

Article

Approach to Psychic Wholeness: Psychoanalytic Theory in Daoist Supreme Deity Talismans of *XuHuo*

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Abstract: The Supreme Deity Talismans of *XuHuo*, as the mysterious visual artforms in Daoism, are significant ritual images created by Daoists during the Song and Yuan dynasties. This article explores the creation process of the SDTXH by applying psychoanalytic theory to analyze the literature related to their drawings in *Daozang*. The ritualistic concentration involved in writing the SDTXH resembles Jung's systematic exercises aimed at eliminating critical attention, thus creating a vacuum in conscious. This vacuum serves as the key premise for active imagination, through which the unconscious is integrated into the conscious. *Fuqiao*, in fact, is a symbol dynamically depicting the process of the unconscious being inseminated by the conscious through immersion within it. This integration, or unity, represents the embodiment of concepts such as "mandala", *Guizhong*, and *Taiji*. The SDTXH originate from *Guizhong* and essentially serve as archetypal images, similar to the sandplay images constructed by the clients. As the language of the unconscious, the SDTXH effectively bridge the conscious and unconscious, enabling the unconscious content, namely the archetype, to be symbolically expressed and bringing order to the creator through active imagination. The emergence of the SDTXH signifies the practitioner's progress towards achieving psychic wholeness.

Keywords: supreme deity talismans of *XuHuo*; active imagination; *Fuqiao*; *Guizhong*; the Self; collective unconscious; archetypal image; psychic wholeness



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1. Introduction

Ancient Chinese people have always believed that talismans possess inherent (divine) powers in themselves. The emergence of the Supreme Deity Talismans of *XuHuo* (歟火大神符; SDTXH; Figures 1 and 2) during the Song and Yuan dynasties (960AD–1368AD) was unprecedented¹ in the history of Daoism. The SDTXH differ significantly from the classical model. They evoke a sense of artistic enjoyment by resembling exquisite traditional Chinese paintings. Their creation is directly linked to Daoist Thunder Magic (*Leifa*, 雷法), integrating Inner Alchemy with talismans. Without the cultivation of the Inner Alchemy, the SDTXH cannot be achieved. The Heavenly Lord Deng (*XuHuo dengtianjun*, 歟火邓天君) depicted in the SDTXH serves as the commander-in-chief of the Marshal Class. The account of his origin was translated as follows:

Concentrate (*Ningshen*, 凝神) deeply and meditate. Meditate a bright point of light within the Kidney Palace (*Shengong*, 腎宮). Shortly, a fire ignites and gradually engulfs your entire body. With a single exhalation, the ashes are blown away. Then, meditate the energies of the five directions, each with a distinct color, converging and merging into a unified aura of purple and gold light, which transforms into an infant (*Yinger*, 嬰兒). As the infant gradually grows, it has the beak of a phoenix with silver teeth, red hair and a blue body. Its eyes emit fiery light extending thousands of feet, and its wings also glow with flame. Beneath each of its arms, a head emerges, with eyes that emit fiery light as well, enveloped in a golden aura. In its left hand, it grasps a fire drill, while its right hand clutches a mallet with eight edges. A fiery dragon coils gracefully around its body. 凝神, 靜坐。存腎宮一點極明。須臾火起, 漸漸燒徧一身。吹炁一口, 其灰燼悉皆吹去。卻存五方五色之炁, 混合結成一團紫金之光, 乃化為嬰兒。漸漸長大, 鳳嘴, 銀牙, 朱發, 藍身。兩目迸

火光萬丈，兩翅亦有火。左右兩腋下各生首，目亦出火，光帶金色。左手執火鑽，右手執八角鎚，有火龍繞身。(Daofa huiyuan 1988b, p. 599)



Figure 1. The Supreme Deity Talismans of XuHuo (Zhang 2004b, p. 344).



Figure 2. The Supreme Deity Talismans of XuHuo (Zhang 2004b, p. 365).

Wang Wenqing (王文卿), the founder of the *Shenxiao* (神霄) Thunder Magic of Daoism in the Northern Song dynasty (960AD–1127AD), stated that “The envoy of thunder represents an incorruptible primordial spirit, revered today as the Original Beginning. Cheng Yong (程雍), one of the Thunder deities, embodies the sun and moon, while the Five Generals symbolize the Five Planets. Within the human body, the envoy symbols the primordial spirit. Cheng Yong signifies primordial *qi* (炁) and primordial essence, and the *qi* of the five organs is manifested as the Five Generals”. (起雷使者)乃先天不壞之元神，即今所尊元始也。程雍乃日月也，五將乃五星也；於人身使者乃元神也。程雍乃元炁元精也，五藏之炁為五將也。(Chongxu tongmiao shichen wangxiansheng jiahua 1988, p. 391) Consequently, the Heavenly Lord Deng is essentially a primordial spirit, primordial *qi*, and primordial essence within humans, which can be comprehended as life energy. Hence, it is more suitable to translate *qi*² as ‘life energy’ rather than ‘the breaths’.

With regard to the origins of the SDTXH in the Song and Yuan dynasties, Lin Jing (林靜) believed that their development was shaped by the flourishing of painting in the Song era. Specifically, the Song emperors held a profound appreciation for painting, with Song Huizong (宋徽宗, the Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty) standing out for his remarkable achievements in both painting and calligraphy, thereby significantly advancing the art of painting. This artistic boom in the Song dynasty had a profound impact on Daoist talismans (Lin 2020, p. 63). Sujung Kim also ascribed the emergence of the SDTXH to the stimulus of external societal needs. He pointed out that “Talismans responded to various religious and social needs, such as exorcistic, therapeutic, and funerary rituals, which resulted in the inclusion of more complex visual components such as cartographic, symbolic, corporeal, and cosmic elements, as well as stylized scriptural elements in the talismans during the Song period (960–1279)” (Kim 2022, p. 3). While both scholars emphasize external influences, they fail to elucidate the intrinsic mechanisms that led to the genesis of the SDTXH.


Remarkably, Reiter (2007, p. 33) has unveiled that the Heavenly Lord Deng represents an innate spiritual potential. However, his exploration of this potential remains limited.


This innate spiritual potential likely originates from *Fuqiao* (符竅), the orifice of the SDTXH, which is intricately linked to the divine efficacy of the talismans. From a Daoist perspective, when drawing talismans without understanding the *Fuqiao* behind them, one risks mockery from ghosts and spirits; however, when mastering that *Fuqiao*, one can astonish and frighten even the ghosts and spirits 畫符不知竅, 反惹鬼神笑; 畫符若知竅, 驚得鬼神叫 (Daofa huiyuan 1988a, p. 674). Prominent Daoist scholar Qing Xitai (卿希泰) asserts that the efficacy of talismans primarily relies on the practitioner's spiritual cultivation and piety (Qing 1995, p. 33). Li Yuanguo (李遠國) concurs, emphasizing that the spirit is the core of Daoist talismans (Li 1998, p. 11). According to Chen Lin (陳林), when it comes to what determined *Fuqiao*, it was *jing* (精), *qi*, and *shen* (神) (Chen 2002, p. 44). Moreover, as a leading Daoist figure, Ren Zongquan (任宗權) believes that the secret to a potent talisman lies in the practitioner's ability to channel *jing*, *qi*, and *shen* into the brush tip through meditation (Ren 2012, p. 159).


