside. In some sense, Chinese history and

culture may be understood, at least partially, as an attempt to keep the outside (foreign/non-Chinese) outside or make the outside inside.

55. The effects of the end of imperial patronage on Chinese religious traditions has yet to be adequately considered.

56. In this section and the one's which follow, I use the romanization system employed by the individual or group in question.

57. Since the invasion, the Chinese communist government and its collaborators have initiated a “resettlement” and “reoccupation” policy, wherein Chinese settlers receive money and (Tibetan) land as an incentive to move to Tibet. China is also using Tibet as a mine of “unlimited resources” and as a dumping ground for its nuclear waste products. Such is the fate of “Shangri-la” in a modern industrial context.

58. Marx hardly could have anticipated the development of television and electronic media, with the subsequent disembodiment (evisceration, lobotomization, and anesthetization) of human being.

59. Zhang Enpu (Chang En-p'u) took over the position of Celestial Master from Zhang Yuanxu 張元旭 (62nd Celestial Master, ?-1924) in 1924. The Celestial Masters lineage passed from Zhang Enpu to Zhang Yuanxian 張源先 (64th Celestial Master) and then to Zhang Jiyu 張繼禹 (65th Celestial Master), the current lineage holder.

60. I will not address Daoist influences on individuals and organizations in other East Asian countries. Interested readers may consult the *Daoism Handbook* (Kohn 2000a).

61. A descriptive list of Daoist sacred sites may be found in Brock Silvers' *The Taoist Manual*.

62. While Daoists use Fengshui and are often high-level geomancers, Fengshui is not Daoist per se. It falls more broadly within what I would label “traditional Chinese culture” or a “traditional Chinese worldview.”

63. Information on modern and contemporary Daoist communities and teachers may be found in Goullart 1999 (1961); Blofeld 1973; Yoshioka 1979; Saso 1972; 1978; Tsui 1991; Schipper 1993 (1982); Porter 1993; Dean 1993; 2000; Siegler 2003; Komjathy 2004; 2006; Silvers 2005.

64. Kristofer Schipper (b. 1934), a Dutch scholar and preeminent member of Daoist Studies, received Daoist ordination in 1968 by Zhang Enpu 張恩浦, the 63rd Celestial Master, in Tainan 台南, Taiwan. Michael Saso (b. 1930) received Daoist ordination in the 1970s by Zhuangchen Dengyun 莊陳登雲 (Chuang-ch'en Teng-yUn; 1911-1976) in Xinzhu 新竹, Taiwan. Both of these ordinations were in the Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity) tradition, the modern form of Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) Daoism.

65. Other important recent conferences include the Conference on Daoist Identity (Bowdoin College; York, Maine; May 29-June 1, 1998; organized by Livia Kohn, Harold Roth, Yamada Toshiaki, and Tanaka Fumio), Conference on Taoism and Ecology (Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions; Cambridge, Mass.; June 5-8, 1998; organized by Norman Girardot and Livia Kohn), Conference on Daoist Cultivation (Camp Sealth; Vashon Island, Wash.; May 9-13, 2001; organized by Louis Komjathy), Conference on Daoism and Tantra (Boston University; Boston, Mass.; April 19-21, 2002; organized by David Eckel and Livia Kohn), First International Conference on Daoism and the Contemporary World (Boston University; Boston, Mass.; June 5-7, 2003; organized by Livia Kohn and Liu Xun), Second International Conference on Daoism and the Contemporary World (Sichuan University; Chengdu, Sichuan; June 6-10, 2004; organized by Li Gang, Zhang Qin, Livia Kohn and Liu Xun), and Third International Conference on Daoism and the Contemporary World (Munich, Germany; May 25-28, 2006).

66. The best overview of the field of Daoist Studies is Anna Seidel's "Chronicle of Taoist Studies in the West 1950-1990" (1989-90). This article has been supplemented by Verellen 1995. For additional historical overviews of Daoist Studies in the West see Barrett 1981; 1987; Kohn

2000b. Clarke's *The Tao of the West* (2000) is highly recommended for understanding the ways in which Daoism has been interpreted, presented, and constructed in the West.

67. I have not included New Age discourse communities, representatives of Perennial Philosophy, or so-called “philosophical Daoists.” I have also not included Western popularizers of “Taoism” such as John Blofeld (1913-1987), Alan Watts (1915-1973), Gia-fu Feng (1919-1985; Stillpoint Foundation; Manitou Springs, Col.), A1 Chungliang Huang (b. 1937; Living Tao Foundation/Lan T'ing Institute; Urbana, Ill.) and Stephen Chang (Foundation of Tao; San Francisco). For more historical, critical information on Daoist teachers and organizations in North America see Komjathy 2003c; 2003d; 2004; 2006; Siegler 2003. Lists of Daoist groups may be found at <www.daoistcenter.org>, <www.taorestore.org>, and <www.pluralism.org/directory>. None of these or any other teachers or organizations are recommended here. Prospective students must rely on their own orientations, needs, interests, and common sense. However, chapter six of the *Zhuangzi* provides some insight in this respect: Master Si, Master Yu, Master Li, and Master Lai were all talking together. ‘Who can regard non-action (*wuwei* 無為) as his head, life (*sheng* 生) as his back, and death (*si* 死) as his rump? Who can regard death and life, existence and annihilation, as a single body? I will be his friend.’ The four men looked at each other and smiled. There was no obstruction in their heart-minds (*mo ni yu xin* 莫逆於心) and so they became friends.”

68. These models may be placed in dialogue with various Daoist views of death and the afterlife. Concern over death and dying may be *the* underlying influence in any given Daoist lifeway. For example, in chapter two of the *Zhuangzi*, we find the following: “How do I know that loving life is not a delusion? How do I know that in hating death I am not like someone who, having left home in his youth, has forgotten the way back.... Find harmony through celestial equanimity (*tianyi* 天倪), leave things to their endless changes, and so live out your years.... Forget the years, forget distinctions. Leap into the boundless and make it your home.” And in chapter six: “I received life because the time had come; I will lose it because the order of

things pass on. Be content with this time and dwell in this order and then neither sorrow nor joy can touch you. In ancient times this was called ‘freeing the bound’ (*xianjie* 旱糸解).” The quietistic approach of classical Daoism emphasized merging with the unending changes of cosmological processes. Here death was simply an ontological given, a transformation no different than waking up (or not waking up) to a new day. In contrast, later immortality seekers envisioned a life in subtle realms that was liberated from the limitations of space and time. Here one could so transform oneself as to join a divine bureaucracy or live in terrestrial paradises. However, for some alchemists, the goal of alchemy was seen as the same as that of the classical tradition: to align oneself with larger cosmic transformations and to disappear in unification.

69. Part of what is fascinating about the study of Daoism (and religious traditions in general) is to observe the diverse attempts of Daoist practitioners to reconcile such approaches into a coherent and harmonious system.

70. Livia Kohn has identified three distinct types of Daoist “lineages” in America, namely, ritual, self-cultivation, and self-improvement (Kohn 2001a, 198). See also Komjathy 2004.

71. There is also the trend of assimilating “Daoist” practice into the larger American “health and fitness,” “alternative medicine,” and New Age movements. See Komjathy 2006.

72. Various modern attempts to define the parameters of Daoist practice have been made. Some examples include Min 1990; Ni 1995; 1997; Liu 1998; Kohn 2001b; Silvers 2005. See also “Contours of Practice” on the Center for Daoist Studies website. Much still remains to be rectified and clarified for Daoism to become a viable and meaningful religious tradition outside of China. In the case of the United States, one could compare this situation to that of Buddhism, specifically Zen Buddhism, thirty or so years ago. We still await the formation of viable American Daoist communities inhabiting specifically Daoist spaces, the training of individuals in deep and

authentic practice, and the publication of comprehensive and systematic manuals similar to those of other religious traditions. With regard to the latter, I am thinking specifically of various books on Zen practice, including Philip Kapleau's *The Three Pillars of Zen*, Katsuki Sekida's *Zen Training: Methods and Philosophy*, Omori Sogen's *An Introduction to Zen Training*, Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi's *On Zen Practice*, and John Daido Looi's *The Eight Gates of Zen*.

73. That is, except for the commentaries on the *Daode jing* mentioned above.

74. While the categorization of the *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions* as Daoist or Daoistic may be problematic in certain respects, especially with regard to its "original context of composition," there can be little doubt that it has exerted a profound influence on the later Daoist tradition. The foundational view of health and wellbeing in Daoist self-cultivation lineages considered more generally is the same as that expressed in the *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions* and related texts. Emphasis is placed on conservation, regulation, harmonization, and alignment.

75. The character *zhi* 治, here translated as "to govern," also means "to regulate" as well as "to heal."

76. Almost all of the texts translated are recognized as central to the Daoist tradition. However, the reader should note that by including the *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問 (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic: Basic Questions), a classical Chinese medical text, I am not claiming that this work is "Daoist." Rather, I am suggesting that such an understanding is necessary for Daoist training. In this way, the *Suwen* may be seen as a "handbook for Daoist practice." While Chinese medicine is not Daoist per se, there are important cross-pollinations, and there can be little argument that Chinese medical models provided some of the foundations for a variety of Daoist movements. In addition, certain individuals were practitioners of both Chinese medicine and Daoism, perhaps the most famous being Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682).

77. For a historically annotated catalogue of Daoist texts in translation see Komjathy 2003b. Alternative glimpses into and models of Daoist practice may be found by reading Livia Kohn's *The Taoist Experience* (1993) and Stephen Bokenkamp's *Early Maoist Scriptures* (1997). Issues of authorship and dating of Daoist texts are clarified in *The Taoist Canon: A Historical Companion to the Daozang* (2004), edited by Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen.

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Inward Training

內業

Introduction

The “Neiye” 內業 (Inward Training) is a relatively unknown work that may be categorized as Daoistic or “proto-Daoist” and included in the period of “classical Daoism” (480 B.C.E. – 9 C.E.). Part of a set of texts on “techniques of the heart-mind” (*xinshu* 心術), it provides detailed principles and instruction for inner cultivation.

The text of the “Neiye” (Inward Training; abbr. NY) is contained in chapter forty-nine of the *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan), a collection of miscellaneous (*za* 雜) works that include a variety of texts with Daoistic concerns. The *Guanzi* contains material from between the fourth and second centuries B.C.E., most of which centers on statecraft and may thus be labeled “Legalist” (*fajia* 法家). The collection is named after Guan Zhong 管仲 (d. 645 B.C.E.), who was considered the greatest minister of the state of Qi 齊. The collection effort itself is associated with the famous Jixia 稷下 Academy, and the received edition was compiled by Liu Xiang 劉向 (79-8 B.C.E.). Thus, while the collection contains texts from as early as the fourth century B.C.E., it did not receive its present form until the first century B.C.E.

With regard to sections with Daoistic concerns, there are four chapters in the received *Guanzi* that center on “techniques of the heart-mind” (*xinshu* 心術), that is, methods for stilling the heart-mind and realizing mystical oneness with the Dao. The so-called Techniques of the Heart-mind chapters include the “Xinshu shang” 心術上 (Techniques of the Heart-mind I; ch. 36), “Xinshu xia” 心術下 (Techniques of the Heart-mind II; ch. 37), “Baixin” 白心 (Purifying the Heart-mind; ch. 38), and “Neiye” 內業 (Inward Training; ch. 49).¹

Before discussing *Inward Training* in detail, some information on the three other Techniques of the Heart-mind chapters may be helpful.² *Techniques of the Heart-mind I* seems to be a separate and independent work, with only some terminological and philosophical parallels with *Inward Training* and *Techniques of the Heart-mind II*. It is divided into two distinct parts. The first contains concise statements that describe the sage ruler and his approach to the world of society and politics. The second part aims at interpreting, explaining, and elaborating on the first part. *Techniques of the Heart-mind II* has close affinities with *Inward Training*. The text often paraphrases or develops material contained in *Inward Training*, especially chapters six to ten. Sometimes it seems to quote directly from that work, so much so that it often prefaces these passages with the phrase “thus it is said” (*guyue* 故曰). Finally, *Purifying the Heart-mind* develops some of the key terminology presented in *Inward Training* and *Techniques of the Heart-mind I*. This may be a Huang-Lao 黃老 text, with “Huang-Lao” referring to a Han-dynasty (Early: 202 B.C.E.-9 C.E.; Later: 25-221 C.E.) political movement that venerated Huangdi 黃帝 (Yellow Thearch) and Laozi 老子 (Master Lao) and combined aspects of “Daoism” and “Legalism.” *Purifying the Heart-mind* is principally concerned with the demeanor of the sage, the preservation of life, and survival in the world of politics. Generally speaking, the Techniques of the Heart-mind chapters recommend that the aspiring adept empty the heart-mind (*xuxin* 虛心) of distracting desires (*yu* 欲) and preconceptions (*man* 念) in order to realize mystical unification with the Dao (*dedao* 得道).

The text translated below, *Inward Training*, is an anonymous text that is generally considered the oldest of the Techniques of the Heart-mind chapters and most likely dates from the fourth century B.C.E. It is thus the oldest extant work of the so-called “Daoist school” (*daoia* 道家),³ a loosely knit group of individual practitioners and cultivation communities that Harold Roth (Brown University) has labeled “inner cultivation lineages.”⁴ The texts most commonly associated with these inner cultivation lineages or Warring States (480-222 B.C.E.) “Daoism”⁵ are the *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters; abbr. LZ)⁶ and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang; abbr. ZZ). The former is traditionally associated with the pseudo-historical Laozi 老子 (Master Lao), a composite personage who was said to be the

elder contemporary and teacher of Kongzi 孔子 (Confucius; ca. 551-ca. 479 B.C.E.) and an archivist of the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770-256 B.C.E.). Recent philological and archaeological research, in contrast, reveals the *Book of Venerable Masters* as an anthology with a variety of textual and historical layers. There is much to recommend the view that the received text (most often the Wang Bi 王弼 [226-249 C.E.] redaction) is an anthology of earlier (perhaps 5th and 4th c, B.C.E.) oral traditions that were later (by at least 168 B.C.E.) codified into a “coherent” text. Thus, one may tentatively identify at least five phases in the historical compilation of the received *Daode jing*: (1) oral traditions, including mnemonic aphorisms; (2) collections of sayings;⁷ (3) early anthologies; (4) codified, classified, and edited anthologies; and (5) fully integrated and standardized editions.⁸ With regard to the *Book of Master Zhuang*, the text is associated with an identifiable historical figure named Zhuang Zhou 莊周. However, again textual scholarship understands the received text to be an anthology containing a variety of distinct historical and textual layers. Contemporary scholarship most often divides the text into three sections: (1) inner chapters (1-7); (2) outer chapters (8-22) and (3) miscellaneous chapters (23-33).⁹ The inner chapters are associated with the actual teachings of Zhuang Zhou. The additional chapters are frequently associated with distinct early Daoistic groups: (1) Primitivists (chs. 8-10; parts of 11, 12, and 14); (2) Hedonists (chs. 28-31); (3) Syncretists (chs. 12-16, 33); (4) later followers of Zhuang Zhou (chs. 17-22); and (5) Anthologists (chs. 23-27, 32).¹⁰

In addition to the *Laozi*, *Zhuangzi*, and *Techniques of the Heart-mind* chapters of the *Guanzi*, recent revisionist scholarship would include parts of other important texts as well, including the *Huainanzi*, 淮南子 (Book of the Masters of Huainan) and *Lushi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals of Mister Lu). If one accepts the suggestion that the Daoistic aspects of these texts are related to the early Daoist “inner cultivation lineages,” then they provide insights into the practice modalities and communal contexts of the earliest “Daoist” practitioners and communities.¹¹ Throughout the pages of the texts of the classical period, one finds practice principles, specific cultivation methods, goals and aspirations, descriptions of mystical absorption, as well as representatives and models of successful training.

Returning to *Inward Training* in particular, the text, as contained in the received *Book of Master Guan*, consists of a series of rhymed poetic stanzas. Most of the lines are tetrasyllable, meaning that they consist of four-character combinations. However, other patterns of five or more characters also occur. The rhymes appear most often at the end of every second and even line. In addition, many of these rhyme patterns are “irregular,” a characteristic which may or may not assist the attempt to accurately date and locate its origin.¹² The received version of *Inward Training* contains two or three divisions, thus dividing it into three or four long sections. It has been further partitioned into a varying number of verse stanzas by different scholars. Rickett (1998), following Ma Feibai 馬非百, has translated the text as dividing into fifteen stanzas, with most of these being further subdivided into shorter units of varying length. Roth, developing the work of Gustav Haloun and Jeffrey Riegel, divides the work into twenty-six verse stanzas. Thus, the appearance of the text as a series of verse stanzas or poetic chapters is a modern hermeneutical development. In the present translation, I have followed Roth’s critical text, including many of his character amendments. The present translation thus contains twenty-six chapters.

Inward Training advocates a diverse training regimen, which includes dietetics, conservation, psychophysiological refinement, expansions of consciousness, and mystical unification. As the names of the related Techniques of the Heart-mind chapters suggest, *Inward Training* understands Daoist practice as ultimately connected to consciousness and spirit (*shen* 神), with particular emphasis placed on the ability of the heart-mind (*xin* 心) either to attain numinous pervasion (*lingtong* 靈通) or to separate the adept from the Dao as Source. Here the heart-mind is understood both as a physical location in the chest (the heart [*xin* 心] as “organ” [*zang* 臟]) and as relating to thoughts (*nian* 念) and emotions (*qing* 情) (the heart as “consciousness” [*shi* 識]). Intellectual and emotional activity is a possible source of dissipation and disruption. However, when stilled (*jing* 靜) and stabilized (*ding* 定), the heart-mind is associated with innate nature (*xing* 性), the givenness (*ziran* 自然) and the actualization

(*xiu* 修) of one's innate endowment from and connection with the Dao. This return to one's original nature (*benxing* 本性) is the attainment of mystical unification (*dedao* 得道). With regard to *Inward Training* as a Daoist mystical text, the late A.C. (Angus Charles) Graham (1919-1991), a renowned scholar of Chinese intellectual history, has commented, “‘Inward Training’ ... is important as possibly the oldest ‘mystical’ text in China” (1989, 100). And in reference to chapter two, “This may well be the earliest Chinese interpretation of the experience of mystical oneness” (ibid., 104). Moreover, Harold Roth believes that “*Inward Training* assumes a significance that has not heretofore been appreciated: It is the oldest extant expression of the distinctive mystical practice and philosophy that is the basis of the entire [Daoist] tradition from its obscure origins to the time of the *Huai-nan Tzu* [*Huainanzi*] in the mid-second century B.C.” (Roth 1999, 198). *Inward Training* represents one of the key “foundations of Daoist mysticism.”

In terms of Daoist practice, *Inward Training* contains a diverse and comprehensive set of guidelines and approaches. *Inward Training* documents and advocates an integrated system for self-cultivation and mystical realization of the Dao: training guidelines and cultivation principles, detailed explanations of foundational techniques, descriptions of expected benefits, and accounts of radical transformation. Following Roth (1999, 99-100), a generalized outline is as follows:

Chapters 1-7: Underlying philosophical and cosmological principles;
Chapters 8-14: Techniques and principles for internal cultivation;
Chapters 15-19: Holistic benefits of internal cultivation;
Chapters 20-23: Techniques and principles for internal cultivation;
Chapters 24-26: Summaries of internal cultivation and its benefits.

The cultivation of stillness (*xiujing* 修靜) is the center and root of the entire text of *Inward Training*. The advocated course of training involves (1) Specific techniques (*shu* 術) meant to develop stillness (*jing* 靜), inner power (*de* 德), and alignment (*zheng* 正) with the Dao; (2) specific psychological and physiological benefits, that derive from such a cultivation program; and (3) a radical transformation (*hua* 化) of self, a shift in

ontological condition, that is the *embodiment* of the Dao, which includes the application of insights emerging from inner cultivation practice to the larger context of being-in-the-world.¹³ Thus, *Inward Training* may be, and perhaps should be, understood as a manual for Daoist mystical praxis. In addition to these more psychological and mind-based concerns, *Inward Training* also provides guidelines for dietetics (“macrobiotics”) and hygiene practice.¹⁴ For instance, the text informs us, “Considering the way of eating, if you over-indulge, your qi will be injured. This will cause your body to deteriorate. If you over-restrict, your bones will be weakened. This will cause your blood to congeal. The place between over-indulgence and over-restriction, we call this ‘harmonious completion’” (ch. 23). However, while we do find references to gymnastic, dietetic, and hygiene practice in *Inward Training* and the texts of classical Daoism more generally, such aspects of Daoist cultivation are seen as preliminary and foundational. The goal of these early practitioners and lineages centered on the “numinous” (*ling* 靈), rather than on health and longevity.

The place of *Inward Training* in the larger Daoist tradition remains obscure. On first glance, it appears that its role is almost completely negligible, especially when compared to the two most influential texts from the classical period, namely, the *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi*. However, comparison of concerns, themes, terminology, and practice modalities points towards historical precedents for much of the later tradition. At times, in fact, the text has close parallels to contemporary Daoistic forms of Qigong 氣功 (Qi Exercises). One of the most interesting aspects of *Inward Training* in terms of later developments is the occurrence of the phrase “guarding the One” (*shouyi* 守一) alternately rendered as “guarding oneness” or “maintaining unification.” Similar phrases appear throughout the earliest Daoist texts; these include “embracing the One” (*baoyi* 抱一; DDJ ch. 10), “holding to the One” (*zhiyi* 執一; NY ch. 9), and “attaining the One” (*deyi* 得一; NY ch. 9). However, the earliest occurrence of “guarding the One” is found in chapter twenty-four of *Inward Training*: “Expand your heart-mind and release it. Relax your qi and allow it to extend. When your body is calm and unmoving, guard the One (*shouyi* 守一) and discard myriad disturbances.” In *Inward Training*, guarding the One refers to a method of decreasing distractions and extrospection, of increasing stillness

and introspection. It also refers to the attainment of a condition of mystical identification and unification. In the later Daoist tradition, “guarding the One” became a more general term for Daoist meditation, referring to a variety of different practices in different contexts.¹⁵ The fact that *Inward Training* is the *locus classicus* for “guarding the One” is intriguing with regard to its influence on the later tradition.

Inward Training also contains some technical terms that deserve mention.¹⁶ With regard to the title *Neiye* 內業, a variety of renderings are possible and have been proposed. Some of these include “Workings of the Inner”(Riegel), “Inward Training” (Graham and Roth), “Inner Workings” (Rickett), and “Inner Cultivation” (Kirkland). *Nei* 內 is unproblematic as referring to “inside,” “within,” “inward,” or “internal,” with the character depicting a person (*ren* 人) inside a border (*jiong* 冂). However, *ye* 業, here translated in a technical sense as “training,” is more challenging. This character is conventionally rendered as “activity,” “work,” “deed,” or “achievement.” *Neiye* rendered as “*Inward Training*” is employed here as expressing the technical meaning of the title and the actual contents of the work: techniques (*shu* 術) that center on the heart-mind (*xin* 心) in its capacity for mystical realization of the Dao (*dedao* 得道). That is, the *Neiye* emphasizes a specific internal training regimen. It should be added that such an undertaking involves a specific kind of internal “disposition” (*ye* 業), “activity” (*ye* 業), “effort” (*ye* 業), and “accomplishment” (*ye* 業).

Inward Training also utilizes terminology that parallels that used in classical Daoist texts in particular and the later Daoist tradition more generally. In this respect, we find references to the “heavens” (*tian* 天), earth” (*di* 地), and “human being” (*ren* 人). In the later tradition, these interrelated “concepts” are called the “Three Powers” (*sancai* 三才). I have translated *tian* as the “heavens” rather than “heaven” for two primary reasons. First, the plural form enables one to avoid possible confusion of this term with the Christian “Heaven.” Second, *tian* literally refers to the sky. In this sense, it relates to natural and cosmological cycles, occurrences, and realms. Later, these heavens become seen as subtle realms with divine inhabitants. That is, the cosmos is multi-tiered and multi-layered. In *Inward Training*, we find the heavens referred to as the “Great Circle” (*dahuan* 大

圓) and the earth referred to as the “Great Square” (*defang* 大方). Such terminology points towards a classical Chinese view of the cosmos: a square earth covered by a celestial canopy. This was expressed as the “Canopy Heaven” (*gaitian* 蓋天) theory, which understood the heavens as a great dome carrying the constellations and planets that rotated daily over a square earth.¹⁷ It also may be understood as the existential experience of human beings with regard to the heavens and earth. The text also speaks of the “ten thousand beings” (*wanwu* 萬物). This phrase, usually translated as “myriad things,” refers to every being and thing in existence, with *wan* 萬 (lit., “ten thousand”) being the classical Chinese way of saying “all” or “every.”¹⁸ I have rendered *wanwu* as “ten thousand beings” in order to suggest that there are lives involved. The translation of *wanwu* as “ten thousand beings,” and not as “myriad things,” attempts to counteract the all too pervasive tendency to objectify lives. *Wu* often refers to “things” (i.e., inanimate objects) but often also to other (non-human) beings. The notion of “inanimate objects” also becomes problematic in a worldview based on a spectrum of *qi*.

Two additional, more general terms deserve mention before moving on to the technical mystical and practice terminology employed in *Inward Training*. First, the text frequently speaks of “regulating” or “regulation” (*zhi* 治), which may also be translated as “govern” or “heal.” In socio-political contexts, this character is used to discuss the way in which rulers and ministers govern. In *Inward Training*, and in a Daoist context more generally, it most frequently relates to principles and practices for regulating or healing oneself. Interestingly, the two contexts become merged in the famous commentary on the *Daode jing* by Heshang gong 河上公 (Master Dwelling-by-the-River; fl. 160 B.C.E.?); this is the *Laozi zhangju* 老子章句 (Commentary by Chapter and Verse on the *Laozi*; a.k.a. *Daode zhenjing zhu* 道德真經解 [Commentary on the Perfect Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power]; DZ 682). This commentary is one of the most influential Daoist commentaries; here Heshang Gong reads the *Daode jing* as a manual on longevity (*yangsheng* 養生) techniques, including its references to the “country” as relating to internal corporeal realities. The way of “governing the country” (*zhiguo* 治國) is the way of “regulating the

body” (*zhishen* 治身). With regard to such regulation, *Inward Training* also speaks of the “Nine Cavities” (*jiuqiao* 九竅): “When the well-spring does not become drained, the Nine Cavities are in accord and connected” (ch. 15). The Nine Cavities refer to the nine openings in the body including the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, anus, and urethra. Interestingly, the same phrase appears in the late sixth-century C.E. *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31): “The aberrations of the Nine Cavities are in the Three Essentials” (1a). Here the Three Essentials (*sanyao* 三要) refer to the three orifices through which *qi* is most easily lost; the eyes (*mu* 目), ears (er 耳), and mouth (*kou* 口). Emphasis is placed on sealing the senses to prevent dissipation and distraction. This recalls the end of chapter seven of the *Zhuangzi*:

The emperor of the southern ocean was called Brevity (Shu 儻). The emperor of the northern ocean was called Suddenness (Hu 忽). The emperor of the Center was called Primordial Chaos (Hundun 混沌). Brevity and Suddenness often met in the land of Primordial Chaos, and Primordial Chaos treated them very generously. Brevity and Suddenness discussed how they could repay the inner power (*de* 德) of Primordial Chaos. They said, “All people have the Seven Cavities (*qiqiao* 七竅) so that they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. Primordial Chaos alone does not have them. Let’s try boring some.” Each day they bored another hole. On the seventh day Primordial Chaos died.

Like the disruption caused to Hundun’s primordial unity through increasing differentiation, the sense organs may confuse and destabilize the adept’s innate nature. Differentiated and conditioned modes of being separate one from one’s original context of interrelationship.

Also worthy of note is the way in which *jing* 精 (“vital essence”) is employed in *Inward Training*. This character consists of *mi* 米 (“rice”) and *qing* 青 (“azure,” but also “pure”). Etymologically, it refers to young or unprocessed rice. By extension, it refers to the essence of things. In contemporary internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) lineages, vital essence is one of the “Three Treasures” (*sanbao* 三寶), namely, vital essence, subtle breath (*qi* 氣), and spirit (*shen* 神). These three aspects of the adept’s body-self are

seen as interrelated but also as varying degrees of refinement, with spirit as the apex.

Similarly, in classical Chinese medicine, vital essence is understood as a more substantial aspect of qi, and qi is understood as a more subtle aspect of vital essence. Here vital essence relates to the actual physical foundation of health and vitality: seminal fluids (*jing* 精) in men and blood (*xue* 血) in women. The connection between vital essence and qi may also be understood etymologically: *qi* 氣 consists of *mi* 米 (“rice”) with *qi* 气 (“vapor” or “steam”). Both the characters for vital essence and qi contain the component for “rice.” As vital essence is rice in grain form, qi is rice in vapor form. Through the “cooking” (refining) of rice grain, steam is produced; through the cooking of vital essence, qi is produced. In *Inward Training*, attention is drawn to a different aspect of *jing* 精. In chapter eight, we find the following: “Vital essence is the essence of qi” (*jing ye zhe qi zhi jing ye* 精也者氣之精也). And in chapter fifteen: “Vital essence is the well-spring of qi” (*jing yiwei qiyuan* 精以為氣湖). In *Inward Training*, vital essence is the most concentrated as well as the most refined and ethereal form of qi. It is both the life-giving essence contained in the seed of all living beings and the physiological substrate associated with the equanimity of sages that directly relates to their sagacity. It is the basis of health, vitality, and psychological well-being. With regard to the latter, it is important to note the psychological disruption and instability that comes from the dissipation and loss of vital essence.¹⁹ Sometimes, *Inward Training* also describes vital essence in cosmological terms as closely related to the Dao itself. Thus, in *Inward Training*, vital essence, sometimes used interchangeably with qi, occupies the most privileged position in terms of one’s physicality and vitality.²⁰ It is foundation for more advanced training in “techniques of the heart-mind” (*xinshu* 心術).

The heart-mind is perhaps the central concern of *Inward Training*. As my translation of *xin* 心 as “heart-mind” suggests, in a classical context this character refers to the entire range of conscious experience, including perception, thought, emotion, desire, and intuition. The heart is understood as relating to both the actual physical heart and the seat of intellectual and emotional activity (mind). Calming (*an* 安) and stilling (*jing* 靜) the activity

of the heart-mind leads to stabilization or concentration (*ding* 定) as well as expanded consciousness and spiritual realization. Thus, the heart-mind is often referred to as the “ruler” (*wang* 王) of the body-self. This relates to the “complete heart-mind” (*chengxin* 成心) and innate nature (*xing* 性), the heart-mind (*xin* 心) with which one was born (*sheng* 生). In addition, the heart-mind is often considered the center (*zhong* 中) of human beings and relates to “spirit” (*shen* 神), the “divine” or “sacred” capacity of human beings to connect with and manifest the Dao as Source. It enables one to (re)establish “numinous pervasion” (*lingtong* 靈通).²¹ Thus, *Inward Training* explains, “Within the heart-mind, there is yet another heart-mind” (*xin zhi zhong you you xin yan* 心之中又有心焉; ch. 14).

Closely connected with the heart-mind, one finds numerous references to “spirit” (*shen* 神) and “numen” (*ling* 靈) in *Inward Training*. I have translated these terms in a more standard way, so that the distinction may be maintained. Both characters relate to specific “divine” or subtle energetic aspects of one’s being and the cosmos more generally. Etymologically, *shen* 神 relates to “spiritual dimensions” (*shi* 示), omens and similar divine manifestations, and the establishment and attendance to such a connection (*shen* 申). *Ling* 靈 depicts “rain” (*yu* 雨) over three “mouths” (*kou* 口) and “shamans” (*wu* 巫). The latter component depicts two “humans” (*ren* 人) connecting (|) the “heavens” (*tian* 天; represented as the upper 一) with the earth (*di* 地; represented as the lower 一). By extension, *ling* involves the communal movements and voices of shamans to connect the heavens and the earth, to establish harmony and beneficial patterns of interaction; *ling* relates to magical efficacy. In both cases, these characters are associated with the “sacred” and the “divine,” encompassing one’s internal capacities, outward orientation, and larger bestowal of the cosmos. For instance, in chapter nine we find the following: “When one can transform even a single being, we call them ‘spiritual.’” And in chapter twelve, “Speaking of spirit, no one knows its limits; its luminosity extends to know the ten thousand beings. Guard it at the center and do not let it waver. Do not disturb your senses with external things. Do not disturb your heart-mind with the senses. This is called ‘attaining the Center.’”²² In *Inward Training*, “spirit” and “numen” often appear to be interchangeable. Nonetheless, I have

maintained a distinction by translating *shen* as “spirit”/“spiritual” and *ling* as “numen”/“numinous.”²³

The heart-mind and consciousness are differentiated in a number of significant ways in *Inward Training*. First, we find frequent reference to *yi* 意, “intention” or “awareness.” *Yi* relates to consciousness in its concentrated form and guiding function. The character depicts “sound” (*yin* 音) over “heart” (*xin* 心); “intention” expresses the inner motivations and longings of the heart as human center, as sovereign of the body-self. In *Inward Training*, *yi* often has the more general meaning of “thought” or “thinking,” and in this way becomes a possible source of dissipation. It becomes associated with *si* 思, “thinking” or “thought.” Here we find “field” (*tian* 田) over “heart” (*xin* 心; “thinking” expresses the expanse of activity that occurs in the heart as emotional and intellectual center. This activity again has the capacity to create confusion (*luan* 亂), turbidity (*zhuo* 濁), and dissipation (*san* 散).

Inward Training is clearly concerned with possible sources for the dissipation of vital essence (*jing* 精), vitality (*sheng* 生), and spirit (*shen* 神). As the title suggests, emphasis is placed on cultivating the internal (*nei* 內), as innate connection to the Dao, over the external (*wai* 外), as potential disruption of one’s personal harmony and stability. *Inward Training* identifies various psychological tendencies and patterns that may lead to disruption and destabilization. Vitality may be lost and the heart-mind confused through specific emotional and intellectual activities; such conditions include grief (*you* 憂), happiness (*le* 樂), joy (*xi* 喜), anger (*nu* 怒), desire (*yu* 欲), anxiety (*huan* 患), and profit-seeking (*li* 利). It should be mentioned that these aspects of human being are not, generally speaking, inherently harmful; rather, it is excessive and inappropriate activity and expression that exhausts one’s vitality and numinosity. “Considering the vitality (*sheng* 生) of human beings, it inevitably occurs because of balance (*ping* 平) and alignment (*zheng* 正). The reason why balance and alignment are lost is inevitably because of pleasure (*xi* 喜), anger (*nu* 怒) grief (*you* 憂), and anxiety (*huan* 患)” (ch. 22). The loss of this vitality, associated with the dissipation of vital essence, destabilizes the foundations for more

advanced inward training, which center on the heart-mind and spirit. An additional source of disruption and disturbance is the “five desires” (*wuyu* 五欲), which relate to the “five senses” (*wuguan* 五官) and their concern with the external. These include desire generated by hearing (ears), seeing (eyes), tasting (tongue), smelling (nose), and touching (body). “Regulate the five sense-desires and cast off the two misfortunes (*erxiong* 二凶). When both joy and anger [the two misfortunes] are negated, Balance and alignment will permeate your torso” (ch. 21).

Inward Training also mentions misfortunes that may come from “human injury” (*renhai* 人害) and “celestial calamities” (*tianzi* 天望). The former relates to harm that comes from others, whether physical, psychological, or spiritual. The text explains that this often occurs because of one’s particular qi quality or qi configuration. “A complete heart-mind at the center cannot be concealed or hidden. It will be known through your appearance; it will be seen in the color of your skin. If you encounter others with exceptional qi (*shanqi* 善氣), they will be kinder to you than your brothers. If you encounter others with harmful qi (*eqi* 惡氣), they will injure you with their weapons” (ch. 18). Personal injury is at least partially the result of personal conduct and presence.²⁴ Here one may read “weapons” (*rongbing* 戎兵) as both literal and symbolic; possible sources of harm are not only or simply physical. Negative or harmful qi leads to a resonance in and a response from others. The same is true of positive and beneficial qi. Thus, the Daoist adept cultivates a presence and way of being infused with this “extraordinary qi,” numinosity (*ling* 靈), and the unnamable mystery which is the Dao. Celestial calamities probably relate to two foundational early beliefs. The heavens respond to one’s activities; if one’s life is based in detrimental patterns of interaction, difficulty and obstruction will be the most common experience. Similarly, “fate” or “life-destiny” (*ming* 命) was seen as a “decree” (*ling* 令) from the heavens. Without proper alignment and accordance, calamity and harm was believed to arise. By extension, the Daoist adept must endeavor to rectify his or her way of perceiving, thinking, and being.

The way (*dao* 道) in which this is accomplished is through cultivation (*xiu* 修), regulation (*zhi* 治), and transformation (*hua* 化).²⁵ *Inward Training*

advocates a training regimen that involves “aligning” (*zheng* 正)²⁶ the body-self and “stilling” (*jing* 靜) the heart-mind. Both of these technical terms relate to Daoist meditation practice. By aligning the four limbs and stilling the heart-mind of excess emotional and intellectual activity, the adept establishes and maintains his or her innate connection (*tong* 通) with the Dao. One reawakens the “complete heart-mind” (*chengxin* 成心) and “innate nature” (*xing* 性). As alignment becomes comfortable, as the body-self becomes more relaxed, and as stillness deepens, an internal stability (*ding* 定) emerges. “If you can be aligned and still, only then can you become stable. With a stabilized heart-mind at the center... You can make a lodging place for vital essence (*jingshe* 精舍)” (ch. 8). Such alignment, stillness, stabilization, and completion is also related to developing “inner power” (*de* 德), often rendered as “virtue.” *De* is frequently paired with *dao* 道 in Daoist contexts, the most famous being its appearance in the title of the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power). Inner power is one’s personal endowment from and expression of the Dao. By cultivating stillness, a pivot of emptiness (*xushu* 虛樞) becomes established. This emptiness creates the space for the sacred to enter and manifest through the individual adept.

The purifying and stilling of the heart-mind prepares the Daoist practitioner for mystical identification and unification, for numinous pervasion (*lingtong* 靈通). This involves radical self-transformation, a shift in ontological condition. *Inward Training* refers to a person who has attained this state of actualization as a “sage” (*shengren* 聖人), which might also be translated as “divine being.” The character *sheng* 聖 (“sacred”) contains the radicals for “ear” (*er* 耳) and “mouth” (*kou* 口). With reference to this character, Izutsu has commented, “[The] term designates a man, endowed with an unusually keen ear, who is capable of hearing the voice of a supernatural being, god or spirit, and understands directly the will or intention of the latter” (1984, 301). The sage is the “receptive one,” the one who listens to the sonorous patterns of the cosmos and its varied subtle layers. This capacity for listening also leads to an additional ability: one’s speaking expresses such a divine connection and such expression then resonates with others.

The most comprehensive and recommended study and translation of *Inward Training*, especially for those interested in the earliest known forms of Daoist practice and lifeways, is that of Harold Roth (1999). I have benefited from and at times closely followed Roth's excellent translation. In addition, Roth has provided a text-critical edition of *Inward Training* which I have used for my Chinese version.²⁷ An alternative translation of *Inward Training* appears in Rickett 1998. Rickett's two-volume translation of the *Book of Master Guan* also includes the related Techniques of the Heart-mind chapters. Harold Roth's contribution to *Religions of China in Practice* contains selected translations related to the earliest Daoist inner cultivation lineages. Russell Kirkland's *Taoism: The Enduring Tradition* (2004) contains important discussions of the place of *Inward Training* in the Daoist tradition, including possible areas of influence on later, organized Daoist religious movements. Additional references may be found in these studies as well as in the bibliography provided below.

Notes

1. Two other texts are sometimes grouped with the four Techniques of the Heart-mind chapters; these are the “Zhouhe” 宙合 (All-Encompassing Unity; ch. 11) and “Shuyan” 樞言 (Pivotal Sayings; ch. 12).
2. Here I am following the summary in Rickett 1998, 15-16.
3. *Daojia* 道家, first appearing in Sima Tan 司馬談 (d. 110 B.C.E.) and Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (145-86? B.C.E.) *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian), was originally a bibliographic category, a way to catalogue texts with seemingly similar concerns. However, Harold Roth has shown that there were, in fact, communities of practitioners that could receive the label “Daoist school.” Here one should note that this was not a “philosophical school” or a “way of thinking,” but rather a religious school and a way of being. See Roth 1999, 173-203.
4. Kirkland has referred to this tradition as involving “biospiritual cultivation” (1997, 76). Developing Roth (1999, 181-85), one might also

refer to the earliest “Daoists” as “technicians of the Way” (*daoshu zhe* 道術者).

5. When speaking of the Daoist tradition, some consider it problematic to identify an organized religious movement (“Daoism”) before the 2nd century C.E. at the earliest, and perhaps as late as the 5th century. One may thus wish to refer to these texts as “proto-Daoism.” In addition, “Daoism” (“Taoism”) is a Western interpretative category that encompasses many diverse phenomena; it may thus turn out that we must discard “Daoism” as a viable concept and speak of independent but interrelated movements. Such, however, is not my position. I hold that Daoism is a religious tradition, albeit one composed of diverse adherents, communities, practices, soteriological goals, historical influences and so forth, that begins with the inner cultivation lineages of the Warring States period and that focuses on a life lived in attunement with the Dao as sacred reality. Much work remains to be done on the various connective tissues that bind and separate Daoists and Daoist movements throughout history. One such strand is clearly the cultivation of “clarity and stillness” (*qingjing* 清靜), a concern found in the inner cultivation lineages, early Celestial Masters, Tang-dynasty Shangqing, and Quanzhen. For an initial attempt to identify some commonalities see Russell Kirkland's *Taoism: The Enduring Tradition* (2004).

6. This text later received the title *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; abbr. DDJ). I have translated *Laozi* as “Book of Venerable Masters,” rather than “Book of Master Lao,” in keeping with my view, influenced by Michael LaFargue and others, that the text is a series of “sayings collages.”

7. Here one thinks of the so-called *Book of Q*, which many Bible scholars believe to be a collection of the historical Jesus’s sayings that was later used as the source for the received Gospels.

8. The most successful attempt at providing a historically contextualized English translation of the *Daode jing* is Michael LaFargue’s *The Tao of the Tao Te Ching* (1992).

9. The received version, in thirty-three chapters, was edited by Guo Xiang 享象 (252-312), famed member of the Xuanxue 玄學 (Profound Learning) hermeneutical school. According to information contained in Lu Deming's 陸德明 (556-627) preface to his *Jingdian shiwen* 經典釋文 (Explanation of Terms in the Classics) and in Guo's own annotations, the 33-chapter recension was condensed from an earlier 52-chapter version. In Guo Xiang's view much of this purged material was spurious. For a brief study of "lost passages" see Knaul (Kohn) 1982.

10. These divisions follow Mair 2000, 37. Additional insights may be found in Graham 1990; Roth 1991a; Liu 1994.

11. Some would deny the application of "Daoist," understood as an initiated member of a self-conscious religious tradition, to these practitioners. However, arguably such inclusion involves a specific way of life, specific worldviews, practices, and goals/ideals, more than some institutional affiliation.

12. Approximate phonetic reconstructions of this ancient rhyme scheme and related discussions may be found in the translations of Allyn Rickett (1998) and Harold Roth (1999).

13. A detailed discussion of each of these aspects of *Inward Training* may be found in Roth's *Original Tao*.

14. Some scholars use the term "macrobiotics" or "macrobiotic hygiene" (Harper 1998; Roth 1999) in reference to early medical and Daoistic forms of practice; these include *daoyin* 導引 (lit., "guiding and stretching"; gymnastics), dietary, and sexual regimens. While this may be accurate terminologically and historically, in a modern interpretative context it has the potential to create confusion. This is due to the fact that "Macrobiotics" is a contemporary dietetics movement created by George Ohsawa (Yukikazu Sakurazawa; 1893-1966) and popularized by his student Michio Kushi (b. 1926). For this movement's most recent manifestation see <www.kushiinstitute.org>.

15. Livia Kohn (1989) has provided a representative survey of the main methods referred to as “guarding the One” in the Daoist tradition more generally.

16. The technical nature and context-specific meanings of Chinese characters is too rarely recognized. Thus, in the context of *Inward Training* as a technical training manual, a number of characters must be rendered as relating specifically to meditation practice, including the correct alignment of the body, “aligning the four limbs” (*zheng sizhi* 正四肢).

17. The *locus classicus* for the “Canopy Heaven” system is the third-century B.C.E. *Zhoubi suanjing* 周髀算經. For a discussion see Major 1993, 38-39, 269-90.

18. This gives one pause at the extent to which the “scale of being” has been altered by industrialization and modernization. In contemporary usage, “billion” or “trillion” expresses the unlimited number that was once expressed by “ten thousand.”

19. Vital essence is also associated with the brain and a determining factor in the attainment of higher levels of consciousness. Thus we find the maxim “revert vital essence to repair the brain” (*fanjing bunao* 返精捕腦) in later internal alchemy lineages. Under this understanding, spiritual realization is partially based on conserving vital essence.

20. This is interesting as it may point towards a moment when the two “substances” were less clearly differentiated than in later texts and traditions, and when a different understanding of the body prevailed.

21. One of the things that is fascinating about the Techniques of the Heart-mind chapters in general and *Inward Training* in particular is the potential contained therein for historical revision. It is frequently assumed and argued that “mind” (*xin* 心) became central in the Daoist tradition only after the influence of Buddhism, with its mind-based approach towards spiritual

liberation. However, these works clearly point towards a much earlier historical precedent in the Daoist tradition itself.

22. In *Inward Training*, spirit and numen most frequently refer to one's inherent numinosity, one's capacity for connecting with, merging with, and expressing the divine. However, we also find a passage that may point towards a "mediumistic" understanding as well: "There is a spirit naturally residing in the body. One moment it leaves, the next it arrives. There is no one who is able to conceive of it. If you lose it, you will inevitably be disturbed; if you attain it, you will inevitably be governed" (ch. 13).

23. Roth translates these terms in reverse; for his explanation see 43-44. In the case of the *Zhuangzi*, Graham has proposed translating *shen* as "daemon"/"daemonic" (see Graham 1981, 35, n. 72).

24. It should be noted, however, that one cannot always anticipate, avoid, or rectify others' habituated and non-beneficial ways of interacting. One also cannot know the possible rectification inherent in difficulty. According to the *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31, 2a), "Grace (*en* 恩) comes from harm (*hai* 害); harm comes from grace."

25. *Dao* 道 may refer to both the Way, the Source of all being and the universe as cosmological process, and a way, specific approach towards living. In *Inward Training* the character is used in both of these senses.

26. *Zheng* 正 is most conventionally rendered as "upright," "correct," "orthodox," or "rectified." Here I am following Roth's translation as "aligned" and "alignment." This rendering is justified with regard to the technical terminology of *Inward Training*. In this context, it clearly relates to an aligning of the body, a specific physical meditation posture, and the cosmological alignment, a larger spiritual connection, that emerges from such a gesture. Roth places so much emphasis on alignment in *Inward Training* that he identifies a "Fourfold Aligning" in the text: (1) Aligning the body (*zhengxing* 正形); (2) Aligning the four limbs (*zheng sizhi* 正四

肢); (3) Aligning the qi (*zhengqi* 正氣); and (4) Aligning the heart-mind (*zhengxin* 正心) (Roth 1999, 109).

27. A discussion of the various editions consulted appears in Roth 1999, 35-44.

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Translation (翻譯)

INWARD TRAINING

1

Considering the vital essence of beings,
This is what gives them vitality.
It generates the five grains below;
It becomes the arrayed stars above.
When flowing between the heavens and earth,
We refer to it as ghosts and spirits.
When stored within the human chest,
We call such beings sages.

2

Thus we may describe this qi—
Bright, as if ascending to the heavens;
Dark, as if inflooding an abyss;
Vast, as if dwelling in an ocean;
Lofty, as if residing on a mountain peak.
Thus we may consider this qi.
It cannot be controlled by force,
But it can be stabilized through inner power.

It cannot be expressed in sound,
But it can be welcomed through awareness.
Reverently guard it and do not lose it:
We call this “completing inner power.”
When inner power is complete and insight emerges,
The ten thousand beings will be realized.

3

Considering the forms of the heart-mind,
They are naturally infused and filled with it.
They are naturally generated and completed by it.
The reason why one loses it
Is because of grief, happiness, joy, anger, desire,
and profit-seeking.
If you can cast off grief, happiness, joy, anger, desire
and profit-seeking,
Your heart-mind will return to equanimity.
The disposition of such a heart-mind
Is that it benefits from calmness to attain serenity.
Do not disturb it; do not disrupt it.
Then harmony will naturally become complete.

4

Clear, as though right by your side;
Vague, as though it will not be attained;
Indiscernible, as though beyond the boundaries.
The investigation of this is not remote—
Each day we apply it through our inner power.
The Dao is what infuses the body,
But people cannot establish a place for it.
It goes forth but does not return;
It comes back but does not lodge.
So silent that no one can hear its sound.

Suddenly at rest, it resides in the heart-mind.
So subtle we do not see its form;
So expansive it arises in our own being.
We do not see its form;
We do not hear its sound.
Still, we notice its completion.
We refer to it as “Dao.”

5

Now then, the Dao is without a set place;
But the calmness of an adept heart-mind makes a place.
When the heart-mind is still and qi is patterned,
The Dao may then come to rest.
Such a way is not remote from us—
When people realize it, they are thereby sustained.
Such a way is not separate from us—
When people accord with it, they are thereby harmonious.
Thus, become concentrated as though connected to it.
Become indiscernible as though beyond all location.
Considering the disposition of this Dao,
How can it be conceived of or discussed?
Cultivate the heart-mind and still your thinking;
The Dao may then be realized.

6

Let us consider the Dao—
It is what the mouth cannot express;
It is what the eyes cannot perceive;
It is what the ears cannot hear.
It is that through which we cultivate the heart-mind
and align the body.
When humans lose it, they die;
When they attain it, they flourish.

When endeavors lose it, they fail;
When endeavors attain it, they succeed.
Now then, the Dao is without root or trunk;
It is without leaves or flowers.
The ten thousand beings live because of it;
The ten thousand beings develop because of it.
We designate it as “Dao.”

7

The ruling principle of the heavens is alignment.
The ruling principle of the earth is levelness.
The ruling principle of human beings is stillness.
Spring, autumn, winter, and summer are the seasons
Of the heavens.
Mountains, hills, rivers, and valleys are the constituents
Of the earth.
Pleasure, anger, accepting, and rejecting are the devices
Of human beings.
Thus, we may speak of the sage—
He alters with the seasons but does not transform;
He shifts with things but does not exchange with them.

8

If you can be aligned and still,
Only then can you become stable.
With a stabilized heart-mind at the center,
With the ears and eyes acute and bright,
And with the four limbs firm and fixed,
You can make a lodging place for vital essence.
The vital essence is the essence of qi.
When qi is guided, vital essence is generated.
When it is generated, then there is thinking.
When there is thinking, then there is knowing.

When there is knowing, then you should cease.
Considering the forms of the heart-mind,
Excessive knowing dissipates vitality.

9

Those who can transform even a single being—
We call them “spiritual.”
Those who can alter even a single situation,
We call them “wise.”
To transform without expending qi,
To alter without expending wisdom,
Only extraordinary persons who adhere to the One can do this.
Adhere to the One without losing it
And you will be able to govern the ten thousand beings.
Extraordinary persons employ beings,
But they are not employed by beings.
This is the principle of attaining the One.

