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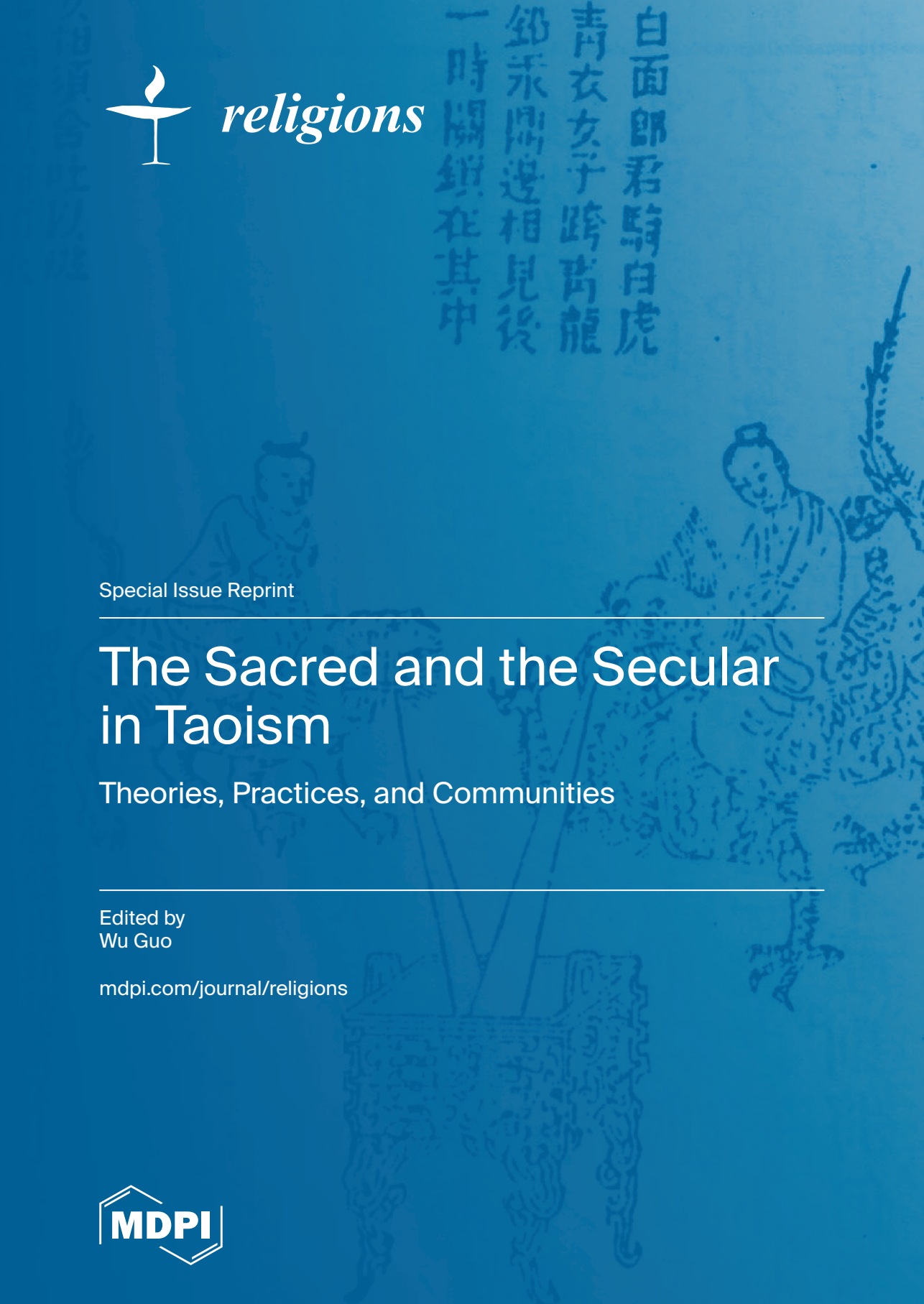

Special Issue Reprint

The Sacred and the Secular in Taoism

Theories, Practices, and Communities

Edited by
Wu Guo

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The Sacred and the Secular in Taoism: Theories, Practices, and Communities

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Editor

Wu Guo

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Contents

About the Editor

Wu Guo

Wu Guo is a distinguished professor of the Department of Religious Studies of Shandong University, as well as the Executive Director of the Jao Tsung-I Institute for Studies on Religions and Chinese Culture. His research interests are Taoist Ideology, Taoist History, and Taoist Scriptures, with representative publications including *The Taoism and the Culture of Yunnan (2000), Studies on the Jingming-zhongxiao-quanshu (2005), and the co-authored book History of Chinese Taoist Thoughts* (edited by QING Xitai, 2009). He presided over a number of research projects such as "Studies on Jingming Sect of Taoism" (2005–2010), "Studies on Taoism in Ming and Qing Dynasties" (2011–2017), and "Compilation of the New Interpretation on Taoist Terminologies" (2018–2023). As of now, he is a Vice Chairman of the Association for Research on Laozi and Taoist Culture, a Discipline Committee Member of the Chinese Expert Committee on Evaluating Journals in Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Chief Editor of the journal *Hong-Dao* published in Hong Kong.

Preface

Unlike Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, which have a definite, sole founder, Chinese Taoism seems to have no such founder in history, and understanding the time of Taoism's foundation is quite inconsistent in academic circles. In addition, Taoism has constantly changed to adapt to Chinese society in different periods, thereby making it even more complicated. To reveal the complexity of Taoism more effectively, we have collected articles for this Special Issue from three aspects: ideological theories, behavioral practices, and believers' communities, thus emphasizing its characteristics from the two dimensions of the sacred and the secular. As a result, 13 articles have been published in this Special Issue. Among them, the first six articles emphasize the ideas of Taoism by incorporating the fundamental characteristics of Taoism, its concepts of the universe, divinities and genders in Taoist theory, and by also analyzing the sacred and secular elements within these topics. The next three articles discuss Taoist practices of cultivation, magic, and rituals; then, the three articles that follow consider Taoist communities and their institutional systems. The final article focuses on the revision of a dictionary, but, in fact, its content encapsulates many details of Taoist theories, practices, and communities; therefore, we have also included it in this Special Issue. I believe these articles are helpful not only for scholars who specialize in Taoism, but also for those who are willing to learn more about traditional Chinese culture. Many thanks to the authors, reviewers, and editors!

Wu Guo
Editor

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Editorial

Preface: The Sacred and the Secular in Taoism: Theories, Practices, and Communities

Wu Guo

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As an indigenous religion of China, Taoism has always been regarded as "Za Er Duoduan" 雜而多端 (Miscellaneous and Multifaceted), just as a famous scholar Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 (1254–1340) said in the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). Although academic studies on Taoism have been conducted for more than a hundred years, its understanding remains unclear and disjointed because few scholars are engaged in it, and many issues remain unexplored. On the other hand, because of the "Za Er Duoduan" (Miscellaneous and Multifaceted) characteristics of Taoism itself, research from different scholars often takes into account one aspect only, failing to examine Taoism comprehensively and systematically. In view of this, we have established a Special Issue on Taoist studies in the journal *Religions*, hoping to build an academic platform for scholars to publish their achievements and promote the fostering of talents and teams in this field. At the same time, we limit the scope of discussion of this Special Issue to theories, practices, and communities, to illustrate the "Za Er Duoduan" (Miscellaneous and Multifaceted) characteristics of Taoism itself, reminding readers that we need a comprehensive examination to understand Taoism well on the whole.

Unlike the Daojia 道家 (Philosophical Taoism), which pursued spiritual realms and personal transcendence in the pre-Qin period (770 B.C.–221 B.C.), as a religious community that still exists in Chinese society, not only does Taoism have its special religious beliefs, theological theories, mysterious practices, and organizational systems, but it is also inextricably linked with Chinese secular society. In terms of daily life, moral ethics, economic behaviors, social activities, and so on, it has been consistent with the secular society and has constantly transformed to adapt to the secular situation of Chinese society. This practice of constant change to adapt to the real situation is the essence of Taoist philosophy "Shun Qi Ziran" 順其自然 (Let Nature Take Its Course) or "Yinxun" 因循 (Follow the Course), but at the same time, it also leads to the different appearance of Taoism in different periods and increases the difficulty in grasping Taoism in general. In view of this, this Special Issue emphasizes both "sacredness" and "secularity", the purpose of which is to remind readers that Taoism is characterized by two aspects simultaneously, and it is not advisable to hold onto only one side.

There are 13 articles published in this Special Issue, and in order to better reflect its aims, we rearrange the order of the articles and make the following brief explanations:

The first article is "What Do the Lingbao Celestial Scripts Tell Us about Some Fundamental Characteristics of Daoism?" by Professor Pengzhi Lü of Southwest Jiaotong University. By discussing three kinds of "Tianshu" 天書 (Celestial Scripts or Celestial Writings) in the Gu Lingbao Jing 古靈寶經 (Ancient Numinous Treasure Scriptures) of the Eastern Jin (317–420) and the Liu Song (420–479) dynasties, and their understanding in the *Lingbao Jingmu* 《靈寶經目》 (*Catalogue of Numinous Treasure Scriptures*) compiled by Lu Xiujing 陸修靜, a prominent Taoist of the Liu Song dynasty, this article holds three basic characteristics of Taoism that differ from other religious traditions: the veneration of written symbols, the pursuit of longevity and immortality, and the synthesis of philosophy and belief. It should be noted that the title of this article when it was originally submitted was "What is

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Taoism?: A Perspective from the Celestial Scripts of the Numinous Treasure (*Lingbao* 靈寶) Daoist Scriptures". However, both the anonymous reviewers and the editorial board felt that it was not appropriate for him to attempt to illustrate the basic characteristics of the whole of Taoism with only three Lingbao celestial scripts in the Six Dynasties (222–589) as examples, because Taoism had undergone many changes in its later stages. Therefore, we suggested that the author use the current title instead. From this case, it can also be seen that Taoism is "Za Er Duoduan" (Miscellaneous and Multifaceted) indeed, and that we have difficulties in grasping Taoism in general.

The next five articles are about the ideas or theories of Taoism. Among them, "Searching for the Location of Lord Lao: The Evolution of Daoist Cosmic Concept between the Han and Tang Dynasties", written by Zhaojie Bai of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences and Pei Li of Northwest University, discusses the change of the Taoist concept of the universe in the Han (202 B.C.–A.D. 220) and the Tang (618–907) dynasties by organizing the different views of different Taoist scriptures regarding the heavenly realm where "Laojun" 老君 (Lord Lao) lived, such as Kunlun 昆侖, Taiqing 太清, Ziwei 紫微, and Taiji 太極. Because "Laojun" (Lord Lao) is one of the Taoist supreme deities in its belief, the examination of his celestial position in various Taoist scriptures not only helps in understanding Taoist concepts of the Gods and the universe deeply, but also makes us understand that Taoism has indeed been developing and changing in the long river of history.

"Laojun" (Lord Lao) is one of the highest deities in Taoism, but Laozi 老子, as its prototype, is a real historical figure. The article "On the Origin of 'Laozi Converting the Barbarians': A Historical Background Analysis", written by Jiamin Si and Jishao Han from Shandong University and Yuan Zhang from Hefei Normal University, examines the Taoist statement of "Laozi Hua Hu" 老子化胡 (Laozi Converting the Barbarians) from a realistic and historical perspective, before arguing that the basic elements of this statement are rooted in Chinese secular ideological resources and describing the process in which Laozi, as a historical figure, was gradually deified into "Laojun" (Lord Lao). At present, there are two approaches to Taoist studies in the academic circle, understanding from the conceptual level and investigating from the realistic point of view, both of which are helpful for furthering the study of Taoism and understanding it comprehensively. Our purpose of combining the above two articles is to give readers a sense of the differing and even contradictory aspects of Taoism.

The other three articles in this group also understand Taoism from a conceptual perspective. Among them, "Gender Trouble in the Early Lingbao Scriptures" by Jiefeng Lu of Nanjing University reveals three different attitudes about gender in the early Lingbao靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) scriptures, such as the statement "differences between men and women" from Confucianism, the term "transforming a female into a male" from Buddhism, and the proposition that "men and women are equal in the transmission of the Tao" from Taoism. Finally, the principle of softness and femininity espoused by the Taoist tradition became the mainstream of Taoism in its later stages. Another article written by Daizhao Zhou and Hongwei Chen from the University of Science and Technology Beijing, "On the Classical Principles and Contemporary Practices of Taoist Female Worship", further discusses the phenomenon of female worship in Taoism and suggests that this phenomenon actually reflects the Taoist traditional principles, such as "Qiwu" 齊物 (The Oneness of All Things), "Zhuyin" 主陰 (Honoring Softness and Appreciating Femininity), and "Xujing" 虛靜 (State of Complete Humility and Tranquility Without Being Affected). The article "Visualizing the Invisible Body: Redefining *Shanshui* and the Human Body in the Daoist Context" was written by Ziyun Liu of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Although it is based on the traditional Chinese "Shanshui Hua" 山水畫 (Landscape Paintings) as the research object, it involves Taoist views on the relationship between "I" and the universe, and it believes that landscape paintings can transcend the mundane body and provide access to the sacred truth and reality of the Tao in the context of Taoism.

There are three articles on Taoist practices in this Special Issue, namely "A New Study on Fushi of Early Quanzhen Daoism" by Hongyi Chen and Yongfeng Huang of Xiamen

University, "A New Form of Taoist Theurgy in the Qing Dynasty: Xizhu Doufa in the Taoist–Tantric Fusion Style" by Yuhao Wu of Nanjing University, and "An Overview of the Weiyi (威儀 Dignified Liturgies) of Taoism" by Zehong Zhang and Yang Lou of Sichuan University. Hongyi Chen and Yongfeng Huang's article found that Quanzhen 全真 Taoism, representing the emerging Neidan 内丹 (Inner Alchemy) sect of cultivation, made extensive use of traditional Taoist feeding techniques named Fushi 服食 in its early stage. It indicates that some views of the former academic circles are not true, because most scholars who previously studied Quanzhen Taoism either believed that there was no practice of Fushi within Quanzhen or thought that their practice of Fushi was influenced by the Southern Lineage of Taoism after the convergence of the northern and southern sects of Taoism in the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368). From this case, we can learn that the emergence of a new practice in Taoism is not necessarily able to completely replace the old method, but may exist simultaneously and harmoniously, just as the Waidan 外丹 (Outer Alchemy), an ancient method for becoming immortal, is still practiced by some Taoists. The other two articles on Taoist practices discuss the use of theurgies and rituals as a means of serving the religious order or the general public. Among them, Yuhao Wu's article discusses the Xizhu Doufa 西竺斗法 (Dipper Method of Ancient India) of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong 龍門西竺心宗, a branch of Quanzhen Taoism that emerged in the Yunnan 雲南 region during the Qing dynasty (1636–1912), and it analyzes the relationship between Taoist theurgy and Buddhist Tantra. The article written by the famous scholar Zehong Zhang and his student Yang Lou discusses the solemnity and sanctity of Taoist rituals from the perspective of "dignity " or "stateliness", such as the dignified image of Taoist priests, dignified duties of ritual masters, and some tools used in Taoist rituals to enhance the sacredness, including commanding banners, swords, rulers, mirrors, tokens, water bowls and bells, drums, cymbals, and chimes, which are essential to their religious practices.

As well as theological theories and religious practices, communities of believers and their organizational systems are also indispensable elements in our understanding of Taoism. As a kind of "institutional religion", Taoism not only needs to have a flock of believers who believe in its teachings and practice its propositions, but also need some institutions to convene these believers for inheriting its incense. There are three articles in this Special Issue, which adequately demonstrate the content of Taoism in this aspect: "Zhao Yizhen and the Thunder Method Inherited from His Master Zhang Tianquan" by Wei Xu of Fudan University, "The Celestial Masters and the Origins of Daoist Monasticism" by Qi Sun of Shandong University, and "The Flow of Institutional Charisma: Quanzhen Taoism and Local Performing Arts in Republic Shandong and Henan" by Guoshuai Qin of Qilu University of Technology and Wanrong Zhang of Fudan University. Wei Xu's article found the clue of the Hunyuan Leifa 混元雷法 (Thunder Method of Hunyuan) that Zhao Yizhen 趙宜真 (?–1382), a famous Taoist priest in the late Yuan (1271–1368) and early Ming (1368–1644) dynasties, inherited from his master Zhang Tianquan 張天全 (1275–?), but former scholars always believed that Zhao Yizhen was the inheritor of the Quanzhen Sect 全真派, Jingming Sect 淨明派, and the Thunder Method of Qingwei 清微雷法. This discovery not only enriches our understanding of Zhao Yizhen, but also strengthens our understanding that Taoist sects are not strictly walled and incompatible. Qi Sun's article discusses the popularization of Taoist monasteries (*Daoguan*, 道觀/道館) as a form of organization in the Southern and Northern dynasties (420–589). He believes that Taoist monasteries were not only the early Taoist tradition of seclusion, asceticism, and hermetic practice in the mountains, but also the influence of the southern Tianshi 天師 Taoism, which had its roots in popular society and is based on the tradition of "Linghu Huamin" 領戶化民 (Mastering the Households and Ruling the People). Further, he argues that this reflected major changes in the structure of medieval Taoism and gradually transformed the Taoist monasteries into religious service facilities in the metropolises. If Qi Sun's article mainly discusses the institutional form of Taoism from the perspective of orthodox Taoism and professional Taoists, then Guoshuai Qin and Wanrong Zhang's article paints a different picture for us from the perspective of ordinary believers, which takes some local performing groups still active in

Shandong 山東 and Henan 河南 as examples, showing their consistency with the orthodox Quanzhen Taoism in the disciple initiation rites, lineage poems, guild names, sacrificial ceremonies, etc. Although this article discusses Quanzhen Taoism from the perspective of its influence on local arts, it believes that this phenomenon is the local arts borrowing and imitating the Quanzhen Taoist institution in order to raise their own status. However, the actual situation may not be so simple, because we know that when Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (1112–1170) founded Quanzhen Taoism in the Jin dynasty (1115–1234), he had set up many folk groups that were not professional Taoists or monasteries, such as the famous "Sanzhou Wuhui" 三州五會 (Five Guilds in Three States), and there were some popular religions characterized by talking-singing the "Baojuan" 寶卷 (Precious Scrolls) in Chinese society after the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1636–1912) dynasties, which are also deeply influenced by orthodox Taoism. In other words, there were indeed groups of people in China who believed in Taoism that differed from the professional Taoist priests and the Taoist monasteries, but the scholars paid less attention to them in the past. Consciously aware of the existence of such groups, the in-depth exploration of their relationship with monastic Taoism and professional Taoists and its significance in the development of Taoism should perhaps be a direction to work on in the future.

The last article in this Special Issue is the "Suggestions on the Revision of *the Great Dictionary of Taoism*" written by Zuguo Liu of Shandong University, Qi Liu of Fudan University, and Mi Wang of Shanghai Jiao Tong University. This article points out some errors in the *Daojiao Da Cidian* 《道教大辭典》 (*The Great Dictionary of Taoism*) compiled by the Chinese Taoist Association and the Suzhou Taoist Association in 1994, and it discusses the explanations of some entries in this dictionary, which cover many aspects of Taoist theories, practices, communities, etc. Although the focus of this article is on the revision of the dictionary, its content is helpful to our understanding of Taoism, so we are pleased to include it in this Special Issue.

In conclusion, the above 13 articles cover many aspects of Taoism, which not only contribute to academic research, but also help people understand Taoism. We hope to establish more Special Issues about Taoist studies in the future, in order to train research teams and promote related research.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Article

What Do the Lingbao Celestial Scripts Tell Us about Some Fundamental Characteristics of Daoism?

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Abstract: Toward the end of the Eastern Jin 東晉 (317–420) and the beginning of the Liu Song 劉宋 (420–479) Dynasties, a series of scriptures, what we now know as the ancient Lingbao scriptures (*gu Lingbao jing* 古靈寶經), emerged. The texts contained various kinds of celestial scripts, which were regarded as the archetype of all the Lingbao scriptures. Among them, the 3 most important were the 672 graphs of the Perfected Script on Five Tablets in Red Writing (*Chishu wupian zhenwen* 赤書五篇真文), found in the *Scripture of Celestial Writing* 天書經 (*DZ* 22), the 256 graphs of the Self-Generating Jade Graphs of the Secret Language of the Great Brahmā (*Dafan yinyu ziran yuzi* 大梵隱語自然玉字), found in the *Inner Sounds of All the Heavens* 諸天內音 (*DZ* 97), and the 64 graphs of the Jade Script of the Five Directions and Five Sprouts (*Wufang wuya yuwen* 五方五牙玉文), found in the *Preface to the Five Talismans of Lingbao* 靈寶五符序 (*DZ* 388). This article traces the origins of these Lingbao celestial scripts, analyzing and explaining the content of their images and text, as well as the beliefs and practices related to them. It then summarizes how Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406–477), a prominent Daoist of the Liu Song Southern Dynasty, classified and understood the various scripts in his *Catalogue of Lingbao Scriptures* (*Lingbao jingmu* 靈寶經目). Such discussions reveal some basic characteristics of Daoism that distinguish it from other religious traditions: the veneration of written symbols, the pursuit of longevity and immortality, and the synthesis of philosophy and belief. Beliefs concerning celestial writing and scripts occupy a pivotal position in the broader system of Daoist scripture and teachings.

Keywords: Daoism; Buddhism; ancient Lingbao scriptures; Lingbao celestial scripts; *Catalogue of Lingbao Scriptures*; Daoist philosophy

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1. Introduction

As is widely known, Daoism does not have a clear and definite founder. In my view, Daoism is a religious tradition that took shape when the scriptures of the "Three Caverns" (*Sandong* 三洞) (Cavern of Spirit (*Dongshen* 洞神) or Three Sovereigns (*Sanhuang* 三皇); Cavern of Perfection (*Dongzhen* 洞真) or Upper Clarity (*Shangqing* 上清); and Cavern of Mystery (*Dongxuan* 洞玄) or Numinous Treasure (*Lingbao* 靈寶)) and "Four Supplements" (*Sifu* 四輔) (Great Mystery (*Taixuan* 太玄), Great Peace (*Taiping* 太平), Great Clarity (*Taiqing* 太清), and Orthodox Unity (*Zhengyi* 正一)) were defined.[1] Because these bodies of scripture are differentiated from one another by their time periods, origins, contents, and character, Daoism became a religion that encompassed different traditions. The concepts of the "Three Caverns" and "Four Supplements" emerged separately at the turn of the fourth and fifth centuries and fifth and sixth centuries, respectively, when different scriptural traditions were united, forming an ever-broader tradition under the standard of "Daoism." Though the "Three Caverns" scriptures that emerged in succession during the Western and Eastern Jin 晉 (265–420) and Southern Dynasties 南朝 (420–589) in the Jiangnan 江南 region and the "Four Supplements" scriptures produced in different areas during the Eastern Han 東漢 (25–220) and Six Dynasties 六朝 (220–589) all claim the banner of venerating the Dao, many of their beliefs and practices are quite different. Among the characteristics that differentiate the two categories of scripture, there is the common religious belief shared across the

"Three Caverns" scriptures concerning celestial scripts (*tianshu* 天書). Though we see a similar idea in some of the later scriptures of the "Four Supplements," generally speaking, these scriptures are the result of the influence of the "Three Caverns" scriptures.

The scriptures of the "Three Caverns" offer a unique perspective on the formation of scripture; that is, the archetype of Daoist scripture is believed to be graphs and symbols that originated in the heavens, which are referred to as "celestial script" (*tianwen* 天文) or "celestial writing" (*tianshu* 天書). In Daoist history, the prototypical or most representative instances of such celestial writing or script are the several kinds presented in the ancient Lingbao scriptures that appeared toward the end of the Eastern Jin (317–420) and the beginning of the Liu Song Dynasties (420–479). Through an examination of these ideas on Lingbao celestial writing, we can not only come to understand some key Daoist beliefs and practices but also distinguish some important characteristics that differentiate Daoism from other religious traditions. In previous work, I wrote on the concept of celestial writing in Lingbao scriptures (Lü 2003); however, this article, though exploring similar materials pertaining to the three kinds of celestial writing in this body of scriptures, aims to take the discussion in a new direction.

2. The Origins of the Lingbao Celestial Scripts

The concept of the Lingbao celestial script comes from earlier sources, which I briefly lay out here according to historical chronology:

1. "Yarrow and Turtle" (*Shigui* 蓍龜) and "Yellow River Chart and Luo River Documents" (*Hetu luoshu* 河圖洛書), recorded in "Appended Remarks" (*Xici* 繫辭) of the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經), Warring States 戰國 (481–221 BCE)

   "Appended Remarks" part I reads:

   > In order to determine the auspicious and inauspicious under Heaven…there is nothing greater than the 'Yarrow and Turtle.' This is why Heaven gives birth to divine beings, and sages take them as models. Heaven and Earth transform, and sages imitate such changes. Heaven bequeaths an image, manifesting the auspicious and inauspicious, and sages emulate it. The Yellow River brought forth a chart, and the Luo River brought forth writings, and sages took them as models.
   >
   > 以定天下之吉凶……莫大乎蓍龜。是故天生神物，聖人則之。天地變化，聖人效之。天垂象，見吉凶，聖人象之；河出圖，洛出書，聖人則之。 (Wang et al. 1980, p. 82)

The passage discusses how sages, though it is unclear who these figures are, model themselves on the prognostications of the yarrow stalks, divine tortoise, images of heavenly and earthly transformation, the Yellow River Chart, and the Luo River Writings. In effect, it describes how sages received various kinds of revelation from the gods.

"Appended Remarks", part II reads:

> When Bao [Fu] Xi ruled the world in ancient times, he looked up to examine the images of Heaven, and looked down to examine the models of earth. He examined the patterns of the birds and the beasts, as well as the appropriate [structures of] the terrain. Near at hand he took [patterns] from himself, and at a distance from objects. Thereupon he first created the eight trigrams in order to communicate with the spirits and in order to categorize the natures of the myriad objects.
>
> 古者包犧氏之王天下也，仰則觀象於天，俯則觀法於地，觀鳥獸之文，與地之宜，近取諸身，遠取諸物，於是始作八卦，以通神明之德，以類萬物之情。 (Wang et al. 1980, p. 86; translation from Bokenkamp 2010, p. 25)

This passage points out that Fu Xi 伏羲, noted in the text as Bao Xi包犧, was the sage who "began to compose the eight trigrams" 始作八卦. The Yellow River Chart, Luo River Writings, the eight trigrams (including the trigram images of yang 陽, a solid line, and yin 陰, a broken line, revealed through yarrow divination), and turtle patterns were, in

actuality, graphic symbols embodying divine traces or divine meaning, a kind of written revelation bestowed upon humanity from the gods. These were the earliest examples of "celestial script".

2. Celestial Script, Perfected Script, Vermillion Script, Talismans, Registers, Yellow River Chart, and Luo River Writings, recorded in Prophetic Weft Texts (*Chenwei* 讖緯), Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220)

Since the Zhou 周 Dynasty of upper antiquity, an intimate relationship between an emperor's rule and Heaven has existed in Chinese thought. To determine whether an emperor's rule was legitimate, there was a need to discern whether the ruler had been granted the right to preside over the state. This was what was known as the heavenly mandate (*tianming* 天命). How was this expressed and made clear to the ruler and ministers?

A heavenly mandate was primarily demonstrated through the reception of heavenly sent signs or omens, perhaps as precious objects, such as jade stones or mysterious birds, or a phoenix (*fenghuang* 鳳凰). A passage of the "Eulogies of Shang" (*Shangsong* 商頌) of the *Shijing* 詩經 notes: "Heaven commanded the mysterious bird;/It descended and gave birth to the Shang" 天命玄鳥，降而生商 (Maogong et al. 1980, *j.* 23, p. 622). These signs and omens could also be images or texts, such as the Yellow River Chart or the Luo River Writings, auspicious signs regarded as symbolic of the heavenly mandate. Where did the Yellow River Chart come from? According to legend, a dragon emerged from the Yellow River with a divine pattern inscribed upon its back, which was indeed the Yellow River Chart. And what about the Luo River Writings? Legend has it that a tortoise climbed out of the Luo River with red characters inscribed upon its back. Han prophetic weft texts made great efforts to disseminate these kinds of visual and textual signs and omens. Among the terms used to refer to such phenomena, those most frequently mentioned are the Yellow River Chart, the Luo River Writings, the Perfected Script (*zhenwen* 真文), the vermilion script (*chiwen* 赤文), and the celestial script (*tianwen* 天文), as well as talismans (*fu* 符) and registers (*lu* 籙), terms which carry similar meaning. In the prophetic weft texts, these are regarded as signs or omens descended from heaven, symbols of the heavenly mandate.

The celestial scripts described within the ancient Lingbao scriptures are quite similar to the heavenly-sent images and writing mentioned in the prophetic weft texts, with only slight differences; while the latter directly claim to be auspicious responses of the heavens, the ancient Lingbao scriptures, on the other hand, assert that other various kinds of auspicious responses accompany the appearance of the Lingbao celestial scripts in the world. This distinction may be related to the impact of Buddhist ideas that were prevalent at the same time the ancient Lingbao scriptures appeared. Buddhist scriptures often claim that at the time of the birth and nirvana of the Buddha, various kinds of auspicious responses occurred. Putting aside this slight difference, we can, however, see that the prophetic weft texts were a significant source of inspiration for the ancient Lingbao scriptures, as well as for the entirety of the Daoist tradition. (See also Seidel 1983).

3. A Series of "Reduplicated Scripts" (*Fuwen* 複文) in the *Scripture of Great Peace* (*Taiping jing* 太平經)

The *Taiping jing*, a Han Dynasty Daoist work, not only mentions celestial writing, numinous treasures, celestial books, and perfected writing, it also introduces a series of "reduplicated scripts" in the shape of tadpoles, such as in the "Reduplicated Scripts for Flourishing Above and Eliminating Harm" 興上除害複文, fascicle 104 of the scripture. (M. Wang 1960, pp. 473–82; see also Gong 1992).

4. Celestial Scripts referenced in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283–343) works

First, there is the statement from his master Zheng Yin 鄭隱, recorded in the "Wide Reading" (*Xialan* 遐覽) chapter of the *Inner Chapters of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity* (*Bao puzi neipian* 抱朴子內篇): "The talismans that came forth from the Elder Lord are all celestial writings" 符出於老君，皆天文也 (M. Wang 1985, p. 335).

Second, Ge Hong's *Records of Divine Transcendents* (*Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳) includes the story of Bo He 帛和, who according to the instructions of Lord Wang 王君, a transcendent figure of Mount Xicheng 西城, stares at a cave (lit. "stone chamber" 石室) wall for three years and is thus able to see the "method of divine cinnabar of the *Scripture of Grand Purity*, as well as the *Celestial Writings in Large Characters of the Three Sovereigns* and the *Charts of the Perfected Forms of the Five Marchmounts*, all carved by someone in ancient times" 古人之所刻太清中經神丹方及三皇天文大字、五嶽真形圖 (Chen 2014, p. 58; translation adapted from Campany 2002, p. 135). Here, Ge Hong explicitly refers to the Writ of the Three Sovereigns (*Sanhuang wen* 三皇文) as "celestial script in large characters" (*Tianwen dazi* 天文大字).

5. The "Writings of the Flying Celestials of the Three Primordials, Eight Conjunctions, and Multitude of Directions"

The *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhen'gao* 真誥), a Shangqing revelatory text of the Eastern Jin, claims that the exhortations transmitted by the perfected stemmed came from the "Writings of Flying Celestials of the Three Primordials, Eight Conjunctions, and Multitude of Directions" (*Sanyuan bahui qunang feitian zhi shu* 三元八會群方飛天之書). (Tao 2011, p. 11). It is necessary to note that before the ancient Lingbao scriptures appeared in the world, the early Shangqing scriptures were the most detailed account of celestial writing since the Eastern Jin. When Shangqing scriptures use the term "scripture" (*jing* 經), they do not imply that they were written by human beings but instead were naturally taking shape in the heavens above, formulated by the coalescence of qi. These scriptures were initially obtained by sages, who perfected them in the heavens and then gradually transmitted them to people who cultivated the Dao in the world. Isabelle Robinet (1932–2000), a French Daoist Studies scholar, has offered an incisive outline of heavenly writing in Shangqing scriptures, briefly discussing how this concept came to have an impact on the ancient Lingbao scriptures (Robinet 1979, pp. 29–57; 1984, pp. 112–22, 193–94; 1991, pp. 128–31).

The ideas and texts presented above were the indigenous sources of the concept of Lingbao celestial scripts. According to several scholars, there were also external or foreign origins of such ideas (Zürcher 1980, pp. 110–12; Bokenkamp 1997, pp. 385–89; Hsieh 2010, pp. 78–87). In his "Preface to [the Translation of] the Verses on the Dharma (Skt. Dharmapada)" 法句經序, Zhi Qian 支謙, prolific layman translator of early Buddhist scriptures while residing in the Wu Kingdom 吳國 (220–280), writes: "Moreover, the various emergences of the Buddha have all occurred in India, where the sounds of the language are different from the Han and they call writing 'heavenly writing' and spoken language 'heavenly speech'. As the terms for things are so different [in the two languages], the transmission of any substance is not easy" 又諸佛興，皆在天竺，天竺言語與漢異音，云其書為天書，語為天語，名物不同，傳實不易." (Sengyou 1995, p. 273). The *Sūtra of Univesal Radiance* (*Puyao jing* 普曜經; Skt. Lalitavistara), translated in 308 by Dharmarakṣa (Zhu Fahu 竺法護), another prominent translator of Mahayana Buddhist texts working during the Western Jin 西晉 (265–317), is perhaps the earliest scripture that mentions Indian script in Chinese translations of Buddhist sutras; in the 10th fascicle, the *Puyao jing* lists 64 kinds of Indian script.[2] Among these, the first is Brahmic script (*Fanshu* 梵書) and the second is Kharoṣṭhī script (*Qulou shu* 佉樓書), which were the basis of the majority of early Chinese translations of Buddhist sutras. Moreover, from the early fourth century, discussions of the origins of the Sanskrit language and Brahmic script began to appear in Chinese Buddhist teachings. The prevailing view was that the Sanskrit language and Brahmic script were forms of celestial language and writing, respectively, created by the god Brahmā. Another interpretation posited that they were created by the Buddha. Sanskrit and Brahmic writing were essentially sacred languages differentiated into spoken and written languages in the mundane world of the central lands. Such ideas had a profound impact on the ancient Lingbao scriptures and the beliefs in the celestial writing evident therein. The ancient Lingbao scriptures both carried on and greatly developed earlier indigenous and Buddhist ideas of celestial writing to form a rich and complex set of beliefs concerning celestial writing.

3. Three Kinds of Celestial Writing Recorded in Three Texts of the Ancient Lingbao Scriptural Corpus

Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾 referred to the group of scriptures recorded in the *Catalogue of Lingbao Scriptures* (*Lingbao jingmu* 靈寶經目), compiled by Liu Song 劉宋 Daoist Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 (406–477) in the 14th year of the Yuanjia 元嘉 period (437), as the "ancient Lingbao scriptures" (*gu Lingbao jing* 古靈寶經). The vast majority of these scriptures were composed by Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫 (fl. 402), the grandnephew of Ge Hong, during the Longan 隆安 period (397–402) toward the end of the Eastern Jin in the Jurong句容 area of Jiangsu 江蘇.[3] Among the ancient Lingbao scriptures listed in *Lingbao jingmu*, there are altogether 27 extant texts, all of which are now preserved in the *Daozang* 道藏 or Dunhuang manuscripts. They are listed according to their abbreviated titles and *Daozang* or Dunhuang manuscript number:[4]

(1) Chishu wupian zhenwen 赤書五篇真文 (DZ 22); originally titled Yuanshi wulao chishu yupian zhenwen tianshu jing 元始五老赤書玉篇真文天書經; also known by the title Tianshu jing 天書經;
(2) Chishu yujue 赤書玉訣 (DZ 352);
(3) Kongdong lingzhang 空洞靈章 (P. 2399);
(4) Shengxuan buxu zhang 升玄步虛章 (DZ 1439);
(5) Jiutian shengshen zhang jing 九天生神章經 (DZ 318);
(6) Zhenyi wucheng jing 真一五稱經 (P. 2440, DZ 671);
(7) Zhutian neiyin 諸天內音 (DZ 97);
(8) Zuigen shangpin dajie 罪根上品大戒 (DZ 457);
(9) Zhihui shangpin dajie 智慧上品大戒 (DZ 177);
(10) Lingbao sanlu jianwen 靈寶三籙簡文 (no longer extant as a standalone text, but largely reconstructed through citations in other texts);
(11) Mingzhen ke 明真科 (DZ 1411);
(12) Zhihui dingzhi jing 智慧定志經 (DZ 177);
(13) Benye shangpin 本業上品 (P. 3022);
(14) Falun zuifu 法輪罪福 (DZ 346);
(15) Wuliang duren shangpin miaojing 無量度人上品妙經 (DZ 87); also known by the title Duren jing 度人經;
(16) Zhutian lingshu duming 諸天靈書度命 (DZ 23);
(17) Miedu wulian shengshi miaojing 滅度五煉生屍妙經 (DZ 369);
(18) Sanyuan pin jie 三元品戒 (DZ 456);
(19) Ershisi shengtu 二十四生圖 (DZ 1407);
(20) Lingbao wufu xu 靈寶五符序 (DZ 388);
(21) Taiji yinzhu baojue 太極隱注寶訣 (DZ 425);
(22) Zhenwen yaojie 真文要解 (DZ 330);
(23) Zhenyi ziran jing jue 真一自然經訣 (P. 2356);
(24) Fuzhai weiyi jue 敷齋威儀訣 (DZ 532);
(25) Benyuan dajie shangpin 本願大戒上品 (DZ 344);
(26) Xiangong qingwen 仙公請問 (DZ 1114 and S. 1351);
(27) Zhongsheng nan 眾聖難 (DZ 1115).

Among this group of scriptures, numbers 1, 7, and 20 separately describe the three most important types of celestial writing recorded in the Lingbao scriptures: (1) the Perfected Script on Five Tablets in Red Writing (*Chishu wupian zhenwen* 赤書五篇真文) in the *Tianshu jing*; (2) the Self-Generating Jade Graphs of the Inner Sounds of All the Heavens (*Zhutian neiyin ziran yuzi* 諸天內音自然玉字) in the *Zhutian neiyin;* (3) and the Jade Script of the Five Directions and Five Sprouts (*Wufang wuya yuwen* 五方五牙玉文) in the *Lingbao wufu xu*.

1. Perfected Script on Five Tablets in Red Writing in the *Tianshu jing*

The central theme of the *Tianshu jing* is the formation of the Lingbao Perfected Script on Five Tablets, which is naturally generated in the void before the formulation of heav-

ens, earth, sun, and moon. Later, Yuanshi tianzun 元始天尊 (Celestial Worthy of Primordial Beginning) refines the script by using the vermillion qi in the Halls of Flowing Fire (*Liuhuo zhi ting* 流火之庭) to form talismans inscribed with a kind of seal script which embody the Dao; later Daoist texts refer to these talismans as cloud seals (*yunzhuan* 雲篆). The Perfected Script or celestial writing described in the *Tianshu jing* is initially differentiated according to the five directions, which is why it is known as the Lingbao Perfected Script on Five Tablets; the perfected writings of each direction are also, based on their different capacities, distinguished into four groups. For example, the Perfected Script of the East is titled *Dongfang anbao hualin qingling shilao jiuqi qingtian chishu wupian zhenwen* 東方安寶華林青靈始老九炁青天赤書玉(五)篇真文 (DZ 22, 1.7b). The phrase "Green Heaven of Nine Qi" (*Jiu qi qingtian*) in the title comes from the five phases (*wuxing* 五行) cosmology, in which the number nine and the color green are associated with the east. The Perfected Script of the East includes four groups of seal script talismans; the first group has twenty-four graphs, while the second, third, and fourth groups all have thirty-two graphs.

The *Tianshu jing* clearly indicates that these four groups of the Perfected Script each have different uses and capabilities. For example, the scripture describes the four groups of the East:

> As for the Jade Tablet in Red Writing of Numinous Treasure of the Eastern Green Thearch, the upper [group] has 24 graphs, transcribed in the Primordial Terrace of the Nine Heavens. Their principal [function] is to summon the Upper Thearchs of the Nine Heavens, who audit the charts and registers of divine transcendents. Below this is [the group] of 32 graphs, transcribed in the Eastern Floriate Pavilion of the Purple Tenuity Palace. Their principal [function] is to summon star officials and bring order to the divisions and numbers of the heavens. Below this is [the group] of 32 graphs, transcribed in the Lodges of Controlling Numina in the Eastern Mulberry [Fields]. Their principal [function] is to arrest ghosts and demons and quell the qi of the nine heavens. Below this is [the group] of 32, transcribed in the Cinnabar Terrace of the Northeastern Jade Watchtowers in the Nine Heavens. Their principal [function] is to control the water thearchs of the eastern seas and the periods of great kalpas and floods, and to summon wyverns, dragons, and watery divine spirits. Altogether, there are 124 graphs, all of which are the naturally generated writing of Primordial Beginning.
>
> 東方青帝靈寶赤書玉篇，上二十四字，書九天元臺，主召九天上帝，校神仙圖籙。其下三十二字，書紫微宮東華殿，主召星官，正天分數。其下三十二字，書東桑司靈之館，主攝鬼魔，鎮九天氣。其下三十二字，書九天東北玉闕丹臺，主攝東海水帝，大劫洪災之數，召蛟龍及水神事。合一百二十四，皆元始自然之書也。
>
> (DZ 22, 1.10a–b)

The passage notes that these groups of the Perfected Script, four in total, each have a different function; not only are the functions different but the form of the seal script graphs, the number of graphs, and the heaven in which they are written are all different.

The *Tianshu jing* records the seal script graphs, but it does not elucidate any of their corresponding Chinese characters. Each graph is imbued with meaning and can be translated into a standard Chinese character. But, because the *Tianshu jing* does not provide these translated characters, there is no way at all of understanding the meaning of the graphs; indeed, the script is abstruse heavenly writing, distinct from any ordinary script meant to be circulated in the human world. The *Chishu yujue* (DZ 352), another ancient Lingbao scripture that explains the *Tianshu jing*, contains the meanings of this celestial writing and perfected script. For example, the translated Chinese characters for the four groups of Perfected Script of the East are differentiated as follows:

> The nine qi of the east began in the August Green Heaven. Within the thickly massed cyan auroras, there is an elder being, who manages the evaluation of charts and registers and controls qi to raise transcendents (24 characters). Jupiter assists the liver; the *jiao* and *kang* lodgings secure perfection. The *di* and *fang*, *xin*

and *wei* and, these four effulgences circle and turn. The *ji* presides over the seven celestial bodies; the jade *dou* illuminates the wheel. Receiving qi and capturing wrong shall sweep away hosts of disasters (32 characters). The divine spell of the eastern mountain controls and summons [the celestial beings] of the nine heavens. The talismanic commands in red writing govern and assemble [celestial beings] of Mount Fengdu. They bind demons and send off ghosts; for that which you aim to inflict punishment, there is no mitigation. All shall call upon the Wood Palace—do you dare delay? (32 characters) Below, they regulate those of the eastern river, the water deities of the great seas. During a flood disaster of a great kalpa, the *jiao* dragon shall bear you upon its body. The water bureau opens the path, so that those who pass through the number in the hundreds of thousands. With the red writing of the green thearch, wind and fire have no space. (32 characters)

東方九炁，始皇青天。碧霞鬱壘，中有老人。總校圖録，攝炁舉仙。（24字）歲星輔肝，角亢鎮真。氐房心尾，四景迴旋。箕主七辰，玉斗明輪。承炁捕非，掃除災群。（32字）東山神呪，攝召九天。赤書符命，制會酆山。束魔送鬼，所誅無蠲。悉詣木宫，敢有稽延？（32字）下制東河，溟海水神。大劫洪災，蛟龍負身。水府開道，通徑百千。青帝赤文，風火無間。（32字） (DZ 352, 1.8b–9b)

We also find a list of the *Wupian zhenwen's* original seal script and their translated Chinese characters in Du Guangting's 杜光庭 (850–933) *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* 太上黄籙齋儀 (DZ 507, 54.1a–21b).

2. The Self-Generating Jade Graphs of the Inner Sounds of All the Heavens in the *Zhutian neiyin*

The *Zhutian neiyin* enumerates in order the Self-Generating Jade Graphs of the Inner Sounds that are written in the 32 heavens. These heavens are divided according to the 4 cardinal directions (NSEW), and in each direction, there are 8 heavens, each containing 8 graphs for a total of 256 graphs. For example, the eight heavens of the eastern quadrant contain sixty-four seal script graphs, collectively known as the "Celestial Script for Administering All of the Nine Qi" (*Jiuqi zongzhu tianwen* 九炁總諸天文), a title that also employs the principles of the five phases, in which the number nine is correlated with the east (DZ 97, 1.1b–4b).

The prefatory passage to the third *juan* of the *Zhutian neiyin* relates the origins and nature of the jade graphs, recounting the meeting between *Yuanshi tianzun*, the Upper Thearchs of the Five Elders (*Wulao shangdi* 五老上帝), and the masses of great sages (*dasheng* 大聖) and divine spirits (*shenling* 神靈) of the ten directions beneath the tall mulberry trees at the Cypress Mound Lodge (*Bailing she* 柏陵舍) in the fragrant groves and gardens of the Realm of Vermillion Brilliance (*Chiming shijie* 赤明世界). At that time, heaven and earth had not been illuminated for three days and three nights, and so the Upper *Wulao shangdi* sincerely asked *Yuanshi tianzun* to reveal the wondrous auspicious images to open the heavens. The deity agreed, and thereupon:

In the span of brief moment, heavenly qi became brilliant and well-ordered, and the tenebrous dark dispersed and dissipated. A bright radiance of five colors penetrated throughout the five directions. Suddenly, there was celestial writing, each graph one *zhang* square, that generated naturally and appeared atop the empty darkness. In the five-colored brightness, the colorful script shined and shimmered. The eight corners [of each graph] suspending its luminosity, its purity and brightness boggling the eyes so that one could not look upon them.

俄頃之間，天氣朗除，冥晦豁消，五色光明，洞徹五方，忽然有天書，字方一丈，自然而見空玄之上，五色光中，文彩煥爛，八角垂芒，精光亂眼，不可得看。

(DZ 97, 3.2a)

Yuanshi tianzun explains that the graphs are too abstruse and profound, and so he orders the August One of Heavenly Perfection (*Tianzhen huangren* 天真皇人) to transcribe the

celestial writing into a script that can be recognized and read. *Tianzhen huangren* completes the task and adds a final comment on the celestial writing:

> The Self-Generating Jade Graphs of the Inner Sounds of All the Heavens are the hidden language of Grand Brahmā found within all the heavens. When the qi flying in the heaven coheres to merge and harmonize with the sounds of the five directions, they are generated atop Primordial Commencement. They emerge from within the empty cavern and, following the cycles of opening and salvation, they universally become the merits of heaven and earth. This script is venerable and wondrous, not to be comprehended by the ordinary… [it] is not something that can be thoroughly understood by those with foolish emotions or deficient reflection.
>
> 諸天內音自然玉字，皆諸天之中大梵隱語，結飛玄之炁，合和五方之音，生於元始之上，出空洞之中，隨運開度，普成天地之功。斯文尊妙，不譬於常…非愚情短思所能洞明。 (DZ 97, 3.6a–b)

From the "Illimitable Cavern Stanzas of the Hidden Language of the Grand Brahmā" (*Dafan yinyu wuliang dongzhang* 大梵隱語無量洞章), found in *juan* three through four of the same scripture, we know that the Self-Generating Jade Graphs were transcribed into Chinese characters, such as the sixty-four of the eight heavens of the east (DZ 97, 3.7a). (See Table 1)

Table 1. Transcriptions of the Sixty-four Self-Generating Jade Graphs of the Eight Heavens of the East.

Heaven	Transcription
Taihuang huangzeng tian 太黃皇曾天	亶婁阿薈，無恕觀音
Taiming yuwan tian 太明玉完天	須延明首，法攬菩曇
Qingming hetong tian 清明何童天	稼那阿奕，忽訶流吟
Xuantai pingyu tian 玄胎平育天	華都曲麗，鮮菩育臻
Yuanming wenju tian 元明文舉天	答落大梵，散煙慶雲
Shangming qiyao moyi tian 上明七曜摩夷天	飛灑玉都，明魔上門
Xuwu yueheng tian 虛無越衡天	無行上首，回蹤流玄
Taiji mengyi tian 太極濛翳天	阿陀龍羅，四象吁員

The Jade Instructions for the Celestial Sounds (*Tianyin yujue* 天音玉訣), recorded in *juan* one through two in the same scripture, indicate where these seal script graphs are written in the heavens, what function they have, and how they are to be used. For example, the Jade Instructions explains the eight graphs of the first heaven in the east, *Taihuang huangzeng tian*, as follows:

> The first, second, and third graphs are written atop a tall tower in the Mystic Capital. This script, in order to rectify the divisions of heaven and earth, controls and summons the great deities and masses of perfected of the ten directions. The fourth and fifth graphs are written atop the southern pavilion of the traveling terraces of the thearch lords. They control the self-generating divine perfected born within the empty nothingness. The sixth, seventh, and eighth graphs are written at the gates of the sun and moon. They control the light that penetrates the Ninefold Darkness and open the bureaus of the long nights. Each graph is one *zhang* square, their eight corners radiating brightly within the Huangzeng heaven. The August One of Heavenly Perfection stated: 'To cultivate the path of the flying transcendent, on the days of the ten monthly *zhai*, you should write the first three graphs of the Huangzeng heaven [on paper] in red. Then facing the flourishing direction, ingest it [the paper], and recite the incantation according to

the ritual methods. For a hundred days, the myriad spirits will pay court before you.'

東方九炁青天八會書音皇曾天中，第一、第二、第三三字皆仰書玄都長樓之上，其文以正天地之度數，主召十方眾真大神。其次第四、第五二字則書帝君遊臺南軒之上，主空無之中生自然神真。其次第六、第七、第八三字書日月之門，主通九幽之光，開長夜之府。字皆方一丈，八角煥明皇曾天中。天真皇人曰：修飛仙之道，當以月十齋之日，朱書皇曾天中第一、第二、第三三字，向王服之，呪如法，百日萬神朝己。 (DZ 97, 1.15b–16a)

The *Wuliang dongzhang* embeds the eight jade graphs from each heaven in a pentasyllabic poem and provides an explanation of the implicit meanings of the jade graphs. Again, the example, from the first heaven is illustrative:

皇曾亶元紀，	Huangzeng ends with primal strands.
婁都界上京。	Loudu borders the upper metropolis.
阿那震琳響，	Within Ana, the shaken jade-slips sound—
薈秀何宛延。	How long and winding [the road to] Huixui.
元無中生真，	Within primal nothingness Perfected are born,
恕答通明梁。	Through Heda the bright bridge extends.
觀覺朗四冥，	Guanjue brightens the stygian realms in the four directions.
音韻自成章。	The rhymes by themselves form strophes.

Tianzhen Huangren's explanation is appended immediately thereafter. It reads:

Loudu is the name of a tall tower in the middle of the heaven. Above, it joins with the Palace of Great Mystery, which is on Jade Capitoline Mountain. *Ana* is the overseer of *Loudu*, in charge of the regulation of the Six Brahmā [*qi*]. When the numbers indicate the conjunction, the drums of *Loudu* sound and the Perfected all assemble in audience. *Huixiu* is the Thearchical Lord's loft building for roaming. *Heda* is the gate of the sun and moon. The Perfected ride golden chariots to open the stygian blackness; the Jade Maidens carry floriated banners to unloose the bonds [confining the dead to the underworld]. *Guanjue* is responsible for the registers of [those in the postmortem halls] of eternal night. In the tenebrous regions of the directions, he plucks for the [the dead] from the nine stygian halls.

婁都者，天中心長樓之名，上承太玄之宮玉京之山也。阿那以婁都之監，主六梵之數，數交則婁都鼓鳴，眾真上朝。薈秀則帝君之遊臺，恕答則日月之門戶。真人乘金輪以開冥，玉女仗華旛而披紐。觀覺主長夜之録，四冥拔出九幽之府。

(DZ 97, 3.7b–8a; Translation from Bokenkamp 2014b, p. 196)

The first graph *dan* 亶is not explained, but according to Li Shaowei's 李少微 (fl. 625?) commentary in *juan* four of *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu* 元始無量度人上品妙經四注, we find that it means the "appearance of something even, vast, and distant" 坦然廣遠貌 (DZ 87, 4.6b).

Lu Xiujing's *Lingbao jingmu*, recorded and transmitted by Song Wenming 宋文明 (fl. 549–551) of the Liang 梁Southern Dynasty in his *Tongmen lun* 通門論, incisively summarizes the main content of the *Zhutian neiyin*:

These 256 characters theorize the divisions and appointed times of assemblies in all the heavens; the names, taboo names, positions, and titles of the great sages, perfected, and transcendents; all the palaces, bureaus, cities, terraces, and locations governed by these divine beings; the grades and ranks of divine transcendents that transform and rise or descend; the various kinds of masses of demons; and the karma of human beings and ghosts in the cycles of life and death.

其二百五十六字，論諸天度數期會，大聖真仙名諱位號，所治宮府城臺處所，神仙變化升降品次，眾魔種類，人鬼生死轉輪因緣。 (Jiyu Zhang 2004, vol. 5, p. 511)

In other words, these graphs contain the entirety of the profundities of all the heavens, sages, perfected, divine transcendents, ghosts, demons, and humanity.

The graphs are also a kind of pseudo-Sanskrit, which imitate Buddhist *dharani* (*tuoluo ni* 陀羅尼) incantations. Stephen R. Bokenkamp first recognized that among the eight graphs—陀羅育遼，眇炁合雲—of the third heaven of the north, the *Taiwen hanchong miaocheng tian* 太文翰寵妙成天, the first two are "tuo luo" 陀羅. The *Foshuo huaji tuoluo ni zhou jing* 佛説華積陀羅尼神咒經 (T. 1357), translated by Zhi Qian 支謙 of the Wu 吳 state during the Three Kingdoms 三國 (220–280) period, was circulated early on in the Jiangnan 江南 region. This sutra refers to divine incantations in various ways with approximatly the same pronunciation as the two characters "tuo luo". Ge Chaofu 葛巢甫, the figure who composed the ancient Lingbao scriptures, and others were perhaps inspired or influenced by this sutra in creating a Daoist version of the *dharani* incantation. The *Zhutian neiyin* refers to the celestial script as the "Hidden Language of the Great Brahma" (*Dafan yinyu* 大梵隱語), a title that also reveals foreign Buddhist influence.

We should add two further points with regard to the Daoist version of the *dharani* incantation and the *Dafan yinyu*. First, the Daoist version is similar to the Buddhist *dharani* in that it is considered a kind of password to the cosmos of the grand emptiness. Those who wish to control or manipulate the universe must be skilled in reciting this secret language. In addition, the *Duren jing* 度人經, which is also from the ancient Lingbao corpus, adopts the *Dafan yinyu* celestial script in 264 graphs from the *Zhutian neiyin,* referring to it as the "Illimitable Sounds of the Hidden Language of the Great Brahma within All the Heavens" (*Zhutian zhong dafan yinyu wuliang yin* 諸天中大梵隱語無量音), and suggests that it be recited to save the dead. Second, Wang Haoyue 王皓月has suggested that the Chinese characters used to translate the esoteric sounds should be interpreted and punctuated according to explanations in the *Zhutian neiyin*; in other words, we cannot simply break the lines into a tetrasyllabic verse (H. Wang 2017, pp. 336–37).

3. Jade Script of the Five Directions and Five Sprouts in the *Lingbao wufu xu*

The *Lingbao wufu xu* notes the existence of a third kind of Lingbao celestial script, the "Various Heavenly Names of the *Scripture of the Most High Perfected One* from the August One" (*Huangren Taishang zhenyi jing zhu tianming* 皇人太上真一經諸天名), which later Daoist texts refer to as the "Jade Script of the Five Directions and Five Sprouts." (DZ 388, 3.14a). The *Lingbao wufu xu* considers the ingestion of this celestial script as quite similar to the ingestion of the cloudy qi of the five directions. The original text uses seal script graphs and a form of incantatory language to explain them. The Tang Dynasty Daoist scripture *Shangqing jinmu qiuxian shangfa* 上清金母求仙上法 records both the seal script and explanatory text for this particular celestial script; the comparison between these two kinds of writing is clear. For example, the east has twelve seal script graphs followed by the corresponding Chinese characters and explanatory text that reads "For the green sprout of the east, ingest green sprouts and imbibe them with dawn auroras" 東方青芽，服食青芽，飲以朝霞(華) (DZ 391, 18a). The meaning is evident and is much easier to understand than the explanations of the *Zhutian neiyin* script. The entry for the "Various Heavenly Names" in the *Lingbao wufu xu* recounts the various methods of ingestion used for the celestial script and their effects, as well as the myth describing their origins. The tale chronicles the journey of the Yellow Emperor to visit the divine transcendents of the four cardinal directions in his search for the essential prescriptions for ingesting the script. According to the story, the Yellow Emperor fails to obtain any instructions from the transcendents until he receives directions from the August One of Mount Emei (*Emei shan huangren* 峨嵋山皇人).

The prefatory section of the first *juan* of the *Lingbao wufu xu* describes the history and nature of the celestial script. It recounts the story of Yu the Great 大禹, who after successfully subduing the floodwaters, receives this celestial script. The divine being who transmits the text to Yu warns that his body is too weak and that his life will soon come to an end; so, the divine being transmits the oral instructions for using the celestial script, which will allow Yu to refine and cultivate his body. After ingesting the celestial script, Yu ascends in flight to become a transcendent. But before departing, he copies the celestial script and conceals the writings in a cavern within Lake Dongting 洞庭湖. Helü闔閭

(r. 514–496 BCE), King of Wu 吳 during the Spring and Autumn Period, asks the Elder of Draconic Awe (*Longwei zhangren* 龍威丈人), a recluse of Mount Bao包山, to enter the grotto and retrieve the writings. However, Helü does not understand the meaning of the script, and so dispatches an emissary to Kong Qiu 孔丘 (Confucius), a high official in the state of Lu 魯 at the time, to inquire about them. Helü instructs the emissary to falsely claim that the celestial script came from a red bird who descended before them holding the texts in its beak and conceal the matter of the Elder of Draconic Awe being sent to retrieve the scripts from the cavern. However, Confucius is already aware of the truth of the matter, and so offers instead a children's song that recounts the matter and foretells the impending downfall of the Wu kingdom. The emissary can only admit that he has made up the story and then returns to the King of Wu to report on the episode. The passage concludes:

> Helü felt pity for himself and became weak. Sighing, he cut off any further hopes. Thereafter, he never again sought an explanation [of the writs]. Then, he deposited the numinous texts in a divine lodge, where he secretly treasured them. Later, on days of leisure, he would take them out to look at. The writings were never unsealed from their storage place, and eventually their location was lost. Fuchai obtained them at Mount Lao, but in the end, suffered death and elimination; Helü acquired them in the [caverns] of Lake Dongting, and subsequently [Wu] became a state subsumed by Goujian. These [events] were what [Kong] Qiu explained in the lyrics of the children's song—Helü's defeated kingdom was a testament [to Kong Qiu's statements]. The bestowal of this divine script is not something people can initiate so the texts can be gathered up—rarely does [such a situation] not result in misfortune. If the celestial writings are transmitted to someone who does not share in the Dao, whether one should suffer punishment for such matters lies with the Mystic Capital.
>
> 闔閭自傷方薄，歎息而絶望，遂不復重求解釋也。乃藏之神館，秘貴靈文，其後閑旦，親自取視，函封不脫而失書所在矣。夫差獲之於勞山，終有殺滅之患，闔閭探之於洞庭，遂爲勾踐所並。是由丘所説童謡之言，喪國閭徵矣。夫神文非啟授而攬之者，鮮不爲禍也。天書非道同而傳之者，無有不嬰罰於玄都也。
>
> (DZ 388, 1.11a)

In the story, Helü does not receive a divine transmission but instead asks the Elder of Draconic Awe to retrieve the celestial writs. In the end, his actions lead to the destruction of the Wu kingdom. Goujian 勾踐, King of Yue 越, driven by his steadfast resolve to destroy Wu and restore Yue from a position of humiliation, which had come at the hands of Fuchai, Helu's son, in battle several years earlier, finally puts an end to Wu. The story is also briefly recounted in the "Bianwen" 辨問 section of the *Bao puzi neipian* 抱朴子內篇. Chen Guofu 陳國符 believes that earlier sources *Yuejue shu* 越絶書 and *Hetu jiangxiang* 河圖絳象 served as the basis for the story (Chen 2014, pp. 49–50)[5]. Bokenkamp has also argued that the details of the story about the Elder of Draconic Awe retrieving the celestial writs from the caverns of Mount Bao were an important source of the Tao Yuanming's 陶淵明 (365–427) famed *Record of the Peachflower Fount* 桃花源記 (Bokenkamp 1986).

4. The Classification and Interpretation of the Lingbao Celestial Scripts in Lu Xiujing's *Lingbao jingmu*

Lu Xiujing, who lived during the Liu Song 劉宋 (420–479) of the Southern Dynasties 南朝 period, was the first great master in Daoist history to compile, edit, and propagate the ancient Lingbao scriptures. His *Lingbao jingmu* is not preserved in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) *Daoist Canon,* though the preface to this work survives in *juan* four of the *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤, a Daoist encyclopedia compiled in the Song Dynasty (DZ 1032, 4.4a–6a). The catalog itself survives in *Lingbao jing yishu* 靈寶經義疏, also known as the *Tongmen lun* 通門論, written by Song Wenming during the Liang (502–557) (Jiyu Zhang 2004, vol. 5, pp. 509–18). In this work, Lu Xiujing classifies and interprets the Lingbao celestial scripts

that have been recorded in the ancient Lingbao corpus. The document helps us to corroborate and more deeply understand the scripts.

1. The Relationship between the Celestial Scripts of the "Old" (*jiu* 舊) Lingbao Scriptures transmitted by *Yuanshi tianzun* and the "New" (*xin* 新) Scriptures received by the Transcendent Duke 仙公

Lu Xiujing's catalog divides the ancient Lingbao corpus into two categories: (1) the "Old Lingbao Scriptures from *Yuanshi tianzun*" 元始舊經, classified according to their meaning and further divided into ten sections; and (2) "all the new scriptures, which contain the teachings, precepts, instructions, and essentials, as well as explanations for proper conduct and behavior, received by the Transcendent Duke Ge" 葛仙公所受教戒訣要及説行業新經. The catalog asserts that the entirety of the ten sections of the "old" scriptures, those expounded and transmitted by *Yuanshi tianzun,* were celestial scripts and writings. A statement in the *Kongdong lingzhang* 空洞靈章, one of the scriptures of the ancient Lingbao corpus, affirms that "The numinous tablets expounded by *Yuanshi* [*tianzun*] are the writings of the flying heavens in ten sections" 元始敷靈篇，十部飛天書.[6] Moreover, the "new scriptures" received by the Transcendent Duke were "transmitted through the oral instructions of transcendents and sages" 仙聖口訣相傳;[7] they were also rooted in the celestial writings in ten sections and believed to be further expositions and elucidations of the *Yuanshi tianzun's* "old scriptures". In other words, all of the Lingbao scriptures were regarded as celestial writings, and the notion of celestial writing ran through the entire Lingbao scriptural system.

Lu Xiujing's catalog asserts that the Lingbao celestial scripts, from their initial formation to the time when *Yuanshi tianzun* "sent down teachings" 下教 from the heavens and "saved heavenly beings" 救度天人, underwent five periods of transition: Draconic Magnificence (*Longhan*龍漢), Extended Vigor (*Yankang* 延康), Vermillion Brilliance (*Chiming* 赤明), Opening Luminary (*Kaihuang* 開皇), and Higher Luminary (*Shanghuang* 上皇). In the final one, the "Six Heavens proceeded in their cycles, and the multitudes of sages hid themselves or rose up" 六天運行，眾聖幽昇, which led to the "scriptures being returned to the Grand Veil [Heaven] 經還大羅. It was not until the end of the Eastern Jin and early Liu Song that they were transmitted into the human world. During Lu Xiujing's time, the false and true scriptures had become mixed and the collection was in disarray, conditions that necessitated his undertaking to bring order to them. At the end of his preface to the catalog, Lu clearly notes that the scriptures he organized should be divided into two categories: (1) *Yuanshi tianzun*'s old scriptures, those recorded in the "old catalogue" (*jiumu* 舊目) in ten sections, and (2) the new scriptures received by the Transcendent Duke Ge. *Lingbao jingmu* provides supplementary proof of the celestial origin of the ancient Lingbao corpus and the original relationship between the old and new scriptures.

2. Celestial Writing at the Forefront of the Twelve Categories of Daoist Scripture

In *Lingbao jingmu,* Lu divides Daoist scriptures into twelve categories as follows (Jiyu Zhang 2004, vol. 5, p. 511):

(1) Origin of Scripture: the script of the eight conjunctions of the self-generating celestial writings 經之來源，自然天書八會之文;
(2) Divine Talismans: the script of the self-generating cloud-seal 神符，自然雲篆之文;
(3) Jade Instructions: explanations of the script of the eight conjunctions of celestial writings, all set forth by the heavenly sages 玉訣，玄聖所述，解釋天書八會之文;
(4) Numinous Charts: images of divine transformation and numinous changes, all set forth by the heavenly sages 靈圖，玄聖所述，神化靈變之象;
(5) Ledgers and Registers: names and taboo names of the sages and the perfected, and the positions and ranks within the divine palaces, all set forth by the heavenly sages 譜録，玄聖所述，聖真名諱，神宮位第;
(6) Precepts and Regulations: statutes of transgression and blessing, all set forth by the heavenly sages 戒律，玄聖所述，罪福科目;

(7) Ceremonial Protocols: ritual standards and ceremonial sequences and the grades and standards of *zhai* and rites of expiation, all set forth by the heavenly sages 威儀，玄聖所述，法憲儀序，齋謝品格;
(8) Methods and Acroama: divine medicines, numinous mushrooms, and measures for making gold, water, and jade pliant, all set forth by the heavenly sages 方訣，玄聖所述，神藥靈芝，矛(柔)金水玉之法;
(9) Various Techniques: methods for contemplating deities and actualizing perfection; fasting of the mind and sitting in oblivion; pacing the void and flying in the emptiness; supping on and imbibing the qi of the five directions; and guiding and pulling the three luminaries, all set forth by the heavenly sages 眾術，玄聖所述，思神存真，心齋坐忘，步虛飛空，餐吸五方元〔炁〕，道引三光之法;
(10) Records and Biographies: methods of study and training for obtaining the Dao and realizing perfection, all set forth by the heavenly sages 記傅，玄聖所述，學業得道成真之法;
(11) Heavenly Stanzas: lyrics for extolling the multitudes of sages, all set forth by the heavenly sages 玄章，〔玄聖所述，〕讚誦眾聖之辭;
(12) Memorials and Announcements: documents for transmitting and receiving scriptures and ritual protocols for ascending the altar and proclaiming a covenant, all set forth by the heavenly sages 表奏，玄聖所述，傳授經文，登壇告盟之儀.

Lu Xiujing's primary aim with this classification was to address the divisions of the Lingbao scriptural corpus; however, later Daoists extended this system to incorporate all Daoist scriptures in the Three Caverns (*Sandong* 三洞). Each cavern had twelve classes of scripture, which then collectively became known as the "36 divisions" (*sanshiliu bu* 三十六部). Two points must be noted about this classification. First, celestial writing is placed at the head of the twelve divisions and is regarded as the origin of the scriptures. This illustrates the fact that Lingbao celestial writings are the most important scriptures of the Lingbao corpus, and why Song Wenming in his *Lingbao jing yishu* 靈寶經義疏, therefore, changed their title to "Basic Texts" (*Benwen* 本文). The "script of the eight conjunctions" 八會之文 refers to writing formed when the three forms of qi (*xuan yuan shi* 玄元始) and the five phases converged. This idea stems from the Shangqing revelations recorded in the first *juan* of the *Zhen'gao* 真誥 that notes the "writings of the flying heavens of all the directions, the eight conjunctions, and three primordials" 三元八會群方飛天之書. Second, before this list, divine talismans were regarded as celestial script, but here they are distinguished from the first category, and, like the numinous charts that are similar to celestial script, are listed as a discrete kind of Daoist scripture.

3. Various Kinds of Lingbao Celestial Script and the Number of their Graphs

In discussing the celestial script, the first category of twelve in his *Lingbao jingmu*, Lu Xiujing explains in detail:

> First is the origin of scriptures, the script of the eight conjunctions of the self-generating celestial writings, altogether comprised of 1190 graphs. Of these, 668 are the original root of the Three Powers, which give birth to heaven, establish earth, and inaugurate the transformation of human beings and divine spirits—they are the root of the myriad things. Thus, to say that there is a heavenly way, earthly way, human way, and divine way is a statement of this. To cultivate and use this method, generally there are four classifications…These 256 graphs theorize the divisions and appointed times of assemblies in all the heavens; the names, taboo names, positions, and titles of the great sages, perfected, and transcendents; all the palaces, bureaus, cities, terraces, and locations governed by these divine beings; the grades and ranks of divine transcendents that transform and rise or descend; the masses of demons of various kinds; and the karma of human beings and ghosts in the cycles of life and death. These 63 graphs are the names and titles of the primordial essence of the five directions, methods of ingesting elixirs in search of transcendence, refining the spirit and transforming

> the body, and rising and vaulting upward in broad daylight. The remaining 123 graphs lack any explanation of their sounds.
>
> 第一經之本源，自然天書八會之文，凡一千一百九字。其六百六十八字，是三才之原根，生天立地，開化人神，萬物之根。〔故〕云有天道、地道、〔人道〕、神道，此之謂也。修用此法，凡有四科：……其二百五十六字，論諸天度數期會，大聖真仙名諱位號，所治宮府城臺處所，神仙變化升降品次，眾魔種類，人鬼生死轉輪因緣。其六十三字，是五方元精名號，服禦求仙，練神化形，白日升騰之法。餘一百二十三字，闕無解音。 (Jiyu Zhang 2004, vol. 5, p. 511)

In this section, the several forms of the Lingbao celestial script that Lu Xiujing distinguishes are identical to the three divisions in the ancient Lingbao corpus discussed above; even the number of characters is essentially the same. First, there is the "Perfected Script on Five Tablets in Red Writing" of the *Tianshu jing* with 668 characters (actually 672). Second are the "Self-Generating Jade Graphs of the Inner Sounds of All the Heavens" of the *Zhutian neiyin* with 256 characters. Next is the "Jade Script of the Five Directions and Five Sprouts" of the *Lingbao wufu xu* with 63 characters (actually 64). Finally, there is a category of celestial writing, of which the celestial graphs "lack any explanation of their sounds." This last category includes the "Jade Script in Three Tablets of the Eight Effulgences of the Three Regions" (*Sanbu bajing sanpian yuwen* 三部八景三篇玉文) (96 characters) that originated in the *Ershisi shengtu jing*二十四生圖經; the "Given Names, Taboo Names, and Talismanic Names of the Demon Kings of the Five Directions in the Eight Effulgences Registers" (*Bajing lu wufang mowang xingwei fuming* 八景籙五方魔王姓諱符名) (10 characters) that also originated in the *Ershisi shengtu jing*; and the "Celestial Script of the Middle Primordial that Pacifies the Spirits, Settles the Divinities, and Refines and Saves the Five Transcendents, from the Yellow Emperor of the Lingbao Heavens" (*Lingbao Huangdi liandu wuxian anling zhenshen zhongyuan tianwen* 靈寶黃帝鍊度五仙安靈鎮神中元天文) (16 characters) that originated in the *Wulian shengshi miaojing* 五鍊生尸妙經. Altogether, this last category consists of 123 characters (actually 122) (C. Wang 2009; H. Wang 2017, p. 110).

4. The Perfected Script on Five Tablets in Red Writing, the first kind of Lingbao Celestial Script, Divided into Four Classification (*sike* 四科) based on Function

Lu Xiujing explains in his *Lingbao jingmu* that "generally there are four classifications" of the Perfected Script:

> With regards the cultivation and use of these methods, generally there are four classifications: (1) those that control and summon the Upper Thearchs of the Nine Heavens, who audit the charts and registers of divine transcendents; these are methods of seeking transcendence and effecting perfection; (2) those that control and summon the starry officials of the celestial lodges, bring to order the divisions and numbers of the heavens, protect the kingdom and bring peace to the people; if the sequence of the five planets is in disarray or the four times seven (i.e., the twenty-eight Mansions 宿) are disaster-stricken, implement the way of the eight junctions, enact the wonders of the celestial writings, harmonize heaven and pacify earth—then the myriad disasters will naturally be dispelled; (3) those that arrest and control Fengdu, abolish and cut off the six heavens; with these, the hordes of demons will surrender and be subdued, while ghosts and sprites will be abolished and thwarted; (4) those that command the water thearchs and summon dragons to ascend to the clouds; no spirit of the seas or waterways will fail to revere them.
>
> 修用此法，凡有四科：第一〔主〕召九天上帝，校神仙圖録，求仙致真之法；第二主召天宿星官，正天分度，保國寧民，若乃五星録（錯）越，四七受災，施八會之道，行天書之妙，和天安地，則萬禍自消；第三攝制酆都，鹹斷六天，群魔降伏，鬼妖滅爽；第四敕命水帝，召龍上雲，海瀆之靈，莫不敬奉之也。 (Jiyu Zhang 2004, vol. 5, p. 511)

The classification encompasses four distinct functions: (1) seeking transcendence; (2) warding off and eliminating celestial disasters of the stars and lodges; (3) arresting and summoning ghosts and demons; and (4) warding off and eliminating flood disasters. Clearly, Lu Xiujing's description of the classifications is identical to the *Tianshu jing*.

5. Some Fundamental Characteristics of Daoism: A Perspective from the Celestial Scripts of the Lingbao Scriptures

From the above discussion, we find that the Lingbao celestial scripts are deep reflections of several significant Daoist beliefs and practices. Comparative analysis also suggests that these scripts typically represent some basic characteristics that differentiate Daoism from other religions.

1. The Daoist Veneration of Written Symbols

The Lingbao celestial scripts, so to speak, are a kind of written revelation granted to human beings from the gods. Such written revelations are not what the gods speak but rather those graphs and scripts that express divine meaning, which can only be given to humanity to view. This is quite different from the oral revelations God grants prophets in the Christian *Bible*. For example, in the "Book of Genesis" in the *Old Testament:* "Then God said 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (1.3) (Coogan et al. 2010, p. 11). The "Gospel of John" in the *New Testament* reads "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of the people (1.1–3) (Coogan et al. 2010, p. 1881). The "Book of Exodus" in the *Old Testament* reads "Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain, carrying the two tablets of the covenant in his hands, tablets that were written on both sides, written on the front and on the back. The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets…As soon as he [Moses] came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets from his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain" (32.15–19) (Coogan et al. 2010, p. 129). The Ten Commandments were written on the tablets. After Moses broke them, God later allowed Moses to prepare new tablets after listening to His oral transmission. Stephan Peter Bumbacher has suggested that God's intention was to hide his form from human sight and not allow human beings to see His own personal writing; thus, he suggests that the story implies that Christianity emphasizes the oral as opposed to written text (Bumbacher 1995). John Lagerwey has also written an article that discusses oral and written language in Eastern and Western religious traditions, which also aims to lay bare this key distinction between Daoism and Christianity (Lagerwey 1985).

Of course, Daoism does not reject considerations of voice and sound. According to explanations in the *Tianshu jing* and the *Chishu yujue*, Daoist priests utilize the Perfected Script on Five Tablets primarily as written seal script talismans, complementing this with spoken incantatory verse. When priests use the Perfected Script on Five Tablets, they generally write or inscribe the script on some object and then cast or arrange these objects in the appropriate place. According to the *Zhutian neiyin* explanations, the use of the Self-Generated Jade Graphs emphasizes dharani-like sounds supplemented by the use of written seal script talismans; practitioners can recite the Jade Graphs but can also transcribe them onto paper, which they then ingest. In short, Daoism utilizes both voice and text.

2. The Daoist Pursuit of Longevity and Immortality

As noted above, the first group of the celestial script in the east, described in the *Wupian zhenwen*, is used to cultivate transcendence. In the list of eight Self-Generating Jade Graphs from the first of the eight eastern heavens, the first three are used to "cultivate the path of flying transcendents" 修飛仙之道. The Lingbao *wufu* graphs were also originally intended as oral formulas for the practice of imbibing qi and cultivating transcendence. The *Lingbao wufu xu* that records the celestial writing includes numerous methods of ingestion, and all are intended for nourishing life and cultivating transcendence. The prefatory sec-

tions of both the first and third *juan* in the scripture suggest that such methods originated from celestial writing. In short, the three kinds of Lingbao celestial scripts indicate that Daoism prescribes active engagement in the pursuit of longevity and immortality, exploring and expounding on all sorts of techniques for nourishing life and cultivating transcendence. The majority of these require the application of a secret formula (*mijue* 秘訣), a fact that demonstrates Daoism to be an esoteric religious tradition, whose practitioners do not lightly divulge the mysteries of the heavens. Indeed, the Lingbao celestial scripts are considered the greatest mysteries of the heavens. Daoism's emphasis on secret transmission very clearly differentiates it from Christianity, which aimed at spreading the Gospel, and Buddhism with its goal of universal salvation.

Cherishing life and detesting death might be said to be one of Daoism's most basic values, and many Daoist scriptures clearly address the issue. For example, the "Earthly Perfection" (*Dizhen* 地真) section of the *Bao puzi neipian* states that "Life should be held dear, and death feared" 生可惜也，死可畏也 (M. Wang 1985, p. 326). The *Dongxuan lingbao zhai shuo guangzhu jie fa deng zhuyaun yi* 洞玄靈寶齋説光燭戒罰燈祝願儀 (DZ 524) notes "Among the myriad things humanity is of top priority, and humanity considers life a treasure … all know that they must fear death and take joy in life" 夫萬物以人爲貴，人以生爲寶……一切皆知畏死而樂生 (DZ 524, 5b). In order to propagate this central tenet, some Daoist scriptures adopt metaphorical and comparative rhetorical techniques to vividly illustrate the principle that death is inferior to life. For instance, the "Earnest Seeking" (*Qinqiu* 勤求) chapter of the *Bao puzi neipian* notes:

> Among the ancients, there was a saying: 'The living is in me, and the benefits are also great therein'. To discuss the value of this statement, though nobility may become thearchs or kings, they are insufficient in comparison with this law. To discuss its seriousness, though good fortune extends to all those under heaven, it is not sufficiently easy to come by as using this technique. Thus, there is the suggestive expression 'a dying prince takes joy in being a living mouse.'
>
> 古人有言曰，生之於我，利亦大焉。論其貴賤，雖爵爲帝王，不足以此法比焉。論其輕重，雖富有天下，不足以此術易焉。故有死王樂爲生鼠之喻也。
>
> (M. Wang 1985, p. 259)

The *Santian neijie jing* 三天內解經 (DZ 1205) also mentions "The true way delights in life and abhors destruction. That which pertains to long life is the Dao; that which pertains to death and destruction is not the Dao. A dead prince is not worth a live rat … life is valuable" 真道好生而惡殺。長生者，道也；死壞者，非道也。死王乃不如生鼠……生可貴也 (DZ 1205, 1.10a; translation from Bokenkamp 1997, p. 224).

Compared with Daoism, Buddhism is precisely the opposite, promoting the principles of detesting life and cherishing death. Such values are not only expressed in early Buddhist texts but are also reflected in early Daoist materials. (Tang 1998, pp. 305–6). The *Santian neijie jing* records:

> Laozi is the lord of living transformation; Śakyāmuni is the lord of transformation by death. As a result, Laozi was born from his mother's left armpit and is lord of the left. The left is the side of yang breaths that gover the Azure Palace with its Registers of Life. Śakyāmuni was born from his mother's right armpit and is lord of the right. The right is the side of yin breaths and the black records of the Registers of Death. In this respect the differences between the teachings of Laozi and Śakyāmuni are those between the laws of left and right. The transforming influences of the left accord with the palace of the left, so that the pneumas of life cause the adept's body to rise and fly off in transcendence. The transforming influences of the right accord with the palace of the right, so that the pneumas of death cause the adept to pass through oblivion and be reborn. Buddhist dharma robes are entirely black. [Buddhists] are made to wear these black garments in order to model themselves on the breaths of yin and to represent the fact that their names are entered in the black records.

> 老子主生化，釋迦主死化。故老子剖左腋而生，主左，左爲陽氣，主青宮生録。釋迦剖右腋而生，主右，右爲陰氣，主黑簿死録。是以老子、釋迦教化，左右法異。左化則隨左宮生氣，使舉形飛仙。右化是隨右宮死氣，使滅度更生，法服悉黑，使著黑衣，以法陰氣，入於黑簿也。 (DZ 1205, 1.9b–10a; translation from Bokenkamp 1997, p. 223)

A lost piece of Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 commentary in the *Zhen'gao* 真誥 also reads:

> The *Nirvāna Scripture* states: "When life is obliterated it is obliteration with no remainder –Total obliteration is bliss." In this way, Buddhists take life to be an illusion and regard death as a joyful thing. In the Fangzhu kingdom, life is blissful and death is a calamity. This is why [Buddhists] call their practices "the methods of the Buddha" and not "the Way of the Buddha."[8]

> 《涅槃經》云：'生滅滅矣，寂滅爲樂。'是以生爲幻，死爲樂。方諸國以生爲樂，死爲患也。故稱佛法，不稱佛道。

3. The Daoist Synthesis of Philosophy and Belief

In a manner of speaking, Daoism is a religious tradition that merges Daoist philosophy, beliefs, and practices concerning divine transcendence. We might consider a piece of the preface to the *Tianshu jing* that describes the celestial writs:

> The Perfected Writs in Red Writing on Jade Tablets from the Numinous Treasure Cavern Mystery of Primordial Commencement were born within the empty cavern prior to Primordial Commencement. Heaven and earth had not yet established their roots; sun and moon had yet to emit light. All was dark and tenebrous, with neither ancestor nor primogenitor. The numinous writs remained hidden and shadowed; no sooner were they present, then they disappeared. The Two Principles awaited them [the writs] in order to be differentiated; the sun awaited them in order to shine. The numinous charts altered cycles; the mystic images pushed forward changes. Seizing the opportunity and responding to the moment, at that time [the writs] came into existence therein. Heaven and earth obtained them and were thereby distinguished; the Three Effulgences obtained them and emitted radiance … At this time, heaven sent down twelve mystic signs, and earth manifested twenty-four corresponding resonances … Heaven treasured them [the writs] and so brought about its floating suspension; earth secreted them away and so brought about peace. The five thearchs controlled them and so brought obtained restraint. The Three Luminaries mounted them and so become loftily illuminated; the higher sages revered them and so brought about perfection; the Five Marchmounts followed them and so obtained numinosity. The Son of Heaven obtained them and so brought about ordered governance; stately throne enjoyed them and so arrive at Great Peace … The Perfected Writs in Red Writing on Five Tablets [of the Heavenly Worthy] of Primordial Beginning and the Five Elders emerged from within the Self-Actualizing of the empty cavern. [They] generated heaven and established earth, opened the transformations and made divine the brightness. Those above refer to them as numinous, for they effect protection of the Five Marchmounts, pacify the state and lengthen its existence. Those below refer to them as treasured, for they are the mystic wonders of numinous treasure and are what is revered by the myriad things. The [Celestial Worthy] of Primordial Commencement opened the charts and twelve numinous signs arose above, while twenty-four corresponding resonances were manifested below.

> 元始洞玄靈寶赤書玉（五）篇真文生於元始之先，空洞之中，天地未根，日月未光，幽幽冥冥，無祖無宗。靈文晻藹，乍存乍亡，二儀待之以分，太陽待之以明。靈圖革運，玄象推遷，乘機應會，於是存焉，天地得之而分判，三景得之而發光……是時天降十二玄瑞，地發二十四應……天寶之以致浮，地秘之以致安，五帝掌之以得鎮，三光乘之以高明，上聖奉之以致真，五嶽從之以得靈，天子得之

> 以致治，國祚享之以太平……元始五老赤書玉（五）篇出於空洞自然之中，生天立地，開化神明。上謂之靈，施鎮五嶽，安國長存，下謂之寶，靈寶玄妙，爲萬物之尊。元始開圖，上啟十二靈瑞，下發二十四應。 (DZ 22, 1.1a–b)

From this, we can see that the celestial scripts had already been born within the empty void prior to the emergence of the heavens, earth, sun, moon, stars, and other celestial bodies. When the celestial writings came into the world, it was as if the great Dao had been made manifest, marked by the various celestial signs and earthly corresponding resonances. Heaven, earth, and the myriad things, as well as both gods and human beings, all relied upon this celestial writing to be established. Indeed, the scripts serve as the origin of the world and are its most lofty principle. In fact, there is no difference between this type of celestial writing and the Dao itself, the cosmological or ontological foundation of everything, which is discussed in the *Daode jing* 道德經. The celestial script described in the *Wupian zhenwen* is explicitly endowed with all the characteristics and functions of the Dao.

In the ancient Lingbao corpus, several places more clearly articulate the idea that celestial writing is equivalent to the origin of the universe and the myriad things and the loftiest principle. The *Duren jing* claims:

> Above it [red script 赤文] there is no further parent; Only the Dao constituted its body. The Five-Part Script spread abroad, planting everywhere its spiritual power. Without the script, there would be no light; Without the script, there would be no brilliance. Without the script, nothing would be established; Without the script, nothing would have been formed. Without the script, there would be no salvation; Without the script, there would be no life.
>
> 上無復祖，唯道爲身。五文開廓，普植神靈。無文不光，無文不明，無文不立，無文不成，無文不度，無文不生。 (DZ 87, 2.7b–9a; translation from Bokenkamp 1997, pp. 415–16)

The passage views the Lingbao scriptures as the root of the heavens and the body of the Dao. Moreover, it suggests that without the script, absolutely nothing would occur, an evident instance of the texts and scriptures being elevated to the status of cosmological origin or loftiest principle. In addition, the Lingbao scriptures consider the emergence of celestial writing and the operations of the Dao to occur at the same time. For example, the *Tianshu jing* claims "Once the numinous texts stirred, the Dao then thereupon began to act" 靈文既振，道乃行焉 (DZ 22, 1.4b). The *Zhutian neiyin* reads: "Once the sounds were clear, then the Dao thereupon began to operate" 其音既朗，其道行焉 (DZ 97, 3.3b). These kinds of statements reveal, without a doubt, the correspondence between celestial writing and the Dao.

What is especially worthy of attention is the repeated assertions of the Lingbao scriptures that the celestial script was spontaneously produced. It is given various names within the corpus, such as "self-generated writings" (*ziran zhi shu* 自然之書), "self-generated script" (*ziran zhi wen*自然之文), or "self-generated jade graphs" (*ziran yuzi* 自然玉字), all of which ascribe the notion of "self-generating" as a fundamental characteristic of this celestial writing. The *Daode jing* asserts that "self-generating" is a basic attribute of the Dao, such as in the statement "The Dao takes as its model the Thus-So" 道法自然. In these short phrases, the same two characters, *ziran* 自然, are used to describe the self-generating, spontaneous, and natural formation of both the Dao and the celestial writing, suggesting that the authors of the texts perceived the nature of both entities to be alike. This is why the *Zhutian neiyin* maintains that those who "are able to naturally understand the sounds of all the heavens, will be able to thoroughly penetrate the dark void and merge together with the Dao" 能自然知諸天之音，洞達玄虛，與道合同也 (DZ 97, 2.15a). From the perspective of Daoist practitioners, "to obtain the Dao is to become a transcendent" 得道成仙, a maxim that has always been prevalent amongst Daoists. But this is no different than saying that understanding and utilizing celestial writing is an important path to becoming transcen-

dent. From the various forms of celestial script recorded in the Lingbao corpus, we can see that Daoist philosophy and religious beliefs have been ingeniously fused together.

It is also necessary to note that in addition to the "Dao," *qi* 氣 indicates an original or lofty principle in Daoist philosophical discourse. The concept of *qi* is intimately related to the "Dao". When we speak of the "Dao", whether it be as a creative force or as a constitutive element of all things, we often cannot separate any discussion from *qi*, which is the material foundation of the Dao's operations within the world. The *Laozi* 老子 speaks of the role of *qi* in the creation of the all, though the text does not fully expand on the idea.[9] However, in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子 and other philosophical works, such as the *Guanzi* 管子, we find further discussion.[10] The ancient Lingbao scriptures fully absorbed these Daoist philosophical concepts on *qi* and developed them in new directions. Within the Lingbao corpus, in addition to the basic theory of the existence of *qi* and the principle of creation that suggests the Dao manifests and functions through qi, there is also the idea that the coagulation of qi explains the formation and nature of celestial scripts. The ancient Lingbao scriptures also suggest that Daoist deities came into being through the coalescence and transformation of primordial *qi* (*yuanqi* 元氣), a notion that links the concepts of divinity with the ontological and cosmological significance of the Dao and *qi*. As the scriptures convey, the various deities are, in their very essence, manifestations of the Dao and *qi*. In truth, *jing* 經 (scripture), *shen* 神 (deity), and *qi* (vital breath) form a trinity and cannot be separated (Lü 2003, pp. 588–90). The concept of *qi* is another example of how the ancient Lingbao scriptures meld together philosophical ideas and religious beliefs.

Many scholars, both inside and outside China, have long tried to separate the study of Daoist philosophy and Daoist religious teachings, arguing that the two are distinct. But from the perspective of the Lingbao celestial writings, this sort of thinking is indeed a misunderstanding. The Lingbao celestial scripts are strong proof that Daoism is a Chinese religious tradition of profound depth and ideology. Thus, we should acknowledge, as Daoist studies scholar Anna Seidel once wrote, Daoism as the "unofficial high religion of China." (Seidel 1997).

6. Conclusions

To close, I believe we can glean three provisional conclusions from the discussion above. First, the Lingbao celestial scripts highlight the divine nature of the Lingbao scriptures, a point that is demonstrated in several ways:

(1) The scriptures originated in the heavens and were certainly not ordinary texts meant to circulate widely in the world; thus, many of them carry special designations, such as "Celestial Writing" (Tianshu 天書), "Perfected Script" (Zhenwen 真文), "Red Writing" (Chishu 赤書), or "Celestial Script" (Tianwen 天文), among others.
(2) The scripts were produced by qi coalescing in the heavens; the scriptures were not composed by human beings.
(3) The meaning of these mysterious and abstruse scriptures can be understood only through the annotated explanations of the sages and perfected.
(4) The scriptures were systematically transmitted from the heavens into the human world, and the gods, transcendents, perfected, and Daoist priests involved in this process were not the producers of these scriptures but merely conveyed them to the proper recipient(s).
(5) The scriptures correspond to the Dao and qi, which serve as the origin of all things.
(6) Other various reasons. They are secretly stored in the heavens; they are protected by sage perfected or transcendent lads and jade maidens; their text also conveys divine sounds; they can be transformed into wondrously numinous objects; whoever obtains the scripts can become an undying transcendent, achieve unlimited salvation, expel demons, treat illnesses, and accomplish other amazing ends; only those who are fated to become transcendents may obtain them; they can only be transmitted at certain times according to a fixed number of years; and those who carelessly transmit them or show them irreverence will be punished.

Second, ideas concerning the Lingbao celestial scripts are at the core of beliefs in the Lingbao scriptures. Song Wenming's *Lingbao jing yishu* reproduces Lu Xiujing's *Lingbao jingmu;* both are eminent Daoists in their classifications and explanations of the ancient Lingbao scriptures and indicate the central importance of the celestial scripts within the Lingbao system. After the list of old scriptures from *Yuanshi tianzun*, which Lu had divided into ten sections, he offers a summarizing and clarifying statement:

> Of the 36 *juan* listed in the "Structured Catalogue of Purple Tenuity Scriptures and Old Scriptures [transmitted by the Celestial Worthy of] Primordial Commencement" to the right, 21 *juan* have already emerged. Today, [those that have emerged] have been separated into 23 *juan*, while 15 *juan* have still yet to emerge. The 36 *juan* of the wondrous scriptures in ten sections have all be engraved with golden lettering and transcribed atop jade tablets. The chapter titles have been inscribed in the Southern Balustrade of the Purple Tenuity Palace. The Metropolis of Great Mystery atop the Jade Capitoline Mountain also houses and records these texts. The masses of great sages of the various heavens, according to the regular fasting months and days, ascend to pay a visit to the Jade Capitol, burning incense, circling [the mountain] as they proceed, and reciting scriptures as they travel to pay homage to the celestial scripts.
>
> 右《元始舊經紫微經格目》三十六卷，二十一卷已出，今分成二十三卷，十五卷未出。十部妙經三十六卷，皆剋金為字，書於玉簡之上，題其篇目於紫微宮南軒，太玄都玉京山亦具記其文。諸天大聖眾依格齋月日，上詣玉京，燒香旋行誦經，禮天文也。 (Jiyu Zhang 2004, vol. 5, p. 510)

Several phrases correspond to another explanatory note Lu added to his catalog in ten sections: "[The scriptures] were all transcribed texts in golden [lettering] on [jade] tablets" 皆金簡書文. Moreover, the passage notes that celestial beings "pay homage to the celestial scripts" on the requisite *zhai* days. These ideas demonstrate that the old scriptures originated in the divine scriptures recorded in the heavens. Song Wenming summarizes the essential content of the various sections of the old scriptures:

> Section 1: "Elucidates the corresponding transformations of the source root" 明應化之源本;
>
> Section 2: "Elucidates the cycles and convergences from start to finish" 明運會始終;
>
> Section 3: "Elucidates of universal extension of Heaven's merit" 明天功之廣被;
>
> Section 4: "Elucidates awe-inspiring influence of sagely virtues" 明聖德之威風;
>
> Section 5: "Elucidates the varying grades of precepts and regulations" 明戒律之差品;
>
> Section 6: "Elucidates the bases of human conduct and behavior" 明人行業之由從;
>
> Section 7: "Elucidates the far-reaching [benefits] of delivering all creatures" 明濟物之弘遠;
>
> Section 8: "Elucidates the paths and traces of cause and effect [karma]" 明因果之途跡;
>
> Section 9: "Elucidates the methods and regulations of cultivation practices" 明修行之方法;
>
> Section 10: "Elucidates the substance and functions of regulating the body" 明治身之體用.

Song's succinct phrases, several of which are evidently derived from the foundational belief in celestial writing, encapsulate the beliefs and practices found in the old scriptures. The explanations in sections one and four especially connect to scriptures related to the Lingbao celestial scripts. The explanations in sections five and six coincide with Lu's characterization of the eleven *juan* of "new scriptures, which contain the teachings, precepts, instructions, and essentials, as well as explanations of proper conduct and behavior, received by the Transcendent Duke Ge" 葛仙公所受教戒訣要及説行業新經. If we consider the extant new scriptures alongside the old scriptures and Song and Lu's descriptions, we

see that the former elaborate and further explicate the latter. Indeed, the beliefs and practices found in both bodies of scripture are analogous.

Third, as discussed above, the Lingbao celestial scripts reflect several fundamental characteristics of Daoism: the veneration of written symbols, the pursuit of longevity and immortality, and the synthesis of philosophy and belief. As the *Wushang miyao* 無上秘要, a Daoist collectanea from the Northern Zhou 北周 (557–581) confirms, Daoism is indeed grounded in these three basic, interrelated principles. According to the *Wushang miyao mulu* 無上秘要目錄, recorded in the Dunhuang manuscript P. 2861, the first section of the Northern Zhou compilation is titled "Selections on the Great Dao" 大道品, which contains excerpts of other Daoist scriptures testifying to the ontological and cosmological significance of the "Dao." (Lagerwey 1981, pp. 49–71). Scriptural quotations in the second section, "Selections on the Changes and Transformations of the One *Qi*" 一氣變化品, discuss the same matters with regard to *qi*. The Dao and *qi* were core principles in Daoist philosophical writings, and their close conceptual relationship was often reflected in linking the two terms together to form a composite term (*Daoqi* 道氣) in Daoist works (Lü 2000, pp. 32–34). After the first two sections, the *Wushang miyao,* as the table of contents indicates, contains sections on various cosmic realms, including heaven, earth, humanity, and divine beings, and all four are generated through the transformations of *qi*. The following sections from "Selections on Perfected Scripts" 真文品 to "Selections on Casting Tablets" 投簡品 (29 in total) center on the sources of Daoist scriptures and the rituals and rules for their transmission. These sections reveal that Daoist scriptures, in fact, originate from *qi,* which converges and forms celestial books. Altogether, roughly the first third of the *Wushang miyao* reflects the first fundamental characteristic of Daoism. Thereafter, the *Wushang miyao* encompasses sections on various kinds of Daoist practices, including techniques, methods, rituals, precepts, and regulations, all of which are linked to the worldview based on the Dao and *qi* presented in the first two sections of the collection. Generally speaking, Daoist practices correspond to a particular worldview or principle; for example, cultivation practices concerning the ingestion of *qi* are grounded in broader theories of *qi*. The practices subsequently cited in the *Wushang miyao* can lead to different results, such as becoming a ghost official (*guiguan* 鬼官), the lowest rank for cultivators of the Dao, or casting off all forms to become formless (*wuxing* 無形), the highest aim of such regimens. Regardless, the existence of various realms (heaven, earth, humanity, and deities) and the various practices that may lead a practitioner to them are a testament to the second fundamental characteristic of Daoism. The final sections of the *Wushang miyao* ("Transforming Divine Luminescence" 變神景, "Embodying Double Forgetting" 體兼忘, "Gathering in the Thus-So" 會自然, and "Returning to the Silent Stillness" 歸寂寂) concern the act of returning to the Dao, an exact inversion of the first section that deals with the everything emanating from Dao. All these sections reflect the third fundamental characteristic mentioned above. In short, the structure of the *Wushang miyao* and the relationship between the various sections reflects a comprehensive unified system that organically integrates the three characteristics of Daoism raised above. To borrow the Chinese philosophical concept of substance and function (*tiyong* 體用), I would suggest that the third characteristic speaks of the "substance", while the first two speak of the function. Or, we might also use the term "revelation", employing it in its Western Christian sense. If so, we can think of "substance" as having two important points: (1) the revelation of the Dao and *qi* (characteristic #1) and (2) the revelation of practices (i.e., cultivating the Dao) and the results of fully dedicating oneself to them (characteristic #2). As we can see, beliefs concerning celestial writing and scripts occupy a pivotal position in the broader system of Daoist scripture and teachings.

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Notes

1 On the scriptures of the "Three Caverns" and "Four Supplements", see (Chen 2014, pp. 1–87; Ōfuchi 1981; Lai 2001; C. Wang 2008).

2 In the first fascicle of the *Declarations of the Perfected* (*Zhen'gao* 真誥), the Lady of Purple Tenuity (*Ziwei furen* 紫微夫人) claims to describe the "foundational beginnings of the writing" 為書之本始, which first existed as celestial graphs before differentiating and transforming into mundane script as "64 kinds of writing" 六十四種之書 (DZ 1016, 1.7b). Wang Chengwen 王承文 argues that these "64 kinds of writing" are related to the cosmogonies articulated in the *Apocrypha on the Book of Changes* (*Yi wei* 易緯). See (C. Wang 2010, pp. 788–89). Hsieh Shu-wei suggests, however, that they are directly related to the 64 kinds of script recorded in the *Puyao jing* that the Buddha studied at a young age. As he argues, the 64 kinds of writing known in Buddhist teachings influenced conceptions of celestial writing that we find in revelations recorded in Shangqing works from the Eastern Jin; see (Hsieh 2010, pp. 87–92).

3 On the ancient Lingbao corpus, see (Ōfuchi 1974, 1997, pp. 73–218; Bokenkamp 1983; Kobayashi 1990, pp. 13–188; C. Wang 2002, 2017; H. Wang 2017; Liu 2018). In addition, western scholars have provided English translations of the titles and synopses of the content for the 27 extant ancient Lingbao scriptures. See (Bokenkamp 1983, pp. 479–85; Schipper and Verellen 2004, pp. 214–39).

4 Works from the Ming dynasty *Daozang* 道藏 are cited according to their numbers as listed in (Schipper and Chen 1996, pp. 258–348).

5 The *Wu Yue chunqiu* 吳越春秋, an Eastern Han (25–220) historical work somewhat later than the *Yue jue shu* 越絕書, but whose content is largely similar, also transmits the same story; see the first appendix, "*Wu Yue chunqiu* yiwen" 《吳越春秋》佚文 in (Jue Zhang 2019, p. 441).

6 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao kongdong lingzhang* 太上洞玄靈寶空洞靈章經, in (Jiyu Zhang 2004, vol. 3, p. 64).

7 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao benxing suyuan jing* 太上洞玄靈寶本行宿緣經, DZ 1114, 5b.

8 *Tianhuang zhidao taiqing yuce* 天皇至道太清玉冊 (DZ 1483), 195b.Translation from (Bokenkamp 2014a, pp. 248–50).

9 See for example, chapter 42 of the *Laozi*: "The Dao gave birth to the one; the one gave birth to the two; the two gave birth to the three; and the three gave birth to the myriad things. The myriad things bear *yin* and embrace *yang*, and surging *qi* makes them harmonious" 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以为和 (B. Wang 2008, p. 117).

10 In the *Zhuangzi,* see the chapter titled "Knowledge Rambled North" (*Zhi beiyou* 知北遊): "That is why it states: 'That which pervades all under heaven is merely the one *qi*'" 故曰"通天下一氣耳". (Guo 1961, p. 733) In the *Guanzi,* see the chapter titled "Pivotal Sayings" (*Shuyan* 樞言): "If something has *qi,* then it is alive; if something does not have *qi,* then it is dead. Whatever lives does so through *qi*" 有氣則生，無氣則死，生者以其氣. (Guo 1984, p. 316).

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Searching for the Location of Lord Lao: The Evolution of Daoist Cosmic Concept between the Han and Tang Dynasties

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Abstract: The period between the Han and Tang dynasties was a crucial time in the development of the Daoist cosmic concept. During that time, Daoist believers needed to place important deities properly in the newly created heavenly realm. Faced with placing the great deity Lord Lao in a specific place, different Daoist believers made various attempts with some complex adjustments, which eventually reached the consensus during the Tang Dynasty at the latest that "Lord Lao lives in Great Clarity Heaven". The investigation of this adjustment process would present multiple possibilities in the development of the Daoist cosmic concept.

Keywords: great high lord Lao; cosmic concept; Kunlun mountain; great clarity heaven; supreme pole heaven; purple sublimity palace

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In 570, Zhen Luan 甄鸞 (fl. 566–570) objected to Emperor Wu (Yuwen Yong 宇文邕, re. 560–578) of the Northern Zhou Dynasty's (557–581) flattering of Daoism and submitted the *Xiaodao Lun* 笑道論 (*Laughing at the Dao*) to refute Daoist teachings. In this work, which enraged Emperor Wu, Zhen Luan acerbically sneered at the inherent contradictions of the Daoist cosmic concept. In Chapter 1 of his work titled "The Creation of Heaven and Earth 造立天地", Zhen Luan quoted the Daoist classic *Zao tiandi Ji* 造天地記 (*the Record of Creating Heaven and Earth*)—"Kunlun Mountain is 4800 li high, and above it are Jade Capital Mountain 玉京山 and Grand Canopy Mountain 大羅山, each 4800 li high". He also quoted Daoist the source named *Guangshuo Pin* 廣說品 (*the chapter of General Exposition*): "The distance between the heaven and earth is one hundred million and five thousands of li, and the Purple Sublimity Palace 紫微宮 is located in the heaven that is five hundred million levels above". Then, Zhen Luan ranked the Daoist doctrine of Lord Lao's body transforming into the universe with the above-mentioned hierarchy of heavenly realms in which the Kunlun and Purple Sublimity Palace were located, and then came to the following absurd conclusion:

> The Purple Sublimity Palace is situated millions of li higher than Mount Kunlun. And Lord Lao transformed his heart into the canopy, his liver into the Palace of the Green Emperor, his spleen into the Purple Sublimity Palace, and his head into Mount Kunlun. Why does Lord Lao stand upside down on the ground with his head below and his liver above?（紫微宮）是則高於昆侖山數百萬里。而老君以心為華蓋, 肝為青帝宮, 脾為紫微宮, 頭為昆侖山。不知老君何罪倒豎於地, 頭在下、肝在上? (Zhen 1934).

In Zhen Luan's misinterpretation of the Daoist universe, the Purple Sublimity Palace (Lord Lao's spleen) was located at the upper level, while Mount Kunlun (Lord Lao's head) was much lower. This upside-down form was indeed absurd. Zhen Luan's barb pointed to the absurdities in the Daoist cosmic concept and view of heaven, and Lord Lao (deified Laozi) became the object of ridicule. Just underneath Zhen Luan's seemingly superficial satire lay complex issues of Daoist philosophy and intellectual history.