Despite the ongoing efforts, deciphering the intricate concepts of *jing*, *qi*, *shen*, and *Fuqiao* remains a significant challenge for researchers. The SDTXH, as a manifestation of the interplay between *jing*, *qi*, *shen*, and *Fuqiao*, can be viewed as a compelling subject for psychoanalysis. Hence, this article endeavors to delve into the psychological underpinnings of the SDTXH's genesis through the lens of the collective unconscious theory, aiming to contribute to the enrichment and advancement of Daoist psychology. Notably, the SDTXH features vivid archetypal images, each comprising numerous elements laden with profound meanings and connotations. All that is contained and analyzed in the SDTXH applies and can function as archetypal images, either as examples or models of ancient times, or as a technique of a specific cultural tradition, since it presupposes another Theology, another Physiology, and another Anthropology (*jing*, *qi*, *shen*, *Fuqiao*, *Guizhong*, etc.). Among these archetypal images, the most prominent are the artistic depictions of the Heavenly Lord Deng, the Chinese characters, and the eight trigrams present in the SDTXH.


2. The Elements of the SDTXH: The Symbolic Expression of the Collective Unconscious


The elements of the SDTXH encompass diverse symbols, including the Thor with a bird-like beak, the loong, the Sun, the Moon, heaven, Earth, fire, and supernatural power. Notably, the imagery also harbors concealed elements, such as ghosts, deities, mountains, seas, as well as the emotions of love, hate, passions, and vengeance embedded in the mythology of the Thor. In the first SDTXH, some of these overt elements are represented symbolically in the following manner:


 = the Sun and the Moon; the left eye represents the Sun, while the right eye signifies the Moon.


 = when the eyes are opened, the flames will radiate brilliantly, casting a luminous glow upon heaven and Earth, thereby banishing malevolent spirits.


 = round sky and square Earth.


 = the eight trigrams.

 = the Thor.


 = the exaggerated distortion of the Chinese character 敕 (*chi*).


 = the exaggerated distortion of the Chinese character 煞 (*sha*).


 = supernatural power.

 = the "cloud of fire".

The second SDTXH exhibits a remarkable resemblance to the first, yet it distinguishes itself significantly through the introduction of the following four distinct images:

 = the Thor spewed out a cloud of fire.

 = using a whip to coerce the dragon (loong) into producing rain.

 = fire, the Thor.



= wind, the Electric Mother.

We can infer that many elemental images portrayed in the SDTXH derive from the images that underlie the phenomenal world. Among the diverse elements comprising the SDTXH, the imagery of fire stands out prominently, recurring numerous times. In his interpretation of the hexagram ䷄, Richard Wilhelm observed that “sun, fire, the lucid, the Clinging, plays a great role in this religion of light. It dwells in the eyes, forms the protecting circle, and brings about rebirth” (Wilhelm 1962, p. 18). This interpretation aligns with the realities of Daoism. As Carl Jung argued, “If one worships God, sun, or fire, one is worshipping intensity and power, in other words the phenomenon of psychic energy as such, the libido” (Jung 1956, pp. 85–86). Thus, Heavenly Lord Deng, capable of emitting fire, serves as the object of people’s reverence. The SDTXH may be regarded as a symbol embodying power.


2.1. The Heavenly Lord Deng as a Heroic Archetypal Image in the SDTXH

The *Daozang* (道藏) documents a mythological narrative regarding the Heavenly Lord Deng. His mortal name is Deng Bowen (鄧伯溫). In antiquity, he accompanied the Yellow Emperor in his victory against *Chi You* (蚩尤) and was thereafter awarded the rank of General of *Henan* (河南). Observing the Yellow Emperor ascending to heaven, the deity relinquished his position and retreated to *Wudang* (武當) Mountain. After a century of diligent cultivation, he attained the ability to ascend and descend with the *qi*. The deity observed that humanity was lacking in loyalty and filial piety, indulging in murder, exploitation, and the abuse of the weak, while the king’s ministers were powerless to restrain these transgressions. Therefore, he vowed relentlessly, day and night, to become a divine thunderbolt, executing punishment on behalf of heaven, against this malice and iniquity. His anger and indignation rose unceasingly towards the heavens. One day, he suddenly transformed into the image depicted in Figures 1 and 2. 雷部有欸火大神，姓鄧名伯溫。昔從黃帝戰敗蚩尤，封河南將軍。大神見黃帝登天，遂棄位入武當山，修行百載，能隨炁升降。又見世人不行忠孝，殺害侵欺，以強凌弱，國王輔弼不能制御。遂日夜發大願，欲為神雷，代天誅伐此惡逆，念念不絕，怒炁衝天。忽一日... (Zhang 2004b, p. 342) Evidently, the Heavenly Lord Deng in the mythological story is the embodiment of justice and heroism.

The Heavenly Lord Deng in traditional Chinese lore exhibits a profound congruence with Jung’s conceptualization of hero archetypes. Primarily, the Heavenly Lord Deng can be perceived as a “personification of the libido” (Jung 1956, p. 255), as Jung himself explicitly stated that “the finest of all symbols of the libido is the human figure, conceived as a demon or hero” (Jung 1956, p. 171). This symbolism transcends the objective, material realm of astral and meteorological images, assuming a human form that undergoes transformations from joy to sorrow and vice versa. Furthermore, according to the mythology, the Heavenly Lord Deng undergoes a transformative journey from mortality to supernatural status. This metamorphosis is imperative as Jung posited that “the religious figure cannot be a mere man, for it has to represent what it actually is, namely the totality of all those primordial images... These, so far as psychological experience is concerned, are the archetypal contents of the (collective) unconscious” (Jung 1956, pp. 177–78). Lastly, the divine image of the Heavenly Lord Deng is part bird, part human. Jung believed that the appearance of the image “depends on the attitude of the conscious mind” (Jung 1956, p. 180). Through clinical observations, Jung concluded that “the theriomorphic symbols always referred to unconscious manifestations of libido” (Jung 1956, p. 180), thus further strengthening the parallelism between the Heavenly Lord Deng and Jung’s theory of hero archetypes.