10

Govern the heart-mind residing at the center.
Govern the speech issuing from your mouth.
Govern affairs so that they benefit human beings.
Then all under the heavens will be governed.
When the whole meaning is realized,
Then all under the heavens will be covered.
When the whole meaning is stabilized,
Then all under the heavens will be heard.
This is that to which we are referring.

11

When your body is not aligned,
The inner power will not arrive.
When the center lacks stillness,

The heart-mind will not be governed.
Align your body and assist inner power—
Then the Dao will gradually arrive on its own.

12

Considering spirit, no one knows its limits;
Its luminosity extends to know the ten thousand beings.
Guard it at the center and do not let it waver.
Do not disturb your senses with external things.
Do not disturb your heart-mind with the senses.
This is called “attaining the Center.”

13

There is a spirit naturally residing in the body.
One moment it leaves, the next it arrives.
There is no one who is able to conceive of it.
If you lose it, you will inevitably be disturbed;
If you attain it, you will inevitably be governed.
Reverently clean out its dwelling place
And vital essence will naturally arrive.
Still your attempts to imagine and conceive of it.
Calm your efforts to think about and control it.
Abide in dignity and reverence
And vital essence will naturally become stable.
Attain it and do not release it.
Then the ears and eyes will not overflow;
The heart-mind will not desire anything else.
With an aligned heart-mind at the center,
The ten thousand beings become regulated.

14

The Dao fills all under the heavens.
It is everywhere where people reside,

But people are unable to recognize it.
When you explore the whole meaning,
You extend up to the heavens above,
And stretch down to the earth below.
You pervade the nine inhabited regions.
What does it mean to investigate this?
The answer resides in the calmness of the heart-mind.
When your heart-mind is governed,
The senses then are also governed.
When your heart-mind is calm,
The senses then are also calm.
The heart-mind is what governs them;
The heart-mind is what calms them.
You store the heart-mind by means of the heart-mind;
Within the heart-mind, there is yet another heart-mind.
That inner heart-mind is an awareness that precedes language.
Only after there is awareness is there form.
Only after there is form is there language.
Only after there is language is there usefulness.
Only after there is usefulness is there governing.
Without being governed, you will inevitably be disturbed.
If you become disturbed, you will die.

15

With vital essence preserved and naturally generated,
Calmness will come to flourish externally.
Stored internally, we consider this to be the well-spring.
Flood-like, it harmonizes and balances.
We consider it to be the source of qi.
When this source does not become exhausted,
The four limbs are firm and strong.
When the well-spring does not become drained,
The Nine Cavities are in accord and connected.
Then you may fully investigate the heavens and earth.

You may then extend to the four oceans.
At the center, there will be no delusions;
Externally, there will be no deviation or calamity.
The heart-mind will be complete at the center;
The body will be complete in its appearance.
Such people do not encounter celestial calamities;
Such people do not meet with harm from others.
We call these individuals “sages.”

16

If people are able to be aligned and still,
Their skin will be ample and smooth,
Their ears and eyes will be acute and bright,
Their sinews will be supple, and their bones will be strong.
Then they will be able to hold up the Great Circle,
And they will tread firmly on the Great Square.
They will investigate through great clarity;
They will perceive through great luminosity.
Be reverent and careful and do not waiver.
Daily replenish your inner power.
Thoroughly come to know all under the heavens,
And investigate everything within the four directions.
To reverently manifest this effulgence.
This is called “internal attainment.”
If you do this but fail in its reversal,
This will cause a disruption in vitality.

17

Considering the practice of the Dao,
You must coil, you must contract.
You must uncoil, you must expand.
You must be firm, you must be dedicated.
Guard adeptness and do not become lax.

Abandon the excessive and discard the trivial.
When you reach the ultimate limit,
You will return to the Dao and inner power.

18

A complete heart-mind at the center
Cannot be concealed or hidden.
It will be known through your appearance;
It will be seen in the color of your skin.
If you encounter others with exceptional qi,
They will be kinder to you than your brothers.
If you encounter others with harmful qi,
They will injure you with their weapons.
The reverberation of the wordless
Is more rapid than the drumming of thunder.
The shape of qi and the heart-mind
Is more luminous than the sun and moon.
It is more manifest than the concern of parents.
Rewards are insufficient to encourage goodness;
Punishments are insufficient to discourage transgression.
And yet, once this exceptional qi is attained,
All under the heavens will come to be contained.
Once this complete heart-mind is stabilized,
All under the heavens will come to listen.

19

By concentrating your qi as if spiritual,
The ten thousand beings will be contained in you.
Can you concentrate? Can you unite with them?
Can you not resort to divining by tortoise or milfoil
And yet recognize the auspicious and the inauspicious?
Can you stop? Can you cease?
Can you not seek it in others,

And yet realize it within yourself?
You think about it and think about it,
And yet again think about it further still.
You think and yet you cannot connect with it.
The ghostly and spiritual can connect with it,
This is not due to the power of ghosts and spirits,
But to the utmost capacity of vital essence and qi.
When the four limbs become aligned,
The blood and qi become still
Unify your awareness and concentrate the heart-mind.
Then the ears and eyes will not overflow.
Even the far-off will seem quite near.

20

Thinking and inquiring give rise to knowing.
Idleness and carelessness give rise to worry.
Cruelty and arrogance give rise to resentment.
Worry and grief give rise to disease.
When disease reaches its apex, then you die.
When you think about something and don't let go,
There will be internal distress and external weakness.
Do not plan things out prematurely
Or your vitality will abandon its dwelling place.
In eating, it is most appropriate not to become full.
In thinking, it is most appropriate not to become strained.
Regulate these to an appropriate degree of activity,
And you will naturally reach the Dao.

21

Considering the life of human beings,
It is the heavens that brings forth their vital essence,
And the earth that brings forth their form.
These two combine to make a human being.

When they are in harmony, there is vitality.
When they are not in harmony, there is no vitality.
Inquiring into the way of harmonizing them,
What is essential is unable to be perceived,
And what is subtle is unable to be compared.
If balance and alignment permeate your torso,
This harmony swirls and blends in your heart-mind.
This provides perpetual longevity.
When joy and anger are not limited,
You must make a plan to limit them.
Regulate the five sense-desires
And cast off the two misfortunes.
When both joy and anger are negated,
Balance and alignment will permeate your torso.

22

Considering the vitality of human beings.
It inevitably occurs because of balance and alignment.
The reason why balance and alignment are lost
Is inevitably because pleasure, anger, grief, and anxiety.
And so, for inhibiting anger nothing is better than poetry.
For casting off grief nothing is better than music.
For limiting joy nothing is better than ritual propriety.
For guarding ritual propriety nothing is better than reverence.
For guarding reverence nothing is better than stillness.
When you are inwardly still and outwardly reverent,
You are able to return to your innate nature.
Innate nature will become greatly stabilized.

23

Considering the way of eating,
If you over-indulge, your qi will be injured.
This will cause your body to deteriorate.

If you over-restrict, your bones will be weakened.
This will cause your blood to congeal
The place between over-indulgence and over-restriction,
We call this “harmonious completion.”
Here is the lodging-place of vital essence.
It is also where knowing is generated.
When hunger and satiation lose their regulation,
You must make a plan to rectify this.
If you are overly satiated, engage in activity.
If you are hungry, expand your thinking.
If you are old, forget your worries.
If you are overly satiated and do not move,
The qi will not circulate through the limbs.
If you are hungry and do not expand your thinking,
When you finally do eat you will not stop.
If when old you do not forget your worries,
The well-spring of your vitality will dissipate.

24

Expand your heart-mind and release it.
Relax your qi and allow it to extend.
When your body is calm and unmoving,
Guard the One and discard myriad disturbances.
You will see profit and not be enticed by it.
You will see harm and not be frightened by it.
Relaxed and unwound, and yet free from selfishness,
In solitude you will find joy in your own being.
This is what we call “circulating the qi.”
Your awareness and practice appear celestial.

25

Considering the vitality of human beings,
It inevitably comes because of joyfulness.

When anxious, you lose the guiding thread.
When angry, you lose the fundamental point.
If you are anxious, sad, pleased, or angry,
There is no place within you for the Dao to reside.
Selfish love and desire must be stilled.
Foolishness and confusion must be rectified.
Do not diminish them and do not enlarge them.
Auspiciousness will naturally return to you.
That Dao will naturally come to you.
You can rely on the Dao and be guided by it.
If you are still, you will come to realize it.
If you are agitated, you will come to lose it.

26

The numinous qi resides within the heart-mind.
One moment it arrives, the next it leaves.
So subtle, there is nothing inside.
So vast, there is nothing outside.
The reason why we come to lose it
Is because of the harm caused by agitation.
When the heart-mind holds to stillness,
The Dao will naturally come to settle.
Considering humans who have realized the Dao,
It permeates their skin and saturates their hair.
Within their chests, they remain unsoiled.
Follow this way of restricting sense-desires,
And the ten thousand beings will not harm you.

Chinese Text (中文)

內業

凡物之精，此則為生。
下生五穀，上為列星。
流天地間，謂之鬼神。
藏於胸中，謂之聖人。

二

是故此氣，杲乎如登於天。
杳乎如入淵，淖乎如在於海。
萃乎如在於屺。是故此氣也。
不可止以力，而可安以德。
不可呼以聲，而可迎以意。
敬守勿失，是謂成德。
德成而智出。萬物畢得。

三

凡心之形，自充自盈，自生自成。
其所以失之，必以憂樂喜怒欲利。
能去憂樂喜怒欲利，心乃反齊。
彼心之情，利安以寧。
勿煩勿亂。和乃自成。

四

折折乎如在於側。忽忽乎如將不得。
渺渺乎如窮無極。此稽不遠。日用其德。
夫道所以充形、而人不能固。其往不復。
其來不舍。寂乎莫聞其音。卒乎乃在於心。
冥冥乎不見其形。淫淫乎與我俱生。
不見其形、不聞其聲。而序其成。謂之道。

五

夫道無所。善心安焉處。
心靜氣理，道乃可止。

彼道不遠，人得以產。
彼道不離，人因以和。
是故萃萃乎其如可與索。
渺渺乎其如窮無所。
彼道之情，惡意與聲。
修心靜意，道乃可得。

六

道也者，口之所不能言也。
目之所不能視也。耳之所不能聽也。
所以修心而正形也。
人之所失以死，所得以生也。
事之所失以敗，所得以成也。
凡道無根無莖，無葉無榮。
萬物以生。萬物以成。命之曰道。

七

天主正。地主平。人主靜。
春秋冬夏，天之時也。
山陵川谷，地之材。
喜怒取予，人之謀也。
是故聖人與時變而不化，從物遷而不移。

八

能正能靜、然后能定。
定心在中、耳目聰明、
四肢堅固、可以為精舍。
精也者、氣之精也。
氣導乃生。生乃思。思乃知。知乃止矣。
凡心之形、過知失生。

九

一物能化，謂之神。
一事能變，謂之智。
化不易氣，變不易智，
唯執一之君子能為此乎。
執一不失，能君萬物。
君子使物，不為物使。
得一之理。

十

治心處在中。治言出於口。
治事加於人。然則天下治矣。
一言得、而天下服。
一言定、而天下聽。
此之謂也。

十一

形不正，德不來。
中不靜，心不治。
正形攝德，淫然而自來。

十二

神莫知極。照乎知萬物。
中守不忒。不以物亂官。
不以官亂心。是謂中得。

十三

有神自在身。一往一來。莫之能思。
失之必亂。得之必治。
敬除其舍。精將自來。
靜想思之。寧念治之。
嚴容畏敬、精將自定。
得之而勿拾。

耳目不淫，心無他圖。
正心在中，萬物得度。

十四

道滿天下。普在民所，民不能知。
一言之解，上祭於天。下極於地。
蟠滿九州。何為解之？在於心安。
我心治，官乃治。
我心安，官乃安。
治之者心也。安之者心也。
心以藏心。心之中又有心焉。彼心之心意以先言。
形然后言。意然后形。言然后使。使然后治。
不治必亂。亂乃死。

十五

精存自生，其外安榮。內藏以為泉原。
浩然和平，以為氣淵。
淵之不涸。四體乃固。
泉之不竭，九竅遂通。
乃能窮天地，被四海。
中無惑意。外無邪螫。
心全於中。形全於外。
不逢天螫，不遇人害。
謂之聖人。

十六

人能正靜，皮膚裕寬。
耳目聰明，筋伸而骨強。
乃能載大圓而履大方。
鑒於大清，視於大明。
敬慎無忒。日新其德。
遍知天下。窮於四極。
敬發其充，是謂內得。

然而不反，此生之忒。

十七

凡道，必周必密。
必寬必舒。必堅必固。
守善勿舍。遂淫釋薄。
既致其極、反於道德。

十八

全心在中：不可蔽匿。
知於形容。見於膚色。
善氣迎人，親於弟兄。
惡氣迎人，害於戎兵。
不言之聲，疾於雷鼓。
心氣之形，明於日月。察於父母。
賞不足勸善。刑不足懲過。
氣壹得，而天下服。
心壹定，而天下聽。

十九

博氣如神，萬物備存。
能專，能一乎。
能無卜筮，而知吉凶乎。
能止乎。能已乎。
能勿求諸人，而得之己乎。
思之思之，又重思之。
思之而不通。鬼神將通之。
非鬼神之力也。精氣之極也。
四體既正，血氣既靜。
一意搏心。耳目不淫。雖遠若近。

二十

思索生知。慢易生憂。
暴傲生怨。憂鬱生疾。疾困乃死。
思之而不拾，內困外薄。不蚤為圖。
生將異舍。食莫若無飽。
思莫若勿致。節適之齊，彼將自至。

二十一

凡人之生也。天出其精。地出其形。
合此為人。和乃生。不和不生。
察和之道，其精不見，其微不醜。
平和擅胸。淪洽在心。
此以長壽。喜怒失度，乃為之圖。
節其五欲，去其二凶。
不喜不怒。平正擅胸。

二十二

凡人之生也。必以平正。
所以失之、必以喜怒憂患。
是故止怒莫若詩。去憂莫若樂。節樂莫若禮。
守禮莫若敬。守敬莫若靜。
內靜外敬、能反其性。性將大定。

二十三

凡食之道，大充氣傷、而形不戕。
大攝骨枯，而血沍。
充攝之間，此謂和成。
精之所舍，知之所生。
飢飽失度，乃為之圖。
飽則疾動。飢則廣思。老則忘慮。
飽不疾動，氣不通末。
飢不廣思，食而不止。老不忘慮，淵乃速竭。

二十四

大心而放、寬氣而廣。
其形安而不移、能守一而棄萬苛。
見利不誘。見害不懼。
寬舒而仁、獨樂其身，是謂運氣。意行似天。

二十五

凡人之生，必以其歡。
憂則失紀。怒則失端。
憂悲喜怒，道乃無處。
愛慾靜之。愚亂正之。
勿引勿推。福將自歸。
彼道自來。可籍與謀。
靜則得之。躁則失之。

二十六

靈氣在心。一來一逝。
其細無內。其大無外。
所以失之，以躁為害。
心能執靜，道將自定。
得道之人，理蒸毛泄。
胸中無敗。節欲之道。
萬物不害。

Book of Venerable Masters

老子

Introduction

The *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters; abbr. LZ), or *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; abbr. DDJ), is perhaps the most important and revered text in the entire Daoist tradition. One of the earliest texts of classical Daoism, it may be interpreted in a number of ways, one of the most significant of which is as a manual of self-cultivation and mystical realization.

The *Book of Venerable Masters*, usually translated as the *Book of Master Lao*, is the most well-known text from the seminal phase of Daoism, namely, the “classical period” (480 B.C.E.-9 C.E.). In particular, it is one of a number of “classics” that survive from the Warring States (480-222 B.C.E.), a time of immense political strife, violent social upheaval, and philosophical diversity. The received *Book of Venerable Masters* contains material from at least as early as the fourth century B.C.E. and is usually associated with the so-called “Daoist school” (*daojia* 道家)¹ a loosely knit group of individual practitioners and cultivation communities that Harold Roth (Brown University) has labeled “inner cultivation lineages.”² The texts most commonly associated with these inner cultivation lineages or Warring States “Daoism”³ are the *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters)⁴ and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang; abbr. ZZ). However recent revisionist scholarship would add the so-called “Xinshu” 心術 (Techniques of the Heart-mind) chapters of the *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan), chapters thirty-six through thirty-eight and chapter forty-nine,⁵ as well as parts of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Book of the Masters of Huainan) and *Lushi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals of Mister Lu).⁶ If one accepts the suggestion that the Daoistic aspects of these texts are related to the early inner cultivation lineages, then they provide insights into the practice modalities and communal contexts of the earliest “Daoist”

practitioners and communities.⁷ Throughout the pages of the texts of the classical period, one finds practice principles, specific cultivation methods, goals and aspirations, descriptions of mystical absorption, as well as representatives and models of successful training.

The Book of Venerable Masters is traditionally associated with Laozi 老子. Here begins the enigma. “Laozi” may be translated/interpreted in a number of ways: “Master Lao,” “Old Child,” “Old Master,” or “venerable masters.” In terms of traditional attribution and biographical material, the standard source is chapter sixty-three of the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian) at least partially compiled by Sima Tan 司馬談, Grand Astrologer of the Han court during the early years of Emperor Wu’s reign (r. 141-87 B.C.E.), and completed by his son Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145-86 B.C.E.). The *Records of the Historian* provides the following account:

Laozi was a person of Quren village in the Lai district of Hu province in Chu 楚. His surname was Li 李. He had the given name Er 耳, personal name Boyang 伯陽, and posthumous name Dan 聃. He was a historiographer in charge of the archives of Zhou.

Kongzi [Confucius] once traveled to Zhou because he desired to ask Laozi about ritual (li 禮). Laozi said, “The sages you speak about have long withered along with their bones. Moreover, when a superior person is in accord with the times, he rides in a carriage; when his time has not yet arrived, he wanders with the wind. I have heard that a good merchant fills his storehouses but appears to have nothing; a superior person is overflowing with inner power (*de* 德) but looks like a fool. Abandon your prideful airs and various desires; get rid of your rigid posturing and lascivious thoughts. Each of these contains no benefit. I have nothing more to say.”

Kongzi left and later addressed his disciples, “Birds, I know, can fly; fish, I know, can swim; animals, I know, can run. For the running, one can make a net; for the swimming, one can make a line; for the flying, one can make an arrow. But when it comes to a dragon, I have no way

of knowing how it rides the wind and clouds and ascends into the heavens. Today I have met Laozi who is really like unto a dragon.”⁸

Laozi cultivated the Dao (*xiudao* 修道) and inner power. He taught that one should efface oneself and be without fame in the world. After he had lived in Zhou for a long time, he saw that the Zhou was in decline. Then he departed. When he reached the pass [Hangu Pass 涵谷關], the keeper of the pass, Yin Xi 尹喜, said, “We will see no more of you. I request that you write a book for us.” Laozi then wrote a book in two parts, discussing the Dao and inner power in 5,000 words.

Thereupon, he departed. No one knows where he ended his life.

Thus, Laozi is sometimes known as Li Er 李耳 or Lao Dan 老聃. In this account, Laozi is said to have been an archivist of the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770-256 B.C.E.) and a senior contemporary and teacher of Kongzi 孔子 (Confucius; ca. 551-ca. 479 B.C.E.). In addition, while preparing to depart on his “western journeys,” he met Yin Xi 尹喜. The latter would come to occupy a central place in the later establishment of Louguan 樓觀 (Lookout Tower Monastery) as a major Daoist center.

In contrast to the above account, deeper inquiry suggests that creation of the pseudo-historical person “Laozi” was a conflation of different legends.⁹ The earliest stratum, which came from a Ruist 儒 (Confucian) source and was current by the fourth century B.C.E., centered on a meeting between a certain Lao Dan and Kongzi. Subsequently, Laozi was made the foremost representative of Zhuangzi’s 莊子 philosophy.¹⁰ During the first half of the third century B.C.E., Lao Dan was recognized as a great teacher in his own right, the founder of the “Daoist,” or perhaps more accurately “Laoist,” school. It was only during the Early Han dynasty (202 B.C.E.-9 C.E.) that parallels were identified between the *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi* and the texts became classified under the bibliographic category “Daoist school” (*daojia* 道家). The elevation of Laozi as a verifiable historical figure and “founder” was also an attempt to gain political authority, especially on the part of representatives of Huang-Lao 黃老. This name refers to a Han-dynasty

political movement that venerated Huangdi 黃帝 (Yellow Thearch) and Laozi 老子 (Master Lao) and combined aspects of “Daoism” and “Legalism.” But what does such revisionist scholarship mean for the Daoist tradition and practicing Daoists? One response might be to continue to revere Laozi as a “place-holder,” as representing the classical tradition, including the earliest practitioners and cultivation communities. However, it also suggests that, in the case of Daoism, the search for some obscure founder like Jesus Christ or Sakyamuni Buddha is perhaps a futile endeavor. The Daoist lineage did not begin and does not end with a human being.

With regard to the text itself, recent philological and archaeological research reveals the *Book of Venerable Masters* as an anthology with a variety of textual and historical layers. There is no single author. There is much to recommend the view that the received text (most often the Wang Bi 王弼 [226-249 C.E.] redaction) is an anthology of earlier (perhaps 5th and 4th c. B.C.E.) oral traditions that were later (by at least 168 B.C.E.) codified into a “coherent” text. Thus, one may tentatively identify at least five phases in the historical compilation of the received *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power): (1) oral traditions, including mnemonic aphorisms; (2) collections of sayings;¹¹ (3) early anthologies; (4) codified, classified, and edited anthologies; and (5) fully integrated and standardized editions.¹² For this reason, I have translated the title *Laozi* as *Book of Venerable Masters* in keeping with my view that the text is an anthology, a collection of teachings from various teachers and communities living between the fifth century B.C.E. and the second century B.C.E.¹³

My proposed sequence of composition is supported by recent archeological finds, specifically the manuscripts unearthed at Mawangdui 馬王堆 (near Changsha; Hunan) and Guodian 郭店 (Jingmen; Hubei). The received *Daode jing* consists of eighty-one chapters¹⁴ that are commonly divided into two sections, the so-called *dao jing* 道經 (chs. 1-37) and *de jing* 德經 (chs. 38-81).¹⁵ In the case of the two Mawangdui manuscripts, discovered in 1973 and datable to at least 168 B.C.E., the text of the *Laozi* is similar to the received version except for one interesting fact: the divisions are reversed.¹⁶ The Mawangdui manuscripts begin with the *de jing* section (chs. 38-81) and end with the *dao jing* section (chs. 1-37).¹⁷ This means that the

basic organization and content of the received text was established by at least the second century B.C.E. However, if one accepts the importance of the Guodian manuscripts, also referred to as the “Bamboo Laozi,” then there is evidence for considering the earliest versions as being “anthologies” and “sayings collages.” The Guodian bamboo strips, discovered in 1993 and datable to at least 300 B.C.E., represent the oldest extant version of the *Laozi*. In its transcribed form, it divides into three groups: (A) Thirty-nine bamboo slips, which correspond in whole or in part to various chapters (chs. 19, 66, 46, 30, 15, 64, 37, 63, 2, 32, 25, 5, 16, 64, 56, 57, 55, 44, 40, and 9); (B) Eighteen slips (chs. 59, 48, 20, 12, 41, 52, 45, and 54); and (C) Fourteen slips (chs. 17, 18, 35, 31, and 64). The arrangement of the passages differs significantly from the received version, and there are numerous variant and/or archaic characters. In terms of content, it is noteworthy that many of the polemical and anti-Ruist (Confucian) passages are absent. One explanation is that the “Bamboo Laozi” represents an earlier phase of composition. The Guodian slips point towards the fact that the organization and content of the received text was in flux at least as late as the end of the fourth century B.C.E.¹⁸

In sum, the *Book of Venerable Masters*, or *Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power*, is an anthology containing a variety of historical and textual layers. It is an anonymous text, with many of its passages coming from the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.

Returning to the received *Book of Venerable Masters*, the text consists of eighty-one chapters and approximately 5,000 characters. The chapters have varying line length, chapter length, and concerns. In addition, much of the text is rhymed. Comparison between the *Book of Venerable Masters* and other early poetry collections, such as the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry) and *Chuci* 楚辭 (Lyrics of Chu), reveal a poetic structure closer to that used in the fourth century B.C.E. Perhaps more importantly, the concise and rhythmic characteristics of the text suggest a mnemonic function; that is, the lines, representing earlier sayings and practice guidelines, were easily committed to memory and recited.¹⁹ The text is often cryptic and enigmatic, enabling it to be adopted, adapted, and interpreted in a variety of ways and

contexts. As this is true of the original Chinese text(s), how much more so for contemporary English translations with their assorted agendas?

It is unnecessary to review all of these Euro-American cultural productions, but some of the most prevalent and influential distortions must be mentioned. There are various outdated misconceptions and misinterpretations that continue to hold sway in non-specialist contexts, particularly in popular New Age discourse communities and Western academic discourse. The most epidemic among these is the bifurcation of the Daoist tradition into “philosophical Daoism” and “religious Daoism.”²⁰ I would label this interpretative tendency as the “received view” concerning Daoism. Under this interpretation, the former is “original,” “pure” and “true” Daoism, while the latter is a “corrupt” and “degenerate” adjunct to the former. Some also mistakenly equate “philosophical Daoism” with the Chinese *daoia* 道家 (lit., “Family of the Way”) and “religious Daoism” with the Chinese *daoiao* 道教 (lit., “Teachings of the Way”). With regard to the former, the Western construction of “philosophical Daoism” has no correlation to the Chinese term *daoia*, a taxonomic category used by Han historiographers as a way of classifying texts and as a veiled reference to the Huang-Lao 黃老 tradition. With regard to the latter, the use of *daoiao* as a designation for a self-conscious Daoist religious tradition did not emerge until the fifth century C.E. This occurred in the struggle for imperial patronage and court influence, in attempts to distinguish “Daoism” from Buddhism. It was also employed as a legitimizing factor in Kou Qianzhi’s 寇謙之 (365-448) reform movement called the New Way of the Celestial Master, also known as the “Northern Celestial Masters.” That is, there are no theoretically grounded, historically accurate, or anthropologically relevant referents for the Western distinction between “philosophical Daoism” and “religious Daoism.” This bifurcated interpretative framework fails to consider the complexity and diversity of the Daoist tradition itself. Any bimodal (bipolar) understanding of Daoism should be discarded.

Moreover, *there is no such thing as philosophical Daoism*. Philosophical Daoism is wholly a modern Western construct that has no correspondence to actual historical events or personages.²¹ From its “beginnings,” here dated to the Warring States period (480-222 B.C.E.), “Daoism” was a

“religious tradition.”²² “Religion” here is not used in a restrictive sense as a veiled reference to Catholicism, that is, as a highly structured institution with priestly hierarchies, although such characteristics are clearly part of many religious traditions (including certain movements in organized Daoism). As I use the term, “religion” involves an *interaction* between the human dimension and the sacred dimension(s), often through trans-rational responses.²³ This “definition” suggests that the core of religious traditions centers on “mystical experiences” or “encounters” with that which a given community defines as “sacred” or as “ultimate reality.”²⁴ It centers on a “more.” This does not entail that other, non-mystical experiences, such as a feeling of communal belonging, are not equally valid and important. What it does suggest is that, especially emicly speaking, many forms of communal organization fail to *re-member* such connections with the sacred. My claim that “Daoism” is a “religious tradition” from the very beginning is based on both a close reading of classical Daoist texts, such as the *Daode jing* 道德經 and *Zhuangzi* 莊子, and a more comprehensive understanding of the tradition as a whole.²⁵ With regard to the *Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power*, this text, which is held up as *the* representative work of “philosophical Daoism,” contains references to specific techniques, stage-based training regimens, specific types of experiences, and accounts of successful and venerated models for “realizing the Dao” (*dedao* 得道).

So how did such a historical construction come to dominate and be perpetuated in Western cultural contexts? The “received view” of Daoism originates in Western colonialism and missionary activity, concerning which contemporary New Age appropriative agendas are heirs. It was during the late imperial period (1368-1911) that the first Western missionaries arrived in China, bringing with them a whole set of new cultural influences, sensibilities, and prejudices. One of the most well-known early missionaries was Matteo Ricci (1551-1610), a representative of the Roman Catholic Jesuit order²⁶ who was based in Macao in the 1580s. Ricci and his Jesuit brethren were soon followed by various other Catholic orders, specifically the Dominicans in the early years of contact. This eventually led to a conflict concerning the Jesuit practice of adaptation and accommodation. In 1704, the Pope condemned Chinese rituals, and in 1742 a decree was issued that settled all points against the Jesuits. This remained the position of the

Catholic Church until 1939. However, emperors such as Shengzu 聖祖 (Kangxi 康熙; r. 1662-1722) and Gaozong 高宗 (Qianlong 乾隆; r. 1736-1795) promoted the Jesuit position. This led to the proscription of Christianity in 1724. It was not until 1846 at French insistence that the proscription was lifted.²⁷ The period between 1860 and 1900 saw the gradual spread of missionary stations into every province. One of the central figures in this missionary activity and in the Western “invention” of Daoism was James Legge (1815-1897), a Scottish Congregationalist and representative of the London Missionary Society in Malacca and Hong Kong (1840-1873). Legge was one of the first Westerners to translate Daoist texts beyond the *Daode jing* and *Zhuangzi*. His translations became highly popular, to the point of becoming canonical (they are still in print through Dover).

They were published in Max Muller’s *Sacred Books of the East*, published in fifty volumes between 1879 and 1891. Legge’s *Texts of Taoism* made up volumes thirty-nine and forty. Legge, like his Victorian and Christian missionary counterparts, viewed and disseminated the *Daode jing* as the “Daoist bible” and Laozi as the “founder” of Daoism. This also involved the distinction between a so-called “philosophical Daoism” and “religious Daoism,” with the former being “pure” and “original” Daoism and the latter being a degenerate and superstitious adjunct to the former. There can be little doubt that the “Victorian invention of Daoism,” the “Leggian view” of the Daoist tradition, established many of the dominant interpretative lenses for the West’s interaction with the tradition. That is, Legge’s portrayal of Daoism, influenced by Confucian literati officials, is the “received view” of Daoism, the most widespread construction of Daoism in the West. One might even go so far as to call it the “Sinological prejudice” concerning Daoism, because of the widespread influence of Confucian literati, Victorian translators, and their intellectual progeny.²⁸

Such are our interpretative legacies. The interpretations are, of course, intimately related to the translations. Concerning the history of the translation of the *Daode jing*, Chinese historiography tells us that a Sanskrit translation was produced in the seventh century and that the Buddhist monk Xuanzang 玄奘 (596-664) transported it to India during his pilgrimage (see

Pelliot 1912). The earliest known Western translation of the *Daode jing* was a Latin version produced by Jesuit missionaries in China, which a certain Matthew Raper presented to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1788. The stated intention of the translators was to show that “the Mysteries of the Most High Trinity and Incarnate God were anciently known to the Chinese nation” (Legge 1962a [1891], xiii; Hardy 1998, 165).²⁹ The next earliest translation (French; 1842) was that of Stanislas Julien (d. 1873), a student of Jean-Pierre (J.P.) Abel Remusat (1788-1832?). The first English version (1868) was produced by John Chalmers (fl. 1860); this was, in turn, followed by those of Frederic Balfour (fl. 1880) (English; 1884) and James Legge (1815-1897) (English; 1891) (see Legge 1962a [1891], xi-xiv; Welch 1957, 4-5; Hardy 1998, especially 165-66; LaFargue and Pas 1998, 299-301).

And so began the Western fascination with the *Daode jing*, one of the most hermeneutically open and interpretatively malleable texts in “world literature.” In 1998, Michael LaFargue and Julian Pas estimated the number of Western translations at 250, pointing towards the oft-stated truism that “the *Daode jing* is the most translated book in the world next to the Bible” (see, e.g., Welch 1957, 4; Mair 1990, xi; Chan 2000, 1). Moreover, the text has become a sort of bible for contemporary New Age discourse communities, in both “translations” and “adaptations” such as the *Tao of Pooh* (1982). With regard to “translations,” the situation has deteriorated to the point where one does not need to know Chinese to produce and publish a “translation.” Perhaps the most well-known (and influential) of these cultural productions, which tell us more about Western fantasies than the Daoist tradition, is Stephen Mitchell’s translation. Here Mitchell informs the reader, “[T]he most essential preparation for my work was a fourteen-year long course of Zen training, which brought me face to face with Lao-tzu and his true disciples and heirs, the early Chinese Zen Masters.... If I haven’t always translated Lao-tzu’s words, my intention has always been to translate his mind” (Mitchell 1988, x).

When someone reads such “translations” and claims to have an affinity, one must realize that the text at hand is not the *Daode jing*. It is a manipulated

and reinterpreted approximation, a source text forced into parameters that meet the most prevalent desires and expectations of a contemporary audience.³⁰

These misconceptions and misinterpretations aside, in the context of Daoist tradition, the figure of Laozi and the *Book of Venerable Masters*, or *Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power*, are intimately connected. During the Later Han dynasty (25-221 C.E.), numerous communal and populace-supported forms of religious activity began to become more viable and widespread. It was also during this time that Laozi 老子 became imperially recognized as the deity Laojun 老君 (Lord Lao). Thus, there is the *Laozi ming* 老子銘 (Inscription for Laozi), which dates from 165 C.E. and is the earliest textual evidence about the official cult of a deified Laozi. It was also during this time that Laozi as Lord Lao and the text of the *Laozi* became centrally important in the most well-known earliest form of organized Daoism, namely, the Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) movement. According to traditional accounts, in 142 C.E. Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (fl. 140 C.E.?) received a revelation from Lord Lao, the “deified” form of Laozi and personification of the Dao, on Mount Heming 鶴鳴 (Crane Cry).³¹ During Lord Lao’s revelation, Zhang was appointed as terrestrial representative, the “Celestial Master,” and given healing powers as a sign of his empowerment. The movement in turn became patrilineal, passing from Zhang Daoling to his son Zhang Heng 張衡 and then to his son Zhang Lu 張魯 (fl. 190 C.E.). In the communal and ritual context of the early Celestial Masters, the text of *Laozi* was so important that Zhang Lu wrote a commentary on it entitled the *Laozi Xiang’er zhu* 老子想爾注 (Xiang’er Commentary on the *Laozi*; DH 56).³² Moreover, this commentary and the text itself formed the earliest extant Daoist precepts, also associated with the early Celestial Masters. These are the so-called “Nine Practices” and “Xiang’er, Precepts,” both of which appear in the sixth-century *Taishang laojun jinglu* 太上老君經律 (Scriptural Statutes of the Great High Lord Lao; DZ 786).

Laozi as “historical personage” occupied a place of prominence during many other moments and in various contexts of Daoist history. Perhaps most importantly was his role in the establishment of Louguan 樓觀

(Lookout Tower Monastery), the first Daoist monastic community, and in the founding mythology of the Tang imperial house. At the end of the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534), members of the Northern Celestial Masters congregated in a newly established center in the Zhongnan mountains (near present-day Xi'an). This was Louguan 樓觀 (Lookout Tower Monastery; called Louguan tai 樓觀臺 today), which was founded by Yin Tong 尹通 (398-499?) and became the first Daoist monastery.³³ Yin Tong claimed descent from Yin Xi 尹喜, the “guardian of the pass” who legend tells us received the *Daode jing* from Laozi as he left China for his western travels. Louguan eventually grew significantly and rose to prominence under the leadership of Wang Daoyi 王道一 (447-510). A number of visions of Lord Lao appeared there, which also helped to solidify the temple's place of importance in the geo-political landscape. Some representative works from Louguan include the *Laojun jiejing* 老君戒經 (Precept Scripture of Lord Lao; DZ 784), *Xishengjing* 西昇經 (Scripture on Western Ascension; DZ 666; DZ 726), and *Chuanshou jingjie* 傳授經戒 (Transmission of Scriptures and Precepts; DZ 1241). Louguan Daoists also compiled encyclopedias, including the important *Wushang biyao* 無上秘要 (Esoteric Essentials of the Most High; DZ 1138).

During the Tang dynasty (618-907), many Tang emperors and their courts showed imperial favor for the Daoist tradition. As noted above, Lord Lao as the deified Laozi became central to the Chinese state as early as the Han dynasty. Similarly, the patterns of millenarian prophecy were also well established. During the beginning of the Tang, the rulers embraced a prophecy centering on a figure with the surname Li 李 (Li Hong 李洪) as the future Lord of Great Peace. Interestingly, Li was the surname of both Laozi (Li Er 李耳) and the founders of the Tang dynasty. Thus, the Tang rulers became linked with both Laozi, the preeminent figure in the Daoist tradition and now the Tang's own original ancestor, and the vision of a Daoist utopia. Numerous miracles centering on divine appearances of Lord Lao occurred. One such vision took place at Bozhou 亳州, Laozi's supposed birthplace, where Lord Lao caused a withered cypress tree to bloom again. Miraculous material signs were also discovered throughout China and at various Daoist sacred sites; these included inscribed stones,

divine statues, and images on walls and cliffs. Such discoveries, of course, helped to ensure continued imperial patronage for places such as Louguan. Tang emperors gave extensive privileges to the Daoists, offered lavish gifts to temples and monasteries, established a Daoist track in the imperial bureaucracy, sponsored Daoist collection efforts, honored Lord Lao with the title Xuanyuan huangdi 玄元皇帝 (Sovereign Thearch of Mysterious Origin), and aided the success of the tradition in general. Especially under Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713-755), Daoism flourished and membership grew extensively. A number of imperial princesses were given Daoist initiation in elaborate ceremonies (see, especially, Benn 1991). Monasteries (*guan* 觀), first established in the seventh century, were staffed by Daoist priests and priestesses (*daoshi* 道士), who performed *jiao* 醮 ("offering") and *zhai* 齋 ("purification") rituals for integrating society and cosmos. The Tang dynasty also established a system of official control, including a state-controlled ordination system and legal codes governing religious behavior. It was in this context that the *Laozi* (Book of Venerable Masters) was formally elevated to the status of a *jing* 經 ("classic" or "scripture"), that is, the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power). In addition, the *Daode jing* became required reading for the imperial examinations.

Laozi, as both historical figure and as Lord Lao, continues to hold a place of veneration in the contemporary Daoist tradition. Among other things, he is part of the Sanqing 三清 (Three Purities; Three Pure Ones), being represented as Daode tianzun 道德天尊 (Celestial Worthy of the Dao and Inner Power). The Three Purities most often occupy the central altar in contemporary Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) temples and monasteries.

With regard to the *Book of Venerable Masters*, numerous commentaries have been written. According to one count, over 700 commentaries have been composed, of which 350 are extant (W.T. Chan 1963, 77). A more modest estimate, based on Isabelle Robinet's research (1977; 1998; 1999), is approximately one hundred as contained in whole or in part in the Ming-dynasty (1368-1644) Daoist Canon. This, of course, does not include commentaries composed from the sixteenth century forward.³⁴ Nonetheless,

there can be little debate that the text has inspired much interest and diverse interpretation. This points not only to its central importance in the Daoist tradition in particular and Chinese culture more generally, but also to its hermeneutical openness and interpretative malleability. The *Book of Venerable Masters* has received a diversity of readings depending on changing socio-historical contexts and religious concerns. The earliest extant commentary is found in the *Hanfeizi* 韓非子 (Book of Master Hanfei; DZ 1177), a Legalist (*fajia* 法家) text dating from the third century B.C.E. The commentary is found in chapter 20, entitled *Jie Lao* 解老 (Explaining the *Laozi*), and chapter 21, entitled *Yu Lao* 喻老 (Illustrating the *Laozi*).³⁵

In addition to the *Hanfeizi*, four early Daoist commentaries on the text are still extant. The earliest surviving Daoist commentary in the Daoist Canon is that of Yan Zun 嚴遵 (Junping 君平; fl. 83 B.C.E.-10 C.E.), originally named Zhuang Zun 莊遵. Yan Zun was a formula master (*fangshi* 方士) who spent his days in the markets of present-day Chengdu engaging in divinization and prognostication and his nights teaching cultured elite the intricacies of the Chinese literati tradition. For instance, he taught Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 B.C.E.-18 C.E.), a famous Han poet and philosopher. He in turn wrote the *Laozi zhigui* 老子指歸 (Essential Meaning of the *Laozi*; a.k.a. *Daode zhenjing zhigui* 道德真經指歸; DZ 693), which reads the *Daode jing* from the perspective of a magico-religious practitioner. Only chapters 38-81 are extant. Unfortunately, very little work has been done on this text. We also have the above-mentioned Celestial Masters' commentary, namely, the *Laozi Xiang'er zhu* 老子想爾注 (Xiang'er Commentary on the *Laozi*; DH 56). Accepting an earlier date of composition, the text is associated with the early Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) movement and is sometimes attributed to Zhang Lu 張魯, the third Celestial Master. It thus interprets the *Laozi* in terms of Celestial Masters, concerns. It is also associated with the so-called "Xiang'er Precepts," a set of twenty-seven conduct guidelines. Only chapters 3-37 are extant. Next, there is the commentary by Heshang gong 河上公 (Master Dwelling-by-the-River; fl. 160 B.C.E.?); this is the *Laozi zhangju* 老子章句 (Commentary by Chapter and Verse on the *Laozi*; a.k.a. *Daode zhenjing zhu* 道德真經註 [Commentary on the Perfect Scripture on the Dao and Inner

Power]; DZ 682). This commentary is one of the most influential Daoist commentaries; here Heshang gong reads the *Daode jing* as a manual on longevity (*yangsheng* 養生) techniques, including its references to the “country” as relating to internal corporeal realities.³⁶ The commentary also contains titles to the various chapters of the *Book of Venerable Masters*. Finally, we have the *Daode zhenjing zhu* 道德真經註 (Commentary on the Perfect Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; DZ 690) by Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249), a member of the Xuanxue 玄學 (Profound Learning) hermeneutical tradition, which is sometimes incorrectly identified as “Neo-Daoism” in earlier Western scholarship. Here Wang Bi emphasizes cosmological aspects of the *Daode jing*, especially a distinction between “being” (*you* 有) and “non-being” (*wu* 無) and the concept of emptiness (*kong* 空/*xu* 虛). This commentary has exerted a profound influence on Western understandings of the text, so much so that it is the only commentary to have been translated into English more than once.³⁷

In terms of later commentaries, Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933), ritual master and famous court Daoist, stands out. Du Guangting had a profound interest in the *Daode jing* and its commentarial tradition. He reviewed and collated more than sixty previous commentaries, dividing them into five groups. In the process, Du became the leading codifier of the Chongxuan 重玄 (Twofold Mystery) hermeneutical school. Drawing inspiration from the Buddhist Madhyamika or Sanlun 三論 (Three Treatises) school, Twofold Mystery emphasized the realization of an ontological condition where neither being nor non-being exists. This is the state of “oneness,” and Twofold Mystery adherents such as Du Guangting equated this with realization of the Dao. This is evident in the name “Twofold Mystery,” which is a reference to chapter one of the *Daode jing*: “Mysterious and again more mysterious/The gateway to all that is wondrous” (*xuan zhi you xuan zhongmiao zhi men* 玄之又玄眾妙之門). Du’s commentary is found in his *Daode zhenjing guangshengyi* 道德真經廣聖義 (Expansive and Sagely Meaning of the Perfect Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; DZ 725).

The Ming-dynasty Daoist Canon also contains internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) commentaries. A representative example of this interpretative approach is by Bai Yuchan's 白玉蟾 (1194-ca. 1227), one of the principal members of the so-called Nanzong 南宗 (Southern Lineage) of internal alchemy and practitioner of thunder magic (*leifa* 雷法). Bai's commentary appears in the *Daode zhenjing jiyi* 道德真經集義 (Collected Interpretations of the Perfect Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; DZ 724).³⁸ The *Book of Venerable Masters* was also centrally important in early Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) Daoism. In particular, the practitioners of early Complete Perfection emphasized its importance as a guide for Daoist training. Wang Zhe 王壘 (Chongyang 重陽 [Redoubled Yang]; 1113-1170), the founder of Complete Perfection, frequently cites the *Book of Venerable Masters*. For example, in the *Chongyang quanzhen ji* 重陽全真集 (Chongyang's Anthology of Complete Perfection; DZ 1153), Wang explains, "[To practice spiritual refinement] you must fully understand the three hundred characters of the *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman) and read up on the five thousand words of the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power)" (13.7b-8a). Moreover, traditional accounts mention that Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 (Changsheng 長生 [Perpetual Life]; 1147-1203), one of the so-called Seven Perfected (*qizhen* 七真), also wrote a commentary on the text. This commentary has not survived.³⁹

During my fieldwork on contemporary Daoist monasticism (2005-2006), I found that Quanzhen monks often knew the *Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power* by heart and would cite it at will. It formed part of the daily fabric of life for many monastics. In this respect, it is noteworthy that Ren Farong 任法融 (b. 1936), current President of the Chinese Daoist Association (Zhongguo daojiao xiehui 中國道教協會; Beijing), has written a commentary on the text entitled the *Daode jing shiyi* 道德經釋義 (Explaining the Meaning of the *Daode jing*). In addition, the text has been inscribed at a variety of Daoist sacred sites, including the Kunyu 崑崙 mountains in eastern Shandong, Shangqing gong 上清宮 (Palace of Highest Clarity) on Qingcheng shan 青城山 (Azure Wall Mountain; Sichuan), and Yuquan yuan 玉泉院 (Temple of the Jade Spring) at Huashan 華山 (Mount Hua; Shaanxi).

In the Daoist tradition, the *Book of Venerable Masters*, or *Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power*, is read as a scripture and often as a manual of self-cultivation. In terms of the text as “scripture” (*jing* 經), it is understood to be “sacred” or an emanation of the Dao. The character for “scripture” contains two elements: the *si* 絲 (“silk”) radical on the left, and the *jing* 井 (“well”) phonetic on the right. A further etymological reading of this character might suggest that the *jing* phonetic is also a meaning-carrier. Under this reading, “scriptures” are threads and watercourses that form and re-form networks of connection. They connect the Daoist practitioner to both the unnamable mystery which is the Dao and the Daoist tradition, the community of adepts that preceded one, as a historical continuum. This understanding of the *Book of Venerable Masters* has been maintained throughout Daoist history, specifically in a ritual context where it is chanted.⁴⁰

The *Book of Venerable Masters* is also read as a guide to self-cultivation. While some would identify this as a later “religious manipulation,” a close reading of the text reveals that such concerns and orientations are clearly present in the text itself. Throughout the chapters of the *Book of Venerable Masters*’ one finds practice principles, specific cultivation methods, proposed benefits, goals and aspirations, descriptions of mystical absorption, as well as representatives and models of successful training. Regarding specific cultivation methods, the most explicit example is probably chapter ten. Here we find the following:

Carrying the ethereal and corporeal souls,⁴¹
Embracing the One,
Can you be without separation?
Concentrating the qi and attaining softness,
Can you be like a newborn child?
Cleansing and purifying mysterious perception,
Can you be without flaws?
Loving the people and governing the country,
Can you abide in non-knowing?

Opening and closing the Celestial Gates,
Can you become like a female?
Illuminating and purifying the four directions,
Can you abide in non-action?

This passage is clearly alluding to a specific set of techniques (*shu* 術), meditation methods (*fa* 法) intended to purify and regulate, and ultimately to lead to (reunification (*yi* 一) and mystical perception (*xuanlan* 玄覽). This chapter is by no means unique or atypical. Numerous examples could be offered, but one more will suffice.

Attaining emptiness completely and guarding stillness
sincerely,
The ten thousand beings arise together; I simply observe their
return.
Each being comes to flourish, then returns to the Source.
Returning to the Source is called stillness;
Stillness is called returning to life-destiny.
Returning to life-destiny is called constancy;
Knowing constancy is called illumination.
(ch. 16)

The texts of classical Daoism in general and the *Book of Venerable Masters* in particular emphasize such mystical praxis and realization. However, there is more to these works than some vague concept of “mystical identification” or “sacred absorption.” In addition to advocating and prescribing a religious way of life, such as lessening desires and purifying consciousness, the *Book of Venerable Masters* contains references to specific rituals that are most often glossed over and/or purged from the text in translation. For example, in chapter twenty there is a reference to the Tailao 太牢 (Great Sacrifice) ritual.

Most people are busy as though attending the Tailao feast,
As though ascending a tower in spring.
I alone am unmoving, showing no sign,

(see also ZZ chs. 18 & 19)

The Tailao ritual was one of the most elaborate ancient sacrifices, wherein three kinds of animals were killed as ritual offerings. The animals included an ox, sheep, and pig. We also find the following in chapter five:

The heavens and earth are not humane;
They regard the ten thousand beings as straw dogs.
The sage is not humane;
He regards the people as straw dogs.
Between the heavens and earth, it is like a bellows.

This passage may be interpreted in a variety of ways, but one viable reading would suggest that it conceives of the cosmos as an unending ritual sequence. In ancient China, “straw dogs” (*chugou* 舞狗) were used as effigies, as ritual offerings. During the sacrificial ceremony, they were burned and through this process absorbed by the divine. Arguably, the above passage is envisioning a world and universe where each being has a particular place in the perpetual sacrifice which is life. No one can know the “fate” (*ming* 命) of each being in that ritual process.⁴² This is not to say that the *Book of Venerable Masters* is a ritual text, or that it is even advocating a ritualistic approach to cultivation. Rather, it suggests that many of its concerns emerged *within a religious context*, and that its proposed way of life incorporated and modified such influences.

The *Book of Venerable Masters* also contains some technical terminology that deserves mention. As the more common title of the text, *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power), indicates, two of the most important “concepts” are *dao* 道 and *de* 德. In the present translation, *dao* 道 has been left untranslated and placed in upper-case letters as “Dao.” When rendered into English, *dao* is most commonly translated as “way” and/or “Way.” In a Daoist context, *dao* refers to both the unnamable mystery underlying and pervading all existence and one’s overall way of life. By extension, it relates to the practices and religious path that one follows. It is easy for the reader of the *Book of Venerable Masters* to become attached to “Dao” as the name of some “ultimate reality.” However, various passages

emphasize that that to which “Dao” refers is “nameless” (*wuming* 無名) and “mysterious” (*xuan* 玄). When speaking about the Dao, and the Daoist adept by extension, the text employs a whole vocabulary of negation and obscurity: “wondrous” (*miao* 妙), “subtle” (*wei* 微), “chaotic” (*hun* 混), “obscure” (*mei* 昧), “vague” (*huang* 恍), and “indistinct” (*hu* 惚). The Dao also receives other cognate designations: “source” (*yuan* 原), “root” (*gen* 根), “mother” (*mu* 母), “beginning” (*shi* 始), and “ancestor” (*zong* 宗). The inability to adequately express “what” or “how” the Dao is (if it is at all) becomes clear in such passages as the following from chapter twenty-five: “I do not know its name, and so I call it ‘Dao.’”⁴³ Forced to name it, I call it “great.” Echoing this passage, the eighth-century *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 620) has the following: “The great Dao is without name. It raises and nourishes the ten thousand beings. I do not know its name; forced to name it, I call it ‘Dao.’” (la). Because humans communicate primarily through language, and because one wishes to verbally express one’s experience, one uses names (*ming* 名). However, in the context of classical Daoism, the name that expresses the subtle presence/absence at the center of Daoist practice is only a vague approximation. As chapter one of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang) explains, “Names are the guest of reality” (*ming zhe shi zhi bin ye* 名者實之賓也). *Dao* itself is a contingent, perhaps semi-arbitrary, signifier; it is fundamentally inadequate. Here one may also note the emphasis on negation (*wu* 無) in the text, which has close parallels with “apophatic mysticism” or “negative theology” more generally.⁴⁴ The Dao is “not this,” “not that.” Any attribution or description is contingent at best, and misleading at worst. Thus, the text emphasizes abiding in a place of “non-knowing” (*wuzhi* 無知), “non-action” (*wuwei* 無為), and “suchness” (*ziran* 自然). Interestingly, the *Book of Venerable Masters* may also be understood in terms of sensory perception: the text is “aural centric,” not “ocular centric.” Emphasis is placed on “hearing” (*wen* 聞) and “listening” (*ting* 聽), versus “seeing” (*jian* 見) and “visual perceiving” (*shi* 視). The sage (*shengren* 聖人), or the advanced Daoist adept, is the “receptive one,” a human being who listens attentively. Such attentiveness is more sensitive to the subtle and hidden aspects of existence.⁴⁵

Closely related to the Dao as unnamable mystery and all-pervading ontological ground is *de* 德. In the present translation, *de* has been rendered as “inner power.” Other translations have been proposed and employed, including “virtue” and “potentiality.”⁴⁶ *De* is the inherent connection (*tong* 通) that one has with the Dao; it is the “nature” (*xing* 性) or “life-destiny” (*ming* 命) that has been endowed by the Dao. By extension, *de* is the overall manifestation of the Dao in and as one’s life. The more that one maintains such a connection and actualizes such potential, the more one comes to *embody* the Dao as being-in-the-world. Thus, the *Book of Venerable Masters* emphasizes “alignment” (*zheng* 正), “accordance” (*cong* 從), “simplicity” (*pu* 樸), and “suchness” or “being-so-of-itself,” (*ziran* 自然). Inner power is both what one is from the beginning and what one becomes through this being.