The period between the Han (206 BC–220 CE) and Tang (618–907) was one of the most enthusiastic periods in the evolution of Daoist teachings. Different Daoist groups in different regions created their own "scriptural teaching 經教" systems based on the old beliefs

and ideological resources. With the deepening of knowledge exchanges during the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589), the originally diverse doctrinal ideas were largely integrated by the early Tang (618–907), which solidified into an internal consensus among Daoists. During this period, the Daoist cosmic concept experienced a process of consolidation from much diversiform content into an ideological unity.[1] It is noteworthy that Daoism, in creating its cosmic concept (especially the description of the heavenly realm), needed not only to elaborate on the appearance of "nature" and the process of its creation but also to rationalize the placement of exalted deities in the cosmic levels and attempt to account for the relationship between the deities and the universe. As a result, the "parameters" considered by Daoists while creating or describing their cosmic concept were much increased. Unsurprisingly, this caused difficult contradictions in the integration and harmonization of Daoist cosmologies from different sources. When Zhen Luan mocked the Daoist doctrine of Lord Lao incarnating the universe, it was during a period in which multiple Daoist cosmologies coexisted and had not yet been fully integrated. In fact, the contradictions between different Daoist texts offering descriptions of the universe were much more serious than in Zhen Luan's example. Under the background of the fierce debate between Buddhism and Daoism, such inherent doctrinal contradictions would inevitably become the focus of attack by ideological competitors. Furthermore, Zhen Luan also challenged the description of the cosmic hierarchy inhabited by another Daoist deity, the Lord of Great Dao of the Most High 太上大道君[2]. In a similar way to the mockery of Lord Lao's upside-down position, Zhen Luan's criticism continued to be based on a method of false attribution. Zhen Luan and others had successively openly questioned and sharply refuted Daoist cosmological views and the location of the deities, which may indeed have shaken the foundation of the Daoist faith. Facing the introduction of the highly inclusive and explanatory Buddhist cosmic concept to China, such a provocation would undoubtedly have increased the anxiety of the Daoists. Thus, with the internal challenges and stimulation from outside, did the Daoists try to adjust their teachings and solve their conceptual contradictions? If the answer was yes, then how did they solve these problems? And did it ultimately work? Concerning these questions, the process of how medieval Daoists conceptually placed Lord Lao in the celestial realms is of vital importance in exploring the process of adaptation and integration of Daoist cosmologies at that time.

1. Shadows of the Kunlun Mountain as the Heavenly Ladder

The transformation of Laozi (human) to "(Great high) Lord Lao" (deity) was already completed in the Han Dynasty. During the reign of Emperor Huan (re. 147–167), Wang Fu's 王阜 "Laozi Shengmu Bei" 老子聖母碑 (Epitaph of Laozi's Holy Mother) and Bian Shao's 邊韶 "Laozi Ming" 老子銘 (Inscription of Laozi) both described Laozi as "the Dao, born from the formless in the beginning, arose before the Great Origin, and moves in the source of the Primal Simplicity 道也, 乃生於無形之先, 起於太初之前, 行於太素之元" (F. Wang 1960). He is "merging the Qi of chaos, together with the Three Lights forever 離合於混沌之氣, 與三光為始終" (Bian 1988). The above statements are already familiar. The large number of Lord Lao images discovered in the Han Dynasty tombs repeatedly prove that Laozi had been revered as a deity (Jiang 2016, pp. 438–516, 139–57), but still there were distinct understandings of his divinity from different communities (M. Lu 2021). Scholars have conducted extensive research on the initial process of Laozi's deification. Liu Yi has provided a comprehensive review of this topic.[3] The continuous deification of Laozi gradually led to the assimilation of his divinity with the Dao. Meanwhile, as an independent and distinct deity, Laozi, or Lord Lao[4], maintained a stable position in the world of belief and occupied an exclusive "residence". Lord Lao's legends and deification had multiple sources and clues. One of these clues suggests that there was a significant connection between Lord Lao and the Kunlun Mountain. This connection led to Lord Lao's residence being placed on Kunlun by the early Heavenly Master of Daoism. Such an arrangement left a lasting impact on the subsequent legends of Lord Lao.

According to ancient Chinese legends, Kunlun stands amid heaven and earth and was one of the most important sacred mountains in ancient Chinese beliefs. From ancient times to the present, the cultural and spiritual value of Kunlun has been reiterated and reconstructed countless times. Early Daoism made every effort to incorporate and utilize the Kunlun faith, and Kunlun was naturally accepted as one of the most important fairylands in Daoism[5]. In the famous early Daoist classic *Laozi Xiang'er Zhu* 老子想爾注 (*Xiang'er Commentary to Laozi*), the dwelling of Lord Lao was placed on the Kunlun Mountain: "When scattered, he becomes the Qi, and when gathered, he becomes the Most High Lord Lao who constantly governs Kunlun 一散形為氣, 聚形為太上老君, 常治昆侖" (Rao 1991). Jiang Sheng's 姜生 research based on Han Dynasty tombstone carvings and later literary materials suggests that there existed an immortal ascension belief during the Han Dynasty. According to this belief, people would "worship Lord Lao to 'receive books' and visit the Queen Mother of the West at the 'Kunlun Gate' 昆崙闕" (Jiang 2016). The close connection between the Queen Mother of the West and Kunlun Mountain, being one of the most familiar themes belonging to Chinese mythological research, had also been incorporated into Daoist beliefs and descriptions of the immortal realms[6]. Although there is no clear evidence to locate the place where Laozi granted the Daoist books on the Kunlun Mountain, the process of ascension through receiving the book from Lord Lao and paying respects to the Queen Mother of the West had made the "geographical relationship" between Lord Lao and Kunlun quite close. And in turn, this may have led later Daoist believers to suppose that Lord Lao's residence was close to or even on Kunlun (as described in the *Xiang'er Zhu*).

As the axis mundi in ancient Chinese mythology, Kunlun holds an extremely important position in the Chinese belief system. Throughout the existing research on Kunlun, it can be found that traditional academic research on the topic often attempted to determine the exact location of Mount Kunlun by examining the descriptions in pre-Qin literature such as the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (*Classic of Mountains and Seas*) and the *Chu Ci* 楚辭 (*the Songs of the South*). However, most modern studies show that the attempt to locate mythical elements in a specific earthly location runs too high a risk. Instead, exploring the origins and evolution of Kunlun in the fields of mythology, intellectual history, cosmology, and linguistics may yield more tangible results. Notably, Gu Jiegang's "Kunlun Mythology System" proposed a new direction for Kunlun research (Gu 2000). Since then, scholars have further explored Kunlun in terms of ideology and beliefs, achieving numerous meaningful fruits[7]. The mythical significance of Kunlun need not be extensively explained here, but as Wang Yu pointed out, according to the *Shanhai jing* and other documents before the Eastern Han Dynasty, other mountains besides Kunlun also served as the gateways to heaven, residences of the celestial sovereign, and the axis of the world (Y. Wang 2021, pp. 76–83). The elevation of Kunlun's status and exclusive possession of these functions gradually solidified during the Han Dynasty, and these concepts were precisely the cultural heritage that organized Daoism was able to directly accept.

Several scholars have discussed how early Daoism absorbed and transformed the Kunlun legends (Luo 2014, pp. 149–54; 2020, pp. 66–74; Zhang and Li 2020, pp. 203–30; G. Wang 2022, pp. 165–72). In the process of transforming the Kunlun Mountain into a Daoist fairyland, Daoists were particularly attentive to shaping the depiction of the Queen Mother of the West and her female fairy group[8]. According to literary and archaeological materials, the relationship between the Queen Mother of the West and the Kunlun Mountain was established no later than the Han Dynasty, and it remained stable in the subsequent Daoist descriptions of the universe. Although Laozi, or Lord Lao, was given a residence on the Kunlun Mountain in *Xiang'er Zhu*, this view did not become the mainstream understanding of the Daoist cosmic concept after the Northern and Southern Dynasties. The lack of documented descriptions and the concealment by the later mainstream cosmic concept have led to the neglect of this residence of Lord Lao in early Daoism. Luo Yiying and Wang Guiping have introduced the descriptions of Lord Lao residing in the Kunlun Mountain in *Xiang'er Zhu* and *Baopuzi-Quhuo* 抱朴子-祛惑 (*Book of the Master Who*

Keeps to Simplicity-Dispel confusion). However, there is still room for further discussion on the related situations and possible subsequent impacts.

In Han Dynasty beliefs, the Kunlun Mountain was the abode of the Heavenly Emperor, while in early Celestial Master Daoism, this mountain's main deity was replaced (Y. Wang 2020, p. 68). *Xiang'er Zhu* is the earliest existing Daoist work that explicitly claimed that Lord Lao resided in Kunlun[9]. Liu Yi pointed out that the idea regarding Laozi as the main deity in *Xiang'er Zhu* is inconsistent with the popular Han Dynasty beliefs, and he suspects that the currently existing version of this book may have been revised in later times (Y. Liu 2003, pp. 77–103). However, the *Xiang'er Zhu* clearly stated that Lord Lao resided in the Kunlun Mountain, which contradicted the records about Lord Lao's residence in the "Three Caverns" scriptures after the Eastern Jin Dynasty 東晉 (317–420) (as detailed in the following). Therefore, it could be speculated that the relevant passages in this book were either part of the original text or were formed before the Eastern Jin Dynasty. *Xiang'er Zhu* provided an interpretation of the term "one":

> One is the Dao… When dispersed, it becomes Qi. When gathered, it becomes Great High Lord Lao. Lord Lao constantly governs Kunlun. 一者道也……一散形為氣, 聚形為太上老君, 常治昆侖[10]

This passage equated Lord Lao with the "gathering form" of the Dao (or One) and designated the Kunlun Mountain as his settled location. The expression "zhi 治" is not uncommon, where "治" can be understood both as a verb meaning to "govern" or as a noun meaning "the place governed". However, considering Lord Lao's "Kunlun Great Dioceses 昆崙大治" mentioned below and the early Heavenly Master Daoist Twenty-four dioceses 二十四治 system, it is plausible to suggest that the phrase "Lord Lao constantly governs Kunlun" in *Xiang'er Zhu* may imply a projection of the "dioceses 治" organization of the early Heavenly Master Daoism tradition[11].

Nüqing Guilü 女青鬼律 (*Code of Nüqing for Controlling the Demons*) was a Daoist work that emerged in the Wei (220–265) and Jin (265–420) dynasties or even earlier (Schipper and Verellen 2004, pp. 127–29). This book claims that "Great Dao of the Most High 太上大道" could not bear the frequent disasters of the people, so dispatched Zhang Daoling 張道陵 to spread this scripture to stop the sufferings caused by ghosts. One passage in this book also reflects the idea of Lord Lao residing in Kunlun.

> Dao says: …… The venerable Daoist Qi of Three-Five-Seven-Nine rules over the Kunlun Mountain of the Pure Tenuity. It appeared in three heavens and quickly enters your body and then you are untied and escape from the net and pay homage to Lord Lao.
>
> 道曰：……三五七九道氣尊, 治在清微昆侖山。近見三天入人身, 解脫綱羅見老君. (Nüqing 1988, DZ 790, vol. 18, 248a)

The Dao refers to the Great Dao of the Most High who passed down this book. From this passage, it can be inferred that the Kunlun Mountain was the divine realm pursued by those who have achieved success in cultivating the Dao and one can meet Lord Lao upon arrival. Although there are very few reliable documents passed down from the early Heavenly Master Daoism, a comparison of the passages in the *Xiang'er Zhu* and the *Nüqing Guilü* mentioned above reveals that Lord Lao's governance of Kunlun was indeed an important perspective within this Daoist organization at that time. This view was not accepted by the later Three Caverns Scriptures, but it still had a lasting impact in two ways.[12]

Firstly, a small number of Daoist priests and their organizations who strictly adhere to the doctrine of early Heavenly Master Daoism inherited this viewpoint. The surviving relevant materials are very limited, but fortunately, their date and context have been approximately confirmed. The rectifying movement of Daoism in the Northern Wei Dynasty (386–534) led by Kou Qianzhi (365–448) was a well-known historical event. This movement was based on the appearance of the Great High Lord Lao on Mount Song 嵩山 and his revelation of new scriptures. This resulted in Kou Qianzhi being recognized as a new

heavenly master and the owner of numerous sacred scriptures.[13] The most important of these newly published scriptures is *Yunzhong Yinsong Xinke Zhijie* 雲中音誦新科之戒 (*New Liturgical Rules of the Hymns from amid the Clouds*), and the present *Laojun Yinsong Jie Jing* 老君音誦誡經 (*Book of the Hymnal Rules of Lord Lao*) is a part of this book. The Great High Lord Lao's speech from *Laojun Yinsong Jie Jing* included at least three explicit statements declaring that he resided on the Kunlun Mountain.

The *Taishang Laojun's Yinsong Jieling Wen* states: "In this present world, there are many evildoers. The fathers are not kind, children are not filial, and ministers are not loyal. …Therefore, I withdrew and went far away to Kunlun Mountain… My diocese with pavilions and palaces is on Kunlun Mountain, and mansions interconnect one another… After settling disasters down, I will return and ascend to my abode at Kunlun".

> 《太上老君音誦戒令文》曰：我以今世之人作惡者多，　父不慈、子不孝、臣不忠……吾是以引而遠去, 乃之昆侖山上。……吾治在昆侖山, 山上臺觀, 眾樓殿堂, 宮室連相接次 ……平定之後, 還當昇舉, 伏宅昆侖.[14]

In this passage, Lord Lao repeatedly emphasized his dwelling was on Mount Kunlun. Even if he occasionally descended to the mortal world, he would retire back to the Kunlun dioceses. *The Santian Nei Jiejing* 三天內解經 (*Explanations of the Essentials of Three Heavens*) was written during the Liu Song Dynasty (420–479). Chen Guofu, Masayoshi Kobayashi, Stephen R. Bokenkamp, Zhao Yi, and Li Ganghave conducted in-depth research on this scripture.[15] The scripture contains a very striking passage worth noting:

On the first day in the fifth month of the Renwu year, the first year of the Hanan era (142), Lord Lao and the Daoist Zhang Daoling met at the stone chamber on QuTing (渠亭) Mountain in Shu county, intending to journey to the Kunlun Great Diocese to visit the Newly Emerged Great High. The Great High believed that people feared evil spirits more than the true divines, hence he named himself the "Newly Emerged Lord Lao". He appointed Zhang as the Master of the Three Heavens and One and Orthodox, appeasing Qi of the Grand Capital of Mystery and entrusted him with the teaching of the One and Orthodox Covenant with the Powers, and the regulations of the Newly Emerged Lord Lao.

> 以漢安元年（142）壬午歲五月一日, 老君於蜀郡渠亭山石室中, 與道士張道陵將詣昆侖大治新出太上。太上謂世人不畏真正, 而畏邪鬼, 因自號為"新出老君"。即拜張為太玄都正一平氣三天之師, 付張正一明威之道、新出老君之制.[16]

Archaeological discoveries from the Han dynasty provide evidence that there was an important deity called "Xinchu Laogui Taishang Laojun 新出老鬼太上老君 (the Newly Appeared Aged Demon-Great High Lord Lao)" in early Daoism. Liu Zhaorui, based on these discoveries and the above, "feared evil spirits more than the true divines" from the *Santian Nei Jiejing*, and believed that the self-proclaimed title "Xinchu Laojun（Newly Appeared Most High Lord Lao)" originally should be "Xinchu Laogui (Newly Appeared Aged Demon)" (Z. Liu 2005, pp. 172–79). The use of the term "aged demon" may be considered coarse and uncivilized when removed from its original historical and religious contexts, leading to later revisions. The relationship between "Lord Lao", "Great High", and "Newly Emerged Lord Lao" in the text is a confusing issue. "Great High" named himself "Newly Emerged Lord Lao" (or Newly Appeared Aged Demon), which suggests that they refer to the same person. However, the fact that Lord Lao led Zhang Daoling to pay their respects to the Newly Emerged Lord Lao implied that they were two different individuals. According to earlier legends of the Heavenly Masters, one of the main deities who imparted teachings to Zhang Daoling was Lord Lao. The account in *Santian Nei Jiejing* further complicates the tale of Zhang Daoling's commission legend. There are two plausible explanations: (1) both Lord Lao and the Newly Emerged Lord Lao essentially refer to the deified Laozi, and the two represent different revelations of the same divine entity, or (2) it may be a creative invention by the author of this scripture that was not widely accepted by later Daoists. Whatever the relationship between these two gods, the concept of the Kunlun Great Diocese as the residence of the Newly Emerged Lord Lao is already clearly reflected, which is sufficient for the present research. Another Daoist classic from

the Southern Dynasties (420–589) also confirmed the existence of this belief. *Taishang Lingbao Shengxuan Neijiao Jing* 太上靈寶昇玄內教經 (*Scripture of the Esoteric Doctrine of Ascent to Mystery*) produced before the Liang dynasty (502–557) was an important Daoist text in the medieval period. The complete text of this book has been lost, but based on the surviving fragments, Yamada Takashi compiled and edited a version of it. In the "Shengxuan Jing Dijiu Wuji Jiujie pin" 昇玄經第九無極九戒品 (The Ninth Chapter: Supreme Nine Precepts from Scripture of Ascent to Mystery) the following was said:

> The Great High then from his Kunlun Diocese ascended to the Seven Treasures Virtue Abbey of the Heaven Top Diocese. He summoned Daoling and said to him: "My Dao emerged from the state of non-origination, before the beginning of the Great Beginning".
>
> 太上於是昆侖治中, 進登天首大治七寶道德觀上, 召道陵而告之曰："吾道出於無先, 太初之前".[17]

This passage is cited by the Daoist encyclopedias *Wushang Miyao* 無上秘要 (*The Essence of the Supreme Secrets*) (Yuwen and Zhou 2016, 100.1267) in the Northern Zhou dynasty (557–581) and *Shangqing Daolei Shixiang* 上清道類事相 (*The True Appearances of the Categories Pertaining to the Dao of the Highest Purity*), compiled by Wang Xuanhe (王懸河, fl. 983).[18] It is also covertly borrowed by the *Zhengyi Fawen Falubu Yi* 正一法文法籙部儀 (*Protocol of the Section of Ritual Registers, of the Zhengyi Canon*) created by the Heavenly Master Daoists of the Southern Dynasties.[19] The repeated citations of this passage reflect its evident significance. There is no doubt that this passage once again reveals the status of "Kunlun Great Diocese" as the residence of Zhang Daoling's teacher, the Great High Lord Lao.

Based on a comprehensive review of the existing medieval Daoist texts, while the earliest Daoist scriptures such as *Xiang'er Zhu* placed the residence of Lord Lao on Kunlun, only a few subsequent works continued with this tradition. However, as the Daoist doctrines, particularly cosmology, continued to evolve, Kunlun was deemed no longer adequate as the abode of the great deity Lord Lao. The descriptions of the universe provided by new Daoist groups often incorporated old beliefs while emphasizing their own belief's superiority and transcendence. They often integrated old doctrines into new systems of thought but only assigned them a lower position. Specifically, the status of Kunlun in Daoist belief gradually declined, and the view of Kunlun as a secondary immortal realm became common in the Daoist world after the Eastern Jin Dynasty. In Ge Hong's (283–363) *Baopuzi Neipian*, a passage from *Taiqing Shendan Jing* 太清神丹經 (*the Book of the Divine Elixir of the Great Purity*) was quoted: "When a superior person attains the Dao, they ascend to become heavenly officials; when a middle-level person attains the Dao, they reside in the Kunlun Mountain 上士得道, 昇為天官；中士得道, 棲集昆侖".[20] Pan Shizheng 潘師正 (586–684) incorporated "the concept of divines divided into three levels" theory into his famous work *Daomen Jingfa Xiangcheng Cixu* 道門經法相承次序 (*The Order of the Succession of the Daoist Scriptural Legacy*).[21] The same content was inherited by *Yongcheng Jixian lu* 墉城集仙錄 (*Record of the Assembled Immortals of Yongcheng*) (Du and Luo 2013, p. 574), *Taiqing Shendan Zhongjing Xu*太清神丹中經敘 (*The Explanation of the Central Book of the Divine Elixir of the Great Purity*) in the *Yunji Qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (*Cloudy Bookcase with Seven Labels*) (Zhang and Li 2003, 73.1663), and *Taishang Hunyuan Laozi Shilue* 太上混元老子史略 (*Short History of Laozi, Most High of Undifferentiated Beginning*).[22] According to the accounts in the above works, it can be inferred that the concept of divines divided into three levels was spoken through the mouth of Yuanjun 元君, who was a female immortal that taught Lord Lao the "Great Clarity Alchemy". Considering these details, it is highly likely that this concept originated from the Great Clarity tradition. There is a close relationship between Lord Lao and the Great Clarity tradition (see below). This dialogue between Yuanjun and Lord Lao was accepted by later works. *Daojiao Yishu* 道教義樞 (*The Pivotal Meaning of Daoist Doctrine*) by Meng Anpai 孟安排 (fl. 699) quoted similar words from the *Ziran Jingjue* 自然經訣 (*Instructions Concerning the Spontaneous Scripture*), stating the following:

> The upper immortals ascend to heaven in broad daylight; the middle immortals dwell in famous mountains such as Kunlun and Penglai, constructing palaces in mid-air; the lower immortals often reside in caves and grottoes of various famous mountains.
>
> 上仙白日昇天；中仙棲于昆侖、蓬萊等名山, 空中結宮室；下仙常棲諸名山洞室.[23]

Ziran Jingjue seems to be the *Lingbao Zhenyi Ziran Jingjue* 靈寶真一自然經訣 (*Instructions Concerning the Spontaneous Scripture of the True One of Numinous Treasure*). This indicates that the Lingbao scriptures also accepted the views of the Three Immortal Sages. As Kunlun's position in the constantly evolving Daoist cosmology gradually diminished, it became inconvenient for the highly divine Lord Lao to continue to place its Great Diocese in this inferior immortal realm.

However, while the early Daoist understanding of Lord Lao residing in Kunlun gradually gave way to new beliefs, the shadow of Kunlun Mountain continued to loom over the later legends of Lord Lao. As mentioned earlier, Kunlun enjoyed a unique position as the center of the earth and the gateway to heaven during the Han dynasty.[24] The passage describing "Kunlun as Heavenly Ladder" in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子 is considered to be the most concise expression:

> Ascending Kunlun Mountain, at a point twice its height lies Liangfeng Mountain. Climbing it will not lead to death. Twice its height again lies the Xuanpu. Climbing it brings spiritual elevation and the ability to control wind and rain. Going up another two times its height leads to the top heaven, where climbing it grants divine powers and access to the abode of the Taidi. 昆侖之丘, 或上倍之, 是謂涼風之山, 登之而不死。或上倍之, 是謂懸圃, 登之乃靈, 能使風雨。或上倍之, 乃維上天, 登之乃神, 是謂太帝之居. (S. Zhang 1997, 4.432).

Perhaps due to the strong and lasting influence of Kunlun as the ladder/gateway to heaven, or perhaps because the early Daoist doctrine of Lord Lao's "constant governance of Kunlun" still held its influence, in the biographies of Lord Lao appearing after the Eastern Jin dynasty—whether before or after his "conversion of the barbarians 化胡", or at a specific time when his life or accomplishment was transitioned—Lord Lao often needed to return to Kunlun for "ascending to heaven". The "Laozi Huahu Jing Xu" 老子化胡經序 (Preface to the *Classic on Laozi's Conversion of the Barbarians*), which appeared during the Northern and Southern Dynasties, stated that after completing the work of Imperial Historian of the Zhou Dynasty, he "returned to Kunlun and would convert those in the land of the barbarians 言歸昆侖, 化彼胡域".[25] In the *Yiqie Daojing Yinyi Miaomen Youqi* 一切道經音義妙門由起 (*Phonological Glossary of the Daoist Canon and The Origin and Development of Daoist Doctrine*) by Shi Chongxuan 史崇玄 (d. 713), a similar description is quoted: "During the time of King You (re. 782–771 BC), Lord Lao along with twelve jade maidens, twenty-four immortals, and Guiguzi rode on the white deer to go out of the western strategic pass and head north towards Kunlun 至幽王時, 老君從十二玉女、二十四仙人, 並與鬼谷等俱乘白鹿, 出西關, 北之昆侖矣".[26] With the development of the worship of Lord Lao, especially the well-known Daoist fervor brought about by the Tang ruling families' recognition of Lord Lao as their ancestor, the compilation and editing of Lord Lao's biography were able to rapidly advance and become essentially standardized. The basic contents of Lord Lao's biography in later generations were inherited from the biographies written during the Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Tang Dynasty, which had strong stability. In relatively late Daoist materials in the Tang and Song dynasties, we can still see the imprints left by the early Kunlun legends on Laozi's biography.

Xie Shouhao's 謝守灝 (1134–1212) *Taishang Hunyuan Laozi Shilue* states that: During the reign of King Zhao of Qin 秦昭王 (re. 306–251 BC), Lord Lao "left through San Pass, crossed the Flowing Sands, ascended Kunlun Mountain, and returned to the Purple Sublimity Ultimate Palace 復出散關, 遂渡流沙, 昇昆侖, 還紫微上宮".[27]

Du Daojian's 杜道堅 (1237–1318) *Xuanjing Yuanzhi Fahui* 玄經原旨發揮 (*Dissertation on the Original Meaning of the Mysterious Scripture*): "The Sage Lao traversing the Flowing

Sands in his later years, ascended to Kunlun and returned to the Purple Sublimity Ultimate Palace 老聖晚涉流沙, 西昇昆侖, 還紫微上宮".[28]

A similar expression is quite common in the post-Tang biography of Lord Lao, although such an association was particularly deliberate. In the Daoist belief during the medieval period, and especially during the Tang Dynasty, the immortals could ascend to heaven from every place, so specifically keeping "Kunlun" as a must-pass route for ascension seemed to be unnecessary and cumbersome. For the present study, more importantly, from the accounts of Xie Shouhao, Du Daojian, and others, it can be found that Lord Lao was given a residence in a higher cosmic level: the Purple Sublimity Ultimate Palace 紫微上宮. The issue of the Purple Sublimity Ultimate Palace is more complex and will be discussed later. Next, the focus will be on the most important residence set up by the medieval Daoists for Lord Lao: the Great Clarity Heaven.

2. Exquisite Palace and Hall in the Great Clarity Heaven

As one of the "Three Pure Ones 三清", Lord Lao was commonly believed to reside in the Great Clarity Domain/Heaven 太清境/天 of the Three Clarity Realms after the Tang dynasty. Lord Lao's stable placement in the Great Clarity Domain underwent a highly complicated evolution in the medieval period. Due to a lack of sources, it is unknown whether there was any doctrine debate surrounding Lord Lao's shift in residence from Kunlun to the Great Clarity Domain. But overall, as mentioned above, the early Heavenly Master Daoism inherited the Kunlun belief from the Han dynasty and regarded Lord Lao as a great deity on the Kunlun Mountain. This concept left some traces in the later legends of Lord Lao. However, as the cosmological descriptions of Daoism in the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties further developed, the Great Clarity Heaven quickly replaced Kunlun as the common abode of Lord Lao.

Based on the available Daoist materials, we know that between the Han and Tang dynasties, Daoism had various celestial realms theories, including three heavens, nine heavens, thirty-six heavens, five hundred million heavenly realms, etc. There were also diverse descriptions of the celestial realms with the same levels. Following the integration of Daoist religious orders and textual systems starting from the Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang dynasties[29], these different understandings and interpretations about the celestial realms were eventually consolidated into the widely accepted "theory of thirty-six Heavens" during the early Tang dynasty.[30] The textual description of this imagery of heaven was very common during the Tang and Song dynasties. Based on "the summary of Daoist Three Caverns 道教三洞宗元" in the *Yunji Qiqian*, the following structure can be seen[31]:

Realms	Names	levels
Beyond the Three Realms 三界外	Grand Canopy Heaven 大罗天	One level
	Jade Clarity Domain 玉清境	One level
	Highest Purity Domain 上清境	One level
	Great Clarity Domain 太清境	One level
	Four Seed People Heavens 四種民天	Four Levels
Inside the Three Realms 三界内	The Formless Realm 無色界	Four Levels
	the Form Realm 色界	Eighteen Levels
	the Realm of Desire 欲界	Sixteen Levels

The three most important and supreme deities at that time were also embedded in the Three Clarity Domains: Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Beginning 元始天尊governed the Jade Clarity Domain, The Lord of Great Dao of Jade Dawn 玉晨大道君 (later known as Heaven Worthy of the Numinous Treasure 靈寶天尊) governed the Highest Purity Domain, and the Great High Lord Lao governed the Great Clarity Domain. Upon learning of such a result of the doctrinal integration, the main task now falls on tracing the early

evolution of teachings that led to Lord Lao being embedded into the Great Clarity Domain and becoming its host.

The complex process of the evolution and integration of the Daoist Heaven's hierarchy before the Tang Dynasty has been deeply researched (see previous annotations). These studies allow for the avoidance of countless intricacies that used to be difficult to overcome, making the discussion more efficient and focused on the main theme. First, the process that established the Great Clarity Heaven as one of the Three Clarity Heavens will be briefly outlined. Fabrizio Pregadio's in-depth research on the Great Clarity tradition shows that the term "Great Clarity Heaven", which later became associated with Lord Lao's residence, originally referred to the highest spiritual state that a practitioner could attain. With the operation of Han dynasty alchemists, this spiritual state was transformed into the supreme immortal realm that could be reached by taking the great elixir of Golden Alchemy. At the same time, alchemical scriptures such as the *Jiudan Jing* 九丹經 (*Book of the Nive Elixirs*), *Taiqing Jing* 太清經 (*Scriptures of the Great Purity*), and *Jinye Jing* 金液經 (*Book of the Golden Liquor*) were regarded as sacred texts from the Great Clarity Heaven (Pregadio 2005, 35ff). The "Great Clarity Tradition" created by the group of alchemists from the Han Dynasty was not a "sect" or a strictly religious organization, but the knowledge system they built around the great elixir could be shared internally and ultimately condensed into the "Great Clarity section 太清部" scriptures in the *Daozang*.[32] The traditional alchemists' esoteric nature made it difficult to sort out issues such as the era of creation, the process of transmission, and the mythological system of the Great Clarity scriptures.[33] However, Ge Hong clearly stated in his record of the transmission of his own Golden Alchemy technique from Zuo Ci 左慈 to Ge Xuan 葛玄, that the rise of the Great Clarity tradition can be traced back to at least the end of the Han Dynasty.[34] In the same work by Ge Hong, there are several passages describing the highest celestial realm, the Great Clarity Domain. One of them stated that Great Clarity was located forty li above the earth, and its wind was so fierce that mortal beings could not bear it[35]. But here was a place where immortals lingered[36]. The *Laozi Zhongjing* 老子中經 (also known as the *Taishang Laojun Zhongjing* 太上老君中經, *The Most High Lord Lao's Book of the Center*) is a peculiar Daoist scripture that listed over fifty divine immortals with their corresponding explanations. This scripture's compilation date was disputed, but it was asserted early on that Lord Lao resided in the realm of Great Clarity. He Jiangtao summarized several main views regarding the time of *Laozi Zhongjing*: Haruki Kusuyama 楠山春樹, Shigeki Maeda前田繁樹, and Chie Katô 加藤千惠 believed the book was written in the fifth century; Kristofer Schipper, John Lagerwey, and Liu Yongming 劉永明supported that this work was written during the Han Dynasty; Wang Ka 王卡and Ding Peiren 丁培仁considered this scripture to have been produced during the Wei-Jin period, while Liu Yi 劉屹 advocated for the early Eastern Jin Dynasty. He Jiangtao agreed with the view of scholars such as Kristofer Schipper and believed this work was composed in the middle to late Eastern Han Dynasty.[37] Recently, Gao Tonglin suggested that this was a work of the Liu Song dynasty, but one that extensively copied the previous Daoist scriptures (T. Gao 2021, pp. 106–31). Regardless, there seems to be no problem with the wide acceptance of the opinion that this scripture was written before the theories of the Highest Purity and the Numinous Treasure Realms were commonly accepted. The first immortal listed in the *Laozi Zhongjing* was the Supreme Grand One 上上太一, who was the father of the Dao and the pioneer of heaven and earth, located in the upper nine heavens and within the realm of Great Clarity.[38] The author placed the Great Clarity as the highest heavenly realm above the "Nine Heavens". More importantly, in the sections about the fifth and sixth immortals in the book, "Lord Lao" was mentioned:

> Fifth Immortal: Lord of the Dao, also known as the One, is the central star of the Polaris on the Central Pole of the Supreme Heavenly Lord… Above is the Primordial pneuma of Great Clarity…Laozi and Taihe serve on his left and right…第五神仙：道君者, 一也, 皇天上帝中極北辰中央星是也.……上有太清元氣……老子、太和侍之左右……

> Sixth Immortal: Lord Lao is the soul of heaven and the ruler of nature, always attending to the Lord of the Dao's side. Therefore, we nine immortals are called the Nine-Headed Lord. 第六神仙：老君者, 天之魂也, 自然之君也, 常侍道君左右方。故吾等九人, 九頭君也。[39]

Fabrizio Pregadio believed that the "Supreme Grand One" and the "Lord of the Dao" in *Laozi Zhongjing* are both Dao or One, essentially the same deity.[40] If so, the Lord of the Dao is not only "above the Primordial pneuma of Great Clarity", but is also within the realm of Great Clarity. The presence of Lord Lao and Taihe (the seventh immortal in the same book, "the spirit of heaven 天之魄"[41]) alongside Lord of the Dao naturally placed them within the realm of Great Clarity as well. The discovery of early literature that explicitly placed "Lord Lao" within Great Clarity is exciting, but it is worth considering whether this "Lord Lao" is really our deified version of Laozi. A section clearly modified from the "Fifth Immortal" and "Sixth Immortal" in *Laozi Zhongjing* appeared in the *Dongzhen Taiyi Dijun Taidan Yinshu Dongzhen Xuanjing* 洞真太一帝君太丹隱書洞真玄經 (*Supreme One and Lord Emperors Secret Scripture of Grand Elixirs and Mysterious Scripture of Cavern Truth Canon*), which was compiled during the Six Dynasties period.[42]

> Taisu Jun Yuancheng Laozi, also known as the soul of heaven, governs in the Great Clarity Domain, within the Curved Array. He serves the Emperor Lord and is in charge of the pneuma of the True Primordia, hence he is known as Taisu Jun. Taihe Jun Huangcheng Laozi is the spirit of heaven, who also governs within the Great Clarity Domain and Curved Array. He is known as Taihe Jun and serves the Heavenly Emperor, in charge of the pneuma of the True Embryo. …Taisu Yuancheng Laozi constantly serves the Emperor within Great Clarity; while Huangcheng Laozi serves the Heavenly Emperor and can be found in and out of Purple Sublimity, located in Kunlun. 太素君元成老子, 亦天之魂, 治在太清之中, 勾陳之內, 常侍帝君, 主真元之炁也, 號曰太素君矣。太和君皇成老子, 天之魄也, 亦治在太清勾陳之內, 號曰太和君, 常侍天帝, 主胎元之氣也。……太素元成老子, 太清之中常侍帝君；皇成老子, 常侍天帝, 出入紫微, 正在昆侖[43]

Undoubtedly, this scripture of the Six Dynasties showed that the two "Laozi" and their Emperor Lord were situated within the realm of Great Clarity. However, the fact of two "Laozi" (or Lord Lao in *Laozi Zhongjing*) suggests that this title may not exclusively refer to the "Great High Lord Lao". Despite the existence of such doubt, based on an overall observation of the citation and this scripture, the Lord Lao in the above context should still mean the deified Laozi, the Great High Lord Lao. Based on the above citation, Lord Lao said "we nine immortals are called the Nine-headed Lord". It is not difficult to infer that the first-person pronoun "I/we 吾(等)" was the deity (Lord Lao) who was proclaiming this scripture. The end of the scripture quoted the *Shenxian Xuantu* 神仙玄圖 (*Mysterious Images of Divines and Immortals*) to speak about the requirements for the propagation of this scripture, commanding those who obtain it to carefully study it in "my" (still without specifying the name of the deity) voice. This suggests that the scripture was originally meant to be spoken through the mouth of a certain deity. In other words, all the first-person pronouns in this work pointed to the same deity. Based on the titles of the scripture, *Laozi Zhongjing*, *Taishang Laojun Zhongjing*, or *Laozi Lizang Zhongjing* 老子歷藏中經 (*Laozi's Book of the Center on Inspecting the Viscera*),[44] it can be inferred that the deity revealed the scripture was either Laozi or the Great High Lord Lao, and the term "I" in this text should be referring to our Lord Lao.

In the Great Clarity tradition, the records about the transmission lineage of alchemical techniques also pictured the Great Clarity Heaven as the abode of the Great High Lord Lao. Lord Lao was seen as an important link in the transmission of the Great Clarity scriptures. *Yunji Qiqian* was compiled in the Song Dynasty (960–1279), but it was mainly compiled from earlier Daoist texts. It summarized the brief religious history of the Great Clarity section of the Daoist canon:

Great Clarity. Master Meng said: "… These scriptures elucidate the art of the Golden Alchemy, and those who master it can ascend to the realm of Great Clarity, so it is called Great Clarity..".

Firstly, the Great Clarity regards the Great One as its origin.

> … The *Jiujun Shenming Daoyao* says: "The *Taiqing Zhong Jing* came from Lord Lao and was passed down to Yuanjun and the Jiuhuang Zhenren."… The *Zhengyi Jing* mentions: "The *Taiqing Jinye Tianwen Dili zhi Jing* consists of forty-six volumes". This scripture mainly discusses Golden Alchemy and also includes astrological and meteorological calculations, I should not show its details here. According to the *Mo Lu*, in the first year of the Han An era (142), the Great High transmitted these forty-six volumes of scripture to the Heavenly Master, and they have been passed down ever since.
>
> 言太清者, 孟法師云：……此經既明金丹之術, 服禦之者遠昇太清, 故言太清。……太清者, 太一為宗。
>
> ……《九君申明道要》云："《太清中經》, 元始出來, 出於老君, 傳付元君、九皇真人……。"《正一經》云："《太清金液天文地理之經》, 四十六卷。"此經所明, 多是金丹之要, 又著緯候之儀, 今不詳辯。按《墨錄》所明, 即漢安元年（142）, 太上以此經四十六卷付於天師, 因此至今也。[45]

In this summary, Lord Lao both served as the inheritor and transmitter of scriptures among the gods in the Great Clarity Heaven and a divinity who transmitted the Great Clarity scriptures to humanity through the Heavenly Master Zhang Daoling.[46] Legends about Lord Lao's participation and even leadership in the transmission of the Great Clarity scriptures are clearly evident in the materials on immortals. In Du Guangting's 杜光庭 (850–933) *Yongcheng Jixian Lu*, such as in the story of (Supreme) Yuanjun's teaching the *Taiqing Shendan Jing*, Lord Lao still appeared as a guiding figure.[47]

According to materials such as the *Dongzhen Taiyi Dijun Taidan Yinshu Dongzhen Xuanjing*, in the Highest Purity doctrine, Lord Lao was placed in the Highest Purity Heaven, but was not the main deity of this realm. However, the elevating movement of Lord Lao's godhood in the Han Dynasty, and especially the further popularization of the Daoist teachings that revered Lord Lao as the Dao, made the later Daoist believers easily shape Lord Lao as the host of the Great Clarity Realm. From the results reflected in the literature, this was indeed the case. However, even as his identity as the "god of the universe" (or the incarnation of the Dao) became the mainstream belief in Daoism during the Eastern Jin and Northern and Southern dynasties, the actual status of Lord Lao, the highest deity of the Great Clarity realm, suffered a decline in the divine world and his heavenly realm's position also decreased (although retaining the same name). Now, let us turn our attention to the views of the Highest Purity and Numinous Treasure Heavenly Realms, Three Heavens (or Three Pure Ones), and the dwarfing of Lord Lao's Great Clarity residence.

Highest Purity and Numinous Treasure were important Daoist traditions that emerged in southern China during the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties. Along with the pre-existing Orthodox and One Covenant with the Powers, they dominated the Daoist movement for the following centuries and blended to form the mainstream Daoist doctrine. From the "Thirty-Six Heavens" model (See previous table), formed by integrating the heaven views of the Highest Purity and Numinous Treasure, it can be observed visually that the Great Clarity Heaven where Lord Lao resided was no longer the highest as before in the traditional Great Clarity system, but only the fourth-ranked celestial realm and the lowest of the Three Purity Heavens. The evolution of the "Three Heavens" during the Han and Tang Dynasties is also worth a brief discussion. The "Three Heavens" had various meanings, and these different meanings became intertwined due to the integration and analogy made by Daoist followers. The Heavenly Master Daoism, which emerged at the end of the Han Dynasty, first proposed the "Three Heavens" belief to replace the "Six Heavens", which had become outdated Qi 故氣 (Z. Wang 1999, pp. 22–49; Lu 2018a, pp. 60–64; Zhao 2006, pp. 43–48, etc.). But based on the existing materials, the "Three Heavens" at this

time only appear as names such as "Mystery and Prime Supreme Three Heavens of Great Clarity 太清玄元上三天", and it seems to refer to a heavenly realm called the "Three Heavens", rather than three different levels of a heavenly realm (Kobayashi 1990, pp. 482–510; W. Sun 2022, p. 34). According to Lu Min's research, the formation and development of the "Three Heavens" went through several stages, including combining the Three Heavens with the Pure Tenuity Heaven 清微天, Leftovers of Yu's Food Heaven 禹餘天, and Great Scarlet Heaven 大赤天; corresponding with the Jade Clarity Domain, Highest Purity Domain, and Great Clarity Domain; and placing important figures such as the Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Beginning, the Lord of Great Dao of Jade Dawn, and Lord Lao within the Three Heavens at different stages. Until Lu Xiujing's 陸修靜 (406–477) day, the "Three Heavens" had not yet been associated with the Three Clarity Domains 三清境, nor had it been split into the three levels of heaven.[48] Sun Weijie has pointed out that it was not until the Liu Song Dynasty that the *Taishang Santian Zhengfa Jing* 太上三天正法經 (*Scripture of the Correct Law of the Three Heaven*) provided descriptions of the Pure Tenuity Heaven, Leftovers of Yu's Food Heaven, and Great Scarlet Heaven that were higher than the more traditional Nine Heavens. Another work, *Shangqing Waiguo Fangpin Qingtong Neiwen* 上清外國放品青童內文 (*Esoteric Text of the Green Lad on the Goods Deposited in Foreign Countries*), which dates back no earlier than the Liu Song Dynasty, proposed the concept of the Three Clarity Heavens—Jade Clarity, Highest Purity, and Great Clarity. However, it regarded the Pure Tenuity Heaven, Leftovers of Yu's Food Heaven, and Great Scarlet Heaven as the upper, middle, and lower layers of the Jade Clarity Domain, rather than corresponding to the Three Clarity Domains as they did later (W. Sun 2022, pp. 34–35). The popularization of the new integrated "Three Heavens" such as "Jade Clarity-Pure Tenuity" and their corresponding hierarchical relationships clearly did not occur before the Liu Song period. What is even more complicated is that the Daoist traditions that emerged in the Eastern Jin and Southern Dynasties, such as Highest Purity and Numinous Treasure, were relatively easy to reach a consensus on the issue of Jade Clarity and Highest Purity when sharing ideas about the heavenly realms. However, there was more hesitation regarding the question of where Lord Lao resided in the "Great Clarity Heaven". Lu Min noticed this and pointed out that the ancient Numinous Treasure Scriptures *Duren Jing* 度人經 (*Scripture of Saving Human Beings*) only mentions Jade Clarity and Highest Purity, without Great Clarity. When *Wushang Miyao* quoted the *Sanhuang Jing* 三皇經 (*the Writ of the Three Sovereigns*), it listed Jade Clarity, Highest Purity, and Supreme Pole 太極 (rather than Great Clarity) as the heavenly realms where the Three Caverns immortals are living. The last seat beside Jade Clarity and Highest Purity among the Three Pure Domains posed a difficult choice between Great Clarity and Supreme Pole in the Daoist doctrine of the Northern and Southern Dynasties. In the end, "Great Clarity" emerged as the winner, but "Supreme Pole" also pointed out other forks in the journey of searching for Lord Lao's residence. These issues will be addressed later in this paper. By the end of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the Great Clarity Domain eventually became the lowest level among the Three Realms, stabilized and undisputed. In the *Shangqing Taishang Kaitian Longqiao Jing* 上清太上開天龍蹻經 (*Book of the Dragon Stilts That Open up Heaven, a Supreme Purity Scripture of the Most High*), which is often used as the classical Daoist cosmological literature of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the names and hierarchy of the Three Clarity Domains have been determined:

> The way of the transcendents/immortals regards life as the most important [thing], therefore it cultivates it/life. At first, cultivators practiced in the mortal world, but as they delved deeper into their cultivation, they entered the immortal realms. Through constant migration, they advanced step by step, first entering the Great Clarity Domain as immortals, then the Highest Purity Domain as Perfect Beings, then the Jade Clarity Domain as Saints, and finally reaching the realm of Grand Canopy—where they achieve the ultimate state of the Dao. 仙道主生, 因生修習。仙之言遷, 遷昇太清。遷仙入真, 上昇上清。遷真入聖, 上昇玉清。遷聖入道, 上昇大羅, 至道之境[49]

As the concept of Three Clarity Heavens gradually took shape, the hosts in the Three Heavens also underwent some adjustments.

The final combination of Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Beginning, Heaven Worthy of the Numinous Treasure, and Lord Lao were not the original three main deities. The "three Treasure Lords 三寶君" who were believed to uncover the Three Caverns Scriptures were originally the most prominent deities in the Three Pure Domains. *Dongxuan Jiutian Jing* 洞玄九天經 (*Nine Heavens Scripture of Dongxuan*) quoted by *Wushang Miyao* explained that the Heavenly Treasure Lord 天寶君 was the deity of the Great Cavern, who revealed the Great Cavern scriptures in the first year of the Longhan 龍漢 era and was known as the "Supreme Vast Possession Jade Clarity Palace 高上大有玉清宮"; the Numinous Treasure Lord 靈寶君, the Cavern Mystery deity who revealed the Cavern Mystery scripture in the first year of the Chiming 赤明 era and was then known as the "Jade Purity Seven Treasures Pole Star Terrace of Supreme Purity Capital of Mystery 上清玄都玉清七寶紫微宮"; the Divine Treasure Lord 神寶君 was the deity of Cavern Divinity, who revealed the Cavern Divinity scriptures in the first year of the Shanghuang 上皇 era and was known as the "Three Sovereigns Great Clarity Supreme Pole Palace 三皇洞神太清太極宮".[50] This viewpoint had a strong influence from the late Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang Dynasties. In the early Tang Dynasty, the *Daomen Jingfa Xiangcheng Cixu* recorded a dialogue between Pan Shizheng and Emperor Gaozong 唐高宗 (re. 649–683). This book repeatedly mentioned the notion that the Three Heavens, including Pure Tenuity heaven, were equivalent to the Three Domains including the Jade Clarity Domain, and the Three Treasure Lords, respectively, governed the Three Domains. However, there is a lack of direct explanation about whether Lord Lao was the host of Great Clarity.[51] From Li Heshu's examination into the process of the formation of the "Three Pure Ones" as supreme deities, it is evident that Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Beginning, the Lord of Great Dao, and Lord Lao gained significant prestige during the early medieval Daoist movement. These three became widely recognized as the ultimate deities in the Tang dynasty, but their status as the supreme deities of the Three Pure Domains was the result of hundreds of years of evolution that culminated in the late Tang and even early Song dynasties (H. Li 2019, pp. 1–55). However, under the influence of the Great Clarity tradition, the combination of Lord Lao and the Great Clarity Heaven has always disclosed a close relationship. In other words, although the Great Clarity Heaven was only one of the optional components of the Three Clarity Heavens, there was ambiguity as to whether Lord Lao was the highest deity of Great Clarity Heaven, but the concept of Lord Lao being in Great Clarity had almost never been questioned. Wang Xuanhe 王懸河 (ca. 680) in his *Sandong Zhunang* 三洞珠囊 (*The Pearl Bag of the Three Caverns*) explicitly stated that "the Supreme Pole Palace in the Great Clarity Domain is home to Great High Lord Lao, and it is located above the thirty-third heaven 大（太）清境太極宮, 即太上老君, 位在三十三天之上也".[52] Although Du Guangting hoped to explain the idea that Lord Lao could exist in multiple universes by using the concept of Lord Lao possessing multiple incarnations, he still had to rely on traditional beliefs and place Lord Lao's main residence in the Great Clarity Heaven. According to Du Guangting's *Daode Zhenjing Guang Shengyi* 道德真經廣聖義 (*Explications Expanding upon the Sage's Commentary on the True Scripture of the Way and Its Power*), Lord Lao "spreads his incarnations and applies the appeals without any boundary or limitation. But Lord Lao's body is pure and inactive, remaining constantly in the palace of Great Clarity 分形應感, 無量無邊.而老君體端寂無為, 凝然常住於太清之宮也".[53] Lord Lao's "temporary residences" created by the Daoist doctrine movement in the Six Dynasties could be our closing focus. By examining these temporary residences, there is an opportunity to glimpse into other possible—though interrupted—trajectories of Daoist thought in their evolution.

3. The Purple Sublimity Ultimate Palace, Supreme Pole Domain, and the Difficulties in Integrating the Godhood of Gold Portal Latter Saint

In addition to the influential beliefs of the residences of Kunlun and Great Clarity, there were also the perspectives that Lord Lao resided in the Purple Sublimity (Ultimate)

Palace 紫微(上)宫 and the Supreme Pole Heaven 太極天. These viewpoints had a certain influence at that time but gradually fell out of favor. These temporary abodes of Lord Lao can be understood as cutoff branches in the evolution of Daoist thought.

3.1. Lord Lao's Purple Sublimity Ultimate Palace

The mentions of Lord Lao residing in the Purple Sublimity Ultimate Palace were not particularly rare in medieval Daoist scriptures, but the relevant records were ambiguous and confusing. During the Tang dynasty, when annotating the *Duren Jing*, Li Shaowei 李少微 quoted an earlier text, the *Yin Shi Xuanzhong Ji* 尹氏玄中記 (*Yin's Record of the Mysteries*), stating that the "Great High Lord Lao constantly resides in the Purple Sublimity Palace, also known as the Heavenly Sovereign, the Heavenly Worthy of the Great One, and the Gold Portal Saint Lord 太上老君常居紫微宫, 一號天皇大帝, 一號太乙天尊, 一號金闕聖君".[54] Xuanyi 玄嶷 (fl. the late 7th to early 8th century) also noted this Daoist view, stating: "Laozi descended from the Purple Sublimity Palace and conferred the Heavenly Master position on Daoling老子從紫微宫下降, 授道陵天師之任".[55] "Shi Lao Zhi" (Chapter on Buddhism and Daoism) in the *Wei Shu* (*the History of Wei*) 魏書·釋老誌 written by Wei Shou 魏收 (507–572) stated: "the origin of the Daoist tradition is derived from Laozi… residing in the Jade Capital, he is the leader of the God-Kings; descending into the Purple Sublimity he is the master of the flying immortals 道家之原, 出於老子……上處玉京, 為神王之宗；下在紫微, 為飛仙之主".[56] Medieval Daoist believers devoted painstaking effort to explaining the Purple Sublimity Palace, but undoubtedly, the root of this Daoist heavenly palace was the traditional astronomy concept of the Purple Sublimity Enclosure 紫微垣. In the *Wushang Miyao*, the Seven Treasures Purple Sublimity Palace of Primordial Yang of Xuandu 玄都元陽七寶紫微宮 located in "the Grand Palace of Primordial Yang 元阳太宫" was incorporated into the system of "The Palace of the Celestial Officials 天官宫".[57] Celestial Officials天官was the Chinese ancient astronomical term corresponding to star patterns. If we recall the above analysis of the *Laozi Zhongjing* and the *Dongzhen Taiyi Dijun Taidan Yinshu Dongzhen Xuanjing*, we can see that Laozi (and Daojun) were situated at the "Central Star of the Polaris on the Central Pole 中極北辰中央星" and "Within the Gouchen 勾陳之內", both of which were the names of constellations. Regarding this, the important medieval astronomical text "Tianwen Zhi" in *Jin Shu* 晉書·天文志 (Chapter on the Astronomical Record *in Jin History*) may offer some inspiration.

> The Five Stars of the North Pole and the Six Stars of the Curved Array are all in the Purple Sublimity Palace. The North Star is the most revered of the North Pole, and Pivot Star is the pivot of heaven. … The star east of the North Pole is called the Recorder Under the Pillar, which oversees the recording of sins. 北極五星, 勾陳六星, 皆在紫宮中。北極, 北辰最尊者也, 其紐星, 天之樞也。……極東一星, 曰柱下史, 主記過. (Fang et al. 1974, 11.289)

"The Purple Palace" referred to the central palace of the constellation Purple Sublimity Palace. "Recorder Under the Pillar 柱下史" was one of Laozi's common appellations. As is well known, it is believed that Laozi once served as this official during the Zhou dynasty. Although there is a lack of direct documentary evidence, such a connection may have stimulated some Daoist practitioners to place Lord Lao's residence in the Purple Sublimity Palace of the Stars, especially considering that the Purple Sublimity Palace was the core institution in the sky.

The traditional astronomical knowledge about the Purple Sublimity Palace should be one of the origins of the Daoist imagination of their newly created universe. However, the universe depicted by Daoists differs significantly from the traditional astronomical descriptions. The latter's main purpose was "observing the sky to determine the agricultural time 觀象授時". The descriptions of the heavenly realm continuously created by the Daoist believers during the Han and Tang dynasties always tried to transcend the boundaries of traditional constellation worship. The different individuals made various interpretations of the Purple Sublimity Palace where Lord Lao resided. For example, "The Stanzas on the

Offices of Three Realms 三界宮府品" in *Wushang Miyao* included several versions of the Purple Sublimity Palace:

> Purple Sublimity Palace. It is located at Yuming Field outside the Northern Sea, on the Xuanlong Mountain where the Lady of the Purple Sublimity resides. 紫微宮。右在北溟外羽明野玄隴山, 紫微夫人之所居。
>
> Purple Sublimity Ultimate Palace. It is situated at Mount Jade-Capital in the northwestern part of the Grand Capital of Mystery. 紫微上宮。右在玄都西北玉京山。
>
> Seven Treasures of Purple Sublimity Palace. It is located at the Mount Jade-Capital in the Grand Capital of Mystery. 七寶紫微宮。右在太玄都玉京山。
>
> Seven Treasures Pole Star Terrace of Primordial Yang of Capital of Mystery is where the Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Beginning is in a state of peace and no-action and left to ponder all living beings. 玄都元陽七寶紫微宮。右原始元尊恬然安漠, 寂然無為, 思念萬兆之所.[58]

In the above Purple Sublimity Palaces, besides the realm of the Lady of the Purple Sublimity, all the other celestial Purple Sublimity Palaces appeared to be the varied results of Daoism interpreting the same celestial Purple Sublimity Palace.

Based on the current Daoist scriptures, it can be found that there were several different views on which celestial level Lord Lao's Purple Sublimity Palace was located. Several celestial realms, including the Grand Canopy 大羅, Highest Purity, Jade Clarity, and Great Clarity, had been considered as its location. In the *Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao Yebao Yinyuan Jing* 太上洞玄靈寶業報因緣經 (*Scripture of the Most High from the Dongxuan Lingbao Canon Regarding Retribution and Karmic Causes*), which was approximately written during the Northern and Southern dynasties, the deity self-reported his incarnations in different identities in the realms of Jade Clarity Domain, Highest Purity Domain, Great Clarity Domain, Palace of Primordial Yang, and the Purple Sublimity Palace.[59] From this narration, it can be inferred that the author of this scripture seemed to believe that the Purple Sublimity Palace was located somewhere outside the "Three Clarity Domains 三清境", but the specific location was not mentioned. The viewpoint that the Purple Sublimity Palace was located in the Supreme Grand Canopy Heaven was supported by some Numinous Treasure scriptures. For example, the *Dongxuan Lingbao Yujing Shan Buxu Jing* 洞玄靈寶玉京山步虛經 (*Lingbao Scripture on Pacing the Void at Jade-Capital Mountain*) stated: "the Jade-Capital Mountain of Mysterious Capital is above the Three Clarity Domains, keeping spotless and dustless. The Jade Capital Golden Portal, Seven Treasures Mastery Terrace, and the Purple Sublimity Ultimate Palace stand on this mountain 玄都玉京山在三清之上, 無色無塵。上有玉京金闕、七寶玄臺、紫微上宮, 中有三寶神經".[60] In the *Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao Zhihui Zuigen Shangpin Dajie Jing* 太上洞玄靈寶智慧罪根上品大戒經 (*Lingbao Scripture on the Supreme Great Rules of Wisdom Concerning the Roots of Guilt*), when describing this scripture's result, it stated: "this text should be sent back to the Seven Treasures Mastery Terrace in the Purple Sublimity Palace above the Grand Canopy 其文當還大羅之上七寶玄臺紫微宮中".[61] Lu Xiujing's *Dongxuan Lingbao Zhai Shuo Guangzhu Jiefa Deng Zhuyuan Yi* 洞玄靈寶齋說光燭戒罰燈祝願儀 (*Observations on the Lingbao Retreat, Especially on Lights, Beacons, Rules, Punishments, Lamps, and Vows*) shared a similar view.[62] However, the placement of the Purple Sublimity Palace in the Highest Purity Domain was also mentioned in materials from around the same period. In the *Dongxuan Lingbao Ziran Jiutiansheng Shenzhang Jing* 洞玄靈寶自然九天生神章經 (*Stanzas of the Life Spirits of the Nine Heavens from the Dongxuan Lingbao Canon*), it said that the Numinous Treasure Lord resided in the Highest Purity Heaven and his residence was known as "the Jade Capital Seven Treasures Pole Star Terrace of Supreme Purity Capital of Mystery 上清玄都玉京七寶紫微宮".[63] The *Taishang Lingbao Hongfu Miezui Xiangming Jing* 太上靈寶洪福滅罪像名經 (*Scripture of the Metaphoric Names for Eliminating Guilt and Increasing Good Fortune*) which was possibly compiled during the Tang Dynasty, held that the Cavern Mystery Twelve Scriptures existed in "the Purple Sublimity Palace

of Seven Treasures of Primordial Yang in the Leftovers of Yu's Food Heaven of the Highest Purity Domain 上清境禹餘天玄都元陽七寶紫微宮".[64] The view that the Purple Sublimity Palace was located in the Jade Clarity Heaven was not very common, but it was not completely absent either. The *Qiyu Xiuzhen Zhengpin Tu* 七域修真證品圖 (*Diagram Demonstrating the Hierarchy of Degrees in the Practice of the True and of the Seven Regions*) might be written during the Northern and Southern Dynasties. It was important for understanding the arrangement of the heavenly realms in Daoism. The book stated that the domain governed by the Great High Lord Lao was the Great Clarity Domain, and it also indicates that the Purple Sublimity Palace was in the Pure Tenuity Heaven of the Jade Clarity Domain 玉清境清微天.[65] In later Daoist materials, there were occasional attempts to combine the concepts that "Lord Lao governs the Great Clarity Domain" and "Lord Lao always resides in the Purple Sublimity Palace". As a result, the Purple Sublimity Palace was placed within the Great Clarity Heaven. The *Taishang Dongshen Sanyuan Miaoben Fushou Zhenjing* 太上洞神三元妙本福壽真經 (*Real Scripture of Blessings and Longevity, Revealing the Marvelous Root of the Three Principles, from the Dongshen Canon*), compiled by Miao Shanshi 苗善時 in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), stated: "The Great Saint Ancestor Mystery and Prime Dao Virtue Heavenly Lord Great High Lord Lao 大聖祖玄元道德天尊太上老君 is in the Purple Sublimity Palace of the Great Clarity Domain".[66] However, this viewpoint did not conform to the established Daoist description of the heavenly realm and ostensibly had no significant impact.

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the Purple Sublimity Palace was believed to be Lord Lao's residence. However, as Daoist cosmology rapidly evolved and adjusted, both the location of this Palace and the abodes of Lord Lao were rapidly changed in the Daoist faith. Ultimately, within the integrated Daoist universe, the Purple Sublimity Palace became a palace under the rule of the Lord of Great Dao of Jade Dawn in the Highest Purity Domain and was no longer associated with Lord Lao. Although this heavenly palace no longer belonged to Lord Lao, the influence of the old belief was not completely eradicated. In the *Hunyuan Shengji* 混元聖紀 (*Annals of the Sage of Undifferentiated Beginning*) written during the Song Dynasty, it was still believed that after Lord Lao went west through the San Pass 散關, he "ascended Kunlun and returned to the Purple Sublimity Palace".[67]

3.2. The Supreme Pole Domain and the Godhood of the Gold Portal Latter Saint

As mentioned earlier, in the development of the Daoist cosmic concept during the medieval period, there was a potential struggle between the Supreme Pole Domain and the Great Clarity Domain. Although the Great Clarity Domain ultimately emerged victorious and became the eternal residence of Lord Lao, the Supreme Pole Domain that once housed Lord Lao continued to play a sustained role in the Daoist doctrine. While the heavenly realms ruled by Lord Lao were constantly adjusted, the Gold Portal Latter Saint was gradually identified with Lord Lao, and this deity was thus mixed into the scheme of the spatial arrangement of the Daoist universe. This assimilation phenomenon was both confusing and fascinating.

As mentioned above, it was not until the end of the Northern and Southern Dynasties that the Great Clarity Domain became one of the "Three Clarity Domains". The description of the Divine Alchemies in *Daoji Jing* 道跡經 (*The Scripture on the Trace of Dao*) listed the Great Clarity Alchemy, Supreme Pole Alchemy, Highest Purity Alchemy, and Jade Clarity Alchemy in order of their belonging to the celestial realms from low to high.[68] This showed that the Supreme Pole Realm was at a higher level than Great Clarity but lower than Highest Purity. The quotation of *Sanhuang Jing* in *Wushang miyao* recorded, "therefore, the Great Cave is on the Jade Clarity, the Cavern Mystery is in the City of Highest Purity, and the Total Name of the Cavern Divinity is in Supreme Pole 故大洞處於玉清之上, 洞玄則在於上清之城, 洞神總號則在於太極".[69] It can be inferred that "in the early version of the *Sanhuang Jing*, the Three Pure Realms were actually composed of Jade Clarity, Highest Purity, and Supreme Pole".[70] The process of Lord Lao being placed into the Supreme

Pole Heaven is not very clear, but more pieces of evidence support this fact. First are the titles that Lord Lao owned. *Zhengao* 真誥 (*Declarations of the Perfects*), compiled by Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (456–536), one of the fundamental texts of the Highest Purity scriptures, mentioned that the Lord of Great Dao of Jade Dawns was the descendant of the Great Dao—"the Perfect of the Highest Purity and the teacher of Lord 上清真人, 為老君之師". "Lord Lao is the disciple of Great High (the Lord of Great Dao of Jade Dawns). Lord Lao knew the secrets of longevity when he was seven years old and became the Perfect of the Supreme Pole 老君者, 太上之弟子. 年七歲而知長生之要, 是以為太極真人" (Tao and Zhao 2011, 5.78). Wang Xuanhe's *Sandong Zhunang* stated: "The Grand Mystery is the capital of the Patriarch of Supreme Pole. Laozi resides here and responds to all directions 太玄者, 太宗極主之所都也. 老子都此, 化應十方, 不可稱述".[71] "Taizong Jizhu 太宗極主" appeared to be a reversed version of "Taiji Zongzhu 太極宗主" (the Patriarch of Supreme Pole). Wang Haoyue discovered that in the *Taiji Zuoxiangong Qingwenjing* 太極左仙公請問經 (*The Scripture Originate from Taiji Zuo Xiangong's Question*), the divine name of Lord Lao was Superior Laozi of the Most High and Supreme Pole, Superior Master 太上太極高上老子無上法師 and the Perfect of the Supreme Pole, Superior Master 太極真人高上法師.[72] It is suspected that the influence of the Perfect of the Supreme Pole Xu Laile 徐來勒 in the Numinous Treasure scriptures became much greater, leading later believers to mistakenly accept that "the Perfect of the Supreme Pole" was especially referring to Xu (H. Wang 2022, pp. 49–50). From such names, it can be inferred that Lord Lao did hold the positions of "the Perfect of the Supreme Pole" and "the Patriarch of Supreme Pole", and his relationship with the Supreme Pole Domain was evident enough. More visual materials showing Lord Lao residing in the Supreme Pole Domain were the descriptions of celestial hierarchies in *Qiyu Xiuzhen Zhengpin Tu* and *Zhenling Weiye Tu* 真靈位業圖 (*Table of the Rank and Functions in the Pantheon*).

Qiyu Xiuzhen Zhengpin stated that "the way of cultivation, from the mundane to the holy, ascends and descends through seven realms 修道之法, 從凡至聖, 昇降七域", and then showed a listing of the immortal titles in each of the seven realms in order. The general framework is as follows:

Stages	**Host**
First Fruit: Immortal of the Cave Palaces 第一初果洞宮仙人	
Second fruit: the Perfect Immortal of the Void Palaces on the famous mounts 第二次果名山之上虛宮地真人	
Third Fruit: the Perfect of Nine Palaces 第三次果為九宮真人	
Fourth Fruit: Great Clarity Supreme Immortals 第四果證位為太清上仙	Great High Lord Lao
Fifth Fruit: The Perfects of the Supreme Pole 第五太極真人果位	The relevant palaces are above Great Clarity and below Supreme Clarity, governed by Lord Lao.
Sixth Fruit: The Perfects of Highest Purity 第六果位為上清真人	It is located above Supreme Pole, in the Highest Purity Domain, governed by The Lord of Great Dao of Jade Dawn.
Seventh Fruit: Jade Clarity Sages 第七極果為玉清聖人	Merged with Dao.

It can be seen that the author of *Qiyu Xiuzhen Zhengpin Tu* generally accepted the mainstream Daoist cosmological structure combining the Three Heavens, Three Clarity Domains, and Three Honors (Lord Lao, Lord of Great Dao of Jade Dawn and Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Beginning). However, this text gave a rather unique explanation regarding the immortal beings occupying the Great Clarity and the Supreme Pole Fruit Positions. While the Great Clarity Domain where Lord Lao resided was described similarly

to the contemporary accounts, the Supreme Pole Fruit Position and relevant palaces were located in a special space above Great Clarity and below Highest Purity. This area was also attributed to Lord Lao's jurisdiction. In this system of immortals and transcendence realms, Lord Lao remarkably occupies two different "fruit positions" and two immortal domains simultaneously. This clearly problematic issue could only be explained by the author's imperfect attempt to blend the divergent and conflicting doctrines.

Compared with the *Qiyu Xiuzhen Zhengpin Tu*, the case presented in the *Zhenling Weiye Tu* was even more complex. The latter involved the structural contradictions caused by the blending of Lord Lao and the Gold Portal Latter Saint. The *Zhenling Weiye Tu* was believed to have been originally created by Tao Hongjing and later re-edited by Lüqiu Fangyuan 閭丘方遠 (d. 906). This work divided the Daoist deities into seven levels according to their ranks, and each level had the positions of left, middle, and right.

Levels in the *Zhenling Weiye Tu*
Jade Clarity
Highest Purity
Supreme Pole
Great Clarity
Nine Palaces
Three Officials 三官
Feng Capital 豐都

The existence of the Supreme Pole Domain can be clearly seen from the above structure. Amid the Great Clarity realm was the "Great Clarity Great High Lord Lao" with the note indicating that the "Lord of Great Clarity, rules over all people below 太清道主, 下臨萬民" (Tao et al. 2013, p. 169). This was consistent with the popular Daoist belief that Lord Lao governed Great Clarity. However, the problem was that other deities or "incarnations" of Lord Lao also appeared in the Great Clarity Domain. "Lao Dan 老聃",[73] one of the recognized names or incarnations of Lord Lao, occupied the right position of the Supreme Pole. "Left Perfect of the Supreme Pole, the Central Yellow Lord Lao 太極左真人中央黃老君", who occupied the left position of the Supreme Pole, was also an early deity incarnation of Laozi. Based on the descriptions in the medieval Daoist scriptures summarized by Wang Jiakui, it appeared that Daoist practitioners at that time believed that the Central Yellow Lord Lao was a disciple of the Lord of Great Dao of Most High. He mastered Dao at the age of seven and finally achieved the status of the Perfect of the Supreme Pole. So why were these identities of Lord Lao placed in different immortal realms? Did Tao Hongjing and Lüqiu Fangyuan not realize that the Great Clarity Great High Lord Lao, Lao Dan, and the Left Perfect of the Supreme Pole the Central Yellow Lord Lao were all different godhoods of Laozi? One possible answer is that Tao Hongjing and Lüqiu Fangyuan could only rely on the descriptions in the existing scriptures to arrange the hierarchy of these deities. The contradictions inherent in the different scriptures could not be completely eliminated. The sacred nature of these scriptures limited the ability of Tao Hongjing and other Daoists to integrate all the doctrines into a coherent whole. Therefore, regardless of the intentions of Tao and Lüqiu to organize a clear and systematic genealogy of deities, and to understand the origins of divine beings and their godhoods, they still had to strictly adhere to the original descriptions in the scriptures when arranging these deities. This ultimately led to Lord Lao and his incarnations appearing in multiple positions in both the Great Clarity Domain and the Supreme Pole Domain. The same problem also occurred with another godhood of Lord Lao, the Gold Portal Latter Saint, which involved the messianism of medieval Daoism.

The belief of Kalpa 劫 has had a profound impact on Chinese politics and society since the Han dynasty (Wu 2014, pp. 144–54; Y. Sun 2015, pp. 1–32, 101–64, etc.). After the rise of Daoism, especially during the Eastern Jin dynasty when it was advocated by believers of the Highest Purity Daoist tradition, Daoists generally accepted the eschatology that this

world was approaching its destruction, and the savior Holy Emperor of Gold Portal Latter Saint 金闕後聖 would save the world.[74] Those who claim to believe in Daoism and become "seed people 種民" should successfully survive the cosmic disaster and gain eternity in the new world of the Latter Saint. The study of eschatology and messianism in medieval Daoism has long been a topic of great interest.[75] What needs to be briefly discussed here is the relationship between the savior Gold Portal Latter Saint and our Lord Lao. According to the current research, the Gold Portal Latter Saint was originally created by the medieval Daoists without a direct prototype of an ancient figure. However, this deity was quickly rewritten by Daoists after the Eastern Jin Dynasty and equated with other figures. E. Zürcher had discovered the phenomenon in which the Gold Portal Latter Saint and another savior "True Lord Li Hong 真君李弘" were mixed together.[76] Ōfuchi Ninji and Shang Fei noted the process of fusion between Lord Lao and the Gold Portal Latter Saint. According to the record in *Zhenling Weiye Tu*, Shang Fei believed that Lord Lao and the Gold Portal Saint Lord were not considered the same deity in the recognition of Tao Hongjing, as they were separated and placed in different positions (Shang 2010, p. 211). *Shangqing Gaoshang Jinyuan Yuzhang Yuqing Yinshu* 上清高上金元羽章玉清隱書 (*Secret Writings of the Yuqing Heaven, Feathered Stanza from the Jinyuan Palace*) written in the later period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties, stated: "Latter Saint Nine Mysteries Gold Portal Saint Lord, he descended to scholars of the Zhou Dynasty and changed his title to Laozi 後聖九玄金闕帝君, 下為周師, 改號老子".[77] Based on this information, Ōfuchi Ninji concluded that the divine status of the Gold Portal Latter Saint had already merged with Lord Lao at a later period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (Ōfuchi 1964, pp. 510–11). Actually, there were enough Daoist literature examples from the Southern and Northern Dynasties to Tang dynasties equating Lord Lao with the Gold Portal Latter Saint.[78]

The combination of important deities could be resolved by the doctrine that the same deity appeared as different identities in different eras. However, there may be irreconcilable issues with regard to the division and description of the heavenly realms where these deities reside. For example, when the understanding that Lord Lao was equivalent to the Gold Portal Latter Saint was accepted, the holy domain that originally belonged to the Gold Portal Latter Saint would also become the domain of Lord Lao, and vice versa. But how can the same deity appear and rule over two different and distinct heavenly realms at the same time? The *Zhenling Weiye Tu* by Tao Hongjing did provide a description of the Gold Portal Latter Saint:

> Right position of Highest Purity: Right Saint Gold Portal Emperor Dawn, Latter Saint Great Dao of Mystery and Prime will be born in this world in the year of Renchen. 上清右位:右聖金闕帝晨後聖玄元道君.壬辰當下生.[79]

> Middle position of the Supreme Pole: The Supreme Pole Gold Portal Emperor Lord. His surname is Li, and will descend in the year of Renchen and become the Lord of Great Peace. 太極中位:太極金闕帝君.姓李, 壬辰下教, 太平主.[80]

The two "Gold Portals" mentioned here are obviously different. One was the original Latter Saint, while the other was mixed with the godhood of the True Lord Li Hong 李弘. If the blending of the Latter Saint and Lord Lao did not occur during the time of Tao Hongjing, it would not cause much confusion in the understanding of the structure of the immortal world when placing them in different celestial realms in the *Zhenling Weiye Tu*. However, by the time this book was re-edited by Lüqiu Fangyuan, such contradictions became very apparent. Where should Lord Lao reside? Is he in the Great Clarity Heaven, Supreme Pole Heaven, or perhaps in the Highest Purity Heaven where the Latter Saint Great Dao of Mystery and Prime was located? In fact, during Lüqiu Fangyuan's day, the Daoist community had already reached a consensus on this matter. The widely accepted belief was that "Lord Lao governs Great Clarity Heaven". Ultimately, the anxiety caused by materials such as *Zhenling Weiye Tu* did not lead Daoists into perpetual confusion about their beliefs.

4. Conclusions

The pursuit of the immortal realm is an endless journey for Daoist practitioners, which constitutes an important aspect of the Daoist cosmic concept. The Daoist cosmic concept accepted the traditional descriptions of the universe, but it also developed a unique and distinct hierarchy of the divine world. This divine world was a realm where deities reside and travel, and how to reasonably locate important deities in appropriate celestial realms was a crucial issue of the Daoist cosmological description. During the Han and Tang dynasties, various Daoist teachings on the heavenly realms emerged. Although some of these teachings were not fully developed and were subsequently abandoned without actually placing deities within them, others did evolve toward maturity. A deep observation of this process is highly attractive to modern scholars, but choosing an appropriate perspective or analytical approach to discover and present the complex context of this evolution remains a complicated issue that requires careful consideration. Observing the changes in the great deities' positions and locations may be an effective choice.

These deities carried rich information about beliefs, and the evolution of their interpretation could reveal the trends in the beliefs of the religious group behind them. The contradictions and harmonies hidden between different interpretations can demonstrate potential communication and interaction among different belief groups. Taking this approach, Lord Lao is undoubtedly a proper subject of study. Unlike the newly created deities such as Heavenly Worthy of the Primordial Beginning and the Lord of Great Tao of the Most High, the belief in Lord Lao had an earlier origin and was accepted and worshipped by more Daoist groups. Therefore, the issue of where Lord Lao resided involves multiple interpretations. Meanwhile, due to the traditional understanding of Lord Lao already having a fixed location, when practitioners later sought to innovate on the concept of Lord Lao's location, they would feel the anxiety and pressure of tradition. Thus, "creating the location of Lord Lao" and "searching for the location of Lord Lao" were parallel thought processes that were both consistent and conflicting. It is noteworthy that even after the emergence of the new view, the traditional beliefs sometimes did not completely disappear, but left behind certain details or legacies such as Kunlun, Purple Sublimity Palace, and Supreme Pole Heaven as mentioned earlier.

During the investigation of the complex issue involving Lord Lao's location, the focus shifted multiple times, from the Kunlun Mountain to the highest heaven Great Clarity Heaven, and the lowest heaven of the Three Clarity Domains, then to the constantly shifting position of the Purple Sublimity Palace, and the Supreme Pole Domain which was once considered as a feasible alternative member of the Three Clarity Domains. Between the Han and Tang dynasties, the ever-changing location of Lord Lao reflected the intense evolution of Daoist cosmic concept. The final result of Lord Lao being placed in the Great Clarity Heaven of the Three Clarity Domains reflected a temporary settling of the intense doctrinal evolution. Through an examination of Lord Lao's location, the core cosmological beliefs in Han and Tang Daoism can be delved into. Such a discussion would aid in delineating a more complete picture of the history of Daoist thought.

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Notes

1 For the overall discussion of the evolution of Daoist cosmic concept (especially the view of the heavenly realm) between the Han and Tang dynasties, cf. (Schafer 1977; Mugitani 1988, pp. 54–73; Xiao 1989, pp. 207–648; W. Sun 2016; Lu 2018b; and others).

2 Zhen Luan, and Xiaodao Lun. 148a. In the same work, Zhen Luan once again ridiculed the location of the Lord of the Great Dao of the Most High, pointing to the inconsistency between the ritual practice and the classic narrative in Daoist tradition. See *Xiaodao Lun*, p. 149c.

3 Y. Liu (2005), For more focused research, see (Kikuchi 2002; Kusuyama 1979).

4 The transformation of Laozi's divinity was not a simple linear progression. Criticism towards the overemphasis on Laozi's sacred status was not limited to those outside of Daoist tradition, as some practitioners also expressed dissenting views. As Ge Hong (葛洪) straightforwardly stated, "as for Laozi, he was particularly adept at attaining the Dao, inwardly genuine and natural. To properly understand his life, one should rely on historical records as well as immortal and secret texts to cross-reference. Other folk views are full of falsehoods. The later Daoist priests have added their own embellishments, which are not authentic teachings". See Li Fang ed., *Taiping Yulan*, p. 659.2943b.

5 The Kunlun belief system in the Han dynasty and its subsequent adoption by Daoism, Cf. (Sofukawa 1979; Xian 2006; Luo 2020; G. Wang 2022, etc.).

6 The brief summary of the relationship between Queen Mother of the West and Kunlun, see (L. Michael 1979). The research on Queen Mother of the West is extremely rich. A comprehensive review can be found in (Q. Zhang 2013, pp. 1–38).

7 A brief discussion on the research approaches of Kunlun can be found in (L. Gao 2019). For more significant works on the study of Kunlun, see (Y. Wang 2020; T. Michael 2016; Feng 2022).

8 Research on the Queen Mother of the West is quite rich, Zhang Qin has contributed to this field his *Wenhua Renleixue Shiye Xiade Xiwangmu Shenhua Chuanshuo Yanjiu* (Q. Zhang 2013, pp. 1–38).

9 There have been many studies on *Xiang'er Zhu*, cf. (Mugitani 2013, pp. 1–42), translated by Li Heshu.

10 Rao Zongyi, *Laozi Xiang'er Zhu Jiao Zheng*, p. 12.

11 Regarding the twenty-four dioceses system of the Heavenly Master Daoism, see (C. Wang 1996). For information on the organizational system of the early Heavenly Master Daoism, cf. (Kleeman 2016).

12 It should be noted that a material in Ge Hong's (葛洪) *Baopuzi Neipian* 抱朴子內篇 [*Book of the Master Who Keeps to Simplicity, Inner Chapters*] is often used as early evidence of Lord Lao's governance of Kunlun, but the interpretation of this material is questionable. According to Ge Hong's record, Cai Dan 蔡誕 became an earth immortal with a lowly status and was driven by higher-ranking deities. He was responsible for tending Lord Lao's dragons, but due to negligence, he lost the Five-color dragon Lord Lao often rode. As a result, he was punished and sent to work as a farmer under Kunlun Mountain. Later, when Cai Dan returned home, he claimed that he came from Kunlun and stated that the sacred realm of Kunlun is not accessible without Lord Lao's talisman. See (M. Wang 1986, pp. 349–50). Some scholars linked Lord Lao's information in Cai Dan's story with the statement "Laojun governs Kunlun" in *Xiang'er Zhu* and argue that both reflect the same idea that Lord Lao resides in and rules over Kunlun. However, in this story, there is no necessary connection between Lord Lao and "ruling over Kunlun". If Lord Lao was situated on a higher plane in the immortal realm, he should still have the power to banish Cai Dan to cultivate land at the foot of Kunlun Mountain.

13 On Kou Qianzhi, Cf. (Wei 1974, 114.3049–3054; Y. Chen 2001, pp. 120–58; Zhong 2005, pp. 436–524; Y. Liu 2002, pp. 271–81).

14 *Laojun Yinsong Jie Jing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 785, vol. 18, pp. 211c, 212a.

15 Fort overview and academic Understanding of *Santian Nei Jiejing* 三天內解經, Cf. (Jin 2014, pp. 5–6; G. Li 2017, pp. 13–21).

16 *Santiannei Jiejing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1205, vol. 28, p. 414b.

17 Yamada (1999, p. 220). Due to the discovery of Dunhuang manuscripts and other reasons, the international academic community has paid more attention to the *Shengxuan Jing*. For related research, refer to (Liu 2011, pp. 117–213).

18 Wang Xuanhe, *Shangqing Daolei Shixiang*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1132, vol. 24, p. 876c.

19 *Zhengyi Fawen Falubu Yi, in Daozang*, vol. 32, 200c. (Lü 2011, p. 9).

20 *Baopuzi Neipian Jiaoshi*, p. 4.76.

21 Pan Shizheng, *Daomen Jingfa Xiangcheng Cixu*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1128, vol. 24, p. 797a.

22 Xie Shouhao, *Taishang Hunyuan Laozi Shilue*, in *Daozang*, DZ 773, vol. 17, p. 902a.

23 Meng Anpai, *Dajiao Yishu* 道教義樞, in *Daozang*, DZ 1129, vol. 24, p. 811a.

24 Wang Yu王煜, "Kunlun, Tianmen, Xi Wangmu Yu Tiandi", pp. 59–60.

25 "Laozi Huahu Jing Xu", in (J. Zhang 2004, vol. 8, p. 186b).

26 Shi Chongxuan, *Yiqie Daojing Yinyi Miaomen Youqi*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1123, vol. 24, p. 725c.

27 Xie Shouhao, *Taishang Hunyuan Laozi Shilue*, in *Daozang*, DZ 773, vol. 17, p. 893c.

28 Du Daojian, *Xuanjing Yuanzhi Fahui*, in *Daozang*, DZ 703, vol. 12, p. 771b.

29 For Daoist Integration from the Southern and Northern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang dynasties, see (Bai 2018).

30 Regarding the formation process of the "Thirty-Six Heavenly", in addition to the research conducted by Lu Min, Sun Weijie, Xiao Dengfu, and Mugitani Kunio, there are also works by (Zeng 1993, pp. 41–43, 59; H. Wang 2017, pp. 73–89; W. Sun 2022, pp. 33–45, etc.).

31 *Yunji Qiqian*, p. 3.36.

32 A systematic introduction to the classification of the *Daozang*, see (G. Chen 1963, pp. 1–104).

33 There has been much discussion about the Great Clarity classics and alchemy. The discussions surrounding the literature, chemistry, and cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries have been particularly intense. Internationally renowned scholars such as Joseph Needham, Nathan Sivin, and Chen Guofu have all written specialized books on this subject. More recent summaries and discussions can be found in (Han 2009, 2015, 2022, pp. 49–236).

34 *Baopuzi Neipian Jiaoshi*, 4.71. Fabrizio Pregadio believed that the Great Clarity tradition originated around 200 AD. in the Anhui region of China, and quickly spread to neighboring areas across the Yangtze River. See his *Great Clarity*, pp. 5–6.

35 *Baopuzi Neipian Jiaoshi*, p. 15.275.

36 *Baopuzi Neipian Jiaoshi*, p. 3.52.

37 Regarding the relevant works of these scholars, see (He 2015, pp. 29–30).

38 *Taishang Laojun Zhongjing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1168, vol. 27, p. 142b.

39 *Taishang Laojun Zhongjing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1168, vol. 27, p. 143a-b.

40 Fabrizio Pregadio, *Great Clarity*, pp. 43–44.

41 *Taishang Laojun Zhongjing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1168, vol. 27, p. 143ab.

42 Kristofer Schipper and Franciscus Verellen ed., *The Daoist Canon*, pp. 159–60.

43 *Dongzhen Taiyi Dijun Taidan Yinshu Dongzhen Xuanjing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1330, vol. 33, p. 533b.

44 Gao Tonglin pointed out that during the Sui and Tang dynasties, the *Laozi Zhongjing* was called *Laozi Lizang Zhongjing*老子歷藏中經, and it was also attributed as a classic taught by Laozi. This point can be found in his "*Laozi Zhongjing* Xintan", pp. 106–31.

45 *Yunji Qiqian*, pp. 6.98–100.

46 In early literature, Zhang Daoling had "two faces". One was the Patriarch Heavenly Master created by the teaching of the Orthodox and One Covenant with the Powers, while the other was an alchemist. These two different faces were eventually merged in the mythological biography of Zhang Daoling. See (C. Liu 2000, pp. 67–136; Y. Liu 2010, pp. 113–36, 137–56; Goossaert 2022, pp. 13–32) Han Jishao, "Cong *Laozi Xiang're Zhu* dao Liandanjia Zhang Daoling" 從《老子想爾注》到煉丹家張道陵 [From *Laozi Xiang'er Zhu* to Alchemist Zhang Daoling], in his *Woming Zaiwo*, pp. 205–21, etc.

47 See *Du Guangting Jizhuan Shizhong Jijiao*, pp. 569–75.

48 Lu Min, "Jintang Daojiao Tianjieguan Yanjiu", pp. 66–68.

49 *Shangqing Taishang Kaitian Longqiao Jing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1354, vol. 33, p. 738b.

50 *Yunji Qiqian*, pp. 24.303–304. I translated "時號" as "be known as", but the original expression seems to be wrong. These palaces should be the residences of Three Treasure Lords, but not their alternative names.

51 Pan Shizheng, *Daomen Jingfa Xiangcheng Cixu*, pp. 782c, 784a.

52 Wang Xuanhe, *Sandong Zhunang*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1139, vol. 25, p. 340c.

53 Du Guangting, *Daode Zhenjing Guangshengyi*, in *Daozang*, DZ 725, vol. 14, p. 318c.

54 Chen Jingyuan 陳景元 (1025–1094), *Yuanshi Wuliang Duren Shangpin Miaojing Sizhu*元始無量度人上品妙經四注 [*Four Commentaries on the Book of Salvation*], in *Daozang*, DZ 87, vol. 2, p. 240a.

55 Zhen Luan, *Zhen Zheng Lun* 甄正論, in *Taisho Tripitaka*, T. 2112, vol. 52, p. 561a.

56 Wei Shou, *Wei Shu*, p. 141.3048.

57 *Wushang Miyao*, p. 22.282.

58 *Wushang Miyao*, pp. 22.268–275.

59 *Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao Yebao Yinyuan Jing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 336, vol. 6, pp. 128c–29a.

60 *Dongxuan Lingbao Yujing Shan Buxu Jing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1439, vol. 34, p. 625b.

61 *Taishang Dongxuan Lingbao Zhihui Zuigen Shangpin Dajie Jing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 457, vol. 6, p. 895a.

62 Lu Xiujing, *Dongxuan Lingbao Zhaishuo Guangzhu Jiefa Deng Zhuyuan Yi*, in *Daozang*, DZ 524, vol. 9, p. 824b.

63 *Dongxuan Lingbao Ziran Jiutiansheng Shenzhang Jing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 318, vol. 5, p. 843c.

64 *Taishang Lingbao Hongfu Miezui Xiangming Jing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 377, vol. 6, p. 292c.

65 *Qiyu Xiuzhen Zhengpin Tu*, in *Daozang*, DZ 433, vol. 6, p. 695b-c.

66 *Taishang Dongshen Sanyuan Miaoben Fushou Zhenjing*, in *Daozang*, DZ 651, vol. 11, p. 414a.

67 Xie Shouhao, *Hunyuan Shengji*, in *Daozang*, DZ 770, vol. 17, p. 789b.

68 *Wushang Miyao*, pp. 78.977–100284.

69 *Wushang Miyao*, p. 6.84.

70 Lu Min, "Jintang Daojiao Tianjieguan Yanjiu", pp. 71–72.

71 Wang Xuanhe, *Sandong Zhunang*, p. 354c.

72 *Taiji Zuoxiangong Qingwenjing*, in (D. Li 1999, p. 2315).

73 *Zhenling Weiye Tu Jiaoli*, p. 138.

74 The most systematic Daoist scripture about the Gold Portal Latter Saint is *Shangqing Housheng Daojun Lieji*上清後聖道君列紀, in *Daozang*, DZ 442, vol. 6, pp. 744b–48b. According to the hypothesis of Kobayashi Masayoshi, this text was likely written after 364 CE and possibly after 371 CE. See Masami Kobayashi, *Rikuchō Dōkyōshi Kenkyū*, pp. 436–37; more about the Messianism of medieval Daoism, see pp. 403–82.

75 The relevant research has been quite abundant, besides Masami Kobayashi's work, also Cf. (Anna 1970, pp. 216–47; Mollier 1990; Bokenkamp 1994, pp. 59–88; F. Li 1996b, pp. 137–60; F. Li 1996a, pp. 82–99; F. Li 1996c, pp. 91–130; Campany 2002, pp. 194–211); Sun Yinggang孫英剛, "Jindao Zhichen" 金刀之讖 [The Golden Sword Prophecy], in his *Shenwen Shidai*, pp. 134–64, etc.

76 E Zürcher, "Eschatology and Messianism in Early Chinese Buddhism", in Idema (1981, p. 37).

77 *Shangqing Gaoshang Jinyuan Yuzhang Yuqing Yinshu*, in *Daozang*, DZ 1358, vol. 33, p. 780b.

78 Ge Hong, *Yuanshi Shangzhen Zhongxian Ji* 元始上真眾仙記 [*Register of Primordial Beginning, the Superior Perfects and Hosts of the Immortals*], in *Daozang*, DZ 166, vol. 3, p. 270a; Pan Shizheng, *Daomen Jingfa Xiangcheng Cixu*, p. 796b-c; J. Chen (1988, p. 240a).

79 *Zhenling Weiye Tu Jiaoli*, p. 54.

80 *Zhenling Weiye Tu Jiaoli*, p. 86.

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On the Origin of "Laozi Converting the Barbarians": A Historical Background Analysis

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Abstract: This article examines the historical background of "Laozi huahu 老子化胡" (Laozi converting the barbarians) and investigates its generation mode and constituent elements. It also discusses and reflects on issues such as the origin of "huahu" and Laozi's deification. The origin of "Laozi huahu" has little relationship to issues such as the divine system in the Han dynasty and Laozi's deification. Its elements are rooted in Chinese secular ideological resources. The story of "heroes moving across borders" during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, along with the notion of Laozi as the universal teacher for disciples of various schools, gave birth to the saying. An analysis of the historical background suggests that the origin of "huahu" had likely gone through a long evolutionary process, including an undocumented period where it was transmitted orally as a legend.

Keywords: "Laozi Huahu (converting the barbarians)"; origin; ethnic relations; Laozi's deification

1. Introduction

The "Laozi huahu shuo 老子化胡説" (The Theory of Laozi Converting the Barbarians) is a vital legend in terms of the formation of Daoism, the deification of Laozi, and other related topics. Since Paul Pelliot (1878–1945) discovered the Dunhuang 敦煌 documents of *Laozi Huahu Jing* 老子化胡經 (the Scripture of Laozi Converting the Barbarians), there have been various opinions by different scholars, including Wang Weicheng 王維誠 (W. Wang 1934), Erik Zürcher ([1959] 2007), Kusuyama Haruki 楠山春樹 (Kusuyama 1979), Ōfuchi Ninji 大淵忍爾 (Ōfuchi 1991), Liu Yi 劉屹 (Y. Liu 2011, 2013), and Jiang Sheng 姜生 (S. Jiang 2018). For a long time, the question of its origin has been traced back to Laozi's 老子 (or Laotze) journey to the West as stated in the *Shiji* 史記 (The Grand Scribe's Records) (Q. Sima 1963, p. 2141). Later, during the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220), Laozi was worshiped with the Futu 浮屠 (Buddha). It is rumored that "Laozi entered the land of the Yidi 夷狄 (western barbarians) and became Buddha 老子入夷狄為浮屠" (Fan 1973, p. 1082). During the Three Kingdoms period (220–280), it was said that "Futu scriptures are not far off Chinese *Laozi Jing* 老子經 (Scripture of the Laozi); therefore, it was believed that Laozi went out of the pass, through the Western Region 西域 to Tianzhu 天竺國 (India) to teach Hu 胡 (barbarians) 浮屠所載與中國《老子經》相出入，蓋以為老子西出關，過西域之天竺，教胡" (S. Chen 1964, pp. 859–60). In the Western Jin dynasty (265–317), the Daoist priest Wang Fu 王浮 composed *Laozi Huahu Jing* in the form of a text, which marked an end to debates about its origin.

Although the above statements provide an overview of the stages involved in the formation of "huahu" from a historical perspective, it is worth noting that this legend has much older origins. Zürcher realized this fact long ago and pointed out that "huahu" did not emerge as a tool for debate after the rise of Buddhism and Daoism rose to prominence (Zürcher [1959] 2007, p. 290). However, academia rarely discusses this issue in depth. Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 even asserts without any discussion that "Laozi huahu" is an extension of

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the topic of "Laozi huaru 老子化儒" (Laozi converting the Confucians), which refers to Laozi's conversion of the Confucians during the Warring States Period (ca. 476–221 B.C.E.) (Gu 2011, p. 211). Such reasoning with a certain depth in intellectual history is valuable. Undoubtedly, an in-depth discussion of the historical and social background of the origin of "huahu" is a crucial prerequisite for understanding this issue. Examining the intellectual history behind a particular line of reasoning can be highly valuable. To fully comprehend the issue at hand, it is essential to engage in an in-depth exploration of the historical and social context surrounding the origin of "huahu".

This article examines the historical background of "Laozi huahu shuo" and investigates its generation mode and constituent elements. It also discusses and reflects on issues such as the origin of "huahu" and Laozi's deification.

2. Early Ethnic Relations in China: History and Legends

Supporters of the "huahu" theory believe that, after Laozi went west out of Hangu Pass 函谷關, he incarnated as the Buddha; then, he civilized the barbaric Hu people and turned them into Buddhists. It tells of the emergence of Buddhism and aims to prioritize Daoism over Buddhism, as those who believed in Daoism were Han Chinese, while the Hu people adopted Buddhism. It also promotes the idea that the "Han" 漢 (Chinese) were superior to the "Hu". Gil Raz points out that "huahu" was not just a unique doctrine; it associated Daoism with the "essence of Chinese civilisation" (Raz 2014). Furthermore, Liu Yi has already incorporated ethnic relations into his research on "huahu," thus indicating that it can be a crucial perspective for interpreting the origin of the theory (Y. Liu 2011, p. 54).

Throughout history, foreigners residing beyond borders have often been perceived as barbaric and hostile by locals. Even during the time of Greek civilization, historians such as Herodotus would use derogatory language describing outsiders. Archaeological and literary evidence shows that early Chinese society also held an unequal view toward outsiders. During the Yin-Shang period (approximately 14th–11th century B.C.E.), it was common practice to offer living humans as sacrifices to ancestors, with sacrificial victims primarily selected from enemies of the Yin belonging to barbarian tribes. This practice allowed Yin merchants to satisfy their ancestors by punishing their adversaries (Wang and Gu 2007, pp. 204–15).

Ensuring the equality for foreigners is a significant challenge that many countries and regions must face. Dutch scholar Siep Stuurman conducted research on common humanity by exploring how the Greeks, Hebrews, Indians, and Chinese addressed this issue. Stuurman identified specific religious and philosophical mechanisms that transformed foreigners into compatriots. The study revealed that Chinese culture embraced pluralism in its view of the Yi and Xia 夷夏 (the barbarians and the Chinese). Furthermore, Chinese culture has had an inherent relativistic viewpoint that was reflected in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (ca. 145–? B.C.E.) praise for the Xiongnu 匈奴 in *Shiji.* This also demonstrates the influence of egalitarianism (Stuurman 2017, p. 137).

Chinese people are skilled at using "quasi-kinship" to unite different ethnic groups under a common humanity. While kinship-based clan groups are the most prevalent form of cohesion in human society, China has unique characteristics in utilizing kinship relationships. Sociologist Maximilian Carl Emil Weber (1864–1920) noted that "China has undergone many changes in its long historical process, but the only constant is clan kinship ties (or quasi-kinship cohesive relationships)" (Kang 2004, p. 9). In fact, not only does this relationship span an extended period, but China's use of this bond also surpasses that of ordinary "families" or "clans", thereby serving as a link between ethnic groups through quasi-kinship. Archaeological sites show that large settlements had already appeared during the Longshan period 龍山時期 (about 4350–3950 years ago) (S. Wei 2020, pp. 62–63). These settlements in China's central region faced more intense conflicts, then they tended to be larger and more strongly allied than those on the periphery. After a long collision and fusion, various ethnic groups elected Huangdi 黃帝 (the Yellow Emperor) as their common ancestor and merged into a quasi-kinship brotherhood alliance. It records that Huangdi

had "twenty-five sons, fourteen of whom gained their different surnames: namely, Ji, You, Qi, Ji, Teng, Pro, Ren, Gou, Xi, Ji, Ji and Yi 子二十五宗，其得姓者十四人，為十二姓，姬、酉、祁、紀、滕、箴、任、荀、僖、姞、儇、衣是也" (Z. Wei 2019, pp. 353–54). The actual situation behind this story may be that twenty-five clans that centered around twelve surnames formed a brotherhood alliance under the name of Huangdi as their common ancestor.

When Sima Qian wrote *Shiji* at the turn of the second and first centuries B.C., the concept that Huangdi was the ancestor of Huaxia had already deeply rooted in people's minds. Even the Xiongnu, who were at odds with Han dynasty then, were regarded by Sima Qian as descendants of Huangdi. This was because the Xiongnu were the descendants of Xiahoushi 夏後氏 (Q. Sima 1963, p. 2879). Meanwhile, according to *Shiji*, Yu 禹 was a great-grandson of Huangdi and a grandson of Emperor Zhuanxu 顓頊. Moreover, "Yu belonged to Si surname, but after he divided his territory among his offspring, they used their state names as surnames, and thus there came about Xiahou clan 禹為姒姓，其後分封，用國為姓，故有夏後氏" (Q. Sima 1963, p. 89). It can be seen that legends about Huangdi being the "ancestor king" have considerable openness. Common ancestry has become a way for ethnic groups to think about cognition boundaries.

In traditional China, society was based on the ethics of kinship. As contact and cognition with ethnic groups along border areas developed, blood and "quasi-blood ties" played an important role in fostering cohesion. This can inspire the application of other ethical concepts, such as the master–apprentice relationship, which is one of China's most important non-kinship relationships, thereby naturally possessing such potential value.

The transmission of knowledge is intertwined with human civilization. In the process of transmission, the teacher or educator in a superior position has the right to educate the disciple or students. This power is reflected not only in politics but also in society. For instance, during the Qin dynasty (221–207 BC), "clerks as teachers 以吏為師"[1] prevailed," while the Han dynasty (202–220 BC) witnessed "Sanlao who is treated as an official charge of education 三老掌教化",[2] thus indicating that educational authority was an integral part of national governance systems, particularly within rural power structures during the Han dynasty. Not only within the country, but also in border governance, emphasis was placed on demonstrating educational authority (Lu 2022). Li Lei's study of the Kuaiji Carving Stone 會稽刻石 reveals that Qinshi Huang 秦始皇 (the First Emperor of the Qin empire; r. 247–210 B.C.E.) deliberately exerted his authority over the "Yue people's cultural traditions," which was a form of external demonstration of educational authority (L. Li 2016).

Before the Central Plains dynasty practiced the civilization of foreign ethnicities, Xunzi 荀子 (ca. 313–238 B.C.E.) proposed that "the kids of foreign tribes, such as Gan-people 干, Yue-people 越, Yi-people 夷, and Mo-people貊 are born with the same voice, but grow up with different customs, because they received a different education 干、越、夷、貉之子，生而同聲，長而異俗，教使之然也" (Xianqian Wang 1988, p. 2). This suggests that barbarians could adopt Huaxia's customs if they received an adequate education. By the time of the Han dynasty, ancient frontier narratives already contained the idea of civilizing ethnic minorities. The typical legends include the following:

In the southeast of China during the late Shang dynasty, "Taibo 太伯of Wu 吳國, and his younger brother Zhongyong 仲雍, were both sons of Taiwang 太王 (supreme king) of Zhou 周 and elder brothers of Jili 季歷 … Taibo fled to the Man 蠻 of Jing 荊 and called himself Gouwu 句吳. The local people regarded him as righteous, and those who followed and allied themselves to him were more than a thousand families; they established him as the TaiBo (The Grand Eldest) of Wu" 吳太伯，太伯弟仲雍，皆周太王之子，而王季曆之兄也。…… 太伯之饺荊蠻，自號句吳。荊蠻義之，從而歸之千餘家，立為吳太伯。(Q. Sima 1963, p. 1445).

In the southwest region during the reign of King Wei of Chu 楚威王 (r. 340–329 B.C.E.), "General Zhuang Qiao 莊蹻 led the troops along the river, seized Ba 巴, Qianzhong 黔中 to the west. … He arrived at Dianchi 滇池, which was 300 *li* 里 square, next to the flat land, thousands of *li* of fertility, with the military power to determine what belonged to the Chu

楚國. He wanted to return, but the Qin 秦 attacked and captured the Jun 郡 (county) of Ba and Qianzhong in Chu, and the roads were blocked; he returned and relied on his people to become king of the Dian 滇. They changed their clothes and followed the local customs and thereby acting as their chieftain" 將軍莊蹻將兵循江上，略巴、（蜀）黔中以西。…… 蹻至滇池，（地）方三百里，旁平地，肥饒數千里，以兵威定屬楚。欲歸報，會秦擊奪楚巴、黔中郡，道塞不通，因還，以其眾王滇。變服，從其俗，以長之。 (Q. Sima 1963, p. 2993). Though the story bears the hallmarks of military conquest, the effect of spreading civilization is the same.

In northeast China, the *Hanshu* 漢書 (History of Han) records, "As Yin 殷 dynasty declined, Ji Zi 箕子 left for ChaoXian 朝鮮 (the Korean Peninsula), teaching its people about propriety, righteousness, farming and weaving" 殷道衰，箕子去之朝鮮，教其民以禮義，田蠶織作。 (Ban 1964, p. 1658).

In northwest China, the *Houhanshu* 後漢書 (The History of the Latter Han Dynasty) records the origin of the Western Qiang people 西羌, saying: "During the reign of Duke Li of Qin 秦厲公 (r. 476–443 B.C.E.), Wuyi Yuanjian 無弋爰劍 was captured by Qin and made into a slave...When all the other Qiang saw Yanjian being burned but not dying, they thought he was a god and feared him; they respected him as their leader. There was little grain in the Hehuang 河湟 area but many birds and beasts, so hunting became their main activity. Yuanjian taught them how to farm and raise animals which gained their respect; gradually, more people settled down under his leadership" 羌無弋爰劍者，秦厲公時為秦所拘執，以為奴隸。…… 諸羌見爰劍被焚不死，怪其神，共畏事之，推以為豪。河湟間少五穀，多禽獸，以射獵為事，爰劍教之田畜，遂見敬信，廬落種人依之者日益眾。(Fan 1973, p. 2875). Yuanjian spread the Chinese lifestyle to the Qiang people; he taught them how to farm and raise animals. This shows that Yuanjian is essentially an example of a Chinese cultural hero.

These stories blend history with the legends surrounding ethnic groups since the Spring and Autumn period (770–221 B.C.E.). Wang Mingke 王明珂 summarized them as "heroic migration stories 英雄徙邊故事" (Mingke Wang 2009, pp. 79–93). These stories generally represent cultural or ethnic centralism, where ancient Chinese heroes bring civilization to other ethnic groups in all directions.

The civilization of the barbarians of the Chinese concept of education is a product that combines Chinese ethical concepts and historical cognition projected onto the "world". As Jia Fang 賈放 pointed out in his study of the Russian literary structuralist Propp (Владимир Яковлевич Пропп, 1895–1970), "the emergence of new ideas and theories must create a new set of terminology or give existing terms new meanings" (Jia 2019, p. 72). It can be said that the term system for Chinese people to civilize other ethnic groups is embodied in the "hero migration story" as a story template where the protagonist "hero" constantly changes; that could be Wu Taibo, Zhuang Qiao, Ji Zi or Yuanjian, and of course. That could also be someone else.

The "Laozi huahu" legend tells the story of Laozi, a Chinese hero or Shengxian 聖賢 (sage), who went to a remote area to enlighten foreigners. This narrative structure is consistent with the "heroic migration story," and their relationship is almost apparent. With this story template, it is only one step away from creating "Laozi converting the barbarians" by replacing the protagonist of the legend with Laozi and locating the enlightened people as the Hu people in the West.[3] Thus, the story of "Laozi huahu" has already taken shape.

3. Laozi's Character as a Teacher

Laozi's image transformed during the long period when "Laozi huahu" was brewing, which spanned the Han dynasty. Mr. Jiang Sheng's research pointed out that the appearance of Confucius meeting Laozi in Han tomb paintings indicates that this historical story already had religious connotations (S. Jiang 2011). Confucius and Laozi were not just simple human sages, but they possessed divine attributes. Some other scholars have examined the historical evolution of the legend of Laozi before the Tang dynasty (618–690) and concluded that, from a linear perspective, there was an important transi-

tional period during the Han dynasty where Laozi's image transformed from human to divine (Xingfen Wang 2019).

Therefore, it is necessary to clarify that Laozi embodies a dual identity: a historical figure (sage) and a deity-like one. In modern times, Daoist priest Wang Lixue 王理學compiled *Laozi shilu* 老子實錄 (The Authentic Record of Laozi). In the preface, he pointed out many misunderstandings about his true identity due to unresolved doubts about whether there were two different Laozi—one pre-cosmic and one cosmic. The former is ethereal and mysterious, while the latter has a physical body of flesh and blood, which makes him more accessible to people with verifiable historical records. "Laozi's philosophy of Wuwei has been welcomed by people from all over the world throughout history" 老子無為主義為古今中外所歡迎，其歷史多有不明真相的，皆為有先天老子、後天老子的疑案無法判決的原因。先天老子是氣體，是虛的，其事玄妙難測；後天老子是月（肉）體，是實的，其事平易近人，有正史可考，信而有征。 (Zhang 2021, pp. 122–23).