2.2. Chinese Characters as Readable Archetypal Images in the SDTXH

The SDTXH comprise three Chinese characters: *chi*, *sha*, and *gui* (鬼). Chinese characters serve as the fundamental form of talismans, especially in early Daoism. The early Daoist text *Tai ping jing* (太平經) is abundant in compound characters, referred to as “*Fuwen*” (複文), consisting of overlapping Chinese characters or their exaggerated distortions (Figure 3) (Taiping jing 1988, pp. 524–41). Later Daoists crafted talismans while retain-

ing Chinese characters (Liu 2013, pp. 102–3). These later compound characters, such as the talisman named *Dongguanbu* (洞觀部)³, composed of the exaggerated distortion of the three Chinese characters *tian* (天), *di* (地), and *ren* (人) (*Gaoshang shenxiao yuqing zhenwang zishu dafa* 1988, p. 580), the talisman for curing children’s fright (治小兒驚符)⁴, comprising , *tian* (天), *di* (地), *ren* (人), and the exaggerated distortion of *gui* (鬼) (*Wushang xuanyuan santian yutang dafa* 1988, pp. 95–96), and the plague-exorcism talisman⁵, utilizing the exaggerated distortion of *wen* (瘟) (*Shangqing tianxin zhengfa* 1988, p. 628), among others, demonstrate this evolution. Additionally, later Daoism introduced simpler talismans consisting of a single Chinese character, such as *chi*, *sha*, and *gui* (鬼)⁶ (*Shangqing tianxin zhengfa* 1988, p. 617) and so forth.

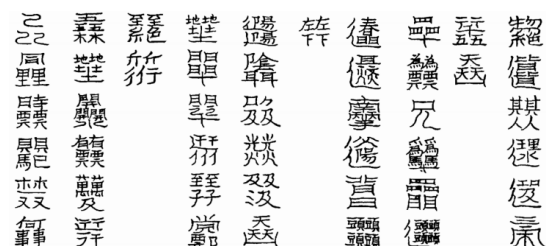


Figure 3. These compound characters, known as “*xingshangchuhai*” (興上除害), are denominated as symbols representing the eradication of harm or misfortune.

Professor Shen Heyong (申荷永) offers an expansive perspective on Jungian psychology, emphasizing that “Chinese characters are readable archetypes” (Shen and Gao 2019, p. 27). Gao Lan (高嵐) and Shen Heyong further articulate the intricate connection between Chinese characters and archetypes, positing that Chinese characters function as archetypal images of abstraction and generalization, encompassing a diverse array of primal concepts and images, thereby embodying the profound archetypal significance inherent within these characters (Gao and Shen 2000, p. 377). Echoing this sentiment, Adelina Wei-Kwan Wong avers that “The hieroglyphs are formed in images and reveal different facets of the lived human experience of the ancient Chinese people. The images themselves directly convey meaning to the reader” (Wong 2018, p. 55).

2.3. The Hexagrams as Brilliant Archetypal Images in the SDTXH

The eight trigrams, portrayed through specific points in Figure 1 or via several lines in Figure 2, can be deemed as another significant set of archetypal images within the SDTXH. The *Bagua* (八卦), commonly known as the eight trigrams (Figure 4), represents a symbolic system that holds profound cultural and historical significance in ancient China.









	Name	Attribute	Image	Family Relationship
	Ch'ien the Creative	strong	heaven	father
	K'un the Receptive	devoted, yielding	earth	mother
	Chên the Arousing	inciting movement	thunder	first son
	K'an the Abysmal	dangerous	water	second son
	Kên Keeping Still	resting	mountain	third son
	Name	Attribute	Image	Family Relationship
	Sun the Gentle	penetrating	wind, wood	first daughter
	Li the Clinging	light-giving	fire	second daughter
	Tui the Joyous	joyful	lake	third daughter

Figure 4. The Wilhelm-compiled classification system of the eight symbols (Wilhelm 1967, pp. 1–li).

It is imperative to underscore Richard Wilhelm’s perspective on the eight trigrams as he argued the following: “in what might be called an abstract sense, they represented not

objective entities but functions” (Wilhelm 1967, p. 1). The eight trigrams exhibit a remarkable simplicity and ingenuity, to the extent that they were envisioned as “images of all that happens in heaven and on earth” (Wilhelm 1967, p. 1). In this context, Jung postulated that “the ancient Chinese philosophy of the *I Ching* devised some brilliant images” (Jung 1956, p. 170). Elucidating the nexus between hexagrams and the unconscious, Jung elaborated that “the *I Ching* consists of a collection of sixty-four interpretations in which the meaning of each of the possible Yin-Yang (陰陽) combinations is worked out. These interpretations formulate the inner unconscious knowledge that corresponds to the state of conscious at the moment” (Jung 1969c, p. 452). It is thus evident that the ensemble of sixty-four interpretations in the *I Ching* encapsulate knowledge pertaining to the unconscious. Possibly influenced by Jung’s perspective on the unconscious and hexagrams, Shen Heyong posited that “Jung once remarked with a sigh that the hexagrams in the Book of Changes are archetypes that lend themselves to interpretation” (Shen and Gao 2019, p. 27). Therefore, the hexagrams in the *I Ching* can be regarded as carriers of unconscious knowledge.

Essentially, the collective unconscious serves as the fundamental source of the profoundly compelling and impressive SDTXH. Viewed solely as a psychological construct, the Heavenly Lord Deng in the SDTXH embodies the positive, beneficial manifestations of the unconscious, whereas the dragon (loong) portrayed concurrently represents its negative, adverse aspects (Jung 1956, p. 374). The creative process of the SDTXH, “so far as we are able to follow it at all, consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image by active imagination, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work. By giving it shape, the Daoist artist translates it into the language of that period, and so makes it possible for us to find our way back to the deepest springs of life” (Jung 1966, p. 82).

3. Active Imagination: A Way to the Generation of the SDTXH

In Jungian psychoanalysis, active imagination emerges as the paramount and quintessential method, embodying the inherent process of directly accessing the unconscious. The term “active imagination” was first introduced in “the Tavistock Lectures” (Jung 1971, p. 433). According to Jung, “active imagination, as the term denotes, means that the images have a life of their own and that the symbolic events develop according to their own logic—that is, of course, if your conscious reason does not interfere. You begin by concentrating upon a starting point” (Jung 1976, p. 171). In Jungian theory, there exists a detailed depiction of active imagination: “When you concentrate on a mental picture, it begins to stir, the image becomes enriched by details, it moves and develops... And so when we concentrate on an inner picture and when we are careful not to interrupt the natural flow of events, our unconscious will produce a series of images which make a complete story” (Jung 1976, p. 172).