These various terms, and the ontological conditions to which they refer, are interrelated. The *Book of Venerable Masters* advocates a way of life based on “decreasing” (*shao* 少) and “lessening” (*gua* 寡). Appear plain (*jiansu* 見素) and embrace simplicity (*baopu* 抱樸); decrease personal interest (*shaosi* 少私) and lessen desires (*guayu* 寡欲)” (ch. 19; also ch. 37). The heart-mind (*xin* 心) and one’s innate nature (*xing* 性) become obscured by desire (*yu* 欲), knowing (*zhi* 知), contending (*zheng* 爭), selfishness (*si* 私), and excess (*tai* 泰). “Thus we may consider the sage’s approach to governing (*zhi* 治) – Empty the heart-mind (*xu qi xin* 虛其心) and fill the belly (*shi qifu* 實其腹). Weaken the will (*mo qi zhi* 弱其志) and strengthen the bones (*qiang qi gu* 強其骨)” (ch. 3; also ch. 12). On the most basic level, this passage emphasizes living closer to necessity and sustenance. However, from a Daoist perspective, “governing the country” (*zhiguo* 治國) also relates to “governing (or healing) the body-self” (*zhishen* 治身). To empty the heart-mind is to decrease excessive intellectual and emotional activity; to fill the belly, *fu* 腹, also refers to the lower abdominal region, is to increase the *qi* stored in the body’s center.

Perhaps the most central term relating to the “quietistic approach” advocated in the text is *wuwei* 無為, which literally means “without acting.” Here technically rendered as “non-action” *wuwei* involves a way of being

that avoids contrived, artificial, or fabricated behavior. The more technical translation of *wuwei* as “non-action” encompasses this notion of effortless activity. In some sense, “acting through non-action” (*wei wuwei* 為無為; ch. 3) presupposes a process of purification (*jing* 淨), return (*gui* 歸), and reversal (*fan* 反). By purifying the heart-mind of intellectual and emotional turmoil, one returns to being through one’s innate nature (*xing* 性), the heart-mind with which one was born. How is this condition realized?

Block the passages (*se qi dui* 塞其兌);
Close the doorways (*bi qi men* 閉其門);
Blunt the sharpness (*cuo qi rui* 挫其銳);
Loosen the tangles (*jie qifen* 解其紛);
Harmonize the brightness (*he qi guang* 和其光);
Unite with the dust (*tong qi chen* 同其塵).
(ch. 56; also ch. 4)

One “decreases and again decreases” (*sun zhi you sun* 損之又損; ch. 48)⁴⁷ and comes to attain “constant contentment” (*changzu* 常足; ch. 46). One must become less to become more. This involves practicing “emptiness” (*chong* 冲/*xu* 虛) and connecting with “nonbeing” (*wu* 無).” Who can be turbid (*zhuo* 濁) so that it may become suspended? Practice stillness (*jing* 靜) until it gradually becomes clear (*qing* 清)” (ch. 15; also 37 & 45). And, “Returning to the Source (*guigen* 歸根) is called stillness (*jing* 靜); this means returning to life-destiny (*guiming* 歸命). Returning to life-destiny is called constancy (*chang* 常); knowing constancy is called illumination (*ming* 明)” (ch. 16; also ch. 52).⁴⁸ The *Book of Venerable Masters* refers to the realization of such an ontological condition, one’s original connection with the Dao, as “simplicity” (*pu* 樸) and “suchness” or “being-so-of-itself” (*ziran* 自然). *Pu*, poetically rendered as “uncarved block,” indicates a condition where one’s original nature has not been disrupted or altered. It suggests the condition of a tree as tree, in contrast to a tree as “lumber” or “vessel.”⁴⁹ *Ziran*, sometimes translated as “nature/natural” or “spontaneity,” literally means “self-so.” Through decreasing and doing less, one returns to one’s innate nature, to being-so-as-oneself.

A person who follows such practice principles is an “adept” (*shi* 士). Conventionally rendered as “knight,” “scholar,” or “scholar-idealist,” in certain chapters of the *Book of Venerable Masters* this phrase appears to refer to members of Daoist inner cultivation lineages, to someone involved in Daoist mystical praxis. This usage seems to anticipate the later term referring to a “Daoist priest” (*daoshi* 道士), literally, “adept of the Dao.” “Considering those in primeval times skilled at being adepts (*shi* 士), they were subtle (*wei* 微), wondrous (*miao* 妙), mysterious (*xuan* 玄), and connected (*tong* 通)” (ch. 15). And, “When the highest adepts (*shangshi* 上士) hear about the Dao, they are diligent in their practice (*xing* 行) of it. When the middle adepts (*zhongshi* 中士) hear about the Dao, they wonder whether or not it exists. When the lowest adepts (*xiashi* 下士) hear about the Dao, they laugh loudly and mock it. If they did not laugh, it would not be the Dao” (ch. 41). The more advanced practitioner, the *shangshi* 上士 (“highest adept”), is, in turn, described in a variety of ways in the *Book of Venerable Masters*. Such a Daoist practitioner is adept (v.) (*shan* 善), conventionally rendered as “good” or “good at.”

In dwelling, be adept at groundedness.
In cultivating the heart-mind, be adept at deepness.
In giving, be adept at humaneness.
In speaking, be adept at sincerity.
In rectifying, be adept at regulation.
In doing, be adept in abilities.
In moving, be adept at timeliness.
(ch. 8; also 15)

Throughout the *Book of Venerable Masters*, we also find references to the “heavens” (*tian* 天), “earth” (*di* 地), and “human beings” (*ren* 人). In the later tradition, these interrelated “concepts” are called the “Three Powers” (*sancal* 三才).⁵⁰ I have translated *tian* as “heavens” rather than “heaven” for two primary reasons. First, the plural form enables one to avoid possible confusion of this term with the Christian “Heaven.” Second, *tian* literally refers to the sky. In this sense, it relates to natural and cosmological cycles, occurrences, and realms. Later, these heavens become seen as subtle realms

with divine inhabitants. That is, the cosmos is multi-tiered and multi-layered. In this respect, we also find reference to Di 帝, the “Thearch” (ch. 4).⁵¹ The earth is literally the ground or soil upon which one stands; it is the terrestrial context of one’s being. When speaking about the earth as “world,” that is, as including human culture and the “ten thousand beings” (*wanwu* 萬物), classical Daoism uses the phrase *tianxia* 天下, which literally means “under the heavens.” With regard to the “ten thousand beings,” this phrase, usually translated as “myriad things,” refers to every being and thing in existence, with *wan* 萬 (lit., “ten thousand”) being the classical Chinese way of saying “all” or “every.”⁵² I have rendered *wanwu* as “ten thousand beings” in order to suggest that there are lives involved. The translation of *wanwu* as “ten thousand beings,” and not as “myriad things,” attempts to counteract the all too pervasive tendency to objectify lives. *Wu* often refers to “things” (i.e., inanimate objects) but often also to other (non-human) beings. The notion of “inanimate objects” also becomes problematic in a worldview based on a spectrum of *qi* 氣. “The *qi* is empty and waits on all beings” (*qi ye zhe xu er dai wu zhe ye* 氣也者 虛而待物者也; ZZ ch. 4). And, “The ten thousand beings carry yin and embrace yang. It is the empty *qi* (*chongqi* 沖氣) that harmonizes these” (DDJ ch. 42).

Finally, the *Book of Venerable Masters* also employs a wide variety of technical terms relating to meditational practice and mystical realization (*dedao* 得道). These include the following: “guarding the Center” (*shouzhong* 守中; ch. 5); “embracing the One” (*baoyi* 抱一; ch. 10); “guarding stillness” (*shoujing* 守靜; ch. 16); “embracing simplicity” (*baopu* 抱樸; ch. 19); “guarding the black” (*shouhei* 守黑; ch. 28); and “mysterious sameness” (*xuantong* 玄同; ch. 56).

The present handbook is an anthology of select chapters. I have selected those chapters which, from my perspective, are most relevant to self-cultivation. This does not mean that there is no need to familiarize oneself with the other chapters. With the proliferation of translations, the interested reader can easily find numerous complete versions.

As mentioned, the *Laozi*, or *Daode jing*, has been translated too many times to document. These various cultural productions are discussed in the

contributions of Julia Hardy and of Michael LaFargue and Julian Pas to *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching* (Kohn and LaFargue 1998). A philologically sound and bilingual translation is that by D.C. Lau. The most recent edition of this seminal and influential translation, published by the Chinese University Press of Hong Kong (1989), also contains Lau's rendering of the Mawangdui manuscripts. The Mawangdui manuscripts have also been translated by Henricks (1989), who, in addition, has published a translation of the "Guodian Laozi" (2000). The most systematic and convincing attempt at historically contextualizing the text and applying such insights to its translation is Michael LaFargue's *The Tao of the Tao Te Ching* (1992). A concise and helpful overview of scholarship on the text is Alan K. L. Chan's contribution to the *Daoism Handbook* (2000). Also recommended are the more recent articles on Laozi and the *Daode jing* collected in *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching* (Kohn and LaFargue 1998) and *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi* (Csikszentmihalyi and Ivanhoe 1999). Especially important for understanding the classical period of Daoism in general and the *Daode jing* in particular are Harold Roth's various publications. For Laozi as Lord Lao and his place in the Daoist tradition, one may consult Livia Kohn's *God of the Dao: Lord Lao in History and Myth* (1998).

Notes

1. *Daojia* 道家, first appearing in Sima Tan 司馬談 (d. 110 B.C.E.) and Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (145-86? B.C.E.) *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian), was originally a bibliographic category, a way to catalogue texts with seemingly similar concerns. However, Harold Roth has shown that there were, in fact, communities of practitioners that could receive the label "Daoist school." Here one should note that this was not a "philosophical school" or a "way of thinking," but rather a religious school and a way of being. See Roth 1999, 173-203. Cf Kirkland 2004.
2. Developing Roth (1999, 181-85), one might also refer to the earliest "Daoists" as "technicians of the Way" (*daoshu shi* 道術士).

3. When speaking of the Daoist tradition, some consider it problematic to identify an organized religious movement (“Daoism”) before the 2nd century C.E. at the earliest, and perhaps as late as the 5th century. One may thus wish to refer to these texts as “proto-Daoism.” In addition, “Daoism” (“Taoism”) is a Western interpretative category that encompasses many diverse phenomena; it may thus turn out that we must discard “Daoism” as a viable concept and speak of independent but interrelated movements. Such, however, is not my position. I hold that Daoism is a religious tradition, albeit one composed of diverse adherents, communities, practices, soteriological goals, historical influences and so forth, that begins with the inner cultivation lineages of the Warring States period and that focuses on a life lived in attunement with the Dao as sacred reality. Much work remains to be done on the various connective tissues that bind and separate Daoists and Daoist movements throughout history. One such strand is clearly the cultivation of “clarity and stillness” (*qingjing* 清靜), a concern found in the inner cultivation lineages, early Celestial Masters, Tang-dynasty Shangqing, and Quanzhen. For an initial attempt to identify some commonalities see Russell Kirkland’s *Taoism: The Enduring Tradition* (2004).

4. This text later received the title *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power). I have translated *Laozi* as “Book of Venerable Masters,” rather than “Book of Master Lao,” in keeping with my view that the text is a series of “sayings collages.” I have also translated *Daode jing* as “Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power,” rather than the more conventional “Classic of the Way and Virtue,” to emphasize its sacred standing *in the Daoist tradition*. In this sense the text is a “scripture” (*jing* 經). It is clear, however, that the work has also exerted tremendous influence on Chinese culture more generally. In this sense the text is a “classic” (*jing* 經).

5. The “Neiye” 內業 (Inward Training; abbr. NY) is one of the key Techniques of the Heart-mind chapters.

6. The *Liezi* 列子 (Book of Master Lie) is often placed in the classical period. However, although the received text contains some early material, especially from the *Zhungzi*, the *Liezi* was compiled in the fourth century

C.E. For a catalogue and historical annotations of translations of Daoist texts see Komjathy 2003.

7. Some would deny the application of “Daoist,” understood as an initiated member of a self-conscious religious tradition, to these practitioners. However, arguably such inclusion involves a specific way of life, specific worldviews, practices, and goals/ideals, more than some institutional affiliation.

8. This phrase became the title of the eleventh-century *Youlong zhuan* 猶龍傳 (Like Unto a Dragon; DZ 774).

9. The most detailed and convincing argument may be found in A.C. Graham’s article “The Origins of the Legend of Lao Tan” (1998 [1986]).

10. Laozi, or Lao Dan, appears in various chapters of the *Zhuangzi*, including chapters three, five, seven, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-five, twenty-seven, and thirty-three.

11. Here one thinks of the so-called *Book of Q*, which many Bible scholars believe to be a collection of the historical Jesus’ sayings that was later used as the source for the received Gospels.

12. The most successful attempt at providing a historically contextualized English translation of the *Daode jing* is Michael LaFargue’s *The Tao of the Tao Te Ching* (1992).

13. At some point one can imagine someone undertaking the difficult task of identifying the different “schools” associated with various passages and chapters. Here I am thinking of research on the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang), which recognizes the following groups: (1) Primitivists (chs. 8-10; parts of 11, 12, and 14); (2) Hedonists (chs. 28-31); (3) Syncretists (chs. 12-16, 33); (4) later followers of Zhuang Zhou (chs. 17-22); and (5) Anthologists (chs. 23-27, 32) (Mair 2000, 37).

14. The division into eighty-one chapters is associated particularly with the Heshang gong 河上公 version (see below), which also has chapter titles. It was not universally accepted until much later, probably during the Tang period (618-907), when the text was standardized under the patronage of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 712-755).

15. The *Daode jing* is also referred to as the “Five Thousand Character Text” (*wuqian wen* 五千文), a reference to its approximate length.

16. There are also character variants and some grammatical particles that have provided textual clarification.

17. Translations of the Mawangdui manuscripts may be found in Henricks 1989 and Lau 1989.

18. A translation of the Guodian *Laozi* may be found in Henricks 2000. For academic articles see Allan and Williams 2000.

19. This is obvious in contemporary Daoist contexts as well, wherein the *Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power* is sometimes chanted. In addition, during a fieldtrip to China in 1997 I visited Daoist temples at Qingcheng shan 青城山 (Azure Wall Mountain). While staying at Shangqing gong 上清宫 (Palace of Highest Clarity), a Dragon Gate monk and I exchanged our favorite memorized lines from the scripture.

20. This outdated interpretative framework is, unfortunately, perpetuated in Julian Pas’ *Historical Dictionary of Taoism* (1997). For a critical review see the Review Section at the Daoist Studies website (www.daoiststudies.org). For discussions of such interpretative issues in Daoist Studies, especially key questions such as “Who is a Daoist?” and “What is Daoism?”, see Creel 1956; Sivin 1978; Saso 1978; Strickmann 1980; Thompson 1993; Kobayashi 1995; Kirkland 1997; 2000; Clarke 2000; Kohn and Roth 2002; Komjathy 2002a; 2004; Miller 2003.

21. When I say that “philosophical Daoism is a complete fiction” I am speaking historically in terms of the Chinese religious tradition *which is*

Daoism. However, if one were to expand the discussion to include contemporary developments, it is clear that there are individuals, both Chinese and Western, who consider themselves “philosophical Daoists.” One such individual is Liu Xiaogan 劉笑敢 (b. 1947). Internet groups, or “webrings,” such as the Circle of Wandering Daoists fall into this category as well. While such individuals are clearly applying classical Daoist “ideas” to modern intellectual and social needs, much of their authority rests on the highly questionable belief and claim of representing “original Daoism.”

22. For many historians, it is problematic to speak of “Daoism,” which in this reading is understood as an organized tradition with a self-conscious collective identity, before the 2nd century C.E. This view centers on Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (fl. 142 C.E.?) and the early Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) movement. This view is misguided for two important reasons. First, it neglects historical precedents (see below); second, one could argue that “Daoism” was not an organized tradition with a self-conscious identity until the early medieval period (see Kobayashi 1995; Kirkland 1997).

23. This definition is indebted to the work of Rudolf Otto, William James, Mircea Eliade, and Paul Tillich.

24. What exactly the “sacred dimension” is depends of the Daoist sub-tradition involved. There are also different types of “mystical experiences” in Daoism. For instance, Warring States adepts were directed towards “unification,” while early Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) practitioners aimed at joining a celestial bureaucracy. On types of Daoist mysticism see Kohn 1991.

25. Two additional points should be made. First, the modern Chinese approximation of the Western category “religion” is *zongjiao* 宗教, literally meaning the “teachings of the ancestors.” That is, in a Chinese context, “religion” is understood as involving a community that is both corporeal and spiritual. Second, my suggestion that religion involves an interaction between the human dimension and the sacred dimension would, arguably, be recognized and accepted by practicing Daoists. As will become clear,

most Daoist movements originated in divine revelations, most notably from gods and immortals. For the moment, it is enough to note the importance of talismans (*fu* 符) in the Daoist tradition. Like a talisman, the Daoist practitioner's practice culminates in a joining of two things that were originally unified but which have become separated over time.

26. The Jesuits were and are known especially for their erudition and openness to learning. In addition, their basis in Roman Catholicism makes them more sympathetic to ritualistic expression and institutional hierarchies.

27. The development of Daoist Studies itself is indebted to colonialism: the earliest research occurred in France and Japan.

28. As Girardot explains, "Legge was the single most important figure in contributing to the late Victorian invention of 'Taoism' as a reified entity located 'classically', 'purely, and 'philosophically' within certain ancient texts or 'sacred books' - or, more accurately, within a single enigmatic 'classical' text or Taoist 'bible' known as the *Tao Te Ching* (Book of the Tao and Its Power) attributed to the sage Lao Tzu" (1999, 108). In addition, "Legge's extensive Taoist studies...set much of the underlying tone, textual content and hidden logic for subsequent Western discussions of this tradition within Sinology, the general history of religions and popular culture" (ibid., 109; see also Girardot 2002).

29. According to Legge (ibid.), the manuscript version was still extant in England when he wrote his preface to *The Texts of Taoism*.

30. For discussions of some of these translations see Julia Hardy's contribution to *Lao-tzu and the Tao-te-ching* (Kohn and LaFargue 1998). Here Hardy suggests that "bad scholarship often makes good religion."

31. In contemporary Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) Daoism, this location is sometimes associated with Qingcheng shan 青城山 (Azure Wall Mountain; Sichuan).

32. The *Xiang'er* commentary has been translated by Stephen Bokenkamp in his *Early Daoist Scriptures* (1997).

33. See Livia Kohn's *Monastic Life in Medieval Daoism* (2003).

34. It is impossible to estimate the total number of extant commentaries, but they continue to be composed throughout the world. With regard to American Daoism, Liu Ming, head priest of Orthodox Daoism in America, is currently working on one.

35. A translation of these chapters may be found in Sarkissian 2001.

36. For a translation of the *Heshang gong* commentary see Erkes 1958. Alan K.L. Chan (1991) has published a comparative study of the Heshang gong and Wang Bi commentaries.

37. For translations see Lin 1977; Rump and Chan 1979; Lynn 1999; Wagner 2003.

38. Bai Yuchan's commentary, as it appears in *Taishang daode baozhang yi* 太上道 德齋章翼 (Aide to the Great High Precious Chapters on the Dao and Inner Power; JY 64/JH-84), has been translated into Italian by Alfredo Cadonna (2001).

39. For guidance concerning Daoist commentaries see Robinet 1977; 1998; 1999. A selection of various commentaries may be found in Red Pine's (Bill Porter) idiosyncratic translation entitled *Lao-tzu's Tao-te-ching* (2001 [1997]).

40. In contemporary Complete Perfection communities, the text is recited ritually. Recitation of the *Book of Venerable Masters* began as early as the Latter Han dynasty (25-221 C.E.) and was well established by the Tang dynasty (618-907) (see Kohn 1998).

41. I have taken the character *ying* 營 (lit., "to manage") here as a variant for *hun* 魂 ("ethereal soul"). In this decision, I am following Eduard Erkes.

Erkes follows the *Heshang gong* 河上公 (Master Dwelling-by-the-River) commentary by taking the term *ying* as the functional equivalent of *hun*; he suggests it is a variant of *ling* 靈 (“numen”) in Chu dialect (1950, 141-42; Roth 1999b, 95, n. 69). In the context of a classical Chinese worldview, the human being was understood to consist of two “souls,” the ethereal or cloud soul (*hun* 魂) and the corporeal or white soul (*po* 魄). The former was yang in nature and associated with the heavens and spirit, while the latter was yin in nature and associated with the earth and the body/bones. That is, an eternal soul was not an ontological given. At death, the *hun* ascended and eventually dissipated into the heavens, while the *po* descended and eventually decomposed into the earth. Thus, early Daoist views of death involved a “disintegration” model, wherein the human being was understood to disappear into (merge with) the cosmos at death.

42. Similarly, chapter twenty-nine gives the following description: “The world is a sacred vessel (*shengqi* 聖器); the world cannot be acted upon.” And in chapter seventy-eight we encounter the following: “To accept the soil of the country is to become the master of the earth-shrine (*sheji* 社稷). To accept the inauspicious omens (*xiang* 祥) of the country is to become the ruler of the world.”

43. Interestingly, the text contains the character *ming* 名 in the first instance and *zi* 字 in the second. In terms of Chinese naming practice and in the present context, this suggests that the speaker does not know the name of the Dao when it came into being (*ming*), and so can only provide a relational name (*zi*).

44. For a detailed discussion of “apophatic mysticism” in the *Book of Venerable Masters* see Harold Roth’s contribution to *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi* (Csikszentmihalyi and Ivanhoe 1999). For an opposing view see Csikszentmihalyi’s article in that same publication.

45. The character *sheng* 聖 (“sacred”) contains the radicals for “ear” (*er* 耳) and “mouth” (*kou* 口). With reference to this character, Izutsu has

commented, “[The] term designates a man, endowed with an unusually keen ear, who is capable of hearing the voice of a super-natural being, god or spirit, and understands directly the will or intention of the latter” (1984, 301), The sage is the “receptive one,” the one who listens to the sonorous patterns of the cosmos and its varied subtle layers. This capacity for listening also leads to an additional ability: one’s speaking expresses such a divine connection and such expression then resonates with others.

46. “Virtue” is the most frequent translation of *de*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies three primary meanings: (1) The power or operative influence inherent in a supernatural or divine being, and/or an embodiment of such power; (2) Conformity of life and conduct with principles of morality; and (3) Moral excellence; a special manifestation of the influence of moral principles in life or conduct. Taken in these various layers of meaning, “virtue” closely approximates the Chinese *de*. However, in its more common usage, “virtue” connotes “ethical” or “moral” behavior. This has the potential to cause serious misunderstandings, as the *Book of Venerable Masters* is clearly critiquing conventional (Ruist) morality.

47. It is no accident that this phrase directly parallels one found in chapter one: “mysterious and again more mysterious” (*xuan zhi you xuan* 玄之又玄). The implication is that the practice of twofold decreasing leads to an experience of the twofold mystery which is the Dao. The latter phrase also became the name of a major Daoist hermeneutical school known as Chongxuan 重玄 (Twofold Mystery).

48. These chapters on “clarity” (*qing* 清) and “stillness” (*jing* 靜) exerted a major influence on the development of “Clarity-and-Stillness literature” during the Tang dynasty (618-907). The most well-known and influential text is the *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 620).

49. This term was adopted by Ge Hong 葛洪 (287-347) as part of his Daoist name, Baopuzi 抱朴子 (Master Embracing Simplicity), which is a direct reference to chapter ten of the *Book of Venerable Masters*.

50. In the Daoist tradition, the *locus classicus* for the Three Powers is the *Yinju jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31): “Heaven and earth steal from the ten thousand beings; / The ten thousand beings steal from humanity;/Humanity steals from the ten thousand beings. / When the Three Bandits are correctly ordered,/The Three Powers are then at peace” (1b).

51. In its earliest usage Di 帝, conventionally rendered as “emperor,” refers to Shangdi 上帝 (Supreme Thearch), the high god and supreme ancestor of the Shang dynasty (ca. 1550-ca. 1030 B.C.E.). During the Zhou dynasty (ca. 1030-222 B.C.E.), when the *Book of Venerable Masters* was composed, the conception of Di as a personal being was becoming replaced by *tian* 天 (“the heavens”) as an impersonal cosmological and naturalistic process. A thearch (the/ark) is a divine ruler. Like theopany (divine manifestation) and theology (study of divinity), thearch is derived from the Greek *theos*, meaning “god” and relating to divinity more generally. I have translated Di as “Thearch” to indicate the divine connotation of the term; “cosmocrat” might be a more liberal equivalent.

52. This gives one pause at the extent to which the “scale of being” has been altered by industrialization and modernization. In contemporary usage, “billion” or “trillion” expresses the unlimited number that was once expressed by “ten thousand.”

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Translation (翻譯)

BOOK OF VENERABLE MASTERS

1

The dao that can be spoken is not the constant Dao.
The name that can be named is not the constant name.
Nameless – the beginning of the heavens and earth.
Named – the mother of the ten thousand beings.
Thus, constantly desireless, one may observe its subtlety.
Constantly desiring, one may observe its boundaries.
These two emerge from sameness, but differ in name.
This sameness is called “mysterious.”
Mysterious and again more mysterious—
The gateway to all that is wondrous.

2

When all under the heavens knows beauty as beauty,
Ugliness is already present.
When all under the heavens knows benefit as benefit,
Non-benefit is already present.
Therefore, being and non-being generate each other;
Difficulty and ease complement each other;
Long and short contrast with each other;
High and low depend on each other;
Sound and voice harmonize with each other;
Front and back follow each other.
Therefore, the sage abides in a condition of non-action,
Practicing a teaching that does not require words.
The ten thousand beings appear, but one does not reject them.

There is generation, but one is free from having.
There is action, but one is free from depending.
Accomplishment is complete, but one is free from dwelling.
It is only because one does not dwell that it does not leave.

3

Do not exalt the worthy, and people will not contend.
Do not value rare goods, and people will not steal.
Do not display desirable things, and people's heart-minds will not be disturbed.
Thus we may consider the sage's approach to governing—
 Empty the heart-mind and fill the belly.
 Weaken the will and strengthen the bones.
Constantly enabling people to abide in non-knowing and non-desiring
Inhibits those with schemes from daring to act.
By acting through non-action, nothing is not governed.

4

The Dao is empty; when applied, it does not overflow.
Fathomless, as if the ancestor of the ten thousand beings.
 Blunt the sharpness;
 Untie the knots;
 Harmonize the brightness;
 Unite with the dust.
Deep and clear, it seems as though it exists.
I do not know whose descendent it is;
It symbolizes that which preceded the Thearch.

5

The heavens and earth are not humane;
They regard the myriad beings as straw dogs.
The sage is not humane;
He regards the people as straw dogs.

Between the heavens and earth, it is like a bellows.
Being empty, one is not exhausted;
Moving, even more becomes manifest.
Excessive speaking always impoverishes;
It is better to guard the Center.

6

The Valley Spirit does not die;
It is called the Mysterious Female,
The gateway to the Mysterious Female
Is called the root of the heavens and earth.
Continuous and uninterrupted, it seems to exist.
Applying this does not require effort.

7

The heavens are long-lasting and the earth is abiding.
The reason why they are long-lasting and abiding
Is because they do not live for themselves.
Therefore, they are able to live long.
Thus, the sage puts himself last, but actually comes first.
He steps outside himself, but through this is preserved.
Is this not because the sage lacks personal concerns?
Through this, he is able to complete himself.

8

The highest adeptness resembles water.
Water is adept at benefiting the ten thousand beings,
But it has no need to compete with them.
It resides in the places that people avoid.
Therefore, it is close to the Dao.
 In dwelling, be adept at groundedness.
 In cultivating the heart-mind, be adept at deepness.
 In giving, be adept at humaneness.

In speaking, be adept at sincerity.
In rectifying, be adept at regulation.
In doing, be adept in abilities.
In moving, be adept at timeliness.
Only one who does not compete is free from blame.

10

Carrying the ethereal and corporeal souls,
Embracing the One,
 Can you be without separation?
Concentrating the qi and attaining softness,
 Can you be like a newborn child?
Cleansing and purifying mysterious perception,
 Can you be without flaws?
Loving the people and governing the country,
 Can you abide in non-knowing?
Opening and closing the Celestial Gates,
 Can you become like a female?
Illuminating and purifying the four directions,
 Can you abide in non-action?
Accomplishing this and nourishing this,
Accomplishing this but not possessing this,
Acting through this but not relying on this,
Developing this but not controlling this,
This is called mysterious inner power.

12

The five colors cause one's eyes to become blind.
The five sounds cause one's ears to become deaf.
The five flavors cause one's mouth to become frail.
Racing around and hunting cause one's heart-mind
 To become mad.
Difficult-to-get goods cause one's activity to become disrupted.

Therefore, the sage is for the belly, not for the eyes.
Thus, he abandons that and receives this.

13

Favor and disgrace are like being startled.
Caring about calamities is like having a self.
What do we mean by saying “Favor and disgrace are like being startled”?
Receiving favor is for the inferior.
Attaining it startles one; losing it startles one.
Thus favor and disgrace are like being startled.
What do we mean by saying “Caring about calamities is like having a self”?
The reason why I have calamities is because I have a self.
If I did not have a self, what calamities would I have?
Therefore, the one who takes his self as the world
Can be entrusted with the world.
The one who cares for his self as the world
Can be relied on by the world.

14

Looking for it, one cannot perceive it.
We call it remote.
Listening for it, one cannot hear it.
We call it rare.
Grasping for it one cannot attain it.
We call it subtle.
These three cannot be investigated.
Thus, they are commingled and become one.
Above it there is no brightness;
Below it there is no darkness.
Continual and continuous, it cannot be named.
Once again one returns to non-being.

This is called the form of formlessness,

The appearance of non-being.
It is called vague and elusive.
Meeting it, one cannot perceive its face;
Following it, one cannot perceive its back.
Adhere to the Dao of primeval time
In order to attend to being in the present.
The ability to know this primeval beginning
Is called tracing the threads of the Dao.

15

Considering those in primeval times skilled at being adepts,
They were subtle, wondrous, mysterious, and connected.
Their depth was such that they could not be recognized.
It is only because they could not be recognized
That here we force ourselves to describe them.
 Cautious, as if crossing a river in winter.
 Hesitant, as if fearing neighbors everywhere.
 Impeccable, as if a guest.
 Expansive, as if ice on the verge of melting.
 Sincere, as if an uncarved block.
 Vast, as if a valley.
 Commingled, as if turbidity.
Who can be turbid so that it may become suspended?
Practice stillness until it gradually becomes clear.
Who can be calm so that it may become long-lasting?
Practice activity until it gradually becomes generated.
Those who protect this way do not desire fullness.
Only the one who is free from fullness
Can remain hidden and without new achievements.

16

Apply emptiness completely;
Guard stillness steadfastly.

The ten thousand beings arise together;
I simply observe their return.
All beings flourish and multiply;
Each again returns to the Source.
Returning to the Source is called stillness;
This means returning to life-destiny.
Returning to life-destiny is called constancy;
Knowing constancy is called illumination.
One who does not know constancy
Will be disordered and act recklessly.
Knowing constancy leads to endurance.
Endurance leads to openness.
Oneness leads to correct governing.
Governing leads to accordance with the heavens.
Accordance with the heavens leads to the Dao.
Through the Dao, one becomes everlasting.
Then there is no self; then there is no danger.

18

When the great Dao is abandoned,
Humanity and righteousness appear.
When the intelligent and clever rise up,
Great falsity and hypocrisy appear.
When the six relationships are disharmonious,
Filial piety and familial kindness appear.
When the country is chaotic and disordered,
Loyal ministers and officials appear.

19

Renounce sagehood and abandon intelligence;
The people will benefit a hundredfold.
Renounce humanity and abandon righteousness;
The people will return to filial piety and familial kindness.

Renounce skillfulness and abandon profit-making;
Robbers and thieves will no longer exist.
These three must be regarded as ornamental;
They are not sufficient.
Therefore, they must become subordinate.
Appear plain and embrace simplicity;
Decrease personal interest and lessen desire.

20

Renounce learning and be free from sorrow.
Affirmation and negation, what is the difference?
Beneficent and malevolent, what is the distinction?
What humans fear cannot but be feared.
Because they are uncultivated, it has not yet ended.
Most people are busy as though attending the Tailao feast,
As though ascending a tower in spring;
I alone am unmoving, showing no sign.
I resemble an infant who has not yet become a child;
Lazy and idle, as though there is no place to return.
Everyone has more than enough;
I alone appear as though abandoned.
I have the heart-mind of a fool—
Chaotic and unpredictable.
Ordinary people are bright and clear;
I alone appear dim and indistinct.

Ordinary people are inquiring and discerning;
I alone appear hidden and obscure.
Like an ocean in its tranquility;
Like a high wind in its endless movement.
Each person has his reasons;
I alone am insolent as though unconcerned.
I alone am different from other people;
I revere being fed by the mother.

21

Considering the orientation of great inner power,
Only the Dao becomes followed.
The Dao considered as a thing—
It is elusive and indistinct.
Indistinct, elusive, its center contains forms.
Elusive, indistinct, its center contains beings.
Obscure, unseen, its center contains essences.
These essences are fundamentally real;
The Center contains something deserving trust.
From antiquity to the present,
Its name has not been abandoned.
Through it we may observe all beginnings.
How can I know the form of every beginning?
Through this.

28

Know the male, but guard the female—
Become the streambed of the world.
Becoming the streambed of the world,
Constant inner power does not separate.
Return to a condition of childhood.
Know the white, but guard the black—
Become the pattern of the world.
Becoming the pattern of the world,
Constant inner power does not deviate.
Return to a condition of non-differentiation.
Know honor, but guard disgrace—
Become the valley of the world.
Becoming the valley of the world,
Constant inner power is then sufficient.
Return to a condition of simplicity.

When simplicity dissipates, there are vessels.
The sage employs them to become an elder.
Thus the great governing is not disrupted.

29

You wish to take the world and act upon it;
I know that this cannot be accomplished.
The world is a sacred vessel;
The world cannot be acted upon.
To act upon it is to fail it;
To grasp it is to lose it.
Therefore, considering beings,
 Some take action, while others follow;
 Some breathe through the mouth, others through the nose.
 Some are strong, while others are weak.
 Some destroy, while others are destroyed.
Thus the sage avoids extremes,
Avoids extravagance, avoids excess.

33

To know others is intelligence;
To know one's self is illumination.
To overcome others is power;
To overcome one's self is strength.
To know sufficiency is affluence.
To act through force is obstinance.
To not lose one's place is endurance.
To die but not to perish is longevity.

37

The Dao constantly abides in non-action,
And yet nothing is left undone.
If ministers and rulers are able to guard it,

The myriad beings will transform naturally.
In transformation, desires may arise;
I will subdue them through nameless simplicity.
Through this nameless simplicity,
I will come to be without desires.
Becoming desireless through stillness,
All the world will become settled naturally.

40

Reversal is the movement of the Dao.
Weakness is the application of the Dao.
All beings of the world are born through being,
Being is born through non-being.

41

When the highest adepts hear about the Dao,
They are diligent in their practice of it.
When the middle adepts hear about the Dao,
They wonder whether or not it exists.
When the lowest adepts hear about the Dao,
They laugh loudly and mock it.
If they did not laugh, it would not be the Dao.
Thus, we have well-established sayings—
 Illuminating the Dao seems like obscurity.
 Advancing in the Dao seems like retreat.
 Being unwavering in the Dao seems like imbalance.
 The highest inner power seems like a valley.
 The greatest purity seems like disgrace.
 Abundant inner power seems like deficiency.
 Established inner power seems like aversion.
 Essential perfection appears changeable.
 A great square has no corners.
 A great vessel is completed late.

Great music is seldom heard.
A great image has no form.
The Dao is hidden in namelessness.
Only the Dao is adept in lending; and still remaining complete.

42

The Dao generated the One;
The One generated the two;
The two generated the three;
The three generated the myriad beings.
The myriad beings carry yin and embrace yang.
It is the empty qi that harmonizes these.
People dislike aloneness, scarcity and poverty,
But rulers and ministers take these as their names.
Thus, all beings may gain by losing.
And may lose through gaining.
What people teach, I also teach—
“The strong and violent will not die well.”
I take this as the father of my teaching.

43

The softest thing in the world
Overcomes the hardest thing in the world.
Non-being can enter places without openings.
Through this, I know the benefit of non-action.
The teaching without words,
The benefit of non-action—
Few in the world can reach this.

45

Great achievement seems imperfect;
Its application is never exhausted.
Great fullness seems empty;

Its application is never suspended.
Great direction seems twisted.
Great skillfulness seems inept.
Great eloquence seems confused.
Restlessness overcomes cold;
Stillness overcomes heat.
Clarity and stillness are the rectification of the world.

46

When the world is with the Dao,
Gallop horses are used for their manure.
When the world is without the Dao,
War horses are bred in the borderlands.
No calamity is greater than not knowing contentment.
No trouble is greater than desiring attainment.
Thus, the contentment of knowing contentment
Is constant contentment.

48

In the pursuit of learning, one increases each day.
In the practice of the Dao, one decreases each day.
Decreasing and again decreasing,
One eventually arrives at non-action.
Through non-action, nothing is left undone.
In taking hold of the world, remain uninvolved.
Becoming involved with affairs,
One cannot take hold of the world.

52

The world had a beginning;
We regard it as the world's mother.
By coming to attain the mother,
One can know the child.

By coming to know the child,
One can again guard the mother.
To the end of life, there will be no danger.
 Block the passages;
 Close the doorways.
To the end of life, there will be no fatigue.
 Open the passages;
 Attend to affairs.
To the end of life, there will be no relief
Perceiving the subtle is called illumination.
Guarding softness is called strength.
Apply the brightness, and return to illumination.
Do not bring calamities on yourself.
This is called practicing constancy.

53

Holding an abundance of inner power is like being a child.
Poisonous insects and venomous snakes will not sting.
Fierce and menacing animals will not gorge;
Birds of prey will not attack or seize.
The bones are soft and sinews flexible,
But the grasp still remains firm.
Not knowing the union of female and male,
There is completion in activities.
This is the culmination of vital essence.
A child can cry for a whole day without becoming hoarse.
This is the culmination of harmony.
Knowing harmony is called constancy.
Knowing constancy is called illumination.
Attempting to increase life is called inauspicious.
A heart-mind ordering the qi is called strength.
To become strong is to become aged.
We cannot call this the Dao.
Not being in the Dao, one will die early.

56

One who knows does not speak;

One who speaks does not know.

Block the passages;

Close the doorways;

Blunt the sharpness;

Loosen the tangles;

Harmonize the brightness;

Unite with the dust.

We refer to this as mysterious sameness.

Thus, there is no way to get close to it;

There is no way to separate from it;

There is no way to benefit it;

There is no way to harm it;

There is no way to honor it;

There is no way to disgrace it.

Thus, it is revered in the world.

70

My words are very easy to understand,

And very easy to practice.

But the world does not understand them,

And does not practice them.

My language has an ancestor;

My affairs have their lord.

Only I abide in non-knowing;

Therefore I remain unknown.

Those who know me are few,

So what I am is revered.

Therefore, the sage wears coarse clothes,

But embraces the jade within.

71

To know that you do not know is best;
To not know that you are knowing is sickness.
Only by being sick of sickness are you not sick.
The sage is not sick because he is sick of sickness.
Through this, he is not sick.

76

When living, human beings are soft and flexible;
When dead, human beings are hard and rigid.
When living, grass and trees are soft and pliable;
When dead, they become withered and dry.
Thus, hardness and rigidity are companions of death;
Softness and flexibility are companions of life.
Thus, powerful weapons will not overcome.
Strong trees will be singled out and cut down.
The powerful and great will become lowered.
The soft and flexible will become elevated.

78

Nothing in the world is softer and weaker than water;
But attacking with hardness and strength cannot overcome it.
This is because nothing can change it.
Weakness overcomes strength;
Softness overcomes toughness.
Everyone in the world knows this,
But no one is able to practice it.
Thus the sages have said,
 “To accept the soil of the country
 Is to become the master of the earth-shrine.
 To accept the inauspicious omens of the country
 Is to become the ruler of the world.”

Direct communication seems like its opposite.

81

Honest words are not beautiful;
Beautiful words are not honest.
One who is adept does not contend;
One who contends is not adept.
One who knows is not expansive;
One who is expansive does not know.
The sage avoids accumulation
The more he works for others, the more he has;
The more he gives to others, the more he gains.
The way of the heavens is to benefit, not to injure.
The way of the sages is to act, not to compete.

Chinese Text (中文)

老子

一

道可道非常道。名可名非常名。
無名天地之始。有名萬物之母。
故常無欲以觀其妙。常有欲以觀其徼。
此兩者同出而異名。
同謂之玄。玄之又玄，眾妙之門。

二

天下皆知美之為美斯惡已。
皆知善之為善斯不善已。
故有無相生。難易相成。長短相較。
高下相傾。音聲相和。前後相隨。
是以聖人處無為之事。行不言之教。

萬物作焉而不辭。生而不有。為而不恃。
功成而弗居。夫唯弗居是以不去。

三

不尚賢使民不爭。不貴難得之貨使民不為盜。
不見可欲使民心不亂。是以聖人之治。
虛其心，實其腹。弱其志，強其骨。
常使民無知無欲。使夫智者不敢為也。
為無為則無不治。

四

道沖而用之或不盈。淵兮似萬物之宗。
挫其銳。解其紛。和其光。同其塵。
湛兮似或存。吾不知誰之子。象帝之先。

五

天地不仁。以萬物為芻狗。
聖人不仁。以百姓為芻狗。
天地之間，其猶橐籥乎。
虛而不屈。動而愈出。
多言數窮。不如守中。

六

谷神不死。是謂玄牝。
玄牝之門是謂天地根。
綿綿若存。用之不勤。

七

天長地久。天地所以能長且久者，以其不自生。
故能長生。是以聖人後其身而身先。
外其身而身存。非以其無私耶。故能成其私。

八

上善若水。水善利萬物而不爭。
處眾人之所惡。
故幾於道。居善地。
心善淵。與善仁。言善信。
正善治。事善能。動善時。
夫唯不爭故無尤。

十

載營魄抱一能無離乎。專氣致柔能嬰兒乎。
滌除玄覽能無疵乎。愛民治國能無知乎。
天門開闔能為雌乎。明白四達能無為乎。
生之畜之，生而不有，為而不恃，
長而不宰，是謂玄德。

十二

五色令人目盲。五音令人耳聾。五味令人口爽。
馳騁畋獵令人心發狂。
難得之貨令人行妨。
是以聖人為腹不為目。
故去彼取此。

十三

寵辱若驚。貴大患若身。
何謂寵辱若驚。寵為下。
得之若驚。失之若驚。是謂寵辱若驚。
何謂貴大患若身。吾所以有大患者，為吾有身。
及吾無身吾有何患。故貴以身為天下若可寄天下
愛以身為天下，若可託天下。

十四

視之不見。名曰夷。
聽之不聞。名曰希。
搏之不得。名曰微。
此三者不可致詰。故混而為一。
其上不皦。其下不昧。繩繩不可名。
復歸於無物。是謂無狀之狀、無物之象。
是謂惚恍。迎之不見其首。
隨之不見其後。執古之道以御今之有。
能知古始是謂道紀。

十五

古之善為士者、微妙玄通。深不可識。
夫唯不可識、故強為之容。
豫焉若冬涉川。猶兮若畏四鄰。
儼兮其若客。渙兮若冰之將釋。
敦兮其若樸。曠兮其若谷。
混兮其若濁。孰能濁以止。
靜之徐清。孰能安以久。動之徐生。
保此道者、不欲盈。夫唯不盈故能蔽不新成。

十六

致虛極，守靜篤。
萬物并作，吾以觀復。
夫物芸芸，各復歸其根。
歸根曰靜，是謂復命。
復命曰常，知常曰明二
不知常，妄作凶。
知常容，容乃公、公乃王。
王乃天，天乃道、道乃久。
沒身不殆。

十八

大道廢，有仁義。

智慧出，有大偽。
六親不和，有孝慈。
國家昏亂，有忠臣。

十九

絕聖棄智，民利百倍。
絕仁棄義，民復孝慈。
絕巧棄利，盜賊無有。
此三者以為文不足。故令有所屬。
見素抱樸。少私寡欲。

二十

絕學無憂。唯之與阿，相去幾何。
善之與惡，相去若何。
人之所畏，不可不畏。荒兮其未央哉。
眾人熙熙如享太牢，如春登臺。
我獨泊兮其未兆，如嬰兒之未孩，慄慄兮若無所歸。
眾人皆有餘，而我獨若遺。
我愚人之心也哉，沌沌兮。
俗人昭昭，我獨昏昏。
俗人察察，我獨悶悶。
澹兮其若海，颺兮若無止。
眾人皆有以，而我獨頑似鄙。
我獨異於人，而貴食母。

二十一

孔德之容，唯道是從。
道之為物，惟恍惟惚。
惚兮恍兮，其中有象。
恍兮惚兮，其中有物。
窈兮冥兮，其中有精。
其精甚真。其中有信。
自古及今、其名不去。

以閱眾甫。吾何以知眾甫之收哉。以此。

二十八

知其雄，守其雌。為天下谿。
為天下谿，常德不離。復歸於嬰兒。
知其白，守其黑。為天下式。
為天下式，常德不忒。復歸於無極。
知其榮，守其辱。為天下谷。
為天下谷，常德乃足。復歸於樸。
樸散則為器。聖人用之則為官長。
故大制不割。

二十九

將欲取天下而為之。吾見其不得已。
天下神器。不可為也。為者敗之。執者失之。
故物或行或隨。或歔或吹。或強或羸。或挫或隤。
是以聖人去甚。去奢去泰。

三十三

知人者智。自知者明。
勝人者有力。自勝者強。
知足者富。強行者有志。
不失其所者久。死而不亡者壽。

三十七

道常無為，而無不為。
侯王若能守之，萬物將自化。
化而欲作。吾將鎮之。
以無名之樸，無名之樸，夫亦將無欲。
不欲以靜，天下將自定。

四十

反者道之動。
弱者道之用。
天下萬物生於有。
有生於無。

四十一

上士聞道，勤而行之。
中士聞道，若存若亡。
下士聞道，大笑之。
不笑不足以爲道。
故建言有之，明道若昧。進道若退。夷道若類。
上德若谷。大白若辱。廣德若不足。
建德若偷。質真若渝。大方無隅。
大器晚成。大音希聲。大象無形。
道隱無名。夫唯道善貸且成。

四十二

道生一。一生二。一生三。
三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽。
沖氣以爲和。人之所惡，
唯孤寡不穀。而王公以爲稱。
故物或損之而益，或益之而損。
人之所教，我亦教之。
強梁者不得其死。吾將以爲教父。

四十三

天下之至柔，馳騁天下之至堅。
無有入無間。吾是以知無爲之有益。
不言之教，無爲之益，天下希及之。

四十五

大成若缺，其用不弊。
大盈若沖，其用不窮。
大直若屈。大巧若拙。
大辯若訥。
躁勝寒，靜勝熱。清靜為天下正。

四十六

天下有道，卻走馬以糞。
天下無道，戎馬生於郊。
禍莫大於不知足。咎莫大於欲得。
故知足之足常足矣。

四十八

為學日益。為道曰損。
損之又損，以至於無為。
無為而無不為。取天下常以無事。
及其有事，不足以取天下。

五十二

天下有始，以為天下母。
既得其母，以知其子。
既知其子，復守其母。
沒身不殆。塞其兌，閉其門。
終身不勤。開其兌，濟其事。
終身不救。見小曰明。
守柔曰強。用其光，復歸其明。
無遺身狹。是謂習常。

五十五

含德之厚比於赤子。蜂蠆虺蛇不螫。
猛獸不據。攫鳥不搏。骨弱筋柔，而握固。
未知牝牡之合而全作。精之至也。

終曰號而不嗟。和之至也。
知和曰常。知常曰明。益生曰祥。心使氣曰強。
物狀則老。謂之不道。不道早已。

五十六

知者不言。言者不知。
塞其兌。閉其門。挫其銳。解其紛。
和其光。同其塵。是謂玄同。
故不可得而親。不可得而疏。
不可得而利。不可得而害。
不可得而貴。不可得而賤。
故為天下貴。

七十

吾言甚易知，甚易行。
天下莫能知，莫能行。
言有宗，事有君。
夫唯無知，是以不我知。
知我者希，則我者貴。
是以聖人被褐懷玉。

七十一

知不知上。不知知病。
夫唯病病，是以不病。
聖人不病，以其病病。
是以不病。

七十六

人之生也柔弱。其死也堅強。
萬物草木之生也柔脆。其死也枯槁。
故堅強者死之徙。柔弱者生之徙。
是以兵強則不勝。木強則兵。

強大處下。柔弱處上。

七十八

天下莫柔弱於水。而攻堅強者莫之能勝。
以其無以易之。
弱之勝強。柔之勝剛。天下莫不知，莫不行。
是以聖人云，受國之垢是謂社稷主。
受國不祥是謂天下王。正言若反。

八十一

信言不美，美言不信。
善者不辯，辯者不善。
知者不博，博者不知。
聖人不積。既以為人已愈有。
既以與人已愈多。
天之道利而不害。聖人之道為而不爭。

Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions

內經素問

Introduction

The *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問 (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic: Basic Questions; DZ 1018), sometimes abbreviated as *Neijing* 內經 (Inner Classic) but more appropriately as *Suwen* 素問 (Basic Questions), is a central text of classical Chinese medicine. As one of the earliest received classics of Chinese medicine, the *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions* is foundational for understanding the worldview and therapeutic approach to health and well-being underlying both classical Chinese medicine and specific Daoist traditions.