If we consider "the story of heroes moving to the border" as the source of "Laozi's conversion of barbarians", then Laozi's image as a historical figure becomes a determining factor. Still, there is much room for exploration. In the following section, we will examine Laozi's image as a teacher and consider his two-sided nature as both Confucius' mentor and an emperor's instructor. The reason for delving into this topic is that Laozi's reputation as a teacher is crucial to his portrayal as the hero who converts barbarians. Not only is the image of a teacher a direct metaphor for the right to educate, but Laozi, as a teacher, is most suitable for enlightening barbarians. That is the key point for combining his identity with "the story of heroes moving to the border".

3.1. Laozi as the Teacher of Confucius and Other Sages

Even if we do not immediately assume that Laozi was the principal figure in "transforming barbarians" during the Qin and Han dynasties, very few sages qualified for such a title. This is especially true considering that "Confucius meets Laozi" gradually became popular at that time; Laozi had become Confucius' teacher, and his role as a teacher was more representative than China's ancient sage representative, Confucius (551 BC–479 BC). Additionally, other philosophers also received teachings from Laozi.

During the Warring States period, Laozi was already established as Confucius' teacher through various dialogues recorded in The Book of Rites *Liji* 禮記 (The Book of Rites), where many dialogues between Confucius and his disciples include the phrase "I heard from Lao Dan 吾聞諸老聃曰." In addition, Confucius mentioned that he assisted in burying a member of Xiangdang 巷黨 with Lao Dan and that Lao Dan taught him how to handle a solar eclipse they witnessed together (X. Sun 1989, pp. 545–46). According to Confucius, Laozi was a knowledgeable elder who guided him in many ways. The Daoist perspective on their relationship is described in *Zhuangzi* 莊子 (Master Zhuang Zhou), which states: "When Confucius was fifty-one years old and still hadn't found the Way, he went south to Pei and met with Lao Dan 孔子行年五十有一而不聞道，乃南之沛見老聃." After meeting each other, Laozi gave some guidance to Confucius (Guo 2012, pp. 518–35). Other Warring States documents such as *Lüshichunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (The Annals of Sire Lü) and *Hanshiwaizhuan* 韓詩外傳 (The Unauthorized Biography of Han Poem) also contain varying degrees of records about this event.

Although the various schools of thought differ in detail, they all suggest that Confucius sought instruction from Laozi. During the Warring States period, many sayings about Laozi made it difficult for Sima Qian to record his biography accurately. In fact, at the end of "The Biography of Laozi" in *Shiji*, he hinted that "Lao Laizi was also a Chu person who wrote fifteen volumes on the use of Daoism and lived simultaneously with Confucius 老萊子亦楚人也，著書十五篇，言道家之用，與孔子同時"; "(Zhou Taishi) Dan is Laozi (周太史)儋即老子" (Q. Sima 1963, pp. 2141–42). This shows that Laozi had already become an iconic figure at that time whose deeds could not be measured solely by historical standards. According to Lü Simian 呂思勉, "various philosophical books often contain erroneous and doubtful facts. This is because ancient academic knowledge was primarily

passed down orally without written records, making it easy for errors to occur; additionally, people emphasized its meaning over their factual accuracy, resulting in fables. Therefore, relying on them to discuss historical facts can easily lead to mistakes. However, despite this fact, everyone at that time knew they were fables" 諸子書所記事實，多有訛誤，此似誠有可疑。然古人學術，多由口耳相傳，無有書籍，本易訛誤；而其傳之也，又重其義而輕其事。…… 此則所謂寓言也。此等處，若據之以談史實，自易謬誤。然在當時，固人人知為寓言。故諸子書中所記事實，乖謬者十有七八，而後人於其書，仍皆信而傳之。(Lü 2016, pp. 373–74). Although Confucius seeking instruction from Laozi may not have happened historically, it has become a firmly established idea in people's minds.

Aside from Confucius, Laozi also imparted his teachings to Yang Ziju 陽子居 and Yin Xi 尹喜. According to *Zhuangzi*, Yang Ziju and Lao Dan met in Liang梁 while traveling south to Pei 沛and west on the Qin road, respectively. During their encounter, Laozi advised Yang Ziju against arrogance or pride (Guo 2012, pp. 953–55). In *Shiji*, it is mentioned that Yin Xi compelled Laozi to write a book (Q. Sima 1963, p. 2141). As a teacher, Laozi's influence extended beyond the circle of Warring States philosophers after he guided Yang Ziju and Yin Xi. He continued teaching barbarians even after leaving China as part of his natural progression.

Overall, Laozi's identity has been attributed to many things, thereby creating an air of mystery around him with strong legendary elements. However, during the Warring States period, he was primarily recognized as a sage who taught other philosophers. Many stories clearly illustrate this point and reflect his historical significance rather than portraying him as an immortal figure, as later generations did.

3.2. Laozi as a Teacher of Emperors

According to *Lüshichunqiu*, not only silk can be dyed, but also a country "非獨染絲然也，國亦有染". The text cites the example of Shun 舜, who learned dyeing from Xu Yu許由 and Boyang 伯陽. Gao You's 高誘 (fl. first half of the third century) annotation suggested, "Boyang is probably Laozi, who was Shun's teacher at that time 伯陽，蓋老子也，舜時師之者也" (Xu 2017, pp. 47–48). Although it is uncertain whether the Boyang mentioned in *Lüshichunqiu* may refer to Laozi or not, Gao You's annotation indicates that, by the Eastern Han dynasty period, Boyang had already been identified as Laozi, and his role as Shun's teacher had become popular.

During the deification process of Laozi, his role as a teacher to emperors gained significant importance. Prior to the Tang dynasty, biographies referred to him as one of twelve imperial teachers or even thirteen saintly teachers, such as in *Gaoshanglaozi benji* 高上老子本記 (The Basic Annals of Lord Laozi), *Xuanzhongji* 玄中記 (The Biography of Mystery), *Laixiangji* 瀨鄉記 (The Hometown of Laozi), *Shenxianzhuan* 神仙傳 (The Legend of the Immortal), and *Chusaiji* 出塞記 (The Legend of Laozi's Journey). These works all mention either twelve imperial teachers or thirteen saintly teachers (Shi 1988, p. 726). Ding Peiren 丁培仁 pointed out that some of these books were written before the North and South dynasties (420–589) (Ding 2007, pp. 575–76). They summarize many versions since the Eastern Han dynasty. As part of his deification process, he became an imperial teacher, and this image was associated with divine immortals. Examining the development process of this image as an imperial teacher reveals some distance from the legend of "Laozi huahu".

During the Qin and Han dynasties, Laozi was primarily associated with the Fangshi 方士 (masters of esoterica). Emperors such as Qin Shihuang and Hanwudi 漢武帝 (emperor Wu of the Han dynasty, r. 141–87 B.C.E.) recruited Fangshi in search of immortality, thus leading to many people creating supernatural events or attaching themselves to immortals to win favor from the emperor. The "Laozi bianhua jing" 老子變化經 (The Scripture of the Transformations of Laozi) lists Laozi's experiences as "cultivating inner essence when retreating, becoming an imperial teacher when advancing 退則養精，進則帝王師". According to its records, Laozi appeared in human form 17 times as an imperial teacher throughout his life. For example, during Fuxi's 伏羲 time, he was known as Wen Shuangzi 溫爽子: "In the fifth year of King Kang's reign 元（王）康五年, Laozi transformed into a

woman's womb and was born seventy-two years later with the surname Li and given name Dan. He adopted the style name Boyang and served as a minor official for seven hundred years before arriving at Chu state, where King Ping 楚平王 (r. 528–516 B.C.E.) refused his advice due to a lack of moral virtue. Consequently, he left Chu and crossed westward through Hangu Pass, where he taught Yin Xi using two chapters on *Wuqianwen* 五千文 (Five Thousand Words, it is also known as *Tao Te Ching* or *Daode jing* 道德經). During Qin dynasty, he was known as Jianshu Zi 蹇叔子, at the time when he entered (the land of) the Hu, he was known as Futujun 浮屠君, during Han dynasty [he was known as] Wang Fangping 王方平" 元（王）康五年，老子化入婦女腹中，七十二年乃生，讬母姓李，名聃，字伯陽，為柱下吏七百年，還變楚國，而平王喬蹇不從諫，道德不流，則去楚而西度咸（函）谷關，以《五千文》上下二篇授關長尹喜。秦時號曰蹇叔子。大（入）胡時號曰浮慶（屠）君；漢時號曰王方平。 (K. Wang 2004, pp. 181–82). Scholars, including Kikuchi Noritaka 菊地章太, believe that this scripture was compiled at the end of the Eastern Han dynasty (Kikuchi 2009). Further research by Sun Qi 孫齊 shows that, at that time, the followers of Fangshi Wang Fangping used this concept of Laozi being an imperial teacher to promote him as a reincarnation of Laozi himself to elevate his status (Q. Sun 2016).

Despite Laozi's status as an emperor and teacher at this time, Wang Fangping's disciples relied on a tradition of Daoist sorcery that included generations of supernatural teachers, which were most likely fabricated by the Fangshi. According to Ge Hong's 葛洪 (283–363), *Shenxianzhuan*, Emperor Wen of Han 漢文帝 (r. 180–157 B.C.E.) visited Heshanggong 河上公 specifically seeking advice on *The Scripture of Laozi*:

> When the emperor encountered some confusing passages in scripture, he sought an explanation, but no one could provide one. Minister Pei Kai裴凱suggested that a scholar well-versed in Laozi lived near the Yellow River in Shanzhou 陝州. The emperor dispatched an envoy to ask his questions, but Heshanggong replied: "The Dao and virtue are venerable and honorable; they cannot be discussed from afar." Upon hearing this, the emperor promptly visited him.
>
> 帝於經中有疑義，人莫能通。侍郎裴凱奏云："陝州河上有人誦《老子》。"即遣詔使齎所疑問之，公曰："道尊德貴，非可遙問也。"帝即駕幸詣之。
>
> (Ge 2020, p. 229)

During the early Han dynasty, there was a trend of worshipping Huang-Lao 黃老之學. Empress Dowager Dou 竇太后, the mother of Emperor Wen, was known to be fond of the teachings of the Yellow Emperor and Laozi. As per *Shiji* records, it was mandatory for the emperor and his sons to read Huangdi and Laozi's works while also showing respect towards their skills. This legend exaggerates the trend in worshiping Huang-Lao during that period—好黃帝、老子言，帝及太子諸竇不得不讀《黃帝》、《老子》，尊其術 (Q. Sima 1963, p. 1975). According to *Shenxianzhuan*, Heshangong demonstrated his divine power when he met Emperor Wen (Ge 2020, p. 229); his power convinced Emperor Wen. Such displays were a common propaganda tactic used by the Fangshi.

During the early Han dynasty, Laozi's words and skills were highly respected by emperors. As the Fangshi promoted and transformed his teachings, a new tradition emerged where Laozi became a teacher for emperors. In addition, deified Laozi had the opportunity to convert barbarians to Buddhism; as mentioned in the previous "Laozi bianhua jing," he could enter the land of the Hu. However, during the Han dynasty period, the goal of the Fangshi was simply the pursuit of wealth and status, and they had no incentive to build further details regarding Laozi's entry into Hu's land. Therefore, when Buddhism entered China, the role of the Fangshi in structuring the "huahu" was limited.

Furthermore, in the tradition of the Han Fangshi, they seemed more interested in attracting outsiders rather than actively civilizing barbarians. During the reign of Emperor Chengdi 漢成帝 (r. 33–7 B.C.E.) of the Western Han dynasty, a man named Gan Zhongke 甘忠可 from Qi wrote *Tianguanli baoyuan taipingjing* 天官曆包元太平經 (The Scripture of the Great Peace and the Conservation of the Origin According to the Calendar of the Officials of Heaven) in twelve volumes. During the reign of Emperor Shundi 漢順帝

(r. 125–144) of the Eastern Han dynasty, a Fangshi named Gong Chong 宮崇 presented his teacher Gan Ji's 干吉 (or Yu Ji 于吉) work *Taiping qinglingshu* 太平青領書 (The Book of the Great Peace with Blue-Green Headings), which consisted of one hundred and seventy volumes. However, because "his words were based on Yin-Yang Five Elements 陰陽五行 theory and contained many witchcraft-related terms," it was reported to the authorities that Gong's work was full of superstitions and not grounded in reality, so it was confiscated. 其言以陰陽五行為家，而多巫覡雜語。有司奏崇所上妖妄不經，乃收藏之 It was not until during the reign of Emperor Huan Di 漢桓帝 (r. 146–168) that Xiang Kai 襄楷 presented it again and made this book known to the public (Fan 1973, p. 1084). The vast volumes contained in *Taiping qinglingshu* present the collective achievements of the Han Fangshi. Though somewhat altered by later generations, they still represent the Fangshi thoughts regarding the middle to late Eastern Han period. The extant version of the book is called *Taipingjing* 太平經 (The Scripture of the Great Peace). In Volume 88 of the *Taipingjing*, through dialogue between immortals 真人 and celestial masters 天師, there is such an appeal: "When barbarians hear about us [China], they will retreat; China will expand without fighting or invading others … When China prospers greatly, good people from eighty-one domains shall come down [to China] 夷狄聞之，日自卻去，中國日以廣，不戰鬥伐而日彊也。…… 中國當大興平，八十一域善人當降，來歸中國" (Ming Wang 2014, pp. 344–45). This shows that, according to the Fangshis' beliefs during the Han dynasty, China was meant to enjoy visits from all nations instead of bringing civilization to backward countries.

In brief, it is more convincing to interpret "Laozi huahu" within the context of Laozi as a sage. However, it should be noted that Buddha, who is also a key figure in "Laozi's influence on the Hu people becoming a Buddha," has two faces: a historical figure and a western deity. Pei Songzhi 裴松之 (372–451) cited *Weilüe* 魏略 (A Brief History of the Wei) in his annotations to *Sanguozhi* 三國志 (The History of Three Kingdoms), saying that when Buddhism was first introduced to China, the Chinese people tended to view Laozi as the former.

> In the kingdom of Lin'er, there is a legend that tells of a prince named Futu who was born to the king Xietouye 屑頭邪 and a queen called Moye 莫邪. … Futu's teachings has some similarities and some differences from those found in Laozi's classic text from China. It is believed that Laozi traveled west through the Western Regions to Tianzhu, where he taught the Hu people.
>
> 臨兒國，浮屠經云其國王生浮屠。浮屠，太子也。父曰屑頭邪，母云莫邪。…… 浮屠所載與中國老子經相出入，蓋以為老子西出關，過西域之天竺，教胡。
>
> (S. Chen 1964, pp. 859–60)

The Buddha in this text is portrayed as a prince of the Lin'er State and one under the influence of Laozi's teachings.

This statement aligns with the stories of Laozi guiding Confucius, Yang Ziju, and Yin Xi. This serves as another example of Laozi's image as a sage teacher. Additionally, an intriguing phenomenon arose after the Han dynasty, where there was a debate between Buddhism and Daoism regarding "Laozi huahu". Both religions referred to historical books and classics while arguing from the perspective of "who is the teacher of another 釋李師資" and "whose birth was first 佛老先後". The prerequisite for their argumentation was to consider them as historical figures. This indirectly indicates that divinity may not be the core issue in the "huahu".

4. Reflection on the Deification of Laozi

When discussing the origin of the notion of "Laozi huahu", it is impossible to avoid addressing the deification of Laozi. Cultural phenomena such as multiple reincarnations 累世託生, his role as an imperial teacher for generations, and his embodiment of the Great Way 大道 are crucial aspects for understanding this process (G. Liu 1935; Seidel 1969; Kusuyama 1979; Kohn 1998). It is generally believed that Laozi became deified during the Eastern Han dynasty. Although some scholars have attempted to trace this process back to earlier times

by suggesting that there were already elements of deification present in stories such as when Laozi met Yin Xi in *Shiji* (Z. Liu 2005), according to Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤, Ban Gu 班固 (32–92) listed him among the upper-middle category (from a system of 9 ranks) of people in the *Hanshu* at the beginning stage of the Eastern Han dynasty, thereby indicating that his divine status had not yet been confirmed at this time (Rao 2003, p.188). In any case, the deification process of Laozi must have been phased, and its significant milestone was to equate him with the Great Way, which is the origin of the universe. Regarding the relationship between "Laozi huahu" and the deification of Laozi, academia often regards the latter as an essential premise for the former. The typical logic was roughly summarized by Wang Weicheng:

> Laozi was already deemed legendary during the Eastern Han Dynasty for his extraordinary abilities. The idea that Laozi went to convert the barbarians first appeared during Emperor Huan's reign … Later, Daoism developed based on the teachings of Huang-Lao from the Han dynasty, with Laozi as its founder and ancestor. Some texts also mention Futu-Laozi. Both Daoism and Buddhism flourished in China during Emperor Shun and Emperor Huan's reigns. However, Chinese people have always valued their own culture over foreign cultures leading to a view of "us" versus "them." As descendants of the Huaxia tribe, those who followed Daoism believed they could not allow foreign religions to coexist with theirs, resulting in inevitable conflict. Therefore, some stories associate Laozi leaving Zhou through the Pass or going on a journey to become immortal with his supposed conversion of barbarians into Buddhists.
>
> 東漢時所傳説之老子，已甚異乎常人，成為神話之人物。而老子化胡之說，即始傳於桓帝之時。…… 後世道教當沿漢代黃老之學而來，其教宗祖老子，浮屠老子嘗並列，順帝、桓帝之時，道佛二教均當始興，道教為中國所自出，佛教乃從外來，中國人民素持"夷""夏"之見，尊華夏而賤夷狄，則從道者流，自以華胄我族，豈容彼夷異教幷立？衝突抵抗，勢有必然。故或遂附會舊時老子去周出關，真人西遊，及老子神話化之說，造為老子入夷狄為浮屠之言。
>
> (W. Wang 1934, pp. 6–8)

This interpretation of "How did Laozi become a deity" presented here exhibits clear Whiggism tendencies (Butterfield 1965, p. 11). It assumes that Laozi was already the central figure in a legend about "converting barbarians to Buddha;" it also speculates on his historical status as a "deified sage." However, during the Han dynasty's religious tradition, there were not only significant deities such as Laozi, and some scholars believe that, by the end of the Han dynasty, Laozi was merely an important immortal rather than a primary god (Y. Liu 2013, pp. 6–8). This raises questions as to how much Laozi was worshiped during the Eastern Han period.

During the Western Jin dynasty, historian Sima Biao 司馬彪 (ca.?–306), in *Xuhanshuzhi* 續漢書志 (The Records of Sequel to the History of Han), evaluated Emperor Huan of the Eastern Han dynasty as being fond of "immortal matters" and cited his worship of Laozi as evidence (B. Sima 1973, p. 3188). However, it is important to note that, although Emperor Huan's worship of Laozi was considered an "immortal matter", the representation of Laozi in this kind of ritual may differ from the immortal Laozi who has been revered for generations as a teacher to emperors and is equivalent to the Great Dao. In 166 A.D., during Emperor Huan's reign in Yanxi's ninth year 延熹九年, Xiang Kai advised him against such practices.

> I have heard that you have built a shrine in the palace to honor Huangdi, Laozi, and Buddha. The Dao emphasizes purity, emptiness, non-action, kindness towards life, and abhorrence of killing. They also advocate for restraining desires and avoiding excesses. However, your Majesty has not followed these principles and imposed unreasonable penalties on others. By deviating from their Dao, how can you benefit from them? It is said that Laozi traveled to barbarians' land and became Buddha who did not sleep under the same mulberry tree three times

> so as not to create feelings of kindness. This was the ultimate essence, Jing 精. When presented with a beautiful woman by a heavenly god, he saw through her external appearance and recognized her as just "a leather sack filled with blood". With this ability to "keep the One" (Shouyi), he achieved enlightenment. In contrast, your Majesty has collected beautiful women worldwide and indulged in refined foods and wines alone without restraint. So why do you still aspire to be like Huang-Lao?
>
> 又聞宮中立黃老、浮屠之祠。此道清虛，貴尚無為，好生惡殺，省欲去奢。今陛下嗜欲不去，殺罰過理，既乖其道，豈獲其祚哉！或言老子入夷狄為浮屠。浮屠不三宿桑下，不欲久生恩愛，精之至也。天神遺以好女，浮屠曰："此但革囊盛血。"遂不眄之。其守一如此，乃能成道。今陛下淫女豔婦，極天下之麗，甘肥飲美，單天下之味，柰何欲如黃老乎？
>
> (Fan 1973, pp. 1082–83)

After reading this passage, Xiang Kai comprehends that, while Huangdi, Laozi, and Futu possessed certain divine qualities—such as Futu's ability to endure the scrutiny of heavenly gods—they were primarily recognized as individuals who achieved enlightenment by pursuing clarity, inaction, and unity. They were not synonymous with the Dao.

Liu Yi's investigation of the "Laozimubei" 老子母碑 (The Stele of Laozi's Mother) came to a similar conclusion. The tablet was written by Wang Fu 王阜 in Changsha 长沙 during the time of Emperor Huan's reign, thereby representing the local officials' respect for the elderly. Liu Yi pointed out that later generations' claim that "Laozi is the Dao" in Wang Fu's "Shengmubei" 聖母碑 (The Stele of the Holy Mother) is not present in the original text of "Laozimubei". Similarly, Bian Shao 邊韶, a minister of Chen 陳, wrote "Laoziming" 老子銘 (The Inscription on Laozi) during the time of Emperor Huan of the Han but did not mention Laozi as the origin of the universe (Y. Liu 1998). This statement makes sense when combined with Xiang Kai's discussion; however, it ignores the differences in beliefs about Laozi among different groups if one believes that equating him with the Dao was not a concept people had during Han dynasty. Different classes may have had different ways of understanding the same belief subject. For example, some scholars have pointed out that Xiwangmu in the Han dynasty was regarded as an immortal goddess by upper-class believers and an omnipotent deity by ordinary believers (Wang and Wang 2022).

The case of Wang Fangping and his work "Laozi bianhua jing" shows that the Fangshi who actively promoted the deification of Laozi outside of the emperors and bureaucrats had already gone further down on their path to deify him throughout the Han dynasty. However, the Fangshi cannot represent the overall level regarding the deification of Laozi during the Han dynasty; moreover, under a background where the highest rulers respected elders highly, bureaucrats such as Wang Fu or Bian Shao might have deliberately elevated the status quo when describing Lao-tzu just to fit into current trends. Therefore, the actual position held by Laozi within the people's spiritual world during the Han dynasty might have been even lower.

The Han dynasty required a potent deity with extensive influence if they intended to create "huahu" based on their belief in deities and to incorporate the transformation of barbarians into Buddhists. However, despite Laozi's experience in Journey to the West, he was not regarded as the primary deity during Huangdi's advocacy for simplicity and detachment from desires and extravagance. Hence, it remains uncertain whether Laozi could convincingly fulfill the role of "converting the barbarians to Buddha".

In the Han dynasty's divine system, Xiwangmu (the Queen Mother of the West) might be a great deity with the ability to "convert barbarians into Buddhists". Although there is no reference to this saying, assuming and discussing it can be likened to drawing auxiliary lines in solving a geometry problem—it helps clarify certain viewpoints.

First of all, Xiwangmu is a deity closely related to the West. The belief in Xiwangmu is a very complex system. Riccardo Fracasso's research shows that Xiwangmu belonged to at least three different systems of gods before the Han dynasty (Fracasso 1988). However, the

most basic concept embodied in her name and reflected in the belief in Xiwangmu is her close connection with the West, which easily leads people to associate her with Western barbarians. Modern studies on early Buddhist statues also focus on this point, as Subai 宿白 points out: "Xiwangmu was transmitted through Kunlingzhique 昆陵之闕 (The gap in the Kunlun Mountains) in the western wilderness and connected with Western barbarians … Xiwangmu was transformed into a Buddhist statue and may have had some connection with the barbarians who worshipped Buddha at that time" (Su 2004). Of course, Wang Yu's 王煜 research shows that faith in Xiwangmu did not come from northwest China but was one of the core concepts of "Western Belief 西方信仰" indigenous to China reflecting ideas about ascending to heaven and becoming immortal (Y. Wang 2020). In the Han Dynasty, Xi Wangmu was not regarded as a "barbarian god". In summary, Xiwangmu living in the West does not mean she came from there as Buddha did.

Secondly, it is not difficult to add the "huahu" element to the belief in Xiwangmu due to the strong plasticity of her story. An example of this is seen in the appearance of Dongwanggong (the King Father of the East) 東王公. Chen Zhi 陳直 once pointed out that "during the Han Dynasty, Xiwangmu's stories were used as mirrors and painting themes, and Dongwanggong was added as a match" (Z. Chen 2006, p. 187). During this period, Xiwangmu's portrayal was almost all-encompassing and underwent multiple changes in both image and identity. This favorable condition allowed Xiwangmu to become a god in the religious environment of the Han dynasty with the ability to "convert barbarians into Buddha".

Finally, archaeological data from the Eastern Han dynasty suggests a connection between Xiwangmu, the Hu people, and Buddha. The stone shrine of Guo's tomb in Xiaoshan Hall, Shandong Province 山東孝山堂郭氏墓, which was built around the early Eastern Han dynasty, has six sets of images from top to bottom on its west wall. The middle position of the lower part of the first set is Xiwangmu and her attendants. The fourth set reflects the war between the Hu and Han with the title "Hu King 胡王" (Y. Jiang 2000, p. 23). In the middle–late period of the Eastern Han dynasty, many bronze mirrors with inscriptions or images related to Xiwangmu appeared. Some scholars named them as "Eastern Han chariot immortal image mirrors 漢車馬神仙畫像鏡", often with inscriptions such as "conquering barbarians 四夷服" and "exterminating Hu-Lu 胡虜珍滅" (S. Wang 2006, p. 1). In addition, a series of painted stone tombs were unearthed in Yinan County 沂南 at the end of Eastern Han dynasty in Shandong Province. On the octagonal pillar in the central room, there are decorations, including Xiwangmu and Buddhist figures holding hand seals (Zeng et al. 1956, pp. 26–27). It can be seen that there are close connections between Xiwangmu, the Hu people, and Buddha.

In fact, in the past study of "Laozi huahu", if any of the cases we have listed appear, scholars might consider it as evidence of "huahu". For example, when Laozi, the Hu people, and Buddha appear together in the Cliff Sculptures of Kongwang Mountain 孔望山摩崖造像, it would be considered related to "huahu" (R. Wang 2008). However, when the main character (Laozi) is replaced by Xiwangmu, who has higher divine power, there is no such saying as "Xiwangmu huahu". It can be assumed that, at the beginning of its formation and even for a period after its formation, "huahu" maintained a certain distance from the divine system of the Han dynasty.

The belief that Laozi was a deity is not the basis for "Laozi huahu". Instead, it was the historical legends of "huahu" that laid the foundation for his deification. When Buddhism entered China on a large scale, while Daoism integrated Chinese divine systems and ideas (including "huahu") to confront it, the deification of Laozi merged fully with "Laozi huahu", and Laozi was considered as a religious founder.

5. Conclusions

The academic research on "Laozi huahu" has been historically viewed through a religious lens, with some considering it as the precursor to Daoism or a response to Buddhism's influence on Chinese culture. Others see it as an entry point for Buddhism into

China. However, this article argues that the origins of "huahu" can be traced back to China's secular intellectual resources. Specifically, the theme of "heroes moving borders" during the Spring and Autumn period and Warring States period, along with Laozi's concept of being a teacher for various schools of thought, laid the foundation for what would become known as "huahu".[4]

Although it is impossible to determine the exact period when the concept of "Laozi huahu" was formed through research into the intellectual history, there are early indications based on historical materials. For instance, during the Han and Jin dynasties, people believed that foreign Chupu 樗蒲 (chaupar) was used by Boyang to calm his anxiety after entering Rong 戎 (Ouyang 1965, p. 1278). Additionally, rumors suggest that Laozi created Hujia 胡笳 (Hu's flute), an instrument used by barbarians during his travels to the west (Fan 1973, p. 1082). Li Daoyuan's 酈道元 (ca.?–527) recorded in his *Shuijingzhu* 水經註 (Commentary on the Water Classic) that there was the Boyang Valley 伯陽谷, Boyang Lake 伯陽水, Boyang City 伯陽城, and Boyang River 伯陽川 beside the Wei River 渭水. "It is said that Li Er 李耳 went westward from here and spread his name throughout these mountains and plains" (D. Li 2007, p. 430). Generally speaking, the story of "Laozi huahu" revolves around mountains and rivers that first caught people's attention. The Chupu and Hujia, which are particularly noteworthy, were likely spread during the Western Han dynasty due to deepening exchanges between the Central Plains and Western Regions. This suggests that "Laozi converting the barbarians" may have emerged during this time, with its original version potentially differing from what we know today. Still, its basic content should already have existed.

It seems highly plausible that there were versions of "Laozi converting the barbarians" circulating in oral accounts without any written version or being recorded in any existing books long before the theory appeared in the received literature. This period should be known as the "primitive" era of "Laozi huahu".

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Notes

1 According to *Shiji*, "Prime Minister Li Si 李斯 said: '… I suggest that all history books except Qin be burned. … Medicine, divination, and planting books are not destroyed. If anyone wants to learn the decrees, use the officials as teachers.' The emperor said: 'Allowed.'" 丞相李斯曰: "…… 臣請史官非秦記皆燒之。…… 所不去者，醫藥卜筮種樹之書。若欲有學法令，以吏為師。"制曰："可。" (Q. Sima 1963, pp. 254–55).

2 *Hanshu* says, "A Ting 亭 (pavilion) was set up every ten miles with a governor. Ten Ting form a Xiang 鄉 (township), each has managers, such as Sanlao 三老, Youzhi 有秩, Sefu 嗇夫, Youjiao 遊徼. Sanlao is treated as an official charge of education." 十里一亭，亭有长。十亭一乡，乡有三老、有秩、嗇夫、游徼。三老掌教化。(Ban 1964, p. 742).

3 In some atypical versions of the "Laozi huahu," Laozi's teaching influenced not only the Western people but also the four directions. The statue tablet of Xinyanzhi 辛延智, made in 548 (in the Western Wei Dynasty 西魏), says Laozi enlightened and taught the barbarians in the south, west, north, and east (Shaan Xi Yao Xian Yao Wang Shan Bo Wu Guan et al. 1996, p. 138).

4 The factors that led to their integration are difficult to determine. However, according to historical records, besides Laozi converting "Hu", there is also a saying that Laozi entered "Rong 戎". For example, Zhang Hua 張華 (232–300) states: "Laozi entered the western Rong and made Chupu 樗蒲" 老子入西戎，造樗蒲 (F. Li 1960, p. 3219b). which suggests that "Laozi entering Rong" may be the blueprint for "Laozi transforming Hu." Especially considering that during the Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States period, "Rong" could refer to Qin State. As recorded in *Guanzi* 管子 (Master Guan Zhong): Qihuangong 齊桓公 (Duke Huan of Qi; r. 685–643 B.C.E.) went westward, conquering Bai Di 白狄 territory until he reached Xihe 西河 … and then Qin Rong began following him 西征，攘白狄之地，遂至於西河 …… 而秦戎始從" (X. Li 2004, p. 425). Moreover, due to Qin's relatively backward culture at this time, the six states viewed it as barbarians during the Warring States period, as stated by *Shiji*:

"Qin was initially a small country far away from others; they were treated like barbarians 秦始小國僻遠，諸夏賓之，比於戎翟" (Q. Sima 1963, p. 685). Therefore, the Chu state waged war against Qin for long periods, with Laozi traveling westward towards Qin before enlightening them with his teachings, which was a cultural offensive against Qin. The short-lived Qin dynasty fell and was replaced by the Han dynasty, under which "Laozi teaching Qin" became popular during the "criticizing Qin" trend at the beginning of the Han Dynasty due to its strong satirical meaning. Furthermore, Laozi passed through Hangu Pass when he left Zhou Dynasty, an important passageway from the Six Kingdoms to Qin State, suggesting that there may be a connection between Laozi's journey westward and his relationship with Qin. In addition, in the previously mentioned "Laozi bianhua jing", it is said that Laozi served as an emperor's teacher for generations with one line stating: "During the time of Qin State, he was called Jian Shuzi". This may also be related to "Laozi teaching Qin". If on top of "teaching Qin", Laozi continued to teach and govern towards the West, then it would have reached into territories inhabited by Western barbarians where converting into Hu-people could naturally occur.

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Gender Trouble in the Early Lingbao Scriptures

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Abstract: The early Lingbao scriptures incorporate pluralistic gender discourses. On the one hand, the early Lingbao scriptures accept the social gender system of "differences between men and women" as the decision of all deities, and incorporate the "chastity" virtue of women advocated by Confucianism. The auspiciousness of giving birth to a boy and the masculine perspective of the Daoist discipline are not immune to correlative sexism. On the other hand, the early Lingbao scriptures actively borrow the Buddhist individualized gender, take the term "transforming a female into a male" as one of the "eight difficult situations" and the merit of worshipping the Daoist scriptures and illustrate the cultivated journey of women beyond gender in the stories of past actions, in an attempt to overcome the correlative sexism caused by the dominant gender system. The Dao unifies the concept of correlative gender and the concept of individualized gender, makes men and women equal objects of teachings, gives the perfected transcendent the freedom to choose gender, and integrates family ethics and individual transcendence with the images of a Daoist wife. The early Lingbao scriptures echo the Daoist principle of softness and femininity, use gender as an opportunity for Daoist cultivation, and explore possible ways to resolve gender trouble.

Keywords: the early Lingbao scriptures; gender; female; equality; Daoist cultivation

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1. Introduction

Querying the meaning of "gender" in religious texts is a (post-)modern way of asking questions with which a vast majority of ancient religious texts are not always in conversation. However, this does not deny the existence of gender-specific discourses in ancient religious texts, especially with regard to the situation of women in classical doctrines, religious organizations, and the life of faith (Li 1994). These gender discourses are deeply embedded in religious texts and cannot simply be separated out from other discourses. Therefore, the "gender-critical turn" is necessary and efficient to analyze the notions of gender that suffuse all religious worlds and experiences (King 2005, p. 8). As socio-cultural constructs, gender discourses demonstrate gender-based power relations and raise questions of gender justice under the scrutiny of modernity.

Based on the gender-critical framework, the process of constructing the gender concepts in Daoist texts is gradually revealed. The concepts of gender are presented here in three faces. The first is the original force of cosmogony, which is expressed in Daoist worship of the goddesses and female immortals as the representatives of the cosmic force of "yin 陰" (Schafer 1973; Cahill 1993, 2006). The second is the role of social and cultural activities, which is expressed in the writings of the group of Daoist priestesses and their legendary experiences (Chao 2008; Jia 2018). The third is the function of the body as the field of sexual and reproductive practices, which is expressed in Daoist sexual practices (Gulik 1961; Robinet 1988; Wile 1992) and the special practices of women's inner alchemy (Despeux 1990; Valussi 2003). These gender concepts are continually produced, interpreted, and identified in the classics, organizational systems, and cultivated practices of Daoism.

Among the world religions, Daoism is one of the few that are considered to be gender-sensitive (Y. Wang 1995), with its goddess worship and feminine cultivation revealing the "soft and quiet consciousness" that is critical and corrective to masculine hegemony

(Zhan 2010, p. 158). However, the gender discourses in Daoism are not uniform, but rather present a complex interplay of pluralistic discourses. On the one hand, Daoism understands gender relations in terms of Dao or the Way constituted by the successive mutual movement of "yin" and "yang 陽" and believes that the two genders are interdependent and complementary rather than opposed to each other. Actually, Daoism inherits Laozi's idea of valuing softness and holding on to femininity and affirms the importance of the principle of softness and femininity in the universe and life (X. Liu 2001). On the other hand, the Daoist organizational system and ethical norms subscribe to the male-dominated social gender system, with male Daoist priests having absolute advantages in power, prestige, and wealth, while women's own voices are rarely heard in historical writings (Du 1988, p. 310; Despeux and Kohn 2003, p. 5; Cahill 2003).

The ambivalent attitude of Daoism towards gender is even more ambiguous in the early Lingbao 靈寶 (Numinous Treasure) scriptures, which were recorded in Lu Xiujing's 陸修靜 (406–477 C.E.) catalog of Lingbao scriptures, quoted in the Dunhuang manuscripts Pelliot chinois 2861.2 and Pelliot chinois 2256 (Y. Liu 2009). Lu Xiujing divided the early Lingbao scriptures into two parts: part A is the former scriptures taught by Yuanshi Tianzun 元始天尊 (Celestial Worthy of Primordial Commencement) and part B is the new scriptures received from Ge Xiangong 葛仙公 (Duke Transcendent Ge). The texts of the early Lingbao scriptures are mainly included in the Dongxuan 洞玄 (the Cavern Penetrating Mystery) division of the *Dao zang* 道藏 (Daoist Canon), and some of them are found only in Dunhuang manuscripts. Although there is ongoing controversy about the date of their composition, most of them are in the late 4th to early 5th century, and some may be earlier or later (Y. Liu 2018, pp. 325–38).

In contrast to the Shangqing 上清 (Highest Clarity) movement, the early Lingbao scriptures do not give much importance to goddesses and female immortals, and male deities such as Yuanshi Tianzun, Ge Xiangong, Tianhuang Zhenren 天皇真人 (Perfected of Heaven Emperor), and Taiji Zhenren 太極真人 (Perfected of Great Ultimate) become the main subjects of the narrative, which reveals the prevailing gender concept of the male-dominated society. While incorporating the Buddhist content, the early Lingbao scriptures also borrow from the Buddhist doctrine of "transforming a female into a male", which is controversial, either as a misogynistic attitude from the Indian tradition (Bokenkamp 1983, p. 473) or as a break with traditional Confucian family ethics (Tsuzuki 2010). It is because of the convergence of these multiple discourses that the gender discourses in the early Lingbao scriptures contain a hermeneutical tension that has not received sufficient attention.

This paper attempts to sort out the gender discourses in the early Lingbao scriptures, based on the social and cultural contexts of the Six dynasties period, examines the correlative sexism and individualized gender equality revealed by the pluralistic gender discourses, illustrates the possible ways to overcome the contradiction between sexism and gender equality through Daoist cultivation, and reflects on the inspiration they bring to the resolution of gender trouble.

2. The Differences between Men and Women

2.1. Traditional Chinese Gender System

The main context for the gender discourses in the early Lingbao scriptures is the traditional Chinese social gender system. Since the Duke of Zhou made ritual proprieties and music, the differences between men and women had been reinforced compared to previous generations (G. Wang 1959, pp. 473–74). As a social discipline to establish order, the ritual proprieties of the Zhou dynasty were based on the division of labour and organization between men and women. It resulted in a gender system in which men were dominant and women were subordinate, men were superior and women were inferior, men were rigid and women were soft, and men were in charge of external affairs and women were in charge of internal affairs, and patriarchal family lineages were maintained from generation to generation through ancestor worship and filial piety ethics (Rosenlee 2006, pp. 123–27; Du and Wang 2012, p. 79). The so-called "differences between men and

women" are not a division of the two genders into separate or even dual individuals, but rather an understanding of the distinction between men and women in the context of the family relationship entered into by marriage, where their respective existence is shaped by their identities within the family and does not precede or transcend the ritual life of the family (Barlow 2004, p. 42).

Confucianism since the pre-Qin dynasties had inherited and carried forward the gender system of the ritual proprieties of the Zhou dynasty, which established the mainstream concept of gender in ancient Chinese society. In explaining the meaning of marriage, the *Book of Rites* makes the "differences between men and women" the basis for the "appropriateness of husband and wife", the "kinship of father and son", and the "justice of ruler and minister" (Ruan 2009, p. 3648).

In this context, Daoism, although initially characterized as non-mainstream and possibly even antagonistic to the mainstream, gradually succumbed to mainstream ideology and ethics after the period of the Six dynasties. It is evident from the disappearance of the "ritual of transmission" of sexual cultivation in the early Tianshi 天師 (Celestial Masters) movement (Ge 2003, pp. 67–68). In the face of the mainstream gender concept advocated by Confucianism, the early Lingbao scriptures also show its "submission", no longer in obvious conflict with it, and even defend and reinforce the "differences between men and women" from a Daoist standpoint.

2.2. Daoist Explanation of the Gender System

The early Lingbao scriptures regard the "differences between men and women" as the destiny of the individual at birth, ordained by the deities. As a sociocultural construction, although the gender system has been historically grounded by the sage, the Duke of Zhou, it is still not immune to the suspicion of being artificial and may lead to criticism. For this reason, Confucianism relied on the *Book of Changes* to construct the moral metaphysics, explaining a priori basis for the "differences between men and women" in terms of "yin-yang" and "qian 乾 (heaven)-kun 坤 (earth)". In the "Appended Remarks part I" of the *Book of Changes*, it is said that "the way of qian constitutes the male, while the way of kun constitutes the female", and the fixed relationship between qian and kun illustrates the ethical norms and behavioural qualities of the two genders, such as superiority and inferiority, nobility and humility, activity and tranquillity, and hardness and softness (Ruan 2009, pp. 156–57). This metaphysical interpretation is more abstract and does not address how the gender of individual existence is specified.

Daoism not only brings into play a cosmology of the original material force but also visualizes the original material force as deities with personal characteristics. Because everything in the world is created by the original material force, including human beings, deities govern the existence of the individual, including his or her gender. It is said as follows in the *Dongxuan lingbao ziran jiutian shengshen zhang jing* 洞玄靈寶自然九天生神章經 (referred to as *DLZJSZJ*):

> "When one becomes an embryo, the three origins nourish it and the nine types of material force are formed into a body. In the ninth month, the deities are fully distributed, the material force in the body is full and it has the ability to make sounds. The deities of the nine heavens celebrate it. The deity Taiyi 太一 (Great One) is in charge of the talisman, the deity Dijun 帝君 (Imperial Lord) examines its destiny, the deity Zhulu 主錄 (Records Officer) writes its document, the deity Siming 司命 (Longevity) determines its life span, the deities Wudi 五帝 (Five Emperors) supervise its birth, the deity Shengmu 聖母 (Holy Mother) guards the delivery room, and all the deities of the three worlds, from heaven to earth, guard against it. The deity Jiutian Sima 九天司馬 (Governor of the Nine Heavens) faces east at the court and reads nine times the 'Treasurable Petition about the Birth of the Deities from the Nine Heavens'. If it is male, all the deities sing of respect; if it is female, all the deities sing of acceptance. If it is male, the deity Siming is serious to permit; if it is female, the deity Siming is serious to obey.

> Therefore, one is born. If the deity Jiutian Sima does not give the petition, and if the deities do not sing of respect or permission, one will not be born after all." (DZ.318:5.843c)[1]

In explaining Laozi's statement that "the three produced all things", *DLZJSZJ* transformed the Dao into the "three origins" that is the origin of chaotic non-being, the origin of red mixed non-being, and the origin of silently penetrating. The "three origins" are each divided into the three types of material force called "Xuan 玄" (mystery), "Yuan 元" (element), and "Shi 始" (beginning), making a total of nine types of material force. They make up all things in heaven and earth (DZ.318:5.843b). Therefore, the conception and eventual birth of a human being is the result of the nurturing of the three origins and nine types of material force. After nine months of gestation, the deities in the body are connected to the deities of the nine heavens. A similar statement is found in the *Shangqing jiudan shanghua taijing zhongji jing* 上清九丹上化胎精中記經, "Human being models itself after heaven and earth, and the material force models itself after nature. The material force of nature is the essence of the nine heavens, which is transformed into the human body and nurtures the embryo. In the ninth month, the material force of the nine heavens is full, and in the tenth month, it is born" (DZ.1382:34.82a).

In *DLZJSZJ*, the conception of a baby is a sacred process, which is only possible by the order of all the deities. Taiyi, Dijun, Zhulu, and Siming are in charge of holding, examining, and writing the talisman and determining its destiny. When a baby is born at full term, Wudi and Shengmu guard it kindly. The most important part of the birth process is the reading of the "Treasurable Petition about the Birth of the Deities from the Nine Heavens" by the Jiutian Sima, which is a necessary process for all births. After this, gender differences begin to emerge: for male births, all the deities sing of respect and Siming is serious to permit; for female births, all the deities sing of acceptance and Siming is serious to obey. Originally, respect, permission, acceptance, and obedience are just the moral qualities of different behaviours and attitudes, but they become gender norms in the context of "differences between men and women".

According to the commentary of Wang Xichao 王希巢 in the Southern Song dynasty, the difference between men and women in terms of superiority and inferiority as shown in *DLZJSZJ* is the same as the distinction between "playing jades" and "playing spindles" in the poem "Limpid Stream" of the *Book of Songs* (DZ.397:6.430a; Ruan 2009, pp. 937–38). The "differences between men and women" are already established by all deities at the time of birth and are therefore reinforced by the sanctity accorded to them.

2.3. Chastity as a Female Virtue

In the early Lingbao scriptures, "chastity" is recognized as the most important moral virtue for women. When constructing its own discipline, Daoism incorporated the ethical norms of Confucianism and reinforced them through the "teachings of the Spiritual Way" (Wu 2006, p. 183). There are fourteen norms of conduct corresponding to different social identities, including a ruler, a minister, a father, a son, a husband, a wife, an elder brother, a younger brother, a teacher, a friend, a savage, a Daoist priest, a foreigner, and a slave, in the *Taiji Zuo Xiangong qingwen jing* 太極左仙公請問經 (referred to as *TZXQJ*)[2] vol.1 and the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhihui zuigen shangpin dajie jing* 太上洞玄靈寶智慧罪根上品大戒經 (referred to as *TDLZZSDJ*)[3] vol.1. Among them, the ethical norm used to teach a wife is chastity to her husband.

This concept of chastity is strongly advocated by Confucianism. For example, a chaste woman is considered to be one of the manifestations of ritual proprieties in the "Four Rules of Mourning Dress" of the *Book of Rites* (Ruan 2009, p. 3682); the virtues of a wife are chastity and obedience according to Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 (127–200 C.E.) commentary on the "Meaning of Marriage" of the *Book of Rites* (Ruan 2009, p. 3650); in the *Commandments to Women*, Ban Zhao 班昭 said that to be leisurely, to be quiet, to be chaste, to be neat, to abstain from what is shameful, to be disciplined in action and quietness, are the virtues of a woman (Fan 1965, p. 2789).

Daoism in the Han dynasty also embraced these ethical norms of Confucianism. For example, a wife's chastity is considered a virtue for a married woman in Heshang Gong's 河上公 *Chapters and Verses of Laozi* (Heshang Gong 1993, p. 207), Yan Zun's 嚴遵 *Tenet of Laozi* (Yan 1994, p. 53), and the *Orders of the Great Daoists* in the early Tianshi movement (DZ.789:18.236c). It is therefore obvious that the women's virtue of chastity in the early Lingbao scriptures reflects the dominant social ideology at that time.

2.4. Correlative Sexism

The traditional Chinese concept of gender distinguishes between men and women in an interdependent and complementary association of "yin" and "yang", but this association does not mean that men and women are necessarily equal to each other. On the contrary, the two genders in the association can be trapped in a hierarchy in which the male occupies a dominant, preferred, and powerful position, while the female is in a subordinate, secondary, and inferior position. It is known as "correlative sexism" (Hall and Ames 2000). When the early Lingbao scriptures accept the traditional gender concept, sexism implicit in it is also inevitable, particularly in the following two points.

Firstly, the birth of a male is regarded as an auspicious event in the early Lingbao scriptures. According to the *Yuanshi wulao chishu yupian zhenwen tianshu jing* 元始五老赤書玉篇真文天書經 (referred to as *YWCYZTJ*) vol.1, when Yuanshi Tianzun opened the "Texts of Five Original Lords Written in Cinnabar on Jade", various auspicious events arose, including twelve miraculous signs in heaven and twenty-four efficacious correspondences on earth; the twentieth correspondence was that all pregnant women in the world gave birth to boys (DZ.22:1.775b). It reflects the fact that under the patriarchal gender system, only males were allowed to inherit the lineage and wealth of the paternal family, and having boys became a common desire to make the family flourish.

From the pre-Qin dynasties to the Northern and Southern Dynasties, the custom of begging for a son was very prevalent. For example, the daylily that was known as "the flower for boys" was popularly worn by married women (Zhang and Chen 2010, p. 404); there was a kind of "witchcraft of changing the fetus" in order to determine the gender of the fetus by means of magic (Li 2008, pp. 44–46). In contrast, a woman became a member of her husband's family after she got married, so she was born without happiness and love, and was not valued by her father's family as Fu Xuan 傅玄 (217–278 C.E.) said in his poem "Bitter Appearance" in the Western Jin dynasty (Lu 1983, p. 555). The auspicious events in the early Lingbao scriptures are the result of conformity to the dominant social preference for men over women.

Secondly, the Daoist discipline in the early Lingbao scriptures is from an obvious masculine perspective. Among the various kinds of "Ten Commandments", the third commandment is not to commit adultery against other wives and not to covet smooth skin in the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao benxing suyuan jing* 太上洞玄靈寶本行宿緣經 (referred to as TDLBSJ, DZ.1114:24.666c)[4] and *TDLZZSDJ* vol.1 (DZ.457:6.887b), while the second commandment is not to commit adultery against other women in the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhihui dingzhi tongwei jing* 太上洞玄靈寶智慧定志通微經 (referred to as *TDLZDTJ*)[5]. There are 180 commandments in the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao sanyuan pinjie gongde qingzhong jing* 太上洞玄靈寶三元品戒功德輕重經[6], of which the eightieth is "the sin of coveting other women" and the ninety-eighth is "the sin of walking or talking alone with women" (DZ.456:6.881a–b). Similar commandments are also found in the "180 commandments taught by Lord Lao" of Tianshi movement (DZ.786:18.219a–221b). These commandments all have men as the subject of the Daoist discipline, while women are merely the victimized object of the crimes.

Although influenced by Buddhist monastic discipline, the commandment of sexual misconduct is also related to ancient Chinese law. From the Warring States to the Jin dynasty, the punishment for sexual misconduct became increasingly harsh and was mainly reserved for male offenders (Zhao 2014, p. 129). The stone inscriptions erected by Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇 (259–210 B.C.E.) in Kuaiji 會稽 contained the following clause: "Prevent

the separation of internal and external, forbid promiscuity, and maintain chastity and honesty between men and women. If a husband becomes a boar in another family, it is not a crime to kill him" (Sima 1982, p. 262), in which a "boar" means that a man who has a wife commits adultery against another man's wife. The crimes of sexual misconduct in the Han dynasty were all committed by men, including "adultery", "rape", "adultery during mourning", and "rape of a subordinate's wife" (Cheng 2010, pp. 146–47). It was also the case in the Jin dynasty, where, for example, "the decree on adultery with aunts was aggravated by the death penalty in the downtown area and adultery with a widow was punishable by three years" (Fang 1974, p. 927).

The masculine perspective of the Daoist discipline in the early Lingbao scriptures is similar, and while it serves to protect women, it also suggests that women do not have the same full social subject identity as men, but rather implies the sexism of male dominance and female subordination.

3. Transforming a Female into a Male

The early Lingbao scriptures are the focus of research on Buddho-Daoism (Zürcher 1980; Bokenkamp 1983). Unlike the passive acceptance of the Confucian gender concept, the early Lingbao scriptures actively incorporate the Buddhist gender concept in an attempt to overcome the correlative sexism caused by the dominant gender system, which advocates the "differences between men and women".

In contrast to the concept of correlative gender in the complementary association of "yin" and "yang", Buddhism does not locate gender solely in the context of family relationships, but rather in the perspective of the individual, treating men and women as distinct from each other on the basis of a dual classification: the two genders are represented physically as male or female genitalia, psychologically as the "Oedipus complex" of falling in love with mother or father, while the difference in social identities is based on the physical and psychological differences between the two genders (Lu 2022). This concept of individualized gender does not deny the interaction between men and women but argues that the differences in individual existence lead to the formation of interaction. Therefore, Buddhism does not focus on the division and organization of the two genders but rather emphasizes the impact of the individual's physical and mental behavioural activities on themselves as gendered beings.

Under the influence of the Buddhist concept of gender, the early Lingbao scriptures are no longer confined to the model in which one of the two genders defines the other under the "differences between men and women", but focus on the physical experience and inner state of the individual. In particular, the early Lingbao scriptures borrow from the Buddhist doctrine of "transforming a female into a male", echo the Daoist tradition of freedom of individuality and the principle of softness and femininity, and explore the possible ways of becoming a perfected transcendent through Daoist cultivation.

3.1. Gender Transformation in the Chinese Tradition

Although "transforming a female into a male" was recorded before Buddhism was introduced to China, it was only a special case rather than a mainstream concept. Under the traditional Chinese gender system, the two genders follow the ethical norms of interdependence and complementarity; each person identifies with his or her own gender and actively performs his or her respective duties, which makes it possible to realize the value of life and the perfection of humanity. The boundary between men and women becomes a gap that need not and cannot be crossed, and the masculinity of women and the femininity of men are both seen as a state of variations, anomalies, and exceptions. In the "Meaning of Music" of the *Book of Rites*, it is said that if men and women are not distinguished, chaos will arise, as are the differences between heaven and earth (Ruan 2009, p. 3320).

Therefore, in the canonical texts from the pre-Qin dynasties onwards, the transformation of a woman into a man was a very special phenomenon and was regarded as a portent for a change of dynasty. For example, in "Condemnation of War", Mozi said that in the

time of the last emperor of the Shang dynasty, there was a woman who became a man (Sun 2001, p. 150). In the *New Version of the Chronology on Bamboo Scrolls*, it is said that in the forty-second year of the reign of Emperor Xin 帝辛, Ji Fa 姬發 who was the first emperor of the Zhou dynasty obtained the Book written in cinnabar from Lü Shang 呂尚, and a woman was transformed into a man (G. Wang 2021, p. 90). In the *Records of the Historian*, it is said that there was a woman who became a man in the thirteenth year of the King Xiang of the Wei Kingdoms 魏襄王 (Sima 1982, p. 1849). According to the *Book of the Song Dynasty* and the *Book of the Jin Dynasty*, in the years 291–299 C.E. of the Jin dynasty, there was a girl named Zhou Shining 周世寧 living in Anfeng 安豐 County who gradually became a man from the age of eight, and her gender was not determined until she was 17 to 18 years old (Shen 1974, p. 1005; Fang 1974, p. 907).

There were two explanations for this particular phenomenon according to the "Record of Five Agents" of the *Book of the Han Dynasty* (Ban 1962, p. 1472). One explanation came from Jing Fang's 京房 (77–37 B.C.E.) interpretation of the *Book of Changes*, which suggested that the transformation of a woman into a man is a sign of the flourishing of "yin", which will lead to a lowly man becoming a king; the transformation of a man into a woman is a sign of the triumph of "yin", which will lead to the downfall of the dynasty. Another explanation suggested that the transformation of a man into a woman is the result of the abuse of castration and the transformation of a woman into a man is the result of the domination of the female ruler.

In addition, "transforming a female into a male" is also a special kind of witchcraft. For example, in the *Book of the Later Han Dynasty* and the *Book of Searching Deities*, Xu Deng 徐登, a native of Min 閩, was good at witchcraft and was originally a woman, but was transformed into a man (Fan 1965, p. 2741; Gan 2019, p. 44). This kind of witchcraft is also found in the early Lingbao scriptures. In *YWCYZTJ*, there is a talisman of the arising of the very white "yang" from the nine heavens, which transforms a woman into a man after she swallows it; there is also a talisman of the arising of the very black "yin" from the three heavens, which transforms a man into a woman after he swallows it (DZ.22:1.788c–789a). These two talismans may be related to the talisman of the arising of the very profound "yang" from the three heavens and the talisman of the arising of the very profound "yin" from the three heavens in the *Taishang lingbao wufu xu* 太上靈寶五符序 vol.3 (DZ.388:6.339c–340a), which are used to the cultivation of the metamorphosis and deliverance from the corpse and can transform the bodies of male and female with the transcendental material force of "yin" and "yang". In the context of the correlative gender, "transforming a female into a male" is never the right way to solve gender trouble.

3.2. Gender Transformation as One Difficult Situation

"Transforming a female into a male" in early Lingbao scriptures originated in Buddhism and was considered a rare event in the process of cultivation. There are "eight difficult situations", i.e., eight conditions that are very difficult to achieve, the first of which is "the difficult situation of being born as a human being and transforming a woman into a man for nobles, Daoist priests and commoners" in the *Taishang lingbao weiyi dongxuan zhenyi ziran jingjue* 太上靈寶威儀洞玄真一自然經訣 (referred to as *TLWDZZJ*)[7].

It is clear from the textual comparison that the "eight difficult situations" in early Lingbao scriptures are related to the Buddhist text, the *Sūtra of Forty-Two Sections* (T.784:17.723c25–29)[8]. In particular, "transforming a female into a male" is an entry unique to the "eight difficult situations" of the *Sūtra of Forty-Two Sections*, and is not found in the "nine difficult situations" of the *Compendium on the Six Perfections* (translated by Kang Senghui 康僧會 [?–280 C.E.], T.152:3.16c27–17a2), nor in the "eight inopportune moments" (aṭṭha akkhaṇā) of the three *Āgama*[9]. According to historical records, one version of the *Sūtra of Forty-Two Sections* was translated by Zhi Qian 支謙[10], the famous Buddhist translator living in the Kingdom of Wu during the Three Kingdoms period, and Huijiao 慧皎 (497–554 C.E.) of the Liang dynasty claimed that the *Sūtra of Forty-Two Sections* had spread to the area east of the Yangtze River in his *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (T.2059:50.323a14–15). In addition,

the early Lingbao scriptures were heavily influenced by Buddhism in the area east of the Yangtze River (Kamitsuka 1998), so the "eight difficult situations" of *TLWDZZJ* are likely a reference to the *Sūtra of Forty-Two Sections*.

"Transforming a female into a male" is originally not a misogynistic attitude from the Indian Brahminical tradition, but a Buddhist method of liberation from the physical and mental obstacles faced by women in reality. Under the concept of individualized gender, the dual differences between men and women in terms of physical, psychological, and social identities are easily opposed to each other, leading to further entanglement, oppression, and resistance between the two genders. According to Buddhism, gender antagonism is rooted in the individual's inability to understand the truth of his or her own existence and is always trapped in a false attachment to dualities such as the self and the other; gender antagonism also brings mental affliction and defilement, which makes gender an obstacle to the spiritual cultivation of liberation. "Transforming a female into a male" does not mean endorsing sexism and masculine hegemony, but rather transcending the dichotomy of gender differences with emptiness so that women are no longer objects of male desire and discover the way to perfection through truthful enlightenment of women themselves (Shi 2015, p. 106).

Influenced by this, the early Lingbao scriptures focus on the various dilemmas faced by female cultivation from the physical, mental, family, and social perspectives, and explores the possibility of escaping the confines of gender identity.

3.3. Women's Wishes and Merits for Daoist Cultivation

In the early Lingbao scriptures, "transforming a female into a male" is regarded as a merit for women who believe in the Daoist scriptures and worship the Dao. It is said in *TZXQJ* vol.1 that if one receives and worships the Lingbao scriptures, one obtains various meritorious rewards according to different prior wishes. Three of them relate to women's wishes for Daoist cultivation, i.e., "to transform into a man, chant the scriptures and think of the immortal way", "to sit upright in a secluded room, chant the most profound scriptures and think of the immortal way", and "to disobey what is forced to do, elevate the extremely sincere heart and think of the immortal way" (ZDZ.13:4.120c). It is therefore evident that freedom from the bondage of gender identity under the dichotomy of men and women is the primary goal of women in the practice of Daoist cultivation.

This wish is also found in the other early Lingbao scriptures of the new scriptures received from Ge Xiangong. In *TDLBSJ*, the meritorious reward of cultivation that corresponds to the woman's prior wishes is the transformation of a woman into a man, with a beautiful face and excellent intelligence (DZ.1114:24.666b); in the *Taishang xuanyi zhenren shuo miaotong zhuanshen ruding jing* 太上玄一真人說妙通轉神入定經, it is said that the woman, relaxed and quiet, contemplates this scripture and gains the transformation of her body into a man (DZ.347:6.174c); in the *Shangqing taiji yinzhu yujing baojue* 上清太極隱注玉經寶訣 (referred to as *STYYB*), the result of practicing the wonderful things described in the scripture includes transforming a female into a male (DZ.425:6.645a); in *TLWDZZJ*, the blessings of worshipping the Lingbao scriptures include the transformation of women into men and the divine great wisdom received by women (ZDZ.10:4.98b).

The combination of belief in the Daoist scriptures and the wish to transform the female into a male is probably derived from Zhi Qian's translation of the *Sūtra of the Eight Lucky and Spiritual Mantras*: "A woman who believes in this sūtra, respectfully and discreetly without flattery, gives up her female body to become a man, and is wise and often resourceful . . . " (T.427:14.72c24–25). The sūtra was very popular at that time and was also well-known to Daoists. It is advocated in *TLWDZZJ* that the reading of Buddhist scriptures, such as the *Spiritual Mantra*s, the *Large Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*, the *Small Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*, the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*, the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Sūtra of Wonderful Treasure*, the *Samādhi Sūtra* (ZDZ.10:4.97b). Among them, the "*Spiritual Mantra*s" is presumably Zhi Qian's *Sūtra of the Eight Lucky and Spiritual Mantra*s (C. Wang 2002, p. 55). Inspired by the Buddhist texts,

the early Lingbao scriptures called on female devotees to pursue freedom and become a perfected transcendent by "transforming a female into a male".

3.4. Gender Transformation in the Stories of Past Actions

The journey from a woman to a man is vividly illustrated in the Daoist stories of past actions. Influenced by the Buddhist concept of reincarnation (saṃsāra), the Chinese word "lunzhuan 輪轉" (cycling) is frequently used in the early Lingbao scriptures to describe the cycle of life and death and the path to immortality through the accumulation of good deeds in previous lives (Bokenkamp 2007, pp. 162–63). At the same time, the early Lingbao scriptures also borrow the Buddhist concept of past actions (pūrva-parikarman) and the form of the stories of the Buddha's previous lives (jātaka), which expand the stories of the immortals' past lives as Daoist practitioners, including the cultivated journey of transformation from a woman to a man during the process of cycling.

In the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao chishu yujue miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶赤書玉訣妙經 (referred to as *TDLCYM*)[11] vol.2, it is said that Aqiuceng 阿丘曾, the daughter of Wang Fudu 王福度, climbed the wall to see the Daoist perfected and made a vow to enter the cycle of life and death as soon as possible and transform into a male body, in the hope of ascending to immortality after ten thousand Kalpa; later, she was hindered by the demon king and resolutely plunged into the fire; then her body jumped into the air as it were, and in a moment it was seen that her female body transformed into a man and came directly to the Dao (DZ.352:6.194b–c). This story is derived from Zhi Qian's translation of the *Sūtra of the Dragon-Generosity Girl* (T.557:14.909c6–910a24; Bokenkamp 1983, pp. 474–75). The major discrepancies between the two stories are mainly in two places. Firstly, the reason for the demon king's obstruction: in the *Sūtra of the Dragon-Generosity Girl*, it is "five obstacles for women", while in *TDLCYM*, it is the father's order for his daughter to get married; secondly, the way of transforming the body: in the *Sūtra of the Dragon-Generosity Girl*, it is throwing oneself downstairs, while in *TDLCYM*, it is burning the body. In the story of Aqiuceng, the demon king represents the bondage of women to the Confucian gender ethics that advocates "three kinds of obedience", i.e., obeying the father before marriage, obeying the husband after marriage, and obeying the son after the husband's death (Ruan 2009, p. 2394). However, Aqiuceng did not succumb to her fate as a woman, nor was she deluded by the demon king. Her perception of her femininity is that she was unfortunate in her previous lives and did not have sufficient conditions and merits, which resulted in her becoming a woman (DZ.352:6.194c). Therefore, she hoped to seize the opportunity of meeting Yuanshi Tianzun to begin her journey of Daoist cultivation and to free herself from the constraints of her gender identity by accumulating individual merits.

In addition, it is also briefly mentioned in *TDLCYM* that Nanji Zunshen 南極尊神 (Worthy Deity of Southern Extremities), whom Aqiuceng once studied under, was also a woman in the past and transformed into a male body during the Fire Kalpa (DZ.352:6.195a).

The stories of "transforming a female into a male" later developed into a type of scripture on the past actions of deities, and provided guidance for women in Daoist cultivation, in the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhenwen duren benxing miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶真文度人本行妙經 (referred to as *TDLZDBM*)[12]. The story of Aqiuceng has been changed to the past actions of Chiming Tiandi 赤明天帝 (Red Bright Celestial Emperor, DZ.1138:25.32c–33b, DZ.1032:22.692c–693b). And the story of Nanji Zunshen has been further detailed: in the past, Nanji Zunshen was born as Huang Duming 皇度明, the daughter of King Wan of the Kingdom Yanfuli 閻浮黎國宛王, but her quest for the immortals was restricted by the palace; after her father building a high platform for her to perch on, she touched the heavens and then entered into the womb of Primal Sovereign; after a single Kalpa, she was reborn as a male, and eventually became the supreme spirit of Southern Extremities (DZ.1138:25.32b–c, DZ.1032:22.693b–c).

Additionally, the stories of Qingling Shilaojun 青靈始老君 (Original Ancient Lord of the Green Numina) and Haoling Huanglaojun 皓靈皇老君 (Illustrious Ancient Lord of the White Numina) also include the transformation of a woman into a man in the cultivated

process of previous lives. In the past, Qingling Shilaojun was born as a girl, Hong Natai 洪那臺, because of the lust for beauty, and lamented the fact that a woman confined to the secluded room could not attain the Dao; when climbed the wall and looked around, she saw the Yuanshi Tianzun descending with many deities, wished for nirvana to become a man, and plunged from the wall into the sea; then she was caught by the five-coloured flying dragon, transformed into a man in the air, flew to the front of the Dao and eventually became the supreme deity after the Fire Kalpa (DZ.1138:25.30a–c, DZ.1032:22.687b–c). In the past, Haoling Huanglaojun was named Huang Fei 皇妃, the daughter of the numinous phoenix and the princess of the Kingdom Weiluo 衛羅國; after seeing the Yuanshi Tianzun descending through a mirror-like sun, she climbed the sunlit platform, but suffered from the constraints of the palace; then she was lifted by the divine phoenix to the Yuanshi Tianzun and studied with the Jintai Wangmu 金臺王母 (Queen Mother of Golden Tower); after three hundred years, she entered into the womb of a woman surnamed Li 李氏 and was reborn as a male named Shangjin Richang 上金日昌 (DZ.1138:25.31b–32a, DZ.1032:22.688b–689a).

By way of comparison, the stories of "transforming a female into a male" in *TDLZDBM* have a similar narrative structure:

Firstly, the special opportunity for transforming a female into a male is to ascend to a high place and see the deities descend, which is derived from the seven-floor building that was illuminated by the light radiating from a white tuft of hair between the Buddha's eyebrows in the *Sūtra of the Dragon-Generosity Girl* (T.557:14.909c11–12).

Secondly, the dilemmas faced by the female body are all the result of the social gender system of "differences between men and women", which dictates female behaviour, including the ethical norms of obedience to the father and husband, and the restriction of space for women to perform their domestic duties (Tsuzuki 2010, p. 117).

Thirdly, the prior wishes combine the transformation of a woman into a man with becoming transcendental immortality, which is derived from the Buddhist doctrine of transforming the female body to become a Buddha.

Fourthly, the method of transforming a female into a male is to be reborn after death, including two specific ways, which show the bravery and determination of women sacrificing their lives in their quest for the Dao. One is to destroy the existing body by burning oneself or throwing oneself from a high place and transforming it into a new body in the air; the other is to be reborn by the cycle of life and death. These two methods of "transforming a female into a male" are also derived from Buddhism. The method of changing genders in the air is found in the *Sūtra of the Dragon-Generosity Girl* (T.557:14.910a9–10), the *Sūtra of Seven Girls* (translated by Zhi Qian, T.556:14.909a22–23), and the *Compendium on the Six Perfections* (T.152:3.38c26–28), etc., while the method of changing genders in the reincarnation is found in the *Large Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (translated by Zhi Qian, T.225:8.497a26–27), the *Sūtra of Heart Light* (translated by Dharmarakṣa [239–316 C.E.], T.569:14.942c19–20) and the *Sūtra of the Sea Dragon King* (translated by Dharmarakṣa, T.598:15.153a16), etc. In fact, the "air" where transforming the female body may be a figurative metaphor for the state of "intermediate existence" (antarābhava) between death and rebirth (Gu 1987).

Fifthly, the result of transforming a female into a male is not only liberation from gender bondage, but also the eventual granting of a divine name to the supreme perfected deity, which is similar to the Buddhist prophecy (vyākaraṇa).

It is clear from this narrative structure that "transforming a female into a male" in the early Lingbao scriptures is not female discrimination, but rather a breakthrough in the social gender system of "differences between men and women", which teaches women to break away from all obstacles through their own cultivation and to be free to pursue the Dao and eventually attain transcendental immortality. In contrast, the writings of Tianshi and Shangqing movements in the Six dynasties seldom mention "transforming a female into a male", except for Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 (456–536 C.E.) *Zhen gao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected), which quoted the "eight difficult situations" (DZ.1016:20.523b). It shows the distinctiveness of the frequent discussion of gender transformation in the early Ling-

bao scriptures, which explored gender trouble by borrowing the Buddhist concept of individualized gender. While the Shangqing movement provided the group organization and practice methods for women's self-cultivation (Despeux and Kohn 2003, pp. 110–18), the early Lingbao scriptures conceptually provided instructions for women's independent personal self-cultivation in a gendered way, which echoed distantly in the religious practices of Daoist priestesses since the Tang dynasty and the "women's inner alchemy" of the Ming and Qing Dynasties.

4. Dao beyond the Gender

The different discourses on gender in the early Lingbao scriptures illustrate the complex struggle between discrimination and equality in the gender trouble, where the plurality of discourses is not a haphazard patchwork, but implies an attempt to communicate and integrate. These two concepts, the correlative gender of "differences between men and women" and the individualized gender of "transforming a female into a male", originate from different cultural contexts, represent different ways of thinking, and focus on different theories of life. However, they are not distinctly separate, but share the problem of gender perception and the trouble of gender justice, and therefore have the potential to communicate with each other. From the perspective of the Dao, the early Lingbao scriptures unify the contradictions between the individual and society, faith and ethics, and the self and the other, which result in the combination of individual male and female and gender relations to explore possible ways to gender equality. It is like the saying in the "Equality of Things" of *Zhuangzi*, "The Dao identifies them all as one".

4.1. Equal Transmitters of the Dao

According to the salvation of all beings in the early Lingbao scriptures, men and women are equal in the transmission of the Dao. In *TDLZZSDJ*, the Chinese words "shan nanzi shan nüren 善男子善女人" (good men and good women, DZ.457:6.889a), "qingxin shinü 清信士女" (pure faithful men and women, DZ.457:6.887c), "baixing zi nannüren 百姓子男女人" (people's men and women, DZ.457:6.888c), "baixing nannü 百姓男女" (people's men and women, DZ.457:6.888c) appear repeatedly and are also found in other early Lingbao scriptures. In fact, all these words are borrowed from Buddhist literature. The words "good men" (kulaputra) and "good women" (kuladuhitr) are the most common terms used in Buddhist texts for the disciples of the Buddha. The "qingxin shinü" is an early Chinese translation of the Sanskrit words "upāsaka" (laymen) and "upāsikā" (laywomen).[13] The words "baixing zi nannüren" and "baixing nannü" are derived from the Chinese words "zuxing nannü 族姓男女" (men and women of the clans)[14] and "zuxing zi zuxing nü 族姓子族姓女" (men of the clans and women of the clans)[15], which are another early Chinese translation of the Sanskrit words "kulaputra" and "kuladuhitṛ".

Just as there is no gender in Chinese nouns, the canonical texts from the pre-Qin period are not in conversation with the gender of the speakers and the objects of the discourses. Under the idea that "men are in charge of external affairs and women are in charge of internal affairs", men were far more educated than women in ancient Chinese society, and men were the default listeners and readers of most of the canonical texts, while women's education was specifically addressed in works such as Ban Zhao's *Commandments to Women*. With the introduction of the Buddhist texts into China, the gendered nature of Indo-European nouns also triggered gender self-consciousness among book authors and readers. The Buddhist texts often use pairs of words such as bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, laymen and laywomen, good men and good women, and so on (Skilling 2001). Influenced by this, the gender-specific nature of the target audiences of the preaching was also noted and men and women were treated equally as believers and transmitters of the Dao in the early Lingbao scriptures.

It is said in the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhihui benyuan dajie shangpin jing* 太上洞玄靈寶智慧本願大戒上品經 (referred to as *TDLZBDSJ*)[16] that at that time, the men and women of the secular families, who respected and enjoyed the great teachings, were impressed by

that the Daoist priests had endured hunger and recited the scriptures, and set lunch for them day after day, and sometimes went to hear them; impressed by their respect and devotion, the Daoist priests preached to the men and women, teaching them the incantation, which they each recited ten thousand times (DZ.344:6.159a). Here, the idea of equality between men and women, which is originally implied in the Dao of all things, is clearly expressed: both men and women are respectful, willing, and faithful followers of the Dao, and both are the objects of the words, teachings, and transmission of the Daoist scriptures.

In the ritual of imparting the records of the disciples of the immortal sages, the transmitter of the scriptures faces south, with male disciples prostrating on the left and female disciples on the right, in *STYYB* (DZ.425:6.642c). This tradition of placing men and women on the left and right was originally a Confucian rite. It states that men walk on the right and women on the left when walking on the road in the "System of Emperor" and "Internal Rules" of the *Book of Rites* and the "Happiness of Success" of *Mr. Lü's Annals of the Spring and Autumn Period*. Daoism also agrees that men and women should not intermingle. For example, it was considered to be the clear rule laid down by the sage that men walk on the left side of the road and women on the right in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (284–344 C.E.) *External Chapter of The Master who Embraces Simplicity* (Ge 1991, p. 614); it is said that when chanting scriptures in the north direction, men should be in the east and women in the west in the *Taizhen yudi siji mingke jing* 太真玉帝四極明科經[17]; it is emphasized that men and women should not be mixed so that the dignity will be in accordance with the heavenly code in the *Taiji zhenren fu lingbao zhaijie weiyi zhujing yaojue* 太極真人敷靈寶齋戒威儀諸經要訣[18]. Although the ritual separation of the genders is accepted in *STYYB*, there is no hierarchical distinction between men and women, but at the same time, men and women are treated as equal subjects for the transmission of scriptures. It is the Dao's transcendence of the gender differences between men and women.

4.2. Transcendental Choice of Gender

Those who are liberated through Daoist cultivation are free to choose their gender in the early Lingbao scriptures. For the common people, gender is determined at birth, whether it is explained by the deities singing of respect or acceptance, or by actions and merits in previous lives. However, the immortal sages, who are one with the Dao, transcend all differences and the bondage that comes from gender, and thus the question of gender is given free choice. In *TDLZBDSJ*, those who endure hardship and poverty, repent of their past, cultivate their future, seek and believe in the Daoist teachings in order to liberate themselves, and obtain many kinds of meritorious rewards of rebirth as a human being in the next life, including the will for becoming a man or a woman, which is determined by their own wishes (DZ.344:6.159b). In other words, the liberated person can choose his or her own gender as he or she wishes at the time of the cycle of life and death, rather than being determined, distinguished, and bound.

Of course, freedom of gender is only possible through the accumulation of conditions and merits in previous lives. Ge Xiangong once described his experience in previous lives in the *Taishang dongxuan lingbao benxing yinyuan jing* 太上洞玄靈寶本行因緣經[19] as follows: at that time he thought to himself that he would not attain the Dao in this life and that he was not as good as a woman, who was solemnly silent, had nothing to do and could be relaxed and happy; then he was reborn as a woman at the end of his life, with good looks, excellent powers of thought, and a good tongue; at that time she practiced the rituals of purification, studied the scriptures and then wished to become a man (DZ.1115:24.672b–c). In Ge Xiangong's journey to immortality, gender was a matter of his own will, and after his death, he was reborn as he wishes; whether he was born as a woman or a man was a meritorious reward, with a beautiful body, outstanding talent and a heart that aspired to the Dao, which also accumulated merits for further cultivation in the next life. For the Daoist practitioners, gender is not only not an obstacle but also a special opportunity for attaining transcendental immortality.

4.3. Daoist Wife

The images of the wise and virtuous wife, as portrayed in the early Lingbao scriptures, express the possibility of individual transcendence within the dominant gender ethics of society, and reaffirm the wisdom of the Daoist tradition of honoring softness and keeping femininity.

In the story of past actions of *TDLZDTJ*, Le Jingxin 樂淨信, who was a certain past life of Yuanshi Tianzun, asked his wife about the way to provide offerings for the Daoist priests, and his wife replied, "The Dao is revealed from the heart, and where can the Dao be found? Is it not a reward to the Dao that just what the Daoist priests do not have should be offered, and that the Daoist priests practice the rituals of purification and raise up the manifestation of the Dao after receiving the offerings?" When Le Jingxin wanted to support a Daoist priest in the south of the mountain, he received the affirmation and encouragement of his wife: "If you can do it, it is really a good idea. On the day when you close your eyes, you will still have something to rely on. If you do not, there is nothing to pray for when the body dies and the spirit is extinguished." (DZ.325:5.890c–891a) The wife of Le Jingxin is similar to the wise wife in the *Biographies of Exemplary Women* written by Liu Xiang 劉向 (78–9 B.C.E.), who is responsible for assisting her husband and upbringing her children; the difference is that while the secular wise wife only helps her husband in his individual achievements of career, Le Jingxin's wife is like a religious teacher of Daoist cultivation, with deep insight and experience in her own religious practice. In *TDLZDTJ*, it is said that the title given to the wife of Le Jingxin after she became a deity is the "Dowager Lady of Zhonghou 中候太夫人" (DZ.325:5.893a).

The wife of Fajie 法解, the son of Le Jingxin, was also wise and virtuous. When Fajie wanted to sell his son to provide offerings for the Daoist priests, his wife, although initially reluctant to part with her son, finally agreed to do so in view of the deathbed teachings of Le Jingxin and his wife, who had accumulated the good fortune by providing offerings for the Daoist priests. This story has been proven to have its Buddhist origins in the *Viśvantara-jātaka* (T.152:3.9a27–11a8; Zürcher 1980; Bokenkamp 2006). However, unlike Viśvantara's wife, who was reluctant to give up her children, Fajie's wife was eventually willing to sell her son and provide offerings for the Daoist priests together with her husband. She had the loving nature of a mother and the suppleness of a wife, reflecting the dominant gender norms of society, while at the same time she transcended family ethics and accumulated individual merits by practicing Daoist cultivation. Afterward, Fajie and his wife became deities together, and Yuanshi Tianzun revealed that Fajie was actually the previous life of Zuoxuan Zhenren 左玄真人 (Perfected of the Left Mystery) and Fajie's wife was actually the previous life of Youxuan Zhenren 右玄真人(Perfected of the Right Mystery) in *TDLZDTJ* (DZ.325:5.892c).

A wise and virtuous wife can serve not only as a good companion of Daoist cultivation but also redeem the husband who does not believe in the Daoist teachings. There is a story in *TDLZBDSJ* about a wife who became immortal and saved her husband from hell. Once upon a time, a woman studied and recited the Lingbao scriptures, and even though her husband was often angry about it, she never retreated from her determination to Daoist cultivation; as a result, the woman ascended to immortality in the daytime, and her husband died and entered hell, where he was punished for years and years; the woman flew to see her husband and persuaded him to read the *Daode jing* 道德經, and that he should be saved (DZ.344:6.158c). In this story, the woman represents the Daoist laywoman who practices cultivation at home, taking care of the household chores as a wife and reciting the scriptures to become immortal as a devotee. Her Daoist approach to helping her husband also echoes the common theme of saving all beings in the doctrines of Lingbao scriptures.

Without undermining the dominant gender norms of society, women can also achieve cultivated achievements beyond those of men, and the principle of softness and femininity they represent overcomes the crises caused by rigidity, strength, and anger, and even provides a model and guide for men. It is clear from this that the Dao can accommodate gender differences and the gender norms derived from them, but it can also transcend them and

enable men and women to realize the pursuit of individual freedom and immortality on an equal footing.

5. Conclusions

From the above analysis, the early Lingbao scriptures incorporate pluralistic gender discourses from Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism itself, showing the complex and contradictory gender trouble between discrimination and equality, while exploring possible ways to transcend it.

Firstly, the early Lingbao scriptures accept the gender system of the ritual proprieties of the Zhou dynasty, with the "differences between men and women" as the decision of all deities by singing of respect or acceptance, and reinforced the sanctity of gender norms, while in the Daoist discipline incorporating the female virtue of "chastity" advocated by Confucian rites. The inevitable correlative sexism is reflected in the auspiciousness of giving birth to a boy and the masculine perspective of the Daoist discipline.

Secondly, the early Lingbao scriptures actively borrow from the Buddhist concept of individualized gender, especially the term "transforming a female into a male" as a Buddhist method of liberation, and take it as one of the "eight difficult situations" and the merit of worshipping the Daoist scriptures for women. The cultivated journey of women's liberation from the constraints of the gender system and their quest for transcendental immortality is illustrated in the stories of past actions in order to overcome the limitations of correlative sexism. The focus of later Daoism on female practitioners and their gendered cultivated journeys can also be regarded as a further extension of the concept of individualized gender in Daoist practice.

Finally, in the context of the Dao, the early Lingbao scriptures unify the Confucian concept of correlative gender, which advocates "differences between men and women", and the Buddhist concept of individualized gender, which advocates "transforming a female into a male". It is emphasized that men and women are equal in the transmission of the Dao and that the perfected persons are free to choose their gender. The images of the wise Daoist wife embody the integration of family ethics and individual transcendence and echo the principle of softness and femininity espoused by the Daoist tradition. In short, it is the salvation of all beings in the early Lingbao scriptures.

Although the correlative sexism that existed in ancient Chinese society was not fundamentally addressed, the early Lingbao scriptures use gender as a special opportunity for Daoist cultivation, explore possible ways to resolve gender trouble and pursue freedom from the perspective of Daoist practice and provide insightful inspiration for contemporary thinking about gender justice.

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Abbreviations

DZ *Dao zang* 道藏. Beijing: Cultural Relics Publishing House, Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, Tianjin: Tianjin Classics Publishing House, 1988.
T *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. Edited by Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡辺海旭. Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai 大正一切經刊行會, 1924–1934.
ZDZ *Zhonghua dao zang* 中華道藏. Edited by Zhang Jiyu 張繼禹. Beijing: Huaxia Publishing House, 2014.

Notes

1 DZ. *Dao zang* 道藏. The form of reference for this work is DZ.318:5.843c, where 318 is the text number, 5 is the volume number, 843 is the page number, and "c" is the register.

2 It is the Dunhuang manuscript S.1351, which belongs to part B of Lu Xiujing's catalog. See (ZDZ.13:4.119b). ZDZ. *Zhonghua dao zang* 中華道藏. The form of reference for this work is ZDZ.13:4.119b, where 13 is the text number, 4 is the volume number, 119 is the page number, and "b" is the register.

3 It belongs to part A of Lu Xiujing's catalog. See (DZ.457:6.887a).

4 It is considered as the second volume of *TZXQJ*.

5 It belongs to part A of Lu Xiujing's catalog. See (DZ.325:5.890a).

6 It belongs to part A of Lu Xiujing's catalog.

7 It is transcribed on three Dunhuang manuscripts Pelliot chinois 2356, Pelliot chinois 2403 and Pelliot chinois 2452, which belongs to part B of Lu Xiujing's catalog. See (ZDZ.10:4.97c).

8 T. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. The form of reference for this work is T.784:17.723c25–29, where 784 is the text number, 17 is the volume number, 723 is the page number, "c" is the register, and 25–29 is the line number.

9 See *Ekottarikāgama*, vol. 36 (translated by Samghadeva, T.125:2.747a9–b7), *Madhyamāgama,* vol. 29 (translated by Samghadeva, T.26:1.613b1–c10), and *Dīrghāgama*, vol. 9 (translated by Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念, T.1:1.55c5–21).

10 See *Da Zhou kanding zhong jing mulu* 大周刊定眾經目錄 vol.8 (written by Mingquan 明佺, T.2153:55.416a) and *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 vol. 15 (written by Zhisheng 智昇, T.2154:55.640b18–19). Tang Yongtong speculated that the extant *Sūtra of Forty-Two Sections* might be the translation by Zhi Qian (Tang 2015, p. 27).

11 It belongs to part A of Lu Xiujing's catalog.

12 It belongs to part A of Lu Xiujing's catalog. Its fragment is found in the Dunhuang manuscript Pelliot chinois 3022V^{0} and is quoted in the *Wushang miyao* 無上秘要 vol. 15 (edited during ca. 574–578 C.E., DZ.1138:25.30a–33b) and the *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 vol. 101–102 (edited by Zhang Junfang 張君房 around 1027 C.E., DZ.1032:22.684c–693c).

13 See *Pratyutpannasamādhi* vol. 3 (translated by Lokakṣema, T.418:13.916b18–19), *Arthavargīyasūtra* vol. 2 (translated by Zhi Qian, T.198:4.185a4), *Mahāprajñāpāramitā* (translated by Zhi Qian, T.225:8.483c5), and *Kṣemaṅkāraparipṛcchā* (translated by Zhi Qian, T.533:14.814c15–16), etc.

14 See *Fajing jing* 法鏡經 (translated by An Xuan 安玄, T.322:12.15b24), *Zhai jing* 齋經 (translated by Zhi Qian, T.87:1.911a7), and *Dharmapada* (translated by Vighna, T.210:4.559a17), etc.

15 See *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* (translated by Zhi Qian, T.474:14.536b14), *Pusa benye jing* 菩薩本業經 (translated by Zhi Qian, T.281:10.447b19), and *Sūrataparipṛcchā* (translated by Bo Yan 帛延, T.328:12.55a11–12), etc.

16 It belongs to part B of Lu Xiujing's catalog.

17 It is a scripture about disciplines of the Shangqing movement. See (DZ.184:3.435b).

18 It belongs to part B of Lu Xiujing's catalog. See (DZ.532:9.868c).

19 It belongs to part B of Lu Xiujing's catalog.

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Article

On the Classical Principles and Contemporary Practices of Taoist Female Worship

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Abstract: Facing growing contemporary crises, many scholars turn to ancient eastern religions and goddess civilizations as a means of culture root-seeking. As one of the origins of Chinese civilization, Taoist female worship (道教女性崇拜) shows profound eastern wisdom and feminine philosophy on human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships. From feminist perspectives, this paper traces the origin and development of Taoist female worship and elaborates its classical principles—Qiwu (齊物) theory, Zhuyin (主陰), and Xujing (虛靜). On this basis, this paper discusses the contemporary practices of Taoist female worship's classical principles—thingness re-enchantment (物性復魅), harmony world (和諧世界), and self-cultivation (修身養性)—and illuminates their realistic significance: rethinking ethical relationships, establishing efficient ethics, and helping people to resolve crises.

Keywords: Taoist female worship; culture root-seeking; classical principles; contemporary practices

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1. Introduction

Facing increasing contemporary crises, people have begun to rethink culture and civilization. It is against this background that culture root-seeking has appeared as a means of trying to find solutions for human beings. On the one hand, for western countries, in "Culture Root-seeking" (Ye 2019, p. 5), various "cultural others" (Ye 2019, p. 5) become a mirror for the self-reflection of western culture. On the other hand, for non-western countries, culture root-seeking is seen as a part of "glocalization" (Robertson 2000, pp. 249–50), with the aims of self-identification and self-reflection. Culture root-seeking has manifested in many ways, mainly including the "Eastern Turn" (Ye 2019, p. 7) and the "Goddess Revival" (Ye 2019, p. 6). At the end of the 20th century, there was a spread of eastern influences on the west. Western intellectual pioneers such as the psychologist Carl Gustav Jung, the religious theorist Mircea Eliade, and the scientist Fritjof Capra sought wisdom from eastern religions to cope with crises. At the same time, under the influence of ecological feminism, the Goddess Revival was increasingly popular in western academia. It aims to revisit patriarchal values with prehistoric goddess beliefs and to reshape a harmonious worldview that is more in line with the law of nature (Ye 2019, p. 6). It helps human beings reconfirm the roots of their lives and recover their lost souls and beliefs (Ye 2019, p. 161). The two cultural tendencies of the Eastern Turn and the Goddess Revival complement and support one another with their common wisdom of nature reverence and motherhood veneration. "Taoist female worship" (Zhan 1990, p. 54), with its profound eastern religious connotations and goddess cultural heritage, becomes one of the important fusion points of both the Eastern Turn and the Goddess Revival.

Taoist female worship, as a combination of "goddess worship" (女神崇拜) and "female immortal worship" (女仙崇拜), stands as a Chinese religious tradition with female immortals as the core of belief (Zhan 1990, p. 54). From a feminist perspective, Taoist female worship, possessing both the ecological spirit of eastern religions and the philosophical thoughts of goddess civilizations, instructs people to live in harmony with the uni-

verse and achieve spiritual immortality. Regarding Tao (道) as the mother of all things in the universe, Taoist female worship is characterized by "respecting and conforming to nature" (順應天道), "advocating femininity while appreciating masculinity" (尚阴贵阳), and "practicing humility and tranquility" (虛靜修煉). Accordingly, it is believed that Taoist female worship advocates three classical principles—the Qiwu principle, Zhuyin principle, and Xujing principle—which form a complete system of worldviews about human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships. For thousands of years, the three classical principles of Taoist female worship have evolved in step with historical development. In the contemporary era, the Qiwu principle has evolved into the practical idea of thingness re-enchantment, the Zhuyin principle has been developed into the practice of harmony world, and the Xujing principle is represented by the common norm of self-cultivation. These contemporary practices inherited and developed the classical principles of Taoist female worship, playing an important role in regulating the ethical human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships, providing ethical principles and practices for contemporary society, and contributing to Chinese wisdom's capacity to solve contemporary crises.

This article aims to discuss, from feminist perspectives, the inspirations of Taoist female worship on how to resolve contemporary crises through regulating human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships. The body of this article contains three parts. The first part traces the origin and development of Taoist female worship. The second part analyzes the classical principles of Qiwu, Zhuyin, and Xujing advocated by Taoist female worship. The third part discusses the contemporary practices of thingness re-enchantment, harmony world, and self-cultivation, which are inherited and developed from the classical principles of Taoist female worship. Interpreting from feminist perspectives, Taoist female worship is more than a Taoist religious tradition; it is also a cultural symbolism of Tao. In this respect, the word female, like the word femininity, is used as a general term to render Chinese words such as yin (陰), ci (雌), and pin (牝), which indicate the universal force, attribute, style, or manner in opposition to the male (Liu 2001, p. 239). It is believed that Taoist female worship, along with classical principles and contemporary practices, is not gendered; it aims not to reinforce the stereotypes of men or women, nor to prioritize one side within every binary relationship; instead, it serves as a cultural, ethical, and philosophical metaphor, aiming to remind and inspire people to remedy the injustices of human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships so as to achieve ecological balance, social harmony, and individual well-being, ultimately solving contemporary crises.

2. The Origin and Development of Taoist Female Worship

Since ancient China, there has been a tradition of female worship, including goddess worship and female immortal worship, which have been inherited, integrated, and developed by Taoism into a complete Taoist female immortal system. On this basis, under the influence of Zhuyin thought, the Taoist female devotees' efforts, and emperors' immortal worship, Taoist female worship was established and developed, and it flourished not only as a Taoist religious tradition but also as a cultural symbolism of Tao.

2.1. The Origin of Taoist Female Worship

Before the formation of Taoist female worship, there was already female worship, which was manifested in the worship of goddesses and female immortals. Ancient female worship originated from goddess worship. Goddess worship is the result of our ancestors' admiration of female fertility. This admiration was externalized into mystical rituals, in which women were glorified with goddess characteristics and the divine position (Zhan 1990, p. 7). Initially, goddess worship only had natural attributes; with the establishment of matriarchal females' exalted status—the mother was the link that maintained the blood relationship—it acquired social attributes (Zhan 1990, p. 8). In addition to our ancestors' admiration of female's fertility, goddess worship was also induced by our ancestors' need to transform nature (Zhan 1990, p. 10). Goddess worship evolved over time to include

more goddesses and developed into an important religious feature of the pre-Qin Dynasty (先秦) (Zhan 1990, p. 14).

Female immortal worship was another manifestation of female worship during the pre-Qin Dynasty. If God worship is a religious characteristic common to all the peoples of the world, then immortal worship is a unique religious characteristic in the ancient belief system of the Chinese people. In ancient China, immortality means "live forever and ascend to heaven" (長生仙去) (Zhan 1990, p. 14). Female immortals were those who combined divinity, immortality, and femininity. The concept of the female immortal is rooted in goddess worship. Following the development of society, witches who possessed the miracle medicine of immortality were transformed into female immortals. Simultaneously, some female Taoists were gradually upgraded to the status of female immortals. In this way, the number of female immortals continued to increase (Zhan 1990, p. 18).

Overall, female worship is the result of people's idealization of life and death, and a ritual reproduction of women's special vitality, reflecting the conscious awareness of our forefathers in their struggle against disease and death. Fundamentally, both goddess worship and female immortal worship were forms of supporting the ancient people's consciousness of life. If goddess worship represents our forefathers' desire for life, then female immortal worship shows our forefathers' resistance to death. Therefore, goddess worship and female immortal worship comprise two-level reflections of the same consciousness (Zhan 1990, p. 26).

2.2. The Development of Taoist Female Worship

Taoism inherited and developed Chinese female worship tradition. As a traditional Chinese religion, Taoism was officially founded and institutionalized in the Eastern Han Dynasty (東漢), and its origins can be traced back to the pre-Qin Taoist school[1]. Taoism took Laozhuang's (老莊) Taoist thoughts of pre-Qin Dynasty as the core matrix. At the same time, it inherited the concepts, practices, and rituals of Chinese Wicca (中國巫教)[2], Fangxian Tao (方仙道)[3], and Huanglao Tao (黃老道)[4], and was finally founded and institutionalized by Daoling Zhang (張道陵)[5]. On this basis, Taoism inherited the goddesses in ancient Chinese mythological texts such as the *Classic of Mountains and Seas* (《山海經》[6]) and the *Biography of Mu Tianzi* (《穆天子傳》[7]). The female immortals of newer texts were also continually incorporated into the classical biographies of Taoist immortals. From the end of the Western Jin Dynasty (西晉末) or the beginning of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (東晉初) to the Qing Dynasty (清朝), more and more female goddesses and immortals were included by *The Biographies of the Gods and Immortals* (《神仙傳》[8]), *Shangqingbu Taoching* (《上清部道經》[9]), and the *Zhengao* (《真诰》[10]), and received great acceptance and respect in Taoist activities. Collections of biographies, such as *Yongcheng Jixian Lu* (《墉城集仙錄》[11])—*A Collection of Taoist Female Immortals' Biographies*, *A Post-Collection of the Female Immortals of All Ages* (《歷世真仙體道通鑒後集》[12]), and *Volume Eight of The History of the Immortals of All Ages* (《歷代仙史·卷八》[13]), were dedicated to the specialized biographies of female immortals. In the long process of development, Taoism integrated the worships of goddesses and female immortals, and drew on the contents and methods of existing female worship, eventually forming a complete Taoist female immortal worship system.

The Taoist female immortal worship system includes five lineages of worshiped immortals: the Shengmu Yuanjun (聖母元君), the scattered female immortals of all generations (歷代散見女仙), the female immortal system of Xingning descending immortal lineage (興甯降仙系女仙), the female immortals of the Huayang Fairland (華陽洞天女真), and the female Taoist devotees of the Middle Ages (中世女道) (Li Yang 2000a, p. 12). The innate character of ShengmuYuanjun is a Xuanmiao Yunǚ (玄妙玉女) born from the three Qi (炁) Taoist energies, namely, Yuan (元)—origin; Xuan (玄)—mysteriousness; and Shi (始)—beginning, and her identity is the sacred mother and teacher of Laozi. Her special mission is to enlighten the world (Li Yang 2000a, pp. 50–51). Nüwa (女娲), also known as Lishan Laomu (骊山老姆), and her various transformations are typical of scattered female immor-

tals who were transformed from traditionally worshiped goddesses. In Taoism, Nüwa was omnipotent as "the sacred female immortal of ancient times, who transforms all things" (古之神聖女，化萬物者也。) (qtd. in Zhan 1990, p. 10). Later generations like Bixia Yuanjun (碧霞元君), Mazu (媽祖), and Linshui Furen (臨水夫人), etc., are also famous scattered Taoist female immortals. Xiwangmu (西王母), also known as Jinmu Yuanjun (金母元君), was both the leader and mother of the female immortals of the Xingning descending immortal lineage (Li Yang 2000a, p. 64). It is written in the *Yongcheng Ji Xian Lu* that "Jinmu Yuanjun is the leader of the female immortals, and the ruler of Yongcheng" (Li Yang 2000a, p. 59). The female immortals of the Xingning descending lineage include the Mingxing female immortals (明星女仙), Xianren Yunǚ (仙人玉女), and Liuding Yunǚ (陸丁玉女) (Zhan 1990, pp. 40–41). Mingxing female immortals are related to the sun, moon, and stars, with the representatives of Lady Taiyin Yuegong (太阴月宮夫人) and Doumu Yuanjun (斗姆元君). The Xianren Yunǚ are the personification of the Mingxing female immortals, while the Liuding Yunǚ are the arti-factualization of the Xianren Yunǚ (Deng 2017, p. 359). The Huayang Dongtian lineage of female immortals are the Shanqing female immortal officials who reside in the Huayang Dongtian Xianzhen Gongfu (華陽洞天仙真宮府), with Hanzhentai (含真台) and Yiqiangong (易遷宮) as the home base (Li Yang 2000a, p. 70), including Chunlong Liu (劉春籠), Xizi Li (李溪子), Xihua Han (韓西華), Qiongying Dou (竇瓊英), Sutai Zhao (趙素台), Lihe Chuan (傳禮和), Huizi Zhang (張徽子), Shuying Ding (丁淑英), etc. (Li Yang 2000a, p. 70). Most of the female Taoist devotees of the Middle Ages came from folklore, including Guanfu Huang (黃觀福), Shangxian Dong (董上仙), Zhengmian Yang (楊正見), Dongxuan Bian (邊洞玄), Fajin Wang (王法進), Ziran Xie (謝自然), Xuanjing Pei (裴玄靜), Xuanfu Qi (戚玄符), Fengxian Wang (王鳳仙), Xianfu Gou (缑仙姑), Xuantong Xue (薛玄同), Miaodian Lu (魯妙典), Pingzhi Yang (楊平治), etc. (Li Yang 2000a, pp. 84–88). By the Middle Ages, Taoist female worship had spread widely to the lower classes, and the miracles (靈迹) of Taoist female immortals were also widely spread, such as the light and speedy walking (輕身疾走) of Xiangu He (何仙姑), Xiangu Zheng's (鄭仙姑) cooking without rice (無米之炊), Xiangu Zhang's (張仙姑) illnesses diagnosis by operating Qi (發炁診疾), Xiaoyao Qi's (戚逍遙) silent resting without eating (靜默休糧), Meiniang Lu's (盧眉娘) skillful weaving of the island of Chau Island (巧織洲島), Qiongyu Chen's (陳瓊玉) divine walking on water (水上神行), and Xiangu Yu's (于仙姑) water yanking through the ten fingers (十指流茶) (Zhan 1990, p. 51). With the development of history, Taoist female immortals were increasing, their images have changed from simple to complex, their "miracles" have become increasingly well-known, and the Taoist female immortal system was increasingly influential.

Based on Taoist female immortal worship system, the Taoist principle of Yin (陰)—femininity; the important role played by women in the organizational construction of Taoism; and the female worship activities of the rulers reinforced the establishment and strengthened the flourishing of Taoist female worship (Zhan 1990, pp. 44–52). *Guicang* (《歸藏》[14]) is the original philosophical work focusing on the Yinyang dialectics. It is headed by the Kun (坤) trigram, advocating the principle of Yin, which is inherited by Taoism (Zhan 1990, pp. 44–46). Taoism gradually formed a fundamental doctrine rooted in Yin. Since the principle of Yin was originally a philosophizing of female worship, when it became one of the theoretical foundations of Taoism and was widely publicized and applied, it inevitably became one of the principles of Taoist female worship and reinforced female worship in return. This is one of the main reasons why the number of Taoist female immortals was increasingly enlarged (Zhan 1990, p. 49).

The important role of female Taoist devotees in the Taoist organizational construction also accelerated the development of Taoist female worship. For example, Meiniang Lu's active religious and social activities at the end of the Han Dynasty (漢朝) contributed to the unification of government and religion (Zhan 1990, p. 49). Since the Weijin Nanbei dynasties (魏晉南北朝), some female Taoist devotees became the founders of Taoist schools and mainstays of Taoist teachings. For instance, Wei Furen's (魏夫人) vigorous teaching of the art of Taoist internal alchemy was of great significance to the formation of the Shangqing

school (上清派) (Zhan 1990, p. 50). Such outstanding Taoist female devotees attracted many women to convert to Taoism, spawning more stories of female immortals and enlarging the Taoist female immortal system (Zhan 1990, p. 51).

Additionally, the ruler's worshiping of Taoist immortals, including female immortals, was also one of the factors contributing to the development of Taoist female worship. This phenomenon was most prevalent in the Tang Dynasty (唐朝) because the royal family regarded Laozi as their ancestor. Taoist miracles were regarded as the auspicious signs of the ancestor's blessing and the country's prosperity, and the appearances of immortals, including female immortals, were taken as manifestations of local political achievements and the clarity of government (Li Yang 2000a, p. 78). This reverence for Taoism and immortality provided fertile soil for female worship, making the Tang Dynasty a golden age for both Taoism and Taoist female worship.

Under the influence of Zhuyin philosophy, the Taoist female devotees' efforts, and the historical background of emperors' immortal worship, the religious tradition of Taoist female worship was further established and flourished. It is even extended to a cultural unconsciousness of China. Just as Shichuang Zhan argued, the combination of the Taoist female worship and the doctrine of female cultivation can be said to be a manifestation of the collective cultural awareness of China, which is not only spread in Taoism but is also widely related to many aspects of the entire spiritual structure (Zhan 1990, p. 132). In fact, in the contemporary era, Taoist female worship is still playing an important role not only in religious activities but also in cultural, spiritual, and ethical cultivation.

Shichuang Zhan points out that since female worship was inherited and developed mainly by Taoism, it is rational that female worship can be defined as Taoist female worship, namely, a religious tradition inherited and developed by Taoism with the fundamental purpose of eliminating calamities, removing evils, and achieving immortality, with the female deity as the core of its beliefs (Zhan 1990, p. 54). From feminist perspectives, female deities include not only Taoist motherly goddesses and female immortals but also Taoist renunciants, Taoist devotees, and ordinary lay practitioners or followers. Just as Catherine Despeux and Livia Kohn conclude, after their survey of the historical record to illustrate the changes in the Taoist perception and social situation of women (Despeux and Kohn 2003, p. 5), "Ordinary events, normal people, and undistinguished workers do not make exciting subjects worthy of recording for posterity or extolling in the present. Still, it is those ordinary individuals, that make up the majority of people, and the majority of women." (Despeux and Kohn 2003, p. 244). When talking about Taoist female worship, this article not only takes the small-portioned female Taoists presented in classical Taoist literature as the worshiped icons but also takes the whole Taoist population, both the female and the male, as worshiped objects because each Taoist has the collective genes of Taoist appreciation and application of femininity. These worshiped objects can serve as models for both living women and men. In this sense, Taoist female worship can also be regarded as a cultural symbolism of Tao, within which the symbolized motherhood (母性), maternity (牝性), femininity (陰性), and fertility (雌性) are regarded as the worshiped female virtues which are beneficial for all mankind. The worshiped female virtues do not mean gendered or stereotyped features exclusively for women; rather, they refer to normative moralities for all.

In a word, Taoist female worship is a unique Chinese religious tradition formed and developed after the combination of primitive goddess worship and female immortal worship by Taoism. Interpreting from feminist perspectives, it is more than a religious tradition; it also serves as a cultural symbolism of Tao concerning the worldview system of human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships. It advocates principles of Qiwu, Zhuyin, and Xujing, which, with historical evolution, have been inherited and developed by contemporary practices, namely, thingness re-enchantment, harmony world, and self-cultivation. When talking about the classical principles and contemporary practices of Taoist female worship concerning human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships, this article, with feminist ecological, humanistic, and individual concerns, aims

not to offer a limited religious guidance for Taoists but to offer infinite cultural, philosophical, ethical, and practical inspirations for the whole world's general public in confronting contemporary crises.

3. The Classical Principles of Taoist Female Worship

As mentioned above, Taoist female worship can be traced back to the mythological age. With its development from the Fuxi (伏羲) era, Huangdi (黃帝) era, and Yaoshun (堯舜) periods to the end of the Warring States (戰國) period and the Qinhan (秦漢) periods, Taoist female worship emerged following the official establishment of Taoism at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty (東漢). During that time, natural disasters were aggravated, social conflicts were intensified, the economy declined, and the people were in dire straits (Zhan 2017, p. 4). Taoist female worship, following the establishment of Taoism, arose in response to that state of crisis. Therefore, like Taoism, in addition to having some classical religious characteristics, such as the ideals of immortality (長生不老), a complete system of immortals, specialized biographies, and unique religious rituals, etc., Taoist female worship also formed Tao-focused principles for people in confronting crises (Zhan 2017, p. 5). From feminist perspectives, Taoist female worship advocates three main principles, namely, Qiwu, Zhuyin, and Xujing, for people to deal with crises. With these principles rooted in the Taoist spirit of Tao (道)—the origin, operating law, and returning of the universe; and the criterion of Te (德)—morality, virtues, or ethics, Taoist female worship had established a set of worldviews on human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships, which were of great help in that troubled time.