When engaging in the writing of the SDTXH within Daoism, it is paramount that conscious reasoning does not intervene. Specifically, Daoists must cultivate a state wherein their spirit condenses and remains in a meditative tranquility. As articulated in seminal Daoist texts, such as the *Qingwei yuanjiang dafa* (1988, p. 278) (清微元降大法)⁷ and the *Tianhuang zhidao taiqing yuce* (1988, p. 379) (天皇至道太清玉册)⁸, practitioners are instructed to maintain a clear and undisturbed mind, free from distractions and external influences. By attaining this state, Daoists can effectively prevent their spirit from wandering and their energy from becoming chaotic. Moreover, when Daoist practitioners embark on writing talismans, they must immerse themselves in a state of complete forgetfulness, transcending both body and mind, as advocated in the *Daofa huiyuan* (1988a, p. 689) (道法會元)⁹. During this concentrated state, as Wilhelm (1962, p. 35) observed, “it is only a matter of fixing one’s thinking on the point which lies exactly between the two eyes, the light streams in of its own accord.” This process closely aligns with Jung’s description of active imagination. According to Jung, the capacity to access the unconscious can be developed with practice: “The training consists first of all in systematic exercises for eliminating critical attention, thus producing a vacuum in conscious. This encourages the emergence of any fantasies that are lying in readiness” (Jung 1969c, p. 78). It is imperative to maintain awareness

of non-interference, thereby safeguarding the ego from being overwhelmed by the unconscious and entering the psychopathic state that Jung feared.

Only under the psychological premise of ensuring the vacuum in the conscious can the suppressed unconscious be opened through training. Active imagination represented for Jung “an effective way of countering this tendency¹⁰ by opening up the psyche to its suppressed unconscious layers, a lowering of the threshold of conscious to permit the upwelling of archetypal fantasies and mythic images” (Clarke 2000, p. 126). Therefore, active imagination can be considered as a bridge between the unconscious and conscious. By active imagination, the unconscious flows into the conscious to generate the SDTXH.

4. *Fuqiao*: The Secret of the Generation of the SDTXH

By the natural process of active imagination, the unconscious content spontaneously flows into the conscious, and the archetypal images appear in the form of the SDTXH. According to Jung, the images come from two sources: “One source is the unconscious, which spontaneously produces such fantasies; the other source is life, which, if lived with complete devotion, brings an intuition of the Self, the individual being. Awareness of the individual Self is expressed in the drawing, while the unconscious exacts devotedness to life” (Wilhelm 1962, p. 102). The generation process of the SDTXH appears to align more closely with the latter source. This is analogous to what *Zhuangzi* (莊子) referred to as “I have lost myself” (吾喪我) (Watson 2013, p. 7). During this process, there exists a pivotal moment of psychological transformation, which Jung designated as the “archetype of transformation” (Jung 1969a, p. 38), while Daoism refers to it as *Fuqiao*.

Fuqiao represents a unity of opposites, encompassing concepts such as *qian* (乾) and *kun* (坤), *kan* (坎) and *li* (離), being (有) and none (無), among others. This unity transcends all phenomena. According to *Daozang*, it is widely acknowledged that this *Fuqiao* is not ordinary *Fuqiao*, where many opposites undergo critical transformations, such as *qian* and *kun*, *shen* and *qi*, *kan* and *li*, and so on. You should seek *Fuqiao* in your body, not elsewhere. If you can understand *Fuqiao*, you will approach the Dao (道). 殊不知此竅非凡竅，乾坤共合成。名為神炁穴，內有坎離精。當於身中而求，不可求於他也。能知此竅，即可與言道矣 (Daofa huiyuan 1988a, p. 674). The description of *Fuqiao* is astonishingly similar to Jung’s so-called the symbolic process, which is “an experience in images and of images. Its development usually shows an enantiodromian structure like the text of the *I Ching*, and so presents a rhythm of negative and positive, loss and gain, dark and light” (Jung 1969a, p. 38). The symbolic process is an experience involving transformation archetypes with richer meaning, and these transformation archetypes are real and authentic symbols. It can be concluded that *Fuqiao* may be considered as the “archetype of transformation”, which is vividly depicted as a dynamic process in *Daozang*, as shown in Figure 5 (Daofa huiyuan 1988a, p. 677).

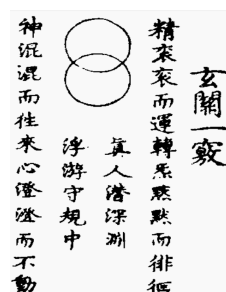


Figure 5. Visual depiction and symbolic representation of the concept of *Fuqiao* (Daofa huiyuan 1988a, p. 677).

Fuqiao can be described as a breakthrough in the Daoist practice of Inner Alchemy, which is what Jung called the “archetype of transformation” in which it anticipates the figure that comes from the dynamic synthesis process of the conscious and unconscious elements in the personality. It is, therefore, a symbol that unites the opposites: a mediator, a

bringer of healing, that is, one who makes the whole. The “archetype of transformation” is dynamically described as follows in *Daozang*: “The essence (*jing*, 精) rotates smoothly, the energy (*qi*, 炁) hovers silently, the spirit (*shen*, 神) wanders harmoniously, and the heart remains empty and unperturbed” 精袞袞而運轉, 炁默默而徘徊, 神混混而往來, 心澄澄而不動 (Chinese characters in Figure 5). This passage vividly describes the suspension of the critical mechanism of the conscious; that is, the heart remains empty and unperturbed, and the spontaneous emergence of unconscious; that is, the essence rotates smoothly, the energy hovers silently, and the spirit wanders harmoniously.

Fuqiao, in fact, is a threshold realm depicting the movement of the psyche at the moment of transformation, at which various opposites undergo qualitative transformations. Jung’s view on the unity of opposites explicitly stated that “The idea of the union of the two opposite principles, of male and female, is an archetypal image” (Jung 1976, p. 119). Yin (陰) and yang (陽) are unified in the Dao. In this context, *Fuqiao* serves as the archetypal image of the Dao. The SDTXH inherently contain *yin* and *yang*, negative and positive, loss and gain, as well as darkness and light. Daoists harnessed the cultivation of drawing the SDTXH by adhering to the principle of harmonizing opposing elements, thereby generating a transformative force that fosters the development of a superior personality.

5. The Self: The Root of the Generation of the SDTXH

Jung “called the mediating or ‘uniting’ symbol which necessarily proceeds from a sufficiently great tension of opposites the ‘Self’” (Jung 1970, p. 410). The Self means “the unconscious brings together *yin* and *yang* and things become utterly indistinguishable and we cannot say any more whether they are *yin* and *yang*” (Jung 1976, p. 118). In other words, the Self signifies the deepest unity of opposites. Using Jung’s imagery of the deepest layer of the collective unconscious, it refers to “the bottom of the cistern in our dream” (Jung 1976, pp. 118–19). The vivid description of *Guizhong* (規中) in *Daozang* is more in line with the meaning of the Self; that is, “*Zhenren* (真人) dives into the depths of the abyss, yet floats freely while adhering to *Guizhong*” 真人潛深淵, 浮游守規中 (Daofa huiyuan 1988a, p. 677), as shown in Figure 6. Therefore, the “*Guizhong*” mentioned in Daoism is a symbolic expression of Jung’s concept of “Self”. Jung empirically pointed out that “the Self appears ... in the form of a totality symbol, such as the circle, square, *quadratura circuli*, cross, etc.” (Jung 1971, p. 460). Thus, the charts of *Guizhong* (Figure 6) can be considered as archetypal images representing the Self.