The *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions*, usually translated as the *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine: Simple Questions*, is a seminal text of classical Chinese medicine, the standardized and systematized medical approach that developed under the Han dynasty (Early: 202 B.C.E.-9 C.E.; Later: 25-221 C.E.). As the title indicates, the text is associated with Huangdi 黃帝 (Yellow Thearch/Yellow Emperor). The Yellow Thearch is one of three ancient "thearchs" (*di* 帝) from China's pre-dynastic or pre-historical period, which in order of succession are as follows: (1) Fu Xi 伏羲; (2) Shen Nong 神農; and (3) Huangdi 黃帝 (Yellow Thearch). Mythologically speaking, the Yellow Thearch is said to have been the son of Shao Dian 少典. His family name was Gongsun 公孫 and his personal name was Xuanyuan 軒轅. He is also known by the name Youxiong 有熊.¹ Said to have reigned from 2696 to 2598 B.C.E., he was given the title of "Yellow Di" because his reign rested on the forces of soil and because the color of soil is yellow. The Yellow Thearch has been ascribed various qualities during different periods of Chinese history, and is in turn many things to many people. In a more general sense, he is seen as the founder of Chinese civilization itself. As time went by, the figure of the Yellow Thearch became a representative of political philosophy, medical

knowledge, longevity techniques, sexology lore, and divine sovereignty. In the context of the *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions*, the Yellow Thearch embodies each of these aspects of Chinese cultural memory as well as the search for knowledge, especially knowledge concerning health, healing, and longevity, more generally.²

Although the *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions* is traditionally ascribed to the Yellow Thearch, it is an anonymous work that clearly contains textual layers from a variety of historical periods. This is most likely true of not only the chapters themselves, but also various passages within each chapter. In his *Huang Di nei jing su wen: Nature, Knowledge, Imagery in an Ancient Chinese Medical Text* (2003), Paul Unschuld traces the history of early editions and commentaries through the eventual establishment of the “textus receptus” of the extant *Basic Questions*. In terms of the various historical and textual layers, the *Basic Questions* is a compilation of fragmentary texts written, collected, and edited by an unknown number of individuals in a period lasting from about the second century B.C.E. to the second century C.E. The received text also contains philosophical strata, such as the yin-yang and Five Phases doctrine of systematic correspondence, whose beginnings are at least as early as the fourth and third centuries B.C.E. In addition as the text has been edited throughout Chinese history, it also contains material from probably as late as the eighth century C.E.

The *Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic: Basic Questions* is part of a family of texts that contain the primary title of *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic). In addition to the *Suwen* 素問 (Basic Questions),³ the first two chapters of which are translated in the present handbook, the “Yellow Thearch's inner classics” include the *Huangdi neijing lingshu* 黃帝內經靈樞 (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic: Numinous Pivot; DZ 1020), abbreviated as *Lingshu* 靈樞 (Numinous Pivot),⁴ and the less well-known *Huangdi neijing taisu* 黃帝內經太素 (Yellow Thearch's Inner Classic: Great Foundations), abbreviated as *Taisu* 太素 (Great Foundations).⁵ These are the earliest extant texts that express a standardized and systematized medical and therapeutic approach.⁶ In the Yellow Thearch's inner classics,

we find a complex and integrated system employing a classical Chinese worldview and advocating preventative self-regulation as well as interventionist forms of therapy such as acupuncture, moxibustion (burning powdered mugwort on the skin), and herbs, although primary emphasis is placed on acupuncture. In addition to these texts, three other early important works must be mentioned in terms of classical Chinese medicine: the *Nanjing* 難經 (Classic of Difficult Issues), *Shanghan lun* 傷寒論 (On Cold-Induced Disorders), and *Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經 (Shennong's Classic of Herbology). The *Classic of Difficult Issues*, composed in the first century C.E., consists of eighty-one “chapters” on eighty-one specific issues (*nan* 難), which are structured as dialogues of one or more sets of questions and answers. These questions often revolve around passages from the Yellow Thearch's inner classics. *The Classic of Difficult Issues* covers various aspects of Chinese medicine, including a codified system of correspondences focusing on yin-yang and the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行).⁷ The *Shanghan lun*, composed and edited between the 2nd and 3rd centuries C.E., is the oldest extant Chinese medical classic on externally contracted disease (*waigan bing* 外感病). It presents a systematized body of knowledge on the origin and development of such diseases and their treatments, specifically through the use of herbology and medicinal formulas. The title refers to illnesses contracted via external pathogenic factors, especially those relating to cold (*han* 寒) and wind-cold (*hanfeng* 寒風).⁸ Finally, the *Shennong bencao jing* is the earliest extant work on herbology or “pharmacology.” Possibly composed as early as the first century C.E., but first attested to with certainty in the literature registry of the Sui (589-618) and Tang (618-907) dynasties, the received *Shennong bencao jing* was prepared by the famous Daoist Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456-536), most well-known in Daoist history for collecting and editing the *Zhen'gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected; DZ 1016) and establishing a quasi-monastic community on Maoshan 茅山 (Mount Mao; in present day Nanjing). The title refers to the mythological Chinese culture hero Shennong 神農, the Divine Husbandman, who is credited with the development of agriculture in China.⁹

All of Yellow Thearch's inner classics express and develop the systematization of what may be referred to as “classical Chinese

cosmology.” Standardized during the Early Han dynasty (202 B.C.E.- 9 C.E), this system incorporates yin-yang 陰陽 and Five Phase (*wuxing* 五行) cosmologies. These originally-distinct cosmologies were reconciled into a complementary system by Zou Yan 鄒衍 (ca. 305-240 B.C.E.).

Etymologically speaking, yin 陰 depicts a hill (*fu* 阜) covered by shadows (*yin* 衾), while yang 陽 depicts a hill (*fu* 阜) covered by sunlight (*yang* 暉).

At the root-meaning level, yin and yang are ways of speaking about the same place at different times/moments of the day. Yin and yang are not “polar opposites” or antagonistic substances; they are in fact, complementary principles, aspects, or forces. As the characters suggest, yin and yang are used to represent different dimensions of the same phenomena or situation. By extension, there are various associations:

yin/female/earth/dark/heavy/turbidity/rest and

yang/male/heavens/light/light/clarity/activity.¹⁰ At times, “yin” is used to designate negative or harmful aspects of life more generally (immorality, ugliness, disease, etc.), while “yang” becomes related to positive or beneficial aspects of life (morality, beauty, health, etc.).¹¹ When a heart-mind conditioned by discrimination, absolutist thinking, and hyper-critical approaches encounters a worldview based on yin-yang, much confusion may arise. The desire and conditioned expectation for this and not that, for good opposed to evil, obstructs the recognition of subtlety and interrelationship. Thus we find the following passage concerning debate in chapter two of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang):

“Suppose you and I have had an argument. If you have defeated me instead of me defeating you, then are you necessarily right and am I necessarily wrong? Is one of us right and the other wrong? If I have defeated you instead of you defeating me, then am I necessarily right and are you necessarily wrong? Is one of us right and the other wrong? If you and I don’t know the answer, then other people are bound to be even more in the dark. Whom shall we get to decide what is right? Shall we get someone who agrees with you to decide? But if he already agrees with you, how can he decide fairly? Shall we get someone who agrees with me? But if he already agrees with me, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who disagrees with both of us?

But if he already disagrees with both of us, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who agrees with both of us? But if he already agrees with both of us, how can he decide? Obviously, then, neither you nor I nor anyone else can decide for each other.” (Watson 1968, 48)

Regarding yin and yang, what must be emphasized is that these are relative associations, not absolute characteristics. Just because women are considered “yin” in one respect or in one context, it does not follow that they are also “immoral” or “turbid” There are also varying degrees of yin and yang in every phenomenon, in each moment or experience, and in every being. Moreover, in the context of a classical Chinese worldview in general and Daoism in particular, life is seen as depending on the mutually beneficial interaction of yin and yang.¹² Thus, we find the following passage in chapter forty-two of the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power):

The Dao generated the One (*yi* 一);
The One generated the two (*er* 二);
The two generated the three (*san* 三);
The three generated the ten thousand beings (*wanwu* 萬物).
The ten thousand beings carry yin 陰 and embrace yang 陽,
And it is the empty qi (*chongqi* 沖氣) that harmonizes these.

Or in an alternative rendering:

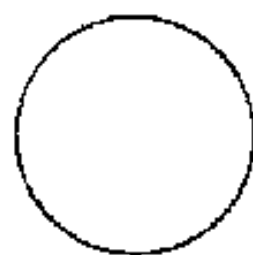
The Dao generates unity;
Unity generates duality;
Duality generates trinity;
Trinity generates all being,
The myriad beings carry yin and embrace yang,
And it is the empty qi that harmonizes these.

This passage is often linked with a more elaborate description of cosmogony, or the origin of the cosmos, found in chapter three of the *Huainanzi*, 淮南子 (Book of the Masters of Huainan; DZ 1184), which is entitled “Tianwen xun” 天文訓 (Discourse on Celestial Patterns).

When Heaven and Earth were yet unformed,
All was ascending and flying, diving and delving.
Thus it was called the Great Inception.
The Dao began in the Nebulous Void.
The Nebulous Void produced spacetime;
Spacetime produced the primordial qi.
A shoreline (divided) the primordial qi.
That which was pure and bright spread out to form Heaven;
Then the heavy and turbid congealed to form Earth.
(Major 1993, 62)

In terms of the origins of the manifest universe, or the present cosmic epoch, the Dao represents primordial undifferentiation or pure potentiality. In a pre-manifest “state,” the Dao is an incomprehensible and unrepresentable before. The Dao thus relates to original qi (*yuanqi* 元氣), the “energy” of “the beginning not yet beginning to be a beginning” (*you weishi you you shi* 有未始有有始; ZZ ch. 2).¹³ Through a spontaneous, unintentional, and impersonal process of unfolding or differentiation, this undifferentiation became the One or unity. That is, even unity or the wholeness of Being-before-being is not the Dao in its ultimate sense. The One represents the first moment or stage of differentiation. From this unity, separation occurs. In the next phase of differentiation, the one divides into two, yin and yang. Here yin also relates to terrestrial qi or the qi of the earth (*diqu* 地氣), while yang relates to celestial qi or the qi of the heavens (*tianqi* 天氣). At this moment yin and yang have not yet formed patterns of interaction. The interaction of yin and yang is referred to as “three;” this moment involves yin and yang in dynamic and continual interaction, resulting in further differentiation.¹⁴ This further differentiation leads to the emergence of materiality as well as more individualized beings and forces, including human beings (*ren* 人). Human beings, as *homo erectus*, are seen as the life-form with the clearest capacity to connect the heavens and the earth. In the later Daoist tradition, these three (the heavens, earth, and human beings) are referred to as the “Three Powers” (*sancai* 三才).¹⁵ The emphasis on alignment (*zheng* 正) and throughness (*tong* 通) is clear in the reference to the dynamic interaction of yin and yang as Taiji 太極, which

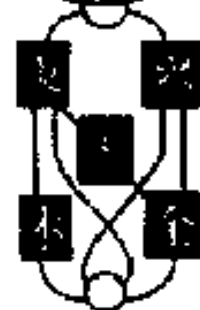
literally means the “Great Ridgepole,” or the “Great Ultimate” by extension. Thus, we have the famous *Taiji tu* 太極圖 (Diagram of Taiji) attributed to the Neo-Confucian Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073).



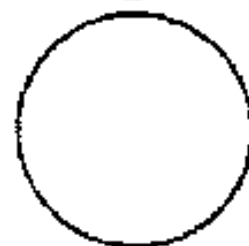
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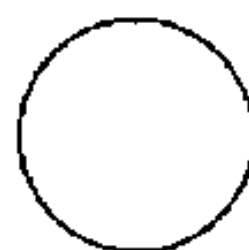
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乾道成男



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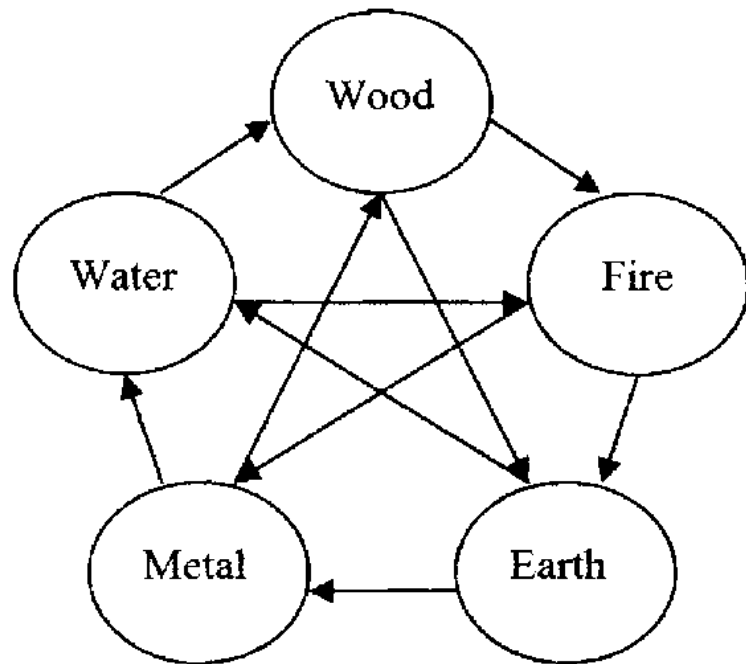
生化物萬

Etymologically speaking, *ji* 極 is the “ridgepole” or the center beam in an architectural structure. Applied to yin and yang, it suggests both distinction/separation (a center dividing point) and connection/unification (a center meeting point). This cosmogonic and cosmological process, involving yin and yang in continual, creative interaction, is not just in the past; it also represents the context of being and becoming, the unending process which is the world and being-in-the-world. Such an “emanationist cosmogony/cosmology” also reveals how and why the Daoist belief in deities and spirits does not contradict the view of the Dao as unnamable mystery and original source. “Theologically speaking,” if the Dao is both immanent and transcendent, neither immanent nor transcendent, then there is no necessary distinction between “nature” and “gods.” Deities are simply differently differentiated aspects of the Dao, and worshipping deities is not, in and of itself, different than having reverence for the unnamable mystery which is the Dao.

The Yellow Thearch’s inner classics also employ, emphasize, and systematize Five Phase (*wuxing* 五行) cosmology. Conventionally rendered as “Five Elements,” *wuxing* literally means something like “five activities” or “five movements.” This dynamic and process-orientated aspect becomes more satisfactorily rendered in the designation of “Five Phases.” The Five Phases are Wood (*mu* 木), Fire (*huo* 火), Earth (*tu* 土), Metal (*jin* 金), and Water (*shui* 水). While these five do, in fact, relate to actual substances as well as related phenomena and energetic qualities of the “phases,”¹⁶ the system is much more complex and dynamic than “elements” would lead one to believe. The Five Phases are the centerpiece of the so-called “system of correspondences” or “systematic correspondence.” Also referred to as “naturalistic medicine,”¹⁷ this system of correspondences consists of the following associations (phase / season / emblem / direction / life-stage / orientation / climate / orbs / spiritual dimension / color / flavor / odor / sound / beneficial emotion / injurious emotion / sense organ / grain / planet / tissue):

- (1) Wood: spring: Azure Dragon: east: birth: outward: wind: liver/gall bladder: ethereal soul (*hun* 魂) : azure: sour: rancid: shouting: humaneness: anger: eyes: wheat: Jupiter: ligaments.
- (2) Fire: summer: Vermillion Bird: south: adolescence: upward: heat: heart/small intestine: spirit (*shen* 神) : red: bitter: scorched: laughing: respect: excessive joy: tongue: beans: Mars: arteries;
- (3) Earth: late summer: —: center: adulthood: centering: dampness: spleen/stomach: intention (*yi* 意): yellow: sweet: fragrant: singing: honesty: worry: mouth: rice: Saturn: muscles;
- (4) Metal: autumn: White Tiger: west: maturation: inward: dryness: lungs/large intestine: corporeal soul (*po* 魄): white: pungent: rotten: weeping: righteousness: grief: nose: oats: Venus: skin and hair;
- (5) Water: winter: Mysterious Warrior: north: old-age: downward: cold: kidneys/bladder: vital essence (*jing* 精): black: salty: putrid: groaning: wisdom: fear: ears: millet: Mercury: bones.

The Five Phases, including their various associations, are, in turn, understood to relate to each other in patterns of dynamic interaction. The so-called “production cycle” is as follows: Wood-> Fire-> Earth-> Metal-> Water->Wood->. Then there is the “destruction cycle”: Wood-> Water-> Metal-> Earth-> Fire->Wood->. Finally, there is the “control cycle”: Wood-> Earth-> Water-> Fire-> Metal-> Wood->. In contemporary Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM),¹⁸ these sequences are most often represented as a circle (the production cycle) with a pentagram inside (the control cycle).



Generally speaking, the *Basic Questions* emphasizes a preventative approach to health and well-being, while the *Numinous Pivot* centers on an interventionist response to disease. “Sages (*shengren* 聖人) do not regulate diseases (*bing* 病) after they are already a disease. They regulate them before they arise. They do not regulate disorder (*han* 亂) after it is already disorder. They regulate it before it is disorder. This is what we mean” (ch. 2). The *Basic Questions* provides principles, guidelines, and models for living in harmony with the larger seasonal and cosmic cycles. The text is fundamentally about how to live well, which herein means a regulated and harmonious life that recognizes the larger context of one’s being. In some sense, the *Basic Questions* contains an ecological worldview, emphasizing interconnection and larger patterns of influence and dependency. The text advocates attentiveness to internal and external cycles, which affect one’s overall health, well-being, and spiritual alignment. It is delusion to believe that one is unaffected by and independent from ever-expanding spheres of relationship: familial, communal, cultural, regional, national, global, and cosmological. For example, how can lunar cycles shift oceanic tides and not influence internal human conditions? The *Basic Questions* documents the basic constituents and subtle physiology of human beings and the ways in which these are affected by larger cycles. In terms of content, we find

chapters on yin and yang, seasonal qi cycles, the organ and meridian systems, bodily substances (essence, qi, fluids, blood, etc.), disease typology and classification, etc. Developing the naturalistic view of health and well-being, the *Numinous Pivot* is a more technical manual for therapeutic responses to disease. From one perspective, the *Numinous Pivot* is about what physicians should do when people do not follow the guidelines advocated in the *Basic Questions* or when unexpected and unpreventable health problems occur. The text contains technical material on acupuncture, moxibustion, and rudimentary herbology.

Moreover, it provides information on types of needles and needling techniques. In terms of content, we find chapters on the organ and meridian systems, disease typology and classification, questions and recommendations for patients, disease transmission, bodily substances, various detrimental influences, types of needles and needling techniques, etc.

The *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions*, as contained in the Ming-dynasty (1368-1644) Daoist Canon (DZ 1018), consists of fifty chapters. This version, with various layers of commentary, is based on the editions of Wang Bing 王冰 (fl. 760) of the Tang dynasty (618-906) and of Lin Yi 林億 (fl. 1050) and Sun Guangzhong 孫光重 (fl. 1050) of the Song dynasty (Northern: 960-1126; Southern: 1127-1279). According to Unschuld (2003), much of the primary editorial work and content analysis of the received *Basic Questions* originates with Wang Bing. Wang Bing not only rearranged the structure of the text, but also added more than five thousand commentaries, quoting a total of 536 passages from thirty-eight texts. Along with editors such as Quan Yuanqi 全元起 (fl. 620) and Yang Shangshan 楊上善 (fl. 670), Wang also brought dialogical and non-dialogical discourses together or rearranged them without attempting to superimpose one coherent structure on them. By the eleventh century, when Wang Bing's edition received its final editorial form, almost all of the commentaries were discernable through the use of large characters for the main text and small characters for the commentarial layers.¹⁹ It is also interesting to note that Wang Bing, probably the most influential editor of the received text, had a

strong interest in Daoism. In his preface, Wang Bing remarks, “In my youth I longed for the Dao. I continually strove to nourish life (*yangsheng* 養生).” He also quotes extensively from the *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters) and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang), especially in his comments on the first few sections of the text (see Unschuld 2003, 48-51).

Of the seventy-nine discourses constituting the most standard edition of the *Basic Questions*, sixty-eight are structured as dialogues between Huangdi 黃帝 (Yellow Thearch) and a given adviser/teacher. In the received text, these include Qi Bo 岐伯 (60 dialogues), Lei Gong (7 dialogues), and Gui Yuqu (1 dialogue). A similar dialogic pattern is found in the *Numinous Pivot*. In addition to Qi Bo and Lei Gong, its dialogue partners include Bo Gao 伯高, Shao Shi 少師, and Shao Yu 少俞.²⁰ As the numbers indicate, Qi Bo is the central pedagogical figure in the *Basic Questions*.

In the first two chapters translated in the present handbook “Shanggu tianzhen lun” 上古天真論 (Discourse on Celestial Perfection of High Antiquity) and “Siqu diaoshen lun” 四氣調神論 (Discourse on Harmonizing Spirit with the Four Qi), the text begins by emphasizing the Yellow Thearch’s innate divine capacities and the divine context of the transmissions contained in the *Basic Questions*.

In ancient times, there was the Yellow Thearch. When born, he had spiritual numinosity (*shenling* 神靈). When an infant, he was able to speak. When a child, he was aligned and regulated. When older, he was sincere and pervasive. After he became completed (*cheng* 成), he ascended to the heavens (*dengtian* 登天). There he addressed the Celestial Master (*tianshi* 天師) saying...

This passage follows the opening statements in the “biography” of the Yellow Thearch found in the first chapter of the *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian). Here the text suggests that the Yellow Thearch had innate capacities (“spiritual numinosity”) and that he actualized (“completed”) this potential or fulfilled this life-destiny (*ming* 命). The implication is that some type of practice/realization is involved. After this training, he ascends to the heavens. Note that the text does not say anything about “death” (*si*

死) or “departing” (*qu* 去). This immediately recalls the Daoist notion of “ascending to the heavens in broad daylight,” a form of immortality relating to “deliverance from the corpse” (*shijie* 尸解). After the Yellow Thearch arrives at this celestial location, he meets the Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Master) Qi Bo. On the most basic level, this opening passage establishes the context for the received *Basic Questions*: it contains divinely revealed and transmitted guidelines that emerge in and from the heavens. For anyone familiar with the history of the Daoist tradition, the reference to the “Celestial Master” invokes the Daoist Celestial Masters movement, which originated in revelations from Laojun 老君 (Lord Lao) to Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (fl. 140 C.E.?) in 142 C.E. At the present time, due to questions concerning dating and issues of crosspollination, it is difficult to know the relationship of this passage of the *Basic Questions* to the Celestial Masters tradition. It is also difficult to know whether or not the phrase “Celestial Master” is an editorial or scribal interpolation. What is clear is that the parallels are undeniable in the above passage. Both traditions emphasize a narrative based in divine revelations to a foundering figure, who is, in turn, identified as a “listener” first and a “transmitter” second.²¹

As the titles suggest, the first two chapters of the *Basic Questions* center on one’s inherent alignment (*zheng* 正) with the Dao and the necessity of harmonizing (*he* 和/*diao* 調) and according with (*cong* 從) larger seasonal and cosmological patterns (*wen* 文/理). The first chapter emphasizes “celestial perfection” (*tianzhen* 天真), which here means both one’s original endowment from the Dao and one’s commitment to self-regulation and realization. If one were to speak about this in terms of the later Daoist tradition, one could utilize the notions of “innate nature” (*xing* 性) and “life-destiny” (*ming* 命). Daoist cultivation lineages following a “quietistic approach” recognize that one is originally and fundamentally “perfect” (*zhen* 真). By embracing simplicity (*baopu* 抱樸) and abiding in suchness (*ziran* 自然), one recognizes that dissipation and disharmony only emerge when one neglects the self-regulating and self-rectifying capacity inherent in being. Both consciousness (“innate nature”) and corporeality (“life-destiny”) are inherently well.

The second chapter focuses on “harmonizing spirit” (*diaoshen* 調神) with the “four qi” (*siqu* 四氣). Here spirit (*shen* 神) relates to the most subtle or “divine” aspect of one’s being. Spirit is associated with the heart-mind (*xin* 心) and “consciousness” in a more general sense. The heart-mind is often considered the center (*zhong* 中) or ruler (*zhu* 主 / *wang* 王) of human beings and relates to spirit, the “divine” or “sacred” capacity of human beings to connect with and manifest the Dao as Source. While the heart-mind in its habituated and desire-filled state is seen as a potential source of dissipation, in its more refined condition it contains the capacity for spiritual realization and mystical unification. Thus the *Basic Questions* provides the following instructions: “Abiding in calmness and contentment, emptiness and nonbeing, the perfect qi (*zhenqi* 真氣) is in accord. When vital essence (*jing* 精) and spirit (*shen* 神) are guarded internally (*neishou* 內守), how can disease arise?” The four qi refer to the energetic qualities and patterns of the “four seasons” (*sishi* 四時): spring, summer, autumn, and winter. While the *Basic Questions* only discusses these four time periods, one must also consider the importance of attending to the needs of the Earth phase, which is usually associated with the center and either the period between each season or “Indian Summer” (late summer). Because of its association with the center, the Earth phase is often identified with stillness and rootedness. Attentiveness to the Earth phase recognizes its various associations, including the primary importance of the spleen-stomach network for digestion. The spleen and stomach in turn relate to “postnatal” or “posterior heaven” (*houtian* 後天) qi, which is differentiated from “pre-natal” or “anterior heaven” (*xiantian* 先天) qi. The latter is the qi that one receives from the universe and one’s ancestors (prebirth influences), while the former is the qi that one receives through one’s own life (post-birth influences). In particular, air and respiration, associated with the lungs, as well as food and digestion, associated with the spleen, are the two primary sources of post-natal qi.

The first two chapters of the *Basic Questions* also emphasize conservation and harmonization. When expressed in a vague way like “be natural,” such guidelines can easily be scoffed at and dismissed out of hand or seen as

justification for some unregulated (“spontaneous” [read: egocentric and libertine]) way of life. But when considered from an energetic and “astro-geomantic” perspective and knowledge-base,²² various influences and networks become visible. In terms of the view expressed in the *Basic Questions*, the most fundamental form of harmonization begins with the body-self. One regulates one’s eating, drinking, sexual activity, and sleeping. One also becomes attuned to the internal circulation of qi, the condition and tendencies of the orbs (organs), and the overall condition of one’s being.

The next sphere of influence is one’s immediate place; this relates to relationships, communal influences, as well as locality and region. These involve the possibility of “invasion” and disruption by external pathogenic influences (EPIs). The first two chapters of the *Basic Questions* clearly understand such causes of disease (*bing* 病) as relating to one’s own way of life and naturalistic harmful influences.²³ The latter includes the so-called “six climatic influences” (*liuqi* 六氣): wind (*feng* 風), dryness (*gan* 乾), dampness (*shi* 濕), cold (*han* 寒), summer heat (*shure* 暑熱) or heat (*re* 熱), and fire (*huo* 火) (see also ch. 8; chs. 66-74). A more complete understanding also recognizes other influences, such as vacuity (*xu* 虛), noxious influences (*xie* 邪牙), injurious winds (*zeifeng* 賊風), and wind-cold (*hanfeng* 寒風). That is, specific natural phenomena have the capacity to disrupt one’s internal equilibrium and health, giving rise to disease. From a practical perspective, this means that, in addition to self-regulation and energetic strengthening, one avoids exposure to such potentially harmful influences. For instance, Daoist adepts frequently emphasize not exposing oneself to strong winds, heavy rain, and snow. If one must travel or move in such conditions, certain precautions are taken, such as covering the neck, lower back/kidneys, and shoulders with extra insulation. This involves the more general understanding that the lower body is associated yin and thus may be especially affected by cold and dampness, while the upper body is associated yang and thus may be especially affected by heat and wind.²⁴ More specifically, dampness may easily affect the feet and ankles, cold the knees and lower back, and wind the upper back, neck, and head.

In a more positive sense, one attempts to live in more nourishing environments, such as mountains, forests and near streams, and become aware of the energetic qualities of place. There are a number of dimensions to this, including “ecological” and cosmological aspects. With regard to the former, one recognizes the effects of “landscape,” the places within which one is located and the communities within which one participates. Generally speaking, “natural places” contain a cleaner and more refined energetic quality. Locations with specific attributes, mountains, streams, woods, wildlife, etc., are most beneficial for human flourishing and harmonization. More specifically, there are types of mountains, trees, birds, etc., which each have a particular quality and influence. For example, pine trees have a strong yang quality, including a powerful upward movement. For someone with a tendency towards stagnation, it may be beneficial to live among pines. However, for someone with a tendency towards liver-yang rising and headaches, pine trees can exacerbate such conditions. Cosmologically speaking, the most easily observable and recognizable patterns involve the seasons and the sun and moon cycles. Following the seasonal cycles, means becoming attentive to and resonating with their energetic qualities. Spring is associated with birth (*sheng* 生) and an outward energetic direction. Summer is associated with development (*chang* 長) and an upward energetic direction. Autumn is associated with harvesting (*shou* 收) and an inward energetic direction. Winter is associated with storing (*cang* 藏) and a downward energetic direction. Agriculturally speaking, and note that the Daoist tradition frequently emphasizes “internal cultivation” (*neixiu* 內修), spring is the time to plant seeds, summer to allow maturation, autumn to harvest, and winter to store.

By extension, as spring is associated with the Wood phase and thus with anger, such “psychological” aspects of one’s being often become manifest and more pronounced during spring. This is also true of excessive joy/hysteria in summer, grief in autumn, and fear/depression in winter. To neglect attending to these patterns is to “lose one’s time.” Thus Daoists follow the seasonal cycles both externally and internally.

Similarly, the phases of the sun and moon occupy a central place in Daoist practice that is attentive to astro-geomantic influences. For instance, one becomes aware of and connected with the lunar cycles. In particular, the new and full moon are important energetic times in Daoist cultivation and ritual. Both moments have a refined and highly beneficial frequency. When these “effulgences” or “luminosities” are infused and circulated through the body, a more cosmological being develops. The seasonal and cosmological cycles may also be mapped according to the so-called “double-hours” or time associations of the “terrestrial branches” (*dizhi* 地支). These correspond to specific hours and related yin-orbs (*zang* 藏/臟; “storehouses”) and yang-orbs (*fu* 府; “receptacles”). Chinese medicine normally begins the time cycle with the double-hour *yin* (*), the time of the lungs, as this is the beginning of “life” and the qi cycle.

Zi 子	11 pm-1 am	Gall Bladder
Chou 丑	1am-3am	Liver
*Yin 寅	3am-5am	Lungs
Mao 卯	5am-7am	Large Intestine
Chen 辰	7am-9am	Stomach
Si 巳	9am-11 am	Spleen
Wu 午	11 am-1pm	Heart
Wei 未	1pm-3pm	Small Intestine
Shen 申	3 pm-5pm	Bladder
You 酉	5pm-7pm	Kidneys
Xu 戌	7pm-9pm	Pericardium
Hai 亥	9pm-11pm	Triple Burner

During these hours and alternate poles (e.g., *mao* with *you*), one is able to observe the overall condition, whether of harmony or disruption, of a given orb. Thus, spirit (*shen* 神) disturbances, associated with the heart and with the branch *wu*, often manifest between 11pm and 1am as insomnia and restlessness. Cosmologically speaking, Daoists also observe the so-called twenty-four seasonal periods (*ershisi jie* 二十四節) and Eight Nodes (*bajie* 八節).²⁵ These periods may also be given an approximate date based on the Gregorian (Western) calendar. “Asterisks” (*) indicate the Eight Nodes.

*Lichun 立春	Spring begins	February 5
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Yushui 雨水	Rain water	February 19
Jingzhi 驚蟄	Excited insects	March 5
*Chunfen 春分	Vernal equinox	March 20
Qingming 清明	Clear brightness	April 5
Guyu 穀雨	Grain rain	April 20
*Lixia 立夏	Summer begins	May 5
Xiaoman 小滿	Slight fullness	May 21
Mangzhong 芒種	Bearded grain	June 6
*Xiazhi 夏至	Summer solstice	June 21
Xiaoshu 小暑	Slight heat	July 7
Dashu 大暑	Great heat	July 23
*Liqiu 立秋	Autumn begins	August 7
Chushu 處暑	Limit of heat	August 23
Bailu 白露	White dew	September 8
*Qiufen 秋分	Autumnal equinox	September 23
Hanlu 寒露	Cold dew	October 8
Shuangjiang 霜降	Frost descends	October 23
*Lidong 立冬	Winter begins	November 7
*Lichun 立春	Spring begins	February 5
Yushui 雨水	Rain water	February 19
Jingzhi 驚蟄	Excited insects	March 5
*Chunfen 春分	Vernal equinox	March 20
Qingming 清明	Clear brightness	April 5

While there are particular, observable qualities to each of these periods, and while each refers to an important time in a traditional agricultural cycle, the Eight Nodes receive particular emphasis in Daoist practice. The Eight Nodes refer to the beginning of the four seasons, the solstices, and the equinoxes. The energetic qualities of each of these cosmological moments is especially pronounced and influential.

While the categorization of the *Yellow Thearch's Basic Questions* as Daoist or Daoistic may be problematic in certain respects, especially with regard to its “original context of composition,” there can be little doubt that it has exerted a profound influence on the later Daoist tradition. The foundational view of health and well-being in Daoist self-cultivation lineages considered more generally parallels that expressed in the *Basic Questions* and related texts. Emphasis is placed on conservation, regulation, harmonization, and alignment.

In terms of the first chapter of the *Basic Questions*, “Celestial Perfection of High Antiquity,” this naturalistic view of health, healing, and longevity has often been misunderstood and misinterpreted. Read in a negative light, the chapter seems to express a patriarchal perspective on women’s health and beauty. In particular, the chapter appears to suggest that women’s health and physical appearance reaches its peak at 28, begins to decline at 35, and is fully exhausted at 49. This view may be interpreted as an example of “Chinese prejudices and patriarchal attitudes” towards women. However, such readings ignore the contextual meaning of the chapter. Qi Bo, the teacher of the Yellow Thearch, is here making a distinction between patterns of conservation/regulation/harmonization and of dissipation/recklessness/disruption. Emphasis is being placed on “celestial perfection” (*tianzhen* 天真) in contrast to ordinary or habituated ways of life. The former recognizes the importance of self-cultivation and maintaining a connection with the Dao as naturalistic patterning and cosmological process, while the latter ignores such an orientation. The ignore-ant fail to acknowledge the various potential sources of dissipation: self-indulgence, relational disharmony, familial and societal pressures, and larger atmospheric and climatic extremes. In terms of the passages on the “normal life-spans” of men and women, Qi Bo is here speaking about the ordinary human being, the human being engaging in patterns of dissipation and neglect. Thus, the chapter ends with the Yellow Thearch recalling the transmission that he received concerning the “perfected” (*zhenren* 真人), those beings who have consciously cultivated a harmonious way of life: “I have heard that in high antiquity there were perfected beings (*zhenren*). They carried the heavens and earth and held yin and yang in their hands. They exhaled and inhaled vital essences (*jing* 精) and qi. In seclusion, they established themselves in guarding spirit (*shoushen* 守神). In their own skin and flesh they accorded with the One. Thus they were able to attain a longevity resembling the heavens and earth, a longevity that knows no end. Such were those who lived in and through the Dao.” This section of the *Basic Questions* is one of the most eloquent expressions of an approach based on “nourishing life” (*yangsheng* 養生).

There is also some technical terminology in the *Basic Questions* that deserves mention. The first aspect requiring comment is the title of the text, *Huangdi neijing suwen* 黃帝內經素問. As mentioned, Huangdi 黃帝 refers to the Yellow Thearch, a mythological “thearch” or emperor from China’s pre-dynastic period. In its earliest usage Di 帝 refers to Shangdi 上帝 (Supreme Thearch), the high god and supreme ancestor of the Shang dynasty (ca. 1550-ca. 1030 B.C.E.). During the Zhou dynasty (ca. 1030-222 B.C.E.), the conception of Di as a personal being was becoming replaced by *tian* 天 (“heavens”) as an impersonal cosmological and naturalistic process. A thearch (the/ərĕk) is a divine ruler. Like theophany (divine manifestation) and theology (study of divinity), thearch is derived from the Greek *theos*, meaning “god” and relating to divinity more generally. I have translated Di as “Thearch” to indicate the divine connotation of the term; “cosmocrat” might be a more liberal equivalent. In the context of the *Basic Questions*, Huangdi is a “thearch,” divine sovereign, in the sense of having ascended to the heavens and, at the same time, being concerned with the harmonious governing of the country, as both terrestrial and corporeal landscape. Although *neijing* 內經 is often translated as “classic of internal medicine,” this seems to be an unjustified interpretative leap. The more literal rendering of “inner classic” suggests that it is text to be transmitted and studied *within* a given community; it requires instruction and communal interpretation to be thoroughly understood. Finally, in the translation of *suwen* 素問 as “basic questions,” “basic” is understood in the sense of fundamental and foundational (*ben* 本) (see also Unschuld 2003,8-21).

The *Basic Questions* understands the human being as consisting of various psycho-physiological dimensions. Emphasis is placed on vital essence (*jing* 精), subtle breath (*qi* 氣), and spirit (*shen* 神). In the later Daoist tradition, these three aspects of the body-self are referred to as the Three Treasures (*sanbao* 三寶). The character *jing* 米青 consists of *mi* 米 (“rice”) and *qing* 青 (“azure” but also “pure”). Etymologically, it refers to young or unprocessed rice. By extension, it refers to the essence of things. In classical Chinese medicine, vital essence is understood as a more substantial aspect of *qi*, and *qi* is understood as a more subtle aspect of vital

essence. Here vital essence relates to the actual physical foundation of health and vitality: seminal fluids (*jing* 精) in men and blood (*xue* 血) in women. The connection between vital essence and qi may also be understood etymologically: *qi* 氣 consists of *mi* 米 (“rice”) with *qi* 气 (“vapor” or “steam”). Both the characters for vital essence and qi contain the component for “rice.” As vital essence is rice in grain form, qi is rice in vapor form. Through the “cooking” (refining) of rice grain, steam is produced; through the cooking of vital essence, qi is produced. Finally, *shen* 神 relates to “spiritual dimensions” (*shi* 示), omens and similar divine manifestations, and the establishment and attendance to such a connection (*shen* 申). Spirit relates to consciousness and “divine” capacities more generally. The *Basic Questions* also identifies other “substances”: blood (*xue* 血), *ye*-fluids (*ye* 液), and *jin*-fluids (*jin* 津). In terms of classical Chinese medicine, *ye*-fluids are distributed to the yin-orbs (*zang* 藏 / 臟; storehouses) and yang-orbs (*fu* 府 / 腑; receptacles), bones and joints, brain and marrow, but do not flow with the qi and blood. They are thick and viscous, move slowly, and function as a moistening lubricant and supplement to the vital essence, especially in the deep yin areas of the body, such as the joints and marrow. *Jin*-fluids follow the circulation of the qi and blood, and assist their smooth flow, spreading throughout the surface of the body to warm and moisten the muscles, flesh and orifices, and flush the skin with nourishment. The *jin*-fluids are thin, clear and watery, and flow quickly and easily. These fluids are also related to saliva in particular. The primary emphasis in the *Basic Questions* is on conserving and storing these various psycho-physiological aspects of human being. One must do all that one can to protect against dissipation and disharmony, two of the primary causes of dis-ease.

Related to vital essence and sexual activity, the Celestial Water (*tiangui* 天癸) mentioned in the *Basic Questions* is seen as a downward infusion from the heavens, which initiates the onset of “puberty.” The descent of the Celestial Water is associated with the menses and menstruation in females, and semen and ejaculation in males. When the Celestial Water commences, the capacity for reproduction emerges. This indicates an early stage of life.

When the vital essence is exhausted, sexual reproduction is no longer possible, and one's health and well-being become imperiled. This indicates a late stage of life. Here we see the association of vital essence and sexual function with the Water phase and thus with the kidneys. Interestingly, in addition to being associated the Water phase, *gui* 癸 is the tenth celestial branch (*tiangan* 天干) and is, in turn, related to the planet Mercury.

The *Basic Questions* contains important information on the orbs (*zangfu* 臟腑; “organs”) and meridian (*mai* 脈; *jingluo* 經絡) system as well.²⁶ The yin-orbs (*zang* 藏/臟) include the liver (*gan* 肝), heart (*xin* 心), spleen (*pi* 脾), lungs (*fei* 肺), and kidneys (*shen* 腎). The yang-orbs (*fu* 府) include the gall bladder (*dan* 膽), small intestine (*xiaochang* 小腸), stomach (*wei* 胃), large intestine (*dachang* 大腸), urinary bladder (*pangguang* 膀胱), and the triple burner (*sanjiao* 三焦). In order to make the systems consistent, the pericardium (*xinbao* 心包) was added to the yin-orbs. The triple warmer, associated with three locations in the body corresponding to upper, middle, and lower, and the pericardium, a sheath around the heart, have no recognized counterparts in Western anatomy. The *zang* are associated with yin because they are said to be situated in the interior parts of the body; their primary function is storage. The *fu* are associated with yang because they are said to be situated in the exterior parts of the body; their primary function is elimination.

These orbs are, in turn, connected with various channels that circulate qi throughout the body, referred to as the meridian (*mai* 脈) system. This system consists of twelve primary meridians, those of the twelve orbs, and Eight Extraordinary Vessels (*qijing bamai* 奇經八脈). The Eight Extraordinary Vessels include the Renmai 任脈 (Conception Vessel), Dumai 督脈 (Governing Vessel), Chongmai 衝脈 (Thrusting Vessel), Daimai 帶脈 (Belt Vessel), as well as two extra meridians along the arms and two along the legs. The Renmai follows the front centerline of the body, the Dumai the back centerline, the Chongmai the middle core, and the Daimai the beltline. On a more esoteric level, the Renmai and Dumai carry and connect the qi from the twelve primary orb meridians. The Chongmai maintains a connection between the heavens and earth; this occurs through the crown-point and the perineum. Finally, the Daimai is the only horizontal

meridian, traversing all of the other meridians, and thus harmonizes the various conduits of qi circulation. The Eight Extraordinary Vessels receive special attention in Daoist internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) practice.

Although still developing, future research on embryogenesis, as understood in Chinese medicine, may provide additional insights into the importance of the Eight Extraordinary Vessels. If the Chongmai, Dumai, and Renmai are the first meridians to develop, the Daoist adept would be accessing a more primordial moment in the differentiation of the self. In the first chapter of the *Basic Questions*, the Renmai, Chongmai, and an additional meridian, the Yangming 陽明 (Yang Brightness), receive special attention. The Yangming meridian is also considered the meridian that contains the largest capacity for yang; in this sense, it is closely associated with vitality and energetic aliveness.²⁷

In chapter two, we also find references to Shaoyang 少陽 (Lesser [or Minor] Yang), Taiyang 太陽 (Greater [or Major] Yang), Shaoyin 少陰 (Lesser Yin), and Taiyin 太陰 (Greater Yin). I have amended the text to place Shaoyin in relation to autumn and Taiyin to winter, the most standard understanding. Traditionally speaking, Shaoyang (yang in ascendance) is associated with spring, Taiyang (yang at apex) with summer, Shaoyin (yin in ascendance) with autumn, and Taiyin (yin at apex) with winter. Here yang relates to movement and activity, while yin relates to stillness and rest. Thus chapter two of the *Basic Questions* contains the following: “Now then, the yin and yang of the four seasons (*sishi* 四時) is the root of the ten thousand beings. Because of this, the sages (*shengren* 聖人) nourish yang (*yangyang* 養陽) in the spring and summer, and nourish yin (*yangyin* 養陰) in the autumn and winter. Through this, they accord with the root. Thus, along with the ten thousand beings, the sages immerse themselves and drift through the gateway to birth and development.”

Finally, one may note the presence of technical terminology that parallels both classical Daoism as well as that found in the later tradition. With regard to the former, chapter one instructs, “The sages corral the will (*zhixian* 志閑) and lessen desires (*shaoyu* 少欲). They maintain a calm heart-mind (*xin'an* 心安) and are free from fear. They work hard but do not

become exhausted. They allow the qi to follow what is beneficial. Then each person follows his own aspiration (*congyu* 從欲) and everyone arrives at contentment (*deyuan* 得願). Thus, they are content with their food and satisfied with their clothing. They are joyful under any condition. Whether elevated or debased, they remain free of concern. Such people are called ‘simple’ (*pu* 樸). Through this, craving (*shi* 嗜) and desire (*yu* 欲) are unable to tax their eyes. Excess (*yin* 淫) and deviation (*xie* 邪) are unable to mislead their heart-minds.” The emphasis here on lessening desires, calming the heart-mind, being content, and returning to simplicity or suchness recall numerous passages in the “Neiye” 內業 (Inward Training) chapter of the *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan), *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters), and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang). In terms of the later Daoist tradition, it is interesting that chapter two contains the following: “Considering the qi of the heavens (*tianqi* 天氣), it is clear and still (*qingjing* 清靜), radiant and luminous (*guangming* 光明). It stores its inner power (*de* 德) without ceasing; thus, it does not descend.” Here one immediately recalls the *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 620). The connection to the *Yellow Thearch’s Basic Questions*, as well as earlier references in the *Yijing* 易經 (Classic of Changes), suggests that the Daoist adept who cultivates clarity and stillness eventually develops celestial luminosity (*tianming* 天明) and numinous pervasion (*lingtong* 靈通). He or she resides in a larger matrix of being, an ontological condition attuned to cosmological rhythms.

Various sections of the *Huangdi neijing suwen* have been translated. Chapters one to thirty-four have been translated in Ilza Veith’s *The Yellow Emperor’s Classic of Internal Medicine* (1972 [1949]). A translation of chapter one and two appears in *The Way of Heaven* (1987) by Claude Larre. *The Secret Treatise of the Spiritual Orchid* (1987) by Claude Larre and Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallee contains a translation of chapter eight. A general-audience translation has also been published by Maoshing Ni (1995), son of Ni Hua-ching, current leader of the Universal Society of the Integral Way (USIW), and president of Yosan University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Chapters one through ten have been translated by Paul

Unschuld in his *Medicine in China: A History of Ideas* (1985). This work, along with Unschuld's recent study of the *Suwen* (2003), provide important information on the *Suwen* in particular and the history of Chinese medicine more generally. Finally, there is a forthcoming three-volume translation currently in preparation by Paul Unschuld and Hermann Tessenow (see Unschuld 2003, x).

Notes

1. This “biographical information” appears in the first chapter of Sima Tan 司馬談 (d. 110 B.C.E.) and Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (145-86? B.C.E.) *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the Historian).
2. The received *Yellow Thearch* 's *Basic Questions* contains a variety of textual and historical layers. The context of composition for the various chapters is unclear at the present time. For some insights see Unschuld 2003.
3. Selections of the *Suwen* have been translated into English by Veith 1972; Larre and Rochat de la Vallee 1987; Larre 1994; Ni 1995. There is also a forthcoming three-volume translation currently in preparation by Paul Unschuld and Hermann Tessenow (see Unschuld 2003, x).
4. There are two available English translations of the *Lingshu*: Ki 1985 and Wu 1993. Chapter eight has also been translated by Larre and Rochat de la Vallee (1992).
5. Selections from the *Taisu* have been translated in Unschuld 1985, which also includes selections from a wide variety of primary Chinese medical source material (see Komjathy 2003, 13, n. 35).
6. We also have the “non-canonical” medical manuscripts found at Mawangdui 馬王堆 (near Changsha; Hunan), which are datable to at least 168 B.C.E. These manuscripts often employ a “demonological view” of disease and an “exorcistic approach” to therapy. They also provide early examples of concerns that were absorbed into the latter Daoist tradition,

such as “abstinence from grains” (*quegu* 卻穀; *bigu* 避穀). A critical study and translation of the Mawangdui medical manuscripts may be found in Harper 1998.

7. For an English translation and critical discussion of the *Nanjing* See Unschuld 1986a.

8. An English translation of the *Shanghan lun* may be found in Mitchell et al. 1999.

9. A translation of a text by this name appears in Yang 1998.

10. In the context of a classical Chinese worldview, the human being was understood to consist of two “souls,” the ethereal or cloud soul (*hun* 魂) and the corporeal or white soul (*po* 魄). The former was yang in nature and associated with the heavens and spirit, while the latter was yin in nature and associated with the earth and the body/bones. That is, an eternal soul was not an ontological given. At death, the *hun* ascended and eventually dissipated into the heavens, while the *po* descended and eventually decomposed into the earth. Thus, early Daoist views of death involved a “disintegration” model, wherein the human being was understood to disappear into (merge with) the cosmos at death.

11. Thus “ghosts” (*gui* 鬼) and “demons” (*mo* 魔) are categorized as “yin” and often considered “malevolent.” However, from a more encompassing perspective, these beings are simply unresolved or obstructed qi-patterns. They, too, have the possibility to be transformed (*bianhua* 變化).

12. This, of course, is an oversimplification. The Daoist tradition often identified certain aspects of existence, whether external or internal, as “yin” in the sense of harmful, and in turn viewed them as sources of dissipation and disruption. For example, there are the so-called Three Corpses/Deathbringers (*sanshi* 三尸) or Three Worms (*sanchong* 三蟲), often associated with the three elixir fields (*dantian* 丹田), which are said to feed on grains and deplete human vitality. Their primary motivation is to exhaust the adept and cause premature death.

13. This cosmological depiction also appears at the beginning of chapter two of the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 (Book of the Masters of Huainan).

14. In the later Daoist tradition, and in the contemporary Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) sect specifically, “three,” as the primary yang number (thus 9 [3x3] as redoubled yang), also becomes represented/manifested in the “gods” of the Sanqing 三清 (Three Purities/Three Pure Ones).

15. In the Daoist tradition, the *locus classicus* for the Three Powers is the *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31): “Heaven and earth steal from the ten thousand beings; / The ten thousand beings steal from humanity; / Humanity steals from the ten thousand beings. When the Three Bandits are correctly ordered, / The Three Powers are then at peace” (1b).

16. In the context of a qi-based worldview, centering as it does on “energy” as the fundamental aspect of all phenomena, it is problematic to speak of “substance” in any way except as conventional and contingent. Everything consists of qi in varying degrees of differentiation and substantiation. Thus, everything may be mapped along a spectrum of qi, from the most substantial to the most subtle.

17. Developing Paul Unschuld’s typology of Chinese medical history (Unschuld 1985), one may identify a number of diverse approaches to illness and their related therapeutic responses in terms of distinct models. These include ancestral medicine, demonological medicine, naturalistic medicine, moralistic medicine, and soteriological medicine. Each one of these is associated with a particular cause of illness (ancestors, demons, climatic influences, moral transgression, suffering as an ontological given) and therapeutic response (recognition/pacification, exorcism/ritualistic intervention, harmonization/purgation, confession/religious intervention, elimination/liberation). Such approaches emerged during specific moments of Chinese history and are often associated with particular religious “traditions”: Shang dynasty (ca. 1550-1030 B.C.E.)/ancestor worship, Zhou

dynasty (ca. 1030-222 B.C.E.)/*wu* 巫 (“shaman”)-oriented communities and *fangshi* 方士 (“formula master”) magico-religious practitioner) lineages, Early Han dynasty (202 B.C.E.-9 C.E.) Cosmologists and Ruists (Confucians), Later Han dynasty (25-221 C.E.)/early Daoism, and Six Dynasties (265-581)/Buddhism. Such a linear historical mapping may suggest progression, but these diverse approaches to illness continued to coexist throughout Chinese history.

18. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is the contemporary form of Chinese medicine practiced in mainland China, other East Asian countries, and the West. It was created under the direction of the Chinese Communist government and attempts to “modernize” Chinese medicine to be more consistent with modern Western (allopathic/scientific) views on disease and viable therapeutic approaches.