3.1. The Principle of Qiwu

First and foremost, in terms of the human–nature relationship, Taoist female worship advocates the Qiwu principle. Qiwu means "the oneness of all things" (萬物齊一). It is one of the core principles of *Tao Te Ching* (《道德經》). Laozi declared the oneness of all things to be the Tao: "Tao has no clear, fixed entity. It is in a trance, but there is an image in it. It is in a trance, but there is the oneness of things in it" (道之爲物，惟恍惟惚。惚兮恍兮，其中有象。恍兮惚兮，其中有物。) (Laozi 2011, p. 55). Zhuangzi inherited and developed the Qiwu Principle of Laozi in his writing "On Qiwu" in *Zhuangzi*. He used many allegories to illustrate the principle of Qiwu: "heaven and earth are born together with me, and all things are the one with me" (天地與我並生，而萬物與我爲一。) (Zhuangzi 2007, p. 39). There is an equivalent relationship between the oneness of all things, the mother, and the Tao. This relationship is the most important vision of *Tao Te Ching*. Laozi claimed that "(Tao) is the mother of all things" (Laozi 2011, p. 1) in the first chapter of *Tao Te Ching*. In chapter 6, Laozi further claimed that "The Tao is eternal and everlasting because it is similar to a great mother giving birth to and nurtures all things in the universe restlessly. The birth gate of profound motherly fertility is the root of all things in heaven and earth. It exists forever with infinite functions" (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。) (Laozi 2011, p. 18). In chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*, Laozi claimed that "There is the oneness of all things, which has been in existence since the formation of the heaven and the earth. I can't hear its voice or see its form, it is quiet and humble, it doesn't rely on any external force, but exists independently and never stops, it circulates and never fails, and it can be the motherly root of all beings. I don't know its name, so I reluctantly call it Tao, and then reluctantly give it another name called Da (Greatness)" (有物混成，先天地生，寂兮寥兮，獨立而不改，周行而不殆，可以爲天下母。吾不知其名，字之曰"道"，強名之曰"大"。) (Laozi 2011, p. 65). It is clear that the function of the oneness of all things is equal to the mother and the Tao, which is the origin of the universe, the beginning of life, and the primitive source of the world. From the feminist perspective, the metaphor of using the mother to symbolize the oneness of all things is meant to illustrate the Taoist motherly philosophies of Qiwu principle–Ziran (自然)—naturalness; and Wuwei (無爲)—non-action.

Laozi's use of the analogy combining the oneness of all things, the Tao, and the mother shows, first, that the Qiwu principle advocates the motherly Taoist wisdom of Ziran. The Qiwu principle believes that the origin of the universe, namely, the oneness of all things, the mother, or the Tao, is natural and spontaneous instead of being intentional. Therefore, the Qiwu principle advocates Ziran, which means naturalness. Laozi claimed in chapter 25 that "Human models on Earth; Earth models on Heaven, Heaven models on Tao; Tao models on Nature" (人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。) (Laozi 2011, p. 66). According to Xiaogan Liu, this stanza shows that Tao is the highest concept of the universe. As the oneness or the mother of the universe, it follows the principle of naturalness. Thus, naturalness is endowed by Tao with the position of the pivotal value (Liu 2001, p. 243). Laozi compared Tao to the mother; the mother is closely related to nature because they are both featured by the virtue of being fertile and selfless. Specifically, the mother is as great as nature for her eternal fertility to give birth to all things, her selflessness, and her fairness in giving life to all things, treating them as equal beings without possessing, disturbing, or favoring any of them. The characteristic of naturalness is often attributed to motherly virtues like selflessness, generosity, tolerance, and amiability.

Moreover, Laozi's repeated use of the metaphor of the mother for the Tao clarifies that the Qiwu principle promotes another Taoist wisdom, Wuwei. Out of the belief that the Tao or the oneness of all things is the intrinsic essence of the universe, remaining unaffected by the external elements and keeping the universe in natural balance and harmony, the principle of Qiwu promotes Wuwei, which means non-action, namely, taking no action to interrupt natural harmony and balance. Laozi claimed in chapter 64 that, "He who takes actions fails. He who grasps things loses them. For this reason, the sage takes no action and therefore does not fail. He grasps nothing and therefore he does not lose anything" (爲者敗之，執者失之。是以聖人無爲，故無敗；無執，故無失。) (Laozi 2011, p. 170). Therefore, Taishang Laojun (太上老君)—the divine Laozi—was the one of most important paragons in practicing Wuwei. He remained humble in front of Heaven and Earth and kept his own fundamentals, taking no actions, unlike everyone else, to practice benevolence, loyalty, respect, love, and desire out of self-benefit. He believed the Heaven, Earth, and Human to be funded by the Great Tao and endowed with the same qi, but people are all chasing trifles while neglecting the essentials, which leads to self-harm. With such a belief, Laojun guarded the root of the Tao, the oneness of all things, so he became a Taoist immortal. Therefore, it is believed that if people can follow the saints' Wuwei wisdom, they can achieve immortality and return to the Great Tao (G. Li 2017, p. 307). Similar to naturalness, Wuwei is also the inspiration of the motherly virtues of being passive, still, quiet, and tranquil. Accordingly, the female is regarded as the epitome of Wuwei, and Laozi's exaltation of the feminine is taken as the symbol of the Taoist doctrine of Wuwei.

As the two aspects of the Qiwu principle, Ziran and Wuwei, are complementary, naturalness is the theoretical essence of Wuwei, while Wuwei is the method of achieving naturalness. They both explain the motherly features of the Taoist Qiwu principle. According to Gang Li's explanation, the Tao is originally natural, and the so-called "birth" of the Tao in *Tao Te Ching* is self-generated without being born, which can help us to further understand the naturalness of the Tao (G. Li 2017, p. 306). In other words, naturalness is the nature and root of Tao. Wuwei, as another feature of natural Tao, aims to maintain naturalness. Only with Wuwei can the Taoist sages support all things in their natural state, be prudent, and dare not take any action. All of these are the manifestation of the spirit of Wuwei, which works, in turn, to protect the naturalness of all beings. Thus, we see that Ziran is a core moral value, while Wuwei is the methodological principle to actualize and sustain it (Liu 2001, p. 244). In fact, Ziran and Wuwei represent the dialectical relationship of You (有)—oneness; and Wu (無)—nothingness, with the mother as their common symbolized association, just as Laozi claimed in chapter 1 of *Tao Te Ching*, "Tao can be Tao, but it is not the normal Tao; It can be named but cannot be normally named. The nothingness is named as the beginning of heaven and earth, while the oneness is a named as the mother of all things." (道可道，非常道，名可名，非常名。

無名天地之始，有名萬物之母。) (Laozi 2011, p. 2). Based on Taoist dialectic thinking with the mother as the consistent symbol, Xiaogan Liu points out that both Ziran and Wuwei are easily associated with femininity; they usually suggest an easy and tolerant attitude, a quiet and low-keyed nature, and a moderate and generous mind (Liu 2001, p. 244). In any case, the Taoist motherly wisdom of both Ziran and Wuwei aim to keep the oneness of all things, namely, the Qiwu principle, and ultimately to sustain the Tao.

Many Taoist female immortals, like Taoist male immortals, are divine teachers of Qiwu principle. This can be shown in Yunhua Furen's (雲華夫人) teaching for Dayu (大禹):

> The heaven and earth were originally a chaotic whole, and the sages divided them into two parts, and took some of them to build the human body. Then they excavated the earth resources as inexhaustible wealth and scattered them to human beings… All materials in human world are endowed with the sun, moon, and stars, and are formed and raised by the nature law. Therefore, human beings should comply with the nature laws, such as the lightening and darkening pattern of the sun and the moon, the weather changes of four seasons, the coming and going time of thunder and lightning, and the movement of wind and rain. (X. Zhang 2001, p. 567)

The main idea of Yunhua Furen's teaching is that Heaven, Earth, and human beings are in wholeness, human beings are part of Heaven and Earth, and all human activities are imitating and unified to the way of nature, so human beings should follow the doctrine of non-action and respect and comply with naturalness. In this way, all things will prosper as they are. Laozi claimed in chapter 52 that, "The world had a beginning, which can be considered the mother of the world. Having attained the mother, in order to understand her children. Having understood the children, if you return and hold on to the mother, till the end of your life you'll suffer no harm" (天下有始，以爲天下母。既得其母，以知其子；既知其子，復守其母，沒身不殆。). In this stanza, the mother is the Tao and Nature. All things in the world are like the Tao or nature's children. To understand the essential Tao so as to attain immortality, it is significant not only to maintain the naturalness of all things but also to remember the doctrine of non-action; only in this way can Taoists return and hold onto the mother and nature with life integrity.

It is worth pointing out that neither the Qiwu principle, including its motherly wisdom of Ziran and Wuwei, nor female immortals' teaching of the Qiwu principle are stereotyped. Instead, the fact is that both men and women are required to follow the Qiwu principle and are able to have the motherly virtues of being natural and taking no actions. These motherly virtues are used as a metaphor of the Qiwu principle. That is why Xiaogan Liu comments that Laozi praises sage rulers who practice naturalness because they bring people and societies natural life, marked by peace and harmony (Liu 2001, p. 243). Likewise, the association of the Taoist doctrine of Wuwei and female attributes is made merely in terms of symbolization, which indicates the normative teaching for human beings, especially sage rulers on how to maintain the balance of the natural and social world. It is in this sense that the Qiwu principle is of great universal significance for environmental harmony and social justice.

Taoist female worship with the Qiwu principle is of great help for the re-thinking of the human–nature relationship. It reminds people to learn from Taoist immortals' attitudes towards nature like selflessness, fairness, frugality, respect, and conformity. It warns that in front of infinite and profound nature, people should remain humble with awe and get rid of bias, superiority, and conquering posture, thus reaching the transcendent unconsciousness of crossing the boundary between human and nature. Laozi said, "I always have three treasures, which should be seriously kept and protected: charity, frugality, and dare not to take actions before others. Charity makes bravery, frugality makes generosity; non-action makes growth opportunity" (我恒有三寶，持而保之，一曰：慈，二曰：儉，三曰：不敢爲天下先。夫慈，故能勇；儉，故能廣：不敢爲天下先，故能爲成器長。) (Laozi 2011, p. 176). In the chapter "On the oneness of All Things" (齊物論) of *Zhuangzi*, Zhuangzi explicitly states, "there is nothing that is not the other" (物無非彼，物無非是。), "the one

is out of the other, and the other is because of the one" (彼出于是，是亦因彼。) (Zhuangzi 2007, p. 32). Zhuangzi places the human equal to the non-human and allows all beings to grow on their own with naturalness and non-action, which the Qiwu principle of Taoist female worship believes to be the highest love for life. *Baopuzi Neipian* (《抱樸子內篇》[15]) also states, "The way of Heaven does nothing, and allows things to be natural; there is no affinity nor estrangement, and there is no one without the other" (天道無爲，任物自然，無親無疏，無彼無此也。) (M. Wang 1985, p. 124). The inherent mechanism of naturalness and non-action lies in that Taoism places human beings in a macroscopic universe to locate their own actions and fully realizes the special value of the coordinated relationships of the diversified universe (Zhan 2003, p. 65). That is why the principle of Qiwu promotes "motherly Tao, Tao modeling on Naturalness, natural non-action, and non-active governance" (玄牝之道、道法自然、自然無爲、無爲而治。), "non-action makes every action" (無爲而無不爲), which has been taken as the ethical principles for ecological construction and which is the same as the ecological feminist style of respecting and returning to nature instead of conquering nature.

3.2. The Principle of Zhuyin

Taoist female worship also promotes the principle of Zhuyin. Zhuyin means "honoring softness and appreciating femininity" (貴柔守雌). Starting from the idea that "the softness is the use of the Tao" (弱者道之用), Laozi emphasized that "the softest makes the strongest in the world" (天下之至柔，馳騁天下之至堅。) (Laozi 2011, p. 123) and "the femininity often overcomes the masculinity with stillness" (牝常以靜勝牡). Such a worldview connects Yin to the mysteries of the Tao. In the Taoist cosmic model of Yin and Yang, Yin is equal to Yang as one of the manifestations of power. The fundamental reason of Xiwangmu's leadership and motherhood of all female immortals is that she is the highest representative of Yin (Li Yang 2000b, p. 9). Du Guangting, in the opening chapter of *Yongcheng Jixian Lu*, states that "Xiwangmu was born from the most wonderful Qi of Xihua mountain (西華山), coalesced from the extremely innate Yin, positioned in the east, motherly nurturing female immortals, and thus becoming the head of all the female immortals" (西王母乃西華之至妙，洞陰之極尊……體柔順之本，爲極陰之元，位配西方，母養群品，天上天下三界十方女子之登仙得道者，咸所隸焉。) (qtd. in Li Yang 2000b, p. 9).

The importance of Yin's power in Taoist teachings can be seen in some Taoist classics. It is written that "The one with Tao uses Yin while the one without Tao uses Yang; Yang is measurable while Yin is inexhaustible" (凡有道之士用陰，無道之士用陽。陽則可測，陰則不可窮也。) (qtd. in Zhan 1988, p. 19). *Taiping Ching* (《太平經》[16]) also attaches great importance to the value of Yin, femininity, and motherhood, believing that they occupy a more important position in the process of the harmonization between Yin and Yang. It said that "each thing has its double, with which it harmonizes, like heaven harmonizes with earth, the birth of Yang must take place in Yin, this law is the same for the people on the earth" (夫天地之生凡物也，兩爲一合。今是上天與是下地爲合。凡陽之生，必於陰中，故乃取於此地上人也。) (M. Wang 1997, p. 652). The *Taiping Ching* also pointed out that "The earth is the mother, the father is given by the mother, so it is in the Yin. The essence of Yang is given by the mother, which is the same as the heaven is given by the earth. It is difficult to see the first Qi of Yang's transformation, only when it enters the Yin to take shape and becomes visible, so it is remembered in the Yin not in the Yang" (地爲母，父施於母，故於陰中也，其施陽精，同始發於天耳。陽者，其化始氣也微難睹，入陰中成形，乃着可見，故記其陰中，不記其陽也。) (M. Wang 1997, p. 11). Though these sayings might fall into an essential tendency, they showed the original thinking of Zhuyin philosophy. It can be said that the favoring and honoring of Yin's power became one aspect with which Taoism has gradually developed the concept of female worship.

However, the paramount belief of the Zhuyin principle is Yinyang balance and harmony. It is essential that the Taoist female worship's Zhuyin principle is not a perception of Yin's superiority over Yang, but rather a worldview on Yinyang balance and harmony, one of the most important religious doctrines and one of the most fundamental philosophies of

Taoism. Yinyang balance and harmony advocates Yin–Yang equality, believing that both Yin and Yang are important parts of the world. It is the underlying logic of gender justice in Taoism. Li Yang points out that whether there is equal opportunity for sainthood is one of the most important indicators of whether a religion has an equal conception of gender. Medieval Christian theologians repeatedly discussed the question of whether females had souls based on the Bible's creation myths, and early Buddhism had a negative attitude toward the possibility of females becoming Buddhas, believing that only a female in a male body could become a Buddha. In contrast, the Taoist masters did not question the possibility of the female becoming immortal, and the issue was never raised, even by the opponents of the belief in immortality (Li Yang 2000a, p. 125). Clearly, the female and the male are equal in the issue of Taoist immortality, namely, the opportunity for the female to attain immortality is equal to that of the male. As stated in *Yongcheng Jixian Lu*, Yinyang balance and harmony is the core of Tao, it is the nurturing base of all things; it forms the continuity of non-stop birth and growth. So, Heaven covers all things while the Earth holds all things; clear gas and turbid gas have equal contributions; the sun shines and the moon gleams; day and night have level functions—all these binaries build the Heaven, Earth, and humankind. That is why Mugong (木公) is the king of the east while Jinmu (金母) is the queen of the west. Male and female immortals perform their own functions, ensuring the immortal world is in its proper order (qtd. in Li Yang 2000a, p. 126). Obviously, with the basis of Yinyang balance and harmony, gender justice is natural in the Taoist genealogy of immortals.

Yinyang balance and harmony not only lies in fair gender relationship but also lies in androgynous personalities. The phenomenon of androgyny is common among Taoist immortals because it is regarded as an ideal state of life in Taoism. Nüwa was originally the founding god who was both male and female and who created mankind out of the earth, and Xiwangmu was originally an omnipotent god who possessed the dual elements of the universe, such as east and west, sun and moon, and male and female, in one body (Lian 2017, pp. 380–81). Although Bixia Yuanjun is a goddess in appearance, she has achieved a state of androgyny in both her gender temperament and her divine functions (Lian 2017, p. 384). Likewise, some male immortals also show androgyny. Fuxi, like Nüwa, is commonly regarded as an androgynous immortal (Lian 2017, pp. 380–81). Charlotte Furth's study found out that the "body of the Yellow Emperor" (黃帝) represents the idea of hermaphroditism and androgyny (Furth 1999, p. 23). In fact, for Taoists, androgyny does not exist particularly in Taoist immortals but in every person, even in everything. Yinyang balance and harmony is the birth of life; therefore, the maintenance of an individual's Yinyang balance and harmony is important. It is fundamental to note that the Zhuyin principle reflects the Taoist cosmology that Yinyang balance and harmony creates all things (陰陽和合、化生萬物), which is named the Tao of Yinyang. Laozi wrote, "When you know masculinity yet hold on to femininity, you'll be the ravine of the country. When you're the ravine of the country, your constant virtue will not leave. And when your constant virtue doesn't leave, you'll return to the state of the infant."知其雄，守其雌，爲天下溪。爲天下溪，常德不離，複歸于嬰兒。) (Laozi 2011, p. 75). That is why Laozi regarded Yinyang balance and harmony as one aspect of the Great Tao: "Tao begets one, one begets two, two begets three, and three begets all things. Everything contains Yin and Yang, and they interact to form a harmonious whole" (道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以爲和。) (Laozi 2011, p. 120). *Taiping Ching* states, "Nan (男)—Men and Nǚ (女)—women are the embodiment of Yin and Yang" (男女者，陰陽之本也。) (M. Wang 1997, p. 38), "The nature of heaven and earth is half Yin and half Yang" (天地之性，半陰半陽。) (M. Wang 1997, p. 702), and "A man cannot give birth to a child alone, and a woman cannot raise a child alone" (男不能獨生，女不能獨養。) (M. Wang 1997, p. 142). In other words, *Taiping Ching* believes that all things have both Yin and Yang, the whole universe was born out of Yinyang balance and harmony, while human beings began with the vital energy of the universal Heaven and Earth, which have Yin and Yang, so human beings also have Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang are in balance and harmony, so are men and women. It is from this

basic Taoist cosmology of Yinyang balance and harmony that the *Taiping Ching* observes Heaven and Earth from afar, closely examines men and women, and regards the Yinyang balance and harmony as the Tao. It points out that, "there is nothing complex discourse in the Tao, and Yinyang balance and harmony is the core" (道無奇辭，一陰一陽，爲其用也。) (M. Wang 1997, p. 11). For many feminists, the underlying tenet of the Zhuyin principle is the ancient eastern mirror of modern feminist worldview. Such a tenet, like the feminist worldview, can be extended from promoting gender justice to advancing universal social justice.

Aside from the ontological importance, the Zhuyin principle of Taoist female worship also shows great ethical significance with respect to human–human relationships. Unlike other religions and cultures that repress and discriminate against the female, Taoist female worship advocates the Zhuyin principle, which highlights the social equality and justice. It can first be seen from the complex and extensive system of Taoist female worship, in which the division is not based on different identities but rather on the individual's abilities to cultivate Taoism. As Ruiling Zhang states, "Taoism believes that not only can women become immortal independently, but also women of any class can become immortal" (R. Zhang 2007, p. 69). Suping Li also points out that Taoism's idea of becoming immortal is inclusive, open-minded, and flexible, and it does not hold any discrimination or prejudice against women's cultivation of immortality. It even makes no distinction of gender, class, intelligence, and appearance (S. Li 2001, p. 43). Yinyang balance and harmony shows the ethical significance of maintaining harmonious social relationships. Shichuang Zhan points out that "Laozi not only clarifies that everything has a basis for existence in terms of Yinyang, but also takes 'harmony' as the beautiful and good realm for the existence and development of all beings" (Zhan 2003, p. 64). Taoists believe that in order to cultivate the Tao of immortality, one must first become a human being, that learning to be a human being is a prerequisite for the sublimation of life, and that the principle of Yinyang balance and harmony is a prerequisite for learning to be a human being. Therefore, for Taoism, Yinyang balance and harmony is not only a synonym for the gender relationship but also a metaphor for the unity of all differences in the ethical relationship of human–human in social activities. In short, in the tradition of Taoist female worship, Yinyang balance and harmony is the mother of all things, the root of great transformation, and the most basic existence in the universe. It gives birth to all things and embodies the cosmic view of life. It is the fundamental principle not only for dealing with gender relationships but also for regulating relationships among all human beings.

3.3. The Principle of Xujing

In addition to the principles of Qiwu and Zhuyin, Taoist female worship also emphasizes the Xujing principle. To some extent, the Xujing principle is the starting point for a Taoist during the process of Taoist cultivation, with the doctrine of "keeping the mind in a state of complete humility and tranquility without being affected" (致虛極, 守靜笃。). From a feminist viewpoint, Xujing highlights the feminine wisdom of being humble, tranquil, simple, peaceful, etc., thus becoming one of the primary principles of Taoist female worship. Chapter 16 of *Tao Te Ching* fully shows the importance of Xujing and the association of Xujing wisdom and motherly virtue. Laozi said, "I try to make the humility of the mind as great as possible, so that the tranquility of life will remain unchanged. Because I have examined the life cycle of all flourished things and found the law of nature: all things flourish by returning to motherly root which is called humility and tranquility, and humility and tranquility makes life vitality and longevity. One cannot recognize this law of nature often causes chaos and disasters, whereas one can recognize this law of nature is called being wise and all-encompassing, open-minded, fair, and comprehensive, and will be able to conform to the natural Tao, so he can live a long life and ultimately achieve immortality." (致虛極，守靜笃。萬物並作，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。不知常，妄作凶。知常容，容乃公，公乃全，全乃天，天乃道，道

乃久，沒身不殆。) (Laozi 2011, p. 39). The Xujing principle, symbolized with feminine virtues, can be further explained by the Taoist doctrines of Xu (虛) and Jing (靜).

In addition to the definition of Qianxu (謙虛)—humility, modesty, or open-mindedness—Xu can also be defined by Xuwu (虛無)—emptiness, nothingness, or simplicity. Though they have different emphasized aspects, they are compatible. Xuwu emphasizes the formal essence of Xu, while Qianxu highlights the spiritual essence of Xu. In form, only emptiness, nothingness, or simplicity can embrace existence; while in spirit, only humility, modesty, or open-mindedness can make progress. Xu is symbolized by the motherly virtue of selflessly giving birth to all beings; as Gang Li concludes after his analysis of *Xishengching* (《西升經》[17]), the motherly Tao is the Taoist emptiness and nothingness, which gives birth to, contains, and nurtures all existences, thus being called the abyss of Tao (G. Li 2017, p. 304). Xu is also symbolized by the feminine features of being low-keyed, patient, and inclusive. This can be seen from Laozi's repeated use of the valley and the water to symbolize feminine Xu. In chapter 6, Laozi equates the immortal valley to the mysterious mother (谷神不死，是謂玄牝). In chapter 8, Laozi greatly advocates the feminine Tao of being humble and virtuous like water: "Water is beneficial for all things without competition. It is located in humble places rejected by others. It is for this humble virtue and low-keyed position; water is exactly the example of feminine Tao." (水善利萬物而不爭，處衆人之所惡，故幾于道。) (Laozi 2011, p. 22). Hence, there are some famous Chinese sayings like "having a mind as humble as a valley" (虛懷若谷) and "having the best virtue like water"(上善若水).

Likewise, for Jing, there are several meanings, such as Qingjing (清靜)—tranquility, quietness, and serenity—and Ningjing (甯靜)—peacefulness, stillness, or calmness. Jing is highly praised by Laozi. In chapter 15 of *Tao Te Ching*, it is written that "Who can stop flowing like a muddy stream of water and become quiet and slowly tranquil? Who can remain silent for a long time like the grass and trees, yet sprout vitality without ceasing? He who maintains the above essentials of the Tao refuses to be complacent. Precisely because he is never complacent, he is able to remove the old and renew the new." (孰能濁以靜之徐清？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。) (Laozi 2011, p. 37). Laozi says in chapter 26 that "Calmness is the root of frivolousness, stillness is the king of restlessness, so the saints do not walk away from calmness and stillness all day long. Or they will lose the root with frivolousness, and fail the king with restlessness" (重爲輕根，靜爲躁君，是以聖人終日行不離輜重。輕則失本，躁則失君。) (Laozi 2011, p. 71). Laozi also argues that in chapter 45 that "Impatience surpasses coldness, tranquility surpasses hotness, tranquility is the righteousness of the world" (躁勝寒，靜勝熱，清靜爲天下正。) (Laozi 2011, p. 127). Such virtues of Qingjing—tranquility, quietness, and serenity—and Ningjing—peacefulness, stillness, or calmness—are often venerated by Taoists as the feminine features. This veneration can be seen in the above-mentioned chapter 25 of *Tao Te Ching*, where Laozi proclaims the tranquil and peaceful oneness of all things to be the mother of all beings (有物混成.....寂兮寥兮.....可以爲天下母。) (Laozi 2011, p. 65). Again, like Xu, femininity serves as the symbol of Taoist doctrine of Jing. In fact, Xu and Jing are not discrete; instead, they are the two complementary sides of an integral whole intended to fully demonstrate the Taoist female worship's principle of Xujing.

How, then, to practice the Xujing principle? Zhuangzi put forward Xinzhai (心齋) and Zuowang (坐忘). Xinzhai refers to the concentration of the mind without distraction, concentrating on the transforming ear-listening to heart-listening and, further, to breath-listening to free the senses from the complexity of the world (Zhan 1990, pp. 78–79). Zuowang means sitting in oblivion to "forget one's body, abandon one's cleverness, keep free from the bonds of form and intelligence, and merge with the great Tao as one" (隳支體，黜聰明，離形去智，同于大通。) (Zhuangzi 2007, p. 141). In other words, Zuowang enables people to perceive internal peace without being constrained by external desires, thus arriving at a state of open-mindedness and enlightenment. Accordingly, there were twelve practicing processes of the Xujing principle with Xinzhai and Zuowang: awakening the perception of soul (一靈獨覺法), obliterating external chaos and keeping internal peace

(泯外守中法), meditating on heart and keeping unity (冥心守一法), fastening mind and controlling orifices (系心守竅法), emptying heart and fulfilling lower abdomen (虛心實腹法), connecting mind with breath (心息相依法), concentrating attention and illuminating stillness (凝神寂照法), returning to light and regaining observation (回光返照法), resting mind and stopping thoughts (息心止念法), thinking about the eternal Tao (存想谷神法), resting delusions and sticking to truth (息妄全真法), and returning to the original simple state (返還先天法) (Xiao 2017, pp. 251–58).

The Xujing principle, with the practical methods of Xinzhai and Zuowang, can be traced back to Xuanmu's (玄母) ritual of Taoist cultivation. According to the *Shangqing Yuanshi Bianhua Baozhen Zhen Shangching* (《上清元始變化寶真上經》[18]), "to practice the cultivation ritual of Xuanmu, one should take a bath and empty stomach, enter the room, face the southeast, make nine obeisances, then sit in a flat position facing the north, knock on the teeth for nine times, and finally contemplate Xuanmu with eyes closed following four seasons' forms and shadows in the Nine Heavens (九天) and in the Qionglin Qiying Zhigong (瓊林七暎之宮)……" (qtd. in Zhan 1990, p. 80). This ritual focuses on eliminating distracting thoughts and entering a state of humility and tranquility to harmonize body and mind, becoming a typical practice of the Xujing principle. Many female Taoists, equal to male Taoists, are the model immortals in practicing Xujing principle. For example, Guanfu Huang (黃觀福), a banished Shangqing immortal (上清谪仙), was devoted to the Taoist practice of keeping inner peace and tranquility, eating cypress leaves and sitting in silence all day long since childhood, and successfully returned to the immortal world (Li Yang 2000a, p. 88). According to the collections of female immortals, Shangxian Dong (董上仙) was "good at keeping in tranquility and harmony"; Wangshi (王氏) "stayed alone in a quiet room with burning incense and inner peace"; Wangshi Nǚ (王氏女) "was good at self-purification by keeping still for a longtime"; and Xiaoyao Qi (戚逍遙) "was good at quietness and simplicity" (Li Yang 2000a, pp. 84–88). They carried out the practices of concentrating on the mind (專志), observing the inner world (內觀), smoothing the breath (順氣), and stopping the chaos (止亂), thus arriving at the realm of quietness and selflessness (虛空忘我), the unity of the nature and self (天人合一), and finally attaining Taoist immortality. Their life stories show the efficiency of the Xujing principle, especially the Xinzhai and Zuowang practices. In the world's various religions, few but Taoism offer equal opportunities for men and women. It is said that in Taoist cultivation there were some special cases in which women could achieve immortality more easily than men because women had special physiology and psychology, so they could enjoy the benefits of this priority (Chen 1989, p. 152). Fan Furen was an example. In the Jin Dynasty (晉朝), the couple Gang Liu and Yunjiao Fan practiced immortality together, and Fan Furen's immortality skills surpassed Gang Liu's, embodying the idea of female immortals overpowering male immortals (Yi 2016, p. 126).

However, it is significant to claim that Xujing is not a gendered principle but a normative principle. It is normative for both men and women. In other words, empirically, feminine virtues like Qianxu—humility, modesty, or open-mindedness; Xuwu—emptiness, nothingness, or simplicity; Qingjing—tranquility, quietness, and serenity; and Ningjing—peacefulness, stillness, or calmness, may be found more often in women, but the normative truth is that men also have these qualities. They are the noble traits of nature, from which human beings should learn; they befit not only human beings but also for the whole universe. Simultaneously, it is also necessary to claim that Xujing, with the above-mentioned practices of Xinzhai and Zuowang, is not gendered and stereotyped to be exclusively for women. The noteworthy point is that all words related to female or male are used only in the sense of a metaphor and refer more essentially to normative meanings for human life. It is in this sense that the Xujing principle is of great significance for human individual cultivation. The Xujing principle is of great importance to maintaining the balance and harmony of the human–self relationship. According to Shichuang Zhan, Taoist female immortals, equal to Taoist male immortals, should practice the Xujing principle, which consists of two major levels: one is to refine the form and transform the body, an-

other is to accumulate virtues and refine morality; the two levels are complementary to each other and form an organic whole (Zhan 1990, p. 84). In the Taoist immortal world, Pengzu's (彭祖) method of prolonging life has been circulated; by having Yuanjun Taiyi Jindan (元君太一金丹) or taking herbs, the joints of Yinyang Qi can travel without any stagnation in either bending or stretching; by nourishing the spirit with good deeds and refining the soul while sitting in oblivion, one can live long, ascend to Heaven, and become immortal (X. Zhang 2001, p. 561). Cainǚ (采女) grasped the essentials of Pengzu's method, appeared like a maiden of fifteen or sixteen years old when she was actually two hundreds and seventy years old, and joined the female immortal system; moreover, she instructed the method to the King of Shang (商王), and he prolonged his life to 300 years old (X. Zhang 2001, p. 561). Laozi says, "I am in great worry because I have a body; if I had no body, what worry would I be in? Therefore, if the preciousness of one's body is for the purpose of contributing for the world, the world can be entrusted to him; and if the love of one's body is for the purpose of benefiting the world, the world can be depended on him" (吾所以有大患者，爲吾有身， 及吾無身， 吾有何患？故貴以身爲天下， 若可寄天下； 愛以身爲天下， 若可托天下。) (Laozi 2011, p. 32). It can be seen that at the level of human–self relationship, body and mind play equal roles: the purpose of refining the form and transforming the body is to better accumulate virtues, and only by moral practice can the form be refined and the body be transformed.

In brief, based on traditional Taoist doctrines and contemporary feminist interpretations, Taoist female worship advocates the classical principles of Qiwu, Zhuyin, and Xujing in dealing with human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships. These principles condense the core of *Tao Te Ching*: to follow the Tao (道)—the origin, operating law, and returning of the universe; and to promote the Te (德)—morality, virtues, or ethics. These principles do not operate independently but are inseparable, complementary, and mutually reinforcing. They have had different receptions at different times and have inspired various historical practices. In contemporary times, with the growing ecological, social, and personal crises, there is an urgent need to find solutions. Driven culture root-seeking thoughts, Taoist female worship, as an oriental religious tradition and a cultural symbolism of Tao, has been revived, and its classical principles have been inherited and developed into some new practical concepts applicable in the contemporary context, playing an important role in the re-construction of ethical relationships and the resolution of worldwide crises.

4. The Contemporary Practices of Taoist Female Worship

The contemporary era is characterized by high-level globalization, complex social relations, and increasing physical and mental illnesses. It is a time full of natural, social, and personal crises. In Chinese history, there is an old law that Taoism has always been able to rescue the situation in troubled times (Nan 2012, p. 9). This is because Taoism regards the persuasion of benevolence to be one of its most important religious functions (X. Zhang 2001, p. 191). Taoist female worship, as a religious tradition of Taoism, also regards virtue persuasion as one of its important contents and spiritual interests. All of the Taoist immortals, male or female, are venerated because of their laudable virtues. The reason why Xiwangmu has been the top female immortal for thousands of years is precisely because of her everlasting function as an ethical model. The revered status of the other immortals is likewise dependent on their ethical edification in response to the evolution of time. In fact, as analyzed in Part 3, Taoist female worship has a significant function of ethical enlightenment with respect to human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships. Even though Taoist female worship is far away from contemporary daily life in terms of religious rituals, its ethical significance has never faded; instead, its function of being a cultural metaphor of Tao still subtly influences the contemporary world and contributes to Chinese wisdom confronting the contemporary crises for the whole world. Specifically, interpreted under the perspective of contemporary feminism, the Qiwu principle has been developed into the ethical practice of thingness re-enchantment, helping modern people to

rethink the human–nature relationship and establish sustainable ecological ethics to solve the ecological crisis. The Zhuyin principle has evolved into the practical view of world harmony, guiding people to reflect on the ethical human–human relationship and to reshape a harmonious social ethical outlook to cope with the social crisis. The Xujing principle functions as the ethical foundation of contemporary practices of self-cultivation, driving people to reflect on the human–self relationship and to build a positive life ethics to remove themselves from personal crisis.

4.1. The Practice of Thingness Re-Enchantment

The Qiwu principle has been developed into thingness re-enchantment, aiming to help people construct sustainable ecological ethics to cope with ecological crises. The term "thingness" refers to the "the vital thingness of all things". Thingness re-enchantment refers to the restoration of the charm of all things' vital "thingness". It inherited the essence of Zhuangzi's Qiwu theory, which is well-manifested in the story of "Zhuangzhou Dreams of a Butterfly" (莊周夢蝴蝶), which talks about the mutual transformation of Zhuangzhou and a butterfly in a dream and expounds the transformation and trans-corporeality of the human and the non-human. It is also inspired by the story of Xiwangmu, who embodies the five elements of gold, wood, water, fire, and earth, which also well-illustrates the transformation and trans-corporeality of the human and the non-human. With the inheritance and inspiration from Zhuangzi's and Xiwangmu's stories, thingness re-enchantment highlights thingness's transformation and trans-corporeality among all things. Transformation and trans-corporeality stress the dynamic of the material transportation of all things according to material feminist thoughts (Alaimo and Hekman 2008, p. 14). In this sense, thingness re-enchantment criticizes anthropocentrism and egocentrism. It believes that with the transformation and trans-corporeality, all things become one, so there is no more discrimination between one and the other. Holding this belief, thingness re-enchantment aims to revive the enchantment of vital thingness which has been repressed during the last centuries. By recovering the common sense that everyone and everything came from and will return to the vital thingness, the equal relationship between the human and the non-human can be revived.

If the Qiwu principle expresses Taoist simple materialist thought which regards Taoist Qi as the unit oneness of all things (X. Yang 2017b, p. 68), then thingness re-enchantment highlights the new materialist thought of "contemporary Neo-Taoism" (Dong 1991, p. 2), which takes the energetic quantum as the vital thingness. In other words, it pays closer attention to the vital thingness than to the unit oneness. It believes that both peripheral material like Qi or quanta and macroscopic materials like Heaven or Earth are the energetic beings with vital thingness in them, and all the things are in a vital isomorphic and mutually sensible whole (X. Yang 2017b, p. 68). However, it also believes that both the unit oneness and the vital thingness are natural organisms with vital life, active agency, dynamic power, and ever-lasting trans-corporeality. It argues that both the unit oneness and the vital thingness will return to nature. Namely, they are the two aspects of nature: the unit oneness is the epistemological and ontological basis of nature; while the vital thingness is the methodological and empirical embodiment of nature. On this basis, the Qiwu principle highlighting the unit oneness comparatively emphasizes more of the religious goal of Taoist naturalness and mystical immortality, while thingness re-enchantment emphasizing that the vital thingness is more catering to the contemporary status quo and is thus more applicable to the general public in solving realistic problems, especially the environmental crisis.

Thingness re-enchantment believes that both the unit oneness and the vital thingness are materialistic and exist ahead of humanity. However, this is not to stress the priority of thingness over humanity but to oppose the discrimination and bias against thingness during the past centuries and revive the enchantment and importance of thingness. In fact, using word "re-enchantment", thingness re-enchantment aims to restore the equality between thingness and humanity and return to the harmonious relationship of human–

nature. On this basis, to confront the environmental crisis, thingness re-enchantment practically puts forward sustainable ecological ethics, including the Heaven and Earth ethic as well as the animal and plant ethic.

With the legacy of the Taoist viewpoint of Heaven and Earth, thingness re-enchantment proposes principles and practices of the Heaven and Earth ethic. *Taiping Ching* states that the Heaven and Earth are the father and mother of all things (M. Wang 1997, p. 120). Heaven is regarded as the father of all things, whose wind, rain, thunder, and lightning are the physical and mental activities of the father. *Taiping Ching* compares the Earth to a mother's body, and the various components of the Earth are like the organs and tissues of the mother, believing that spring water is her blood, stone is her bone, and earth is her flesh, all of which have her spirits and feelings; therefore, human beings should treat the Heaven and Earth as their father and mother, that is, with great cherishing and caring (Zhan 2003, p. 65). Thingness re-enchantment identifies with the Taoist idea of celestial induction; it believes that the occurrence of natural disasters is closely related to human behaviors, so people should look for the causes and solutions in their own behaviors. Thingness re-enchantment advocates the attitude towards disasters of Nüwa. It says, in ancient times, that the four poles were abolished, the nine continents were split up, the Heavens cannot cover, the Earth cannot carry, the fires and waters were unquenchable, the beasts ate the people, and the preying birds seized the old and the weak, so Nüwa refined the five-colored stone to mend the Heaven, broke the whole to establish the four poles, killed the black dragon to help Jizhou (濟州), and accumulated ashes to stop the fires and waters (X. Zhang 2001, p. 549). Nüwa's practice in mending Heaven shows the ethical code that confronts crises: humankind should actively rectify the human–nature relationship to maintain the ecological balance. It also represents Nüwa's wisdom of Sancai Xiangdao (三才相盜): Heaven, Earth, and human beings depend on each other; human beings draw nourishment from Heaven and Earth for existence; human beings steal energy from all things for survival and development; and all things receive material creation from human beings; therefore, human beings should live in harmony with Heaven and Earth and sense each other with their own closely related periphery to achieve the unity of Heaven, Earth, and humankind, or else human beings will suffer in danger (Liu Yang 2014, p. 50). Deeply rooted in the collective unconsciousness of Nüwa's wisdom, thingness re-enchantment also believes that Heaven and Earth are living organisms; if they are ill or destroyed, human beings will also face the same fate; namely, humankind is a part of nature, and human activities are subjected to the laws of nature. Therefore, when facing disasters, human beings should first make up for their misdoings towards nature before they can save themselves. On this basis, thingness re-enchantment fights against unlimited exploitation, expansive production, and excessive consumption. This sustainable Heaven and Earth ethic has led to a growing awareness of environmental protection in society, families, and individuals, and a gradual increase in environmental protection actions.

With the inheritance of the Taoist motherly virtues of Ziran and Wuwei, thingness re-enchantment proposes practices of an animal and plant ethic. Either Ziran or Wuwei believe in the vital thingness of all beings, which can be seen from the common animatism of all things, just as Shichuang Zhan points out that Taoism upholds the theory of animatism based on the position that everything has the essence of Tao (Zhan 2003, p. 65). In Taoism, all beings are the creatures of the essential Tao, the four seasons and five elements are also the essential Tao of Heaven and Earth; the six animals and the beasts, the plants, and vegetables are the divine treasures composed of the four seasons and the five elements of the universe. Accordingly, there are a large number of precepts requiring people to correctly treat the ecological environment of Heaven and Earth, human beings, plants, and animals, with "abstaining from killing" (戒殺生) as the major precept and an important principle in dealing with the relationship between human beings and the environment (Lin 2007, p. 36). It promotes benevolence for animals and plants, "If an animal is in danger, human beings should help it, which in return will protect human beings not to be harmed by any evil in the world" (qtd. in Zhan 2003, p. 61). It requires that "one should not burn the fields,

mountains, and forests with fire, and one should not pick the flowers and grasses… one should not cut down the forests randomly" (qtd. in Zhan 2003, p. 62). On this basis, thingness re-enchantment also requires the plant and animal ethical practices of anti-killing or injuring any living things, anti-burning wild fields or mountains, anti-cutting down trees, anti-picking flowers or plants, anti-polluting rivers, anti-exhausting natural sources, anti-over-fishing and hunting, and anti-going up a tree to look for nests and breaking eggs, etc. Thingness re-enchantment requires human beings to care for animals and plants, to help animals and plants to relieve themselves out of difficulties, and to protect the diversity of species. These ethical practices can protect the ecological environment and maintain the harmony between human and nature. As all things are fundamentally linked with each other, and human beings cannot be purely autonomous in existence, the ethical practices of thingness re-enchantment are not only beneficial for the environment but also for mankind's safety, health, and happiness.

Thingness re-enchantment re-announces Laozi's three treasures of keeping charity, maintaining frugality, and daring not to take actions before others with ecological concern. It requires people to take the lifestyles of subtraction, non-possession, minimalism, and vegetarianism. Such lifestyles contain the simple idea of ecological balance and the unity of all things, which not only protects Heaven, Earth, animals, and plants but also benefits human beings. In other words, thingness re-enchantment shows great sympathy and respect for non-human nature, non-human animals, and plants. It is characterized by a sense of cosmic wholeness and the ethical practices of ecological balance and harmony. With the ethic of Heaven and Earth, as well as the ethic of animal and plant, the unit oneness, vital thingness, material spontaneity, and energetic dynamism of all existence are highlighted, while consumerism, materialism, and money worship are questioned and reflected upon. As a consequence, the benign and balanced ecological chain can be preserved, the tensions between human beings and nature can be alleviated, the justice between human beings and animals and plants can be achieved, and the ecological crisis is expected to be resolved.

4.2. The Practice of Harmony World

The principle of Zhuyin, based on Yinyang balance, has evolved into the contemporary concept of harmony world, which guides mankind to rebuild social ethics in dealing with social crises. Shichuang Zhan points out that the social ethics of Taoism emphasizes Yinyang balance and harmony, which are thought-provoking and practical for maintaining the harmonious and benign development of society (Zhan 2003, p. 59). It believes that not only are men and women born of Yinyang harmony; different nations are also born of it. It advocates an open and inclusive mindset to re-examine all kinds of antagonistic social relationships to promote the construction of social harmony (Luo 2017, p. 363). Qitan Lin argues that as the highest classic of Taoism, *Tao Te Ching*'s social thought is mainly against oppression and war and advocates social justice; the ideal society of "a small country with few people" (小國寡民) to be constructed shows us a harmonious world with no wars, no exploitation, no oppression, living and working in peace and contentment, enjoying oneself, and tranquility and beauty (Lin 2007, p. 35). Inspired by Laozi's advice to achieve a "Xuantong Shijie" (玄同世界)—ideal world, based on the cosmology of Yinyang balance and harmony—harmony world advocates ten practical norms: anti-gender oppression; anti-classical exploitation; anti-national injustice; anti-war; anti-over taxation; anti-interference; anti-extravagance in production, population, and consumerism; anti-polarization between the rich and the poor; anti-hijacking of social wealth by a few people; anti-monopoly of major powers.

As we can see, the Zhuyin principle has evolved into the universal social practices of harmony world. The relationship between the two concepts contains two aspects. On the one hand, they share their underlying cosmology of Yinyang balance and harmony. They both hold the worldview that every person, each group, and every nation contain Yin and Yang without belonging exclusively to either Yin or Yang. The double-fish-circle perfectly reflects this idea, which is not only the symbol Taoism but also the metaphor of

harmony world. On the other hand, they are different, first, with respect their applicable people; the former was put forward mainly for the Taoist population, while the latter is practical for the general public. Meanwhile, the former is the epistemological and ontological foundation of the latter, while the latter is the methodological and empirical practice of the former. Specifically, the Zhuyin principle is closely bonded with the Taoist purpose of immortality; while harmony world is specifically catering to resolve contemporary social crises caused by unjust human–human relationships for ordinary people. Therefore, a harmonious world particularly focuses on familial and national relationship, which are key to society harmony. Based on the core of harmony, it proposes the ethical practices of family harmony and international peace so as to guide people to rebuild human–human relationship remove themselves from social crisis.

The harmonious world learns from the principle of Zhuyin and puts forward harmonious family ethics. In the Taoist female immortal world, women's lives are as important as men's. It is of boundless beneficence for immortals to save lives and maintain Yinyang orders. Xiwangmu is the most revered female immortal precisely because she adopted and guarded abandoned women and raised thousands of daughters, and she even found appropriate male immortals to be husbands in her dual roles as a leader and a mother (Li Yang 2000a, p. 64). Obviously, Xiwangmu plays an important role in family protection. The concept of the harmonious world draws its nourishment from the Taoist female worship system and follows the principles of application of both masculinity and femininity, the complementation of Yin and Yang, the unity of male and female, as well as the coupling of the rigid and the soft. It puts forward a series of family ethics. It believes that family harmony is a prerequisite for the realization of social harmony, while male–female harmony is a necessary condition for family harmony, and cherishing women is a prerequisite for male–female harmony. In view of this, it not only protects women's lives and status by criticizing patriarchal bias and the brutalization of women, it also empowers and respects women's right to achieve their ideal personalities by endorsing and supporting women's pursuit of their values inside and outside the family. Embedded in Taoist female followers' family life stories, harmony world encourages women to acquire inspirations and courage to establish self-identity and self-realization by becoming economically independent, creating social relationships, and constructing independent personalities, thus transcending the social norms of patriarchal traditions.

The noteworthy point is that when claiming that cherishing women or applying femininity is a prerequisite for male–female harmony, it is neither belittling men or masculinity nor stereotyping males or females. Instead, by supporting women or urging femininity, it is opposing the common discrimination and bias against women of the dominant society. The fact is that harmony world upholds the position of equality between men and women, clarifies the interdependent and inseparable relationship between men and women, and suggests that men and women should learn from each other so as to attain gender complementation and win–win cooperation. With the practice of the family ethics of harmony world, the conflicts caused by the logocentric dichotomy framework can be alleviated, a harmonious family order can be established, and social harmony can be basically guaranteed.

Harmony world also learns from the Taoist cosmology of Yinyang balance and harmony and comes up with the nation ethic to attain world peace. Taoism's appreciation for femininity lies in the feminine wisdom of living selflessly, humbly, and inclusively like water, which is embracing, raising, and benefiting all things without striving for fame and fortune (Cheng 2017, p. 328). Such wisdom is inspiring for national and international issues. Laozi said, "A great nation should be like the river and sea, resting in a humble place, so that all the nations can meet there. The feminine power lies in their serenity, tranquility, and humility. Likewise, if a big country can be humble to a small country, it will surely be able to gain the trust and attachment of the small country; if a small country can be humble to a big country, it will also be able to gain the trust and support of the big country" (大邦者下流。天下之牝，天下之交也。牝恒以靜取勝牡，以靜爲下。故大邦以下小邦，則取小邦；小邦以下大邦，則取大邦。) (Laozi 2011, p. 164). Laozi also said that "The river

and the sea can be the king of hundreds of valleys because they are good at being at the lower positions. If the sages are humble in words, selfless in front of fame and wealth, and inclusive for differences, they can win the respect, support, and compliance of people, because they don't contend with the people, there is no one who can contend with him" (江海所以能爲百谷王者，以其善下之也，是以能爲佰谷王。是以聖人之欲上民也，必以其言下之；其欲先民也，必以其身後之。是以聖人處上而民不重，處前而民不害。是以天下樂推而不厭。以其不爭，故天下莫能與之爭。) (Laozi 2011, p. 175). Based on Taoist wisdom in international issues, harmony world puts forward a national ethic of fairness, openness, and justice. It advocates that the great nations should learn from the humble river and sea or gentle and inclusive femininity and establish harmonious diplomatic relations based on humility and inclusion. It puts forward the ethical practices like generate prosperity in harmony (和衷共濟), cooperate to achieve double wins (合作共赢), grow together in peace (和平相處), seek common ground while holding back differences (求同存異), embrace different civilizations and cultures(兼容並包), collaborate towards a common goal in the same boat (同舟共進), develop parallelly without contradicting each other (齊頭並進), benefit from each other's strengths and make up each other's shortfalls (互通有無), etc.

Simultaneously, harmony world follows Taoist negative attitudes towards the army in several chapters of *Tao Te Ching*. In chapter 30, Laozi criticized that "Those who support their masters with the Tao do not use their soldiers to rule the world, because everything has a cause and effect. Thorns and thistles are born wherever the army is located. After the war, there will be an inauspicious year. Goodness leads to goodness, so dare not to take the fierceness." (以道佐人主者，不以兵強天下，其事好還。師之所處，荊棘生焉。大軍之後，必有凶年。善有果而已，不敢以取強。) (Laozi 2011, p. 80) In chapter 31, Laozi reinforced his criticism that "The good army is an ominous weapon. All things hate it, so the saint with Tao does not favor it. It must not be used unless it is a last resort, because peace is the top morality. If one has to wins a war, he should not be happy and proud. Otherwise, he is bloodthirsty, and will never fulfil his ambition. Auspicious things are placed left while sinister things are positioned right. Literary generals are placed on the left while military generals are located on the right, who are treated with the funeral rites. Namey, killers should be sorry with sadness and tears, and a victorious battle should be treated with funeral rites." (夫佳兵者，不祥之器。物或惡之，故有道者不處。兵者，不樣之器，非君子之器。不得已而用之，恬淡爲上，勝而不美。而美之者，是樂殺人。夫樂殺人者，侧不可以得志于天下矣。吉事尚左，凶事尚右。偏將軍居左，上將軍居右，言以喪禮處之。殺人之衆，以哀悲泣之。戰勝，以喪禮處之。) (Laozi 2011, p. 83) Highly identifying with Laozi's positive attitudes towards war, harmony world believes that life vitality is characterized by softness, inclusiveness, and harmony, while deathly lifelessness is characterized by hardness, discrimination, and violence; therefore, a strong army will never be victorious because its powerful, violence, and bias are hated and opposed by the whole world. On the contrary, harmony, peace, and love are the source of vital life, the birth of all beings, and the home of all peoples. Therefore, harmony world advocates harmony diplomacy, publicizes peace, opposes violence, and protests any unjust fiercely contested and costly wars. Such nation ethics have become the solid foundation and value support for the construction of a community of human destiny in the new era, which can help mankind to effectively confront social crises.

4.3. The Practice of Self-Cultivation

Last but not least, the Xujing principle has been inherited and developed by the trend of self-cultivation, which guides contemporary people to construct a positive life ethic to resolve personal crises. According to Catherine Despeux and Livia Kohn, it is essential for the Xujing principle to equally cultivate body and mind, which is called "Xingming Shuangxiu" (性命雙修)—the "dual cultivation of inner nature and destiny" (Despeux and Kohn 2003, p. 211). Yuhui Yang also points out that the Xujing principle advocates Xingming Shuangxiu to maintain longevity and spiritual immortality (Y. Yang 2017c, p. 144). On this basis, self-cultivation puts forward the life ethic of Xingshen Shuangxiu (形神雙修)—

dual cultivation of form and spirit to maintain a balanced and harmonious human–self relationship. Weitao Yang points out that Taoist ethical wisdom in the human–self relationship helps people to realize the true nature and value of life in the present society, which is surrounded by material and secular life (W. Yang 2017a, p. 223). The cultivation of form (形) means taking good care of the body through daily mindful clothing, eating, housing, and exercising, etc., to maintain physical health and beauty. The cultivation of spirit (神) refers to mind purification and moral refinement to perfect the soul and maintain benevolence. The double cultivation of form and spirit can work together to achieve life vitality and spiritual fulfillment.

It is worth noting that though deeply rooted in the dual cultivation of body and mind, the dual cultivation of form and spirit still has some differences from the former. First, the former often stresses the power of bedchamber arts (房中術), with an appreciation of the role of female sexuality in achieving longevity and immortality, while the latter does not stress sexuality, longevity, or immortality; instead, it advocates a tempered lifestyle in each aspect of daily life to improve life quality. Second, the former places a high premium on the cultivation of Qi, namely, Neidan (内丹)—internal alchemy practice, advocating that one cultivate essence (養精), refine breath (煉氣), and condense spirit (凝神) so as to reach longevity and immortality; whereas the later attaches great importance to meditation (冥想) and sitting still (靜坐). Third, in refining morality, the former foregrounds Qianxu, Ziran, and Wuwei, while the later combines Taoist ethical principles with the Confucian ethics of loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, and righteousness (忠孝仁義). It is obvious that self-cultivation with dual cultivation of form and spirit is catering to the contemporary time, which is characterized by religious syncretism; it not only highlights the importance of body vitality and mental health but also puts special emphasis on ethical education to deal with moral crisis. Despite these differences, the Xujing principle and self-cultivation are fundamentally common. The Xujing principle is the original source, the basic logic, and underlying principle of self-cultivation.

Based on the Xujing principle of reshaping the form, self-cultivation pays great attention to the practical cultivation of the body. Taoism's aim is to prolong life and achieve longevity and immortality, so it attaches great importance to the health of body. According to Shichuang Zhan, in the view of Taoists, keeping one's form intact and healthy is not only a basic requirement for a person to live a lifetime; it is also an inevitable manifestation of natural law (Zhan 2003, p. 61). On this basis, in order to cultivate the body, self-cultivation advocates that we learn from the Xujing principle, especially its wisdom of Xinzhai. It promotes the simplicity and purification of the body by adopting a minimalist lifestyle. It believes the to simplify or purifying the body is a process of continuous relaxation for the sake of physical health and freedom. Self-cultivation suggests following Laozi's promotion of "embracing simplicity and thrifty, possessing less self-interests and desires" (見素抱樸，少思寡欲) (Laozi 2011, p. 48). Additionally, self-cultivation promotes that everyone should adopt the mindful lifestyle; it requires people to mindfully eat healthy food, have cloth with natural fabrics, live in a clean house, and engage in gentle exercises like Taijiquan (太極拳) and Baduanjin (八段錦) to reach a state of bodily purification, simplicity, and vitality.

Self-cultivation also attaches great importance to the cultivation of the spirit. It strongly recommends Zhuangzi's Zuowang practice by meditating and sitting still to attain inner peace. Youhui Shu elucidated, "The key to cultivate one's body lies in the cultivation of spirit, namely getting rid of distracting thoughts and clearing one's mind of all desires; if the one's mind is peaceful, then illnesses and evils will be eliminated" (Shu 2017, p. 155). Similar to the twelve practicing processes of the Xujing principle, it also formulates twelve self-cultivating methods of spirit: keeping natural mind peace (自然清靜), conforming to naturalness (順應自然), maintaining the righteousness of mind and thoughts (正心正念), keeping moderate and restrained (適度有節), staying calm and sedate (淡定從容), living mindfully in the present (活在當下), being content and happy with current possession (知足常樂), pursuing noble taste with simplicity and thrifty (簡素致遠), returning to hu-

mility and tranquility (清空歸零), holding great wisdom with great humility (大智若愚), knowing the nature law and accepting personal fate (知天樂命), and enjoying peacefulness and happiness (安享清歡) (Xu and Lei 2018).

In the cultivation of spirit, self-cultivation pays more attention to accumulating virtues and refining moralities based on the normative doctrine of the Xujing principle. Shichuang Zhan points out that Taoism links human life encounters with ethics and morality (Zhan 2003, p. 60) and has the function of teaching benevolence and removing evils with the obvious concepts of immortality and life ethics (Zhan 2003, p. 62). Taoist female immortals, equal to male immortals, are not only good at body and mind cultivation but also focus more on accumulating virtues and helping the world. All the revered Taoist female immortals, like the revered Taoist male immortals, show ethical wisdom with great charity and compassion. Doumu Yuanjun (斗母元君) is described as a great saint, with charity and compassion; if living beings in trouble called her name, she would always come to save them from their suffering by following their voices (X. Zhang 2001, p. 535). Similarly, Bixia Yuanjun (碧霞元君) was devoted to taking good care of all the good and evil things on Earth, blessing farmland, business, travel, marriage, and childbirth, and healing illness (X. Zhang 2001, p. 545). Mazu (媽祖) helped people out of disasters at sea with her compassion and good water skills (X. Zhang 2001, pp. 546–47). Other female immortals such as Cihang Zhenran (慈航真人), Shuntian Shengmu (順天元君), Ziwei Furen (紫薇夫人), Magu Yuanjun (麻姑元君), etc., also adopted moral transcendence as their life pursuit to attain immortality. Self-cultivation advocates that we learn from them to accumulate virtues and refine mortality. It stresses loyalty, filial piety, benevolence, and righteousness (忠孝仁義). It requires people to abide by virtuous principles and practices like giving and dispersing wealth, generating benevolence and love, accumulating merits and good deeds, and being selfless and inclusive. It also comes up with practical commandments such as not to steal, not to take ill-gotten gains, not to engage in illicit sexual intercourse, not to slander others with delusive words, not to speak with fake tongues, and not to conspire other evils. These ethical principles and practices, which focus on the self-cultivation of inner goodness, is of great significance for the proper handling of the modern human–self relationship, making a great contribution to the construction of contemporary life ethics.

In the cultivation of form and spirit, self-cultivation stresses "the unity of them without separation" (載營魄抱一) (Laozi 2011, p. 25)". Form and spirit, like inner nature and destiny, are generally seen as closely connected, without essential or substantive difference between them. Catherine Despeux and Livia Kohn conclude that "The two simply indicate different aspects of the same basic phenomenon; they should be intimately linked and merged into one integrated unity. As perception becomes clearer the unfolding of the adept's spiritual side brings with it physical transformations as well as a new understanding of body and self. Similarly, all physical changes effected by the practice bring about a new evolution of the inner psychological state." (Despeux and Kohn 2003, p. 214). In other words, the two are an inevitable integrity. The more the form is sublimated, the more spirit becomes light, radiant, and open, until it dissolves into eternal cosmic life. Such ethical practices of form and spirit help people to enhance the awareness of the integrity of body and mind so as to get rid of the fear of death, the uneasiness of life, and the detachment from self. Meanwhile, it is also noteworthy that the ethical practices of the dual cultivation of form and spirit are not exclusive for women, and the examples of female immortals' dual cultivation do not mean that only female immortals are capable of achieving immortality through the dual cultivation. In fact, self-cultivation is suitable for everyone. Feminine virtuous deeds can be seen in male immortals and can serve as examples for both female and male Taoists.

To sum up, the classical principles of Taoist female worship have been developed into contemporary practical concepts of thingness re-enchantment, harmony world, and self-cultivation from feminist perspectives. Like the three main classical principles, the three main contemporary practices also imply holistic thinking; they are an integrity; they complement each other and work together to regulate ethical human–nature, human–human,

and human–self relationships and to establish efficient environmental ethics, social ethics, and life ethics to cope with ecological crisis, social crisis, and personal crisis. In other words, with the contemporary practices, Taoist female worship is instructive for contemporary people to make the right ethical choices in order to achieve a positive ethical outcome in terms of the solution to contemporary crises; the construction and maintenance of a community of destiny among nature, society, and human beings; and the future survival and shared prosperity of all beings.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, interpreting from the perspective of feminism, Taoist female worship, as a Taoist religious tradition formed by the inheritance and development of goddess worship and female immortal worship, provides abundant Chinese wisdom for the whole world in terms of how to overcome contemporary crises by regulating ethical relationships. With the three main principles of Qiwu, Zhuyin, and Xujing, Taoist female worship established a set of worldviews concerning human–nature, human–human, and human–self relationships, which are of great help to the ethics construction of both ancient and modern times. With the main contemporary practices of thingness re-enchantment, harmony world, and self-cultivation, which are inherited and developed from the classical principles, Taoist female worship helps contemporary people to rethink ethical problems and resolve worldwide crises. Both the classical principles and contemporary practices not only reflect the ever-lasting glamour of Taoist female worship as a religious tradition which promotes Taoist doctrines but also demonstrate the timeless significance of Taoist female worship as a cultural symbolism which advocates environmental, social, and personal harmony through ethical practices.

The most praiseworthy point is that Taoist female worship jumps out of the superficial interpretation of concepts. As for the word "Taoist", it contains both "T (Tao—Nature)" and "-ist (Human related)". When talking about the word "Female", it means "F (female)" plus "M (male)" instead of single "F (female)". About "Worship", it defines the "W (water world)" by emphasizing the "Ship (water transportation)". These profound interpretations are what Taoist female worship aims to convey. It first illuminates the Natural Tao: "Human models on Earth; Earth models on Heaven, Heaven models on Tao; Tao models on Nature" (人法地，地法天，天法道，道法自然。) (Laozi 2011, p. 66). The human should follow the example of nature, conforming to natural law to maintain the human–nature harmony. Second, it implies the Tao of Yinyang cosmology: "Tao begets one, one begets two, two begets three, and three begets all things. Everything contains Yin and Yang, and they interact to form a harmonious whole" (道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物。萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以爲和。) (Laozi 2011, p. 120); therefore, a harmonious human–human relationship is essential to establishing a harmonious society. Third, Taoist female worship signifies the Tao of Being like Water: "human should be like water to cultivate the best virtues—beneficial for all things without competition, locate in humble places, have a benevolent heart, be kind to others, speak trustworthy, good at leadership, do professional things, and move timely. No-competition makes no wrongdoings." (水善利萬物而不爭，處衆人之所惡，故幾于道。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。) (Laozi 2011, p. 22). In this way, an individual can live peacefully with others and by themselves. In this sense, Taoist female worship itself has been a form of Tao to some extent, which provides more than virtuous Taoist models for Chinese people; it also offers sublime Taoist wisdom for the whole world.

Catherine Despeux and Livia Kohn commended that "Daoism goes beyond mainstream in that many of its strands propose a feminine ideal as cosmic yin and venerate important goddesses and immortals. These serve as models to living women. Daoism, moreover, offers a social alternative for women in that it opens paths to pursue their own goals as independent agents, be it the practice of self- cultivation, service as mediums, nuns, or priests, or attainment of immortality." (Despeux and Kohn 2003, p. 5). While paying tribute to their penetrating commends, this article believes Taoism to transcend the main-

stream not only in its proposition of the feminine ideal as cosmic Yin based on goddess and immortal veneration but also in the establishment, development, and spread of Taoist female worship as a worshipful Tao itself, which highlights the universally symbolized feminine virtues beneficial for all. So to speak, Taoist female worship brings more than an alternative for both men and women to pursue life fulfillment; it also opens the mind's eye for all beings to see and embrace the capitalized cosmic Life as it is.

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Notes

1 Taoist school (道家) is one of the most important philosophical trends in ancient China, which arose in the Spring and Autumn periods of pre-Qin era. The original "Taoist school" was represented by Laozhuang thoughts or Huang-Lao thought that prevailed during the Warring States and Qinhan periods. During the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty, by growing from the philosophical root of Taoist school, inheriting ancient immortals, and absorbing some of the contents of Chinese primitive religions and folk beliefs, Taoism (道教) was established and institutionalized as a religion practicing longevity and immortality with complete immortal systems, standardized doctrines, professional teachings, specialized organizations or associations, and communal rituals. For further information, please refer to (K. Wang 2019).

2 Chinese Wicca (中國) began as a sacrificial culture in ancient times. It is rooted in folklore and has deep roots, and like the three religions of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, it is a traditional Chinese culture. It is a Chinese tradition beyond the three religions. As one of the hundred schools in the Spring and Autumn (春秋) Period, Chinese Wicca was not recorded in the official history, and was later merged with the Zhengyi Tao (正一道) of Zhangling (張陵), one of the founders of Taoism.

3 Fangxian Tao (方仙道) refers to the doctrine formed by alchemists based on Zou Yan's (鄒衍) five-element Yin and Yang ideas of the movement of the five virtues at the end of the period of the Warring States (戰國) period to explain their magic alchemy arts.

4 Huanglao Tao (黃老道) is the form of "quasi-Taoism" (准道教), a combination of divine magic, Huanglao theory, and the primitive religious rituals, with Huang Di (黃帝) and Laozi (老子) as the worshiped Gods.

5 Daoling Zhang (張道陵) was a native of Feng County (豐縣) in the Eastern Han Dynasty. He was the founder of the Taoism. He was also known as Zhang Tianshi (張天師) because of his original creation of Wudoumi Tao (五斗米道), also known as Tianshi Tao (天師道).

6 *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* (《山海經》) is an encyclopedia of ancient societies, encompassing ancient geography, history, mythology, astronomy, animals, plants, medicine, religion, as well as anthropology, ethnography, oceanography, and the history of science and technology, among many other things.

7 *The Biography of Mu Tianzi* (《穆天子傳》) is one of the historical texts of the Western Zhou Dynasty. It records the historical events of King Mu's western tour, which is the earliest travelling activity recorded in China.

8 *The Biography of Gods and Immortals* (《神仙傳》) is a ten-volume collection of ancient Chinese novels written by Hong Ge, a Taoist scholar of the Eastern Jin Dynasty. *The Biography of the Immortals* is famous for its rich imagination and vivid narratives.

9 *Shangqingbu Taoching* (《上清部道經》) is written by Xi Yang (楊羲), a Taoist priest, between Eastern Jin Dynasty and the Sixth Dynasty. It is about a proliferation of stories and legends about female deities.

10 *Zhengao*《真诰》 is a work written by Hongjing Tao (陶弘景) during the Southern Dynasty. The book is a comprehensive one, involving many scriptures, a large number of Taoist figures and formulae, etc. It is an important historical document for the study of Taoism.

11 *Yongcheng Jixian Lu* (《墉城集仙錄》) is one of the first specialized collections of Taoist Female Immortals' Biographies by Guangting Du (杜光庭).

12 *A Post-Collection of the Female Immortals of All Ages* (《歷世真仙體道通鑒後集》) is a compilation of the works of Daoyi Zhao (趙道一), a Yuan dynasty writer who recorded the deeds of the ancient and modern immortals who have attained immortality.

13 *Volume Eight of The History of the Immortals of All Ages* (《歷代仙史·卷八》) was wirtten by Jianzhang Wang, who recorded one hundred and thirty-three female deities and immortals, which is twelve more than of Xianjian Houji《仙鑒後集》. Among them,

there are more compelling stories about the newly created female immortals in the Ming and Qing dynasties. It can be seen that the author intended to publicize them.

[14] *Guicang* (《歸藏》) is one of the *Three Books of Changes* (《三易》) with the other two of *Lianshan* (《連山》) and *Zhouyi* (《周易》). *Guicang* is the one with Kun (坤)—female principle as the first hexagram; while *Zhouyi* is the one with Qian (乾)—male principle as the first hexagram.

[15] *Baopuzi Neipian* (《抱樸子內篇》) is a Taoist classic compiled by Hong Ge in the Jin Dynasty, which laid the theoretical foundation for the Taoist immortals in the Wei and Jin Dynasties. It mainly talks about the prescriptions and medicines of the immortals, the changes of ghosts and monsters, the health and prolongation of life, and the avoidance of calamities and illnesses, and so on.

[16] *Taiping Ching* (《太平經》) is an Eastern Han Taoist classic of Taiping Tao, which is said to have been conferred by a god to the alchemist Ji Yu (于吉). The book consists of 170 volumes, with extensive contents covering Heaven and Earth, Yin and Yang, the five elements, the ten branches, calamities, and the immortals, etc.

[17] *Xishengching* (《西升經》) is written by an unknown author, known as the *Laozi Xishengching* (《老子西升經》). The book tells of Laozi's ascending process to the west. It discusses the issues of cosmic ontology and form and spirit, and inherits Laozi's idea of ruling by non-action.

[18] *Shangqing Yuanshi Bianhua Baozhen Shangching* (《上清元始變化寶真上經》) is written by unknown authors. It was written during the Northern and Southern Dynasties. It is a volume of excerpts from the previous volume of the *Guishan Xuanlu*《龜山玄箓》.

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Article

Visualizing the Invisible Body: Redefining *Shanshui* and the Human Body in the Daoist Context

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Abstract: This paper addresses the "invisible body in *shanshui* paintings" by redefining the correlation between *shanshui* and the human body in the Daoist context. I argue that the human body is not invisible in *shanshui* painting—it is ever-present through the agency of the *shanshui*. The correlation will be unpacked in two aspects. Firstly, *shanshui* is ontologically connected and shares a "corporeal" affinity with the bodies of human beings. Secondly and more importantly, with the development of inner alchemy (*neidan* 内丹), *shanshui* and the human body are identified as representative of one another. *Shanshui* becomes the body through the lens of the unique concept of *neijing* 内景 (inner landscape). As the powerful and redemptive mediation between human beings and the Dao, *shanshui* reveals not only the inner body but also the mechanism of inner energies. Furthermore, it offers a solution to solve the Daoist anxiety over the body's physical limitations by breaking down the constant confrontation and opposition between the "I" and the cosmos and reactivating one's primordial dependency on nature. *Shanshui* painting, in this vein, transcends the mundane body and provides access to the sacred truth and reality of the Dao.

Keywords: body; *shanshui*; Daoism; inner landscape; inner alchemy; self-cultivation

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> "[One must take] the body as the mountain-stream to discover it. The significant aspects of the mountain and water will then be apparent."[1]
>
> —Guo Xi 郭熙 (1279–1368)
>
> *Shanshui xun* 山水訓 *(Mountains and Waters Treatise)*

1. Introduction

The absence of the body has been a constant inquiry in the study of Chinese art. Why—John Hay (Hay 1994, p. 77) asks in his article "The Body Invisible in Chinese Art"—does the body seem to be almost invisible in a figurative tradition that flourished for over two thousand years? Why does *shanshui* 山水 (mountain-water) painting[2], the pre-eminent art form in China, appear to exemplify an absence of the body? While the nude seems to be the starting point for Western bodily perceptions, a human body in the anatomical sense is absent in Chinese art traditions.[3] In *shanshui* paintings, we see small human figures amidst the immense nature—contrasted by the grandeur of the universe, human presence seems humble. However, we do not see the volume and structure of the human body. How should we understand such "absence"?

Hay answers these questions by explaining that the "invisibility" is not an absence but the West's *inability* to recognize bodies presented utilizing non-Western artistic indicators. A Chinese body was dispersed through metaphors locating it in the natural world by transformational resonance and brushwork that embodied the cosmic-human reality of *qi* 氣 (vital energy). He further demonstrates that the Chinese term for visceral system *zangxiang* 臟象 (visceral image) appears to have incorporated a perception that the universe is a process of self-imaging, and it represents the processing, storage, and distribution of vital *qi* associated with the substances. On such ground, he concludes, all phenomena are images generated by an autonomous process out of potentiality, and the notion of "the

representation of the body" may be descriptive rather than analytical (Hay 1994, p. 77). Hay's definition of "the representation of the body" invites us to think of the body in a more macrocosmic dimension. The gestures of natural objects can be read as dispositions of the human body. A bending pine tree is symbolic of a dignified salute. However, Hay's points are insightful but far from being sufficient. In his understanding, the body is only present through anthropomorphizing natural objects.

This paper will address Hay's question from a Daoist perspective by redefining the correlation between *shanshui* and the human body. I argue that the body is not invisible in *shanshui* paintings—it is ever-present through the agency of the *shanshui*. The correlation will be unpacked in two aspects. Firstly, *shanshui* is ontologically connected and shares a "corporeal" affinity with the body of human beings. It is the macrocosmic body that shares the most resemblance with human beings regarding body composition and structure. The affinity is further illustrated through the concept of *dong* 洞 (grotto, cave), which exists not just as a geographical or cosmological concept but also exists within the human body. Secondly, and more importantly, with the development of inner alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), *shanshui* and the human body are identified as representative of one another. *Shanshui* becomes the body through the lens of the unique concept of *neijing* 內景 (inner landscape). *Shanshui* reveals not only the inner body but also the mechanism of inner energies. As Daoist painters transform the inner alchemical vision into *shanshui* paintings, the boundary between the body and the cosmos has been dissolved. Nature and humanity fuse under the single agency of the *shanshui*, creating a unified image of the macrocosms and microcosmos.

Through this analysis, this paper reestablishes the crucial link between *shanshui* and the Daoist body. I argue that *shanshui* is the powerful and redemptive mediation between the human body and the Dao and offers a solution to solve the Daoist anxiety over the body's physical limitations. It breaks down the constant confrontation and opposition between the "I" and the cosmos and reactivates one's primordial dependency on nature. *Shanshui* paintings, in this vein, transcend the mundane body and provide access to the sacred truth and reality of the Dao. Furthermore, this paper will provide a theoretical foundation for the emerging discourse on inner alchemical *shanshui* paintings, a unique genre of Daoist paintings that has been "rediscovered" in recent years.

2. The Corporeal Affinity between *Shanshui* and the Human Body

Shanshui as a compound can be traced back to as early as the 4th century in Zong Bing's 宗炳 (375–443) *Hua shanshui xu* 畫山水序 (*Introduction to Painting Mountain and Water*). It is the earliest extant theoretical formulation that has come down to us. In this short essay, Zong Bing remarks, "Sages model themselves on the Dao through their spirits, and the virtuous comprehend this. Mountains and water display the beauty of the Dao through their forms and the benevolent delight in this"[4]. We can see that the meaning of *shanshui* was closely related to Dao from its birth. Mountains and water, with one representing the strong force of *yang* and the other representing the soft energies of *yin*, work in balance as the symbol of the natural world. Their dynamic interaction resonates with the cosmic principle. Since the Dao is formless in nature, *shanshui* approaches Dao through its concrete form. *Shiming* 釋名 (*Explanation of names*) defines *xian* 仙 (immortality) as "moving into the mountains"[5]. Another treatise in *Songshu* 宋書 (*Book of the Song*) records how Zong Bing appreciates *shanshui* paintings: "All I do now is purify my heart and contemplate the Dao by wandering in the paintings from my bed".[6] Away from the real *shanshui*, Zong Bing immerses himself in *shanshui* painting and uses it as a medium to access the reality of Dao.

On a spiritual level, even though human beings are the most advanced living creatures in the world, Daoists consider the natural and unspoiled *shanshui* closer to the Dao. While humans constantly consume their original essence, *shanshui* can maintain its most genuinely natural form endowed by the ontological entity Dao. *Shanshui*, as something unspoiled and uncarved, in such a context, sets a paradigm model of *zhen* 真 (true and real) for human beings. It is the manifestation of the Dao, the effective and redemptive

mediation that connects man to the Dao. *Shanshui painting*, as the visual representation of the *shanshui*, provides access to the truth and reality of Dao.

But the connection between the *shanshui* and human beings is not only spiritual. The significance of *shanshui* also lies in the Daoist view of existence as a form of being that shares a cosmic connection between all things. In this vein, the macro-cosmos is inherently connected with the micro-cosmos; worldly things with bodily things; and physical things with "non-physical" phenomena such as time, space, spirit, and so on. The body of human beings as the microcosm is analogous to *shanshui*—the macrocosmic body of the universe.

2.1. Shanshui as the Macrocosmic Body

There is a homogeneous connection between the body of the *shanshui* and the body of human beings engrained in Chinese tradition. Compared to other natural landscapes, the mountain-water compound shares the most resemblance with human beings regarding body composition and structure. The Northern Song painter Guo Xi 郭熙 (fl. 1060s) captures this resemblance in his famous treatise *Shanshui xun* 山水訓 (*Mountains and Waters Treatise*), in which he describes the mountain-water as a living, organic cosmic body:

> Mountain has water as blood, foliage as hair, mist, and clouds as its spirit and character. Thus, a mountain is said to gain its life through water, its external beauty through vegetation, and its elegant charm through mist and clouds. Water has the mountain as its face, huts, pavilions as eyes and eyebrows, and anglers as its soul.[7]

> There are high mountains and low mountains. The arteries of the high mountain run low. Its limbs spread wide; its feet are powerful and solid. Ridgelines of creviced peaks and rounded crests crowd together and interweave in unbroken, gleaming links. Such is a high mountain. Thus, this type of high mountain is called not solitary and called not reclining. The arteries of [a] low mountain run high. Its head summit comes halfway down, merging straight into its neck. The base is broad spread, and earthen mounds erupt in profusion. It extends deep down into the earth; none can measure how far. Such is a low mountain . . . Such are the configurations of mountains and water.[8]

Guo Xi compares the natural landscape to the physiological body. As an organic cosmic body, *shanshui* encompasses rocks, rivers, grass and trees, soil, and so on. They are the mountain's bones, veins, hair, and flesh. These correlations, in terms of structure and composition, are rather straightforward. It is close to Hay's understanding that the body is only present through anthropomorphizing natural objects. In a more sophisticated manner, *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (*Seven Tablets in a Cloudy Satchel*), the miniature Daoist Canon[9] of the Song dynasty, recorded the mythical cosmogonic story of Pan Gu 盤古:

> When the primordial breath burgeoned forth, the heaven and earth divided and formed the trigrams *qian* and *kun*, *yin* and *yang* came into force by dividing. It was then [that] the primordial breath engendered the central harmony which is none other than a man. It gave birth to Pan Gu, who, at his death, transformed his body. His respiration yielded the clouds and the wind, his voice the thunder, his limbs the four extremities of the world, his left eye the sun, his right eye the moon, his internal organs the five peaks, his blood the rivers, his veins the earth, his muscle the soil, his hair the stars, his skin the grass and wood, his teeth the metal and stone, his marrow the jewels and jades, his sweat the rain. All the worms he carried, roused by the wind, metamorphosed into humans. (Lévi 1989, p. 109)[10]

The body of the primordial giant Pan Gu transforms into a natural phenomenon. Compared to Guo Xi's treatise, the correlation between the natural landscapes and the body is made systematic and tight through the system of *yin* and *yang* and five elements, where the body parts are associated with different elements and form an organic whole. Furthermore, contrary to Guo's anthropomorphizing natural objects, Pan Gu's body becomes

nature itself. The death of his body marks the differentiation of the undivided cosmic unity.

It is noticeable that the Pan Gu myth gives a detailed description of how the giant, as the first-born human being, transforms into nature but uses minimal words to describe the birth of other human beings—they are just trivial worms that Pan Gu carries. There is an apparent division between Pan Gu and other human beings. The myth suggests that while Pan Gu's body can transform and become *shanshui*, an ordinary human body is not able to attain such transcendence. In between the transformation of the microcosmic and macrocosmic body, there is a clear prerequisite for the human body. Pan Gu, born out of the harmonious interaction between the primordial *yin* and *yang qi*, is the ideal form of human being, or the "superman." His physical body does not limit him. In this sense, Pan Gu is close to what *Zhuangzi* calls the *zhenren* 眞人 (authentic/perfected being), who can "go into the water and not get wet, enter the fire and not be burned" (Zhuangzi and Watson 2013, p. 42). *Zhuangzi* has made many distinctions between the *zhenren* and ordinary human beings; for instance, a *zhenren* breathes through his heels, whereas the ordinary mean breathes through his throat (Zhuangzi and Watson 2013, p. 42). That is to say, the difference between Pan Gu or the *zhenren* and the ordinary is not only spiritual but also corporeal. The former can break through the determinate functions of the body parts and allow the body to meld into one whole and be fully integrated by the vital *qi*. Therefore, in order to transform the mundane human body into the macrocosmic body, one needs to overcome physical limitations to join in great unity with the Dao.

Now it becomes clear that for the Daoists, nothing seems to be more limiting than the physical body. The body marks the boundary of a human being and separates him/her from the natural flow of the cosmos. As Yuan Daoist Zhang Ziqiong 张紫琼[11] said:

> Heaven and human beings are originally [formed] by one homogenous *qi*,
>
> It is the form and body [of the human beings] that stand in between them.
>
> Cultivate until one's form and spirit are deeply united.
>
> Then [one] will realize that form is true emptiness.[12]

The physical body is eventually to be transcended. Lao Zi's famous saying, "the reason I have great trouble is that I have a body. When I no longer have a body, what trouble have I?" (Lau 1963, p. 17) echoes the anxiety with the body. In a similar vein, Zhuangzi advocates that in the process of Dao-embodiment, firstly, one must smash one's limbs and body to disintegrate perception and rationality (Zhuangzi and Watson 2013, p. 53), as mentioned above. Here Zhuangzi discards the limbs not to disable the body but to stress how the physical body could stand as an obstacle in arriving at a state of equivalence (*tong* 通) with the Dao. In inner alchemical practice—which turns the whole body into a laboratory to produce the elixir, the physiological function of the body parts is less important compared to the emblematic functions of the body.

For the Daoists, the body is a paradoxical complex. On the one hand, it is the field of life and contains the true form of the symbolic body. On the other hand, the limitation of the physical body has become the source of Daoist anxiety, for it imposes the constant confrontation and opposition between the "I" and the cosmos. Therefore, reconnecting the opposition and reactivating one's primordial dependency on nature become the locus of the transcendent quest.

2.2. Dong: Connecting the Space of Shanshui and the Human Body

The corporeal affinity between the mountain-water compound and the human body might be best exhibited through the concept of *dong* 洞. *Dong*, as an empty space or a natural void, echoes with the source of Dao—a deep and murky great void or emptiness. The void is the realm of nothingness, or "non-being." In other words, the Dao is the unmanifested void or emptiness. Since it is uncreated and unmanifested, it harbors endless potential and will not die. Therefore, the image of the void possesses the features of the Dao. *Dong*, in this sense, suggests a cosmological beginning.

The concept of the *dadong* (Great Grotto 大洞) was adopted in medieval religious Daoism. It lies at the heart of Upper Clarity cosmology, a tradition from the fourth century onwards. In the mysterious cosmic process, human beings and the celestial realm fuse through the vast void of the Great Grotto. The *Preface to the Upper Clarity Perfect Scripture of the Great Grotto* (*Shangqing dadong zhenjing xu* 上清大洞真經序) demonstrates the Great Grotto as such:

> The Dao is born from nothingness, secretly harboring a multitude of numinous powers, which no one can fathom. Spirits condense in the void, marvelously transforming in myriad ways without bounds. In the darkest depths, there is an essence, serene and stable, which shines out the light. This great mystery is infinite, reaching across the void and preserving stillness. This is called the "Great Grotto". (Miller 2008, p. 53)[13]

In this passage, the Great Grotto is identified with "the great mystery." It is the harbor of Dao, boundless and limitless. Moreover, we find new dimensions of the Great Grotto: it is the source of spirits (*shen* 神) and essence (*jing* 精). That is to say, the purest form of spirit and essence is born and located in the empty void of the Great Grotto. The void of nothingness is the source of "being," from which the creation of myriad things has emerged. This quality reminds us of another popular image in *Daode jing*—the valley (*gu* 谷). Hans-Georg Moeller demonstrates that the valley—the open void of the mountain—possesses the positive quality of fertility (Moeller 2006, p. 28). The valley is a negative form (compared to the "full" mountains that surround it) and is mere potential (a potential that has not yet materialized). But due to its emptiness and featurelessness, it guarantees its inexhaustibility and constant fertility. A couple of similar images—"a negative, merely potential, and imperishable void" (Moeller 2006, p. 10)—share the same characteristics with the valley, including the grotto.

Grotto-heaven is a unique geo-religious phenomenon in Daoism. As the quintessence of the mountain (Raz 2019, pp. 1409–52), it is a place of transcendental passage and revelation and is interconnected with other supernatural realms (Verellen 1995, p. 271). The Daoists, not intimidated by the mysterious and the unknown, are always willing to go into the mountains and seek the grotto-heavens and the blessed land (*dongtian fudi* 洞天福地). However, the grotto-heavens do not guarantee transcendence. The tale *guanqi lanke* 觀棋爛柯 ("*Watching Chess While the Axe Rotted*") recorded in *Shuyi ji* 述異記 (*Records of Strange Things*) tells an interesting story. Due to its broad reception, the mountain where the story happened was renamed Lanke Mountain, which the late Tang court Daoist Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850–933) labeled as the Eighth Grotto-Heaven of Turquoise Clouds.

> During the Jin Dynasty, Wang Jin from Xin'an County was chopping wood at Stone Chamber Mountain. He saw several youths playing the game of Go and singing. Zhi stopped to listen. The youths gave an item to Zhi, which was similar to a jujube core. Zhi kept it in his mouth and felt no hunger. A moment later, the youths said: "Why are you not going?" Zhi stood up and saw the axe had completely rotted. When he returned, there was no one from his time. (Ren Fang 任昉, *Shuyi ji*)[14]

In this tale, Wang Zhi is a curious man, drawn to the youths by the board game[15] and their singing. The youths, knowing that he is not an immortal, give Zhi a jujube core to keep him from being hungry. Jujube is considered the food of immortals. It is also the food Daoists have during *bigu* 辟穀 (avoiding grains) fasting. Here, it is noticeable that the youths give Zhi a jujube core rather than juicy jujube with full flesh. Daoists often contain the jujube core in the mouth to stimulate saliva flow. In inner alchemical practice, the mouth is often referred to as the Flowery Pond (*huachi* 華池), while the liquor of the mouth is called Nectar Spring (*liquan* 醴泉) or the Jade Secretions (*yujin* 玉津). Daoist Tao Hongjing said in *Yangxing yanming lu* 養性延命錄 (*Records on Preserving One's Nature and Lengthening Life*) that "Drinking at the Jade Spring, we can live longer and eliminate the disease."[16]

The saliva the jujube core stimulates would eventually help nourish the cinnabar field, the main areas the adept concentrates on during his/her breathing or visualizing exercises.

The rotted axe shows us that time is still passing in the cave. However, the axe experiences a different length of time from Wang Zhi. Thanks to the jujube core, Zhi can share a "being in the present" with the immortals. He is experiencing the immortal's perception of time in the grotto—things happen within a moment (*e'qing* 俄頃). But for the axe, many years have passed by. There is a saying related to this story—"only one day one has been in the grotto, while outside millennia have passed" 山中方一日，世上已千年.

Apparently, the grotto heavens do not guarantee transcendence. The adepts must find their own "jujube core" to transcend their physical body. Nevertheless, the grotto heavens contain passages to the Dao, and the journey through the grottos is a journey beyond our world. A mountain is a place of life—"the locus of sustenance and transcendence" (Raz 2019, p. 1409). *Dong*, as Verellen eloquently summarized, has the meaning to "penetrate" or "communicate" both physically and intellectually.

Following the macrocosmic-microcosmic model, we should notice that *dong* is not just a geographical or cosmological concept; it also exists within the human body. One of the earliest examples of esoteric hagiography (*neizhuan* 內傳), the *Esoteric Hagiography of the Perfected Being of Purple Solarity* (*Ziyang zhenrenneizhuan* 紫陽真人內傳) provides a detailed account on different dimensions of the *dong*. This text records the spiritual journey of Zhou Yishan 周義山 (b. 80 BCE), detailing the methods he used to become a Perfected being. The text reads:

> "The [part of] heaven [where there is] nothing is called space. The [part of] a mountain [where there is] nothing is called a grotto. The [part of] a human [body where there is] nothing is called a [grotto] chamber. The empty spaces in the mountains and organs of the body are called grotto courts. The empty spaces in human heads are called grotto chambers. This is how the perfected take up residence in the heavens, the mountains, and human beings. When they enter the place of nothingness, a grain of rice could contain Mt. Penglai and embrace the sixfold harmony [of the cosmos], yet heaven and earth would not be able to contain them. Only those who meditate on and visualize the perfected, preserve the three palaces, have an audience with the one spirit, and make an effort to meditate on them will definitely be able to see Lord Wuying, the White Prime Lord and the Yellow Venerable Lord in their grotto chamber.[17] The chariot of clouds with a canopy of feathers will then come, and they will become perfected persons." (Miller 2008, pp. 152–53)[18]

The above passage shows that a grotto exists in heaven, a mountain, and a human head. *Dong* suggests simultaneously primordial cosmological grottos, grottos in a mountain, and within the human body. The grotto chamber in the human head is the residence of the spirits. It is noticeable that the human body is again compared to the body of the mountains, attesting to the former argument about corporeal affinity.

The passage tells us that a Perfected being can walk freely in these empty spaces. The real question here seems to be how to reach the state of the Perfected being. James Miller explains that since the Perfected dwell in vacuity, they can forge the connections between the emptiness of outer space and the inner space of mountains and brains (Miller 2008, p. 152). Miller's explanation suggests that the emptiness in heaven, the mountain, and the human head should not be taken as "void of the space." It is instead an ontological condition that precedes the materialization of things. Only the Perfected beings could dwell in these empty grottos, for they are able to withdraw from the physical and return to their source in the great void or emptiness. This understanding aligns with the following passage from *Annotations to the Scripture for the Salvation from Distress* (*Taishang dongxuan lingbao tianzun shuo jinku miaojing zhujie* 太上洞玄靈寶天尊說救苦妙經註解) by Dongyang zi 洞陽子:

> *Dong* (cavern or grotto) is *tong* 通 (to "connect/penetrate/communicate"). It is connected with heaven and earth. Spirits and immortals secretly commute in

> between these grottos. Under heaven, there are ten greater grotto heavens, and thirty-six lesser grotto heavens dwell in the tremendous boundless void, and they are all interlinked. Only the immortals and sages who assemble to form and disassemble into *qi* can go through the void without obstacles. Therefore, the sage [understands the patterns of things] from various parts of things and nearby from his own body. Within the human body, there are also grotto heavens. There are nine palaces in the head. Counting the empty heaven above, there are ten greater grotto heavens. The spine has twenty-four sections, and [the throat] has twelve stories. There are thirty-six lesser grotto heavens in total. They connect with the nine heavens of the Muddy Palace above and the nine places of the Caudal Pass below. True *qi* secretly commutes in between these grottos. Therefore, the stage operates the polar stars in utmost emptiness and silence. Their spirit communicates with the *qi* of the grotto heavens and the heaven above. That is so-called the rising and descending of the three palaces. They go up and down, and it is infinite.[19]

This passage adopts the ten greater grotto-heavens and the thirty-six lesser grotto-heavens system that was organized in the Tang Dynasty by Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 (647–735) and Du Guangting into the human body. Just as the geographical grotto-heavens are interconnected, the grottos within the human body are also interlinked. Yet, the author reminds us that only the immortals and sages can go through these places freely. That is because they can transform between form and formlessness and attain an all-pervading (*tong*) unity with the Dao. However, for ordinary human beings, the physical body stands between them and the *datong* 大通 (Great Thoroughfare). The grottos within the body are blocked. Hence the lived body is not able to merge with the vital energies of the outer cosmos.

To put it in a nutshell, *shanshui* is ontologically connected and shares a "corporeal" affinity with the bodies of human beings. The human body as the microcosm is analogous to the macrocosmic body of the universe. *Shanshui*, as the macrocosmic body, shares the most resemblance with human beings regarding body composition and structure. This correlation was made systematic and tight through the system of *yin* and *yang* and five elements, as well as Daoist practice. The affinity is further illustrated through the concept of *dong*, which exists not just as a geographical or cosmological concept but also exists within the human body. In this way, the body is not invisible in *shanshui* paintings—it is ever-present through the agency of the *shanshui*. However, the connection is undermined by the limitation of the physical body, for it imposes the constant confrontation and opposition between the "I" and the cosmos. Only through the transformative process—by letting go of regular vision and transcending awareness of human form—can one attain recognition of the Great Thoroughfare between the human body and *shanshui*.

3. The Inner Landscape: *Shanshui* as Human Body

With the development of Quanzhen Daoism and inner alchemy, Daoists start to visualize the "inner landscape" of the body as a microcosm containing the natural phenomenon of the macrocosm. Even though the correlation between *shanshui* and the human body goes way back in Chinese philosophy and aesthetic discourses, the visual representation of the mountain as/inside the body is an inner alchemical invention. The history of inner alchemy can be traced back to the second century AD, to the inner cultivation methods recorded in the scriptures of *Laozi zhongjing* 老子中經 (*Central Scripture of Laozi*) and *Huangting jing* 黃庭經 (*Scripture of the Yellow Court*). We could even find its sprouts in much earlier scriptures such as *Neiye* 內業 (*Inward Training*). Yet it is from the Tang Dynasty (618CE-907CE) and Song Dynasty (960CE-1297CE) onward, especially with the establishment of Quanzhen Daoism, that inner alchemy has gained wide acceptance among Daoists and established itself as the major and orthodox practice for nourishing life and achieving Dao within one's own body.[20] The goal of inner alchemy is to join the "natural ingredients" in a symbolic crucible and purify them in the fires of a symbolic furnace in the body. The

adepts are expected to visualize a combined image in which the cosmic body and human body are orchestrated into a unified rhythm.

Inner landscape refers to the inner alchemical vision that the interior of the human body is a microcosm, and it contains the natural phenomenon of the macrocosm, as Zeng Zao 曾慥 (–1155) elaborates in *Daoshu* 道樞 (*Pivot of the Dao*):

> What is called the inner realm? It is the realm of the body. The real image is the furnace within my body, which contains heaven and earth, sun and moon, stars, wind and clouds, the milky way, mountains, rivers, grass, and wood. Heaven is [associated with] *qian* hexagram, [with] gold; it is the canopy situating above the myriad of things, and it is, therefore, the lung of the inner realm. The stars, sun, moon, and so on are the upper burner[21] of the inner realm, it is the measurement system of blood circulation. The Great Void mysterious realm above is where the lucid *qi* coagulates; below the mysterious realm is where the turbid *qi* unites and separates. The division between the lucid upper part and the turbid lower part is the middle burner, and it is the separation between the thorax and the abdomen. The area above the separation is translucent, and the down below is filthy. The five mountains and the mountain ranges are the head; the valley is the mouth and nose; the wellspring is the saliva, and the food and the drink; the river running to the sea is [similar to] the food and drink coagulate in the springhead; the cloud and rain generated from the mountain and stream is the hair.[22]

Since the macrocosm is inherently connected with the microcosm, and the process of inner alchemy imitates the circulation of the *qi* between heaven and earth, the natural landscape seems to be the perfect medium to illustrate the inner operation of the body. In the inner alchemical visualization process, human bodies and natural landscapes are identified as representative of one another. The cosmic body is the human body, and the vital energy roams in between heaven and earth the same way it circulates within the human body. The space and structure of the natural world becomes integral to understanding the human body. The material representation of the natural world—the *shanshui*—hence becomes a powerful visual tool connecting the spheres of the body, the natural world, the cosmos, and the mental world. The externalization of the inner alchemical progress in the likeness of the macrocosm manifests the divine identity of the practitioners. For them, the ultimate reality is not the actualities of everyday life but the vision they acquire through inner alchemical practice.

Consequently, inner alchemical graphic representations of the body often depict the human body microcosmically with an inner landscape. Anna Hennessey demonstrates that just as internalization in the form of internal alchemy was becoming a focal component of Daoism, externalization in the form of alchemical representation was also rising as a tool through which this process of internalizing the religious experience could be actualized (Hennessey 2011, p. 16). In other words, the practice of inner alchemy focuses on visualizing the inner landscape, a virtual microcosm of the external cosmos manifested in the Daoist body. Visualization is a practice that actualizes the presence of the deities or inner landscape according to painted or textually described icons through concentration and imagination. The interaction with the divine stimulates and increases the body's energy, improving both physical and spiritual conditions and unclogging the blockage between inner "grottos." The eventual goal of visualization is to see the inner and outer dimensions as one.

Representations of the inner alchemical body were rarely found prior to the Song dynasty (960–1279), but the Song period marks a turning point in the graphic representation of the body along with graphic representation (*tu* 圖) in general. As Catherine Despeux elaborates, from the Song onward, visual imagery comes to play a more significant role, not only as a record of knowledge but also as a teaching aid, a mode of transmission, a mnemonic device, a visual translation of a text, and a representation of a certain reality (Despeux 2005, p. 47). These body-mountain charts could be roughly divided into two categories: representation of the body in the form of a mountain, such as *Chart of the Rise*

and Fall of Yin and Yang, Image of the Body (*Tixiang yin yang shengjiang tu* 體象陰陽升降圖) and *Image of the body of Original Qi* (*Yuanqi tixiang tu* 元氣體象圖) and representation of landscape within the human body such as *Neijing tu* 內經圖 (*Chart of Inner Landscape*) and *Xiuzhen tu* 修真圖 (*Chart for the Cultivation of Perfection*). In these body charts, the visual representation of inner alchemy blends in patterns of cosmological emblems, laboratory alchemy, Daoist deities[23], Buddhist terms, and other metaphorical images such as natural landscapes, animals, human figures, buildings, and so on. The key to deciphering the meaning of these images is to understand the dynamics between them and how these images, through the interplay of the five elements and *yin* and *yang*, contribute to the whole alchemical process. Whenever we look at inner alchemical charts or images, we look at (part of) a transformative process, both spatial and temporal.

The visual representation of inner alchemy inspires Daoists to transform the inner vision into *shanshui* paintings. The visual iconography, metaphors, and principles of inner alchemy are incorporated into the representation of *shanshui*. Since *shanshui* can stand for the human body or body parts, and *shanshui* painting, in its nature, embodies the element of time, *shanshui* paintings seem to be the perfect medium of the field of life or transformative progress. That is to say, *shanshui* reveals not only the inner body but also the mechanism of inner energies. Daoist literati Huang Gongwang 黃公望 (1269–1354) was a pioneer in waving the inner landscape of the body into the fabric of the cosmos. As the head of the acknowledged "Four Masters" of the Yuan period, he was also a renowned practitioner of inner alchemy whose teachings are recorded in the Daoist Canon.[24] In his later years, he withdrew from public life and joined Quanzhen Daoism. In recent years, scholars have noticed the connection between Huang's *shanshui* paintings and inner alchemy visuality. By comparing the graphs and illustrations from Daoist Canon with Huang Gongwang's *Sunny after Sudden Snow* 快雪時晴圖, Susan Huang claims that the painting is of significant inner alchemical connotation (Huang 2014, pp. 121–204). The two elements from the painting—the usual red sun and the cliff in the shape of a platform—are iconic visual language in inner alchemy. While the red sun represents the spirit of pure *yang*, the platform could be either the Palace of Muddy Pellet in the head or the practitioner himself. In 2017, Lennert Gesterkamp gave a lecture at the Chinese Academy of Fine Arts titled "Huang Gongwang's '*Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains*' as a Daoist Inner Landscape." In this lecture, he argued that the landscape in this painting symbolizes the various stages and processes of Daoist inner alchemy, which Huang's friend and fellow disciple undoubtedly understood. Furthermore, Xie Bo offers a thorough inspection of Huang Gongwang's painting in her book *The Visualization of Daoist Elysium: Huang Gongwang and His Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* (Xie 2018). Built on Susan Huang's concept of the inner landscape, Xie forwards the idea of "Visualization of Daoist Elysium." She believes that Huang's *shanshui* painting is essentially an exteriorization of his ideal *shanshui*, a mixture of the inner alchemical landscape with Daoist sacred iconography and cosmology. Ziyun Liu's dissertation *The True Realm of Vision: The Visualization of Inner Alchemy in Yuan Shanshui Painting* (Liu 2021) argues that Huang Gongwang's later paintings can be read as different stages of the inner alchemical transformative process.

As a Daoist literati painter, Huang transformed his inner alchemical vision into *shanshui* paintings and used art as a proper vehicle to access the truth and reality of Dao. These paintings blur the boundary between the inner and the outer landscape. Nature, the human body, and celestial heaven fuse under the single agency of *shanshui*. Huang Gongwang creates a unified image of the macrocosms and microcosmos, representing an ontologically united realm that is essentially one and the same. Consequently, Huang Gongwang's inner alchemical visual expression set a new paradigm for his protégés and the following generations. Meanwhile, they created new inner alchemical visual languages and constantly expanded their repertoire. Stephen Little's sugggestion that Wen Boren's 文伯仁 (1502–1575) handscroll *Spring Dawn at the Elixir Terrace* 丹台春曉圖 is an allegory of inner alchemy is corroborated by the presence of an attached colophon in cursive script, written by the late Ming artist and dramatist Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521–1593) in the classical lan-

guage of inner alchemy, in which the component aspects of the vital energies (*qi*) within the human body are directed toward the creation of the inner elixir (Little and Eichman 2000, pp. 350–51). Gesterkamp reads Wang Ximeng's *A Thousand Miles of Streams and Rivers* 千里江山图 as depicting a story of Daoist self-cultivation. This journey includes the mundane and transcendental world as well as inner alchemical transformation (Gesterkamp 2022). For example, the river chariot in the image is a typical inner alchemical metaphor symbolizing the transportation of the spleen water. Liu believes that Lu Guang's 陸廣 (C. 1300–after 1371) *Spring Dawn at the Cinnabar Platform* 丹臺春曉圖 and Kun Can's 髡殘 (1612–1674) *Green Mountains Rising to the Sky* 蒼翠凌天圖 and *Layers of Rock and Piles of Ravine* 層岩疊壑圖 represent the alchemical paths, and *The Thatched Hut of Dreaming of an Immortal* 夢仙草堂圖, attributed to Tang Yin 唐寅 (1470–1524) embodies the inner alchemical visualized true realm (Liu 2021).

As we can see, inner alchemical *shanshui* paintings exist as a tradition that goes beyond the scope of Huang Gongwang, as well as the Yuan literati circle. It has been passed down from generation to generation and continues to shape the meaning of *shanshui* paintings. In these paintings, the human body does not need to manifest itself through anthropomorphizing natural objects; it is visible and present in the way that *shanshui* becomes the body. The meaning and function of inner alchemical *shanshui* paintings are probably best illustrated by Daoist Liu Chengyin's 劉誠印 colophon to the *Chart of the Inner Landscape*. He miraculously encountered the chart when examining paintings and calligraphies in a mountain study surrounded by pine trees. At first, he thought it was simply a *shanshui* painting. But after he observed the chart for a long time, he said: "I began to realize that exhalation and inhalation (*huxi* 呼吸) as well as expelling and ingesting (*tuna* 吐納) of the human body are the waxing and waning as well as the ebb and flow of the cosmos. If you can divine and gain insight into this, you will have progressed more than halfway on your inquiry into the great Way of the Golden Elixir" (Komjathy 2008, p. 77).

Through his Daoist gaze, Liu syncretized his exhalation and inhalation with the dynamism of the cosmos. The cosmic body becomes his body. The world as lived and the world as "the ultimate reality" fuse under the agency of *shanshui* and become the same world. Meanwhile, Liu's experience brings out a significant function of inner alchemical *shanshui* paintings: they could potentially have the same function as a typical Daoist bodily graph, and work as a record of knowledge, a mode of transmission, a mnemonic device, a visual translation of a text, and even a teaching aid. As inner alchemical transformation is a long and challenging process, and there can be dangerous illusions and delusions, these inner alchemical *shanshui* paintings are extremely valuable for confused practitioners. The translucence this genre of painting brings dissolves the border between the body and *shanshui*. This is especially true considering these paintings are often dedicated to a certain Daoist.

Inner alchemical *shanshui* paintings show us a vision that transcends the actualities of everyday life. It is not an image depicting the pure joy and magnificence of paradise—the realm *out* of this world. It is a picture *in* this world. The Daoist painters see the *shanshui*, the human body, and the cosmos essentially as one. The transcendence and even sacredness of inner alchemical *shanshui* paintings come from the unity of humanity and nature. The cosmic body and the human body fuse under the single agency of the *shanshui*, creating a unified image of the macrocosms and microcosmos. In these paintings, we can see how the flow of energy (*qi*) is activated through the momentum of force (*shi* 勢) of *shanshui* and how the *yin* and *yang* energy is constantly in flux through the coalescence of the amorphous *qi*. Inner alchemical *shanshui* paintings break down the constant confrontation and opposition between the "I" and the cosmos and reactivate one's primordial dependency on nature. The "outer" and "inner" realms hence become inseparable. What seems more significant than identifying the inner alchemical connotation of a *shanshui* painting is recognizing that it is a unified image of the macrocosms and microcosmos. This realm is ontologically united and is essentially one and the same. In this vein, inner alchemical *shanshui* painting is essentially a manifestation of the truth of Dao.

4. Concluding Remarks

For the Daoists, the body is a paradoxical complex. *Shanshui*, as something unspoiled and uncarved, is the manifestation of the Dao, the effective and redemptive mediation that connects the human body to the Dao. *Shanshui* is not the "other" but the manifestation of the absolute, which encompasses human beings and nature. *Shanshui* paintings, in this vein, provide access to the truth and reality of Dao as a proper vehicle. It is an organic whole that one could immerse oneself in, an aggregation of the interactive animation of the components of the world. As François Jullien eloquently puts it, *shanshui* paintings thrust our being back to its legitimate inductions, reestablish its primordial connections, and replenish vitality by immersing our being in these countless and constantly renewed circuits of energy (Jullien and Todd 2009, p. 143).