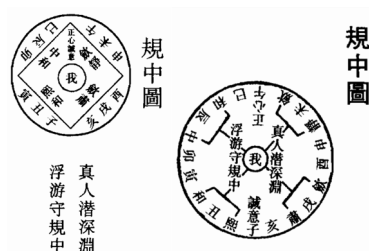


Figure 6. The charts of *Guizhong* (Zhang 2004a, pp. 631, 636).

There is a passage in *Daozang* that describes *Guizhong* with obscure and difficult language: “*Guizhong* refers to a state where one is neither in the middle nor on the inside or outside, neither attached to material objects nor confined by appearances. It is the center where the unconscious and conscious unite as a whole” 規中者, 如一規之中, 不在中間, 不在內外也, 不著物也, 不泥象也。在身中之中, 意中之中 (Daofa huiyuan 1988a, p. 677). By analyzing the imagery presented in the chart of *Guizhong* (Figure 6), the textual depiction of *Guizhong* in this passage closely resembles Jung’s elucidation of the Self, “by which Jung understand a psychic totality and at the same time a centre, neither of which coincides with the ego but includes it, just as a larger circle encloses a smaller one” (Jung 1969a, p. 142). As Jung suggested, the ego is only the center of the field of conscious, while the Self is the

center of the total psyche, which includes the unconscious and conscious: “In this sense the Self would be an ideal entity which embraces the ego” (Jung 1971, p. 425).

Jung’s understanding of the Self is very clear; that is, “The Self, as a symbol of the wholeness, is a coincidentia oppositorum, and therefore contains light and darkness simultaneously” (Jung 1956, p. 368). Accordingly, Richard Wilhelm provided an accurate description of the personality that attained the Self, namely “A man who reaches this stage transposes his ego; he is no longer limited to the monad, but penetrates the magic circle of the polar duality of all phenomena and returns to the undivided One, the Dao” (Wilhelm 1962, p. 17). What is the state of attaining the Self or returning to the Dao? Starting from the Chinese expression “熙和 (Xihe)”, the sequence of Chinese expressions in clockwise rotation, namely “中和 (Zhonghe)”, “斂靜 (Lianjing)”, and “斂肅 (Liansu)”, are presented in the chart of Guizhong (Figure 6). These Chinese expressions depict the most ideal state: “Conflict has come to rest, and everything is still or once again in the original state of indistinguishable harmony. The ideal condition is named Dao, and it consists of the complete harmony between heaven and earth” (Jung 1976, p. 119). Therefore, Zhenren mentioned above “is the supreme realm of Daoism and is able to fully comprehend and accept the laws of nature, to completely eschew the artificial and achieve pure naiveté and nature and to fully embody the authentic Self that is consistent with the Dao” (Wang and Wang 2020).

According to *Daozang*, the SDTXH are generated from *Guizhong*, that is, from the Self. The literature records as follows: “When meditation reaches the state that the practitioner has lost himself, the golden lights gradually emerges from two circles (兩規中, the two circles on the left side of Figure 7), converging into a supreme unity (the single circle on the right side of Figure 7 is formed by the combination of the two circles on the left), with mystical talismans appearing before the practitioner’s vision”. 俟其大定, 物我兩忘, 漸運金光自兩規中出, 合為上, 符篆在面前 (*Daofa huiyuan* 1988a, p. 691). Below is the translated text providing a thorough explanation of the SDTXH’s creation process based on the content of the Daoist text:

First, one must purify one’s mind and concentrate, eliminating all distractions and focusing one’s awareness, so that one’s conscious becomes profoundly clear and one’s awareness extends to all corners of the universe. Only when spirit returns and breath revives and one’s primordial spirit manifests, can one pick up the brush. With eyes focused on the tip of the brush, one must meditate on one’s own spiritual light emerging from two circles (兩規中, the two circles on the left side of Figure 7), converging at the center of one’s eyebrows, forming a millet-sized bead (the single circle on the right side of Figure 7 is formed by the combination of the two circles on the left) in front of one’s face, which then transforms into a golden thread with light pouring into the tip of the brush. Following the prescribed method, one should write the SDTXH with the brush, visualizing a golden snake flying across the paper. It is crucial to move the brush according to the movement of one’s eyes, writing the SDTXH with one’s eyes, and comprehending the teachings of Daoist Thunder Magic with one’s heart. Imagine the golden light gradually expanding, filling the heavens and the earth. 先澄澄湛湛, 絕慮凝神, 使其心識洞然, 八荒皆在我闔, 則神歸氣復, 元神現前, 方可執筆。以眼瞪視筆端, 思吾身神光自兩規中出, 合乎眉心, 為一粒黍珠在面前, 即成金線一條, 光注毫端, 便依法書篆, 存如金蛇在紙上飛走, 定要筆隨眼轉, 眼書天篆, 心悟雷篇。思金光漸漸廣大, 充塞天地 (*Daofa huiyuan* 1988a, p. 692).

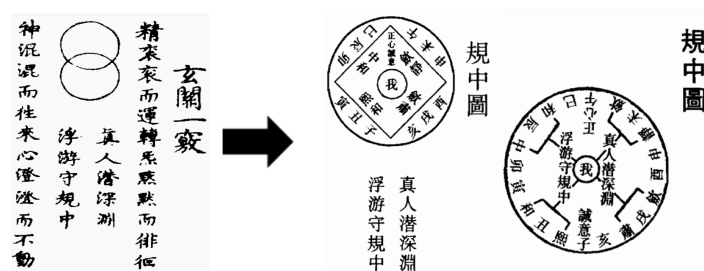


Figure 7. The individuation process: the secret and root of the generation of the SDTXH.

In summary, Jung has called this wholeness that transcends the conscious the Self. The Self is a superior and sublime state. Following synthesis, the Self transforms into the protective circle, known as the mandala, serving as a “traditional antidote for chaotic states of mind” (Jung 1969a, p. 10). The individuation process that leads to the formation of the Self (Figure 7) could be dynamically expressed by synthesizing the two circles (Figure 5) into the circle (Figure 6). The circle or sphere, or the quaternity (the square in Figure 7), is another form of wholeness. Therefore, the SDTXH originate from *Guizhong*, which essentially refers to the Self.