19. The textual history of the received *Basic Questions* is much more complicated than this brief account suggests. For those with the interest, Unschuld provides a highly detailed discussion (2003, 22-75).

20. Following Tessenow, Unschuld argues that most of the dialogues were the work of compilers who constructed them as a device to link originally separate texts. “The questions and answers put in the mouths of Huang Di and his partners allowed them [these compilers] to provide introductions and transitions from one theme to another. Only in a few instances... should the dialogue be considered a structural characteristic of the primary text” (Unschuld 2003, 8-9). Nonetheless, there can be no denying the subsequent and enduring influence of the dialogue structure.

21. Such a person is a *shengren* 聖人, most often rendered as “sage.” The character *sheng* 聖 (“sacred”) contains the radicals for “ear” (*er* 耳) and “mouth” (*kou* 口). With reference to this character, Izutsu has commented, “[The] term designates a man, endowed with an unusually keen ear, who is capable of hearing the voice of a super-natural being, god or spirit, and understands directly the will or intention of the latter” (1984, 301). The sage is the “receptive one,” the one who listens to the sonorous patterns of

the cosmos and its varied subtle layers. This capacity for listening also leads to an additional ability: one's speaking expresses such a divine connection and such expression then resonates with others.

22. To the best of my knowledge, the phrase “astro-geomancy” was first coined by Peter Nickerson (1997) in his contribution to Stephen Bokenkamp's *Early Daoist Scriptures* (1997). See pages 239-46. “Astro geomancy” as employed in the present discussion relates to the energetic qualities of place, from the perspective of both region and locality (Fengshui 風水/Geomancy) as well as space and time (astronomy/astrology).

23. According to Unschuld, “*Illness* is defined here as the primary experience, that is, the subjectively perceived feeling of indisposition that can lead to changes in behavior. *Disease*, by contrast, is a socially determined product, a conceptual reshaping of the primary experience of illness. Therefore, I characterize disease as a clearly defined deviation, within a specific set of ideas concerning the causation, character, and treatment of illness, from a normal state of human existence, however that normal state may be conceived. As a result, certain manifestations of illness, may, in different societies, be comprehended as completely different diseases” (Unschuld 1985, 19; italics in original).

24. These correspondences are, of course, contingent. The body is also mapped according to other yin-yang associations: the inside of the arms and legs as yin, the outside as yang; the front of the body as yin, the back as yang; etc.

25. “Observation” (*guan* 觀) is a fundamental practice in the Daoist tradition. Interestingly, this character consists of *jian* 見 (“to see”) with *guan* 鵠 (“egret”). The quality of observation is clear in the unmoving stance of an egret peering into water in order to perceive subtle presences. It is perhaps no coincidence that Daoist monasteries also are referred to with the character *guan* 觀 (“observatory”). On the Daoist meditation practice of internal observation (*neiguan* 內觀) see Kohn 1989.

26. In translating *zang* as “orb,” I am following Porkert 1974. Although *zang* has been translated in numerous ways (organ, viscera, depot, storehouse, etc.), orb seems the best choice as it includes the larger process-oriented qi theory. “The ambiguity of the technical ‘orb’ (*orbis*) reflects almost exactly that of the Chinese term *tsang*, which refers on the one hand to a bodily substratum with ill-defined material and spatial contours, and on the other hand to a physiological function associated with the substratum and qualitatively defined in time with precision and subtlety” (Porkert 1974, 107).

27. In Chinese medicine more generally, the Yangming is one of six combination meridians: Taiyang 太陽 (Greater Yang; small intestine and urinary bladder), Yangming 陽明 (Yang Brightness; stomach and large intestine), Shaoyang 少陽 (Lesser Yang; triple burner and gall bladder), Taiyin 太陰 (Greater Yin; spleen and lungs), Shaoyin 少陰 (Lesser Yin; heart and kidneys), and Jueyin 厥陰 (Ceasing Yin; liver and pericardium). Disease progression is also mapped along similar lines, from Taiyang to Jueyin.

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Translation (翻譯)

YELLOW THEARCH'S INNER CLASSIC: BASIC QUESTIONS

Discourse 1: Celestial Perfection of High Antiquity

In ancient times, there was the Yellow Thearch. When born, he had spiritual numinosity. When an infant, he was able to speak. When a child, he was aligned and regulated. When older, he was sincere and pervasive. After he became completed, he ascended to the heavens.

There he addressed the Celestial Master saying, “Tradition has taught that the springs and autumns of human beings in ancient times amounted to one hundred years. Even at that age, their movement and activity were not in decline. Human beings of today only live to half of one hundred years. Even at that age, their movement and activity is in decline. Is this because the time and world are different? Or is it because human beings have lost something?”

Qi Bo responded, “Human beings of ancient times understood the Dao. They patterned themselves on yin and yang and harmonized themselves through techniques and reckoning. Their eating and drinking had regulation. Their rising and retiring had constancy. They avoided being reckless and disorderly, and so did not become exhausted. Thus, their bodies and spirits were able to remain united. Reaching the culmination of the years allotted by the heavens, they departed at one hundred years of age.

“Human beings of today are not like this. They take alcohol as their drink of choice. They take recklessness as their constant. Intoxicated, they enter the bedchamber. Through desire, they drain their vital essence. Through dissipation, they scatter their perfection. They do not know how to preserve fullness. They do not know when to attend to spirit. Over-active, they strain

their heart-minds. They go against the joy of living, and their rising and retiring lack regulation. Thus, at half of one hundred years of age, they decline.

“Now then, the sages of high antiquity disseminated their teachings. Each of them taught that vacuity, noxious influences, and injurious winds should be avoided at specific times.

“Abiding in calmness and contentment, emptiness and nonbeing, the perfect qi was in accord. When vital essence and spirit are guarded internally, how can disease arise?

“Therefore, the sages corralled the will and lessened desires. They maintained a calm heart-mind and were free from fear. They worked hard but did not become exhausted. They allowed the qi to follow what was beneficial. Then each person followed his own aspiration and everyone arrived at contentment.

“Thus, they were content with their food and satisfied with their clothing. They were joyful under any condition. Whether elevated or debased, they remained free of concern. Such people were called 'simple.' Through this, craving and desire were unable to tax their eyes. Excess and deviation were unable to mislead their heart-minds.

“Whether ignorant or wise, worthy or unworthy, there was nothing and no one to fear. They were merged with the Dao. Therefore, they could live to one hundred years of age without their activity declining. With their inner power preserved, they were free from danger.”

The Thearch inquired further, “When people become advanced in years they cannot have children. Is this because their strength has been exhausted through deviance? Or is it because celestial reckoning makes it so?”

Qi Bo responded, “When a girl is seven years old, the kidney qi is full. The teeth change and the hair grows longer. At two times seven, the Celestial Water (*tiangui*) arrives and the Renmai (Conception Vessel) is connected.

The great Chongmai (Thrusting Vessel) is flourishing and the lunar affair descends for the first time. Thus she is able to have children. At three times seven, the kidney qi is even. Then the real teeth grow and physical growth ends. At four times seven, the muscles and bones are firm. The hair reaches its greatest length, and the body is flourishing and strong. At five times seven, the Yangming (Yang Brightness) vessel declines. The face begins to become wrinkled and the hair begins to fall out. At six times seven, the three yang vessels decline in the upper body. The face is completely wrinkled and the hair begins to turn white. At seven times seven, the Conception Vessel is empty. The great Thrusting Vessel also declines slightly. The Celestial Water dries up and the Terrestrial Pathway is no longer connected. Thus, the body withers and she can no longer have children.

“When a boy is eight years old, the kidney qi is full. The hair is long and the teeth change. At two times eight, the kidney qi is flourishing and the Celestial Water arrives. Vital essence and qi flow in excess. Yin and yang are in harmony. Thus he is able to have children. At three times eight, the kidney qi is even. The muscles and bones are strong and firm. Thus the real teeth grow and physical growth ends. At four times eight, the muscles and bones are powerful and flourishing. His flesh is full and firm. At five times eight, the kidney qi declines. The hair falls out and the teeth decay. At six times eight, the yangqi declines and becomes exhausted in the upper body. The face becomes wrinkled, while the hair and sideburns whiten in places. At seven times eight, the liver qi declines and the muscles can no longer move. At eight times eight, the Celestial Water dries up. The vital essence is scarce, with the storing ability of the kidneys declining. The entire body is close to the end. Then the teeth and hair fall out.

“The kidneys rule the water. They receive and store the vital essence of the five yin-orbs and six yang-orbs. As long as the five yin-orbs are flourishing, one can produce emissions. When the five yin-orbs all decline, the muscles and bones become loose and weak. The Celestial Water is exhausted. Thus the hair and sideburns whiten and the body becomes heavy. One's

movement and walking are no longer upright. One can no longer have children.”

The Thearch then asked, “There are some people well advanced in age who can still have children. Why is this?”

Qi Bo explained, “This is because celestial longevity is beyond the norm. The qi in their vessels is constantly connected, while their kidney qi is flourishing and abundant. Although this is the case, with regard to having children, men cannot exceed eight times eight years of age, while women cannot exceed seven times seven years of age. At these ages, the vital essence and qi of the heavens and earth are exhausted.”

The Thearch spoke, “Considering adepts of the Dao who are one hundred years old, are they able to have children?”

Qi Bo responded, “Adepts of the Dao are able, even when old, to preserve their physical form. Even when their bodies have achieved such longevity they are able to have children.”

The Yellow Thearch commented, “I have heard that in high antiquity there were perfected beings (*zhenren*). They carried the heavens and earth and held yin and yang in their hands. They exhaled and inhaled vital essences and qi. In seclusion, they established themselves in guarding spirit. In their own skin and flesh they accorded with the One. Thus they were able to attain a longevity resembling the heavens and earth, a longevity that knows no end. Such were those who lived in the Dao.

“In the time of middle antiquity, there were realized beings (*zhiren*). They were fertile in inner power and complete in the Dao. They harmonized with yin and yang and accorded with the four seasons. They abandoned the mundane world and separated from the ordinary. They gathered vital essence and preserved spirit. They wandered between the heavens and earth, attentively perceiving and listening to what lies beyond the eight boundaries. In this way they protected and increased their longevity and

life-destiny and became vibrant. They truly returned to the condition of perfected beings.

“In the next period there were sages (*shengren*). They dwelled in the harmony of the heavens and earth. They followed the principles of the eight winds. Exposed to the craving and desire within the mundane world, they were free of heart-minds filled with irritation and anger. Their practice contained no desire to separate from the mundane world. Complete in themselves, they had no desire to observe the ordinary. They did not exhaust their bodies through various affairs. Internally, they were free from the calamities of thinking and worrying. Through this, quiescence and contentment became their foundation. Through this, self-realization became their accomplishment. Their bodies were not exhausted; their vital essence and spirit were not dispersed. They truly could reach one hundred years of age.

“In the next period there were exalted beings (*xianren*). Through formulas they regulated the heavens and earth. They represented the sun and moon. They argued about the arrayed stars and planets. They rebelled against according with yin and yang. They divided and separated the four seasons. And yet, they progressed by following high antiquity, merging and identifying with the Dao. Even they could extend their longevity and reach an extreme age limit.

Discourse 2: Harmonizing Spirit with the Four Qi

The three months of spring are called *fachen* (sending forth and spreading out). Together the heavens and earth bring forth life, and the ten thousand beings are enlivened. One should go to sleep at nightfall and wake up at dawn. [After waking up,] walk around the courtyard with broad strides. Let down the hair and relax the body. Allow the will to be productive. Live and do not kill. Give and do not take away. Reward and do not punish. This resonates with the vernal qi. It is the way of nourishing life (*yangsheng*). To act in opposition to this injures the liver. In summer, it causes cold disturbances (*hanbian*). The ability to initiate developing is diminished.

The three months of summer are called *fanxiu* (luxuriant and flowering). The qi of the heavens and earth interact and commingle. The ten thousand beings flower and bring forth fruit. One should go to sleep at nightfall and wake up at dawn. Do not become exhausted by the sun. Allow the will to remain free from anger. Assist flowering and complete flourishing. Assist the qi in attaining circulation. It likes to move toward the exterior. This resonates with the summer qi. It is the way of nourishing growth (*yangchang*). To act in opposition to this injures the heart. In autumn, it causes intermittent fevers (*hainue*). The ability to initiate harvesting is diminished. At the beginning of winter (*dongzhi*), sickness will become more serious.

The three months of autumn are called *rongping* (enduring and regulating). The qi of the heavens becomes rushed, while the qi of the earth is clear. One should go to sleep early and wake up early. Get up when the rooster crows. Allow the will to be calm and serene. Through this, you inhibit the repressive tendency of autumn. Harvest and gather spirit and qi. Allow the qi of autumn to be regulated. Do not allow the will to scatter it towards the exterior. The lung qi becomes clear. This resonates with the autumnal qi. It is the way of nourishing harvesting (*yangshou*). To act in opposition to this injures the lungs. In winter, it causes diarrhea (*sunxie*). The ability to initiate storing is diminished.

The three months of winter are called *bicang* (accumulating and storing). Water freezes and the earth splits open. There is no influence from yang. One should go to sleep early and wake up late. You must accord with the light of the sun. Allow the will to be as if concealed, as if hidden. Let it seem as though you have only personal concerns, as though you are self-contained. Avoid coldness and seek warmth. Do not allow anything to escape through the skin, so that the qi may be urgently grasped and preserved. This resonates with the winter qi. It is the way of nourishing storing (*yangcang*). To act in opposition to this injures the kidneys. In spring, it causes impotence (*weijue*). The ability to initiate generation is diminished.

Considering the qi of the heavens, it is clear and still, radiant and luminous. It stores its inner power without ceasing; thus, it does not descend. If the heavens released their full luminosity, the sun and moon would no longer appear bright. Then deviant influences (*xie*) would injure the hollows and cavities. The yangqi would be hidden and obstructed, while the qi of the earth would simulate brightness. Clouds and mists would no longer have vital essence. Through an upward resonance, white dew (*bailu*) would not descend. Interaction and commingling would not occur. The life-destiny of the ten thousand beings would no longer be bestowed. Without this bestowal, many of the most venerated trees would perish. As soon as perverse qi (*eqi*) manifests, the winds and rains become disordered. The white dew does not descend. Then vegetation no longer flourishes. Injurious winds (*zeifeng*) would arrive in great numbers, and torrential rains would arise in great numbers. The heavens, earth, and four seasons would no longer support each other. Then the Dao would be lost equally by all. Even before being completed, everything would be disrupted and destroyed.

Only the sages (*shengren*), by according with such occurrences, would protect themselves from strange diseases. Through such beings, the ten thousand beings will not become lost, and the qi of life will not be dispersed.

Acting in opposition to the vernal qi prevents Shaoyang (Lesser Yang) from generating. The liver qi becomes injured internally.

Acting in opposition to the summer qi prevents Taiyang (Greater Yang) from developing. The heart qi becomes empty internally.

Acting in opposition to the autumnal qi prevents Shaoyin (Lesser Yin) from harvesting. The lung qi becomes scorched and congested.

Acting in opposition to the winter qi prevents Taiyin (Greater Yin) from storing. The kidney qi comes to perish alone.

Now then, the yin and yang of the four seasons is the root of the ten thousand beings. Because of this, the sages nourish yang in the spring and summer, and nourish yin in the autumn and winter. Through this, they accord with the root. Thus, along with the ten thousand beings, the sages immerse themselves and drift through the gateway to birth and development.

Acting in opposition to the root severs the foundation and ruins one's perfection. Thus, the four seasons as well as yin and yang are the beginning and end of the ten thousand beings, the root of death and life. Acting in opposition to these is a calamity that injures life. According with these ensures that disease will not arise. We refer to this as realizing the Dao.

Considering the Dao, it is what the sages practice. It is what the ignore-ant admire. One who accords with yin and yang will live. One who acts in opposition to them will die. One who accords with them is regulated. One who acts in opposition to them is disordered. To overturn accordance is to be in opposition. We refer to this as internal obstruction.

This is the reason why sages do not regulate diseases after they are already a disease. They regulate them before they arise. They do not regulate disorder after it is already disorder. They regulate it before it is disorder. This is what we mean.

Now then, waiting for disease to already develop before remedying it, and waiting for disorder to already develop before regulating it, this is like waiting until one is thirsty before digging a well, like waiting until war comes before forging weapons. Is this not too late?

Chinese Text (中文)

黃帝內經素問

上古天真論篇第一

昔在黃帝，生而神，’弱而能言，幼而徇齊，長而敦敏，成而登天。

問於天師曰：余聞上古之人，春秋皆度百歲，而動作不衰；今時之人，年半百而動作皆衰者。時世異耶？人將失之耶？

岐伯對曰：上古之人？其知道者，法於陰陽，和於術？數，食飲有節，起居有常，不妄作勞，故能形與神俱，而盡終其天年，度百歲乃去。

今時之人不然也，以酒為漿，以妄為常，醉以入房，以欲竭其精，以耗散其真，不知持滿，不時御神，務快其心，逆於生樂’起居無節，故半百而衰也。

夫上古聖人之教下也，皆謂之虛邪賊風，避之有時，恬儉虛無，真氣從之，精神內守，病安從來。

是以志閑而少欲，心安而不懼’形勞而不倦，氣從以順，各從其欲，皆得所願。故美其食，任其服，樂其俗，高下不相慕，其民故曰樸。

是以嗜欲不能勞其目，淫邪不能惑其心，愚智賢不肖，不懼于物，故合於道。

所以能年皆度百歲而動作不衰者，以其德全不危也。

帝曰：人年老而無子者，材力盡邪？將天數然也？

岐伯曰：女子七歲，腎氣盛，齒更髮長。二七而天癸至，任脈通，太沖脈盛，月事以時下，故有子。三七腎氣平均，故真牙生而長極。四七筋骨堅，髮長極，身體盛壯。五七陽明脈衰，面始焦，髮始墮。六七三陽脈衰於上，面皆焦，髮始白。七七任脈虛，太沖脈衰少，天癸竭，地道不通，故形壞而無子也。

丈夫八歲，腎氣實，髮長齒更。二八腎氣盛，天癸至，精氣溢瀉，陰陽和，故能有子。三八腎氣平均，筋骨勁強，故真牙生而長極。四八筋骨隆盛，肌肉滿壯。五八腎氣衰，髮墮齒槁。六八陽氣衰竭於上，

面焦，髮鬢頽白。七八肝氣衰，筋不能動，天癸竭，精少，腎臟衰，形體皆極。八八則齒髮去。

腎者主水，受五臟六腑之精而藏之，故五臟盛，乃能瀉。

今五臟皆衰，筋骨解墮，天癸盡矣，故髮鬢白，身體重，行步不正，而無子耳。

帝曰：有其年已老，而有子者：何也？

岐伯曰：此其天壽過度，氣脈常通，而腎氣有餘也。此雖有子，男子不過盡八八，女子不過盡七七，而天地之精氣皆竭矣。

帝曰：夫道者，年皆百歲，能有子乎？

岐伯曰：夫道者，卻老而全形，身年雖壽，能生子也。

黃帝曰：余聞上古有真人者，提挈天地，把握陰陽，呼吸精氣，獨立守神，肌肉若一，故能壽敝天地，無有終時，此其道生。

中古之時，有至人者，淳德全道，和於陰陽，調于四時，去世離俗，積精全神，游行天地之間，視聽八遠之外，此蓋益其壽命而強者也。亦歸於真人。

其次有聖人者，處天地之和，從八風之理，適嗜欲於世俗之間，無恚嗔之心，行不欲離於世，被服章，舉不欲觀於俗，外不勞形於事，內無思想之患，以恬愉為務，以自得為功，形體不敝，精神不散，亦可以百數。

其次有賢人者，法則天地，象似日月，辨列星辰，逆從陰陽，分別四時，將從上古合同於道，亦可使益壽而有極時。

四氣調神論篇第二

春三月，此謂發陳。天地俱生，萬物以榮，夜臥早起，廣步于庭，被髮緩形，以使志生，生而勿殺，予而勿奪，賞而勿罰，此春氣之應，養生之道也；逆之則傷肝，夏謂實寒變，奉長者少。

夏三月，此謂蕃秀。天地氣交，萬物華實，夜臥早起，無厭于日，使志勿怒，使華英成秀，使氣得泄，若所愛在外，此夏氣之應，養長之道也；逆之則傷心，秋謂痙瘡，奉收者少，冬至重病。

秋三月，此謂容平，天氣以急，地氣以明，早臥早起，與雞俱興，使志安寧，以緩秋刑，收斂神氣，使秋氣平，無外其志，使肺氣清，此秋氣之應，養收之道也；逆之則傷肺，冬謂飧泄，奉藏者少。

冬三月，此謂閉藏。水冰地坼，勿擾乎陽，早臥晚起，必待日光，使志若伏若匿，若有私意，若已有得，去寒就溫，無泄皮膚，使氣極奪。此冬氣之應，養藏之道也；逆之則傷腎，春謂痿厥，奉生者少。

天氣，清淨光明者也，藏德不止，故不下也。

天明則日月不明，邪害空竅。陽氣者閉塞，地氣者冒明，雲霧不精，則上應白露不下。

交通不表，萬物命故不施，不施則名木多死。惡氣不發，風雨不節，白露不下，則菀卧不榮。賊風數至，暴雨數起，天地四時不相保，與道相失，則未央絕滅。

唯聖人從之，故身無奇病，萬物不失，生氣不竭。

逆春氣則少陽不生，肝氣內變。

逆夏氣則太陽不長，心氣內洞。

逆秋氣則太陰不收，肺氣焦滿。

逆冬氣則少陰不藏，腎氣獨沉。

夫四時陰陽者，萬物之根本也。所以聖人春夏養陽，秋冬養陰，以從其根；故與萬物沉浮于生長之門，逆其根則伐其本，壞其真矣。故陰陽四時者，萬物之終始也；生死之本也；逆之則災害生，從之則苛害不起，是謂得道。道者聖人之行，愚者佩之。從陰陽則生，逆之則死；從之則治，逆之則亂。反順為逆，是謂內格。

是故聖人不治己病，治未病不治己亂，治未亂此之謂也。夫病已成而後藥之，亂已成而後治之，譬猶渴而穿井，鬥而鑄錐，不亦晚乎？

Scripture on Clarity and Stillness

清靜經

Introduction

The *Taishang laojun shuo chang qingjing miaojing* 太上老君說常清靜妙經 (Wondrous Scripture on Constant Clarity and Stillness as Spoken by the Great High Lord Lao; DZ 620), abbreviated as *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness), was a central scripture of the early Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) movement and continues to be chanted to this day as part of the Complete Perfection monastic liturgy.

This scripture is part of a group of Tang-dynasty (618-907) works that could be labeled “Clarity-and-Stillness literature.” In addition to the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness*, these include the following: *Qingjing xinjing* 清靜心經 (Heart Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 1169), *Wuchu jing* 五廚經 (Scripture on the Five Pantries; DZ 763), *Liaoxin jing* 了心經 (Scripture on Realizing the Heart-Mind; DZ 643), *Xuwu benqi jing* 虛無本起經 (Scripture on the Origin and Arisal of Emptiness and Non-being; DZ 1438), and *Xuanzhu xinjing zhu* 玄珠心鏡注 (Annotations to the Mysterious Pearl and Mind Mirror; DZ 574, 575). The Clarity-and-Stillness family of texts also relates to other Tang-dynasty works focusing on meditative practice and attaining the Dao such as the *Neiguan jing* 內觀經 (Scripture on Inner Observation; DZ 641; trl. Kohn 1989), *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論 (Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness; DZ 1036; trl. Kohn 1987b; Cleary 2000), *Dingguan jing* 定觀經 (Scripture on Concentration and Observation; DZ 400; trl. Kohn 1987b), *Cunshen lianqi ming* 存神鍊氣銘 (Inscription on Preserving Spirit and Refining Qi; DZ 834; trl. 1987b), and *Tianyinzi* 天隱子 (Book of Master Celestial Seclusion; DZ 1026; trl. Kohn 1987a; 1987b).

The *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* is a Daoist text of unknown authorship,¹ but was probably composed in the eighth century C.E. Like its

less well-known counterparts, the seventh century *Shengxuan huming jing* 昇玄護命經 (Scripture on Protecting Life and Ascending to the Mysterious; DZ 19) and the eighth century *Qingjing xinjing* 清靜心經 (Heart Scripture on Clarity and Stillness),² the scripture emerged under the influence of Buddhist insight meditation (*vipasyana*) and expresses a form of wisdom (*zhi* 慧) based on the practice of observation (*guan* 觀). Composed of verses in four- and five-character combinations (391 characters in total), the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* combines the worldview of the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power)³ with the structure (as well as some content) of the Buddhist *Panruo xinjing* 般若心經 (Heart Sutra of Perfect Wisdom; T. 250-57). The latter is a condensed version of the “perfection of wisdom” (*prajna-paramita*) sutras that was probably composed in China in the early seventh century.

The *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* became highly influential shortly after its composition. The earliest commentary on this text is attributed to the famous Daoist master Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933; DZ 759). The scripture soon rose to prominence in the Song dynasty (960-1279), when it was used by the so-called Nanzong 南宗 (Southern Lineage) of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹). In particular, Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (fl. 1209-1224) and his disciples Li Daochun 李道純 (fl. 1288-1290) and Wang Jie 王玠 (fl. 1310?), experts in both internal alchemy and thunder magic (*leifa* 雷法), wrote commentaries on the text, interpreting it symbolically and in an alchemical context (DZ 755; 757; 760). In addition, references to the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* appear throughout the writings of Wang Zhe 王嘉 (Chongyang 重陽 [Twofold Yang]; 1113-1170), the founder of Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) Daoism, and those of the early Complete Perfection adepts. The text continued to occupy a central place in the worldview and practice of Complete Perfection in later periods as well. For instance, Wang Yuanhui 王元暉, Hou Shanyuan 侯善淵, and Liu Tongwei 劉通微 all wrote commentaries on it (DZ 757; 758; 974). The scripture is still chanted in contemporary Complete Perfection monastic liturgy, as found in the *Xuanmen risong zaowan gongke jing* 玄門曰誦早晚功課至 (Liturgical Scriptures of the Mysterious Gate for Daily Morning and Evening Recitation). In addition, when I conducted fieldwork on

contemporary Daoist monasticism (2005-2006), Quanzhen Daoist monks frequently recommended the text as foundational and it was also inscribed in a variety of temples and temple compounds (e.g., Yuquan yuan 玉泉院 [Temple of the Jade Spring; Huashan]).

In terms of Daoist practice, the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* gives short verses that emphasize the need to eliminate ordinary, habituated perception and to develop clarity and stillness – the foundation for “realizing the Dao” (*dedao* 得道). The text first describes aspects or manifestations of the Dao as divisible into yin and yang, turbidity and clarity, as well as stillness and movement. Emphasis is also placed on the tendency of the heart-mind (*xin* 心) to generate desires, attachments, and entanglements. The condition of being in desire and attachment is described in terms of poison, for this leads to dissipation of qi, confusion of heart-mind (the seat of intellectual and emotional activity), and instability of spirit. The scripture in turn recommends the practice of observation as foundational: the adept must observe both internal and external worlds, including the self and heart-mind. This meditative observation results in the realization that everything is empty of self-identity. Completing this, one practices the observation of emptiness (*guankong* 觀空), culminating in a state of complete clarity and stillness or oneness with the Dao. This is the ontological condition of “constant clarity” (*changqing* 常清) and “constant stillness” (*changjing* 常靜). One enters the Dao (*rudao* 入道), awakening to the reality that this is one’s original nature (*benxing* 本性), one’s original suchness (*ziran* 自然). The latter part of the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* reverses direction and outlines the decline from pure spirit to turbidity and lostness. Confusion of heart-mind leads to disruption and destabilization of spirit. This results in attachment to and desire for external phenomena. Attachment and desire generate vexation and delusion, ending in grief and suffering. One becomes lost to the perfect Dao. Finally, the scripture concludes with an admonition for further practice, for attentive and sustained cultivation: “As for the Dao of perfect constancy, / One who awakens to it will naturally realize it. / Realizing and awakening to the Dao, / You will have constancy in clarity and stillness.”

The scripture also contains a few technical terms that deserve mention. First, clarity (*qing* 清) and stillness (*jing* 靜) are often used as paired cultivation terminology. Through the cultivation of stillness, clarity increases; through the cultivation of clarity, stillness increases. The two are inseparable. In terms of Daoist alchemy, this dual cultivation is symbolized by the trigrams Gen-mountain 艮, representing stillness, and Li-fire 離, representing clarity or illumination.⁴ Like a remote mountain summit, the Daoist adept develops emptiness that can contain all things, stillness that can encompass every sound. Like a brilliant fire, the Daoist adept develops insight that can illuminate all things, clarity that can permeate every direction. Moreover, the Daoist practitioner is often urged to develop three specific qualities: relaxation (*song* 鬆), stillness (*jing* 靜), and stability (*ding* 定). Moving through a process of relaxation, stillness occurs. As one becomes more relaxed, stillness deepens and expands. The deepening and expansion of stillness eventually becomes stabilized. This stabilization or concentration is the unshakable root of practice. Stillness and stability emerge through continual dedication to realization and awakening, through constant practice of observation (*guan* 觀). The *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* suggests that the practice of observation and the development of clarity and stillness allow one to abide in suchness (*ziran* 自然). In this ontological condition, the “Six Desires” do not arise and the “Three Poisons” are dispersed. The Six Desires (*liuyu* 六欲) are those originating from the six sense-organs (*liugen* 六根: eyes (sight), ears (sound), nose (smell), mouth (taste), body (touch), and mind (thought)). The Three Poisons (*sandu* 三毒) are greed (*tan* 貪) [*Raga*, “attachment” / “desire”], anger (*chen* 嗔) [*Dvesha*, “aversion”], and ignorance (*chi* 痴) [*Moha*, “delusion”].⁵ By freeing oneself from the Six Desires and Three Poisons, by developing clarity and stillness, one awakens to innate nature (*xing* 性). The character *xing* 性 consists of two parts: *xin* 心 (“heart-mind”) on the left side and *sheng* 生 (“to be born”) on the right side. Thus, innate nature is the heart-mind with which one is born. It is the personal half of the talisman — one’s original connection to and attunement with the Dao. To cultivate clarity and stillness is to realize innate nature. This is nourishing the root; this is returning to the Dao.

Alternative translations of the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* may be found in issue four of *The Dragon's Mouth: The Newsletter of the British Taoist Association*, in the second volume of James Legge's *The Texts of Taoism*, in Livia Kohn's *The Taoist Experience*, and in Eva Wong's *Cultivating Stillness*. The latter includes a Daoist commentary that interprets the text in terms of internal alchemy. Additional information on the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* may be found in Livia Kohn's *God of the Dao* and in the *Daoism Handbook*.

Notes

1. Although a postface attributes the text to Ge Xuan 葛玄 (fl. 200 C.E.), famous alchemist, grand-uncle of Ge Hong 葛洪 (283-343), and supposed transmitter of Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) scriptures, its reliance on Buddhist ideas suggests a date no earlier than the Tang dynasty.
2. Like the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness*, the *Shengxuan huming jing* is contained in the *Xuanmen risong zaowan gongke jing* 玄門日誦早晚功課經 (Liturgical Scriptures of the Mysterious Gate for Daily Morning and Evening Recitation) and is thus recited as part of contemporary Quanzhen liturgy.
3. The terms *qing* 清 ("clarity") and *jing* 靜 ("stillness"), sometimes rendered as "purity" and "tranquility," appear frequently in the *Daode jing* and in the "Neiye" 內業 (Inward Training) chapter of the *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan), both dating from the Warring States period (480-222 B.C.E.). For example, in chapter sixteen of the *Daode jing* we find the following passage: "Returning to the Source is called stillness (*jing* 靜); this means returning to life-destiny (*ming* 命). Returning to life-destiny is called constancy (*chang* 常); knowing constancy is called illumination (*ming* 明)." The principle of "clarity and stillness" is also found in the *Xiang'er* 想爾 commentary to the *Daode jing* and makes up one of the so-called "Nine Practices."

4. These two trigrams are paired in hexagram 22, Bi-energetic 賁, and hexagram 56, Lu-wandering 旅.

5. The character used here for “ignorance” is interesting, as it consists of the “disease” radical (*chuang* 疒) and the meaning-carrier “knowing” (*zhi* 知). That is, ignorance is a dis-ease of knowing.

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Translation (翻譯)

WONDROUS SCRIPTURE ON CONSTANT CLARITY AND STILLNESS AS SPOKEN BY THE GREAT HIGH LORD LAO

Lord Lao spoke:

The great Dao is without form.
It brings forth and nurtures heaven and earth.
The great Dao is without feelings.
It regulates the course of the sun and moon.

The great Dao is without name.
It raises and nourishes the ten thousand beings.
I do not know its name;
Forced to name it, I call it Dao.

Within the Dao, there is clarity and turbidity.
Within the Dao, there is movement and stillness.

Heaven is clarity and earth is turbidity.
Heaven is movement and earth is stillness.

The male is clarity and the female is turbidity.

The male is movement and the female is stillness.

Descending from the beginning,
Flowing toward the end,
The ten thousand beings are born.

Clarity is the source of turbidity.
Movement is the root of stillness.

If you can be constantly clear and still,
Heaven and earth completely return.

The human spirit is fond of clarity,
But the heart-mind disturbs it.
The human heart-mind is fond of stillness,
But desires meddle with it.

If you can constantly banish desires,
Then the heart-mind will become still naturally.
If you can constantly settle the heart-mind,
Then the spirit will become clear naturally.

Abiding in suchness, the Six Desires do not arise,
The Three Poisons are dispersed and destroyed.
Whoever cannot accomplish this
Has not yet settled the heart-mind;
Desires have not yet been banished.

If you can abolish desires,
Internally gazing into the heart-mind,
You see that in actuality there is no heart-mind.

Externally gazing into form,
You see that in actuality there is no form.

Remotely gazing into things,

You see that in actuality there are no things.

When you awaken to these three,
Only then do you gain a glimpse into emptiness.

Using emptiness to observe emptiness,
You see that emptiness is not empty.
When even emptiness does not exist,
You see that no-thingness is indeed no-thing.

Without even the nonexistence of no-thingness,
There is only clear and constant silence.

When silence is no longer silence,
How can desires come forth?
When desires do not come forth,
Then this is perfect stillness.

Perfect stillness resonates with things.
Perfect constancy realizes innate nature.
Constantly resonating, constantly still,
There is constant clarity, constant stillness.

When clarity and stillness are like this,
You gradually enter the perfect Dao,
When you enter the perfect Dao,
This is called “realizing the Dao.”

Although we call this “realizing the Dao,”
In truth there is nothing to attain.
Having the ability to transform all life,
This is called “realizing the Dao.”

As for one who can awaken to this,
That one is able to transmit the sacred Dao.

Lord Lao spoke:

The superior adept does not compete;
The inferior adept is fond of competing.
The highest inner power is not inner power [德, *Dé*];
The lowest inner power clings to inner power.

All clinging and attachments
Have nothing to do with the Dao and inner power.

People do not realize the perfect Dao
Because they have deviant heart-minds.
When the heart-mind is deviant,
Then the spirit becomes startled.

When the spirit is startled,
There is attachment to the ten thousand beings.
When there is attachment to the various beings,
Then coveting and searching are born.

When coveting and searching are born,
Then there are troubles and vexations.
Troubles, vexations, deviations, and illusions
Cause grief and suffering for body and heart-mind.

Then you meet with turbidity and defilements,
Currents and waves, life and death.
Continually drowning in the ocean of suffering,
You are perpetually lost to the perfect Dao.

As for the Dao of perfect constancy,
One who awakens to it will naturally realize it.
Realizing and awakening to the Dao,
You will have constancy in clarity and stillness.

Chinese Text (中文)

太上老君說常清靜妙經

老君曰：大道無形，生育天地；大道無情，運行日月；大道無名，長養萬物。吾不知其名，強名曰道。夫道者，有清有濁，有動有靜。天清地濁，天動地靜，男清女濁，男動女靜。降本流末，而生萬物。清者濁之源，靜者動之基。人能常清靜，天地悉皆歸。夫人神好清而心擾之，人心好靜而慾牽之。常能遣其欲而心自靜，澄其心而神自清，自然六欲不生，三毒消滅。所以不能者，為心未澄、慾未遣也。能遣之者，內觀於心，心無其心；外觀於形，形無其形；遠觀於物，物無其物。三者既悟，唯見於空。觀空亦空，空無所空，所空既無，無亦無，無既無，湛然常寂。寂無所寂，慾豈能生？慾既不生，即是真靜。真靜應物，真常得性。常應常靜，常清靜矣。如此清靜，漸入真道。既入真道，名為得道。雖然得道，實無所得。為化眾生，名為得道。能悟之者，可傳聖道。

老君曰：上士無爭，下士好爭；上德不德，下德執德。執著之者，不名道德。眾生所以不得真道者，為有妄心。既有妄心，即驚其神。既驚其神，即著萬物。既著萬物，即生貪求。既生貪求，即是煩惱。煩惱妄想，憂苦身心，便遭濁辱，流浪生死，常沉苦海，永失真道。真常之道，悟者自得。得悟道者，常清靜矣。

Scriptural Statutes of Lord Lao

太上老君經律

Introduction

The *Taishang laojun jinglu* 太上老君經律 (Scriptural Statutes of the Great High Lord Lao; DZ 786), abbreviated as *Laojun jinglu* 老君經律 (Scriptural Statutes of Lord Lao), contains some of the earliest principles and guidelines (precepts) for Daoist conduct and practice.

This text is part of a vast corpus of precept texts, texts whose concerns and recommendations vary depending on historical context and the Daoist sub-tradition involved.¹ The *Scriptural Statutes of Lord Lao* is a sixth-century anthology of Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) conduct guidelines. It contains the earliest extant set of precepts, which also go back to the Celestial Masters movement, the most well-known early form of organized Daoism. This tradition originated in a revelation from Laojun 老君 (Lord Lao), the “deified” form of Laozi and the embodiment of the Dao, to Zhang Daoling 張道陵 in 142 C.E. The Celestial Masters in turn became an organized “theocracy” in the land of Shu (present-day Sichuan) under the direction of Zhang Lu 張魯 (d. 216 C.E.), the third Celestial Master and grandson of Zhang Daoling. Zhang Lu is credited with authoring the *Laozi Xiang'er zhu* 老子想爾注 (Xiang'er Commentary on the *Laozi*; DH 56; S. 6825). Lost until the discovery of a manuscript copy at Dunhuang in the early twentieth century, the *Xiang'er* commentary provides some important insights into the worldview and practices of the early Celestial Masters. In addition, this commentary forms the basis of the so-called “Xiang'er Precepts,” a group of twenty-seven precepts found in the *Scriptural Statutes of Lord Lao*,² This set of guidelines for Daoist conduct also may have been compiled by Zhang Lu.

The section of the *Scriptural Statutes of Lord Lao* translated below (DZ 786, 1a-2a) includes two sets of Daoist conduct guidelines: (1) the *Daode*

zunjing Xiang'er jie 道德尊經想爾戒 (Xiang'er Precepts from the Venerable Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power); and (2) the *Daode zunjing jie* 道德尊經戒 (Precepts from the Venerable Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power). These titles can easily lead to confusion since the first group is usually referred to as the “Nine Practices” (*jiuxing* 九行) or “Nine Mandates” while the second group receives the designation of the “Xiang'er Precepts.” However, using the historical categorization of the “Nine Practices” and “Xiang'er Precepts” makes sense when one realizes that the former is derived from the *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters) or *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power) and that the latter comes from the *Xiang'er* commentary itself.³ For this reason, I have amended the translation and Chinese text to reflect this understanding.

The Nine Practices relate to nine sets of technical terms and a variety of passages in the *Daode jing*. These precepts are prescriptive in nature; they are intended to inform one's activities and to promote beneficial patterns of interaction. The Nine Practices are divided into three sets of three, according to “higher” (first three), “middle” (second three), and “lower” (final three). In some sense, each precept may be understood as a shorthand or encrypted version of relevant textual passages:

1. Practice non-action (*xing wuwei* 行無為): “I [abide in] non-action, and the people transform on their own” (ch. 57; see also ch. 3, 43, 63, and 64).⁴

2. Practice softness and weakness (*xing rouruo* 行柔弱): “Nothing in the world is softer and weaker than water. / But attacking it with hardness and strength does not defeat it. / This is because nothing can change it. / Weakness defeats strength; softness defeats hardness” (ch. 78; see also ch. 36, 40, 43, 52, 55, and 76).

3. Practice guarding the feminine (*xing shouci* 行守雌): “Know the masculine, but guard the feminine. / Become the streambed of the world” (ch. 28; see also ch. 10).

4. Practice being nameless (*xing wuming* 行無名): “The Dao is constantly nameless. / Though its simplicity may seem trivial, / The world is unable to

subjugate it” (ch. 32; see also ch. 1, 37, and 41).

5. Practice clarity and stillness (*xing qingjing* 行清靜): “Clarity and stillness are the rectification of the world” (ch. 45; see also ch. 15, 16, 39, and 57).

6. Practice being adept (*xing zhushan* 行諸善): “In dwelling, be adept at groundedness; / In [cultivating] the heart-mind, be adept at deepness; / In giving, be adept at humaneness; / In speaking, be adept at truthfulness ; / In rectifying, be adept at regulation; / In doing, be adept in abilities; / In moving, be adept at timeliness” (ch. 8).

7. Practice being desireless (*xing wuyu* 行無欲): “Thus, constantly desireless you may observe the Wondrous; / Constantly desiring you may observe the boundaries” (ch. 1; see also ch. 3, 34, and 57).

8. Practice knowing how to stop and be content (*xing zhi zhizu* 行知止足): “No calamity is greater than not knowing contentment. / No trouble is greater than desiring attainment. / Thus, the contentment of knowing contentment is constant contentment” (ch. 46; see also ch. 32, 33, and 44).

9. Practice yielding and withdrawing (*xing tuirang* 行推讓): “Thus, the sage joyfully withdraws from the world and does not become tired. / Because he does not compete, / Nothing in the world can compete with him” (ch. 66).

Many of the Nine Practices are also ways in which the Dao is described in the *Daode jing*. The Dao is nameless and desireless, and the Daoist adept, by following the above principles, can become an *embodiment* of the Dao. In addition, the Nine Practices clearly relate to two chapters of the *Daode jing* in particular; six of the nine precepts appear in chapters 10 and 57. The inclusion of chapter 10 is especially interesting as this contains some of the most technical practice descriptions in the entire text.

The Xiang'er Precepts relate to twenty-seven sets of technical terms and a variety of passages in the *Xiang'er* commentary on the *Daode jing* [老君道

德经想尔训, *Lǎojūn Dàodé Jīng Xiǎngěr Xùn*]. These precepts are proscriptive in nature; they are intended to inform one's activities and warn against harmful patterns of interaction. The Xiang'er Precepts are divided into three sets of nine, according to "higher" (first nine), "middle" (second nine), and "lower" (final nine). The Xiang'er Precepts and their related passages are as follows: (1) Bokenkamp 1997, 80; (5) Bokenkamp 1997, 88 & 99; (6) Bokenkamp 1997, 97; (7) Bokenkamp 1997, 98; (8) Bokenkamp 1997, 134; (15) Bokenkamp 1997, 122; (18) Bokenkamp 1997, 79; (20) Bokenkamp 1997, 119-20; (25) Bokenkamp 1997, 116; and (27) Bokenkamp 1997, 130. As is obvious from this list, only ten of the twenty-seven precepts have corresponding passages in the extant *Xiang'er* commentary. One explanation for this is the fragmentary nature of that commentary; the Dunhuang manuscript only contains the commentary on chapter three through chapter thirty-seven.

As mentioned, it seems that the early Celestial Masters read and recommended the Nine Practices and Xiang'er Precepts as guidelines for Daoist conduct or behavior. This has led some to refer to them as "rules" or "moral obligations." In this sense, they may be interpreted as mandates for communal participation and acceptance. This "moralistic" or "political" reading includes the possibility of abuse — individuals may be forced into pre-patterned and mandated forms of life. In contrast, an alternative reading would suggest that the Nine Practices and Xiang'er Precepts, as found in the *Scriptural Statutes of Lord Lao*, are practice guidelines.⁵ Rather than restricting their applicability to "conduct" or "behavior" one might suggest that they relate to every aspect of one's life, including physical, psychological, and energetic dimensions. They are principles and guidelines for Daoist practice. These sets of precepts relate and may be applied to any activity, situation, or interaction. They are a way of life.

I would, then, return to the Nine Practices. From my perspective, these "precepts" are just nine selections out of an almost infinite range of possibilities. An individual adherent or Daoist community identified and extracted specific terms from the *Daode jing* and simply added "practice" (*xing* 行) to them. These were the principles that they found most relevant

and beneficial to their life situations. Rather than simply elevating the selections of these individuals or groups, one may take them as pointing towards a model for dynamic interaction with the texts of the earliest Daoist “inner cultivation lineages.” For these early Daoist writings can (and perhaps should) be read as practice manuals. From the texts of the “Neiye” 內業 (Inward Training; abbr. NY) chapter of the *Guanzi* 官子 (Book of Master Guan), the *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters) or *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; abbr. DDJ), and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang; abbr. ZZ), the following practice guidelines might be reflected upon and enacted.

1. Practice completing inner power (*xing chengde* 行成德; NY ch. 2; see also ZZ ch. 5).

2. Practice cultivating the heart-mind (*xing xiuxin* 行修心; NY ch. 5 & 6).

3. Practice altering with the seasons (*xing shibian* 行時變; NY ch. 7).

4. Practice being aligned and still (*xing zhengjing* 行正靜; NY ch. 8 & 16).

5. Practice settling the heart-mind (*xing dingxin* 行定心; NY ch. 8).

6. Practice internal storing (*xing neicang* 行內藏; NY ch. 15).

7. Practice being inwardly still and outwardly reverent (*xing neijing waijing* 行內靜外敬; NY ch. 22).

8. Practice the way of eating (*xing shidao* 行食道; NY ch. 23).

9. Practice circulating qi (*xingyunqi* 行運氣; NY ch. 24).

These are nine practices from the “Neiye.”

10. Practice emptying the heart-mind and filling the belly (*xing xuxin shifu* 行虛心實服; DDJ ch. 3).

11. Practice blunting the sharpness and untying the knots (*xing cuorui jiefen* 行挫銳解紛; DDJ ch. 4 & 56).

12. Practice embracing the One (*xing baoyi* 行抱一; DDJ 10; see also NY ch. 9 & 24).⁶

13. Practice the Seven Practices (*xing qixing* 行七行; DDJ ch. 15).

14. Practice returning to the Source (*xing guigen* 行歸根; DDJ ch. 16).

15. Practice embracing simplicity (*xing baopu* 行抱朴; DDJ ch. 19).

16. Practice reducing selfishness and decreasing desire (*xing shaosi guaya* 行少私寡欲; DDJ ch. 19 & 48; see also NY ch. 26).

17. Practice not speaking (*xing buyan* 行不言; DDJ ch. 56).

18. Practice not competing (*xing buzheng* 行不爭; DDJ ch. 81).

These are nine supplemental practices from the Daode jing.

19. Practice free and easy wandering (*xing xiaoyao you* 行逍遙遊; ZZ ch. 1).

20. Practice being useless (*xing wuyong* 行無用; ZZ ch. 1 & 4).

21. Practice making all things equal (*xing qiwu* 行齊物; ZZ ch. 2).

22. Practice caring for life (*xing yangsheng* 行養生; ZZ ch. 3).

23. Practice fasting the heart-mind (*xing xinzhai* 行心齋; ZZ ch. 4).

24. Practice hiding the world in the world (*xing cang tianxia yu tianxia* 行藏天下於天下; ZZ ch. 6)

25. Practice freeing the bound (*xing xianjie* 行系系角军; ZZ ch. 6).

26. Practice sitting-in-forgetfulness (*xing zuowang* 行坐忘; ZZ ch. 6).

27. Practice being not yet emerged from the ancestral (*xing weishi chuzong* 行未始出宗; ZZ ch. 7).

These are nine practices from the Zhuangzi.

As mentioned, in the later tradition the five core precepts (*cula sila*) of Buddhism were adopted as the ethical foundation of Daoist practice. These

precepts are as follows:

1. Do not destroy life.
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not commit sexual misconduct.
4. Do not speak falsely.
5. Do not take intoxicants.

In Daoist practice, these five core precepts are sometimes associated with correlative cosmology or systematic correspondences. They receive correspondences based on the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行), namely, Wood (*mu* 木), Fire (*huo* 火), Earth (*tu* 土), Metal (*jin* 金), and Water (*shui* 水). The section below comes from the *Taishang laojun jiejing* 太上老君戒經 (Precept Scripture of the Great High Lord Lao; DZ 784, 14a-15a), a sixth-century C.E. Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) text associated with Louguan tai 樓觀臺 (Lookout Tower Monastery; Zhouzhi, Shaanxi).

The precept to abstain from killing belongs to the east [and the phase wood]. It embodies the qi of receiving life and presides over growth and nourishment. People who kill will receive corresponding injury to the liver.

The precept to abstain from stealing belongs to the north [and the phase water]. It embodies the essence of greater yin and presides over resting and storing. People who steal will receive corresponding injury to the kidneys.

The precept to abstain from sexual misconduct belongs to the west [and the phase metal]. It embodies the substance of lesser yin and presides over men and women being pure and resolute. People who engage in sexual misconduct will receive corresponding injury to the lungs.

The precept to abstain from intoxicants belongs to the south and the phase fire. It embodies the qi of greater yang and presides over completion. People who consume intoxicants will receive corresponding injury to the heart.

The precept to abstain from lying belongs to the center and the phase earth. Its virtue is honesty. People who lie receive corresponding injury to the spleen.

Within contemporary Quanzhen 全真 Daoism, specifically the Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) lineage in mainland China, three precept texts occupy a central position. In order of initiation, these include the *Chuzhen jie* 初真戒 (Precepts of Initial Perfection; JY 292; ZW 404), *Zhongji jie* 中極戒 (Precepts of Medium Ultimate; JY 293; ZW 405), and *Tianxian dajie* 天仙大戒 (Great Precepts of Celestial Immortality; JY 291; ZW 403). Here the *Precepts of Initial Perfection* is foundational. According to the text, the adept should be familiar and proficient with the five foundational precepts and the *Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇 (Chapters on Response and Retribution of the Great High [Lord Lao]) before focusing on the Ten Precepts of Initial Perfection (*chuzhen shijie* 初真十戒). The Ten Precepts of Initial Perfection are as follows:

1. Do not be disloyal, unfilial, inhumane or dishonest. Always exhaust your allegiance to your lord and family, and be sincere when relating to the myriad beings.
2. Do not secretly steal things, harbor hidden plots, or harm other beings in order to profit yourself. Always practice hidden virtue (*yinde* 隱德) and widely aid the host of living beings.
3. Do not kill or harm anything that lives in order to satisfy your own appetites. Always act with compassion and kindness to all, even insects and worms.
4. Do not be debased or deviant, squander your perfection, or defile your numinous qi. Always guard perfection and integrity, and remain without deficiencies or transgressions.
5. Do not ruin others to create gain for yourself or abandon your own flesh and bones. Always use the Dao to help other beings and make sure that the nine clan members all live in harmony.
6. Do not slander or defame the worthy and good or exhibit your talents and elevate yourself. Always praise the beauty and goodness of others and never be contentious about your own accomplishments and abilities.

7. Do not drink alcohol or eat meat in violation of the prohibitions. Always harmonize qi and innate nature, remaining attentive to clarity and emptiness.