The underlying notion of human existence in harmony with nature is at the core of *shanshui* paintings. Nevertheless, human figures are usually quite small in *shanshui* paintings, and the human body is often "invisible". It seems that the all-powerful forces of nature manifested by the grandeur of the monumental mountains do nothing but humble the existence of human beings. But in the eyes of the Daoists, the body is not invisible in *shanshui* paintings—it is ever-present through the agency of the *shanshui*. This is especially true in terms of inner alchemical *shanshui* paintings, in which human existence is immense. His head is the towering peak, his saliva the splashing stream, and his spine the dragon-like ridge. Heaven and earth are within reach. When the boundary between body and cosmos is dissolved, humans are no longer limited by their physicality. Human beings are not humbled or intimidated by the monumental mountains, and *shanshui* is no longer irrelevant to human presence. The human body is the mountain, and the mountain is the human body. The constant confrontation and opposition between the "I" and the cosmos have been demolished, and we see a realm of unity (between humanity and nature), translucence, and freedom.

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Notes

1 蓋身即山川而取之，則山水之意度見矣。(Guo 2010, p. 35).

2 In this paper, I will use the transliterated term *shanshui* paintings to refer to this genre of painting. Although "landscape painting" might seem more straightforward, the phrase is only derivatively what *shanshui* paintings mean. The meaning, connotation, and history of these two terms are significantly different. To assume *shanshui* paintings equal to the genre of landscape art runs the risk of overlooking its indigenous intellectual history and cultural roots. The transliterated term *shanshui* will also help to preserve the dynamic interaction between *shan* 山 (mountain) and *shui* 水 (water).

3 The role of *shanshui* paintings in Chinese art has been compared many times with that of the nude in the West. William Watson believed that they both are a theme "unvarying in itself but made the vehicle of infinite nuances of vision and feeling." See Watson (1974, p. 83).

4 夫聖人以神法道，而賢者通；山水以形媚道，而仁者樂 (Zong and Wei 2016, p. 5).

5 仙，遷也，遷入山也 (Liu n.d.).

6 唯當澄懷觀道，臥以遊之 (Shen 1974, p. 2279). For an extensive discussion on Zong Bing, see Bush and Murck (1983, pp. 132–64). Lim Chyehong also provides a complete translation of *Hua shanshui xu* in her dissertation. See Lim (2011).

7 山以水為血脈，以草木為毛髮，以煙雲為神彩，故山得水而活，得草木而華，得煙雲秀媚。水以山為面，以亭樹/榭為眉目， 以漁釣為精神。(Guo 2010, p. 35).

8 山有高有下。高者血脈在下，其肩股開張，其腳狀厚，巒岫岡勢陪擁相勾連。映帶不絕，此高山也。故知如是高山謂之不孤，謂知不仆。下者血脈在上，其巔定半落，項領相攀，根基龐大，堆阜臃腫，直不深插，可測其淺深，此淺山也 . . . 此山水之體裁也。(Guo 2010, p. 37).

9 *Yunji qiqian* is an anthology of the *Dasong tiangong baozang* 大宋天宮寶藏 (*The Precious Canon of Heavenly Palace of the Great Song*). It was compiled by Daoist Zhang Junfang 張君房 in 1019, dedicated to Emperor Zhenzong of the Northern Song 宋真宗 (r. 997–1022). It is later included in the *Zhengtong Daozang* 正統道藏 (hereby referred to as *DZ*). The *Zhengtong Daozang* was printed under the Zhengtong (1436–1449) reign in 1445. This paper uses the *Daozang* text published by the three publishing houses (*sanjiaben* 三家本), see *Daozang* (1988). It is one of the most authoritative collections of Daoist texts, graphs, charts, maps, talismans, and so on. This paper benefits greatly from Schipper (2005). The work number follows the title concordance of Schipper and Chen (1996).

10 洎乎元气蒙鴻，萌芽茲始，遂分天地，肇立乾坤，啟陰感陽，分布元氣，乃孕中和，是為人矣。首生盤古，垂死化身，氣成風雲，聲為雷霆，左眼為日，右眼為月，四肢五體為四極五嶽，血液為江河，筋脈為地裡，肌肉為田土，發髭為星辰，皮毛為草木，齒骨為金石，精髓為珠玉，汗流為雨澤。身之諸蟲，因風所感，化為黎。(*Yunji qiqian*, *DZ* 1032. 56).

11 Birth and death date unknown.

12 天人一氣本來同，為有形骸礙不通。煉到形神冥合處，方知色相即真空。(Yin Zhenren 2012, p. 215).

13 夫道生於無，潛眾靈而莫測。神凝於虛，妙萬變而無方。杳冥有精，而泰定發光。太玄無際，而致虛守靜。是之謂大洞者歟。(*DZ* 6).

14 信安郡石室山，晉時王質伐木，至見童子數人，棋而歌，質因聽之。童子以一物與質，如棗核，質含之不覺饑。俄頃，童子謂曰: 何不去? 質起，視斧柯爛盡，既歸，無復時人。(Ren 2019, p. 53).

15 The game of Go is no ordinary game for the Daoists. *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 (*Miscellaneous Records of the Western Capital*), attributed by Liu Xin 劉歆 (c.53 BCE–23) and collected by the famous Daoist Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–343), denotes that "those who are good at the principle [of Go], are good enough to aid the teaching of the saints" 精其理者，足以大裨聖教 (Liu 2012, p. 20). The strategy of Go sometimes is compared to the art of administering a country.

16 玉泉者，令人延年除百病。(*DZ* 838).

17 The three cinnabar fields within the human body. The three Prime Lords function as intermediaries, enabling the adept to ascend to heaven.

18 天無謂之空。山無謂之洞。人無謂之房也。山腹中空虛是謂洞庭。人頭中空虛是謂洞房。是以真人處天，處山，處人。入無間以黍米容蓬萊山，包括六合，天地不能載焉。唯精思存真, 守三宮，朝一神，勤若念之，必見無英，白元，黃老在洞房焉。雲車羽蓋既來，便成真人。(*DZ* 303).

19 洞者通也，上通於天，下通於地，中有神仙，幽相往來。天下十大洞、三十六小洞，居乎太虛磅礴之中，莫不洞洞相通，惟仙聖聚則成形，散則為氣，自然往來虛通，而無窒礙。是以聖人遠取諸物，近取諸身。則人一身之中，亦有洞者。頭有九宮，上有寥天，共為十大洞天；柱骨二十四節，共十二重樓，共三十六洞。上通泥丸之九天，下徹尾閭之九地，中有真炁幽相往來。是以聖人於虛極靜篤之中，斡轉璇璣，神通炁洞，上與天通，所謂三宮昇降，上下往來，無窮者也。(*DZ* 399).

20 On one hand, the practice of inner alchemy belongs to the general tradition of Daoist meditation and inner cultivation. It is the ripe fruit of this constantly evolving tradition. On the other hand, differentiated from the primitive inner cultivation practice of early Daoism, inner alchemy stands out for its distinct characteristics and fully developed cosmological system. From the Tang and Song dynasty onward, inner alchemy replaces the pantheon of inner bodily gods with the impersonal principles which regulate the functioning of the cosmos and the human being.

21 Upper burner is a concept in traditional Chinese medicine. It is the upper part of the so-called *sanjiao* 三焦 (triple burner), one of the six *fu* 腑 (bowel) organs within the human body. It is essential to the free movement of the *qi*. The upper burner relates to organs the thorax and the breathing function. The middle burner relates to the organs above the stomach and digestion. The lower burner relates to the organs lower down in the abdomen and the urogenital or gynecological function. According to *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經 (*Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*), the upper burner acts like a mist; the middle like foam; and the lower like a swamp. See *Huangdi neijing* (2009, p. 315).

22 吾於是宜知夫內境真象焉。內境者何也？身之境也。真象者，吾身之爐，其中有天地、日月、星辰、風雲、河漢、山嶽、江河、草木焉。天者，乾也，金也，華蓋也，處於萬象之上，是為內境之肺者也。星辰日月之輪者，是為內境之上焦，榮衛流行之度者也。太虛玄界之上清氣凝集焉，玄界之下濁氣聚散焉，上下清濁之分是為內境之中焦，羅隔者也。羅隔之上，清爭之域也；羅隔之下，穢濁之境也。五嶽群山者，首也；澗谷者，口也、鼻也；泉源者，津液也，飲食也；江河奔大海者，飲食聚於水穀之府也；雲雨生山川者，毛髮也。(*DZ* 1017).

23 Although the general over-arching structure of inner alchemy moved on from the pantheon of inner gods, it still borrows terms from earlier meditative practice. For example, *jing* (essence) is also called "White-haired old man" 白頭老子 and *shen* (spirit) "Woman in Green Attire" 青衣女子.

24 There are three inner alchemy treatises in the Daoist Canon associated with him: *Secret Instructions on Holding the One and Encasing the Three* 抱一守三訣 (*DZ* 576); *Straightforward Directions on Quanzhen by Sir Paper Boat* 紙舟先生全真直指 (*DZ* 242) and *Alchemical Instructions of the Old Man Three Peaks, the Master Holding the One* 抱一子三峰老人丹訣 (*DZ* 281).

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A New Study on Fushi of Early Quanzhen Daoism

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Abstract: Fushi (服食), a method for treating diseases and nourishing life to achieve longevity, is highly valued and widely used in traditional Taoism. Regarding whether Quanzhen Taoism, a new form of Taoism founded in the Jin Dynasty (1115–1234), practices Fushi, contradictory opinions have been recorded in *Collected records written on Qingyan Mountain* (Qingyan conglu 青巖叢錄) from the end of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) and *The History of the Taoist School founded by (Qiu) Changchun* (Changchun daojiao yuanliu 長春道教源流) from the late Qing Dynasty (1636–1912). Today's scholars generally believe that Quanzhen Taoism emphasizes the cultivation of heart and mind and thus has nothing to do with Fushi. This article, centered around early Quanzhen Taoism representatives Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (1112–1170) and the "Seven True Ones (Qizhen 七真)", combines their writings, quotations, biographies, and other materials and discovers that while Wang Chongyang and others heavily criticized the traditional method of Fushi, they also carried out extensive Fushi activities and accumulated rich practical experience in areas such as taking medicine (fuyao 服藥), breathing exercises (fuqi 服氣), fasting (bigu 辟穀), dieting (yinshi 飲食), and using talismans (fufu 服符). Early Quanzhen Taoism both denied and utilized Fushi leading to a contradiction between words and deeds. The reasons for this contradiction can be attributed to two aspects: the internal alchemy thinking of the early Quanzhen Taoism that prioritized Tao over technique (shu 術), and dual cultivation of inner nature (xing 性) and life (ming 命) and prioritizing the former over the latter.

Keywords: Fushi; Quanzhen Daoism; Wang Chongyang; Qizhen (Seven True Ones)

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1. Introduction

Fushi is one of the common practices of physical cultivation in Daoism, which aims to heal diseases, strengthen the body, prolong life, and even achieve immortality through the intake of specific drugs, food, gas, talisman water, etc. As early as the Spring and Autumn (770–476 BC) and Warring States (475–221 BC) periods, Fushi was popularized among immortals and alchemists. After the birth of Daoism at the end of the Eastern HanDynasty (25–220), this practice was absorbed and transformed, gradually developing into a rich and diverse set of methods for nourishing the body through Fushi. Many scholars have already conducted research on this Taoist phenomenon, accumulating quite substantial results.[1]

Among the many sects of Taoism, the Fushi practices of Quanzhen Taoism are especially noteworthy. Quanzhen Taoism arose in the middle of the Jin Dynasty, founded by Wang Chongyang in northern China. It broadly absorbed the intellectual essence of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism and pursued the goal of achieving immortality, advocated the dual cultivation of inner nature and life (xingming shuangxiu 性命雙修) and the equal emphasis of accomplishments and practices (gongxing bingzhong 功行並重). It innovated comprehensively the Taoist doctrines, commandments, temple systems, methods of practice, and transcendent states. Therefore, Chen Yuan 陳垣 (1880–1971) summarized the ideological features of Quanzhen Taoism with the phrase "neither Confucian, Taoist nor Buddhist", referring to it as the "New Taoism" or the "reformist sect within Taoism" (Chen 1962, p. 2). Influenced by this view, as a late-emerging sect, Quanzhen Taoism is often emphasized by its researchers in terms of the new aspect. According to existing

Quanzhen Taoist material, members of Quanzhen Taoism frequently elucidate the meaning and methods of mental cultivation. In contrast, they rarely discuss physical cultivation. Even if they do touch upon it, it is usually related to internal alchemy and there is almost no content specifically focused on Fushi. Therefore, scholars studying Quanzhen Taoism, when investigating its religious practices, seldom pay attention to the relationship between Quanzhen Taoism and Fushi practices, and even directly assert that Quanzhen Taoism has nothing to do with Fushi. Other treatises focusing on Taoist Fushi practices usually consider Taoism as a whole, based on Taoist texts specifically discussing Fushi. Obviously, this method is not applicable to Quanzhen Taoism, which has not left any writings on Fushi, so these works naturally do not pay attention to the Fushi situation of Quanzhen Taoism. If we only focus on the features of Quanzhen Taoism that are different from traditional Taoism and ignore the usage of traditional Taoist methods by Quanzhen Taoism, we cannot fully and accurately grasp the content and social activities of Quanzhen Taoism's practices, and our understanding of Quanzhen Taoism's inheritance in the history of Taoist development will be insufficient. Therefore, it is very necessary to explore the relationship between Quanzhen Taoism and Fushi practices, especially the relationship between them during its initial period of establishment.

The representative figures of early Quanzhen Taoism mainly include the founder Wang Chongyang and his seven disciples known as the "Seven True Ones": Ma Yu 馬鈺 (1123–1183), Tan Chuduan 譚處端 (1123–1185), Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 (1147–1203), Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (1148–1227), Wang Chuyi 王處一 (1142–1217), Hao Datong 郝大通 (1140–1212), and Sun Bu'er 孫不二 (1119–1182). The relationship between early Quanzhen Taoism and *Fushi*, which this article discusses, revolves around Wang Chongyang and the "Seven True Ones". Since Quanzhen Taoism has not discussed *Fushi* in the form of a monograph or a special chapter, we cannot use the traditional method of examining Taoist *Fushi* practices. Instead, we can only compile trivial segments about *Fushi* from the materials of early Quanzhen Taoism. We mainly selected materials from the following channel. First, the poetry collections and quotations of Wang Chongyang and others, which were compiled by the disciples of Wang Chongyang and the "Seven True Ones", are collected. These recorded the educational and cultivated thoughts of Wang Chongyang and others in the form of poetry and recorded sayings. Second, the Taoist books of Quanzhen Taoism written by Taoist priests are selected. These recorded the life stories of Wang Chongyang and others in the form of individual biography. A considerable part of these are stele inscriptions with clear chronological records and are highly credible. Third, other documents from the Jin and Yuan periods, which were created at times relatively close to the active periods of Wang Chongyang and others, are collected. Therefore, they can more realistically reflect the situation of early Quanzhen Taoism. The *Fushi* practices under investigation include taking medicine, absorbing energy, grain avoidance, diet, and taking talisman water.[2]

2. Early Quanzhen's View on Fushi

Regarding the relationship between Quanzhen and Fushi, there have been different opinions since the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Wang Hui王禕 (1322–1373) in *Collected records written on Qingyan Mountain* states: "However, there are two techniques in the art of immortals: one is cultivation, and the other is Fushi. These two are now the teachings of Quanzhen" (Wang 2016, p. 607). He also says: "Nowadays, cultivation and Fushi techniques have been passed down and are used by Quanzhen. The name of Quanzhen rose during the Jin Dynasty, with divisions between the Southern and Northern sects. The Southern Sect emphasizes the nature, while the Northern Sect emphasizes life" (Wang 2016, p. 608). Wang Hui learned the Confucian classics from Huang Jin 黃溍 (1277–1357), and was a schoolmate of Song Lian 宋濂 (1310–1381). From 1347 to 1349, Wang Hui compiled historical books in Yanjing 燕京 (now Nanjing 南京, Jiangsu 江蘇), during which he submitted letters to the authorities, expressing his views on the social situation, but was not taken seriously. Therefore, in 1350, Wang Hui left Yanjing, retired to Qingyan Mountain 青巖山 (now Yiwu 義烏, Zhejiang 浙江), and wrote the book *Collected records*

written on Qingyan Mountain. In 1358, Wang Hui entered the service of Zhu Yuanzhang 's 朱元璋 (1328–1398) regime. In 1369, Zhu Yuanzhang issued a decree, ordering Song Lian and Wang Hui to compile *Yuan History* (Yuanshi 元史). In 1373, Wang Hui was sent on a mission to Yunnan 雲南 by imperial order and was killed. *Collected records written on Qingyan Mountain* is Wang Hui's reading notes, which narrate the origins of the *Book of Changes* (Zhouyi 周易), *Book of Documents* (Shangshu 尚書), *Book of Odes* (Shijing 詩經), *Spring and Autumn Annals* (Chunqiu 春秋), Three Rites (Sanli 三禮), *Centrality and Commonality* (Zhongyong中庸), *Great Learning* (Daxue 大學), Apocrypha, Buddhism, Taoism, Geomancy, Medical school, etc. When Wang Hui narrates the origins of Taoism, he starts from Laozi's 老子 *Scripture of the Dao and Its Virtue* (Daode jing 道德經) and goes all the way to Zhengyi 正一 and Quanzhen Taoism at his time. Although Wang Hui was greatly influenced by Confucian thought, he also had many interactions with Taoist priests. His division of the Taoist pattern at that time into Zhengyi and Quanzhen schools indicates that he accurately grasped the basic situation of Taoism at that time. This indicates that in Wang Yi's time, the emphasis on Fushi and cultivation were the two main features of Quanzhen. Around the middle of the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), the Southern Sect led by Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (1134–1229) and the Northern Sect led by Wang Chongyang merged to form a larger Quanzhen. In terms of organizational form, the Northern Sect unified the Southern Sect; in terms of cultivation methods, the Southern Sect influenced the Northern Sect. The Southern Sect emphasized physical cultivation and widely used various techniques for conserving essence and nourishing qi (炁). Therefore, some scholars believe that "Wang Yi directly regards Quanzhen as a teaching of cultivation and Fushi, which cannot be denied as a direct result of the blending and confluence of Daoist sects since the middle and later periods of the Yuan Dynasty" (Zhu 2009, p. 96). However, *The History of the Taoist School founded by (Qiu) Changchun*, completed in the year of 1879, presents an opposing view: "The teachings of Qiu Chuji has gained much from the essentials of *Scripture of the Dao and Its Virtue* and has no drawbacks from the inferior practices of cultivation, Fushi, talismans, exorcisms, or rituals" (ZW 949, 1). The author Chen Jiaoyou 陳教友 (1824–1881), was a seventeenth-generation disciple of Quanzhen in the late Qing Dynasty. He believed that Qiu Chuji (also known as Changchunzi 長春子) focused on inheriting and promoting Laozi's knowledge, with no connection to Fushi or other Daoist techniques. Based on this, Chen Jiaoyou extended this judgment to the whole Quanzhen: "In the early Ming Dynasty, Daoism flourished with Quanzhen and Zhengyi . . . Quanzhen originally did not mention cultivation or Fushi. Since Chen Zhixu's 陳致虛 (1290-?) *Folios on Awakening to Perfection* (Wuzhen pian 悟真篇) studies, the Southern and Northern sects have been unified, and only then did cultivation begin, but Fushi has not been heard of" (ZW 949, 147). In his view, Quanzhen has had no connection with Fushi from beginning to end. It can be seen that the two have opposite views on whether or not there was the taking of medicine in Quanzhen Daoism, but both advocate that there was no such practice in early Quanzhen Daoism. This understanding has great influence and has been supported by many scholars in later generations.[3]

Based on the available materials, Wang Chongyang and others basically rejected and negated the Fushi techniques of traditional Daoism. Wang Chongyang said: "Do not rely on scattered pills to seek virtue, nor depend on talisman water to hope for ascension" (DZ 1153, 9. 6b). He also said: "Having obtained the carefree true freedom, why bother with taking pills or dining on mist?" (DZ 1153, 10. 10a). Things such as talisman water, taking pills, and dining on mist are of no help in accumulating virtue and transcending the world. Only the carefree state of mind is the path to liberation. Ma Yu also said: "Practicing meditation, paying respects to the earth, chanting, dining on mist, and fasting while reading scriptures. Relying on talisman water and concentrating on imagination, gargling and swallowing exhaust the body. Many are lost in the arts of the bedroom, depending on Fu Huan Yuan (Returning to the Origin), and water and fire as support. If not sinful, various practices are obstructed, and cultivation is misguided" (DZ 1150, 8a). He also said: "Stop talking about and swallowing, don't mention concentration, swallowing mist and

taking Qi are all illusory. Sitting in meditation and practicing diligently, pulling hands and legs is laborious. Picking and fighting for divine elixir is scattered and lost, taking pills, and water and fire are inappropriate. In the end, it is the principle of Wu Wei (non-action) that is most reliable" (DZ 1150, 20b). The mentioned practices such as dining on mist, swallowing mist, fasting, talisman water, and taking Qi are all essential aspects of Daoist Fushi. Ma Yu pointed out that only the ultimate principle of nature and non-action is worth relying on, and the practices of Fushi are all in vain. *Record of the Celebrated Encounter of the Arcane Wind* (Xuanfeng qinghui lu 玄風慶會錄), completed in 1232, recorded Qiu Chuji's answer to Genghis Khan's 成吉思汗 (1162–1227) question about the path to longevity: "Ancient people said: 'Taking medicine for a thousand mornings is not as good as sleeping alone for one night.' Medicine is made of plants, and energy is the marrow. So what is the benefit to remove the marrow and add the plants? For example, if you store gold in a bag, and gradually remove the gold and add iron, over time the gold will be gone and the bag will be filled with iron only. What's the difference between the principle of taking medicine and this?" (DZ 176, 5b). The "medicine" mentioned here refers specifically to herbal medicine. Qiu Chuji believed that the vital substances ("essence") in the human body are the essence of a person, while medicines are merely various plants. If a person does not conserve their own essence but instead pursues taking herbal medicine, it is not different from neglecting the fundamentals and pursuing the superficial. It can be seen that Wang Chongyang, Ma Yu, and Qiu Chuji all held a negative and critical attitude towards the traditional Fushi techniques of Daoism.

3. Fushi Practices in Early Quanzhen Daoism

Since Taoism incorporated *Fushi* practices into its cultivation system, it has developed a rich variety of *Fushi* programs. Previous scholars have summarized Taoist *Fushi* practices into five types: taking medicine, absorbing *qi*, grain avoidance, diet, and taking talisman mater, which basically cover all Taoist *Fushi* activities. Therefore, we will start from these five aspects to examine the *Fushi* practices of early Quanzhen Taoism.

Although early Quanzhen Daoism did not advocate the traditional Daoist practice of using medicinal herbs, they did not entirely reject it in practice. Wang Chuyi, one of the "Seven True Ones", often consumed herbs while living in seclusion on Tiezha Mountain in Wendeng County (now Weihai 威海, Shandong 山東). *Song of the Stone Fungus on Tiezha Mountain* (Yong chashan shizhi 詠查山石芝) says: "The essence of the sun and the moon form auspicious sprouts, the mysterious light and true qi are contained within. It nourishes the five viscera, producing golden fluid, and secretly strengthens the entire body's muscles and bones" (DZ 1152, 1. 30a). Another *Song of the Stone Fungus on Tiezha Mountain* (Yong tiechashan shizhi 詠鐵查山石芝) states: "Among spiritually beautiful mountains and seas, to pick fungus, one must forget their form so as to nourish the jade sprouts to satisfy hunger and quench thirst, increase spirit and intelligence, and shine with clarity. People who take it will not decline or decay" (DZ 1152, 4. 21a-b). The "stone fungus" (shizhi 石芝) mentioned here refers to the fungus that grows on stones, which has long been included in the list of consumables by Daoists.[4] According to Wang Chuyi, stone fungus has the effects of cultivating true qi, nourishing the five viscera, strengthening the body, and prolonging life. In addition, Wang Chuyi often exchanged medicines with others. *Thanking county magistrate for Mint Pills from Yunzhou* (Xie zaigong hui yunzhou bohe jianwan 謝宰公惠鄆州薄荷煎丸) says: "A drop of the elixir can nourish a beautiful complexion for a thousand generations and people break through the cycle of life and death" (DZ 1152, 2. 28a-b). "*Seeking Atractylodes from the Same Province to Give* (Benzhou tongzhi mi cangshu zengzhi 本州同知覓蒼術贈之)" says: "The light of the sun and the moon form a beautiful knot, gradually making the muscles and bones strong. It can gather the divine light of the four seasons, and transform into immortality" (DZ 1152, 2. 29a-b). The mint pills and Atractylodes mentioned in the poems were originally medicines for treating diseases, but Wang Chuyi's focus was not on their healing functions but on their magical effects in promoting cultivation. Qiu Chuji had many connections with technique of Tak-

ing Drugs.[5] In his *Demonstration to the Public* (Shizhong示眾), he wrote: "Stone marrow can prolong life, and cinnabar can rejuvenate the complexion. Ge Hong 葛洪 traveled the great sea, and Wang Lie 王烈 (supposedly circa 224–263) encountered deep mountains" (DZ 1159, 4. 11b-12a). The "stone marrow" (shisui 石髓) and "cinnabar" (dansha 丹砂) mentioned in the poem are all external alchemy medicines, and both Ge Hong and Wang Lie are representative figures of medicinal cultivation. It is obvious that Qiu Chuji also had an affirmative attitude to the method of seeking longevity through ingesting external elixirs. In addition, in his *Discourse on Conserving Health* (Shesheng xiaoxi lun 攝生消息論), he associated spring, summer, autumn, and winter with the liver, heart, lung, and kidney of the human body, respectively, reminding people to pay attention to the corresponding visceral diseases in different seasons and listing the medicinal recipes for treating the diseases. In summary, early Quanzhen Daoism not only understood and valued the traditional Daoist practice of using medicinal herbs, but to some extent still retained the legacy of medicinal cultivation.

Among the five types of dietary practices in early Quanzhen Daoism, the most commonly used method was taking qi. Early Quanzhen Daoism's practice of taking qi usually took place within the framework of internal alchemy. The ingested qi included both external and internal qi, with more emphasis on internal qi. Sun Bu'er's *Kun Dao Kung Fu Sequence* (Kundao gongfu cidi 坤道功夫次第) in the tenth chapter titled *Dietetic Regimen (fushi* 服食*)* states: "Great alchemy forms in the mountains and marshes, containing the essence of creation. In the morning, we embrace the qi of the sun, and at night, we absorb the essence of the moon. When the time is right, the elixir can be collected, and as years pass, the body becomes lighter. When the original spirit can move freely, all pores emit light" (JY 177, 444). Practitioners in the mountains and marshes absorbed the qi of the sun and the moon during the early morning and evening. After persisting for a period of time, the elixir naturally forms within their bodies, making them light and agile. When the original spirit can move freely, light will emanate from all pores. This is how early Quanzhen Daoists applied the technique of ingesting external qi to the female elixir cultivation method. In terms of ingesting internal qi, Wang Chongyang and others had accumulated a wealth of experience, mainly including "Drinking Daogui" (yin daogui 飲刀圭) and "Eating Shu Rice" (can shumi 餐黍米). The term "Daogui" frequently appears in the poetry of Wang Chongyang and the "Seven True Ones". Wang Chongyang says, "Frequently drink Daogui" (DZ 1153, 12. 19a-b). Ma Yu says, "Feast daily on Yurui (jade stamens), and drink Daogui often" (DZ 1142, 1. 25b). Liu Chuxuan says, "Leisurely drink Daogui throughout the twelve zodiac signs" (DZ 1141, 3. 9a). Tan Chuduan says, "Always be open and honest, and silently drink Daogui" (DZ 1160, 2. 7b). Examples such as these are numerous. "Daogui" originally referred to the tools used to measure medicine in external alchemy and was later introduced into internal alchemy practice. Wang Chongyang explained, "Drinking Daogui is swallowing saliva to ingest qi" (DZ 1156, 10a). It can be seen that "Drinking Daogui" is the traditional Daoist method of swallowing saliva to ingest qi. He says, "Daogui is one. With water and qi, it can give birth to everything" (DZ 1156, 16a-b). He also says, "Exhaling is the Dao, inhaling is the Gui, practicing is everything, and the verifier is the Daogui, which is the rejuvenation" (DZ 1156, 16b). This shows that the qi being ingested is the vital qi cultivated and nourished within the body. The term "Shu Rice" was also frequently mentioned by Wang Chongyang and others. Wang Chongyang says, "Before the Three Pure Ones, participate in the Shu Rice Pearl" (DZ 1153, 12. 9a). Ma Yu says, "In the beginning, the elixir forms a mysterious treasure, and the Shu Rice Pearl hides the external spring" (DZ 1149, 3. 10b). Sun Bu'er says, "Every day, increase the Shu Rice, and the white hair will turn red again" (JY 177, 444). In Qiu Chuji's *Straightforward Directions on the Great Elixir* (Dadan zhizhi 大丹直指), he specifically explained: "The dragon is the positive yang qi of the heart fluid, and if it doesn't go up, it naturally combines with the kidney qi. The tiger is the true water of the kidney qi, and if it doesn't go down, it naturally intersects with the heart fluid. When the dragon and the tiger mate, a grain shaped like Shu Rice is formed. This method is called the dragon and tiger mating, and it reveals

the elixir" (DZ 244, 1. 6a). He also says, "This is the combination of qi, called mating. Each day, perform one mating, obtain one object shaped like Shu Rice, and return it to the Yellow Court in the center, which can naturally increase longevity and prolong life" (DZ 244, 1. 7b). From this, it can be seen that the so-called "Shu Rice" is actually the product formed by the combination of the qi of the heart and kidneys. In terms of its nature, it also belongs to internal qi.

Early Quanzhen Daoists also paid attention to abstaining from grains in their cultivation practices. Wang Chongyang, in *Su Muzhe—Persuading the Same Stream* (Su Muzhe—Quan tongliu 蘇幕遮·勸同流), said, "The residue of the five grains is difficult to transform" (DZ 1153, 4. 9b). This can be seen as a direct continuation of the traditional Daoist practice of abstaining from grains. He was also influenced by Buddhist views on the body, repeatedly mentioning "four false bodies" (sijia shenqu 四假身軀), "four false mortal bodies" (sijia fanqu 四假凡軀), and "illusory transformed color bodies" (huanhua seshen 幻化色身), expressing a denigration and negation of the physical body. Because "the flesh and the four elements are false", and eating grains is for the maintenance of the body, he reminded others that "you should know that the grains support the body", comparing eating grains to "eating dirt, dining on mud, and nourishing dust" (DZ 1153, 2. 11a). However, he opposed abstaining from grains intentionally, believing that it should be a natural result of internal alchemy cultivation. In *Requesting the Master to Abstain from the Five Grains since Childhood* (Yugong qiu ziyou bushi wugu 于公求自幼不食五穀), he wrote: "This cause is only in Yujing Mountain, no need for feasting and paying attention to appearance. Nourishing qi relies on the moisture of true water, while nourishing the spirit is like the leisure of white clouds. When practicing to the point of overflowing and transcending the middle position, lead and mercury are cast out from here. Just wait for the impurities outside to be exhausted, then the brilliant colors will return" (DZ 1153, 1. 20b–21a). When discussing Cutting Off Grains, Wang Chongyang used terms such as "True Water" (zhenshui 真水) and "Lead and Mercury" (qiangong 鉛汞) to advocate inner alchemy-oriented practice of it. According to Wang Chongyang, abstaining from grains is not an independent cultivation technique but a characteristic that arises when internal alchemy cultivation reaches a certain level.[6]

Sun Bu'er's *"Kun Dao Kung Fu Sequence"* in Eleventh Song *Abstaining from Grains* (Bigu 辟穀) also says: "Once you have obtained the spiritual qi, the lungs and viscera will feel cool and extraordinary. Forget the spirit without attachment, and unite with the extreme emptiness. In the morning, you eat mountain yams; when hungry at dusk, gather marsh mushrooms. If you mix with smoke and fire, the body will not tread the jade pond" (JY 177, 444). In Sun Bu'er's female alchemy practice, when the practitioner's qi is full, they will feel their organs refreshed, indescribable, and enter a carefree state of "forgetting the spirit " (wangshen 忘神) and "uniting with the extreme" (heji 合極). At this point, practitioners can naturally abstain from grains and must be careful not to eat them again, replacing them with high-nutrition and hard-to-digest foods such as mountain yams and lotus seeds.[7] From this, it can be seen that both Wang and Sun advocated achieving a natural state of abstaining from grains through internal alchemy cultivation.

Early Quanzhen Daoism combined religious cultivation with daily diet. Firstly, Wang Chongyang and others advocated that diet should be simple and moderate. Wang Chongyang said: "People should restrain their desires, and their intake of sour and spicy food should be regulated" (DZ 1153, 11. 11b). This straightforwardly expresses the need to suppress the desires of the mouth and stomach. Ma Yu proposed "Ten Precepts", (shijie 十戒) the seventh of which states: "Be careful with your words, moderate your diet, reduce your taste, discard glory, and eliminate hatred and love" (DZ 1256, 1. 9a). He emphasized controlling the quality and quantity of food and drink. Tan Chuduan said: "When I feel cold and hungry, I only wear coarse clothes and eat pickles" (DZ 1160, 1. 5a). Liu Chuxuan said: "Do not think about delicious meals, just beg for leftovers" (DZ 1141, 3. 19a). Both advocated a frugal lifestyle that does not seek delicious food. Qiu Chuji said: "learning the Dao, monks wear coarse clothing, eat poor food, and do not accumu-

late wealth for fear of harming their bodies and losing their blessings. Learning the Dao, laymen should also moderate their food and drink, dwelling place, treasures, and wealth according to their situation, and should not be too different" (DZ 176, 7b-8a). The identities of the practitioners, whether they are monks or laymen, have different requirements, but the requirement to control their diet is the same. Secondly, Wang Chongyang and others, from the perspective of cultivation, repeatedly emphasized abstaining from alcohol and meat. Wang Chongyang said: "In general, to learn the Dao, one must not kill, steal, drink alcohol, eat meat, break precepts, or violate vows" (DZ 1154, 2. 3a). He clearly regarded alcohol and meat as obstacles to learning the Dao. Ma Yu also said: "Alcohol is the pulp that disrupts nature, and meat is the thing that cuts off life. It is best not to eat it" (DZ 1057, 2b). Quanzhen Daoism takes life cultivation as a means to become an immortal, and alcohol and meat are things that damage inner nature and life. He also praised his disciples, saying, "Each one is pure and clean for life, abstains from desires, meat and alcohol" (DZ 1057, 14b). Tan Chuduan said: "Everyone who learns the Dao craves for meat, and those who are addicted to alcohol and flowers are entangled in sins. Desiring meat hurts the lives, and the intention of greed and love harms the root" (DZ 1160, 3. 5a). Eating meat harms the lives of creatures, and drinking alcohol easily gives rise to a heart of greed and love. Both will lead people astray from the right path of learning the Dao. Liu Chuxuan said: "while eating meat, you should think of living animals, and you should not drink alcohol for no reason" (DZ 1141, 4. 15a). He also advised people to refrain from eating meat and drinking alcohol. Thirdly, early Quanzhen Daoism used tea drinking as an auxiliary means of cultivation. Ma Yu's *Dreamless Command—Following Chongyang's Rhyme* (Wumengling—Danyang jiyun 無夢令·丹陽繼韻) says: "No matter how many bowls Zhaozhou has, don't call Lu Tong anymore. Pray to the Duke of Taiyuan, free from the entanglement of sleep demons. Bright and splendid, bright and splendid, see the shore of eternal life" (DZ 1154, 1. 13a). The "Zhaozhou 趙州" mentioned here refers to the master Congshen 從諗禪師 (778–897), who was famous for his key phrase "Go and have tea"; the "Duke of Taiyuan 太原公" refers to Bai Juyi 白居易 (772–846), who, along with Lu Tong 盧仝 (769?–835), wrote poems about tea. Ma Yu pointed out that drinking tea could help avoid the intrusion of sleep demons, allowing one to enter a bright and splendid realm of achieving immortality. In *Walking on Clouds—Tea* (Tayunxing—Cha 踏雲行·茶), it is said: "Tea deserves the name as it eliminates the thoughts that disrupts sleep, and the merit is immeasurable. Confucius no longer dreams of Duke Zhou, the mountain people laugh at Chen Tuan's drowsiness. The seven bowls of Lu Tong, and the monk Zhaozhou, ever know that the taste returns to the supreme. If Zaiyu could taste a cup, there would be no daytime sleep, and the spirit would be refreshed" (DZ 1142, 1. 10a–b). Here, a series of allusions such as Confucius 孔子 (551–479 BC) not dreaming of Duke Zhou 周公 (supposedly circa 1096–1032? BC), Chen Tuan's 陳摶 (871–989) drowsiness, and Zaiyu's 宰予 (522–458 BC) daytime sleep have been used to illustrate that by drinking tea, one can overcome sleep problems and achieve a refreshed and clear state. Early Quanzhen Daoism believed that during sleep, people cannot control their thoughts and easily generate desires, which hinders cultivation. Therefore, they adopted the method of "fighting sleep demons" (zhan shuimo 戰睡魔) to restrain the desire for sleep, reduce sleep time, and maintain inner purity. Modern scientific research shows that tea contains a large amount of caffeine and catechins, which can excite the central nervous system of the human body. Therefore, Ma Yu relied on drinking tea to dispel sleepiness and maintain a vigorous mental state. Finally, early Quanzhen Daoism proposed dietary principles that correspond to the changes of the four seasons. Qiu Chuji's *Discourse on Conserving Health* extensively absorbed and drew upon the principles of health preservation from before the Jin Dynasty. Based on the correspondence between human organs and the changes in the four seasons and the five elements, he proposed a set of general principles and specific methods for dietary health preservation in different seasons.[8] The content is concise and practical, making it suitable for both Quanzhen Taoists and the general public to follow.

Since the advent of Daoism, the practice of using talisman water to treat diseases has been passed down continuously and was later adopted by the Quanzhen Sect of Neo-Daoism. Wang Chongyang said: "How can you allow medical treatment? Do not let people be overwhelmed, the use of talisman water is a good cause" (DZ 1153, 7. 12b). This fully affirms the positive effect of practicing talisman water on accumulating good causes. In his work dedicated to immortal Lu 陸仙, he openly said, "I practice talisman water, and you cultivate medicinal herbs" (DZ 1154, 2. 3b). In *Walking on Grass—Kunyu Mountain Tuan'an* (Tasuoxing—Kunyushan tuan'an 踏莎行·昆嵛山團庵), it is said, "Water talisman does not work here, the cause and effect have already reached Wendeng County" (DZ 1153, 7. 13b). The "water talisman" mentioned here is equivalent to "talisman water" (Kunio 2006, p. 351). Since Wang Chongyang said that he did not perform talisman water here, it implies that he had done so before. Moreover, Wang Chongyang also used talisman water to cure his disciple Ma Yu's illness. In the *Records of the Correct Lineage of the Golden Lotus* (Jinlian zhengzong ji 金蓮正宗記) written in 1241, it is recorded: "Then he went to the smoke and mist cave on Kunyu Mountain. The teacher suddenly suffered a severe headache as if his head was splitting. People said, 'Master Ma may not survive these days!' The real person (Wang Chongyang) said, 'I have transformed him from three thousand miles away. Can I let him die?' He then chanted water for him to drink, and he was healed after drinking" (DZ 173, 3. 5b). The "talisman water" mentioned here is the method of treating diseases with talisman water. Wang Chongyang cured Ma Yu's headache through this method. Ma Yu also affirmed and utilized talisman water. In his *Praising fashi Liu's Ascension with a Poem* (Hunyuan Liu fashi shenghua, yi ci zan zhi 混元劉法師昇化，以詞讚之), he highly praised Master Liu's 劉法師 actions of "writing talisman water to cure diseases and save disasters" (DZ 1149, 10. 23a). In *Presenting Ma Yan Gao* (Zeng Ma Yangao 贈馬彥高), he said, "When encountering me, you forget your worries by drinking talisman wine, which can cure hundreds of diseases like saving a drowning person" (DZ 1149, 9. 11a). The "talisman wine" (zhoujiu咒酒) mentioned here should be similar to "talisman water", just using wine as a medium instead. In addition to "talisman water", Ma Yu also used a technique called "talisman fruit" (zhouguo 咒果). The *Records of the Correct Lineage of the Golden Lotus* records: "A poor man in Zhiyang had both of his feet disabled and cried out in pain. The teacher (Ma Yu) chanted water for him to drink, and he walked as if flying. Luan Wugong 欒武功 (fl. circa 11th c), who had suffered from wind paralysis for a long time, found no effect from hundreds of medicines. The teacher (Ma Yu) chanted fruit for him to eat, and he was healed in one day" (DZ 173, 3. 10a). Whether it was "talisman water" or "talisman fruit", the therapeutic effects were astonishing, and the time it took to see results was extremely short. Due to a lack of historical materials, we cannot know the specific operation of "talisman fruit". Judging from the name alone, it may involve drawing talismans directly on the fruit or using fingers to draw talismans on the fruit's surface, then consuming it. In essence, it should be an expanded application of the talisman water method.

4. The Internal Causes of Inconsistency in Fushi in Early Quanzhen Daoism

In the early days of Quanzhen Daoism, practitioners used Fushi techniques for cultivation and preaching while simultaneously belittling and rejecting it. The appearance of this contradictory situation between concept and practice is not only related to the influence of the Zhong-Lü 鍾呂 thought on early Quanzhen Daoism, but also due to the early Quanzhen Daoist tendency to prioritize spiritual cultivation over preserving life.

4.1. Emphasizing "Dao" over "Technique" and the Inner Alchemy Thinking of Cultivation Methods Leading to the Dao

Taoism, named after "Dao", is known for its diverse methods. Therefore, the pair of concepts, "Dao" and "Technique", are widely applied in the categories of Taoist cultivation and transcendence. Generally speaking, in Taoism, "Dao" has two meanings. On one hand, it refers to the origin and essence of all things in the universe. From the perspective of cosmic origin, "Dao" is the beginning of heaven and earth (the world). For all things

themselves, everything in the world depends on Dao for their creation. It exists eternally and is the ultimate destination of the world and all things, transcending the tangible material world. On the other hand, "Dao" also refers to the realm of self-transcendence of life. Through cultivation, humans can approach and return to "Dao", which can bring both body and spirit to the highest level of perfection. Technique refers to all kinds of concrete and practical methods of cultivation, all aiming to approach Dao. Taoism believes that "Dao" and "Technique" complement each other. "Dao" provides a rich theory for "Technique", pointing out the direction for the development of "Technique", while "Technique" is the prerequisite and path to achieving "Dao". Since the concepts of "Dao" and "Technique" can describe the cultivation activities of Taoism, they can naturally be applied to the Inner Alchemy technique, which has dominated Taoist cultivation since the end of the Tang Dynasty (618–907) and the Five Dynasties (907–979). Taoist Inner Alchemy theory believes that the Inner Alchemy practice follows the "Dao" of creating heaven and earth and generating all things. Carrying out practical cultivation based on it can lead the practitioner to the "Dao" of life transcendence. As a new Daoist school based on Inner Alchemy cultivation, early Quanzhen Daoism often emphasized the Dao and techniques simultaneously, showing its preference for the Inner Alchemy Dao and not engaging in other cultivation methods. Wang Chongyang, in his *Ninghai Begging for Change on Paper Banners* (Ninghai qihua shu zhiqishang 寧海乞化書紙旗上), said, "People ask for evidence against the harmful wind, but I have no techniques. I only eat and sleep, following the natural human instincts, which is full of the spirit of the great Dao of non-action, corresponding to the absence of techniques" (DZ 1153, 2. 18a). The *Three States and Five Associations Begging for Merit* (Sanzhou wuhui huayuanbang 三州五會化緣榜) further states, "You do not understand the root cause and only learn superficial techniques, which only helps you to seek blessings and nourishing the body, not cultivate life and enter the Dao" (DZ 1154, 3. 13a). In the *Song of exhortation to the Dao* (Quandao ge 勸道歌), Wang Chongyang listed various traditional Daoist techniques, such as fasting, meditation, talisman water, and gargling, and sternly pointed out, "Do not use any of these, as they are all best discarded", then turned the focus to Inner Alchemy cultivation (DZ 1153, 9. 4b–5a). Obviously, the "exhortation to the Dao" was actually encouraging people to abandon techniques and return to the Dao through Inner Alchemy cultivation. Ma Yu said, "Purity lies in purifying the heart and cleansing the qi. When the mind is clear, external things cannot disturb, so emotions settle and divine clarity arises; when the qi is pure, evil desires cannot interfere, so essence becomes complete and the abdomen is full. Hence, purifying the heart is like purifying water and nourishing qi is like raising a child. When the qi is refined, it becomes divine, and when the spirit is divine, the qi transforms, which is the result of purity. If one practices techniques with intention and action, they are just limited techniques; if one practices the principle of non-intention and non-action, it leads to the boundless realm of purity and emptiness" (DZ 1057, 8a–b). Ma Yu's "purity" (qingjing 清淨) cultivation discards limited techniques, advocating for the principle of non-intention and non-action. He believed that this can lead one back to the infinite and pure Dao. In the *Gift to Ju Deyi* (Zeng Ju Deyi 贈鞠得一), it is said that cultivation techniques are not the right path to return to the Dao; only by revealing one's true heart can one unite with the Dao (DZ 1149, 8. 16b). Tan Chuduan criticized those who only studied elixir techniques to show off their abilities but ignored the guidance of enlightenment and immortality (DZ 1160, 3. 5a–b). He also called for practitioners to recognize and understand the emptiness of all things, the concept of Buddhism, and let go of worldly thoughts and illusions, and learn the great Dao of immortality. Qiu Chuji said, "People in the world who pray for longevity do not make great vows from their original life and spirit but beg for blessings from immortals and Buddhas, which is abandoning the root and seeking the end. Our school does not talk about longevity because it transcends it. This supreme great Dao is not a trivial technique for extending life" (ZW 378, 284). In summary, there is a clear emphasis on the Dao over techniques in early Quanzhen Daoism literature. Therefore, when early Quanzhen Dao-

ism promoted Inner Alchemy and cultivation of the mind, it inevitably downplayed and disparaged techniques such as Fushi.

Wang Chongyang and others' understanding of "Dao" and "Shu" is actually inherited from the Zhong-Lü Daoist school. The early Quanzhen School revered Zhongli Quan 鍾離權 (fl. circa 9th c) and Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 (fl. circa 9th c) as their ancestors, and absorbed and borrowed a large amount of Zhong-Lü teachings. In *Anthology of Zhongli Quan's Transmission of the Dao to Lü Dongbin* (Zhong-Lü chuandao ji 鍾呂傳道集), Zhongli Quan repeatedly criticized those who were obsessed with techniques and did not comprehend the Dao. He proposed the classification of cultivation into five levels of immortality and three levels of techniques, further explaining: "The three levels of techniques refer to the minor, intermediate, and major achievements. The five levels of immortality refer to ghost immortals, human immortals, earth immortals, spirit immortals, and celestial immortals, all of which are immortals" (DZ 263, 14. 2b–3a). In his description of human immortals, he said: "Human immortals are the second lowest among the five immortals. Cultivators who do not understand the great Dao, acquire one technique within the Dao, and have unwavering faith and determination throughout their lives. And The *qi* of the five elements interacts and consolidates, making them immune to the harm of the eight evil diseases, and they enjoy good health with few illnesses, which is called human immortality" (DZ 263, 14. 3b). Cultivators who cannot comprehend the Dao and stick to techniques will become human immortals. Although human immortals can manipulate the qi of the five elements to strengthen their bodies and reduce illness, this combination of qi is just a result of coincidences. Moreover, human immortals are helpless against aging, sickness, death, and suffering. However, this trend of praising minor techniques and ignoring the Dao spread widely in the secular society, which aroused Zhongli Quan's dissatisfaction. He said: "Techniques that do not conform to the Dao rely on extensive knowledge and strong recognition to deceive the world, praise each other and cause the great Dao to be unheard, thus giving birth to various minor techniques and side doors" (DZ 263, 14. 6a). He also said: "Since side door techniques are easy to achieve and popular among the secular people, they pass them on to each other and do not awaken until death. As a result, they become customs and corrupt the great Dao" (DZ 263, 14. 6b–7a). At the same time, Zhongli Quan also advocated that techniques should not be separated from the Dao. He said: "There are countless techniques, but they are all part of the Dao. If one cannot achieve the great Dao, one should stop at one technique within the great Dao. Once successful, one will live a peaceful and happy life with longevity, hence called human immortality" (DZ 263, 14. 4a). Although he did not highly regard the realm of human immortals, he still recognized that many techniques practiced to become human immortals were part of the great Dao. Apparently, Zhongli Quan's intention of belittling techniques was not to oppose them but to warn cultivators that these techniques were only aspects of the Dao, which were "lower techniques for nourishing life" and "minor techniques for gathering spirit". One should not be obsessed with or exaggerate them, otherwise, they would never truly grasp the great Dao and could only achieve human immortality in their lifetime. Zhongli Quan also showed cultivators a path to seek the Dao and immortality: "Minor techniques make human immortals, intermediate techniques lead to earth immortals, and Dao brings spirit immortals. These are the three levels of achievement, which are essentially the same. Seeking the Dao through techniques is not difficult; seeking immortality through the Dao is also quite easy" (DZ 263, 14. 5b). General techniques can only provide safety and longevity, belonging to the "minor achievements" level, but in terms of the goal of achieving immortality, they are consistent with the intermediate and major levels of cultivation, with only differences in the degree of attaining the Dao and the rank of immortality. Human immortals achieved through general techniques may not be praiseworthy, but they still stand at the starting point of cultivation, laying the foundation for further cultivation to become earth immortals and spirit immortals. This practice of integrating traditional Daoist techniques into the cultivation hierarchy was further summarized by Shi Jianwu 施肩吾 (fl. 820), who inherited the Zhong-Lü alchemy methods,

as the proposition of "cultivating techniques to enter the Dao" (lianfa rudao 煉法入道), becoming the bridge connecting the "old techniques" and the "new Dao".[9]

The formation of the Zhong-Lü Inner Alchemy School occurred during a critical period when the Inner Alchemy Dao was transitioning from hidden to prominent. On one hand, Inner Alchemy practitioners needed to attack the previous Daoist cultivation techniques to bolster the momentum of the emerging Inner Alchemy methods, highlighting their independence and advanced nature. On the other hand, various traditional Daoist cultivation techniques had a solid follower base for a long time before the maturity of Inner Alchemy Dao and had produced practical effects to some extent. Therefore, Inner Alchemy practitioners actively reconciled the relationship between the two and absorbed the achievements of relevant techniques to construct a more complete Inner Alchemy cultivation system. It is precisely because of the above reasons that Zhongli Quan adopted a more tolerant attitude towards the ingestion of herbal medicines and the cultivation of External Alchemy.[10] The early Quanzhen School's contradictory words and actions regarding the Fushi were one of the specific manifestations of inheriting the Zhong-Lü ideology. However, compared to Zhong and Lü, Wang Chongyang and others had greatly reduced tolerance to traditional Daoist techniques.

4.2. Dual Cultivation of Inner Nature and Life and Prioritizing the Former over the Latter

In its early stage, the Quanzhen School adhered to the principle of "dual cultivation of inner nature and life" in the Inner Alchemy tradition. Wang Chongyang said, "Life and nature are complementary" (ZW 866, 670). He also said, "Those who understand inner nature and life are truly practicing the Dao" (DZ 1156, 2a). It is evident that he regarded the two as a complementary and unified entity, and the realization of them is the right path to cultivation. Ma Yu said, "With a clear life, one attains longevity; with a tranquil nature, one can see far. Life is the name of qi, and nature is the word of the divine. qi is the mother of the divine, and the divine is the child of qi. When the child and mother become the true unity, one can transcend life and death" (DZ 1149, 5. 6b). In his view, only through the dual cultivation of inner nature and life, can one achieve true nature and transcend life and death. Tan Chuduan said, "when you let go of everything, inner nature and life can be harmoniously integrated" (DZ 1160, 2. 8a). This expresses the pursuit of harmony and completeness in inner nature and life. Liu Chuxuan said, "Without water at its root, the sprout dies; without life for its nature, the body dies" (DZ 1058, 4b). He used the analogy of root and sprout to illustrate the inseparable relationship between essence and life. Qiu Chuji also said, "The secret of the Golden Elixir (jindan 金丹) lies in one essence and one life only. Essence is heaven, always hidden at the top; life is earth, always hidden at the navel. The top is the root of essence; the navel is the base of life. One root and one base are the origin and ancestors of heaven and earth... It is only these two things, essence and life, that are the truth in thousands of scriptures and myriad discussions" (DZ 244, 2. 10b–11b). He believed that the cultivation of inner nature and life is the foundation of Quanzhen School's Inner Alchemy practice, and identified the head and navel as the locations where inner nature and life reside in the human body. Thus, it can be seen that the early Quanzhen School basically continued the previous Inner Alchemy tradition of equal emphasis on inner nature and life in cultivation.

However, Wang Chongyang and others also advocated that there is a hierarchy and distinction in importance between inner nature and life. Wang Chongyang said, "The root is nature, and life is the base" (DZ 1158, 1a). He also said, "The guest is life, and the host is nature" (DZ 1158, 1b). This expression reveals his inclination to prioritize inner nature over life. To emphasize the importance of nature cultivation, he even said, "inner nature is more important than life" (DZ 1153, 4. 14a). This extreme statement elevates how important it is to cultivate nature rather than life. Ma Yu said, "For humans, there is birth and death, but if there is form, there must be decay" (DZ 1150, 18a). Since the decay of the physical body is an inevitable trend, the significance of nurturing the body is greatly reduced. Hao Datong said, "If a cultivator does not subdue their mind, even if

they have left the mundane world for many years, there is no merit, as they do not see nature of themselves. If they do not see it, how can they nourish life? If inner nature and life are not complete, how can they become true?" (DZ 1256, 1. 20a). To achieve a state of complete inner nature and life, one must start by revealing their true nature and then extend to maintaining the physical body. He also said, "Taking use of life to cultivate inner nature" (DZ 1256, 1. 21a). This explains the hierarchy and importance of the inner nature and life from the perspective of the relationship between them. Qiu Chuji said, "In our sect, the first three stages are all about active cultivation, which is life cultivation; while the latter six stages are the effortless subtle Dao, which is inner nature cultivation. From now on, we only mention nature cultivation instead of life cultivation. The term 'cultivation' implies deliberate efforts. Cultivation is work. With stages and levels, how can nature be considered work? Even Buddha only perfected nature cultivation" (ZW 378, 285). In the Inner Alchemy practice of the Quanzhen School, the proportion of life cultivation was already far smaller than that of nature cultivation, and life cultivation was also set as a deliberate practice, pale in comparison to the inner nature cultivation. However, even this was not satisfactory for Qiu Chuji. He demanded that from now on, only inner nature cultivation should be mentioned, and compared to the Buddhist practice of illuminating the mind and seeing inner nature. This led the Inner Alchemy practice of the Quanzhen School to develop in the extreme direction from canceling life cultivation to focusing on dual cultivation of inner nature and life.

In the early Quanzhen School, while advocating "dual cultivation of inner nature and life", it also demonstrated a tendency to "prioritize inner nature and downplay life" (zhongxing qingming 重性輕命), reflecting the contradiction between secular and religious perspectives on life. For a long time, secular and religious views on life have been intertwined and deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture, both of which were recognized and accepted by the early Quanzhen School. The secular view of life believes that humans are a physical and spiritual unity, with the latter relying on the former for existence. Based on this concept, the early Quanzhen School inherited the principles and methods of "dual cultivation of inner nature and life" from the Inner Alchemy Daoist tradition, striving to achieve dual liberation of the body and spirit. Fushi practices, as a set of health-preserving methods commonly used in traditional Daoism, belong to the category of life cultivation and were naturally included in the cultivation program by Wang Chongyang and others. On the other hand, the religious view of life holds that physical life can only exist briefly and will eventually fade away, while spiritual life is eternal and indestructible. Therefore, the early Quanzhen School, contrary to the traditional Daoist belief in immortality, sought spiritual liberation and regarded the cultivation of inner nature and the practice of the mind as the main path to becoming an immortal. In this respect, they despised various physical cultivation techniques, including Fushi practices, and focused their attention on the exercise of the mind and nature. It can be said that the contradictory attitude toward Fushi practices in the early Quanzhen School was due to their simultaneous inclusion of two different views on life in ancient China.

5. Conclusions

In traditional Taoism, the practice of Fushi has been widely used as a method to maintain health and seek immortality. According to the Quanzhen Taoist documents from the Jin-Yuan period, early Quanzhen Taoism representatives like Wang Chongyang and the 'Seven True Ones' also carried out various Fushi activities. This indicates that most scholars who previously studied Quanzhen Taoism either believed that there was no practice of Fushi within Quanzhen, or thought that their practice of Fushi was influenced by the Southern Lineage of Taoism after the convergence of the northern and southern schools of Taoism. Both of which are inconsistent with the true historical situation of Quanzhen Taoism.

However, as previous researchers pointed out that figures such as Wang Chongyang indeed held a vehemently critical attitude towards Fushi, the root cause of this lies in the

certain level of opposition between the practices of Inner Alchemy and the general health-maintenance techniques, such as Fushi, in terms of the methods of practice and the ultimate goals. Since the late Tang Dynasty and the Five Dynasties, Inner Alchemy emerged from numerous cultivation techniques and held a dominant position. After it absorbed the theoretical components of Confucianism and Zen Buddhism, it gradually emphasized achieving spiritual enlightenment through cultivating the mind and refining the nature. On the other hand, Fushi is a general health-maintenance technique passed down from traditional Taoism, serving the ultimate goal of immortality. Therefore, at the time when Inner Alchemy was absolutely dominant, Fushi was naturally frowned upon and suffered a tremendous impact. As a newly established religious sect at the time, the Quanzhen school urgently needed to demonstrate its superiority and originality in doctrine and practice, hence it negated many traditional Taoist cultivation techniques including Fushi, displaying a confrontational stance against the old religious tradition. The early Quanzhen Taoism's practice of both negating and utilizing Fushi reflects the changes that Fushi underwent in the context of prevailing Inner Alchemy. Looking back at the history of Taoism, Fushi once played a pivotal role in health preservation and cultivation. However, as Inner Alchemy became the mainstream of cultivation and gradually expanded the content of mind–nature cultivation, the existence value of Fushi was greatly weakened. Yet, this does not mean that Fushi then withdrew from the stage of Taoist history. For example, taking drugs, breathing techniques, the emergence of grain avoidance with Inner Alchemy became an auxiliary or even directly acted as an important step in Quanzhen Taoist Inner Alchemy practice. Fushi practices and the use of talisman water were also used to educate the public, becoming part of the Quanzhen Taoist "true practice" (zhenxing 真行) in social life. The Fushi cultivation of early Quanzhen Taoism had a significant impact on the later generations. Among the disciples of the "Seven True Ones", many inherited the Fushi tradition of early Quanzhen Taoism. Yin Zhiping 尹志平 (1169–1251) believed that the quality of daily diet should match the depth of cultivation, thus urging himself to accumulate meritorious deeds. At the same time, he drank tea to assist in religious cultivation against sleepiness. Yang Mingzhen 楊明真 (1154–1233) and Fan Yuanxi 范圓曦 (1178–1249) both gained renown by using talisman water to cure patients. Wang Zhijin 王志謹 (1178–1263) repeatedly emphasized temperance in eating and drinking and rejection of alcohol and meat, which is consistent with the dietary principles of early Quanzhen Taoism. Shi Chuhou 史處厚 (1101–1174) tried "abstaining from grains" and "only drinking Daogui", and Li Zhichang 李志常 (1193–1256) also had experience with "grain avoidance for several weeks". Obviously, these disciples' Fushi practices directly inherited the cultivation methods of early Quanzhen Taoism. Unlike the previous generation of Quanzhen Taoist masters, they hardly expressed any disdain or dissatisfaction with Fushi in their writings. This indicates that by that time, Fushi had completely integrated into the daily preaching and cultivation activities of Quanzhen Taoism, and hence the inherent conflict between the old Taoist tradition and the new religion and its new cultivation method also dissolved.

The active use of Fushi practices by the early Quanzhen School contributed to the rapid development and expansion of its sect. First, Fushi practices enriched the cultivation methods of the Quanzhen School. In the teachings of Zhong-Lü, there was already a combination of Inner Alchemy cultivation and Outer Alchemy Fushi practices.[11] The Quanzhen School further incorporated breathing exercises, abstaining from grains, and eating and drinking into the Inner Alchemy perspective, making them part of the Quanzhen School's Inner Alchemy techniques, which promoted the perfection of the Quanzhen School's cultivation system. Second, Fushi practices were often used as a medium to connect Quanzhen practitioners with the general public, building a solid foundation of support for the Quanzhen School. In order to attract and educate as many people as possible and expand the influence of the religious group, the early Quanzhen School frequently made use of Alchemy techniques, including Fushi techniques. Wang Chongyang and others interacted with the public through healing methods such as talisman water and giving medicinal

remedies, as well as imparting health preservation knowledge in daily eating and drinking practices, adhering to the principles of asceticism and inner nature and life cultivation. This not only created a positive image for the religious group but also subtly instilled the sacred teachings of the sect into the general public, creating favorable conditions for a large number of people to learn about and join the Quanzhen School. In conclusion, the rapid rise of the Quanzhen School during the Jin and Yuan periods was largely attributed to the active engagement in Fushi practices.

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Notes

1 Ishijima Yasutaka石島快隆 (Ishijima 1960) believes that the ideas from *Token for the Agreement of the Three According to the Book of Changes* (Zhouyi cantong qi 周易參同契) by Wei Boyang 魏伯陽 (fl. circa 132–168), a pioneering Daoist of cultivation and Fushi practice, and systematized *Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity* (Baopu zi 抱朴子) by Ge Hong 葛洪 (283–363) are the pillar of Yijing studies and the Daoist thoughts of immortals influenced by Yin-Yang Five Elements (wuxing 五行) during Qin (221–207 BC) and Han (202 BC–220 AD) periods. Yan Jinxiong's 顏進雄 (Yan 2000) *The Influence of Fushi Customs and Poetry in the Six Dynasties* (Liuchao fushi fengqi yu shige 六朝服食風氣與詩歌) examines the background, thought, and types of Fushi during the Six Dynasties (222–589) period, with a focus on the influence of Fushi on the development of poetry during this time. Liao Ruiyin's 廖芮茵 (Liao 2004) *Study of Fushi for Health Preservation in the Tang Dynasty* (Tangdai fushi yangsheng yanjiu 唐代服食養生研究) discusses the era environment of Fushi in the Tang Dynasty, sorting out the practices of emperors, nobles, literati, Daoists, and Buddhists, and provides a rational evaluation of the contributions and influences of Fushi on health preservation in the Tang Dynasty. Huang Yongfeng's 黃永鋒 (Huang 2008) *Research on Daoist Fushi Techniques* (Daojiao fushi jishu yanjiu 道教服食技術研究) redefines the scope of Daoist Fushi, using the framework of the philosophy of technology, and explores its procedural characteristics and practical functions, revealing the driving mechanism of its development. Xu Gang's 徐剛 (Xu 2018) *Daoist Fushi Research from the Perspective of Life Philosophy* (Shengming zhexue shiyuxia de daojiao fushi yanjiu 生命哲學視域下的道教服食研究) analyzes the relationships between Daoist physiology, philosophy, body–spirit, change, and Fushi from the perspective of life philosophy, and uses modern scientific statistical analysis to investigate the ingredients, techniques, measurements, prescriptions, and nutritional components of Daoist Fushi recipes. *Fushi* by He Zhenzhong何振中 (He 2022) organizes its history from the Qin (221–207 BC) and Han Dynasties (202 BC–220 AD) to the modern era, introduces the types, efficacy, preparation methods and uses, explores the relationship between Fushi and inner refinement (neilian 內煉), guiding and pulling (daoyin 導引), grain avoidance and other health preservation techniques and reveals how significant and valuable to inherit the traditional Fushi. Some progress has also been made in the collation of Fushi literature. Chen Guofu 陳國符 (Chen 2014, pp. 378–401) and Jiang Lisheng 蔣力生 (Jiang 2004a, pp. 21–23; 2004b, pp. 18–23) have both compiled bibliographies focusing on ancient Fushi literature. Li Ling 李零 (Li 1993), the chief editor of *An Overview of Chinese Alchemy* (Zhongguo fangshu gaiguan 中國方術概觀), has proofread and collated eight Fushi texts from the *Zhengtong Daoist Canon* (Zhengtong daozang 正統道藏), with summaries written before each book, introducing the content and overall value. There are many other monographs and numerous papers discussing Fushi from different perspectives, which are too numerous to mention here.

2 Huang Yongfeng believes that Daosim Fushi includes five types of taking herbal medicine, breathing exercises (qi), abstaining from grains, eating and drinking, and using talismans. He discussed each of them (Huang 2008, pp. 100–69), which is refereed by the author.

3 Liu Xianxin 劉咸炘 (1896–1932) believes that northern and southern lineages of the Quanzhen "never mention Fushi practices" (Liu 2012, p. 46). Hou Guangfu 侯光復 says, "As a matter of fact, the Quanzhen Daosim really look down on traditional Daoist alchemical arts of cinnabar and mercury . . . Other well-known Quanzhen masters also do not mention any techniques for Fushi practices" (Hou 1988, p. 90). Zhu Zhanyan朱展炎 states that "cultivation and Fushi practices were strongly criticized by the early Quanzhen predecessors", and believes that "Quanzhen negates traditional cultivation practices which are fundamentally on the basis of its pursuit of the theoretical foundation of mental liberation" (Zhu 2009, pp. 96–97). Xiao Jinming 蕭進銘 also asserts, "That Quanzhen does not mention Fushi practices is true" (Xiao 2010, p. 674).

4 *Inner Chapters of Master Who Embraces Simplicity* (Baopu zi neipian 抱朴子內篇) writes that there are five types of zhi 芝, including stone zhi, wood zhi (muzhi 木芝), plant zhi (caozhi 草芝), flesh zhi (rouzhi 肉芝), and mushroom zhi (junzhi 菌芝). Each of these five types have more than a hundred of kinds of it (See DZ 1185).

5 Meng Naichang 孟乃昌 (1933–1992) believes that Qiu Chuji knew external elixir and valued it. He provides the following evidence: In Qiu Chuji's *Poems on Spring Outings during Cold Food Festival* (Hanshi ri zuo chunyou shi 寒食日作春遊詩), a line reads: "I wish I could acquire the great elixir to strengthen body to fly up to the heaven". This reflects his aspiration and unfulfilled hope for success in external elixir. Ye Ziqi 葉子奇 (fl. circa 1327–1390) of the Ming Dynasty recorded in his *Master of Grass and Trees* (Caomuzi 草木子) that: "Qiu Chuji (also known as Changchun zi 長春子) was able to refine cinnabar into gold, thereby providing financial support for the military and national affairs of the Yuan Dynasty. Due to this achievement, he was awarded a golden seal and became the leader of the Quanzhen Taoism". While the claim that Qiu Chuji helped finance Kublai Khan's 忽必烈 (1215–1294) military by refining gold and silver is not reliable, it may be related to his experiments with refining during his lifetime. Additionally, the White Clouds Temple 白雲觀, where Qiu Chuji stayed and preached after returning from the western regions to Yanjing, also has a tradition of practicing external elixir (Meng 2018, p. 124).

6 Abstaining from grains consists of two types, the natural one and intentional one. The former refers to when a person reaches a certain level of cultivation, their qi and blood are in abundance, and they do not desire to consume grains. The latter refers to deliberately not consuming grains or food during cultivation, and instead eating other fruits, herbs, etc.

7 Chen Yingning's 陳攖寧 (1881–1969) *Commentary to the Practice stages of Kundao* (Sun Bu'er nügong neidan cidi shi zhu 孙不二女功内丹次第诗注) states: "This is the true practice of abstaining from food. Those who can achieve this do so because the spiritual energy is full within their bodies and they naturally do not think about food. This is not because they can endure hunger with an empty stomach" (Hu and Wu 2008, p. 90). *Explication of the Practice stages of Kundao* (Sun Bu'er yuanjun kundao gongfu cidi zhushi 孙不二元君坤道功夫次第注释) says: "During Greater Celestial Circuit (da zhoutian 大周天), one consumes two types of qi, and the desire for food is cut off. This is what we call the abstaining from grains (bigu 辟穀). From this, it can be seen that abstaining from grains is just a natural outcome" (Chen 1975, p. 9). Both of these statements indicate that abstaining from grains is not a proactive action, but an effect that occurs after female elixir practitioners reach a certain level. This is what we commonly refer to today as, "Full qi within leads to the cutting-off of food".

8 Qiu Chuji believes that spring belongs to the wood element in the Five Elements, corresponding to the liver in the five internal organs and sourness in the five flavors. According to the theory of mutual restraint among the Five Elements, wood overcomes earth, and earth corresponds to the spleen in the five internal organs and sweetness in the five flavors. Therefore, the dietary principle for spring is "appropriate reduction of sourness and increase of sweetness to nourish the spleen's qi". Following this, in summer, it is "appropriate to reduce bitterness and increase spiciness to nourish lung qi"; in autumn, it is "appropriate to reduce spiciness and increase sourness to nourish liver qi"; and in winter, it is "appropriate to reduce sourness and increase bitterness to nourish heart qi". As for the dietary dos and do nots in the four seasons, Qiu Chuji has more detailed rules, such as not drinking excessively in spring, and elderly people should not eat too much rice, noodles, or pastries. In summer, one should not eat cold or greasy food, nor melons, eggplants, or uncooked vegetables. Instead, one should drink cassia soup and cardamom boiled water, and eat more beans. In autumn, one can eat more sesame; in winter, avoid eating too much barbecue, meat noodles, and wontons. See Qiu (2005, pp. 96–105).

9 During the Tang and Song (960–1279) dynasties, the alchemy of Daosim transformed from the external to the internal. At that time, a transitional stage, alchemy practice leading to the Dao, emerged in internal alchemy. Earlier scholars pay relatively less attention to it. Guo Wu郭武 believes that the aim of "alchemy practice leading to the Dao" was to criticize the old to establish the authority of the new. This phenomenon had positive significance in the late Tang Dynasty shortly after the rise of internal alchemy practice (Guo 2016, p. 54).

10 Zhongli Quan said: "There are three types of illnesses. Seasonal illnesses are cured by taking herbal medicine. Physical and geriatric diseases often need to be treated by taking two types of medicine, namely internal and external elixir" (DZ 263, 15. 8a–b). External elixir is not unusable. He also stated: "It is just because people who practice the Dao may only awaken in their later years and are aware of the fact that their kidney and heart are not healthy. The kidney is like the root of qi. If the root is not deep enough, the tree's leaves will not grow abundantly. The heart is like the source of fluids. If the source is not crystal, the water will not flow continuously. It is necessary take a long time to refine the Dragon-Tiger Great Elixir with Nine Grades (jiupin longhu dadan 九品龍虎大丹) by using various minerals. This can helps the practitioner to connect with the true qi and refine their body so as to allow it to stay in the world immortally, and ultimately ascend to heaven" (DZ 263, 15. 10b). It can be seen that Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin not only did not oppose taking medicine and elixirs, but even affirmed their effects.

11 *A True Record of the Assembled Immortals of the Western Hills* (Xishan qunxian huizhen ji 西山群仙會真記) states "From ancient times to the present, wise men have also discussed external alchemy, so it is not that external alchemy cannot be used. . . . From this, we can see that after the spirit goes through gathering and dispersing changes, it ultimately becomes void. Using qi to return to the origin is called returning alchemy. Later generations of people who took external alchemy also saw its effects and became immortals. This is because they began practicing external alchemy but also practiced internal alchemy at the same time. Both internal and external alchemy achieved results, so they understood the way to become immortals. If one only uses external alchemy, their qi will weaken, their spirit will deteriorate, and the refined qi of heaven and earth cannot condense within their body, resulting in significant harm instead" (DZ 246, 4. 7a–b). This shows that although the Zhong-Lü school advocates internal

alchemy, they do not reject external alchemy. In their view, using internal alchemy alone can make one an immortal, while external alchemy must be combined with internal alchemy to achieve immortality.

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A New Form of Taoist Theurgy in the Qing Dynasty: Xizhu Doufa in the Taoist–Tantric Fusion Style

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Abstract: The Longmen Xizhu Xinzong 龍門西竺心宗 was a Taoist sect that was active during the Qing Dynasty. The sect reportedly originated in India and has long been renowned for its Xizhu Doufa 西竺斗法. However, due to its secrecy and lack of literature, its true form remains a mystery. Examining the self-reported history of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong, it can confidently be stated that Xizhu Doufa was often used in conjunction with Dharani and had deep roots in Tantric Buddhism. During the Sui and Tang Dynasties, Tantric Buddhism gained popularity in China and evolved into Tang Tantrism (Ch. Tangmi 唐密). There is a large amount of Dipper Method (Ch. Doufa 斗法)-related content in Tang Tantrism, which is a variant of China's original Dipper Method observed in India. After being passed back to China, it was named "Western Transmission". Many of the existing documents on the Dipper Method from the Ming and Qing Dynasties originated from Tang Tantrism. In terms of belief, they reflect the combination of Doumu 斗姆 and Marici; in terms of methods, they incorporate multiple elements, including the Taoist Thunder Method (Ch. Leifa 雷法) and Marici mantra. Overall, the ideas, lineage of transmission, and other aspects recorded in these documents are extremely similar to those emphasized by the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong, providing evidence for the origin of Xizhu Doufa. This evidence also provides a new reference for the direction in which Tang Tantrism developed after the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism 會昌毀佛.

Keywords: Longmen Xizhu Xinzong; Dipper Method; Tang Tantrism; Taoism in the Qing Dynasty

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1. Introduction

The Longmen Xizhu Xinzong (the Heart Lineage of India) 龍門西竺心宗 was a Taoist sect that was active during the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912), famous for its Xizhu[1] Doufa[2] 西竺斗法, a secret theurgy from India. According to the records in *The Jingai Xindeng*[3] (金蓋心燈, abbr. *JGXD*), The sect originated in India and was introduced into China by Jizu Daozhe[4] 雞足道者 (fl. 13th–18th century).[5] Jizu Daozhe, who originally had no name, called himself Yedaposhe 野怛婆闍, which means "seeker of the Tao". He went to Beijing to visit Wang Changyue[6] 王常月 (?–1680), the high priest of the Longmen Sect[7] 龍門派 in the reign of Shunzhi 順治 (1643–1661). After being named Huang Shouzhong 黃守中 by Wang and converting to the Longmen Sect, Jizu Daozhe established his base at Jizu Mountain[8] 雞足山 and took on many disciples, thus spreading Xizhu Doufa. In the era of Qianlong 乾隆 (1735–1796), Min Yide 閔一得 (1749–1836) visited Jizu Daozhe with the *"Great Precept Book"* (Ch. *Da Jie Shu* 大戒書). Jizu Daozhe was delighted with the book and wanted to exchange it with Xizhu Doufa. Therefore, Min Yide stayed at Jizu Mountain for 3 months, and, after finishing his study, he compiled 12 volumes of *The Dafan Xiantian Fanyin Douzhou* (大梵先天梵音斗咒, abbr. *DFFYDZ*), which described Xizhu Doufa in detail (see Min et al. 2020, pp. 209–10).

Min Yide, the 11th-generation disciple of the Longmen Sect of Quanzhen Taoism, was a prominent figure in the history of Taoism in the Qing Dynasty. Due to his weak physical condition from childhood, Min Yide was ordered by his father to join the Longmen Sect at the age of 9 so as to learn methods to improve his health. He served as the main leader of the Taoist group on Jingai Mountain 金蓋山 in Huzhou 湖州 and achieved great success

in Taoist cultivation. However, he is also renowned for his systematic sorting of the Taoist doctrine and history. His collection of works, *The Gushu Yinlou Cangshu* (古書隱樓藏書, abbr. *GSYLCS*), comprises over 20 pieces that he either wrote or compiled, which mainly explain the principles and methods of Taoist cultivation. Additionally, the *JGXD*, which contains many invaluable resources and a large amount of information, has great significance for those studying Taoist history in the Qing Dynasty, as previously mentioned. Almost all the existing historical records of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong were written by him.[9]

Min Yide's records suggest that the history of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong can be traced back to Buddha's time (see Min et al. 2010, pp. 491–92). In his writings, Min Yide referenced *The Vasudhara Dharani* 持世陀羅尼經, a Buddhist sutra that is closely linked to the history of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong. This sutra was translated into Chinese by Master Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) in the fifth year of the Yonghui 永徽 era (654). In addition to Xuanzang's version, there are two other Chinese translations of *The Vasudhara Dharani*, one by Master Amoghavajra (Ch. Bukong 不空; 705–774) and the other by Master Fatian 法天 (? –1001). All three versions are included in the *Taishō Tripiṭaka* 大正新脩大藏經 within the Tantric Buddhism category.[10]

The Vasudhara Dharani explains that a layman named Sucandra (Ch. Miao Yue 妙月) asked the Buddha for methods of supporting the poor, curing diseases, and fighting disasters. Then, the Buddha taught him Dharani (T20, n1162).

Min Yide said that, after learning Dharani, Sucandra taught it to many people and was regarded as the master of the second generation of the Jiatuo Zhengzong 伽陀正宗. The Jiatuo Zhengzong was the predecessor of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong. For thousands of years, many successors, such as the Holy Monk Tieniu[11] 鐵牛聖僧, Bodhisattva Miaofan 妙梵菩薩, inherited the Jiatuo Zhengzong. In the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), Yedaposhe entered China as the master of the 100th generation and stayed at Jizu Mountain to await the appearance of a successor. Then, in the reign of Qianlong, Min Yide came to this place. (see Min et al. 2010, pp. 491–92).

The Longmen Xizhu Xinzong, with its long history, combines the essences of Taoism and Buddhism, showcasing a unique style. The sixth volume of the *JGXD* contains 13 biographies of individuals from the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong, spanning from Jizu Daozhe to Zhuzhu Sheng 住住生.[12] These 13 individuals are known for their formidable spiritual abilities but often exhibited unconventional behaviors that were quite different from those observed in the orthodox Longmen Sect of Taoism.

According to Min Yide's records, Jizu Daozhe was only proficient in Xizhu Doufa when he first arrived in China. Jizu Daozhe placed great importance on Xizhu Doufa, referring to it as "the treasure of India", and its requirements for successors were very strict (see Min et al. 2020, pp. 209–10). Although Xizhu Doufa was effective and highly exotic, its specific content is now difficult to determine, possibly due to its being heavily guarded. Additionally, an examination of Min Yide's book catalog reveals no work entitled *DFFYDZ*. What is the real face of Xizhu Doufa? It has become a mystery.

Due to the secret nature of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong, there are few relevant studies on this sect. In the contemporary era, *An Example of Daoist and Tantric Interaction during the Qing Era: The Longmen Xizhu Xinzong* 清代道教と密教—— 龍門西竺心宗 by Monica Esposito from Italy placed the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong into the background of the interaction between Taoism and Buddhism in the Qing Dynasty and made it clear that the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong was the product of the integration of the Longmen Sect and Tantric Buddhism (Esposito 2005). *A Preliminary Study of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong in the Qing Dynasty* 清代道教龍門西竺心宗初探—— 兼論雲南雞足山佛教對道教的影響 by Professor Sun Yiping 孫亦平 of Nanjing University studies the establishment, development, inheritance, religious beliefs, and cultivation characteristics of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong from multiple perspectives, discusses the impact of Buddhism in Jizu Mountain on Taoism, and explains the new features of the Longmen Sect in the Qing Dynasty with the integration of Buddhism and Taoism, as well as the impact of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong on Jiangnan

Taoism (Sun 2015). These studies encompass a wealth of materials but mainly focus on discussing the social background, historical inheritance, organizational form, and character deeds without delving into Xizhu Doufa directly. Therefore, while these studies inspired this paper to a great extent, new research directions still need to be explored. This article aims to first determine the basic attributes of Xizhu Doufa and then explore its form and connotations from the perspectives of Dipper belief and the rites associated with Xizhu Doufa, as well as its significance in Taoist theurgy during the Qing Dynasty.

2. The Basic Form of Xizhu Doufa

As *The Jueyun Benzhi Daotong Xinchuan* (龍門正宗覺雲本支道統薪傳, abbr. *JYDTXC*)[13] records:

> Master Min Yide obtained Xizhu Doufa and compiled *DFFYDZ*, passing it down to Master Fei Boyun 費撥雲. Fei shared it with other masters including Zhou Yifan 周抑凡, Ling Xiaohu 凌曉湖, and Chen Muzhai 陳牧齋. Then, the practice was inherited by Master Bian Dingsan 卞鼎三 and has remained consistent through the generations. Even until now, Xizhu Doufa still maintains its powerful effect of granting wishes. During the practice of the ritual, once the master prays, an immediate response will be received. The title of "India's Treasure" is truly well deserved.[14]

Here, it is revealed that Xizhu Doufa works through the form of "prayer". Additionally, it shows that the Xizhu Doufa lineage remained well organized after Min Yide. Throughout the biographical records of these masters, there are varying degrees of information regarding Xizhu Doufa. For instance, the *JYDTXC* recorded that Chen Muzhai utilized Xizhu Doufa to pray for clear skies and rain, cure illnesses, and ward off evil (Hu et al. 1994, p. 472, vol. 31). Before he passed away, he even instructed his disciple Bian Dingsan to perform the Xizhu Doufa ritual:

> One day, Master Chen Muzhai was critically ill and instructed his disciple Bian Dingsan to quickly perform the Xizhu Doufa ritual, but it was not completed. Chen Muzhai said, "My retribution has come. Tonight, the crows and sparrows are chirping, just like the situation when my teacher Fei Boyun was critically ill and performed this ritual. My illness will definitely not be cured." Later, it turned out to be true.[15]

According to this record, Xizhu Doufa can pray for sunshine and rain, cure diseases and exorcism, and even fight disasters and prolong life. It is of the same nature as the Dipper Method (Ch. Doufa 斗法) that originally existed in China and belongs to the category of ritual in Taoism.

In Taoism, the Dipper Method developed from the belief in the Dipper. The Dipper belief is a major component of star worship in China and has a long history that dates back to primitive times. The earliest archaeological evidence related to the Dipper belief found in China is a rock painting discovered in Ji County, Shanxi 山西吉縣, that dates back approximately 10,000 years ago (see Cultural Bureau of Linfen Administration in Shanxi Province 1989).[16] Rituals corresponding to the Dipper belief also had early origins due to the latter's widespread popularity. Legend holds that the ancient king Yu 禹 created the primitive witchcraft known as Yubu 禹步, which imitated the arrangement of the Big Dipper's seven stars in a dance-like manner. *The Fifty-Two Prescriptions* 五十二病方 discovered in Mawangdui 馬王堆, believed to date from the pre-Qin era 先秦(Paleolithic era–221 BC), also documented a method of using Yubu to treat illnesses with a process highly similar to later Taoist practices (see Wang and Wang 2014, p. 189). *The Xijing Zaji* 西京雜記 also recorded the ritual of praying to the North Star[17] for longevity in the imperial palace of Emperor Gaozu in the Han Dynasty 漢高祖 (256 BC/247 BC–195 BC), which proved that the ritual of praying to the stars was quite popular in the Qin (221 BC–207 BC) and Han (202 BC–220) Dynasties (Ge and Zhou 2006, p. 146). In *The Record of the Three Kingdoms*

三國志, there is a record stating that Sun Quan 孫權 (182–252) asked Taoist priests to hold a star rite in order to extend the life of General Lü Meng 呂蒙 (178–220) (Chen and Pei 1982, pp. 1279–80). These examples demonstrate the longstanding history of the Dipper Method in China.

However, Xizhu Doufa, which is associated with the "Xizhu" crown, has its own distinct characteristics and is not entirely consistent with the original Dipper Method of China. Through a literature review, we can identify the unique inheritance of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong.

As the predecessor of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong, the name of Jiatuo Zhengzong itself reveals a great deal of information. In Chinese, the word "Jiatuo" mainly has two meanings. One is a translation of the Sanskrit word agada, which means good medicine. The other is a translation of the Sanskrit word gāthā, which means a rhythmic sentence.

As for the word "Zhengzong", it means orthodox school in Chinese. Jiatuo Zhengzong can be understood as the Zhengzong of Jiatuo in English. Due to the emphasis of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong on Dharani, the Zhengzong of Jiatuo signifies the meaning of the orthodox school of gāthā or the orthodox school of Dharani (Ch. Tuoluoni 陀羅尼). The original meaning of Dharani is tantamount to remember and never forget. It is used as the general name for a kind of memory method, which is related to the process of cultural transmission in ancient India. The ancient Indians had language but no written characters, and the spread of knowledge mainly depended on word of mouth. In this context, Indians created many efficient methods of memory, and the Buddhist gāthā is one of these products. This highly rhythmic sentence is catchy and easy to remember. After the emergence of characters, this kind of memory method of the ancient Indians still survived, but its meaning and use have gradually changed. In Buddhism, the combination of Dharani and vidyā is a perfect example. This combination renders Dharani, which was originally a mere method of memory, increasingly mysterious.

Vidyā, which can be regarded as a kind of incantation, originated from the prayer used in primitive religion and is widely attested in Indian folk and Brahmanism. It is different from the meaning of Dharani for memory. At first, the vidyā was not allowed to be used in Buddhism. It was after the time of Tantric Buddhism that the combination of Dharani and vidyā became more common.

Furthermore, during the Yuan Dynasty, Buddhism in India and the Western Regions (Ch. Xiyu 西域) evolved into the form of Tantric Buddhism. If Jizu Daozhe did indeed come to China during the Yuan Dynasty, the teachings he brought with him would likely have belonged to this form of Buddhism. According to Min Yide, Jizu Daozhe's chanting was described as sounding like thunder and a bell, with a voice likened to metal and the tides of the sea (Min et al. 2010, p. 492), all of which are characteristics of Tantric Buddhism. In China, the Dipper Method is often accompanied by incantations, thus suggesting that the Dharani of Jizu Daozhe would align with the Xizhu Doufa practice. Additionally, Master Sucandra is also closely associated with Tantric Buddhism, considered as the first king of Shambhala in Kālacakra Tantra, and the Buddha taught the Kālacakra sutras at his request. From this perspective, it is highly probable that Xizhu Doufa was spread through Tantric Buddhism.

3. The Dipper Method in Tang Tantrism

At the turn of the Sui (581–618) and Tang (618–907) Dynasties, Buddhism entered a new stage of development, and Tantric Buddhism became very popular, forming Tang Tantrism (Ch. Tangmi 唐密) in China. There is a large amount of content on the Dipper Method in Tang Tantrism, which is obviously influenced by Taoism. According to Hsiao Teng-fu 蕭登福, there are more than 30 Buddhist sutras related to the worship of stars (Teng-fu Hsiao 1993, pp. 73–74). Most of these texts are the products of Tantric Buddhism of the Tang Dynasty, mainly based on the relevant ritual of the Dipper.

For example, in *The Foshuo Beidou-qixing Yanming Jing* (T21, n1307 佛說北斗七星延命經, abbr. *BDYMJ*), at the beginning of the sutra, there are images of the seven gods of the Dip-

per and corresponding secret signs, which are clearly derived from Taoism. The sutra then proceeds to match the seven gods of the Dipper with the Seven Buddhas. It is believed that, by receiving this sutra, one can gain many benefits, such as capacities for averting misfortunes, warding off ghosts, and attaining wealth. Hsiao Teng-fu believes that the concept of this sutra comes from *The Taishang Xuanling Beidou Benming Yansheng Zhenjing* (太上玄靈北斗本命延生真經, abbr. *BDJ*) and *The Gexiangong Li Beidou Fa* (葛仙公禮北斗法, abbr. *GXGLBDF*) (Teng-fu Hsiao 1993, p. 113).

The *GXGLBDF* is placed after *The Fantian Huoluo Jiuyao* (梵天火羅九曜, abbr. *FTHLJY*) in the form of an attachment. The *FTHLJY* (T21, n1311) is entitled "Compilation by Master Yixing[18] 一行 (683–727)". This text describes the good and bad luck of the time in which the Navagraha[19] 九曜 passed through each person's Mansion of Twenty-Eight Mansions[20] 二十八宿 and gives examples of the relevant rituals of the Navagraha, such as orientation, offerings, and mantra. This text shows the distinctive characteristics of Sino-Indian integration, in which the mantra and some images are Indian in style, but the main contents of the worship of the Dipper and related rituals have clear Chinese marks.

As for the *GXGLBDF* itself, Gexiangong, in its title, provides clues as to the origin of the text. Gexiangong is an honorific name referring to the legendary Taoist figure Ge Xuan 葛玄 (164–244). At the beginning of *The Beidi Qiyuan Ziting Yansheng Mijue* (北帝七元紫庭延生秘訣, abbr. *BDYSMJ*), a Taoist scripture from the Six Dynasties period (222–589), it is stated that "in the second year of Chiwu 赤烏 (239) in the Wu kingdom, Gexiangong received the scripture from the Lord Lao Zi; later, Mr. Ye passed it on to the world during the Wei Dynasty (220–266)"[21]. These two texts may have come from the same lineage. In terms of content, both Taoist scriptures follow the same principles of operation, with the *GXGLBDF* taking a more simplified approach.

The *GXGLBDF* is a short book, with only 600+ Chinese characters in total. This scripture vigorously promotes the importance of the Dipper to humanity and records a brief ritual in which offerings are made and prayers are directed towards the Dipper. In the *GXGLBDF*, only the mantra[22] at the end of the text probably has an Indian or Buddhist color, and all the rest reflect traditional Chinese knowledge of the worship of the Dipper.

The *GXGLBDF* seems unimpressive, but it has great influence and is valued by many scholars. For example, Hsieh Shu-Wei 謝世維 believes that the relatively definite Dipper ritual comes from the *GXGLBDF*, originating around the eighth century (Shu-Wei Hsieh 2018, p. 28). Hsiao Teng-fu believes that, by studying books such as the *FTHLJY*, *The Beidou Qixing Humo Fa* (北斗七星護摩法, abbr. *BDHMF*), *The Qiyao Xingchen Biexing Fa* (七曜星辰別行法, abbr. *QYBXF*) compiled by Master Yixing, and the sutras translated by Amoghavajra and Vajrabodhi (Ch. Jin'gangzhi 金剛智; 669–741), we find that the ritual and the star worship of Tantric Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty were deeply influenced by the *GXGLBDF* (Teng-fu Hsiao 1993, p. 104). In addition, Hsieh Shu-Wei also pointed out that the method of matching the hour of human birth to the seven stars of the Dipper in the *GXGLBDF* can also be found in *The Wuxing Dayi Yin Huangdi Dou Tu* 五行大義引黃帝斗圖, *BDYMJ*, *FTHLJY*, and *BDJ* (Shu-Wei Hsieh 2018, p. 30). Various studies have shown that there is an important source of the Dipper Method in Tang Tantrism, i.e., the Dipper Method passed down by Ge Xuan and recorded in the *GXGLBDF*. However, the Dipper Method passed down by Ge Xuan did not appear suddenly. It gathered many kinds of Dipper rituals that had already spread throughout China.

As for the *BDJ*, there are numerous disputes about the age of this scripture. Most of the ancients believed that this scripture was produced by Zhang Daoling 張道陵 (34–156), the founder of Zhengyi Taoism, while most contemporary scholars believe that it originated from the late Tang or early Song (960–1279) Dynasty. Although the various viewpoints are in opposition to each other, the materials supporting these viewpoints can mostly prove that the Dipper Method recorded in the *BDJ* is part of the same developmental context as the Dipper Method in the Taoist tradition and has the same origin as the Dipper Method in Tang Tantrism. For example, Hsieh Shu-Wei believes that the *BDJ* inherited the religious practice of the *GXGLBDF* (Shu-Wei Hsieh 2018, p. 32). Hsiao Teng-fu believes that the

BDYSMJ, which was probably handed down from Ge Xuan, was a scripture aiming to explain the ritual and offering of the sacrifice to the Dipper and should be viewed as an auxiliary text to the *BDJ*. Therefore, there is a clear inheritance chain of the Dipper Method passed down by Ge Xuan. The *BDJ*, *BDYSMJ*, and *GXGLBDF* are all links in the chain (Teng-fu Hsiao 1997, pp. 53–54). These views, regardless of whether the *BDJ* appeared early or late, all agree with on inheritance relationship with other scriptures of the Dipper. Hsieh Shu-Wei even believes that the rituals in the *BDJ* may be a part of folk religious practices which reveal some more primitive and more basic sources (Shu-Wei Hsieh 2018, p. 32). Meanwhile, the *GXGLBDF*, related to the *BDJ*, has directly affected the rituals, star worship, sacrifice, and other aspects of Tang Tantrism, which demonstrates the relationship between Taoism and Buddhism in the inheritance of the Dipper Method.

Many of the texts about star worship in Tang Tantrism were not translated but written or assembled by monks, being different from the general Buddhist sutras. For example, *The Qiyao Rangzai Jue* 七曜攘災訣 is entitled "Collected and Composed by the Brahmin Monk Jinjuzha from India"; the *QYBXF* is entitled "Written by Master Yixing"; the *BDHMF* is entitled "Written by Master Yixing"; the *FTHLJY* is entitled " Compilation by Master Yixing"; *The Xiuyao Yigui* 宿曜儀軌 is entitled "Written by Master Yixing"; *The Beidou-qixing Humo Miyao Yigui* 北斗七星護摩秘要儀軌 is entitled "Stated by the Acharya at the Translation Department of Xingshan Temple"; the *BDYMJ* is entitled "A Brahmin Monk Obtained in Tang China". This shows the strong correlation between these ancient books and Chinese culture, and many of these books directly inherited the concept and rituals of stars in China. Hsiao Teng-fu summarized six characteristics of the star worship literature in Tantric Buddhism, which generally apply to Tang Tantrism:

(1) In the Tantric Buddhist sutras, the gods of the Dipper and the Twenty-Eight Mansions gradually came to be interpreted as incarnations of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas.

(2) Tang Tantrism gradually came to mix Navagraha (excepting the two nodes of the Moon) with the Dipper as the same thing.

(3) In the ritual of worshiping stars, Tantric Buddhism is deeply influenced by Taoism.

(4) With regard to the motivation for worshiping the gods of stars, Tantric Buddhism shares the same goals as Taoism, such as prolonging life, bringing good fortune, praying for blessings, resolving difficulties, warding off evil spirits, and curing diseases.

(5) The legends of the gods of the Dipper and the Twenty-Eight Mansions descending to the human world gradually increased in number in Tantric Buddhism.

(6) Influenced by Taoism, Tantric Buddhism establishes a closer relationship between the gods of stars and human beings, and. in this tradition, the rituals used for dispelling disaster and praying for blessings became increasingly diverse (Teng-fu Hsiao 1993, the Conclusion of Chapter 2).

It should be emphasized again that the Dipper Method in Tang Tantrism was entirely based on the native Chinese belief and related rituals of the Dipper, without a direct affinity with Indian culture. Hsiao Teng-fu provided sufficient arguments for this statement, including two prominent reasons. Firstly, Buddhism regards gods as being still caught in the cycle of reincarnation and lower-level existences compared to Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Arhats; thus, it is impossible to worship stars such as the Dipper as gods. Secondly, ancient Indian astronomy was developed on the basis of the system of the Twelve Houses of the Zodiac, while ancient Chinese astronomy was developed on the basis of the Twenty-Eight Mansions as the main astronomical system. It is obvious that the Dipper Method in Tang Tantrism belongs to the latter system (Teng-fu Hsiao 1993).

After the process of being absorbed by Tang Tantrism and combined with the gradually improved Doumu (mother of the Dipper) 斗姆 Belief[23] after the Tang Dynasty, the Dipper Method developed in parallel and became interwoven with Buddhism and Taoism. From that time, the Dipper Method adopted very rich multicultural elements reflecting an obvious Taoist–Tantric fusion style.

4. The Gaodou Method and Longmen Xizhu Xinzong

During the Yuan (1271–1368), Ming (1368–1644), and Qing (1636–1912) Dynasties, a new type of Dipper Method emerged, which was known as the Gaodou (report to the Dipper) Method 告斗法. The Gaodou Method usually takes Doumu as the highest god for worship. By praying to Doumu's palace, it conveys information on topics such as the aversion of sickness, relief from misfortune, and transcendence of the dead. According to the research of Hsieh Shu-Wei and Tao Jin (Shu-Wei Hsieh 2020; Jin Tao 2012), there are several existing texts on the Gaodou Method, including the following:

- 先天雷晶隱書 *The Xiantian Leijing Yinshu*, abbr. *LJYS*, around 1353.
- 清微玄樞奏告儀 *The Qingwei Xuanshu Zougao Yi*, abbr. *QWZGY*, 1279–1368.
- 紫極玄樞奏告儀 *The Ziji Xuanshu Zougao Yi*, abbr. *ZJZGY*, 1279–1368.
- 清微灌斗五雷大法 *The Qingwei Guandou Wu-Lei Dafa*, abbr. *QWGDWLDF*, around 1382.
- 先天斗母奏告玄科 *The Xiantian Doumu Zougao Xuanke*, abbr. *DMZGXK*, 1445–1587.
- 梵音斗科 *The Fanyin Douke*, abbr *FYDK*, 1733.
- 先天大梵奏告金科 *The Xiantian Dafan Zougao Jinke*, abbr. *DFZGJK*, 1902.
- 亡斗節次 *The Wangdou Jieci*, abbr *WDJC*, 1924.
- 先天拔亡奏告科儀 *The Xiantian Bawang Zougao Keyi*, abbr. *BWZGKY*, 2000.

The names of these texts reflect a strong characteristic of inheritance, and some of them are very similar to the *DFFYDZ* of Xizhu Doufa. In addition, many clues related to the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong can be found in the lineage of the Masters recorded in some of these texts. Taking the *BWZGKY* as an example, the Masters mentioned in the text can be divided into six groups. Among them, the fourth group of "Masters of the Ziguang 紫光 (purple light) Sect" has the following masters:

- Master Jiaohua Ajiali 祖師紫光啟教西番教化阿迦利大法師.
- Saint Tieniu—Master Yixing 祖師鐵牛聖者一行禪師.
- Master Shizi Monk 祖師比丘三藏姚秦史紫真人.
- Master Lanniu Monk 祖師採石懶牛禪師.
- Master Holy Monk of the Southern Journey 祖師南渡聖僧法師.
- Master the Maiden who Conquers Demons 祖師降魔女仙師.
- Master Tiger head Monk 祖師虎頭三藏大法師.
- Master Puguang Monk 祖師比丘翰林學士普光真人.
- Master Bald Monk 祖師禿頭三藏大法師.
- Master Qingyuan 祖師清遠授宣教大法師.
- Master Yingguang Monk 祖師比丘應光大法師.
- Master Pishamen Bhikkhunī 祖師毘沙門比丘尼大法師.
- Master Huiguang 祖師慧光大法師.
- Master Yifeng 祖師一峰大法師.

The above Masters are basically Buddhist monks. According to Tao Jin's research, the Ziguang Sect was a branch of Tantric Buddhism in the Tang and Song Dynasties, which upheld the Marici mantra (Jin Tao 2014). Tao Jin has collected many folk documents, among which are records related to the history of the Ziguang Sect. For example, the preface to *The Dafan Chan* 大梵懺 records:

> In the later Qin Dynasty (384–417), there lived a monk named Jiaohua 教化[24] at Guta 古塔 (ancient pagoda) Temple. One day, a beggar girl came to the temple asking for alms. She was unkempt and gave off an unpleasant odor, causing everyone to despise her. However, Jiaohua was the only one who offered her help. Ten days later, the beggar girl said to him, "I am Marici. Today I give you the Brahma mantra. Practice hard and it will be effective." At the age of 180, Jiaohua passed the Brahma mantra on to Ajiali 阿迦利, Ajiali to Tieniu 鐵牛, Tieniu to Yixing, Yixing to Lanniu 懶牛,[25] and Lanniu to Bai Yuchan[26] 白玉蟾. As a result, Taoism inherited the Brahma mantra.[27]

Meanwhile, *The Xiantian Dafan Leishu* 先天大梵雷書, from the folk collection, records:

> During his escape[28], Emperor Gaozong of the Song Dynasty 宋高宗 (1107–1187) saw a shining goddess in the sky who introduced herself as Marici. She told him that he was in trouble and that she was there to help. The emperor was overjoyed and expressed his gratitude to Marici by kowtowing to her. Later, he enshrined her portrait in the palace. One day, a monk who knew the Marici mantra appeared at the palace. After being recommended by the ministers, the emperor allowed him to stay. The monk was effective in praying for sunshine or rain and saving the suffering. One of the emperor's concubines fell seriously ill, and the emperor ordered the monk to treat her. As soon as he recited the mantra, the concubine regained consciousness. She said that while she was in a trance-like state, she had been bound by a demon king and unable to escape until seven flaming pigs appeared and burned the demon king, allowing her to escape. Finally, the emperor ordered the imperial concubine to inherit the monk's mantra and gave her the name "Maiden Who Conquers Demons (Ch. Xiangmo Nü, 降魔女)".[29]

On the basis of the legends documented in these texts, we can roughly trace the lineage of the Ziguang Sect, which is generally consistent with the fourth group's lineage in the *BWZGKY*. However, some inaccuracies have crept in with the passage of time. For instance, in the *BWZGKY*, Master Jiaohua and Master Ajiali are combined in a way that contradicts the legend in *The Dafan Chan*, although other texts present them as separate figures. Additionally, while other texts distinguish between Saint Tieniu and Master Yixing, the *BWZGKY* combines these two characters into one.

Saint Tieniu, also recorded in the *GSYLCS*, is called "Holy Monk Tieniu". He is the first person of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong to be named after Sucandra. Saint Tieniu should have had an important position, but the historical data are missing. According to the above legend, Tieniu passed the Brahma mantra down to Yixing, who, as one of the founders of Tang Tantrism, was indeed associated with many legends of the Dipper and left many documents on the Dipper Method. This connection may indicate the source of Xizhu Doufa.

The key piece of information is that the Ziguang Sect and Longmen Xizhu Xinzong both believed that their sects were from the West, which, naturally, leads us to wonder whether they have the same source. However, by examining the above ritual texts, it can clearly be seen that this source is in China, which is completely in line with the development of the Dipper Method from the pre-Qin period.

According to Tao Jin's research, the earliest prototype of the Gaodou Method is the Doumu Method recorded in *The Daofa Huiyuan* (道法會元, abbr. *DFHY*) (Jin Tao 2013, pp. 501–5). The origin of the Doumu Method in the *DFHY* is based on the notion that Shangguan-Zhenren 上官眞人 combined the Thunder Method (Ch. Leifa 雷法) of the Shenxiao Sect[30] 神霄派 passed down by his uncle Wang Wenqing 王文卿 (1093–1153) with the Marici mantra passed down by Master Yixing. The existing Gaodou Method is mainly preserved within the Zhengyi tradition (Jin Tao 2012, p. 41).

Hsieh Shu-Wei also pointed out that the *LJYS* (around 1353) in the *DFHY* is the earliest text reflecting the combination of Doumu and Marici, and this combination was completed in the inheritance of religious rituals. This kind of religious ritual, which Hsieh Shu-Wei called the Doumu–Marici Method, comes from the tradition of the Shenxiao Sect, and its theory is inherited from the knowledge system of Wang Wenqing and Bai Yuchan (Shu-Wei Hsieh 2014, pp. 209–40).

From this information, we can see that the prevalent religious rituals centered on Doumu during the Ming and Qing Dynasties can be traced back to a common source: the ritual tradition of Doumu–Marici represented by the Doumu Method in the *DFHY*. This ritual tradition already existed and had spread among the people for a long time before the publication of the *DFHY* text. Therefore, it would be unjustified to classify this form

of the Dipper Method as simply Taoism or Tantric Buddhism. However, the underlying logic of the Dipper Method is inherently Chinese and has naturally evolved from China's longstanding tradition of star worship from the time of the pre-Qin period. This tradition may have even spread to India and then returned to China due to the popularity of Tantric Buddhism, with Master Yixing and Saint Tieniu possibly playing pivotal roles in this process. This forging of a brand-new style of ritual is characterized by a combination of the Thunder Method of the Shenxiao Sect with the mantras of Tantric Buddhism, which not only cultivates internal alchemy but also prays for sunshine and rain, cures diseases, exorcises evil, and manages disasters.

This reveals a significant fact, i.e., that, after the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism[31], Tang Tantrism did not disappear completely in China. Instead, it gradually shifted toward civilian development and maintained some communication with India. During the Song Dynasty, one branch of this sect merged into the Shenxiao Sect of Taoism and was known under the name of the Ziguang Sect. As another branch of inheritance, the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong, although the specific time of its infiltration is unclear, has been traced back to the Tang Dynasty through texts such as *The Vasudhara Dharani* and others. It was officially incorporated into Taoism during the Qing Dynasty. On the basis of these findings, we can establish the proposition that Tang Tantrism underwent a transformation into Taoism. However, further research is necessary to determine the specific composition and completeness of its form.

In addition to Xizhu Doufa, there was another kind of Dipper Method spread on Jingai Mountain. According to the *JGXD*, "When Chen Qiaoyun 陳樵雲 was 25 years old, he returned from Guangxi Province to Jingai Mountain and learned from Xu Longyan 徐隆岩 about the Ziguang Fandou[32] 紫光梵斗. He held rituals piously every day, and the sky dropped sweet dew for this"[33]. Xu Longyan, who teaches the Ziguang Fandou, was once the leader of the Taoist group of Jingai Mountain. The *JGXD* records that Xu Longyan was proficient in Taoist rituals. In his early years, Xu Longyan had converted to Zhengyi Taoism. Later, after arriving at Jingai Mountain, he passed on the Dipper Method to Chen Qiaoyun, Zhu Chunyang 朱春阳, Shi Changzai 史常哉, and others (Min et al. 2020, p. 157). This evidence shows that the Ziguang Fandou and the existing Gaodou Method all originate from the same source.