6. Sandplay Therapy: The Process of the Generation of the SDTXH

Sandplay therapy is grounded in Jungian analytical psychology, particularly his theory of the unconscious and the concept of active imagination. The process of Daoists creating the SDTXH within a sanctum chamber resembles the experience of clients undergoing sandplay therapy in a secure, unconstrained, and safeguarded environment, albeit in the absence of a trained sandplay therapist. The constituent elements of the SDTXH exhibit a profound resemblance to the miniature models employed by the clients in sandplay therapy. This analogy extends not merely to their superficial forms but also to the underlying principles and mechanisms that govern their function. Specifically, the SDTXH operate in a manner analogous to the imagery presented in sandplay, serving as “the magic of the symbol which contains those primitive analogies that speak to the unconscious” (Wilhelm 1962, p. 107).

6.1. Both Approaches Have a Designated Safe, Free, and Protected Space

Daoists in ancient China usually performed the rituals related to the SDTXH in a sanctum chamber (密室, *Daofa huiyuan* 1988b, p. 172). It was emphasized that the sanctum chamber where the SDTXH were created should not be disclosed to others 書符密室, 勿以語人 (*Lingbao wuliang duren shangpin miaojing* 1988, p. 206). Writing the SDTXH and chanting spells occurred, as well as purifying and gathering spirits within a sanctum chamber 書符念呪, 潔淨密室內集神 (*Taishang chiwen dongshen sanlu* 1988, p. 795). The sanctum chamber provided Daoists with a sense of safety, freedom, and protection. Safety, freedom, and protection are the basic conditions of sandplay therapy. In the foreword to his mother’s book, “*Sandplay: A Psychotherapeutic Approach to the Psyche*”, Dr. Martin Kalff pointed out that his mother observed that “it was the therapist’s responsibility to create what she called a free and protected space for the client” (Kalff 2003, p. xiv).

In contrast to counseling sessions, the sanctum chamber does not involve a trained sandplay therapist, thus ensuring that the basic requirements of sandplay therapy—non-verbal and non-directive—are fully met. A free and protected space is crucial in order to enable the emergence of the archetypal images. Richard Wilhelm explicitly underscored the pivotal role of utmost quietness in facilitating the emergence of archetypal images, as elaborated on in his work: “If the utmost quietness is not achieved, human nature and life never see each other again” (Wilhelm 1962, p. 23). It is not the therapist, but rather the sanctum chamber itself, that “creates this ‘free and protected space’ by functioning as both a physical and psychological container” (Mitchell and Friedman 1994, p. 54).

6.2. The Constituent Elements of the SDTXH Exhibit Remarkable Similarities to the Miniature Models Used by the Clients in Sandplay Therapy

The dispersed form of Daoist talismans emerged in the Song dynasty, clarifying the composition of the SDTXH (Figures 1 and 2). The constituent elements of the SDTXH encompass the Thor with a bird-like beak, loong, the Sun, the Moon, heaven, Earth, fire, ghosts, deities, mountains, seas, and so forth. Analogously, these elements can be represented as miniature models in sandplay. Notably, both the talisman and the sandplay are square in shape, a symbol representing the wholeness in alchemy. Intriguingly, we observe a similar pattern in the sketch of “*Systema Munditotius*”¹¹ (Figure 8), where Jung ascribed specific connotations and meanings to the symbols he employed (Jung 2009, pp. 363–64).

By comparison, we can clearly discern the following parallels: the constituent elements of the SDTXH closely align with the symbols Jung utilized to create the mandala. In a parallel fashion, the *Guizhong* charts that generate the SDTXH resonate with Jung's mandalas and universe diagrams, serving as the theoretical foundation for sandplay therapy.



Figure 8. The sketch of "Systema Munditotius" (Jung 2009, p. 363).

6.3. Both "Speak" in Symbolic Language That Is Consistent with the Unconscious

Jung argued that Westerners are incapable of comprehending the *I Ching*, or the Book of Changes, as he originally stated: "The lack of comprehension goes so far that even learned Sinologues have not understood the practical application of the *I Ching*, and have therefore looked on the book as a collection of abstruse magic spells" (Wilhelm 1962, p. 86). The reason for the lack of comprehension lies in the fact that the *I Ching* "speaks" in symbolic language. Both the eight trigrams and the sixty-four hexagrams serve as "symbols standing for changing transitional states; they are images that are constantly undergoing change" (Wilhelm 1967, p. 1). The talismans, due to their use of symbolic language, suffer a similar fate as the Book of Changes: "They have long been relegated to 'low', 'folk', 'superstitious', and 'magical' beliefs that were deemed unworthy of scholarly research" (Kim 2022, p. 2). The true reason lies in the fact that both amulets and hexagram symbols are experiential and ineffable, unable to be fully expressed through words. According to Jung, "what happens within oneself when one integrates previously unconscious contents with the conscious is something which can scarcely be described in words. It can only be experienced" (Jung 1961, p. 287).

However, what words scarcely capture can often be expressed through images. In his book *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung stated: "To the extent that he managed to translate the emotions into images—that is to say, to find the images which were concealed in the emotions—he was inwardly calmed and reassured" (Jung 1961, p. 177). That is because the images are speaking. The images in the SDTXH and the sandplay images constructed by the clients were equivalent to the constituent elements of Jung's mandala, which "speak" in symbolic language consistent with the unconscious. Dr. Martin Kalff stated that "Many of these aspects of the psyche are beyond the limits of ordinary language and cannot be expressed verbally. The sandplay method takes the limited therapeutic possibilities of language into account with great seriousness and offers alternative means of psychic expression" (Kalff 2003, p. xii). Kalff explored the way of treating children through the sandplay images created by the children. She pointed out that "The sand picture that is produced by the child can be understood as a three-dimensional representation of some aspect of his psychic situation. An unconscious problem is played out in the sand box, just like a drama. The conflict is transferred from the inner world to the outer world and is made visible... In addition, the detail sand composition of the pictures give the therapist an indication of the path to follow in the treatment" (Kalff 2003, p. 9). That is because, when the symbols constituting the SDTXH and sandplay images have connotations beyond the

general and immediate meaning, they acquire symbolic meaning. In that sense, they are readable archetypal images, which can be described as tools to express the Self.

6.4. Both Believe That the Emergence of the Circle Is a Key Indicator of Achieving Psychic Wholeness

The fragmentation of the conscious and the unconscious causes many disorders, and these two are reintegrated by symbols. The unity of the conscious and unconscious by the SDTXH is *Guizhong*. Similarly, the unity of these two by sandplay images is *Taiji* (太極). As Jung described the role of the mandala as a symbol, *Guizhong* and *Taiji* are also “a means of protecting the centre of the personality from being drawn out and from being influenced from outside” (Jung 1976, p. 179). All these symbols function to integrate, reorganize people’s inner spiritual order, and foster a balanced individual personality. Therefore, “they serve to produce an inner order—which is why, when they appear in a series, they often follow chaotic, disordered states marked by conflict and anxiety. They express the idea of a safe refuge, of inner reconciliation and wholeness” (Jung 1969a, p. 384).