8. Do not be greedy and acquisitive without ever being satisfied or accumulate wealth without giving some away. Always practice moderation in all things and show kindness and sympathy to the poor and destitute.

9. Do not have any relations or exchange with the unworthy or live among the confused and defiled. Always strive to control yourself, becoming perched and composed in clarity and emptiness.

10. Do not speak or laugh lightly or carelessly, increasing agitation and denigrating perfection. Always maintain seriousness and speak humble words, so that the Dao and inner power remain your primary concern. (*Chuzhen jie*; ZW 404; 9a-9b; cf. *Chuzhen shijie wen* 初真十戒文; DZ 180)

These precepts provide guidelines for monastic conduct and ethical engagement in the world. Through reflection, application, and modification, the aspiring adept may establish harmonious internal conditions and beneficial patterns of interaction. The challenge is to find the way towards transformation or, alternately, to be what one is from the beginning. The cultivation of virtue (*de* 德) manifests as a transformational energetic presence.

At the present time, translations and studies of Daoist precepts are fairly scarce. Alternative translations of the Nine Practices and Xiang'er Precepts may be found in Stephen Bokenkamp's *Early Daoist Scriptures* and Liu Ming's *The Blue Book*. The latter also includes some interesting insights concerning "orthodox Daoist practice" from the perspective of a self-identified Euro-American Daoist priest. The *Laojun shuo yibai bashi jie* 老君說一百八十戒 (180 Precepts Spoken by Lord Lao; DZ 786, 4a-12b; DH 78; P.4731 / P.4562), datable to around 350 C.E. and of unknown provenance, has been translated and studied by Barbara Hendrischke and Benjamin Penny. An alternative translation appears in Liu Ming's *The Blue Book*. Kristofer Schipper has published a study of these precepts in terms of

ecology in *Daoism and Ecology*, edited by Norman Girardot et al. The *Taishang ganying pian* has been translated by Paul Carus and D.T. Suzuki as well as by Eva Wong. The most comprehensive study, which includes translations of a variety of precept texts, is Livia Kohn's *Cosmos and Community: The Ethnical Dimension of Daoism* (2003).

Notes

1. Daoist precepts developed under the influence of Buddhist ethics (*sila*) and monastic codes (*vinaya*). Traditionally, Buddhism identifies three essential aspects of training and discipline, namely, ethical conduct (*sila*), mental discipline (*samadhi*), and insight or wisdom (*prajna*). On the most basic level, ethical conduct consists of five general precepts and five supplemental precepts. The former is required of all Buddhists (lay and monastic), while the latter is specifically for monks and nuns. The five primary precepts are as follows: (1) Do not destroy life; (2) Do not steal; (3) Do not commit sexual misconduct; (4) Do not speak falsely; and (5) Do not take intoxicants. The additional five precepts include not eating after midday, not engaging in sensual activity (dancing, singing, etc.), not wearing bodily adornments (including jewelry and perfume), not sleeping in high or luxurious places, and not accepting material wealth. An alternative list includes not discussing the faults of others, not praising oneself while abusing others, not being covetous, not indulging in anger, and not defaming the Three Treasures (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha). Generally speaking, Daoist sub-traditions emphasizing ethical conduct adopted and advocated the five basic Buddhist precepts.

2. The Xiang'er Precepts also appear in the *Yaoxiu keyi jielii chao* 要修科儀戒律鈔 (Notes on Essential Rules, Observances, Precepts, and Statutes; DZ 463) and the *Taishang jingjie* 太上經戒 (Scriptural Precepts of the Great High; DZ 787).

3. According to the *Xiang'er* commentary itself, the precepts were to be used as follows: "Whenever human beings wish to undertake some action, they should gauge it against the precepts of the Dao, considering it calmly

to determine that the principles of their action do not contravene the Dao. Only then should they gradually pursue it, so that the Dao of life does not depart from them” (Bokenkamp 1997, 100).

4. Bokenkamp translates this precept as “practice lacking falseness,” by which he means that the adept is advised to avoid contrived, artificial, or fabricated behavior. The more technical translation of *wuwei* as “non-action” encompasses this notion of effortless activity. Note also that Liu Ming, following Bokenkamp, translates the precept as “the mandate of honesty.”

5. In this respect, it is interesting that the character *lu* 律, translated as “statute” in the present context, also may refer to a series of tones in music and a poetic stanza. By extension, precept study and practice may enable one to resonate with and awaken to the Dao.

6. An alternative designation for this practice is “guarding the One” (*shouyi* 守一). The earliest occurrence of “guarding the One” is found in chapter twenty-four of *Inward Training*: “Expand your heart-mind and release it. Relax your qi and allow it to extend. When your body is calm and unmoving, guard the One (*shouyi* 守一) and discard myriad disturbances.” In *Inward Training*, guarding the One refers to a method of decreasing distractions and extrospection, of increasing stillness and introspection. It also refers to the attainment of a condition of mystical identification and unification. In the later Daoist tradition, “guarding the One” became a more general term for Daoist meditation, referring to a variety of different practices in different contexts (see Kohn 1989).

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Translation (翻譯)

SCRIPTURAL STATUTES OF THE GREAT HIGH LORD LAO

Precepts from the Venerable Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power

Practice non-action.

Practice softness and weakness.

Practice guarding the feminine. Do not initiate actions.

These are the highest three practices.

Practice being nameless.
Practice clarity and stillness.
Practice being adept.

These are the middle three practices.

Practice being desireless.
Practice knowing how to stop and be content.
Practice yielding and withdrawing.

These are the lowest three practices.

Xiang'er Precepts from the Venerable Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power

Do not delight in deviance. Delight is the same as anger.
Do not waste your vital essence or qi.
Do not injure the ruling qi (*wangqi*).
Do not eat beings that contain blood, delighting in their flavor.
Do not yearn for merit or fame.
Do not become false, pointing at forms and calling them Dao.
Do not forget the methods of the Dao.
Do not try to affect things.
Do not kill or speak about killing.

These are the highest nine precepts.

Do not study deviant texts.
Do not covet glory or strive for it strenuously.
Do not pursue fame or praise.
Do not do things pleasurable to the ears, eyes, or mouth.
Always remain modest and humble.
Do not be trivial or easily provoked.
Always be reverent in religious undertakings, have a respectful heart-mind and be without confusion.
Do not indulge yourself with fancy clothes and fine foods.
Do not overextend yourself.

These are the middle nine precepts.

Do not, if impoverished, strenuously pursue wealth and honor.

Do not commit any harmful act.

Do not establish too many taboos or avoidances.

Do not pray or make sacrifices to ghosts and spirits.

Do not strongly oppose anyone.

Do not consider yourself to be infallible.

Do not contend with others over right and wrong. When you meet with contention, withdraw from it.

Do not proclaim [yourself to be] a sage of great fame.

Do not delight in warfare.

These are the lowest nine precepts.

Chinese Text (中文)

太上老君經律

道德尊經戒

行無為，行柔弱，行守雌，勿先動。

此上最三行。

行無名，行清靜，行諸善。

此中最三行。

行無欲，行知止足，行推讓。

此下最三行。

道德尊經想爾戒

戒勿喜邪，喜與怒同。

戒勿費用精氣。

戒勿傷王氣。

戒勿食含血之物，樂其美味。
戒勿慕功名。
戒勿為偽，彼指形名道。
戒勿忘道法。
戒勿為試動。
戒勿殺，言殺。
此上最九戒。

戒勿學邪文。
戒勿貪高榮強求。
戒勿求名譽。
戒勿為耳目口所誤。
戒常當處謙下。
戒物輕躁。
戒勿事當詳，心勿惚恫。
戒勿恣身，好衣美食。
戒勿盈溢。
此中最九戒。

戒勿以貧賤強求富貴。
戒勿為諸惡。
戒勿多忌諱。
戒勿禱祀鬼神。
戒勿強梁。
戒勿自是。
戒勿與人爭曲直，得諍先避之。
戒勿稱聖名大。
戒勿樂兵。
此下最九戒。

Scripture for Daily Internal Practice

內日用經

Introduction

The *Taishang laojun nei riyong miaojing* 太上老君內日用妙經 (Wondrous Scripture for Daily Internal Practice of the Great High Lord Lao; DZ 645), abbreviated as *Nei riyong jing* 內日用經 (Scripture for Daily Internal Practice), is a Song dynasty (Northern: 960-1126; Southern: 1127-1279) text that emerged through the coupling of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) and the earlier tradition of clarity and stillness (*qingjing* 清靜).

This scripture is a later continuation and development of a group of Tang-dynasty (618-907) works that could be labeled “Clarity-and- Stillness literature.” The most well known and influential of these is the *Taishang laojun shuo chang qingjing miaojing* 太上老君說常清 靜妙經 (Wondrous Scripture on Constant Clarity and Stillness as Spoken by the Great High Lord Lao; DZ 620), abbreviated as *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness). In addition to the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness*, the other Clarity-and- Stillness texts include the following: *Qingjing xinjing* 清靜心經 (Heart Sutra on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 1169), *Wuchu jing* 五廚經 (Scripture on the Five Pantries; DZ 763), *Liaoxin jing* 了心經 (Scripture on Realizing the Heart-Mind; DZ 643), *Xuwu benqi jing* 虛 無本起經 (Scripture on the Origin and Arisal of Emptiness and Nonbeing; DZ 1438), and *Xuanzhu xinjing zhu* 玄珠心鏡注 (Annotations to the Mysterious Pearl and Mind Mirror; DZ 574, 575). The Clarity-and-Stillness family of texts also relates to other Tang-dynasty works focusing on meditative practice and attaining the Dao such as the *Neiguan jing* 內觀經 (Scripture on Inner Observation; DZ 641; trl. Kohn 1989), *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論 (Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness; DZ 1036; trl. Kohn 1987b; Cleary 2000), *Dingguan jing* 定觀經 (Scripture on Concentration and Observation; DZ 400; trl. Kohn 1987b), *Cunshen lianqi ming* 存神鍊氣銘 Inscription on

Preserving Spirit and Refining Qi; DZ 834; trl. Kohn 1987b), and *Tianyinzi* 天隱子 (Book of Master Celestial Seclusion; DZ 1026; trl. Kohn 1987a; 1987b).

The *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* is a Daoist text of unknown authorship and provenance, but probably was composed during the Southern Song period (1127-1279), most likely sometime during the thirteenth century. As the name suggests, there is another associated text – the *Taishang laojun wai riyong miaojing* 太上老君外日用妙經 (Wondrous Scripture for External Daily Practice of the Great High Lord Lao; DZ 646). The former discusses meditation, while the latter emphasizes ethical practice.¹ A scarcity of historical sources on the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice*, as well as its relative obscurity in the later Daoist tradition, makes the original context of its composition difficult to ascertain. What is clear is that the scripture embodies the cross-pollination of the Tang-dynasty Clarity-and- Stillness literature and the internal alchemy traditions of the Song dynasty. As discussed below, it also seems probable that the text was composed in a Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) religious community.

With regard to the Clarity-and-Stillness literature, the most representative and well-known work is the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness*. This text emerged under the influence of Buddhist insight meditation (*vipasyana*) and expresses a form of wisdom (*zhi* 智) based on the practice of observation (*guan* 觀). Composed of verses in four- and five-character combinations (391 characters in total), the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* combines the worldview of the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power) with the structure (as well as some content) of the Buddhist *Panruo xinjing* 般若心經 (Heart Sutra of Perfect Wisdom; T. 250-57). Similarly, the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* also employs the format of verses in four- and five-character combinations (380 characters in total).

As the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* contains much of the worldview and practice of the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness*, a thorough understanding of that text is required. The *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* gives short verses that emphasize the need to eliminate ordinary, habituated

perception and to develop clarity and stillness – the foundation for “realizing the Dao” (*dedao* 得道). The text first describes aspects or manifestations of the Dao as divisible into yin and yang, turbidity and clarity, as well as stillness and movement. Emphasis is also placed on the tendency of the heart-mind (*xin* 心) to generate desires, attachments, and entanglements. The condition of being in desire and attachment is described in terms of poison, for this leads to dissipation of qi, confusion of heart-mind (the seat of intellectual and emotional activity), and instability of spirit. The scripture in turn recommends the practice of observation as foundational: the adept must observe both internal and external worlds, including the self and heart-mind. This meditative observation results in the realization that everything is empty of self-identity. Completing this, one practices the observation of emptiness (*guankong* 觀空), culminating in a state of complete clarity and stillness or oneness with the Dao. This is the ontological condition of “constant clarity” (*changqing* 常清) and “constant stillness” (*changjing* 常靜). One enters the Dao (*rudao* 入道), awakening to the reality that this is one’s original nature (*benxing* 本生), one’s original suchness (*ziran* 自然). The latter part of the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* reverses direction and outlines the decline from pure spirit to turbidity and lostness. Confusion of heart-mind leads to disruption and destabilization of spirit. This results in attachment to and desire for external phenomena. Attachment and desire generate vexation and delusion, ending in grief and suffering. One becomes lost to the perfect Dao. Finally, the scripture concludes with an admonition for further practice, for attentive and sustained cultivation: “As for the Dao of perfect constancy, / One who awakens to it will naturally realize it. / Realizing and awakening to the Dao, / You will have constancy in clarity and stillness.”

Another influence on the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* is the tradition(s) of internal alchemy. As internal alchemy developed in the Song dynasty, it came to be discussed, retrospectively, in terms of the so-called Beizong 北宗 (Northern Lineage) and Nanzong 南宗 (Southern Lineage), an obvious borrowing from the sectarian divisions of Chan (Zen) 禪 Buddhism. The Northern Lineage refers to the Quanzhen 全真 (Complete

Perfection) movement, founded by Wang Zhe 王嘉 (Chongyang 重陽 [Redoubled Yang]; 1113-1170), while the Southern Lineage refers to a textual tradition revolving around “five patriarchs.” These include Liu Cao 劉操 (Haichan 海蟾; fl. 1031); Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (d. 1082), author of the seminal *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇 (Chapters on Awakening to Perfection; DZ 1017, j. 26-30); Shi Tai 石泰 (d. 1158); Xue Shi 薛式 (d. 1191); and Chen Nan 陳楠 (d. 1213). The well-known Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (1194-ca. 1227) was a disciple of Chen Nan. Both of these internal alchemy lineages owe a great deal to the slightly earlier textual tradition known as the “Zhong-Lu tradition,” referring to Zhongli Quan 鍾離權 (Zhengyang 正陽 [Aligned Yang]; 2nd c. C.E.) and Lu Dongbin 呂洞賓 (Chunyang 純陽 [Purified Yang]; b. 798?). The *Zhong-Lu chuandao ji* 鍾呂傳道集 (Anthology of the Transmission of the Dao from Zhong to Lu; DZ 263, j. 14-16; trl. Wong 2000) is representative of the latter.

Modifying the earlier tradition of operative or laboratory alchemy (*waidan* 外丹), internal alchemy lineages emphasized interior forms of meditation and the Tang practice of observation (*guan* 觀). Internal alchemy practice frequently involves two related processes. The first is the dual cultivation of innate nature (*xing* 性) and life-destiny (*ming* 命). In terms of “Daoist etymology,” the character for innate nature represents the heart-mind with which one is born, while the character for life-destiny depicts the two kidneys viewed from the back. In one interpretation, innate nature refers to mind or consciousness, and thus to related meditation practices; life-destiny refers to physical vitality and longevity, and thus to related “nourishing life” (*yangsheng* 養生) practices. One is advised to maintain a balanced cultivation regimen through the use of both movement (*dong* 動), physical discipline, and stillness (*jing* 靜), mental discipline. Closely associated with this is the process of alchemical transformation, which most often centers on the Three Treasures (*sanbao* 三寶), namely vital essence (*jing* 精), subtle breath (*qi* 氣), and spirit (*shen* 神). The first, preliminary stage in internal alchemy practice involves establishing the foundations (*zhuji* 築基). Adepts seek to replenish vital essence and qi through specific stretching and qi circulation practices. Internal alchemy practice proper is

often outlined as a threefold process: (1) refining vital essence and transmuting it into qi (*lianjing huaqi* 煉精化氣); (2) refining qi and transmuting it into spirit (*lianqi huashen* 煉氣化神); and (3) refining spirit and returning to emptiness (*lianshen huanxu* 煉神還虛). As the various psycho-physiological aspects are combined, an “immortal embryo” (*taixian* 胎仙) is formed. What exactly this means depends on the specific alchemy tradition and the individual practitioner. But returning to emptiness is returning to the Dao.

Returning to the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* in particular, the text finds precedents in the earlier writings of the first-generation Complete Perfection adepts. The text might, in turn, have been composed in a thirteenth-century Complete Perfection religious community. As Stephen Eskildsen has shown (2004,26-33), many of the early Complete Perfection adherents referred to an all-pervasive existential approach towards self-cultivation and spiritual realization as “daily practice” (lit., “daily application”; *riyong* 日用), translated by Eskildsen as “daily sustenance.” Throughout the early Quanzhen textual corpus, one finds references to “daily practice,” especially in the writings of Ma Danyang, Qiu Changchun, and Hao Guangning. As expressed by Ma Yu 馬鈺 (Danyang 丹陽 [Elixir Yang]; 1123- 1183), the successor of Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (1113-1170) and the second patriarch of Complete Perfection Daoism,

“Daily practice involves never deceiving or mocking heaven and earth. Always train yourself diligently. Cherish each moment. Do not pass the day in vain. Decrease your sleep, as this is something that [ordinary] people desire. You should rectify your misdeeds, but this is not [only] to be done through seated meditation. You should keep your heart-mind stable for a long time. Whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, follow the Dao. All adepts should quit giving rise to thoughts. Quickly seek out innate nature (*xing* 性) and life-destiny (*ming* 命). If you can just purify the heart-mind and abandon desires, you will become a spirit immortal (*shenxian* 神仙). Acknowledge nothing else and stop having doubts! These are proper

and true words. You only need to be constantly clear and constantly pure.” (*Danyang zhiyan* 丹陽 直言, DZ 1234, 1a)

And in the same public talk, Ma Danyang admonishes,

“Each day, you must not forget the matter of daily practice. Daily practice consists of two types: daily external practice (*wai riyong* 外用) and daily internal practice (*nei riyong* 內日用).

“Considering daily external practice, you are strongly forbidden to see the faults of others, boast about your own virtue, envy the wise and talented, give rise to worldly thoughts that are the fire of ignorance, produce feelings of superiority over the masses, [discriminate] between self and other or right and wrong, or speak of hatred and affection.

“Considering daily internal practice, quit giving rise to doubtful thoughts. Never forget the internal. Whether wandering about or standing and sitting, you should clear the heart-mind and discard desires. Have nothing that hangs on or hinders [your progress]. Do not get defiled and do not become attached. In perfect clarity and perfect purity, wander about freely according to your aspirations. Consistently throughout the day contemplate the Dao in the same way a hungry person thinks of food or a thirsty person of drink. If you become aware of the slightest imbalance, you must correct it. If you train yourself in this way, you will become a spirit immortal.”
(*Danyang zhiyan*, DZ 1234, 2a-2b)

Similarly, Hao Datong 郝大通 (Guangning 廣寧 [Expansive Tranquility]; 1140-1213) advises the aspiring Complete Perfection adept as follows:

“Daily practice involves refining qi when residing in quiet places and refining spirit when residing in noisy places. Walking, standing, sitting and lying down *are* the Dao. Throughout day and night do not get confused by what appears before you. If you sleep for one hour, this is an hour lost. Practice day by day and you will gradually gain

accomplishment. If you refrain from sleeping for one thousand days, your training will become complete. Do not believe others when they speak about ‘bones of destiny’ (*sugu* 宿骨)” (*Zhenxian yulu* 真仙語錄, DZ 1256, 1.20a)

Qiu Chuji 丘處機(Changchun 長春[Perpetual Spring]; 1148-1127), the third patriarch and national leader of the developing Quanzhen monastic order, also discusses daily internal and daily external practice, that is, personal and interpersonal cultivation, or the development of spiritual realization and ethical engagement.

“Abandon self and accord with others. Overcome yourself and return to ritual propriety. This is daily external practice. Forgive others and withstand insults. Eliminate every thought and anxiety. Allow all things to come to rest in your heartmind. This is daily internal practice....Put others first and yourself last. Use yourself as the prescription for others. This is daily external practice. Through clarity and stillness, maintain your training (*xinxing* 修行). This is daily internal practice....Constantly direct the heart-mind towards unity, purifying and cleansing yourself throughout the twelve double-hours. Each and every moment remain awake and attentive. Don’t allow your innate nature (*xing* 行) to become obscured. Make the heart-mind stable and your qi harmonious. This is real daily internal practice. Cultivate benevolence and amass virtue. Allow yourself to suffer for the benefit of others. This is real daily external practice.” (*Zhenxian yulu*, DZ 1256, 1.15b)

In these passages, one encounters the early Quanzhen adepts giving clear guidance concerning Daoist practice. One’s daily life becomes practice-realization; practice-realization becomes one’s daily life. But how does one “attain” such an existential or ontological condition? According to the above insights, one cultivates clarity and stillness as an internal condition and selflessness and virtue as an external condition. Over time, one realizes that there is nothing to attain; one merges with the Dao. However, the aspiring Daoist, the novice or initiate if you will, is left without specific

instructions on religious praxis. There are guidelines, but the methods must be supplied through one-to-one instruction from one's teacher. This is exactly where the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* proves profound. It clearly advocates meditation as the foundation of self-transformation.

Now, as for your daily internal practice,
Keep your eating and drinking regulated;
Restrain your speaking and meditate alone.
Do not allow even a single thought to arise.
The ten thousand affairs are all forgotten.

Then preserve your spirit and stabilize your intent.
The mouth and lips are mutually locked up;
The teeth should be lightly touching.
Your eyes do not see a single thing;
Your ears do not hear a single sound.
Unified, the heart-mind is guarded within.

Continually harmonize your breathing.
Subtle, still more subtle, make a light exhale.
It is as if the breath exists, as if it does not exist.
Nothing is allowed to separate or interrupt.

One must engage in consistent and prolonged meditation. This practice centers on solitary, aligned sitting. One empties the heart-mind and stills excessive intellectual and emotional activity. The stages of Daoist meditative praxis may be mapped as follows: complete agitation (*chundong* 純動), major agitation (*taidong* 太動) / minor stillness (*shaojing* 少靜), minor agitation (*shaodong* 少動) / major stillness (*taijing* 太靜), complete stillness (*chunjing* 純靜). Progress in meditation also relates to the parallel ontological conditions of turbidity (*zhuo* 濁) and clarity (*qing* 清). As agitation decreases, stillness increases; as turbidity decreases, clarity increases. Stillness emerges from clarity; clarity emerges from stillness. Through daily meditation, a condition of serenity and harmony eventually comes to prevail. One focuses on the process of emptying and stilling until

emptiness and stillness are themselves forgotten. According to the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice*, this quietistic meditation will result in complete alchemical transformation.

While the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* provides direct statements about meditation practice, it also contains some technical terminology that deserves mention. First, I have translated *cunshen* 存神 as “preserve spirit,” suggesting something like consciousness in a more cosmic sense. Such a translation captures the meaning in terms of internal alchemy. However, this phrase could as be translated as “visualize the spirits,” recalling earlier Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) visualization practices. It seems likely that each rendering is possible in different sections of the scripture. For consistency’s sake, I have maintained “preserve your spirit” or “preserve spirit” throughout.

In addition, clarity (*qing* 清) and stillness (*jing* 靜) are often used as paired cultivation terminology. Through the cultivation of stillness, clarity increases; through the cultivation of clarity, stillness increases. The two are inseparable. Moving through a process of relaxation, stillness occurs. As one becomes more relaxed, stillness deepens and expands. The deepening and expansion of stillness eventually becomes stabilized. This stabilization or concentration is the unshakable root of practice. According to the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice*, “The numinous tower of the heart emptied of all things: / This is called clarity. / Not allowing even a single thought to arise: / This is called stillness.”

We also find references to the “twelve double-hours of the day” (*shier shichen* 十二時辰). These are as follows: *zi* 子 (11pm-1am), *chou* 丑 (1am-3am), *yin* 寅 (3am-5am), *mao* 卯 (5am-7am), *chen* 辰 (7am-9am), *si* 巳 (9am-11am), *wu* 午 (11am-1pm), *wei* 未 (1pm-3pm), *shen* 申 (3pm-5pm), *you* 酉 (5pm-7pm), *xu* 戌 (7pm-9pm), and *hai* 亥 (9pm-11pm). Daoist practice frequently employs time-specific cultivation regimens. Thus, many internal alchemy texts note that the hour of *zi* (11pm-1am) is an important meditation time. The text also speaks of “Sweet Dew” (*ganjin* 甘津),² a reference to saliva produced during Daoist cultivation and one of the key

elements in the alchemical process. Here mention is made of the perfect qi (*zhenqi* 真氣), sometimes referred to as “true qi.” Perfect qi is the final stage in the process of refinement and transformation of qi and is the qi that circulates in the meridians and nourishes the orbs. The *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* also describes the process of gathering and storing qi in the elixir field (*dantian* 丹田) in terms of two metaphors: “like a child cherished in the womb” (*nanzi huaiyun* 男子懷孕) and “like a hen incubating an egg” (*ji baolun* 雞抱卵). The adept must guard and nourish the storehouses of qi.

In this context, the scripture also advises one to “observe the inner regions” (*guan neijing* 觀內境); one must become familiar with the microcosm, the inner world, of the human body. This Daoist view of the body as cosmos and landscape is emphasized when the *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* urges the adept to “enrich the country and pacify the people” (*dangguo anmin* 當國安民), an allusion to chapter ten of the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power) and the second section of the *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31). From at least as early as the second century C.E. Heshang gong 河上公 (Master Dwelling-by-the-River) commentary on the *Daode jing*, entitled the *Daode zhenjing zhu* 道德真經註 (Commentary on the Perfect Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power; DZ 682), Daoists have read various references to the “country” and the “people” as relating to the body and its constituents. The *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* continues this commentarial tradition. Additional echoes of the *Daode jing* appear throughout this scripture, from descriptions of the Daoist adept in terms of “subtle” (*wei* 微), “empty” (*xu* 虛), “nonexistent” (*wu* 無), and “wondrous” (*miao* 妙), to the famous line of the Dao from chapter one, “mysterious and again more mysterious” (*xuan zhi you xuan* 玄之又玄).

Finally, the adept is advised to nourish and protect the Seven Treasures (*qibao* 七寶), namely, vital essence, blood, qi, marrow, the brain, the kidneys, and the heart. This is a modification of the “seven treasures” of Buddhism: silver, gold, lapis lazuli, crystal, agate, rubies, and cornelian, substances that receive a variety of symbolic interpretations in the Buddhist

tradition. The *Scripture for Internal Practice* suggests that the Daoist adept should consider and reflect on the various ways in which the Seven Treasures are dispersed. These aspects of human being are not simply substances and organs; it is also important to recognize the related associations, specifically the Five Phase correspondences. For instance, becoming overly engaged in listening may be detrimental to the kidneys and dissipate vital essence. Excessive emotional and intellectual activity may injure the heart, thus leading to instability of spirit. One should in turn adopt lifeways and practices that preserve and nourish the Seven Treasures.

The *Scripture for Daily Internal Practice* has been translated by Livia Kohn in her contribution to *The Human Condition*, which also contains a translation of the *Wai riyong jing*. A brief discussion of the text appears in Livia Kohn's *God of the Dao* (1998).

Notes

1. In addition to the *Nei riyong jing* and *Wai riyong jing*, there are two other less important texts associated with this new development. These are the *Neidan jing* 內丹經 (Scripture on Internal Alchemy; DZ 643) and its offshoot, the *Neidan shouyi jing* 內丹守一經 (Scripture on Guarding the One in Internal Alchemy; DZ 644). Both provide a philosophical description of the internal alchemy process and frequently use phrases typical of Tang-dynasty observation (*guan* 觀) texts.

2. Although interesting, the use of *gan* (“gruel” / “full”) seems to be a scribal error for the more standard *gan* 甘 (“sweet”). The former may, however, have a specifically Daoist technical meaning, as it consists of “water” (*shui* 水) with “sweet” (*gan* 甘).

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Translation (翻譯)

WONDROUS SCRIPTURE FOR DAILY INTERNAL PRACTICE OF THE GREAT HIGH LORD LAO

Now, as for your daily internal practice,
Keep your eating and drinking regulated;
Restrain your speaking and meditate alone.
Do not allow even a single thought to arise.
The ten thousand affairs are all forgotten.

Then preserve your spirit and stabilize your intent.
The mouth and lips are mutually locked up;
The teeth should be lightly touching.
Your eyes do not see a single thing;
Your ears do not hear a single sound.
Unified, the heart-mind is guarded within.

Continually harmonize your breathing.
Subtle, still more subtle, make a light exhale.
It is as if the breath exists, as if it does not exist.
Nothing is allowed to separate or interrupt.

Then the fire of the heart naturally descends;

The water of the kidneys naturally ascends.
Inside your mouth, the Sweet Dew arises of itself.
The numinous Perfected support your body
And you spontaneously know the path to long life.

During the twelve double-hours of the day,
Constantly seek clarity and stillness.

The Numinous Tower of the heart emptied of all things:
This is called clarity.
Not allowing even a single thought to arise:
This is called stillness.

The body is the dwelling place of qi.
The heart is the residence of spirit.
When intent moves, spirit is agitated;
When spirit is agitated, qi is dispersed.

When intent is stable, spirit remains fixed;
When spirit remains fixed, qi gathers.
The perfect qi of the Five Phases
Then gathers together and forms a pinch of elixir.

Then naturally in the body a sound can be heard.
Walking and standing, sitting and lying down,
One constantly practices awareness.
In the body, it is as if there is the movement of wind.
In the belly, it is as if there is the sound of thunder.

Infusing and harmonizing qi fully,
A rich liquid pours into the top of the head.
When you drink from this pinch of elixir,
Your ears begin to hear the tunes of the immortals.
These are the sounds of the stringless melodies
Sounding spontaneously without any strumming,
Reverberating naturally without any drumming.

Spirit and qi then combine together
Like a child being cherished in the womb.
If you can observe the inner regions,
Spirit naturally begins to communicate.
This is the residence of emptiness and nonbeing,
The place where you can reside with the sages.

If you refine the combination through nine revolutions,
You will bind and complete the great elixir.
Spirit then spontaneously enters and leaves.
Your years will match those of heaven and earth;
Your radiance will join with that of the sun and moon.
Then you will cast off arising and passing away.
Each day that you cease to practice this,
Surely there will be injury and disease.
So, during all the twelve double-hours of the day,
Constantly seek clarity and stillness.

Qi is the mother of spirit;
Spirit is the child of qi.
Like a hen incubating an egg,
Preserve spirit and nourish qi.
Then you will never be separated from the Wondrous.

Mysterious and again more mysterious—
In the Human body there are Seven Treasures.
Use them to support the country and pacify the people.
Then your essence, qi, and blood will be abundant.

Essence is quicksilver;
Blood is yellow gold;
Qi is beautiful jade;
Marrow is quartz;
The brain is numinous sand;

The kidneys are jade rings;
And the heart is a glittering gem.

These are the Seven Treasures—
Keep them firmly in your body, never letting them disperse.
Refine them into the great medicine of life.
Then with all the ten thousand spirits,
You will ascend to the immortal realms.

Chinese Text (中文)

太上老君內日用妙經

夫曰用者，飲食則定，禁口獨坐，莫起一念。萬事俱忘，存神定意，口唇相粘，牙齒相著，眼不視物，耳不聽聲，一心內守，調息綿綿。微微輕出，似有如無，莫教間斷，自然心火下降，腎水上昇，口內泔泔自生，靈真付體，自知長生之路。十二時辰，常要清靜。靈臺無物爲之清，一念不起爲之靜。身是氣之宅，心是神之舍。意行則神行，神行則氣散。意住則神住，神住則氣聚。五行真氣，結成刀圭，自然身中有聲，行處坐臥，常覺身體如風之行，腹內如雷之鳴，沖和氣透，醍醐灌頂，自飲刀埋耳。聽仙音無弦之曲，不撫而自聲，不鼓而自鳴，神氣相結，如男子懷孕，得觀內境，神自言語。是虛無之宅，與聖同居，煉就九轉，結成大丹，神自出入，與天地齊年，日月同明，脫離生滅矣。每日休教有損失，十二時辰常要清靜。氣是神之母，神是氣之子，如雞抱卵，切要存神養氣，能無離乎妙哉。玄之又玄，人身中有七

寶事，爲富國安民，精氣血滿也。精是水銀，血是黃金，氣是美玉，髓是水晶，腦是靈砂，腎是瑋瑋，心是珊瑚，此是七寶，歸身不散，煉就大藥，萬神盡登仙矣。

Scripture on the Hidden Talisman

陰符經

Introduction

The *Huangdi yinfu jing* 黃帝陰符經 (Yellow Thearch's Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31), abbreviated as *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman), was a central scripture in early internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) traditions and in the early Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) movement. It continues to be held in high esteem within the contemporary monastic order, especially in the Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) branch of Complete Perfection.

The *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* is a Daoist text of unknown authorship, but probably was composed in the late sixth century C.E. It is composed primarily in four and five character combinations, and there are two extant versions. The shorter version consists of approximately 300 characters (323 in total), while the longer version contains approximately 400 characters (437 in total). Some believe that the shorter text is the older edition. If one drops the final/additional 113 characters, the versions are almost identical.

The contents of this scripture are often abstract and open to a wide range of interpretations. Because of this, the historical context and determining influences of its composition remain unknown. Some have suggested its emergence from a Chinese military context, while others see it as being of Daoist provenance. The proposed “militaristic” origination and interpretation comes from the fact that an early commentary, the *Huangdi yinfu jing shu* 黃帝陰符經疏 (Commentary on the Yellow Thearch's Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 110), is ascribed to Li Quan 李筌 (fl. 8th c.), a moderately successful official and military expert under the Tang dynasty (618-906). This interpretation is also based in conjecture on earlier

military uses of *yinfu* 陰符 as a designation for “hidden contracts,” or a tally used for military strategizing. Such a reading seems both historically questionable and philosophically unsatisfying. What is clear is that the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* has exerted a major influence on the Daoist tradition.

As an assumed revelation from Huangdi 黃帝, the Yellow Thearch,¹ an ancient mythological emperor and Daoist deity, who was also recognized as the ancestor of the Song dynasty (Northern: 960-1126; Southern: 1127-1279), the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* became canonical in bibliographies from the Song dynasty onwards. Along with other shorter works, this scripture came to occupy a central position in internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) traditions during the eleventh century.

In particular, the practitioners of early Quanzhen 全真 (Complete Perfection) Daoism emphasized its importance as a guide for Daoist training. Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (1113-1170), the founder of Complete Perfection, frequently cites the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman*. For example, in the *Chongyang lijiao shiwu lun* 重陽立教十五論 (Chongyang’s Fifteen Discourses for Establishing the Teachings; DZ 1233), Wang comments, “Innate nature (*xing* 性) is spirit (*shen* 神); life-destiny (*ming* 命) is subtle breath (*qi* 氣). Innate nature meeting subtle breath is like a wild bird obtaining the wind.... Thus, the *Yinfu jing* says: ‘The regulation of all beings comes from *qi*.’ This is exactly it” (DZ 1233, 4b). Similarly, in the *Chongyang quanzhen ji* 重陽全真集 (Chongyang’s Anthology of Complete Perfection; DZ 1153), Wang explains, “[To practice spiritual refinement] you must fully understand the three hundred characters of the *Yinfu jing* and read up on the five thousand words of the *Daode jing*” (13.7b-8a). Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 (Changsheng 長生 [Perpetual Life]; 1147-1203), one of the so-called Seven Perfected (*qizhen* 七真), also wrote a commentary on the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman*; this is the *Huangdi yinfu jing zhu* 黃帝陰符經注 (Commentary on the Yellow Thearch’s *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman*; DZ 122).

The importance of this text in the larger Daoist tradition is testified by the existence of twenty commentaries contained in the Ming-dynasty (1368-1644) Daoist Canon. Even the famous Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) wrote one. The *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* has also maintained its position in contemporary Complete Perfection Daoism, especially in its Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) branch. Liu Yiming 劉一明 (1734-1821), an eleventh-generation patriarch of Dragon Gate, wrote a commentary that is contained in his *Daoshu shier zhong* 道書十二種 (Twelve Daoist Books); this is the *Yinfu jing zhu* 陰符經注 (Commentary on the Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; ZW 255). The scripture remains a part of contemporary Complete Perfection, being venerated as a concise guide to Daoist practice. In addition, during my travels in China during 1997-1998, I met Li Zhongyu (born circa 1908), a Buddho-Daoist teacher and Chinese medical practitioner in Pengxian, near Chengdu (Sichuan). Well-known for his treatment of cases involving psychological/spiritual disorders, specifically “ghost possessions,” Dr. Li is also a respected teacher of Qigong and a meditation practice known as the Blue Character Method (*bizi fa* 碧字法). During one of our visits, Dr. Li emphasized the significance of the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* as an essential text for Daoist cultivation.

The text has also been inscribed at a variety of Daoist sacred sites, including Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery; Beijing) and Shangqing gong 上清宮 (Palace of Highest Clarity) at Qingcheng shan 青城山 (Green Wall Mountain; Guanxian, Sichuan). In this respect, it is also noteworthy that Ren Farong 任法融 (b. 1936), current President of the Chinese Daoist Association (Zhongguo daojiao xiehui 中國道教協會; Beijing), has written a commentary on the text entitled the *Huangdi yinfu jing shiyi* 黃帝陰符經釋義 (Explaining the Meaning of the *Huangdi yinfu jing*).

In terms of Daoist cultivation, the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* gives short verses that emphasize self-transformation, a movement from limited human consciousness to a more cosmologically oriented way of being. The Daoist practitioner must become aware of the cyclical patterns of nature, specifically the alteration of yin and yang, and the underlying mysteries of

the universe. In this context, Daoist training involves becoming aware of the heart-mind (*xin* 心): “The human heart-mind is the pivot” (1a). Purification of the heart-mind, stilling excess intellectual and emotional activity, and elimination of desires allow one to return to one’s original connection (*tong* 通) with the Dao. This requires dedication to cultivation and refinement (*xiulian* 修鍊).

The scripture also contains a few technical terms that deserve mention. Many of these are open to and have received a wide range of interpretations. First, “hidden talisman” (*yinfu* 陰符) has been translated as follows: “secret tally,” “hidden contract,” “unconscious unification,” and “joining with obscurity.” In my reading, “hidden talisman” invokes the reality that each individual has an innate connection with the Dao. This resembles a talisman in two separate pieces, which when rejoined reveal the original unity. “When heaven and humanity join and manifest, / The ten thousand transformations have a stable base” (1a). This is the “pivot” (*ji* 機) and the “extraordinary vessel” (*qiqi* 奇器) mentioned in the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman*. In this respect, the phrase *yinfu* also reminds one of the title of chapter five of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang) “Dechong fu” 德充符 (Talisman of Inner Power Complete).

The scripture also explains that the Five Thieves (*wuzei* 五賊) disrupt the human heart-mind. Under one interpretation, the Five Thieves are excitement (*xi* 希), excessive joy (*le* 樂), grief (*ai* 哀), desire (*yu* 欲), and anger (*nu* 怒). Dissipating spirit and qi, the Five Thieves destabilize the heart-mind. The scripture also explains that “The aberrations of the Nine Cavities are in the Three Essentials” (1a). The Nine Cavities (*jiuqiao* 九竅) refer to the nine openings in the body, including eyes, ears, nose, mouth, anus, and urethra. The Three Essentials (*sanyao* 三要) refer to the three orifices through which qi is most easily lost: the eyes (*mu* 目), ears (*er* 耳), and mouth (*kou* 口). Here the emphasis is on sealing the senses to prevent dissipation and distraction. This recalls the end of chapter seven of the *Zhuangzi*:

The emperor of the southern ocean was called Brevity (Shu 儻). The emperor of the northern ocean was called Suddenness (Hu 忽). The emperor of the Center was called Primordial Chaos (Hundun 混沌). Brevity and Suddenness often met in the land of Primordial Chaos, and Primordial Chaos treated them very generously. Brevity and Suddenness discussed how they could repay the inner power of Primordial Chaos. They said, ‘All people have the Seven Cavities (*qiqiao* 七竅) so that they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. Primordial Chaos alone does not have them. Let’s try boring some.’ Each day they bored another hole. On the seventh day Primordial Chaos died.”

Like the disruption caused to Hundun’s primordial unity through increasing differentiation, the sense organs may confuse and destabilize the adept’s innate nature. Differentiated and conditioned modes of being separate one from one’s original context of interrelationship.

Another technical term in the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* is the Three Powers (*sancai* 三才; lb). The Three Powers refer to heaven (*tian* 天), earth (*di* 地), and humanity (*ren* 人). “Mobilizing the army” (*yongshi* 用師; lb) may be interpreted as relating to Daoist practices of ritual invocation, where the priest calls upon “celestial troops” (*tianbing* 天兵) to intervene on his or her behalf. Here the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* suggests that self-reliance is more efficacious than spirit intervention and that the adept’s practice is so purified that such invocation becomes unnecessary.

Finally, the Three Reversals (*sanfan* 三返) refers to the practice of the “three natures returning to unity” (*sanxing guiyi* 三性歸一). This involves “reversing” the outward orientation of seeing, hearing, and thinking. These aspects of the self are turned inward, so that the Daoist adept peers into, listens to, and sinks the mind into the lower elixir field (*dantian* 丹田; lower abdomen). In sum, according to the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman*, the Daoist practitioner must decrease desires and sensual engagement in order to still and stabilize the heart-mind.

As a final set of technical details, the reader should note three things. First, the text of the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* as found in the Daoist Canon (DZ 31) has the line “Heaven gives life; heaven takes life away – /

This is the principle as the Dao” at the end of the first section. In the present translation, I leave this line in the first section of the Chinese text, but place it at the beginning of the second section of the translation. This follows the text of Liu Yiming. In addition, some character additions, also found in the text of Liu Yiming, have been considered and incorporated into my English translation. Finally, many Daoists emphasize the 300-character version of the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* as primary. As mentioned, this version is the same as the 400-character version when the final 113 characters are subtracted. In the present translation, the 300-character version would end with the line “I consider the patterns and principles of the seasons and things wisdom” (2a).

The *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* has been translated previously in James Legge’s *The Texts of Taoism: The T’ai Shang Tractate, The Writings of Chuang Tzu*. A translation of the text with Liu Yiming’s commentary appears in Thomas Cleary’s *Vitality, Energy, Spirit*. A translation and discussion of the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* in terms Chinese military thought may be found in Christopher Rand’s “Li Ch’uan and Chinese Military Thought.” Florian Reiter’s “The ‘Scripture on the Hidden Contracts’ (Yin-fu ching): A Short Survey on Facts and Findings” discusses authorship, possible dates of composition, and its place in the history of Daoism. Finally, “‘Mutual Stealing among the Three Powers’ in the *Scripture of Unconsciousness Unification*” by Zhang Jiyu and Li Yuanguo is a discussion of the text in terms of ecology.

Notes

1. A thearch (the/ərĕk) is a divine ruler. Like theophany (divine manifestation) and theology (study of divinity), thearch is derived from the Greek *theós*, meaning “god” and relating to divinity more generally. I have translated Di 帝 as “Thearch” to indicate the divine connotation of the term; “cosmocrat” might be a more liberal equivalent.

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Translation (翻譯)

YELLOW THEARCH'S SCRIPTURE ON THE HIDDEN TALISMAN

Upper Section: Extensive Way of Spirit Immortality and Embracing the One

Observe the way of heaven,
Attend to the activities of heaven,
And that is all.

Heaven has Five Thieves;
One who perceives this prospers.

The Five Thieves are in the heart-mind.
They extend to and even affect heaven.

The canopy of space and time is in your hands.
Ten thousand transformations arise from your body.

The innate nature of heaven is humanity.
The human heart-mind is the pivot.

Establishing the way of heaven
Enables the settling of humanity.

When heaven manifests killing power,
It moves the stars and shifts the constellations.
When earth manifests killing power,
Dragons and snakes continually emerge.
When humans manifest killing power,
Heaven and earth are overturned.
When heaven and humanity join and manifest,
The ten thousand transformations have a stable base.

There are ingenious and awkward natures—

They can be subdued and concealed.

The aberrations of the Nine Cavities
Are in the Three Essentials;
They can be aroused or stilled.

When fire arises from wood,
Calamity manifests with certain destruction.
When treachery arises in the country,
Time moves with certain destruction.
Those who know this practice cultivation and refinement;
We call such people sages.

**Middle Section: Extensive Method for Enriching the Country and
Pacifying the People**

Heaven gives life; heaven takes life away—
This is the principle of the Dao.

Heaven and earth steal from the ten thousand beings;
The ten thousand beings steal from humanity;
Humanity steals from the ten thousand beings.
When the Three Bandits are correctly ordered,
The Three Powers are then at peace.

Therefore it is said,
 Eat at the appropriate times,
 And the hundred bones will be regulated.
 Move in accordance with the pivot,
 And the ten thousand transformations will be at peace.

People know the spiritual as spiritual.
But they do not know the non-spiritual as spiritual.

The sun and moon have calculations;
Large and small have limitations.
The efficacy of sages is born there;

Spiritual illumination emerges there.

If you steal the pivot [of the universe],
Nothing under heaven can see you, no one can know you.
When superior people attain this,
They are able to endure impoverishment.
When inferior people attain this,
They are irreverent towards life-destiny.

Lower Section: Extensive Technique for Strengthening the Troops and Preparing for Battle

The blind are adept at hearing;
The deaf are adept at seeing.

Sever your ties to the single source of greed—
This is ten times better than mobilizing the army.

Practice the Three Reversals day and night—
This is ten thousand times better than mobilizing the army.

The heart-mind is born from things;
The heart-mind dies from things.
The pivot [of the heart-mind] is in the eyes.

Heaven is without kindness.
But from this great kindness is born.
With swift thunder and strong wind,
All beings become active.

The nature of utmost joy is to be in balance;
The nature of utmost stillness is to be pure.

Heaven is fundamentally private,
But its application is ultimately open to all.
The regulation of all beings comes from qi.

Birth is the root of death;
Death is the root of birth.
Benefit is born from harm;
Harm is born from benefit.

Ignorant people consider the patterns and principles
of heaven and earth sacred;
I consider the patterns and principles
of the seasons and beings wisdom.

People assume that being ignorant is sagely;
I assume that not being ignorant is sagely.
People believe that being strange is sagely;
I believe that not being strange is sagely.

Thus, sinking in water and entering fire
Bring destruction on oneself.

The Dao abides in suchness and stillness;
Thus, heaven, earth, and the ten thousand beings are born.
The way of heaven and earth enfolds;
Thus, yin and yang prevail.
Yin and yang form a reciprocal oscillation,
And transformations are in complete accord.

Thus, sages know that the Dao in its suchness
Cannot be avoided or abandoned.
Following it, they completely grasp it.

The Dao in utmost stillness
Cannot be recorded by laws or calculations.
Because of this, the sage has an extraordinary vessel.

This gives birth to the ten thousand forms,
The eight trigrams, the stems and branches,
The movement of spirits, and the concealment of ghosts.

The mystery of the mutual alteration of yin and yang
Clearly progresses beyond form.

Chinese Text (中文)

黃帝陰符經

神仙抱一演道章 上

觀天之道，執天之行，盡矣。天有五賊，見之者昌。五賊在心，施行於天。宇宙在乎手，萬化生乎身。天性，人也。人心，機也，立天之道，以定人也。天發殺機，移星易宿。地發殺機，龍蛇起陸。人發殺機，天地反覆。天人合發，萬變定基。性有巧拙，可以伏藏。九竅之邪，在乎三要，可以動靜。火生於木，禍發必剋。竈生於國，時動勿潰。知之修鍊，謂之聖人。天生天殺，道之理也。

富國安民演法章 中

天地，萬物之盜；萬物，人之盜；人，萬物之盜。三盜既宜，三才既安。故曰：食其時，百骸理。動其機，萬化安。人知其神而神，不知不神而所以神也。日月有數，大小有定。聖功生焉，神明出焉。其盜機也，天下莫能見，莫能知。君子得之固躬，小人得之輕命。

強兵戰勝演術章 下

瞽者善聽，聾者善視。絕利一源，用師十倍；三反晝夜，用師萬倍。心生於物，[心]死於物，[心]機在目。天之無恩而大恩生。迅雷烈風，莫不蠢然。至樂性餘，至靜性廉。天之至私，用之至公。禽之制在氣。生者，死之根；死者，生之根。恩生於害，害生於恩。愚人以天地文理聖，我以時物文理哲。人以虞愚，我以不愚聖，人以奇期其聖，我以不期[奇]其聖。故以沉水入火，自取滅亡。自然之道靜，故天地萬物生。天地之道寢，故陰陽勝。陰陽相推而變化順矣。是枚聖人知自然之道不可違，因而制之。至靜之道，律曆所不能契。爰有奇

器，是生萬象。八卦甲子，神機鬼藏。陰陽相勝之術，昭昭乎進乎象矣。

Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses

重陽立教十五論

Introduction

The *Chongyang lijiao shiwu lun* 重陽立教十五論 (Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses to Establish the Teachings; DZ 1233), abbreviated as *Chongyang shiwu lun* 重陽十五論 (Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses) or *Shiwu lun* 十五論 (Fifteen Discourses), is part of the early Quanzhen 全真 (Ch'uan-chen; Complete Perfection) textual corpus. It is generally regarded as one of the clearest and most succinct manuals on the fundamentals of early Complete Perfection practice.

Redoubled Yang 's Fifteen Discourses is attributed to Wang Zhe 王勰 (1113-1170), the founder of Complete Perfection Daoism. Wang's Daoist name (*hao* 號) was Chongyang 重陽 (Redoubled Yang); thus, within the tradition, he is referred to respectfully as either Wang Chongyang or Perfected Chongyang (Chongyang zhenren 重陽真人). According to traditional hagiographies (biographies of saints), Wang Chongyang was born in the village of Dawei in Xianyang (near present-day Xi'an, Shaanxi). After fairly unsuccessful attempts at careers in the imperial bureaucracy and then in the military, Wang Chongyang decided to abandon the mundane world. In the summer of 1159, at the age of 48. Wang is believed to have encountered two supernatural beings in a tavern in Ganhe township, near Huxian, Shaanxi. These beings are sometimes identified as Zhongli Quan 鍾離權 (Zhengyang 正陽 [Aligned Yang]; 2nd c. C.E.?) and Lu Dongbin 呂洞賓 (Chunyang 純陽 [Purified Yang]; b. 798 C.E.?). The latter is traditionally venerated as the patriarch of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) lineages more generally. In 1160, at Liquan (northwest of Xianyang), Wang Chongyang again encountered an immortal (*xian* 仙), usually identified as Lu Dongbin, who transmitted "secret formula in five sections" (*wupian*

miyu 五篇秘語; *wupian xuanmi* 五篇玄密) (*Jinlian zhengzong ji* 金蓮正宗記; DZ 173, 2.2a-3b).

Following these mystical experiences, Wang moved to the town of Nanshicun near Ganhe (Shaanxi). There he dug a grave mound called the “Tomb for Reviving the Dead” (*huo siren mu* 活死人墓 conventionally rendered as “Tomb of the Living Dead.”¹ He spent three years in this enclosure, most likely engaging in ascetic practices, practicing internal alchemy, and exchanging poetry with those who came to visit him. After this period he filled in the grave and moved to the village of Liujiang, about three miles away from Nanshicun. There Wang built a meditation hut (*an* 庵), which he lived in for the next four years. Then, in the summer of 1167, at the age of 54, he burned down the hut, dancing while he watched it burn to the ground. Thereupon, Wang Chongyang moved from Shaanxi province to Shandong province, located in northeast China.