Furthermore, the *JGXD* also mentions that Chen Qiaoyun exchanged knowledge and skills with Li Chijiao 李赤腳, Zhang Pengtou 張蓬頭, Jin Huaihuai 金懷懷, and other members of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong. This led him to become increasingly convinced that various Taoist sects, knowledge, and skills all originate from the same source (Min et al. 2020, p. 181). Min Yide and Chen Qiaoyun were both in charge of Jingai Mountain at different times and were on very friendly terms. Therefore, it is highly likely that Min possessed a deep understanding of the Ziguang Fandou. As a result, these records of Min Yide almost express the notion that the Ziguang Fandou shares the same origin as Xizhu Doufa.

The facts that the Ziguang Fandou spread through Zhengyi Taoism and that many members of the Taoist group of Jingai Mountain after Min Yide were effective in recording the Thunder Method of Zhengyi Taoism[34] reflect the communication between Quanzhen Taoism and Zhengyi Taoism in the Qing Dynasty.

5. The Historical Positioning of Xizhu Doufa

Through previous discussions, it is known that Xizhu Doufa was a new form of theurgy in Qing dynasty Taoism. This judgment has multiple layers of meaning.

Firstly, in an English context, Xizhu Doufa can be seen as a type of theurgy. The development of the Dipper Method progressed through a long process, with the early version mostly consisting of simple rituals for worshiping the Dipper. Later, the Gaodou Method integrated other practices such as internal alchemy cultivation, mantras, and rituals, rendering it far richer in content. According to the Gaodou Method, practitioners must reach a spiritual state of emptiness to summon various gods and goddesses, including the Nine Emperors of the Dipper and Doumu, even merging with them. This causes the Gaodou

Method to seem highly consistent with theurgy.[35] According to Min Yide's records, Xizhu Doufa contains very rich content. For example, after years of ascetic practices, Huosiren 活死人 was allowed to learn Xizhu Doufa. Jizu Daozhe first taught him Dana-yin 怛那印, which is a small part of Xizhu Doufa (Min et al. 2020, pp. 219–20). Dana-yin is a kind of mudra (hand gesture) in Tantric Buddhism which can also be found in other Gaodou Methods (see Jin Tao 2014). The example of the teaching of Dana-yin illustrates the kinship between Xizhu Doufa and other Gaodou Methods, additionally highlighting the need for powerful personal qualities required for the practice of Xizhu Doufa (in terms of religious practice). In order to improve one's personal qualities, it is generally necessary to engage in Taoist internal alchemy cultivation or Tantric Buddhism yoga. There is ample information on the Tantra practice method of Marici in *The Great Marici Sutra* translated by Devaśāntika 天息災 (?–1000).

Secondly, Xizhu Doufa can be considered as a relatively "new" practice. From a chronological perspective, the Gaodou Method is the latest form of the Dipper Method to date and is still being passed down in contemporary times. Although Min Yide did not clearly classify Xizhu Doufa, the use of terms such as "Zougao" 奏告 and "Douke" 斗科 in the text indicate without a doubt that Xizhu Doufa belongs to the Gaodou Method.[36] Moreover, among the numerous Gaodou Methods, Xizhu Doufa is one of the newer ones. According to Hsieh Shu-Wei's research, early Gaodou Method texts either did not mention Doumu or did not fully integrate Doumu and Marici (Shu-Wei Hsieh 2020). However, the mentions of Doumu in the works of Min Yide and his disciples, as well as the thriving Doumu faith on Jingai Mountain, may indicate the mature Doumu beliefs contained within Xizhu Doufa.

From a formal perspective, Xizhu Doufa is very concise. This is not due to its primitivity but rather is a result of refinement and transformation. *The operate instruction of the Vasudhara Dharani* 行持佛說持世陀羅尼經法規則 written by Min Yide lists some precautions to be taken when conducting relevant rituals using *The Vasudhara Dharani*, and its emphasis on simplicity and directness is evident. For example, in the "Clothing" section, it states that "lay people can wear ordinary Taoist robes or dress neatly"[37]. *The Vasudhara Dharani* is the most important text in the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong aside from the *DFFYDZ*, and *The operate instruction of the Vasudhara Dharani* is said to have been handed down by Jizu Daozhe. Its stylistic tendencies should be consistent with those of Xizhu Doufa. From *The operate instruction of the Vasudhara Dharani*, it is evident that the doctrines and methods transmitted by the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong have been carefully edited and refined, abandoning cumbersome theory and taking a direct approach that is generally simple and straightforward. This is likely one of the reasons why the sect emphasizes the transmission of their teachings through the word "heart".

From a sectarian perspective, Xizhu Doufa is a unique blend of the Quanzhen Taoism and Zhengyi Taoism lineages. According to Hsieh Shu-Wei's research, the early Gaodou Method mainly derived from the Qingwei Sect 清微派 and Shenxiao Sect, combined with elements of the Golden Elixir Southern Sect 金丹南宗 and Tantric Buddhism (Shu-Wei Hsieh 2020). However, after the unification of various sects of Zhengyi Taoism in the Ming dynasty, the Qingwei Sect, Shenxiao Sect, and some of the Golden Elixir Southern Sect were incorporated into Zhengyi Taoism. Since then, the Gaodou Method has primarily been passed down within the Zhengyi Taoism sect, even in modern times. However, Xizhu Doufa belongs to the category of Quanzhen Taoism and blends multiple lineages. Reading Min Yide's works, elements of non-Quanzhen sects can be found throughout. This kind of fusion can be regarded as a breakthrough. After the passing of Min Yide, numerous branches developed from the Taoist group on Jingai Mountain. Many of these branches placed great emphasis on religious rituals, and most of their members were laypeople allowed to marry and have children. This style is remarkably similar to that of Zhengyi Taoism.

6. Conclusions

Xizhu Doufa's specific content is a mystery due to its secret transmission and lack of documentation. However, as a subset of the wider Dipper Method, Xizhu Doufa shares many traits with other types of Dipper Methods. Tracing the historical development of the Dipper Method can help us to understand Xizhu Doufa.

The Dipper Method originated from the belief in the Dipper. The worship of the Dipper has a long history in China, dating back to primitive society. It evolved into the belief in Doumu, which took at least a few thousand years. Eventually, Doumu merged with Marici, a process that took several hundred years, culminating in the fully developed Doumu–Marici belief. This belief spanned both Buddhism and Taoism and became a widely worshipped deity among the people, as well as the main object of veneration in the Dipper Method.

Before officially introducing Doumu as its main god, the Dipper Method underwent significant development. Yubu, which existed in primitive witchcraft, was an early form of the Dipper Method. After the birth of Taoism, the Dipper belief was strengthened and became more diverse. Among the various methods, the Dipper Method transmitted by Ge Xuan in the Wu region during the Three Kingdoms period (220–280) had a great influence, and many later schools of the Dipper Method traced their origins back to this template. During the Tang Dynasty, Tantric Buddhism became popular and formed Tang Tantrism in China. Many of the contents of Tang Tantrism were related to the Dipper Method, combining the original Chinese Dipper Method with Indian culture. As a result, after the Tang Dynasty, the Dipper Method mostly showed characteristics of the integration of Taoism and Tantric Buddhism.

Among the different methods, the Gaodou Method was a new type of Dipper Method established on the basis of the Doumu belief. In several existing Gaodou Method texts, the lineage of the Masters is quite remarkable. Taking the *BWZGKY* as an example, the Ziguang Sect recorded in the text has great similarities with the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong in terms of the Masters' lineage and practice methods. The Ziguang Sect was a Tantric Buddhism sect that practiced the Marici mantra during the Tang and Song Dynasties, and its origins can be traced back to Master Yixing. This sect was combined with Taoist sects such as the Shenxiao Sect and transmitted a Dipper Method that emphasized both internal alchemy cultivation and the cooperation of mantras, mudras, etc. This situation was closely related to the harsh, survival-threatening circumstances that Tang Tantrism encountered after the Huichang Persecution of Buddhism. After the Tang Dynasty, Tang Tantrism lost its complete organizational form in China. Nonetheless, through fragmentation, it either moved underground among the people or merged with Taoism. Following a lengthy period of integration, some parts of Tang Tantrism have even survived to the present day. From this perspective, the situation of the Longmen Xizhu Xinzong is basically similar to that of the Ziguang Sect. Therefore, Xizhu Doufa also blends elements of Tang Tantrism and the Taoist Thunder Method, and its basic form is still within the scope of the original Dipper Method practiced in China. When examining the transmission of Xizhu Doufa after Min Yide, mixtures with the Thunder Method of Zhengyi Taoism are often found, which serve as evidence of the Chinese descent of Xizhu Doufa.

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Notes

1 The meaning of Xizhu is the country of India in the Western Region.

2 Doufa refers to the Dipper Method. "The Dipper" or "The Big Dipper" is also known as "The Plough" in English (Ch. Beidou, 北斗).

3 The *JGXD* was written by Min Yide and systematically records the history of the Longmen Sect of Quanzhen Taoism in the form of biographies. It is a comprehensive work on the history of the Longmen Sect before the mid-Qing Dynasty.

4 The meaning of Daozhe is a person who practices Taoism.

5 Min Yide recounted that when he encountered Jizu Daozhe, the latter was purportedly over 500 years old yet looked only as though in his 60s. Jizu Daozhe's eyes were bright and piercing while his voice resounded like a bell (see Min et al. 2010, pp. 575–76).

6 Wang Changyue (?–1680), a well-known Taoist in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, was a seventh-generation master of the Longmen sect of Quanzhen Taoism. His greatest contribution was reviving the declining Taoism and revitalizing its spiritual essence; later, he was recognized as the founder of the revival of the Longmen sect of Quanzhen Taoism.

7 The Longmen Sect is a branch of Quanzhen Taoism established by Qiu Chuji 丘處機 (1148–1227). It not only inherits traditional Taoist thought but also reorganizes Taoist cultural treasures such as science, rituals, commandments, talismans, and elixirs. Its contributions have laid the foundation for Taoism today.

8 Jizu Mountain was originally the site of the venerable disciple Mahākāśyapa's practice. According to Buddhist scriptures, Mahākāśyapa was instructed not to enter Nirvana and to guard the Buddha's robe on Jizu Mountain until Maitreya Bodhisattva became a Buddha and passed the robe on to him. China's Jizu Mountain is located in the northwest of Binchuan County, Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. It is named after its three peaks at the front and one ridge at the back, resembling a chicken's foot. Jizu Mountain is now a holy site for the three branches of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana, and Tibetan Buddhism.

9 For more research on Min Yide, see Chen (2017).

10 Xuanzang's version: T20, n1162. Amoghavajra's version: T20, n1163. Fatian's version: T20, n1164.

11 The meaning of Tieniu is a bull that is as strong and tough as iron.

12 These 13 individuals are Jizu Daozhe, Guan Tianxian 管天仙, Dajiao Xian 大腳仙, Wang Xiuhu 王袖虎, Jin Huaihuai 金懷懷, Baima Li 白馬李, Zhang Pengtou 張蓬頭, Huosiren 活死人, Li Chijiao 李赤腳, Shizhao Shanren 石照山人, Li Pengtou 李蓬頭, Longmen Daoshi 龍門道士, and Zhuzhu Sheng 住住生.

13 After Min Yide's passing, his teachings were inherited and expanded upon by many disciples who established several branches centered around Jingai Mountain. One of these branches was the Jueyun Tan 覺雲壇, founded during the Guangxu period 光緒 (1875–1908). In 1927, Dai Benheng 戴本珩, Prime Minister of Jueyun Tan, led the compilation of the book *JYDTXC*. This book followed the style and content of the *JGXD* and provided additional details on the lineage and transmission of the sect following Min Yide's era.

14 自閔祖易得西竺斗法, 歸纂《大梵先天梵音斗法》, 傳之撥雲費師. 費傳周抑凡, 淩曉湖, 陳牧齋三師. 陳傳鼎三卞師. 師師相傳, 淵源一貫. 迄今斗法, 禱之輒應, 靈異卓著. 西竺至寶, 誠不誣也. (Hu et al. 1994, p. 430, vol. 31)

15 師一日病危, 命其及門卞子鼎三, 奏告急告斗科, 斗未竣, 師曰:" 我報應已得, 鴉雀夜鳴, 與我師撥雲子病危告斗時同其報應. 我病必不起矣." 既而果然. (Hu et al. 1994, p. 472, vol. 31).

16 For further studies on the Dipper belief, see Zhu (2018).

17 Regarding the relationship between the Big Dipper and the North Star in ancient Chinese astronomy, please refer to Shen (2022).

18 Master Yixing (683–727), a monk of the Tang Dynasty, was known for his exceptional intelligence from a young age and had a comprehensive knowledge of various texts, particularly in the fields of calendrics, yin-yang theory, and the five elements. He learned from his teachers Subhakarasimha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra, inheriting and refining the teachings of Tantric Buddhism. Yixing made remarkable contributions to astronomy and calendrics and was called the "scientist among monks".

19 The Navagraha is a collective term for the nine celestial bodies in ancient Indian astrology, and the concept was introduced to China during the Tang Dynasty. The nine parts of the navagraha are the Sun, Moon, the planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, and the two nodes of the Moon.

20 In ancient China, astronomers divided the ecliptic into four regions collectively known as the Four Symbols, and each was represented by a mystical animal. The Azure Dragon 青龍 symbolized the east, the Black Tortoise 玄武 represented the north, the White Tiger 白虎 stood for the west, and the Vermilion Bird 朱雀 represented the south. Each region contained seven mansions, adding up to a total of 28 mansions.

21 吳赤烏二年, 葛仙訪受之于太上老君. 至魏時, 葉先生傳之于世. (Jiyu Zhang 2004, p. 241, vol. 30)

22 唵薩缚诺剎怛罗(二合) 三磨曳室哩曳扇底迦俱嚕娑婆(二合) 贺.

23 The development of the Doumu belief progressed through a lengthy process, with the fully matured belief integrating the Chinese Doumu and Indian Marici. This integration may have been completed as late as the mid-Yuan dynasty, but its groundwork may have been laid as early as the Tang dynasty by Master Yixing and others. For further research on the Doumu belief, please refer to the following sources: Hsiao (2004, 2011).

24 The meaning of " 教化" is to influence others through the means of education.

25 The meaning of " 懶牛" in Chinese is lazy bull.

[26] Bai Yuchan (1134–1229), a Taoist priest of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), was an expert in internal alchemy theory and one of the five ancestors of the Golden Elixir Southern Sect 金丹南宗 in Taoism. He was also very skilled in poetry, calligraphy, painting, and other arts. It is generally believed that Bai Yuchan organized the religious group of the Golden Elixir Southern Sect and was the actual founder of this sect.

[27] 姚秦時, 古塔寺有西番僧名教化, 遇一貧女乞食於寺, 襤褸臭穢, 眾皆惡之, 惟教化憫而濟焉. 越旬日, 女曰: 我摩利支天, 梵音符咒授汝, 精煉無求不應. 教化壽至一百八十傳阿伽利, 利傳鐵牛, 牛傳一行, 行傳懶牛, 牛傳玉蟾先生, 玄門得其法焉. (Tao 2014)

[28] Emperor Gaozong fled to the south to escape the Jurchen people and created the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279). This happened between 1127 and 1130 and involved him using political and military strategies to establish a new dynasty in the south with Lin'an 臨安 as the capital city. It's sometimes called the "difficulties of Lin'an".

[29] 宋高宗南渡之時 . . . 但見空中光茫燭天 . . . 曰吾乃大梵先天之女雷祖摩利支也, 帝今有難特來救護 . . . 高宗大悅, 再拜啟謝, 密記聖像繪彩于宮中奉祀. 一日, 忽有僧能持此咒, 大臣舉之, 敕留演奉. 凡祈禱雨陽, 拯救患難, 靡不感應. 忽有宮妃為祟所憑, 命僧治之. 念動梵音, 其妃即醒. 乃曰: 適被大魔所縛, 不能得脫, 恍惚之間見有七豬, 火焰迸身, 燒烙魔體, 遂得更生 . . . 帝敕原病宮嗣傳其法, 賜名降魔女. (Tao 2014)

[30] The Shenxiao Sect is a branch of Taoism that originated in the late Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) and was prevalent during the Southern Song through to the Yuan and Ming periods. The lineage recognizes Chen Tuan 陳摶 (871–989) and Bai Yuchan as two of its founders, with Bai Yuchan having authored several works on the Thunder Method. Additionally, the Shenxiao Sect is considered as a sub-branch of the school of talismanic magic.

[31] The Huichang Persecution of Buddhism refers to a series of policies initiated by Tang Emperor Wuzong 唐武宗 (814–846) during his reign from 840 to 846. The peak of this persecution was the edict issued in April of the fifth year of the Huichang era (845). However, after Wuzong's death in the sixth year of the Huichang era, the throne was inherited by the Tang Emperor Xuanzong 唐宣宗 (810–859), who reinstated the worship of Buddha, thus ending the persecution. This event dealt a severe blow to Buddhism in China.

[32] The meaning of Fandou is Indian-style Dipper Method.

[33] (陳樵雲) 二十五, 歸自粵西, 禮蘿岩師於雲巢, 近求玄秘. 蘿岩師授以紫光梵斗, 遂休雲巢. 日夜虔禮, 甘露為之屢降. (Min et al. 2020, p. 180)

[34] For example, Ling Xiaohu has a record of being profficient in medical skills and the Thunder Method of Zhengyi Taoism in *The Daotong Yuanliu* (道统源流, abbr. *DTYL*), which also states that Bian Dingsan is profficient in all the kinds of Thunder Methods (Lay Buddhist Zhuangyan 1929).

[35] Theurgy is a type of magic. It consists of a set of magical practices performed to evoke beneficent spirits in order to see them or know them or influence them, for instance, by forcing them to animate a statue, to inhabit a human being (such as a medium), or to disclose mysteries (Riffard 1983).

[36] For information on the relationship between concepts such as "Zougao" and "Douke" with the Gaodou Method, please refer to (Shu-Wei Hsieh 2020).

[37] 凡庶只用道袍或衣冠俱可. (Min et al. 2020, p. 490)

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An Overview of the Weiyi (威儀 Dignified Liturgies) of Taoism

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Abstract: Dignified liturgies (weiyi 威儀), one of the fundamental concepts in the Taoist scriptures, shows the overall image of Taoism displayed at the altar of the retreat (zhai 齋) and offering (jiao 醮) rituals. By examining the weiyi and Weiyi Masters in Taoist history, the dignified image of Taoist priests, the dignified duties of ritual masters, and the weiyi at the altar of the zhai and jiao rituals, we argue that the weiyi, which embodies the sacred dignity of the zhai and jiao altar, is key to understanding the meaning and function of Taoist zhai and jiao rituals. An overview of the weiyi is a new perspective in Taoist ritual studies, as in Taoist history its image as a state religion was displayed through dignified liturgies.

Keywords: Taoism; weiyi; zhai and jiao rituals; state ceremony

1. Introduction

Weiyi is one of the fundamental concepts in Taoist scriptures but has not been widely studied by scholars. Weiyi has various meanings. It refers to the appearance of the Taoist priest and the ritual protocols, and it can refer to the dignified image of Taoist ceremonies. As an important section in Taoist scriptures, it is ranked seventh among the twelve divisions of the *Taoist Canon* and generally covers all Taoist zhai and jiao rituals. International Taoist scholarship has placed increasing emphasis on the study of Taoist zhai and jiao rituals. For example, European and American scholars (such as Kristofer Marinus Schipper (Schipper and Verellen 2006), Anna Seidel (1988), John Lagerwey (1986, 2010), Kenneth Dean (1995), and Livia Kohn (2003)), Japanese scholars (such as Ōfuchi Ninji (2005), Maruyama Hiroshi (Maruyama 2004), and Asano Haruji (Asano 2005)), and Chinese scholars (such as Chen Yaoting (Chen 2003), Liu Jih-Wann (Liu 1967), Lee Fong-mao and Xie Conghui (Lee and Xie 2001), Zhang Zehong (Zhang 1996, 1999), Lai Chi Tim (Lai et al. 2007), Xie Shiwei (Xie 2010), Lü Pengzhi (Lü 2008), Zhang Chaoran (Zhang 2015), and Lin Xilang (Lin 2006)) have all studied Taoist zhai and jiao rituals in various ways. However, the nature of weiyi, its construction in Taoist rituals, and its influence on society are still issues worth exploring in Taoist studies. The dignity of the zhai and jiao ritual altar is demonstrated by the weiyi, the key to understanding the meaning and function of zhai and jiao rituals. The approach we take in this article, an overview of the meaning of weiyi, is a new perspective in Taoist ritual studies.

2. Weiyi in the History of Taoism

Weiyi is the overall image of the Taoist zhai and jiao ritual altar, including the streamers and banners, the ceremonial settings of the altar, and all the rules and observances presented by the ritual masters. Taoism is a scriptural religion, and its teachings and rituals are all based on scripture. Historically, Taoist scriptures have been divided into twelve divisions, which cover the various disciplines of scripture and ritual. The twelve divisions are basic texts (本文), divine talismans (神符), jade instructions (玉訣), numinous charts (靈圖), catalogs and registers (譜錄), precepts and observances (戒律), dignified liturgies

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(威儀), methods (方法), techniques (眾術), records and biographies (記傳), encomia and lauds (讚頌), and memorials and announcements (表奏) (Schipper and Verellen 2006, p. 21; Pregadio 2008, p. 1257).[1] In the *Taoist Canon* of the Zhengtong Reign Period of the Ming Dynasty 正統道藏 (hereafter abbreviated as ZTDZ), the scriptures were cataloged according to the Three Caverns (三洞) and the Four Supplements (四輔), and the scriptures of the zhai and jiao rituals were all classified under the category of weiyi of the Three Caverns. The category of weiyi of the Cavern of Mystery (洞玄) includes a total of 99 rituals, such as the rituals of the Golden Register (金籙), the Yellow Register (黃籙), and the Jade Register (玉籙), the Great Offering of All Heaven (羅天大醮), the Three audiences code (三朝科) and the Penances rituals (懺儀). There are 30 rituals in the Cavern of Perfection (洞真), including the rituals of Lamps (燈), Penances (懺), Prayer and Exorcism (祈禳), Announcement (奏告), Deliverance, and Salvation (拔度). Moreover, 26 rituals in the Cavern of Spirit (洞神), such as the jiao rituals of Orthodox Unity (正一), the rituals of Penances, Atonement (仰謝), Precious Stanzas (寶章). This method of classifying different kinds of weiyi scriptures in the Three Caverns of Dongzhen, Dongxuan, and Dongshen reflects the categorization view of the compilers of the ZTDZ in the Ming dynasty.

2.1. Weiyi in the Lingbao Retreat

The Numinous Treasure (Lingbao 靈寶) Retreat method is the mainstream of Taoist classified rituals (keyi 科儀), and the Lingbao tradition was the first to use the term weiyi. The Taoist priests believe that the Lingbao tradition's patriarch Ge Xuan (葛玄, 164–244) wrote the *Instructions on Retreats and the Dignified Liturgies* 敷齋威儀訣, which is a famous text quoted in the Tang and Song rituals[2]. In the early Lingbao scriptures, the term weiyi is already found in the titles. Ancient weiyi scriptures (namely, *Tablets of the Jade Register, for the Ceremonial of the Three Principles,* and *True and Spontaneous Scripture* 洞玄靈寶玉籙簡文三元威儀自然真經) compiled in 530 contain parts of the *Tablet of the Jade Register of the Median Principle* 中元玉籙簡文, which is one of the fundamental texts of the Lingbao liturgy. The *Essential Instructions on the Scriptures on the Dignified Liturgies for Lingbao Retreats, Expounded by the True Man of the Great Ultimate* 太極真人敷靈寶齋戒威儀諸經要訣, compiled by Ge Chaofu (葛巢甫, fl. 402), is also a famous text from the ancient Lingbao scriptures (DZ, vol. 9, p. 874). This work is also often abbreviated as *Lingbao weiyi jingjue* 靈寶威儀經訣 or *Fuzhai weiyi jing* 敷齋威儀經, and its contents are often quoted in the keyi scriptures of the Tang and Song dynasties to discuss the essentials of the Lingbao Retreat. The Taoist priest, "after seeking and receiving the Lingbao scriptures, should devoutly consecrate them as supreme treasures, not divulge them at will and not pass them on to those who are not qualified" (求受靈寶經，永為身寶，宗奉供養，不敢妄泄至真，傳非其人。), so says the Dunhuang manuscript p. 2452 *Lingbao weiyi jingjue (shang)* 靈寶威儀經訣（上）.

The *Catalogue of Lingbao Scriptures* 靈寶中盟經目, compiled by Lu Xiujing (陸修靜, 406–77), also contains a volume of weiyi scriptures, namely, *Scriptures on the Dignified Liturgies from the Dongxuan Lingbao Canon of the Most High* 太上洞玄靈寶敷齋威儀經.[3] In the Dunhuang manuscript (p. 2237 靈寶中盟經目 of the *Codes and Precepts for the Practice of Taoism of the Three Caverns*, Vol 5 三洞奉道科誡儀範卷第五), a scripture is named *Taishang Lingbao fuzhai weiyi jing* 太上靈寶敷齋威儀經一卷. Among the Taoist scriptures on keyi of the Song dynasty (960–1279), there are also several works devoted to weiyi. Among the 55 rubrics in the *Great Rites of the Numinous Treasure of Highest Clarity* 上清靈寶大法 compiled by Jin Yunzhong (金允中, fl. 1224–1225), volume 17 is entitled Rubric of weiyi 鎮信威儀品. In the *Standardized Rituals of the Supreme Yellow Register Retreat* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀, compiled by Jiang Shuyu (蔣叔輿, 1162–1223), we can also find the title *Fourth Weiyi* 威儀第四 in the rubric of keyi. The *Golden Book of Salvation according to the Lingbao Tradition* 靈寶領教濟度金書 (hereafter abbreviated as GBSLT), compiled by Lin Lingzhen (林靈真, 1239–1302), consists of 320 volumes and is considered to be the most comprehensive work on the weiyi of the Lingbao Retreat.

2.2. Taoist Weiyi Masters of the Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties (581–960)

During this period, "Taoist Weiyi Master" was an Official Taoist title bestowed by the central government.[4] Historical Taoist priests with this title include Hu Ziyang (胡紫陽, fl. 742), Yuan Danqiu (元丹丘, fl. early 8th century), Shen Fu (申甫, fl. 766–779), Zhang Zhan (張湛), Deng Qixia (鄧啟遐, fl. 904–907), Wang Qixia (王棲霞, 882–943), Zhao Changying (趙常盈, fl. 825), Sima Xiu (司馬秀, fl. 723–733), Ren Keyan (任可言), Qie Yisu (郤彝素), Nie Shidao (聶師道, 841–911), Wang Xuzhen (王虛貞), Qie Yuanbiao (郤元表), Xiao Xuanyu (蕭玄裕), Liu Xuanjing (劉玄靜), Bai Yuanjian (白元鑒, fl. 756), Zhu Xiaowai (朱霄外, fl. 951), etc. The earliest Taoist priest to hold this title was Wang Yan (王延, 520–604), the master of the Mysterious Metropolis Temple (玄都观) in the Sui dynasty (581–618). In volume 85, *Wang Yan*, of the *Cloudy Bookcase with Seven Labels* (雲笈七籤), we can see that Wang Yan was appointed Taoist Weiyi Master by imperial edict, an official position that has existed ever since (詔以延為道門威儀之制，自延始也。) (DZ, vol. 22, p. 603). In 586, Emperor Wen of Sui (隋文帝, 541–604) summoned Wang Yan to the Daxing Hall (大興殿), and "he was given the title of Taoist Weiyi. This title has been used ever since" (因職以道門威儀。威儀之名，自茲始矣。)[5]. During the Sui and Tang dynasties (581–907), the Taoist Weiyi Master, as a Taoist official appointed by the emperor, was responsible for supervising and guiding the Taoist priests (Wang and Yang 1988, p. 605). The central government was to "protect and support Taoism and Buddhism, thus establishing the position of Weiyi to clean up religious affairs" (道釋二教，必在護持，須置威儀，令自整肅。) (Dong et al. 1966, p. 3154). Weiyi was also a title in Taoist practice, and in the Tang dynasty (618–907), Ritual Masters, Weiyi Masters, and Ordination Masters were collectively known as the Three Masters (道士修行有三號，其一曰法師，其二曰威儀師，其三曰律師。) (Li 1992, p. 125). The Tang dynasty had a strict selection system for Taoist Weiyi Masters, and those who served as Weiyi Masters were all well-known Taoist masters. For example, Qie Yisu was the master of the Prosperous Tang Temple (興唐觀) and the Great Clarity Temple (太清宮), and Zhang Tanxuan (張探玄) was the master of the Saint Reality Temple (聖真觀) and the Mysterious Origin Temple (玄元觀).

During the Tang dynasty, when Taoism flourished, Taoist Weiyi Masters were active in Chang'an (長安) and on various famous mountains, and they played an important role in social and political life. Mount Mao (茅山) was held in high esteem by the imperial family of Tang, and the Taoist Weiyi Master of Mount Mao was even called the Mountain Gate (山門) Weiyi Master. Sun Zhiqing (孫智清), the sixteenth Patriarch of the Shangqing Tradition of Mount Mao, was the Mountain Gate Weiyi Master in 832 [6] and signed himself in the scriptures as "Sun Zhiqing, Weiyi Master of the three temples of Mount Mao".[7] According to the *Monument of Deng Qixia* (鄧啟遐), *Taoist Weiyi Master of Mount Mao* 茅山道門威儀鄧先生碑, written by Xu Kai (徐鍇), Deng became the Weiyi Master of Mount Mao in 912 (Dong et al. 1966, p. 9283). One of the courtyards in the Palace of the Ten-thousand-fold Longevity (萬壽宮), over which he presided, was named Weiyi. During the reign of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang (685–762), Bai Yuanjian (白元鑒), a Taoist Weiyi Master at the Supreme Emperor Temple (上皇觀) in Chengdu, was known as "Weiyi Master Bai" (白威儀先生) (Deng 1987, p. 443). The description of Taoist Weiyi Masters that we can see in the Taoist scriptures of the Sui, Tang, and Five Dynasties is a demonstration of their sacred image.

2.3. Two Street Merit and Virtue Officials (兩街功德使) and Left- and Right-Street Weiyi Masters (左右街威儀) in the Tang Dynasty

In the Tang dynasty, the post of the merit and virtue officials was established to manage the affairs of Buddhism and Taoism, and the Taoist priests were selected to serve as the left- and right-street Weiyi Masters under them.[8] For example, Cao Youzhi (曹用之) and Tan Zixiao (譚紫霄, 823–973) were the left-street Weiyi Masters, and Yin Sixuan (尹嗣玄) and He Chonghui (何沖徽) were the right-street Weiyi Masters. The full title of the inscription on the funerary stelae of Master Xuanji (玄濟先生), found in 1993 in the Tang tomb at Tianjiawan in the eastern suburbs of Xi'an (西安), Shaanxi (陝西) Province, is *Inscription with*

preface for Master Cao, Master of the Palace of Great Clarity in the Tang Dynasty, Great Master of the Three Religions, Weiyi Master of the Left Street, given the posthumous title of Xuanji Master by the Emperor 唐故太清宮內供奉三教講論大德左街道門威儀葆光大師賜紫諡玄濟先生曹公玄堂銘並序 (Wu 2005, p. 218). This shows that Cao Youzhi (曹用之, fl. 846–871) was a left-street Weiyi Master. Tan Zixiao (譚紫霄, 823–973) was also appointed as the left-street Weiyi Master. Yin Sixuan (尹嗣玄), the Taoist priest of Bronze Goat Temple (青羊宮), was appointed as the right-street Weiyi Master (Dong et al. 1966, p. 8574). According to the description of Du Guangting (杜光庭, 850–933) in the *Collected Works of the Master of Broad Accomplishment* 廣成集, "Twenty-one people, including He Chonghui, the right-street Weiyi Master, spent seven days and nights in the new temple to set up a golden register altar" (DZ, vol. 11, p. 232). During the Tang in Chang'an, there was a group of two street Weiyi Masters who actively participated in the state religious activities. According to the *Liturgical Manual for the Yellow Register Retreat of the Most High* 太上黃籙齋儀, complied by Du Guangting, the scriptures written in the 2 streets amounted to 5300 volumes (DZ, vol. 9, p. 346). This is a historical record of the participation of Taoist priests in the writing of scriptures in the Tang dynasty. During the reign of Emperor Zhenzong of the Song (宋真宗, 968–1022), the title of Weiyi was replaced by that of the Taoist register, but the term Weiyi was always used at the Taoist ritual altar.

3. Dignified Image (威儀形象) of Taoist Priests, Dignified Duties (威儀職責) of Ritual Masters

3.1. Requirements for the Dignified Image of the Taoist Priests

The way Taoist priests walk, live, sit and sleep is referred to in the scriptures as the "Four Weiyi". Taoism advocates always maintaining a dignified appearance and never giving up one's solemnity (常持法相、不舍威儀。) (CPWDTC, DZ, vol. 24, pp. 750–51). Taoist priests must strictly observe the precepts inwardly while appearing outwardly dignified (內執戒律，外持威儀。).[9] From its earliest days, Taoism placed great emphasis on the cultivation of the Taoist priest's solemnity, and for this reason, detailed rules were laid out in the scriptures. The *Tablets of the Jade Register, for the Dignified Liturgies of the Three Principles of Lingbao, Cavern of Mystery* (洞玄靈寶玉籙簡文三元威儀自然真經), an early fifth-century scripture, contains eighty rules for the liturgies of a Taoist priest attending or serving the master, such as, "When attending the master, sit upright, with a solemn and dignified posture" (詣師威儀，當執手平坐，儼然無虧，為眾所觀。) (DZ, vol. 9, p. 862). Another fifth-century scripture, the *Scripture on the Dignified Liturgies of Orthodox Unity* (正一威儀經), contains 132 requirements for Taoist priests, including ordination, daily practice, clothing, and living. For example, for the psalmody, a Taoist priest must wash his hands and burn incense before picking up a scripture (DZ, vol. 18, p. 254). These are some of the requirements for the daily practice of the Taoist priests of the early Lingbao and Zhengyi traditions. The *Ten Items of Taoist Dignified Liturgies* (玄門十事威儀), compiled at the end of the 8th century, lists 10 items for Taoist priests to practice daily and a total of 144 rules, including rules concerning behavior towards the master, the use of certain objects (sitting platforms, water flasks, 5 eating bowls, and 2 napkins), and hygiene. These remarkable regulations are for all monastic communities and for daily practice. In Taoism, a qualified and virtuous grand master should always maintain a dignified demeanor in his daily practice, that is, maintain the weiyi.

3.2. Requirements for the Ritual Vestments of the Taoist Priests

The ritual vestments (法服) best reflect the dignified image of the Taoist priests, and Taoism stipulates that all registered Taoist priests must take off their lay clothes and put on the religious vestments. In the scriptures, the clothes worn by ritual masters at the jiao ritual altar are called weiyi ritual vestments (威儀法服), and according to the rules, a master cannot officiate at a jiao ritual without wearing them. According to the *Code of the One Thousand Realities of Lingbao, Cavern of Mystery* 洞玄靈寶千真科 (hereafter abbreviated as OTRLCM), the color of the Daoist weiyi ritual vestments varies according to tradition,

with the Shangqing tradition being purple, the Lingbao tradition being yellow, and the Zhengyi tradition being crimson (See Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. Dignified image of Taoist priests from Baiyun Temple in Beijing at the Great Offering of All Heaven, Mount Qingcheng, 8 October 2018.

Figure 2. Dignified image of Taoist priests at the Great Offering of All Heaven, Mount Qingcheng, 8 October 2018.

These different ritual vestments must be strictly adhered to, and as stated in chapter 9 (*Prescriptions about vestments*) of the *Summary of Important Ceremonies, Rules, and Codices to be Practiced* (要修科儀戒律鈔· 卷九衣服鈔), compiled by Zhu Faman (朱法滿, early 8th century), if the Taoist priests are to perform the ritual and worship the deities, they must wear the appropriate ritual vestments according to their rank (若朝修行事，禮謁眾聖，皆威儀法服，隨法位次。) (DZ, vol. 6, p. 960). Since the well-dressed ritual vestments are the best way to reflect the dignity of the altar, both male and female Taoists must first focus on the vestments during the rituals (CPWDTC, DZ, vol. 24, p. 760). In the *Treatise on the Code of Ritual Vestments for the Entire Liturgy* (三洞法服科戒文), which contains 46 rules on ritual vestments, Zhang Wanfu (張萬福, fl. 713) says that "a Taoist priest should take care of his vestments as if he were taking care of his eyes or his hands and feet" (道士護持法服，當如兩眼，又如手足。) (DZ, vol. 18, p. 231). For the Taoist priests, the ritual vestments are not only symbolic of a dignified image, but they are also symbolic of the law of Heaven and Earth, Yin and Yang, and the Five Phases (五行).

3.3. Requirements for the Dignified Duties of the Ritual Masters

Taoism attaches great importance to the dignity of the altar of the zhai and jiao rituals, and there are clear requirements for the image and duties of the ritual masters, who "must not lose their dignity in the presence of the altar" (不得登壇之際，少懈威儀。) (DZ, vol. 9, p. 478). An altar is a sacred place, and the masters who preside over the rituals must present a dignified image and adhere strictly to the ritual protocols. In the *Essence of the Supreme Secrets* 無上秘要, there are seven positions of ritual masters at the altar of the zhai and jiao rituals, namely, the High Priest (高功), the Chief Cantor (都講), the Inspector of

the Retreat (監齋), the four Intendants of the Scriptures, the Incense, the Lamps, and the Seats (侍經, 侍香, 侍燈, 侍座) (DZ, vol. 25, p. 172). These masters are also known as the Deacons of Weiyi (威儀執事), and they perform their respective duties while ascending the altar. As the head of the masters, the High Priest must be highly moral and have a great presence (See Figures 3 and 4).

Figure 3. Incense burning in the dignified liturgy, Mount Heming, Sichuan.

Figure 4. Dignified image of the High Priest at the worship of the deities in the Middle Qiongtai temple, Mount Wudang, 17 October 2012.

In the *Comprehensive and Requisite Manuals of Taoism* 道門通教必用集, compiled by Lü Taigu, "the task of the high priest is to have both inner and outer qualities, and when he gives the call for the visualization of the spirit, all the spirits come to listen" (高功之任，道德威儀，檄召存思，百靈咸聽。) (DZ, vol. 32, p. 3). During the ritual, the High Priest stood at the head of the congregation, and the other masters stood in front of the altar in left and right order (DZ, vol. 31, p. 220). Today, Taoism still attaches great importance to the appearance of the High Priest, whose dignified appearance is generally a major factor in his selection.

The consecration of the altar in the zhai and jiao ritual is performed by the Head Cantor. "All the dignity of an altar comes from the guidance of the cantor, and it is natural that the cantor should be responsible for the ritual of the consecration" (一壇威儀，皆自都講贊導也。則敕壇，當是都講為之爾。) (DZ, vol. 32, p. 37). In the *Jade Mirror of the Numinous Treasure* 靈寶玉鑑, it is mentioned that, for the consecration, "first the water and the sword are placed at the Door of Earth, and the cantor, holding the tablet in his hand, goes to the door and performs the ritual" (先以水劍安地戶上，選有威儀道士，具壇簡，詣劍水處地戶者。) (DZ, vol. 10, p. 224) and then consecrates the altar by visualizing (存想) the Three Primes (三元). According to the *Ritual for the Transmission of the Covenant of Spontaneity* 靈寶自然齋儀 (Dunhuang Manuscript, S. 6841), the duty of the Inspector of Seats is to proclaim the rules and observances of the dignified liturgies. All in all, the masters at the altar are required to keep their spirituality intact and maintain their dignity.

The hymns of the Pacing the Void (步虛) are the dignified rhythms at the ritual altar in honor of the deities. The pacing and chanting during the ritual symbolize the pilgrimage

to the heavenly Jade Capital (玉京). During the zhai ritual, "the twelve boys who will be in charge of the dignified liturgies must first learn the scriptures of Pacing the Void and be skilled in practicing the ten great hymns of Pacing the Void and chanting as they walk around the circle during the zhai ritual." (應執威儀道童十二人，須要先習步虛經、大步虛十首令熟。正齋旋繞時隨聲贊詠。) (SRSYRR, DZ, vol. 9, p. 658). Taoists believe that the Three Purities (三清) reside on Mount Jade Capital in the Capital of Mystery (玄都), the most prestigious and sacred place among the Three Heavens (三天). Thus, "chanting and praising the Three Purities while walking in a circle is a very dignified ritual procedure" (登壇朝奏，吟詠步虛，一象玄都玉京也。威儀法式，莫不備焉。) (SRSYRR, DZ, vol. 9, p. 383). In general, the various rules and observances of the ritual masters are designed to fulfill a ritual function, that is, "to maintain dignity externally and to be sincere and respectful internally."(外則合其威儀，內則盡夫誠敬。) (DZ, vol. 10, p. 147).

3.4. Dignified Image of the Divine Immortals

The belief in divine immortals is characteristic of Taoism, and many vivid descriptions of the dignified images of their epiphanies can be found in Taoist scriptures. When the goddess Xiwangmu (西王母) and the Shangqing female deity Shangyuan Furen (上元夫人) completed the transmission of the scriptures and talismans to Emperor Wu of the Han (漢武帝, 156 B.C.?–87 B.C.) and were ready to depart, "men, horses, dragons and tigers, the ceremonial procession was as large and dignified as when they first appeared" (臨發，人馬龍虎，威儀如初來時。) (DZ, vol. 5, p. 56). In the *Biographies of Immortals* 神仙傳, we can see that the Immortal Cai Jing's (蔡經) epiphany is "as dignified as a general's campaign, with five dragons pulling a wagon, with a feathered roof for him, and an entourage waving banners before and behind him" (乘羽蓋之車，駕五龍，龍各異色，前後麾節，旌旗導從，威儀如大將軍出也。) (DZ, vol. 22, pp. 743–44). The ritual masters establish communication with the deities through visualization and imagination, and the scriptures contain many descriptions of the epiphany of the immortals during this process. In the rituals of the Tang and Song Lingbao Retreats, masters summon merit officials (功曹) and other officials hidden in their five bodies (五體) through visualization and imagination, which is called externalizing the officials (出官). As it is described in the *Essential Instructions on the Scriptures on the Dignified Liturgies for Lingbao Retreats, Expounded by the Real Man of the Great Ultimate* 太極真人敷靈寶齋戒威儀諸經要訣, "the officials summoned wear neat official uniforms and are very dignified" (出者嚴裝顯服，冠帶垂纓，整其威儀。) (DZ, vol. 9, p. 857). In the rites for presenting petitions (伏章), the masters imagine the dignified image of the Most High Lord Lao (太上老君), "wearing a crown of nine virtues and a robe of nine colors of clouds, sitting in the main hall" (太上戴九德之冠，著九色雲霞之帔，正殿而坐。) Another description in the *Spinal Numinous Writ of the Hidden Writing of Shangqing* 上清隱書骨髓靈文 of the *Secret Essentials of the Most High Principal Zhenren Assisting the Country and Saving the People* 太上助國救民總眞祕要 (DZ, vol 32, p. 81). In the *Ritual for the First Night Communication of the Retreat of the Eight Nodes* 洞玄靈寶八節齋宿啟儀, there is also the visualization of "the immortal girls and boys, the sun and moon lords, the star lords, the five emperors, the nine billion horses and soldiers, the retreat inspectors, and all the officials of the three worlds" (仙童玉女、天仙日月、星宿五帝、兵馬九億萬騎，監齋直事，三界官屬，羅列左右，威儀肅肅，不有懈怠。), all of whom are so dignified (DZ, vol. 32, p. 747). The Dunhuang manuscript S. 203, *Ritual of Zhengyi Registration* 度仙靈籙儀, describes the image of the masters' visualization as follows:

> *The merit officers, the brave generals, the cavalrymen, the officials of the Three Offices, and the heavenly soldiers each appear in numbers of 340, magnificently dressed and very dignified.* 功曹使者、郎吏虎賁、察奸鉤騎、三官僕射、天鄉甲卒等官各三百卌人出。出者嚴莊顯服，正其威儀。

4. Weiyi at the Altar of the Zhai and Jiao Rituals

The dignity of Taoism is embodied together by the ritual rules in the Taoist scriptures and the ritual practice of the masters at the altar. According to the *Great Meaning of the*

School of Mysteries of Lingbao, Cavern of Mystery 洞玄靈寶玄門大義, there are twelve Taoist retreats divided into Three Registers (三籙), namely—the Golden Register Retreat (金籙齋), the Jade Register Retreat (玉籙齋), and the Yellow Register Retreat (黃籙齋)—and Seven Sections (七品), namely, the Retreat of the Three Emperors (三皇齋), the Retreat of Spontaneity (自然齋), the Retreat of Shangqing (上清齋), the Retreat of Teaching (指教齋), the Retreat of Mud and Charcoal (塗炭齋), the Retreat of Luminous Perfection (明真齋), and the Retreat of the Three Primes (三元齋). Each ritual has a specific function. For example, the Golden Register Retreat is for blessing the emperor and eliminating natural disasters, the Yellow Register Retreat is for salvation, and the Teaching Retreat is for the expiation of sins.

4.1. Ritual Banners and Streamers at the Zhai and Jiao Altar

The Taoist zhai and jiao altar is a sacred place for communication between humans and the deities, and the ritual banners and streamers (幡, 幢) placed on the altar show the dignity of Taoism in holding, protecting, and practicing the Tao. Banners and streamers existed in the ritual system of the pre-Qin rituals. However, the Taoist scriptures record that they came from heaven (See Figures 5 and 6).

Figure 5. Banner at the altar of the Great Offering of All Heaven in Yuxu Temple, Mount Wudang, 26 July 2012.

Figure 6. Streamers at the sending deities' part of the Great Offering of All Heaven in Yuxu Temple, Mount Wudang, 26 October 2012.

The relevant records are as follows:

> *Various types of streamers, flags, and fans, including a pair of jie, a pair of chuang, a pair of jing, a pair of fans (幡) with pearls, a pair of wuming fans, and a pair of crane feathers.* 節一對，幢一對，旌一對，珠幡一對，五明扇一對，鶴羽一對。 (SRSYRR, DZ, vol. 9, p. 383)

> *A total of 4 pairs of different types of streamers, (jie, chuang, jing, mo), a pair of wuming fans, a pair of feather fans, a pair of ruyi, 12 yellow silk bags, a vermilion wooden box, 2 black lacquered wooden shelves, 5 liang of agila wood, 5 liang of kapur, 50 pieces of new tea, and 100 liang of silver. These 14 ritual tools are called the 14 dignified items in Taoist scriptures.* 節、幢、旌、磨、五明扇、羽扇、如意各一對，罩護威儀黃絹袋一十二個、盛威儀朱紅木匣一隻、威儀黑漆立架二座、沉香五兩、腦子五兩、新茶五十片、銀一百兩。此十四種儀仗法器，經書稱之為威儀一十四事。[10]

> *Streamers and banners (jing, jie, chuang, pei) are dignified divine instruments. They are classic, dignified liturgical tools now made by the state.* 旌、節、幢、旆，亦神仙所持，既具經典及威儀之限，如今國家所制也。 (CPWDTC, DZ, vol. 24, p. 754)

> *The banners and streamers that flutter in the air are a necessary part of the rituals.* 幡幢旌節，折旋回環，外儀之事也。 (DZ, vol. 4, p. 14)

The weiyi at the altar of the zhai and jiao rituals are divided into two parts: the inner and outer parts. In the Ming dynasty, the outer altar had eight types of ornate banners and streamers, which include celeste deep red jie, vermilion chuang for worship, flying cloudy jing, light silk threads, precious feather instruments, wuming fans, crane feather fans, and ten absolute spirit fans (幡) (仙境絳節、朝元朱幢、飛空霓旌、含虛散絲、殊妙寶旻、五明雲扇、靈鶴羽扇、十絕靈幡). The inner altar had two: the precious streamer of the command of the demons on the inner altar and the lion flag of the exorcism of the Three Heavens on the inner altar (內壇命魔寶幢、內壇三天辟邪獅子之節). These elaborately decorated banners were intended to enhance the sacredness of the altar site (See Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7. Dignified image of the Qingxuan Tan (Altar of the Blue Heaven), Mount Qingcheng, 8 October 2018.

Figure 8. Dignified image of the main altar, at the Great Offering of All Heaven, Mount Qingcheng, 8 October 2018.

4.2. Ritual Tools at the Zhai and Jiao Altar

Various types of ritual tools are used in Taoist zhai and jiao rituals to enhance the dignity of the altar. These include command banners, swords, rulers, mirrors, tokens, water bowls and bells, drums, cymbals, chimes, and wooden fish, which are essential to the religious practice of both male and female Taoists. Both bells and chimes are important musical instruments in Taoist rituals, and there is a Taoist scripture entitled *Book of the Protocol for the Bell and the Chime Stone of Lingbao* 洞玄靈寶鐘磬威儀經. According to the Sui-Tang Taoist scripture *Discourse of Zuoxuan of Lingbao, Cavern of Mystery* 洞玄靈寶左玄論 (7th century), volume 3, weiyi, "If the weiyi on the altar is well respected, it will be able to summon the true immortals of the ten directions and also subdue all demons and spirits" (其威儀法行若整，則能召制十方真仙法眾，又能降伏一切眾魔鬼魅也。) (DZ, vol. 24, p. 931), which means that the ritual function is guaranteed.

4.3. Ritual Lamps at the Zhai and Jiao Altar

As part of the Yellow Register, the function of the lamp ritual is to enlighten the darkness and save the spirits of the dead. Lu Xiujing pointed out that the lamp ritual is an important ritual that illuminates heaven and earth and brings back light to the ghosts of the eight directions and nine nights (DZ, vol. 24, p. 773).[11] The protocols of the lamp ritual are recorded in Taoist scriptures such as the *Liturgical Manual for the Yellow Register Retreat* 太上黃籙齋儀 and the SRSYRR. For example, "In the five directions, the five lamps are lit to illuminate the five mountains" (然燈威儀，於五方，然五燈，以照五嶽。) (DZ, vol. 9, p. 369). The lighting of lamps in the altar's five directions (namely, east, west, north, south, and center) signifies the illumination of the five famous mountains of China (The Five Great Mountains of China 五嶽), namely, Mount Tai 泰山-Eastern Mountain in Shandong),

Mount Huashan 華山-Western Mountain in Shaanxi), Mount Hengshan 衡山-Southern Mountain in Hunan), Mount Songshan 嵩山-Central Mountain in Henan), and Mount Heng 恒山-Northern Mountain in Shanxi). The number of lights lit during the ritual is a symbolic expression of Taoist cosmology. For example, "lighting eight lamps to illuminate the eight trigrams" means that "the path is illuminated in all directions for the sponsor of the retreat" (然八燈以照八卦，為齋主照明八達。) (GBSLT, DZ, vol. 7, p. 113). In Taoism, Three Levels (三部) and Eight Effulgences (八景) together constitute the Twenty-Four Spirits of the human body, and "during the lamp ritual, 24 lamps are lit at the Earth Door to illuminate the 24 spirits of the disciples, bring them blessings, increase their qi (炁) and prolong their lives" (然燈威儀，於地戶上, 然二十四燈，以照二十四生氣，為弟子延生益炁，增福安神，注上生名，削除死籍。) (SRSYRR, DZ, vol. 9, p. 500). "The three lamps on the natal destiny illuminate the three celestial souls, the seven lamps illuminate the seven earthly souls, one lamp on the stellar deity Taisui illuminates the whole body, ten lamps illuminate ten directions, twenty-eight lamps mean twenty-eight lodges, and thirty-two lamps enlighten thirty-two heavens." ((於本命, 上然三燈，以照三魂; 行年, 上然七燈以照七魄; 太歲, 上然一燈, 以照一身。面十方, 然十燈, 以照十方; 二十八燈, 以照二十八宿; 三十二燈, 以照三十二天。) (ISTLCM, DZ, vol. 24, p. 773).) Each number of lamps in the lamp ritual has a clear symbolic meaning.

4.4. Weiyi at the State Zhai and Jiao Ritual Altar in Tang and Song

During the Tang and Song dynasties, Taoism flourished and the Taoist zhai and jiao rituals were presented to the public as a state ceremony. The imperial family name of the Tang dynasty was Li, so Laozi (whose name was Li Er) was revered as a distant ancestor, and his portrait was sent around the country by order of the emperor to be enshrined in the New Era Temple (開元觀), and "all male and female Taoist priests in the temple were required to hold dignified liturgies to welcome the portrait" (所在道士、女冠道士等，皆具威儀法事迎候。) (Ji 1987, fasc 426, p. 793). During the Song dynasty, Taoism was involved in the state's suburban offerings (郊祀), and according to the *History of the Song Dynasty* 宋史, "Emperor Huizong revered Taoism, and when he held the rituals, a hundred masters of methods (方士) stood in two rows in front of the altar, holding various streamers and banners" (徽宗崇尚道教，制郊祀大禮，以方士百人執威儀前引，分列兩序，立於壇下。) (Tuo 1985, p. 2543). The masters of methods here were Taoist priests who became an important part of the national ceremonial procession. In 1113, Emperor Huizong held a winter offering and a court banquet at Jingling Palace (景靈宮), also with a procession of a hundred Taoist priests (Editorial Board 2002, vol. 1109, p. 467). According to the *Ancient matters from Wulin Garden* 武林舊事, during the Southern Song (1127–1279), when the emperor was about to arrive at the Great One Palace (太乙宮), the Taoist priests greeted the emperor with a dignified procession in front of Ten-thousand-fold Longevity Temple (萬壽觀) (Ji 1987, fasc 590, p. 181). These are the historical realities of how the Taoists used to welcome the emperor according to the dignified liturgies.

During the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), the Yellow Emperor (Zhao Xuanlang 趙玄朗) was worshipped as a sacred ancestor and given the title "Divine Ancestor of the Highest Direction" (聖祖司命天尊). During the Dazhong xiangfu (大中祥符) reign period of Emperor Zhenzong (1008–1016), he repeatedly proclaimed the myth of the descent of the Heavenly Books and held various ceremonies to welcome them, among which the Taoist Weiyi can be seen. On 19 May 1008, the emperor issued an edict to escort the Heavenly Book from the capital to the foot of Mount Taiwith one hundred Taoist Weiyi Masters and thirty people on the road each day (Ji 1987, fasc 315, p. 115). On 1 September 1008, to enshrine the Heavenly Book, Emperor Zhenzong built a Taoist altar in the palace's Hall of Chao Yuan (朝元殿), with drums and music playing before and after the dignified Taoist procession, and the Book Guardian leading the way (Tuo 1985, p. 2540). On 28 October 1008, the emperor set up a ceremony for the Heavenly Book at the Qianyuan Gate (乾元門), a dignified Taoist procession escorted the Heavenly Book from the palace to the Qianyuan Gate, ascending the jade chariot with yellow banners and drums at the front and back

(Ji 1987, fasc 315, p. 128). In 1012, to revive the myth of the descent of the Divine Ancestor of the Highest Direction, Emperor Zhenzong decreed that more than fifty doors in the palace would be named by himself and filled with gold, and the officials would hold yellow banners with Taoist Weiyi Masters to welcome them to the palace (Ji 1987, fasc 315, p. 128). In the autumn of 1014, a procession of Taoist masters played music and escorted the Heavenly Book from the altar of the Hall of Longevity (萬歲殿) to the Hall of Chaoyuan (Ji 1987, fasc 315, p. 311). To celebrate the descent of the Heavenly Book, Emperor Zhenzong issued an order in the Hall of Chongde (崇德殿) to set up the Great Offering of All Heaven (羅天大醮) in all the provinces of the country and first to build an altar for twenty-seven days (Tuo 1985, p. 2543). This reflects the Song dynasty's special reverence for the Yellow Emperor. The Taoist scriptures emphasize that "to ensure the dignity of the Taoists, the protocols must be strictly observed" (道眾威儀，事在嚴整。) (OTRLCM, DZ 34: 371). The narrative about the weiyi in the scriptures is in fact the perfection of the zhai and jiao altar pursued by the Taoists.

5. Conclusions

In Taoism, the deities should be worshipped as if they were present. The weiyi reflects both the sacredness of the zhai and jiao rituals and the full image of Taoism as a state religion. From the above examination of the weiyi, we can draw the following conclusions.

First, Taoist Weiyi absorbed pre-Qin Confucian rites and incorporated Taoist theological theories. Pre-Qin Confucianism has a deep tradition of rites. In the current discussion of the origins of Taoist zhai and jiao rituals in Chinese and foreign Taoist scholarship, some argue that Taoism draws on elements of the pre-Qin patriarchal clan system religion (Zhang 1996), and we can argue through our thematic examination that Taoist Weiyi originated from pre-Qin rites. In the *Book of Rites-Doctrine of the Mean* 禮記· 中庸, it is mentioned that Confucianism has "three hundred rites and three thousand dignified liturgies" (禮儀三百，威儀三千。) (Ruan 1980, p. 1633). Since the founding of the first Taoist organization by Zhang Ling (張陵, pp. 34–156) in the Eastern Han Dynasty, he inherited the pre-Qin Taoism and drew on the rites of Confucianism to create the Taoist zhai and jiao rituals, which were refined by successive masters into the Taoist Weiyi. The expression "three hundred rites and three thousand dignified liturgies" is also found in many Taoist scriptures, such as the *Meaning of the Tao and its Virtue* 道德真經指歸, attributed to Yan Zun (59–24 B.C.) (DZ 12: 357) and the *Commentary on the Daode Jing by the Tang Emperor Xuanzong* 唐玄宗禦制道德真經疏 (DZ 11: 778). Taoism, however, inherits this statement with a new interpretation from the perspective of Taoist theology. The Taoist priests communicate with the deities at sacred altars through the weiyi, fulfilling the Taoist function of the salvation of the world and humanity. The religious function of Taoism is realized through the strict implementation of its complex ritual procedures. According to the *Essay on the Rectification of Errors on the Altar of Mystery* 玄壇刊誤論, "In order to complete the dignified liturgies, the actions of advancing, retreating, walking, visualizing and imagining, ascending the altar and bowing down during the ritual must be carried out in strict accordance with the rules, so as to meet the requirements of the ritual" (威儀既備，即俯仰進止，庠序雅步，存真念道，登壇朝奏，禮拜稽首，動無虧闕，方合教化法式也。) (DZ, vol. 32, p. 627). Taoists claim that weiyi, like all the other teachings, comes from the teachings of the Most High Lord Lao (Taishang Laojun 太上老君) and that "weiyi transmitted by the Most High" (威儀太上傳) is a classic phrase from the ritual scriptures (GBSLT, DZ 7: 87).

Second, the weiyi on the zhai and jiao ritual altar is necessary for Taoism to fulfill its state religious functions. The Li imperial family of the Tang dynasty worshipped Laozi of Taoism as a distant ancestor, and the Zhao imperial family of the Song dynasty worshipped Zhao Xuanlang, the Yellow Emperor of Taoism, as a distant ancestor, leading Taoism into a period of prosperity with imperial support. In the feudal society of the Tang and Song, where religion was used to educate the people, Taoism assumed the role of state religion, and Taoist Weiyi became an integral part of state ceremonies, adding to their solemnity.

Weiyi is the method of pleasing the gods at the altar, a place of sacred communication between human beings and the deities, and in Taoism, it is said that "the Three Primes originally had 3, 400 dignified liturgies" (三元本有威儀俯仰之格三千四百條) (DZ 24: 738). As a state religion revered by the central imperial authorities during the Tang and Song, Taoism needed a well-developed ritual procedure to present its image. By the Song dynasty, Taoism already had standardized rules and observances, such as the triple altar great offerings (Great Offering of the Universal Heaven 普天大醮, Great Offering of the Whole Heaven 周天大醮, Great Offering of All Heaven 羅天大醮), which meant that Taoist Weiyi was sufficient to fulfill the functions of the state religion. Weiyi has a rich Taoist cultural connotation. By studying it, we can deepen our understanding of Taoist zhai and jiao rituals. As Kristofer Schipper has said, the study of ritual must always be based on precise examples that come from the observation of a whole and the complete inventory of the elements that constitute it (Blondeau and Schipper 1988, p. VIII). This article is a comprehensive study of the weiyi, and our further work will be devoted to studying in detail various aspects of weiyi, such as the protocols of zhai and jiao rituals, the rules for the performance of rituals at the altar, the daily habits and practices of monastic Taoist priests, the solemn demeanor and appearance of Taoist priests and immortals, the dignity of the ordination ceremony and the official title of Weiyi Master.

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Abbreviation

DZ *Daozang* 道藏 [*Taoist Canon*]. Beijing: Cultural Relics Press, Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, Tianjin: Ancient Books Publishing House, 1988 (Daozang 1988).

Notes

1 In this article, *The Taoist Canon* and *The Encyclopedia of Taoism* are the main references for the translation of scripture titles and terminology in Taoism.

2 See DZ 9: 378, Jiang shuyu (蔣叔輿 1162–1223) compiled, *Standardized Rituals of the Supreme Yellow Register Retreat* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀, fasc 1. Abbreviated as SRSYRR in this article. The form of reference for this work is DZ, vol. p. 378, where 9 is the volume number and 378 is the page number.

3 See DZ 24: 758, *Codes and Precepts for Worshipping the Dao of the Three Caverns of Lingbao, Cavern of Mystery Section* 洞玄靈寶三洞奉道科戒營始. Abbreviated as CPWDTC in this article.

4 For relevant studies, see Zhou Qi's "Examination on the Taoist Weiyi" 道門威儀考 (*Shi Lin* 史林, Zhou 2008, vol. 6, pp. 111–14), which examines the Weiyi Taoist priests of the Tang dynasty, and Liu Kangle's discussion of the Taoist Weiyi Master in the Taoist official system of the Tang dynasty in his book, *A Study of the Taoist Official System in the Middle Ages* 中古道官制度研究 (Ba-Shu Publishing House 巴蜀書社 Liu 2013, pp. 162–70).

5 See DZ 5, p. 273, *Comprehensive Mirror of Immortals Who Embodied the Tao through the Ages* 歷世真仙體道通鑑.

6 See DZ 5, p. 603, *Chronicle of Maoshan* 茅山志.

7 See DZ 5, p. 560.

8 About merit and virtue officials, see Zha Minghao 查明昊 (Zha 2009).

9 See DZ 24, p. 781, *Abridged Codes for the Taoist Community of Master Lu* 陸先生道門科略.

10 This is the description of the altar for the sacrifice of the Mao brothers, San Mao Zhenjun, on the 23rd day of the 4th lunar month in Maoshan. See DZ 3, p. 338, *Protocol of the Additional Canonization of the Mao Brothers* 三茅真君加封事典.

[11] See the lamp ritual part of *Instructions for the Study of the Tao of Lingbao, Cavern of Mystery* 洞玄靈寶道學科儀, signed Chisongzi (赤松子), in DZ 24. Abbreviated as ISTLCM in this article.

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Article

Zhao Yizhen and the Thunder Method Inherited from His Master Zhang Tianquan

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Abstract: Zhao Yizhen (?–1382) was one of the most important figures in the history of Daoism in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties. His master, Zhang Tianquan (1275–?), was recorded to be a disciple of Jin Pengtou (?–1341), a famous master of inner alchemy in the late Yuan, in the poems written by Zhao Yizhen himself and in the biography of Zhao Yizhen written by Zhang Yuchu (1359–1410), the 43rd Heavenly Master. According to these records, we know that the Method that Zhao Yizhen learned from Zhang Tianquan was only about inner alchemy, inherited from Jin Pengtou. But this story does not include all the facts. Since we have found the biography of Zhang Tianquan, which is preserved in rare editions of *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian* collected in the libraries of Beijing and Taipei, we can determine that what Zhang Tianquan was aware of and famous for was indeed the Thunder Method of Hunyuan. With the evidence found in *Daofa Huiyuan*, we can conclude that Zhao Yizhen was also very familiar with the Thunder Method of Hunyuan, which must have been inherited from Zhang Tianquan, and he tried to merge it into his own ritual system of the Qingwei tradition.

Keywords: Yuan Dynasty; Daoism; Zhao Yizhen; Zhang Tianquan; Thunder Method of Hunyuan

1. Introduction

Rising in the Song-Yuan period, the Thunder Method 雷法 was a complex system of Daoist exorcist rituals, with the Method summoning the Thunder Marshals as its core. Using talismans and spells, the ritual master 法師 normally summoned Thunder Marshals to solve drought problems for local society or to heal people who were possessed by demons. Thunder Methods from different traditions or areas might deploy different Thunder Marshals as the commander-in-chief of their Thunder divine troops. Generally, most kinds of Thunder Methods could be included in the two main Daoist traditions, Qingwei 清微 and Shenxiao 神霄, according to Zhang Yuchu 張宇初, the 43rd Heavenly Master. Further, most of the ritual manuals or texts of these kinds of Thunder Methods are preserved in *Daofa Huiyuan* 道法會元, which were related to Zhao Yizhen.

Zhao Yizhen (?–1382) 趙宜真 (also named Yuanyang 原陽/元陽), the master of Liu Yuanran 劉淵然, was one of the most important figures in the history of Daoism in the late Yuan and early Ming periods. Scholars have contributed to field discussions about his teaching and transmissions of the Thunder Method, as well as inner alchemy. As a disciple of Zeng Guikuan 曾貴寬 (also named Chenwai 塵外), who stood for the Qingwei 清微 School of Thunder Method in the South Jiangxi 江西 area, Zhao Yizhen was known for his compilation of ritual texts of the Qingwei tradition and was listed as a patriarch of the Qingwei School (Schipper 1987; Wang 2016; Xu 2016; Gao 2016). As the successor of the Qingwei School, Zhao Yizhen also acquired and taught methods of other Daoist traditions, but he did not claim to be a successor of those Daoist Schools elsewhere (Xu 2021). In fact, although the question of whether Zhao Yizhen inherited the Jingming 淨明 School has been clarified, he actually had a certain understanding of the Method of the Jingming tradition, with the evidence in his note of "the treatment of plague and disease in the Method of Jingming" 淨明法中治勞瘵方 (Xu 2016, 2018). Similarly, although Zhao Yizhen did transfer

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to study under many other Daoist masters, he admitted that he learned only the Method of inner alchemy from them, which he traced back to the teaching of Jing Pengtou 金蓬頭, a famous Daoist master of inner alchemy in the late Yuan. He never mentioned that he learned from them other kinds of Thunder Methods in addition to that of the Qingwei tradition. Moreover, his biographies have no record of learning this Method either.

Based on historical resources newly found in the libraries of Beijing and Taipei, this article attempts to answer questions such as: Did Zhao Yizhen himself and the authors of his biographies tell us all the facts? Did these so-called masters of inner alchemy pass to Zhao Yizhen the Method of inner alchemy only? Is there a possibility that Zhao Yizhen had been the successor of some other Daoist School of the Thunder Method in addition to the Qingwei School? If so, how did Zhao Yizhen manage the relationship between the Qingwei tradition and other kinds of Thunder Methods in his own religious life?

2. Copies of the Early Ming Edition of *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian* with Supplemental Biographies of Zhang Tianquan and Zhao Yizhen

Zhang Tianquan 張天全 was one of the Daoist masters of inner alchemy under whom Zhao Yizhen studied. He was one of the most famous disciples of Jin Pengtou 金蓬頭, listed in the "Biography of Jin Pengtou," in juan 5 of *LiShi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian Xubian* 歷世真仙體道通鑒續編 of the *Daozang* 道藏 edition.

Although he did not mention Zhang Tianquan in his "Biography of Jin Ye'an" 金野菴傳, Zhang Yuchu did mention him in his "Biography of Zhao Yuanyang" 趙原陽. In juan 4 of *Xianquan Ji* 峴泉集, Zhang said, "He (Zhao Yizhen) then studied under Zhang Tianquan (also named Tiexuan 鐵玄), who lived in the Daoist Temple Taiyu 泰宇觀 in Ji'an 吉安. And Zhang Tianquan learned from Jin Ye'an, who lived in Mount Longhu 龍虎山, the secrets of inner and external alchemy to extract Golden Elixirs" 復師吉之泰宇觀張天全，別號鐵玄。張 師龍虎山金野庵，得金液內外丹訣.

Additionally, in his poem "A Memorial to My Study Experience" 紀學, in juan 1 of *Yuanyang Zi Fayu* 原陽子法語, Zhao Yizhen himself once told us that "My Master Tiexuan, from the Daoist Temple Shouchang 壽昌觀, once studied under Master Jin Pengtou, who lived in Peak Shengjing 聖井峰 (of Mount Longhu). Then, he went back to Mount Qinghua 青華山and founded the Daoist Temple Taiyu. There, to fulfill my hunger for Dao, he fed me with the Method of inner alchemy. Then, I left and studied under Master Li Fuzi 李夫子 (named Xuanyi 玄一), from Nanchang 南昌. I heard the name of Master Feng Waishi 馮外史 (named Puyi 蒲衣) from Master Li. Master Feng was also a disciple of Master Jin and had achieved a high level of inner alchemy. At that time, he stayed in Longsha 龍沙(the sandbars of River Zhang 章江 of Nanchang). So I transferred to study under him" 壽昌仙伯鐵玄翁，曾於聖井師金公。歸向青華開泰宇，食我法乳蘇疲癃。繼後從遊李夫子，聞有蒲衣馮外史。亦師金祖紹仙宗，駐鶴龍沙明至理.

According to Zhao Yizhen's own narrative and the historical records at his time or later ones cited above, we only know that what Zhang Tianquan was good at and what Zhao Yizhen learned from him was the Method of inner alchemy (perhaps external alchemy also) inherited from Jin Pengtou. Since we do not know whether all the Masters, Zhang Tianquan, Li Xuanyi, and Feng Puyi had passed different types of Thunder Method to Zhao Yizhen or not, we do not consider whether Zhao Yizhen had learned from them other Methods, especially other kinds of Thunder Methods in addition to the Qingwei tradition.

Things changed. The biography of Zhang Tianquan added to *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian*, a manuscript of the Ming Dynasty and a printed edition from the late Ming, gives us the opportunity to determine the details of Zhang Tianquan's life and the relationship between him and his disciple, Zhao Yizhen, especially in the part on the Thunder Method.

2.1. The Ming Manuscript Collected in the National Library of Beijing

The *Daozang* 道藏 edition of *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian* has a main part of 53 juan, supplemented with a part of five juan entitled "*Xubian*" 續編 and a part of six juan entitled "*Houji*" 後集. The date of the compilation of *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian* is uncertain, but

it is perhaps during two decades after the fall of the Song Dynasty (Lévi 2004, p. 888). The latest date recorded in *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian*, the *Daozang* edition, is Jin Pengtou's death. However, there is a mistake with that date, which must be 1341 and not 1336 (Zheng 2006, p. 156). The first year of the Zhizheng era 至正of the Yuan Dynasty was 1341. Zhang Tianquan also died in a year of the Zhizheng era, according to his biography, which we refer to below. Further, Zhao Yizhen died in 1382, the 15th year of the Hongwu era 洪武 of the Ming Dynasty, as we know. While Zhang Tianquan was mentioned in the "Biography of Jin Pengtou," and Zhao Yizhen was mentioned in the "Biography of Huang Leiyuan" 黃雷淵, these dates suggest that *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian* had once been reprinted and supplemented during the early Ming.

The Ming manuscript collected in the National Library of Beijing has only 25 juan remaining, with the editing principles listed by Zhao Daoyi 趙道一, the Contents of *Qianjuan* 前卷, and a piece of a note written by Yu Zhenzi 玉真子at the front. According to the Contents, the *Qianjuan* should have 36 juan, but juan 24 to 33 had been lost long before the transcription. The content of this *Qianjuan* corresponds to the 53-juan part and the five-juan part of the *Daozang* edition, except with the biographies of Zhang Tianquan and Zhao Yizhen added. Moreover, the part of *Houji* of *Daozang* edition in which female immortals are recorded is totally omitted from the Ming manuscript. According to Yu Zhenzi, when he received the manuscript from some Mr. Zunwang 遵王, he was told that there should be a part of 6 juan named *Houji* somewhere, but it had been lost earlier.

This "Mr. Zunwang" may be Qian Zeng 錢曾, a famous collector of rare books in the early Qing. He did once possess some edition of *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian*. As he commented in his reading notes *Dushu Minqiu Ji* 讀書敏求記, "The book has two parts, one of 36 juan entitled *Qianji* 前集 and the other of 6 juan entitled *Houji*. *Qianji* includes biographies from Xuanyuan Huangdi 軒轅皇帝 to Zhao Yuanyang 趙元陽. *Houji* includes biographies from Wushang Yuanjun 無上元君 to Sun Xian'gu 孫仙姑. It may be divided by the immortals' genders, I think. The book was compiled by Zhao Daoyi, a Taoist from Mount Fuyun 浮雲山. At the front of the book, he placed a piece of a document, presented to Haotian Shangdi 昊天上帝" 真仙體道通鑒, 前集三十六卷, 後集六卷。前集，軒轅皇帝至趙元陽止。後集，無上元君至孫仙姑止。蓋以女仙故，而為之區分也。浮雲山道士趙道一編修。前有表，進之昊天上帝. What Qian Zeng said is consistent with the manuscript, except for the piece of the document. At least, we may use the manuscript as a copy of some edition from the Ming period.

Fortunately, in the manuscript, we find reference numbers such as "Jiaji" 甲集, "Yiji" 乙集, and "Bingji" 丙集 on the first leaf of juan 1, 4, and 8. Most importantly, we find a list of the names of benefactors on the last leaf of juan 4, including Liu Daoan 劉道安, the first chair of the Daoist Palace Chaotian 朝天宮in the capital (Nanjing 南京); Wang Shizhen 汪士真, from County Haiyan 海鹽縣; Zhong Benqing 鍾本清, from Hangzhou State 杭州府; and 22 other persons from those places. Although we do not know who Liu Daoan was, the Daoist Palace Chaotian was known to be built in 1384, the 17th year of the Hongwu era. Further, Zhong Benqing was once the abbot of the Daoist Monastery Chongyang 重陽庵in Hangzhou in the Hongwu era, according to the 1475 stele "Chongyang an ji" 重陽庵記 and the poem presented to him with the date of 1375, the 8th year of the Hongwu era, both of which are preserved in *Chongyang An Ji* 重陽庵集. Moreover, we find the name "Wang Shizhen" as a Taoist living in the Daoist Temple Qizhen 棲真觀 in Haiyan, in juan 3 of the 1748 edition of *Haiyan Xian Tujing* 海鹽縣圖經. He was the official of the Daoist Registry of County Haiyan 海鹽縣道會司 when the temple was renovated in 1412, the 10th year of the Yongle era 永樂. All of these points suggest that the manuscript was copied from some edition, 36 juan with 6 juan supplemented, printed in the Jiangnan 江南 area (possibly in Nanjing) in the early Ming (possibly in the Yongle era).

This suggestion can be confirmed by the postscript of *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian* written by Yang Shiqi 楊士奇, a famous scholar and once the Prime Minister in the early Ming. He told us that "The book has 36 juan and is compiled by Zhao Daoyi, a Taoist from Mount Fuyun. It contains biographies of immortals included in Liu Xiang's 劉向 and Ge

Hong's 葛洪 works. Although with a preface written by Liu Chenweng 劉辰翁, it must have been supplemented after Liu's death. Zhao Daoyi lived at the same time as Liu. He could not write the biography of Zhao Yuanyang. Since the woodblocks of the book are now stored in the Daoist Palace Chaotian, it might be Liu Yuanran, the disciple of Zhao Yizhen, who decided to add Zhao's biography. Thanks to Xiao Fengwu 蕭鳳梧, the clerk of Daolu si 道錄司 (the Central Daoist Registry), I have 10 volumes on my bookshelves" 真仙體道通鑒三十六卷，浮雲山道士趙道一所編。蓋會粹劉、葛諸家之書為之者也。有須溪先生序。然亦有後人續增者矣。道一與須溪同時，安得復紀趙元陽。此板今在朝天宮， 其殆淵然之不泯其師者乎？余家十冊，得之道錄掌書蕭鳳梧. The postscript is preserved in juan 23 of *Dongli Xuji* 東里續集, with no date. Further, we know nothing about Xiao Fengwu except that he was a Taoist of the Daoist Palace Chaotian and came from the hometown of Yang Shiqi, according to the postscript of *Liexian Zhuan* 列仙傳, also preserved in juan 23 of *Dongli Xuji*. Since Emperor Yongle moved the capital to the north in 1421, the 19th year of the Yongle era, the postscript should have been written before then. Although we do not have an accurate date for the printing, the Daoist palace Chaotian edition seems to be the original from which the manuscript was transcribed.

2.2. The Ming Edition Collected in the National Library of Beijing and Taipei

Bearing the name of Lizhi 李贄, the famous intellectual after Wang Yangming 王陽明, the Ming edition collected in the National Library of Beijing and Taipei must have been recompiled and printed in the late Ming.

The Ming edition has 36 juan, which seems to be the same as the Ming manuscript. However, the content of juan 1 to 4 was replaced with female immortals from Wushang Yuanjun to Wangnv 王女, corresponding to juan 1 to 4 of *Houji* of the *Daozang* edition. Moreover, the Ming edition has a preface written by Zhao Daoyi, also corresponding to the postscript of *Xubian* of the *Daozang* edition. Additionally, the Contents of the Ming edition include Zhang Tianquan, Zhao Yuanyang, and Liu Yuanran, which are not listed in the Contents of the Ming manuscript.

However, these differences do not mean that it is totally different from the Ming manuscript. Juan 36 of the Ming edition actually has no biography of Liu Yuanran and ends with the biography of Zhang Tianquan and the biography of Zhao Yizhen, the same as the Ming manuscript. We can infer that one of the main resources of the recompilation of the Ming edition was the same as the original for the Ming manuscript.

2.3. The Fragment of the So-Called Yuan Edition and the Fragment of the Early Ming Edition Collected in the National Library of Beijing

The fragment of the so-called Yuan edition and the fragment of the early Ming edition collected in the National Library of Beijing both have 22 characters in every line and 12 lines in every half leaf, with a black margin and two lines on the left and right sides of the frame. The style of character in two fragments seems to be the same also. However, the lines of the frame of the so-called Yuan edition seem a bit wider, and there are counting symbols printed in the margin of the so-called Yuan edition. Although we cannot exactly know whether the fragment of the so-called Yuan edition was printed in the Yuan period (Luo 2018, p. 39) or actually printed in the early Ming, the two fragments apparently do not belong to the same edition.

The two fragments both have only some of the 36 juan remaining, with no overlap. The fragment of the so-called Yuan edition has only juan 34, 35, and 36 of *Qianjuan*. Juan 34 has only a few leaves of part of the "Biography of Lin Lingsu" 林靈素 and all leaves of the "Biography of Wang Wenqing" 王文卿. Juan 35 has the biographies of the Quanzhen 全真 School from Wangzhe 王嚞 to Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄 intact. Juan 36 has biographies of immortals from Huangfu Tan 皇甫坦 to Fu Deyi 傅得一 (only a part remaining), with a leaf of part of the Contents of *Houji*, from Mozhou Nv 莫州女 to Sun Xian'gu, and the postscript written by Zhao Daoyi. Further, we can find reference numbers such as "Rener" 壬二 and "Rensan" 壬三 printed on the first leaves of juan 35 and 36, like the reference

numbers found in the Ming manuscript. However, since the remaining content of juan 36 is incomplete, we do not know whether or not juan 36 of this so-called Yuan edition has the biographies of Zhang Tianquan and Zhao Yizhen.

The fragment of the early Ming edition has juan 21 to 27 of *Qianjuan*. Juan 21 has biographies of immortals from Cen Daoshun 岑道順 (only a sentence remaining) to Song Yu 宋愚. Moreover, juan 22 has biographies of immortals from Wei Shanjun 韋善俊 to Lan Caihe 藍采和, juan 23 from Zhang Guo 張果 to Tan Qiaoyan 譚峭岩, juan 24 from Ye Fashan 葉法善 to Tan Qiao 譚峭, juan 25 from Xue Jichang 薛季昌 to Nie Shidao 聶師道, juan 26 from Zhang Yun 張氳 to Nie Shaoyuan 聶紹元, and juan 27 from Xu Zuoqing 徐左卿 to Huang Sun 黃損. We can also find reference numbers such as "Gengji" 庚集and "Genger" 庚二 printed on the first leaves of juan 25 and 26. We can still find a name list, including 13 persons on the last leaf of juan 26, which should be the name list of benefactors like the one that we found in the Ming manuscript. Since the fragment has only the content before juan 36, we also do not know whether or not juan 36 of this early Ming edition has the biographies of Zhang Tianquan and Zhao Yizhen.

Still, we can infer that both fragments, whether printed in the Yuan period or the early Ming, could be the basis of the early Ming edition from which the Ming manuscript was transcribed, if not the original.

3. Biography of Zhang Tianquan and the Thunder Method of Hunyuan That He Passed to Zhao Yizhen

The biography of Zhang Tianquan and the biography of Zhao Yizhen were added after the biography of Jin Pengtou in juan 36 of the early Ming edition was printed in the Jiangnan area. Additionally, the biography of Jin Pengtou is not exactly the same as that in the *Daozang* edition. It has a paean to Jin's portrait written by Yu Ji 虞集 added at the end. The biography of Mo Yueding 莫月鼎 before it also has a paean to Mo's portrait written by Yu Ji added at the end. As the biography of Zhang Tianquan mentions at the end that "For detail, please refer to the epitaph of his Daoist life 道行碑 that Yu Ji wrote for him," we can assume that the supplemental work of the early Ming edition depended on some edition of the collected works of Yu Ji.

In fact, Yu Ji had written many epitaphs of Taoists living in Yuan Dynasty, such as Zhang Liusun 張留孫, Chen Rixin 陳日新, and Huang Yuanji 黃元吉, who were much more famous and important than Zhang Tianquan. However, we cannot find their biographies added to *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian*, which means that the supplementing of the biography of Zhang Tianquan and the biography of Zhao Yizhen should imply the intention to promote the prestige and status of Zhang Tianquan and Zhao Yizhen. Achieving a high position in the court, Liu Yuanran had compiled and printed many Daoist and medical books dedicated to his master Zhao Yizhen (Xu 2014). As Yang Shiqi said, Liu Yuanran or his disciples had the aspiration to do so.

Zhao Yizhen had transferred to study under many Daoist masters. Zhang Tianquan was just one of them, famous but not very important. The most important one must have been Zeng Guikuan, who stood for the Qingwei School. Moreover, Zhao Yizhen claimed that he was the orthodox successor of the Qingwei School in prefaces and postscripts preserved in *Daofa Huiyuan*, as we know. In this sense, if Liu Yuanran or his disciples wanted to promote the prestige of their lineage, he or they should have created or added a biography of Zeng Guikuan. Oddly, we cannot find Zeng's biography added to *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian*.

This omission might be due to the limits of the records of Zeng Guikuan's life. Beyond a successor of the Qingwei School listed in the "Biography of Huang Leiyuan," we only know that Zeng Guikuan was a Taoist who lived in the Daoist Pavilion of Dongyuan 洞淵閣 in County Anfu 安福縣 of Ji'an 吉安, according to the stele written by Ouyang Xuan 歐陽玄, preserved in juan 9 of *Guizhai Wenji* 圭齋文集. There are not enough resources at hand to write a biography of Zeng Guikuan, and it is much more convenient to rewrite a biography of Zhang Tianquan from the epitaph that already exists.

3.1. Biography of Zhang Tianquan as the Simplified Version of the Epitaph of Zhang Tianquan's Daoist Life

Although we cannot find the epitaph of Zhang Tianquan's Daoist life in any edition of the collected works of Yu Ji now collected in the libraries of China or other places, there should be once have been a full-length epitaph on which the supplementing work was based. As the simplified version of the epitaph, the biography of Zhang Tianquan does give us some details of Zhang Tianquan's Daoist life:

> Perfected Zhang was named Xinglao 星老, also called Tianquan. He was born in a native family with a good educational background in County Ancheng 安成縣 of Ji'an. His grandfather and father both had longevity. One night, his mother had a dream of swallowing the light of stars and felt to be pregnant when she woke up. When he was born in the morning of September 27, the Jihai 己亥 year of the Yuan Dynasty, the delivery room was full of the sacred light. He was born peculiar. When he was young, he desired to learn to be an immortal, and he asked his father for permission to be a Taoist. Then, he left home to live as a Taoist in the Daoist Palace Shouchang in the County. However, the Daoist Palace was plentiful in property. It is unsuitable for a Taoist to live a pure and simple life there, he thought. Therefore, he decided to leave to trace the Dao. He went to study under Zha Taiyu 查泰宇, from Nankang 南康, the instructor of Confucianism in Wuchang 武昌, who passed the Thunder Method of Hunyun 混元道法 to him. Since then, he performed the Thunder Method successfully and was eager to help the populace with it. He came back home and was fascinated with the quiet and beautiful scene of Mount Qinghua, west of the State. There he founded the Daoist Temple Taiyu, in memory of his master Zha Taiyu. Then he visited and learned the Method of inner alchemy from Dongmen Lao 東門老 (the elder who lived near the east gate) and Jin Pengtou, who lived in Peak Shengjing of Mount Longhu. He learned "Tie zi shi hao" 鐵字十號 (ten pieces of the ode to character iron) and named himself Tiexuan and Lanniu zi 懶牛子. He gradually became popular. The famous and important scholars and advisors at that time all admired him. Yu Ji, the advisor of Cabinet Kuizhang 奎章閣, nominated him to the court. He then was ordained with the honorary title "Perfected of Spirit Concentrated, Deep in Virtue, Salvation for the Masses" 凝神玄德廣濟真人. Because of his preaching of it, the Thunder Method of Hunyuan was popular in Jiangnan area. Moreover, he passed the Method of Dao 道法 to Zhao Yuanyang, whose ancestors came from County Junyi 浚儀縣. One year in the Zhizheng era, he wrote a hymn, and passed away sitting there. For detail, please refer to the epitaph of his Daoist life that Yu Ji wrote for him.
>
> 真人姓張，名星老，字天全。世家吉之安成，代習詩書。祖、父俱有耆德。其母夫人一夕夢吞星光，覺而有娠。以元之己亥九月二十七日辰時，神光滿室，真人生焉。生而神異。自幼即慕神仙之學，乃請命于父。遂于邑之壽昌宮出家。見其殷富，不遂清虛恬澹之志，奮然棄去。師事武昌教授南康查泰宇，受混元道法之傳。由是，道法大闡，利濟之心切切。後登郡西之青華山，見其山水幽勝，乃開基建觀，以泰宇為名，示不忘其師也。復參東門老，及龍虎山聖井金蓬頭，究竟金液大丹之旨。得鐵字十號，別號鐵玄、懶牛子。名著四方。當時名公閣老莫不敬慕。待奎章閣學士虞文靖公薦之於朝，制授凝神玄德廣濟真人。混元教法行於江南者，由真人倡之。以道法付浚儀趙元陽。至正年間，書偈，坐解。虞文靖公為述《道行碑》甚詳焉。

The historical information preserved in the biography cited above can be verified with the gazettes of Jiangxi. The Daoist Temple Taiyu was recorded in the 1781 edition of the gazette of County Luling 廬陵縣. According to the stele "Chongxiu Qinghua guan ji" 重修青華觀記 written by Liu Dunxin 劉敦信, the Daoist Temple Taiyu was founded in 1320, the seventh year of the Yanyou era 延佑; it burned down at the fall of the Yuan Dynasty and was rebuilt and renamed Qinghua by Zhu Ximing 朱熙明, a disciple of Zhang Tianquan, in 1384, the 17th year of the Hongwu era.

The biography says that Zhang Tianquan was born in the Jihai year of the Yuan Dynasty, which seems to be 1299, the third year of the Dade 大德 era. However, there must be a mistake with that date. If he was born in 1299, Zhang Tianquan would have been only 21 when founded the Daoist Temple Taiyu and would have been younger than 50 when died before Yu Ji's death (1348, the eight year of the Zhizheng era), which seems to be too young. Furthermore, it was uncommon for Yu Ji not to use "Dade" but instead to use the character "Yuan" to describe the year, which meant that the date must be one of the first years of Yuan Dynasty when the Song Dynasty had still not been conquered. Thus, we can infer that the phrase "Jihai" here is an error for "Yihai" 乙亥, the 12th year of Zhiyuan era 至元 (1275), corresponding to the first year of the Deyou 德佑 era of Emperor Gongdi of the Song Dynasty 宋恭帝. In that case, Zhang Tianquan would have been 45 when he founded the Daoist Temple Taiyu and died in his 70s, which seems more reasonable.

His master Zha Taiyu was mentioned in "Biography of Lei Mo'an" 雷默庵, in juan 5 of *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian Xubian* of the *Daozang* edition. He was one of the three most important disciples of Lei Mo'an (the other two were Lu 廬 and Li 李, from west Shu 蜀). In 1270, the sixth year of the Xianchun era 咸淳, Lei Mo'an received the revelation from Lu Da'an 路大安（an immortal said to have lived in the Six Dynasty ）and Heavenly Lord Xin 辛天君 (a Thunder Marshal, also named Hanchen 漢臣or Zhongyi 忠義) at his own home altar in Town Jinniu 金牛鎮 of Wuchang, and originated the Thunder Method of Hunyuan. As the instructor of Confucianism in Wuchang, Zha Taiyu had the convenience of visiting Lei Mo'an and learning the Thunder Method of Hunyuan from him. He was accepted as the patriarch of the southeast branch of the Hunyuan School (Xu 2017). As the disciple of Zha Taiyu, Zhang Tianquan should have transmitted the lineage of Lei Mo'an and been the successor of the southeast branch of the Hunyuan school too.

This lineage can be confirmed by ritual texts preserved in *Daozang* and the local memory recorded by the literati of Ji'an.

Generally, there are two texts of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan preserved in *Daofa Huiyuan*. One text is entitled *Hunyuan Liutian Ruyi Dafa* 混元六天如意大法, the same title as the scroll that Lei Mo'an received from Lu Da'an. The other, entitled *Hunyuan Liutian Miaodao Yiqi Ruyi Dafa* 混元六天妙道一炁如意大法, has a name list of patriarchs in which Perfected Zha (Thunder Emissary of Celestial Perfected, Secondary Minister of Golden Gate of Nine Heaven) 九天金闕少宰仙真雷使查真人 and Perfected Zhang (named Tianquan) 天全張真人 appear at the end (Qing 1999, p. 24). This fact means that Zhang Tianquan was accepted as the patriarch of the Hunyuan School after Zha Taiyu, and the text should represent the southeast branch of the Hunyuan School, while the former text might represent the west Shu branch of the Hunyuan School transmitted by Lu and Li.

Still, we have evidence of Zhang Tianquan's practice of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan. Li Qi 李祁, the local literatus, highly praised Zhang Tianquan in his postscript "Ti Zhang Tianquan Suoke Tianjun Jiangbi Hou" 題張天全所刻天君降筆後, preserved in juan 10 of *Yunyang Ji* 雲陽集. He wrote, "Mr. Zhang Tianquan is earnest and sincere in performing the teaching of Hunyuan to help the populace" 張君天全以精誠累行，持混元教，濟度群品.

Conversely, a story preserved in juan 31 of the gazette of State Ji'an 吉安府, the 1660 edition, made an ironic criticism of Zhang Tianquan. In the story, a local immortal named Suoyi Xian 蓑衣仙 once visited Mount Qinghua and was welcomed by Zhang Tianquan. He asked Zhang Tianquan to leave with him but was refused. He then left a comment behind: "Misguided by the man with a cyan face, this man (Zhang Tianquan) would fail to achieve the Dao all his life" 此人為青面老子誤一生. As annotated, "the man with a cyan face" here refers to Heavenly Lord Xin, who revealed the Thunder Method of Hunyuan to Lei Mo'an and was also the commander-in-chief summoned by the Thunder Method of Hunyuan. The comment implies that the locals of Ji'an regarded Zhang Tianquan as a fanatic of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan.

3.2. *The Thunder Method of Hunyuan Zhao Yizhen Inherited from Zhang Tianquan*

As cited above, the biography stated that Zhang Tianquan "passed the Method of Dao to Zhao Yuanyang". The meaning of "Method of Dao" here is obscure. Since the former sentence made clear that Zhang Tianquan contributed much to the Thunder Method of Hunyuan, "Method of Dao" here should refer to the Thunder Method of Hunyuan. It seems indubitable in context. However, the biography is a simplified version, and the epitaph of Zhang Tianquan's Daoist life has been lost. Since the biography of Zhao Yizhen, added to the end of the biography of Zhang Tianquan, only mentions that Zhang Tianquan was a disciple of Jin Pengtou, while Zhang Yuchu also used the phrase "Method of Dao" in his "Biography of Jin Ye'an" to refer to the Method of inner alchemy, we cannot exclude the possibility that "Method of Dao" here might refer to the Method of inner alchemy. In other words, we are not sure that the true meaning of "Method of Dao" in the original text of the epitaph must be the Thunder Method of Hunyuan.

Fortunately, although Zhao Yizhen himself or the authors of his biographies made no mention of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan, we can still find proof that Zhao Yizhen inherited the Thunder Method of Hunyuan from Zhang Tianquan.

As mentioned above, there are two texts of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan in *Daofa Huiyuan*. In addition, we find a third text, a short piece of the Method of Summoning Heavenly Lord Xin, bearing the name of Perfected Lei (Lei Mo'an), also preserved in *Daofa Huiyuan*. Although these three texts all deploy the Method of Summoning Heavenly Lord Xin as their core, they are different from one another in many details (Xu 2017). *Hunyuan Liutian Miaodao Yiqi Ruyi Dafa*, the only text related to Zhang Tianquan, has many Thunder Officers, Generals, and Marshals not mentioned in the other two texts. Further, the documents of Qingwei for feats 清微言功文檢 in juan 41 of *Daofa Huiyuan*, which was compiled by Zhao Yizhen (Boltz 1987, p. 47; Schipper and Yuan 2004, p. 1106), especially the Petition of High Brightness and Golden Mystery 崇明金元章 for informing the Generals and Agents, list Marshal Ma as the Mysterious Official who was in charge of the troops of Hunyuan 混元都統靈官馬元帥, Marshal Xu and Zhao of the bureau of Heavenly Hospital 天醫許趙二元帥, Celestial Officer Zhu and Li of the bureau of Hundreds of Herbs 百藥朱李二仙官, Marshal Ma and Geng of the Bureau of Attacking by Qi 攻炁院馬耿二元帥, Zhang Xiansheng Mountaineer Junior 小翻山張賢聖, and Grand Agents, such as Lv, Qiu, Tian, etc. 呂丘田... 諸大功曹, were all the same as in *Hunyuan Liutian Miaodao Yiqi Ruyi Dafa.* It seems that Zhao Yizhen tried to merge the Thunder Method of Hunyuan that he inherited from Zhang Tianquan into his own ritual system of the Qingwei tradition, at least by way of gathering all the divine troops together.

However, Zhao Yizhen also adopted the Methods of other Daoist traditions. We need further evidence to determine whether he was the successor of Zhang Tianquan's lineage of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan.

Documents in juan 15, 23, and 32 of *Daofa Huiyuan* list Zhao Yizhen as the patriarch of Qingwei while giving the full titles of Zhao Yizhen as "Perfected of Hunyuan, Superior Official Administrating the Documents of Qingwei, and Ritual Master of the Great Caves of the Three Radiant Spheres in the Heaven of Highest Purity" 上清三景大洞法師清微總章上卿混元真人 (Reiter 2017, p. 97). The full titles of Zhao Yizhen are not only recorded in the standard texts in *Daozang* but are also applied in practical ritual texts in daily life. For example, printed in the woodblock document "Precious Registry of the Jade Purity for Ascending to the Heaven" 玉清昇天寶籙, a private collection of Prof. Lee Fengmao, the name list of the patriarchs of Qingwei also gives the same full titles for Zhao Yizhen (Lee 2018, p. 275).

Among these titles, ''Ritual Master of the Great Caves of the Three Radiant Spheres in the Heaven of Highest Purity" means that Zhao Yizhen had accepted the high level of the Registry. It is no surprise that a famous Taoist such as him attained that level.

"Superior Official of Administrating the Documents of Qingwei" seems to be a combination of the Rank 5 title "Emissary of Administrating the Documents of Qingwei " 清微總章使 and the Rank 3 title "Superior Official of Dongzhen of Qingwei" 清微洞真上卿 included in the Regulations of ordination ranks and titles of the Qingwei School 清微法職品格 in juan 10 of *Daofa Huiyuan*. Since the Regulations were newly compiled, maybe the title was endowed according to the lost Old Regulations 旧格, often cited but abolished by Zhao Yizhen. However, it must be a high position (maybe above Rank 3) in the ordination ranks of Qingwei.

Interestingly, "Perfected of Hunyuan" seems to be an honorary title, but it is too simple to be that. Actually, Zhao Yizhen's honorary title was "Ritual Master of Highly Educated, Broadened the Dao, Purity in Virtue" 崇文廣道純德法師 or "Perfected of Enlightened with Dao, Interpreting the Dao to Populace, Broadened in Virtue, Advocating the Teaching of Dao" 悟道開化廣德弘教真人 (Xu 2018), both of which are long enough to fit his prestige and status. Obviously, "Perfected of Hunyuan" must be an ordination title, but it cannot be found in the Regulations of ordination ranks and titles of the Qingwei School, which means it was not the ordination title of Qingwei. Unsurprisingly, we find it in the Regulations of ordination ranks and titles of Hunyuan School 混元品秩 preserved in the Jade Regulations of the Heavenly Altar of Zhengyi 正一天壇玉格, the 1658 edition collected in the library of Peking University (Goossaert 2013; Goossaert 2022, p. 119; the same content can also be found in a late Qing manuscript transcribed from the 1658 edition, see Liu 2013). It is listed as the Rank 1 title of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan. Although we do not know the exact date of the Regulations of ordination ranks and titles of the Hunyuan School, "Perfected Hunyuan" could not be an ordination title other than that of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan. In a word, the ordination titles given in the documents of Qingwei tell us that Zhao Yizhen was the patriarch of the Qingwei School, as well as the successor of the Hunyuan School, although Zhao Yizhen himself only admitted the former identity openly.

4. Conclusions

Zhao Yizhen was known as one of the patriarchs of the Qingwei School. He himself insisted that he was the successor of the Qingwei School in his prefaces or postscripts of the ritual texts preserved in *Daofa Huiyuan*, although he never mentioned his master Zeng Guikuan in his own writing. The masters whom he and the authors of his biographies mentioned again and again were Li Xuanyi, Feng Puyi, and Zhang Tianquan, labeled as the masters of inner alchemy and always traced back to Master Jin Pengtou. Neither his poems nor the biographies of him cited above mentioned that these masters had taught him some kinds of Thunder Methods besides the Method of inner alchemy. It is true but not the entire story.

The Biography of Zhang Tianquan preserved in *Lishi Zhenxian Tidao Tongjian*, the edition that was likely to be supplemented by Liu Yuanran, gives more details about Zhang Tianquan and shows us the other face of Zhao Yizhen. Zhang Tianquan was one of disciples of Jin Pengtou, as well as the most important disciple of Zha Taiyu and the patriarch of the southeast branch of the Hunyuan School. Zhang Tianquan's dual experiences gave his disciple, Zhao Yizhen, the opportunity to learn the Thunder Method of Hunyuan from him while accepting the secret Method of inner alchemy at the same time. In fact, in the narratives by the local literati, Zhang Tianquan was always bound with Heavenly Lord Xin, the commander-in-chief of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan. Obviously, Zhang Tianquan was famous not for his achievement of the Method of inner alchemy but for his practice of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan. It is incomprehensible to exclude Zhao Yizhen from the transmission of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan.

Although he would not claim his relationship with the lineage of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan, Zhao Yizhen did transmit the Thunder Method of Hunyuan by merging it into his own ritual system of the Qingwei tradition. As cited above, one of the three texts of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan preserved in *Daofa Huiyuan* was related to Zhang Tianquan.

Additionally, its distinctive divine troops, including a pack of Thunder Officials, Generals, and Marshals, along with Heavenly Lord Xin, were all deployed in the ritual system of the Qingwei tradition redesigned by Zhao Yizhen. Furthermore, Zhao Yizhen held the ordination title "Perfected of Hunyuan," the highest rank in the Regulations of ordination ranks and titles of the Hunyuan School. Although we have no proof that the Regulations had already existed in Zhao Yizhen's time, the title must be related to the Thunder Method of Hunyuan, if it is not the highest title. While never admitting he was the successor of the Hunyuan School, Zhao Yizhen, as a Taoist, could not deny Heavenly Lord Xin, as well as the pack of divine troops of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan once granted to him in the Daoist ritual of transmission by his master Zhang Tianquan. Moreover, he needed the ordination title to be announced when he summoned them. In other words, at the scene of Daoist rituals, Zhao Yizhen could practice as a successor of the Thunder Method of Hunyuan if Heavenly Lord Xin and the pack of divine troops were needed.

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The Celestial Masters and the Origins of Daoist Monasticism

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Abstract: The Daoist monasteries, which were first popularized in southern China in the late fifth century, reflected major changes in the structure of medieval Daoism. From the perspective of comparative religious history, the rise of Daoist monasteries bears some similarity to the monasticisms that came into being in the Christian and Buddhist traditions; all three originated in hermitic and ascetic practices. However, Daoist monasticism did not naturally stem from the hermetic Daoism tradition; instead, it underwent a two-stage process of "grafting" in terms of its spiritual beliefs and values. The first stage saw the emergence of Daoist scriptures in the Jin and Song periods; in particular, the Lingbao scriptures, which transformed and distilled the tradition of hermetic Daoism practiced in the mountains and invested hermitic practice with a more complete and sacrosanct doctrinal foundation. The second saw the Southern Dynasties' Celestial Masters order embrace and experiment with the beliefs and values within the Lingbao scriptures; this process introduced the inherent communitarian nature of the Celestial Masters into the development of Daoist monasticism and resulted in the large-scale transformation of religious practice among the Celestial Masters of the period. This change of direction among the Celestial Masters order in the Jin and Song periods toward mountain-based practice led to the establishment of Daoist monasticism, but also to a loss of purity therein.

Keywords: Daoist monasticism; Daoist monasteries; Daoguan; Celestial Masters

1. Introduction

The appearance of Daoist monasteries (*Daoguan*, 道觀 or 道館) in the fifth century was a key turning point in the history of Daoism. Not only did the appearance and popularization of Daoist monasteries reshape the cultural landscape in the mountain regions of ancient China, but these events also brought major changes to Daoism's social structure. Daoism transformed from a religious community rooted in rural society to a monastic religion of renunciation and asceticism (Wei 2019; Sun 2020).

Scholars generally mark the establishment of the Chongxu Guan Temple 崇虛館 in Nanjing (then known as Jiankang 建康) in the third year of the Tai Shi 泰始 reign (467) in the Southern Dynasties as the beginning of the history of Daoist monasteries. In that same period, at least four Daoist temples appeared all at once across southeast China (Sun 2014, pp. 158–67). It is difficult to understand why Daoist monasteries would appear so abruptly. Scholars have worked assiduously to trace the monasteries' origins. It has been suggested that virtually all the pre-existing spaces devoted to Daoist practice are connected with the rise of Daoist monasteries. Such spaces include the temple buildings (*jingshe* 精舍) of the mountain-dwelling hermits of the Wei (220–266) and Jin (265–420) dynasties, the "chambers of quietude" (*jingshi* 靖室) of Daoist families, the "halls of parishes" (*zhitang* 治堂) within the homes of the Celestial Masters order (*tianshi dao* 天師道) practitioners, the Mao Mountain 茅山 villa belonging to the Shangqing 上清 school, the "abstinence halls" (*zhaitang* 齋堂) depicted in early Lingbao 靈寶 scriptures, and the guesthouses arranged for hermits (Kohn 2000; Bumbacher 2000, pp. 490–93; Kohn 2003; Akiko 2009; Wang 2017, pp. 3–171; Wei 2017).

However, the reasons underlying the rapid spread of Daoist monasteries are perhaps worthy of greater attention than the reasons underlying their origins. This point is concerned

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with how we can explain the regional differences that mark the rise of Daoist monasteries, which first appeared in southeast China during the early stages of the Southern (420–589) Dynasties. Moreover, there were many more Daoist monasteries in the south than in the north for the entire duration of the Southern and Northern (386–581) Dynasties. How did this new mode of practice emerge from within the Daoism of the Southern Dynasties, and why did the majority of Daoist priests accept it so readily?

In this paper, I seek to explore the emergence of Daoist monasteries from the perspective of comparative religious history. I also attempt to highlight the role of mountain-based Daoist practice among the Celestial Masters order in the Jin and Song (420–479) periods, which led not only to the establishment of Daoist monasticism but also to a loss of purity therein.

2. Patterns in the Development of Monasticism

Monasticism exists in numerous religious traditions, with the most prominent examples being Christian monasteries and convents and Buddhist monasteries. These monasticisms share similar characteristics, such as disengagement from one's family in favor of collective religious practice; obedience to clear standards of behavior and religious commandments; and the possession of a unique social identity and image and pattern of social relations (Weckman 2005; Johnston 2000, p. 1; Juergensmeyer 1990). Scholars insist that Daoism is not a monastic religion because it manifests in too many non-monastic ways, especially not practicing strict celibacy (Strickmann 1978; Schipper 1984). Yet, in the Tang dynasty (618–907), entering the monastic life became the only legal way for Daoist priests to practice, as prescribed by official law and religious code (Zheng 2004). Thus, more than a hundred years after the appearance of the earliest Daoist monastery, Daoism in the Tang Dynasty had already established monasticism, and although it later underwent many new changes, to this day, the largest sect of Chinese Daoism, *Quanzhendao* 全真道, still adheres to the tradition of monasticism.