The following textual analysis reveals that the creation of talismans, as a symbolic act, facilitates the transformation of the practitioner’s inner state, leading to the attainment of the Daoist ideal of *Zhenren* (the whole man). The key point in achieving this inner state transformation lies in the emergence of circular forms with a central point (*Yangjing*, 陽精):

Before inscribing any talismans, one must gather one’s focus and essence, amidst the depths of meditation, harnessing the innate spark of unconscious and elevating it with intention. This leads to the formation of three floral auras atop the crown of the head and the convergence of two luminous orbs between the eyebrows. With concentrated gaze, one emits a burst of light, forming a circular image ○. This represents the supreme Dao, the primal *qi* of the universe. It encompasses heaven and earth, embracing all spirits. This is the essence of the gathered golden light, commanding the presence of divine spirits. When inscribing talismans onto paper, one begins with the symbol of *qian* (乾), reverses its direction, and ultimately returns to *qian* (乾) to complete the cycle. Subsequently, within this circular image, a single dot is inscribed, embodying the profound essence. The single dot represents *Yangjing*, one’s primordial spirit. Its radiance is boundless, filling the vastness of the universe. Subsequently, based on one’s personal intention, the talismans are inscribed onto it freely. 凡書符篆之先, 必聚精會神, 於杳冥恍惚之際, 運先天一點明靈, 隨念而昇, 結三花於頂上, 攢兩曜於眉間, 注睛迸光, 作一圓象: ○此大道也, 先天一炁也。包羅天地, 總括萬靈。所謂金光四集, 曷敢不臨之義也。或書符於紙上, 則起乾, 逆轉復歸乾而止, 然後於圓象中復作一點, 妙在其中矣。此陽精也, 自己元辰也。晃曜無邊, 充塞宇宙。然後隨意書符於其上 (Daofa huiyuan 1988b, p. 211).

In Richard Wilhelm’s translation of *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, there is a detailed elaboration of the term “*Yangjing*”: “There develops by itself in the midst of the light a point of the true light-pole (*yang*, 陽). Then suddenly there develops the seed pearl. It is as if man and woman embraced and a conception took place” (Wilhelm 1962, p. 31). The circular form with *Yangjing* at its center is, in fact, a symbol of “the unconscious being inseminated by conscious through immersion within it”. Salome Wilhelm argued that “In this way the unconscious is activated and thus, together with an enriched conscious, enters upon a supra-personal mental level in the form of a spiritual rebirth” (Wilhelm 1962, p. xvi). This circular form with the *Yangjing* at its center corresponds to Jung’s mandala, indicating that the practitioner has achieved a spiritual rebirth.

The circle serves as a paramount symbolic representation. The significance of the emergence of the circle is described by Daoist Inner Alchemy as “When the light is made to move in a circle, all the energies of heaven and earth, of the light and the dark, are crystallized” (Wilhelm 1962, p. 30–31). Dora Kalff, the founder of sandplay therapy, held circles in high regard. Kalff observed that children often utilize the circle to express their sense of wholeness, and, in alignment with Jungian thought, she perceived the circle as a symbol of psychic wholeness (Kalff 2003, p. 2). In the case of healing Jim, who had learning difficulties, Kalff commented that “the manifestation of the Self, represented in

many forms, but most impressively in the circle, means the starting point of healthy ego development. This is the beginning of the unfolding of inherent personality traits" (Kalff 2003, p. 50). After discussing the significance of the circle as a symbol, Kalff emphasized that "the manifestation of the Self, this inner order, this pattern of wholeness, is the most important moment in the development of the personality" (Kalff 2003, p. 6). Jung recognized "the circle as a mandala, the psychological expression of the totality of the Self" (Jung 1969a, p. 304). Jung further elaborated on the intimate relationship between the circle and the central point (namely, *Yangjing*), stating that "the two parts are indispensable to each other and equivalent. Since olden times the circle with a centre has been a symbol for the Deity, illustrating the wholeness of God incarnate: the single point in the centre and the series of points constituting the circumference" (Jung 1969b, p. 276).

Therefore, both Daoists and psychoanalysts represented by Dora Kalff believe that the emergence of the circle is a key indicator of achieving psychic wholeness. Both the diagram of the universe, which underpins sandplay therapy, and the *Guizhong* chart, the basis of the SDTXH, feature a circular form with a central point (*Yangjing*), symbolizing the transition of human psychology from chaos to order. During the creation of the SDTXH, its creators held that inner state transformation lies in the emergence of circular forms with a central point (*Yangjing*). Based on his own experiences, Jung pointed out that "it is of considerable practical importance that the symbols aiming at wholeness should be correctly understood by the doctor" (Jung 1969b, p. 191). Dora Kalff concurred with Jung's view that therapists must be able to accurately identify symbols that point towards wholeness (Kalff 2003, p. 8). Therefore, the circular symbol pointing towards wholeness is highly valued by Daoists as well as the psychoanalytic school represented by Jung.

7. Conclusions

Essentially, the SDTXH represent archetypal images. As a universal language of the unconscious, the SDTXH can effectively bridge the gap between the conscious and unconscious, allowing the unconscious content, specifically the archetype, to be symbolically expressed via active imagination. It is in the natural process of active imagination that the unconscious and the conscious gradually integrate with each other. Figure 7 depicts a symbol that "comes from the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality" (Jung 1969a, p. 164). The transition from *Fuqiao* to *Guizhong* depicted in Figure 7 is the most crucial step in the formation of the SDTXH. *Fuqiao* represents the state in which the unconscious emerges when the conscious is present and its critical mechanisms are suspended. On the other hand, *Guizhong* is a symbol of the Self. As Jung (1969a, p. 164) argues, "the goal of the individuation process is the synthesis of the Self". The archetypal images of the Self, such as mandalas or *Guizhong*, are utilized in the creation of the SDTXH. It is during the rite of writing the SDTXH that the Daoist's ego approaches the Self; that is, it approaches the great Dao, the superior realm, and higher personality.

The ritualistic process of writing the SDTXH can be likened to the sandplay therapy of ancient China, both involving a transition from chaos to order. In the composition of the SDTXH, the Daoists' cognitive state progresses from disarray to coherence, ultimately attaining a sense of wholeness. From these two techniques, "it is easy to see how the severe pattern imposed by a circular image of this kind compensates the disorder and confusion of the psychic state—namely, through the construction of a central point to which everything is related, or by a concentric arrangement of the disordered multiplicity and of contradictory and irreconcilable elements" (Jung 1969a, p. 388). The transition from a dispersed state to an assembled form of the SDTXH, as depicted in Figures 1 and 2, enables the Daoists to reconcile opposing factors, such as *yin* and *yang*, *qian* and *kun*, *kan* and *li*, justice and evil, light and darkness, thereby symbolizing spiritual rebirth.