It was in Shandong that Wang began to attract his most important disciples. One of his earliest disciples was Ma Yu 馬鈺 (Danyang 丹陽 [Elixir Yang]; 1123-1183). At Ma Danyang’s residence in Ninghai (Shandong), Wang built another meditation hut, which he called the Quanzhen an 全真庵 (Hermitage of Complete Perfection). The name of this hermitage is the earliest usage of the phrase *quanzhen*, and it was within this and similar meditation enclosures (*huandu* 環堵 ; *huanqiang* 環牆) that Wang and early Complete Perfection adepts engaged in ascetic and alchemical training, commonly referred to as “cultivating perfection” (*xiuzhen* 修真). Thus, “complete perfection” may be understood as a reference to the completion of alchemical practice, resulting in alchemical transformation, a shift in ontological condition from ordinary human being (*ren* 人) to “immortal” or “transcendent” (*xian* 仙). Extant hagiographies inform us that many people gathered around Wang while he was living in Ninghai, but his increasing demands for ascetic discipline and religious commitment, including the requirement of sexual abstinence, alienated many potential adherents. Nonetheless, with the assistance of both formal disciples and lay patrons, Wang’s emerging religious movement began to establish meeting halls or associations (*hui* 會 / *she* 社 / *tang* 堂), sometimes translated as

“congregations.” Some of these included the following, all located in Shandong: Jinlian hui 金蓮會 (Association of the Golden Lotus), Pingdeng hui 平等會 (Association of Equal Rank), Qibao hui 七寶會 (Association of the Seven Treasures), Sanguang hui 三光會 (Association of the Three Radiances), and Yuhua hui 玉華會 (Association of Jade Florescence). It is unclear who initiated such establishments, how many people participated, what types of activities occurred, and what, if any, lasting influence they had on the later development of Complete Perfection as a formal monastic order. However, these meeting halls did provide a communal context for the early Complete Perfection adepts.

The Complete Perfection tradition identifies seven early adepts as the most important, and at times the only, disciples of Wang Chongyang.² These seven disciples are known as the Seven Perfected (*qizhen* 七真). The so-called Seven Perfected are as follows:

1. Ma Yu 馬鈺 (1123-1184), *zi* Xuanbao 玄寶 (Mysterious Treasure), *hao* Danyang 丹陽 (Elixir Yang).
2. Tan Chuduan 譚處端 (1123-1185), *zi* Tongzheng 通正 (Pervasive Alignment), *hao* Changzhen 長真 (Perpetual Perfection).
3. Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 (1147-1203), *zi* Tongmiao 通妙 (Pervasive Subtlety), *hao* Changsheng 長生 (Perpetual Life).
4. Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (1148-1127), *zi* Tongmi 通密 (Pervasive Obscurity), *hao* Changchun 長春 (Perpetual Spring).
5. Wang Chuyi 王處一 (1142-1217), *zi* Yuyang 玉陽 (Jade Yang), *hao* Sanyang 傘陽 (Shaded Yang).
6. Hao Datong 郝大通 (1140-1213), *zi* Taigu 太古 (Great Antiquity), *hao* Guangning 廣寧 (Expansive Tranquility).
7. Sun Buer 孫不二 (1119-1183), *hao* Qingjing 清靜 (Clear Stillness).³

Through the work of these seven early practitioners, as well as the support of their own disciples, Complete Perfection began the transition from a grass-roots religious community to one of the most widespread religious

institutions in northern China. After the death of Wang Chongyang in 1170, leadership of the movement passed to Ma Danyang, Wang's closest friend and most trusted disciple. Ma Danyang, with the assistance of the other early adepts, was instrumental in transforming the movement from a small community to a regional religious movement. He engaged in extensive missionary activity, especially in Shaanxi province, where he had contact with over 700 people of various socio-economic backgrounds. After the death of Ma, Qiu Changchun assumed leadership. It was under the direction of Qiu that Complete Perfection moved from regional movement to national monastic institution. This transformation of the tradition was greatly facilitated by Qiu's meeting with Chinggis Qan (Genghis Khan; r. 1206-1227) in 1220, during which Complete Perfection became imperially recognized and given *de facto* control of northern China's religious communities. This led to followers of Complete Perfection building new monasteries and seizing control of many existing Chan 禪 (Zen) Buddhist monasteries. Tax-exempt status also attracted many individuals, who sought to avoid the financial oppression of supporting Mongol aspirations for world domination.

Drawing upon the work of Russell Kirkland and Livia Kohn on the Daoist tradition more generally (Kirkland 1997; 2002; Kohn 1998; 2000b), the history of the Complete Perfection movement may, in turn, be divided into at least five major phases: (1) formative, (2) incipient organized, (3) organized, (4) resurgent, and (5) modern. The formative phase includes the seclusion and spiritual determination of Wang Chongyang, the founder, and his subsequent attempts to communicate his vision of religious vocation to others. As certain individuals became convinced of its relevance and efficacy, a group of dedicated disciples began forming around Wang Zhe, the so-called Seven Perfected in particular. This marks the beginning of the "incipient organized" phase, and it included the establishment of the various meeting halls or associations. One may say that Complete Perfection as an identifiable religious movement, with a distinct sense of religious identity (see Kohn and Roth 2002; Goossaert and Katz 2001), commences at this point. The "organized" phase involved the expansion of Complete

Perfection throughout different geographical regions in northern China, especially under the leadership of Ma Danyang and Qiu Changchun; this simultaneously included both a more inclusive stance concerning the requirement of an “ascetic” or “renunciant orientation” and a commitment to establishing and / or inhabiting formal monasteries. That is, at this point there was both a recognition of lay participation and a movement toward monasticism.

In the organized phase, Complete Perfection leaders and proponents also had increasing contact with imperial households and courts, culminating in Qiu Changchun’s meeting with Chinggis Qan (Genghis Khan; ca. 1162-1227; r. 1206-1227) in 1222 and the Qan’s granting Qiu *de facto* control of the whole of north China’s organized religious communities. Complete Perfection continued to gain power and increase in membership during the years of 1222 to 1280, partially due to its attraction as the primary tax-exempt religious institution during the Mongol-Yuan (1260-1368). However, much like the Mongolian control of China more generally, Complete Perfection’s superior status was fairly short-lived. Under Qubilai Qan (Khubilai Khan; Emperor Shizu; 1215-1294; r. 1260-1294), a number of anti-Daoist edicts were issued, culminating in the burning and destruction of Daoist texts, textual collections, and printing blocks in 1281. In my interpretation of Complete Perfection history, this marks the end of the organized phase.⁴

Although Complete Perfection continued to exist, its place of supremacy was replaced by the Zhengyi 正一 (Orthodox Unity) tradition, associated with the earlier Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) movement, during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). The period of “resurgence” begins in the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), when the Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) branch of Complete Perfection was formally established by Wang Changyue 王常月 (Kunyang 崑陽; 1622-1680).⁵ During the resurgent phase, we encounter such influential figures as Min Yide 閔一得 (Lanyun 懶雲 [Lazy Cloud];

1758-1836) and Liu Yiming 劉一明 (Wuyuan 悟元 [Awakening to the Origin]; 1734-1821).⁶

The “modern” phase in turn parallels the end of Chinese imperial rule in 1911. It includes the near-catastrophic devastation inflicted on the tradition during the so-called Cultural Revolution (1967-1977), also known as the Ten Years of Chaos. However, Complete Perfection’s place in the modern world, primarily through the recognition of the Dragon Gate branch by the Chinese Communist government as the official form of organized Daoism in mainland China, has become more stable since the loosening of governmental control since 1978 (see Pas 1989). Complete Perfection temples and monasteries are currently being built or restored throughout mainland China. The current headquarters of Dragon Gate is Baiyun guan 白雲觀 (White Cloud Monastery) in Beijing, which also houses the Chinese Daoist Association (Zhongguo daojiao xiehui 中國道教協會).⁷ In addition, the Dragon Gate lineage, at least in name, has spread to not only Hong Kong and Taiwan, but also Canada, England, Italy, and the United States.

With regard to early Complete Perfection beliefs and practices, Wang Chongyang and his immediate disciples clearly advocated and followed a religious way of life centering on self-cultivation, and on ascetic and alchemical practice in particular. For instance, we know that Wang Chongyang and his early disciples often spent extended periods in seclusion. Many of the early Complete Perfection adepts engaged in solitary training in meditation enclosures (*huandu* 環堵; *huanqiang* 環牆), which were rooms walled in on all sides.⁸ The adept walled himself or herself in for a fixed period of time, in order to meditate continuously and to complete a given stage of internal alchemy practice. Wang Chongyang popularized the 3-year (1000-day) and 100-day enclosure, and Ma Danyang, who practiced both kinds of retreat, built *huandu* in various places along his travels. As mentioned, Wang Chongyang spent extended periods of time in seclusion in various hermitages (*an* 庵), which may have been a precursor

to or substitute for the meditation enclosure.⁹ The commitment to solitary ascetic training was a hallmark of early Complete Perfection.

Returning to the life of Wang Chongyang, there are a variety of texts in the Ming-dynasty (1368-1644) Daoist Canon attributed to him. Wang was, first and foremost, a prolific and competent poet, often employing poetry as an opportunity to transmit his religious vision. There are three extant poetry collections. These are the following: *Chongyang quanzhen ji* 重陽全真集 (Redoubled Yang's Anthology of Complete Perfection; DZ 1153); *Chongyang jiaohua ji* 重陽教化集 (Redoubled Yang's Anthology on Teaching and Conversion; DZ 1154); and *Chongyang fenli shihua ji* 重陽分梨十化集 (Redoubled Yang's Anthology on Ten Conversions through Dividing Pears; DZ 1155). These collections provide important information on Wang's life, teaching methods, cultivation guidelines and techniques, as well as mystical experiences. We also have the *Chongyang shou Danyang ershi si jue* 重陽授丹陽二十四訣 (Twenty-Four Instructions Transmitted from Redoubled Yang to Elixir Yang; DZ 1158). This text consists of a series of definitions about twenty-four technical terms employed in early Complete Perfection. It is written in the form of a dialogue between Wang Chongyang and Ma Danyang. Next, there is the *Chongyang zhenren jinguan yusuo jue* 重陽真人金關玉鎖訣 (Perfected Redoubled Yang's Instructions on the Gold Pass and Jade Lock; DZ 1156). This is one of the most technical manuals on early Complete Perfection practice. It covers a wide range of cultivation techniques, including detailed instructions on alchemical transformation.¹⁰ The final text attributed to Wang Chongyang is the *Chongyang lijiao shiwu lun* 重陽立教十五論 (Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses to Establish the Teachings; DZ 1233), which is translated in the present handbook.

As the title indicates, *Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses* consists of fifteen sections.

1. Living in Hermitages (*zhu'an* 住庵)
2. Cloud Wandering (*yunyou* 雲遊)

3. Studying Texts (*xueshu* 學書)
4. Preparing Medicinal Herbs (*heyao* 合藥)
5. On Construction (*gaizao* 蓋造)
6. Companions in the Dao (*he daoban* 合道伴)
7. Sitting in Meditation (*dazuo* 打坐)
8. Controlling the Heart-mind (*jiangxin* 降心)
9. Refining Innate Nature (*lianxing* 鍊性)
10. Pairing the Five Qi (*pipei wuqi* 匹配五氣)
11. Merging Innate Nature and Life-destiny (*hun xingming*; 昆性命)
12. The Way of Sages (*shengdao* 聖道)
13. Going Beyond the Three Realms (*chao sanjie* 超三界)
14. Methods for Nourishing the Body (*yangshen zhi fa* 養身之法)
15. Leaving the Mundane World (*lifanshi* 離凡世)

From these discourse titles alone, one gains a glimpse into the religious worldview, spiritual orientation, and training regimens of the early Complete Perfection movement.

When compared with a text such as *Redoubled Yang's Instructions on the Gold Pass and Jade Lock*, the *Fifteen Discourses* clearly provides less technical details about advanced Daoist practice. The overall tone and general accessibility of the *Fifteen Discourses* inspires certain questions. What was its context of composition? Who was its intended audience? One possibility is that the text was intended as a succinct summation of basic Complete Perfection beliefs and practices. As the text does seem to have

this type of orientation, it could have been composed to orient and introduce prospective adherents, such as individuals who attended the various meeting halls in search of deeper religious training. Another possibility is that it was intended to provide novices and beginning-level practitioners with a guidebook or manual on the fundamentals of Complete Perfection training.

In this respect, it is also noteworthy that the text begins with a section entitled “Living in Hermitages” (*zhu'an* 住庵). After being confirmed of a sincere interest and religious commitment, the aspiring Complete Perfection adept was required to go into seclusion.

All renunciants (*chujia* 出家) must first retreat to a hermitage (*an* 庵). A hermitage is an enclosure (*she* 舍), a place where the body (*shen* 身) may be attuned and entrusted. When the body is attuned and entrusted, the heart-mind (*xin*) gradually realizes (*jiande* 漸得) serenity (*an* 安). Qi and spirit (*shen* 神) become harmonious and expansive. Then you may enter the Way of Perfection (*ru zhendao* 入真道). (DZ 1233, 1a)¹¹

This passage suggests more complete dedication to a Daoist religious path through abandoning the mundane world and embracing intensive spiritual training. The text presupposes that the adept has already decided to leave behind the life of a householder; one has already decided to become a monk or nun by leaving the family (*chujia* 出家), that is, severing ties to parents, spouses, and children.¹² The Way of Perfection is a path of asceticism and renunciation. This initial commitment is followed by solitary meditation practice, during which one becomes purified of distractions, entanglements, and desires. It is only after this period of seclusion that one receives more complete training. Thus, the text assumes that such preliminary requirements have been taken before additional instructions are given.

Of the various sections, two in particular deserve some introductory comments. First, “cloud wandering” (*yunyou* 雲遊) refers to pilgrimage or travels to distant temples and sacred places in search of deeper training. In its alternative form, “wandering cloud” (*youyun* 遊雲), it refers to

wandering Daoist adepts. Like clouds drifting over mountain peaks, the aspiring practitioner travels from sacred site to sacred site. In the process, one may come in contact with higher-level teachers and receive more advanced training. “Crossing over distant waters of turbulent and roiling waves, one inquires into the Dao without becoming wearied. Then even a single phrase exchanged between teacher and disciple initiates complete illumination (*yuanguang* 圓光). Internally one realizes the great issue of life and death and comes to stand as an elder (*zhang* 丈) of Quanzhen (Complete Perfection)” (1b). “Companions in the Dao” (*daoban* 道伴 / *daoyou* 道友) expresses the central importance of friendship in Daoist cultivation. Such friendship is spiritual friendship, an easy and natural relationship based on mutual respect and reciprocal flourishing. Companions in the Dao are adepts with natural affinities and parallel aspirations who recognize their own practice-realization in each other. *Redoubled Yang’s Fifteen Discourses* provides two primary criteria. First, one must examine the character of people before becoming friends with them. Some important qualities include humaneness, respect, reverence, honesty, reliability, discernment, insight, generosity, and wisdom. Such qualities as honesty, integrity, and genuineness are vital. Character, including intentions and motivations, is especially important with regard to spiritual matters. Second, there are three types of people who will nourish and advance one’s practice and three types who will harm and hinder one’s training.

Join those with an illuminated heart-mind (*mingxin* 明心), wisdom (*hui* 慧), or strong determination (*zhi* 志). Avoid those who are ignorant concerning external projections of the heartmind, who lack wisdom and are turbid in innate nature, or who lack determination and are inclined to quarrel. (3a)

The emphasis here on the necessity of spiritual companionship recalls a similar concern in chapter six of the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang).

Master Si 祀, Master Yu 輿, Master Li 犁, and Master Lai 來 were talking together. “Who can regard non-action (*wu-wei* 無為) as his

head, life (*sheng* 生) as his back, and death (*si* 死) as his rump? Who knows that death and life, existence (*cun* 存) and annihilation (*wang* 亡), are a single body (*yiti* 一體)? I will be his friend.” The four looked at each other and smiled. There was no obstruction in their heart-minds (*mo ni yu xin* 莫逆於心) and so they became friends.

And later on in the same chapter we find the following:

Master Sanghu 桑戶, Master Mengfan 孟反, and Master Qinzhang 琴張 addressed each other: “Who can join with others without joining with others (*xiangyu yu wu xiangyu* 相與於無相與)? Who can act with others without acting with others (*xiangwei yu wu xiangwei* 相為方令無相為)? Who can ascend to the heavens (*dengtian* 登天) and wander in the mists (*youwu* 遊霧), roam among the Limitless (*qiaotiao wuji* 曉無極),¹³ and forget life (*wangsheng* 忘生) forever?” The three looked at each and smiled. There was no obstruction in their heart-minds (*mo ni yu xin* 莫逆於心) and so they became friends.

These passages provide another insight concerning friendship: authentic friendship is natural and spirit-based. The heart-mind of each individual involved forms one half of a talisman. When such heart-minds are joined in relationship, a feeling of wholeness and integrity pervades. Authentic friendship is simple, supportive, and nourishing. It involves unconditional positive regard and a recognition of possibility and capacity.

Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses also contains some technical terminology that deserves mention. First, the text understands the body-self (*shen* 身) as consisting of various aspects. First, there are the so-called Three Treasures (*sanbao* 三寶), namely, vital essence (*jing* 精), subtle breath (*qi* 氣), and spirit (*shen* 神). In the most conventional terms, vital essence, qi, and spirit are understood along a spectrum, from the most substantial to the most subtle or refined. The character *jing* 精 consists of *mi* 米 (“rice”) and *qing* 青 (“azure,” but also “pure”). Etymologically, it refers to young or unprocessed rice. By extension, it refers to the essence of things. Vital essence is understood as a more substantial aspect of qi, and qi

is understood as a more subtle aspect of vital essence. Here vital essence relates to the actual physical foundation of health and vitality: seminal fluids (*jing* 精) in men and blood (*xue* 血) in women. The connection between vital essence and qi may also be understood etymologically: *qi* 氣 consists of *mi* 米 (“rice”) with *qi* 气 (“vapor” or “steam”). Both the characters for vital essence and qi contain the component for “rice.” As vital essence is rice in grain form, qi is rice in vapor form. Through the “cooking” (refining) of rice grain, steam is produced; through the cooking of vital essence, qi is produced. Finally, *shen* 神 relates to “spiritual dimensions” (*shi* 示), omens and similar divine manifestations, and the establishment and attendance to such a connection (*shen* 申.). Spirit relates to consciousness and “divine” capacities more generally.

The text also mentions other terms designating aspects of the body-self. First, various dimensions of the heart-mind (*xin* 心) are centrally important in Complete Perfection practice. Traditionally speaking, the heart-mind is a focal point of Daoist training. Particular emphasis is placed on the ability of the heart-mind (*xin* 心) either to attain complete enlightenment (*yuanguang* 圆光) or to separate the adept from the Dao as Source. Here the heart-mind is understood both as a physical location in the chest (the heart [*xin* 心] as “organ” [*zang* 臟]) and as relating to thoughts (*nian* 念) and emotions (*qing* 情) (the heart as “consciousness” [*shi* 識]). Intellectual and emotional activity is a possible source of dissipation and disruption. However, it is also the abode of spirit (*shen* 神), the sacred capacity within human beings. In a technical sense, the heart-mind also relates to intention (*yi* 意) and aspiration (*zhi* 志). The character *yi* 意 consists of *yin* 音 (“sound”) over *xin* 心 (“heart-mind”). Intention is the sound of the heart-mind, the core condition of the heart-mind made manifest. As concentrated consciousness, intention is used in Daoist cultivation specifically to guide the circulation of qi. Closely associated with intention, *zhi* 志 is usually translated as “will,” but is here rendered as “determination” and “aspiration.”¹⁴ Read etymologically, *zhi* 志 consists of *shi* 士 (“adept”) over *xin* 心 (“heart-mind”). The *shi* component is usually read as a phonetic, but may also be taken as a meaning-carrier. In this reading, aspiration or determination is the heart-mind manifested in the sincerity and commitment of a Daoist adept.

Redoubled Yang 's Fifteen Discourses also continually refers to innate nature (*xing* 性) and life-destiny (*ming* 命). The character *xing* 性 consists of *xin* 心 (“heart-mind”) and *sheng* 生 (“to be born”); innate nature is the heart-mind with which was born. The character *ming* 命 may be associated with *ling* 令 (“mandate”); life-destiny is a decree from the cosmos made manifest as one’s corporeality.¹⁵ Generally speaking, innate nature relates to consciousness and the heart-mind (*xin* 心), while life-destiny relates to physicality and the body (*shen* 身). In *Redoubled Yang Fifteen Discourses*, we are informed that innate nature relates to spirit, while life-destiny relates to *qi* (4b). Complete Perfection practice involves the dual cultivation of innate nature and life-destiny, a commitment to both stillness (*jing* 靜) and movement (*dong* 動) practices.

As mentioned, certain intellectual, emotional, and behavioral patterns disrupt the inherent enlightened condition of the heart-mind. On the most general level, we find reference to the “world of dust” (*chenshi* 塵世), the mundane world as limiting human possibility. Such limitations include personal desire, familial expectations, and societal obligations. *Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses* in turn emphasizes severing ties to the Three Realms (*sanjie* 三界), sometimes translated as the Three Worlds. The Three Realms are the Realm of Desire (*yujie* 欲界), Realm of Form (*sejie* 色界), and the Realm of Formlessness (*wusejie* 無色界). The process of becoming unconditioned by these realms is a three-fold forgetting (*wang* 忘) and a corresponding three-fold liberation (*jie* 解). First, one forgets (*wang* 忘) planning and thinking. This is liberation from the Realm of Desire. Then one forgets mental projects (*jing* 境), that is, residual images of the external world. This is liberation from the Realm of Form. Finally, one no longer clings to the idea of “forgetting” or “emptiness” (*kong* 空). This is liberation from the Realm of Formlessness. This process of becoming unconditioned by external concerns and influences and returning to one’s original nature, one’s inherent enlightenment, involves refraining from various patterns of dissipation. One source of dissipation is the external world. Disruption of personal harmony and spiritual alignment occurs when the senses are engaged. *Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses* recommends sealing the Four Gates (*simen* 四門), namely, the eyes, ears, nose, and

mouth. By directing awareness and attentiveness inward, one increases vitality and energetic aliveness. There is a movement from the external to the internal: one cultivates internal practice (*neixing* 內行) over external accomplishment (*waigong* 外功) (2b). The text also identifies greed (*tan* 貪) as a primary source of disruption.¹⁶ This parallels the emphasis in early Complete Perfection on abandoning certain ontological tendencies, including ignorance (*wuming* 無明), vexation (*fannao* 煩惱), greed (*tan* 貪), craving (*luan / lian* 戀), intoxicants (*jiu* 酉), sex (*se* 色), wealth (*cai* 貝才), and anger (*qi* 氣).¹⁷ The way of rectifying such patterns of dissipation involve dedication to practice (*xiuxing* 修行) and cultivating perfection (*xiuzhen* 修真).

Drawing upon earlier Tang-dynasty (618-907) Clarity-and-Stillness literature and observation (*guan* 觀) manuals,¹⁸ *Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses* emphasizes the importance of meditation. When discussing “sitting in meditation” (*dazuo* 打坐) and “quiet sitting” (*jingzuo* 靜坐), a three-stage process is identified: calmness (*an* 安), stillness (*jing* 靜), and stability (*ding* 定). The adept begins by cultivating relaxation and calmness, specifically serenity throughout the body. As this relaxation deepens, the intellectual and emotional turmoil of the habituated heart-mind begins to become stilled. By cultivating stillness, clarity (*qing* 清) and illumination (*ming* 明) also come to develop. One moves from a state of agitation, referred to as the “chaotic heart-mind” (*luanxin* 亂心), to a state of serenity, referred to as the “stabilized heart-mind” (*dingxin* 定心). As stillness deepens, the heart-mind and spirit become stabilized and concentrated. In this condition of stability, one realizes one’s innate nature and becomes completely immersed in the Dao.

The text also emphasizes the relationship between practice (*xing* 行), also referred to as cultivation (*xiu* 修), and accomplishment (*gong* 功). In the Buddhist tradition, which exerted a certain degree of influence on Complete Perfection, *xing* most often refers to specific types of “deeds” or “activities,” while *gong* refers to “merit.” These terms in turn relate to “karma” (*yuan* 緣). One way of rectifying one’s karma is to perform beneficial and virtuous deeds. Such deeds lead to the accumulation of merits, which ensure that one’s negative karma becomes neutralized and

that one will acquire a more positive rebirth. While this Buddhist perspective does pervade certain Complete Perfection discussions, *Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses* uses the terms to discuss Daoist cultivation in particular. Through practice, which includes various methods (*fa* 法), exercises (*gong* 功), and techniques (*shu* 術), one's level of cultivation increases. Internal practice (*neixing* 內行) takes precedence over external accomplishment (*waigong* 外功). Internal realization is primary. Nonetheless, certain "accomplishments" necessarily occur during the course of Daoist training. The important thing is to accept these as signs of successful training, rather than opportunities to inflate one's ego or assert one's superiority.

An additional level of Complete Perfection practice involves internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹). In the course of internal alchemy, the adept focuses on exploring and activating the Daoist subtle body, the energetic body within the body. This type of training regimen involves specific elixir fields (*dantian* 丹田) and precious palaces (*baodian* 寶殿). The alchemical process in turn requires refinement (*lian* 鍊 / 煉). In the most general terms, it involves the following three stages: (1) refining vital essence and transmuting it into qi (*lianjing huaqi* 煉精化氣); (2) refining qi and transmuting it into spirit (*lianqi huashen*, 煉氣化神); and (3) refining spirit and returning to emptiness (*lianshen huanxu* 鍊神還虛). Through this process, one comes to complete the elixir (*chengdan* 成丹) and become alchemically transformed (*bianhua* 變化).

In this respect, Discourse Ten, "Pairing the Five Qi" (*pipei wuqi* 匹配 五氣), is especially technical. The Five Qi (*wuqi* 五氣) refer to the qi of the five yin-orbs (*zang* 藏 / 臟), which are the liver (*gan* 肝), heart (*xin* 心), spleen (*pi* 脾), lungs (*fei* 肺), and kidneys (*shen* 腎). The Central Palace (*zhonggong* 中宮) here probably refers to the Ocean of Qi (*qihai* 氣海), the lower abdomen. The Three Primes (*sanyuan* 三元) are usually synonymous with the three elixir fields and / or their corresponding "constituents", corresponding to the perineum (vital essence), lower abdomen (qi), and center of head (spirit). The Azure Dragon (*qinglong* 清龍) and White Tiger (*baihu* 白虎) are two of the four directional spirits,

with the other two being the Vermilion Bird (*zhuque* 朱雀) and Mysterious Warrior (*xuanwu* 玄武). The Azure Dragon corresponds to the liver, while the White Tiger corresponds to the lungs. In Complete Perfection, the Azure Dragon most often designates spirit, while the White Tiger designates qi. Similarly, lead (*qian* 鉛) relates to original spirit (*yuanshen* 元神) [“Primordial Spirit”], while mercury (*hong* 衆) relates to original qi (*yuanki* 元氣) [“Primordial Energy”]. The cinnabar sand (*dansha* 丹砂) is another designation for the elixir (*dan* 丹), the compounding of which is the culmination of alchemical practice.

One way of mapping the completion of such training regimens centers on perfection (*zhen* 真) and immortality (*xian* 仙). Perfection refers to the Dao in its original completeness as well as to the adept in his or her fully refined condition. One etymological reading of the character *zhen* 真 suggests that it depicts an alchemical stove; in this sense, it resembles other characters utilized in Chinese alchemy traditions, with one example being *ding* 鼎 (“tripod”). In addition to advocating the process of cultivating perfection (*xiuzhen* 修真) and completing the elixir (*chengdan* 成丹), *Redoubled Yang’s Fifteen Discourses* makes frequent reference to “immortality” or “transcendence” (*xian* 仙 / 僊). Etymologically speaking, the character *xian* 仙 contains the *ren* 人 (“person”) radical with *shan* (山 (“mountain”). A variant (權) consists of *ren* 人 with *xian* (“flying”). Etymologically, then, a *xian* is a mountain recluse and / or an ecstatic traveler. At certain times, *Redoubled Yang’s Fifteen Discourses* seems to suggest that becoming an immortal involves ascending to the heavens (*dengtian* 登天) and joining the ranked immortals (*liexian* 列仙). In this respect, we find references to two Daoist celestial locations: Zigong 紫宮 (Purple Palace) and Yuqing 玉清 (Jade Clarity). The latter refers to one of three heavens that occupied a central place in the early Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) tradition. These three heavens were as follows: Taiqing 太清 (Great Clarity), Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity), and Yuqing 玉清 (Jade Clarity). Jade Clarity was the highest, or most refined, of the three. In these terms, immortality seems to involve the spirit becoming liberated (*shenjie* 神解) from the body, with the spirit being some type of personal entity. In contrast, other passages in

Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses suggest that immortality is transpersonal; it involves some type of mystical unification or disappearance in the cosmos. In this way, immortality or transcendence relates to consciousness in a more purified state, in a condition of complete merging with the Dao. That is, here emptiness (*xu* 虛 / *kong* 空) is primary.

As mentioned, *Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses* has been identified as the most concise and clearest expression of early Complete Perfection worldview and practice. The text's overall place in the later Complete Perfection monastic order remains unclear at the present time. However, *Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses* has received increasing attention among contemporary Complete Perfection adherents and monastic communities. It has been included in various mainland Chinese Daoist anthologies and published in pamphlet form to be circulated at Daoist temples and monasteries to visitors and patrons. In addition, the Complete Perfection monastic community of Yuquan yuan 玉泉院 at Huashan 華山 (Mount Hua; Huayin, Shaanxi) commissioned the engraving of the text on a stele which was erected in front of the Qizhen dian 七真殿 (Shrine of the Seven Perfected).

Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses has been translated numerous times. The earliest translation appeared in Yao Tao-chung's Ph.D. dissertation, entitled "Ch'uan-chen: A New Taoist Sect in North China during the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries" (1980). An alternative translation was prepared by Patricia Ebrey for *Chinese Civilization and Society: A Sourcebook* (1981). This translation was reprinted in *Chinese Religion: An Anthology of Sources* (1995), edited by Deborah Sommer. Additional translations may be found in Florian Reiter's article "Ch'ung-yang Sets Forth His Teachings in Fifteen Discourses" (1985), Thomas Cleary's *Vitality, Energy, Spirit: A Taoist Sourcebook* (1991), and Livia Kohn's *The Taoist Experience* (1993). For a readily accessible English introduction to early Complete Perfection Daoism see Stephen Eskildsen's *The Teachings and Practices of the Early Quanzhen Taoist Masters* and my forthcoming books *Cultivating Perfection* and *The Way of Complete Perfection*.

Notes

1. The Tomb for Reviving the Dead was grave mound, a cave-like enclosure. It consisted of a mound of dirt several feet high, with an additional vault ten feet deep underneath.
2. This is partially a reflection of later Complete Perfection historiographical concerns and partially an accurate representation of the early adepts who played the most vital roles in ensuring the social and institutional success of Complete Perfection as a Daoist religious movement. It should also be mentioned that three of Wang Chongyang's earliest disciples, Shi Chuhou 史處厚(1102-1174), Yan Chuchang 嚴處常(1111-1183), and Liu Tongwei 劉通微 (d. 1196) are often excluded from many standard accounts. Nonetheless, each of Seven Perfected receives a place of veneration in the contemporary Complete Perfection monastic order, as expressed in the *Taishang xuanmen zaotan gongke jing* 太上玄門早壇功課經 (Scriptures of the Great High Mysterious Gate for Morning Altar Recitation; ZW 936) and *Taishang xuanmen wantan gongke jing* 太上玄門晚壇功課經 (Scriptures of the Great High Mysterious Gate for Evening Altar Recitation; ZW 937). These are the primary liturgical texts of the contemporary monastic order, wherein one also finds the well-known "Eight Great Invocations" (*ba da shenzhou* 八大神咒).
3. Traditionally speaking, Chinese people in general and Daoists in particular have a variety of names, both given and self-selected. These include one's given surname (*xing* 姓) and personal name (*ming* 名). In addition, one has a "style-name" (*zi* 字), which is usually self-selected. Next, there is one's secondary style-name (*hao* 號), which is sometimes self-selected and sometimes given. The French *sobriquet* ("nickname") is sometimes used to refer to style-names. Finally, in the case of religious adherents, a religious name (*faming* 法名 / *daohao* 道號) may be given, usually upon formal initiation or ordination and as a sign of lineage standing. In the case of early Complete Perfection, Wang Chongyang often gave his disciples religious names (*faming*) beginning with *chu* 處 ("abiding") and style-names (*zi*) beginning with *tong* 通 ("pervasive"). Note

also the frequent appearance of *yang* 陽 (“bright”) and *chang* 長 (“perpetual”).

4. Here it should be noted that Complete Perfection did not cease to be “organized” at this point, and so this interpretive framework has a certain heuristic deficiency. One may, in turn, think of the “resurgent phase” as a period of reorganization.

5. The Dragon Gate branch is traditionally associated with Qiu Changchun. During the resurgent phase, as documented in such texts as the *Qinggui xuanmiao*, 清規玄妙 (Pure Regulations of the Mysterious and Wondrous; ZW 361), each of the Seven Perfected was identified with particular sub-lineages. These were as follows: Longmen pai 龍門派 (Dragon Gate Lineage) / Qiu Changchun; Suishan pai 隨山派 (Mount Sui Lineage) / Liu Changsheng; Nanwu pai 南無派 (Nanwu Lineage) / Tan Changzhen; Yushan pai 遇山派 (Mount Yu Lineage) / Ma Danyang; Huashan pai 華山派 (Mount Hua Lineage) / Hao Taigu; Yushan pai 崑山派 (Mount Yu Lineage) / Wang Yuyang; and Qingjing pai 清靜派 (Clarity and Stillness Lineage) / Sun Buer (Koyanagi 1934 [*Hakuinkan shi (Baiyun guan zhi)* 白雲觀志. Tokyo: Tōhō bunka gakuin Tōkyō kenkyūjo]). While Dragon Gate Daoists hold a place of veneration for Qiu Changchun as founder, recent research suggests that the formal lineage of Dragon Gate goes back to Wang Changyue (Esposito 1993; 2000; 2001). The name Longmen refers to the mountain range in western Shaanxi province, where Qiu Changchun spent time engaging in solitary practice.

6. Liu Yiming remains an influential figure in contemporary Dragon Gate, especially through his *Daoshu shier zhong* 道書十二種 (Ten Daoist Texts). Much of this work has been translated in Thomas Cleary’s various publications.

7. Daoist restoration and revitalization efforts received a set back with the Chinese government’s suppression of Falun gong 法輪功 (Dharma Wheel Exercises), a Qigong cult, in 1999.

8. *Huandu* 環堵 literally refers to a small square hut measuring four *du* 堵 on each side, with one *du* equaling one *zhang* 丈 (approx. 3 meters). The earliest occurrences of the term appear in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang) and *Liji* 禮記 (Book of Rites), where it is the dwelling-place of a hermit.

9. These meditation enclosures also recall the earlier Daoist pure rooms or chambers of quiescence (*jingshi* 靜室).

10. For a complete, annotated translation of this text see my book *Cultivating Perfection: Mysticism and Self-Transformation in Early Quanzhen Daoism* (Brill, 2007).

11. Interestingly, this last phrase *ru zhendao* 入真道 (lit., “enter the perfect Dao”) may refer to complete dedication to the Dao as perfection or be taken as shorthand for *ru quanzhen dao* 入全真道, that is, formally joining the religious movement of Quanzhen (Complete Perfection) as a renunciant.

12. *Chujia* is the Chinese rendering of the Sanskrit *pravrajya*, a Buddhist technical term. It means not only that one has left the family and taken up residence in a monastery, but also that one has vowed to abstain from any sexual relations.

13. Reading *qiaotiao* 蹻跳 (“wander”) for *naotiao* (“grasp”).

14. In classical Chinese medicine, *yi*, usually rendered as “intention,” is associated with the Earth phase and the spleen. It relates to both one’s guiding direction and thinking / planning (*si* 思) the field (*dan* 田) of the heart-mind (*xin* 心), more generally. *Zhi*, usually rendered as “will,” is associated with the Water phase and the kidneys. It relates to sustained follow-through.

15. In a more esoteric interpretation, the character *ming* 命 depicts the two kidneys viewed from the back. This recalls an alternative name for the kidneys, Mingmen 命門 (Gate of Life), and their association with vital essence (*jing* 精).

16. Here one may recall the Buddhist emphasis on desire as the source of suffering. Classical Buddhism emphasizes the Four Noble Truths: (1) Suffering / unsatisfactoriness; (2) The origin or arising of suffering; (3) The end of suffering; (4) The path leading to the end of suffering. That is, the nature of existence is suffering / impermanence. The source of suffering is desire. Eliminate desire and you eliminate suffering. The path to the end of suffering is the so-called Eightfold Path: (1) Right Understanding; (2) Right Thought; (3) Right Speech; (4) Right Action; (5) Right Livelihood; (6) Right Effort; (7) Right Mindfulness; and (8) Right Concentration.

17. In this case, it is interesting to note that *qi* 氣, subtle breath or “energy” when used in a positive sense, refers to “anger” when referring to a negative condition. Anger is the dispersing or harmful manifestation of *qi*.

18. A wide variety of earlier Daoist texts are cited and identified as important in the early Complete Perfection tradition. Some of these include the *Daode jing* 道德經 (Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power), *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31), and *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 620). *Redoubled Yang's Fifteen Discourses* cites the *Scripture on the Hidden Talisman* in section 4b.

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Translation (翻譯)

REDOUBLED YANG’S FIFTEEN DISCOURSES TO ESTABLISH THE TEACHINGS

Discourse 1: Living in Hermitages

All renunciants must first retreat to a hermitage. A hermitage is an enclosure, a place where the body may be attuned and entrusted. When the body is attuned and entrusted, the heart-mind gradually realizes serenity. Qi and spirit become harmonious and expansive. Then you may enter the Way of Perfection.

Now, when movement and activity become necessary, you must not overdo things and exhaust yourself. If you overdo things and become exhausted, you will dissipate your qi. And yet, you cannot remain entirely inactive either. If you do not move, your qi and blood will become obstructed and weakened.

You should, therefore, find a middle way between movement and stillness. Only then can you guard constancy and be at peace with your endowments. This is the method of residing in serenity.

Discourse 2: Cloud Wandering

There are two kinds of wandering.

The first involves viewing the brilliant scenery of mountains and rivers, the splendid colors of flowers and trees. Some people engaging in this kind of wandering delight in the variety and splendor of provinces or prefectures.

Others enjoy the towers and pavilions of temples and monasteries. Some seek out friends to forget their concerns. Others indulge the heart-mind with fine clothing and food. People like this, even if they travel roads measuring ten thousand miles, exhaust their bodies and squander their strength. Regarding the sights of the world, their heart-minds become confused and their qi declines. Such people are engaging in empty cloud wandering.

The second kind of wandering involves investigating innate nature and life-destiny and inquiring into the subtle and mysterious. Ascending high summits beyond peaks and gorges, such a person visits enlightened teachers without becoming exhausted. Crossing over distant waters of turbulent and roiling waves, one inquires into the Dao without becoming wearied. Then even a single phrase exchanged between teacher and disciple initiates complete illumination. Internally one realizes the great issue of life and death and comes to stand as an elder of Quanzhen (Complete Perfection). Such people are engaging in authentic cloud wandering.

Discourse 3: Studying Texts

The way to study texts is not to strive after literary accomplishments, and thereby confuse your eyes. Instead, you must extract the meaning as it harmonizes with the heart-mind. Abandon texts after you have extracted their meaning and grasped their principle. Abandon principle after you have realized the fundamental ground. After you realize the fundamental ground, then attend to it until it completely enters the heart-mind.

Keep it in the heart-mind for a long time, and its essence and inner truth will become naturally present. The radiance of the heart-mind will be vast and abundant; wisdom and spirit will take flight and soar. There is no place that they will not pervade, nothing that you will not understand.

When you reach this stage, you should practice storing and nourishing such a condition. And yet, do not be overly enthusiastic or rush to accomplish this. Rather, simply fear losing innate nature and life-destiny.

There are also people who do not understand the root meaning of texts, but merely desire to memorize many concepts and become widely read. Such people converse and babble on in front of others, bragging about their outstanding talents. This is of no benefit to cultivation and practice. Instead, it injures spirit and qi. Although one reads more and more, what is the benefit in relation to the Dao?

Only by attaining the meaning of texts can you store them deep within.

Discourse 4: Preparing Medicinal Herbs

Medicinal herbs are the flourishing emanations of mountains and waterways, the essential florescence of plants and trees. One type is warming, while another is cooling. They can tonify or disperse. One type is thick, while another is thin. They can be applied externally or taken internally.

If one is willing to study them as essences, one can enliven the innate nature and life-destiny of people. However, if one is a deluded healer, one will injure the body and the physical constitution of people. All those who study the Dao must fully understand this. If you do not understand herbal preparation, you will have no way to support the Dao.

You should also not develop attachments, because they will injure your hidden accomplishment [from past lives]. Externally, you may become greedy for wealth and expensive goods; internally, you may waste the ability to cultivate perfection. This not only leads to transgressions and errors in this life, but will also cause retribution in future lives. Elevated disciples within my gate, take care and be attentive.

Discourse 5: On Construction

Reed-thatched huts and grass-thatched shelters are essential for protecting the body. To sleep in the open air or in the open fields offends the sun and moon.

On the other hand, living beneath carved beams and high eaves is also not the action of a superior adept. Great palaces and elevated halls — how can these be part of the living plan for followers of the Dao?

Felling trees severs the precious fluids of the earth's meridians; begging for goods and money, while performing religious activities, takes away the life-blood of the people. Such people merely cultivate external accomplishment; they do not cultivate internal practice. This is like using painted cakes to satisfy hunger or storing snow for provisions — one vainly expends great effort and in the end gains nothing.

Someone with strong determination must early on search for the precious palaces within his own body. Vermilion towers outside the body, no matter how unceasingly they are restored, will collapse and crumble. Perceptive and illuminated worthies should carefully examine this.

Discourse 6: Companions of the Way

Followers of the Dao join together as companions because they can assist each other in sickness and disease. “If you die, I’ll bury you; if I die, you’ll bury me.”

Therefore, you must first choose the right person and only then join with that person as a companion. Do not join with someone first and then consider him as a person.

Once this is accomplished, do not become overly attached to each other. Attachment between people ensnares the heart-mind.

At the same time, do not remain completely without attachment. A complete lack of attachment will cause your feelings to diverge. You should find a middle way between attachment and non-attachment.

There are three kinds of people with whom you should join and three whom you should avoid. Join those with an illuminated heart-mind, wisdom, or strong determination. Avoid those

who are ignorant concerning external projections of the heart-mind, who lack wisdom and are turbid in innate nature, or who lack determination and are inclined to quarrel.

When establishing yourself in a monastery, completely accord with your own heart-mind and aspirations. Do not just follow your emotions or trust the outer appearance of others. Only choose the elevated and illumined. This is the supreme method.

Discourse 7: Sitting in Meditation

“Sitting in meditation” does not simply mean to sit with the body erect and the eyes closed. This is superficial sitting. To sit authentically, you must maintain a heart-mind like Mount Tai, remaining unmovable and unshakable throughout the entire day. [Maintain this practice] whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, whether in movement or stillness. Restrain and seal the Four Gates, namely, the eyes, ears, mouth, and nose. Do not allow the external world to enter in. If there is even the slightest trace of a thought about movement and stillness, this cannot be called quiet sitting. If you can practice like this, although your body resides in the world of dust, your name will already be listed in the ranks of the immortals.

Then there is no need to travel great distances and consult others. Rather, worthiness and sagehood resides within this very body. After one hundred years, with accomplishment completed, you will cast off the husk and ascend to perfection. With a single pellet of elixir completed, spirit wanders through the eight outer realms.

Discourse 8: Controlling the Heart-mind

Let me explain the way of the heart-mind. If the heart-mind is constantly deep, then it remains unmoving. Obscure and dark, it does not give attention to the ten thousand beings. Profound and vague, there is no such

thing as internal or external. Not even the slightest trace of thought remains. This is the stabilized heart-mind. It needs no control.

However, if the heart-mind is generated by pursuing external appearances, it becomes upset and overturned, searching for the head and chasing after the tail. This is called the chaotic heart-mind. You must urgently extract and expel it. Do not let it become unrestrained. Such a heart-mind ruins and spoils the Dao and inner power. It harms and diminishes innate nature and life-destiny.

Whether standing, walking, sitting, or lying down, [if the heart-mind] is constantly exhausted by hearing and seeing, knowing and perceiving, then there will only be sickness and suffering.

Discourse 9: Refining Innate Nature

Regulating innate nature is like harmonizing the strings of a zither. If they are too tight, they will snap. If they are too loose, they will not resonate. Find the middle place between taut and slack, and the zither will be harmonized.

This is also like casting a sword. If there is too much steel, it will break. If there is too much tin, it will bend. Find the harmonious mixture of steel and tin, and the sword will be useful.

To harmonize and refine innate nature, embrace these two methods. Then you yourself will become wondrous.

Discourse 10: Joining the Five Qi

The Five Qi gather in the Central Palace; the Three Primes collect at the top.

The Azure Dragon breathes out crimson mist; the White Tiger exhales black smoke.

The myriad spirits array themselves in rows; the hundred meridians flow and become infused.

The cinnabar sand is radiant and becomes brilliant; the lead and mercury congeal and become purified.

The body may still reside in the human realm, but the spirit already wanders among the heavens.

Discourse 11: Merging Innate Nature and Life-destiny

Innate nature is spirit; life-destiny is qi. Innate nature meeting life-destiny is like wild birds obtaining the wind. They use it to float and soar, rising lightly. Saving their strength, they complete their flight with ease.

Thus the *Yinfu jing* (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman) says, “The regulation of all beings resides with their qi.” This is exactly it.

The adept cultivating perfection must rely on this, never allowing it to be disseminated to lesser adepts. One should fear that the spirits and luminaries will send down censure. Innate nature and life-destiny are the roots of cultivation and practice. You should attentively forge and refine them.

Discourse 12: The Way of Sages

To enter the way of sages, you must develop determination for many years, amassing accomplishments and binding yourself to practice. Only an adept of elevated illumination, an individual with excelling realization, can enter the way of sages.

Your body may reside in a single room, but innate nature will fill the heavens, earth, and whole cosmos. The multitude of sages silently protects and supports you. Immortal lords in limitless numbers invisibly encircle and surround you. Your name becomes recorded in Zigong (Purple Palace) and established among the ranked immortals. Your physical form may remain in

the world of dust, but your heart-mind is already illuminated beyond all beings.

Discourse 13: Going Beyond the Three Realms

The Three Realms are the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of formlessness.

When the heart-mind forgets planning and thinking, one goes beyond the realm of desire. When the heart-mind forgets mental projections, one goes beyond the realm of form. When the heart-mind does not manifest even a vision of emptiness, one goes beyond the realm of formlessness.

Abandoning these Three Realms, the spirit dwells in the country of immortals and sages. Innate nature resides in the region of Yuqing (Jade Clarity).

Discourse 14: Methods for Nourishing the Body

The Dharma Body [法身, *Fǎshēn*] is a representation of formlessness. It is neither emptiness nor existence, has neither after nor before. It is neither low nor high, neither long nor short.

When applied, there is nowhere that it does not pervade. When stored, it is dark and obscure without residual traces.

If you realize this way, you can appropriately nourish this body. The more you nourish it, the more accomplishments you attain. The less you nourish it, the less accomplishments you attain.

Do not desire to go back; do not yearn for the mundane world. Then you will depart and dwell in suchness.

Discourse 15: Leaving the Mundane World

Leaving the mundane world does not mean that the body departs. Instead, it refers to a condition of the heart-mind. The body is like the lotus root; the

heart-mind is like the lotus blossom. The root is in mud, but the blossom is in the empty void.

For the person in realization of the Dao, the body may reside in the mundane world, but the heart-mind rests in the realm of sages. People of today desire to be eternally undying, and so “leaving the ordinary world” seems like a great absurdity. Such people have not fully understood the principle of the Dao.

I have spoken these “Fifteen Discourses” to admonish those within these gates with strong determination and sincere aspirations. Examine these principles profoundly and in detail so that you may know them.

Chinese Text (中文)

重陽立教十五論

第一論住庵

凡出家者，先須投庵。庵者舍也，一身依倚。身有依倚，心漸得安，氣神和暢，入真道矣。凡有動作，不可過勞，過勞則損氣。不可不動，不動則氣血凝滯。須要動靜得其中，然後可以守常安分，此是住安之法。

第二論雲遊

凡遊歷之道有二：一者看山水明秀，花木之紅翠，或翫州府之繁華，或賞寺觀之樓閣，或尋朋友以縱意，或為衣食而留心。如此之人，雖行萬里之途，勞形費力，遍覽天下之景，心亂氣衰，此乃虛雲遊之人。二者參尋性命，求問妙玄，登巖嶮之高山，訪明師之不倦，渡喧轟之遠水，問道無厭，若一句相投，便有圓光內發，了生死之大事，作全真之丈夫。如此之人，乃真雲遊也。

第三論學書

學書之道，不可尋文而亂目，當宜採意以合心。捨書探意，採理捨理，採趣採得趣，則可以收之入心。久久精誠，自然心光洋溢，智神踴躍，無所不通，無所不解。若到此則可以收養，不可馳騁耳，恐失於性命。若不窮書之本意，只欲記多念廣，人前談說，誇訝才俊，無益於修行，有傷於神氣，雖多看書，與道何益。既得書意，可深藏之。

第四論合藥

藥者，乃山川之秀氣，草木之精華。一溫一寒，可補可泄，一厚一薄，可表可托。肯精學者，活人之性命，若盲翳者，損人之形體。學道之人不可不通，若不通者，無以助道。不可執著，則有損於陰功。外貪財貨，內費修真，不足今生招愆，切忌來生之報。吾門高弟仔細參詳。

第五論蓋造

茅庵草舍，須要遮形，露宿野眠，觸犯日月。苟或雕梁峻宇，亦非上士之作為，大殿高堂，豈是道人之活計。斫伐樹木，斷地脈之津液，化道貨財，取人家之血脈。只修外功，不修內行，如畫餅充飢，積雪為糧，虛勞眾力，到了成空。有志之人，早當覓身中寶殿，體外朱樓，不解修完看看倒塌。聰明君細細察詳。

第六論合道伴

道人合伴，本欲疾病相扶，你死我埋，我死你埋。然先擇人而後合伴，不可先合伴而後擇人。不可相戀，相戀則繫其心，不可不戀，不戀則情相離。戀欲不戀，得其中道可矣。有三合三不合：明心，有慧，有志，此三合也。不明、著外境，無智慧、性愚濁，無志氣、乾打闢，此三不合也。立身之本在叢林，全憑心志，不可順人情，不可取相貌，唯擇高明者，是上法也。

第七論打坐

凡打坐者，非言形體端然，瞑目合眼，此是假坐也。真坐者，須十二時辰，住行坐臥，一切動靜中間，心如泰山，不動不搖，把斷四門，

眼耳口鼻，不令外景入內。但有絲毫動靜思念，即不名靜坐。能如此者，雖身處於塵世，名已列於仙位，不須遠參他人，便是身內聖賢。百年功滿，脫殼登真，一粒丹成，神遊八表。

第八論降心

凡論〔降〕人之道，若常湛然，其心不動，昏昏默默，不見萬物，冥冥杳杳，不內不外無絲毫念想，此是定心，不可降也。若隨境生心，顛顛倒倒，尋頭覓尾，此名亂心也。速當剪除，不可縱放則壞道德，損失性命。住行坐臥，常勤降，聞見知覺為病患矣。

第九論鍊性

理性如調琴弦，緊則有斷，慢則不應，緊慢得中，琴可調矣。則又如鑄劍，鋼多則折，錫多則捲，鋼錫得中，則劍可矣；調鍊性者，體此二法，則自妙也。

第十論匹配五氣

五氣聚於中宮，三元攢於頂上。青龍噴赤霧，白虎吐烏煙。萬神羅列，百脈流沖，丹砂晃朗，鉛汞凝澄。身且寄向人間，神已遊於天上。

第十一論混性命

性者，神也。命者，氣也。性若見命，如禽得風，飄飄輕舉，省力易成。《陰符經》云：禽之制在氣是也。修真之士不可不參，不可泄漏於下士，恐有神明降責。性命是修行之根本，謹緊鍛鍊矣。

第十二論聖道

人聖之道，須是苦志多年，積功累行，高明之士，賢達之流，方可人聖之道也。身居一室之中，性滿乾坤，普天聖眾，默默護持，無極仙君，冥冥圍遶，名集紫府，位列仙階，形且寄於塵中，心已明於物外矣。

第十三論超三界

欲界，色界，無色界，此乃三界也。心忘慮念即超欲界，心忘諸境即超色界，不著空見即超無色界，離此三界，神居仙聖之鄉，性在玉清之境矣。

第十四論養身之法

法身者，無形之相也。不空不有，無後無前，不下不高，非短非長，用則無所不通，藏之則昏默無跡，若得此道正可養之。養之多則功多，養之少則功少，不可願歸，不可戀世，去住自然矣。

第十五論離凡世

離凡世者，非身離也，言心地也。身如藕根，心似蓮花，根在泥而花在虛空矣。得道之人，身在凡而心在聖境矣。今之人欲永不死而離凡世者，大愚不達道理也。言十五論者，警門中有志之人，深可詳察知之。

Book of Master Celestial Seclusion

天隱子

Introduction

The *Tianyinzi* 天隱子 (*Book of Master Celestial Seclusion*; DZ 1026; also DZ 1017, 2.4a-6b) is a Tang-dynasty (618-907) manual on observation and realizing the Dao. It provides a model for Daoist practice accessible enough that it continues to be used to this day by Qigong 氣功 (Qi Exercise) practitioners.