Understanding monasticism as it developed in other religions will be of some use to our understanding of the emergence of the Daoist monastery (Kohn 2003). Christian and Buddhist monasticism both originated with cloistered monks who followed hermitic and ascetic practices. Christian monasticism stems from the Desert Fathers of fourth-century Egypt, led most notably by St. Anthony of Egypt (c.251–356), who forsook an affluent home life for a solitary, ascetic life in the wilderness over a period of several decades. Little by little, his admirers grew in number, and modeled their behavior on his own; St. Anthony then led these ascetics, guiding them together in the monastic life (Harmless 2004). Similarly, Buddhist monasticism emerged from hermetic and ascetic Indian traditions. The path taken by Sakyamuni himself bore some resemblance to that taken by St. Anthony: he abandoned a life of material ease, renouncing his family to become an ascetic. He pursued religious practice in mountains and forests, and even among tombs, and he attracted a band of followers. During the Buddha's time, *sangha* (groups of monks) still dwelt primarily in forests and begged for food as they wandered the streets. By the time of the Mauryan Empire (ca. 324–187 BCE), more and more Buddhist monks stopped wandering and started to gather next to pagodas where relics were enshrined, thereby establishing permanent, organized *samghārama* with a large complex of buildings. From "communities of wanderers", Buddhist monks evolved into monastic groups with fixed dwellings (Lamotte 1988, pp. 310–13; Keisho 1980, pp. 287–322).

Christian and Buddhist monasticism developed along similar trajectories. They both witnessed an aggregation of monastic sites, a move toward fixed dwellings among ascetic groups, and the institutionalization of the ascetic life. First, a few ascetics, having actively cast aside the secular life, established simple, non-permanent dwellings away from centers of human activity. Soon thereafter, others began to follow in their footsteps and assemble in such locations, leading to the formation of ascetic groups. Then, this group coalesced even more and began to build fixed premises. Ultimately, having consolidated their dwellings and laid down their commandments, a monastic system emerged that was based on ascetic communal living.

There are, moreover, certain universal features that gave rise to monasticism. Monastic movements are often backed by specific political and economic contexts, especially social crises and ideological changes. The general spiritual anxiety that social crises create is sufficient to generate widespread avoidance behavior and provides such behavior with room to thrive. Furthermore, monasticism is a radical religious undertaking; it is a form of resistance and innovation in the face of old ascetic methods that have lost their spiritual and charismatic appeal. Buddhism is considered to have been a reaction against ritual sacrifice and nature-worshipping Brahminism. Fourth-century Christian imperialization, together with the corrupt practices that engendered, is considered to have been an important factor in the rise of monasteries (Dunn 2003, pp. 1–2). In the words of James W. Thompson, "[m]onasticism, with its other-worldliness, its self-abnegation, its austerity, was a protest against the worldliness, the riches, the vanity of a church grown scandalously corrupt." (Thompson 1928, p. 138).

It is ironic that the establishment of monasticism was frequently a betrayal of its initial purpose. Collective monastic life developed out of hermitic and ascetic practices, characterized by a withdrawal from secular life in organized society. Yet, despite this, once it became organized and its locations became fixed, it inevitably brought a certain formalization and dogmatization to religious life, leading to the forging of new social relations; that is, it changed secular life. Such a change comes close to Max Weber's notion of the "routinization of charisma". This quotidianism and routinization was undoubtedly contrary to the original intention behind monasticism, and frequently inspired new waves of rebuilding of the monastic tradition. For this reason, monasticism is often represented in religious history as a cycle of corruption and reform. Christianity's so-called "desert city paradox" and Mahayana Buddhism's Forest Hypothesis are both relevant in this regard (Silber 1995, p. 137; Drewes 2018).

3. Daoist Practice in the Mountains

It may be said that monasticism itself is an amalgam of two rather contradictory tendencies: on the one hand, it has an anti-communitarian element with an emphasis on an asceticism that renounces secular life. On the other hand, it also has a communitarian element, with groups of ascetics residing communally in monasteries. From a collective standpoint, it sets itself apart, founding a new community while distancing itself from society at large. In terms of early Daoism, these two qualities belong to two different traditions: one is the first organized Daoist movement that emerged in the second century, the Celestial Masters, and the other is the long-standing Daoist hermetic tradition, dedicated to the pursuit of transcendence through individualized cultivation, often referred to in the texts as *xiandao* 仙道, or "the way of transcendence" (Campany 2009). Chinese researchers often refer to the latter as *shenxian daojiao* 神仙道教 or "The Taoism of the Immortals" (Hu 1989). In this paper, I will simply refer to this as the hermetic Daoism.

The Celestial Masters' organization relied on and served village-level civil society, preaching to all people. They were not concerned with seclusion or ascetic practices. On the contrary, they were highly attentive to family values and daily life (Stein 1979). In the late Han dynasty and in the Wei and Jin periods, the Celestial Masters gained widespread popularity, forming a relatively large-scale religious order. Although its history was even longer, hermetic Daoism was not devoted to ecumenical missionary work, and was only concerned with individual asceticism or esoteric knowledge transmitted from master to disciple (Tadao 1984, pp. 425–61). Since monasticism began with those who practiced seclusion and asceticism, we should begin our investigation of Daoist monasticism by examining hermetic Daoism.

Analogous to the Desert Fathers of Christianity and the "Forest Saints" of Buddhism, the ascetics of ancient China were usually referred to as "Men of the Cliffs and Caves" (*Yanxue zhishi* 岩穴之士) (Vervoorn 1990). It was said, furthermore, that "to practice Daoism you must enter the wooded mountains 為道者必入山林." (*Baopuzi neipian Jiaoshi* 抱朴子內篇校釋, p. 187; Michael 2016) Mountains are to Daoism as the desert is to Christianity, and as forests

are to Buddhism; they are symbolic of another world. However, the early Daoist monastic tradition embodied a completely different set of beliefs and values to those of Christianity and Buddhism.

Wolfgang Bauer stated in this regard that "the degree of rigidity to which eremitism was pursued can be connected with that basic concept of the universe: the less pessimistic the latter was, the less radical the intended degree of withdrawal from the world." (Bauer 1981). Hermetic Daoism altogether lacks conceptions of the suffering of life or the sinfulness of life; rather, it considers that being born human is a blessing; therefore, one needs to maintain one's health and live a long life. Hermetic Daoism even tends toward hedonism. Similarly, it differs from the Christian and Buddhist emphases on ascetic practice in the desert and forest, respectively, and on the significance of trial by fire. In hermetic Daoism, mountains are considered a "happy place" (*fudi* 福地) where one can maintain one's health and even avoid misfortune. When ascetics practiced in the mountains and engaged in such related practices as abstinence from grains and from physical desire, their aim was not self-redemption or purification of the mind, but rather themes to which Daoism has always aspired: longevity and immortality, that is, the immortality and transformation of the body (Eskildsen 1998). *Daoji jing* 道機經, the Daoist ascetic manual that gained widespread currency during the Wei and Jin periods, notes that "there are too many desires in this world 民間多慾" and that there is a need to "go into the mountains and live in seclusion, to not stray from naturalness, and to keep practicing Daoism to the point where one is transformed; then, one can gain immortality 入山潛處, 守志自然,功滿形變, 則得長生." The Daoji scriptures also speak in detail of health, diet, and carnal knowledge. It is thus clear that "going into the mountains" did not mean having to follow ascetic practices (*Xiandao jing* 顯道經, p. 646; Sun 2013). Wang Zhen 王真, a Daoist priest during the Cao Wei period, brought three concubines into the mountains with him as part of his spiritual practice. This was nothing out of the ordinary for Daoists (*Shenxian zhuan jiaoshi* 神仙傳校釋, p. 218). Thus, although the practice of hermetic Daoism in the mountains tended toward seclusion, it lacked an ascetic tradition. Rather, it was a "mildly" monastic tradition that embraced seclusion but not asceticism.

Following the political crises and social turmoil of the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220), withdrawal from society to live in seclusion became a notable social movement at the end of the Han dynasty and into the Wei and Jin periods, a clear indicator being the official *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, which for the first time, included biographical accounts of hermits. It was also during this period that the pursuit of longevity became widespread across all levels of society. In the *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 by Ge Hong 葛洪, generally all of the people who became "immortal" had undertaken Daoist practice in the mountains. Moreover, in secular texts, we also read of many ordinary people who turned to asceticism in the mountains. The *Shuijing zhu* 水經注, published in book form in the early sixth century, refers to the traces left behind by numerous ascetics. It can be seen that the pursuit of Daoism in the mountains was, at the time, a widespread phenomenon across northern and southern China, one difference being that northern ascetics largely lived in stone chambers, while their southern counterparts mostly constructed temple buildings. Most of their cloisters, located as they were in wooded mountains, were relatively crude, and many were soon abandoned, which highlights the lack of stability of these environments for the individual practice of Daoism (*Shuijing zhu jiaozheng*, pp. 44, 104, 225, 650, 660, 715, 750, 753, 796).

The records in the *Shuijing zhu* indicate that mountain-dwelling ascetics from the period lived in communities, as opposed to living as individual hermits. For instance, we read that on Xiyi Mountain 錫義山 "there are currently dozens of Daoist priests in attendance, with their hair hanging down loosely, using atractylodes for food 今有道士被發餌朮, 恒數十人"; in the Wudang Mountains 武當山, "there is a gathering of people taking herbal medicine for their health 藥食延年者萃焉"; and on Qingxi Mountain 青溪山, "besides the spring waters, there are many cabins built by Daoist priests for their spiritual practice 泉側多結道士精廬." (*Shuijing Zhu jiaozheng*, pp. 660, 753) Similarly, the *Hou Han shu* observes that Liu Gen "lives in seclusion on Song Mountain 嵩山; many people come from distant

places in the hope of learning Daoism from him 隱居嵩山中, 諸好事者自遠而至, 就根學道" (*Hou Han shu*, p. 2746); in the *Guanzhong ji* 關中記, Pan Yue 潘嶽remarks that on Song Mountain there are "more than ten caves 石室十餘孔" and that "many Daoist priests dwell inside, to distance themselves from the secular world 道士多游之, 可以避世" (*Chuxueji*, p. 103); the *Nan Yongzhou ji* 南雍州記describes how on Qingxi Mountain, "hermits come and go, and there are often more than one hundred of them 學道者常百數, 相繼不絕." (Huang 2000, p. 568) Gatherings, such as that described in the *Hou Han shu*, were held on an even larger scale: a hermit named Zhang Kai 張楷, for instance, "lives in seclusion on Hongnong Mountain. His students follow his lead, and the place in which they live has become a marketplace 隱居弘農山中, 學者隨之, 所居成市." (*Hou Han shu*, pp. 1242–43) The *Jin shu* 晉書remarks that Guo Yu 郭瑀 "is a hermit in Linsong Xiegu, and has dug out a cave in which to live 隱於臨松薤穀, 鑿石窟而居" and that "he has over one thousand registered students 弟子著錄千餘人." (*Jin shu*, p. 2454) The "Shilao zhi 釋老志" of *Wei shu* 魏書 observes that during the Sixteen Kingdoms period (304–439), alchemist Lu Qi 魯祈 "lived in seclusion on Han Mountain and educated several hundred students 避地寒山, 教授弟子數百人." (*Wei shu*, p. 3054) Gathering in the mountains was rarely witnessed before this period and is related to the loosening of the state's grip on the lives of ordinary people from the late Eastern Han period.

It is noteworthy that even though quite large groups of people who had withdrawn from society did gather in mountain regions, hermits in the Wei and Jin periods failed to develop fixed temple buildings. The *Shuijing zhu* records the presence of a large number of Buddhist temples and folk ancestral temples in northern China but does not identify the existence of a single Daoist monastery (Chen 1985, pp. 252–61; Hisayuki 1964, pp. 366–90; Cai 2011, pp. 130–41). There were even places of communal Daoist worship adjacent to Buddhist temples with no sign that they ever developed into Daoist monasteries. The classic example of this can be seen from the Daoist ascetics Wang Jia 王嘉 and Zhang Zhong 張忠 who lived in northern China (controlled by northern ethnicities) following the Revolt of Yongjia 永嘉之亂 that occurred in 311 CE. The *Jinshu* records the following:

> [Wang Jia] didn't partake of the five cereals, nor did he wear fancy clothes. He practiced the art of breath straining, and didn't make friends with worldly people. He lived in seclusion in Dongyang valley, digging out a cave on a cliff as a place to live. He had many hundreds of followers, and they also lived in caves. In the final years of Shi Jilong's reign (Shi Le, pp. 295–349), Wang Jia abandoned his disciples, went to Chang'an, lived in seclusion in the Zhongnan Mountains, building a thatched hut as his residence. When his disciples learned of this, they once again came in search of him. Wang Jia then dwelt in solitude on Daoshou Mountain. (*Jin shu*, p. 2496)
>
> [王嘉]不食五穀，不衣美麗，清虛服氣，不與世人交遊。隱于東陽穀，鑿崖穴居，弟子受業者數百人，亦皆穴處。石季龍之末，棄其徒眾，至長安，潛隱於終南山，結庵廬而止。門人聞而復隨之，乃遷於倒獸山。

The path taken by Wang Jia strongly resembles that taken by St. Anthony. To prevent spiritual regression, the latter parted ways with his group once he was surrounded by people in his cloisters and headed to an even more remote place to continue his practice. This gradual retreat from society is extremely similar to the two instances in which Wang Jia "abandoned his disciples".

The example of Zhang Zhong, by contrast, reveals not only that mountain-dwelling hermits of the era formed monastic social groups of a certain size. It also highlights the practice of Daoism in groups under the guidance of a teacher.

> During the Revolt of Yongjia, Zhang Zhong lived in seclusion on Tai Mountain. His mind was still, and without desire. He practiced breathing techniques, took fungus and minerals as medicine, and practiced ways to maintain his health….He lived in a quiet and secluded valley between towering cliffs. He had dug out a cave as his room. His students also lived in caves, at a distance of more than

> 60 steps. Every five days, they would come and pay their respects to him. Zhang Zhong educated his students not by speaking but rather through his behavior. The students studied his behavior by observing him, and then withdrew. Zhang Zhong built a Daoist altar in the cave, where he worshiped every day. (*Jin shu*, p. 2451)
>
> [張忠]永嘉之亂，隱于泰山。恬靜寡欲，清虛服氣，餐芝餌石，修導養之法……其居依崇岩幽谷，鑿地為窟室。弟子亦以窟居，去忠六十餘步，五日一朝。其教以形不以言，弟子受業，觀形而退。立道壇於窟上，每旦朝拜之。

This appears to have been the highest form of monasticism among fourth-century northern ascetics. According to the *Shuijing zhu* and the *Gaoseng Zhuan* 高僧傳, Zhang Zhong's ascetic group happened to be in the same place at the same time as the monk Zhu Senglang's 竺僧朗 Buddhist order, yet Zhang simply "stayed in his cave 穴居". Senglang then "built a formal temple and houses, with the buildings joined together 大起殿舍, 連樓累閣". "The complex had several dozen rooms, and it is said that after this was done, more than one hundred followers visited 內外屋宇數十餘區, 聞風而造者百有餘人." (*Shuijingzhu jiaozheng*, p. 209; *Gaosengzhuan*, p. 190) Such a comparison reveals that the Buddhism practiced in the mountain forests was already a fairly complete monastic system, while the mountain-dwelling Daoist ascetics represented by Zhang Zhong had yet to take such a step toward developing a system of their own.

The phenomena noted above—of entering mountain areas for religious practice, and the clustering of groups who did so—primarily emerged in northern China. Considering monasticism's general pattern of evolution, the potential for Daoist temples to evolve was far greater in northern China. Nonetheless, it was in the southeast during the early Southern Dynasties period that the Daoist monastic movement initially unfolded. Moreover, Daoist monasteries in southern China far outnumbered those in the north for the entire duration of the Southern and Northern Dynasties period. This disparity differed greatly from the parallel development of fourth-century Buddhist temples across northern and southern China. Wei Bin 魏斌 considers this glaring regional disparity to be due possibly to the general mood of mountain-based religious practice shifting south into the Jiangnan region in the wake of the Disaster of Yongjia. It was in Jiangnan that Daoist monasteries developed and grew in sophistication, while in the north they gradually disappeared (Wei 2017, pp. 129–30).

The seclusive atmosphere in the Jiangnan region during the Six Dynasties period (222–589) indeed surpassed that of the north, and it also shaped the common social practices of the seclusive scholar–officials. Correspondingly, high officials and the nobility became accustomed to "recruiting hermits" (*zhaoyin* 招隱) and were happy to establish premises for them (*Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世說新語箋疏, p. 778; *Song shu* 宋書, pp. 2276–77, 2291). In this sense, early Daoist monasteries were indeed a manifestation of Southern seclusive culture. The earliest Daoist monastery, Chongxu Guan, constructed in the third year of the Taishi 泰始 reign (467), may be regarded as an "academic hall" (*xueguan* 學館) established by the state (Akiko 2009, pp. 234–37). Moreover, several other Daoist monasteries sponsored privately by aristocrats may be regarded as having resulted from the same logic; these were merely a form of private sponsorship.

However, understanding the emergence of these monasteries as a version of Daoism that sought sponsorship still poses problems. First, there are even earlier instances of recruiting Daoist priests to establish premises, such as Cao Cao's 曹操 establishment of humble thatched-roof abodes (*maoci* 茅茨) for Xi Mengjie 郗孟節 (*Shenxian zhuan jiaoshi*, p. 218); the Northern Wei (386–534) emperor Daowu's 道武帝 creation of a "hall of quietude" (*jingtang* 靜堂) for the immortal court academician Zhang Yao 張曜; and the establishment of a hall for Du Zigong 杜子恭 by the Eastern Jin's (317–420) Huan Wen 桓溫 (*Taipingyulan*, p. 765). Yet none of these buildings saw the advent of an "era of the Daoist monastery." Furthermore, what appears in the records are primarily the most famous Daoist monasteries of the Southern Dynasties period, whose heads were relatively "successful" Daoist priests from the Southern Dynasties' social class of scholar–officials (Pettit 2013). The speed with which the Daoist monasteries spread in southern China proves the existence of a broad social

base for Daoist practice. In other words, the Daoist community in the South was ready for a shift in the direction of Daoist monasticism. This was not something that individual religious leaders could influence, nor was it something that official sponsorship could restrict. We should now turn our attention toward the religious choices made by southern China's grassroots Daoist believers, who were primarily priests in the Celestial Masters.

4. The Celestial Masters' Entry into the Mountains

The Wei and Jin periods were a time in which the Celestial Masters disseminated widely across northern and southern China. Yet, as a result of constraints at the heart of the religion, the spread of the Celestial Masters across both the north and south primarily took the form of the spontaneous duplication of a libationary system (*jijiu tizhi* 祭酒體制). This led to a situation in which "everyone referred to themselves as a teacher and established their own parish 人人稱教，各作一治". The original organization, the rites, and even the doctrine had spiraled out of control. The scattered, self-supporting parishes of the Celestial Masters had become virtual money-making tools of the libationers (*jijiu* 祭酒), to the extent that there was mutual competition and factional fighting. This chaos was vividly depicted by Lu Xiujing 陸修靜 in the *Daomen kelüe* 道門科略 and in contemporaneous scriptures. The irregular development of the Celestial Masters gave rise to status differentiation among the Celestial Master libationers. In southern China, there were large parishes overseeing tens of thousands of believers, like Du's parish in Qiantang 錢塘, and mid-size orders with over 800 believing households; there were also "lesser masters" (*xiaoshi* 小師) who wandered the streets, being unable as they were to establish parishes. The status of libationers varied from person to person. Many folk-based Celestial Master libationers had no means of effectively overseeing their parishioners; all they could do was wander, performing the low-status role of the professional religious service provider. Having entered the fifth century, the Celestial Masters were confronted by the impact of Buddhism and suppression by secular regimes. In particular, the Sun En 孫恩 Revolt of 399–411 threw the Celestial Masters order, which had pursued a policy of "mastering the households and ruling the people 領戶治民", into an unsustainable position (Sun 2020).

It was around the year 400 that the Shangqing scriptures 上清經 and the Lingbao scriptures 靈寶經, which had newly emerged in southern China, began to disseminate widely. The popularity of these scriptures, which were later referred to as the "Sandong Jingshu 三洞經書", is not unrelated to the lack of sanctity ascribed to the Celestial Masters order. These scriptures advocated anew the hermetic tradition of longevity and immortality while selectively absorbing elements from Buddhism to form a scriptural system with a new cosmology and outlook on the world. The texts were styled as "the Supreme Way" (*shangdao* 上道), the "Supreme Scripture" (*shangjing* 上經), and the "Supreme Law" (*shangfa* 上法), and were heavily critical of old Celestial Masters' amendments to Daoist law, which were disparaged as "the lower way" (*xiadao* 下道) and "the lesser way" (*xiaodao* 小道). The primary audience comprised ascetics who sought to break away from secular society and pursue holiness; this naturally included Celestial Master believers.

The Shangqing scriptures are regarded as the pinnacle text of hermetic Daoism principles and practice in pursuit of individual longevity and immortality (Strickmann 1979; Robinet 1997). The earliest members of the Shangqing school were Xu Mi 許謐 and his son–originally members of the Celestial Masters–from Jurong 句容, as well as the medium Yang Xi 楊羲. The Shangqing scriptures inherited hermetic Daoism's belief in mountain-based spiritual practice and held that practitioners should "relinquish their families, divorce their wives, go to the Five Great Mountains and engage in prolonged fasting in the mountain forests 棄家放妻, 游五嶽, 長齋山林." (*Sijimingke jing*, p. 426) In the *Zhen'gao* 真誥, it states that Yang Xi worked tirelessly to convince Xu Mi to build a temple building on Mao Mountain, to complete the transformation from the "Xu chief of staff in the human world 人間許長史" to the "Daoist priest Xu in mountains 山中許道士." Xu Mi's temple building was also known as "Nanshan zhi 南山治." It could be said that this was the earliest case of the Celestial Masters moving into chambers of quietude in

the mountains. However, the Shangqing Daoism was still an individualized religion, and Xu Mi's chambers of quietude on Mao Mountain were only spaces for individual practice and soon ceased to exist. They cannot be viewed as a Daoist monastic complex as such (Pettit 2013, pp. 14–49).

Of greater revolutionary significance was the emergence of the Lingbao scriptures, which were essentially a result of the development of hermetic Daoism. They emphasized mountain-based practice but accepted and transformed a large number of Buddhist beliefs and values. The Lingbao scriptures are considered the first Daoist scriptural system to have been truly pervaded by Buddhism, or to have attempted to hyper-assimilate Buddhism. Among the most important of these beliefs and values are universal salvation, merit transfer, and asceticism (Zürcher 1980; Bokenkamp 1983). Through these concepts, the Lingbao scriptures redefined the responsibilities and the image of the Daoist priesthood: priestly asceticism was not merely concerned with the pursuit of immortality; it was even more important to help liberate all sentient beings. Likewise, liberation from personal desire did not require first-hand study of Daoism; by inviting a Daoist priest to make a sermon or perform a ritual, one could return merit to oneself. Merit transfer required the assurance of sanctity; as a result, a professional Daoist priesthood emerged, with members who had broken away from the secular world. To ensure the sanctity of the Daoist priesthood, the Lingbao scriptures emphasized the importance of mountain-based ascetic practice; furthermore, in order to pray for the salvation of common people, it was necessary for professional Daoist priests to hold collective Lingbao abstinence rituals in "abstinence halls" (Campany 2015). Yet, as Stephen Bokenkamp has noted, "while the Lingbao authors seem to have imagined no dedicated structures for their practice beyond expanded versions of the already extant Chambers of Quietude, they did expect their monastics to be dedicated religious specialists—anchorites, rather than cenobites." The emergence of Daoist monastery was "not fully prefigured in the Lingbao scriptures." (Bokenkamp 2011, p. 124).

Newly emerged southern Daoist scriptures, particularly the Lingbao scriptures and their new beliefs and values, not only provided Daoist believers with a path to redemption that was new and original, rarefied and sacred, but the modes of practice they advocated also corresponded with the contemporaneous and actual needs of the crisis-ridden Celestial Masters order—and in particular, the needs of the grassroots libationers. The Celestial Masters readily accepted the "Sandong Jingshu" once it emerged; this served to deepen the transformation of the Celestial Masters' doctrinal beliefs and values, practices, and the organizational model of the order. Yet this process of acceptance was complex and was a strong reflection of the active trade-offs, adjustments, and transformations undertaken by the order. Contemporaneously, a number of "hybrid scriptures" appeared, ones in which the Celestial Masters were considered the standard and in which the doctrines and rituals of the Celestial Masters, the Shangqing scriptures, and the Lingbao scriptures were blended. These were most likely authored by members of the Celestial Masters. With regard to the acceptance and fusing of the newly emerged doctrine, the methods and points of emphasis within these scriptures were wholly dissimilar, which demonstrates something of the complexity of the various stages within the evolution of the Celestial Masters order.

Appearing in book form in the Jin-Song transitional period, the eschatological *Dongyuan Shenzhou Scriptures* 洞淵神咒經 were a relatively early manifestation of the "hybrid scriptures". These scriptures are thought to have been composed by Daoist priests from a lower socio-economic class of Jiangnan society; they are a patchwork of popular religious elements seeking to promote salvation in the last days, and the targets of their proselytizing were, to a significant extent, grassroots Celestial Master believers (Lü 2008, pp. 174–81). By means of radical proselytization, the *Dongyuan Shenzhou Scriptures* sought to popularize a new form of spiritual practice among Celestial Master believers and to greatly esteem "the severing of all ties, and the practice of the Dao in the mountains 一切斷絕, 入山修道", while also permitting "being among the people, and treating their illnesses 遊行世間, 為人治病." (*Dongyuan Shenzhoujing*, p. 34) The *Dongyuan Shenzhou Scriptures* do not entirely discount

the value of being among the people as traditionally practiced by priests of the Celestial Masters order. It even goes so far as to promise that they, just like the Daoist priests of the mountain forests who practiced the asceticism of the "Sandong Jingshu", would not suffer from pestilence. However, it also holds that only the latter group, the mountain-dwelling priests of the "Sandong Jingshu", were true Daoist priests and that others were merely "minor priests 小小道士." (*Dongyuan Shenzhoujing*, p. 78) It also constantly emphasizes that it was only Daoist priests in the mountains who would be able to endure future disasters. Volume two of the *Dongyuan Shenzhou Scriptures* envisions the mountain-based spiritual practice of the Celestial Masters order as follows:

> From this the Renwu year onward, Daoist priests should wear religious garments such as hats, coarse cloth, aprons and capes, and carry a staff. They eat only one meal a day, and not consume food after midday. They stop eating all meat and drinking alcohol. They educate people from secular society, and do not violate any laws. Men and women teach each other, and be mentored by the wise. They cannot raise living things, and live alone. It is their duty to study the scriptures. People living in the mountains should abstain from meat and fish every month; during this period of abstinence, they may only eat vegetarian food. Whether there are ten, thirty or one hundred people living together in the mountains, they should cultivate a large area of fields and gardens, and plant trees and vegetables; they should build quadrangular houses as well as an abstinence hall and pavilion. One, two or three people should not live separately from others, because otherwise the spirits will deceive them; the ways of practice within the scriptures cannot be undertaken on one's own. The abstinence hall may hold many people. People must fast three times a month, burn incense three times a day, and pray in ten directions: then the gods will attach themselves to people. What difference does it make if one or two people are alone in the mountains, not fasting according to the prescribed methods and just living there on their own with nothing more than insects and deer around them? They should follow wise teachers, those with many skills and scriptures. There should be more than one person present; the more there are, the better. There is no need to stop at a dozen or more people, much less two or five. Having just a few people is not enough to subdue the mountain spirits. Mountain spirits are deceitful, and that means bad luck. (*Dongyuan Shenzhoujing*, p. 78)
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> 道士自今壬午年以去，亦作冠褐裙帔三法衣策杖耳。一日一食，過中不餐，斷一切葷，酒亦不嘗。教化俗人，為事不得犯科。男女相度，智者為師。不得畜生生之物，正孑然一身耳。經書為業，入山中人，月月長齋，齋空食菜耳。入山十人、三十人、百人一處，廣作田植、園菜、五果、屋舍四方，並齋堂、樓閣，不得一人、二人、三人獨住。鬼神欺人，經法不可獨。齋堂人多，月月三齋，日日三時，上香禮拜十方，此為神來附人矣。二人一人獨在山中，複不立法建齋，直獨在山中，蟲鹿亦在山中耳，此為何異也。當奉明師，師多才技，又多經文，乃一人上，可住多多。遂上十人者，不可住也，況複二人、五人也。此不伏山神，山神欺人，人亦不吉矣。

This is an extremely important text in the context of the establishment of Daoist monasticism. It reveals that amid the stimulus provided by the emergence of new scriptures, the Celestial Masters order had already laid the ground rules for monastic practice: priests dwelling in the mountains should form groups of more than ten people; to live collectively in a fully equipped temple, farmland and vegetable patches need to be established as a source of income; to undertake collective spiritual practice in a timely manner; and to abide by relevant commandments and systems. Clearly, this closely resembles a genuine monastic lifestyle. Yet within these monastic groups, there was still no explicit limitation on gender roles, only generalized claims that "men and women instruct each other, and are mentored by the wise", giving the impression that the organization's living space comprised a mix of males and females.

The mountain-based asceticism advocated in the *Dongyuan Shenzhou Scriptures* differed from what was intended in the Shangqing scriptures and the Lingbao scriptures. The *Dongyuan Shenzhou Scriptures*' most striking characteristic was their distinctive collegiality. The mountain-based practice they sought was not characterized by seclusion and asceticism, but more closely resembled a revamping of an existing form of Celestial Master activity. The scriptures did not relinquish the secular flavor of the original Celestial Masters; while even stronger in their praise of mountain-based practice, they still pursued "the use of education to enlighten people 人間教化" such that there was no distinction between being in the mountains and being in the world. The scriptures even asserted that "if Daoist priests remain in the mountains, where the roads are far-flung, people in secular society cannot find them, and they have no way of converting. Even though they may wish to, there would be nowhere to receive instruction. Therefore, wise Daoist priests do not necessarily reside in the mountains 道士入山, 山途玄隔, 世人不見, 無處歸依, 雖有本心, 無處相度, 是以智人道士, 不必山中矣." (*Dongyuan Shenzhoujing*, p. 29) We may well say that as a monastic ideal, this was less than complete, yet it highlights the Celestial Masters' experimentation with, and transformation of, new religious beliefs and values in the Jin and Song periods. It is precisely because of this adaptability that the Celestial Masters were able to attract such broad-based, grassroots support and engagement from their followers in southern China, thus acting as a catalyst for the spread of the Daoist monasticism in southern regions.

5. Southern Dynasties Daoist Monasteries and the Celestial Masters

The earliest Daoist monasteries emerged in the south in the roughly 50-year period after the publication of the *Dongyuan Shenzhou Scriptures*, or at least they appeared in historical records as such. These monasteries were all essentially built via imperial edict or through funds donated by scholar–bureaucrats. Most of the heads of the monasteries were not normal Daoist priests at the grassroots level, but higher-ranking and intellectually minded Daoist priests with close connections to the social class of scholar–officials. For this reason, scholars frequently emphasize the proximity between early Daoist monasteries and the chambers of quietude. However, this view has to a significant degree been distorted by the retention of historical data: these well-known Daoist monasteries were merely a drop in the ocean of the Daoist monasticism, and a great many monasteries at the grassroots level never entered the historical record.

One item to which we can refer is the *Jiuxi Zhenren Sanmao Jun Stele* 九錫真人三茅君碑 erected at Mao Mountain in 522 CE. The inscription on the reverse side of this stele lists the names of 103 Daoist priests and 63 Daoist monasteries or temple buildings; very few of these are to be seen in other records (Sun 2014, pp. 99–100). Moreover, these monasteries' names were merely those from the vicinity of Mao Mountain during the Southern Liang dynasty (502–557), and their number exceeds the sum total of the Southern Dynasties' Daoist monasteries recorded in other textual sources. Where did all these Daoist monasteries spring from? In his notes on his depiction, contained in the *Zhen'gao*, of the state of ascetic practice between the early Liu Song and late Qi (479–502) periods in the vicinity of the southern caves of Mao Mountain, Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 offers an important clue:

> Currently, around the entrances to the great southern cave of Mao Mountain, there is a good water source but many rocks, and it is flat down below. In the early years of the Liu Song period, only the female Daoist priest Xu Piaonu lived here. She obtained funding from the Guangzhou governor Lu Hui. She lived at the entrance to the cave, and passed away after living here for several years. [Her] disciple, surnamed Song, was a very noble woman who was undisturbed by the outside world. She died at an old age, and was buried on the southern side of the mountain. Song's disciple, surnamed Pan, continued to live here and is still alive today. During the Yuan Hui reign (473–477), some men also came to live alongside them on the southern side. During the early Southern Qi dynasty, [the emperor] ordered Wang Wenqing, who was from Jurong, to

> establish a Daoist monastery here and name it "Chong Yuan". A temple building and corridors were built in a very imposing style. There are seven or eight Daoist priests, and they all receive official funding. For more than twenty years now, men and women from near and far have been meeting miles around, and have established more than ten buildings. But very few of them practice "the Supreme Way"; most of them practice the Lingbao rites and talismans. Recently a woman came to live at the entrance to the cave; she often cleans and sweeps and Claims to be the administrator of the cave. She often practices divination like a sorceress, and is pretentious and ostentatious. Situations like that are everywhere. There are also streams on the eastern and western sides of Mao Mountain, and there is also the spot where Ren Dun, who attained the Dao, lived in the waning years of the Jin dynasty; the stove he used to refine his potions is still there today. Now, Xue Biaozhi and others live there. There is also Zhu Fayong, who lives on a small hill nearby; it boasts a fine view, but it lacks a water source. (*Zhen'gao*, p. 558)
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> 今[茅山]近南大洞口有好流水而多石，小出下便平。比世有來居之者，唯宋初有女道士徐漂女，為廣州刺史陸徽所供養，在洞口前住，積年亡。女弟子姓宋，為人高潔，物莫能干，年老而亡，仍葬山南。宋女弟子姓潘，又襲住，於今尚在。元徽中，有數男人復來其前而居。至齊初，乃敕句容人王文清仍此立館，號為崇元。開置堂宇廂廊，殊為方副。常有七八道士，皆資俸力。自二十許年，遠近男女，互來依約，周流數里，廨舍十餘坊。而學上道者甚寡，不過修靈寶齋及章符而已。近有一女人來洞口住，勤於灑掃，自稱洞吏，頗作巫師占卜，多雜浮假，此例亦處處有之。大茅東西亦有澗水，有晉末得道者任敦住處，合藥灶塘猶存。今有薛彪數人居之，又有朱法永，近小山上，快矚眺而乏水。

Through this record, we can see that the Mao Mountain Daoist monastery emerged in the early years of the Liu Song period. When it first began, private monastery buildings for Daoist practice were built in a piecemeal fashion by mountain-dwelling ascetics. Afterward, officials of the early Southern Qi period founded the "Chongyuan Guan 崇元館", which, compared with the earlier monastery buildings, was much more spacious and formal. Then, more ascetics assembled near monastery buildings, establishing more than ten "public offices" (*xieshe* 廨舍), which were less formal. These monastery buildings, built by mountain-dwelling ascetics who gathered spontaneously, were not established by official or imperial order whatsoever, but there is evidence to suggest that they were referred to as Daoist monasteries or subsequently evolved into such (Bumbacher 2000, pp. 442–43). For instance, Zhu Fayong 朱法永, living on his small hill, was most likely the very same "Zhu Fayong of Yanguan, owner of Dongxuan Guan 洞玄館主鹽官朱法永" mentioned on the reverse side of the *Jiuxi Zhenren Sanmao Jun Stele*. From this we can infer that the large number of Daoist monasteries' names recorded on the reverse side of the stele, such as Long'e Guan 龍阿館, Fuxiang Guan 福鄉館, Jinling Guan 金陵館, Fangyu Guan 方隅館, Tianshi Guan 天市館, Beidong Guan 北洞館 and Maozhen Guan 茅真館, all bear the clear imprint of Mao Mountain's sacred geography, which would have made them similar to the Daoist monastery built by the ascetics on Mao Mountain.

There is evidence to suggest that many of these mountain-dwelling ascetics were previously priests of the Celestial Masters order. For instance, cousins of Tao Hongjing's disciple Zhou Ziliang 周子良 came to Mao Mountain from eastern Zhejiang in the twelfth year of the Tianjian reign (513) and lived in "annexed buldings on the western hill" (*xi'e biexie* 西阿別廨) (*Zhoushi mingtongji* 周氏冥通記, p. 158). Zhou Ziliang's maternal aunt Xu Baoguang 徐寶光 was originally "a libationer of the obsolete Daoism" (*jiudao jijiu* 舊道祭酒). Before coming to Mao Mountain, she "left home at the age of ten, studied Daoism with a teacher, set up a temple building in Yuyao 十歲便出家, 隨師學道, 在余姚立精舍", then lived in a "hall of parishes of the Celestial Masters" (*tianshi zhitang* 天師治堂) in Yongjia 永嘉 prefecture (*Zhoushi mingtongji*, pp. 522, 533). In other words, the Xu family was a prominent family of traditional libationers of the Celestial Masters order. Yet, after Zhou Ziliang followed Tao Hongjing to Mao Mountain, the Xu clan abandoned their parish

in eastern Zhejiang 浙江; they sought shelter with Tao Hongjing, and lived in "annexed buildings" (*biexie* 別廨) in the vicinity of Huayang Guan 華陽館.

From this, we may infer that many of the "men and women from near and far" who established "public offices" in the Mao Mountain of Tao Hongjing's era were, like the Xu family, originally priests of the Celestial Masters libationary system. The reason(s) that they chose to live in the vicinity of the Daoist monastery on Mao Mountain is, to a large extent, due to the fact by that time it had already become a well-known religious center. Tao Hongjing records how during the celebration of the Sanmaojun festival each year, "officials and commoners got together. There were several hundred carriages; close to four or five thousand people; men and women, both ascetics and people from secular society. There were so many people that it was like being in a big city 公私雲集, 車有數百乘, 人將四五千, 道俗男女, 狀如都市之眾." (*Zhen'gao*, p. 557) We can infer the sheer scale of the Mao Mountain religious market. This assembly of believers "just climbed the mountain together, held the Lingbao rites, and returned once these were over 唯共登山, 作靈寶唱贊, 事訖便散"; they came primarily to hold religious services, and did not have any affiliation with a Daoist monastery similar to that of the libationers of the Celestial Masters. The official Taoist monasteries are naturally the best choice for the faithful, but even these unofficially established monasteries can get a share of the huge religious market. As Tao Hongjing remarked, among the priests of Mao Mountain of the time "very few of them practice the Supreme Way; most of them practice the Lingbao rites and talismans 學上道者甚寡, 不過修靈寶齋及章符而已." (*Zhen'gao*, p. 558) Although the "annexed buildings on the western hill" were relatively crude, they were the same as formal Daoist monasteries in that they incorporated an abstinence hall in which the Lingbao fasting rites and the Celestial Masters' rites were held, a private room and an altar (Sun 2014, pp. 105–10). It may be seen that these Daoist priests and former libationers abandoned missionary work among ordinary people; they chose to enter the mountains and build premises there in accordance with the new beliefs and values advocated in the Lingbao scriptures, and to expand by relying on income derived from the performance of ceremonies rather than by levying tax or charging rent.

The situation at Mao Mountain was an epitome of the process of conversion to the monastic life of the southern Celestial Masters of the era. It is through this process that we can understand why many of the heads of the well-known early Daoist monasteries had connections to the Celestial Masters—many monasteries were transformed directly under the order's control. A great many elements from the Celestial Masters were preserved in monastery-based Daoist practice (Sun 2020, p. 358). To a large degree, the abandonment of traditional practices and the switch to mountain-based religious practice among grassroots Celestial Master priests is attributable to economic factors; it was not necessarily based on spiritual concerns. It is understandable, therefore, if many of the characteristics of the Celestial Masters-especially its strong ties to the family as well as to secular society-have been preserved in the ordinary Daoist monasteries of the Southern Dynasties, rather than adopting a strictly monastic approach. The *Taixiao langshu* 太霄琅書, another "hybrid scripture" from the Southern Dynasties period, describes the Celestial Masters' fusion of monastic practices (Yoshitoyo 1977; Ninji 1991).

The *Taixiao langshu* embodies both the old Celestial Masters' tradition of "mastering the households and ruling the people 領戶治民", and the more recent tradition of teaching the "Sandong Jingshu". However, Daoist priests were referred to as Daoist devotees (*daomin* 道民), and it was necessary for them to render a land tax, "Non-payment of tax means parish registers cannot be obtained 租不送者, 不得治籙"; those who learned the scriptures were referred to as "disciples" (*dizi* 弟子); and "although the latter do not pay tax, they may still be taught the scriptures 於租雖闕, 無妨受經." Although there were differences as to their garments and practice methods, Daoist devotees and disciples were both scholars who "shared a reverence for the same Daoism 同宗一道." (*Dongzhen taishang taixiao langshu*, p. 664) Teachers also taught commentaries on the *Daode Jing* 道德經 and the "Sandong Jingshu", while also holding Celestial Master memorials to the emperor and Lingbao fasting

rites. In the scriptures, ascetics can be divided into six different types: those who do not renounce the world; those who do renounce the world; those who do not renounce their family; those who do renounce their family; those who wander; and those who live in seclusion. However, there was no imposition on them to enter the mountains or renounce their ways (*Dongzhen taishang taixiao langshu*, p. 668). As with the *Dongyuan Shenzhou Scriptures*, the *Taixiao langshu* held that careful attention to detail was the most important consideration, to deliver common people from torment, and that "there is no difference between living in the mountains and in the world 居山, 處世無異." Thus, it opposed the purely hermetic Daoist-style practice whereby individuals went into the mountains in pursuit of self-liberation, and promoted the establishment of premises in which to preach to ordinary people:

> People of the "Greater Vehicle" who study the Supreme Way, practice Daoism and enlighten ordinary people do not need to escape into the mountain forests. There is no social contact in the mountains. There is an abstinence from desire, the preparation of herbal remedies, and the learning of alchemy, (but) these are just the minutiae of building merit, not the most important foundation. There is no way to build merit in the mountains, so one needs to enter the big, worldly cities and build Celestial Master halls of parishes or monasteries, copy the scriptures, proclaim the wonders of Daoism, assist the state in providing relief to the common people, be diligent in one's spiritual practice, suppress evil and promote good. (*Dongzhen taishang taixiao langshu*, p. 693)
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> 凡學上道，大乘之人，修己化世，勿逃山林。山林絕人，中小避欲，合藥試術，研習奇方，是建德之細，非立功之大基。山中立功無所，所以出世市朝，起創治館，繕寫經書，宣行妙法，助國濟時，慈心精勤，抑惡揚善。

Put briefly, what is described in the *Taixiao langshu* reflects the state of the Southern Dynasties Celestial Masters after the internalization of Daoist monastic practice. The old modes of Celestial Master spiritual practice and the new modes of spiritual practice were not mutually exclusive. The premises it describes, built by the Venerable Masters during their practice of Daoism, seem to be a natural transformation of the Celestial Master chambers of quietude and of the halls of parishes. Thus, although it is evident that the *Taixiao langshu* greatly valued celibacy, it did not strictly demand it; it even made a special provision for marital relations between "lay masters" (*zaisu shizi* 在俗師資) and their disciples. Although marriage between a master and an apprentice was forbidden, a master was permitted to marry the daughter of a disciple or recruit a disciple as a son-in-law (*Dongzhen taishang taixiao langshu*, p. 691).

Out of a quest for sanctity, celibacy in Daoist monasteries during the Southern dynasties gradually became a common pursuit. Yet there were no strict limitations in this regard, especially given that there was no rejection of family life in Daoism (Masaharu 1982). Many Daoist monasteries were handed down from master to disciple, while other monasteries, including official monasteries, were passed down to family members. For instance, the Taiping Guan 太平館, built by Emperor Gao of Southern Qi 齊高帝 for Chu Boyu 褚伯玉, was headed by the grandson of Chu's fifth younger brother, Chu Zhongyan 褚仲儼, during the Liang dynasty; a certain Jiang Fuchu 蔣負芻 was in possession of Zhongyang Guan 宗陽館, and later "handed over the day-to-day running of the monastery to his second son, Hongsu 弘素." (*Shangqing Daolei Shixiang* 上清道類事相, p. 877) The family-based inheritance of Daoist monasteries is indicative that Daoist priests were likely to have lived together with their family members, and, moreover, that Daoist monasteries were akin to private family property rather than "the common property" (*changzhu* 常住) of a religious group. In Tao Hongjing's view, almost ten people lived in the very noisy "annexed buldings on the western hill", including Xu Baoguang 徐寶生 and her elder brother Xu Puming 徐普明, her son Zhu Shansheng 朱善生, her nephew Zhou Ziping 周子平, and her servant-girl Lingchun 令春. Most of them belonged to the Xu clan, and the men and women lived together. Although there is no evidence of marital relations between them, it was

very much like a home for them. Michel Strickmann thus argued that: "It would be very wrong to think of Mao Mountain as a truly 'monastic' center. It is clear that the community included both married and unmarried practitioners, as well as large numbers of children." (Strickmann 1978, p. 471) Such circumstances were not at all uncommon during the Southern Dynasties period. Even during the Sui (581–619) and Tang eras, the golden age of Daoist monasticism, the true severing of family ties among Daoist practitioners may not have been strictly enforced. This set the tone for the Daoist monasticism from its earliest days.

6. Conclusions

If we agree that the general pattern of the establishment of monasticism originates in radical seclusion and asceticism, that it has led to the development of religious groups with fixed dwellings and the evolution of structured daily life, then this general pattern has parallels with Daoist monasticism (that is, Daoist monastery practices). Yet Daoist monasticism was not a natural outgrowth of the hermetic tradition of withdrawal from secular society. Rather, it underwent a two-stage process of "grafting" in terms of its spiritual beliefs and values. The first stage saw the emergence of the New Daoist scriptures of the Jin and Song periods; in particular, the Lingbao scriptures transformed and distilled the tradition of hermetic practice in the mountains. This stage also borrowed concepts from Buddhism and invested hermitic practice with a more complete and sacrosanct doctrinal foundation. The second stage saw the adoption of and experimentation with the beliefs and values within the Lingbao scriptures by the Southern Dynasties' Celestial Masters order, which introduced the inherent communitarian nature of the Celestial Masters into the development of Daoist monasticism and triggered the large-scale transformation of religious practice among the Celestial Masters of the period. The Celestial Masters' order, which had its roots in popular society, embraced and transformed a mountain-based spiritual practice that had emphasized cutting ties with secular society. This became a key moment in the rise of Daoist monasticism.

To a certain extent, this can explain the regional disparities in the distribution of Daoist monasteries during the Southern and Northern Dynasties: the northern Chinese Celestial Masters order was not initiated into the ways of the "Sandong Jingshu" until almost a century later. The impact of the Lingbao scriptures on the northern Celestial Masters and the existence of the northern Celestial Masters as a group is evident from the large number of Daoist statues that appeared in the late fifth century (Bokenkamp 1997). It is interesting to note that following the introduction of the Lingbao scriptures, the northern Celestial Masters did not widely adopt the model of Daoist monastery practice; the spread of Daoist monasteries in northern China did not occur until after the Sui dynasty. There may have been deeper underlying factors for this related to social structure. In her study of the same geographically distinct phenomenon of Buddist statuary between northern and southern China, Shu-fen Liu 劉淑芬 observes that the Yiyi 義邑 organization, comprised of monks and laymen, was widespread in northern Chinese Buddhism. Southern Dynasties' governments, having implemented a system of guilt by association, exercised a stronger degree of social control, making it harder for grassroots groups to form similar organizations for believers (Liu 2010). This analysis is also applicable to the Daoism of the Southern Dynasties. The organizational structure of the Celestial Masters, based on "mastering the households and ruling the people", was irreconcilably at odds with the state control exercised increasingly by the Southern Dynasties; for southern Daoists, tight grassroots supervision hastened the process of conversion to monastic life. Lu Xiujing's mid fifth-century Daoist reforms grew out of these circumstances, while he himself was the most representative figure in the transformation of the former Celestial Masters into monastery-based practitioners (Wang 2017, pp. 601–706).

In contrast to Christian and Buddhist examples of monasticism, Daoist monasticism has had a unique evolutionary process. Lacking the concept of the other world or original sin, Daoism does not reject secular life, and Daoist monasticism is not so ascetic and extreme,

but rather a communal type of monasticism: dwelling in the mountains without leaving the secular world, living in the monasteries without separating from the family. The Celestial Masters' turn toward monasticism preserved many secular characteristics. Even ascetics who withdrew into the mountains were later disparaged as "people of the Lesser Vehicle" (*xiaocheng zhiren* 小乘之人), and the idea took hold that "superior Daoists practice in the middle of the city, lesser ones do so in distant mountain forests 上士學道在市朝, 下士遠處山林." (*Taishang laojun jiejing* 太上老君戒經, p. 208) In the Southern Dynasties period, many Daoist monasteries were situated in mountain forests, but with the passage of time, more monasteries gradually sprang up in cities (Zhang 2006). Daoist monasteries gradually evolved from being a "home for the Immortals" in the mountain forests into religious service facilities in the metropolises.

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The Flow of Institutional Charisma: Quanzhen Taoism and Local Performing Arts in Republic Shandong and Henan

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Abstract: Quanzhen Taoism and its relationship with local performing arts is an important yet inadequately studied subject, to date, due to the shortage of and limited access to new sources. However, on the basis of historical documents, oral statements and field research, we determined at least eight genres of local performing arts closely related to Quanzhen Taoism, especially its sublineage, the Longmen School, in Republic Shandong and Henan. They traced back their own history to Quanzhen Taoist patriarch WANG Chongyang, adopted the Quanzhen Taoist lineage poem to name their disciples, and created the Ever Spring Guild (Changchun hui 長春會), in the name of Quanzhen Taoist QIU Changchun 丘長春, to assist each other. In other words, the Quanzhen Taoist institution was imitated by the local performing arts and, at the same time, the local artists performed some reasonable adaptations and accommodations to meet their own needs. By reviewing the local performing arts in Shangdong and Henan provinces, we can further understand Quanzhen Taoism in popular cultural traditions and local societies.

Keywords: Quanzhen Taoism; institutional charisma; local performing arts

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1. Introduction

Ever since its beginning, Quanzhen Taoism has been consciously established as an institutionalized order, characterized by its ever-lasting emphasis on inner alchemy, original genealogical naming system, Chan-like monastic rules and distinctive religious practices, such as begging and cloud-travel (*yunyou* 雲遊) (Goossaert 1997). Additionally, not surprisingly, we can identify the elements and influences of Quanzhen Taoism in various avenues in society (Goossaert 2007; Katz 2000). On the issue of its relationship with the performing arts (see Durkheim 1971; Strickmann 2002; Van der Loon 1977; Chen 2007), modern scholars have convincingly demonstrated that most of the popular theatrical genres in 13th and 14th centuries can easily determine their origins in the religious lore of the Quanzhen Taoism of the period (Hawkes 1981; H. Wang 2004; Zuo 2004). In addition, Quanzhen Taoism can also be expressed in poetry, including lyrics (*ci* 詞), songs (*ge* 歌), verses (*lüshi* 律詩), and quatrains (*jueju* 絕句) (Komjathy 2013), even to the extent that "no any other religion [in the Yuan dynasty] could draw more attention from the literati community or exert more influence upon the literature world than Quanzhen Taoism" (Deng 1991, p. 23).

We should note that all the abovementioned scholars' arguments are grounded in the textual evidence and canonical sources that focus on the influence of Quanzhen teachings and masters upon the themes of theatrical genres. However, these studies barely examine the impact of the Quanzhen Taoist institution on the organization of local artists and their performing troupes. Additionally, the tight fictive kinship signified by the lineage poem (*paishi* 派詩) and the legendary patriarchs QIU Chuji 丘處機 (Taoist name: QIU Changchun 丘長春, 1148–1227) and his enduring appeal, are all typical elements of Quanzhen Taoism that appear in the practice of performing local arts.

These undeveloped aspects, we venture to say, have inspired our conception of "institutional charisma", the phrase we used in the title of this paper. As perceived by Quanzhen

scholars, Quanzhen Taoism, starting from QIU Chuji's journey westward to meet Genghis Khan in the Hindu Kush, gradually evolved into an institutional order with a national distribution (Kubo 1967; Yao 1980a; Goossaert 1997; Mou et al. 2005; Komjathy 2007). In its institutionalization, of course, Quanzhen Taoism formed a set of concepts to create its own identity, of which the genealogical system was at the core. Although having almost nothing in common with the lineage poem discussed later in this paper, the naming system utilized by Quanzhen Taoists in the Jürchen-Jin and Mongol Yuan dynasties, namely, ZHI 志, DAO 道 and DE 德 for the males, and MIAO 妙, SHOU 守 and HUI 慧 for the females, was an obvious indicator for identifying a Quanzhen cleric (Goossaert 2001, pp. 131–32). Similar to the naming system, sacrifices performed for Quanzhen patriarchs was an annual event for Quanzhen Taoists, which was a formal occasion used to meet the same practitioners from different parts of the country and share their mutual views and collective identity created by the same patriarch. For example, when QIU Chuji was interred at the White Cloud monastery in 1228, over 10,000 Quanzhen Taoists from all areas of the country gathered to attend the funeral rite (W. Zhao 2005, p. 417), and surely it was the first time that most of them, and possibly their disciples, had met each other face to face and knew of their existence per se. Another less-mentioned, but equally crucial, concept for the institutionalization of Quanzhen Taoists was the construction of its sacred history. We know for sure that WANG Chongyang was the founder of Quanzhen Taoism; however, according to QIN Zhian 秦志安, a Quanzhen Taoist of the third generation, the legendary, immortal donghu dijun 東華帝君was the first Quanzhen partiarch, and consequently, Quanzhen Taoist history would be as long as, if not longer than, that of Zhenyi Taosim 正一道 (Goossaert 2021). In their competition with Zhengyi Taoism, Quanzhen Taoists included this attributed history into the Taoist canon *Xuandu baozang* 玄都寶藏 as the symbolic capital to prove their antiquity and orthodoxy (Chia 2011, p. 169; Komjathy 2013, p. 6). While reviewing the sources with regard to the local performing arts in the provinces of Shandong and Henan, we found that they made frequent references to Quanzhen Taoism in many places and from time to time, and mostly focused on its lineage poem, patriarchal sacrifice and history, all of which constitute the institutional form of the Quanzhen order, other than the cultivating practices, such as inner alchemy, asceticism and so forth. In other words, the institutional organization is the charismatic legacy left by Quanzhen Taoism and inherited by local artists.

The local performing art (*difang quyi* 地方曲藝) include singing and narrations, where performers use a third-person voice to narrate in the vernacular, possibly accompanied by simple musical instruments. The number of performers is usually one or in pairs, but does not exceed five individuals. This form of performance emerged in the Tang Dynasty (618–907) and became popular because of its accessibility and colloquialism, and there are probably thousands of different types of *difang quyi* that have passed around China throughout history. As previously mentioned, the field data and oral accounts from the Republican times (1912–1949) convey an interesting image of the relationship between Quanzhen Taoism and the organizational structure of the local performing arts: in the Shandong 山東 and Henan 河南 provinces, Quanzhen masters served as patriarchs and patrons gods, different branches in the lineages of local performers distinguished themselves from each other on the basis of the lineage poems used by different Quanzhen lineages and they established the theatrical Ever Spring Guild (Changchun Hui 長春會) under the name of Quanzhen master QIU Changchun. With reference to Rolf Stein's "ceaseless dialectical movement of coming and going" between Taoism and local cults, we can venture to say that Quanzhen Taoism predominated its dialectical movements with the local performing arts by virtue of its own institutional charisma.

First, we must provide a brief clarification of the sources. Our arguments mainly focus on the Republican era, and the period beyond that time, when necessary; therefore, in addition to the social investigations and statistics provided at present, we also adopt part of the oral accounts as our source. These oral accounts are not the products of our own fieldwork, but were collected by teams of scholars performing systematic surveys at that time.

The most important text is the *Investigation of Popular Entertainment in the Xiangguo Temple* (Xiangguoshi minzhong yule diaocha 相國寺民眾娛樂調查, 1936, reprint in 1989), which is a survey of local folklore and entertainment for the purpose of implementing a new form of popular education. The investigators expressed a sympathetic critical reflection of the performers. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Xiangguo temple has become a local center for social activities of Kaifeng 開封 in Henan, with various local actors performing in or around the temple (Bianweihui 1995, pp. 459–61).[1] Our other major source is the *Henan quyi zhishi ziliao huibian* 河南曲藝志史資料彙編 (Bianjibu 1988, 1989, 1990, hereafter *QYHB*), which was edited in the 1980s and presents over a hundred articles on various 20th-century performing arts in Henan province. It is part of a larger national survey project of the performing arts, directed by the Ministry of Culture and other government departments and conducted by local scholars and cultural workers, and was intended to provide a systematic understanding of the surviving performing arts in China. The articles in the *QYHB* are mostly surveys conducted at the time or excerpts from other sources, and a few of them provide obscure or limited information of the survey. To better understand the source, we also interviewed Xu Liping 徐立平, a contemporary popular performer of the Shandong Laozi 山東落子 in Ji'nan 济南, who specializes in more than forty pieces and has greatly contributed to the transmission of this performing art. The sources we have at our disposal, to date, mainly concern Shandong and Henan in the Republican period; therefore, we use the performing arts in these two provinces as the subject of our discussion. The reliability and accuracy of the oral accounts are by no means unquestionable,[2] especially concerning the origin and history of certain local performing art genres, in which the performers express their specific understanding of their relationship with Quanzhen Taoism. Moreover, we should remain prudent when using these materials to develop our discussion.

Whatever the origins and histories, though quite fascinating, of these dramatic traditions, we are still interested in their relations with Quanzhen Taoism, in particular, and thus, we exclusively address their formal organizations that are borrowed directly from the Quanzhen Taoist institution. How did local performing arts use the lineage poem of the Longmen School for the master–disciple transmission? What influence did the Quanzhen institution have on sacrificial ceremonies, disciple initiation rites and organizational forms of local performing troupes? How did they modify Quanzhen history, the legends of the patriarch QIU and the lineage poem? By addressing these questions, we progressively reveal the distinctive influence of the institutional tradition of Quanzhen Taoism on the local performing arts in Shandong and Henan in the Republican period.

2. Local Performing Arts and Their Internal Succession

According to the extant sources, there are at least eight local genres of performing arts in the provinces of Shandong and Henan. We were not able to describe in detail the types of performance, instruments, repertoire and the other details of each genre; however, we presented their basic characteristics. In order to keep to the theme of this study, we directly address the point that the transition of these local performing arts from master to disciple is based on the lineage poem of the Longmen School. Additionally, when relating to their origins, they all worship the Quanzhen master QIU Changchun as their patriarch and create their own sacred history by following the Taoist pantheon of immortals. However, although these eight performing arts share the same Longmen lineage poem, each genre is divided further into various branches in their transmission to different regions; each branch is named after their different founding master so as to distinguish themselves from each other, such as Dongzhang men 東張門 and Xizhang men 西張門.[3]

2.1. Taoist Ballade

The Taoist ballade (Daoqing 道情) is a narrative art closely related to Taoism. It was initially performed by Taoists to propagate Taoism and eulogize Taoist teachings, accompanied by drums (*yugu* 漁鼓[4]). The themes were mainly based on Taoist thoughts and stories of the gods and immortals. It probably arose during the Tang and Song (960–1279) dynas-

ties and gradually developed into a kind of art performed by professional local actors after the Yuan (1271–1368) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties. Its themes also went beyond Taoist stories and were widely spread in several northern and southern provinces.[5]

In Republican times, this genre was largely performed by laymen who worshipped none other than QIU Changchun as their patriarch (Ma 1989, p. 47). A Republican-era sociological investigation indicated that there were still five people in 1936 chanting the Taoist ballade in the Xiangguo temple of Kaifeng, Henan: ZHANG Yuancai 張元材 and his disciple QIAO Mingsong 喬明松, MA Lichun (courtesy name: Hongbin) 馬禮純 (宏斌) and his two disciples YANG Zongshan 楊宗山 and ZHANG Zongxi 張宗西. Among these five persons, MA Lichun was the leader with the most power and greatly influenced Daoqing and other performers. He also had four apprentices: YANG Zongyi 楊宗義, ZHAO Zongnan 趙宗南, ZHAO Zongbei 趙宗配 (北) and XU Zongdong 徐宗洞 (東) (L. Zhang 1936, p. 130). From these two pairs of master–disciple relations, we could conclude that the Taoist ballade performers in Xiangguo temple were affiliated with the Longmen School, and that they, respectively, belonged to four generations, identified by the names of Yuan, Ming, Li and Zong.

Moreover, the deceased Taoist ballade performer DONG Mingde 董明德 from Taikang County 太康縣 in Henan province possessed a copy of the *Hundred-Character Chart for the Taoist Name and Genealogy of the performers from the Longmen School of Patriarch QIU* (Qiuzu longmenpai yiren daohao beixi baizipu 邱祖龍門派藝人道號輩系百字譜) (QYHB, 3, pp. 226–27), whose generation order was the same as the of the *General Register of Lineages Revealed by Various Veritables* (Zhuzhen zongpai zongbu 諸真宗派總簿), preserved, at present, in the White Cloud Monastery 白雲觀 in Peking.

2.2. Henan Zhuizi

Henan Zhuizi (墜子 or 墜字) is generally considered to be a derivative of the Taoist ballade, while synthesizing other performing arts formed around the end of the Qing Dynasty, popular in the Henan region and spreading to Tianjin 天津 and other places. Its appellation comes from the fact that the performers use a two-stringed zither (*qin* 琴) that creates a falling sound or because they drop the tone of the last word of each sentence, and the performers are usually one or two people (Zhang 1951; *QYHB*, 2, pp. 108–26).

Some of the earliest Zhuizi performers were Taoist balladists. For example, LEI Ming 雷明, who performed in Kaifeng in 1905, continued to name his disciples based on his lineage poem after he began to perform Zhuizi (*QYHB*, 3, p. 13). ZHANG Mingliang 張明亮, who performed at Xiangguo temple in the 1930s, is a similar example. He started learning and performing Taoist ballades at twelve years old and had five disciples of the "Zhi 至" generation. At the age of thirty-five years, he felt that he could not maintain his daily life by performing Taoist ballades; therefore, he decided to perform Zhuizi and then had ten disciples, two males and eight females, from the same "Zhi" generation. After 1921, more and more women participated in Zhuizi performances, and they also used the lineage poem of the Longmen School (L. Zhang 1936, p. 93).

In Republican Henan, there were 36 performers from seven tea gardens (*chayuan* 茶園, the name of the troupe) who performed Zhuizi at Xiangguo temple, of which FAN Lifeng 范禮鳳 and ZHANG Licui 張禮翠 from the Qingchun Tea Garden 青春茶園 were the most outstanding (L. Zhang 1936, pp. 78–79). Among the 36 performers, 22 belonged to the Longmen School, corresponding to six generations: Jiao 教, Yong 永, Yuan 元, Ming 明, Zhi 芝/ 治 and Li 禮/ 理. Moreover, their succession from master to disciple was strictly in accordance with the lineage poem of the Longmen School.

In addition, according to the theatrical lineage manuscript held by ZHANG Mingliang, the Zhuizi genre can be divided into "Seven Veritables and Eight Lineages" 七真八派: the "Seven Veritables" were no other than the "Seven Veritables of Quanzhen Taoism" 全真七子, but with a slight variance, namely, QIU Chuji 丘處機, LIU Langyan 劉朗言, TAN Changsheng 譚長生, MA Danyang 馬丹陽 (MA Yu, 馬鈺, 1123–1183), HAO Taigu 郝太古 (HAO Datong 郝大通, 1140–1212), WANG Yuyang 王玉陽 (WANG Chuyi 王處一,

1142–1217) and SUN Qingjing 孫清靜 (SUN Bu'er 孫不二, 1119–1182); as for the "Eight Lineages", except for the seven lineages of Longmen 龍門, Suishan 隨山, Nanwu 南無, Yushan 遇山, Huashan 華山, Lunshan 侖山 and Qingjing 清靜, founded by the Seven Veritables, respectively, there was an eighth lineage called Yinxi 寅戲 (L. Zhang 1936, pp. 74–77). Compared with the lineage poem of the *General Register of Lineages Revealed by Various Veritables*, there was no difference in the order of these characters, except for some generation characters incorrectly written, but pronounced the same. Among them, LIU Langyan should be LIU Changsheng 劉長生 (original name: LIU Chuxuan 劉處玄, 1147–1203) and TAN Changsheng should be TAN Changzhen 譚長真 (original name: TAN Chuduan 譚處端, 1123–1185). As for the eighth school, "The tiger elder brother (Laohu dashixiong 老虎大師兄) created the Yinxi school, which was the eighth school, and this school had no successor" (L. Zhang 1936, p. 77). Possibly, this theatrical Yinxi school corresponds to the Taoist lineage Yinxi pai 尹喜派, whose lineage poem is preserved in the *General Register of Lineages Revealed by Various Veritables*; however, unfortunately, no further information has been discovered.

Moreover, in the 1940s, the performer ZHANG Yuanfa 張元法 and his two disciples, LI Mingliang 李明亮 and ZHANG Mingyue 張明月, performed the "disguised Zhuizi " 化裝墜子 in Neihuang County 內黃縣, Henan (*QYHB*, 3, p. 63). According to the middle character of their given names and their relationship as master and disciple, they also seemed to belong to the Longmen School.

2.3. Shuoshu

Storytelling (Shuoshu 說書, also called Pingci 評詞) is a form of language performance that originated in the Tang and Song (960–1279) dynasties, with a single performer who generally only uses simple gestures, does not sing and does not use musical instruments. The stories they tell, mainly historical, have rich themes, some of which have a strong Taoist perspective (*QYHB*,1, p. 62).

In the Republican era, there were eight story-tellers still active in Xiangguo temple: DAI Mingyin 戴明印, CHU Zhigang 楚至鋼, WANG Futang 王福堂, FAN Mingxian 范明顯, ZHU Yuanhui 朱元慧, ZHOU Mingyuan 周明元, WANG Mingshun 王明順 and WU Mingwen 武明文 (L. Zhang 1936, p. 103). Except for the unidentified WANG Futang, the other seven performers belonged to the Longmen School. It is worth noting that, among these Pingci Shuoshu performers, there was a direct or indirect master–disciple or coreligionist relation between them, all descending from a story-teller named LI Yongxue 李永學, as showed in the following Table 1.

Table 1. The lineage of LI Yongxue (L. Zhang 1936, pp. 63–74).

		WANG Wanfu		
	MA Junting	WAGN Mingshun		
		LI Mingfu	ZHANG Zhizhong	WANG Ligui
		MA Mingtang	CHU Zhigang	
LI Yongxue		QIU Dacheng		
	DUAN Yuanshan	FAN Mingxian		
		ZHOU Mingyuan		
		LIU Mingxiang		
		DAI Mingyin	FENG Zhiying	

Except for this performing group in Xiangguo temple, there were two other famous *Pingci Shuoshu* performers, ZHAO Yuancheng 趙元城 and his disciple JI Mingjun 紀明君, whose successive transition from master to disciple was as follows (Table 2):

Table 2. The lineages of ZHAO Yuancheng and JI Mingjun (L. Zhang 1936, pp. 63–74).

YUAN Yongtang	ZHAO Yuancheng	↘
WEI Yonghai	ZHANG Yuande	JI Mingjun

What is notable is that, in addition to the common rite of worshiping QIU Changchun as the patriarch, there was also a saying of "Seven Veritables and Eight Lineages" circulating among the Pingci Shuoshu performers, which was the same as that of Henan Zhuizi, except for some individual generation characters (*QYHB*, 1, p. 60).

2.4. Shandong Laozi

Shandong Laozi 山東落子 is a sub-lineage of the Lotus Rhyme (Lianhua Lao 蓮花落). The Lotus Rhyme is performed during begging, or possibly by Buddhist monks during begging and fundraising activities and has been popular since the Song Dynasty. In the Jiaqing 嘉慶 period (1760–1820) during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), it was created in Shandong by combining local dialects and folk songs, mostly performed by a single person or a pair, using a large cymbal and a bamboo board as instruments.

In the Republican era, the most well-known Shandong Laozi performer was GU Hezhen 顧合真 who belonged to the Longmen School and was mostly active in the Fan county 範縣 of Henan province and the rural areas of Heze 菏澤 and Liaocheng 聊城 in Shandong province. According to a study, at that time, most of the Shandong Laozi performers belonged to ZENG 曾, CHAI 柴, YAN 閻 and ZHANG 張, the four dominating theatre branches of the Longmen School, and some other performers belonged to the branches of Sunzhao 孫趙, Meiqing 梅清 and Dingsi 丁四. They all worshiped Quanzhen master QIU Changchun as their patriarch, claimed themselves to be the successors of the Longmen School and set up a one-hundred-character genealogy; the active performers at that time corresponded to the eighteen to twenty-three-generation characters (*QYHB*, 2, pp. 155–56).

It is worth mentioning that, at present, XU Liping is still performing Shandong Laozi in the Changqing 長清 district, Ji'nan 濟南 City, Shandong province (Figure 1). To date, he is one of the most famous performers in the area, and he proves that such a tradition still exists. XU Liping, using XU Yongkui 徐永奎 as his stage name, acknowledge performer QU Jiaowen 曲教文, who is the disciple of CHEN Heyun 陳和雲, as his master in the early 1950s, and learned Shandong Laozi from him. Xu Liping states that he belongs to the Dongzhang branch 東張門 of the Longmen School.[6] Additionally, he also said that, although he knew he belonged to the Longmen School and that his patriarch was QIU Chuji, he did not know why.

Figure 1. XU Liping performing the Shandong Laozi at the Changqing culture fair on 31 January 2023.

2.5. Shandong Kuaishu

Kuaishu 快書 existed during the mid-Qing Dynasty era and was popular in Shandong province. It is famous for telling the story of WU Song 武松 in *Water Margin* (Shuihu zhuan 水滸傳) and can be performed by one or two people using musical instruments, such as the three-stringed zither (*sanxian* 三弦) (X. Guo 2004). These performers worshiped Quanzhen Taoist QIU Changchun as their patriarch. That is to say, as far as its affiliation is concerned, Shandong Kuaishu also belonged to the Longmen School. From the Republican era to the present day, the relatively well-known Shandong Kuaishu performers were QI Yongli 戚永立 and his disciple GAO Yuanjun 高元钧, who both belonged to the Laozhang branch 老張門, mostly active in Shandong province (Jiang 2009, p. 126; Li 2011).

2.6. Guangzhou Dagu

Guangzhou Dagu 光州大鼓 are performed by one person. The performer sings alongside drums as an accompaniment and plays multiple roles. It appeared during the Xianfeng 咸豐 period (1851–1861) during the Qing Dynasty, and was mainly popular in southeast Henan (*QYHB*, 2, p. 158). At that period, the performers in the Huangchuan 潢川 area of Henan were CHANG Hebin 常和賓, CHANG Jiaozhi 常教芝, WEI Yuanzong 魏元宗, LIU Yuanzhong 劉元中 and LIU Yuanpeng 劉元鵬 (Bianweihui 1996, p. 1662). They belonged to the He 和, Jiao 教 and Yuan 元 generations, while performers of the Yong 永 generation, in between the Jiao and Yuan generations, are missing.

According to the oral accounts, there is a popular saying among the troupe performing the *Guqu* 鼓曲 genre of "Seven Veritables, Eight Lineages and One Hundred Branches": Quanzhen master and patriarch Wang Chongyang propagated his teaching by performing *Guqu*, and extensively adopted and taught his disciples. He adopted one hundred disciples in total, with seven of them "attaining the Tao": QIU 邱, LIU 劉, TAN 譚, MA 馬, HAO 郝, WANG 王 and SUN 孫, namely, the "Seven Veritables"; later on, QIU Changchun inherited his master's teaching and created the Longmen School; QIU has eight successful disciples whose surnames are GAO 高, GUI 桂, CHAI 柴, ZHANG 張, XING 省, ZHAO 趙, HAN 韓 and YANG 楊, namely, the "Eight Lineages"; these eight people continued to recruit and teach their disciples; therefore, *Guqu* was passed on from generation to generation. Although the term "Seven Veritables, Eight Lineages" is the same as in the Zhuizi, the "Eight Lineages" refer to different theatrical branches, not the schools of Quanzhen Taoism. The Guangzhou Dagu performers also agreed with this saying and left behind the *Hundred-Character Chart for the succession of Longmen School* (Longmenpai baizi chuancheng zipu 龍門派百字傳承字譜) (*QYHB*, 3, pp. 38–40).

2.7. Puyang Qinshu

The appellation Qinshu 琴書 comes from the accompanying instrument, the yangqin 扬琴, which was formed during the Qianlong 乾隆 period (1736–1796) during the Qing Dynasty. The performers mainly sing and supplement this with narrations (J. Zhang 1984). Puyang Qinshu 濮陽琴書 is popular in the Puyang area that is on the border between Henan and Shandong provinces.

As for the Puyang Qinshu, in the Republican era, the studies and statistics are much simpler: Puyang Qinshu performers worshiped Quanzhen master QIU Changchun as the patriarch and belonged to the CHAI branch, one of the aforementioned four branches affiliated with the Longmen School; around the 1949 liberation, the relatively famous Qinshu performers were JIANG Hexiu 姜何修, ZHAO Jiaowen 趙教文, JING Yongfu 荊永福 (1922–1982), ZHU Yuanli 朱元立, MA Fengyun 馬鳳雲 and MA Shunqing 馬順卿 (*QYHB*, 2, p. 157; *QYHB*, 3, p. 93). They belonged to the He 何, Jiao 教, Yong 永 and Yuan 元 generations.

2.8. Yongcheng Da'nao

The name of this performing art comes from its instrument, *da'nao* 大鐃, which is usually used by a single person and is probably influenced by the Shandong Laozi. In the late-Qing and early Republic periods, the Da'nao genre was introduced to Yongcheng 永城

in Henan province by performer HAN Fengkui 韩鳳魁 (1862–1911), and then took root and flourished there. HAN adopted CHENG Xueshan 程學山 (1894–1960) as his disciple in Yongcheng and gave him the stage name Yuanfang 元方. Cheng had three disciples: MIAO Mingqing 苗明清, CHENG Mingyuan 程明元 and BIAN Mingkun 卞明坤 (*QYHB*, 3, pp. 32–34). In accordance with the Yuan 元 and Ming 明 generations in the lineage poem and the professional customs in local performing arts, we could presume that the successive order of Yongcheng Da'nao also belonged to that of the Quanzhen Longmen School.

We identified these eight local genres of the performing arts previously mentioned to have some kind of relationship with Quanzhen Taoism. Unlike the Taoist ballade and Shuoshu, other local performing arts emerged relatively late in time, mainly after the mid-Qing period. Because there is scarce historical documentation of these local arts, most of the performers we know, to date, were active in the first half of the 20th century, and most of their generation names were He 合, Jiao 教, Yong 永, Yuan 圓 and Ming 明. In regard to the characters that were used by their predecessors, we were unable to determined these, at present, due to the shortage of historical documents and oral accounts.

The reasons for the use of Quanzhen's institution by local performers are complex. The first reason to be taken into consideration is that the Quanzhen masters used the Taoist ballade to preach their doctrine during and after the foundation stage of Quanzhen Taoism. During the Jin 金 (1115–1234) and Yuan Dynasties, due to WANG Chongyang and his disciple, especially the Seven Veritables' painstaking effort, Quanzhen Taoism turned from an originally disclosed folk group into a national and institutional religious order that could compete with Zhengyi Taoism; at the same time, with regard to its method of propagation, Quanzhen Taoism paid special attention to local music and dance, which were popular during the Jin Dynasty, so as to be well-adapted to the local folk customs and attract public support (Z. Zhang 2011, pp. 113–15). Through this brief introduction, we can determined that these eight local performing arts have fused and influenced each other, for example, the Taoist ballade and the Zhuizi, the Shandong Laozi and the Yongcheng Danao. This influence may not only be in the form of performances, but also the institutions. The Taoist ballade clearly comes from Quanzhen, and, in turn, has influenced the other performing arts.

Secondly, some investigators have argued that the reason why local performers are affiliated with Taoism is closely connected to their social status in pre-modern society: "In the feudal society, to avoid being insulted or humiliated by the society, performers claim that they are descending from the lineage of immortals; born with natural air, walking in the three worlds (Heaven, Earth and Human World) and equipped with five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal and water), they claim Three Pures (Sanqing 三清) and Five Patriarchs (Wuzu 五祖) to be their ancestors" (*QYHB*, 2, p. 185). Even in the Republican era, the local artists' singing and narrating techniques were considered to be of a low standard and even difficult to be identified as one type of art: "a variety of people can be their audience, even women are regulars; most of the audience are the common people and the uncivilized soldiers who are trapped in though life and hard to hold their head high. So, a gentleman who is endowed with extraordinary talents and wealthy in knowledge or a westernized member of the Imperial Academy who can read English letters like 'A, B, C and D' would not go there" (L. Zhang 1936, p. 83).

During and prior to the Republican era, local performers indeed possessed an extremely low social status (L. Wang 1981; Me 2005). On the one hand, they were discriminated against as being uneducated; however, on the other hand, they mastered the performing arts that could entertain people. Spontaneously, they needed to justify the origin of their arts and Taoism became their first choice. Therefore, just as cited in the former paragraph, the performers claimed that they descended from the lineage of immortals and formed the Taoist orthodox teaching of "One Air (Yiqi 一氣) brings about Three Pures, Three Pures leads to Five Patriarchs, Five Patriarchs teaches Seven Veritables and Seven Veritables imparts Eight Lineages", in order to create their own sacred history. Most local

performers did not know more than their masters, or grand master in some cases; they quite clearly knew that they were the de facto successors of the Taoist immortals.

Lastly, the use of lineage poems is also a way for local performers to self-identify, and it is one of the most obvious signs of the close relationship between the performer's troupe and Quanzhen clergy. It not only expresses one's origin and transition, but also unites the master and disciple. Except for the storytellers who may have attended traditional private schools (*sishu* 私塾) for a few years, most performers were uneducated and had a low literacy level. The performers' education relied on their apprenticeships to their masters. Because the number of performers was small, each master took on fewer disciples, usually no more than ten, thus forming an extremely close relationship. This relationship was very similar to the master–disciple relationship of Quanzhen Taoists. Through the lineage poem, they could not establish only the generation between master and disciple, but could also identify with the genre of the performing arts to which they belonged.

To date, actors in Kunqu 昆曲 and other theatres also have their own lineage poems (Hu 2018); however, they are not those of the Quanzhen Longmen School. The phenomenon of the lineage poems of the Longmen School being used by the local performing troupes in Shandong and Henan provinces reflects the distinctive influence of Quanzhen Taoism, especially the Longmen School, in these two provinces. However, we should keep in mind that the Quanzhen influence is confined to the institutional organization; from the repertoire of Zhuizi (154 pieces in total), Shuoshu (73 pieces in total) and the Taoist ballade (65 pieces at least) preserved in the *Xiangguosi minzhong yule diaocha* (L. Zhang 1936, pp. 84–85, 104–105, 126–127), local actors preferred to perform and narrate popular legends and histories, especially the stories from the famous novel Sanguo yanyi 三國演義, which once mentioned a Taoist figure in the Taoist ballade *Hanxiangzi baishou* 韓湘子拜壽; however, it never dealt with Quanzhen teachings or practices. In other words, we may easily understand and categorize Confucian loyalty and filial piety, proselytized by the local performing arts; however, in the case of Quanzhen Taoism, in contrast with the so-called "Ch'üan-chen drama" of Yao Tao-chung (Yao 1980b) or the "Quanzhen plays" of David Hawkes (Hawkes 1981) in their respective studies on Quanzhen Taoism and the Yuan opera, we can easily find it institutionally replicated in the local performing arts.

3. Sacrificial Ceremony, the Acceptance of Disciples, and the Ever Spring Guild

Based on their strong social support for Quanzhen Taoism and emotional recognition of its identity, in the Republican period, various local performing arts recruited and taught their disciples in accordance with the *Hundred-Character Chart of Longmen School*, as previously shown, and, meanwhile, almost all genres performed the same ceremony for the sacrifice and acceptance of disciples, similar to those of Quanzhen Taoism. Moreover, for the purpose of survival in society, they set up the Ever Spring Guild to assist one another.

3.1. Sacrificial Ceremony in Honor of the Patriarch QIU

Because of their affiliation with Quanzhen Taoists, these performers worshiped their own Taoist patriarchs, such as QIU Changchun and LÜ Dongbin 呂洞賓: "on the birth- or death-days of their patriarch, every performer would offer money to hold a memorial meeting to worship their own patriarch, and simultaneously suspend their business to spend time on holding a bustling festival" (L. Zhang 1936, p. 77). Indeed, in addition to their own patriarch, several performers also presented other special sacrificial rules. Taking the magicians in the Republican period as an example, in addition to worshiping their patriarch LÜ Dongbin, they would "burn incense, paper money and candles to pay respects to the Heaven on the 15th day of every lunar month" (L. Zhang 1936, p. 195).

Among the sacrificial ceremonies performed by different performing art troupes, the most influential is of course that of the Longmen School. Prior to the 1949 liberation, different kinds of performers, such as the Pingci performers who practiced martial arts and acrobatics, the Zhuizi and performers who wandered around without settling down anywhere, all assembled at Qiuzu temple 丘祖廟, located in South Mount Taishan temple street

in Kaifeng, every year on the birth- (the 19th day of the 7th lunar month) and death-days (the 19th day of the 12th lunar month) of the patriarch QIU (*QYHB*, 1, p. 60). Even the Patriarch Qiu temple fair attracted local artists from other provinces; according to the statements of XU Zhifa 徐治法, a Zhuizi performer from Fuyang county 阜陽縣 in Anhui 安徽 province: "In the past, people from Anhui province always came to Kaifeng to worship patriarch QIU on the 19th of the 7th lunar month" (*QYHB*, 1, p. 46). Indeed, in addition to the birth- and death-days, performers also visited the memorial tablet of the patriarch QIU during ordinary festivals to burn incense and prostrate themselves before the tablet (*QYHB*, 2, p. 253).

In the Republican era, according to the existing historical data, there were three leaders present during the sacrificial ceremony: the president (*huizhang* 會長), law-executor (*zhitangsi* 值堂司) and the manager (*zhuguan* 主管). The agendas of the sacrificial ceremony were: 1: worship the patriarch QIU Changchun; 2: preach ten precepts; 3: examine oneself before the patriarch and reflect on one's violation of precepts and the subsequent punished; 4: write a post (*xietie* 寫帖) for the new disciple; 5: "warm the birthday" (*nuanshou* 暖壽), that is, to express their sincerity, participants should burn incense and paper throughout the night and learn from each other by comparing their skills; and 6: prostrate oneself before the patriarch QIU Changchun, set off firecrackers and then end the sacrificial ceremony (Bianweihui 1995, pp. 509–11).

3.2. Disciple Initiation Rites

As previously mentioned, various local performing troupes associated themselves with the Longmen lineage, while during the actual transition, one performing troupe can be divided further into different branches, such as the ten branches of Taoist ballade performers, "ZENG 曾, CHAI 柴, YANG 楊, ZHANG 張, LIU 劉, GAO 高, QI 齊, LU 蘆, Sunzhao 孫趙 and Zhangzhao 張趙", and the eight branches of Henan Zhuizi: "Dazhang 大張, Xiaozhang 小張, Dahua 大花, Xiaohua 小花, SUN 孫, DONG 董, LIU 劉 and GAO 高." Out of the need for inheriting the traditions of performance and survival, local performers attached great importance to the master–disciple relationship and called the ceremony of initiating new disciples into the branch as "entry into the home" (*ru Jiamen* 入家門). The new performers could be formally identified only after participating in the disciple-initiation ceremony and, only after completing his apprenticeship could he then recruit and teach his own disciples. Otherwise, they would be labeled as an empty leg (*kongtui* 空腿) or wild breed (*yezhong* 野種) and were not allowed to make a living as a performing artist. In addition, other performers would not respect them and would even exclude them from their group by throwing away their performing instruments (*dian jiahuo* 掂傢伙) (*QYHB*, 3, pp. 205–7).

In fact, in order to be a Quanzhen cleric, formally accepted by both the Taoists and government, people had to undergo two separate rites of passage, ordination (*guanjin* 冠巾) and collective consecration (*shoujie* 受戒), of which the latter is more typical of Quanzhen Taoism (Goossaert 2007, pp. 140–52; Goossaert 2013, p. 36). During the ordination rite, one has to write a post, clearly showing his firm desire to leave the family (*chujia* 出家); during the collective consecration ceremony, at least eight famous Taoists serve as the guarantors and monitors witnessing the entire ceremony (L. Gao 2018, pp. 110–13, 149–53; Peng 2021, pp. 103–10). Similarly, when a local actor accepts a disciple, many of these factors appear in the rite and, more importantly, the frequent reference to and presence of Wang Chongyang and his famous disciples, the Seven Veritables, made the rite more similar to a Quanzhen initiation event. For example, when the Shandong Kuaishu performer GAO Yuanjun formally acknowledge QI Yongli as his master, he burned incense in front of the memorial tablet, "Heaven, earth, emperor, parents and master (Tian di jun qin shi 天地君親師)", located in the middle of the hall; he then prostrated himself before his master, listening to his master announcing: "I, a little Taoist priest in blue clothes, go down the hill under the immortal master's order; today is no other than an auspicious day, and I will transmit the Tao for the immortal master."[7] Some other local performing arts more obviously

evoke Quanzhen lore. For instance, when a Guangzhou Dagu troupe holds its ceremony for accepting new disciples, a new performer presents a special post of initiation (*baishi tie* 拜師貼) to his future master. Such a post of initiation often traces its sacred history during the introductory stage (*tietou* 貼頭):

> Since Pangu created the world from the chaos of the universe, heaven, earth, emperor, parents and master were the superiors;
>
> 混沌初開盤古分, 天地君親師為尊；
>
> Primordial Patriarch Hongjun laozu set up the great Longmen and dispatched WANG Chongyang to come down to Earth to save and enlighten the ordinary people;
>
> 鴻鈞老祖立下大龍門, 差派王重陽下凡來度人；
>
> WANG Chongyang adopted one hundred disciples in total, and seven of them attained Tao: QIU, LIU, TAN, MA, HAO, WANG and SUN.
>
> 徒弟一百整, 得道有七人：邱、劉、譚、馬、郝、王、孫.
>
> Having arrived at the Red Cloud Temple, they finally settled down there;
>
> 到了紅雲寺, 師徒才安身；
>
> Later, WANG Chongyang died and patriarch QIU kneeled down in front of the gate (of Red Cloud Temple);
>
> 貼生喪了命, 邱祖去跪門；
>
> The (seven) disciples searched all over for the Zhouzu ground, and then safely intered their master;
>
> 尋找周祖地, 葬安師父身；
>
> Having observed a one-hundred-day mourning period for their master, they then set up their schools separately;
>
> 守孝百天整, 各立各的門；
>
> Patriarch QIU created the Longmen School, and was therefore called the Old Superior Worthy.
>
> 邱祖龍門派, 長稱老先尊. (QYHB, 3, p. 38)

In this brief introduction, Honjun Laozu is not a Quanzhen immortal, but the supreme deity in the *Investiture of the Gods* (Fengshen yanyi 封神演義). Local artists often sang and narrated this famous divine novel (Meulenbeld 2015). In the Republican era, local art performers' initiation post for acknowledging someone as a master also included the main text, regulations, performers' one-hundred-generation characters, the signature of the guarantor and recommender masters and the date. We should note that the one-hundred-generation poem is the lineage poem of the Longmen School in Quanzhen Taoism (*QYHB*, 3, p. 228).

However, the acknowledgment of someone as the master is not performed at random; it also involves many ritualistic and economic requirements. For example, the master-acknowledgment ceremony requirements for a Henan Zhuizi performer are as follows:

1. Parents, brothers and sisters cannot be acknowledged as the master, only another non-kin person can.
2. When acknowledging the master, it is necessary to have recommender (*yinjianshi* 引薦師) and Taoist (*daoshi* 道師) masters.
3. On that day, one should invite all the participants to a feast to let them know that you have acknowledged someone as your master.
4. It is necessary to write a master-acknowledgment post and invite someone to serve as the guarantor master (zuobaoshi 作保師).
5. Having finished the three-year apprenticeship, one should perform the Zhuizi for one year for the master and donate all the earnings to the master as a repayment (L. Zhang 1936, p. 74).

Out of these five requirements, the 3rd and 5th items are derived from performing troupes' common habitus; the 2nd and 4th items have a distinct ritual significance: the presence of the recommender, Taoist and guarantor masters shows that the master-acknowledging ceremony of Quanzhen Taoism has an obvious effect on the local performing arts.

More typical is the master-acknowledging ceremony of Shandong Laozi. According to its customs, in addition to the three masters previously mentioned and his fellow apprentices, during the ceremony, one should also submit to the disciple post (*mensheng tie* 門生貼) and perform a salutation to the master; later, the master would give him a stage name, according to the Longmen lineage poem, add his name to the disciple register, teach him the rules and preach the moral rules concerning acting.[8] Based on these main factors and procedures, we can easily observe that the performer's ceremony for acknowledging someone as the master is, to a certain degree, similar to the ordination and collective consecration rites of the Quanzhen Longmen School.[9]

3.3. The Ever Spring Guild

In the former section, we mentioned that local performing actors hold a sacrificial ceremony for the patriarchs QIU Changchun and LÜ Dongbin on a special date. In reality, these Quanzhen celebrities played a role in the local actors' daily lives. For example, LÜ Dongbin was viewed as the patron god of prostitutes for his legendary flirting with a white peony (Katz 1996; P. Liu 1996), and another Quanzhen patriarch, LIU Chuxuan, was treated similarly because he was said to cultivate himself in a brothel (Qin 2023). In regard to QIU Changchun, he was perceived as the founder and patron god of jade craftsmen and their guild, which we refer to again later in the study, because people believed that QIU Changchun taught the poor to transform stone into jade (Y. Li 2002, pp. 732–733). Whether prostitutes or jade craftsmen, they were considered low social classes, and by founding an association or a guild, they could unite and support each other in the face of economic depression or social changes. Likewise, this also occurred in the local performing arts during the Republican era.

During the Republican period, two main types of performers' guilds existed in Henan province: one was the Three Sovereigns Guild (Sanhuang hui 三皇會), where blind and Sanxianshu 三弦書 (narrations and singing with *sanxian* as an accompaniment) performers dominated, and the other was the Ever Spring Guild, which was dominated by Taoist ballades and story-telling performers. In his book, the *Investigation of Popular Entertainment in the Xiangguo Temple*, ZHANG Lüqian 張履謙, on the basis of the sociological survey data from Republican Kaifeng, stated that the Ever Spring Guild was a popular organization consisting of people who told stories, sang Taoist ballades and Zhuizi, performed conjuring tricks and performed acrobatics. In 1936, the president of the Ever Spring Guild was the Taoist ballade performer MA Lichun and the vice president was Zhuizi performer ZHANG Mingliang (L. Zhang 1936, p. 73).

In fact, the Ever Spring Guild, during the Republican era, was not established only in Kaifeng, but also in Zhengzhou 鄭州 (Henan province), Ji'nan and Peking. Moreover, participants were not limited to the local performing arts discussed in this paper, but also assumed a wide variety of popular occupations; in his *Stories of rivers and lakes* (Jianghu congtan 江湖叢談), LIAN Kuoru 連闊如 stated that all performers and retailers could join in the Ever Spring Guild, for example, people who told fortunes by reading faces; performed Chinese martial arts and acrobatics; sold liniments, eye ointments, plasters, medicine for toothaches, afrodyn, knives and scissors, needles and combs; performed and sold conjuring tricks; sang Dagu Shu; told story recited to the rhythm of bamboo clappers; commented on the histories; performed a comic dialog and pedicures; sold medicine for simian sarcoma, other special medicines and folk prescriptions; healed venereal diseases; performed with monkeys and other animals; performed raree shows; sold medical sugars and ratsbane; and performed the circus.[10]

By listing the popular occupations, we could observe without any difficulties that these people lived at the grassroot level of society. As they faced daily pressures from their

difficult lives, they needed to set up or join in the Ever Spring Guild to assist each other. Similar to the Ever Spring Guild, they also united and collectively created a legendary tradition about the "thirteen boards" (*shisankuai ban* 十三塊板), which assembled all the disadvantaged and local artists to form a family, "whether knowing each other or not, once heard someone saying 'let us see on the thirteen boards', they will treat each other as a family" (*QYHB*, 2, p. 251). To put it another way, to "assist each other" or "treat each other as a family" is the practical reason for founding or entering the Ever Spring Guild.

The Ever Spring Guild had a president and a vice-president. Both of them were elected by the performers. "The president should have rich experiences, earn more money than the others, behave honestly, have the courage to solve tough problems, work hard, be willing to sacrifice himself and be able to mediate disturbance and dispute. Only in this way, people would respect him, and move under his orders when thing happens." Moreover, the presidency had no limitations, "only under the condition of having big faults, incurring the wrath of the public or resigning voluntarily, the president could be changed." The main responsibilities of the president were divided into two categories: internal and external. Internal responsibilities included accommodating performers when hosting temple fairs, establishing performance areas and punishing performers who violated guild regulations, etc.; the external responsibilities included assisting the local gentry to host temple fairs and markets, taking care of routine temple-fair matters and maintaining performers' economic interests (Lian, pp. 4–7).

It should be noted that the Ever Spring Guild was an unofficial, fluid organization. As it was freely composed of local performers, it was quite weak at practically disciplining local artists. Taking Xiangguo temple, for example, in the Republican era, "the Ever Spring Guild just drew up the guild regulations and conventions and took care of routine recruiting matters. As for the problems of choosing performing area or performing what kind of genre, the Guild is totally laisser-faire: performers can randomly perform or sing what they want." However, when addressing the collective crisis, for example, in 1927, when General FENG Yuxiang 馮玉祥, in the name of rectifying social order, planned to prohibit the popular arts, such as telling stories and singing, performers of various local arts could voluntarily assemble and help each other (*QYHB*, 1, p. 229). In other words, the Ever Spring Guild, founded in the name of patriarch QIU Changchun, formed a common identity and served as a clarion call for them to unite and organize collective activities.

Whether from the sacrificial ceremony, master-acknowledgment ritual or Ever Spring Guild in the name of QIU Changchun, we can easily identify Quanzhen lore in the local performing arts. Moreover, we can alternatively claim that Quanzhen Taoism, as a completely institutionalized religious order, is the model to imitate for local performing artists. However, we should note that, at the same time, imitation is never duplication; when adopting the Quanzhen institution, local artists did make some deviations and variations for their individual needs.

4. Deviation and Variation

The transmission of the Longmen lineage poem into the local performing arts is closely related to the preaching methods of Quanzhen Taoism. At the beginning of Quanzhen Taoism, Taoists often preached by singing Taoist ballades (Z. Zhang 2008; Liao 2022). It was during this preaching process that Quanzhen Taoists may have brought their way of teaching into the local performing arts troupe. As a result, the performers of Taoist ballades also used the Longmen lineage poem and, eventually, they expanded from Taoist ballades to other performing arts (*QYHB*, 3, p. 13).

However, while they adopted the Quanzhen Taoist lineage poem as an institutional form, the local artists considerably changed Quanzhen Taoist history and rewrote the Longmen lineage poem with different characters. This may have been due to the poor education of the performers. Although they might have known or heard about the immortals and legends of some Quanzhen patriarchs, they did not precisely understand Quanzhen doctrines, ideals or its history of transmission, which was only accessible to Quanzhen clerics.

Additionally, living a difficult lives, local performers of different generations might become sworn brothers or get married, which also disrupts the regular successive sequence of the original Longmen lineage poem. Therefore, compared to the Quanzhen institution, and if we take that as a standard, the organizational structure of the local performing arts presents many deviances and variances; thus, they seem to be similar, but are actually quite different.

4.1. Quanzhen History

We already stated that the Quanzhen history we know, to date, is constructed by Quanzhen adherents, especially Taoists of the third generation, to identify the patriarchs existing before WANG Chongyang and classifying the Seven Veritables as a group (Marsone 2001; G. Zhang 2008; W. Zhao 2010). Whether the history is true or not, we must perceive it as a fact that Quanzhen Taoism indeed created a sacred history, namely, the Five Patriarchs and the Seven Veritables, and this was widely accepted as the standardized formula by Quanzhen Taoists from the mid-Yuan dynasty onwards (Jing 2012). Since all the local performing arts we discussed here affiliate themselves with the Longmen School, when tracing their own history, they also needed to deal with the origin and development of Quanzhen Taoism. However, just as we showed in other sections of this paper, most of their narratives are quite different from the standard Quanzhen history during the Yuan dynasty, where many Quanzhen immortals and masters are replaced by mythical and imaginary Taoist figures, or many non-Quanzhen immortals and masters only appear in Quanzhen history without providing any explanations.

Taking the origin of Guangzhou Dagu as an example, according to local performers' oral accounts, "(Guangzhou Dagu) was first performed by the earliest Taoist ancestor Hongjun laozu, then he hands down his knowledge and skill to ZHANG Guolao 張果老, one of the Eight Immortals (Baxian 八仙), XU Maogong 徐茂公 of the Tang Dynasty and WANG Chongyang of later dynasty, etc." (*QYHB*, 3, pp. 37–38). WANG Chongyang had one hundred disciples and seven of them attained the Tao, namely, the "Seven Veritables": QIU, LIU, TAN, MA, etc. Then, QIU Changchun became the successor and continued to recruit and teach eight people, GAO, GUI, CHAI and ZHANG, etc., namely, the "Eight Lineages". This was the outcome of the saying "Seven Veritables, Eight Lineages and One Hundred Branches", and from where the introduction of the post for acknowledging someone as the master originated. Hongjun laozu, ZHANG Guolao, XU Maogong and WANG Chongyang are either Taoist immortals or real Taoist figures; however, their successive transitions from master to disciple in Guangzhou Dagu were very different from the various hagiographical accounts presented in Quanzhen literature.

We can more clearly observe this fabrication from the aforementioned communal pantheon that recounts their origins and is prevalent in various local performing arts: they are all affiliated with the lineage of immortals, descending from the natural air, and taking Three Pures and Five Patriarchs as their ancestral root; Three Pures refers to Yuanshi Tianzun 元始天尊, Lingbao Tianzun 靈寶天尊 and Taishang Laojun 太上老君; Five Patriarchs refers to Donghua dijun LI Tieguai 東華帝君李鐵拐, Jinghua dijun LÜ Chunyang 警化帝君呂純陽, Shunhua dijun CAO Guojiu 順化帝君曹國舅, Chuandao dijun ZHONGLI Quan 傳道帝君鐘離權 and Fuzuo dijun LIU Haichan 浮佐帝君劉海蟾, all belonging to the Eight Immortals; In the Song Dynasty, CAO Guojiu was imprisoned as he illegally favored his guilty brother. After his release, CAO traveled to a mountain to cultivate Tao, named his branch the "Chongyang pai" 重陽牌, of which Chongwang means a return to life, and transmitted "Chongyang pai" to seven disciples, namely, QIU, LIU, TAN and MA, etc.; then, the seven disciples set up eight branches in the local performing arts, such as Longmen and Huashan. This was their sacred tradition: "One Air brings about Three Pures, Three Pures leads to Five Patriarchs, Five Patriarchs teaches Seven Veritables and Seven Veritables imparts Eight Branches" (*QYHB*, 2, p. 185). However, this complete and standard history, re-written by local performers, is a hybrid; WANG Chongyang, the

founder of Quanzhen Taoism and a real figure in history, is excluded for no reason and exists as a branch name.

Compared to classical Quanzhen history, such as the *Record of the True Line of Transmission of the Golden Lotus School* (Jinlian zhengzong ji 金蓮正宗記, DZ173) and *Portraits and Biographies Concerning the Origin of the Master of the True Line of Transmission of the Golden Lotus School* (Jinlian zhengzong xianyuan xiangzhuan 金蓮正宗仙源象傳, DZ174), we can easily observe that there is a great difference between Quanzhen history compiled by Quanzhen Taoists themselves and the sacred history recounted by local performers. As previously mentioned, the reason why these popular performers refer to Quanzhen history is because they want to borrow and make use of the reputation of Quanzhen Taoism in the Jin and Yuan dynasties, and then construct their own truth and orthodoxy. From of this consideration, they inherited the Taoist pantheon, such as Three Pures and Five Patriarchs, already existing in Taoist tradition, and, alternatively, transplanted and grafted this pantheon into their own traditions and branches, such as the ten branches of the Taoist ballades and the eight branches of Henan Zhuizi. In short, they changed the history unanimously accepted by Quanzhen Taoists and constructed their own sacred history by using Quanzhen masters and legends to describe their origins according to their own circumstances and needs.

On first sight, these variations in or deviations from the standard history of Quanzhen patriarchal succession may seem random or capricious, lacking the necessary interpretations of these changes from the performer's part. However, these deviant histories of the local performers may stem from their local circumstances and needs. For instance, Hongju laozu might be more familiar to the locals than QIU, LIU, TAN and MA. In other words, these local ballad singers and storytellers were trying to adapt to the tastes and preferences of their audiences. Their reconstructed histories, though deviating from standard Quanzhen history, were not random at all but, rather, they were reasonable and calculated adaptations.

We also need to consider another possibility, as previously stated: the identity exchange between Quanzhen Taoists and local performers in late-Imperial China. Many Quanzhen Taoists eventually became professional performers and, vice versa, many performers were household Quanzhen Taoists. According to the fieldwork of some contemporary scholars, this was indeed the case. Stephen Jones' research, for example, determined that, when clerics were expelled from the temples or returned to lay life, they took on the professions of performers or trained lay people in the arts (Jones 2011). This was not deception; it was a real lineage succession within which lifestyle and profession evolved. From this, we can speculate that a similar transmission may have existed in the northern society in the Republican period. However, in reviewing the local sources of Shandong and Henan that we have observed, to date, concerning the Republican period, we did not obtain any obvious evidence.

4.2. Birth-/Death-Days of Patriarch QIU Changchun and His Disciples

During the Republican era, the Ever Spring Guild, voluntarily organized by all kinds of local performers, would regularly hold gatherings to commemorate their common patriarch, QIU Changchun. Undoubtedly, patriarch QIU's birth- and death-days became the most important dates for gatherings. However, the dominant saying in Republican performing arts genres is that the birthday of patriarch QIU is on the 19th day of the 7th lunar month and the death date is the 19th day of the 12th lunar month; according to Quanzhen history, neither of these two dates conforms to historical fact. In fact, QIU's birthday is on the 19th day of the 1st lunar month and the 9th day of the 7th lunar month. The underlying cause for the change in the sacrifice date is undecipherable, at present. This may be because the two dates were well-established by local market fairs or temple festivals. Moreover, the two dates were the birth or death dates of an important performer in history and were then used to mark the sacrificial rituals of the ancestors of the genre.

At the same time, for their own needs, local performers made some changes to patriarch QIU's disciples. QIU Changchun adopted five disciples in total: the first sang opera,

the second told stories, the third wove bamboo baskets (*luo* 籮), the fourth repaired winnowing pans (*boji* 簸箕) and the fifth repaired bamboo baskets (*QYHB*, 2, p. 251). However, according to *The History of the Taoist School founded by (Qiu) Changchun* (Changchun daojiao yuanliu 長春道教源流), none of QIU's 48 first-generation disciples engaged in any of these five kinds of occupations (M. Chen 1975). The most reasonable explanation for this alteration is that these five, disciple craftsmen attributed to patriarch QIU were representatives of the people who actually lived in grassroot society and joined the Ever Spring Guild. Similar patterns can also be observed in jade craft guilds in Peking and in other North China cities and townships where local jade craftsmen and merchants adopted QIU Changchun as their patron god; however, traditional Quanzhen history never mentions QIU as having anything to do with jade craft or business. Local circumstances and needs are crucial to these apparent or random choices in reshaping history.

4.3. Lineage Poem and the Successive Relationship of Master and Disciple

In the Republican era, numerous local artists named their disciples in accordance with the lineage poem of the Longmen School of Quanzhen Taoism; however, with regards to each character, numerous differences between the lineage poems known to performers of different genres and that of the Quanzhen Longmen School recorded in the *General Register of Lineages Revealed by Various Veritables*, which are presented in the following chart one by one, are evident (Table 3):

Table 3. Lineage poems of different genres.