Thus, Jungian psychoanalytic theory provides us with a unique perspective to interpret the talisman in the Daoist context as a symbolic expression of the collective unconscious: "The talisman, it is a symbol of union and trust. It merges my spirit with theirs, and my *qi* with theirs. The spirit and *qi* are formless, yet they manifest in the form of a tal-

isman”. 符者，合也，信也。以我之神，合彼之神；以我之炁，合彼之炁。神炁無形，而形於符。(Daofa huiyuan 1988a, p. 692). The word “union” (he, 合) means “the synthesis of conscious and unconscious elements in the personality” (Jung 1969a, p. 164). The word “trust” (xin, 信) refers to the four Chinese characters “zhengxin chengyi” (正心誠意) in Figure 7 above, which, according to Jung’s interpretation, refers to “that is the self, the wholeness of the personality, which if all goes well is harmonious, but which cannot tolerate self-deceptions” (Jung 1961, p. 196). On the contrary, Daoist talismans and Inner Alchemy can also serve to correct the biases of psychoanalytic theory, as Jung once emphasized that “it was the text of *The Golden Flower* that first put me in the direction of the right track” (Wilhelm 1962, p. xiv). For instance, Daoist discourse on the creation of talismans through Inner Alchemy, expressed as “Such emergence from being into none naturally aligns with the Dao” (如此出有入無，自然合道; Daofa huiyuan 1988a, p. 691), provides an exquisite portrayal of the individuation process, significantly contributing to a precise understanding of the Self.

In summary, this article utilizes psychoanalytic theory to interpret and analyze the SDTXH in Daoism, revealing that, despite the different analytical frameworks, both the SDTXH and the psychoanalytic theory converge ultimately towards a pursuit of psychic wholeness. This convergence facilitates the comprehension of the abstract pluralistic idea of “one mind, many mentalities”. Our comparative analysis helps to make “the abstract pluralistic idea of “one mind, many mentalities” become substantial and concrete, and thereby come fully to life” (Shweder et al. 1998, p. 779). In this sense, we say both lead to the same destination via different paths.

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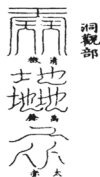
Data Availability Statement: No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

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

Notes

- ¹ In the eyes of ancient Chinese people, talismans were believed to possess inherent magical powers. The earliest evidence of this belief can be traced to the *mawangdui* (馬王堆) texts, specifically the “Recipes for Fifty-Two Ailments” (*wushier bingfang*, 五十二病方). The text recommends, for instance, that “when someone ails from gu, incinerate a north-facing paired talisman. Then steam sheep buttock, drop (the buttock) into hot bath water, and toss in the talisman ash. Then, the ailing person, and wash the hair and body to treat the gu” (Harper 1997, p. 301). The religious organization of Daoism emerged during the Eastern Han dynasty (25AD–220AD). Strickmann noted that “Disease and its cure are a paramount focus in the earliest accounts of Daoism” (Strickmann 2002, p. 1). The ritual of curing illnesses with talismans, grounded in Daoist beliefs, became the primary method for early Daoism to attract followers, indicating that the talismans’ inherent magical powers were still widely believed in during that time. During the Wei, Jin, Southern, and Northern dynasties (220AD–589AD), Daoists further proposed that talismans were formed by the condensation of Congenital Energy (*xiantian qi*, 先天炁). Consequently, talismans were viewed as another manifestation of the Dao, possessing supernatural powers, and were further sanctified within Daoism. This laid the foundation for the integration of Inner Alchemy and talismans. Since the Tang dynasty (618AD–960AD), Daoists have discovered an effective path to breach the barrier between heaven and man—the cultivation of Inner Alchemy. It was in this context that talismans were regarded as products of Inner Alchemy cultivation.
- ² *Qi* (energy, 炁) refers to the ontological form of the Dao. In Daoist thought, there is indeed a close relationship between Dao and *qi*. Specifically, Dao signifies the origin and fundamental laws of nature in the universe, representing an intangible force and existence. *Qi* represents the energy that exists throughout the universe. In Daoist philosophy, *qi* is the manifestation and dynamic flow of Dao in the material world. Consequently, *qi* can be viewed as embodiment of Dao, representing its concrete manifestation and implementation. In Daoist practices, individuals aim to achieve harmony with the Dao through the regulation and cultivation of their own *qi*.

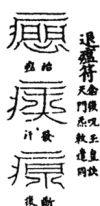
- 3 The following figure is the talisman named *Dongguanbu* (洞觀部) (*Gaoshang shenxiao yuqing zhenwang zishu dafa* 1988, p. 580).



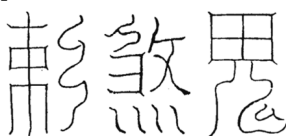
- 4 The following figure is the talisman named curing children's fright (治小兒驚符) (*Wushang xuanyuan santian yutang dafa* 1988, pp. 95–96).



- 5 The following figure is the talisman named plague-exorcism (退瘟符) (*Shangqing tianxin zhengfa* 1988, p. 628).



- 6 The following figure includes some simpler talismans consisting of single Chinese characters (*Shangqing tianxin zhengfa* 1988, p. 617).



- 7 When writing talismans, one must maintain a pure and tranquil mindset, devoid of any distracting thoughts. 凡書符時，須心地清靜，無有雜念 (*Qingwei yuanjiang dafa* 1988, p. 278).

- 8 For those who engage in writing talismans, the sole requirement is to have a settled mind, unperturbed by external affairs... In this way, when the brush touches the paper, the spirit remains unwavering and the energy remains undisturbed. 書符者，惟要心定，不思外事... 庶幾下筆時，神不走炁不亂。 (*Tianhuang zhidao taiqing yuce* 1988, p. 379).

- 9 When engaging in the writing of talismans and inscriptions, one must first concentrate the mind and stabilize the thoughts, attaining a state of forgetfulness of both the self and the world. 凡書符篆，先凝神定慮，物我兩忘。 (*Daofa huiyuan* 1988a, p. 689).

- 10 In the context provided, “this tendency” should refer to Jung’s belief “that, in the overdevelopment of the conscious intellect—the ‘monotheism of consciousness’, as he called it—modern Western culture has allowed itself to be cut off from its instinctual roots in the unconscious” (Clarke 2000, p. 126).

- 11 The sketch of “Systema Munitotius” can be considered as a combination of the aforementioned “The Supreme Deity Talismans of XuHuo” (Figures 1 and 2), *Fuqiao* (Figure 5), and *Guizhong* charts (Figure 6). The constituent elements of the sketch of “Systema Munitotius” are listed in the “image legend” and primarily include Anthropos Man, Human Soul, Serpent (Earthly Soul), Bird (Heavenly Soul), Heavenly Mother, Phallus (Devil), Angel, Devil, Heavenly World, Earth (Mother of the Devil), Sun (Eye of the Pleroma), (Sun, Eye of the Pleroma), God of the Frogs (Abraxas), the Fullness, the Emptiness, Flames, Fire, Love, and Gods (stars without numbers).

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