This text is part of a group of Tang-dynasty works on the Daoist meditation practice of observation (*guan* 觀) and realizing the Dao (*dedao* 得道). In addition to the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion*, these include the following: *Neiguan jing* 內觀經 (Scripture on Inner Observation; DZ 641; trl. Kohn 1989), *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論 (Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness; DZ 1036; trl. Kohn 1987b; Cleary 2000), *Dingguan jing* 定觀經 (Scripture on Concentration and Observation; DZ 400; trl. Kohn 1987b), and *Cunshen lianqi ming* 存神鍊氣銘 (Inscription on Preserving Spirit and Refining Qi; DZ 834; trl. Kohn 1987b). These meditation manuals also relate to other Tang dynasty works that could be labeled “Clarity-and-Stillness literature.” The Clarity-and-Stillness family of texts include the *Qingjing xinjing* 清靜心經 (Heart Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 1169), *Qingjing jing* 清靜經 (Scripture on Clarity and Stillness; DZ 620; trl. Wong 1992; Kohn 1993), *Wuchu jing* 五廚經 (Scripture on the Five Pantries; DZ 763), *Liaoxin jing* 了心經 (Scripture on Realizing the Heart-Mind; DZ 643), *Xuwu benqi jing* 虛無本起經 (Scripture on the Origin and Arisal of Emptiness and Non-being; DZ 1438), and *Xuanzhu xinjing zhu* 玄珠心鏡注 (Annotations to the Mysterious Pearl and Mind Mirror; DZ 574,575). Of these, the *Scripture on Clarity and Stillness* is the most well-known and influential.¹

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* is an anonymous eighth-century work that contains a preface attributed to Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (zi Ziwei 子微 [Youthful Tenuity]; hao Zhenyi 真一 [Perfect Unity]; 647-735), the twelfth patriarch of Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) and author of the well-known *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論 (Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness; DZ 1036). According to Sima Chengzhen's preface, he received teachings from a certain Tianyinzi 天隱子 (Master Celestial Seclusion), sometimes translated as Master of Heavenly Seclusion, about whom he had no biographical information. He then edited the text so that it could be disseminated.

Another possibility is that Sima Chengzhen adopted the persona of Master Celestial Seclusion as a poetic device. Historically speaking, personal information on Sima Chengzhen is somewhat scant. He was born in Henan in 647. After receiving a standard literati education intended to lead to official service, Sima Chengzhen abandoned the pursuit in 668. At the age of twenty-one, he turned to the Dao and began Daoist training on Songshan 嵩山 (Mount Song) under Pan Shizheng 潘師正 (Tixuan 體玄 [Embodying the Mysterious]; 585-682), eleventh Highest Clarity patriarch. Following the death of Pan, Sima succeeded him as twelfth patriarch of the Highest Clarity tradition in 684, at the age of thirty-seven. He eventually settled on Mount Tiantai 天台 (Zhejiang), where he established the Tongbo guan 桐柏觀 (Cypress Monastery) under imperial patronage. Over the years he gained more and more access to and influence on the imperial household. This occurred at the courts of Emperor Ruizong 睿宗 (r. 710-713) and Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713-756), with his first recorded audience occurring in 711 and increasing in frequency between the years of 721 and 730. In 724, Xu an zo ng ha d a monastery, named Yangtai guan 陽臺觀 (Monastery of the Bright Terrace), built for him on Mount Wangwu 王屋 (Shanxi), Sima Chengzhen died there in 735.

Sima Chengzhen wrote or edited fifteen works, of which nine are still extant. According to Livia Kohn (1987b, 21-22), the extant works can be divided into four groups: (1) Geographical descriptions; (2) Works on charms or tokens; (3) Techniques on bodily immortality; and (4) Mystical

texts. In the present discussion, the third and fourth categories are especially relevant. The third category, techniques for bodily immortality, consists of the *Xiusheng yangqi jue* 修生養氣訣 (Instructions on Cultivating Vitality and Nourishing Qi; DZ 277) and its variant edition entitled *Fuqijingyi lun* 月艮氣牢青義論 (Discourse on the Essential Meaning of Ingesting Qi; *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤, DZ 1032, 57). Sima Chengzhen's texts emphasizing mystical praxis include the following: *Taishang shengxuan huming miaoqing song* 太上昇玄|芟命女少|至公頁 (Commentary on the *Taishang shengxuan huming miaoqing* [DZ 19]; DZ 312), *Daoti lun* 道體論 (Discourse on the Embodiment of the Dao; DZ 1035), and *Zuowang lun* 坐忘論 (Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness; DZ 1036). The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* also falls within this category.

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* may, in turn, be understood as a Tang-dynasty Highest Clarity Daoist text. The Highest Clarity tradition began in the 360s when members of the aristocratic Xu 許 family, Xu Mai 許邁 (b. 301), Xu Mi 許謐 (303-373) and his son Xu Hui 許翮 (341-ca.370), hired the spirit medium Yang Xi 楊羲 (330-386?) to establish contact with Xu Mi's wife Tao Kedou 陶可斗. Through a series of revelations from underworld rulers, divine officers, denizens of Huayang dong 華陽洞 (Grotto of Brilliant Yang), and former leaders of the Celestial Masters, Yang Xi described the organization and population of the subtle realms of the cosmos, particularly the heaven of Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity). These various celestial communications included specific methods for spirit travel and ecstatic excursions, visualizations, and alchemical concoctions. A wide variety of texts are important for understanding the religious world of Highest Clarity, two of the most important being the *Dadong zhenjing* 大洞真經 (Perfect Scripture of the Great Grotto; DZ 6) and the *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (Scripture on the Yellow Court; DZ 331; 332; trl. Huang 1990). Thus, the early Highest Clarity tradition emphasized ecstatic astral travel and visualization of corporeal spirits.

By the seventh and eighth centuries, Highest Clarity became infused with Buddhist concerns and soteriological methods. In particular, in texts such as the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* and *Discourse on Sitting-in-*

Forgetfulness we find an emphasis on the practice of “observation” (*guan* 觀), a Daoist adaptation and modification of Buddhist insight meditation (*vipasyana*). Buddhist meditation practice is conventionally divided into *samatha* (Chn.: *zhi* 止) and *vipasyana* (Pali: *vipassana*; Chn.: *guan* 觀). The *samatha-vipasyana* system became central in the Chinese Tiantai 天台 Buddhist system, especially as expressed in Zhiyi’s 智顗 (538-597) *Mohe zhiguan* 摩訶止觀 (Great Calming and Contemplation; see Donner and Stevenson 1993). *Samatha* is usually described in terms of cessation, tranquility, and concentration, while *vipasyana* relates to insight, especially insight into the impermanence of all phenomena, including own-being. *Samatha* involves stilling and calming excess intellectual and emotional activity, often through breath-control techniques (*pranayama*). *Vipasyana* is transpersonal in orientation, in the sense that its ultimate goal is liberation (*nirvana*) from the endless cycle of rebirth (*samsara*). Insight meditation involves awareness and mindfulness concerning various psycho-physiological phenomena (body, feelings/sensations, mind, and moral/intellectual subjects). Under such Buddhist influences, earlier Highest Clarity visualization (*cun* 存) techniques became transformed during the Tang dynasty. In this context, “visualization” appears no longer to involve visualizing interior body gods, as in the *Scripture on the Yellow Court*; rather, visualization herein emphasizes completely beholding spirit in the more subtle sense of consciousness or “divinity.” Thus, the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* explains, “Visualization means gathering the heart-mind (*shouxin* 收心) and recovering innate nature (*fluxing* 復性)” (2a). That is, rather than meaning “visualizing internal spirits,” *cunshen* 存神 here suggests gaining insight into the nature and potentiality of spirit. Consciousness becomes more expanded or cosmic in nature.

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* provides detailed instructions on Daoist meditation practice and mystical realization. Like its companion text, the *Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness*, the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* envisions such an endeavor as involving progressive stages and gradual attainment. The text consists of eight sections.

1. Spirit Immortality (*shenxian* 神仙)

2. Simplicity (*yijian* 易簡)²
3. Gates of Gradual Progress (*jianmen* 漸門)³
4. Purification and Abstention (*zhaijie* 齋戒)
5. Seclusion (*anchu* 安處)
6. Visualization (*cunxiang* 存想)
7. Sitting-in-Forgetfulness (*zuowang* 坐忘)
8. Spirit Liberation (*shenjie* 神解)

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion*, in turn, speaks of “Five Gates” (*wumen* 五門), including purification and abstention, seclusion, visualization, sitting-in-forgetfulness, and spirit liberation. The latter is the culmination of this training regimen.

This map of spiritual realization differs in certain respects from the *Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness*, wherein Sima Chengzhen identifies the following seven-stage process:

1. Reverence and Trust (*jingxin* 敬信)
2. Interrupting Karma (*duanyuan* 斷緣)
3. Gathering the Heart-mind (*shouxin* 收心)
4. Detachment from Affairs (*jianshi* 簡事)
5. Perfect Observation (*zhenguan* 胃)
6. Intense Concentration (*taiding* 泰定)
7. Realizing the Dao (*dedao* 得道)

Many of these terms are, nonetheless, utilized in the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion*. In addition, “realizing the Dao” parallels “spirit liberation.” There is a movement from limited human being, with its various layers of habituation and dissipation, to a more all-encompassing and expansive immersion in the Dao. Through such attunement and alignment, one merges with the Dao, and in the process becomes an *embodiment* of the Dao.

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* speaks of the Five Gates mentioned above in terms of types of liberation (*jie* 解). Purification and abstention relate to liberation through trust (*xinjie* 信解). Seclusion relates to liberation through withdrawal (*lanjie* 闌解). Visualization relates to liberation through insight (*huijie* 慧解), also rendered as wisdom. Sitting-in-forgetfulness

relates to liberation through absorption (*dingjie* 定解), also rendered as concentration or stability. Finally, spirit liberation (*shenjie* 神解) is accomplished when spirit pervades every aspect of being and reality in its totality. These various levels of realization may, in turn, be understood as conditions of the heart-mind (*xin* 心), which is also considered the abode of spirit (*shen* 神).

At the beginning of Daoist practice, the aspiring adept is filled with emotional and intellectual turmoil. One abides in a condition of almost complete habituation; this is the agitated heart-mind (*dongxin* 動心). Turbidity (*zhuo* 濁) is extreme, while clarity (*qing* 清) is minimal. Agitation (*dong* 動) is extreme, while stillness (*jing* 靜) is minimal. In this condition, the adept must place his or her trust in the Dao, while gradually lessening desires and embracing simplicity. One in turn withdraws deeper into the self, engaging in more intense inward training and internal cultivation. Here the commitment centers on the internal (*nei* 內) over the external (*wai* 外). Turbidity begins to become replaced by clarity, agitation by stillness. As practice-realization deepens, one begins to gain insight into the nature of existence and the more subtle layers of the body-self. Here clarity and stillness become more constant than turbidity and agitation. The transformation of habituated, ordinary modes of being to more refined patterns of interaction receives a stable foundation. The Daoist adept then engages in more all-encompassing “forgetfulness” (*wang* 忘), forgetting personality, familial and societal expectations and obligations, as well as other forms of limited and limiting consciousness. At this stage, clarity and stillness become one’s daily sustenance, one’s constant ontological condition. This is the state of concentration or absorption (*ding* 定). One abides in a condition of almost complete realization (*liaoda* 了達) and awakening (*wu* 悟); it is here that the illuminated heart-mind (*zhaoxin* 照心) emerges. This is a return to innate nature (*xing* 性), the heart-mind with which one was born. With clarity and stillness stabilized, one merges more completely with the Dao, and spirit, as the Dao made manifest, becomes all-pervading.

There is also some technical terminology that deserves mention. The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* emphasizes specific meditation-related terminology. One is advised to dedicate oneself to the practice of “observation” (*guan* 觀). The character *guan* 觀 consists of *guan* 鴈 (“egret”) and *jian* 見 (“to see”). Observation is the quality of an egret remaining attentive to barely visible or unseen presences. Observation may, in turn, become one’s constant way of being. One cultivates a calm and quiet heart-mind as well as attentiveness to various energetic influences. Observation leads to a merging with the Dao as Source as well as to the ability to experience and relate in more realized (less egoistic) ways.⁴

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* emphasizes an understanding of the body-self (*shen* 身) in its various layers. The text identifies the following constituents: vital essence (*jing* 精), subtle breath (*qi* 氣), spirit (*shen* 神), heart-mind (*xin* 心), ethereal soul (*hun* 魂), and corporeal soul (*po* 魄). In the most conventional terms, vital essence, qi, and spirit are understood along a spectrum, from the most substantial to the most subtle or refined. In the later Daoist tradition, these three aspects of the body-self are referred to as the Three Treasures (*sanbao* 三寶). The character *jing* 精 consists of *mi* 米 (“rice”) and *qing* 青 (“azure,” but also “pure”). Etymologically, it refers to young or unprocessed rice. By extension, it refers to the essence of things. In classical Chinese medicine, vital essence is understood as a more substantial aspect of qi, and qi is understood as a more subtle aspect of vital essence. Here vital essence relates to the actual physical foundation of health and vitality: seminal fluids (*jing* 精) in men and blood (*xue* 血) in women. The connection between vital essence and qi may also be understood etymologically: *qi* 氣 consists of *mi* 米 (“rice”) with *qi* 气 (“vapor” or “steam”). Both the characters for vital essence and qi contain the component for “rice.” As vital essence is rice in grain form, qi is rice in vapor form. Through the “cooking” (refining) of rice grain, steam is produced; through the cooking of vital essence, qi is produced. Finally, *shen* 神 relates to “spiritual dimensions” (*shi* 示), omens and similar divine manifestations, and the establishment and attendance to such a connection (*shen* 申). Spirit relates to consciousness and “divine” capacities more generally.

Spirit is also associated with the heart-mind in its purer or original condition. Recalling earlier views expressed in the Techniques of the Heart-mind (*xinshu* 心術) chapters of the *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan), the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* understands Daoist practice as ultimately connected to consciousness and spirit (*shen* 神), with particular emphasis placed on the ability of the heart-mind (心) either to attain spirit immortality (*shenxian* 神仙) or to separate the adept from the Dao as Source. Here the heart-mind is understood both as a physical location in the chest (the heart [*xin* 心] as “organ” [*zang* 臟]) and as relating to thoughts (*nian* 念) and emotions (*qing* 清) (the heart as “consciousness” [*shi* 識]). Intellectual and emotional activity is a possible source of dissipation and disruption. In this respect, the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* also emphasizes the connection between the heart-mind and the eyes (*mu* 目). When the eyes are directed outward and concerned with external phenomena, the heart-mind becomes confused and spirit becomes disoriented.⁵ However, when stilled (*jing* 靜) and stabilized (*ding* 定), the heart-mind is associated with innate nature (*xing* 性), the givenness (*ziran* 自然) and the actualization (*xiu* 修) of one’s innate endowment from and connection with the Dao. This return to one’s original nature (*benxing* 本性) is the attainment of mystical unification (*dedao* 得道).

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* also mentions other “spiritual” aspects of the body-self, including the *hun* 魂 and *po* 魄. The character for *hun* consists of *gui* 鬼 (“ghost”) and *yun* 云 (“cloud”), and is thus sometimes rendered as “cloud soul.” The character for *po* consists of *gui* 鬼 (“ghost”) and *bai* 白 (“white”), and is thus sometimes rendered as “white soul.” Under one interpretation, the association with “white” invokes the bones (*gu* 骨) and the *po*’s connection to the body. The *hun*, here translated as “ethereal soul,” is yang in nature. It is associated with the liver, the heavens, and thinking. The *po*, here translated as “corporeal soul,” is yin in nature. It is associated with the lungs, the earth, and feeling. From a classical perspective, both of these “souls” are ephemeral in nature. When the ordinary human being dies, the *hun* ascends as a spiritual entity, eventually dissipating into the cosmos; the *po* descends with the body,

eventually decomposing with the body and bones. However, through alchemical transformation, these various corporeal entities are merged into a single, composite being.

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* also employs various technical terms originating in classical Daoism, derived from texts such as the “Neiye” 內業 (Inward Training) chapter of the *Guanzi* 管子 (Book of Master Guan), *Laozi* 老子 (Book of Venerable Masters), and *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Book of Master Zhuang). These include inner power (*de* 德), non-action (*wuwei* 無為), and suchness (*ziran* 自然), also rendered as being-so-of-itself, spontaneity, or naturalness. Inner power, sometimes translated as virtue, is the inherent connection (*tong* 通) that one has with the Dao; it is the “nature” (*xing* 性) or “life-destiny” (*ming* 命) that has been endowed by the Dao. By extension, inner power is the overall manifestation of the Dao in and as one’s life. The more that one maintains such a connection and actualizes such potential, the more one comes to embody the Dao as being-in-the-world. Here technically rendered as “non-action,” *wuwei* 無為 involves a way of being that avoids contrived, artificial, or fabricated behavior. The more technical translation of *wuwei* as “non-action” encompasses this notion of effortless activity. In some sense, “acting through non-action” (*wei wuwei* 為無為) presupposes a process of purification (*jing* 淨), return (*gui* 歸), and reversal (*fan* 反). By purifying the heart-mind of intellectual and emotional turmoil, one returns to being through one’s innate nature (*xing* 性), the heart-mind with which one was born. This condition is *ziran* 自然, suchness or being-so-as-onself.

Similarly, the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* speaks of the “qi of emptiness” (*xuqi* 虛氣), “sitting-in-forgetfulness” (*zuowang* 坐忘), and “returning to the Source” (*guigen* 歸根). The “qi of emptiness,” or “empty qi,” may be understood in a variety of ways. First, it is the qi that preceded the cosmos in its manifest or differentiated state. In this sense, it is the primordial or original qi (*yuanqi* 元氣), and is thus connected with the emanations of the Undifferentiated (*wuji* 無機) and Primordial Chaos (*hundun* 混沌). Another possible understanding is that “emptiness” is the quality of qi; that is, qi is subtle and mysterious, as though non-existent. It

is not a “substance.” In this sense, the “qi of emptiness” recalls two influential passages from classical Daoism. The first appears in chapter forty-two of the Laozi: “The Dao generated the One (*yi* 一); the One generated the two (*er* 二); the two generated the three (*san* 三); and the three generated the ten thousand beings (*wanwu* 萬物). The ten thousand beings carry *yin* 陰 and embrace *yang* 陽, and it is the empty qi (*chongqi* 沖氣) that harmonizes these. “Similarly, in chapter four of the *Zhuangzi* explains, “Make your aspirations (*zhi* 志) one. Don’t listen with your ears; listen with your heart-mind (*xin* 心). No, don’t listen with your heart-mind, listen with your qi. Listening stops with the ears, the heart-mind stops with recognition, but qi is empty and waits on all things (*qi ye zhe xu er dai wu zhe ye* 氣也者虛而待物者也). The Dao gathers in emptiness alone. Emptiness is the fasting of the heart-mind (*xinzhai* 心齋).”

“Sitting-in-forgetfulness” (*zuowang* 坐忘; lit., “sit and forget”) also originates in the *Zhuangzi*: “I’m improving... I can sit-in-forgetfulness (*zuowang* 坐忘) . . . 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 Pervasion (*datong* 大通). This is what I mean by sitting-in-forgetfulness” (ch. 6; Waston 1968, 90).⁶ In his commentary on this passage, Guo Xiang 郭象 (252-312), a representative of the Xuanxue 玄學 (Profound Learning) hermeneutical school, gives the following explanation: “In the condition of sitting-in-forgetfulness, what is not forgotten? First one forgets every residual trace (*ji* 跡). One also forgets that which caused the residual trace. Internally, one is unaware that there is a body-self; externally, one is unaware that there are the heavens and earth. Then one becomes completely empty (*kuang* 曠) and unified with transformation (*bianhua* 變). There is nothing that is not pervaded (*tong* 通)” (DZ 745, 8.39b). Sitting-in-forgetfulness is a meditation method through which one cultivates forgetting everything that separates one from mystical absorption.⁷ This practice became more fully systematized in Sima Chengzhen’s Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness. The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* also discusses Daoist cultivation as a process of “returning to the Source” (*guigen* 歸根). This phrase occurs in the preface, section 1b, and section 4a. In the latter, we find a direct quotation from

chapter sixteen of the *Laozi*: “Returning to the Source (*guigen* 歸根) is called stillness (*jing* 靜); this means returning to life-destiny (*guiming* 歸命). Returning to life-destiny is called constancy (*chang* 常); knowing constancy is called illumination (*ming* 明)” (also ch. 52). Stillness and emptiness create the space for numinous pervasion (*lingtong* 靈通), a return to the Dao as Source and unnamable mystery.

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* also employs various terms from classical Chinese and Daoist cosmology. First, we find a number of references to yin 陰 and yang 陽. Etymologically speaking, yin 陰 depicts a hill (*fu* 阜) covered by shadows (*yin* 衾), while yang 陽 depicts a hill (*fu* 阜) covered by sunlight (*yang* 暉). At the root-meaning level, yin and yang are ways of speaking about the same place at different moments/ times of the day. Yin and yang are not “polar opposites” or antagonistic substances; they are, in fact, complementary principles, aspects, or forces. As the characters suggest, yin and yang are used to represent different dimensions of the same phenomena or situation. By extension, there are various associations: yin/ female/ earth/ dark/ heavy/ turbidity/ rest and yang/ male/ heavens/ light/ light/ clarity/ activity. In the context of a classical Chinese worldview in general and Daoism in particular, life is seen as depending on the mutually beneficial interaction of yin and yang. The Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行) are closely associated with the cosmological map of yin-yang. The Five Phases are Wood (*mu* 木), Fire (*huo* 火), Earth (*tu* 土), Metal (*jin* 金), Water (*shui* 水). The Five Phases are the centerpiece of the so-called “system of correspondences” or “systematic correspondence.” Also referred to as “naturalistic medicine,” this system of correspondences consists of various associations, including phase, season, emblem, direction, life-stage, orientation, climate, orbs, spiritual dimension, color, flavor, odor, sound, beneficial emotion, injurious emotion, sense organ, grain, planet, tissue, etc. In this respect, the text also refers to the Five Flavors (*wuwei* 五味). These are the flavors associated with the Five Phases: sour (wood/liver), bitter (fire/heart), sweet (earth/spleen), spicy (metal/lungs), and salty (water/kidneys). The *Book of Celestial Seclusion* also mentions the Three Powers (*sancai* 三才). The Three Powers refer to the heavens (*tian* 天), earth (*di* 地), and humanity (*ren* 人), with the phrase going back

to the *Yijing* 易經 (Classic of Changes). In the later Daoist tradition, the locus classicus for the Three Powers is the *Yinfu jing* 陰符經 (Scripture on the Hidden Talisman; DZ 31): “Heaven and earth steal from the ten thousand beings; the ten thousand beings steal from humanity; humanity steals from the ten thousand beings. When the Three Bandits are correctly ordered, the Three Powers (*sancai* 三才) are then at peace” (1b).

Finally, a number of other Daoist technical terms appear in the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion*. The first is *daoguo* 道果, literally “fruit of the Dao,” here rendered as “culmination of the Dao.” This phrase refers to various signs or accomplishments (*gong* 功) that emerge during dedicated Daoist practice. For example, the *Haikong zhizang jing* 海空智藏經 (Scripture of Master Haikong zhizang; DZ 9; DH 73) describes five stages of Daoist attainment as “fruits of the Dao” (*daoguo* 道果). These include terrestrial immortal (*dixian* 地仙), flying immortal (*feixian* 飛仙), self-contained (*zizai* 自在), without dissipation (*wulou* 無漏), and non-action (*wuwei* 無為). The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* also mentions the practice of “abstention from grains” (*quegu* 卻穀) or “avoidance of cereals” (*bigu* 辟穀), here referred to as “not eating cereals” (*jue shi li* 絕食粒).⁸ Sometimes interpreted as fasting more generally, abstention from cereals, in early Daoist contexts, is associated with eliminating the Three Worms (*sanchong* 三蟲) or Three Deathbringers (*sanshi* 三尸), also translated as Three Corpses. Residing in the three elixir fields (*dantian* 丹田), the Three Worms may be understood as “spiritual parasites.” The late Tang-dynasty (618 -907) *Chu sanshi jiuchong jing* 除三尸九蟲經 (Scripture on Expelling the Three Deathbringers and Nine Worms; DZ 871) contains illustrations of the Three Deathbringers (7a-8a), wherein they are identified as follows: Peng Ju 彭据 (upper), Peng Zhi 彭質 (middle), and Peng Jiao 彭橋 (lower) (also DZ 817). Other texts, such as the *Sanchong zhongjing* 三蟲中經 (Central Scripture on the Three Deathbringers; Yunji qiqian, DZ 1032, 81.15b-17a), provide alternative names: Qinggu 青古 (Blue Decrepitude; upper), Baigu 白姑 (White Hag; middle), and Xueshi 血尸 (Bloody Corpse; lower) (also DZ 303, 4a).⁹ These harmful entities depend on cereals or grains for nourishment and attempt to bring the human being to early death. By eliminating cereals, the Daoist adept aims at

expelling these negative influences. On a symbolic level, one may also think of these “entities” as the harmful manifestation of the related spiritual abode. Under this reading, the lower elixir field (perineum) relates to either the conservation (positive) or dissipation (negative) of vital essence (*jing* 精). The “worm” in this case would be desire. The middle elixir field (abdomen) relates to either the conservation or dissipation of qi. The “worm” in this case would be various emotional and intellectual tendencies, with anger (*nu* 怒) being one of the most injurious. Finally, the upper elixir field (head) relates to either the conservation or dissipation of spirit (*shen* 神). The “worm” in this case would be excessive speaking or gazing. The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* emphasizes that dietary restrictions such as abstinence from grains are only expedient measures.

The text also emphasizes the necessity of a chamber of quiescence (*jingshi* 靜室) as a practice space. Also referred to as pure rooms (*qingshe* 清舍 / *jingshe* 靜舍), these are meditation chambers for solitary practice. Traditionally, such pure chambers were small, detached wooden huts where Daoists engaged in purification, ritual offerings, and meditation. Furnishings were restricted to an incense burner, incense lamp, petition table, and scholar’s knife. The text also refers to this enclosure as a “chamber of seclusion” (*ju’an zhi shi* 居安之室) and seems to provide a fragmentary description of its architectural characteristics (3a).

The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* conceives of this Daoist training regimen as resulting in a specific goal: spirit immortality (*shenxian* 神仙) or spirit liberation (*shenjie* 神解). Within the Daoist tradition, one way of mapping spiritual progress centers on types of “immortality” or “transcendence” (*xian* 仙/權). Etymologically speaking, the character *xian* 仙 contains the *ren* 人 (“person”) radical with *shan* 山 (“mountain”). A variant (僊) consists of *ren* 人 with *xian* (“flying”). Etymologically, then, a *xian* is a mountain recluse and/or an ecstatic traveler. One of the earliest expressions of such “ranks” (*deng* 等) or “classes” (*pin* 品) of immortals appears in Ge Hong’s 葛洪 (*Baopuzi* 抱朴子 [Master Embracing Simplicity]; 283-343) *Baopuzi neipian* 抱朴子內篇 (Inner Chapters of Master Embracing Simplicity; DZ 1185). Here we find the following:

Superior adepts (*shangshi* 上士) who rise up in their bodies (*xing* 行) and ascend to the Void (*xu* 虛) are called celestial immortals (*tianxian* 天仙). Mid-level adepts (*zhongshi* 中士) who wander among renowned mountains are called terrestrial immortals (*dixian* 地仙). Lesser adepts (*xiashi* 下士) who first die and then slough off (*xiansi houshui* 先死後脫) are called corpse-liberated immortals (*shijie xian* 尸解仙). (2.1 1a)

As time went on, this classification system and typology became developed and transformed in a variety of ways. For example, the late Tang-dynasty (618-907) *Chuandao ji* 傳道記 (Record of the Transmission of the Dao; DZ 263, j. 14-16; trl. Wo ng 2000) explains, “The immortals have five ranks (*wudeng* 五等), including ghost immortal (*guixian* 鬼仙), human immortal (*renxian* 人仙), terrestrial immortal (*dixian* 地仙), and spirit immortal (*shenxian* 神仙). The celestial immortal (*tianxian* 天仙) is beyond rank. All of these are immortals” (14.2b). As these passages indicate, the meaning of *xian* differs depending on historical context and the Daoist sub-tradition involved. “Immortal” suggests that such adepts have achieved some form of eternal life, while “transcendent” implies that they have “gone beyond” some limitation. However, one must keep in mind that “immortality “ may not be “personal”, and personality may be what inhibits such realization. While a shift in ontological condition is involved, the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* seems to envision “spirit immortality” and “spirit liberation” as transpersonal in nature. “Such a condition resides in cultivating our own qi of emptiness (*xuqi* 虛氣) and not becoming entangled in the mundane world. It is found in our own suchness (*ziran* 自然) and not becoming disoriented by deviant views (*xiejian* 邪見)” (1 a). And with regard to spirit liberation, “When the four gates (*simen* 四門) of trust (*xin* 信), withdrawal (*lan* 閱), insight (*hui* 慧), and absorption (*ding* 定) have become pervaded by spirit (*tongshen* 通神), we call this spirit liberation (*shenjie* 神解). The meaning of ‘spirit’ here refers to that which arrives without moving and is swift without haste. It pervades the transformations of yin and yang and is as old as the heavens and earth” (4b).

In the present translation, I have not translated the various notes attached to the text of the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* as preserved in the Ming-dynasty Daoist Canon. In addition, I have amended the text to include a few sentences contained in the *Daoshu* 道樞 (Pivot of the Dao; DZ 1017, 2,4a-6b) and *Congshu chengji* 叢書集成 (Compendium of Collected Works) versions. For the most part, both of these decisions stem from careful reflection and an attempt to clarify the text's meaning. From my perspective, the short notes found in the Daoist Canon edition provide very few additional insights. The one exception appears in the first section, "spirit immortality" (*shenxian* 神仙). Here we find the following:

Pleasure (*xi* 喜), anger (*nu* 怒), grief (*ai* 哀), excessive joy (*le* 樂), personal love (*ai* 愛), hatred (*wu* 惡), and desire (*yu* 欲) are the Seven Deviations (*qixie* 七邪) of the emotions (*qing* 情). Wind (*feng* 風), cold (*han* 寒), heat (*shu* 暑), dampness (*shi* 濕), hunger (*ji* 飢), satiation (*bao* 飽), labor (*lao* 勞), and idleness (*yi* 逸) are the Eight Deviations (*baxie* 八邪) of qi. Abandoning these deviations is to complete (*cheng* 成) the accomplishment of immortality (*xiangong* 仙功).

An alternative translation of the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* may be found in Livia Kohn's article "The Teaching of T'ien-yintzu" (1987a) and in her book *Seven Steps to the Tao* (1987b), both of which include translations of the notes.¹⁰ The former also contains information on issues of authorship as well as on the history and content of the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion*. The latter is a systematic discussion of Sima Chengzhen's *Discourse on Sitting-in-Forgetfulness* in the context of Tang-dynasty meditative and mystical systems. Both of these publications also contain detailed annotations. Information on the life of Sima Chengzhen may be found in Ute Engelhardt's *Die klassische Tradition der Qi-Übungen: Eine Darstellung anhand des Tang-zeitlichen Textes 'Fuqi jingyi lun' von Sima Chengzhen* (1987).

Notes

1. Descriptions of these texts may be found in Kohn 1998a; Kohn and Kirkland 2000. On Daoist texts translated to date see Komjathy 2003.

2. Reading *yijian* 易簡 as “simplicity” is supported by its appearance in other editions as *jianyi* 簡易.

3. The emphasis throughout the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* on “gradual progress” (*jian* 漸) recalls the distinction within the Chan 禪 (Zen) Buddhist tradition. Within that context, the path to Buddhist realization is debated in terms of “suddenness” (*dun* 頓) versus “gradualness” (*jian* 漸). The *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion*, as one might anticipate, takes a traditional Daoist perspective of balance, moderation, and gradual progress.

4. Interestingly, Daoist temples and monasteries also receive the designation of *guan* 觀, here meaning “observatory.” Daoist temples provide a communal context for inquiry into the external cosmos and introspection of internal worlds.

5. The connection between the heart-mind and eyes in Daoist practice is eloquently expressed in Wu Yun’s 吳筠 (d. 778) *Xinmu lun* 心目論 (Discourse on the Heart-mind and Eyes; DZ 1038). A translation of this text may be found in Kohn 1998b.

6. In translating *wang* 忘 as “forgetfulness” rather than “forget” or “forgetting,” I am identifying “forgetfulness” as a hypostatization. As Michael LaFargue has suggested, “To hypostatize something is to speak of it as though it were an independent entity or force.... Laoists [members of an early inner cultivation lineage] hypostatized the quality of mind they cultivated, for instance speaking of ‘bringing about Stillness’ as a mental state or quality, but also of Stillness as an independent force that is ‘the Norm of the World, (5 [45]: 4)’ (LaFargue 1992, 229-30; also 53-85; 243).

7. In this respect, it is also interesting that the *Book of Master Celestial Seclusion* speaks of “Daoist techniques” or “techniques of the Dao” (*daoshu* 道術). As Harold Roth has shown, this designation occurs somewhat frequently in classical Daoist literature (see Roth 1999, 181-85). Thus, one characteristic shared within the Daoist tradition is the practice of such techniques. One might, in turn, propose that an alternative name for

Daoists is Technicians of the Way or Technicians of the Mysterious, with “mysterious” (*xuan* 玄) being another classical designation for the Dao.

8. Traditionally, there are five grains (*wugu* 五穀), associated with the Five Phases (*wuxing* 五行) and their related yin-orbs (*zang* 藏/臟). The associated “grains” receive different designations. One map includes the following: wheat (wood/liver), beans (fire/heart), rice (earth/spleen), oats (metal/lungs), and millet (water/kidneys). Under one understanding, when these five grains are eliminated, the “five sprouts” (*wuya* 五芽) or beneficial energies emerge in each orb.

9. With regard to the Three Deathbringers, the three elixir fields are most often identified as follows: *Niwan gong* 泥丸宮 (Palace of Nirvana; center of head), *Jianggong* 絳宮 (Vermillion Palace; heart region), and *Qihai* 氣海 (Ocean of Qi; lower abdomen).

10. Kohn’s translation of the Book of Master Celestial Seclusion was reprinted in her *The Taoist Experience* (1993).

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Translation (翻譯)

BOOK OF MASTER CELESTIAL SECLUSION

Preface by Sima Chengzhen

The path to spirit immortality takes perpetual life as the foundation. The essentials of perpetual life take nourishing qi as the beginning. This qi is received from the heavens and earth; it is harmonized through yin and yang. When spirit is empty amidst yin and yang, we call this the heart-mind. The agents of the heart-mind during day and night, waking and sleeping, are the ethereal soul and corporeal soul. Through them, the human body is never far from the path to spirit immortality.

I do not know where Master Celestial Seclusion came from. He wrote this book in eight sections, encompassing the secret and wondrous. It covers topics not easily attained among ordinary humans through study and observation alone.

Speaking of cultivating and refining form and qi, as well as nourishing and harmonizing the heart-mind with emptiness, “returning to the Source” goes back to Boyang [Laozi], while “bestowing illumination” originates with Zhuang Zhou [Zhuangzi]. Perpetual life and expansive vision also begin with these works. I have personally studied the Dao. Feeling compassion for people of the mundane world who often die prematurely without realizing perfect longevity, I wished to transmit these teachings to those with similar aspirations. I have simplified them so that they can be practiced and referred to easily. From Boyang to Master Celestial Seclusion, there has only been this teaching.

Spirit Immortality

When human beings are born, they are endowed with the qi of emptiness. Their vital essence and illumination are connected and awakened. When studying is not obstructed or hindered, we may then speak of “spirit.” Stabilize spirit internally, and bestow illumination externally. Through this, one becomes different than ordinary people. We may then speak of “spirit immortality.” Thus, a spirit immortal is also a human being. Such a condition resides in cultivating our own qi of emptiness and not becoming entangled in the mundane world. It is found in our own suchness and not becoming disoriented by deviant views.

Simplicity

The *Yijing (Classic of Changes)* [*I Ching*] says, “The way of the heavens and earth is simple.” What does this mean?

Master Celestial Seclusion says, “The heavens are above my head and the earth is beneath my feet. Opening my eyes, I can see them fully, without

relying on any binding artifice to communicate. Thus, it may be said that simplicity is the inner power of spirit immortality.”

What path, then, should be used to seek this?

Master Celestial Seclusion says, “Without seeking you cannot know it; without a path you cannot complete it. Now, in studying spirit immortality, you must first realize simplicity. If the teachings are involved, unusual, or cunning, they will only lead people astray. They will not lead to a return to the Source. Such is not my teaching.”

Gates of Gradual Progress

The *Yijing* contains the hexagram Jian (Gradual Progress). Laozi speaks of the gateway to the wondrous. Humans cultivating perfection and realizing innate nature cannot expect sudden awakening. Instead, one must focus on gradual progress and advance towards it. One must abide in calmness and practice it. Thus, the gates of gradual progress have been established.

The first is purification and abstention. The second is seclusion. The third is visualization. The fourth is sitting-in-forgetfulness. The fifth is spirit liberation.

What does purification and abstention mean? It means cleansing the body-self and emptying the heart-mind.

What does seclusion mean? It means withdrawing deep into a chamber of quiescence.

What does visualization mean? It means gathering the heart-mind and recovering innate nature.

What does sitting-in-forgetfulness means? It means abandoning form and forgetting oneself.

What does spirit liberation mean? It means that the ten thousand dharmas are pervaded by spirit.

Thus, when you practice these five gates of gradual progress, completely realize the first before gradually progressing to the second. Completely realize the second before gradually progressing to the third. Completely realize the third before gradually progressing to the fourth. Completely realize the fourth before gradually progressing to the fifth. Then spirit immortality will be completed.

Purification and Abstention

Purification and abstention do not merely involve living on vegetables and roots. Cleansing the body is not merely bathing to remove the dirt. Instead, this method involves regulating food intake so that there is harmony and balance and massaging the body so that it comes to give off a radiant glow.

Now, a human being is endowed with the qi of the Five Phases, and consumes things associated the Five Phases. From the time one receives form in the womb, one inhales and exhales as well as circulates vital essence and blood. How could it be possible to abandon eating and still seek perpetual life?

However, people of the mundane world do not know that refraining from food intake and ingesting qi [服氣, *Fúqì*, “Absorbing Qi”] are only expedient measures utilized by Daoists (*daojia*). It is not the case that Daoists permanently stop eating cereals [辟谷, *Bìgǔ*]. When we speak of purification and abstention with regards to eating, purification refers to cleansing and purifying our nourishment, while abstention refers to regulating and being attentive to our intake.

When you are hungry, you should eat, but never to satiation. This is what we mean by harmony and balance.

Do not eat anything not well cooked. Do not eat anything wherein the Five Flavors are in excess. Do not eat anything rotten or preserved. These are the basic abstentions.

Constantly massage your skin with your hands until it becomes moist and warm. This will expel all the cold qi. This is what we mean by making the body give off a radiant glow.

Refrain from long sitting, long standing, and excessive labor. These are the basic abstentions. They are methods for harmonizing and regulating the body.

When the body is strengthened, qi is complete. For this reason, purification and abstention are the first stage in the gates of gradual progress.

Seclusion

What does seclusion mean? It has nothing to do with living in ornate halls, in cavernous buildings, or on double matting and thick carpeting. It means meditating while facing south, sleeping with one's head to the east, and maintaining harmony between yin and yang. Light and darkness should be in balance. A room should not be too high. If it is too high, yang will be dominant and light will be excessive. A room also should not be too low. If it is too low, yin will be dominant and darkness will be excessive. This is because when light is excessive the corporeal soul [魄, *Pò*] will be harmed. Similarly, when darkness is excessive the ethereal soul [魂, *Hún*] will be harmed.

In human beings, the ethereal soul is yang, while the corporeal soul is yin. If they are injured through light or darkness, then sickness and disease will arise. Dwelling in this manner relates to a chamber of seclusion. In addition, one may consider the qi of the heavens and earth. There may be overbearing yang that attacks the flesh, or excessive yin that overpowers the body. How can one not guard against these?

If you do not follow these methods during the gradual advance of cultivating and nourishing, you are not according with the Daoist technique of seclusion.

Thus Master Celestial Seclusion says, “The room in which I live has windows in each of the four directions. When wind arises, I close them. When wind ceases, I open them. A curtain is suspended in front of my meditation seat. A screen is placed behind it. When it is too bright, I lower the curtain to adjust the light inside. When it is too dark, I raise the curtain to allow the light in from outside. On the inside, I calm my heart-mind, while on the outside I calm my eyes. Both the heart-mind and eyes must be calmed. If either light or darkness prevails, there will be too many external concerns and planning. There will also be too many emotions and desires. How then could one calm oneself internally and externally?” Thus, in studying the Dao, seclusion is the second step.

Visualization

Visualization involves visualizing our spirit. Imaging means creating an image of our body. Close the eyes, and then you will see your own eyes. Gather the heart-mind, and then you will see your own heart-mind. The heart-mind and eyes should not be separate from our own bodies. They should not be allowed to injure our spirit. This is the gradual progress of visualization.

Now, the eyes of ordinary people, to the end of their days, only perceive other people. Thus the heart-mind tends to become conditioned by the external. To the end of their days, they become grafted onto the affairs of others. Thus, the eyes become conditioned by the external. Bright and expansive, the radiance and illumination overflows without becoming inverted. How can such people not become sick and die prematurely?

Thus, returning to the Source is called stillness. Stillness means returning to life-destiny. Complete innate nature and preserve it – this is the gateway to all wonders. Through the gradual realization of visualization, the accomplishment of studying the Dao is half complete.

Sitting-in-Forgetfulness

Sitting-in-forgetfulness follows visualization and is its actualization. Through it, visualization is forgotten. When acting through the Dao, do not see your personal action. Is this not the meaning of sitting? When seeing something, do not act based on your seeing. Is this not the meaning of forgetting? Why is this called not acting? It is because the heart-mind remains unmoving. Why is this called not seeing? It is because form is completely obliterated.

Someone asks, “If the heart-mind is unmoving, does one have the Dao?” Master Celestial Seclusion remains silent and does not answer. Another asks, “If form is completely obliterated, does one have the Dao?” Master Celestial Seclusion closes his eyes and pays no attention. This someone awakens to the Dao and withdraws, saying, “The culmination of the Dao is within me. What person is this ‘me’? What person is actually Master Celestial Seclusion?” Thus, self and other are both forgotten by realizing that there is nothing to illuminate.

Spirit Liberation

The first stage, purification and abstention, is called liberation through trust.

The second stage, seclusion, is called liberation through withdrawal.

The third stage, visualization, is called liberation through insight.

The fourth stage, sitting-in-forgetfulness, is called liberation through absorption.

When the four gates of trust, withdrawal, insight, and absorption have become pervaded by spirit, we call this spirit liberation. The meaning of “spirit” here refers to that which arrives without moving and is swift without haste. It pervades the transformations of yin and yang and is as old as the heavens and earth.

When the Three Powers are combined, we speak of the changes.

When the ten thousand beings are made equal, we speak of the Dao and inner power.

When unified innate nature is realized in its original condition, we speak of perfect suchness.

Master Celestial Seclusion says, “I am born with the changes. I will die with the changes. I move in accordance with the ten thousand beings, and I am still in accordance with the ten thousand beings.

Deviance comes from unified innate nature; perfection comes from unified innate nature. Thus, through spirit I am liberated from life and death, movement and stillness, deviance and perfection. Among human beings, we call such beings immortals [仙, *Xiān*]. Among the waters, we call such beings water immortals [水仙, *Shuǐ Xiān*]. On the earth, we call such beings terrestrial immortals [地仙, *Dì Xiān*]. Among the heavens, we call such beings celestial immortals [天仙, *Tiān Xiān*]. When pervading all and completely transformed, we call them spirit immortals [神仙, *Shén Xiān*].

Thus the way of spirit immortality consists of five gates of gradual study. They all lead to a single goal.

Chinese Text (中文)

天隱子

序

神仙之道，以長生為本。長生之要，以養氣為先。夫氣受之於天地，和之於陰陽。陰陽神虛謂之心，心主晝夜寤寐，謂之魂魄。如此，人之身大率不遠乎神仙之道。天隱子，吾不知其何許人，著書八篇，包括秘妙，殆非人間所能力學。觀夫修鍊形氣，養和心虛，歸根契於伯陽，遺照齊於莊叟。長生久視，無出是書。服習道風，惜乎世人天促真壽，思欲之同志，使簡易而行。信哉。自伯陽而來，唯天隱子而已矣。

神仙

人生時稟得虛氣，精明通悟，學無滯塞，則講之神宅。神於內遺照，於外自然，異於俗人，則謂之神仙。故神仙亦人也。在於修我虛氣，勿為世俗所論折，逐我自然，勿為邪見所凝滯，則成功矣。

易簡

易曰：天地之道易簡者，何也？天隱子曰：天地在我首之上，足之下，開目盡見，無假繁巧而言，故曰易簡。簡者，神仙之德也。然則以何道求之？曰：無求不能知，無道不能成。凡學神仙，先知易簡。苟言涉奇詭，適足使人執迷，無所歸本，此非吾學也。

漸門

易有漸卦，老氏有妙門。人之修真達性，不能頓悟，必須漸而進之，安而行之，故設漸門。一曰齋戒，二曰安處，三曰存想，四曰坐忘，五曰神解。何謂齋戒？曰澡身虛心。何謂安處？曰深居靜室。何謂存想？曰收心得性。何謂坐忘？曰遺形忘我。何謂神解？曰萬法通神。是故習此五漸之門者，了一則漸次至二，了二則漸次至三，了三則漸次至四，了四則漸次至五，神仙成矣。

齋戒

齋戒者，非蔬茹飲食而已，澡身非湯浴去垢而已。蓋其法在節食調中、磨擦暢外者也。夫人稟五行之氣，而食五行之物，而實自胞胎有形也，呼吸精血，豈可去食而求長生。但世人不知休糧服氣，道家權宜，非永絕食粒之謂也。食之有齋戒者，齋乃潔淨之務，戒乃節慎之稱。有飢即食，食勿令飽，此所謂調中也。百味未成熟勿食，五味大多勿食，腐敗閉氣之物勿食，此皆宜戒也。手常磨擦，皮膚溫熱，熨去冷氣，此所謂暢外也。久坐久立勞役，皆宜戒也。此是調理形骸之法。形堅則氣全，是以齋戒為漸門之首矣。

安處

何謂安處？曰：非華堂邃宇、重栴廣榻之謂也。在乎南向而坐，東首而寢，陰陽適中，明暗相半。屋無高，高則陽盛而明多。屋無卑，卑則陰盛而暗多。故明多則傷魄，暗多則傷魂，人之魂陽而魄陰，苟傷明暗，則疾病生焉。此所謂居處之室，尚使之然。況天地之氣，有亢陽之攻肌，淫陰之侵體，豈不防慎哉。修養之漸，倘不法此，非安處之道。術曰：吾所居室，四邊皆窗戶，遇風即闔，風息即開。吾所居座，前簾後屏，太明則下簾以和其內，太暗則捲簾以通其外。內以安心，外以安目，心目皆安矣。明暗尚然，況大多事慮、大多情欲，豈能安其內外哉。故學道以安處為次。

存想

存謂存我之神，想謂想我之身。閉目即見自己之目，收心即見自己之心。心與目皆不離，我身不傷，我神則存，想之漸也。凡人目終日視他人，故心亦逐外走，終日接他事，故目亦逐外瞻。營營浮光，未嘗復照，奈何不病且夭邪？是以歸根曰靜，靜曰復命，誠性存存，眾妙之門。此存想之漸，學道之功半矣。

坐忘

坐忘者，因存想而得也，因存想而忘也。行道而不見其行，非坐之義乎？有見而不行其見，非忘之義乎？何謂不行？曰心不動故。何謂不見？曰形都泯。故天隱子瞑而不視。或者悟道，乃退曰：道果在我矣。我果何人哉？天隱子果何人哉？於是彼我兩忘，了無所照。

神解

一齋戒，謂之信解。言無信心，即不能解。二安處，謂之閑解。言無閑心，即不能解。三存想，謂之慧解。言無慧心，即不能解。四坐忘，謂之定解。言無定心，即不能解。信定閑慧四門通神，謂之神解。故神之為義，不行而至，不疾而速，陰陽變通，天地長久，兼三才而言謂之易。《繫辭》曰：易窮則變，變則通，通則久。齊萬物而言，謂之道德。老子《道經》、《德經》是也。本一性而言，謂之真如。天隱子生乎易中，死乎易中，動因萬物，靜因萬物，邪由一性。真由一性，是以生死、動靜、邪真，吾皆以神而解之，在人謂之仙。

矣。在天曰天仙，在地曰地仙。故神仙之道五歸一門。謂五漸終同歸於仙矣。