School/Branch	派诗 **Lineage Poem**	
白雲觀 White Cloud Monastery	道德通玄靜 真常守太清 一陽來複本 合教永圓明 至理宗誠信 崇高嗣法興 世景榮惟懋 希微衍自寧 (Oyanagi 1934, p. 97; K. Wang 2009, p. 65)	
	DAO DE TONG XUAN JING YI YANG LAI FU BEN ZHI LI ZONG CHENG XIN SHI JING RONG WEI MAO	ZHEN CHANG SHOU TAI QING HE JIAO YONG YUAN MING CHONG GAO SI FA XING XI WEI YAN ZI NING
道情 Taoist ballade	道德通玄靜 真常守太清 一陽來複本 合教永圓明 至理宗誠信 崇高嗣法興 世景榮惟懋 希微衍自寧 (*QYHB*, 3, p. 226)	
	DAO DE TONG XUAN JING YI YANG LAI FU BEN ZHI LI ZONG CHENG XIN SHI JING RONG WEI MAO	ZHEN CHANG SHOU TAI QING HE JIAO YONG YUAN MING CHONG GAO SI FA XING XI WEI YAN ZI NING
河南墜子 (張明亮) Henan Zhuizi (Zhang Mingliang)	道德通玄靜 真常守 泰 清 一陽來複本 合教永 元 明 至理宗誠信 崇高嗣法興 世景榮 為 懋 希 征 衍自寧 (L. Zhang 1936, reprint in 1989, p. 75)	
	DAO DE TONG XUAN JING YI YANG LAI FU BEN ZHI LI ZONG CHENG XIN SHI JING RONG WEI MAO	ZHEN CHANG SHOU TAI QING HE JIAO YONG YUAN MING CHONG GAO SI FA XING XI WEI YAN ZI NING

Table 3. *Cont.*

School/Branch	派诗 **Lineage Poem**	
河南墜子 (柴門) Henan Zhuizi (Chai branch)	道德通玄靜 正乾 守太清 義陽來 富 本 合教永 元 明 志利忠 誠信 慶 高 四 法興 習景雍偉茂 勝玉衍子平 (*QYHB*, 3, p. 206)	
	DAO DE TONG XUAN JING **YI** YANG LAI **FU** BEN **ZHI LI ZHONG** CHENG XIN **XI JING YONG WEI MAO**	**ZHENG QIAN** SHOU TAI QING HE JIAO YONG **YUAN** MING **QING** GAO **SI** FA XING **SHENG YU YAN ZI PING**
評詞說書 Pingci Shuoshu	道德通玄靜 南 常守太清 一陽來 富 本 何 教永 遠 明 至 禮忠 誠信 崇高嗣 發 興 世景榮惟懋 希微衍自寧 (*QYHB*, 1, pp. 60–61)	
	DAO DE TONG XUAN JING YI YANG LAI **FU** BEN ZHI **LI ZHONG** CHENG XIN SHI JING RONG WEI MAO	**NAN** CHANG SHOU TAI QING **HE** JIAO YONG **YUAN** MING CHONG GAO SI **FA** XING XI WEI YAN ZI NING
山東落子 Shandong Laozi	道德 同先慶 鎮鍵 守太清 意言 來 富 本 和 教永 元 明 志禮忠誠 信 從 高 士發 興 始宗龍為廟 西湖岩子寧 (Li Li 2016)[11]	
	DAO DE **TONG XIAN QING** **YI YAN** LAI **FU** BEN Z**HI LI ZHONG** CHENG XIN **SHI ZONG LONG WEI MIAO**	**ZHEN JIAN** SHOU TAI QING **HE** JIAO YONG **YUAN** MING **CONG** GAO **SHI FA** XING **XI HU YAN ZI NING**
光州大鼓 Guangzhou Dagu	道德通玄靖 遵 常守太清 陰陽來複本 和 教永 元 明 智禮忠 誠信 崇高 賽發 興 詩經 榮 易茂 喜為宴子林 (*QYHB*, 3, p. 40)	
	DAO DE TONG XUAN JING **YIN** YANG LAI FU BEN **ZHI LI ZHONG** CHENG XIN **SHI JING** RONG **YI MAO**	**ZUN** CHANG SHOU TAI QING **HE** JIAO YONG YUAN MING CHONG GAO **SAI FA** XING **XI WEI YAN ZI LIN**

From this chart, we can observe that there are numerous differences between the characters; however, their pronunciations are almost the same. There are three possible reasons for the differences in the lineage poems. The first is that different versions of the Longmen lineage poems are created during the process of transmission. Even within the Longmen lineage, varying versions of the lineage poems have existed since the mid-to-late Ming dynasty. Various Quanzhen Longmen histories also recorded various genealogical characters among the local Longmen lineage and sub-lineages in different regions in north and central China (Esposito 2004; G. Zhang 2011; X. Zhang 2013; F. Zhang 2018). The second is that, during the process of transmission, due to the accents in different regions and the lack of written records, lineage poems can easily change during their dissemination, with similar pronunciations, but different characters, for example, the characters Zhi 芝/ 治 and Li 禮/ 理 in the names of Zhuizi performers in Xiangguo temple, previously mentioned (W. Guo 2017; Liu and Gao 2020). The third is the inadequate understanding of the Taoist doctrine and philosophical meanings by the performers, for example, the phrase " 希微衍自寧", which means "it is in what is held and subtle that one finds peace within oneself" (Herrou 2005, p. 316), in the poem of the White Cloud Monastery's character is expressed as " 西湖岩子寧" in Shandong Laozi and " 喜為宴子林" in Guangzhou Dagu, none of which can be understood or explained by local performers of these two genres. The words XI 希, WEI 微 and NING 寧 all frequently appear in the *Daodejing* 道德經, the oldest and most famous Taoist text. According to Yoshioka Yoshihiro, lineage poems can disclose the lineage's independence and doctrinal differences and express the lineage founder's understanding of his own enlightenment (Yoshioka 1979, p. 231). Facing the status quo, despite the similar pronunciations, the doctrinal differences and philosophical meanings are getting lost in translation.

However, when it comes to different branches using the same lineage poem, things becomes much more complicated: performers in the same generation can belong to different branches; performers in different generations can become brothers or can even marry each other. In other words, although local performers have their own stage name, in strict accordance with the lineage poem, they can also easily break this order of succession. Thus, "when trying to find out a performer's successive relation, we should not only know his stage name, but also ask his background; only in this way, could we then determine to which generation, which branch and which lineage he belongs" (Ma 1989, p. 131).

Local artists constructed their own sacred history by virtue of Quanzhen Taoism and, at the same time, changed parts of it according to their practical needs and personal understanding of it. Based on these statements, we can argue that, in the process of imitating the Quanzhen Taoist institution, the local performing arts, more or less, deviated and varied from tradition. From this arbitrariness, we can sense the local artists' desire to improve their social status and efforts to institutionalize their organization. In other words, this "seemingly alike but actually different" concept is exactly what popular performers present in their pursuit of institutional charisma issuing forth from Quanzhen Taoism.

5. Conclusions

In the Republican era, and possibly as early as the mid-Qing dynasty, when the majority of local performing arts emerged in China, out of the need to improve and upgrade one's social status, various local performing arts extensively borrowed and imitated the Quanzhen Taoist institution, including the theatrical branches, relationship of master and disciple and sacrificial and master-acknowledgment ceremonies, from which we can easily discover and identify the influence of Quanzhen Taoism. However, this imitation or borrowing is not achieved in a precise fashion, but with deviations and variations to different degrees, with some aspects becoming extremely different from the original concept: Quanzhen Taoism is more an ideal than a reality. In other words, Quanzhen Taoism greatly influences the local performing arts because of its the institutional charisma, while, during its flow into the other popular culture traditions, Quanzhen history was also considerably changed or reconstructed by local performers.

Indeed, taking the local performing arts as an example to describe the flow of institutional charisma is an interesting and important subject in Quanzhen studies[12]. Just as we showed in the case studies conducted by LAI Chi-tim 黎志添 on Guangdong Taoism and LI Dahua 李大華 on Hong Kong Taoism, Quanzhen is a tradition with a long history and high reputation; therefore, local Taoist sects were eager to assimilate and incorporate certain aspects (Lai 2007; D. Li 2018). At present, the Quanzhen Taoist tradition is still alive as the field research conducted in Hunan province indicates that a local Taoist sect in the Yuxu Gong 玉虛宮 in Xinhua 新化 county utilizes religious names while performing the liturgy (Tian 2023). However, on the basis of all these regional and case studies and by describing the transformations of the Quanzhen institution, we can reconsider the following two questions.

First, the place of Quanzhen Taoism in popular traditions. Rolf Stein argued that there is a "ceaseless dialectical movement of coming and going" between Taoism and other popular traditions:

> The priests of the great religions willingly adopt popular elements and adapt them to their system and nomenclature. Inversely, when popular milieux are confronted with one or more of the great religions, they easily fall subject to the prestige of the latter, and they too proceed to assimilate, make identifications, and become syncretic; or they may even replace old traditional forms with new ones borrowed from a great religion because these have more prestige. (Stein 1979, pp. 53–54)

Undoubtedly, from the description and analysis presented in the above-three sections of this paper, we can observe that this kind of dialectical movement is precisely what occurred between Quanzhen Taoism and the local performing arts in the Republican era.

However, it is worth noting that, until the Republican era, Quanzhen Taoism was established as a legal and complete institution for over seven hundred years. Therefore, in its interaction with the local performing arts, Quanzhen Taoism mainly focused on its institutional output; on the contrary, the local performing arts prioritized the imitation and absorption of the Quanzhen institution. In other words, by virtue of its unmatchable institutional charisma, Quanzhen Taoism dominated this interaction and considerably changed the popular culture diffused into quasi-institutional traditions. Therefore, compared to other types of popular cultural traditions, we can argue that Quanzhen Taoism plays a dominant role in society and exists as a powerful tradition.

Second, the transmission of Quanzhen Taoism in local society.

From extant Quanzhen documents, the main way to transmit Tao is the secret formulae (*mijue* 密訣) passed from master to disciple, and the main locale for transmitting Tao is monasteries and temples. Additionally, around these monasteries and temples, Quanzhen Taoism can organize a series of lay groups and guilds cultivating Tao, thus spreading Quanzhen teachings to local societies. However, in their pursuit of institutional charisma, lay groups and guilds can, on the one hand, imitate the Quanzhen institution and, on the other hand, make some appropriate adjustments and alterations, so as to survive and spread themselves in society.

Judging from the local performing arts during the Republican era, we understand that this newly adapted path for transmission, even though the succession from master to disciple remains fundamental and necessary, is not related to Quanzhen monasteries and temples: it has deviated from Quanzhen Taoism and even lost its original religious meaning. Local performers can still use the lineage poem to name their disciples; however, as for the religious or philosophical meanings of the poem itself, none of the performers we encountered in the documents or investigated in reality could explain, or even be told by their masters how to explain, them. These facts, possibly slightly frustrating for a Quanzhen scholar at first sight, still provide solid and concrete evidence of Quanzhen Taoism's enduring legacy in society and culture in late-Imperial and early Republican China.

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Notes

1 In 1927, Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 abolished temples in Henan, expelled monks and turned Xiangguo Temple into a market, where lots of performers came to live and perform. (Zhong 1995).

2 For a description of oral accounts and its importance in religious studies, see (Welch 1967, chap. IX, X, XI).

3 See the Shandong Laozi.

4 A single-headed hand drum with body made from a bamboo tube, used as an accompanying instrument in Daoqing narrative singing.

5 There are much research on Taoist ballade, see (Wu 1997; Ye 1975, pp. 625–89; Idema 2016). On the definition of Taoist ballade and its connotation, see also Zhu Quan 朱權, *Taihe zhengyin pu* 太和正音譜. 1:42a

6 About Xu Liping's performance and transmission, also see (Li 2016).

7 小小道童身穿藍, 我奉仙師下高山. 今逢黃道是吉日, 我替仙師把道傳. (Jiang 2009, p. 126)

8 *QYHB*, 2, p. 156. About the performing rules and acting morality, see *Zhongguo quyizhi henan juan*, pp. 506–507.

9 About the Quanzhen rites of ordination and collective consecration, see (Y. Chen 2003, pp. 21–27; L. Gao 2018, pp. 105–10).

10 算卦相面的, 打把式卖艺的, 卖刀疮药的, 卖眼药的, 卖膏药的, 卖牙疼药的, 卖壮药的, 卖刀剪的, 卖针的, 卖梳篦的, 变戏法的, 卖戏法的, 唱大鼓书的, 唱竹板书的, 说评书的, 说相声的, 修脚的, 卖猴子药的, 卖药子的, 卖偏方的, 治花柳的, 耍猴儿的, 玩动物的, 拉洋片的, 卖药糖的, 卖耗子药的, 跑马戏的等等. (Lian 2010, p. 4).

11 In our fieldwork, we find that the lineage poem recorded by Xu Liping, under the name of xueyi menhu 學藝門戶, is another version, which is as follows: 道德同先庆 镇健守太清意彦来副本 和教永元明 知礼忠成信 从高士法兴始总龙委庙 西湖岩字宁 DAO DE TONG XIAN QING ZHEN JIAN SHOU TAI QING YI YAN LAI FU BEN HE JIAO YONG YUAN MING ZHI LI ZHONG CHENG XIN CONG GAO SHI FA XING SHI ZONG LONG WEI MIAO XI HU YAN ZI NING

12 About other similar research subjects in Quanzhen Taoism, see (Dong 2003, pp. 578–611; Gao 1997, p. 128; Jones 2010, pp. 85, 88–89, 131–32, 147, 168–69).

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Article

Suggestions on the Revision of *the Great Dictionary of Taoism*

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Abstract: *The Great Dictionary of Taoism*, published by Huaxia Publishing House in 1994 and compiled by the Chinese Taoist Association and Suzhou Taoist Association, is the first comprehensive reference book on Taoism in the world. The dictionary has provided invaluable assistance for scholars of Taoism. However, in the last three decades, with the flourishing research on the language of Taoist literature, the inadequacies in *the Great Dictionary of Taoism* have gradually become apparent. Therefore, a systematic revision of this dictionary is necessary. Based on a selection of 700 typical entries with obvious problems from *the Great Dictionary of Taoism*, this paper conducts a detailed study of their errors from five key areas: entries, meanings, definitions, documentary evidence, and convention. By providing examples and proposing correctional suggestions, the paper aims to provide a necessary reference for the revision of *the Great Dictionary of Taoism*. *The Great Dictionary of Taoism* serves as a vital link between the sacred world and the secular society in Taoism, and this study will help Taoist priests, believers, and researchers accurately understand complex Taoist ideologies and practice patterns. It is significant for the inheritance and promotion of Taoist culture.

Keywords: *the Great Dictionary of Taoism*; entry; meaning; definition; documentary evidence; convention

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1. Introduction

The Great Dictionary of Taoism (*Daojiao da cidian*, 道教大辭典, referred to as *Dictionary*) (Chinese Taoist Association and Suzhou Taoist Association 1994, referred to as Chinese and Suzhou 1994) is the first comprehensive reference book on Taoism in the world. Based on Taoist scriptures, the dictionary comprises commonly used Taoist nouns, terms, and phrases as entries, with about 20,000 entries and nearly three million words in total. *Dictionary* serves as a vital link between the sacred world and the secular society in Taoism and holds great significance for Taoist priests, believers, and researchers to fully comprehend complex Taoist ideologies and practice patterns, as well as to inherit and promote the cultural heritage of Taoism. The publication of *Dictionary* marked a significant milestone in the history of compiling Taoist dictionaries in China and has greatly facilitated the study of Taoism. *Dictionary* is irreplaceable, although several other Taoist dictionaries have been published subsequently, such as Hu Fuchen's 胡孚琛 *Great Dictionary of Chinese Taoism* (*Zhonghua daojiao da cidian* 中華道教大辭典) (Hu 1995), Zhong Zhaopeng's 鍾肇鵬 *Small Dictionary of Taoism* (*Daojiao xiao cidian* 道教小辭典) (Z. Zhong 2010), and Ji Hongzhong's 吉宏忠 *Great Taoist Dictionary* (*Daojiao da cidian* 道教大辭典) (Ji 2020), and it remains the largest one with the most entries to date.

One of the major problems in China's lexicographical work is the long-time lack of revisions and updates for many dictionaries (Linguistics Research Group of the National Office for Philosophy and Social Sciences 2021, p. 9). Zhao Zhenduo 趙振鐸, a renowned lexicographer, emphasizes that if a dictionary has been in use for a decade or longer, it is crucial to release a revised edition (Zhao 2020, p. 236). Over the past 30 years, Taoist studies have experienced rapid development, particularly in the flourishing research on

the language of Taoist literature. Under this circumstance, the inadequacies of *Dictionary* have gradually come to light, and therefore, systematic revisions should be put on the agenda as soon as possible.

As researchers studying the language of Taoist literature, we have frequently read and consulted *Dictionary* for reference in recent years, and we have noticed errors and omissions in *Dictionary*. To our knowledge, there has been no scholarly discussion on this topic. Based on a selection of 700 typical entries with obvious problems from *Dictionary*, we conduct a detailed study of their errors from five aspects: entries (including items established beyond the scope of dictionary entries, entries exceeding the specialized scope of Taoist dictionaries, and omissions of entries), meanings (including omissions of meanings, meanings exceeding the specialized scope of Taoist dictionaries, and inappropriate division or conflation of meanings), definitions (including mistakes, inaccuracies, and redundancies in definitions), documentary evidence (including insufficient or lack of documentary evidence, inconsistency between definition and documentary evidence, documentary evidence outside of Taoist scriptures, inconsistency between entry and documentary evidence, and punctuational and textual errors of documentary evidence), and convention (including inconsistent cross-referencing systems and inconsistent conventions in definitions). By providing examples and proposing correctional suggestions, this paper aims to provide a necessary reference for the revision of *Dictionary*.

2. Errors in the Establishment of Entries in *Dictionary*

Establishing entries (*limu* 立目), also known as word selection, refers to the process of determining which objects should be defined in a dictionary. This is the first task to be addressed in dictionary compilation and is a prerequisite for providing definitions. *Dictionary* has three major problems in terms of the establishment of entries, namely, items established beyond the scope of dictionary entries (所立非目), entries exceeding the specialized scope of Taoist dictionaries (越界立目), and omissions of entries (立目缺漏). *Dictionary* includes about 20,000 commonly used nouns, technical terms, and phrases in Taoism as its entries. While the dictionary's comprehensiveness, conciseness, and searchability were regarded seriously, the process of entry selection, involving reading Taoist scriptures, for instance, was carried out by different individuals, including teachers and students from the Chinese Taoist College. Therefore, errors and omissions are inevitable. Based on the results of our study, 102 of 700 entries are identified as errors in the establishment of entries, accounting for 14.57% of the total.[1]

2.1. Items Established beyond the Scope of Dictionary Entries

As explicitly stated in its preface, the principle of compiling *Dictionary* requires that all entries be derived from Taoist scriptures, and its explanatory notes mention that the entries are gathered and retrieved from Taoist scriptures (Chinese and Suzhou 1994). However, due to the obscurity of Taoist scriptures and compilers' misunderstanding of word meanings, some entries are mistakenly included in *Dictionary*. Some of these entries fail to meet the principle of word selection, while others are even false entries that are entirely nonexistent.

1. Si hua 四化

   Dictionary reads:

   > *Si hua* refers to the four stages that a person goes through from birth to death. Volume 54 of *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 compiled by Wang Qizhen 王契真 in the Southern Song Dynasty says, "*Zhide zhenjing* 至德真經 states that people go through four major stages from life to death, including infancy, youth, decrepitude, and death. During infancy, vital energy (*qi* 氣) is focused, will is unified, and harmony is achieved. The body is impervious to harms, and virtues in the highest form. In youth, the blood and vital energy surge, desires and worries are abundant, and the body is vulnerable to attacks, and hence virtues

> begin to decline. In old age, desires become more subdued, and the body begins to weaken but is not susceptible to external influences. Although it cannot maintain the fullness of infancy, it can still be close to that of youth. In death, the body rests in peace and returns to the origin, thus completing the cycle of life. Therefore, the spirit gives birth to the treasure at birth, and in the end, the treasure loses the spirit. This is the constant cycle of human existence" < 至德真經> 曰: " 人自生至終大化而有四, 嬰孩也, 少壯也, 老耄也, 死亡也." 其在嬰孩, 則氣專志一和之, 至物不傷焉, 德莫加焉; 其在少壯, 則血氣飄溢, 欲慮充起物所攻焉, 德故衰焉; 其在老耄, 則欲慮柔焉, 體將休焉, 物莫先焉, 雖未能保養嬰孩之全, 猶可方於少壯間也; 其在死亡也, 則之於息焉, 反其極焉, 是故生而因靈生寶, 終而因寶喪靈, 此天地之常數. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 379).

The lexicographer's nounce formation of *si hua* is a mistake. The inclusion of *si hua* is an error, as specialized dictionaries should only include words, set phrases, or fixed short sentences established by usage rather than temporary or improvised combinations of words or sentences (Q. Xu 2011, p. 53).

Dahua 大化 (great transformations) refers to the four important stages during a person's life, namely birth, growth, aging, and death. *Liezi tianrui* 列子· 天瑞says, "Human life undergoes four great transformations from life to death, including infancy, youth, decrepitude, and death" 人自生至終, 大化有四: 嬰孩也, 少壯也, 老耄也, 死亡也 (Liezi 列子 1986, p. 6). *Xuanzhu xinjing zhu* 玄珠心鏡注 written by Wang Sunzhi 王損之 in the Tang Dynasty says, "There are four great transformations during human life. As time passes so fast, who perceives it? The stages of infancy, youth, decrepitude, and death are the four significant transformations of human life" 人之生, 大化有四, 天地密移, 誰覺之哉! 嬰兒也, 少壯也, 老耄也, 死亡也, 謂之人生四大化 (TC.575:10.689c).[2] *Wenshi zhenjing zhu* 文始真經注 vol. 8, written by Niu Daochun 牛道淳 in the Yuan Dynasty, says, "Birds, beasts, plants, and trees are subject to the unstoppable flow of the four great transformations of birth, growth, aging, and death. Even the expanse of heaven and earth and the supernatural powers of sages are incapable of halting this process. Thus, it is said that neither heaven and earth nor sages can prevent these transformations from occurring" 鳥獸草木生時不得不生, 長時不得不長, 老時不得不老, 死時不得不死. 生長老死四者, 大化之流行, 雖天地之廣大, 聖人之神通, 亦不能暫留繫, 而使不生長老死也, 故云天地不能留, 聖人亦不能繫也. (TC.727:14.677a).

Dahua you si 大化有四 (there are four great transformations) is used in 10 different discourses of *Daozang* 道藏 (The Taoist Canon, referred to as TC), but the abbreviation of *dahua you si* as *si hua* is not found in Taoist scriptures. It is incorrect to shorten it to *sihua* simply because *dahua you si* refers to the four great transformations of human life. Such a deviation from standard lexicography principles is considered a serious taboo.

In addition, there are punctuational errors in *Dictionary*. In volume 54 of *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, the comma behind the character *zhi* 之 should be placed after the character *zhi* 至, and respectively after the word *zhiyi* 志一 (a single-minded determination) and the word *chongqi* 充起 (spring up).

2. *San daogui* 三刀圭

Dictionary reads:

> *San daogui* is a term used in inner alchemy that is synonymous with *sanbao* 三寶. It refers to the three treasures of vital essence (*jing* 精), vital energy (*qi* 氣), and blood (*xue* 血). C*hongyang zhenren jinguan yusuo Jue* 重陽真人金關玉鎖訣 says, "*Jue* states that *san daogui* is a treasure that contains vital essence, vital energy, and blood" 訣曰: 三刀圭者, 為寶也, 是精氣血也. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 84).

After reviewing the original text of *TC*, it is clear that the lexicographer misunderstood the textual meaning of the example above and established a false entry for *san daogui*. Therefore, *san daogui* should not be established as an entry.

Chongyang zhenren jinguan yusuo jue says: "It is asked that what is *yili daogui* 一粒刀圭? What is *ziyin daogui* 自飲刀圭? What is *tieli daogui* 鐵離刀圭? *Jue* states that *san daogui* is a treasure that consists of vital essence, vital energy, and blood. *Jue* states that *yili*

daogui is compared to body flood (*jinye* 津液), *ziyin daogui* is compared to swallowing and respiration (*yanjin fuqi* 咽津服氣), *tieli daogui* is compared to vital energy. Persistence in the practice of these techniques can help practitioners overcome evil and guide them towards the right path" 問曰: 既刀圭, 何者言為一粒刀圭? 何者自飲刀圭? 何者為鐵離刀圭? 訣曰: 三刀圭者, 為寶也, 是精, 氣, 血也. 訣曰: 一粒刀圭者, 津液; 自飲刀圭者, 咽津服炁; 鐵離刀圭者, 是真炁. 行功不退變, 萬邪皈正 (TC.1156:25.801c). *San daogui* refers to three different types of *daogui* 刀圭, namely *yili daogui*, *ziyin daogui*, and *tieli daogui*. *San daogui* is a temporary phrase, rather than a word with an independent meaning or a set phrase.

A word is the smallest unit of language that can function independently. Therefore, the correct entry for the dictionary should be *daogui*, which refers to vital essence, vital energy, and blood. The entry for *daogui* is already included in *Dictionary* (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 65), and the entry for *san daogui* should be removed.

2.2. Entries Exceeding the Specialized Scope of Taoist Dictionaries

The scope of a dictionary is defined by the range of entries specified in its title, preface, and explanatory notes (Q. Xu 2000). However, some entries in *Dictionary* exceed this scope by including common words used in secular society, thus violating the principle of specialized dictionaries. Specialized dictionaries differ from Chinese philological dictionaries or encyclopedic dictionaries, and the most essential requirement for specialized dictionaries is to be "specialized". As early as 1982, Jiang Yu 江宇 pointed out that "the entries in a specialized dictionary differ from those in a Chinese philological dictionary. The entries in a specialized dictionary are retrieval objects that reflect professional content (Jiang 1982)." According to Xu Qingkai's 徐慶凱 research, specialized dictionaries are intended solely to assist readers in solving professional problems. Entries and meanings of common words should be left to Chinese philological dictionaries, and specialized dictionaries need not intervene in this regard (Q. Xu 2011, p. 31). All entries in a specialized dictionary must fall within the subject scope defined by the dictionary title and should not exceed the disciplinary boundaries.

1. *Muji* 目擊

   Dictionary reads:

   > The term *muji* refers to the act of making eye contact or looking closely at something. "Biography of Ge Hong" in *Book of Jin* (晉書· 葛洪傳) says, "[Ge Hong 葛洪] saw He Youdao 何幼道 and Guo Wenju 郭文舉 on Yuhang Mountain 餘杭山, and they simply made eye contact without saying anything" 於餘杭山見何幼道, 郭文舉, 目擊而已, 各無所言. It is later used to describe witness and is synonymous with *mudu* 目睹. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 375)

   Muji 目擊 is a common word used in the Chinese language and is not limited to Taoist scriptures. The example comes from *Book of Jin*, which is not a Taoist scripture.

   In Taoism, there is an allusion to *muji daocun* 目擊道存, which derives from "Tian Zifang" in *Zhuangzi* 莊子· 田子方. It is stated that "as for people, they immediately recognize the Dao 道 without the need for saying anything upon seeing it" 若夫人者, 目擊而道存矣, 亦不可以容聲矣. Guo Xiang 郭象 annotates, "When people see the Dao, they immediately comprehend it" 目裁亡, 意已達 (Guo 2004, p. 708). *Muji daocun* is a metaphor that describes people with excellent understanding, as their eyes immediately recognize the Dao upon encountering it. While *Dictionary* includes the entry for *muji daocun* (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 376), the entry for *muji* should not be included as its usage and meaning in Taoist scriptures are the same as those in secular literature.

2. *Buyi* 布衣

   Dictionary reads:

   > (1) *Buyi* refers to clothes made of cloth, indicating a simple and austere dressing style. "The Royal House of the Duke of Zhou of Lu" in *Historical Records* (史記·

魯周公世家) states, "[Ji] Pingzi [季] 平子 wore cloth-made clothes and went barefoot, apologizing to the six ministers" 平子布衣跣行, 因六卿謝罪. Similarly, "Biography of Wang Ji" in *Book of Han* (漢書· 王吉傳) says, "After leaving [his] position, [Wang Ji] continued to live at home wearing plain clothes and eating coarse grains" 去位家居, 亦布衣疏食.

(2) *Buyi* refers to cloth-made clothes that are also worn by commoners. "Zhao Er" in *Strategies of the Warring States* (戰國策· 趙二) says, "All people, from the prime ministers and officials to the commoners, regard it as noble and wise for the king to do what is just and righteous" 天下之卿相人臣, 乃至布衣之士, 莫不高賢大王之行義. This word is also used as an antonomasia of commoners. "Xing lun" in *Spring-Autumn of Lü* (呂氏春秋· 行論) says, "The emperor's behavior differs from commoners" 人主之行與布衣異. "Biography of Li Si" in *Historical Records* (史記· 李斯傳) says, "As the King of Qin seeks to conquer all the world and claims to be the emperor to govern the country, it is time for commoners and political strategists to show their abilities" 今秦王欲吞天下, 稱帝而治, 此布衣馳騖之時而遊說者之秋也.

(3) *Buyi* is compared to deep friendships. "Biography of Yu Liang" in *Book of Jin* (晉書· 庾亮傳) says, "[Yu Liang 庾亮] and Wen Qiao 溫嶠 have a deep friendship with the prince" 與溫嶠俱為太子布衣之好. *History as a Mirror* (資治通鑒) vol.90 mentions, "The prince is kind and filial, fond of literature, good at martial arts, courteous to the wise and condescending to scholars. He is willing to listen to advice and has a close friendship with Yu Liang and Wen Qiao" 太子仁孝, 喜文辭, 善武藝, 好賢禮士, 容受規諫, 與庾亮, 溫嶠等為布衣之交. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 358).

The word *buyi* 布衣 is commonly used in Taoist scriptures. For instance, Wang Xuanhe's 王懸河 *Sandong zhunang* 三洞珠囊vol. 2 mentions, "Yan Jizhi 嚴寄之, also known by his courtesy name Jingchu 靜處, was from Jurong 句容 in Danyang 丹陽. He renounced his family and entered the Taoist path, living on simple vegetarian meals and wearing plain cloth-made clothes. He possessed no material wealth" 嚴寄之, 字靜處, 丹陽句容人也. 捨家入道, 菜食布衣, 體無寸帛也 (TC.1139:25.304c). *Buyi*, in this example, refers to cloth-made clothes. Chen Baoguang's 陳葆光 *Sandong qunxian lu* 三洞群仙錄 vol. 1 says, "I became the emperor's teacher with my silver tongue and was granted the title of Marquis of Wanhu 萬戶侯 (Marquis of Ten Thousand Households), which is extremely outstanding among commoners and already sufficient for me" 余以三寸舌為帝者師, 封萬戶, 位列侯, 此布衣之極, 於良足矣 (TC.1248:32.237a). In this instance, *buyi* is used metaphorically to refer to commoners. The meanings of *buyi* used in Taoist scriptures are common and ordinary, without any particular use, and therefore it should not be included in *Dictionary*.

2.3. Omissions of Entries

Omissions of entries here refer to the omissions of some important words in *Dictionary*. A comprehensive specialized dictionary should strive for completeness in its inclusion of words. This means including a wide and thorough range of words within the subject, as well as related words from cross-disciplinary or interdisciplinary subjects (H. Zhong 1987). However, during the compilation of *Dictionary*, several important Taoist words were omitted. Taking the commonly used alchemy terms as an example, important terms such as *fentai* 分胎, *shuifei* 水飛, *dafa* 打法, *chugui* 出匱, *cunxing* 存性, *fu* 伏, *fei* 飛, *fuju* 咬咀, *qigan* 泣乾, *quhe* 去荷, and *tianshui* 添水 were all omitted by *Dictionary*.

1. *Jujiao* 拘校

Jujiao refers to the process of searching and examining something, which is not included in *Dictionary*. This word appears in as many as 60 examples throughout *Taiping Scriptures* 太平經 written in the Later Han Dynasty. Vol. 51 "Jiaowen xiezheng fa" 校文邪正法 notes, "Scriptures from ancient, medieval and modern times should be searched and examined" 拘校上古, 中古, 下古之文 (TC.1101:24.434c). Vol. 91 "Jujiao sangu wen fa"

拘校三古文法 states, “After the immortal admonished, Dejun 德君 closely examined celestial teachings and scriptures, as well as gathered memorials that were shared by the lower officials and people. The memorials were searched and examined in August and were divided into three sections” 戒真人一言, 自是之後, 德君詳察思天教天文, 為得下吏民三道所共集上書文, 到八月拘校之, 分處為三部 (TC.1101:24.484b). Vol. 93 “Fangyao yangu xiangzhi jue” 方藥厭固相治訣 states, “I have obtained the documents of the Taoist master and have searched and examined them with various medical formulary. After retiring to a quiet place, I contemplated the essential meaning of each work and sought clarification for a doubt that cannot be solved” 今愚生得天師文書,拘校諸文及方書,歸居閑處,分別惟思其要意, 有疑不能解, 願請問一事 (TC.1101:24.492b).

Liu Zhaorui 劉昭瑞points out that *jujiao* 句校 is also known as *goujiao* 鉤校 in the literature of the Han Dynasty, as said in “Biography of Chen Wannian” in *Book of Han* (漢書·陳萬年傳), which states that Chen Xian 陳咸, the son of Chen Wannian 陳萬年, was a subordinate official of Shaofu 少府, who held many treasures. Chen Xian searched and examined the offenders and confiscated their ill-gotten wealth. The term *goujiao* 鉤校 means to investigate and examine. In *Taiping Scriptures*, *jujiao* 句校 is referred to as *jujiao* 拘校, which is commonly used in the scripture (Z. Liu 2007, p. 81). As an important word in *Taiping Scriptures*, *jujiao* 拘校 should not be omitted in *Dictionary*.

2. *Fanxian* 飯賢

Fanxian 飯賢 refers to the Taoist practice of offering meals to the virtuous, which serves as a gathering of Taoist communities. This practice is often held when a member of a Taoist household falls ill or is afflicted with misfortune. In such cases, the host will prepare vegetarian food and invite a large group of Taoist priests to partake in the meal. Before the meal, the Taoist priests will offer blessings to the host to ward off disasters. This practice is also known as *shechu* 設廚, which is considered an important Taoist rite and dharma assembly (X. Zhou 2022, pp. 52–53).

Fanxian, an important gathering activity in Taoism, is frequently mentioned in *TC*. *Yaoxiu keyi jielü chao* 要修科儀戒律鈔 vol. 12 written by Zhu Faman 朱法滿 in the Tang Dynasty says, “When the sage’s teachings flourish, the Taoist community prospers, and virtuous individuals emerge to embody the sacred virtue. Since the principles have already been demonstrated, the etiquette of offering meals to the virtuous has also become apparent. *Taizhen ke* 太真科 states that when a household is beset by illness or misfortune, it is appropriate to offer meals to virtuous individuals, which is called *fanxian*” 夫聖教興, 道風著, 賢人出, 聖德隆. 感應之理既彰, 飯賢之儀見矣. < 太真科> 曰: 家有疾厄, 公私設廚, 名曰飯賢. (TC.463:6.978c). *Chuanshou jingjie yi zhu jue* 傳授經戒儀注訣 before the Tang Dynasty says, “Scattering wealth and offering meals to the virtuous is called a gathering. Written invitations are sent out, and an official is invited to oversee the gathering” 散財飯賢, 謂之為會. 文書啓告, 請監會官 (TC.1238:32.171b). *Taiji zhenren fu lingbao zhaijie weiyi zhujing yaojue* 太極真人敷靈寶齋戒威儀諸經要訣 in the Six dynasties notes, “Taiji Zhenren 太極真人 (Perfected of Great Ultimate) says that offering meals to virtuous individuals is a blessed meal with specific numbers of people. Even outside guests may be served together with the virtuous” 太極真人曰: 飯賢福食, 各有人數. 外來之客, 先亦同食 (TC.532:9.871b). The entry “*fanxian*” should be included in *Dictionary*.

3. Errors in the Meanings in *Dictionary*

To accurately define and differentiate word meanings based on a multitude of examples from various sources, comprehensive dictionaries aim to be inclusive and coherent. This is a distinctive and challenging aspect of extensive explanatory dictionaries, requiring lexicographers to exercise great skill and careful consideration (Chen 2020, p. 78). While most of the entries in *Dictionary* have adequate meanings, some errors with meanings exist due to the limited resources at the time, including omissions of meanings, meanings out of the specialized scope of Taoist dictionaries, and inappropriate division or conflation of meanings. Of the 700 entries examined, 83 have errors with their meanings, accounting for 11.86% of the total.

3.1. Omissions of Meanings

The omission of meanings in *Dictionary* refers to situations where certain entries fail to include some of their original meanings, derived meanings, or other important meanings. Although the lexicographers made every effort to avoid such omissions during the compilation process, the limited electronically searchable resources in the 1990s made it difficult to fully explore the Taoist scriptures, resulting in some entries omitting a few meanings.

1. *Fangzhang* 方丈

Dictionary reads:

> *Fangzhang* 方丈 is the title bestowed upon a Taoist deacon, a highly respected master who leads and instructs others on the path of transcendence from the mundane world. Possessing unparalleled expertise in Taoist teachings and boundless compassion, *fangzhang* always endeavors to impart his knowledge to future generations and never withholds his wisdom. He serves as a role model for all Taoists, upholds the cornerstone of Taoist discipline, and promotes the Taoist doctrine to enlighten and cultivate morality. Through performing good deeds, he accrues merits and virtues and earns universal respect and admiration. Only those who have attained the way can be deemed a man of enlightenment. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 317)

Besides the title for a Taoist deacon, *Dictionary* has omitted two important meanings of *fangzhang*.

The first important meaning of *fangzhang* refers to an island called Fangzhang 方丈, which is one of the three immortal islands in Taoism. Tao Hongjing's 陶弘景 *Zhengao* 真誥 (Declarations of the Perfected) vol. 14 says, "To the northwest of the Fangzhang island lies the Yincheng Mountain 陰成大山, and to the southwest of the Canglang 滄浪 River lies the Yangchang Mountain 陽長大山. The circumference of each mountain is 1400 *li* 里 (500 m), and the height is 700 *li*. These mountains are inhabited by many immortals" 方丈之西北有陰成大山, 滄浪西南有陽長大山, 山周迴各一千四百里, 高七百里, 其山多真仙之人所居處焉 (TC.1016:20.578b). Volume four of *Yongcheng ji xian lu* 墉城集仙錄 (Record of immortals in Yong City), written by Du Guangting 杜光庭 in the Late Tang Dynasty, says, "I go north to Xuanzhou 玄洲, and then head east to visit the Fangzhang island" 我正爾暫北到玄洲, 東詣方丈 (TC.783:18.185b). According to volume three of *Ziyang zhenren wuzhenpian zhushu* 紫陽真人悟真篇注疏, written by Zhang Boduan 張伯端, annotated by Weng Baoguang 翁葆光 in the Song Dynasty, and commented by Dai Qizong 戴起宗 in the Yuan Dynasty, it is written, "Pinus densiflora (*chisong* 赤松) and Polygonatum (*huangjing* 黃精) are my friends. Fangzhang island and Penglai 蓬萊 are my home" 赤松黃精乃吾友, 蓬萊方丈是吾家 (TC.141:2.986b).

The second important meaning of *fangzhang* that is omitted in *Dictionary* refers to the dwelling place of the abbot of the Taoist temple. According to *Xuanmen shishi weiyi* 玄門十事威儀, it is written, "When the master returns from a distant place, one should be escorted to his dwelling place. One should pay respect after the master is seated, rather than hastily performing the rites in the courtyard or porch" 若師自外遠還, 送至方丈, 待師坐定, 然後作禮, 不得於門下, 廊下, 匆匆即事 (TC.792:18.260b). *Liugen guidao pian* 六根歸道篇 states, "Therefore, those who upheld the Dao in ancient times were not concerned with the glory of their chariot and crown or pleased by the beauty of their dwelling places. With transcendent thoughts beyond the worldly worries and a leisurely mood of mystery, they nurtured the Dao and established the profoundness" 是以古之守道, 軒冕不顧其榮, 方丈不欣以美, 卓絕乎世慮, 優游乎玄情, 則何道不養, 何玄不立 (TC.1261:32.476a). In volume three of *Xu xianzhen lu* 徐仙真錄, written by Fang Wenzhao 方文照 in the Ming Dynasty, it is stated, "The Dhamma Hall, the dwelling place of the Taoist practitioner, and the dwelling place of the abbot of the Taoist temple are arranged with an interval of three hundred and fifty odd steps from east to west" 法堂, 道房, 方丈, 東西以間計, 總三百五十有奇 (TC.1470:35.566a).

2. *Tufu* 土府

Dictionary reads:

> *Tufu* is a term of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹), known as the middle elixir field (*zhong dantian* 中丹田). See also the entry "*santian*" 三田 (three elixir fields). (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 109)

Another meaning of *tufu* refers to the nether world, which is omitted by *Dictionary*. *Tu* 土 (soil) refers to *di* 地 (land). "Da Su Wu shu" in *Wenxuan* (文選· 答蘇武書) says, "The borderland was torn apart in sorrow" 邊土慘烈. Liu Liang 劉良 annotates, "*tu* means land" 土, 地也 (Xiao 1993, p. 954). *Tu* and *di* are frequently utilized as synonyms of each other in Taoist scriptures, which can be proved by the variants of Taoist scriptures from medieval times. For example, in volume 41 of *Wushang miyao* 無上秘要 (Supreme Secret) from the Northern Zhou Dynasty, it is said, "Among the Nine Lands (*jiudi* 九地) of the Central Emperor, there is Huangshen 黃神 of Wuji 戊己" 中皇九地, 戊己黃神 (TC.1138:25.139b). While in Lu Xiujing's 陸修靜 *Taishang dongxuan lingbao shoudu yi* 太上洞玄靈寶授度儀 in the Southern Dynasty, it is stated, "Among the Nine Lands (*jiutu* 九土) of the Central Emperor, there is Huangshen 黃神 of Wuji 戊己" 中黃九土, 戊己黃神 (TC.528:9.857b).

Tufu means the nether world, where divine officials preside over and assess the fate of deceased souls. This word is frequently used in Taoist scriptures. In volume 112 of *Taiping Scriptures* in the Later Han Dynasty, it is written, "The judges in the nether world assess karmic consequences and reduce the lifespan of the soul accordingly. Once the lifespan is depleted, the deity of Yin 陰神 of the nether world is summoned to collect the body and examine the soul" 大陰法曹, 計所承負, 除算減年. 算盡之後, 召地陰神, 並召土府, 收取形骸, 考其魂神 (TC.1101:24.564b). In volume 44 of *Taishang huanglu zhaiyi* 太上黃籙齋儀 (The Ritual of the Supreme Yellow Register Chamber) written by Du Guangting 杜光庭 in the Late Tang Dynasty, it is stated, "We have been appointed to conduct prayers for the vegetarian host. We respectfully give thanks to the God of Zhizhen Wuji Fanqi 至真無極梵炁天君 from the northwest and offer our humble gratitude to the Deity of Taiyin 太陰之神 of the Gen Palace 艮宮 in the nether land and the God of Kuigang Xingpo Sisha 魁罡刑破四殺神君" 臣等奉為齋主某, 仰謝東北方至真無極梵炁天君, 下謝艮宮土府太陰之神, 魁罡刑破四殺神君 (TC.507:9.312a). Volume 31 of *Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法 written by Jin Yunzhong 金允中 in the Song Dynasty says, "We humbly beseech the officials of the nether world to administer rewards and punishments and to detain the souls of the deceased" 仍乞行下逐處土府冥曹, 主理罪福, 拘役亡魂 (TC.1222:31.551b).

3.2. Meanings Exceeding the Specialized Scope of Taoist Dictionaries

Specialized dictionaries should only include words and meanings that fall within the specific scope of the field, while common words and meanings should be excluded (E. Li 1999). The explanatory notes of *Dictionary* stipulate that entries with multiple meanings are only included if they are relevant to Taoist concepts or associated with them (Chinese and Suzhou 1994). However, some entries still contain numerous common meanings that are not relevant to Taoism, and these meanings should be removed in future revisions.

1. *Sixing* 四行

Dictionary reads:

> *Sixing* refers to a set of four virtues that encompass various moral qualities depending on the context.
>
> (1) *Sixing* refers to the four virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, as described in the silk manuscript from Mawangdui Han Tomb (馬王堆漢墓帛書) *Laozi jiaben juanhou gu yishu* 老子甲本卷後古佚書 (Lost Ancient Books After the Jia Version of *Laozi*), "The four virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom give rise to each other. The four virtues promote harmony, which in turn fosters unity and ultimately results in goodness" 仁, 義, 理, 智之所由生也. 四行之所和, 和則同, 同則善.

(2) *Sixing* refers to loyalty, filial piety, trustworthiness, and obedience, as stated in "Gongsun Long" in *Kongcongzi* 孔叢子· 公孫龍, "Yin Wen 尹文 asked whether a person who is loyal to their ruler, filial to their parents, trustworthy in friendship, and obedient in foreign lands could be called a scholar, to which the king replied, 'Indeed'" 尹文曰: 今有人於此, 事君則忠, 事親則孝, 交友則信, 外鄉則順, 有此四行, 可謂士乎? 王曰: 善.

(3) *Sixing* refers to moral character, refined speech, graceful appearance, and needlework skills. It is the feudal ethical code of ancient women. "Huang[3] shishu qi zhuan" in *Book of Later Han* (後漢書· 黃世叔妻傳) states, "A woman's four virtues are moral character, refined speech, graceful appearance, and needlework skills" 女有四行: 一曰婦德, 二曰婦言, 三曰婦容, 四曰婦功. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 381).

The three meanings above are all common and, thus, should not be included in *Dictionary*.

In Taoist scriptures, *sixing* refers to the four virtuous deeds of spiritual practitioners, as stated in *Taishang dongxuan lingbao bawei zhaolong miaojing* 太上洞玄靈寶八威召龍妙經 vol. 8, "There are four types of great virtuous deeds. What are these four types? The Dao says that those who cultivate purity and stillness accomplish the first type of virtuous deed. Those who devote themselves to the Dao achieve the second type. Those who bring about good transformations and help others succeed accomplish the third type. Those who establish great merits and expedient means to benefit all sentient beings accomplish the fourth type" 並有四等行善功德之大者, 何為四行? 道曰: 如其修清靜, 為之一行也; 申志道心者, 二行也; 善化物得成, 為三行也; 建功方便, 濟度眾生之命, 為四行也 (TC.361:6.243b). *Taishang dongxuan lingbao shoudu yi* states, "The altar master will receive the five texts into his body, nurture his vital essence with jade tokens, protect his life with divine power, receive divine revelations from heavenly books, correspond with the eight trigrams, adhere to the six degrees, lack none of the four types of virtuous deeds, master the five types of divine communication, achieve the tenfold transformation, and attain the indestructible diamond body and supreme fruit of attainment. The altar master will pay respect to the ten directions and constantly abide in *sanbao*" 至於壇主盟身某, 五文入體, 玉符養質, 神真衛命, 天書感瑞, 八會應圖, 六度常持, 四行無缺, 五通仙舉, 十轉飛騰, 金剛淨體, 尅隆聖果, 稽首十方, 常住三寶 (TC.528:9.855b).

2. *Jingshe* 精舍

Dictionary reads:

(1) *Jingshe* refers to the building where Taoists practice and perform rituals. *Beidi shuo huoluo qiyuan jing* 北帝說豁落七元經 says, "To practice this method, one must establish a building for practicing and performing rituals at home with a circumference of one *zhang* 丈 (three and one-third meters) and four doors. The true form of the emperor should be depicted in the building, with nine lamps and seven candles constantly lit to radiate brightness. During the day, they should be extinguished, and at night, a single stick of incense should be lit. Two sand tables, four *cun* 寸 (one-third of a decimetre) in size, should be placed on both sides of the room. A censer should be placed in the middle, with five bowls of still water and a sword nearby. Keep it clean and never let it become polluted. In front of the purified room, a Qiyuan Altar 七元壇 should be built" 欲修此法, 當於家建立一精舍, 方圓一丈, 開四門, 當寫本帝真形圖, 於靜室之中, 立燈九燈, 盞亦七盞, 常燃令光明, 日即息之, 夜燭室中. 立一香, 沙壇二, 大四寸, 中立香爐一口, 靜水五椀, 劍一口, 勿令穢觸. 淨室之前, 建七元壇. "Biography of Sun Ce" in *Book of Wu* in *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (三國志· 吳書· 孫策傳) states, "Sun Ce 孫策 secretly plans to attack Xu 許 and welcome the Han Emperor" 策陰欲襲許, 迎漢帝. The annotation cites "Biography of Jiang Biao" (江表傳), saying that "at that time, there was a Taoist named Yu Ji 于吉 from Langya 琅琊 who lived in the eastern region. He frequented Wukuai 吳會 and built a building where he burned incense,

read Taoist scriptures, and crafted talismans to treat illnesses" 時有道士瑯琊于吉, 先寓居東方, 往來吳會, 立精舍, 燒香讀道書, 製作符書以治病.

(2) *Jingshe* refers to a building for learning. "Danggu zhuan" in *Book of Later Han* (後漢書· 黨錮傳) says, "[Liu] Shu [劉] 淑, who has studied the Five Classics extensively, secluded himself and established a building to teach others. Several hundred students attended his lectures" 淑少學明五經, 遂隱居, 立精舍降授, 諸生常數百人.

(3) *Jingshe* refers to the mind. "Neiye" in *Guanzi* 管子· 內業 states, "When the mind is stable and centered, the senses are keen, and the four limbs are firm, it can be considered a *jingshe*" 定心在中, 耳目聰明, 四肢堅固, 可以為精舍. The annotation explains, "The mind is where the spirit resides" 心者, 精之所舍. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 984).

The second meaning and the third meaning of *jingshe* are commonly used in secular literature and should not be included in *Dictionary*.

Only the first meaning of *jingshe* is relevant to Taoism and is frequently used in Taoist scriptures. *Taixuan zhenyi benji miaojing* 太玄真一本際妙經 says, "One who seeks the Dao must be determined and calm, follow a teacher near or far, and inquire about the profound teachings. Therefore, they may leave behind their parents, ask to be separated from their spouse and children, abandon their dwelling, travel afar to mountains and forests, rely on the building where they practice and perform rituals, renounce worldly pleasures, wear a plain yellow or black robe, relinquish worldly fame and fortune, and focus solely on the Dao. Such a person is known as having left the home of affection and love" 適志從容, 遠近隨師, 詢請玄業. 故求父母, 請別妻子, 捨離居室, 遠遊山林, 依憑精舍, 棄俗服玩, 黃褐玄巾, 捨世榮華, 惟道是務, 是名初出恩愛之家 (TC.1111:24.658a). *Tishang dongxuan lingbao chujia yinyuan jing* 太上洞玄靈寶出家因緣經 says, "Those who leave home in Taoism may have previously established spiritual temples, profound altars, and various buildings where they practice and perform rituals. They extensively build halls and pavilions, craft various images, worship and serve deities, copy and expound scriptures, recite and circulate teachings, and awaken people" 夫出家者, 或先世建立靈觀玄壇及諸精舍, 聖真仙迹廣修堂殿, 造諸形像, 真應化身, 莊嚴供養, 抄經講說, 誦念流通, 開悟人天 (TC.339:6.136c). *Yuanshi dongzhen cishan xiaozi bao'en chengdao jing* 元始洞真慈善孝子報恩成道經 states, "[Taoists] should manage the halls and buildings with filial piety, decorate and uphold the buildings where they practice and perform rituals, and prevent them from falling into disrepair" 孝治堂宇, 粧嚴精舍, 無令穿敗 (TC.66:2.33a).

3.3. Inappropriate Division or Conflation of Meanings

The fundamental characteristics of meanings are generality and distinctiveness (Y. Wang 1990, p. 12). Generality refers to the universality of the definitions, while distinctiveness means that the various meanings must be separated and not overlap with each other. A dictionary must avoid both over-separation, where meanings lack comprehensiveness, resulting in the same meaning being listed into different entries, and over-generalization, where fundamentally different meanings are not listed as separate entries. However, the primary problem with *Dictionary*'s meanings lies in the failure to properly merge similar meanings.

1. *Wuliang* 無量

Dictionary reads:

(1) *Duren jing jizhu* 度人經集注 states, "*Wuliang*[4] means that various types of creatures hear the wonderful Taoist doctrine universally, and without any limits" 無量者, 殊方異類, 普聞妙義, 無有限極也.

(2) *Wuliang* refers to the name of a deity. *Duren jing jizhu* states, "[Wuliang] refers to the beginning deity of Wuliang Dasheng 無量大聖 in heaven, who governs the flying deities and human beings and assesses and promotes them" 天中無量大聖

之始神也. 總統飛天神人, 皆受其品量而得昇遷也. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 173).

Dictionary failed to identify the commonalities between the two meanings of *wuliang* due to the contextual interpretation, which should be merged into a single meaning. Moreover, the first meaning, which uses documentary evidence as its definition, does not comply with dictionary standards.

The term *wuliang* in the phrase "Wangliang Dasheng" 無量大聖 means boundless and limitless spiritual power, which is why the deity is called Wuliang. This word should be explained as immeasurable or endless, with an implied meaning of boundless and sometimes carrying a sense of reverence. For instance, *Chisongzi zhangli* 赤松子章曆 vol. 4 states, "I have been fortunate to venerate the great Dao, and have always been blessed immeasurably" 某夙生慶幸, 得奉大道, 從來荷恩, 實為無量 (TC.615:11.207b). Tao Hongjing's *Zhengao* vol. 6 states, "By contemplating the Dao, practicing the Dao, and having faith in the Dao, one can attain unwavering trust in it. The blessings are immeasurable" 念道行道信道, 遂得信根, 其福無量也 (TC.20.524a). Volume one of *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu* 元始無量度人上品妙經四注 compiled by Chen Jingyuan 陳景元 in the Song Dynasty says, "*Wuliang* means immeasurable" 無量者, 不可稱數 (TC.1016:2.188c).

In contrast, the definition of *wuliang* in *Daojiao da cidian* 道教大辭典 (Great Dictionary of Taoism) compiled by Li Shuhuan 李叔還 is more accurate. It states that "*wuliang* refers to immeasurable or boundless. In Taoism, it conveys the idea of boundlessness with three connotations: first, the great mercy of the heavenly lords in their boundless deliverance of sentient beings; second, the vast and boundless power of the Dao; and third, the immortals and the countless number of human beings (S. Li 2003, p. 433). "Shangqing Scriptures" 上清經 in *Taishang sanshiliu bu zunjing* 太上三十六部尊經 says, "Yuanshi Tianzun 元始天尊 (Celestial Worthy of Primordial Commencement) states that if all immortals practice the boundless great way of the Dao and cultivate the heart of compassion, they will attain the realm of true Dharma" 是時天尊曰: 若諸真人, 無量大神行道心時, 修慈悲行, 得真法地 (TC.8:1.576a).

2. *Xiayuan* 下元

Dictionary reads:

Xiayuan refers to a term of internal alchemy.

(1) *Xiayuan* is the synonym of the elixir field (*dantian* 丹田). Volume nine "Yisheng pian" 頤生篇 in *Daoshu* 道樞 (Pivot of the Dao) states, "One can preserve and nourish oneself by closing and holding the breath, pressing the perineum, retaining *qi*, and descending to the elixir field" 閉息按胯, 截留真氣, 而還下元, 是為保益之方.

(2) *Xiayuan* refers to a part of the human body, specifically the area below the navel and above the waist. "Sanyuan pian" in *Daoshu* 道樞· 三元篇states, "*Xiayuan* is below the navel and above the waist" 下元者, 臍之下, 腰之上屬焉. "Rubbing the kidneys by circling the navel, alternately embracing the area below the navel, and grasping the kidneys with both hands, then switching hands can gather *qi* and strengthen *xiayuan*" 搓兜臍腎, 交加換手, 抱臍之下, 握其腎, 左右手更換焉, 可以集真氣而壯下元矣.

(3) *Xiayuan* refers to the lower elixir field (*xia dantian* 下丹田). As stated in volume 59 "Yanling xiuyang dalue" 延陵修養大略in *Yunji qiqian* 雲笈七籤 (Seven Tablets in a Cloudy Satchel), "Humans have three elixir fields: the upper elixir field, the middle elixir field, and the lower elixir field . . . The lower elixir field is also known as *qihai* 氣海 or *jingmen* 精門" 人有三丹田. 上元, 中元, 下元是也 . . . 下元丹田, 氣海也, 亦名精門. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 110)

Xiayuan in internal alchemy refers to the lower elixir field located in the lower abdomen, below the navel. The three meanings associated with *xiayuan* all refer to this same location and should be merged into a single entry. *Ziting neimijue xiuxing fa* 紫庭內秘訣修行

法 says, "*Xiayuan* is the lower elixir field, located three *cun* 寸 below the navel" 下元丹田宮, 在臍下三寸, 當臍却入三寸是也 (TC.874:18.710a). *Shenxian shiqi jinkui miaolu* 神仙食炁金匱妙錄 says, "The lower elixir field is located three *cun* below the navel, known as Xiayuan Zhenyi 下元真一. The infant is named Yuanyang 元陽, also called Guxuan 谷玄" 臍下三寸為下丹田, 為下元真一者, 嬰兒字元陽, 一名谷玄 (TC.836:18.461c). Volume two of *Songshan taiwu xiansheng qi jing* 嵩山太無先生氣經 says: "Humans have three elixir fields that correspond to *sanyuan* 三元, with the lower elixir field referred to as *qihai* or *jingmen*" 夫人有三丹田, 以合三元上中下也 . . . 下丹田臍下氣海精門也 (TC.824:18.423c).

Xiayuan also has another meaning in Taoist scriptures, referring to the water realm (*shuijie* 水界). Volume two of *Yuanshi wuliang duren shangpin miaojing sizhu*, written by Chen Jingyuan in the Song Dynasty, says, "[Yan] Dong [嚴] 東 states that the three officials (*sanguan* 三官) refer to the heavenly official (*tianguan* 天官), the earthly official (*diguan* 地官), and the water official (*shuiguan* 水官). The heavenly official in the upper realm has three subordinate officials . . . The earthly official in the middle realm has three subordinate officials . . . The water official in the lower realm also has three subordinate officials" 東曰: 三官者, 天地水三官也. 上元天官, 有三官 . . . 中元地官, 亦有三官 . . . 下元水官, 亦有三官 (TC.87:2.210a). Similarly, Volume 44 of *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀, written by Jiang Shuyu 蔣叔輿 in the Southern Song Dynasty, says, "In the upper realm of heaven, there is the *quanqu zhi fu* 泉曲之府 (fountain treasury); in the middle realm of earth, there is the *beidu luofeng* 北都羅酆 (the north Yin Feng); in the lower realm of water, there is the *jiuzhou fenye* 九州分野" 上元天界, 泉曲之府; 下元水界, 北都羅酆; 中元地界, 九州分野 (TC.1213:9.633c). Volume 20 of *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu* 靈寶領教濟度金書, compiled by Lin Lingzhen 林靈真 in the Song Dynasty, says, "If the heavenly demons in the upper realm, the earthly monsters in the middle realm, and the water monsters in the lower realm dare to be disobedient and rebellious, they will have their scales severed and their heads cut off by the myriad of deities" 上元天魔, 中元地妖, 下元水怪, 敢有不順, 拒逆張鱗, 萬神斬首 (TC.465:7.131b). Volume eight of *Yuqing wuji zongzhen wenchang dadong xianjing zhu* 玉清無極總真文昌大洞仙經注, written by Wei Qi 衛琪 in the Yuan Dynasty says, "The heavenly realm is governed by the heavenly officials of the upper realm, the earthly realm is ruled by the earthly officials of the middle realm, and the water realm is managed by the water officials of the lower realm" 天界, 上元天官所統. 地界, 中元地官所轄. 水界, 下元水官所管 (TC.103:2.671b). Volume ten of *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, compiled by Wang Qizhen, says, "The palace of the upper realm is located above the ninth heaven, the palace of the middle realm is situated among the nine lands, and the palace of the lower realm is located in the wind and water cavernous abyss" 上元宮闕, 在九天之上. 中元宮闕, 在九地之間. 下元宮闕, 在風澤洞淵之中 (TC.1221:30.739b). Volume four of *Lingbao wuliang duren shangjing dafa* 靈寶無量度人上經大法 says, "The three palaces of the lower realm are also the temporary palace of the celestial emperor, where the three levels of water officials govern" 下元三宮者, 亦上帝之離宮, 三品水官治於其中 (TC.219:3.629c).

4. Errors in the Definitions of *Dictionary*

The definition is the backbone of a dictionary, and the quality of definitions is the fundamental criterion for evaluating the quality of a dictionary (Zheng 2007). Upon review of the definitions in *Dictionary*, it is evident that they have achieved the goal of being scientifically rigorous, concise, accurate, and comprehensive. However, given that *Dictionary* was compiled by different experts in Taoism, errors and omissions in the definitions were inevitable. Three problems with the definitions stand out: mistakes, inaccuracies, and redundancies. Out of the 700 entries examined, 225 of them are found to have definition problems, accounting for 32.14% of all entries.

4.1. Mistakes in Definitions

Strictly speaking, mistakes in definitions are considered fatal deficiencies in a dictionary, as they confuse one concept with another and directly affect the dictionary's overall quality.

1. *Daizhe* 代赭

Dictionary reads:

> *Daizhe* refers to the chalk (*bai'e* 白垩). [In traditional Chinese culture,] yellow is considered the positive color for soil, while white is regarded as the negative one, thus the name *bai'e* 白垩 (white badness). Later, due to taboos surrounding negative connotations, it is referred to as *baishan* 白善 (white goodness). It is also known as *xueshi* 血師, *baishan* 白墡, and *baiyu* 白玉. See also "Shi zhuyao yinming" 釋諸藥隱名 in *Shi yao er ya* 石藥爾雅. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 387)

There is an error in the definition of *Dictionary*, as *daizhe* and *bai'e* are two distinct minerals that should not be confused.

Daizhe is a type of red ocher that is bitter in taste and cold in nature. It has been traditionally used in Chinese medicine to treat various infectious diseases such as *guizhu* 鬼疰 (chronic recurrent multifocal deep-seated abscesses) and *zeifeng* 賊風 (harmful wind), as well as various infectious diseases and diseases caused by external pathogenic factors. *Zhe* 赭 originally referred to terracotta, as *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 written by Xu Shen 許慎 in the Later Han Dynasty stated: "*Zhe* refers to terracotta" 赭, 赤土也 (S. Xu 2016, p. 342). *Shennong bencao jing* 神農本草經 (Shennong's Classic of Materia Medica) says, "*Daizhe* is bitter in taste and cold in nature" 代赭, 味苦, 寒 (Huang 1982, p. 257). Volume six of *Tujing yanyi bencao* 圖經衍義本草, written by Kou Zongshi 寇宗奭 in the Song Dynasty, says, "*Tujing* 圖經states that *daizhe* grows in the mountains and valleys of the State of Qi 齊, which is also found in the mountains of Hedong 河東 (the east of the Yellow River) and Jingdong 京東 (East of Kaifeng Palace)" < 圖經> 曰: 代赭, 生齊國山谷, 今河東, 京東山中亦有之 (TC.769:17.329a). *Huangdi jiuding shendan jingjue* 黃帝九鼎神丹經訣 vol. 18 states, "[*Daizhe*] is also known as *xuwan* 須丸. The people of Gumu 姑幕 call it *xuwan*, while those of Daijun 代郡 call it *daizhe*. This is a common usage and therefore not widely understood. It is bitter in taste and cold in nature, with no toxicity" 一名須丸. 出姑幕者, 名須丸; 出代郡者, 名代赭. 此為俗用, 乃疏. 其味苦甘寒, 無毒 (TC.885:18.849c). Li Shizhen's 李時珍 *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (Compendium of Materia Medica) in the Ming Dynasty states, "*Zhe* 赭 refers to the red color, while *dai* 代 refers to Yanmen 雁門. *Daizhe* is now commonly called *tuzhu* 土朱 or *tiezhu* 鐵朱" 赭, 赤色也. 代, 即雁門也. 今俗呼為土朱, 鐵朱 (S. Li 2004, p. 586).

Bai'e 白垩 (chalk) is a type of limestone primarily composed of calcium carbonate. It is white in color, also known as *baishantu* 白善土 (white clay), *baituzi* 白土子 (white soil), or *huafen* 畫粉 (whiting). Its color, texture, and properties differ from those of hematite, which is also known as *daizhe* in Chinese. Volume six of *Tujing yanyi bencao*, written by Kou Zongshi in the Song Dynasty, says, "Chalk is bitter and pungent, warm, and nontoxic. It is used to treat women's chills and fever, abdominal masses, amenorrhea, accumulations, yin swelling and pain, leukorrhea, infertility, and dysentery" 白垩, 味苦, 辛, 溫, 無毒. 主女子寒熱, 癥瘕, 月閉, 積聚, 陰腫痛, 漏下, 無子, 泄痢 (TC.769:17.333a). In the same volume, it is stated, "Chalk is found in the mountains and valleys of Handan 邯鄲, and is commonly used by painters. It is abundant and cheap, also known as *baishantu*" 白垩, 生邯鄲山谷, 即畫家所用者, 多而且賤, 一名白善土 (TC.769:17.329a). *Bencao gangmu* states, "As yellow is considered the proper color for soil, white is considered a bad color, hence the name *e* 垩, which means bad. Later generations avoided using this name and called it *baishan* 白善, which means white goodness" 土以黃為正色, 則白色為惡色, 故名垩. 後人諱之, 呼為白善 (S. Li 2004, p. 425).

The term *daizhe* can be reinterpreted as "the ore of hematite, which has a bitter taste, a cold nature, and a red color. It mainly treats various infectious diseases, external symptoms, and gynecological diseases. It is also known as *xuwan* or *xueshi*. In addition, there is a typo in *Dictionary*, where *baishan* 白墡 should be corrected to *baishan* 白善, which is a phonetic error. Mei Biao's 梅彪 *Shi yao er ya* in the Tang Dynasty mentions: "*Daizhe* is also referred to as *xueshi*, *baishan* 白善 or *baiyu*" 代赭, 一名血師, 一名白善, 一名白玉 (TC.901:19.62c).

2. *Mian* 冕

Dictionary reads:

> *Mian* 冕 originally referred to the hat worn by Taoist priests and it carries the meaning of encouragement. As stated in *Dongzhen taishang taixiao langshu* 洞真太上太霄琅書 vol. 4, "*Mian* represents encouragement to cultivate virtue and avoid worldly troubles" 夫冕者, 勉也, 勉勵立德, 免諸塵灾. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 874).

In the example of *Dongzhen taishang taixiao langshu*, both *mian* 勉 and *mian* 冕 in *Guangyun* 廣韻 are classified as *ming* 明 initials, *xian* 仙 rhyme, and falling-rising tone (Chen and Qiu 1982, p. 275). As a result, their pronunciations in Medieval Chinese are identical. However, due to its phonetic similarity to *mian* 勉, referring to encouragement, *mian* 冕 has acquired the cultural connotation of encouragement. It is a phenomenon of phonetic exegetics according to philosophical connotations, which commonly occurs in Taoist scriptures. Phonetic exegetics is often accompanied by contextual interpretations that clarify the meaning of a word in a specific context rather than the objective meaning of the word itself. Therefore, the semantic characteristics expressed by phonetic exegetics are closely related to the context in which the word appears rather than its inherent characteristics when used independently (Q. Liu 2018, p. 102). The materials of phonetic exegetics with contextual explanations are highly subjective and cannot be simply used to establish word meanings.

In Taoism, *mian* refers to the hat worn by the Heavenly Emperor or immortals of higher rank. Volume 100 of *Yunji qiqian*, written by Zhang Junfang 張君房 in the Song Dynasty, states: "At that time, official Cao Hu 曹胡 made clothes, official Bo Yu 伯余 made skirts, and official Yu Ze 于則made shoes, which inspired the emperor to create crowns and hats. The crown was then worn by the wearer, and the hat became the alternative name for the crown, which, with its high back and low front shape, resembled a bow, thus it was called a crown" 時有臣曹胡造衣, 臣伯余造裳, 臣於則造履, 帝因之作冠冕. 冠者則服之, 又名冕者, 則冠中之別名. 以其後高前下, 有俛仰之形, 因曰冠, 冠冕也 (TC.1032:22.675a). Volume 46 of *Wushang miyao* in the Northern Zhou Dynasty says, "It is encouraged to wear formal clothing and hats to maintain traditional culture and morality. Men and women should dress properly, wear hats and jade ornaments, live in China with dignity, and avoid becoming barbarians" 勸助法師法服, 令人世世長雅, 逍遙中國, 不墮邊夷, 男女端正, 冠冕玉佩 (TC.1138:25.164b).

Therefore, the definition of *mian* as encouragement in *Dictionary* is incorrect and should not be based on phonetic exegetics or contextual interpretation. These methods cannot establish the meaning of words and should be distinguished from conceptual meanings.

4.2. Inaccuracies of Definitions

Compared to general Chinese dictionaries, the value of specialized dictionaries lies in "accumulating a large number of important and difficult-to-understand specialized terms and providing accurate explanations" (E. Li 1992). The primary requirement for definitions in specialized dictionaries is professionalism and accuracy. Flaws in definitions refer to inaccuracy or non-rigorousness. Qu Wenjun 曲文軍 argues that the flaws in definitions differ from mistakes in definitions, with the former considered minor flaws or defects and the latter being fatal deficiencies (Qu 2012, p. 28).

1. *Xiaozhao* 小兆

Dictionary reads:

> *Xiaozhao* is a self-referential term used by priests who have not yet received formal education in Taoist scriptures and practices. "Chu rudao yi" 初入道儀 in *Sandong xiudao yi* 三洞修道儀 written by Jia Shanxiang 賈善翔 states, "For all those who have not yet received formal education in Taoist scriptures and practices, the priests are commonly referred to as *xiaozhao*" 凡道士未受經法, 通稱小兆可也. See also the entry "*weizhao*" 衛兆. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 155)

The contextual interpretation used in *Dictionary* results in a biased generalization that *xiaozhao* only refers to Taoist priests who have not yet received formal education in Taoist scriptures and practices. However, this interpretation is not accurate.

Recent research on the language of Taoist literature sheds light on the meaning of the term *xiaozhao*. Zhou Zuoming 周作明 argues that *xiaozhao* refers to the self-designation of practitioners when facing immortals (Z. Zhou 2004). Zhou Zuoming et al. further suggest that "the word *xiaozhao* is similar in meaning to the word *xiaomin* 小民" (Zhou and Yu 2013, p. 39). This argument is supported by evidence found in several Taoist scriptures. For example, in *Taishang yupei jindang taiji jinshu shangjing* 太上玉佩金璫太極金書上經, it says: "*Xiaozhao* (I, a lowly disciple) dares to offer a few words and implores your attention today to present eight wishes, and humbly requests your blessings" 小兆某甲, 敢奏微言, 今日上告, 八願開陳, 請施禮願 (TC.56:1.903b). *Dengzhen yinjue* 登真隱訣, written by Tao Hongjing in the Southern Dynasty, says, "*Xiaozhao* (I, a lowly disciple) respectfully kotow before the Jade Palace and the Purple Palace of the Heavenly Emperor of Taiwei 太微. Please allow me to become immortal, and may all my wishes come true" 冀土小兆男生某, 謹稽首再拜, 朝太微天帝君玉闕紫宮前, 當令某長生神仙, 所欲如願 (TC.421:6.625a). Volume 27 of *Shangqing lingbao dafa*, compiled by Wang Qizhen, states, "The scriptures of *sandong* are passed down through the ages. Therefore, the Dongzhen Department 洞真部 has the *Shangqing dadong huiche bidao lu* 上清大洞回車畢道籙. Those who wear the *lu* 籙 are called disciples of Shangqing dadong 上清大洞弟子. While those who only recite *Dadong Scriptures* 大洞經 in the room and practice dadong exercises are called *xiaozhao*" 三洞經籙, 應運傳行. 故洞真部有上清大洞回車畢道籙一階, 佩之者稱上清大洞弟子. 或不佩籙, 只入室誦< 大洞經>, 行大洞功用者, 止稱小兆臣某 (TC.1221:30.899c).

In fact, *xiaozhao* is not a term that implies a complete lack of education in Taoist scriptures and practices but rather a self-deprecating term used by priests. For instance, *Taishang dadao yuqing jing* 太上大道玉清經 vol. 4 states, "*Xiaozhao* (the small-talented one) has shallow understanding and cannot attain the ultimate truth, and my heart is filled with doubts and fears that cannot be pacified" 小兆道淺, 不達至理, 心中疑懼, 不能自寧 (TC.1312:33.318a). *Dongzhen taishang badao mingji jing* 洞真太上八道命籍經 vol. 2 states, "*Sandong* Master of Taixuandu 太玄都, I (*xiaozhao* 小兆), a disciple of *sanjing* 三景, following the teachings of *Dadong Scriptures*" 太玄都三洞法師某嶽先生, 小兆真人三景弟子, 奉行大洞經事 (TC.1328:33.507a).

Furthermore, *xiaozhao* can also refer to practitioners whose spiritual cultivation is relatively shallow compared to the more advanced immortals. For instance, *Gaoshang shenxiao yuqing zhenwang zishu dafa* 高上神霄玉清真王紫書大法 vol. 1 says, "The seven ancestors ascend to heaven, and the practitioners whose spiritual cultivation is relatively shallow attain the immortal status" 七祖上生天, 小兆得仙位 (TC.1219:28.559b). *Wushang miyao* vol. 66 also mentions, "The Yellow Emperor states that because the practitioners whose spiritual cultivation is relatively shallow do not know the celestial phenomena, they receive *Lingbao wuchengfu jing* 靈寶五稱符經 from Tianlao 天老 (the assistant minister of the Yellow Emperor)" 黃帝曰: 天老以小兆未知天炁, 故受兆靈寶五稱符經 (TC.1138:25.219b).

In summary, *xiaozhao* can be interpreted as a term used by Taoist practitioners to refer to themselves when in the presence of immortals or as an indirect reference to other practitioners whose level of spiritual cultivation is relatively shallow.

2. *Yinshan* 隱山

Dictionary reads:

> *Yinshan* refers to hermits who live in the mountains. "Haiqiongjun yinshan wen" 海瓊君隱山文 in *Haiqiong wendao ji* 海瓊問道集 states, "Those who aspire to be the hermit in the mountains must have a genuine desire for seclusion. Seclusion without any purpose is considered *yin* 隱 (hidden), while seclusion with a specific purpose is considered *shan* 山 (mountain). Those who have not yet understood the Dao should seek to understand it before secluding themselves in the mountains. If one goes into seclusion in the mountains without understanding the Dao,

> one will be captivated by the beauty of the mountains and forget about the Dao. Conversely, if one understands the Dao before going into the mountains, one will forget about the mountains while pursuing the Dao. Forgetting about the mountains will lead to a peaceful mind and forgetting about the Dao will lead to being distracted by the mountains. Therefore, those who forget about the mountains while pursuing the Dao will find peace on earth, while those who forget about the Dao while being in the mountains will find noise in the mountains" 欲隱山者, 善隱心也. 無事治心謂之隱. 有事應迹謂之山, 無心於山, 無山於心也. 是故先須識道後隱於山, 若未識道而先居山者, 見其山必忘其道, 若先識道而後居山者, 造其道必忘其山, 忘山則道性怡神, 忘道則山形蔽目. 是以忘山見道人間亦寂也, 見山忘道山中乃喧也. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 897).

Dictionary incorrectly identified the word class of *yinshan* in its definition. *Yinshan* is not a noun but a verb, meaning to live in seclusion in the mountains. *Shangqing shidichen tongbaizhenren zhentu zan* 上清侍帝晨桐柏真人真圖贊, written by Sima Chengzhen 司馬承禎 in the Tang Dynasty, states, "[He] sought a Taoist master, leaving behind and forgetting his family and worldly attachments. Retreating to the mountains and living in seclusion, he buried himself in a tomb and suffered alone" 尋師道長, 辭親愛忘. 隱山自逸, 瘞墓徒傷 (TC.612:11.160a). Volume eight of *Shangqing taixuan ji* 上清太玄集, written by Hou Shanyuan 侯善淵 in the Jin 金 Dynasty, mentions, "To leap out of the mundane world but not hide in the mountains is to waste one's time in idle leisure" 跳出茅閭不隱山, 蹉跎信任樂清閑 (TC.1061:23.805b). Volume 19 of *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑, written by Zhao Daoyi 趙道一 in the Yuan Dynasty, states, "Zhang Cizheng 張慈正, also known by his courtesy name Ziming 子明, was the eldest son of Dezhao 德昭. He was well-versed in many books, especially the *Book of Changes* (*Zhouyi* 周易), and had over a hundred disciples. Later, he hid in the mountains to study the Dao and did not see his wife and children for a long time" 張慈正, 字子明, 德昭之長子. 博學群書, 最精於易, 從學者百餘人. 久之, 學道隱山, 與妻子不相見 (TC.296:5.210b).

3. *Fuxiu* 浮休

Dictionary reads:

> *Fuxiu* refers to the concept of life and death. "Keyi" in *Zhuangzi* (莊子· 刻意) states, "Its life is like floating, its death is like resting, and it does not think or plan ahead" 其生若浮, 其死若休, 不思慮, 不豫謀. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 835).

Dictionary's hasty combination of morpheme meanings has resulted in an inaccurate definition of the word *fuxiu*. In fact, *fuxiu* comes from "Keyi" in *Zhuangzi*, which states that "its birth is like floating and its death is like resting" 其生若浮, 其死若休. Volume 17 of *Nanhua zhenjing zhushu* 南華真經注疏, annotated by Guoxiang 郭象 in the Jin 晉 Dynasty, and commented on by Cheng Xuanying 成玄英 in the Tang Dynasty, states, "The sage moves without intention, and life and death are integrated. Therefore, its life is like a momentary bubble rising up and changing suddenly, while its death is like rest after exhaustion, with no attachment" 夫聖人動靜無心, 死生一貫, 故其生也, 似浮漚之蹔起, 變化俄然; 其死也, 若疲勞休息, 曾無係戀也 (TC.745:16.476a). According to the definition in the *Great Chinese Dictionary* (漢語大詞典), this term can be interpreted as "the brevity of human life or the unpredictability of the world" (Luo 1990, p. 7695).

There are two examples of *fuxiu* used in *TC*. Volume 178 of *Lingbao lingjiao jidu jinshu*, compiled by Lin Lingzhen in the Song Dynasty, says, "Having witnessed the unpredictability of all worldly affairs, I adhere to the laws of time passing by" 閱世諦之浮休, 故遵隨劫齊年之法度 (TC.465:7.783b). In volume 244, it says, "Witnessing the unpredictability of this impure world, I am reminded of the fleetingness of human life" 覩濁世之浮休, 欵勞生之倏忽 (TC.465:8.199b). These examples demonstrate that *fuxiu* does not signify life and death but rather describes the brevity of human life and the unpredictability of the world.

4.3. Redundancies in Definitions

The definition, i.e., the text used to explain the meaning of an entry, should be concise, accessible, and comprehensive. Adding unnecessary information to the definition will disrupt the balance of the entry or even the entire dictionary. However, some entries in *Dictionary* have included excessive supplementary information in their definitions, making them redundant and cumbersome. Therefore, it is necessary to trim these definitions appropriately to ensure clarity and concision.

1. *Famen* 法門

Dictionary reads:

> *Famen* originally referred to the southern gate of the palace in ancient times. In "the twentieth year of Emperor Xi's 僖 reign" in *Guliang zhuan* 穀梁傳, it says, "The southern gate is called *famen*" 南門者, 法門也. The annotation explains: "The emperor and feudal lords faced south to govern and issued laws and regulations through this gate, giving it the name *famen*" 法門, 謂天子諸侯皆南面而治, 法令聽出入, 故謂之法門. Later, in Taoism, *famen* came to refer to the scriptures and teachings spoken and expounded by the Heavenly Lord, which were considered the access for sentient beings to enter the Dao. *Lingbao Scriptures* 靈寶經 says, "The Heavenly Lord, out of compassion, has widely opened the access for sentient beings to enter the Dao" 天尊慈悲, 大開法門. *Huangjing jizhu* 皇經集注 vol. 2 says, "Expound the scriptures and teachings of Lingbao qingjing zhenyi bu'er 靈寶清淨真一不二" 宣說靈寶清淨真一不二法門. It is annotated: "However, the Dao is formless and invisible yet profound and subtle. It is like a great road, and those who enter it will find their way, hence the term *famen*" 宣靈寶清淨真一不二法門也. 然道無形迹, 了悟明徹, 秘臻妙境, 若大路然, 入之有自矣, 故曰法門. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 683).

The first listed meaning of *famen* in *Dictionary* and its documentary evidence is irrelevant to its meaning in Taoist scriptures, and the explanatory text is redundant.

In Taoism, the term *famen* derives from Buddhism and refers to the path that practitioners take to achieve enlightenment. The Buddhist Dharma is the gateway for all beings to transcend the mundane and become saints, thus called *famen*. The preface of *Saddharmapundarika Sutra* (*Fahua jing* 法華經) states, "The Buddha preaches the Dharma with various paths that practitioners take to achieve enlightenment" 以種種法門, 宣示於佛道 (Kumarajiva 2002, p. 40). In *Ekottaragama-sutra* (*Zengyi a'han jing* 增一阿含經), it is said, "The Buddha opens the path that practitioners take to achieve enlightenment and those who hear it attain firm faith" 如來開法門, 聞者得篤信 (Sanghadeva 2012, p. 151).

Famen is borrowed from Buddhism and refers to the path taken by practitioners to enter the Dao in Taoism. In Taoist scriptures, *famen* has three specific meanings:

(1) The first meaning of *famen* in Taoist scriptures refers to the path or method of practicing the Dao. *Taishang cibei daochang xiaozai jiuyou chan* 太上慈悲道場消災九幽懺 vol. 10 says, "Puji 普濟 asked: The compassionate master shows various virtuous deeds and methods of practicing the Dao, encourages and instructs sentient beings to practice them. As death approaches, when beings are weak and powerless, what levels of cultivation have they achieved in their practice" 普濟上問: 慈尊所顯諸功德法門, 勸喻眾生, 教令修習. 死以眾生微弱, 力不能及, 未審所修, 有何等級 (TC.543:10.83a). In *Shangqing beiji tianxin zhengfa* 上清北極天心正法, it is said, "Nothing comes before the acquisition of *qi* in the path of practice, as *qi* is essential in conforming to the spiritual and verifying the right and method. There has never been a practitioner who succeeded without knowledge of the path of *qi*. With so many methods of practicing the Dao, the most effective approach has yet to be determined" 夫行持之道, 莫先於取炁. 蓋炁正而符靈, 將正而法驗. 未有不知炁路而行持者也. 是法門衆多, 未嘗確論 (TC.567:10.649a).

(2) The second meaning of *famen* in Taoist scriptures refers to Taoism itself. *Chisongzi zhangli* vol. 5 says, "I am fortunate enough to enter Taoism, and through the grace of the Celestial Master, I am granted an official position" 臣以有幸, 得歸法門, 天師矜愍, 賜臣治職

(TC.615:11.213b). In *Taishang changsheng yanshou ji fude jing* 太上長生延壽集福德經, it is mentioned, "Despite performing good deeds, men and women in all the worlds who have yet to enter Taoism are constantly besieged by disasters, illness, and threats of water, fire, swords, and soldiers. To those who want to enter Taoism, what kind of meritorious virtues should they cultivate to attain peace, longevity, and natural sustenance? I humbly implore the merciful and compassionate to widely extend their help and compassion" 今見諸方世界有諸男女, 行諸善道, 未入法門, 常被水火刀兵灾病所臨, 來入法門, 修何功德, 令得安樂, 年壽長遠, 衣食自然, 伏願慈悲廣垂開度 (TC.21:1.773c).

(3) The third meaning of *famen* in Taoist scriptures refers to the Taoist school. *Wushang huanglu dazhai licheng yi* 無上黃籙大齋立成儀 vol. 12 says, "Today, the vegetarian host and the assembly members declare their allegiance to our Taoist school and take refuge in the Great Dao. They observe the fasting ritual and serve the country and the family" 今黃籙大齋主某人眾會稱某人等向我法門, 歸投大道, 奉修齋直, 為國為家 (TC.508:9.443b). *Jingming zhongxiao quanshu* 淨明忠孝全書, written by Huang Yuanji 黃元吉 in the Yuan Dynasty, states, "Some may ask why is this school specifically called "Pure Brightness and Loyal and Filial" (*Jingming Zhongxiao* 淨明忠孝) when there have been many Taoist schools in the past and present" 或問: 古今之法門多矣, 何以此教獨名淨明忠孝 (TC.1110:24.635a).

2. *Yulu* 玉廬

Dictionary reads:

> *Yulu* is a term that refers to the nose and is associated with refining and nourishing practices. "Hangting neijing jing" 黃庭內景經 in *Yunji qiqian* says, "The cloud energy of the Five Mountains is abundant, protecting and nurturing the nose to repay oneself" 五嶽之雲氣彭亨, 保灌玉廬以自償. Liang Qiuzi 梁丘子 annotates, "*Yulu* refers to the nose. It implies that once the three worms (i.e., disease-causing factors) are eliminated, the true energy will be harmonious and continuous, flowing in and out of the mysterious womb, thus achieving self-repayment" 玉廬, 鼻廬也. 言三蟲既亡, 真氣和洽, 出入玄牝, 綿綿不絕, 故曰自償. *Bao* 保 means to maintain, while *guan* 灌 means to irrigate. It is said that the spleen and stomach are the palace of storage, which can maintain and irrigate the whole body, making it peaceful, happy, and self-sustaining. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 342)

The last two sentences in the paragraph provide supplementary explanations to Liang Qiuzi's annotation rather than explanations of the term *yulu* itself. Therefore, they should be removed.

5. Errors in the Documentary Evidence of *Dictionary*

Documentary evidence is an important part of large-scale dictionaries as it serves as proof of definitions, the basis for the establishment of entries, and a carrier for demonstrating the evolution and historical relationships of words. According to the explanatory notes of *Dictionary*, "references are made to various series of books such as *TC*, *Daozang jiyao* 道藏輯要, *Gushu yinlou cangshu* 古書隱樓藏書, *Daoshu shiqi zhong* 道書十七種, *Daoshu shi'er zhong* 道書十二種, *Daozang jinghua lu* 道藏精華錄, *Pingjin guan congshu* 平津館叢書, *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今圖書集成 (Integration of Ancient and Modern Books), *Er'shiwu shi* 二十五史 (Twenty-five Histories), etc." (Chinese and Suzhou 1994). However, many entries are supported by only a single example or lack any documentary evidence altogether. Problems related to documentary evidence are particularly prominent in *Dictionary*, such as insufficient or lack of documentary evidence, inconsistency between definition and documentary evidence, documentary evidence outside of Taoist scriptures, inconsistency between entry and documentary evidence, and punctuational and textual errors of documentary evidence. Out of the 700 entries examined, 240 have problems with their documentary evidence, accounting for 34.29% of the total.

5.1. Insufficient or Lack of Documentary Evidence

There are numerous entries in *Dictionary* with isolated documentary evidence or without any supporting documentary evidence. This deficiency is not attributable to the scarcity of words used in Taoist scriptures but rather to the restricted search conditions during the compilation process. Therefore, meticulous supplementation of documentary evidence is required during revisions. For example, the following entries have no supporting documentary evidence:

1. *Jiejie* 節屆

   Dictionary reads:

   Jiejie 節屆 is a collective term for ritual ceremonies and festivals. During these events, Taoist temples typically perform rituals to pay homage to the immortals. Following the rituals, it is appropriate to follow the ancient traditions of holding a feast and strictly adhering to etiquette and customs. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 336)

2. *Beifang* 北方

   Dictionary reads:

   Beifang 北方 refers to the nether world, which is believed to be a place of *yin* 陰accumulation and extreme cold, associated with the element of water and the season of winter. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 369)

3. *Xunshi* 訓師

   Dictionary reads:

   Xunshi 訓師 refers to an administrative position in Taoist monasteries. *Xunshi* is responsible for teaching and supervising young Taoists, as well as overseeing the management of fasting regulations and educational programs. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 405)

4. *Fulu* 復爐

   Dictionary reads:

   Fulu 復爐 refers to a Taoist ritual practice that involves the concentration of mental energy and intention by priests. This practice bears similarities to the practice of *falu* 發爐. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 724)

5. *Xiangtou* 香頭

   Dictionary reads:

   Xiangtou 香頭 is a common saying referring to the designated leader of a group of individuals who gather at a temple to perform a religious ritual or pay their respects. The leader is often referred to as *xiangtou*. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 724)

6. *Qidan* 起單

   Dictionary reads:

   Qidan 起單 denotes the set of monastic regulations that Taoist monasteries follow. When Taoist priests of the Temple travel or visit other locations, it is customary to refer to their journey as *qidan*. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 803)

7. *Zhiyuan* 職員

   Dictionary reads:

   Zhiyuan 職員 is a title assigned to personnel who participates in Taoist religious ceremonies and rituals. The personnel is sometimes referred to as *faguan* 法官. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 847)

5.2. Inconsistency between Definition and Documentary Evidence

Within lexicography, the inconsistency between definition and documentary evidence refers to a contradiction between the definition of a word and its corresponding documentary evidence. Documentary evidence plays a crucial role in explaining and verifying a definition, making it necessary to ensure that the two align closely during dictionary compilation. Otherwise, the documentary evidence will lose its value in proving the definition, and the definition will become unreliable. As such, it is crucial to maintain consistency between documentary evidence and definition to ensure the accuracy and validity of the definition.

1. *Wangsheng* 往生

Dictionary reads:

> The concept of leaving the Saha World and going to the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha is also known as *wang* 往 (going); the rebirth in a lotus flower made of seven treasures is referred to as *sheng* 生 (birth). In addition, there is also a mantra for achieving rebirth in the Pure Land that can be recited to enable the deceased to be reborn as a human being. According to *Bixia yuanjun huguo bimin puji baosheng miaojing* 碧霞元君護國庇民普濟保生妙經, it is said, "To know one's previous life, observe this life; to know one's afterlife, observe this life" 欲知往生, 當觀今生; 欲知來世, 當觀今世. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 652).

The documentary evidence does not align with the definition of *wangsheng*. *Dictionary* defines *wangsheng* as gaining rebirth, while the meaning of *wangsheng* in the documentary evidence refers to the previous life. They have distinct meanings and differ in their parts of speech. The former functions as a verb, while the latter is a noun. Therefore, this documentary evidence should be replaced with other examples. For instance, *Taishang dongxuan lingbao zhuanshen duming jing* 太上洞玄靈寶轉神度命經 states, "Individuals can be reborn in the Pure Land of the Eastern Region according to their wishes. They can hear Taoist scriptures and teachings, face the Heavenly Lord, and have food and clothing provided naturally" 隨願往生東方淨土, 聞經聽法, 面對天尊, 衣食自然 (TC.340:6.143c). Volume two of *Dacheng miaolin jing* 大乘妙林經 says, "Those who practice goodness can be reborn in the Pure Land of the Three Clarities" 若有修善, 當得往生三清妙土 (TC.1398:34.271b). Volume two of *Yaoxiu keyi jielü chao*, written by Zhu Faman in the Tang Dynasty, says, "By practicing according to the scriptures day and night without slackening, people can experience peace and happiness wherever they go, and be reborn in a Pure Land according to their wishes" 依經修行, 晝夜不懈, 是人所在之處, 自然安樂, 隨所往生, 得居淨土 (TC.463:6.931a).

5.3. Documentary Evidence Outside of Taoist Scriptures

In a Taoist dictionary, the documentary evidence cited should prioritize Taoist scriptures and use specific examples from them to illustrate the meanings of entries. Although the explanatory notes of *Dictionary* indicate that literature from various Taoist series should be used as citation sources, some entries still use secular literature as documentary evidence. Whenever examples from Taoist scriptures are available, it is important to prioritize citing them.

1. *Qingjing fan* 青精飯

Dictionary reads:

> Qingjing Rice (*Qingjing fan* 青精飯) is a type of food traditionally taken by priests in their practice. To make Qingjing Rice, rice is soaked in the juice of the leaves and branches of the Vaccinium bracteatum plant, steamed, and dried until it turns a blue-green color. The priest practitioners of taking herbal medicine state that regular consumption of Qingjing Rice has anti-aging and beauty-enhancing properties. Du Fu 杜甫, a poet in the Tang Dynasty, mentioned it in his poem *Zeng Li Bai* 贈李白. It is stated, "Is there no Qingjing Rice to make me look good" 豈無青精飯, 使我顏色好? Lu You 陸游 in the Song Dynasty also wrote about it

> in his work *Xiaoqi changsheng guan fan yi sui xing* 小憩長生觀飯已遂行, saying that "I ate some Qingjing Rice and met a scholar wearing a black grille turban (*wujiao jin* 烏角巾) on the way" 道上青精飯, 先生烏角巾. For further information on Qingjing Rice, see "Qingjing" 青精 in volume eight of *Xuelin* 學林 written by Wang Guantu 王觀圖 in the Song Dynasty. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 609)

The two examples of Qingjing Rice listed are not from Taoist scriptures. Therefore, given the importance of Qingjing Rice as a Taoist term, we recommend replacing those examples with other documentary evidence from Taoist scriptures.

For example, in volume one of *Huagai shan fuqiu wang guo sanzhenjun shishi* 華蓋山浮丘王郭三真君事實, compiled by Shen Tingrui 沈庭瑞 and others in the Song Dynasty, it is said, "We, the ministers of the immortals, pity your aspirations and have come to guide you. We will give you Taiji 太極 Qingjing Rice of the immortal spirit formula" 吾等主神仙之司, 憫子有志, 故來相過, 乃以太極青精飯上仙靈方授之 (TC.778:18.47b). Volume eight of *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* says, "Initially hiding in Maoshan 茅山, [Yang Taiming 楊泰明] went to the top of Lushan 廬山 to build a hut, where he made Qingjing Rice and practiced fasting due to the proximity of Maoshan and Lushan" 初隱茅山, 以其淺近, 遂來廬山峰頂結庵, 造青精飯, 辟穀 (TC.296:5.317a). *Wudang jisheng ji* 武當紀勝集, written by Luo Tingzhen 羅霆震 in the Yuan Dynasty, says, "The post station provided ample food of Qingjing Rice, with which we energetically climbed the mountain and reached the ninth heaven" 驛亭餉飽青精飯, 著力登山即九天 (TC.963:19.669a). In addition, there is an error in the cross-reference of this entry, where Wang Guantu 王觀圖 should be corrected to Wang Guanguo 王觀國 (G. Wang 1992).

5.4. Inconsistency between Entry and Documentary Evidence

It is worth noting that several documentary pieces of evidence in *Dictionary* do not match the corresponding entries or even lack any reference to the words in question. This phenomenon deserves careful attention in academic research.

1. *Chongju* 沖舉

Dictionary reads:

> *Chongju* 沖舉 is a term for inner cultivation in Taoism. Also known as *qingju* 輕舉, it refers to the practice of ascending during the daytime. *Cantong qi* 參同契 says, "Practitioners must be diligent and practice it day and night without rest, and fast for three years. Then they can ascend lightly and travel far, straddle fire without being burnt, and enter the water without being wet. They can exist and perish, enjoy longevity, and be carefree. When they have completed their achievement, they will ascend, receiving Taoist scriptures and being included in the list of immortals" 勤而行之, 夙夜不休, 服食三載, 輕舉遠遊, 跨火不焦, 入水不濡, 能存能亡, 長樂無憂, 功滿上升, 膺錄受圖. *Xie ziran shi* 謝自然詩, written by Han Tuizhi 韓退之 in the Tang Dynasty, says, "In a flash, [she] ascends lightly and drifts like smoke in the wind. Upon entering the door, nothing is seen, just like a cicada shedding its skin. It is said to be an immortal matter and indeed can be attained" 須臾自輕舉, 飄若風中煙, 入門無所見, 冠履同蛻蟬, 皆云神仙事, 灼灼信可得. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 493).

During the compilation process, the word *qingju* 輕舉 was mistakenly used instead of *chongju* 沖舉 in the two documentary pieces of evidence, which indicated a lack of textual criticism.

Chongju is frequently used in Taoist scriptures. For example, *Sandong qunxian lu* vol. 10 says, "Those who ascend during the daytime must possess the necessary talent to achieve the Dao. You have undertaken this task and have the potential to ascend during the daytime" 白日昇騰者, 當有其材而後成其道, 汝受其一事而有沖舉之望(TC.1248:32.303b). *Yuqing wuji zongzhen wenchang dadong xianjing zhu* vol. 3 notes, "Xu Jingyang 許旌陽 and Ge Xianweng 葛仙翁in the Jin 晉 Dynasty ascended to be immortals by refining and offering sacrifices to the solitary ghosts and spirits, which were their ancestors from thousands of previ-

ous lifetimes" 晉代許旌陽, 吳葛仙翁, 皆以祭煉孤爽鬼神而沖舉成仙, 蓋孤爽亦是千生萬劫曾祖父母 (TC.103:2.621a).

5.5. Punctuational and Textual Errors of Documentary Evidence

It should be noted that the punctuational and textual errors of the documentary evidence in *Dictionary* may harm the accuracy of definitions of words.

1. *Guzheng bing* 骨蒸病

Dictionary reads:

> *Guzheng bing* 骨蒸病 (bone steaming disease) is a term in traditional Chinese medicine that refers to tuberculosis, which is also called *chuanshi* 傳尸, *yanti* 殗殢, *fulian* 伏連, or *wugu* 無辜. *Jijiu xianfang* 急救仙方 vol.11 states: "Huangdi jiu er'shiyi zhong lao tu bing xu" 黃帝炙二十一種癆圖並序. Bone steaming disease is also called *chuanshi*, *yanti*, *fulian*, or *wugu*. For men, their fundamental essence is *yuanqi* 元氣 (vital energy), while for women, it is *xuehai* 血海 (blood). Symptoms of the disease include shortness of breath, abdominal or forehead lumps, night sweats, vivid dreams of ghosts, and eventually exhaustion and death. Patients may also experience clear vision but weakness in limbs, loss of appetite, and wasting away over months and years 骨蒸病者, 亦名傳尸, 亦名殗殢, 亦名伏連, 亦名無辜. 丈夫以元氣為根本, 婦人以血海為根源. 其病狀也, 發天而短, 或聚或分, 或腹中有塊, 或腦門結核, 開臥盜汗, 夢見鬼交, 雖目視分明, 而四肢無力, 上氣食少漸至沉羸, 終延歲月, 遂至殞滅. See also the entry "*chuanshi laozhai*" 傳尸癆瘵 (tuberculosis). (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 721)

"Huangdi jiu er'shiyi zhong lao tu bing xu" 黃帝炙二十一種癆圖並序 is the chapter title of *Jijiu xianfang*. It should be placed after "vol. 11". The citation after the chapter title and before the cross-reference should be enclosed within quotation marks. Additionally, upon reviewing *TC*, we found that "fatian er duan" 發天而短should be corrected to "fagan er duan" 發乾而短 (body dryness and shortness of breath), and "kai wo daohan" 開臥盜汗 should be corrected to "huo wo daohan" 或臥盜汗 (someone may have night sweats) (TC.1164:26.657a).

6. Errors in the Convention of *Dictionary*

The convention of a dictionary refers to the rules and formats for its compilation. As a knowledge system, a dictionary requires an overall design, and its convention outlines the general structure of the dictionary, playing an important role in standardizing the entire work. The explanatory notes of *Dictionary* prescribe a series of compilation principles, including word collection, entry establishment, definition, division of meanings, citation of documentary pieces of evidence, and cross-referencing. However, due to the involvement of many individuals in the compilation process and varying personal understandings or less strict adherence to the execution standards, *Dictionary* has problems with inconsistent cross-referencing systems and inconsistent conventions in definitions. Out of the 700 entries examined, 50 have errors with their conventions, accounting for 7.14% of the total.

6.1. Inconsistent Cross-Referencing Systems

The entries in *Dictionary* often have intrinsic connections with other related entries. In this regard, the explanatory notes of *Dictionary* stipulate that "if there are several names for a word, the most appropriate or commonly used one shall be adopted as the main entry, while the others shall be included as cross-references as appropriate" (Chinese and Suzhou 1994). However, due to the separate writing of dictionary entries and the lack of digital technology support for compilation and collation at the time, it is common to encounter problems such as the lack of cross-references or missing cross-reference labels.

1. *Buhui mu* 不灰木

Dictionary reads:

> *Buhui mu* 不灰木 (wood that cannot be burned to ashes) is a noun related to external alchemy, also known as asbestos. "Shizhi" in *Baopuzi neipian* 抱朴子内篇· 釋滯 says, "The wood cannot be burned to ashes and the fire is hot"[5] 不灰之木, 為熱之火. *Chongxiu zhenghe zhenglei bencao* 重修政和證類本草 vol. 5 says, "*Buhui mu* resembles rotten wood and does not ignite when burned. It is considered a type of stone" 不灰木如欄木, 燒之不燃, 石類也. *Jinshi bu wujiu shujue* 金石簿五九數訣 mentions, "*Buhui mu* comes from the country of Persia. It is the root of silver stone and it appears like rotten wood. It does not turn to ash after long burning. Its color is blue like wood, and it can be used to make mercury" 不灰木, 出波斯國. 是銀石之根, 形如爛木, 久燒無變而無灰, 色青似木, 能制水銀. For further information, please refer to the entry "*shimian*" 石棉 (asbestos). (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 196)

Although *Dictionary* includes a cross-reference label for *shimian*, the actual entry for *shimian* is not present in *Dictionary*.

2. *Tunzi* 吞字

> *Dictionary* reads:
>
> *Tunzi* is a noun of Taoist *fangshu* (technology of immortality and alchemy), which refers to the use of talismanic water. *Taiping Scriptures* states that talismans are written with characters made of cinnabar (*dan* 丹) and it is believed that healing is dependent on "swallowing the characters written on the talismans" (丹書吞字). Please refer to the entry "*fulu*" 符籙 (talismanic script) for further information. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 517)

Although *Dictionary* includes a cross-reference label for *fulu*, the actual entry for *fulu* is not present in *Dictionary*.

3. *Yuliang* 餘糧

> *Dictionary* reads:
>
> *Yuliang* is a noun of external alchemy, which refers to the hidden name of Taiyi yuyu liang 太一禹餘糧. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 558)

Dictionary explains "*yuliang*" 餘糧 as the hidden name of "Taiyi yuyu liang" 太一禹餘糧, but it does not provide the cross-reference, which results in a lack of linkage between related entries.

6.2. Inconsistent Conventions in Definitions

The different parts of a dictionary are interconnected, and its systematic nature is reflected not only in the interrelatedness of the entries but also in the overall consistency of the convention, i.e., the issue of related coherence. According to Zhao Zhenduo, "related" refers to the necessary connection between the various components of the convention and content of entries, while "coherence" refers to the coordinated unity of treatment and expression for related materials (Zhao 2020, p. 182). However, *Dictionary* was completed by different individuals and suffered from inconsistencies and incoherence in its convention.

1. *Hutong lei* 胡桐淚

> *Dictionary* reads:
>
> *Hutong lei* 胡桐淚 refers to an external alchemical medicine, i.e., diversifolious poplar resin, which can be used as a medicine. When it solidifies into blocks in soil or stone-like lye, it is called Hutong alkaloid 胡桐碱. Yan Shigu 顏師古 in the Tang Dynasty provided an annotation for *Hutong* 胡桐 in *Book of Han*, stating that "*Hutong* resembles the tung (桐樹) but not mulberry. When insects feed on the tree, a frothy liquid flows out, which is commonly called Hutong tears (*Hutong lei* 胡桐淚) due to its resemblance to tears. It can be used to refine gold

> and silver and is commonly used by artisans. The word *lei* 淚 (tears) is sometimes mistakenly referred to as *lü* 律 in common saying" 胡桐亦似桐, 不類桑也. 蟲食其樹而沫出下流者, 俗名為胡桐淚, 言似眼淚也. 可以汗金銀也, 今工匠皆用之. 流俗語訛呼淚為律. As a result, it is called *Hutong lü* 胡桐律. See also "*Hutong lei*" in *Compendium of Materia Medica* vol. 34. It is also called *Qu Yuan su* 屈原蘇 in Taoist scriptures. See "Shi zhuyao yinming" 釋諸藥隱名 in *Shi yao er ya*. (Chinese and Suzhou 1994, p. 701)

The documentary evidence and definition are intertwined, resulting in a confusing structure of this entry. The text after the documentary evidence should be moved before it. Additionally, to conform to the citation convention of documentary evidence, the final sentence should read, "*Shi yao er ya* vol.1 says: *Hutong lü* is also known as *Hutong lei* or *Qu Yuan su*" < 石藥爾雅> 卷上: 胡桐律: 一名胡桐淚, 一名屈原蘇 (TC.901:19.62b).

7. Conclusions

Since its publication in 1994, *Dictionary* has been highly praised and extensively recognized in the academic community for its comprehensive coverage of Taoist terminologies and definitions. So far, no substitute for this work has been found. However, with the in-depth study of the language of Taoist literature in recent years, some deficiencies in *Dictionary* have gradually emerged. This paper identifies five major types of errors found in *Dictionary*, including entries, definitions, meanings, documentary evidence, and convention. It aims to provide a necessary reference for the revision of *Dictionary*, which will lead to more accurate and lucid interpretations of Taoist literature, a better grasp of the teachings and doctrines, and improved guidance for Taoist theories and practices for Taoist priests, believers, and researchers. Furthermore, the revised *Dictionary* will provide more authoritative information for subsequent Taoist research.

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Notes

1 This paper focuses on studying the types of errors and analyzing specific problems in *Dictionary*. We utilize a holistic single-classification approach, and for entries with multiple problems, we classify them based on the most prominent error. The quantity statistics of different types of errors are provided solely for comparative purposes, to reflect the overall situation of errors and omissions in *Dictionary*.

2 *Daozang* 道藏 (The Taoist Canon) hereby is referred to as TC. This paper uses *Daozang* text published by the three publishing houses (*sanjiaben* 三家本), see *Daozang* (1988). This paper benefits greatly from Schipper (2005). This text number follows the title concordance of Schipper and Chen (1996). The form of reference for this paper is TC.575:10.689c, where 575 is the text number, 10 is the volume number, 689 is the page number, and "c" is the register.

3 *Book of Later Han* says, "Cao shishu qi zhuan" 曹世叔妻傳 (Fan 1996, p. 814). There is a typo in *Dictionary* where the character "huang" 黃 should be corrected to the character "cao" 曹.

4 *Duren jing jizhu* says, "Immeasurable sounds" 無量音者 (TC.87:2.240c). There is a missing word "sounds" (*yin* 音) in *Dictionary*.

5 *Baopuzi neipian* vol. 8 says, "The wood cannot be burned to ashes and the fire is not hot" 不灰之木, 不熱之火 (TC.1185:28.201c). There is a typo in *Dictionary*, where the character "*wei*" 為 should be corrected to the character "*bu*" 不.

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